

Architecture as Connection
a Fort Dupont Community Center

by

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Jaan Holt, Chair

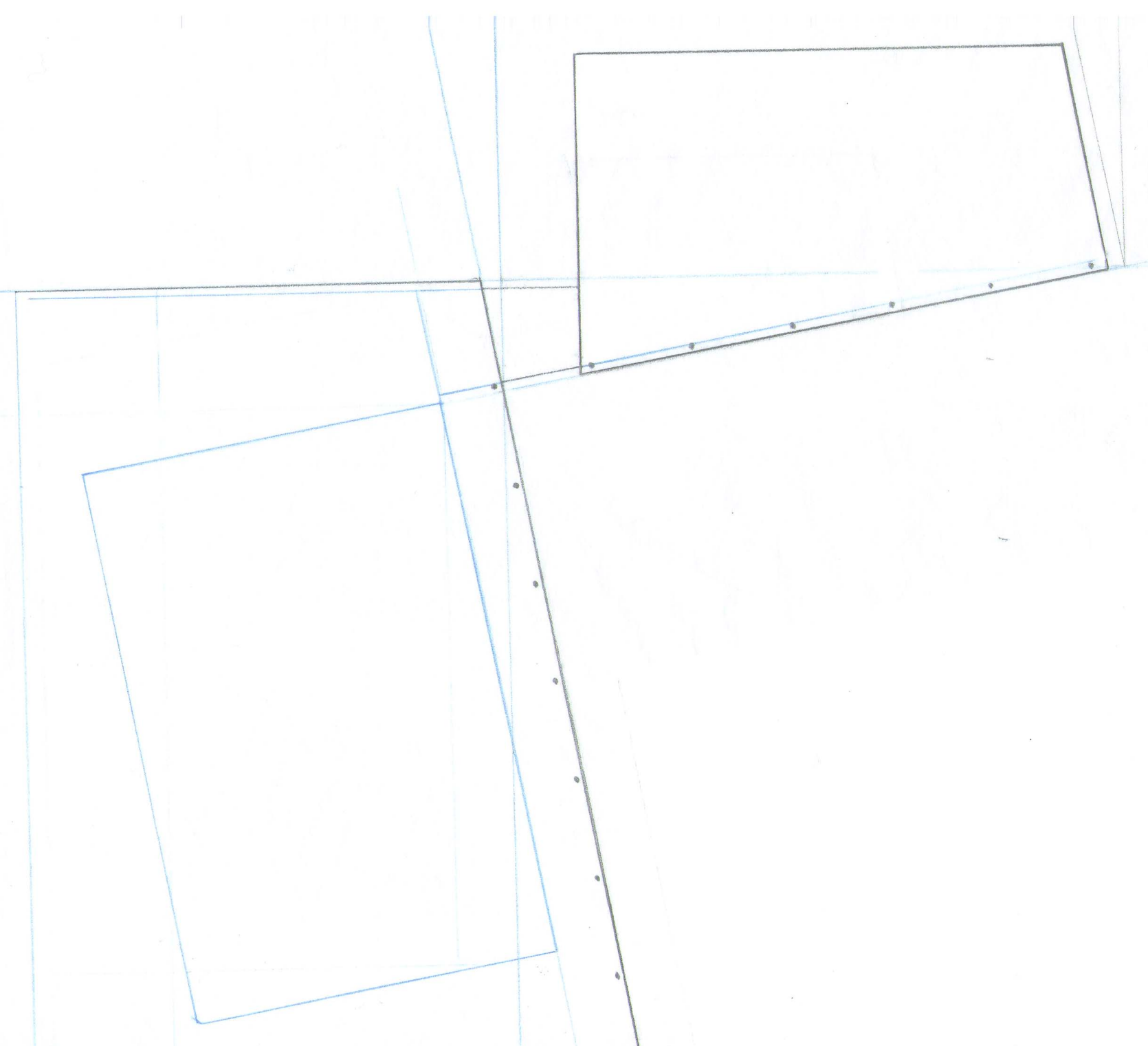
Susan C. Piedmont-Palladino

Marcia F. Feuerstein

Alexandria, VA
22 September 2010

key words: loggia, peristyle, portico,
terrace

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ABSTRACT

Connection is a fundamental part of architecture; not only in the forming of spaces, rooms and buildings, but in how each extends further to the surrounding environment, the streets, the city, and to the world.

Connections are also made between the built environment and the people that experience it. The goal of an architect should be to improve the setting and the quality of life of the people that utilize its features. These settings enable people to connect with each other, strengthen the community, and connect the community with the surrounding environment.

As a thesis study, a community center for Fort Dupont Park in Washington D.C. provides a suitable model for testing this approach to architecture. A variety of existing features such as neighborhoods, schools, and recreational areas provide support for a venue which gives coherence and centrality to the community.

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Thank you to my family and friends for your encouragement and support. You know who you are.

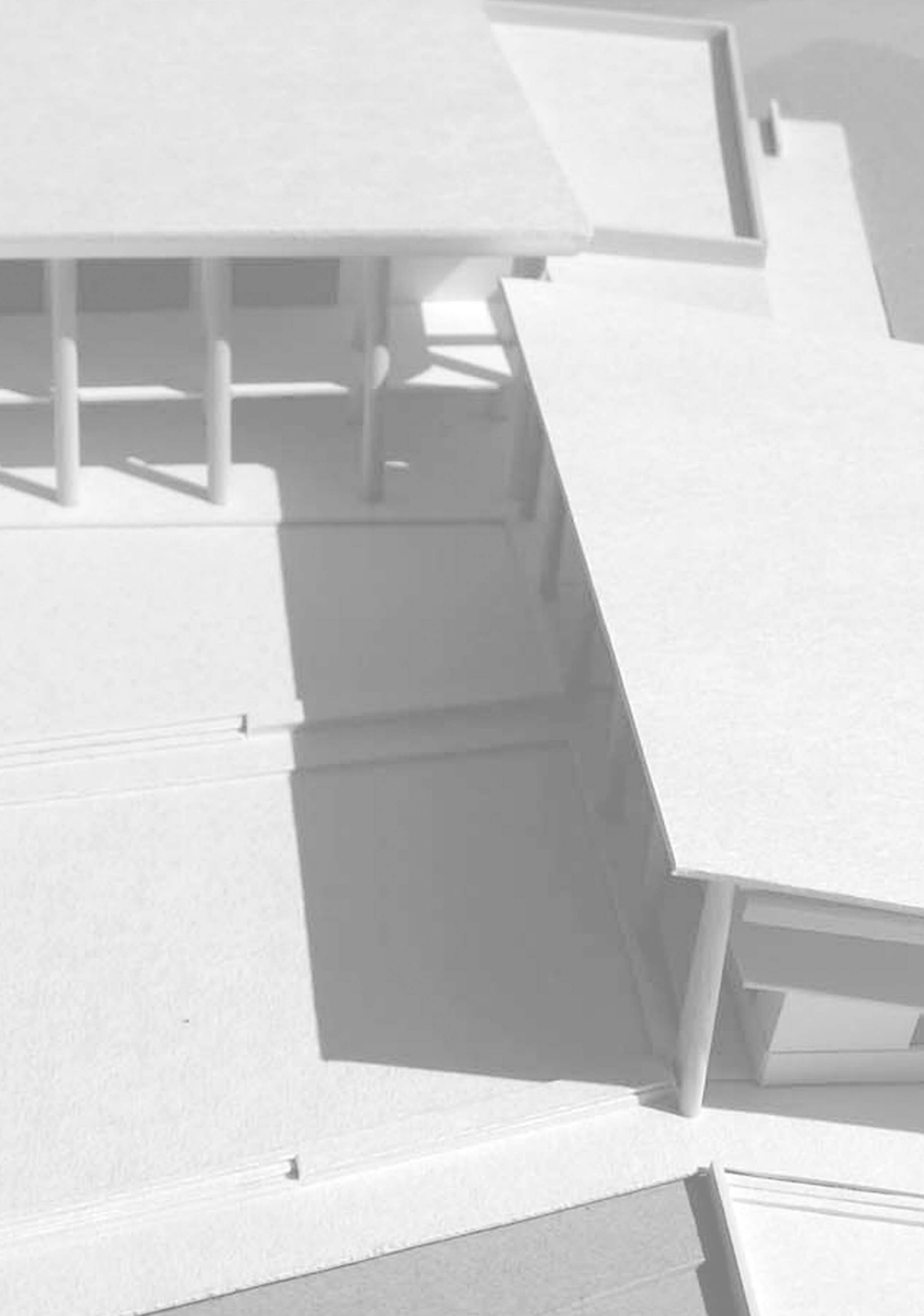


TABLE OF CONTENTS

i	Title Page
ii	Abstract
iii	Acknowledgements
1	Site
2	Origins
3	Early Organization
4	Refining Ideas
6	Site Plan
7	First Floor Plan
8	Second Floor Plan
9	East Elevation
10	West Elevation
11	North Elevation
12	South Elevation
13	Building Sections
14	Building Sections
15	3D Rendering
16	3D Rendering
17	Physical Model
18	Physical Model
19	Physical Model
20	References



SITE

The site for the Community Center is located in Southeast Washington, D.C., east of the Anacostia River in Fort Dupont Park. It sits atop a small hill immediately south of the intersection of Ely Place and 37th Street.

