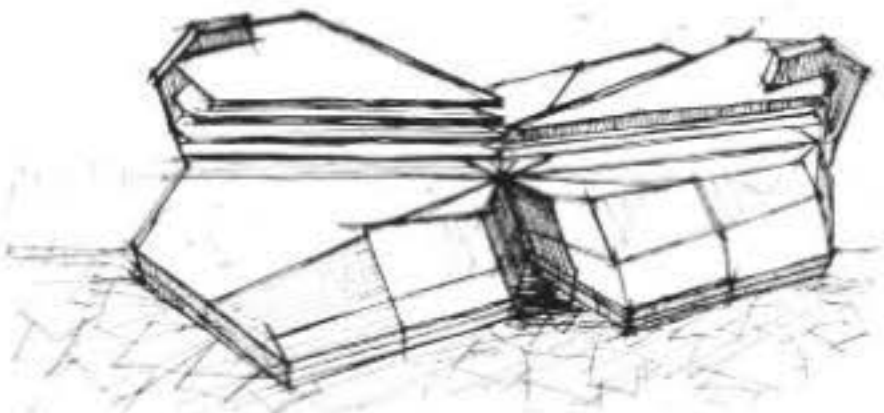
c.1910: North and South Hall are visible here
Today: The school takes pride in its sustainability initiatives.

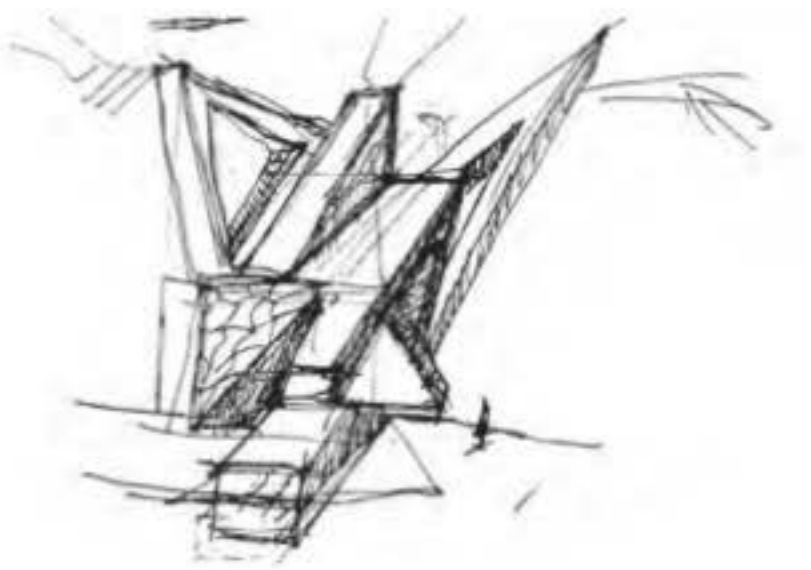
SYNTHETIC SEED // A PROPOSAL FOR THE UCD SHREM ART MUSEUM

Since its founding in 1908, UC Davis has been a place for studying growth. As the University Farm, curriculum focused on agricultural training and technology. Today, our study and knowledge about the natural environment fuels our initiative to gain harmony with it. The university is notable for its ambitious pursuit of environmental sustainability, earning national recognition for dedication and innovation. From the growing of crops to attempting to grow new sources of energy, UC Davis's past, present, and future are inextricably linked to natural growth.

Our goal was to depict natural growth through structure. To this end, we tried to design a form that had a sense of general direction but which varied in approaching that direction. Like the many branches of a tree growing upwards towards the sun but apart in depth and length, our structure reaches upward towards the light. Adhering to an angular formality while attempting to imitate nature in massing, we propose the sowing of a synthetic seed that will make prominently visible UC Davis's focus on our natural environment.

