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**Mandara**

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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT  
UNDERGRADUATE DESIGN THESIS  
IN  
ARCHITECTURE  
SUBMITTAL FORM

[MANDARA]

by  
[MARIYA MARWAN ZANTOUT]

ARCH 508/509- FINAL YEAR THESIS I & II  
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**Abstract:**

People coming together in certain places to escape another situation was always and interest to me.

I have researched diverse cases concerning this subject, however, I limited my field of study towards one case which was Cairo versus Gated Communities. I surveyed a neighborhood in a city in Old Cairo and molded my project within the area in a hybrid strategy of taking the amenities found in Compounds and implementing them in Old Cairo in a way that is more rooted to tradition and the Egyptian Culture.

## Table of Content:

### 1. Introduction to Escapism

- I. What is Escapism?
- II. What can Escapism do socially?
- III. Why do people do it?
- IV. Why is Escapism important and how can it help an individual?
- V. A real life example of escapism and its effects

### 2. Escapist Environments

- I. What are the characteristics of an escapist environment?
- II. Examples of how environments can aid in escapism
- III. Does the escapism experience effect all individuals equally?

3. The research is categorized depending on the various spatial forms of escapism, since each one leads to different experiences:

#### I. Permanent

- Neighborhoods
- Apartment Building
- Communes

#### II. Temporary

- Rituals

#### III. Group Dynamics

- Experiments

### Each case study will have:

- Introduction to the space and concept. What problem or distinctive characteristics it has
- Diagrams to show reasons for escape
- Analysis of escapism through the following aspects:
  - Spatial Conditions
  - Organizational Perspectives
  - Legal Perspectives

4. Conclusion

5. Potential Sites

6. Position and Proposal

7. elements found in compounds

### 8. Neighborhood Analysis

- i. social profile
- ii. strategy
- iii. street appropriation
- iv. users in zamalek and their flow
- v. land use
- vi. building heights
- vii. types of plantations
- viii. images

### 9. Site Analysis

- i. buildings around the site
- ii. the spine
- iii. site location
- iv. master plan
- v. street elevations
- vi. neighborhood compositions
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### 10. Vision

- i. collage vision
- ii. collage of program vision

### 11. Project Detail

### 12. Strategy

- i. grid strategy
- ii. project and building height
- iii. program division
- iv. circulation
- v. courtyards and roofs
- vi. services
- vii. views

### 13. Plans

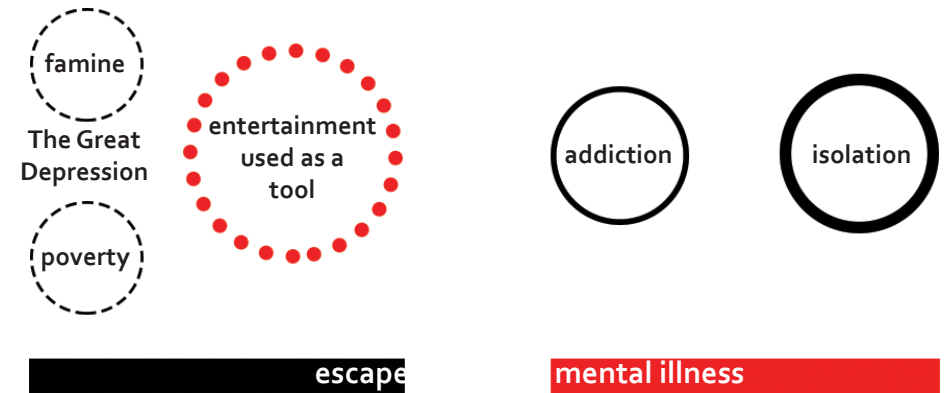
### 14. Drawings and Model



When people are **socialized** against one another, when people feel **othered** and a sense of 'not belonging', what can they do in order to relieve such a feeling? **Escapism**, when an individual has a need to get distracted and zone out to fantasy or enjoyment due to unhappiness or discomforts in their reality, aids in giving people a break from reality's construct to engage in something that does not have the essence of banal aspects of daily life. In other words, 'The avoidance of reality by absorption of the mind in entertainment'. Why is escapism important and how can it help an individual? Escapism at first can be thought of as a way to runaway from reality, however it is something much more than that and we humans, do it daily without acknowledging it. Daydreaming or scrolling on social media is a way for one person to take a break from reality.

**How did it all start?** Escapism as a tool, started in the 1930s, where people at that time felt the need to escape reality through occupying themselves with an alternative, 'entertainment'. It was 'The Great Depression' at that time and people wanted to escape the poverty and famine of their current lives, immersing themselves in the concept of entertainment. It became a tool at that time because it was addictive and can cause mental illness due to complete isolation from society and its addictivity. In contrast, it had its positive side where it helped people overcome stress.<sup>1</sup>

There are different modes of escaping. One can escape **psychologically** or **physically** but you need both simultaneously because they affect one another. The difference between them is, in some cases, your mind affects your space and vice versa.



In a book called 'Trust Me - it's Paradise the Escapist Motif in into the Wild, the Beach and are You Experienced?' it talks about an example of escapism in **Chris McCandless** life. He who had parental problems in his early life that shaped his world view, and he adopted a vagabond lifestyle in the wilderness.

This has shown that escapism is a part of **self-development**, especially at a young age where one has yet to discover themselves and make sense of the world.<sup>2</sup> The author Jon Krakauer talks about the life of McCandless in his book 'Into The Wild' and his protagonists imitated classical bildungsroman and society was viewed as threatening because of the **rigid social rules** that discourage self-cultivation.<sup>3</sup> Due to the instability and malleability of our present times, this primarily leads to confusion and dissatisfaction of fulfilment far off what globalization has to offer.<sup>4</sup> Due to this, people travel to go through a nostalgia to find their sense of identity, but this results in the '**touristic gaze**' where one looks at things he is supposed to gaze at and so the gaze becomes a social construct. Furthermore, it is an imitation of colonial attitudes and not a true cultural exchange. So this book states that travelling cannot help in finding the inner self of a person but merely an elevation of social status if a person's aim is for tourism.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Hannes Krehan, Trust Me - it's Paradise the Escapist Motif in into the Wild, the Beach and are You Experienced? (Anchor Academic Publishing, 2014) 75.

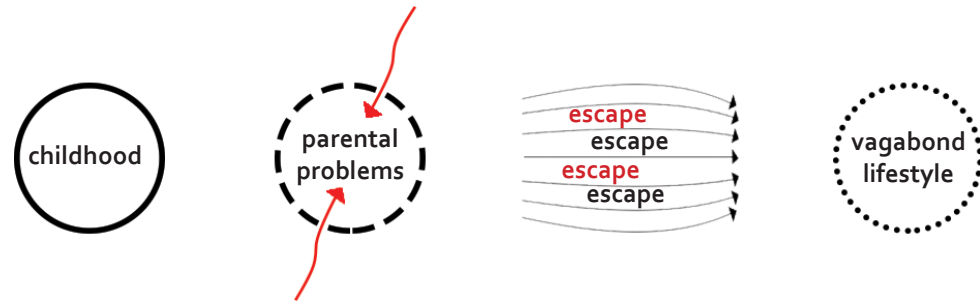
<sup>3</sup> Krehan, Trust Me, 75.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 75-76.

<sup>1</sup>Anjana Nandagopal, Escapism in the 1930s, <https://prezi.com/ndckcbi4n1ju/escapism-in-the-1930s/>, (accessed march 4, 2014)

## Chris McCandless's life



Having looked at the psychology of escapism in a person's life, this has led me to dig deeper into escapism as a spatial aspect. When a person wants to escape, two modes are crucial in order to achieve such a goal, one is escaping through the mind by daydreaming, and another is escaping through the physical space that in return affects your state of mind. They both compliment one another. A physical space can trigger a nostalgic reaction in your brain through past memories or it can help in fantasizing about something completely independent of your past. Having looked at the psychological part, next I will tackle the subject through physical space.

### Escapist Environments

When a person wants to escape an environment, he/she would find a place where their self esteem is increased and a place where they feel comfortable. Places that acquire involuntary attention are places where people search to escape to for a recovery or time out. A place where one is not expected to put in effort and only attracts the individual through **fascination** and **authenticity**.<sup>6</sup>

The escapist environment are places that can range from entertainment, isolated quiet environments (nature), environments with groups of people, to places that give you virtual reality.

<sup>6</sup> G. D. Shows, "Escapist Environments, Restorative Experiences, and Consumer Self-Regulation." (Louisiana Tech University, 2012) 7.

An example of a way an environment can be escapist is the EPCOT Disneyworld concept of several pavilions, each being a different country from around the world, with their employees being from the same country, to immerse the consumer into a cultural diversity. What makes EPCOT's commercial space stand out is not only the spatial aspect but the social and cultural diversity. A company that's target is to take the consumer away to a different place.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it is safe to say that the environment comes hand in hand with the social factor. So what is the spatial place and for who is it? Each escape place must be specific to its users.

### Cognitive State

It has been studied and mentioned that in self-regulation, there are two types of ways individuals complete tasks:

#### action-oriented individuals

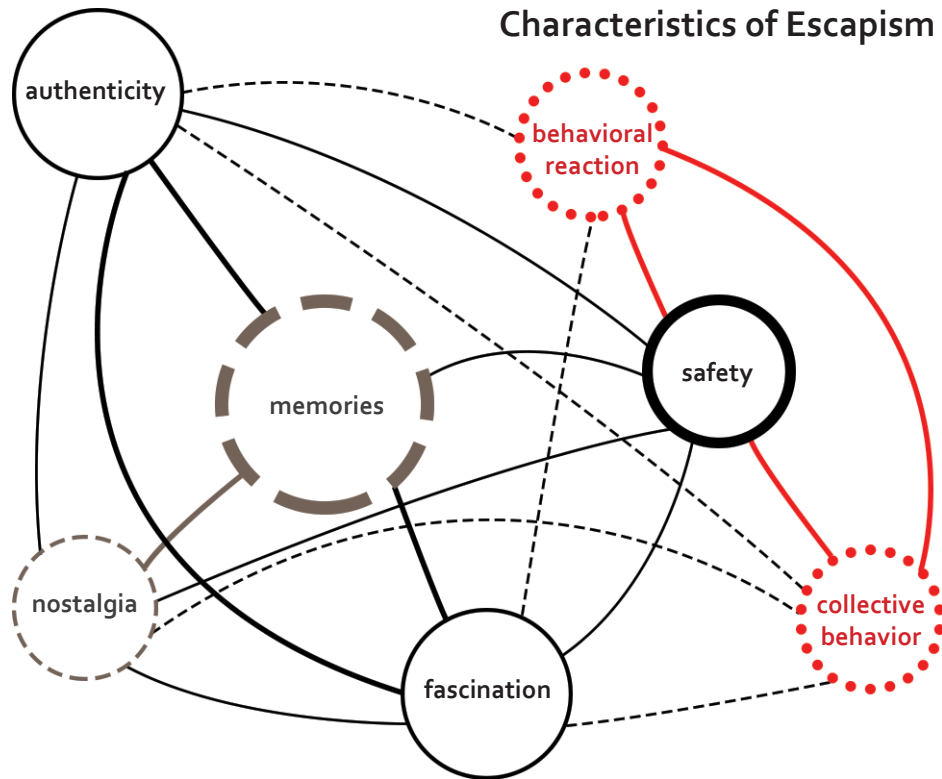
#### state-oriented individuals

In action-oriented individuals, one has more confidence in taking decisions and is strong enough to face any obstacles around in his environment. In opposition to the state-oriented individual where his actions are not firm enough and can be affected easily in addition to the low capacity he is unable to handle so much, their behaviour are more passive. And so based on these two individuals and their capacity to focus on given tasks, each type of individual will behave differently in an escapism experience.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Shows, "Escapist Environments", 3.

<sup>8</sup> Shows, "Escapist Environments", 7-8.

## Characteristics of Escapism



Now that I have covered the foundation of escapist environments, I decided to choose places/ideologies based on three categories in order to have varieties: **Permanent Temporary Group Dynamics**

### Permanent

- Neighborhoods
  - Cairo city vs Cairo compounds
- Apartment Building
  - Chelsea Association Hotel
- Communes
  - Salmon Creek Farm
  - Drop City

### Temporary

- Rituals
  - Burning Man
  - Disneyland / EPCOT

### Group Dynamics

- Experiments
  - Stanford Prison Experiment
  - Rhythm o

## Fascination Vs Authenticity<sup>9</sup>

	Low	Escapism	High	
High	Reality Experience - Daily life - Routine Purchasing	Immersive Experience - Disneyworld - Cultural Restaurants - Fantasy Baseball Camp	High	
Authenticity	-----		Escapism	
Low	Mundane Experience - Living to exist - Acceptance of the tawdry	Fantasy Experience - Online Environments - Role Playing Games - Theatre and entertainment	Low	
	Low	Fascination	High	

I will look at each case study in three different ways:

### Spatial Conditions

What are the spatial factors that an individual was in before escaping? Was this part of the reason they escaped? What environments do they escape to?

### Organizational Perspective

Each case study mentioned above is either controlled by an organization or independant. Did this affect their mode of escapism and did it help?

