

selected design research 2011-2016

Levent Kara, Ph.D., RA

Presented and Exhibited at
the International "Station Centraal"
Symposium, May 04-05 2013
Exhibition, May 04-31 2013
Istanbul & Ankara, Turkiye



USF Honors College
Tampa \ Florida, USA

2016



Kuscuburun Rail Station
Izmir, Turkiye
the American Institute of Architects
2013 Design Award
Tampa Bay Chapter

2013



Terra Vita Residence
Istanbul, Turkiye

2012



Terra Soleil Residence
Istanbul, Turkiye

2012



USF Sun Dome Addition
Tampa \ Florida, USA

2012



USF Cardiovascular Institute
Tampa \ Florida, USA

2011



USF INTO Center
Tampa \ Florida, USA
the American Institute of Architects
2012 Design Award
Florida Chapter



2011



Presented and Exhibited at the
AIA Tampa Bay Annual Meeting
September 12, 2013
Tampa / FL, USA



USF Z-Bridge
Tampa \ Florida, USA
the American Institute of Architects
2012 Design Award
Tampa Bay Chapter

2011



Museum of Troia
Canakkale, Turkiye
the American Institute of Architects
2012 Design Award
Florida Chapter

2011





* Presented to the university administration on July 17, 2016. You can view a fly-through at <https://vimeo.com/171175456> [password: etude]

USF Honors College, 2016

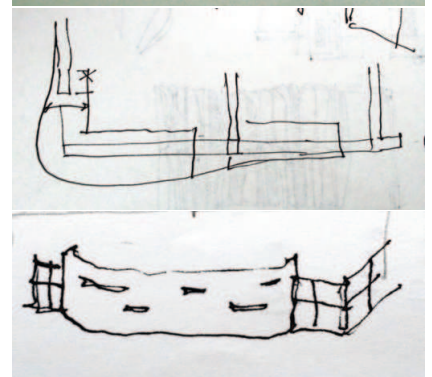
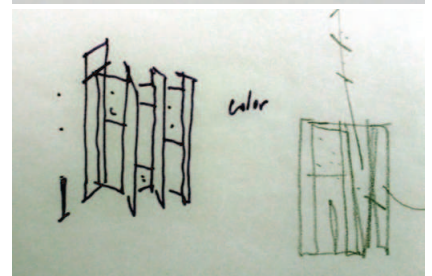
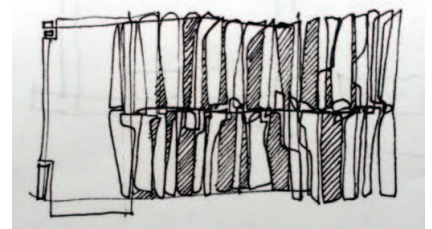
University of South Florida Tampa Campus, Tampa, FL
6000 m2 mixed-use education building, design development.
Client: USF Office of the President.

This design is for the new home of USF Honors College: Honors Colleges are gaining prominence within universities nation-wide as centers of cutting-edge higher education. The Honors College equips gifted students with critical thinking and leadership skills that bridge between and go beyond various traditional academic disciplines. Not only are they becoming important nodes in the recruiting apparatuses of universities, with the close-knit educational environment they offer, Honors Colleges more and more shape the intellectual outlook of the institutions they are part of.

The design responds to the challenge of developing a non-traditional education environment by offering a wide range of possibilities for formal and non-formal social and educational interaction. Comprised of a diagram of three bars around a main vertical section, the proposal creates a hierarchically clear distribution of programmatic elements. While the bars themselves house formal spaces such as classrooms and administration offices, the main section houses social spaces designed for communal events, interactive informal study spaces and group and individual study areas. The main sectional space is defined by a play of translucency and transparency with varying degrees of enclosure. The rigidity of the three bar diagram is broken with multiple autonomous volumetric objects that help shape a fluid interior with a multiplicity of scales calibrated for different degrees of social and experiential encounter. Spaces that cut thorough the vertical space create a dynamic interplay of visibility and movement that contributes to the "tight-knit intellectual community" of the institution defined by "intellectual curiosity" and "communication".

Anchoring the North East corner of a new residential and social complex on the northern edge of USF Tampa Campus, the building is situated at the intersection of two pedestrian axes, thus the ground level opens to a public plaza and green space that pulls the campus into the building. A plastic vertical datum created by a dynamic wall section creates the entry along with a grand stair that pushes out the envelope. This dynamic interaction hints at the public character of the ground level that houses a main event space and lounge areas. The openness of the ground level emanates into the main section and characterize the social and intellectual significance of the Honors College with an intricate play of scales, volumes, and surfaces.

In addition to its institutional and social proposition, the building speaks to the heritage of Florida architecture by its elevated mass, a perforated envelope system that shades the building while enabling control over degrees of transparency and visibility, a shaded roof terrace that allows for unobstructed campus and city views, and the North light that fills its main vertical space through large light wells and a highly transparent North facade.





Kuscuburun Rail Station, 2013

Izmir, Turkiye

3500 m2 local rail station, design and construction.

Client: Izmir Metropolitan Municipality.

