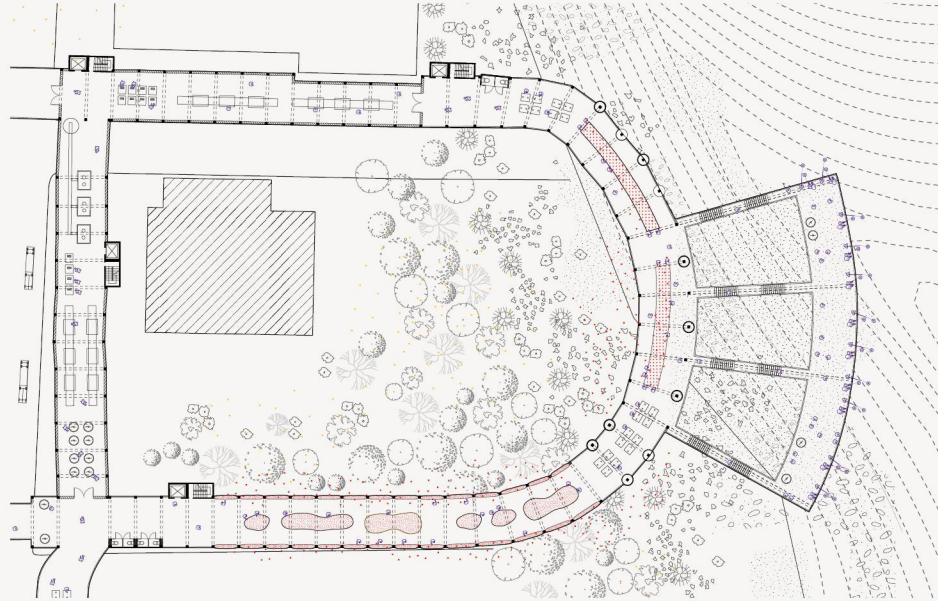




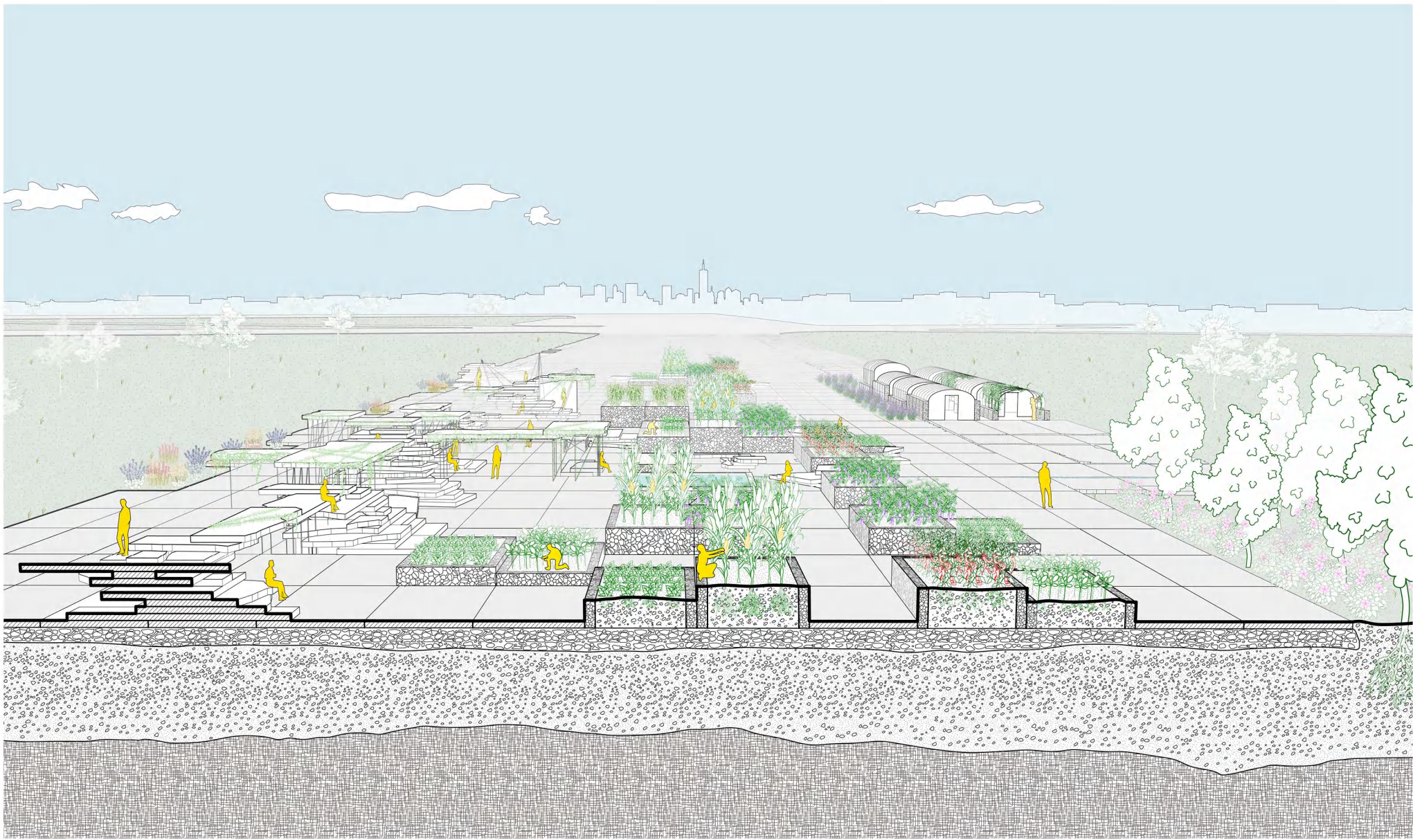
Xiaoyu Zhang (Nancy)

M.Arch (2026), Columbia University

B.Arts in Architectural Studies, Kean University

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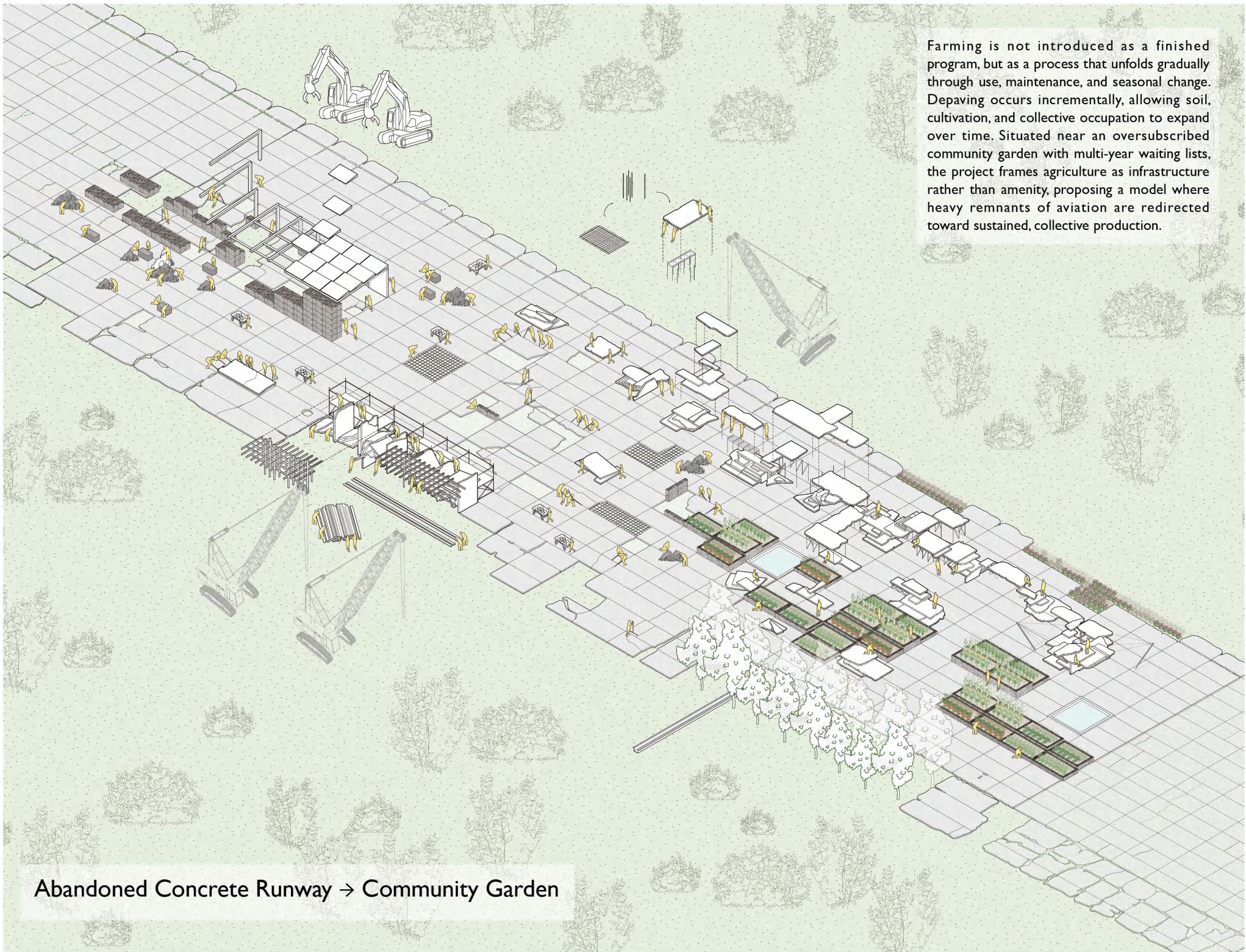
I. After the Runway -- Cracking Concrete into Agricultural Infrastructure

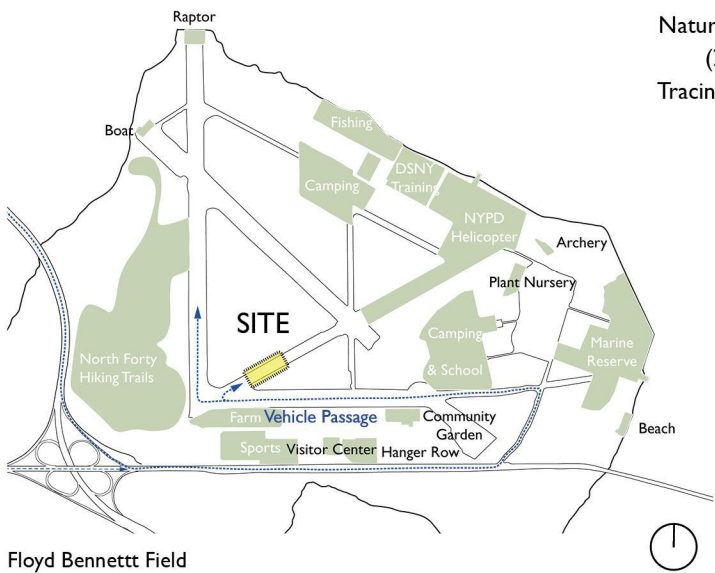
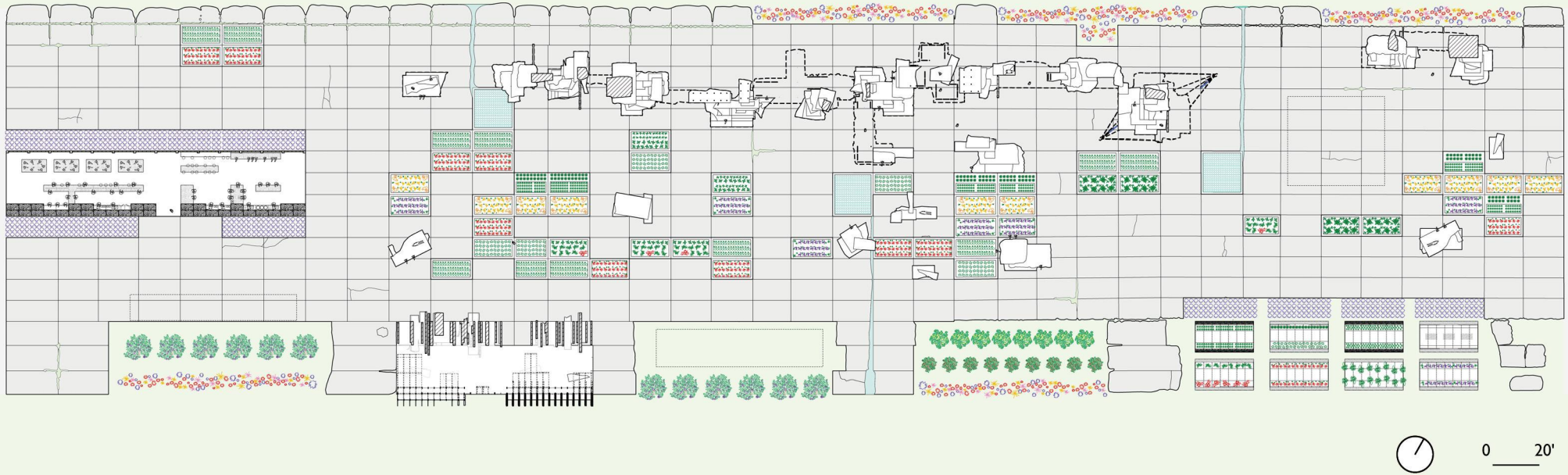
Project Type: Architecture Design
 Location: New York, USA
 Individual Work
 Instructor: Marc Tsurumaki
 Semester: Fall 2025

This project positions depaving as a deliberate architectural act by transforming the former runway at Floyd Bennett Field into a long-term agricultural infrastructure. Rather than removing the runway as obsolete ground, the project works through the cracking and selective reuse of its concrete slabs, treating fragmentation not as failure but as a productive condition. Broken concrete pieces are reassembled on site to construct terraces, retaining edges, paths, and working surfaces, preserving material continuity while avoiding the environmental cost of full demolition and replacement.

Farming is not introduced as a finished program, but as a process that unfolds gradually through use, maintenance, and seasonal change. Depaving occurs incrementally, allowing soil, cultivation, and collective occupation to expand over time. Situated near an oversubscribed community garden with multi-year waiting lists, the project frames agriculture as infrastructure rather than amenity, proposing a model where heavy remnants of aviation are redirected toward sustained, collective production.

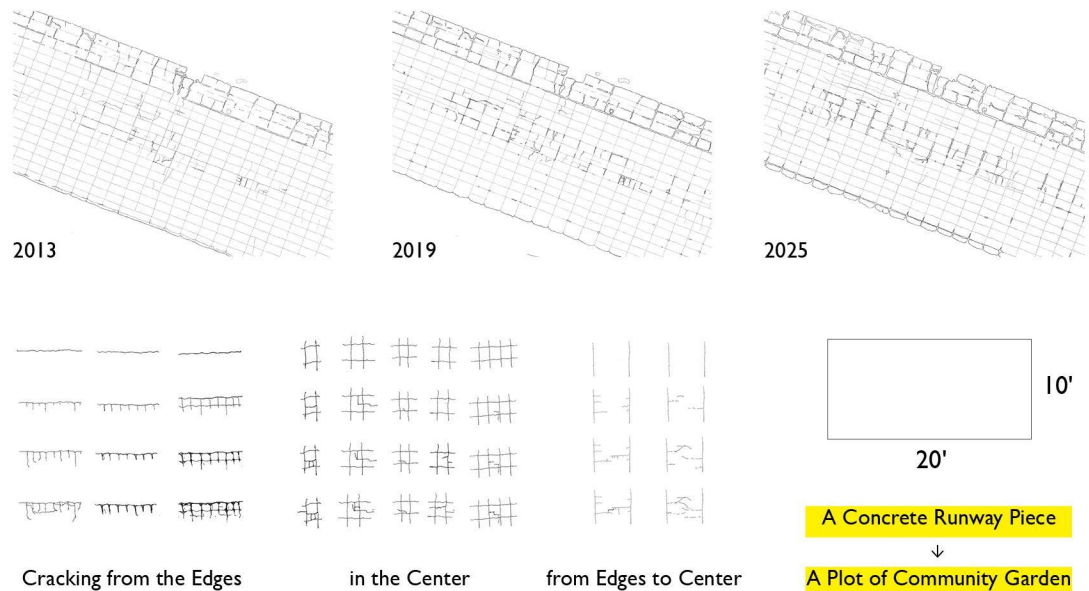
Abandoned Concrete Runway → Community Garden





Natural Cracking Process
(2013 - 2019 - 2025)
Tracing from Google Map,
Hand Sketches

Cracking Diagrams,
Hand Sketches





Farming Senario, Gabion Raised Bed & Concrete Facade, Exterior Render



Farming Pavillion for Drying & Storage, Test Model, 1: 20



Community Kitchen with Gabion Wall & CLT Structure, Detail Section



Farming Landscape, Test Model, 1: 20



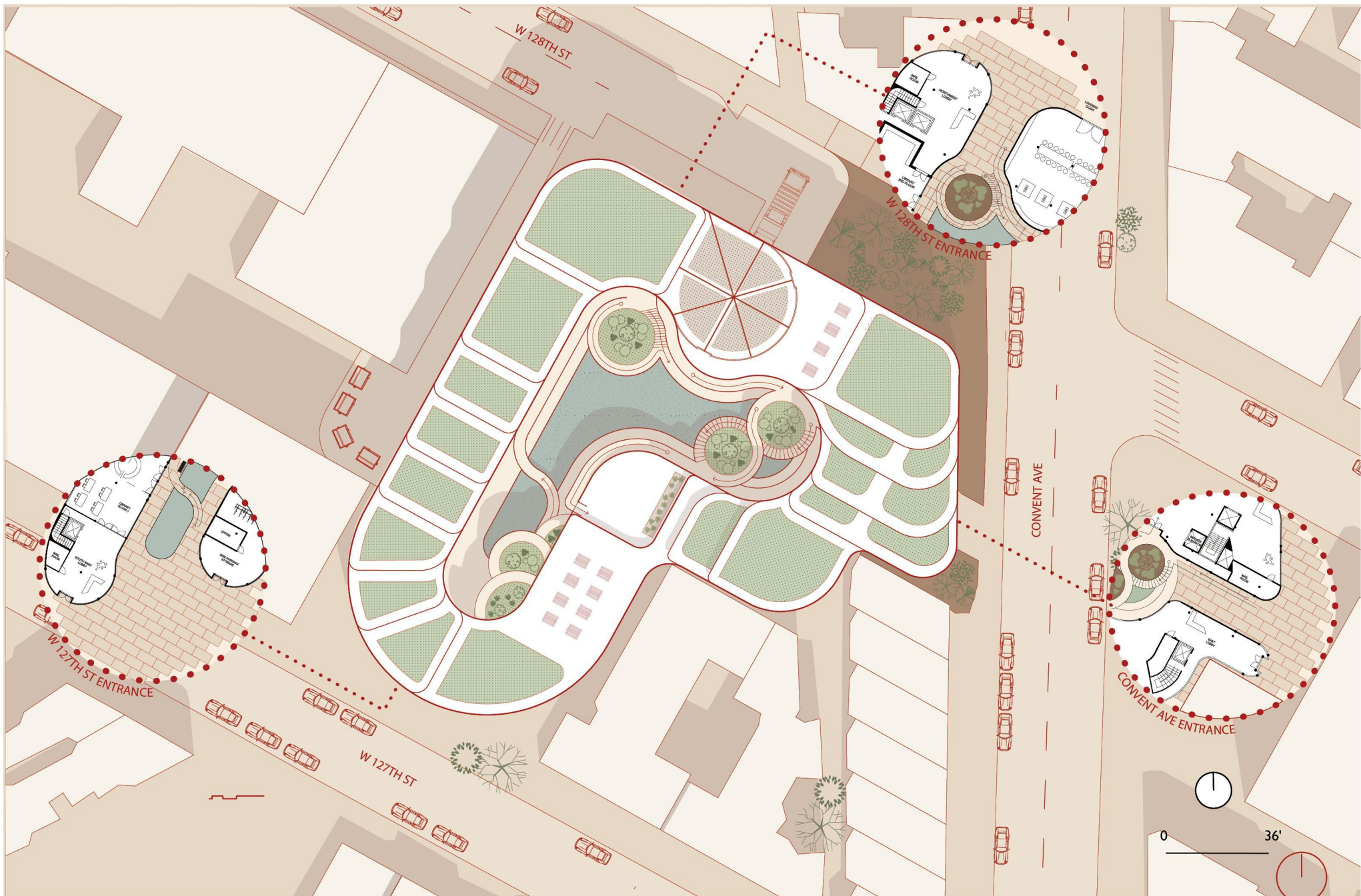
Depaving | Concrete & Rebar Reuse | Intercropping | Water Collection & Reused



2. P(ond)-Block Terrace

Project Type: Architecture Design
Location: New York, USA
Group Work with Isaac Martinez
Instructor: Galia Solomonoff
Semester: Fall 2024

Introducing a shallow water pond into the community, this residential project is to explore an affordable, sustainable housing solution with 138 units in total. P(ond)-Block Terrace has a convenient connection to site context, at the same time strikes a balance between water recycling and water living. Terra Cotta Baguette is used as the facade material, playing with the terraces and open-air balconies. It also works as a sunscreen, providing interesting verticality and structure for residents' spatial experience.

