

This is a portfolio of work provided by Brian Baksa. The works included range from material reasearch, built projects and projects currently under construction.



Brian Baksa

baksabrian@gmail.com

717 799 8281

Design Portfolio



Project Manager + Design Lead
Completed 2019 / Commercial / 1,300 sf
AIA Baltimore Excellence in Design Award
PI.KL Studio

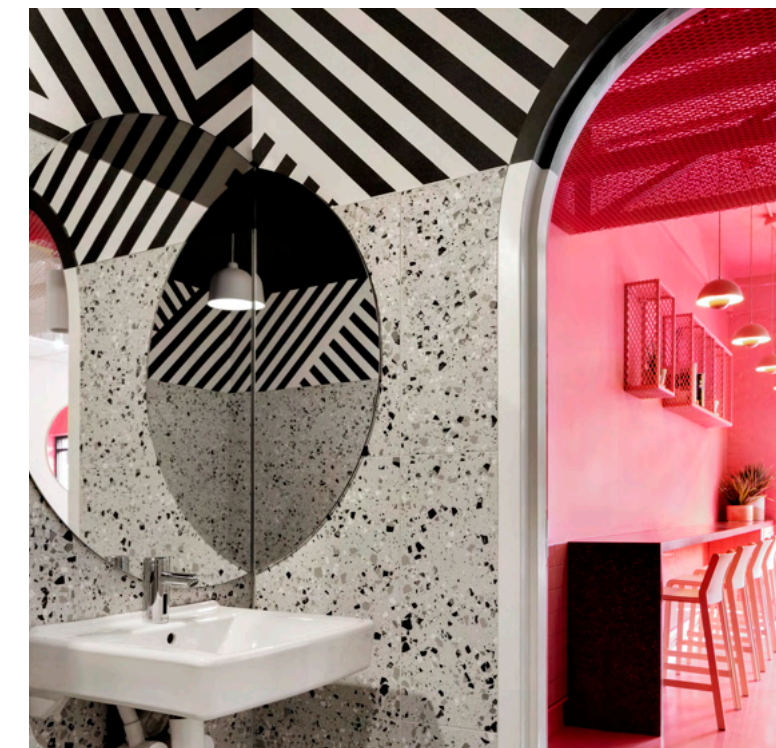
Toki Tako

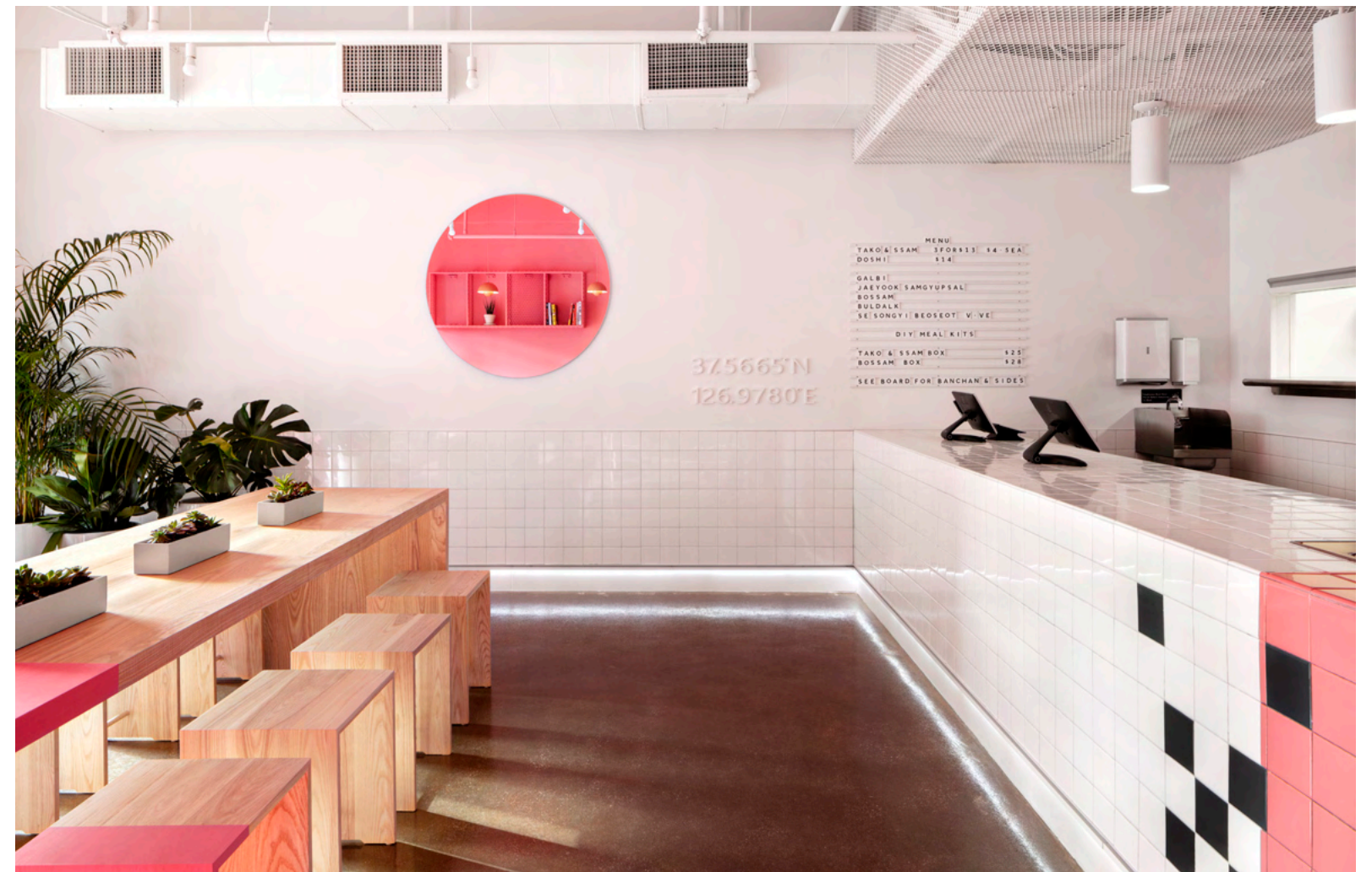
Situated in The Rotunda, a newly revived, mixed-use complex located in the Hampden neighborhood of Baltimore, Toki Tako is a 1,300 sf restaurant fit-out that seeks to bring a contemporary mix to an existing historic landmark.

Inspired by Korean street wear culture, this project aims to provide an urban, contemporary space that matches the remix nature of the food being served; a mash-up of authentic Korean meals served in a street food fashion with tacos and ssam.

Though tightly knit, the project utilizes a 'graphic override' that visually splits the restaurant with a burst of pink overtones and varying material undertones. From custom wood and concrete furniture to light fixtures to dyed concrete, the project takes advantage of turning small ingredients into big impacts; similar to the flavor profiles offered by the food. Sticking with a simple subdued palette along one side of the restaurant allows for an exciting pop of color and textures on the other; creating an unexpected surprise at the small eatery.

