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PORTFOLIO 2022 - 2025

Sophia M. Zaita

Selected Works

Portfolio

Educational + Professional Work
[2022 - 2025]

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2022 - 2025

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FALL 2025
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WORK.

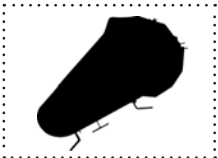
KS COMPETITION
GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT
SPRING 2025
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

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PARSONS DESIGN WORKSHOP
CO-DESIGNER, CONSTRUCTION CREW
SUMMER 2022
PARSONS SCHOOL OF DESIGN

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ABOUT SZ.

Master of Architecture
Cornell University December 2027

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Architectural Design
Parsons School of Design May 2024



housing, first to last

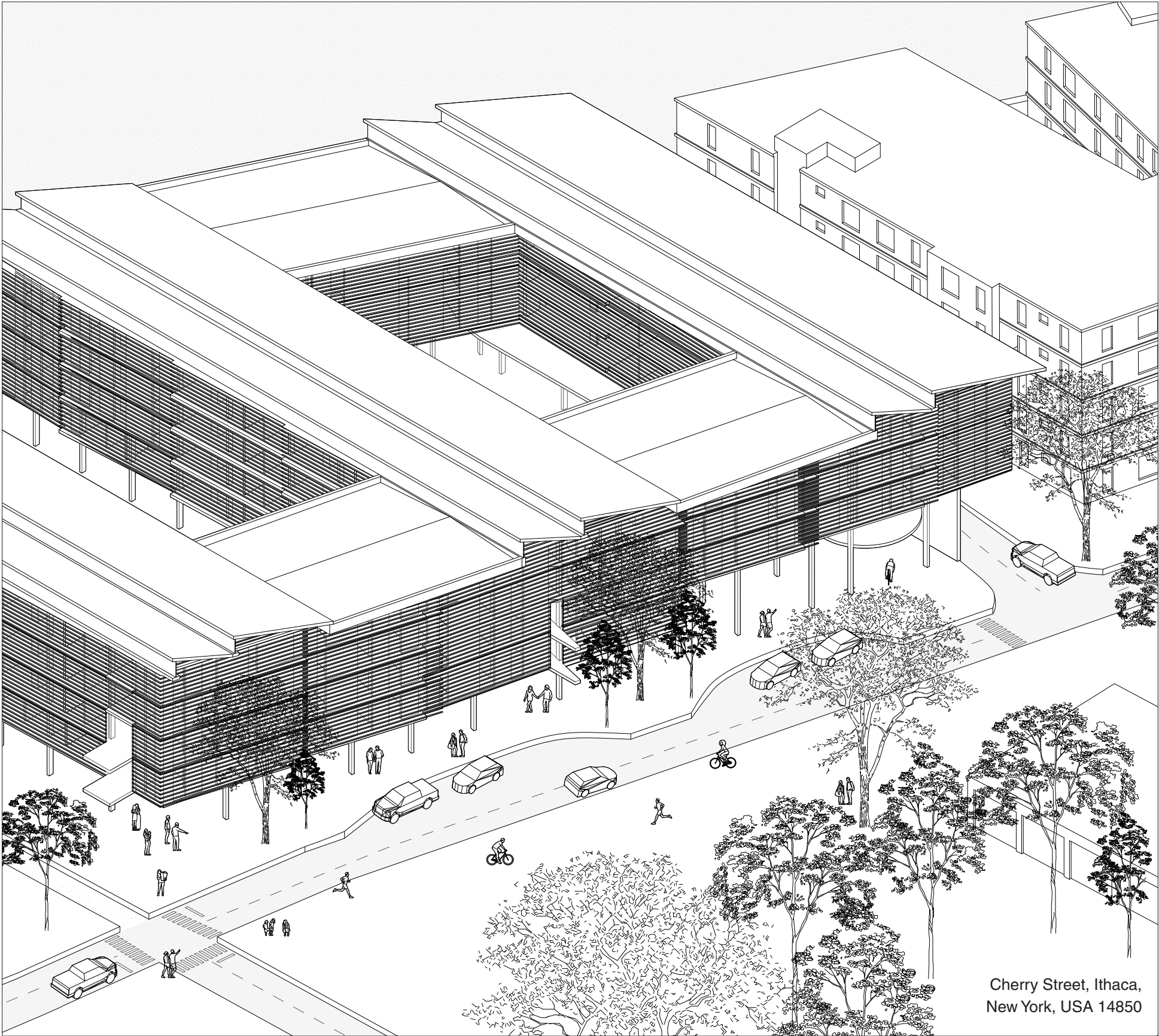
Led by Professors Lily Chi +
Emma Silverblatt

ARCH 5113, M.Arch Core III
Cornell University, Fall 2025

**Community Destination with Local Flavor:
Farm to Table and Educational Campus**

Within our Fall 2025 Engaged Practices studio, we examined the role of housing in today's context, emphasizing the challenges of affordable housing insecurity, rising construction costs, and the limitations of current housing models. These models often fail to meet residents' needs and lack the flexibility required for long-term adaptability + resilience.

Cherry Street began as an industrial site, marked by hardscapes and contaminated soil. Today it remains a desolate corridor in Ithaca, utilized as a place to pass through rather than a destination. By prioritizing soil remediation and urban agriculture, we see an opportunity to restore ecological health while reactivating community life. Grounded in earth-centered design, our vision reimagines Cherry Street as a resilient, vibrant hub where working families, farm interns, Cherry Arts patrons, outdoor enthusiasts, and long-term Ithacans come together around farm-fresh food and creative community life.

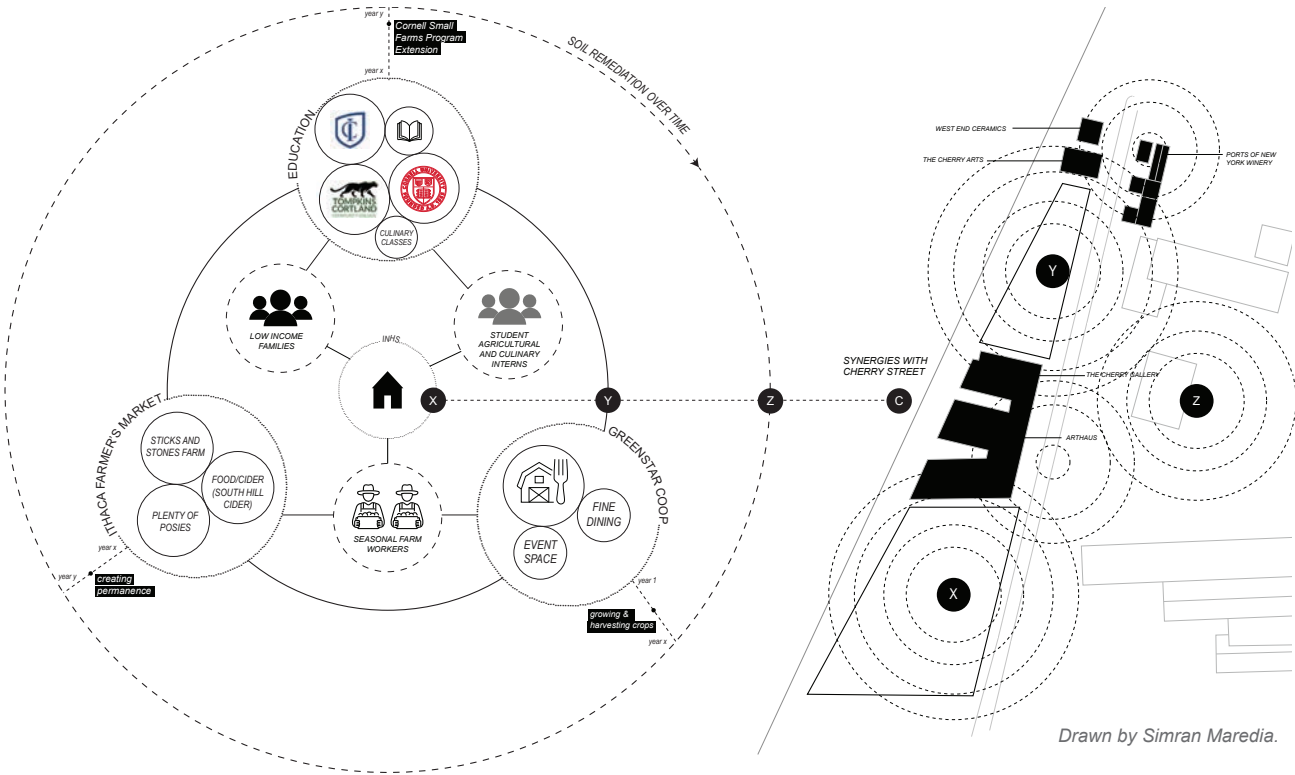


All drawings are by Sophia Zaita unless otherwise noted.

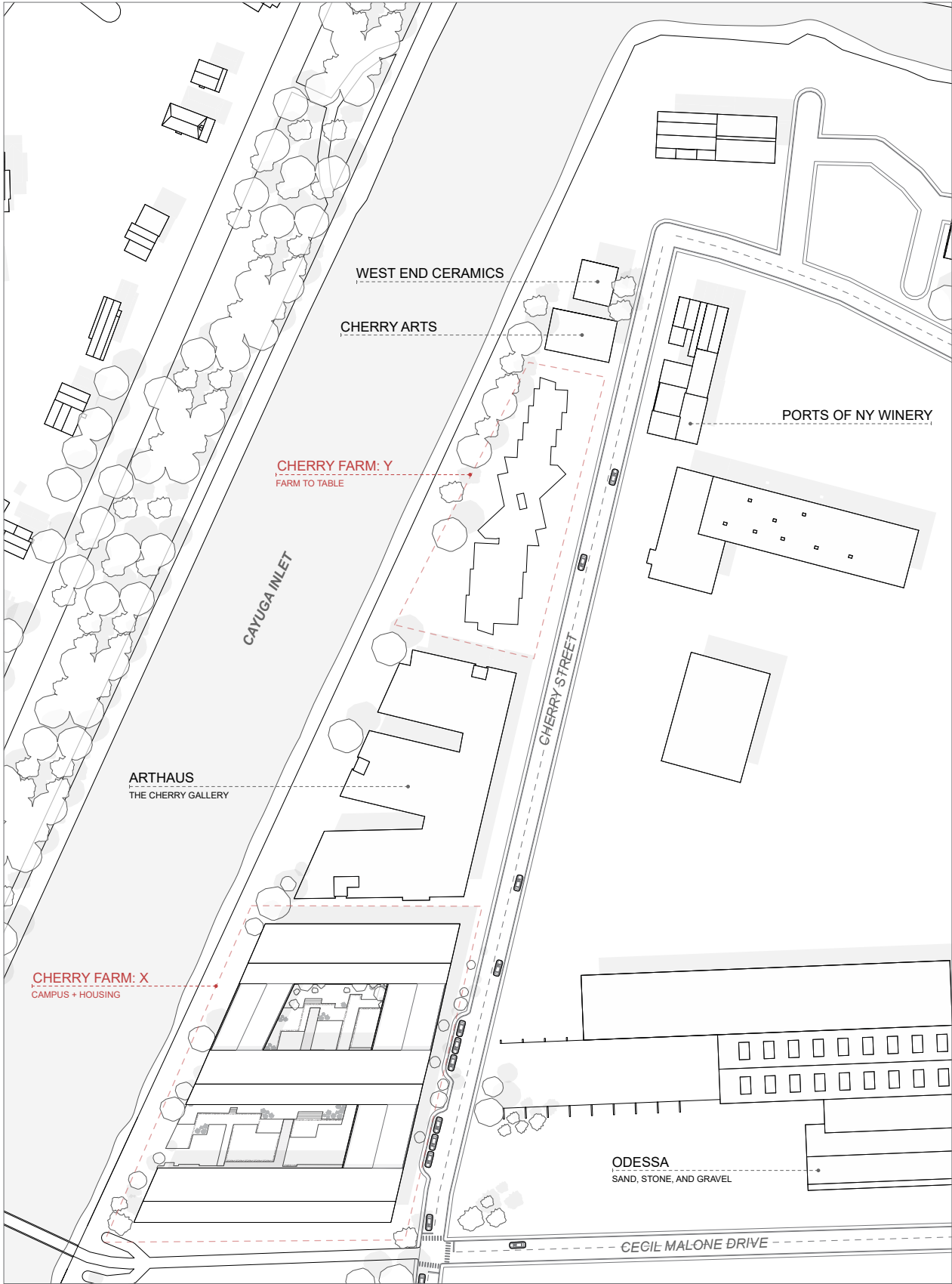
The Cherry Farm

Campus for Cooking, Creating, and Growing

The farm-to-table model welcomes environmental stewards, supports regional farms, and fills a gap in Ithaca’s current food scene by introducing a restaurant style popular across upstate New York. This approach not only strengthens neighborhood connections but also creates opportunities for education in culinary arts, agricultural practices, and workforce development.