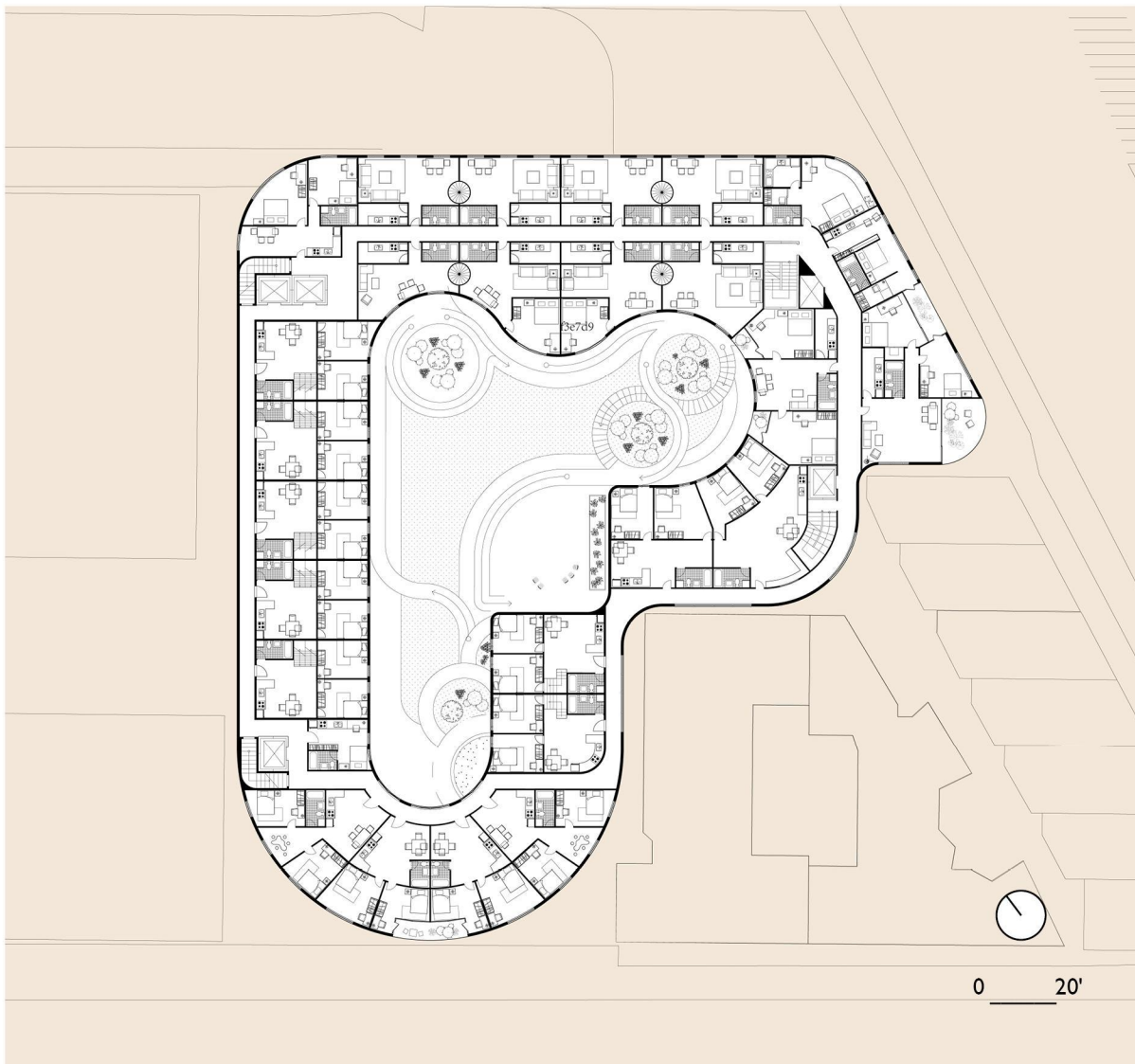


Site Plan

Water-Living

Located in West Harlem and surrounded by three streets, the project has three entrances, one for each street. Because of the height difference of the site, the entrances are in different levels. People can enter the community from every direction that opens to the street. In the center of the community, a water courtyard is designed for entertainment and aesthetic.

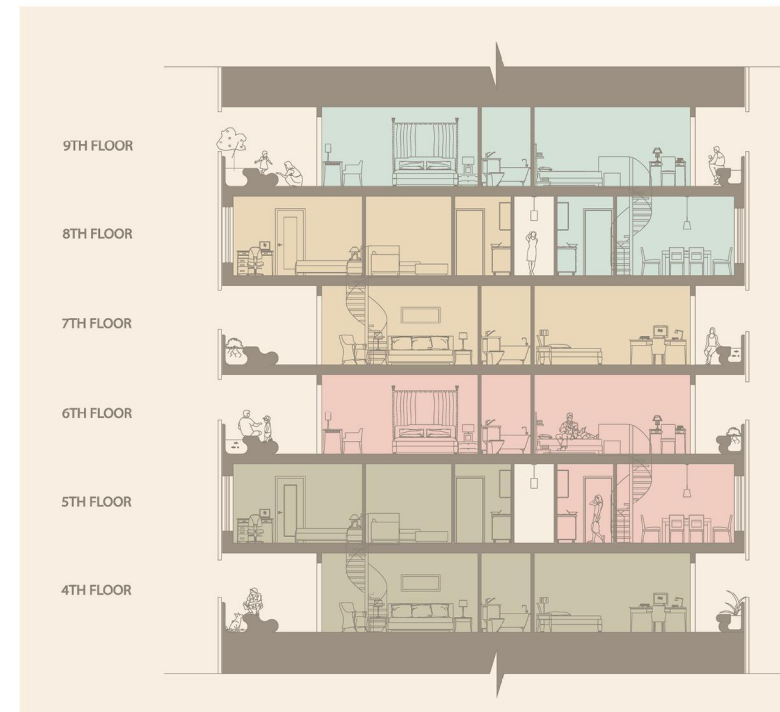
The depth of the pond is varied from 2" to 10", creating a tidal experience according to the weather. In summer, the water courtyard works as a playground for kids, while in winter, the water courtyard works as a skating rink for people's activity.



5th Floor, Floor Plan

High Efficient Circulation | Mixed Typology Units

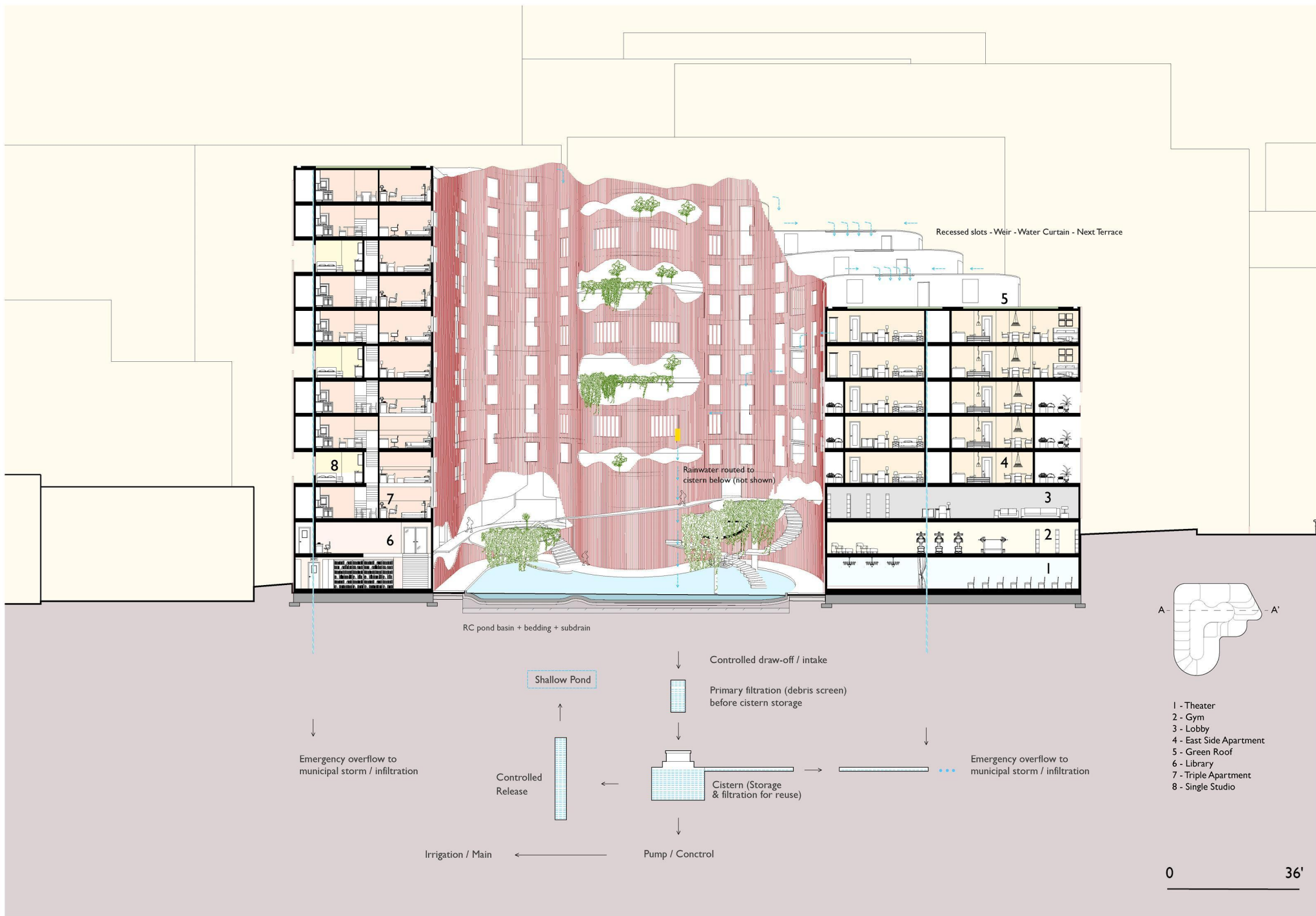
The first three floors are in public program, while the other floors till 13th floor are units. According to the location of entrances, four vertical cores are designed for residents' circulation. Triplexes are located on the west side, while interlocks are located on the north side. Triplexes and interlocks are designed for spatical efficiency, because they can decrease the space of corridors and save space for living. On 5th, 8th, 11th and 13th floor, residents can reach every apartment in an extremely continued circulation. In addition, the layout of windows is well suit for the site context, which can avoid directly view of other apartment buildings. The ramp from the ground level in the courtyard reaches the first 5 floors, which provides amazing movements for people's spatial experience.



North Interlock Apartment, Section



West Triplex Apartment, Section



Water Collection & Recycled | Emergency Overflow | Shallow Pond & Irrigation



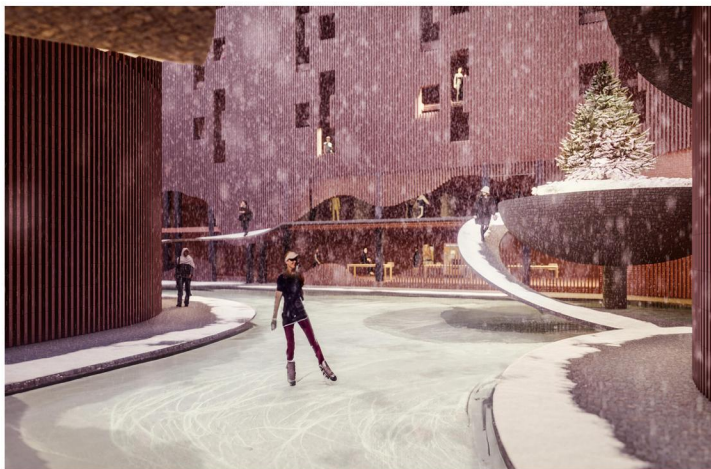
Detail Model, 1:25, Section View



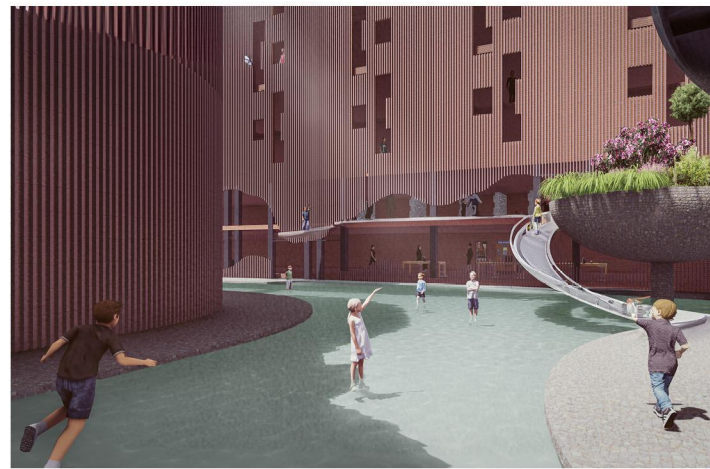
Detail Model, 1:25, Elevation View

Terra Cotta Baguette: Verticality, Sunscreen, Cave-Living

Vertical windows are proposed in the project, reflecting the interior layout of the triplex and interlock. The intention of using the vertical windows, is to avoid excessive window area crowding out storage or living space, as well as providing an extremely high window in 3.5-feet width for lighting, ventilation and aesthetic, which is a unique proposal for the project. Terra cotta baguette is working for the vertical windows, at the same time works as a sunscreen for horizontal windows in the living rooms. When comes to the balconies, the terra cotta baguette plays with the vegetation, creating an interesting relationship between inside and outside. The curtain-like baguettes also forms as cave shapes, creating a cozy, pleasant atmosphere of living.



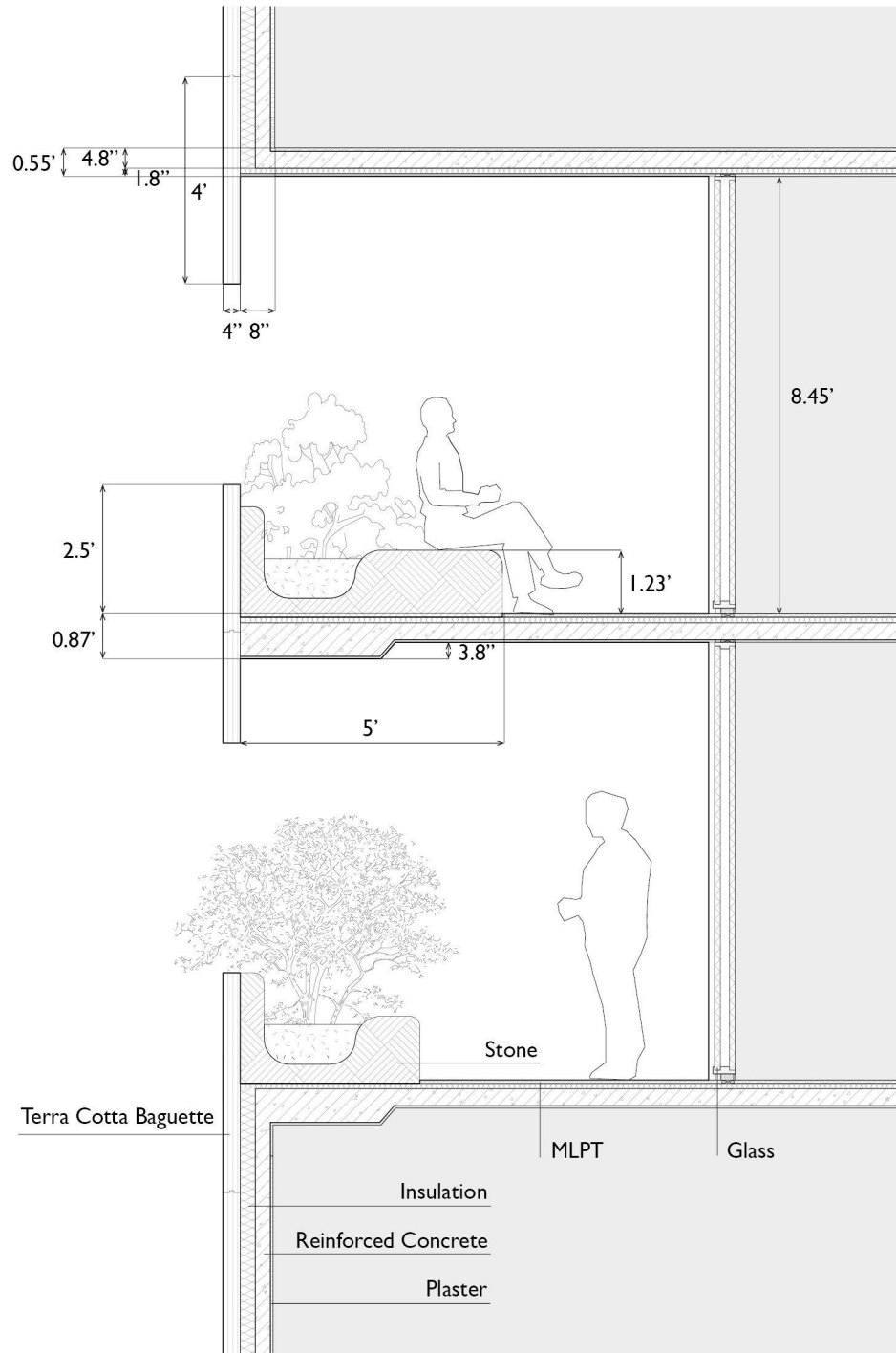
Water Courtyard in Winter, Render



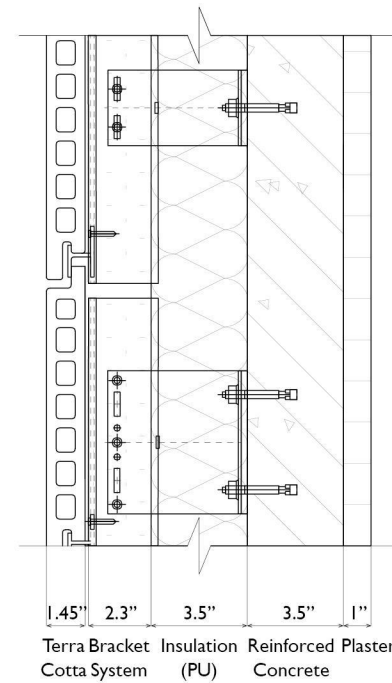
Water Courtyard in Summer, Render

Water Courtyard: Season, Multi-functional

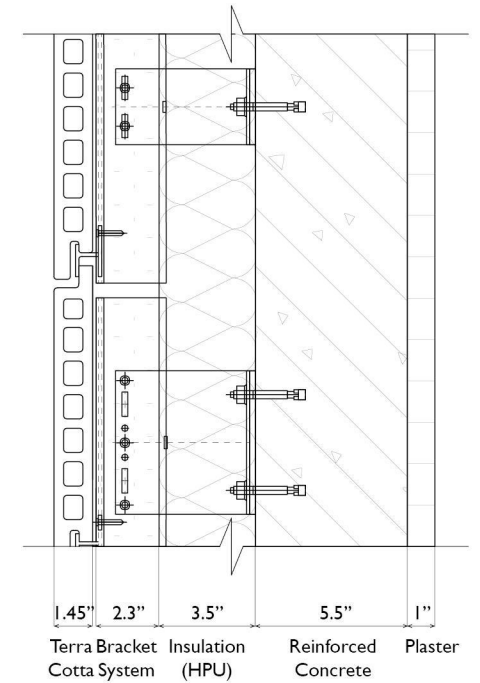
The water courtyard plays a role in both aesthetics and entertainment. In summer, it forms a shallow water pond for kids; while in winter, it forms a ice skiing place for the community.



