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Empathetic Design: TRANSITIONAL SHELTER

**Independent Project submitted to
Roger Williams University, School of Architecture, Art and Historic Preservation
In fulfillment of the requirements of the B.Arch Degree in Architecture
In May 2008**

By

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Class of 2008**

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EMPATHETIC DESIGN

Empathetic Design: TRANSITIONAL SHELTER

Anne Marie Loiselle

May 2008

Advisors: Luis Carranza & Dan Hisel



ABSTRACT

Empathetic design is a concept that can be applied to any building type, anywhere. Empathy has implications in all aspects of design from scale, to materials, to organization and circulation. Empathetic design needs to adapt to the people it is built for, and the context it is built in. It is understanding of the needs and concerns of its occupants and provides a bridge to connect people to space. This project explores the concept of empathetic design as applied to a TRANSITIONAL SHELTER. This shelter is so named because it provides more than a temporary place to sleep. It is not only an empathetic design, but also an empathetic program, understanding of the difficulties, struggles, and desires of people in desperate need of employment and housing. The program and spaces cater to functions that help the homeless get back on their feet. These services include counseling, day care, and job training. It is a safe haven for those who feel they are not understood, or have been forgotten. It is a welcoming retreat from the streets that not only provides a warm, dry place to sleep, but the tools necessary for these people to regain their lives and rejoin society.

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THESIS IDEA



Plaza Apartments - Exterior



Plaza Apartments - Interior

Architecture should be empathetic.

Empathy is described as an emotion that “bridges the distance between human experiences, binding us to another in deeply personal ways that reflect our potential for shared experience, compassion, [and] action” (Thomas). Empathetic architecture bridges its users with the experience of architecture. It does this through taking the personality and mind set of its users into account by understanding the needs of its occupants on multiple levels. It meets the immediate physical needs of the users and the program as required, but then goes beyond to meet the emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs of its users through the spaces, materials, program, circulation, and more. It takes the emotional and psychological state of its occupants into account and attempts to reconcile the emotions of the users allowing them to reflect on those emotions. When put into practice, empathetic architecture would “bind” the user to the building in “deeply personal ways.” Materials can help create a range of emotions from welcome and warm to solid and secure. It is also important that the program is complete and that it offers every service necessary for the user(s) of the building.

Empathetic architecture does not scream about itself; rather it provides a place for its users to be more aware of their own nature. An account of empathetic architecture might sound like the one by Juhani Pallasmaa when he gives an account of a powerful architectural experience and how it “eliminates noise and turns my consciousness to myself; I only hear my own

heartbeat. The innate silence of an experience of architecture results, it seems, from the fact that it turns our attention to our own existence – I find myself listening to my own being” (1994).

Architect Michael Pyatok designed affordable housing that fits into “empathetic design.” He used porches and patios to engage the street and create connections between the residents and the rest of the neighborhood. He also designed interior courtyards to provide private outdoor space for the residents to enjoy safely and securely. Pyatok put himself in the shoes of the residents of his building and answered not only their needs, but their desires and problems. The Encarta Dictionary definition of empathy is “(1)the ability to identify with and understand somebody else’s feelings or difficulties; (2) the transfer of somebody’s own feelings and emotions on an object such as a painting.” In this case, the architect successfully transferred the feelings of the residents to the object of the building.

Another architect who produces empathetic architecture is Paulette Taggart. She has examples of schools, clubhouses, soup kitchens, and apartments that all adhere to empathetic design. While each building type produces very different types of architecture, her ability to focus on the needs of the users makes them successful examples of empathetic architecture. In the example of the school Taggart is quoted saying “we left the children, and parents, feeling that someone cared about where they were going to school” (Pascale). This is the type of reaction that empathetic architecture will give to its users. In her winning design for a single-residence occupancy project in San

Francisco she created a “colorful and dignified building giving hope to residents and providing an anchor in a challenging neighborhood” (Pascale). A description like that shows that Taggart listens to the people she is designing for and understands them. If her building can “give hope” to low-income residents in one of the toughest neighborhoods in San Francisco, she has clearly succeeded in creating an empathetic, and thoughtful building that is respected by not only the residents, but by neighbors as well as the architectural community. She successfully designs for the emotional and physical state.

This is the only way to produce acceptable, functional, beautiful, empathetic architecture.

**You may say I’m a dreamer
but I’m not the only one.
I hope someday you’ll join us,
and the world will live as one.**

- John Lennon, *Imagine*

We just feel like we don't have the means
to rise above and beat it...
It's hard to beat the system,
when we're standing at a distance.
So we keep waiting,
waiting on the world to change.

- John Mayer, *Waiting On The World To Change*



Homeless man sleeping on city sidewalk

(LGfL)



Homeless mother with her four children

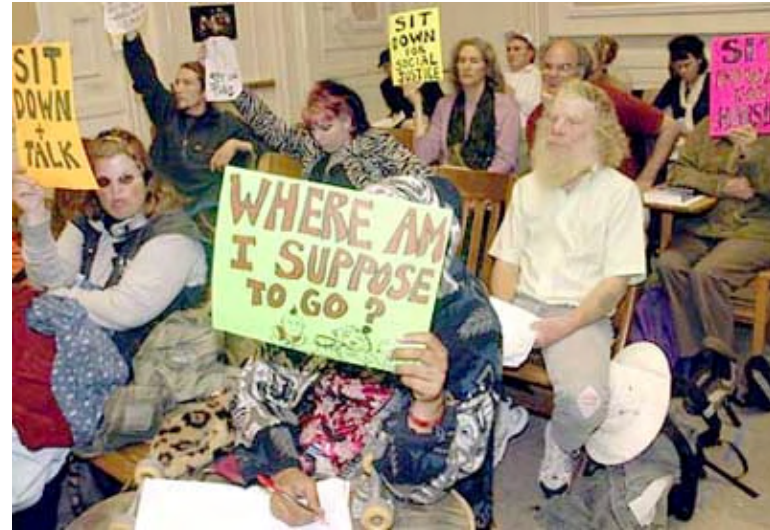
(Dar)

Why, in the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world, does the number of homeless men, women and children continue to grow every year? On any given night in the United States there are over 600,000 homeless people. Homelessness is a growing epidemic in the world today and there is no simple solution. It is largely a political problem that needs governmental attention, but architecture can help. Architecture might even be an important catalyst for the changes that need to be made in order for significant improvements to happen. The following excerpt is from a tape-recorded statement by an eleven-year-old girl as she was approached by a social worker at an emergency shelter in Seattle, WA:

"You think you know what homeless mean but you don't know nothin' 'bout homeless. You think homeless mean you ain't got no apartment, you ain't got no bed for yourself, ain't got no place to wash off when you soil or you be sweaty. Well, bein' homeless mean more than all that. It mean you don't got no next-door neighbor, no best friend no more. You don't got no favorite place to play or hide your candy money. You don't even got your own seat in your own classroom, you be movin' so many time. Don't know the teacher name. So who care? She don't know your name either. You ain't got no good memories of holidays or the movies or even rides. You ain't even got yourself bad memories. You know why? You bet you don't! 'Cause one shelter look like the next, and soon you can't remember how long you been in this one or that one. Anyway, it don't make no difference. Not after a while it don't. You know why? 'Cause you be

doublin' up so many nights in the same bed covers, sharin' the same potty so many nights, that one mornin' you wake up and you ain't sure who you is anymore. Maybe you still you, maybe you turn into the other person. So don't tell me you knows 'bout homeless kids. And don't ask me if I understand what happenin' to my family bein' we got no home. They invisible and so is me. I not here anymore. I died three year ago. Hey, you wastin' your time talkin' to a dead person" (Suransky).

That eleven-year-old girl is calling out for help, and that help can begin with empathetic architecture. She explains that one shelter looks like the next so that she does not know where she is: she craves an identity. She cannot recognize herself because she has not had the opportunity to listen to herself in order to understand who she is and where she belongs. These individuals often need emotional, physical, and psychological help as well as education and job training. Access to stable housing for a night or a few nights is not enough to help the homeless get off the street. They need access to programs and community support groups that will affect change in their lives. Not only do these homeless people need help, but homeless shelters need help as well. Homeless shelters should assist these people in realizing their own identities, skills, and traits. The shelter needs to be empathetic to its users. It needs to help these people who have lost a connection with the built world re-connect with space. According to Webster's Dictionary, empathy is "the projection of one's own personality into an object, with the attribution to the object of one's own emotions,



Homeless in Berkley, California gather to protect their rights

(Kar)



Homeless man asks for change on the snowy city street

(Javanrouh)

responses, etc.” Wikipedia explains empathy as the “ability to recognize, perceive and feel directly the emotion of another.” Empathy allows people to feel comfortable, understood, and that they are not alone in their emotions. Empathy is the bridge between either two people, or a person and an object. Empathetic architecture builds that bridge to connect people to space. A shelter that understood the emotions of the homeless would not leave a little girl feeling dead. The shelter should give her a sense of community and significance. She should feel at home and safe.

The homeless deal with a wide range of problems: from substance abuse, to mental illness, to not wanting to conform to society. A homeless shelter built to be empathetic to and understanding of the needs and emotions of the homeless is crucial. Many current emergency shelters open in the evening and close early in the morning. This leaves the homeless stranded, without a place to keep their belongings and without guidance and direction. Often, these shelters reach capacity and have to turn people away. Many of the homeless are considered “chronically” homeless meaning it is not a temporary situation for them, but rather a common or constant one.

How can architecture help break this trend? How can design encourage and promote change? This is what the TRANSITIONAL SHELTER attempts to explore. It is an attempt at using architecture to help change lives.

Is it possible?

Facts:

- * over the course of a year, between 2.5 and 3.5 million people will live either on the streets or in an emergency shelter
- * between 23 and 40 percent of homeless adults are veterans
- * about 50 percent of the total homeless population is a part of a family
- * homeless children go hungry twice as often as other children
- * 43 percent of children living with homeless parents are under the age of 6
- * the average age of a homeless person: 9 years old

Communities Making Progress:

San Francisco:

- * between 2002 and 2005, the number of chronically homeless individuals dropped from 8,640 to 6,248 (28%) because of San Francisco's Housing First approach

New York City:

- * in 2002, the city placed 22 percent of families who entered shelter in permanent housing; in 2003, 28 percent were placed; and by 2004, 33 percent were placed



Homeless man in California homeless encampment.

(Associated Press)

“Imagine all the people sharing all the world.”

- John Lennon, *Imagine*

Located on a prominent street in South Boston, the TRANSITIONAL SHELTER will be a dignified building on the corner of West Broadway and C Street. The intention of this building is to be a temporary, transitional residence for the homeless. It will embrace its users and help re-connect them to architecture, a connection that they have been missing since living on the street. Once a person enters into the shelter they will follow a series of steps that will eventually lead to securing a job and permanent housing.

Step one for the TRANSITIONAL SHELTER will be getting the homeless in the front door. The homeless need to feel welcome, accepted, and most importantly, safe. They do not want to be on display, but they do not want to be enclosed in “cells” either. It will be important to be empathetic to these feelings and to maintain a distinct balance between openness and privacy throughout the shelter. Upon entering the building, visitors should feel an immediate connection to the building that encourages them to stay and get the help they need from the services available.

Each person or family will be given a bedroom with a shared bathroom. There will be several sizes of bedrooms to accommodate various family sizes. The intention of shared bathrooms is to make sure that the residents are not too comfortable staying in this shelter. If the shelter is too comfortable residents may not want to move out. The hope is that they will want to have more privacy than they do in the shelter, giving them additional incentive to find a job and apartment. This idea is empathetic to the future

of the residents and the idea that what is best for them in the end is to move out of the shelter and find their own place. The level of privacy of the bedrooms will be varied and the residents will be able to move into the more private rooms as they move through the SHELTER's programs. These gateway rooms will be under less security and will have a separate entrance.

All residents will begin the recovery process by receiving counseling. This is an especially empathetic piece of the program in that it is understanding of the possible mental states of the potential users of the building. The counseling center will establish the needs of each person individually. The design of this space will be critical to the success or failure of the center. This space needs to be comfortable and welcoming as well as safe and private. Residents need to feel that they are in a safe, understanding, compassionate place if they are expected to open up to a counselor. Often, residents will continue to receive counseling for their entire stay at the shelter and even after they have left. The counseling centers are located on the second floor of the building, easily accessible yet still private.

When a resident is deemed ready by their counselor, they will begin the job skills training program. This workshop space needs to be conducive to learning and focusing. Outside distractions and interactions should be limited in this space but it should not feel closed off or "prison-like." There will be important overlapping of this space with the entrance space to emphasize the linear movement people will

make through the building's program.

The day care, cafeteria, and shelter shop will be staffed by residents of the TRANSITIONAL SHELTER who have proven they are ready to hold a steady job. This will give these residents some added confidence as well as much needed experience. In addition, these residents will become role-models for the others in the SHELTER. Therefore it is important that the work done in these spaces is visible to others within the building as well as outside the building. It is important for the South Boston community to see the growth of these people and the positive changes they are experiencing. The shelter shop will also be the most important link between the South Boston community and the TRANSITIONAL SHELTER. It is important for community members to understand and appreciate the work that the residents of the TRANSITIONAL SHELTER complete in order to better their lives. Hopefully, by establishing this connection, the community will welcome these people into the neighborhood.

When residents have completed job training and counseling, they will receive help to search for apartments and jobs. It is at this point they can move to the gateway apartments that are the most private. Hopefully by this point the residents have been able to connect psychologically to the space they have lived in and to the people they have gotten to know.

PRECEDENT STUDIES



The public "plaza" area inside the shelter.

(Sam Davis Architecture)

Contra Costa County Transitional Shelter Concord, California

Sam Davis Architecture

"The redesign of the Contra Costa County Adult Shelter has provided the facility with greater flexibility to meet the needs of homeless men and women; it has done so by transforming a warehouse into a welcoming, safe, and comfortable physical environment in which its residents can stabilize and transform their lives" (Davis 113).

The Contra Costa County adult shelter is in an industrial area away from the commercial and residential areas of the community. While this is unfortunate it allowed for a metaphor within the building and for its residents. That metaphor is one of transformation. The warehouse the shelter is located in was transformed into a comfortable, engaging, successful shelter just as its residents will transform themselves into successful members of society. The interior of the warehouse works like a street with various buildings on one side and public spaces on the other. Street-like lighting enhances this effect and provides visual interest through the corridor. Materials used in this project were influenced by the materials that already existed at the site allowing them to inform the transformation.

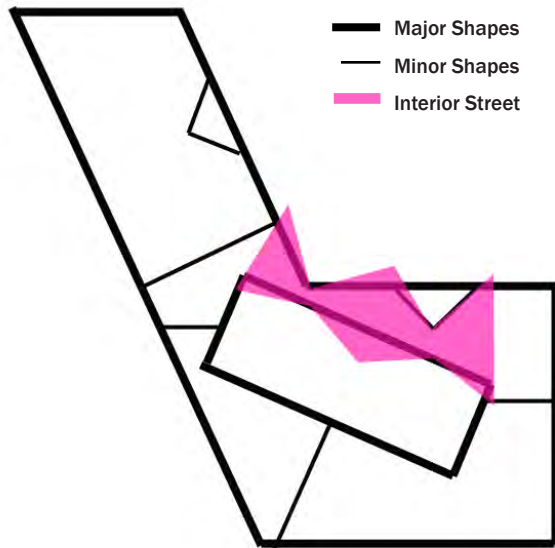
Site:

Located near a major highway in an industrial section of Contra Costa County, the adult transitional shelter sits nestled between a large green space and a mass of highways.



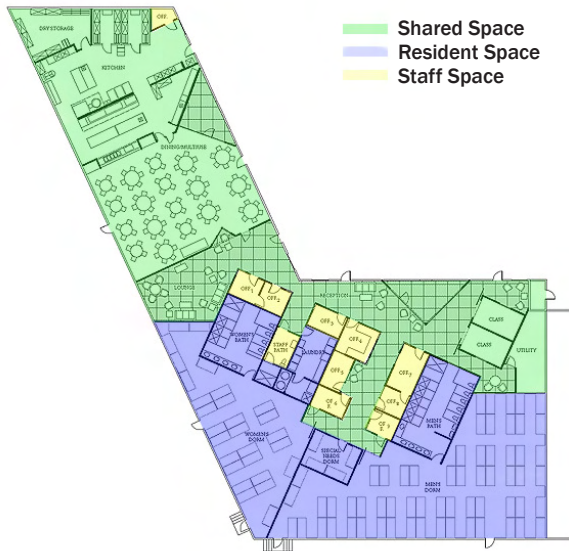
The shelter is clearly isolated from the residential and commercial areas of the county. Residents are only able to access the shelter through vehicular transportation, which most frequently is public transportation.





Massing:

The outer edge of the existing warehouse was not changed in the transformation to a shelter. Within the outer shell interior rooms were arranged to create a dynamic interior “street” that adapted to the exterior shape and created comfortable spaces within.

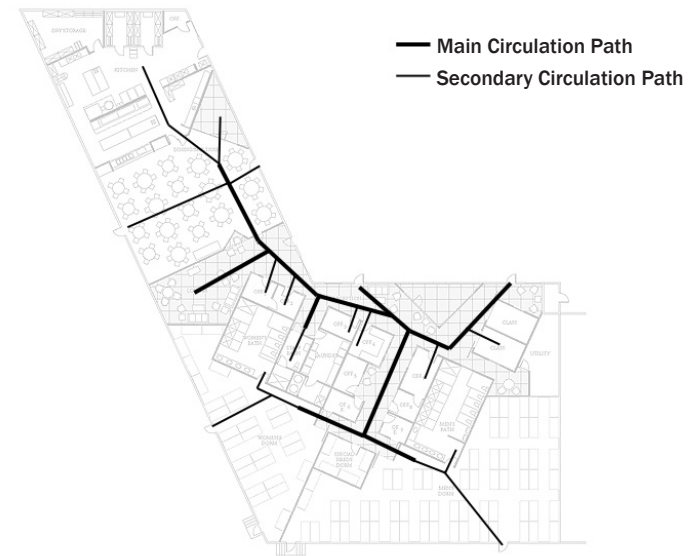


Space Allocations by User:

About 40% of the area of the warehouse is dedicated to the sleeping area and bathroom facilities for the residents. The staff areas including offices is about 10% of the area. The remaining 50% of the building is shared spaces between the residents and staff including the common areas and lounges, the dining hall, and the kitchen.

