



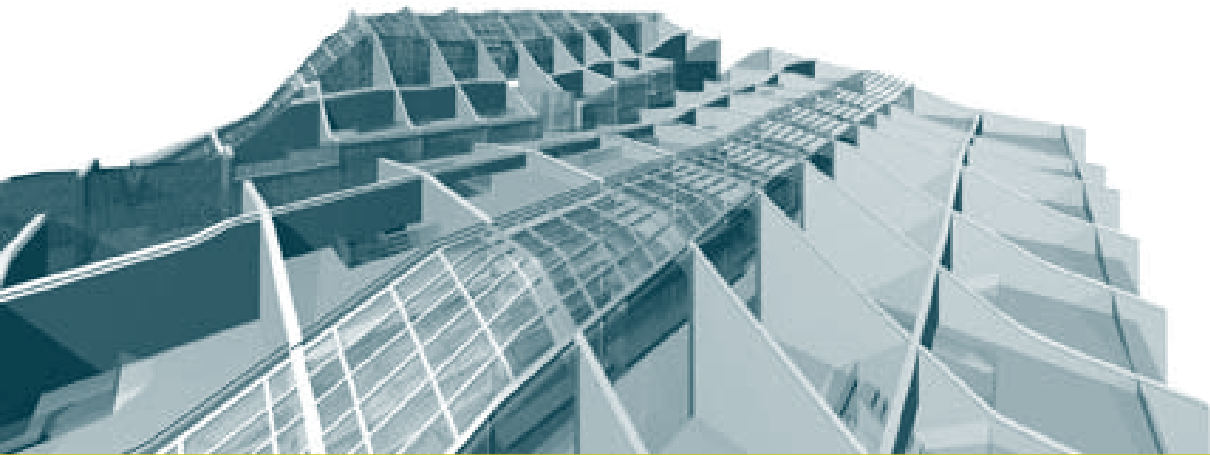
URBAN ECOLOGY

CHANGE, CONTINUITY AND THE MODIFIED GROUND

BY RENÉ DAVIDS, AMIE CHAN AND JAY ATHERTON

URBAN HISTORY

The construction of the Central Freeway, which divided the Hayes Valley in the mid-20th century, treated the city of San Francisco as a blank slate, destroying the existing neighborhoods and community infrastructure in its path. Today, the Hayes Valley portion of the freeway is being replaced by a landscaped boulevard and housing with the intention of creating a whole new place.



TOPOGRAPHICS

The current proposal for Octavia Boulevard responds to the removal of the freeway with a similar clean-slate attitude regarding the city fabric. But the culture of cities is enriched by historical continuity, including some of those episodes perceived as mistakes in retrospect. Our proposal for the parcels "O" and "P" of Octavia Boulevard retains a portion of modified topography and recaptures it as a roof profile. Rather than the wholesale imitation of a Parisian street, our project suggests a hybrid urbanism that draws inspiration from San Francisco's topography and indigenous building traditions.

URBANITY

To maintain the vitality and character of neighborhood streets, the design combines three types of apartments served by a single stair, an arrangement that allows a number of families to co-exist in a "townhouse" configuration. While the residential units form a system of stacked apartments, we have eliminated a few to create visual communication between the interior courtyards and the street. Many of the units are duplexes that offer attractive double-height spaces and a dual orientation to allow for cross-ventilation. ^{FW}

René Davids is a professor of architecture and urban design at the UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design and is a principal of Davids Killory Architecture. René partnered with Amie Chan and Jay Atherton on the Octavia Boulevard competition.

