

TOKYO REPLAY CENTER

TUO

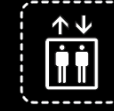


THE CITY IS AN ORGANISM; ITS INHABITANTS ARE ITS CREATORS AND CARETAKERS, LAYERING ADAPTATION AS NEEDS EVOLVE TO MEET EVER-CHANGING DEMANDS. THE TOKYO REPLAY CENTER EXPRESSES ITS LAYERED FUNCTIONALITY AS THE BUILDING CONFIGURES ITSELF TO THE NEEDS OF ITS INHABITANTS; PASSING THROUGH FROM ONE MEMBRANOUS AREA TO ANOTHER, THEY SUPPORT AND PROVIDE FOR THE BUILDING'S FUNCTION. AS EACH CELL'S STATE CHANGES, ITS COLOUR CHANGES AS WELL, RESULTING IN AN EVER-CHANGING MIRROR OF THE CITYSCAPE AROUND IT.



ENTRANCE FOR THE BUILDING IS LOCATED IN THE CENTER, REMOVING THE NEED OF NARROW HALLWAYS SUCH AS "MYWAY" AND OPENING UP CIRCULATION.

RESTAURANT AND CAFE EXPERIENCE. A VIEW OF THE SKY AND SHARE A BAR AND KITCHEN FOR EVENTS.



MULTIPURPOSE AREA SITUATED ON THE TOP FLOOR FOR CONCERTS, BALLROOM EVENTS, WEDDINGS, DANCES.



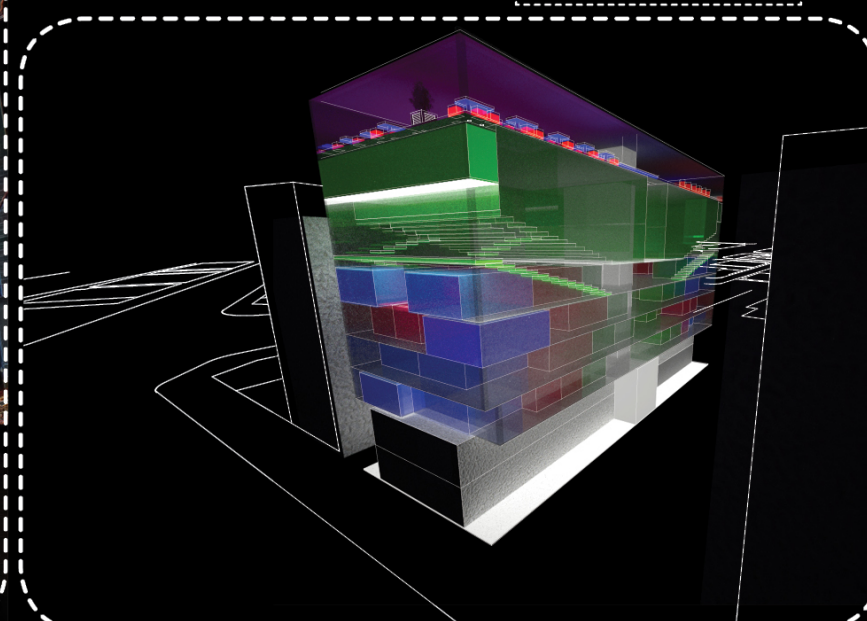
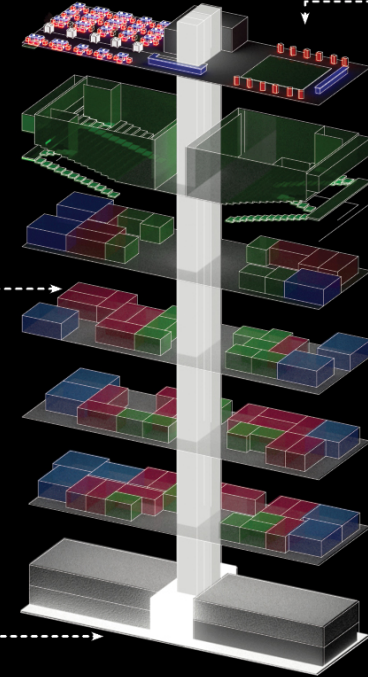
TWO AUDITORIUMS FOR DOUBLE FEATURE SCREENINGS WITH SPECIAL STAIR FEATURE THAT OUTLOOKS TO THE STREETS OF AKIHABARA.