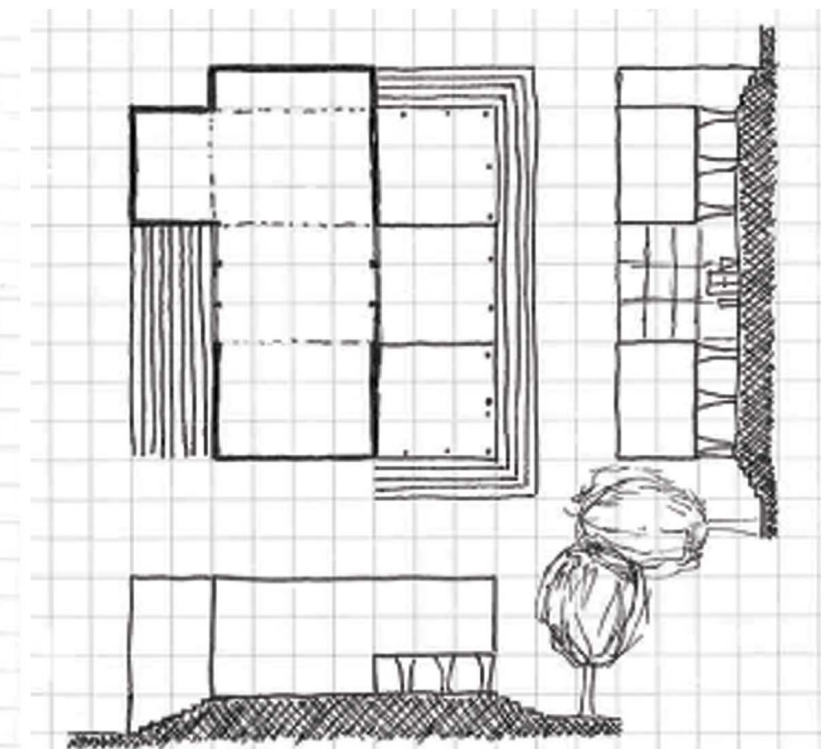
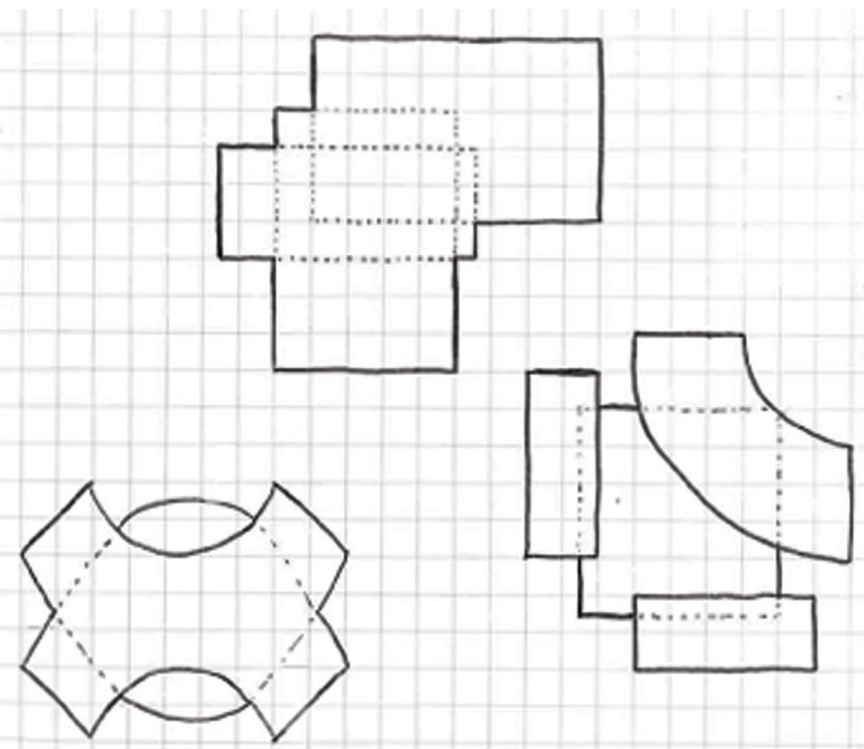
The site terminates the vista as cars approach from 37th Street. This location was chosen due to its close proximity to schools, residential neighborhoods, and recreational areas such as sports fields, an ice arena, playgrounds and bike path through Fort Dupont Park.

The site is a natural intersection of activities that bring people within a community together. It also extends to the city through several Metrobus routes, the Metro, and an existing parking lot to the east.



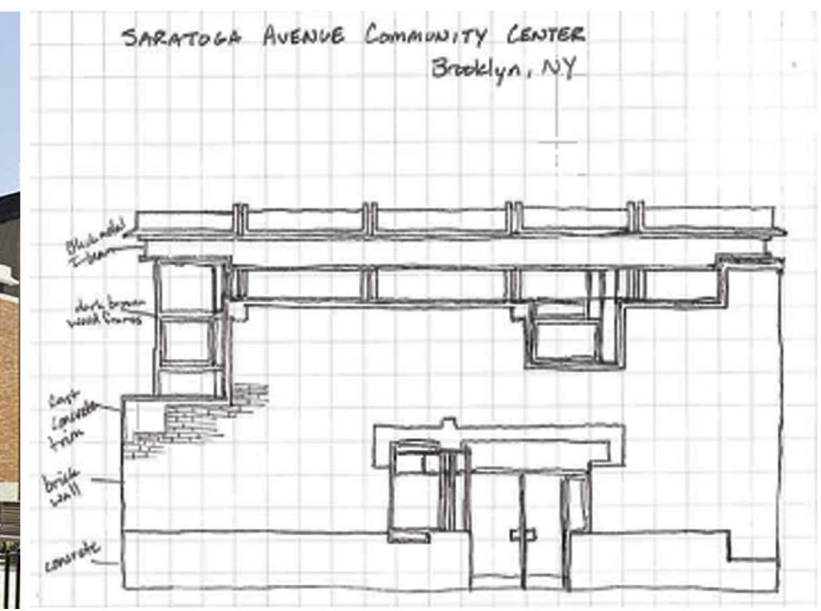
ORIGINS

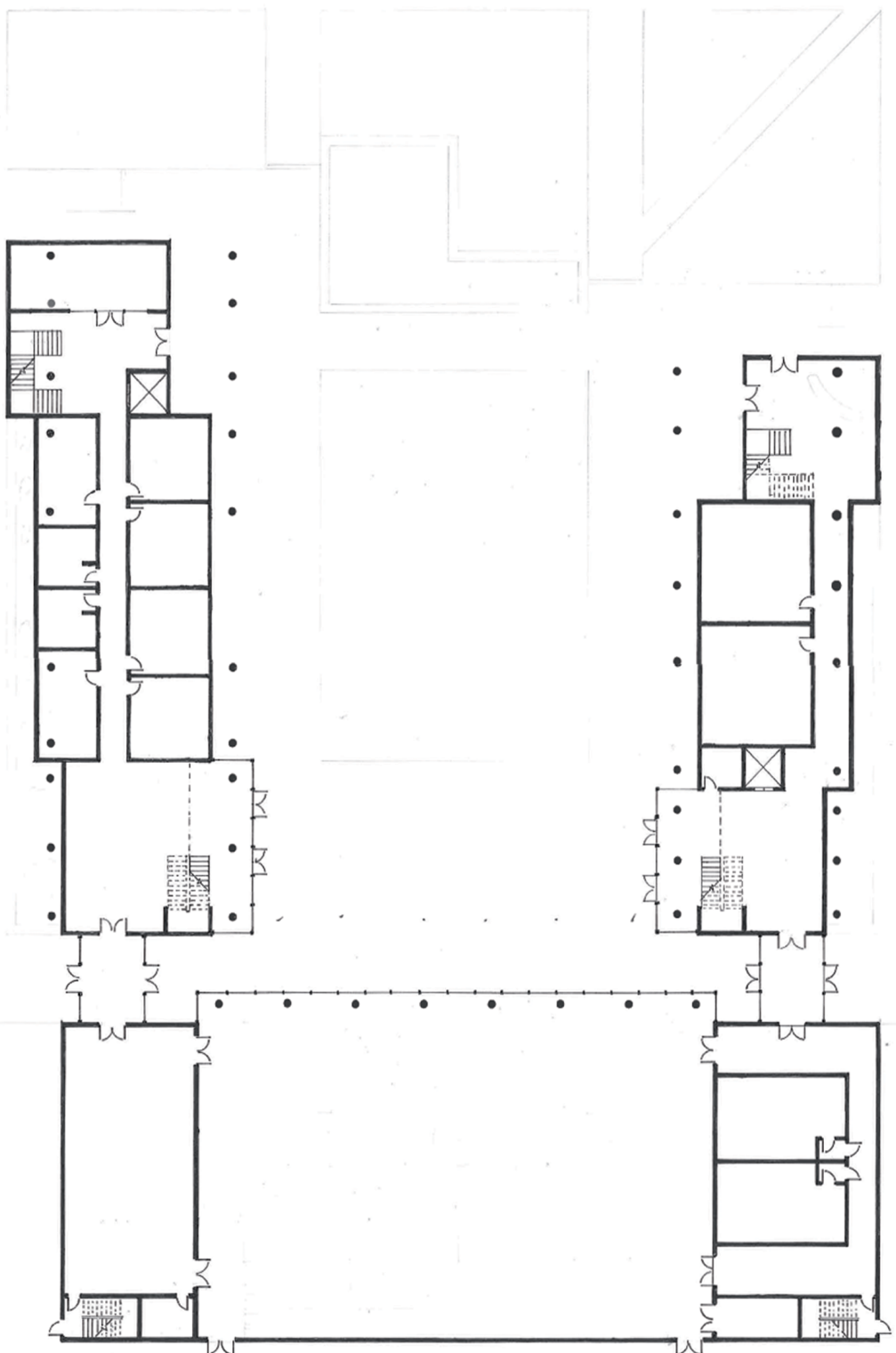
Early studies explored how the site itself connected to the surrounding D.C. area and how the built environment influenced these connections. Architectural themes developed while studying combinations of simple spaces and shapes which create complexity within the combined spaces.



