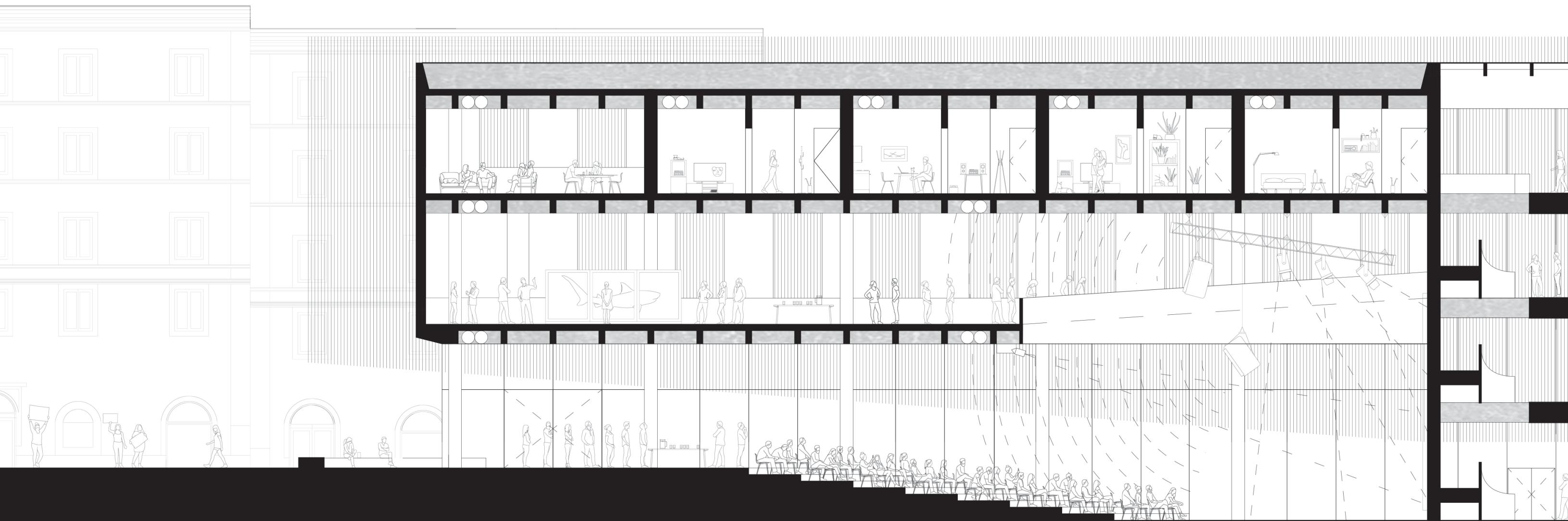


Donovan Cole

Architecture & Design



1 Urban Transformation

Rome, IT
2022

2 Election Center

Des Moines, IA
2021

3 Manhattan Collective

NYC, NY
2020

4 Community Center

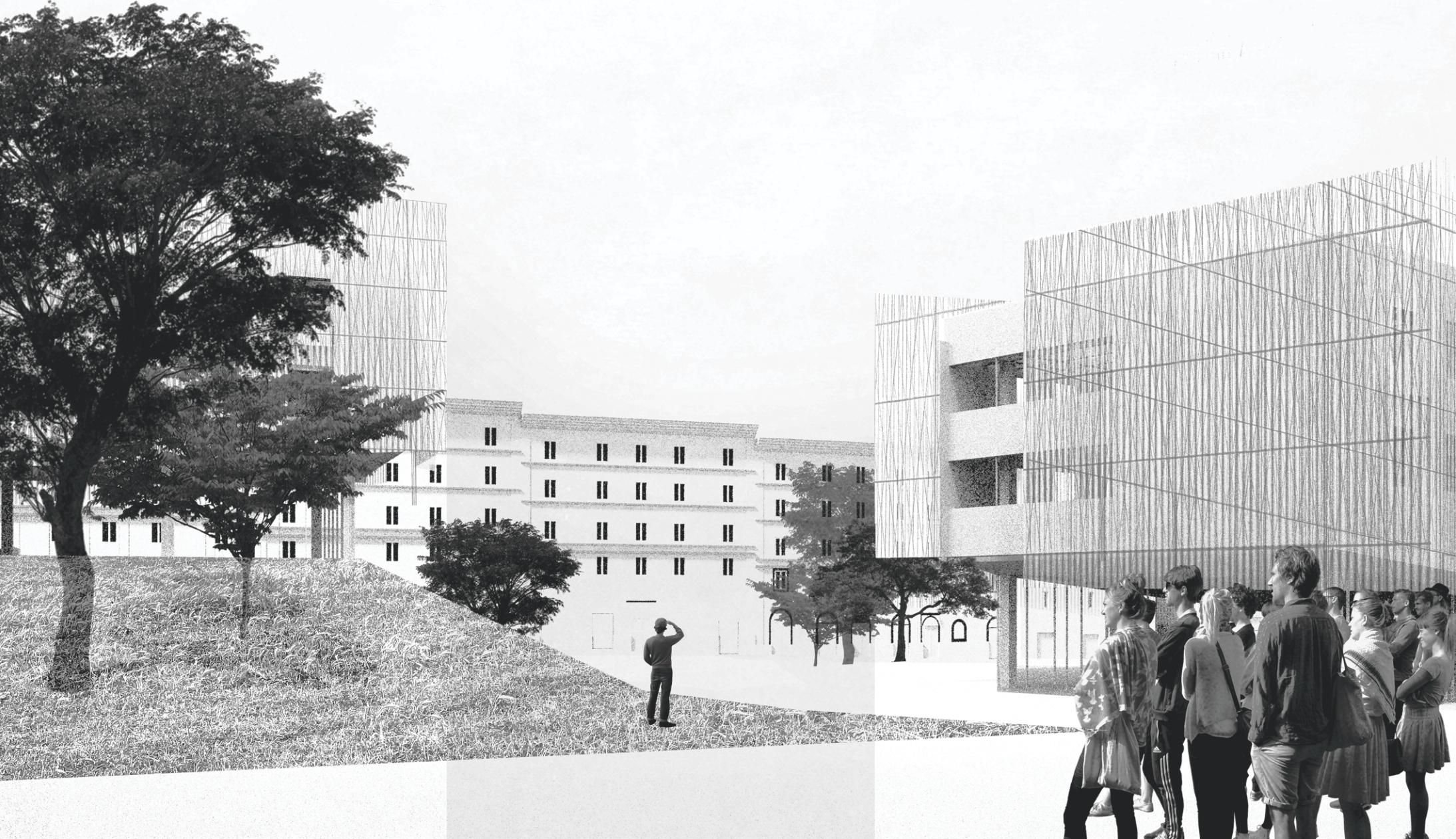
St. Louis, MO
2020

5 Pleasant Decay

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Urban Transformation

San Lorenzo
Rome, IT
2022

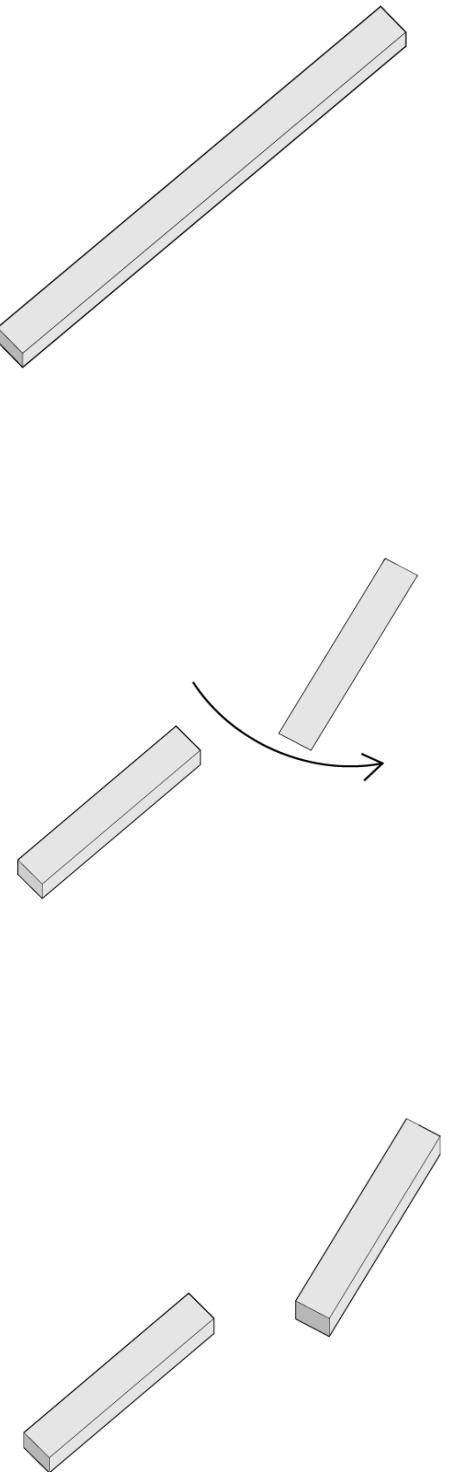


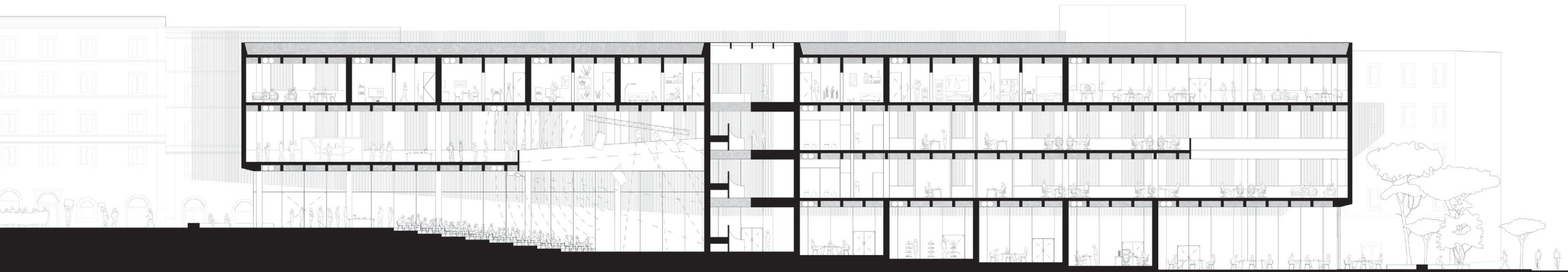
Urban Transformation was conceptualized as a response to the city. A crumbling block of derelict sheds becomes a new heart for the vital neighborhood of San Lorenzo in the heart of Rome. The old, existing block housed nothing but ad-hoc structures and was home to violent crime. The historical architecture Rome is known for surrounded the block, giving our intervention beautiful context. We strove to respect the site and incorporated datums pulled from the apartment blocks surrounding the site. This applied to height and scale foremost but applied to all of the project, including accessing the site.

Rome is a city in which people overwhelmingly walk places or use public transportation. While the site does connect to a major street and includes parking, we strove to incorporate sight lines to the central plaza from the two corners where people would arrive to the site. From the north there is a massive influx of people from the train station - both residents of Rome and abroad. From the south, the main street.

Finally, the project responds to the needs of the city through programming. The main use of space is living, with residences on the upper floors of each mass. They are accompanied by commercial space - both an unprescribed market with open space for vendors (common for neighborhoods in Rome) and typical retail space. A community center acts as an art gallery and a forum for organization. A below-ground gym augments the expansive outdoor space for places to stay active.

At the heart of this project is the unprescribed space, both conceptually and spatially. Rome is a city where the right to exist in urban spaces without paying is practically law. The hope is that this project revitalizes the neighborhood of San Lorenzo without diluting what makes it wonderful.





