



Detail, Jan Palach Memorial, Atlanta, 1990. Photo by Hélène Binet.

The Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture
The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art

**PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE INSTALLATION PROPOSAL
JAN PALACH MEMORIAL, DESIGNED BY JOHN HEJDUK**



INSTALLATION PROPOSAL

The Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture is currently preparing to mount an exhibition of the work of John Hejduk, founding dean of the School of Architecture and 1950 Cooper Union graduate, at the school's Arthur A. Houghton Jr. Gallery. The exhibition, which will be free and open to the general public, is scheduled to run from January 17, 2017 through March 11. It will include photographs of Hejduk's built works taken by H  l  ne Binet, a renowned London-based photographer, who was his photographer of record, as well as original drawings and a chronology of the numerous realizations of Hejduk's design for the *Jan Palach Memorial*. Comprised of two structures - *House of the Suicide* and *House of the Mother of the Suicide* - this work honors the Czech dissident Jan Palach, whose self-immolation in protest of the Soviet invasion of 1968 served as a galvanizing force against the communist government in Czechoslovakia.

As a companion to the exhibition, the School of Architecture intends to reassemble these two structures, first constructed at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta (1990), in the plaza area outside Cooper Union's Foundation Building. In addition to the socio-political importance demonstrated by this work of architecture, it also represents a tradition of engagement between John Hejduk and schools of architecture and cultural institutions across the globe. During the course of Hejduk's career, many of his designs were constructed by students and faculty at various institutions, through a forging of relationships that Hejduk often referred to as the Social Contract. It is the School of Architecture's intent to likewise engage Cooper Union students and faculty in the realization of the *Jan Palach Memorial* at the school, which was a subject of his life's work. These pieces have only been exhibited in New York City one other time, at the Whitney Museum of American Art, in conjunction with the 2002 exhibition *Sanctuaries: The Last Works of John Hejduk*.



Jan Palach Memorial, as built in Prague, 1991. Photo by H  l  ne Binet.

PROJECT HISTORY

The *Jan Palach Memorial* structures were first built in 1990, by Georgia Tech students and alumni under the supervision of Professor James Williamson. They were constructed a second time as a temporary installation on the grounds of Prague Castle in 1991, in conjunction with a major exhibition of Hejduk's work. The opening and dedication ceremony in Prague were attended by President Vaclav Havel and Shirley Temple Black, then U.S. Ambassador to the newly formed democracy of Czechoslovakia.

In January 2016, a permanent installation of the *Jan Palach Memorial* was unveiled in Prague, Czech Republic, twenty-five years after its first, temporary installation at Prague Castle. Now located at Jan Palach Square (formerly Red Army Square), this marked the first time a John Hejduk structure had been located permanently in a public space anywhere in the world. A plaque at the base of the monument displays the poem *The Funeral of Jan Palach*, by former Cooper Union School of Architecture Professor David Shapiro. The opening ceremony included presentations by representatives of the City of Prague; David Shapiro; James Williamson, who collaborated with Czech fabricators to realize the *Jan Palach Memorial*; and Hejduk's daughter, Dr. Renata Hejduk.

DETAILS ON THE TWO STRUCTURES

Both the *House of the Suicide* and *House of the Mother of the Suicide* are built of wood and steel. Each structure measures 9' wide x 9' long, and is capped with 49 steel spikes, the longest of which is more than 12' tall, for a total height of 24'. Their interior framing is built from cedar timber with exterior sheathing of painted 3/4" MDF panels affixed to 1/4" thick masonite substrate. All exterior surfaces have been finished with 4-8 coats of automotive lacquer. The weight of each structure is approximately 7,500 pounds. Together, they include 21 - 3' x 8' MDF panels at 50lbs each; 30 - 3' x 4' MDF panels at 25lbs each; and 98 spikes at approximately 100lbs each. The Cooper Union will obtain all necessary permits for this installation.

