

# **Living in the Moment**

Approaching Mental healthcare design through adaptive reuse and sensory stimulation

Living in the Moment: Approaching Mental Healthcare Design Through Adaptive Reuse and  
Sensory Stimulation

Rishabh Suvarna

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Aki Ishida, Chair

James R Jones

Andrew Gipe-Lazarou

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# Abstract

Living in the Moment: Approaching Mental Healthcare Design Through Adaptive Reuse and Sensory Stimulation

Rishabh Suvarna

This thesis intends to explore the idea of transforming unused lifeless space which is surplus and old into a holistic mental healthcare space. The world has never been the same since the pandemic and one of the major trends that have been seen post-pandemic is the work from home culture, Major companies have chosen this model and not planning to turn back, this has led to the decline in use of office spaces. Most of the office buildings now are seeing a sharp decline in occupancy, this has led to question the usage of such unused workspaces. There have been projects in the recent years where such conversions have taken place such as the 1633 Broadway by SOM. The design takes an intentional approach of carving out a monolith mass which had more than 50-feet of depth strategically to create floor plates appropriate to a residential use case. This also allowed the transformed building to access natural light.

Mental health can play a crucial role for the coming generations and the overall health of the city. It is time that we look for spaces which can be converted to facilities which not only provide traditional mental health clinics but also green public spaces which contribute in lowering the mental stress. To cater to mental healthcare on a larger scale it important to have access to green spaces, a space where a person can go and have lunch, a space where a person can enjoy their walks or just take a break. Even though New York has green spaces such as Central Park, Bryant Park, Washington Square park, high line and much more it is not enough for the everyday local to access them based on their location of work and stay. New York has a couple of mini parks sprinkled across the city such as Paley Park, Green-acre Park. These parks are a breath of fresh air for people living nearby as they have their own private space in this chaotic city.

Being mindful of such strategies can prove useful while designing the building for mental health care not just for the people using the building but also for the people of New York living in and around the building. Some neighborhoods in Manhattan have ample of green spaces as well as spaces where they have good views from their apartments while some neighborhoods lack access to such spaces. In order to be efficient and right in choosing the site, it is important to map such factors which will guide the site selection process. It has been observed that more expensive neighborhoods such as Hudson Yards, Tribe-ca, So-Ho already do have access to green spaces and places which contribute to mental well being of a person. People staying near the Central park have access to such a large green space and hence those areas were

not considered while selecting the site. The intervention makes more sense if it happens on a site which falls on the areas which are deserted of green spaces. Hence, Midtown-West was looked at after studying various neighborhoods in and around Manhattan.

The design follows an adaptive reuse approach where the heritage building is sensitively altered to create spaces which contribute towards the program of the building. Voids are carefully sculpted out of the existing facade while keeping the essence of the building intact. The proposed design intends to make the visitor aware about themselves through architectural features that engage the five human senses. Variations and randomness found in nature is also mimicked in the space which generates curiosity for the person experiencing the same. The orderly and monotonous spaces are avoided by adding natural features and elements such as plants and shrubs. Uses of natural materials such as wood and stone create a sense of warmth and do contribute in create an atmosphere where a person can connect with themselves. Natural light is invited into the space through large openings and cut outs in the slab. The proposed structure is set in from the primary façade to create an in-between space which acts like a buffer space between the external world and the structure. The façade acts like a horizon which a person can use to orient themselves with respect to the building. All these design gestures contribute towards a person's mental awareness and thus making a person to be in the moment.

Being aware of the impact that built spaces can have over a person's mental health, the design takes an approach which focuses on how a person feels in a space. The architecture and the user do have a conversation through light, materials, wind and sound to achieve a space which positively impacts a person's mental health.

# General Audience Abstract

Living in the Moment: Approaching Mental Healthcare Design Through Adaptive Reuse and Sensory Stimulation

Rishabh Suvarna

Architecture is capable of and responsible for providing opportunities which positively affect our mental health, and this thesis explores how this can be achieved within the constraints of the existing infrastructure in the city. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, apart from increasing *vacant office spaces, cases of mental health issues have been on the rise. In a recent survey* involving people living across all 5 boroughs it was found that 2 out of 3 people experienced some form of mental health issue during the past year. There has been an increase in the intake of medication such as Antidepressants, Anti-anxiety medications, Anti-insomnia medications. More than 50% believe that they are not receiving enough mental health care and the biggest barriers to access treatment were finding clinics, cost of treatment, time-consuming.

We spend around 86% of our lives indoors and the built environment around us has the ability to affect our mood, understanding this the thesis approaches designing spaces for mental healthcare with a focus on making people aware of themselves and their surroundings by stimulating the five human senses. This approach helps the person to be in the present and be more conscious of their feelings and thoughts, patients visiting the space experience touch, sound, sight, taste and smell through various architectural gestures in the building. The journey of the patient focuses on a person feeling safe, comfortable and yet allowing them to interact with the community through social spaces. The intent of the thesis is to have a positive impact on a person's mental health, and while doing that also be conscious of the existing footprint of the building.

Being aware of the impact that built spaces can have over a person's mental health, the design takes an approach which focuses on how a person feels in a space. The architecture and the user do have a conversation through light, materials, wind and sound to achieve a space which positively impacts a person's mental health.

# Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family, and all those who believed in me and constantly supported me throughout this journey. I find myself grateful to be surrounded with people who have lent their support to me during challenging times. I'm honored to share this thesis with anyone who can relate to this topic and needs a perspective on the same!

# Acknowledgments

With great pleasure I would like to take the opportunity to thank each person who has contributed towards my thesis in one way or the other. I am deeply grateful to the three committee members who have shared valuable feedback and drove my thesis forward in the direction that I envisaged when I started working on my thesis.

My thesis chair Aki Ishida, has been instrumental in making me look into the direction of healthcare. The ethnographic research project that I worked on under the guidance of Aki, led me to explore drawing techniques through the user's perspective, these inquiries have had an influence in my thesis and opened up new perspectives. Thinking about a person's awareness through architecture forms a crucial part of my thesis. Ideas of awareness, light, consciousness, physiological ideas were introduced to be through Jim's class. These ideas formulated a deep interest in exploring spaces as adjectives instead of nouns. The conversations I had with Jim, had a huge impact not just on my thesis but also on my the way I look at architecture. Those learning will always stay with my in the projects that I work on in the future. Andrew Gipe guided me with stitching the project together, he encouraged me to push the boundaries and go beyond the conventional ideas. His thoughtful questions often led me to finding answers through introspection. Dr. Tuwanda Green's class taught new concepts which could be implemented in my thesis as it spoke about affects of design on the built environment. Joe Wheeler, Nathan King, Virginia Melynk, Prof. Andrew McCoy have helped me shape into a better designer through my interactions and courses that I took with them.

Outside of my world of thesis and architecture I had the support of my parents Yashwanthi Suvarna and Suresh Suvarna, my brother Ritin Suvarna, and my grandparents Jaleja Salian and Meera Poojary. Even though my family stays across the world in India, I feel their presence during challenging times. My cousins and relatives Akshaya Suvarna, Harikesh Kalyanpur, Siddhanth Kalyanpur and Ashwin Parenky have been supportive of my journey in the US. I am grateful to my friends Devanshi Sangani, Issac Simmons, Jacob Placencia, Raj Kumar Jami, Ronn Bi Ojes, Serin Siji, Prathamesh Pednekar, Nupur Mistry, Dimple Zagada for showing support in their own ways.

I would also like to thank collaborators and colleagues from my part jobs at Virginia Tech, with the support of each and everyone of them it has been a great journey through my master's journey!

WHAT GIVES YOU MENTAL PEACE?

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yoga - meditation  
gardening  
Any kind of exercise.  
Painting.  
interaction with plants & animals

LIGHT/LIGHTING  
NATURAL ELEMENTS

Music

Crafts.

- Natural light
- greens.
- quiet silence.
- spending time with family.
- having time.
- Exercise / Run.
- feeling the warmth of the SUN ON MY SKIN.
- walking ~~with~~ with podcast.
- water. / coastline / flowing water.
- green space / stimulating birds.
- sounds / music.
- good library. / good drink at one bar.
- work hard / playing a sport.
- son's bedroom. / spending time with kid and tea.
- New York.

Contributors writing their thoughts during the Thesis Colloquium

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**Architecture is capable of and responsible for providing opportunities which positively affect our mental health, and this thesis explores how this can be achieved within the constraints of the existing infrastructure in the city.**

# Introduction



We spend 86.9% of our lives in an indoor environment. Being stuck in an indoor environment all day can have a negative impact on us and can increase our day to day stress. Most spaces that we occupy today, lack views to the outside, use of natural materials, access to green spaces. These spaces have made us disconnect from nature and our own awareness in that environment. The world has never been the same since Covid, since we were locked in our home for months, we realized how important it is to step out and be exposed to nature.

1 in 5 Americans experience some form of Mental health issue today and the need for designing environments which expose us to natural environments is greater than ever. Environments that stimulates the senses such as smell, touch, sound, taste and sight has the power to bring a person back into the present, the very moment where they want to be yet and be aware of their surroundings.

But where is this required the most?  
**Most cities have high number of people dealing with mental health issues!**

Where can such type of project have a maximum impact?  
**Poorly designed built environments can negatively impact a person's mental health.**

Where can we find opportunities to insert such mental healthcare facilities?  
**Cities also have a large number of unoccupied spaces in form of offices.**

# Mental Health Overview

According to National Alliance on Mental Illness, a mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling or mood. Such conditions may affect someone's ability to relate to others and function each day. Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis.<sup>1</sup>

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience some form of mental illness each year
- 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24<sup>2</sup>

As per the Alliance, there are various types of Mental Health Professionals such as Psychologists, Counselor, Clinicians, Therapists, Clinical social workers and Psychiatrists. These various types of mental health professionals have various types of treatment settings where they practice. Some professionals have a private practice while some practice at a community mental health center. There are separate mental health centers for people dealing with substance abuse, as certain conditions are more sensitive they require an individual space. Tele-therapy and Tele-Psychiatry are methods of mental health care treatment which is done virtually over a phone, this type of therapy does not require the patient to travel and they get access to mental healthcare through the comfort of their home.

## Types of Conditions

- Anxiety Disorders
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Bipolar Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Depression
- Dissociative Disorders
- Eating Disorders
- Obsessive-compulsive Disorder
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Types of therapies
- Psychodynamic
- Cognitive Behavioral
- Humanistic
- Trauma-focused

## Mental Healthcare can be divided into broadly four types of therapies

- Psychodynamic
- Cognitive Behavioral
- Humanistic
- Trauma-focused

## Psychodynamic therapy

A mental Psychodynamic therapy focuses on unconscious processes as they are manifested in the client's present behavior. The goals of psychodynamic therapy are client self-awareness and understanding of the influence of the past on present behavior.

## What does a Psychodynamic therapy session look like?

Generally, psychodynamic sessions are collaborative, open-ended, and conversational. The therapist will allow the client to express their internal experiences, desires, dreams, fantasies, thought processes, and fears.

## Cognitive Behavioral therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a form of psychological treatment that has been demonstrated to be effective for a range of problems including depression, anxiety disorders, alcohol and drug use problems, marital problems, eating disorders, and severe mental illness.

## What does a Cognitive Behavioral therapy session look like?

Working through exercises with your therapist to explore your thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Agreeing some activities to work on in your own time.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/mental-health-conditions/>  
<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

# Vacant Buildings in New York

Since the Covid pandemic, the world has seen a decline in people going to offices. With the advent of online working options, lot of people have chosen to stay at home and thus the demand of office spaces has gone down. Most people prefer working from home to save on cost and travel time. This change in working patterns have impacted the office occupancy and the vacancy has gone up. There is an increase in companies which have chosen this path of working from home and reduced their real estate space to shrink costs.

Today, the U.S, has about 1 billion sq.ft of vacant spaces, which equals to about 370 empire state buildings. The top five cities with the most vacancies are New York, D.C., Chicago, Dallas, and Houston. Among the major cities, New York has the highest percentage of vacant office buildings. As shown in Figure 2, Manhattan leads the chart with about 463.8 million square feet of office space. According to a report by Office of the new York State Comptroller, New York houses the largest office real estate market in the world by area. While there are commercial districts in each of the five boroughs, the three largest business districts are in Manhattan (Midtown, Midtown South and Downtown).<sup>1</sup>

This study and numbers direct the thesis towards a focused approach towards New York as an area of site selection.

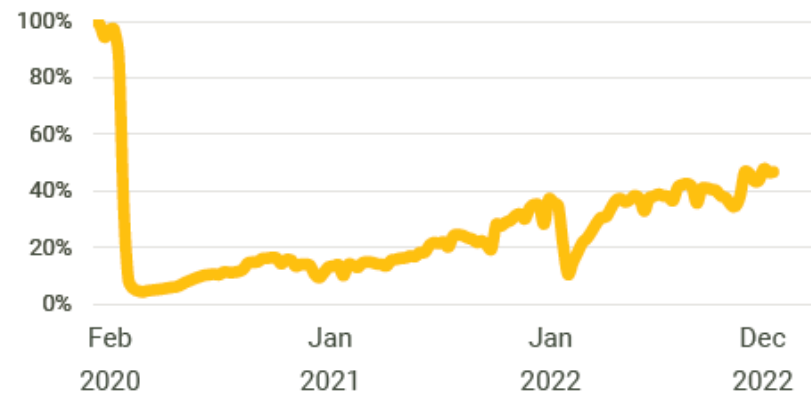


Figure 1: Graph indicating attendance of employees in Offices  
Source: New York City Office Adaptive Reuse Study January 2023 Office Adaptive Reuse Study

Market	Size (millions of square feet)
Manhattan	463.8
Washington, DC	336.4
Chicago	256.2
Dallas	194.1
Los Angeles	189.7
Houston	173.7
Boston	168.6
New Jersey	155.3
Atlanta	153.5
Philadelphia	138.8

Figure 2: Chart indicating largest office markets in the US in terms of size.  
Sources: Jones Lang LaSalle; OSC analysis

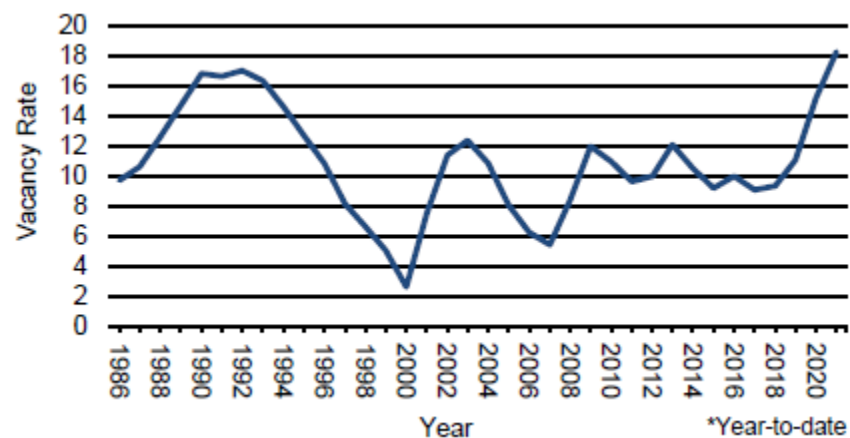


Figure 3: Graph indicating the Office Vacancy Rate in Manhattan.  
Sources: Jones Lang LaSalle; OSC analysis

## Types of Office Re-use

Adaptive Reuse of an office can have multiple options in terms of the program of the space, one of the conversion types is to change the office space into a residential building. The glass building conversions come with their own challenges as it involves re-purposing the facade and altering the floor plate of the building. Service cores designed for office spaces usually are not functional and workable for residential units. These major changes add a lot of cost to the project which then makes the project unfeasible.