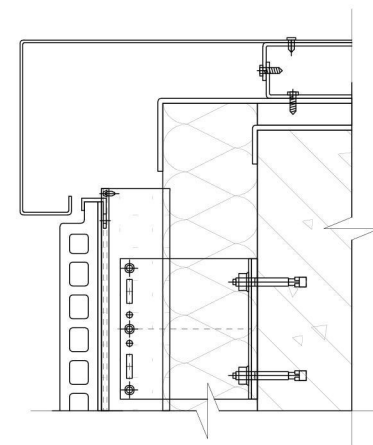
Detail Section



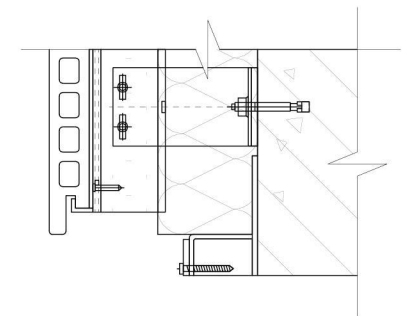
Normal Wall Section



Wall Section for Triplex Apartment



Joint of Roof and Wall, Detail Section



Joint of Ground and Wall, Detail Section

The thickness of the walls and floor slabs are precisely designed for different living function. The floor slabs of balconies are thickened because of the soil and water for plants growing. The walls for triplex apartments are thickened because of the change of the floor height. The study of wall sections gives more chance for the project's implementation.



3. Weekend Field

Project Type: Architecture Design
Location: Madrid, Spain
Group Work with Chang Cao & Xinyi Kong
Instructor: Juan Herreros
Semester: Spring 2026

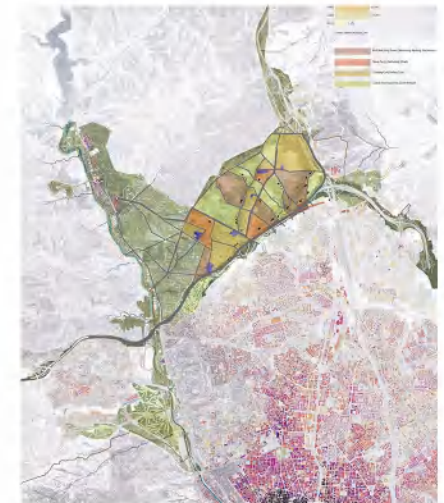
The project explores collective domesticity at the ecological edge of Madrid. It responds to the culture of the dominguero, weekend visitors who leave the dense city in search of outdoor gathering, leisure, and contact with nature. A series of lightweight follies extend domestic life through temporary spaces for shading, dining, resting, and collective activities. Activated during weekends and reclaimed by non-human occupation during weekdays, the structures support short-term inhabitation while minimizing permanent impact on the site.

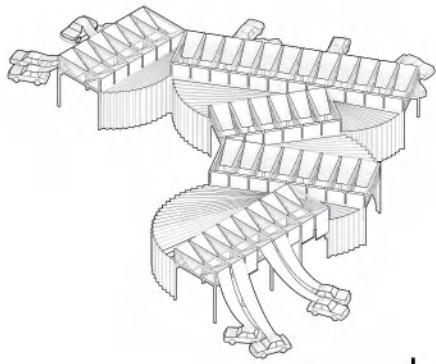


Urban Forest | Domingüero | Non-human Species

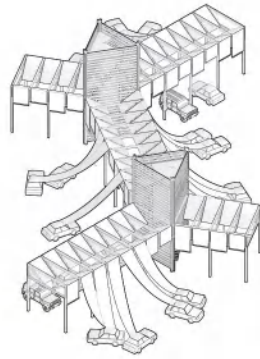
Weekend Field explores a new form of collective domesticity at the ecological edge of Madrid. Located between the forests of Monte de El Pardo, Casa de Campo, and Valdeatas, the project occupies a fragmented threshold where highways, rail lines, suburban developments, and ecological corridors intersect. Once preserved through systems of royal ownership and restricted access, these forest landscapes now operate as Madrid's major public recreational ground and ecological boundary.

As contemporary urban life becomes increasingly dense and privatized, many residents seek forms of outdoor domesticity no longer available within the city itself. The project responds to the culture of the *dominguero* — weekend visitors who temporarily transform public landscapes into spaces for gathering, cooking, resting, and leisure. Rather than treating the site as a fixed destination, Weekend Field understands it as a shifting field of occupation where people, infrastructure, wildlife, and seasonal activities coexist.

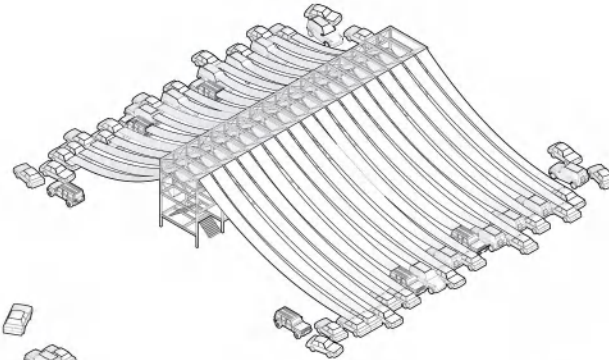




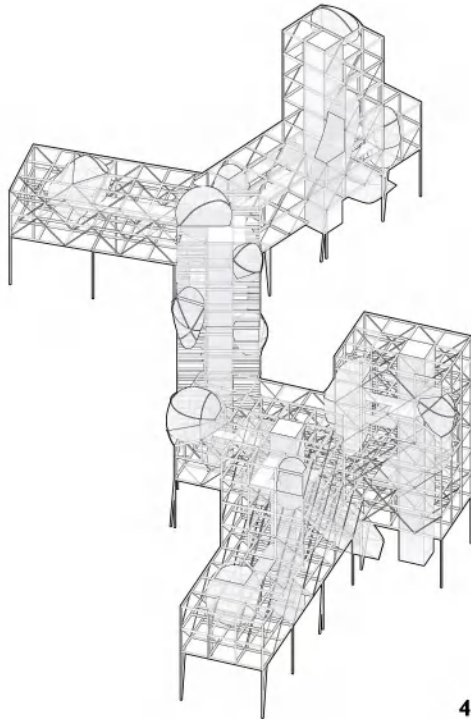
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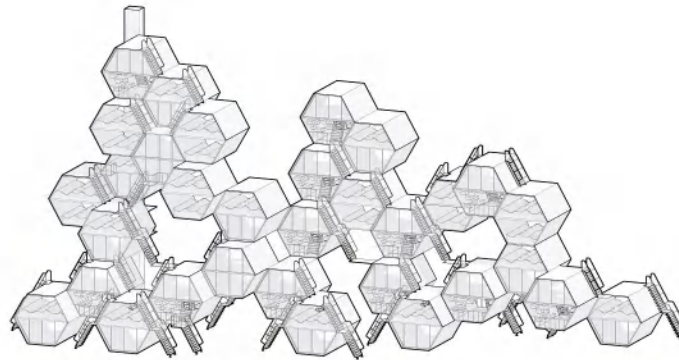
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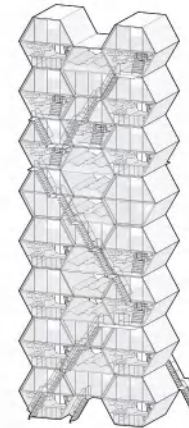
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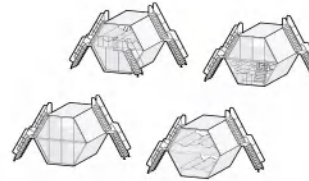
5



6



8



9

Family 1

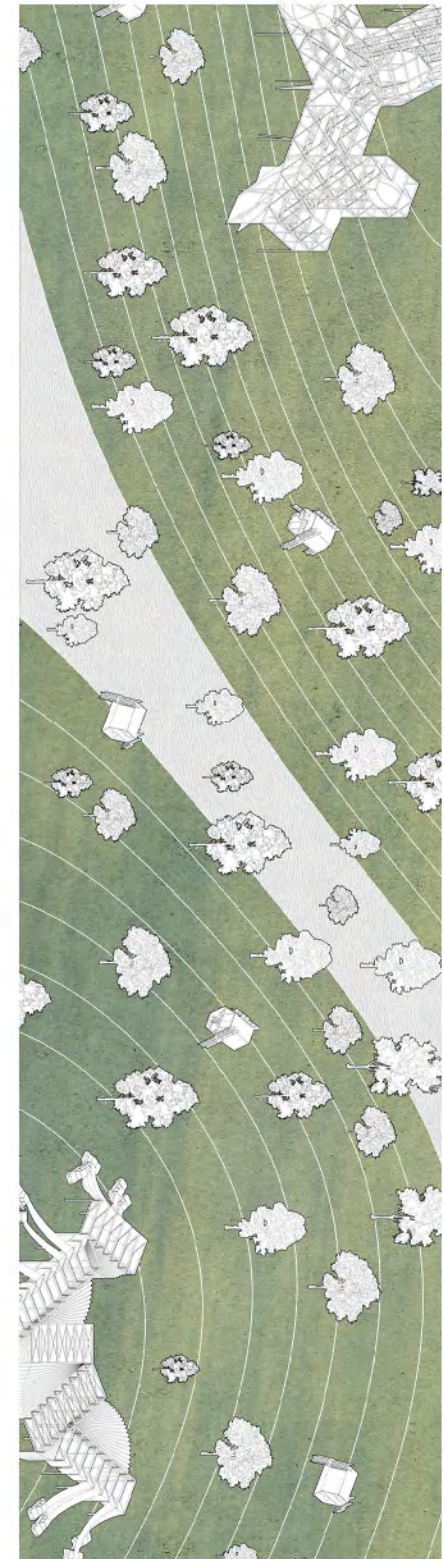
- 1 - BBQ, Kitchen & Parking
- 2 - Resting, Parking & Bird Watching
- 3 - Rave, Party & Gathering

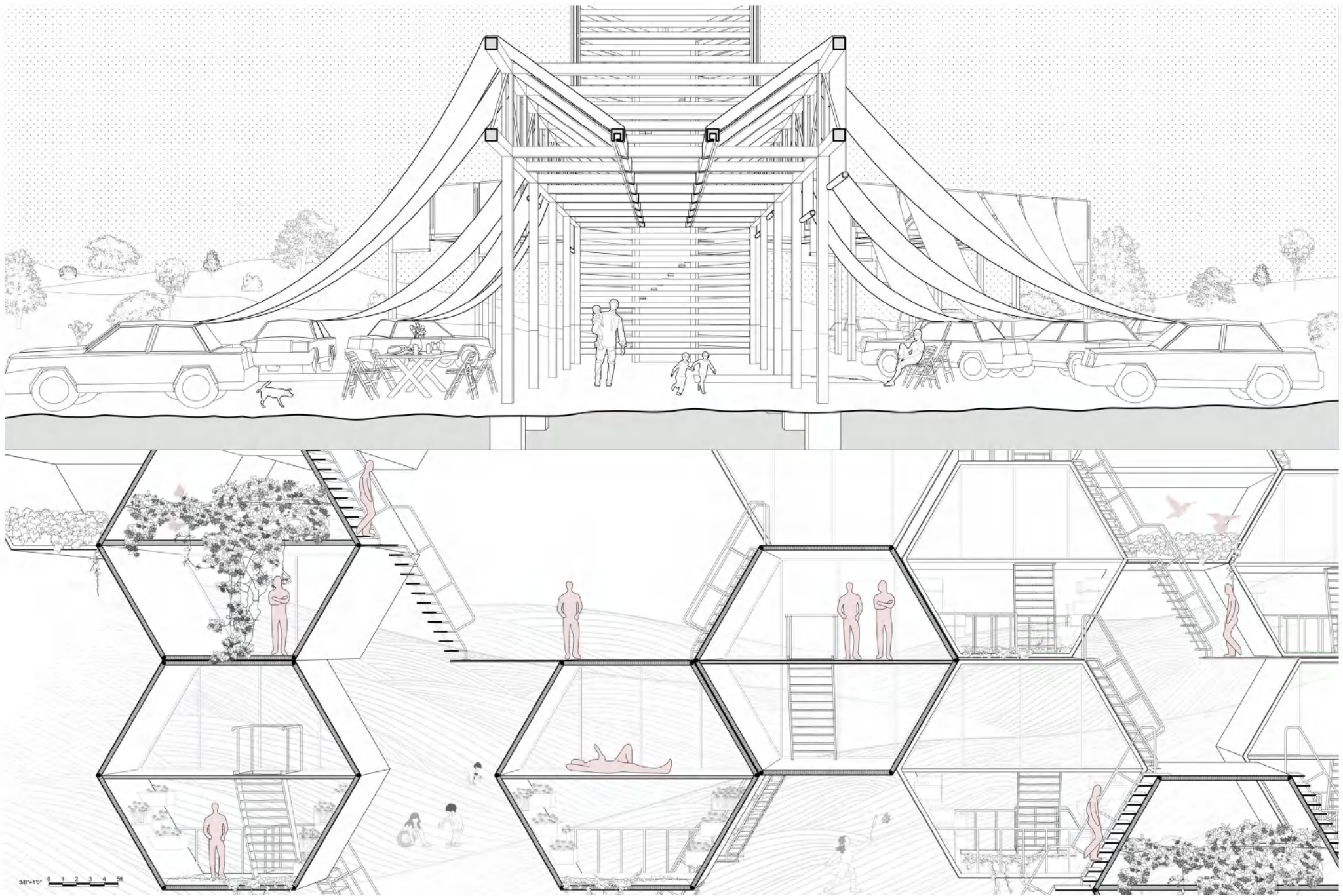
Family 2

- 4 - Sheltering, Meditation & Birdhouse
- 5 - Picnic, Dining & Terraces
- 6 - Shading & Wildlife Habitat

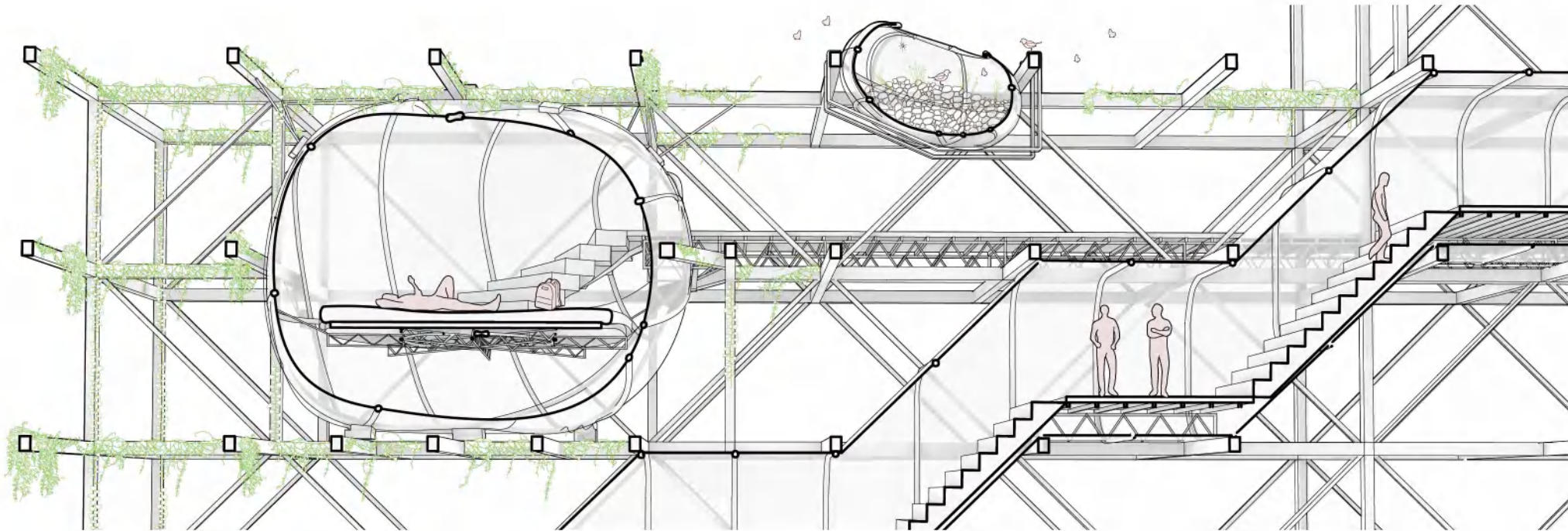
Family 3

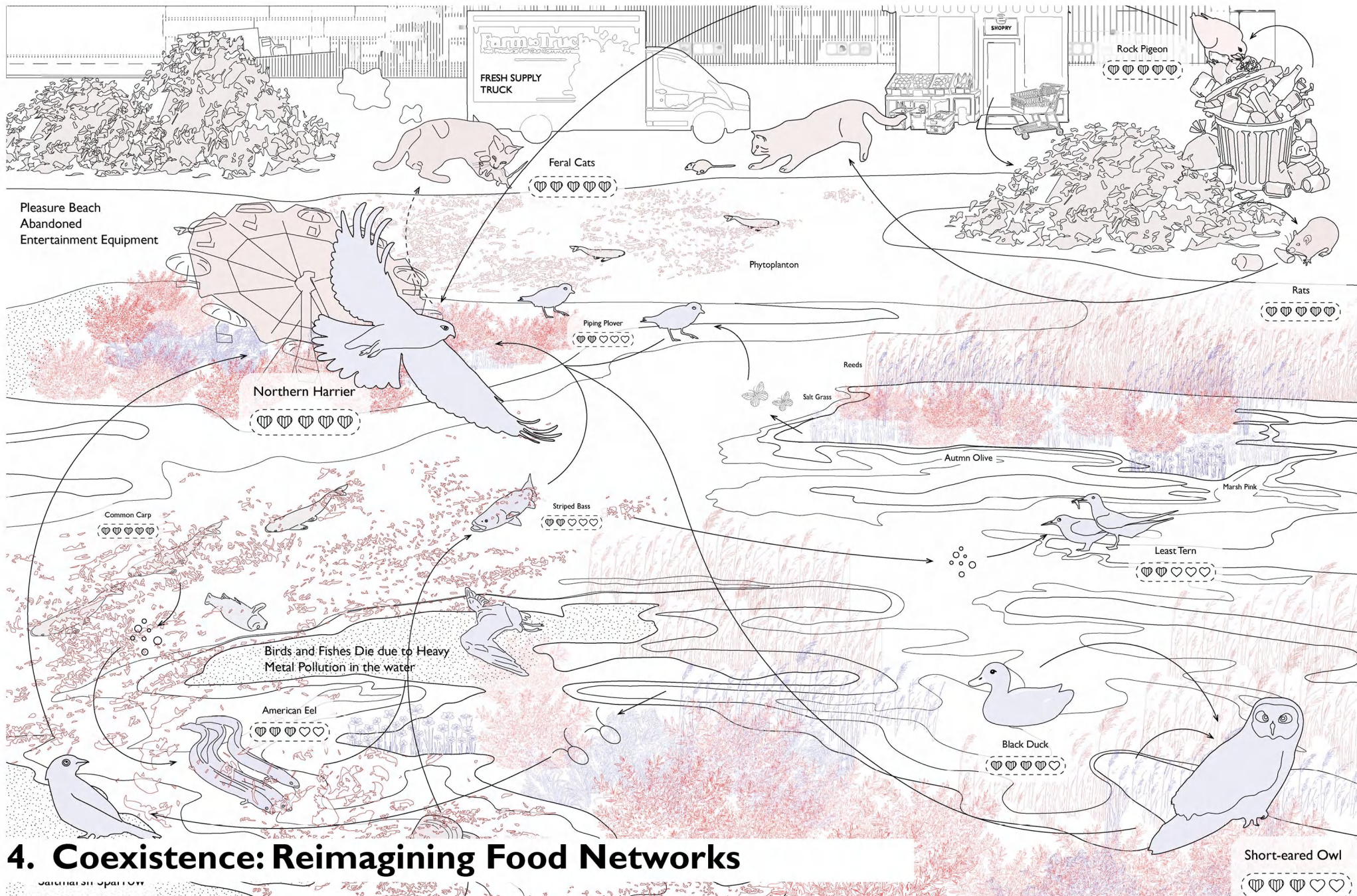
- 7 - Gardening, Sightseeing & Gathering
- 8 - Resting & Sightseeing
- 9 - Birdhouse & Connecting





