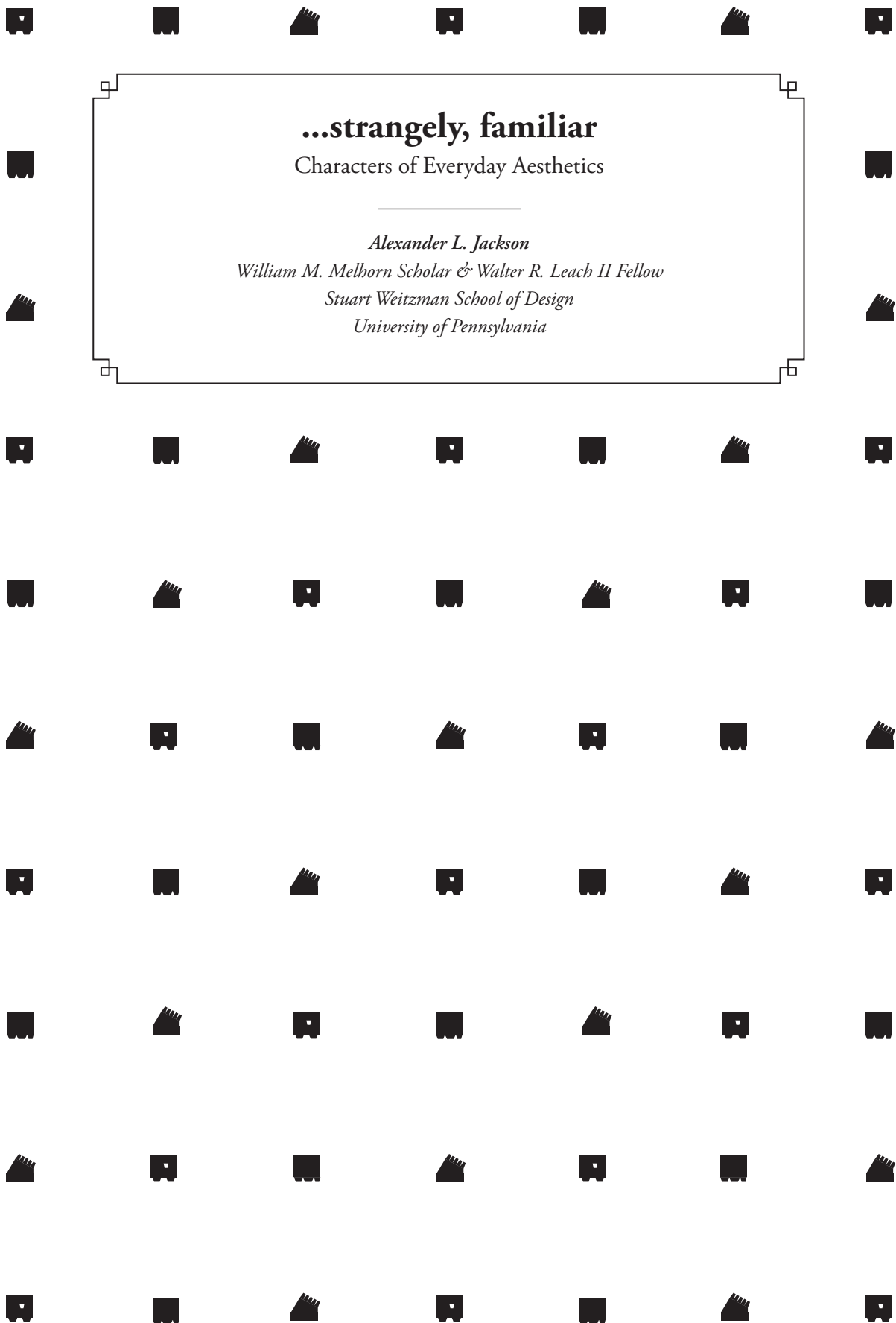




...strangely, familiar

Characters of Everyday Aesthetics

Alexander L. Jackson

William M. Melhorn Scholar & Walter R. Leach II Fellow

Stuart Weitzman School of Design

University of Pennsylvania



Strangely, familiar

Museum of Fake Realities



2020 Spring Architecture Integrated Options Studio - Museum Hybrid

Critic: Miroslava Brooks

Site: The Breuer Building (former Whitney), New York, NY

Building Area: 85,700 SF

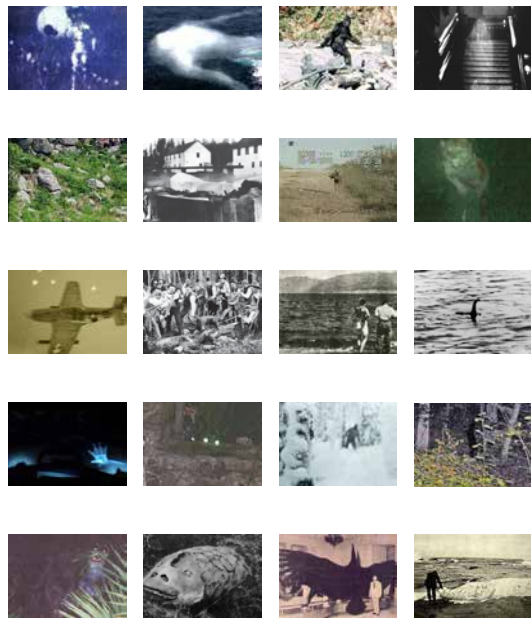
in collaboration with Kevin He

The Polemic & The Project

Through centuries, architecture has operated between the worlds of science and the humanities with increasingly greater emphasis on the former. Historically, museums were places of authority where knowledge was collected by a few disciplinary experts, clearly categorized, and presented to the public. Such authority was often conveyed through a building’s façade via symmetry, monumentality, and historical (Western) references. Today, cultural institutions are rethinking their institutional identities to expand their audience through cross-disciplinary thinking and risk-taking programming.

The project looks at the transformation and addition to the canonical Marcel Breuer building – an icon of sculptural modernist monumentality. Currently the building’s fate is uncertain as the Metropolitan Museum of Art will vacate its premises after a five-year lease from the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Frick Collection will temporarily move in. We will take on the challenge and speculate on its future. As Paul Goldberger, the former New York Times architecture critic, articulated: “The Breuer building is resistant to all attempts to bring it into an urban dialogue along the street, but that alone should not be a reason not to build a work of architecture that attempts, gently and powerfully, to coax it into speaking.” A site of some of the most compelling esthetic battles in recent architecture history, the Breuer building is an epitome of modernism. Reflective of modernity’s divide between nature and culture, the hermetic, anti-contextual, anti-historical, tabula-rasa approach is clearly conveyed in its bold and severe form, entirely cut off from everything around it.

The project is Strangely, familiar; the Museum of Fake Realities: an exploration of the replica through the near miss. We wanted to explore how the idea of fake realities could be explored through architecture by replicating the original Breuer on the opposite side of the site. We were interested in how elements of the Breuer can start to spin an entirely new system, like how one small piece of truth can spin many new tales of fiction. With the aperture of Breuer being the most iconic image of the project, we sought to re-present these through a spatial near miss. The apertures become large spatial voids and organizes exhibition spaces. The iconic figure of the Breuer is now radically transformed on the interior. Situated in parallel to the original Breuer, the elevational experience presents the addition on equal footing with the museum to the point where one may question which is the original.



Nature's Resolution Collection

The collections represent a diptych of representations of nature. One the left, the collection is a series of cryptids. Cryptids are folk lore creatures whose representations throw into question what is actually there. The collection on the right are drawings of 16th century animals from the new world. Here, drawings are highly detailed representations of actual creatures that exist. The collection is a showcase of resolutions. The cryptids, fake creatures, rely on low resolution to become real. The drawings, utilize high resolution to replica a real creature, but through the drawing process, become not real.

This idea is exemplified through these two enlarged images. The Loch Ness monster's size, scale, and material, shape, is thrown into question through the low resolute picture. While, the walrus is drawn to such detail, even toenails that look like humanfeet, but becomes a fake creature.