## 1633 Broadway Re-use Proposal



Figure 4: Existing image of the 1633 Broadway Building.  
Source: <https://www.som.com/research/office-to-residential-conversion-study-1633-broadway/>



Figure 5: Proposed Design of the 1633 Broadway Building  
Source: <https://www.som.com/research/office-to-residential-conversion-study-1633-broadway/>

While re-designing the 1633 Broadway faced the challenged of having vast floor plates which were atleast 50 feet deep. These depths can be very difficult to work with if the building needs to be converted into a residential floor plate due to lack of light reaching the interior spaces. To tackle this issue SOM strategically carved out spaces by replanning the floor plates, this design decision created floor plates which are more suited to accomodate residential units. Natural light can be made more accessible as well by this subtraction.

<sup>1</sup> New York City Office Adaptive Reuse Study January 2023

# Site Selection

To narrow down the site selection, it was crucial to have certain parameters which will lead to organically finding a site where the intervention is required the most. Green spaces in the city, existing mental healthcare facilities and the vacant buildings itself formed the parameters which would narrow down the site selection. Identifying the existing green spaces was a crucial step as that would identify the zones in New York which lack of green spaces for the people of New York.

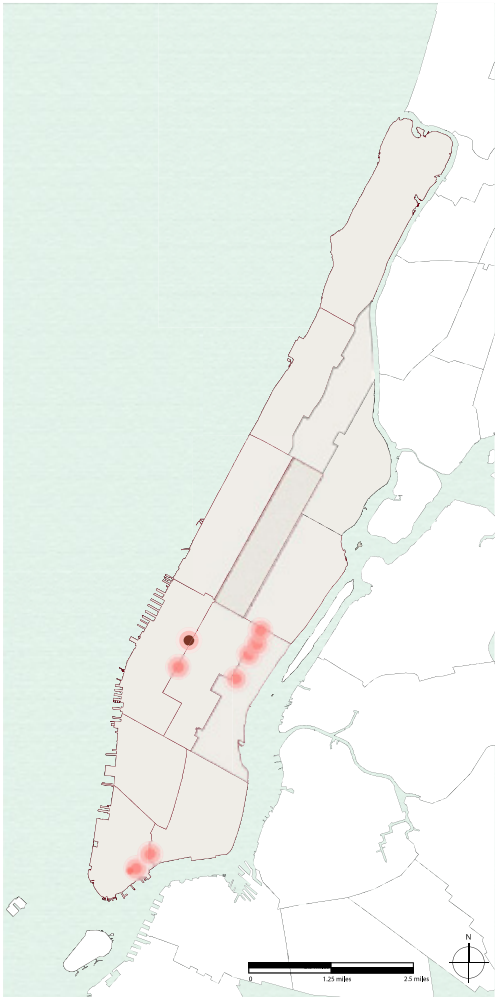


Figure 6: Map indicating the vacant office buildings in New York.

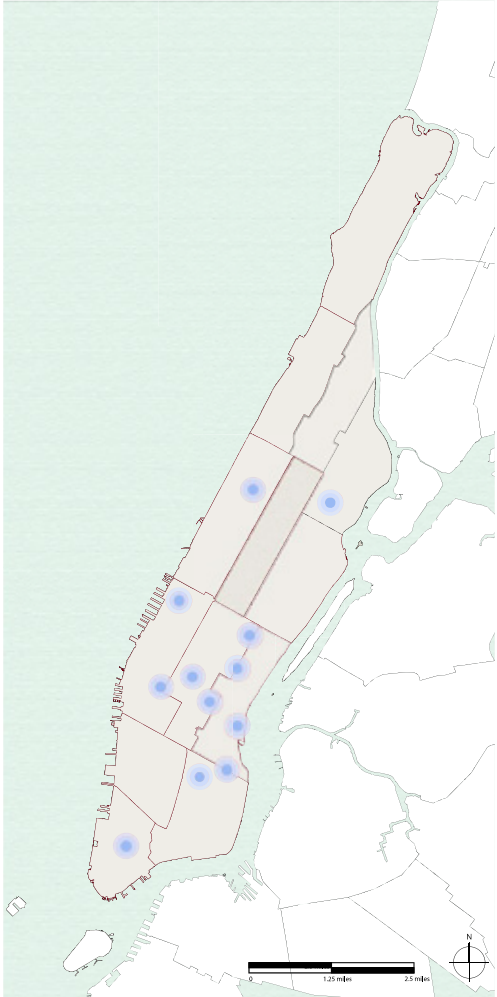


Figure 7: Map indicating the mental health facilities in New York.

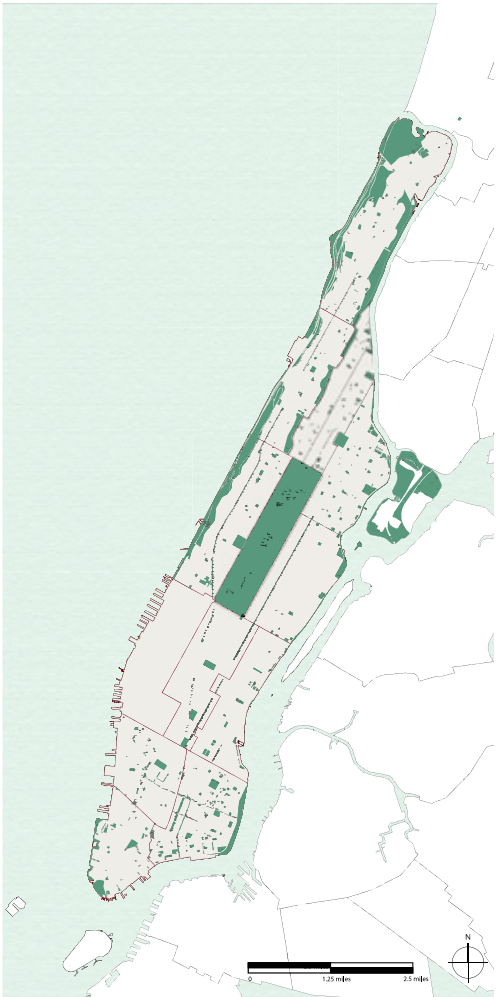


Figure 8: Map indicating the green spaces spread across in New York.

As per figure 6, most vacant buildings in New York fall in the Downtown and Midtown Region, these are commercial districts which house major office spaces yet some of these spaces sit unoccupied. The Downtown are has access to the water views and plenty of public spaces developed around the waterfront. Midtown has very few green spaces for the amount of office spaces it has, this could be discouraging for the office goers. Commercial districts requires spaces where people can take a break, take a moment to sit down and breathe. Pockets parks and public space allow for that and Midtown lacks that, this led to selecting the 630 Ninth Avenue which is located in Midtown.

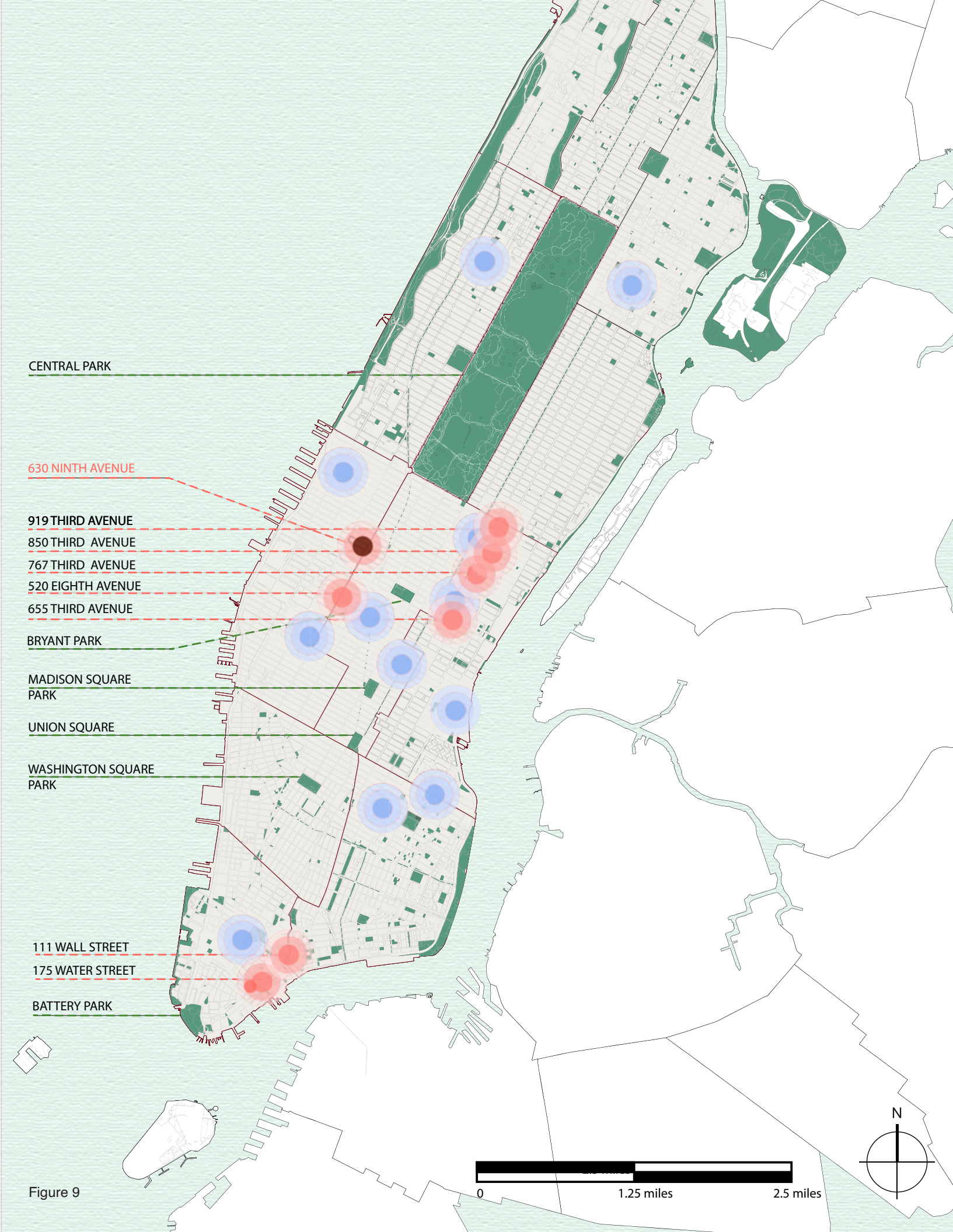


Figure 9

# Site Context

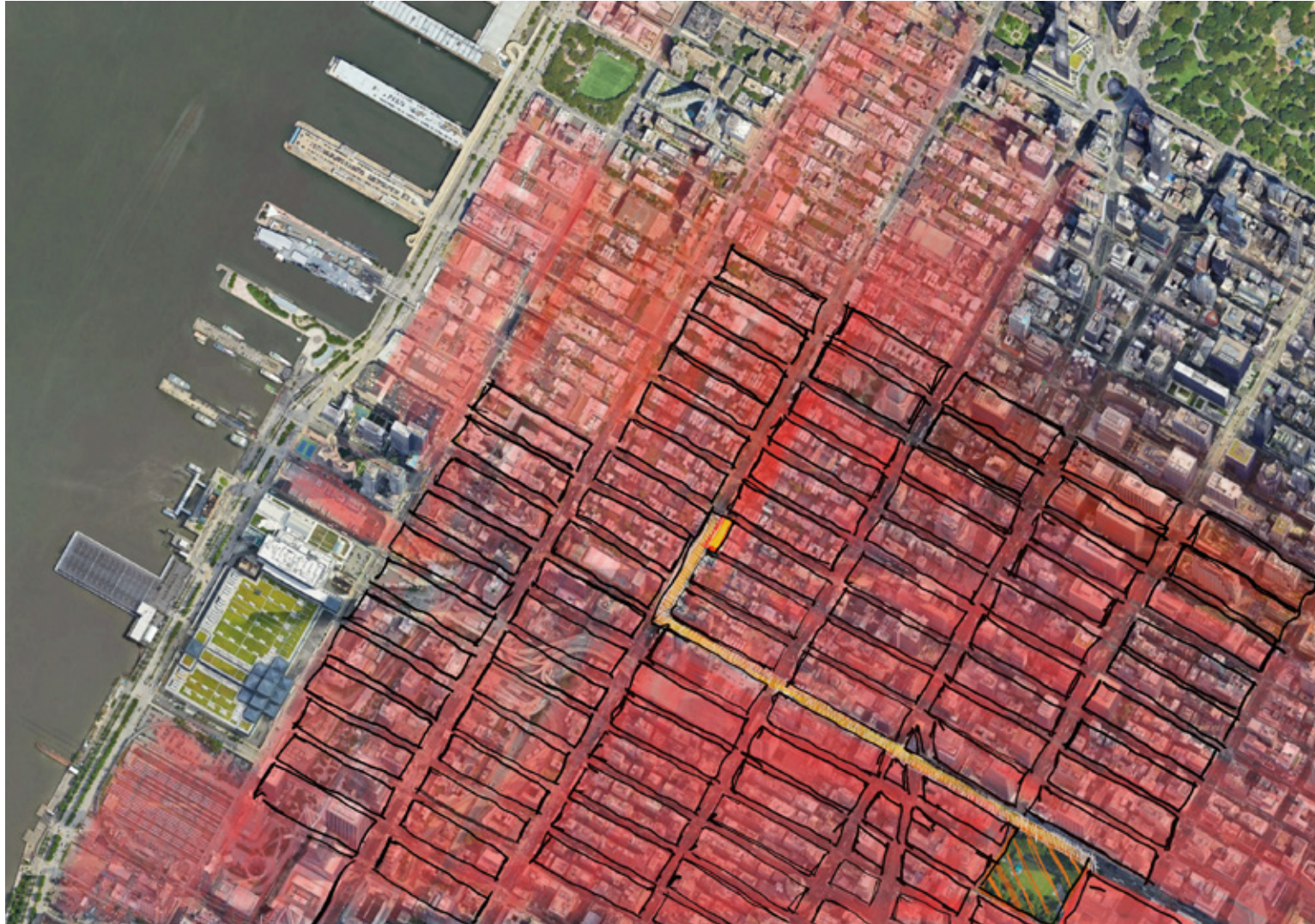


Figure 10: Map Indicating the proximity of green spaces to the proposed site.  
Sources: Google Earth

## Contextual understanding

Understanding the site context of the building is crucial as it guide design decisions at the city level. The site is located in an area of Midtown-NYC which does not have enough of the green spaces. This creates a green space dessert and the nearest green spaces are not at a walkable distance. This creates discouragement among people living in the area and disparity in the green spaces distribution. The density of the area demands significantly more area of the green spaces in the form of pocket parks. Pocket parks could act like a breather space for the people working in offices in this area or people living around in the area and looking for a spot to workout or go for a walk. These parks have the ability to create pause points in the city and can provide a place for refuge for people seeking a break.

