

# SITE SURVEY

STOREFRONT AT ST. MARKS PLACE

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INT 332-01  
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Randal Farm Map showing East 8th Street



St. Marks Place in 1968. Photo by George Cohen



19-25 St. Mark's Place. ca. 1979, photo by Edmund Vincent Gillon

The entire block of St. Marks between Third and Second avenues was built by real estate developer Thomas E. Davis in 1831-32; originally both sides of the street would have been a terrace of oversized Federal homes.

In 1965, a Newsweek writer noted that those looking for the East Village should "head east from Greenwich Village, and when it starts to look squalid, around the Bowery and Third Avenue, you know you're there." For those not trying to sell real estate, the area's lack of gentrification and general isolation was the appeal.

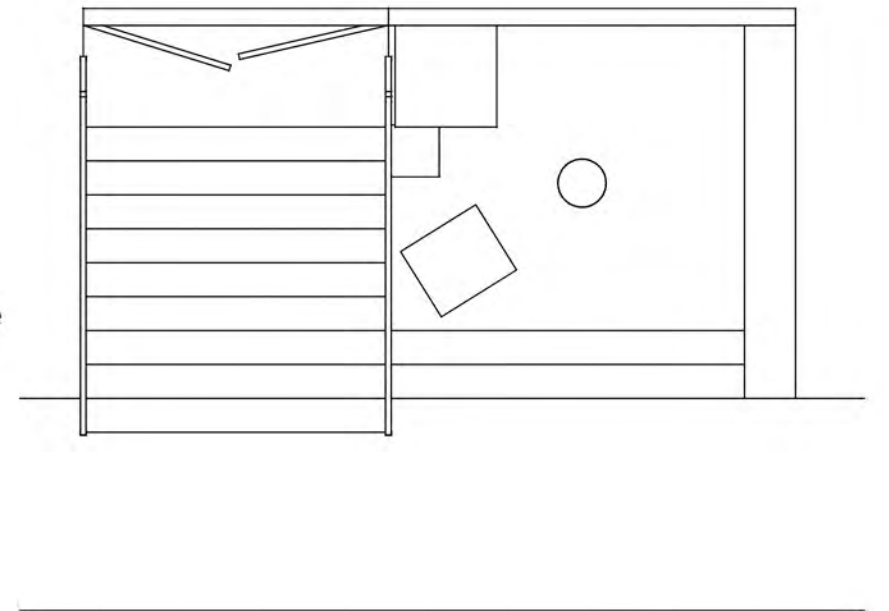
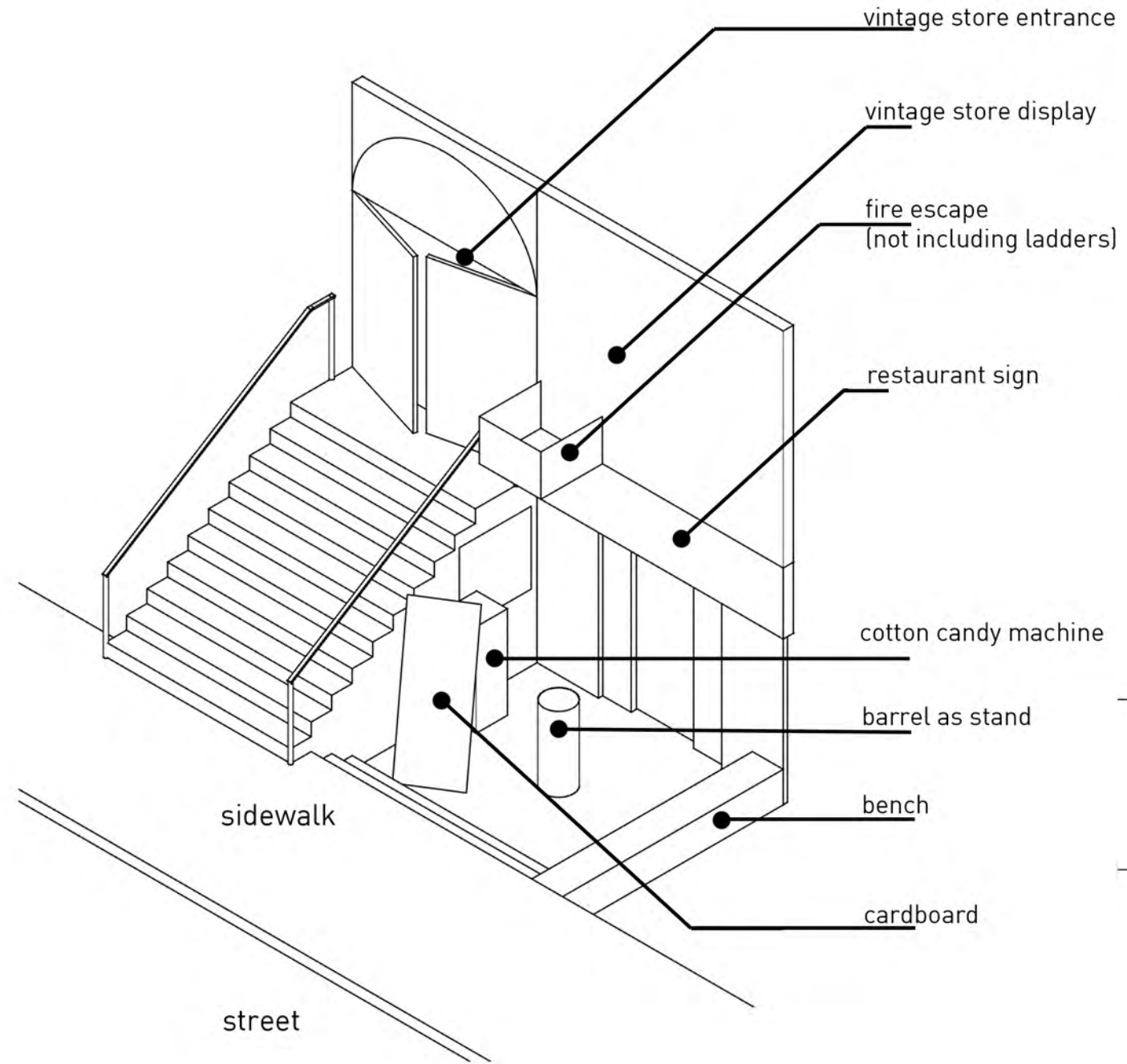
The economic downturn of the 1970s decimated real estate in much of the East Village leading to the sort of squats later popularized and sanitized by the musical Rent and the neighborhood did little to shake its "squalid" reputation.