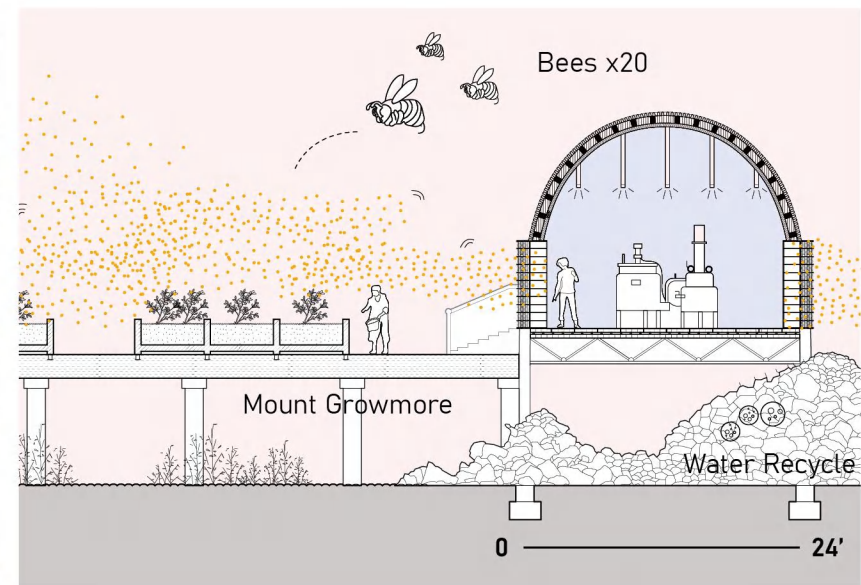
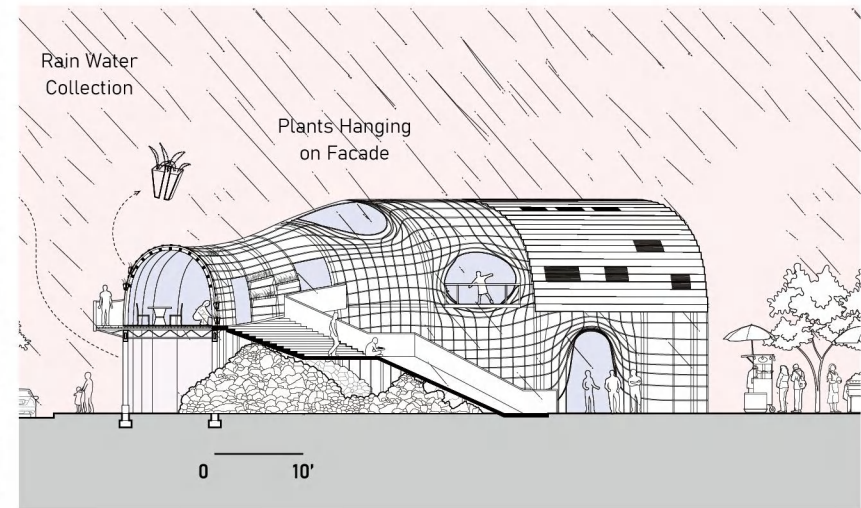
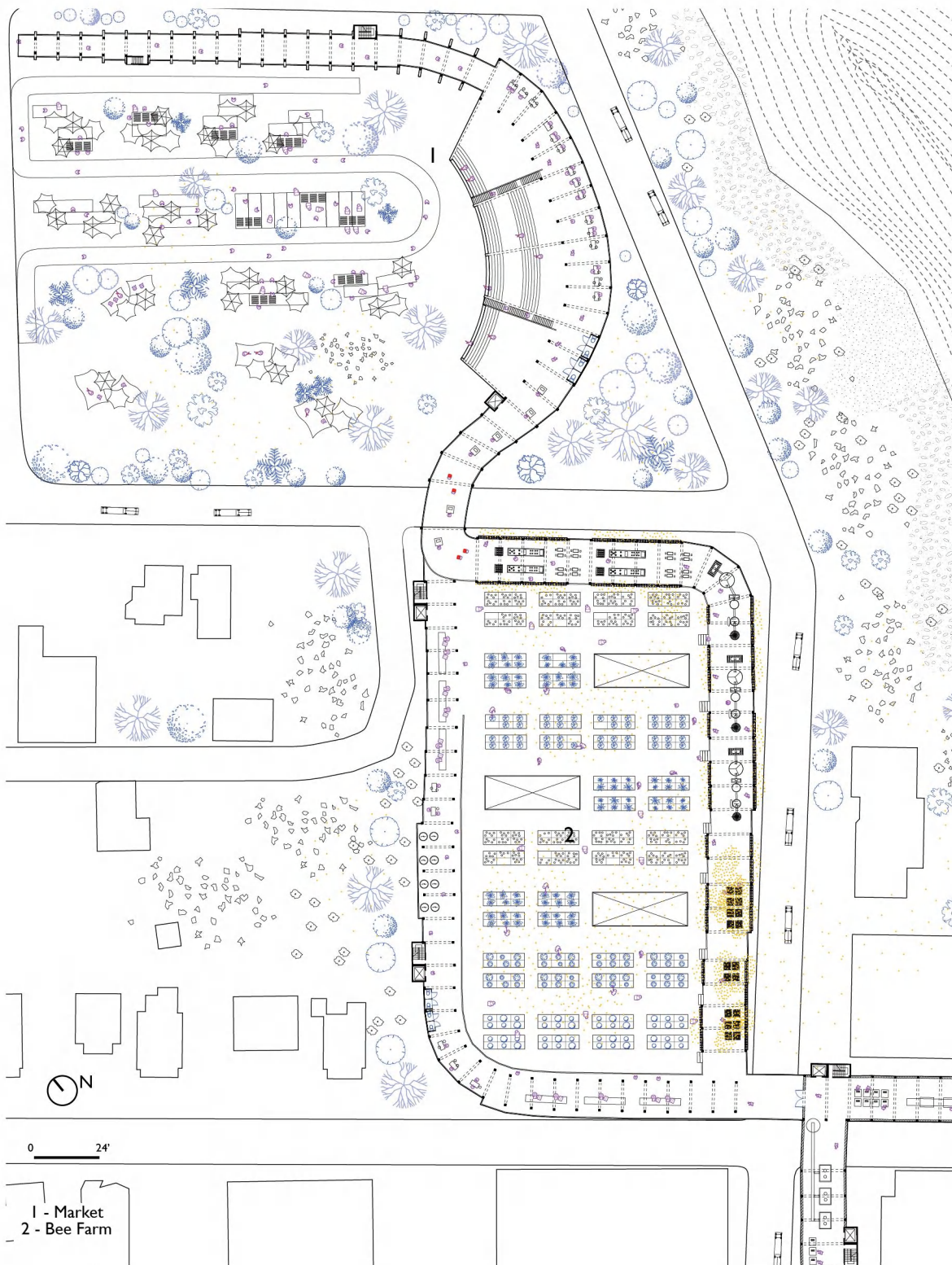
A series of lightweight follies are distributed across the rural landscape, extending the city's domestic realm into nature while minimizing permanent impact on the site. Activated during weekends and gradually reclaimed by non-human occupation during weekdays, these structures support temporary inhabitation without permanence. Visitors arrive by car carrying food, furniture, games, and equipment, constructing their own short-term domestic environments before returning to the city at the end of the day.





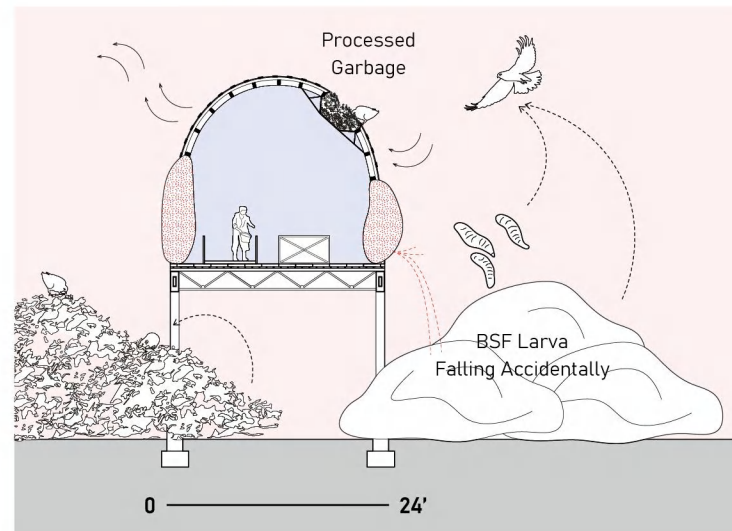
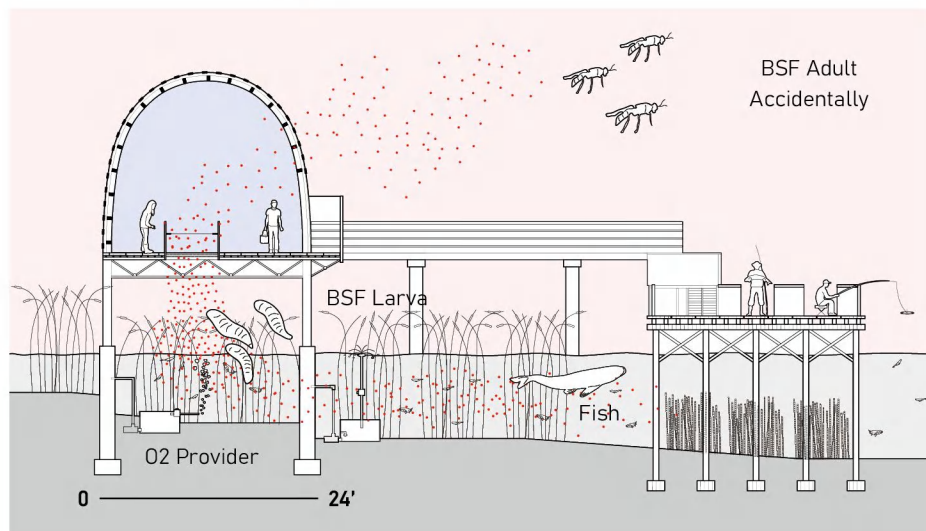
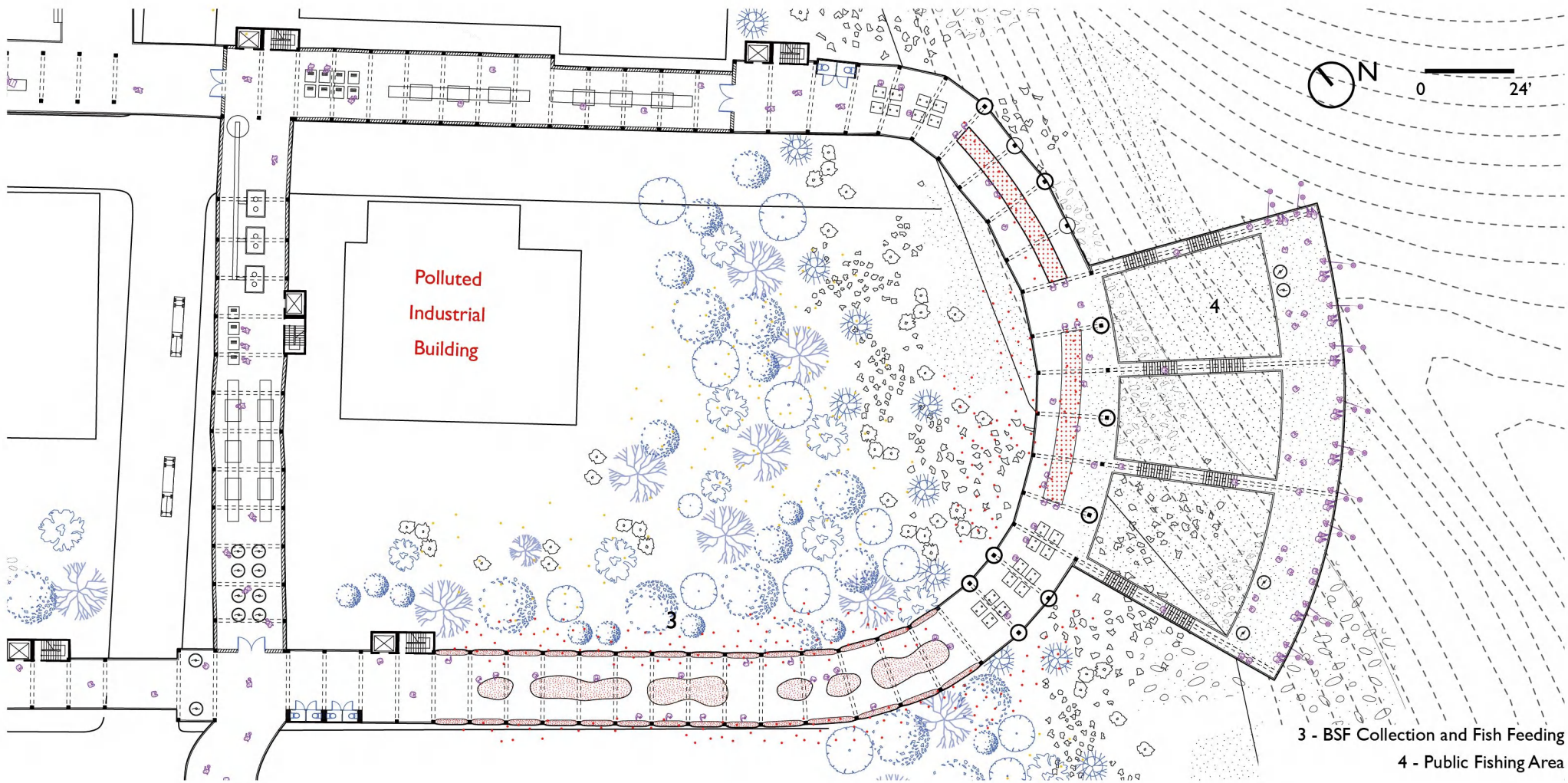
Project Type: Architecture Design
 Location: Bridgeport, CT, USA
 Individual Work
 Instructor: Rachely Rotem
 Semester: Spring 2025

In Bridgeport's East End, a long-standing food desert for residents exists alongside an abundance of industrial pollution that disrupts ecosystems and non-human food chains. This project challenges the separation of food and ecology by creating a shared, circular food system for both humans and other species. Abandoned lots and polluted sites are transformed into productive food hubs where waste becomes a resource. Using black soldier fly farms, microbial digestion, and urban agriculture, the project converts organic waste into nutrients and sustainable protein. The goal is not to fix nature but to design for coexistence—building an urban ecosystem where people, animals, and microbes share resources and adapt together over time.

