

**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
IDENTITY IN AND THROUGH ARCHITECTURE**

A Thesis

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Social and Cultural Identity In and Through Architecture

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As a human race in the 21st century we are facing critical issues which affect our continuing coexistence on this planet: to mesh the colliding cultures of the global city created by air travel and modern communications, to reconcile rising economic growth with the need to repair and sustain our already damaged natural environment, to aid the unfortunate people and countries in an increasingly stratified world, and to provide refuge from the stresses and uproar of the marketplace, the media, and our increasingly urban lives. Architects, urban planners, interior designers, and all other professions which help shape our environment hold responsible the solution to all of these needs; these disciplines address them in the built environment that makes up homes, offices, factories, schools, airports, and civic buildings.

United States of America – the ‘Melting Pot’ of culture, should include such built environments that provide the solutions to the issues brought upon by the 21st century. One may think if we truly are a melting pot we

would merge from heterogenous cultures to a unified homogenous one; no different from mixing various cheeses in a pot over a flame that burns for fluidity and unity. However, America is not a mixed and melted pot of queso. We are a chunky chili of sorts; no matter how vigorously we are stirred, how hot the flame for unity becomes, we represent a multitude of cultures coexisting amongst one another. It is for this that the architect’s responsibility of addressing conflicts caused by the inconsistent mixture of culture across America proves to be such a difficult, tedious, and sensitive task.

Some of these inconsistencies however, are actually where there is an existence of a very steady and consistent culture and suddenly something is done or said that deviates the standards set by the culture of that society. These societies present conflict due to their definite and perpetual belief systems and lifestyles which do not allow any opportunity for change. These societies many times are those of small towns.

Looking back at my own role, in my family, my primary education, and my society, it is *evident* I was walking a different path. While growing up Trenton, Ohio I truly thought it was me vs. the world, or well, vice versa. However, how naive I was to compare my traditional nostalgic lifestyle in the midst of a small rural town, to the entire world. It was not me so much who was different as it was, that I believed everyone one around me to be simply the same. I longed to be immersed in a more dynamic and diverse surrounding, to explore other possibilities for myself; what those before me were achieving was maybe not enough, or maybe, was just not for me. This longing for a more dynamic culture to be exposed to was met some in college through my studies in architecture, art, and history. Also, the culture I found myself to be in was becoming enriched as well. I was surrounded by peers with different backgrounds, lifestyles, goals and dreams. I was thrilled.

I realize now that those who are raised in, and continue to reside in, small towns such as Trenton, Ohio, may never experience such opportunity to widen their exposure, awareness, and knowledge of cultures outside their own demographically homogenous environments.

These small town cultures are limited to that which is familiar and non-threatening to the community.

Conformity is reinforced by the smallness of the population, and probably by the fact that those who do not fit in can move on to somewhere else; those with artistic or intellectual inclination will make their way to the cities. Those with wealth and business or political skills form themselves into a sort of local oligarchy.

Americans have a long tradition of pride in their small towns, which are commonly thought to embody the community, spirit, work ethic, and moral values that represent the best qualities of our nation. The drawbacks of life there - the geographic isolation, self-satisfaction, and petty local politics - are more than compensated for by the safety, friendliness, and the feeling of knowing one's neighbors and being known by them. These qualities however are those of a world that is rapidly passing away. Small towns can no longer be said to represent America as a whole.¹ While some of their populations are declining as current generations are migrating to urban areas, many small town populations are in fact growing and changing, and the appropriate adaptations to these changes are not being met or welcomed.

If small towns and populated rural areas want to continue to exist and progress with the surrounding urban fabric, adaptation is necessary. To those responsible for shaping the environment the question stands, how

can this need to develop strategies for social and cultural sustainability and awareness be addressed through the built environment?

This paper serves to establish a further knowledge of how the built or human environment is a living network of communications and interactions between people, buildings, spaces, objects and stories, and how the physical environment is an ever-changing vessel of ideas, needs and desires where identities are, expressed, formed, and reformed. This will be accomplished through exploring the phenomena of the existence of small towns such as Trenton, Ohio, as well as the larger cities where individual nodes of concentrated cultures exist amongst one another in order to establish a philosophy or methodology which emphasis a more in-depth connection between the people of a culture rather than just the elements of their physical environment.

MULTICULTURAL MODERNISM

Steven Ehrlich has earned international recognition for his distinctive architecture and philosophy that has greatly influenced the architectural community. As the Design Principal of Ehrlich Architects, the Los Angeles-based architect is dedicated to the philosophy of Multicultural Modernism which he states is 'A unique approach to

architecture and planning that is centered on architectural anthropology; an idea that strives to identify and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual culture through design.'²

Ehrlich started off like every other American architecture student on a course of classic Modernism, the early years of his twenties however were spent in Saharan, and sub-Saharan Africa. It was there, on a continent where architecture is elemental in its roots, that Ehrlich experienced what he refers to as 'architecture without architects.'² He began to understand and appreciate simple structures built for their intimate and wise relationship to land and community.

In southern California where he established his practice, Ehrlich came across other, more contemporary traditions no less compelling in their own context, especially through his modernist successors like R.M. Schindler and Richard Neutra.² He did not wish to import Africa literally; nor did he want lose it in weak translation. He is careful not to over-identify the designs with a specific place; he keeps references abstract rather than indulging in what might be called "identity architecture" which he bases as copies of multicultural images. Africa continued to exist in Ehrlich's unspoken subconscious, informing decades of work with cross-cultural influences. "I am fascinated by the

counterpoint of the primal and the futuristic," he says, going on to describe how the hybrid is now, simply itself, not the obvious offspring of two different things but of many different influences "including Japan and the spatiality of New York's lofts."²

His philosophy of Multicultural Modernism includes four elements: The courtyard as an antidote to density stress; an openness to change the technical innovation as embodied by Los Angeles; sensitivity to people and place; and more so pertaining to this paper's exploration, cross-cultural fusion that simultaneously embraces the global and local.

International Modernism, which some may believe is the predecessor of Ehrlich's philosophy, he claims, failed to respect local customs, climate, and culture. In contrast however, Multicultural Modernism believes that there is no single approach to building that works everywhere. It celebrates the unique qualities of people and place, while exploiting technology for a maximum freedom of expression and functionality.²

It is through Steven Ehrlich and his philosophies that I begin to understand a direct connection of how the built environment addresses strategies for social and cultural sustainability and awareness. It is my understanding that Ehrlich's Multicultural Modernism begins with a

sensitivity to place, relying on sight, sound, and touch for inspiration. Acknowledging the direction of a breeze, sunlight filtering through the trees, feeling the cool night air in desert plains - these experiences affect his choice of materials that complement the site. His inspirations came from the sustainability of the Dogon Village courtyards in Mali, the traditions of the Californian sleeping porch, African outdoor-rooms, and the urban living of an open New York loft. While Los Angeles' streetscape was made up of asphalt and chain-link fences, Ehrlich's streetscape came from abroad. His streets were courtyards and his chain link fences were mud-packed walls. He landscaped grounds with palms, instilling an illusion of a tented house in a desert oasis.

Ehrlich's designs may contain cross-cultural references and create environments that invite response, however, there is a yearning and a need for a philosophy or methodology that emphasis a more in-depth connection between the people of a culture rather than just the elements of their physical environment. It is vital for the 21st century that environments are designed to not just invite a response to physical culture, but rather inform a personable culture. Ehrlich's designs may represent the merging of architecture and lifestyles of various cultures, but it does not inform or showcase who

the people of these various cultures are. I learn from his designs about the materials native to Oaxaca, the innovative design of a small New York City loft, how courtyards can be a positive space creating a figure-figure relationship for the house and yard, how Africans adapt to their climate. So now my designs can utilize foreign materials, they can incorporate new ways of living in a space, they can promote a new understanding and relationship to the outdoors, and incorporate ancient passive design strategies of the African nation. Yet, I still do not know anything about the people of Oaxaca, I do not understand the NYC dweller, and I have no connection to the people of Africa.

While Ehrlich's philosophies and work deal with the lifestyles of a culture based on its geographical location, the congregation of a particular lifestyle or demographic exists due to other variables as well.

CHICAGO'S BOYSTOWN

North Halsted, is a smaller area within the Lakeview East boundaries, bordering the adjacent Wrigleyville. Boystown has been used as a colloquial name for all of Lakeview East and it holds the distinction of being the nation's first officially recognized gay village.³

Chicago's gay community has contributed in many ways to the

national and international fight for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights. However, those contributions have often been overlooked in documentations of the movement. A new Chicago Gay History Project seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of those many important people, events, and organizations who helped the Windy City become a leader of gay progress toward the end of the 20th Century. From the anti-gay police raids and harassment of earlier decades, Chicago has risen to become one of the most progressive cities in the world.

In 1998, then Mayor Richard Daley endeavored to create a 3.2 million-dollar restoration of the North Halsted Street corridor. The city erected rainbow pylon landmarks along the streetscape. In 2012, the Legacy Project began the on-going process of installing plaques on the pylons that commemorate important people and milestones in LGBT history.⁴ By putting The Legacy Walk right on the street, it will bring knowledge of LGBT contributions directly into the public realm—bypassing an education system that continues to redact the lives of LGBT people who came before us.

The North Halsted area is now home to Center on Halsted, a LGBT community center. Opened in 2007 as an award-winning, integrative and forward-thinking design, Center on

Halsted reminds visitors of a shared future together.⁵ Designed by the global architecture firm Gensler, Center on Halsted was designed to enable Chicago's wide array of LGBT organizations to come together to collaborate, grow and share resources in a single building. An intentionally visible symbol of LGBT pride, the three-story, 175,000-square-foot complex houses a variety of programs including entertainment venue, a Whole Foods grocery store, a cafe, office space, a technology center, a gymnasium, a theater, a public roof garden, an underground parking structure, and a number of other unique gathering spaces.

Composed of the restored terra cotta and brick facade of a 1924 building wrapped by a new glass structure, Gensler's design creates a visible neighborhood presence for the community center. The historic facade serves as a visual indication of the retail space on the first floor, and the glass composition providing a clear identity for the Center itself.

"The diverse identities of the people who will be using this building inspired our design," Jason Longo, one of Gensler's architectural design directors, said during construction. "Expressions of transparency, color, pattern and historic elements reflect diversity while presenting a unified composition."⁵ The simplistic clear glass facade exposes the inner

workings of the Center, boldly suggesting LGBT people will no longer reside behind a curtain but will be visible for the world to see.

The center on Halsted's gymnasium was the venue for a volleyball tournament I participated in. While there, I was able to experience the phenomena this building provided for its users, visitors, and the surrounding neighborhood: the market and the lobby on the first floor invited everyone on the streets into the space; business men and women grabbing breakfast before work, joggers and their dogs came in to grab a beverage, groups of kids traveled up and down the monumental stair to the second level. I observed art shows and overheard choir practices. There was so much going on all at once all weekend long. While everyone seemed so independent from one another; all having his or her own separate agenda, everything worked cohesively and no one was excused from one another's way; there was constant interaction between everyone regardless of his or her task at hand.

The instillations on Legacy Walk and the Center on Halsted are in ways, examples of Steven Ehrlich's Multicultural Modernism but they achieve so much more than what his philosophies set out to do. While these rainbow pylons that array the streetscape in Boystown represent and invite a response to a culture, the

plaques inform and provide an understanding of a culture. These designs not only adapt and respond to a physical environment and existing culture; they embrace, enhance, celebrate, and create a culture.

Many cities like Chicago include and will with no doubt continue to include nodes of similarly demographic populations. While the Center on Halsted in Boystown represents, informs, and welcomes integration of the prominent LGBT community to the surrounding area, there exists in other cities a central node which represents the city as a whole through the collection of buildings and programmatic functions which reflect the city's diverse demographics and history in one location.

HOUSTON'S MUSEUM DISTRICT

The Houston Museum District consists of nineteen museums within a 1.5 mile radius. The Houston Museum District Association is dedicated to collaborative efforts that maximize use of the artistic, scientific, and educational resources.⁶ Museums like the Czech Center, The Holocaust Museum, The Museum of African American Culture, as well as various art and science museums may cater to specific worldwide cultures that exists in Houston but their central location and acute adjacencies to one another promote a cross cultural phenomenon for the city of Houston. Whether a

resident attending a culture-specific event or tourist visiting an art gallery, one cannot help but observe and be exposed to the other surrounding venues in the Museum District.

One of the newest and most appropriate additions to the Museum District is the Asia Society in Houston. The Asia Society has eleven centers across the globe and is the leading educational organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among the peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context.⁷ Across the fields of arts, business, culture, education, and policy, the Society provides insight, generates ideas, and promotes collaboration to address present challenges and create a shared future.

After coming back from living in Beijing with her husband, former First Lady Barbara Bush alongside former Chairman of the board in NYC's Asian Society Roy M. Huffington established Asia Society Texas Center in 1979.⁷ Sharing the vision of John D. Rockefeller 3rd, who founded Asia Society in New York in 1956, they recognized the need to educate Americans about Asia and to create closer ties between Houston and the people and institutions of Asia.

In 1980, during the time the Asian Society in Houston was established, Asians made up the least of the

population: a mere 2% of the 1.6 million people in Houston. By 1990 the Asian population nearly doubled while the over-all population in Houston remained the same.⁸ By 1995 the significant and steady growth of the Asian population was reason enough for the Asian Society Texas Center's Board of Directors to vote to build a home for its programs and activities.⁷ The Board selected Japanese architect Yoshio Taniguchi, best-known in this country for his renovation and expansion of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, to design the building, the location of course, in Houston's Museum District.