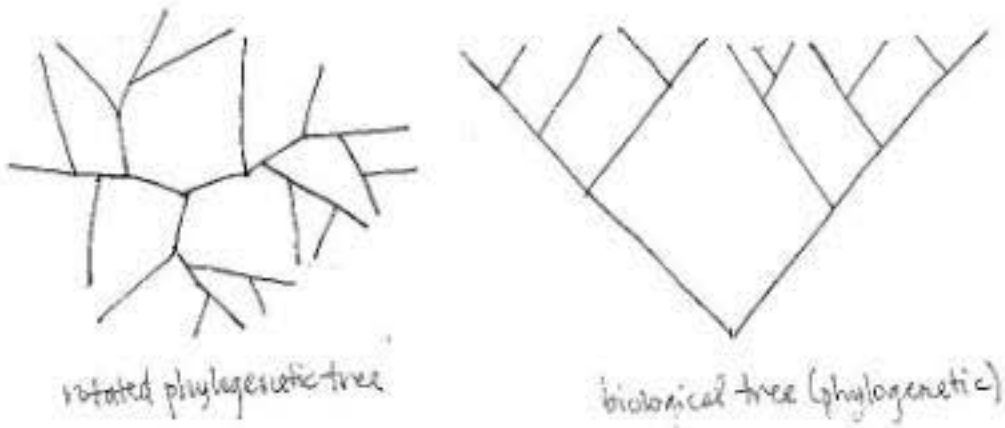


Hexagons, representative of carbon molecules, figured heavily in early design developments



Final concept sketch, sans entryway design + a few other small things

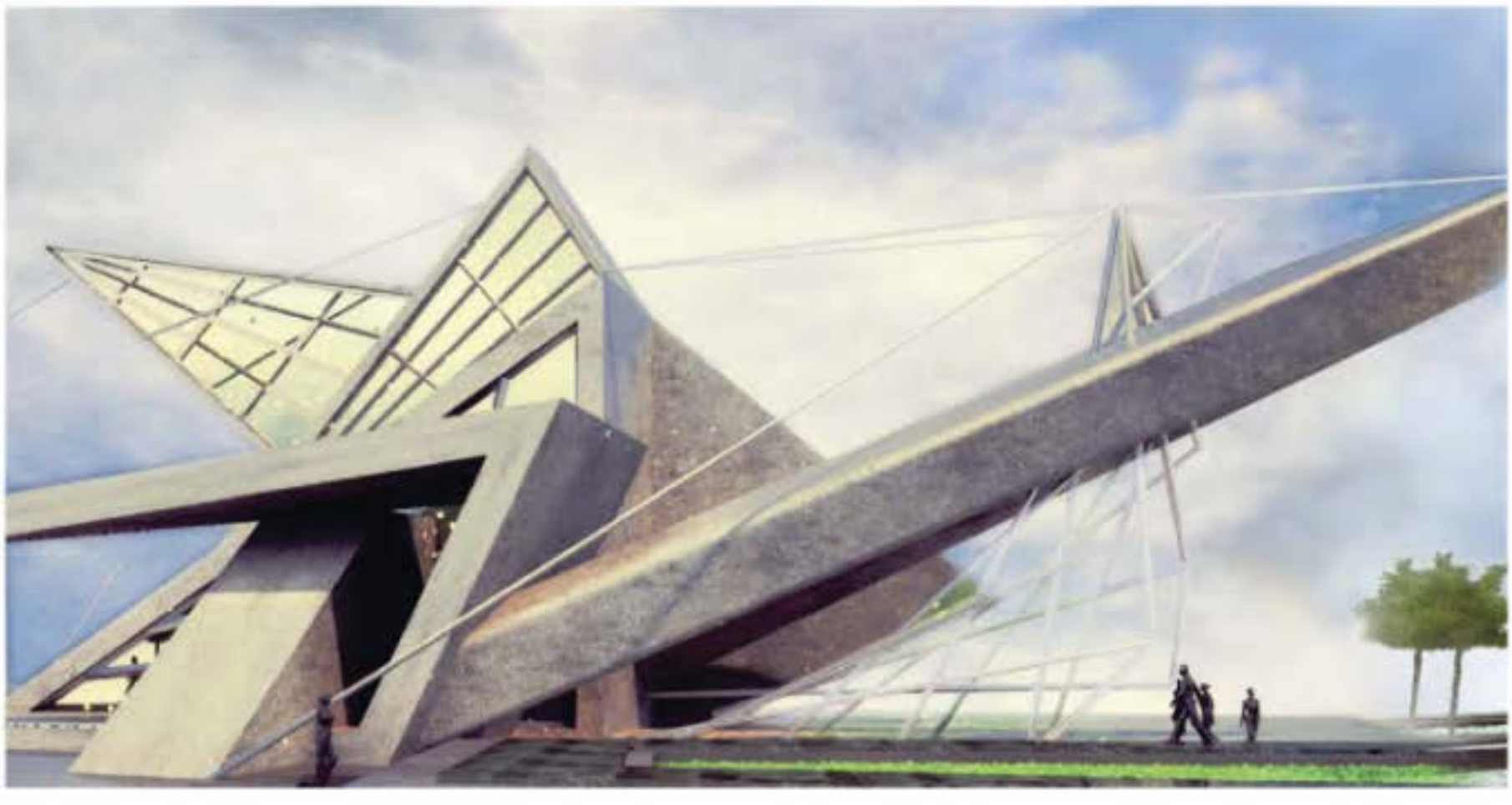
In perceiving nature, we tend to observe complex curvature and the appearance of unorganized randomness. By contrast, man-made design tends to rely on simple, more easily calculable angles and lines. Angled geometry frequently defines humans' mastery of nature - stylized shapes like hexagons describe the microscopic and crops are organized into rectangular rows. In our studies, we wanted to invert this dichotomy - instead of "boxing in" natural form, hard concrete geometry imitates volatile, random growth. Free from manmade arrangement, nature informs the design in a generative, unpredictable fashion.

