

A SPATIAL THEORY OF PUBLIC SPACE

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY



Artist's Rendering on 1915 Postcard

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INTRODUCTION OF CONCEPTS AND TERMS:

THEORY: Among the various aspects of public space, one of the foremost is that of architectural space.

All architectural space falls on a single continuum of accessibility determined by physical and social boundaries.

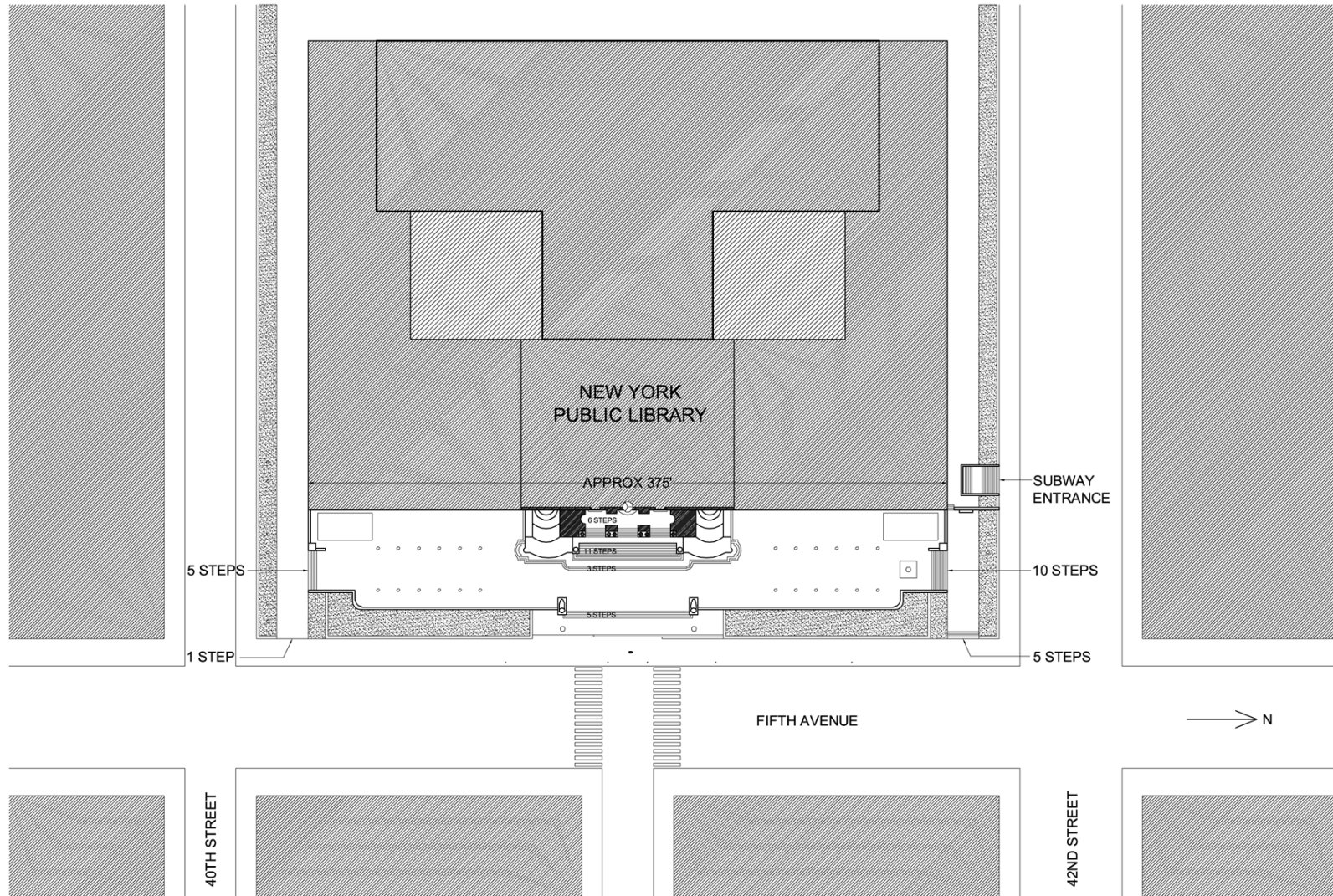
Thus, space can be understood and represented in terms of loosely bounded layers that are mediated by thresholds.

These layers and thresholds distinguish and regulate the degree to which a space can be considered *private* or *public*.