Completed in 2014

Received *The American Institute of Architects Tampa Bay Design Awards, Honor Award in 2013*

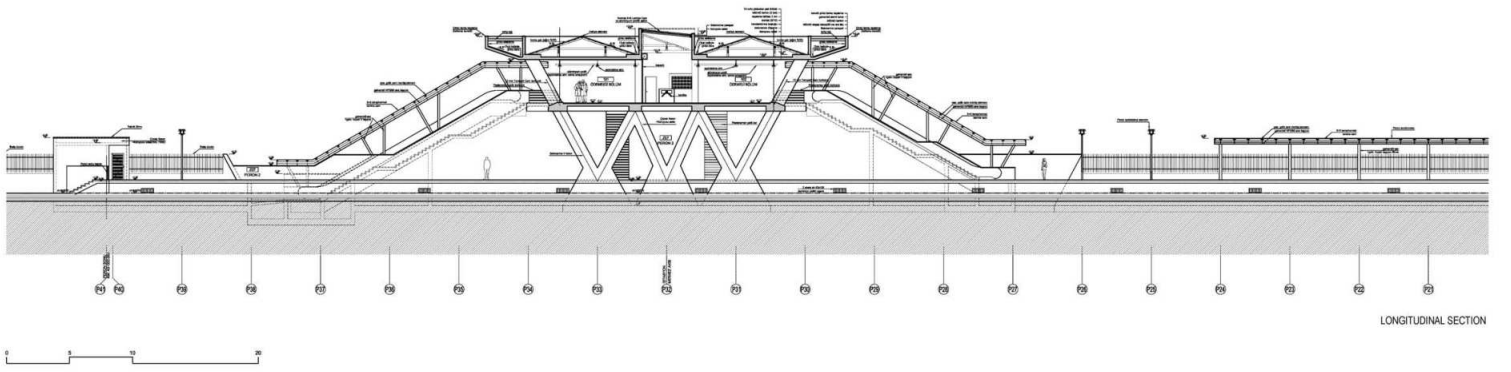
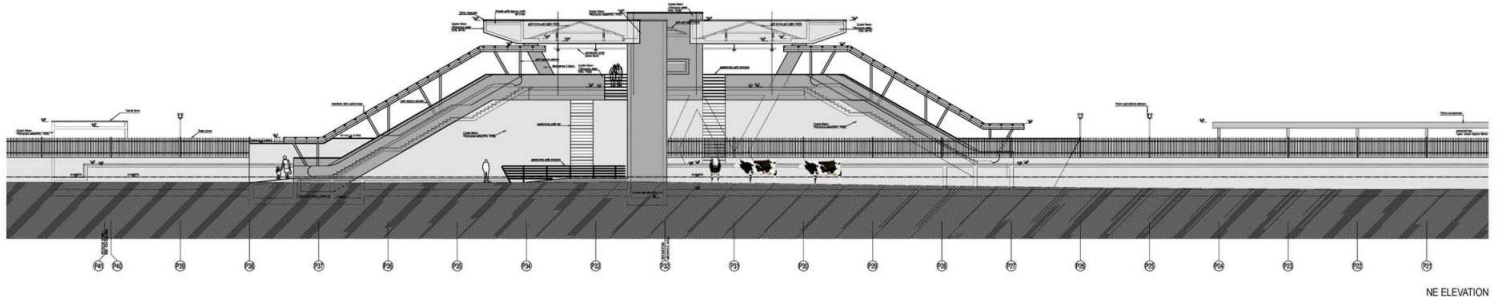
Invited presentation *at the international "Station Centraal" Symposium, May 4-6, 2013, Istanbul, Turkiye.*

Kuscuburun Station is located at about 2 km SW of Kuscuburun village on a remote rural extension of the Izmir Commuter Train System in Turkey. Currently, the station site is surrounded by agricultural fields and a few service warehouses, connected to the village only by a narrow country road.

Given the challenge to design a small local station in this context with a minimum construction budget, the main architectural decisions are formed by focusing on the volumetric and tectonic possibilities of a simple over-pass structure that punctuates within a linear repetitive system [the over-pass type was a given requirement by the client].

Three wall-like volumes running parallel to the tracks establish the anchoring structure of the station and these form the main movement systems holding the stairs, escalators, and the elevators. In order to minimize the formal clutter of the stair systems, the escalators are pushed out as cantilevering structures with a precise outline that connects to the elevator towers and sets a sense of volumetric continuity highlighting the promenade nature of the station. This system of ascending/descending arms is covered by an omnipresent hovering roof structure that determines the overall volumetry of the station structure, connecting, collecting, and disciplining the three vertical anchors as it runs perpendicular to the track system and the train movement. The main bridge deck under the roof is recessed back to achieve better shading performance while also letting the roof line reciprocate with the horizon which is the most dominant contextual measure on the site. This cascading horizontality results in a tilted column structure in one direction, further underlining the punctuality of the main volume developing out of the linear structures that constitute the open platforms of the station.

In a remote rural area, the station structure unassumingly explores a volumetry where two movement patterns intersect and tectonically affect each other in the making of a volumetric node.