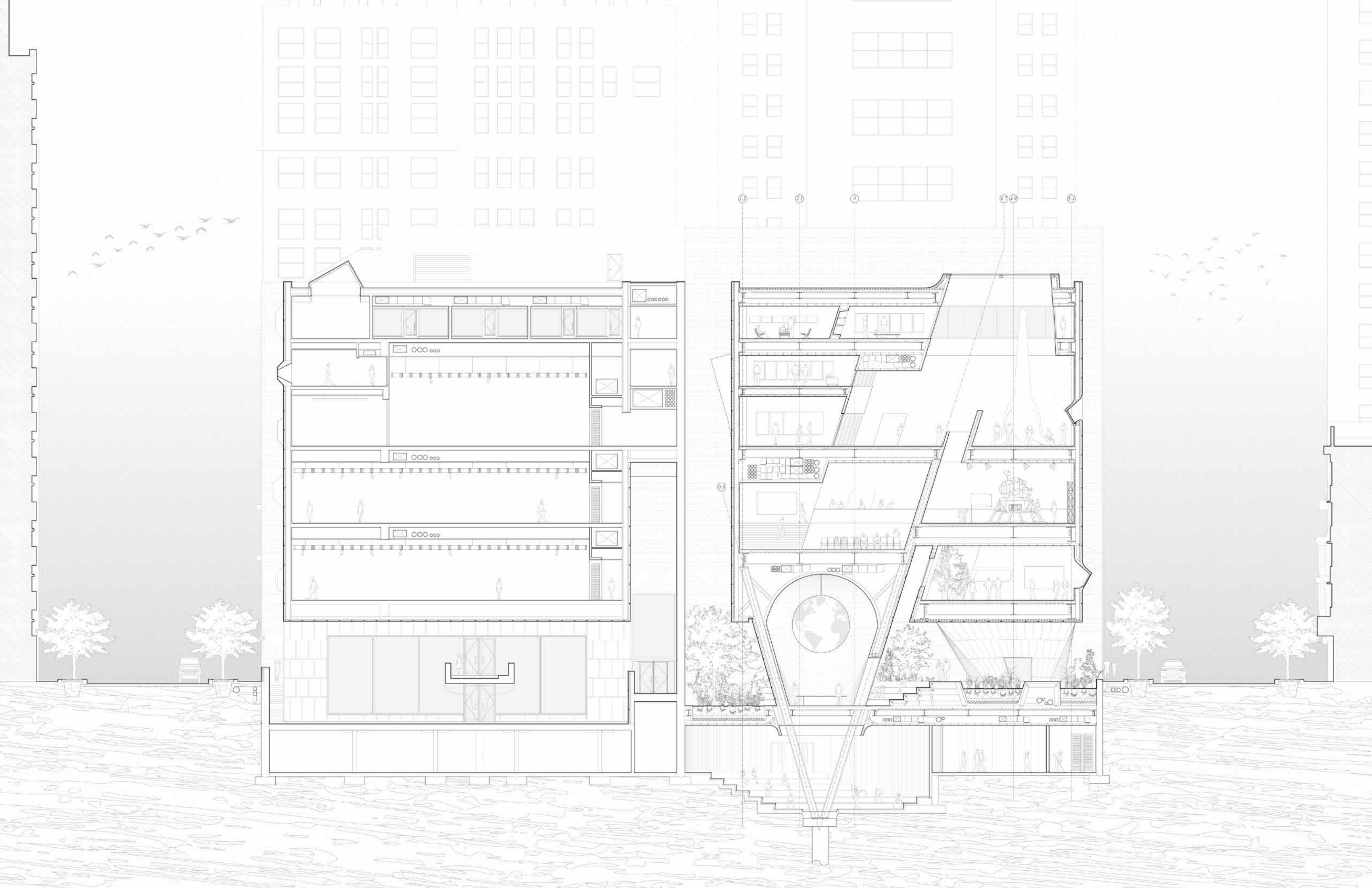
Generative Collage

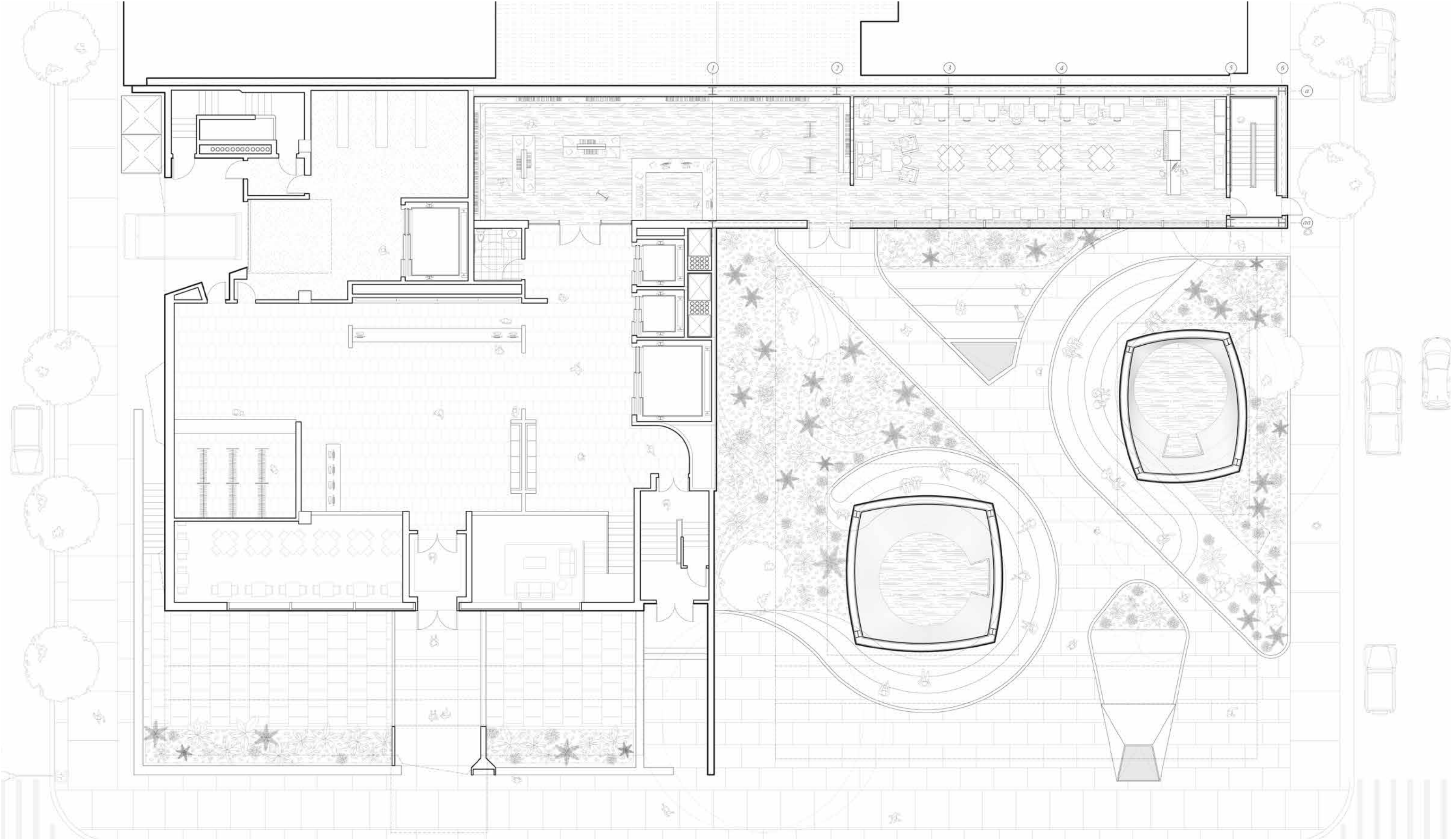
We wanted to explore how the idea of fake realities could be explored through architecture by replicating the original Breuer on the opposite sideof the site with new modifications: first with fictionalized anamorphic features, then with architectural elements. We were interested in how just one element of the Breuer can start to spin off into an entirely new system, similar to how one small piece of truth can spin many new tales of fiction.

