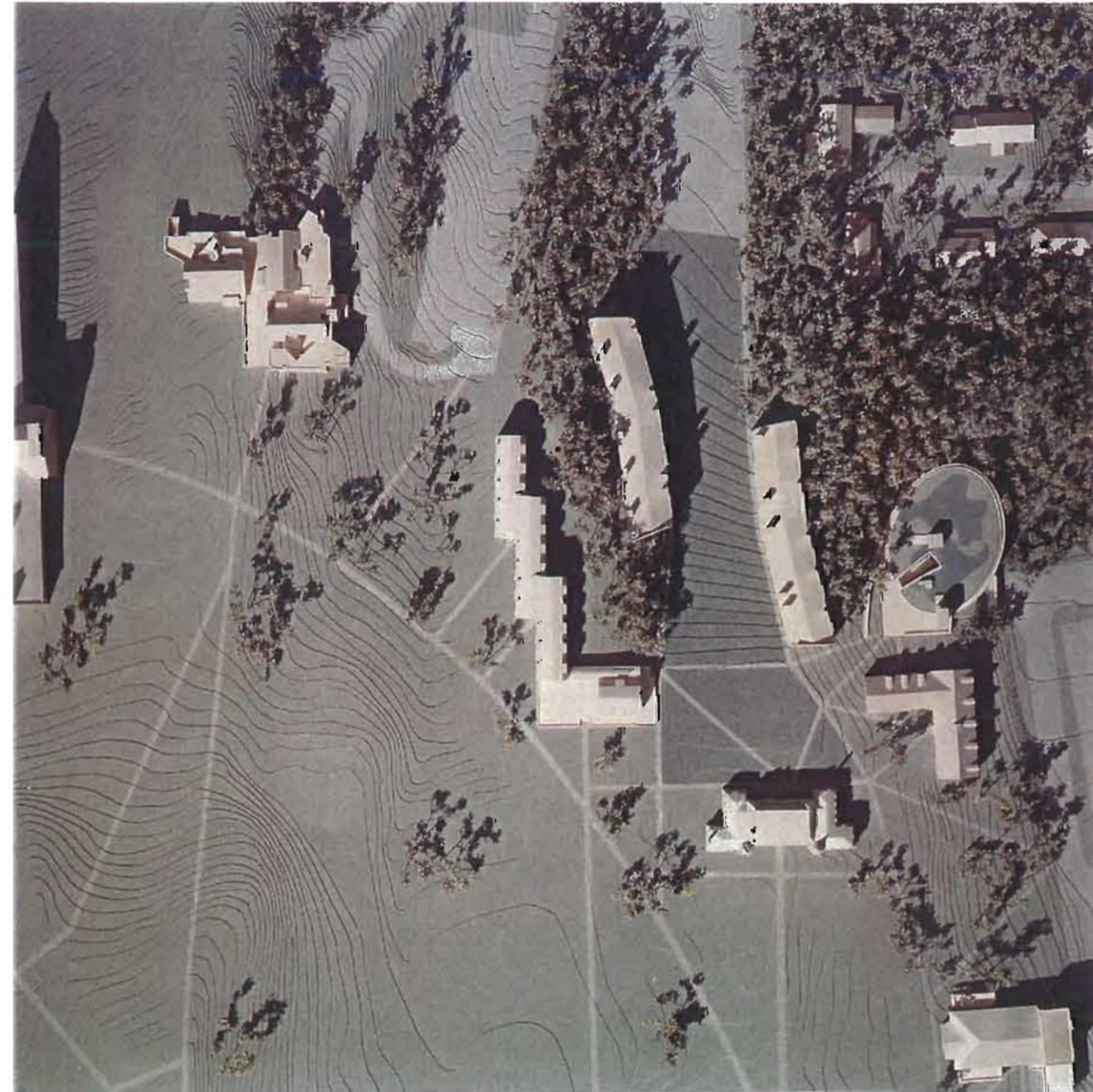


MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE  
ATWATER COMMONS

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**NEW RESIDENCE AND DINING HALLS**  
Schematic Design Presentation



