

Nostalgic Architecture:
Recalling Lost Memories to Create a Timeless Experience

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This thesis is dedicated to all those
who have sought after their inner
child.

A special thank you to my thesis
committee, and to my wife Rebecca
for enduring the long and arduous
journey. She kept me afloat
whenever I started to sink.

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Nostalgic Architecture: *Returning to Sentimental Moments from Our Past to Create Meaningful and Timeless Architecture for Our Future*

Introduction

Everything deteriorates over time. The scientific law of entropy describes that all things will eventually return to their raw materials. Every star, planet, and galaxy that is born will eventually die. Every living being ages; and, we recognize that our keen senses such as hearing and vision seem to slowly fade away, our joints begin to ache, our muscles seem to function differently than they used to, our hair eventually thins, and our skin gets covered with wrinkles and sun spots. A ripe piece of fruit will quickly get consumed by mold, dairy products will spoil, and meat will become riddled with bacteria over time. This phenomenon of deterioration not only occurs in the natural world, but in the artificial world as well. The seemingly everlasting pyramids of ancient Egypt were preserved by sand for thousands of years, but have increasingly decayed over time due to tourism and climatic factors such as air pollution, subterranean water leakage, and environmental erosion. We live in a culture of consumerism where items such as automobiles depreciate in monetary value every minute, and are of less value than newer cars on the lot. As we have become increasingly aware of the Earth's finite resources, we have become empathetic to "green" solutions to attain environmental sustainability. Because we live in a world that teaches us everything decays over time, some people may feel apprehensive towards the future. It seems only natural that one may feel anxious about the road ahead in fear that it

may lead to an end. Some people reminisce about the way things once were because it gives comfort to know the past cannot be seemingly altered. In his book, "The True and Only Heaven" Christopher Lasch suggests the general attitude toward nostalgia depends upon the depreciation of the present. It often appeals to the notion that desirable feelings from our past are no longer obtainable. In the article 'Nostalgia and the American,' Arthur P. Dudden described nostalgia as a mood of "romantic pessimism." He characterized one who is nostalgic as having a preference for "things as they once were" and being filled with "remorse at the loss of youth and vitality."¹ As I am one who is prone to nostalgia, Lasch and Dudden's attitudes suggest that I am dissatisfied with the present and weary of the future. But the longing to return to my past is not a preference for a better time; it is a longing to reconnect with the sentimental moments in my life that have given meaning to my identity. I do not think of life as getting worse over time. On the contrary, I like to think of life as a good-aging wine where life's meaningful moments increase in value over time.

Just like a building, a well-aging wine develops its complex layers of color, tastes, and aromas over time. Although the character of the wine's flavors and aromas will eventually fade beyond the maximum peak of its lifespan, the wine's value increases because of its rarity, and the experiences that are uniquely tied to its vintage. In his book 'Thinking Architecture,'

Peter Zumthor said that he was “convinced that a good building must be capable of absorbing traces of human life and thus taking on a specific richness.” The wear of materials such as tarnish on metals, scratches on hard surfaces, dulled and brittle varnishes on woods, and rounded edges are evidence of a building’s past life which he claims as a primary importance over aesthetic qualities, practical values, and stylistic and historical significance.² Similar to a well-aging wine, a building tells a story through its own unique experiences which can never be reproduced or erased. Great architecture must embrace the stories of our past in order to carry on a timeless and rich experience that is meaningful to the client and its community. By incorporating nostalgia into architecture, we can preserve legacies filled with joyous and meaningful memories that provide glimpses into the hearts of individuals, communities, and cultures.

Significance

The term “nostalgia” was first coined by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer in 1688 in order to label a medical disease that described the negative feelings associated with “homesickness.”³ However, more recent studies conducted by the late twentieth century sociologist Fred Davis suggested an alternative definition. In his studies, Davis noted that participants generally associated positive words such as “warm, old times, childhood, and yearning with the term ‘nostalgia.’”⁴ Instead of being a term that implied negative connotations, the word nostalgia seemed to foster positive and sentimental reactions from one’s past. Additionally, in the article ‘The Idea of Nostalgia,’ Jean Starobinski concluded that early literature on nostalgia was not concerned with troubles of one’s uprooting or exile from his place of origin; but rather, it was “the conflict between exigencies of integration into the adult world and the temptation to conserve the unique status of the child. The literature of

exile, more abundant than ever, is, for the most part, a literature concerned with the loss of childhood.”⁵ Davis and Starobinski implied that nostalgic feelings are desires to return to moments or events from one’s past – most notably, one’s childhood. These moments are usually reflections of the most joyous times in our life rather than the bad times that we try and forget. Nostalgia is a reflection of who we are and who we want to be. It tells a story that identifies us, and it is an idealized past that we can control with our imagination unlike the uncertainties of the future. Regardless of age, social class, gender, ethnicity, nationality and other classifications, almost any person can be affected by nostalgia.⁶ But what I’ve come to realize is that things which are nostalgic to one person might be of no significance to another – and that is the point. Nostalgia is uniquely tied to each and every individual, and it holds the key to our identity throughout time. It respects architectural diversity – It does not favor a preferred style, design process, construction type, material, color or use. That is why it is important to understand nostalgia, so that architecture can speak a timeless language that is tied to the unique identity of each and every client.⁷

Methodology

In this paper, I attempt to gain a further understanding of nostalgia in the hopes that it may be effectively implemented into one’s architectural design process. To further clarify, this discussion will assume Fred Davis’ definition of nostalgia as the desire to return to sentimental moments of one’s past, which Jean Starobinski claims is a defense mechanism to protect the loss of one’s childhood. By implementing nostalgia as part of the design process, I believe that the sentimental values of the past combined with architecture of the present can create a timeless and meaningful experience for the client and the community. Because nostalgia is associated with positive memories, I wished to hear testimonies from people who lived seemingly negative

childhoods. In this pursuit, I came across video testimonials from former residents of the Pruitt-Igoe projects, which were demolished due to poor living conditions. Because nostalgia is a personal experience, I also wanted to revisit my former elementary school in attempts to reconnect with some of my fondest childhood memories. To conclude the investigation on nostalgia, I examined two separate case studies in order to gain knowledge on ways in which architects have already implemented nostalgia into their designs. By understanding the characteristics of nostalgia, this paper intends to provide insight on how one can integrate sentimental memories into future spaces and places that give people meaning in life.

Discussion

H.G. Schenk theorized in his book 'The Mind of the European Romantics' that apprehension towards the future served as a catalyst for an idealized past because the past is timeless – it cannot be changed nor corrupted, and this gives us a sense of power and freedom.⁸ We have power over the past. We can choose any time that we wish to relive, and through imagination we can manipulate these moments and merge them with other moments in our lives to recreate an idealized past. August Wilhelm said: "As a sensitive being, man is positioned in time; however, as a spontaneous being, he carries time within him, and this means that he can live in the past and, in spirit, he can live wherever he likes"⁹. Nostalgia is not a past that we perceive as irrecoverable, but a time in which we can manage to relate to at any desirable point in time. This defines the imaginative characteristic of nostalgia. It is an updated reflection of times left behind. Nostalgia teaches us that through memory and imagination, everything that has been lost can be recovered by return, and the past can be updated. For someone who is nostalgic such as myself, the past does not merely reflect an archive of knowledge, it represents a world

that I can transcend back into; thereby, becoming my present and future as well. Time seemed to wash away my early identity, and so it is only by going back to my past that I may reaffirm who I really am. From the philosophies of Fichte, to Schelling, and to Hegel: The self is in a continuous search for itself, which begins with itself. This identity alienates from itself, and then finds itself upon return.¹⁰ We use art, poetry, music, dreams, and symbols to handle the overwhelming task of self expression; so too, must we use architecture to handle this burden. In order for us to understand ourselves, we must distance away from ourselves. It is during our return that we know who we really are. Nostalgia does not just represent a time that we wish we could return to, it holds the very essence of who we are.

Home is Where the Heart Is

When thinking about the places that are meaningful to me, I take myself back to the home in which I grew up as well as my elementary school that nurtured my early education. Places such as these shape children into the adults they become later in life. Whether we have grown up in a single-family home, a multi-family complex, a mobile dwelling, or even an orphanage, these homes are undoubtedly the most underrated works of architecture in our lives. While some homes may not appear to be boastful works of architecture to people on the outside, every home will inevitably hold some amount of sentimental value to its inhabitants. Holding on to this nostalgia gives us meaning in the times ahead of us and gives meaning to our architecture.

I can remember the cold winter mornings when I had to wake up for school. I remember how the goose bumps used to rise up on my skin after I swung my feet out of bed, and I remember how comforting it was to hear the low humming sound of the heat flowing through the ductwork. I loved tucking my arms

inside of my shirt for the additional warmth, and basking in front of the heating vent while I laid on my back staring at the ceiling. I could tell you about the fun times I had throwing water balloons out of my bedroom's balcony windows or the fun times I had swinging on the rope that hung from my bedroom ceiling. I could go on about all the other little details, such as the stairs that creaked every time someone walked on them or how the front door used to screech whenever a person entered or left the house. These seemingly insignificant details are the things that I remember most as if it were yesterday. Nostalgia is created through experiences such as these. By revisiting our fondest memories and experiences, one can be taken back to a world that once existed.

I realize that some people may have lived rougher lives than others. Therefore, some people may find it difficult to recover happy moments from their childhood. The Yin and Yang principle, however, explains that one cannot understand the meaning of bad if there is no good. How does one understand pain without pleasure, or hate without love? The demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis, Missouri comes to mind as it has been condemned as a notorious icon of architectural failure. It was known as a breeding ground for poverty, crime, violence, segregation, and inadequate living conditions. Yet, it was still considered home to so many people. When watching the documentary 'The Pruitt-Igoe Myth,' I was drawn to the interview of one former resident who spoke of the demolition of his former home. With his head tilted down to the floor in sadness and a melancholy tone in his voice he said, "When they get to the part where the projects are being destroyed... there's some happiness there, but then part of that lying in the rubble is your history and your life." The man raised his head and looked straight into the camera, and a large smile emerged on his face as he said, "That was my youth, ya know?" He then

continued to say, "Yeah, they're gone, but now [no one] will ever know my story."¹¹ In the midst of this inhumane living, there was a spark of happiness expressed on the interviewee's face as he recalled his childhood experience. Without prior knowledge of the project, one would think that the Pruitt-Igoe residence was a wonderful place to grow-up. These reflections reaffirmed that nostalgia reflects positive sentiments from our past. Whether a work of architecture may appear to be a failure on the outside, it is the memories developed on the inside that gives building's their rich experience.

My Grade School Years

I'm walking up a brick path that wraps around the side of my elementary school. I look down toward my feet and I see family names etched into the bricks. I then look up and gaze across the landscape of trees swaying briskly in the wind. The air is cool and filled with the sweet smells of spring flowers that have begun to blossom. The white silky overcoat of snow that had recently covered the ground was nothing more than a few small patches dotting the newly exposed green grass. My teacher emerges from the main entrance glass doors and signals my class to head inside. We walk through the narrow and dark corridor that leads from the lobby into the central heart of the building. At that moment, my attention focuses on the winding blue ramps and the colorful library books in the horizon. As I begin my journey up the ramp, my eyes fixate on the "larger-than-life" image of the children's novel character, Clifford the Big Red Dog draped across a 2-story high wall. I then focus my attention on the new displays of student's artwork exhibited along the wall as I make the ascension. Before I enter the classroom, I prop my head over the railing once more to gaze upon the open horizon of colorful library books, Clifford the Big Red Dog, and the blue ramps.



Fig. 1. Sketch of my elementary school "ramps" drawn from my childhood memories, 2012. Husteck, Eric, artist.

It had been over a decade since I last visited my elementary school, and so I decided to return to the site on my quest for a nostalgic experience. Upon arrival, however, I was blindsided by a startling discovery. The school that held the key to my locked-up inner child was no longer a school, but instead it had been converted into an open-office building. It felt as if my history had been erased. The building that stood in my presence no longer felt like a home, but a distant edifice that looked like my school and stood as a symbol of failure. No longer could I relate to the laughter of children at recess, listen to sing-a-longs, and admire arts-and-crafts projects decorated along the walls and windows.

I was afraid that the tangible memories of my early education and development may have been wiped clean only to exist as a figment of my imagination. I was eager to see the central space that housed my memories of colorful library books, children's artwork, Clifford the Big Red Dog, and the ramps that I had previously reminisced about. Upon entry into the space, my emotional reaction was overwhelming to say the least. I was filled with joy as the architecture of the space generally matched the images from my memory. Albeit the space looked familiar, there were some noticeable differences. Some of the colors and wall configurations didn't quite matchup the way I had remembered, and the space seemed

much smaller than I had remembered. When I looked over to the ramps, I realized there was only one in reality, and the slope was not as exaggerated as I had remembered (Fig. 2). It had dawned on me that my desire to return to this glorious childhood experience was no more than a mere fantasy. It had occurred to me that nostalgia was not only a longing to return to one's past, but a longing to return to an idealized and imaginary past.



Fig. 2. Photograph of my elementary school ramp, 2012. Husteck, Eric, photographer.

In his annual presidential address of the American Historical Association, Carl Becker explained that it is neither possible nor essential that the image of our past is accurate. Nostalgia is about remembering the things in our lives that are to our own identity as well as to the things we are doing and hope to be doing in the future. We imaginatively recreate these memories by blending facts with superficial images; thereby creating a fantasy of what actually happened. Our sense of the past is a hybrid of personal experiences, observations, present conditions, and anxieties concerning the future.¹² Becker's address supports the theory that nostalgia is a collection of memories fragmented throughout time. I could not return to this profound and nostalgic experience from my elementary school days because it did not exist. I was searching for nothing more than a fantasy that

had been created by my own imagination. But is this not what designer's strive to do? Do we not in a sense want to create meaningful and fantastical architecture for our clients? Why would a client hire an architect if there was already an existing building that met his needs and desires? It is thus the duty of the architect to create meaningful architecture to the likes of which the client has never seen, and nostalgia can take us there.

Case Studies



Fig. 3. The Keenan Towerhouse. Hursley, Timothy, photographer. "Keenan Towerhouse" Photographs. New York, NY: Abbeville Press Publishers, n.d. From *New Country Houses*.

The Keenan Towerhouse located in Fayetteville, Arkansas by architect Marlon Blackwell is a perfect example of forward-thinking architecture grounded by nostalgic memories. The client, James Keenan, asked for a new kind of treehouse that could tap into his memories and imagination. He wanted a sophisticated treehouse that served as a playful getaway reminiscent of the joyous

moments that he used to spend in his grandfather's treehouse as a child; and, a treehouse that could put him and his family in a direct relationship with nature. Blackwell's design was influenced by grain silos, water towers, and forest ranger watchtowers local to the area. Not only did the form of the design adhere to the styles of the local tower vernacular in the region, but indigenous materials were used as well in order to reflect the surrounding environment. The main exterior consists of a lattice shell comprised of locally harvested vertical white-oak planks complimented by the modern look of a lightly-colored horizontal steel cladding which are reminiscent of the metallic sheen found on the local tower structures of Arkansas. Upon entry is a stairwell that leads up to the house. The spacing between the vertical fins of the shell allows for views to the outdoors as well as for light and shadows to enter the space to create the affect that one is climbing towards the canopies of the forest like a child in play. Inside of the observatory/living space of the house, the ten-foot high ceiling and steel-framed windows allow one to gaze across the open horizon in any given direction as he/she stands on the locally milled white-oak floor. A pull-down stairway leads to the open roof 'skycourt' above which is enveloped by high walls and a floor covered in the white-oak material. Openings in the walls have been strategically positioned to take advantage of panoramic views of the surrounding forest and Ozark Mountains, which triggered memories from my personal past of looking over the railings at my elementary school.¹³ While the unconventional composition of the Towerhouse created a modernized contrast with respect to the local architecture, the implementation of vernacular forms and materials still tie the architecture to its local surroundings and history. The sensitivity to vernacular traditions combined with the memories of the client's childhood ties the architecture into a meaningful and nostalgic experience whilst the

modern expression turns it into a timeless icon that belongs to the present.



Fig. 4. The Red House. Dale, Nils Petter, photographer. "The Red House" Photographs. New York, NY: Abbeville Press Publishers, n.d. From *New Country Houses*.

The Red House designed by Jarmund/Vignæs Architects in Oslo, Norway was designed in a modern vernacular style to cherish the heart of the client. It served as a home for the client's wife and three children, yet it was also situated near the same grounds of his parent's home where he had grown-up. Therefore, the architects wanted to carefully take the rich family history and childhood memories into account while respecting the dramatic topography and traditional vernacular of the architecture around the site. To achieve this, the design focused on the strong tradition of Scandinavian country houses that are notable for their open leisure spaces and easy access to uncultivated land. The house is settled into a hillside making the building appear as a single-story bungalow when approaching the house. This illusion helps to protect the views held by neighboring buildings, but also reflects the small "hut" appearance of most Scandinavian country homes. The construction consists of a timber-frame structure clad in an ironically bold red-painted fir skin like a child calling for attention, but tying into the vernacular of the spirit colored post-war family houses of the location. The design also takes a more modern approach from the traditional single-story vernacular of Scandinavian

country homes by placing the master bedroom, main living space, and a covered veranda on the top floor to maximize westward views to the valley as well as southward views through the trees and sloping terrain. The bulk of the volume consists of three children's bedrooms, a playroom, and a basement located on the lower level with views primarily oriented in the northern direction.¹⁴ The design's sensitivity to the surrounding landscape and regional vernacular fills the home with memorable connotations to the client's heritage and culture, while the bold and unconventional approach distinguishes it as a home for a new family generation.

Conclusion

We can never live in our past, and so it is important that we do not try to mimic or copy architecture from the past. The idea of nostalgia is to rekindle with experiences that invoke a sense of joy that has been lost from one's past so that we may design meaningful architecture. Nostalgia is a collection of memories that are fragmented in time, but brought together into the present as an idealized whole that is timeless. They are fantasies created by the exaggeration and displacement of fond memories. They exist only in our imagination and so it is the job of architecture to create these non-existent experiences for clients and communities. The designer's goals should meet the needs and desires of the client, and nostalgia respects this personal diversity by tapping into the things that mean the most in each and every person.

Notes

¹ Arthur Dudden, *Nostalgia and the American* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), 517.

² Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture* (Basel, Switzerland: Birkhauser, 2010), 24-26.

³ Jean Starobinski, *The Idea of Nostalgia* (Diogenes, 1966), 84.

⁴ Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1979), 4.

⁵ Jean Starobinski, 103.

⁶ C. Sedikides, T. Wildschut, & D. Baden, *Nostalgia: Conceptual issues and existential functions* (New York, NY: Guilford, 2004), 200-214.

⁷ How can we achieve a sense of nostalgia for an entire community? As Yi-Fu Tuan described in his book 'Space and Place,' adults develop a complex sense of space and place through unique and shared experiences. This development begins at the confusing stage of infancy and evolves into an equally confusing stage of adulthood that becomes structured by experiences and conceptual knowledge. Tuan argues, "Although children come under cultural influences as soon as they are born, the biological imperatives of growth nonetheless impose rising curves of learning and understanding that are alike and hence may be said to transcend the specific emphases of culture." Each person is defined by his/her culture, and every culture is defined by its people. Therefore, to create meaningful architecture for people, we must tap into their culture's vernacular. I do not believe, however, that we want to simply recreate architecture that mimics the styles, construction, materials, and forms of our past traditions. Buildings of our past belong in the past; and so, buildings of our future belong in the future. It is therefore imperative that we seek to create architecture for the present while encompassing the memories of one's past and culture. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place* (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Press, 2008), 19.

⁸ Horia-Vicentiu Patrascu, *Nostalgia □ from Disease to Metaphysical Feeling* (Iasi: Philobiblon, 2011), 495.

⁹ H.G. Schenk, *The Mind of the European Romantics* (London: Constable, 1966), 34

¹⁰ Horia-Vicentiu Patrascu, 497.

¹¹ Chad Friedrichs, & Jaime Friedrichs, *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth* (United States of America: First Run Features, 2011).

¹² Carl Becker, *Everyman His Own Historian* (Minneapolis: American Historical Review), 221-236.

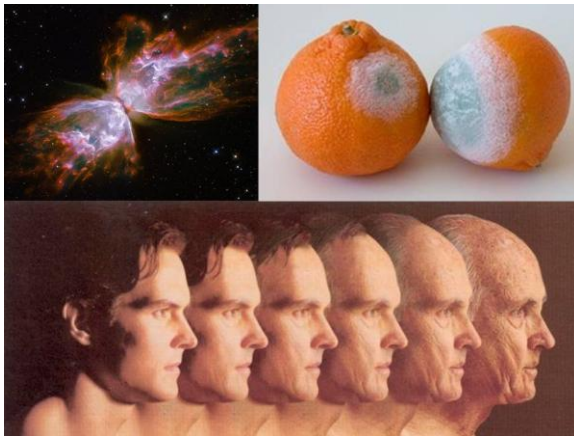
¹³ Dominic Bradbury, *New Country Houses* (New York, NY: Abbeville Press Publishers, 2005), 74-79.

¹⁴ Dominic Bradbury, 92-97.

Nostalgic Architecture: *Returning to Sentimental Moments from Our Past to Create Meaningful and Timeless Architecture for Our Future*

Introduction

[IMAGE 1]



Everything deteriorates over time. The scientific law of entropy describes that all things will eventually return to their raw materials. Every star, planet, and galaxy that is born will eventually die. Every living being ages; and, we recognize that our keen senses such as hearing and vision seem to slowly fade away, our joints begin to ache, our muscles seem to function differently than they used to, our hair eventually thins, and our skin gets covered with wrinkles and sun spots. A ripe piece of fruit will quickly get consumed by mold, dairy products will spoil, and meat will become riddled with bacteria over time.

[IMAGE 2]



This phenomenon of deterioration not only occurs in the natural world, but in the artificial world as well. The seemingly everlasting pyramids of ancient Egypt were preserved by sand for thousands of years, but have increasingly decayed over time due to tourism and climatic factors. We live in a culture of consumerism where items such as automobiles depreciate in monetary value every minute, and are of less value than newer cars on the lot. As we have become increasingly aware of the Earth's finite resources, we have become empathetic to "green" solutions to attain environmental sustainability.

[IMAGE 3]



Because we live in a world that teaches us everything decays over time, some people may feel apprehensive towards the future. It seems only natural that one may feel anxious about the road ahead in fear that it may lead to an end. Some people reminisce about the way things once were because it gives comfort to know the past cannot be seemingly altered. In my research, authors such as Christopher Lasch and Arthur P. Dudden have published books describing nostalgia as a mood of "romantic pessimism" - characterized one who is nostalgic as having a preference for "things as they once were" and being filled with "remorse at the loss of youth and vitality."¹ These attitudes seem to suggest that one who is prone to nostalgia is dissatisfied with the present and weary of the future. But for me, the longing to return to my past is not a preference for a better time; it is a longing to reconnect with the sentimental moments in my life that have given meaning to my identity.

[IMAGE 4]



I do not think of life as getting worse over time. On the contrary, I like to think of life as a well-aging wine where life's meaningful moments increase in value over time. Just like a building, a well-aging wine develops its complex layers of color, tastes, and aromas over time. Although the character of the wine's flavors and aromas will eventually fade beyond the maximum peak of its lifespan, the wine's value increases due to its rarity and the experiences uniquely tied to its vintage.

[IMAGE 5]



In his book 'Thinking Architecture,' Peter Zumthor said he was "convinced that a good building must be capable of absorbing traces of human life and thus taking on a specific richness." The wear of materials such as

tarnish on metals, scratches on hard surfaces, dulled and brittle varnishes on woods, and rounded edges are evidence of a building's past life which he claims as a primary importance over aesthetic qualities, practical values, and stylistic and historical significance.²

[IMAGE 6]



Similar to a well-aging wine, a building tells a story through its own unique experiences which can never be reproduced or erased. Great architecture must embrace the stories of our past in order to carry on a timeless and rich experience that is meaningful to the client and its community. By incorporating nostalgia into architecture, we can preserve legacies filled with joyous and meaningful memories that provide glimpses into the hearts of individuals, communities, and cultures.

Significance

[IMAGE 7]



The term "nostalgia" was first coined by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer in 1688 in order to label a medical disease that described the negative feelings associated with "homesickness."³

[IMAGE 8]



However, more recent studies conducted by the late twentieth century sociologist Fred Davis suggested an alternative definition. In his studies, Davis noted that participants generally associated positive words such as "warm, old times, childhood, and yearning with the term 'nostalgia.'"⁴ Instead of being a term that implied negative connotations, the word nostalgia seemed to foster positive and sentimental reactions from one's past. Additionally, in the article 'The Idea of

Nostalgia,' Jean Starobinski concluded that early literature on nostalgia was not concerned with troubles of one's uprooting or exile from his place of origin; but rather, it was "the conflict between exigencies of integration into the adult world and the temptation to conserve the unique status of the child. The literature of exile, more abundant than ever, is, for the most part, a literature concerned with the loss of childhood."⁵

[IMAGE 9]



Davis and Starobinski implied that nostalgic feelings are desires to return to moments or events from one's past – most notably, one's childhood. These moments are usually reflections of the most joyous times in our life rather than the bad times that we try and forget. Nostalgia is a reflection of who we are and who we want to be. It tells a story that identifies us, and it is an idealized past that we can control with our imagination unlike the uncertainties of the future. Regardless of age, social class, gender, ethnicity, nationality and other classifications, almost any person can be affected by nostalgia.⁶ But what I've come to realize is that things which are nostalgic to me might be of no significance to another – and that is the point. Nostalgia is uniquely tied to each and every individual, and it holds the key to our identity throughout time. It respects architectural diversity – It does not favor a preferred style, design process, construction

type, material, color or use. That is why it is important to understand nostalgia, so that architecture can speak a timeless language that is tied to the unique identity of each and every client.⁷

Methodology

[IMAGE 10]



In my thesis, I attempt to gain a further understanding of nostalgia in the hopes that it may be effectively implemented into one's architectural design process. To further clarify, my discussion will assume Fred Davis' definition of nostalgia as the desire to return to sentimental moments of one's past, which Jean Starobinski claims is a defense mechanism to protect the loss of one's childhood. By implementing nostalgia as part of the design process, I believe that the sentimental values of the past combined with architecture of the present can create a timeless and meaningful experience for the client and the community. Because nostalgia is a personal experience, I wanted to revisit my former elementary school in attempts to reconnect with some of my fondest childhood memories. To conclude my investigation, I examined case studies in order to gain knowledge on ways in which nostalgia has been implemented into architectural design. By understanding the characteristics of nostalgia, my thesis intends to provide insight on how one can integrate architecture with

sentimental memories that give people meaning in their life.

My Grade School Years

[IMAGE 11]



My memory and imagination can take me back to my elementary school. I picture myself walking up the brick path that wraps around the side of the building. As I look down toward my feet, I see family names etched into the bricks.

[IMAGE 12]



I then look up and gaze across the landscape of trees swaying briskly in the wind. The air is cool and filled with the sweet smells of spring flowers that have begun to blossom. The white silky overcoat of snow that had recently

covered the ground was nothing more than a few small patches dotting the newly exposed green grass.

[IMAGE 13]



My teacher emerges from the main entrance glass doors and signals my class to head inside. We walk through the narrow and dark corridor that leads from the lobby into the central heart of the building. At that moment, my attention focuses on the winding blue ramps and the colorful library books in the horizon. As I begin my journey up the ramp, my eyes fixate on the "larger-than-life" image of the children's novel character, Clifford the Big Red Dog draped across a 2-story high wall.

[IMAGE 14]



Sketch of my elementary school ramps drawn from memory. Husteck, Eric, artist.

I then focus my attention on the new displays of student's artwork exhibited along the wall as I make the ascension. Before I enter my classroom on the second floor, I prop my head over the railing to gaze one more time upon the open horizon of colorful library books, Clifford the Big Red Dog, and the blue ramps.