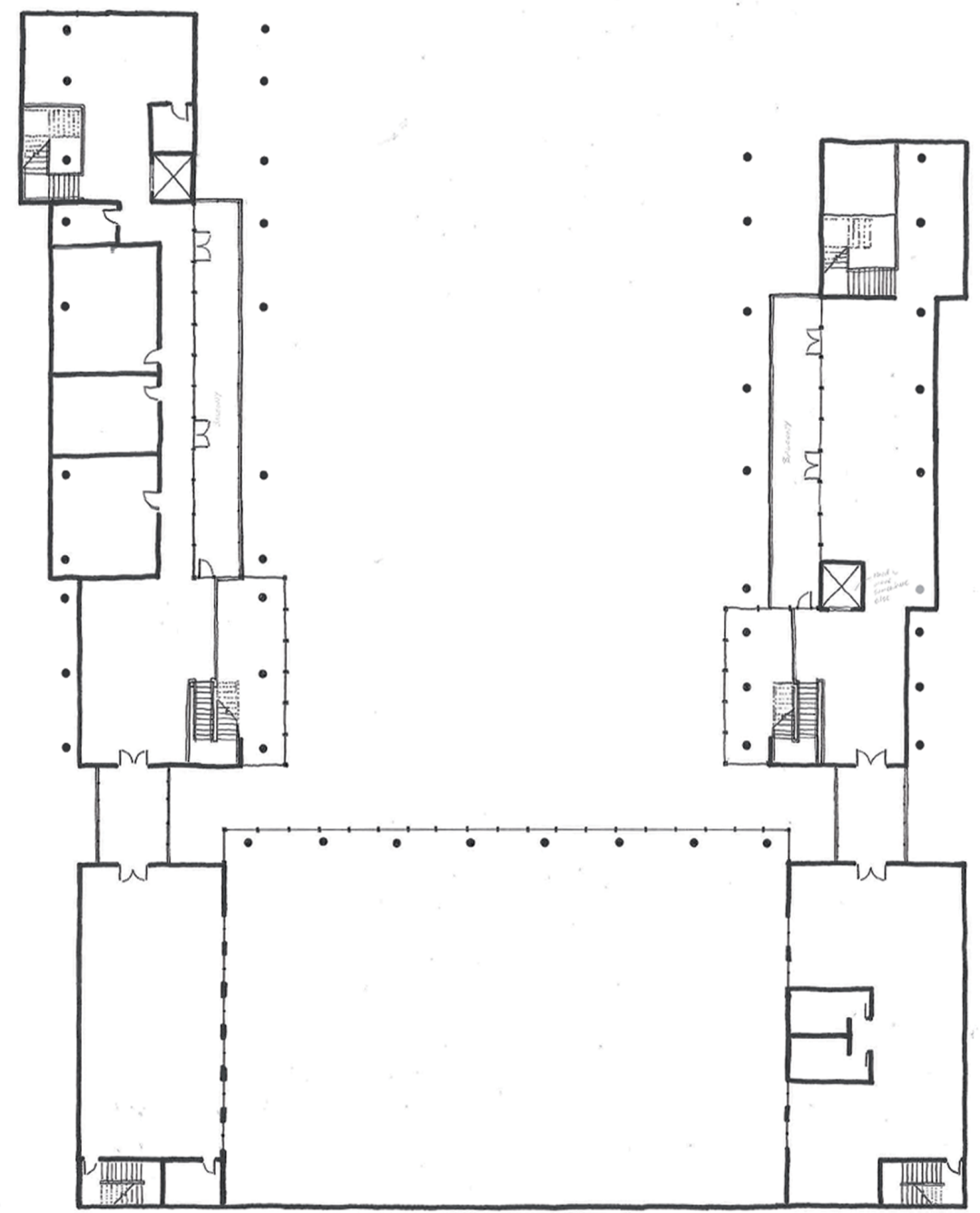
The program developed initially as a building that was designed around the existing pathways and connections between the surrounding buildings and the exterior environment. As the functions of the building were identified, the purpose then became to fragment the larger program into its constituent parts to form the courtyard. Open interconnected spaces accommodate multiple uses while also connecting the building to its surroundings.

Research included the studying of community development, campus and town organization, and neighborhood profiles of the D.C. Wards. Similar existing buildings were studied such as the Saratoga Avenue Community Center in Brooklyn, NY and the Charles Houston Recreation Center in Alexandria, VA. A look at both historical and existing community centers provided a basis for the development of the project.

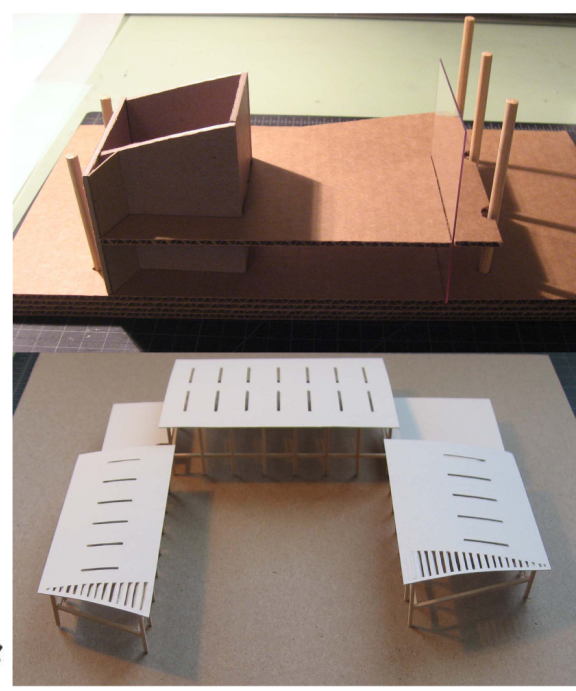
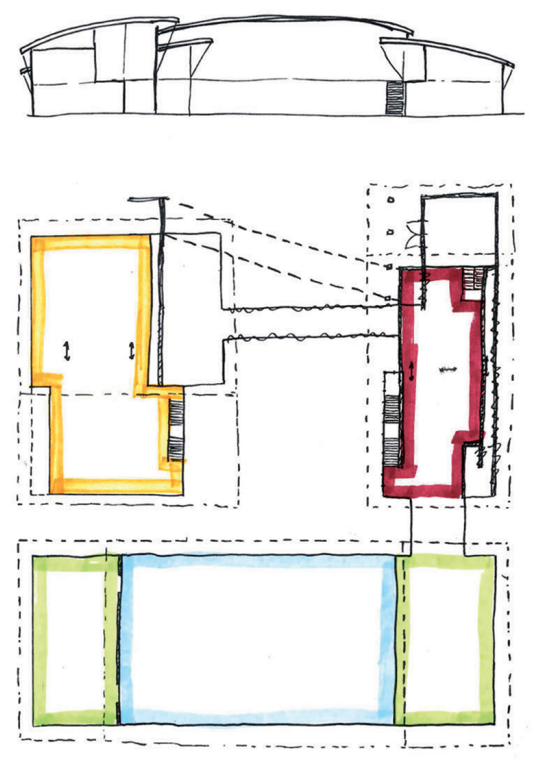




GROUND FLOOR
SCALE: 1" = 1/8"

