

"Landscape of activities"

Experimental workplace for new entrepreneurs

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1.0 ABSTRACT

"Landscape of activities" is a proposal for a new business incubator in the multicultural Shibuya area in Tokyo, that aims to show a way in workplace design that reflects on Japan's present labour situation.

By the crisis of the institute of lifetime employment, types of jobs, as well as work habits and environments transform. The ongoing paradigm change in labour needs to draw the use of new structures that are socially and programmatically more integrated into their urban landscape.

Therefore "Landscape of activities" is also a design strategy, that shows a methodology how to create a building out of its surrounding, how to build a receptive workplace by the pieces of its urban landscape.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 JAPAN'S ECONOMIC-SOCIAL STATUS

What the last two decades shows us in Japan's economic and social status is that the long-believed lifetime employment system of white-collar workers (salarymen) loses its power, and more and more groups of the social range find their future somewhere outside the system.

Other unsolved problem is the working-women's case: although women share 48% of university graduates, only 67% of them are currently employed, usually in low-paid, part-time, "office-lady" roles. An extra disadvantage of theirs is the yet problematic question of childcare.¹

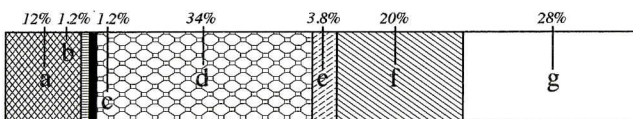
2.2 NEW NEEDS IN WORK / LABOUR MARKET

"I had no desire to become a salaryman after my graduation."²

Akira Yamauchi

"This (startup-business) is the beginning of something that could rejuvenate Japan. Entrepreneurship is Japan's last chance."³

Mitsuru Izumo



(a: Unemployed - 12%; b: NEET - 1.2%; c: Hikikomori - 1.2%; d: Non-regular workers - 34%; e: Freeters - 3.8%; f: Non-satisfied with the job - 20%; g: Employed, satisfied - 28%)

Fig.1 Current employment rates in Japan⁴

As we can see, the latest trends, the newest predictions in economy show a shift in labour market from the fix, rigid corporation-ruled business life to a more flexible, human centered entrepreneurship system.

This project shows a solution focusing on EDUCATION. The aim is to support young professional individuals, who have the talent and knowledge to improve their original ideas to a success in business. The confidence and the experience of responsibility they need to do so is approachable by giving them positions, where their ideas are considered and valued.

A BUSINESS INCUBATOR is a place where these conditions are provided.

This should be a place, where people, who have ideas, can gather, a place, which stimulates them, a place, that supports extroverted and introverted people and work processes and a place, that erases the idea of uniformized workplaces.

In order to achieve it, this project restructures public and private spaces found in an office building.

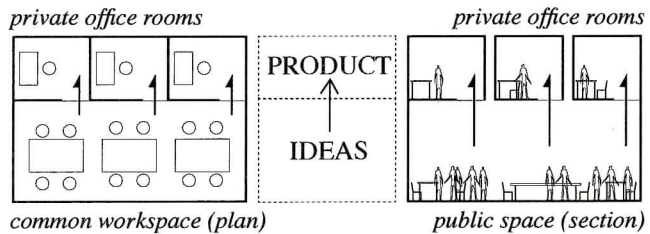


Fig.2 Typical office space layout

Fig.3 Proposal: layout turned vertically to create public and private spaces

The PUBLIC SPACE becomes more receptive, it invites outsiders to enjoy the landscape of activities of the incubated startup companies, it provides opportunity to communicate an idea. There are no restrictions in this space, everyone can shape or reform the space, because it belongs to a COMMUNITY, which changes all the time.

The PRIVATE OFFICE SPACES become vertically separated from the public space on the groundfloor, so that individual work is provided with a calm environment where people can focus on their work. This division also reflects the work process in the incubator: ideas are born in a diverse environment on the ground floor, and business development happens on the upper floors, where the companies have proper private spaces.

2.3 THE EXISTING MERITS OF THE CITY

One of the main concerns in case of a business incubator and its work efficiency is whether it is properly located in the city. One group of these incubators are located in far away distances from the city centre in order to provide a hermetic workplace and reduce cost. The only condition these places cannot fulfil is the SOCIAL INTEGRATION of the new companies. This is the reason why a new wave of business incubators are located closer to the city centre or to other cultural, financial hubs in the city.