It had been over a decade since I last visited my elementary school, and so I decided to return to the site on my quest for a nostalgic experience. Upon arrival, however, I was blindsided by a startling discovery. The school that held the key to my locked-up inner child was no longer a school, but instead it had been converted into an open-office building. It felt as if my history had been erased. The building that stood in my presence no longer felt like a home, but a distant edifice that looked like my school and stood as a symbol of failure. No longer could I relate to the laughter of children at recess, listen to sing-a-longs, and admire arts-and-crafts projects decorated along the walls and windows.

I was afraid that the tangible memories of my early education and development may have been wiped clean only to exist as a figment of my imagination. I was eager to see the central space that housed my memories of colorful library books, children's artwork, Clifford the Big Red Dog, and the ramps that I had previously reminisced about. Upon entry into the space, my emotional reaction was overwhelming to say the least. I was filled with joy as the architecture of the space generally matched the images from my memory. Albeit the space looked familiar, there were some noticeable differences. Some of the colors and wall configurations didn't quite matchup the way I had remembered, and the space seemed much smaller than I had remembered.

[IMAGE 15]



When I looked over to the ramps, I realized there was only one in reality, and the slope was so minimal that it barely even resembled much of a ramp. It had dawned on me that my desire to return to this glorious childhood experience was no more than a mere fantasy. It had occurred to me that nostalgia was not only a longing to return to one's past, but a longing to return to an idealized and imaginary past.

Carl Becker explained in his annual presidential address of the American Historical Association that it is neither possible nor essential that the image of our past is accurate. Nostalgia is about remembering the things in our lives that are to our own identity as well as to the things we are doing and hope to be doing in the future.

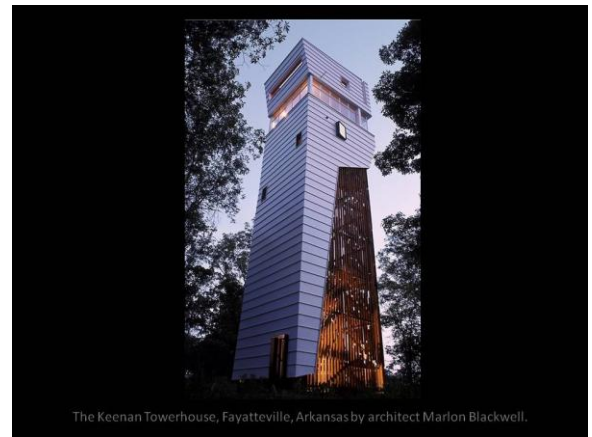
[IMAGE 16]



We imaginatively recreate these memories by blending facts with superficial images; thereby creating a fantasy of what actually happened. Our sense of the past is a hybrid of personal experiences, observations, present conditions, and anxieties concerning the future.⁸ Becker's address supports the theory that nostalgia is a collection of memories fragmented throughout time. I could not literally return to this profound and memorable experience from my elementary school days because it did not exist. I was searching for nothing more than a fantasy that had been created by my own imagination. But is this not what designer's strive to do? Do we not in a sense want to create meaningful and fantastical architecture for our clients? Why would a client hire an architect if there was already an existing design that met his needs and desires? It is thus the duty of the architect to create meaningful architecture to the likes of which the client has never seen, and nostalgia can take us there.

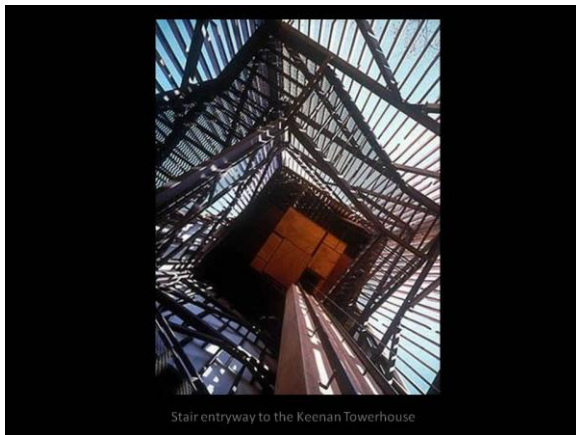
Case Studies

[IMAGE 17]



The Keenan Towerhouse located in Fayetteville, Arkansas by architect Marlon Blackwell is a perfect example of forward-thinking architecture grounded by nostalgic memories. The client, James Keenan, asked for a new kind of treehouse that could tap into his memories and imagination. He wanted a sophisticated treehouse that served as a playful getaway reminiscent of the joyous moments that he used to spend in his grandfather's treehouse as a child; and, a treehouse that could put him and his family in a direct relationship with nature. Blackwell's design was influenced by grain silos, water towers, and forest ranger watchtowers local to the area. Not only did the form of the design adhere to the styles of the local tower vernacular in the region, but indigenous materials were used as well in order to reflect the surrounding environment. The main exterior consists of a lattice shell comprised of locally harvested vertical white-oak planks complimented by the modern look of a lightly-colored horizontal steel cladding which is reminiscent of the metallic sheen found on the local tower structures of Arkansas.

[IMAGE 18]



Stair entryway to the Keenan Towerhouse

Upon entry is a stairwell that leads up to the house. The spacing between the vertical fins of the shell allows for views to the outdoors as well as for light and shadows to enter the space to create the affect that one is climbing towards the canopies of the forest like a playful child.

[IMAGE 19]



Observatory / main living space of the Keenan Towerhouse

Inside of the observatory/living space of the house, the ten-foot high ceiling and steel-framed windows allow one to gaze across the open horizon in any given direction as he/she stands on the locally milled white-oak floor. A pull-down stairway leads to the open roof 'skycourt' above, which is enveloped by high walls and a floor covered in the white-oak material.

[IMAGE 20]



View from the second floor of my former elementary school overlooking the central library space.

View from the "skycourt" at the Keenan Towerhouse overlooking the surrounding forest and Ozark mountains.

Openings in the walls have been strategically positioned to take advantage of panoramic views of the surrounding forest and Ozark Mountains, which triggered memories from my personal past of looking over the railings at my elementary school.⁹ While the unconventional composition of the Towerhouse creates a modernized contrast with respect to the local architecture, the implementation of vernacular forms and materials tie its architecture to the local surroundings and history. The sensitivity to vernacular traditions allows the architect to tap into the client's nostalgic memories whilst the modern style brings the client's past into his present. The result is an enriched experience that transforms visitors into the world of one's past.

Conclusion

[IMAGE 21]



We can never literally live in our past, and so it is important that we do not try to mimic or recreate architecture from the past. The idea of nostalgia is to rekindle with lost experiences that invoke a sense of joy and meaning in our lives. Nostalgia is a personal collection of exaggerated and fantastical memories that are fragmented in time, but brought together into the present as an idealized whole. They exist only in our imagination and so it is the job of architecture to bring the client's fantasies to fruition. It is necessary that we use nostalgia to return to our past identity so that we may create meaningful and sentimental architecture that can timelessly blend with our present and into our future.

Notes

¹ Arthur Dudden, *Nostalgia and the American* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), 517.

² Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture* (Basel, Switzerland: Birkhauser, 2010), 24-26.

³ Jean Starobinski, *The Idea of Nostalgia* (Diogenes, 1966), 84.

⁴ Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1979), 4.

⁵ Jean Starobinski, 103.

⁶ C. Sedikides, T. Wildschut, & D. Baden, *Nostalgia: Conceptual issues and existential functions* (New York, NY: Guilford, 2004), 200-214.

⁷ How can we achieve a sense of nostalgia for an entire community? As Yi-Fu Tuan described in his book 'Space and Place,' adults develop a complex sense of space and place through unique and shared experiences. This development begins at the confusing stage of infancy and evolves into an equally confusing stage of adulthood that becomes structured by experiences and conceptual knowledge. Tuan argues, "Although children come under cultural influences as soon as they are born, the biological imperatives of growth nonetheless impose rising curves of learning and

understanding that are alike and hence may be said to transcend the specific emphases of culture." Each person is defined by his/her culture, and every culture is defined by its people. Therefore, to create meaningful architecture for people, we must tap into their culture's vernacular. I do not believe, however, that we want to simply recreate architecture that mimics the styles, construction, materials, and forms of our past traditions. Buildings of our past belong in the past; and so, buildings of our future belong in the future. It is therefore imperative that we seek to create architecture for the present while encompassing the memories of one's past and culture. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place* (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Press, 2008), 19.

⁸ Carl Becker, *Everyman His Own Historian* (Minneapolis: American Historical Review), 221-236.

⁹ Dominic Bradbury, *New Country Houses* (New York, NY: Abbeville Press Publishers, 2005), 74-79.

Image Credits

[Images 1-8] Gathered from the World Wide Web

[Image 6] From ArchitectureWeek.com & wiki.answers.com

[Image 9] Husteck, Eric, artist.

[Image 10] Return to Childhood, 2012. Wilkinson, Mark, artist. From <http://www.deviantart.com/print/1798889/?>.

[Images 11-15] Husteck, Eric, photographer / artist.

[Image 16] Frontispiece for Marc-Antoine Laugier's, *Essay on Architecture*, 1755. Eisen, Charles, artist.

[Images 17-20] The Keenan Towerhouse. Hursley, Timothy, photographer. "Keenan Towerhouse" Photographs. New York, NY: Abbeville Press Publishers, n.d. From *New Country Houses*.

[Image 20] Former Coventry elementary school media center. Husteck, Eric, photographer.

SITE ANALYSIS

FORMER COVENTRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | 2843 WASHINGTON BLVD., CLEVE. HTS., OHIO 44118



West Side Photographs



Existing Site Physical Model

Birds-eye Perspective (Courtesy of Bing Maps)



East Side Photographs

SITE ANALYSIS

FORMER COVENTRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | 2843 WASHINGTON BLVD., CLEVE. HTS., OHIO 44118



LEGEND

- EDUCATION
- COMMUNITY
- PARK / GREEN SPACE

Scale: 1" = 1000'-0"

0 500 1000 2000 3000 5000 FEET

0 1/4 1/2 1 2 MILE

FIGURE / GROUND



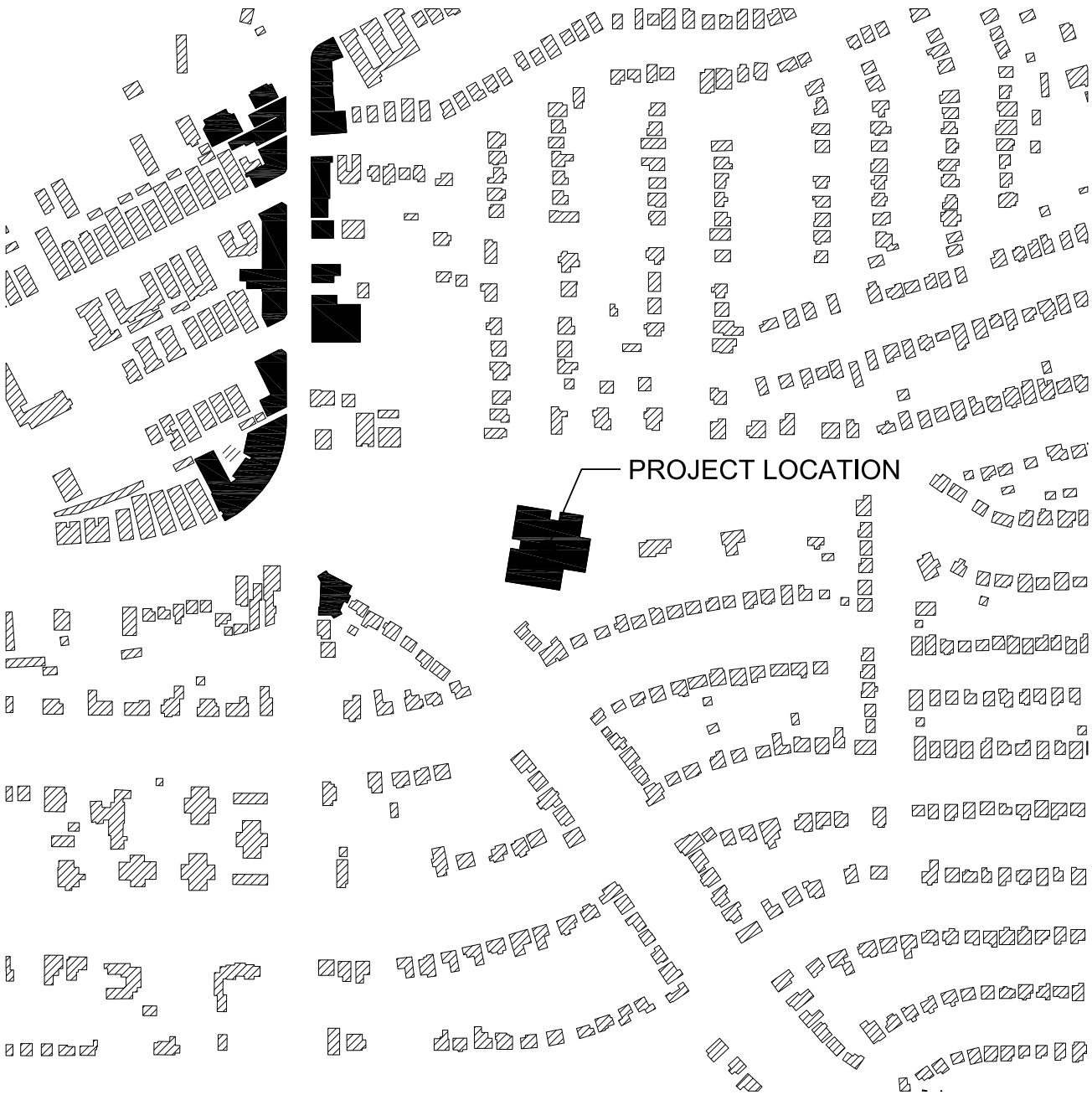
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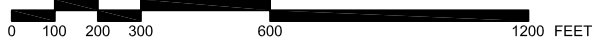
SITE ANALYSIS

FORMER COVENTRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | 2843 WASHINGTON BLVD., CLEVE. HTS., OHIO 44118

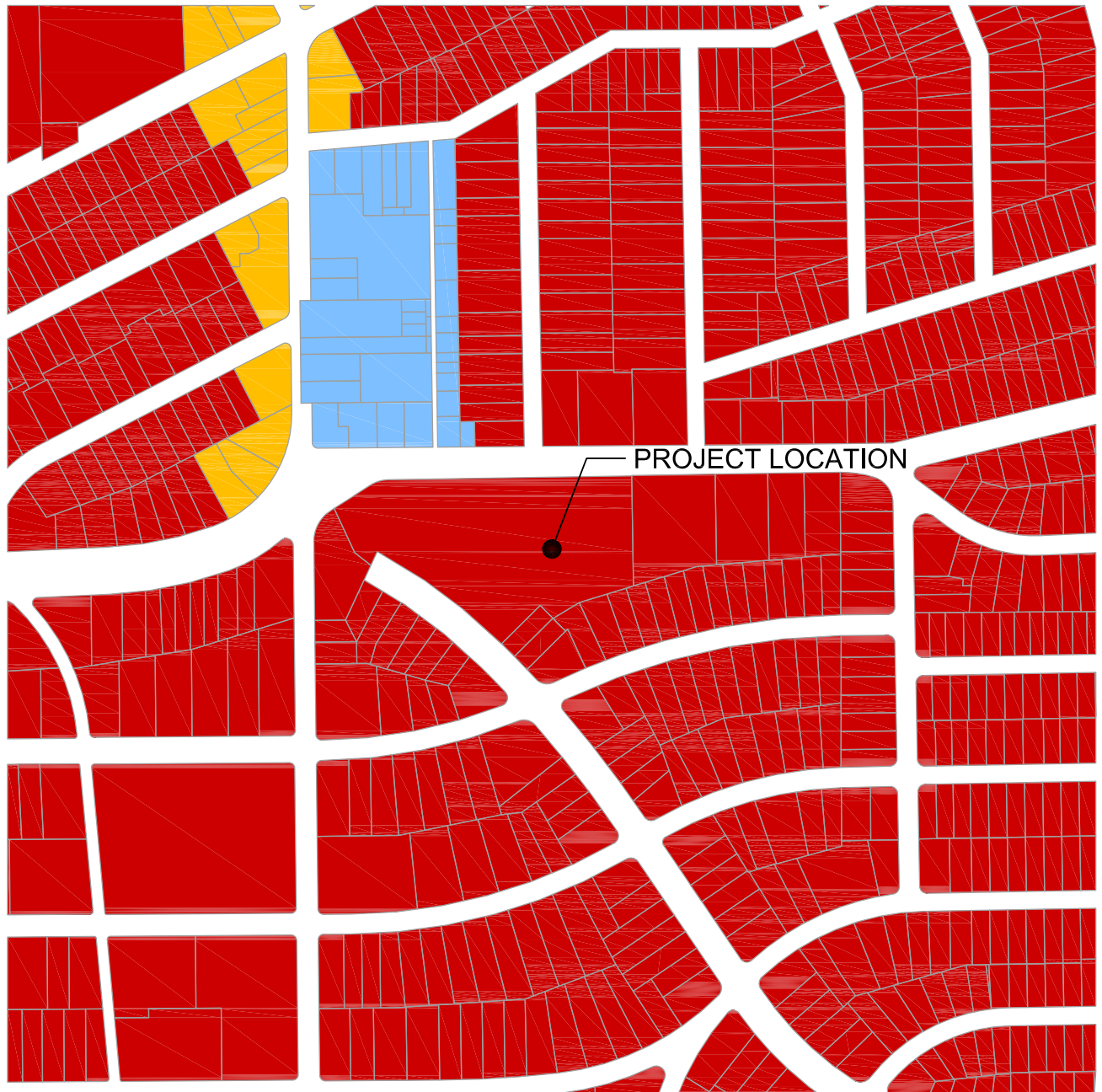
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ZONING



LEGEND



Scale: 1" = 300'-0"



 RESIDENTIAL

 RETAIL

 MIXED-USE

LAND USE

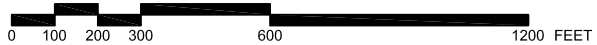


LEGEND

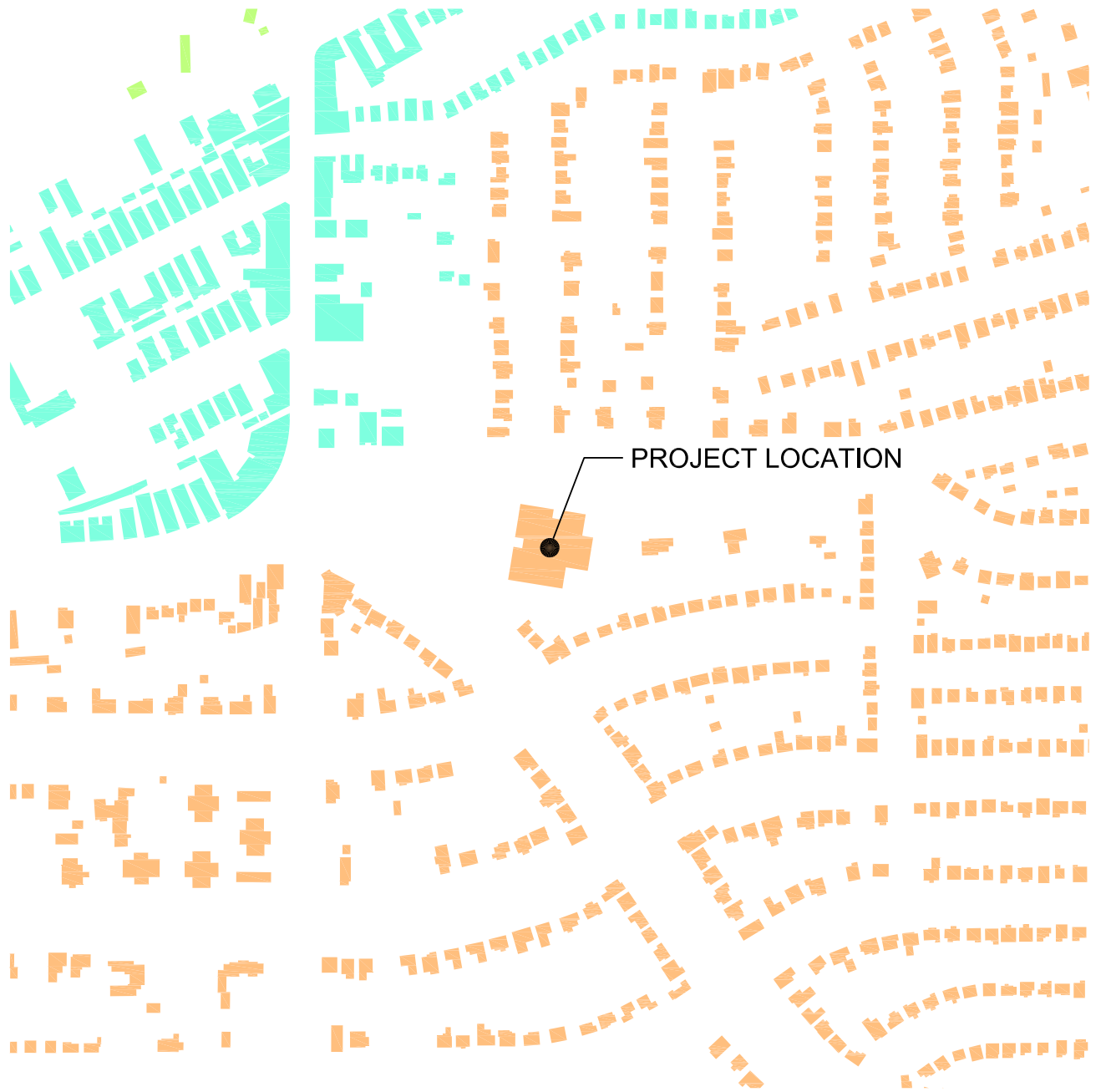
- RESIDENTIAL
- RETAIL
- OFFICE
- LIBRARY
- CEMETERY



Scale: 1" = 300'-0"



MEDIAN INCOME IN 2000



LEGEND

0 - 20 K

20 - 35 K

35 - 50 K

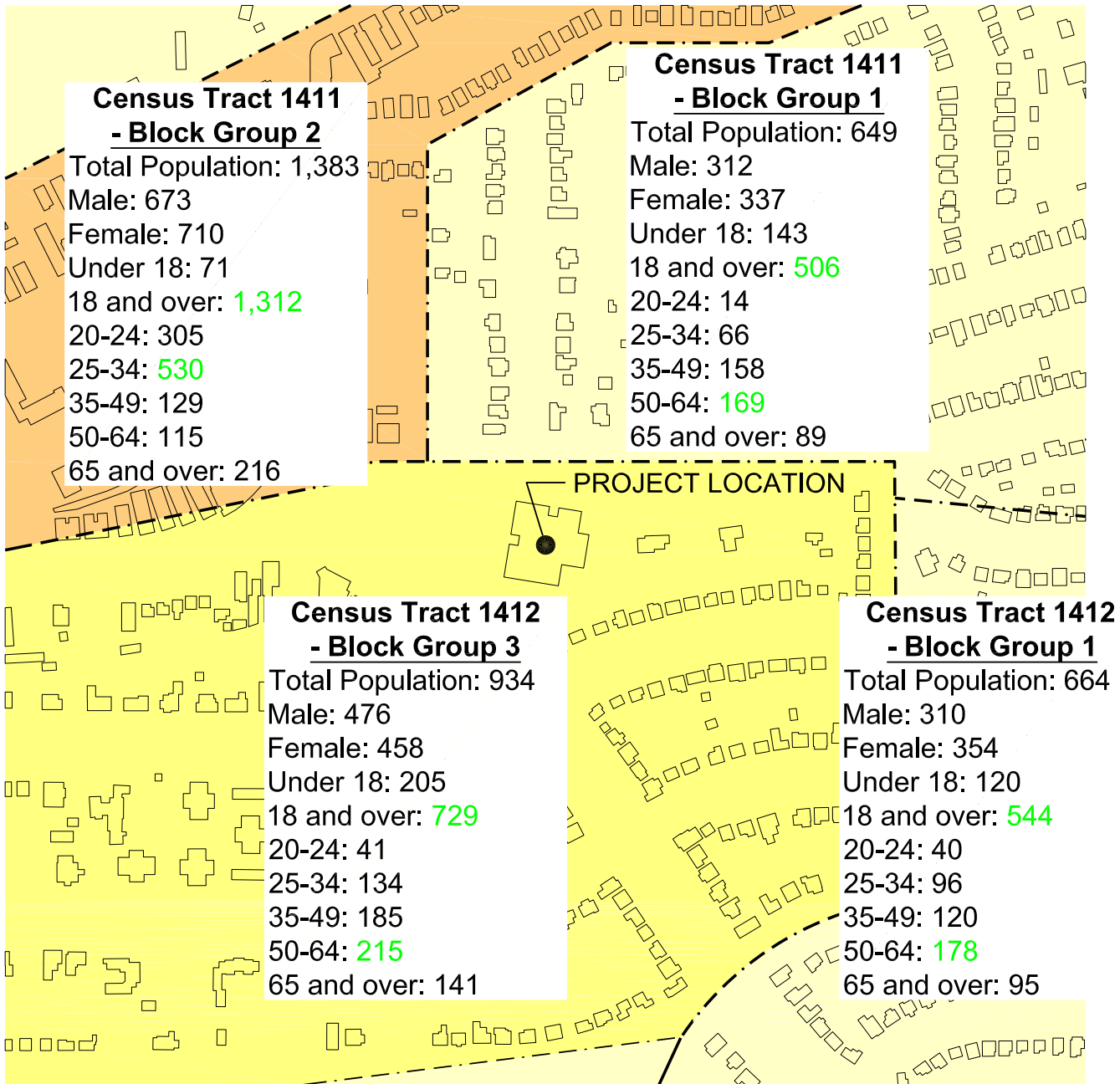
50 - 100 K



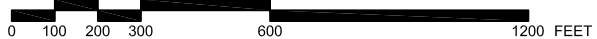
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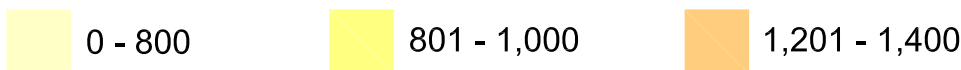
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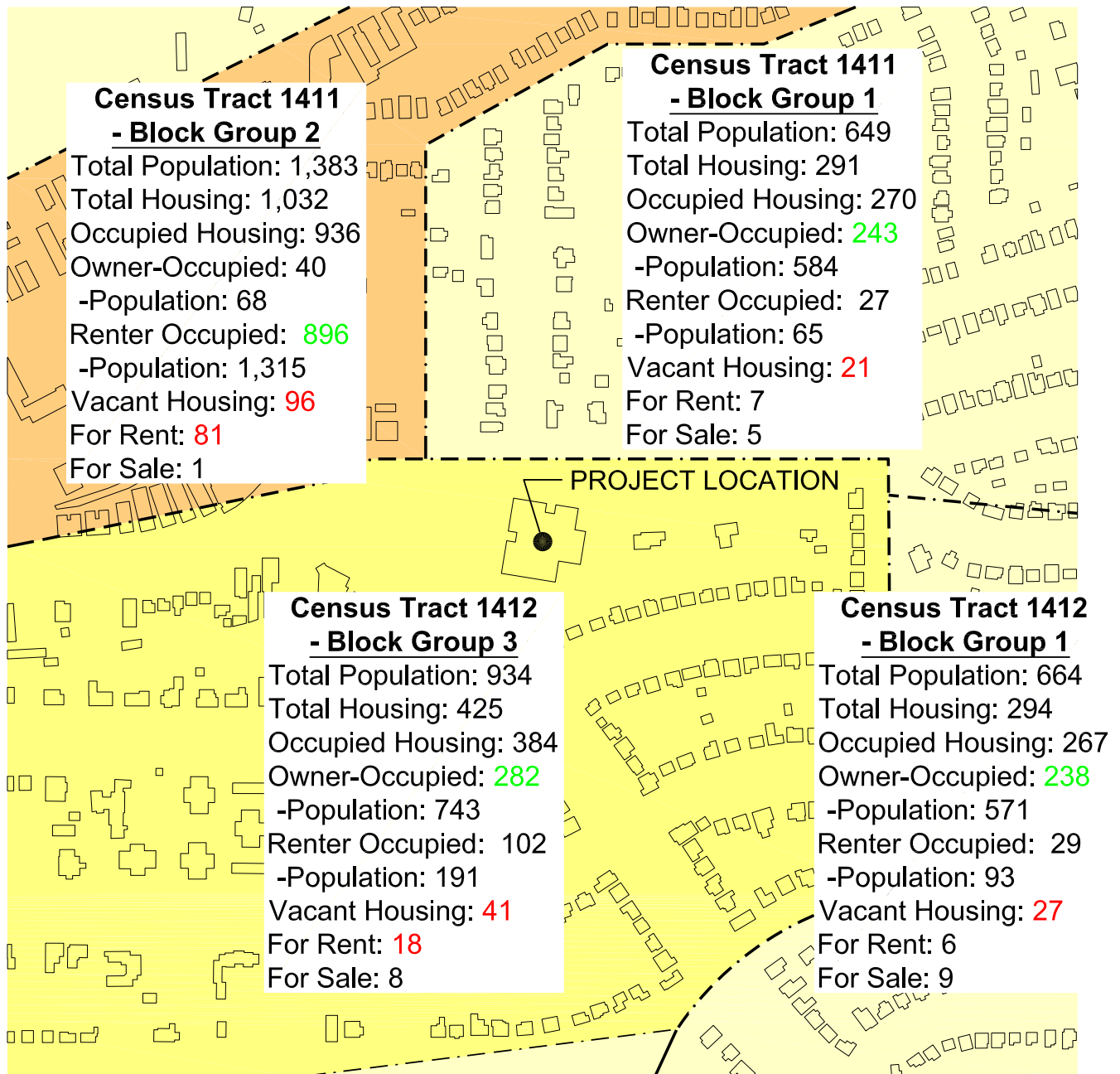
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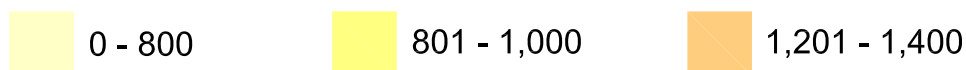