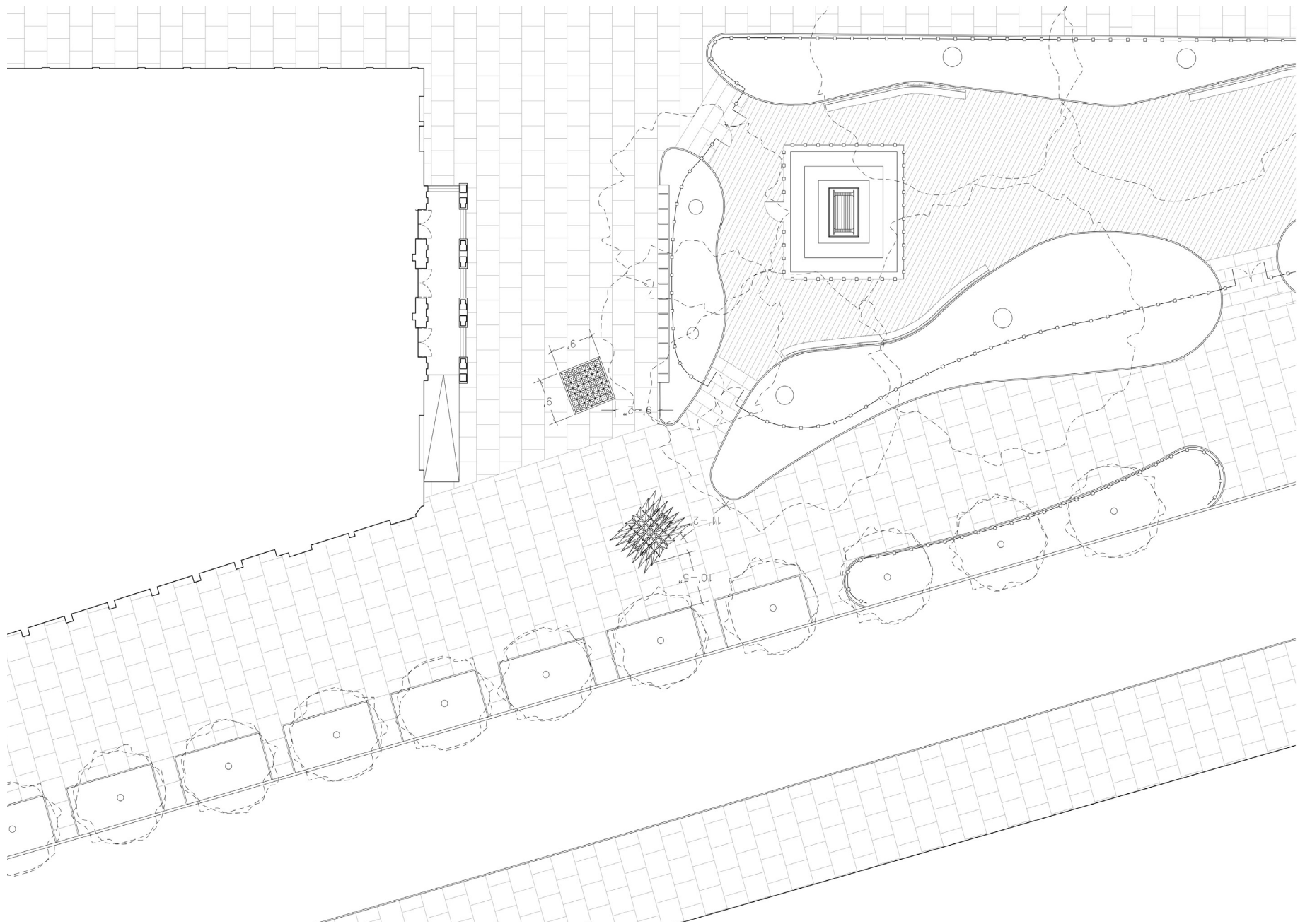
JOHN HEJDUK

John Hejduk (1929-2000) was an architect and educator who lived and worked in New York City. He began teaching at The Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture in 1964, and became the Head of the Department of Architecture in 1965. In 1975, when the School of Architecture became one of the three autonomous degree-granting divisions of The Cooper Union, he was named Dean and Professor of the School of Architecture. In 2000 he became Dean and Professor Emeritus of Architecture. His impact on the pedagogy of architecture was profound, both in the United States and abroad. He was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and of the Royal Society of Arts.