Election Center



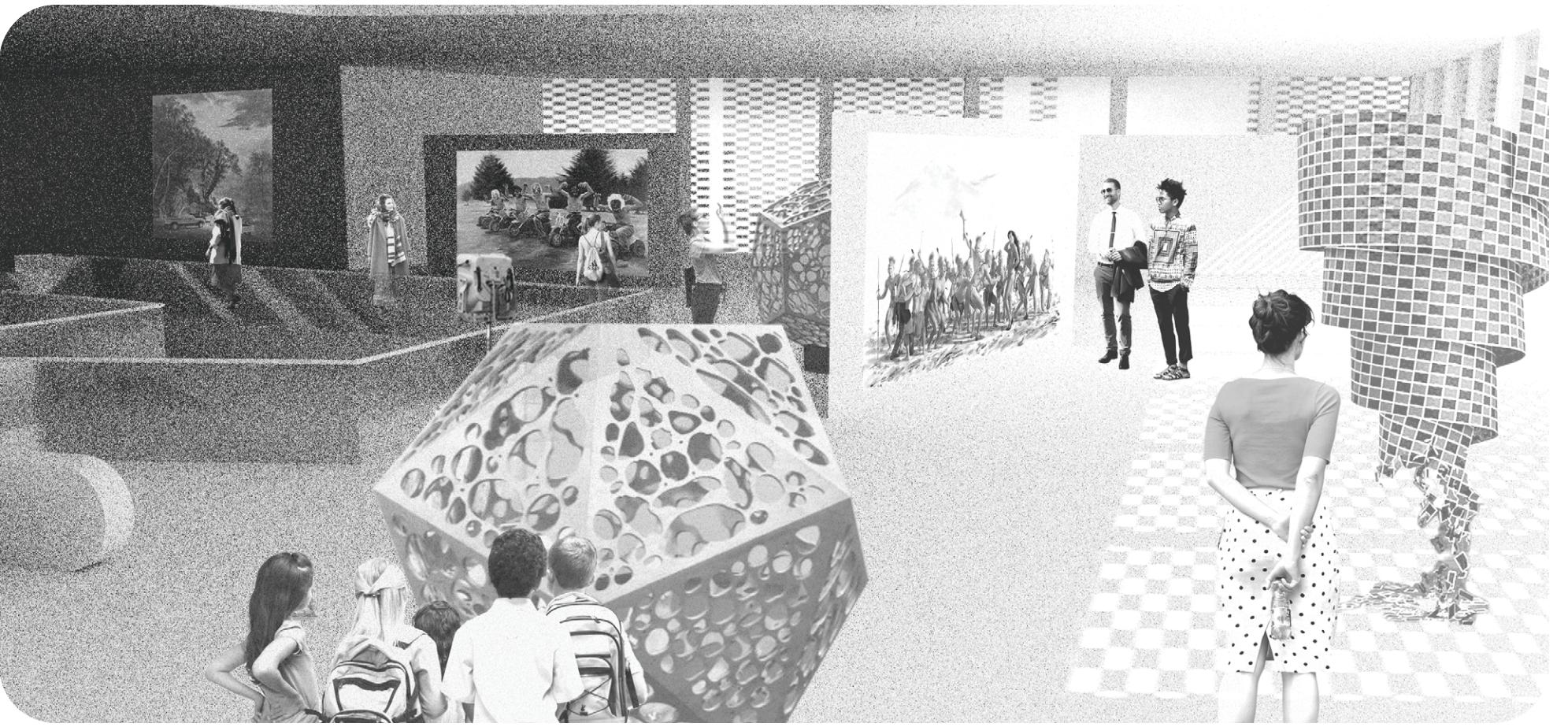
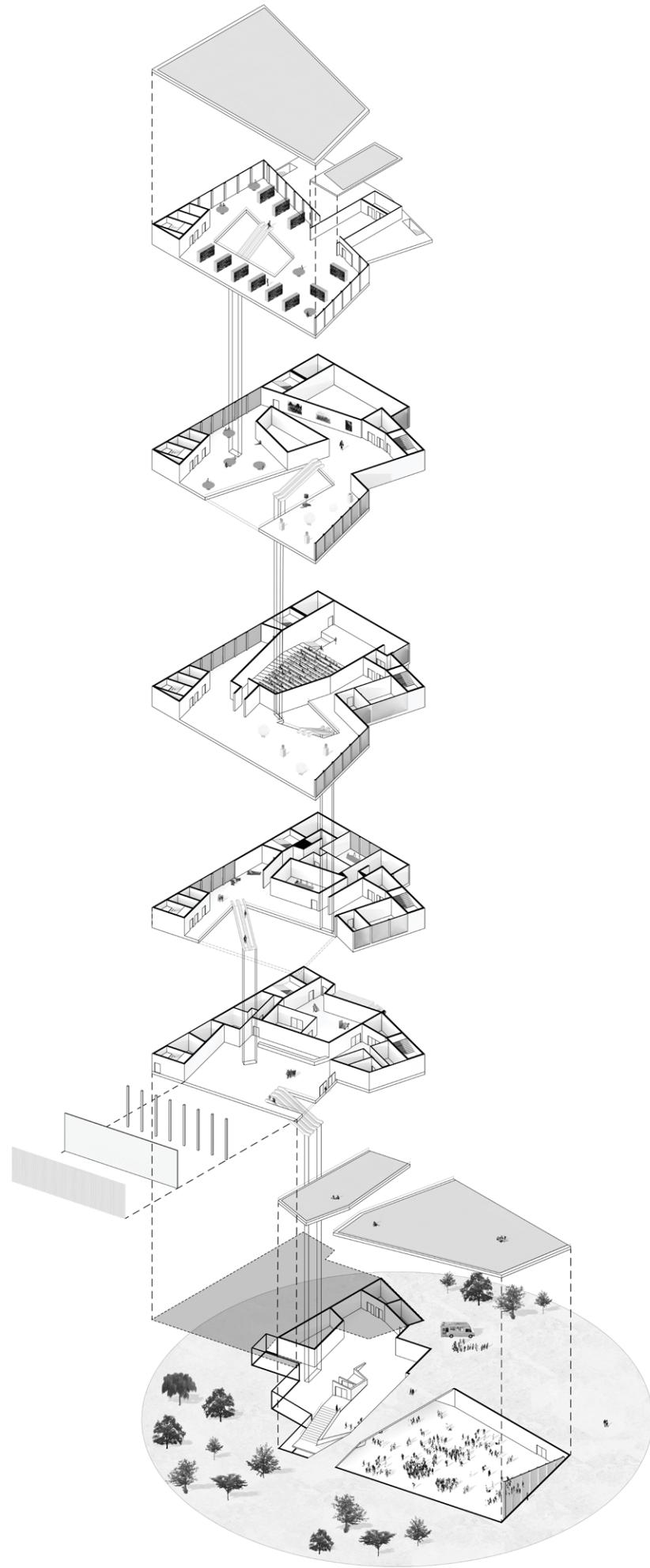
Court Avenue
Des Moines, IA
2021