By the time of completion in 2011, the Asian population in Houston had nearly quadrupled since the Society made way in 1979. While still a minority compared to the African American (23%), White (26%), and Latino (44%) populations, Asians were now 6% of the total population.⁸ Opened in 2012, the 40,000-square-foot Center features the 273-seat performing arts theater, gallery, education center, grand hall, café, shops, and more.⁹ All of this exists on only two floors in order to fit in with the height of the surrounding neighborhood in an attempt to feel as a part of the community, and not as a spectacle dropped into it.

Taniguchi has the bulk of his work in Japan, and his extremely meticulous attention to detail has led him to

master Japanese high modern design.⁹ He strategically selected luxurious materials like stone from Germany, American Cherry wood, and others from all over the world to support the integration the building and its functions promoted. The orientation of the building provides a great view of the downtown skyline from the enormous second story lounge window. This view also captures the water garden with infinity edge and steam machines that rise over the water, obscuring the ground line and creating an almost surreal disconnection from the street. A definite architectural showpiece on the block, the low-lying building has a calming aesthetic and essence of stillness.⁹ With the opening of the Center, Asia Society takes its place as a major educational and cultural institution in the region, the driving force in transforming Houston into an Asia-Pacific city.

REFLECTION

Our environment should be a place where we welcome confrontation, whether in an educational facility, at the work place, or even while sitting on a park bench. After all, what is a better way to dispel cultural stereotypes that may be created in the home than to be in an atmosphere where we are free to ask one another questions about who we are and where we came from; about our feelings and beliefs; our customs and

cultures? But what about those environments that do not have a varied demographic make-up of ethnicities and lifestyles the way Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston do? How would Steven Ehrlich, firms like Gensler, and Yoshio Taniguchi address a town such as Trenton, Ohio where the primary means of cultural exposure comes from the curriculum of the public school system? Multicultural Modernism could promote awareness of other cultures providing opportunity to learn. Installations around town could represent and instill interest to those few minorities. A multicultural center could provide a place to learn and experience the various people and cultures across America and around the world.

But do these 'solutions' seem appropriate for a small, rural, dominantly white, middleclass town such as Trenton? Rather, do we just enhance the existing program that is currently the primary means of cultural exposure: the educational facility? Can reinventing the built environment of the educational building program cater to the redesign of the public educational curriculum? Can this new program cater to the community as a whole? Would it utilize Steven Ehrlich's Multicultural Modernism to create a building with a culturally dynamic form, function, material, and design? Will the design and building program of Chicago's Center on Halsted serve precedent as

to celebrating the local and global culture?

NOTES

¹Hopewell, Stephen. "Return to the Main Street: Small-Town America and Our Cultural Decline. *The Heritage American*. (2009)

² Giovannini, Joseph. "Multicultural Modernism." *Images Publishing*. (2006) 1-2, 4-6, 8.

³ Heap, Chad. "Gays and Lesbians in Chicago."
<<http://www.chicagogayhistory.com/ARTICLE>>

⁴ Bain, Tracy. "Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Movement. *Surrey Books*. (2008)

⁵ "Center on Halsted." About: Our Building.
<<http://www.centeronhalsted.org>>

⁶ "About the Museum District."
<<http://houstonmuseumdistrict.org>>

⁷ "Mission and History."(2013) *Asia Society, Texas*.
<<http://asiasociety.org/texas/about/mission-history>>

⁸ Census Bureau. "Planning and Development Department." *Race/Ethnicity:1980-2010. City of Houston. PL94-171 Data*. (2012).

⁹ "Asia Society Texas Center / Yoshio Taniguchi." (2012) *ArchDaily*.
<<http://www.archdaily.com/262021/>>

THESIS ADDENDUM

FROM WRITING TO DESIGN

The paper portion of this thesis focuses on individual's experience and exposure, or lack thereof, to culture within small towns. It was my intent to move forward in the design process to a small town location where there exists an acute homogeneous demographic and cultural and attempt to create a node for exposure and awareness to other demographics and culture through a building program. While I still believe this to be a prompt for a strong thesis design investigation, for the purpose of a master's thesis I wanted to provide myself an opportunity for a larger-scale building for my final design project as an architecture student. I wanted to apply my investigations on small town experiences to a city where, while culturally and demographically diverse in nature, there still wasn't an evidence of celebrating or integrating said cultures through a single site or building.

SITE SELECTION

Cincinnati is not currently known to be the most progressive area and those who want to live in a culturally diverse place wouldn't necessarily migrate here. This doesn't mean there's not a strong, diverse, cultural existence, however. Perhaps, there just isn't a

place to be exposed to it all which is why the program of a Community

center was chosen to address this thesis.

The location in Cincinnati was chosen based on two major forces that currently do not have any overlap in the master plan of the city: The downtown area and the UC Campus in Clifton.

Between the two is Over the Rhine. This is a historic district just north of downtown and is known for its strong German roots. The historic area is becoming a gentrified portion of the city as its renovations continue to sprawl northward. A master plan for a light rail system will attempt to tie downtown and OTR to the Campus. This provides ample opportunity to continue the revitalization of the city along this new transit path. The site located on the prominent corner of McMicken and Vine Street, which serves as a spine that directly connects UC to the City, currently houses some small service shops, convenience store, residential and the infamous Jazz café coined Schwartz Point.

Furthermore, the proximity and ease of accessibility to Over-The-Rhine allowed me to visit and interview individuals and organizations to grasp the goals, needs, and challenges with such a project.

DESIGN APPROACH

Studying a variety of community centers in other cities guided my approach to develop a building program as well as influence the relation that program had to the surrounding site and community.

The Center on Halsted in Chicago's Boystown neighborhood proved to be the greatest precedent to my design intentions. The LGBT community center opened in 2007 as an award-winning, integrative and forward-thinking design reminds visitors of a shared future together. Designed by the global architecture firm Gensler, Center on Halsted was designed to enable Chicago's wide array of LGBT organizations to come together to collaborate, grow and share resources in a single building. The project is a perfect example of utilizing a multi-faceted building program to promote integration, interaction, and exposure between all of its users and the entire surrounding community.

When applying my precedent and context derived program to my site, site issues began to tremendously influence the design. The site drops over thirty feet from its north-east corner on down around to its north-west corner. The topography issue served as prime opportunity when breaking up the programmatic elements of the building by elevations, yet allowed spatial volumes and multi-level views to integrate the program and provide interaction between the various users.

The elevation changes meant that the entrance points to the site were all at

different levels allowing there not to be a hierarchal flow of program or circulation of the building; every entrance had equal opportunity to access multiple programs and visually be aware of all the adjacencies supporting the integrity of my design intents.

Through the combination of constructing new buildings and renovating existing ones on the site to provide a place for work, leisure, or a home, Cincinnati's Cultural Collaborative at Schwartz Point will embrace and enhance the quality of life to the surrounding neighborhood as well as offer an opportunity for people of various cultures and demographics to come together as a whole in order to learn and grow as individuals.

COMMENTARY BY REVIEWERS

The guest reviewers showed an appreciation to the passion I had for my project and its ambitious intent for the site. Credit was given for designing a 'believable' and 'ready-to-build' project.

It was proposed to reconsider the location of some programmatic elements such as the atrium that served as a central node to the community center. While currently connecting McMicken Ave, Vine St, and the surrounding program to the middle of the site, it could prove beneficial for the atrium to be located closer to the southern 'point' of the site for more a more significant presence as an entrance to the project.

While the master-plan of program and its landscaping on the site provides a multitude of gathering spaces large and small, public and private, it was suggested to provide an iconic destination for users to congregate through the design of an architectural sculpture of sorts.

I attempted to integrate the architecture of the surrounding historic buildings within the new construction of the community center by utilizing similar geometries and materials yet showcasing some of the programmatic elements new to the area with modern forms and new materials. The intent was appreciated; however, the success of the execution was debated by reviewers: some thought it resulted in a 'busy' elevation while others thought it was well balanced with the variations of the surrounding building facades.

REFLECTION AND PREDICTED TRAJECTORY

I greatly appreciate the critique and credit given by the reviewers. I want to continue the study of integrating building programs as well as people in nonconventional ways. I am inspired to continue the passion I have for people and their identity and how architecture can serve as a means to express and be exposed to a variety of cultures and lifestyles.

Cincinnati's Cultural Collaborative SCHWARTZ POINT COMMUNITY CENTER

*"The World in Which You Were Born is Just **One** Model of Reality. Other Cultures Are Not Failed Attempts at Being **You** They Are **Unique** Manifestations of the **Human Spirit**" - Wade Davis*

INTERACT

Promotes interaction; it's a social network for collaborative learning and multi-discipline support of our everyday activities

A design that creates a presence; creates memories

TRANSLATE

Stimulates hands-on collaborative learning and interactive environments

IMAGINE

Incorporates more mixed use, less traditional spaces

LOOK

A hierarchy of spaces (public/private and the in-between) which support different types of interactions

Establishes a presence that attracts residents, employees, students, visitors, and the community

LEARN

Is greener, more frugal, more sustainable

PLAY

TOLERATE

Universal yet promotes a different perspective for all

IDENTIFY

"Home is not where you live but where they understand you"
-Christian Morganstern

Supports more teaching, learning and technology roles

RETHINK

Welcoming, attractive, intimate

LISTEN

Stirs curiosity, Light Stimulating

Becomes a destination

PROVOKE

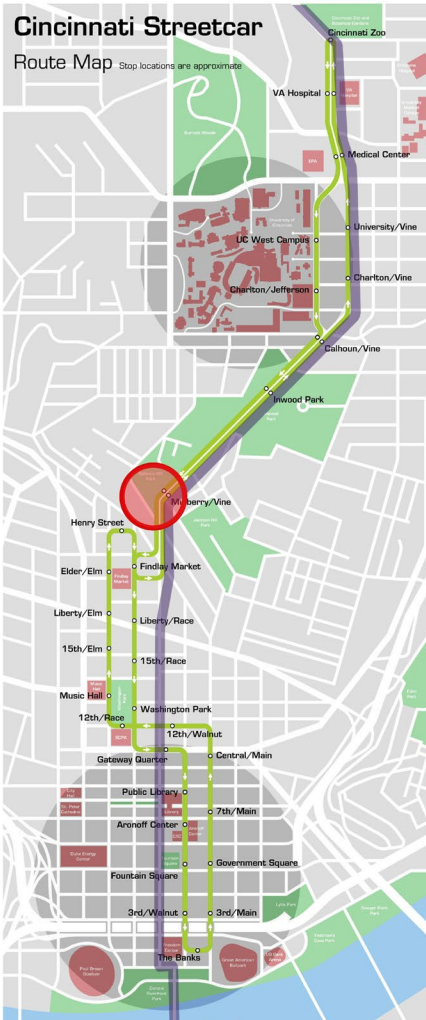
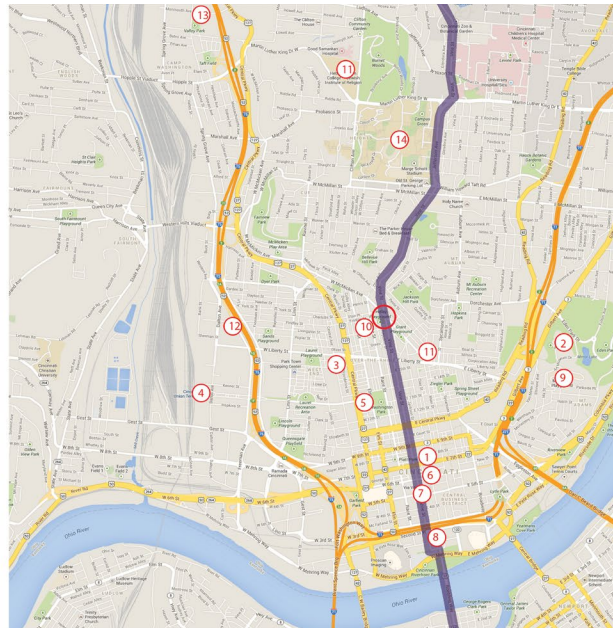
Is a marketplace for ideas of how we progress in a future together