Upon completion, Toki Tako was recognized with an AIA Baltimore Excellence in Design Award and continues to be a Baltimore staple for the city's foodies and locals.





photography courtesy of jennifer hughes

www.jenniferhughes.com

Project Manager + Design Lead
Completed 2023 / 149 Units / 60,000 sf
Multi-family Residential
PI.KL Studio

Hohm

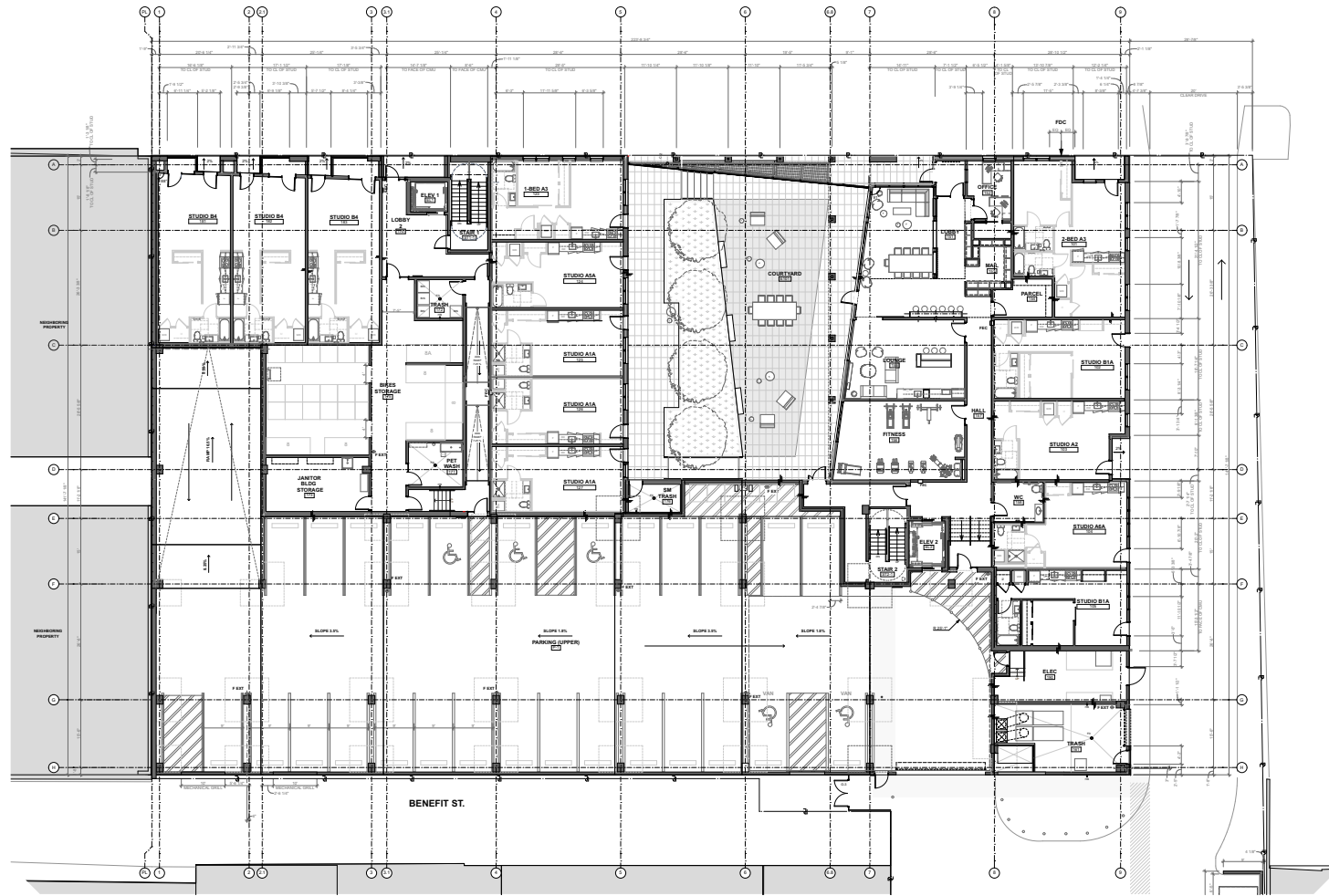
Located in the Highlandtown neighborhood of Baltimore and directly connected to some of the best Latin food, art galleries, and event spaces the city has to offer, Hohm is the first-of-its-kind in this culturally rich neighborhood. Designed for the new generation of living with pragmatic living units and shared amenity spaces, the building hosts 149 units consisting of walk-up, work/live units, studios and 1-bedroom units as well as co-living apartments with 3- and 4-bedroom layouts.

Pulling from the local vernacular, the building takes advantage of brick, warm woods, and urban landscapes to create a timeless structure with contemporary compositions. In an effort to reduce scale and create a sense of place, the main courtyard is located at ground level and opens up to the street edge. Where most apartment buildings would internally place courtyards and resident amenities, this shift in direction allowed for events and activities to flow seamlessly between the residents and the local community — an outward expression that was critical in its relationship to the surrounding context.

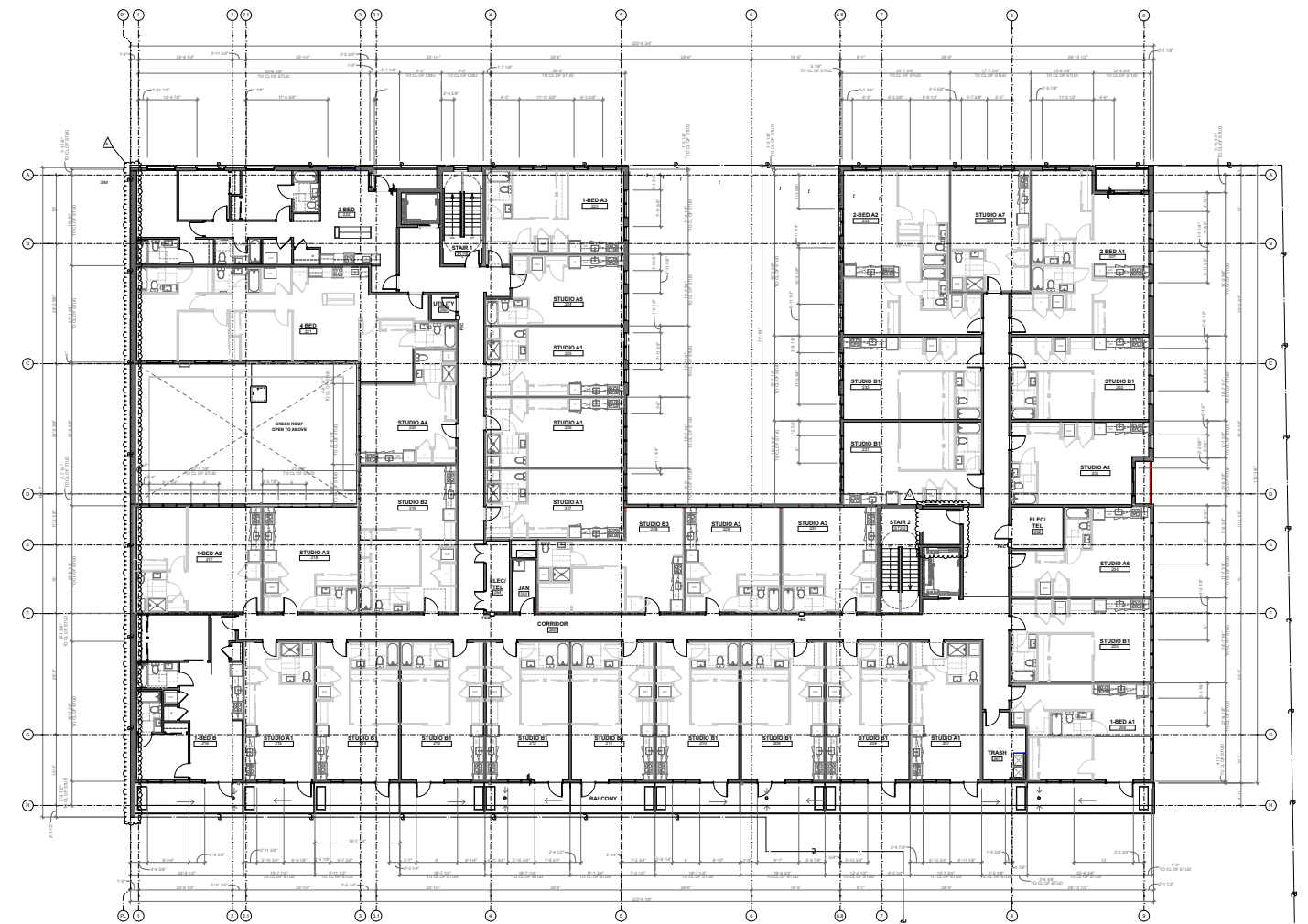
Hohm was designed and constructed during the pandemic, but despite the challenges, we worked closely with the Developer and Contractor teams

to deliver a project that met the parameters of the budget while maintaining the design ethos and intent. Completed in 2023, Hohm provides apartments for the new generation of renters while contributing to the walkability and connectivity of the Highlandtown neighborhood and arts district.