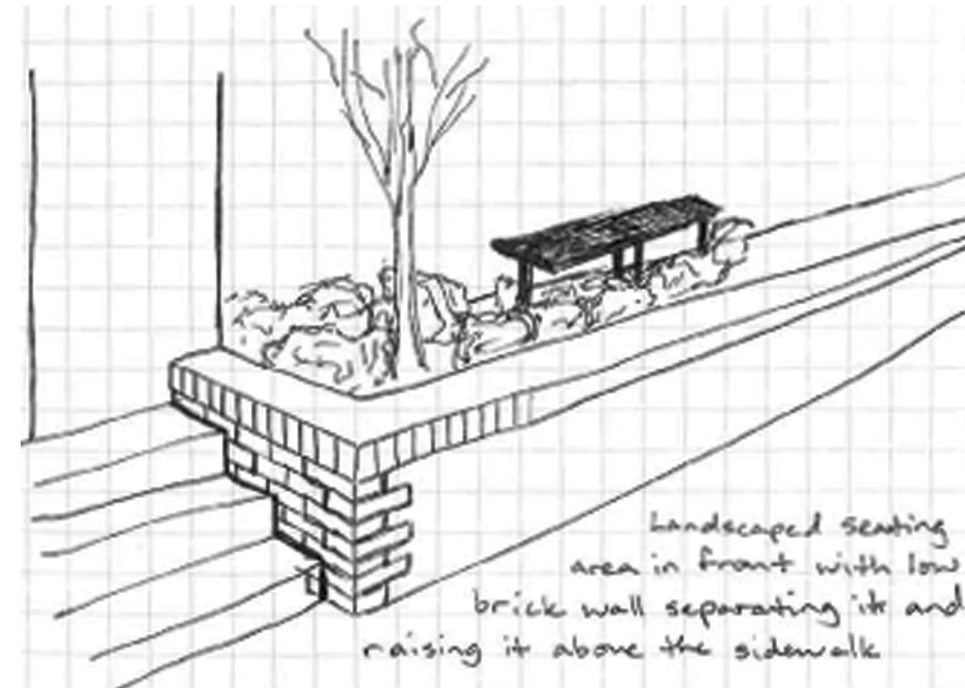
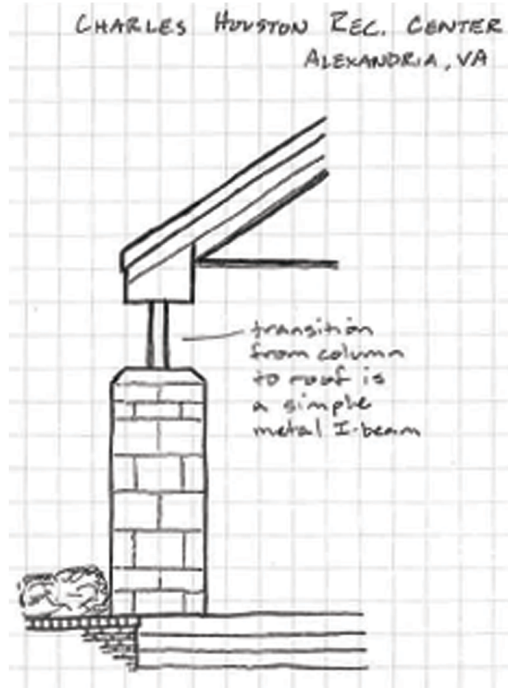
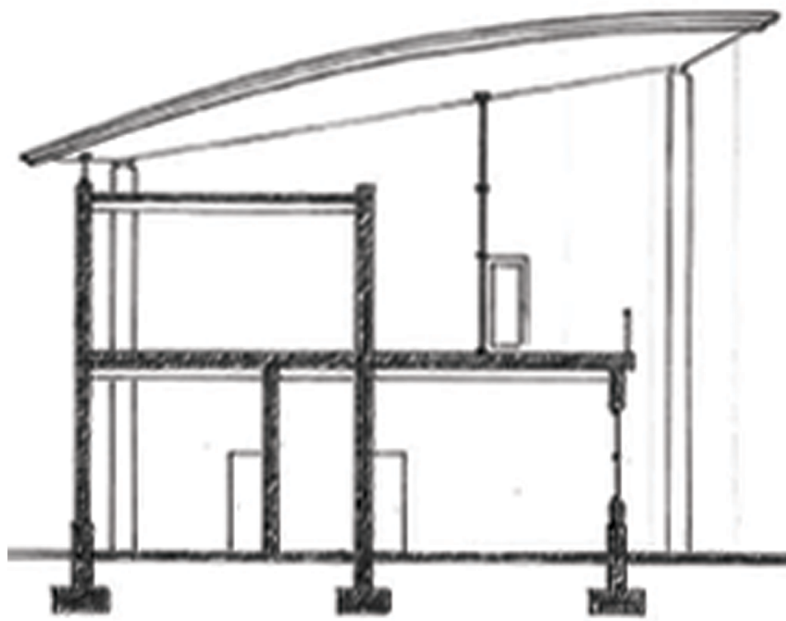
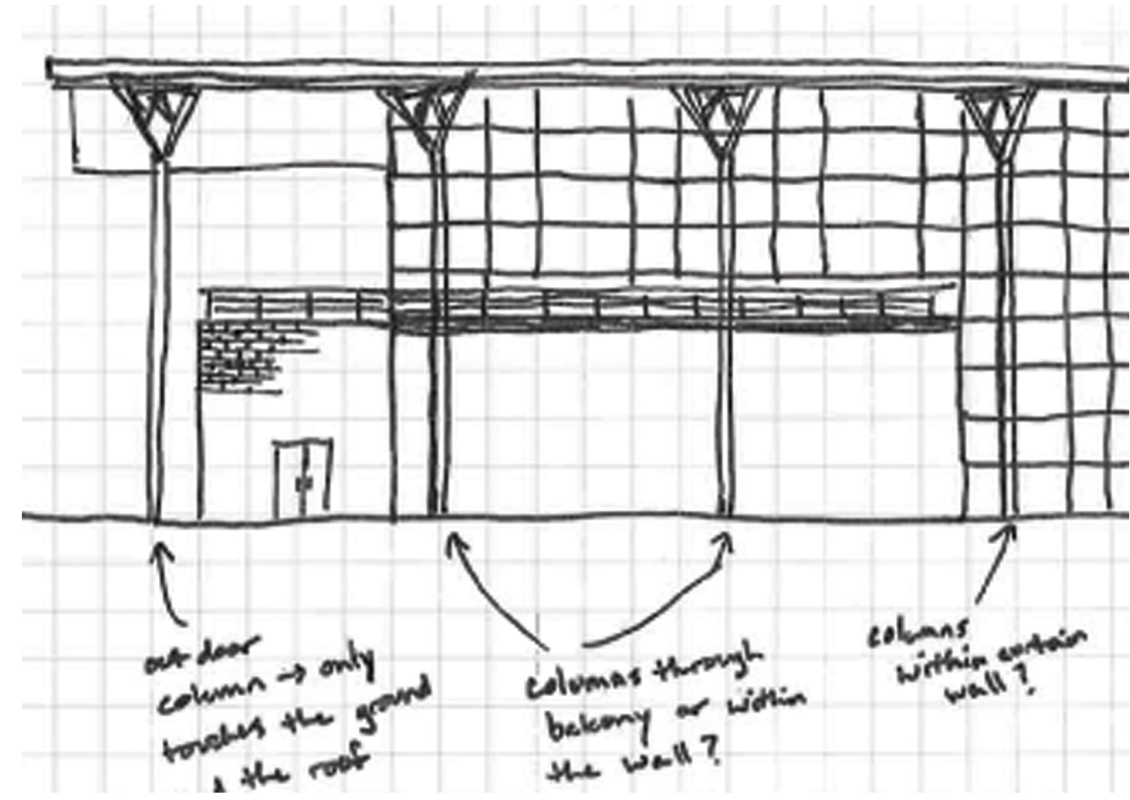
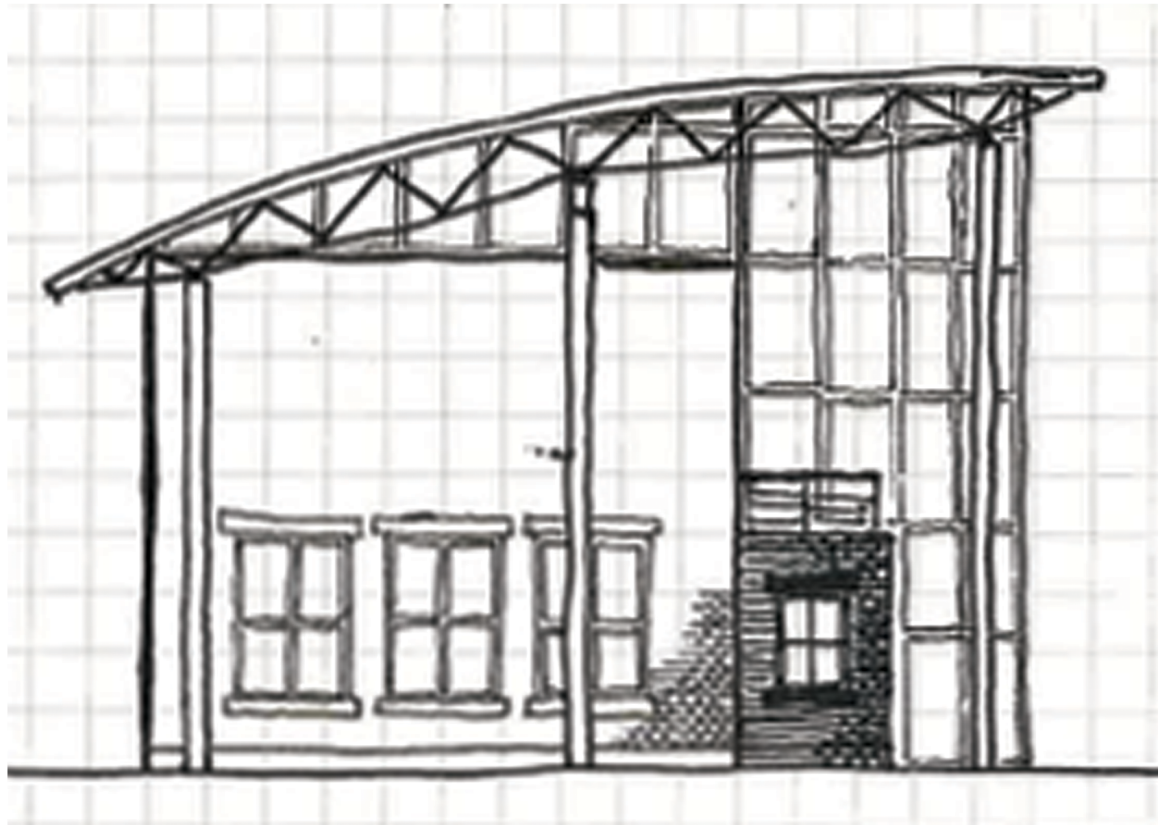