CREATE

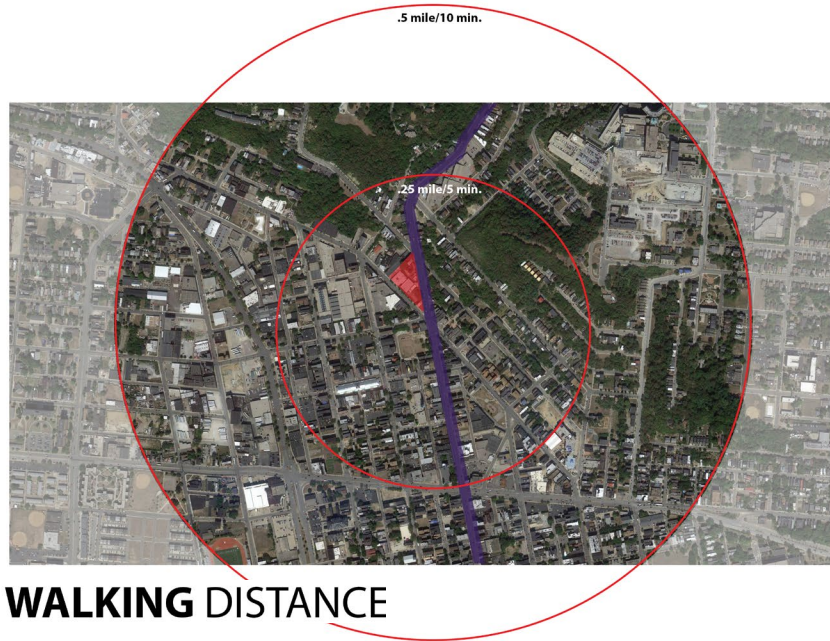
UNITE



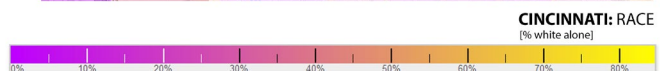
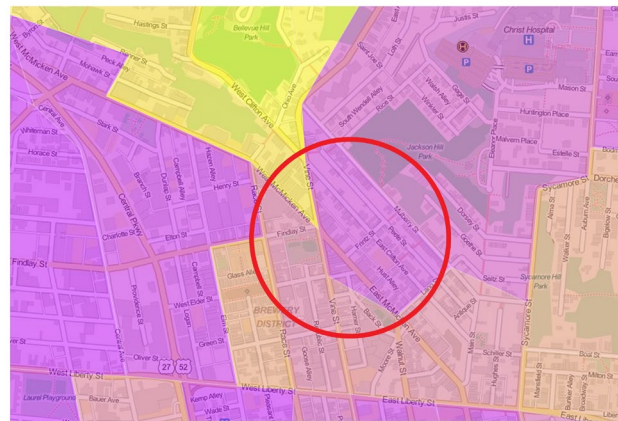
- 1 Arnoff Center for the Arts
- 2 Cincinnati Art Museum
- 3 Cincinnati Ballet
- 4 Cincinnati Museum Center
- 5 Cincinnati Music Hall
- 6 Contemporary Arts Center
- 7 Fountain Square
- 8 Freedom Center
- 9 Playhouse in the Park
- 10 Findlay Market
- 11 Hebrew Union College
- 12 Center for Holocaust and Humanity Education Center
- 13 The Center: Gay and Lesbian Community Center
- 14 University of Cincinnati



CULTURAL ADJACENCIES



WALKING DISTANCE



SITE ANALYSIS

SITE OPTIONS_Option A



SITE OPTIONS_Option B



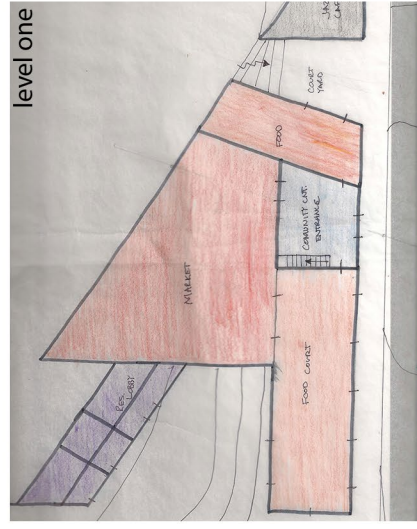
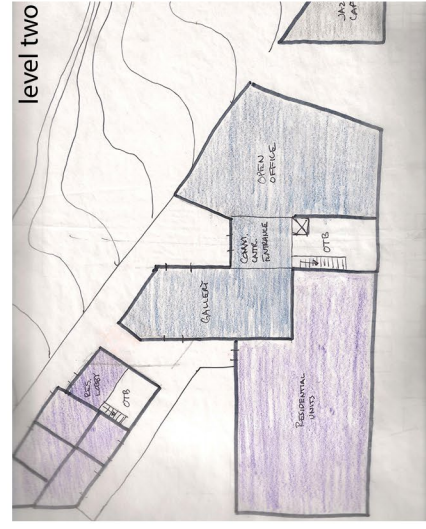
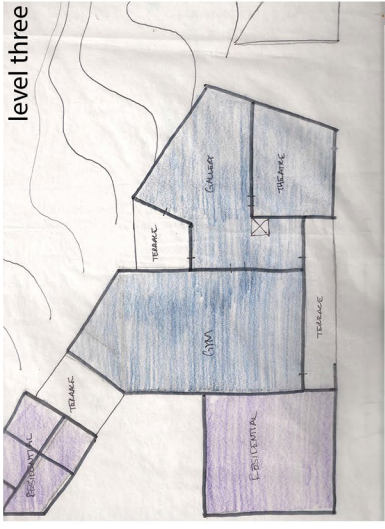
SITE OPTIONS_Option C



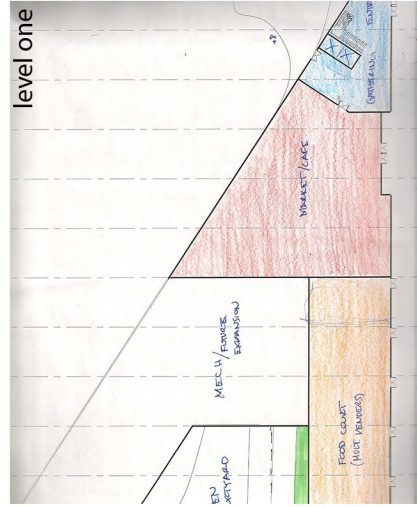
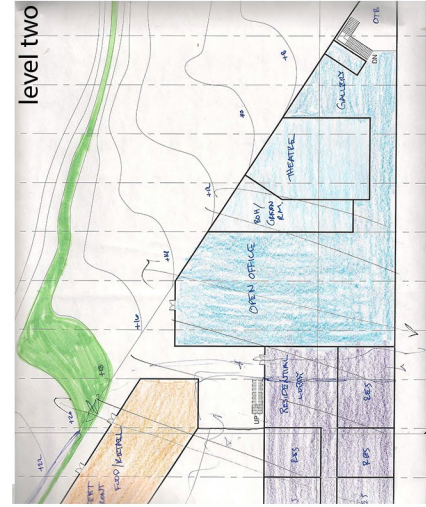
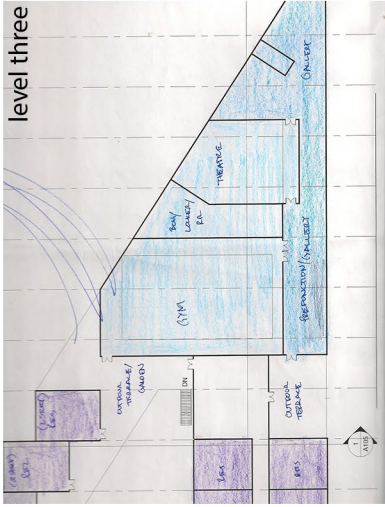
SITE OPTIONS

CINCINNATI CULTURAL CENTER SPACE LIST					
Cincl. Cultural Center	Project Elements	Capacity	Quantity	Site (ASFT)	ASF
Entry	Foyer / Vestibule		1	400	400
	Information / Seating		1	200	200
	Hall / Gallery		1	1200	1200
			Total Entry		1800
Cafe	Seating / Dining		1	500	500
	Kitchen		1	300	300
	Total Cafe				800
Media / Learning Center	Ref. / Service Desk		1	150	150
	Director Office		1	150	150
	Filing / Storage		1	100	100
	Stacks		1	400	400
	Computer Cartel Zone		6	20	120
	Open Seating		15	15	25
					375
	Total Media / Learning Center				1295
Speculative Office	Reception / Waiting		4	200	800
	Conference		2	200	400
	Office		8	120	960
					Total Spec Office
					2160
Prefunction	Seating / Gallery		1	1000	1000
	Kitchenette		1	200	200
	Total Prefunction				1200
Gymnasium	Gym		1	5200	5200
	Spectators			600	600
	Locker / RR Facilities		2	700	1400
	Storage		1	150	150
	Office		1	120	120
					Total Gymnasium
					7470
Theater	Seating		150	1200	1200
	Performance Space		1	600	600
	Back Stage		1	300	300
	Dressing Rm		2	150	300
	Office		1	120	120
					Total Theater
					2520
					TOTAL BUILDING ASF
					17245
					TOTAL GSF @ 65% Efficiency
					28454
					TARGET
					30000

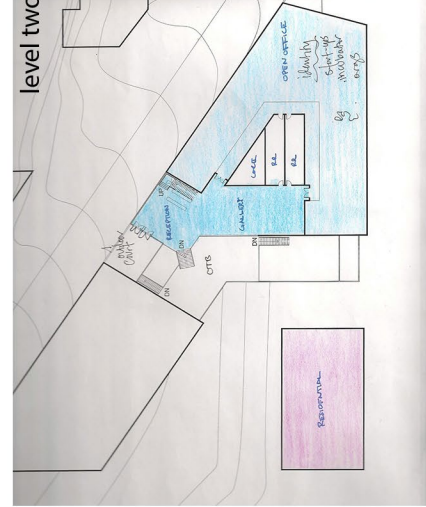
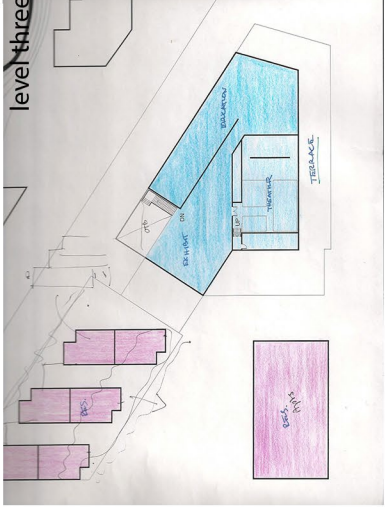
PROGRAM [PROPOSED]



SCHEME ONE



SCHEME TWO



SCHEME THREE

PROGRAM PARTI ITERATIONS

language religion art politics fashion beliefs music geograohy food lifestyle architecture
lingua religione arte politica moda credenze musica geografia ballare architettura stile di vita
γλώσσα θρησκεία τέχνη μόδα πεποιθήσεις

Social and Cultural Identity IN AND THROUGH ARCHITECTURE



Jared Holt

Master of Architecture Thesis

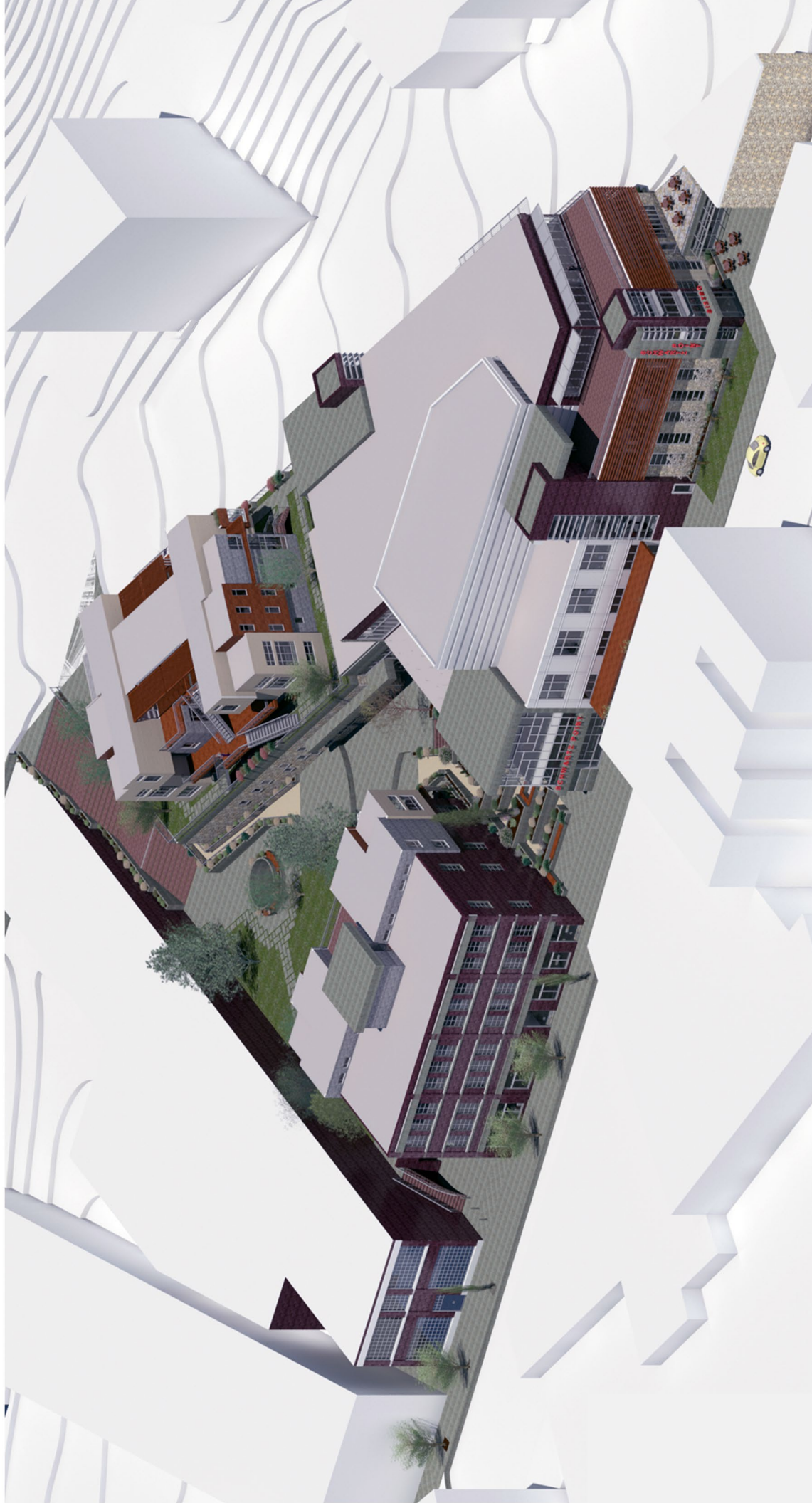
Miami University

Cincinnati's Cultural Collaborative SCHWARTZ POINT COMMUNITY CENTER

宗教 建筑 政治 生活方式 信仰 宗教 地理 跳舞 生活方式 建筑
religión política lenguaje artístico creencias moda música de baile estilo de vida geografia
ةايحل طمن صرقرلا ايفارغللا تادقتعملا يقيسوملا نفا ةسايسرلا ءايزالا نيذلا ةغل
arquitectura sprache religion kunst mode uberzeugungen musik geographie lebensstil