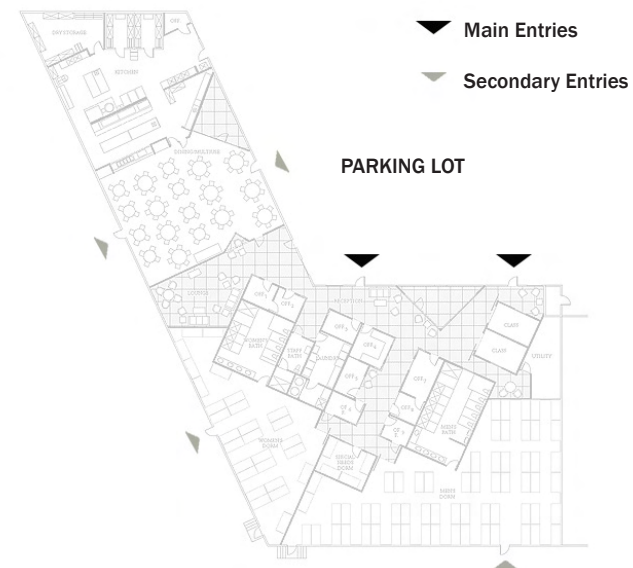
Circulation:

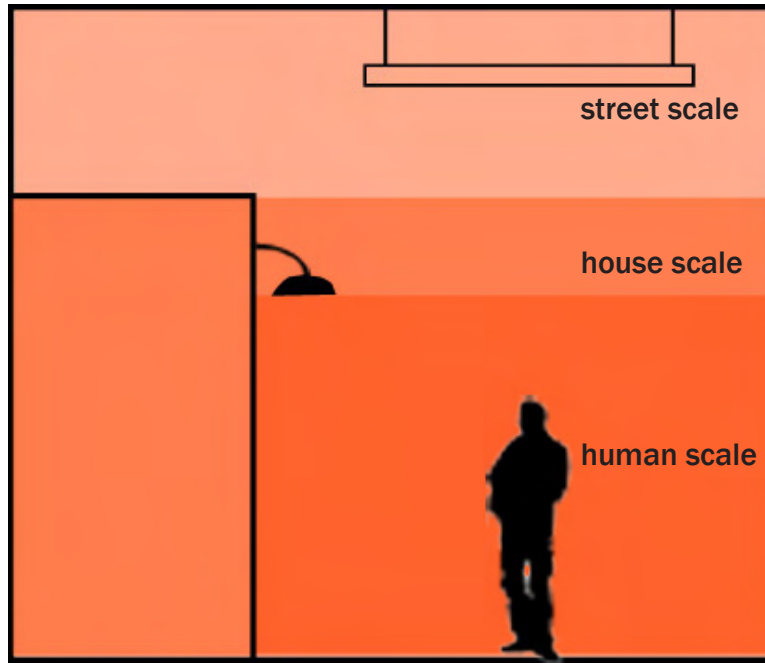
The main circulation in the shelter occurs from the front doors to the public lobby spaces, the dining area, the dorms, and the offices. This main space is referred to as the buildings “main street.” Beyond “main street” the circulation branches off into the various interior “buildings” within the building. This circulation pattern and the concept of the street enable residents to feel as if they are part of a community, something bigger than themselves. This realization is an important step for many who enter the shelter alone.



Entries:

The main entry into this shelter is from the parking lot into the reception area. There are emergency entrance/exits into both the men and women’s dorms and the dining area. The secondary entrances are rarely used since most people use the “street” as the primary means of circulation.





Scale:

Sam Davis Architecture successfully produced an interior environment in a former warehouse that stresses the human level and is comfortable. This was a challenge in the tall warehouse space that was pre-existing. They were conscious to keep the wall height lower than the ceiling of the warehouse to provide a middle scale between the height of a person and the height of the ceiling. Doing this also saves on energy and lighting costs. Saving money is always a concern for non-profit organizations.



Lighting:

Multiple forms of lighting were used together to create more dynamic lighting effects in the public, “plaza” spaces. This also helped to further promote the idea of the interior “street.” When only the lower spaces are illuminated and the ceiling of the warehouse is dark, this space would seem to be outside under the night sky.

Materials:

Since the warehouse is located in an industrial area, and the concept for the building was transformation, the architect decided to use industrial materials on the interior of the building. These materials, such as wood, corrugated metal, and cement panels, can be readily found in the area surrounding the site. Architect Sam Davis used these materials in a way that “created a whole more significant than its individual parts or materials” (112).

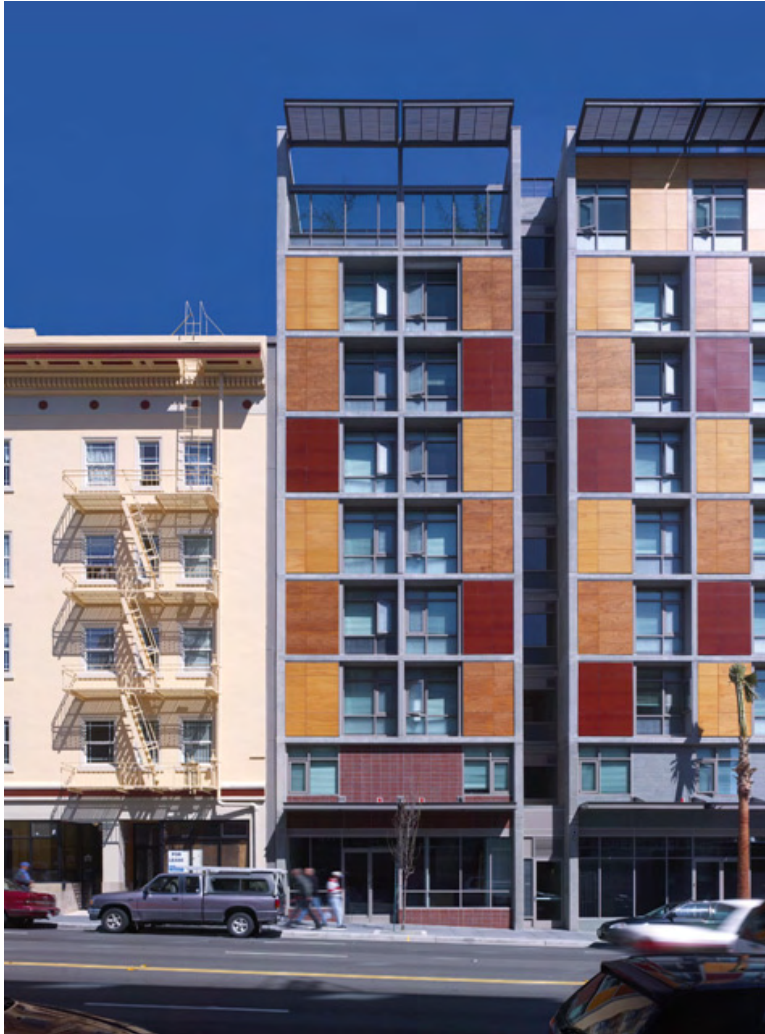


(Sam Davis Architecture)

Interior Street:

The rhythm and location of “street lights” along the main interior corridor create a dynamic pattern as well as a sense of being outside. This street further promotes the idea and understanding of the community within the shelter.





Facade of the Plaza Apartments showing wood panels.

(Bonaface)

Plaza Apartments

San Francisco, California

*Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects
& Paulette Taggart Architect*

“The variation in the panels and in the glazing will give identity to the scale of the individual units. One will be able to read the building as a range of scales from the base, middle, top, to that of the building as a whole. The planning department wondered why we weren’t designing a stucco building to match all the others in the neighborhood. The idea is for this building to respect the context and to make a positive contribution, not to copy the adjacent, older structures. We want the modern frame infilled with large windows and warm wood panels to read as housing, and as a place where people want to live.” -Taggart

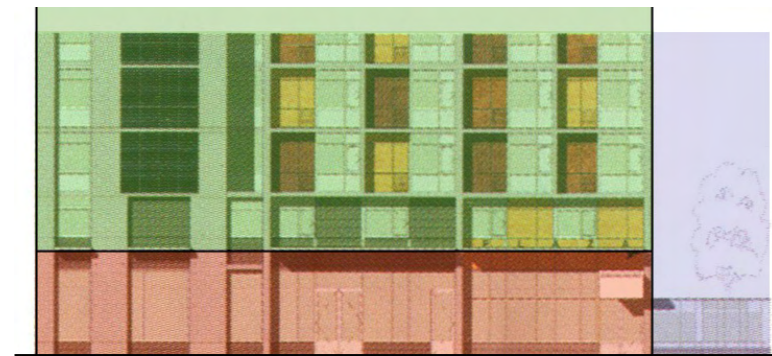
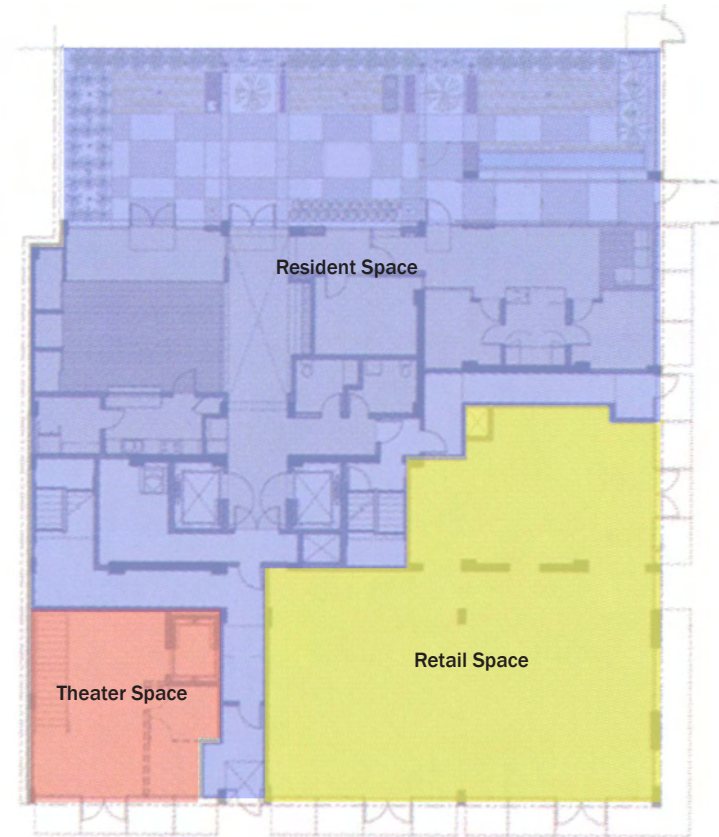
The attention to site, context, and environment was crucial in the design of the Plaza Apartments in San Francisco. The size of the tight urban site is approximately 8,000 s.f. Into that site the architects were able to fit 106 comfortable studio apartments, spaces for medical and social workers, a credit union, and a small black box theater.



The building has also won awards for its level of sustainability. Its sustainable aspects range from the collection of rainwater, to photovoltaic panels on the roof, to recycled wood for the kitchen cabinets.

On the ground floor of the Plaza Apartments building the majority of the space is dedicated to the residents. A quarter of the space is allocated for retail space and a small space is left for the theater's program which existed on the site previously. The resident's spaces on the ground floor consist of an entry, outdoor courtyard, and lobby, as well as a community room. There are entrances from the street into all area directly including the theater, retail, and housing.

The Plaza Apartments are located on a corner in an urban setting and the designers still left a relatively large outdoor semi-private open space to be enjoyed by the residents. This space is at the opposite side of the building from the street corner. This allows the building to clearly define the street edge while at the same time maintaining some open space. The roof of the apartment building is also usable open space.



The elevation (above) shows the defined street corner on the left of the image and the open space, with a tree, on the right.

(Busse)



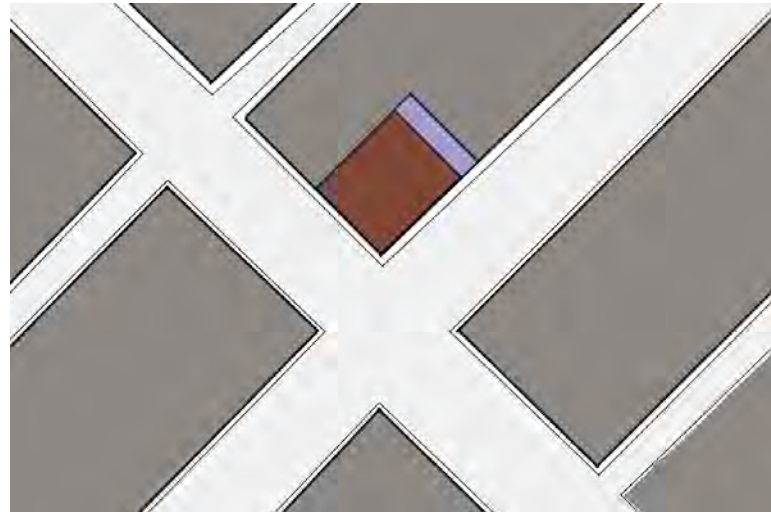
Context:

It is clear that the architects desired to establish clear connections between their new building and the surrounding buildings. They did not want to use the same materials as were used in the buildings around them, so instead they chose to continue the horizontal lines to create a sense of continuity throughout the neighborhood. They chose to use materials that gave a greater sense of warmth and comfort. Leaving the bottom floor open for commercial space not only helps link the building to the neighborhood, but it gives the residents of the building further interaction with others in their community.



Neighborhood:

The diagram to the right shows the densely built neighborhood the apartment building is located in as well as the open space built into the Plaza Apartments.



Ground Floor:

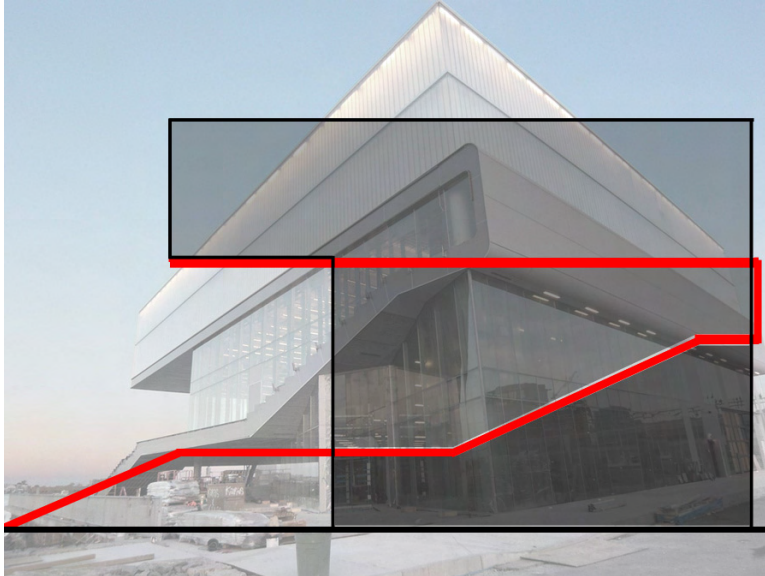
The entry level of the Plaza Apartment building has various functions that reach out to the surrounding community. This creates a dynamic street-front which in turn adds life to any building.





Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Boston, MA.

(Parker)



Public spaces throughout the ICA are clearly defined by the use of the wood harborwalk material. This system of wrapping a material throughout the building clarifies which spaces are public for the visitor who may be unsure.

Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, Massachusetts

Diller + Scofidio

“The design of the ICA negotiates between two competing objectives: to perform as a dynamic civic building filled with public and social activities, and as a contemplative space providing individual visitors with intimate experiences with contemporary art. The “public” building is built from the ground up; the “intimate” building, from the sky down.”

Elizabeth Diller

The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Boston, MA is an example of an empathetic building. It is a well-designed, interesting building that is not conceited. While the building may be intriguing and even fascinating on the outside, once inside the building lends itself to the artwork and visitors completely. It is entirely empathetic to the functions that take place within its walls. Circulation is fluid and simple so the visitors can simply enjoy the artwork and not worry about being lost. The gallery rooms are themselves quiet to allow the artwork to be the only presence. In addition the building provides for multiple kinds of performances so as not to be exclusive. It is clear that the designers not only understood the program but empathized with the artists, the employees and the visitors in order to create a building that tailored to their needs in a functional and beautiful way.

Interior:

Diffused, controllable natural light mixed with directional artificial light provides lighting appropriate for any installation or art piece. The galleries are large with neutral walls, ceilings, and floors to be a blank canvas for the artwork that will inhabit it. These interiors show empathy toward the art, artist, and visitors.

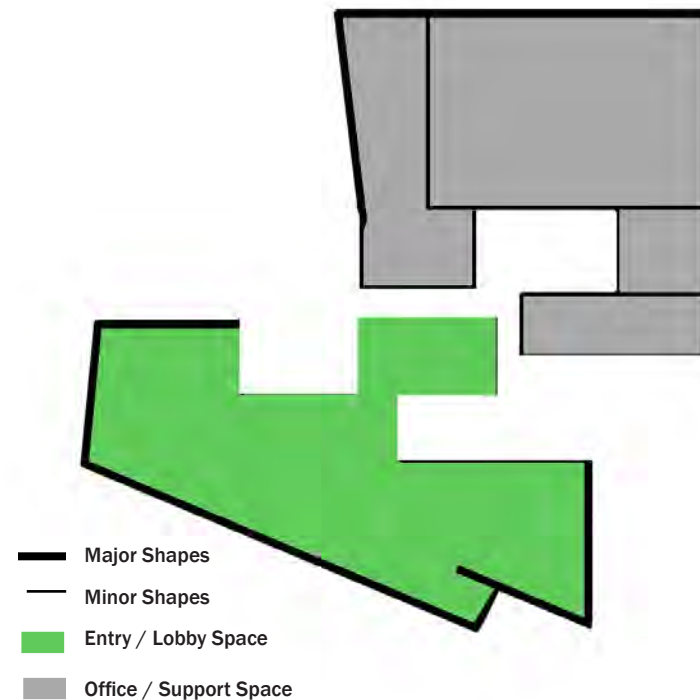


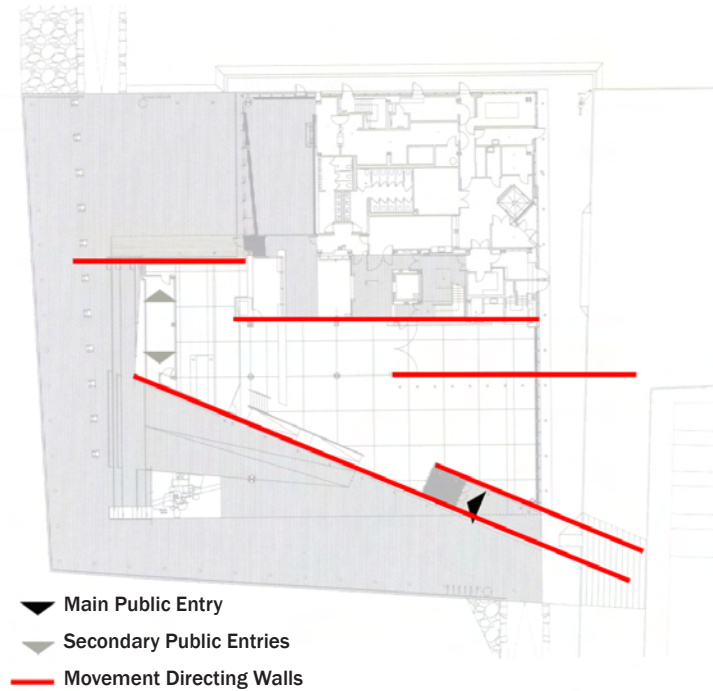
Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Boston, MA.

(Parker)

Massing:

The massing of the plan of the ICA gives immediate prominence to the lobby. The lobby space is the largest and most dynamic space in plan. It is clear that once the program necessitates a more regular form, as in the offices, the plan adapts to that program and the people who will use those spaces.

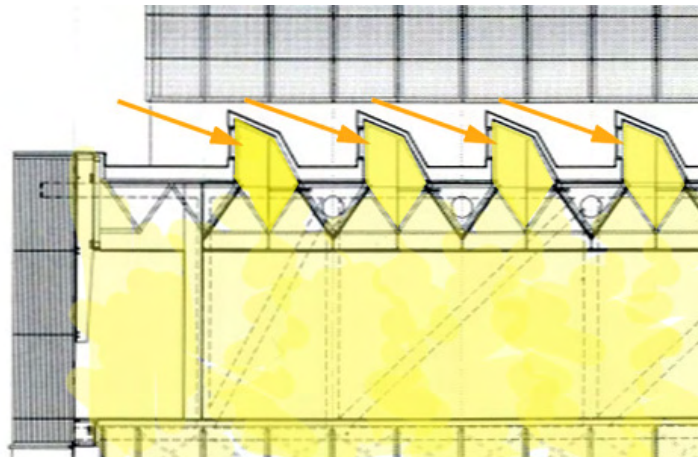




Public Entries:

The main entry to the ICA is directed towards the parking lot which is the way most visitors are expected to arrive. Secondary entrances are located off the harborwalk which is being developed. Through the main entrance visitors are clearly directed toward the front desk through the shape of the walls.

Secondary entrances are located all around the ICA for employees and staff to be able to enter the building without having to navigate through the crowds and visitors.