MODULAR KARAOKE ROOMS ARE STACKED IN A METHOD TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE CIRCULATION AND CREATE SPACES FOR LEISURE. ROOMS ILLUMINATE AS THEY BECOME OCCUPIED.



RETAIL AND SHOPPING LOCATED ON THE GROUND FLOOR AS TRADITIONAL STORE FRONTS. VIDEO GAMES/FILMS/ANIME/MANGA ARE ALL INCLUDED WITHIN THESE AREAS.



BASIS

“The works of the past always influence us, whether or not we care to admit it, or to structure an understanding of how that influence occurs. The past is not just that which we know, it is that which we use, in a variety of ways, in the making of new work.... The typology argument today asserts that despite the diversity of our culture there are still roots of this kind which allow us to speak of the idea of a library, a museum, a city hall or a house. The continuity of these ideas of type, such as they are, and the esteemed examples which have established their identity and assured their continued cultural resonance, constitute an established line of inquiry in which new work may be effectively grounded.”

-The Harvard Architectural Review. Volume 5. Precedent and Invention. Between History and Tradition: Notes Toward a Theory of Precedent. John E. Hancock.

THESIS

The city is an organism; its inhabitants are its creators and caretakers, layering adaptation as needs evolve to meet ever-changing demands. The Tokyo Replay Center expresses its layered functionality as the building configures itself to the needs of its inhabitants; passing through from one membranous area to another, they support and provide for the building's function. As each cell's state changes, its colour changes as well, resulting in an ever-changing mirror of the cityscape around it.

BACKGROUND

The aim of this competition was to develop a new leisure center in Akihabara, Tokyo. The building type is a complex with numerous private media rooms where groups of friends can go to see old anime, to watch classic films, or to play video games in a private setting where they can feel comfortable.¹ This complex should feature an auditorium, multi-purpose place, bar and kitchen services, karaoke rooms varying in sizes, and shops that sell anime, films, and video games.

The Tokyo Replay Center is a hub of entertainment and technology and the design must fit the lifestyle of Japanese Society. “Five minutes is enough for the Japanese to prepare for a long journey,” wrote Yakumo Koizumi, Greek writer who brought Japanese culture to the western world.² He implies the Japanese are not a materialistic people, live a simplistic lifestyle, are minimalist, and prefer to exercise their minds. This mindset is a fundamental force that remains consistent throughout the development of the design.

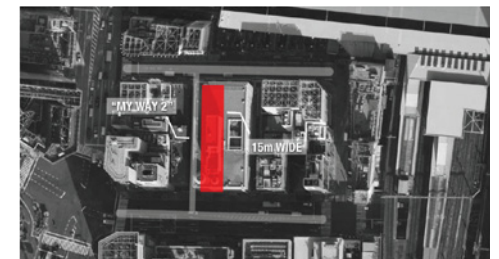
Further narrowing on the site, Akihabara is internationally known as the meeting point for “otaku” people around the world.³ Otaku culture demonstrates a prominent influence in this concentrated area of Tokyo and have developed Akihabara into an “electric town”.⁴ Technology and entertainment in Akihabara create a diverse market for new and used electronics, parts and equipment, gadgets, game arcades, anime, manga, films, cafés and karaoke - all common interests of the otaku people.



top and bottom: site plan of Akihabara



bottom: competition site plan



all site images from:
http://es.archmedium.com/Concursos/TRC/Descargas/TRC_EN_Bases.pdf

¹ “Brief for the Tokyo Replay Center International Architecture Competition for Students Organized by ARCHmedium.” Brief for the Tokyo Replay Center International Architecture Competition for Students. Archmedium, n.d. Web. 27 Apr. 2013. <<http://en.archmedium.com/Concursos/TRC/Summary.php>>.

