SPRING SEMESTER 2022

IAT387: Directed Studies
Intercedence and Memories

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The expression of memory and culture can take a variety of forms through both cultural artifacts and lived experiences. While expressing the ongoing history of an architectural site is difficult, speculatively, the creation of forms that extend the site are valued as a way to express the "genius loci" of the fabric of the site and there, reveal underdeveloped stories through architectural intervention.

This complementary paper seeks to explore 2 main questions of designing site specific synthesis research of Steveston and the japanese-canadian diaspora (the Nikkei) from both the pre and post war periods of the mid 20th century. Contextually the questions are related to Kenneth Footes phenomenology in *Shadowed Ground* drawing outlines and synthesized boundaries at sites where memorialization is a site specific analogue to underexposed "native" stories. This "site exploration" in turn encourages exploring and adaptation of the ideas of "rituals" through the creation and veneration of memorials of historical trauma.

In this paper I seek to answer these 2 key research questions:

> i) How can we contextualize stories that are underrepresented through the concepts of sociological and architectural patina?

> ii) How can we extend the life of collective memory through selective destruction and reconstruction of the land; between significant sites?

In memories, violence and trauma leave traces in the environment, whether it be from architectural artifacts left behind or objects confiscated, these items are remembered or consciously evoked in collective memory and identification. The historical site of Steveston is strewn with these "collective" memory-holders through memorials located throughout the small fishing village but few are relevant to the collective "lost memories" of Japanese Canadians, creating a area ripe for speculation and intervention given how many of Steveston's "lost memories" are built upon the backs of the Nikkei.

The premise of this paper introduces the concepts of patina and hidden memories as architectural concepts; looking specifically at the intercedence of memories through a construction of a "patina of history".Of which, memories and their analogues can be extrapolated and abstracted into architectural vernacular by manipulating the physical journey

inside of the site. In other words, the premise of this paper is to illustrate and describe memories that haven't been conversed about through a normative narrative, but rather it seeks to excavate existing stories that have not been adequately explored through Steveston's documented history.

From a sociological point of view the term "hidden memories" is not new, but rather it seeks to suggest a formation and summation of collectivism among specific groups of people, allowing the formation of a shared knowledge base and information based on social group / group identity. This collective interpretation of memory can be more accurately described as a layer of knowledge that exists beneath the collective memory(figure 1), or more accurately as knowledge based ephemera that emphasizes memories that have been occluded or hidden from the collective knowledge base.
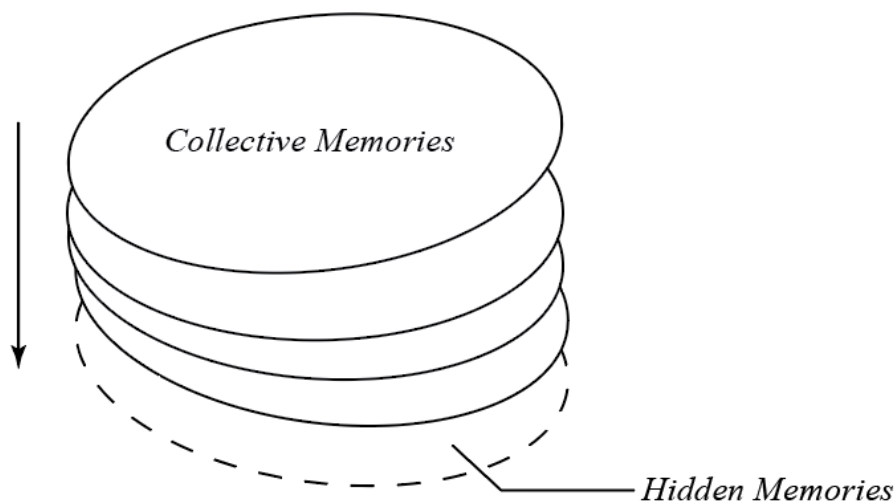

Fig1. An illustration of how hidden memories lie beneath the collective diaspora. (Lee,J 2022)

In this interpretation of "hidden memories", the memories themselves are not important but rather the symbolism and collective synthesis of memories are. In this specific case, these memories can be represented as "devotional objects"; a way for the memories of many to be compressed into an object that collectively represents a significant point of inquiry in the held memories from this particular group of people.