Buildings have the responsibility to giving back to the city and creating public spaces or permeable spaces where people can enter without having to enter the building can be a great addition to the building. These spaces are lively and often attract people from around the building where people enjoy spaces with their loved ones. These spaces have the ability of creating memories for people, and buildings should do that with every opportunity that it gets.



Figure 11: Image indicating the public buildings located in Midtown.  
Sources: Google Earth

The site is located in a fairly private zone where lot of other buildings are residential where as the building marked in pink, there is an opportunity to create public spaces which will be an addition to the public spaces in the context.



Figure 12: Image indicating the New York blocks.  
Sources: Google Earth

The Buildings sits on the edge of one New York Block. Each New York Block is roughly around 900 ft x 260 ft. This makes a long walk between end of each blocks, having permeable spaces which allows people to passes through entering the building can be beneficial for the people walking by.

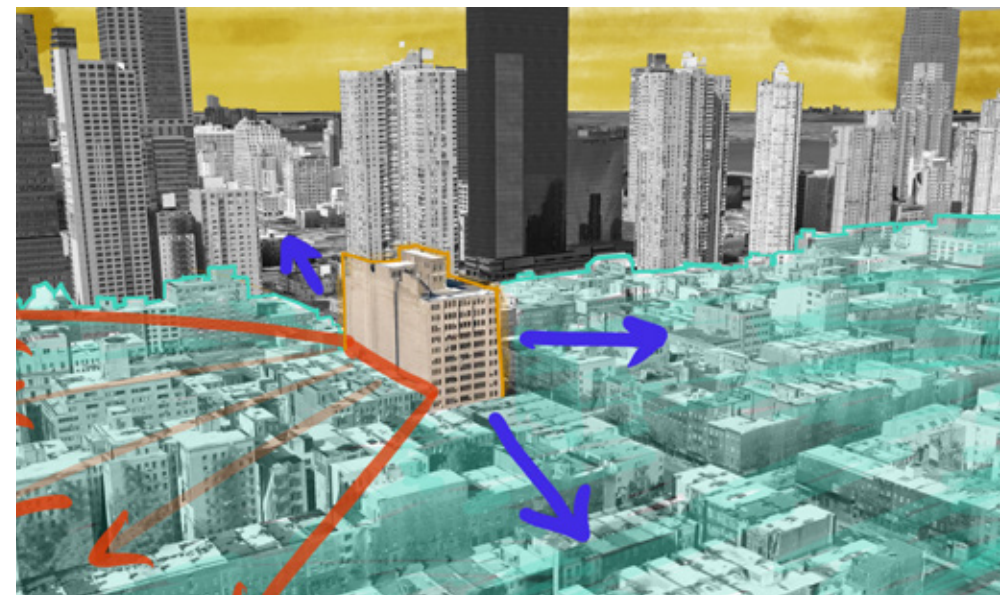


Figure 13: Image indicating the height of the buildings and potential views.  
Sources: Google Earth

The Building is taller than the surrounding buildings which gives opportunities to look out at the upper levels. At the same time the buildings is not too tall like the surrounding New York skyscrapers which can feel intimidating.

# The Site

The 630 Ninth Avenue building is an office building that is 13 story high and was once called as the Film Center Building. Renowned Architect Ely Khan designed this in Art Deco-style and it was completed in the year 1929. The building has gone under renovation in the past where the obsolete spaces were removed. Presently, the building houses few offices and certain floors are vacant and up for lease. The building has a strong presence in the neighborhood with its intricate facade details. There are quite a lot of details that should be preserved while re-imagining the facade as the building does add characters to the surrounding context. A sensitive approach with this building is the best way to go for a building with this kind of history.

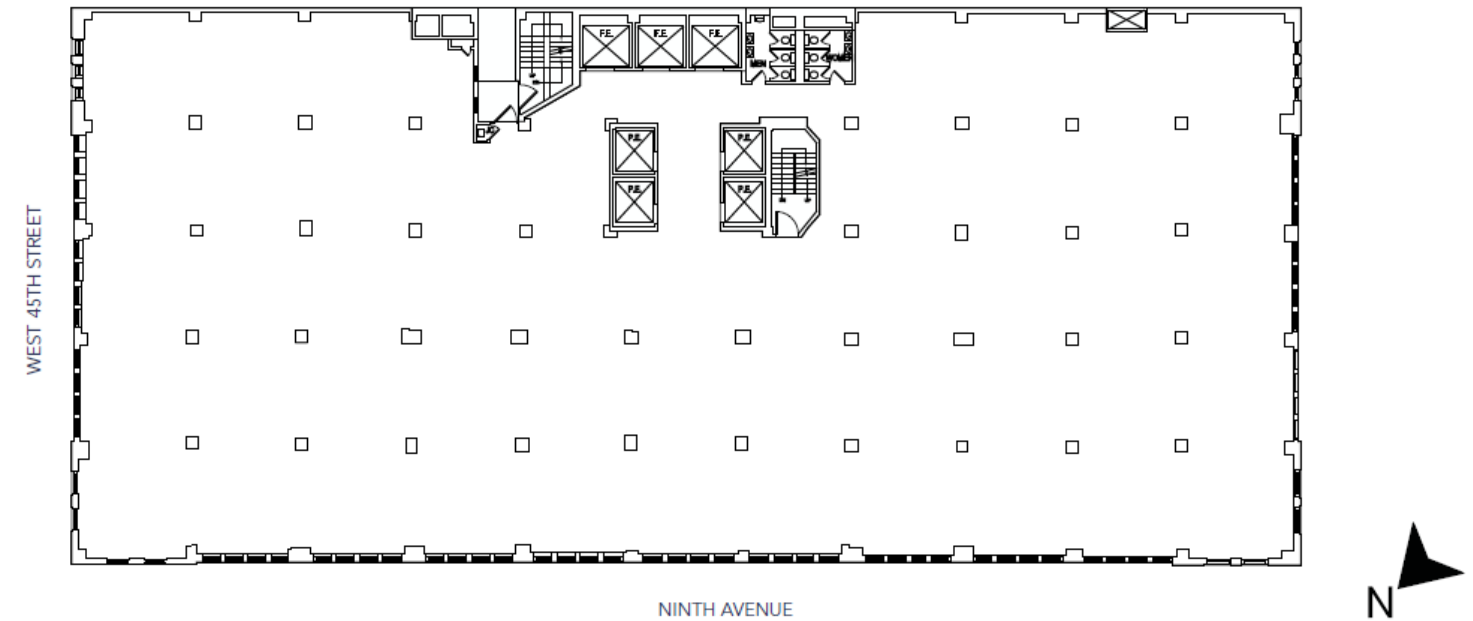
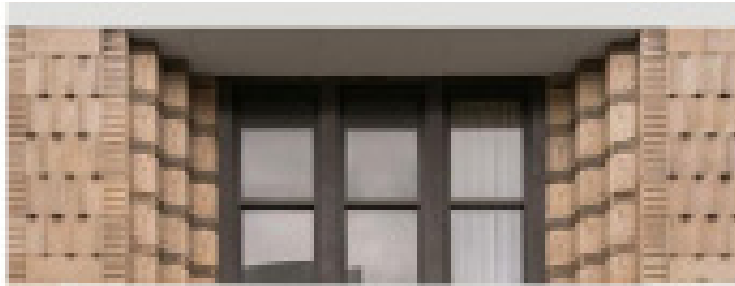


Figure 15: Typical Floor plan of 630 Ninth Avenue  
Sources: <https://www.gfpre.com/properties/630-ninth-avenue>

The building is constructed in Masonry, steel and brick with an average slab to slab height of 11 feet. The service core is located on to one side of the facade which opens up the rest of the floor plate and makes the building more flexible to an adaptive reuse approach. The facade has views towards the North West side of the Hudson river, this could be a great vantage point to look out towards views of the city from the upper levels of the building.

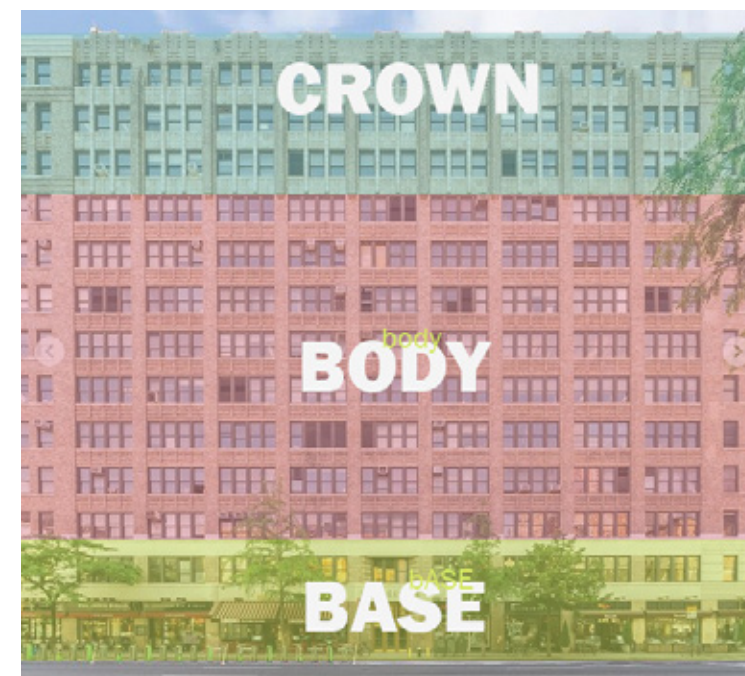


Figure 16: Image showing different sections of the building  
Sources: <https://www.gfpre.com/properties/630-ninth-avenue>



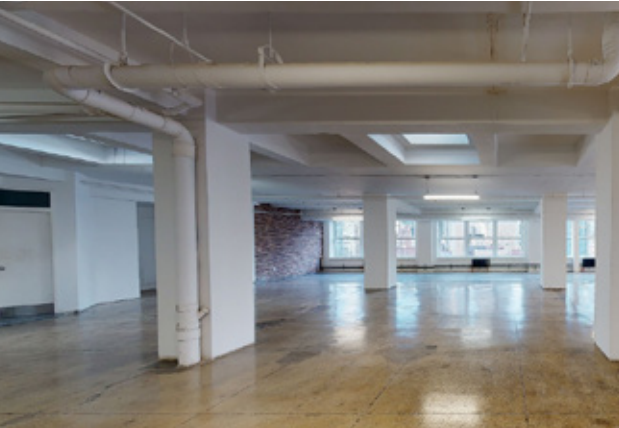
Figure 17: Film Centre Building from across the street  
Sources: <https://www.gfpre.com/properties/630-ninth-avenue>

Figure 14: Image of the 630 Ninth Avenue Facade.  
Sources: <https://www.gfpre.com/properties/630-ninth-avenue>

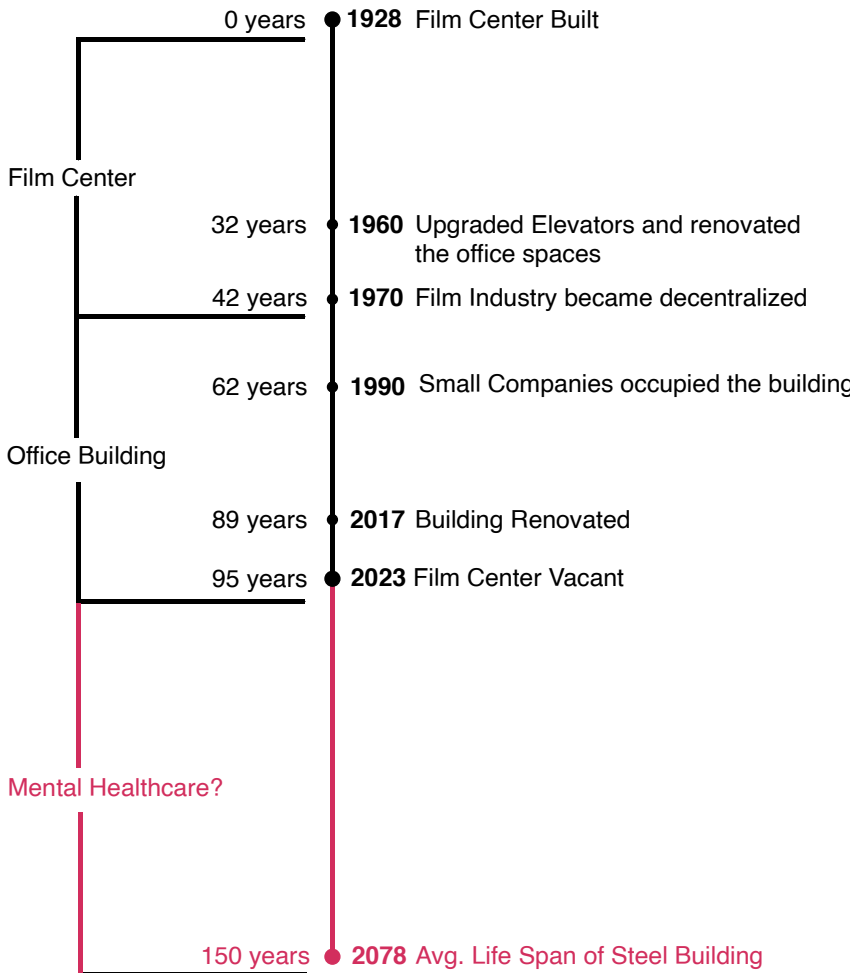
# Adaptive Reuse

## Film Centre Building Timeline

The Film Center Building was built in the year 1928, around 32 years later the building underwent renovation in the office spaces, during this time the elevators were upgraded as well. In the year 1970, the film industry became decentralized and small companies started occupying the building, by 1990 the whole building was occupied by small companies. The building saw a major renovation in the year 2017 but in the recent years the demand for office spaces has reduced and in 2023 most of the offices in the Film Center Building are vacant.



### Film Center Building Timeline



### Why we need to go for adaptive reuse for this project?

The project being located in a dense environment has limitations with respect to resources such as time and money. Using an adaptive reuse approach will help save these both resources. Additionally, the site is located in a heritage building which should be preserved.

### Why not just change the interiors of the project as it will reduce the cost?

Changing only the interiors does not utilize the maximum potential of the project. Also, altering the architecture has the potential to add value and elevate the project.

### Why do we need to add green spaces/terraces inside the building?

Adding green spaces and terraces can bring out the best in a space and makes users of space feel more positive.

### How can this intervention have monetary benefits?

Interventions like adding green spaces and bringing in natural light can increase the rental income as people would be willing to pay more for access to these features.

### What makes this project stand out?

Being sensitive towards the heritage of the building as well as the users of the spaces is one of the primary features of the project. Also the architectural gestures are based around the five senses which have a positive effect on a person's mental health.

Figure 18: Interior Images of the Film Centre Building  
Sources: <https://www.gfpre.com/properties/630-ninth-avenue>

# Case Study I Domino Sugar



Figure 19: Image of the Domino Sugar building with the Brooklyn skyline.  
Sources: <https://www.archdaily.com/1007905/domino-sugar-refinery-pau>

Domino Sugar, Brooklyn is a refinery building which was constructed to house functions such as the filtering, panning and finishing of sugar. In the year 2017, Practice for Architecture and Urbanism did an adaptive reuse of the structure with an intent to create a crown jewel for the new mixed use neighborhood. Rather than navigating the misaligned floors and window sills across the combined masonry shell, PAU adopted a different approach: nesting a brand-new building into the existing envelope, with a 10- to 12-foot gap between the new and the old. By pulling back from the original walls, ideal and standardized floor heights can be achieved, creating best-in-class office space that is designed to meet the needs of new tenants.<sup>1</sup>

The architects have taken an interesting approach which creates a void between the new structure and the old facade. This Void forms the buffer space between the structure and allows the users of the space to experience the void. This is a sensitive approach to keep the facade intact without altering the old design, such an approach then allows the spaces within to be flexible without having the restrictions imposed by the outer facade of the structure.