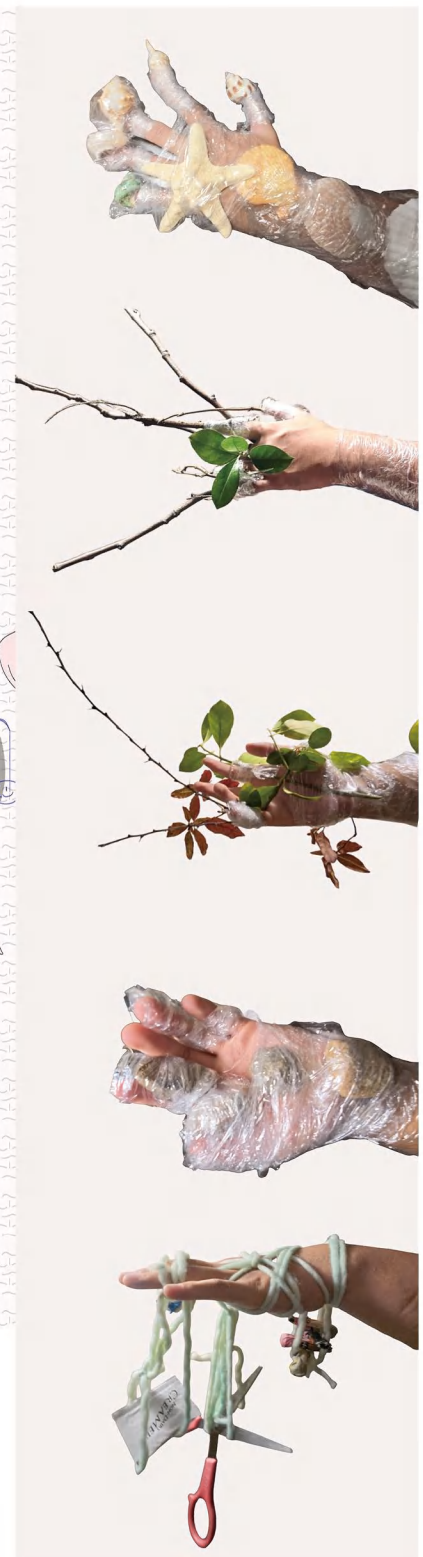
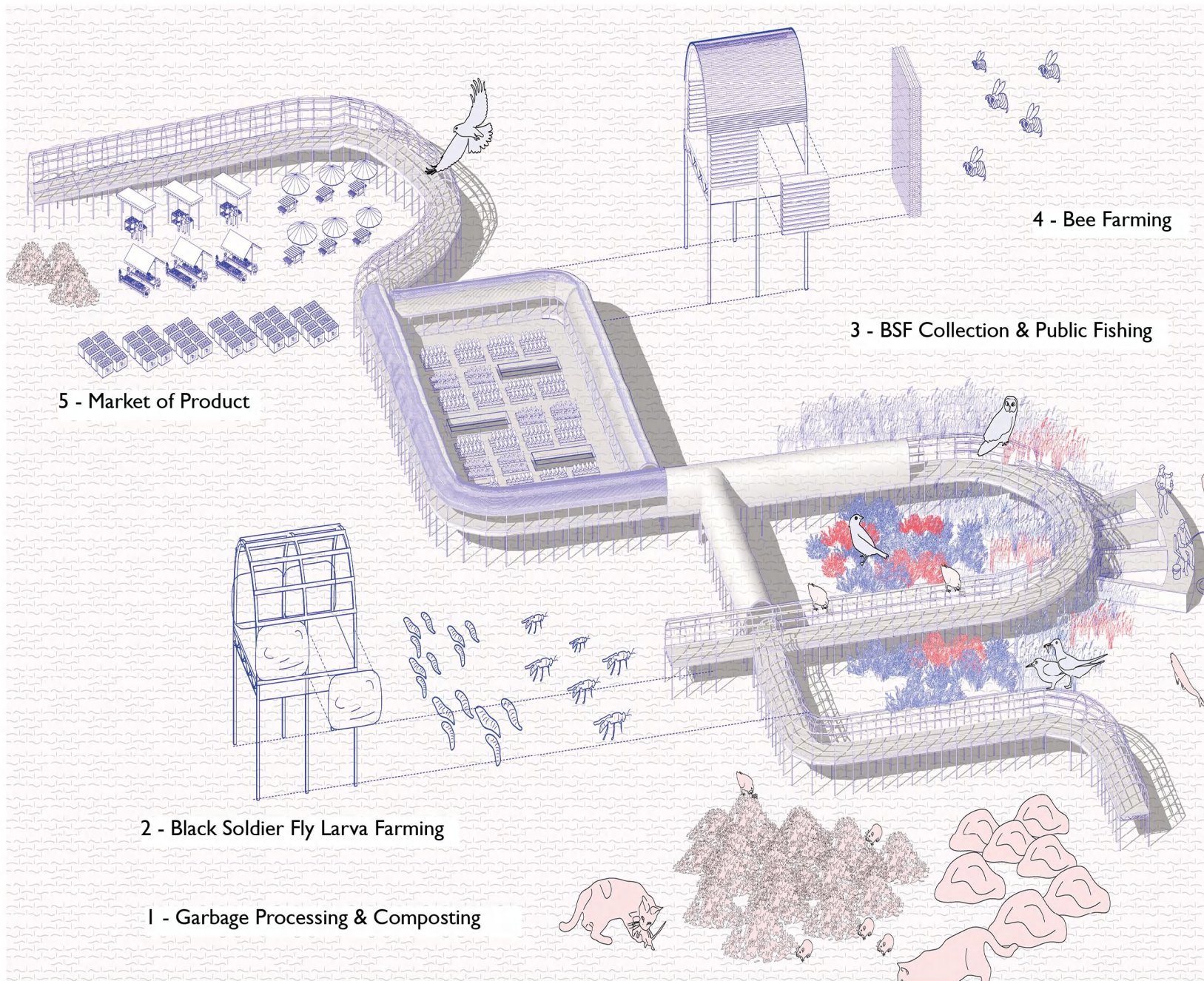


Section, Mount Growmore Bee Farming & Market Space

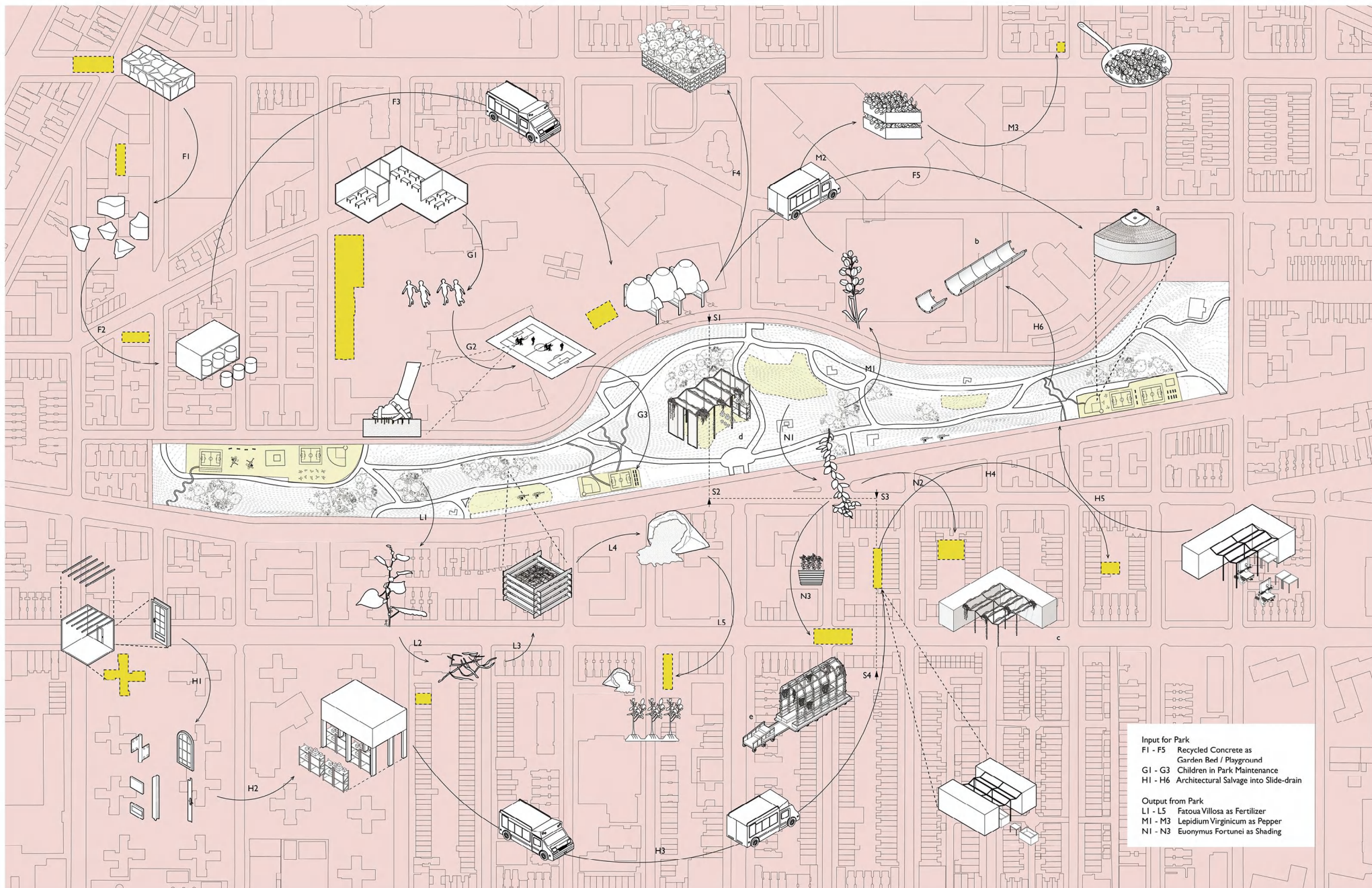
The architecture is divided into two primary linear zones: the Factory Line and the Shared Public Line. The Factory Line is dedicated to waste processing, black soldier fly (BSF) farming, and beekeeping, supporting the project's core functions of decomposing organic waste, protein extraction, and honey production. By weaving industrial production with public interaction, the project blurs the boundaries between city, industry, agriculture, and nature.



The project is elevated to the ground, and waving like a snake, which create interesting relationship to urban context. Market, farming, fishing area and garbage processing is combined with this food network.



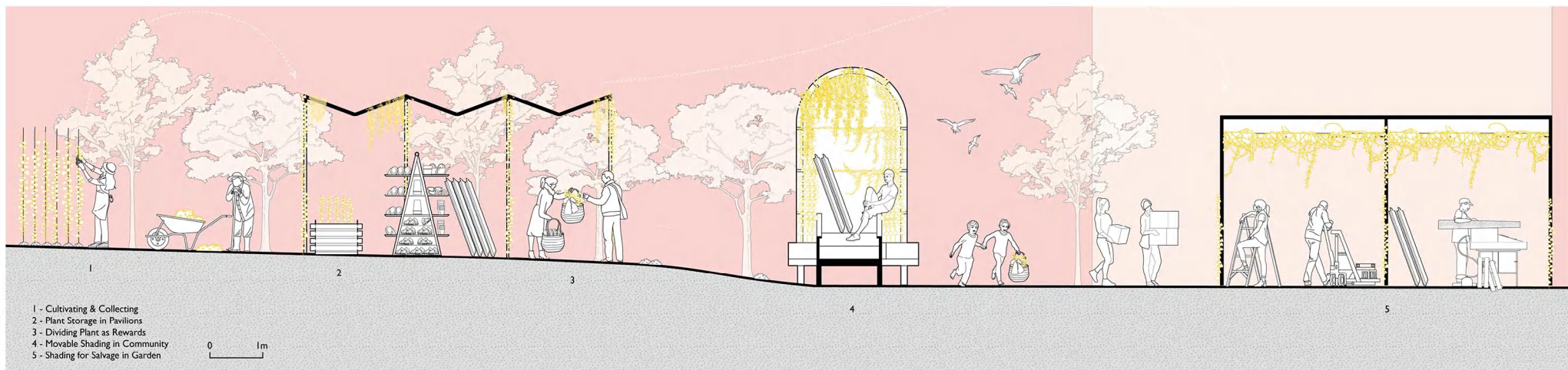
The Black Soldier Fly (BSF) naturally exists within ecosystems as a decomposer. In this project, composted waste is used to cultivate BSF and the larvae are then fed to fish and birds in the wetlands, while also being processed into protein-rich feed for poultry. In this way, BSF enables an efficient transformation of waste into resources within the human food chain. Bees serve as an important medium. By installing artificial hives to cultivate bees, the farm's crop yields can be increased. Bee products, such as honey and propolis, can also be harvested for human consumption. In addition, bees contribute to the pollination of plants in the constructed wetlands and surrounding environment, supporting their reproduction and ecological health.



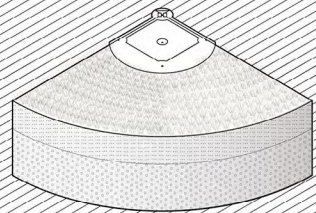
5. Reciprocal Park

Project Type: Urban Design
 Individual Work
 Instructor: Galen Pardee
 Semester: Fall 2023

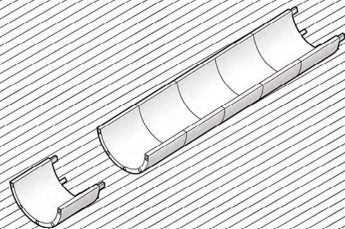
St. Nicholas Park operates with limited maintenance resources. This project reimagines park maintenance as a civic system in which material salvage, invasive species removal, and community participation form a reciprocal cycle. Construction debris and ecological waste become resources for local exchange, transforming routine maintenance into a visible civic infrastructure that supports both ecological repair and social benefit.



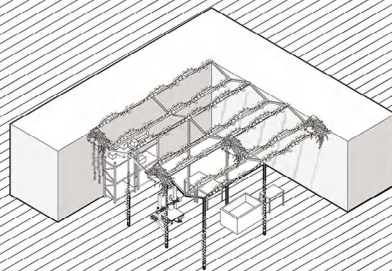
a - Baseball Playground with Recycled Concrete



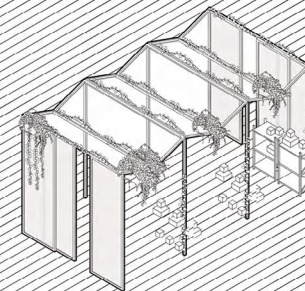
b - Slide-drain from Architectural Salvage



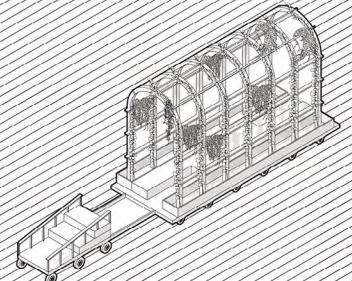
c - Storage with Shading Pavilion



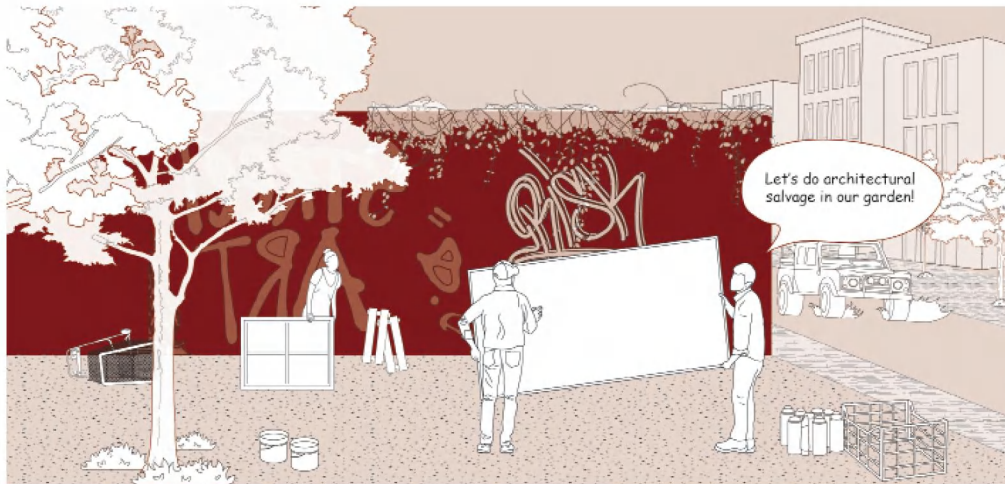
d - Pavilion in St. Nicholas Park



e - Movable Shading Pavilion in Community



According to Jane Hutton, movement of construction materials can shape the landscape of the material origin and material destination. Similarly, for St. Nicholas Park, the movement of salvage material and invasive species promotes social benefits. People in local community take part in park maintenance, at the same time gain benefits from the park. In addition, the concept of 'salvage' happens in not only construction materials, but also invasive species that are considered as harmful product from the park.



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Friends of
St. Nicholas Park
Bartle's House Green

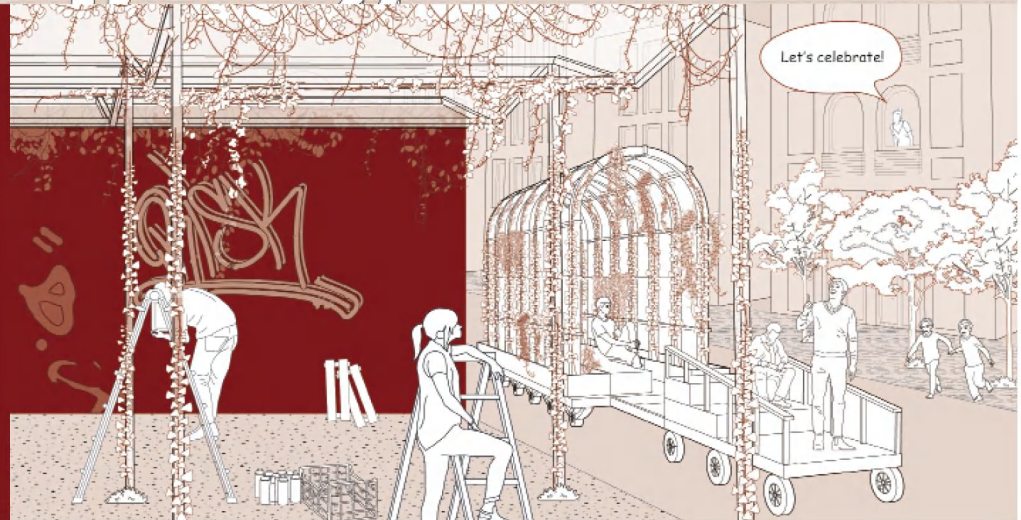
PROGRAM RECRUITMENT

What U Do?

- Renovate your garden to places for architectural salvage
- Recraft products from residence into assemble slide-drain unit
- Participate in building process of slide-drain in St. Nicholas Park

What U Get?

- Wooden pieces for shading part construction in your garden
- Eucalyptus Fortune as a wrapper of wooden structure
- For family-contributors, pavilion as celebration in your community

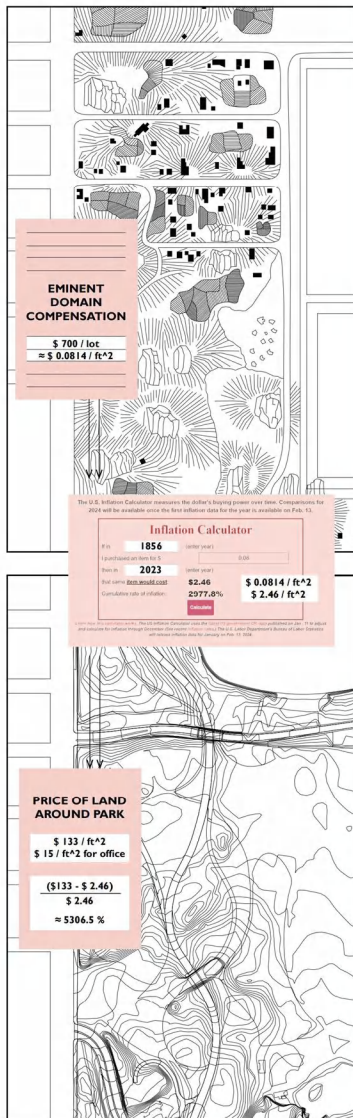




6. Digging Into Memories -- Seneca Village Excavation

Project Type: Landscape Design
Location: New York, USA
Individual Work
Instructor: Emily Ruopp
Semester: Spring 2024

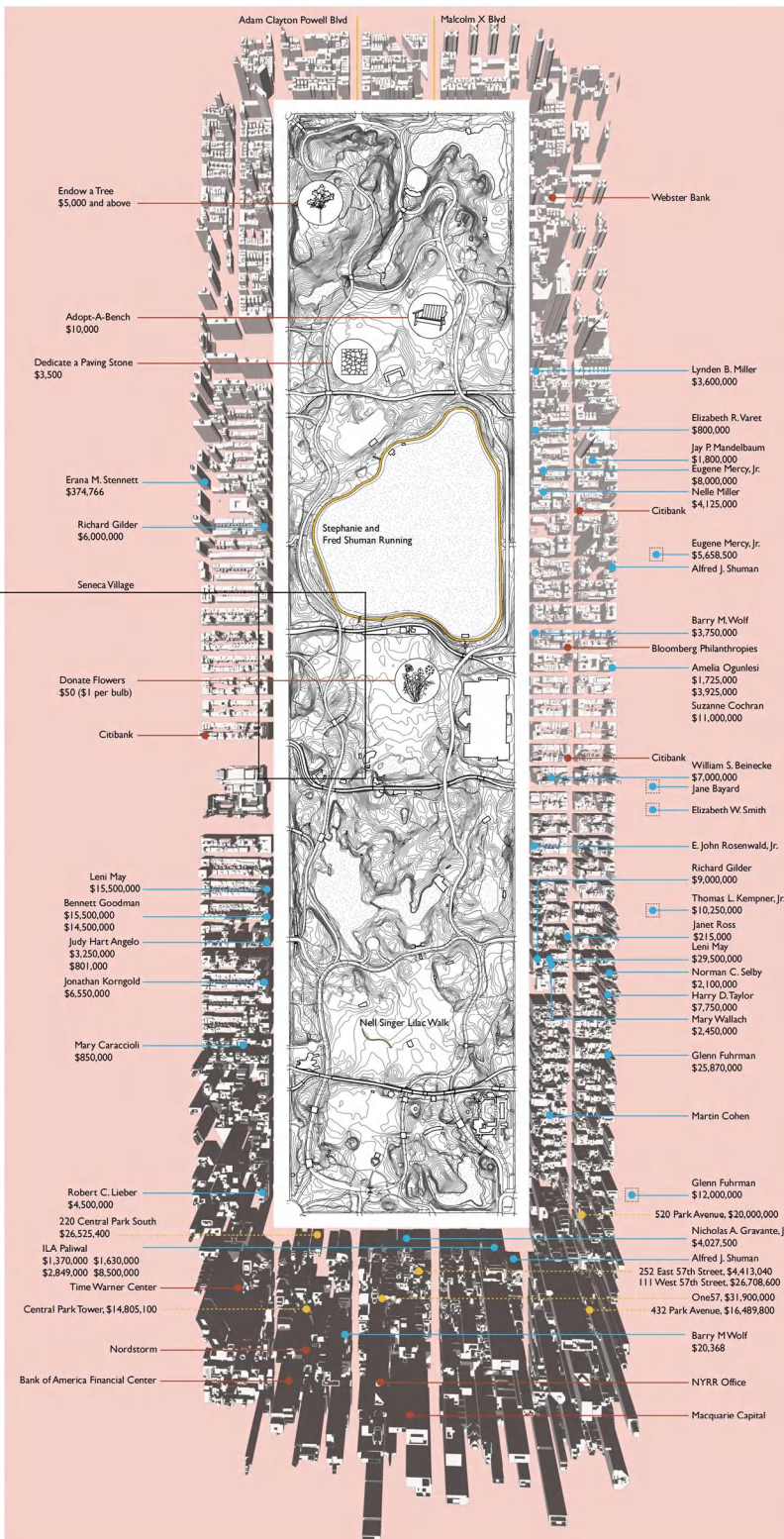
In Bridgeport's East End, a long-standing food desert for residents exists alongside an abundance of industrial pollution that disrupts ecosystems and non-human food chains. This project challenges the separation of food and ecology by creating a shared, circular food system for both humans and other species. Abandoned lots and polluted sites are transformed into productive food hubs where waste becomes a resource. Using black soldier fly farms, microbial digestion, and urban agriculture, the project converts organic waste into nutrients and sustainable protein. The goal is not to fix nature but to design for coexistence—building an urban ecosystem where people, animals, and microbes share resources and adapt together over time.