Similar to the concept of an architectural "hidden memory", patina suggests a "worn in" or "lived in" attribute in site precedence. In other words, patina implies a lived / worn state in objects or artifacts. In this sense one can describe the concept of a "patina of memory" to be ironic, as it is based on the lived in experiences of others and by asserting a site or object *has patina* there is an implication that:

> i) the object in question has existed long enough as a holder of memory to gain a worn in or lived in quality

> ii) the object or memory in question has been designed to mimic a lived in state through an intentional manipulation of the object to falsely imply age.

This quality of an object could also be extended to an architectural motif as well, as architectural patina and its memories are linked and when combined give buildings or vessels of memory a "set location" which make the two terms coupled. In other words, in order to construct an intervention in Steveston, one's research must begin with the families and "discarded" memories of the pre and post war period, looking at which memories of the Nikkei were saved, and which were selectively destroyed in Steveston's colonial revitalization.

In "Intercedence and memories", I propose a structural concept illustrating how we can use memories, mnemonic patina and the excavated stories of the Nikkei to illustrate and counterpoint architecture in speculative installations. This informed counterpoint seeks to inform people of how the collective memories of Steveston Japanese Canadian diaspora are frequently overwritten to "renew" or adjust the narrative to a more colonial and imperialist viewpoint. This in turn brings Steveston itself as a palimpsestic object during the interceding post war years of the mid 20th century.

Structurally Intercedence and Memories begins with a critical look at the stories coming out of Steveston pre World War 2, looking at assessment factors like traditional gender roles during that time, and jobs based on those roles. From this we can begin to extrapolate three main archetypal stories from the towns Japanese Canadian population:

i) People that worked in the town as trades people like the family that owned the formerly named River Garage

ii) People that worked in the cannery as either fishermen or cannery workers for one of three major canneries in Steveston

iii) People that work as boatbuilders at the shipyards before, during and after concentration camps.

From these stories we can begin to look at how memories from these "key areas" begin to drive production in Steveston for families and, notably, how each model family could be thought of as a zone of influence; creating or portraying each families business in relation to public infrastructure (language schools, community centers, gathering halls). Actively illustrating where families could tell stories, gather as a community or otherwise enjoy public life.
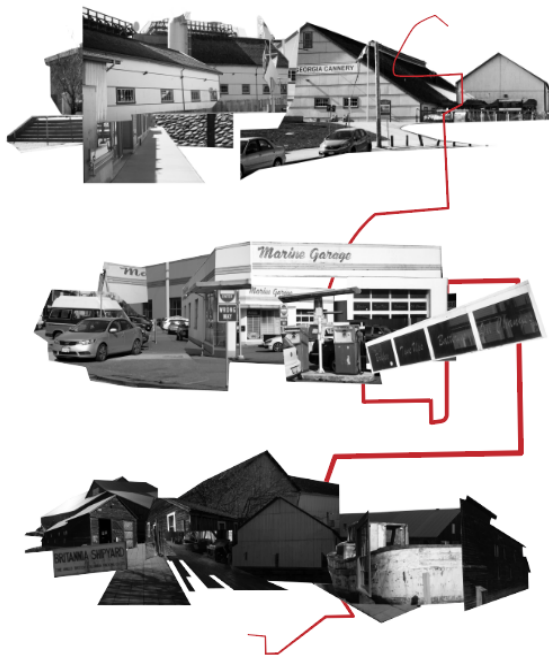

Fig 2. Psychographic map illustrating gathering places for the Nikkei (Lee J, 2022)

In the triptych of stories we could further extrapolate points of interest or "serial interventions" as a meta commentary of community building, while each family would typically start the typical day

at home, we begin to see common places emerge as gathering spots, these confluence zones serve a dual purpose in the community, providing something in terms of community engagement but also qualitatively providing a way to join and influence memories of different families, thus providing a layering of memories to provide and construct our patina of stories. Simply put, by handling and uncovering the memories that initially informed the patinas, we begin to uncover the cultural touchstones that inspired them. This in turn means that one can begin to look at how these vessels of memory influenced the memories being made in Steveston.

In the explorations made for intercedence, the methodology of combining and excavating stories was essential in how historical patina and precedence was to be displayed. For this project it was important to look at design motifs that would illustrate a contemporary view of west coast aesthetics while also looking at an architectural vernacular that could both display the physical journey of the motifs and give space to the proposed exhibition as a vessel of memory.

