

Three Projects

Smith-Miller Hawkinson Architects

Our design process involves the quantitative analysis of the programmatic, qualified by critical thought. For us, the design process is not only the identification of quantities and spatial adjacencies in building form but also the definition of a critical position, derived from cultural and material context.

Each project included in this essay was shaped by our interest in determining a referential set of design criteria for the design process.

In the three institutional design competitions, The Museum of Women's History, The New York Public Library Main Circulating Branch, and the Colorado Springs School, we considered the cultural and physical contexts of the Institutions, not as fixed and finite but as changing over time. These contexts or environments solicited specific architectural responses, which in turn brought about particular and often unfamiliar architectural form.



22 *New York Public Library*



Atrium, New York Public Library

New York Public Library

Circulating Branch: 5th Avenue and 40th Street
New York, New York

The project addresses vertical space and building surface in the mid-Manhattan public realm. Typically, the public realm is confined to the horizontal ground floors of buildings. Our proposal develops a new programmatic form of library organization.

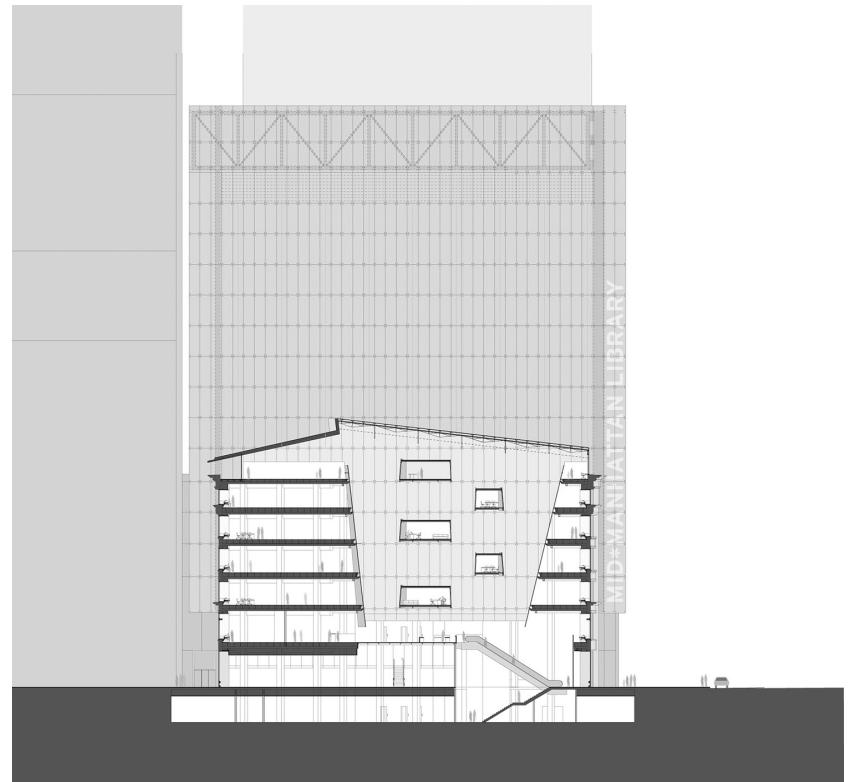
The ground floor is stretched vertically so that as a visitor proceeds up (and throughout) the building, he/she encounters circulation and gathering spaces that define a new type of library. This idea is achieved through the material development of what we identified as an intelligent skin; intelligent in that its surface modulates complex climatic conditions, provides an information

display surface, and orients the public circulation through the building while providing light and views to the city beyond.

On the lower floors arrival is always central to the each floor and adjacent to the light-filled transparent walls of the "Lantern." The Information Commons is located at the arrival and distribution point for each Library Department. These animated places are points of orientation and exchange linked by shortcut stairs or bridges across the Lantern to related quiet areas of collection and seating. The Lantern and the Information Commons act as focal points and points of connection that become way finding devices for the entire building.