NORTH ↑



AERIAL VIEW
[view from north-west]



SOUTH-WEST FACADE



WEST FACADE



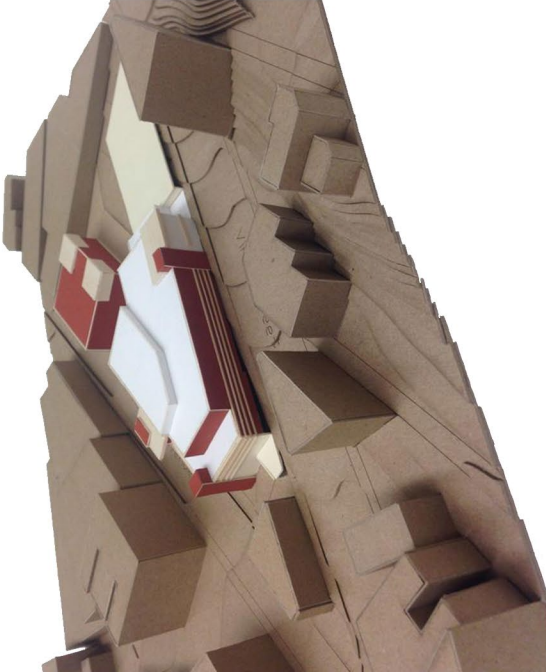
SOUTH FACADE



NORTH FACADE



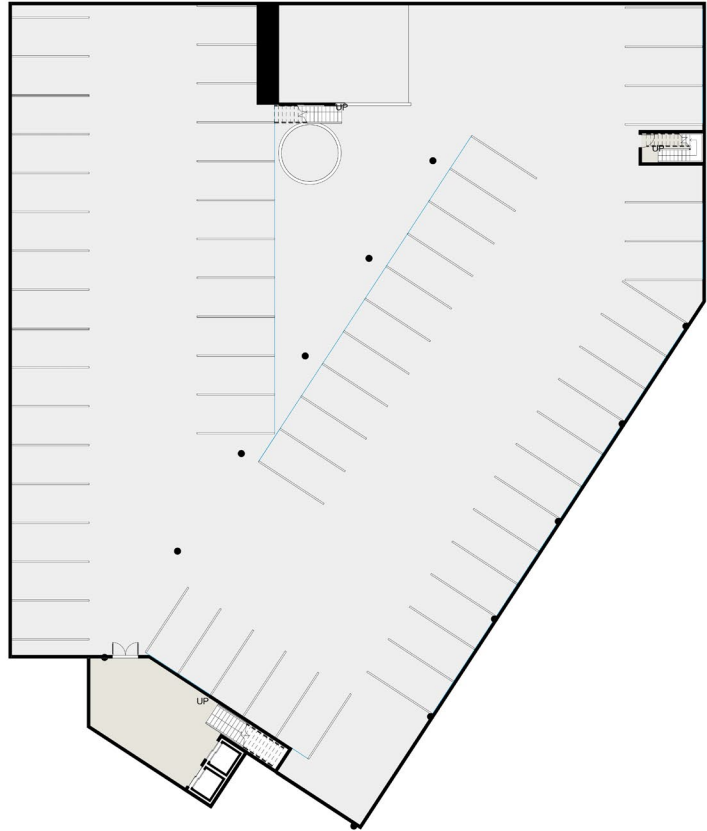
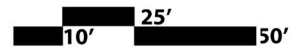
NORTH-WEST FACADE



SOUTH-EAST FACADE

MODEL IMAGES

LEVEL BELOW



BUILDING PROGRAM

● COMMUNITY CENTER

*Open Atrium
Cafe
Gymnasium
Open Offices
Exhibition Gallery
Art Studios
Theatre
Pr-Function Space*

● MARKET

*Grocery Store
Public Kitchen*

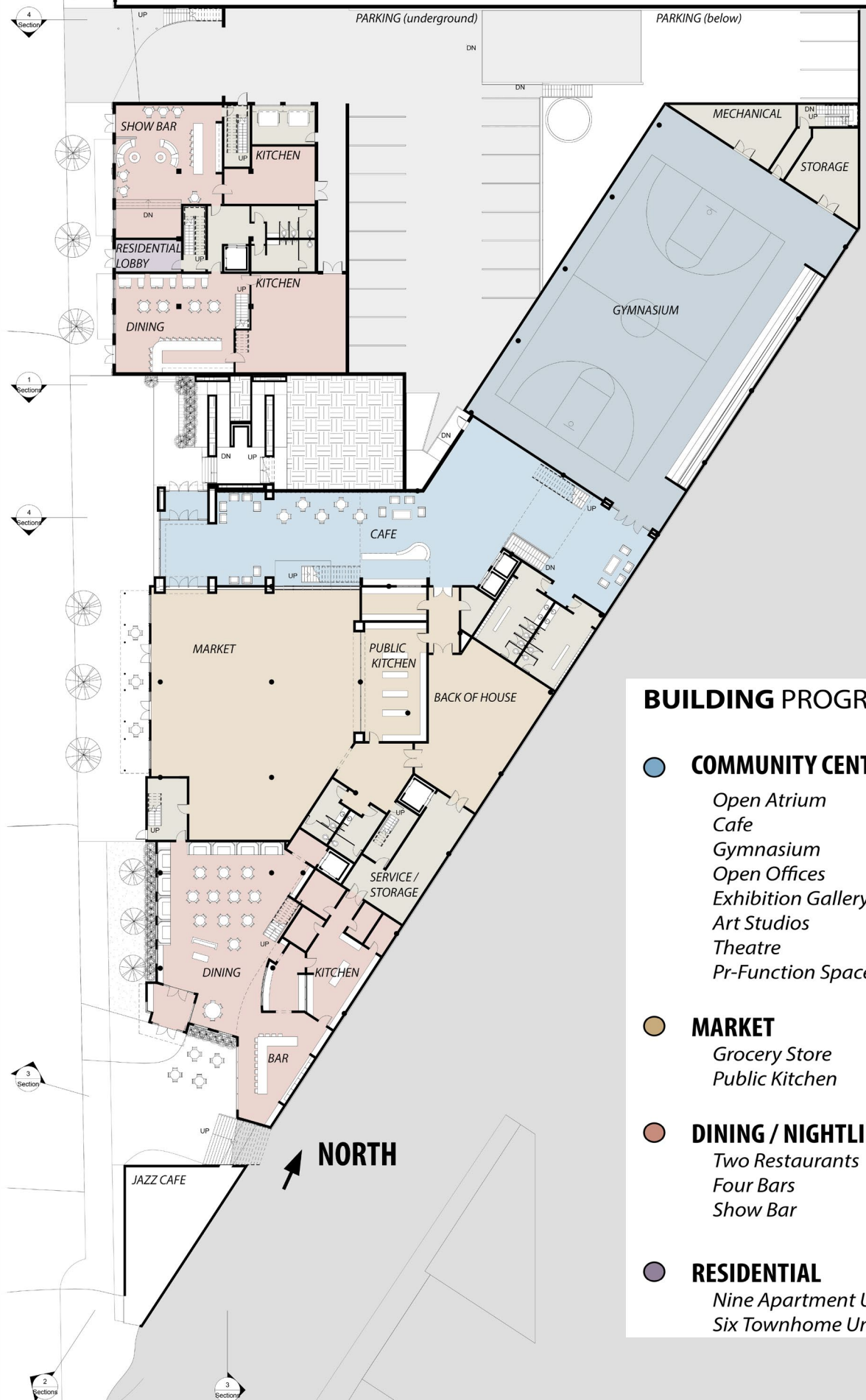
● DINING / NIGHTLIFE

*Two Restaurants
Four Bars
Show Bar*

● RESIDENTIAL

*Nine Apartment Units
Six Townhome Units*

LEVEL ONE



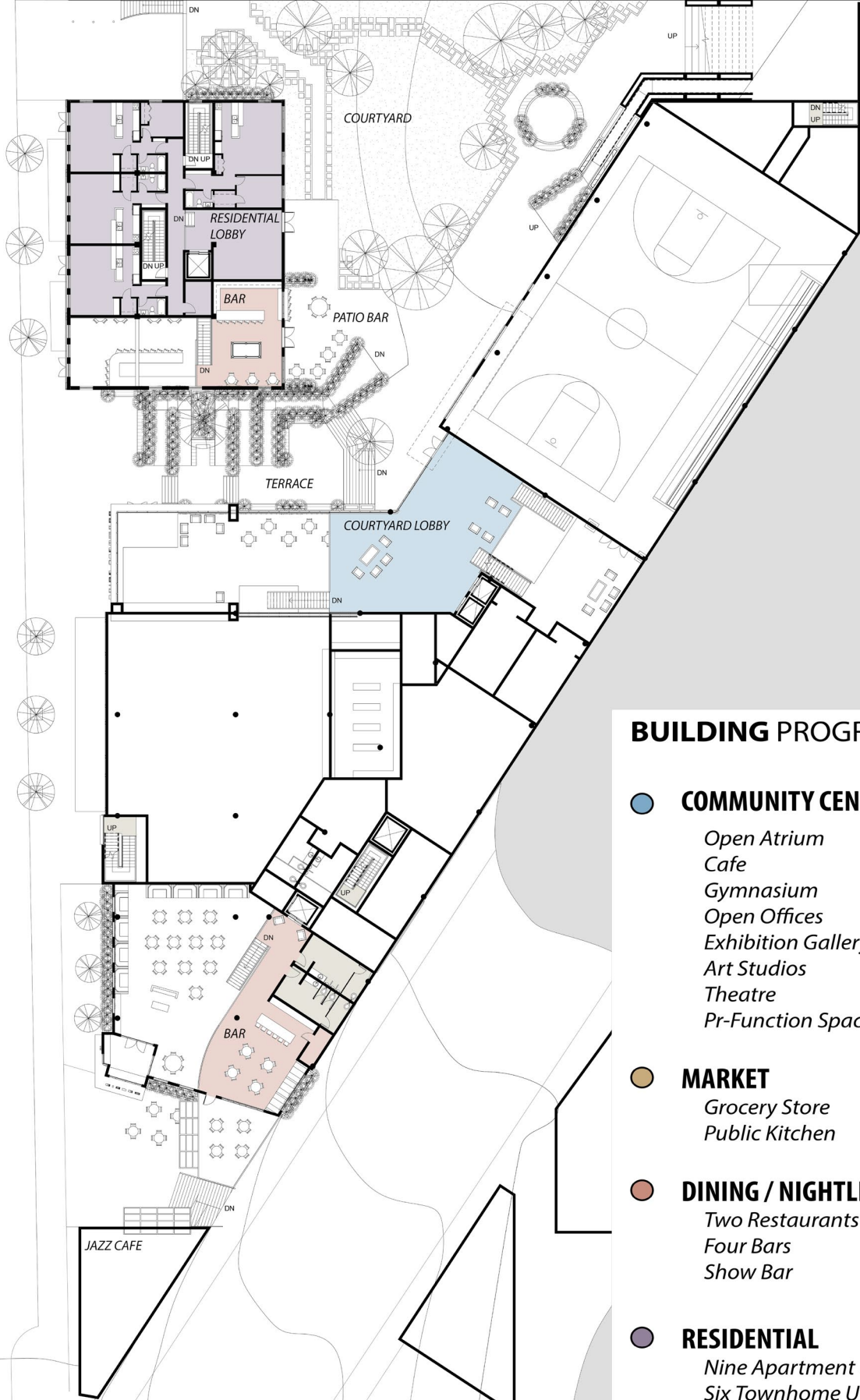
BUILDING PROGRAM

- **COMMUNITY CENTER**
*Open Atrium
 Cafe
 Gymnasium
 Open Offices
 Exhibition Gallery
 Art Studios
 Theatre
 Pr-Function Space*
- **MARKET**
*Grocery Store
 Public Kitchen*
- **DINING / NIGHTLIFE**
*Two Restaurants
 Four Bars
 Show Bar*
- **RESIDENTIAL**
*Nine Apartment Units
 Six Townhome Units*

NORTH

LEVEL MEZZANINE

10' 25' 50'



BUILDING PROGRAM

● COMMUNITY CENTER

- Open Atrium
- Cafe
- Gymnasium
- Open Offices
- Exhibition Gallery
- Art Studios
- Theatre
- Pr-Function Space