### Legal Perspective

Some people escape for order and some escape away from order. Some escape illegally. I will identify these factors in each case study.

<sup>9</sup>Shows, "Escapist Environments", 9.

## Neighborhoods

### Cairo city vs Cairo compounds

The city of Cairo is known for its unique and welcoming culture but at the same time for its, overpopulation and noise pollution. The problematics of the city is what most people love about Cairo, however, in the past two decades, Cairo being the centralized city has become decentralized due to the formation of gated communities on the outskirts of the city. This has caused many of old Cairo's residences to flee out of the capital and into the suburbs, creating a new urban configuration of Cairo, Cairo as a city of gated communities.<sup>10</sup>

They are providing a new capital city as a gate for people to escape to. Developers claim that it is a much safer place away from the pollution of old Cairo. This has been done by aiming for middle to high-class people, leaving the majority of Egypt's citizens, who are below middle-class, in the city, producing an **economical segregation**.<sup>11</sup>

A question was raised during my research about Cairo's situation and it was that, if everyone were given the opportunity to leave old Cairo and become apart of this whole new place, would everyone consider it? **Does everyone define safety in the same way?**

Therefore, I have done a survey in Cairo where I asked a couple of people living in gated communities what is considered safety to them and why did they choose to escape from the old city versus people living in the city what their opinion is about gated communities and the responses I got were as follows:

<sup>10</sup> Dick Doughty, Inside the megacity, <http://almashriq.hiof.no/egypt/900/megacity/>, (Aramco World Magazine March-April 1996)

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Wright, Cairo's gated compounds show rich-poor gulf, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-suburbs/cairos-gated-compounds-show-rich-poor-gulf-idUSL2929352120080703>, (World News July 3, 2008)

## People living in gated communities:

أنا ساكنة في **compound** عشان اول حاجة كل صحابي هناك فده شجعني اروح هناك. هي الموضة بقت دلوقتي اننا نعيش في كمبوندات و الناس بتتبع التطور

I moved to a compound because firstly, all my friends moved and this was a motivation for me. Secondly, it became a trend and we are always updated

دي أمانة لولادنا عشان ال **security** اللي فيها كأنه نادي صغير عندنا بيلعبوا جواه بأمان وأهم حاجة ان الولاد شبه بعض في التربية

The security that is available in compounds is a mode of safety for our children. The compound is similar to a sporting club where kids can play safely with other children like them

## People living in the city:

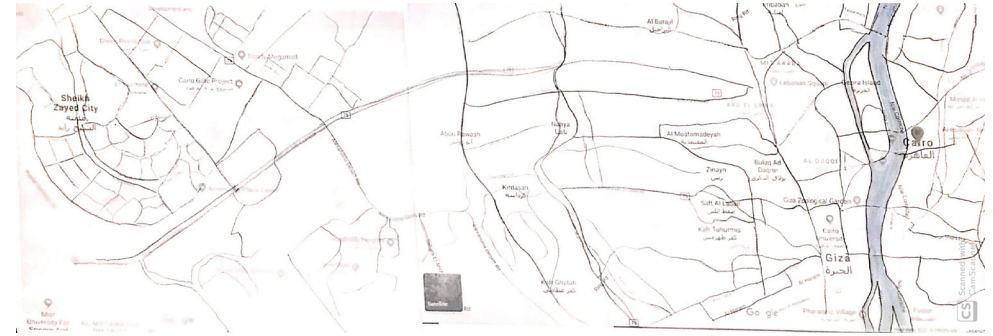
أنا هنا عايش بين اهلي وحتتي وأنا حافظ الشوارع اللي بقت بيتي والناس اللي معايا في الشارع همزة زي اهلي و ده زرار الأمان بتاعي

I live among my friends and family in the city. I know all the streets and people in the streets became a part of my family and this is how I define safety

هم الناس بيروحوا الكمبوندات ليه؟ احنا بطريقتنا بنصنع الأمان في أي حطة بسبب جدعتنا و قوتنا هي اللي بتدينا الأمان في أي مكان

Why are people moving to compounds? Safety is achieved in our own way through our strength and bravery

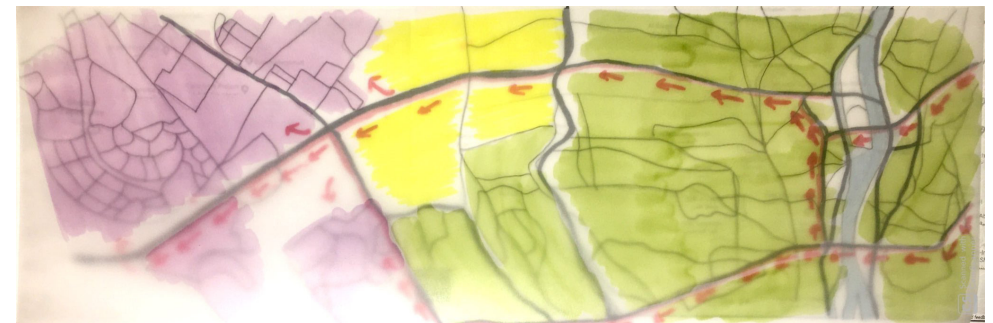
People's definition of safety differs from one another however people living in compounds claim that compounds are a way to escape the problematics of Cairo, ranging from noise, pollution, to congestion.



## Organic road configuration of the city vs organized roads in compounds



- Evacuation of middle-high class residents
- Bigger highway roads in the area around compounds

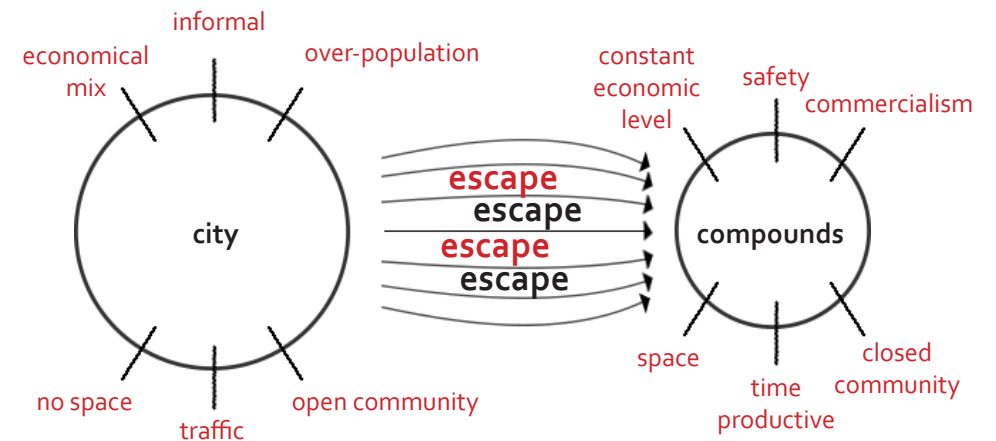


This is showing the different economical segregation- ranging from mixed, to low and high class.

As mentioned before about viewing each case study through three aspects, **Spatial Conditions**, **Organizational Perspective**, **Legal Perspective**, below I will explain in detail about each aspect in relation to this case study about Cairo and its compounds.

### Spatial Conditions

If streets are compared between the city and compounds, one can see that in plan, roads in the city look more organic and smaller rather than the big highways seen around the gated communities. The benefit of having bigger roads is to spend less time on the road due to a decrease in traffic so it is more time efficient and people can be more productive during their day. In contrast to the city, where all roads are tight causing more traffic. Moreover, compounds are limited to a specific community rather than the city where it is a community.

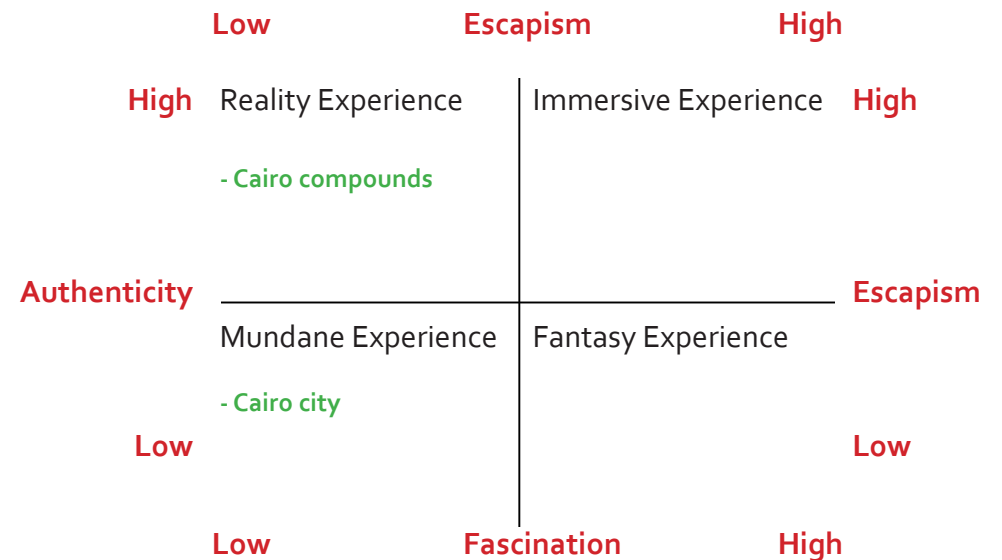


### From an Organizational Perspective

When there is an organizational community that sets all the needs for the people, these people prefer to put that weight on these organizations where security and order is provided. People form this new community of members of the compound that is run by these organizations. Therefore, people escape from freedom to an organization that can control to set all the necessities and rules for those people so that they can follow. This is what people feel more comfortable in and this is what Cairo city lacks.

### From a Legal Perspective

Most people want to **break away** or **escape** from legal laws, but in this case because there was so much chaos, this caused most people to want a place where laws are abided by carefully to avoid disorder. The way people drive in the city of Egypt, no rules, no car lanes and car accidents. In compounds there is order and a systematic way of living that people prefer to abide by.





## Apartment Building

Chelsea Association Bldg.

Chelsea Association Bldg. is currently a closed hotel under construction however it initially started as an apartment building in New York City. It had an interesting system where it integrated the **Fourier Phalanx system**. This system is based on limited number of people present in a specific area.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, the idea of integrating people from different places and professions produced a new culture and sense to the space. Spatially, the building was derived as a product of **street integration** for **social cohesion**. What was unique about this building was that it had a **diversity of people** who were mainly **artists and famous people**.<sup>13</sup> People from all social classes were able to live inside this building. The idea was to get an **economical mix** by making different sized apartment rooms in order to accommodate for everyone's needs.<sup>14</sup>

As mentioned before, the people were mainly artists and famous actors and actresses. What was special about this building was that there was a live theatre throughout the building that would appear spontaneously and so once a person enters the premises they are lost in the crowd.<sup>15</sup>

The flexibility the landlord gave to his clients made them more attached to the building. The mixture of artists and famous people made the place have a sense of allure and fiction. Chelsea was a reminder of the **'old sweet things'** in contrast to the **capitalistic and commercialism** outside its doors.<sup>16</sup> Within the Chelsea bldg. one can be among **friendly neighbors, respect for privacy**, and affordable rent for artists to dwell at in comfort and fulfillment for a **creative atmosphere**. That this was their way of escaping New York City.

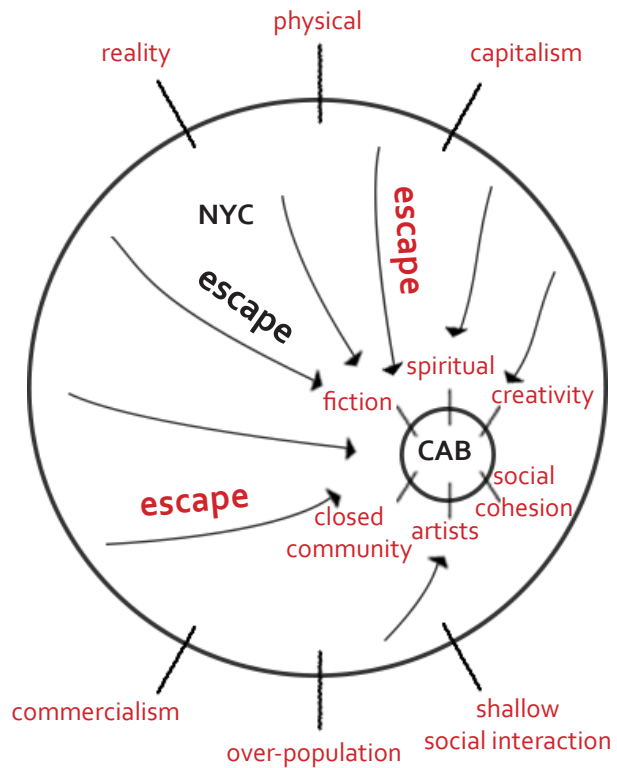
<sup>12</sup> Sherill Tippins, Inside the Dream Palace: the Life and Times Of New York's Legendary Chelsea Hotel (2015) 8-9.

<sup>13</sup> Tippins, Inside the Dream Palace, 153.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 238.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 72-73.



As mentioned before about viewing each case study through three aspects, **Spatial Conditions**, **Organizational Perspective**, **Legal Perspective**, below I will explain in detail about each aspect in relation to this case study about Chelsea Association Bldg.