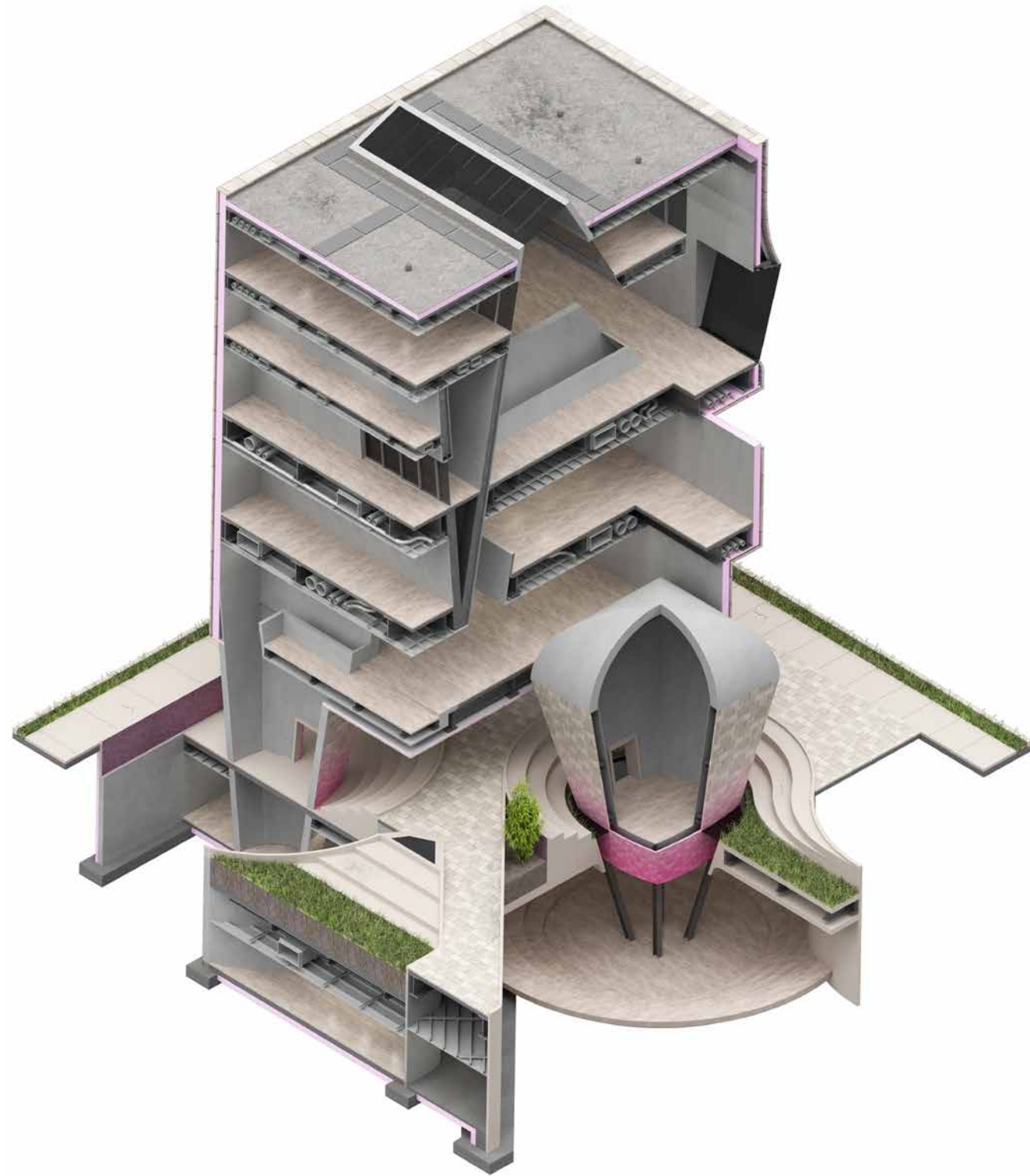


Diptych Elevation Rendering

Situated in parallel to the original Breuer, the front elevational experience presents the addition on equal footing with the museum to the point where one mayquestion which is the original. As explored later in the interiors, the new addition houses parallel exhibits to the original Breuer with the original exhibiting certain factual events/ findings. Borrowing elements from the original Breuer, the addition spins a new architecture based upon the exaggeration and reorientation of the original Breuer's architectural elements such as the apertures and stepping that continue into the groundscape.