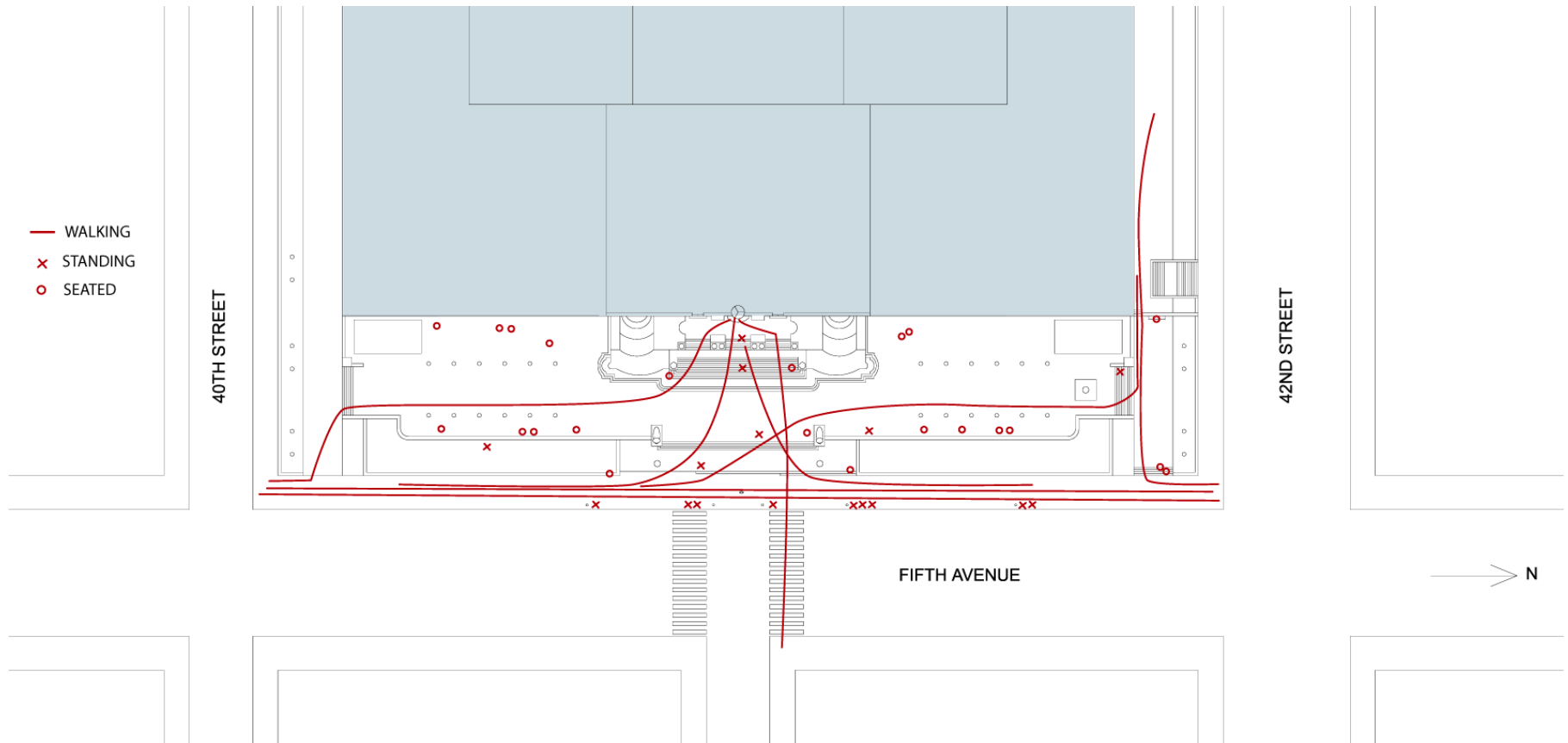
RESEARCH METHODS:

- 1) Architectural field survey of the New York Public Library.
- 2) Behavior mapping using counting and observation of activity.