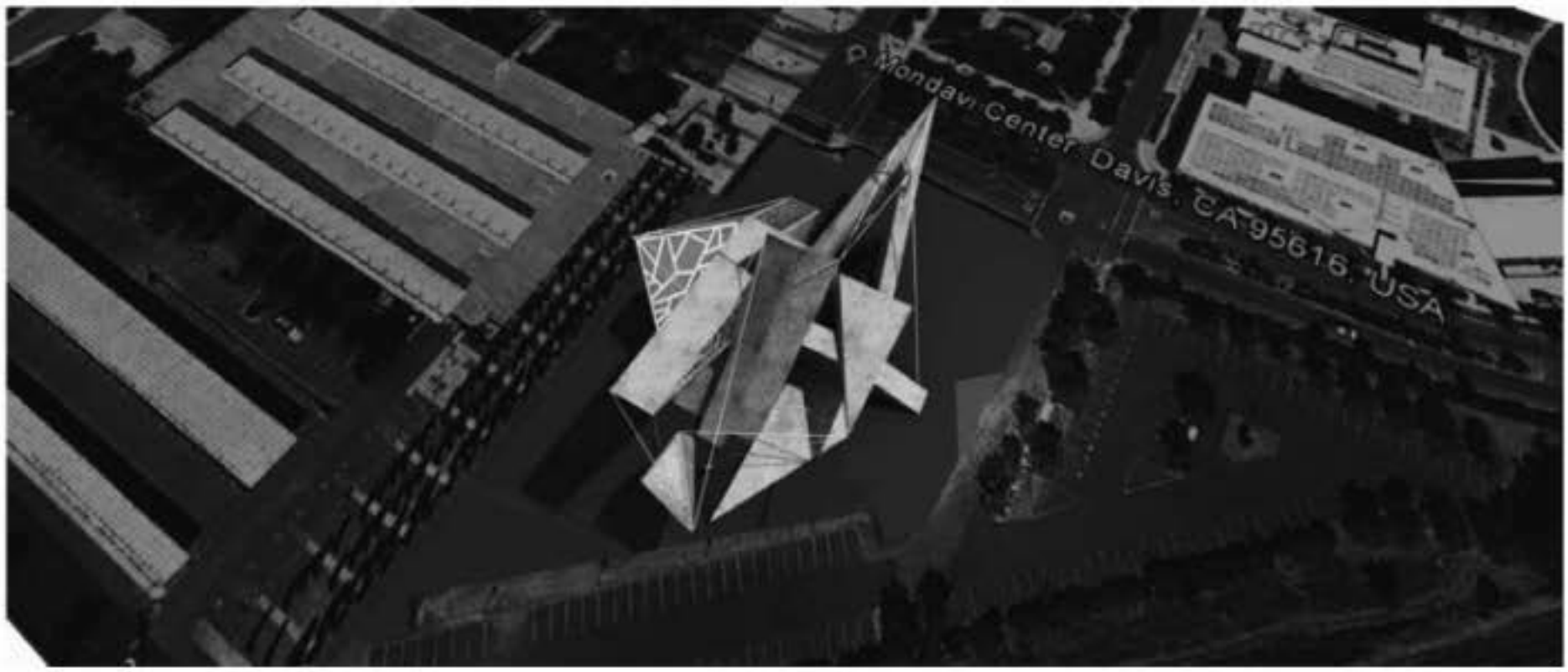


Left: Phylogenetic trees of life. These diagrams represent biodiversity as nodal networks that stem from a single point. They also became an ornamental window superstructure in our design.

Below: Artistic diversity seen through self-portraiture; Wayne Thiebaud(top), Robert Arneson(below) - two different outcomes stemming from a common objective, similar to the trees of life

Consider the differences between the self-portraits of Wayne Thiebaud and Robert Arneson. The former's was a rare departure from his signature depictions of inanimate objects - a mostly representational, if color-saturated portrait. For the latter, self deprecating caricature was a frequent mode of expression. One depicts the artist in recoil as a brick collides with his face. Between these two artists, prominently featured in the collection, the artistic divide seems vast. The design reconciles the pluralistic spectrum of artistic expression through form. From a singular subterranean structure sprouts many distinct growths, like the differing perspectives of artists on the human condition. The convergence of the scheme on the ground plane, between exposed and underground, literally brings the disparate perspectives back down to earth and illustrates art's common power to advance –or grow– our culture and society.





A study of the site's scale with Google Earth and existing plan documentation revealed its relatively small dimensions, which ruled many of the sketches out.

Our final scheme, shown here, was selected for these characteristics:

1. Suggestive curvature through iterative geometry - there are no curved surfaces, but a progression of angles in some places implies curves

