

Dr. Lillie Jackson Center for the Arts and Social Justice

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Architecture  
In  
Architecture

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## ABSTRACT

Architecture informs the structure of society, determining how people move, whose paths cross, and which resources are accessible. By merging social justice initiatives and architectural design, buildings have the power to provide equity, strengthen communities, and encourage dialogue. Empowerment of residents and the disruption of mass incarceration are the goals of this proposal, implemented through community engagement techniques and a mixed-use program supporting employment, job training, housing, social networks, and healing.

Located in Midtown Edmondson's neighborhood of West Baltimore, this social justice center restores a dilapidated parcel of land and former ice factory. The proposed food hall, community center, and garden invite fluid exchange between this hub of resources and the larger society. Simultaneously, current inmates will have the opportunity to engage with the development process through a construction and design apprentice program. Former inmates will find immediate resources to ease the transition back into their community upon release, with supportive networks contributing towards lower recidivism rates and the restoration of voting ability and voice. In a cyclical process, upward individual and communal growth will be redistributed back into the community. Alongside these individuals, local residents are also invited into the fabric of this social justice center.

The project offers interdisciplinary and multi-scalar design from landscape to interiors, adaptive reuse, to new build architecture. By acknowledging history, actively

listening, and designing with intention, this project meets current needs and offers a unique perspective on social architecture. With human rights at the forefront of design decisions, the final proposal reveals that design has the power to incite and actively work towards social justice and disrupt systemically racist institutions, like mass incarceration.

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## GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Design that disrupts, takes action and initiates social change against mass incarceration is the goal of this thesis. Through an interdisciplinary approach, engaging with the community through landscape, interior and built form, architecture has the power to interrupt current models of discrimination at the community level and provide platform for people to be empowered to work towards change.

The Dr. Lillie Jackson Center for the Arts and Social Justice showcases an alternative means to incarceration, mass surveillance, and removal of voice in West Baltimore. This community center reinforces the idea that public land remain public and that employment, housing, and community networks be seen as a human right, freely accessed. This new model for community empowerment uses architecture to demand autonomy, where people determine the future of their cities and livelihoods. It showcases that the removal of racist institutions and policing policies is not only possible but imperative to attaining social justice.

Built environments shape how people experience a city and the degree of safety, freedom, and power which is felt by each individual who occupies it. With this idea in mind, the Dr. Lillie Jackson Center states through its design moves, that mass incarceration must end and in its place, a new model for community driven, bottom-up initiatives which restore, heal and offer opportunities for growth.

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# Points of Inquiry

How can architecture be used as a tool to dismantle mass incarceration, a 21st century system of surveillance, imprisonment and suppression of constitutional and human rights? In what ways does architecture have power to change the biased, comfortable, and colorblind mindsets, which allow this system to persist?

**Racial Justice**

**Mass Incarceration**

**Disruptive Architecture**

**Human Rights**

**Community Building**

**A**rchitecture informs the structure of society, determining how people move, whose paths cross, and which resources are accessible. *By merging social justice initiatives and architectural design, buildings have the power to provide equity, strengthen communities, and encourage dialogue.* Empowerment of residents and the disruption of mass incarceration are the goals of this proposal, implemented through community engagement techniques and a mixed-use program supporting employment, job training, housing, social networks, and healing.

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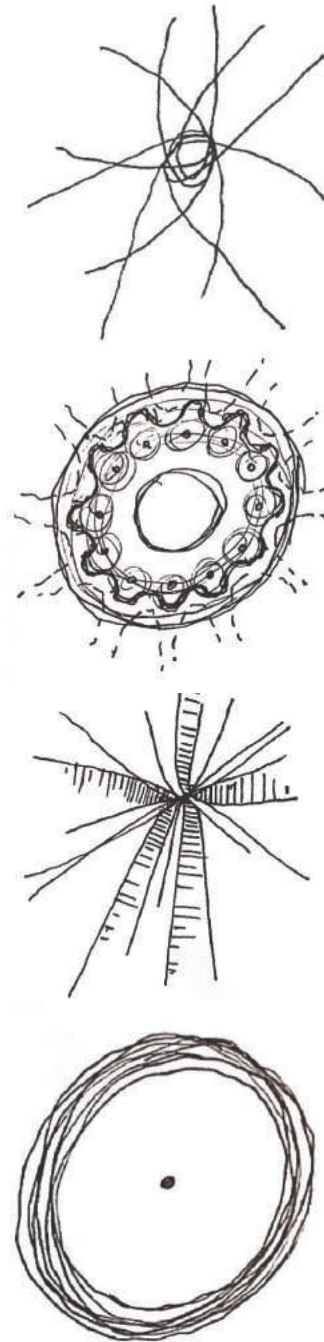
release, with supportive networks contributing towards lower recidivism rates and the restoration of voting ability and voice. *In a cyclical process, upward individual and communal growth will be redistributed back into the community.* Alongside these individuals, local residents are also invited into the fabric of this social justice center.

**T**he project offers interdisciplinary and multi-scalar design from landscape to interiors, adaptive reuse, to new build architecture. *By acknowledging history, actively listening, and designing with intention, this project meets current needs and offers a unique perspective on social architecture.* With human rights at the forefront of design decisions, the final proposal reveals that design has the power to incite and actively work towards social justice and disrupt systemically racist institutions, like mass incarceration.

## Thesis Abstract

The motivating concept behind this proposal is the idea of *inward reflection in combination with outward application of growth*. Like a heartbeat, this program runs off of the energy and potential of each individual who occupies this space. Radiating from the core are points of energy that are dispersed into the broader community. The goal is to embody the memory and existence of those who have inhabited Baltimore through the display of word, application of architecture which responds to present societal needs, and acts as a place for healing. Occupants are encouraged to look inward at their own capacity to achieve great things.

Once these skills and abilities are fostered, these people will be able to contribute towards their community's larger urban development. The important requirement for this loop system to be a success is the *recognition and acknowledgment of value in each person playing their part*. With the beating and cyclical repetition of healing and growth, this social justice center will serve as a source for employment, restoration and community while simultaneously encouraging these ideas throughout the city.



# Thesis Concept

**A**s a public practice, architecture provides great contribution and influence in every city across America. The social implications caused by built environments and the equity or lack thereof produced through these spaces is the primary area of focus for this thesis. Through the market of *social architecture*, this study analyzes ways in which this genre of design has the ability to disrupt unjust systems of mass incarceration. By taking accountability for the history and context in which architecture has played a role in this structure of oppression, we can understand ways in which disruptive architecture can participate in social change and racial justice.

**L**ocated in Baltimore, Maryland, a city home to the highest incarceration rates for black men, this project will serve the Midtown Edmondson neighborhood. This area of the city sits at a key location for transit but has also fallen upon lack of attention to the surrounding buildings as industries have closed throughout the years. *The scope of the project includes the historic restoration of the 1911 American Ice Company Building, new build proposal for housing and a community center in addition to the landscape design of a terraced garden which will serve as the heart of the site.* With a primary focus on providing resources to individuals recently released from prison, the goal is to create a safe zone in the city that will facilitate ease of transition back into society. The project will also welcome local families, youth and people who are participants in the current incarceration system, as guards and police. The goal is

to strengthen dialogue amongst opposing sides of this issue to create more understanding and ultimately change in policy and ways in which authorities police and surveil communities.

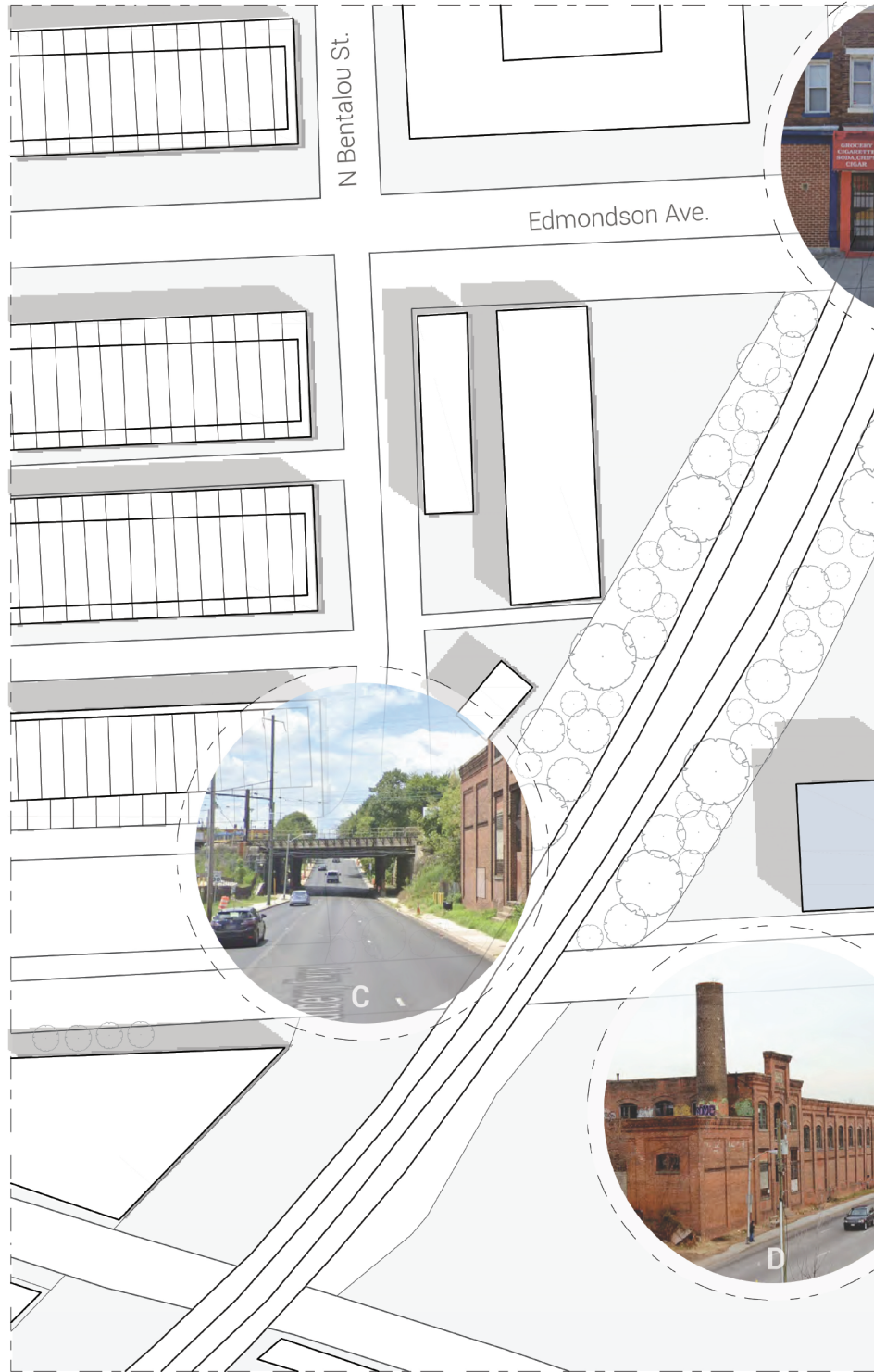
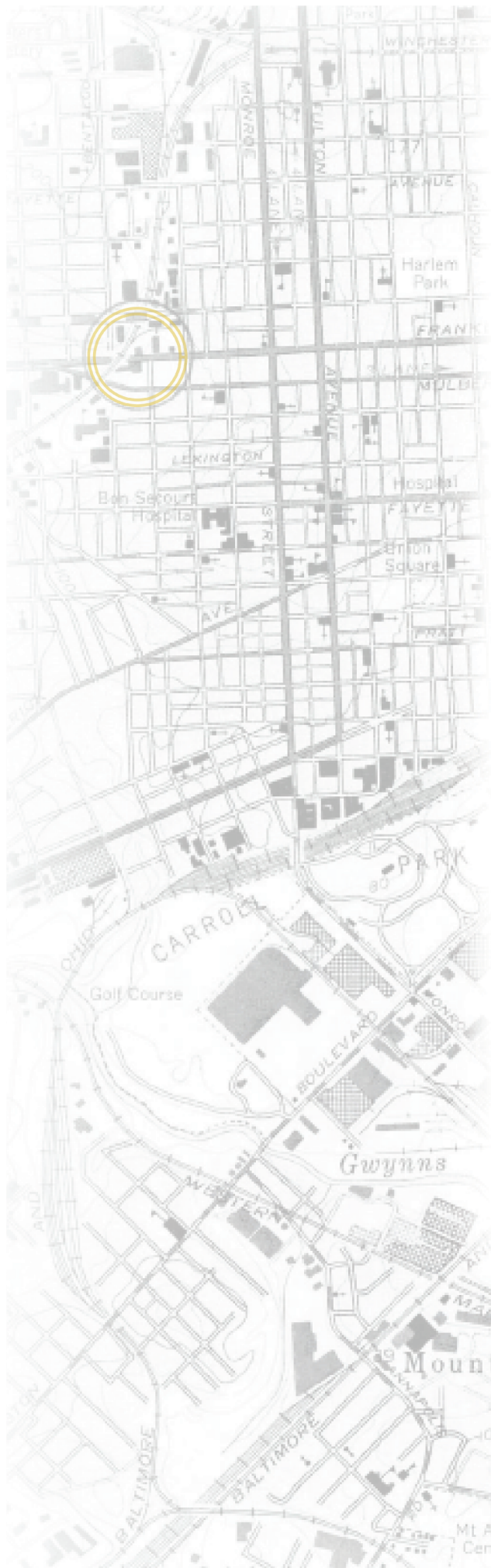
**T**he design approach for a project like this, attempting to tackle such a large social issue, is centered around core concepts of interdisciplinary viewpoints, active listening and responsive and flexible built space. *The design flexes as it moves inward and outward, correlating to occupants self reflection and growth.* External factors including varied topography, adjacency to a train track, and zoning in a transit oriented design will also influence design moves. Through a social justice center, this thesis project aims to create a place for job training and placement, building of social networks, healing and support, in addition to dispersion of these resources into the broader community with the implementation of mobile service centers. The three main programmatic components include the Marc Center Market and food hall, a community center, and temporary housing. Not only does this program offer a safe zone for individual restoration but also allows for time and space to readjust to society. Simultaneously, the larger community is invited to participate in this change and upward growth.

## Project Summary

04  
22  
21

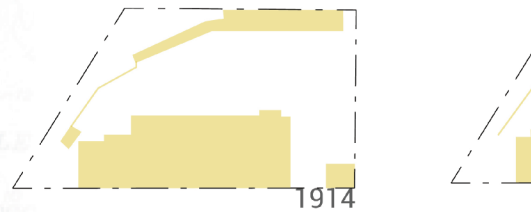
# Final Proposal

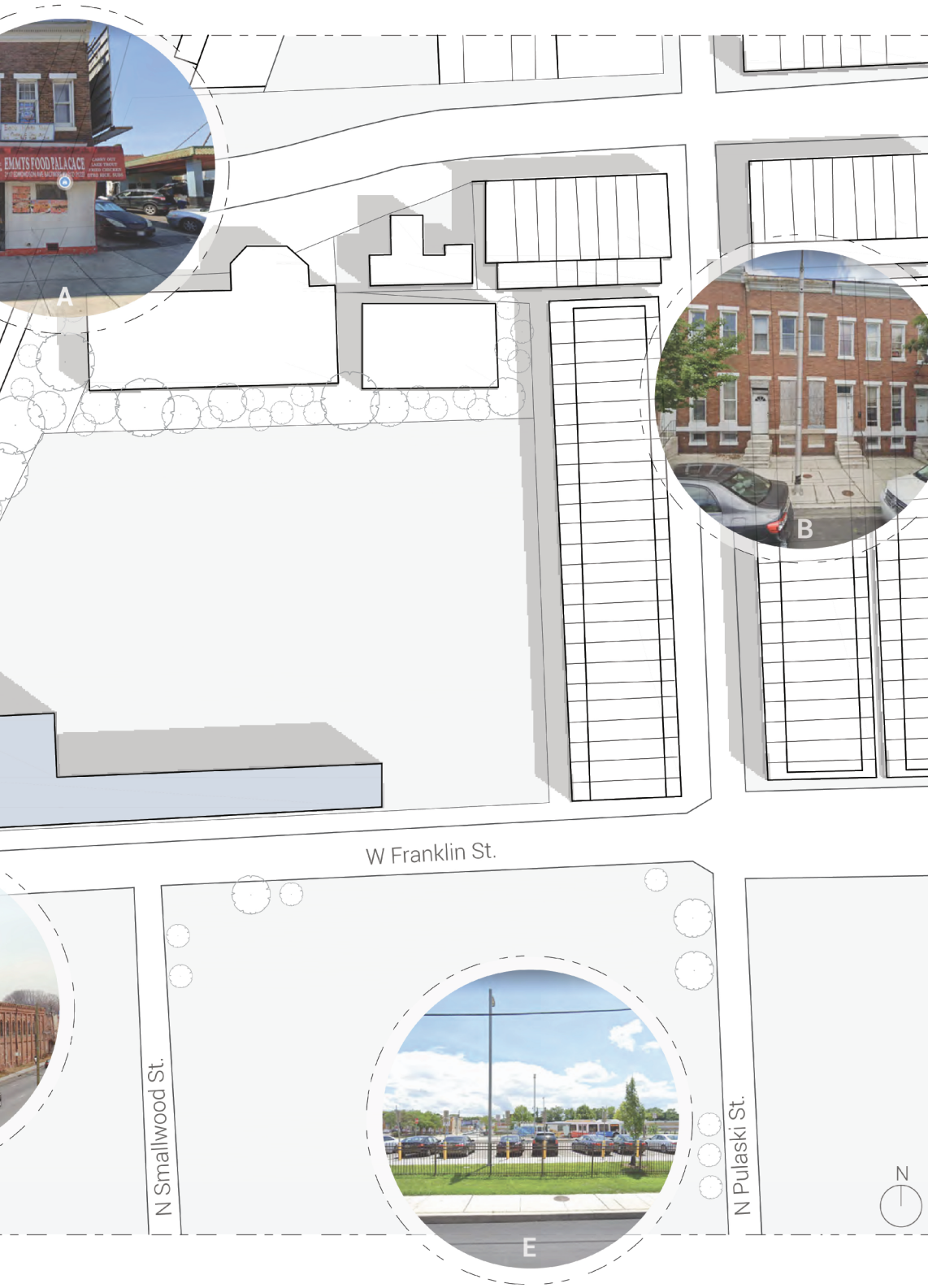
*social justice, disruptive design, human rights, impact*



2100 W Franklin St. Baltimore, Maryland 21223

## Site Evolution

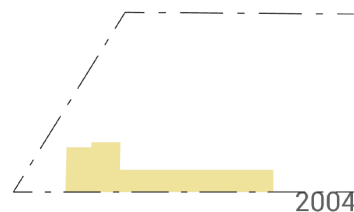
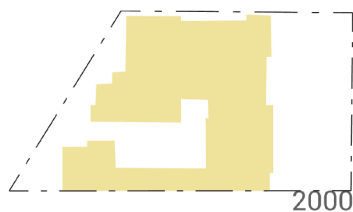
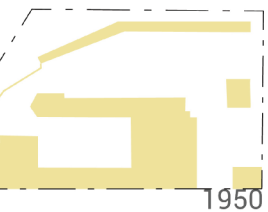


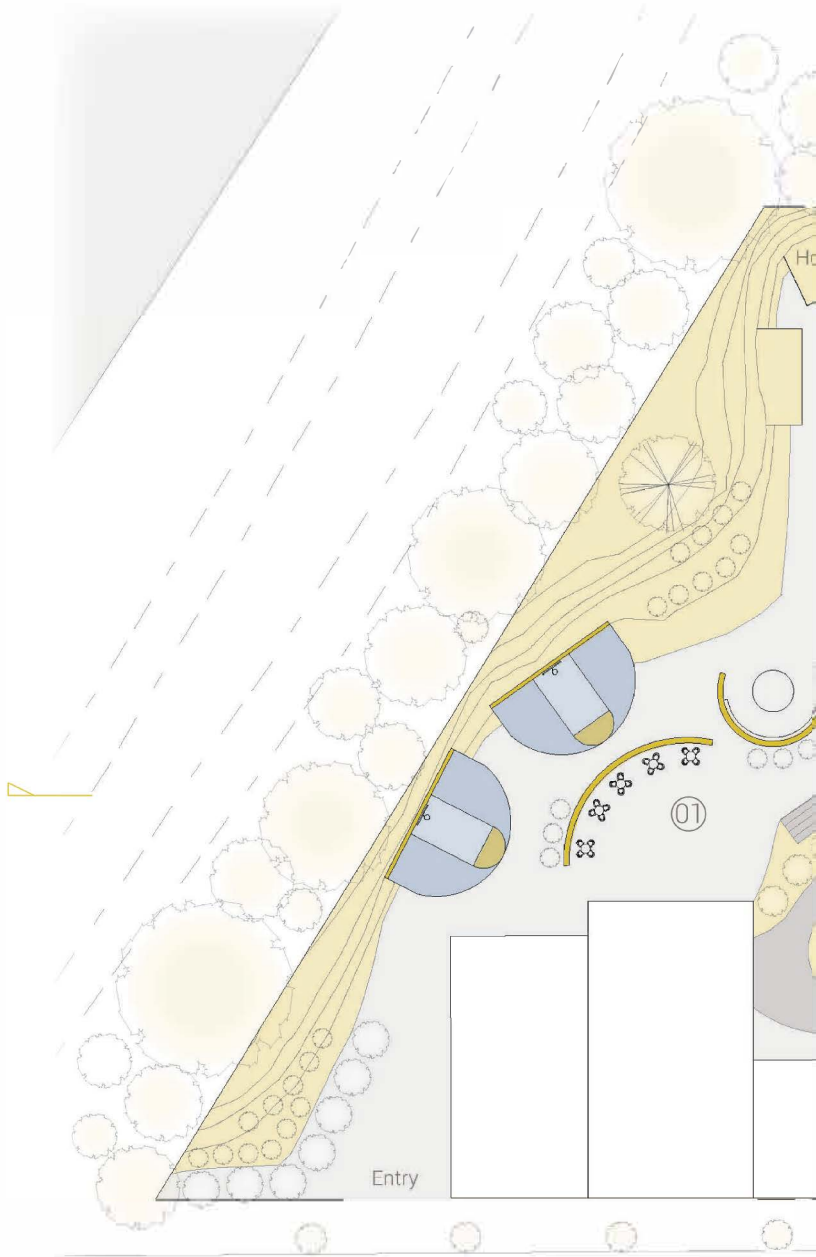
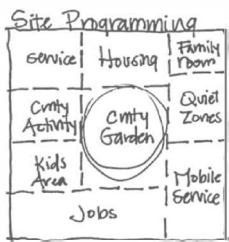
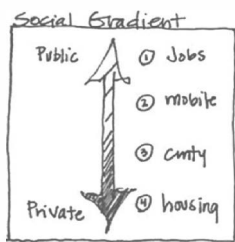
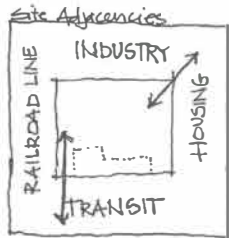
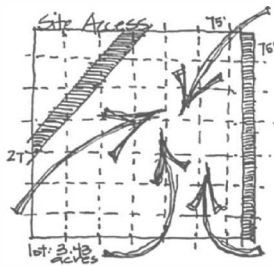
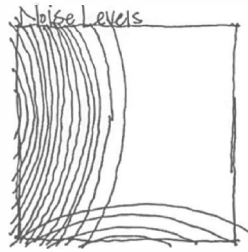
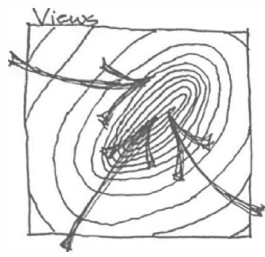


**Latitude** 39.29058°N  
**Longitude** -76.60926° E  
**Temperature** 34 - 78°F  
**Precipitation** 22" (Annual)  
**Air Quality** Good  
**Water Quality** Poor

# Site Plan

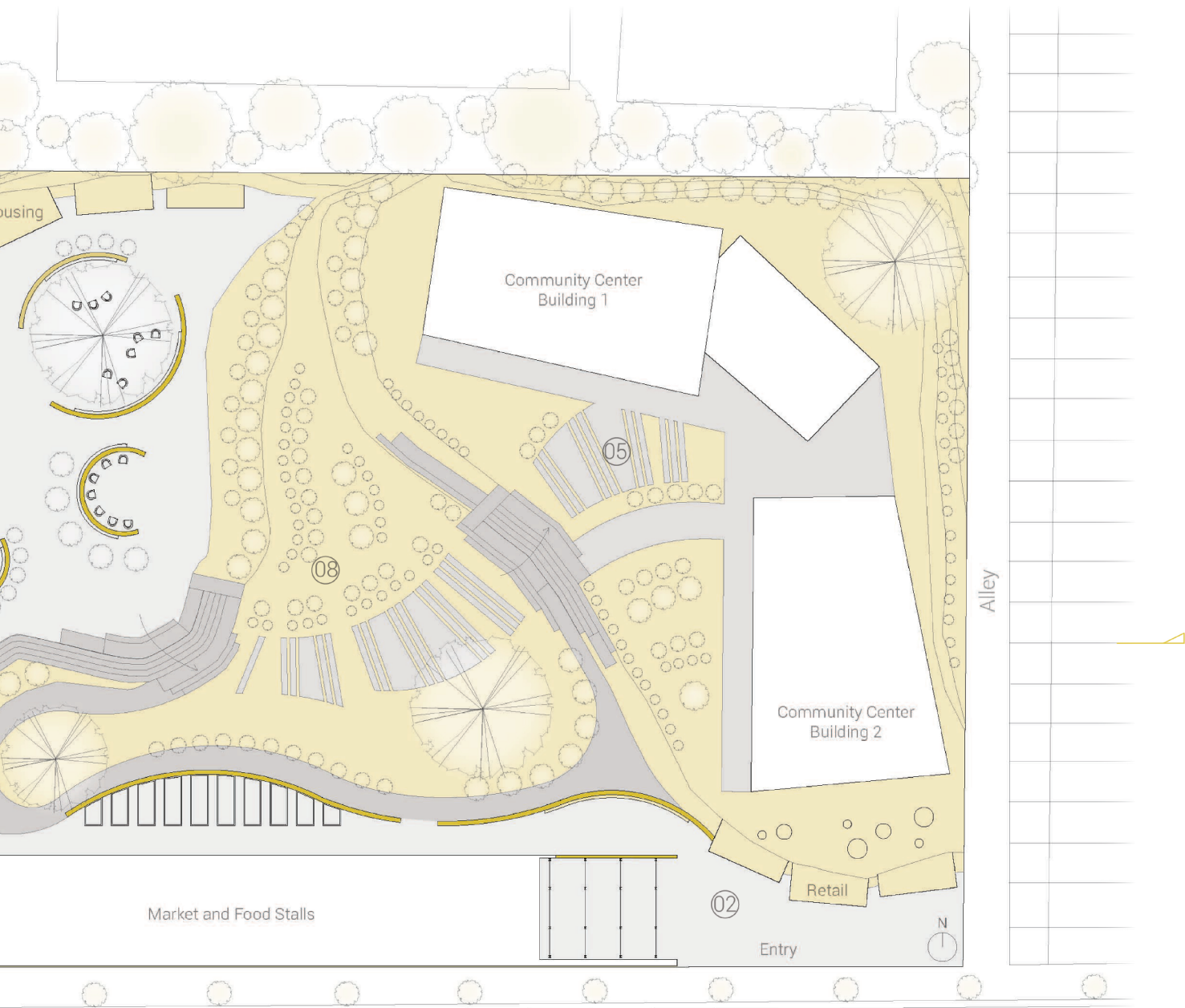
- A** Auto Shop | North
- B** Row Housing | East
- C** Train Platform | West
- D** Franklin Facade | South
- E** Marc Center | South





# Landscape Design





West Franklin Street



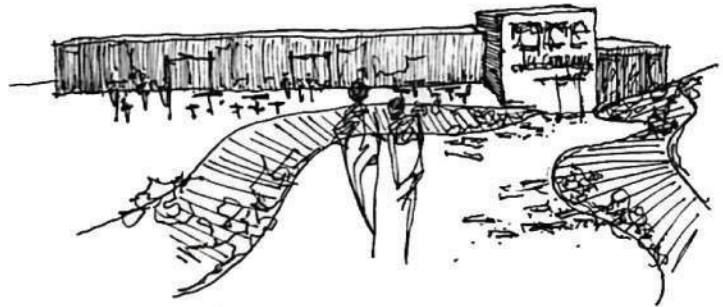
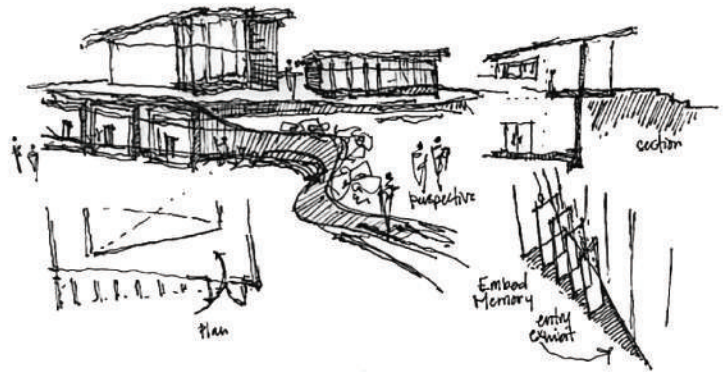
Site Section | Housing + Community

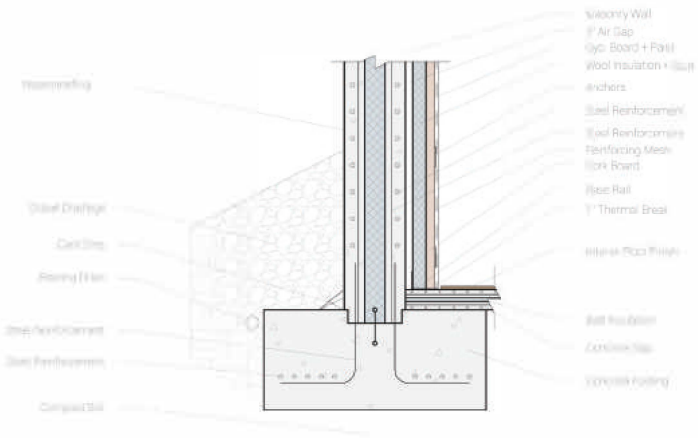
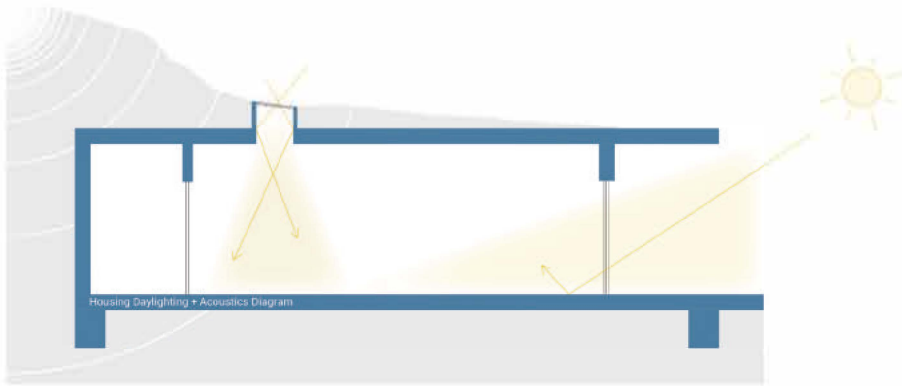


**Native Plant Selections**

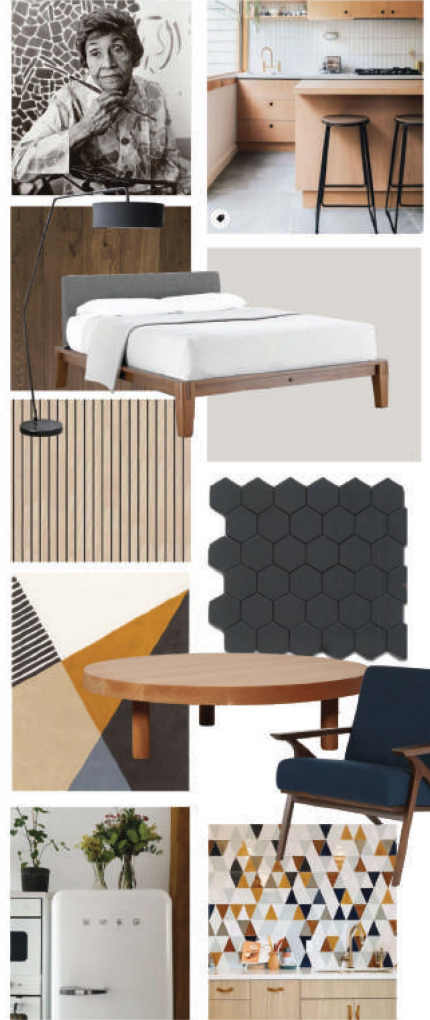


01 Basketball Courts

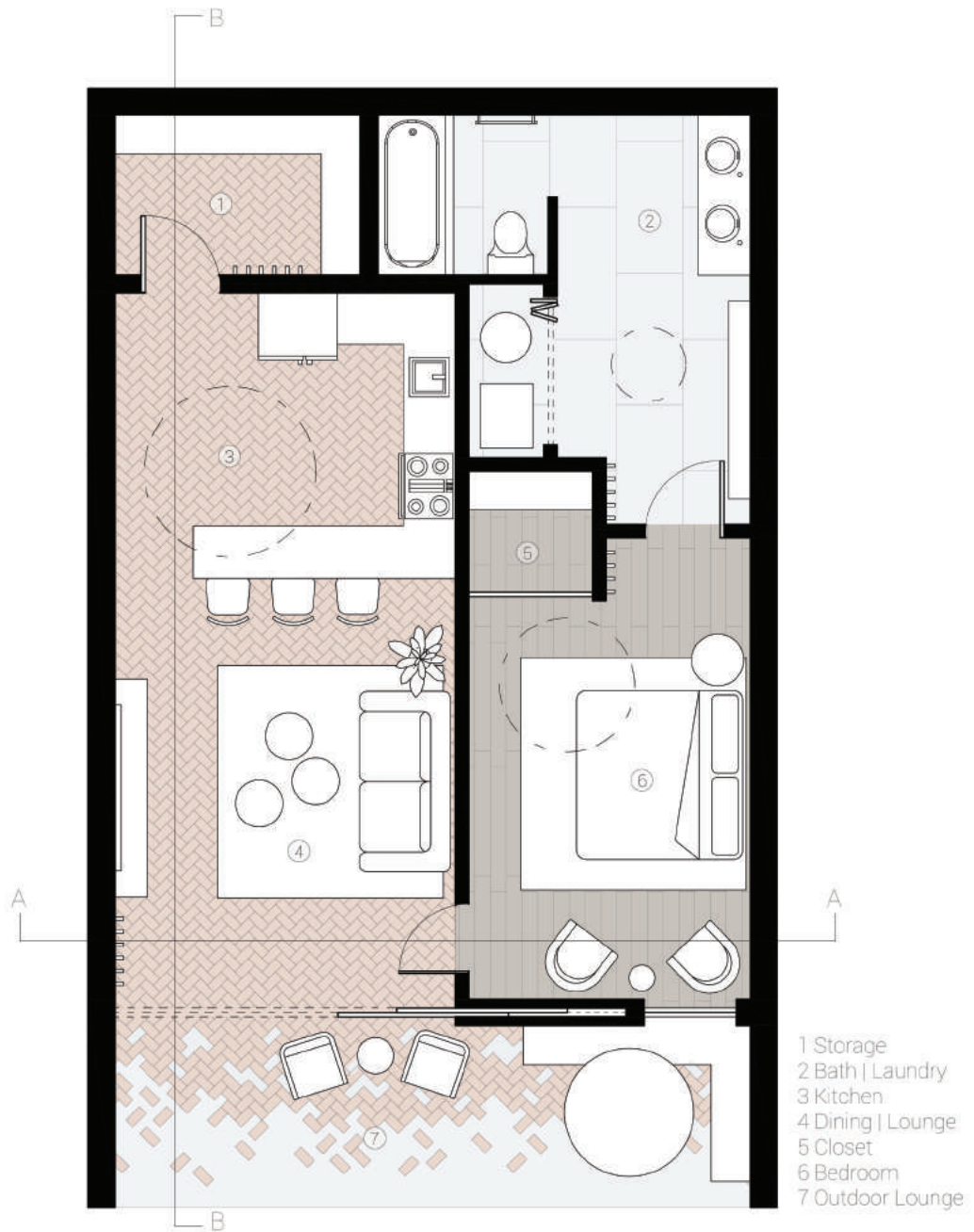




**Cork Insulated Wall Detail**  
 Scale 1/2" = 1' - 0"

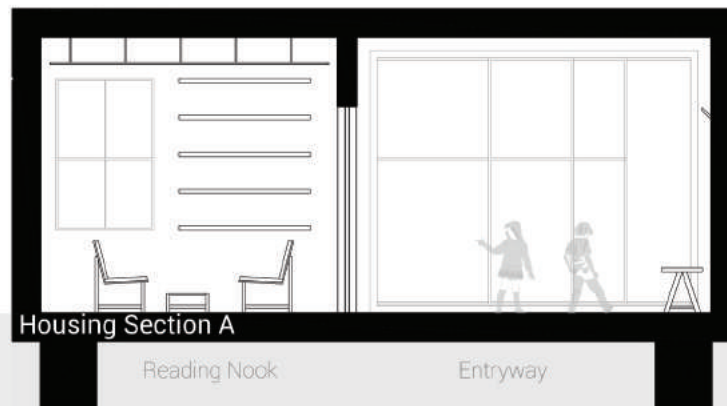


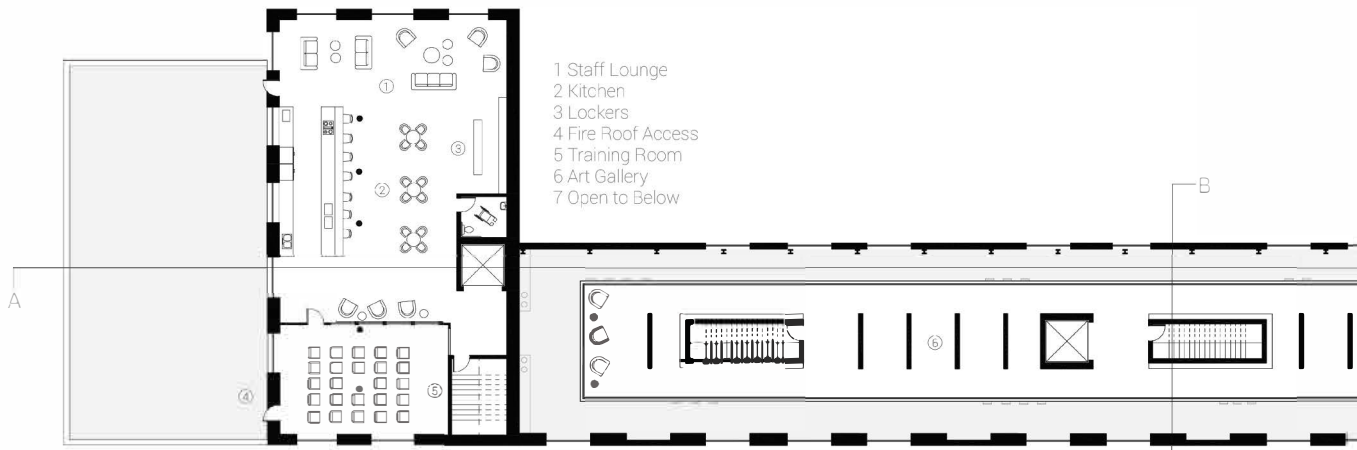
Housing



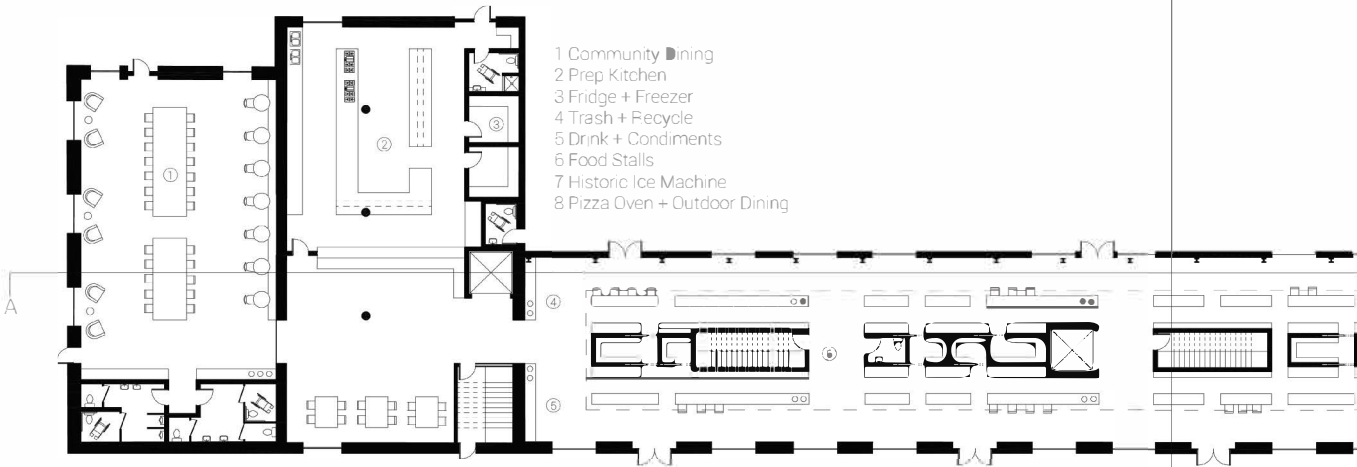
**Housing Model**  
Scale 3/16" = 1' - 0"