KIERANTIMBERLAKE ASSOCIATES LLP  
May 2001

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Atwater Commons 2003

### Introduction

#### *Where We Are and Purpose of this Submittal*

In February 2001, a concept and siting submission was made to the Board of Trustees and the approach to the form and makeup of Atwater Commons in 2003 adopted. At that time, the approval was also given to continue to explore Atwater's new buildings - two new residence halls totaling 155 beds in suite arrangements, and a new dining hall seating 225 - in schematic design. During the past 12 weeks, we have met with our consultant team, members of the College community and administration, and discussed approaches and systems with project managers and constructors. The schematic design exploration has been completed. Documents have been prepared which explore and prove systems, arrangements, program and relationships. The next steps are design development and construction document preparation in order to stay on schedule for implementation and occupation of the new buildings in the Fall 2003.

#### *This Booklet*

This booklet summarizes the development of Atwater in the context of the College and provides a presentation of the elements and characteristics of the new structures. A more detailed specification and set of drawings has been provided to the administration for their analysis and use.

### Elements of the Design

#### *Approach*

To restate the premise of the approach to this plan, this design accepts and employs Le Chateau as the 'front door' of Atwater Commons. This strategy accepts the roles that Le Chateau, Allen and Coffrin serve with regard to current programs and housing. These three structures, in concert with the landscape, form the core of Atwater Commons.

#### *The Architecture and Landscape Elements of Atwater Commons*

Atwater Commons is presently composed of three buildings of intriguing and unique characteristics - Coffrin Hall, Le Chateau and Allen Hall. Architecturally, three structures could not be more diverse. It is arguably the least uniform architecturally and geographically of any of the proposed Commons. From a purely academic viewpoint, one sees it serving a contemporary architectural history lesson. Le Chateau - essentially a large house - is in a French Provincial style. Allen Hall is a common two-story structure without architectural distinction. Coffrin Hall, designed by a renowned architect, is in a Vermont vernacular style rendered contemporaneously. The diverse material palette ranges from the stucco, stone, brick and slate of Chateau to the stucco, block and slate of Allen to Coffrin's stone, slate and metal. It is of this core materials palette, along with that learned from Old Chapel, Painter and Starr - limestone or quartzite, slate, metal, brick and wood - that the new buildings are comprised. As we stated in January and February's presentations:

*One of the great moments of Middlebury, architecturally, is the core trio of Painter, Old Chapel and Starr Hall. These buildings are 18<sup>th</sup> century versions of modern architecture. The stone, warm in tone, ashlar laid but dressed with rustic quoins, granite lintels and modulated by wood windows set nearly flush, is some of the finest masonry work anywhere - domestic or foreign. The brick chimneys punctuate the simple ridge and roof-lines adding rhythm and syncopation to the window pattern.*

Geographically, the core buildings form an outdoor 'room' with the two north/south ridges flanking a grass green, the platform tennis courts, and parking area. Looking at the panorama from Pearsons toward the northeast and Atwater Commons, the perception of this section of campus is of buildings set in the landscape - broad lawns, sparsely populated by a variety of trees and Adirondack chairs - with landscape continuity into the distance. The new buildings reinforce and participate in this setting. Our commentary on the campus and landscape of Atwater in February included the following statement:

*Behind Coffrin is a path which is one of the wonderful, and we think undiscovered, moments of Middlebury College. A found space created by the building and the ridge it nestles against, the path has a contemplative, almost eastern garden serenity about it. Rock clefts afford moss and leaves to gather. Trees grow from the clefts. Birches and firs border the path providing natural cover for other fauna and flora. The path tumbles down the slope to the north, ridge to the east, building to the west, providing rooms with views into this space. This is one of the landscape moments that new architecture, in the Atwater context, might offer the core buildings and the College landscape at-large.*

#### *Other Precedents*

Vermont town greens suggest a informal pattern of placement of buildings within landscape arranged by use. Many town greens within the state are irregular, made by geographic characteristics in combination with the insertion of buildings. The architectural diversity of the existing Atwater buildings does not lend itself to rigid, formal relationships, yet all buildings of Atwater - whether old or new - will form and serve a new community. Atwater Commons follows this landscape-to-building approach. We think the town common plans of Vermont offers precedent for our vision of Atwater Commons.