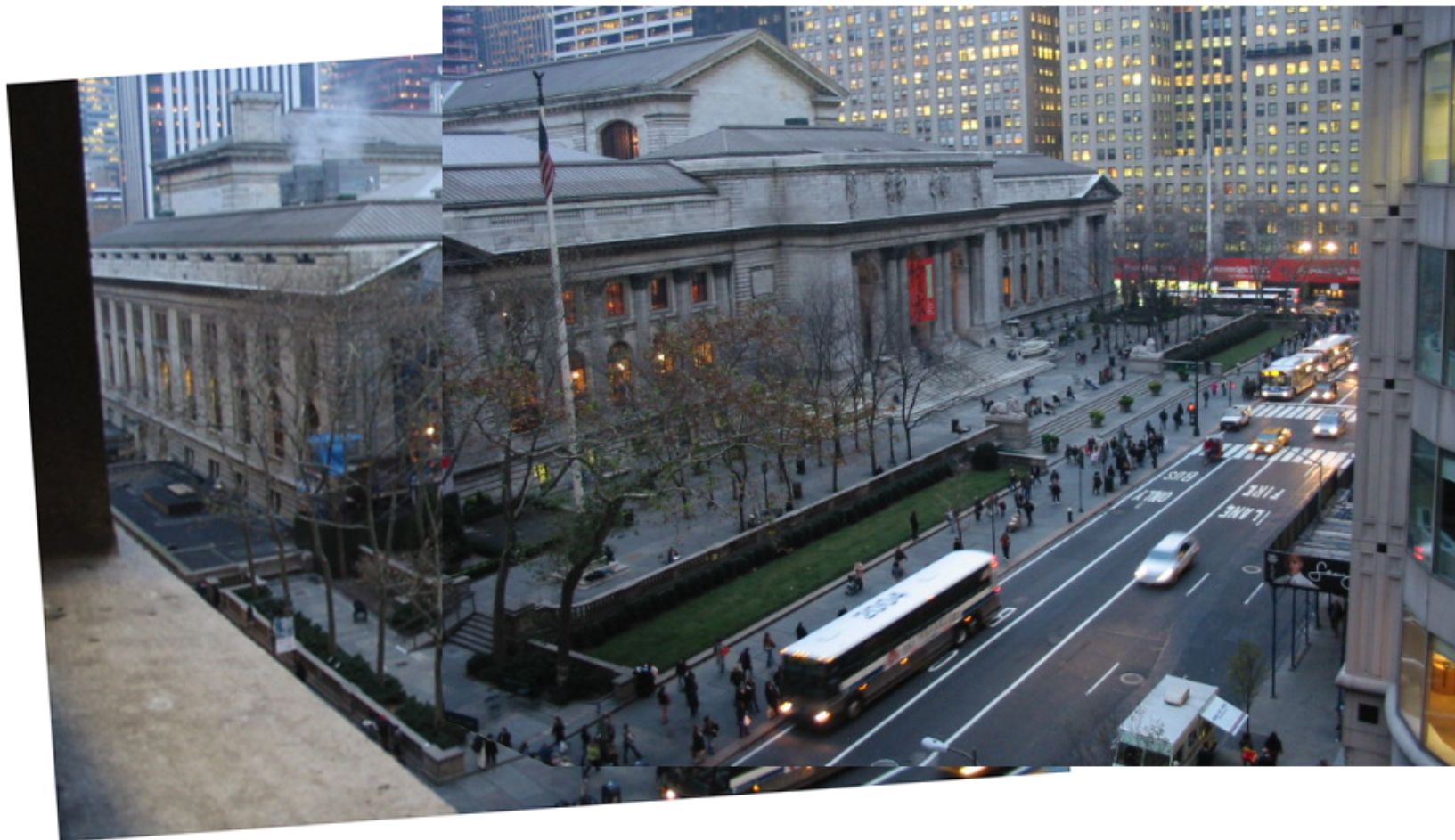




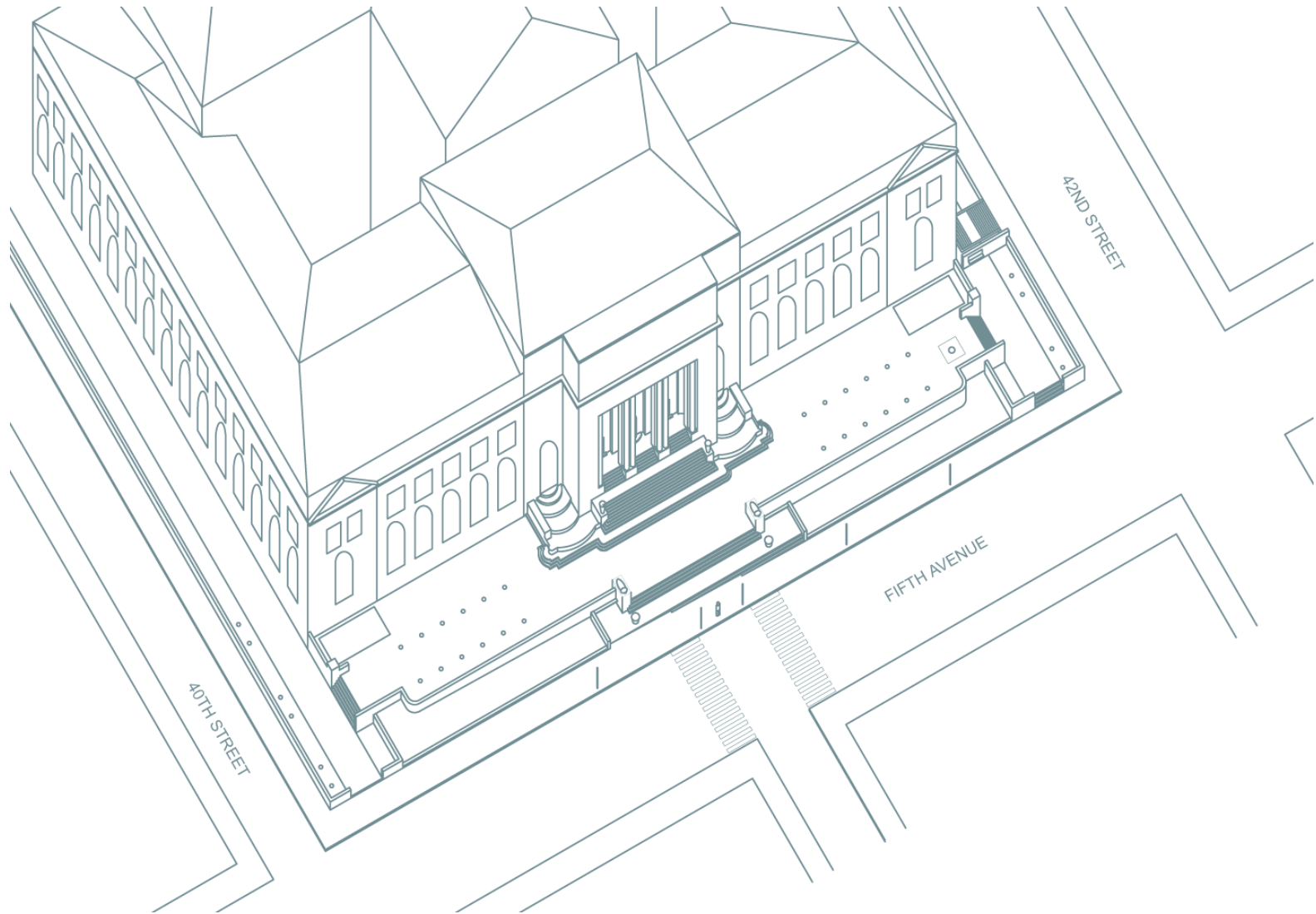
ARCHITECTURAL FIELD SURVEY



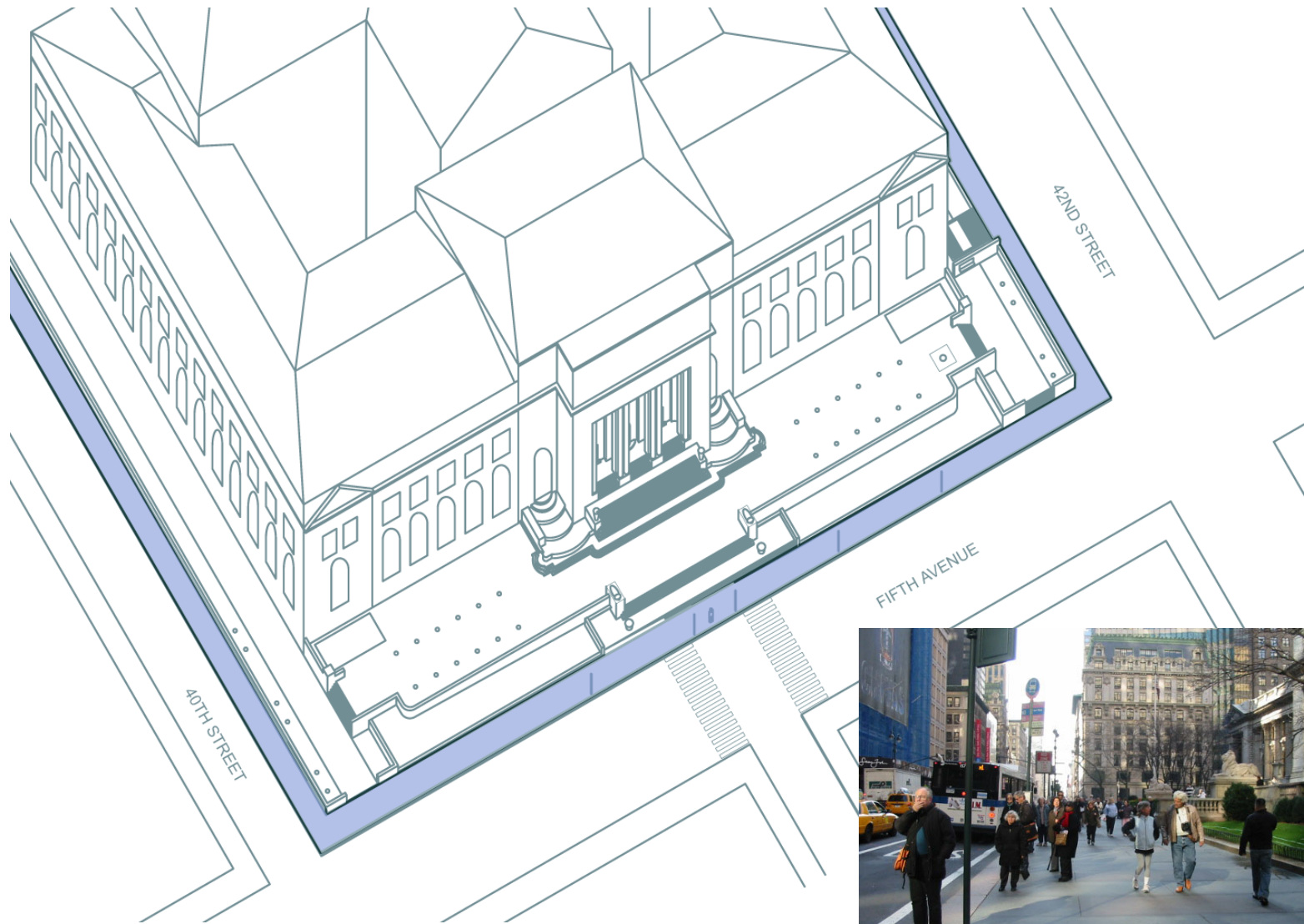
BEHAVIORAL MAPPING - AGGREGATE OF 6 20-MINUTE OBSERVATION PERIODS



