

transformation: 1908 schoolhouse

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movable, school

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abstract

this thesis is an exploration of how the existing site and structure of a 1908 schoolhouse can be transformed and given a new life as a community arts center in marion, virginia.

existing geometry, structure and openings are examined in order to design a project which integrates old and new elements.

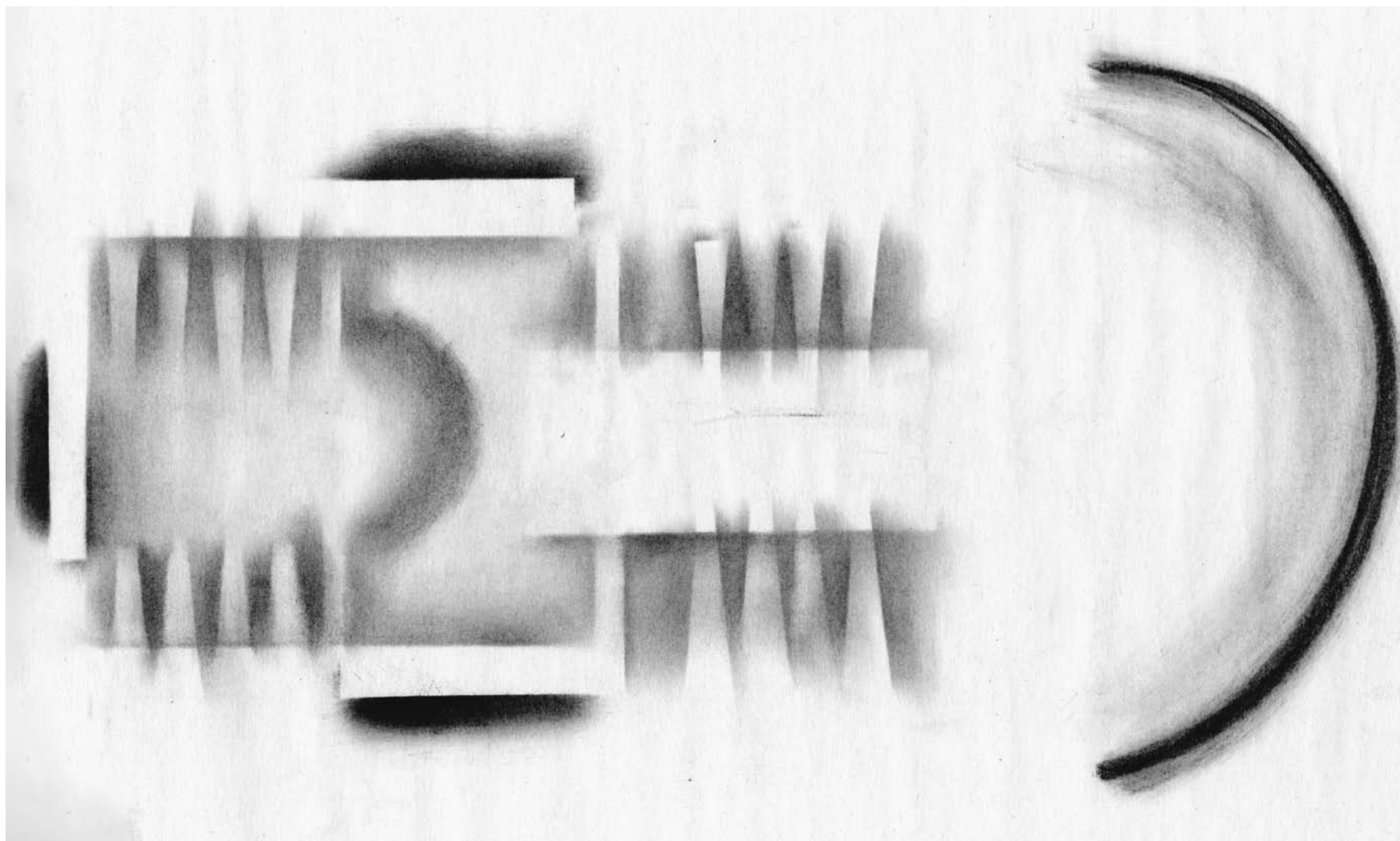
the design strives to create indoor and outdoor gathering spaces that promote creativity and arts education.

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what if imagination and the arts are not frosting at all,  
but the fountainhead of human experience?

rollo may



site - existing conditions

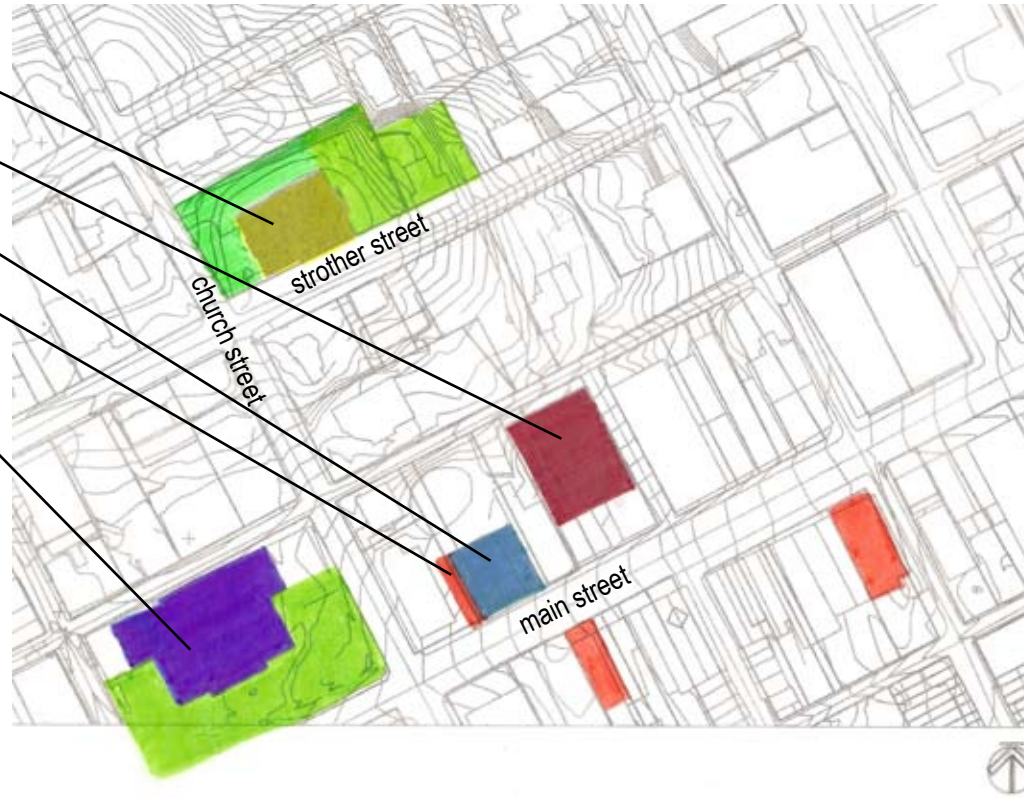
schoolhouse & proposed green space

lincoln theatre

general francis marion hotel

restaurant, typical

courthouse - lawn



downtown marion

a 1908 brick schoolhouse in marion, virginia, a small town in southwest virginia.

the building is located at one of the highest points in town at the intersection of church street and strother street, two blocks from main street and the courthouse.

the schoolhouse has been used as a high school and elementary school, as well as a school administrative building and a museum, but is currently vacant.

downtown marion has minimal public green space, other than the courthouse lawn.



panoramic view at intersection of church street and strother street



view at southwest corner



view at northwest corner

view at southeast corner



existing exterior brick



## site - existing conditions

what does it mean to challenge the original architectural idea?

can the architectural idea remain the same, while the means are challenged?

what are the basic architectural elements of the existing building? should they be preserved? demolished? modified?

how do you activate elements that have become fixed symbols?

what connections are made between old and new? does a trace of the old remain?

should new openings be created? should existing openings be infilled?