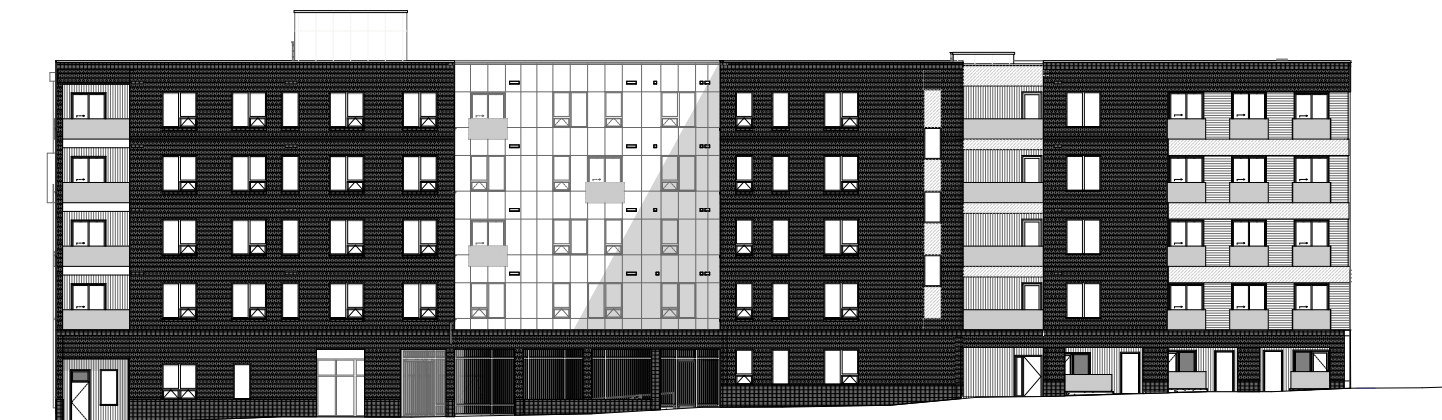




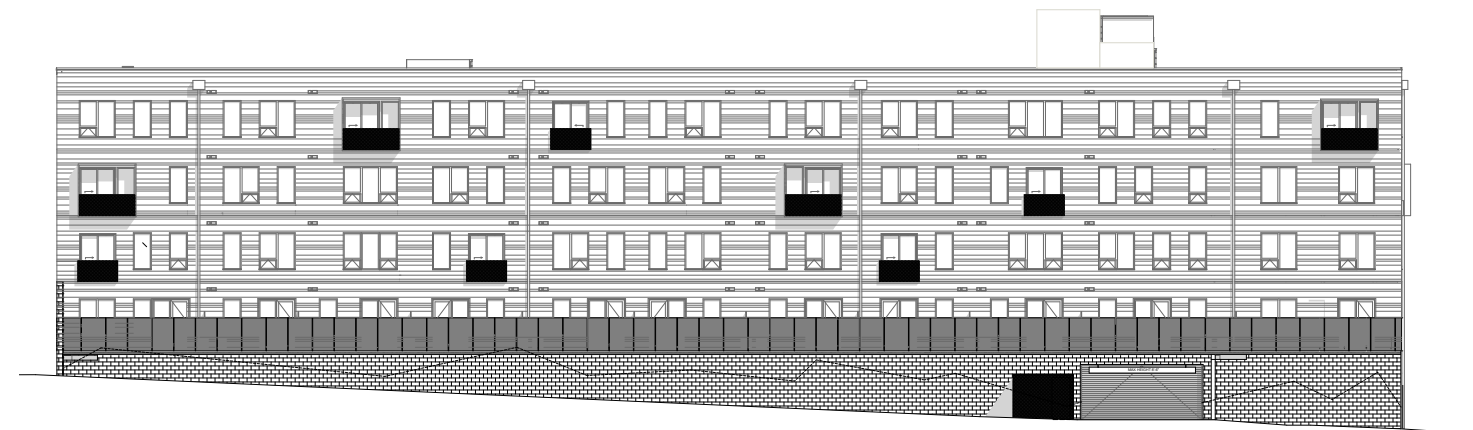
ground floor plan - not to scale



typical floor plan (2nd-5th) - not to scale



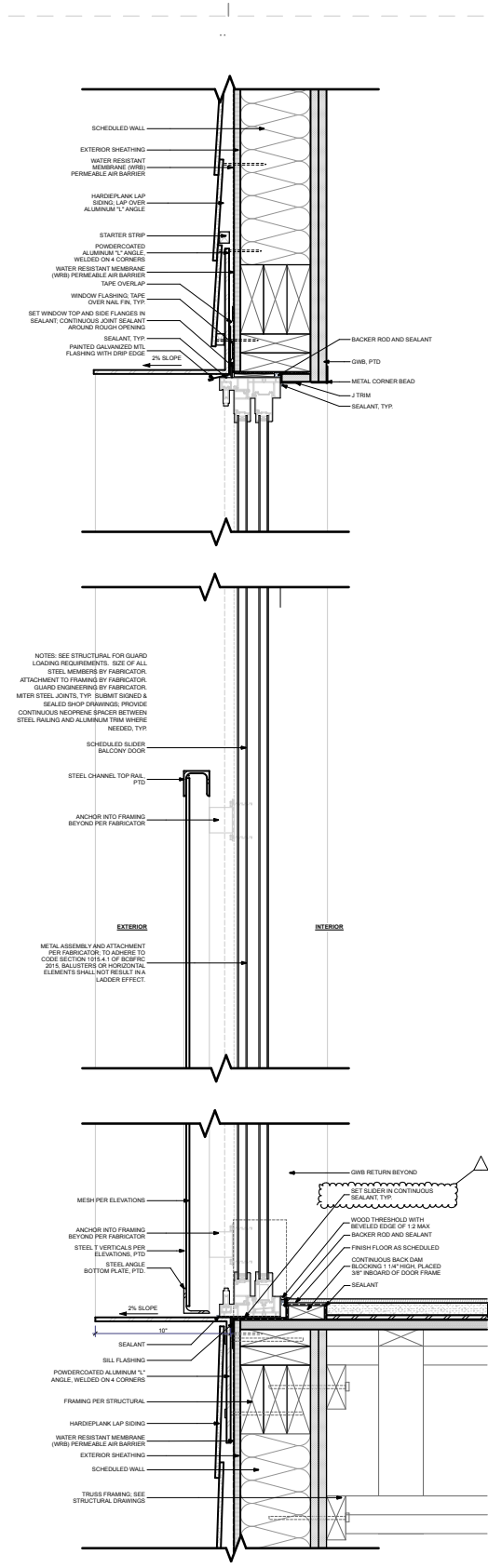
north elevation



south elevation

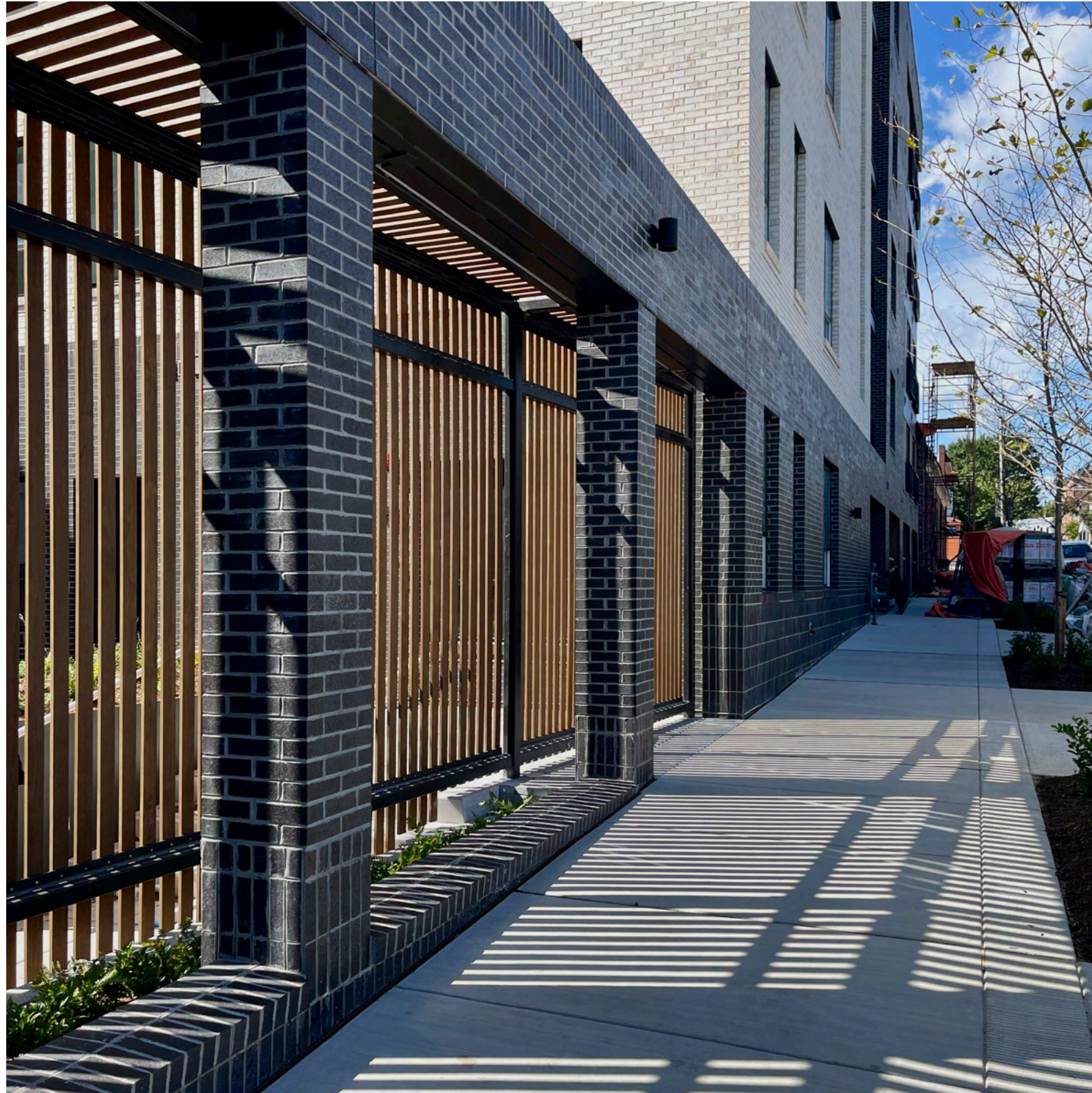
Small design interventions were implemented to create big impacts. We designed projection frames along the south facade, and with over two-hundred linear feet of fenestration, it was important to compose dynamic moments that helped to scale and humanize the facade.

The steel projection frames were designed and constructed in coordination with matching, mesh juliet balconies. To further characterize the south facing wall, while keeping budgets in mind, standard HardiePlank lap siding was randomized during installation for a textural language throughout.



left: steel shadow box section detail

right: south facade along alley



left: street side courtyard entrance



right: photographs courtesy of wpm management



03

Designer
Completed 2019 / Independent Research
Product Design + Material Studies

An End Table For Plants

Through an independent research course at the Taubman College of Architecture and Planning, An End Table For Plants is an exploration in household furniture and up-cycled materials. Utilizing the waste from CNC machinery the end table material is a combination of Polyurethane foam dust, MDF sawdust, and two part resin cast into a cruciform mold.

The CNC waste was collected (mainly polyurethane foam) and mixed with a two part resin to create the wet material. A cruciform mold was created using poly foamboard and routed via the CNC. With the mold ready, the legs were cast first and once cured, removed and assembled into their respective cruciform slots. Once assembled, they were then placed into the end table top mold and cast into place.

An End Table For Plants is as much of a product of its environment as it is a fun, contemporary piece of furniture perfect for holding plants, books, and small decorations. Its materiality is expressed and celebrated in its final form; an ever-changing system of fabricating furniture that will yield aesthetic variants depending on the recycled foam used. Whether one piece may display more of a toned down palette,

others may be mint green in nature, the results are a lightweight, textured piece perfect for any living room.





above:cnc poly waste, mold construction and mockup

Project Manager + Design Lead
In Design / Commercial / 23,000 sf
Non-Profit Organization
PI.KL Studio

SquashWise

SquashWise is a non-profit organization located in Baltimore with a mission to provide academics, athletics, and opportunities for Baltimore's youth. The organization is dedicated to empowering young generations through their squash program (a sport that is historically catered to the white and wealthy) and use their current facilities for after school education programming, post-secondary and career placement, and tutoring. SquashWise creates a second home and second family for minority students and prepares them for successful futures.