SECOND FLOOR
SCALE: 1" = 1/8"



EARLY ORGANIZATION

Initial plans were developed around a central peristyle courtyard with each of the building sections serving different functions. One wing for educational classrooms and study areas, one wing for community offices and meeting rooms, and the larger connecting section for recreation and athletics. Porticos extend out to the terraced courtyard which adapts to the topography of the site.



REFINING IDEAS

As the program developed, details concerning building parts and how they connected to the site and to each other became more important. Materials were chosen to link the building visually and physically with the surroundings to reinforce the connections to the community.

FINAL DRAWINGS



Ely Pl SE
Sousa Middle School

37th St SE

37th Pl SE

3700

Ely Pl SE

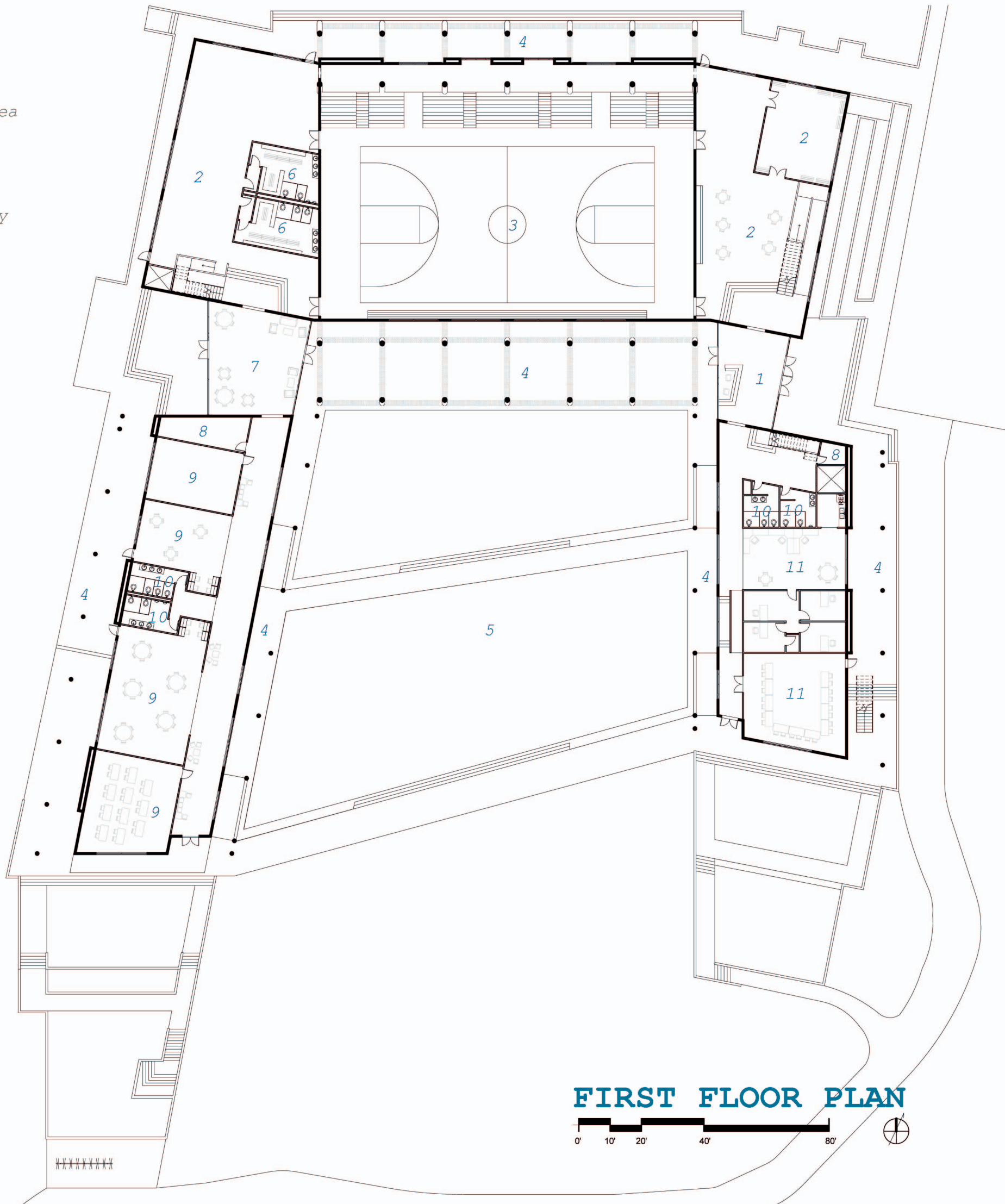
3712

Fort Dupont Ice Rink

SITE PLAN

Legend

- 1 Entrance Lobby
- 2 Multipurpose Area
- 3 Gymnasium
- 4 Covered Walkway
- 5 Courtyard
- 6 Locker Room
- 7 Recreation Lobby
- 8 Mechanical
- 9 Classroom
- 10 Restroom
- 11 Office/
Administration