● MARKET

- Grocery Store
- Public Kitchen

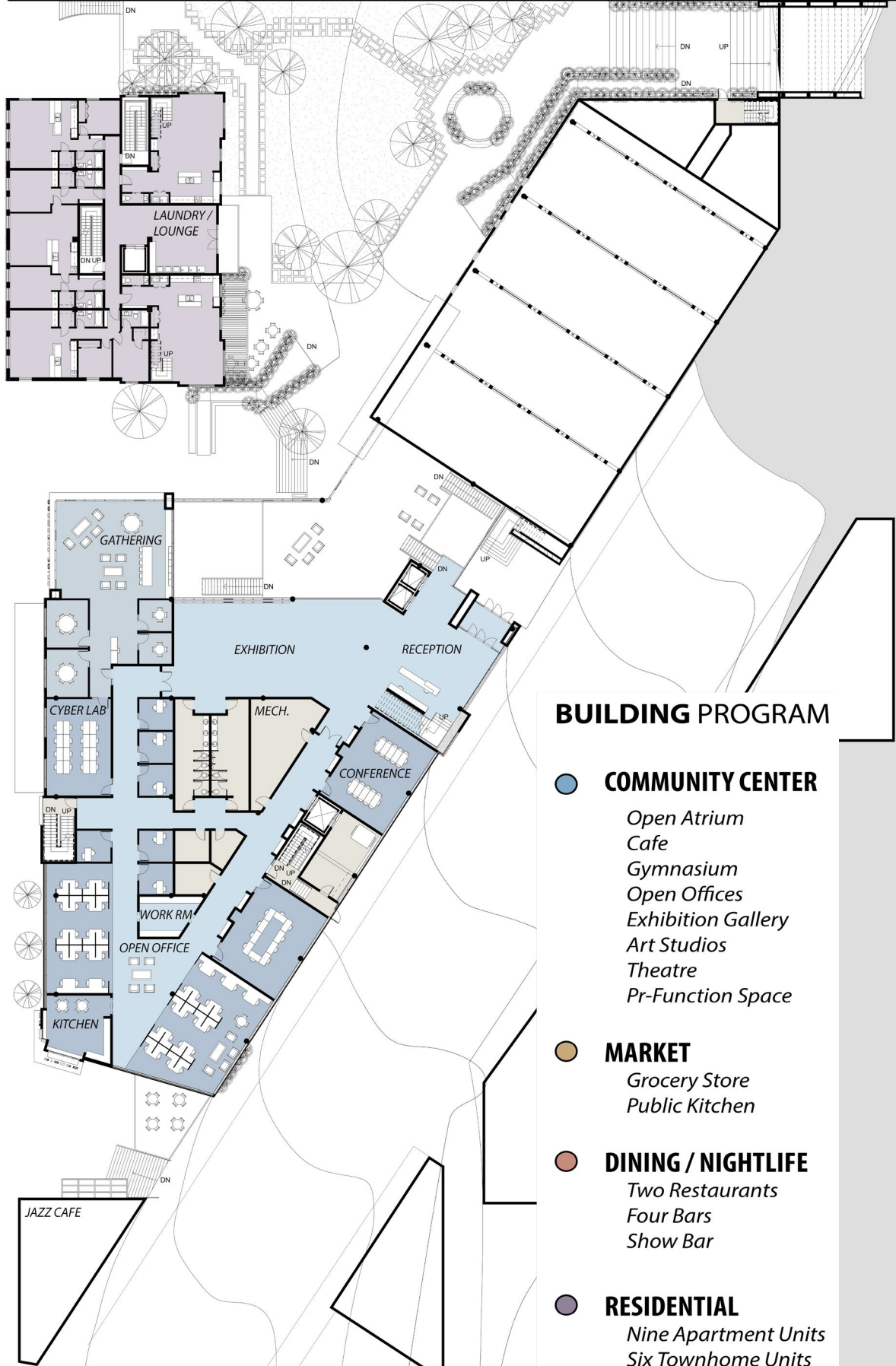
● DINING / NIGHTLIFE

- Two Restaurants
- Four Bars
- Show Bar

● RESIDENTIAL

- Nine Apartment Units
- Six Townhome Units

LEVEL TWO



BUILDING PROGRAM

● COMMUNITY CENTER

- Open Atrium*
- Cafe*
- Gymnasium*
- Open Offices*
- Exhibition Gallery*
- Art Studios*
- Theatre*
- Pr-Function Space*

● MARKET

- Grocery Store*
- Public Kitchen*

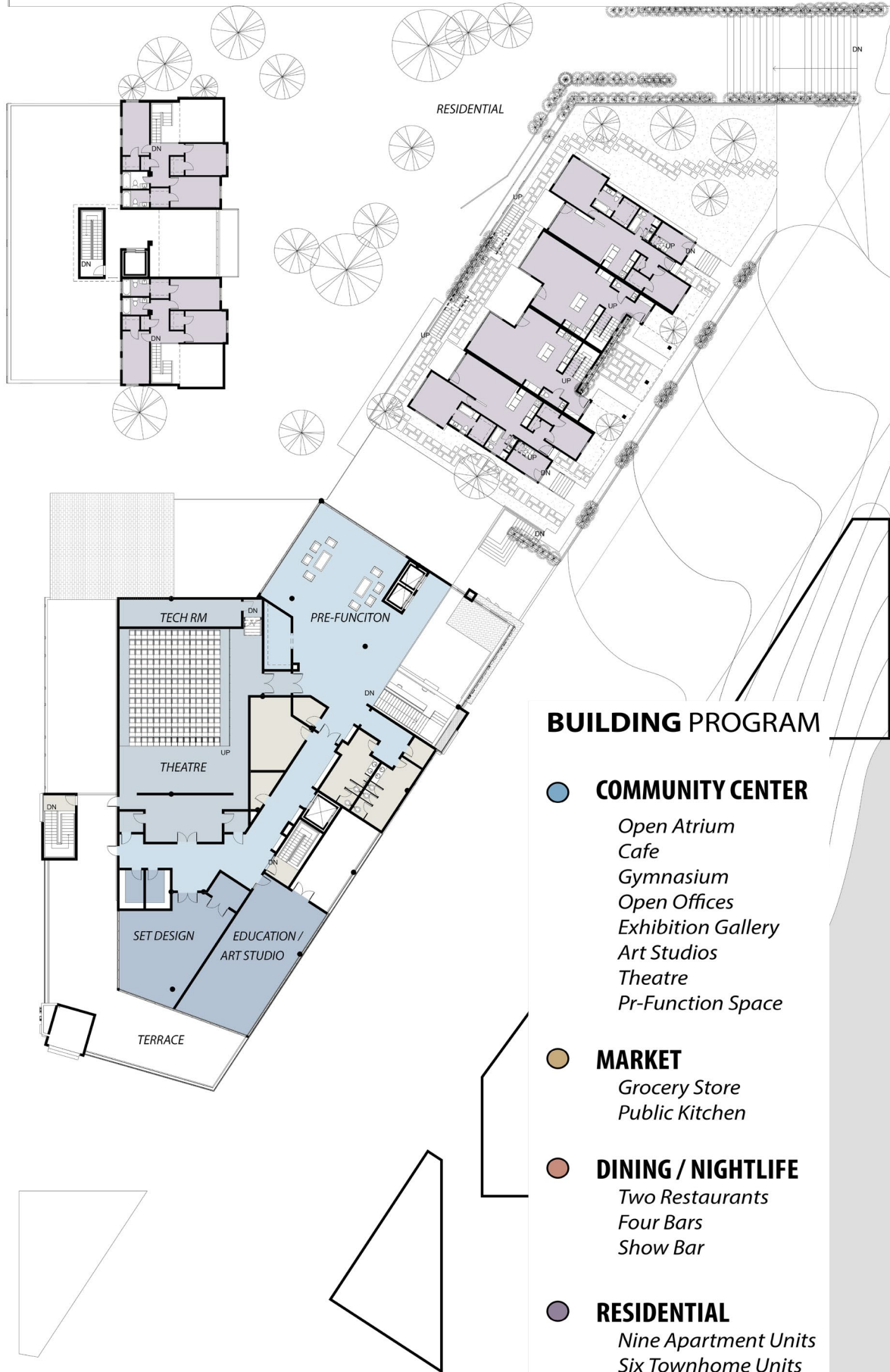
● DINING / NIGHTLIFE

- Two Restaurants*
- Four Bars*
- Show Bar*

● RESIDENTIAL

- Nine Apartment Units*
- Six Townhome Units*

LEVEL THREE



BUILDING PROGRAM

● COMMUNITY CENTER

- Open Atrium*
- Cafe*
- Gymnasium*
- Open Offices*
- Exhibition Gallery*
- Art Studios*
- Theatre*
- Pr-Function Space*

● MARKET

- Grocery Store*
- Public Kitchen*

● DINING / NIGHTLIFE

- Two Restaurants*
- Four Bars*
- Show Bar*

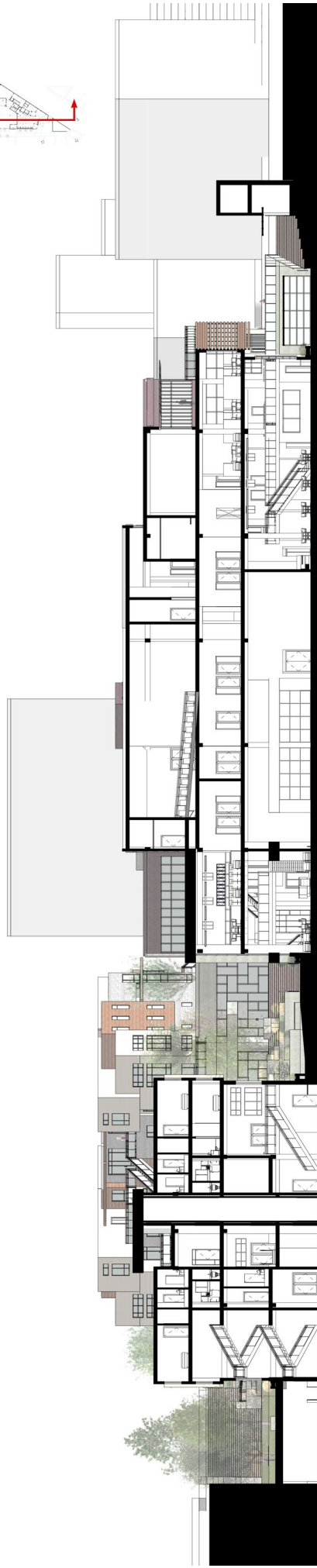
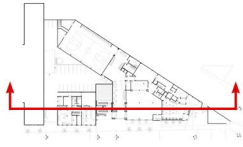
● RESIDENTIAL

- Nine Apartment Units*
- Six Townhome Units*



WEST ELEVATION

10' 25' 50'

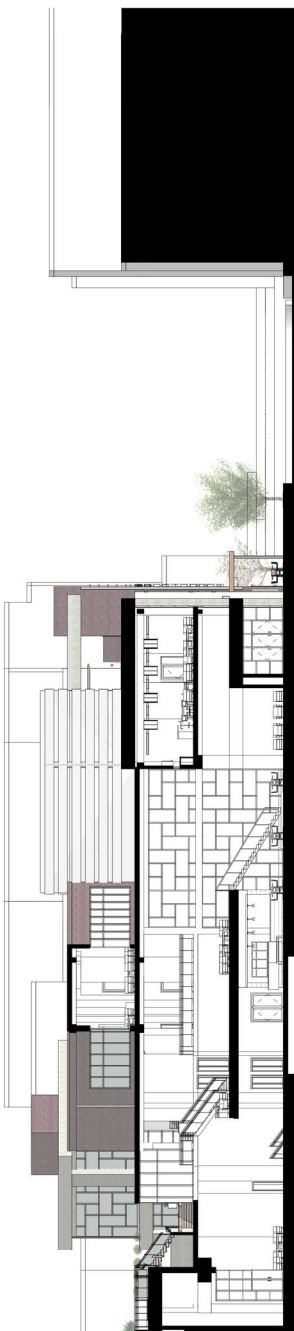
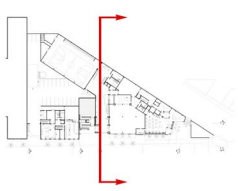


WEST SECTION

10' 25' 50'



SOUTH ELEVATION

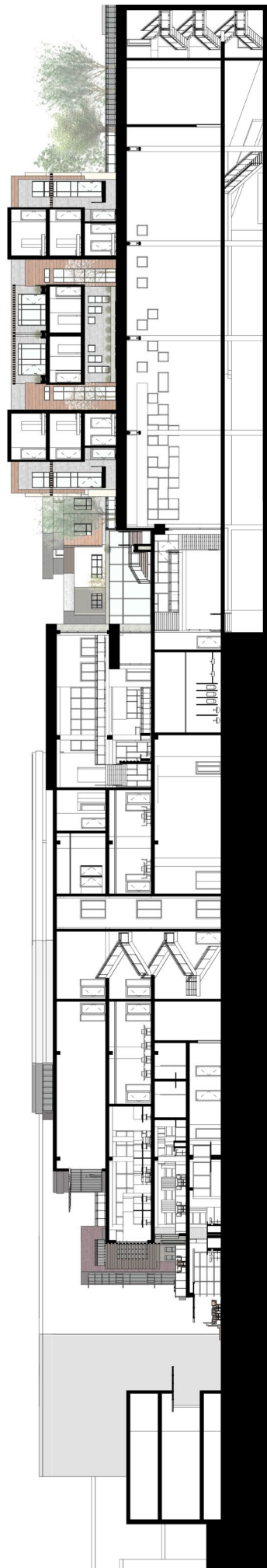
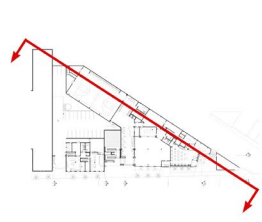