CENSUS 2010 - HOUSING STATUS

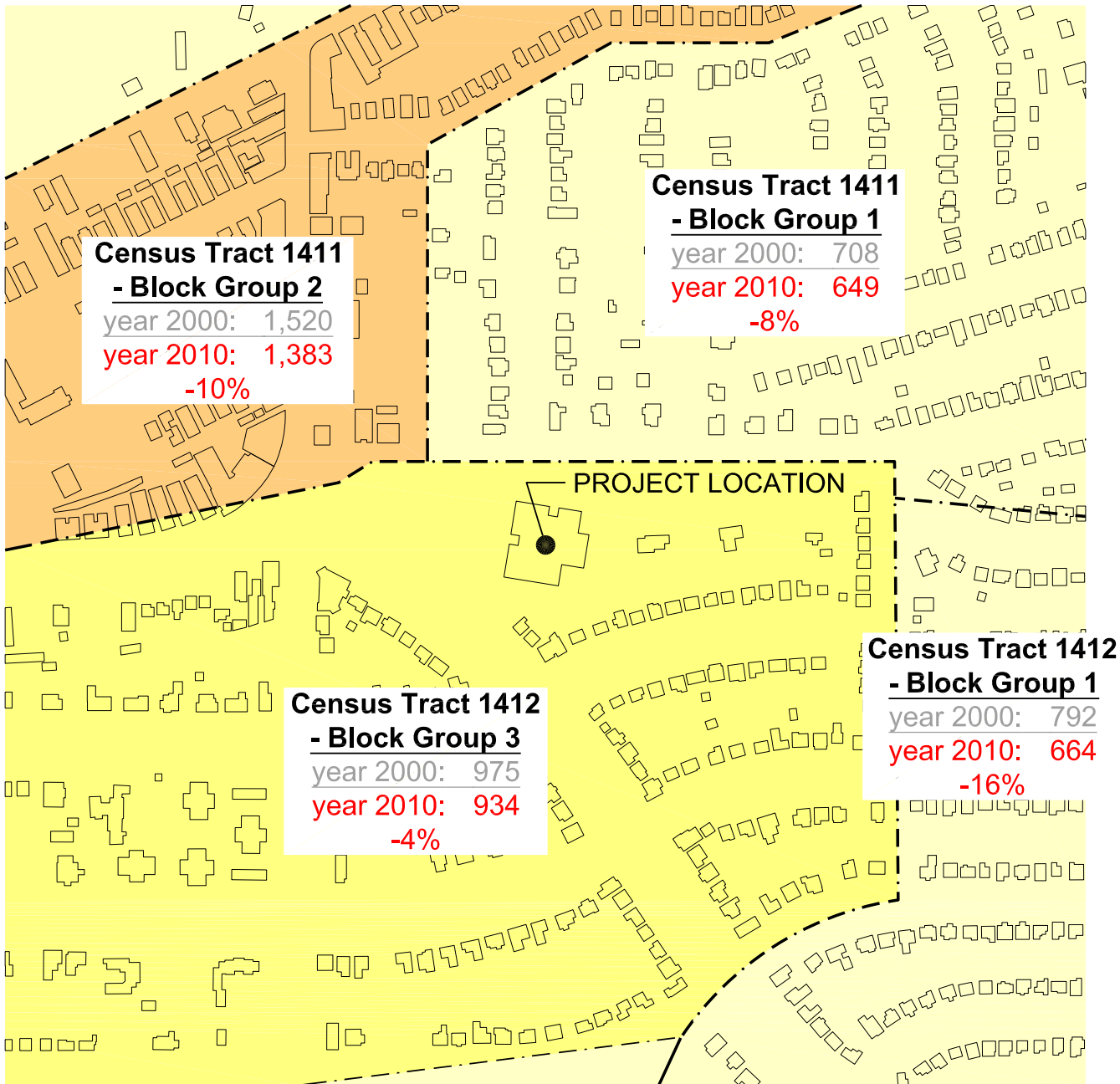


TOTAL POPULATION 2010

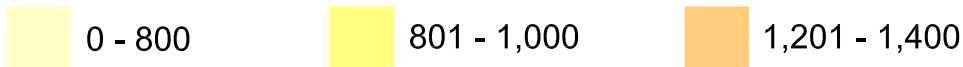
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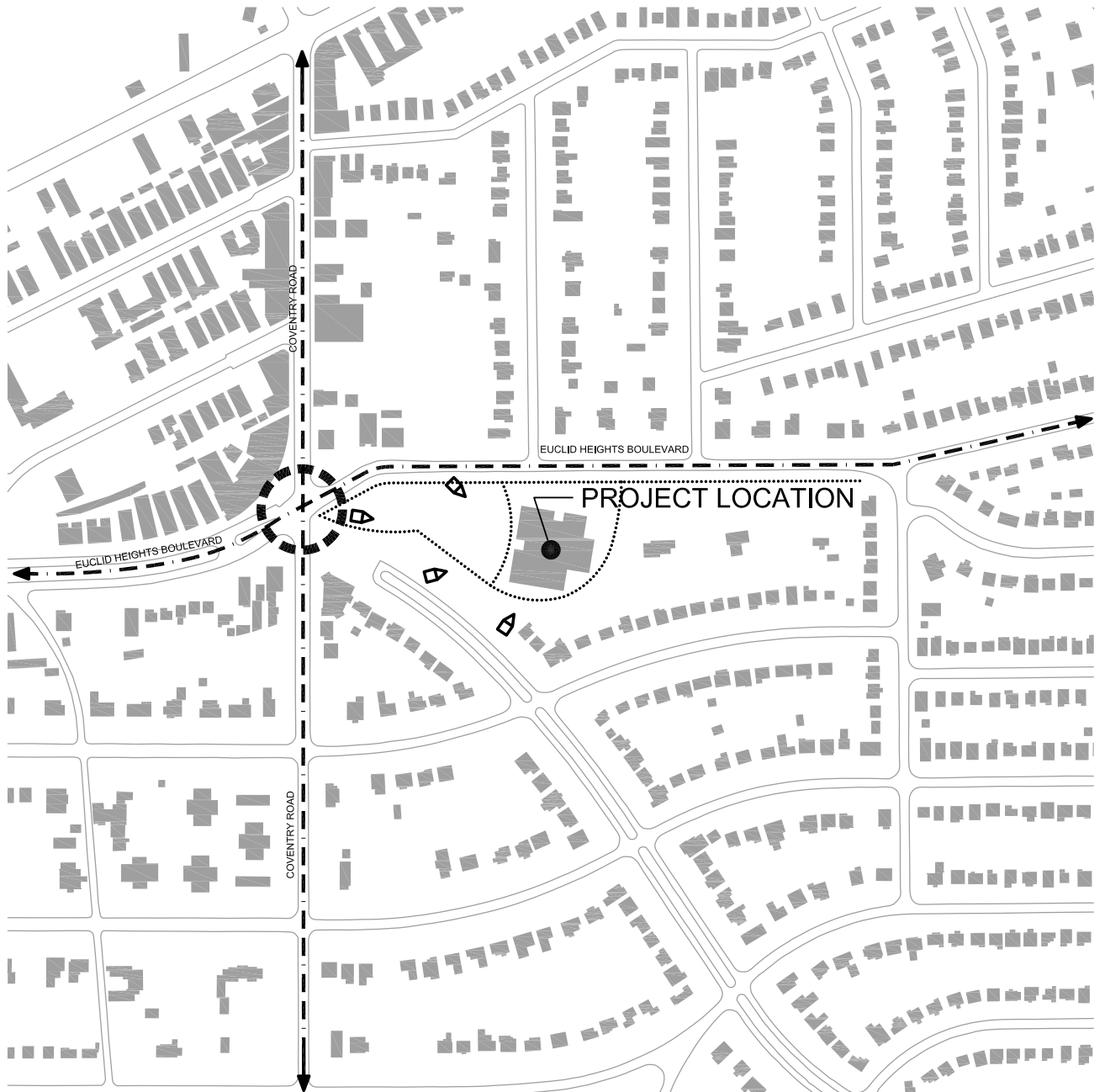
CENSUS - POPULATION



TOTAL POPULATION 2010



CIRCULATION



LEGEND



Scale: 1" = 300'-0"



CRITICAL INTERSECTION



CRITICAL VIEW

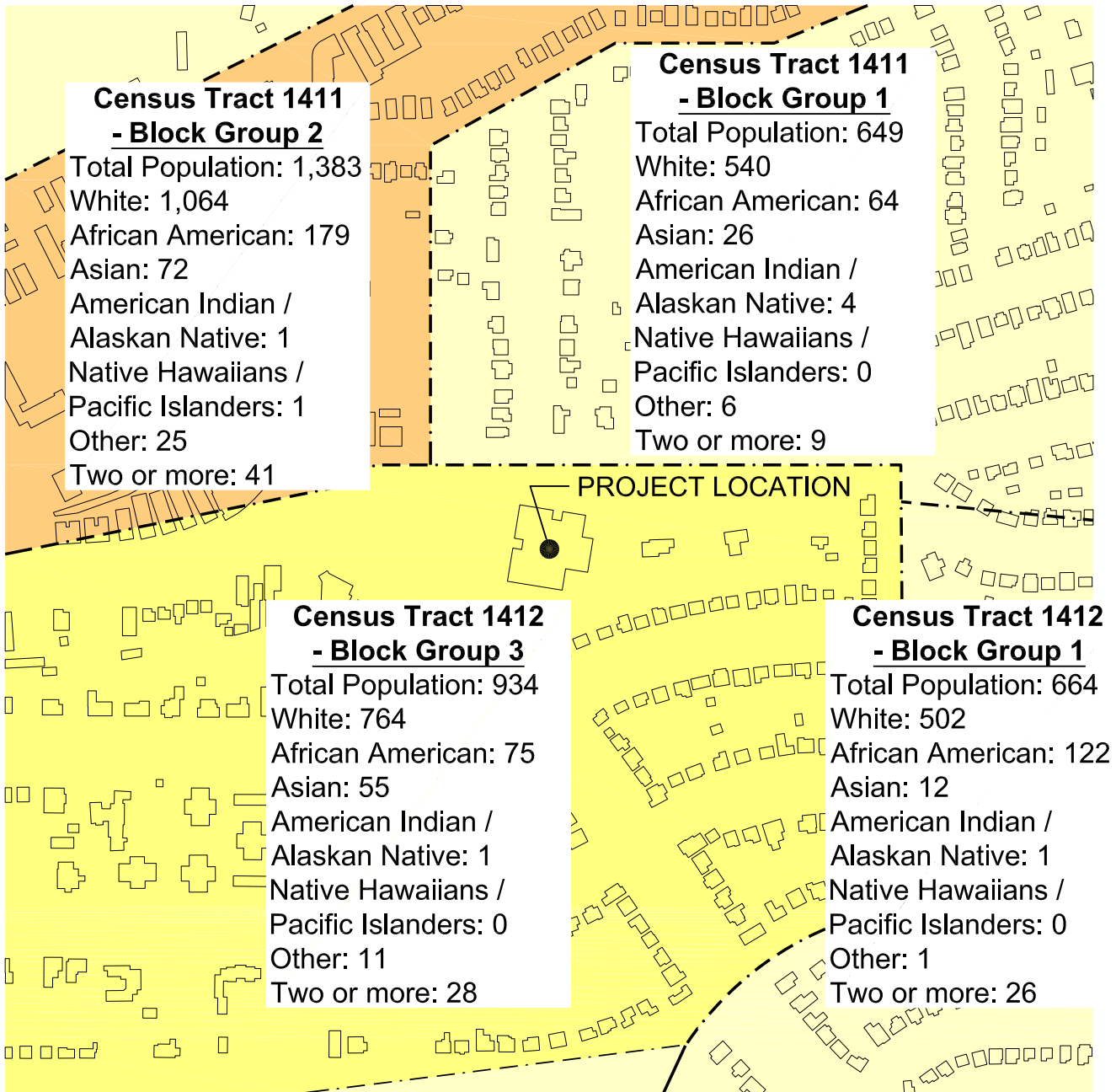


HEAVY VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

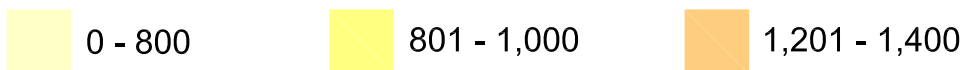
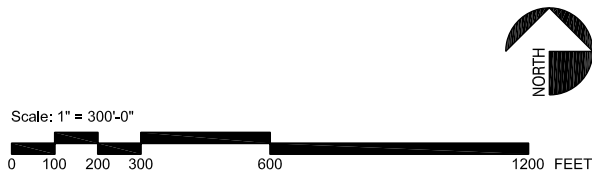


PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC

CENSUS 2010 - RACE

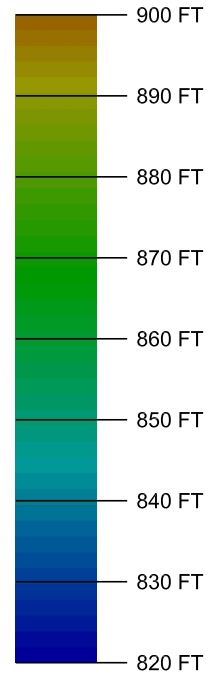


TOTAL POPULATION 2010

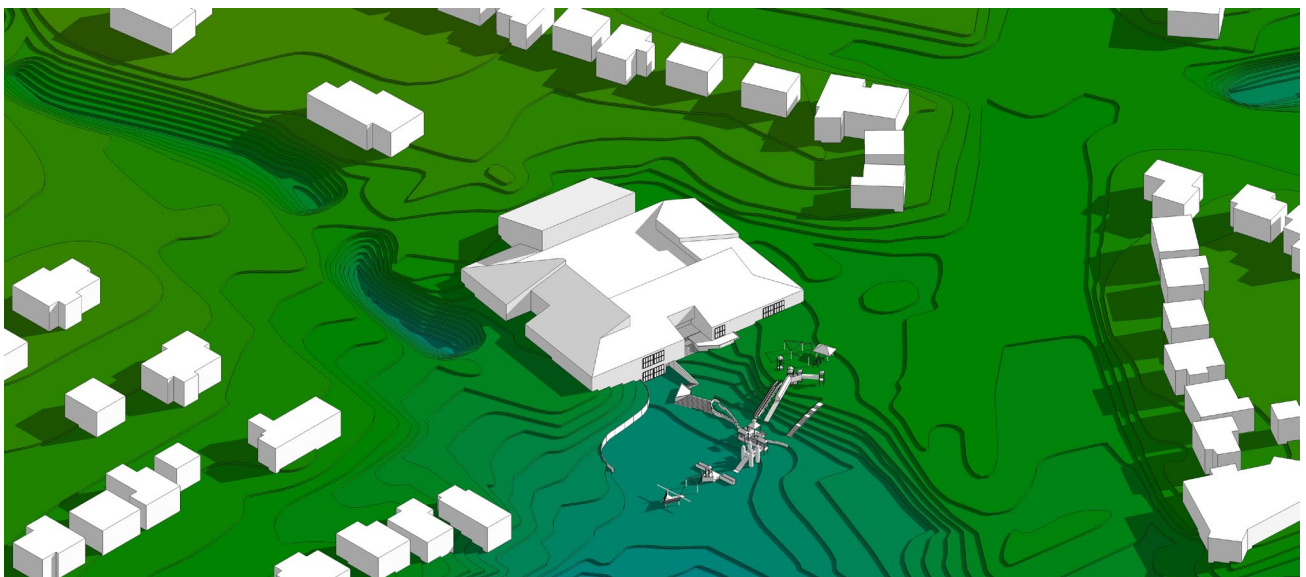
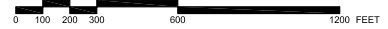




TOPOGRAPHY

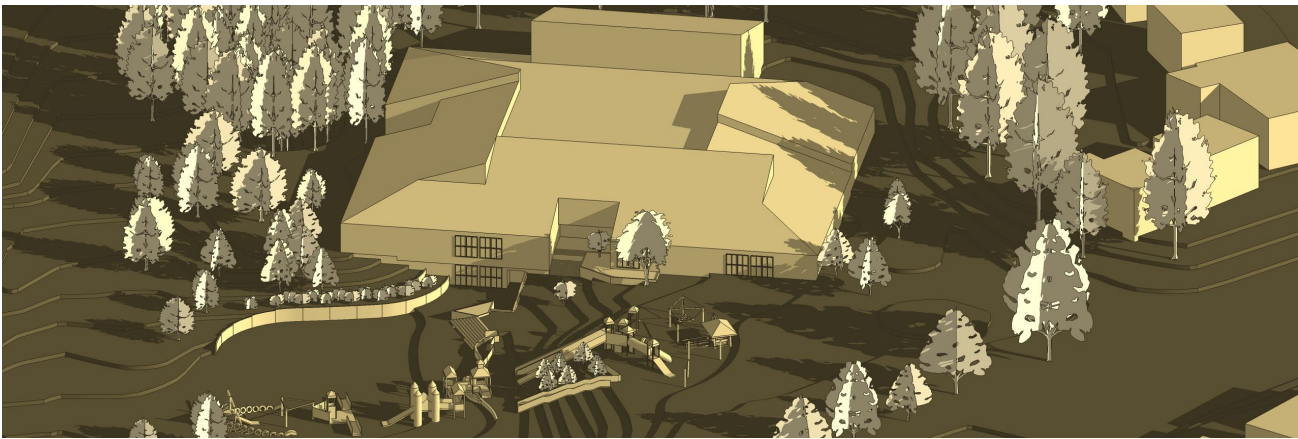
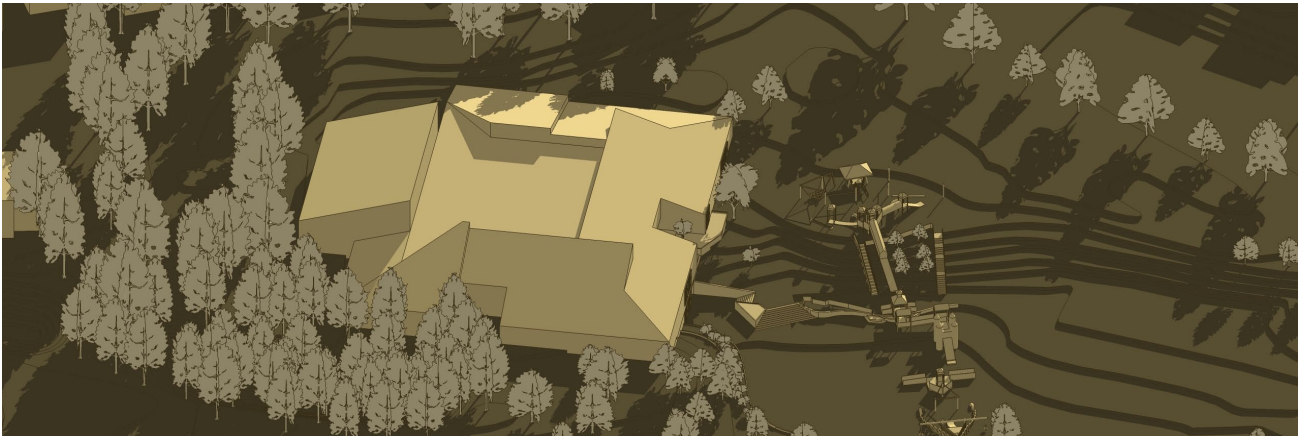
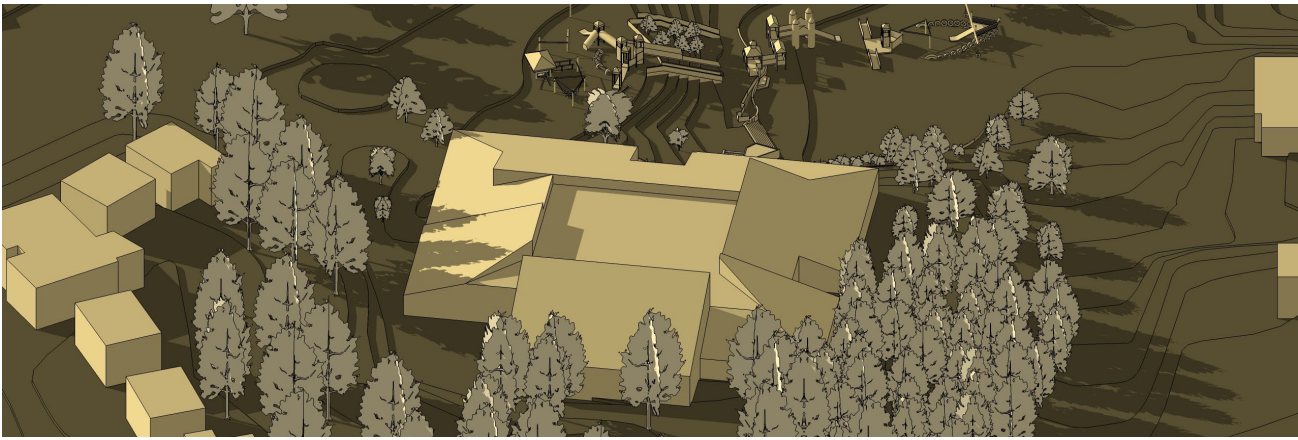
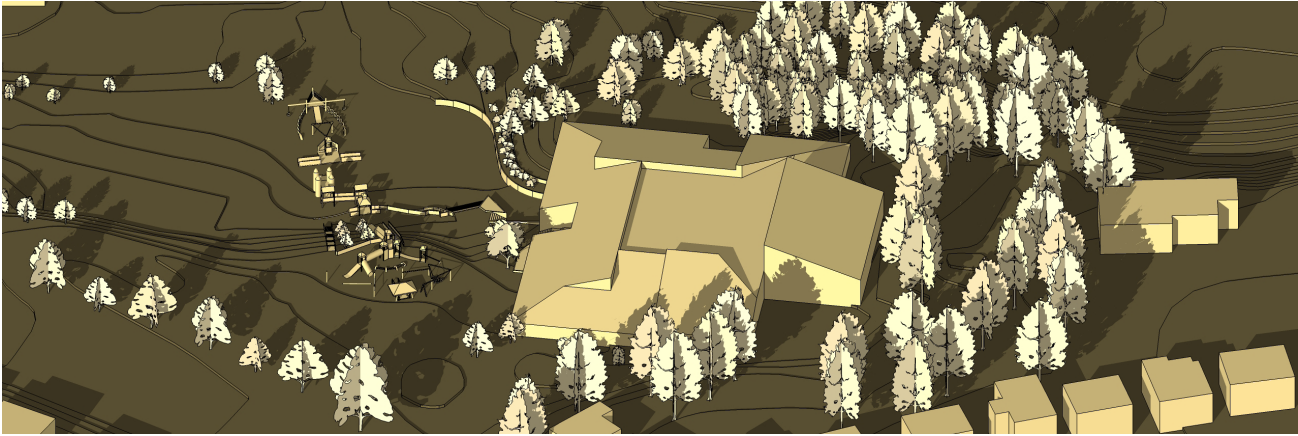