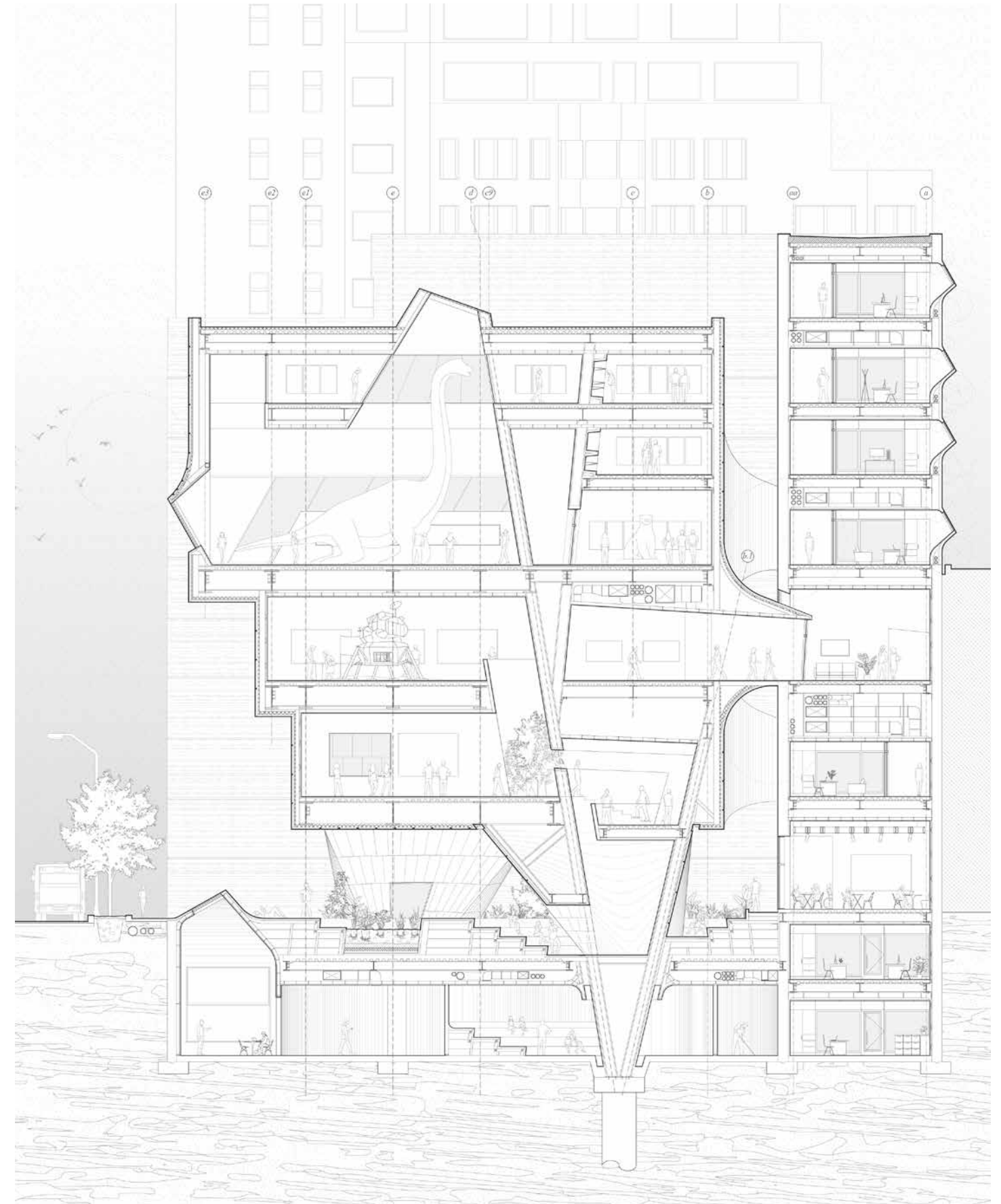


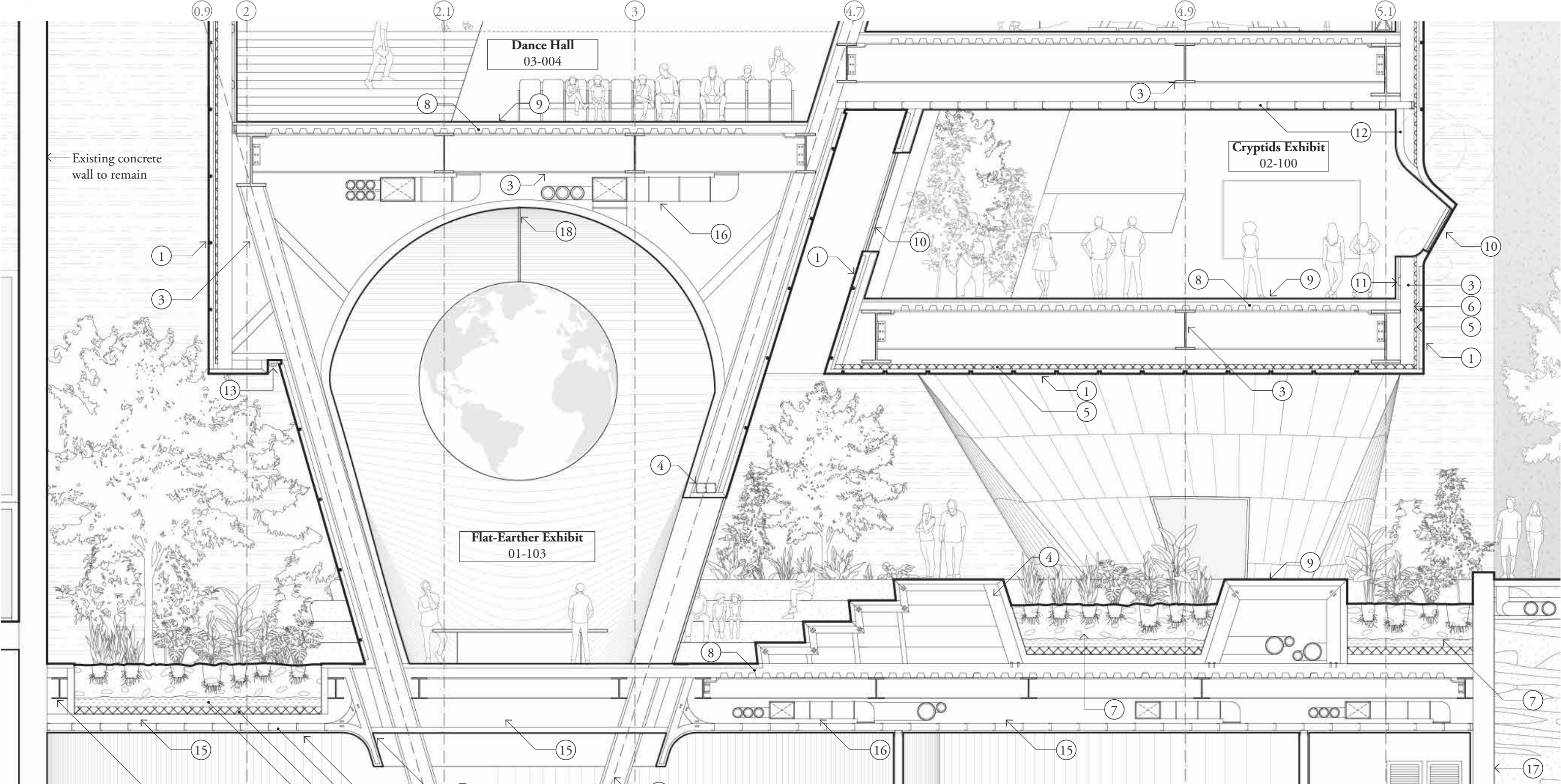


Isometric 'Chunk' Model

The chunk model showcases the relationship between the public plaza at the street level, the basement theaters and classrooms, and the exhibition spaces above. The addition is of steel construction with a hung stone façade, to match the existing stone on the Breuer building. The Skylight is the terminus of the structure as it opens the interior up toward the sky.

Madison Avenue Section





Key Notes

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Hung Stone Rainscreen Facade System | 7. Intensive Green Roof System | 13. Linear LED Lighting Strip |
| 2. Cold Formed Metal Studs | 8. Concrete Subfloor on Metal Decking | 14. 5/8" Gypsum Wallboard |
| 3. Steel I-beam, see Structural | 9. Stone Finish Flooring | 15. Provide Acoustical Batt Insulation |
| 4. Steel tube beam, see Structural | 10. Glazed Window with low-E Coating | 16. Scheduled HVAC Ductwork |
| 5. Rigid Insulation with Vapor Barrier | 11. 3/4" Metal Hat Channels | 17. Cast in Place Concrete Foundation Wall |
| 6. 1/2" Gypsum Sheathing | 12. Interior Metal Studs | 18. Threaded Steel Rod, fasten to framing |





Synthetic Suture

Eco-Infrastructure & the Radically Distributed Building



2020 Fall Architecture Research Studio - Saline Dreams IV

Critic: Jason Payne with Caroline Morgan

Site: T2-1b & T2-1 addition, Owens Lake, California

Gross Area: 2,728,304 SF (62.6 acres)

in collaboration with Megan York

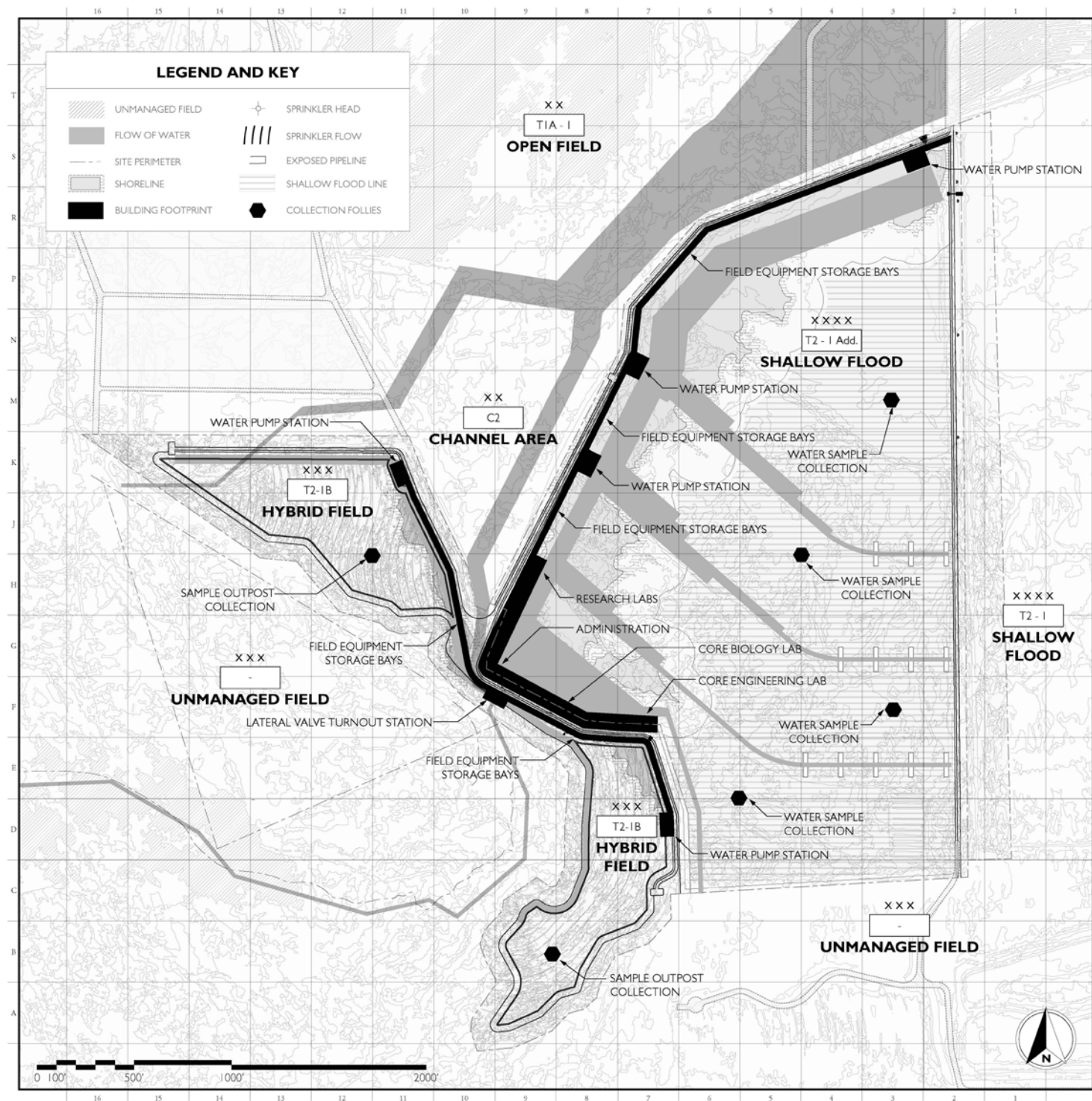
“It is not the shape of the game piece, but the way the game piece plays. It is not the text, but the constantly updating software that manages the text. Not the object form, but the active form.”