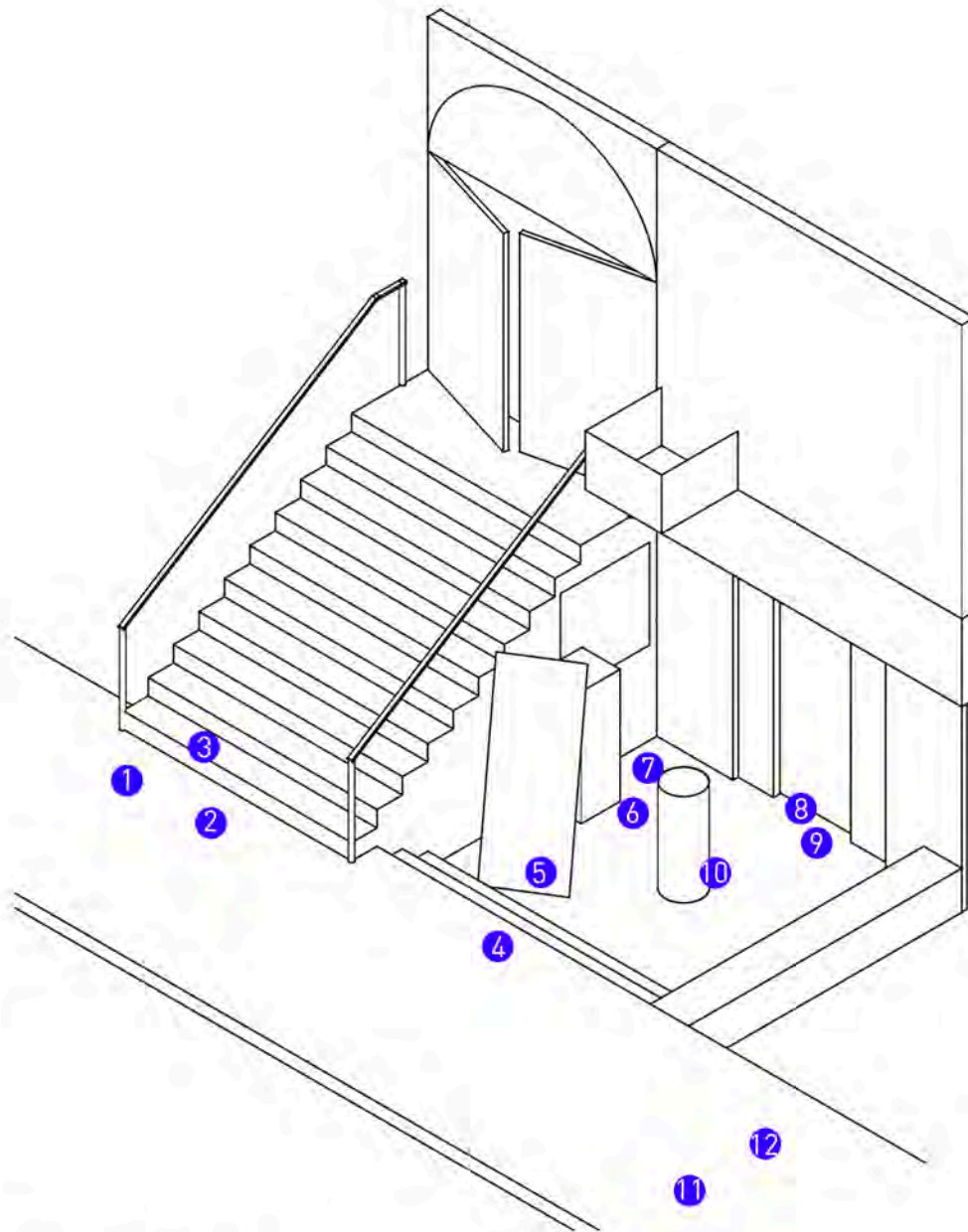
The houses surviving at Nos. 4, 20 and, in fragments, 25, show a demure sophistication: Flemish bond brickwork, headers alternating with stretchers, in a soft, orangey red, with striking marble trim. At the basement level and around the doorways, chunky squarish blocks interrupt the surrounding bands called a Gibbs surround (after the 18th-century Scottish architect James Gibbs). The long-ago elegance of the parlor floor has been stripped away, and only the delicate Gibbs surround of the front door survives; it is painted black.

No. 25, where Samuel Packwood and young Irving Lieder lived their lives, now has a vintage clothing store, Search and Destroy, on the main floor.

This survey took place at the storefront of the basement-level Japanese restaurant, Kenka. On the night of May 6, 2016, the Friday night crowd waiting outside the restaurant was observed from 9:20 p.m. to 11:20 p.m.