Terra Vita, 2012

Umraniye, Istanbul, Turkiye

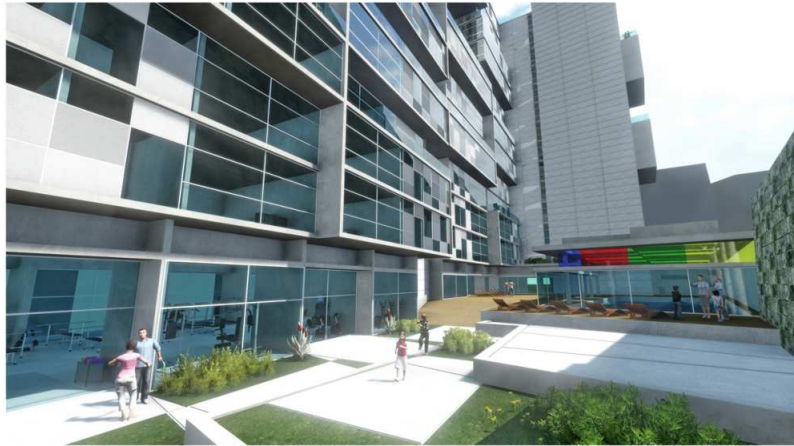
25.000 m2 residence and retail complex, design development.

Client: Aycoka Construction.

This is a housing proposal located in one of the most rapidly developing districts of Istanbul, Turkiye. Umraniye, due to its close proximity to the newly established finance center in Istanbul, started to gain attention as a case for 'urban transformation' policies that Turkey is in the process of discussing and developing. For the past couple of years, Istanbul has seen an explosion of construction activity where the old building stock is replaced with larger, mostly high-end, housing complexes. These complexes come with their own social, recreational, and retail services in the form of gated communities. As a result, urban space has been rapidly degenerating into a leftover between these isolated building complexes. While the older urban fabric had the street as an armature for a continuous social life, these new complexes form their own social domains in isolated pockets.

Our proposal starts with the possibility of keeping the street as a datum in the functioning of the housing complex. Using the slope of the site, a public podium is formed in registration with the one of the main streets in Umraniye. The apartment units establish their privacy in the section as an elevated block [rather than by a wall / fence on the ground level]. The public podium on the ground level houses retail functions and serves the city as a whole, not only to the residents of the complex. A semi-public social level separates the apartment block and the public retail level. This social level houses services like a restaurant, a gym, a pool, a childcare, etc. and is planned to be used by both the residents and non-residents. These services open either to the street with a slender terrace above the retail level or to the sunken courtyard formed by the mass of the apartment block and the retaining walls holding the slope of the terrain.

The apartment block achieves a sense of diversity and modulation that helps establish a dialogue with the surrounding city texture, keeping a sense of scale, while also allowing green spaces in the vertical. Two large urban apertures break the apartment block and introduce a notion of elevated public space. These two 'air gardens' offer playgrounds, places to 'hang out', and can also be used for social occasions by the residents, thus carrying forward the social proposition of the building into its section at an urban scale.





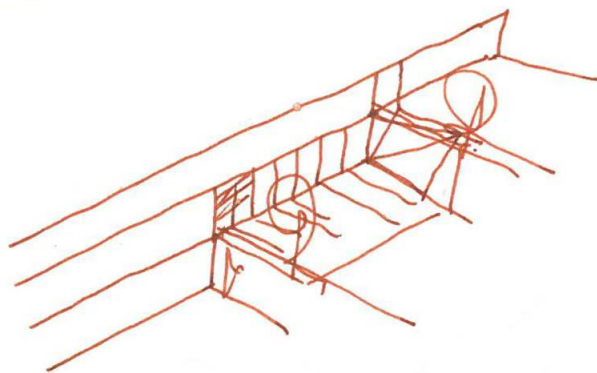
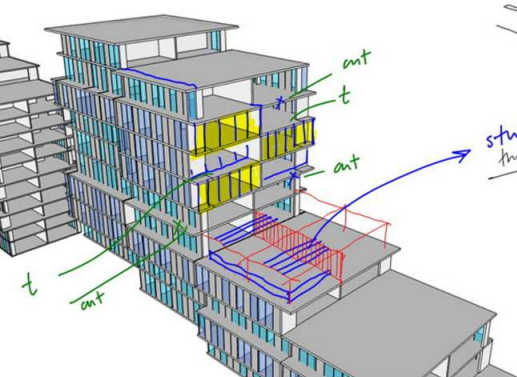
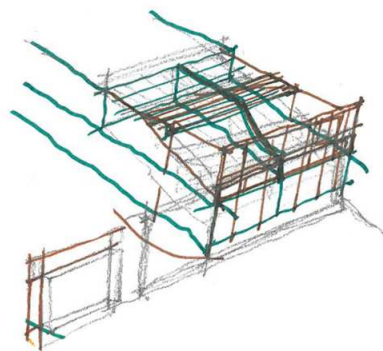
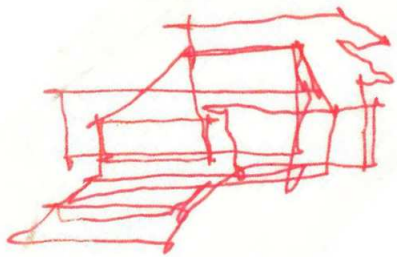
Terra Soleil Residence, Eyup - Istanbul, Turkey

30000 m2 residential with 3500 m2 social/retail space

Client: Aycoka Construction Inc.

