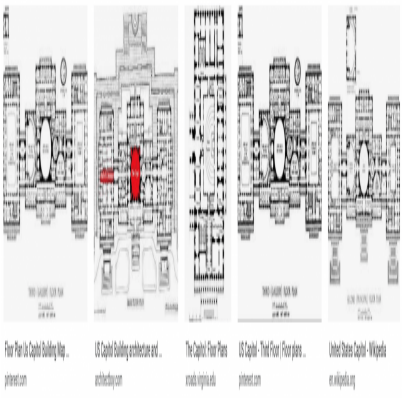


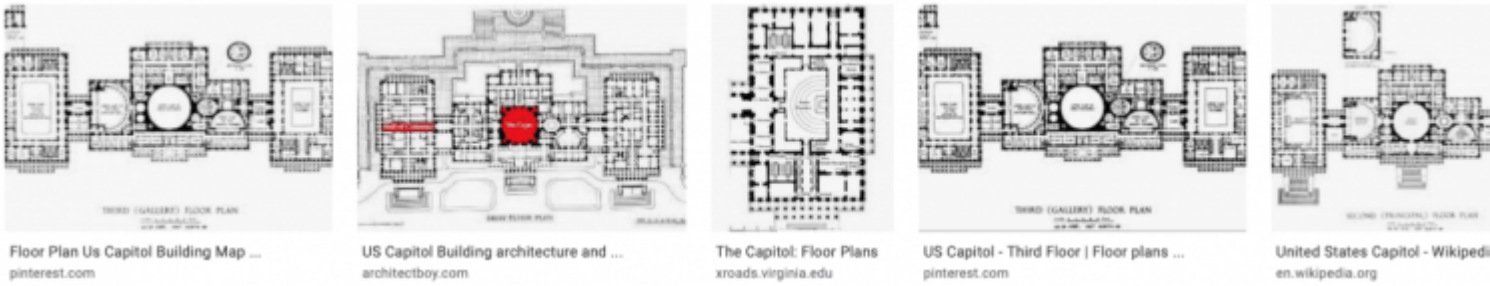
Decryptopolis

Description

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Newly elected US Members of Congress and their staff were disoriented and nervous as they hid in the basement of the Capitol. Included in their concern was the fear of contracting COVID-19 while close to one another, and in the company of people who wouldnâ??t wear masks (Washington Post). Elsewhere Iâ??ve identified cases where the crypt is as dangerous a place to hide as out in the open. See post: Donâ??t go into the crypt.

The general layout of the levels of the Capitol are available online to anyone. I visited as a tourist a long time ago. I presume that not all room labels, spaces, routes, tunnels, and checkpoints are revealed in public documents.



It seems as though the raid on the Washington Capitol Building on 6 January was documented publicly via shared videos. Prominent amongst the short videos that journalists selected from the ocean of social media posts were scenes of rioters relaying instructions to one another as they navigated through the complex. It was a quasi-militarised S&D (seek and destroy) operation.

Unhiding

Iâ??ve been investigating urban living through the lens of cryptography â?? obsessing about the technologies, instruments, and processes of hiding information, messages, things, spaces, places and people within cities. Cryptography is about securing places through concealment, and examining how some of those cryptographic mechanisms are built into the forms, organisational arrangements, framings, myths and metaphors of the city.

(i) To encrypt is to hide; (ii) to decrypt is to unhide. The events on January 6 reminded me that in everyday life, itâ??s the second of these concepts that dominates. Itâ??s more human to expose secrets than to create them. Itâ??s cryptanalysis that drives the human condition, not hiding information. We are forensic beings. By our natures we seek out. We are detectives. Hermeneutic philosophy provides a lot of support for this emphasis, as does the Pragmatic philosophy of C.S. Peirce. Also see posts on interpretation.

The prevalence of conspiracy theories provides further evidence for the priority of forensic-style interpretation in the human condition. See post: Roque fan fiction: The peculiar case of QAnon. Even when thereâ??s nothing to find, we keep looking, like conspiracy theorists looking for non-existent stolen election ballots.

Finding what you are looking for doesnâ??t automatically stop the search. Nor does *not* finding it. The search, the cryptanalysis, is sustained within shared imaginations of communities, however fevered.

References

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Category

1. Architecture

Tags

1. Capitol
2. cryptanalysis
3. cryptography
4. insurrection
5. interpretation

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