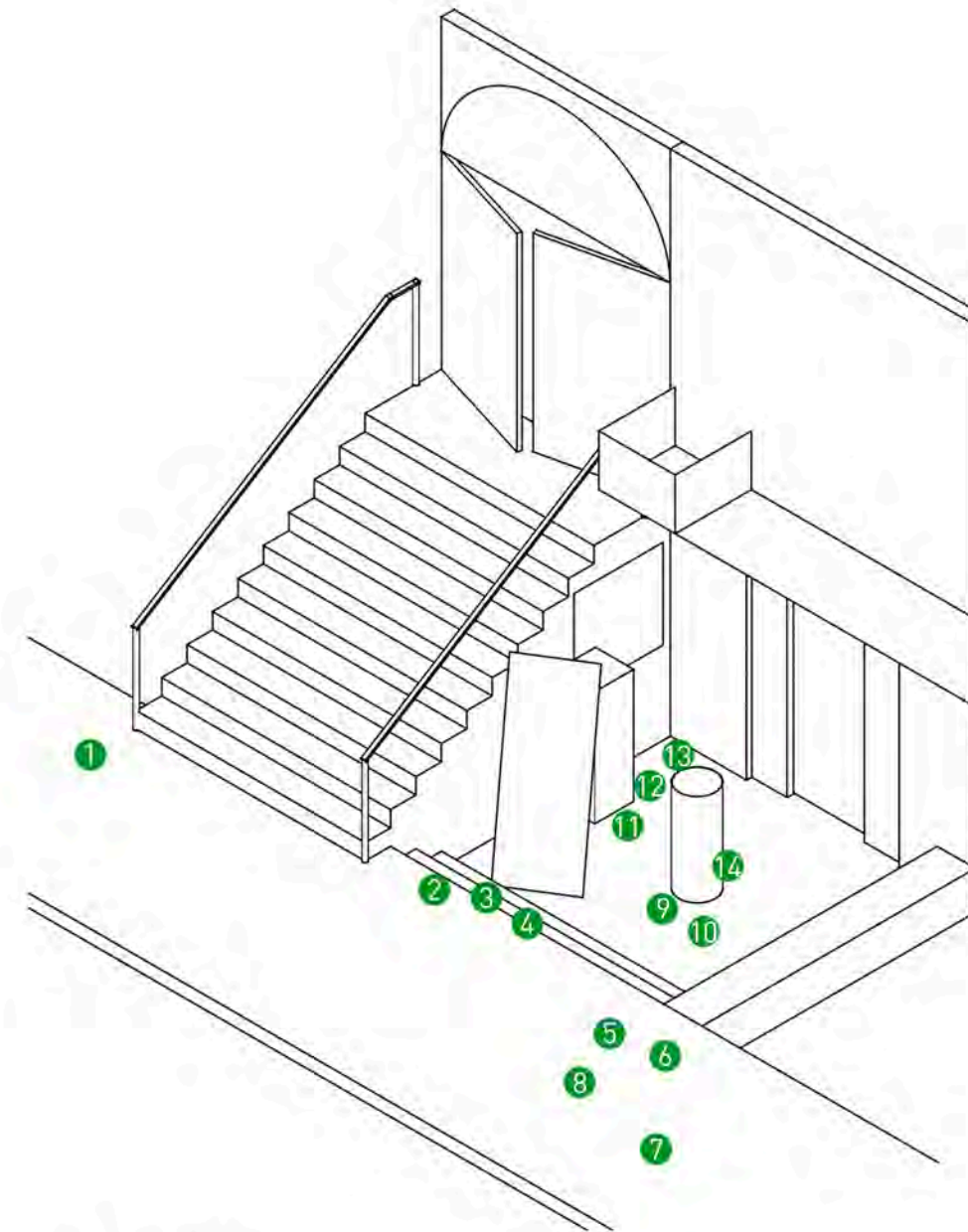


plan view



- 1. 2. 3: smoking & chatting
- 4: taking photos
- 5: behind funny cardboard
- 6.7: making cotton candy
- 8.9: leaving restaurant
- 10: hostess, writing
- 11.12: passing by

May 6, Friday  
cool, windy,  
9: 24 p.m.

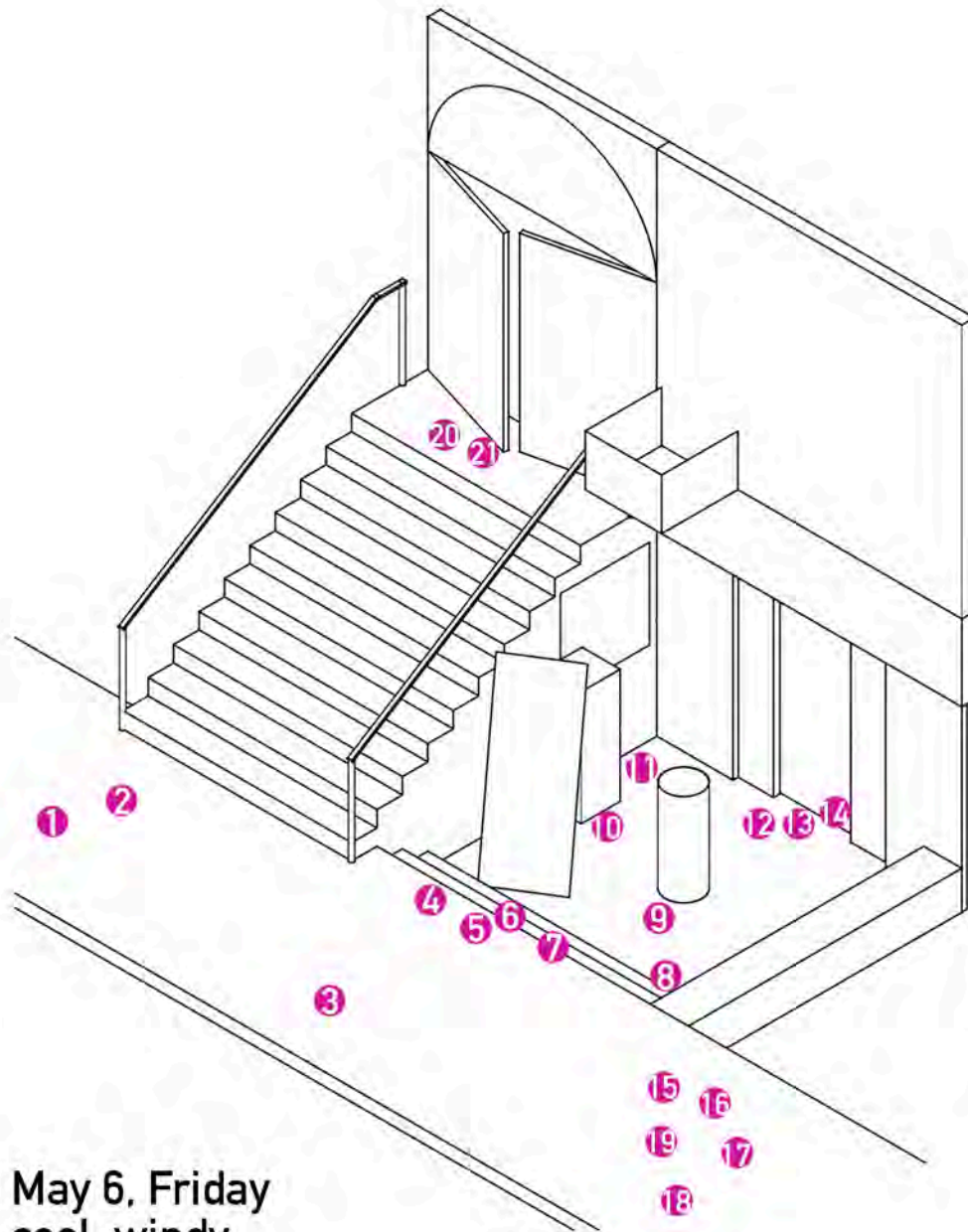


- 1: passing by
- 2.3.4: waiting and chatting
- 5.6: smoking
- 7.6: chatting with 5.6
- 9.10: getting numbers
- 11: making cotton candy
- 12.13: eating cotton candy
- 14: hostess, writing

May 6, Friday  
cool, windy,  
9: 55 p.m.