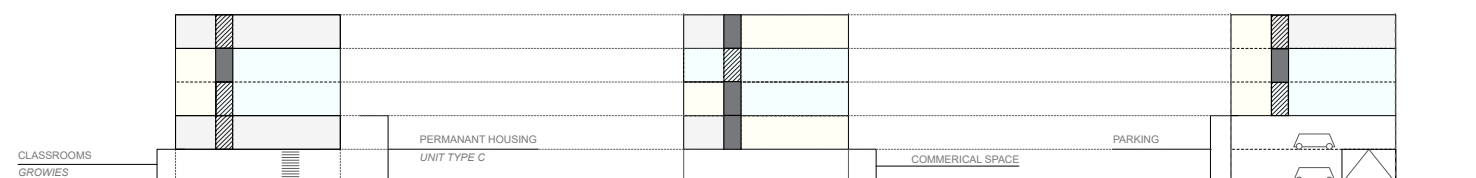
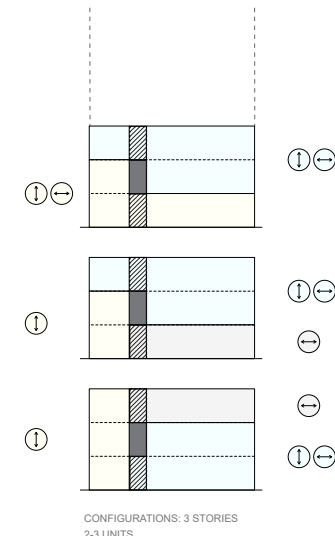
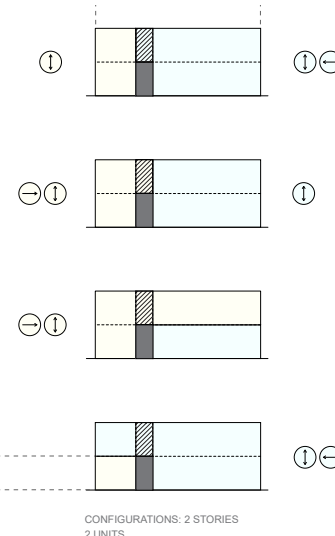
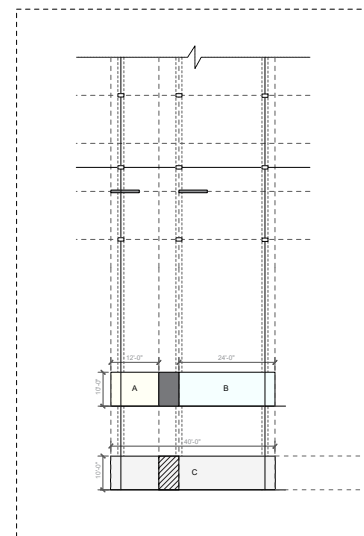
As a satellite site for GreenStar Food Co+op and the Ithaca Farmers Market, the project expands access to local produce, culinary experiences, and cooperative education. Revenue is supported by restaurant sales, fresh food distribution, workshops, events, community space rentals, and an alternative space for the farmers market in the winter months. Partnerships with Cornell, TC3, Ithaca College, Cherry Arts, and local artisans help anchor ongoing agricultural programming, cultural activities, and tourism.



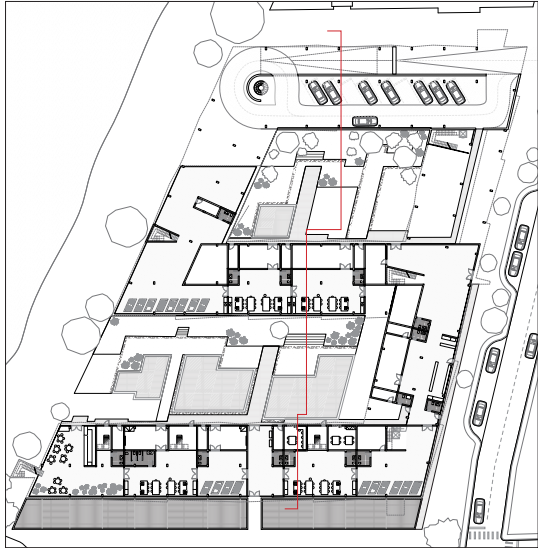
Through Plan + Section

In plan, the building is arranged as two parallel bars, a narrower bar to the south and a wider bar to the north, separated by a central corridor accessible to all residents. Wet cores are positioned along this corridor, consolidating services within the darker zone while reserving perimeter areas for naturally lit living spaces. This layout allows for flexible unit configurations that can be subdivided or expanded, including the possibility of privatizing portions of the corridor to form larger shared units and introduce a skip-stop condition reflected in section.

In section, the project explores the spatial opportunities created through this unit negotiation. The skip-stop strategy enables multiple configurations, ranging from fully open corridors on every floor to selectively closed corridors that support duplex units and varied residential arrangements.



Ground Floor
Plan 00



Main Floor
Plan 01



Skip-Stop Floor
Plan 03

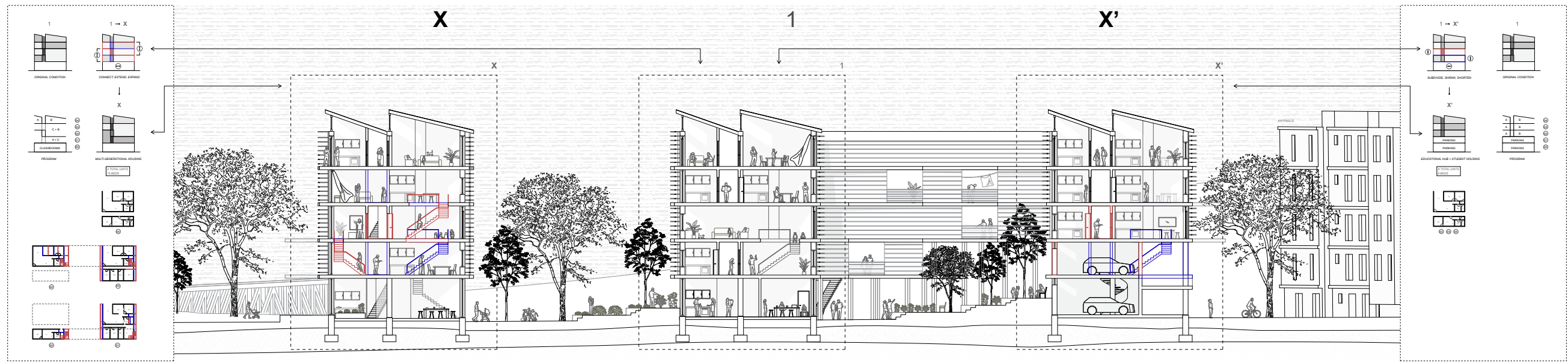


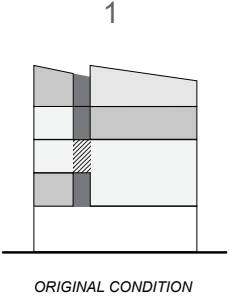
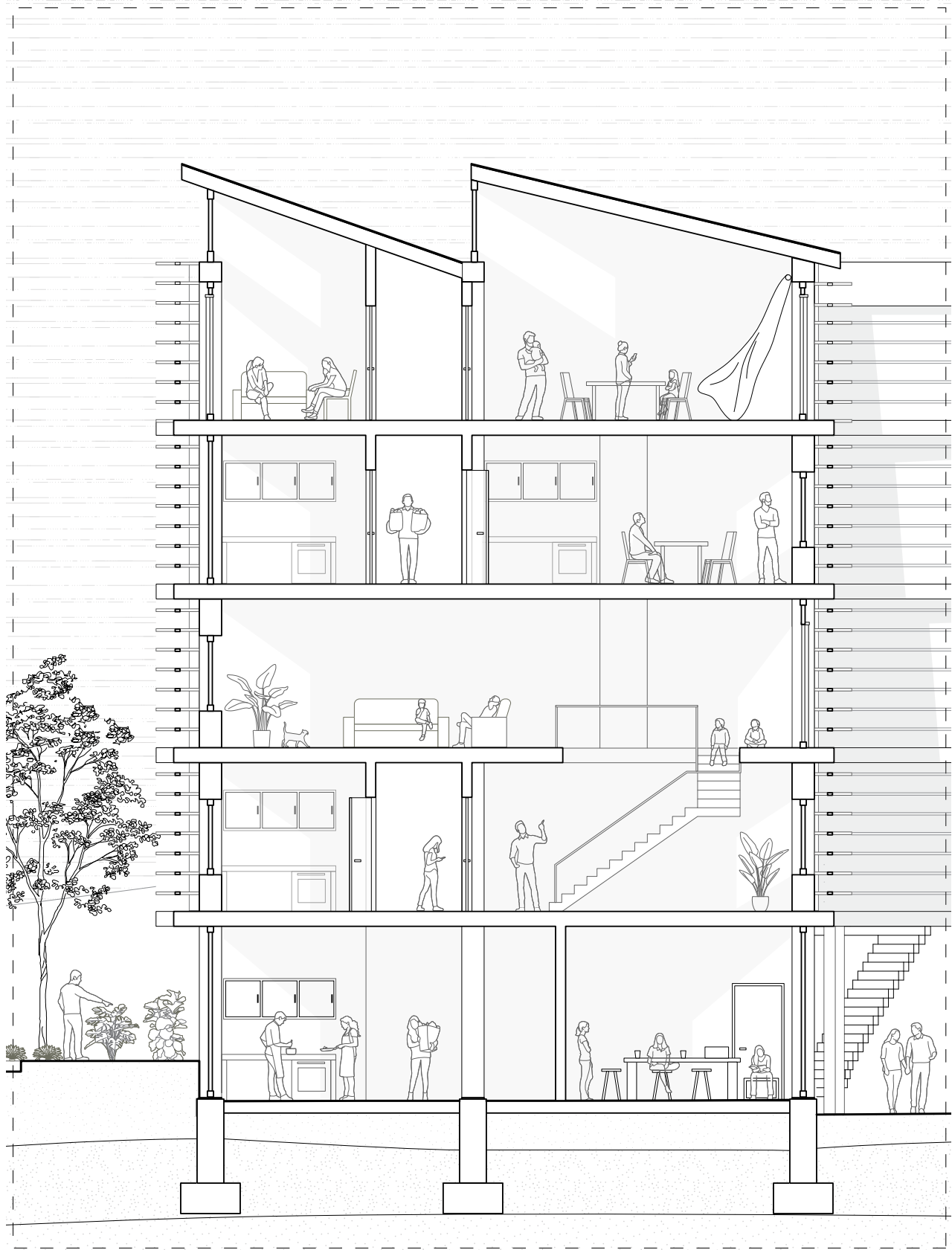
Corridor Floor
Plan 02

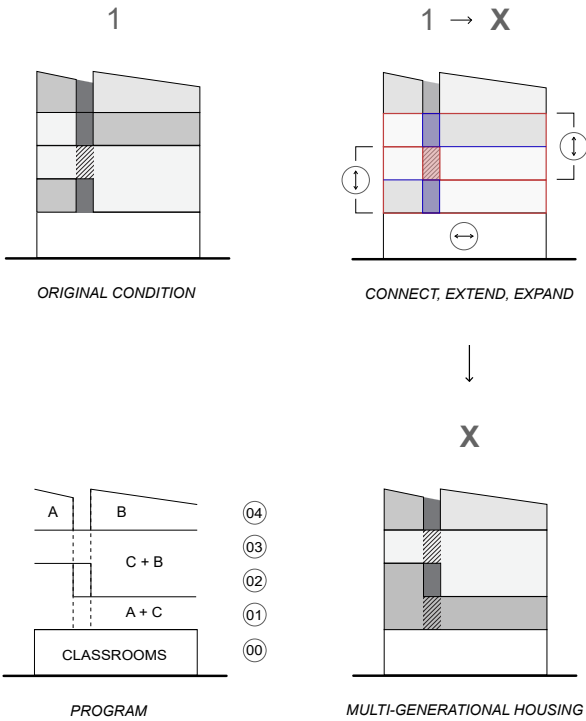
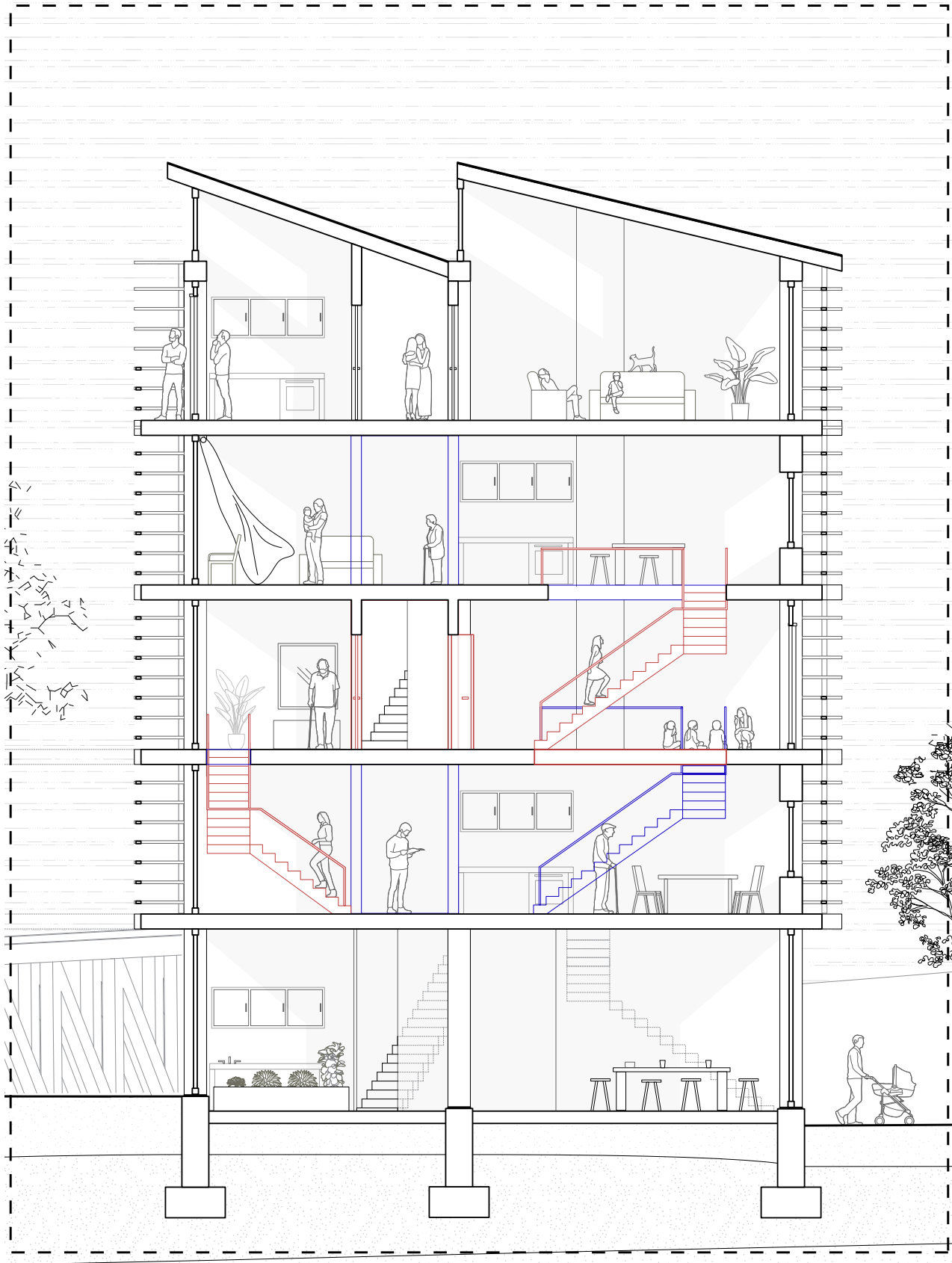


Adaptability in X + X'