N<sup>^</sup>

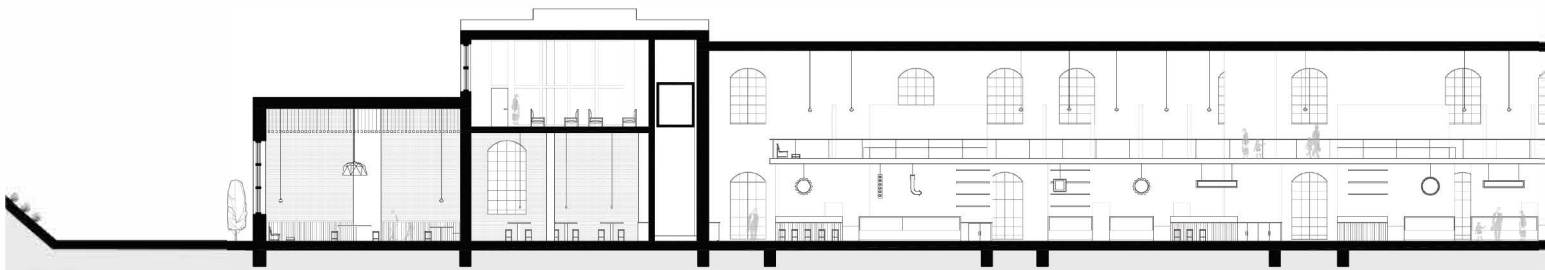
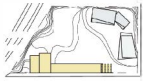




**Food Hall + Market | Level 2**  
Scale 1/16" = 1' - 0"



**Food Hall + Market | Level 1**  
Scale 1/16" = 1' - 0"



**Building Section A**

Employment

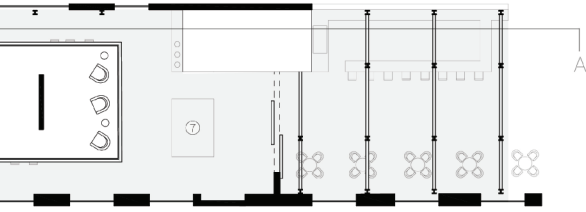


**Zoning + District**

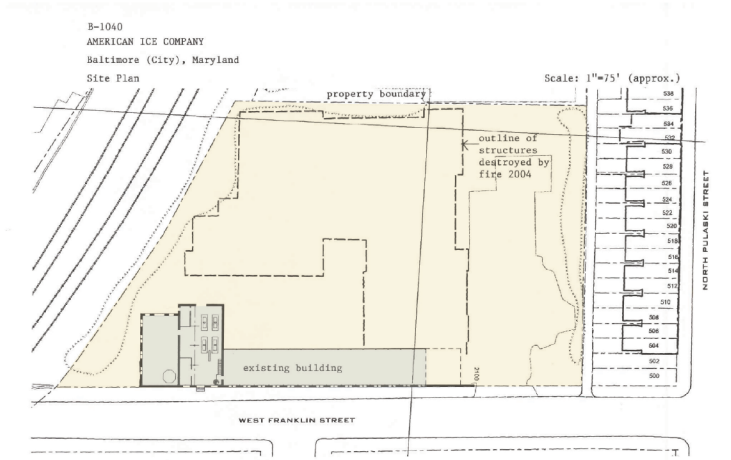
Source: City of Baltimore  
 Neighborhood: Midtown Edmondson  
 Block: 0117 / Lot: 039  
 Zip Code: 21223  
 Zoning District: TOD Transit Oriented Development / Enterprise  
 City Council District: 9th Ward, John T. Bullock (Democrat)  
 Voting Ward: 16-007  
 Transport: Located on Priority Corridor  
 FEMA Map Analysis: No Flood Risk

**Neighborhood Demographics**

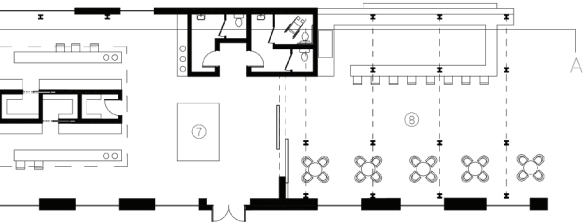
Source: City of Baltimore  
 Poverty Rate: 43-67%  
 Unemployment Rate: 23-36%  
 Public Assistance: 16-39%  
 Racial Demographic: 96% Black  
 Renter Occupied Homes: 60-79%  
 Vacant Buildings: 458  
 Vacant Lots: 118



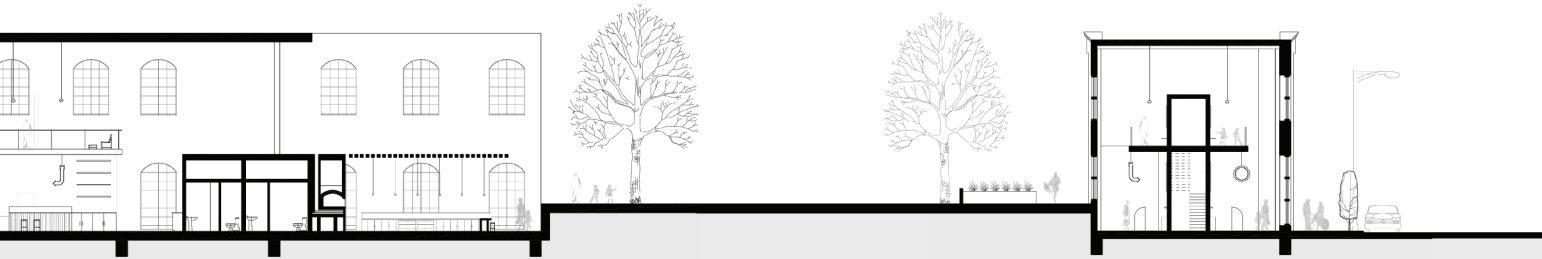
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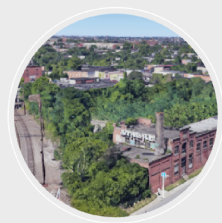
SITE PLAN - 2100 W. FRANKLIN ST.



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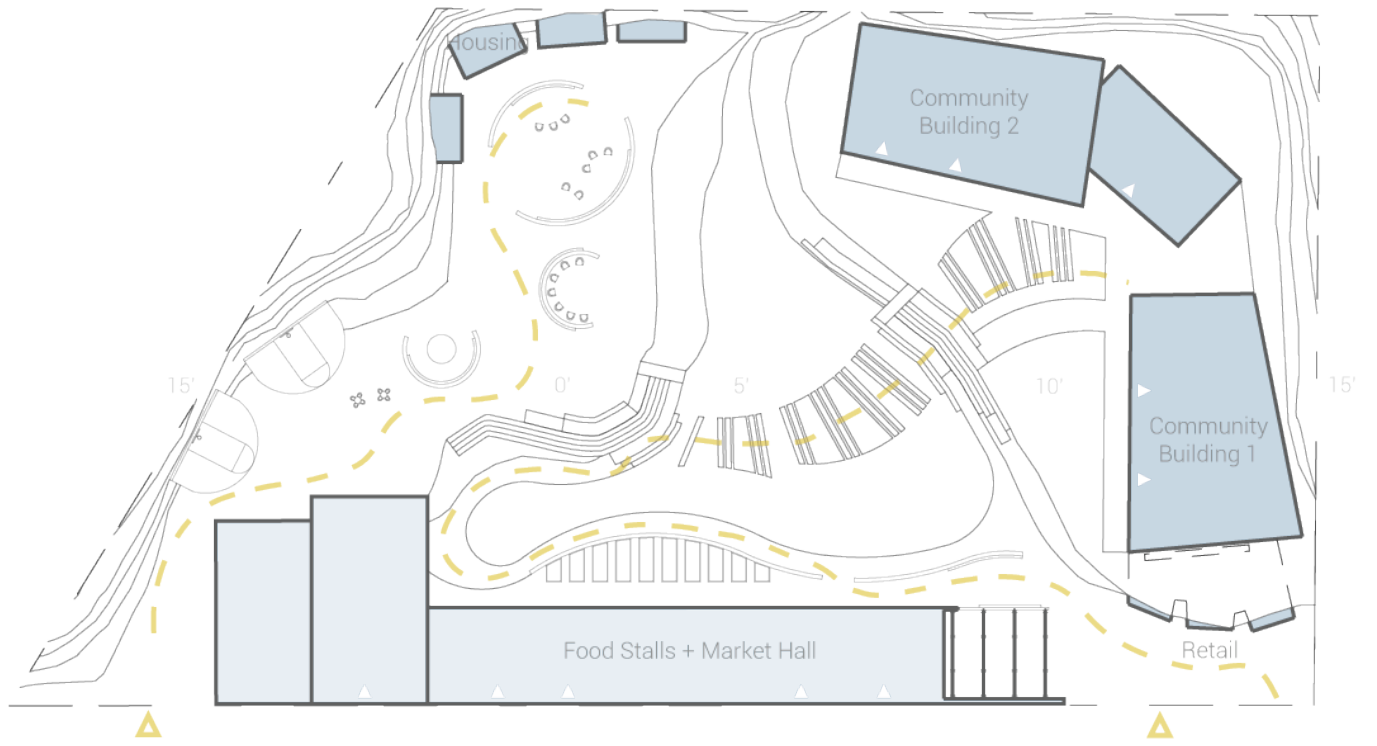


Building Section B



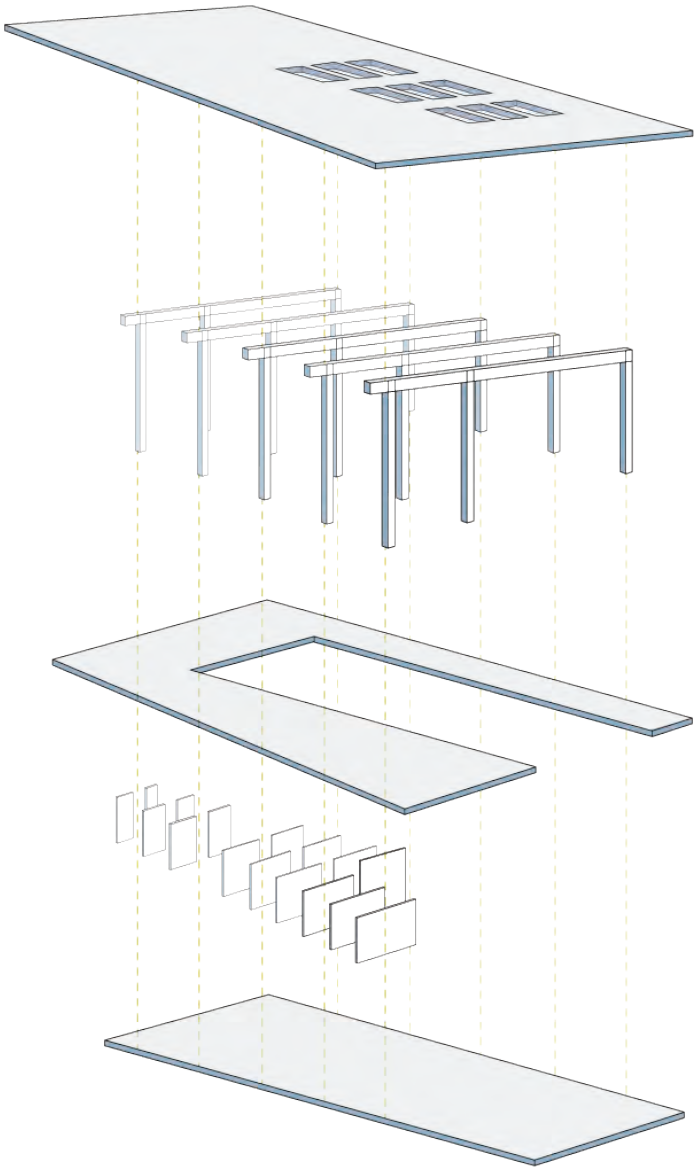
## Program Description

Category	Total SF	Occupancy	Activity
<b>Site</b>	114,606 SF	714	Mixed Use
<b>Market</b>	22,586 SF (19%)	355	Dining + Training
Market	4,526 SF (20%)	150	Employment
Dining	2,078 SF (10%)	56	Training
Outdoor Dining	1,431 (6%)	28	Dining
Prep Kitchen	1,960 SF (10%)	8	Local craft
Staff / Training	2,836 SF (12%)	60	Lounge
Art Gallery / Event	3,516 (15%)	40	Art Display
Restrooms	1,000 SF (5%)	13	Flex Event Space
Circulation	4,878 (22%)	-	
<b>Housing x 4</b>	4,144 Sf (4%)	8	Apartment
Living	257 SF (25%)	-	Transition
Bed	190 SF (19%)	-	housing for
Outdoor	180 SF (17%)	-	formerly
Bath	170 SF (16%)	-	incarcerated
Kitchen	160 SF (16%)	-	1 Bedroom, 1 bath
Storage	79 SF (7%)	-	kitchen, laundry
<b>Community Center</b>	18,917 SF (17%)	351	Mixed Use
Exhibit	3,074 SF (15%)	10	Exhibition of
Art Studio	674 (4%)	25	existence and
Event Space	1,002 SF (5%)	50	memory: art,
Yoga Studios	894 SF (5%)	15	word,
Counseling	2,158 SF (12%)	30	performance
Cafe	1,107 SF (9%)	27	Job Training
Study + Tech Zone	812 SF (4%)	26	Financial, Legal,
Living Room	1,431 SF (7%)	30	and Mental Health
Outdoor Space	1,139 SF (6%)	35	Advising +
Staff	1,182 SF (7%)	17	Counseling
Job Training	767 SF (3%)	20	Gather and
Conference Room	682 SF (3%)	12	converse
Social Lounge	645 SF (3%)	10	Lounge
Art Retail	2,128 (11%)	30	Study
Storage	280 SF (1%)	-	
Restrooms	753 SF (4%)	14	
Circulation	3,192 SF (16%)	-	



- Adaptive Reuse of Former Ice Factory
- New Build Architecture
- Site Entry + Circulation

Site Circulation Diagram



Structural Axon



02 Franklin Street Entry



Dr. Little Jackson Center



Structural Poche  
Community Build

05 Exterior Art Exhibit

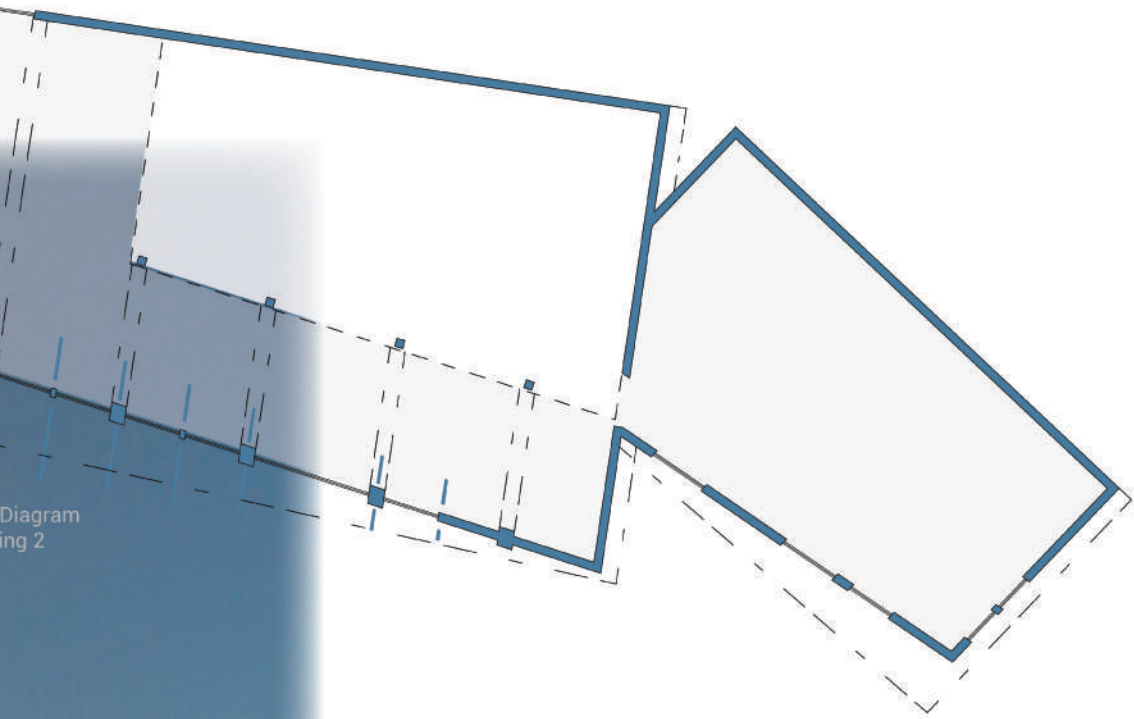
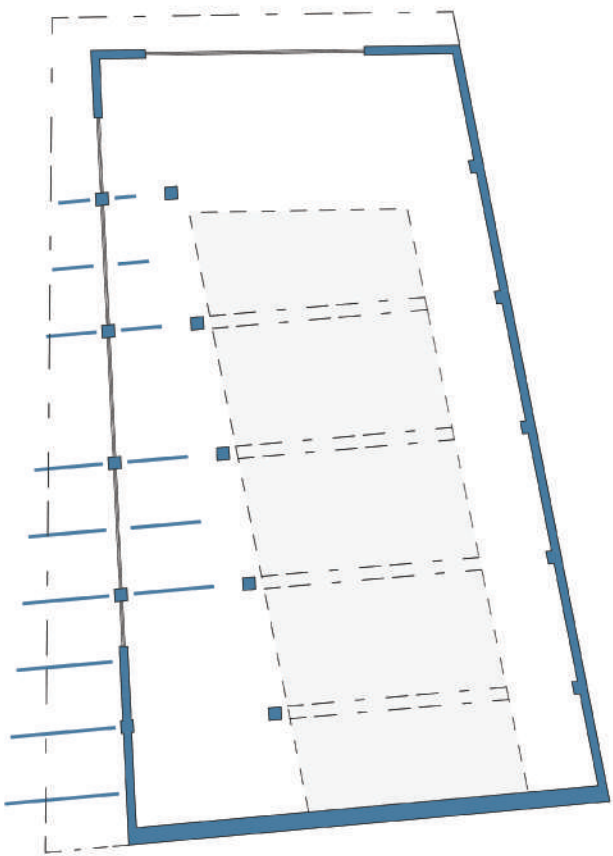


Diagram  
ing 2



Structural Poche



Structural Poche Diagram  
Community Building 1

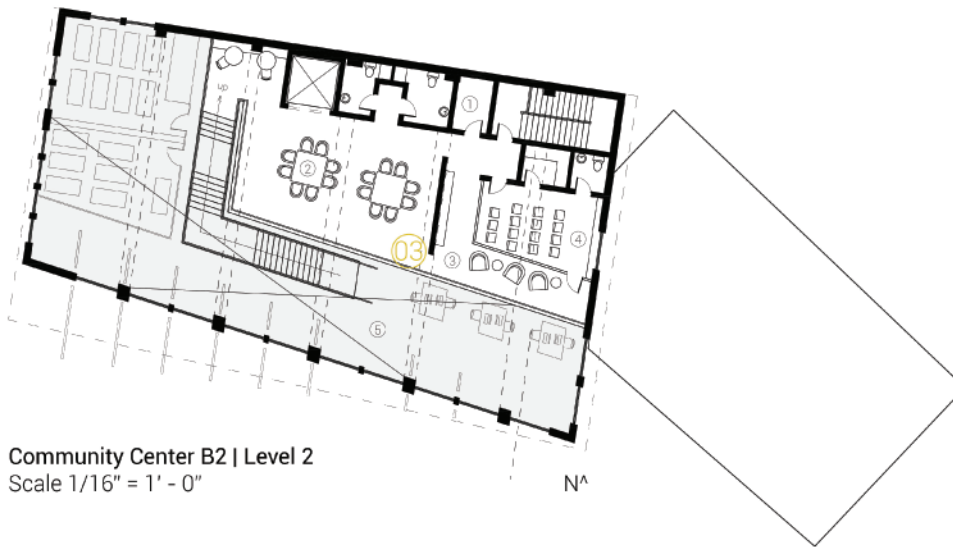


03 Mezzanine Level Building 1

Support for Growth through Business and Community Development

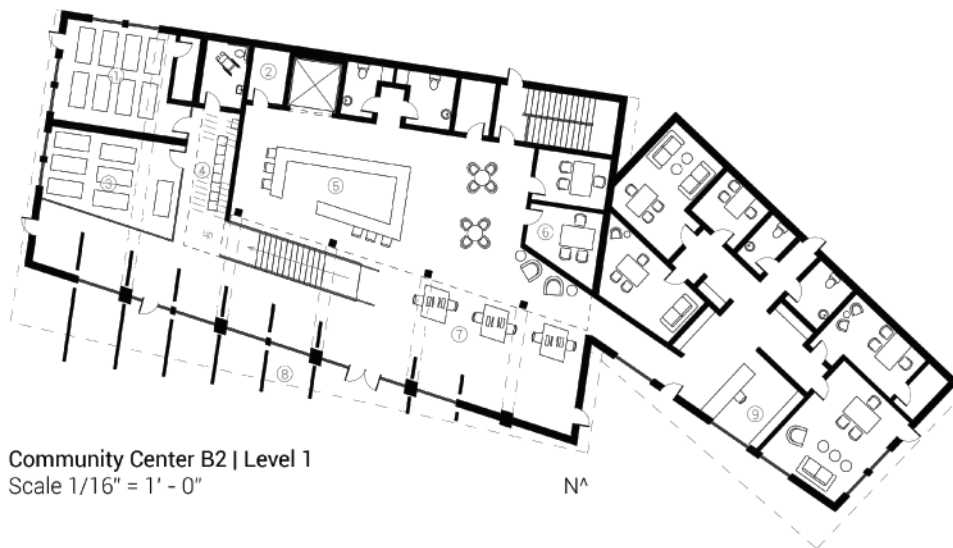
**Yoga + Meditation**  
 Job Training  
 Grain + Juice Bar  
**Tech Zone**  
 Meeting Room  
**Mental Health Support**  
 Financial + Legal Advising  
 Counseling





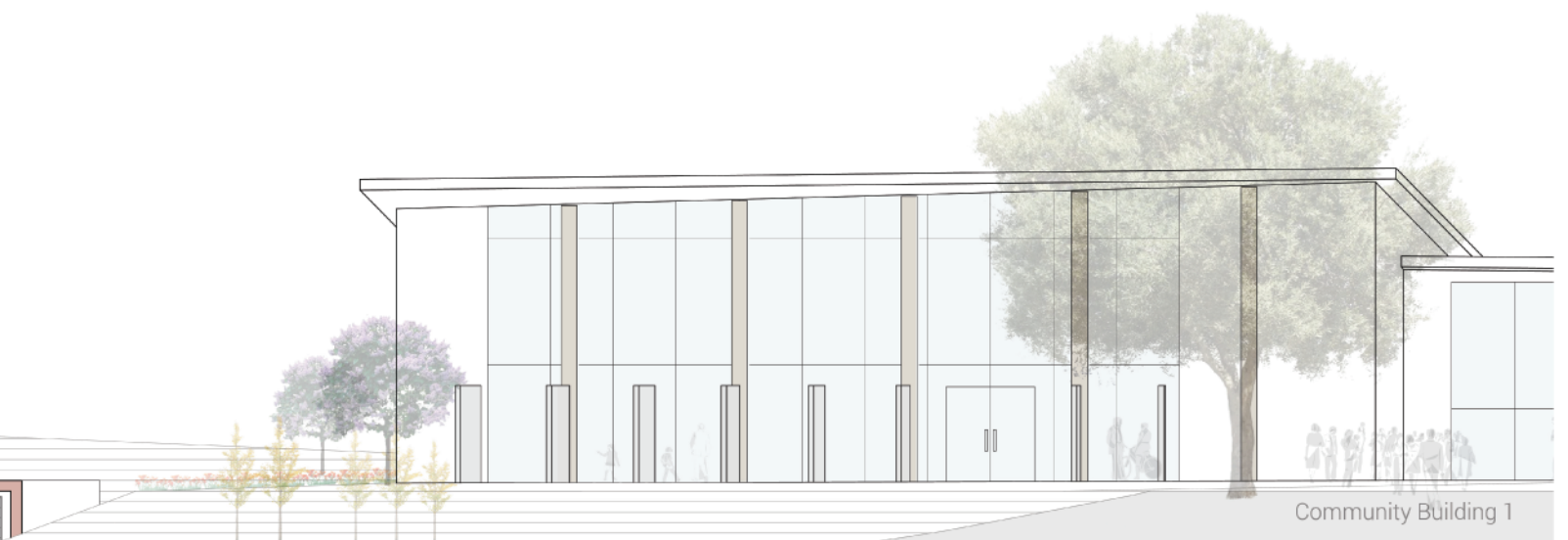
Community Center B2 | Level 2  
Scale 1/16" = 1' - 0"

- 1 Storage
- 2 Job Training
- 3 Waiting Area
- 4 Meeting Room
- 5 Open to Below



Community Center B2 | Level 1  
Scale 1/16" = 1' - 0"

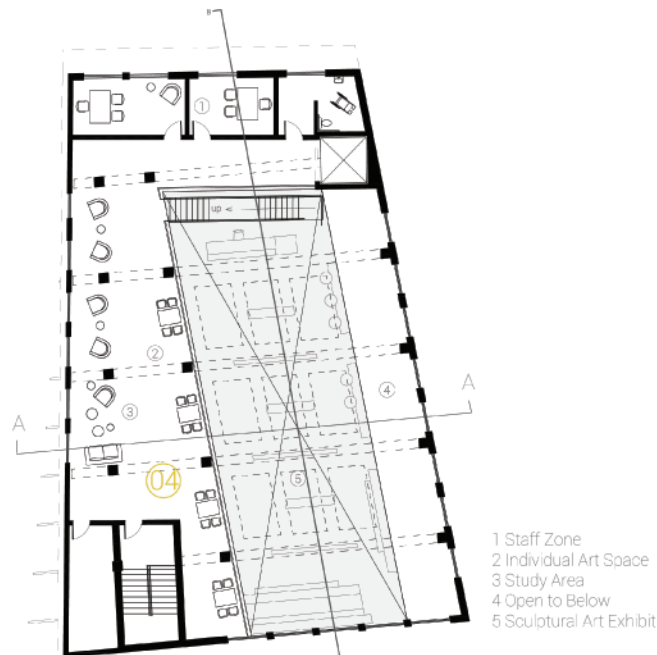
- 1 Yoga Studio
- 2 Fridge
- 3 Yoga Studio
- 4 Lockers
- 5 Juice + Grain Bar
- 6 Financial / Legal Advising
- 7 Technology Center
- 8 Rotating Exhibit
- 9 Mental Health Services



Community



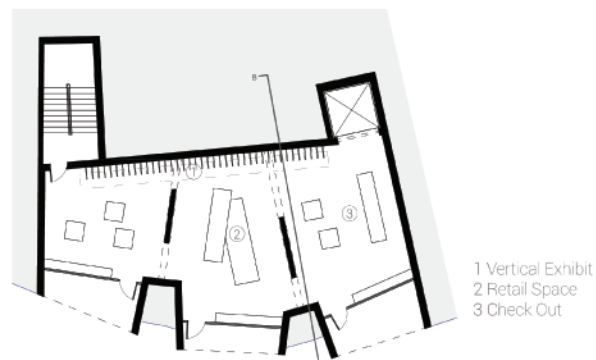
04 Mezzanine Level Building 2



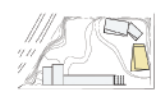
**Community Center B1 | Level 2**  
Scale 1/16" = 1' - 0"

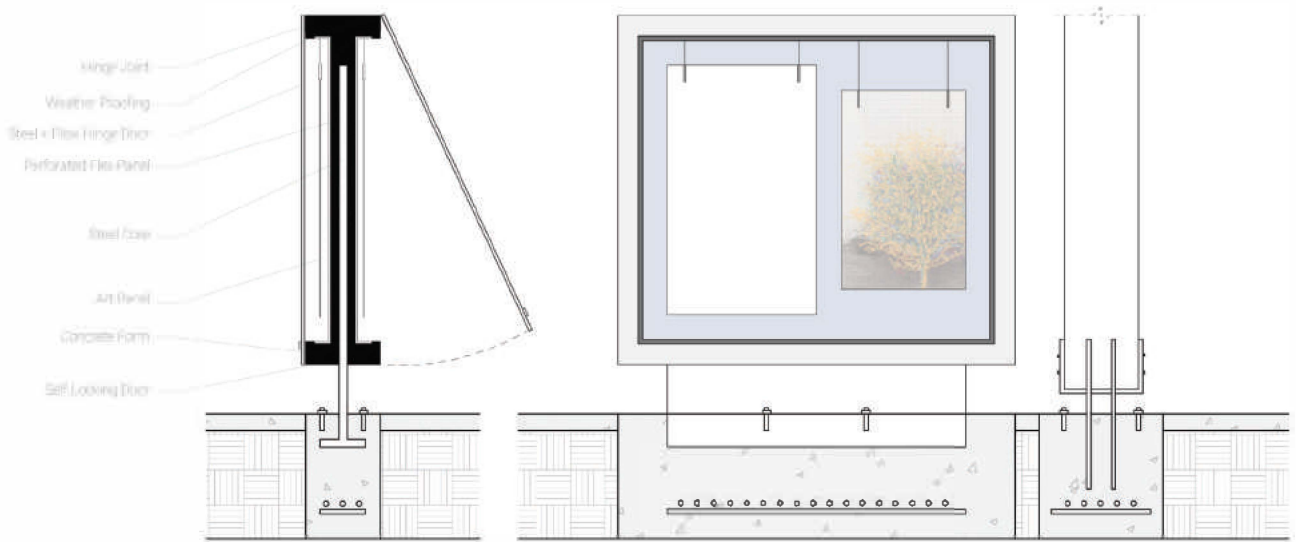
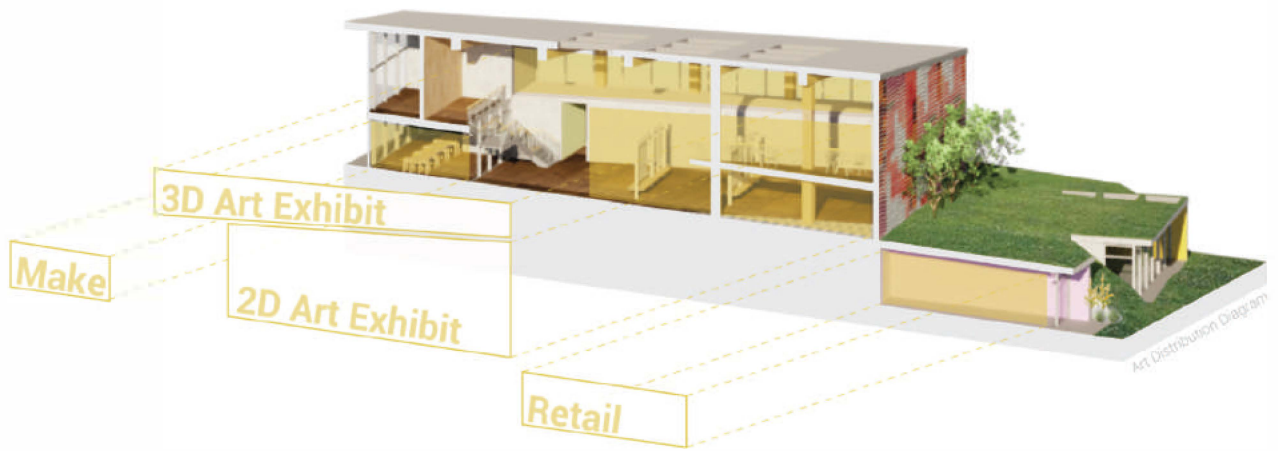


**Community Center B1 | Level 1**  
Scale 1/16" = 1' - 0"

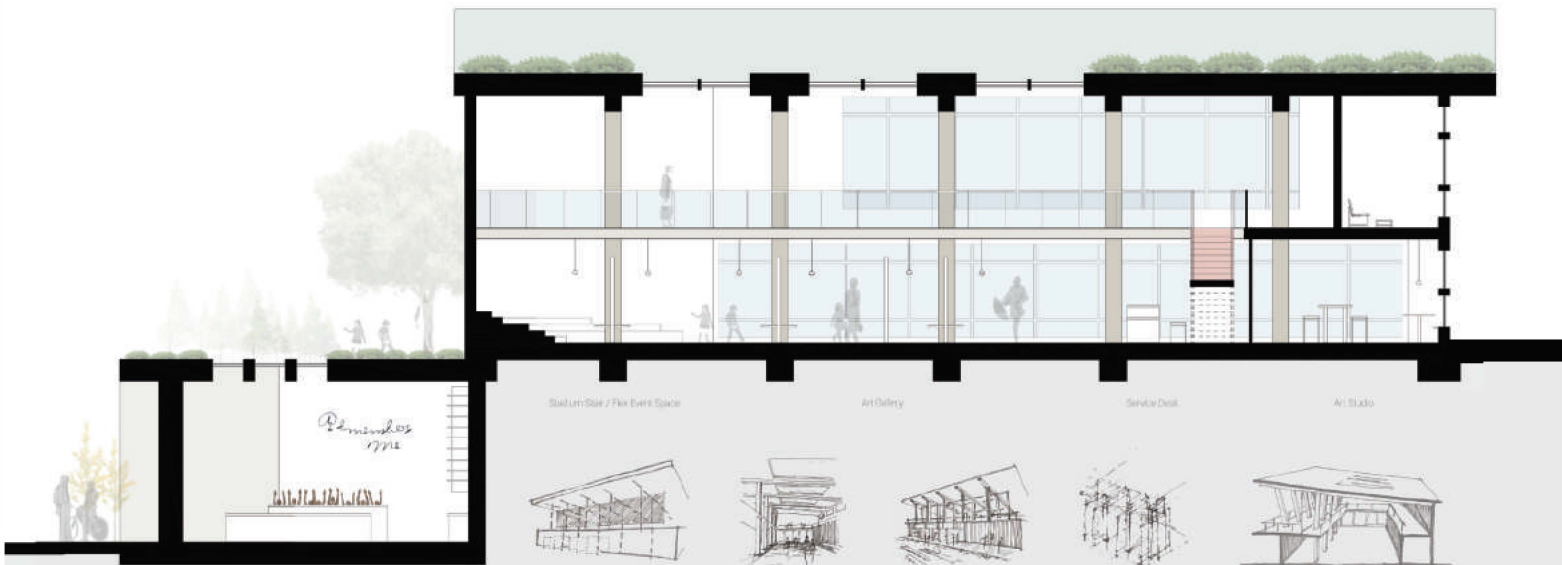


**Arts Retail + Storefront B1 | Level 0**  
Scale 1/16" = 1' - 0"





Art Display Wall Detail  
Scale 1/2" = 1' - 0"





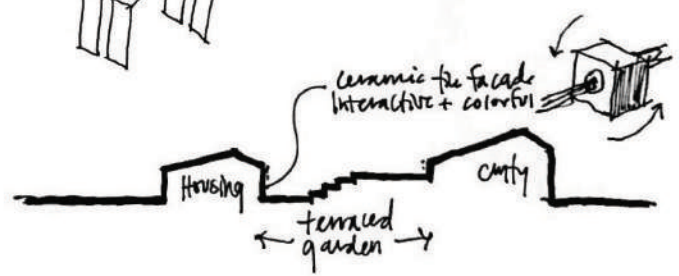
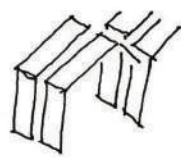
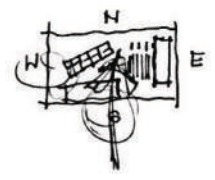
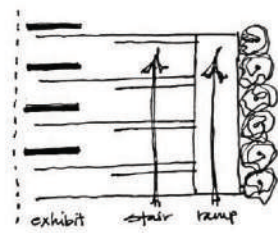
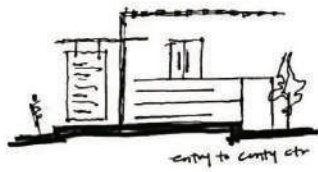
07 Art Studio



Community Section A

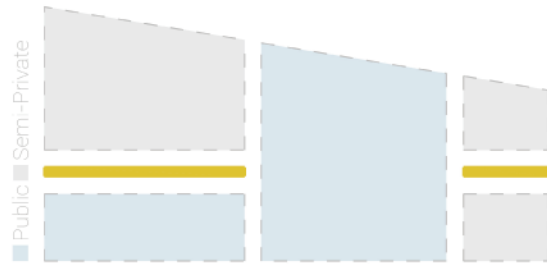


06 Art Gallery



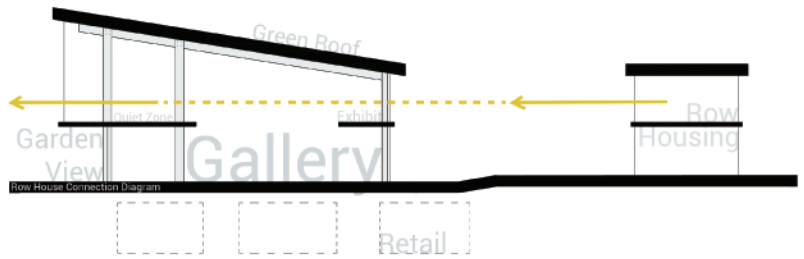


08 Park View of Community Center

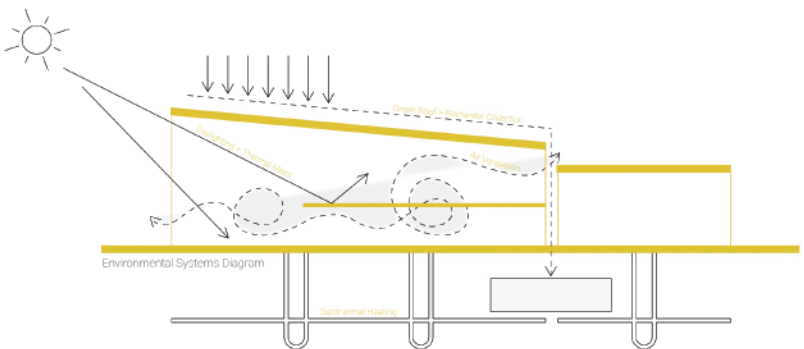


Program Distribution Diagram | Community Building 1

Study Zone  
**Gallery**  
 Exhibit Service  
 Art Studio  
**Staff**  
 Storage  
 Flexible Event Space



Row House Connection Diagram



Environmental Systems Diagram



# Program Description

*social impact, public vs private programs, allocations*



the **Black Experience**  
with **Police in America**

# Social Justice Center

## Food, Housing, Community

### ○ **Program Intentions**

Through bottom up initiatives, this site acts as a community hub for the neighborhood, offering a place of gathering, refuge, and opportunity. Radiating from this nucleus are mobile resource centers which disperse services including nutrition, healthcare, and education, into the broader community. The goal of this proposal is to introduce job training and employment as well as create a safe space for healing and growth.