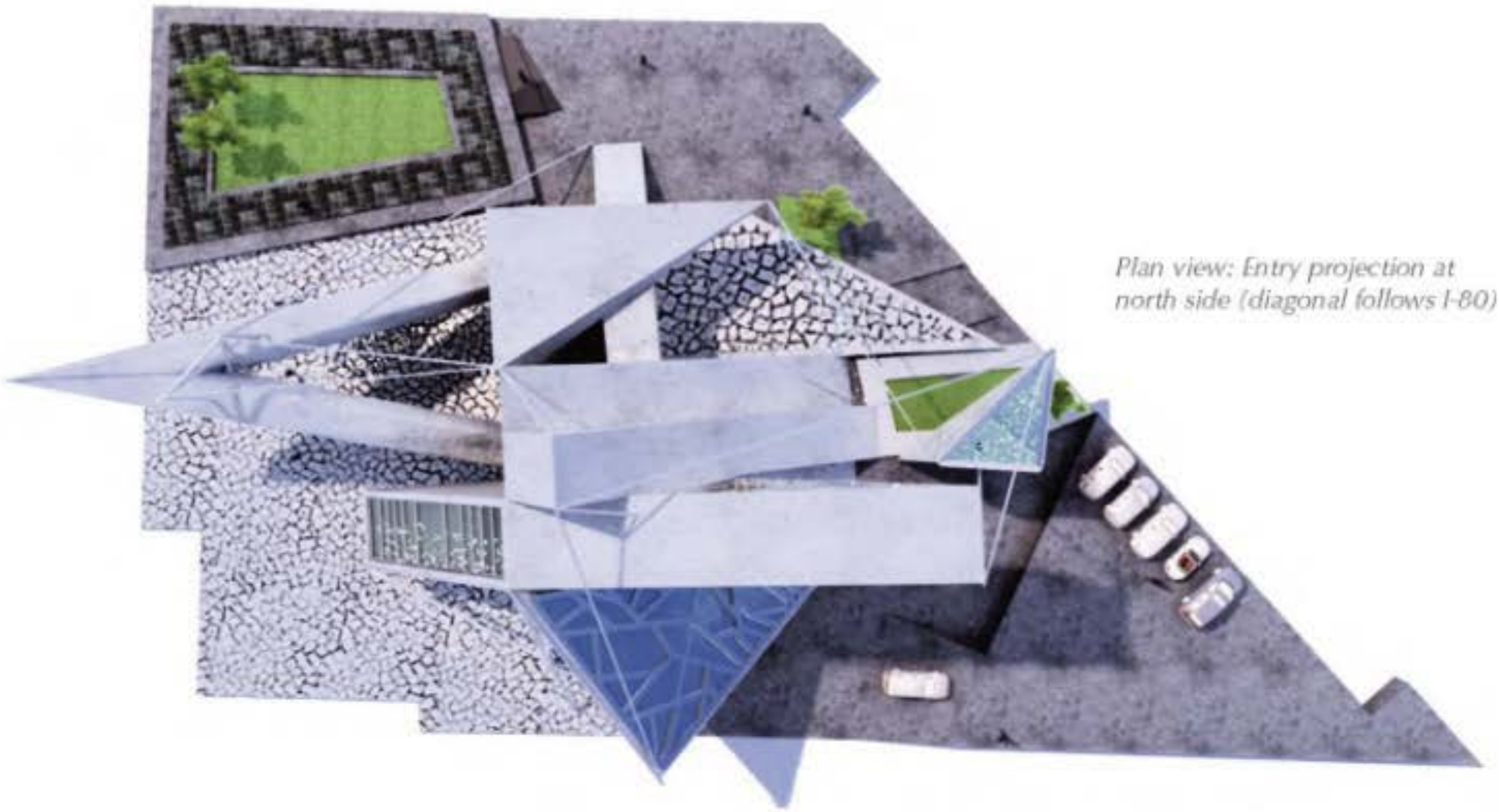
2. Suspension cables and steel lattices' orientation give a sense of origin and destination - which is important in representing growth

3. Comparatively simple massing provides enough volumetric space to accommodate programs - it looks complex but the volume is generous