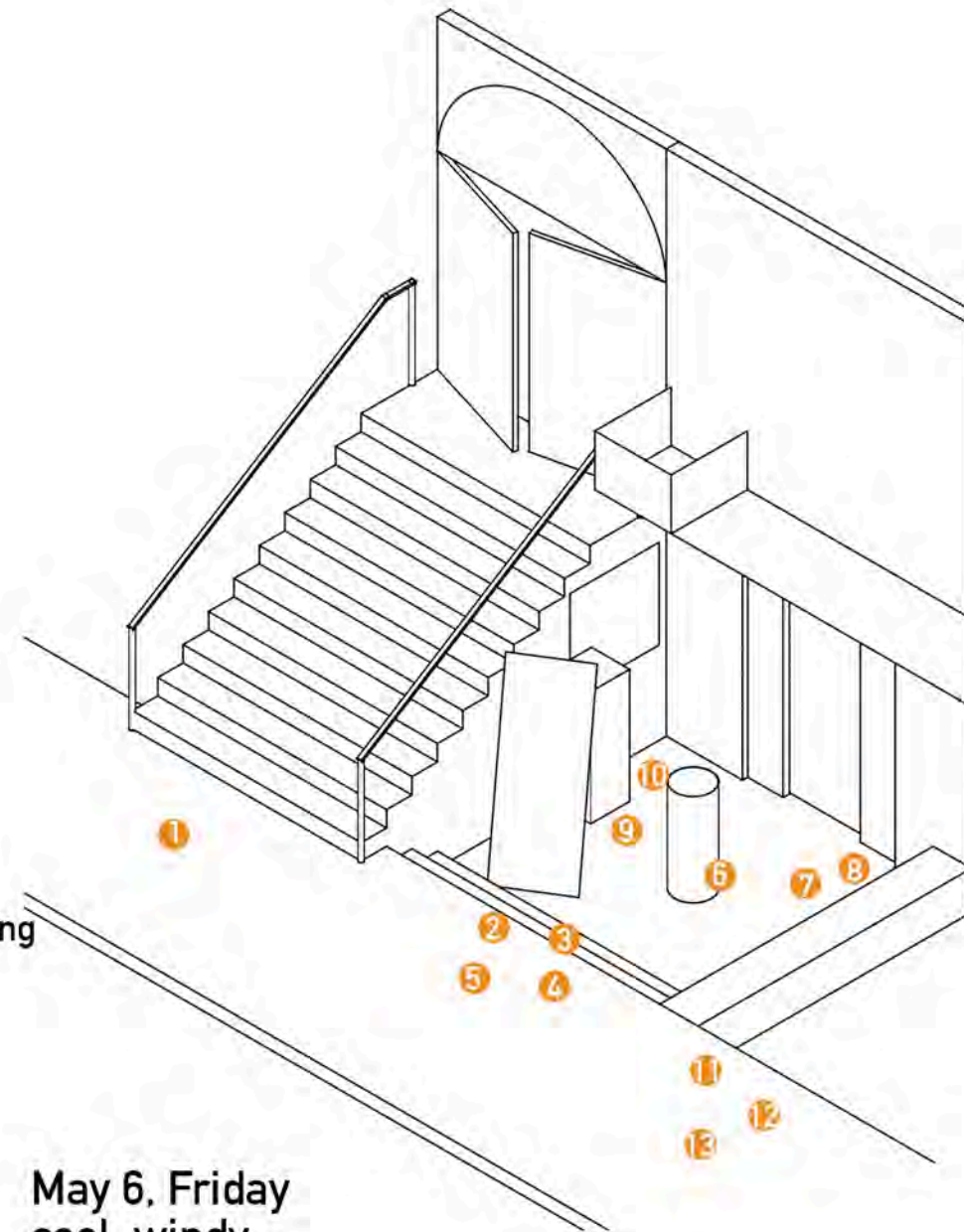
## A: SNAPSHOT STUDIES

A set of snapshots of the crowd at the restaurant door. Due to the level change of the site, axonometric drawings were used to better indicate the locations of individuals. Taken approximately every 30 minutes, these studies are meant to be preliminary and fast; they help to document the average number of persons waiting during peak hours, and to map out the most common activities among the crowd.



May 6, Friday  
cool, windy.  
10: 20 p.m.

- 1.2.3: passing by
- 4.5.6.7: chatting and waiting
- 8: staring at phone
- 9: looking around
- 10: making cotton candy
- 11: talking to 10
- 12.13: entering restaurant
- 14: hostess leading 12.13
- 15.16.17: smoking and chatting
- 18.19: chatting
- 20.21: entering store



May 6, Friday  
cool, windy.  
10: 52 p.m.

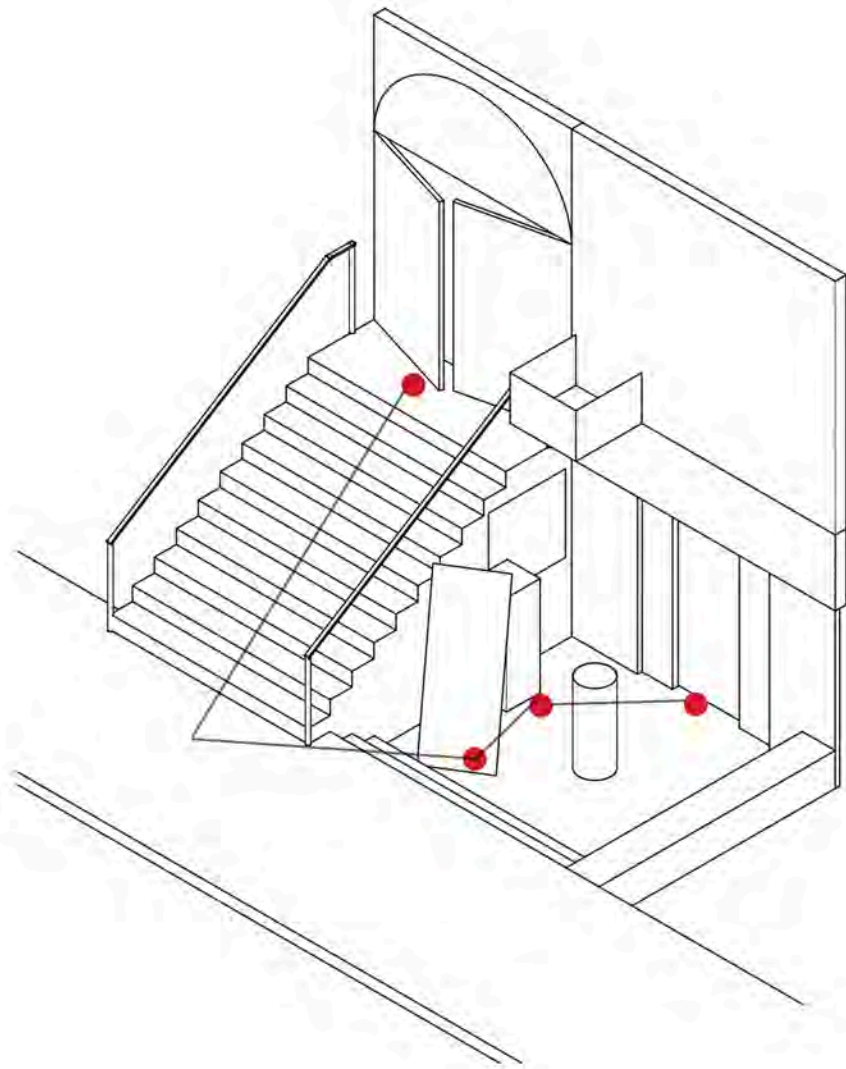
- 1: passing by
- 2.3.4.5: waiting and chatting
- 6: hostess
- 7.8: waiting and chatting
- 9.10: making cotton candy
- 11: staring at phone
- 12.13: waiting and chatting

// Based on the initial snapshots, the waiting time averages on 15 minutes; groups with higher numbers of people tend to wait longer; the average number of people waiting is 13.