### **Marc Center Market + Food Hall**

1. Food Stalls ( Deli, Juice + Grain Bar, Gelato Stand etc.)
  - a. prepare, order, serve, display, storage, sinks, refrigeration, signage
  - b. community dining and lounge
2. Retail Stalls (Flower Shop, Book Stand, Local Artists etc.)
  - a. display, storage, signage, sales
  - b. retailer seating, tables and vertical display surface
3. Operation Zones
  - a. job training / placement office, public speaker event space
  - b. public restrooms, showers for bikers, water fountains
  - c. back of house laundry, dishwashing, community prep kitchen, office

### **Community Living Room**

1. Job Placement Office + Training Room
2. Outdoors: Basketball, Swing Set, Patio, Community Garden, Dining, Lounge
3. Event Space, Meditation + Yoga Rooms, Reading + Study Rooms
4. Public Restrooms, Day Use Showers, Water Fountains
5. Advising / Counseling: Financial, Legal, Mental Health

### **Temporary Housing**

1. Studio Style Tiny Homes: Kitchen, Living, Bed, Bath
2. Garbage, Recreation, Social Gathering, Activity

### **Mobile Service Centers (Restoring Old Prison Buses)**

1. Mobile Nutrition and Fresh Market
2. Mobile Clinic and Vaccine Drive
3. Mobile Tutoring and Education Centers
4. Mobile Childcare Services

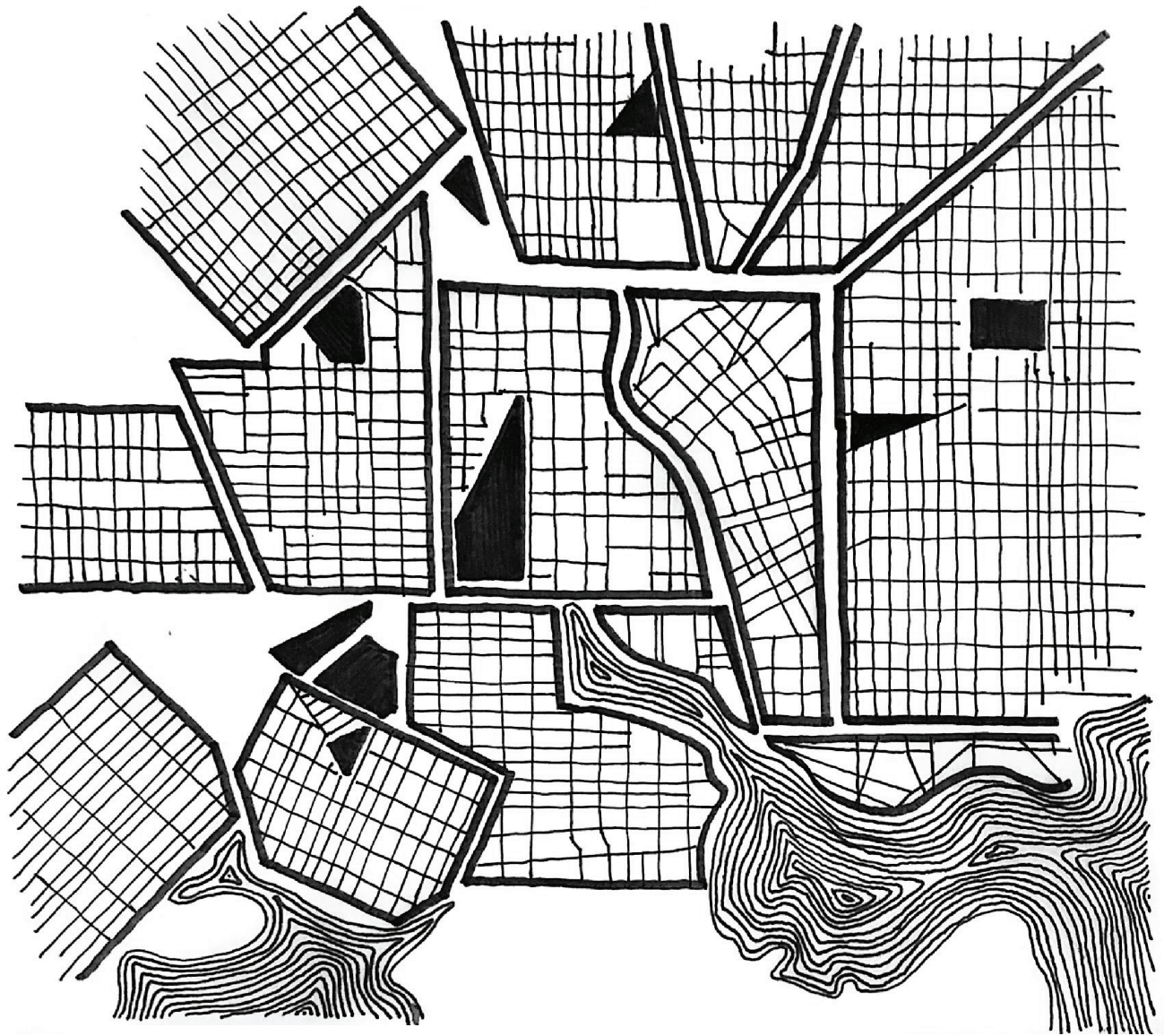


# Site Analysis

*mapping, history, demographics, climate, social context*

“You cannot change any society unless you take responsibility for it, unless you **see yourself** as belonging to it and responsible for changing it.”

Grace Lee Boggs



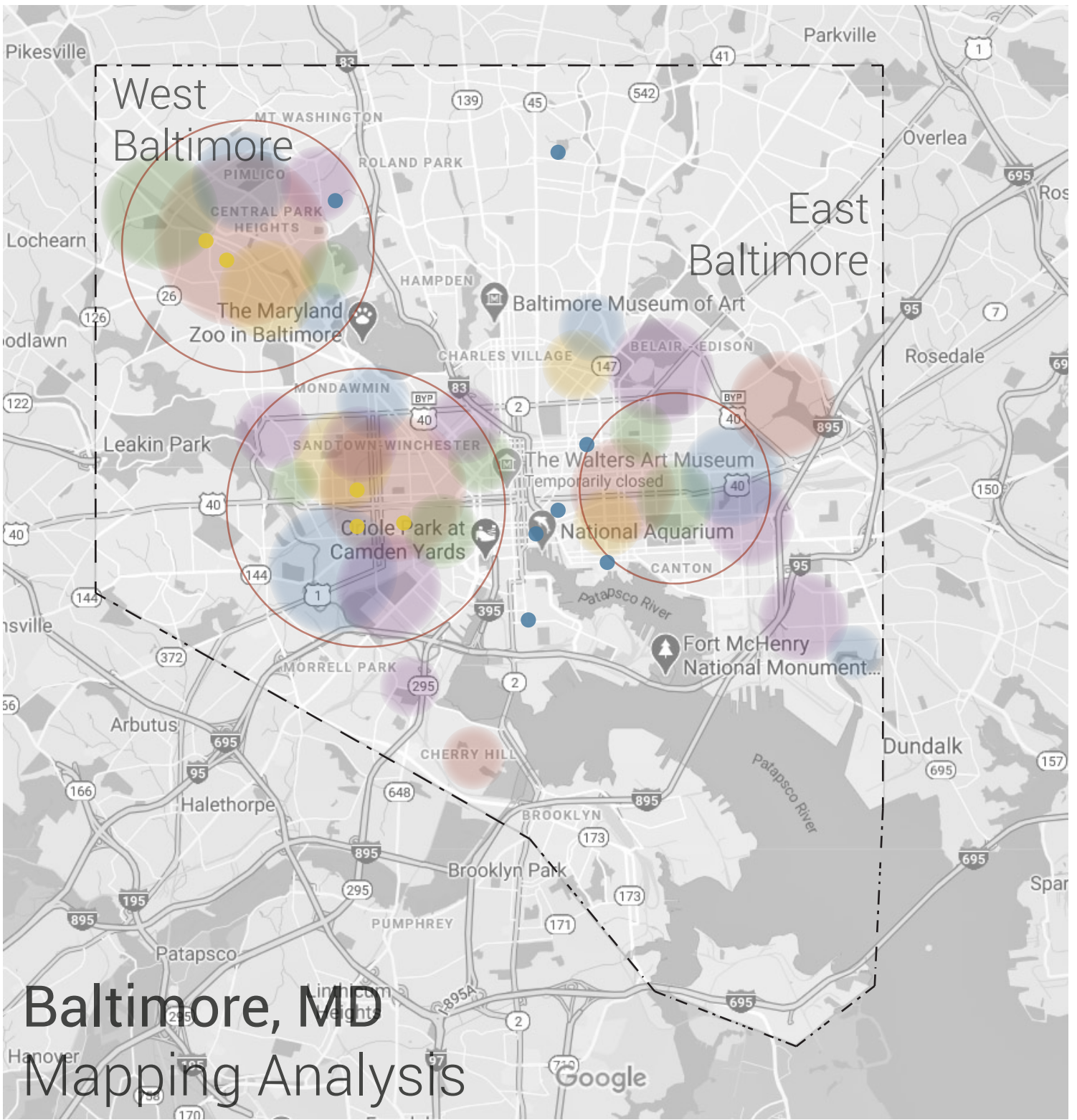
# Mapping + Site Analysis

Baltimore, Maryland



Sources | Library of Congress

# Historic Baltimore



# Baltimore

## Demographics

### *Analysis + Observation*

Baltimore, Maryland is home to some leading universities and hospitals. This focus industry of education and health spurred a curiosity to investigate the relationship to individual well being in this city. Despite the wide expanse of medical professionals and resources in this area, only eight percent of the Baltimore population has health insurance. With twenty two percent of the population living in poverty and eleven percent living with a disability, there is a disparity between available services and the ability for these necessities to actually reach the community. This city is predominantly made up of black Americans, so the correlation between race, health, housing, nutrition, to name a few, are closely linked. In addition to studying the broader whole of Baltimore, in regards to demographics, I have found variations upon these statistics as one zooms into the neighborhoods and smaller districts of the city. West Baltimore, for example has higher rates of unemployment and lack of home ownership. This analysis of demographics will inform the approach to design in combination with the mapping exercises to best propose a program which fits the needs of the community (World Population Review).

35  
Median Age

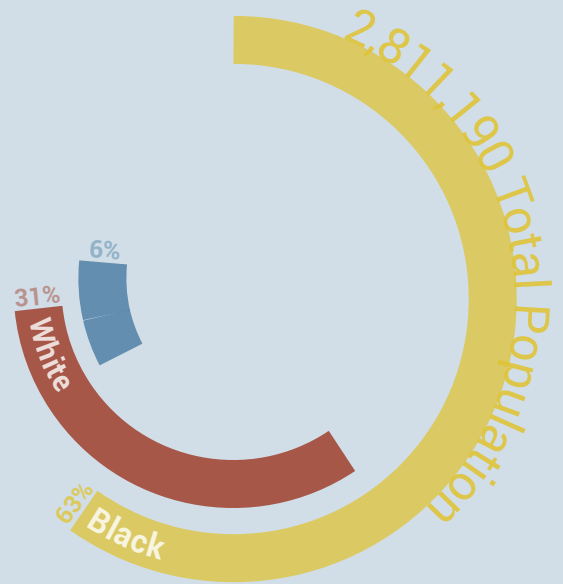
53%  
Renters

9%  
Unemployment

22%  
People Living in Poverty

8%  
Health Insurance

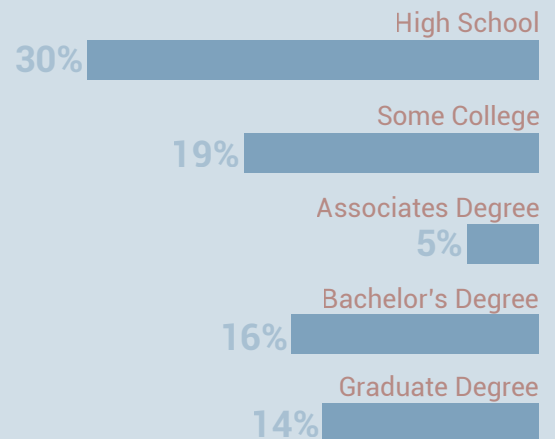
11%  
Have a Disability



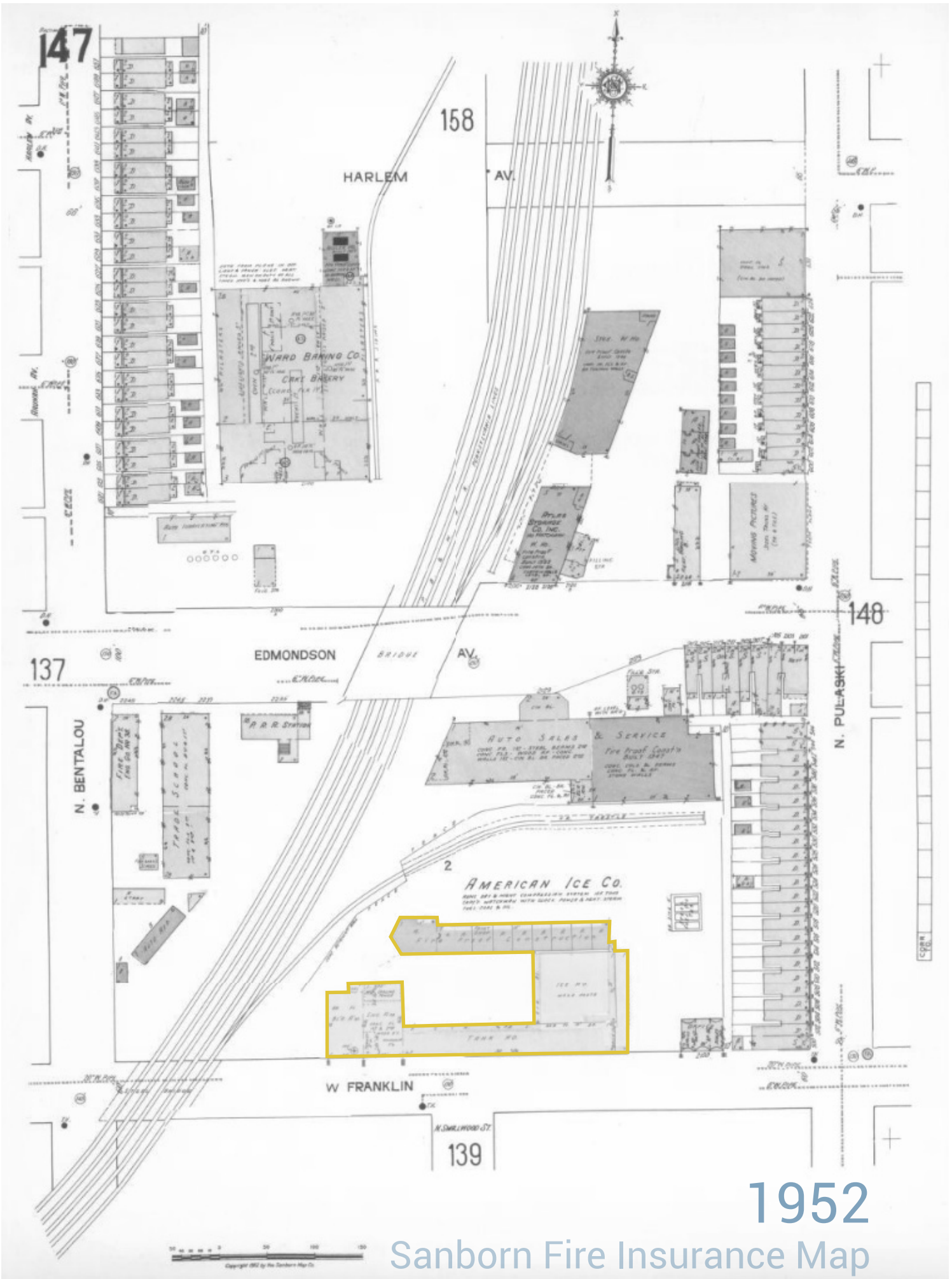
**Race Distribution**  
Source | World Population Review

Education + Health  
Leisure + Hospitality  
Professional Services  
Retail + Commercial  
Public + Administration

**Key Industries**  
Source | World Population Review



**Education**  
Source | World Population Review



1952

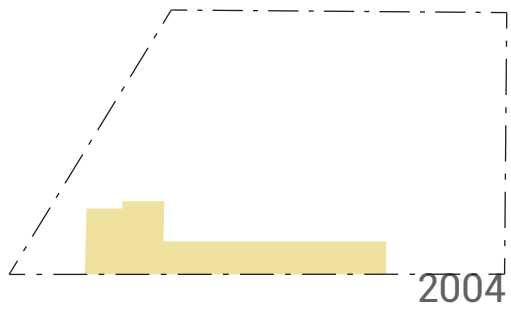
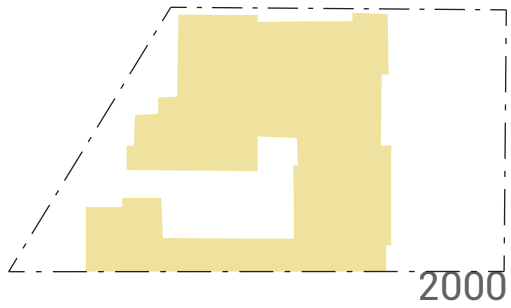
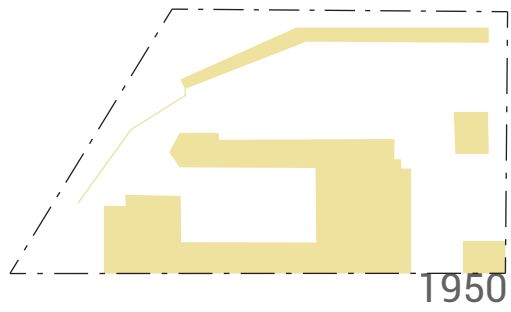
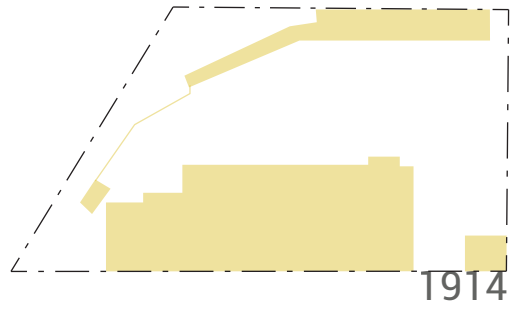
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

# Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Analysis

Built in 1911, the American Ice Company was one of the key figures in the West Baltimore landscape which contributed towards the progression into an industrial zone. Mortimer & Co., a New York Architecture firm, designed this 20th century industrial building with a sequence of bays on its facade, arched openings and decorative masonry. Originally built out of wood frame with brick and stone facades, this building would later be updated into a fire proof structure. However, in 2004, a fire demolished the north end of the property. Powered by steam and fueled by coal, this ice plant which incorporated a boiler room, ice house, tank house, engine room and cooling tower, remained unchanging until it was eventually vacated many years later. Through time the area gradually became more dense with row houses which bordered the surrounding blocks in addition to other industries like auto shops, a fire house, school, Ward Baking Co., and transit. The P.B. & W. Rail Road Pennsylvania Lines joined the landscape in the early 1950's further strengthening the sense of production and industry in this area of the city. What remains today is a 17,600 square foot space which previously encompassed the production zones.



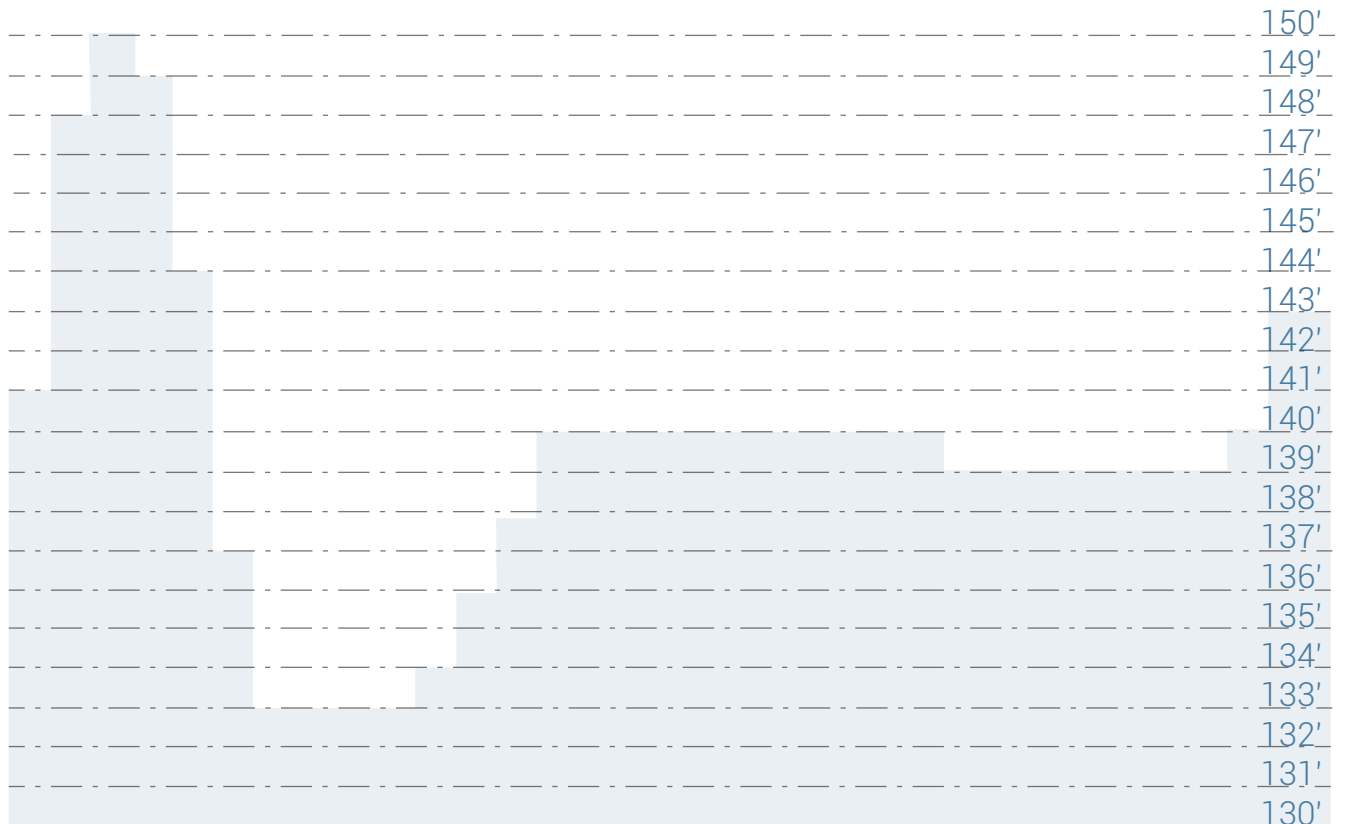
1914  
to  
1952



# Site Evolution



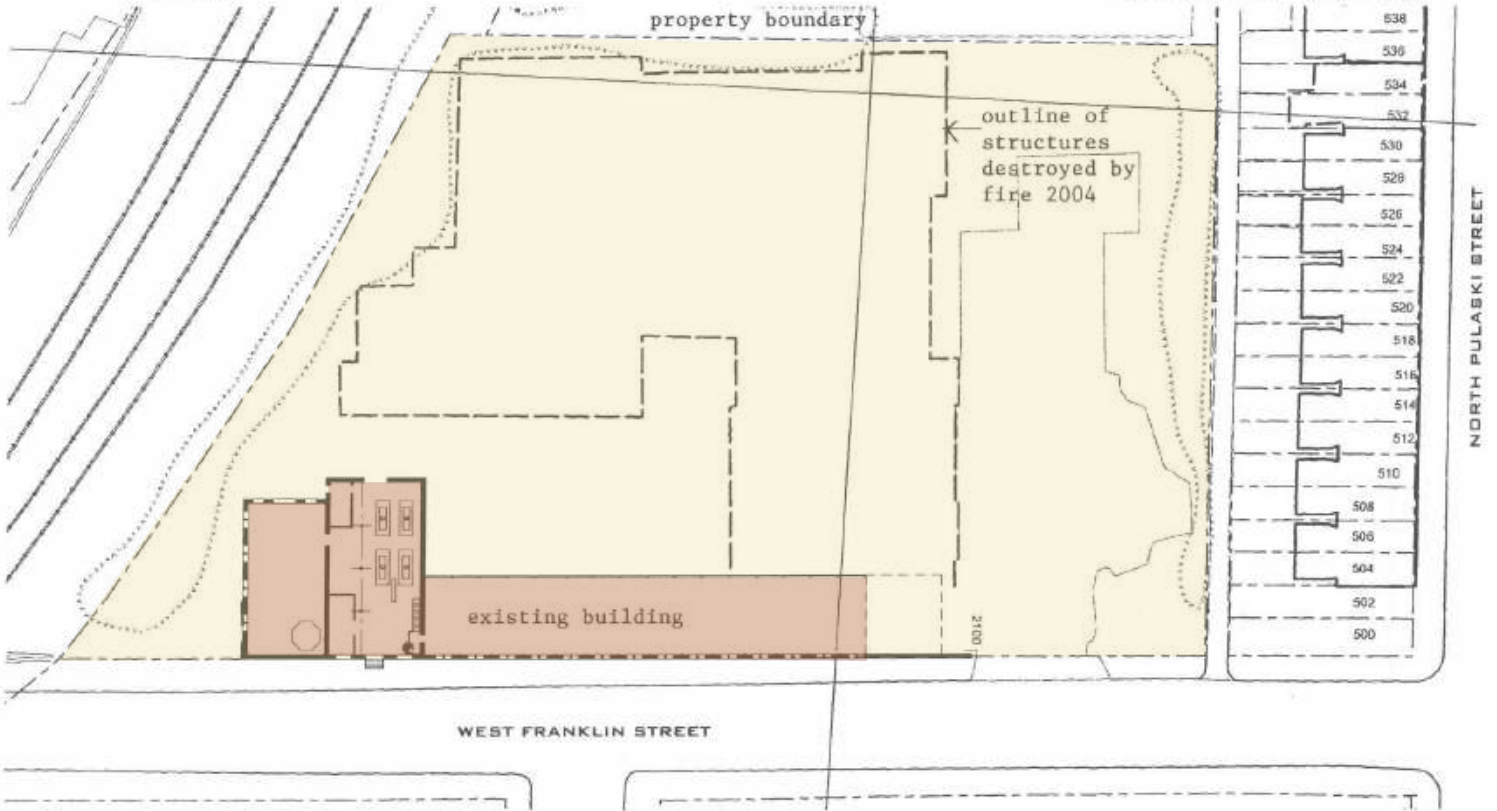
## Site Topography



B-1040  
 AMERICAN ICE COMPANY  
 Baltimore (City), Maryland

Site Plan

Scale: 1"=75' (approx.)











Source | National Park Service



Sources | City of Baltimore, GIS Maps

2100 W Franklin Street Baltimore, Maryland 21223

# Site Analysis

-  Site Boundary
-  Neighborhood Boundary
-  Community Development Cluster
-  Food Desert
-  Parking
-  Railroad
-  Transit Center
-  Priority Transport Corridor
-  Bus Stops
-  Vacant Buildings



## Zoning + District

Source | City of Baltimore

Neighborhood: Midtown Edmondson

Block: 0117 / Lot: 039

Zip Code: 21223

Zoning District: TOD Transit Oriented  
Development / Enterprise

City Council District: 9th Ward,  
John T. Bullock (Democrat)

Voting Ward: 16-007

Transport: Located on Priority Corridor

FEMA Map Analysis: No Flood Risk

Vacant Buildings: 458

Vacant Lots: 118



## Neighborhood Demographics

Source | City of Baltimore

Poverty Rate: 43-67%

Unemployment Rate: 23-36%

Public Assistance: 16-39%

Racial Demographic: 96% Black

Renter Occupied Homes: 60-79%



## Neighborhood + Lot Analysis

Sources | Cross Street Partners, Maryland Dept.  
of Planning, Arch Plan Inc., Baltimore Heritage  
Company, City of Baltimore

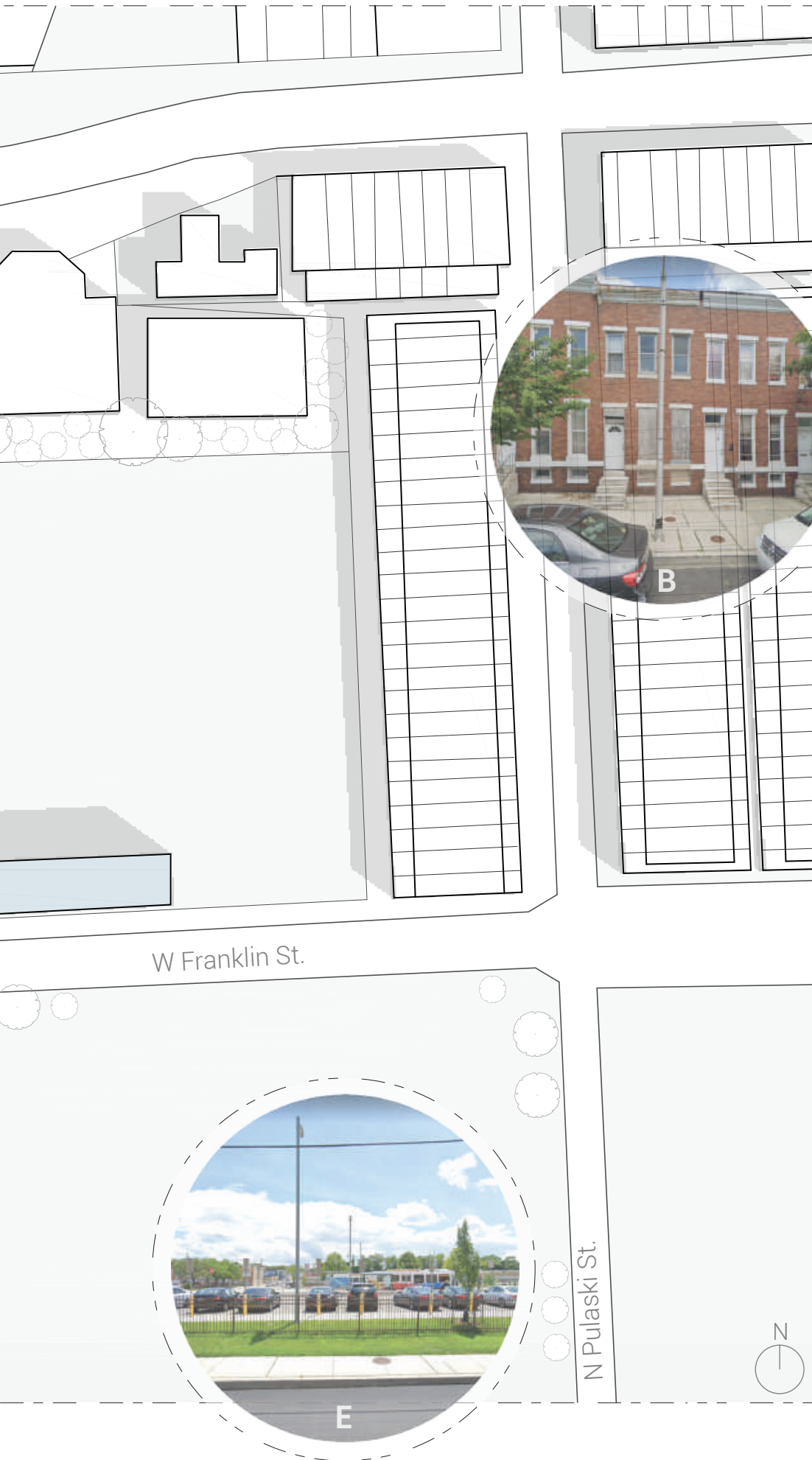


N Bentalou St.

Edmondson Ave.

N Smallwood St.