### Spatial Conditions

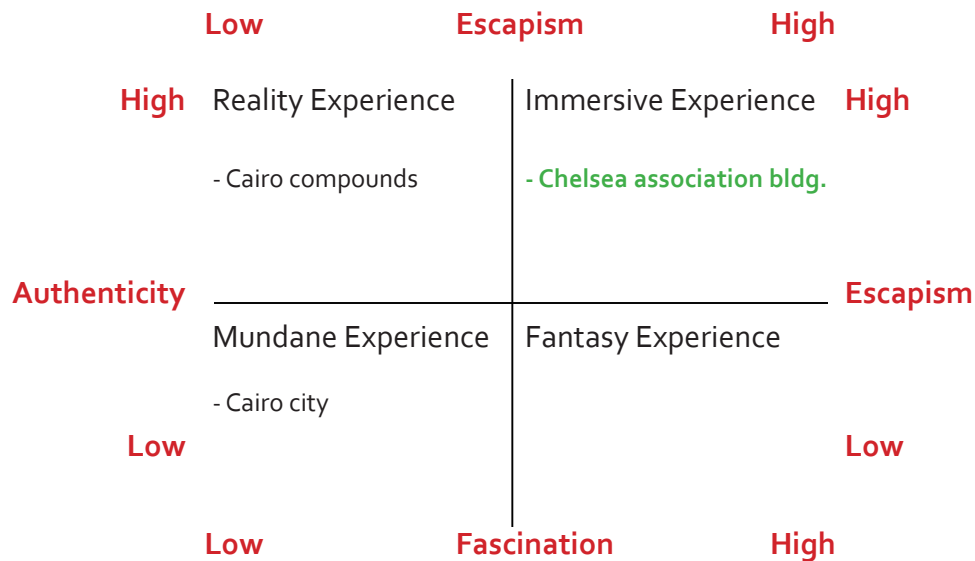
The apartment rooms have high curved walls to the ceiling. This gives the sensation of **'Mystery of the Unknown'**. The stairs are wide enough to allow social interaction with plants and large windows. This gives calmness and a spiritual feeling. Corridors are very wide to allow social cohesion and the apartment overall looks like an interior street.

### From an Organizational Perspective

Artists and famous people from all over the world lived for some time in the Chelsea Association Hotel and they all formed a community that was very diverse. The difference between this community and Cairo's gated communities is that the people in the hotel are more integrated with each other lives and live closely together whereas in compounds, people are living closely together but are not connected on a social level.

### From a Legal Perspective

It was an escape for talented people who wanted to live in an informal way under a landlord who wanted to offer an oasis for them, many of whom happened to be eccentric.



## Communes Salmon Creek Farm



[https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Fritz\\_Haeg](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Fritz_Haeg)



<https://www.oxbowschool.org/experience/inside-ox-bow/2017/9/oxpedition-to-salmon-creek-farm>

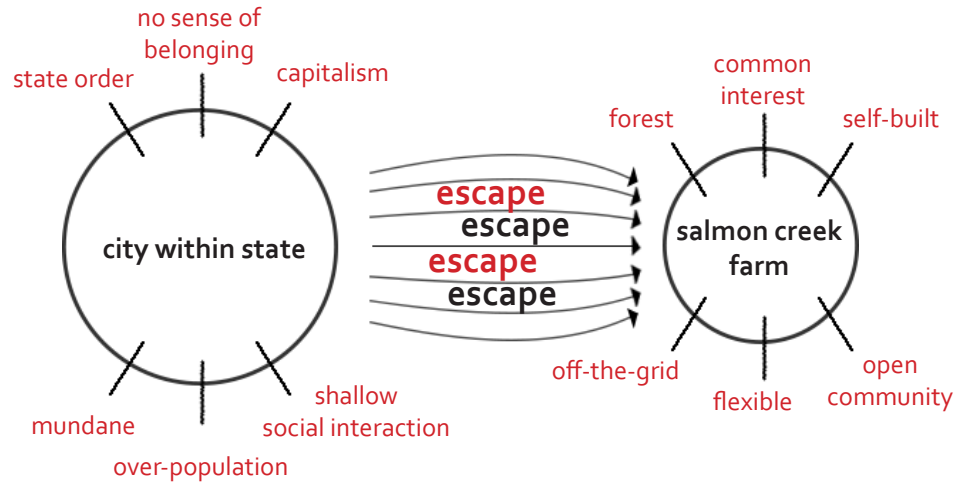
The co-working spaces that have blossomed in cities speak to the idea of finding community amidst the always-connected-yet-isolated vagaries of free-agent economic life. This is a way for people to escape the economic challenges brought to them as a by product of living in a state.<sup>17</sup>

However over time, people slowly moved away from Salmon Creek Farm, drifting into more conventional living arrangements. The reason for this is that, in communal areas, people need to all pitch in the same effort. What truly happens is that some people pitch in more yet they all get the same resources, so this causes inequality and people choose to go back to the city for independence.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Salmon Creek Farm, <https://salmoncreekfarm.org/>

<sup>18</sup> Tom Vanderbilt, Communal Living, the 21st-Century Way, March 10, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/t-magazine/design/fritz-haeg-salmon-creek-farm-commune.html>

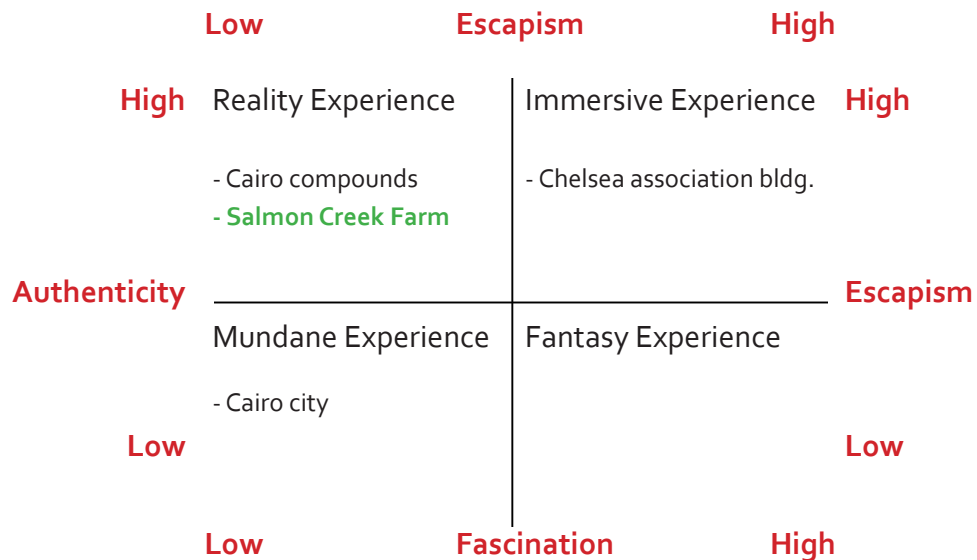
<sup>19</sup> Tom Vanderbilt, Communal Living



As mentioned before about viewing each case study through three aspects, **Spatial Conditions**, **Organizational Perspective**, **Legal Perspective**, below I will explain in detail about each aspect in relation to this case study about Salmon Creek Farm.

### Spatial Conditions

The whole idea of why Salmon Creek Farm is built in the forest, is because nature plays an important role in uniting people in a peaceful way where it affects the psychological factors of a person. The cabins look very organic because they were built by the community. Having this self-made environment builds an attachment to the place more. The cabins are built close to each other organically around the forest with a common cabin for everyone to meet, making it like a huge house with different rooms being the cabins and the forest being the way of circulation within the house.



### From an Organizational Perspective

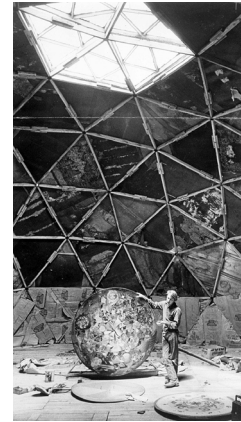
Salmon Creek Farm is owned by Fritz Haeg, who is the person that takes final decisions and plans for what is to be changed or added in the space and what the rules are, even though everyone gets a say in decision making. They form a community similar to the compounds in Cairo, however they are their own organization and the responsibility is on them.

### From a Legal Perspective

The reason people wanted to escape to the forest is because they wanted to escape the state and the inequality and discrimination a person can be subjected to. Making their own basic way of living and setting their own rules was their way of escaping.

## Communes Drop City

Started in 1965, boomed around 1970, then failed in 1973, Drop City was planned by university artists who bought a small piece of land near Trinidad, Colorado. They saw society as materialistic and war-mongering. After establishing their settlement, they were joined by other writers and inventors, and started building a community that celebrated creative work. They wanted to escape the conventional ways of living, rejection of capitalistic materialism.<sup>20</sup>



<https://cdm16079.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15330coll22/id/5601>



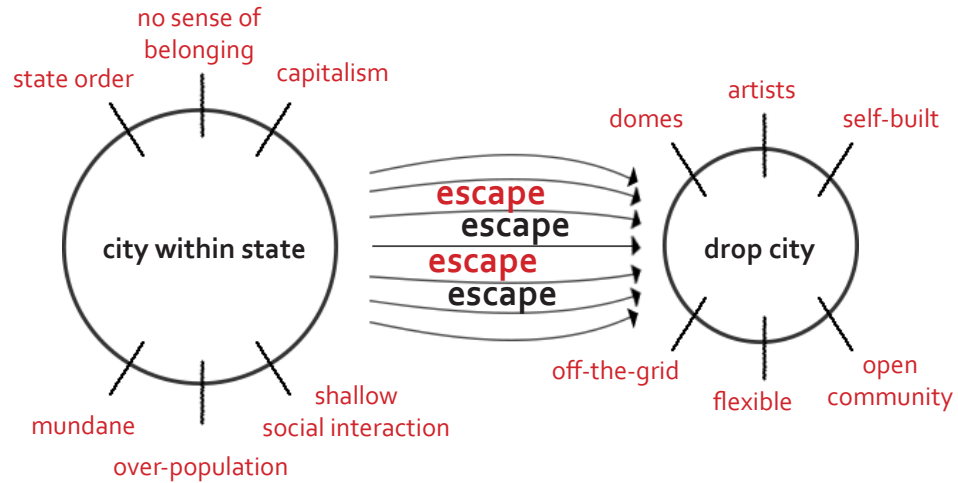
<http://www.metroactive.com/papers/sonoma/05.15.03/drop-city-0320.html>

They began by building domes based on Buckminster Fuller's design of geodesic domes. Drop City became a lab for experimental building. They used materials that cost nothing to make structures. The community grew in size from social media attention and the settlement overcrowded with people but this time it wasn't for an escape from society or state but rather a trend that seems to catch on to people's attention through social media because they won an award for the Buckminster Fuller's design.<sup>21</sup>

The concept of Drop City was to make no rules and to stop no one from joining the community. However, the lack of structure and planning led to the downfall of the commune.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Matthews, "droppers: America's First Hippie Commune, Drop City", 2010

<sup>21</sup> Matthews, droppers, 2010



### Spatial Conditions

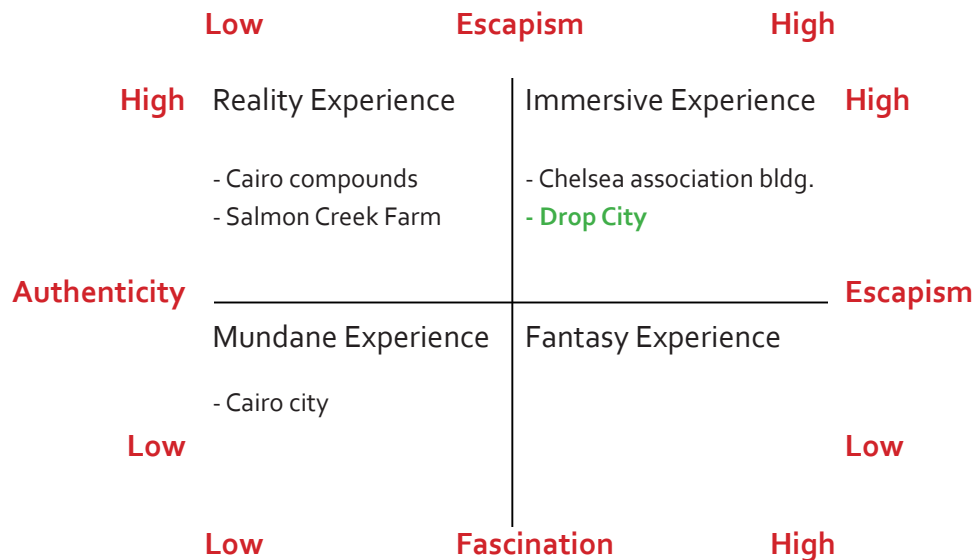
Similar to Salmon Creek Farm, Drop City used materials around them to build their city and this factor allowed for a stronger attachment to the place in contrast to Cairo's compounds. This was their escape and if I were to categorize this community, they would fit under the action-oriented individuals where they are aware of all the difficulties and these does not affect their decision negatively by giving up on what they believe in. What was different about this space is that these domes were built in an artistic way by artists and this is what attracted people's attention to come and see what was happening in a land that supposedly has nothing. This is the fascination factor that drove people to exit the city.