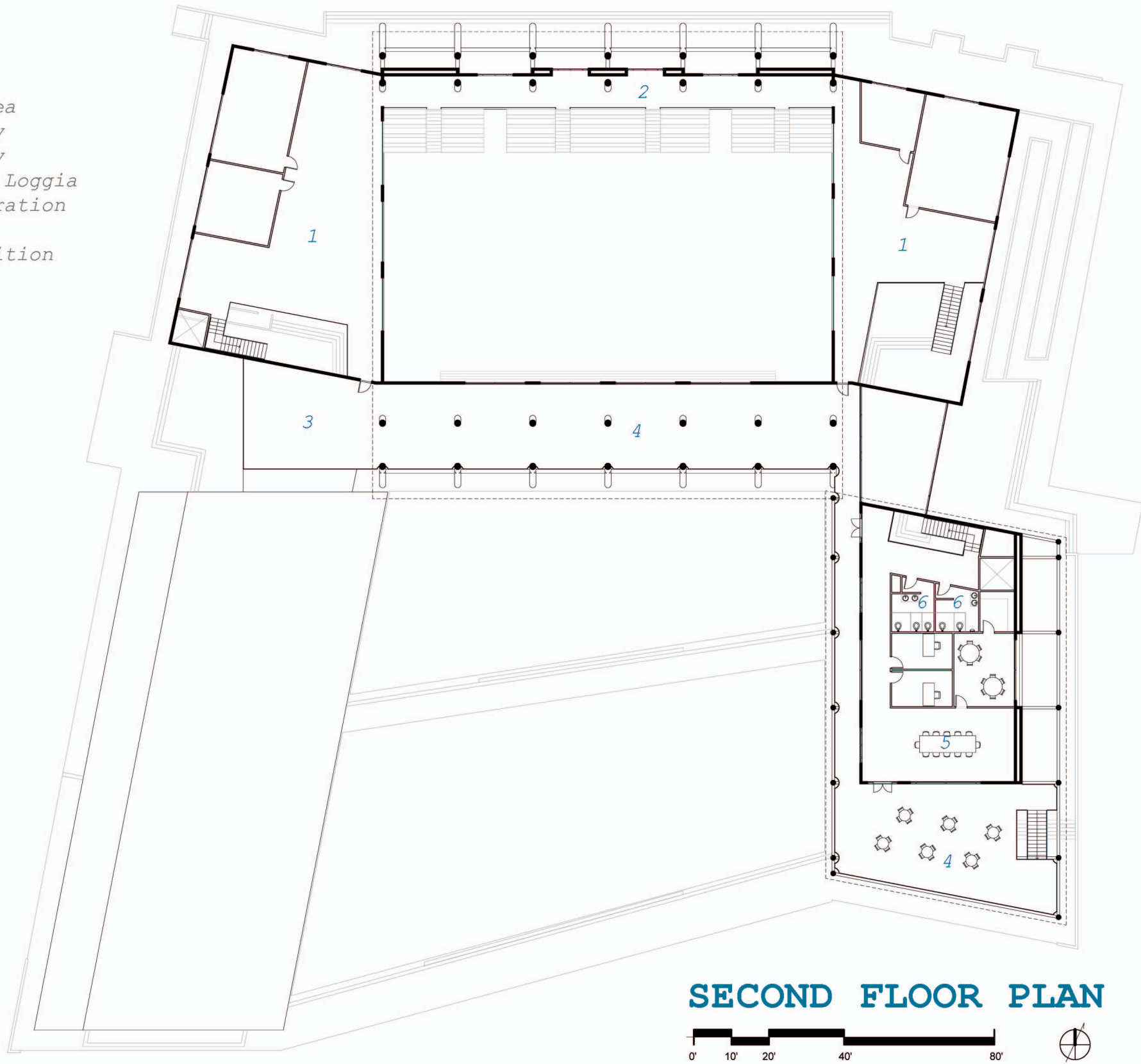


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

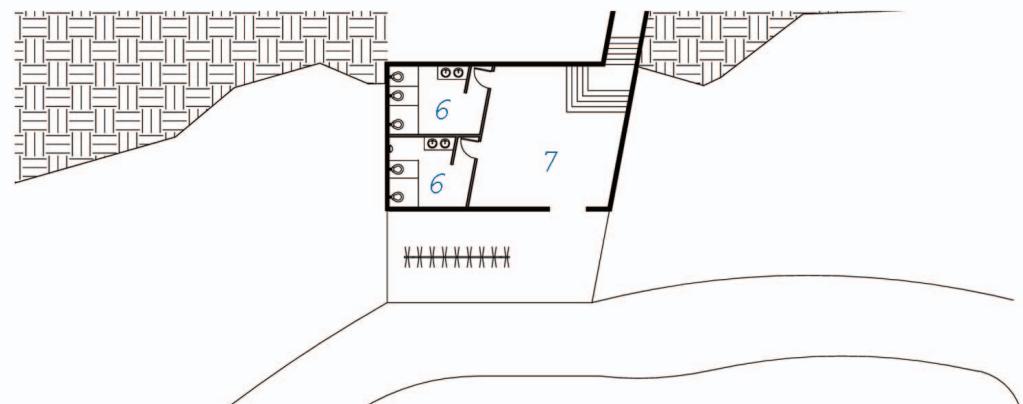


Legend

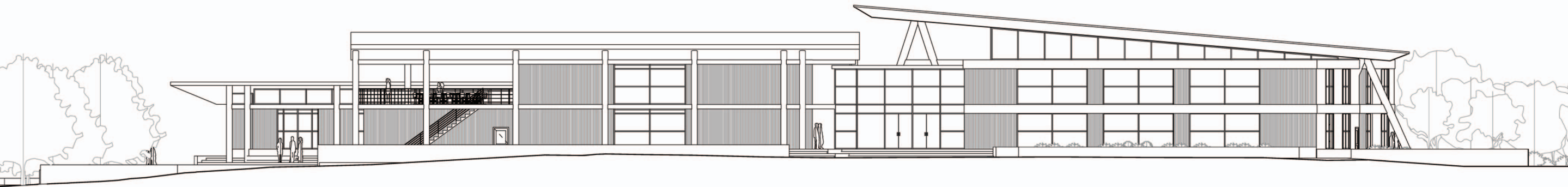
- 1 Multipurpose Area
- 2 Perching Balcony
- 3 Open Air Balcony
- 4 Covered Outdoor Loggia
- 5 Office/Administration
- 6 Restroom
- 7 Bike Path Transition



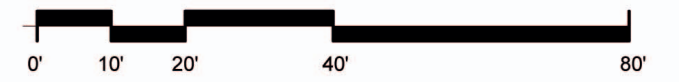
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



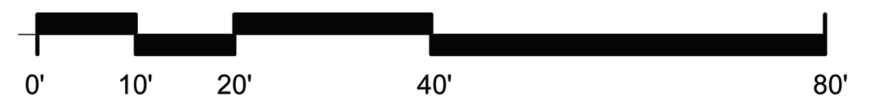
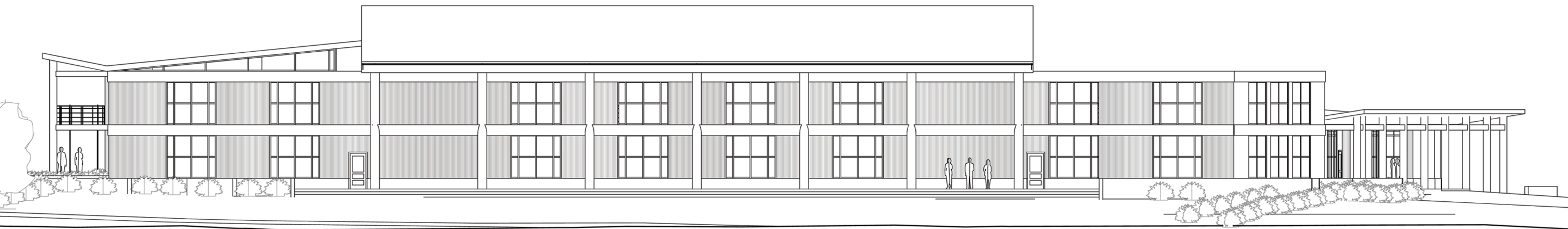
SUB FLOOR PLAN



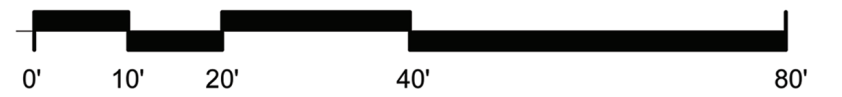
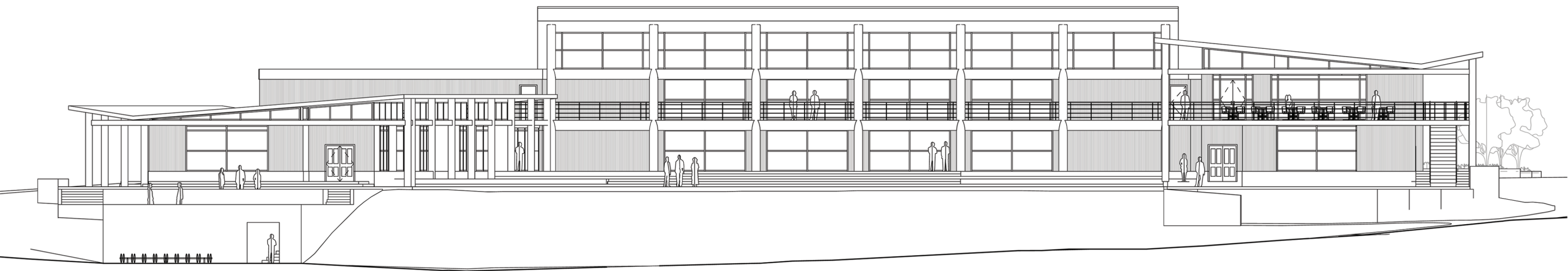
EAST ELEVATION