Using Kenneth Footes' exemplar "Shadowed Ground" Foote asserts that the "ritual space" of patina-ed spaces such as Steveston create a way to capture aspects of Stevestons history through a process Foote terms as Obliteration (Foote, 181). In the case of the project "Intercedence" the obliteration of the collective histories and memories as well as their physical vessels becomes a way to effectively create something ambiguous and with the absence of a ritual to help efface or sanctify the space, the space itself becomes similar to missing words on a page, devoid of sound , energy or purpose.

As Steveston's partial obliteration of memories was largely overshadowed by the renewed efforts to revitalize the fishing village, memories of historical significance became important indicators of Steveston's "heritage" identity, in effect reclaiming pieces and portions of the Japanese Canadian Diaspora that was partially obliterated during the war and post war era. This allowed for portions of stories to be reclaimed through synthesis and preservation, but ultimately Steveston's Japanese population paid the price of being fragmented.(McNulty) These intersecting stories also give insight on creating a way to view the ways the surviving stories to be amplified through exhibitions and historical memorials.

From these zones of influence, the interceding memories of Steveston's historical non-colonial architecture one can begin to see the effacement of architectural history in the form of deconstruction, deportation and manipulation of historic buildings across the village. From this

point of view we can see the idea of an architectural palimpsest take hold, the effacement then rebuilding of infrastructure in Steveston allows for the myriad of architectural forms and expressions take root. As with intercedence the methodology of selective destruction allows for the space to be rebuilt and rebranded, but not without the excavation of memories or precedence in designing for the intercedence of "lost stories"" of Steveston's heritage.

We can look at the building of a palimpsest with a critical eye as well, focusing on specifically why certain sites in Steveston were selectively destroyed or altered. This relationship with the site and ground is a way to analyze how and why the site exists in its current iteration, but like intercedence, also provides a way for the partial excavation of memories to happen chaotically, as you are traversing time as you literally and figuratively "peel back" the layers of a building.

From these two methodologies, one can begin to look at an encompassing methodology that uses both practices, allowing the intercedence of memories to create places of "holding" for stories that were lost or partially excavated through their tellings or, alternatively, stories to be told through the excavation of architectural or mnemonic remnants of the sites past. Specifically, one can look at how and why explorations of these two "metaphysical motifs" can lend a way to express further architectural interventions, whether through exhibit or material design to help uncover or alter different layers of history for experiential users to view.

From the methodologies outlined above, one could think the assumptive navigation of this problem is "complex" in scope, as its speculation of an architectural synthesis relies on understanding the value of memory and patina within the confines of past interventions in Steveston and their subsequent pros and cons. However the methodologies outlined above also segue and fulfill speculative conditions that are unique to this problem area of "patina in memory".

For architectural synthesis I propose two methods in form findings that draw upon the knowledge and style of speculative learning in architecture.

> i) form finding via manipulation of the city and the theory of Eisenmann's "metaphysical grid", looking specifically at sightlines and the manipulation of building forms and counterpoints that frame the resulting building site as a combination of manipulations of metaphysical space and real space.

ii) form finding through the physical journey of each "story making" point in conjunction with manipulating and compressing the physical timeline of the journey to find compelling circulation inside of a geometric primitive.

