

## architecture 384

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### raresiting | springbank commons competition

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### research essay

patrick burke



“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.*

Despite the apparent divergence between the proposal's investigation and matbuilding, the proposal for the Musagetes and SiG joint initiative was borne primarily from the work of Alison and Peter Smithson, and Team 10. The proposal, intended to be a context for change, is a framework for the institutions, the public, and the landscape to succeed and appropriate. The flexible basis for this framework was the influential work of the Smithsons and Team 10, where five considerations are paramount: clustering, repetition and variation, controlled space, pedestrian infrastructure, and flexibility.<sup>1</sup> These considerations have been explored in this proposal across various scales.

The main pedestrian corridor aligns with the length of the building, while minor corridors [dashed] perpendicular to this axis address specific, and sometimes controlled, programmatic requirements. An outdoor corridor [solid] also intersects the major axis at the west of the building, positioning the public program against the primary access points to the rare conservation site (figure one).

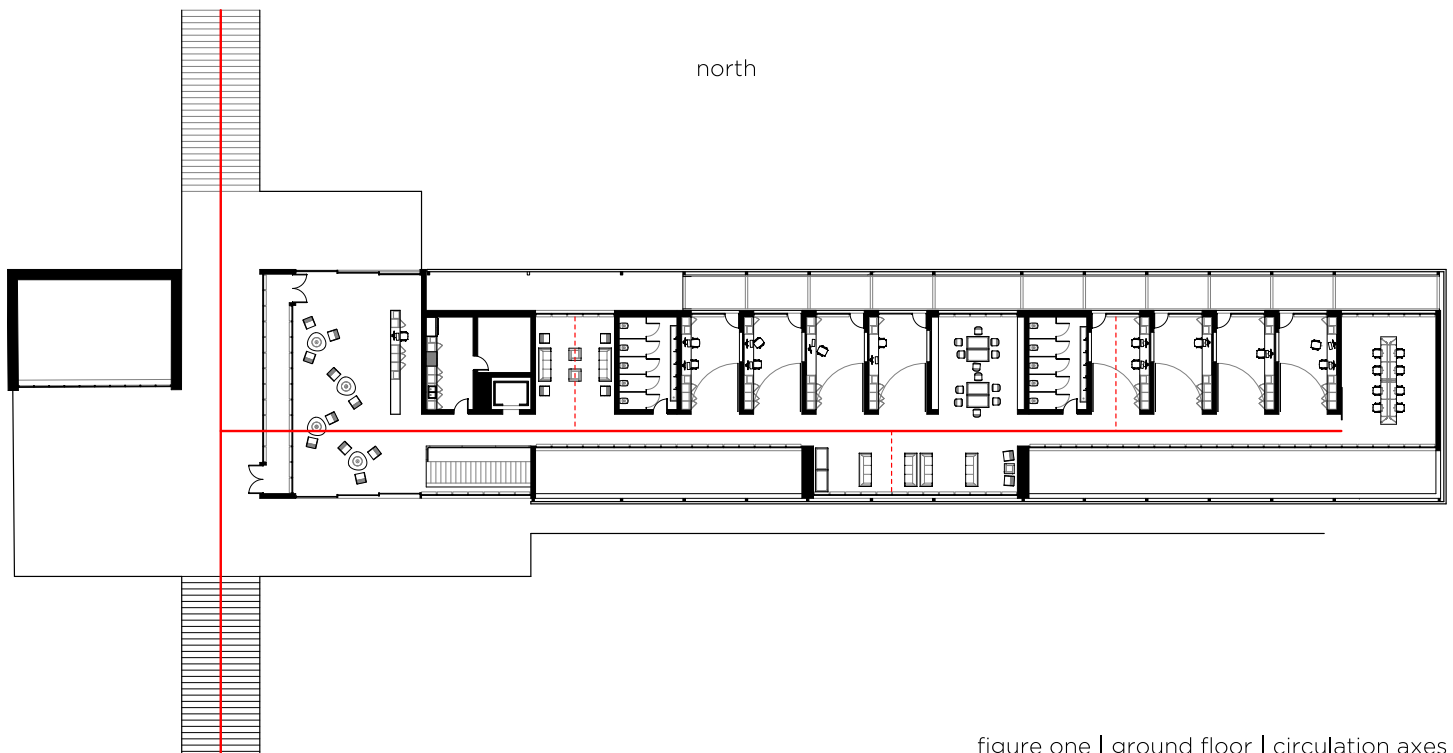


figure one | ground floor | circulation axes

This corridor configuration facilitates the interconnectivity sought by Alison Smithson, through the intermittent clustering of offices amongst the group program (figure two).<sup>2</sup>