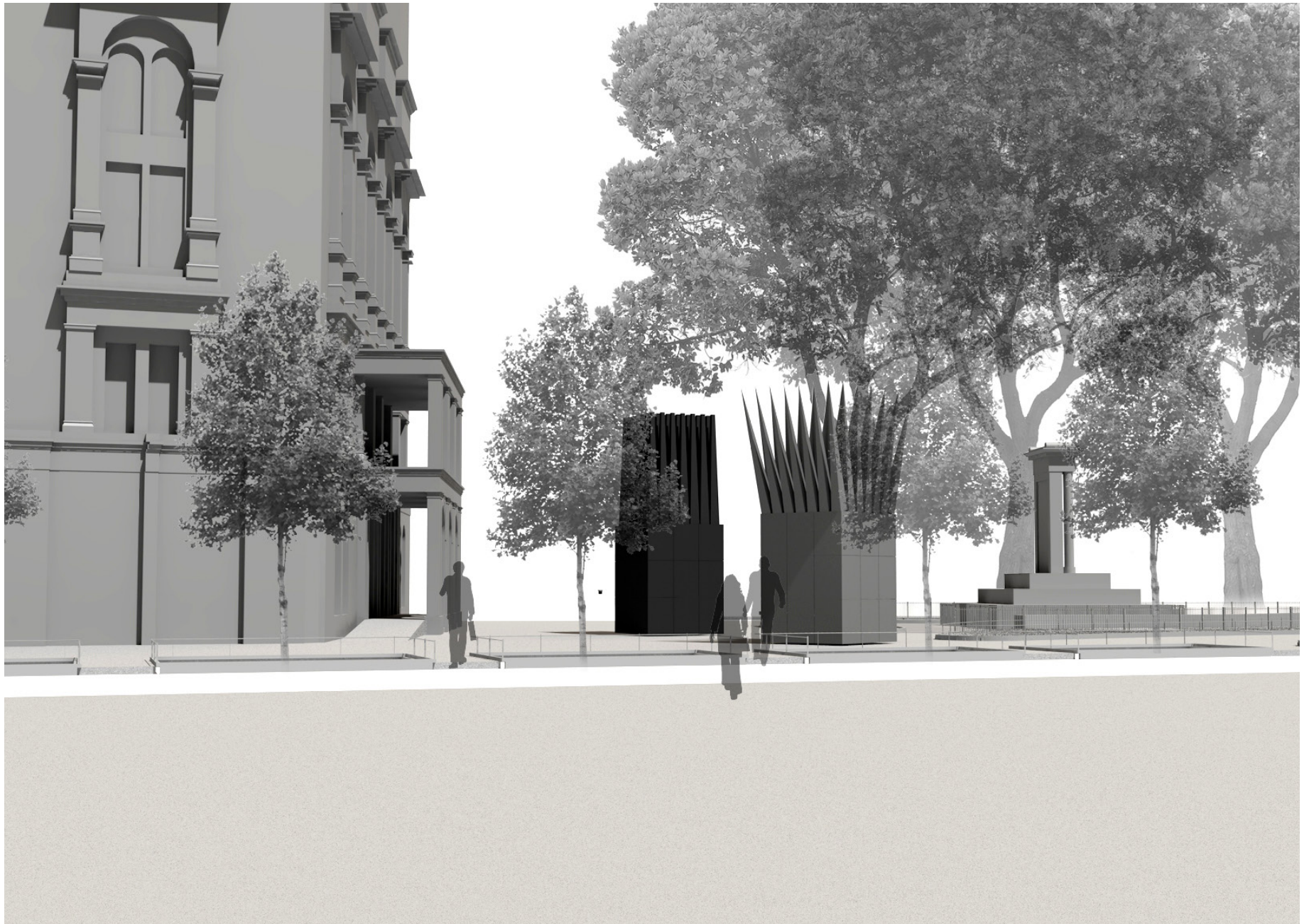
Hejduk's work has been exhibited in New York, Chicago, London, Amsterdam, Paris, Athens, Milan, Oslo, Berlin, Montreal, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Boston, Helsinki, Zurich, Prague, Rotterdam, Briey-en-Foret and Montreal. Structures from his projects have been built at the Gropius Bau (Berlin), the Architectural Association (London), the University of the Arts (Philadelphia), The Oslo School of Architecture (Norway), Georgia Institute of Technology (Atlanta), Prague Castle and Jan Palach Square (Czechoslovakia), the City of Groningen (Holland), near Madison Square Park (New York City), Slussen Stockholm (Sweden), Buenos Aires (Argentina) and at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (Spain).