Keller Easterling, Extrastatecraft, 21

Situated at polygons T2-1 Addition and T2-1b, the Synthetic Suture aims to establish an infrastructural system that proliferates the active engagement of artificial ecologies located at Owens Lake, California. Acting as a direct resultant of existing geological and man-made flows, the project stitches not only individual polygons together, but toward the larger ecology of the Owens Lake Valley, and the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area.

The proposal engages the lakebed in three manners: infrastructural sutures, ecological sutures, and architectural sutures. These devices become subtle interventions that nurture an active form of an environment. Focusing less on architecture as generator, large scale infrastructure elements act as key drivers for the generation and maintenance of the lakebed. The site engages multiples audiences, from biologists and engineers that work within the lake’s environment, to visitors that come to seek understanding about the complex history of the draining of Owens Lake. Beyond human agents many nonhuman actors play an integral role in this ecosystem. Pipes and water lines that feed the shallow flooding ponds become sources for the genesis of life. Tillage generates wells for growth of native vegetation. Microbial life, salt grasses, and reoccurring wildlife now frequent the renewed lake. Eco-engineering infrastructure proliferates the creation of this environment and sustain the project well into the future, setting forth generations of revitalization.

The building becomes BACM (Best Available Control Measures) as the lines between what is natural and artificial are blurred, creating a strange and active extra-urban architecture through the means of infrastructure and synthetic ecosystems. The Synthetic Suture stitches together the natural and the unnatural, the managed and unmanaged, and the micro and macro, through architecture, ecology, and infrastructure.