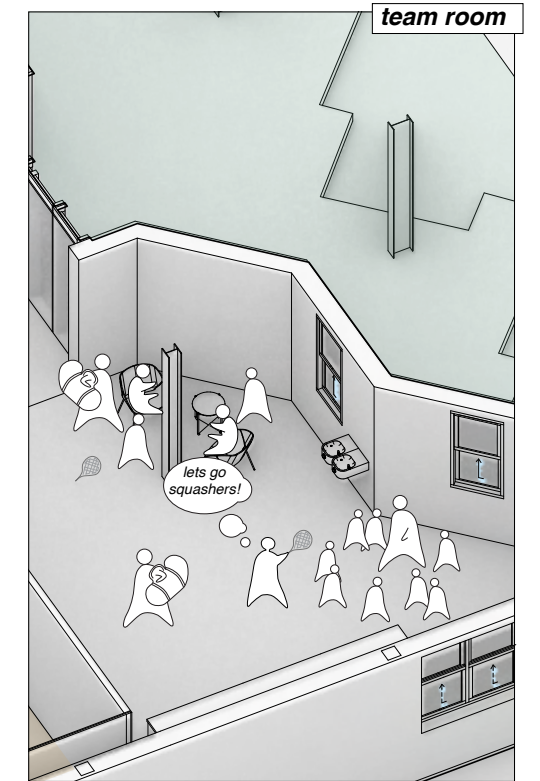
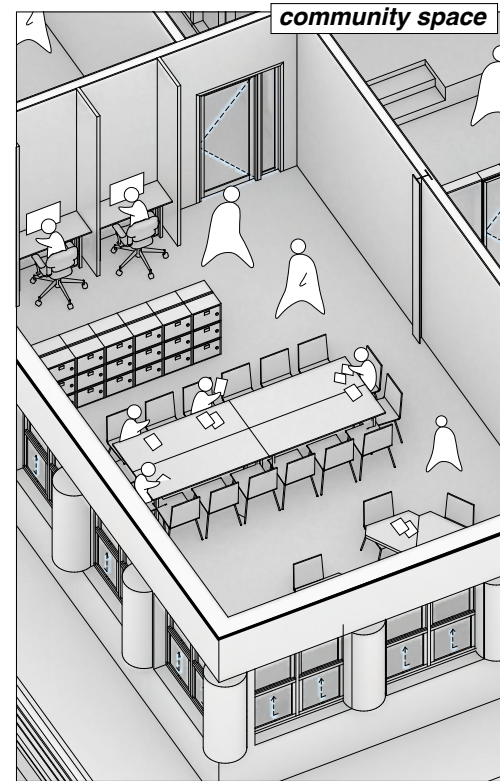
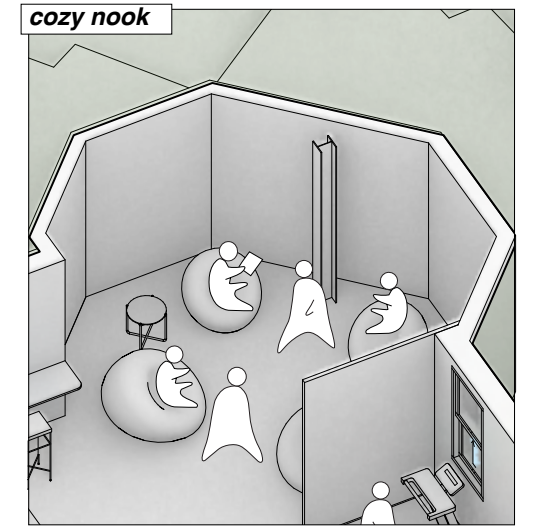
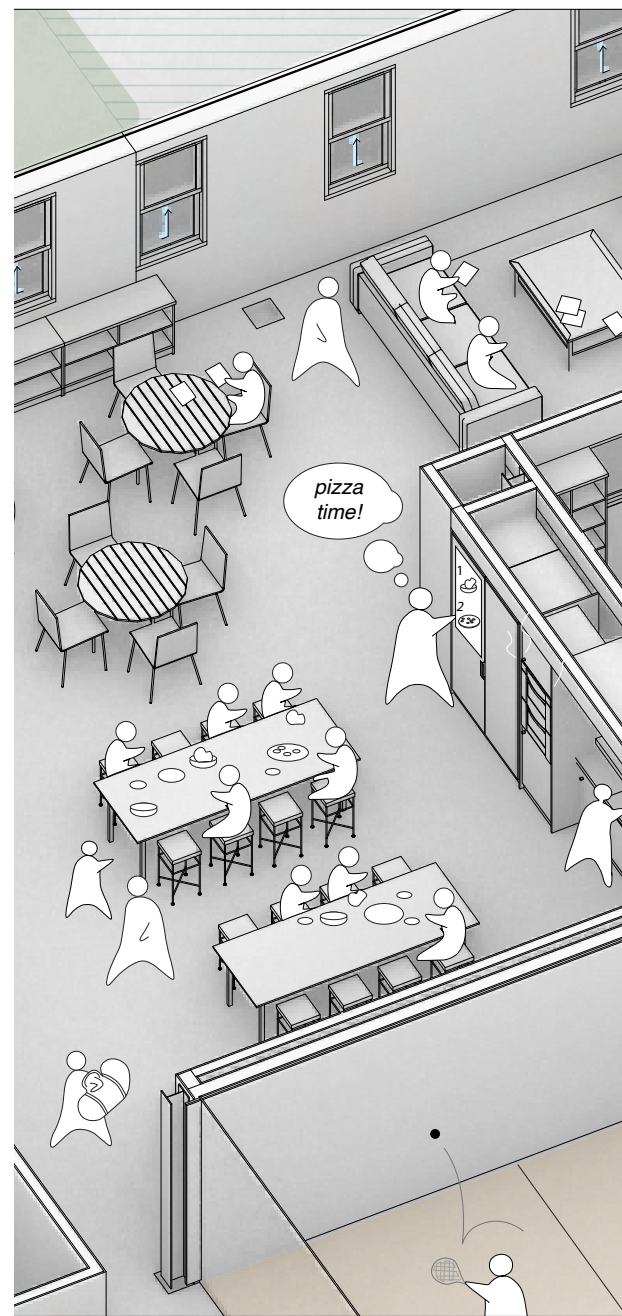
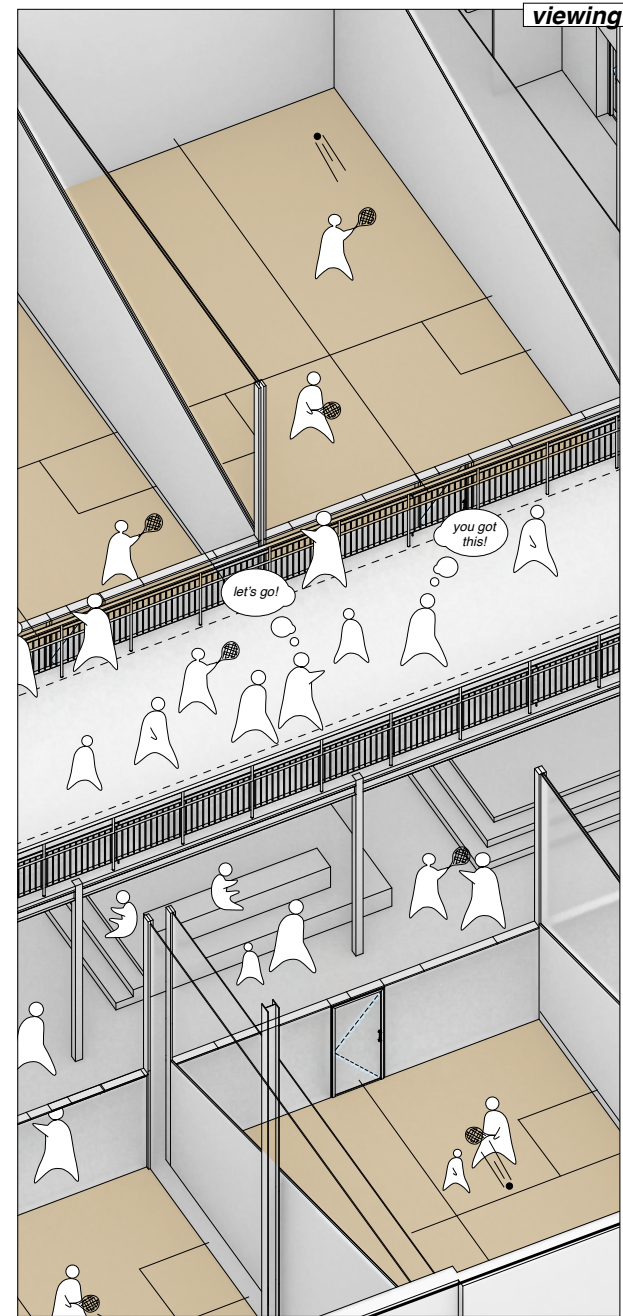
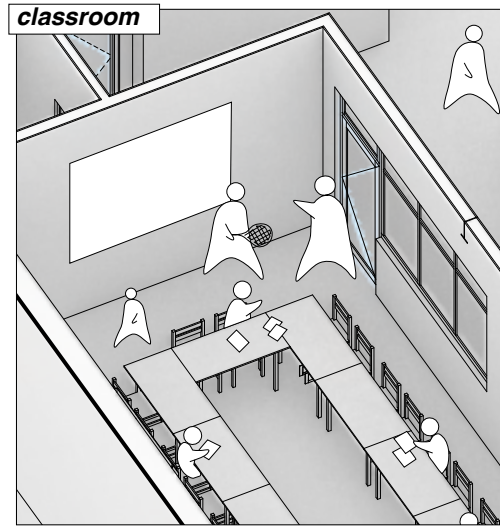
The project is located at 601 N. Howard St, which is the site of a former Greyhound bus station built in 1942 by William Strudwick Arrasmith and is one of few historic examples of Streamline Moderne design from that period in Baltimore. SquashWise plans to transform the historic structure into their headquarters as a youth and community squash center. The 6-court, 3-classroom facility will allow SquashWise to nearly double the size of it's core youth development program, and will provide meaningful opportunities for community-building through squash memberships, youth programs, tournaments, and events.

On the ground floor, the program includes 6 new squash courts, lobby and reception, 6,000 sf of administrative space including private offices, open work space, and conference rooms, and locker rooms. The 2nd level is allocated to the education program and hosts over 1,500 sf of classrooms, breakout learning spaces, and private tutoring rooms. Connectivity was key in the relationship between the two programmatic wings. A mezzanine extends off of the 2nd level, overseeing the action of the squash courts below while maintaining a 'home' for the students and their education space.