HÉLÈNE BINET

Hélène Binet was born in 1959 in Sorengo and is of both Swiss and French background. Over a period of twenty-five years Binet has photographed both contemporary and historical architecture. Her clients include architects Raoul Bunschoten, Caruso St John, Zaha Hadid, Daniel Libeskind, Studio Mumbai, Peter Zumthor and many others. Binet has also photographed the works of past architects such as Alvar Aalto, Geoffrey Bawa, Le Corbusier, Sverre Fehn, John Hejduk, Sigurd Lewerentz, Andrea Palladio and Dimitris Pikionis. Her work has been published in a wide range of books, and shown in both national and international exhibitions.



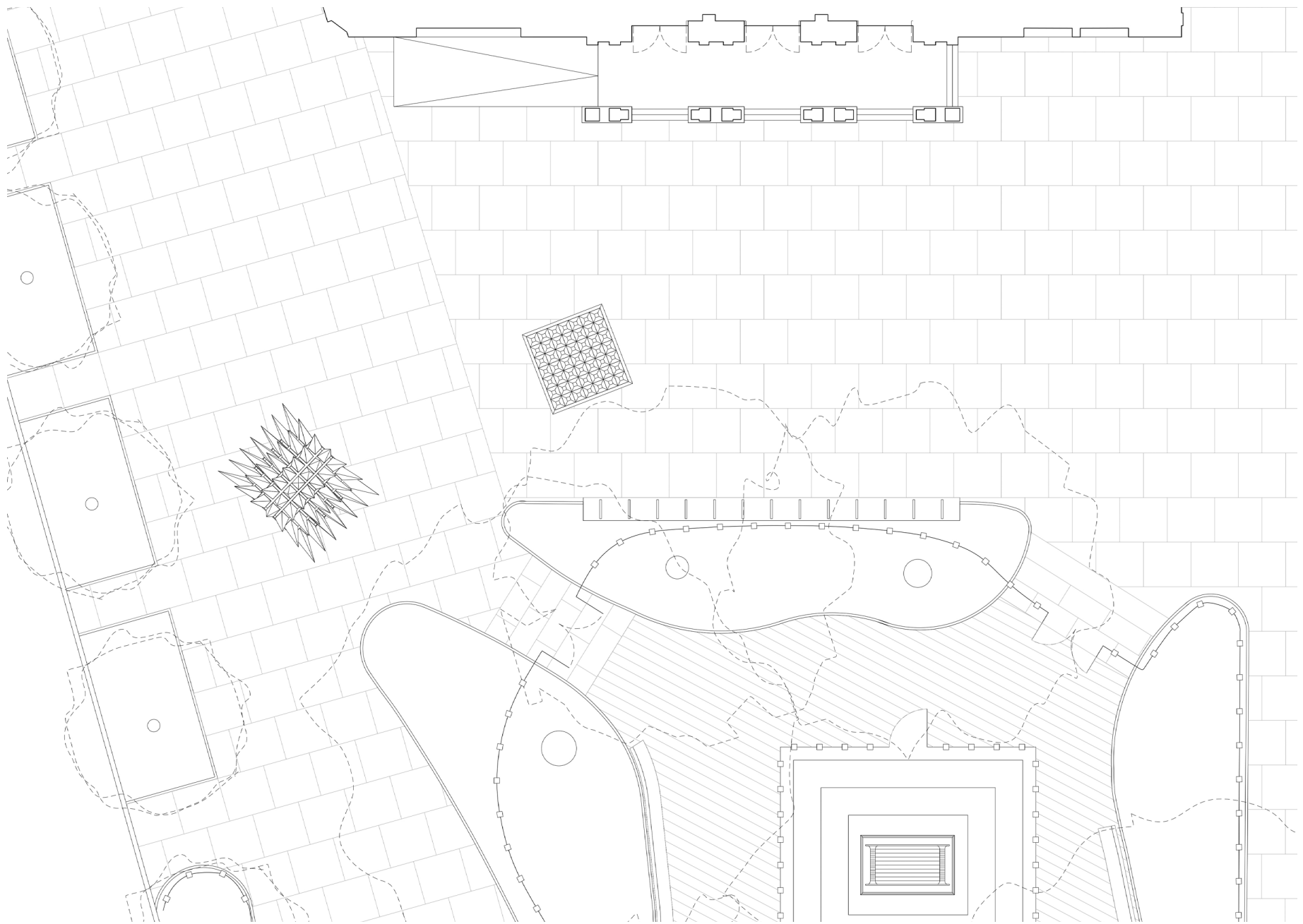
Plan of Proposed Siting for Jan Palach Memorial Structures in front of Cooper Union's Foundation Building, at East 7th Street between 3rd and 4th Avenues.