view of arched opening from west corridor



masonry arches in existing basement



doors and arched opening in central hall

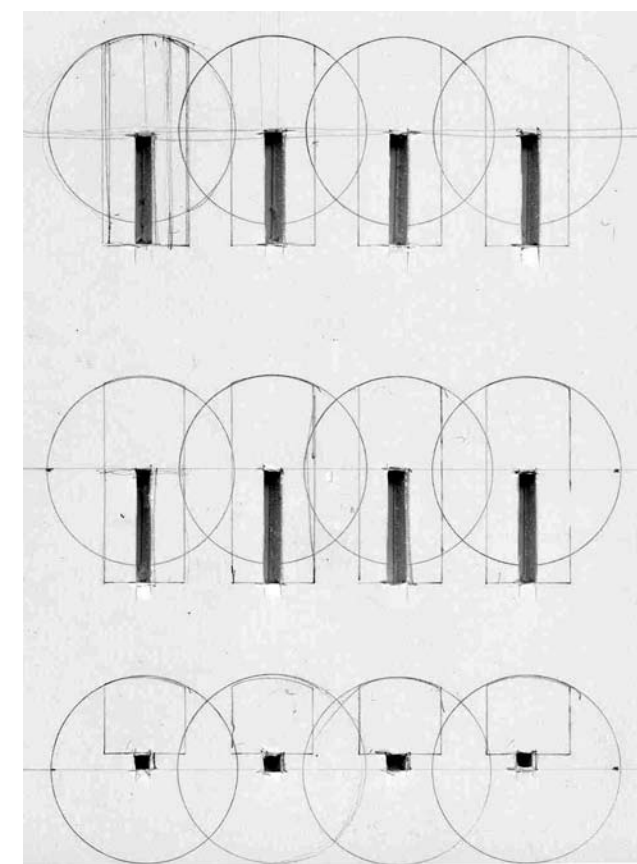
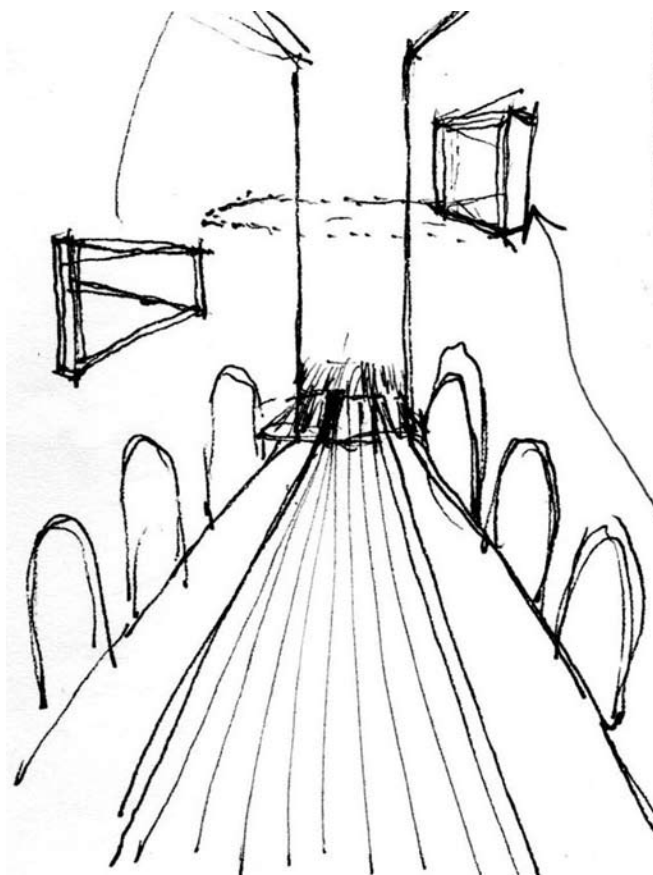


strother street entrance

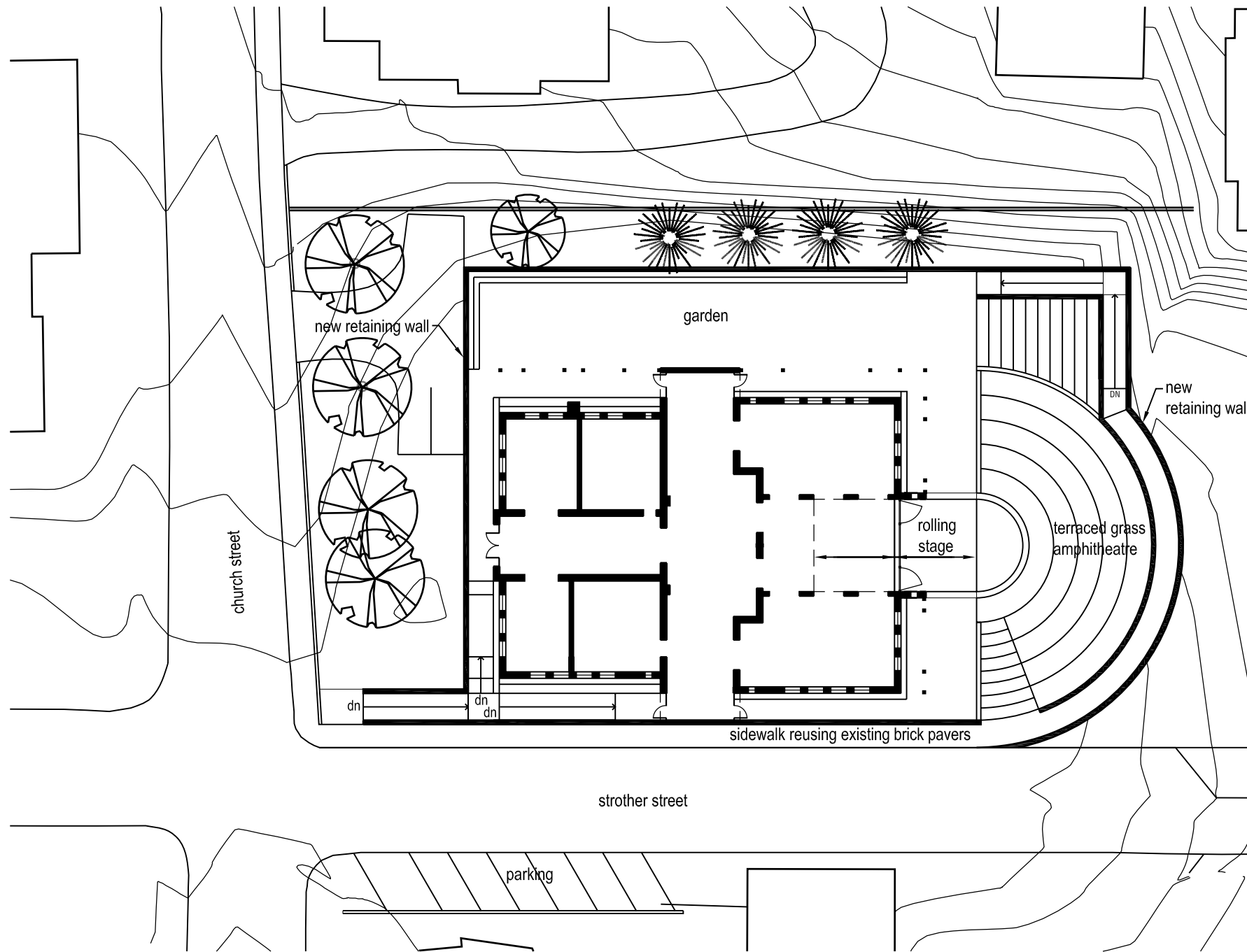
brainstorming – writing...geometry...proportion...  
alignment...connections...openings

BRAINSTORM ABOUT SCHOOL / THESIS

WOOD	HISTORY	CONNECTION
GLASS	SYMMETRY	PATTERN
BRICK	OCCUPY	RHYTHM
OLD	LEARNING	COLOR
REUSE	TEACHING	TEXTURE
ABOUT	CREATING	TACTILE
ADAPT	MAKING	EXCITEMENT
ADAPTABLE	CRATTING	COLLECTIVE
ACTIVATE	SEWING	SUPPORT
ENGAGE	COOKING	INVOLVEMENT
CREATIVE	VIEWING	CLIMB
CREATIVITY	PLAYING	SKY
INSPIRE	PICKING	WIND
REFLECTION	GRINDING	SENSITIVE
HUB	LAUGHING	FREEZE
CENTER	SINGING	TRANSFORMATION
COKE	LISTENING	MEMORY
COMMUNITY	SHARING	TRANSLATION
COMMUNICATION	ENJOYING	FUN
GATHERING	APPRECIATING	HANDS
CONNECTION	REFLECTING	VOICES
EXHIBIT	OBSERVING	MINDS
DISPLAY	WATCHING	HEARTS
COMBINATION		SOUS
COLLABORATION		EYES
OUTSIDE		
INSIDE		