### From an Organizational Perspective

It was a land free from an organizational system. The land was open to the public and no one owned it. It was a free space welcome for everyone and this cannot be seen in the previous examples I have given. Organizations help in maintaining order in a place, even though this place is very flexible with rules, as seen in the Chelsea Association Bldg. and Salmon Creek Farm.

### From a Legal Perspective

These young artists felt restricted in the city under the state regulations, so their way of escaping was going off-the-grid. They rejected capitalistic materialism. However, it is important to note that the people that joined after were joining not as a mode of escapism but as a mode of it being something new and different that people were curious to try.





## Rituals

### Burning Man

An event that happens every year, in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, for a week where people from all over the world come together to strip themselves away from their identity and life and feel 'free' for a short period of time. It is a place of art installation, ted talks and a temporary community where freedom unites everyone for this limited period of time. Burning Man started in 1986 where few artists joined and implemented the idea of **building this 'utopia'** for a week, then watch it all burn to go back to more conventional ways of living.<sup>22</sup> This was their medium of escaping from reality, to a place where you can strip naked and do drugs without any judgement. People would focus on themselves rather than waste time focusing on others and because this was a **common interest** that they had, it was successful.<sup>23</sup>

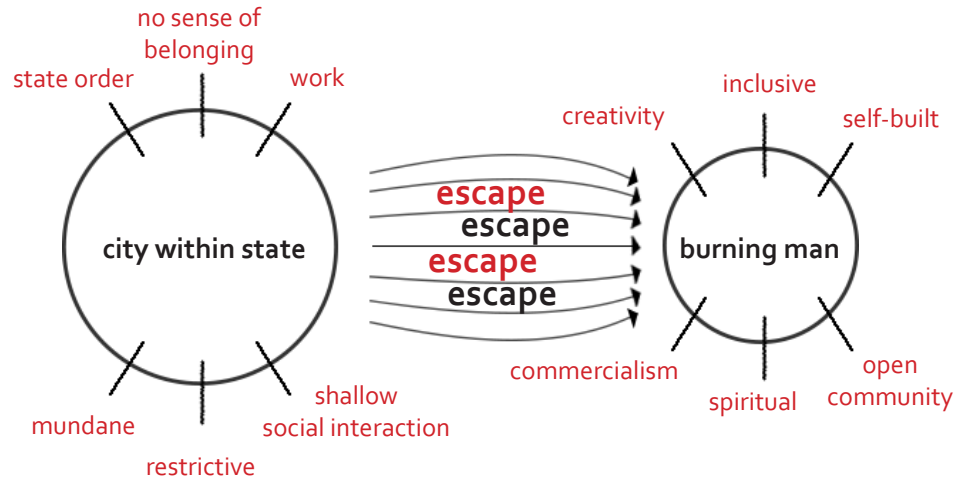
Over the years, this ritual became known world wide around late 1900s and participants increased in number in relation to tickets fee starting for free and becoming as of today costing \$400-\$1400. Are people escaping the reality or is this **just another social construct** given to people as a **trend** to be a part off?

Burning Man seems to have different impacts on individuals depending on their personalities because some people escape a reality which they consider hard working and a greater accumulation of material goods however lacking meaning and does not enrich a person's connection with their inner-self.<sup>24</sup> This causes them to escape to Burning Man, which impacts their life greatly to an extent that once they go back to reality, their perception of the world changes and causes them to live their life differently. In contrast, some people do not escape but rather go as a mode of trend.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Levi. "HOW (AND WHY) BURNING MAN CHANGES PEOPLE FOREVER," n.d. <https://superhumanacademy.com/podcast/burning-man-changes-people-forever/>.

<sup>23</sup> Levi. "HOW (AND WHY) BURNING MAN CHANGES PEOPLE FOREVER

<sup>24</sup> Levi. "HOW (AND WHY) BURNING MAN CHANGES PEOPLE FOREVER



### Spatial Conditions

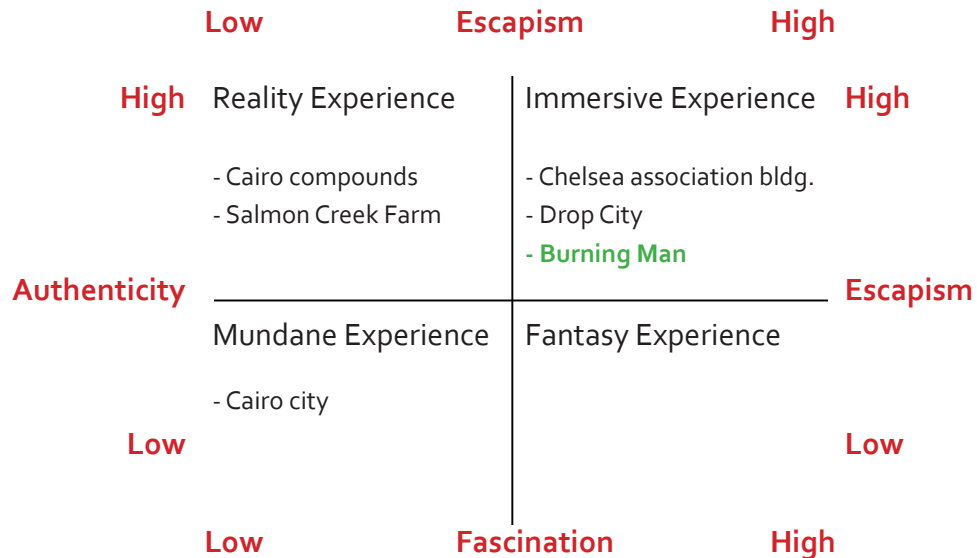
An empty land that becomes a city in one week to get destroyed in a night, has a different effect than communal spaces that are self-built. This is because people are building to destroy, so this does not create a sense of attachment to the place in the way that communes do. Is this a more effective way of escaping from reality? It maybe is, since you are not making Burning Man a reality, it helps in keeping it an escape mechanism, whereas communes make this escape a permanent reality which on the long run diverts from escaping and becomes a different way of living. It still is an escape from the state though, so which one is more convenient?

### From an Organizational Perspective

Burning Man was simply run by a few artists friends, but once it grew in scale, it became an organization including board members and CEO's. Having this organization made Burning Man turn into an establishment and if people wanna escape from capitalistic materialism, it wouldn't make sense to go to such a place so it becomes limited for escapist environments.

### From a Legal Perspective

People are escaping to break free from all the state rules that are socially imposed on people, such as drugs, sex, nudity. It becomes a temporary decentralized space for people to escape. They build their escapist environment through social cohesion and collaboration with one another.



In 1955, Disneyland opened in Anaheim. The idea of Disney came from making a place for both children and adults to have fun. Disney was derived as a product of other cities.<sup>25</sup> Plunging guests into a completely artificial experience that nonetheless is experienced as real, invokes urbanism without producing a city. A place of iconism and a place where people can escape the reality to enter a fairytale.<sup>26</sup> This is a temporary way of escaping and it is suitable for the majority of people.



[https://disney.fandom.com/wiki/Walt\\_Disney](https://disney.fandom.com/wiki/Walt_Disney)



<https://picclick.com/Vtg-California-1963-BLACK-WHITE-Disneyland-MARK-401069674502.html>

## Rituals Disneyland / EPCOT

In 1958, Walt Disney began to plan an actual residential city, EPCOT, and built it in 1982. The vision of how Walt wanted EPCOT to be was not achieved because of the control that Walt wanted over the city by removing civic rights and government control. EPCOT is now known as Disneyworld, an amusement park with restaurants and commercial shops.<sup>27</sup>

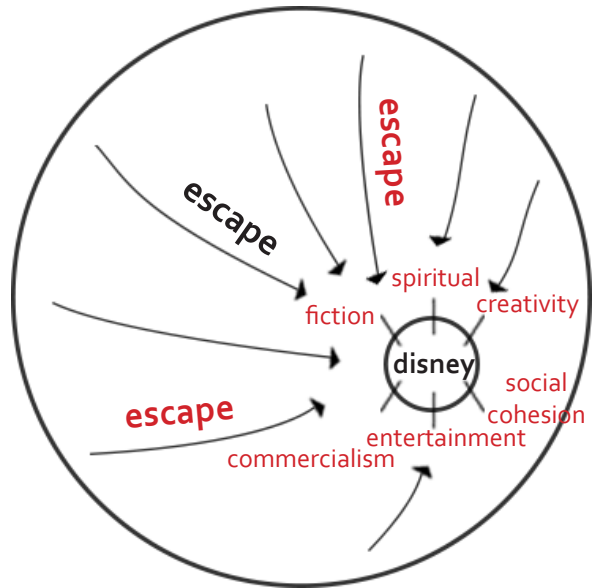
The concept of the way Disneyland was urbanly built is through Walt Disney's psyche. He used nostalgia and fascination as elements in the concept. The streets in Disneyland are derived from actual streets. He used the element of memories to create this nostalgia that really takes a person away from reality. These are the key elements that are used in an escapist environment.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Erin Blakemore. "Walt Disney, Urban Utopian," April 25, 2017. <https://daily.jstor.org/walt-disney-urban-utopian/>.

<sup>26</sup> Blakemore. "Walt Disney, Urban Utopian," April 25, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Tomorrowland: How Walt Disney's Strange Utopia Shaped the World of Tomorrow, n.d. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/may/21/tomorrowland-disney-strange-utopia-shaped-world-tomorrow>.

<sup>28</sup> The Architecture Of Main Street, U.S.A. in Disney World's Magic Kingdom – <https://pursuitist.com/the-architecture-of-main-street-u-s-a-in-disney-worlds-magic-kingdom-photo-tour/>



Frontierland evokes the Old West



[http://www.charactercentral.net/L146\\_DisneyCharacters\\_DisneylandResort\\_Disneyland\\_Frontierland.aspx](http://www.charactercentral.net/L146_DisneyCharacters_DisneylandResort_Disneyland_Frontierland.aspx)



Main Street USA inspired by the 20thC Mid-western town

<https://disneyarks.disney.go.com/blog/2018/03/main-street-u-s-a-refurbishment-complete-at-disneyland-park/>

Aluminum Hall of Fame - visions of the future



<http://duchessofdisneyland.com/park-history/kaizer-aluminum-hall-of-fame/>



The Monorail - realistic preview of transportation

<https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/design-of-disneyland-book>

### Spatial Conditions

Looking at Disney's urban plan, as mentioned previously, the streets are a derivation of actual streets in the USA that are representations of Walt's childhood. Disney used his memories to create this utopia where there is a mixture of fairytale and technology because as a child he his uncle was a train engineer and he had a passion for trains, similarly, he had a passion for animation which Disneyland is all about.

### From an Organizational Perspective

Disneyland has a huge organization that is controlling everything happening around so that it maintains its status as the 'Utopia'. What's different about this organization is that it seems so alien to the space in order to put people in this dream that it is an actual fairy tale and not man made. This is what differs Disney's organization from the rest where its organization is one of the important reasons why people are being able to escape to the other world whereas in Burning Man's case, the organization made it revolve around capitalism.

### From a Legal Perspective

When people go to Disneyland, they are not escaping from state or order because Disney has even more rules that a person has to abide by, however, what compensates is the Utopian City that people get to be around, and the rollercoaster that takes a person to a different kind of euphoria.



## Experiments

### Stanford Prison Experiment

The study of group dynamics can help in understanding the behavioral systems people use to interact and the variables that affect it.

Stanford Prison Experiment has been done in 1971 to test the psychological effects of perceived power, focusing on the struggle between prisoners and prison. Any volunteers could sign up to participate in the experiment that would last for two weeks, however the experiment could only last six days. The participants would be divided into two groups, prisoners and prison guards and put in a prison setting to test the behaviours of each group. The prison guards had direct contact with the psychologist and his assistants that planned out the experiment and throughout the experiment they would tell the guards to be more harsh on the prisoners to see what kind of reaction they would give. After having done so, the prisoners went psychologically unstable and everything had to be stopped.<sup>29</sup>

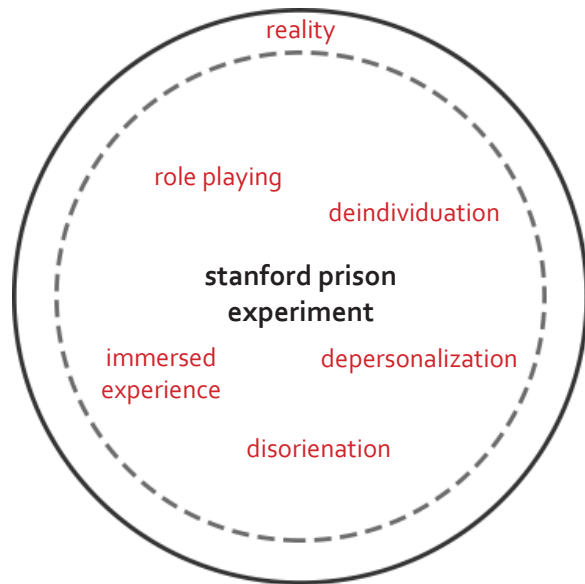
It is seen that once people are given roles to act in, they start to behave accordingly and it becomes a reality. In this case where there is a demand characteristic, people feel that it is acceptable to harm or control one another. This is a form of escape where people play roles of different characters to escape their identity and become someone else. People usually do not play roles in life, so this opportunity of having a role to play for a couple of days excited the people to escape and try something new.<sup>30</sup>



<https://science.howstuffworks.com/innovation/scientific-experiments/stanford-prison-experiment.htm>

<sup>29</sup>Thomas Carnahan and Sam McFarland. "Revisiting the Stanford Prison Experiment: Could Participant Self-Selection Have Led to the Cruelty?" (May 2007), 604.