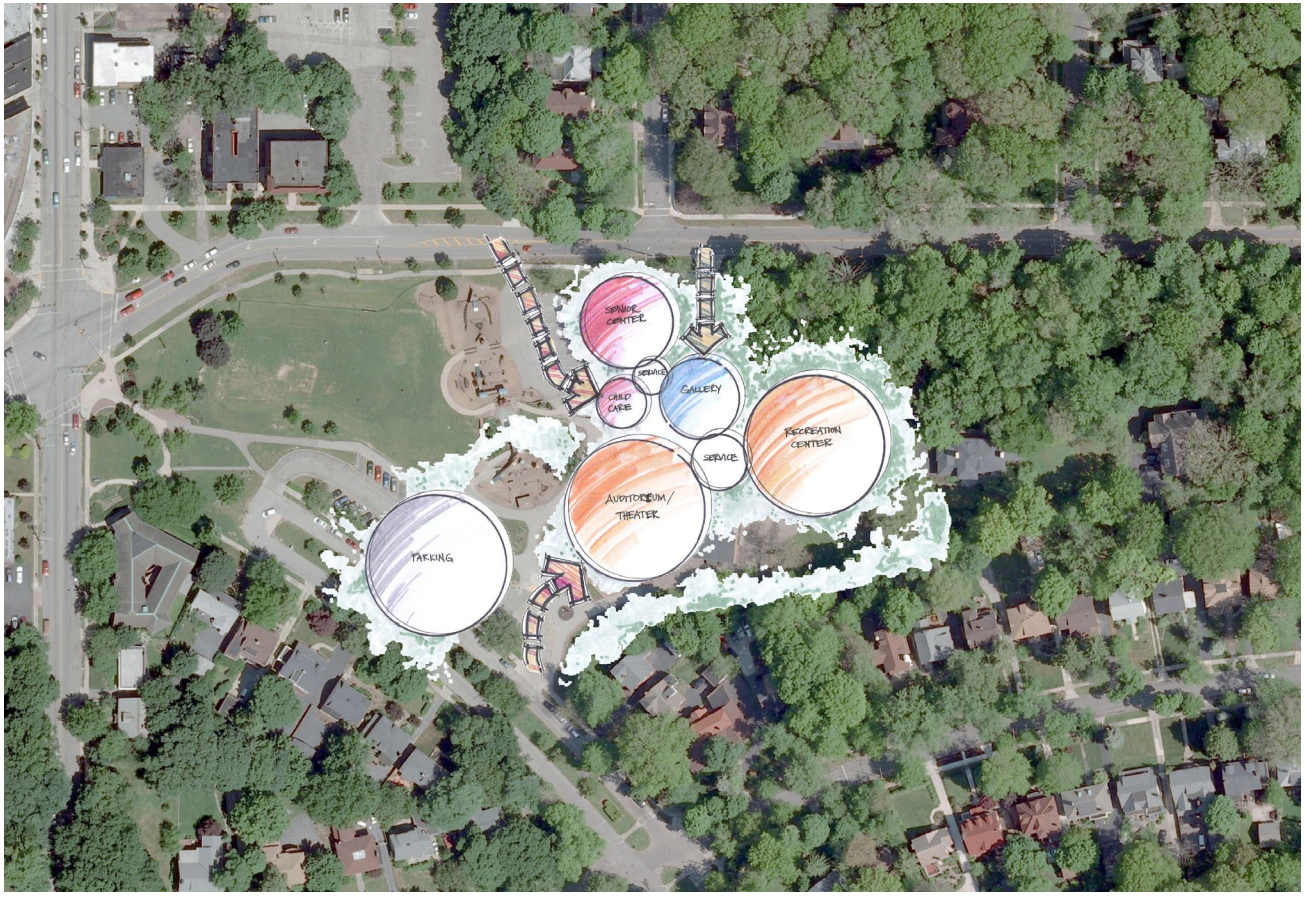
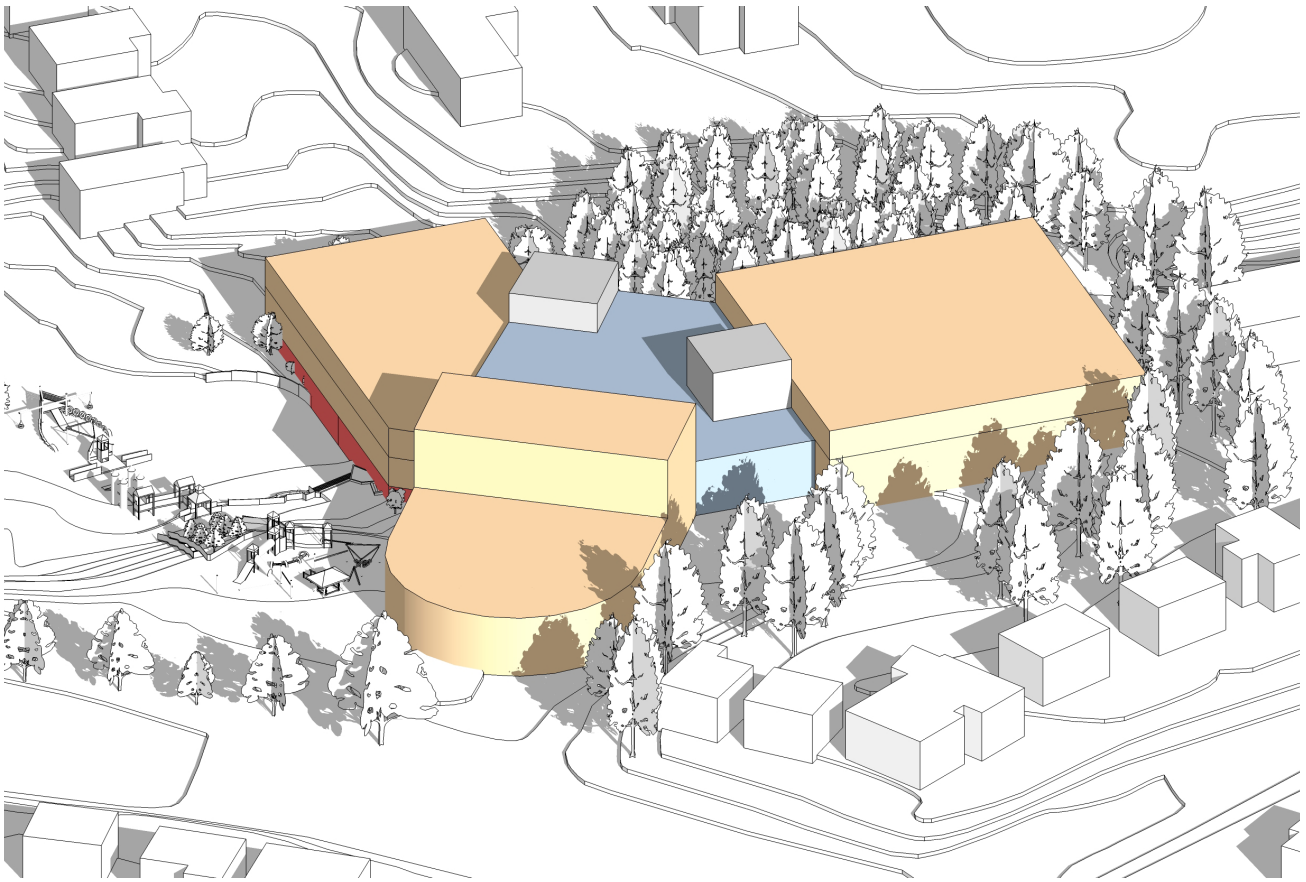
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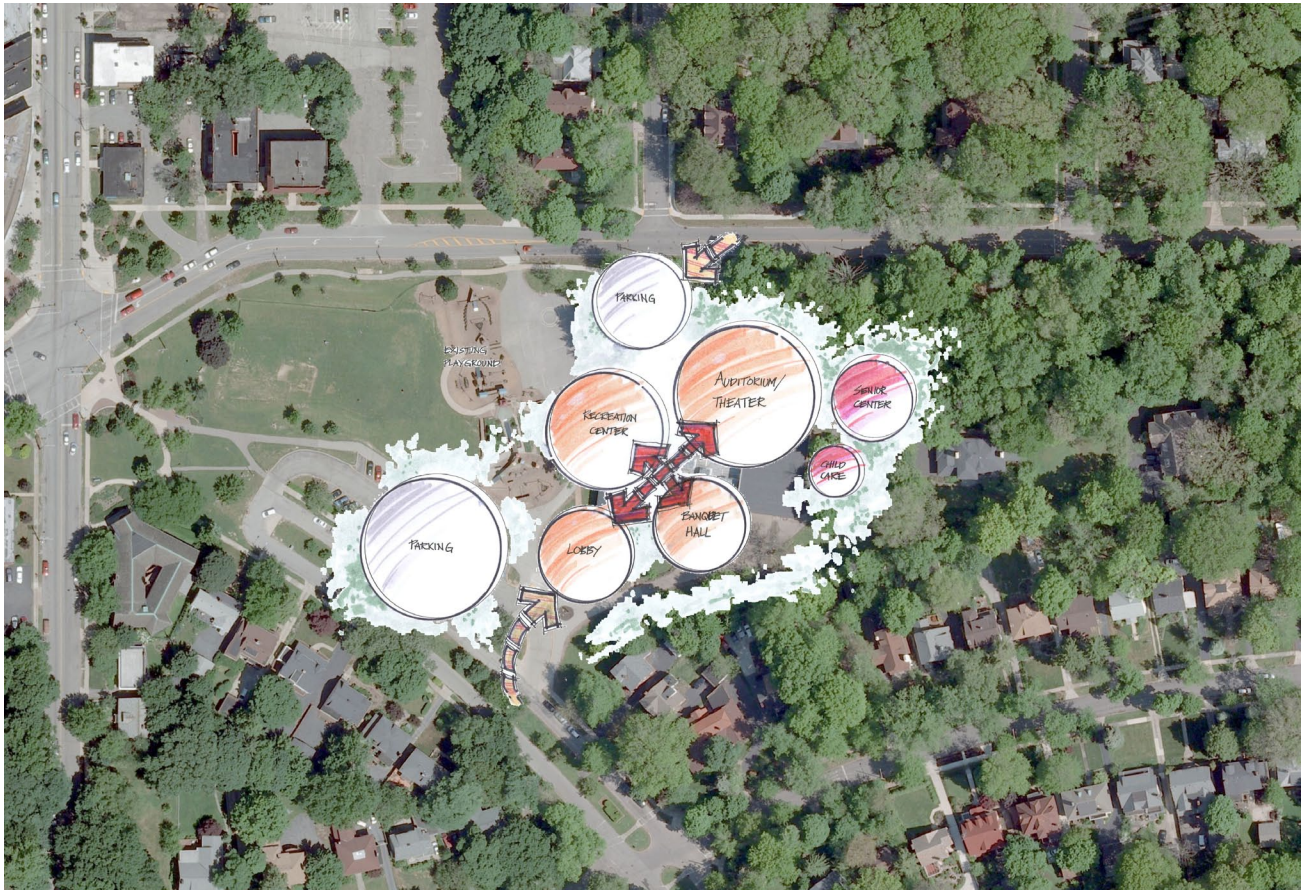
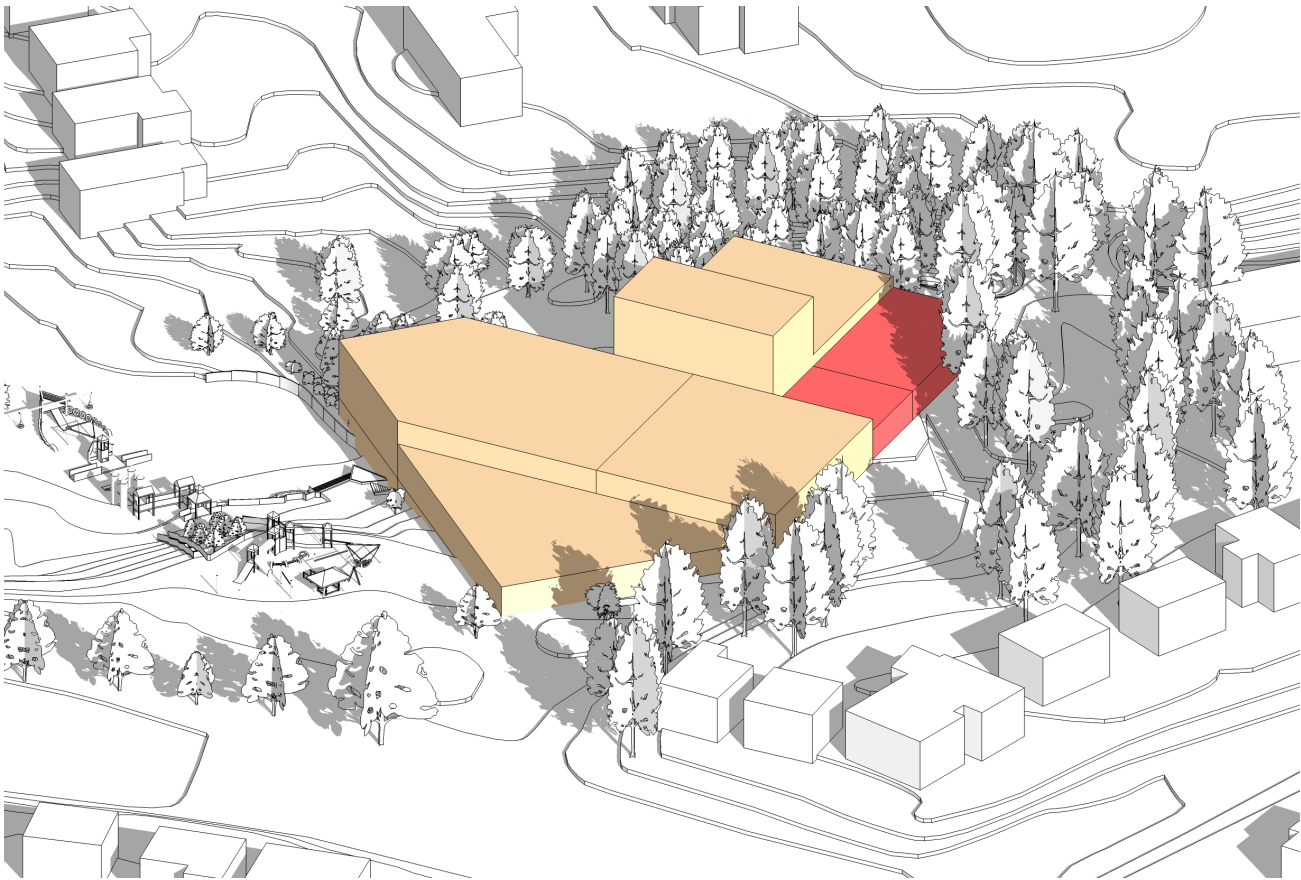
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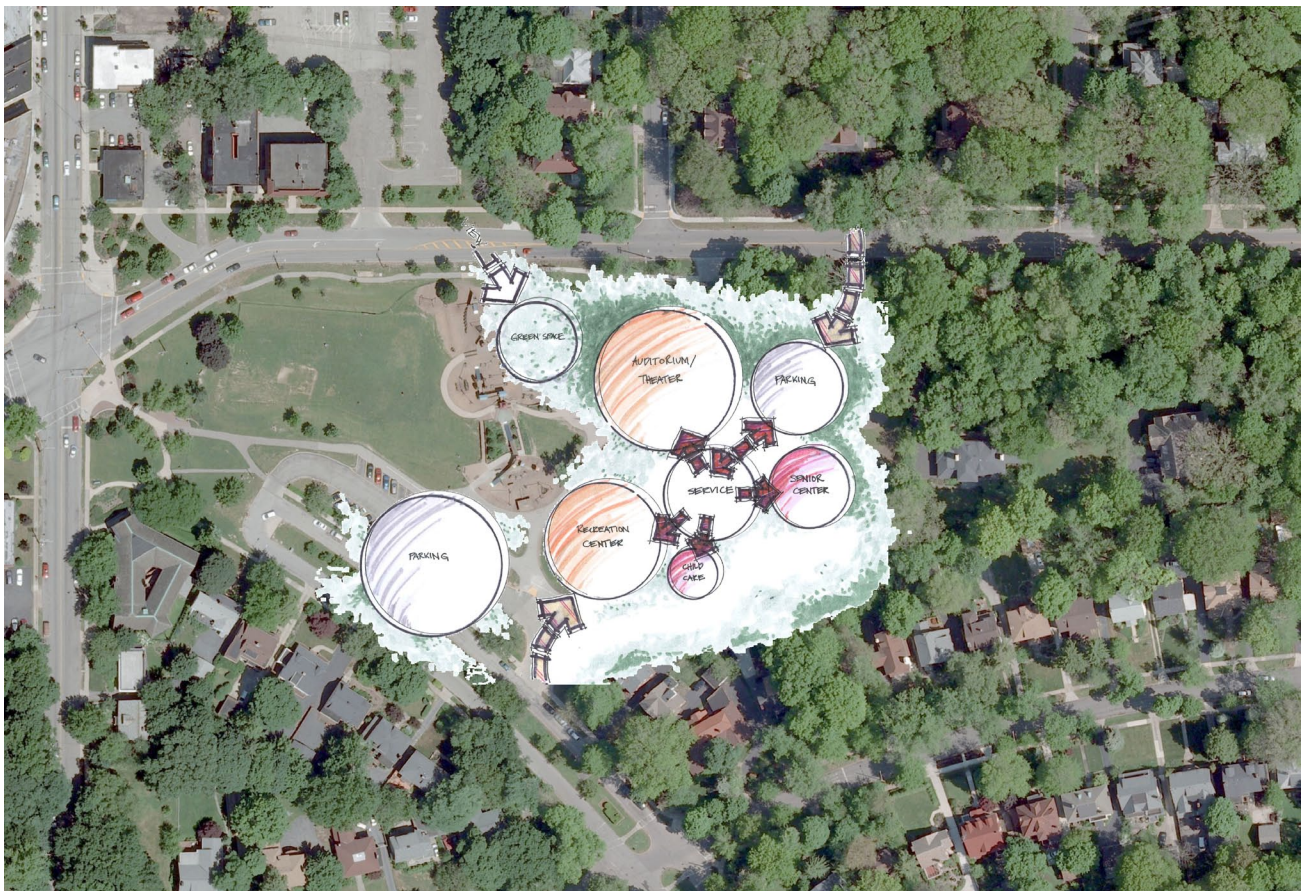
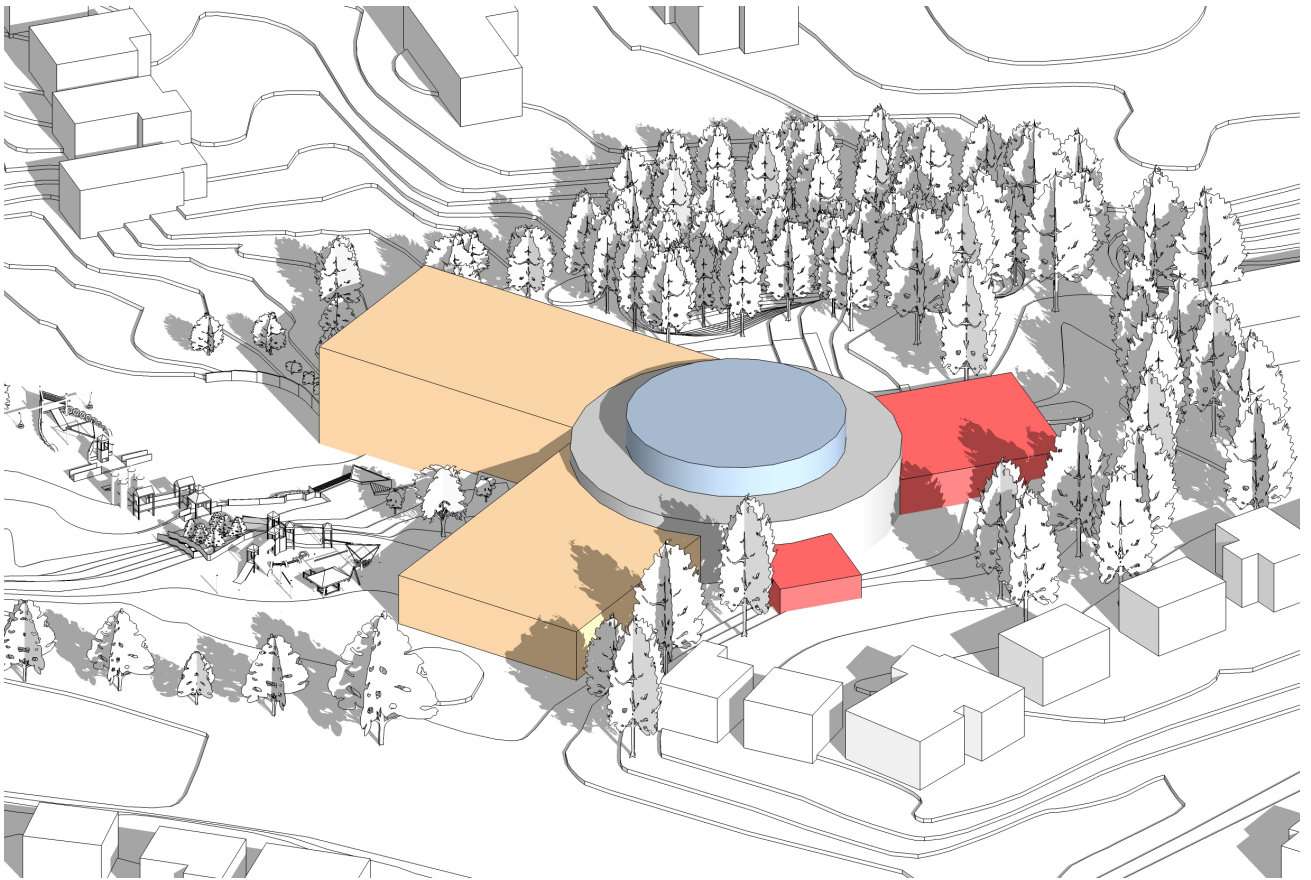
FORMER COVENTRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | 2843 WASHINGTON BLVD., CLEVE. HTS., OHIO 44118

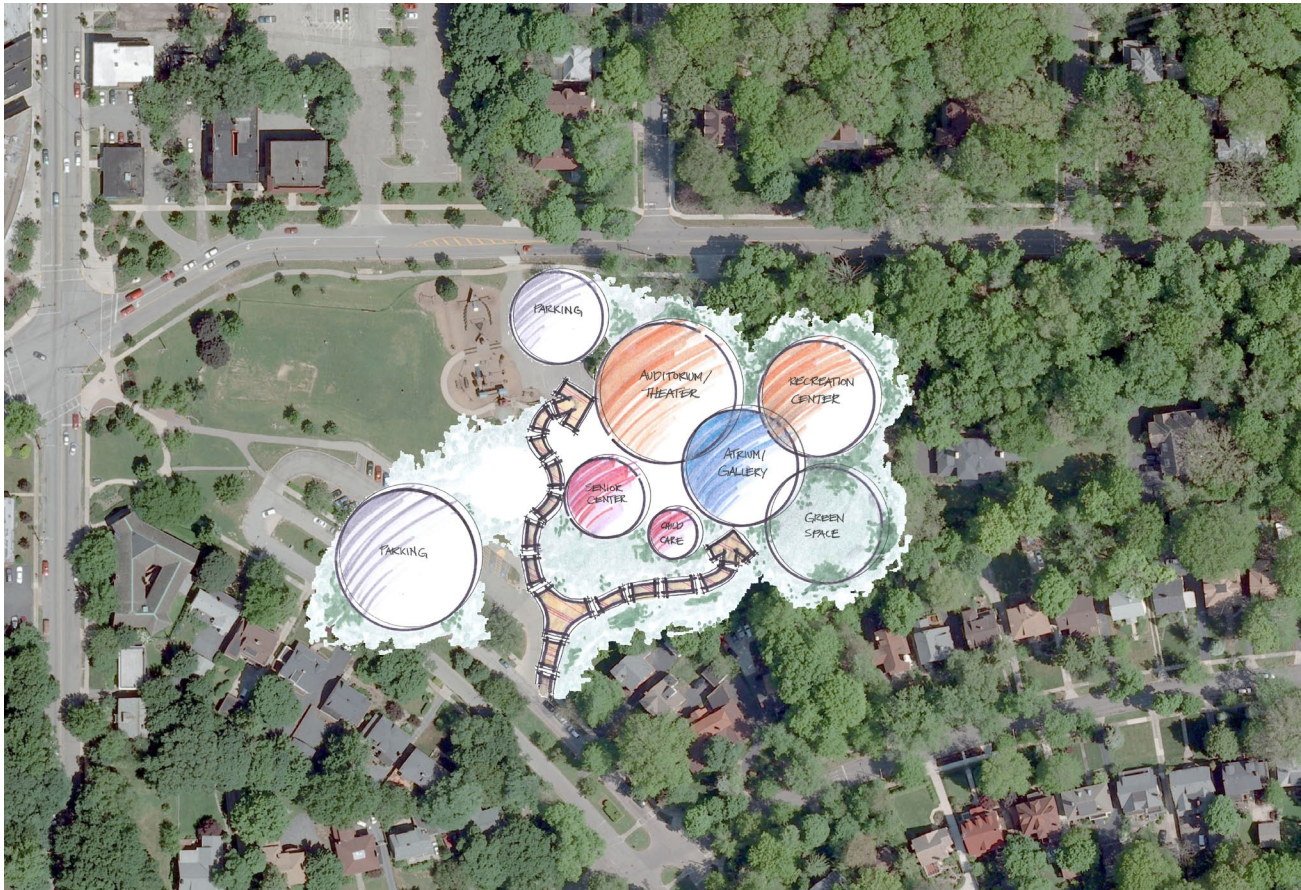


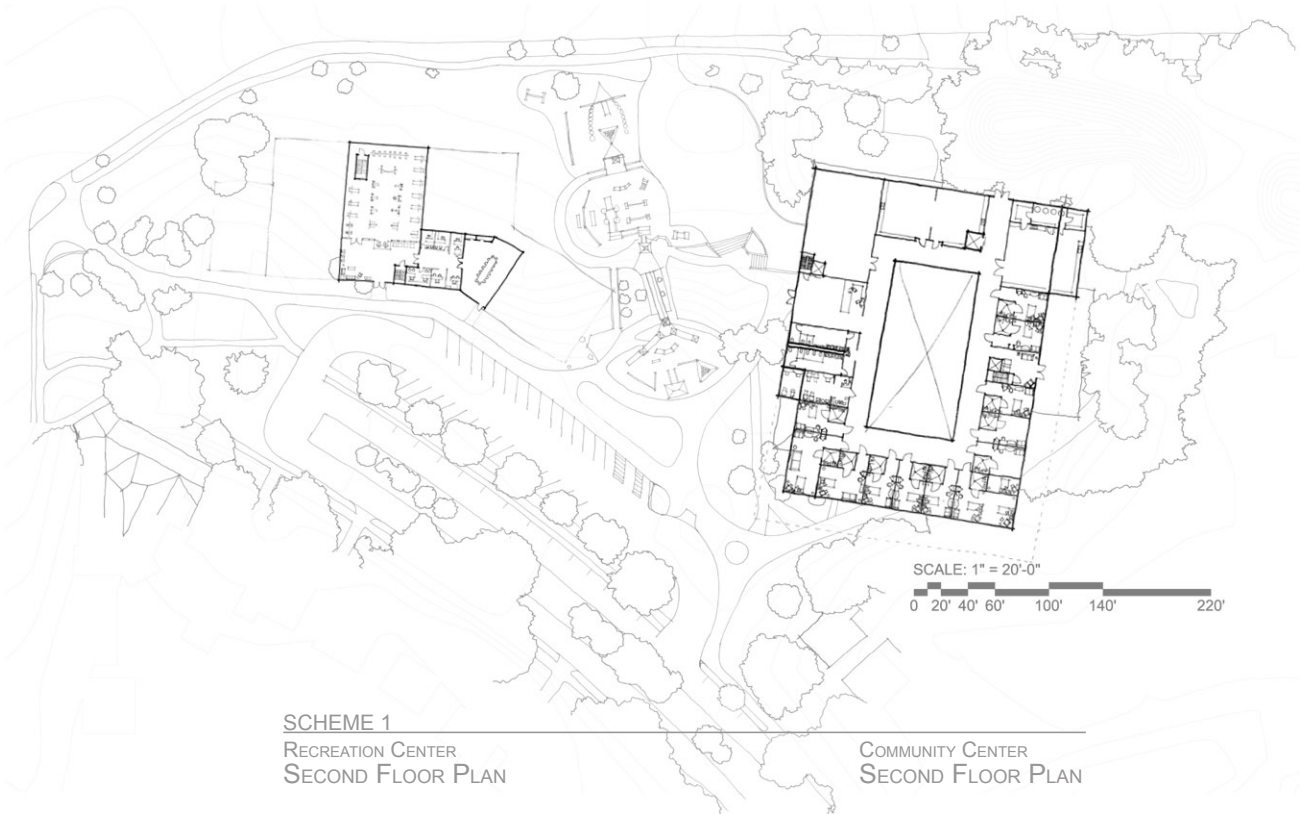


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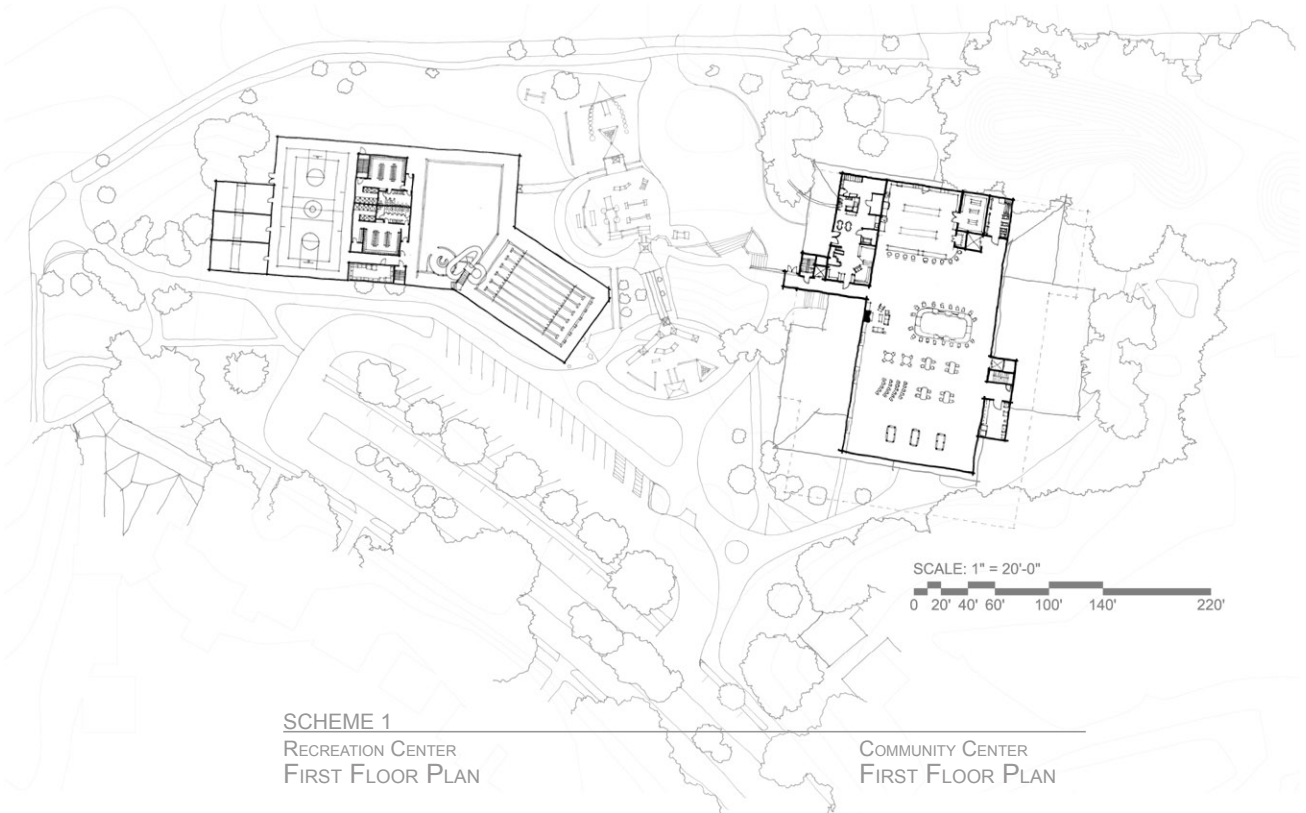