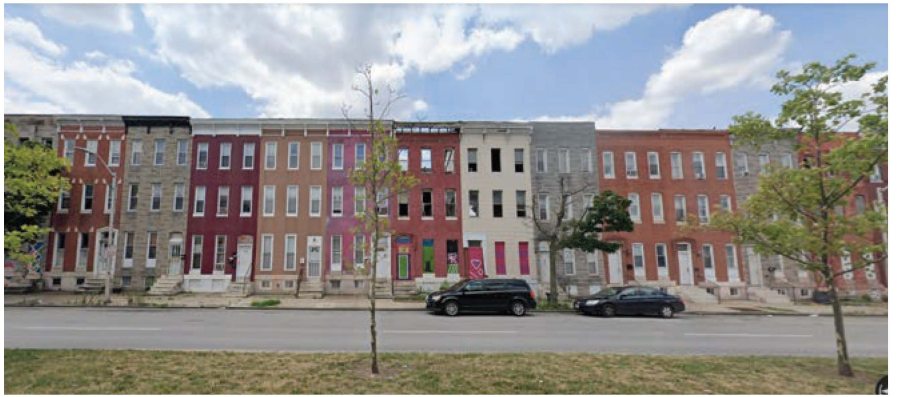
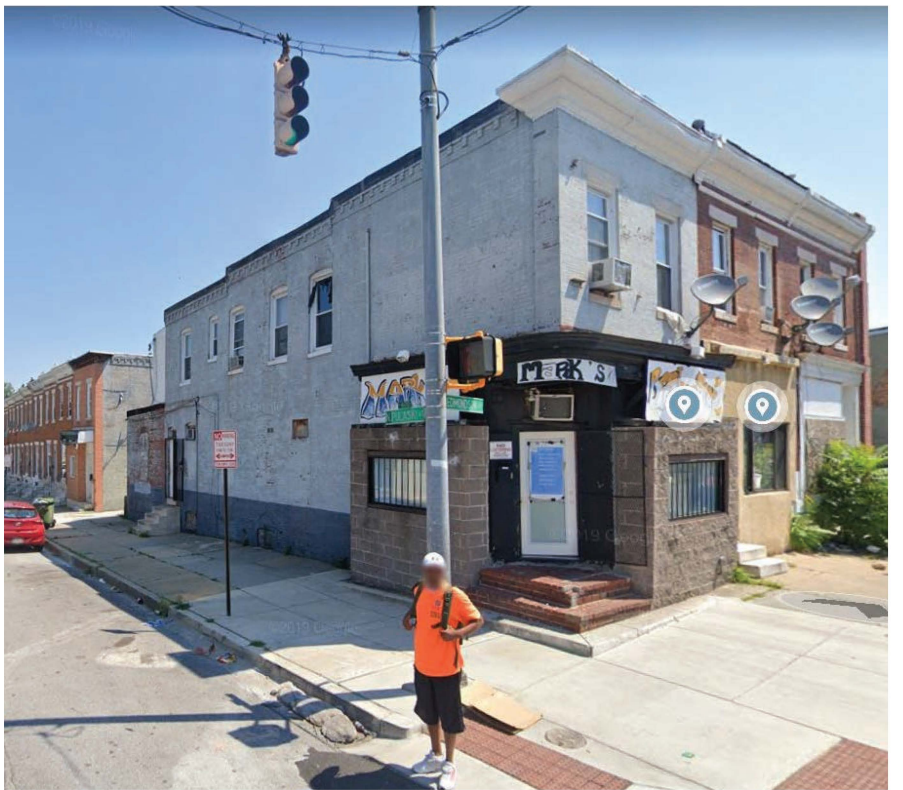
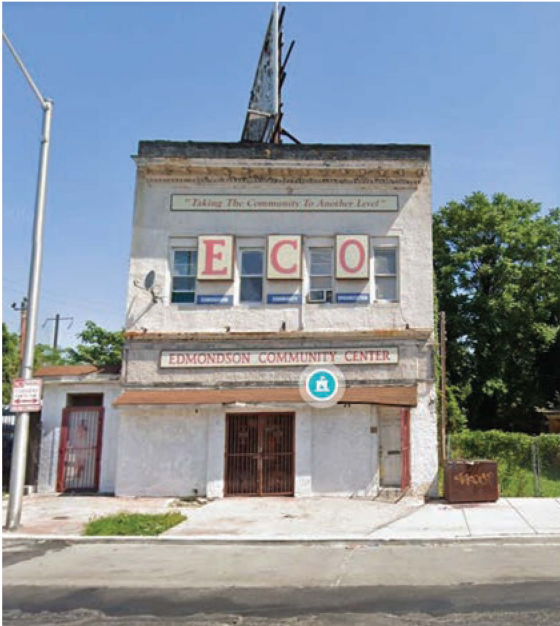
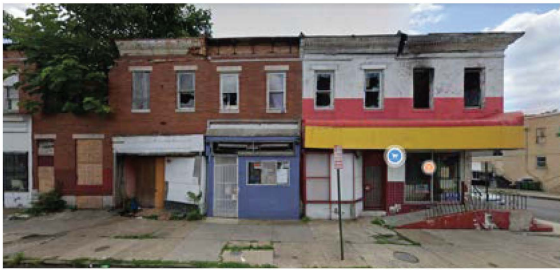
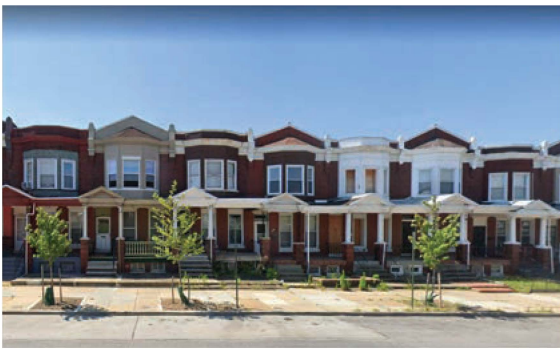
2100 W Franklin St. Baltimore, Maryland 21223

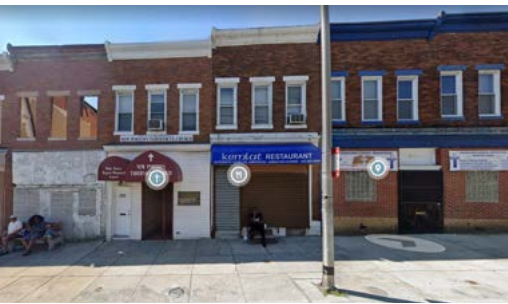


Latitude 39.29058°N  
 Longitude -76.60926° E  
 Temperature 34 - 78°F  
 Precipitation 22" (Annual)  
 Air Quality Good  
 Water Quality Poor

# Site Plan

- A Auto Shop | North
- B Row Housing | East
- C Train Platform | West
- D Franklin Facade | South
- E Marc Center | South





Strong Link Between Housing and Public Space



Flat Roof with some Ornamentation and Pitch Variation

Linear Color Bands and Brick Facades



Remnants of Active Street Presence

Gridded Fenestrations and Doors Typically 2-3 Stories



Graphic Signage

Link to Green Space



Murals and Street Art  
Large presence of Color

# Vernacular West Baltimore Architecture

08

30

20

# Concept Design

*symbolism, intersectionality, architectural reaction*

Source: Johanna Lebtinen

minimalist movements  
with strong **impact**

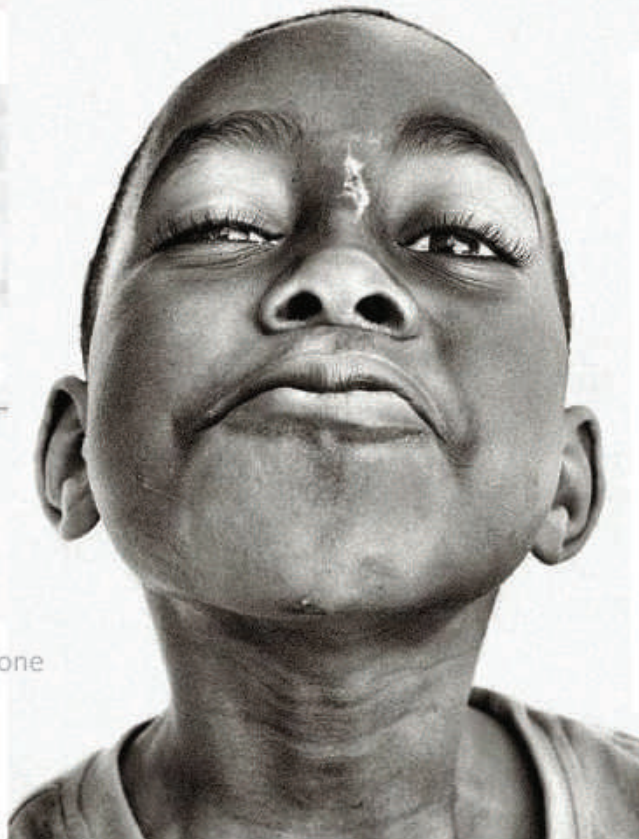


Symbolism

Source: @\_maryi\_



Source: Marco Virgone  
Titled: Disorder



Source: Pinterest



Source: Lila x Lola

# Inspiration Collage

*Concept Ideation*



# Intersectionality Diagram

*Mixed Media | Word, Media, Color, Voice*

This diagram explores the intersection of social issues in systems of oppression. The structure of each fold is reliant on the neighboring strand. Word and color are woven together to suggest that voices from each discipline must be highlighted to best understand these intertwined social conditions. While this project addresses racial inequities, it is important to understand that racism does not exist without diverging with other forms of discrimination.

# Symbolism

*of Word and Architectural Reaction*

This exercise examines the meanings and symbolism behind words like criminality, freedom, voice, power, system, omission, color, platform, and race. This understanding then guides analysis of how these themes become visible in built and social environments. Identification of these moments influence the design principles which work to acknowledge existence, highlighting power and allowing for healing and growth.



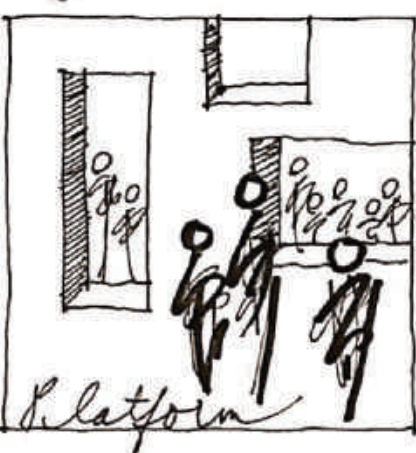
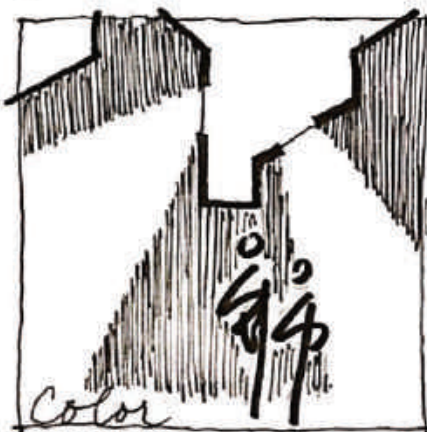
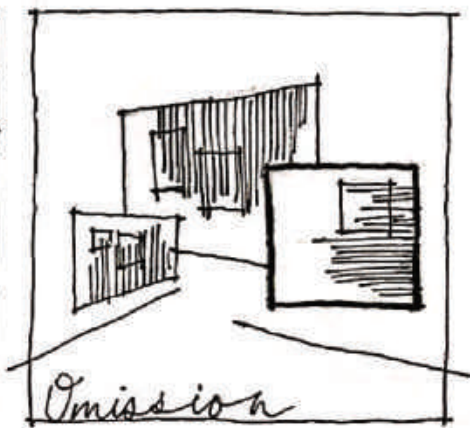
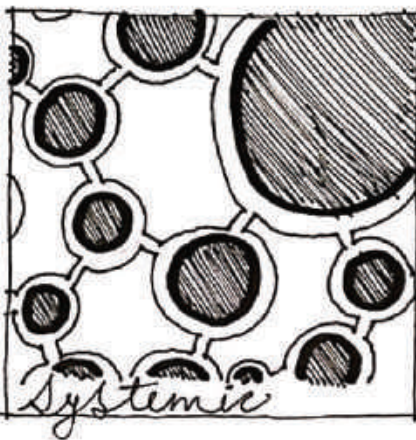
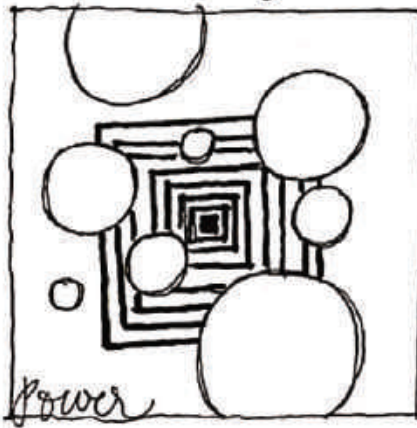
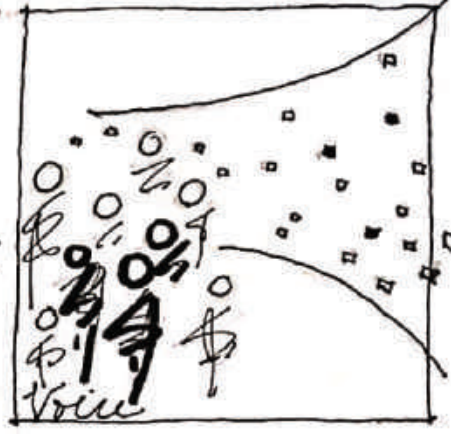
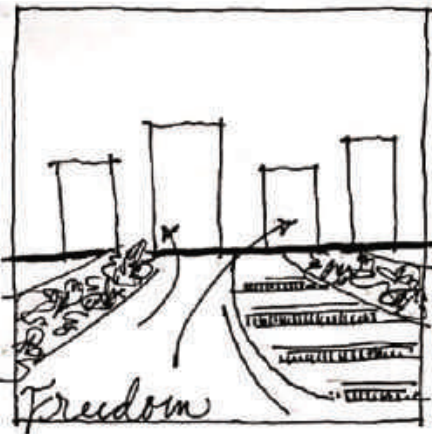
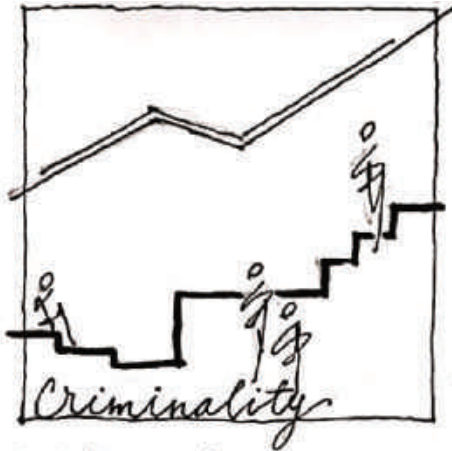
**01 Spatial Ownership**

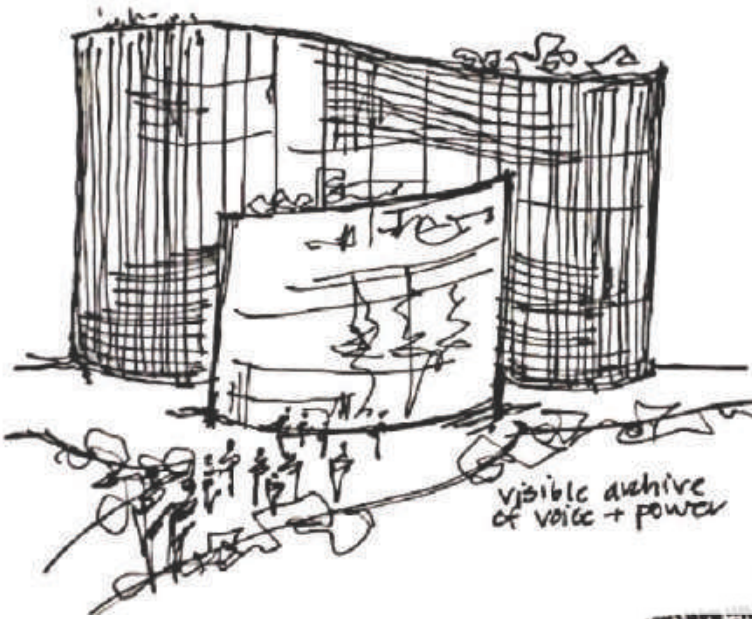
**02 Flexible and Interactive Design**

**03 Place of Refuge**

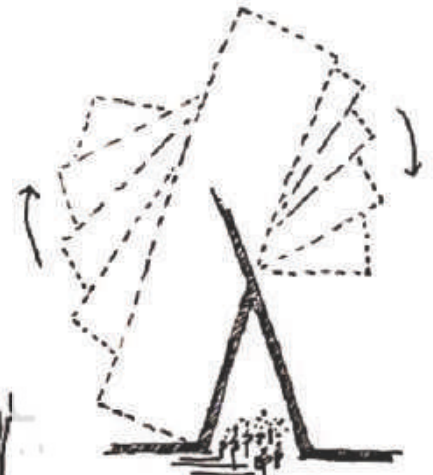
**04 Embedding of Memory**

**05 Social Sustainability**





visible archive  
of voice + power



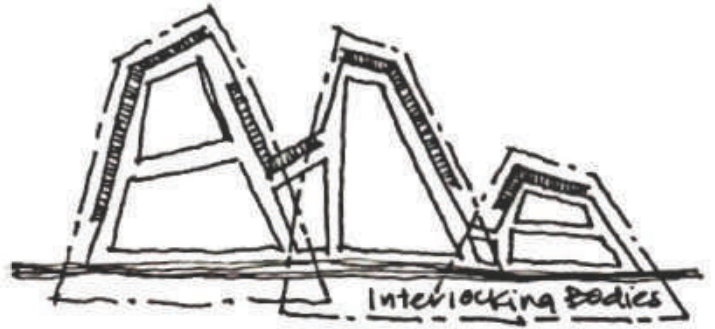
Protective Interior



Embedding  
existence + memory  
(monument/installation)



Place to Remember



Interlocking Bodies

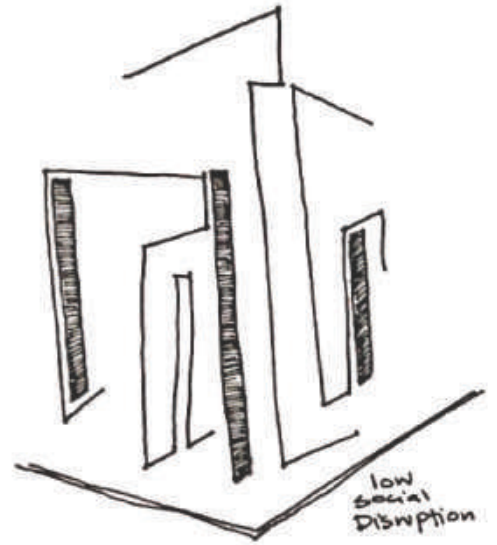




Choice in Destination  
barrier between outside  
forces + Surveillance



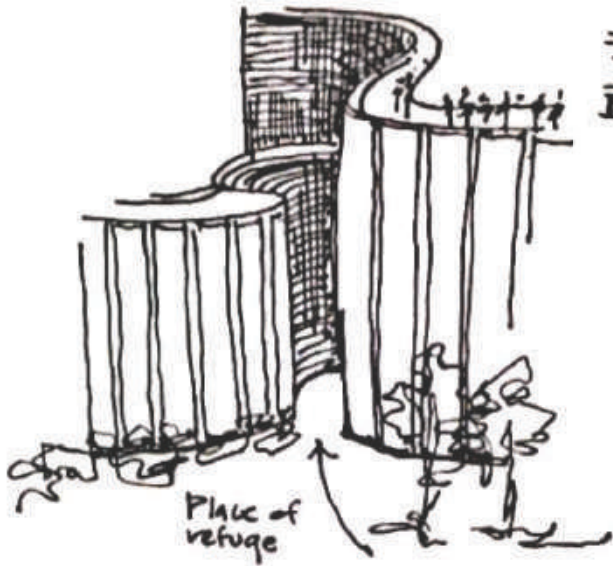
Appropriate Design



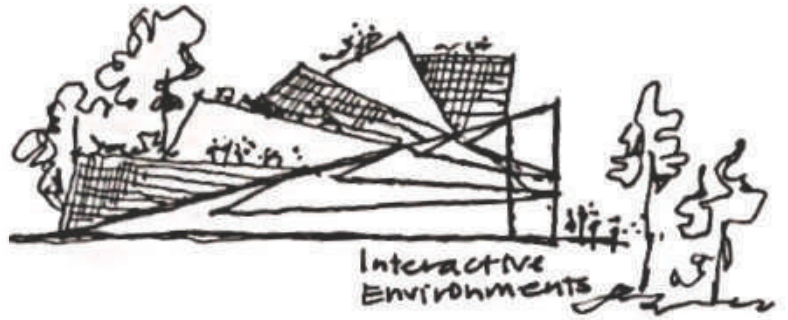
low  
social  
Disruption



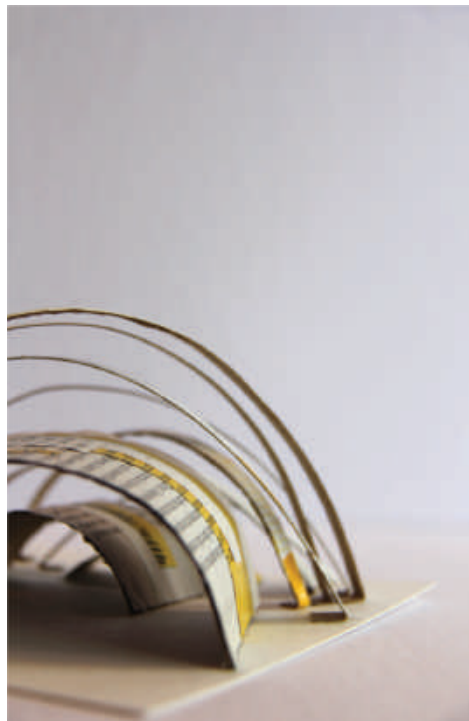
Inhabitable Mass  
vs. Frame



Place of  
refuge



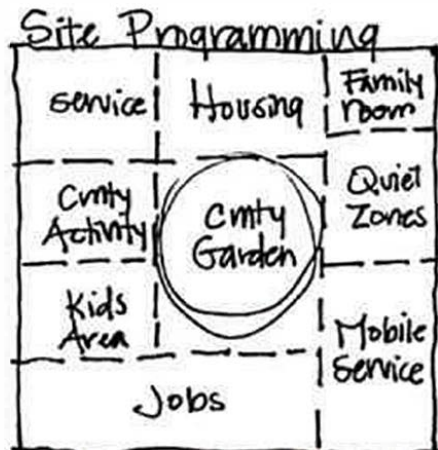
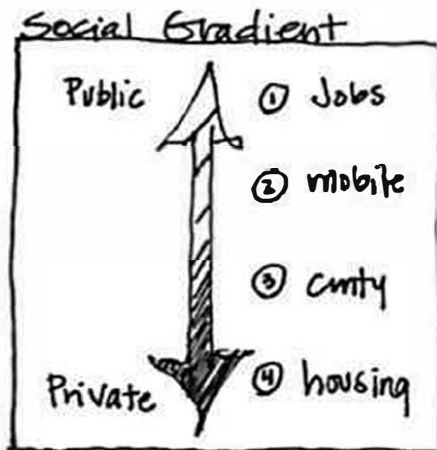
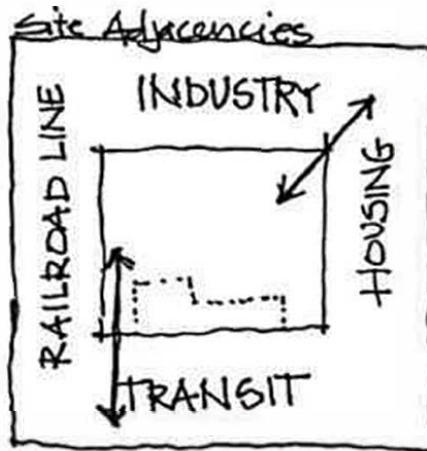
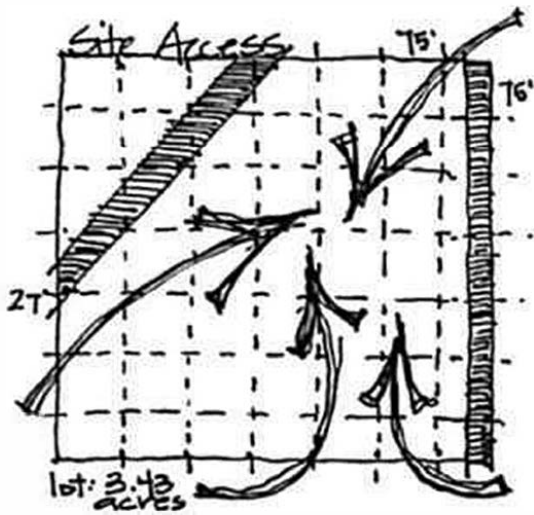
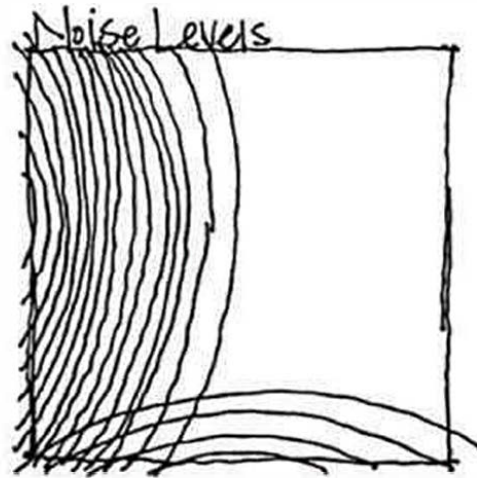
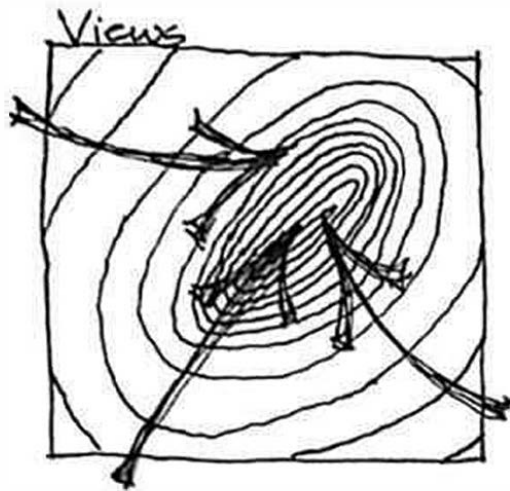
Interactive  
Environments