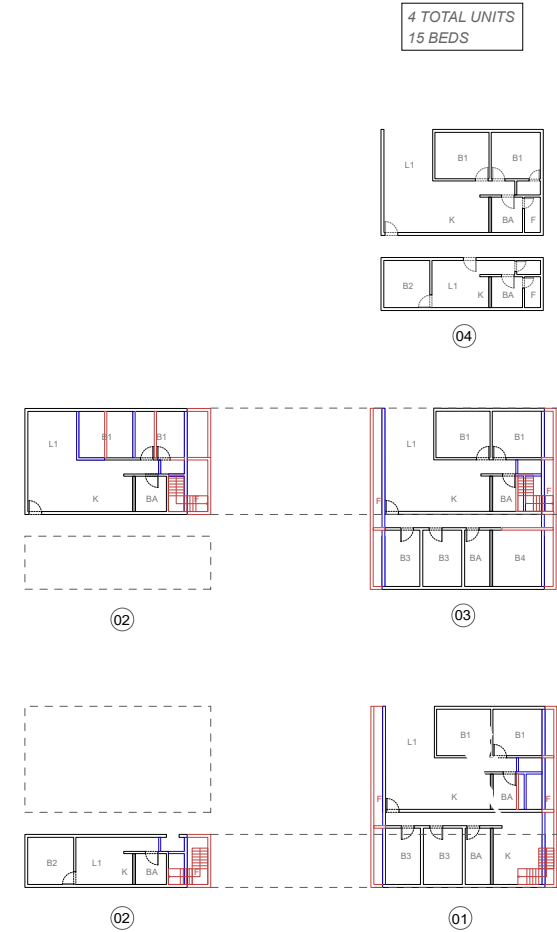
Long Section



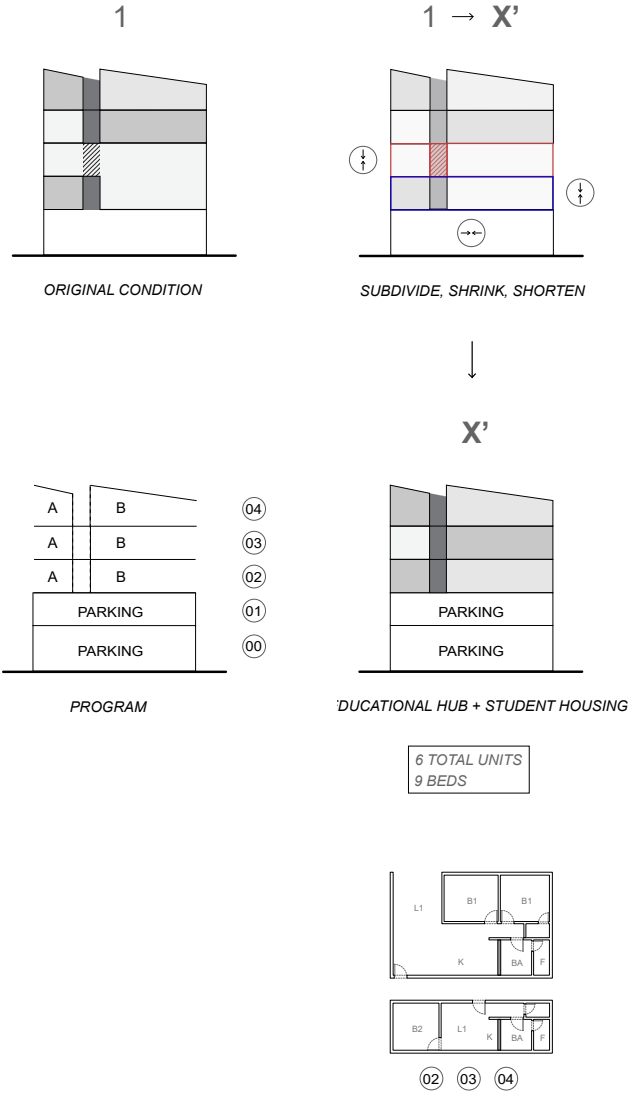
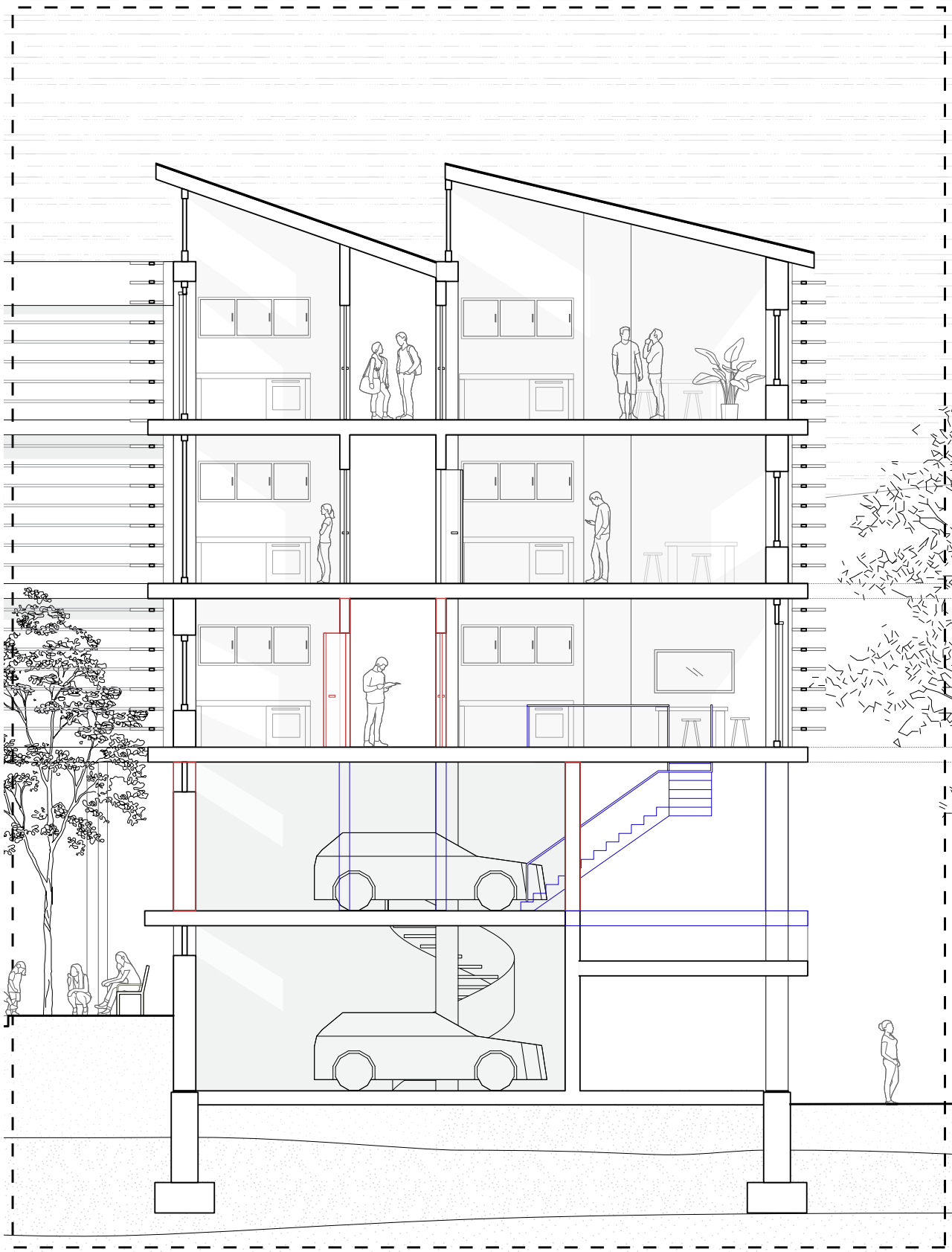




4 TOTAL UNITS
15 BEDS



0 5 10 15
Blue is Removal. Red is Addition.





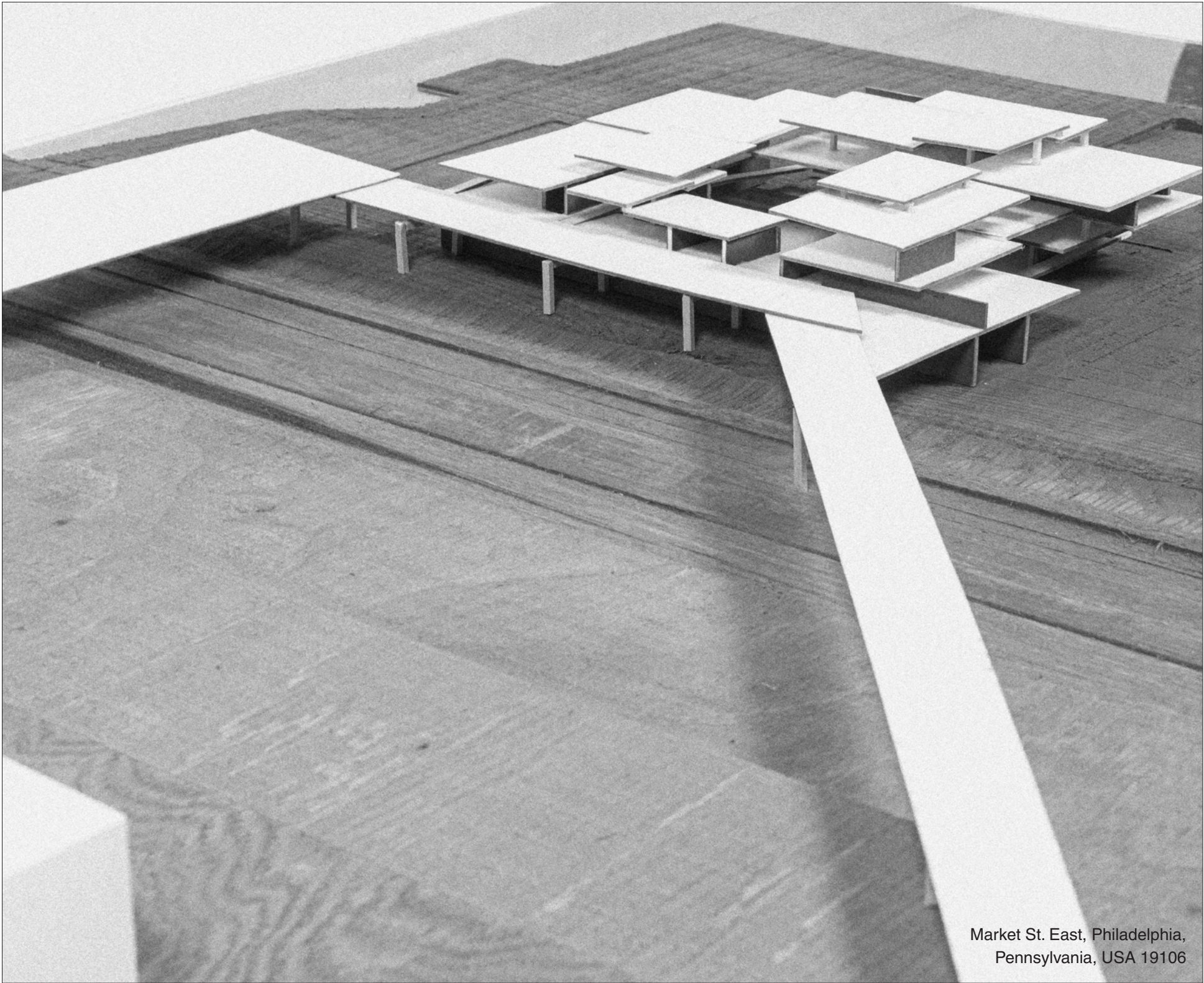
adAAPtations

Led by Professors Iroha Ito,
Andrew Lucia, Martin Miller

ARCH 5112, M.Arch Core II
Cornell University, Spring 2025

**Stitching Time: Weaving History into the
Modern Fabric**

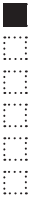
Philadelphia stands as a cornerstone of American history, a city where the nation's founding ideals were drafted and signed into being. Today, with a population exceeding 1.55 million (as of 2023) and a steady influx of tourists drawn to its historical landmarks, Philadelphia remains a vibrant and complex urban center. It's a city defined not only by its past but by the rich tapestry of cultures, communities, and daily life that converge within its shared public spaces. This dynamic interplay of movement, memory, and identity shapes a uniquely layered urban experience.



Market St. East, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania, USA 19106

IN COLLABORATION WITH
Meghan Palmer, *M. Arch '27*
Colleen Zeugin, *M. Arch '27*

All drawings are by Sophia Zaita unless otherwise noted.



Regeneration Station

Research in Collaboration with Meghan Palmer + Colleen Zeugin

In our Core Studio II, adAAPtations, we were tasked with researching, analyzing, and designing a train station for one of several proposed sites. Each location is defined by a lack of sufficient public transit and limited pedestrian access. From the list of seven potential locations, we were asked to select the one that stood out most through critical research and identify further programmatic interventions to inform our design approach.

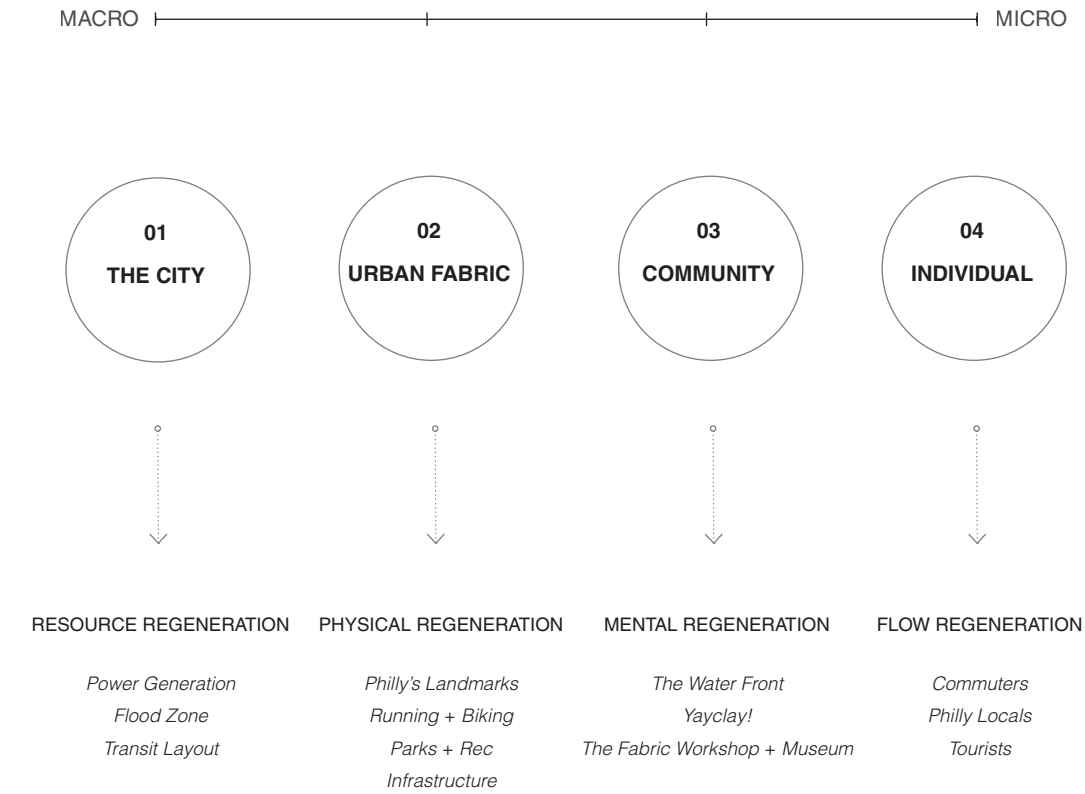


INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM PHILADELPHIA DATABASES BY TEAM. MAP COLLAGE DRAWING BY MEGHAN PALMER.