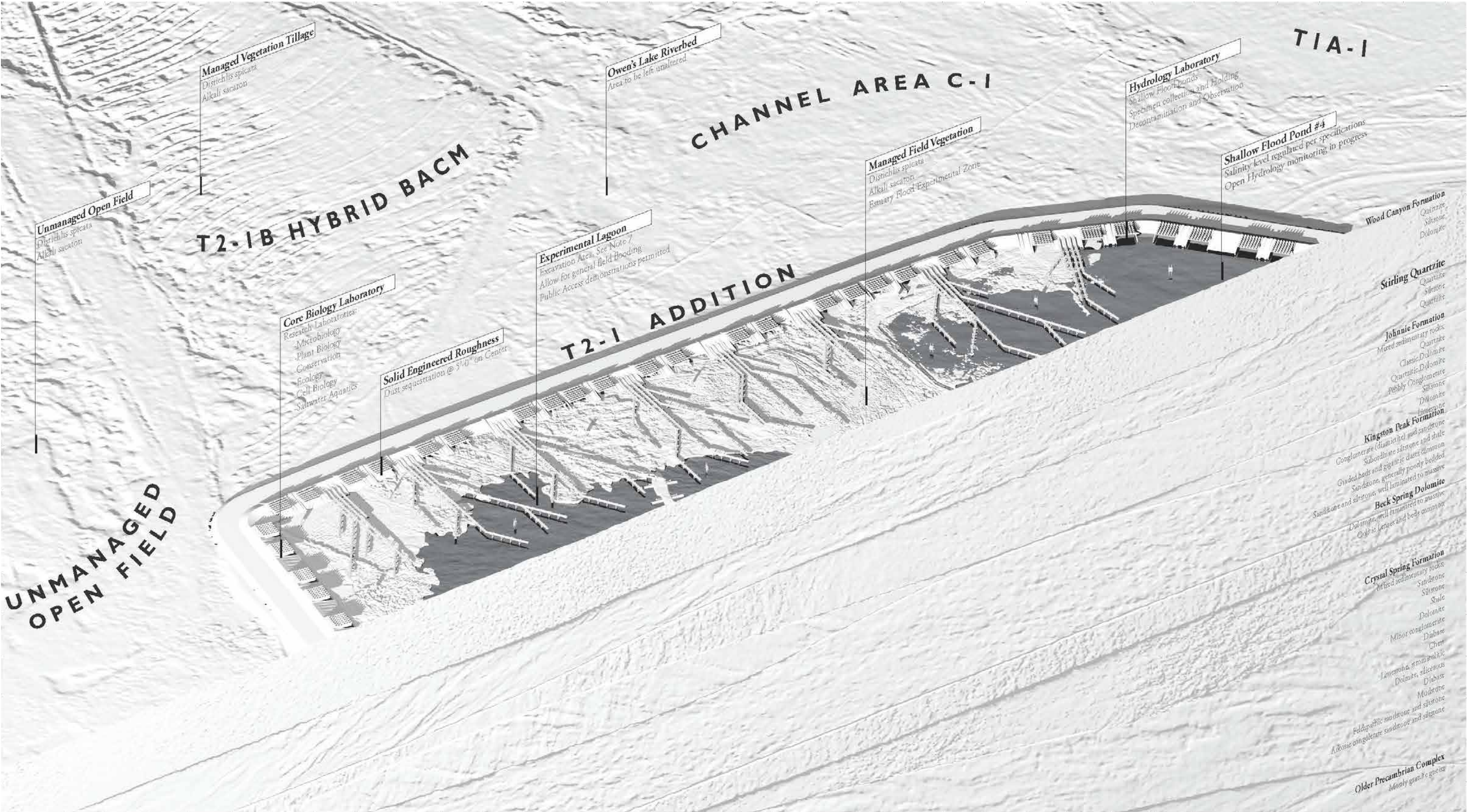
Flow Analysis and Program Diagram

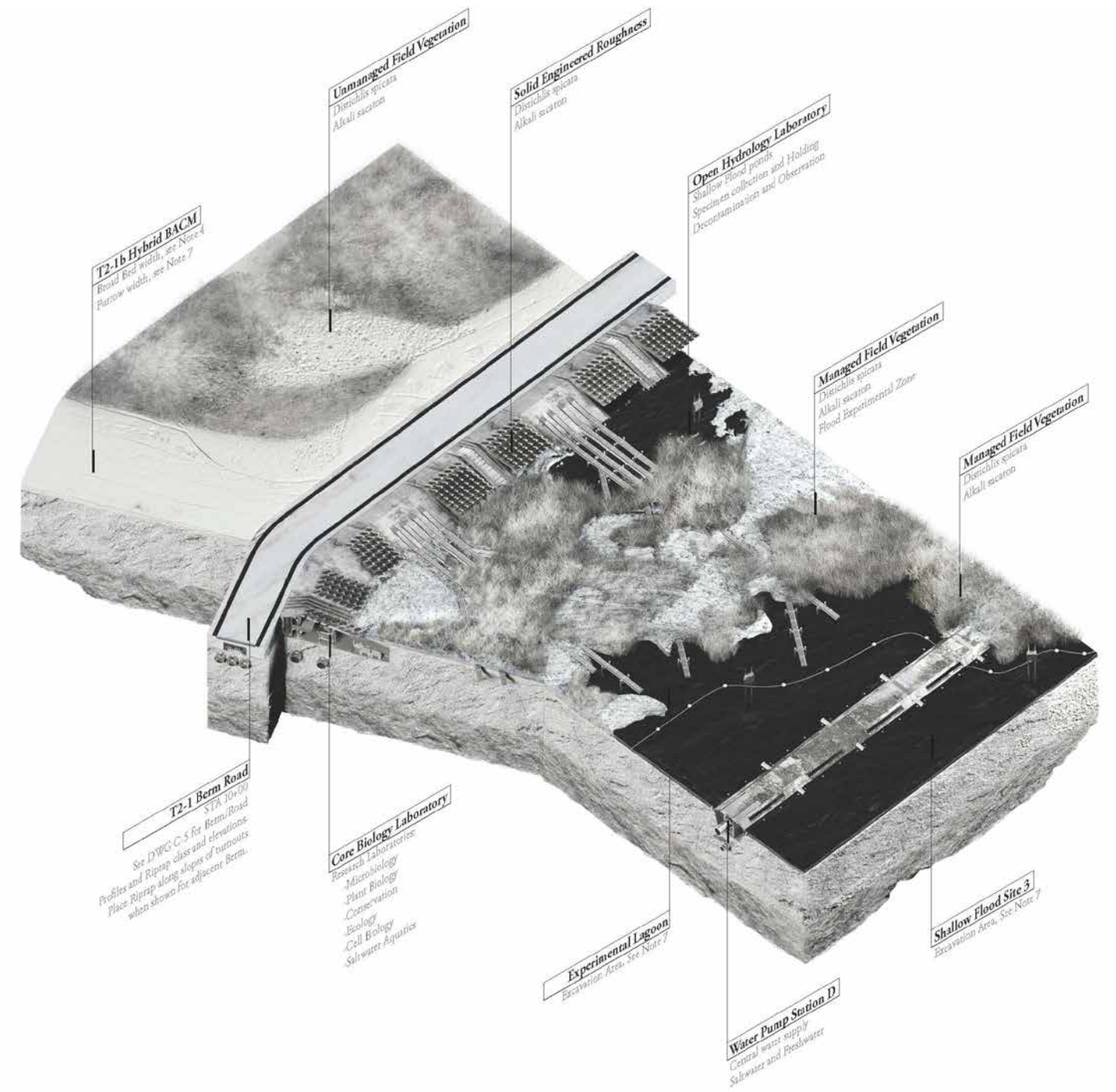
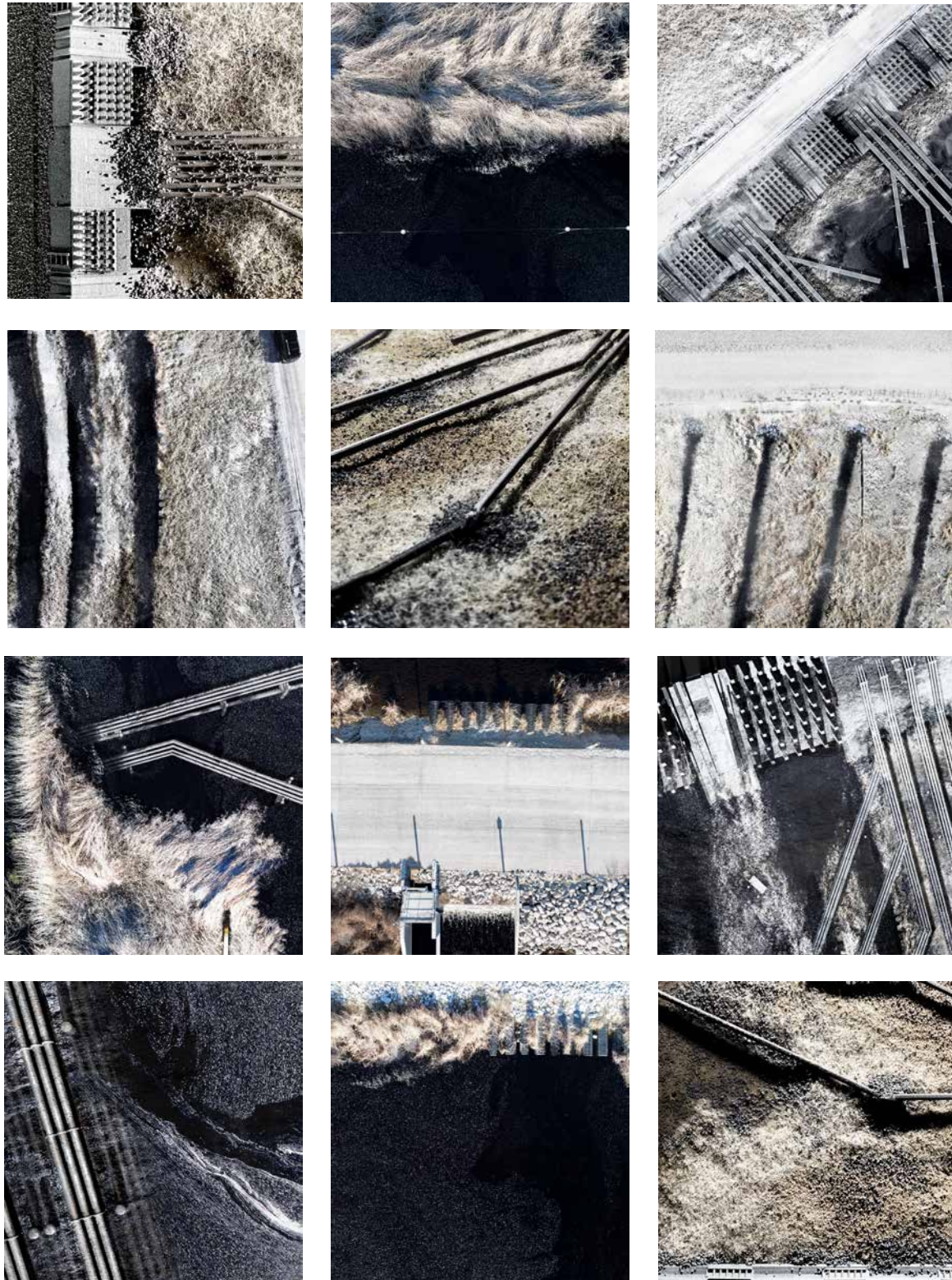
Looking closely at the flow analysis, the Minard Mapping studies both geological and manmade flows occurring on the site and its relationship towards the Channel Area, C-1. These flows then directly influence programmatic elements placed on the site. The project seeks to enhance the existing experimental studies occurring on both polygons. Programmed spaces are represented in black, while direct flows on the site are highlighted in gray.



Satellite Rendering

The project manifests itself as a direct translation of the existing geological and manmade flows on the site. The Polygon T2-1 Addition remains Shallow Flooding, however, has been adapted to suture itself toward vegetation ecologies and means to blur the boundary between that which is architecture and that which is ecology. For the infrastructure that generates these landscapes are the true driver of the environment.





Isometric Building Chunk: Building as BACM

The building becomes BACM as the lines between what is natural and artificial are blurred, creating a strange and active extra-urban architecture through the means of infrastructure and synthetic ecosystems. The Synthetic Suture stitches together the natural and the unnatural, the managed and unmanaged, and the micro and macro, through architecture, ecology, and infrastructure. Thank you.