Another purpose of locating this incubator in Shibuya, Jingumae is to get advantage of the already existing urban functions in the area, such as sport facilities, parks, kindergartens, schools, banks. Having these in the vicinity of the incubator helps improving work efficiency, networking, or solving problematic social issues, like the working women's case.

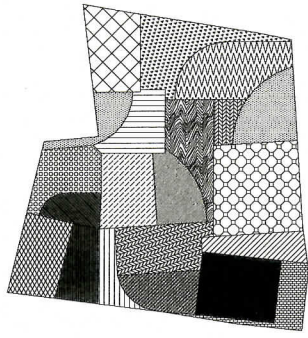


Fig.4 Landscape



Fig.5 Landscape of activities

3.0 DESIGN STRATEGIES

3.1 LANDSCAPES

“Landscape” primarily refers to the diversity of textures, colours, greenery and topography of the site. The now existing parking lot terrace is being deconstructed to a terraced landscape in order to have the site smoothly integrated to its urban environment. This solution also enables the visitors to approach the site from any possible directions.

Although the site is divided into indoor and outdoor spaces, the communication between those is enhanced by several openings on the ground floor. The construction of the rooftop reflects the design of this terraced landscape, and provides a horizontal and vertical indoor-outdoor circulation through the entire building, so that the whole landscape can be enjoyed for recreational purposes.

3.2 LANDSCAPE OF ACTIVITIES: A METAPHORE

The site is not only constructed with different textures and greenery, but it also includes the diversity of the activities of the startup companies. This is what the metaphorical phrase “landscape of activities” represents.

Therefore, this landscape of the site always changes, whenever the companies move in and out. Each company occupies one part of the site, where its private office is located. The textures, furnitures, accessories around them can also change, which enriches the greenery landscape.

3.2 SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

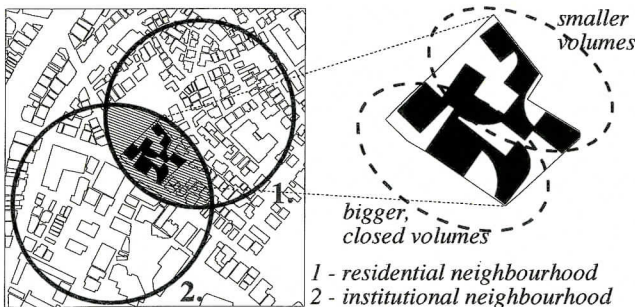


Fig.6 Volumetric reflections on the site

The site is located on the boundary of a medium-scale office area and a small-scale residential area. The composition is constructed by family house size volumes on the north-east side and medium office building size volumes on the south-west side in order to reflect on the spatially complicated urban situation.



Fig.7 Victor Vasarely: Zebras (1944, oil painting)⁵

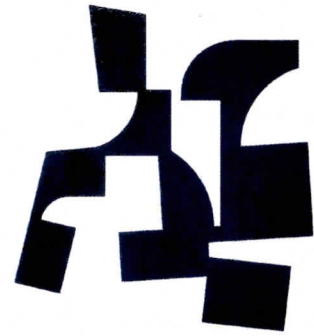


Fig.8 Volumes of building and garden

Garden and building supplement each other in this composition, each of the spaces are designed by the same aspects, so that a part of the garden can be considered as a room with outdoor activities. This principle strengthens the idea of the “landscape of activities”, where all the activities are equally respected, recreational activities are as important as other work-related intellectual activities.

3.3 RENEWABLE TECHNOLOGIES

With regard to sustainability, construction and managing cost reduction, recycled and recyclable materials and energy are used. All structural concrete in the construction is lightweight concrete made with recycled gas concrete aggregate, the structural system of the slabs is BubbleDeck BD300.

The facade is covered with a double polycarbonate sheet structure with wall ventilation cavity in between. This construction lets natural light come through and also satisfies the latest thermal insulation requirements. The material is recyclable after the deconstruction of the building.

Rainwater is collected to use as grey water for cleaning, garden watering and toilet flushing. The water tank is located in the basement, is accessible from the Plumbing engine room. Solar panels are installed on the rooftop of the entrance block, the energy is to cover 60% of the sanitary hot water and floor heating needs.