Figure 20: Looking up at the void space between existing facade and new structure/  
Sources: <https://www.archdaily.com/1007905/domino-sugar-refinery-pau>

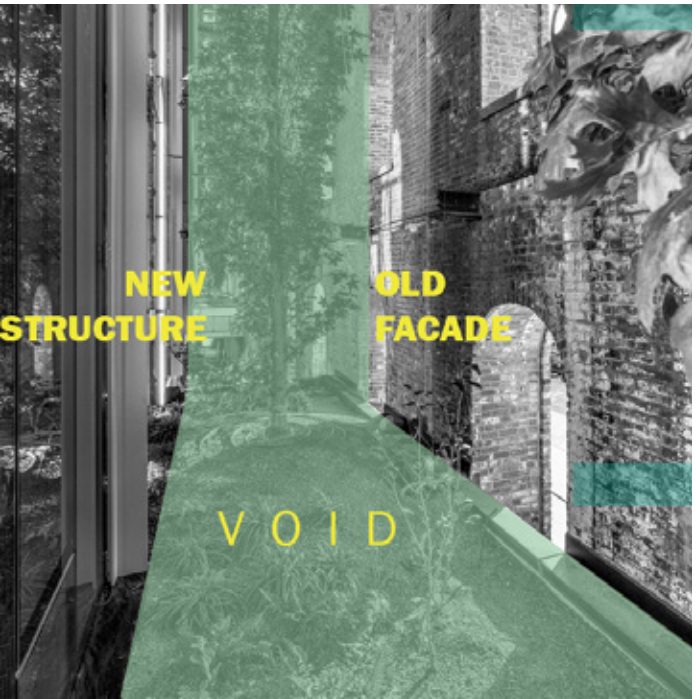


Figure 21: Green terraces in the void spaces.  
Sources: <https://www.archdaily.com/1007905/domino-sugar-refinery-pau>



Figure 22: Open to sky courts bring in light and ventilation in the space.  
Sources: <https://www.archdaily.com/1007905/domino-sugar-refinery-pau>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.archdaily.com/1007905/domino-sugar-refinery-pau>

# Case Study I Paley Park



Figure 23: Paley Park  
Sources: <https://www.paleypark.org>



Figure 24: Image showing the Sound Barrier at Paley Park  
Sources: <https://www.paleypark.org>

New York amidst all its tall buildings has a few pause points in the form of pocket parks. These pockets are not too big in size but have a big impact on the surrounding neighborhood and the people who use it. Once such park is Paley Park, shortly after the park opened in 1967, Mr. Paley stated that “as a New Yorker, I have long been convinced that, in the midst of all this building, we ought to set aside occasional spots of open space where our residents and visitors can sit and enjoy themselves as they pause in their day’s activities<sup>1</sup>.”

The park has round tables and chair instead of the usual park benches where people can eat their lunches or have a chat with their friends and family. The main character of this park is the 20 foot high water cascade wall which transports the people in the park to a completely different zone by blocking out the city noise. The space feels quite intimate and cozy with the dimensions of the park. The chairs are movable and gives a sense of ownership to people who visit the space and move the chairs around. The natural pattern of placing trees gives more spontaneity to the space which can make the person more aware of the surroundings. These gestures of adding green planters around, textured pattern of the floor and sound of water stimulate the senses of any person entering the space.

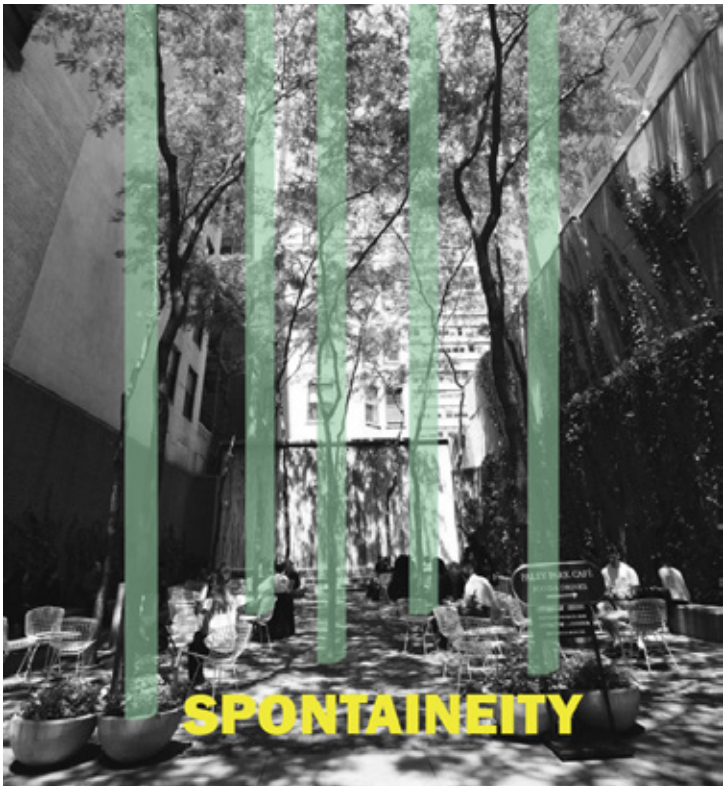


Figure 25: Random placement of trees at Paley Park  
Sources: <https://www.paleypark.org>

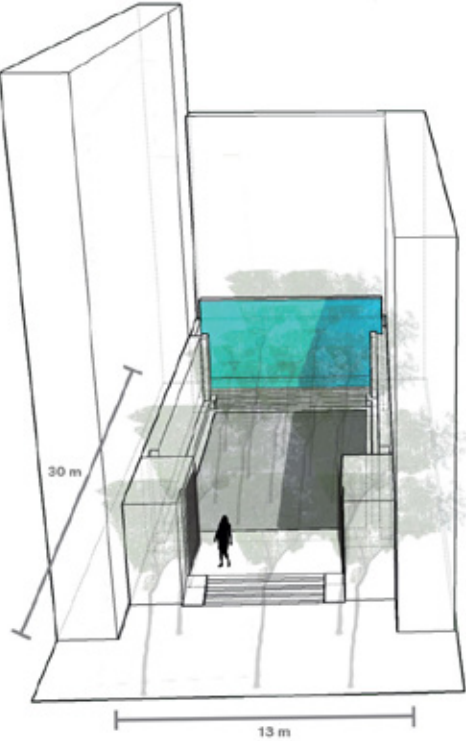


Figure 26: Axonometric of Paley Park  
Source: <https://www.watercubedesign.it/paley-park>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.paleypark.org/about>

# Case Study I Highline Park



Figure 27: Highline Park  
Sources: <https://www.thehighline.org/photos-videos/>

## Community and Private spaces

Highline is an elevated park which was unique to the city of New York since it is an adaptive reuse park of an abandoned railway in the Chelsea area of New York. While providing elevated views of the city this park creates a space where people of New York can enjoy the time spent with their family and friends. High line acts like a vibrant public space which has the power to make someone's day better and affect a person's mental health in a positive way. The park has communal spaces where people of large groups can congregate too while , this allow for people to enjoy the sun, rain and wind in a communal setting. Along with the communal spaces, the park has spaces for refuge where people can find a private space for themselves. These spaces are as important as the communal spaces and give the people a space to pause and reflect. Spaces where there are seats have their backs covered give a sense of security and they feel safer in their surroundings. Without the back being covered, there is anxiety and fear among people while resting or sitting in a space.



Figure 28: Communal areas in the Highline Park  
Sources: <https://www.thehighline.org/photos-videos/>



Figure 29: Image of seating areas in the Highline Park  
Sources: <https://www.thehighline.org/photos-videos/>

# Case Study I Warm Nest



Figure 30: Warm Nest Healthcare Center  
Sources: <https://www.archdaily.com/998974/warm-nest-healthcare-center-ark-shelter-plus-archekta>

The Maggie center philosophy is the inspiration behind Warm Nest Healthcare Center. The concept of the Healthcare Center was designed around the idea of “a warm nest”, a space which is welcoming and people come together, is not invasive nor intrusive. The structure focuses on gatherings, time to reflect, relax, regain strength, get together with loved ones, and embark on the journey to recovery in peace<sup>1</sup>. The designed structure makes a person wonder about their physical, psychological, physiological, and social needs by creating moments in the structure.

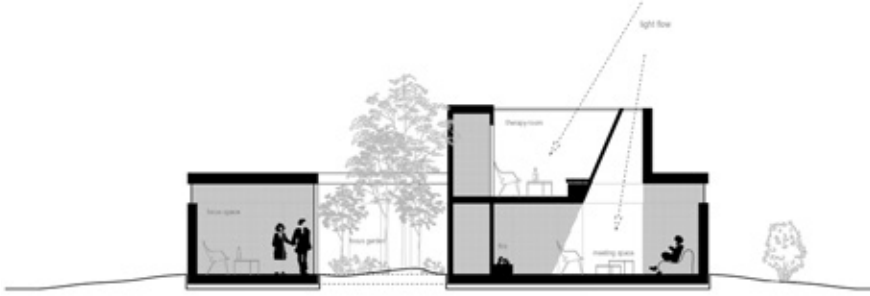


Figure 31: Section through waiting area and therapy rooms: <https://www.archdaily.com/998974/warm-nest-healthcare-center-ark-shelter-plus-archekta>



Figure 32: Courtyard outside the waiting areas in warm nest healthcare center  
Sources: <https://www.archdaily.com/998974/warm-nest-healthcare-center-ark-shelter-plus-archekta>



Figure 33: Spaces in the Warm Nest healthcare center have dimensions quite close to a average home.  
Sources: <https://www.archdaily.com/998974/warm-nest-healthcare-center-ark-shelter-plus-archekta>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.archdaily.com/998974/warm-nest-healthcare-center-ark-shelter-plus-archekta>

# Case Study I Church of Light & Church on Water



Figure 34: Church of the Light  
Sources: <https://www.archdaily.com/101260/ad-classics-church-of-the-light-tadao-ando>

Church of Light has a centripetal quality to the space, the user of the space does experience a space which makes the person look inward.

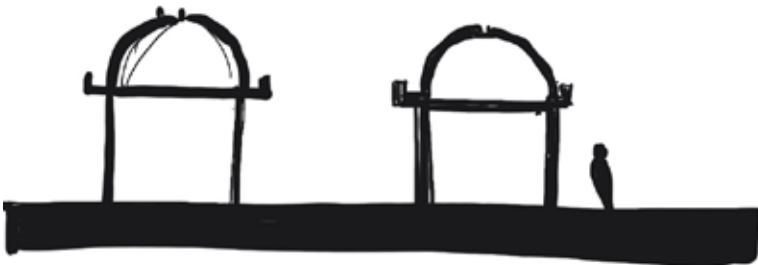


Figure 35: Church on Water  
Sources: <https://www.metalocus.es>

Church on water has a centrifugal quality to the space, the user of the space does experience a space which makes the person look outward towards the nature and the surroundings.

# Design Concepts | Architecture of Awareness

## Form



A unique form which is not seen on a regular basis by people stands out and makes a person notice the surroundings

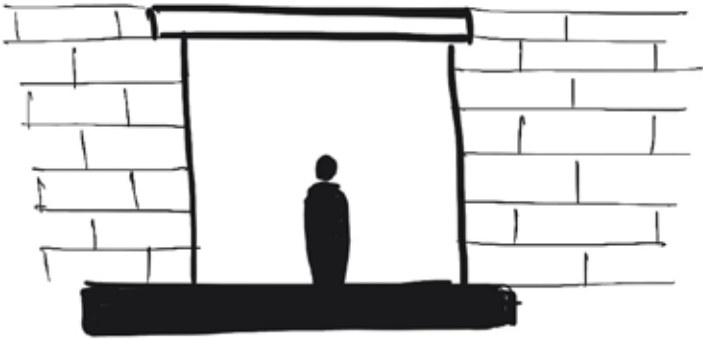


Regular and repetitive forms often go unnoticed as the human subconsciously does not perceive it as anything new

## Height of Openings



A standard door height does not a person think too much when they are entering or exiting a space.



A door height which is larger is smaller than the regular door height get noticed immediately and the person becomes aware of their scale with respect to the surroundings

## Threshold

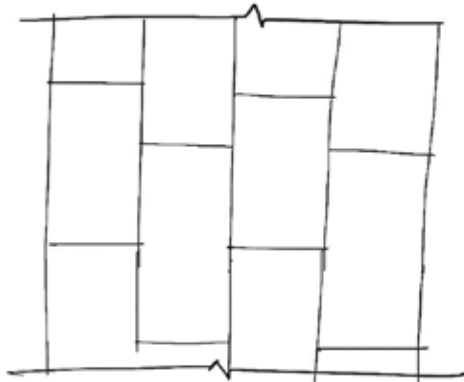


Thresholds that have enough depth make a person aware of their passage from indoor to outdoor spaces

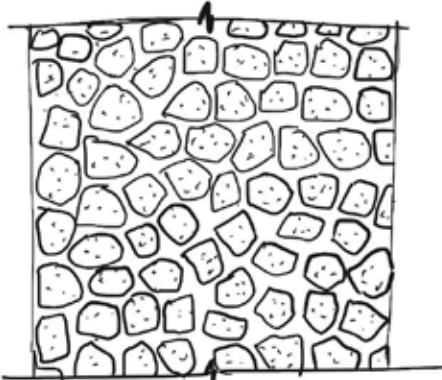


A regular glass door is very common means of entering and exiting the building so it often goes unnoticed

## Texture



Flat surfaces are common and the person's can walk with muscle memory without noticing the surface too much

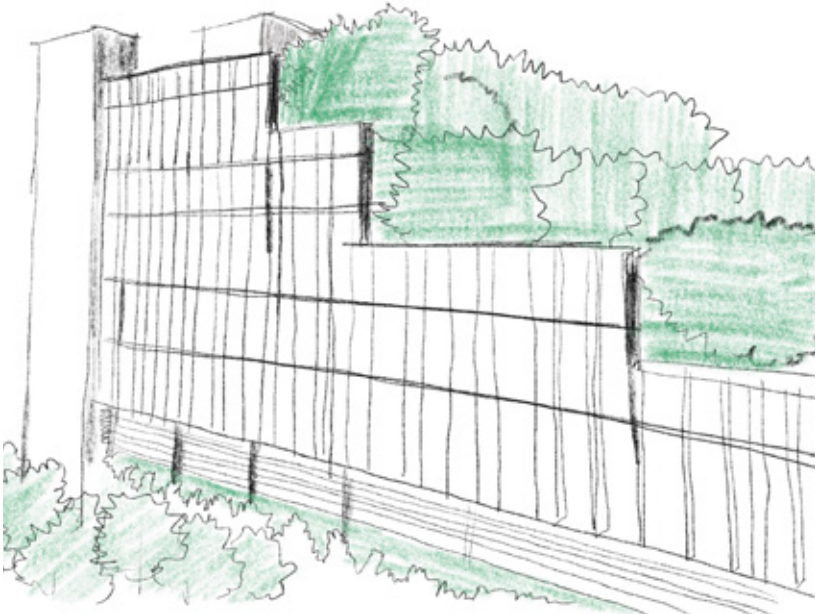


A textured and unlevelled surface immediately makes a person more cautious about their balance.