In synthesis one, we first look at Eisenman's speculative work with the metaphysical grid. Eisenman punctuated his early explorations with gridded systems as a way to establish syntactical architecture as a conception of form or notation(Ansari).Like Eisenman's experiments in a speculative Venice's Cannaregio square, synthesis one draws from this body of work to reimagine the grid as a timeline of activities, and phantom entities of unbuilt projects and plays with the distal length between grid marks as an expression of notable events to users of the land. By squashing, stretching and modifying the timeline and extending the lines as grid points(fig.4), we can begin to see 'collisions' of important events occur through the speculative nature of the established 'metaphysical' grid of events.
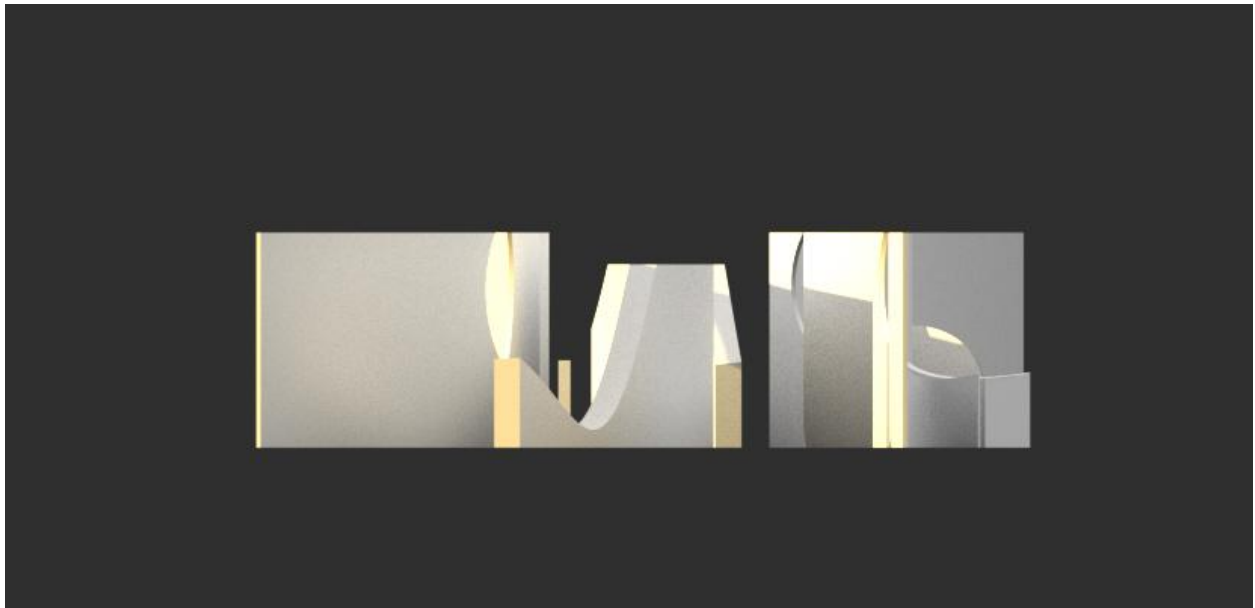

Fig 3 Resultant of modified Grid exploration (Lee J, 2022)

Further appropriating the grid, one can rotate and manipulate the grid multiple times creating a body of lines that intersect, thus forming the basis for our site plan(fig.4). Encapsulating this new form, one can punctuate this new form by visually connecting each "memorable location" in

Steveston by further manipulating the structure to allow unobstructed lines of sight emanating from the stories excavated during my primary research.
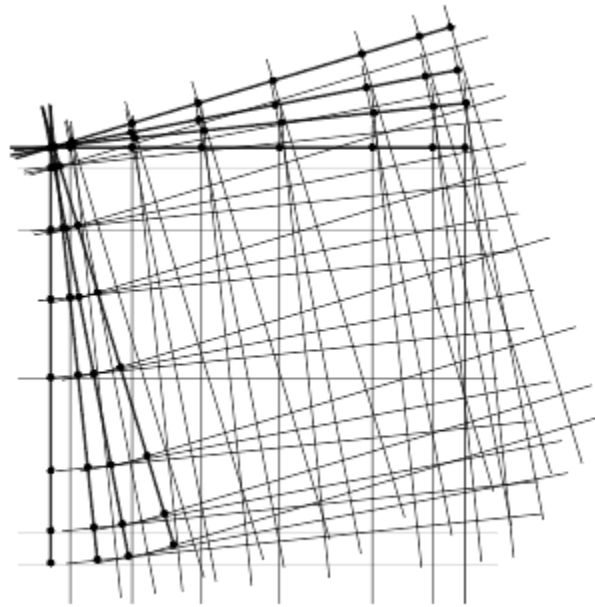

Fig 4 Stacked grids highlighting speculative points of inquiry (Lee J, 2022)