10  
06  
20

# Scheme #1

*site programming, diagram, circulation, views*

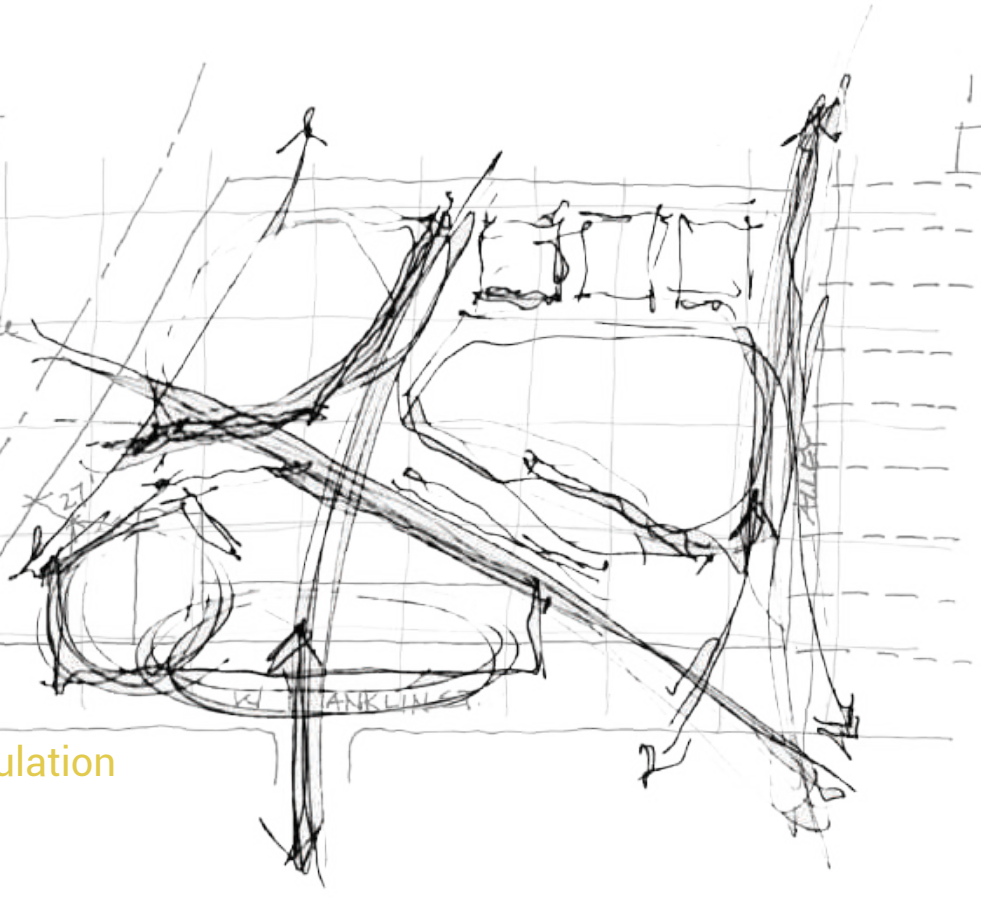


- employment
- temp housing
- Conty. space
- healing
- mobile service

Views

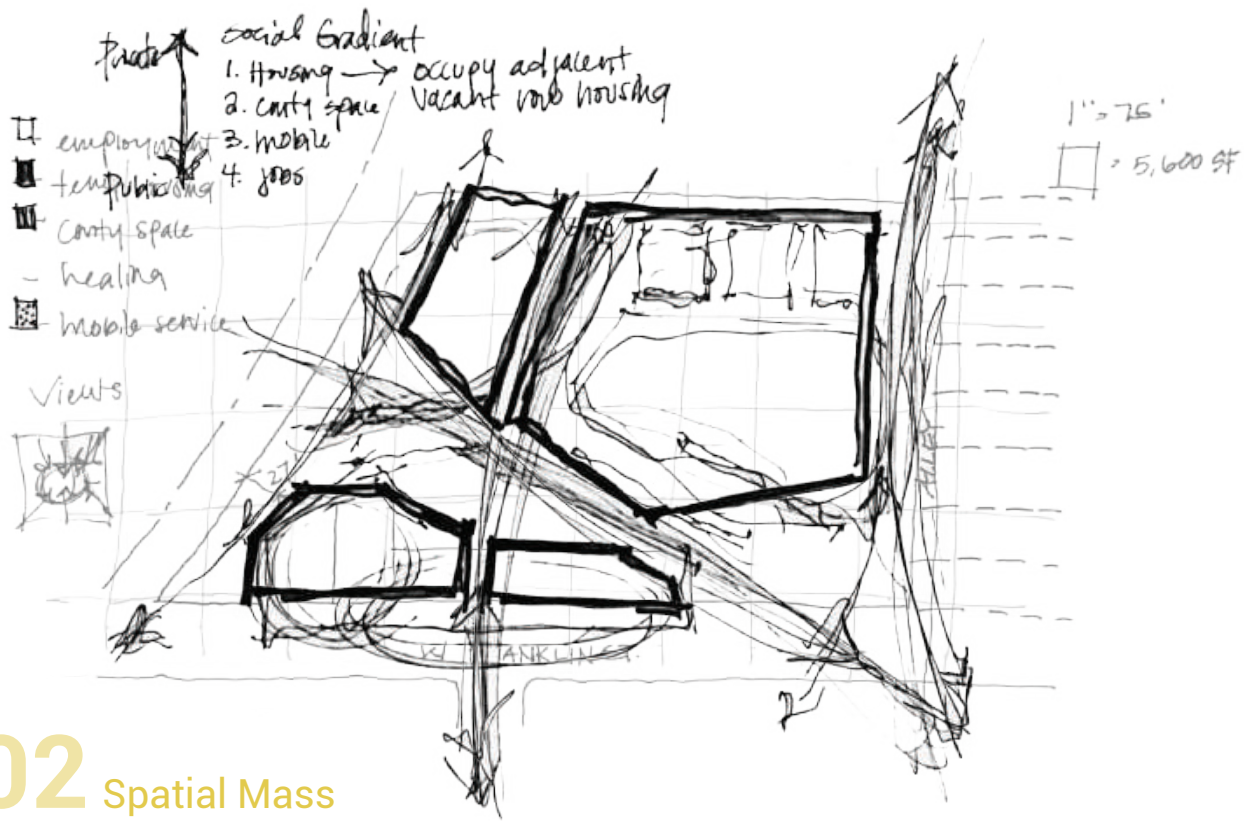


1" = 75'  
 □ = 5,600 SF

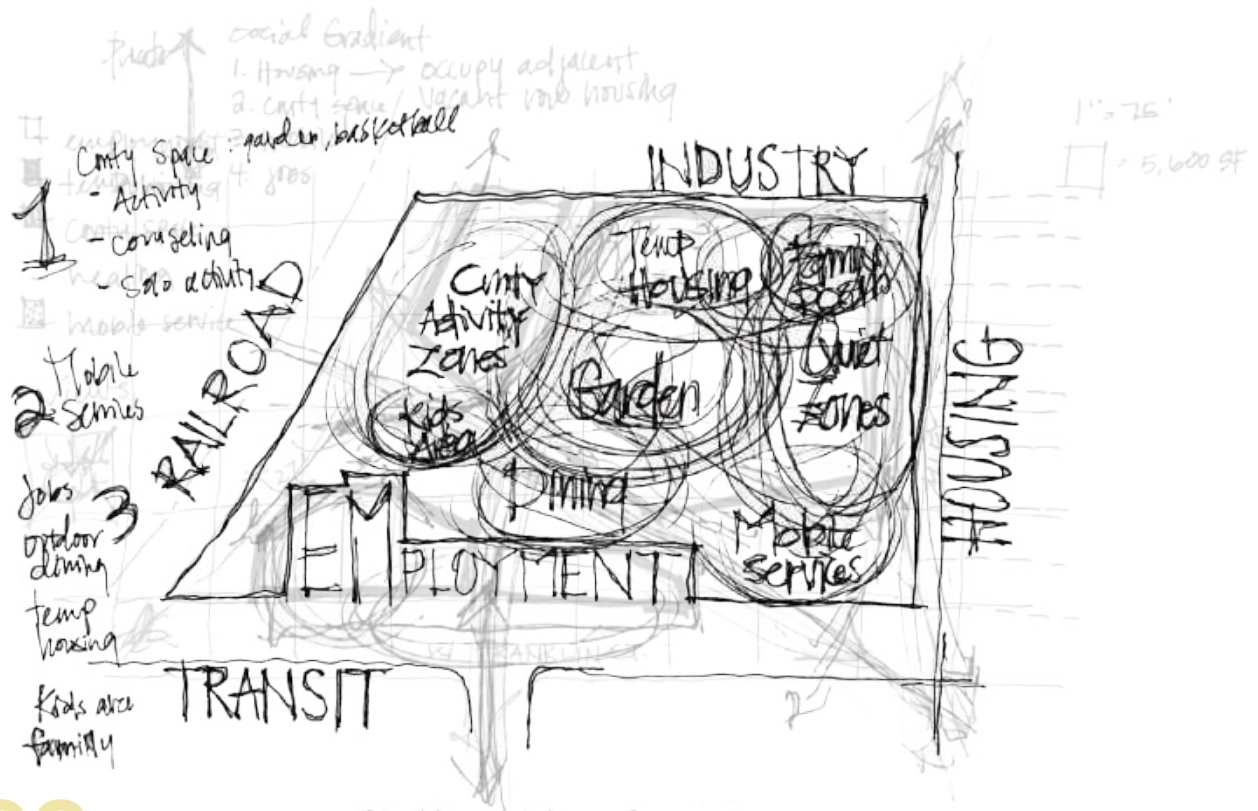


# 01 Site Circulation

# Site Scheme

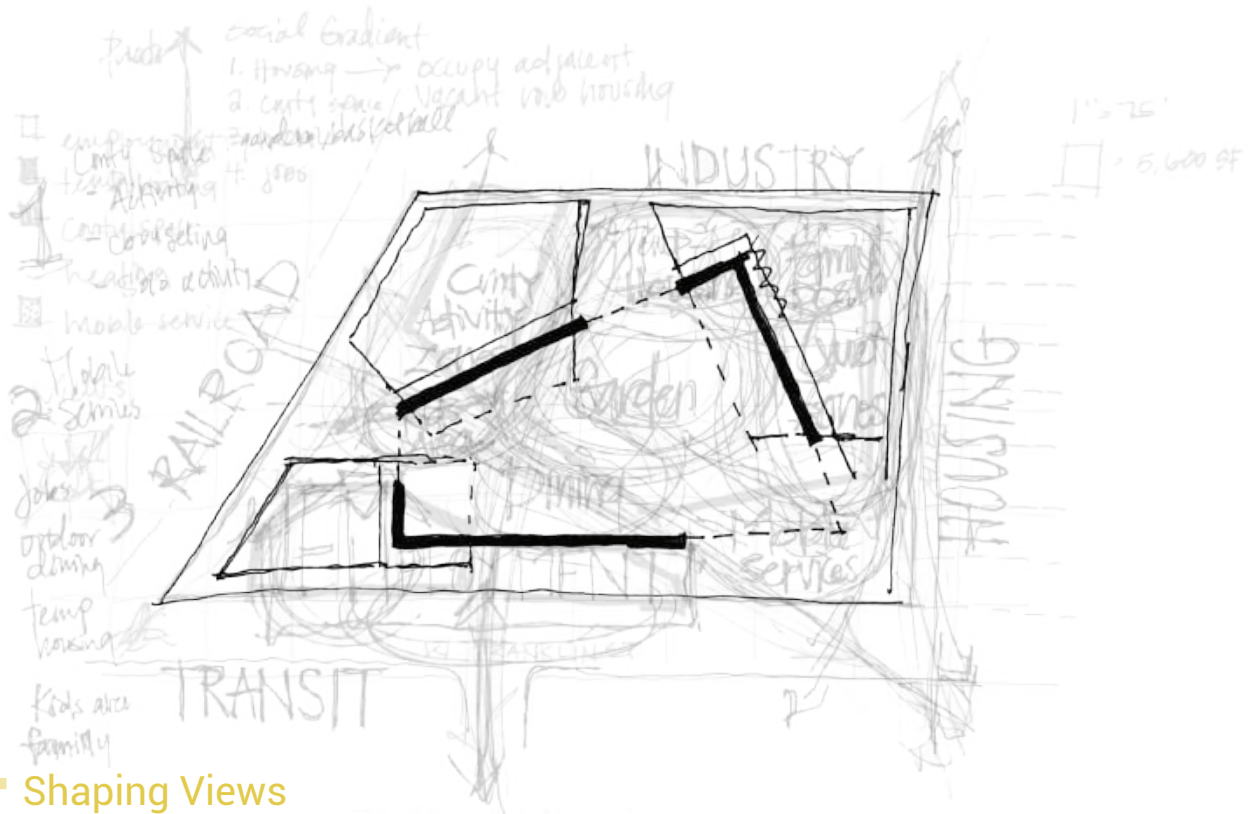


## 02 Spatial Mass

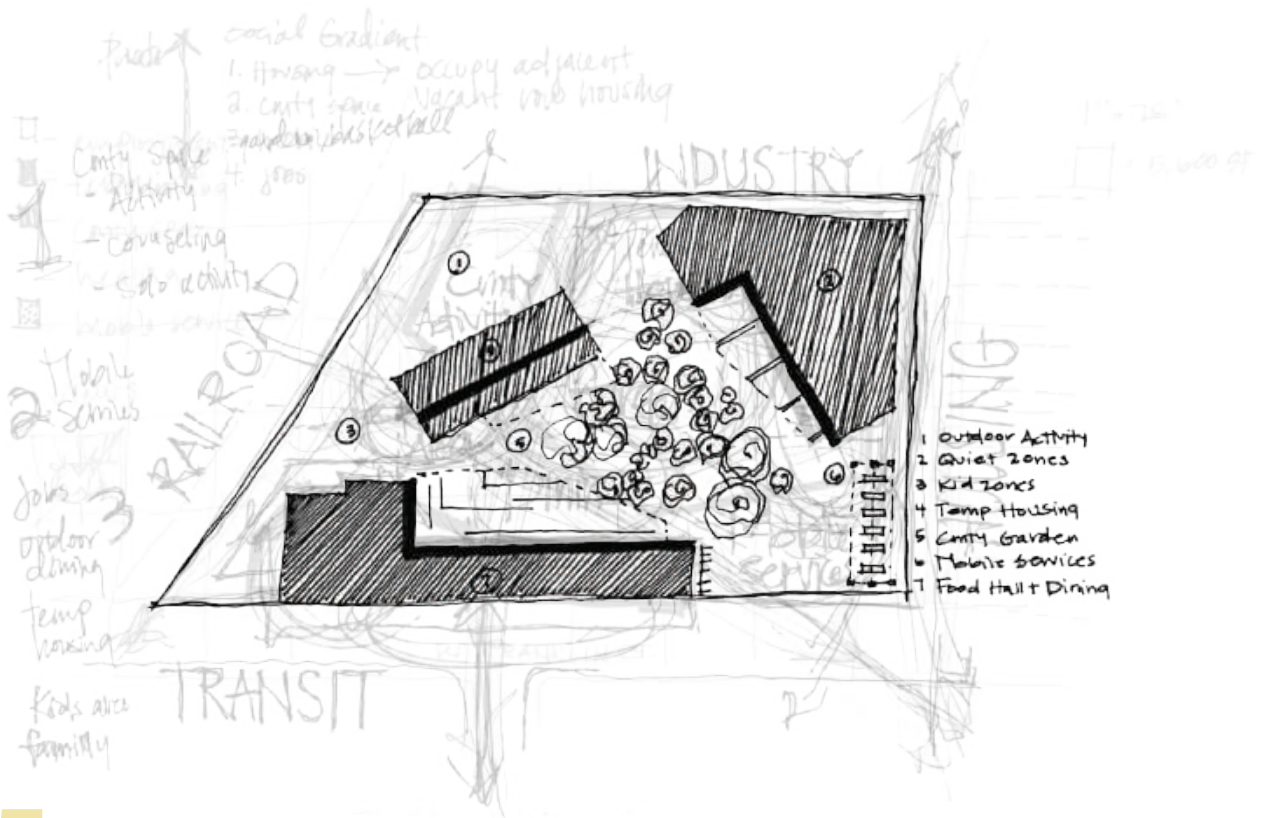


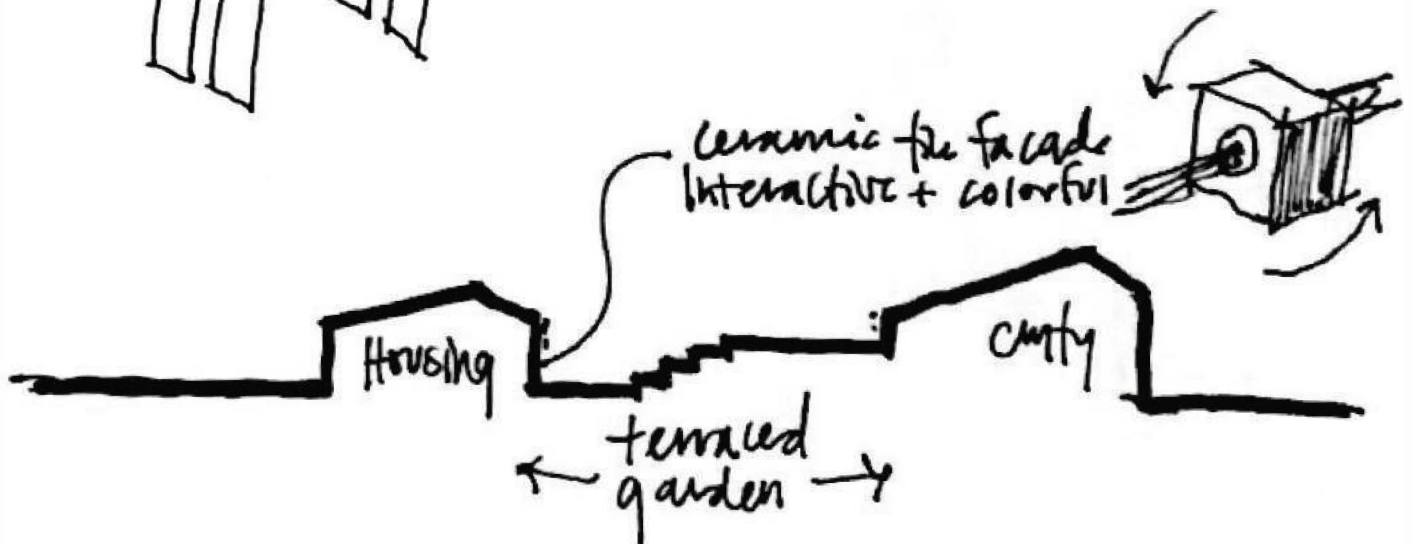
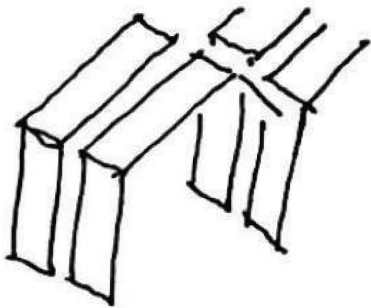
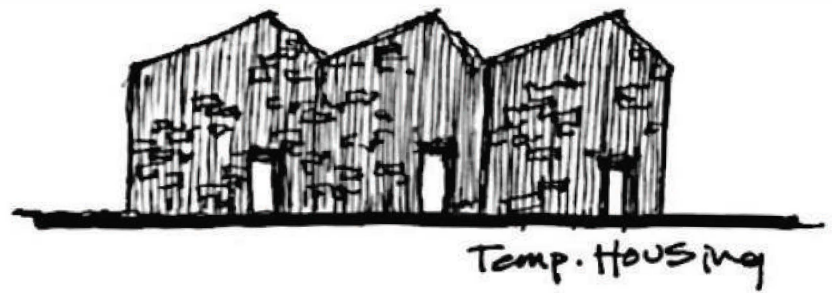
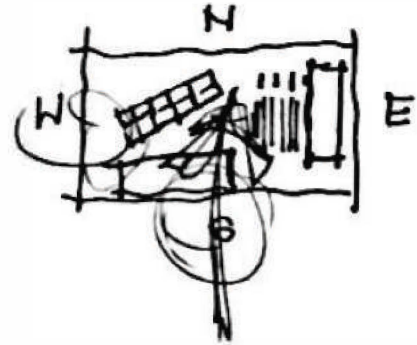
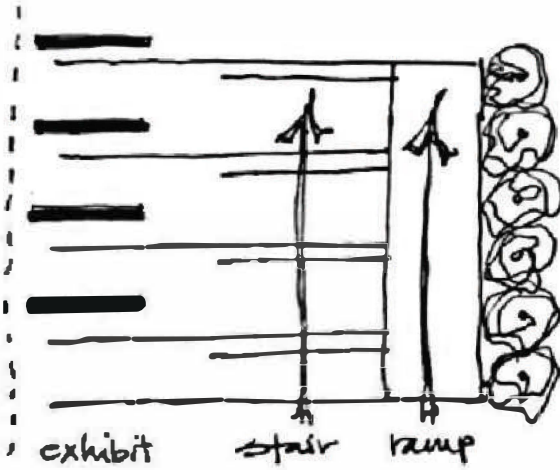
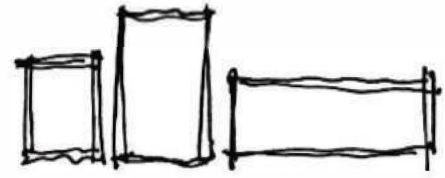
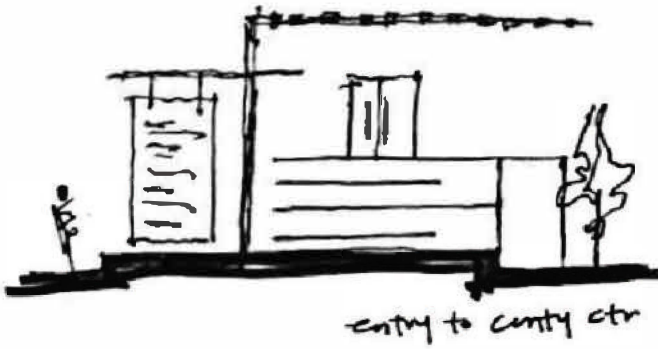
## 03 Program Distribution

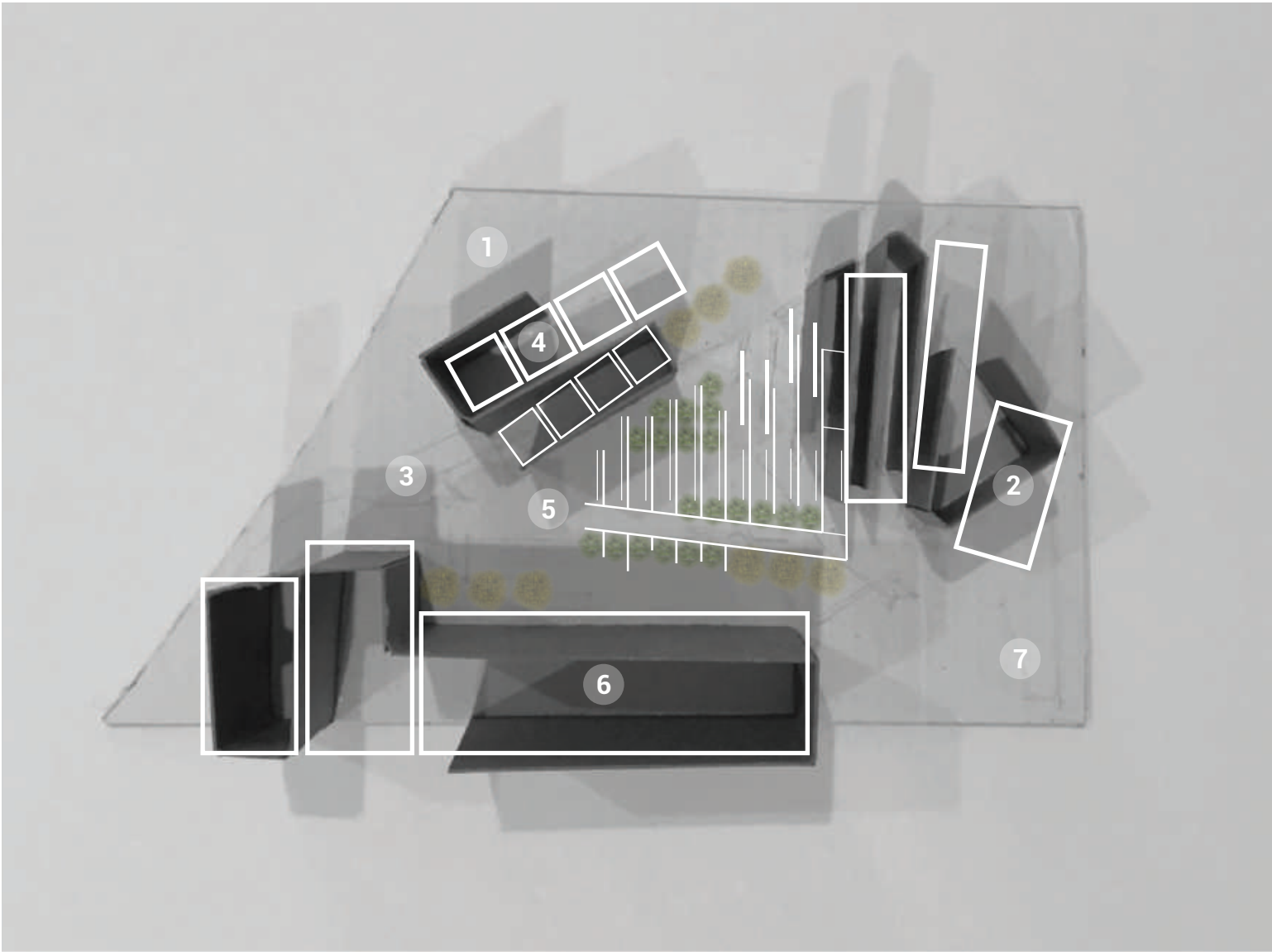
# 04 Shaping Views



# 05 Site Schematic







- 1 Outdoor Activity
- 2 Healing + Growth Center
- 3 Kids Zone
- 4 Temp Housing
- 5 Cmty Garden
- 6 Food Hall + Dining
- 7 Mobile Services

## Site Organization



# Scheme #2

*material, environment, form relationship to context*

You can jail  
a  
Revolutionary,  
but you  
can't jail  
the  
Revolution.

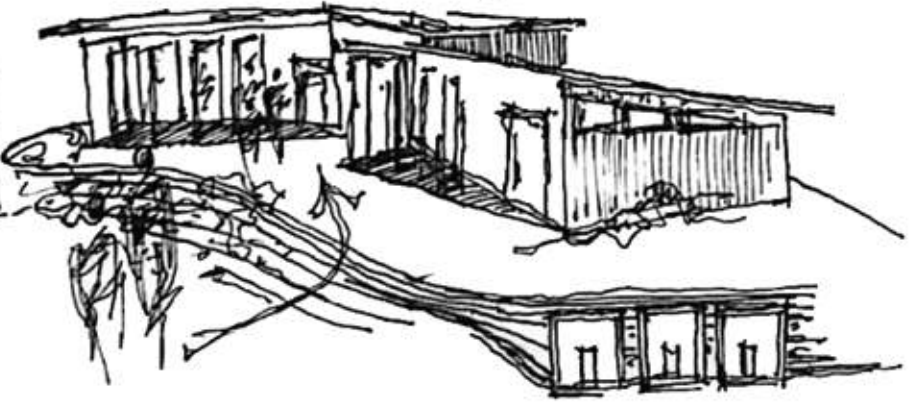
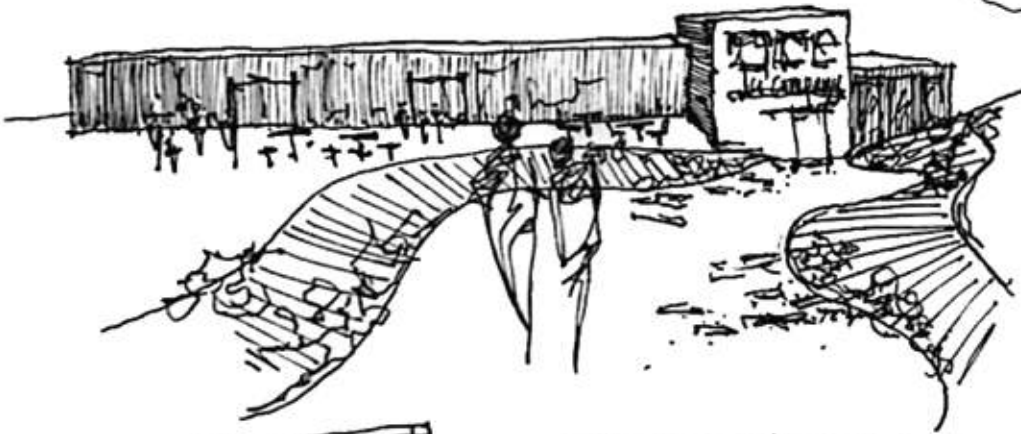
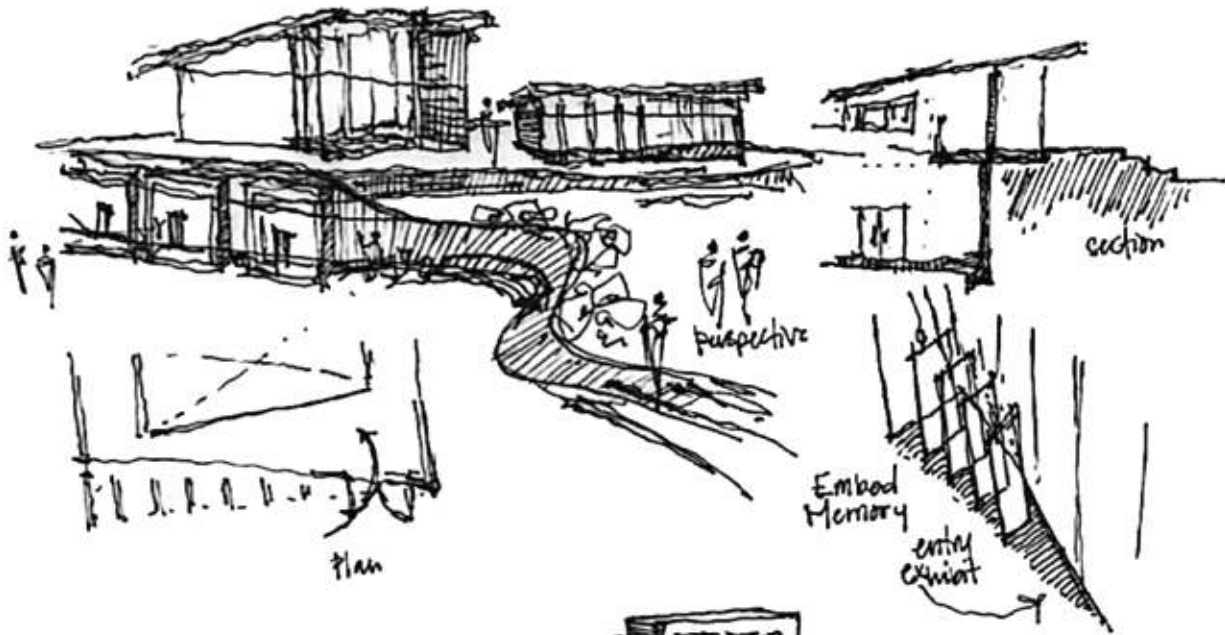
- Huey  
Newton



# Material Study



Source | Pinterest.com

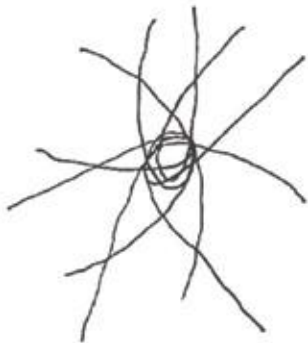


Site + Form  
Relationship

# Concept

## *Motivating Design Goals*

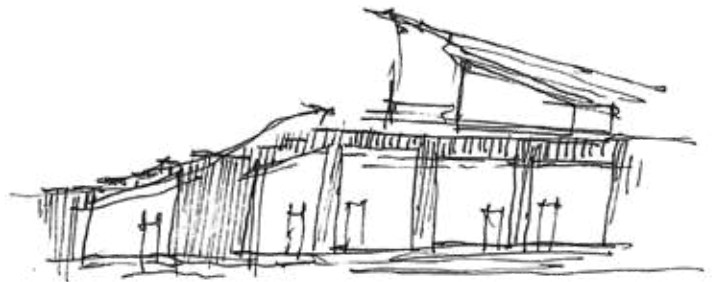
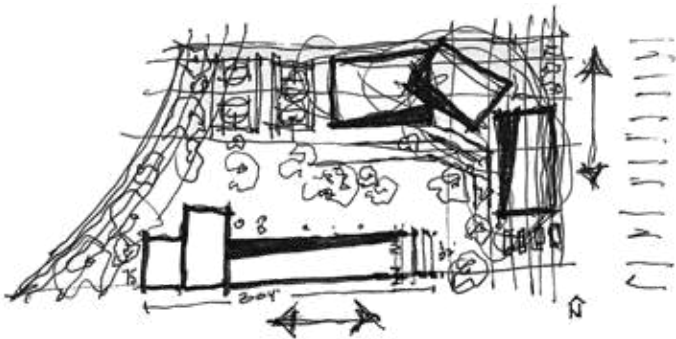
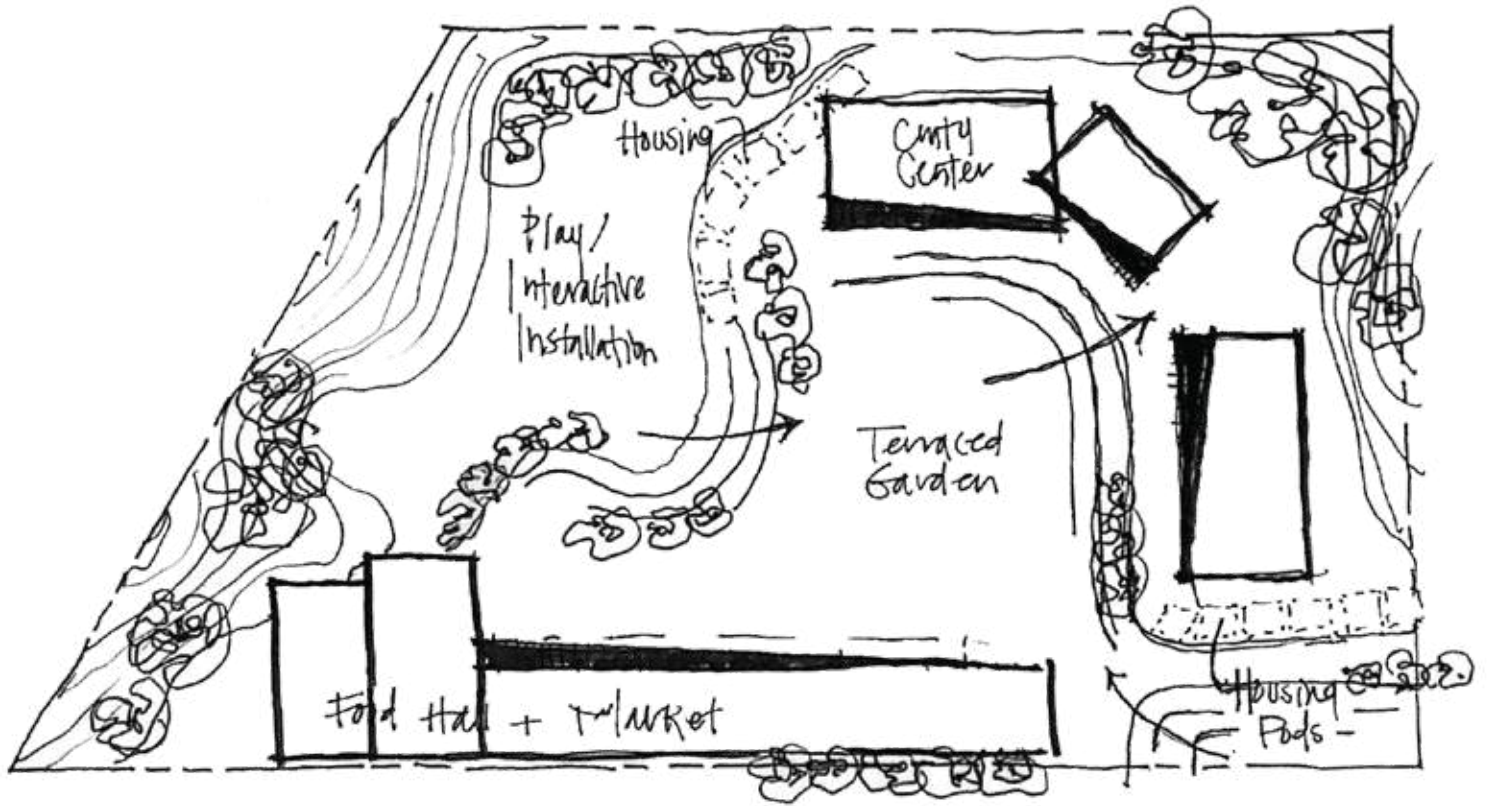
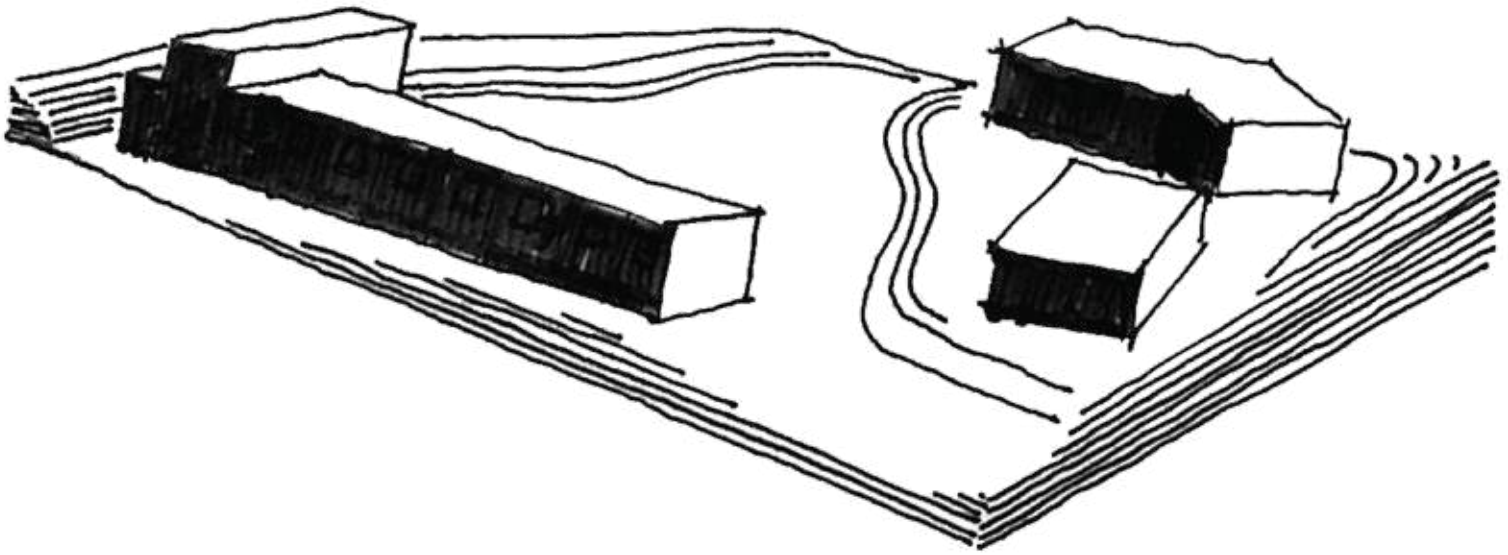
The design of this proposal is guided by the intention of inward looking energy source and restoration. The site creates a heart of activity and potential which flows through the site and radiates out into the community. This consistency of taking in of resources and delivering back to the community in which they came, fuels the design moves. Ultimately, the project looks to the individual capacity of each occupant and is inspired by the bottom up initiative at social justice and individual growth.



01 Inward Reflection

02 Application of Growth

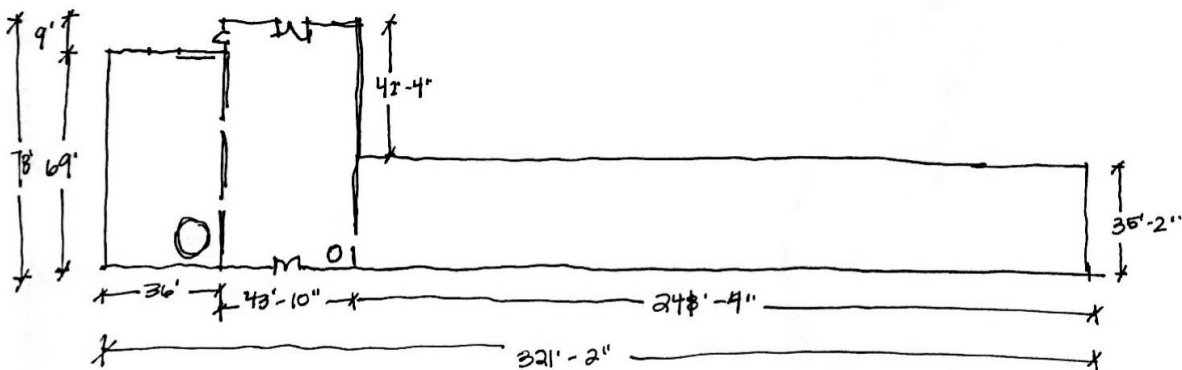
03 Radiating from a Core



# Interior Scheme

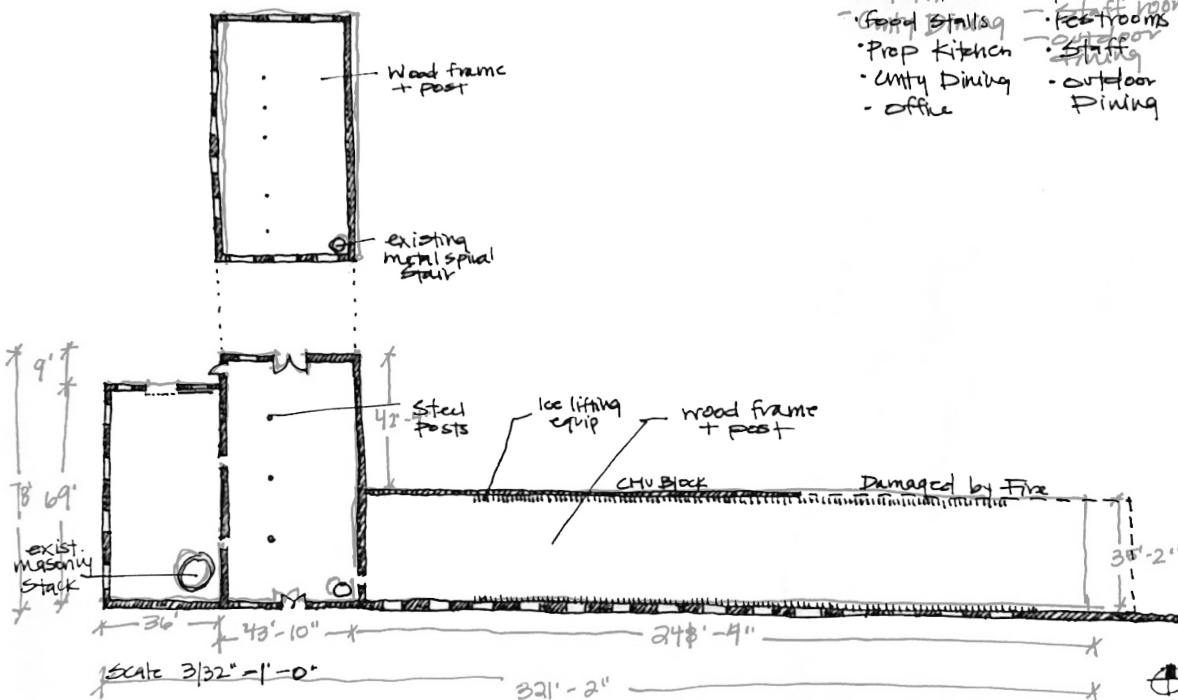
## Ice House Restoration

- Food stalls
- Prep kitchen
- Cmty Dining
- restrooms
- office
- staff room
- outdoor dining

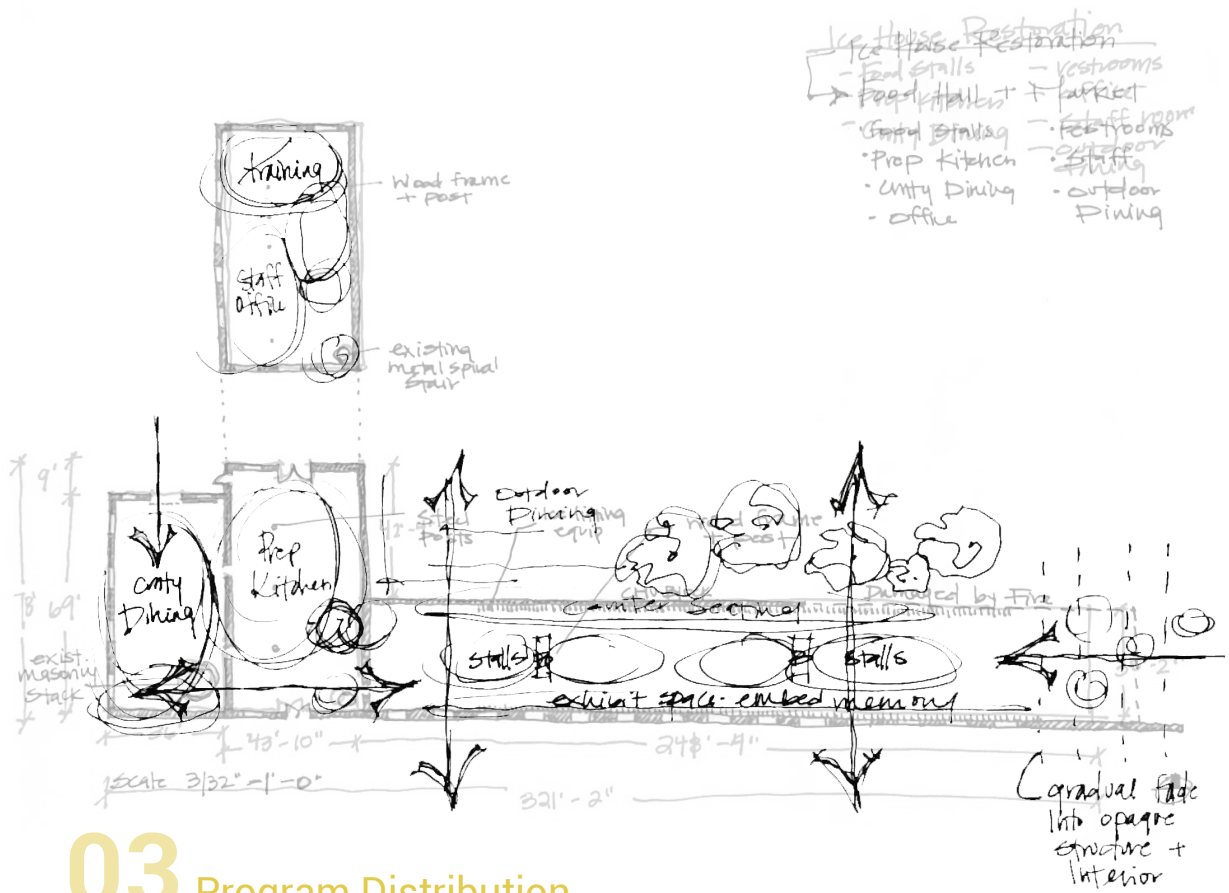


## 01 Scale + Proportion

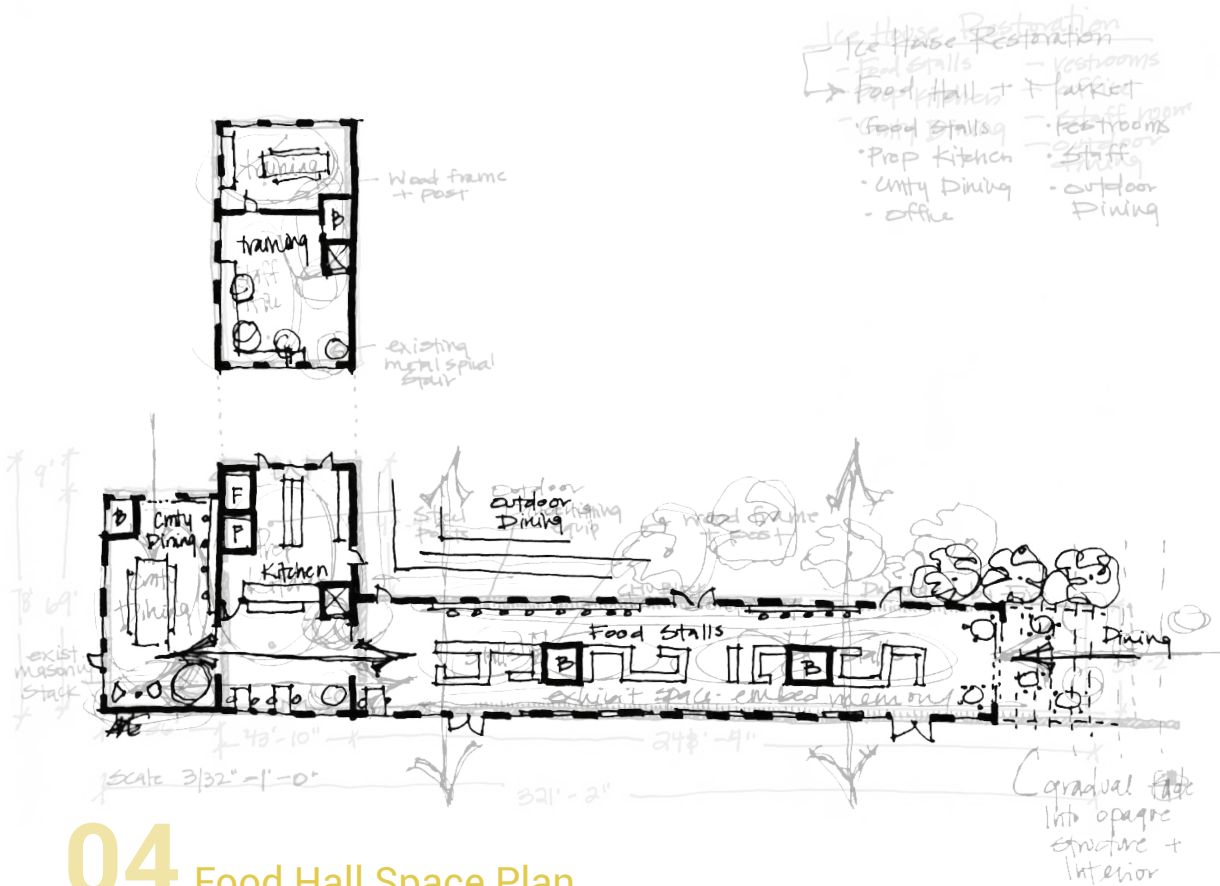
- ### Ice House Restoration
- Food stalls
  - Prep kitchen
  - Cmty Dining
  - office
  - restrooms
  - parking
  - staff room
  - outdoor dining



