



portfolio
cynthia cheng



academic

01 land into legacy

02 upham's root eatery

03 the local library

04 the tandem

professional

houston hotel 05

bunker hill residence 06

somerville residence 07

chatham residence 08



agriculture & agroforestry

land into legacy

Land Into Legacy is built around the question: What is the future of this land, and who will inherit it?

Land is not just a commodity: it is a way of living, a communal resource. Today, many small farmers in the Pioneer Valley are seeking to sell off their land and retire, with large agribusiness ready to buy up their farmlands. To counter this trend, this project seeks to transform rural land ownership through collaborative and Indigenous stewardship. We propose a land trust to incrementally acquire farmland and forestry land. By joining the land trust, indigenous people, immigrants, and other marginalized groups can regain stakes in farming and forestry operations to ensure long-term communal stewardship. This system allows people that would be typically excluded from buying into farming operations to become co-owner and co-operator in this shareholding land model. Anchored by two hubs—a farming center at the Oxbow Marina and a forestry center in Joseph Skinner

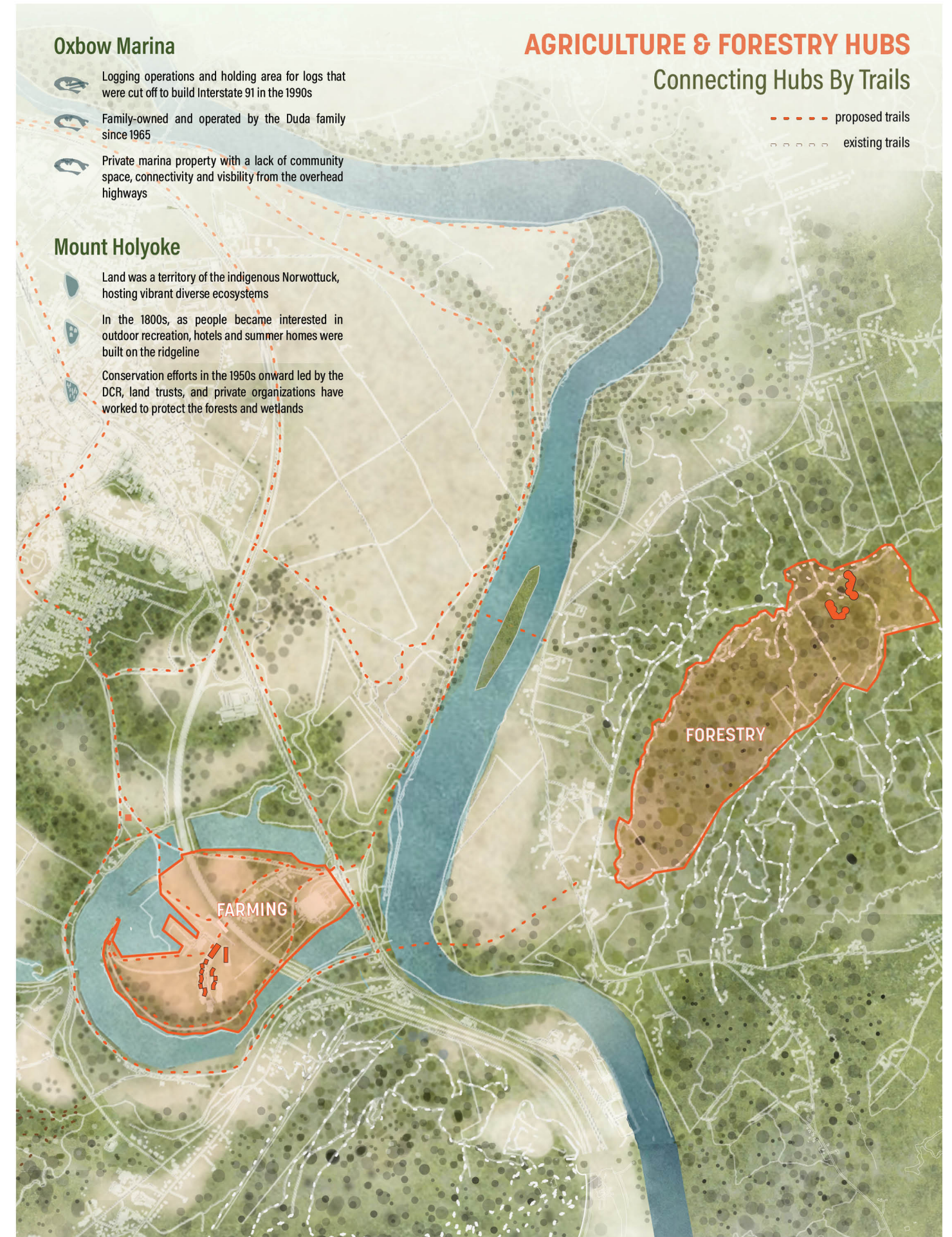
State Park within the Mt. Holyoke Mountain Range, the land trust also operates a network of memorial trails spanning Northampton and Hadley, Massachusetts, integrating regenerative agriculture, agroforestry, education, and community leisure.

Through Land Into Legacy, the present-day crisis of farmland ownership, rooted in the colonial past of rural New England, opens up opportunities to imagine Indigenous and collective land futures. The project envisions land ownership, and consideration of a potential land-back component, not as a prescriptive solution but as an ever changing dialogue around equitable land distribution and intergenerational responsibility. Land Into Legacy seeks to foster a future where land remains rooted in cultural heritage, collective stewardship, and environmental justice.

Partnered project with Zeynep Gul.

course master's
research studio:
instructor designing the rural
semester ettore santi
fall 2024 -
spring 2025

This studio will bring design thinking to rural America. We will focus on the Pioneer Valley in Western Massachusetts, a complex landscape shaped by the increasing intricacy of food systems, ecotourism developments, Indigenous land politics, flooding, nature conservation programs, precarious farm labor, and rural homelessness. During the fall, student groups will interview relevant actors and understand local knowledges. In the Spring, students will define specific design interventions composing their strategy using techniques from architecture, landscape, and urban design, and knowledge from agronomy, political ecology, Indigenous knowledge, food cultures, and more. Together, projects will reimagine what architecture can do in the context of rural space, where pressing social and environmental changes are raising previously unexplored design questions.



THE THREE SISTERS CO-OP LAND TRUST

LAND TRUST
acquires lands from public & private partnerships

EMPLOYEES
acquires stakeholder shares from working for trust or at site locations

THE CITIES
boost their economies, gain tax revenue

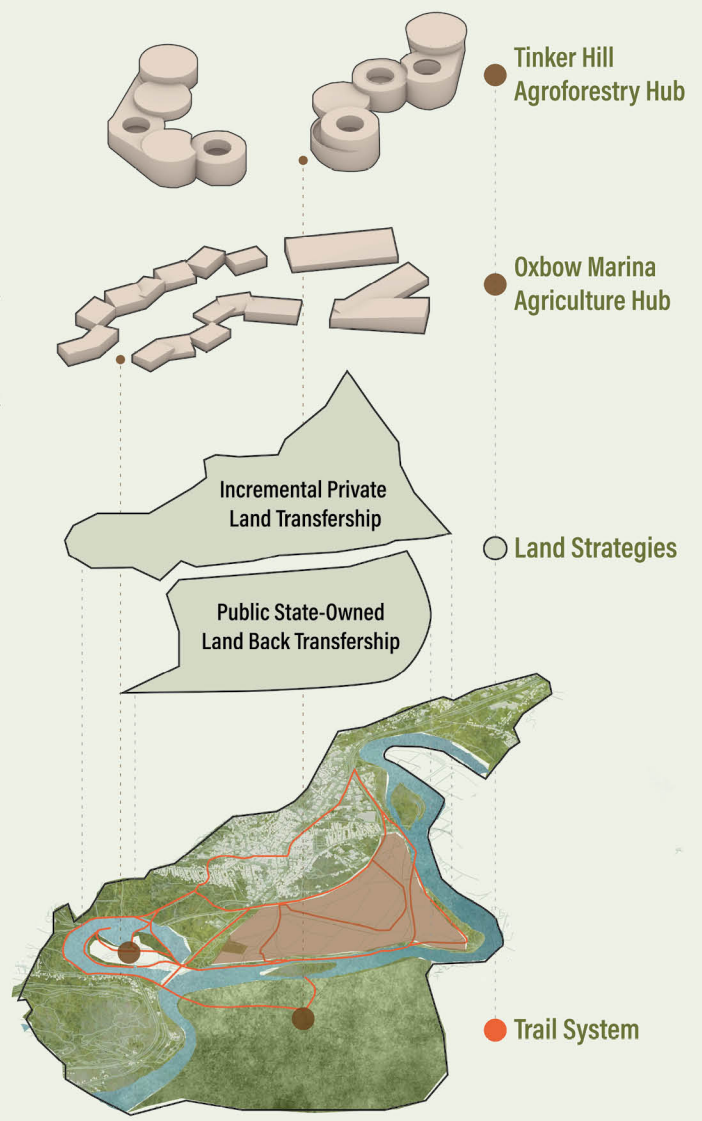
INDIGENOUS GROUPS
acquire stakes and become leaders in land operations and teach traditional land practices

NEW FARMERS
able to join the profession with less barriers to entry and gain shares of land

EST. FARMERS
acquire students to work for their farms and find trust to take succession

ORG. INVESTORS
acquire stakeholder shares and gain profit to support their operations

STUDENTS
acquire job opportunities and gain income



TINKER HILL AGROFORESTRY HUB

Managed by the Three Sisters Cooperative Land Trust

LITTLE TINKER
EL. 545'

PROTECTIVE PRACTICES

CT RIVER
DISTRIBUTARY

PRACTICE LANDSCAPE

CHMURA
ROAD

PILOT LEARNING

TINKER HILL
EL. 685'

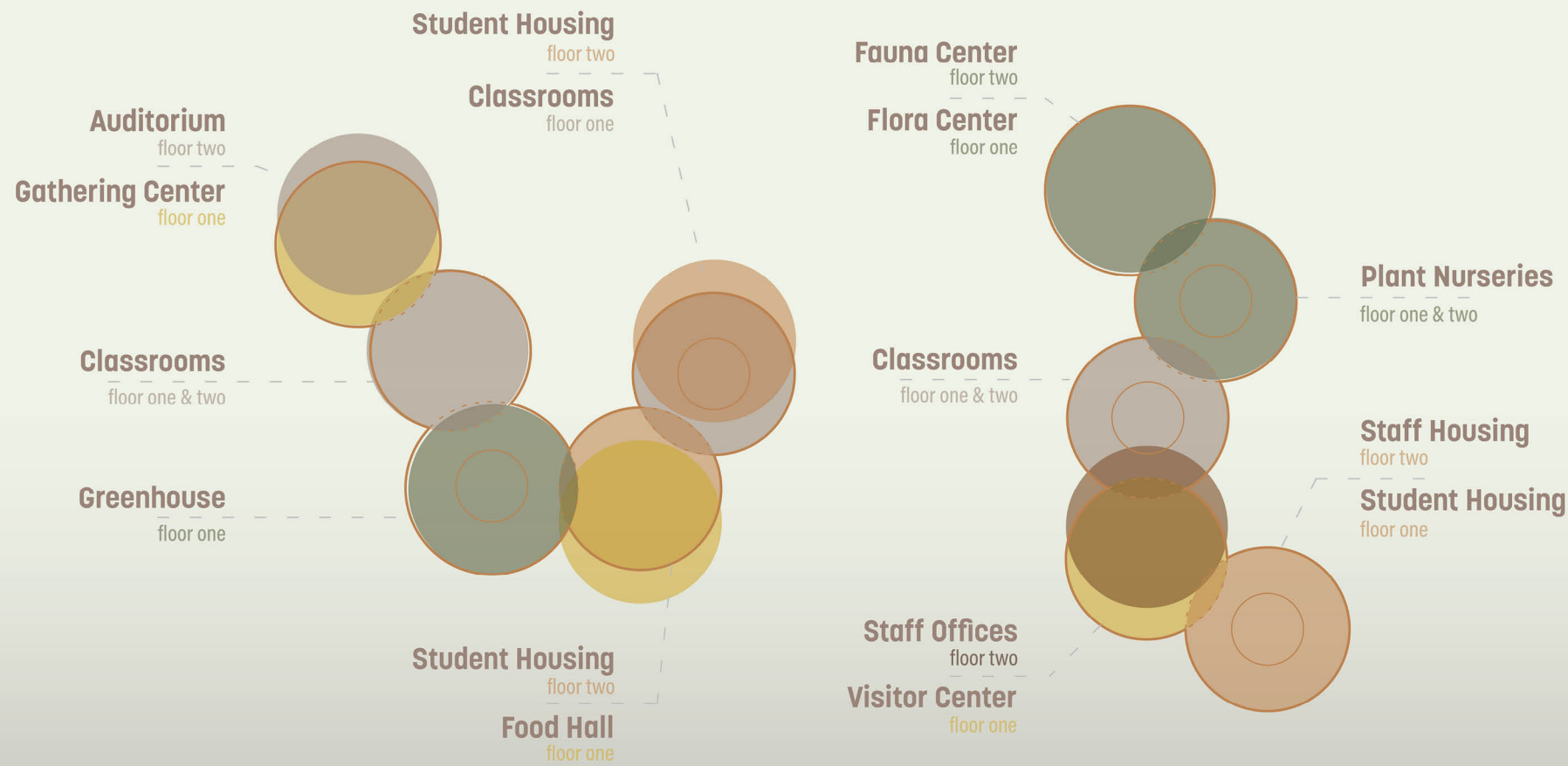
TO HADLEY
RESERVOIRS

TO THE METACOMET-
MONADNOCK TRAIL
& THE SEVEN SISTERS

Conserved Forests
Kestrel Land Trust

Conserved Forests for Education & Research
Amherst College & Kestrel Land Trust

Joseph Allen Skinner State Park
Massachusetts Dept. Conservation & Recreation



Regional Tree Species



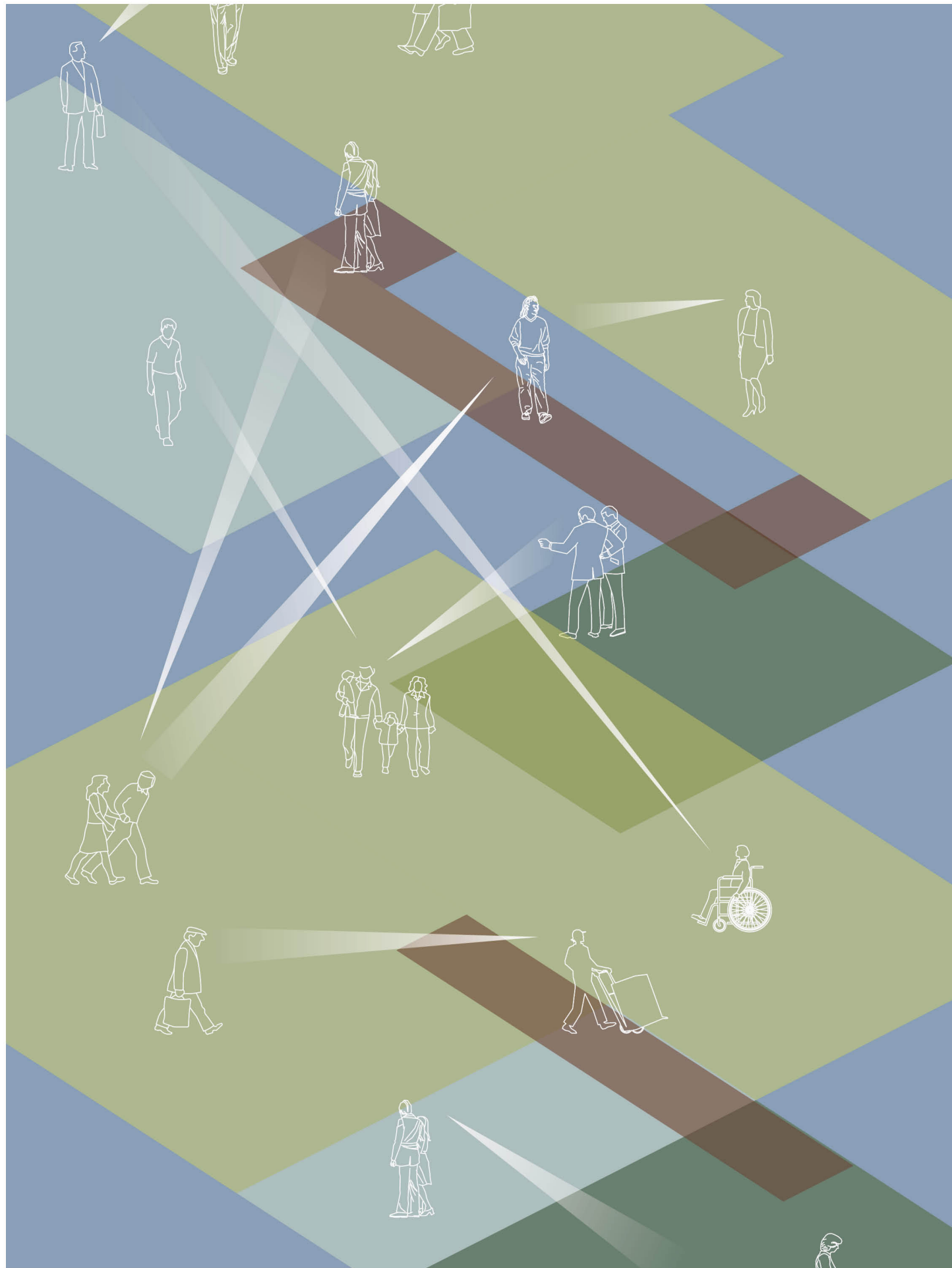
Rare Native Plants in Mt. Holyoke Range

Immersive Learning Land

Cultural Practice Land

Conserved Forest Land





reimagining roots

upham's root eatery

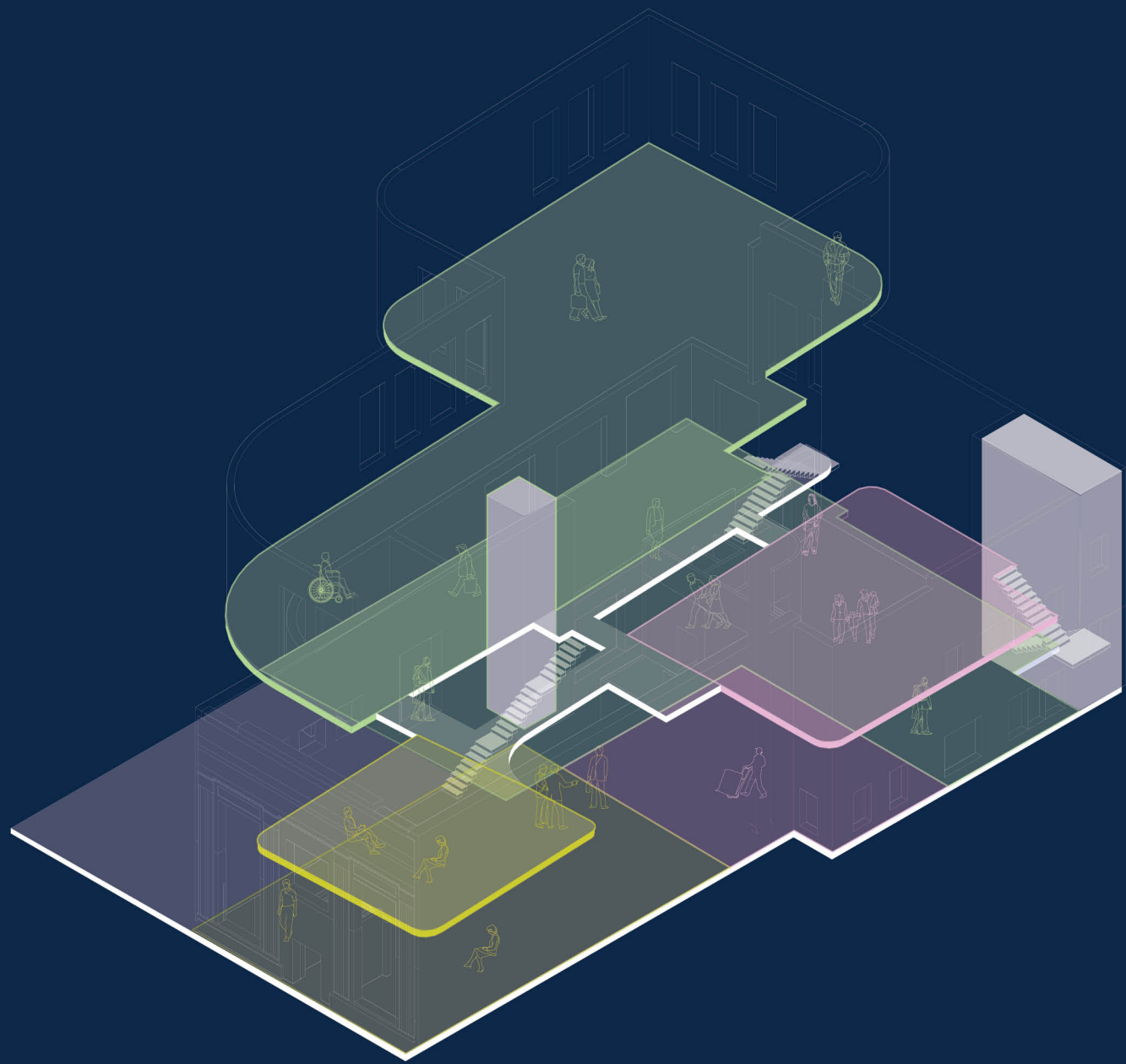
The roots of Upham's Corner in Dorchester, MA are found in food. The area historically served as a cultural and commercial hub for the neighborhood, shaped by waves of immigration and small, family-owned food businesses. Markets, bakeries, and restaurants have long acted as social anchors within the area, reinforcing food as both an economic driver and a means of community connection. Dorchester Savings Bank stands as a landmark within this context, representing the area's financial and civic history while occupying a prominent position in the urban fabric.