Central Park South Billionaires Row

Adopt-A-Bench	\$10,000
Donate Flowers	\$50 (\$1 per bulb)
Endow a Tree	\$5,000 and above
Dedicate a Paving Stone	\$3,500
Corporate Programs	
- Pin Oak	\$10,000 annually
- Kwanzan Cherry	\$25,000 annually
- American Elm	\$50,000 annually
- Historic American Elm	\$100,000 annually

Membership:



Central Park Conservancy Leadership

Elizabeth W. Smith

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(157 West 57th Street)
432 Park Avenue
252 East 57th Street

111 West 57th Street

Central Park Tower
(225 West 57th Street)

220 Central Park South
53 West 53rd Street
520 Park Avenue

Extell Development Company

CIM Group & Harry B. Macklowe
World Wide Group & Rose
Associates, Inc.

JDS Development Group and
Property Markets Group
Extell Development Company

and Shanghai Municipal Invest-
ment Group
Vornado Realty Trust

Pontiac Land Group and Hines
Zeckendorf Development

Fifth Avenue Mansions

Brodsky (86 & 5th)
Michael Bloomberg
(80&5th)

The Charles Ogden Man-
sion (79&5th)
Madonna (81&Lexington)

Roman Abramovich (75 &
5th)
J. Christopher Flowers,
Larry Gagosian (75 & 5th)

Jeff Koons(67&5th)

John Jacob Astor(66&5th)
Cornelius Vanderbilt man-
sion demolished.

Bergdorf Goodman store
(57&5th)
Morgan Freeman Plant (52
&5th)

Caroline Astor & Vanderbuilt
(34th &5th)
Vanderbuilt Triple Palace
(demolished)

Central Park is established for public entertainment. But it brings a huge increase to the land price around it. In the Central Park Conservancy Leadership, many people have more than one apartment around Central Park. Billionaires donate money to Central Park, and they get pleasant environment for their houses, which contributes to their own living environment. However, Central Park is established on an African American Village -- Seneca Village, 1857. Because of Central Park's proposal, Seneca Village is slandered by the media as a 'poor' area, and was demolished compulsorily without given enough demolition fee. Apparently Seneca Village was going through a cultural damage and financial damage.

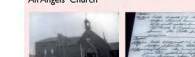
African Union Church



AME Zion Church



All Angels' Church



The Wilson House



Tanner's Spring



Livelihood



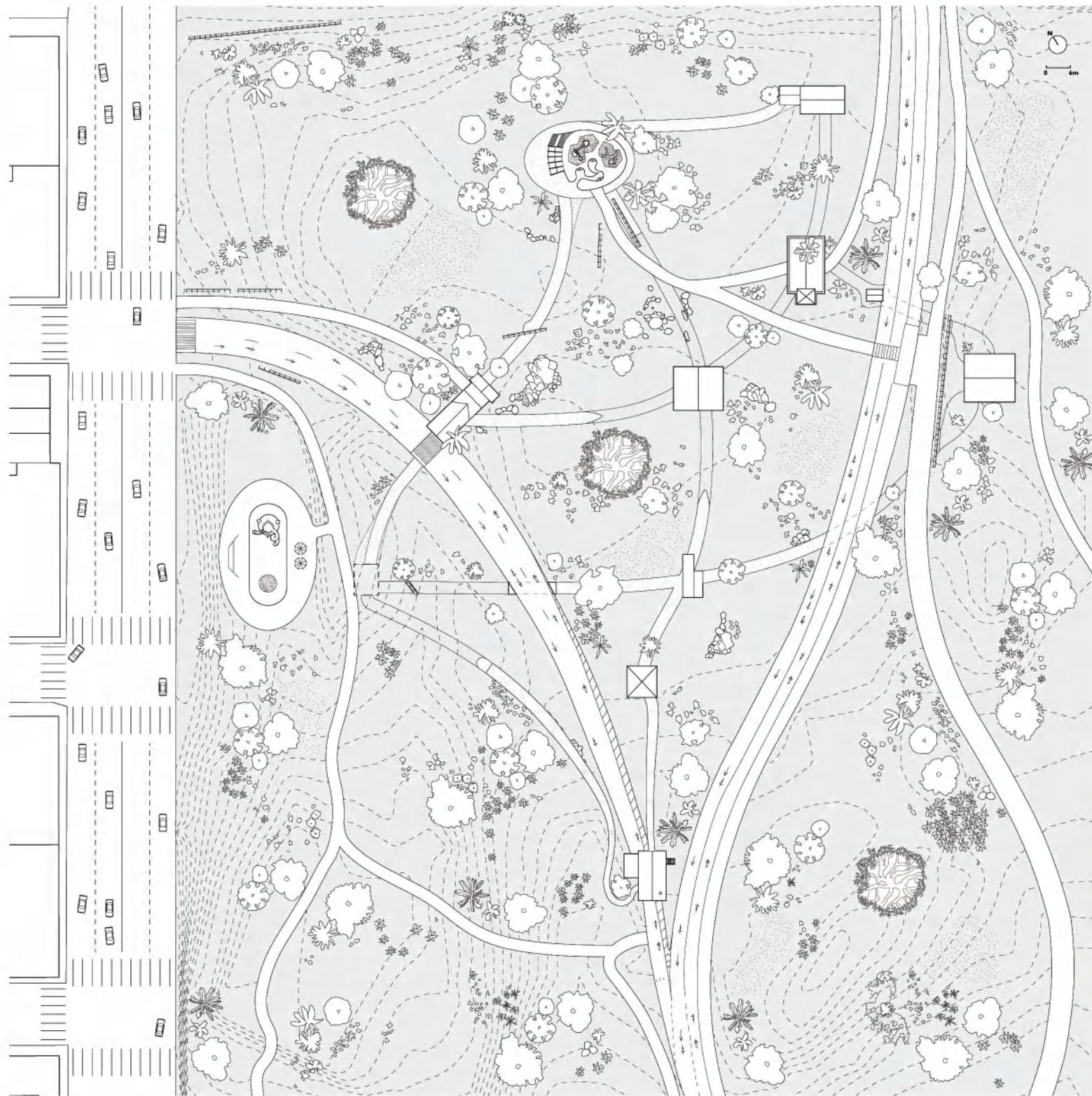
Reservoir Keepers



Downtown Connections (Possible Investment)

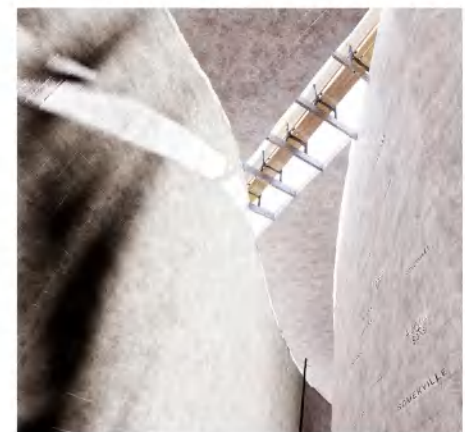


"Purchasing property in Seneca Village was an investment for the future. They were also likely made used to buy property as a path to wealth."



If we digging the lots in central park in a specific route, we'll get a museum underground. The project is to create a historical excavation system, that keeps artifact and old buildings in the original locations, but use concrete, wire mesh and wood to create an anti-shape space for people to pass through. When the paths encounter with benches, trees and roads, it varies into different forms. Working with different elevations is an important solution to the museum.

Museum Interior, Bench







Cultural & Financial Damage, Concept Model

The inner space of the path is constructed by concrete, which is cast in a wooden board texture. The roof of the project is partially off the cutting edge, in order to introduce natural lighting into the space. The name of the African American's later generations of Seneca Village is carved into the walls. When walking in the space, people feel the dialogue between Central Park's current situation and Seneca Village's old memories. Similarly, when people walking on the ground in Central Park, people also noticed the wire mesh structure and concrete structure varied in different elevation, which realizes them of the old memories. That's said, the project is to acknowledge the damage, reveal it, and memorize it.

7. Woven Partition

Project Type: Installation

Group Work with Yifei Dong & Junhao Zhang

Instructor: Zachary Mulitauaopele

Semester: Spring 2024

This installation explores weaving as a spatial partition. Suspended textile elements create a soft and transparent boundary through layering and overlap. Rather than forming a solid wall, the work acts as a soft boundary that allows light and views to pass through.





8. A Door is a Site

Project Type: Installation
 Group Work with Cuishujun Zhang & Ziqian Luo
 Instructor: Jelisa Blumberg Semester: Spring 2026

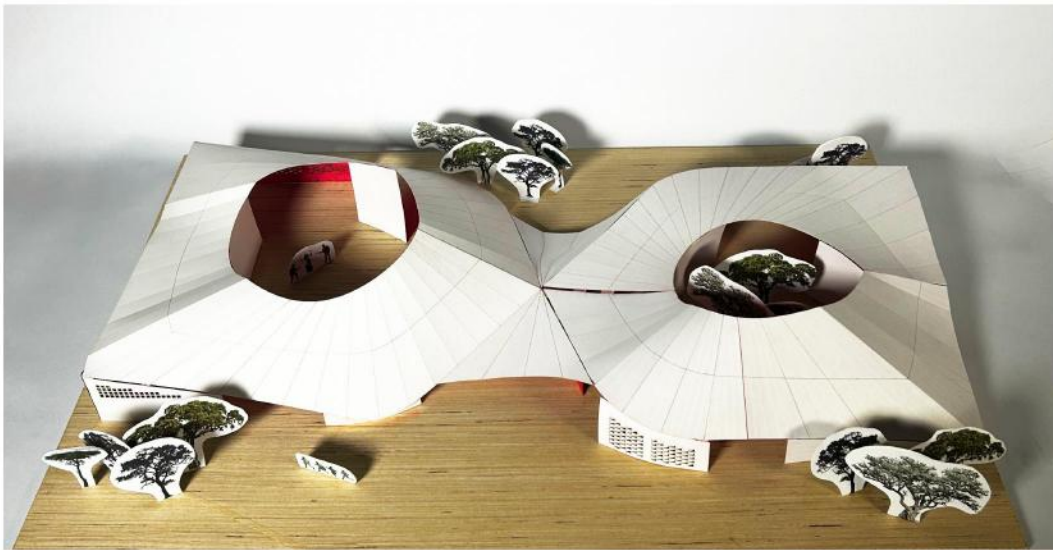




9. Bamboo Facade

Group Work with Junge Huang, Tsz Tung Kwong, To Quynh Pham, Dajin Wang & Sanjana Patel
 Instructor: Tommy Schaperkotter Semester: Spring 2025





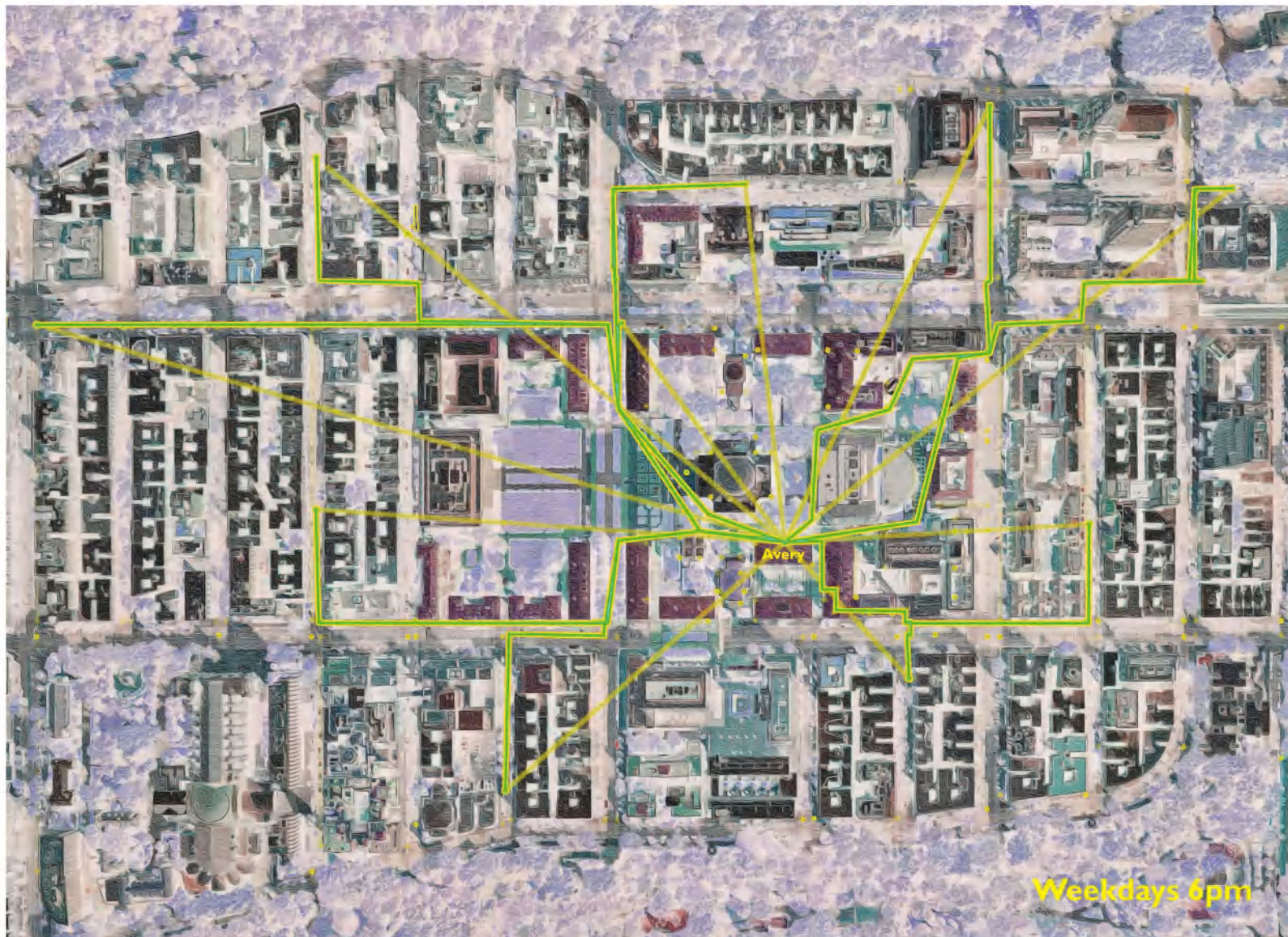
10. Representation of Shred the Artist Center by Toshiko Mori

Individual Work
Instructor: Ray Wang
Semester: Fall 2023



II. Pedestrian Simulation

Individual Work
Instructor: Genevieve Mateyko
Semester: Spring 2024



9 am, go to classes



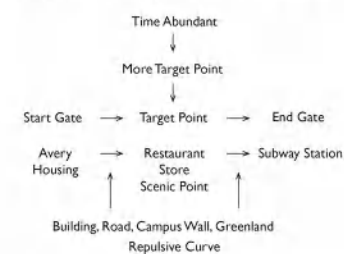
6 pm, go back home



1 pm, go for lunch



2 pm weekend, go out for entertainment



12. A Monument in Use

Project Type: History Paper
Individual Work
Instructor: Mabel Wilson
Semester: Spring 2026

Xiaoyu Zhang, xz3259

ARCHA4642: Contested Grounds

Prof. Mabel Wilson

May. 5th 2026

A Monument in Use: The Barcelona Columbus Monument and the Politics of Strategic Identity

Monuments are often understood as structures that preserve and commemorate the past. However, they do not simply reflect history as it was. They actively shape how the past is understood in the present. As Paul B. Preciado argues, public sculptures do not merely represent the people. They construct them, producing normative political bodies and reinforcing dominant systems of power.¹ This paper builds on this perspective to argue that monuments function as instruments through which political and economic interests are articulated, negotiated, and maintained. The Columbus Monument in Barcelona provides a key example of this process.

Christopher Columbus is a deeply contested historical figure. His voyages were later framed by Spanish royal authority and imperial narratives as the beginning of expansion and wealth accumulation. They were incorporated into a broader framework of exploration and progress. At the same time, his actions in the Caribbean were associated with violence toward Indigenous

¹ Paul B. Preciado, "When Statues Fall," *Artforum*, December 1, 2020, 3, <https://www.artforum.com/features/paul-b-preciaados-year-in-review-248910>

populations.² These dominant narratives have therefore been increasingly questioned in contemporary discourse, particularly within anti-colonial critiques. In this context, Columbus does not carry a fixed meaning. He remains open to reinterpretation, functioning not only as a historical reference but also as a symbolic resource that can be mobilized in different ways.

Rather than focusing on Columbus as a historical individual, this paper examines how his image is constructed and used through the monument. The Columbus Monument in Barcelona, constructed in 1888, was not simply built to commemorate a past event. It was commissioned and promoted by Catalan industrial and commercial elites at a moment when Barcelona was positioning itself within the broader framework of the Spanish Empire.³ The monument should therefore be understood not as a neutral object but as part of a larger project of representation and positioning.

Within this framework, I argue that both the construction of the monument and its subsequent reinterpretations reflect how political and economic elites in Catalonia have, at different moments, made strategic choices about how to position their identity. When alignment with the Spanish Empire provided economic and political advantages, Columbus functioned as a useful symbol through which that relationship could be expressed and legitimized. As those conditions changed, however, the symbolic value of Columbus also shifted. It became less advantageous and, in some cases, problematic.