Blending historic features with contemporary interventions was key in preserving the stories of the existing structure.

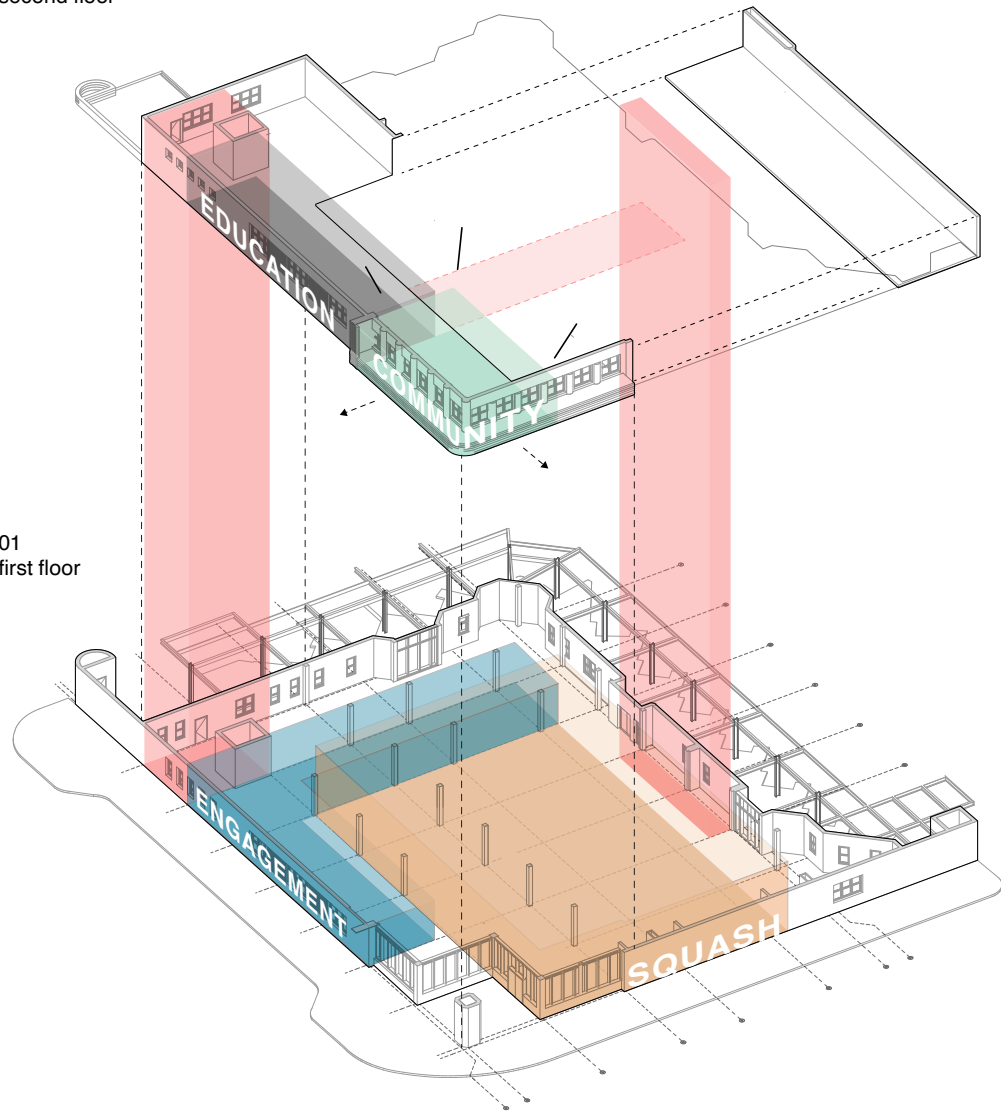
SquashWise is currently in design and has recently been awarded over \$2,000,000 million in tax credits from the Maryland Historical Trust for restoration and preservation of historic properties in the state.