Our team chose **Market Street East**. A site located in the City Center, in close proximity to some of Philadelphia’s most iconic and historically significant landmarks. Its strategic location and untapped potential made it a compelling foundation for architectural intervention.

REGENERATION in the context of Philadelphia will attempt to revitalize underused areas to create thriving, sustainable communities with the goal of benefiting the local population and minimizing displacement.

This can be defined on a multitude of scales:



Re-Definition Through Program

Necessities Based on Urban Data Research

01. Communal

02. Recreational

03. Educational

04. Agricultural

05. Adaptable

06. Local Resources
- →

→

→

→

→
- Place of Belonging

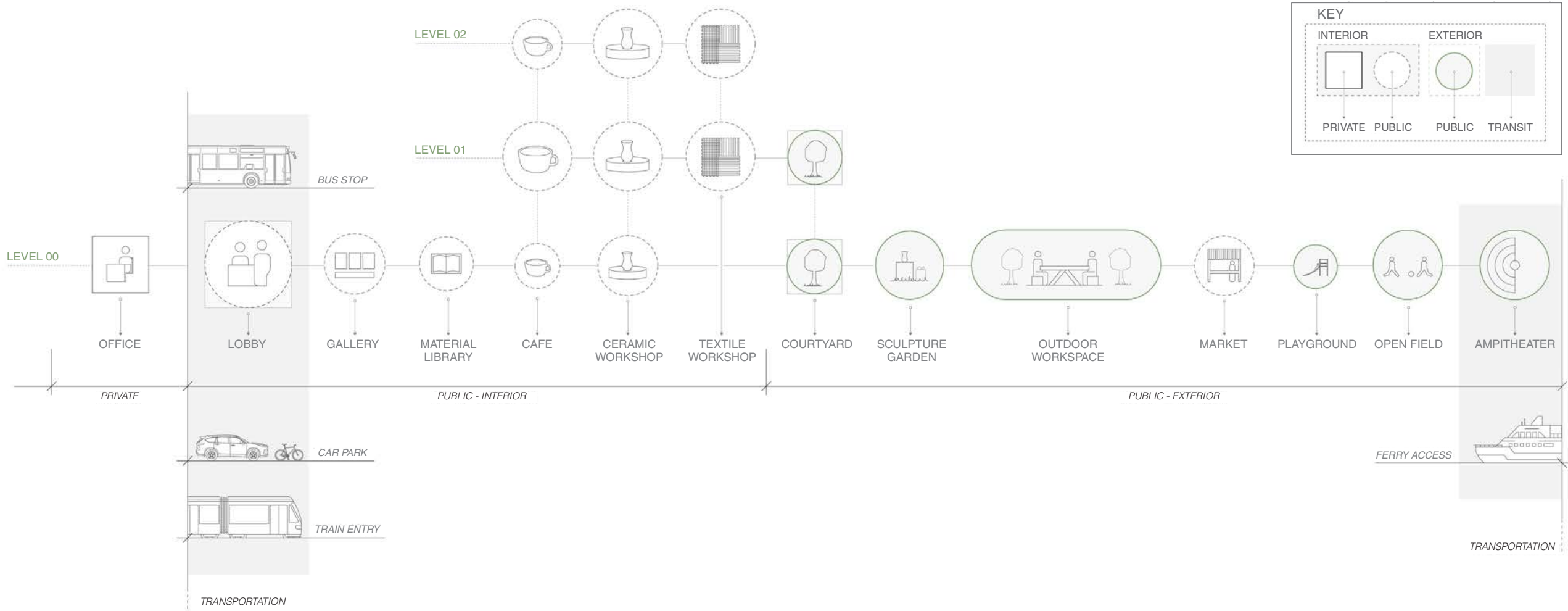
Physical Regeneration

Mental Regeneration

Environmental Regeneration

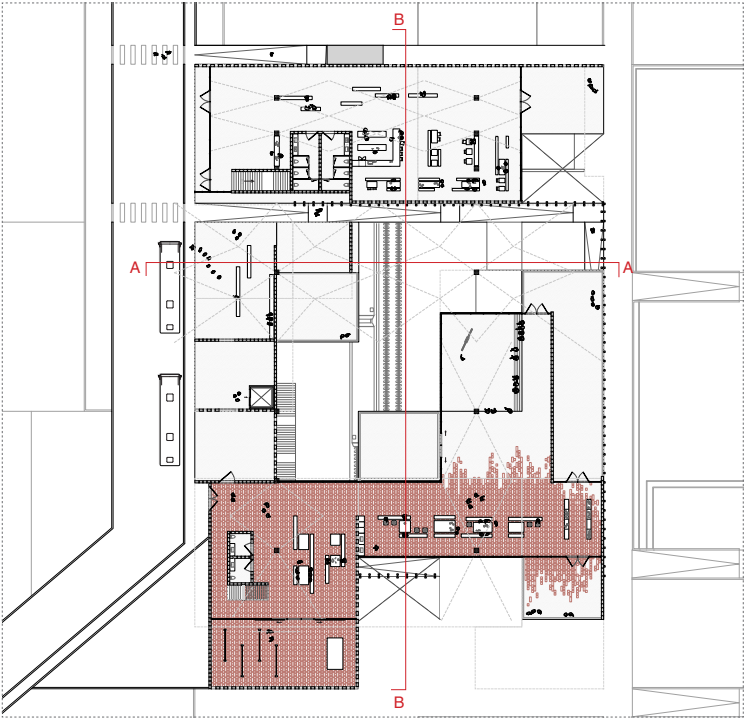
Longevity + Lifecycle

Material Systems

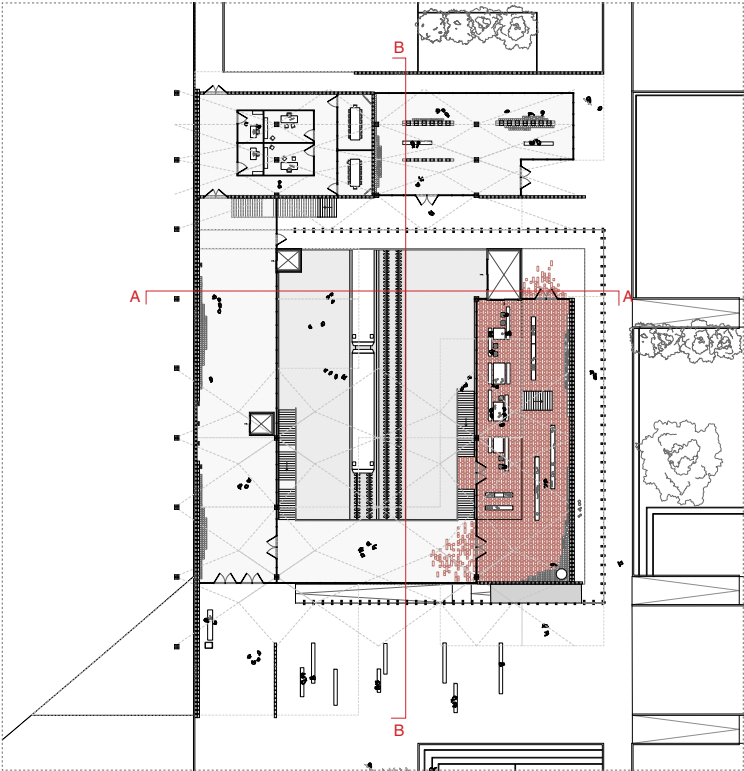


Philadelphia Market St. East

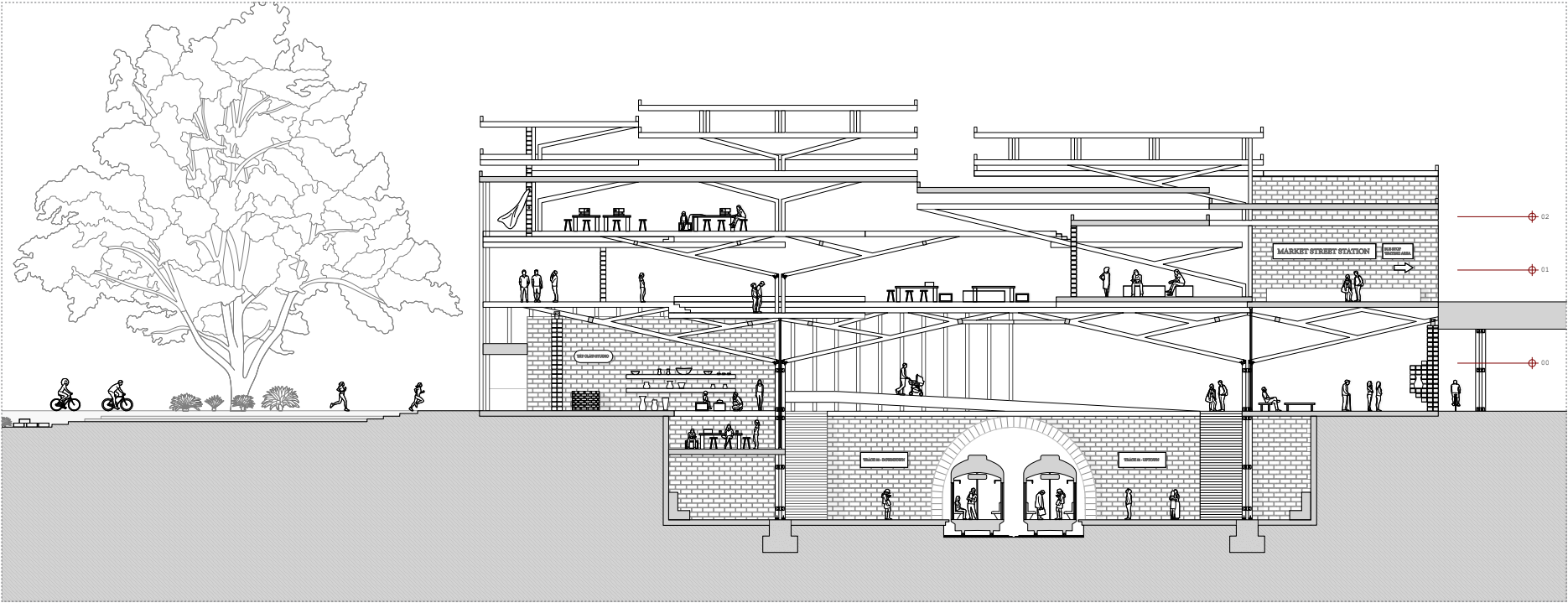
Transit Hub, Workshops, Gathering Place



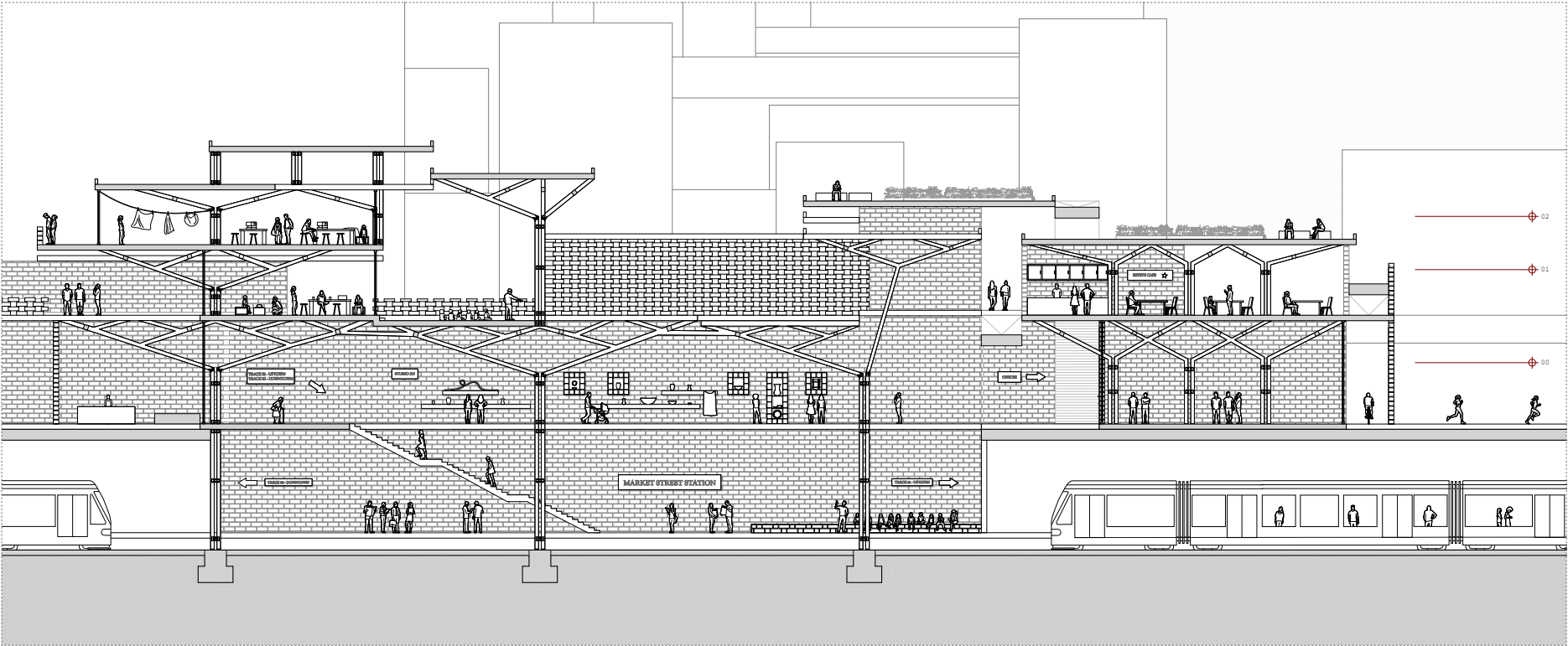
⌚ Main Floor 01



⌚ Floor Plan 00

