

Obvious Main Stair

If you miss the main stairway, or are confused about where it is leading, then the whole building will seem confusing.

The location of the main stairway or elevator plays a major role in creating clarity of circulation through a building. If the stair is poorly placed you will have to ask directions, you might have to backtrack, and you will have difficulty finding your way out.

The argument for clear articulation of circulation systems is developed in the pattern, *Circulation Realms*. That pattern concludes that every realm (a definable place, like a courtyard, wing or department), should have a clearly marked entrance, so that you are always

aware when you are entering or leaving a realm.

A main stairway or elevator will be just such an entrance to all of the realms on the floor above.

To insure that it will be clearly marked, its location must have the following properties.

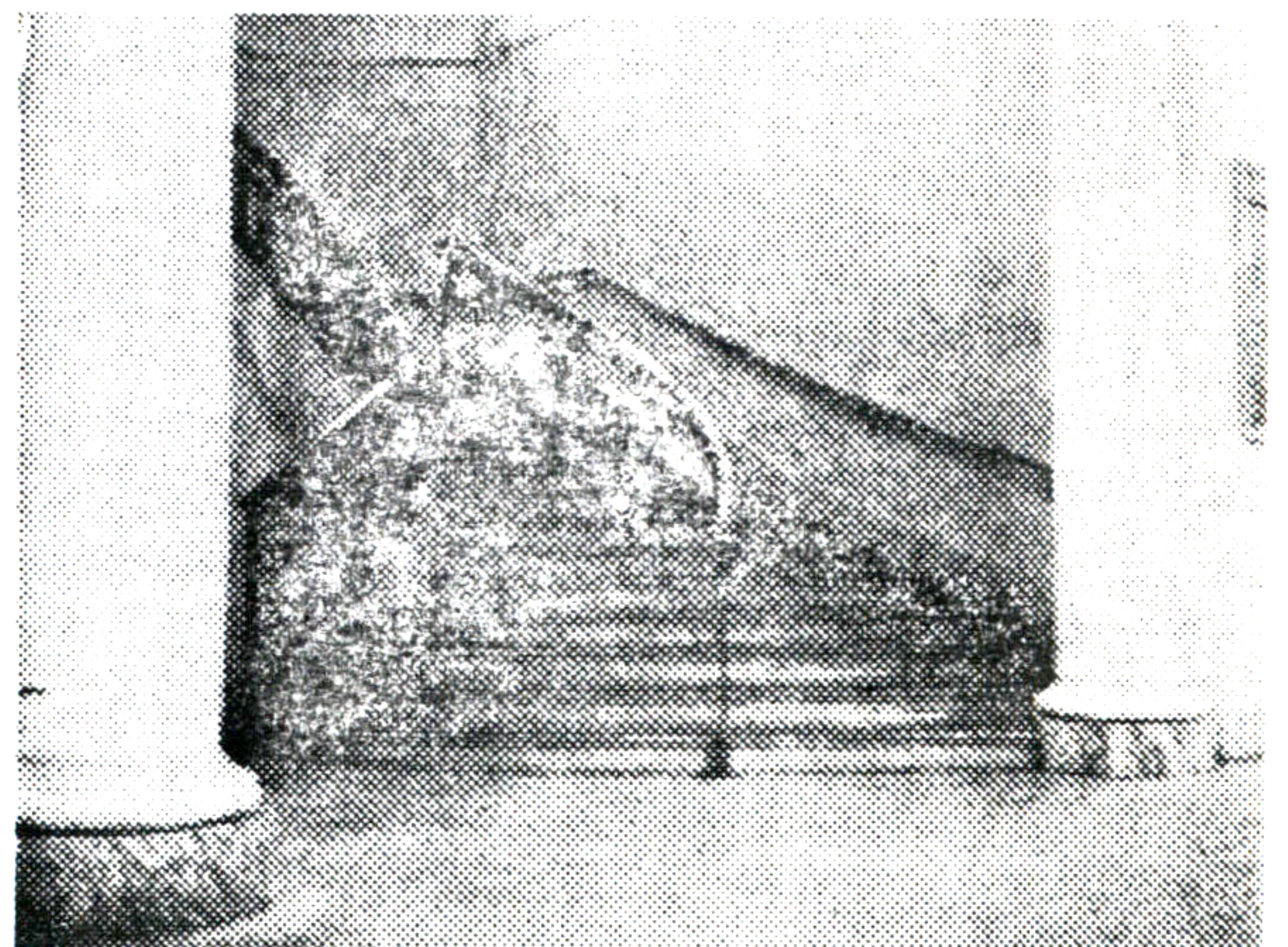
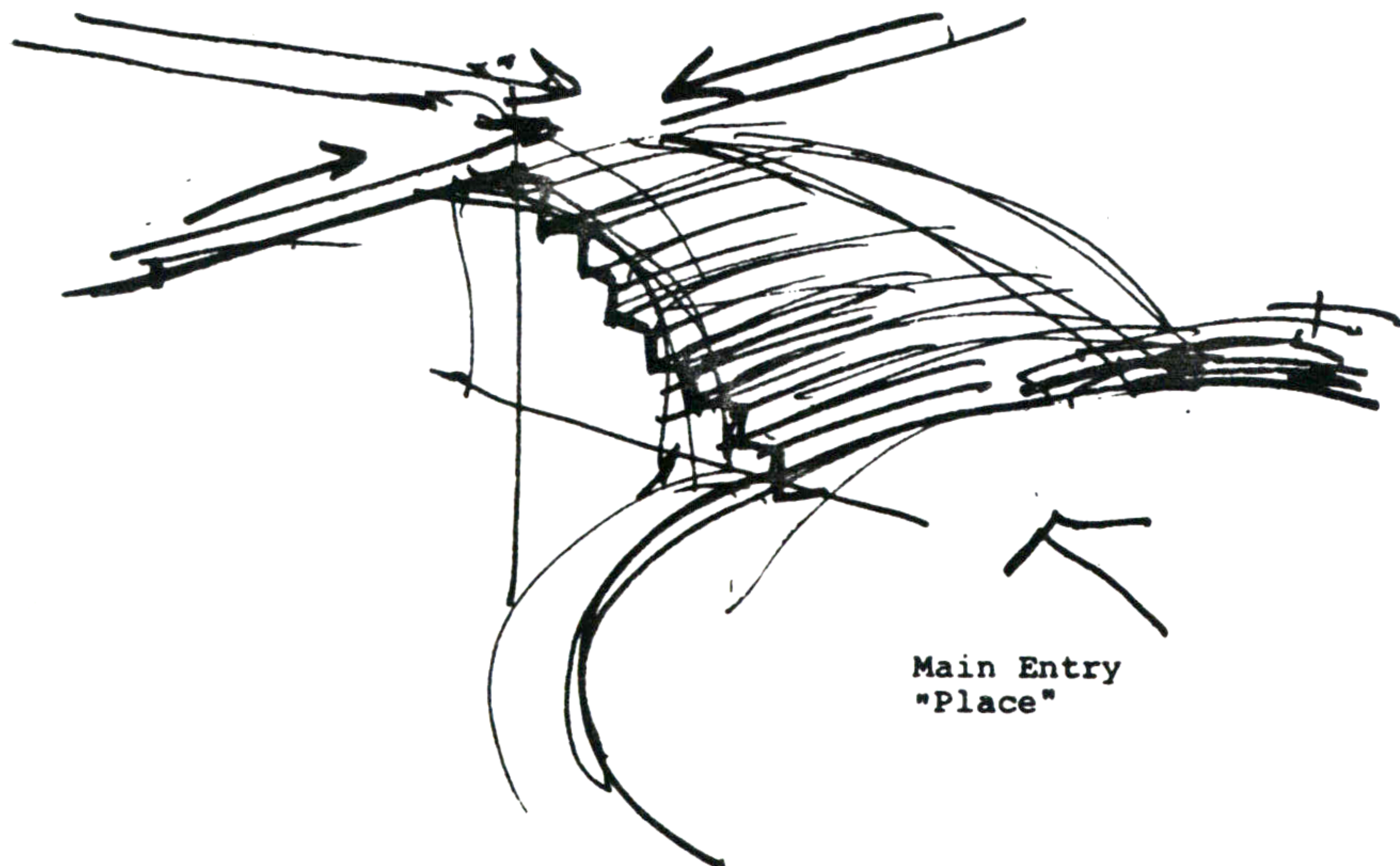
1. It must be made a part of the main entry, whether a courtyard or a lobby. When you have arrived at the entry you want the stair, elevator, or ramp to the upper floors, to be right there. Its exasperating to

have to ask directions, or walk around to find the stair.

2. It must be located so that a line drawn from the main entry to any destination is as straight as possible. This will insure that there are no long "elbows", that force you to backtrack.

3. It must be placed in a position where it commands as much of the building as possible—where it can be seen from all the destinations and circulation paths around it, so that when you leave any part of the building, you will be able to see the way out clearly.

Therefore: Place the main stairs (and/or elevators, ramps, etc.) so that they form part of the main entry "place", and are visible from the main entry itself. Make the line from the main entry to any destination on an upper floor, as straight as possible. Let the stairs be visible from as many destinations and circulation paths as possible.



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This pattern is tentative. If you have any evidence to support or refute its current formulation, please send it to the Center for Environmental Structure, P.O. Box 5156, Berkeley, California 94705; we will add your comments to the next edition.