Our design aims to reimagine Dorchester Savings Bank in Upham's Corner with a program combination of a restaurant, market, and learning kitchen.

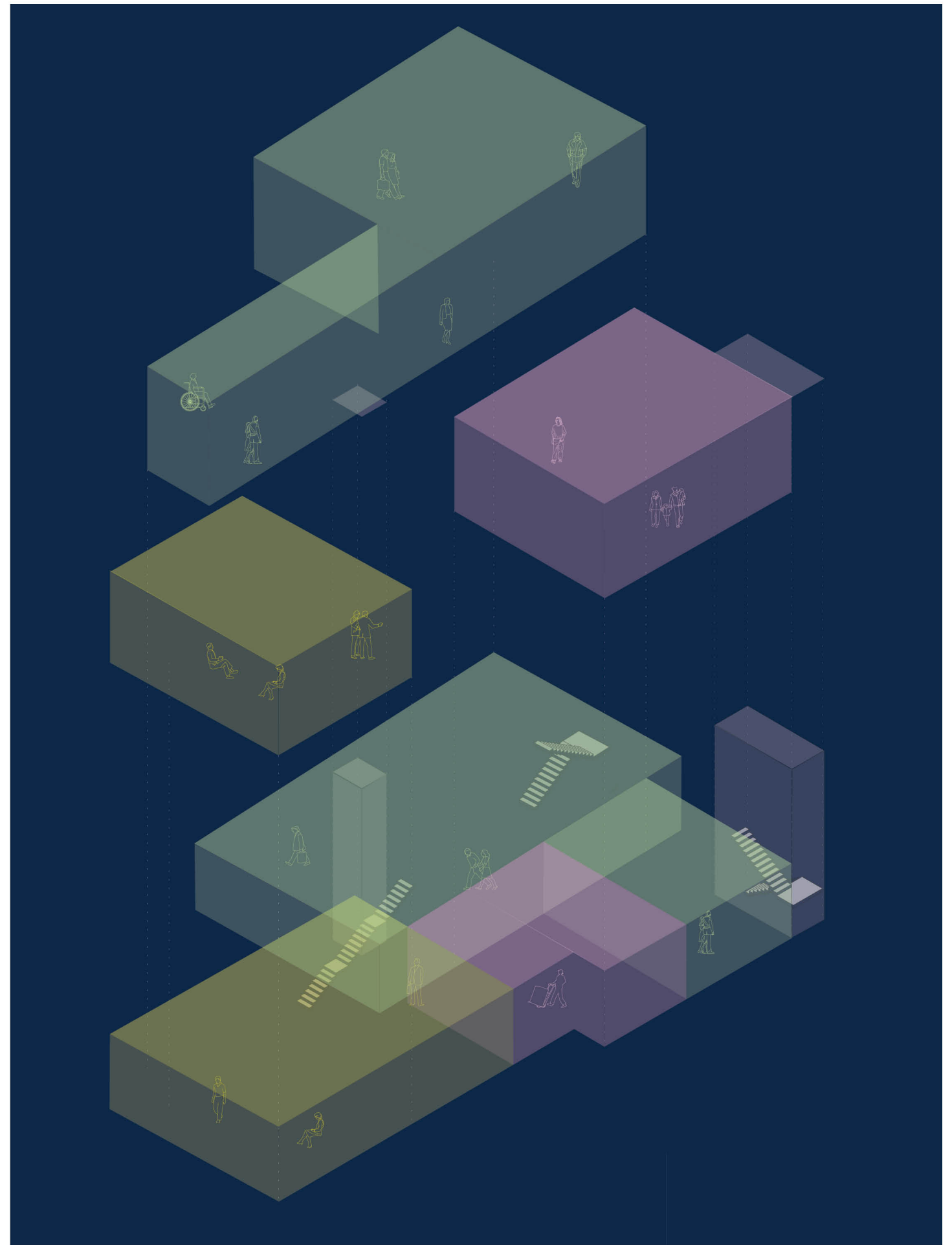
The proposed program layers public and semi-public food-oriented spaces to encourage interaction and shared experience. The market supports daily neighborhood needs, the restaurant functions as a communal gathering space, and the learning kitchen provides opportunities for education, skill-sharing, and cultural exchange. Together, these spaces create a continuous experience that reinforces food as a unifying social element. With new perspectives on relationships formed around food, visitors are reminded how food enriches human connections through shopping, cooking, and eating in one common place.

Partnered project with Kaelin O'Connell.

course	comprehensive design studio	The focus of this studio is the integrated design and detailed development of a building including all of its requisite systems as source for creative invention. This studio draws on the full range of your architectural education to produce a design that is both responsive to specific criteria and prototypical of ways to build sustainable, adaptable, resilient, long-use buildings. Your design will respond to and integrate contexts; project requirements; technical demands; and dynamic processes.
instructor	amanda sanders	
semester	spring 2024	



- Market
- Kitchen
- Restaurant
- Circulation





SECOND LEVEL



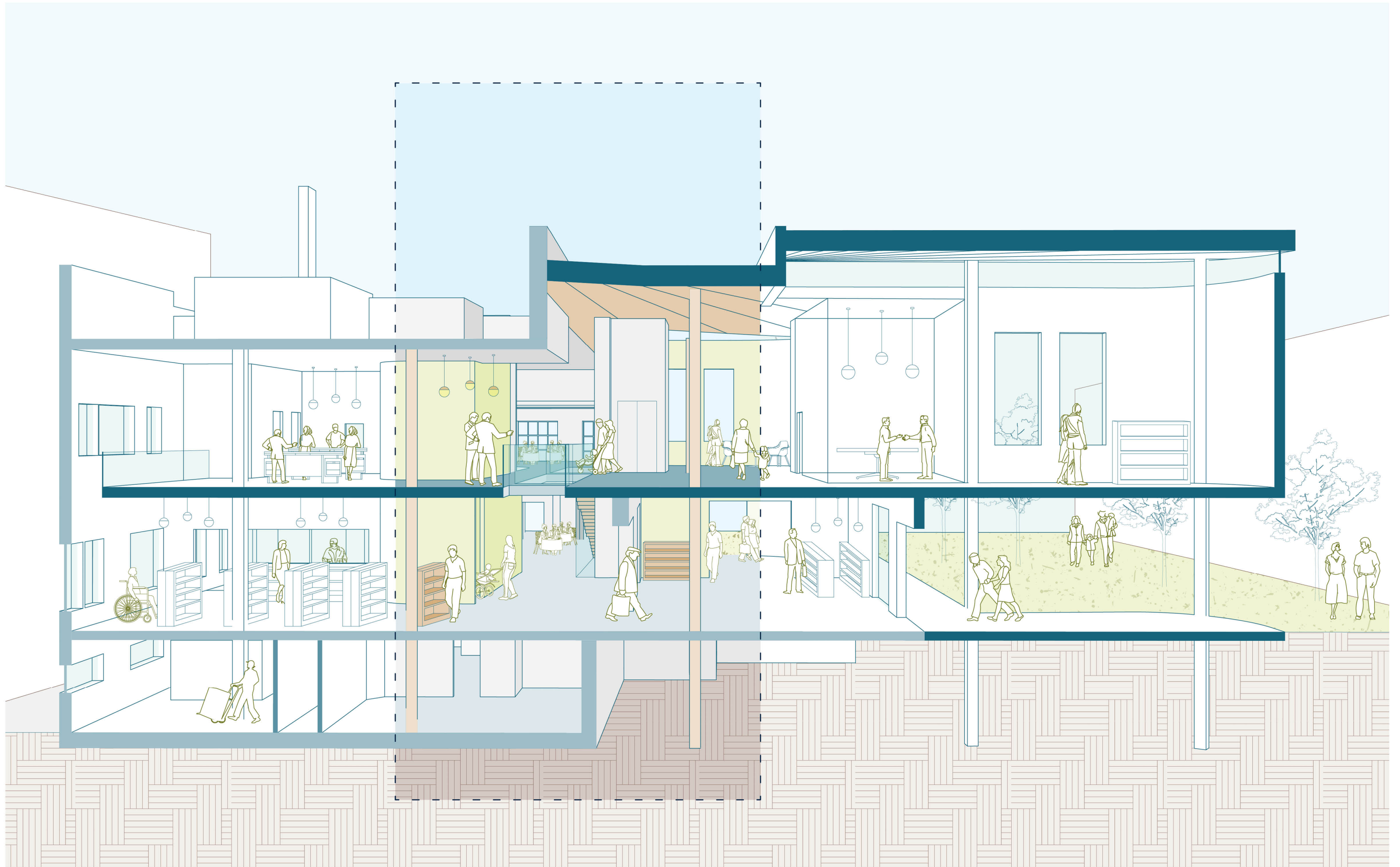
GROUND LEVEL

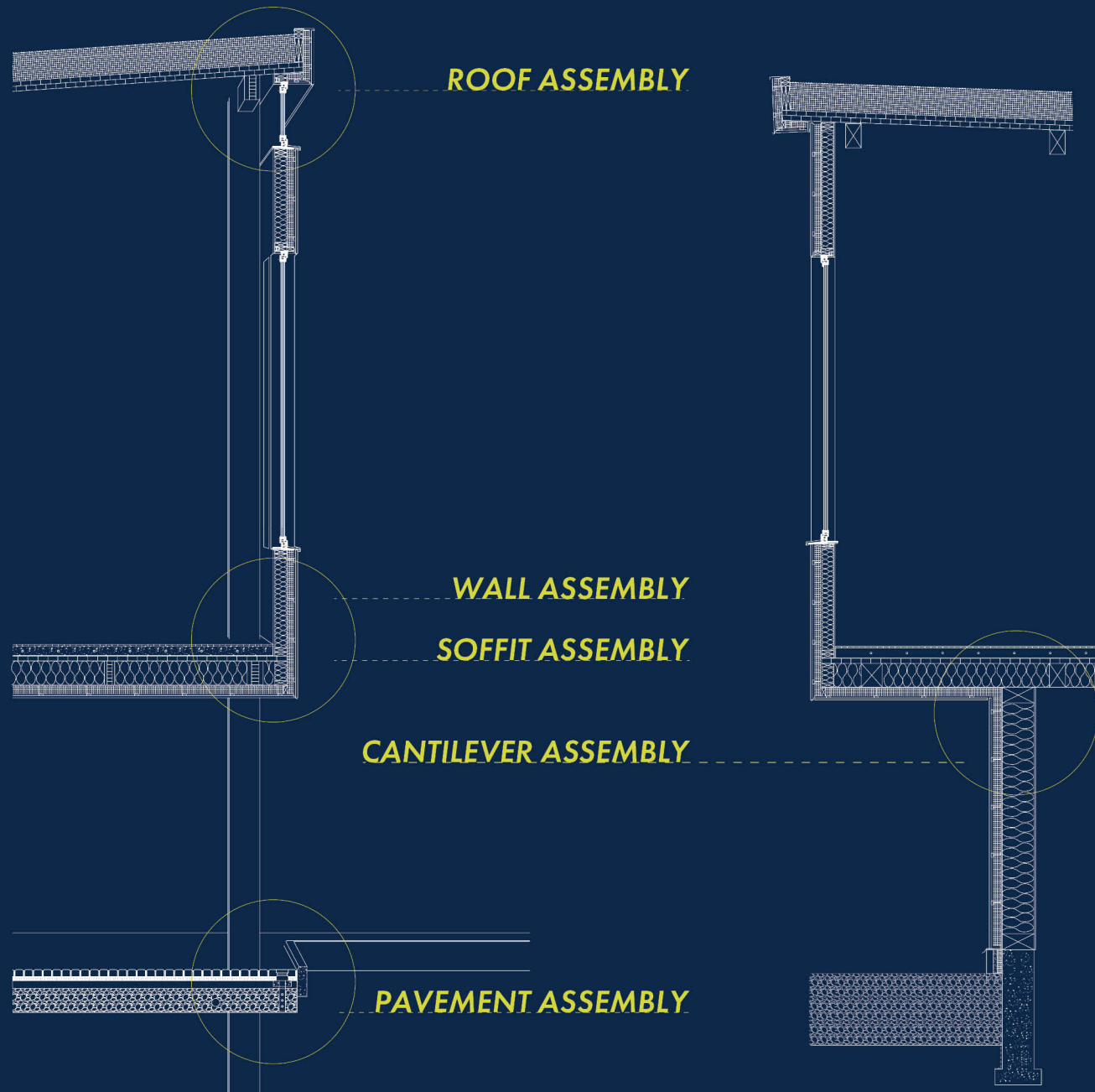


BASEMENT LEVEL

- 1 Mechanical Room
- 2 Geothermal Pipes/Well
- 3 Electrical Room
- 4 Kitchen Prep Space
- 5 Elevator Control Room
- 6 Cold Food Storage
- 7 Ventilation Shaft
- 8 Employee Locker Space
- 9 IT/Technology Room
- 10 Market Storage
- 11 Office Space
- 12 Radiant Delivery Pipes
- 13 Market Space
- 14 Welcome Area
- 15 Electrical Closet
- 16 Restroom
- 17 Janitor Closet
- 18 Kitchen
- 19 Restaurant Dining
- 20 Vendor Stalls
- 21 Green Space
- 22 Patio Space
- 23 Community Garden
- 24 Market Seating
- 25 Event/Meeting Space
- 26 Learning Kitchen
- 27 Pantry
- 28 Stone Ballast Blue Roof
- 29 Air Cooled Chiller
- 30 Energy Recovery Vent