Design Team: Irem Dökmeci, Evrim Gürel

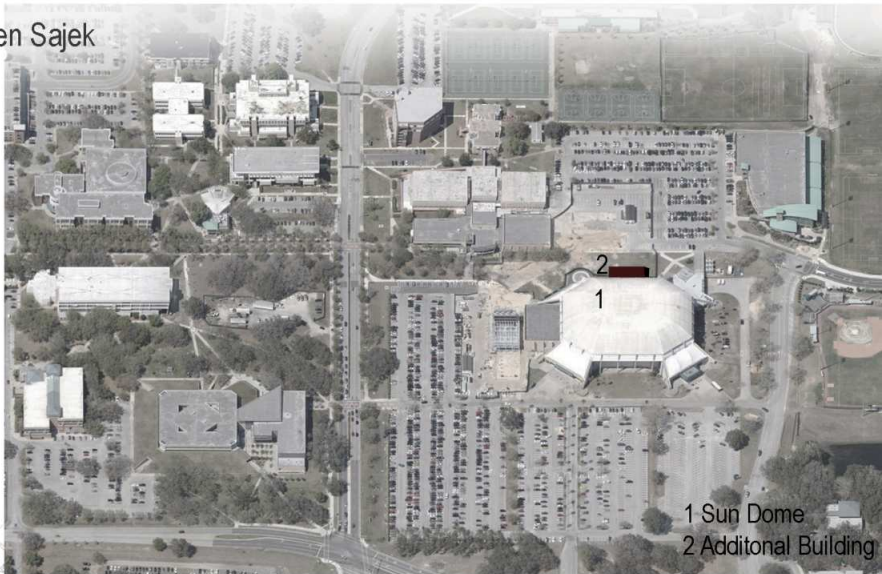
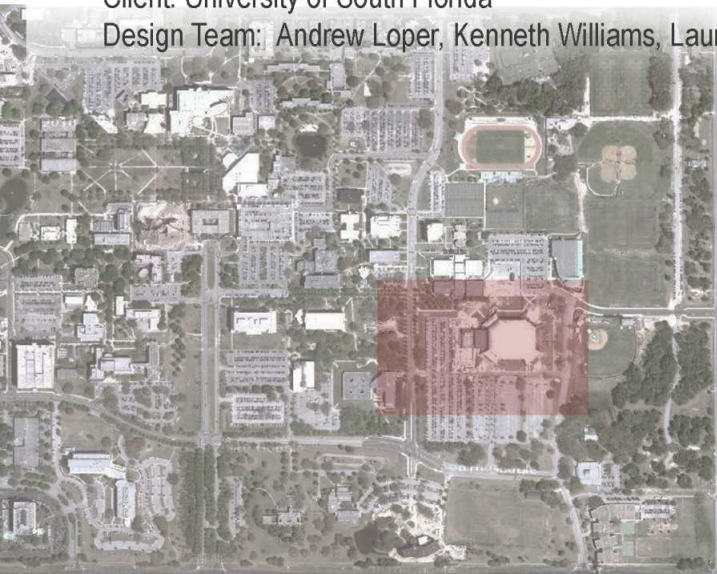




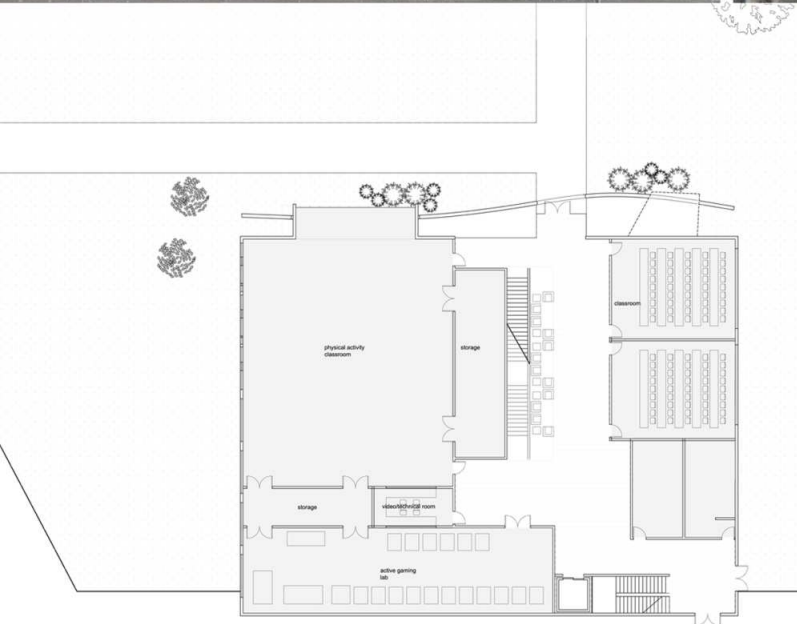


USF College of Education, Sun Dome Addition Building, University of South Florida Campus, Tampa, FL, USA
 2000 m2 education building

Client: University of South Florida
 Design Team: Andrew Loper, Kenneth Williams, Lauren Sajek