Natural Gallery Light:

Natural light is brought into every gallery through filters. All natural light in the galleries is indirect which allows for maximum flexibility in gallery spaces. There are also a few black box gallery spaces for projections, movies, and other displays that require darkness. This design is empathetic to the art, keeping it in perfect condition and away from harmful direct light. The flexibility it provides is ideal for any museum. The attention and thought that has gone into designing this building is a perfect example of empathetic design.

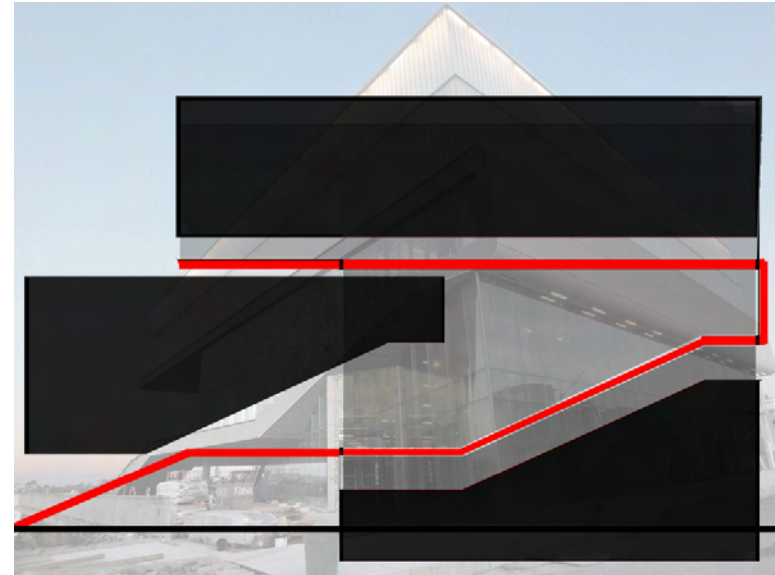


Media center inside the ICA, Boston.

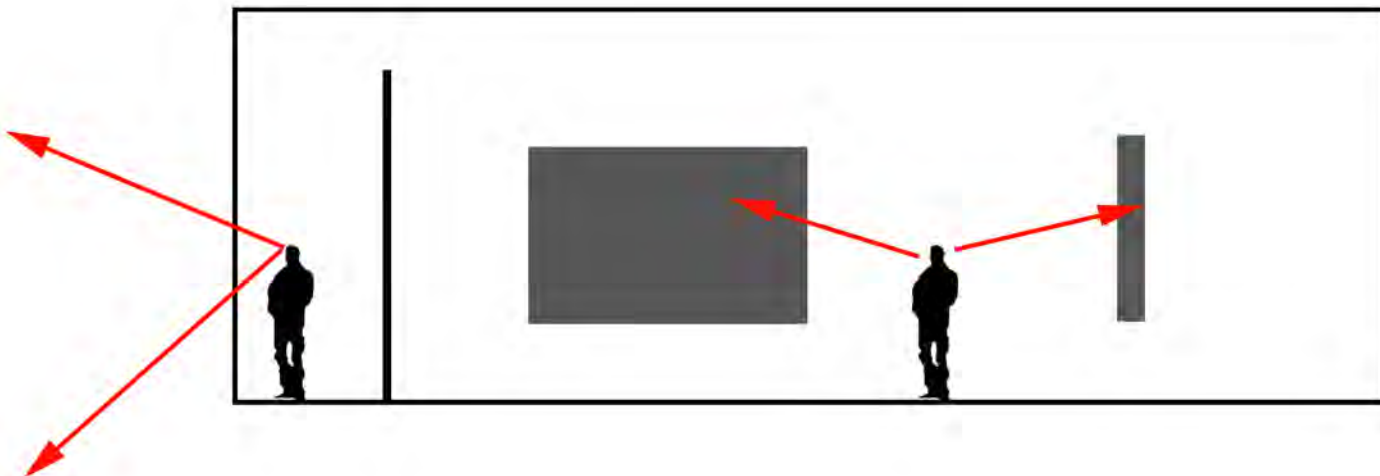
(Parker)

Views:

When inside the galleries of the ICA the visitors' attention is focused on the artwork within the space. Once visitors move out of a gallery they are in front of a spectacular view of the water. This sharp distinction keeps the focus on the artwork when in sight, but also allows the building and the people inside it to stay connected to the site and context of Boston.



The major masses of the building are clearly defined on both the interior and the exterior by the wood ribbon that weaves its way through the building.



**Whatever gets you through your life its alright, its alright
Do it wrong or do it right its alright, its alright**

-John Lennon

Lobby / Reception.....	3,000 s.f
Shelter Shop.....	1,008 s.f.
Job Skills Workshop.....	1,013 s.f.
Administration	
Offices (3).....	345 s.f.
Staff Room.....	360 s.f.
Reception.....	420 s.f.
Subtotal.....	1,125 s.f.
Cafeteria	
Dining Room.....	1,960 s.f.
Kitchen.....	526 s.f.
Subtotal.....	2,486 s.f.
Recreation Room.....	2,400 s.f.
Counseling Center	
Men's Center.....	538 s.f.
Women's Center.....	414 s.f.
Subtotal.....	952 s.f.
Day Care	
Play Room.....	907 s.f.
Outdoor Space.....	450 s.f.
Subtotal.....	1,357 s.f.

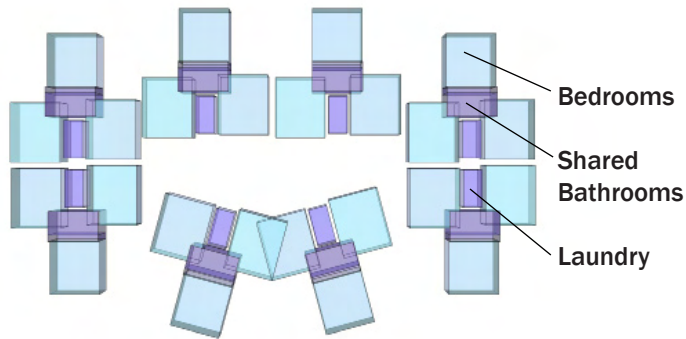
Bedrooms

Men's Rooms (34 @ 90 s.f.).....3,060 s.f.
Family Rooms (17 @ 328 s.f.).....5,576 s.f.
Gateway Apartments (7 @ 414 s.f.)2,898 s.f.
Subtotal..... 11,534 s.f.

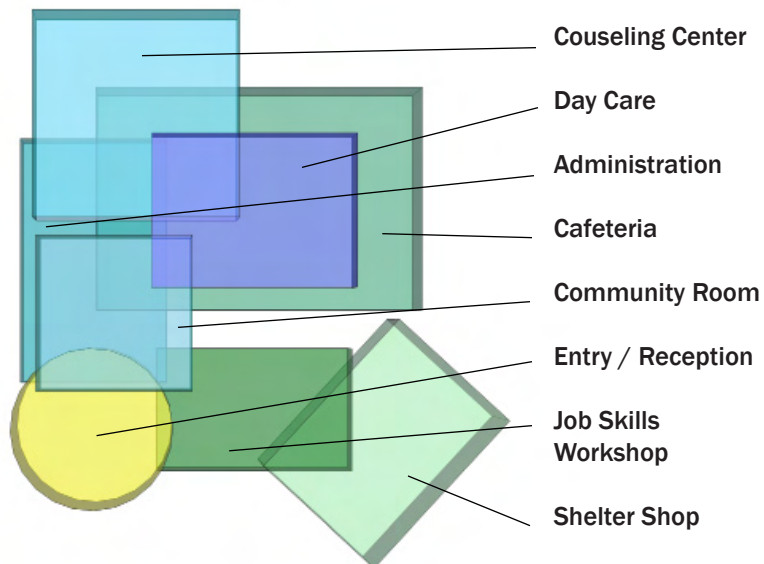
Restrooms (11 @ various sizes).....2,098 s.f.

Laundry Rooms.....462 s.f.

Total Program	27,435 s.f.
Services/Circulation (10%)	7,435 s.f.
<hr/>	
Gross Area	34,870 s.f.



Multiple bedrooms will be grouped around shared bathrooms. Some bedrooms will join together to create larger family rooms. There will also be a common room on each floor.



On the first floor is the Cafeteria, Administration, Job Skills Workshop, and Shelter Shop. The relationship between spaces, especially a visual relationship will be very important for interaction, comfort, and security.

Bedrooms: 7-38 rooms per living floor

It is important that the users feel a sense of privacy and security; therefore they will be in private rooms. There will be various sized rooms ranging from single person rooms to family rooms. Room size will range from 100 - 350 s.f. Bedrooms will be located on the upper floors of the shelter, away from the street. Bedrooms will not have any doors for safety and security reasons.

Bathrooms:

The number of bathrooms will directly correspond to the number of bedrooms. They will be shared bathrooms with toilets, sinks, showers, and changing tables.

Cafeteria & Kitchen: 2,500 s.f.

The cafeteria at this shelter should be able to accommodate the current residents, as well as walk-in visitors in need of an emergency meal. It should be able to hold about 300 people at a time. The kitchen needs to be large enough to provide food for upwards of 450 people per meal.

Job Skills Workshop: 1,000 s.f.

The job skills workshop will consist of one or two classrooms for about 20 people each. These rooms will be used for classes like budgeting, interviewing, and parenting. A small computer station might also be set-up to teach basic computer skills to residents. This space will be adjacent to the shelter shop as some residents will train for jobs at the shop itself.

Counseling Center: 1,000 s.f.

The counseling center will require at least two private offices for one-on-one meetings. There residents and visitors can go to talk, share experiences, and learn about ways to break addiction and treat mental illness.

Recreational Room: 2,400 s.f.

This space will be adjacent to the counseling center and will be a relaxing escape for the residents. It will also be available for informal group meetings for residents as well as planned programs such as AA meetings.

Shelter Shop: 1,000 s.f.

The shelter shop is a crucial piece of the program. This will be a space where anything that gets donated to the shelter, as well as items and artwork made by the residents, can be sold to raise money for the shelter. Residents themselves will run the shop helping them to earn a small amount of money, learn some basic job skills, and to start building a resume. This space will be located at street level in a storefront in order to engage the community with the shelter.

Laundry: 500 s.f.

Laundry facilities are necessary to prevent the spread of sickness and disease that is not uncommon in homeless shelters. Laundry facilities will be available on the second floor near the counseling centers and workout area.

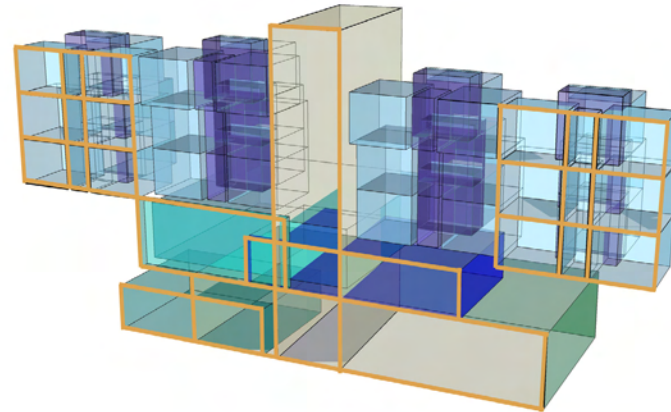
Administrative Offices: 1,125 s.f.

Offices are necessary for the director and assistant director of the shelter. Included in

this area will be a volunteer work area. There will also need to be a reception area adjacent to both the administrative offices as well as the entry.

Day Care: 1,300 s.f.

There needs to be a day care space for single mothers to leave their children so that they can learn the job skills they will need and/or to go out and apply for jobs. This service will also be available to mothers barely able to get by or just getting off the street. At 1,300 s.f. this space will be able to hold up to 37 children.



The public functions of the Homeless Safe Haven will take place on the ground floor.

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

In the morning, men, women, and children wake up in their warm, safe beds on the upper stories of the TRANSITIONAL SHELTER. They are happy to have spent another night off the streets. Staff members have already begun arriving and those in charge have already unlocked the front doors. The residents have a room of their own to store their belongings in and to have some privacy. At the shelter they have clean, shared bathrooms on each living floor.

Each member of the shelter community begins his/her day based on his/her current needs. Many residents will either be beginning or in the middle of the job training program and they will report to the job skills classroom for a new lesson today. In the workshop there are stations set up for computer training as well as a typical classroom layout with a whiteboard for writing. Here they will learn job-related skills as well as communication skills for assistance interacting with coworkers and customers.

Other residents will leave the facility to look for employment. School age children will attend school while children too young for school will go to the day care center. At the day care these children will gain a sense of community and make friends. This space will also be used for all the children after school. Here they can participate in activities and games. Having a separate space for the children is crucial to their development and well-being.

The shelter shop will open for the day, staffed by residents and visited by South Boston community members.

As the day goes on, meals are prepared and served to the residents as well as others from the community who are in need of an emergency meal. Residents will enter the cafeteria in shifts to get their meals. The kitchen will also work as a training area to teach residents about cooking. This might be simply for residents to learn how to cook for themselves and their family, or they may be interested in working in a restaurant.

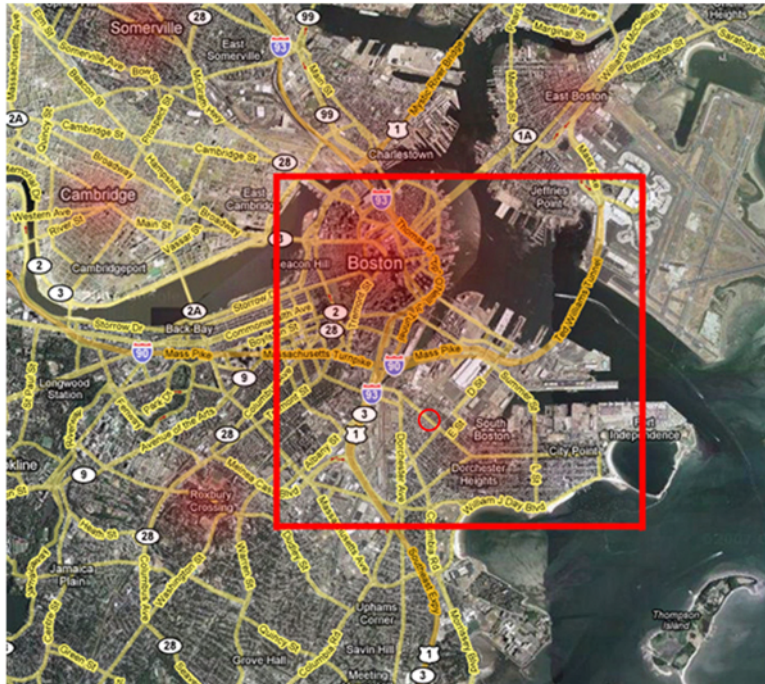
Throughout the day new residents make their way into the shelter. Feeling hopeless, alone, stressed, angry, frightened, or some other range of emotions, they enter into this building. The building's more private entry from C Street welcomes them into a spacious, lively reception area full of activity. As visitors enter they are greeted by the energy and dynamism of the "main street" atrium. They can easily and quickly understand their surroundings and at once feel at home with them. Glimpses of hope are caught in the faces of those who are just entering this shelter for the first time. This is a place where they will be understood, accepted, helped, and not judged.

Late in the day dinner is served and residents who work day jobs have some time to gather together and talk, build social skills, read, write, paint, or whatever they do for leisure. These activities all take place in the recreation room, centrally located on the second floor. By nighttime, all the current residents of the shelter have retreated to their private rooms to recuperate and rest to be ready for the next day. In these rooms they feel safe, warm, and relaxed.

SITE ANALYSIS

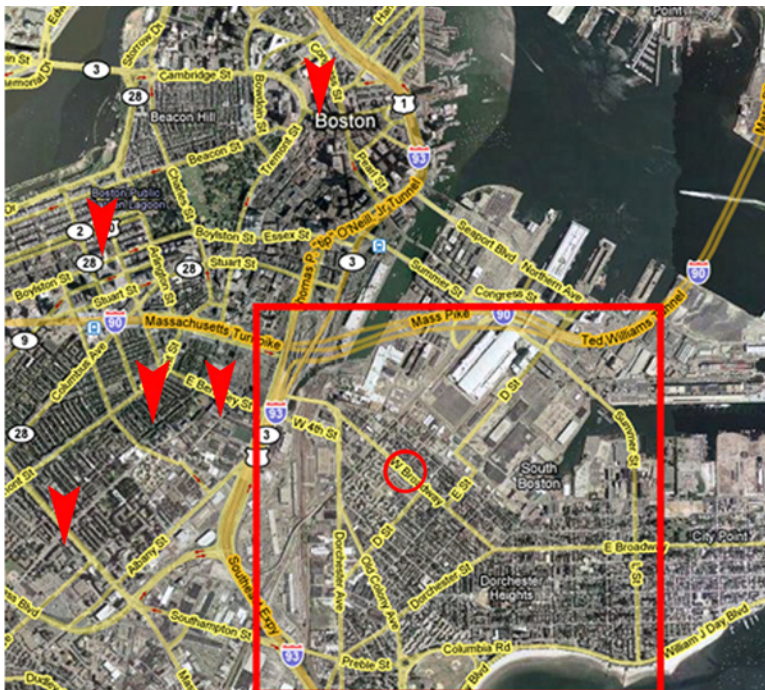


240 West Broadway Street



Current Homeless Population in Boston, MA:
6,365 men, women, and children

The current homeless situation is categorized as a crisis. There are too many individuals and families living well below the poverty level who simply cannot afford a place to live. There are many others struggling with substance abuse or fleeing domestic violence. These people need more than a place to stay tonight. They need support and services to help them get back on their feet.

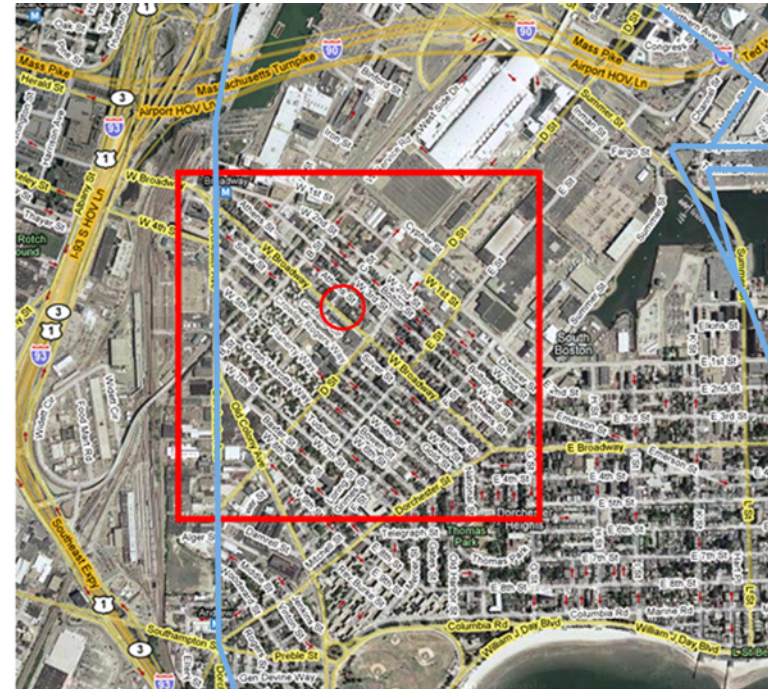


Existing Homeless Shelters

The five shelters pointed out in this diagram hold the majority of the homeless population in Boston every night. They are spread throughout the center of Boston and the South End, however there are no shelters in South Boston.