<sup>30</sup>Carnahan and McFarland. Revisiting the Stanford Prison Experiment, 605.



### Spatial Conditions

The setting the subjects were put in looks exactly like a prison allowing them to immerse completely in their roles. This makes them forget who they are to an extent where they can doubt whether it is an act or reality anymore. The prison guards got affected by the surroundings, allowing them to escape and believe in their role causing the prisoners to feel frustration and psychological torture.

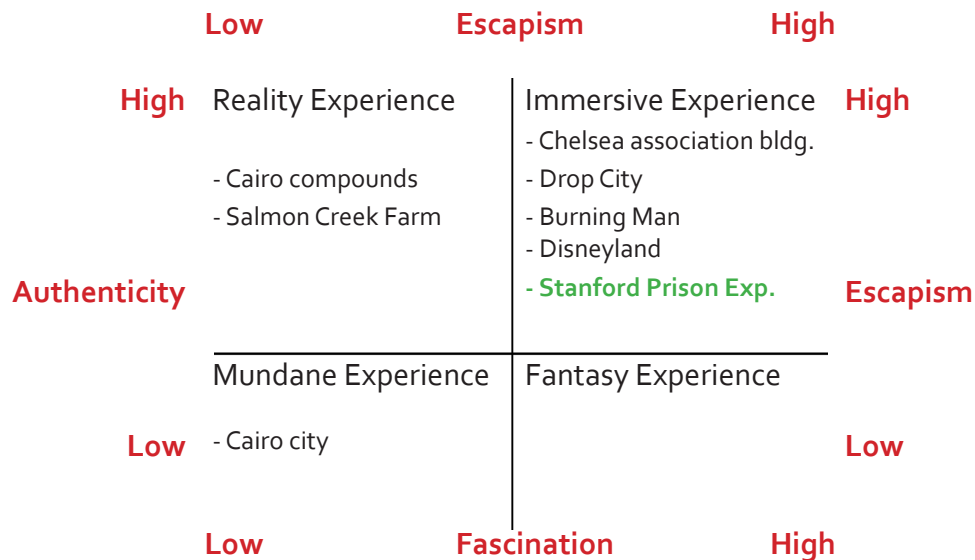
### From an Organizational Perspective

The idea of organization is similar to that one of Disneyland's because there is this full control for people to be put in a setting where everything is artificial but it is organized so well people forget it is a reality and are immersed in the experience. This hidden control that sets the experience can help in the escapism of an individual in a successful way.

When people are given the right to practice their power on individuals, they usually take the advantage and push the limits as far as can be. The control that is given by the organizations is important to be hidden from the subjects or else the experiment would fail. This is in contrast from what we see in our daily life where control is made obvious for people to notice.

### From a Legal Perspective

The psychologist that organized the experiment projected the 'prisoners' to so much harm and violence that everyone complained afterwards how unethical it was and this usually does not happen in our conventional ways of living because it is wrong to project an individual to such harsh experience.





## Experiments Rhythm o

This was a six-hour performance done by **Marina Abramovic** where she put 72 objects on the table ranging from feathers and honey to scissors and knives. The rules were that Marina were to stand in that room as an object and she gave permission for anyone to use these chosen objects which ever way they want on her and she would take full responsibility for it. The purpose of this performance was to see **how far the public will go**.<sup>31</sup>

The public began using these objects very softly on her for the first hour, however they started to get more comfortable in the situation and began **cutting** and **harming** Marina's body. The freedom they had on her body made them push the limits so far as if they own her body. This made them feel they had **power** over her. After five hours of torture, the performance was done and Marina could move and talk, but the minute she took a step forward, the public knew that the performance was over and they **could not confront her** so they **left** the studio immediately. During the performance, Marina **escaped psychologically** to the idea that she is an object and not a human, this has led her to **accept** any external change done to her.<sup>32</sup>

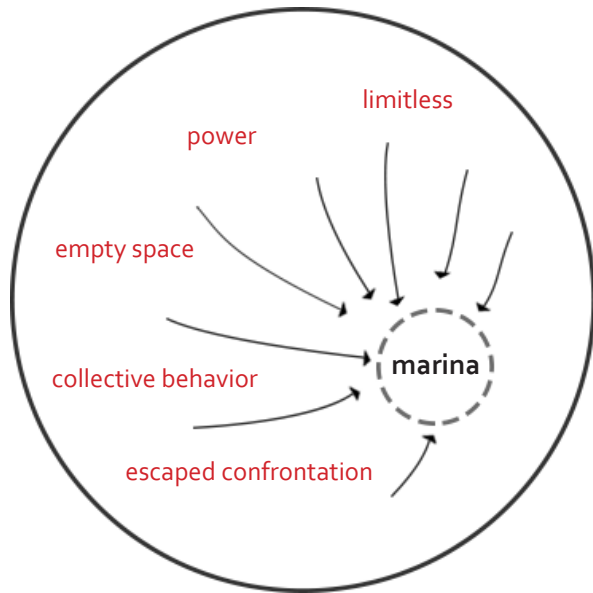
The escape in this experiment is the **audience that could not confront Marina** after what they did to her so they walkd away.



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/419960733980566818/?lp=true>

<sup>31</sup> Kristen Renzi. "Safety in Objects: Discourses of Violence and Value—The Rokeby Venus and Rhythm o." 2013, 131.

<sup>32</sup> Renzi, Kristen. 2013. "Safety in Objects: Discourses of Violence and Value—The Rokeby Venus and Rhythm o." 137.



### Spatial Conditions

People previously were in a place where there were rules and limitations. In this case, the studio presented these objects that tenders an individual to use them on the object. The reason for the audience's escape was not because of the spatial environment but rather escape Marina.

I am focusing on the **bodily understanding of herself as architecture**. What is interesting about Marina's spatial performances is that she uses an empty fractured space where she uses her body as a form of landscape or architecture and relies on the audience relating to her bodily experience as some form of extension of architecture. So, she never invests in distracting and providing visual escapism in terms of aesthetics that compounds in Cairo use. Instead she uses her own psychology in the way she creates a bond with the people, to create an out-of-bodily experience in the immediate moment of interaction.

### From an Organizational Perspective

This kind of experiment was organized by Marina, but during the performance, the audience viewed her merely as an object. After the performance was over, they could not face her because they perceived her differently.

### From a Legal Perspective

The audience escaped the confrontation between them and Marina because normally what was done to her would be unethical and illegal.

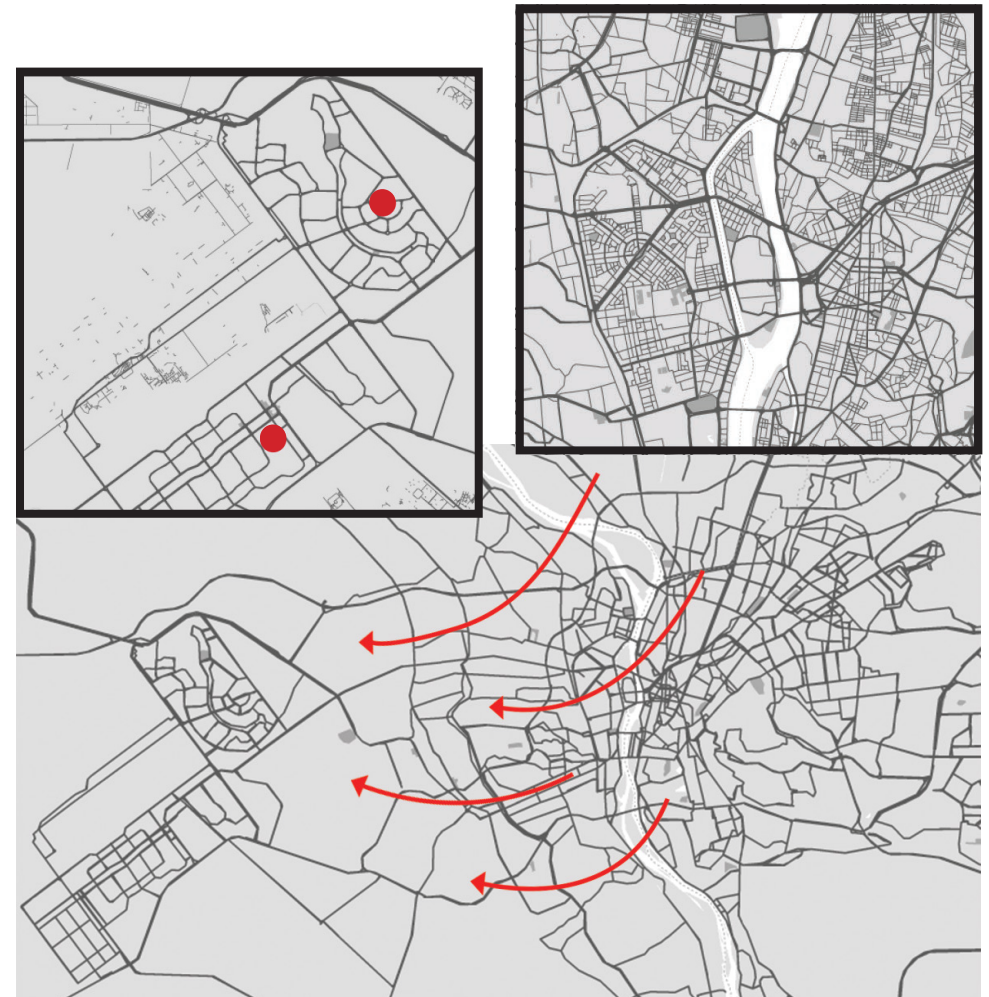
	Low	Escapism	High
Authenticity	High	Reality Experience - Cairo compounds - Salmon Creek Farm	Immersive Experience - Chelsea association bldg. - Drop City - Burning Man - Disneyland - Stanford Prison Exp. - <b>Rhythm o</b>
	Low	Mundane Experience - Cairo city	Fantasy Experience
	Low	Fascination	High

# Cairo City escape to Compounds

**In residential settlements such as Cairo's gated communities, Chelsea Hotel, and the commune settlements, escapism can be questioned whether it becomes permanent, and if not, when does it stop?**

Escapism is when an individual is psychologically at comfort and escaping from certain things, however the answer to the question above is escapism is not something permanent even in those cases.

People will always be subjected to discomfort and when they are in an escapist environment, they forget that the reason they are existing in such place is because they were escaping something.





# Chelsea Bldg.

an escape from NYC

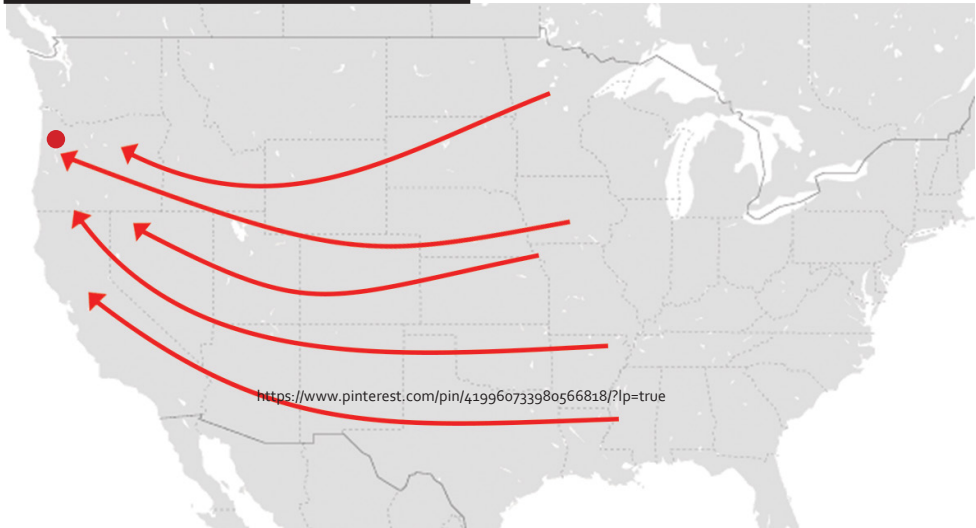
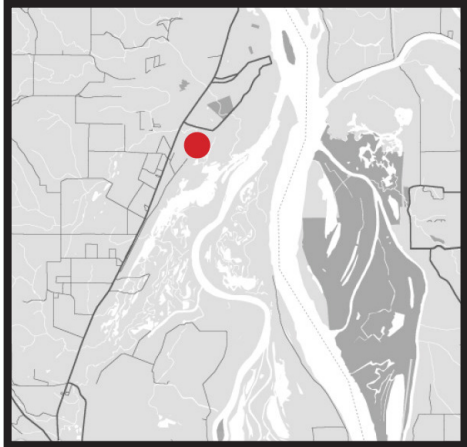


<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/419960733980566818/?lp=true>



# Salmon Creek Farm

an escape from City



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/419960733980566818/?lp=true>

# Drop City

an escape from

City



<https://nonada.es/2013/03/drop-city-hippismo-a-lo-bauhaus.html>



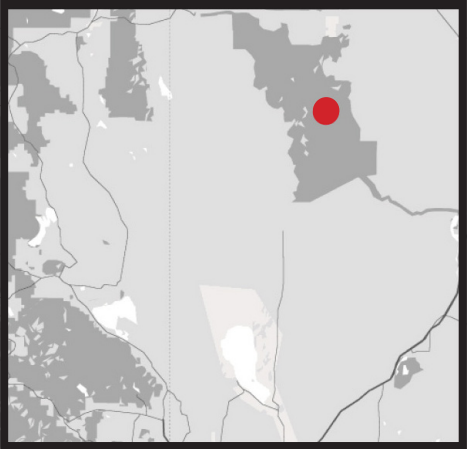
# Burning Man

an escape from

Daily life



<https://www.realistichippy.com/>





# Disneyland an escape from Daily life



<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Elias-Disney.jpg>



After researching the extensive different ways one can escape, it seems that escape is a privilege in most cases. Escapism nowadays is commercialized and people buy their escape however can everyone afford to do it?