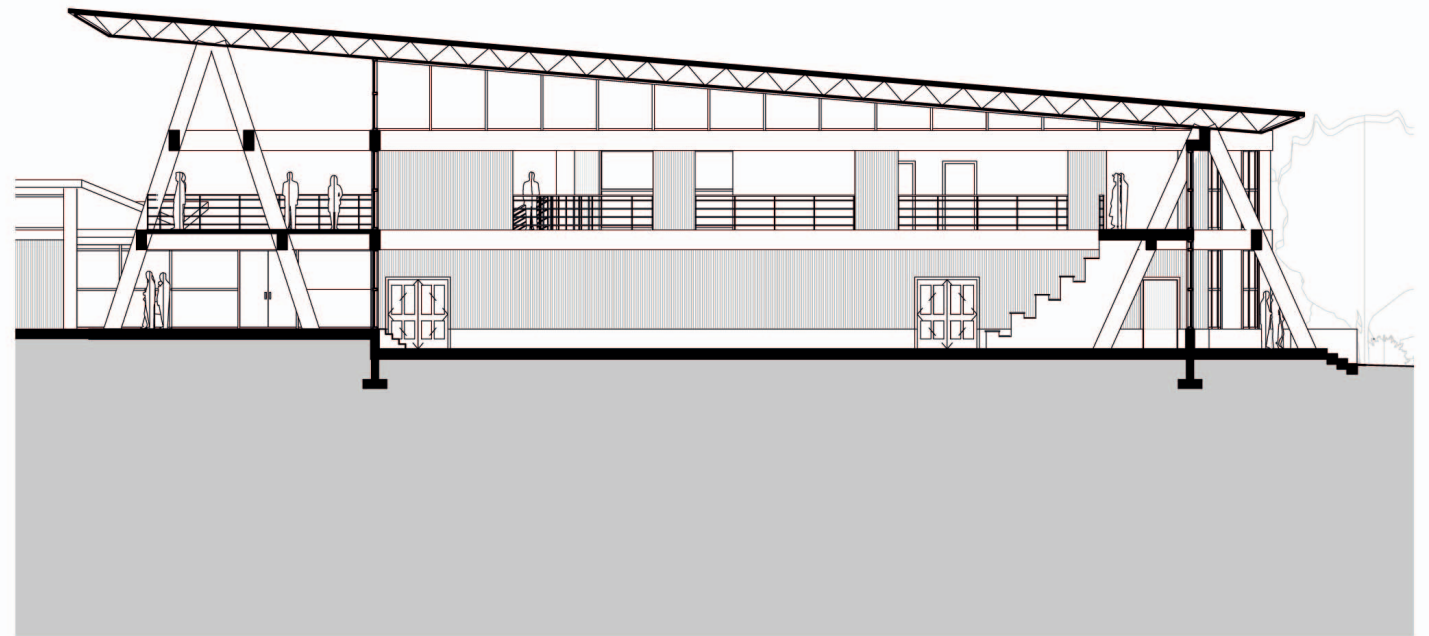
WEST ELEVATION



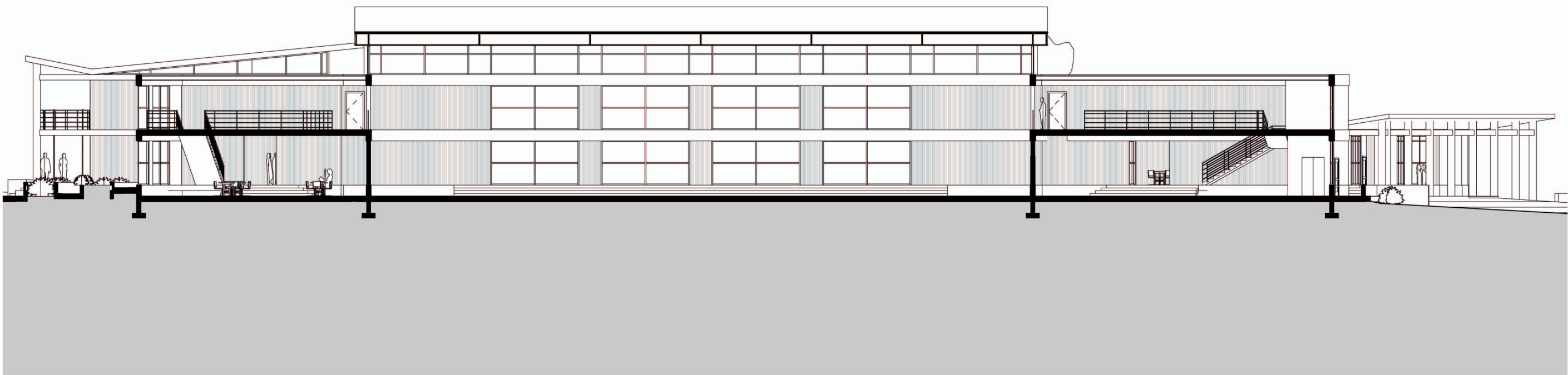
NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