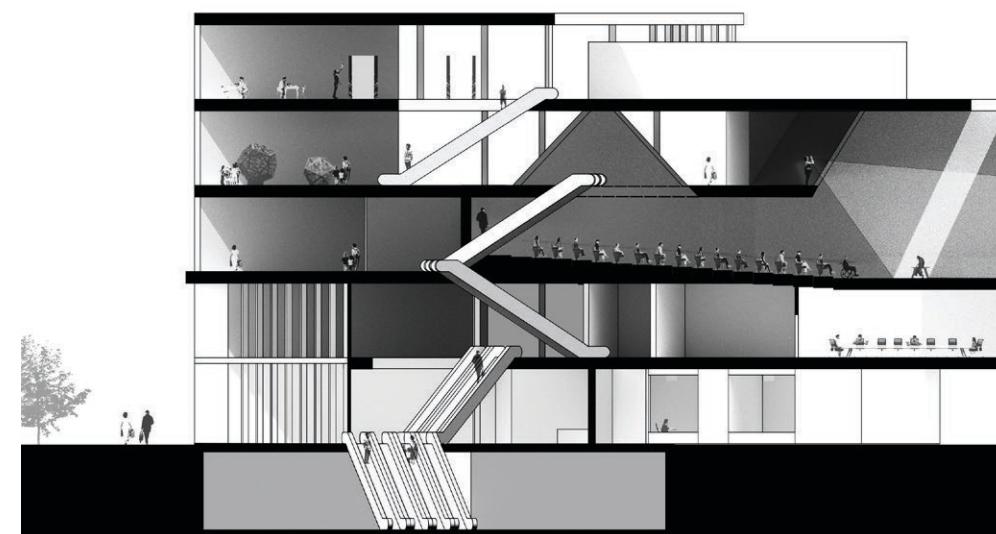
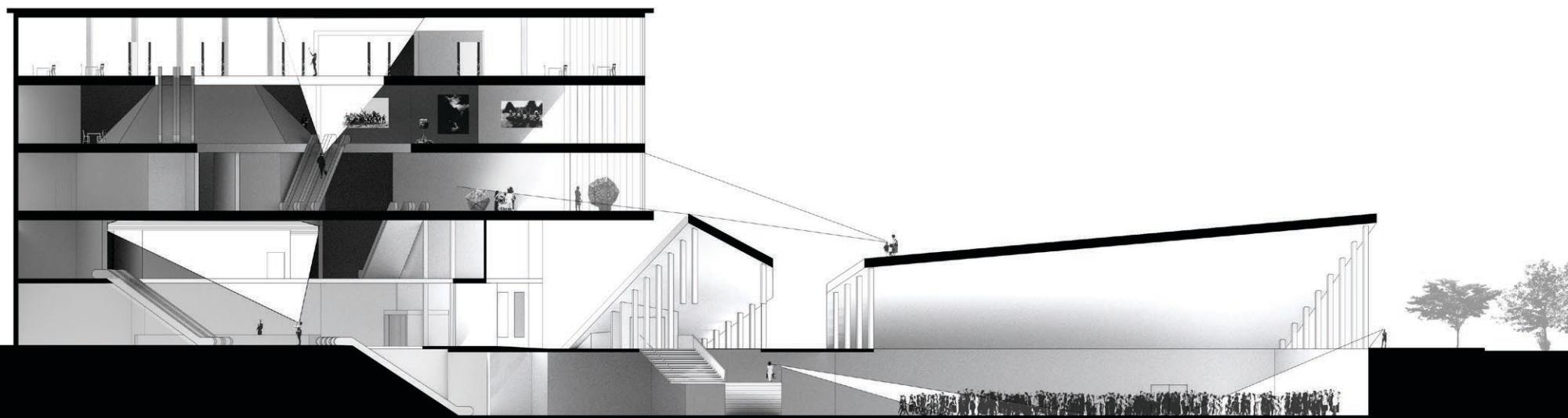


Conceptualized as a new typology of building, the Des Moines Election center is designed for residents to politically organize, caucus and learn about democracy. As our democracy undergoes foundational challenges, conceptualizing the future of spatializing democracy becomes more important.