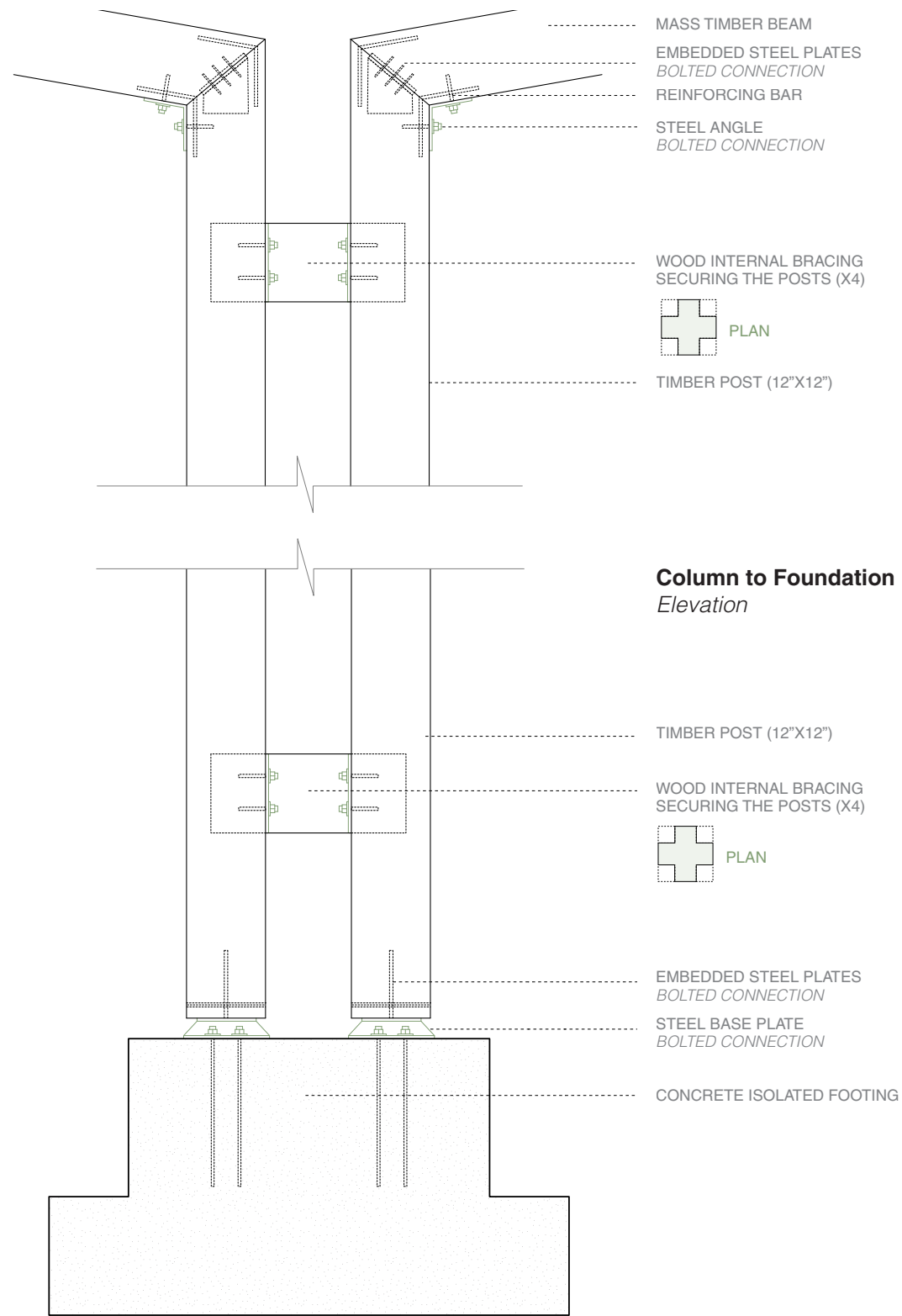


Section A

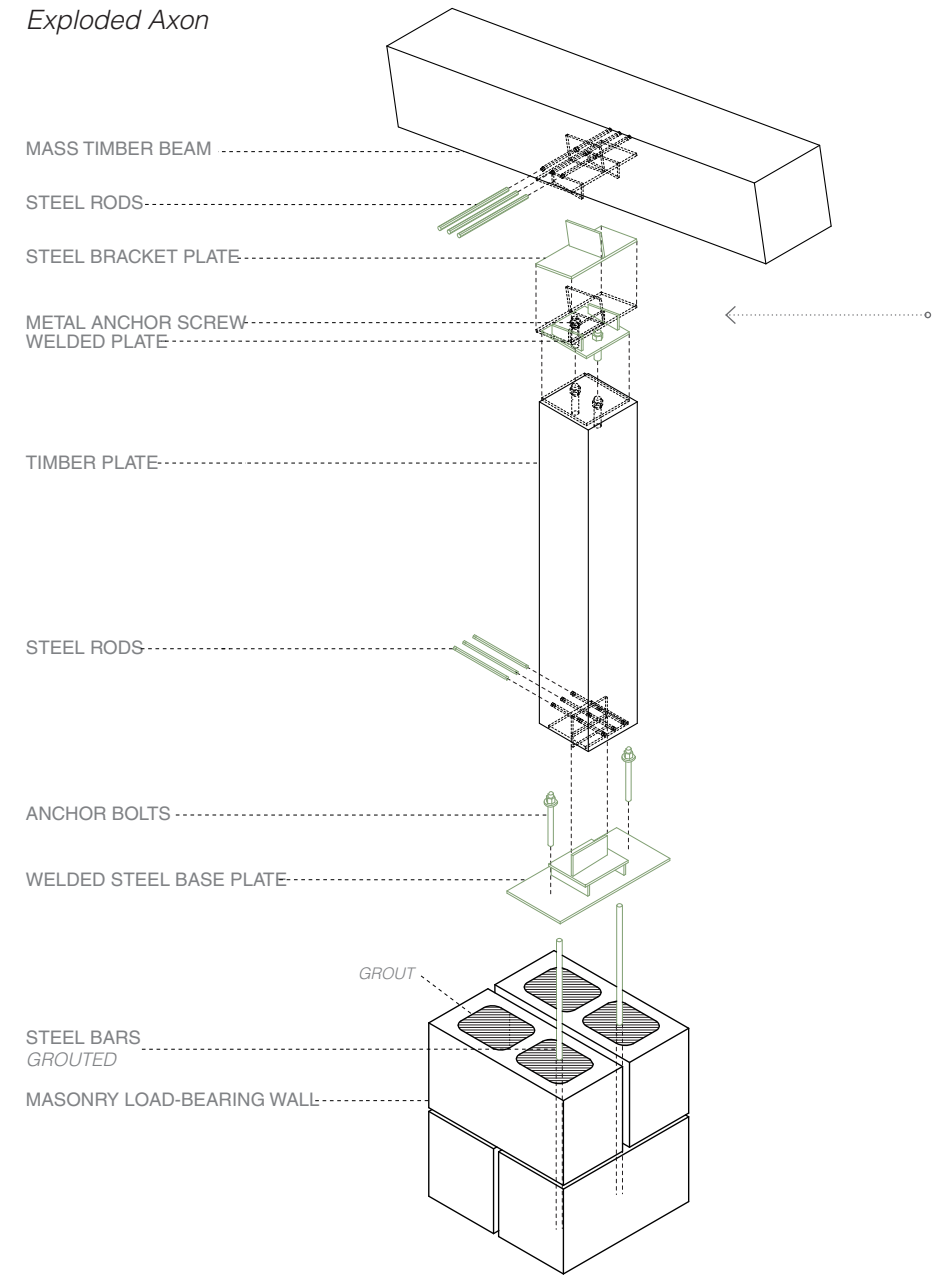


Section B

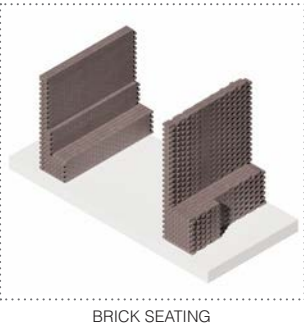
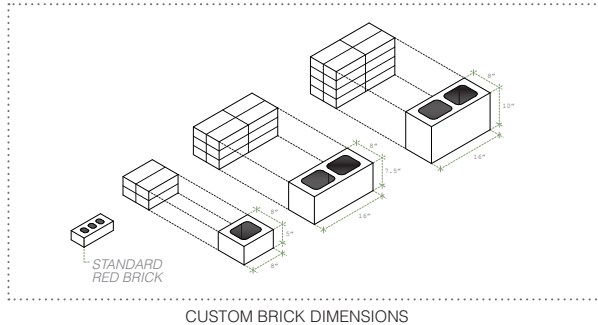
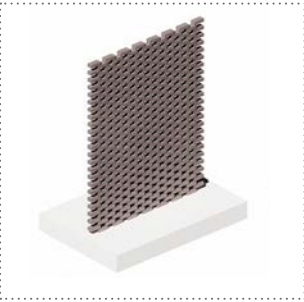
Facade Systems
Brick Configuration + Beam Connections



Beam to Brick Detail
Exploded Axon



Brick Modules
Adaptation to Program





The Heumann Campus

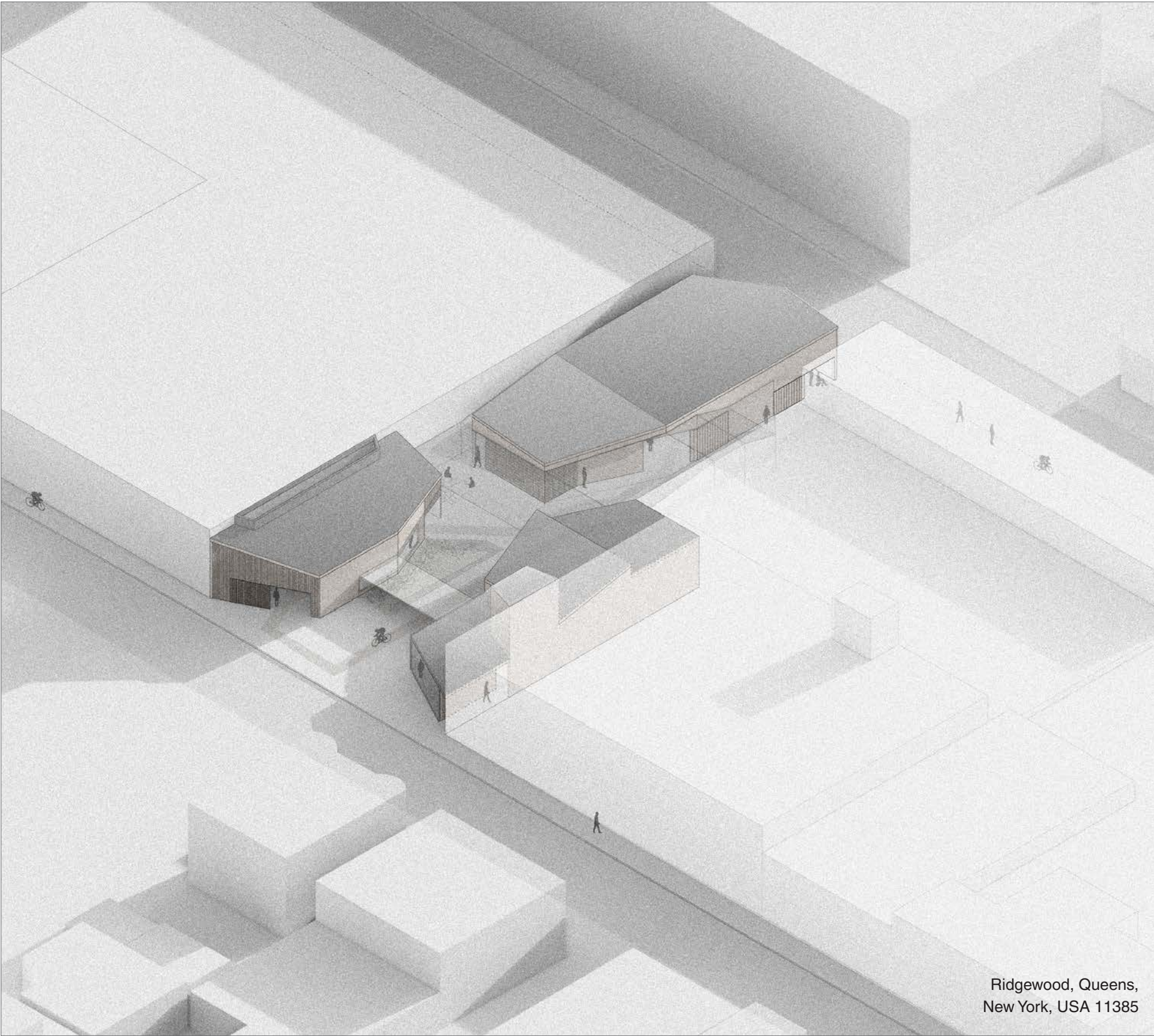
Led by Professor David Gissen

PUAD 4010, Design Studio 5
Parsons SCE, Fall 2023

Designing an Urban Framework for a Disabled Future

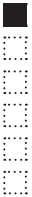
“The Heumann Community Campus of New York City,” named after disability activist and New Yorker Judith Heumann. The campus is reimagining urban planning in order to ease the daily struggles of the disabled population and provide new offices and storefronts for active disability organizations and neighborhood businesses.

The proposed sites for the campus are in an almost continuous line across four narrow lots on four city blocks, lined by residential, commercial, and educational facilities.



Ridgewood, Queens,
New York, USA 11385

All drawings are by Sophia Zaita unless otherwise noted.