In general, the architecture of the College represents characteristics of simplicity, order, materiality, and quality. Each building on campus employs a diverse but common palette of stone, brick, wood, plaster, metal and landscape rendered in simple forms, carefully detailed, and finely crafted. At first glance it seems very uniform. At second and third glance the richness of the campus is displayed and the diversity of each building enjoyed. The new buildings of Atwater employ these precedents.

#### *Site Development*

The two new residence halls contain 155 total beds. A new 225-seat dining hall with a lounge and seminar room is provided. Service to the dining hall and the general complex would come from parking Lot E (behind Wright Theater). The plan requires the removal or relocation of the two upper and the two lower platform tennis courts. Two existing regulation tennis courts would also have to be relocated or removed to provide for the service access to the dining and commons. Lot D to the north of Atwater would be pushed to the north to afford extension of the Atwater Common central outdoor space and would decrease in size by approximately 40 spaces. Additional parking might be created by adding to Lot C near FIC by the same amount.

#### *The New Residence Halls*

The residence halls vary in height relative to their relationship to Atwater Common, a sloping 'green' lawn. While their roof ridge lines stay constant, the green falls away making Residence Hall A a four- to five-story building accommodating 84 beds and Residence Hall B a three- to four-story building accommodating 71 beds. The new halls are in scale with the existing historic halls on campus such as Munroe, Voter, Pearsons, Starr and Painter. The buildings contain various sized (3,4,5 bedroom) flexible suite arrangements and some single rooms. The new residence halls face one another, in a staggered fashion facing the new Atwater Common. Each are placed parallel to and slightly engage the two ridges which form Atwater's landscape. Each hall bends slightly with the landscape contours subtly breaking the long sides of the halls into smaller increments. The halls are approximately 100' apart at this closest interval framing the view to and from the north. Both halls are vertically accessed through lobbies serving stairs. Each stair serves six-to-ten suites with a maximum number of students using any entry totaling 40. The suites are oriented 'through' the building (across its width) with exposures and views to the east and west. Single rooms are grouped vertically about one stair and entry. The residence halls are to be naturally ventilated. At the lowest levels, in part, each of the halls contains other program such as a common lounge, library, seminar room, laundry and other support space or offices.

The facades of the halls are a result of a detailed and careful study of options. On the Atwater Commons sides of the halls - which face one another - the windows are a stacked, regular pattern of three windows for each suite common room. The windows are double hung, with the side units of each triplet forming casements. This arrangement maximizes light, view and ventilation. Local limestone or quartzite (a stone similar to limestone), similar in pattern to that of Painter Hall - a long linear stone with tight joints - in a warm light tan, grey tone, is proposed. On the commons side, the wood windows are more deeply set, for shading purposes, and the masonry openings are 'tied' with a limestone lintel which provides additional shading. Granite lintels and columns, with a deeper set glass and wood wall, provides a larger opening at the base for the stair and lobby entries, and the entry to the tech/seminar rooms and library. The vertical pattern of windows above these entries are staggered reflecting the nature of the entry stairs rising above. Brick 'chimney' ventilation stacks, assisting the natural ventilation of the buildings, punctuate the roof and eave line. Slate roofs with lead-coated copper eaves and trim finish the buildings. The eastern- and western-most sides, against the ridges, employ a local grey-green 'heather' slate rubble or sculping. This more rusticated stone lends texture and subtle plays of light against the material. The sculplings relate to the ledgerrock of the ridge lines. Three, four or five smaller

proportioned (than the commons side) windows are arranged per suite (the number depends upon the number of bedrooms in each suite). These windows break the rigid vertical alignment and shift along the length of the halls. A blind 'window', a stone recess in the proportion of the actual windows, adds additional relief to the wall. The combination of the window arrangements, the material choice and color, we believe appropriate to the facades that face essentially into the thickets of the ridges.

Residence Hall A and B are roughly 45' in width which is slightly wider than Painter or Starr. The end walls (north and south facades) echo Painter or Starr's end walls. They are the limestone or quartzite, without window punctuation, unrelieved. The sanctity of these end walls are in contrast to the windowed long walls of the east and west elevations of each building. In each case, windows serving the special spaces - the library/study hall in B and the tech/seminar room in A - wrap the lower story onto the shared green space turning the building corner.