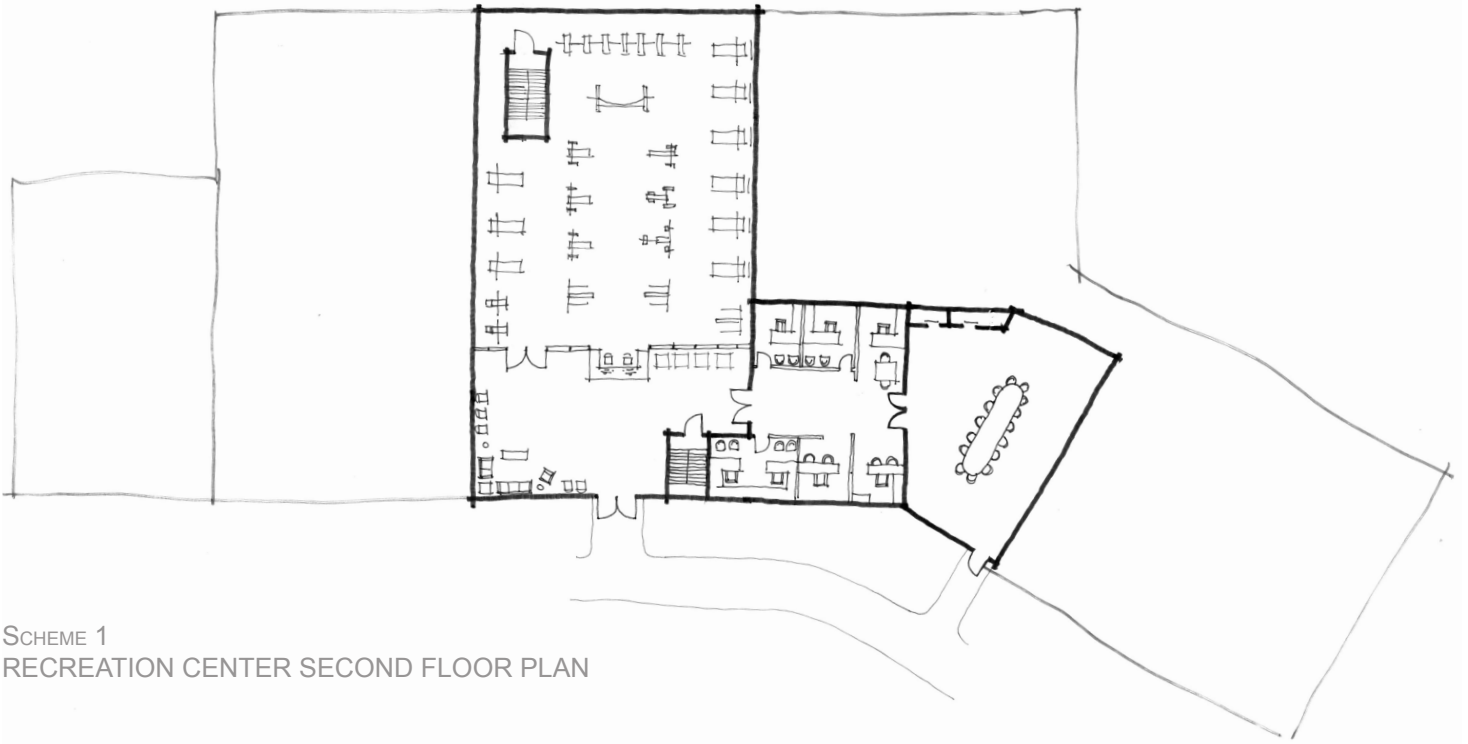
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SECOND FLOOR PLAN

COMMUNITY CENTER
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

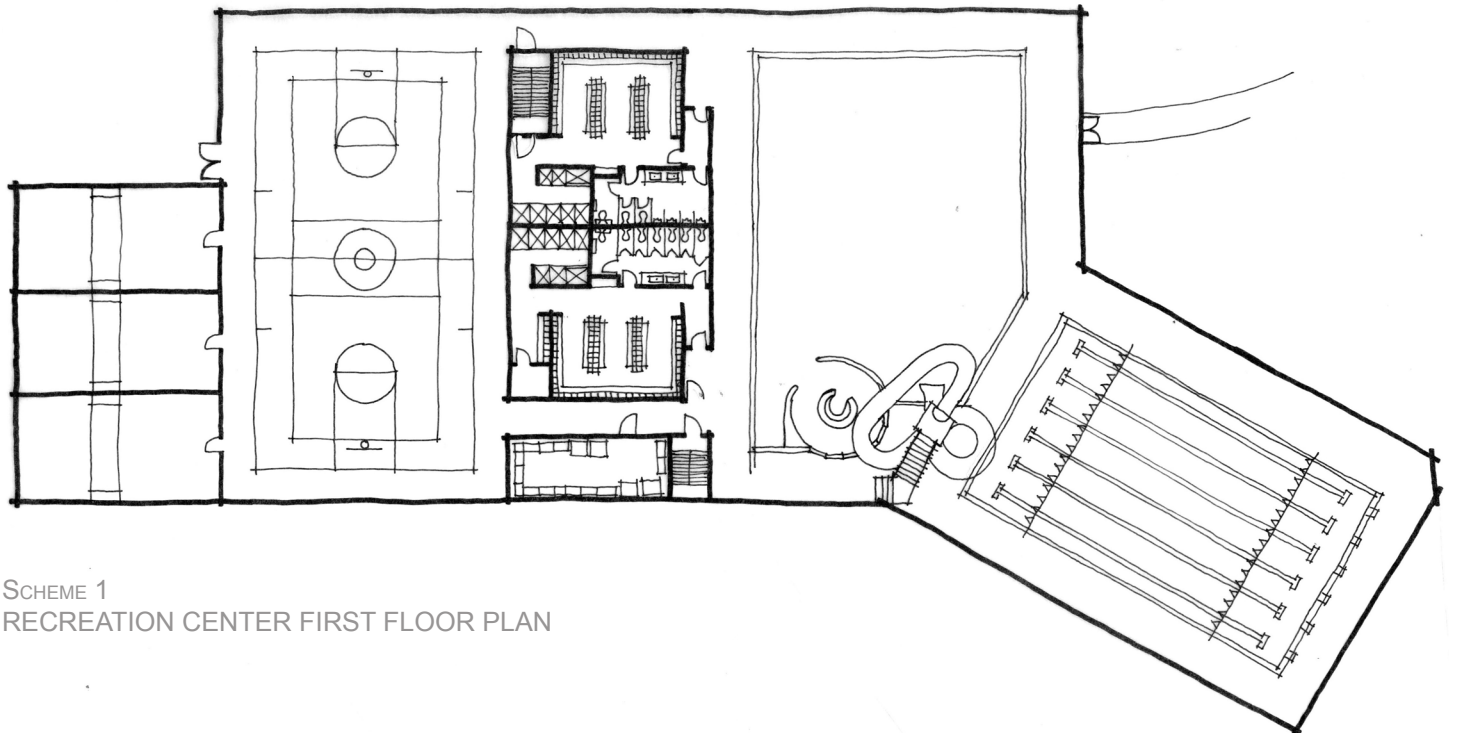


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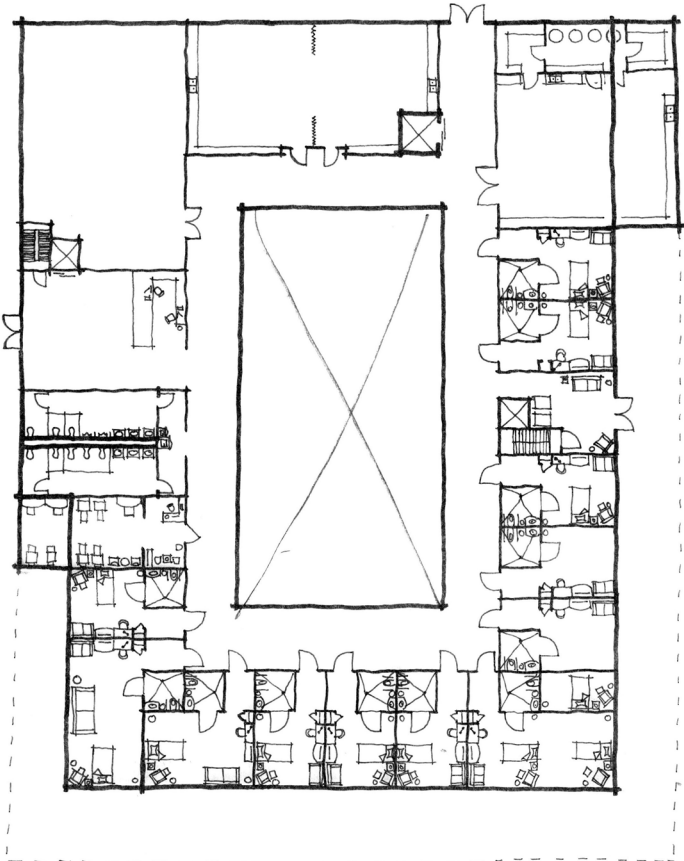
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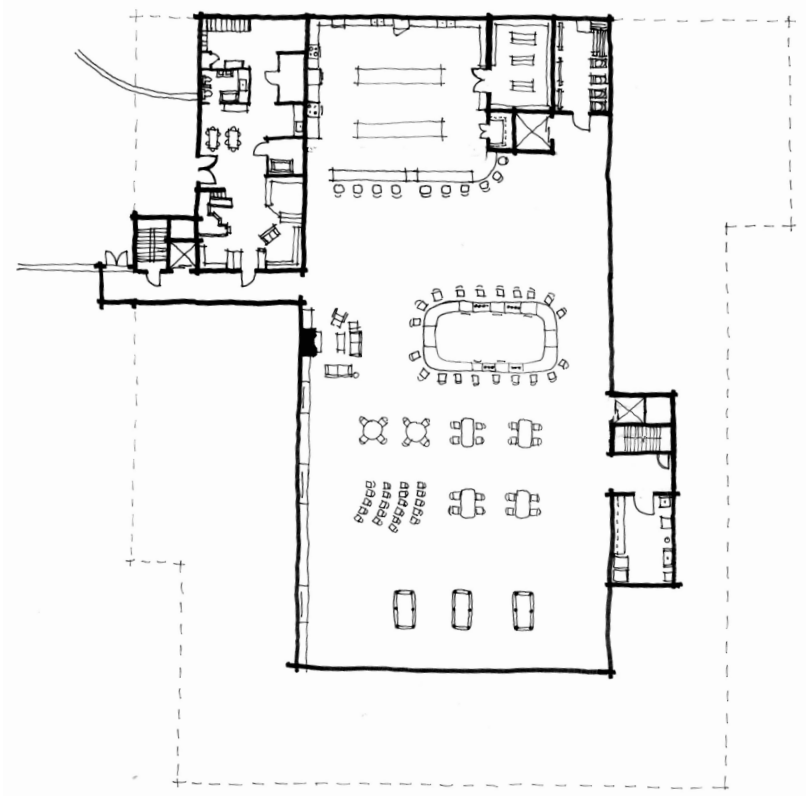
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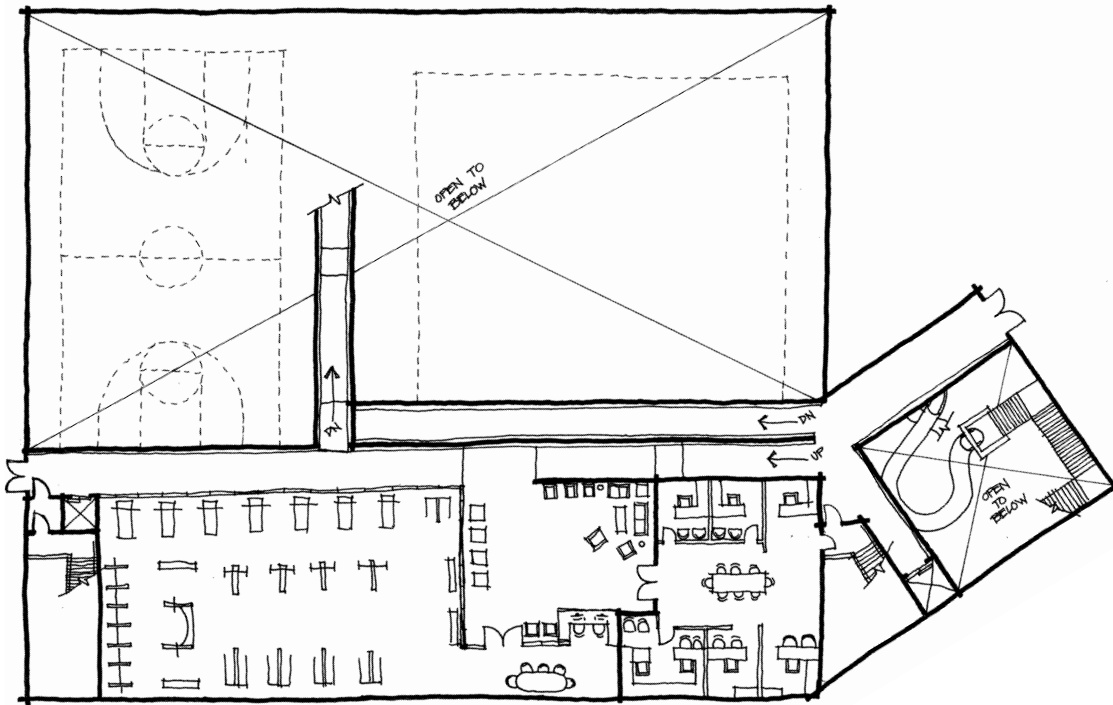
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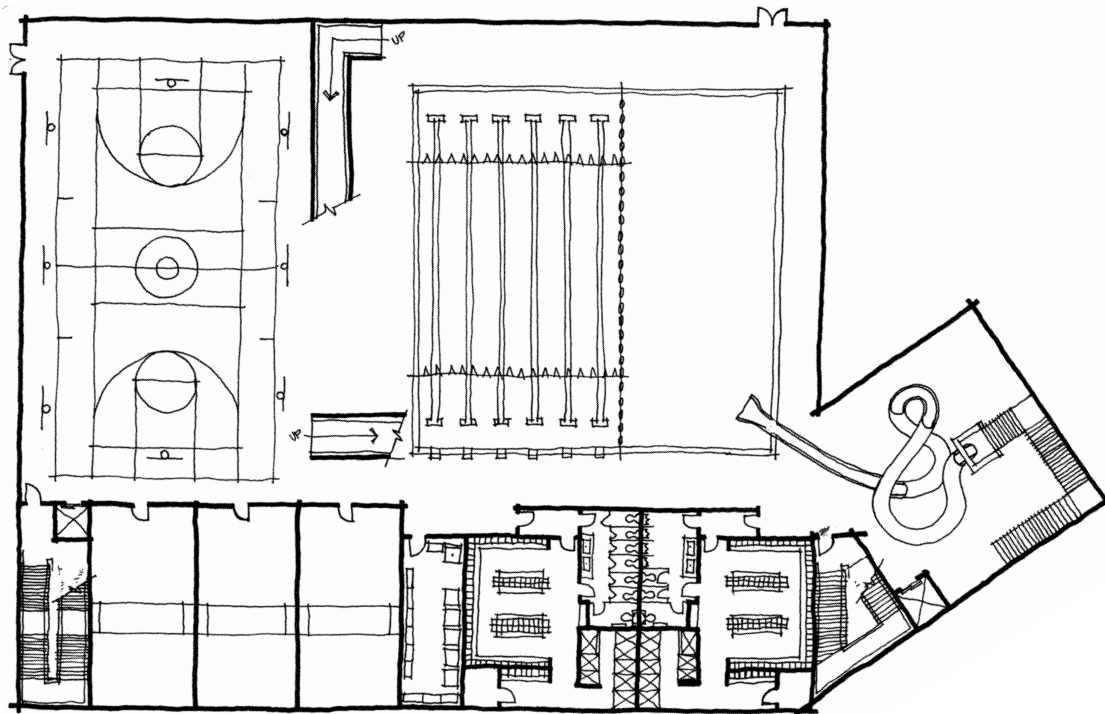
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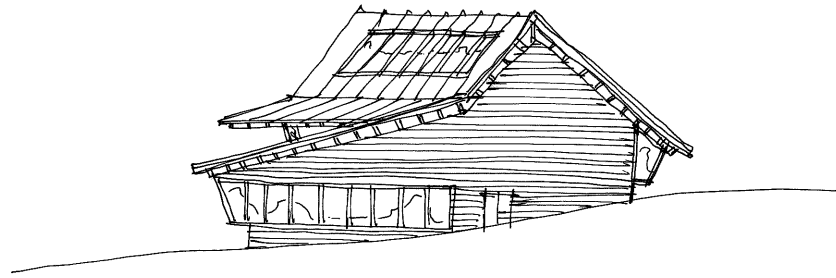
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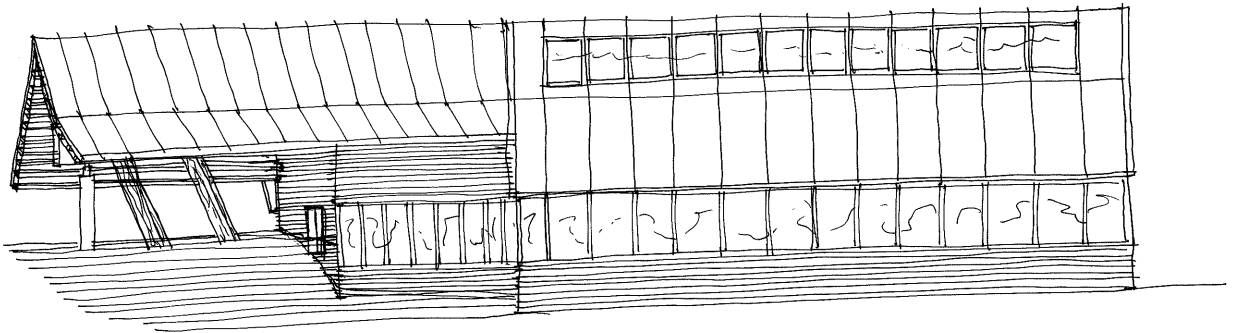
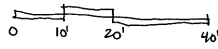
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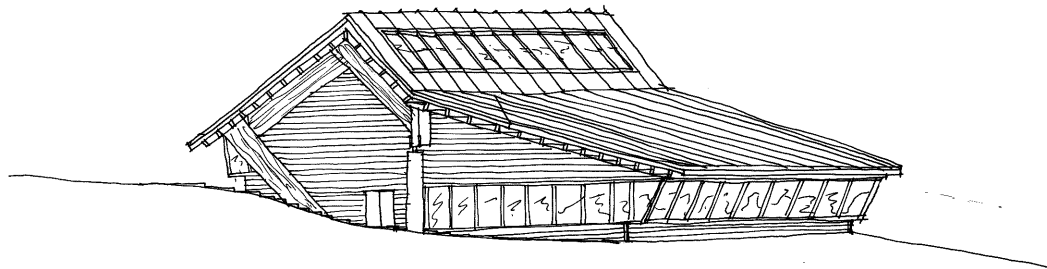
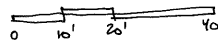
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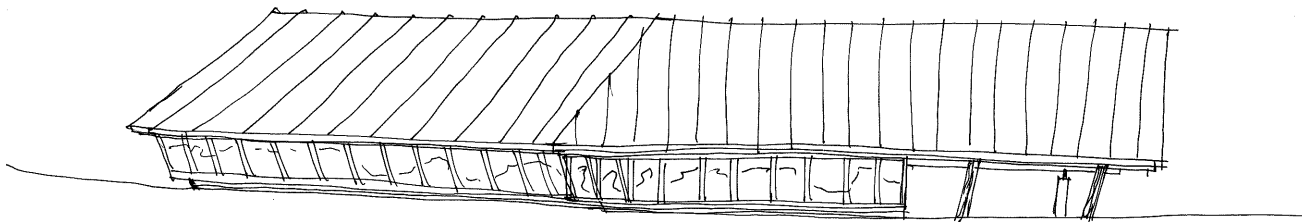
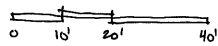
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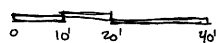
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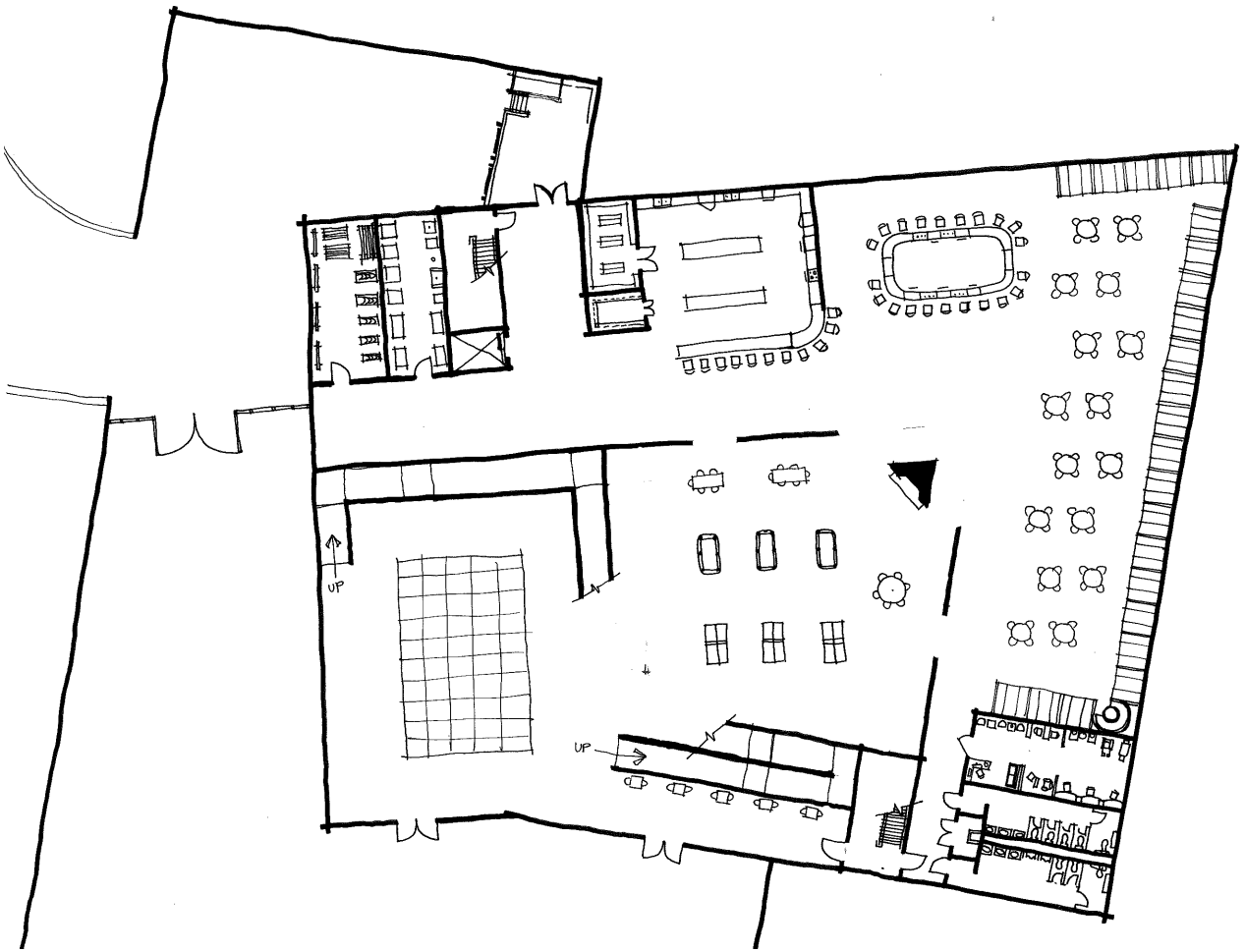


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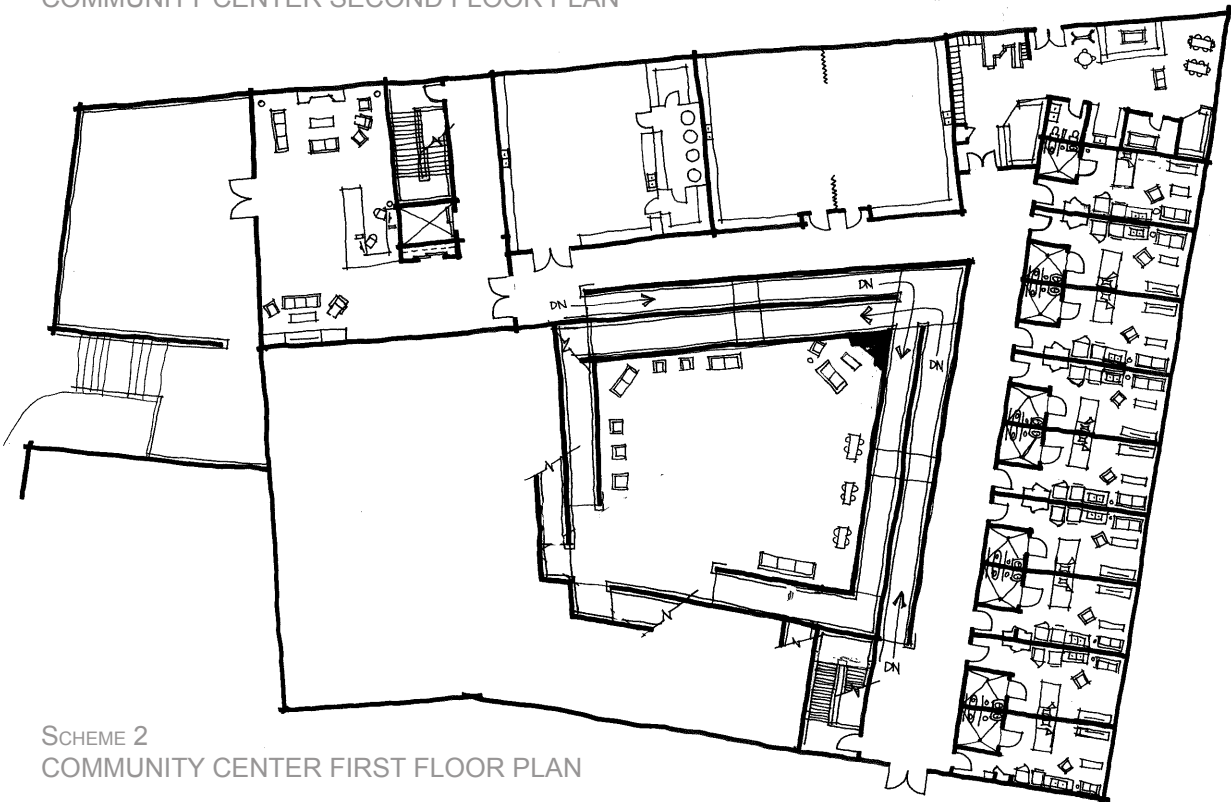