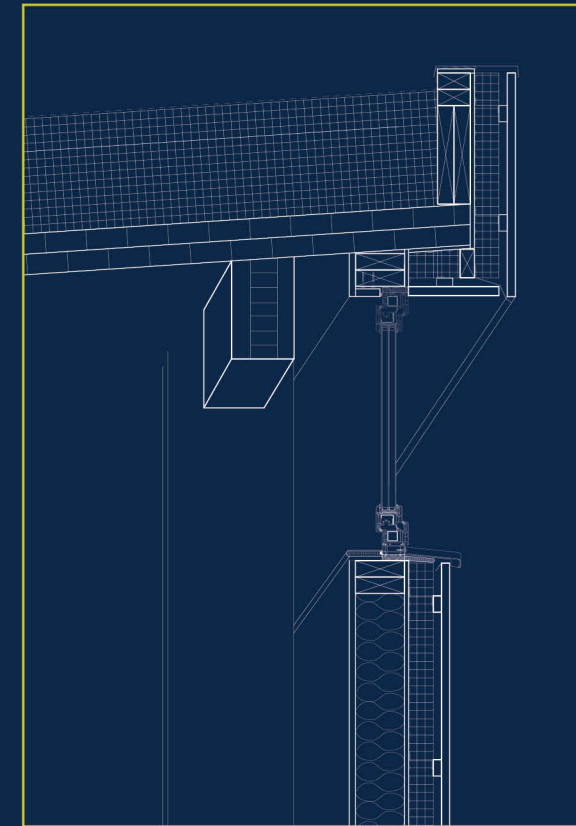




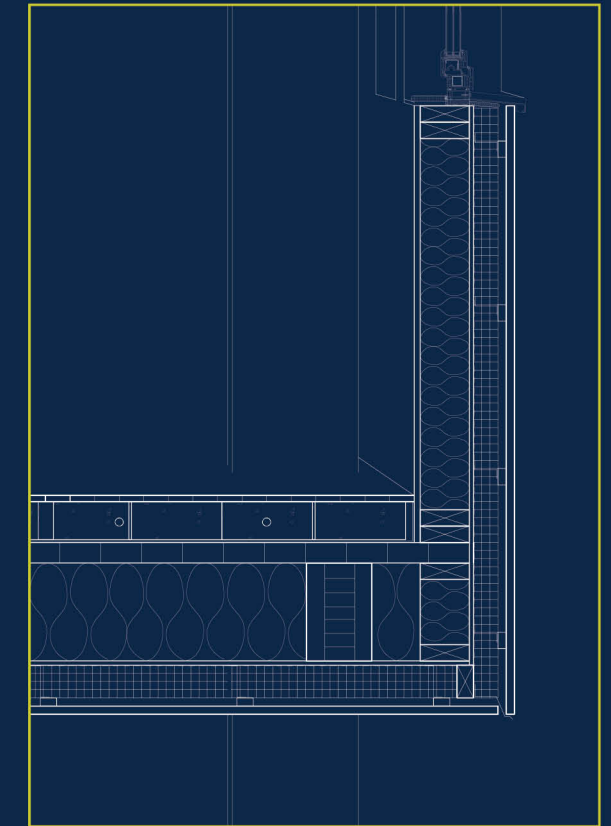


WALL SECTIONS

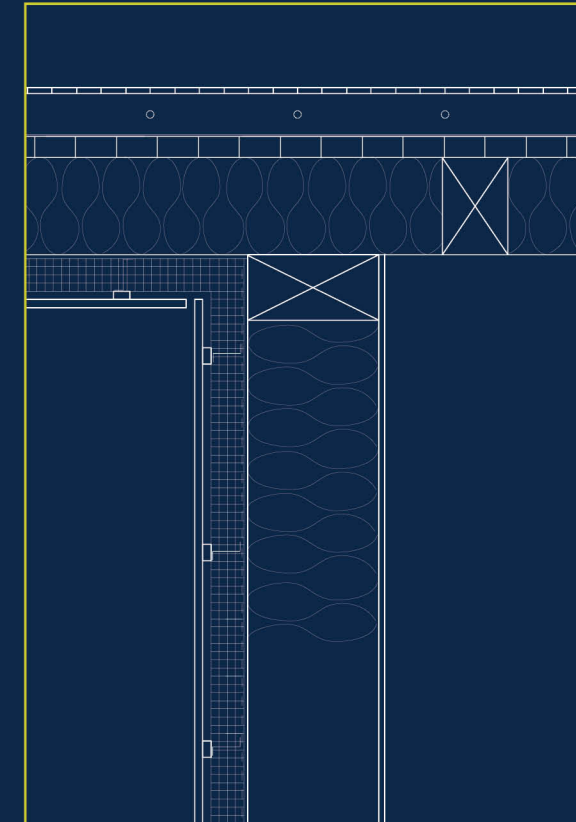
ROOF ASSEMBLY



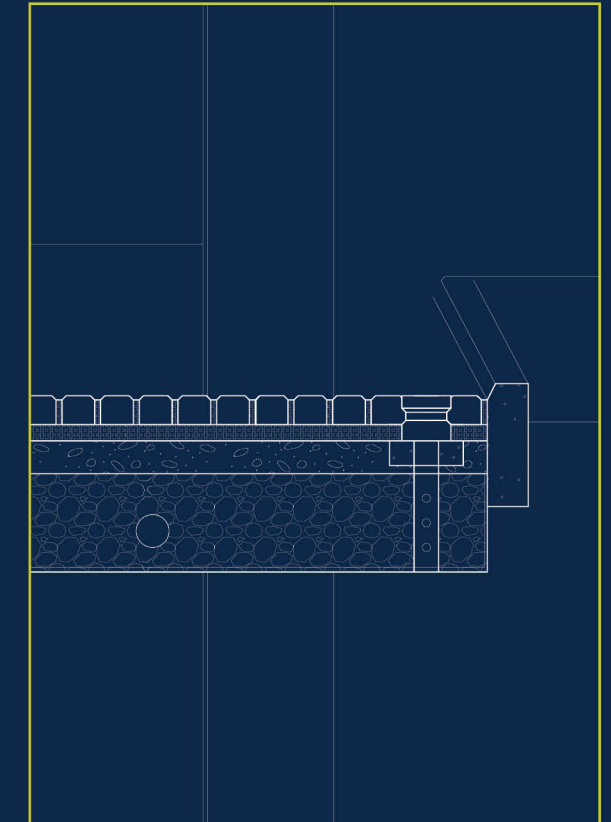
WALL + SOFFIT ASSEMBLY



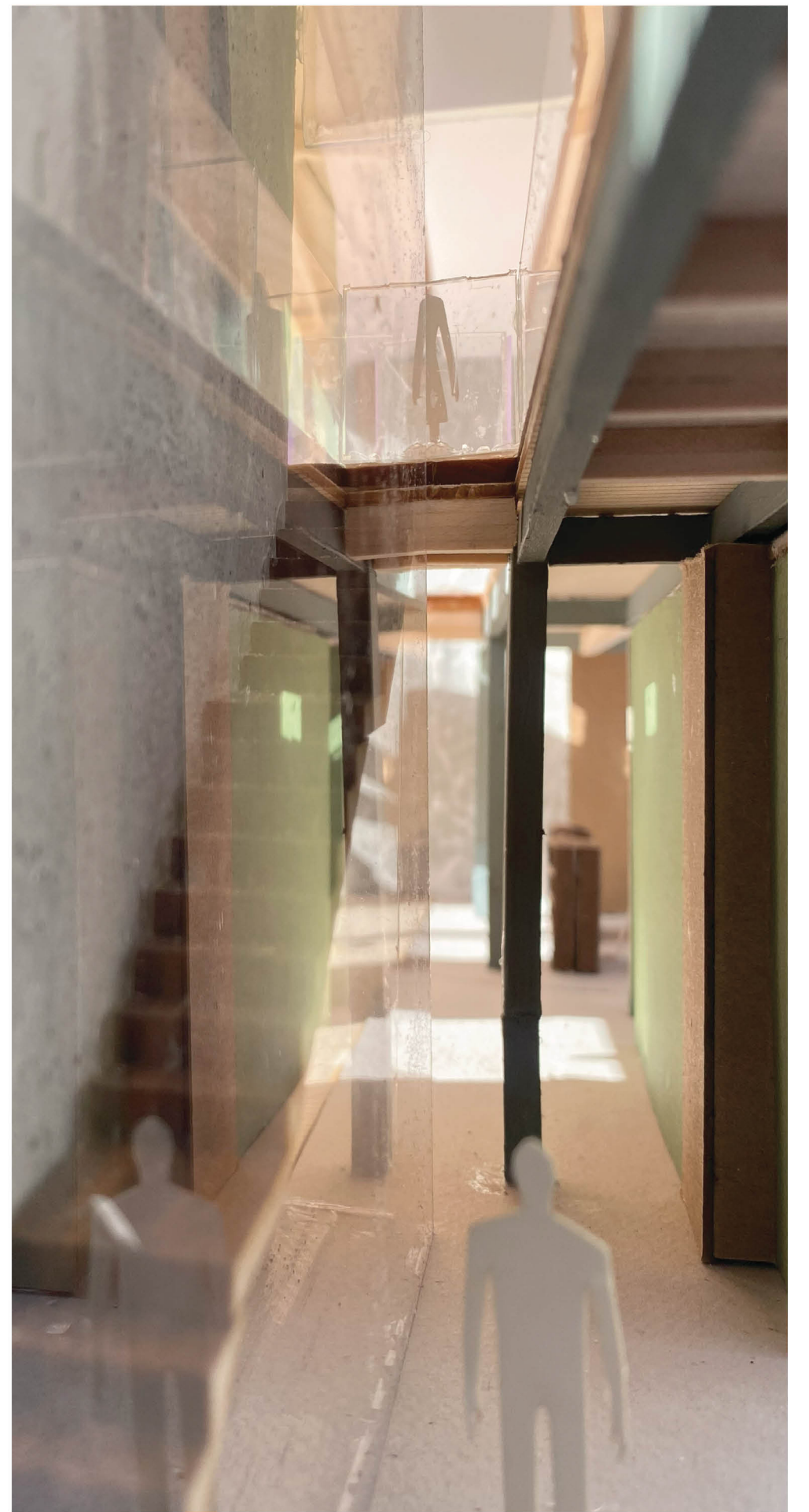
CANTILEVER ASSEMBLY

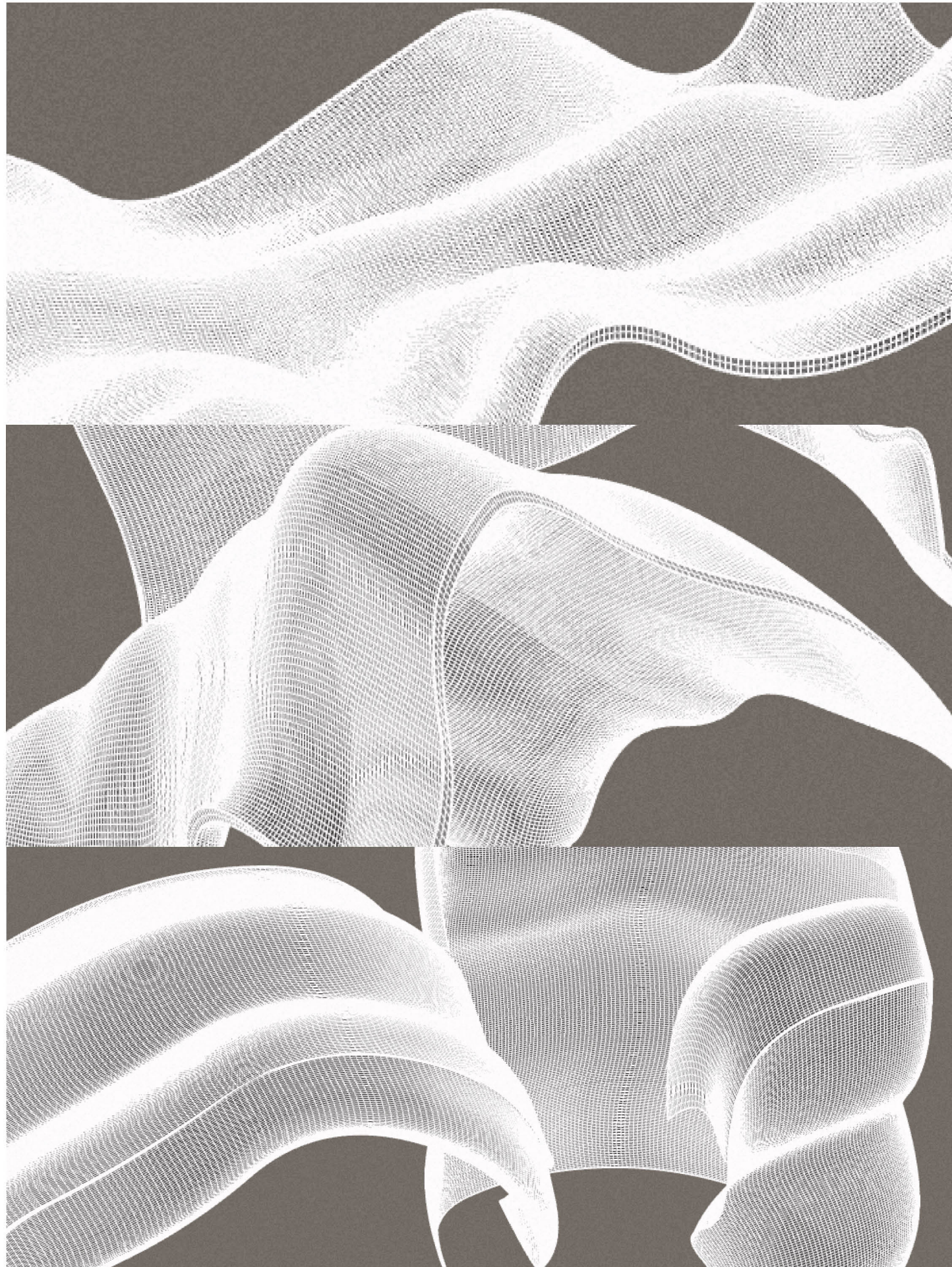


PERMEABLE PAVEMENT ASSEMBLY



WALL DETAILS





soft spaces

the local library

As libraries evolved, their original functions transformed from being places for study and research to centers for the community and the people they serve. Public libraries are places that people of all social, ethnic and economic backgrounds can experience without compensation. They have the means to play a major part in building community, the means to facilitate a safe environment, and the means to provide resources to better understand the human condition and experience.

So much can be learned from the memories and life experiences of those who surround a city library. Yet, libraries rarely contain collections about the people that

they serve. Downtown Boston connects neighborhoods that house people of all age groups, income amounts, education levels, housing situations, etc. A stronger community can be built through the opportunity of documenting experiences from the community, especially from those who are under-served and underrepresented.

The Local Library, located at 9 West Street, hopes to create a sense of security and comfort to people of all social demographics and to provide a means to be a remembered through their experiences. With stepping stones, the library provides the chance for walls to be torn down and a fabric of community to be woven.

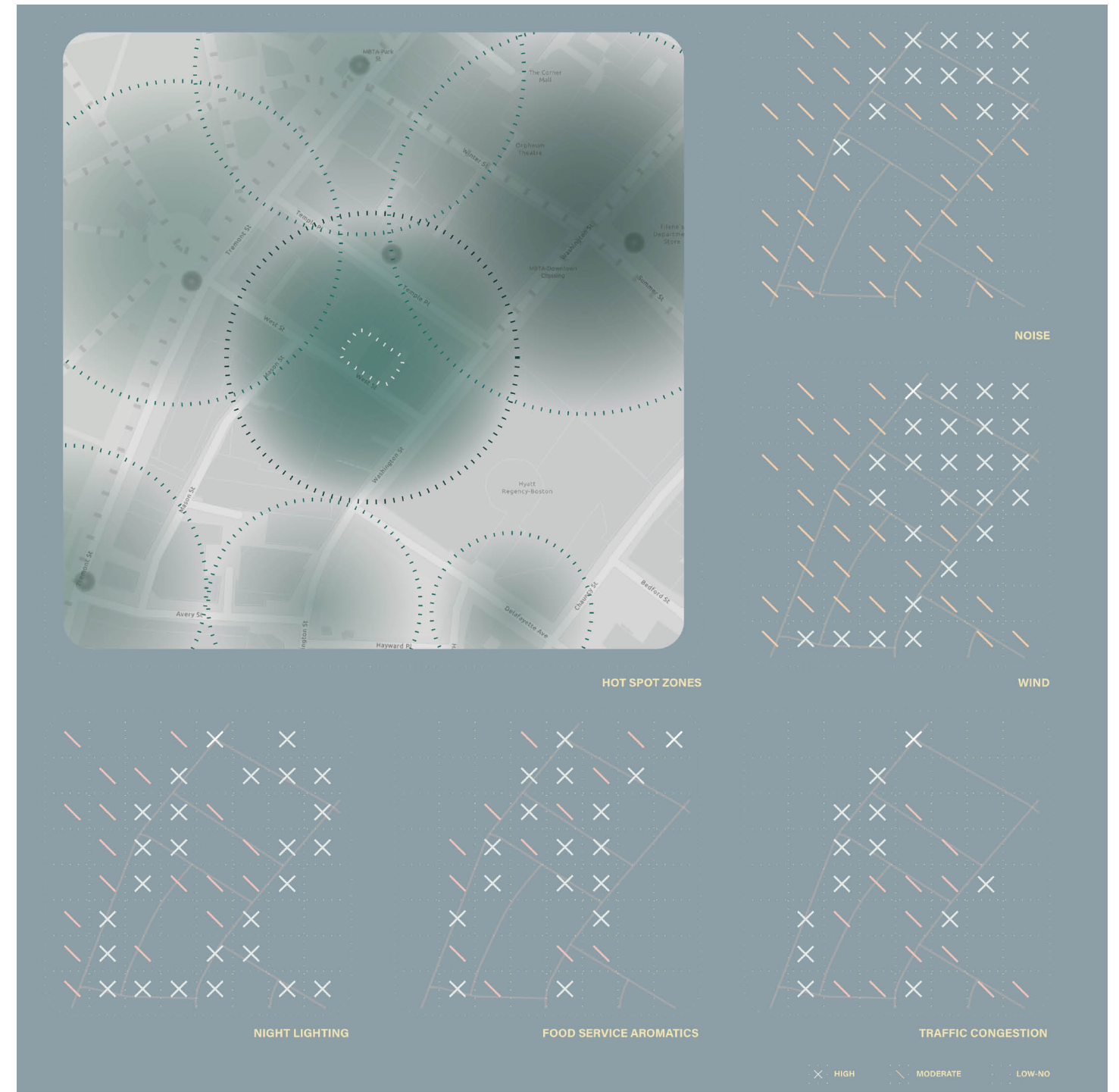
course graduate studio 1
instructor silva illia-sheldahl
semester spring 2023

This course is an introduction to a set of fundamental design parameters that shape Space: Site and Program. The studio proposes methodologies to study a Site to be used as a generative design tool, and the study of Program as drivers of form and spatial organization.



connections to neighborhoods

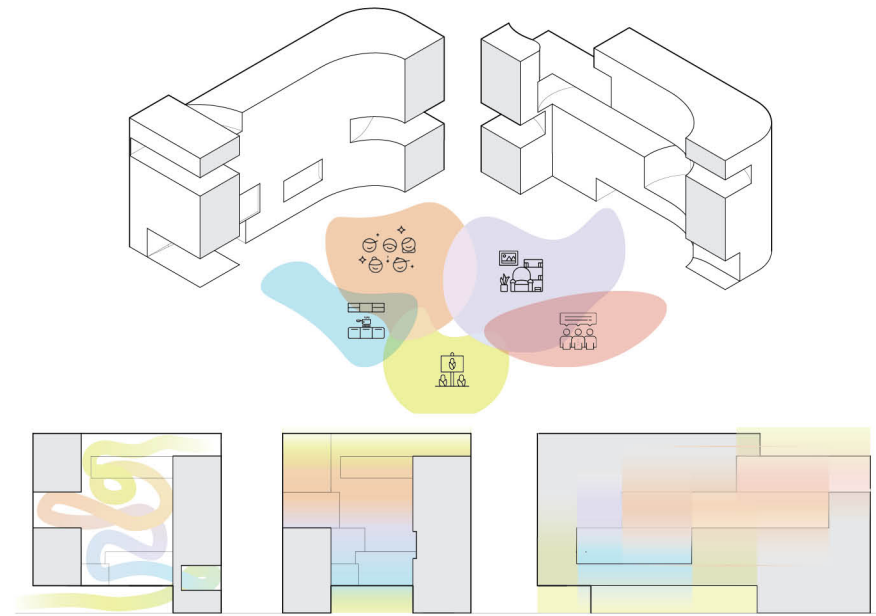
Situated at the center of historic neighborhoods in Boston, West Street is a small strip of Downtown that intersects all kinds of people everyday. There is a potential for the library to serve as a thread that strengthens the connection within this urban fabric. Transforming the site to become a safe and healthy place of gathering for all people is one goal of the library.



connections to memories

Traveling around the site's surroundings creates a distinct memory of the area. The overall memory map provides subjective takes on objective categories. There are many possibilities as to how the library's presence can fit into these maps in ways that benefit a person's experience. Enhancing all communities' and visitor's memory of the site is one goal of the library.