Professional Work Samples

United Health Services Wilson Campus Tower



2019 May - 2020 - Emergency Department & Inpatient Tower

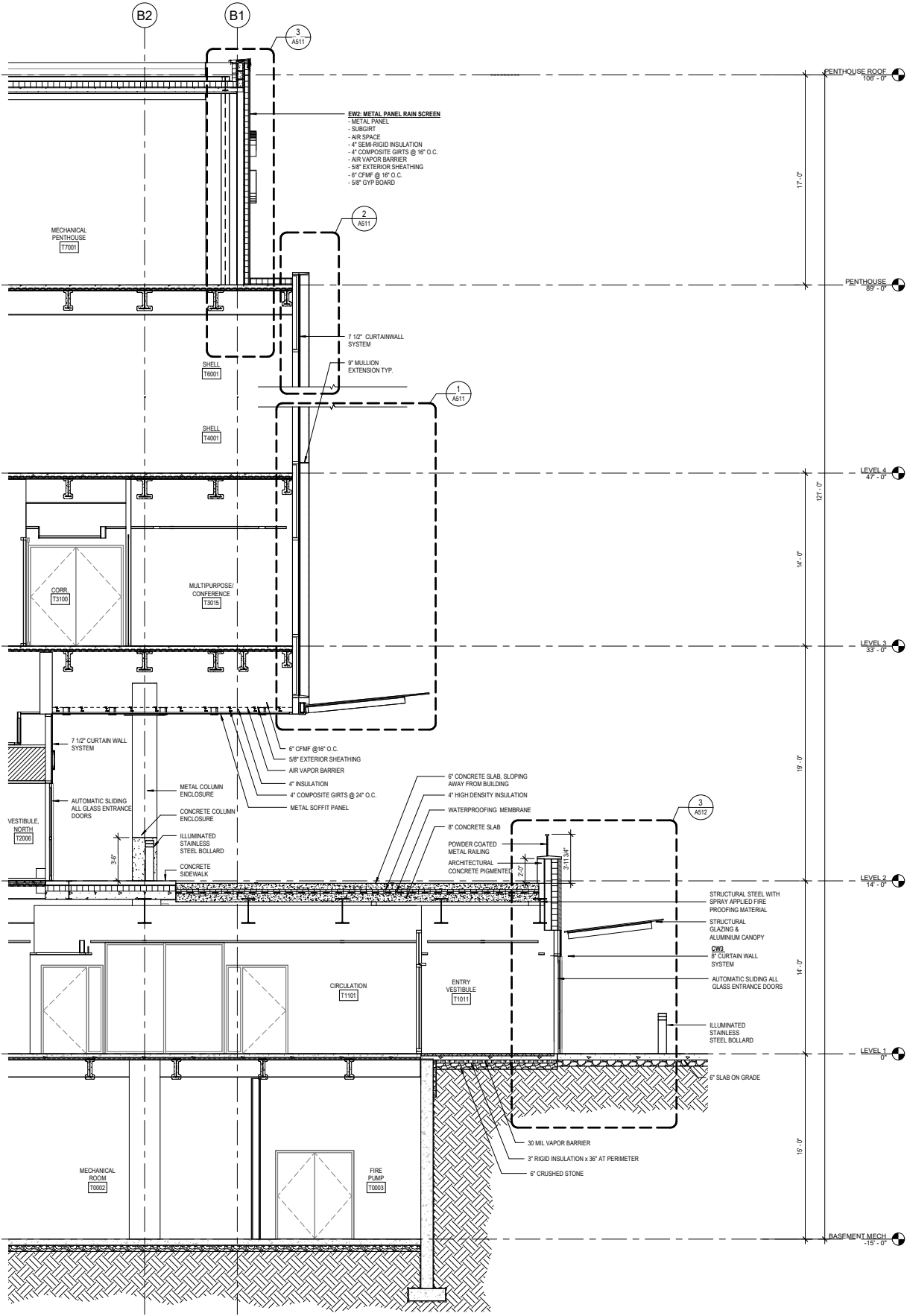
HOK: John Maccallum, Principal & Lead Designer

Site: Johnson City, New York

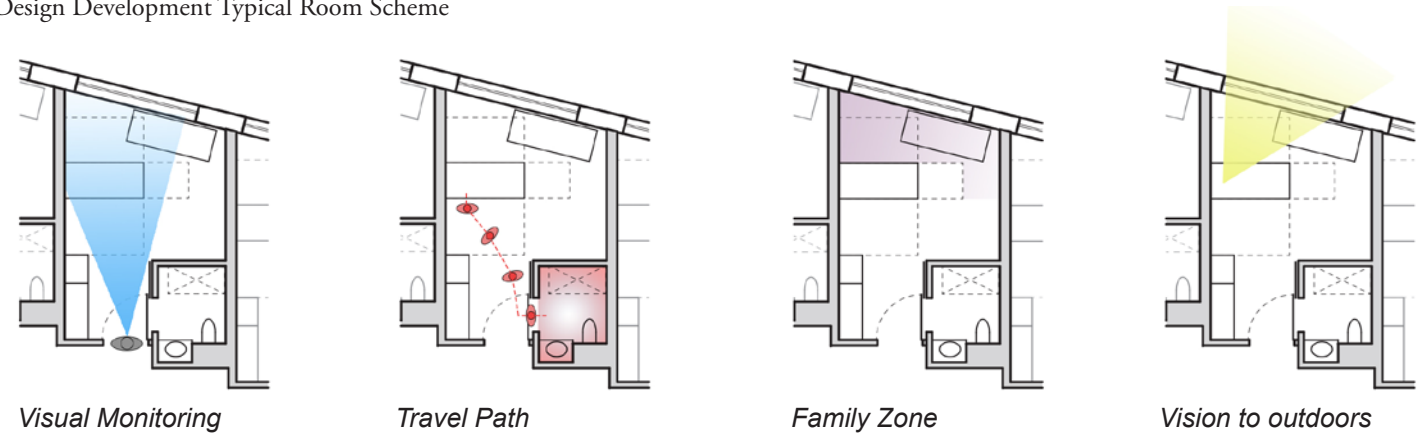
Gross Area: 250,000 SF

The community of Binghamton, NY has seen a growth in population as post-industrial cities in the northeastern United States reinvest in their older economic cores. Accompanying this rise is the increased need for medical services that support local communities. The project seeks to embrace the community as it re-grows. The new building is an expansion of the existing emergency department and expands its imaging and inpatient services. The building is divided into three components: The base (emergency department), the lobby block, and the tower.

Due to challenging site topography, the entire site is excavated to create a new garden and park as the site pulls down into the existing first floor. The new front door of the hospital is then lifted and relocated to the second level, featuring the lobby block. This all glazed interior provides a new lobby, respite roof garden, and future expansion for a cafe and new surgical suite. The tower rises above it with four inpatient bed floors, able to accomadate Intensive and Critical Care units. A new helipad brings emergency services directly to the building, in place of across the street where it exists currently.