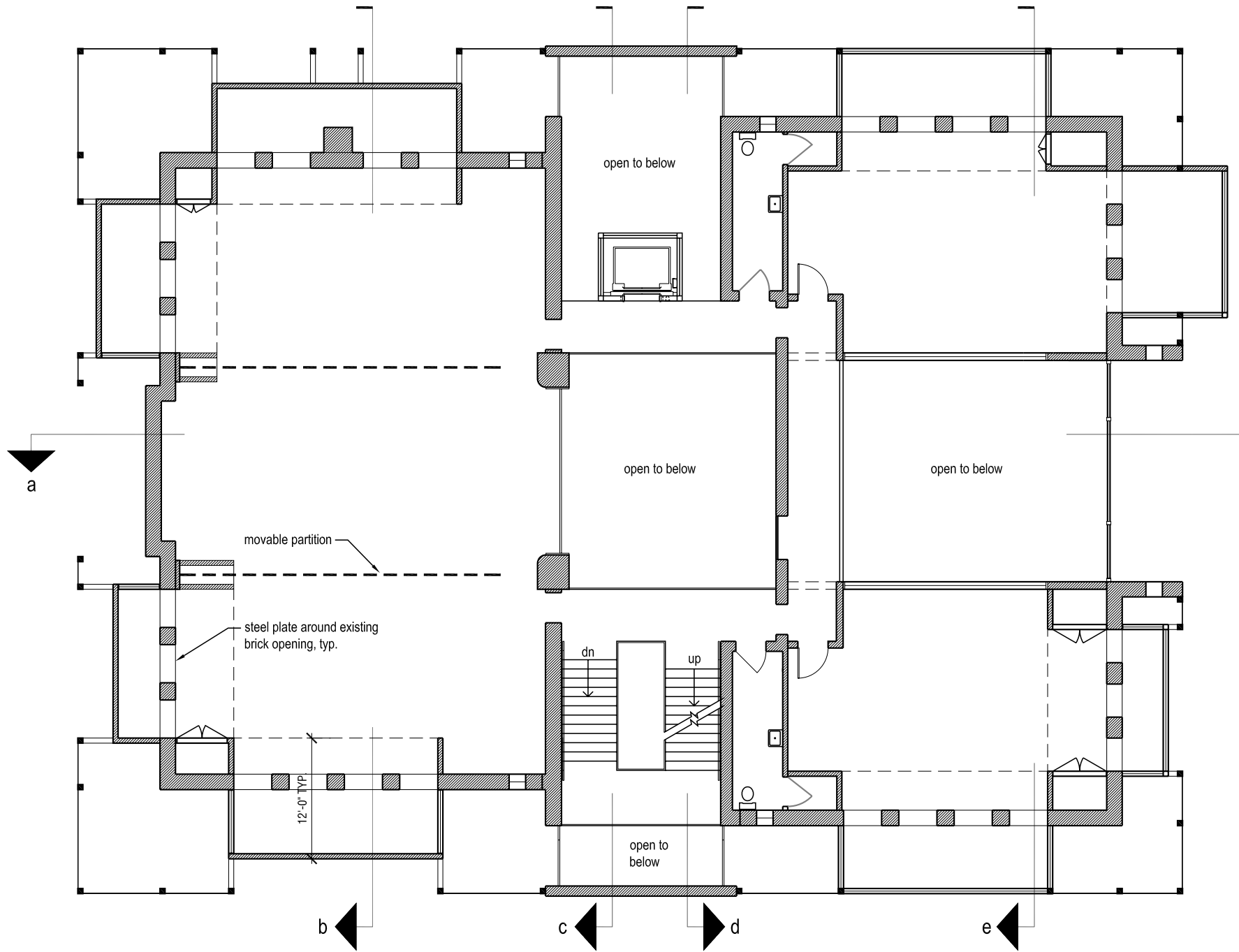
transformation



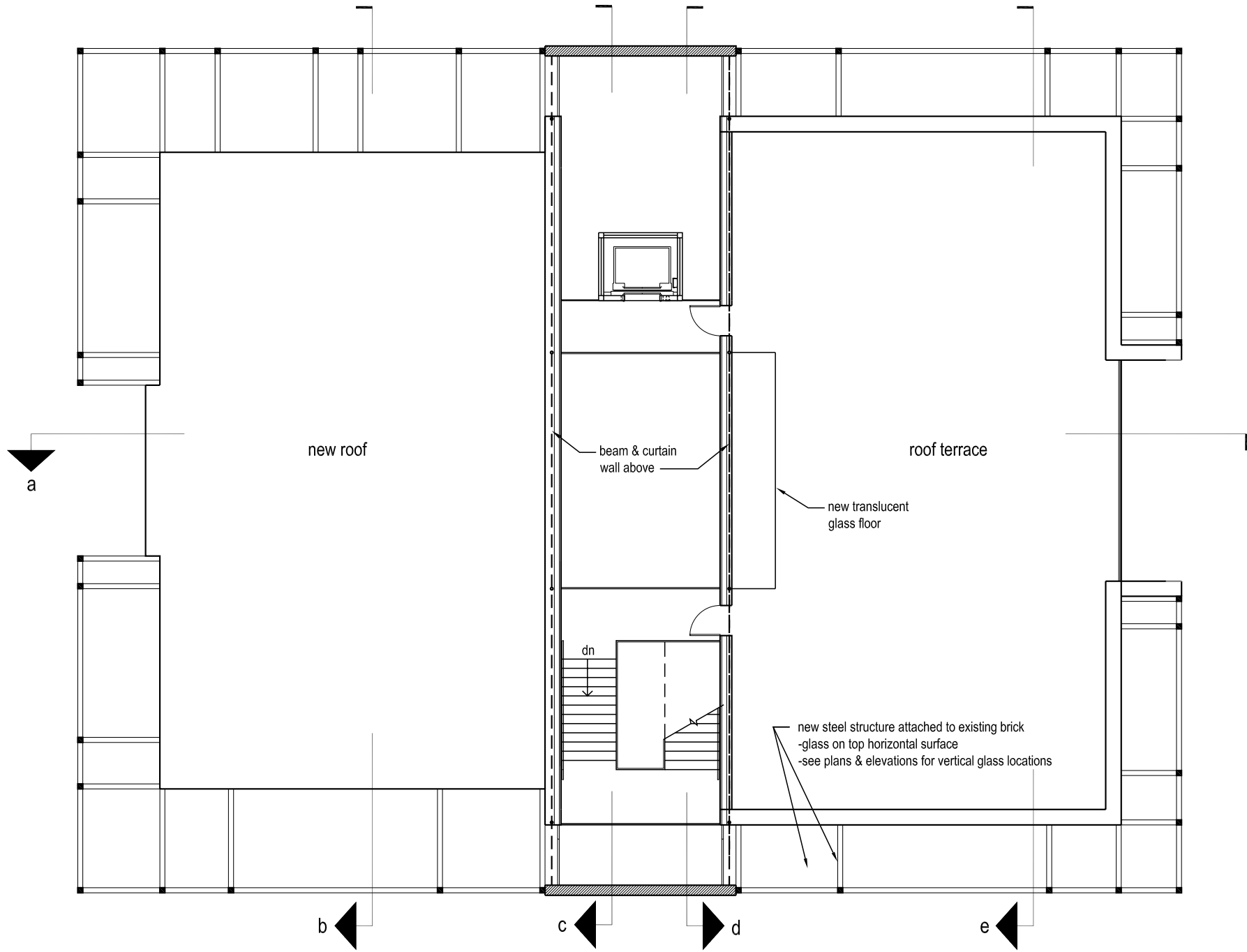
site plan



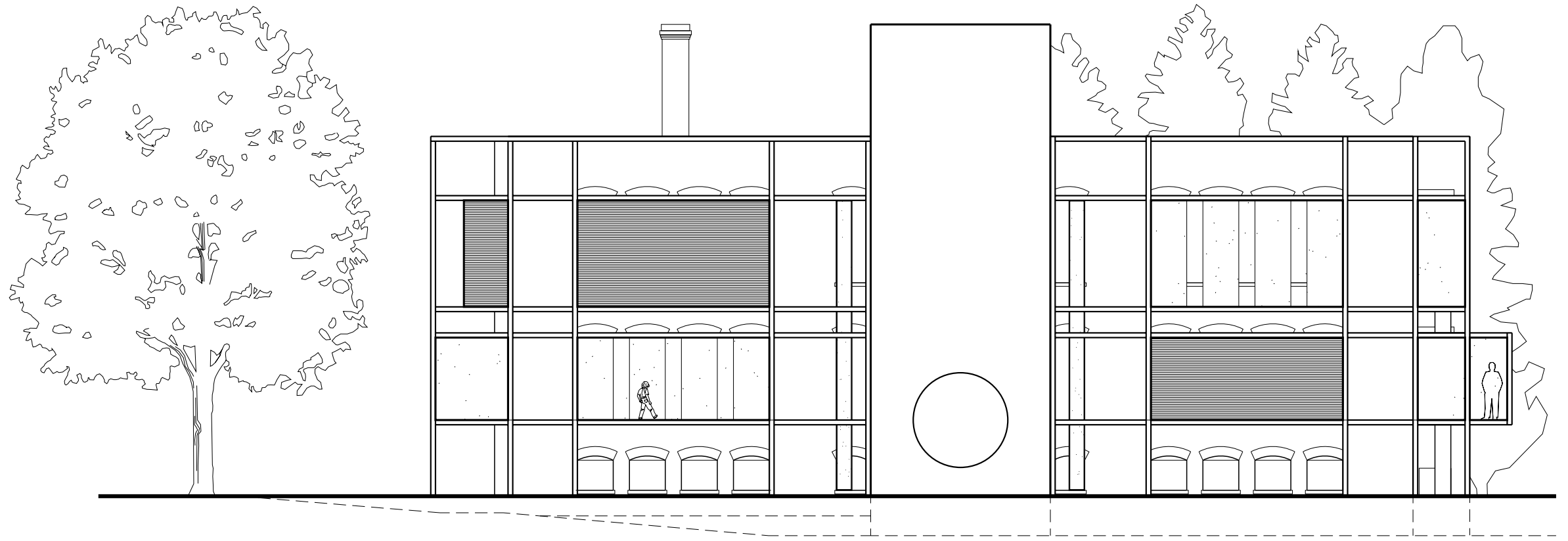




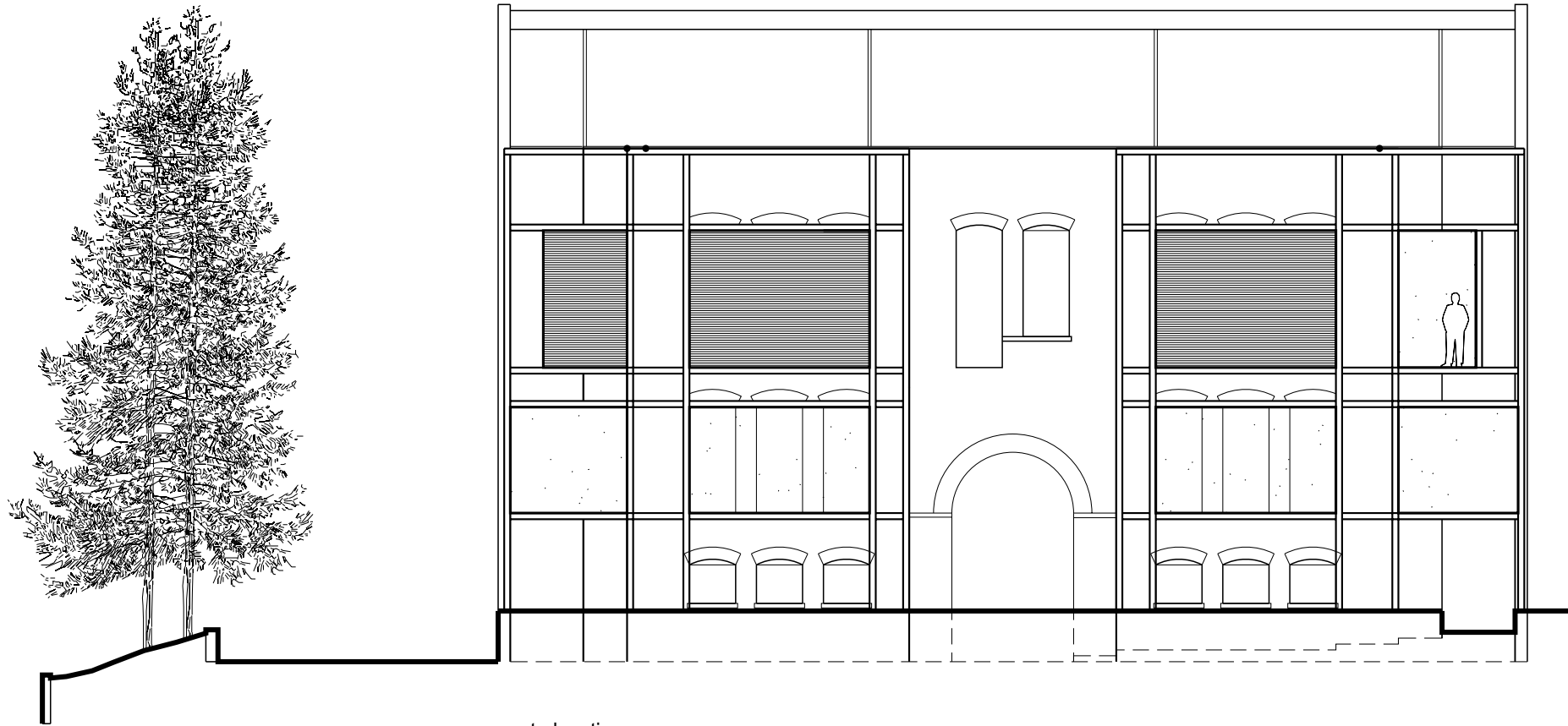
second floor plan



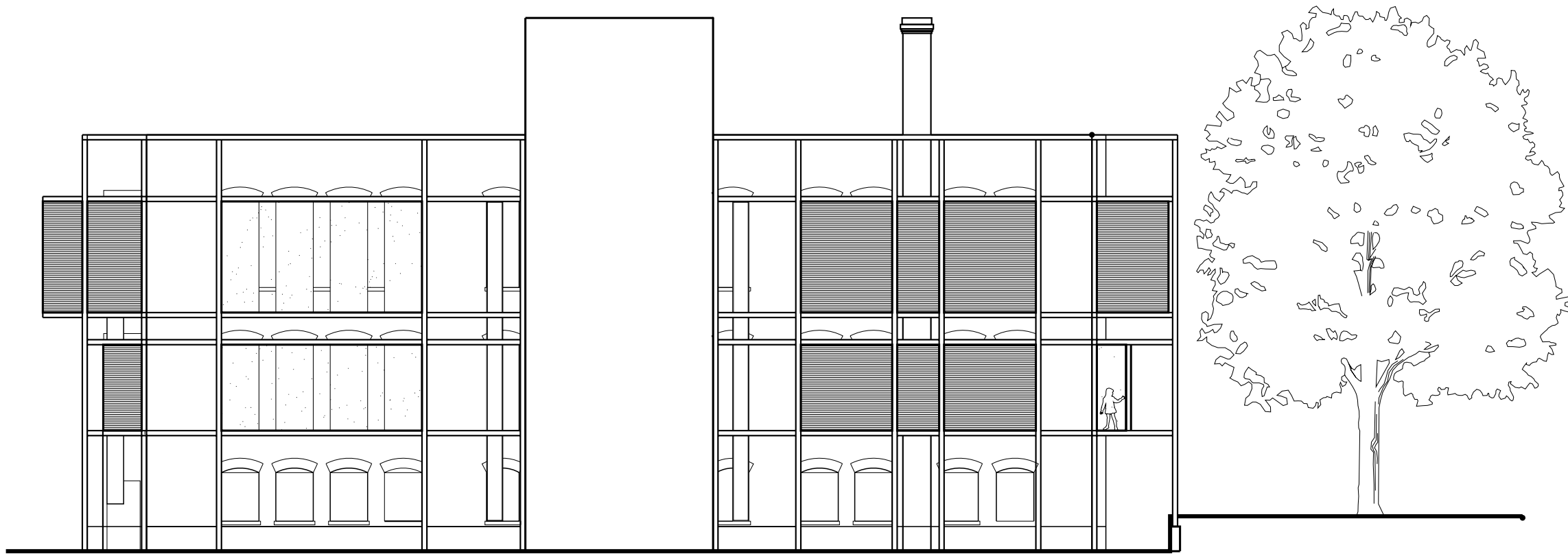
roof plan



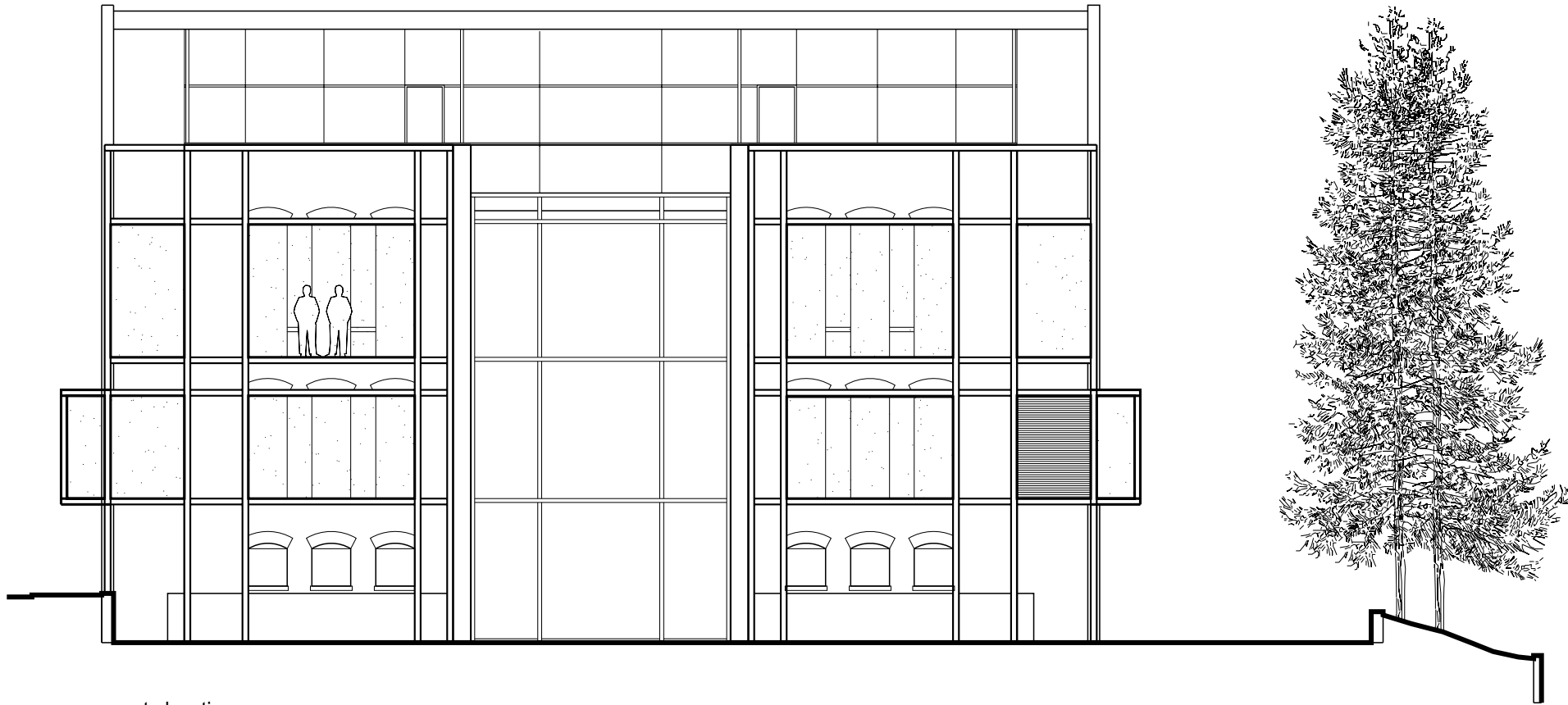
south elevation



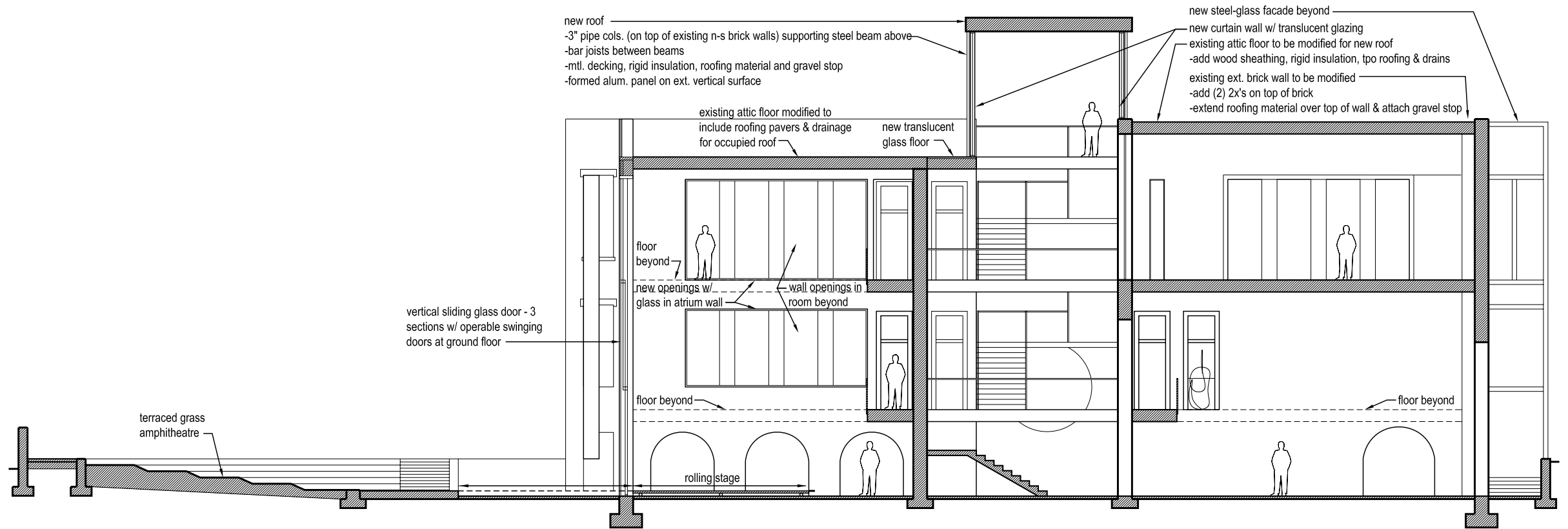