Cross Section



Longitudinal Section

Museum of Women's History

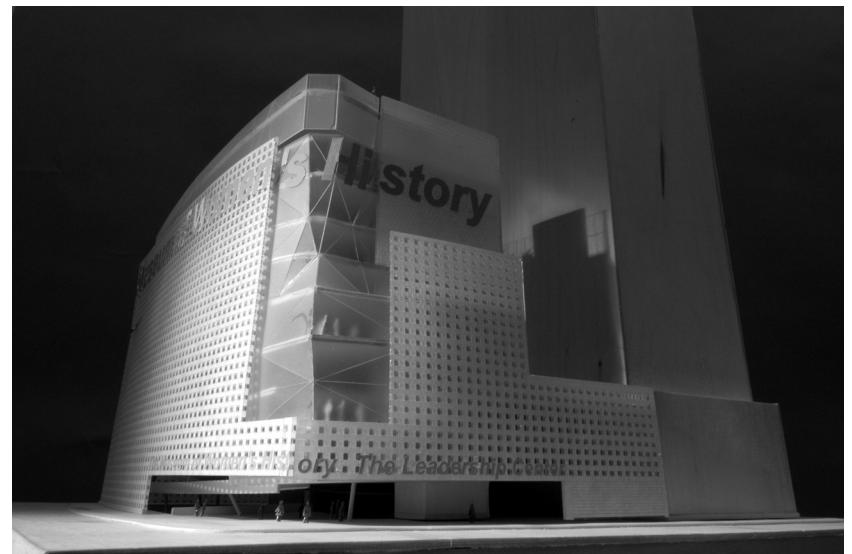
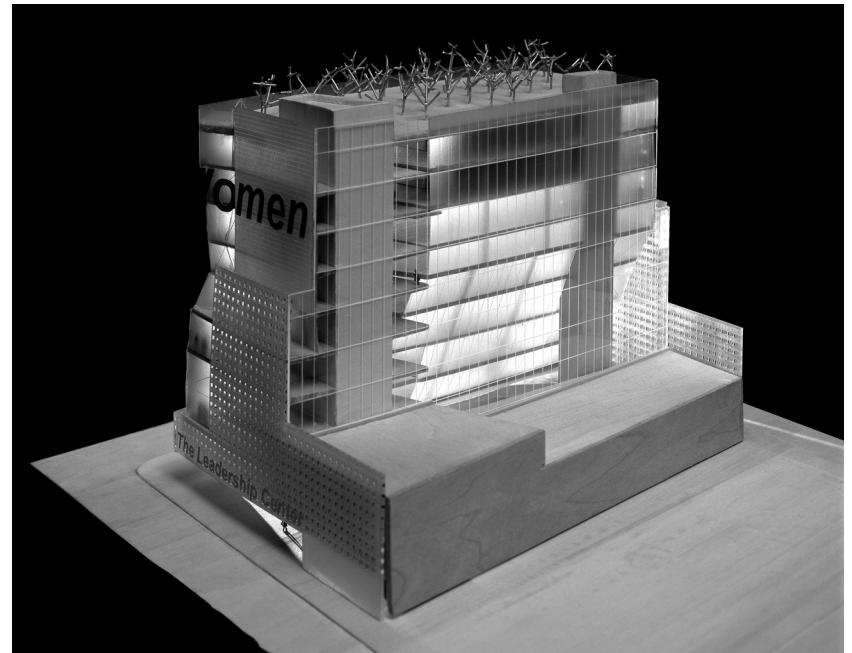
Battery Park City
New York, New York