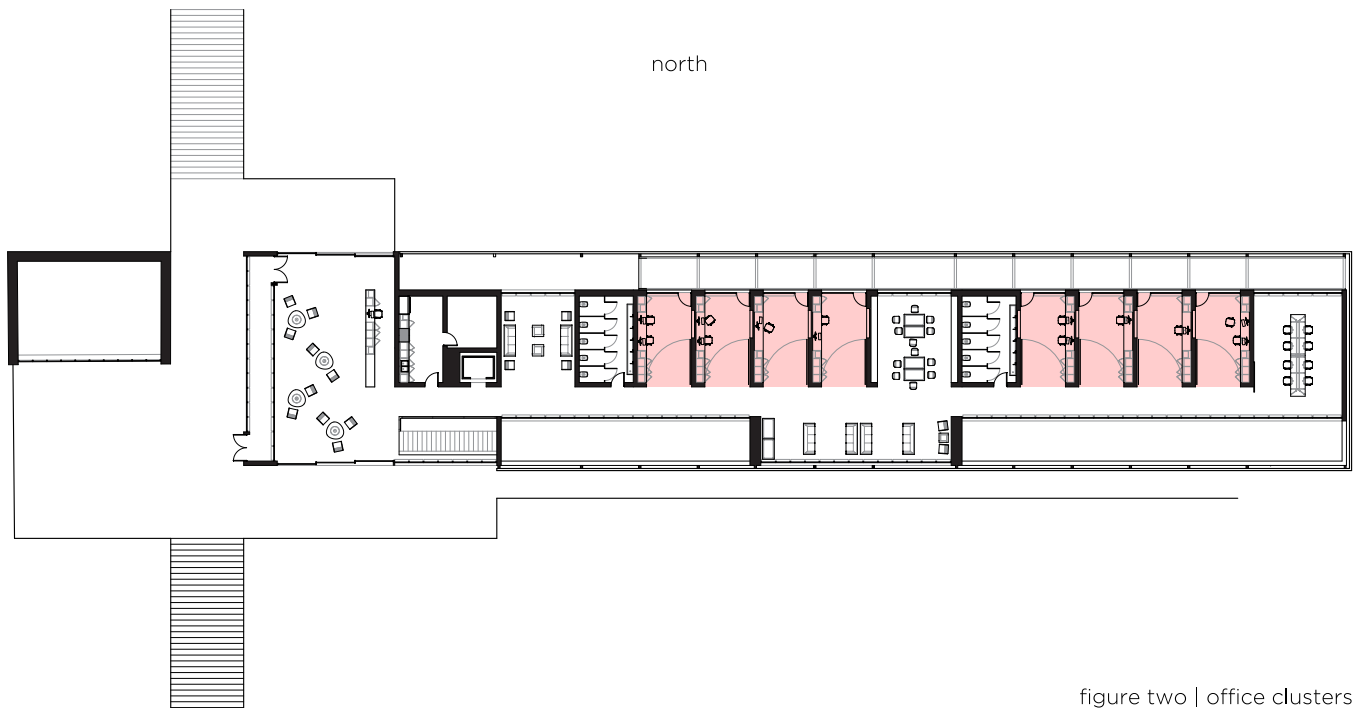


figure two | office clusters

The staff lounges, computing stations, meeting rooms, and washroom facilities are shared between Musagetes and SiG, encouraging different levels of interaction and cross-disciplinary collaboration. The lounge and café at the west end of the building are shared between the general public and the staff.

Space sharing reinforces the social nature of these spaces, tying pedestrian infrastructure into the flexibility of these temporal spaces. Variation and flexibility can be found in the dimension and shape of the group spaces. The smaller group spaces anticipate brief, intimate activities: printing, a coffee, or quick collaboration; whereas the large group spaces accommodate more public gestures: meetings, public charrettes, group work, and communal dining (figure three).

Richard Florida's Rise of the Creative Class was an important driver in the sociological de-

mands of this modern workspace. With the support functions in the public areas of the building, the office space is open to be adaptively reused and personalized: accommodating various semi-private functions.