Firstly, I wanted to tackle this subject through making similar escapist environments as mentioned previously in each case study where it is seen that for Escapism to happen, one has to go from one place to another. In other words, leaving the space behind to find a more suitable alternative.

However, in my approach, my question is:

**How can I diffuse the notion of Escapism within the system itself?**

I will be taking Cairo as my field of research, and instead of having the process of excavation and leaving the place, I will look at how Escapism can be done within Cairo and its desires.



## Two potential sites in Cairo

Site 1: Zamalek



Site 2: Beverly Hills, Sheikh Zayed, 6th of October



# Position & Proposal

Having experienced the shift of the Capital City from Old Cairo to Compounds my project aims to provide a community in the heart of the city with all the amenities needed including what is provided by the Gated Communities. A Communal Project Centre that is providing an alternative way to the people living in compounds which would have an identity that is more rooted to tradition. This communal core offers a unique and particular ritual and tradition of the place.

## Proposal

Having lived in Cairo all my life, I have experienced the shift of the capital city from Old Cairo into the outskirts due to the formation of Gated Communities. Gated Communities segregate the different economic classes, however, what is interesting in the urban fabric of Cairo is the diversity that is found within the same area (Zamalek being one of the most prominent areas that has such diversity).

## Position

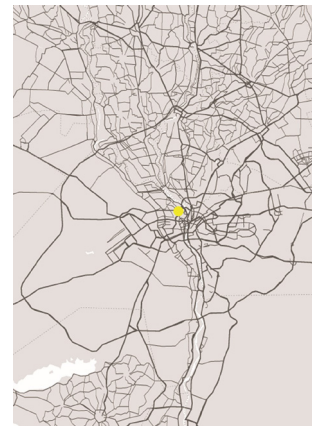
By taking the main elements the compounds use, my project aims to provide a community in the heart of the city with all the amenities needed including what is provided by the Gated Communities. A **Communal Project Centre** that is providing an alternative way to the people living in compounds which would have an identity that is more rooted to tradition. The communal core offers a unique and particular ritual and tradition of the place.

**Mandara** - an interior room always open where people gather together under the permission of the owner. During the day, anyone can use the room for shelter. At night it converts to a place where neighbors and friends meet for events or a place where problems are resolved.

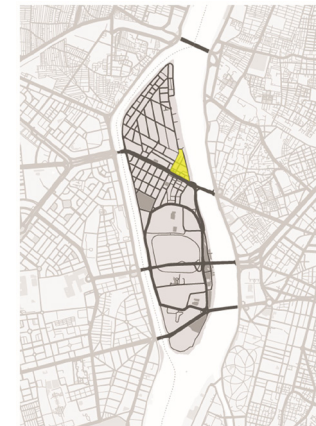
«المنندرة» حجرة في واجهات المنازل الريفية مفتوحة على الدوام يؤمها الضيوف دون استئذان صاحب المنزل، وما إن يأتي ضيف أو غريب أو عابر سبيل ويدخل «المنندرة» حتى يبادره الخدم بالطعام والشراب. وفي المساء تتحول المنندرة إلى مكان للسمر وحل المنازعات والتصالح والتشاور بين الجيران والأصدقاء.

I chose this to be the name of my project because not only is it a term that people in Egypt are familiar with but additionally, it explains my project however I will exteriorize its meaning to provide an outdoor communal experience.

Cairo



Zamalek



Site Location



## Elements found in Compounds

Moreover, after surveying the people that lived in cities versus compounds, this made me look at the elements that compounds use that bring people to them. This was done by looking at commercials and brochures that Gated communities use. By highlighting the keywords that catch people's attention it was clear as to what these elements were.

### Green Open Spaces

Parks

Sports Club

Self-Sustainability

Away from City Stress

### Wide Selection of Units

### Walkability

Diversified National & International Experience

Commercial

Restaurants

Shops

Art Galleries

Theatre Halls & Cinema

### Young and Vibrant Feel

Families and Children

Management Services

Education

Security

Entertainment

**Exclusive Community**

**Privacy & Peace**

### Contained and Functional Community

I started locating all these elements on the existing fabric in Zamalek to see what is missing versus what is already existent there. The left-out elements are shown at the bottom. These elements would be prominent in my project.





# Neighborhood Analysis

## Social Profile



Zamalek has a mixture of old and new building typologies. Therefore, rental regulation differ according to each building and its history. This highlights the fact that there are very expensive and very cheap apartments in the same area. This reflects the economical mixture that is preserved in Zamalek.

## Climatic Analysis of Cairo

Weather in Cairo is usually dry because it is a desert climate with only 3 months of cool, dry and mostly clear winter weather. There is almost no rain and May to September is extremely hot. During summer the avg. temperature is usually 26 °C and during winter is it 15 °C.

### Strategy

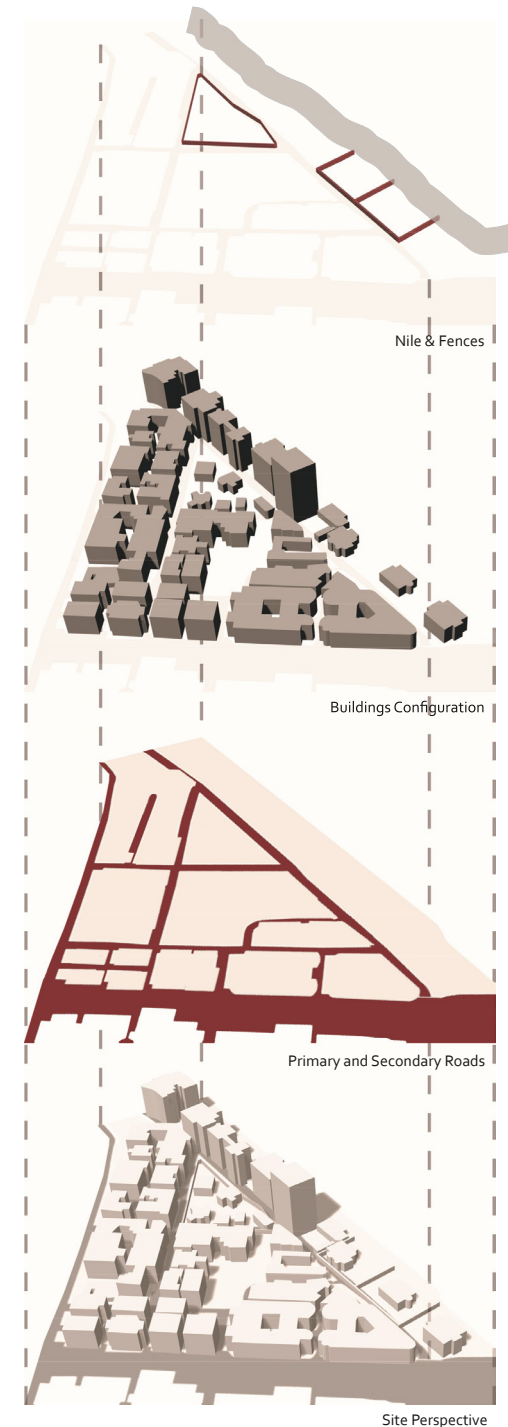
The amenities used in compounds are:

- Security / Safety
- Open Space
- Children Club House
- Variety of Apartments

The challenge is to provide all the mentioned above factors within a public atmosphere.

The programs are as follows:

- Public Parks	1860 m <sup>2</sup>
- Bazaar and an Exhibition Space for the Craftsmen	600 m <sup>2</sup>
- Craftsmen Workshop	950 m <sup>2</sup>
- Parking	5000 m <sup>2</sup>
- Natour room	60 m <sup>2</sup>
- Service kitchen	60 m <sup>2</sup>
- Club House	180 m <sup>2</sup>
- Club House Garden	60 m <sup>2</sup>
- Studios	1320 m <sup>2</sup>
- Different sized Apartments	5280 m <sup>2</sup>



The Street appropriations are what makes the streets in Cairo. The people of the street that cause this appropriation are usually the nature of the building and the people for the valet parking. They get their children and spend so much time on the street.

I additionally analyzed the flow of the people on the street and the nature and valet people are mainly always there (they take shifts between each other), so the street is always a busy street and it becomes like their home therefore a lot of trust is built between them and the people who live in the buildings and this in turn insures security.