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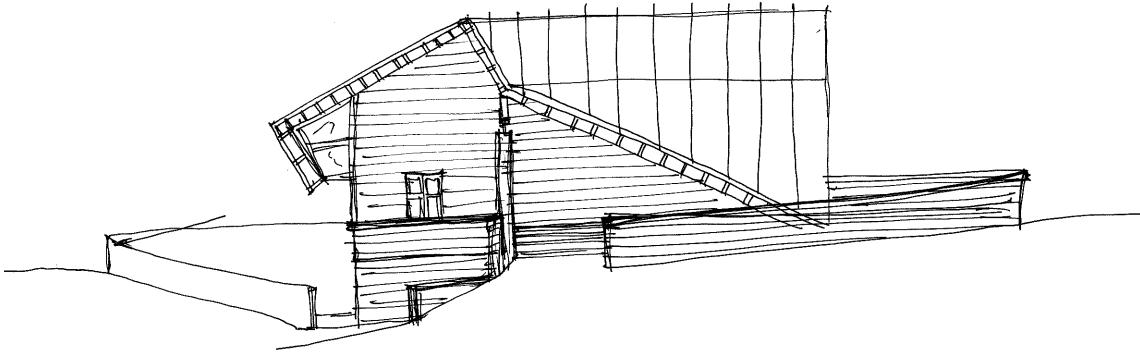




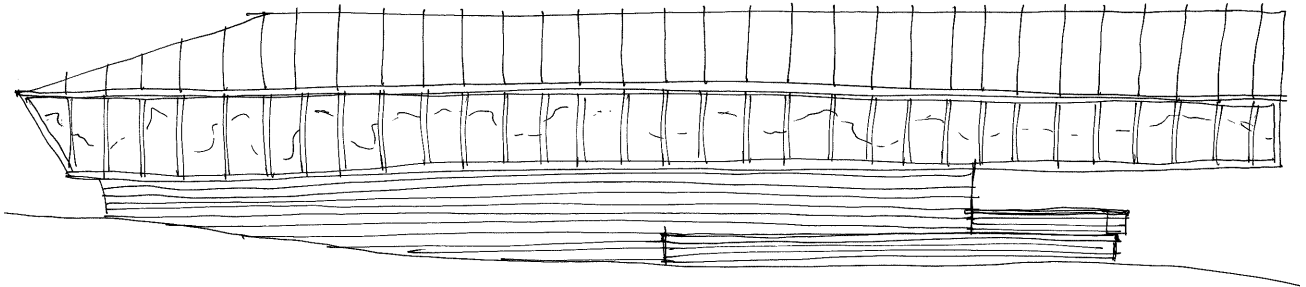
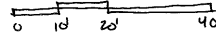
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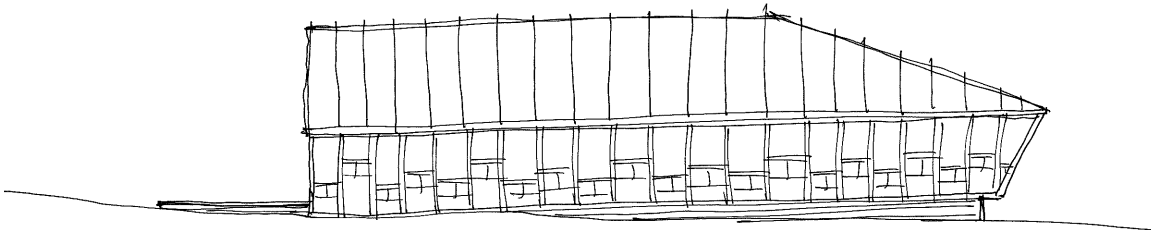
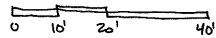
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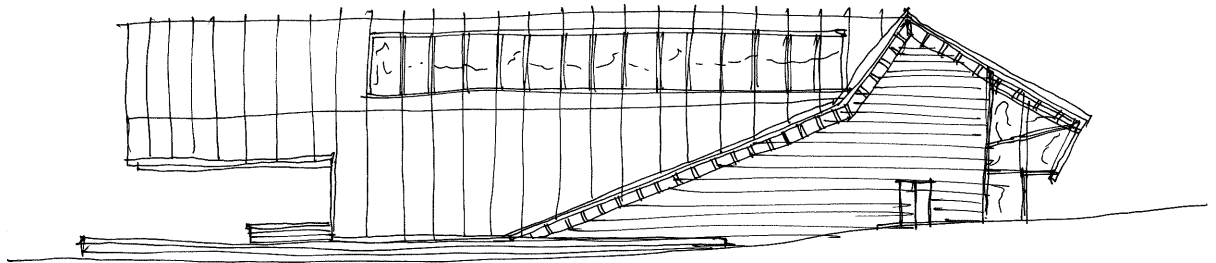
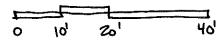
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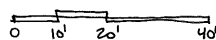
COMMUNITY CENTER
NORTH ELEVATION

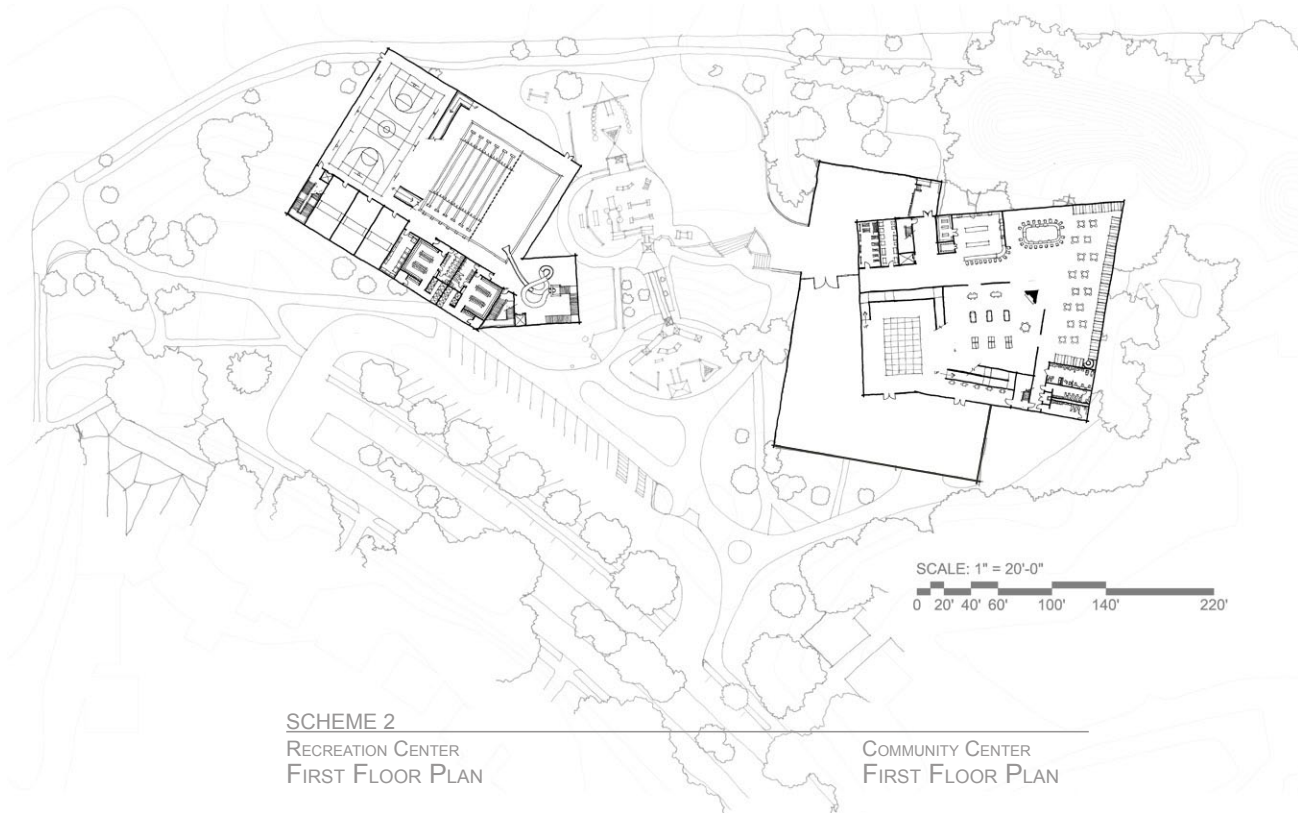
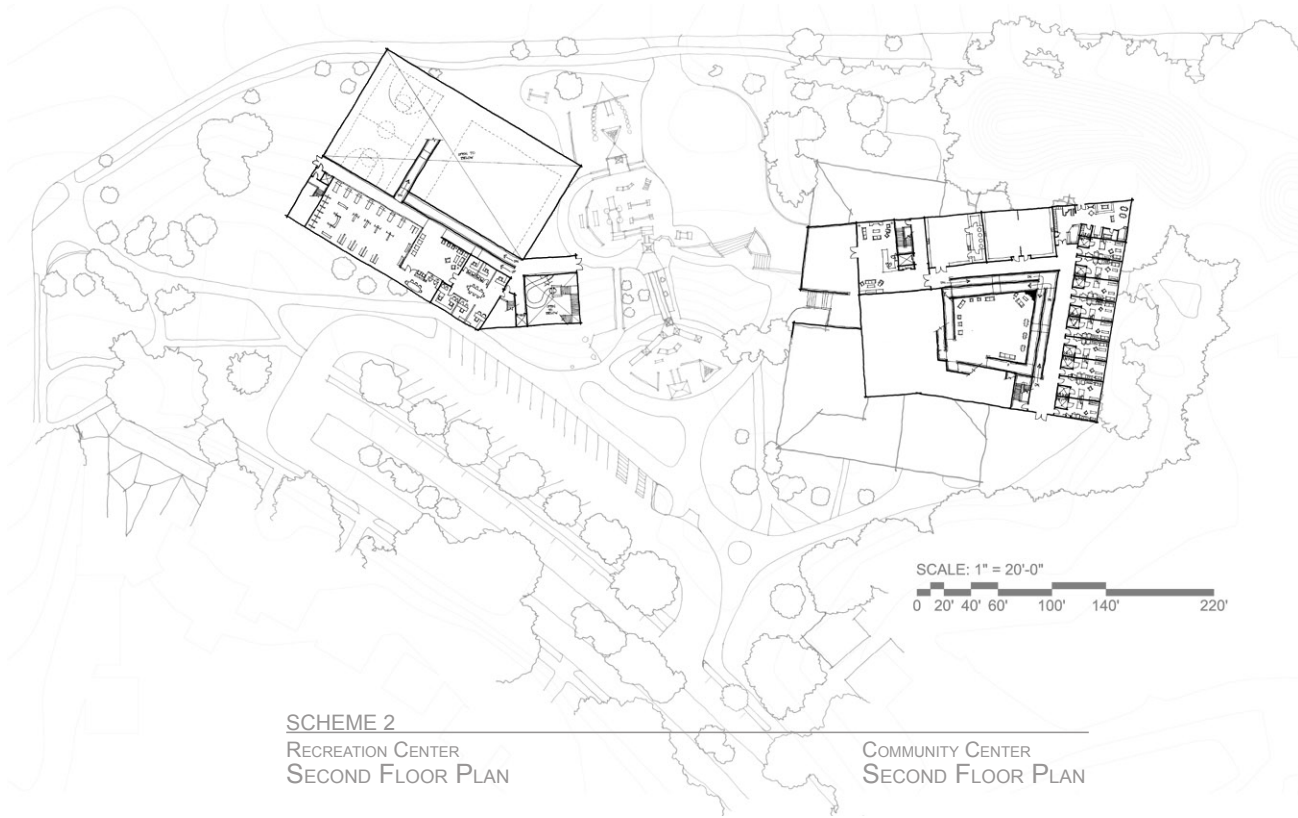


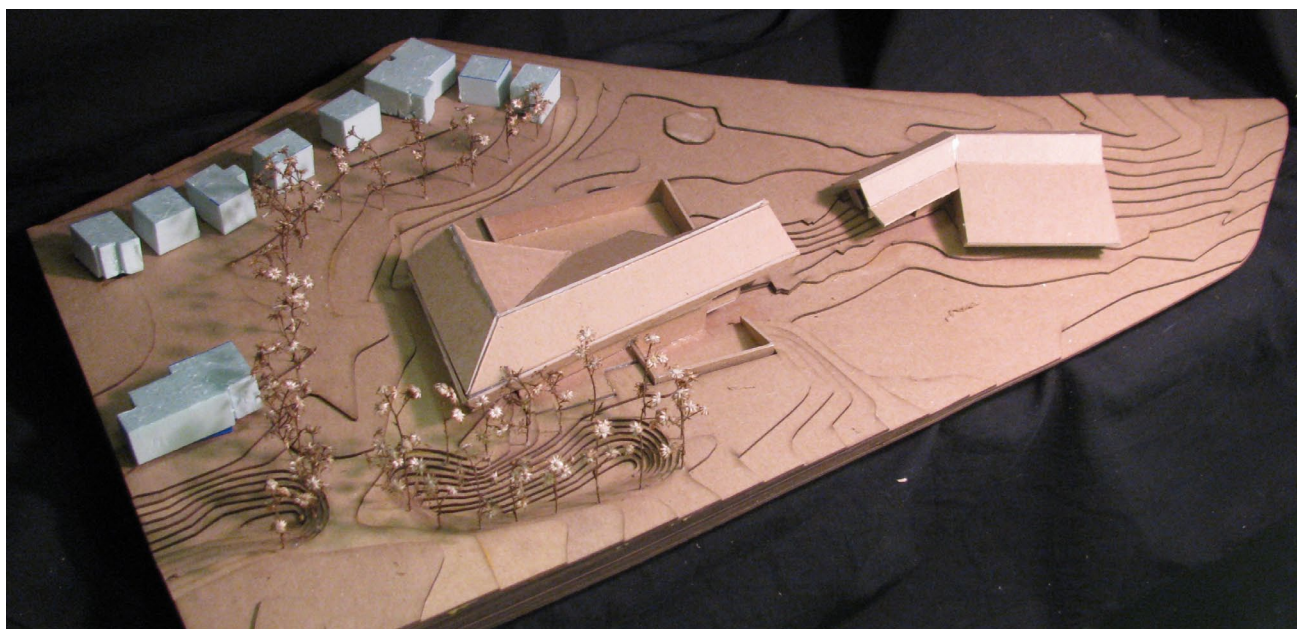
COMMUNITY CENTER
EAST ELEVATION

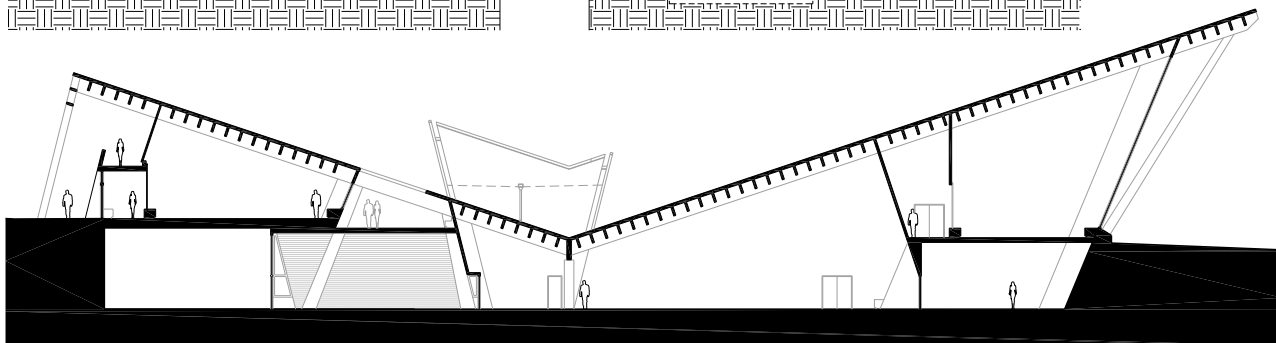
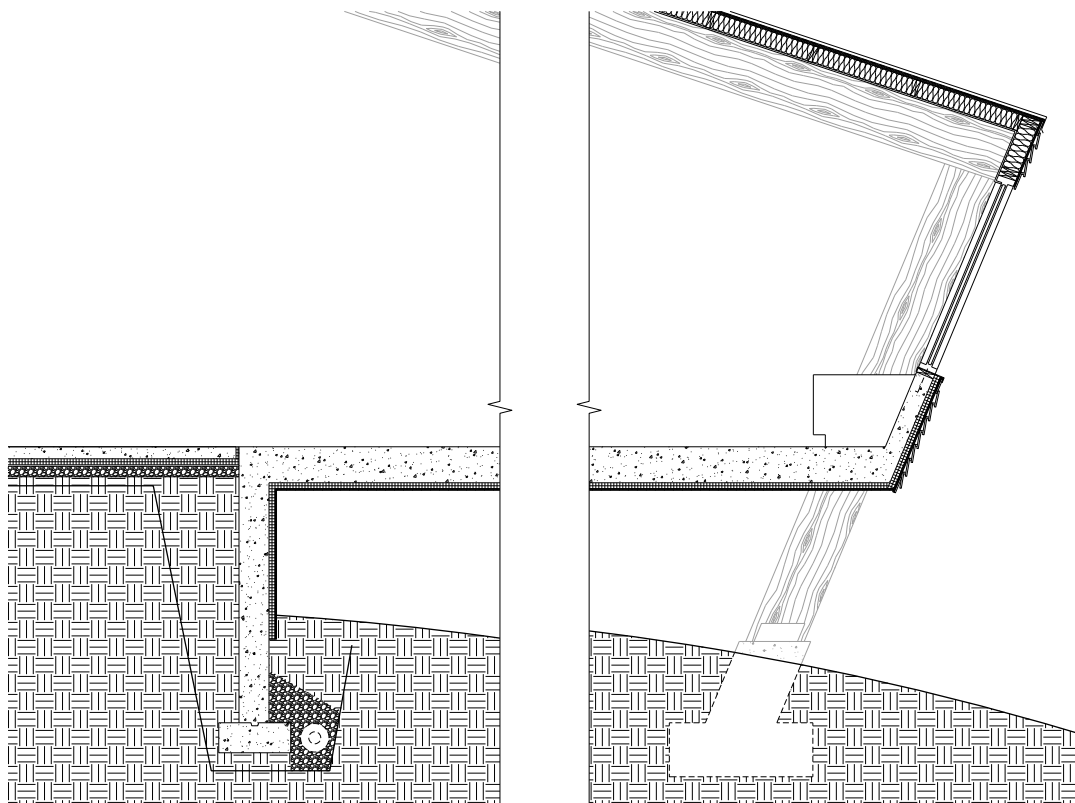
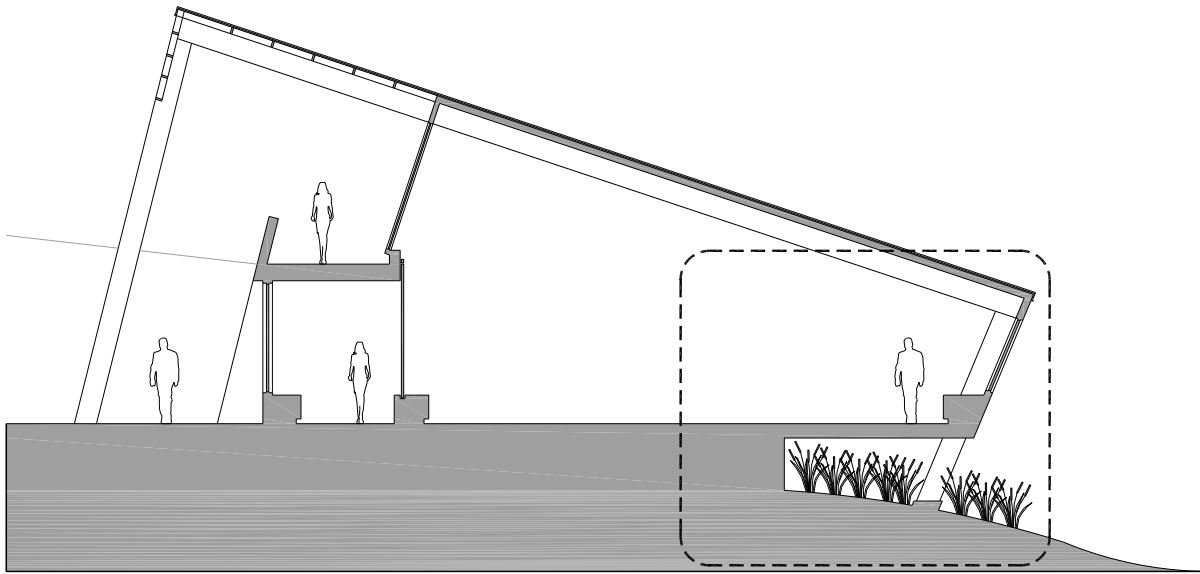


COMMUNITY CENTER
SOUTH ELEVATION

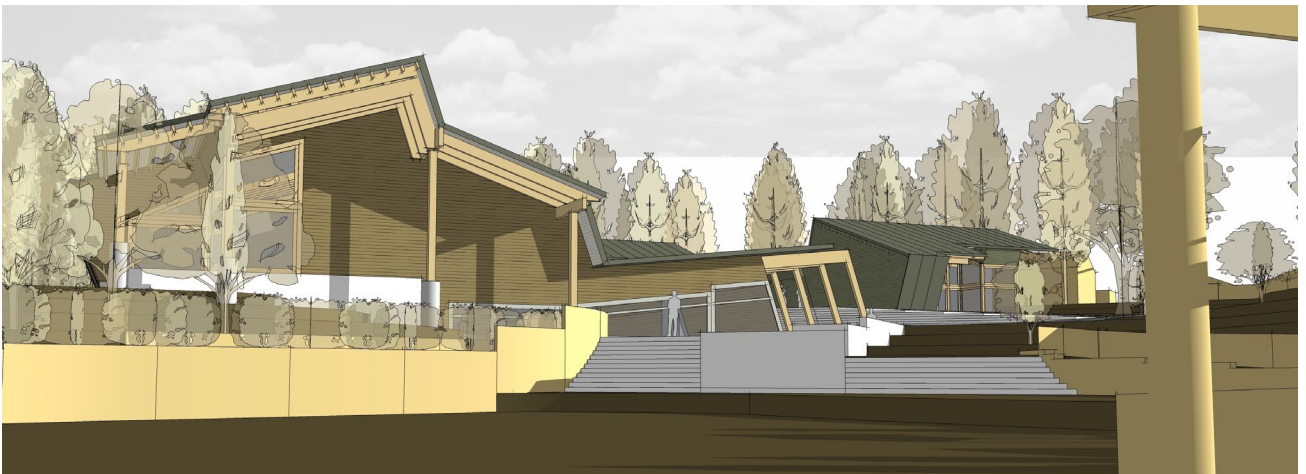
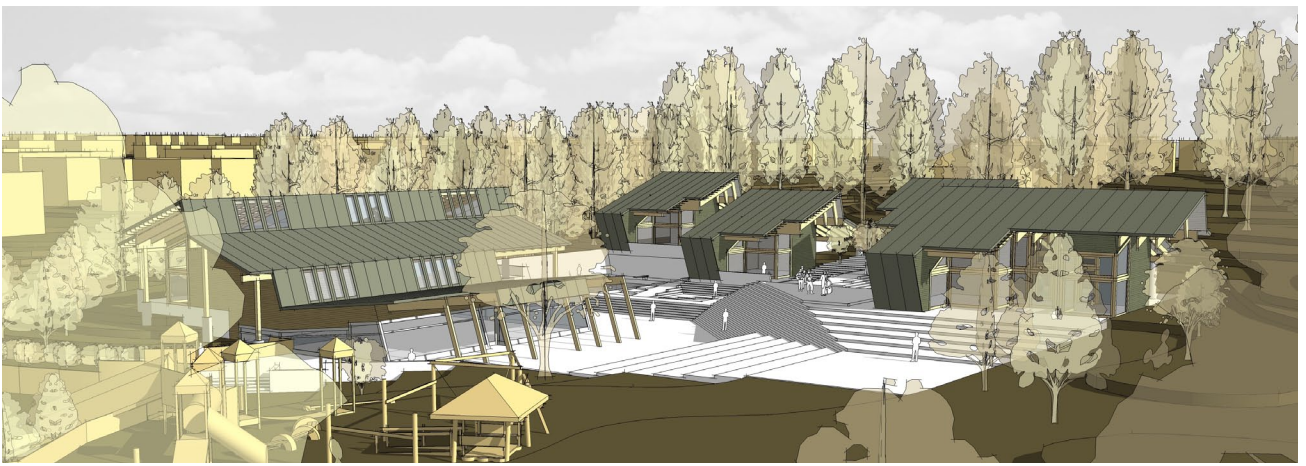




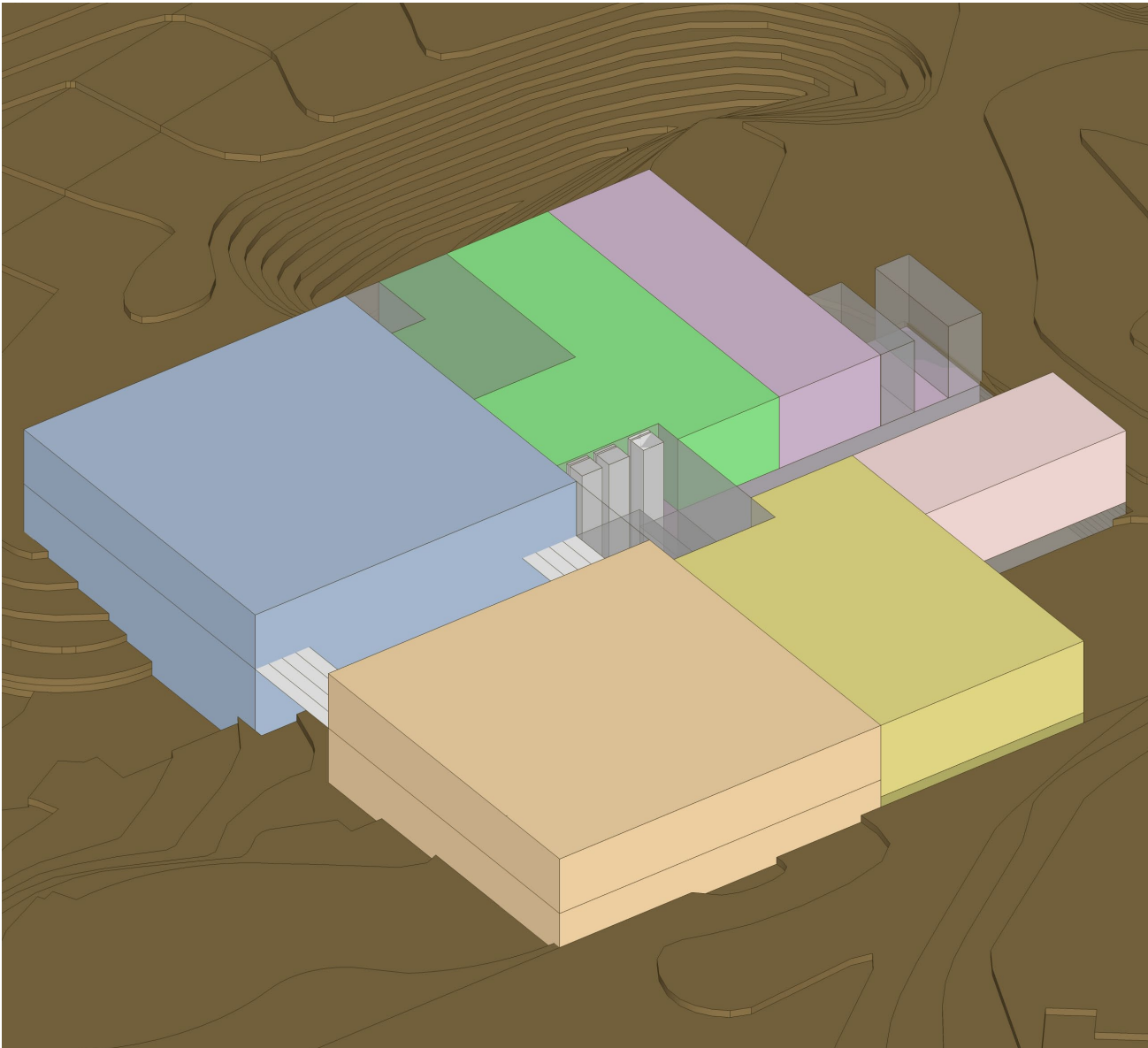













SCHEME 3
CONCEPTUAL BUILDING AND WALL SECTIONS



SCHEME 3
CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES

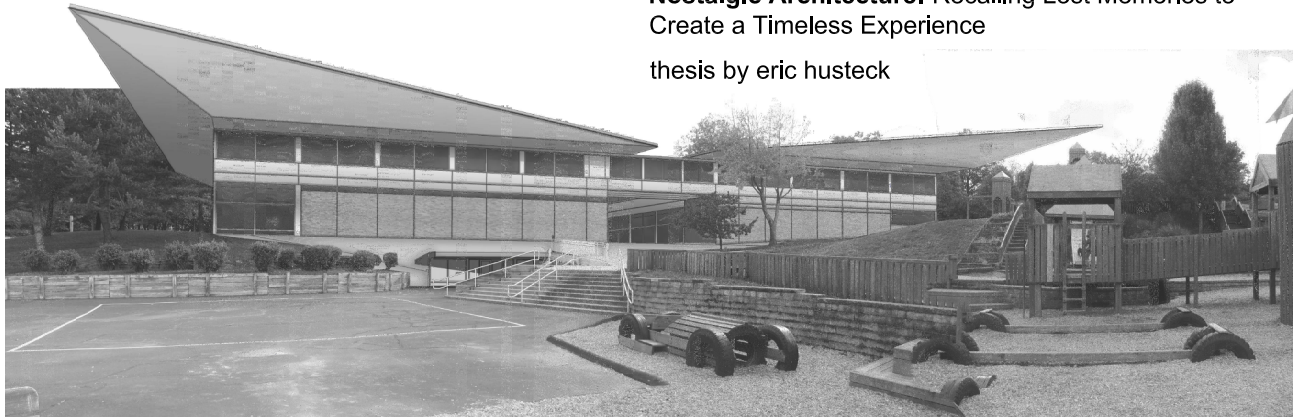


SCHEME 4
Preliminary Massing Diagram:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Natatorium |  Administration |
|  Gymnasium |  Circulation / Ancillary / Building Services |
|  Aerobics |  Vertical Circulation |
|  Fitness | |
|  Rock Climbing | |
|  Conference Rooms / Multipurpose | |