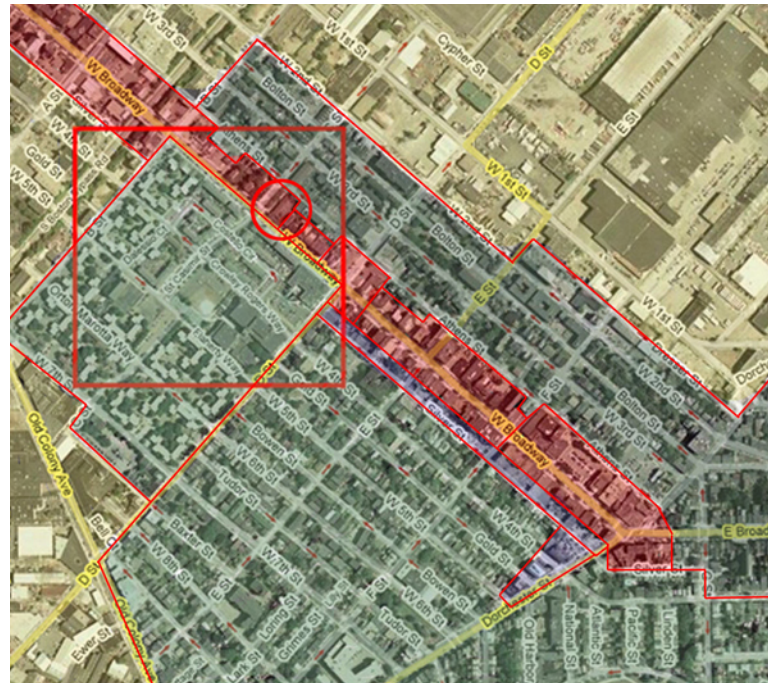
Public Transportation Routes

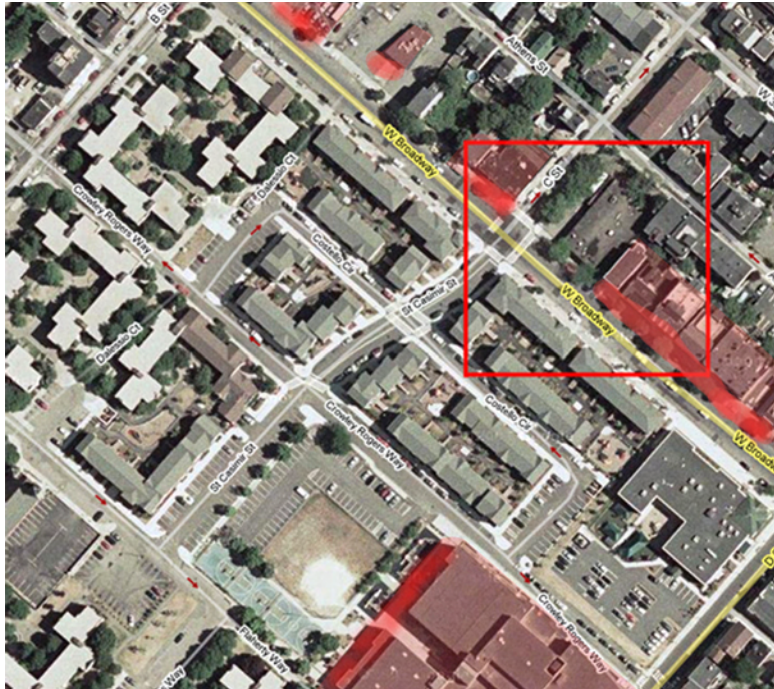
The site on West Broadway Street is located less than a half mile from the nearest subway stop of the Red Line which runs from Braintree and Mattapan (south of Boston) up through the center of the city and the central South Station and on north through Cambridge and Somerville. The site is also located just over one mile from the silver line subway line. This route runs from South Boston to the airport and South Station. This access is crucial to the intended users of the TRANSITIONAL SHELTER since they will most likely not have vehicles but will need to get around the city to look for jobs and apartments.



- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Mixed

The area immediately along West Broadway street is made up of mainly apartment buildings with the first floor dedicated to commercial functions. Beyond that immediate strip there is a large area of housing. Directly across the street from the site is a new housing development. Much of the housing along the street has been recently renovated.





Job Opportunities in St. Vincent Neighborhood

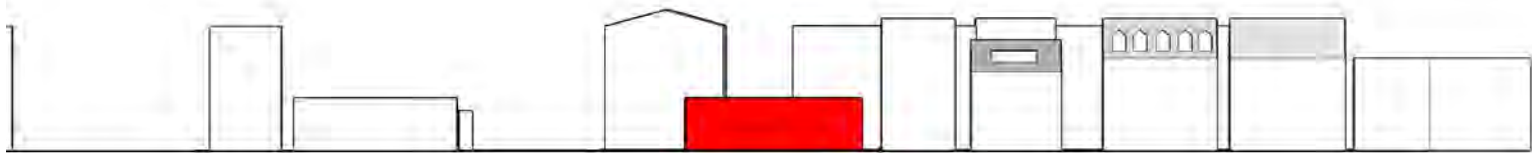
The red areas in the diagram to the left represent job opportunities in the immediate area of the site. There are several restaurants, shops, community centers, and spiritual centers that could all offer possible employment to the TRANSITIONAL SHELTER residents. Less than a mile to the Northwest West Broadway Street intersects Dorchester Avenue. On this road there is a high density of businesses that could also offer potential employment.



West Broadway and C Street

The corner of West Broadway and C Street is a prominent location on an important street in South Boston. This location immediately speaks to the goal of the TRANSITIONAL SHELTER. The existing building on the site appears to have been a gym or YMCA facility before it fell into disuse. It is now an empty building that does not appropriately serve that corner of such an important street. Circling the site are several trees that are an asset to any urban environment.

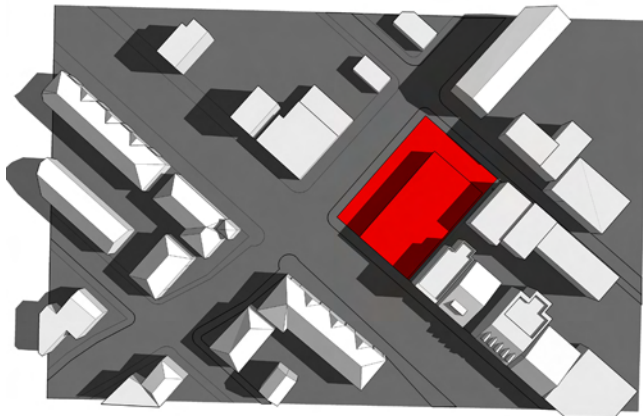
When looking at the sections through the streets adjacent to the site, it is clear which buildings are relatively new and which are either old or have not been renovated. The existing building on the site is several stories smaller than the majority of the buildings in the area except for the one on the opposite corner of West Broadway and C Street. The average building height in the St. Vincent neighborhood is three or four stories high.



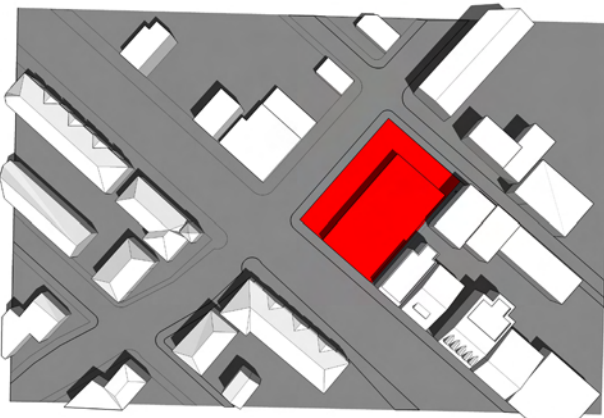
Section Through West Broadway Street



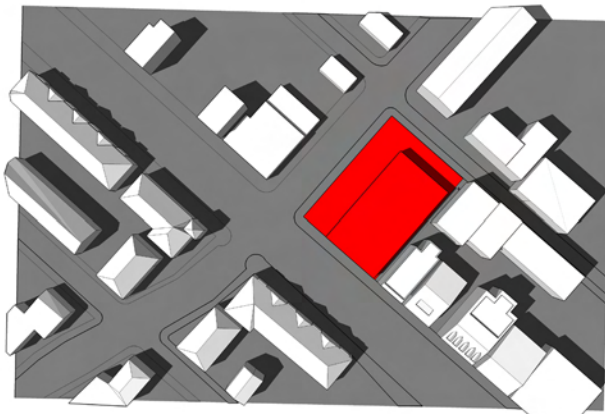
Section Through C Street and St. Casimir Street



June 9am



June 12pm



June 3pm

To the east of the site there are four to five story mixed use buildings. In the summer months these buildings cast short shadows onto the site in the morning hours but after noon the site gets full sunlight from the south and west. The site gets plenty of direct light to make passive solar heating a possibility. The south-west side of the site also currently has two deciduous trees which are advantageous for any building.

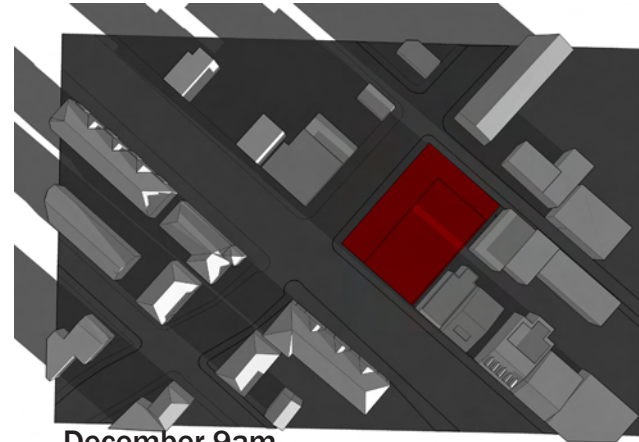


The building on the left is the existing building on the site. To the right are the three and four story mixed use buildings.

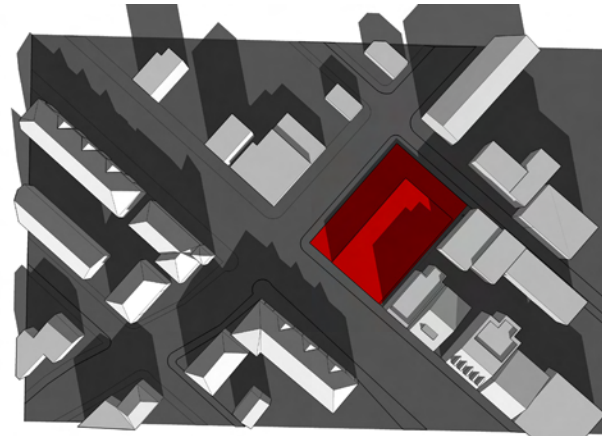
In the winter months long shadows are cast over the site for the majority of the morning. There are a few hours in the early afternoon where the site gets some light. If the building on the site exceeds five stories the upper stories will be able to catch more daylight as they will be taller than the surrounding buildings. It will be important to have sufficient artificial lighting around the site for the winter months when it is often dark. There will also be considerable glare coming in from the south facing windows in these winter months.



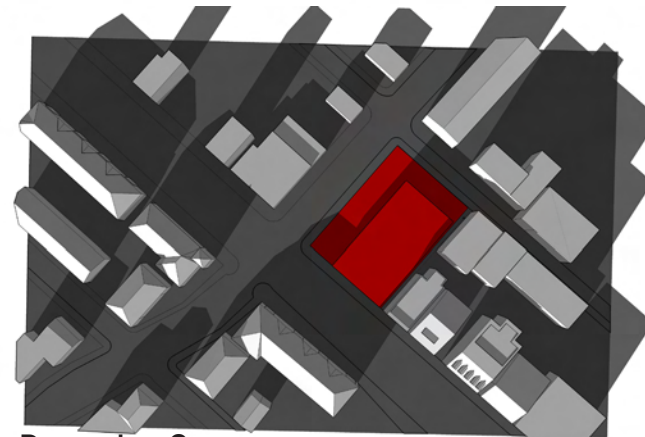
Existing housing southwest of the site.