The majority of materials selected for the residence and dining halls - inside and out, for construction and finish - reflect our commitment to the College's mission of selecting materials 'local' to Vermont, durable and of long-life, and generally 'green' or sustainable to the environment.

#### *The New Dining Hall*

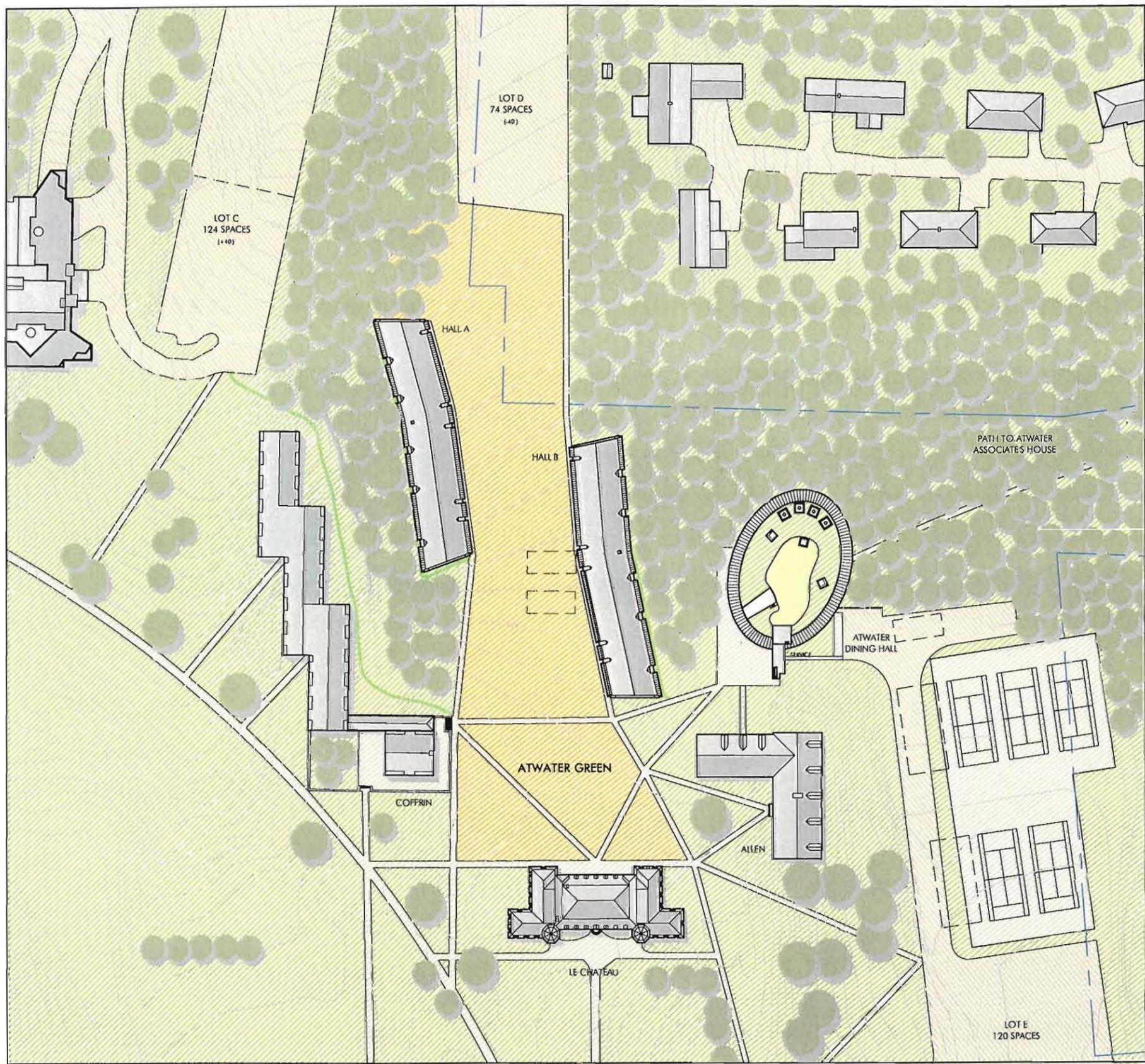
Atwater's new dining hall is positioned to conveniently serve all residents of the commons. It is located as a gateway on the path to the associates residence. The hall embeds itself into the east slope of the Atwater ridge and amongst the tree thicket. The angle of its orientation is to capture views to the southeast toward the Town of Middlebury. The northern tip of the dining hall is rendered as a solid wall controlling views and light to and from the houses of Murdock Court. Embedding the dining hall into the slope reduces the appearance of the buildings mass, and provides for a view of a tipped landscaped roof, possibly as a venue for an environmental artist, extending