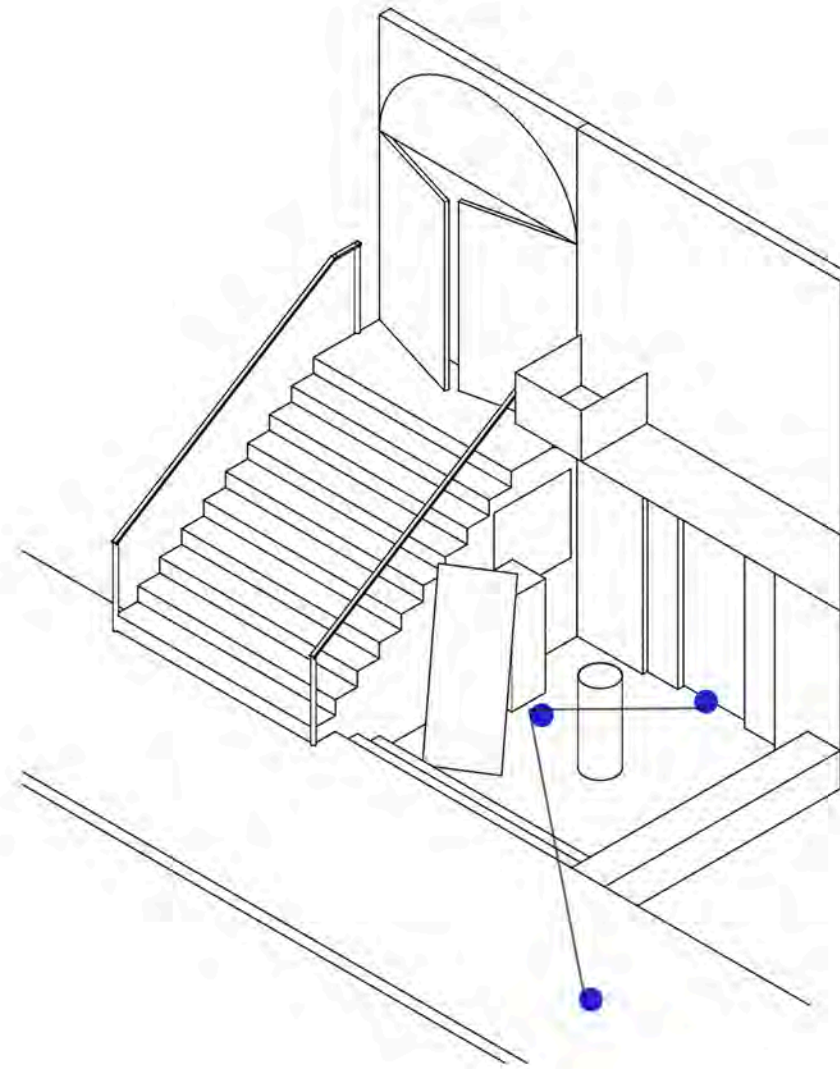
// The silly cardboard is a popular distraction among the waiting crowd, while the cotton candy machine seems popular among leaving customers.

// Very few people choose to sit on the small bench while waiting. Most people choose to stand on the threshold [3 steps] between sidewalk and the store front.

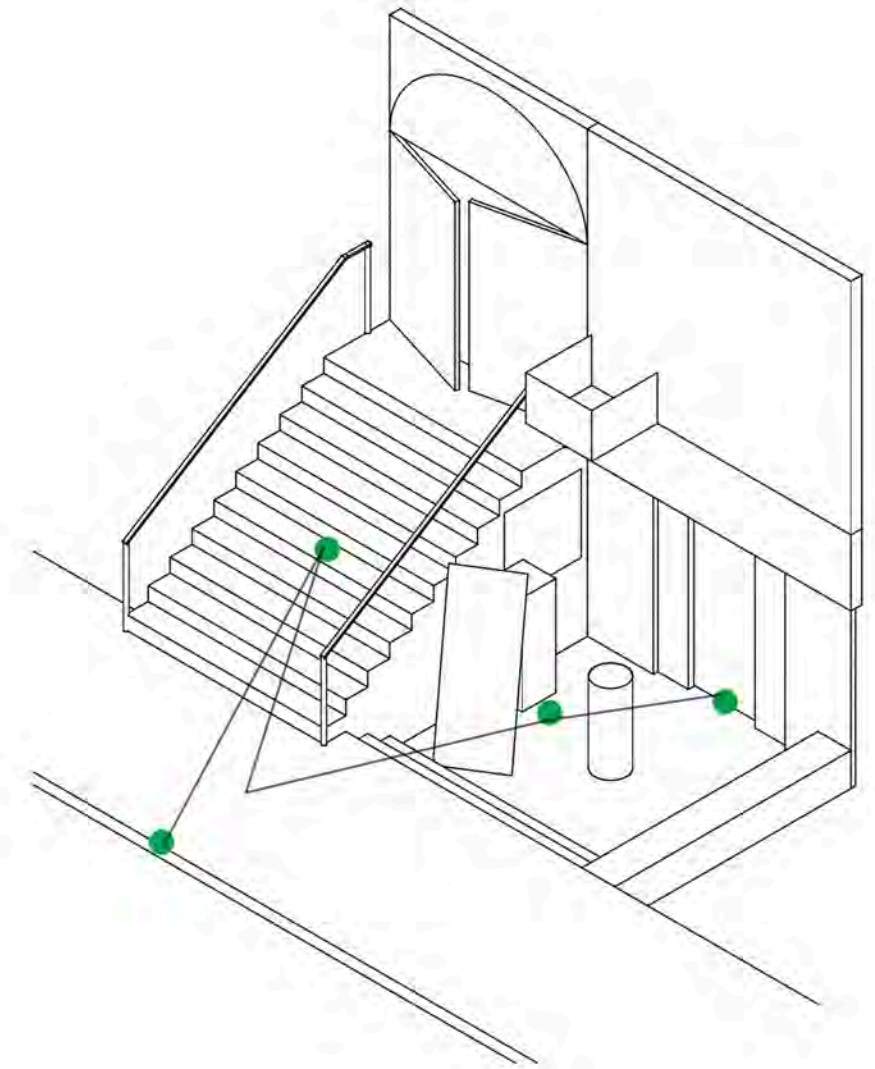
## PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS



**May 6, Friday**  
cool, windy,  
9:31 p.m.    leaving restaurant → making cotton  
candy → taking photo behind silly  
cardboard → entering vintage shop