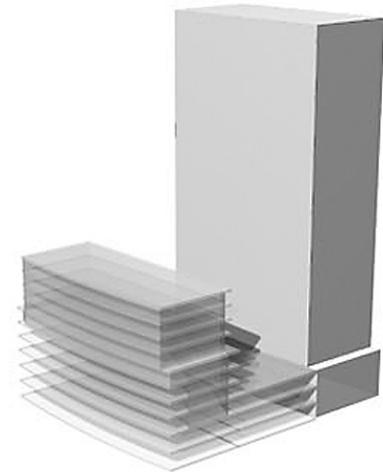
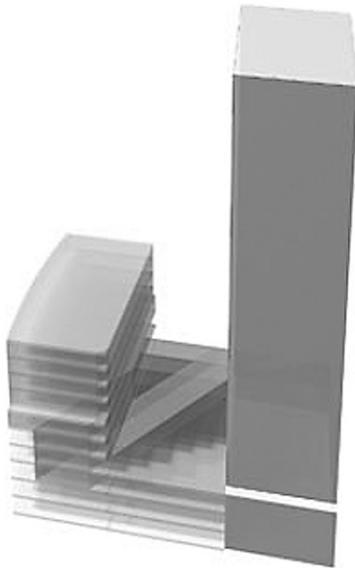
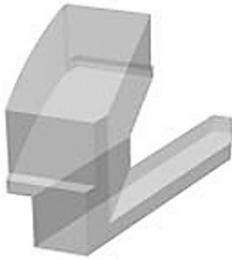
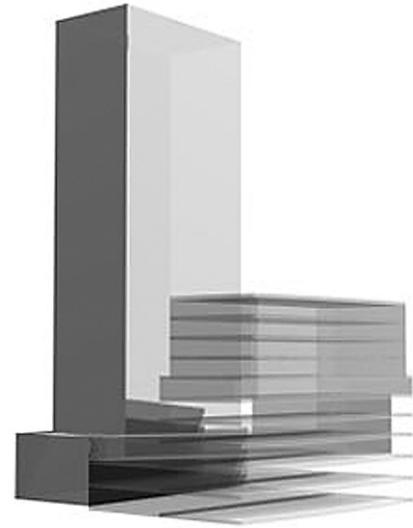
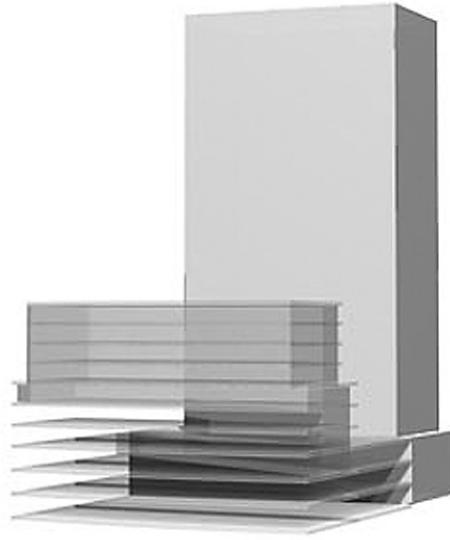
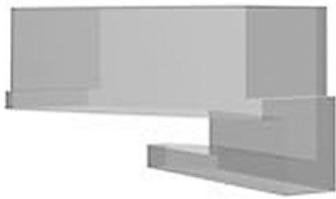
The Battery Park City Authority sees the Museum of Women—the Leadership Center, along with other projects planned for the area, as part of the recovery of lower Manhattan after the events of September 11. It is interesting to us (and not only rhetorically) that our collective belief in establishing an architectural and institutional ground for women's lives, past and future, now coincides with the urgent need to rebuild a devastated ground in New York City. In ways we could not have predicted, the Museum of Women—the Leadership Center, has become an architectural project with both an institutional and an urban mission. The ground we started with is now more complex.