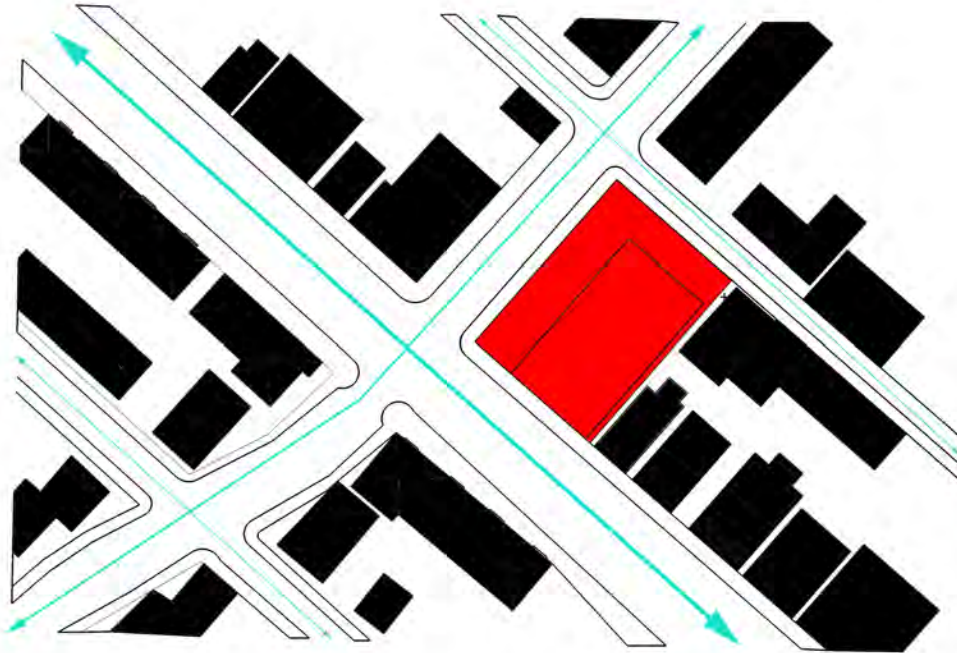
December 9am



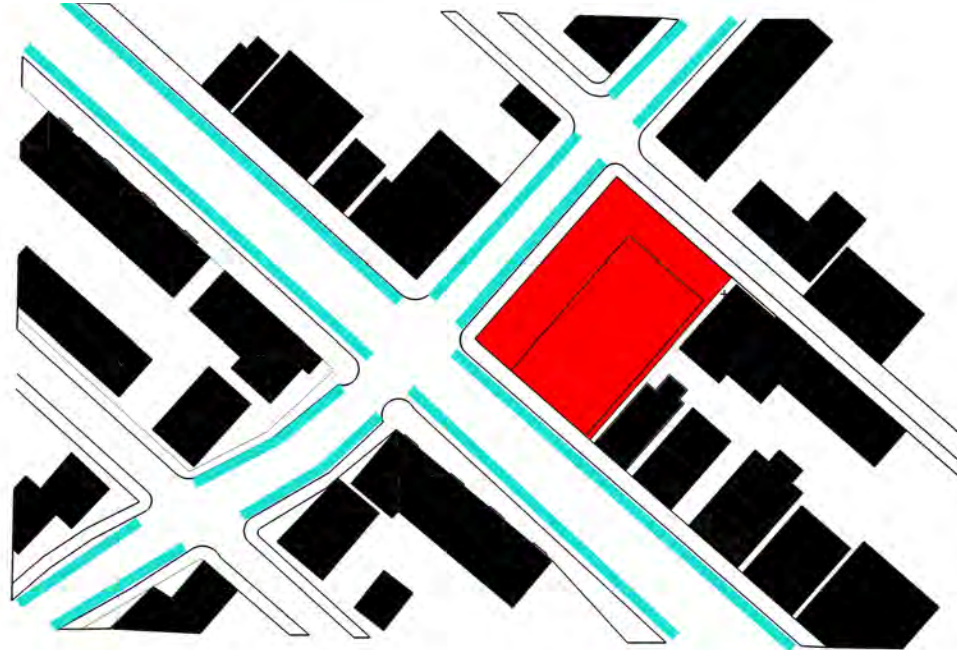
December 12pm



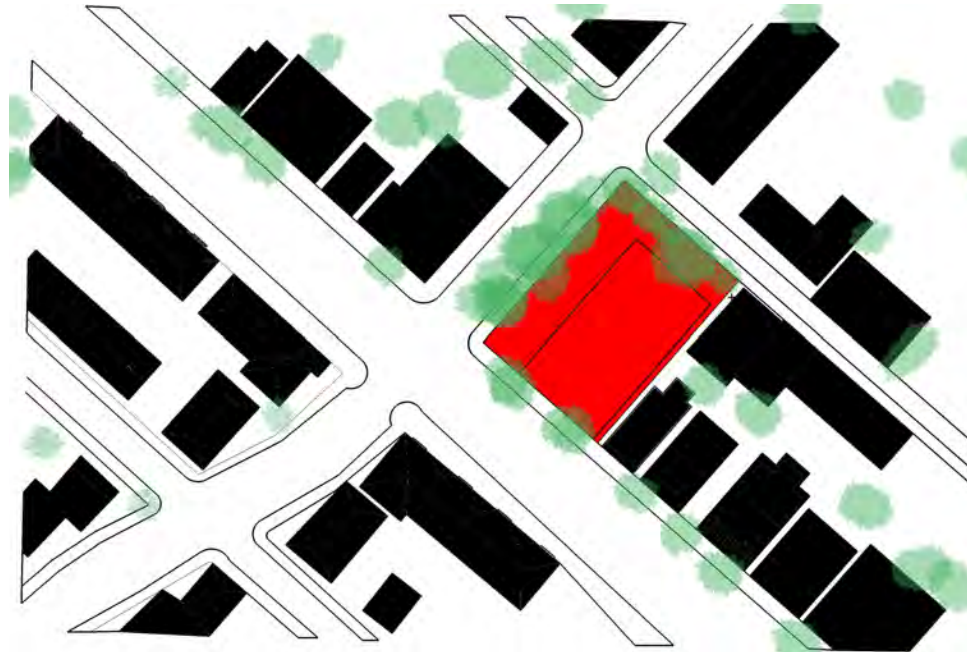
December 3pm



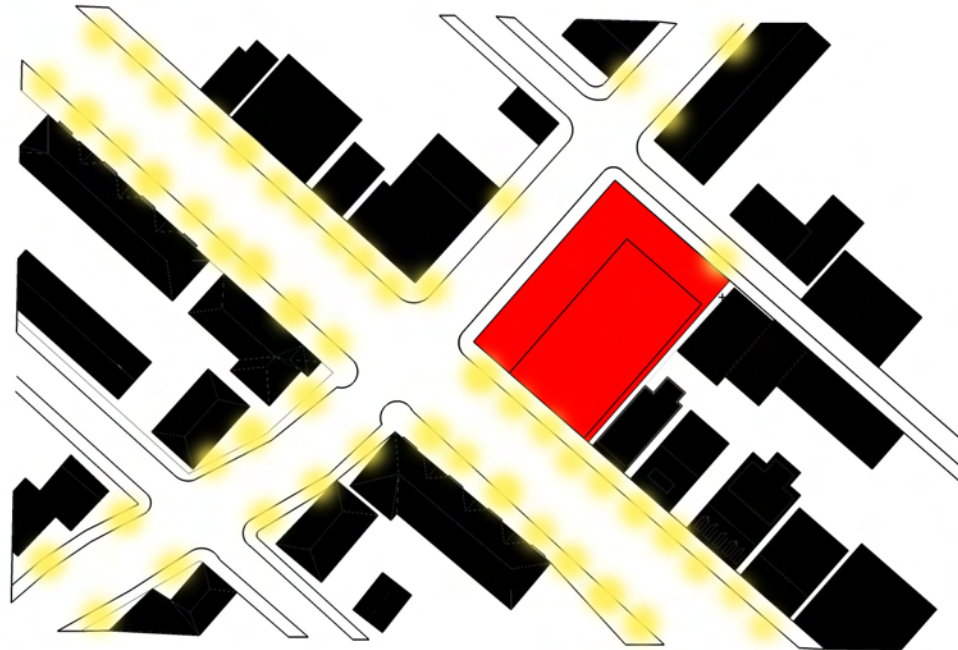
Vehicular Traffic Flow



Street Parking Around Site



Trees Around Site



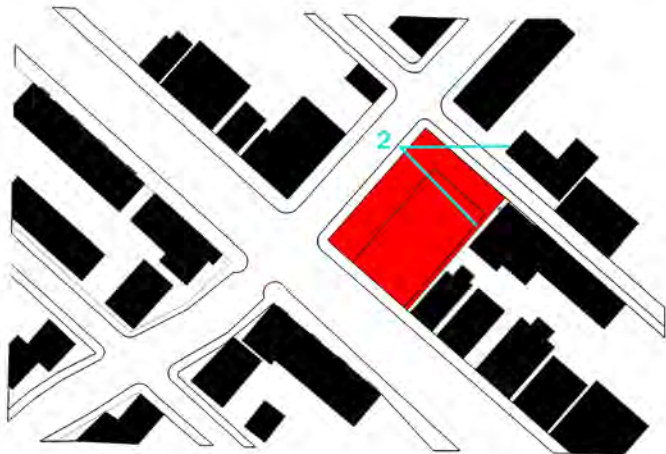
Street Light Concentration Around Site

60

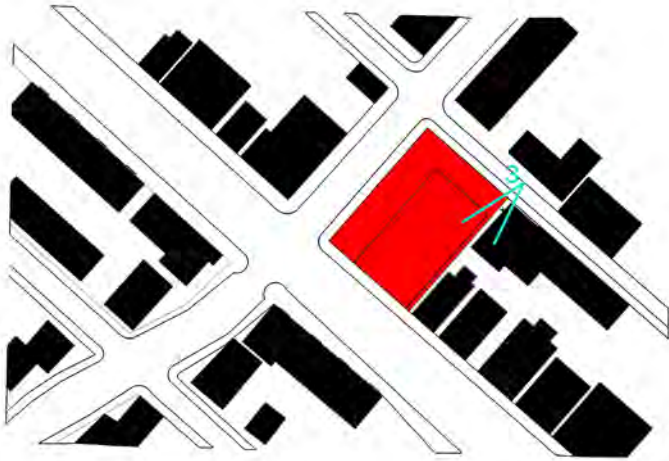
SITE ANALYSIS



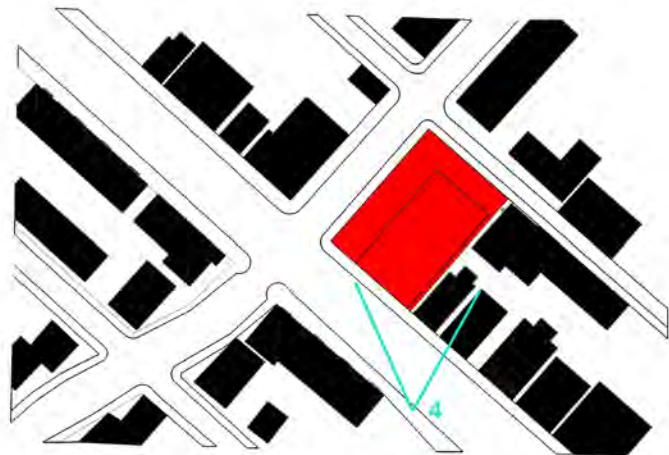
View down St. Casimir Street



View through back of site

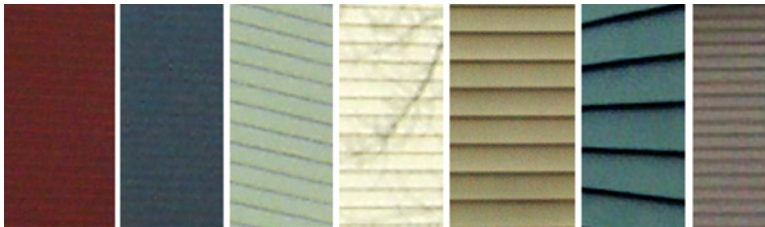


View through Northeast setback



View North toward site





Materials & Details Analysis:

Brick types and colors found along West Broadway Street.

Vinyl siding colors found along West Broadway Street and St. Casimir Street.

Street lamps:

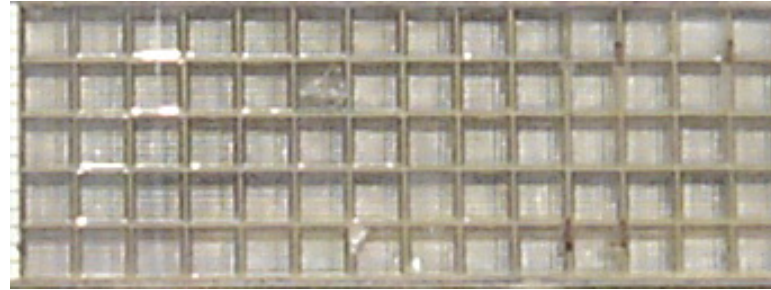
The two lamps on the left are older, more decorative lamps. They are located along West Broadway street itself. The third lamp is much taller and a new addition that was added with the new housing community on St. Casimir Street and continues down C Street adjacent to the site. The fourth type of light is an emergency light located on the opposite corner from the site. It is indicated by the red dot in the diagram below.



The existing building at 240 West Broadway street is a run down brick building. It has a concrete foundation that is slightly damaged and two different colors of brick. Over the entrance there is are several rows of glass block. The majority of the brick and glass block is in good condition. All windows have been removed and replaced with bright blue panels. To the northwest of the building there are two lean-to sheds, one is made of plywood and the other is made of corrugated metal.



Existing Plywood and Corrugated Metal Sheds



Existing Glass Block



Existing Brick and Foundation

CODE ANALYSIS



Map of Massachusetts and surrounding area.

(Town Hunter)

Massachusetts State Building Code

Relevant Building Code information:

OCCUPANCY GROUP CLASSIFICATION:

The cafeteria and community room in the Homeless Safe Haven categorize it as Assembly (A2 & A3) for more than 50 people. The housing portion of the complex falls under the Residential (R1) classification because some residents may stay for less than 30 days.

HEIGHT AREA LIMITATIONS:

Based upon "noncombustible materials" construction (type 1B):

11 stories

Unlimited sq ft

Assembly spaces must be separated from other spaces as required for separated uses in Section 508.3.3.4 with no reduction allowed in the fire-resistance rating of the separation based upon the installation of an automatic sprinkler system.

FIRE RESISTANCE:

Structural frame 2 hours rated

Bearing walls 2 hours rated

Nonbearing walls 0 rating

Floor construction 2 hour rated

Roof construction 1 hour rated

Mixed-use separation 1 hour rated

FIRE ALARM SYSTEM:

A manual fire alarm system shall be installed in Group A occupancies having an occupant load of 300 or more.

Boston City Zoning Ordinance

Saint Vincent Neighborhood District:

The site is located in the Saint Vincent Neighborhood District in a Neighborhood Shopping Subdistrict. It is adjacent to a Multifamily Residential/Local Service Subdistrict.

SPATIAL STANDARDS:

Minimum Lot Width: none

Minimum Lot Frontage: none

Maximum Height: 3 stories or 35 ft

Setbacks: Front: 3 ft

Side: 5 ft No side yard is required except in the case of a lot with a side lot line abutting a Residential Subdistrict
Rear: 20 ft

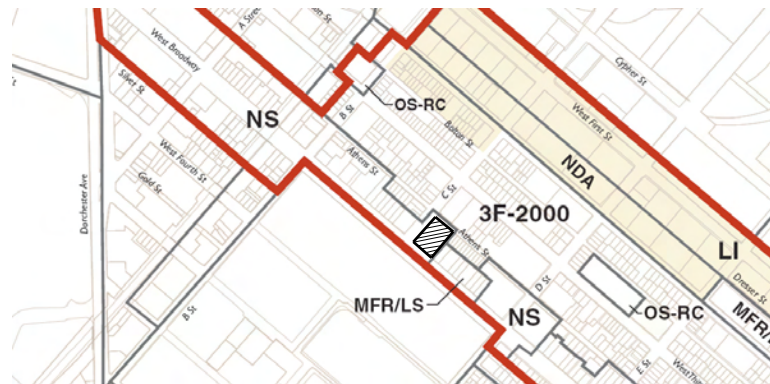
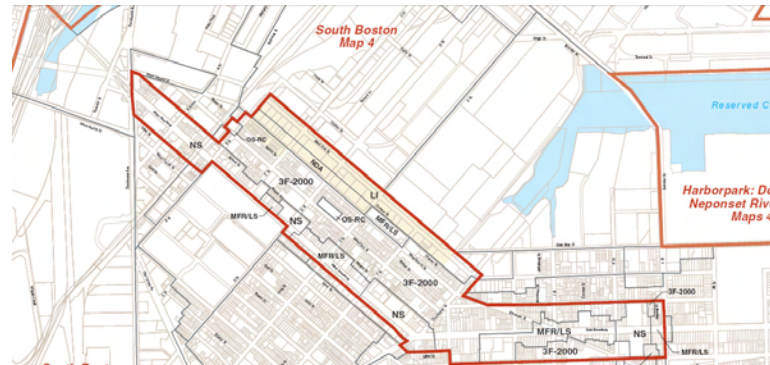
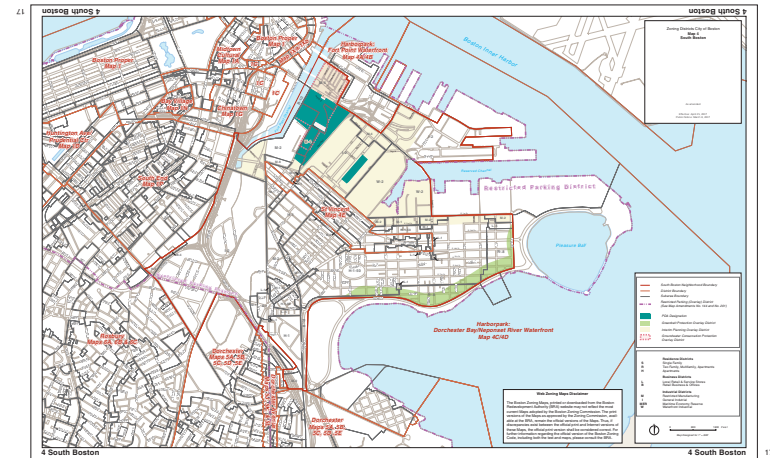
ACCESSIBILITY (according to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board for Transient Housing):

8.4 At least 5% but in no case less than one of the units, sleeping rooms, and suites shall be accessible.

8.7 Doors and doorways designed to allow passage into and within all sleeping units or other covered units shall comply with 521CMR 26.00: DOORS AND DOORWAYS on the corridor side of the door only.

OPEN SPACE:

The provisions of Section 17-1 (Minimum Usable Open Space) shall not apply to hotels, motels, hospitals, dormitories or other residential structures intended and designed primarily for transient occupancy.



**SOUTH BOSTON WATERFRONT INTERIM
PLANNING OVERLAY DISTRICT (IPOD):**

Applicability Within Saint Vincent Neighborhood District: A portion of the South Boston Waterfront IPOD Study Area covers a portion of the Saint Vincent Neighborhood District (Article 57). The provisions of Sections 27P-9 (Interim Height and FAR Controls), 27P-10 (Interim Use Controls), 27P-11 (Interim Waterfront Yard Area Requirements), 27P-12 (Interim Open Space Requirements), 27P-13 (Interim Parking Controls), 27P-14 (Development Review and Design Guidelines), and 27P-16 (Planned Development Area) shall not apply to any Proposed Project in the South Boston Waterfront IPOD Study Area that is located within the boundaries of the Saint Vincent Neighborhood District. All other provisions of this Article, including the requirements of Sections 27P-18 and 27P-19, concerning Interim Planning Permits, shall apply to any such Proposed Project.

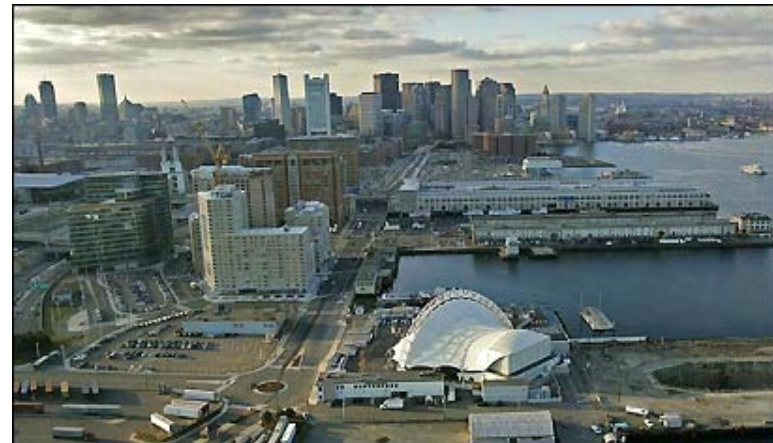
SECTION 27P-18. Standards for Issuance of Interim Planning Permit. The Board of Appeal shall grant an Interim Planning Permit for a Proposed Project only if it finds that: (a) the benefits to the community outweigh the burdens imposed; and (b) the Proposed Project is in substantial accord with the applicable provisions of this Article. If the Boston Redevelopment Authority has made a recommendation to the Board of Appeal on the issuance of an interim planning permit, the Board of Appeal shall follow such recommendation unless

Subject to small project review:

Neighborhoods:

(i) **Projects Adding Gross Floor Area.** Any Proposed Project for the erection or extension of one or more buildings that results in the addition of an aggregate gross floor area of twenty thousand (20,000) or more square feet, and any Proposed Project that results in the addition of a smaller gross floor area for which the underlying zoning requires design review by the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

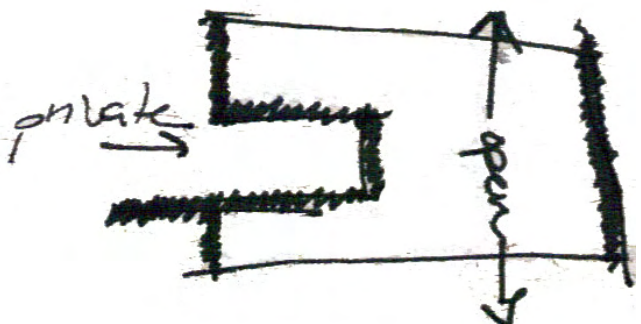
(ii) **Projects Adding Dwelling Units.** Any Proposed Project for the construction of fifteen (15) or more Dwelling Units (but not including rehabilitation or alteration projects unless they result in a net increase of fifteen (15) or more Dwelling Units).

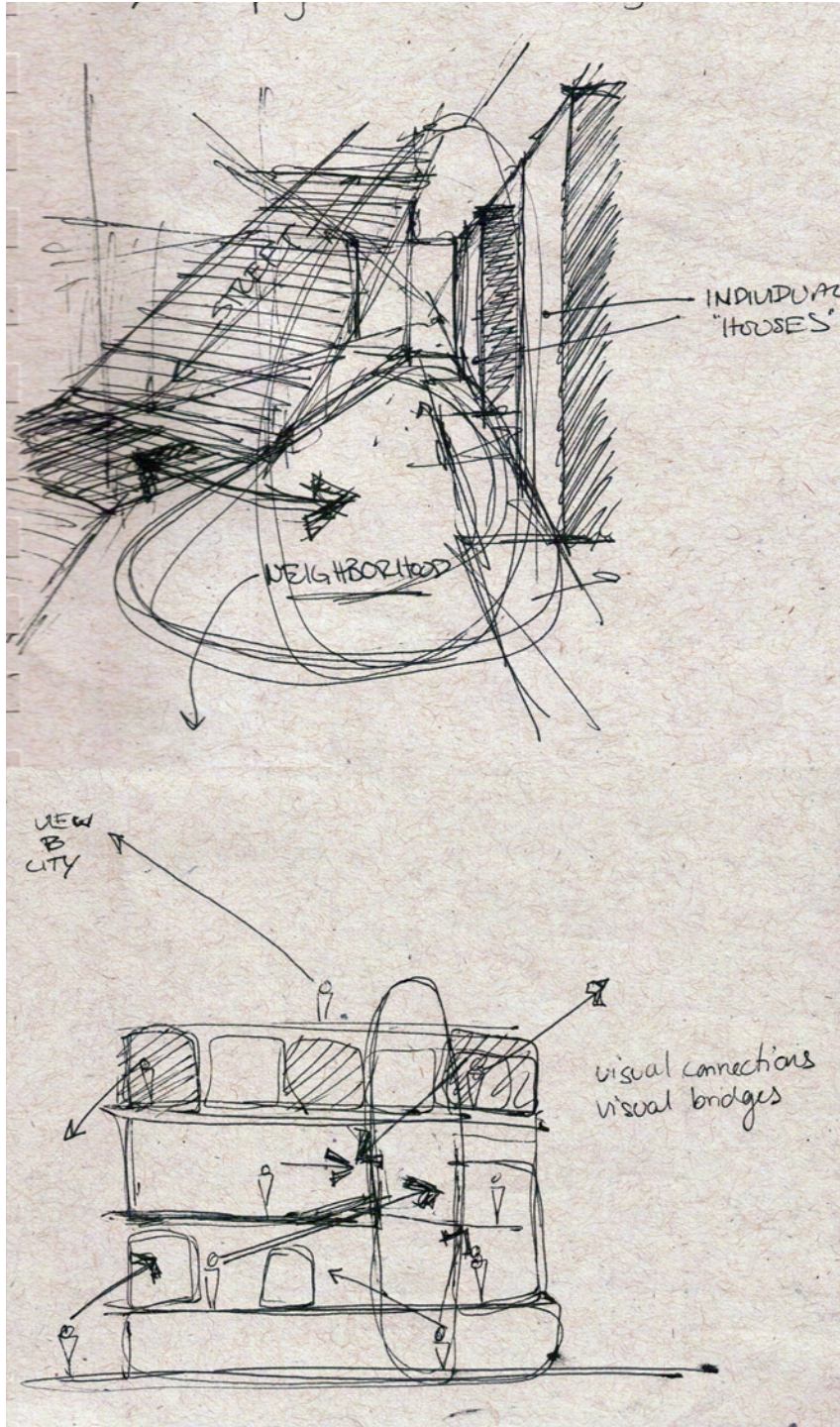


Aerial view of South Boston Waterfront

(Campbell)

CONCEPTUAL IDEAS

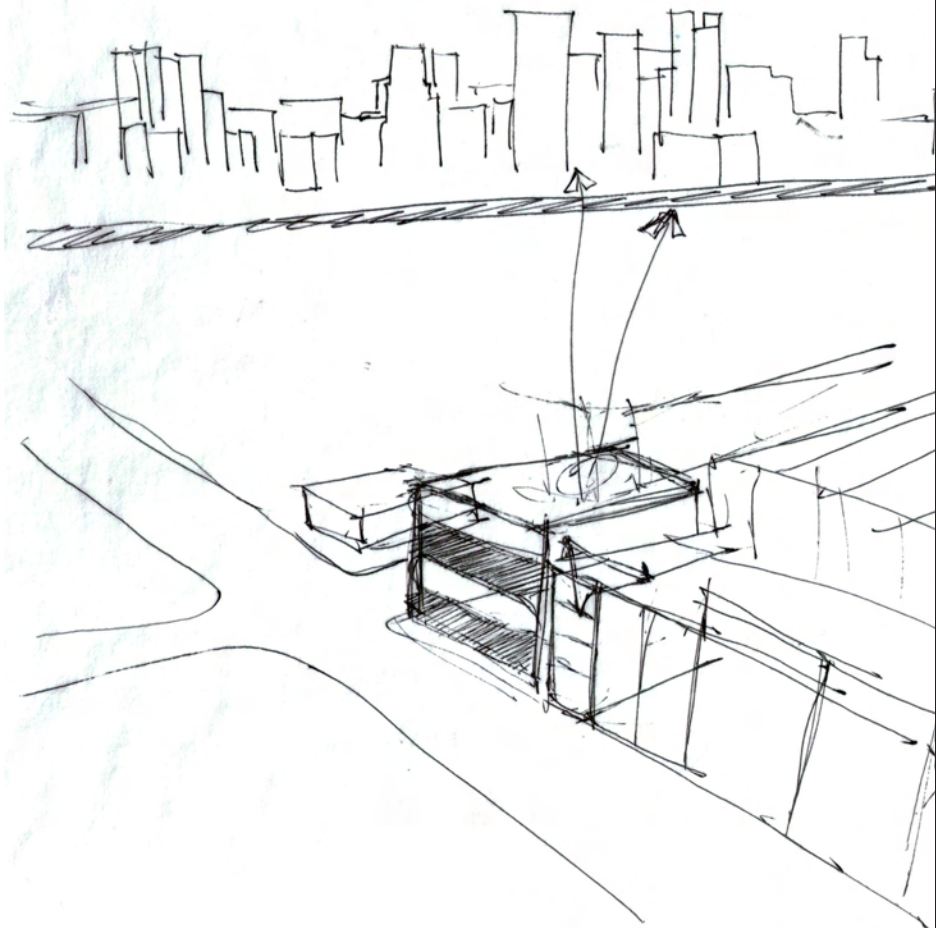




A sense of community is lacking in the life of a person without a stable home. Therefore it is important to focus on creating a neighborhood and community within the building. Residents need to feel at home, safe, and part of something larger than themselves.