NORTH SECTION



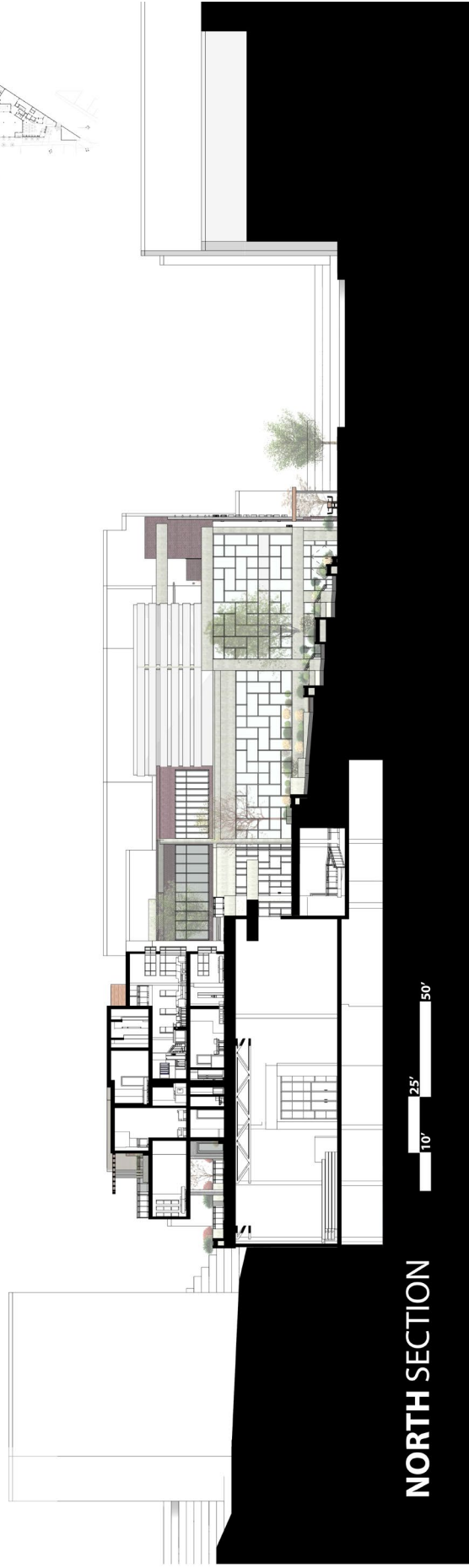
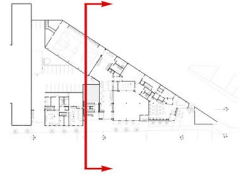


EAST ELEVATION



EAST SECTION







VINE St POINT PLAZA

[level one]



RESTAURANT POINT PLAZA BISTRO

[level mezzanine]



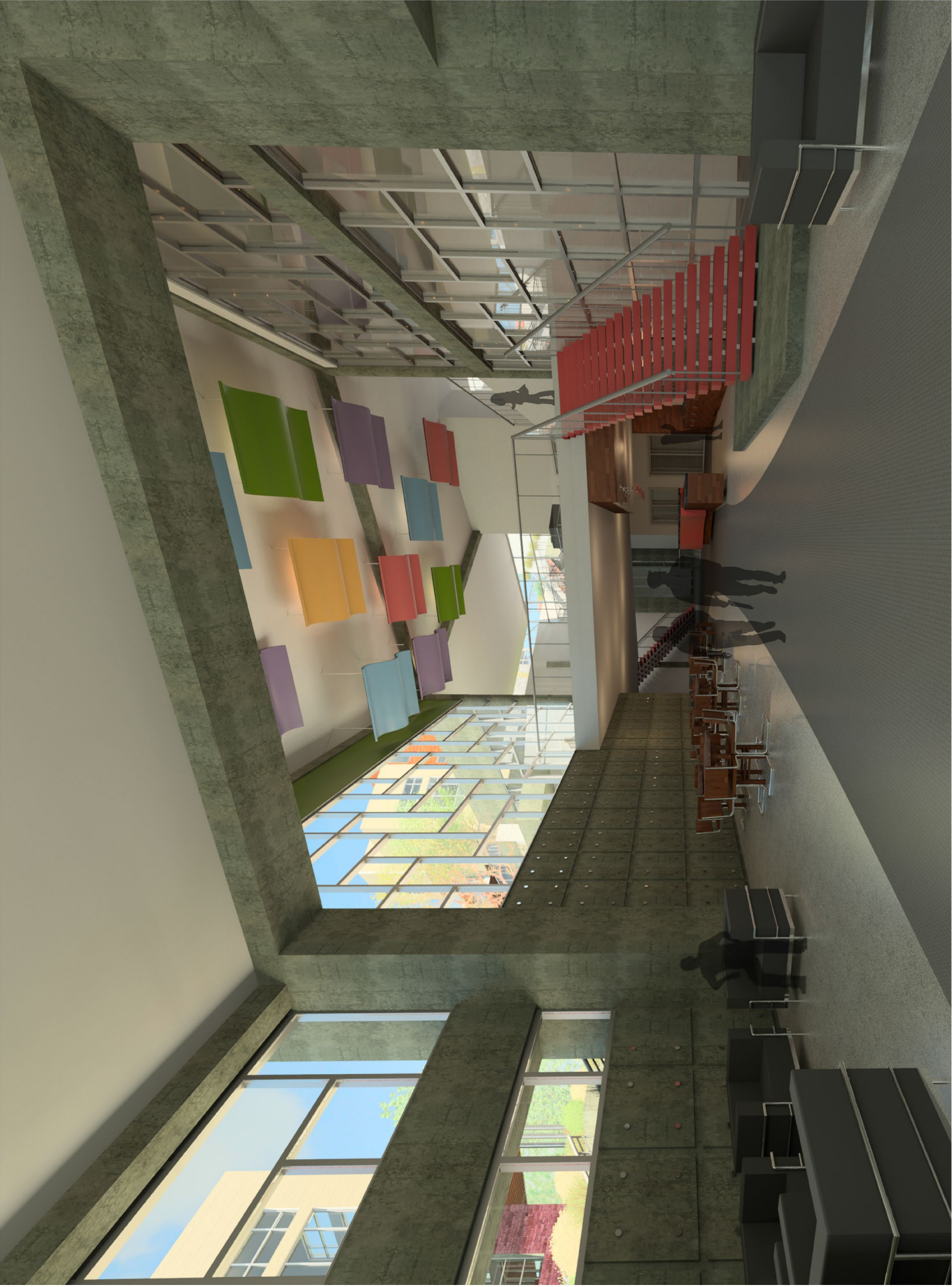
RESTAURANT [RENOVATED]

[level mezzanine]



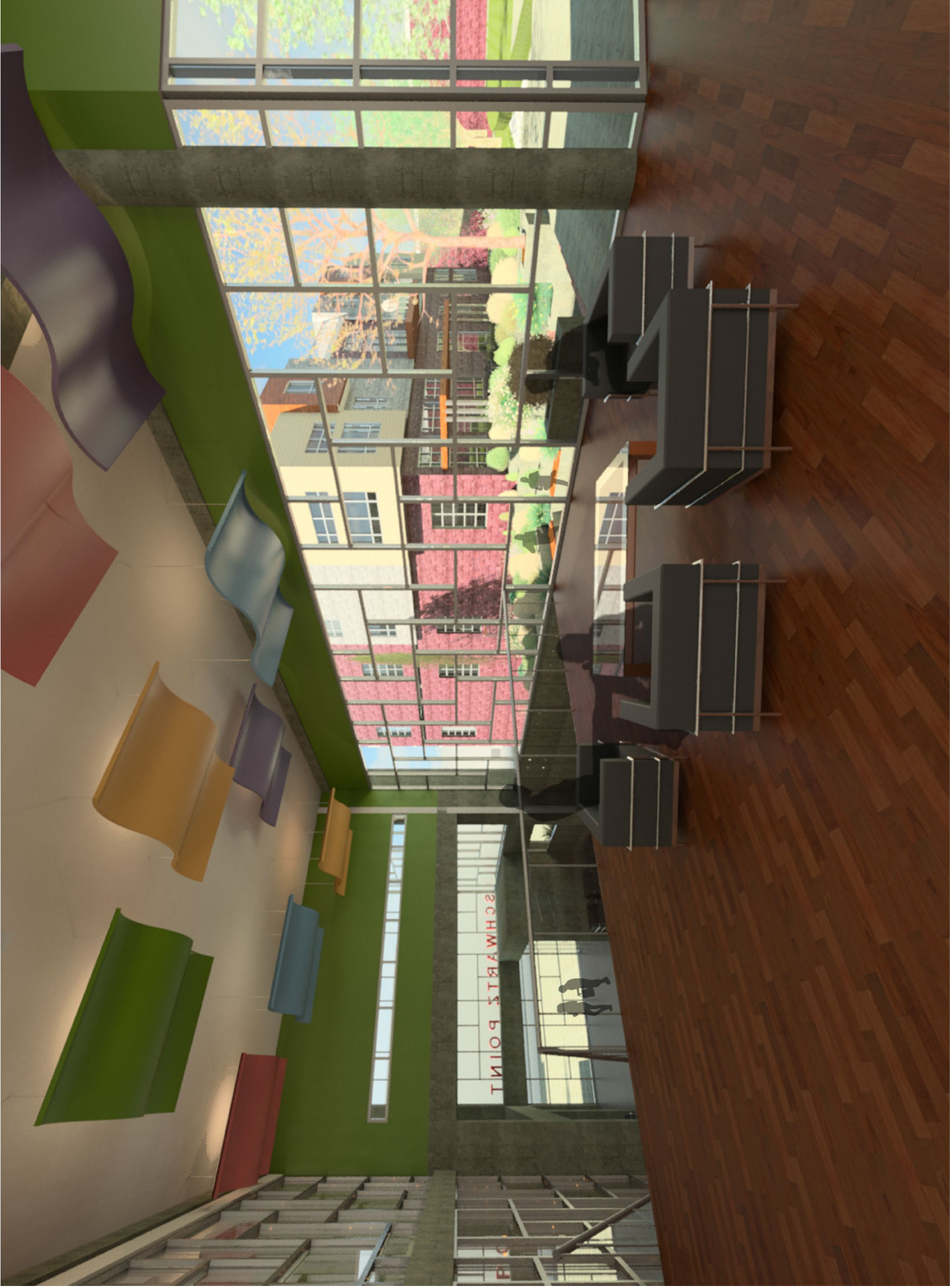
McMICKEN Ave ENTRANCE

[level one]



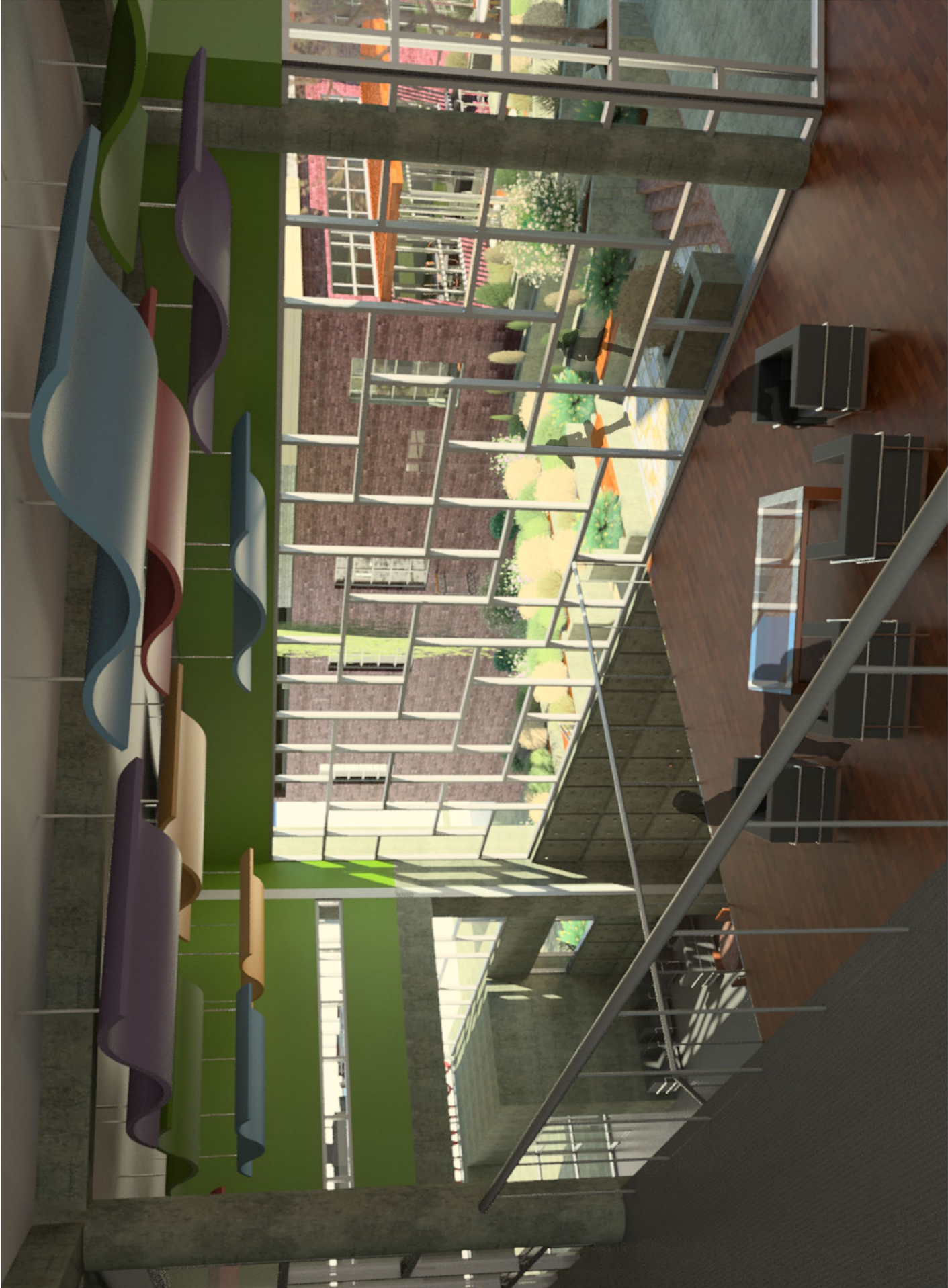
McMICKEN Ave ENTRANCE

[level one]