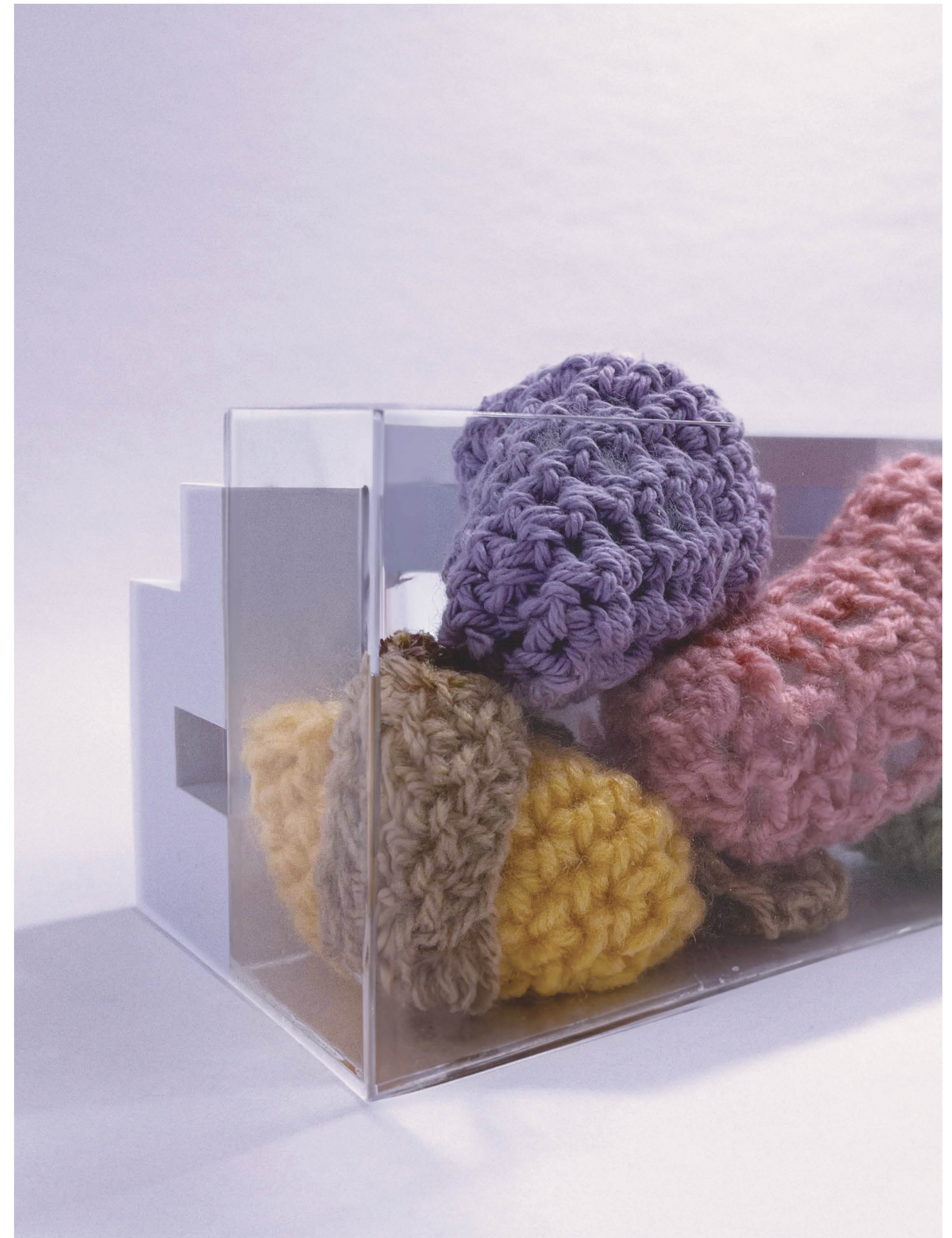
contained & container
soft spaces contained within structured programs

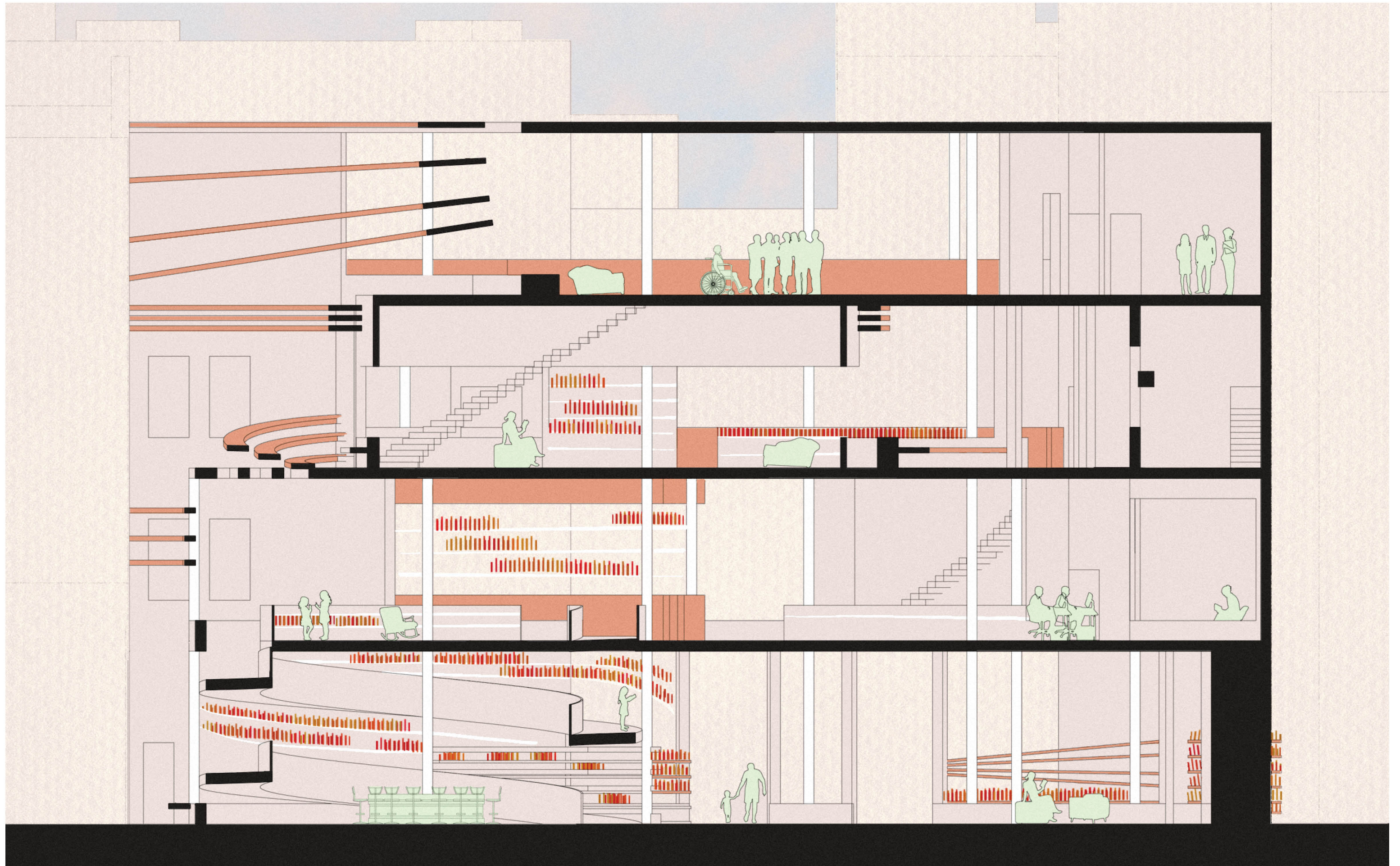


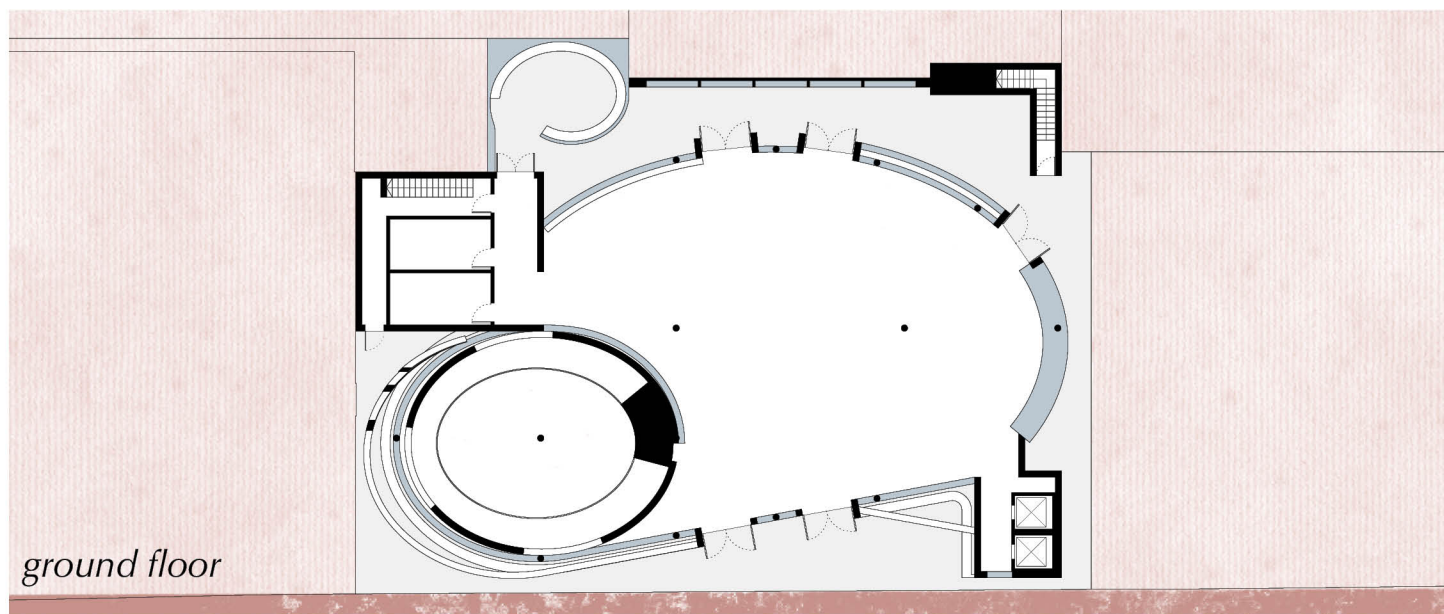
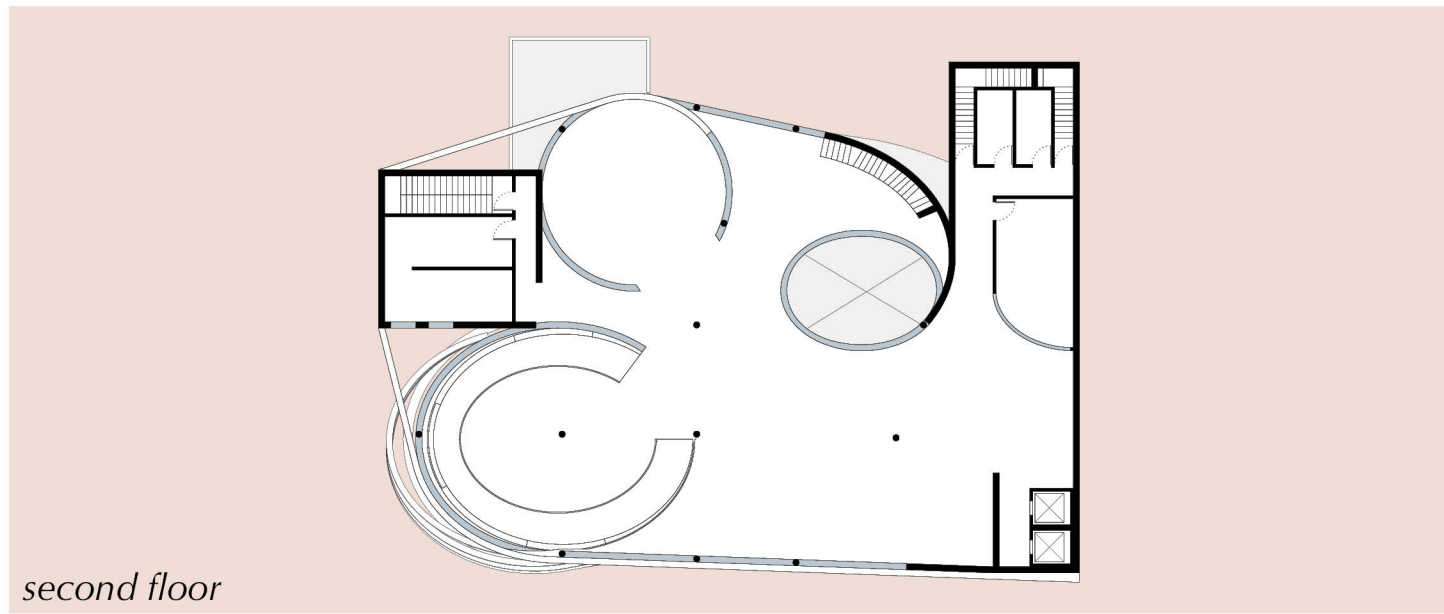
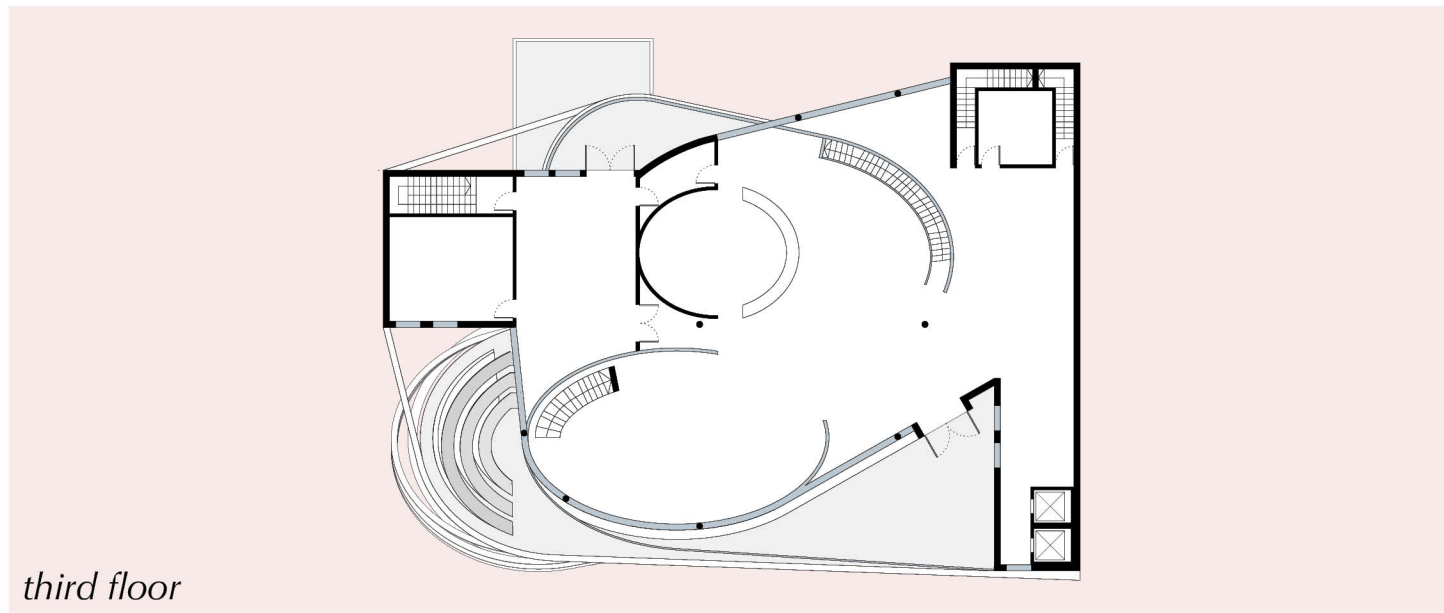
community serving
support spaces



community building
soft spaces





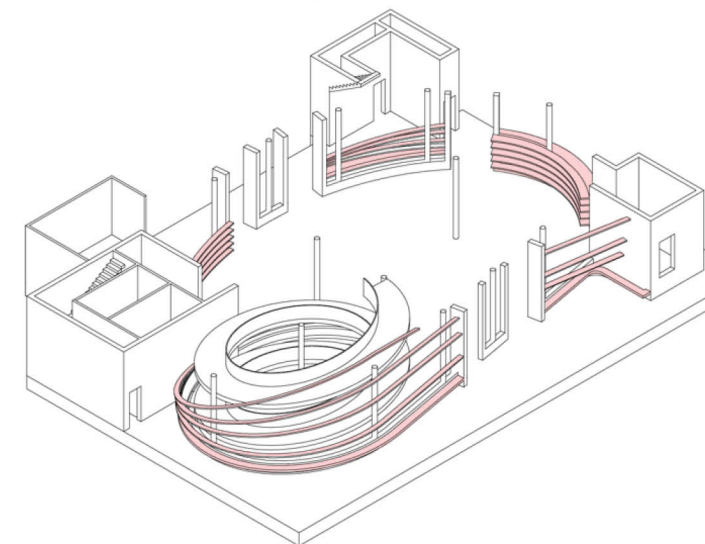
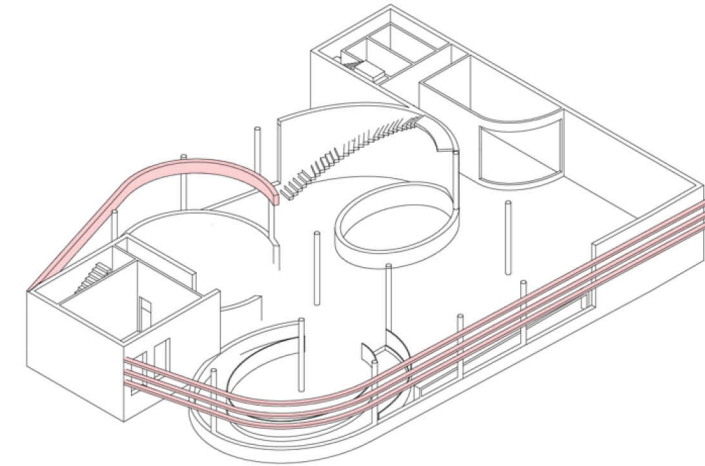
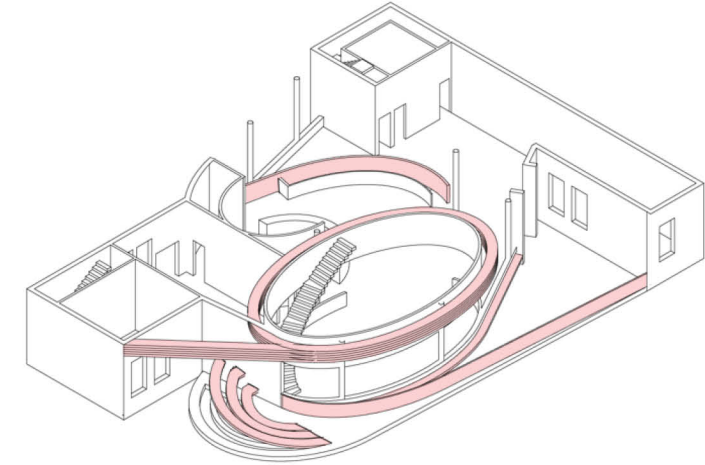
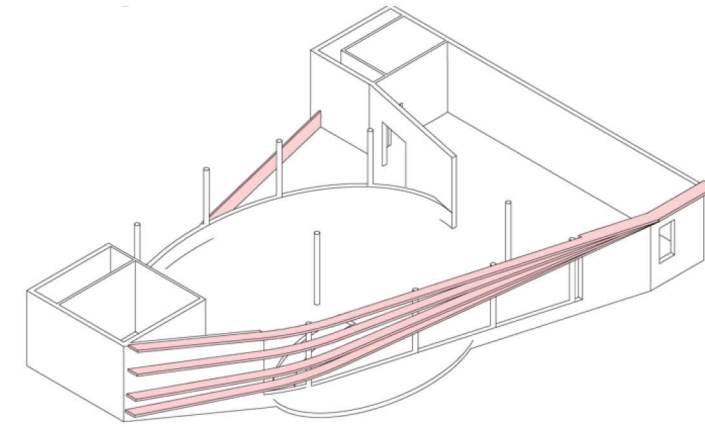


- patio ●
- content creation center ●
- book binding room ●

- public kitchen ●
- staff support space ●
- office ●

- gathering den ●
- media lab ●

- backyard ●
- restrooms ●
- community gallery ●
- cafe ●



- it/maintenance room ●
- brattle bookstore ●
- community group space ●

- restrooms ●
- quiet study room ●
- patio ●
- secondary reading area ●

- conference room ●
- multimedia area ●
- open study/work space ●
- childrens' area ●

- outdoor book tunnel ●
- public forum/lecture space ●
- main reading area ●





tandem tambours

the tandem

The Tandem is inspired by how tambours showcase the essence of softness and flexibility within solid wood pieces that are often perceived as rigid and unwavering.

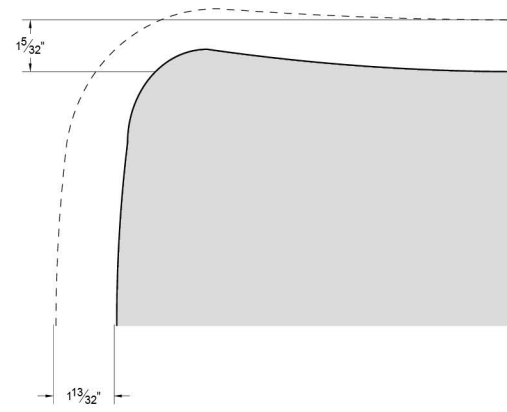
As a modestly-sized modular storage container, the piece can be joined together, in tandem, with another unit to further serve the function of either an ottoman or side table. This piece is our take on sizable traditional wooden tambour furniture, often found in family homes, fit to the contemporary lifestyle of small-scale apartment living and college dorming.

The Tandem aims to bring the graceful aesthetic and artisan craft behind tambour furniture to a modern form of dwelling.