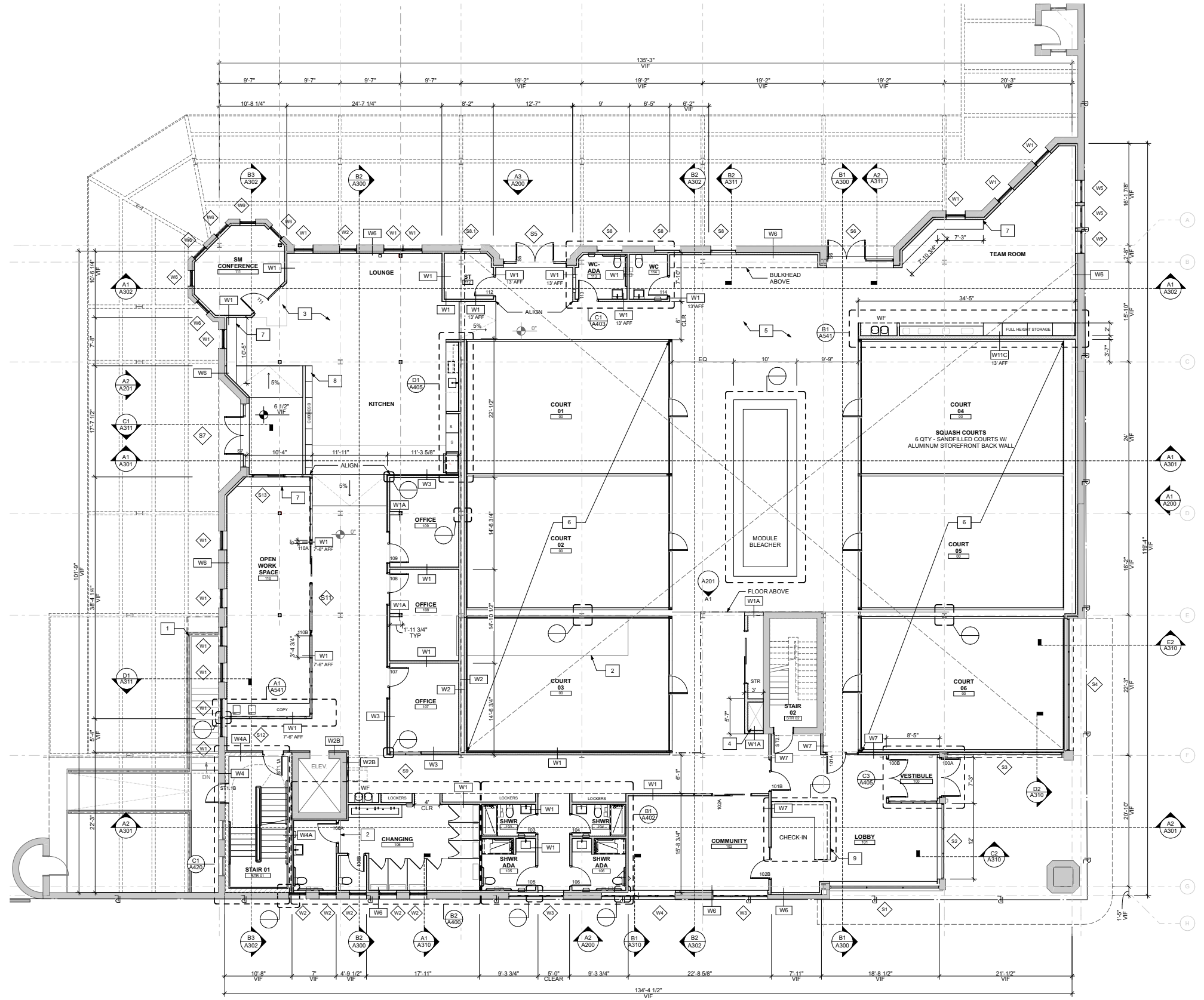


above: programmatic vignettes w/ student input and collaboration

02
second floor

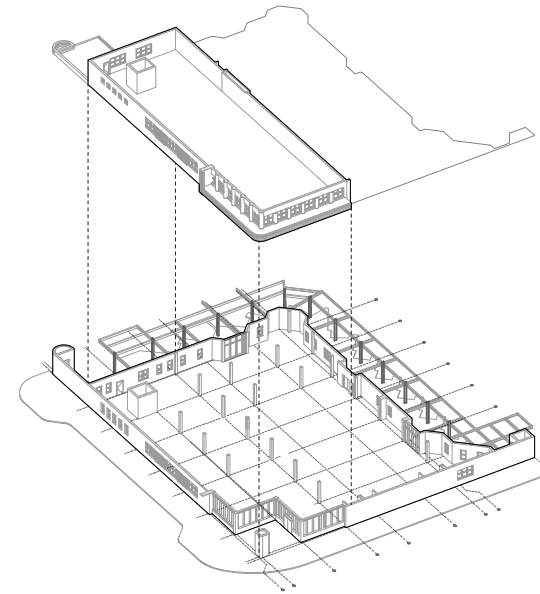


01
first floor



left: program diagrams

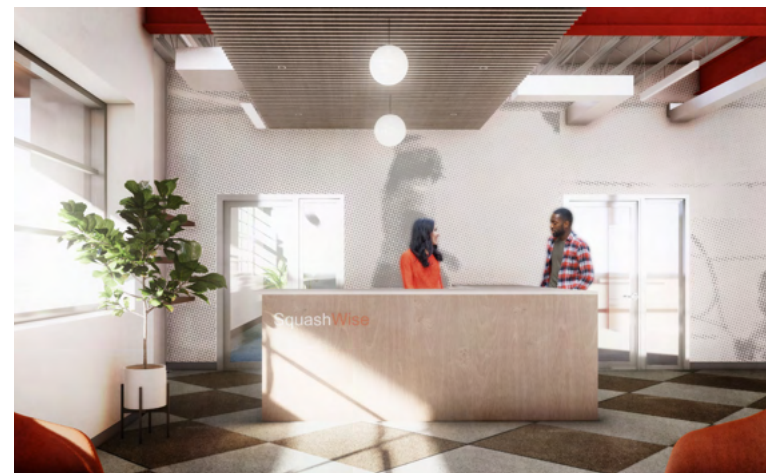
right: proposed first floor plan - not to scale



SquashWise wanted to approach the design with a reverence for the existing structure while creating a space that provided ownership for the students of the program.

Branded colors are utilized as wayfinding tools throughout; applied to highlight the new design interventions while celebrating existing components of the historic building such as the existing bus terminal canopy structure at the rear. It was important for the SquashWise program to be both clearly defined and zoned but to also allow for students to meander through their new 'headquarters' freely. Open admin spaces, breakout zones, and free circulation allow for social

interaction and a consistent feeling of a community within a building. While the first floor contains much of the administrative programming and 'public' sport courts, the second floor is completely dedicated to student use and occupancy. A variety of education spaces from large classrooms to individual learning nooks were designed to help compliment myriad of learning and teaching styles.