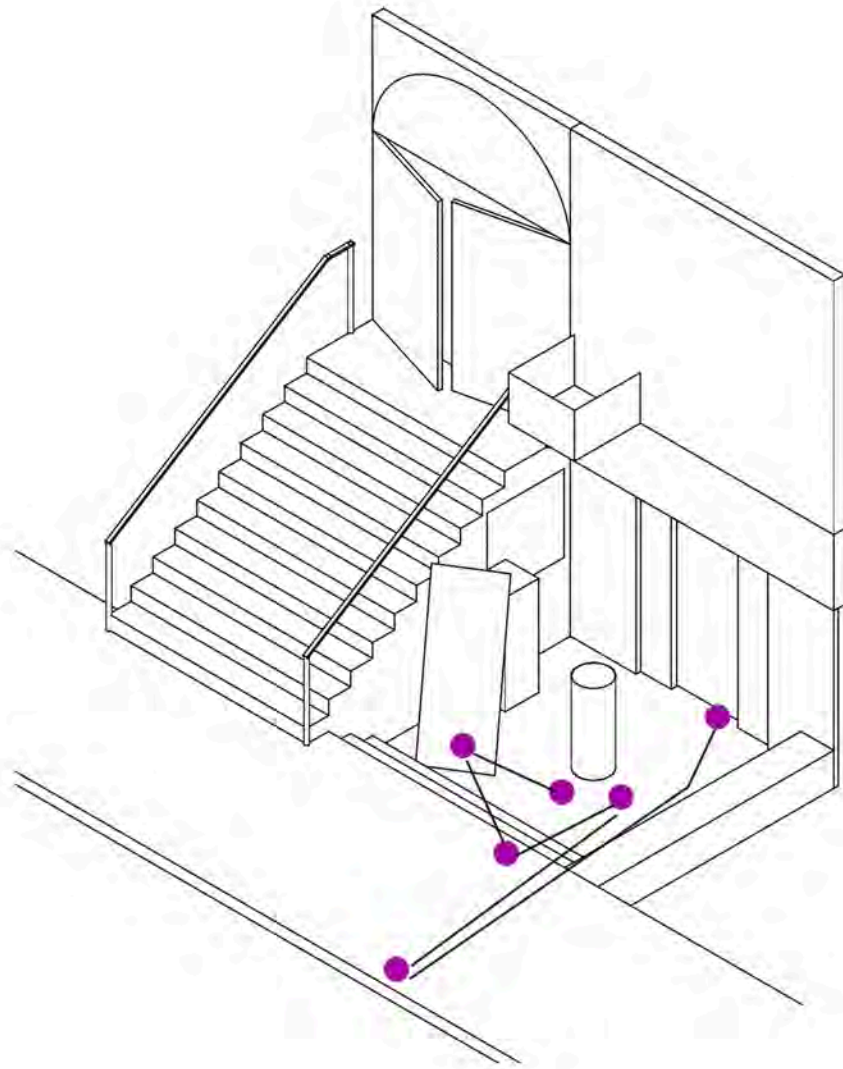
**May 6, Friday**  
cool, windy,  
10:08 p.m.    leaving restaurant → checking out  
cotton candy machine → leaving



**May 6, Friday**  
cool, windy,  
10:35 p.m.    leaving restaurant → making cotton  
candy → going to vintage store →  
changing mind, crossing street