1 Sun Dome
 2 Additional Building

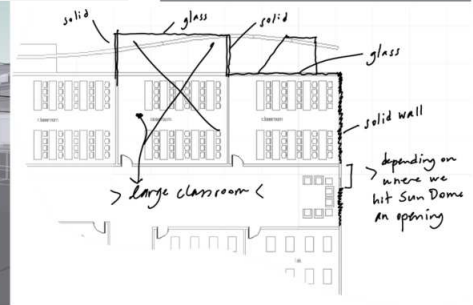
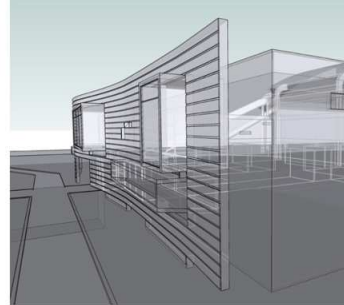
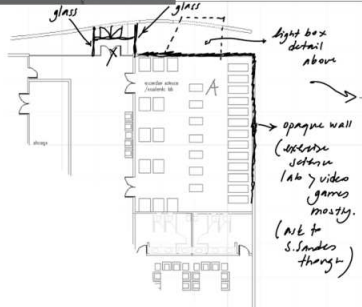
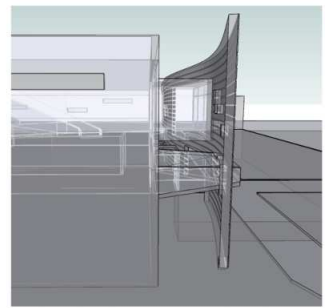
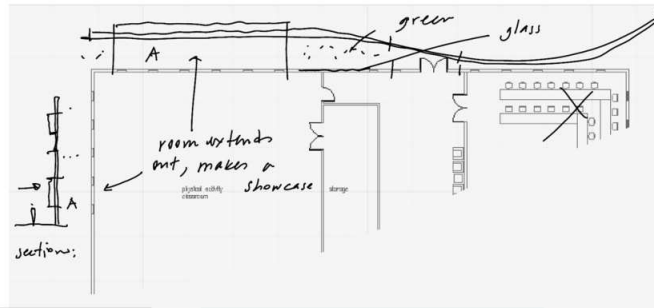