Empathy acts as a bridge between two people or between a person and an object. The TRANSITIONAL SHELTER will be that bridge for residents. It will connect them to a community and a future they may have not been able to imagine for themselves. To strengthen this idea emphasis is placed on visual continuity and connections throughout the building. This visual openness is also empowering for the residents, making them partially responsible for security and safety.

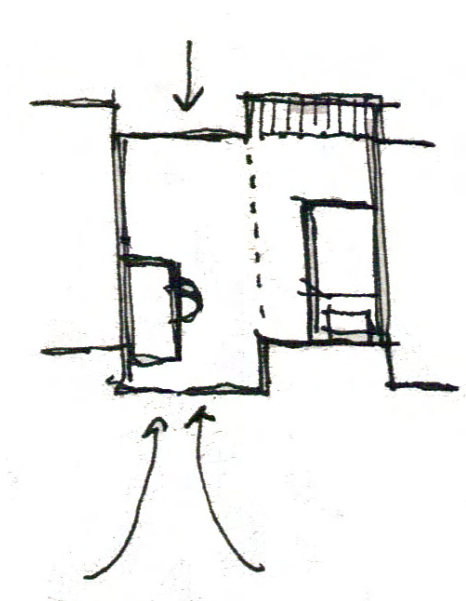
The location of TRANSITIONAL SHELTER in South Boston is an ideal place for residents to be close to the city and aware of the relationship they have with it; while at the same time being removed enough to be able to focus on what they need to accomplish to get back into that city and society. Views of greater Boston will hopefully be motivating and inspirational for the residents of TRANSITIONAL SHELTER. These views represent their reintroduction to society.

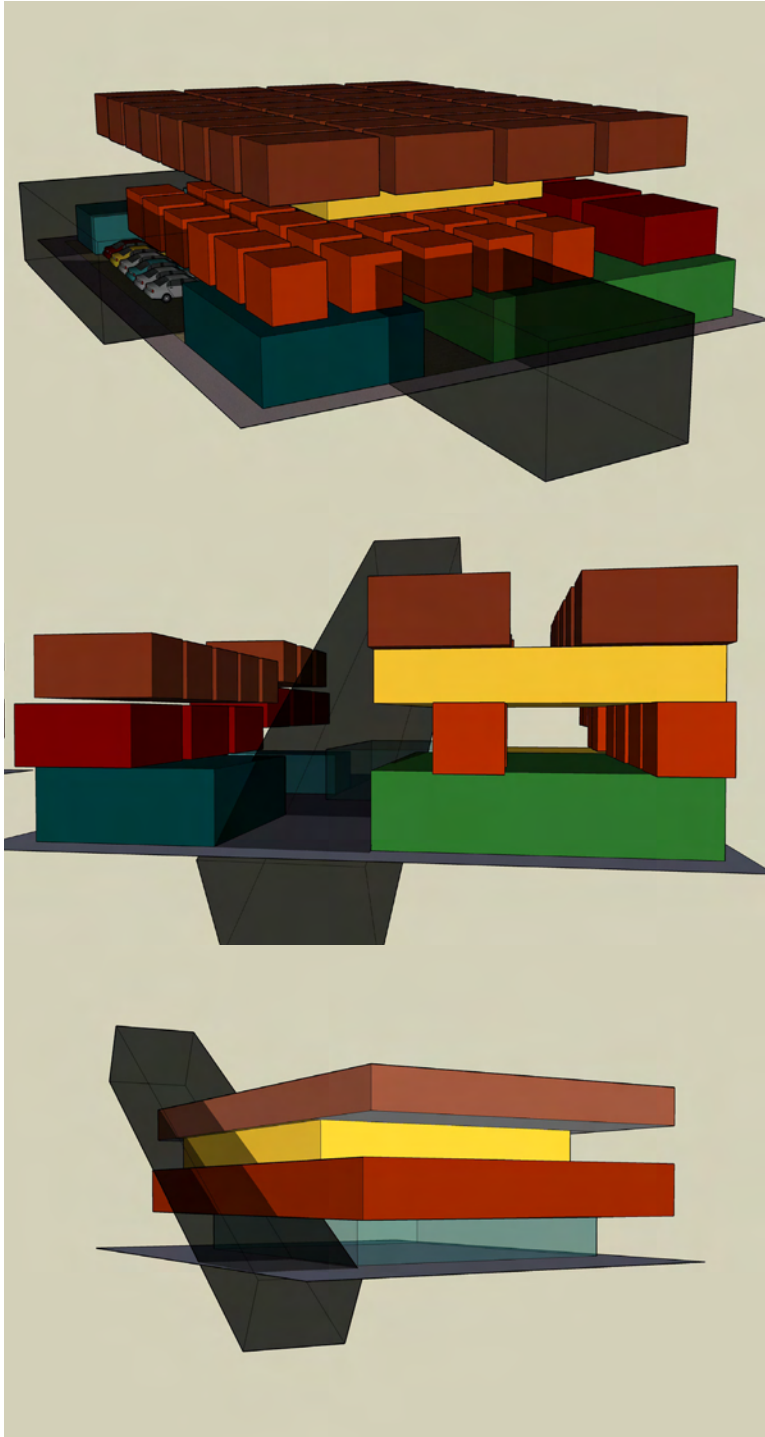




Recognizing the tension between living in the street and living in a home is a necessary step to providing an easy transition for the residents of TRANSITIONAL SHELTER. On the southern facade, the street folds into the building through the central atrium. This space becomes “main street” within the building. This feature also becomes the link between the past and the future for the people coming into the TRANSITIONAL SHELTER.

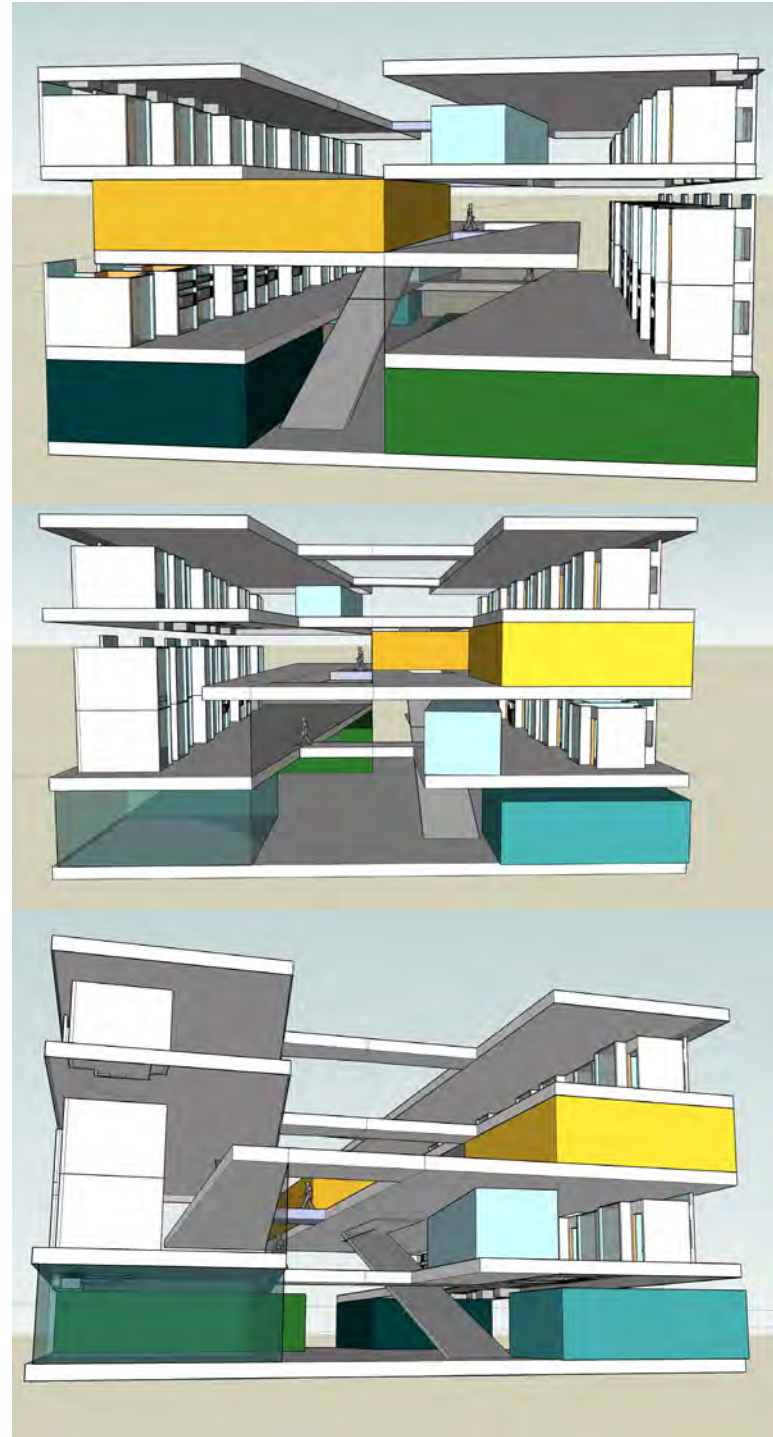
SCHEMATIC DESIGN

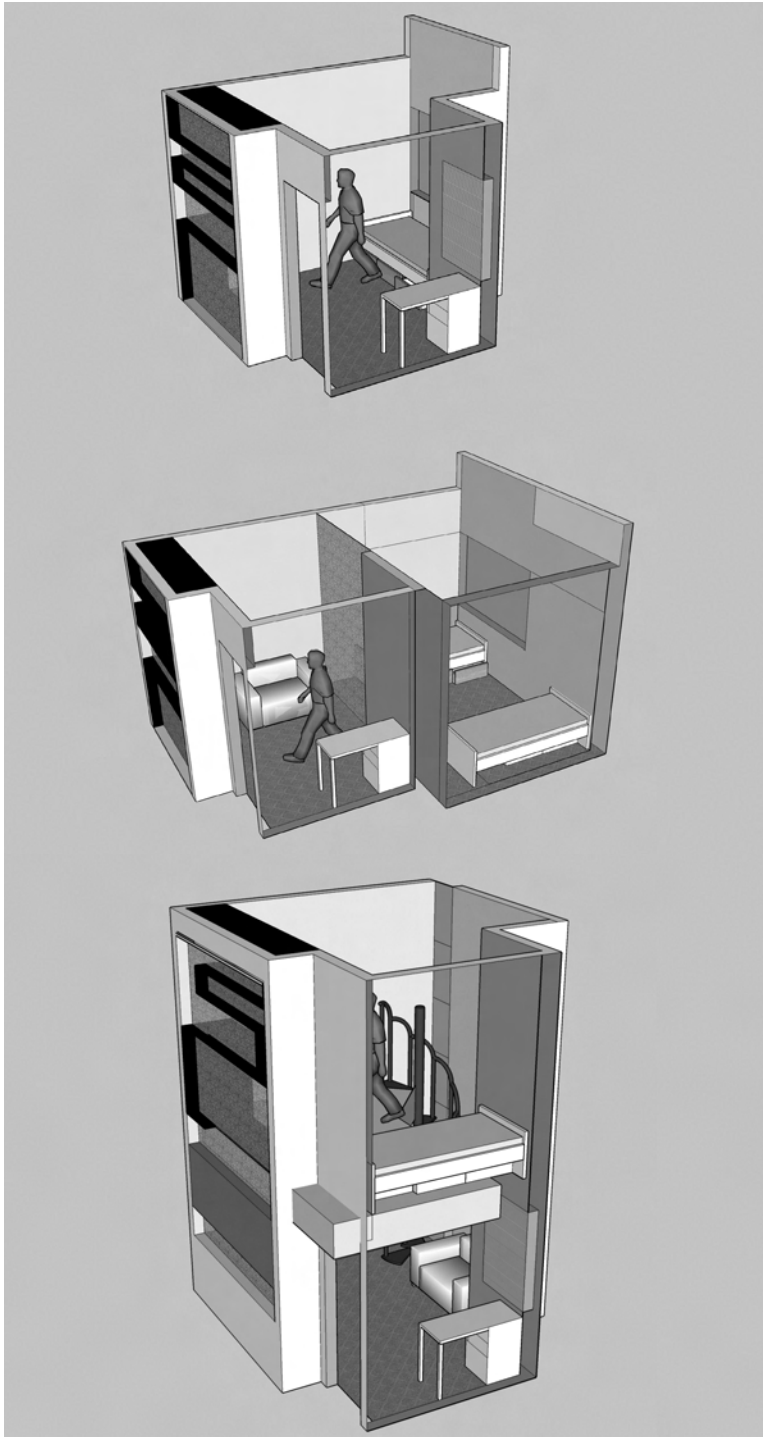




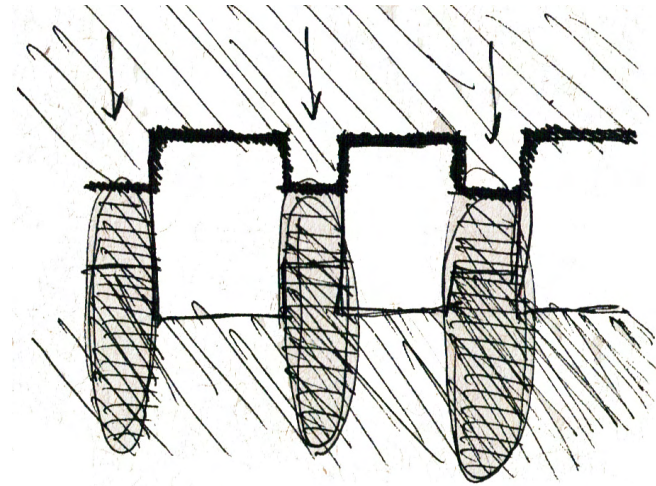
Program layout and “street” integration were carefully studied through a series of models. Various configuration were attempted to try to maximize the number of beds while at the same time creating “neighborhoods” that are focused around a center.

The atrium space became the building's "main street" that connected all floors. Bridges and views were created to maintain visual continuity throughout the building as well as security. Floors also began to stagger in section to create more opportunities for visibility.





Studies were done of the individual rooms and their organization to determine the necessary dimensions needed to provide some privacy to the residents but also to maximize occupancy. Men's single rooms include a desk, a bed, and a lockable storage unit. This storage space is vital to all the residents since the actual bedrooms do not have any doors – there are no doors for safety reasons. Family rooms also have the storage unit and the desk with the addition of a pull-out sofa bed and two to three regular beds. These rooms can therefore accommodate anywhere from two to four people and are geared towards women with children. The gateway apartments were originally designed as two story apartments, but, in the best interest of the whole building, were brought down to one main level with an elevated deck facing C Street. These are the spacious, more private rooms that residents can move into once they have a job but can not yet afford housing. They have their own entrance from the North side of the building.



Room Organization Sketch



81

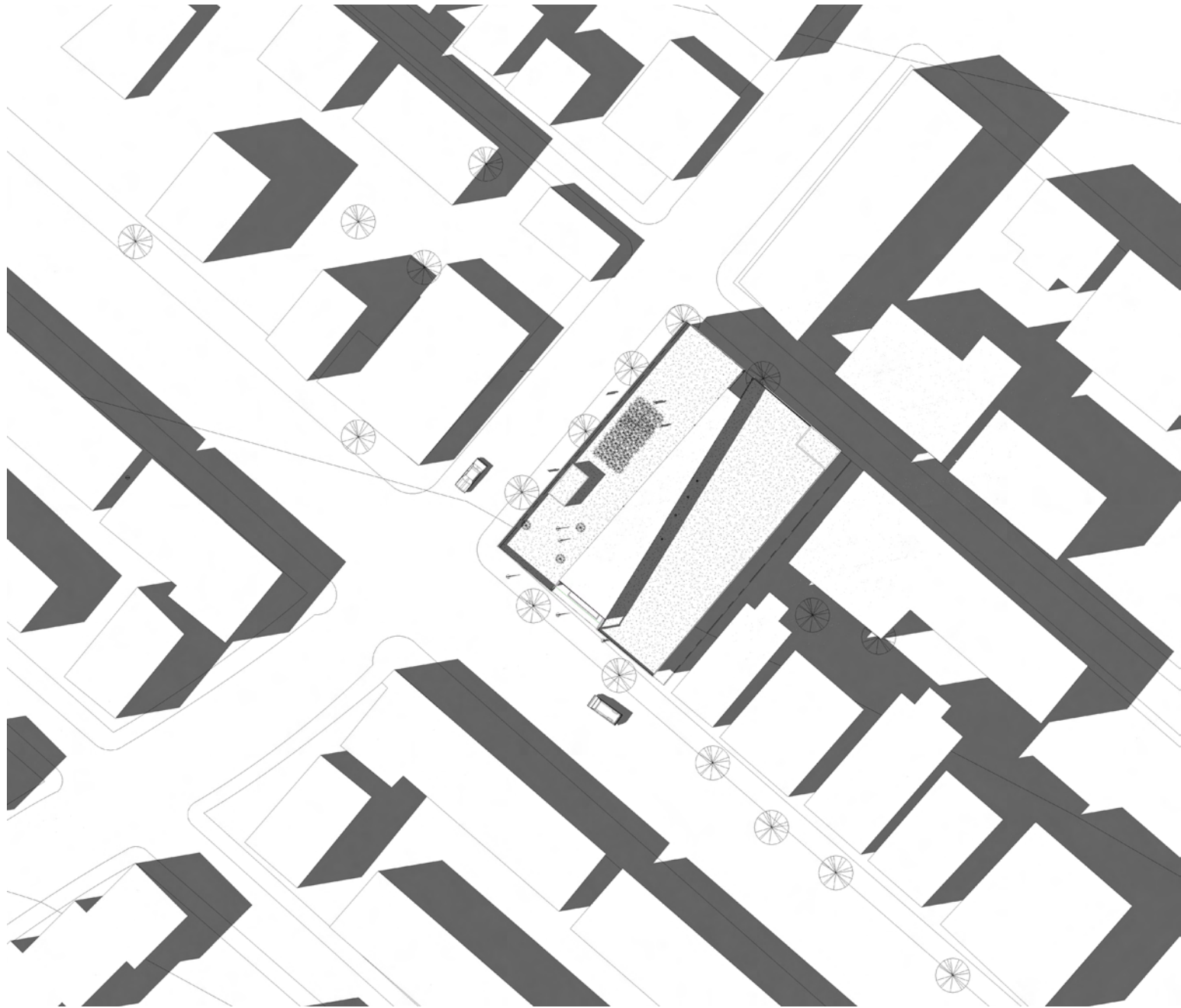
SCHEMATIC DESIGN

FINAL DESIGN









Site Plan

The basic parti of this TRANSITIONAL homeless SHELTER is a city block bisected by a wedge-shaped “main street.” This parti empathizes with the residents’ situation by giving them a comfortable entry sequence, a sense of privacy and discretion, as well as clear safety and security. The building is positioned on the site to take full advantage of the important West Broadway and C Street intersection in South Boston. This corner of the building also gets ample southern light and is an ideal spot for the building’s “front porch.” The programmatic layout of the building is designed with community and safety in mind. Private rooms are organized around common “neighborhood” spaces where residents can learn from each other and form friendships they may not have previously been able to foster. Women and children live in the safety of the top floor in similarly arranged “neighborhoods.”