4.0 CONCLUSION

With a focus on personal preferences, flexible and intensive workstyle, this project explores the potentials of a newly built startup incubator in a dense urban context.

The fast changing world of startup companies requires new approaches in office design: it has to provide an environment, where people feel free to think and are able to enjoy the advantages of a diverse and multicultural community.

References

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- (2)(3) *Start-Up Spirit Emerges in Japan*
Martin Fackler, *International New York Times*, 2013/12/25
- (4) *Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare,*
White Paper on Labor Economics, annual report, 2005
- (5) <http://islandersart.wordpress.com/2011/09/25/2-grade-6-exploring-art-the-creative-process/zebra3/>

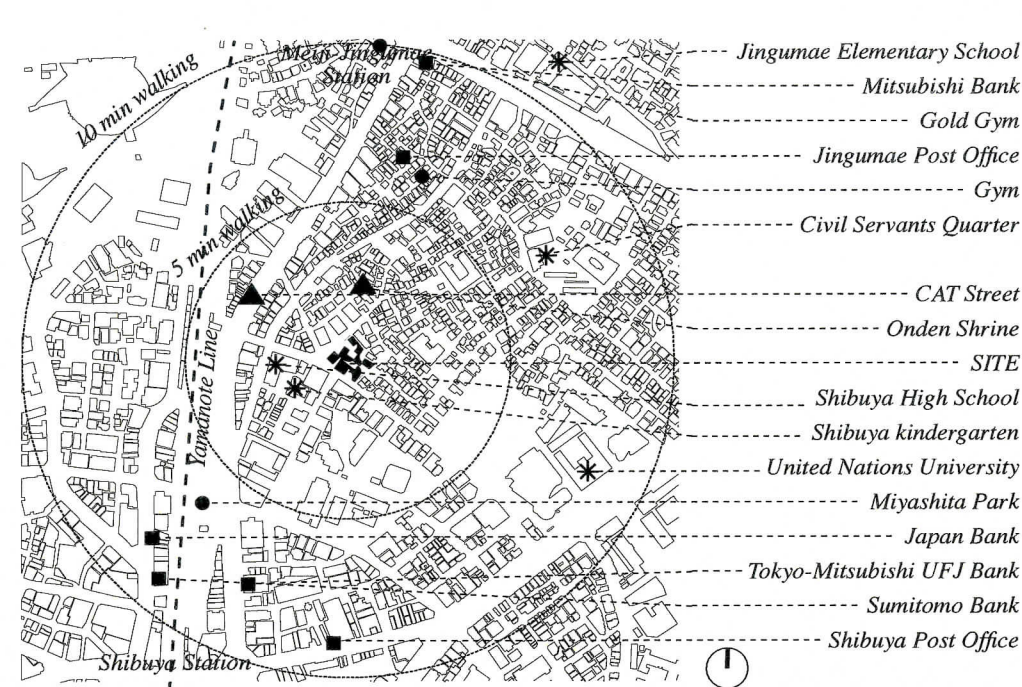


Fig.9 Site plan 1:10000



Fig.10 Site photo from the CAT Street

- ▲ Cultural facility
- Financial facility
- * Educational facility
- Recreational facility

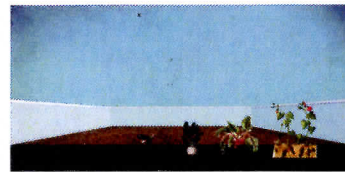


Fig.12 Rooftop - polycarbonate parapet wall, cultivated gardens

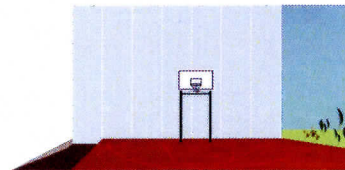


Fig.13 Garden - streetball field, red clay surface



Fig.14 Traffic style office



Fig.15 Chill office, tatami floor



Fig.16 Courtyard - small hill with greenery and a ladder on the top to climb up to the rooftop this green hill is visible from all around the building