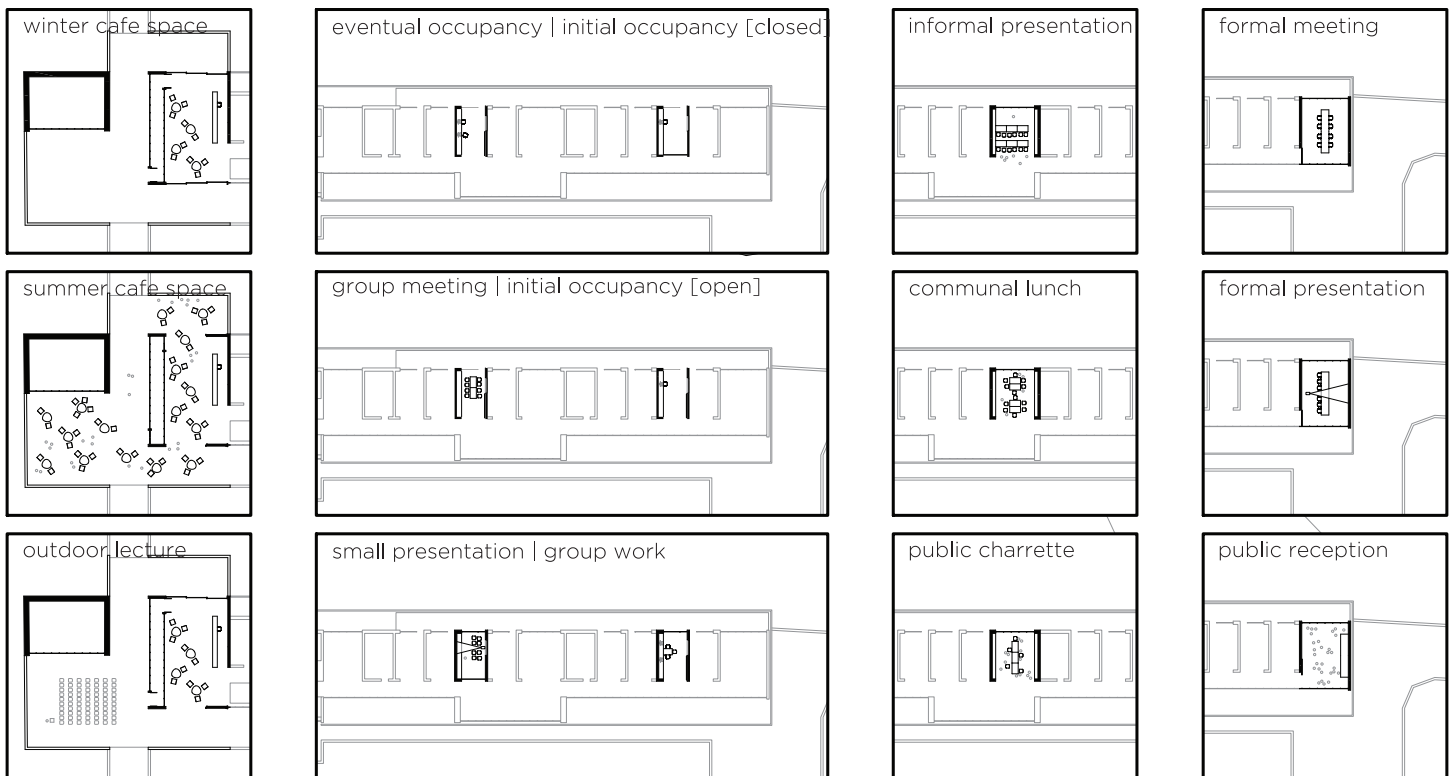


figure three | occupancy variations

The office space offers the occupant full control over his or her environment. Each office is framed with two parallel walls that are perpendicular to the main corridor. The north side of the office space is glazed, with individual access to the outdoors and natural ventilation. Largely, the glass wall on the south side of the office will be left open, as frequent passage through and in front of this threshold would encourage spontaneous interaction. If the office program changes, the wall can be closed to accommodate small presentations, meetings, and group work.

In clustering the offices, unity and logistical repetition contrasts the opportunity for programmatic variation depending on the occupants desired use (figure three). Similar to the

repeated office units, the serial repetition of wooden louvers on the façade unifies the composition from the street while framing interior views.

Variation and flexibility was also drawn from the work of Ryue Nishizama and Kazuyo Sejima, and their office SANAA. The Moriyama House has fragmented the program into several small structures, all formally repetitious. Nishizama strategically clustered the buildings to provide flexibility: allowing the client to occupy or rent various configurations of the buildings (figure 4).



figure 4 | moriyama house

Ultimately, the occupants will succeed and appropriate the offices to their interests in much the same way that the building as a whole will mold to the ambitions of Musagetes and SiG. Similar to the rare Conservation Area's approach to environmental restoration, letting nature take its course, this proposal is a framework that cultivates change and innovation.

## Works Cited

- <sup>1</sup> Smithson, Alison. "How to Recognise and Read Mat-Building." AD, 1974: 573-582.
- <sup>2</sup> Smithson, Alison. "How to Recognise and Read Mat-Building." AD, 1974: 573-582.

## List of Illustrations

Figure 4

<sup>1</sup> Moriyama House. Flickr. 2009. 21 March 2009. <[http://farm1.static.flickr.com/207/500831379\\_11662a59a4.jpg](http://farm1.static.flickr.com/207/500831379_11662a59a4.jpg)>.



## **Works Referenced**

Florida, Richard. The Rise of the Creative Class. New York: Basic, 2002.

Hirsch, Nikolaus. On Boundaries. New York: Lukas + Sternberg, 2007.

Rubio, Agustin. SANAA Houses. New York: Actar/Musac, 2007.

Smithson, Alison. "How to Recognise and Read Mat-Building." AD, 1974: 573-582.