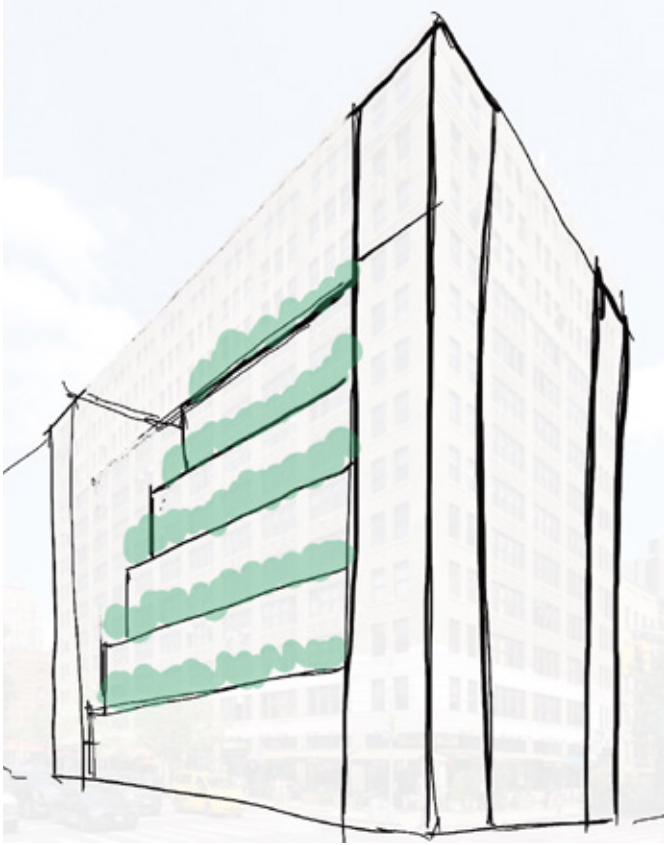
# Design Concepts | Nature and Architecture

The feeling of being in the open is something that people living in the cities quite seldom has experience and that can be taken back to the origin of humanity. Having large green spaces with open to sky terraces are a way of achieving the sense of Savannah inside a building. In the interior spaces and especially furniture placement, the concept of prospect refuge theory. This theory is something that I relate to a lot and would want to have the people experiencing a space find comfort and the feeling of safety. As humans have an affinity towards curve, forms could be developed around those factors. Even in real life scenarios people prefer walking on paths that curved and not orthographically. Levels are some parameter where the designer can focus on to achieve these concepts in their designs.

Nature plays a strong role in getting people together and making sure communities thrive. Today, architects need to incorporate learning from the past into modern designs to maintain the community feeling. One such example is the 'Kampung Admiralty' project by WOHA architects. "The Community Park is a more intimately scaled, elevated village green where residents can actively come together to exercise, chat or tend community farms."



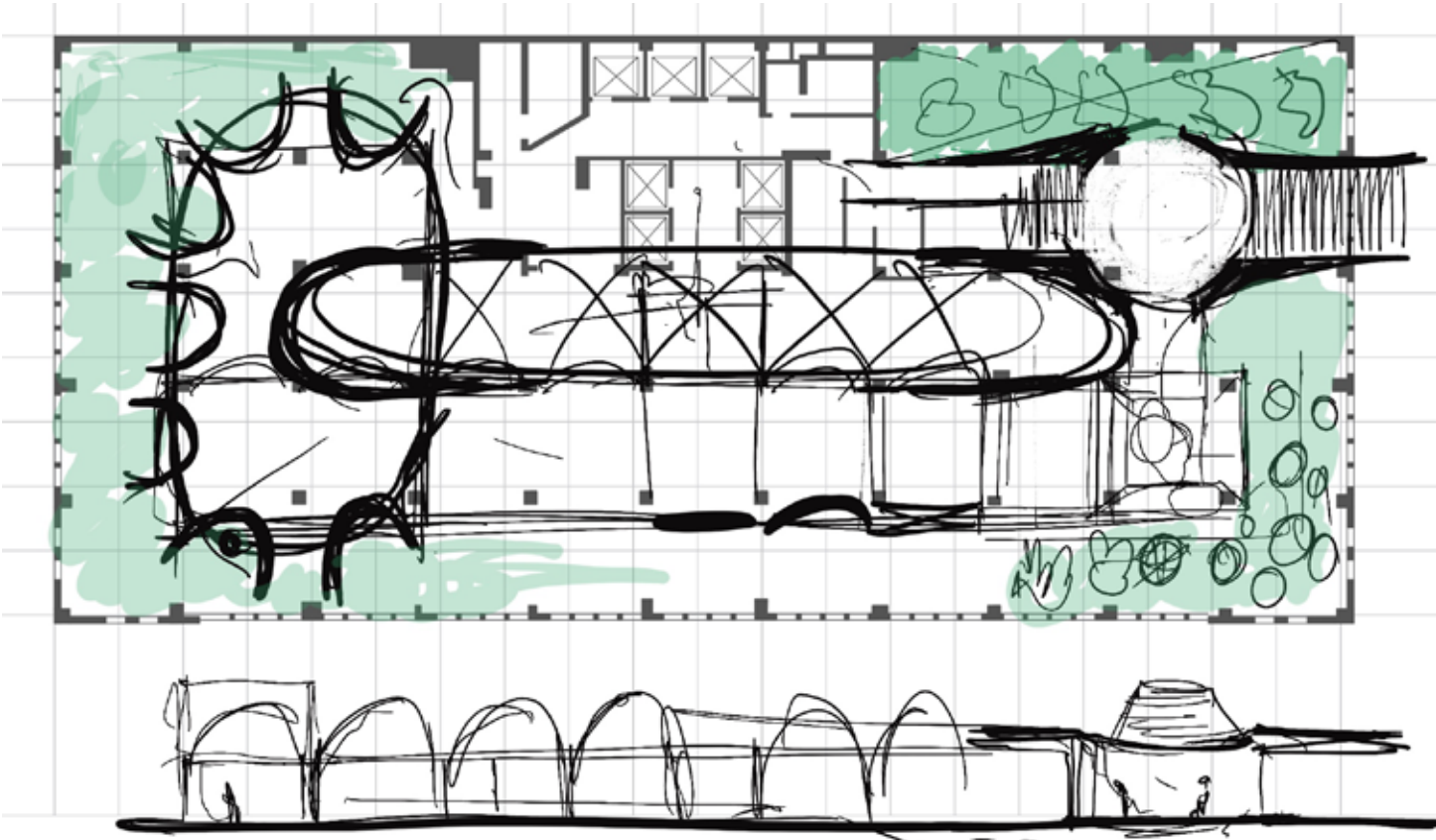
Kampung Admiralty by WOHA Architects



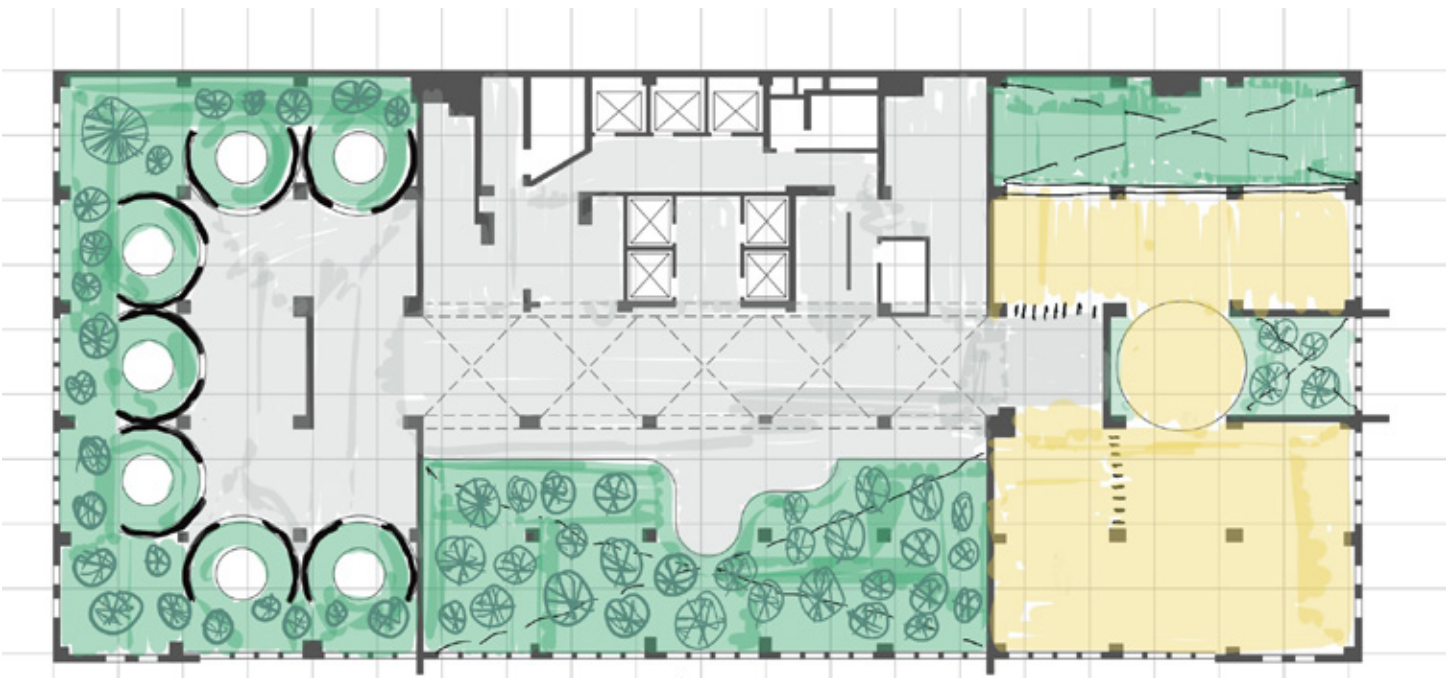
Imagining Green Terraces on the Film Centre Building

There is also a correlation between a person's mental health and exposure to nature; people do feel better in naturally lit spaces. As a designer, we need to maximize the window openings wherever possible and try to create a relationship between the people using the space with the outside world. A space which makes people experience the five senses by incorporating natural elements such as moving water, plants and flowers, and views outside can elevate a person's mood. It is important to use the other senses to make oneself aware of their being, and Juhani Pallasmaa rightly sums it up when he says "vision separates us from the world whereas the other senses unite us with it".

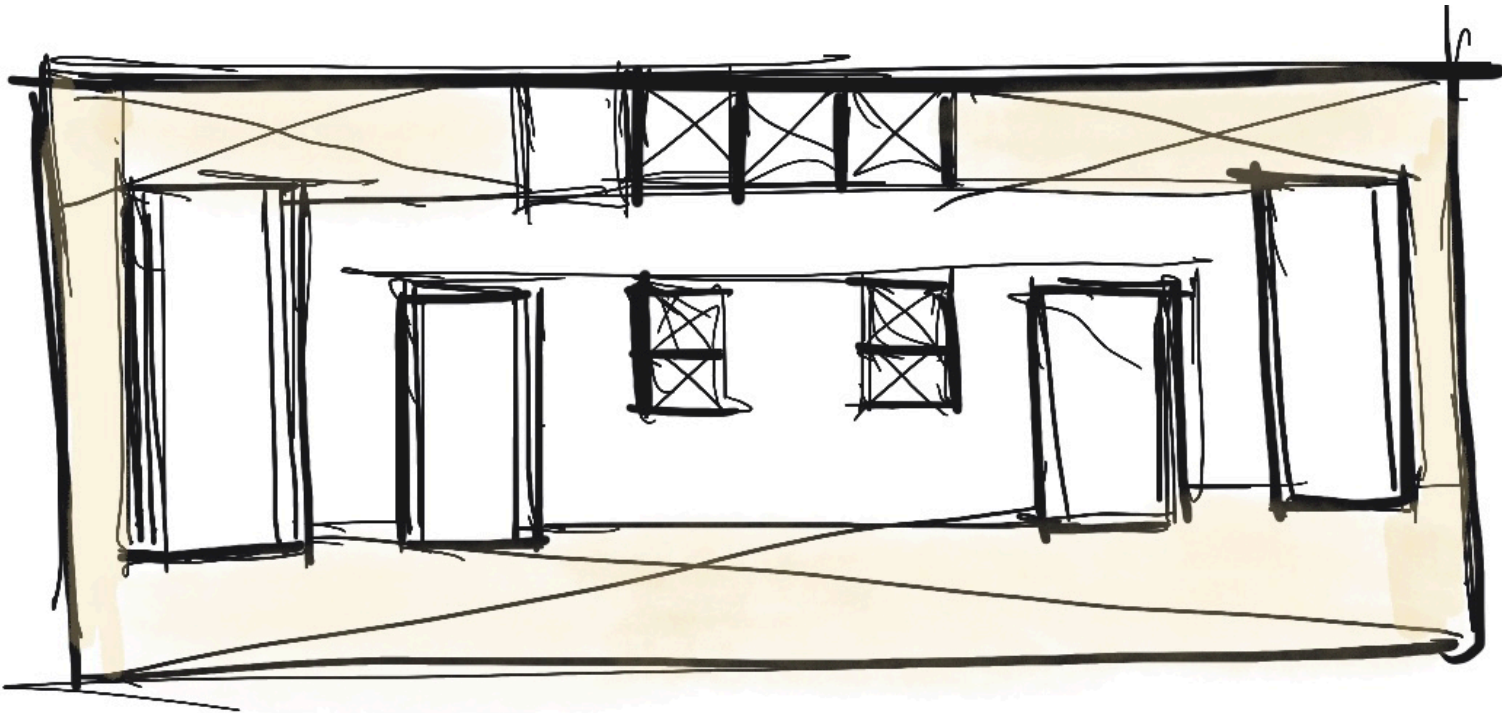
## Introduction of Green Spaces



## Green Spaces Define the Programs



# Design Concepts | Scale and Comfort



The therapy rooms divided into four volumes on the upper floor of the mental healthcare facility.

Mental healthcare spaces are sensitive spaces and they require certain kind of spatial quality which will be suitable to the sensitive nature of the building type. The scale of the structure can have a huge impact on the psychological, physiological, and social aspect of the space. Large volumes and spaces can feel intimidating for a person coming to seek help, in such cases tailoring spaces which are more familiar to people on a daily basis can help. Making room sizes similar to sizes of a home can considerably support a space into being a more comfortable space for patients dealing with health issues. The therapy rooms are divided into four volumes the size of an average home to provide comfort for patients visiting the center for their therapy session.