Nostalgic Architecture: Recalling Lost Memories to Create a Timeless Experience

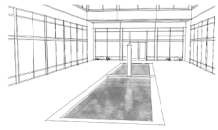
thesis by eric husteck



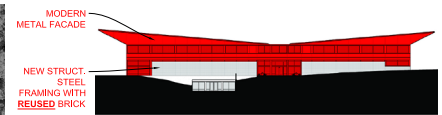
Big Ideas:



Recall Central Peace Theme



Preserve Memories of Footprint



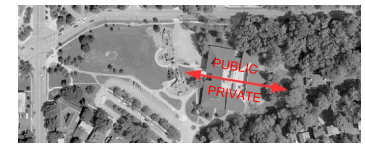
Develop New Over "Old"



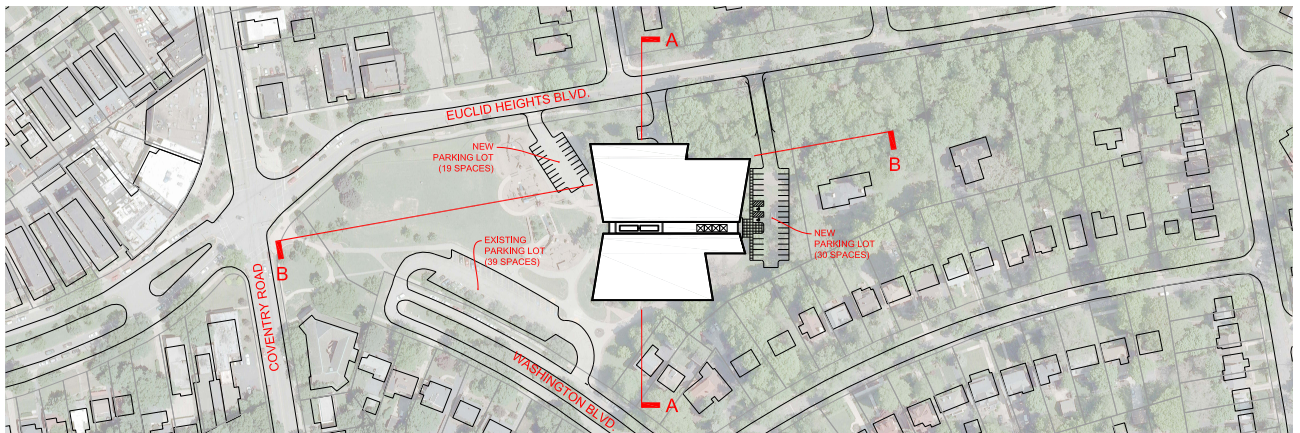
Re-establish Community Ownership



Re-create Transparency & Engagement

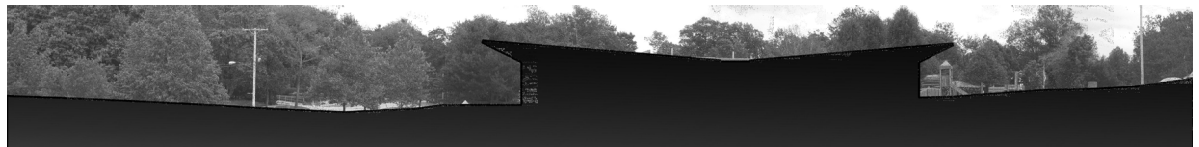


Engage and Connect with Neighboring Park



Site Plan

SCALE 1" = 80' 0"



Site Section A-A

SCALE 1/4" = 20' 0"

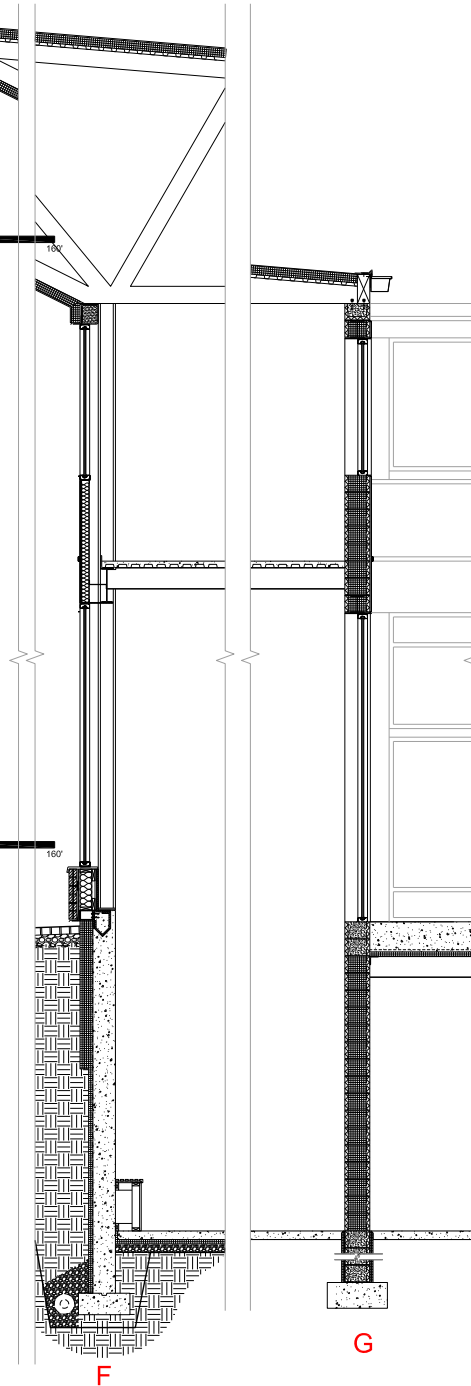
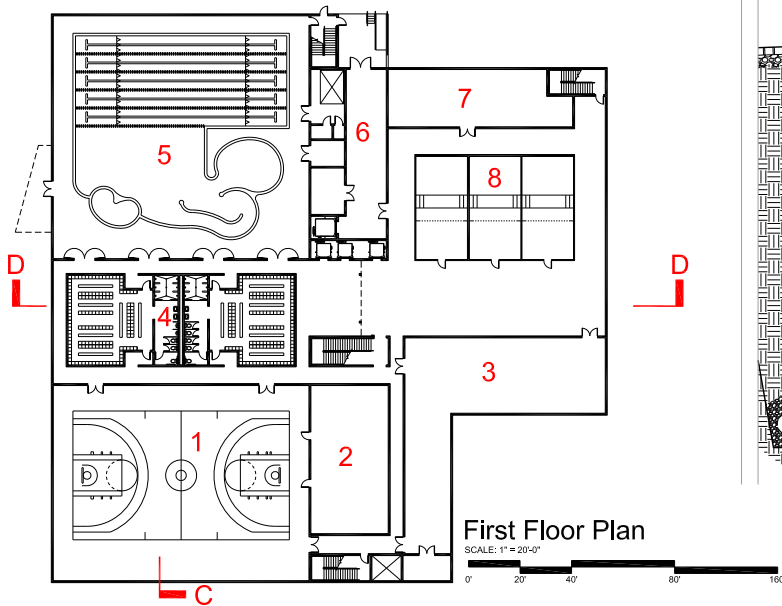
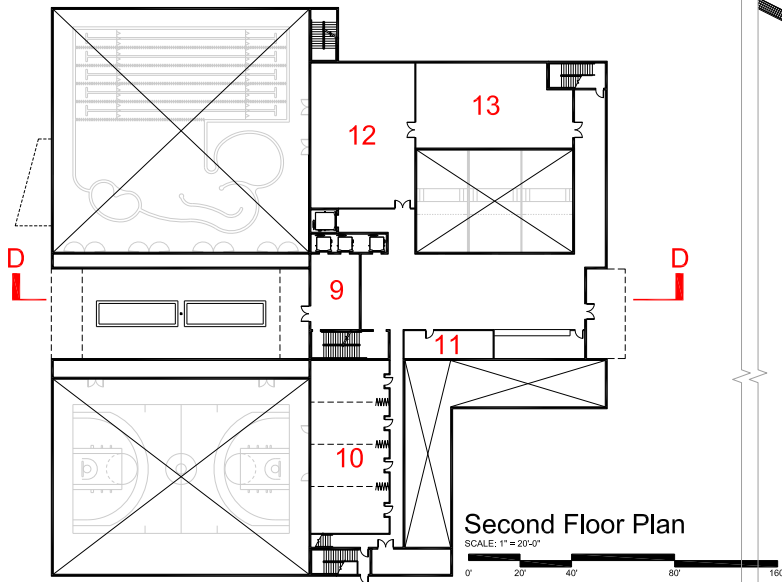
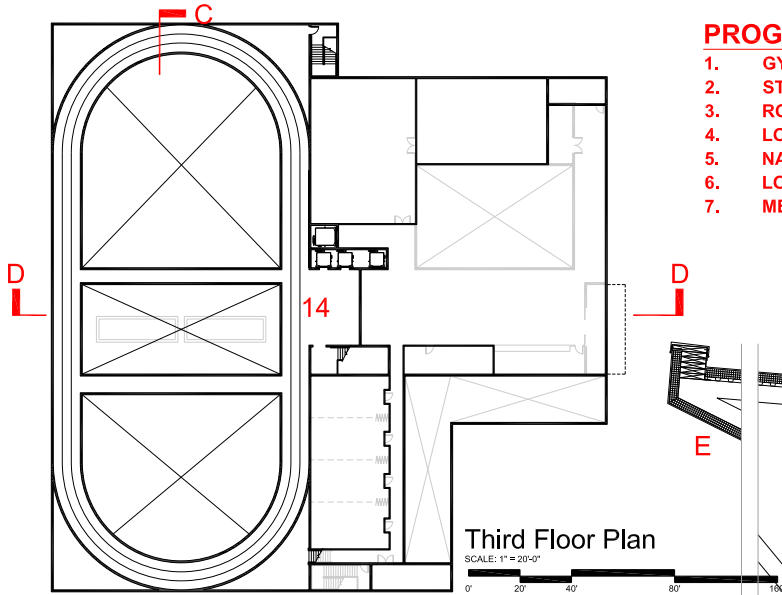


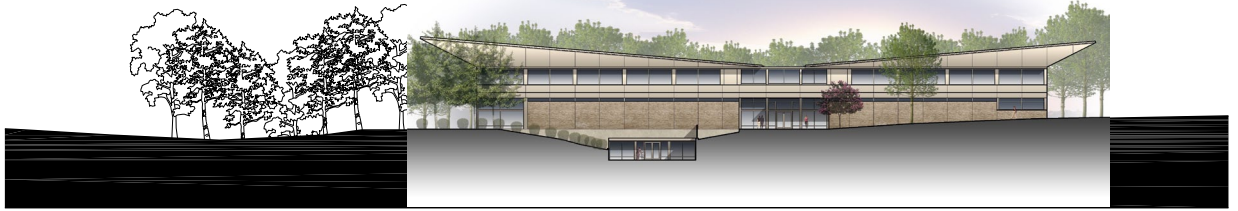
Site Section B-B (Euclid Heights Boulevard)

SCALE 1/4" = 20' 0"

PROGRAM

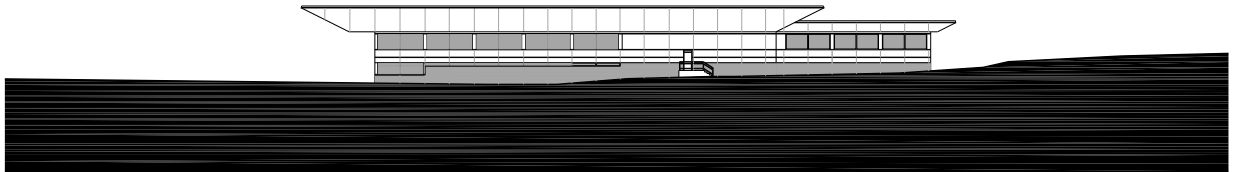
- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. GYMNASIUM | 8. RACQUETBALL |
| 2. STORAGE/ STAFF | 9. LOBBY |
| 3. ROCK CLIMBING | 10. CONF. ROOMS |
| 4. LOCKER ROOMS | 11. ADMIN/ RECEPTION |
| 5. NATATORIUM | 12. FITNESS |
| 6. LOADING | 13. AEROBICS |
| 7. MECHANICAL | 14. RUNNING TRACK |





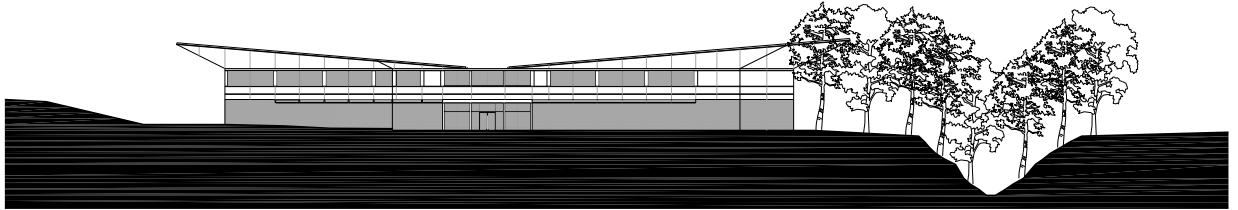
West Elevation

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



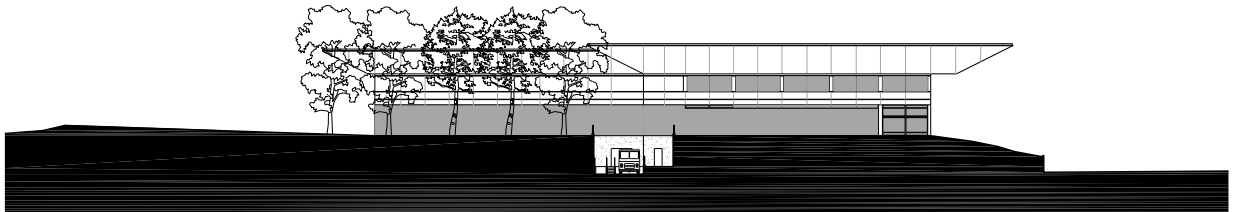
South Elevation

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



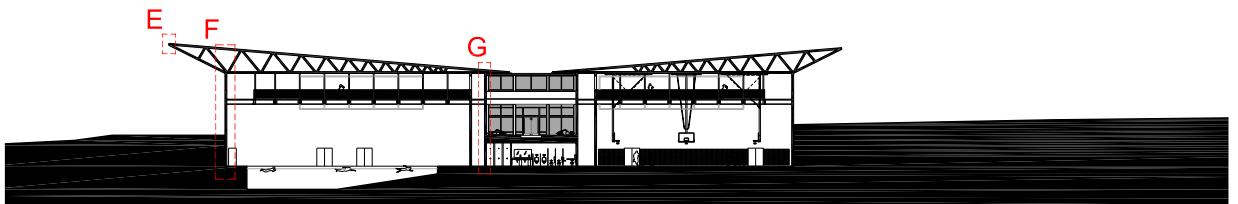
East Elevation

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



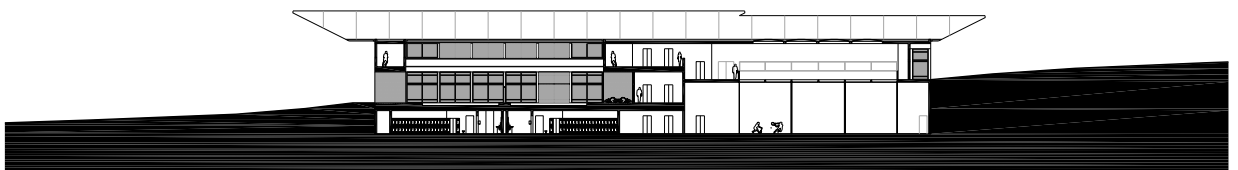
North Elevation

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



Section C-C

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



Section D-D

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



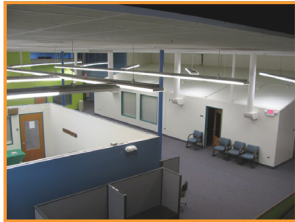
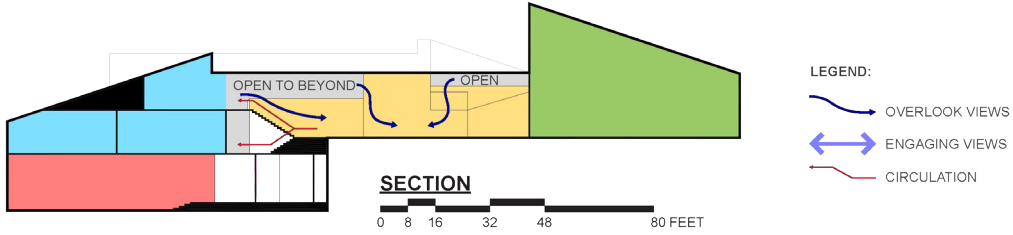
EXISTING BUILDING CASE STUDY



VIEW FROM NORTHWEST



VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST



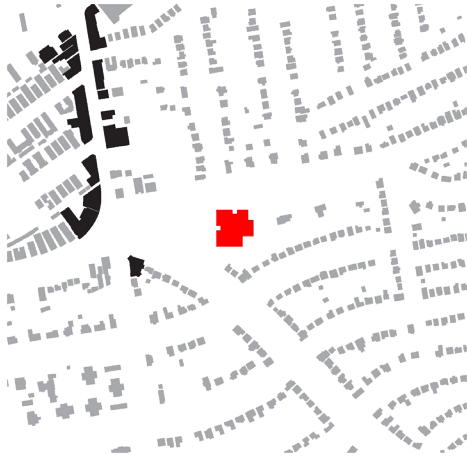
AXONOMETRIC FLOOR PLANS

0 16 32 64 96 160 FEET

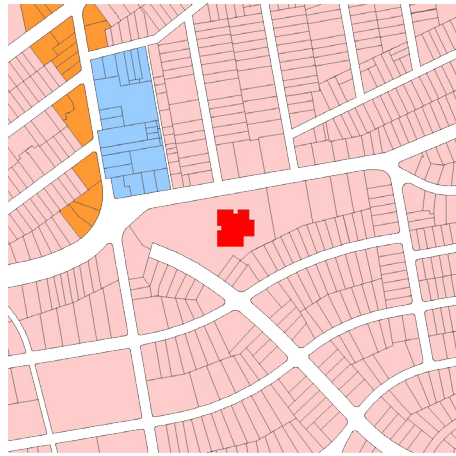
EXISTING SITE VICINITY MAP



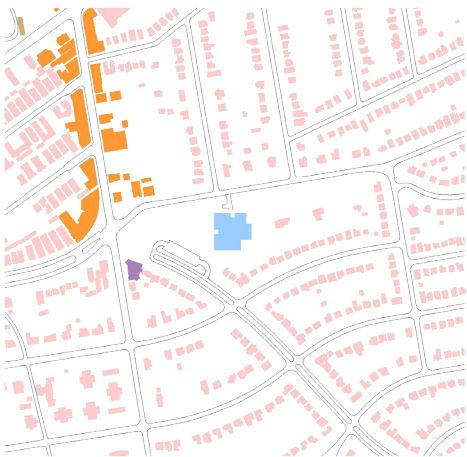
EXISTING SITE PLAN ANALYSIS



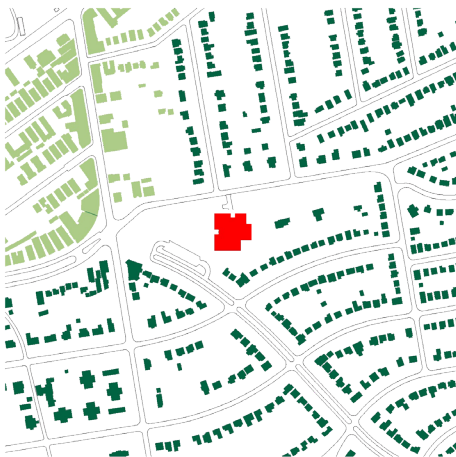
SITTE FIGURE / GROUND SITE PLAN
 ■ Project Location ■ Key Buildings ■ Other Buildings



ZONING SITE PLAN
 ■ Project Location ■ Residential ■ Retail ■ Mixed-use



BUILDING USE SITE PLAN
 ■ Office ■ Residential ■ Retail ■ Library ■ Cemetery



MEDIAN INCOME IN YEAR 2000
 ■ Project Location ■ 0 - 20 K ■ 50 - 100 K



2010 CENSUS DATA

■ Census Tract 1411 Block 1 Ages 50-64: 169 Maj. Owner-Occupied: 243 Pop. Change: from 708 in year 2000 to 649 (-8%)	■ Census Tract 1411 Block 2 Ages 25-34: 530 Maj. Renter-Occupied: 896 Pop. Change: from 1,520 in year 2000 to 1,383 (-10%)	■ Census Tract 1412 Block 1 Ages 50-64: 178 Maj. Owner-Occupied: 243 Pop. Change: from 792 in year 2000 to 664 (-16%)	■ Census Tract 1412 Block 3 Ages 50-64: 215 Maj. Owner-Occupied: 282 Pop. Change: from 975 in year 2000 to 934 (-4%)
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



TOPOGRAPHY
 ■ Project Location ■ Buildings

820 830 840 850 860 870 880 890 900 FEET

A NEW COMMUNITY CENTER:

RECALLING NOSTALGIC MEMORIES OF A FORMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO CREATE A TIMELESS EXPERIENCE

BIG IDEAS:



PROJECT STATEMENT

Reinstate Central Peace Theme

Since 1986, Coventry had proclaimed itself as a "Peace School." This long-standing dedication and commitment was upheld through many longstanding traditions. One tradition was the addition of the school's motto, "Peace, Love, and Respect for All" to the end of the Pledge of Allegiance. Other traditions included the annual honor of the Muriel Ente peace prize award to a student who consistently exemplified the characteristics of a peacemaker. It was named after Muriel Ente, a former principal of the school who established the conflict-management program to teach students how to deal with problems using their words and other non-violent means. These peace traditions died once the school was shut down, but its aura continues to live on today through the symbol of the peace pole that still stands tall today. Therefore, it is important that this last remembrance of the school's peace theme is not taken in vain, and is allowed to thrive once again.



Re-establish Community Ownership

One of the biggest reasons why Coventry elementary facilitates so much nostalgia is because the community had gained a sense of partial ownership of the school. The school's playground was built by the parents, staff, and partners of the community. Today, the names of those who contributed / donated to the cause are still immortalized into the brick walkways. My proposal is to use this same concept of rewarding community support and involvement by enshrining contributor's names into the exterior plaster bricks, symbolizing "new supporting the old."



Preserve Familiarity of Former School's Footprint

Even though the building is lost, the memories never will. By proposing to maintain a majority of the original footprint of the former school, memories can be triggered through storytelling. One can reminisce about lining up in front of the main entrance door awaiting class or remember the exact spot where he/she used to race other colleagues to the playground.



Re-create Transparency and Engagement

The former elementary school was different in regards to its space planning. Most of the classrooms were not enclosed by walls and doors, but rather, the plan was mostly open. While in class, students could catch glimpses across the corridors and banisters to the other classrooms on the other side of the building. The levels were also split allowing for students to be separated yet engaged by overlooking views to the central media center down below.

New over "Old"

All construction is new, but the design proposal emphasizes the preservation of the former elementary school's footprint as much as possible. The idea is to recall familiar memories with the now defunct school. This gives former students the opportunity to spark and reflect fond memories that happened in specific locations.