the landscape of Atwater into, around and over the building. The rooftop landscape of this building would be formed through the incorporation of a sedum or planted roofscape. Skylights, roof ventilation stacks and fireplace chimneys (serving the dining room, lounge and outdoor entry terrace) provide a sculptural landmark to the structure from the Common and College's 'Crescent' path. Within the dining hall, views through the thicket and to the town would be provided. Eastern (for the morning and breakfast) and western (for the evening meal) light would enter the hall and serving areas. Service spaces are located below in a base or plinth engaged into the slope.

The base of the new dining hall, housing services and receiving for the building, would be concrete and slate sculplings similar to the eastern- and western-most elevations of the residence halls pierced by the pathway stair. The dining hall floor proper, containing a student lounge, reception area, seminar room, and other kitchen services would be primarily glass in wood frames with wood infill walls. The fireplace chimneys, the prominent vertical identifiers of the building, are brick sharing a common element with the residence halls. Trims and other surfaces of the soffits and roof are lead-coated copper.

#### *Next Steps*

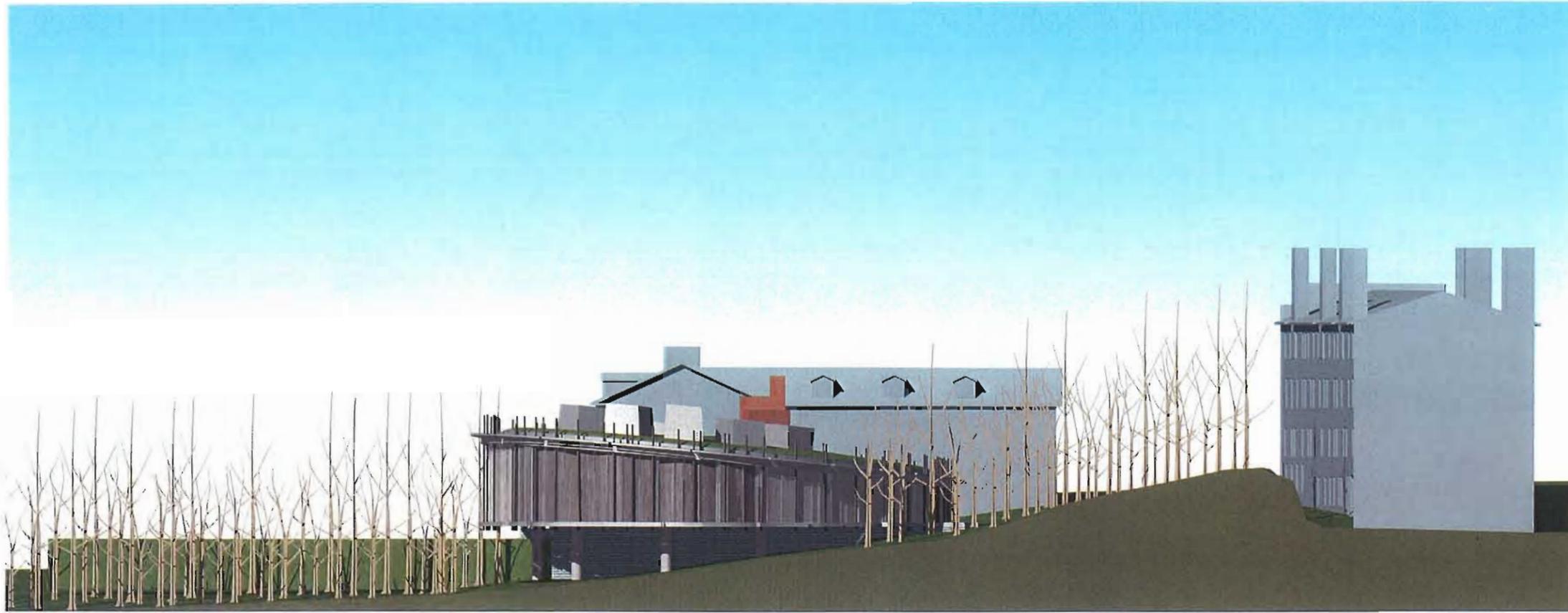
The next phases of the project - design development and construction documents - require approval to proceed by the Board of Trustees. Upon receiving the approval of the Board, town meetings, Vermont Act 250 submittals, and documents may be prepared for a Spring 2002 construction start. Starting construction by late Winter or early Spring 2002 ensures a Fall 2003 occupation of the residence halls and dining serving Atwater.