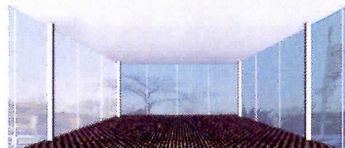


Fig.17 Blue office - homogeneous polycarbonate walls and ceiling, blue cement tiles flooring with blue furnitures

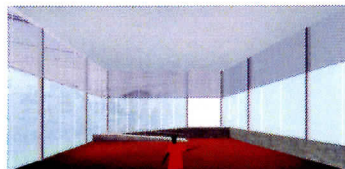


Fig.18 Auditorium and multi-purpose room- concrete flooring painted in dark peach colour, 360° panorama possible



Fig.19 Plumbing engine room - homogeneous concrete surfaces

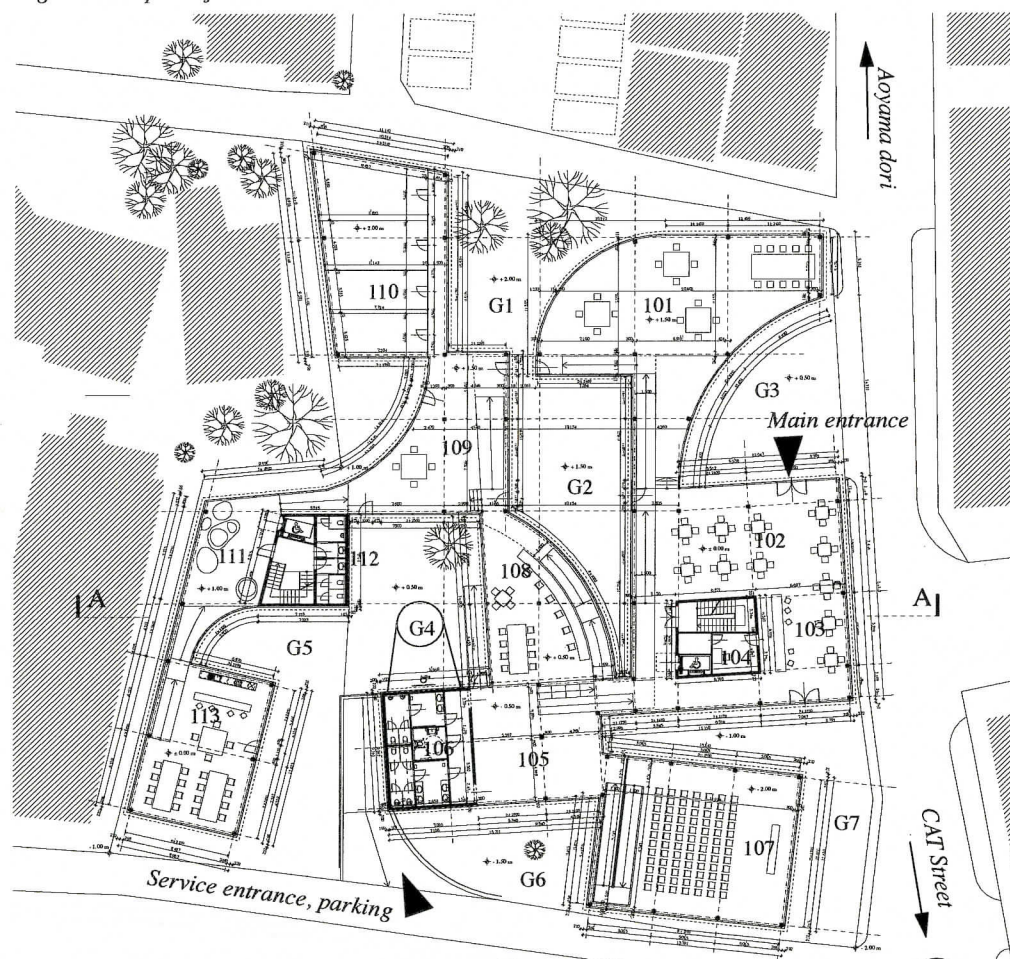


Fig.11 Ground floor plan 1:600

101 - Co-working space, 102 - Entrance, lounge, 103 - Reception, Bar, 104 - Office, Storage, 105 - Catering space 106 - Lavatories, 107 - Auditorium, Multipurpose room, 108 - Co-working space, 109 - Co-working space, Lounge, 110 - 4 Meeting rooms, 111 - Private working space, 112 - Lavatories, 113 - Kitchen G1 - Sand garden, G2 - Garden with a small hill, G3 - Main entrance garden, concrete, G4 - Streetball field, clay G5 - Barbecue garden, grass, G6 - Flower garden, G7 - Stone garden, urban garden