This center was designed with both practicing democracy and learning about it in mind. The large convention center allows for election-related activities and the large public space above ground enables public conversation and demonstration. Furthermore meeting rooms enable smaller political groups to organize. An auditorium, museum and library allow for education to occur.

Ultimately this was designed with the implication that democracy is difficult - the more difficult the method of education, the higher up it is. Democracy is complicated and ultimately prescriptive learning is the surest way to see it fail. The library occupies the highest space in the building - a statement that once you begin learning how to navigate democracy it is a never ending process.





Manhattan Collective



Hamilton Heights
NYC, NY
2020



Manhattan Collective was designed around a new way of existence in the cutthroat rental market of NYC. Students of CUNY (City University of New York) reside in a place that is both home and farm - allowing for food to be grown inside the city. While the concept of the urban farm is nothing new, this iteration has some distinct advantages that elevate it.

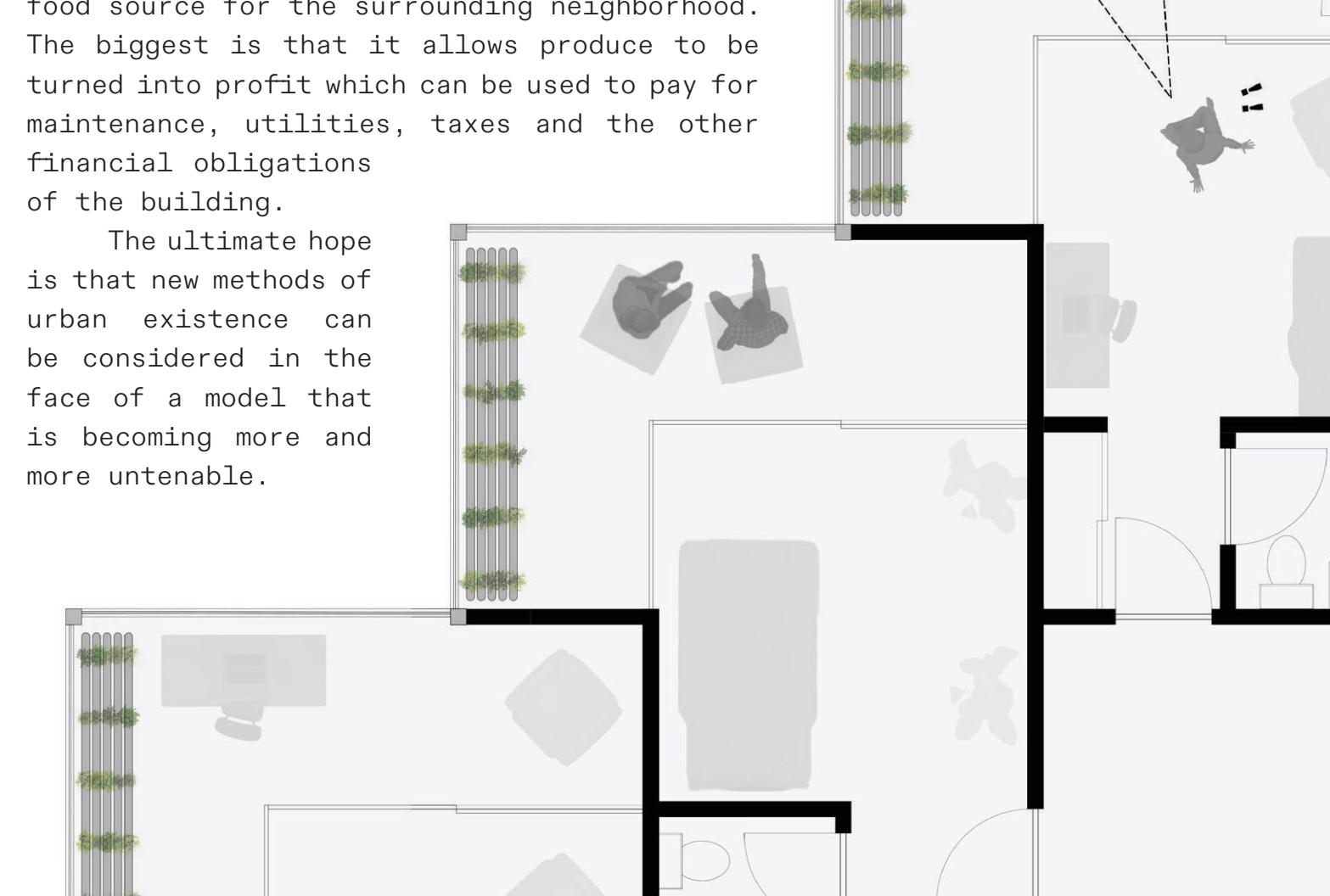
First, the growing shelves for plants double as sun shading in the hotter parts of the year. Their spacing and placement utilizes the sun at all times of the year, preventing heat from entering the inner parts of each unit in the summer and still allowing for sun penetration during the winter. Furthermore they allow each resident to take part in the production of food.