HEUMANN COMMUNITY CAMPUS

LOT 01

LOT 02

LOT 03

LOT 04

MARKET WITH
CENTRAL COURTYARD

TICKETING
BOOTH

AUDITORIUM

BIKE
STORAGE

BIKE REPAIR
SHOP

LOCAL ART
GALLERY

OFFICES, ANIMAL CLINIC,
PUBLIC LIBRARY

HALSEY ST

Bike Repair Shop + Storage

Lot 3 consists of three elements fragmented from the existing structures that surround it. These elements are connected by a light mesh covering that frames moments coming off of the buildings, such as entryways or following the roofscape. The lot is occupied by a non-profit organization that transformed the manufacturing process for adaptable bicycles called “Adapt-Ability”. Their main source of production is by utilizing discarded bicycle parts and tailoring each bicycle to the client. Recycled bicycles that aren’t used in the manufacturing process are fully restored and given to families, local events, and schools. These kids are free to partake in this recreational activity and create lifelong experiences just like any other child.

Artist Gallery

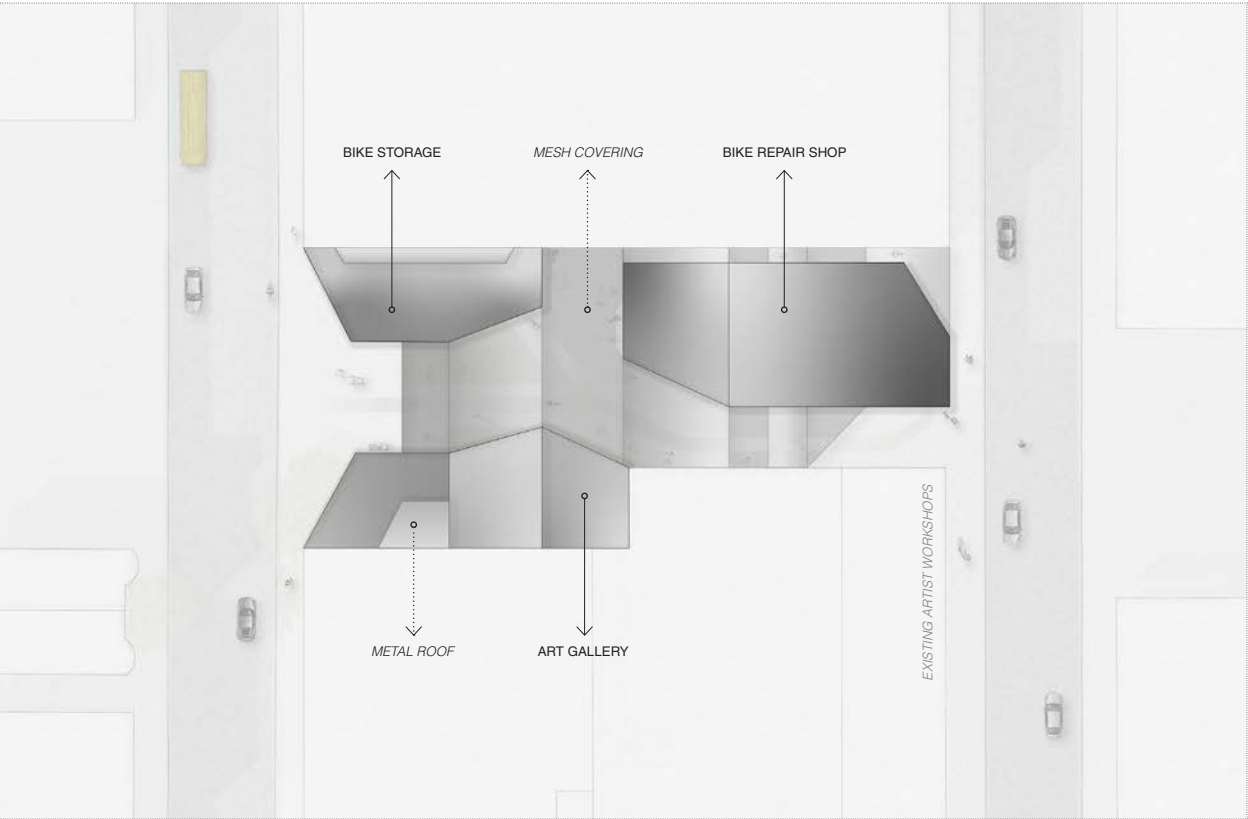
The gallery serves as a more official venue for local artists to show their work to the general public. The elevator located in the current artist workshops provides them with direct access to the loft area. The loft is intended to provide a real-time showcase for the “artists at work.” When circulating the gallery you have a hint of activity through the glass walls.



Urban Framework

Designed in Collaboration with Hazel Kim, B.F.A. '24

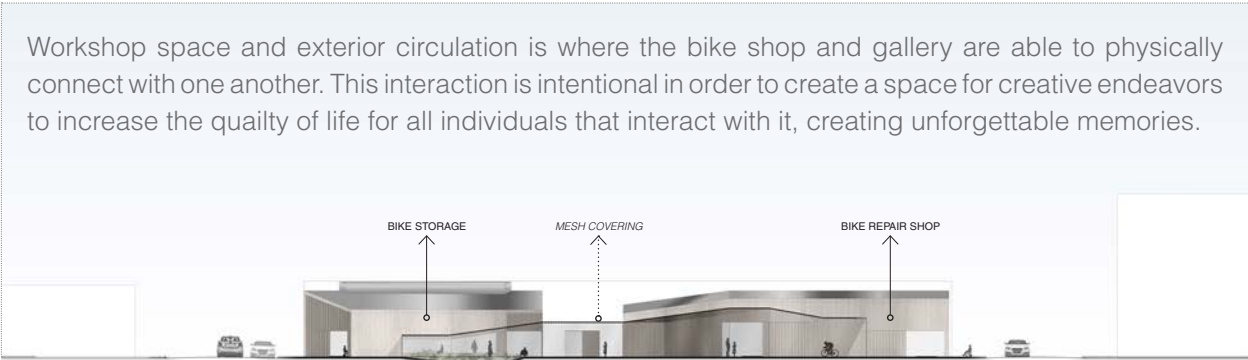
The plan that our team has developed for the Judy Heumann Community Campus emphasizes the horizontal paths that connect the four sites. Public recreation areas, artistic spaces, and offices make up the programs within the campus. The first phase of our intervention began as an expansion off of the existing buildings. Eventually, geometric carving became the primary technique utilized in our preliminary design to enhance user visibility and occupancy of space.



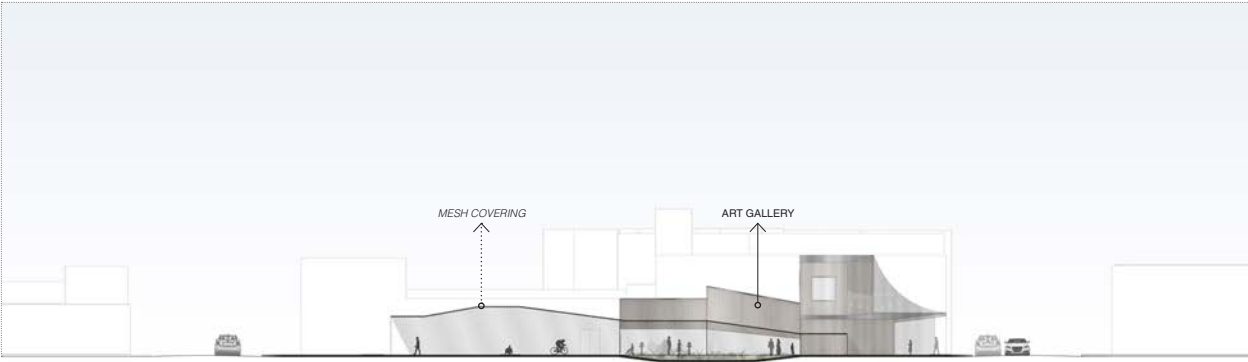
ROOF PLAN



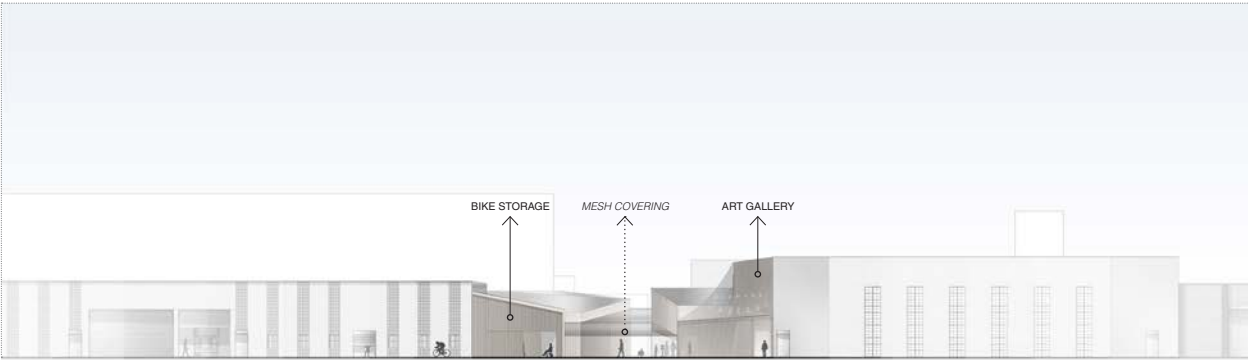
GROUND PLAN



ELEVATION 01



ELEVATION 02

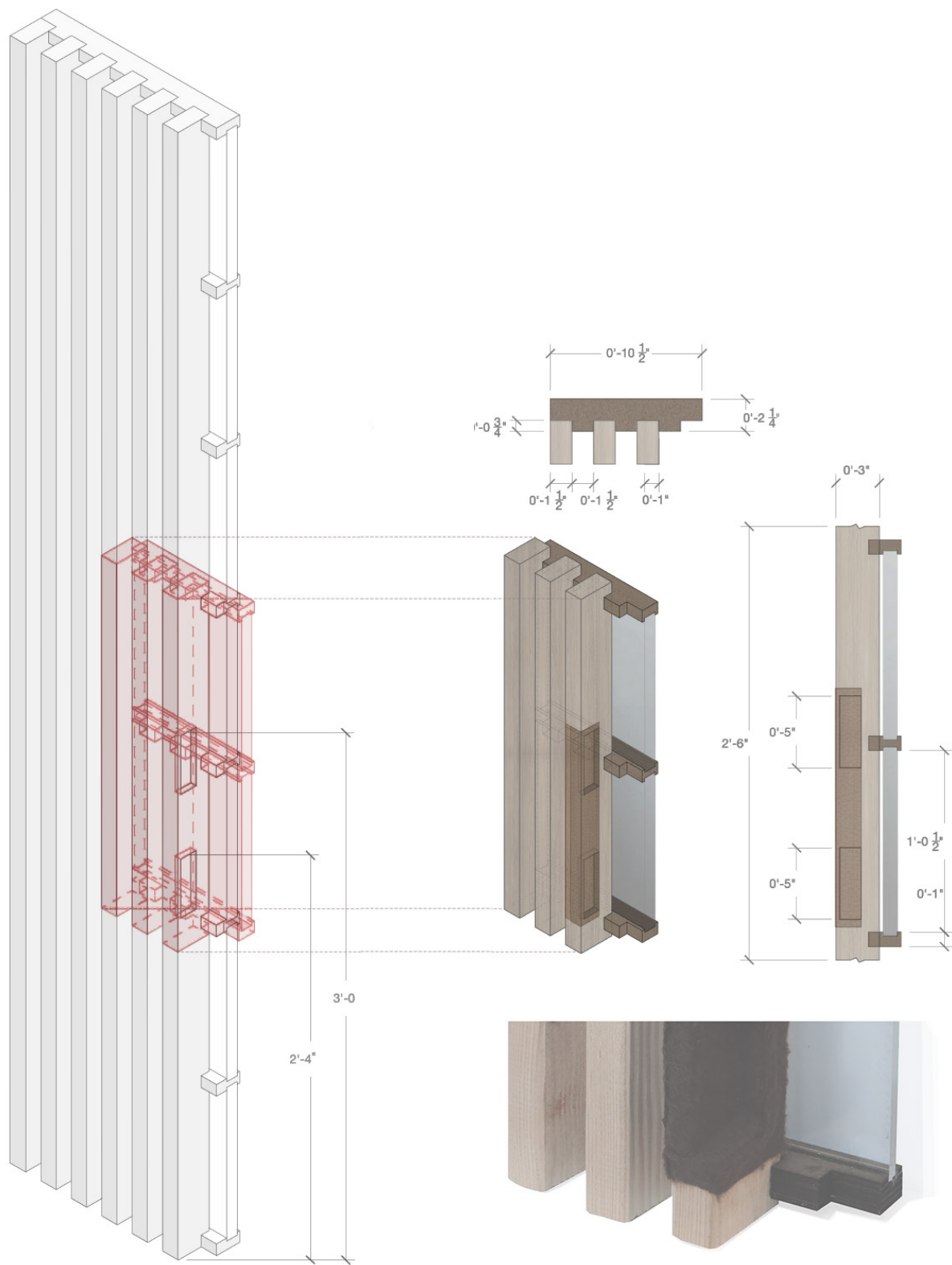


ELEVATION 03



ELEVATION 04

Workshop space and exterior circulation is where the bike shop and gallery are able to physically connect with one another. This interaction is intentional in order to create a space for creative endeavors to increase the quality of life for all individuals that interact with it, creating unforgettable memories.



1:1 Tactile Model

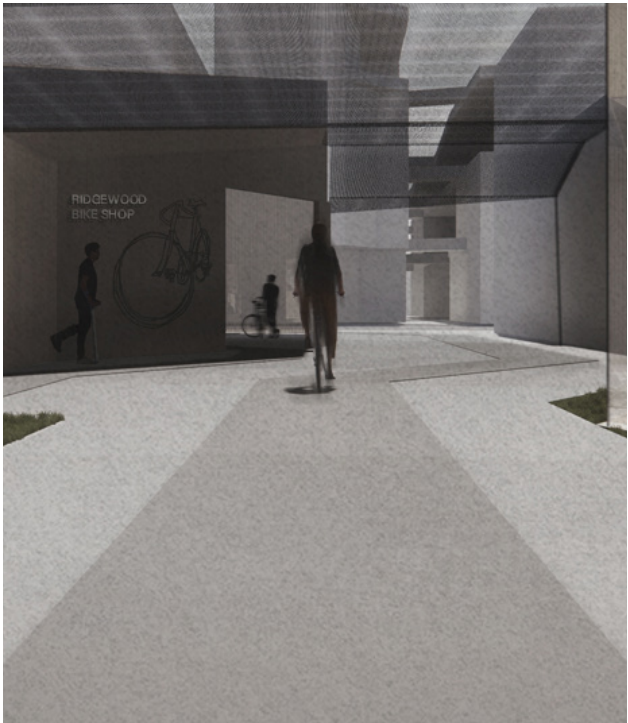
Within the bike repair shop and bike storage, there are five large and one small sliding garage door to provide a direct connection between the interior and exterior spaces. Interior glazing and wooden 2x4s were used in the construction of these horizontal doors. Every door's handle is positioned to accommodate both the average height of a person standing (3'-0" from the ground) and a person who uses a wheelchair (2'-4" from the ground). The front and side facade of the handle element is wrapped with a fur like texture for those with sight blindness to easily locate the entry handle through touch.