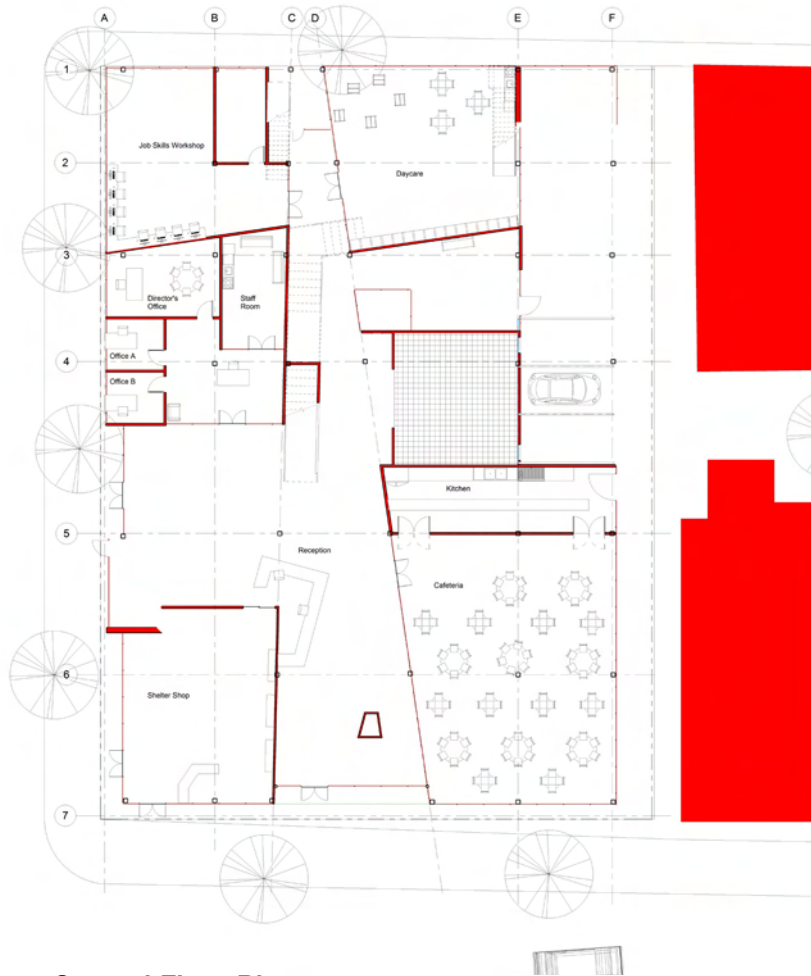
The idea of the bridge is also an important concept for the SHELTER as the building itself is a bridge between the past homelessness of the residents to their future in a home. The two halves of the building are connected with a series of staircases and bridges and the interior “street” facades are transparent to allow for gazes across the atrium. The visual connections throughout the building are important for security as well as empowerment for the residents and visitors. This enhances the sense of community throughout and hopefully would also give people a sense of pride and ownership of the building.