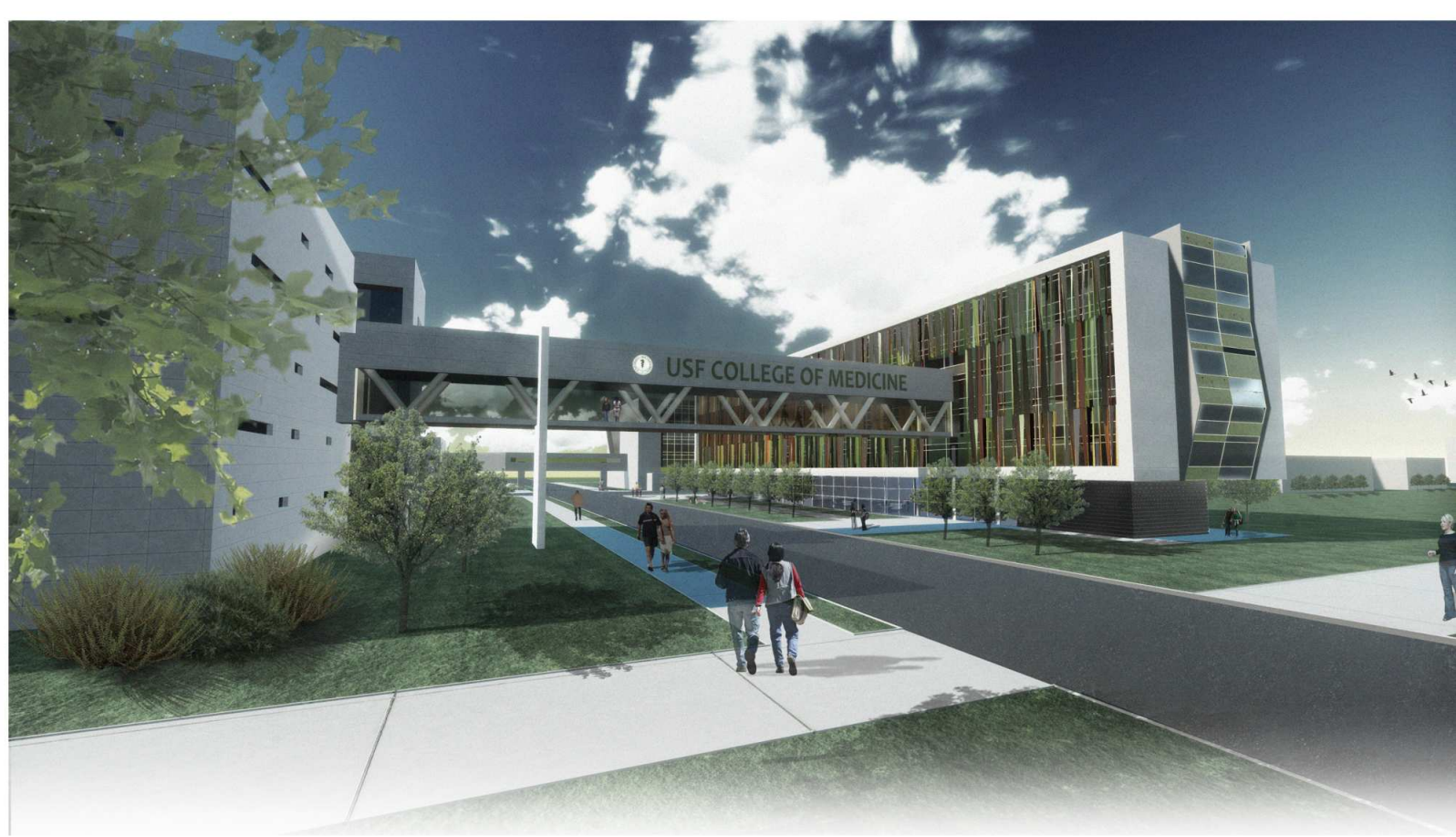
Ground Floor
 Scale: 1/200



First Floor
 Scale: 1/200

USF Sundome

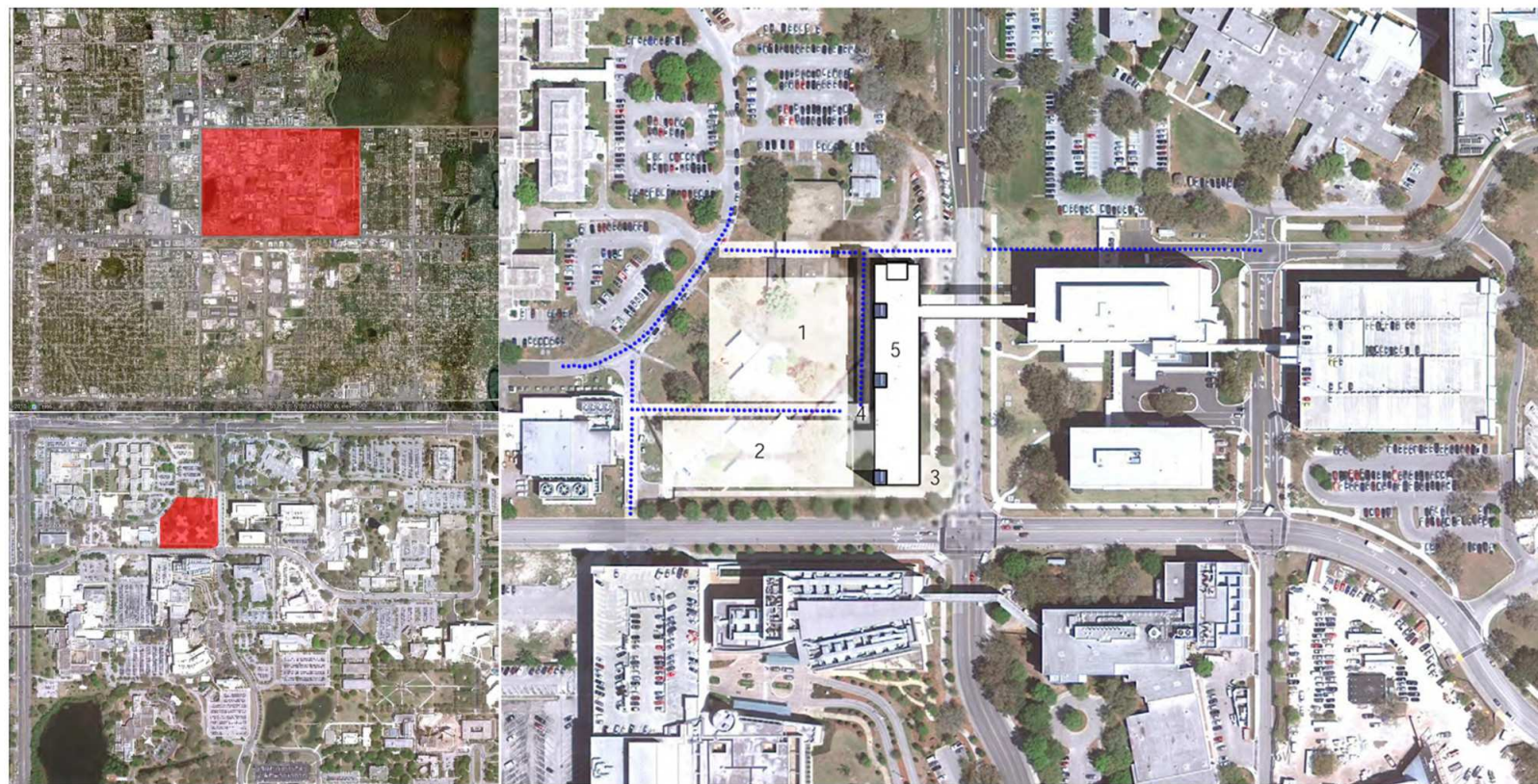




USF College of Medicine, **Cardiovascular Institute**, University of South Florida Campus, Tampa, FL, USA
10000 m2 mixed use research and education building

Client: University of South Florida

Design Team: Andrew Loper, Ken Williams



1. parking
2. second phase massing
3. entry plaza
4. entry
5. proposed structure





USF INTO Center, 2011

University of South Florida Tampa Campus, Tampa, FL

8000 m2 mixed-use education center for INTO University Partnerships Ltd., England, design development.

Client: USF Office of the Provost and INTO USF.

Received *The American Institute of Architects Florida/Caribbean Honor & Design Awards, Merit Award for Unbuilt Work in 2012*

Published in *AIA Florida/Caribbean Architect*, Fall 2012.

The education center is designed as part of a larger complex that includes a conference center and a residential hall. The main site decision is to create a public plaza that opens up to the larger green zone on the North, receiving the main pedestrian walkways from the campus, and acts as the social connector between the three components of the complex. The education center responds to the plaza by creating its ground level as a continuation of the public space. This is achieved by elevating the main classroom volumes above the plaza level and folding the horizontality of the plaza into the open section of the building where a series of playful stairs create a vertical social space, enhancing interaction between users, creating opportunities for encounter and communication through an open inner promenade.

This emphasis on social interaction as part of a larger architectural experience is in accordance with the unique program of the building which will house an international program that serves foreign students from different parts of the world who come to the campus to learn English and then continue their education in different academic programs.

While respecting the built fabric of the campus with its disciplined geometry, the building also creates architectural moments by breaking its rhythms with the insertion of rather autonomous objects such as an auditorium, a student lounge, and a serenity room. These spatial moments further enhance social interaction in enclaves carved out from the open vertical section.