THE HUEMANN GALLERY



EXITING THE BIKE STORAGE



ALONG THE BIKE PATH

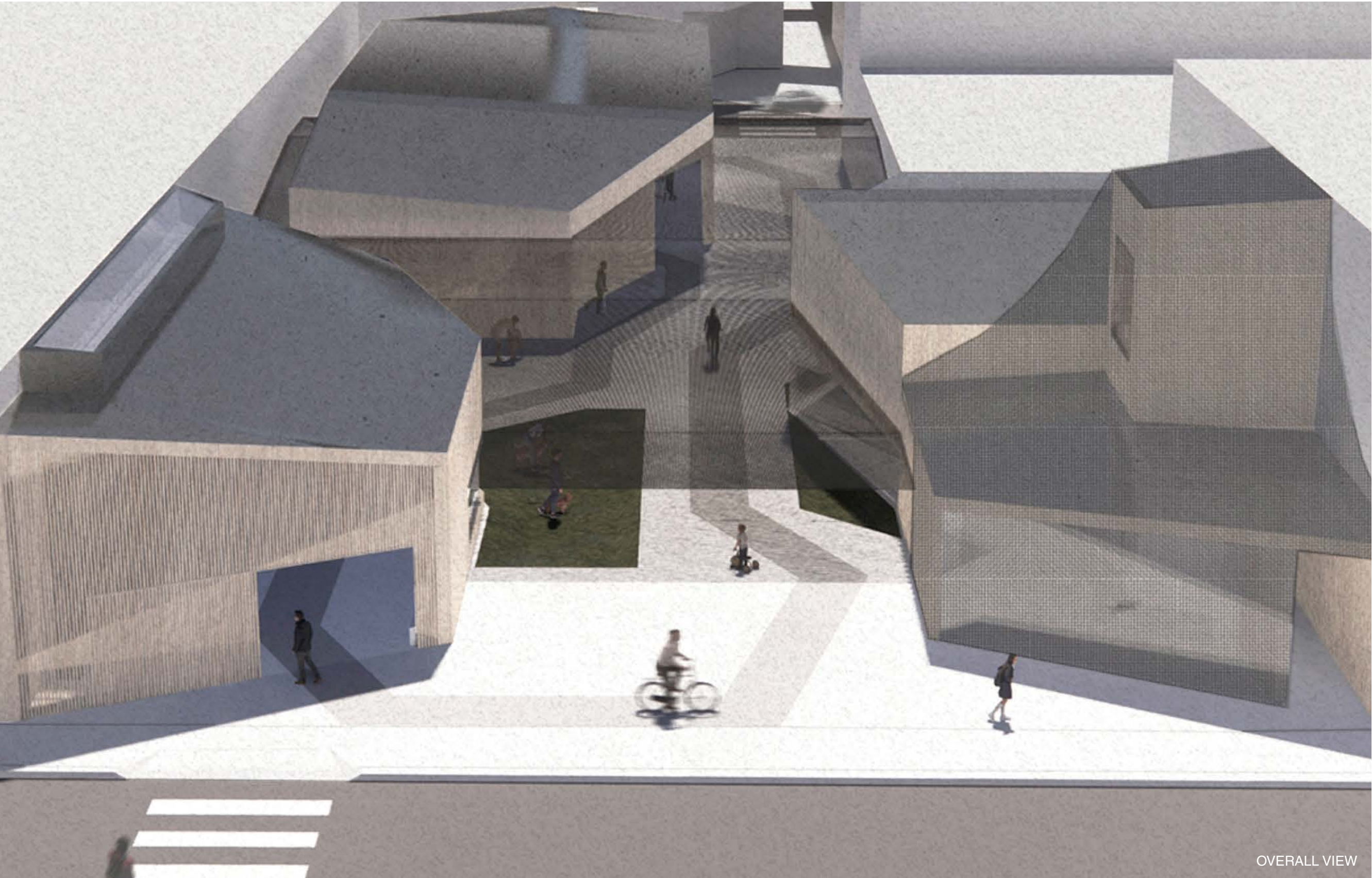


BIKE STORAGE STREET ENTRY

Moments Of Intersection

Each building's roofscape and geometrical carving are carefully designed to allow height fluctuation, generating comfortable areas suitable for individuals with varying heights.

When people are riding, running, or strolling through the area, the tactile elements -- such as the gradient bike route and the green areas in the lot courtyard -- help them navigate.



OVERALL VIEW



Kinderspace Competition

Employed by Professor Catherine Wilmes

Graduate Research Assistant
Cornell University, Summer 2025

Shortlisted for an Ideas Competition

Connecting Education Through Regional Rail

Learning on the Line is a rail-integrated kindergarten prototype that reimagines early childhood education as a mobile, city-wide network. Serving up to 15,000 children, ages 3 - 6, across 25 sq. miles of Chicago’s South Side, the project transforms underused train infrastructure into dynamic learning environments. Anchored by a fixed facility beside an abandoned school site, the system includes mobile teaching cars, self-learning pods, and faculty support units that travel between schools, libraries, and cultural hubs. In response to widespread school closures and disinvestment, this model embeds education into the city’s mobility systems by expanding access, sustaining peer learning, and reconnecting young learners with the broader urban fabric.



Photograph by Cat Wilmes
Model Built by KS Competition Team

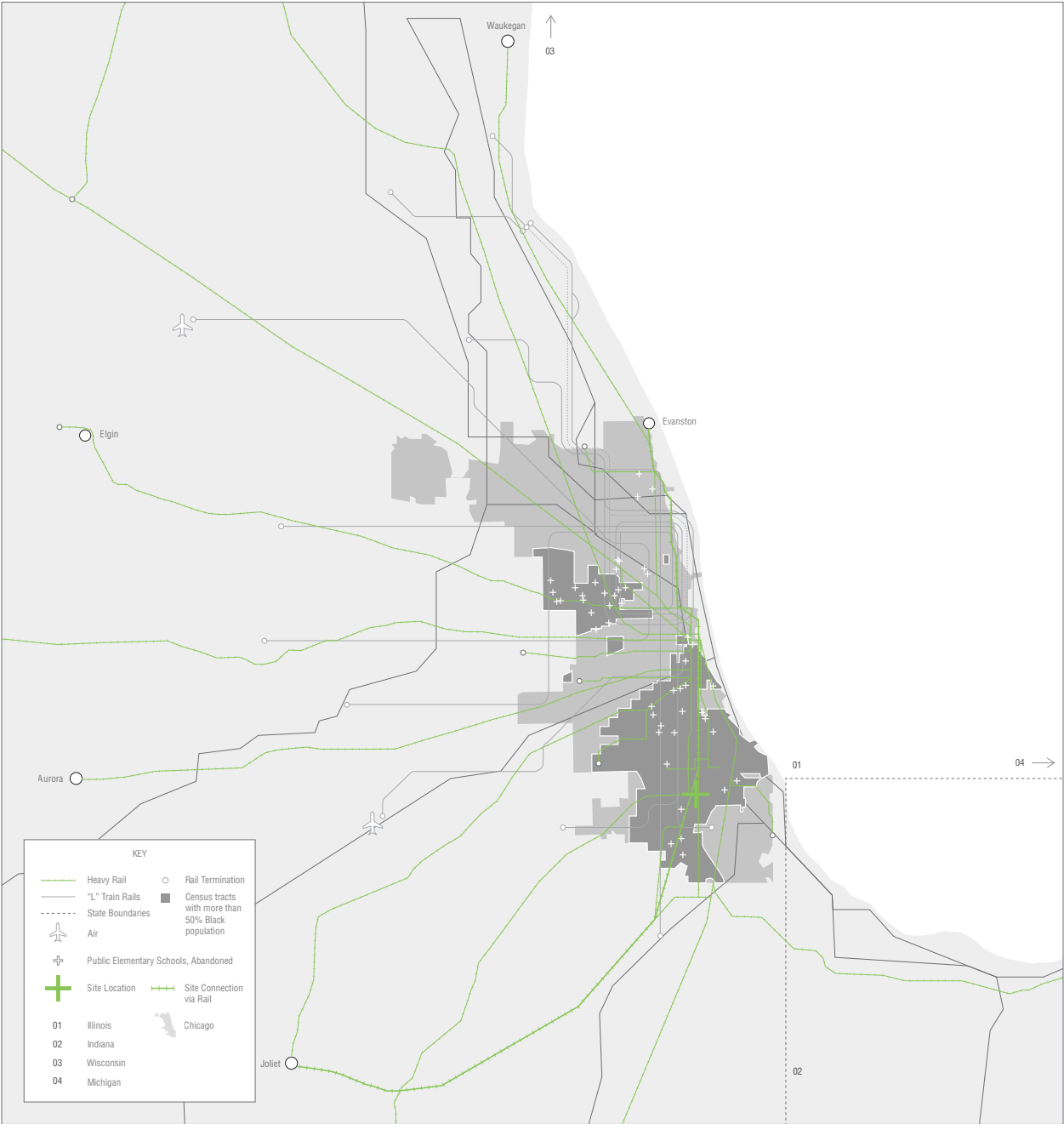
Southside, Chicago,
Illinois, USA 60619

IN COLLABORATION WITH
KS Competition Team

All drawings are by Sophia Zaita unless otherwise noted.



In 2013, Chicago closed 46 school buildings. A decade later, more than half remain unused. Of the 46, only 20 have been repurposed, while 26 remain dormant; 16 of those are publicly owned and vacant, and 10 have been sold but sit unused. This ongoing vacancy has shaped the core of our design intent: to reimagine and revitalize these abandoned schools and rail lines through innovative reuse.

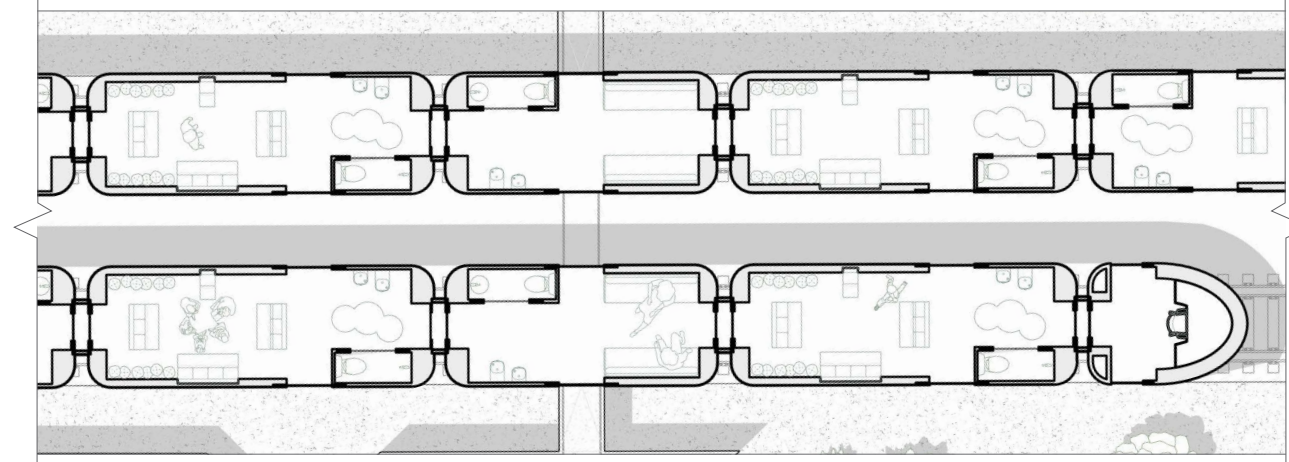


CONTEXTUAL PLAN

Each train car operates as a fully equipped mobile classroom, mirroring the design and amenities of the main facility. Centrally oriented seating fosters collaboration, while keeping peer groups intact. The cars effectively extend the learning environment beyond the school building, connecting seamlessly to other schools, libraries, and cultural institutions.