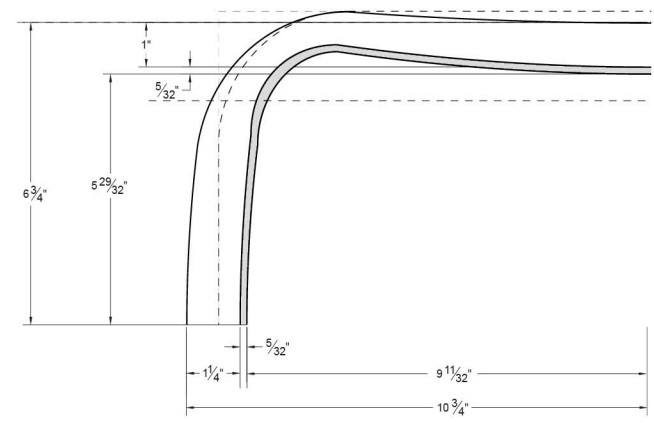
The project involved mocking and iterating through three different design stages before settling on its final form. Major stages involved investigating tambour tracking and general proportions, curvature for softer forms and the exploration of modularity, and a concentration on creating a cohesive aesthetic between tambour doors and walls. The project's realization consisted of learning and developing new woodworking skills such as CNC routing, MDF mold creation, veneer stitching and laminating, vacuum pressing custom plywood, and binding, in conjunction with previous milling and jointing skills.

Partnered project with Christine Cho.

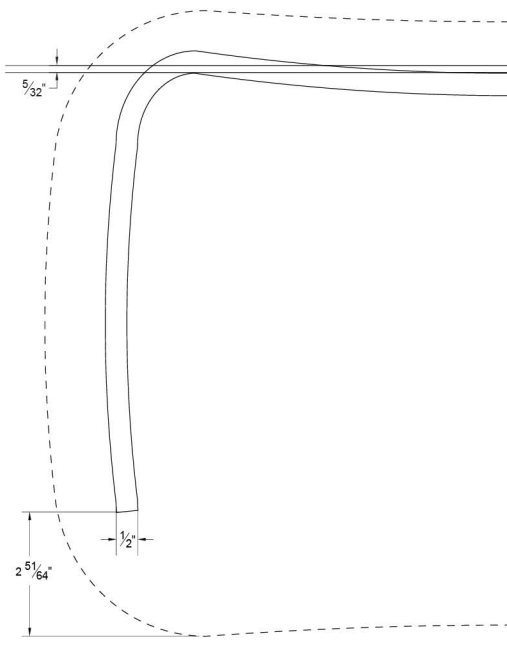
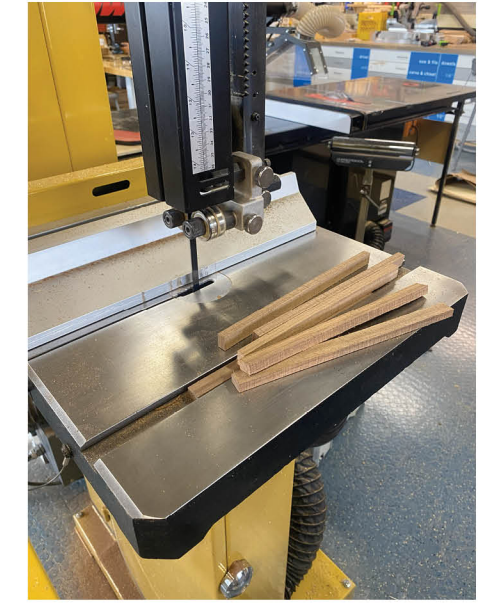
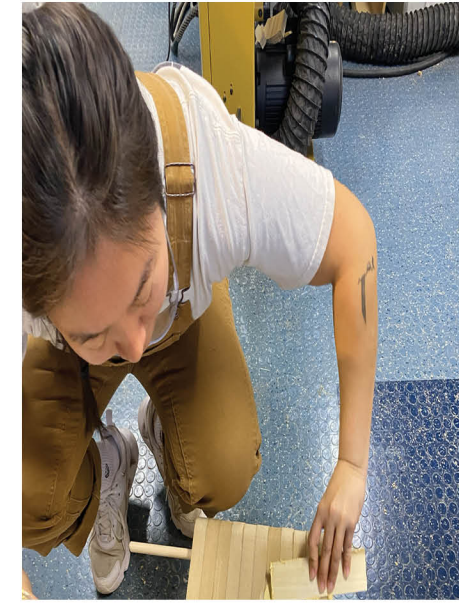
course	adv. architectural communication: meaning & making	This course will embrace a fundamentally experimental investigation of materials as a means for better understanding the way making and fabrication can complement our creative practice and convey meaning. It will explore the manipulation of wood and other relevant end-use materials as an avenue for understanding performative characteristics of furniture and buildings will. The goal is to develop sensitive material literacies so as designers we can more successfully adapt to varying design and manufacturing fields.
instructor	patrick kana	
semester	spring 2023	



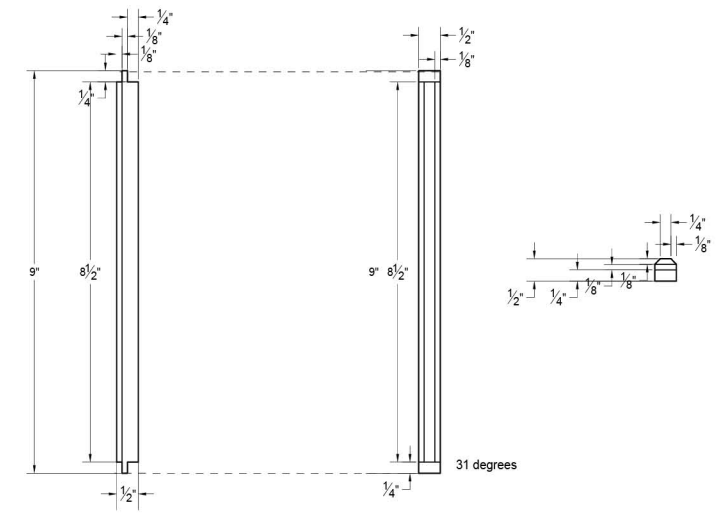
base: seat + feet



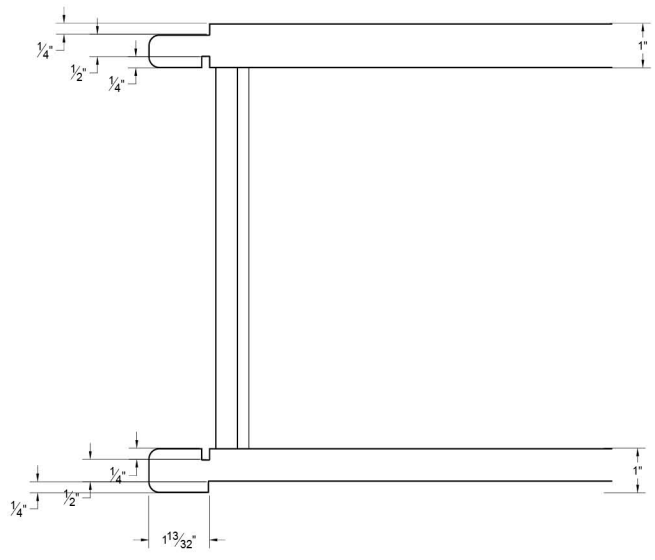
base: tracks



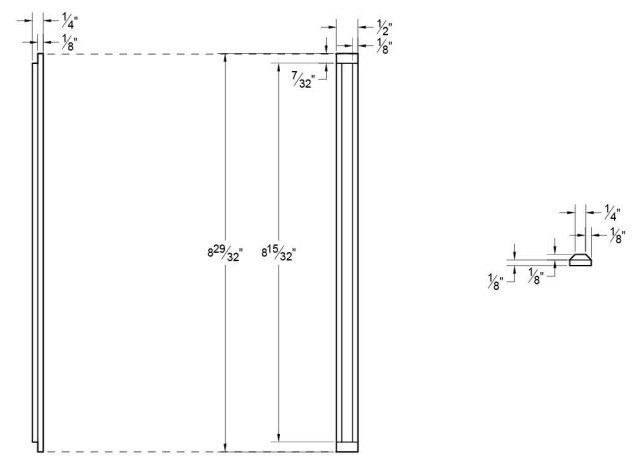
support wall



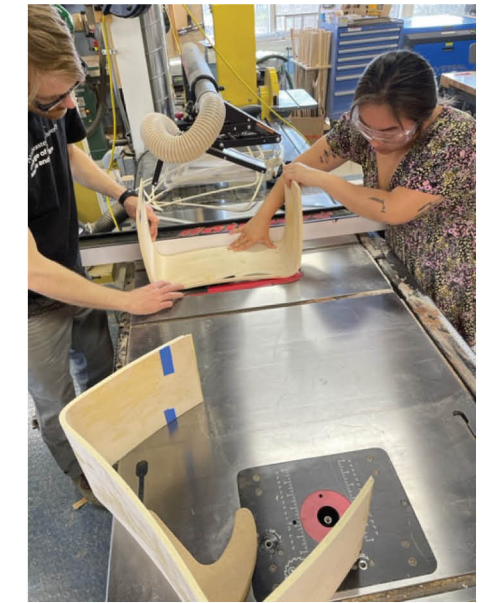
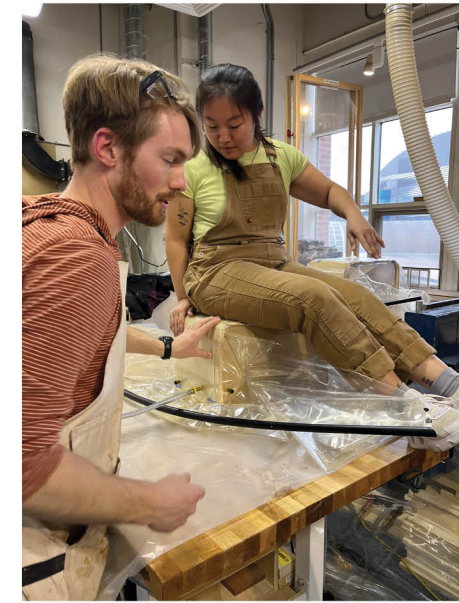
wall tambours



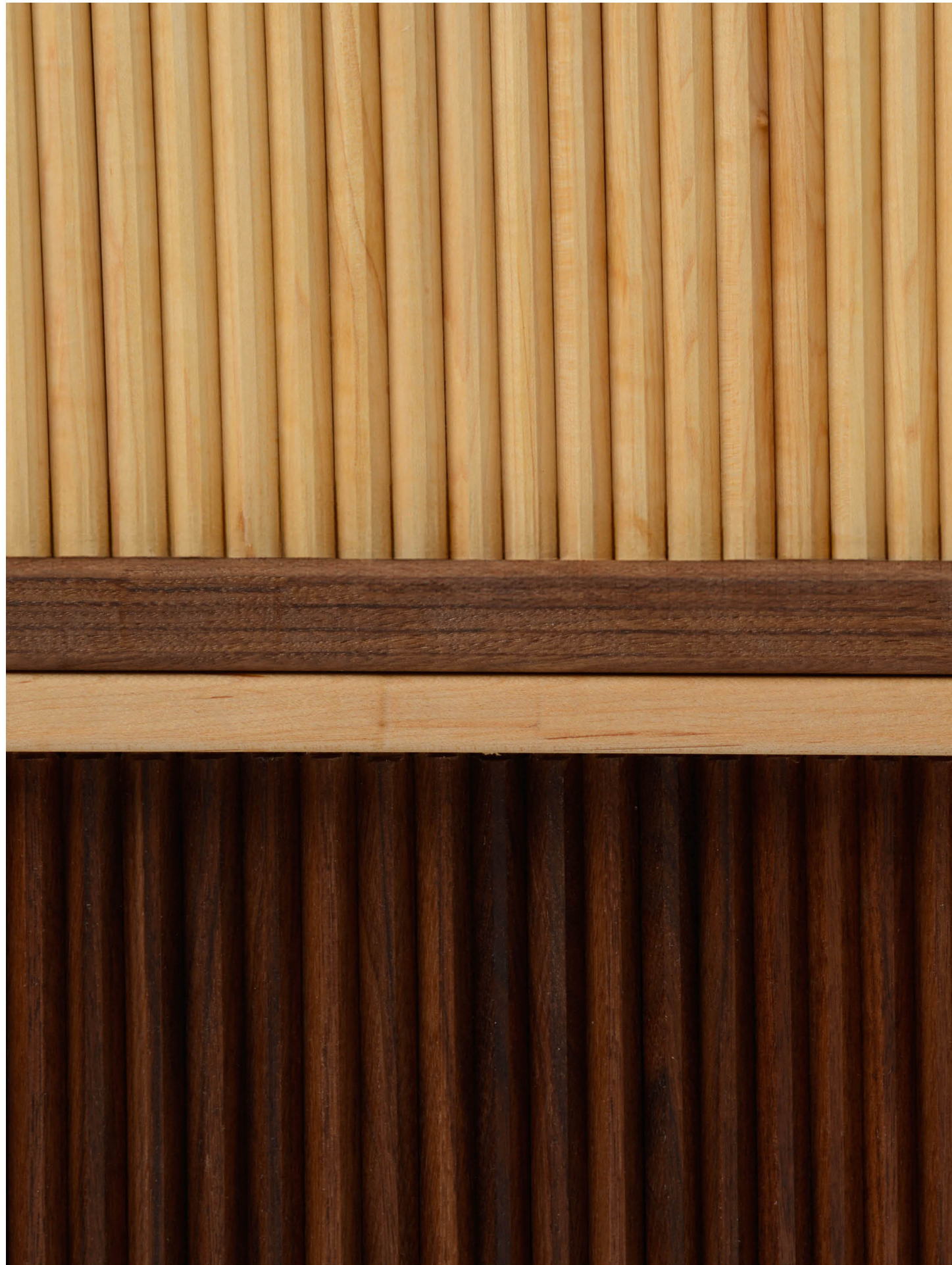
longitudinal section



moving tambours











houston hotel

blanchardA+D, Arlington, MA

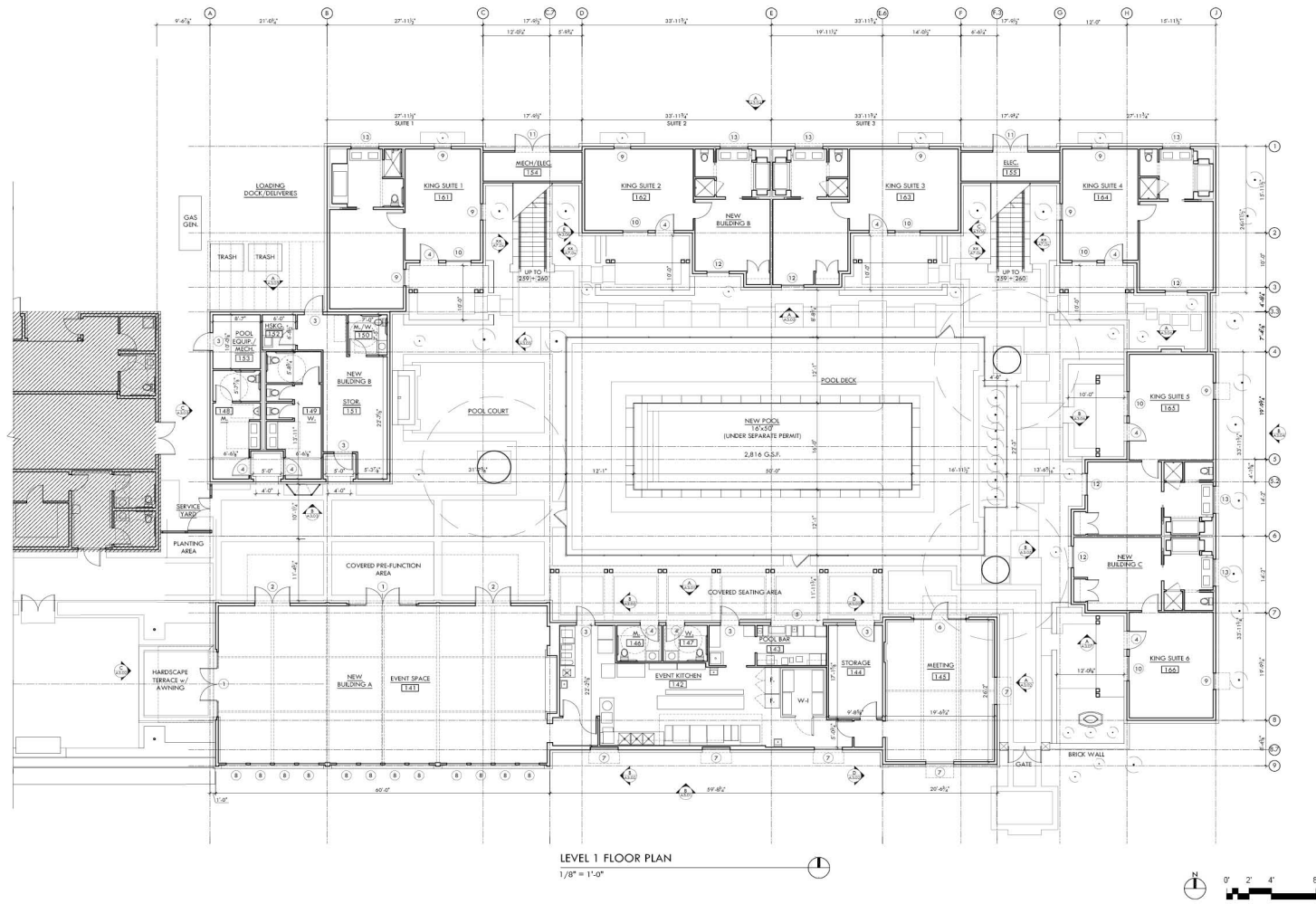
his project is a two-story, ten-key hotel addition located in Houston, Texas, designed to respond to the city's climate, urban context, and hospitality market. The project began immediately after I became part of the blanchardA+D team, leading me to be involved throughout all phases of the project, from early design development through construction documentation.

During design development, I contributed to refining the overall architectural concept, developing floor plans, coordinating guestroom keys, and resolving building core and service strategies. I assisted in façade studies, material selection, and coordination with structural, landscape, MEP, and interior design consultants to ensure design intent was maintained while requirements were met.