During the warmer months, outdoor space does double duty as a communal gathering and as farmable space. Underground rooms for growing mushrooms also augment the building's output.



Finally this produce is sold in a grocer on the ground floor. This has many benefits - from reducing the carbon emissions required to truck food into the city, to providing a healthy food source for the surrounding neighborhood. The biggest is that it allows produce to be turned into profit which can be used to pay for maintenance, utilities, taxes and the other financial obligations of the building.

The ultimate hope is that new methods of urban existence can be considered in the face of a model that is becoming more and more untenable.

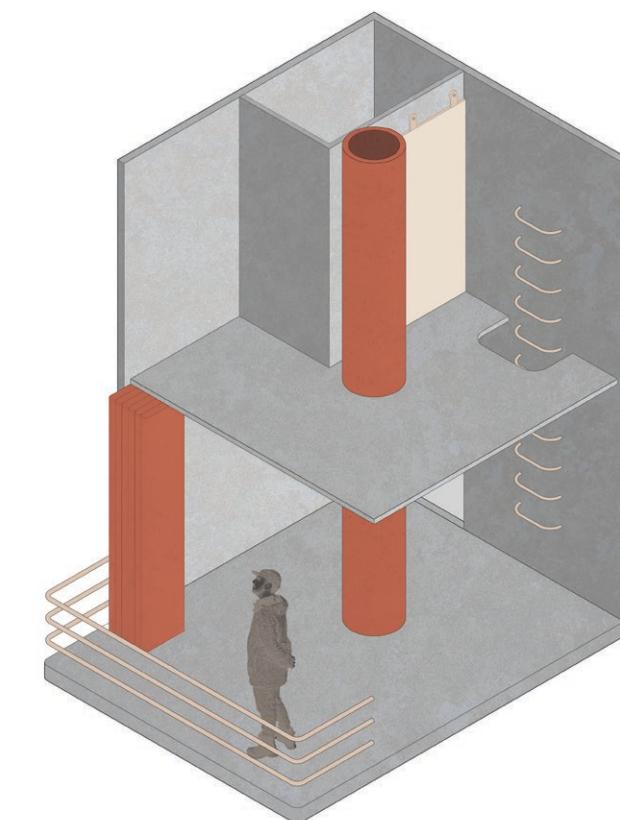
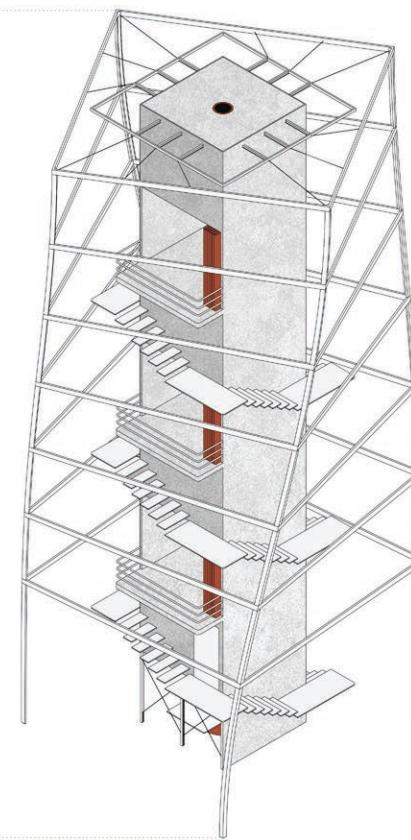
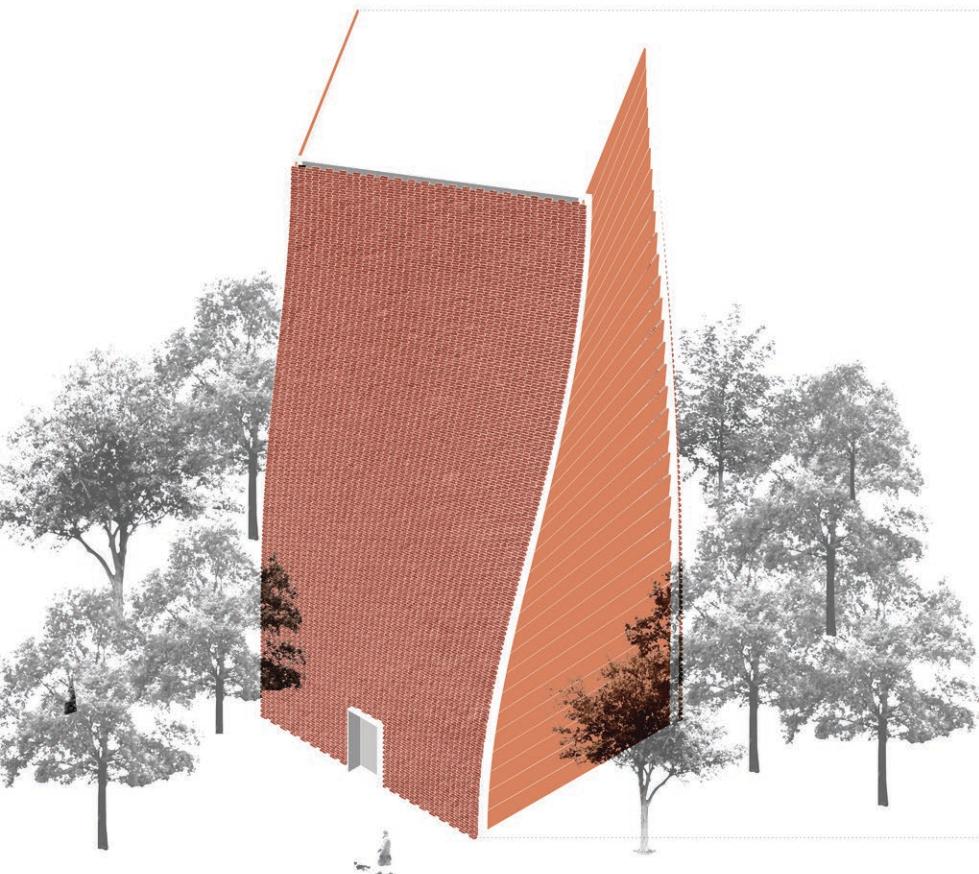


Community Center

Old North
St. Louis, MO
2021

Old North neighborhood is caught between past, present and future. Past holds a thriving neighborhood with beautiful brick houses full of the black residents of St. Louis. The past also holds redlining and intentional efforts by the city government to make Old North financially impossible to those residents. The present reflects this past injustice, with large swaths of the neighborhood full of derelict, crumbling houses and empty lots. The future of Old North is either one of decay or gentrification: two options that displace and erase the current residents.

This project is a community center designed to both create new housing and community space. The units above house displaced members of the community and on the ground floor there is a community kitchen intended as a gathering space for members of the community.



Formally, this work aspires to signal both a new opportunity for community enrichment as well as a respect for the past of Old North - bricks reclaimed from nearby derelict homes are turned from a sign of decay into a form symbolizing new growth in the neighborhood. Furthermore the form reinforces that "newness" as it turns subtly, eschewing mortar and instead using cables to keep its form. In embracing the material past of the site and the present needs of people there is a hope that justice can materialize in the process.

Pleasant Decay

East Village
Des Moines, IA
2019



In the first phase of this project, concrete forms were cast with intentional but unpredictable imperfections within them. Marshmallows were placed in the liquid concrete, moving about unpredictably as it was poured and set. After setting, the marshmallows were then washed out with water, revealing voids within the casting.

These castings then served as the formal inspiration of a pavilion. Further leaning into the relationship between material unpredictability and form, this pavilion was designed to biodegrade unpredictably. New forms will emerge as the mushroom facade and wood lattice biodegrade. A performance springs from the materials - the pavilion's unpredictable form is an installation across both space and time.