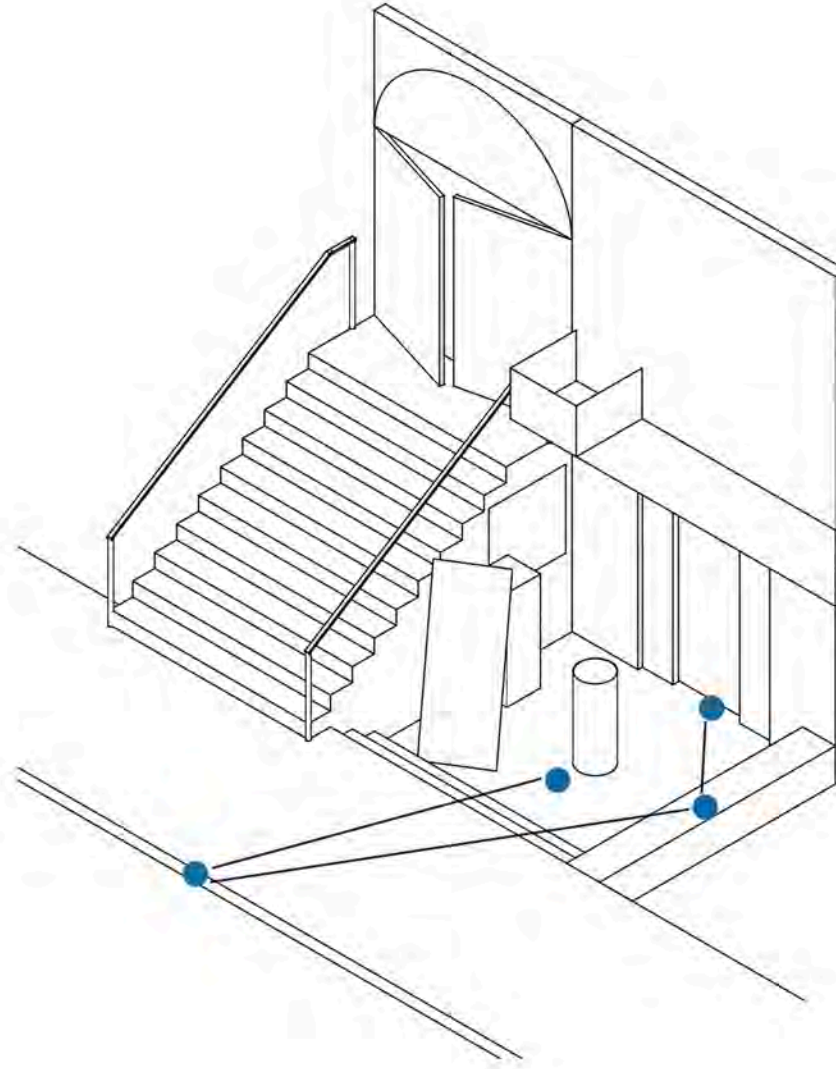
**B: INDIVIDUAL OBSERVATION**

random individuals leaving the restaurant



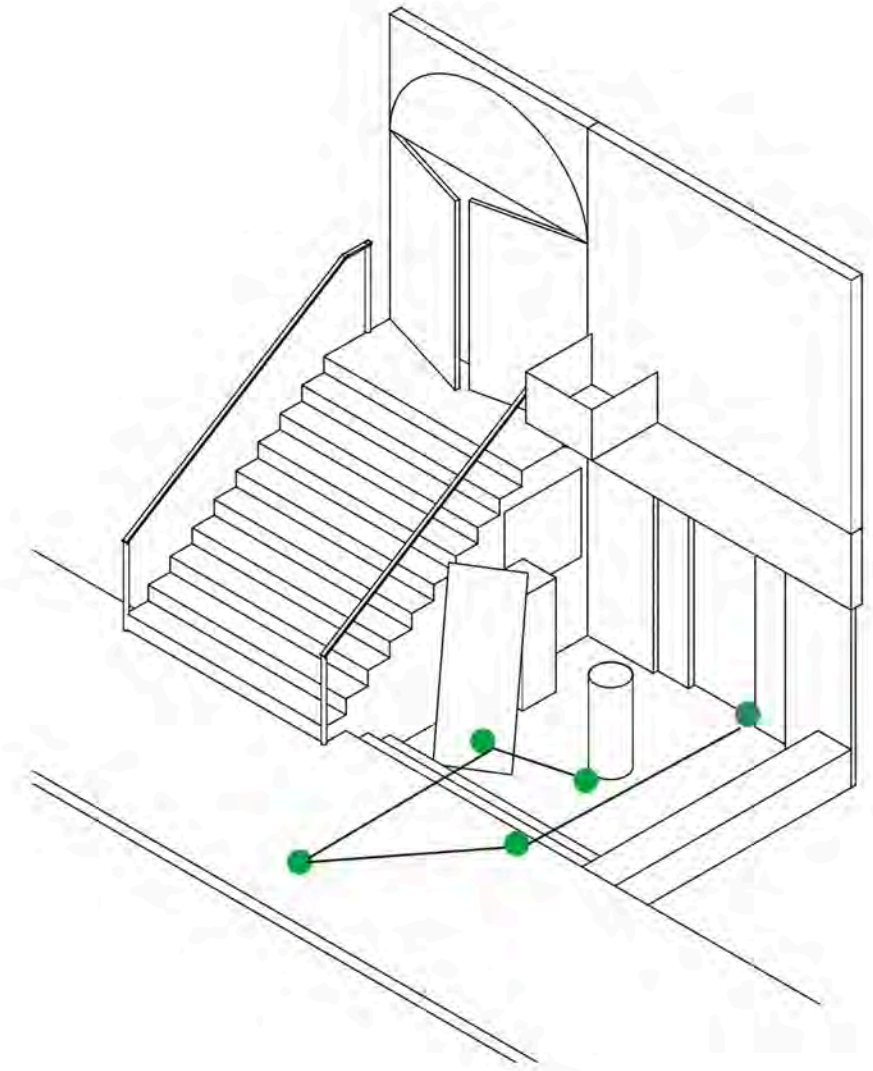
**May 6, Friday cool,**

9:37 making reservation → taking photo with silly cardboard → stepping onto sidewalk → 9:45 talking to hostess → standing on curb, staring at phone → 9:50 getting called by friends, going in restaurant



**May 6, Friday cool.**

10:58 making reservation → standing on curb, chatting → 11:10 sitting on bench → 11:13 going in restaurant



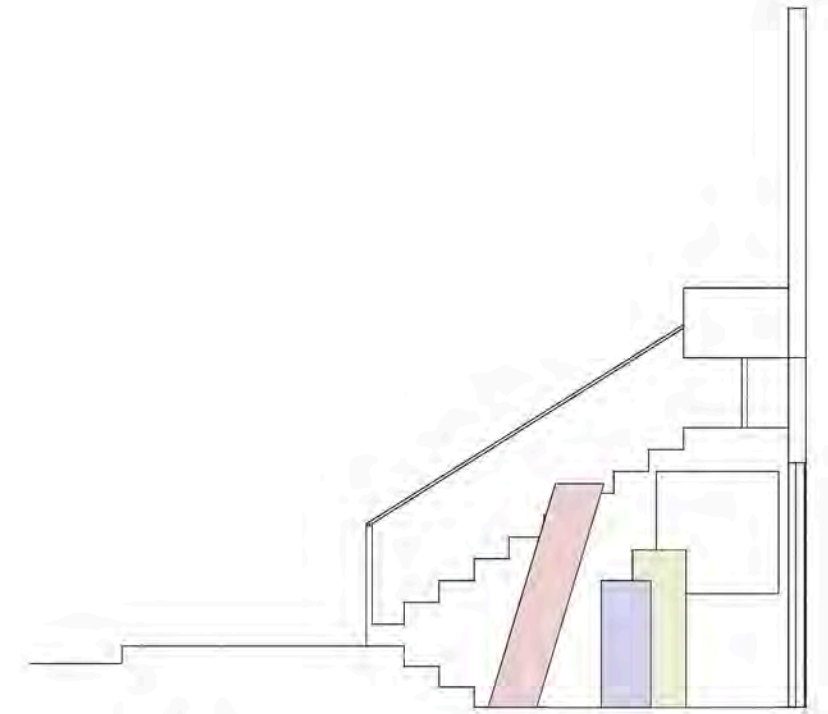
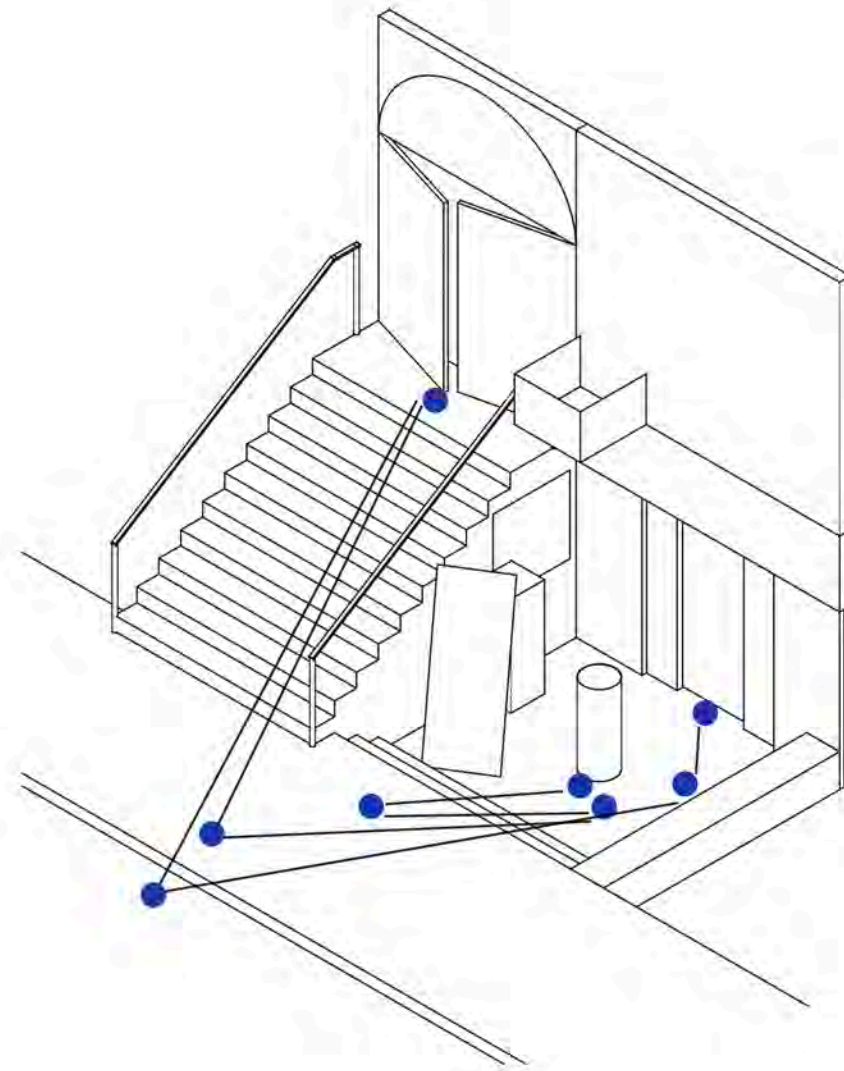
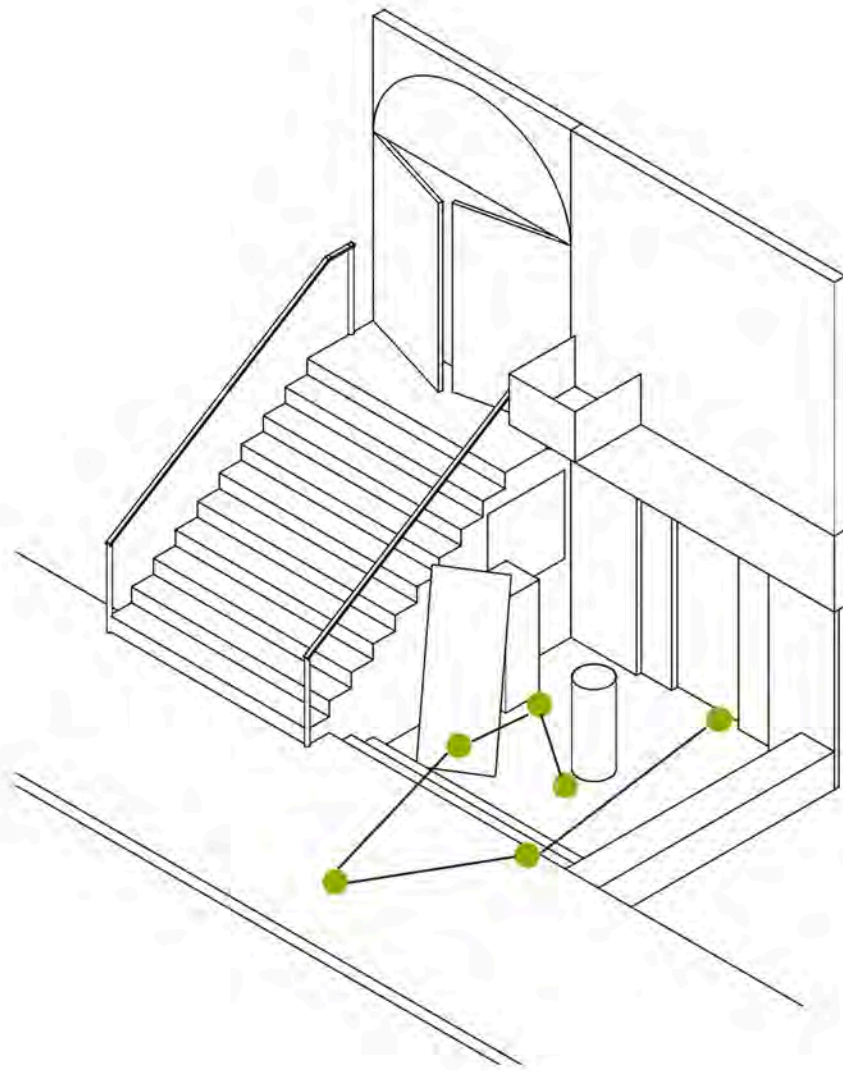
**May 6, Friday cool.**