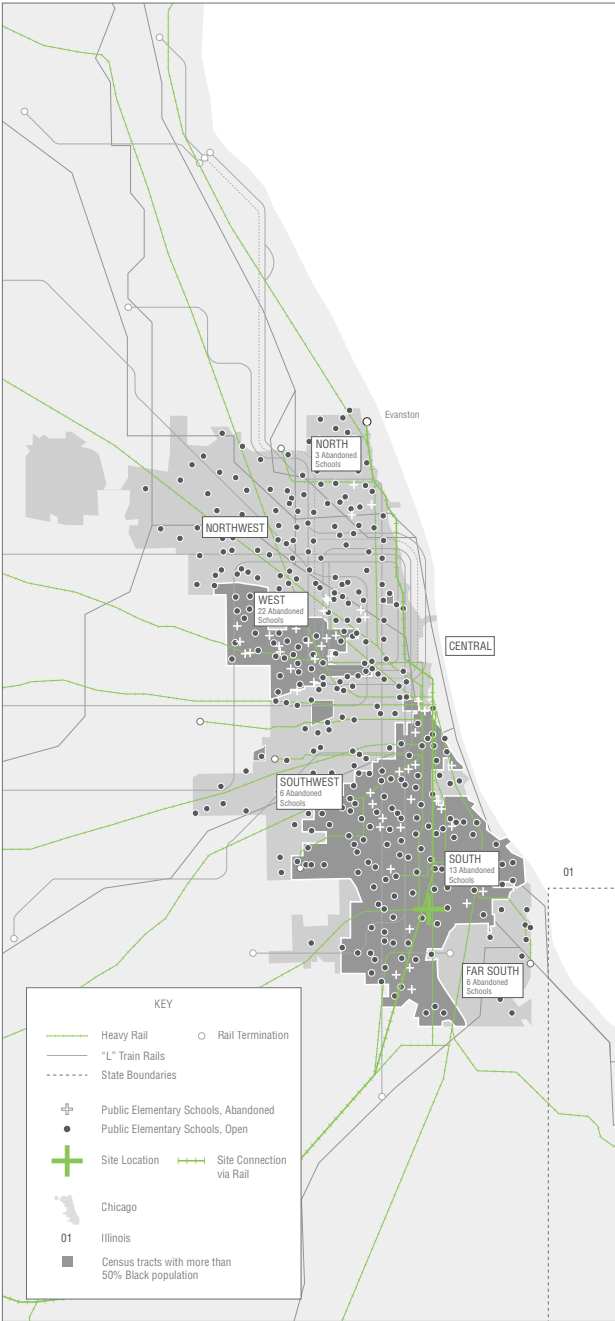


GROUND PLAN

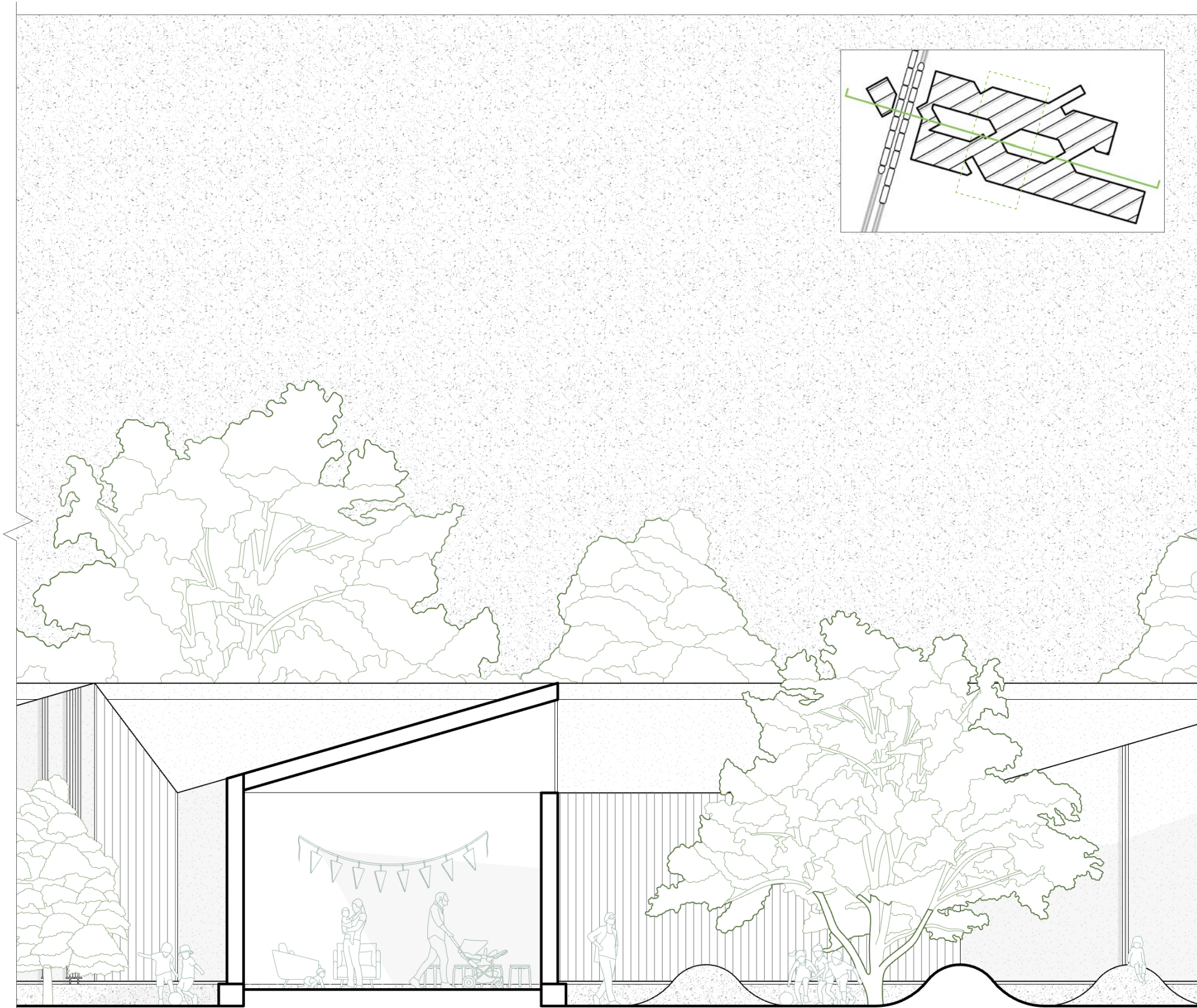


ZOOM-IN TRAIN PLAN

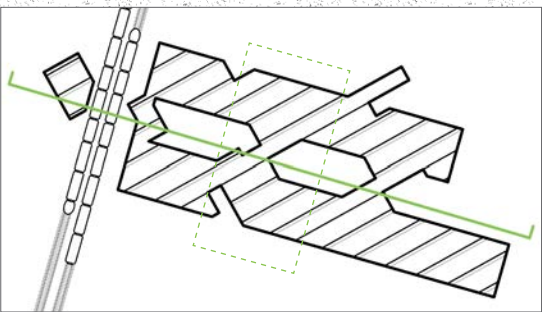
Constructed primarily from renewable mass timber, the building features exposed wood interiors that create a warm, tactile environment ideal for young learners while revealing the structure's logic. Built-in, child-scaled furniture minimizes the need for movable partitions, reducing material waste and reinforcing a cohesive, sustainable design.

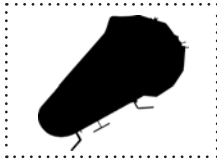


1 ZOOM-IN CONTEXTUAL PLAN



BUILDING SECTION





GROWN NYC’s Teaching Pavilion

Led by Ross Myren + Maya McGlynn

Parsons Design Build
Parsons SCE, Summer 2022

The Entryway

The Parsons Design Workshop builds upon the semester long project developed during the Spring 2022 term in the M. Arch program. Over the summer, our team refined the design in preparation for the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) approval process, constructed the Teaching Garden’s Entryway on the existing GrowNYC site, and engaged the public through community design workshops on Governors Island, among other initiatives.

Summer 2022 was a hands-on experience involving full prefabrication + construction. Our responsibilities included sourcing + ordering materials, milling timber, site excavation, mixing + pouring concrete, sewing canvas components, + assembling the structure, all within tight deadlines.



Photograph by Sophia Zaita

IN COLLABORATION WITH
Parsons Design Workshop Team

All drawings are by Sophia Zaita unless otherwise noted.





01



02



03



04



05



07



06



08



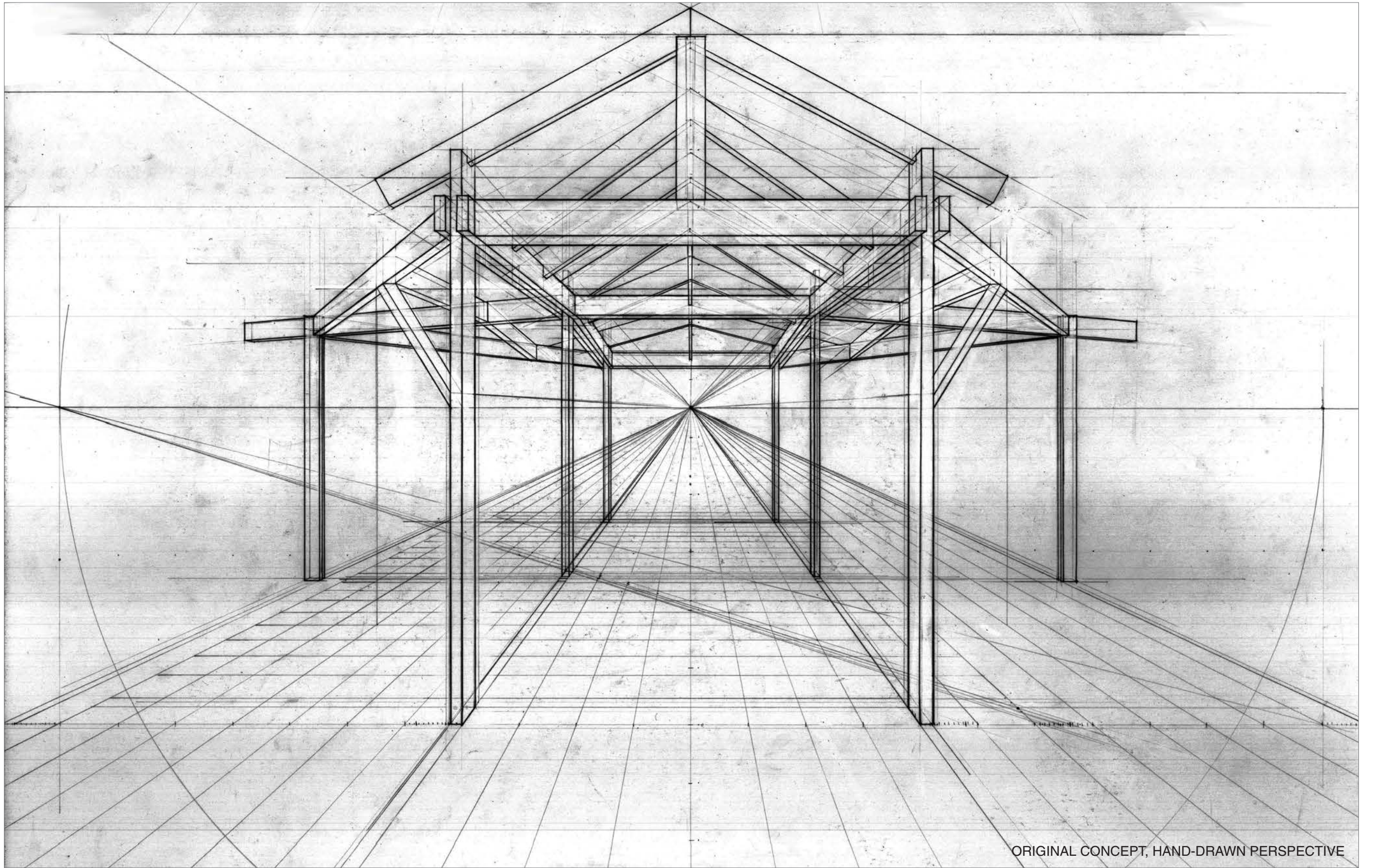
09

The Installation

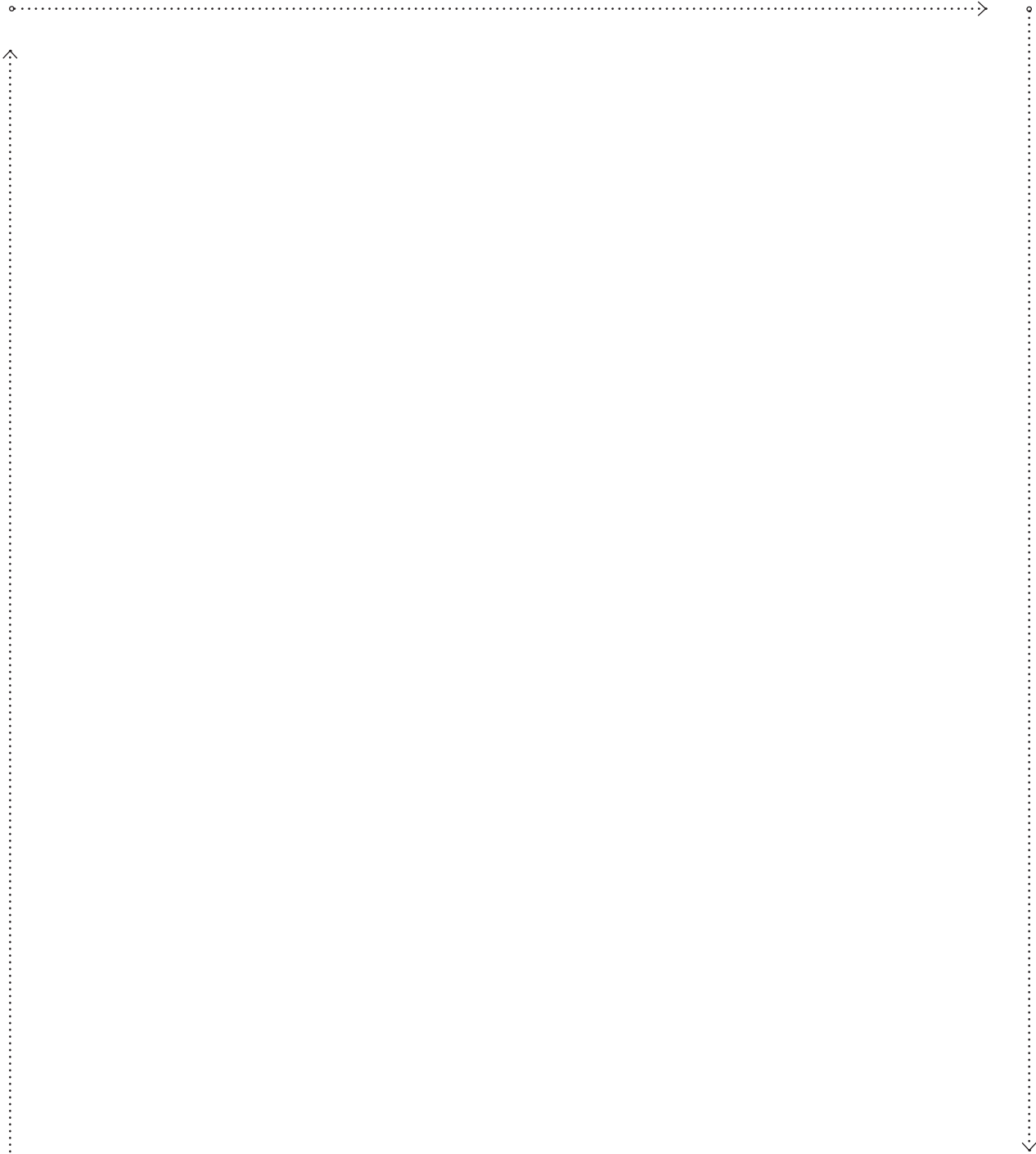
Image Descriptions

- 01. Wood Pre-fabrication
- 02. Wood Pre-fabrication
- 03. Post to Footing Connection
- 04. Assembly on Site
- 05. Assembly on Site
- 06. Assembly on Site
- 07. Final Construction
- 08. Interior Corner Connection
- 09. Exterior Corner Connection

CONSTRUCTION HIGHLIGHTS



ORIGINAL CONCEPT, HAND-DRAWN PERSPECTIVE



Portfolio

Additional Work:
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