NYPL AS VIEWED FROM 40TH STREET AND FIFTH AVENUE

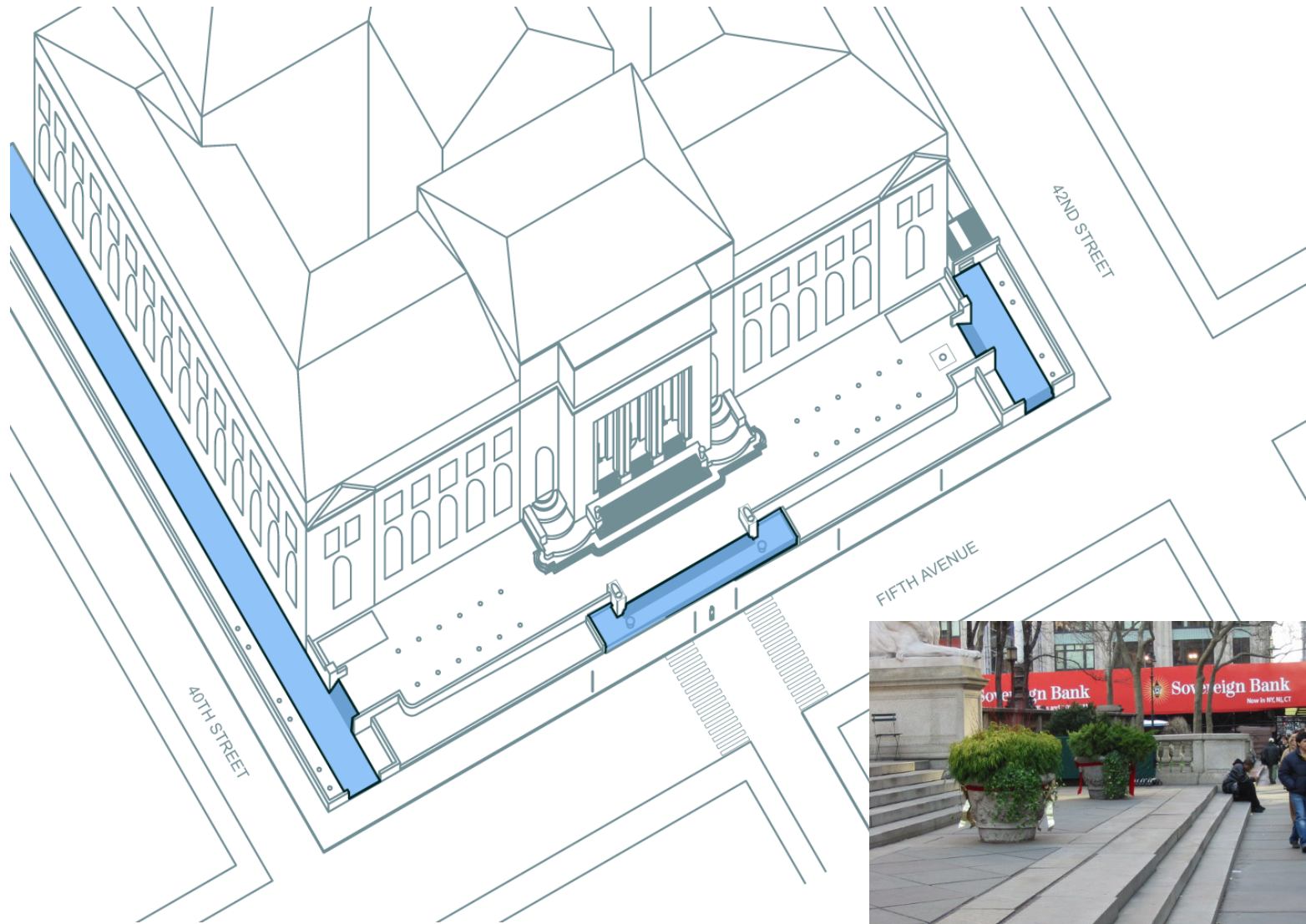


ISOMETRIC VIEW OF NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY



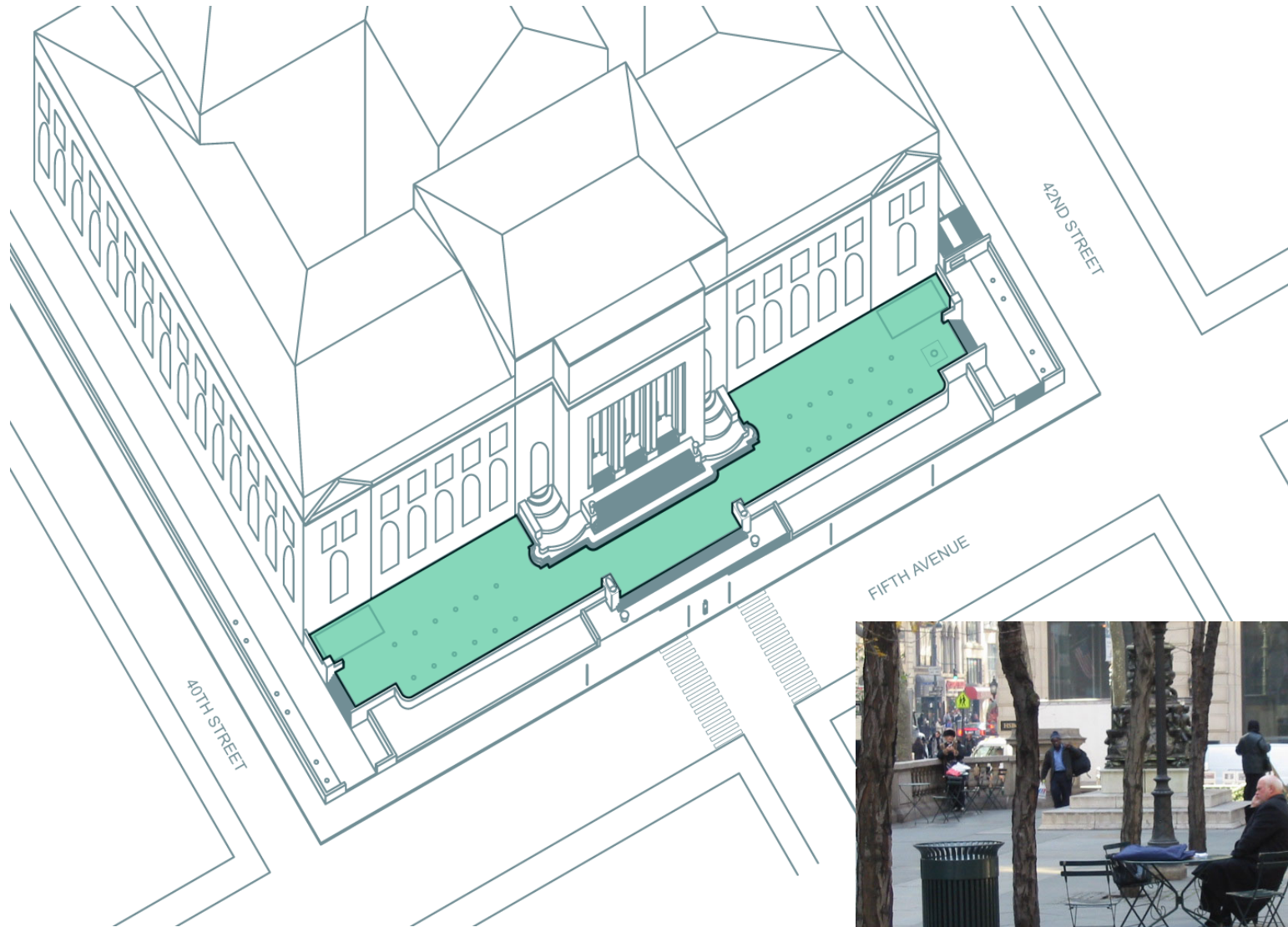
LAYER 0: PUBLIC SIDEWALK





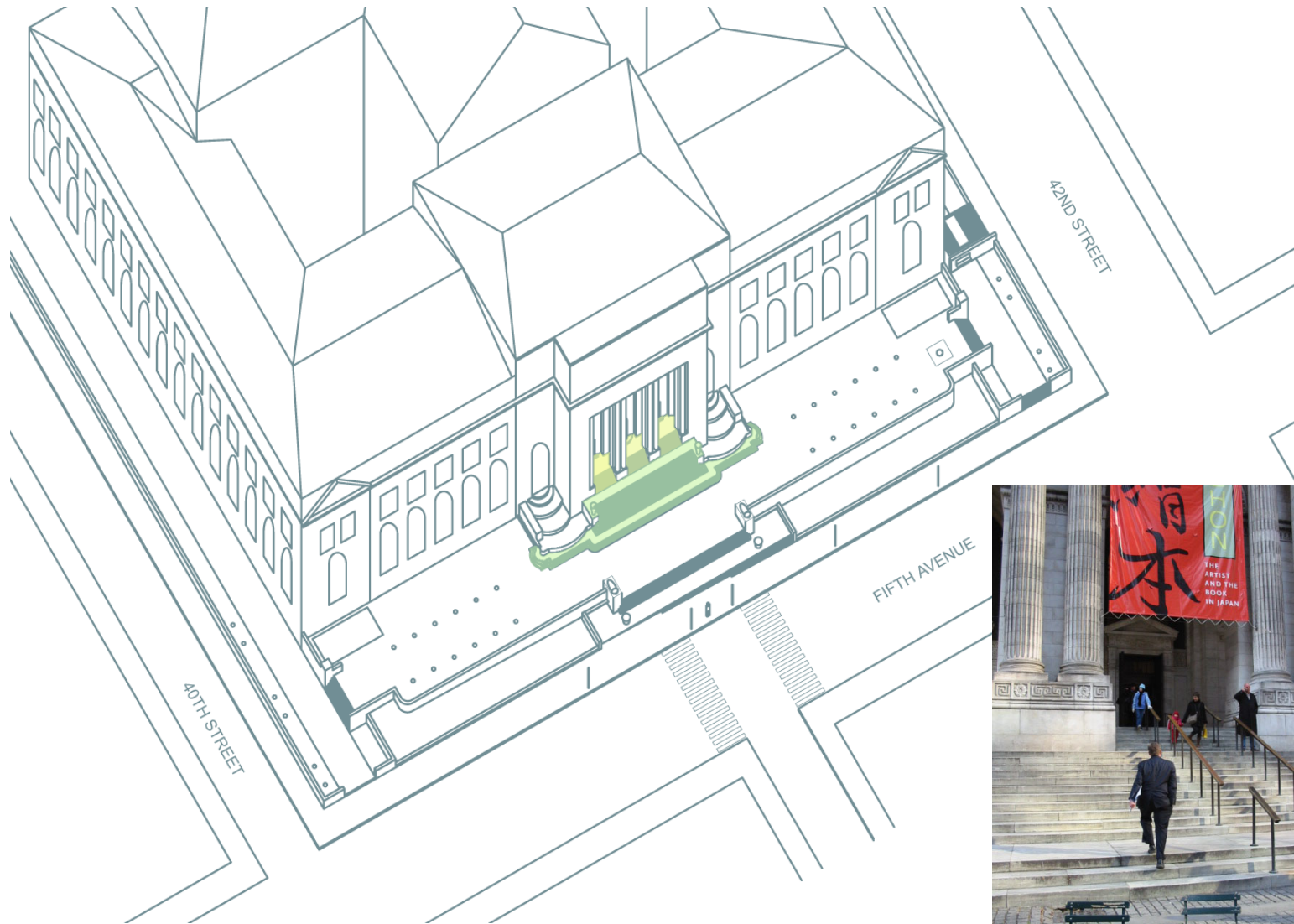
LAYER 1: ENTERING THE LIBRARY PRECINCT



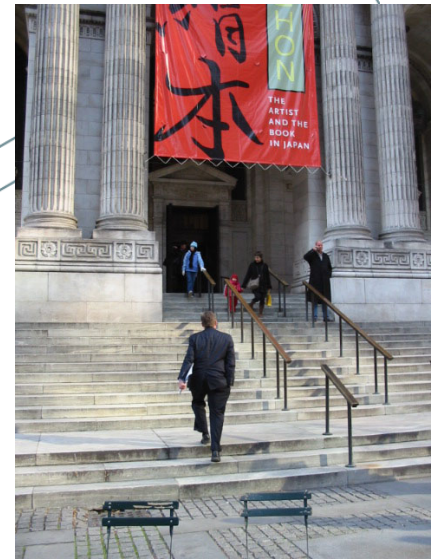