² *The Contested Histories Initiative*, "Columbus Monument in Barcelona, Spain," Case Study #143, 2021, 7, <https://contestedhistories.org/wp-content/uploads/Spain-Columbus-Statue-in-Barcelona.pdf>

³ Stéphane Michonneau, "Why Is There a Columbus Monument in Barcelona?" 3, <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/memoriademocratica/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Per-que-un-monument-de-Colom-a-Barcelona-Michonneau-%C3%A1-en-GB.pdf>

The significance of the monument lies not only in its historical origins but also in its continued capacity to be reinterpreted and mobilized. This paper therefore asks how monuments function as instruments that are selectively used and redefined over time. It also asks what this reveals about political identity, not as a fixed condition but as something continually shaped in relation to changing interests.

Before the construction of the Barcelona monument, monuments in other parts of Spain had already established a dominant narrative of the 'discovery' of the Americas.⁴ In cities such as Madrid and Granada, these monuments strongly emphasized Queen Isabella of Castile and presented her as the central figure behind Columbus's voyage. Through this emphasis, the 'discovery of the New World' was framed primarily as an achievement of the Crown of Castile. At the same time, the role of Ferdinand of Aragon, and by extension the Crown of Aragon, was reduced or omitted. This reinforced a narrative that concentrated symbolic ownership within Castile.

It is within this uneven narrative framework that the Barcelona monument must be understood. In the mid nineteenth century, figures such as Víctor Balaguer actively reinterpreted Columbus.⁵ Balaguer, a Catalan writer, politician, and historian associated with liberal nationalism, framed Columbus not simply as a historical explorer, but as a symbol of freedom, progress, and expansion. At the same time, he argued that Catalonia, and historically the Crown of Aragon, played a decisive role in enabling his success. This reinterpretation did not reject the existing Castilian-centered narrative, but repositioned Catalonia within it.

⁴ Michonneau, "Why Is There a Columbus Monument in Barcelona?" 2 – 3.

⁵ Michonneau, "Why Is There a Columbus Monument in Barcelona?" 2.

The year 1888 marks a critical moment in this process.⁶ The Barcelona Universal Exposition was not simply a backdrop. It was a major event through which the city constructed its image on an international stage. As one of the first world's fairs in Spain, it functioned as a platform to present Barcelona as modern, industrial, and globally connected. Within this context, the Columbus Monument was conceived as a central feature of the exposition. It did not merely commemorate a historical figure. It participated in a larger project of display in which the city, its history, and its political ambitions were staged for both domestic and international audiences.

The project was initiated and funded by a relatively narrow group of political and economic elites, including conservative leaders, industrialists, bankers, and cultural figures in Barcelona.⁷ The composition of the monument committee and its funding sources reveal a project driven by elite networks rather than broad public participation. This limited mode of mobilization reflects a deliberate distancing from middle and lower classes. It underscores the extent to which the monument was shaped by a specific social group.

For these elites, commemorating Columbus was not simply about remembering the past. It was a way to align themselves with the Spanish imperial project at a moment when such alignment offered political and economic advantages. By celebrating Columbus, they reinforced their connection to imperial expansion while also asserting Catalonia's importance within that system. The monument therefore functioned both as a gesture of loyalty to the restored monarchy and as a strategic claim to a

more central position within the imperial framework.⁸

The Barcelona Columbus Monument was fundamentally an elite project shaped by Catalan industrial and commercial interests. It used the imperial narrative not to neutrally represent the past, but to produce a specific political position. Rather than rejecting the Castilian-centered account of discovery, it intervened in it, repositioning Catalonia within the same structure. In doing so, it reveals how the meaning of Columbus is not given, but constructed through political choice and economic interest.



Figure 1. Columbus Monument at the top of La Rambla, Barcelona. Image source: “Barcelona Blog — Ramblas & Columbus,” Guide Privé Barcelone, accessed May 27, 2026, <https://www.guideprivebarcelone.com/en/Barcelona-Blog-Ramblas-Columbus.html>.

Standing at the end of Las Ramblas, the monument occupies the point where the city meets the port. Columbus did not depart from this city, but he returned here in 1493 after his first voyage and was received by the Catholic Monarchs, Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon.⁹ This moment connects the site not to the departure of the voyage, but to its recognition by royal authority, anchoring

⁶ Michonneau, “Why Is There a Columbus Monument in Barcelona?” 4-5.

⁷ Michonneau, “Why Is There a Columbus Monument in Barcelona?” 3.

⁸ Michonneau, “Why Is There a Columbus Monument in Barcelona?” 3.

⁹ The Contested Histories Initiative, “Columbus Monument in Barcelona, Spain,” 2021.

the monument in a point of political validation rather than geographical origin (Figure 1).



Figure 2. Statue of Christopher Columbus atop the Columbus Monument, Barcelona.

Image by Juanedc via Flickr (CC BY 2.0), reproduced from The Contested Histories Initiative, “Columbus Monument in Barcelona, Spain,” Case Study #143, <https://contestedhistories.org/wp-content/uploads/Spain-Columbus-Statue-in-Barcelona.pdf>.

At the top of the column, Columbus extends his arm outward, pointing toward the Mediterranean rather than the Atlantic (Figure 2). This direction does not correspond to the actual route of his transatlantic voyages. Positioned between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, the monument situates Barcelona within a broader geography of circulation and exchange.¹⁰ The gesture connects two maritime worlds: the Mediterranean, historically associated with Catalan commercial networks, and the Atlantic, associated with imperial expansion. In doing so, it establishes a relationship between regional economic activity and overseas expansion, reflecting the position of Catalan industrial and commercial elites.



Figure 3. Construction of the Columbus Monument in Barcelona, 1888.

Reproduced from Francesc Albardaner Llorens, *The 1888 Monument to Christopher Columbus in Barcelona: Rise and Decline*, 2022, https://www.academia.edu/143416002/THE_1888_MONUMENT_TO_CHRISTOPHER_COLUMBUS_IN_BARCELONA.

The monument rises nearly sixty meters high. A single column supports the statue of Columbus. Its form recalls the Roman triumphal column, especially Trajan’s Column, which commemorated imperial military victories. Through this visual language, a fifteenth-century voyage is elevated to the scale of imperial accomplishment. The column lifts the figure above the urban landscape, giving it authority and symbolic command. Space here does more than contain meaning; it renders a particular understanding of time visible (Figure 3).

By adopting this established imperial form, the monument situates Columbus within a pre-existing narrative of expansion and authority. If Trajan’s Column marked Rome’s territorial expansion through

¹⁰ The Contested Histories Initiative, “Columbus Monument in Barcelona, Spain,” 2021.

war, the Columbus Monument marks expansion across the sea.¹¹ The similarity in form reveals how imperial symbols can be repeated across centuries. Expansion is no longer framed as warfare but as exploration. Conquest is reframed as a beginning. In this way, formal continuity allows older logics of power to persist in new historical settings, enabling a maritime voyage to be presented as an achievement comparable to imperial conquest. This narrative serves the interests of Catalan elites, allowing them to align themselves with an established language of imperial authority while reinforcing their own position within it.



Figure 4. Design drawing of the Columbus Monument by Gaietà Buigas i Monravà, c. 1882.

Reproduced from Francesc Albardaner Llorens, *The 1888 Monument to Christopher Columbus in Barcelona: Rise and Decline*, 2022.

The monument begins with a circular base, forming a low platform that is accessed by four sets of

steps. Between them, eight lions are arranged around the perimeter, creating a continuous boundary that separates the monument from the surrounding space (Figure 4).

Above the base, the structure shifts into an octagonal pedestal defined by four projecting buttresses.

Within this level, the figures are organized into two horizontal registers.¹²

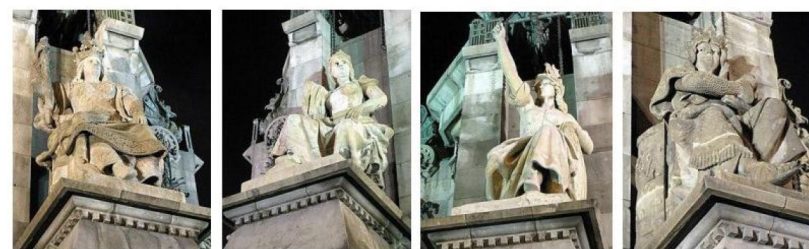


Figure 5. Allegorical figures representing Aragon, Castile, Catalonia, and León on the Columbus Monument, Barcelona. Source: Wikimedia Commons (CC licenses).

The upper register is occupied by four large seated figures representing the principal political entities of Spain -- Catalonia, Aragon, Castile, and León. Crowned and holding heraldic attributes, these figures turn territory into a fixed and legible presence within the structure (Figure 5).

¹¹ Francesc Albardaner Llorens, "The 1888 Monument to Christopher Columbus in Barcelona: Rise and Decline," 8.

¹² Albardaner Llorens, *The 1888 Monument to Christopher Columbus in Barcelona: Rise and Decline*, 8.

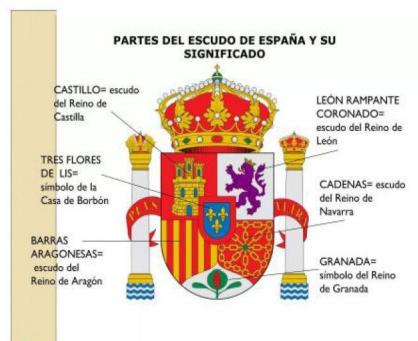


Figure 6. Components of the Spanish coat of arms, showing the heraldic symbols of Castile, León, Aragon, Navarre, and Granada. Screenshot from “Noticia cambio escudo de España,” uploaded by Resumen de prensa Diciembre 1981, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFFwm5Sq9dU>.

This four-part arrangement draws on a heraldic-political system through which the Spanish monarchy is constructed as a composite of four kingdoms, typically Castile, León, Aragon, and Navarre (Figure 6). In this monument, however, Navarre is absent and replaced by Catalonia, a territory historically within the Crown of Aragon. This substitution does not alter the four-part structure itself, but reconfigures its internal composition.

By inserting Catalonia into this established framework, the monument foregrounds its role within the historical narrative of the voyage. Rather than simply reflecting a given political order, the composition reorganizes it, reinforcing Catalonia’s visibility within a narrative shaped by political and economic interests.¹³

¹³ Albardaner Llorens, *The 1888 Monument to Christopher Columbus in Barcelona: Rise and Decline*, 7.



Figure 7. Four figures on the Barcelona Columbus Monument: Pere de Margarit, Fra Bernat Boil, Lluís de Santàngel, and Jaume Ferrer. Reproduced from Francesc Albardaner Llorens, *The 1888 Monument to Christopher Columbus in Barcelona: Rise and Decline*, 2022.

Below the upper register, a second level contains four standing figures associated with Columbus’s voyage: Pere de Margarit, Bernat Boil, Lluís de Santàngel and Jaume Ferrer. Unlike the seated figures above, these are presented as historical actors. All four belong to the Crown of Aragon, though they originate from different regions within it. Margarit and Boil are associated with Catalonia, Santàngel with Valencia, and Ferrer with Mallorca. Rather than representing territory, they correspond to different conditions that made the voyage possible, including finance, military force, religion, and measurement.¹⁴



¹⁴ Albardaner Llorens, *The 1888 Monument to Christopher Columbus in Barcelona: Rise and Decline*, 7.

Figure 8. Pere de Margarit.

Pere de Margarit is associated with military force. A Catalan nobleman and captain, he participated in Columbus's second voyage and was responsible for maintaining control in newly established colonial settlements. In the sculpture, he stands upright, his body turned outward, with one arm extended in a commanding gesture. Beside him, an Indigenous male figure kneels and leans forward, one hand touching Margarit's leg, positioned at a lower level. The contrast is explicit. Margarit stands, directs, and occupies vertical space. The Indigenous figure kneels, submits, and is physically lowered (Figure 8).

This composition does more than depict a historical scene. It constructs a narrative. A figure historically associated with military control is incorporated here as a necessary agent in the continuation of the voyage and its extension into expansion. During Columbus's second voyage and the subsequent colonial period, conflict and violence toward Indigenous populations were ongoing.¹⁵ In this sculpture, however, these relations are reconfigured as order and authority. The Indigenous figure is no longer presented as an independent actor, but is absorbed into a structure of power as a subordinated body.



Figure 9. Bernat de Boil.

Among the figures in the lower register, Bernat de Boil is associated with religion. A Catalan friar, he took part in Columbus's second voyage and was responsible for missionary work in newly established settlements. In the sculpture, an Indigenous figure kneels and kisses a cross, presenting an image of acceptance and conversion (Figure 9)¹⁶.

This image, however, diverges from historical accounts. Boil's missionary efforts in the Americas were not successful, and he was known to have disagreements with Columbus, particularly regarding the treatment of Indigenous populations.¹⁷ The scene therefore does not reproduce a historical outcome. It constructs one selectively.

Religion is not presented here as a contested or uncertain process. It appears as an accomplished transformation. The body of the Indigenous figure serves to confirm this result, incorporating conversion into a narrative that supports expansion.

¹⁵ "Captain Margarit," *Old BCN*, accessed May 5, 2026, <https://oldbcn.com/en/tourism/public-art/captain-margarit>.

¹⁶ "Fray Bernat de Boil," *Old BCN*, accessed May 5, 2026, <https://www.oldbcn.com/en/tourism/public-art/fray-bernat-boil>.

¹⁷ "Bernardo Buil," *Kiddle*, accessed May 5, 2026, https://kids.kiddle.co/Bernardo_Buil.



Figure 10. Lluís de Santàngel.

Lluís de Santàngel is associated with finance. A royal financial official of the Crown of Aragon based in Valencia, he enabled the voyage by advancing the funds required for the expedition at a moment of fiscal constraint.

His role extends beyond funding. When negotiations with Columbus had already collapsed, Santàngel intervened directly, persuading Queen Isabella to reconsider the proposal and reopening the possibility of the voyage.¹⁸

The voyage therefore does not appear as a singular act of royal will. It is structured as a process shaped by capital and negotiation. Santàngel's presence shifts the narrative from exploration as heroic initiative to exploration as a project organized through financial operation and political intervention.

¹⁸ Meyer Kayserling, *Columbus and the Jews* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1894), "Santàngel's Story," accessed May 5, 2026, <https://www.heritage-history.com/index.php?c=read&author=kayserling&book=columbus&story=santangels>.



Figure 11. Jaume Ferrer de Blanes.

Jaume Ferrer de Blanes is associated not simply with knowledge, but with the measurement and division of space. In the sculpture, he appears as a scholarly figure accompanied by an attendant holding a globe (Figure 11). This composition does not depict navigation or action. It points instead to a way of defining and organizing the world.

Historical records indicate that Ferrer did not directly participate in Columbus's voyage. In 1495, he was consulted by the Castilian monarchs to address the problem of measuring the "370 leagues" demarcation line established by the Treaty of Tordesillas and produced related maps.¹⁹ This work involved calculations of latitude, navigational routes, and the conversion between different units. Its aim was to determine an invisible boundary across the ocean.

This process of measurement was far from stable. It relied on inconsistent systems of units and an inaccurate understanding of the scale of the Earth, resulting in significant errors. Yet these calculations were still used as the basis for dividing the world. In this composition, the globe does not simply

¹⁹ "MsFER/1; Jaime Ferrer, 1495 and Jean Fernel, 1528: Problematic Surveys at Sea and on Land," unpublished manuscript, accessed May 5, 2026.

represent knowledge. It transforms the world into something that can be measured, partitioned, and ultimately possessed.

Together, these four figures do not simply describe the conditions of the voyage. They are arranged to produce a specific narrative about it.

Each figure isolates one aspect of the process, military force, religion, finance, and measurement, and presents it as stable and effective. In doing so, conflict, failure, and uncertainty are reduced or removed. What appears is not the complexity of the historical process, but a reordered version of it.

More importantly, this arrangement situates these conditions within the sphere of the Crown of Aragon and foregrounds Catalan actors within it. It constructs a narrative in which Catalonia is positioned as a key participant within the Spanish imperial narrative of 'discovery' and expansion, rather than simply reflecting historical involvement.²⁰

The female figures within the monument do not function as historical actors, but as carriers of meaning. At the level of the pedestal, the four realms are represented as seated allegorical female figures, each associated with specific heraldic attributes.²¹ Through this form, political territories are rendered as stable and legible entities. Above them, winged female figures embody victory and fame, projecting the outcome of expansion as already achieved.

²⁰ Albardaner Llorens, *The 1888 Monument to Christopher Columbus in Barcelona: Rise and Decline*, 7.

²¹ Albardaner Llorens, *The 1888 Monument to Christopher Columbus in Barcelona: Rise and Decline*, 7.

In contrast, the figures associated with the voyage are all male and are linked to specific actions and processes -- military force, religion, finance, and measurement. This distinction separates those who act from what is defined: territory and victory are presented as fixed states, while agency is concentrated in a different register.

Taken together, the monument does not simply recount the voyage, but reorganizes it. The figures at the base break the process into discrete and legible parts, while the allegorical figures above stabilize territory and project victory as already achieved. What emerges is not a record of events, but a structured narrative in which action, meaning, and outcome are carefully separated and reassigned.

In this sense, the monument operates as a framework for collective memory. As Maurice Halbwachs argues, memory is not preserved as an objective record, but is organized through social frameworks that structure how the past is understood. In this case, that framework is given form through a clear spatial and hierarchical arrangement: actions are assigned to identifiable figures, territories are fixed as allegorical forms, and outcomes are elevated and stabilized above them. Through this organization, complex and uneven historical processes are simplified into a coherent sequence that can be easily read and shared.²²

This spatial structure does not simply contain memory, but actively produces it. By separating roles, ordering them vertically, and presenting them as complete, the monument transforms negotiation into decision, violence into order, and uncertainty into authority. What is remembered is therefore not the

²² Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 88 – 158.

historical process itself, but a version of it that has been arranged into clarity and stability.

Within this structure, the conditions of the voyage are consistently located within the sphere of the Crown of Aragon, with Catalan actors given a visible and coherent role across different stages of the process. The monument thus does not simply reflect historical involvement. It constructs a narrative in which Catalonia is positioned as a key participant within the Spanish imperial narrative of “discovery” and expansion.

At the same time, the internal political landscape of Spain was undergoing significant transformation. The rise of Catalan nationalism introduced new frameworks for understanding identity, shifting the terms through which the past could be mobilized. Rather than reinforcing a position within the Spanish imperial structure, these movements emphasized regional distinction, autonomy, and cultural specificity.

Within this shift, Catalonia did not simply abandon the earlier imperial narrative, but actively redefined its relationship to it. As the figure of Columbus became increasingly tied to Spanish national identity, most visibly through the national celebration of October 12, he was no longer a neutral historical figure, but a symbolic representation of Spanish nationalism itself.²³

Distancing from Columbus thus became a way of distancing from the Spanish state. Catalan nationalist movements increasingly rejected his symbolic role, not only because of his association

with imperial history, but because he occupied a central position within a competing national narrative.

This distancing did not remain at the level of discourse, but took shape through specific practices. Actions such as refusing to observe October 12 (Columbus Day), organizing protests, and proposing the removal of the Barcelona monument directly challenged the legitimacy of the symbol. These acts should not be understood as isolated political expressions, but as ways of repositioning meaning: by refusing participation and questioning its presence, Columbus is transformed from a symbol of national achievement into one that can be contested, rejected, and replaced.²⁴

Within this process, the earlier strategy of aligning Catalonia with the narrative of imperial expansion became increasingly ineffective. What had once enabled a central position within that narrative now risked exposing attachment to a declining imperial system. The imperial narrative no longer provided stable political or economic benefits, but instead pointed to a past that had lost its material foundation.²⁵

At the same time, the changing meaning of Columbus within anti-colonial and anti-racist frameworks provided new interpretive possibilities. His voyages were increasingly understood as the beginning of violence, exploitation, and the systematic oppression of Indigenous populations.²⁶ However, this shift was not simply external or neutral. These interpretations were selectively mobilized and amplified within specific political contexts.