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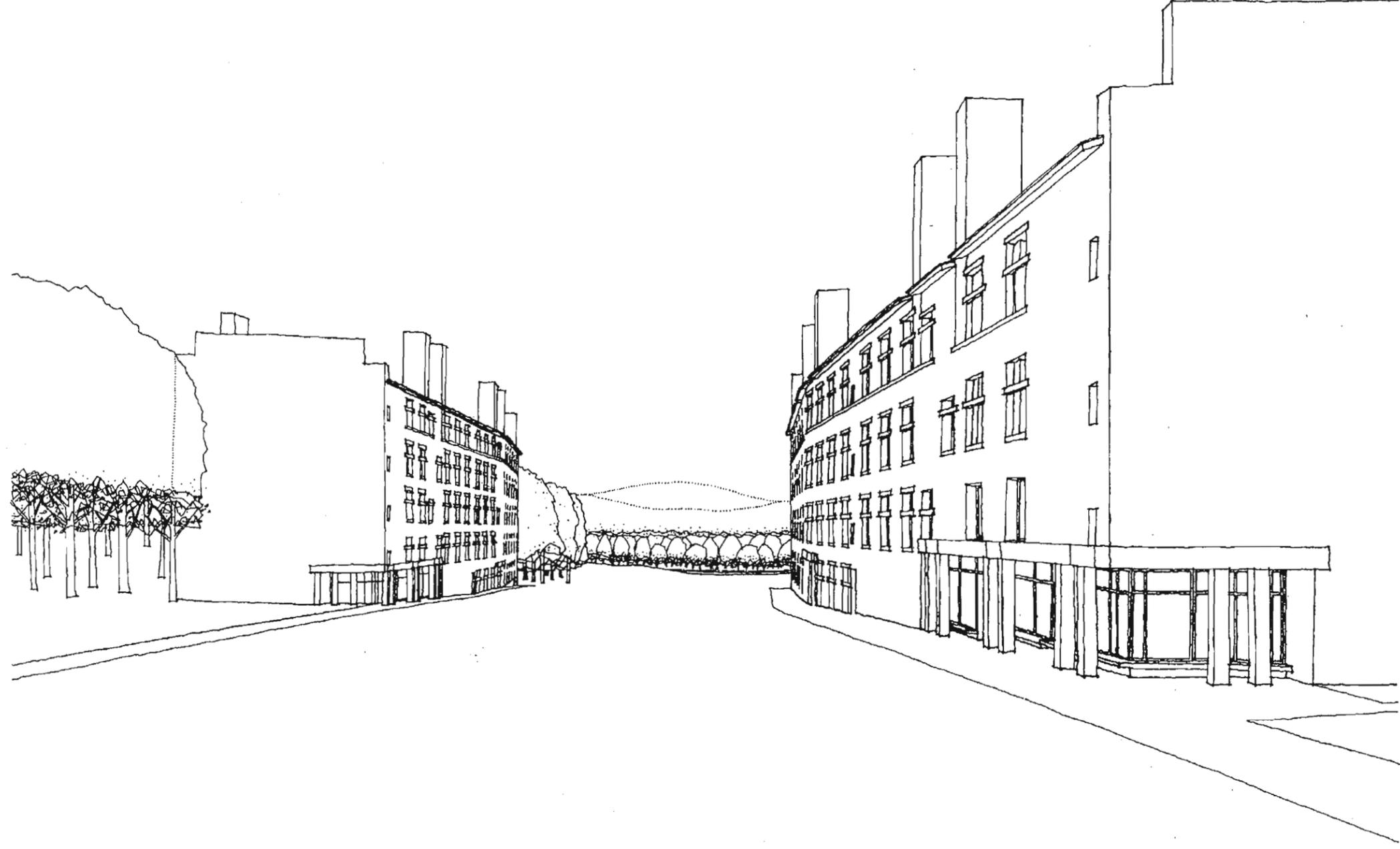