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Nogas, Paul. “Personal Skype Interview with a Tokyo Resident.” Online interview. 20 Oct. 2012.

DESIGN: PRECEDENTS AND INITIATIVES

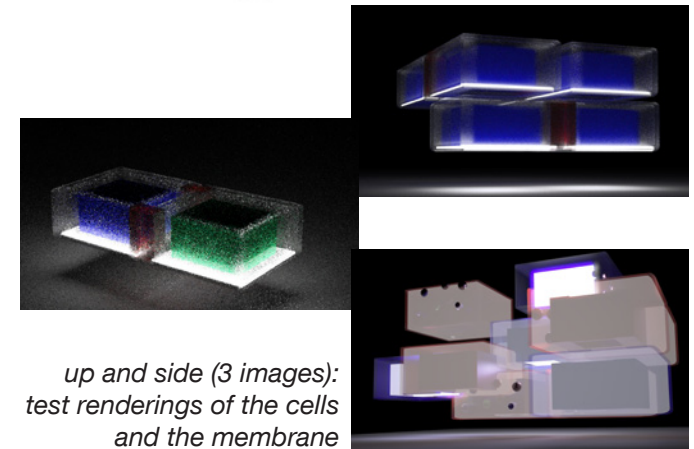
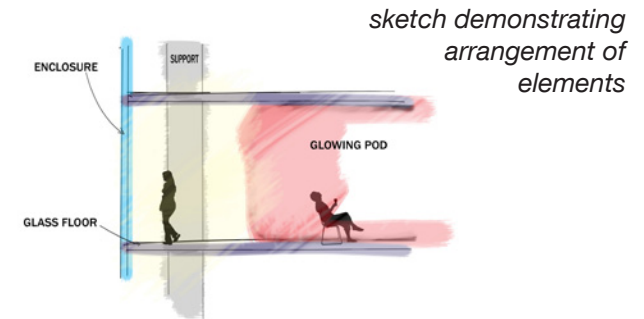
The dominant challenge of the design was fitting a program totalling approximately four thousand square meters on a narrow plot of land of fifteen meters by forty meters. The only natural solution was to stack the program. The seventy karaoke rooms and the auditorium establish almost half of the required space restrictions and in consequence will visually create the most mass. A decision was made to feature these rooms and the auditorium as a layered vibrant illuminant body that will respond to its visitors. The illumination of these spaces is parametric to the occupancy and functions associated with them. The rooms appear as state-changing cells within a membrane. The building will appear to be 'alive' as the inhibitors walk through the membrane and use the cells. Using glass for the enclosure will allow for the glowing cells to penetrate into the colourful cityscape of Akihabara, Tokyo.

The Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany is the precedent for the illuminant body. The stadium's location is in an open landscape. This lends itself to a changing appearance of the skin and enhances its attraction as a monument. The skin of the luminous body consists of large, shimmering white, diamond-shaped ETFE cushions, each of which can be illuminated separately in white, red or light blue.⁵ These colours were chosen as they represent the two local football clubs, FC Bayern München and TSV 1860. The important thing to note is that the colour of the cushions can be controlled digitally and the stadium can be easily identified. The initiative is for these two characteristics to carry over into the Tokyo Replay Center. The Tokyo Replay Center can be wrapped in high performance glass and each of the modules inside would be a single glazed box. There would be an integrated shading device such as a roller shade system with different coloured fabrics that could be lowered or raised to achieve different colours during the daytime. Colour can also be provided by LEDs focused on an oblique angle from the edge or in the frame however this will only be moderately successful in bright sunlight.⁶ Another approach would be using the Allianz Arena method and use three or five layers of ETFE films with air in between the layers to provide the appropriate insulation but still be able to let light through. The same LED frame as previously stated can be used to light the films and this membrane can last up to 30 years.⁷ Using either approach would mimic the precedent's characteristics of having a digitally controlled appearance and being easily identifiable.