## 02 Existing Characteristics



### 03 Program Distribution

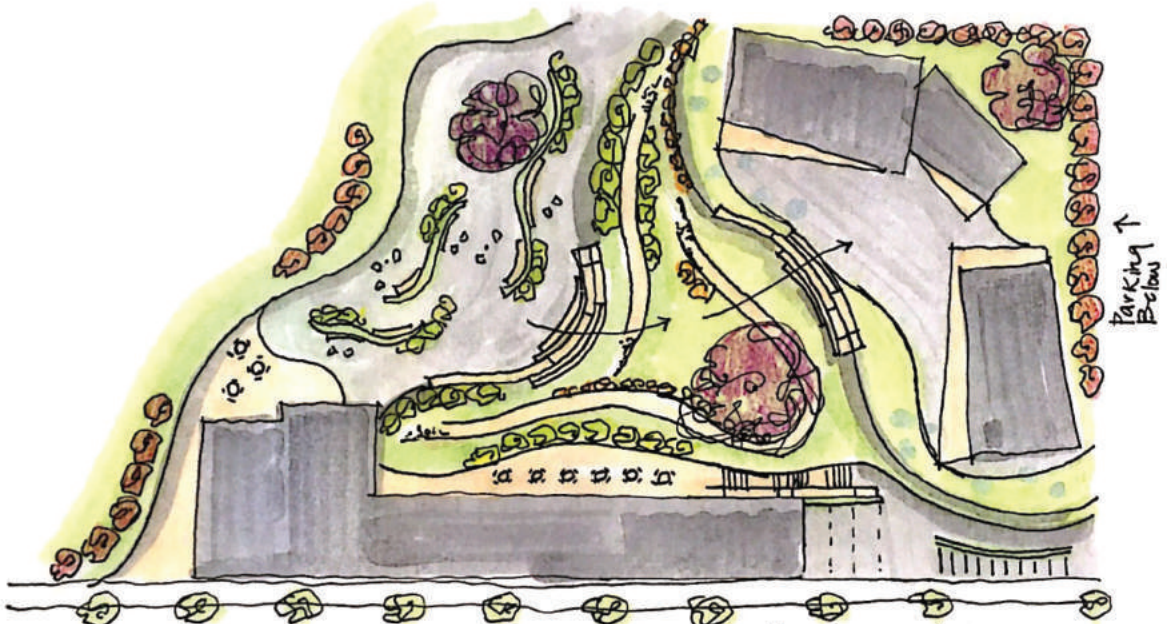
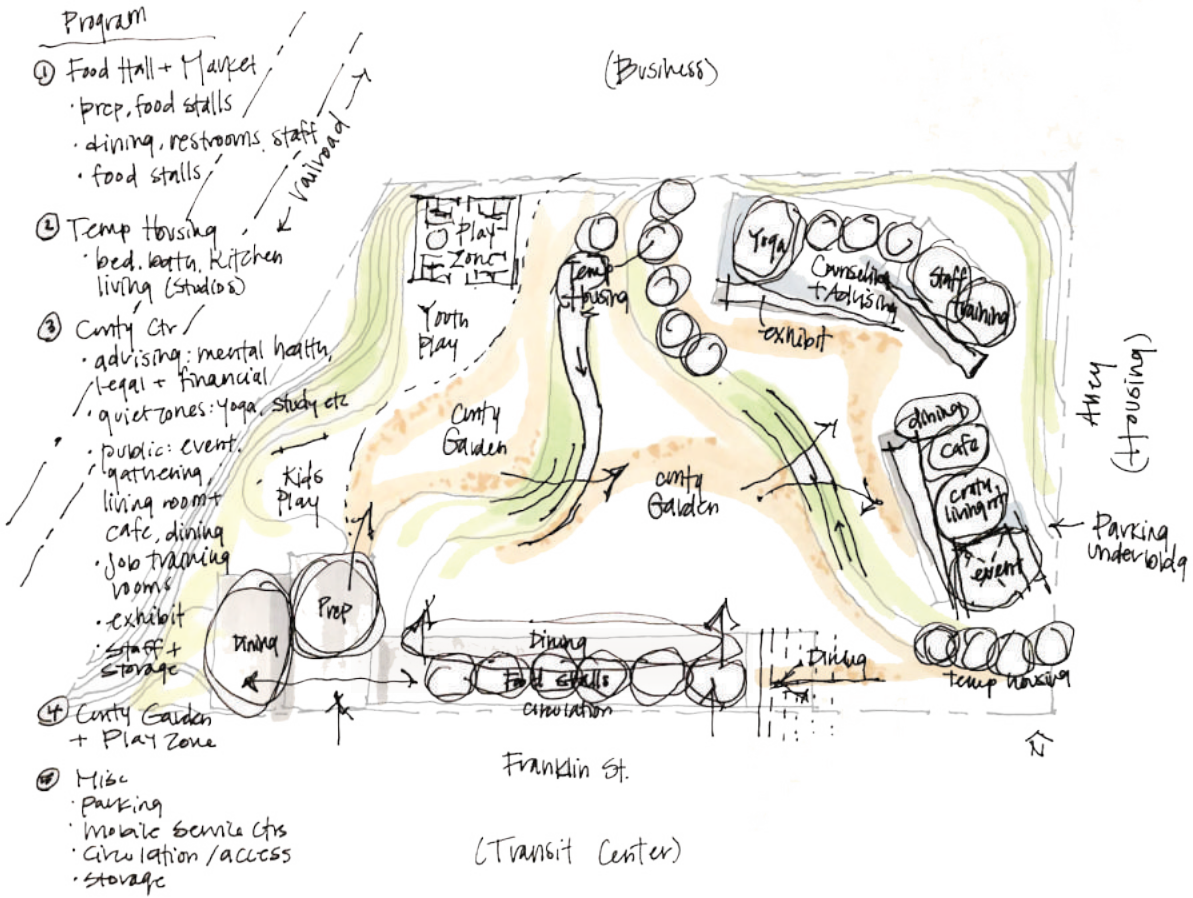


### 04 Food Hall Space Plan



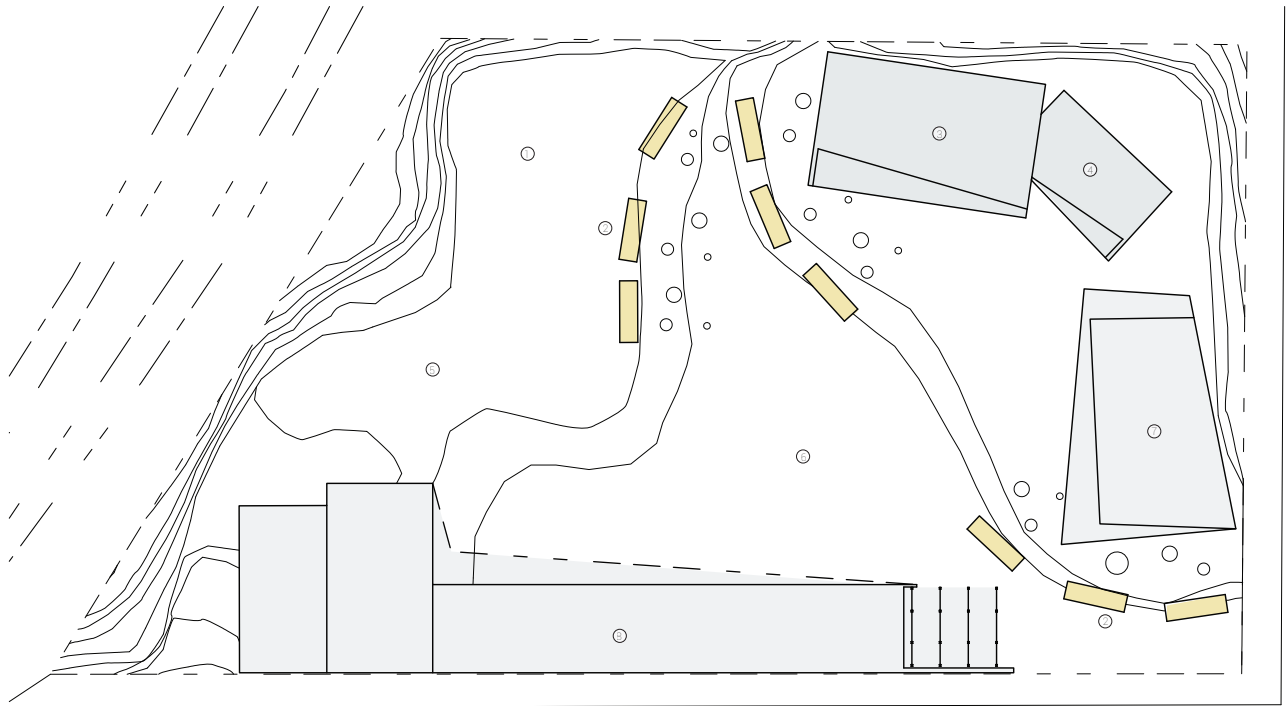
# Scheme #3

*landscape design, architecture schemes, interiors*



Landscape Arch:  
 how do you address ADA?  
 (mobility on grass)

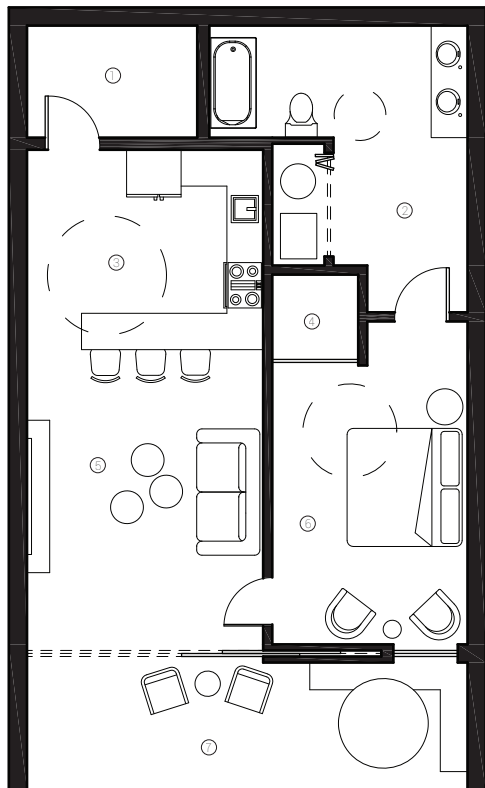
# Landscape Schemes



Site Plan

N^

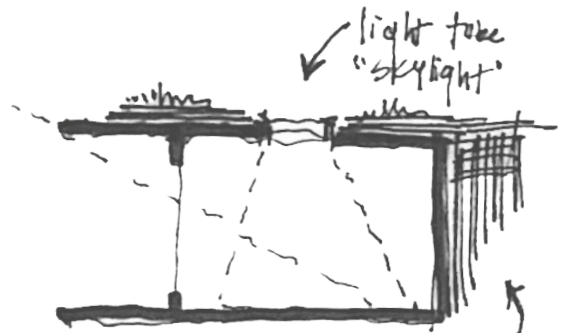
- 1 Play Area
- 2 Housing
- 3 Community Center | Counseling
- 4 Community Center | Healing
- 5 Child Play Zone
- 6 Community Garden
- 7 Community Center | Social Networks
- 8 Food Hall + Market



Housing Model

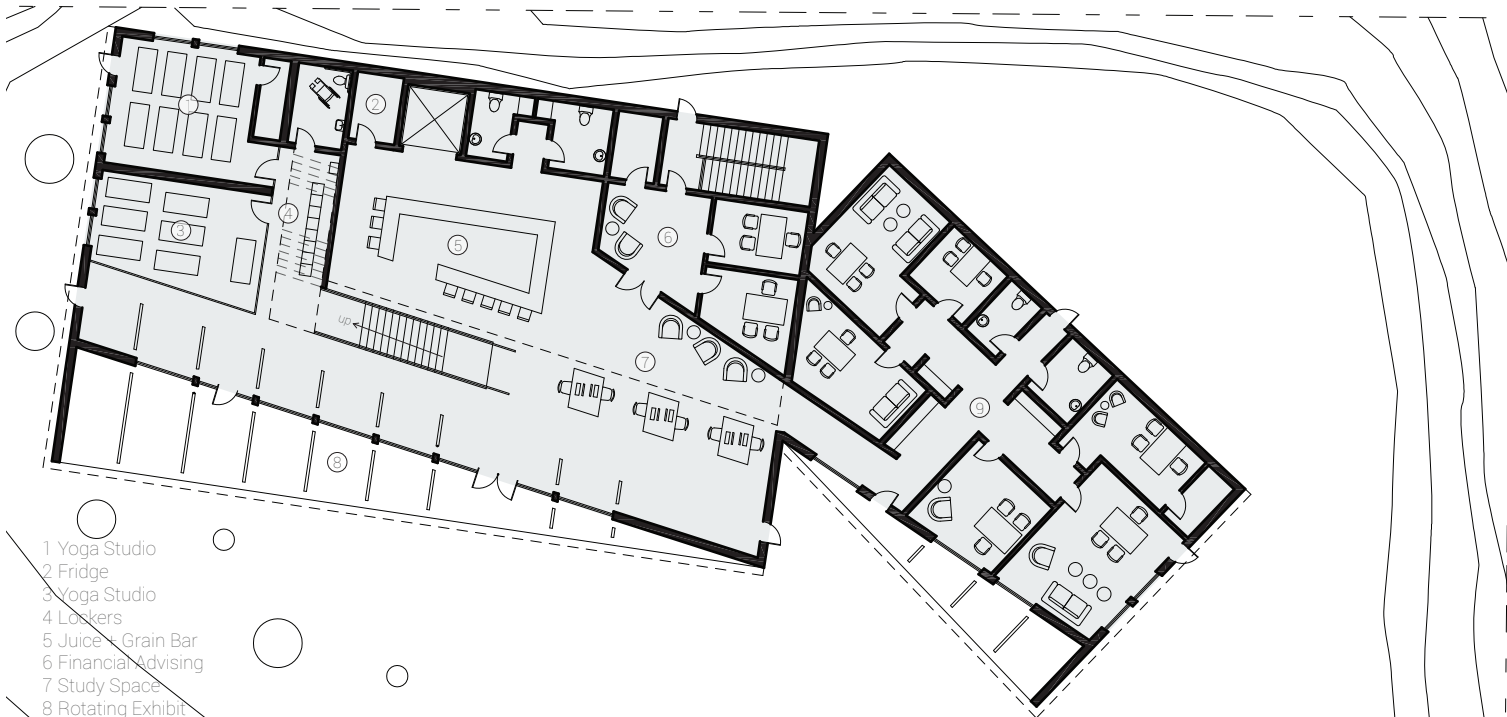
N^

- 1 Storage
- 2 Bath | Laundry
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Dining | Lounge
- 5 Closet
- 6 Bedroom
- 7 Outdoor Dining | Lounge

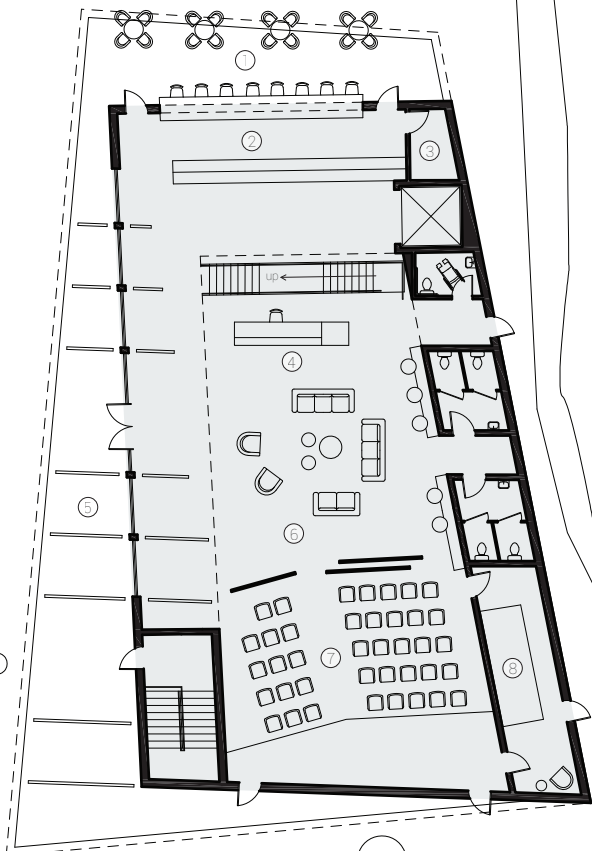


will absorb noise





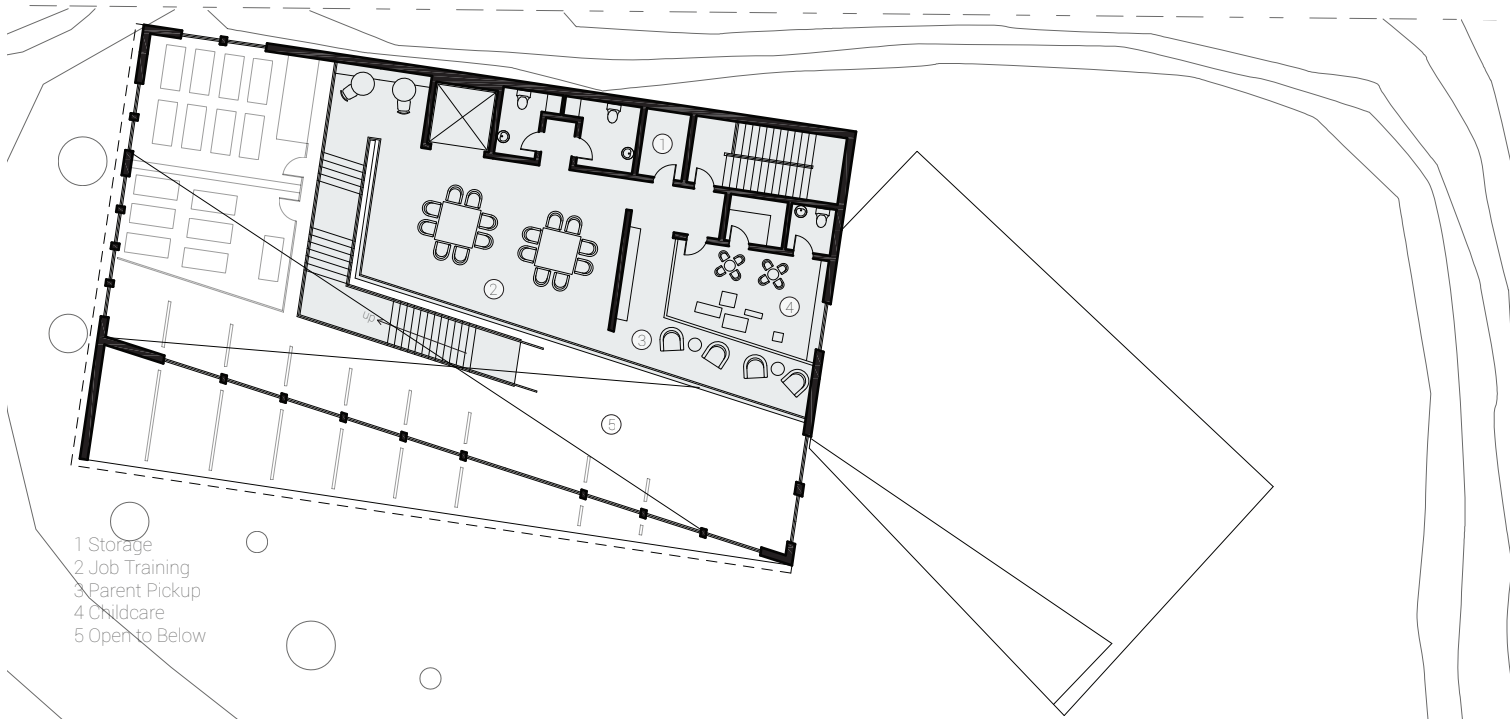
- 1 Yoga Studio
- 2 Fridge
- 3 Yoga Studio
- 4 Lockers
- 5 Juice + Grain Bar
- 6 Financial Advising
- 7 Study Space
- 8 Rotating Exhibit
- 9 Mental Health Services



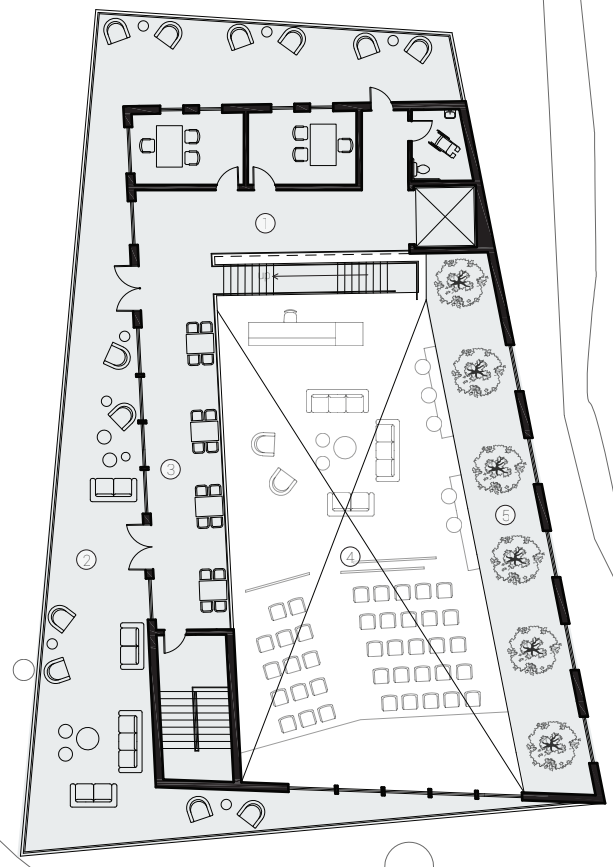
**Community Center | Level 1**  
Scale 1/16" = 1' - 0"

- 1 Outdoor Dining
- 2 Cafe
- 3 Fridge / Freezer
- 4 Help Desk
- 5 Rotating Exhibit
- 6 Community Lounge
- 7 Flexible Event Space
- 8 Storage / Stage Access

**Community Center | Level 1**  
Not to a Scale



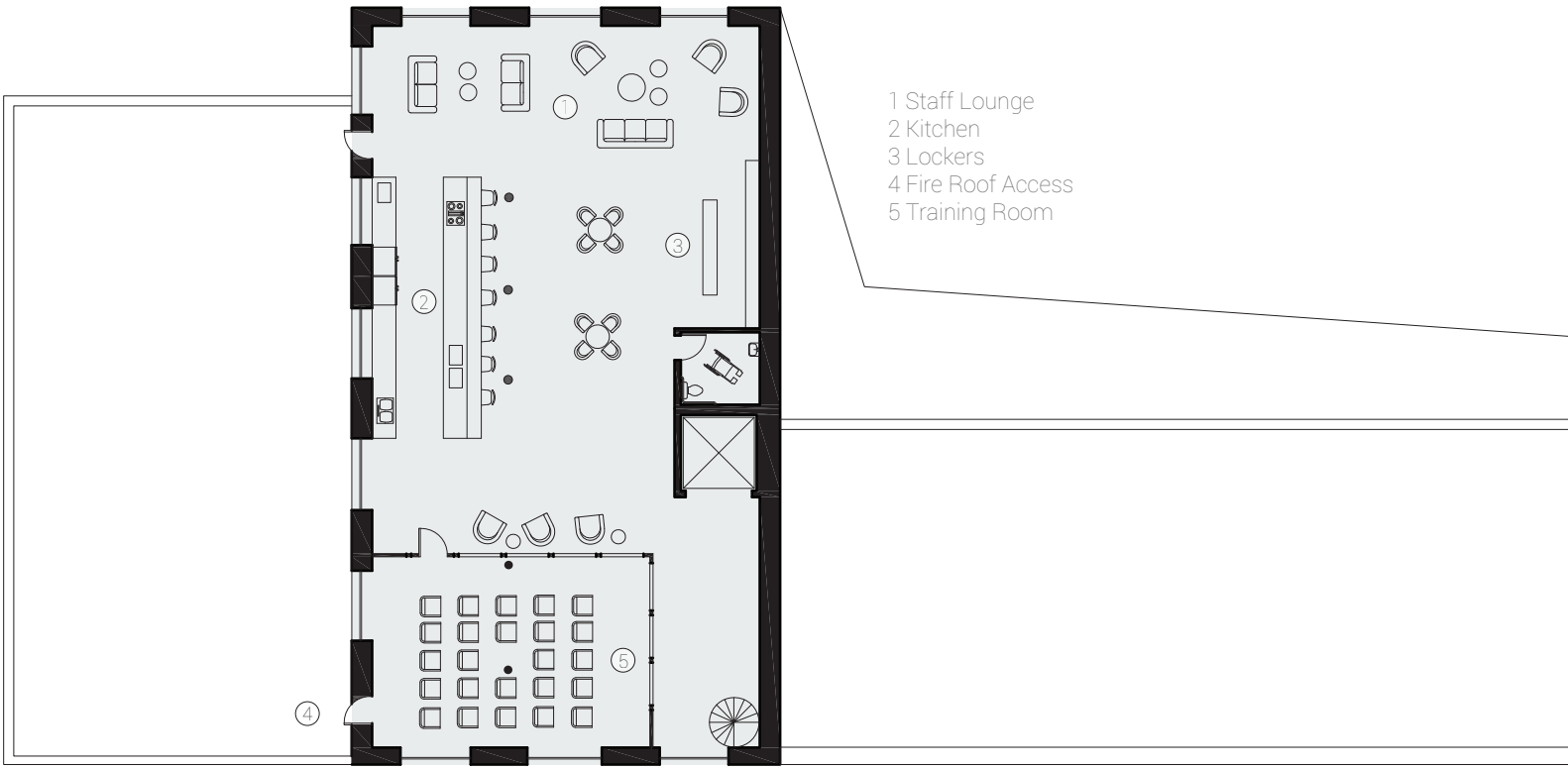
- 1 Storage
- 2 Job Training
- 3 Parent Pickup
- 4 Childcare
- 5 Open to Below



**Community Center | Level 2**  
 Scale 1/16" = 1' - 0"

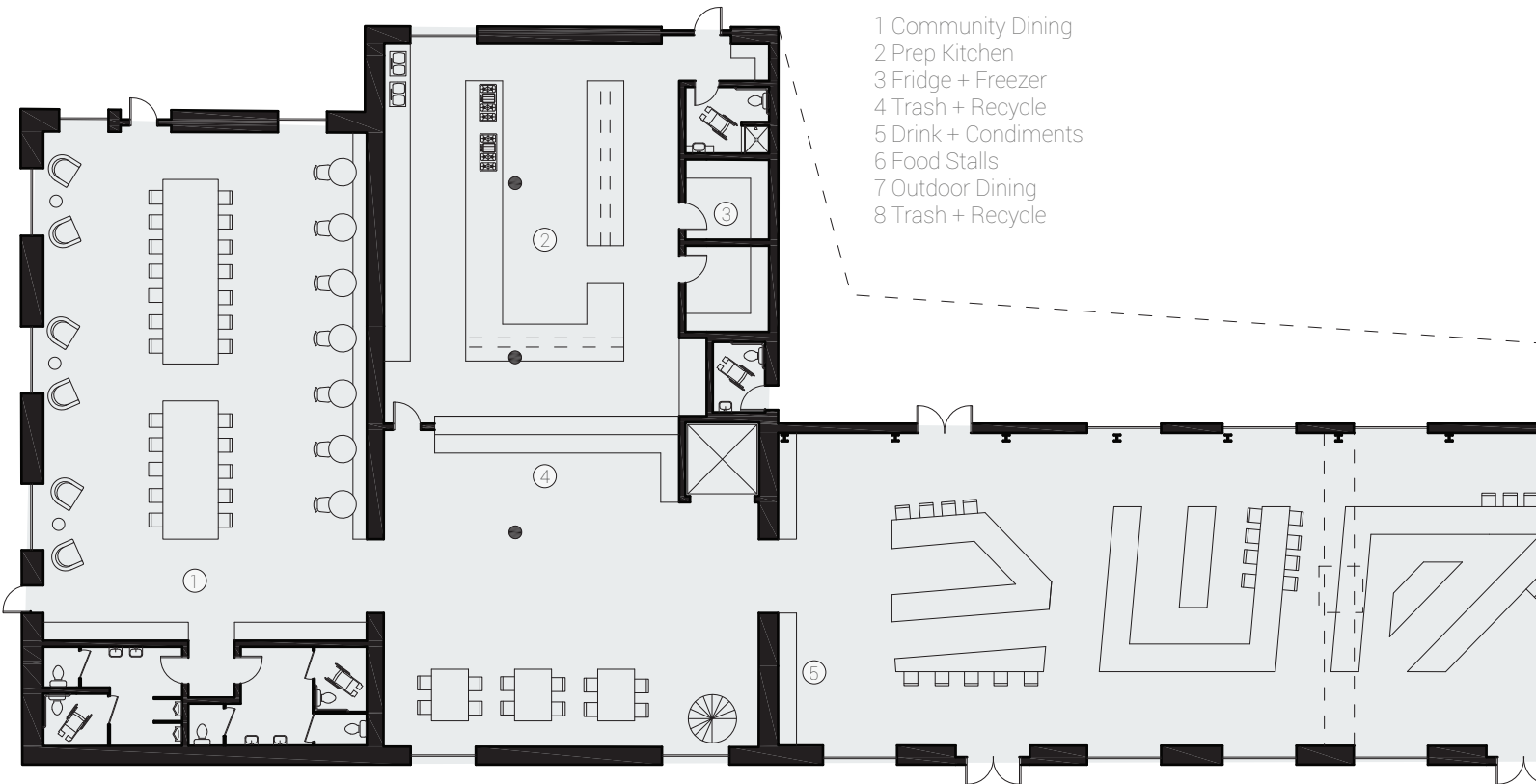
N

- 1 Staff Zone
- 2 Outdoor Roof Deck
- 3 Study Area
- 4 Open to Below
- 5 Light Shelf



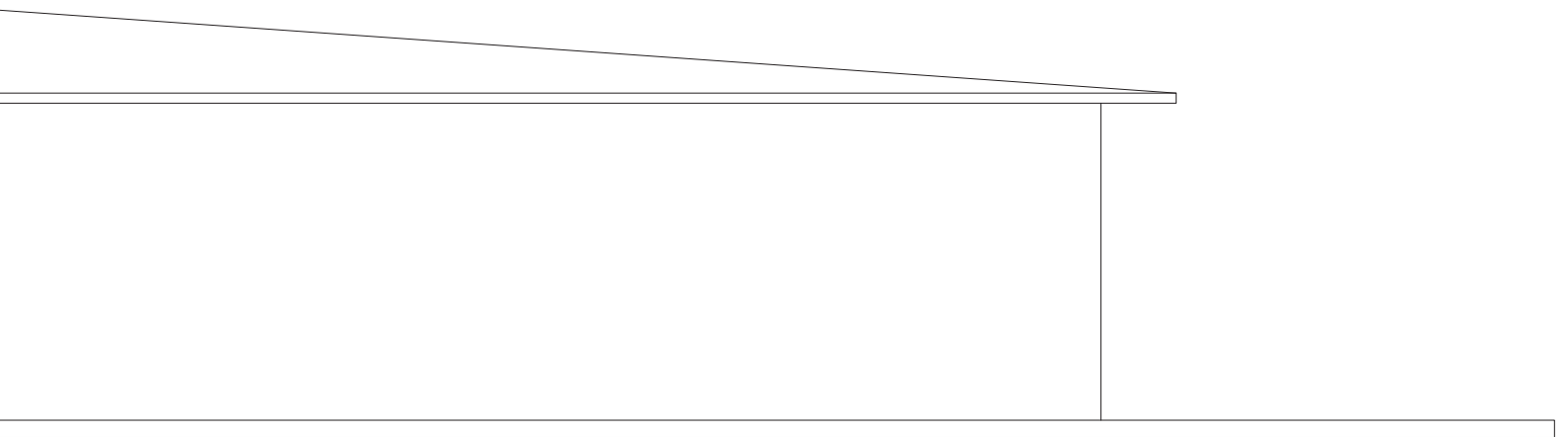
- 1 Staff Lounge
- 2 Kitchen
- 3 Lockers
- 4 Fire Roof Access
- 5 Training Room

**Food Hall + Market | Level 2**  
Not to a Scale

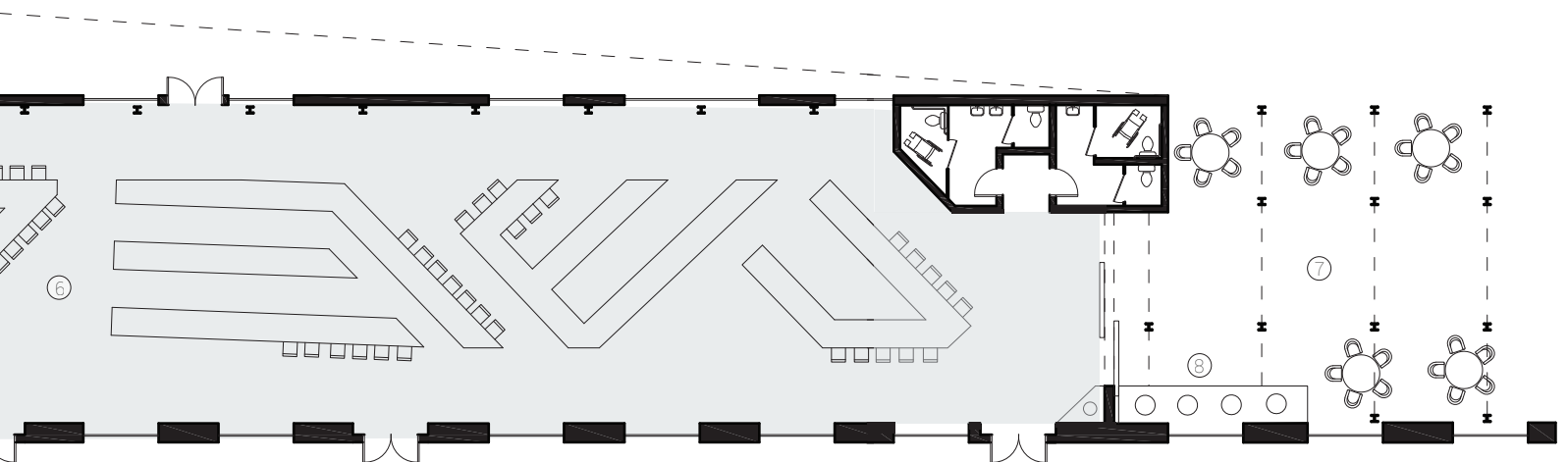


- 1 Community Dining
- 2 Prep Kitchen
- 3 Fridge + Freezer
- 4 Trash + Recycle
- 5 Drink + Condiments
- 6 Food Stalls
- 7 Outdoor Dining
- 8 Trash + Recycle

**Food Hall + Market | Level 1**  
Not to a Scale



N<sup>A</sup>

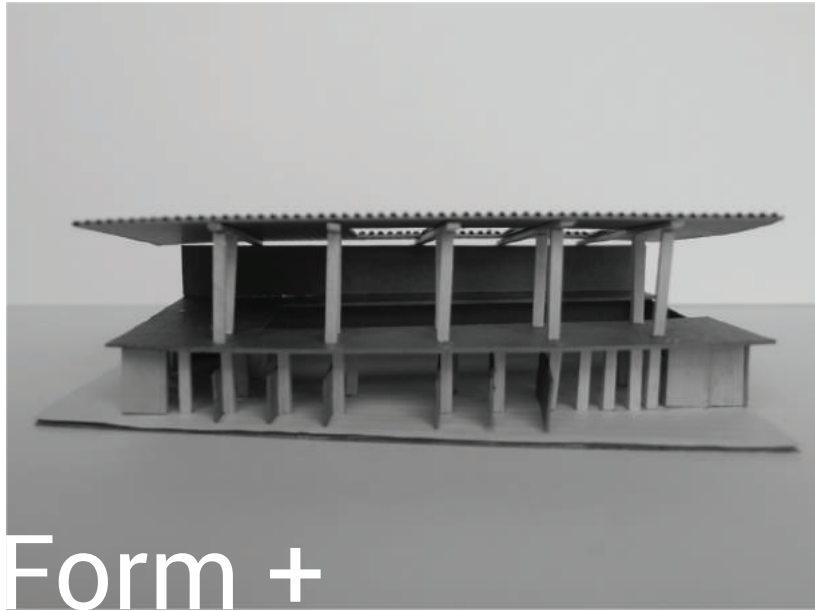


N<sup>A</sup>



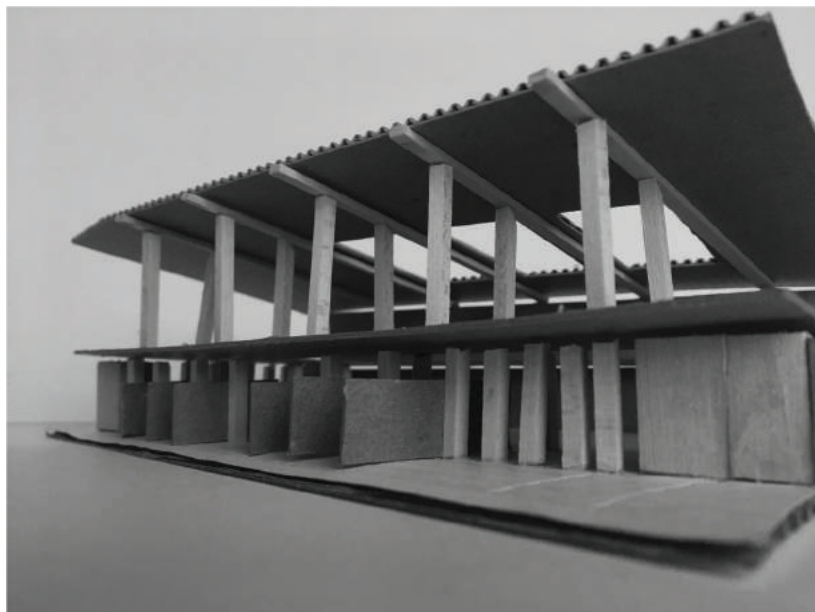
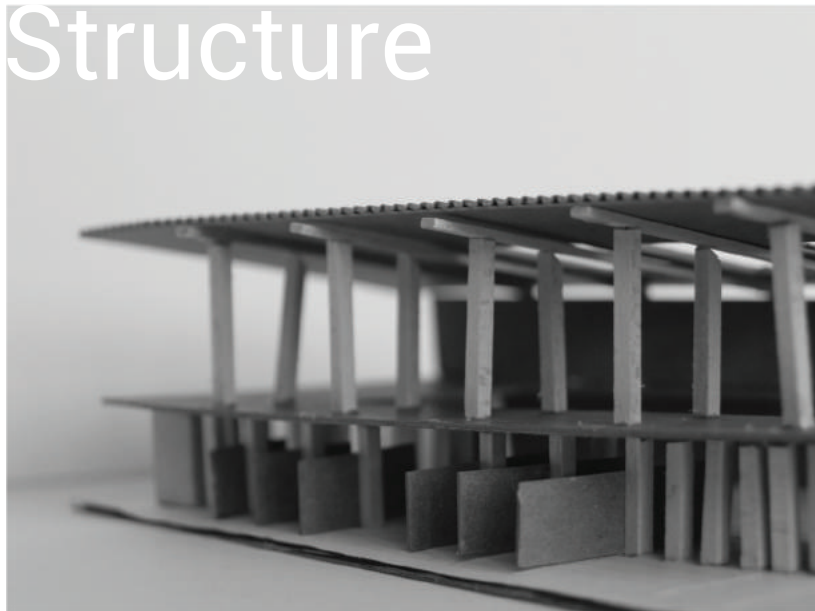
# Scheme #4