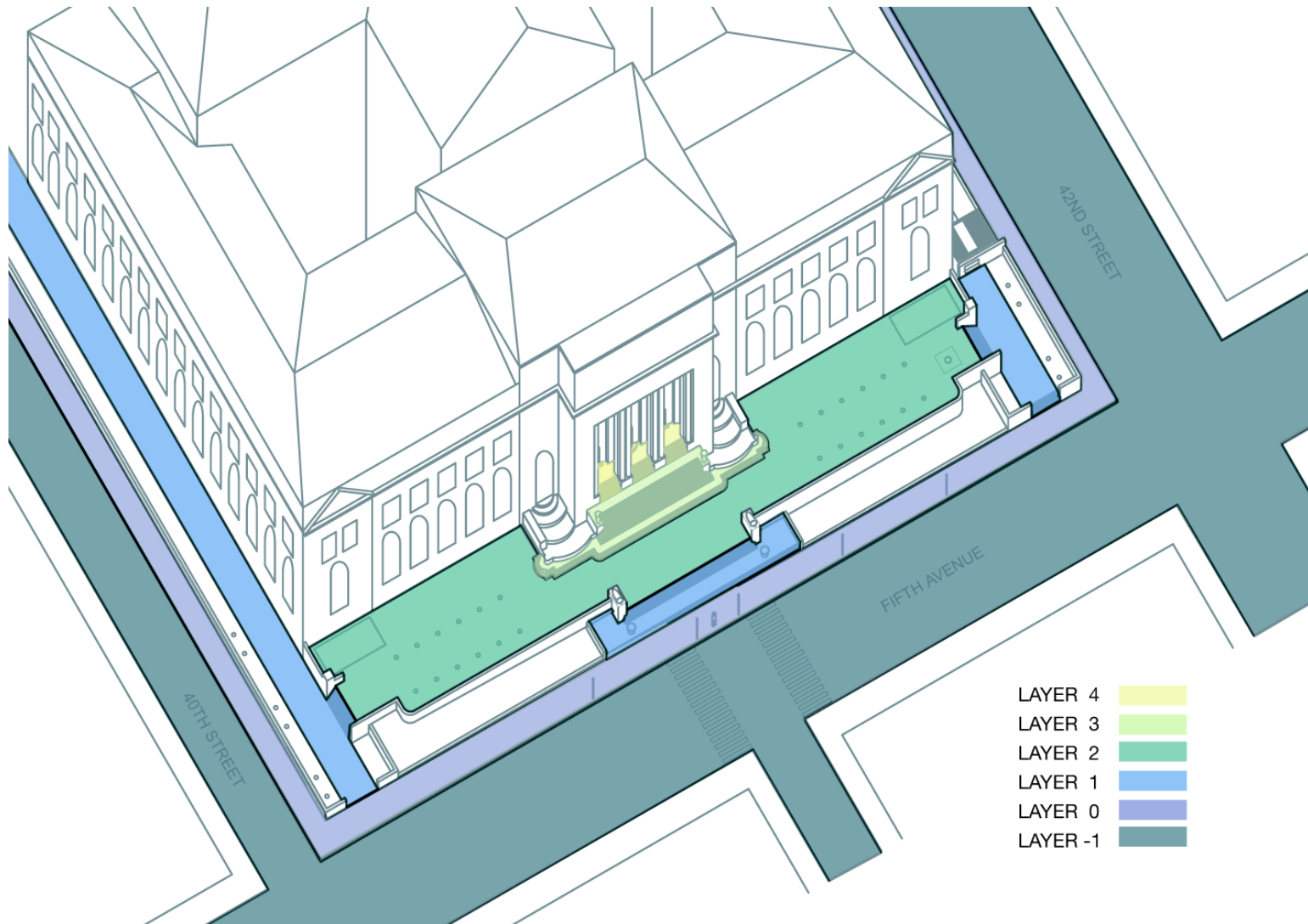
LAYER 2: THE LIBRARY TERRACE



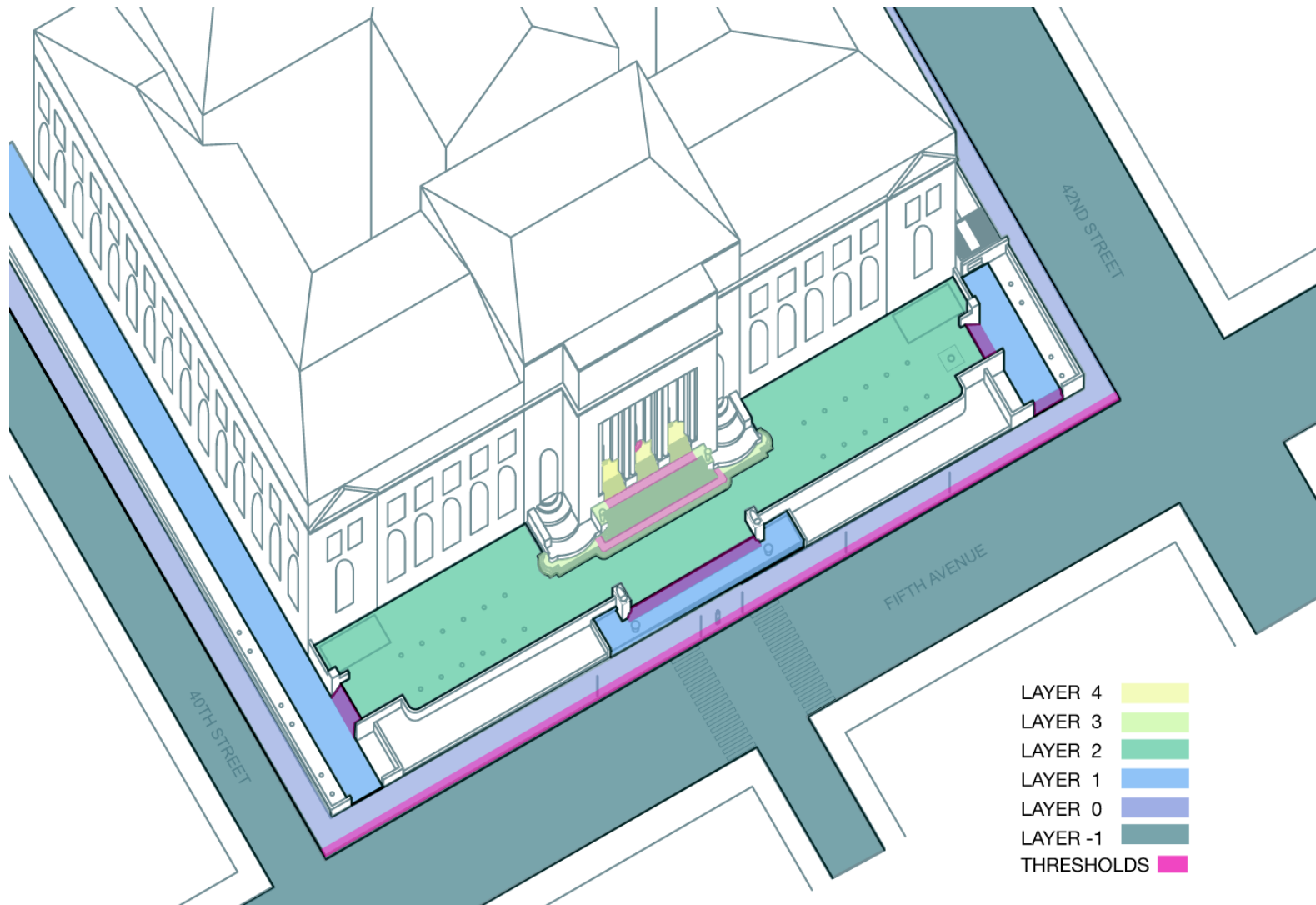


LAYER 3: THE ENTRY STAIRS





RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAYERS OF PUBLIC SPACE



THRESHOLDS BETWEEN LAYERS OF PUBLIC SPACE

SOME DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FROM THIS RESEARCH:

- 1) Create spatial boundaries to differentiate areas of use.
- 2) Use thresholds to create smooth transitions between layers of space.
- 3) Provide architectural features that allow opportunities to rest, change pace, or take a seat in spaces designed for public use.