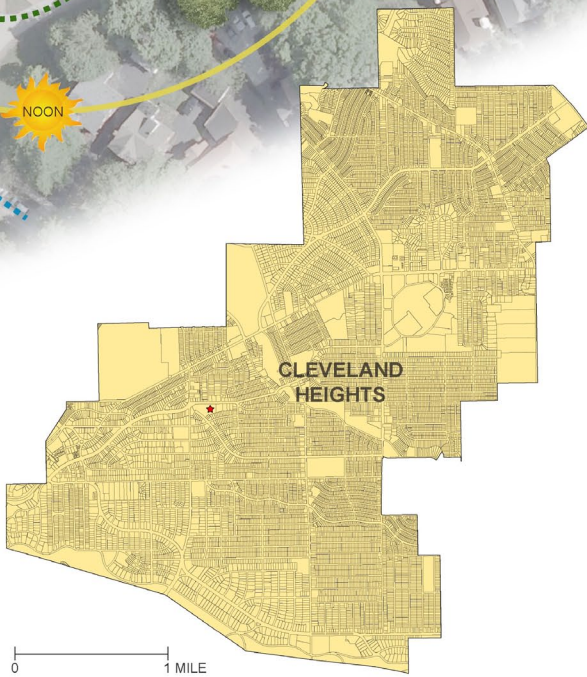
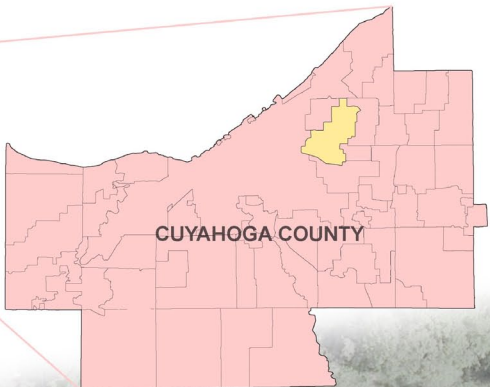
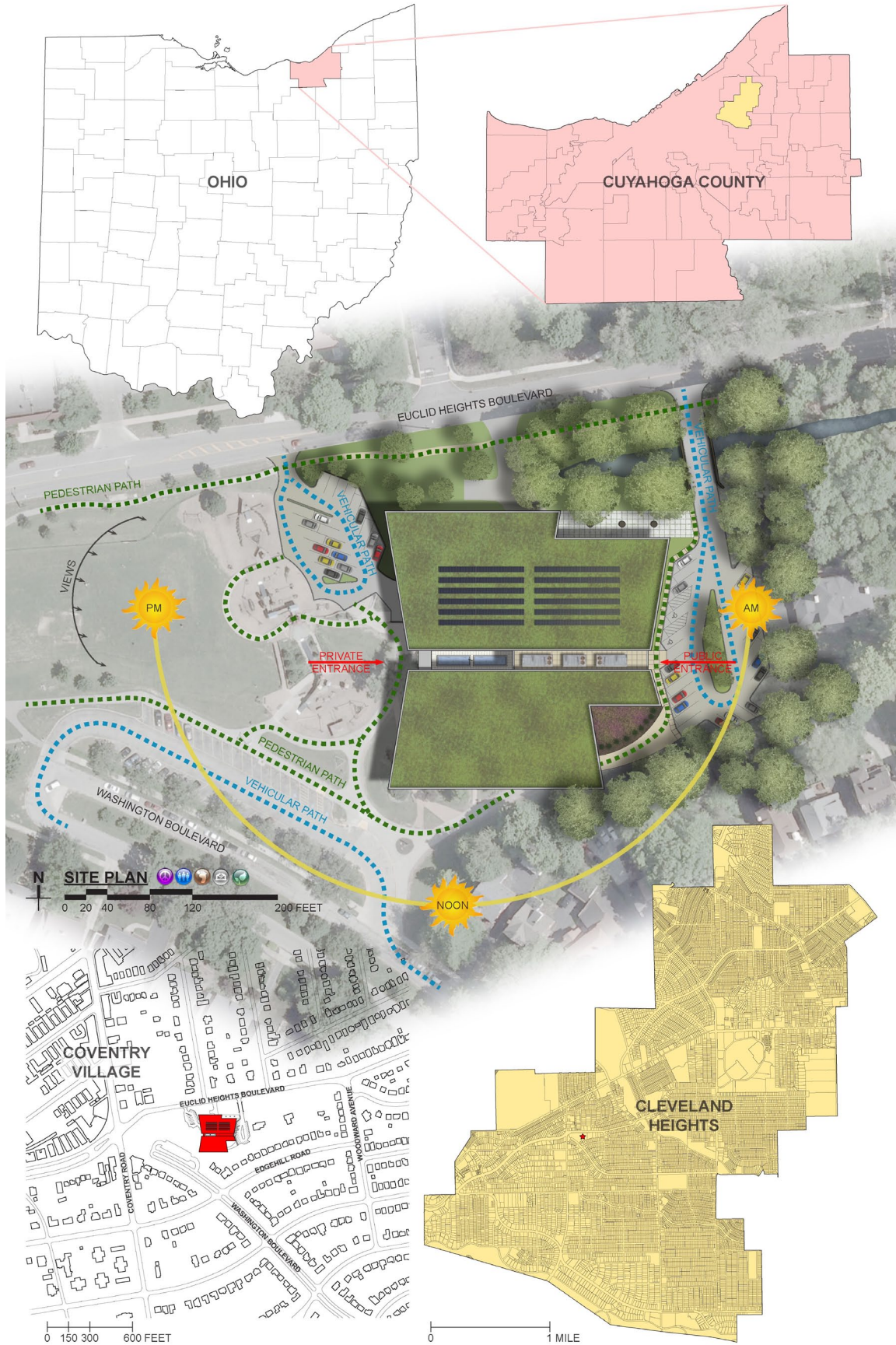
Embrace Community

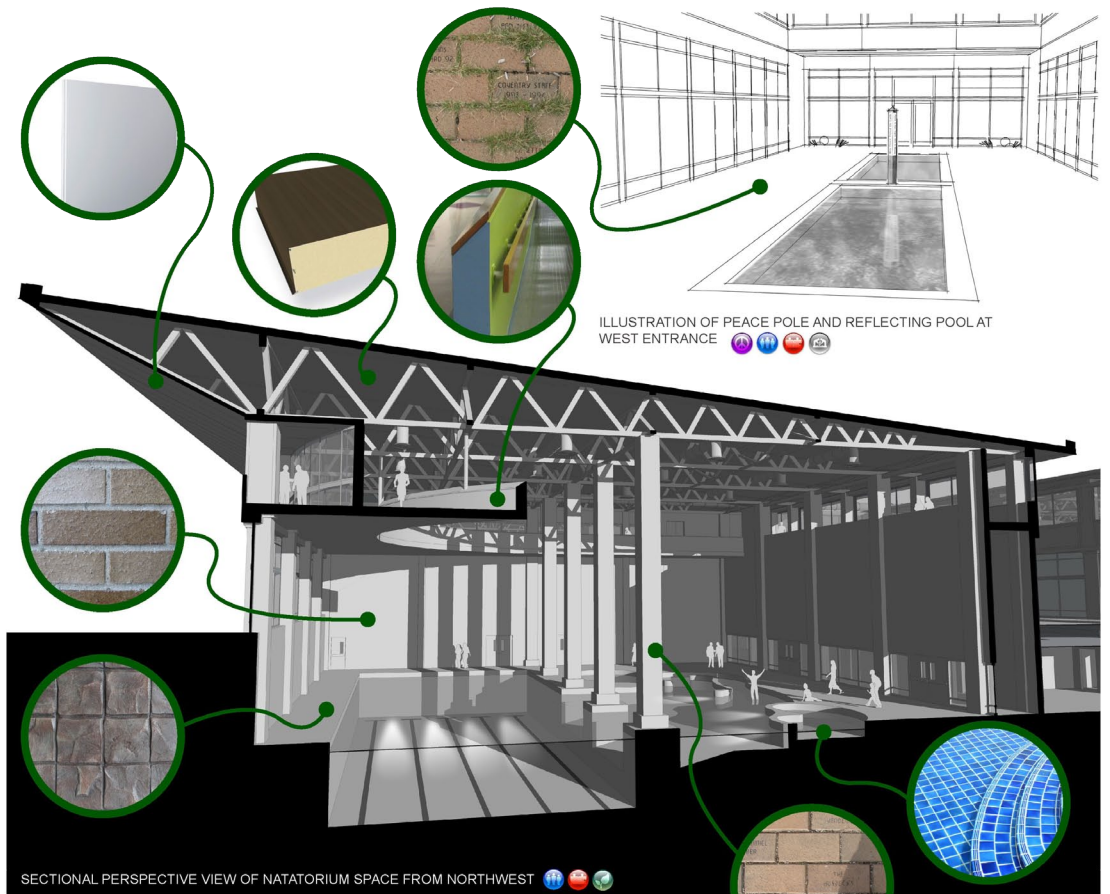
The west entrance is dedicated to private members. These members would most likely be nearby residents who can reminisce down memory lane or understand the history as they walk by the playground and past the peace pole reflecting along the pool's surface. The east entrance is dedicated as the public entrance which is tucked behind the building amidst the nature. This strategy allows the private west end to embrace the memories of the playground and the community it belongs to.

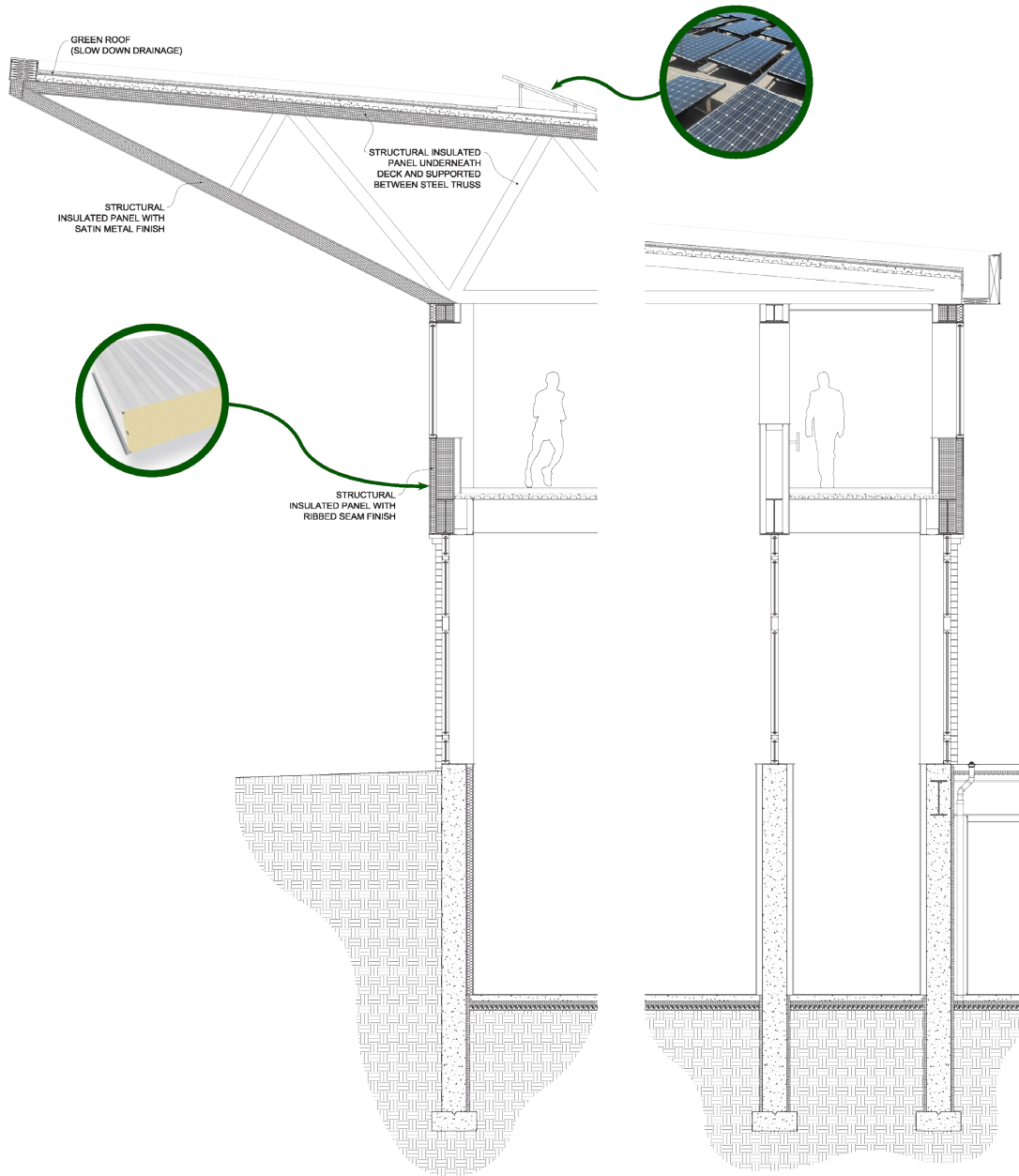
Sustainability

If an old building is going to be razed for a new one, then the design should include noticeable sustainability practices. A community does not want to support a new building that wastes energy and money and does not contribute to the future well-being of the neighborhood.

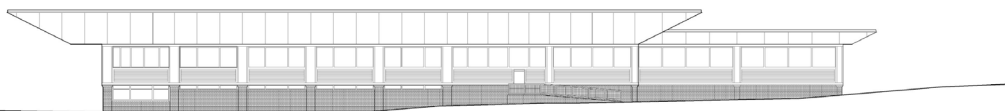
PROPOSED SITE





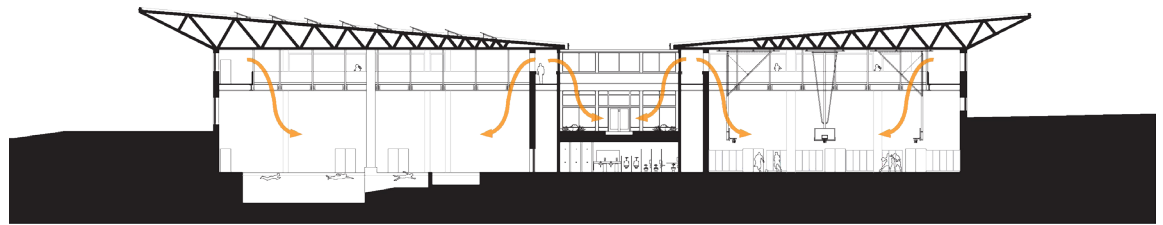


WALL SECTIONS

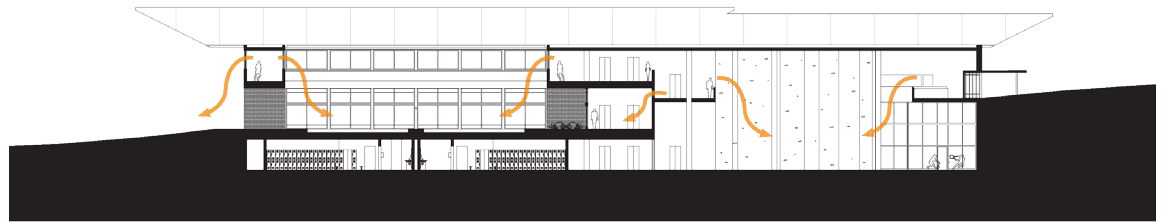



SOUTH ELEVATION





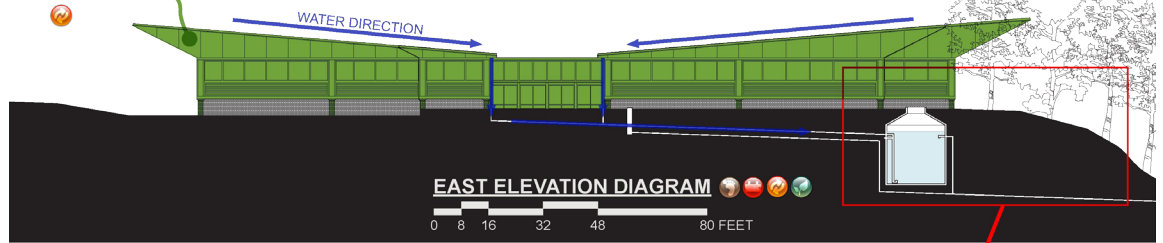
SECTION A-A 
 0 8 16 32 48 80 FEET



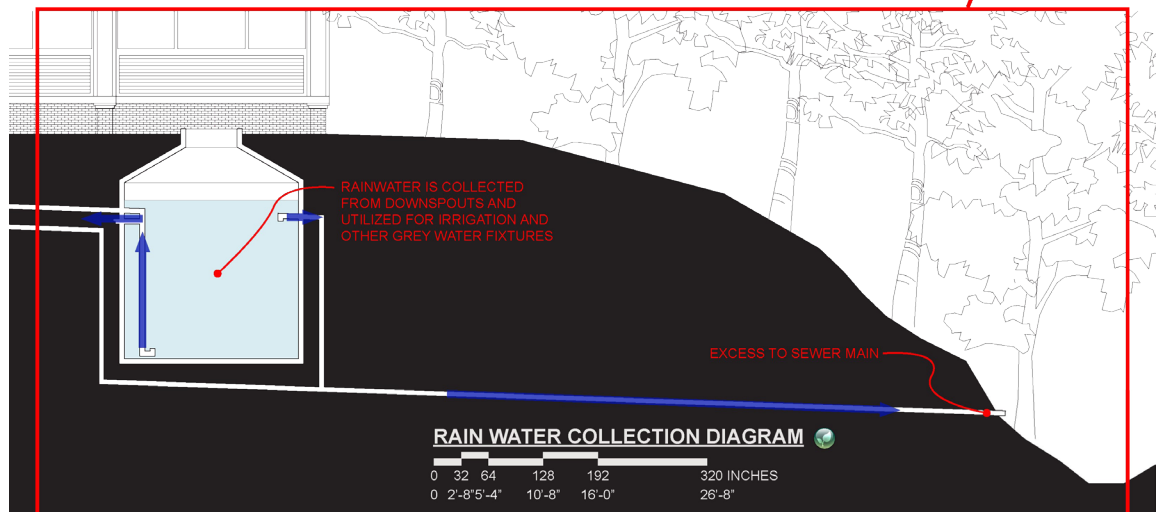
SECTION B-B 
 0 8 16 32 48 80 FEET

NEW OVER 'OLD' CONCEPT. ALL CONSTRUCTION IS NEW, BUT THE DESIGN EMPHASIZES PRESERVING THE ORIGINAL FOOTPRINT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO RECALL FAMILIAR MEMORIES WITH THE OLD SCHOOL

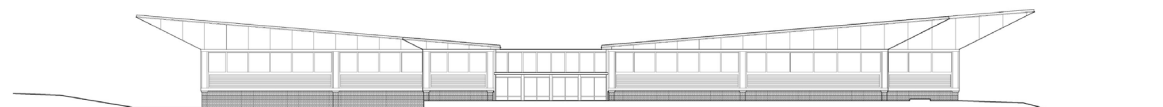
LEGEND:
 VIEWS



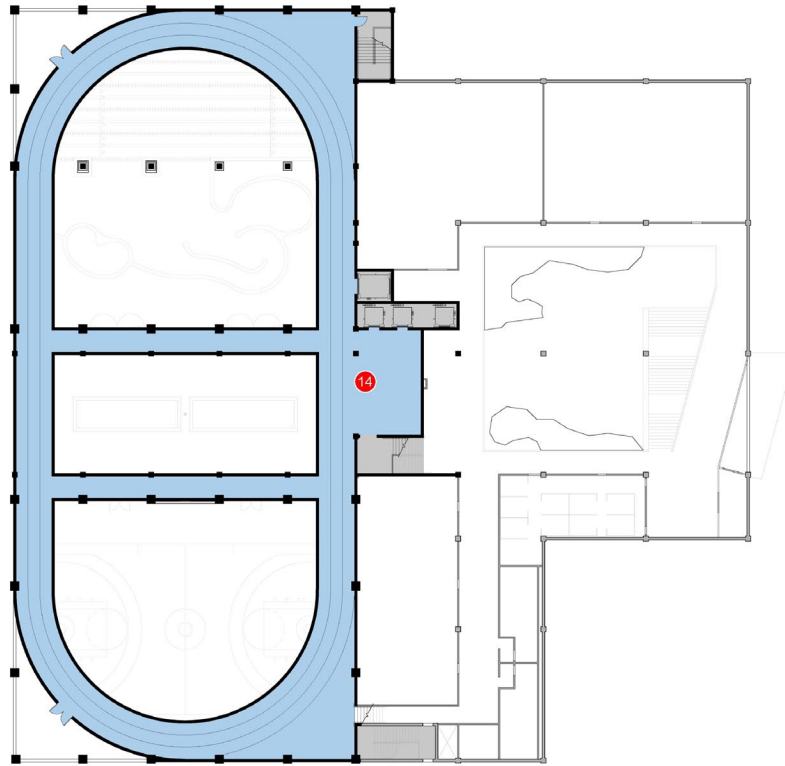
EAST ELEVATION DIAGRAM 
 0 8 16 32 48 80 FEET



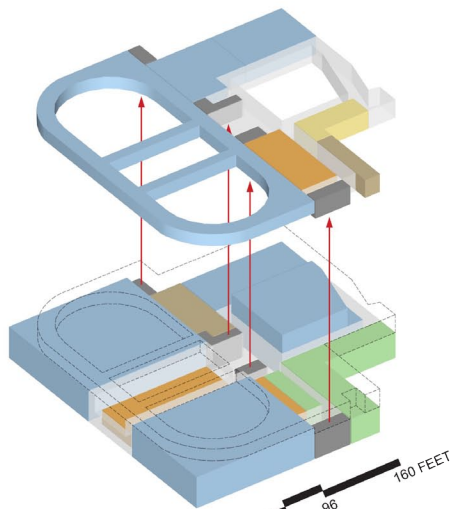
RAIN WATER COLLECTION DIAGRAM 
 0 32 64 128 192 320 INCHES
 0 2'-8" 5'-4" 10'-8" 16'-0" 26'-8"



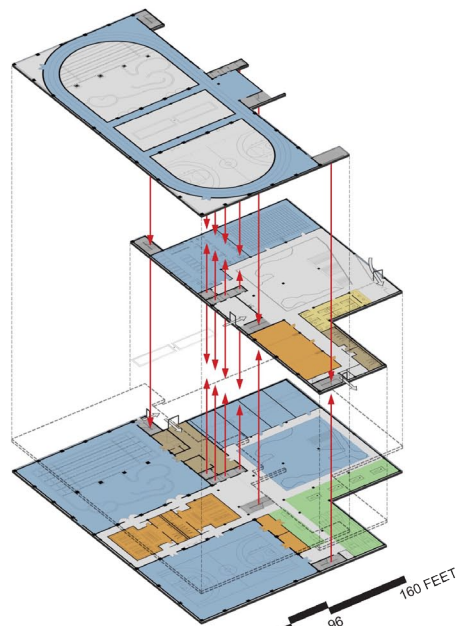
EAST ELEVATION 
 0 8 16 32 48 80 FEET



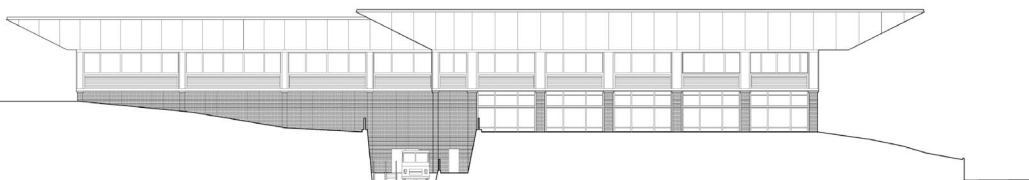
N **THIRD FLOOR PLAN**
0 8 16 32 48 80 FEET



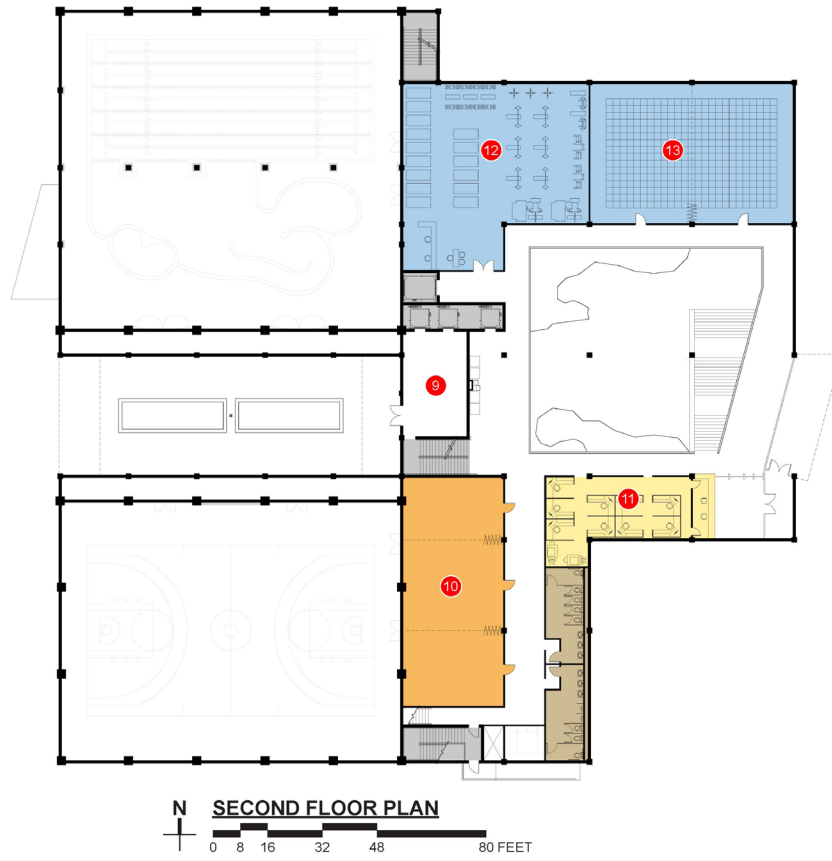
SPACING ISOMETRIC DIAGRAM 🌐 🌐 🌐



PROGRAM ISOMETRIC DIAGRAM 🌐 🌐 🌐



NORTH ELEVATION 🌐 🌐 🌐
0 8 16 32 48 80 FEET





Reflection / Summary

In the initial phases of the written thesis process, I was searching for a process. My background in architectural engineering technology taught me how to be very practical. I learned how to design with function in mind and how to become a detail-oriented thinker. I learned how to consider all disciplines of the architecture, engineering, and construction industry making sure to accommodate for structural, mechanical, and plumbing in the design of a building. It was because of this mindset that I wanted to break away from the shackles of functional design. I wanted to tap into the artistic side of my youth, thus beginning my exploration in the realm of child's play in the hopes to reconnect with my inner child. I realized, however, that it was not only my childhood that I wanted to reconnect with, but to myself in its entirety. As designers, we create experiences for other people. It is important to understand the individual and connect with his/her roots in order to create a space that has personal meaning to them rather than us. A good architectural design is one that benefits the owner, client, and community. It does not matter what people think outside of its local surroundings, but how it serves the neighborhood. It should reflect the community's personality – past and present. I chose to explore nostalgia in hopes to reconnect with lost memories. By tying sentimental memories from various fragments in time, I hoped to find a process in which I could create a timeless experience for new architecture.

There were many challenges that I confronted along this exploration. I began my design process by doing what I knew – designing with function and practicality in mind so that I could better understand how my program fit within the site's context (See scheme 1, pages 43-45). I initially chose to investigate within the entire site's perimeter in the attempt to leave no area unexplored. I first decided to design a recreation center and a community center based on the local community's needs for more gathering spaces and places of high activity. Because my thesis was ultimately about exploring the nostalgia of the neighborhood, it made sense to design a building that served as a communal domain for all of the neighboring residents.

In the second scheme (See pages 46-51), I modified the program to incorporate senior living units for the elderly who would also be employees at the facility. By doing so, I was able to justify a design that would accommodate for an aging population, yet attract a more youthful and young-family demographic at the same time. The problem, however, was the incredibly complex set of programming issues that arose from this addition. The challenge was to separate the private and public spaces as well as creating barriers between the senior living units and high-density activity areas in the neighboring facilities. During this investigation, I began to realize that nostalgia was not necessarily a strategy that I could harness as a design process. It was not a process I was searching for, but a result. I wanted to create a nostalgic experience through my architecture in order to draw a meaningful connection between past and present generations.

In the third scheme (See pages 52-53), I chose to explore an alternative and more poetic route. In order to create a meaningful experience, I wanted to create a bold architecture that made a statement through its form and materiality. During this process, I began to explore the experience of the space in section more than its functional qualities. I wanted to reflect similar moments from the former elementary school on the site by creating large open spaces, overlooking views, and a centralized organization. While the architecture was becoming more poetic in a sense, it was still not grasping enough of the nostalgic qualities I was looking for.

In the final scheme (See pages 54-68), I went back to my project statement. I was searching for architectural expression that would result in a nostalgic experience. From this process, I decided to reinstate the former elementary school's peace theme, re-establish a sense of community ownership, preserve the school's familiar feel, re-create its engagement through overlooking and transparent

views, embrace the community, and justify a new construction with sustainable intentions. By looking at nostalgia as a final outcome rather than a process, I was able to achieve more fluidity in the design. The scheme was more successful because I had reasoning behind everything I did, and with firmer conviction. Having a set of goals to lead towards a nostalgic experience gave me more control and strengthened my arguments. It was only by going through this arduous and lengthy thesis process that I learned how important it was to have big ideas at the beginning of the design process.

In the end, I believe my design was successful in achieving many of the intended big ideas. If more time permitted, I would begin to explore how to make the experience even more poetic. By doing so, I believe that I could further break away from the familiarity of the former elementary school to create stronger memories for current and future generations. The final design still reflected a very similar look to the former school, which gave the impression that I was trying to preserve its remnants. However, memory is seen as a continuous path in time; whereas, nostalgia is a combination of memories from various fragments in time which have been lost. By further distancing the final design from the previous building's aesthetics, I could create an even greater sense of timelessness through familiar experiences. Overall, architecture is about narrating a story. Stories are unraveled as time progresses, and it is the duty of architecture to preserve the legacies of these stories. Through nostalgia, one can learn about the past, present, future, ideals, fantasies, culture, and personality of a community. Nostalgic architecture can transcend people back in time to previous generations while creating new experiences for other generations to come.