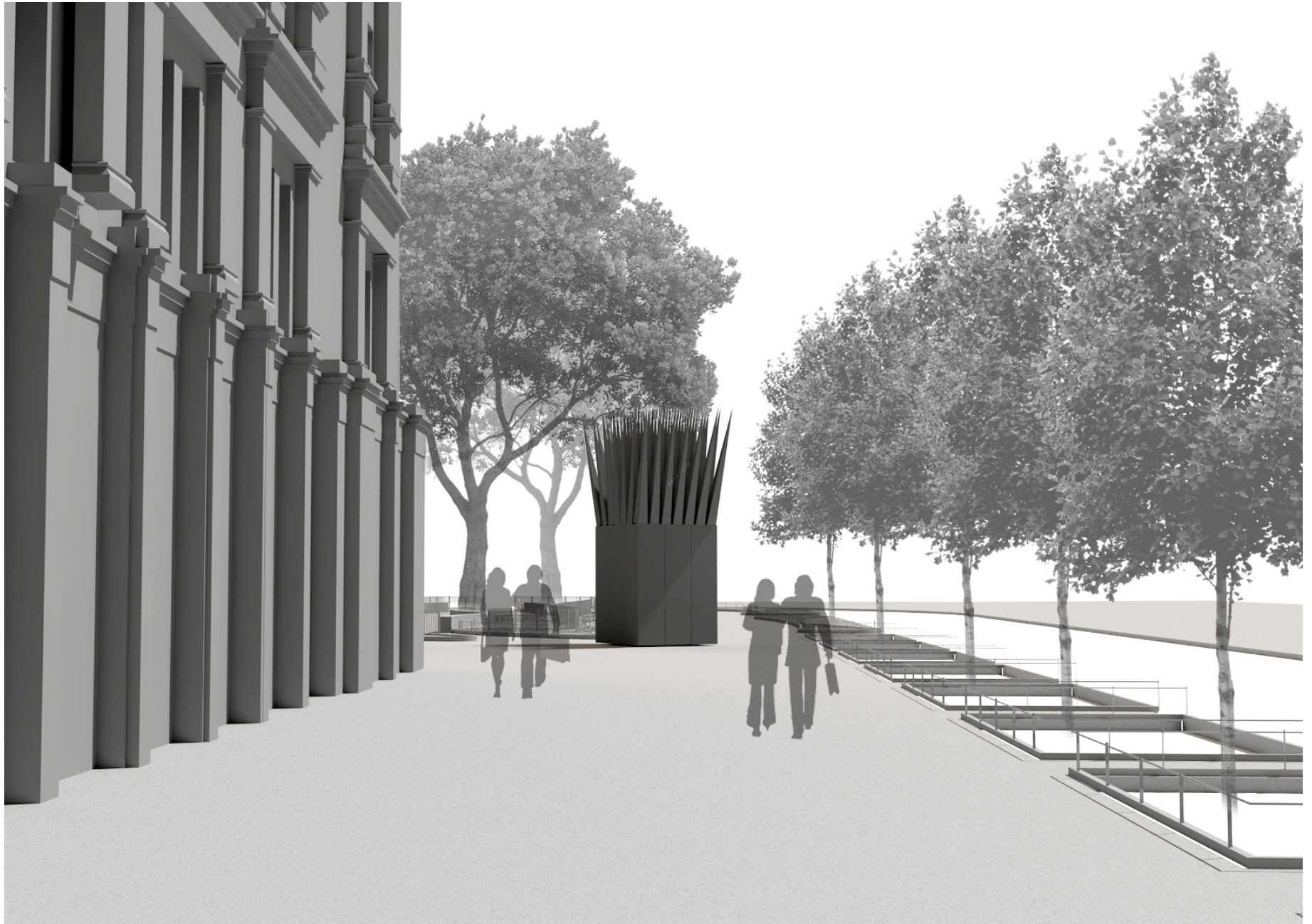
Rendering of the Proposed Location of the Structures, looking East.



Rendering of the Proposed Location of the Structures, looking North.



Plan of the Jan Palach Memorial Structures in relation to Cooper Union's Foundation Building and Peter Cooper Park.



Rendering of the Proposed Location of the Structures, looking South.