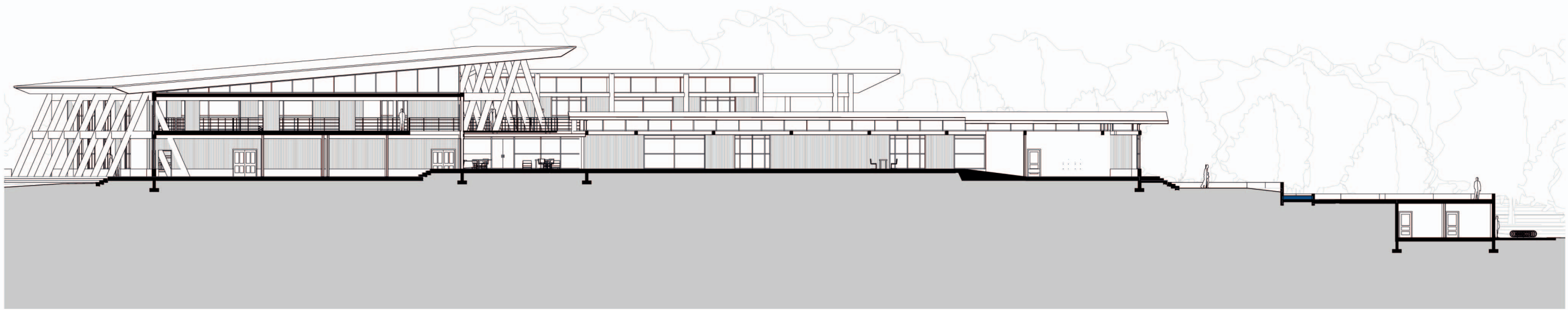


NORTH/SOUTH SECTION LOOKING WEST

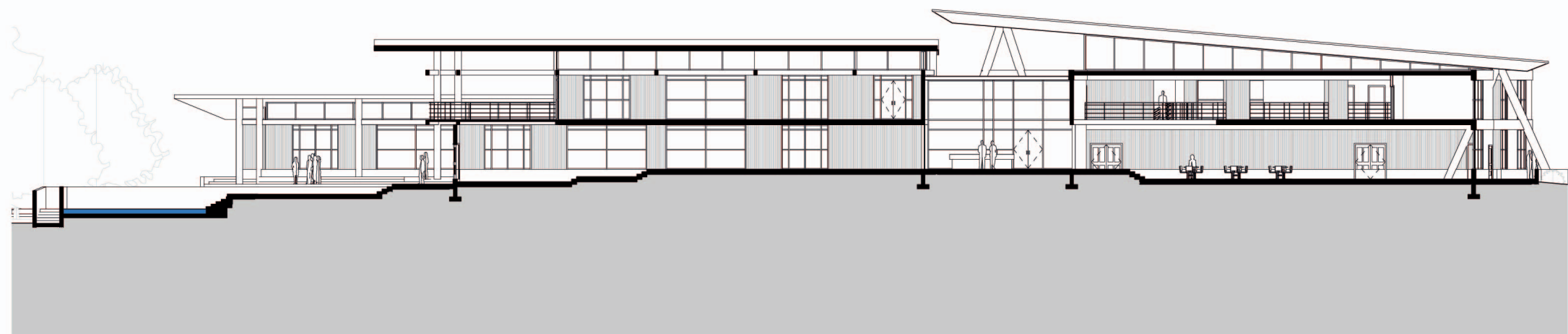


EAST/WEST SECTION LOOKING SOUTH

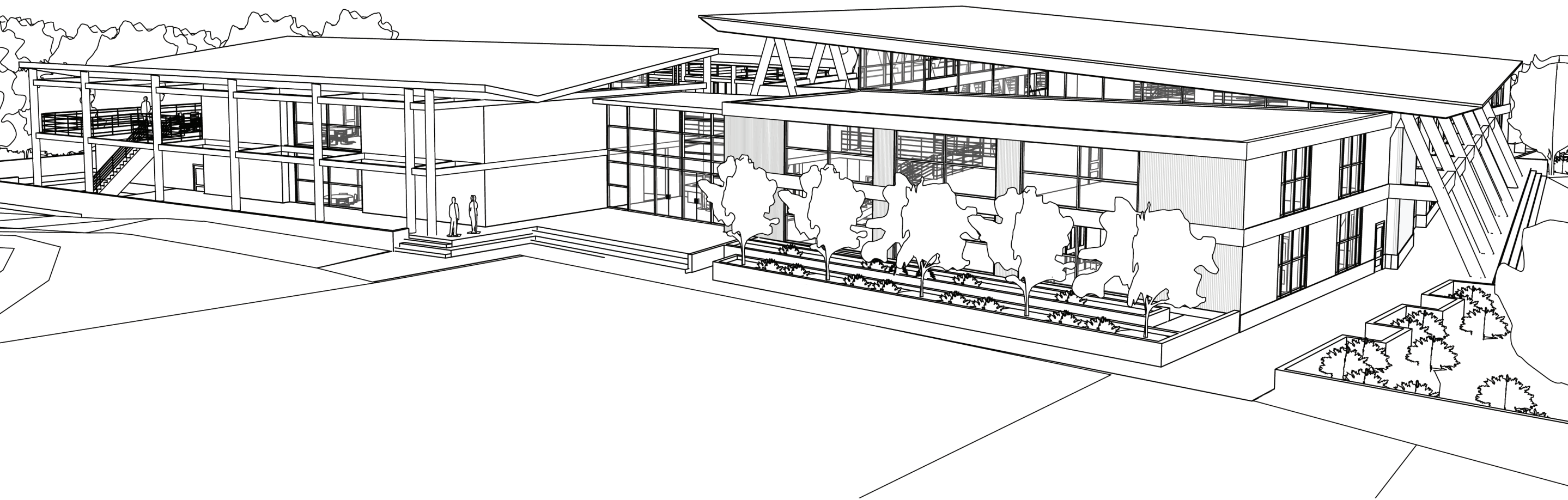




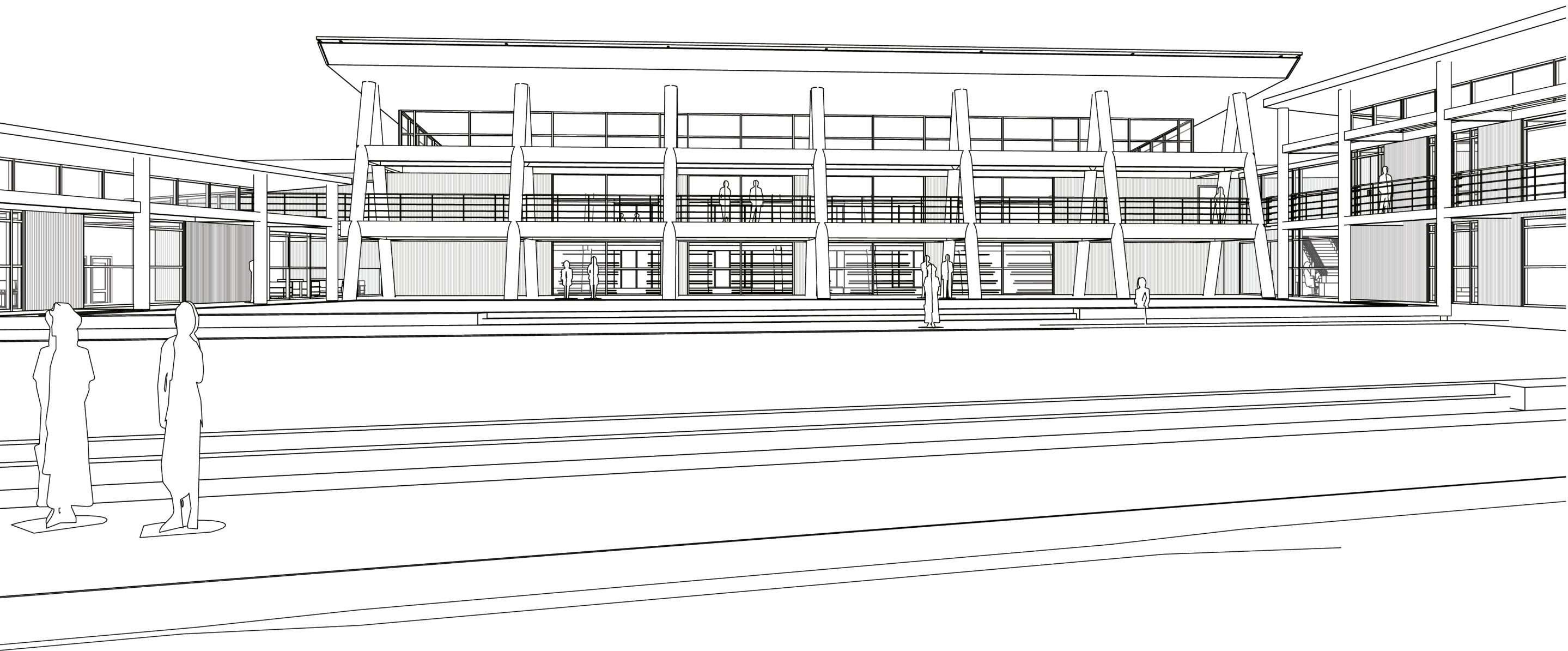
NORTH/SOUTH SECTION LOOKING EAST



NORTH/SOUTH SECTION LOOKING WEST



VIEW OF MAIN ENTRANCE FROM NORTHEAST



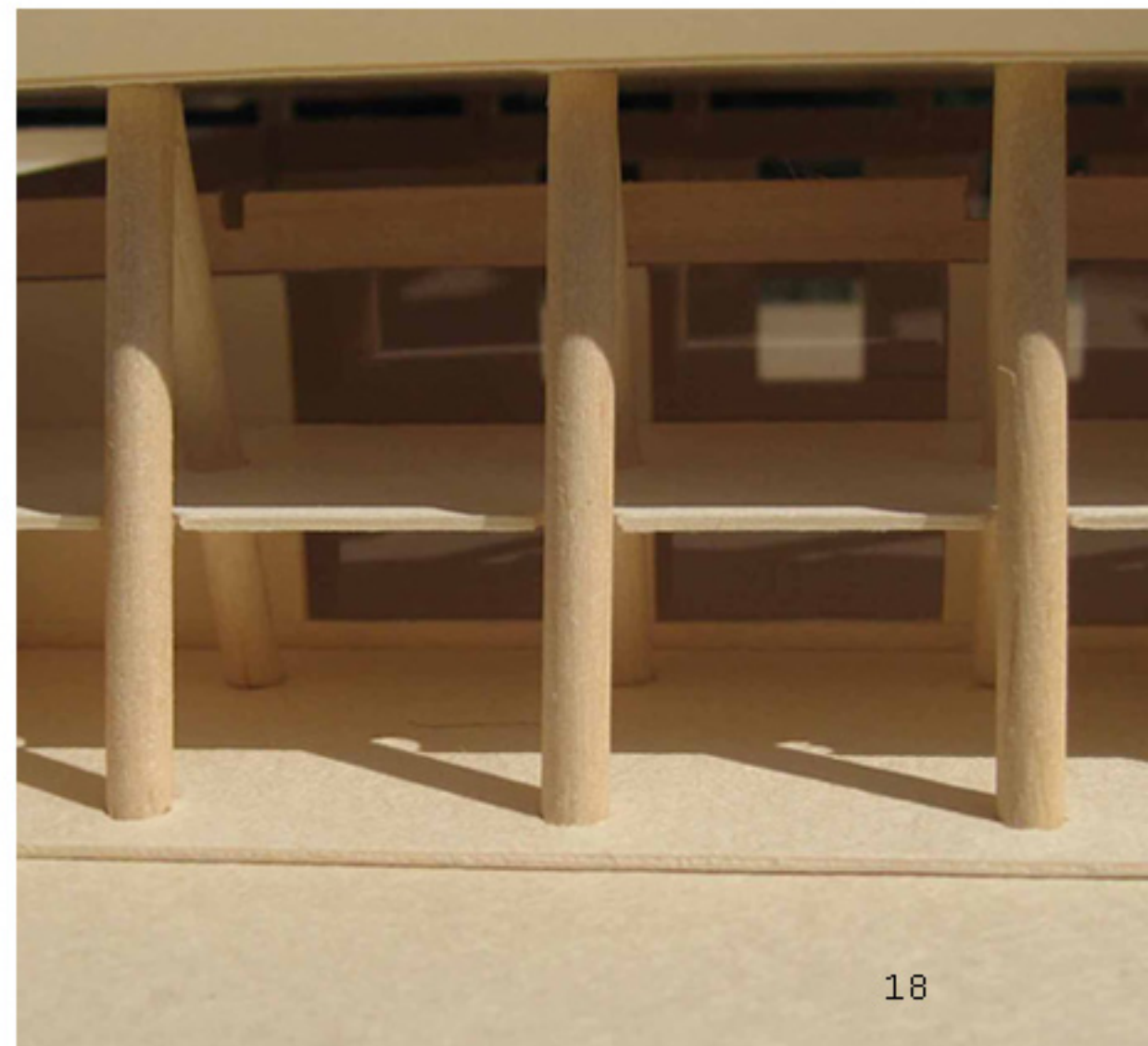
VIEW OF COURTYARD FROM SOUTH



PHYSICAL MODEL



PHYSICAL MODEL





PHYSICAL MODEL



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IMAGE CREDITS

- 1 p.1 Fort Dupont Park, aerial photograph. <http://maps.google.com>
- 2 p.1 Washington, D.C.: A City of Neighborhoods. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/metro/specials/theguide/maps05/dc_neighborhood.html
- 3 p.2 Figure ground diagram of Washington D.C. <http://followthecreativepath.blogspot.com/2011/01/figure-ground-nolli.html>
- 4 p.2 Saratoga Avenue Community Center, photograph. <http://www.georgeranalli.com/i-saratoga.html>

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