Statement of intent:

1. There is a dichotomy that exists between the tourist and the native. Everyone wants to travel and visit foreign places but no one wants to be seen as a tourist. Natives look down upon the tourists but don’t realize that without them there would be no understanding of what defines a native. The two are set in opposition instead of recognizing the reliance each has on the other. The challenge is to create architecture that speaks to this reliance instead of the opposition. The way this is done is providing the same spacial experience for both the tourist and the native and by blurring the line between inside and out. The tourist act of framing will be the main focus of the project. Since the act of framing is actually an attempt to find the authentic it is that same act that further separates the tourist from what they seek. By always viewing things from a distance they never get to truly engage them. They always look at instead of be part of. The only way to counter the act of looking at or framing is to collapse the distance between the tourist and the markers they are identifying and inadvertently distance themselves from.

2. The site is surrounded by many markers that are used to fabricate the identity of Denver. These markers are what tourists think they are after and what make up the real Denver or the authentic Denver experience. The design will have to break down the barriers on each edge of the site to create a connection to the markers that surround it. The circulation on the site will respond to the flow from one marker to another but redirect in order to hinder the process of framing.

3. Scale, traffic, elevation, and adjacent buildings create a feeling of isolation on the site. It becomes an island in the city. Two edges border Downtown Denver, while the other two open on to Civic Center park. The combination creates a flow from Downtown to the park completely bypassing the site. The site is also lifted off the ground 14ft allowing for the bus system to run underneath. This elevation exaggerates the disconnection from the city.

4. The design must address the contradictions and complexities that exist within tourism by shrinking the space between the viewer and the markers that surround the site. Allowing the space of the surrounding context to break the border creates a condition where it is hard to tell when you are on the site or off of it. This is further reinforced by the land manipulations creating the main entry. The ground plane is lifted up providing shelter from the elements which enables the entry to be recessed drawing more of the surrounding space in and further blurring the boundary between inside and out.
Site analysis: Determine the spatial qualities of the site. How does the space flow? There is a strong push from the 16th street mall pulling around the Denver Post building to Civic Center Park quickly bypassing the site. The momentum is increase by the slope of the site and the Height of the Adjacent buildings.

The Diagram: After many attempts to create space that speaks to the reliance of the tourist on the native and vise versa this option was best. Countering the natural flow of the site and redirecting it with a single gesture then following that up with a second level space shifting the other direction. A visual cue leading the eye around the corner completes the cycle.
Transparent/Opaque wall: A very tough exercise to achieve and one in which these attempts fall short. The best way to accomplish this goal is to put aside all preconceived ideas of what defines a wall and try to look at it a completely different way. Once you can do that you will see that the two opposing ideas can really exist in a single wall.
The Infinite room: A room cannot truly be infinite but by manipulating the walls you can create the perception of a larger space and a mental image of an infinite room. Giving the occupant hints to a place that could lie beyond and using light and shadow combined with a well conceived composition the possibilities are limitless.
Small scale formal exercise: Attempting to recreate the initial diagram using points, lines, and plane there were 30-40 versions at 1:50 scale focusing first on the ground plane then moving to elevation.
1/16th scale: After working out the major gestures at a smaller scale the process continues at a larger scale allowing for further articulation of the original spacial diagram. The larger scale enables interior space to be addressed and a first stab at program.
1/8th scale: Materiality is addressed in this phase in the process. Materials are assessed by color, temperature, and reflectivity. Each option is placed on the model in order to enhance the original spacial diagram and magnify the flow through the site.
The Final Model: 1/8 scale - All materials have been applied and floors have been inserted. There is not a stopping point in any design but this is the final step in this process.
Experience Denver
Boutique hotel & visitors center

Program: Boutique Hotel
Lobby 1200sqft
Cafe 900sqft
16 suites 800sqft each
40 single bed rooms 350sqft each
10 double units 600sqft each
Restaurant 3000sqft
Visitors Center 2000sqft
46 parking spaces
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