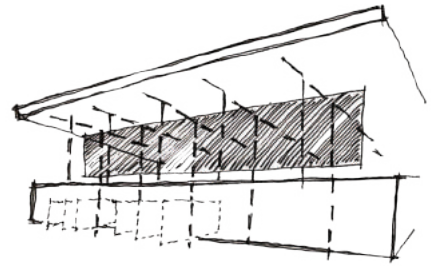
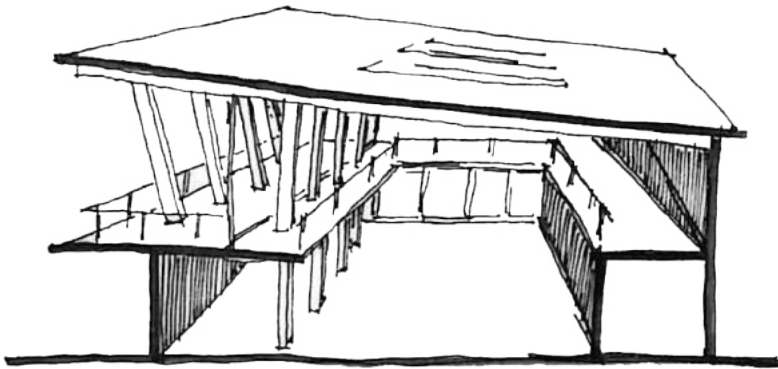
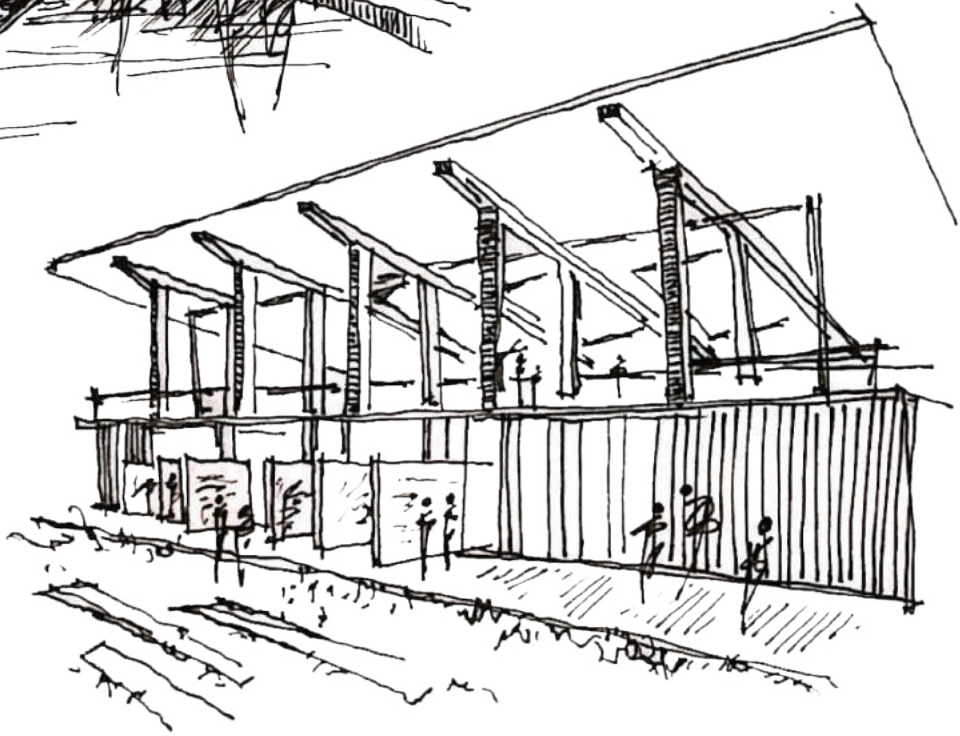
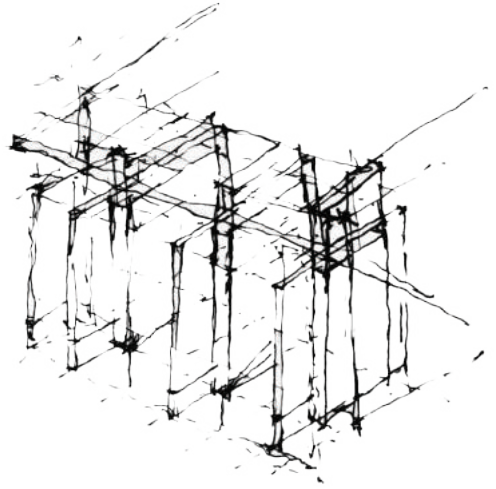
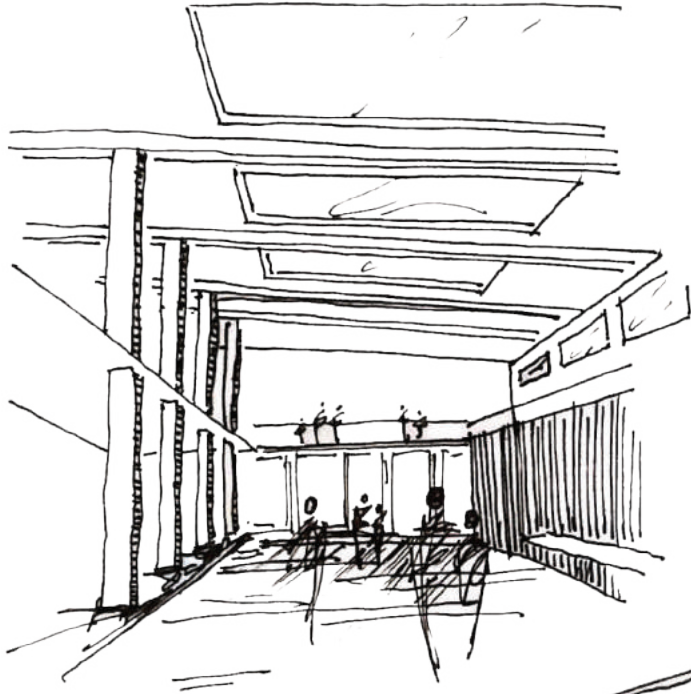
*Form, Landscape Design, Program, Interiors*



Form +

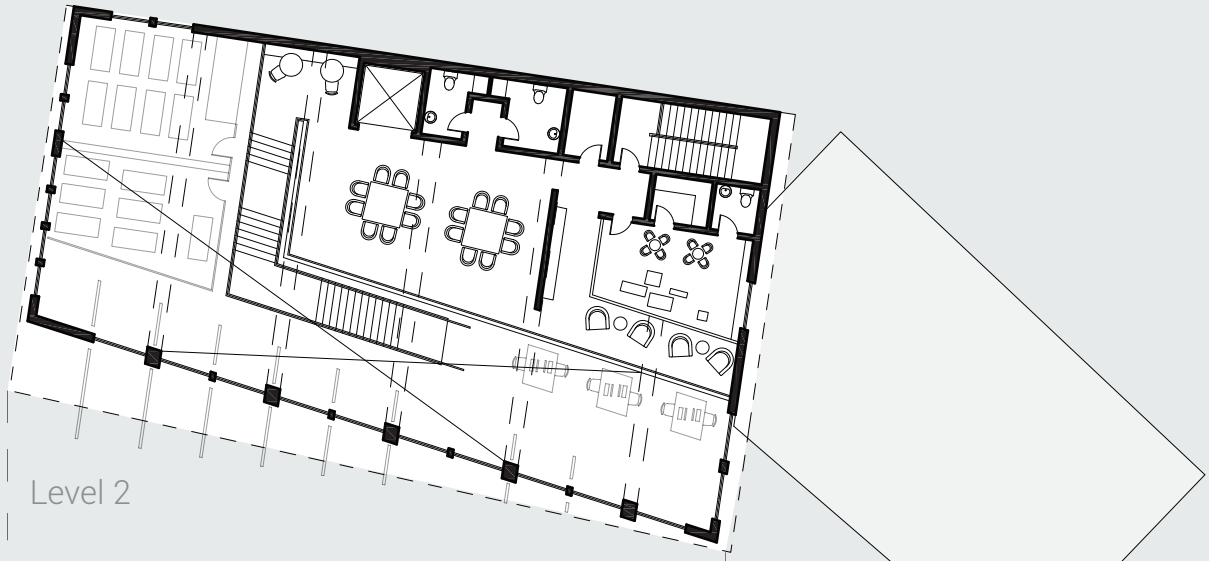
Structure



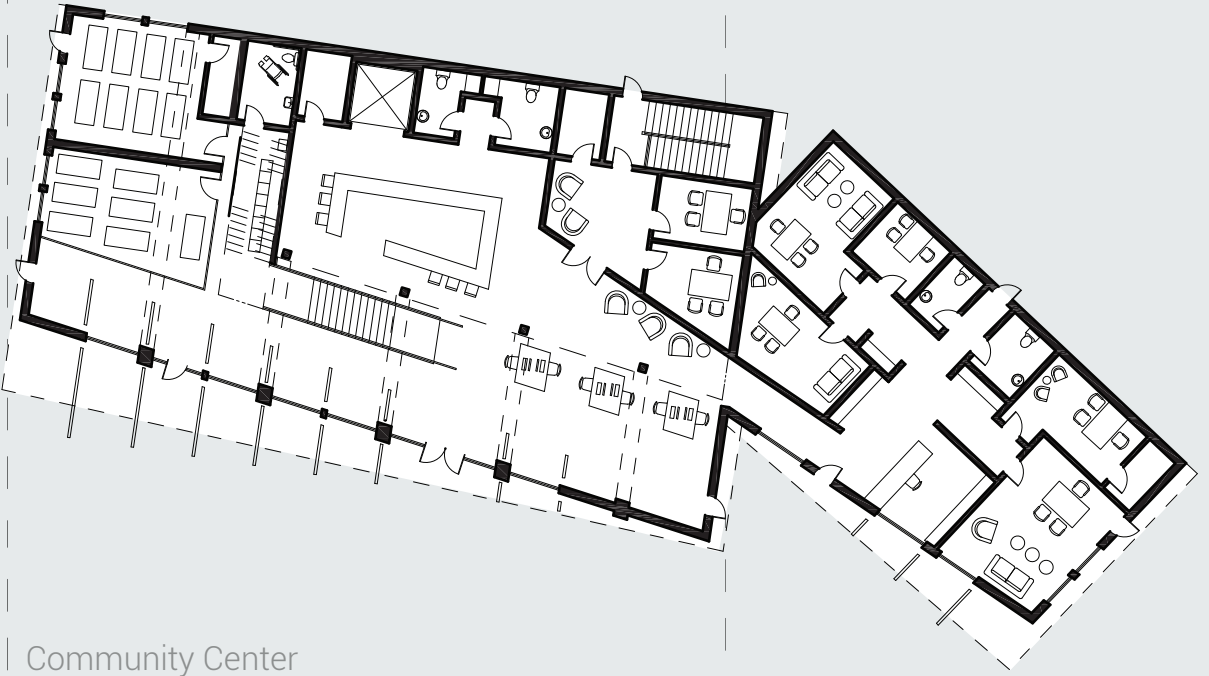


## Program Description

Category	Total SF	Occupancy	Activity
<i>Site</i>	114,232 SF		
<i>Market</i>	18,841 SF (16%)	197	
Market	6,549 SF (36%)	60	- Employment
Dining	4,840 SF (26%)	80	- Training
Staff / Training	3,110 SF (9%)	42	- Dining
Prep Kitchen	1,757 SF (9%)	8	- Local craft
Restrooms	868 SF (5%)	7	- Lounge
<i>Housing x 9</i>	1,036 Sf (8%)	2	
Living	257 SF (25%)	-	- Transition
Bed	190 SF (19%)	-	housing for
Outdoor	180 SF (17%)	-	formerly
Bath	170 SF (16%)	-	incarcerated
Kitchen	160 SF (16%)	-	- 1 Bedroom, 1
Storage	79 SF (7%)	-	bath
<i>Community Center</i>	19,792 SF (17%)		
Circulation	3,192 SF (16%)	-	- Exhibition of
Exhibit	3,074 SF (15%)	10	existence and
Counseling	2,158 SF (12%)	30	memory: art,
Eateries	1,781 SF (9%)	27	word,
Living Room	1,431 SF (7%)	30	performance
Outdoor Space	1,139 SF (6%)	35	- Job Training
Staff	1,182 SF (7%)	17	- Financial,
Event Space	1,002 SF (5%)	50	Legal, and
Yoga Studios	894 SF (5%)	15	Mental Health
Study Space	812 SF (4%)	26	Advising +
Job Training	767 SF (3%)	20	Counseling
Restrooms	753 SF (4%)	14	- Gather and
Daycare	682 SF (3%)	12	converse
Green Space	645 SF (3%)	10	- Lounge
Storage	280 SF (1%)	-	- Study

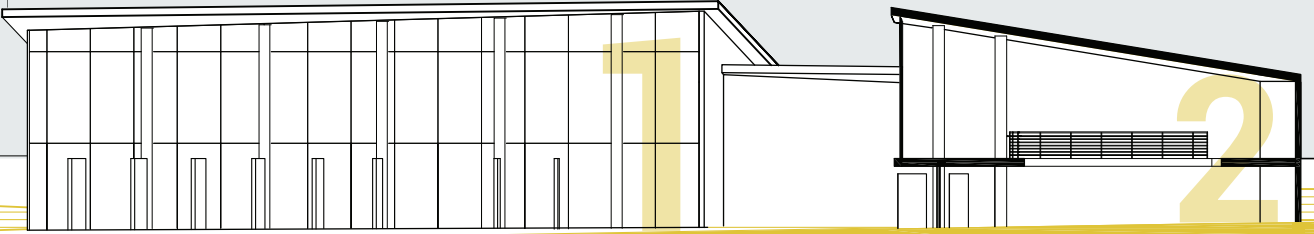


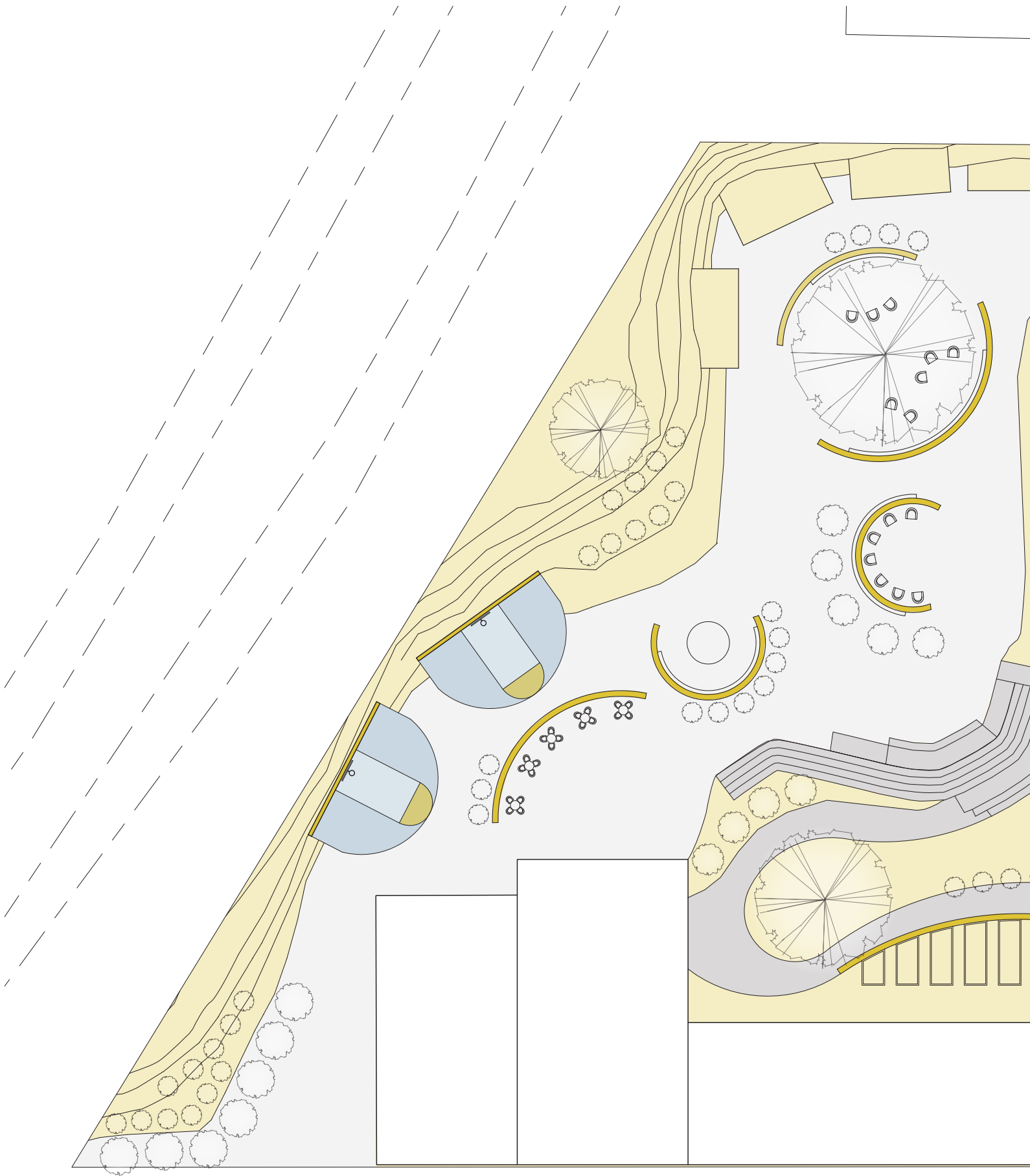
Level 2

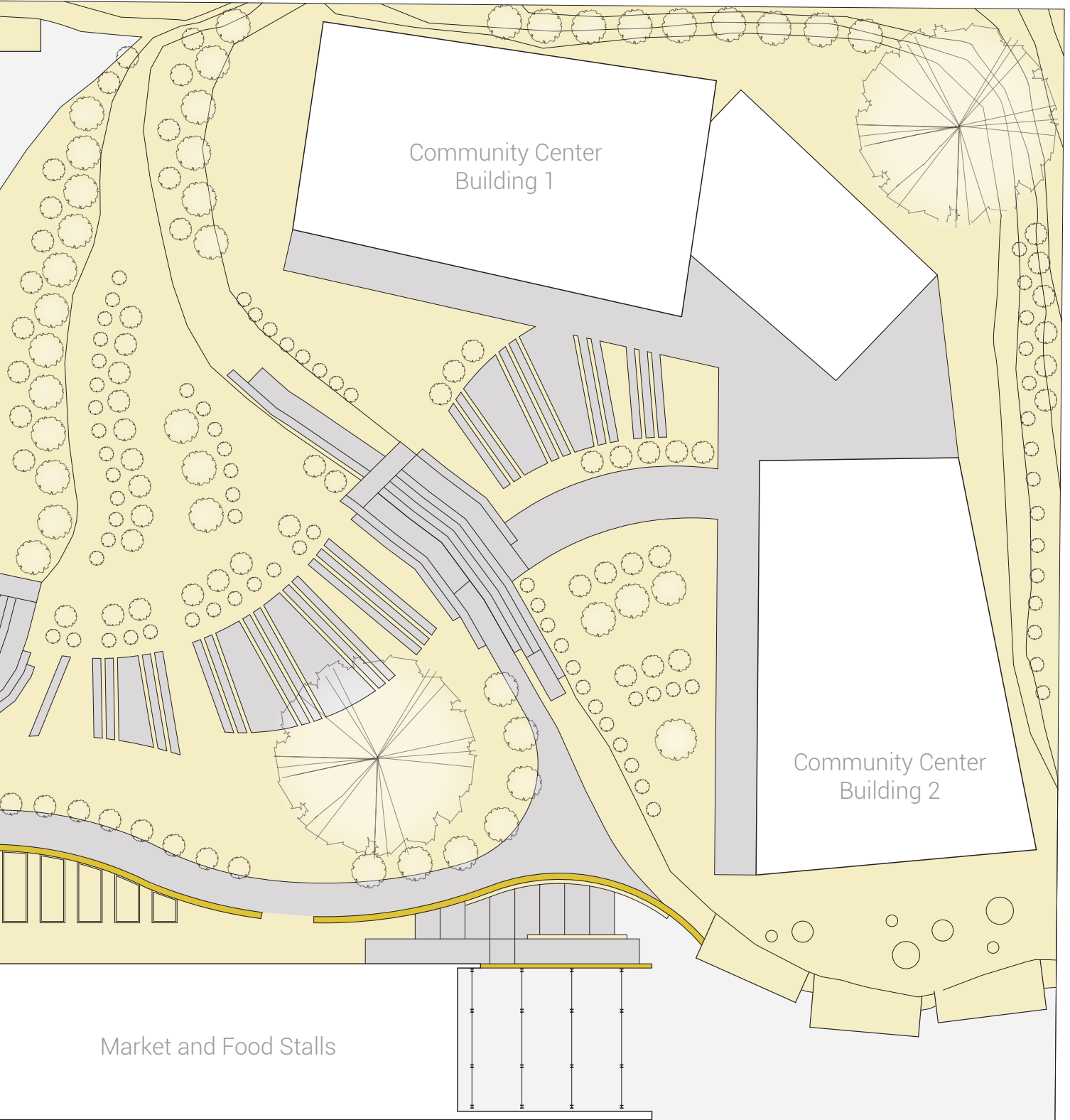


Community Center  
Building 1 Level 1

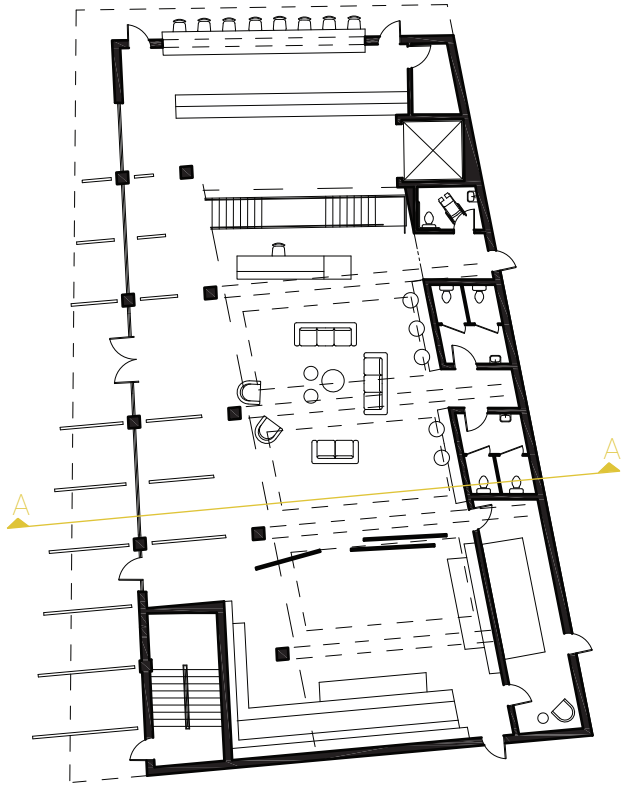
N^



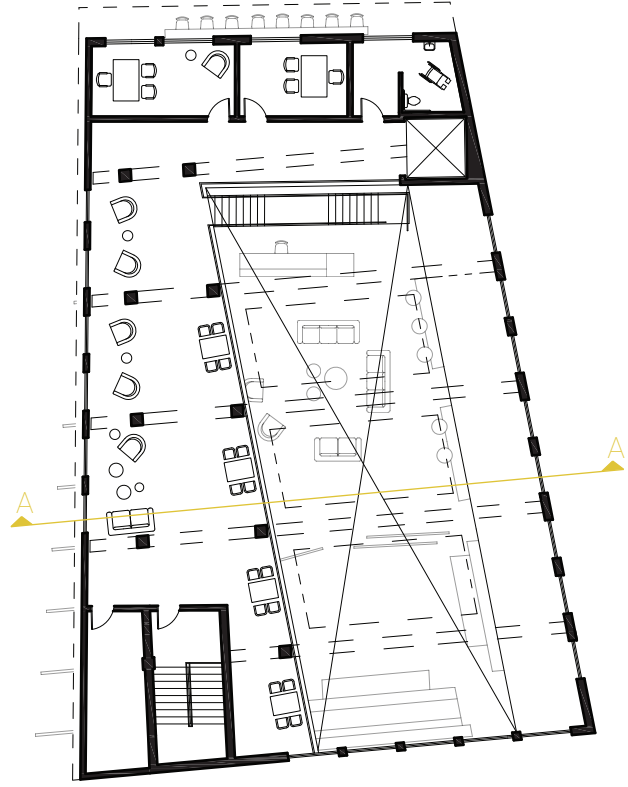




N<sup>^</sup>



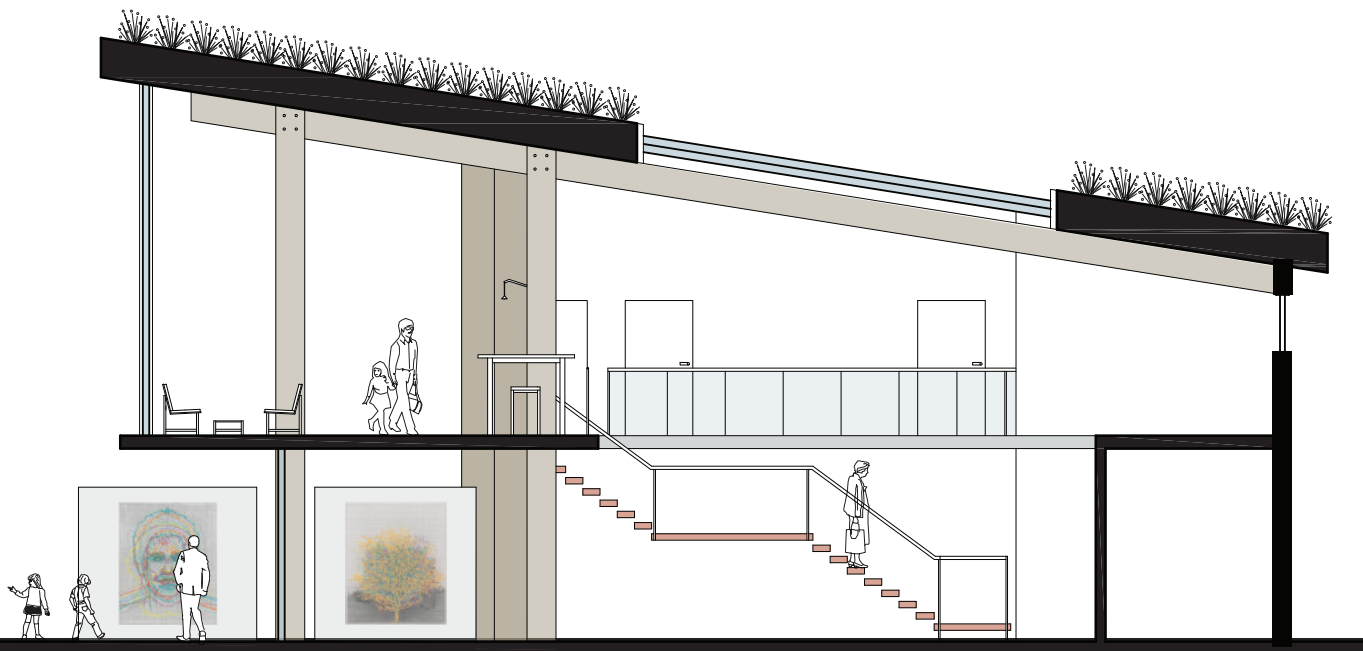
Level 1



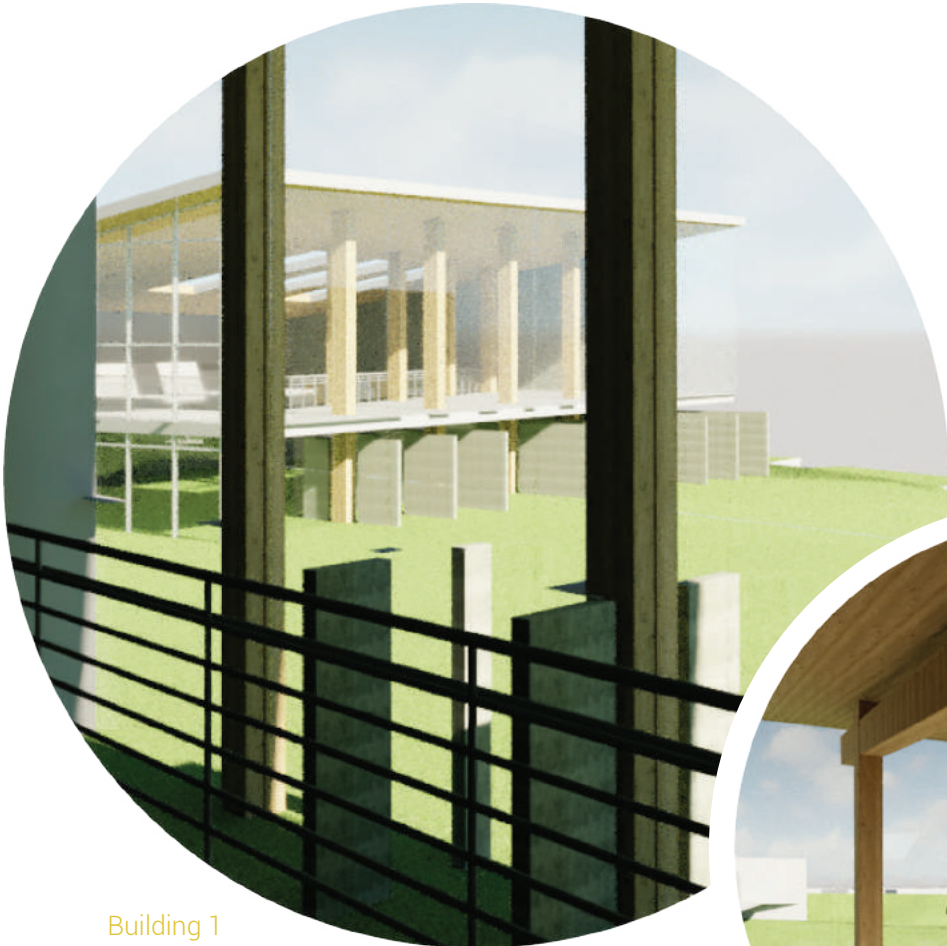
Level 2

Community Center  
Building 2

N^



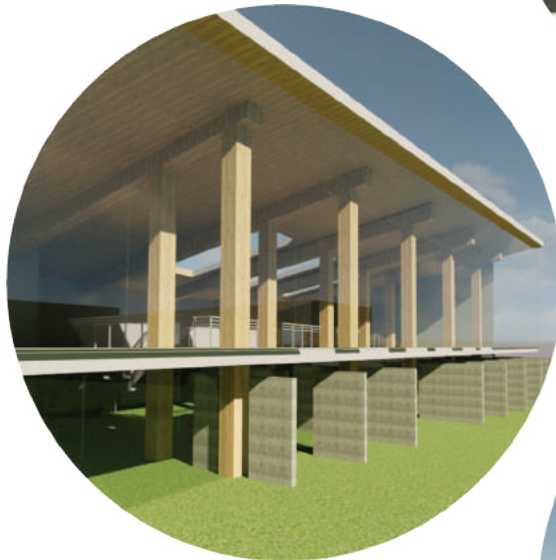
Building Section A  
Scale 1/8" = 1' - 0"



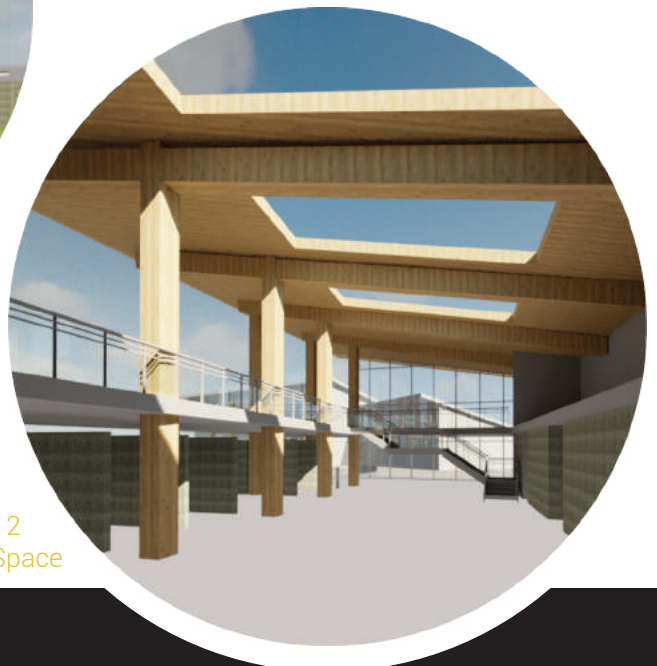
Building 1  
Mezzanine



Building 2  
Mezzanine



Building 2  
Ground Level



Building 2  
Exhibit Space



# Precedent Studies

*restorative justice, urban design, model prison designs*

# Case Studies

## Writing on the Wall | Installation

New York MASS Design Group, Hank Willis Thomas, Baz Dreisinger, Openbox

## Restore Oakland | Architecture

Oakland, CA Designing Justice + Designing Spaces

## Five Keys Mobile Classroom | Mobile

Oakland, CA Designing Justice + Designing Spaces

## Pine Street Market | Architecture

Portland, OR Siteworks Design Build, Interurban Development

## Data Driven Design | Urban

San Francisco, CA San Francisco Department of Planning



## Writing on the Wall | Installation

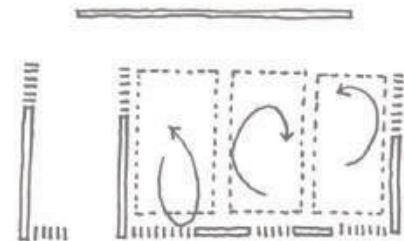
Makers | MASS Design Group, Hank Willis Thomas, Baz Dreisinger, Studio Openbox

Location | High Line, 14th St. New York

Year | 2019

Size | 630 SF

Program | Memorial



Parti Diagram

### P roject Summary

Writing on the Wall is a traveling installation which incorporates the words, ideas, and drawings of previously incarcerated individuals through a built environment which mimics that of a cell. The modular design recreates the atmosphere and scale of life in prison through intentional use of acrylic and polycarbonate to act as a light frame structure invisibly displaying the poems, thoughts and letters. This project *aims at making the imprisoned realm more visible to the public* in an effort to inspire and showcase the need for criminal justice reform. Traveling all around America, this series of nine foot by six foot observation cells contains over 2,500 writings (MASS).

### S ocial Approach

As a counteraction to the removal and namelessness experienced by those who are incarcerated, this installation places word and experience directly into public view. The *orientation and method of imposition* works to suggest the sense of bars confining the viewer emotionally within the minds of the incarcerated and physically within a cell. This work hopes to restore a sense of humanity for the unseen.



# Restore Oakland | Architecture

Architects | Designing Justice + Designing Spaces

Location | Oakland, California

Year | 2013

Size | 20,000 SF

Program | Restaurant / Office



## P roject Summary

Restore Oakland is the first of its kind in the country to actively address justice and economic inequities. This site is a home base for the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights which provides services at local, state, and national levels working to *"shift resources away from prisons and punishment and towards opportunities that make communities safe, healthy, and strong"* (EBCHR). A restaurant serves as a site for job training and eventual transition into long term positions throughout the San Francisco area in combination with space for restoring peace and placing power back in the hands of the people.

## S ocial Approach

Not only does this location offer training and employment, but it also "incubates businesses from low income communities of color" (DJDS). The goal of Restore Oakland is to implement programs which lead to the end of mass incarceration and supports local initiatives like freeing individuals from jail. Through alternative methods of crime response, the Ella Baker Center maintains *community level intervention* and enforces the idea of power in each person.



# Five Keys Mobile Classroom | Mobile

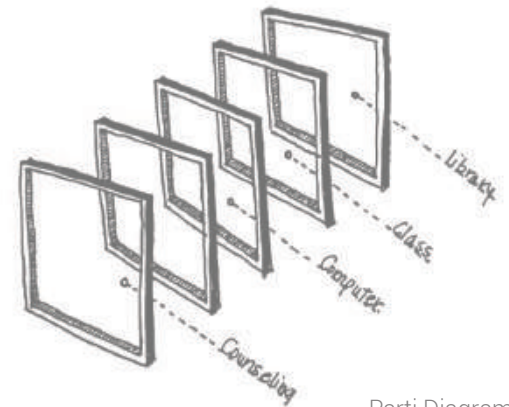
Designers | Designing Justice + Designing Spaces

Location | Oakland, California

Year | 2019

Size | 300 SF

Program | Mobile / Education



Parti Diagram

## P roject Summary

Five Keys Mobile Classroom uses refurbished city buses to bypasses the social inequities which often make education inaccessible for much of the Oakland community. This service center visits a variety of neighborhoods to encourage learning and progress towards GED attainment. This program primarily reaches under-served communities and is a *free intergenerational environment*. The fact that this mobile classroom is a permanent fixture of the community, allows for long term results. In addition to learning space, the bus also includes a library, computer access and counseling.

## S ocial Approach

The simple service of access to an educational environment and committed teachers make a bit impact with a project working towards attaining social change. Scrawled across the exterior is 'Self Determination Project', which identifies this space as one that cultivates a sense of autonomy and control for its users (Five Keys). This service also provides alternatives for youth involved in drug and gang activity.