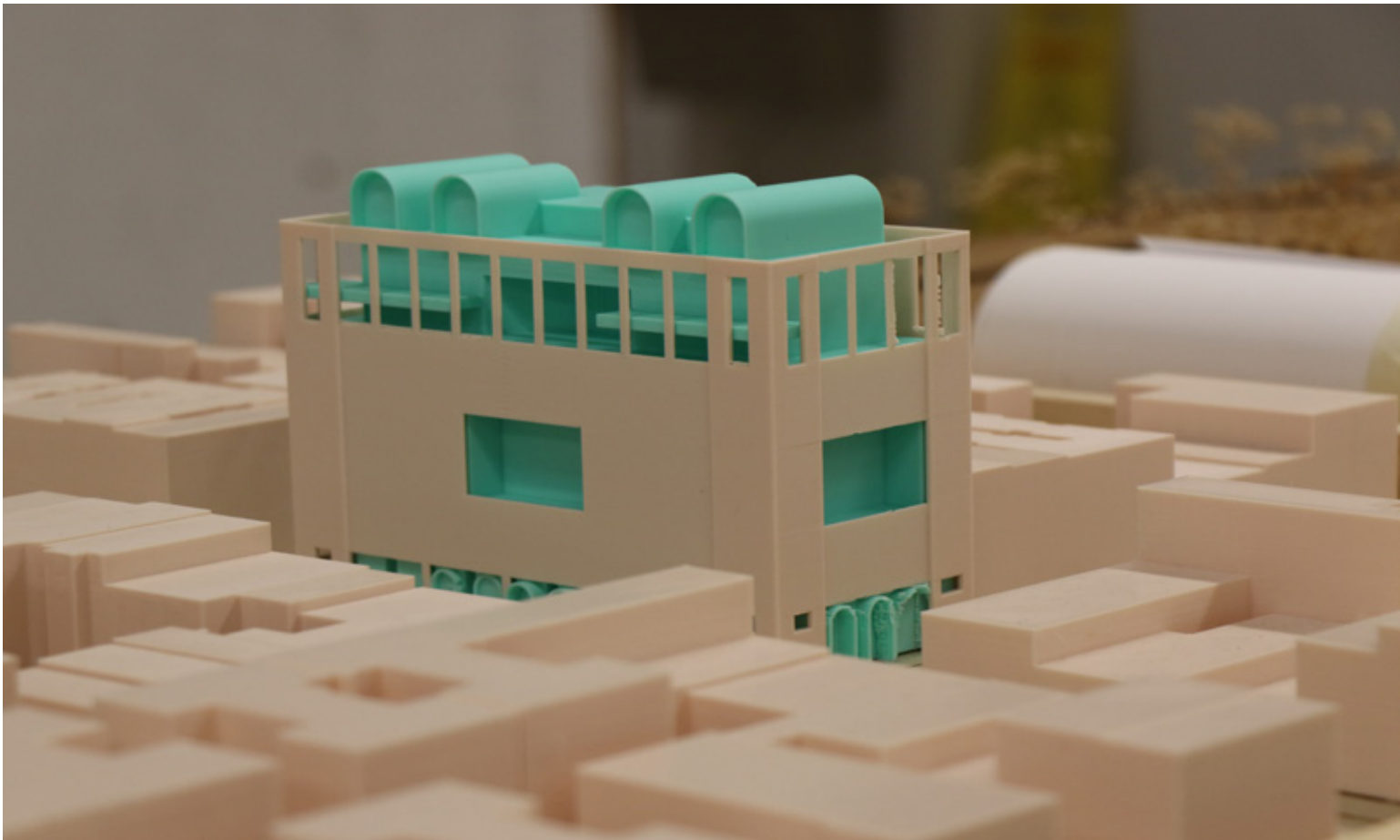
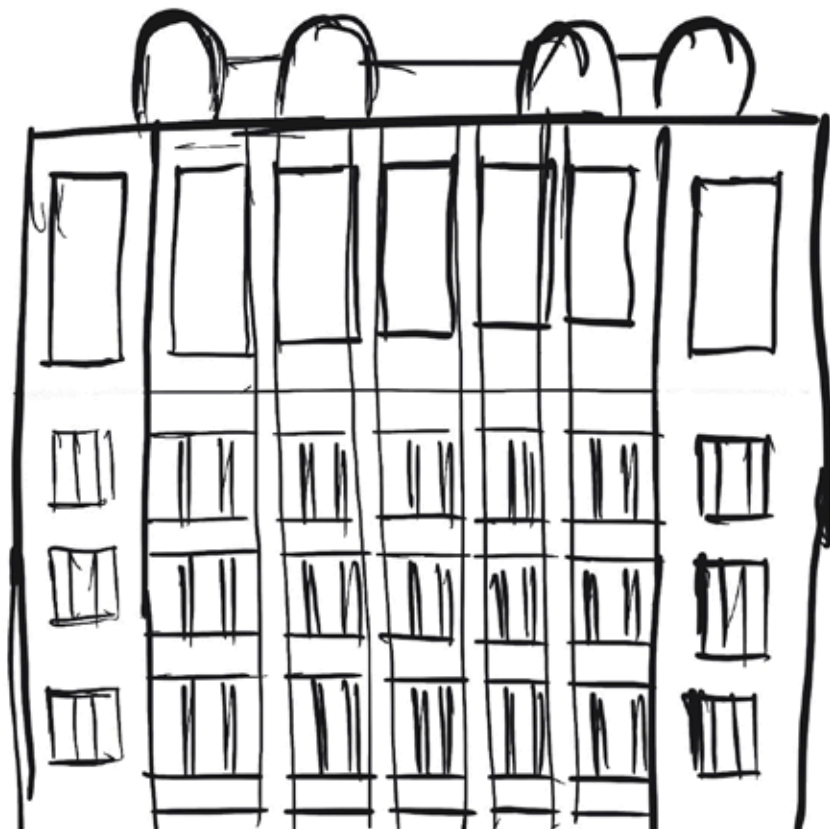


Figure 36: Four Therapy Rooms on the upper floor of the mental healthcare facility.



Figure 37: Therapy Rooms having opening having opening facing out towards the Hudson River.

# Design Concepts | Refuge and Prospect

## Refuge

The meditation pods in the healthcare centre are designed around the concept of “refuge” which provides a retreat to the mental healthcare patients using the space. The curved walls gives a sense of semi-enclosed space which resembles a cave, thus providing the person security by covering the back. These gestures in design could reduce anxiety in a person and make a person feel calmer, this eventually helps the person to meditate and be in the present.

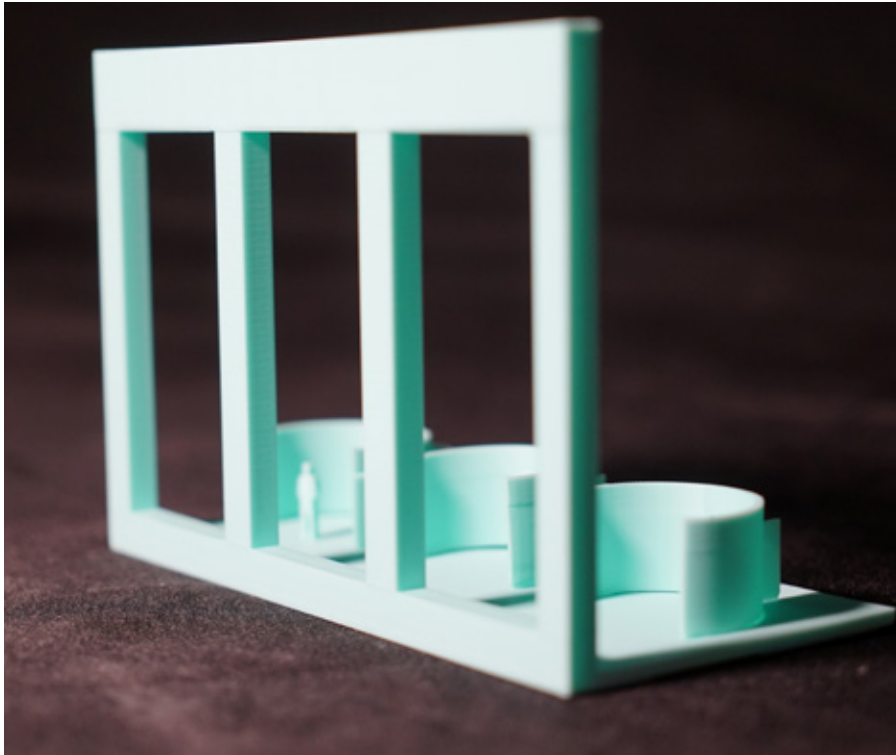


Figure 38: Model images of the Meditation Pods

## Prospect

The vaulted arches in the therapy spaces are built around the idea of prospect. The expansive views which are focused towards the Hudson river towards the west of the building gives the people the ability to observe far distances from an elevated position. People are drawn to spaces that provide both clear views of the environment and a sense of enclosure (Dosen & Ostwald, 2016). This architectural move contributes towards the sense of safety a person experiences in that space.