By establishing a circulation pattern that is complementary to the line of sight "voids" carved into the exhibition walls, we can further allow users to experience historical and memorialized patina by giving users a synthesis of experiences, emanating from a structure that superimposes a physical gridded system in conjunction with a metaphysical one, allowing users to enter the site specific work at any point, analogous to entering the timeline and exploring it of their own volition.
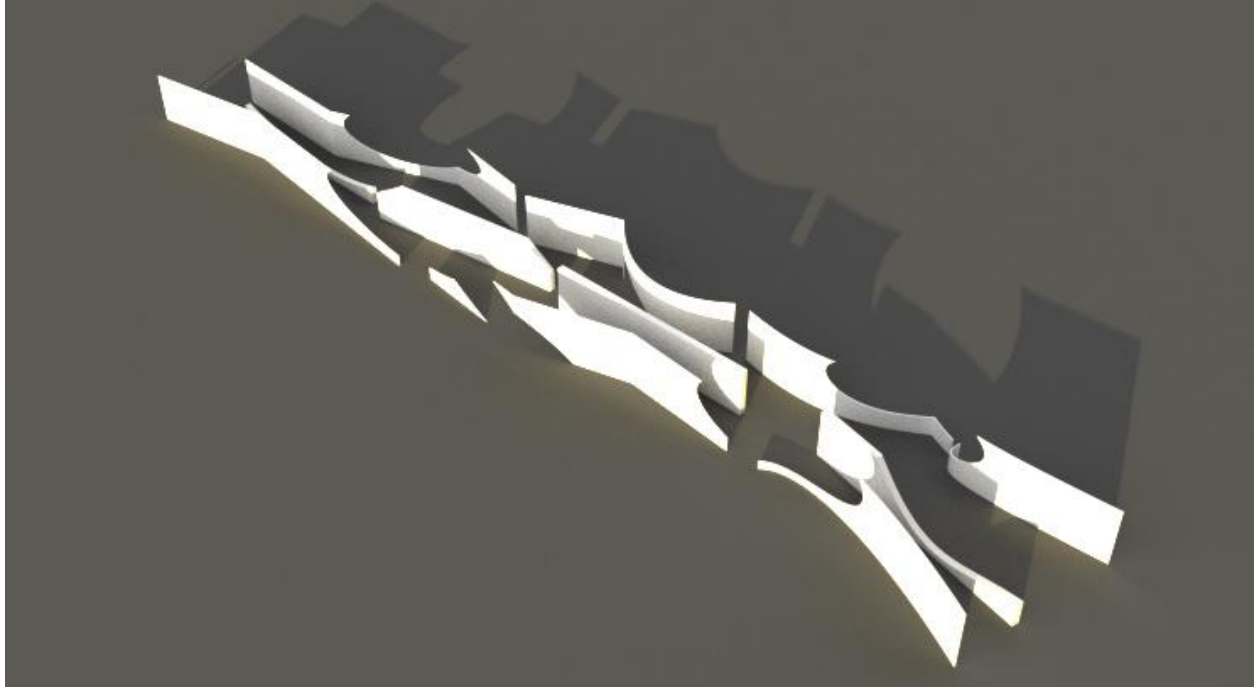
Fig 5. Final Isometric image of Synthesis One (Lee J, 2022)

In synthesis two, we begin by looking at circulation inside of the site, by isolating the physical journey taken for each story. Exploring speculative work that looks further at circulation of people instead of a physical site form, one can begin to visualize how people would move within our surroundings. Similar to Tadao Ando and the metabolist architects of the 1960's, synthesis two follows the notions of function following function, in that the abstraction of the physical journey of visiting each of these landmarks, guides the circulation of the site in relation to the placement of walls / stairs and other circulation viscera in the synthesis two site plan.
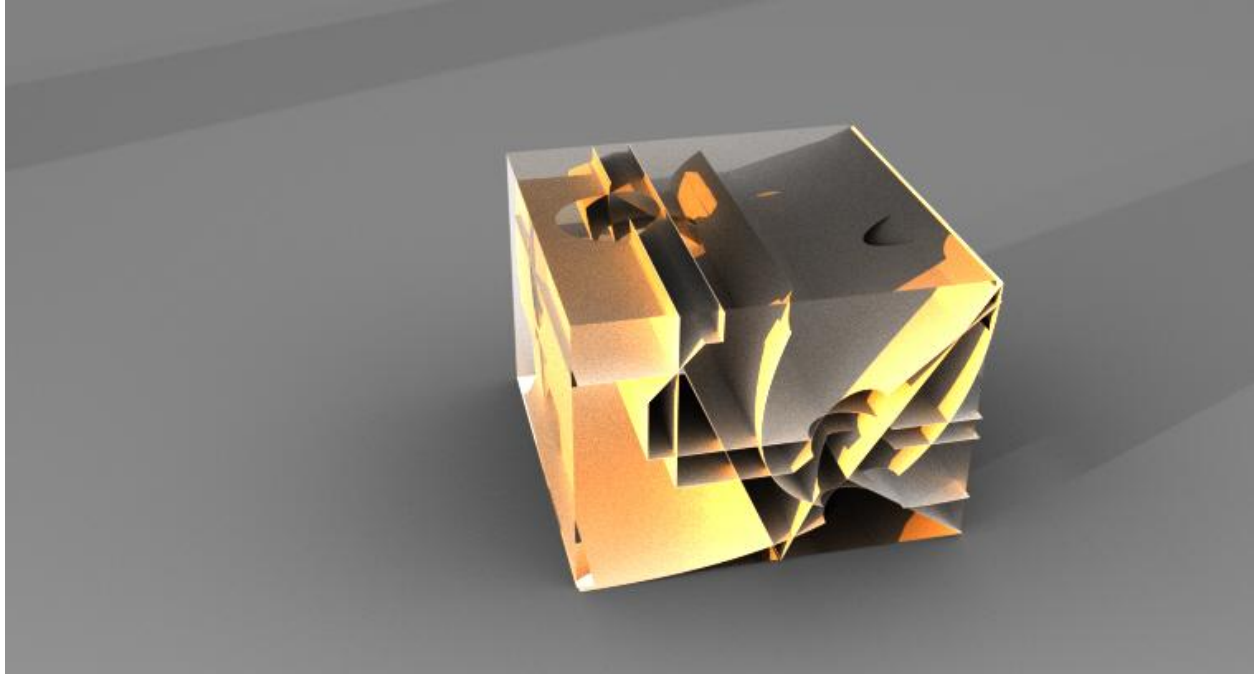
Fig 6. Image of Synthesis 2.1 looking at a speculative walk extruded through a cube (Lee J.2022)