⁵ "Frequently Asked Questions." Allianz Arena. Allianz Arena München Stadion GmbH, n.d. Web. 27 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.allianz-arena.de/en/service/faq/>>.

⁶ Straube, John. "Personal Interview with John Straube P.Eng." E-mail interview. 23 Apr. 2013.

⁷ Ibid

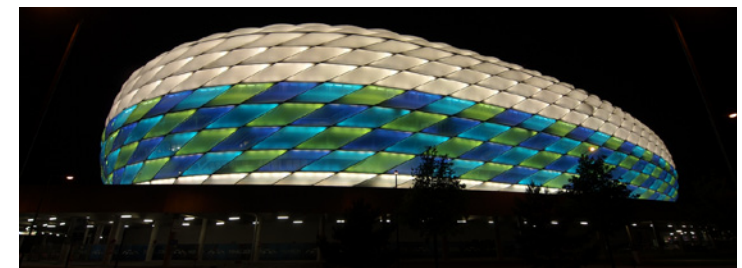


*up and side (3 images):
test renderings of the cells
and the membrane*



*right and bottom:
Allianz Arena's
vibrant skin*

*all Allianz Arena images from:
<http://www.allianz-arena.de/en/>*



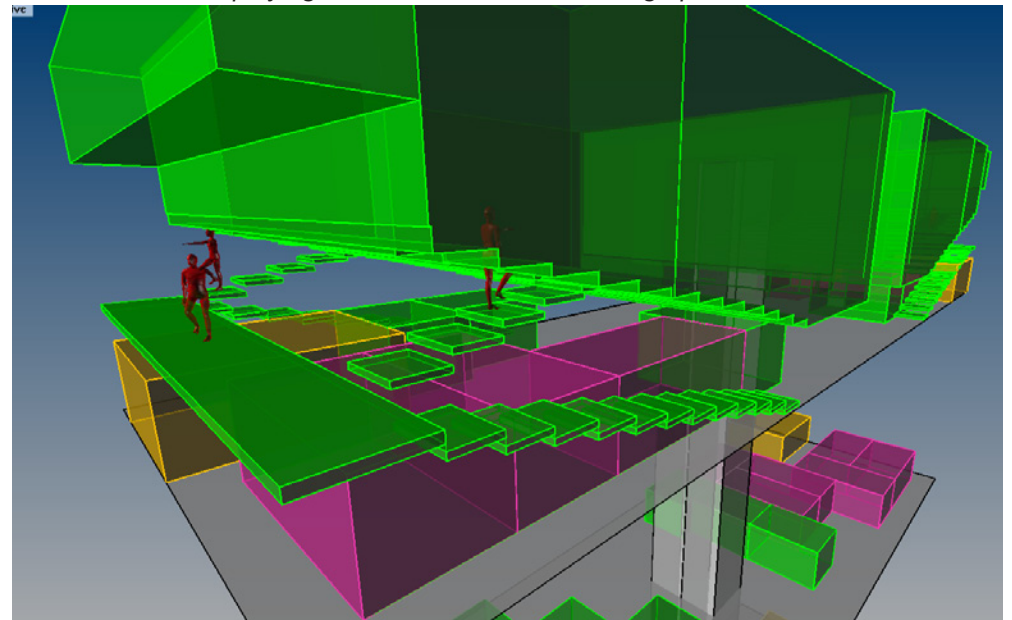
The IFC Center in Greenwich Village, New York City is the precedent for the auditorium. The IFC Center is advertised as the ultimate entertainment space for New Yorkers seeking out the best in independent film.⁸ The Center features new independent foreign films, documentaries, cult movies, short movies, and a gallery that exhibits vintage movie posters from around the globe. During the last four months of 2012, the IFC Center held a “Studio Ghibli Retrospective” that played all the movies created from Studio Ghibli. This Center is an appropriate precedent for the competition design since it manages to function as a cinema but also appear as an organization that focuses on targeting specific audiences. The auditorium in the Tokyo Replay Center will function in the same method. The cinema will feature independent films that specifically target the otaku people visiting Akihabara. The competition design will have two auditoriums to attract more visitors and the program space is achieved by sharing the same wall on opposite sides for projections. There is a core entrance in between the auditoriums for wheelchair accessibility as well as a characteristic staircase that leads directly to the back of the auditoriums where the seating is situated. The staircase also acts as a lookout point into the streets of Akihabara. This decision was made due to the fact that there will always be circulation through that space to access the auditoriums and this lookout method displays the visitors while simultaneously being observed as building activity by the pedestrians of Tokyo.