NORTH ELEVATION

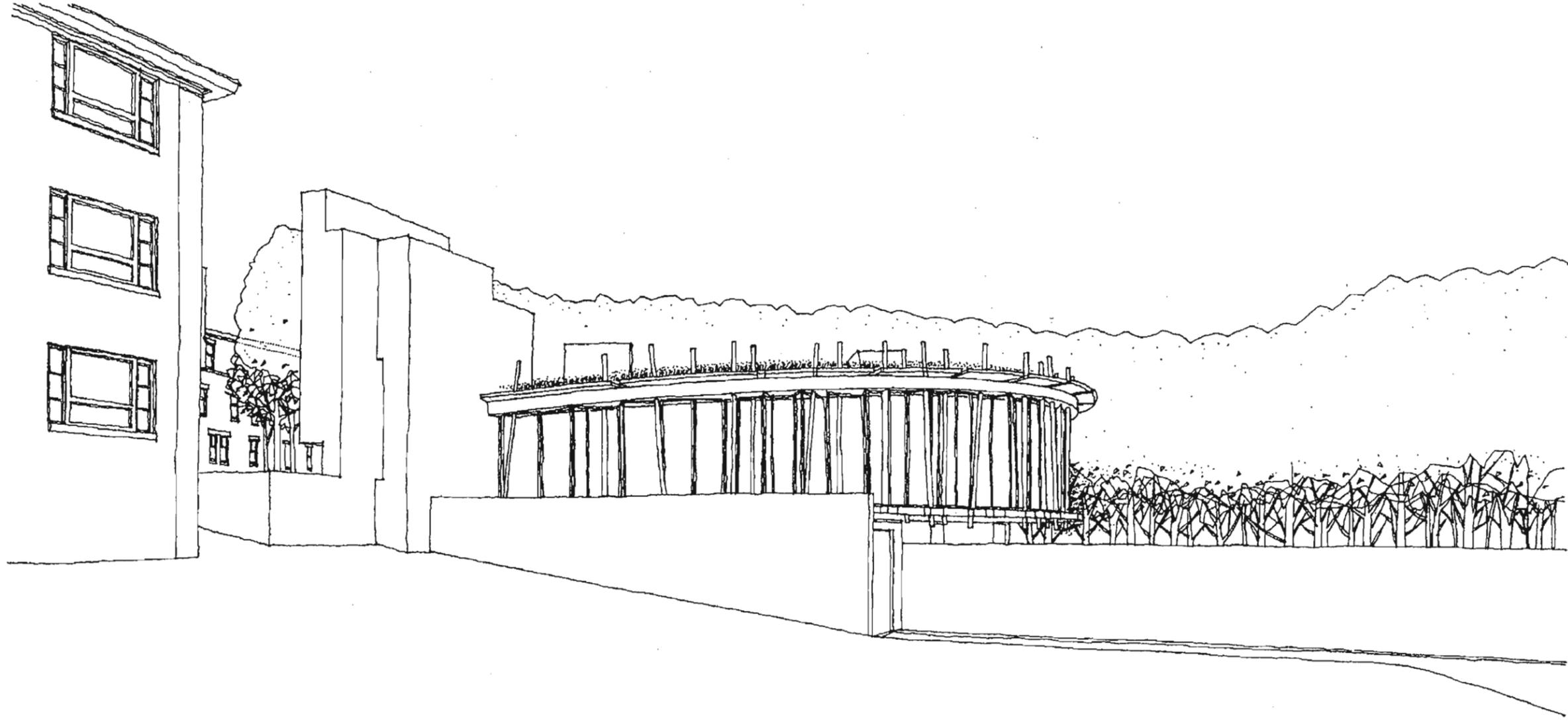


EAST ELEVATION

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DINING HALL ELEVATIONS