### Street Appropriations



### Users in Zamalek and their Flow

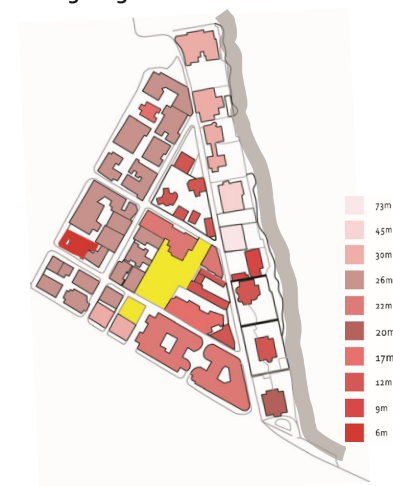




Land Use



Building Heights



Types of Plantations



Street



Entrance



Hallway

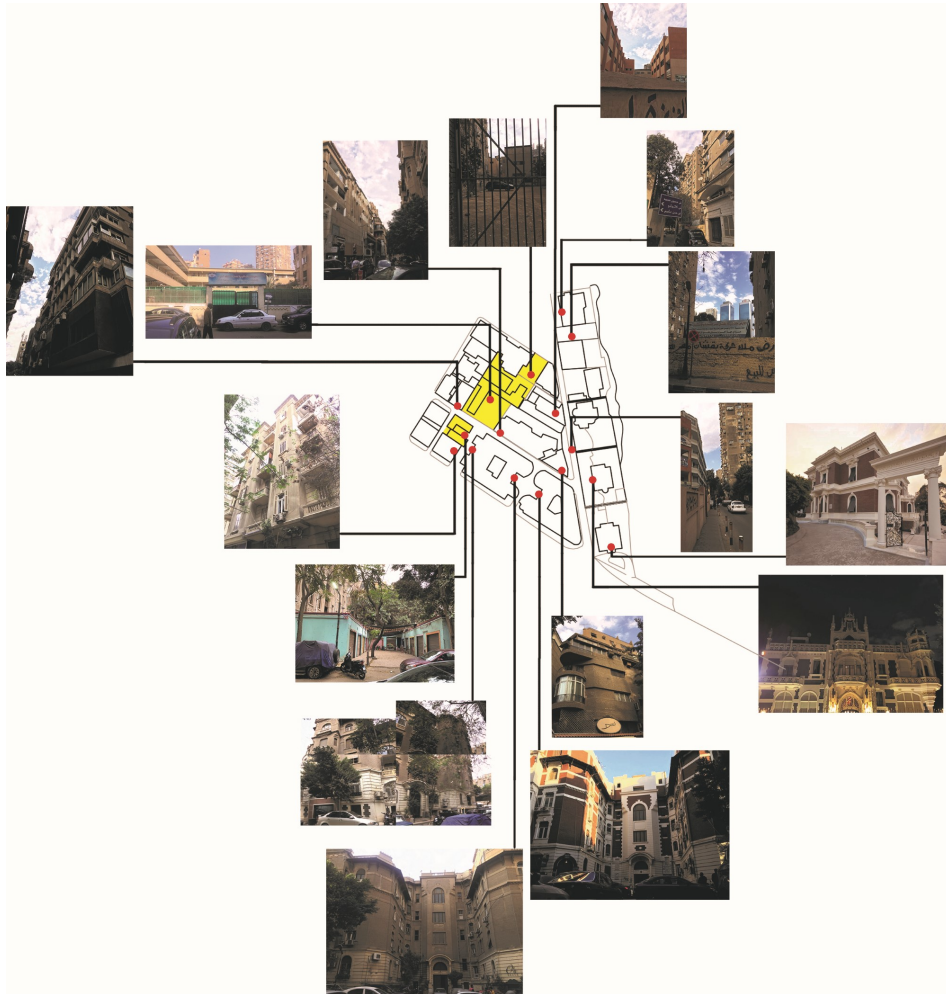


Window / Balcony

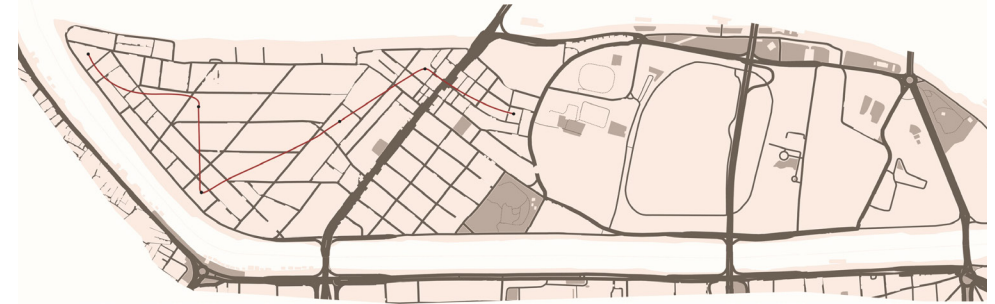


# Site Analysis

## Buildings around the Site



## The Spine



The project aim is to suggest an alternative way of dealing with neighborhoods as a living and working environment through a communal project centre in the face of Gated Communities. It is composed of a spine with several nodes along. These nodes are chosen specifically on points where people on the street are very prominent and appropriate the street in their own way. Each node acts as a communal core along the spine. Through each node the neighborhood extends vertically since the city cannot afford to extend horizontally. An important element in the project is to exteriorize the name **Mandara** to create an outdoor urban-dense experience. I will be designing in detail one specific node but it is a prototype that can be applied to all these locations and has the capability of extending further.

## Site Location



There is no connection between the street and the existing buildings, and this is what I initially aimed for my project to have. A connection between the two.



# Master Plan



Scale 1:2000

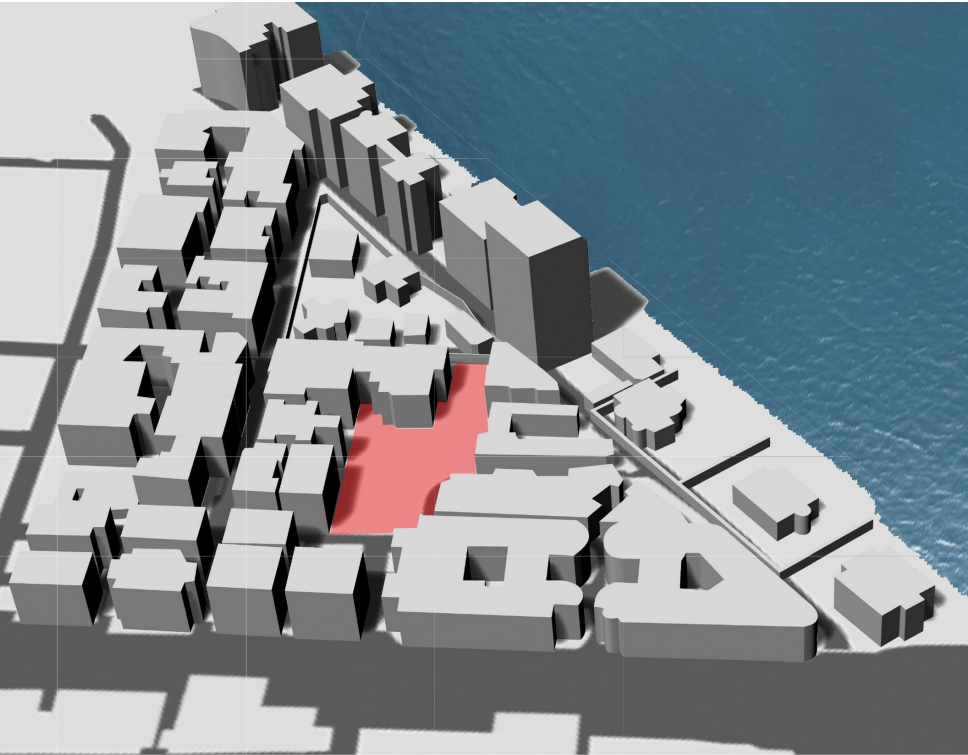
## Elevation AA



## Elevation BB

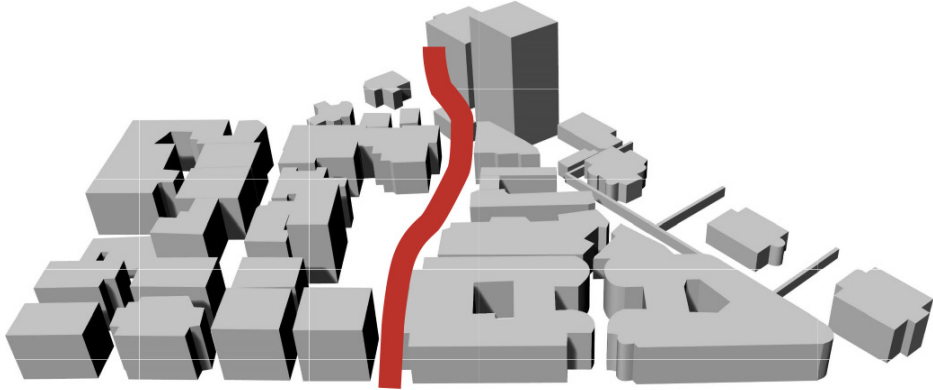


# Neighborhood Composition



My site is close to the Nile and the buildings surrounding it are low especially the ones facing the Nile directly and this is because they are either villas, embassies or palaces.

# Public street passing through Site



My site connects two streets, so people will be passing through my project. There will be visitors that will pass through the project and the commercial program will be on the floor to ensure that people pass through my proj-

# Site User



# Vision

## Collage of Vision



## Collage of Program Vision

Public Park



Craftsmen Workshop



Commercial Bazaar



# Project Detail

Commercial +  
Natour Room

Squares

16

Units

12

Area (m2)

960

Children Park

31

3

1860

Working Studios

22

15

1320

Apartments

93

58

5280

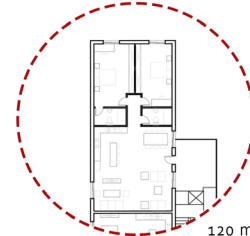


60 m2

31

31

1860

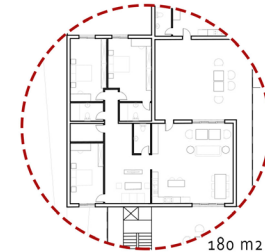


120 m2

38

19

2280



180 m2

24

8

1140

Number of Parking Spots

110

Plot

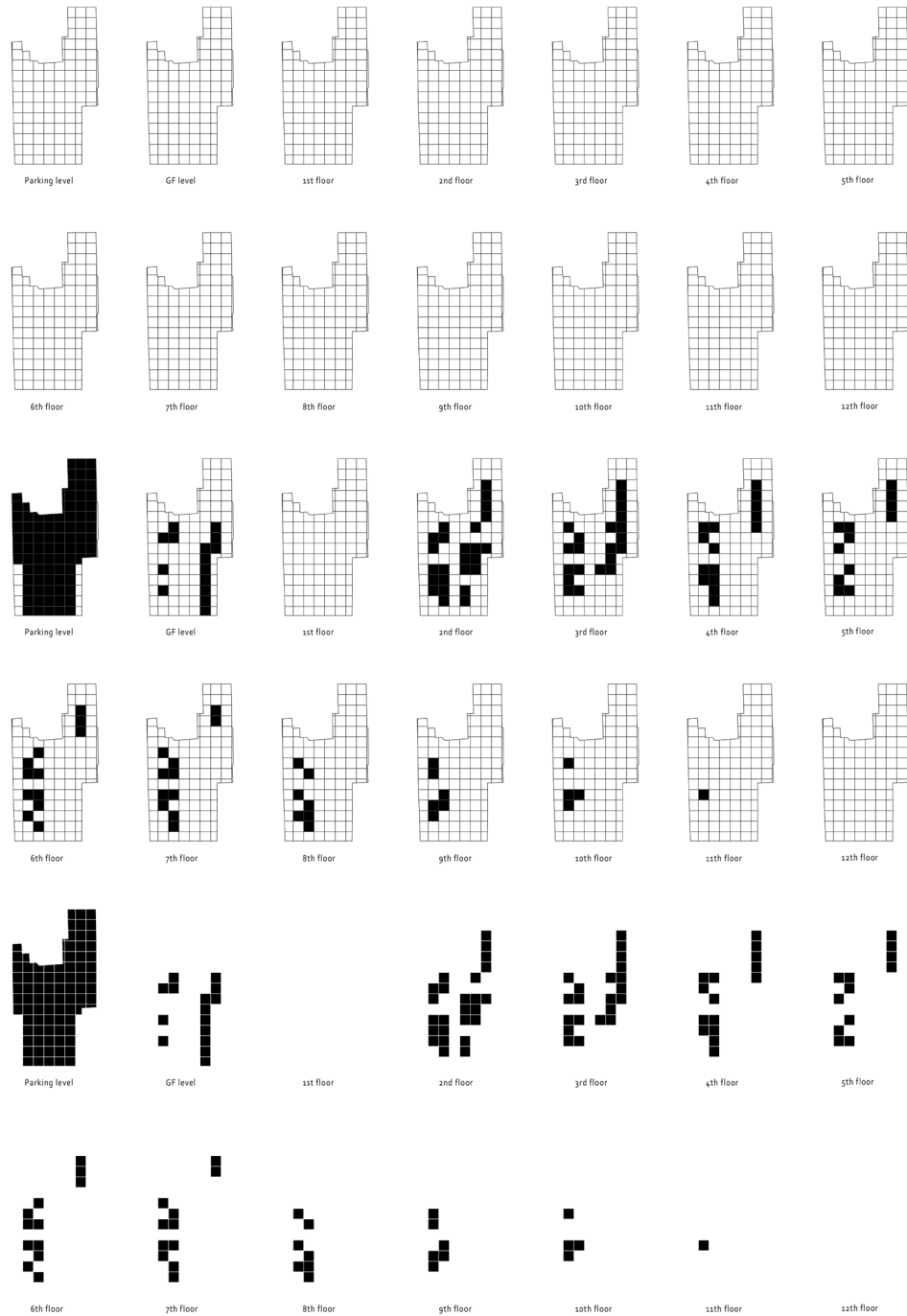
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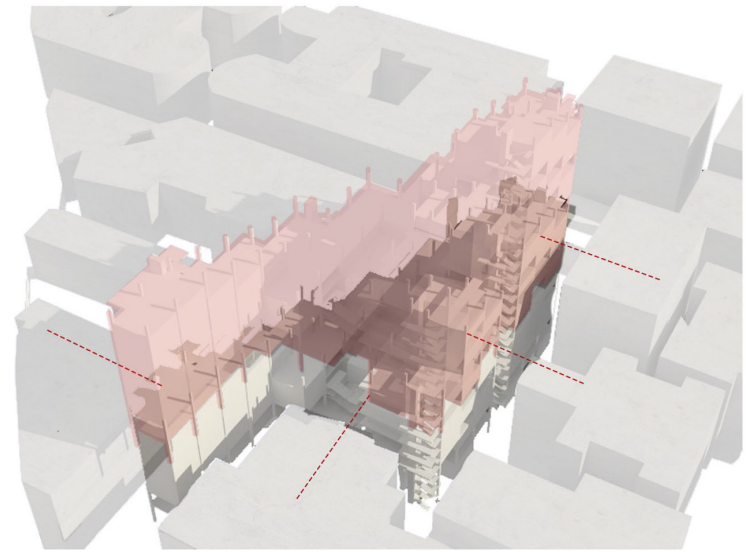
9420



# Grid Strategy

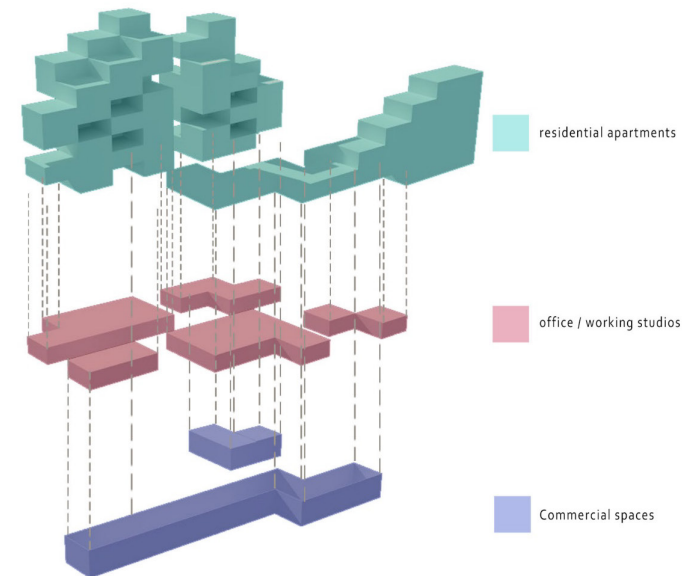


# Project and Building Height



The heights of the project is in harmony with the surrounding buildings. This prevents the project from being alien to the site so it works with the urban fabric.