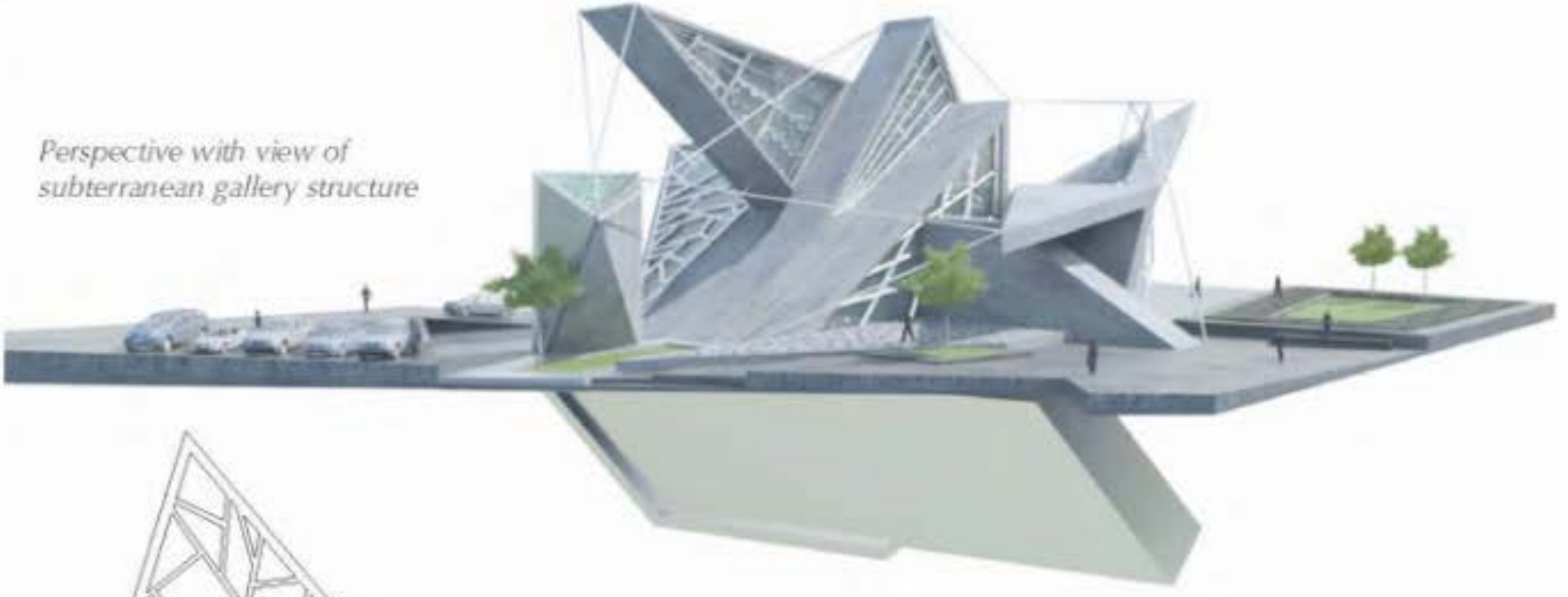
Above: Model superimposed onto Google Earth image

Below: Perspective renders of building proposal

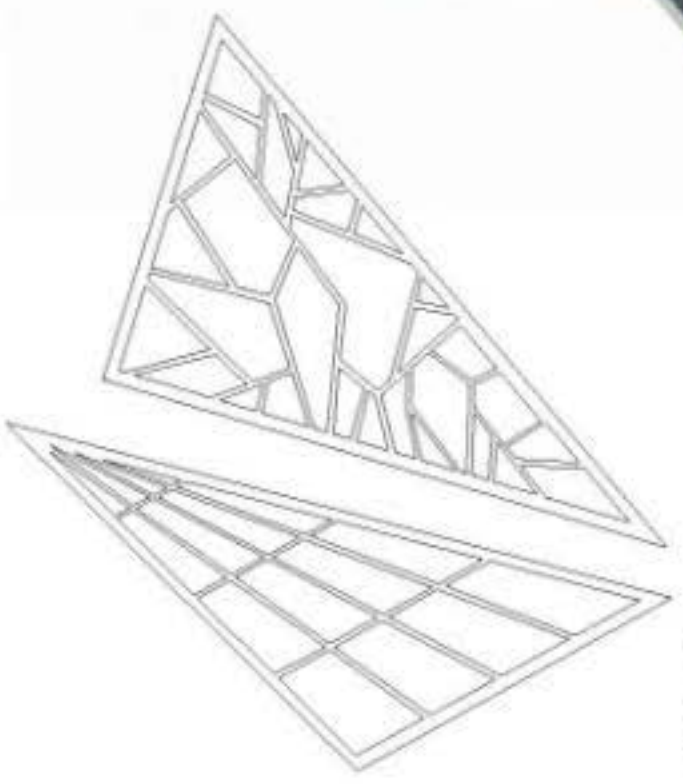
ADDITIONAL RENDERS // COMPILED IN 3D STUDIO MAX WITH V-RAY



Plan view: Entry projection at north side (diagonal follows I-80)



Perspective with view of subterranean gallery structure



Vector drawing of window lattice superstructures, the upper example being our 'phylogenetic tree' design