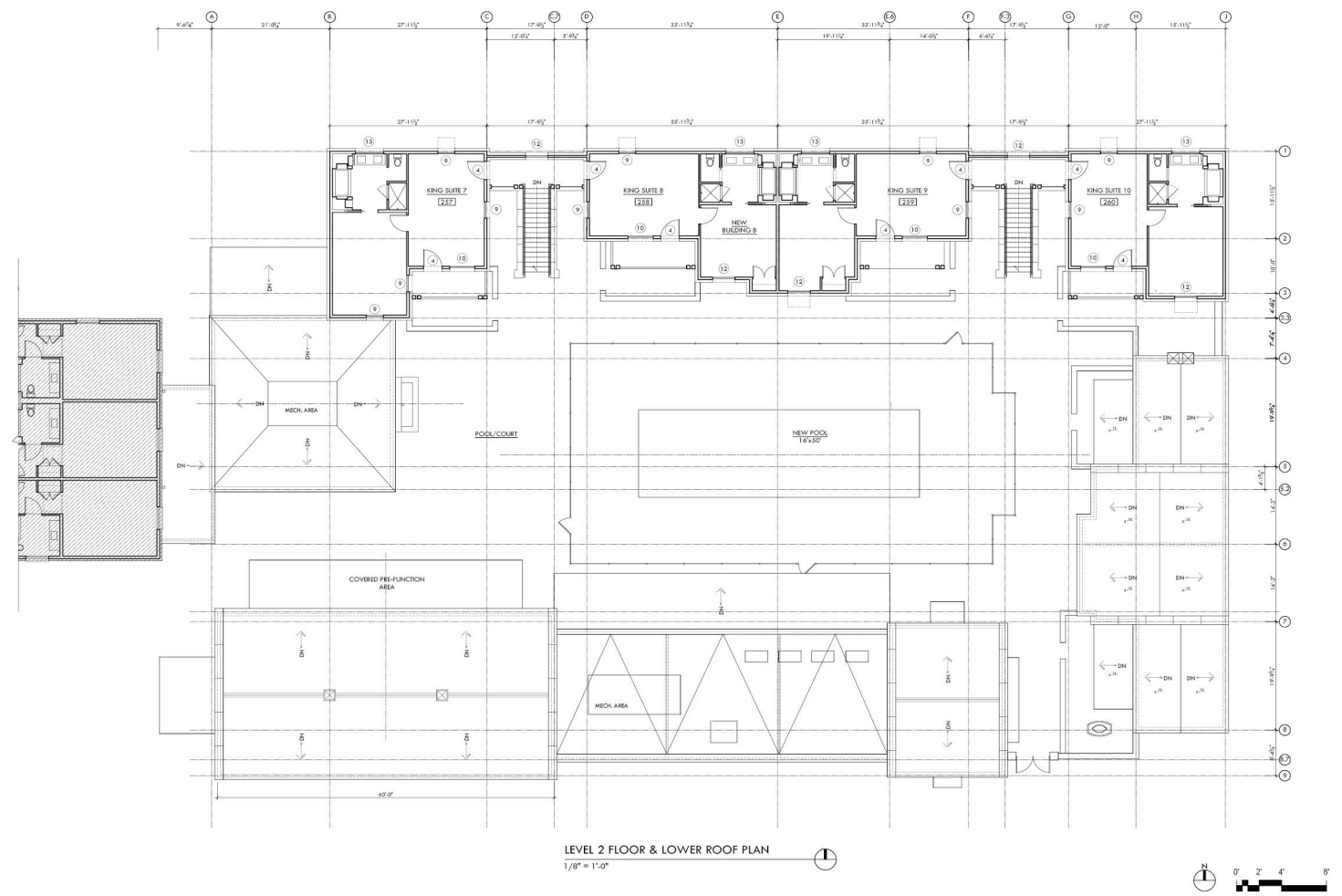
As the project progressed into construction documentation, I played an active role in producing detailed architectural drawings, including plans, sections, elevations, wall sections, and enlarged details. I attended project meetings with our consultants to integrate their systems into the architectural set and assisted in responding to design revisions, code comments, and constructability considerations.

Working on this project from its early stages through documentation, allowed me to develop a strong understanding of hospitality design standards, building systems integration, and the translation of design intent into precise, buildable construction documents.

Contributions: CAD drawings, Rhino Model, Renders



LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



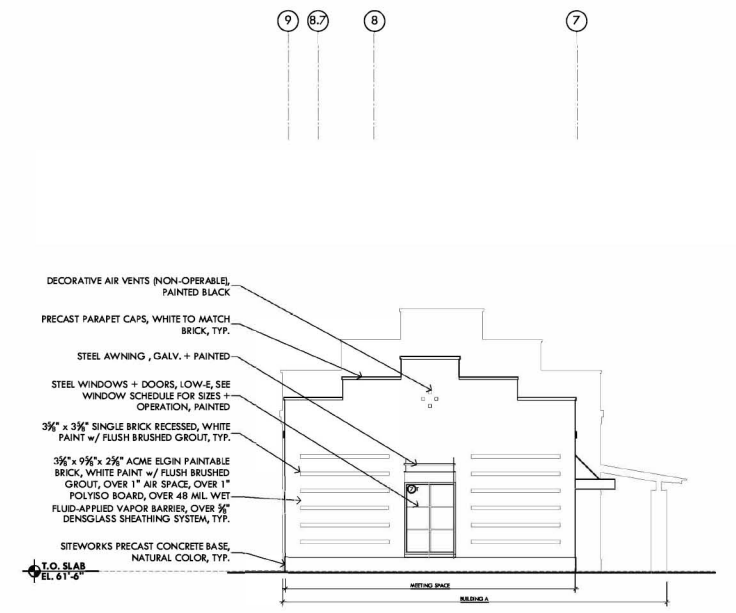
LEVEL 2 FLOOR & LOWER ROOF PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



MEETING/EVENT KITCHEN/EVENT - PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

A



MEETING SPACE - PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

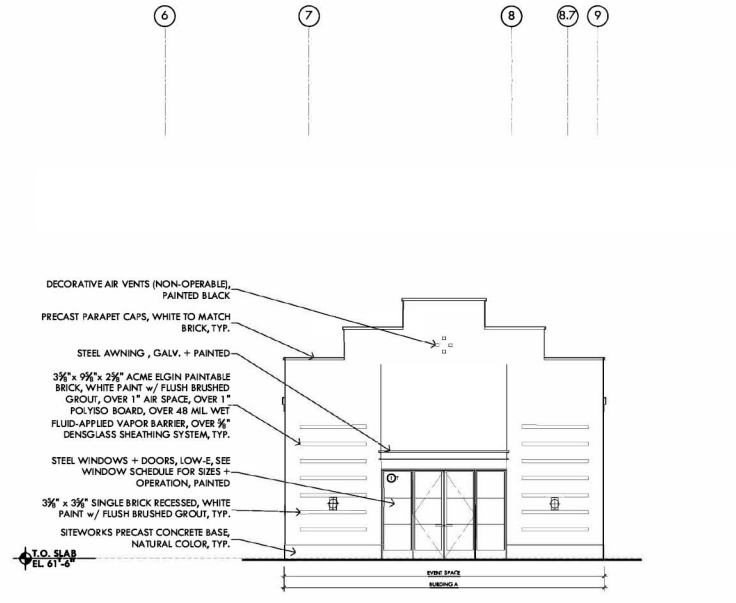
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WEST 20TH STREET - PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

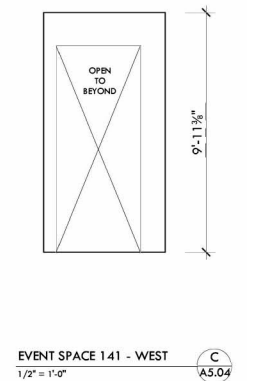
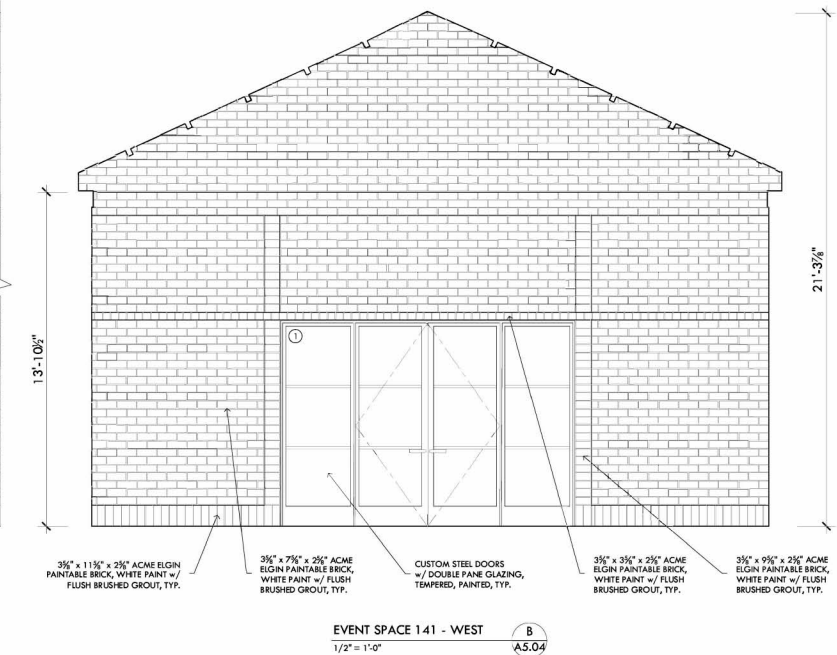
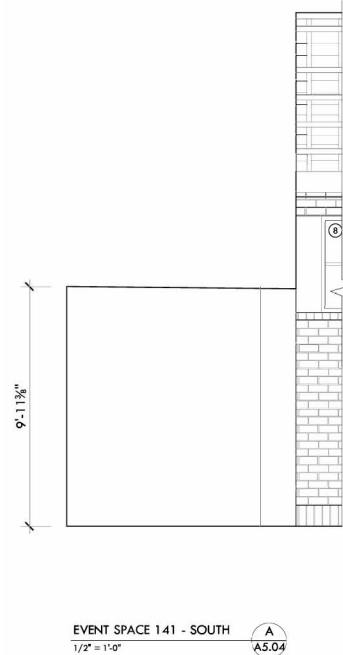
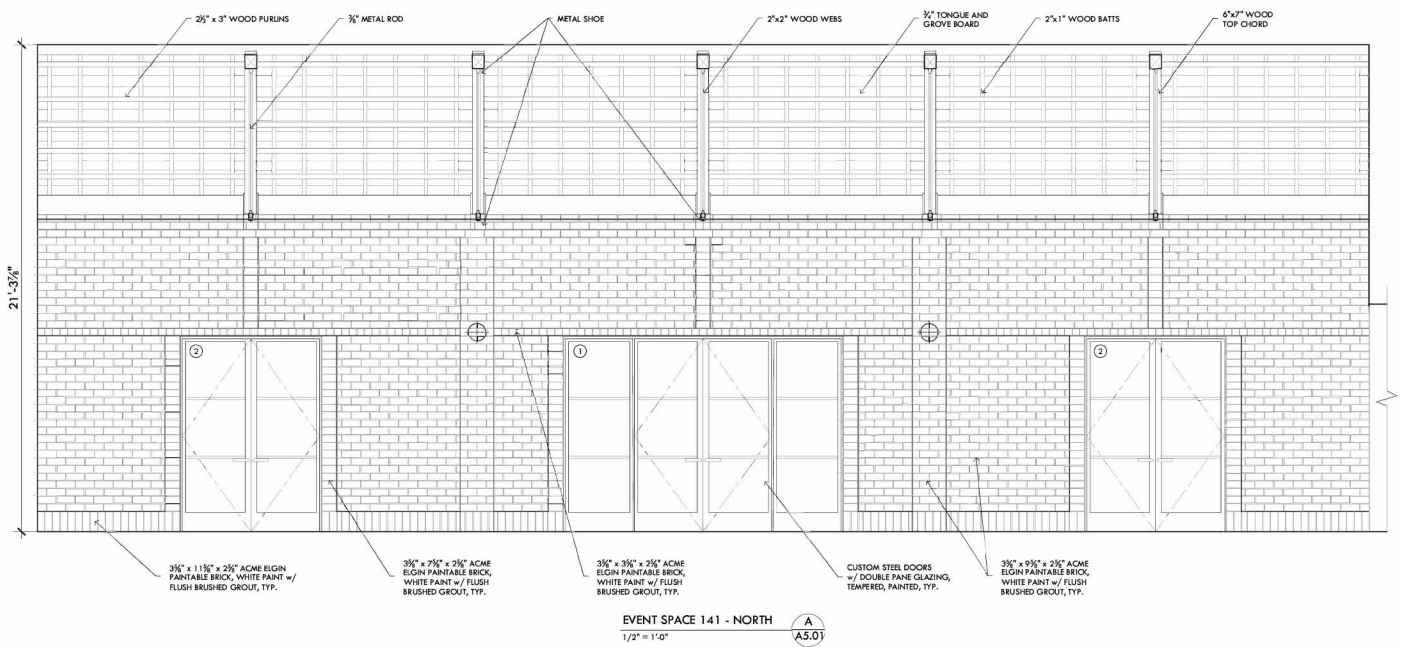
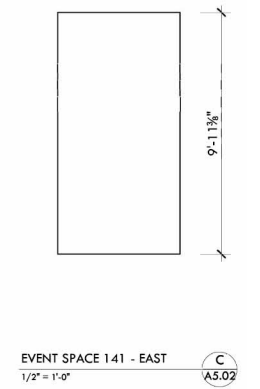
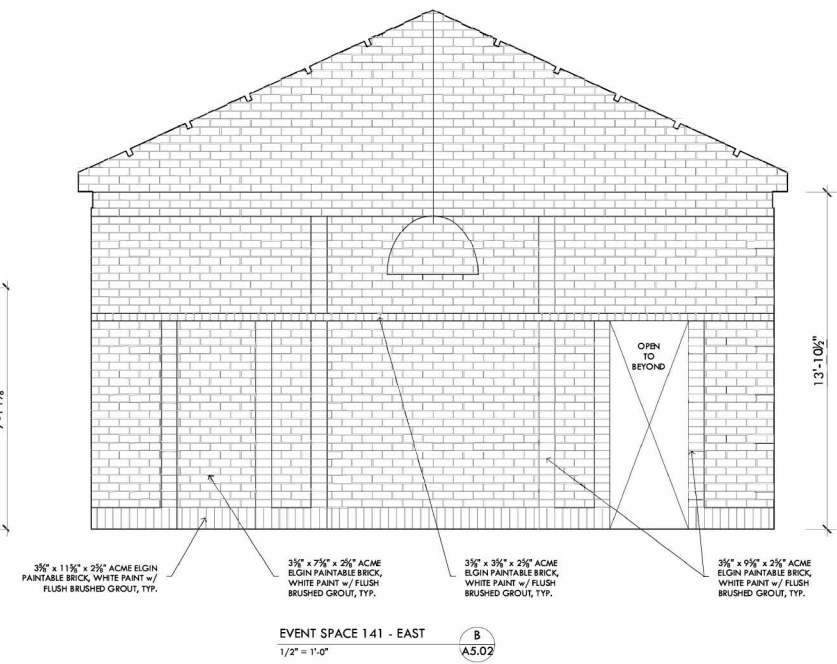
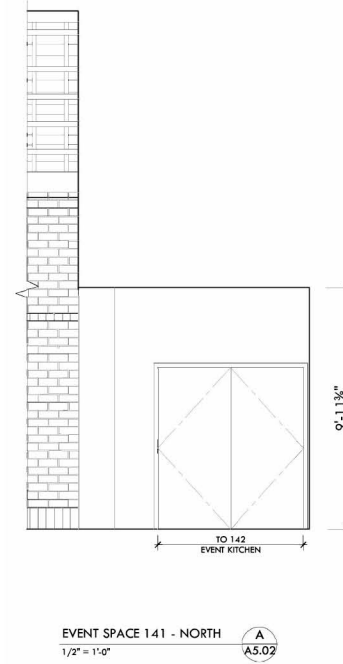
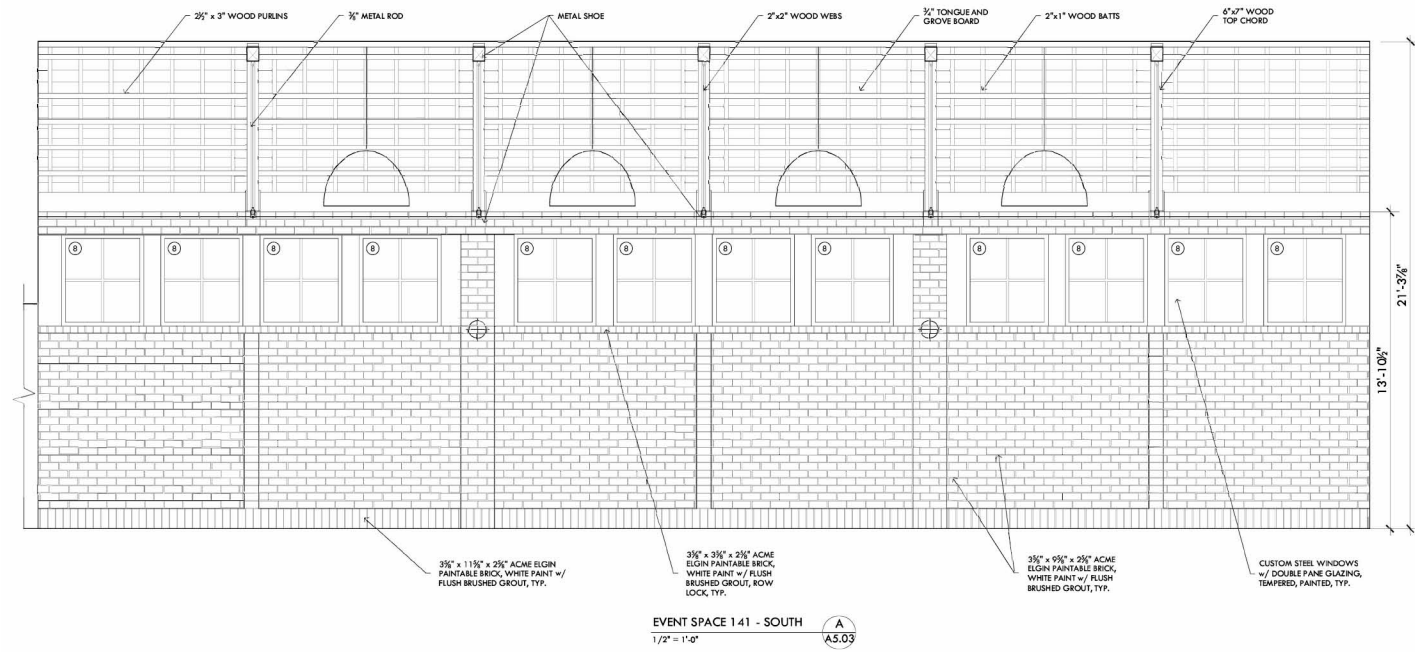
B