Adapting the notion of form following function, the circulation plan of synthesis two takes place inside a simple building footprint, allowing users to be guided instead by the abstracted physical journey. This could be also thought of as expressing the form of the physical journey constricted in a cube, where if the form of the physical journey were to be expressed as a line, the physical journey itself could be fragmented, split apart and stacked to form unique circulation patterns that play with viewer / participants expectations of physical denial and reward(fig), but also as a speculative tool to help the participant figuratively walk the "same steps" as the physical journey plotted on the map.
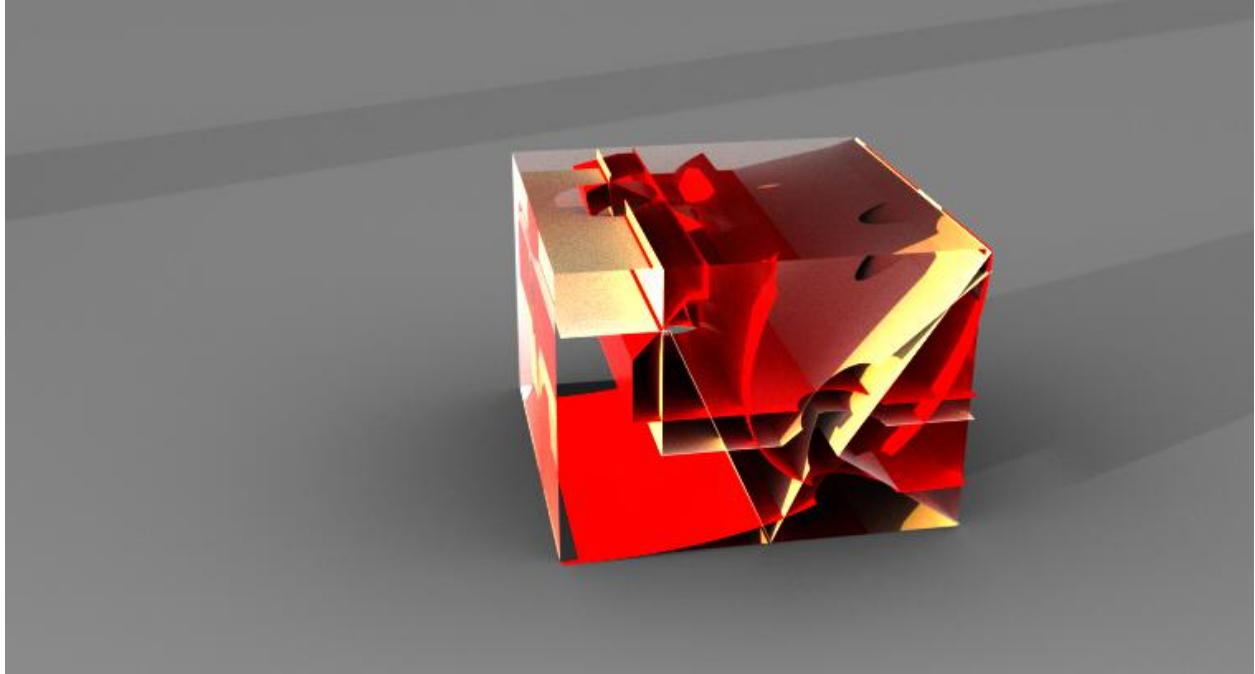
Fig 7. Image of Synthesis 2.1 looking at a speculative walk extruded through a cube, highlighting vertical pathways as points of interest (Lee J.2022)