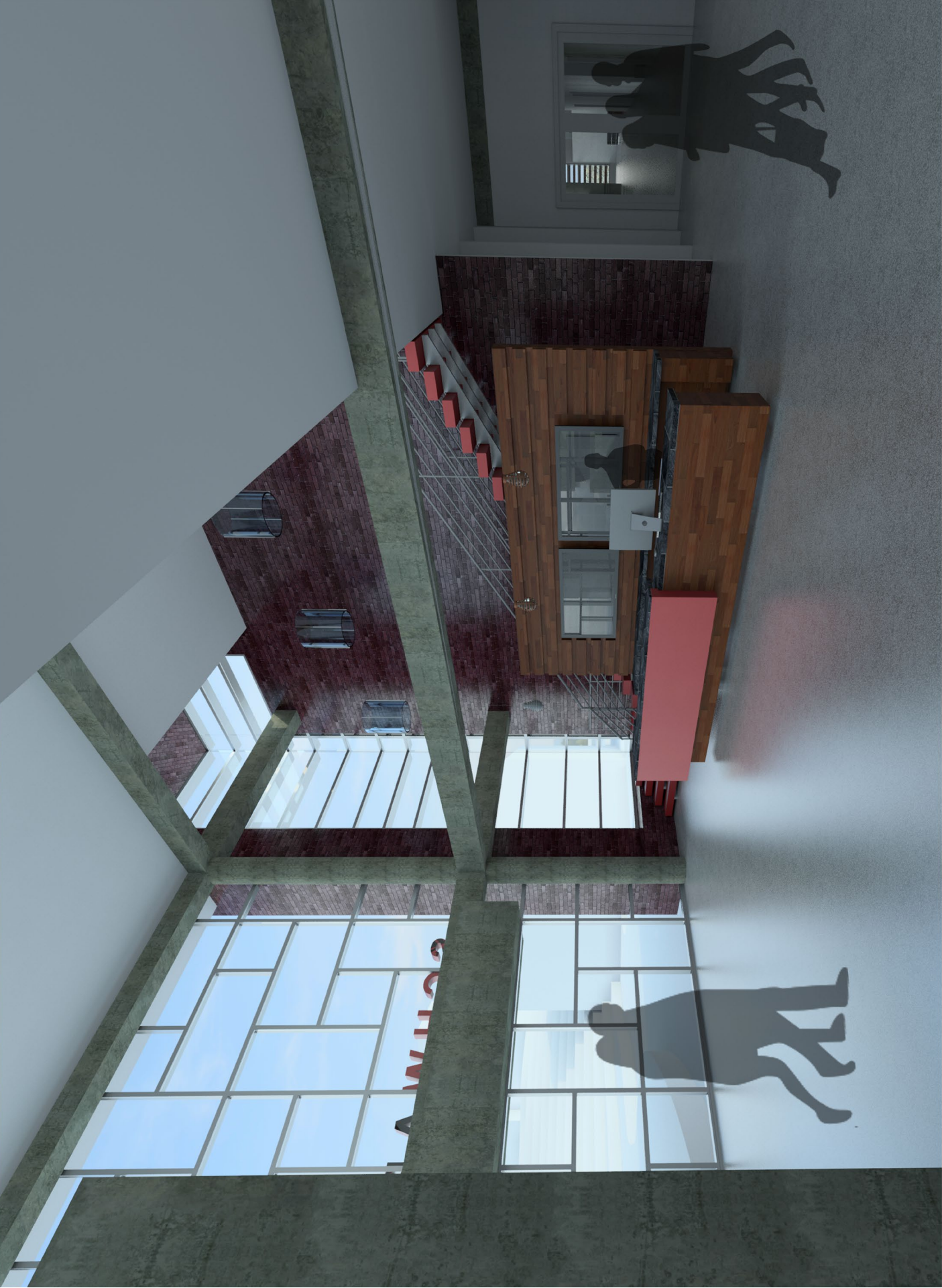
COURTYARD ENTRANCE

[level mezzanine]



EXHIBITION GALLERY

[level two]



VINE St ENTRANCE

[level two]



VINE St ENTRANCE

[level two]



VINE St TOWN HOMES

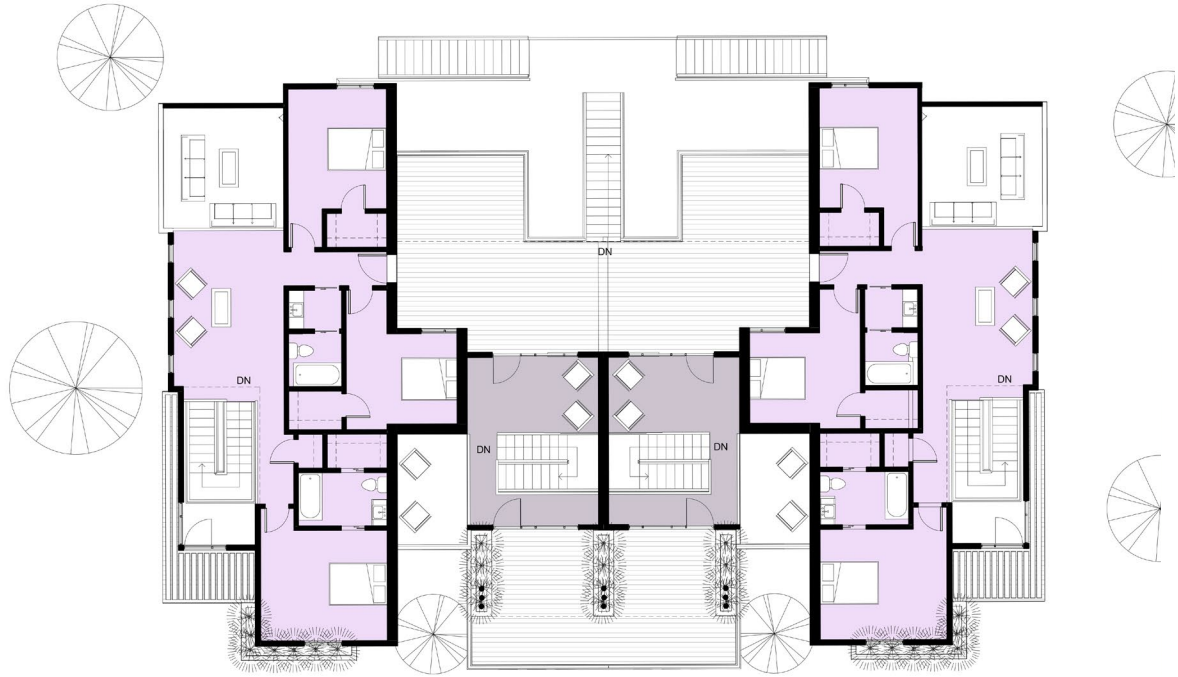


COURTYARD VIEW

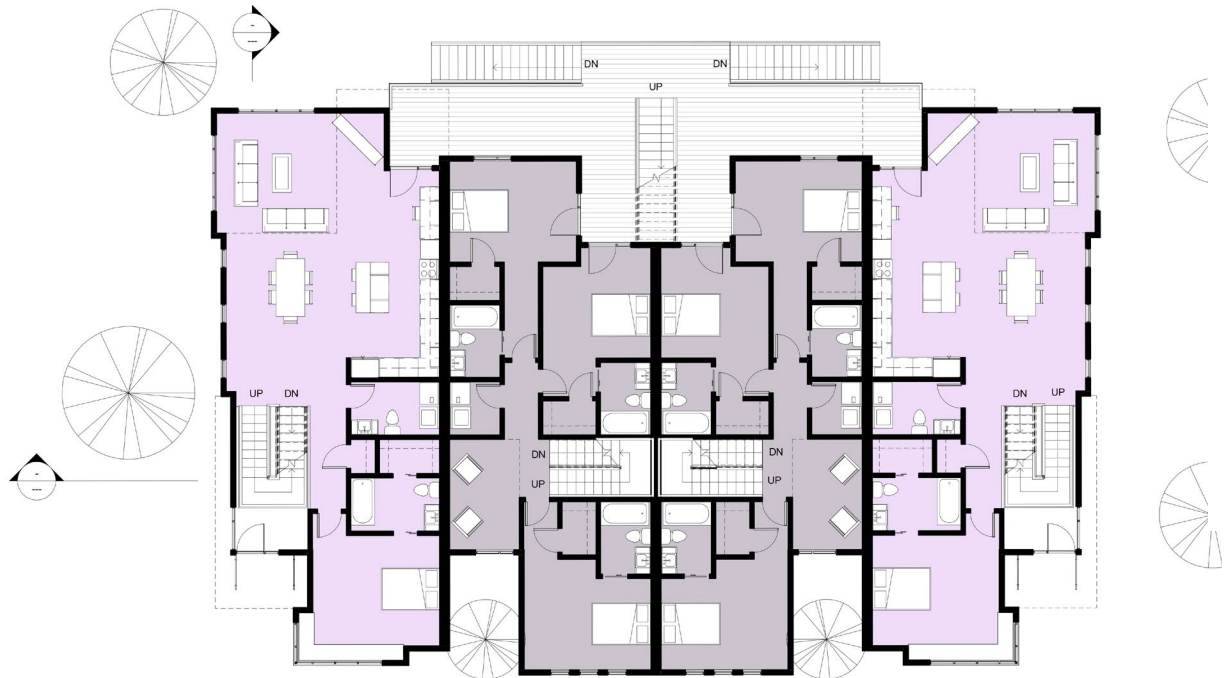
TOWN HOMES [new construction]



SIX UNITS: two [2] bedrooms two [3] bedrooms two [4] bedrooms



LEVEL THREE



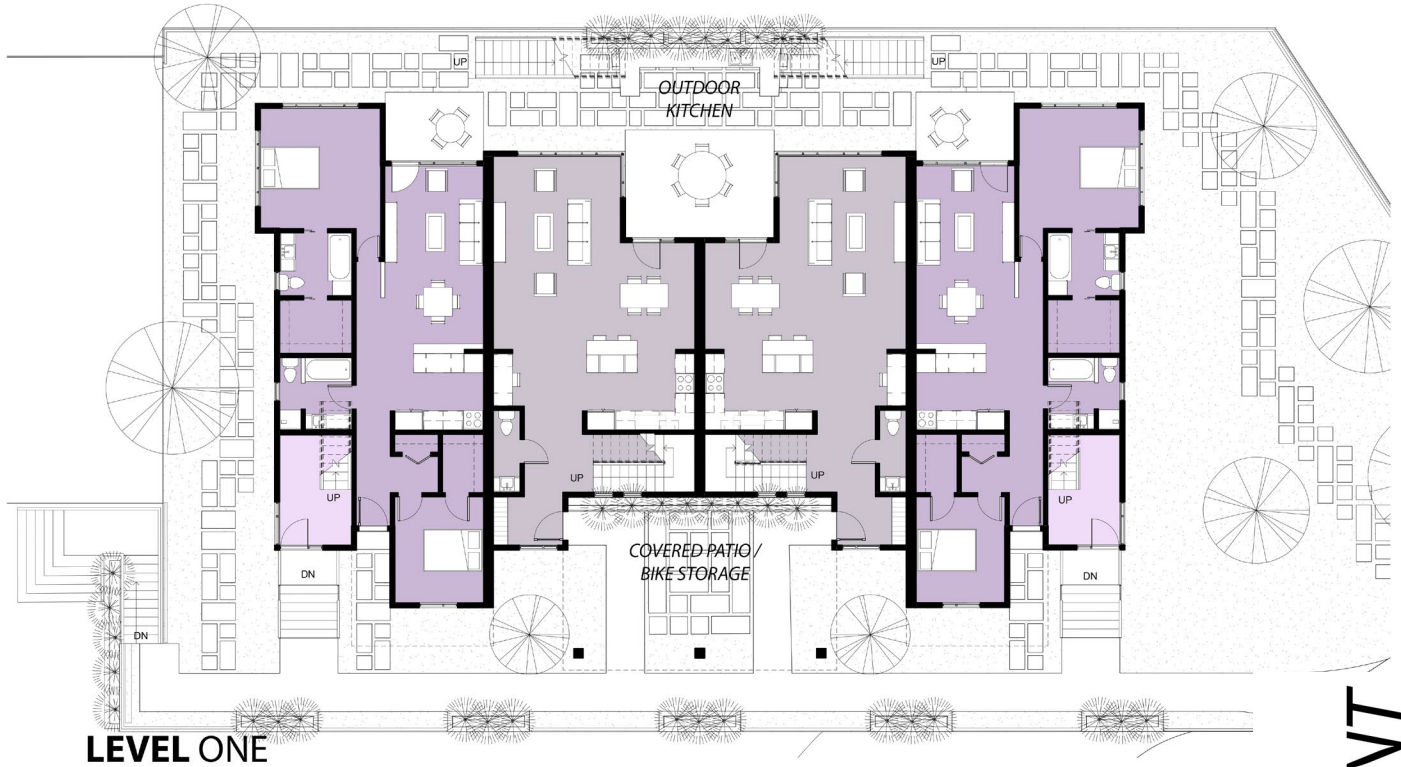
LEVEL TWO

LIVING at the POINT

TOWN HOMES [new construction]



