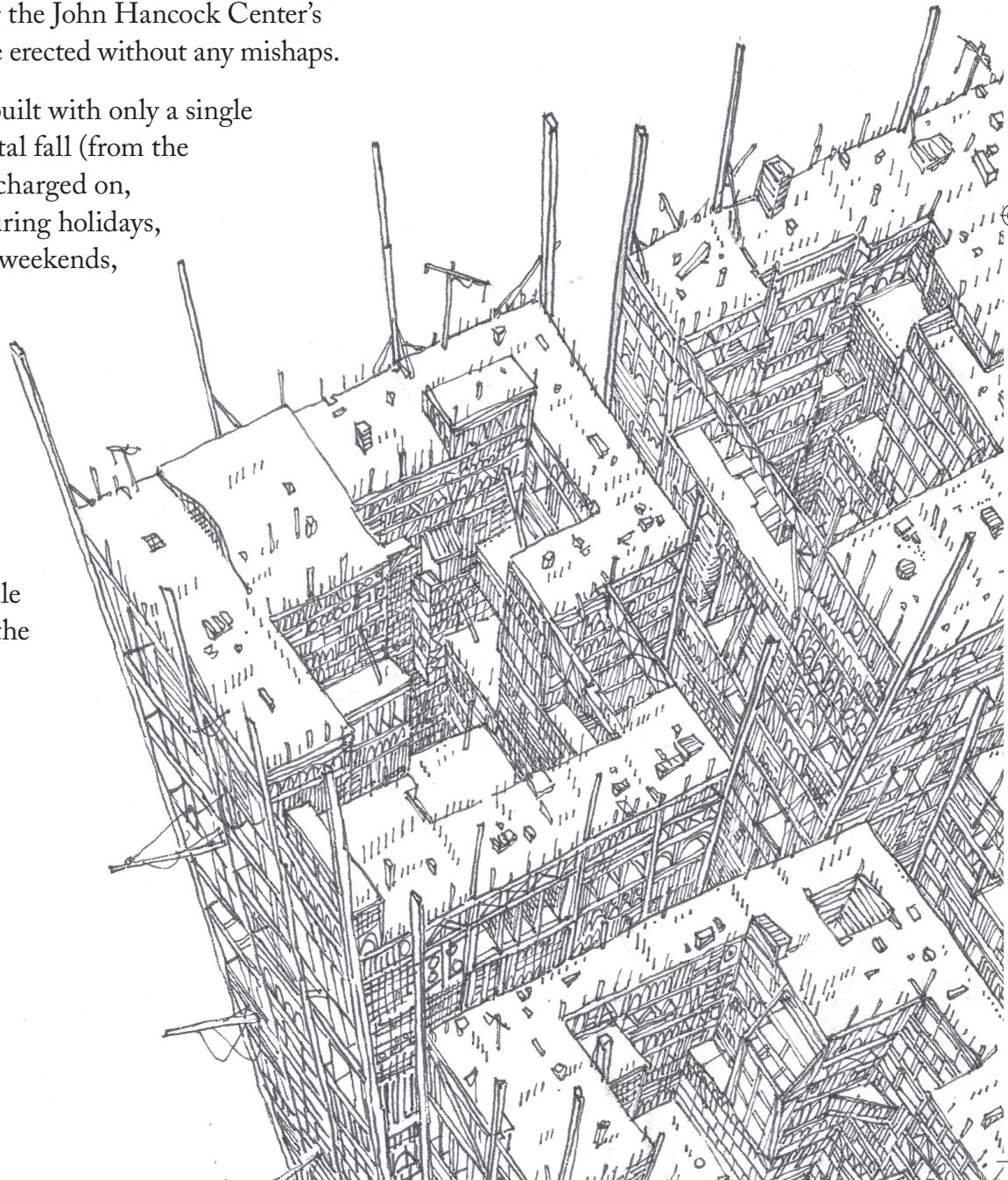


xii. Yet the workers found the sight of the incomplete colossus unbearable; they decided to continue the work on their own. They simply said: “We want to continue the work ourselves.” With no experience and no salaries, foremen and workers substituted metal trusses with wooden overlays and created their own concrete masterpieces—bridges and overpasses linking the four buildings together. The engineers, once subordinate to others, now had the chance to put their ideas into practice.

xiii. While engineers and interns forged on with energy and self-confidence in the herculean project, the tireless developer Mário Garnero secured new loans through connections at state-owned banks. Back salaries were finally paid. The precarious and improvised last floors got metal columns, following the initial structural design of the facade. And so, another 143 floors—now following the John Hancock Center’s construction system—were erected without any mishaps.

xiv. Over 40 floors were built with only a single work-related accident, a fatal fall (from the 217th floor). The workers charged on, building at a crazy rate, during holidays, during the week, over the weekends, day and night, endlessly.

xv. The venture’s cash flow no longer seemed to show strain: the demand for apartments and offices became greater than the availability. This drove up prices per square foot, resale spreads, and anxiety over the building’s completion.





xvi. 33 more floors.

xvii. 12 more floors.

xviii. 81 more floors. No accidents, no disagreements, no problems.

xix. 23 more floors. Everything was proceeding normally. Now, not only the workers, but also the engineers, architects, and brokers, swelling with pride for the monument under their feet, decided to work on Saturdays and Sundays as well, even if their employers did not pay the overtime. The first 100 floors were about to be completed, and soon to be occupied by the first tenants. At the inauguration ceremony, an unexpected reaction: the complete support of the population, flattery from the media, and newspaper articles that praised the mixture of programs and shapes of the building, which were following the blueprint (though only up to the 108th floor) of the original project laid out by Maharishi.

xx. 78 more floors. Present day. The building keeps growing steeply, at a rate of 20 floors a month. The image of the building, previously criticized by Brazilian architects ("that displaced architecture that does not add much to our solid, modernist traditions"), has become a daring national symbol. Floors from one to 209 are already occupied and there is a long wait list of buyers for the space that will be available through the next 100 floors—all of them sold long ago and resold at a premium several times over, with almost the same liquidity as cash.