west elevation



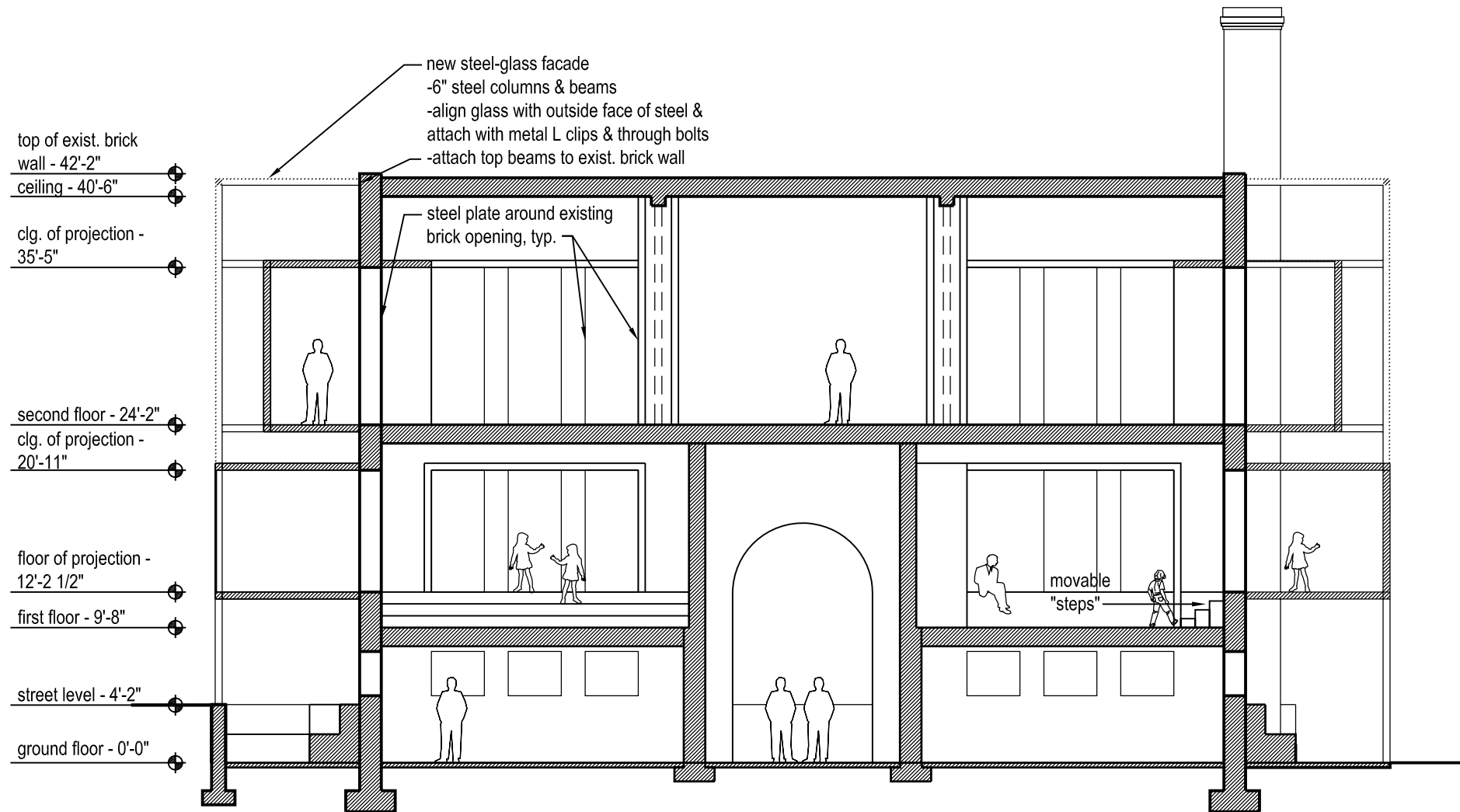
north elevation



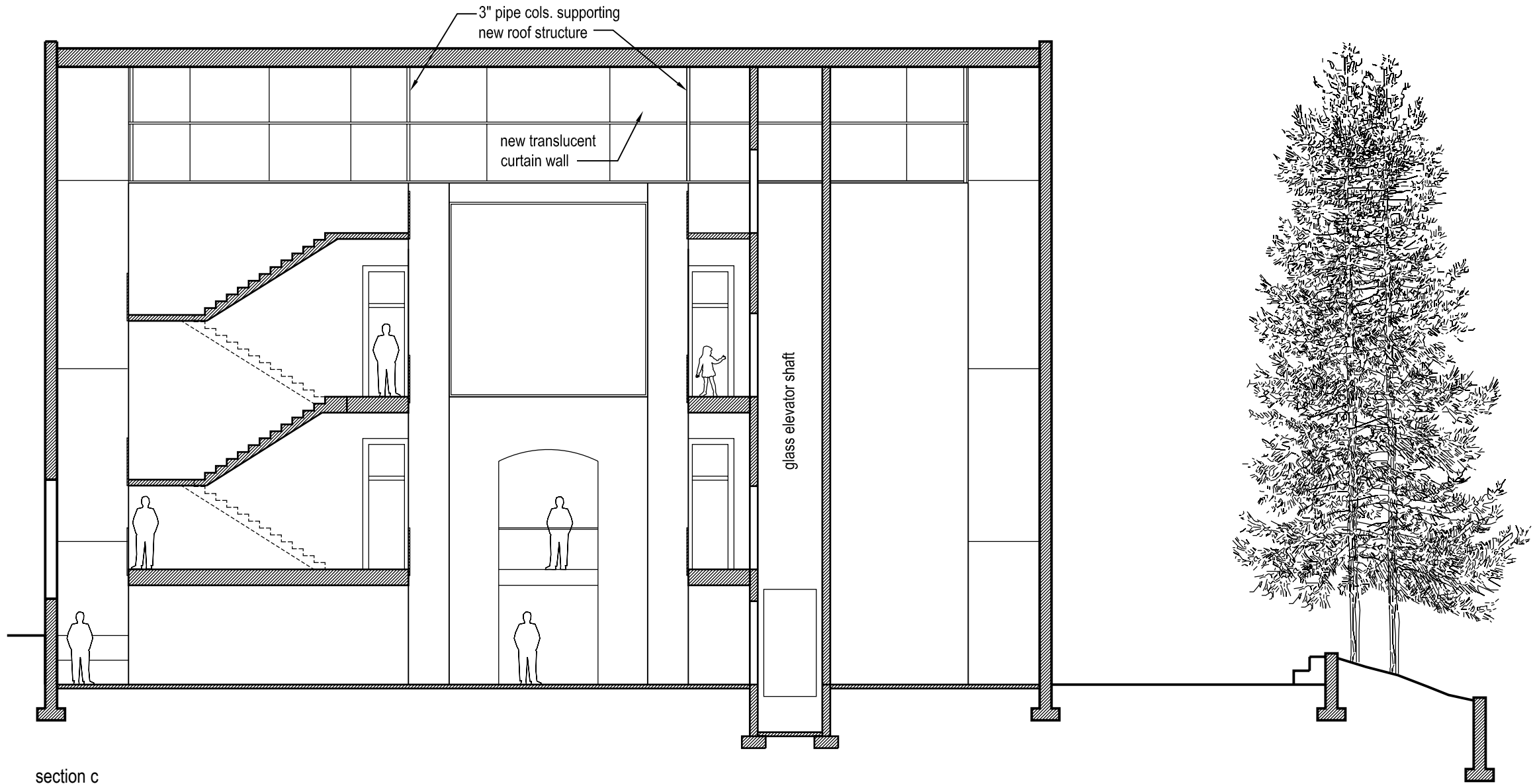
east elevation

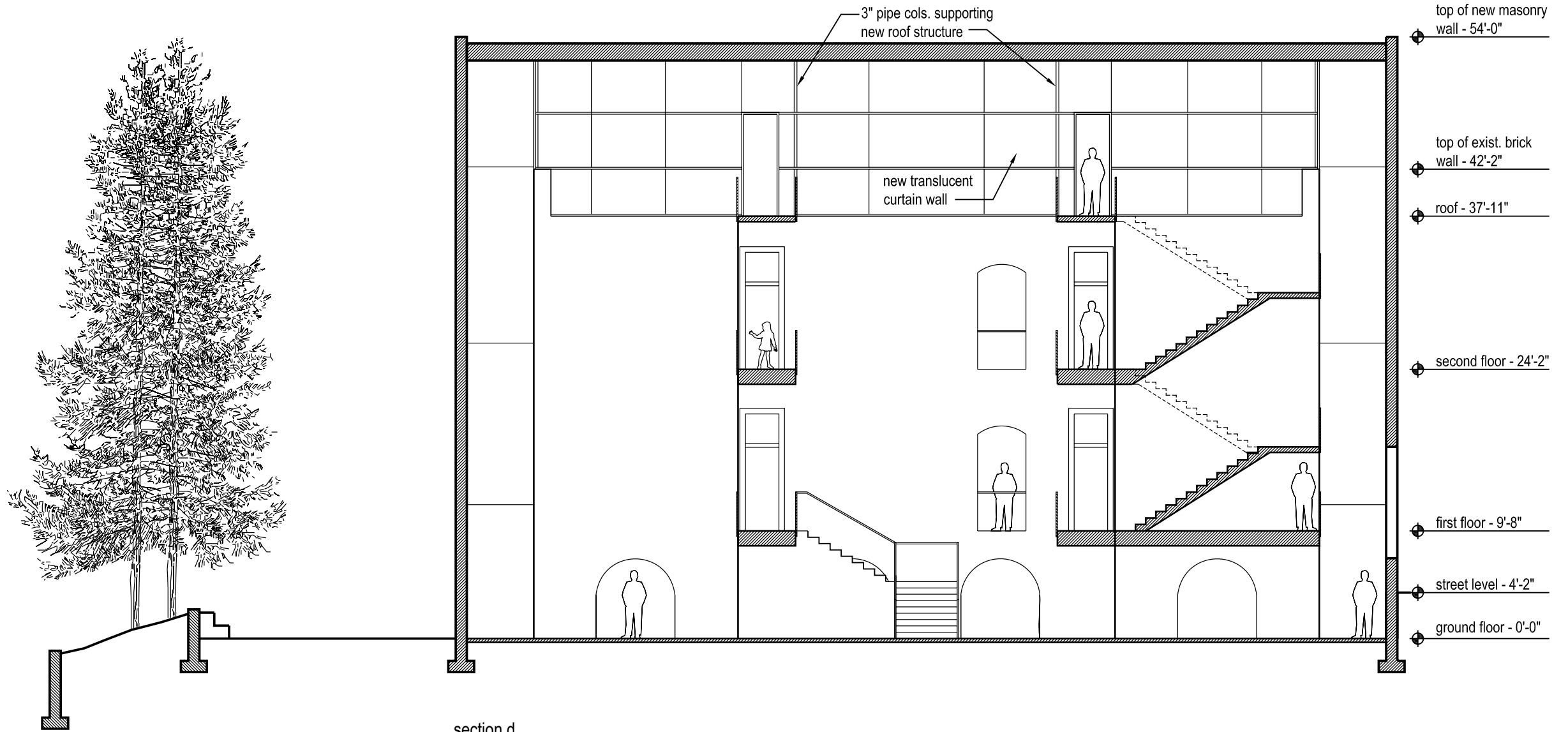


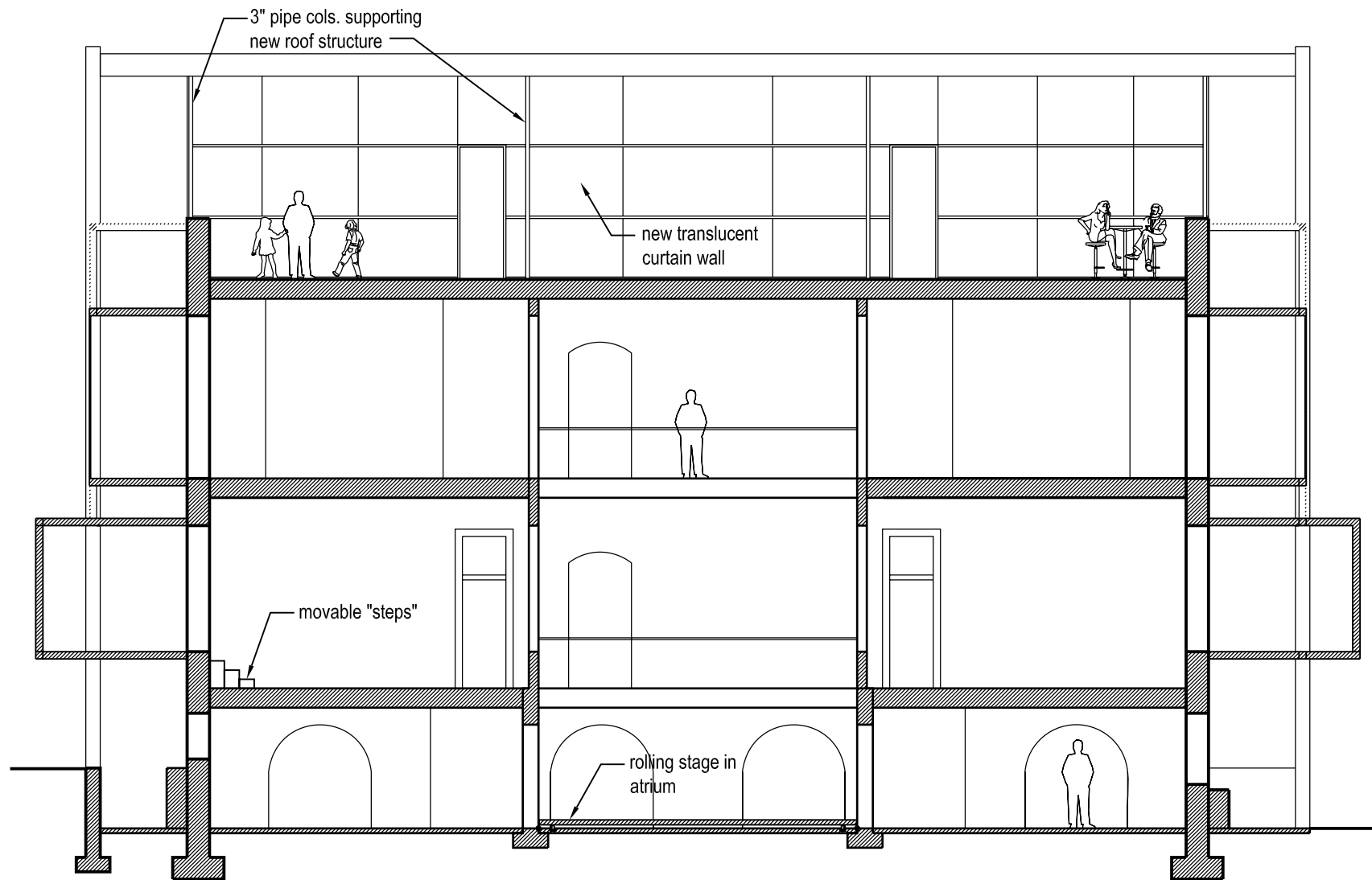
section a



section b







section e

## facade - extensions - openings

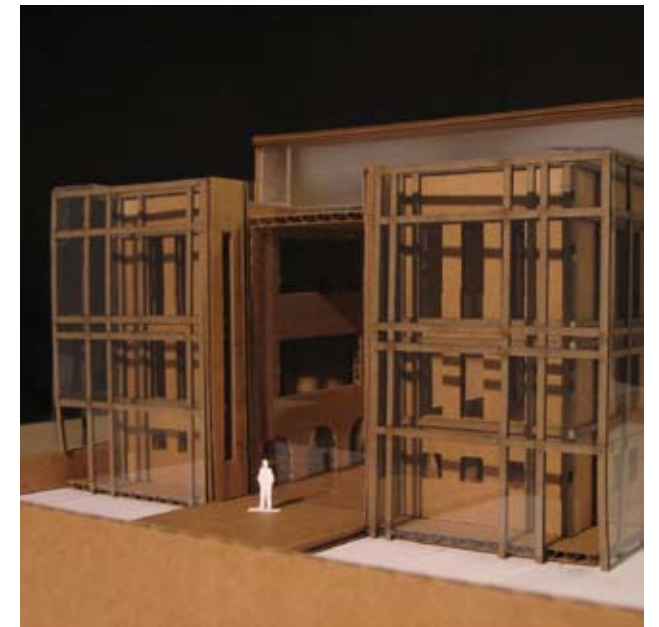
the existing structure is activated by engaging the new structure.

a steel and glass structure creates an enclosure over the existing brick and becomes a graphical frame relating to the geometry of the old building. it is made as thin as possible by mounting the glass within the steel, flush with the outside face of the frame.

the steel provides the support for 12' deep boxes that extend from existing openings in the exterior brick wall, both to the outside and inside, at varying dimensions. the connection continues to interior spaces through aligned openings in the interior walls adjacent to a new east atrium.



window box at southwest corner



northeast view towards interior east atrium and new openings in interior wall



castelvecchio museum - verona, italy - february 2008



occupying the window box

## facade - extensions - openings

allow a window to be more than just a punched hole in the exterior wall...create a new extension that corresponds to the existing holes.

embrace the idea of occupying openings.

a change in materials and color signals the passage through the old wall. you are suspended in a new environment, looking down on, up at and back through the old.