Southwestern Aerial View



Main Entry View



Ground Floor Plan



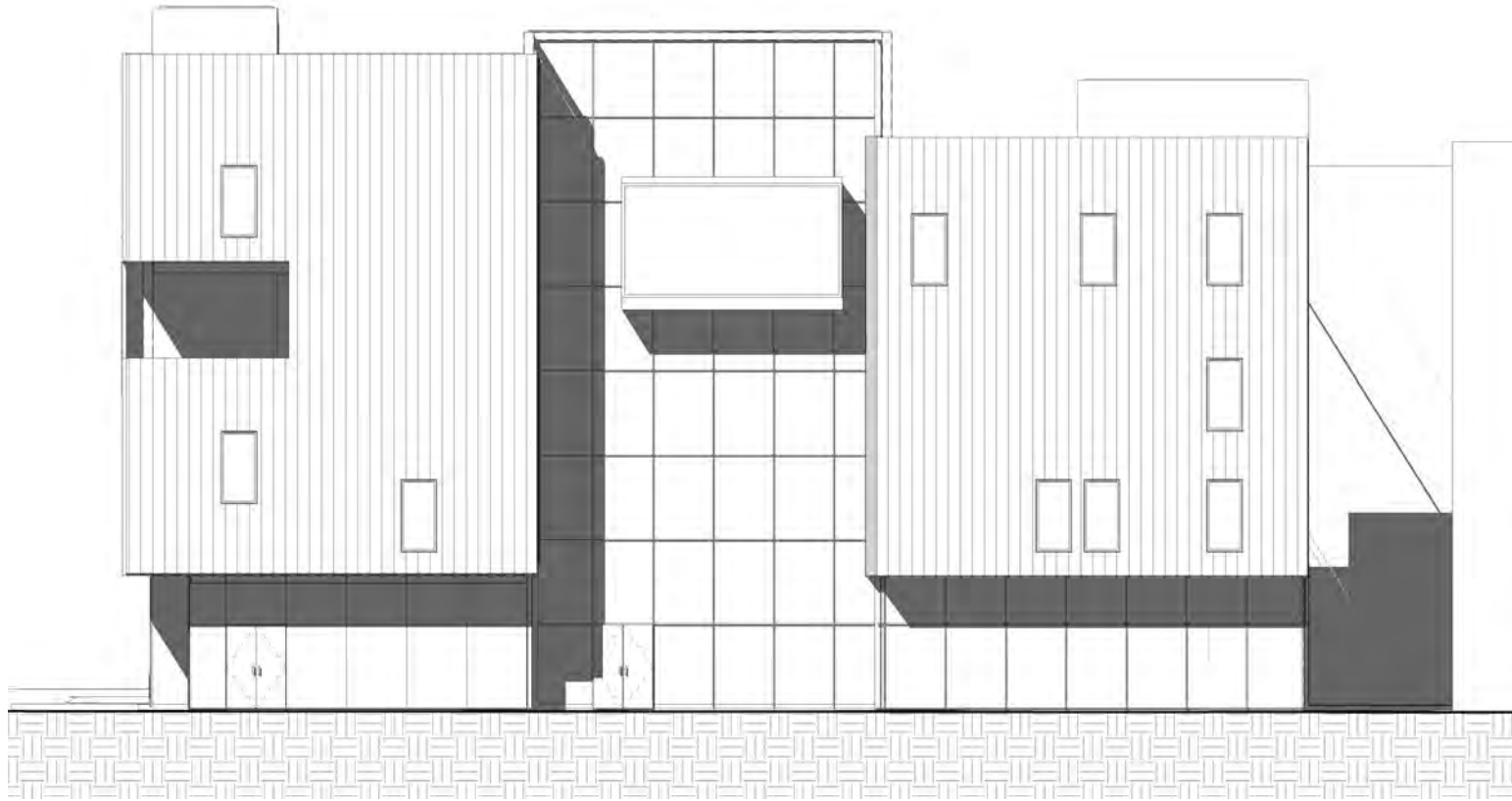
Second Floor Plan



Third Floor Plan



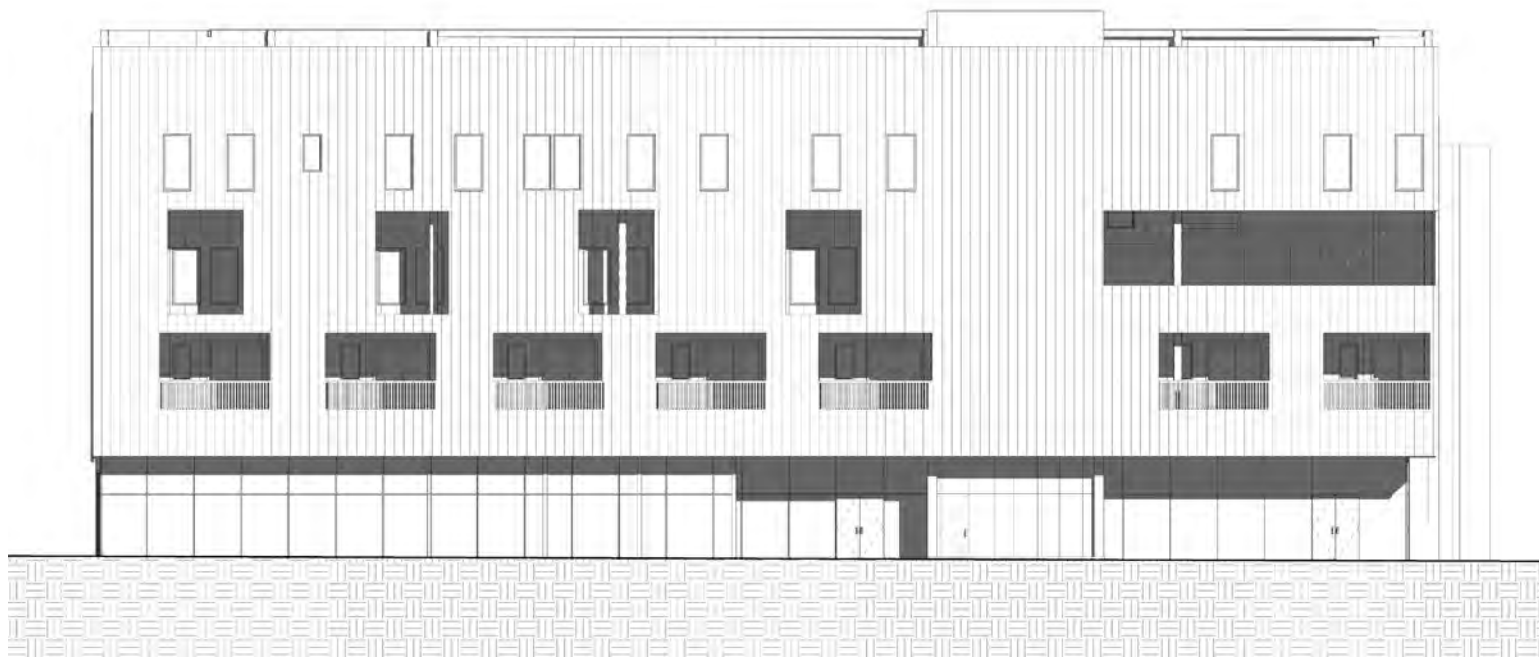
Fourth Floor Plan



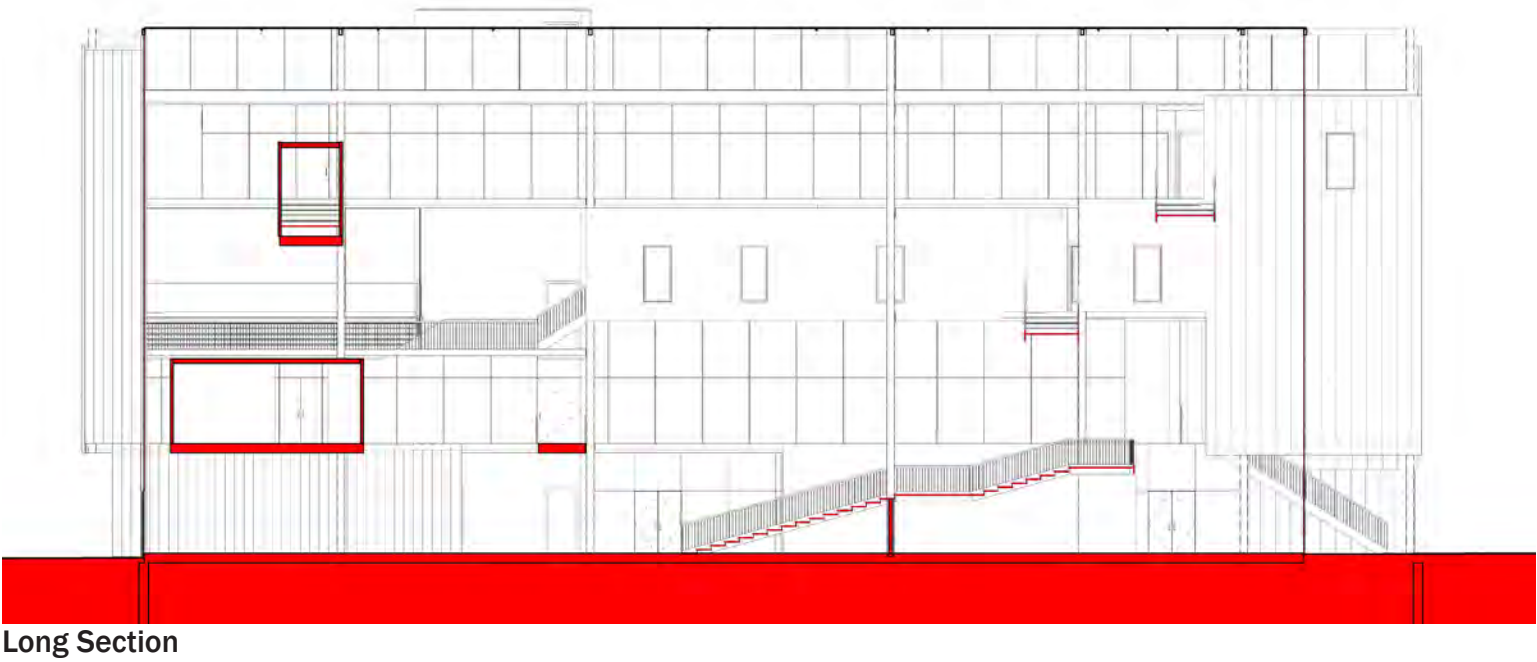
Southern Elevation



Short Section



Western Elevation

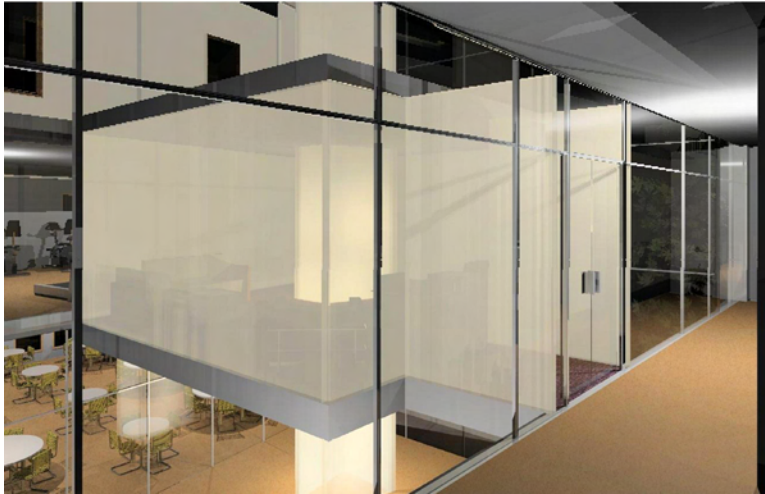




View of North Corner



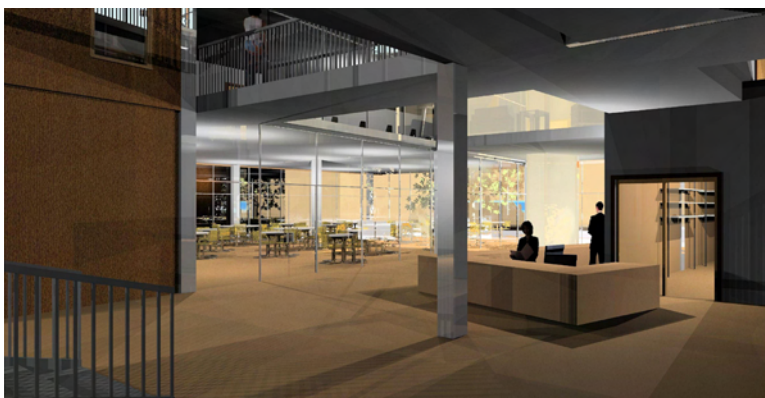
Nighttime Southwest Corner Rendering



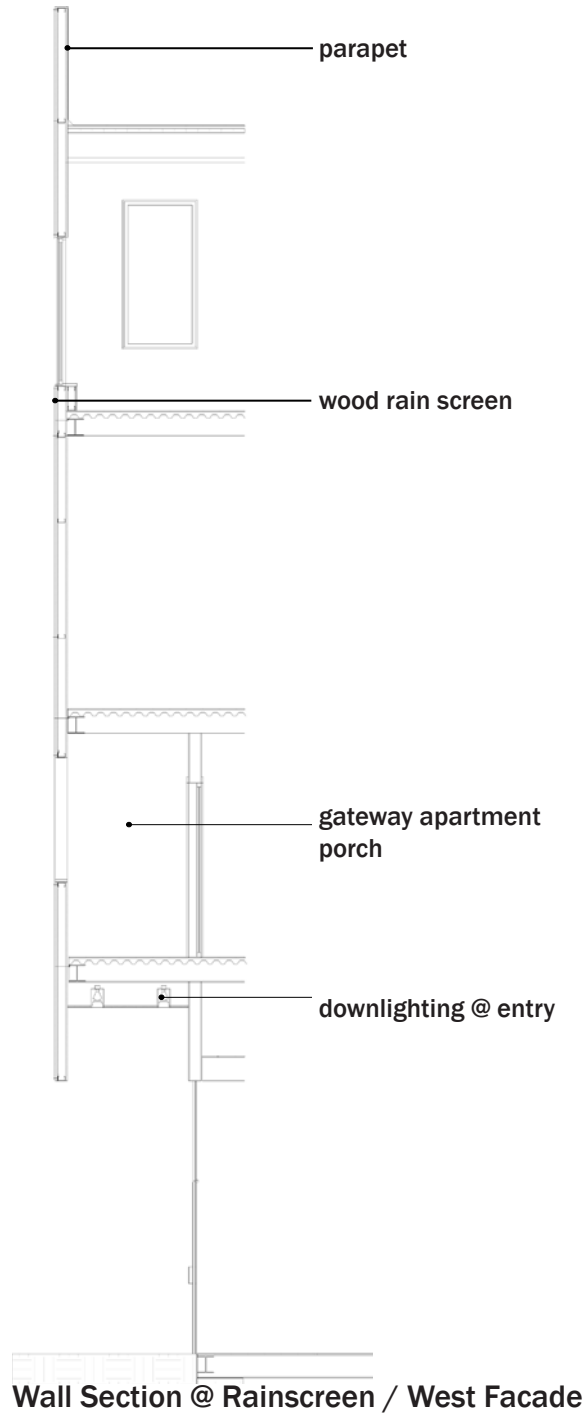
View towards Gateway Living Room



View of Men's Neighborhood

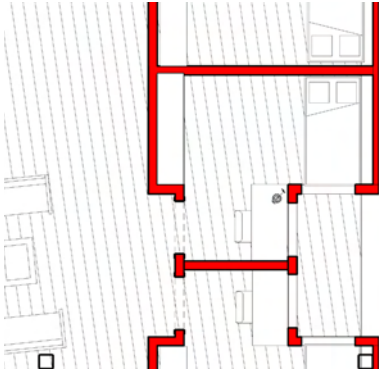


View of Reception Desk from C Street Entry

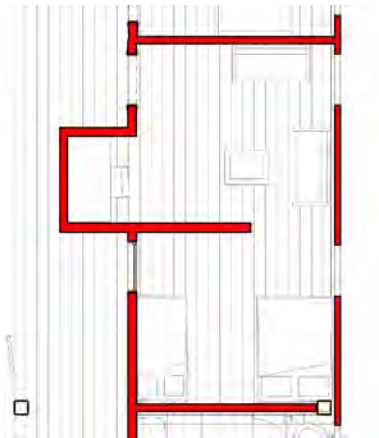




Structural Axonometric Diagram



Men's Single Room

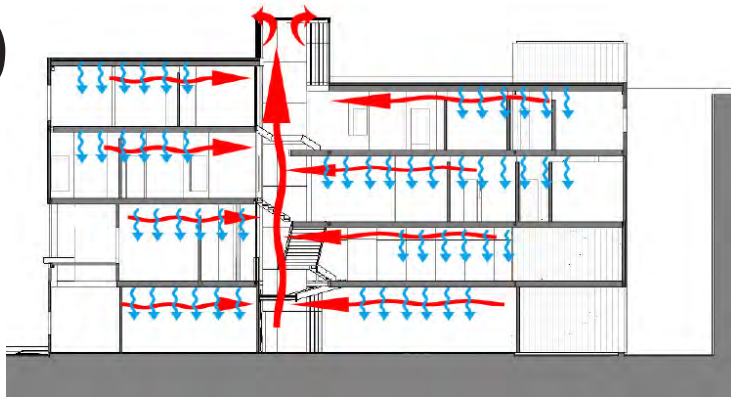


Women & Family Room

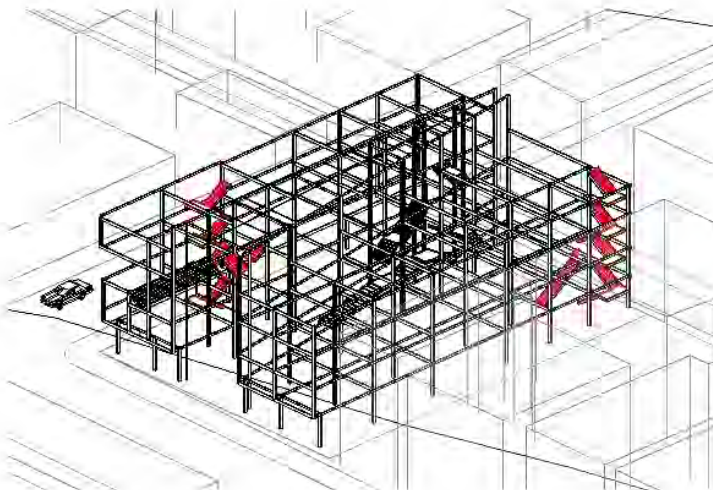


Gateway Apartments

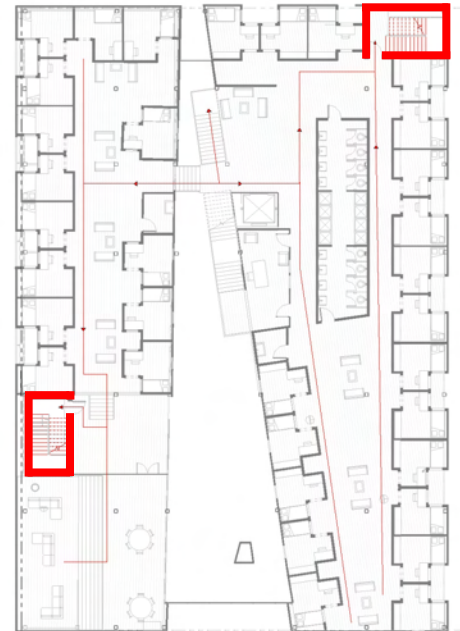




The Transitional Shelter's HVAC system is a Variable Air Volume system with eight zones. There are two zones per floor, one on either side of the atrium. Since the interior walls are not full height, warm air is able to pass through these large spaces and into the atrium. In the summer this hot air will then be vented out the top of the atrium, while in the winter, the hot air can be filtered and recirculated through the building's HVAC system. Having the eight zones will be crucial for the more public spaces that might heat up more quickly than the living spaces and therefore might require more cooling, even in the winter.



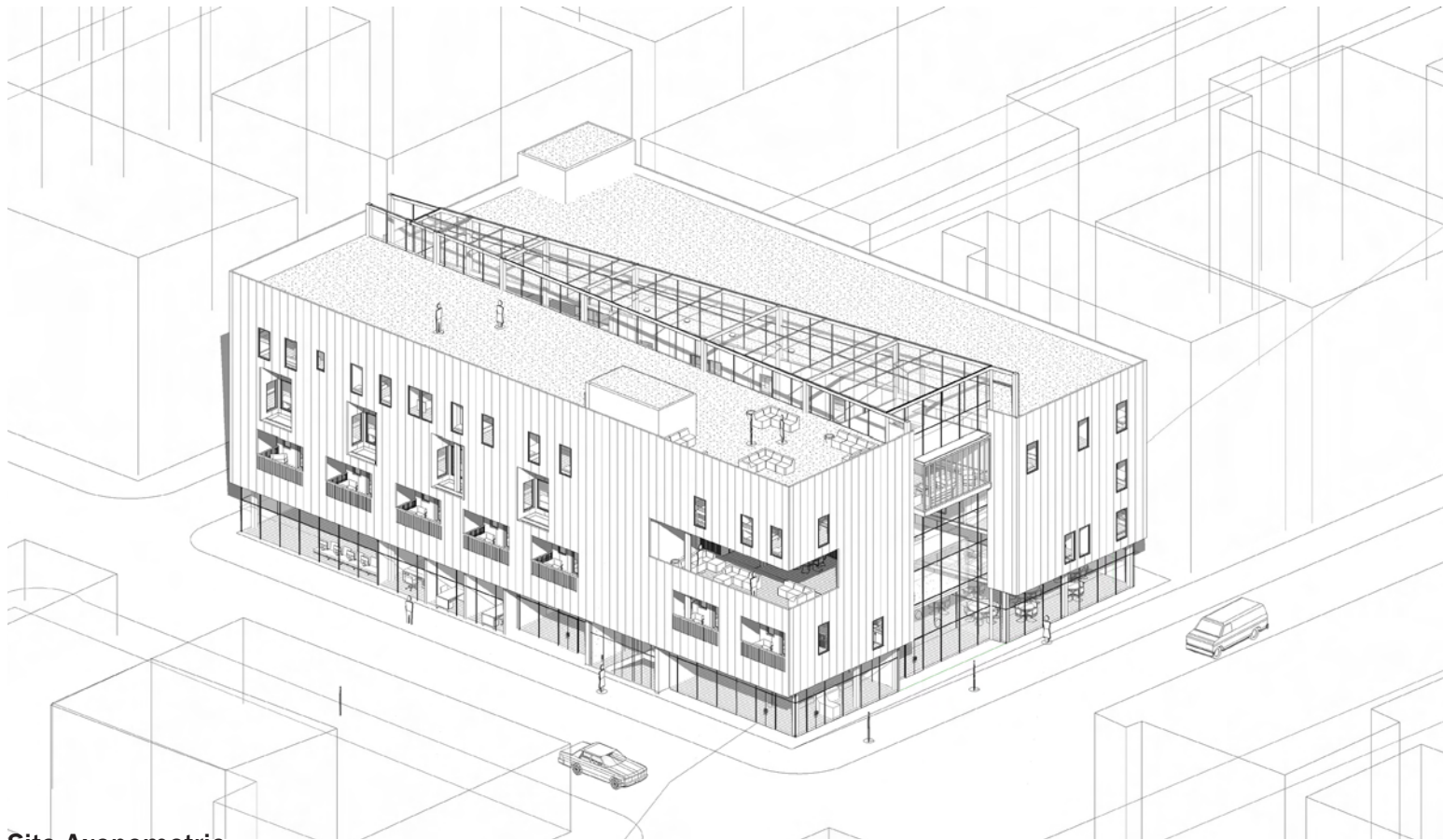
Egress Stairs



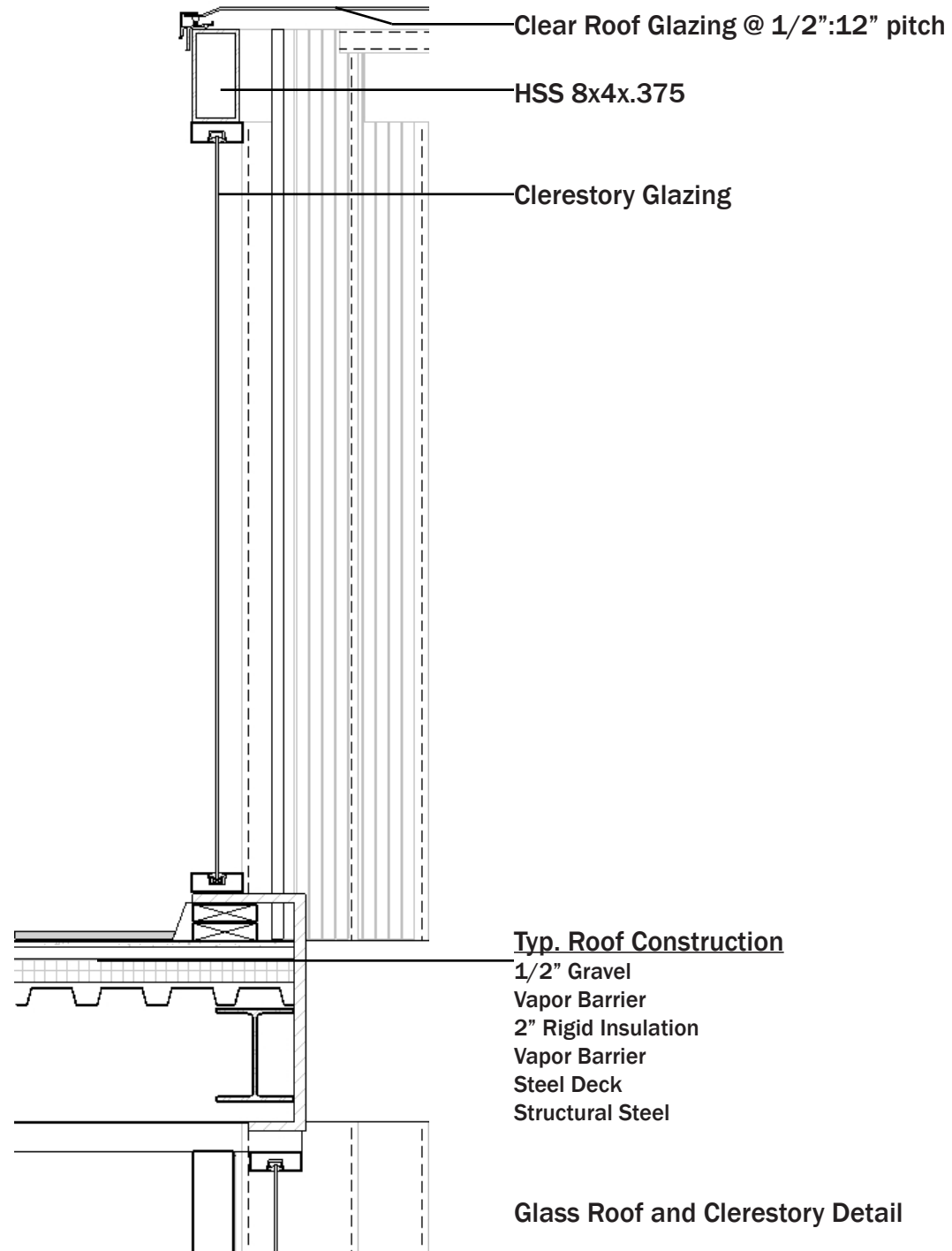
Third Floor Egress Plan

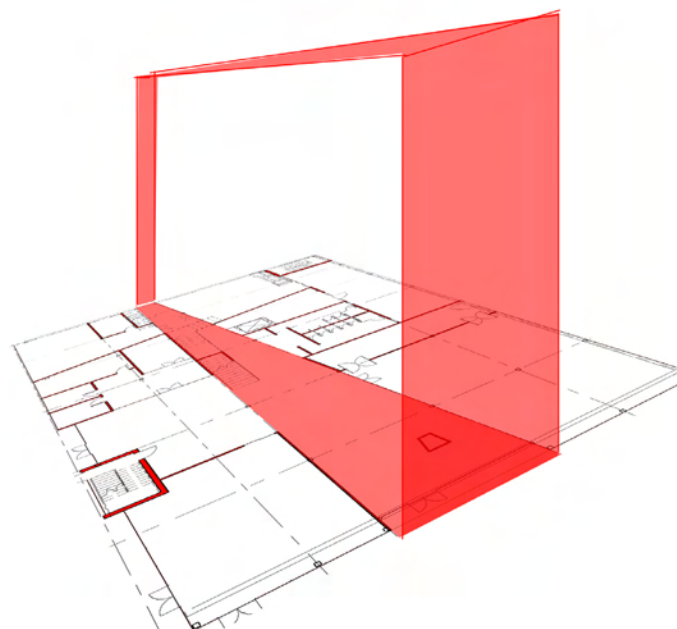


Roof Garden Views

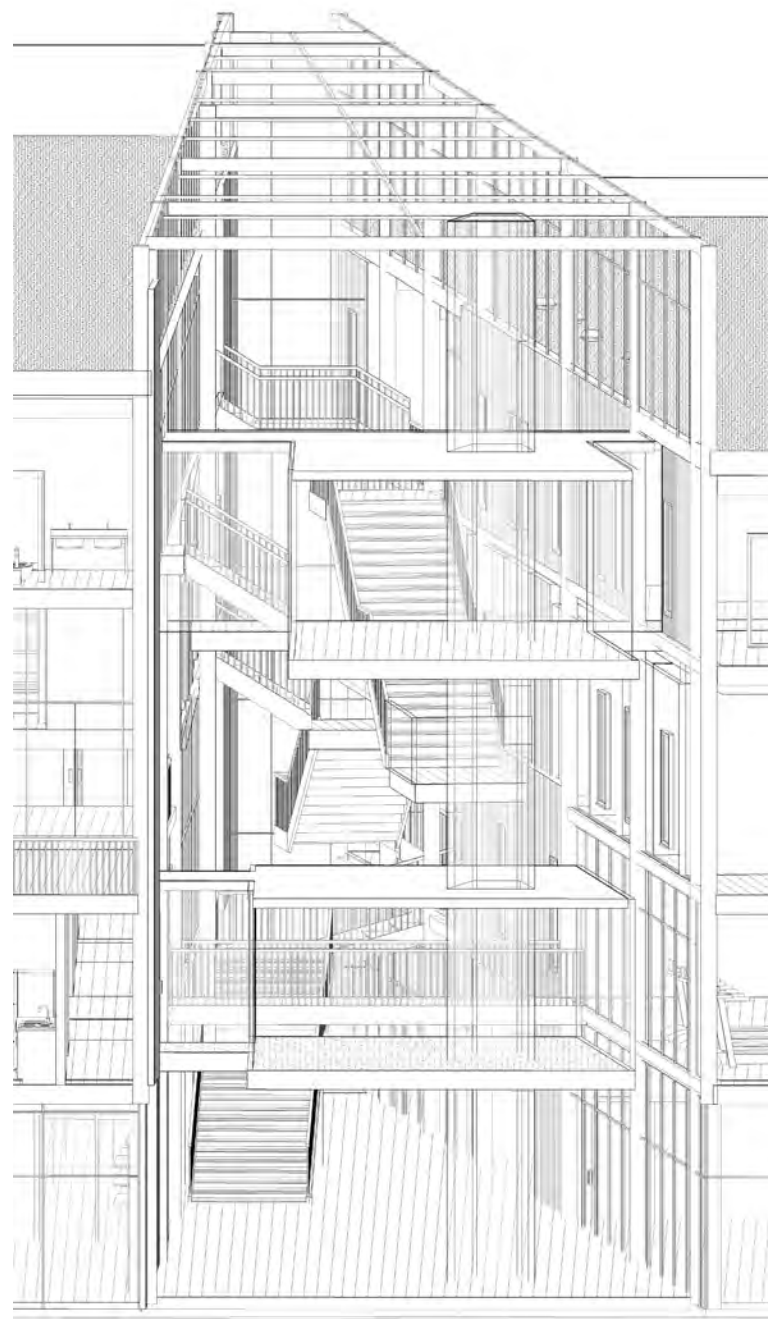


Site Axonometric





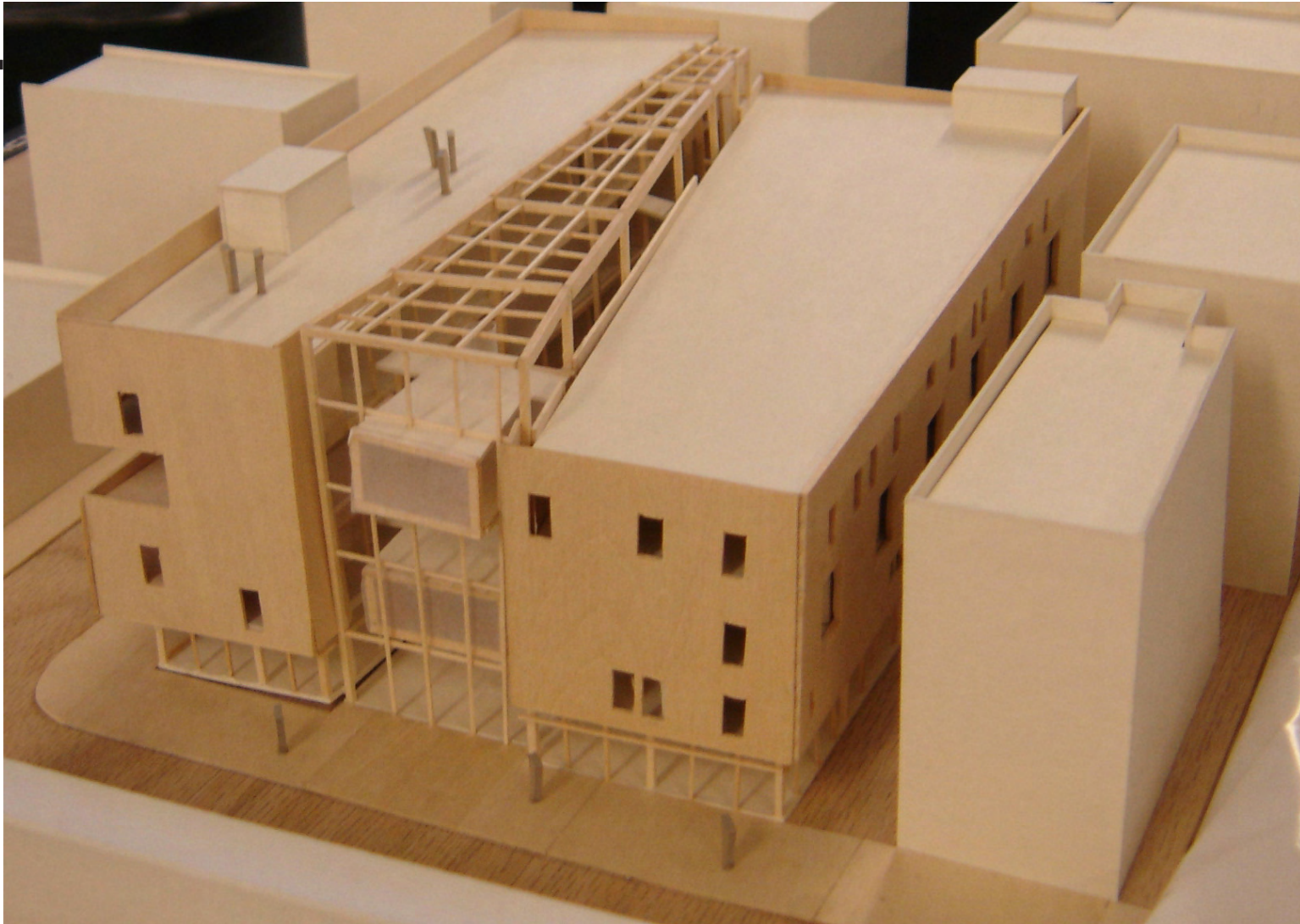
Main Street Diagram



Atrium Axonometric Drawing

104

FINAL DESIGN



Final Model



105

FINAL DESIGN

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