By allowing the physical journey to be the motif of circulation, we can begin to abstract this notion of a physical journey by stretching and squashing the physical timeline modality by violating the bounds of our site plan, in essence allowing our site concept to exceed the shape, by creating circulation elements critical to the experience outside of the site, effectively drawing in users.
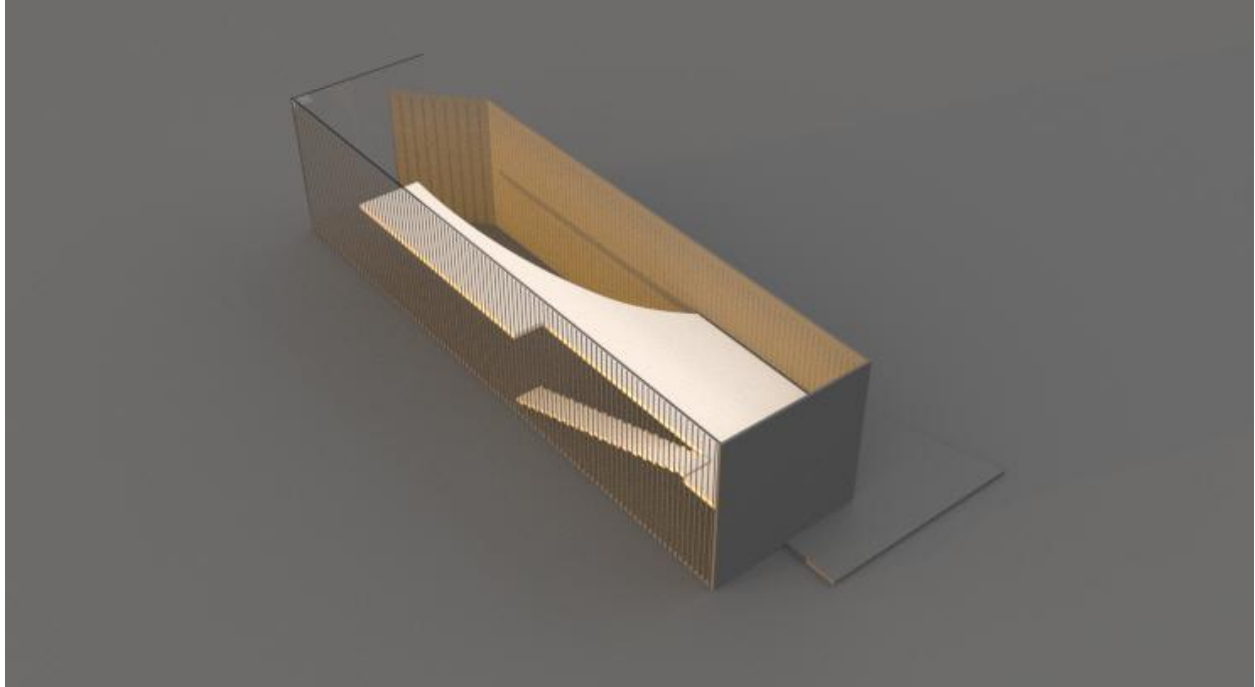
Fig 8. Image of Synthesis 2.2 looking at an abstraction of a physical journey creating tension and denial through surface level changes and a glass facade (Lee J.2022)