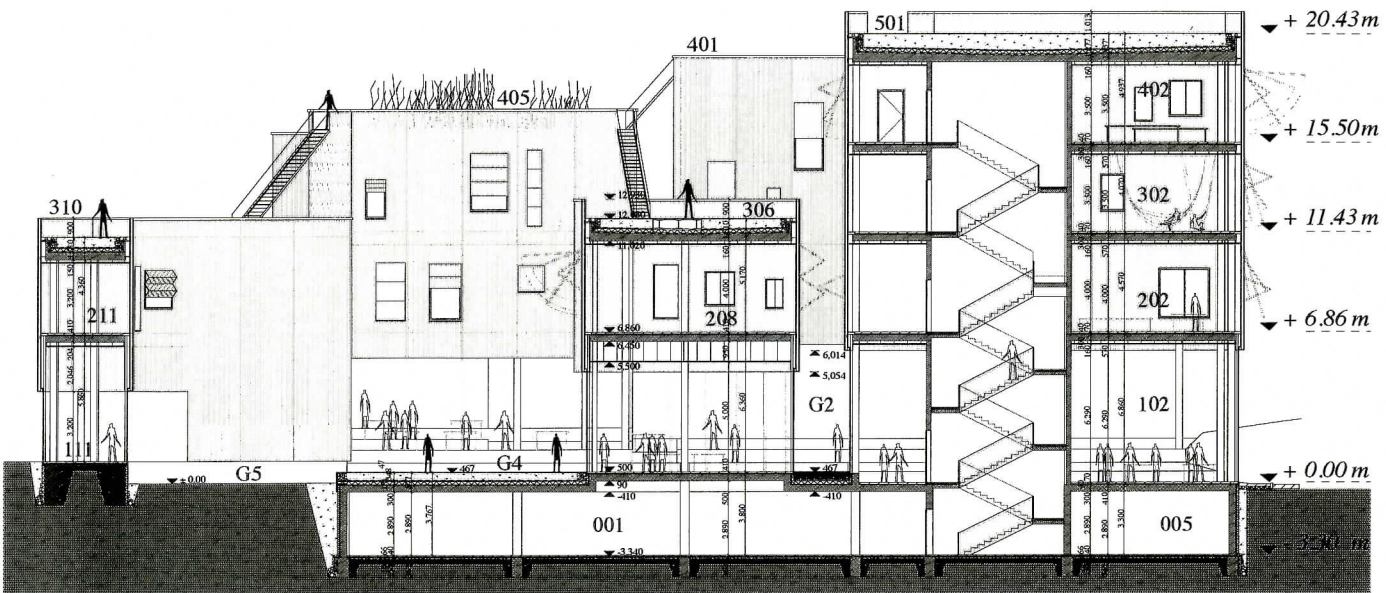


Fig.20 Section A-A 1:300

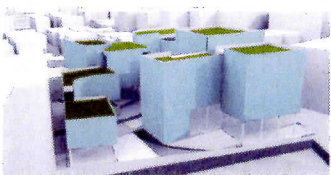


Fig.21 Birdview



Fig.22 Street view



Fig.23 Rooftop view



Fig.24 Interior view

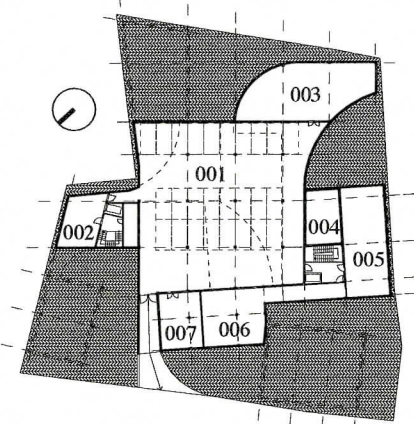


Fig.25 Basement plan 1:1200

01 - Parking space, 002 - Storage, 003 - Air con. engine room, 004 - Plumbing engine room, 005 - Water tank, 006 - Heating station, 007 - Bicycle parking