In addition to its social proposition, the building also aims at expressing the idea of "Florida" as part of its architectural generation, with its elevated mass, shaded open terraces at the top level that look back at the plaza and the wide green of campus on the North, and the sun light received to its main vertical space from the controlled apertures on the roof plane.

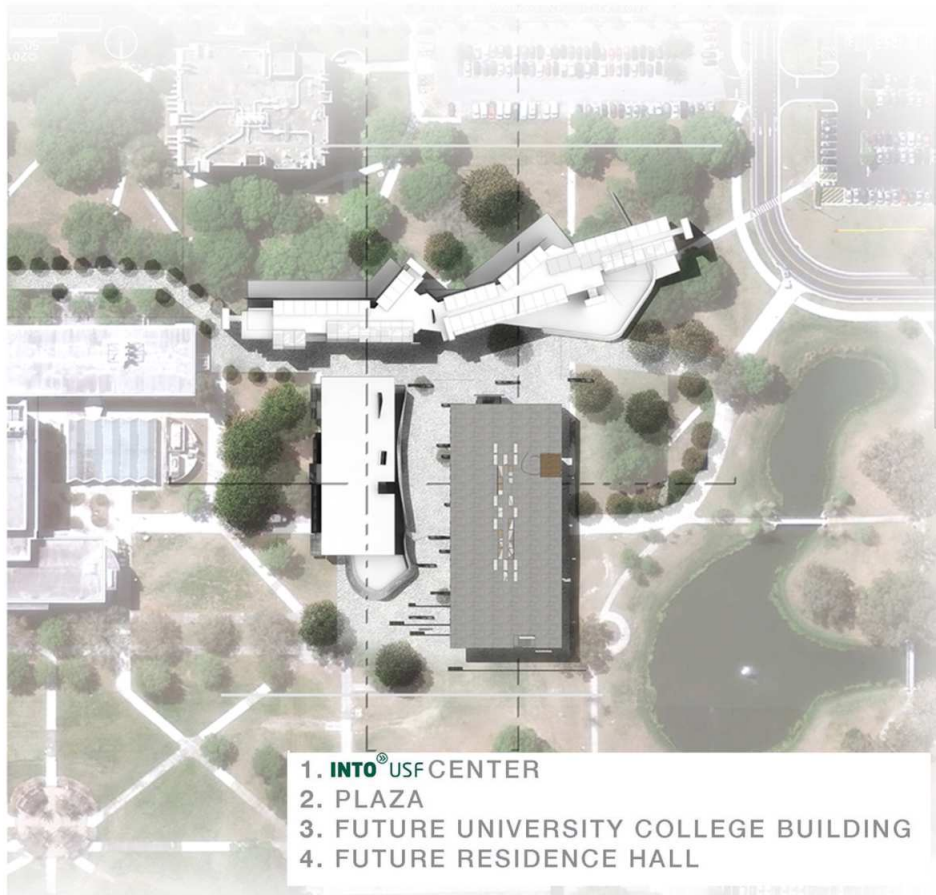
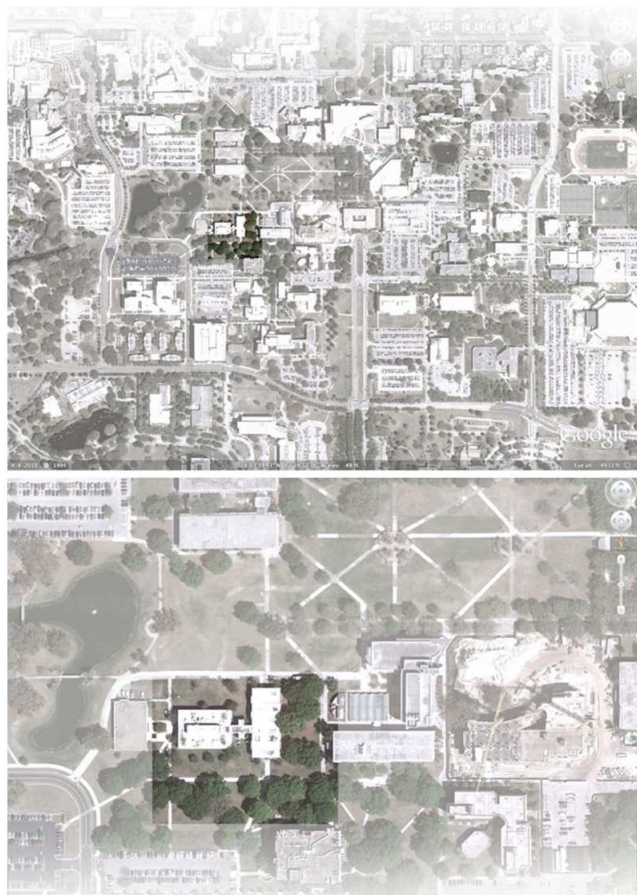


USF INTO Center, University of South Florida Tampa Campus, Tampa, FL, USA

8000 m2 mixed-use education center for INTO University Partnerships Ltd., England,

Client: University of South Florida & INTO Ltd.

Design Team: Andrew Loper, Kenneth Williams, Lauren Sajek





USF Z-Bridge - School of Mass Communications Zimmerman Advertising Program, 2011

University of South Florida Tampa Campus, Tampa, FL
 3000 m2 mixed-use education building, design development.
 Client: USF College of Business.