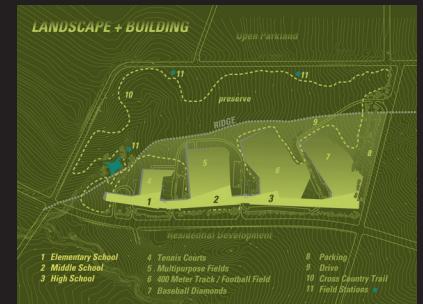
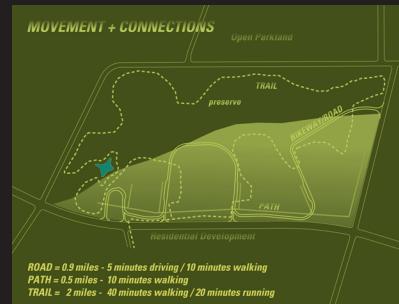
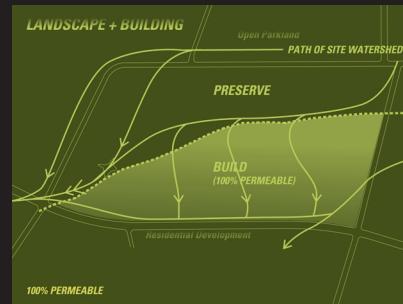
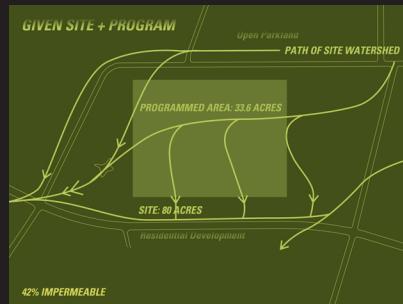
The building is two volumes, one inside the other. The inside volume is glass and the outside is, perhaps, perforated stone or metal. Like a thermos liner, the inside volume contains the museum space proper. The outside volume protects and veils the interior volume, except at the southwest corner, where the interior glass volume breaks through. Beginning at floor seven, where a large truss structurally supports the glass volume below it, the two volumes become one. The first floor of Museum is a large public space with an auditorium below street level.

The second through seventh floors are archival, leadership center, and exhibition spaces. The eighth floor is mechanical. The ninth and tenth floors are administrative spaces. Cutting through these floors are performance and meeting spaces, gardens, cafes and restaurants, bookstores, resting spaces, services. The roof will be an orchard, or a wind garden, or a solar garden.

The visitor enters the Museum by passing through the exterior shell into the glass interior. One passes from outside to inside. Throughout the museum, the visitor passes back and forth between outside and inside. The outside and the inside remain unresolved at the level of the building's meaning in order to keep the building open. This openness is maintained throughout by means of exchanges between inside and outside spaces: interiors subsisting inside other interiors, perforations in solid surfaces, transparency, opacity, places of rest, changes in point of view, changes in program.







Colorado Springs Pre-K-12 School

Colorado Springs, Colorado

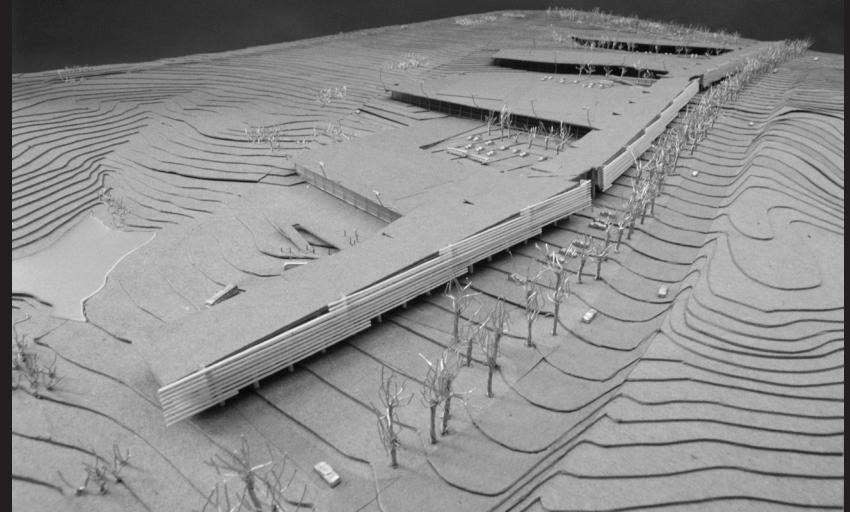
Our proposal integrates, interprets and preserves the remarkable landscapes and ecologies of the Front Range and recommends a design sensitive to the social contract of education in that context. Located at the northernmost edge of the district, and seen as a catalyst for planned residential, commercial and leisure activities, the new buildings consolidate their program areas in the interest of integration within the site.