above: existing shell diagram & material palette

below: concept visualization



above: concept visualization & material palette

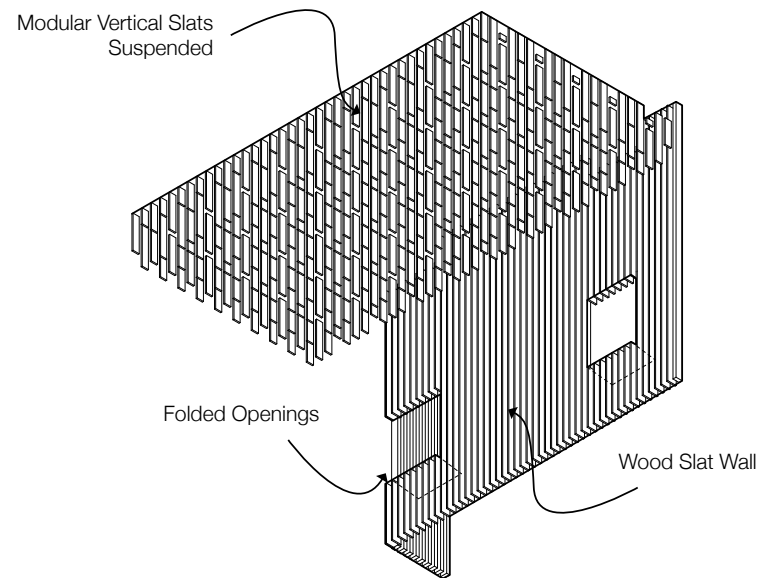
Project Manager + Design Lead
Completed 2021 / Commercial / 300 sf
Interior Renovation
PI.KL Studio

The Local Fry

After completion of their new Korean street food concept Toki Tako, Kevin and Liz Irish contracted PI.KL to renovate the front-of-house for their potato inspired take away restaurant, The Local Fry. With an uptick in their take-out services, the project goals were to turn the seating area into a quick, pick-up hub while providing a unique experience for their patrons.

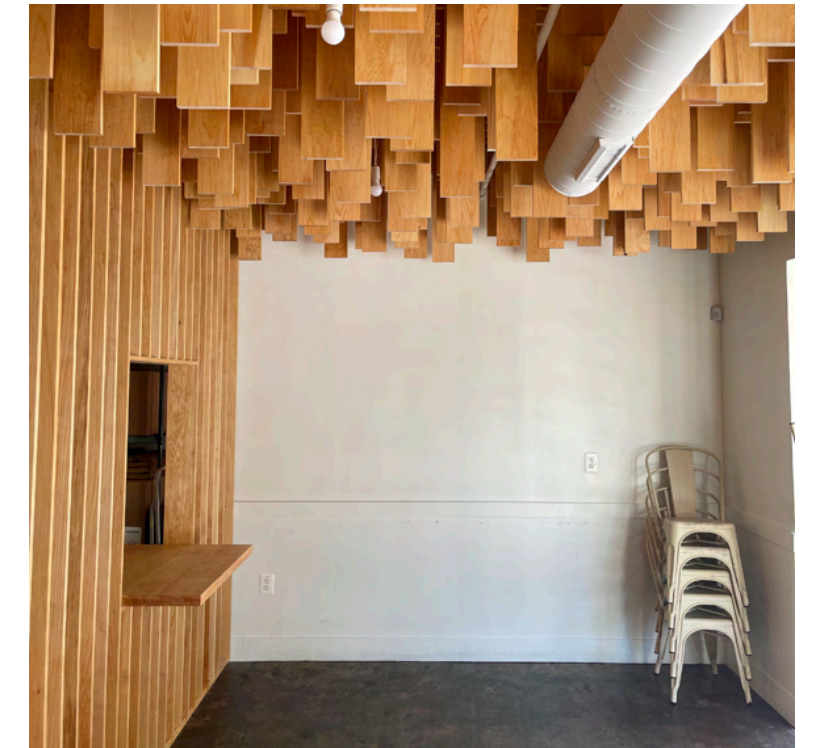
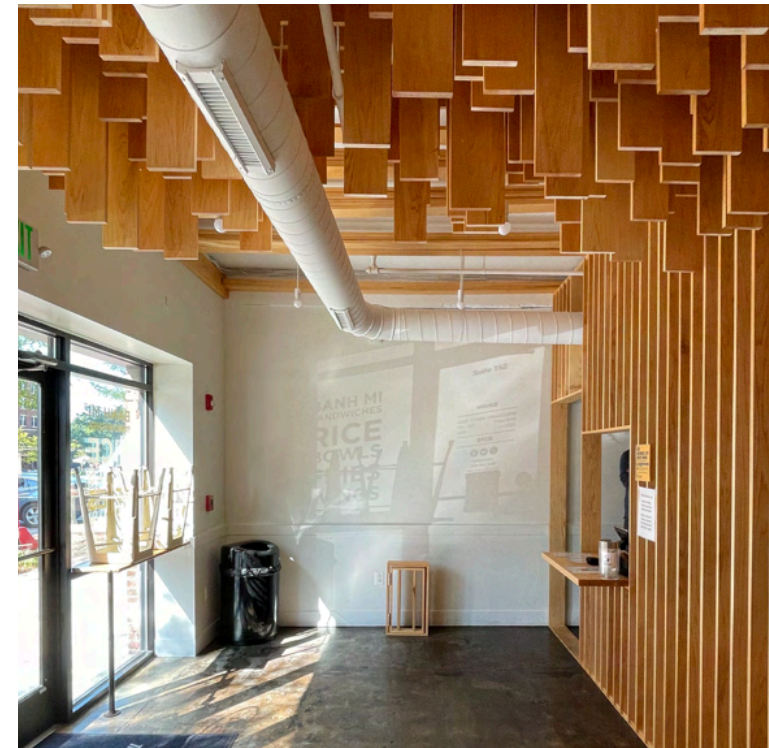
Inspired by the food itself, we conceptualized 'fries in the sky' as a ceiling installation and partition wall that not only separated the front-of-house from the back but also created an unexpected experience when walking in to place orders. Framed and fabricated locally using standard 1x6 oak lumber in aggregated modules, the space becomes an immersive and abstracted, playful interpretation of the fry basket.