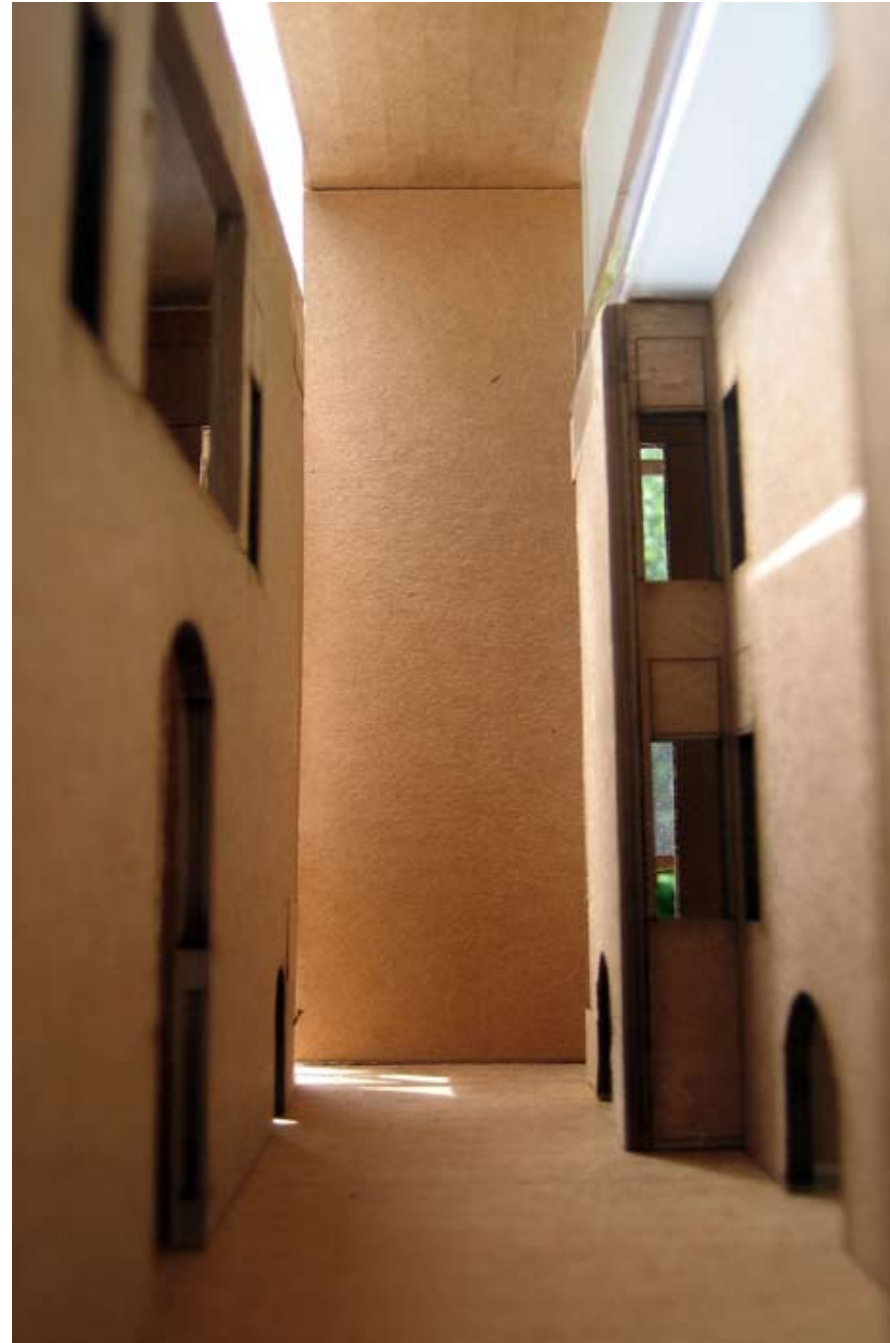
infill of opaque material or glass is determined by orientation and view, as well as desired conditions for the corresponding interior space.

movable "steps" allow access to raised window boxes on the first floor. these can be configured in multiple ways and locations as steps, seating, tables.

existing brick is removed down to the floor level in the openings on the second floor, allowing the window boxes to enlarge the existing rooms as they become extensions.



view at south entrance looking west



preliminary model - central atrium looking north

## central atrium

the new north and south end walls and roof of the central atrium are pulled away from the existing enclosure, creating a void that allows light to penetrate through translucent glass.

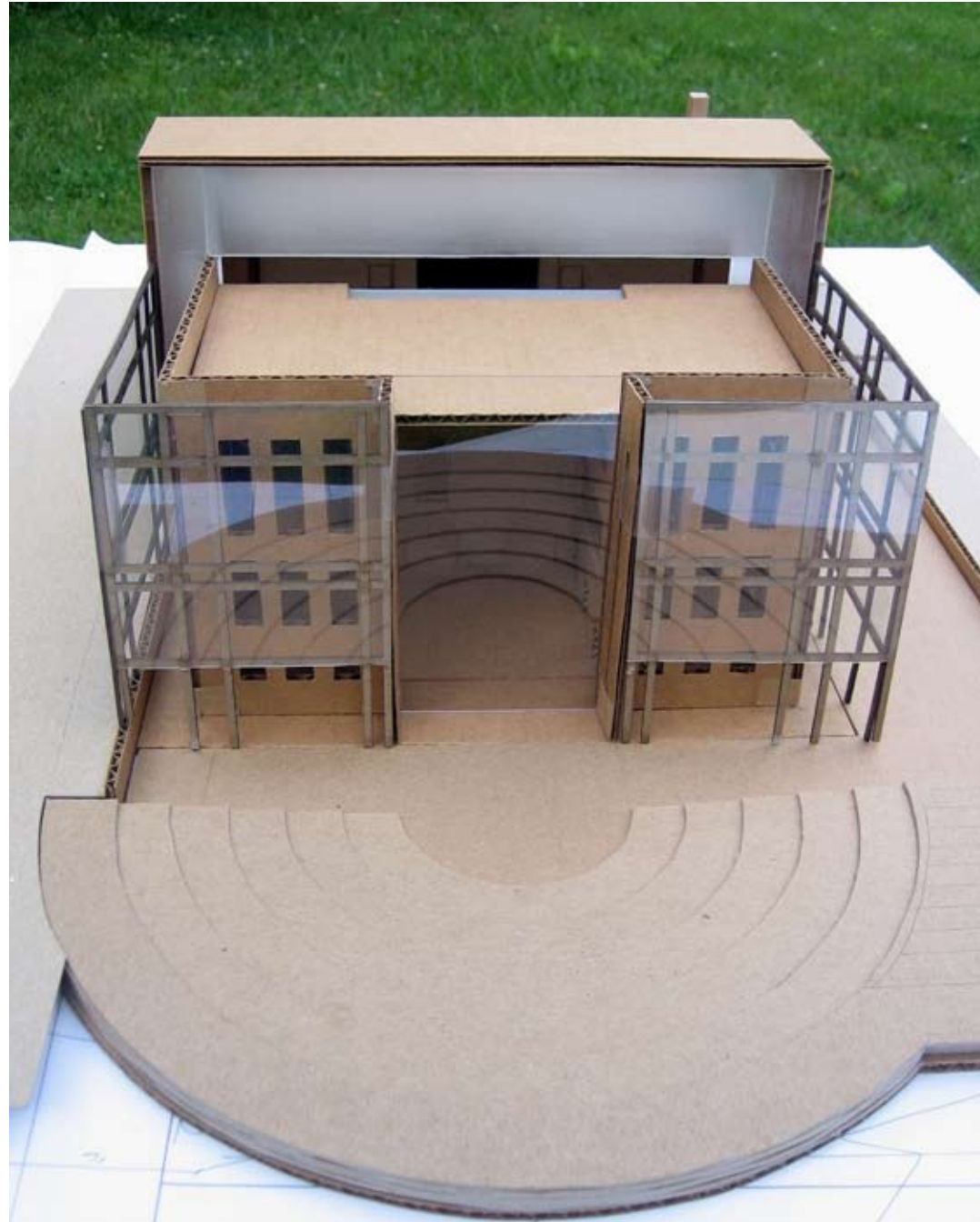
a circular window in the new south wall references the arch of the old strother street entrance and designates the new ground floor entrance, accessed from the street level by a ramp.

existing openings remain at multiple levels throughout the atrium although some are no longer connected to the floors as they once were. remaining portions of the existing floors form new bridges.

the main arch in the west wall, formerly only on the first floor level, is extended down to the ground floor.



santa maria degli angeli chapel - monte tamaro, switzerland - march 2008



view from east

## connections to the exterior

an amphitheatre, community garden and roof terrace provide outdoor gathering and performance spaces.

large glass doors slide vertically to open the east atrium to the exterior.

a rolling stage moves out from the east atrium into the amphitheatre.

window box extensions provide elevated performance balconies.



peony - middleton place gardens - charleston, sc - april 2007

yellow = sunshine, energy, happiness



yellow wall inside window box



veron primary school, dominican republic, march 2009

all images by author.