Received *The American Institute of Architects Tampa Bay Design Awards, Merit Award in Institutional Category in 2012*

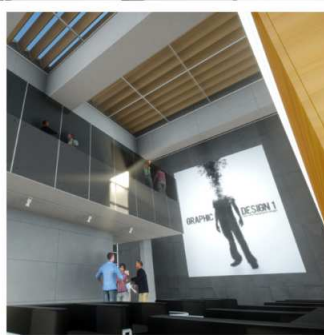
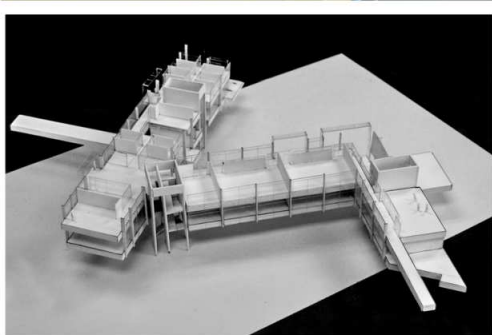
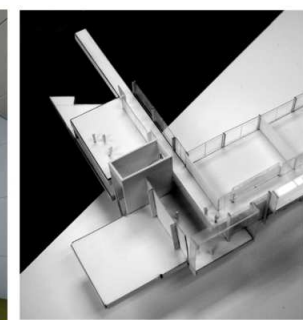
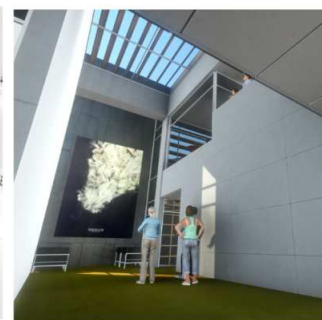
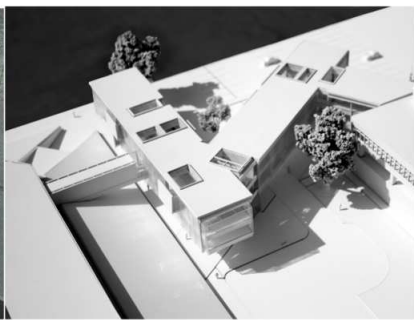
Invited presentation *at the AIA Tampa Bay Annual Meeting, September 12, 2013*

This education building is for a newly established, nationwide unique, graduate program in advertisement as a collaboration between the Business School and the School of Mass Communication. In addition to the 'bridge' status of the curricular structure of this new program, its building is to be situated between the existing buildings of the collaborating academic units.

Considering the social possibilities of the existing open space between the buildings of the two academic units, the main site decision came as elevating the mass of the new building above the ground, creating a shaded social space underneath, and 'touching' the existing buildings with controlled circulation. The particular layout of the building is the result of the existing tree matrix on the site where a Z shape geometry achieves the most effective axial extension that creates the sufficient footprint for the required program on two levels.

The building touches the ground with three main cores with minimum impact on the ground. The ground is offered back to campus as a shaded social space [a real need on any Florida campus], and the building distributes its program axially on two levels hovering above ground. The horizontal linearity on two levels is broken by strategically placed vertical voids that connect two levels experientially. These larger volumes are created at the intersections of movement vectors and provide opportunities for displaying work and social interaction. Because the building requires display of work as a main component of its program, exhibition pockets are designed as part of the main circulation, protruding in and out, thus enriching the volumetric and tectonic scales and sense of enclosure throughout the promenade.

Because of its particular contextual and programmatic proposition, the building aims at a sense of horizontal layeredness and transparency. The degree of transparency is further controlled and enhanced by a louver system that modulates according to spatial and programmatic changes, becoming a phenomenological regulator between inside and outside while pragmatically shading the building.





Troia Museum, 2011

Canakkale, Turkiye
10.000 m2 building, 105.000 m2 open space.

Received *The American Institute of Architects Florida/Caribbean Honor & Design Awards, Merit Award for Theoretical and Research Work in 2012*

Published in *AIA Florida/Caribbean Architect*, Fall 2012

This is a competition entry for a museum to be built on the excavation site of the ancient city of Troia [Troy].

Because the history of Troia is loaded with narratives laid on top of each other throughout the history, from Homer's stories to the tellings of its first excavators, to Hollywood movies, a symbolic reference is hard to single out as a generating principle for the architecture of the museum. Unlike the blazing narratives of their past, the ruins themselves are just like any other, a mute conversation with the idea of settling on a particular location on earth. Ruins do not speak with the clarity of their narratives, they murmur with the wind.

Thus, rather than hunting for a symbolism of a long lost reality, or a symbolism of what Troia means today, not even for a symbolism of the idea of 'the ruin', this proposal looks at the existing site with an eye on how the ruins themselves speak about their own reality as a cultural construct in nature beyond the myriad narratives that both surround and obscure them in multiple iterations.

Once on the excavation site, one is within walls that expand, compress, hide, reveal, frame. Once above the walls, one is lost in a palimpsest of layers upon layers, traces upon traces, with particular but indefinite experiences; a particularity without a particular object of the mind. The excavation site reveals its particularity among other possible ruins as a distinct experiential modality rather than an identifiable visual or mental structure.

The architecture of the museum builds upon these first-person phenomenal experiences of being on the site of Troia, or 'with Troia', as a witnessing. The user is an engaged witness rather than a detached observer.

Troia Museum