Figure 40: Model images of the Meditation Pods

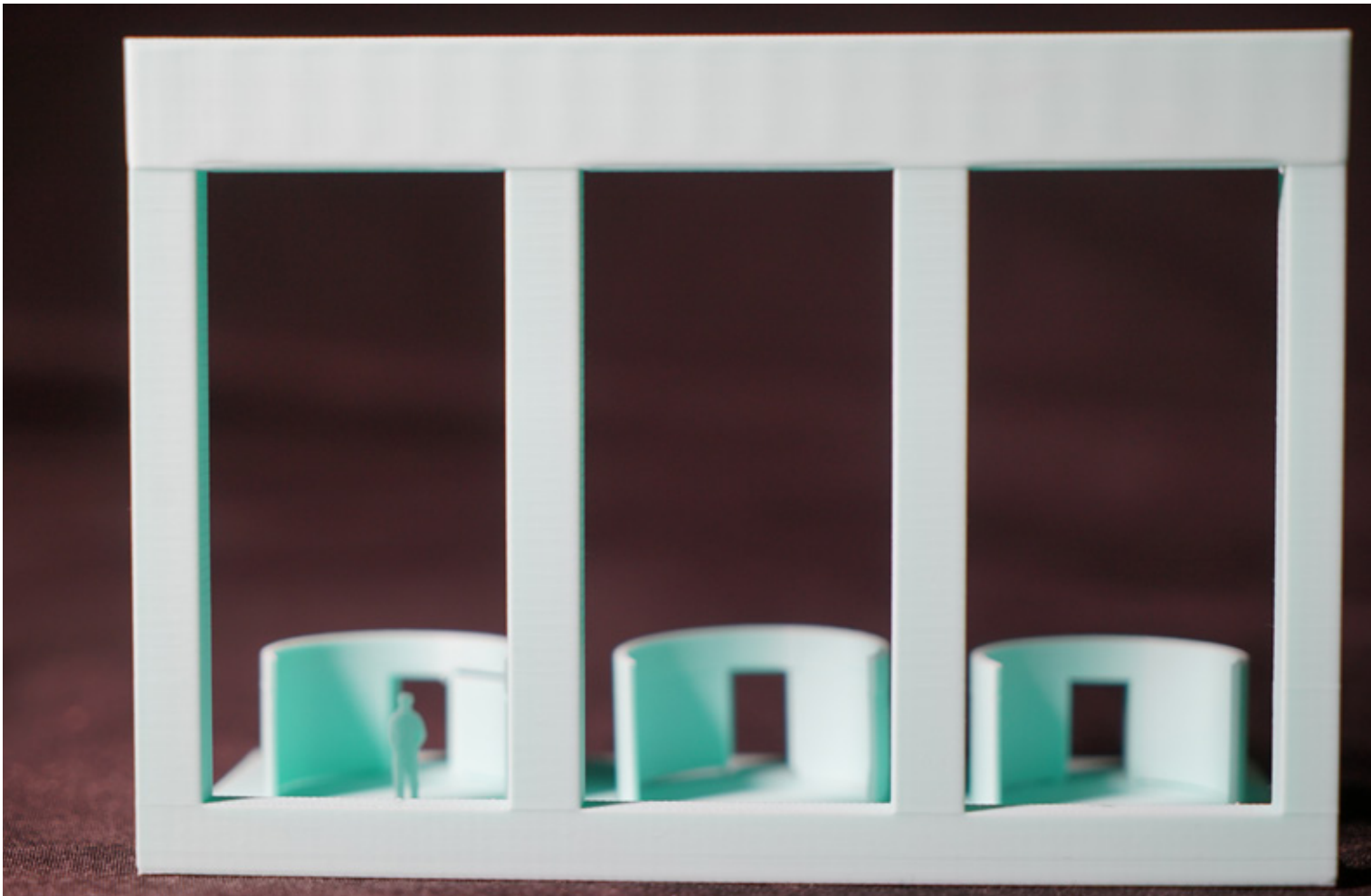


Figure 39: Meditation Pods provide refuge to the mental healthcare patients

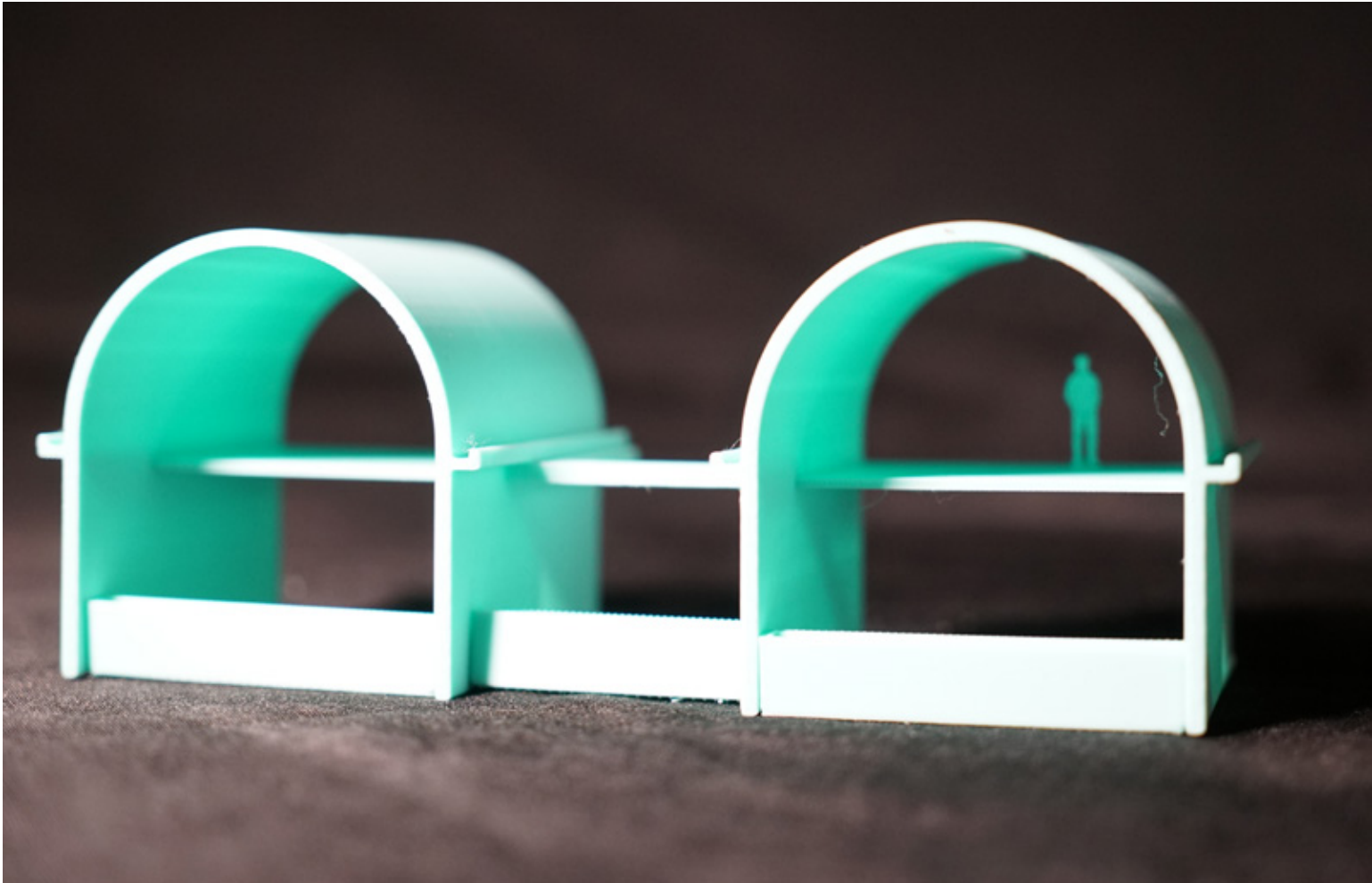
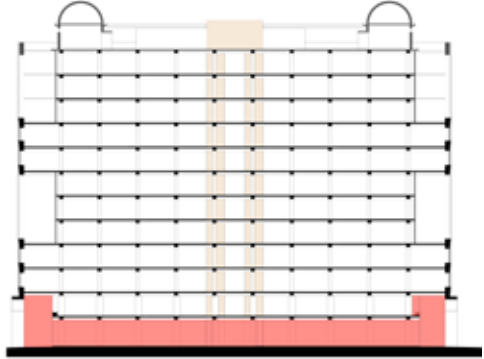
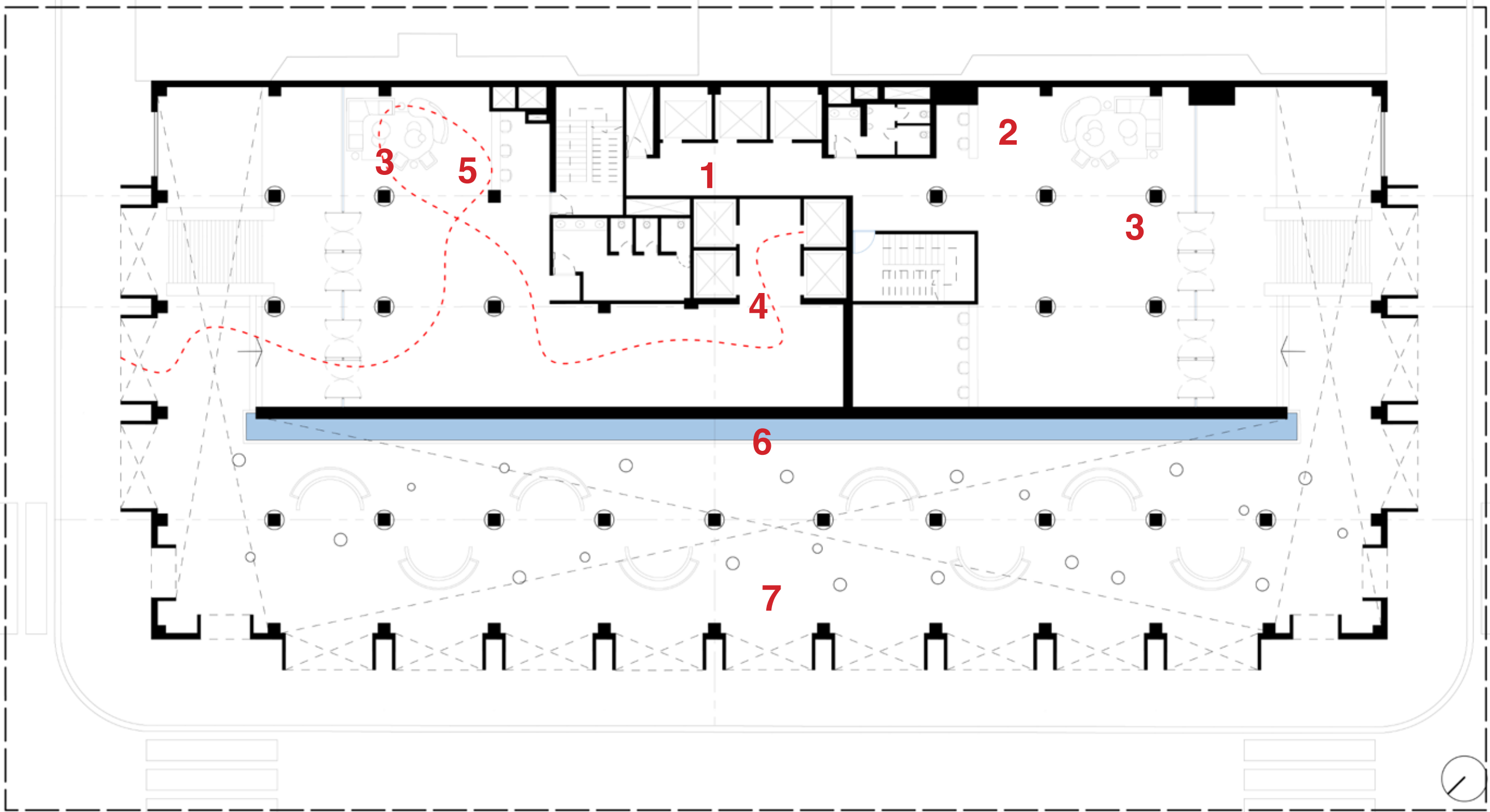


Figure 41: Vaulted opening in the therapy rooms provide prospect to the Mental Healthcare patients

# Layouts | First Level Layout

## LEGEND

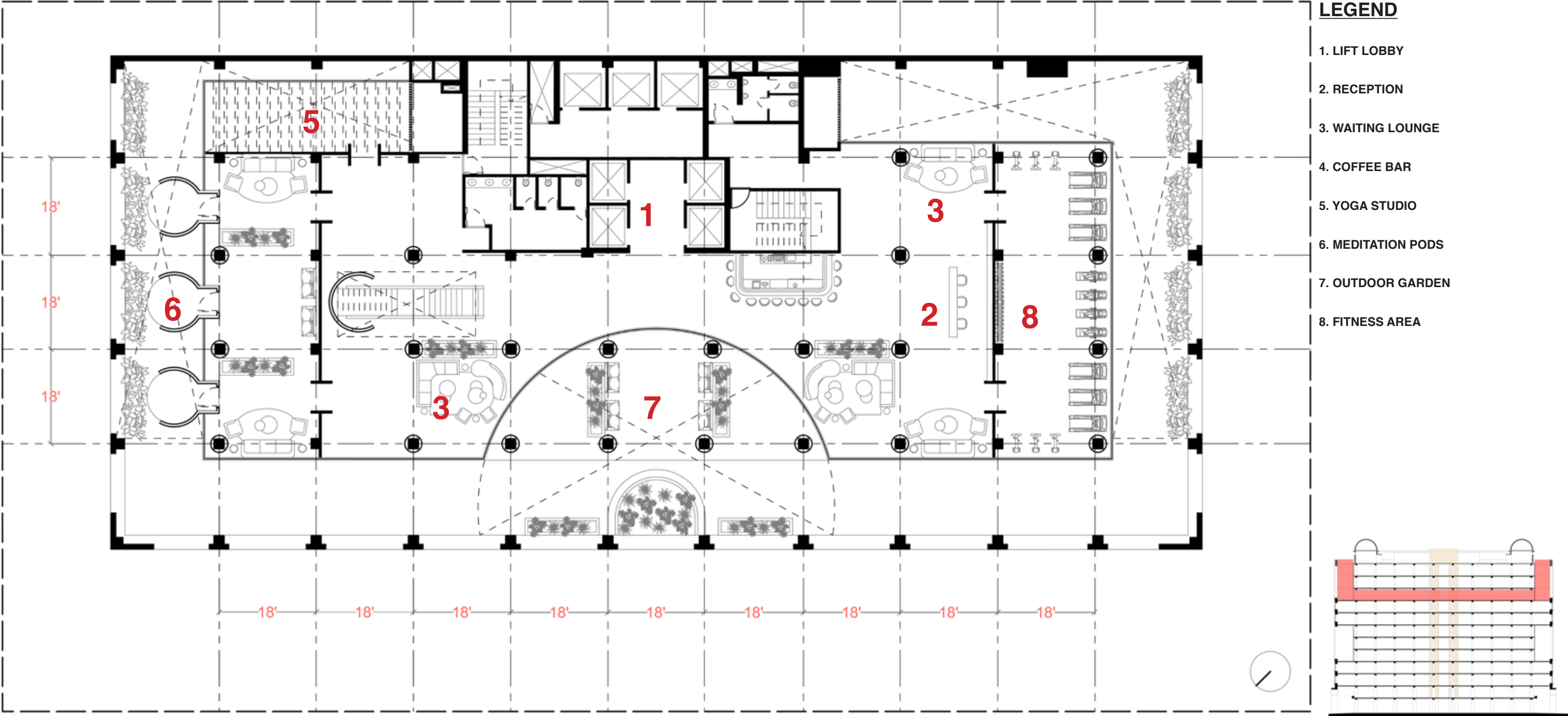
- 1. LIFT LOBBY (OFFICES)
- 2. RECEPTION (OFFICES)
- 3. WAITING LOUNGE
- 4. LIFT LOBBY  
(MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY)
- 5. RECEPTION  
(MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY)
- 6. WATER BODY
- 7. POCKET PARK



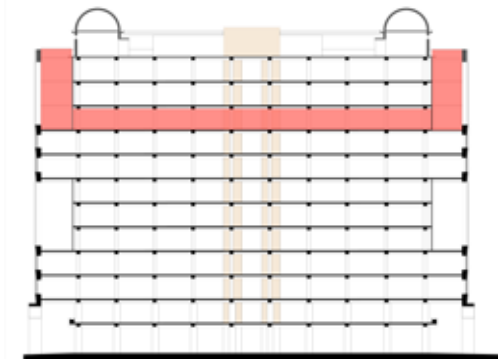
Key Section

**FIRST LEVEL LAYOUT**  
SCALE: N.T.S.

# Layouts | Mental Health Care First Level



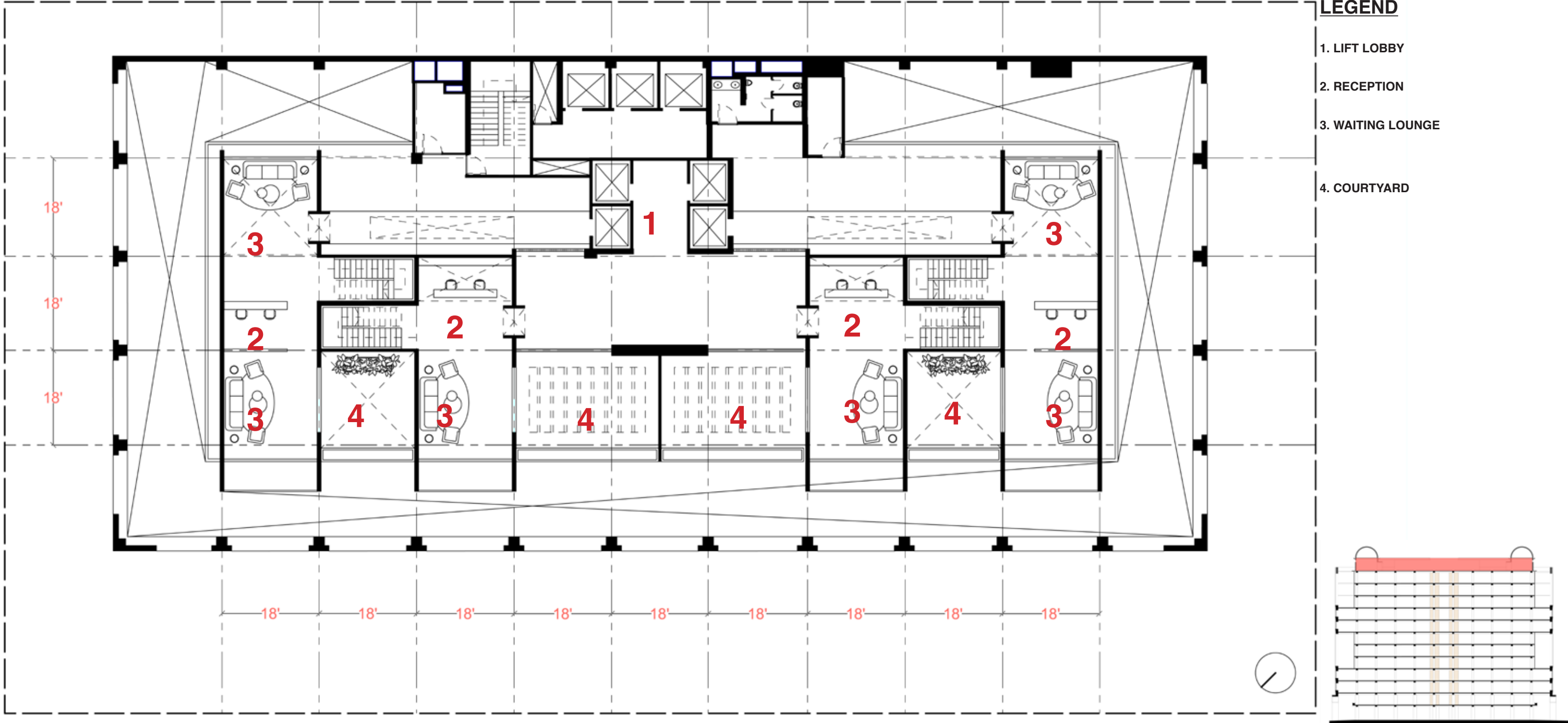
- LEGEND**
- 1. LIFT LOBBY
  - 2. RECEPTION
  - 3. WAITING LOUNGE
  - 4. COFFEE BAR
  - 5. YOGA STUDIO
  - 6. MEDITATION PODS
  - 7. OUTDOOR GARDEN
  - 8. FITNESS AREA