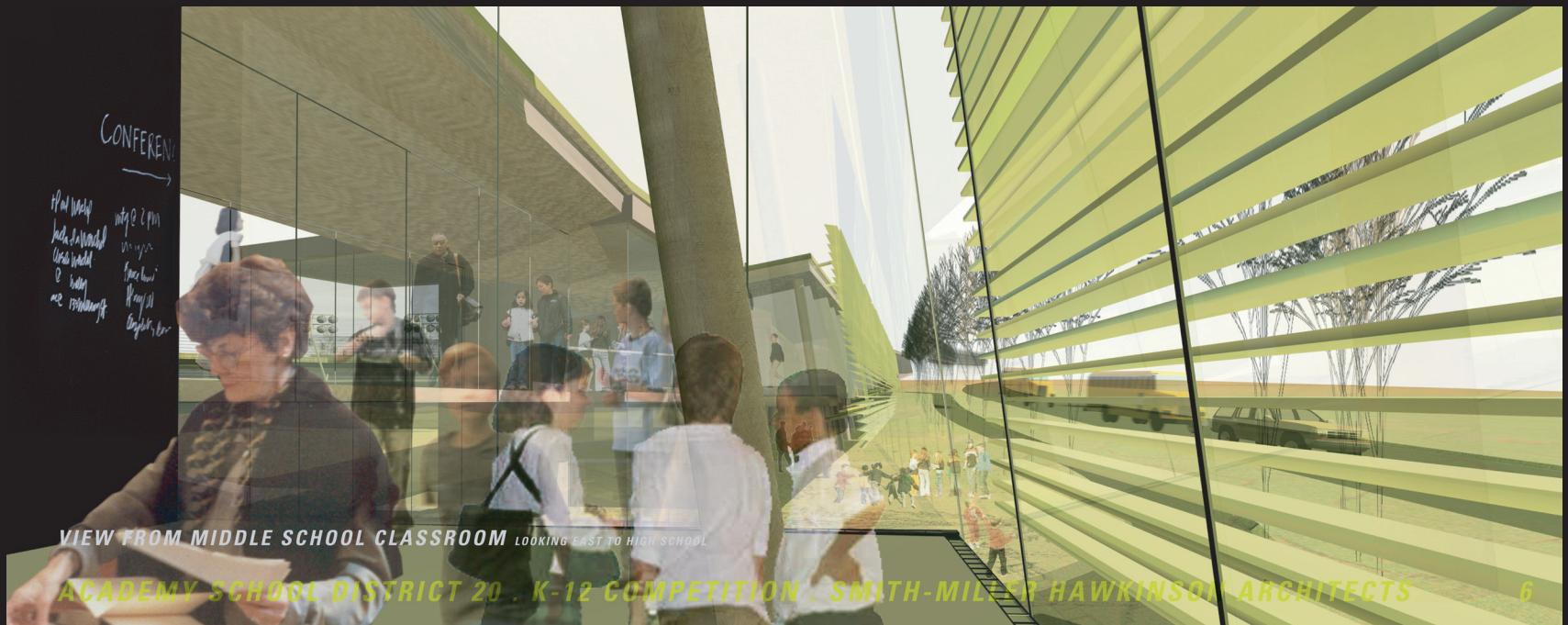
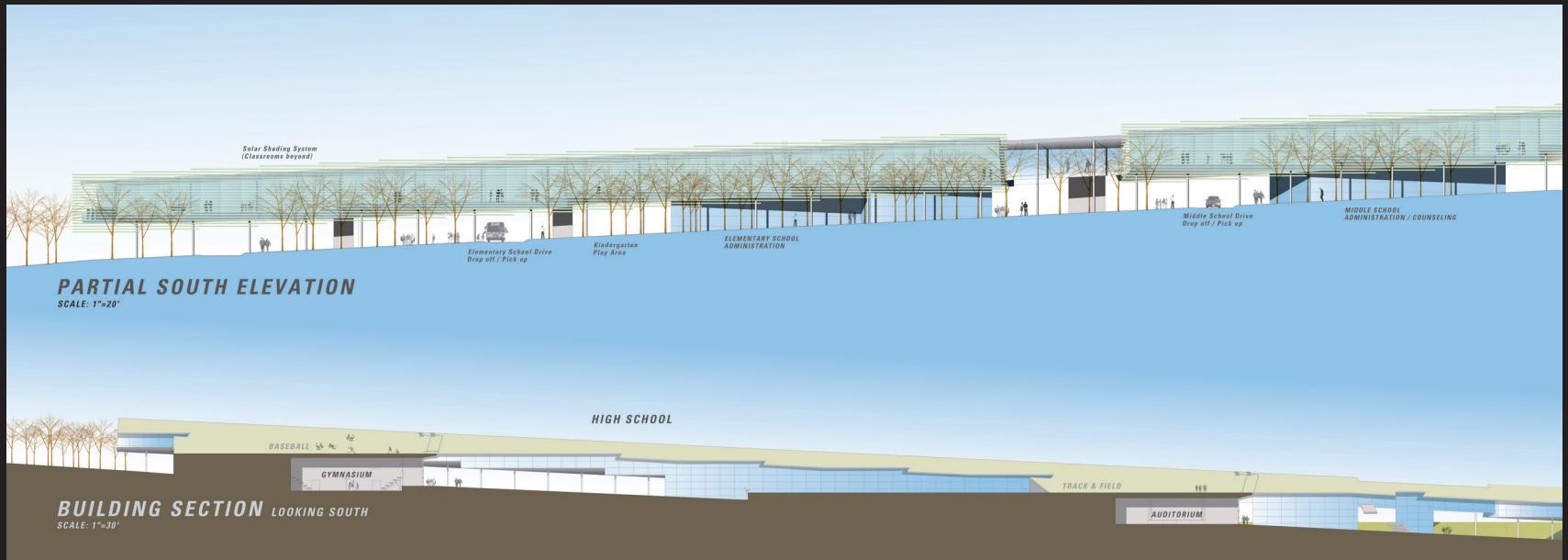
The site marks the point where the suburban meets plains grassland to the north. Preservation of the grasslands in its natural state is at the heart of our project. By folding playing field over building area, classroom over common facility, site occupation is limited to areas south and east of an existing ridge. This allows the north half of the site, an area we are calling the Preserve, to remain unbuilt as open plains grassland, montane shrubland, and a low land riparian ecosystem at the foot of the site. Importantly, site watersheds are managed by design resulting in 100% permeability and 0% discharge.

Stitched to the site by pedestrian path, bike and automobile access, the elementary, middle and high schools are joined along the southern edge of the site, offering protection from the elements while presenting a common façade for the academic community. Joined by design, circulation and site economy, each school has a separate and distinct entry, dedicated drop-off areas, staff and visitor parking, and in the case of the high school, a student parking area.

Each drop-off area is located in a unique courtyard, specifically linked to each school. Classrooms, outdoor and indoor recreational spaces, administrative offices and school facilities all open onto these courtyards, which, while protected from the elements, can be easily supervised and provide a local sense of community for each.

The building and outdoor recreational areas terrace down the site toward the west, linking all program elements together and to the important ground, the Preserve, at the north side of the site. The Preserve organizes the overall site and establishes its ecology. It is an educational, recreational and natural system integrally tied to the project's form and operation. By accommodating their arrangement and relationships to the existing topography, each building's form is shaped by site. The natural slope of the land encourages universal access throughout the building. By maximizing day lighting, encouraging cross-ventilation and using local materials, building systems and materials follow the direction established by site and context.





ACADEMY SCHOOL DISTRICT 20 . K-12 COMPETITION . SMITH-MILLEN HAWKINSON ARCHITECTS 6