SIX UNITS: two [2] bedrooms two [3] bedrooms two [4] bedrooms

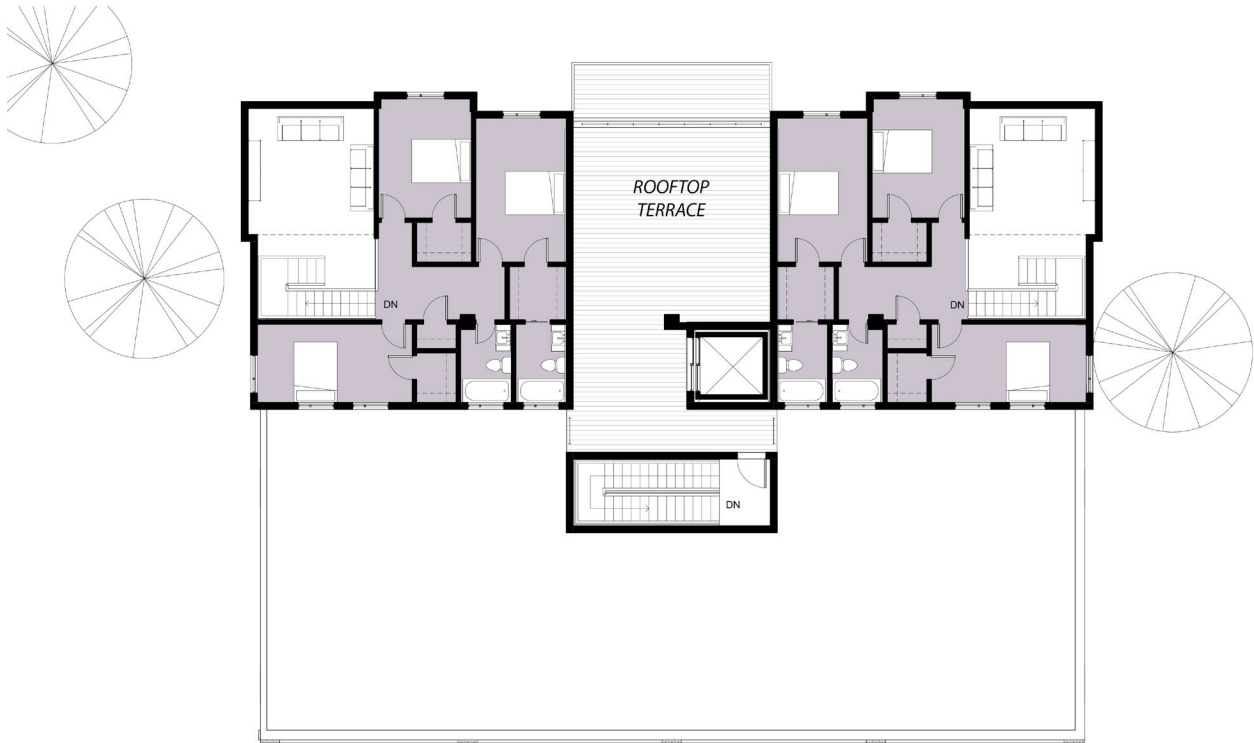


LIVING at the POINT

APARTMENTS [renovation]



NINE UNITS: five [1] bedrooms two [2] bedrooms two [3] bedrooms



LEVEL THREE



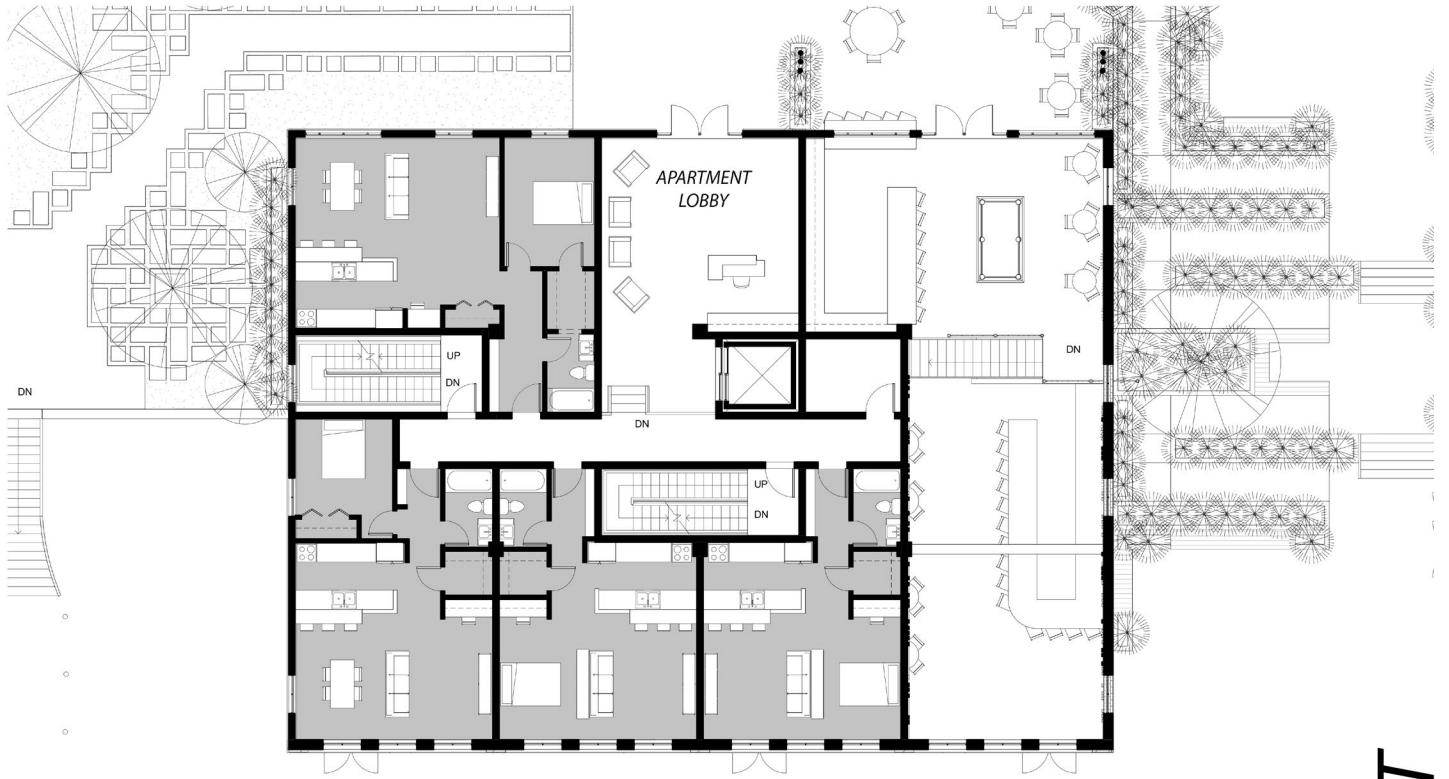
LEVEL TWO

LIVING at the POINT

APARTMENTS [renovation]



NINE UNITS: five [1] bedrooms two [2] bedrooms two [3] bedrooms



LIVING at the *POINT*

VERBAL PRESENTATION

JARED A. HOLT
Miami University
Alumni Hall 4.22.2014

"The location in Cincinnati was chosen based on two major forces that currently do not have any overlap in the master plan of the city: The downtown area and the UC Campus in Clifton.

Between the two is Over the Rhine. This is a historic district just north of downtown and is known for its strong German roots. The historic area is becoming a gentrified portion of the city as its renovations continue to sprawl northward. However, it doesn't quite reach UC's Campus. There's a definite 'stopping point' that could be defined as, 'the other side of the tracks' per se.

However, a master plan for a light rail system will attempt to tie downtown and OTR to the Campus. This provides ample opportunity to continue the revitalization of the city along this new transit path.

After presenting this project and its proposed site last semester, one of my colleagues commented that they doubted the success of this project due to its location, that 'they wouldn't be caught dead in this area.' This was said more so as

casual conversation at the end of my presentation and wasn't meant to be personal. Yet, I was offended. I wasn't offended as it being a critique about a decision I made for my site, I was offended because HOW can we as architects, socially and environmentally responsible designers, limit ourselves to opportunity with a mentality like this?

Yes, one can look at the facts: the demographics of this area... the educational statistics, average income, unemployment rates, crime rates... and establish their opinions... But I didn't have any of that in mind when I first visited the site.

It was a Sunday last fall, I was in the area and very apprehensive to explore. I didn't know what to expect. Yes, I saw rundown buildings, boarded up windows, but I also saw charm, color, and character. But what overpowered that was what I heard. Singing: gospel. There was a church service going on at Findlay Park, adjacent to my site. I was immediately drawn to the park and the music that echoed through the buildings

taking over the whole neighborhood.

I stood on the other side of the fence wanting nothing more than to join. Not just sit in the back row and listen, I wanted to be up there in front of everyone singing and dancing. At the same time the service was going on, there were boys playing basketball. Isolated on a bench in the shade, there were two men sitting, carrying on conversation.

I think it was because of the juxtaposition of these activities taking place simultaneously without any opposition from anyone that drew my interest to them even higher... I'm an athlete but I don't play basketball – yet, I wanted finish my song and dance and play with the kids. I wanted to sit on the bench next to the two men and [I don't know...] take a hit of whatever they were smoking.

Now I realize I also have this imbedded nature about myself that automatically is drawn to the unfamiliar; I want to understand and I want to relate; I want to see how you can make me a better person.

I also realize not everyone is like me in this sense. It can be quite overwhelming always yearning to be apart and understand the unknown and it has gotten me in trouble a time or two... But what

everyone SHOULD have is the opportunity to be exposed to the unknown; the unfamiliar; the different cultures and lifestyles that we should all proudly represent. That is our responsibility. And that's what this project is about.

While Cincinnati's not the most progressive area and those who want to live in a culturally diverse place wouldn't necessarily migrate here... that doesn't mean there's not a strong, diverse, cultural existence. Perhaps, there just isn't a place to be exposed to it all which is why the program of a Community center was chosen to address this thesis.

The site located on the prominent corner of McMicken and Vine Street, which serves as a spine that directly connects UC to the City, currently houses some small service shops, convenience store, residential and the infamous Jazz café coined Schwartz Point.

In beginning the master plan of program some site issues, or rather 'site opportunities' needed to be addressed, in which there were a lot of said 'site opportunities...'

It was quickly realized that this lovely Jazz Café would need to remain as a cultural and historical node to the site. And then there was the topography... Cincinnati lies right on the river and there are

major elevation changes in the surrounding area. The site drops over thirty feet from its north-east corner on down around to its north-west corner.

The topography issue served as prime opportunity when breaking up the programmatic elements of the building by elevations, yet allowed spatial volumes and multi-level views to integrate the program and provide interaction between the various users.

The elevation changes meant that the entrance points to the site were all at different levels allowing there not to be a hierarchal flow of program or circulation of the building; every entrance had equal opportunity to access multiple programs and visually be aware of all the adjacencies.

There are six entrance points upon four various levels of the building. Two of these entrances are to a central atrium that serves as the core of the building and ties all the programmatic elements together.

The program on Level One consists of a café in the atrium, a gymnasium, a market – such as a Whole Foods, a Public Kitchen, where cooking classes are offered and the community can host culinary events. There's a restaurant on the South Point that shares a new plaza with the Jazz Café which has a new indoor-

outdoor stage to be viewed on both sides.

The Mezzanine level is more of a private Level for the users of the building as its only access flush to the site is in the restaurants, and in the atrium this level accesses the courtyard of the site.

The second level [accessed from Vine St.] includes open office space to house the various organizations that use the community center as well as small businesses that would benefit from working from such an environment. [Gathering Space, Cyber Lab, Conference rooms, etc.]

Overlooking the atrium on this level is an open exhibition gallery for advertisement of events, organizations, and activities of the site as well as houses art from the local studios such as the one on the third floor, on which also houses a 200-person theater with a pre-function space that looks over the entire site – great for Banquets and Receptions.

Another site opportunity that I found was from the existing buildings on the site. Along with the Jazz Café, it was decided to keep one other building and do an interior renovation to help connect this new construction back into the historic site. This building houses a multi-level restaurant that has exposure to the courtyard. And a Show Bar for performance,

karaoke, and the occasional drag show.

While the site serves the local Community, it is also a destination for users outside of the area. The various organizations that may range from athletics, art, theatre, business, politics, and culture ALONG with their members, will have a home at the center.

That being so, some people like myself, would really enjoy living in this environment. I reserved the northern portion of my site to residential units. The renovated building houses apartments while old row homes are replaced by new town homes built on-top of the gymnasium.

Now I didn't need to re-invent the wheel on housing per-se, but I did take into consideration 'who' may be living in these spaces: which people of the community, or those moving into the site from outside of the city. Every sleeping space is designed to have equal amenities, and access to the living quarters and shared exterior spaces.

It is envisioned that, whether as a destination for work or leisure, or as a home, Cincinnati's Cultural Collaborative at Schwartz Point will embrace and enhance the quality of life to the surrounding neighborhood as well as offer an opportunity for people of various cultures and demographics to come

together as a whole in order to learn and grow as individuals."