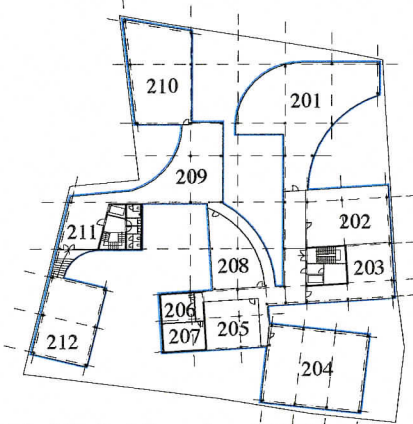


Fig.26 2nd floor plan 1:1200

201 - A-office, 202 - B-office, 203 - C-office, 204 - D-office, 205 - E-office, 206 - Studio, 207 - Studio, 208 - F-office, 209 - Lounge, 210 - G-office, 211 - Lounge, 212 - H-office

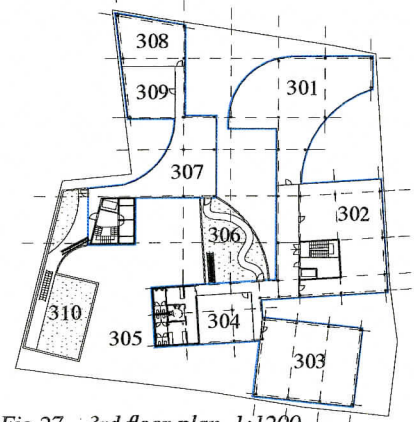


Fig.27 3rd floor plan 1:1200

301 - I-office, 302 - J-office, 303 - K-office, 304 - L-office, 305 - Lavatories, 306 - Rooftop, 307 - Lounge, 308 - M-office, 309 - N-office,

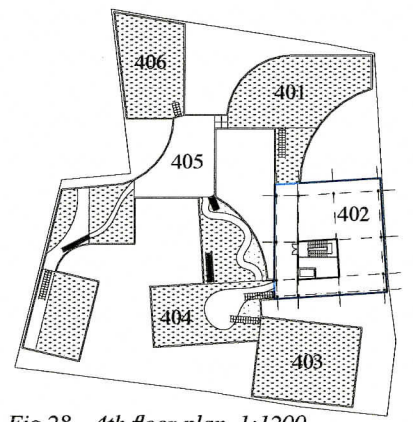


Fig.28 4th floor plan 1:1200

401 - Rooftop, 402 - O-office, 403 - Rooftop, 404 - Rooftop, 405 - Rooftop, 406 - Rooftop

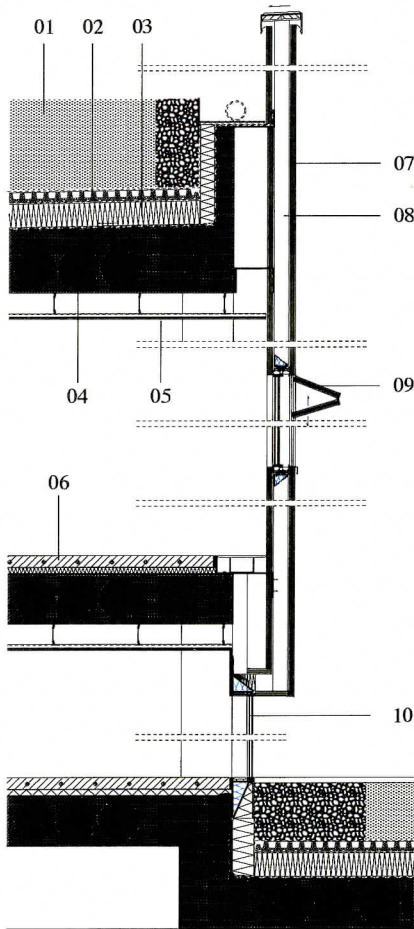


Fig.29 Section details 1:40

01 - 500mm soil, 02 - drainage, 03 - 140mm XPS, 04 - BubbleDeck BD300 RC slab, 05 - 16mm polycarbonate sheet ceiling, 06 - 70 mm heating concrete flooring, 07 - 32 mm PC sheet, 08 - 100mm vent. cavity, 09 - foldable PC shader