## Pine Street Market | Architecture

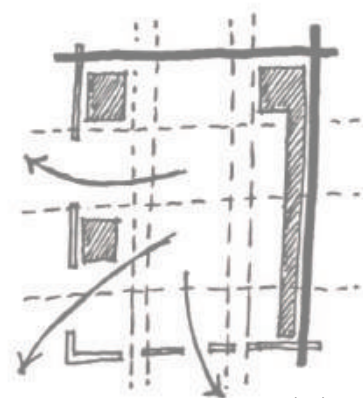
Makers | Siteworks Design Build, Interurban Development

Location | Portland, Oregon

Year | 2016

Size | 28,500 SF

Program | Food Hall / Retail / Office



Parti Diagram

### P roject Summary

Pine Street Market is an adaptive reuse project, similar to the American Ice Company building, in its use of historic tax credits for funding. This sustainable design highlights a mass timber structure, integrated seismic consideration, and an open atrium. Nine eateries are located within this food hall which circulates around a collection of communal tables, *inviting conversation and activating an energy filled space*. Other supporting programmatic elements include office and retail zones above the first level in this integrative community development project.

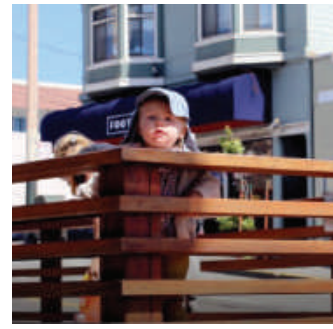
### S ocial Approach

This project acts as a community living room with food serving as the source to bring people together. The goal intended is to make the Portland *culinary scene more accessible to a wider audience*. Environmentally forward and conscious design considerations lead the direction of the design. The energy efficient integrations like stack ventilation, in combination with a durability and materiality tied back to its history allow this food hall to sustain into the future as a place for community gathering.

Interurban. "Pine Street Market: Portland Market Hall." InterUrban Development, 23 Jan. 2020, [www.interurbandevlopment.com/portfolio/pine-street-market/](http://www.interurbandevlopment.com/portfolio/pine-street-market/).

Lake, David. "Pine Street Market." Siteworks, [siteworksportland.com/work/pine-street-market](http://siteworksportland.com/work/pine-street-market).

Pine Street Market. "About". Pine Street Market, [www.pinestreetpdx.com/about](http://www.pinestreetpdx.com/about).



# Data Driven Design | Urban

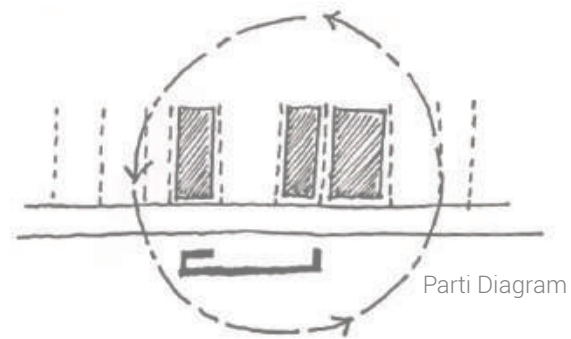
Makers | San Francisco Department of Planning

Location | San Francisco

Year | 2009 - Present

Size | Urban Development

Program | Inclusive Public Space



## P

roject Summary

San Francisco Department of Planning set about a task of analyzing data collected from the city to suggest ways in which urban spaces could be made more accessible to the general public, influence both policy and design. Parklets, which are public spaces which spill across the curb, are public driven projects which simultaneously activate a street and are directly *powered by the local community*. Since these projects are up kept, designed and funded by public members, there is a greater contribution by the people who will eventually occupy this public space.

## S

ocial Approach

This design concept encourages social gathering as well as individual urban lounge. It draws attention to a street and its associated businesses which draw support to commercial activity. The design process is more integrated with community since they are user generated projects which incorporate youth, local groups, and community investment. These small parks, seating and dining zones, or art spaces all contribute to a greater sense of *ownership within the public realm*, which can often feel inaccessible to the greater public.

# Model Prison Design Analysis



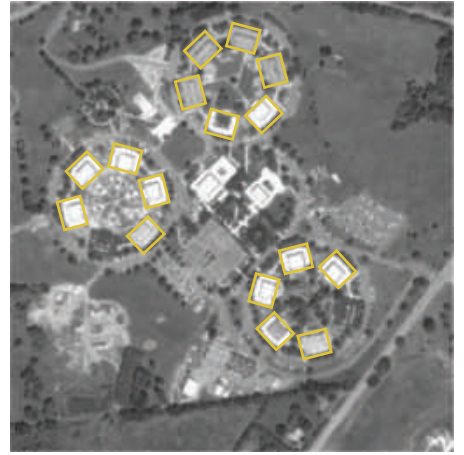
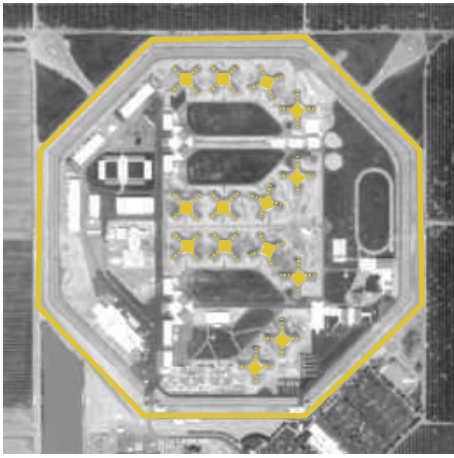
Source | The Story Institute



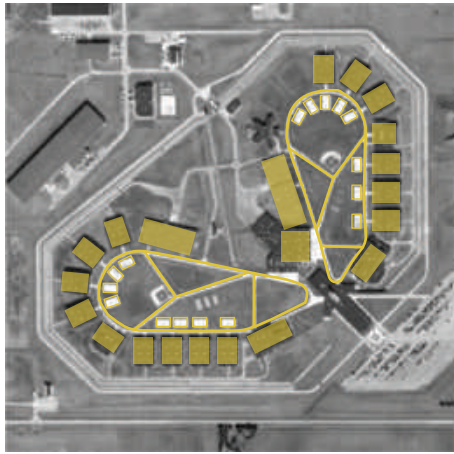
# Halden Prison

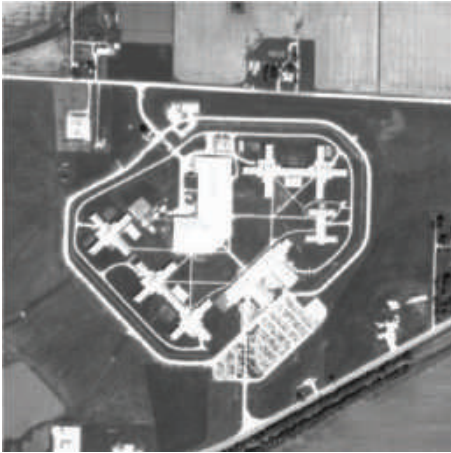
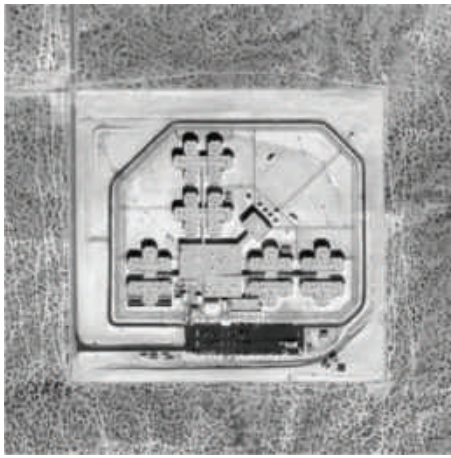
## Norway Maximum Security Prison

Halden Prison sees their inmates as citizens, on the road to reentry into society. With this idea at the core of the program, the architecture works to rehabilitate individuals through plentiful access to nature, humane living environments and interaction with their peers and supervisors. Amenities including a grocery, library, computer room and in-room bathrooms allow the incarcerated members of this prison to *restore a small sense of autonomy* while serving their sentence. Educational opportunities support these individuals towards gaining the necessary *social and technical skills* to exit the prison environment. This prison model is based not on the idea of 'revenge' but rather on individual improvement. Prior to completion of all sentences, inmates will receive resources and assistance in identifying housing and job opportunities which contribute towards smoother transitions and reduced levels of recidivism. Norway's global prison population is far lower than that of the United States, showcasing that greater investment on individual rehabilitation does pay off.



# Aerial Views Prison Complexes







# Research

*artwork, mass incarceration, statistics, psychology*

# See Me. Hear Me.

*Mixed Media on Cardboard | 3.5' x 5'*

2020, a year where social, environmental, and health disasters collided on both a national and global scale. There is no coincidence that when the COVID pandemic was ravaging this country, so too were racial injustices. The visibility of each of these issues has been saturated across public discussion and media networks. In spite of these events, what has emerged is a sense of hope, unity and commitment towards addressing wrong doing and working for change.

*See Me. Hear Me.* is a piece inspired by this call to action against police brutality and racism which infiltrates all levels of our society. It is an attempt at bringing the human being to the forefront of the conversation, because all too often the individuals inflicted by this system go unseen and uncelebrated. The piece layers newsprint articles which document the political and social climate followed by names of those affected, washes of color which symbolically represent participants and finally images of those we have lost. The goal is to stir empathy and visibility to this issue and to the people who have lost their lives. Ultimately, though, this piece works to inspire viewers to join the coalition of change makers and action takers.

## Exhibition

*Moss Arts Center | Student Arts Exhibit*

October 8, 2020 - November 18, 2020  
Sherwood Payne Quillen 71' Reception Gallery  
Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery



See Me. Hear Me.

Hannah Germansky

“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, **build a new model** that will make the existing model obsolete.”

Buckminster Fuller

# First Person Research | Interview

**TOPIC** | Surveillance, Adaptive Re-Use, Historic Precedent of Prison Environments

**Interviewee** | Dr. Greg Galford

**Occupation** | Architect and Educator

**Contact** | ggalford@vt.edu

**Location** | Blacksburg, VA

**Date** | 24 September 2020

**Time** | 1:30 pm

**Method** | Zoom Meeting

## RESEARCH GOAL

With a research specialty in community surveillance, correctional living environments, and historic re-use of these institutions, Dr. Greg Galford can provide insight into the themes of architectural participation and influence. Ultimately, this thesis looks to explore how design can change opinions and policy through greater opportunities for dialogue and exchange of ideas. Through this interview, I hope to gain more insight to how architecture can acknowledge experience and offer refuge for healing and growth as a society.

## REFLECTION

Dr. Galford offered great insight into the relationship between incarceration and architecture. The built space is the tool that controls in prisons. Breaking down barriers and creating spaces which foster dialogue and an ease of transition back into society are some key points to consider. The major take away from this conversation is the importance to focus on the social impact that is produced by architecture, and less so on form and technicality of construction. This study has the best potential to succeed if approached with an intention to understand this interaction between institution, control, and healing.

# Question + Answer

## Dr. Greg Galford

### 01 What are some architectural themes that are visible in correctional facilities?

The most dominant theme within prison environments is the idea that the built form itself acts as a device to control. The bars, cameras, rigid structure and limited autonomy act as physical embodiment of power over another. Additional themes of synchronization, home and protection show up repeatedly in the design of these buildings. The new setting of cell and prison transform into the idea of home for inmates. At the same time, this idea is altered for those whom visit, where the representation of home becomes visible in hotels, units, visitation rooms, and through digital platforms. Behavior, consequentially, is closely linked to environment. Preservation of safety must be maintained, ultimately, for both guards and inmates, which is often upheld through conservative and hard design proposals. Nature and exposure to green space often offer a positive reprieve from imprisonment as well as a contrast to regimented schedules.

### 02 Do you think that architects have any power in minimizing the militarized police surveillance that occurs in predominantly black communities?

Similar to prison landscapes, communities are seeing more invisible surveillance as a byproduct to the progression of technological capabilities. Everyone is constantly on guard, especially in communities targeted by the police. Architecture can't change how local stations police communities, but it can offer a source of refuge and separation from surveillance. A built space which allows a person to feel secure within that environment is key.

### 03 In speaking with inmates during the process of researching for your dissertation, what were some common feelings, fears, and experiences across the body of individuals?

Inmates often feel removed, secluded and forgotten from and by the greater community. The environment and rituals within a prison complex, creates an entirely new world which operates around these people. As a result of this isolation, individuals often lose their voice in the arena of public conversation. A strong connection to the outside world, families and social circles are crucial to maintaining a positive well being through the time of stay. Training and classes provided in these institutions are great ways to keep inmates productive in the day to day rituals. However, skills and trades like firefighting, food

safety, and barber shop operations often go unacknowledged or unaccepted once individuals are reintroduced into society. Along with this inability to practice what they have been trained, people frequently lose their right to vote, face high fees, poor housing and low job prospects. The transition from one institution to freedom is a hard path to follow and many fear an inability to fully adapt to life outside of prison. Access to resources and assistance that meets people half way makes the process a little more fluid, during a very dramatic change of lifestyle.

## 04 In contrast to the role and experience of prisoners, what understanding have you gained of guard's perspectives, through your interviews?

Police and guards also tend to identify with the 'unknown figure' within society. On the streets today, officers are seeing a higher prevalence of weapons and there is fear. Undoubtedly, there is also racism imbedded within the culture of local stations and militarization of these centers enforces internalized sense of power and domination. Because of this more training is needed in order to adequately prepare these individuals to face instantaneous judgment calls. Findings of the demographics of guard populations was interested, as Dr. Galford identified that a majority of the group were ex-military, white males aged thirty to forty five years of age. They tend to build a cohort of guards which mirror each other under the umbrella of a trusted brotherhood. Despite the issues that exist within the authority's structure, it is also important to acknowledge that mortality for these individuals is

fifty-nine years of age due to exorbitant levels of stress in the workplace. Mental health services are something that should also be considered for police officers and prison guards.

## 05 In thinking about my thesis project to create a design proposal with incentives to examine social implications of architecture, what are some suggestions you may have in regards to my approach to program?

Restorative justice is defined as creating resolution and peace between victims and perpetrators of crime. With that in mind, it could be something to consider if this project follows that route or proposes a different solution, which can be identified under a different title. Job training and social networks are key for any community, especially with one welcoming back former inmates, like Baltimore. Today, the social atmosphere is incredibly heightened with climate change, racial injustice and the pandemic, so creating an environment and design which offers peace and safety will help to make this program more accepted. Studying prototypes of prison designs will inform this proposal through a better understanding of existing modes and models of control and how this design can counteract that. Have a well developed sense for the history of this national and international issue, in order to produce a proposal that is relevant and appropriate for both community and site. The most important aspect to study with this thesis, though, is how social issues and architecture interact and the cause and effect of each aspect on the other.

“ The walls, the bars,  
the guns, and the guards  
can never encircle  
or  
hold down the idea  
of the people ”

Huey Newton

## Mass Incarceration Analysis

Underneath the guise of the American dream, woven into the fabric of a country that advertises freedom, exists a deeply rooted and racist system of mass incarceration. Not only does this power to surveille, imprison and control exist at an individual level, but equally so, exists a system that is supported and maintained through laws and programs which ensure its continuation. Mass incarceration is a way of life that black families are essentially born into, from the moment they navigate their neighborhoods as children. Perhaps most clear, although least discussed, is the fact that race is the key factor at the center of this conversation.

In her book, *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander paints the metaphor between mass incarceration and a birdcage, containing the bird behind a multitude of bars which restrict freedom. Behind these barriers, *"is a set of structural arrangements that locks a racially distinct group into a subordinate political, social, and economic position, effectively creating a second-class citizenship"* (Alexander, 229). Little by little, children grow into teens and then adults and in doing so, are stamped with the label criminal, solely based on the color of their skin.

This system was most strongly spearheaded by Clinton, several decades ago through an effort known as the War on Drugs. In doing so, governments bolstered their local and state police with an increase in enforcement and equipment at the same time that prisons were built all across America. On a global scale,

*"the United States which is home to five percent of the world's population hosts twenty five percent of the world's prisoners"* (DuVernay, 13th). The system of power domination over black bodies has morphed over the centuries from slavery, into Jim Crow, and eventually into mass incarceration today. Although the narrative has changed, the underlying foundation of a racist societal means of power and control still persists.

## The Metaphorical Cage

One aspect that is often overlooked in the conversation of mass incarceration, is that a majority of the individuals that remain under criminal control are not housed in a literal prison system. A small portion of the people under governmental surveillance represent the prison populations across the country, with *"twice this number of people on parole"* (Alexander, 128). This system infiltrates our local communities on a daily basis. It expands past the obvious and visible display of separation, and is seen through racially based traffic stops, harsher drug and non-violent crime penalties as compared to white cohorts, and decisions to surveille predominantly poor and black sections of cities. In the Netflix series titled *When They See Us*, Raymond Santana, a boy wrongly convicted of a violent attack, states *"When they say 'boys' they not talking about us. They talking about other boys from other places. When did we ever get to be boys?"* (DuVernay, Season 1: Part 3).

In America, being black means that you are born within the confines of a cage, supported by mass incarceration, which takes away the innocence of children at an early age. The system of surveillance, parole and incarceration spills into the streets and into the lives of families, and most importantly children. Innocence is lost all too soon. Spoken by author, Ibram X. Kendi, *"blackness armed us even though we had no guns [while] whiteness disarmed the cops"* (Kendi, 73). This moment comes from a recollection of a teenage memory. Just like in this experience by Kendi, youth live with the realization and expectation that their childhood is not their own, that there is little power over whether their future is one following a path towards a career or a record. Brown and black bodies are simply assumed as corrupt regardless of hard work, good grades, or community involvement. The necessity in restoring the sense of youth and a slower awakening to adulthood should be visible not only in the policies that police enact on the streets but also in the buildings that exist to support and cultivate social justice.

## *E*xperience of Black Women

Similar to the statistics of black men, "black women remain twice as likely to be incarcerated as white women" (Kendi, 189). This statistic affects younger adults at an even more alarming rate. It is the proportional inequalities that are most jarring. When considering an intersectional perspective on mass incarceration, black women, especially those who identify with additional minority groups face

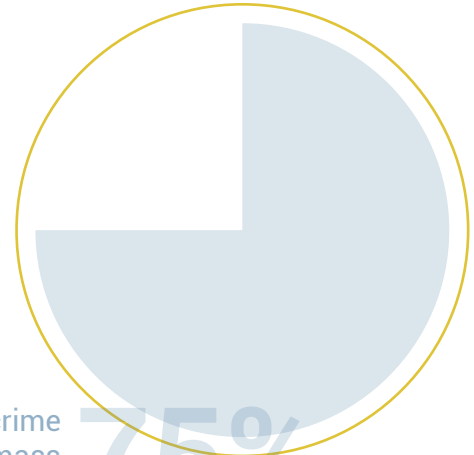
the most discrimination. *Eighty six percent of incarcerated women come from experiences involving abuse and harm on a first hand basis prior to entry into the criminal justice system (Solomon)*. So, in many senses they are simultaneously the victim and perpetrator of crime, a cycle which repeats on itself continuously. Once inside, these women face a system with no appreciation for previous trauma. Lack of mental health services, minimal physician care, in addition to a processes of detention that invades all aspects of autonomy are some factors that contribute to the elevated stress levels and resulting health consequences.

Continuing with this discussion is the fact that women and children are often indirectly affected by mass incarceration. When a family member goes to jail, it does not only affect the life of that one individual, but rather the entire family, the entire community, as well as all of the children and people that reside in that person's circle. Children who are separated from their mothers often have few opportunities to maintain steady contact and communication due to distance and limited and expensive phone services. Often, these kids end up in foster care, separated from siblings, and potentially for the long term from their mothers. Similarly, pregnant women face harsh treatment during incarceration, with little health guidance and mandated restraints during doctor visits. Despite the fact that black women face higher pregnancy related death for mom and baby, the mass incarceration system makes no effort to reduce these outcomes, most specifically

to reduce stress induced by incarceration. The financial, familial, and health responsibilities often fall upon the shoulders of women when their partners are incarcerated, yet another contributor to stress. This negative health side effect greatly impact black women in the long term, a key aspect that must be recognized as a byproduct of systemic racism. Not only is the system of mass incarceration killing black men, women, and kids on the streets, surveilling them in their own communities, but also contributes to astounding levels of mental health issues which lead to lower life expectancies, poorer quality of life and an increase in health problems. To deny the fact that mass incarceration is a problem that exists and is deeply intertwined in all avenues of society, healthcare, education etcetera is a viewpoint that does not see the enormity of the impact of this system.

### **T**he Role of Race

Mass incarceration has succeeded in avoiding large scale crackdown for racial injustice, based on the fact that white Americans also represent a small portion of those affected by the system. Despite this fact, there is clear evidence that racism exists at the core of this issue. Similar to "sexism and other forms of oppression, *racism occurs when a racial group's prejudice is backed by legal authority and institutional control*" (DiAngelo, 21). Mass incarceration operates on the criminal institutional power of law, voting power and governmental control, in efforts to suppress the black voice, autonomy, and constitutional freedoms.



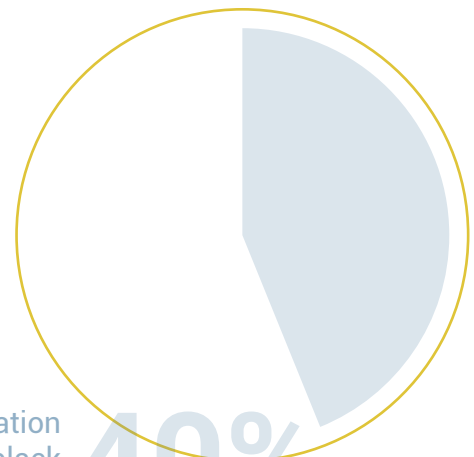
active crime despite mass incarceration

75%



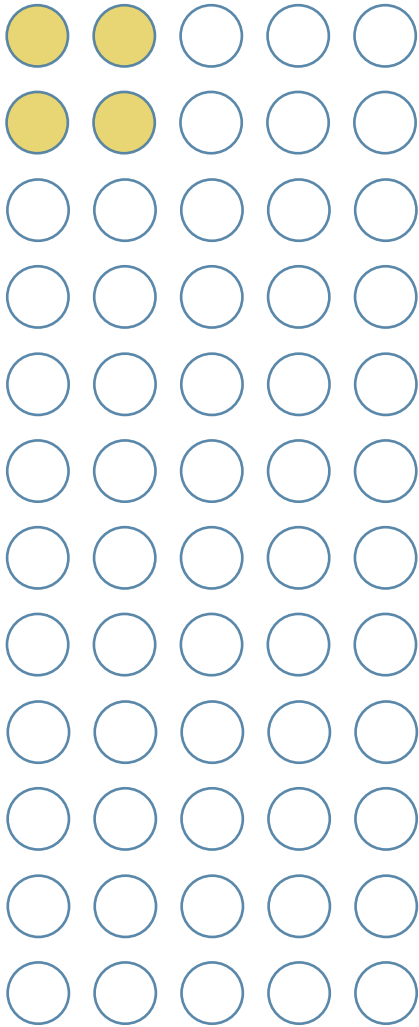
drug offenses in federal prisons

50%

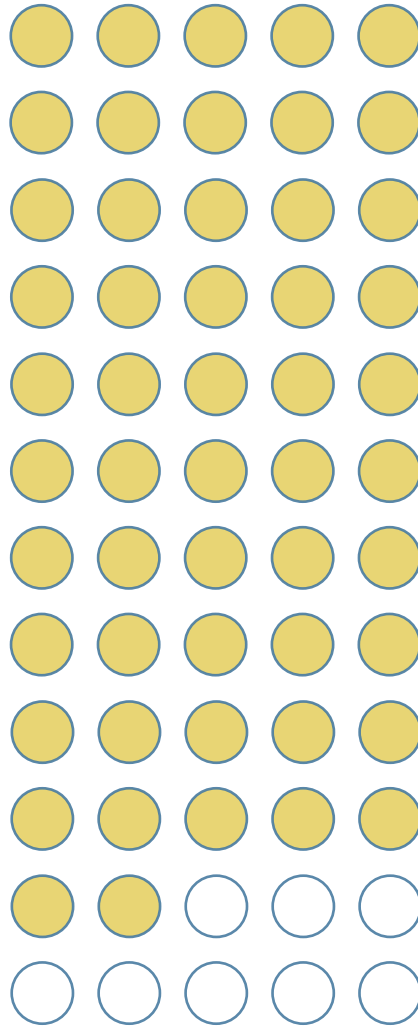


population of black inmates

40%



4 in 60  
white men



52 in 60  
black men

## US Imprisonment Rate for Drug Charges

Black men enter criminal institutions at a disproportionately higher rate than whites, despite filling a lower percentage of the country's population. Police officers are the first line of enforcement, and hold with that the discretion of whom to criminalize and to what degree. This is then followed up by prosecutors who are directly given the ability to distribute charges. At the street level comes the first layer of mass incarceration, one that winds its way up through all levels of government. Most notable is the loss of ability for black communities to advocate against a racist system of imprisonment. Rural white areas of the country often increase in population due to local of prisons, which then correlate to an increase in representatives at the state level, however advocating not for black issues, but instead for white initiatives. Simultaneously, the black communities in which inmates are from, lose representation, enforcing a policy that is *"disturbingly reminiscent of the three-fifths clause in the original constitution"* (Alexander, 240). The underlying goal of mass incarceration is not to curb crime, but instead to maintain a dominance over black Americans while stifling their voice and maintaining a heavy hand of control over their communities.

## A Broken System

The original 'war on drugs' was advertised as a way to address crime, especially as related to drug and non-violent offenses. Over the years, very little has changed as related to this initiative and instead has birthed the nationally distributed propaganda that declares black Americans as an inferior caste of people and enforces both a racial hierarchy and white superiority. Ironically though, there is *"overwhelming evidence that these*

*institutions [prisons, reformatories and jails] create crime rather than prevent it"* (Alexander, 10). In fact, the corporate powers and institutions rely heavily on the continued growth of this racist system. Despite what our government leaders would like to say, there is hard proof that mass incarceration is simply not effective at reducing crime. Instead, this corrupt system has trained white Americans to see "blacks as dangerous, a portrayal that perverts the true direction of violence between whites and blacks since the founding of this country" (DiAngelo, 91). With the evolution of the United States, one aspect has maintained its potency above the rest, a system which openly allows for our communities to operate unequally, without justice, lacking freedom, and without access to civil liberties.

## The Role of Architecture

At the start of mass incarceration in the late nineties, federal funding for public needs like housing and healthcare were redistributed to a boom in prison building projects. With the adoption of minimum mandatory sentencing, came along with it the increase of length of sentences, and correlated growth of prisons (Alexander, 117). From there, it became the norm to build upon a corrupt criminal system. It became clear that there was potential for corporate profit in this national project, which led to private prisons with major hands thrown into the pot. Ignorance and apathy with a blindness to only see the money behind the man led to a system that no longer sees the innocence of black boys but rather as a body with the potential for profit. In *White Fragility*, DiAngelo defends the idea that "guilt is just another name for impotence, for defensiveness destructive of communication; it becomes a device to protect ignorance

and the continuation of things the way they are, the ultimate protection for changelessness" (DiAngelo, 149). The need for criminal reform and racial justice is blatant. Architects stood behind and participated in the eruption of prison systems and mass incarceration across America. Therefore, the work moving forward has to be disruptive. Architects must first acknowledge their role in the building of this system, as well as make efforts to provide communities with design that promotes justice, actively initiates equity, and elevates the voices of people of color, whom have been silenced for too long.

## **A**rchitecture as a Tool for Change

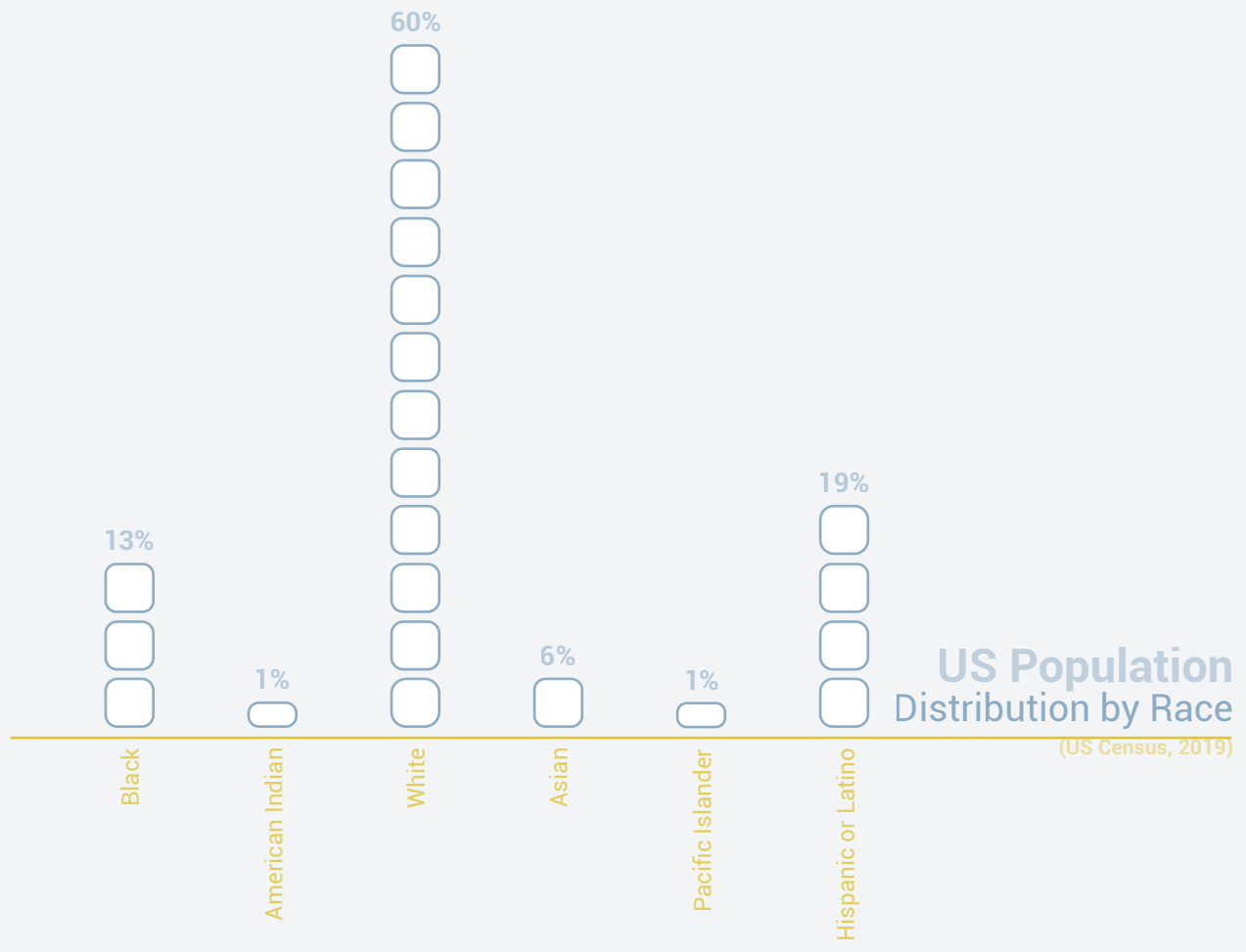
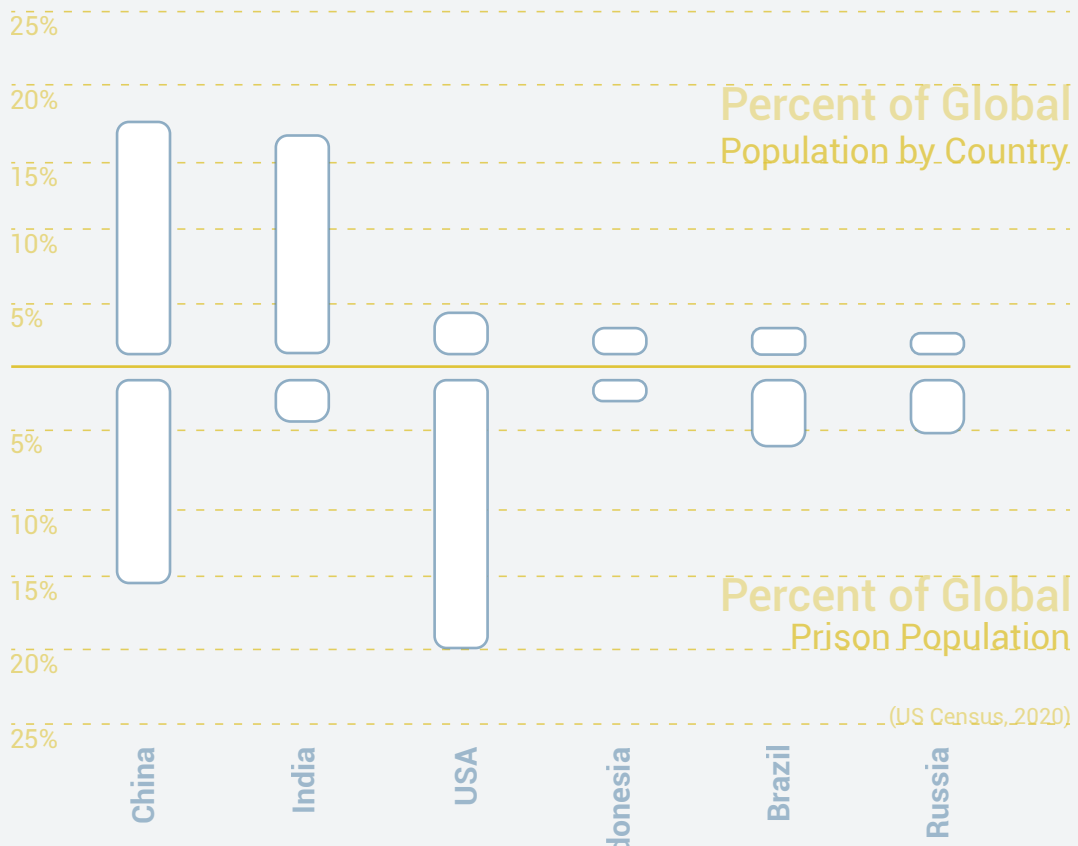
The Black Lives Matter protests and movement, at a global scale, have demanded racial justice and reform, most recently, as related to police violence. The process of dismantling mass incarceration must come from all angles, and changing how police departments operate is a necessary component. This system is multi-faceted, complex, and intricately intertwined with large scale powerful departments and leaders. Because of this, activists and change makers must understand that breaking down a system as corrupt and embedded as mass incarceration will take people working from different specialties, in a collaborative effort. As architects, we have the obligation to contribute to this change in order to uphold our oath to protect the 'health, safety, and welfare' of people.

Not only is it important to attack the system but also to pass the microphone to individuals in black communities who deserve to be a leading part of the change. Through her research, Michelle Alexander found that "the biggest

problem that black communities may face today is not 'shamelessness', but rather the *severe isolation, distrust, and alienation created by mass incarceration*" (Alexander, 206). It is not the efforts made by one individual, nor one perspective to declare what is the right path forward, but rather one decided by communities as a whole. The efforts must see the human behind the label, the man behind the bars, and truly acknowledge the need to provide platforms for greater sharing of voice.

Ultimately, "this approach must go beyond the rhetoric of community policing to a method of engagement between and among people in the community that promotes trust, healing, restorative justice and reparations" (Alexander, 289). Architecture can be used as a tool to increase community and social projects which support local initiatives, foster communication and education as well as redefine the narrative that the government has told for centuries. Regardless of building type, *"all projects have impact on marginalized groups whether or not you ask them for feedback and input"*, which is why it is crucial to involve all members of communities in the restorative process (Grigsby, Webinar). Most importantly, the role of architects is to simply listen and to propose design solutions which contribute towards change.

President of NOMA, Kimberly Dowdell states three key aspects to incorporate in order to make these changes, which include "interdisciplinary expertise, healthy built environments, and a diversity of perspectives" (Dowdell). All of these aspects emphasize the point, that good design for all community members must be developed with all voices in mind and heard. The bodies of individuals behind the drafting table must equally represent the people whom will eventually inhabit



power

Architecture

has the ability to  
incite social change,  
but

in order for this to  
lead to policy change,  
people must be  
empowered to act.

of

the

people

HCG

the building itself. The strongest method for moving forward is through the implementation of an integrated process incorporating a diverse range of opinions, viewpoints, and perspectives.

As related to justice and reforming the system, architects have the power to turn down projects, as a simple means of rejection of the current mode of inequality. We have the ability to decline jobs which require that designers develop inhumane living conditions, solitary confinement, and environments which perpetuate injustices, mostly inflicted upon black and minority members of our community. At the end of the day, our obligation to society as architects, is not one of financial gain or to support corporate profit, but rather to protect the wellbeing of the human beings whom live, work, and interact in the cities in which are built. On the other hand, there is equal power in our possession, to propose designs which initiate conversations, bridge divides, and promote equity.

### *M*y Role as a White Female Architectural Designer

The first step to approaching a project like this, is to first acknowledge my own privilege. As a woman I face inequities that a male counterpart may not encounter, however, race will never be a contributing factor to this experience of inequality. Throughout my studies, the most compelling definition of white privilege that I have come across is defined by Reni Eddo-Lodge. In her book, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race*, Lodge states:

*"It's so difficult to describe an absence. And white privilege is an absence, of the negative consequences of racism,*

*structural discrimination, cultural expectations, violence on your ancestors, subtle marginalization and othering – an exclusion from the narrative of being human"* (Eddo-Lodge, 86).

This absence is what makes my understanding about racism never completely whole, despite all of my research. However, there is still work that I can do as a white female architectural designer to promote anti-racism through the environments that I design as well as to use my voice to initiate challenging yet necessary conversations within the community that exists around me.

My approach is one of an intersectional feminist point of view. It is crucial that as designers we examine our work from multiple lenses, through the crossover of experience of the people whom will ultimately inhabit the cities, streets, and buildings that come out of our hands. We may not all experience the same discrimination, but each person can make efforts to gain understanding and empathy about the inequities that people around us face, in order to come together as a movement to be activists for change.

Ultimately, the goal is to listen. In order to avoid stepping into a white savior standpoint, it is imperative that I propose designs which respond to actual needs rather than ones that I simply believe exist. Using first person research and interviews can be a positive tool to bridge this sense of understanding as well as reading about the experiences of people who live under the oppression of mass incarceration. Empathy is a powerful and essential characteristic for all architects to encompass when starting any type of project, especially true for one attempting to instigate social change.



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