In practical terms of form finding and site precedence, how does the form finding deal with the patina of memory outside of a site specific context? More importantly, how does the relevance of site specific stories center around the partial obliteration motifs present within Steveston urban fabric?
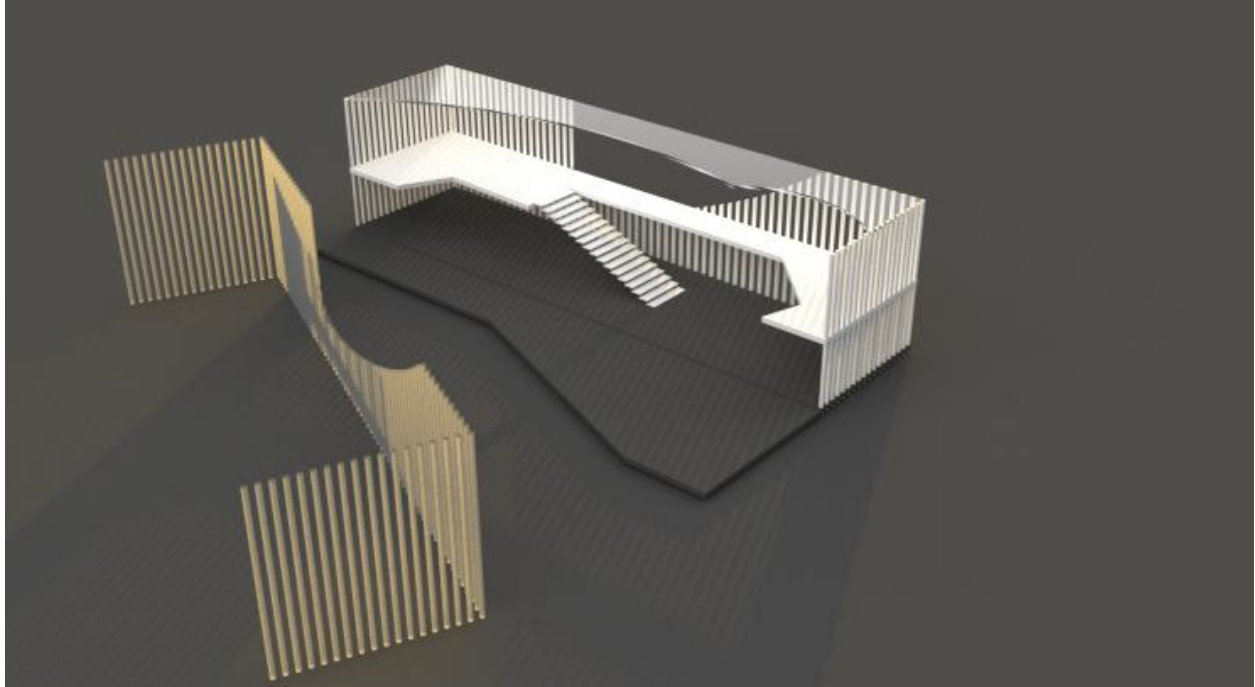
Fig 9. Image of Synthesis 2.3 experimenting with the idea of an abstracted walk that deals with a liminal 3rd section of space defined by a physical journey. (Lee J.2022)

The patina of memory is represented through form finding by allowing these new forms to be inspired by tacit representations of the site, that become, in turn (new) holders of memory by first becoming the "signifier" as a communal place for both physical gathering and collective remembering, and secondly by retelling stories by not only their geographic proximity to the new form / spaces but also as a place to explore stories that have been buried by Stevestons colonial "partial obliteration" and subsequent rebuilding. One could argue that the excavation of these stories would be enough to look at the collective aspects of memory by breaching the liminal veil that binds these stories together, however the forms derived are designed to be experienced as totalities, creating forms that allow users to interact with the context of the site allow users to extend the stories by entering the space as a way to excavate the stories of their own volition, creating their own stories with the timeline presented by acknowledging these temporal structures as holders of hidden memories.

At the same time, the site specific state of the installations is useful to also help extend the aspects of memory outside of site creating stories and experiences that extend the sites stories and provenance through personal excavation and the learning pedagogy of analyzing the synthesis of collective memories. In this way, we can also examine the relationship of stories

between the site, stories and artifacts as expressed in these temporary "vessels of memory" and look speculatively at how the inverse can also be true.

In this way the discussions of memory and patina can be extended to the lay-person as well, bridging together the stories and the site, in a way which benefits communities and causes greater introspection. Acknowledging the diversity and complexity of stories allows users to extend the memories and embolden the patina to grow and foster, giving new ways to talk about excavated stories in memories in conjunction with speculative questioning of the site.

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