Key Section

**MENTAL HEALTH CARE FACILITY FIRST LEVEL**  
**SCALE: N.T.S.**

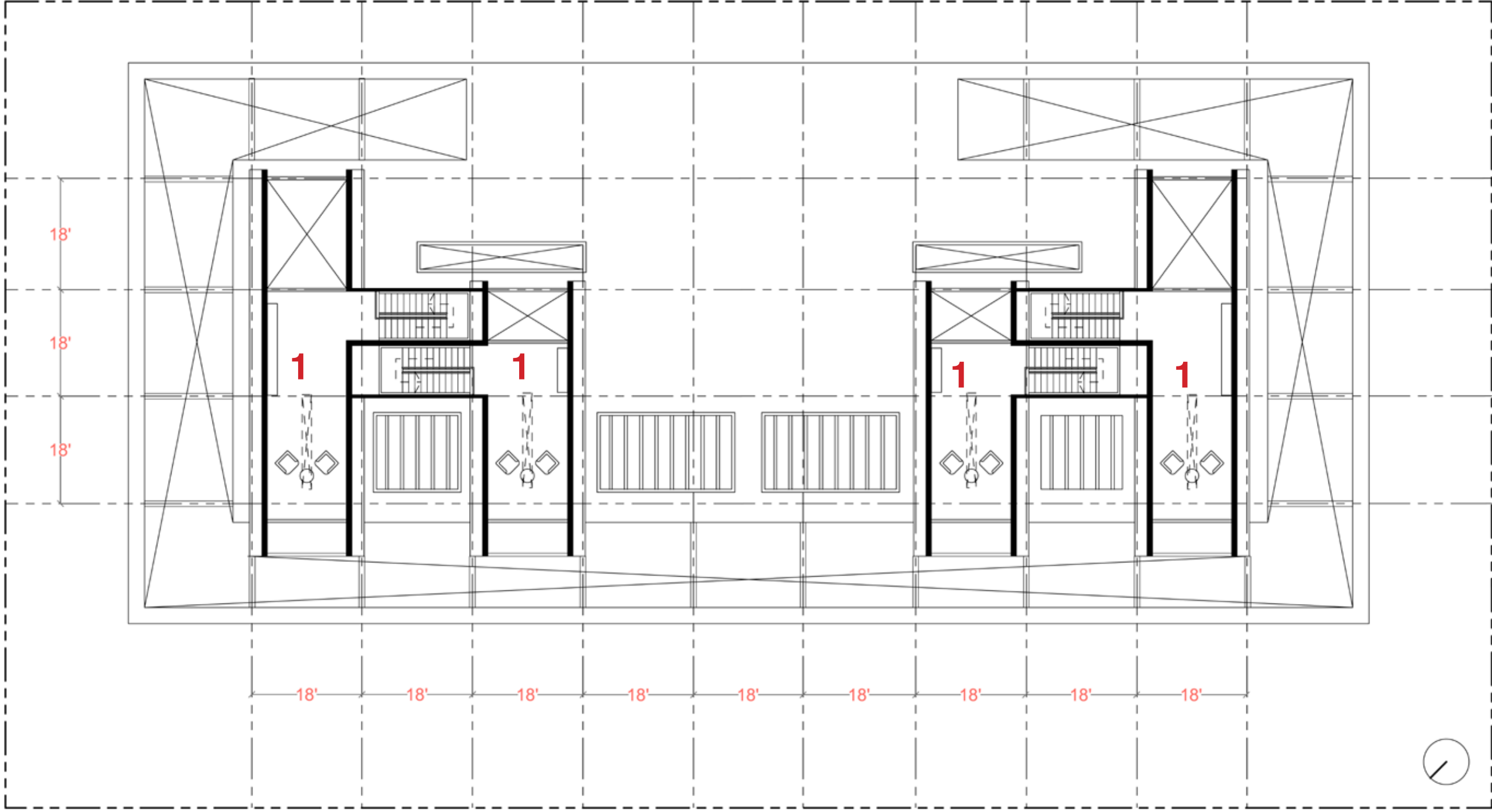
# Layouts | Therapy Rooms Lower Level



- LEGEND**
- 1. LIFT LOBBY
  - 2. RECEPTION
  - 3. WAITING LOUNGE
  - 4. COURTYARD

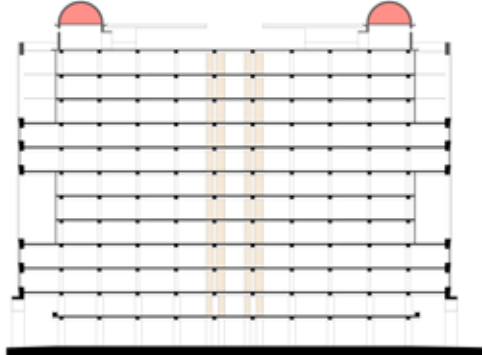
**THERAPY ROOMS LOWER LEVEL**  
SCALE: N.T.S.

# Layouts | Therapy Rooms Upper Level



### LEGEND

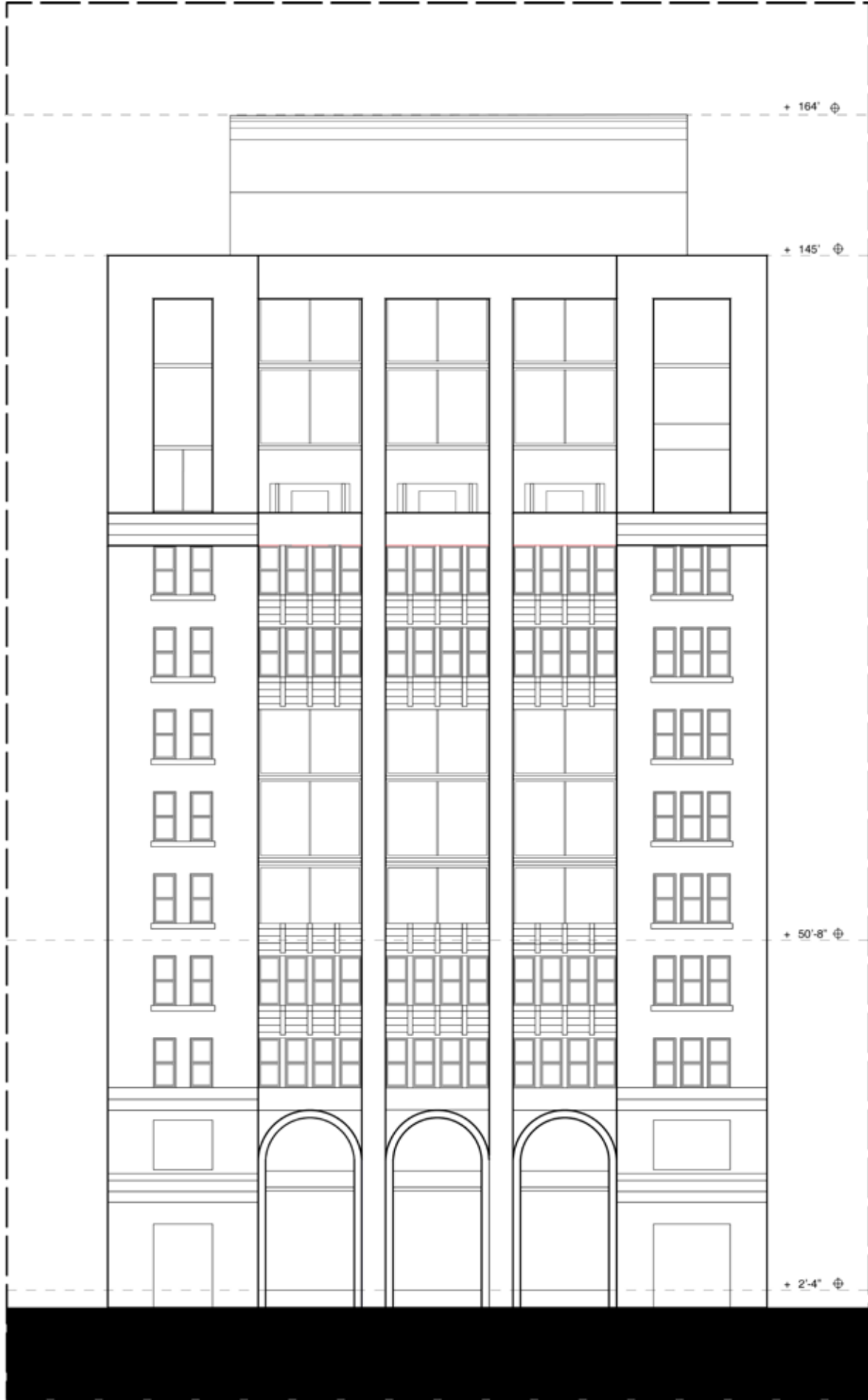
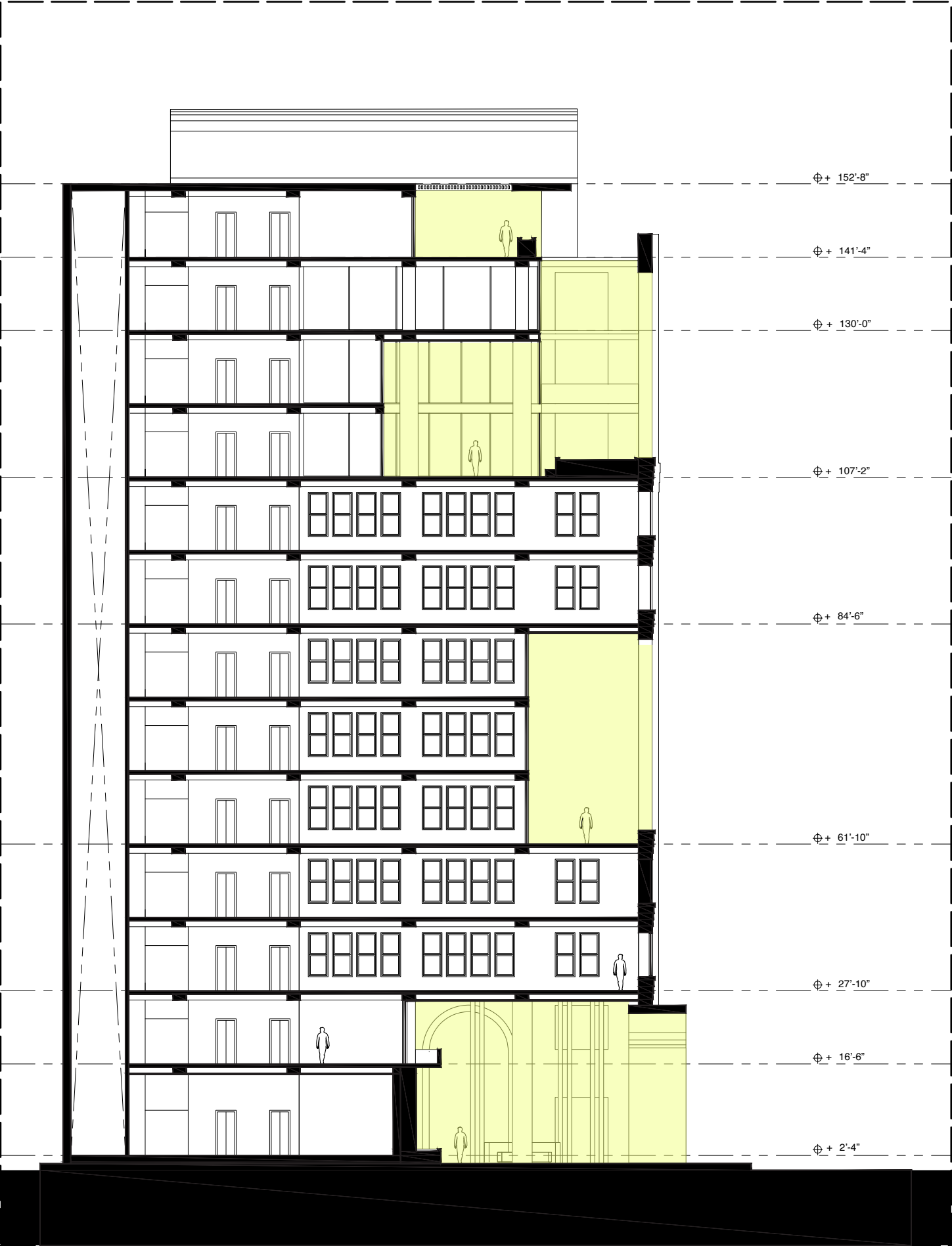
1. THERAPY ROOMS



Key Section

**THERAPY ROOMS UPPER LEVEL**  
SCALE: N.T.S.

# Sections and Elevation



# Views | Across the Road



# Views | Entrance View



# Views | Mental Healthcare Facility Entrance



# Views | Garden at the Mental Healthcare Facility



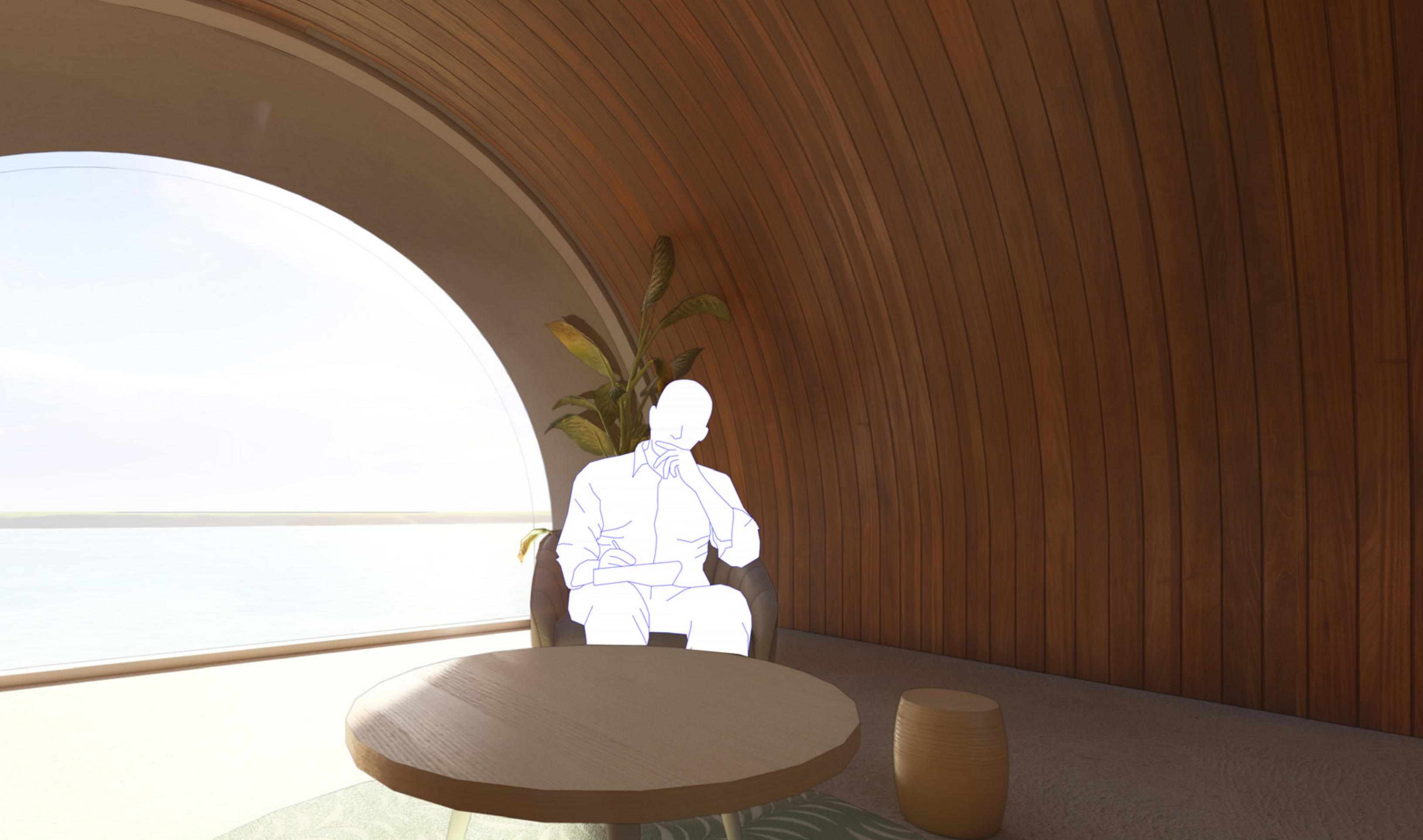
**Views | Meditation Pods at the Mental Healthcare facili-**



**Views | Yoga Studio at the Mental Healthcare facility**



# Views | Therapy Space at the Mental Healthcare facility



**Views | Therapy Room at the Mental Healthcare facility**



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**Rishabh Suvarna**

rishabhs@vt.edu