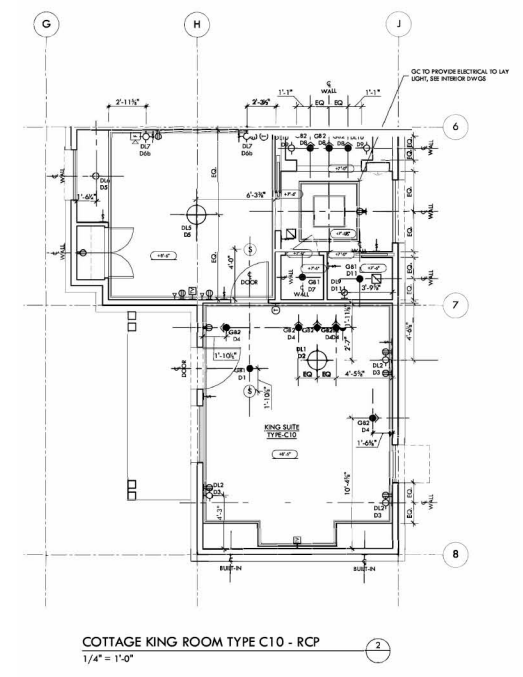
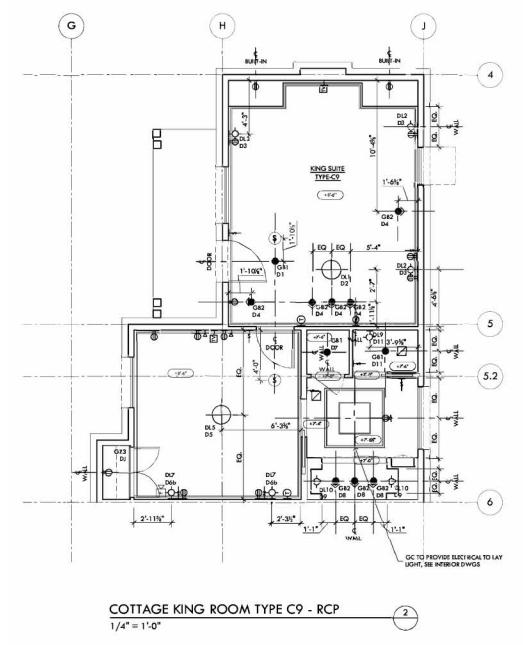
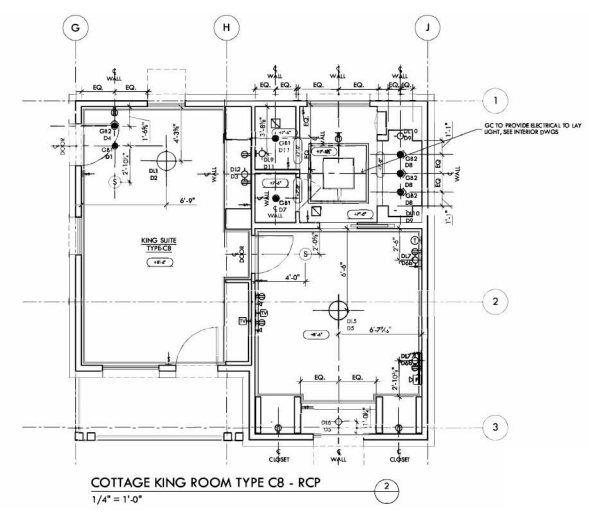
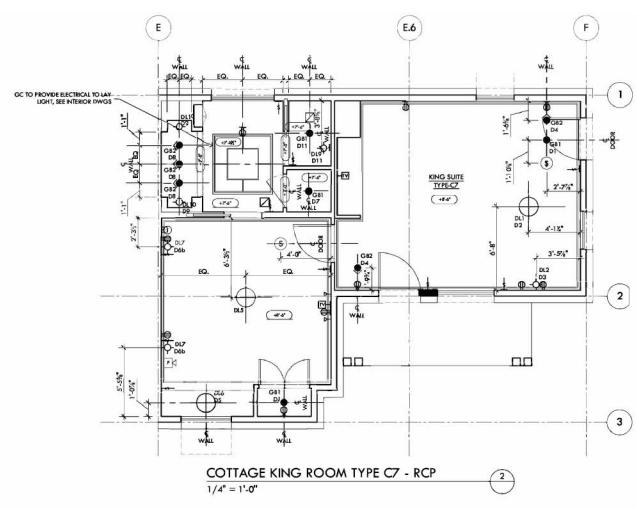
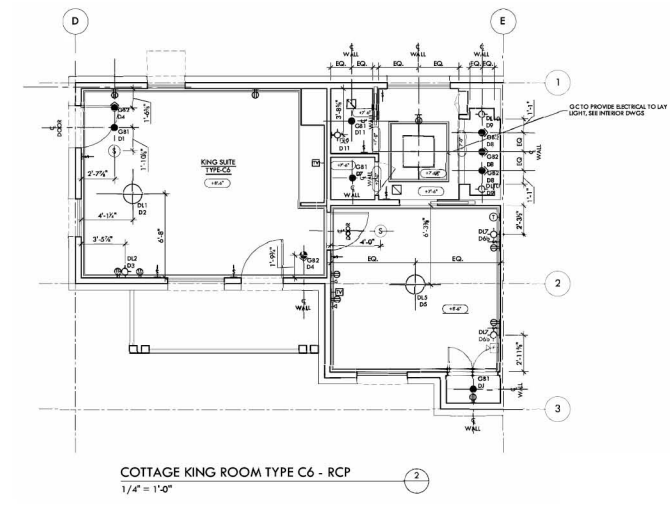
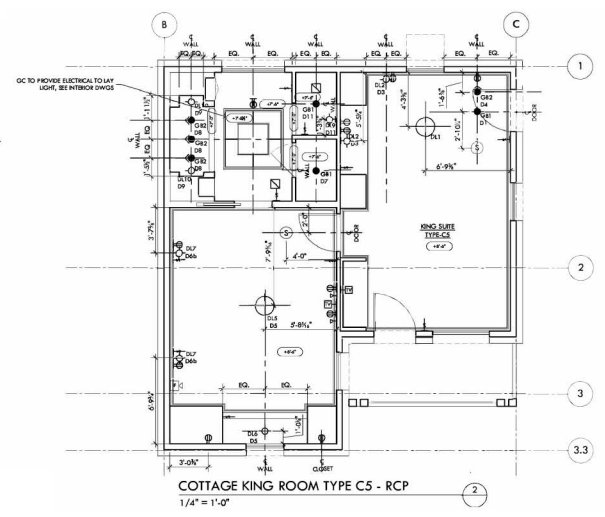
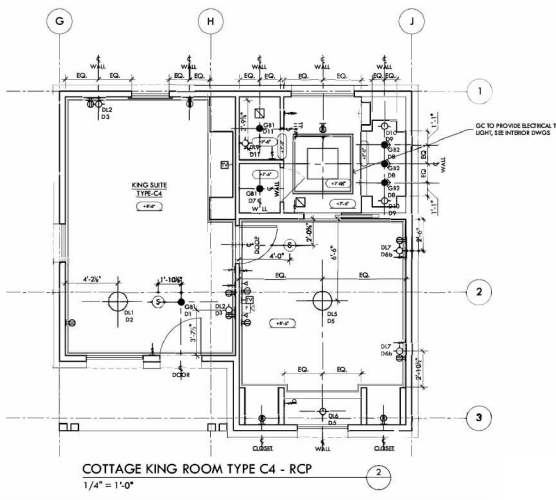
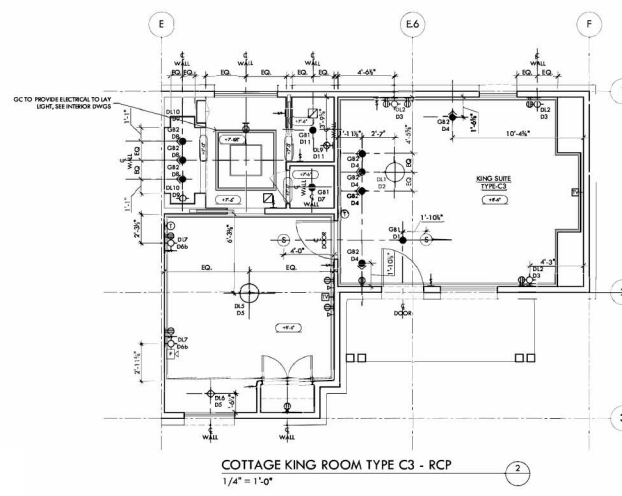
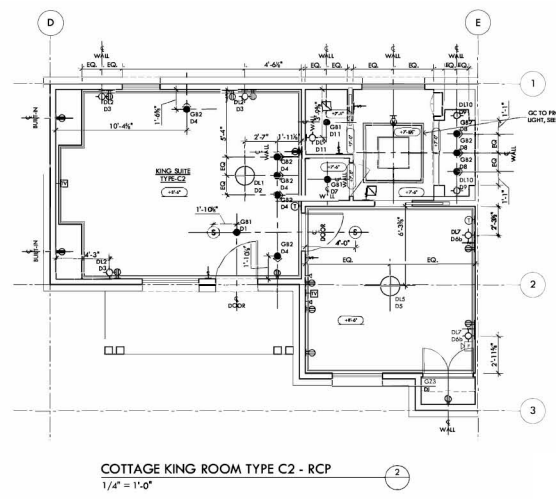
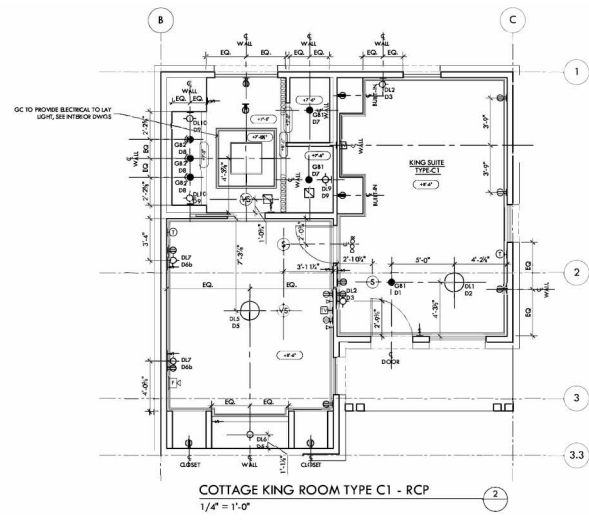
EVENT SPACE - PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

C







guestroom reflected ceiling plans



bunker hill village residence

blanchardA+D, Arlington, MA

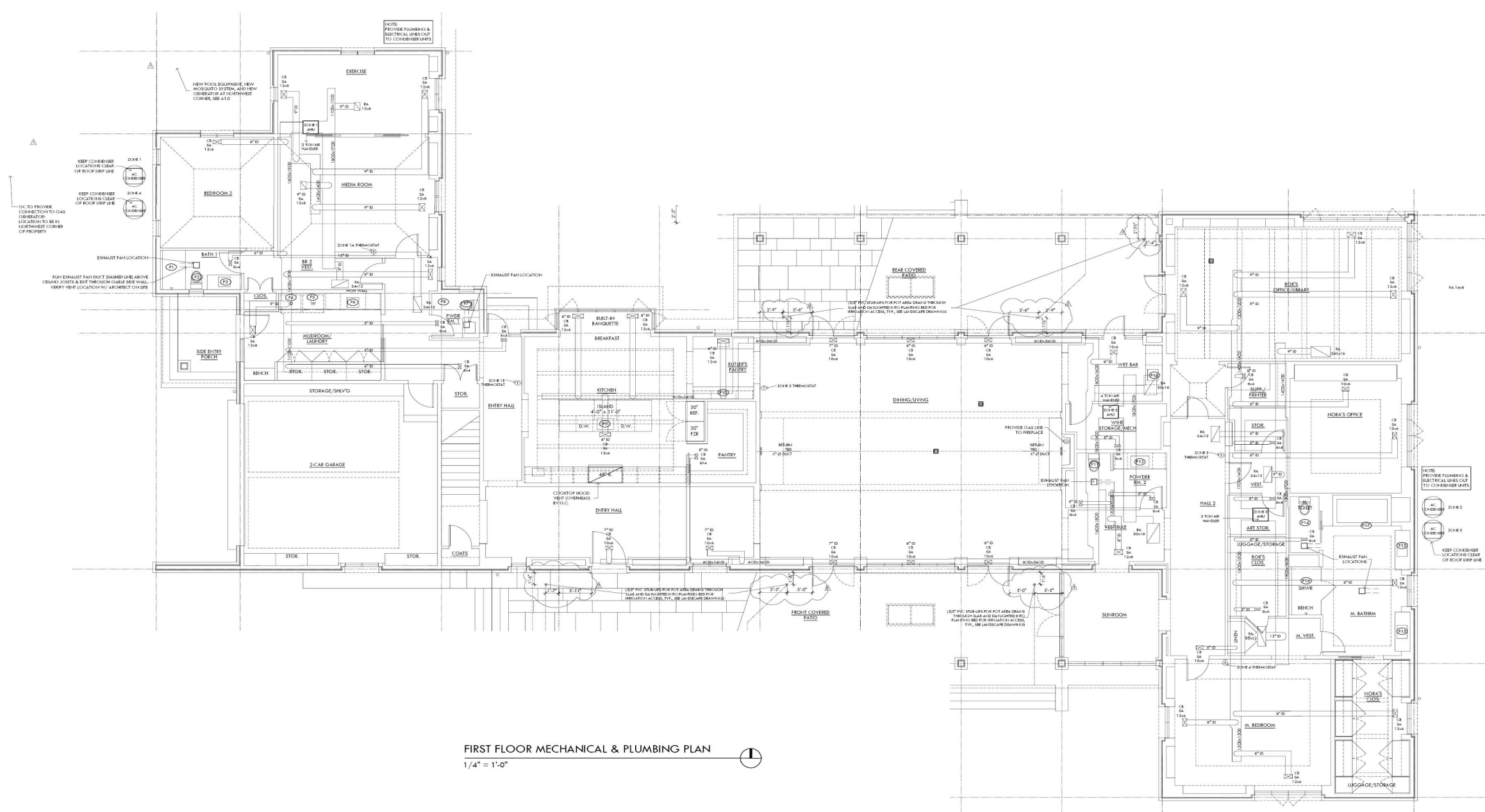
This project is a single-family residence located in Bunker Hill Village, Houston, Texas. I joined the project during its later stages and contributed to advancing the drawings toward permit submission and consultant coordination.

My primary contribution involved integrating MEP systems into the architectural drawings to resolve spatial conflicts. I assisted in updating plans, sections, and ceiling layouts to accurately reflect coordinated building systems. I also developed a detailed 3D model of the residence for client presentations and interdisciplinary coordination.

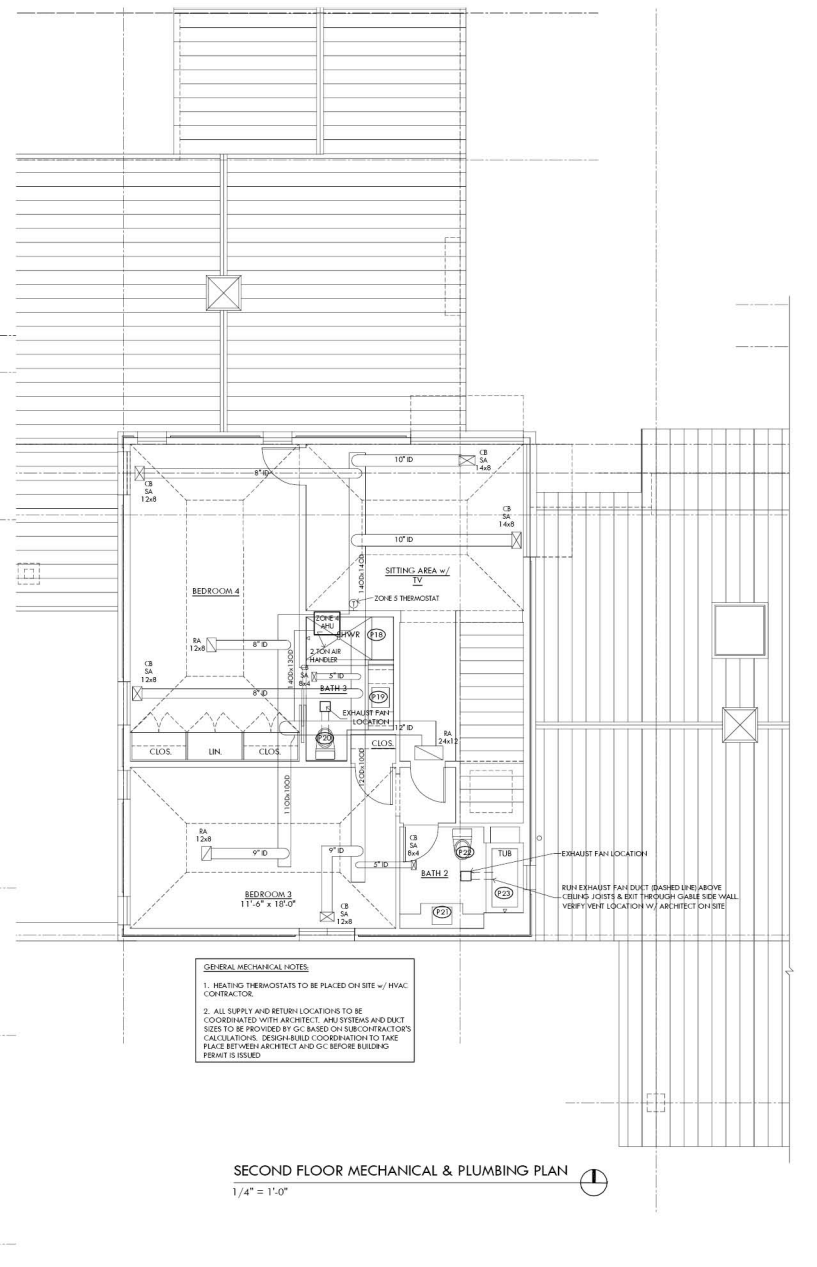
The model was used to show final designs to the client and support discussions with consultants. This work strengthened alignment between the 2D documentation and 3D representation of the project.

As the project's construction progressed, I also managed responses to city comments and contractor inquiries and aided in creating a project manual to ensure the success of the project's construction.

Contributions: CAD drawings, Rhino Model, Renders



FIRST FLOOR MECHANICAL & PLUMBING PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"



SECOND FLOOR MECHANICAL & PLUMBING PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"

GENERAL MECHANICAL NOTES

1. HEATING THERMOSTATS TO BE PLACED ON SITE w/ HVAC CONTRACTOR.
2. ALL SUPPLY AND RETURN LOCATIONS TO BE COORDINATED WITH ARCHITECT, AHU SYSTEMS AND DUCT SIZES TO BE PROVIDED BY GC BASED ON SUB-CONTRACTOR'S CALCULATIONS. DESIGN-BUILD COORDINATION TO TAKE PLACE BETWEEN ARCHITECT AND GC BEFORE BUILDING PERMIT IS ISSUED.





somerville residence

blanchardA+D, Arlington, MA

This project involved a second-floor remodel and third-floor addition to an existing single-family residence in Somerville, MA. I joined the project during advanced documentation and remained involved through the construction phase, supporting both drawing production and site visits.

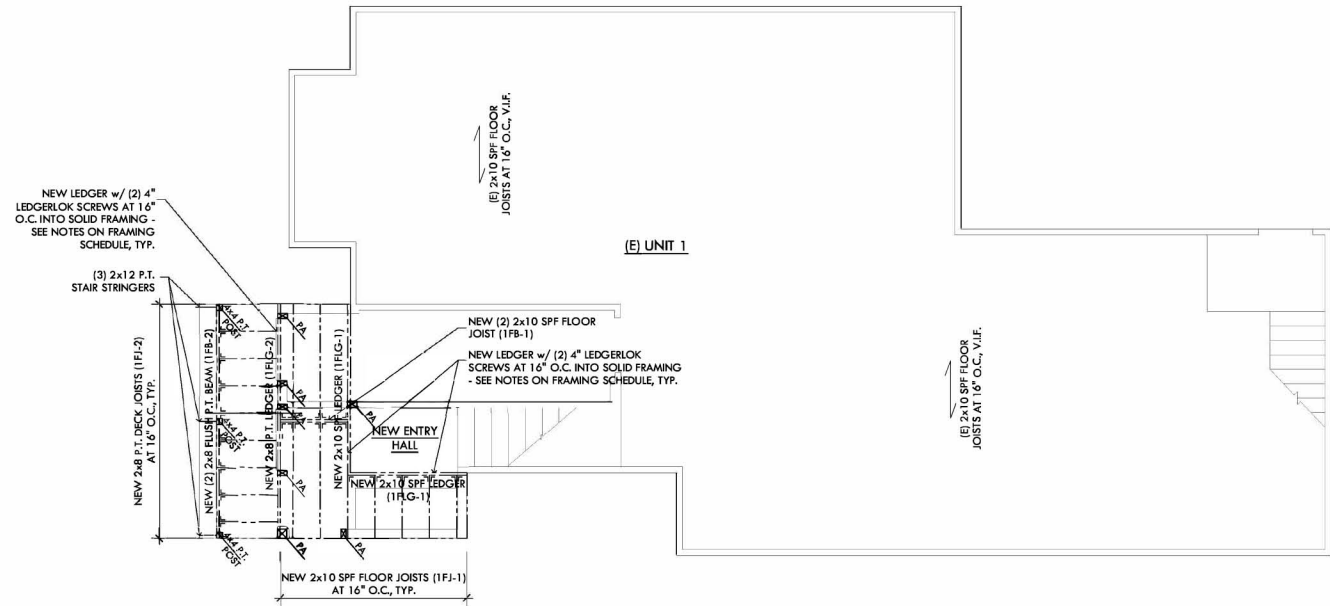
My responsibilities included assisting with framing plans for new dormers and roof modifications, developing and updating window schedules, and producing an architectural model to support design clarity for the client.