Design Development Typical Room Scheme

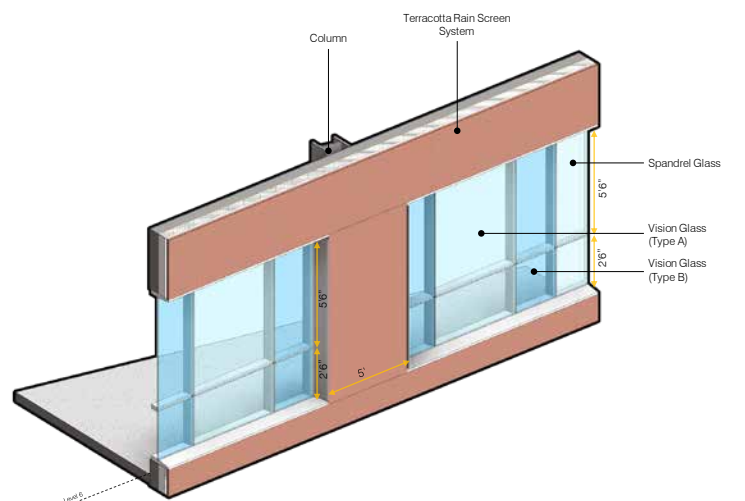
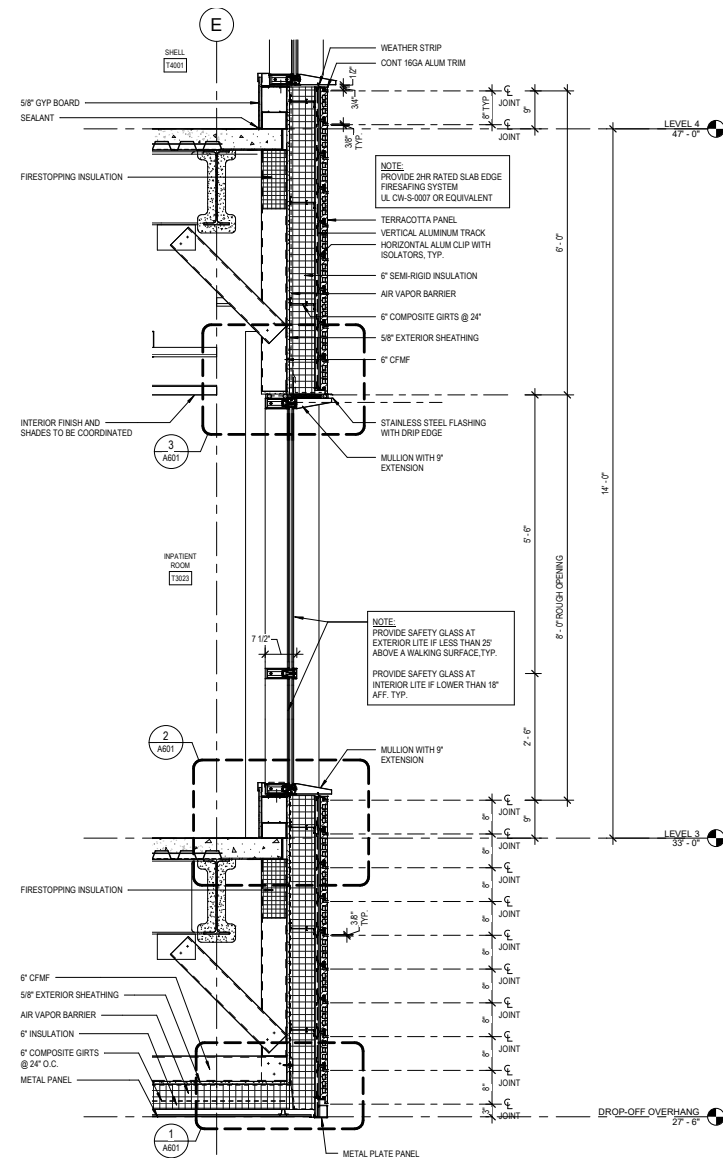
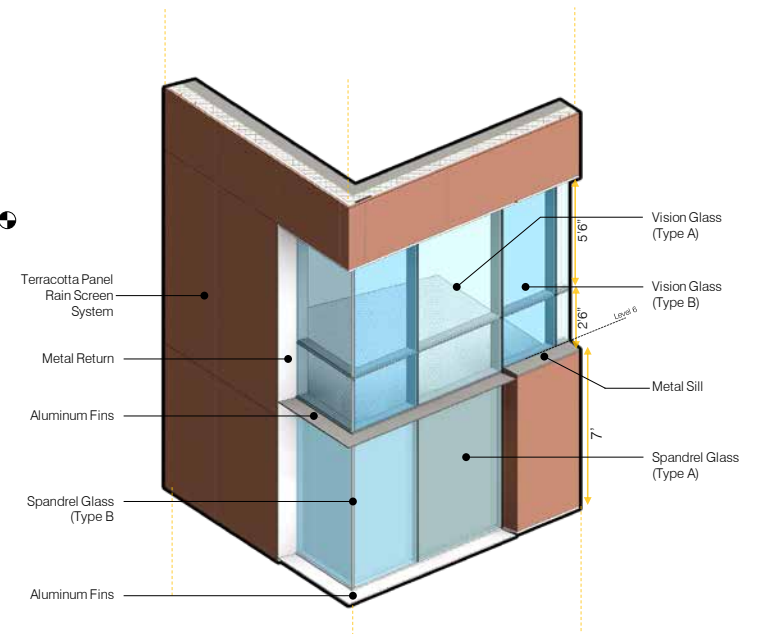
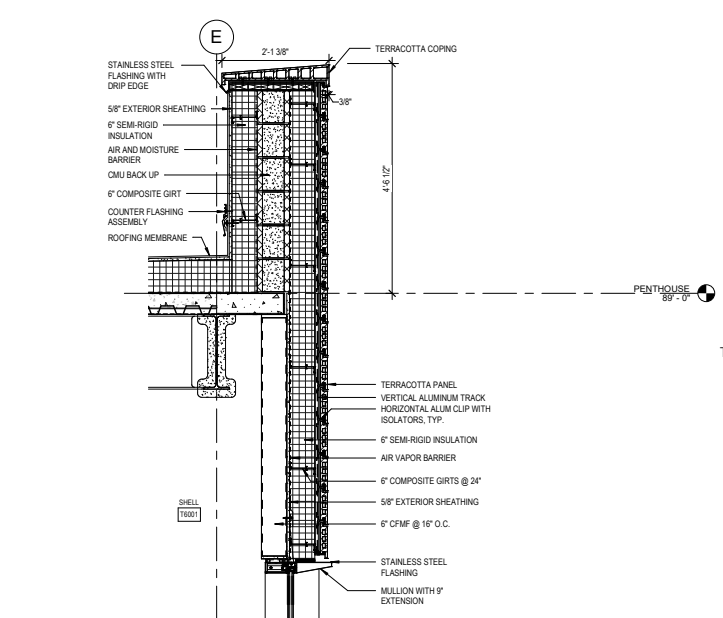
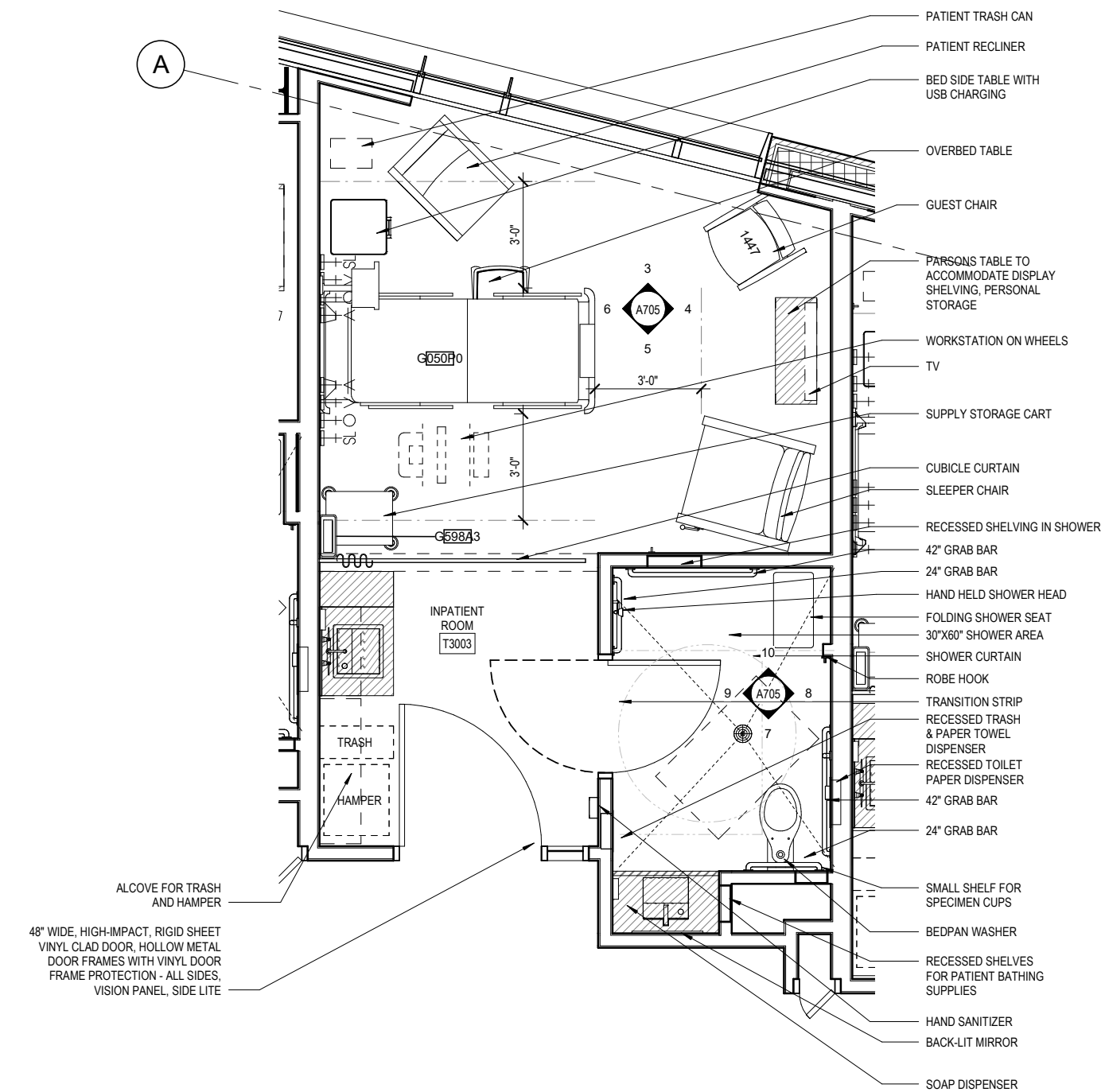


Visual Monitoring

Travel Path

Family Zone

Vision to outdoors



Realization of Concepts

Initial concepts for exterior envelope are initially studied and rendered for materiality, massing, relationship to site and contextual awareness of the existing campus. From there, early diagrams of these assemblies are studied in 'chunks' as isolated typical instances within the project. These ideas are furthered through the design development of the wall system through sections and close readings of the assembly.