street view of the IFC Center in New York City



IFC Center image taken from: <http://www.ifccenter.com/about/>

3D Model displaying the feature staircase leading up to one of the auditoriums

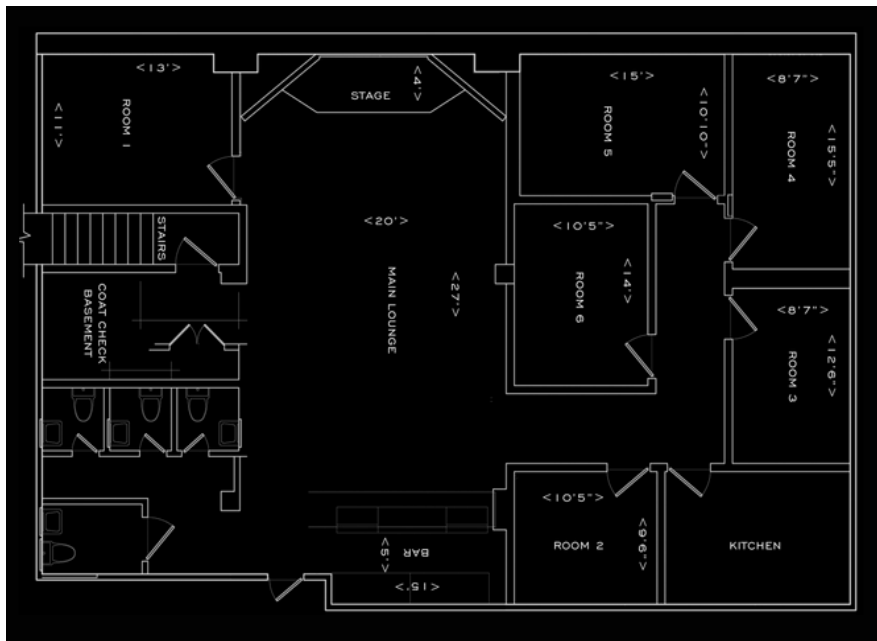


⁸ "About - IFC Center." IFC Center RSS. AMC Networks, n.d. Web. 27 Apr. 2013.
<<http://www.ifccenter.com/about/>>.

Pulse Karaoke Lounge in New York's Times Square is the precedent for the karaoke rooms. The karaoke lounge include private suites with LED lighting systems that sync with every song played in the room.⁹ The rooms are used for multi-media presentations, product launch events, after-work events, parties, team-building events, recreational events such as karaoke and video games, and fundraisers. The plan of the Pulse Karaoke Lounge communicates a main lounge area as soon as you enter the establishment through the stairs and private rooms leading from the main lounge through a narrow corridor. This same arrangement translates into the Tokyo Replay Center. Each floor that contains these private multi-media rooms will have a main lounge which will be the first space that is entered as visitors exit the core circulation. These main lounges will offer bar services that can extend into the private rooms for patrons. The features of Pulse Karaoke Lounge are suitable for the design competition as the otaku people will have freedom to use the rooms for any of their common interests as well as maintaining the appearance or "product" of being in a sentient cell as the colours of the room conform to their functions.