During construction, I assisted with responding to RFIs, revising drawings as needed to address field conditions and

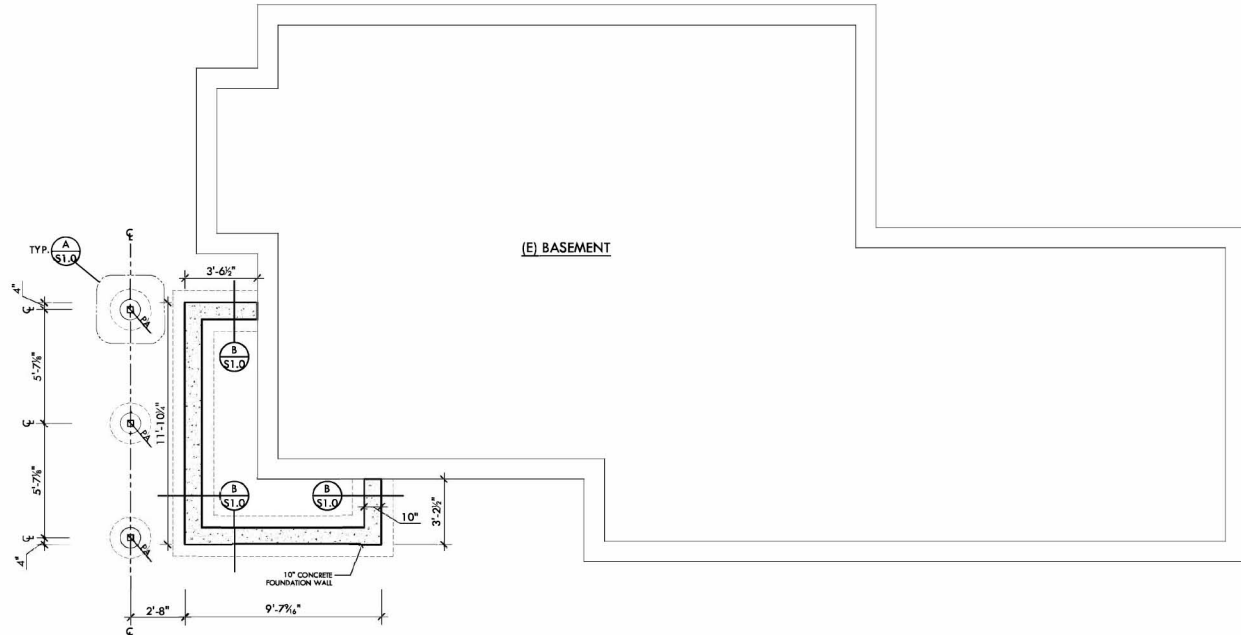
contractor questions. I also conducted site visits to observe the construction process firsthand, gaining direct exposure to how design decisions translated into built work and how framing, envelope, and detailing were executed in the field.

This project strengthened my technical skills in AutoCAD for residential documentation, 3D modeling for client visualization, and reinforced my understanding of residential framing systems, renovation workflows, and construction-phase architectural support.

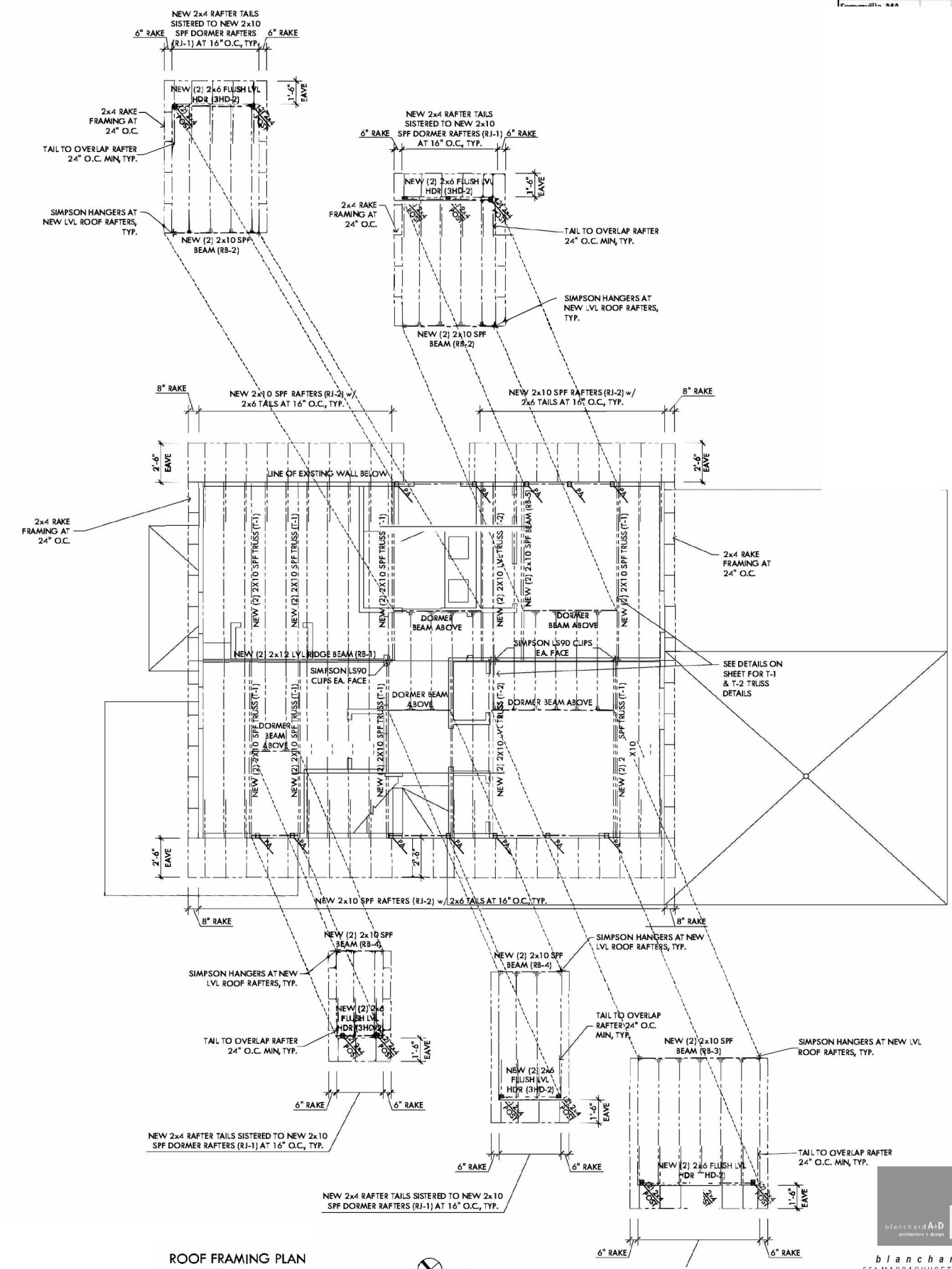
Contributions: CAD drawings, Rhino Model



FIRST FLOOR FRAMING PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"



BASEMENT FRAMING PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"



ROOF FRAMING PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"

framing plan

blanchardA+D
architecture + design

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chatham residence

blanchardA+D, Arlington, MA

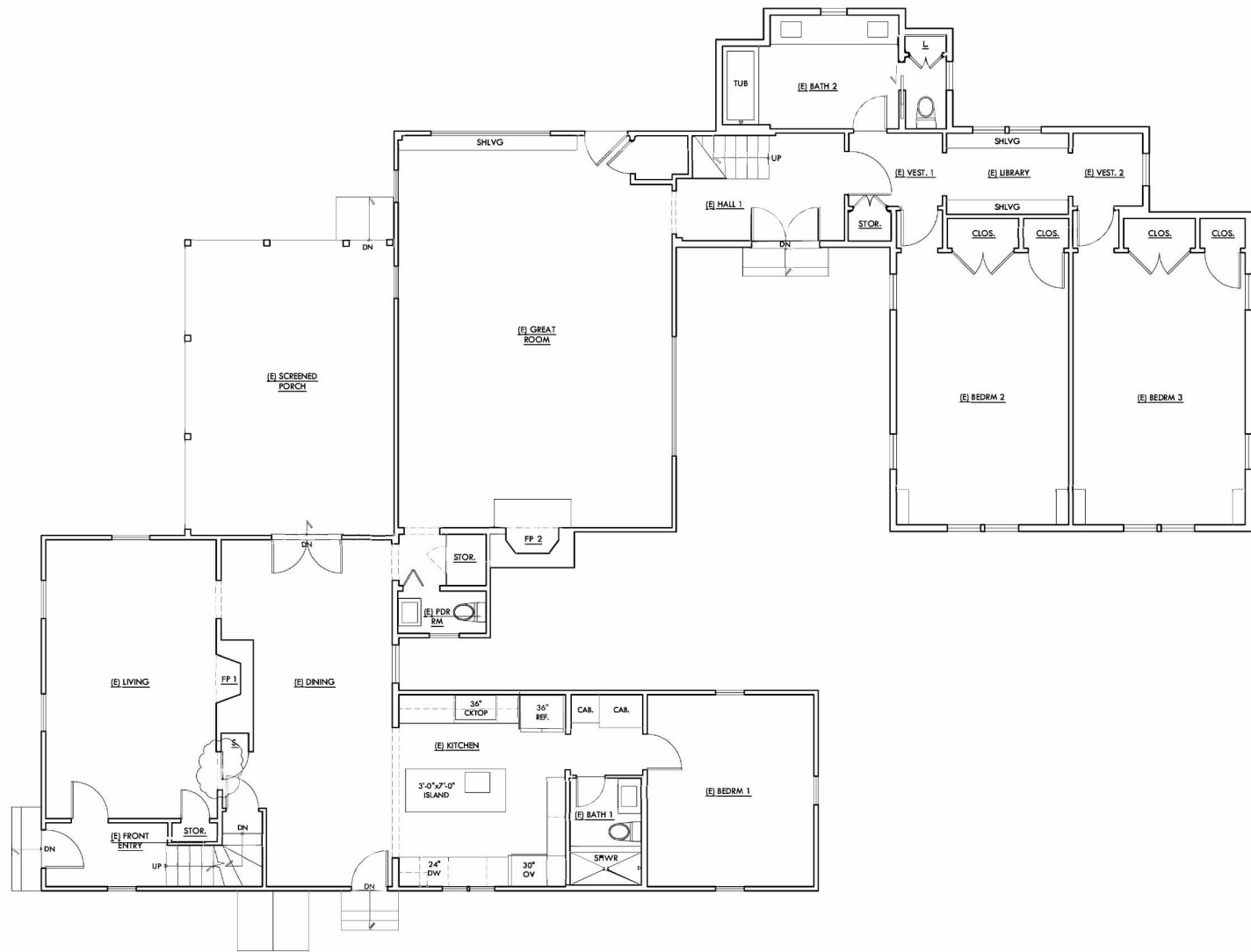
This ongoing project involves the renovation of a single-family residence in Chatham, MA, including a kitchen and living area remodel and a new extension to the existing house. I am currently involved in the early project phase, supporting the foundation for future design development.

To date, my work has focused on producing accurate existing conditions drawings, including plans and elevations, to document the current building layout and inform upcoming design decisions. This process required careful interpretation of site information, field measurements, and reference materials to ensure the drawings accurately reflect existing conditions.

These documents will serve as the technical base for schematic design and design development, enabling efficient coordination and informed decision-making as the project progresses.

Through this phase, I strengthened my on-site technical skills for documenting existing conditions and gained experience in early-phase residential project workflows and renovation planning.

Contributions: CAD drawings



EXISTING/DEMOLITION FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"



EXISTING/DEMOLITION SECOND FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"

EXISTING PLAN NOTE:
ALL SHADED WALL ON EXISTING PLANS INDICATE WALLS TO BE DEMOLISHED - REFER TO PROPOSED PLANS TO GAUGE DEMOLITION SCOPE.
"STRIP" MEANS TO REMOVE PLASTER.



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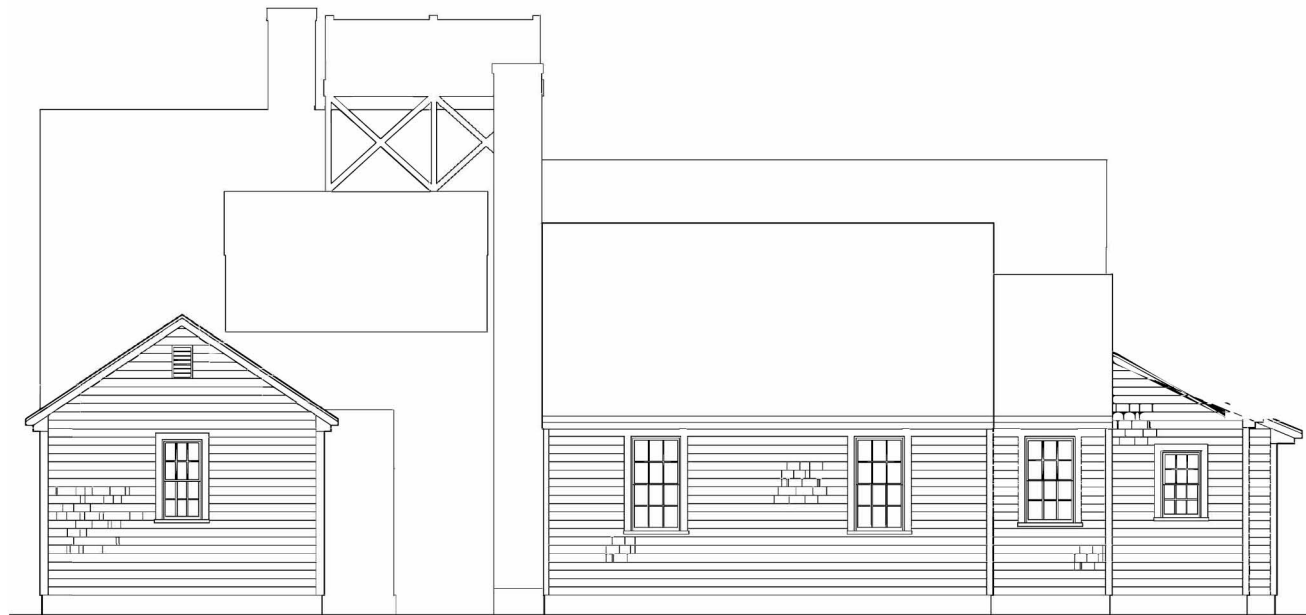
NORTH ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

B



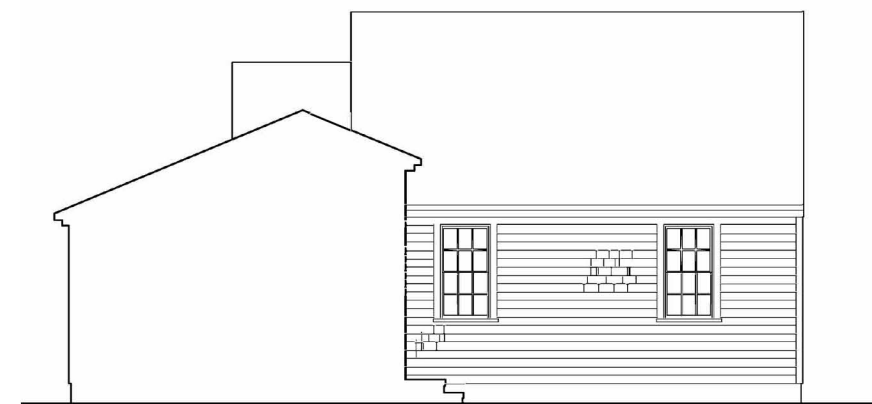
SOUTH ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

A



NORTH ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

A



SOUTH ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

B

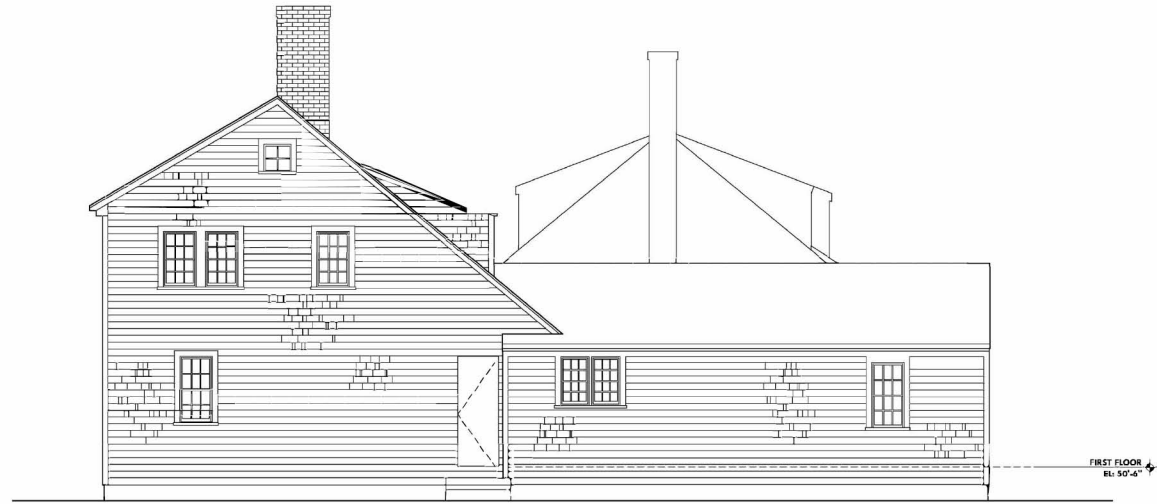
existing elevation conditions



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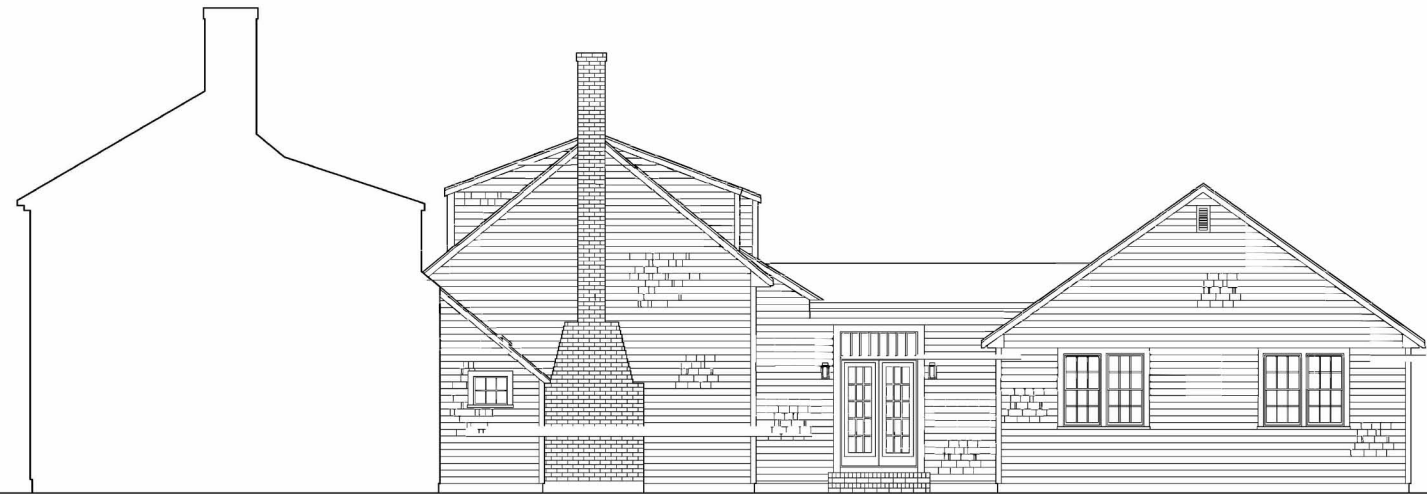
EAST ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

B



WEST ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

B



EAST ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

A



WEST ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

A

existing elevation conditions



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