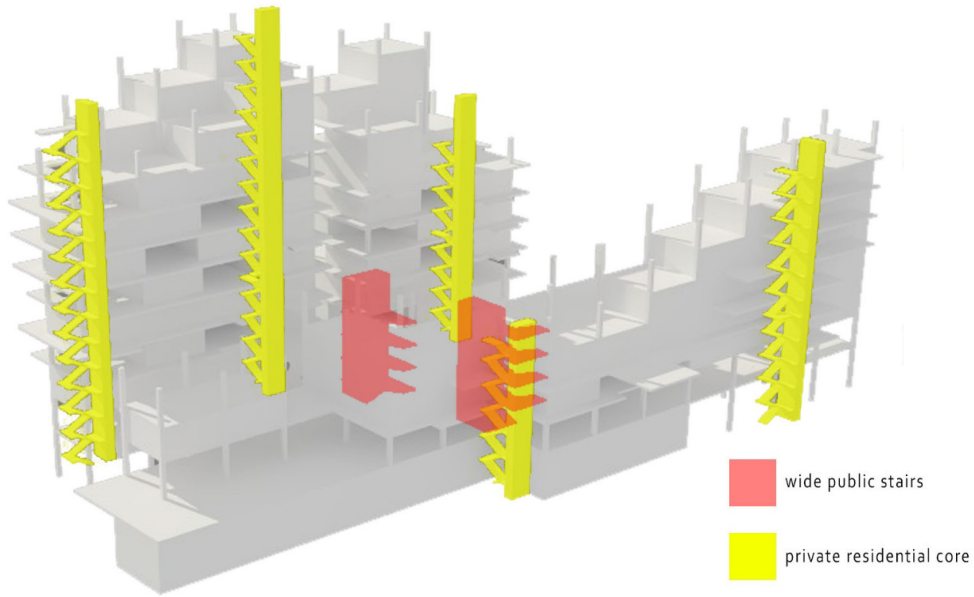
# Program Division



The programs are divided vertically. It start from being completely public on the GF level to being semi-public and finally completely private.

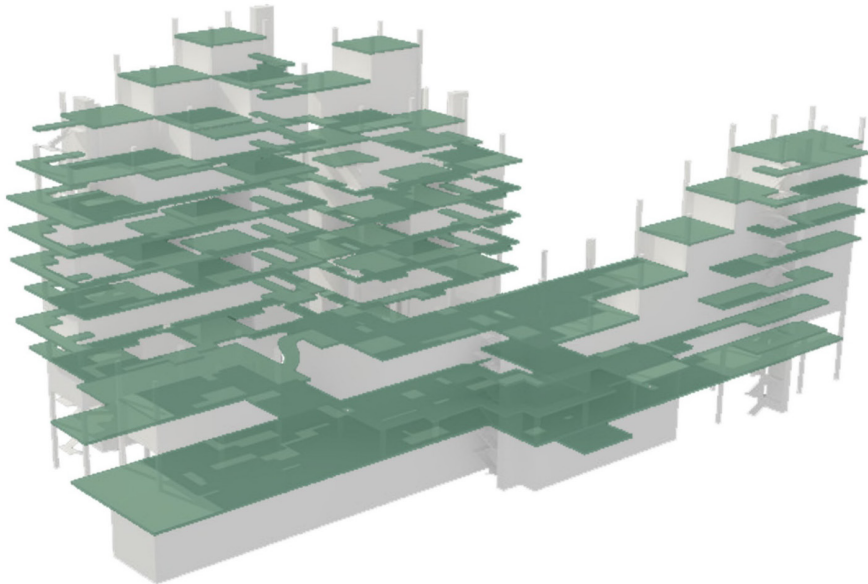


## Vertical Circulation



The vertical circulation is divided into the residential private access and the completely public access to the community

## Outdoor Horizontal Circulation and Communal Spaces



The circulation is completely exteriorized and the roofs of the building are used as communal spaces for the residents. This encourages the residential community to integrate and build a friendly atmosphere.

## Stepped Courtyard and Roof



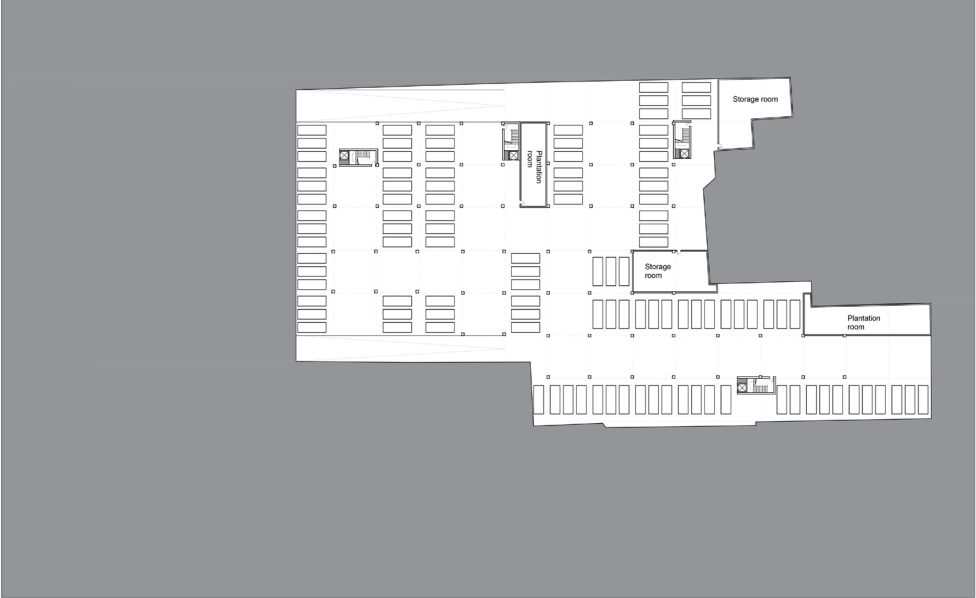
## Services and Outdoor Spaces



# Last Floor View



# Plans



-1 Level

Scale 1:350



GF Level

Scale 1:350



1st Floor

Scale 1:350



3rd Floor

Scale 1:350



2nd Floor

Scale 1:350



4th Floor

Scale 1:350





5th Floor

Scale 1:350



7th Floor

Scale 1:350



6th Floor

Scale 1:350



8th Floor

Scale 1:350



9th Floor

Scale 1:350



11th Floor

Scale 1:350



10th Floor

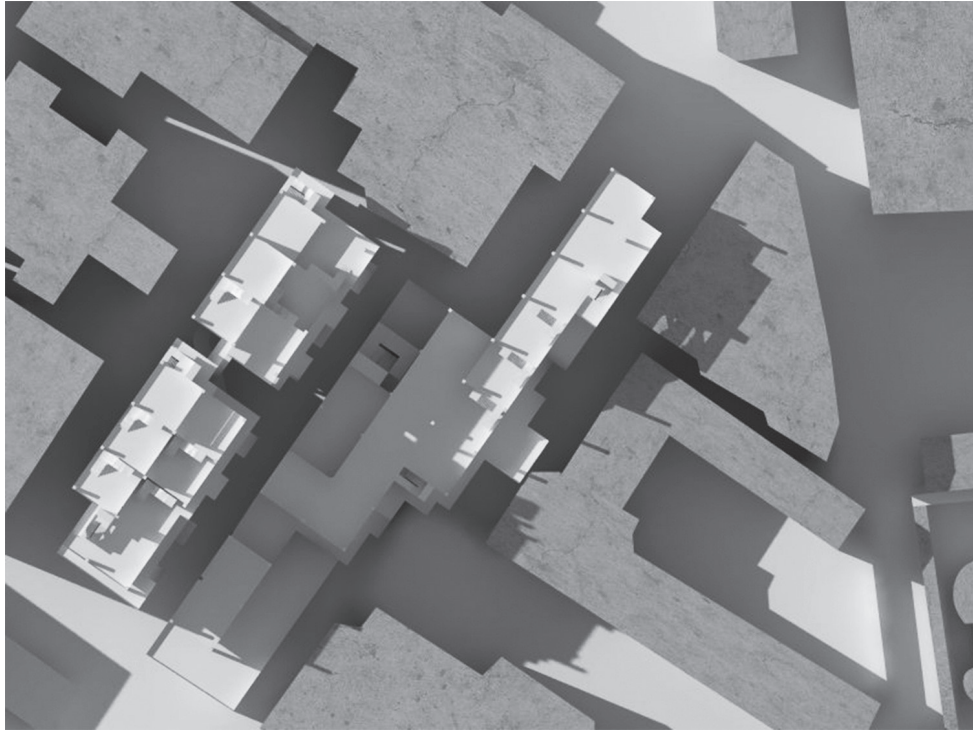
Scale 1:350



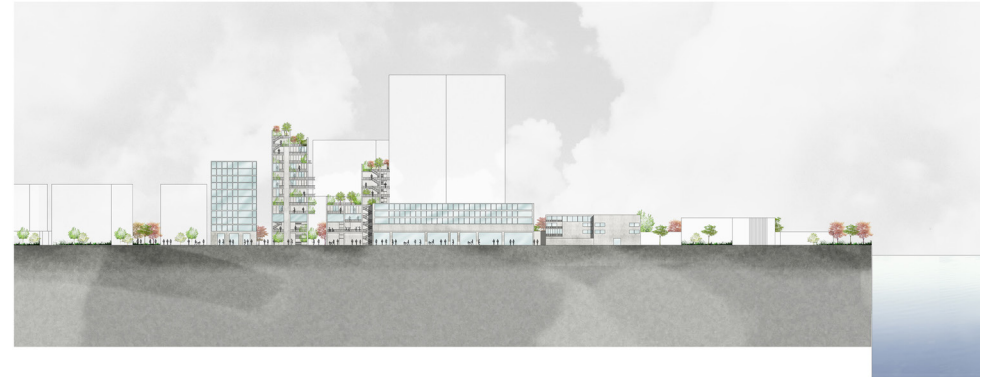
Top View

Scale 1:350

# Drawings and Model



Top View



North-East Elevation

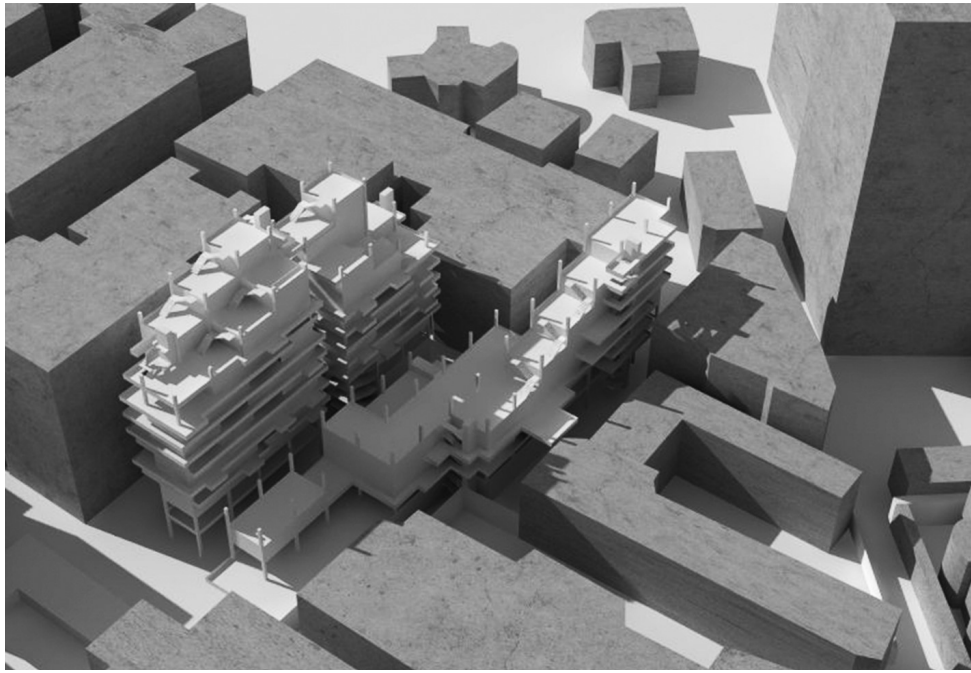
Scale 1:500



South-West Elevation

Scale 1:500







Sectional Perspective

This is highlighting a strong view point my project encompasses where the trees and plants play an important role of how the project looks like and how it leads the people on the ground floor to walk in a particular way. In other residential buildings the GF have high ceilings for entrances but since I am exteriorizing the circulation the heights of the ceiling are clearly high giving a nice open atmosphere. The park gives the project a young vibrant life. The club house ensures that parents can leave their children there and go to work especially females since in Egypt a lot of mothers find difficulty regarding this issue.

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