top: main lounge used as karaoke space
bottom: private room used for video games



left: plan of Pulse Karaoke Lounge



bottom: main lounge interior displaying LED features



⁹ Pulse Karaoke Plan taken from: <http://www.pulsekaraoke.com/why-pulse/venue-specs/>
all other images of Pulse Karaoke taken from: <http://www.pulsekaraoke.com/>

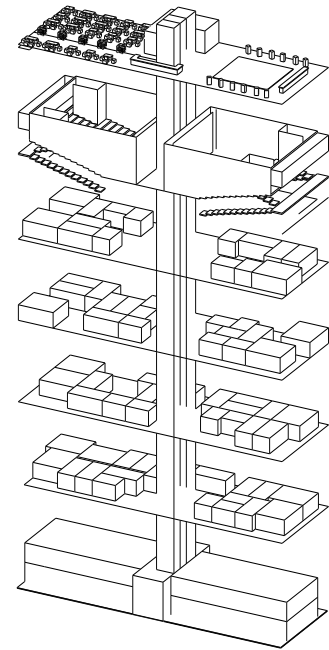
⁸ "Venue Specs - Pulse Karaoke." Pulse Karaoke. Pulse Karaoke Lounge and Suites, 2012. Web. 27 Apr. 2013. <<http://www.pulsekaraoke.com/why-pulse/venue-specs/>>.

The retail spaces that sell anime, film, and video games are located at the ground level with a double height structure. It is common practice to do so as retail experiences most success in areas with the most public circulation. The double height structure allows for a more inviting and permeable public space for customers.

The realization of the multi-purpose room and the restaurant is a design approach that is based on program. The multi-purpose area is associated with the café and restaurant space located at the top floor. These spaces are situated beside each other so they can utilize the same kitchen and storage spaces. Furniture can also be easily manoeuvrable in between spaces. Weddings can be held with the dinner following in the next room. An area of the restaurant can also be sectioned off to feature a patio space that will be exposed to the sky since it is on the top floor.

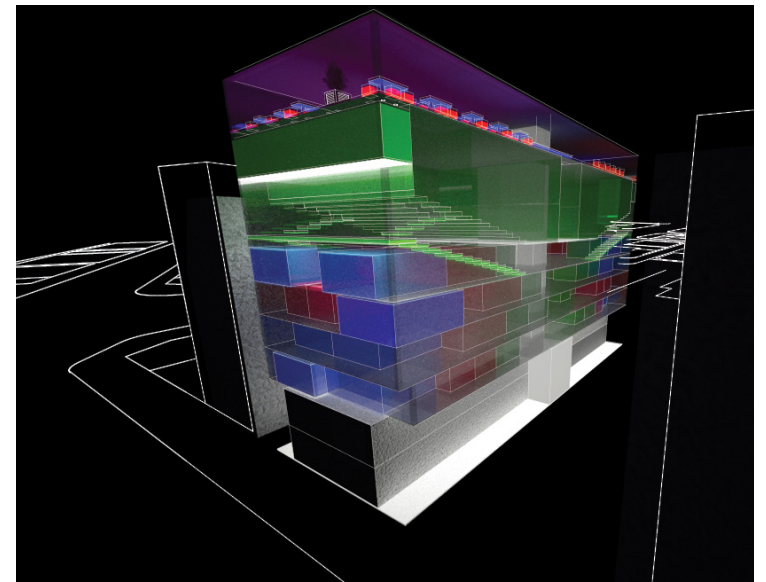
CONCLUSION

All the proposed initiatives form a resulting system that is the final design of the competition. Appropriate precedents were used to create a project that is identifiable as a “product”, an enclosure that is considered high performance and digitally controllable, auditoriums that fit the lifestyles of the otaku people, and private multi-media rooms that respond to its inhabitants. The Tokyo Replay Center functions as a leisure center for people interested in technology and entertainment and effectively mirrors the cityscape of Akihabara, Tokyo.



stretched axonometric presenting each floor

*rendering of the schematic design for the
Tokyo Replay Center*



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