With the success of The Local Fry restaurant model, PI.KL has subsequently collaborated further with Kevin and Liz to develop a franchise design manual to be implemented in future expansions and locations.



left: conceptual axon

right: project completion



Project Manager + Design Lead
Completed 2024 / Cultural / 4,000 sf
Baltimore City Rec + Parks
PI.KL Studio

Triangle Park

Triangle Park (Elijah Cummings Park) is nestled along the North end of Baltimore’s newest master plan developments, Baltimore Peninsula — a waterfront hub for dining, shopping, living, and exploring.

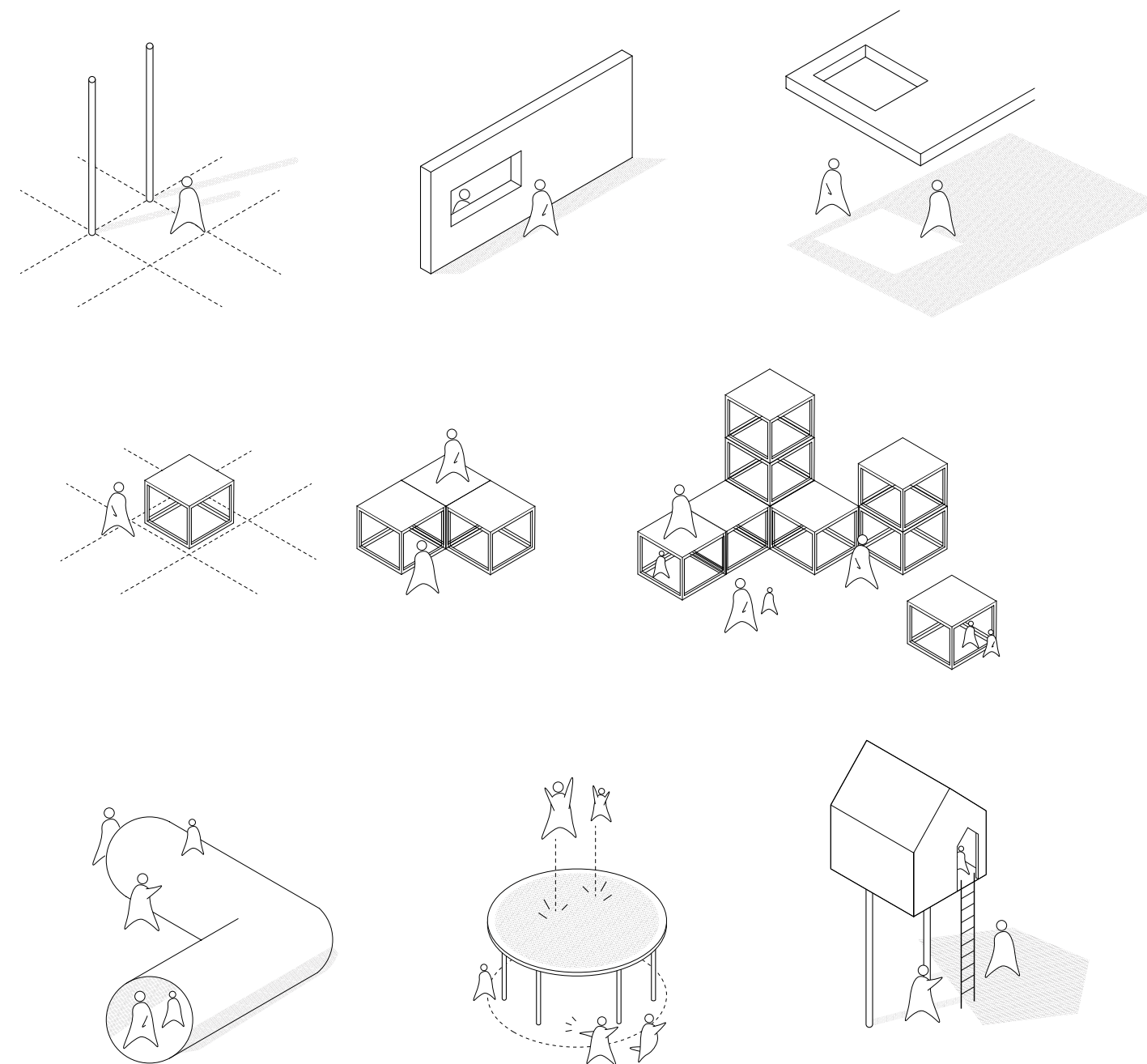
Surrounded by newly constructed mixed-use development, the park is utilized for storm water management with a large-scale cistern buried beneath its main lawn. PI.KL was hired to design the pavilion structure along the park’s North edge. Viewed from Interstate 95 and accessed directly off the neighborhood’s main entrance, the pavilion was designed to be experienced from all directions. A series of studies took place with the development team, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, and project stakeholders. With their collective input and iterative feedback, a concept was created that pulls inspiration from city parks, urban canopies, and playful interventions.

The selected design implements 14'-20' steel canopy structures that create an urban forest within the center of the new development. With large-scale, mixed-use residential buildings surrounding the park, it was important that the pavilion could be experienced from all perspectives — above, below,

and within. When viewing from above, the gridded layout resonates with formal, mid-century pavilions and from below, one can experience dappled, leaf-like light gracing the hardscape paving.

Gemini Fabrication, a local steel fabricator, worked alongside our team to help construct the custom steel canopies. Steel panels were laser cut with a cellular-like perforation and powder-coated off site. An aggregation of vertical, architectural ‘fins’ were designed and welded to each column with an upward curvature as an abstract nod to the reaching branches and trunks of age-old trees.

In situ, the structures take on the scale of full-grown trees with large-reaching spans creating a canopy of organic shade and shadow along the park’s landscape — a park within a park.







above: pavilion office and canopy structures



photographs courtesy of steven norris

Design Lead
Completed 2024 / Placemaking
PI.KL Studio

Signal Station North

Signal Station North is an innovative district lighting plan and public space engagement initiative for Central Baltimore. This unique collaboration between local artists, designers, and nonprofits explores light in public space to engage and enliven communities.

Over the course of the project, which began in late 2019 and completed in 2024, the Signal team developed a number of projects, publications, workshops, and events. Guided by focused listening, research, and urban analysis, these outcomes include a public space lighting plan, creative lighting installations, and practical community tools for the Station North Arts District and other communities wishing to implement lighting projects.

The project is led by the Neighborhood Design Center and supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Central Baltimore Partnership, BOPA, the France-Merrick Foundation and the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation.



left: urban & lighting analysis

right: concept render & final installation