11:02 making reservation → checking out silly cardboard → smoking on sidewalk with friend → 11:09 getting up and down steps, chatting → 11:13 going in restaurant

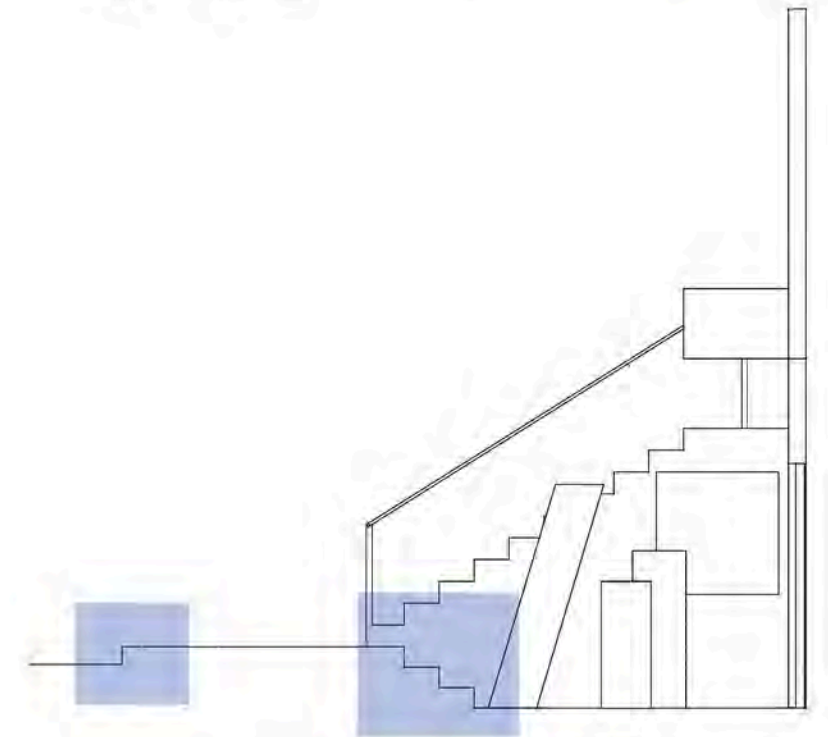
## B: INDIVIDUAL OBSERVATION

random individuals after making reservation





key features



key threshold moments

**May 6, Friday cool.**

11:15 making reservation → checking out cotton candy machine → checking out silly cardboard → standing on sidewalk chatting with friend, checking phone periodically → 11:24 pacing along steps, seeming impatient → 11:33 going in restaurant

**May 6, Friday cool.**

11:36 making reservation → pacing on the sidewalk, chatting with friends → 11:40 checking with hostess → going into vintage shop → 11:49 coming out of shop, lingering near bench → 11:54 going into restaurant

**B: INDIVIDUAL OBSERVATION**

random individuals (in large group) after making reservation

**Main behavior patterns exhibited by people stepping out of the restaurant:**

The self-serving cotton candy machine seemed to be the first thing many approached after stepping out of the restaurant. Most people, however, did not linger around much after dinner.

**Main behavior patterns exhibited by people waiting to be seated:**

// The waiting time averaged on 12-15 minutes from 9:30 - 11:00 p.m., after 11:00 the waiting time became significantly shorter.

// People coming in small groups (2-3) tend to linger within the boundaries defined by the three steps.

// People coming in larger groups (4+) tend to stay on the sidewalk, some wander onto the street.

// Most people chose to kill time by chatting with friends. Most people checked their phones periodically.

Interestingly, there were very few people who chose to sit on the bench while waiting; few people chose to go upstairs to visit the vintage store — presumably out of the concern of missing their calls (on the night of the survey, there was no persons or groups lingering on the staircase of No.25). Very few people left the perimeter completely during the wait.

**Major spatial features and their psychological characteristics:**

// The compact space provides an intimate, informal ambiance without being claustrophobic. The most important threshold moment is the three steps between the restaurant and the sidewalk: these steps set a clear boundary so that people would not wander far away from the waiting area.

// The cotton candy machine and silly cardboard proved to be effective and popular distractions; they also successfully served to keep the customers from straying too far from the waiting area. The bench, in comparison, was not frequented.