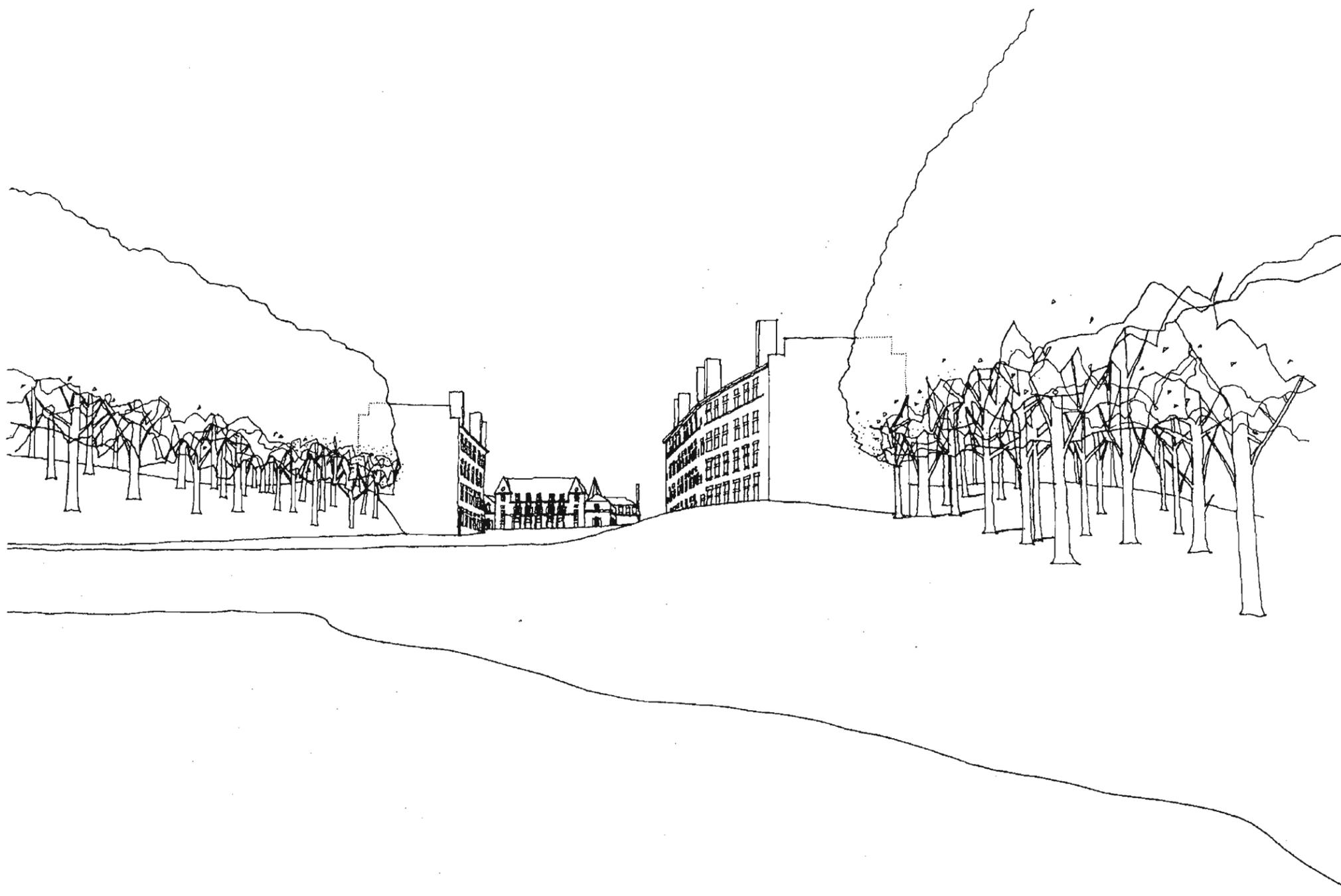


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**COMMONS FROM NORTH**