²³ The Contested Histories Initiative, “Columbus Monument in Barcelona, Spain,” 2021, 8.

²⁴ The Contested Histories Initiative, “Columbus Monument in Barcelona, Spain,” 2021, 8.

²⁵ Michonneau, “Why Is There a Columbus Monument in Barcelona?” 5.

²⁶ The Contested Histories Initiative, “Columbus Monument in Barcelona, Spain,” 2021, 9.

For Catalan nationalist actors, emphasizing the colonial violence associated with Columbus enabled a more decisive break from the Spanish imperial narrative in which he occupied a central role. By foregrounding Columbus as a symbol of oppression rather than discovery, the monument could be repositioned as incompatible with Catalan identity.²⁷

As a result, the monument came to occupy an increasingly unstable position. It no longer functioned as a straightforward affirmation of imperial history, but as a site of tension where competing narratives intersected. The same figure that once enabled alignment with imperial expansion was now reinterpreted as one from which distance had to be established.

The shifts described above are not incidental, but are made possible by the symbolic structure of the Barcelona Columbus Monument itself. The monument does not preserve a stable narrative of “discovery,” but organizes meaning in a way that allows it to be reassigned.

As discussed in previous sections, this monument once enabled Catalan elites to align themselves with the Spanish imperial project by inserting Catalonia into the narrative of expansion. In the contemporary context, however, it is used to produce distance from that same narrative. This reversal does not result from a change in form, but from how the monument structures its representations.

The monument separates territory, action, and outcome into distinct registers and presents them as

coherent and complete. This organization allows its elements to be reinterpreted independently. Figures that once stabilized a narrative of imperial success can now be read as markers of domination, conflict, or exclusion. The same structure that once supported identification can also sustain critique.

As James E. Young suggests, monuments do not carry fixed meanings, but remain contingent on changing political and historical conditions.²⁸ In this case, the Barcelona monument does not replace one narrative with another, but accommodates competing interpretations within the same form. Rather than preserving a shared past, it exposes the tensions embedded within it.

This dynamic is further evident in the selective use of historical identity. Although some historians have proposed that Columbus may have had Catalan origins, this claim has not been widely embraced or mobilized within Catalan contexts.²⁹ Its limited uptake suggests that identity itself is not decisive; what matters is whether it serves a political function. In this case, incorporating Columbus into Catalan identity offers little advantage, and is therefore not activated.

The continued presence of the monument must also be understood within this framework. In 2020, amid a broader wave of global anti-colonial protests, the mayor of Barcelona publicly announced that the monument would not be removed.³⁰ The decision not to remove it is not a neutral act of preservation, but a response to the broader tensions it embodies. Removing the monument could be interpreted as a direct rejection of Spanish national narratives, thereby intensifying the already sensitive relationship between Catalan and Spanish nationalism. Retaining it, therefore, operates as a

²⁸ James E. Young, “Memory and Counter-Memory,” *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. 9 (Fall 1999).

²⁹ Michonneau, “Why Is There a Columbus Monument in Barcelona?” 2.

³⁰ The Contested Histories Initiative, “Columbus Monument in Barcelona, Spain,” 2021, 2.

²⁷ Michonneau, “Why Is There a Columbus Monument in Barcelona?” 5.

strategy that manages these tensions without resolving them.

The persistence of the Barcelona Columbus Monument, therefore, cannot be understood as the preservation of a fixed memory, but as the continuation of a structure through which memory can be reorganized. It no longer functions as the carrier of a stable narrative, but as a site where meaning is continuously produced and reassigned. Its symbolic logic does not resolve conflict, but makes it visible, turning the monument into a space where political positions, historical interpretations, and identity formations intersect.

At this level, the monument is not only an object of contestation, but also a condition that allows this contestation to persist. It both embodies conflict and sustains it, ensuring that disagreements over history and identity remain active rather than resolved.

This paper has argued that the Barcelona Columbus Monument is not a neutral commemoration, but a site where political, economic, and symbolic interests are actively negotiated. Both its construction in 1888 and its subsequent reinterpretations reveal how Catalan industrial and commercial elites have, at different moments, made strategic choices about how to position their identity in relation to the Spanish state and its imperial past.

At the moment of its construction, the monument enabled these elites to embed themselves within a dominant narrative of imperial expansion, aligning Catalonia with the prestige of empire in order to secure both political standing and material advantage. This positioning was not given, but actively

produced.³¹

As these conditions changed, the same structure allowed for a reversal. What once supported alignment later enabled distance. Through nationalist movements, political actions, and the selective mobilization of historical narratives, the meaning of Columbus, and of the monument itself, was reorganized rather than replaced.

This transformation is made possible by the monument's symbolic logic. By organizing figures, territories, and actions into a structured yet open system, it does not fix a single narrative, but allows competing interpretations to emerge. The monument therefore functions less as a representation of the past than as a device through which the past can be continuously reinterpreted and used.

The Barcelona Columbus Monument persists not because it preserves a shared memory, but because it sustains the conditions for its contestation. It does not resolve the tensions it embodies, but makes them legible and manageable. What endures is not its meaning, but its capacity to be strategically mobilized in the ongoing negotiation of identity.

³¹ Michonneau, "Why Is There a Columbus Monument in Barcelona?" 3.

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I 3. Architectural Framework under Constraint

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ARCH6930: Women, Gender and Modern Architecture

Prof. Mary C. McLeod

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Architectural Frameworks under Constraint:

Three Women in Architecture and Professional Formation in Modern China

Introduction

Histories of modern architecture in China have largely been written through institutions, educational systems, and transformations of architectural practice. Within these narratives, individual architects often appear primarily as professional figures, while the conditions under which architectural authority was formed remain implicit. This tendency is particularly evident in accounts of women architects, whose careers are typically recorded through positions held, projects completed, or institutional affiliations, rather than through explicit discussion of gender.

Rather than foregrounding personal experience or presuming the presence of gender-based discrimination, this paper situates women architects within the broader material and institutional conditions of twentieth-century China. In a period marked by economic scarcity, limited access to education, and strong institutional regulation, the formation of architectural expertise depended on a narrow set of opportunities. Entry into architectural education, continuity of professional work, and access to intellectual resources

were structurally constrained long before questions of authorship or recognition emerged.

It is within this context that this paper examines three Chinese women architects, Xiaowei Luo, Yuen Tang, and Jinqiu Zhang, whose careers span architectural history and pedagogy, institutional design practice, and large-scale architectural production from the mid-twentieth century onward. Rather than treating gender as an explicit position claimed by these figures, the paper approaches it as a background condition shaping professional formation. Through different modes of work — historical scholarship, design practice within state institutions, and on-site architectural production — these architects developed distinct architectural frameworks that enabled sustained practice within constrained systems.

In this paper, gender is not treated as a thematic category or an explicit object of representation, but as an analytical lens through which professional formation, institutional continuity, and architectural frameworks can be examined within their historical conditions. This approach does not deny the relevance of gender, but shifts attention from identity-based claims to the conditions under which architectural authority became possible.

Xiaowei Luo: Biographical Background

Xiaowei Luo (1925–2020) was born in Shanghai in 1925, with family origins in Panyu, Guangdong.¹

From an early age, she developed a wide range of interests, including ballet and competitive badminton.

She was once admitted to the vocal department of the National Conservatory of Music, although she did

¹ “Editorial Office of *Housing Science and Technology*, “In Memoriam: Professor Luo Xiaowei, Architect and Architectural Educator,” *Housing Science and Technology* 40, no. 6 (2020): 2, <https://doi.org/10.13626/j.cnki.hs.2020.06.013>.”

not pursue music as a formal field of study.²



Figure 1. Xiaowei Luo Photo³

In 1948, Luo graduated from Architecture at St. John’s University in Shanghai.⁴ At the time, architectural education at St. John’s was embedded in a broader campus culture that included lectures on modern painting and music, as well as frequent exhibitions, performances, and sporting activities.⁵ Studying architecture in this environment meant that her professional training unfolded alongside sustained exposure to artistic and cultural life.

Following graduation, Luo entered professional practice. She worked in the American-owned Texaco Company in Shanghai as a draftsman and assistant architectural engineer. This early experience in practice was soon followed by a return to academia: between 1951 and 1952, she served as a teaching assistant in Architecture at St. John’s University.⁶

² “Yongyi Lu, “My Teacher, Professor Luo Xiaowei,” *Qunyan* no. 10 (2013): 36–37, 39, <https://doi.org/10.16632/j.cnki.cn11-1005/d.2013.10.011>.”

³ “Editorial Office of *Time + Architecture*, “In Deep Memory of Mr. Luo Xiaowei,” *Time + Architecture*, no. 4 (2020): 4–5, <https://doi.org/10.13717/j.cnki.ta.2020.04.002>.”

⁴ “Shiling Zheng, “Reading The Collected Works of Luo Xiaowei (Preface),” *Time + Architecture*, no. 1 (2016): 160–61, <https://doi.org/10.13717/j.cnki.ta.2016.01.031>.”

⁵ “Zheng, “Reading The Collected Works of Luo Xiaowei,” 160.”

⁶ “Editorial Office of *Time + Architecture*, “In Deep Memory of Mr. Luo Xiaowei,” *Time + Architecture*, no. 4 (2020): 4–5, <https://doi.org/10.13717/j.cnki.ta.2020.04.002>.”

In 1952, China's nationwide reorganization of higher education led to the incorporation of St. John's architecture program into Tongji University.⁷ Luo joined the Department of Architecture at Tongji at this transitional moment, marking the beginning of her long academic career there. At Tongji, she gradually developed her teaching and research in foreign architectural history and theory. She was among the first scholars in China to introduce Western architectural history into architectural education as a formal teaching subject. In the 1950s, when access to foreign publications and visual materials was limited, she relied on self-prepared lecture notes and assembled visual resources, through which architectural history courses were gradually established within Tongji's curriculum.⁸

This trajectory was interrupted during the Cultural Revolution. Luo was removed from teaching duties and reassigned to non-academic labor, and architectural history courses were suspended during this period.⁹

After the beginning of the post-Mao reform era, she resumed teaching and research. She visited Europe and North America for on-site building studies. At the same time, she participated in the writing, editing, and translation of architectural history texts, several of which later became widely used in architectural education across China.¹⁰

In academic settings, Luo was known for a consistent and recognizable public presence. She paid close attention to the delivery of lectures and repeatedly emphasized that architects should remain attentive to

life itself. She was widely addressed as *xiansheng*, a traditional honorific in Chinese intellectual circles that denotes scholarly authority rather than gender, and is commonly applied to senior academic figures regardless of sex.¹¹

Architectural Historiography under Ideological Constraint

During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), architectural history and theory in China were interpreted within highly politicized frameworks. Buildings were commonly absorbed into singular social narratives. Pyramids, for example, were described as symbols of the oppression of slaves. Architectural history was treated as an appendix to social development, and historical explanation was expected to follow grand narratives such as peasant struggle or dynastic change. These interpretations reflected the dominant ideological logic of the period rather than isolated misreadings.¹²

Xiaowei Luo did not oppose social or class-based interpretation as such. What she resisted was the reduction of architectural history to a single authorized explanation. When conclusions were fixed in advance, architecture could no longer be examined as a complex cultural and constructive practice. Questions of building technique, spatial experience, aesthetic judgment, and architectural thought were easily absorbed into predetermined political readings.¹³

In response, Luo argued for a layered understanding of history. Drawing on Marxist historical materialism as well as the aesthetic thought of Hegel and Plekhanov, she emphasized that historical phenomena must

⁷ "Editorial Office, "In Deep Memory of Mr. Luo Xiaowei," 4."

⁸ "Lu, "My Teacher, Professor Luo Xiaowei," 36."

⁹ "Lu, "My Teacher, Professor Luo Xiaowei," 36."

¹⁰ "Zheng, "Reading The Collected Works of Luo Xiaowei," 160."

¹¹ "Lu, "My Teacher, Professor Luo Xiaowei," 36."

¹² "Lu, "My Teacher, Professor Luo Xiaowei," 36."

¹³ "Lu, "My Teacher, Professor Luo Xiaowei," 36."

be examined within their specific historical conditions. Architectural history, in her view, should not function merely as an illustration of social development, but be understood as a history of human architectural culture.¹⁴

These positions were shaped under conditions of direct political pressure. During the Cultural Revolution, Luo was removed from teaching and subjected to public criticism. After several months, she was reassigned to sanitation work within the university, and architectural history courses were suspended. During this period, she spent her spare time sitting alone in empty classrooms, reading the latest foreign architectural journals to which she still had access.¹⁵ Even without the possibility of teaching, she maintained her engagement with international architectural discourse through private study.

For Luo, architectural historiography was not a slogan or a disciplinary label. It was a practice sustained under constraint. Even when institutional teaching was interrupted, historical knowledge, in her view, had to remain open to inquiry and capable of withstanding questioning.¹⁶

Pedagogy and Curriculum Formation

Xiaowei Luo regarded pedagogy as central to the formation of architectural history as a discipline. This conviction was most clearly expressed through her long-term commitment to textbook writing and curriculum formation.

Over several decades, Xiaowei Luo authored and edited nearly ten textbooks on Western architectural history. Among them, *Illustrated History of Foreign Architecture* and *A History of Modern Western Architecture* became the most widely used teaching texts in Chinese schools of architecture; first published in 1982 and revised in 2004, the latter was adopted nationally across architectural programs.¹⁷

For Luo, textbooks were not simple compilations of information. They were pedagogical structures. Through them, architectural history could be taught systematically, shared across institutions, and updated over time.¹⁸

Luo did not treat architectural history as a methodological support for design, as in Beaux-Arts or Bauhaus-derived educational models. Instead, she positioned it as an intellectually independent field, one concerned with cultivating historical judgment rather than offering design solutions.¹⁹

Methodologically, she employed “5W + 1H” — what, when, where, who, why, and how — as a practical framework for historical reasoning. This structure shaped both her classroom teaching and the organization of her textbooks.²⁰

Through sustained teaching practice and the circulation of standardized textbooks, this pedagogical framework had a lasting impact at Tongji University. It contributed to an educational structure in which

¹⁴ “Zheng, “Reading The Collected Works of Luo Xiaowei,” 160.”

¹⁵ “Lu, “My Teacher, Professor Luo Xiaowei,” 36.”

¹⁶ “Delin Lai, “My Five Encounters with Luo Xiaowei Xiansheng,” *Architectural Heritage*, no. 3 (2020): 126–27, <https://doi.org/10.19673/j.cnki.ha.2020.03.015>.”

¹⁷ “Editorial Office, “In Memoriam: Professor Luo Xiaowei,” *Housing Science and Technology*, 2.”

¹⁸ “Zheng, “Reading The Collected Works of Luo Xiaowei,” 160.”

¹⁹ “Editorial Office, “In Memoriam: Professor Luo Xiaowei,” *Housing Science and Technology*, 2.”

²⁰ “Lu, “My Teacher, Professor Luo Xiaowei,” 36.”

architectural history and theory occupied a central academic position, supporting Tongji's long-term engagement with architectural scholarship beyond a purely practice-oriented model.²¹

Knowledge Transmission beyond Translation: Cultural Mediator

Xiaowei Luo's engagement with Western architectural history cannot be reduced to the translation of individual texts. Rather, it took the form of sustained knowledge transmission — through textbooks, teaching, and academic exchange — aimed at making architectural history and theory readable and teachable within Chinese architectural education.

In the early reform period, as architectural scholarship in China gradually reconnected with international academia, Luo used textbooks to introduce Western architectural history in forms suited to local teaching contexts.²²

In her teaching, Luo engaged with key Western theoretical texts, including Le Corbusier's *Towards a New Architecture* and Hitchcock and Johnson's *The International Style*, not as isolated canons, but as historically situated arguments to be interpreted within a local academic context. For Luo, the central question was not authorship or translation credit, but how architectural ideas could be interpreted and discussed meaningfully within a Chinese academic setting.²³

²¹ "Zheng, "Reading The Collected Works of Luo Xiaowei," 160."

²² "Xiaohua Deng and Feng Qian, "An Interview with Professor Luo Xiaowei," *Time + Architecture*, no. 1 (2016): 157, <https://doi.org/10.13717/j.cnki.ta.2016.01.029>."

²³ "Lu, "My Teacher, Professor Luo Xiaowei," 36."

Luo's role as a mediator extended beyond texts. During the 1980s and 1990s, she undertook multiple academic visits to Europe and North America, engaging with architectural historians and conducting on-site studies of buildings she had long taught in the classroom. In exchanges with visiting Western scholars in China, she introduced Chinese architectural traditions through lectures. In this process, architectural knowledge circulated across academic systems rather than moving in a single direction.²⁴

Life, Academic Presence, and the Honorific "Xiansheng"

Beyond her academic writing and pedagogical work, Xiaowei Luo appears in the recollections of students and colleagues through a stable and concrete way of life. She did not sharply separate scholarly activity from everyday experience. Instead, urban observation, aesthetic judgment, and academic thinking were treated as part of a continuous practice.²⁵

Many students recalled that Luo repeatedly emphasized, both in and outside the classroom, that architects should remain sensitive to life itself. For her, this sensitivity did not refer only to architectural form, but also to daily experience, urban space, and bodily perception. She often reminded students that architecture is learned not only through drawings and texts, but through how one moves through the city and pays attention to ordinary surroundings. This attitude was expressed not as an abstract principle, but through her everyday interactions with students. Recollections note that Luo was deeply familiar with the city's restaurants, neighborhoods, and ordinary places. When discussing architectural or urban issues, she would naturally place remarks such as "where to eat well" or "which streets are interesting" alongside discussions

²⁴ "Zheng, "Reading The Collected Works of Luo Xiaowei," 160."

²⁵ "Lu, "My Teacher, Professor Luo Xiaowei," 36."

of spatial organization and urban atmosphere. In these exchanges, everyday experience functioned not as a distraction from scholarship, but as a direct entry point into understanding architecture and the city.²⁶

In *My Five Encounters with Professor Xiaowei Luo*, Delin Lai records a vivid scene from one of her academic lectures, bringing this way of life into a public scholarly setting. When she stepped onto the podium, she wore wide-framed black gradient glasses, her short hair carefully styled. A white blazer was layered over a patterned sweater, with a scarf around her neck. The outfit was restrained rather than ostentatious; as Lai observed, it appeared “capable, intellectual, and stylish,” standing out clearly among a row of male professors dressed in blue-gray uniforms. When she began to speak, her voice was gentle and rounded. Her Mandarin carried a distinct Shanghai accent, yet as she moved through architectural history, English names of architects, firms, and buildings — Edward Stone, Kevin Roche, Charles Moore, SOM, Archigram, Lever House, the Seagram Building — were woven naturally into her narration, maintaining a steady rhythm and a direct connection to international architectural discourse.²⁷



Figure 2. Xiaowei Luo Photo²⁸

²⁶ “Delin Lai, “My Five Encounters with Luo Xiaowei Xiansheng,” *Architectural Heritage*, no. 3 (2020): 126–27, <https://doi.org/10.19673/j.cnki.ha.2020.03.015>.”

²⁷ “Lai, “My Five Encounters with Mr. Luo Xiaowei,” 126.”

²⁸ “Lai, “My Five Encounters with Mr. Luo Xiaowei,” 126.”

As the lecture turned to Frank Lloyd Wright, Luo mentioned that Professor Zhaoye Guan of Tsinghua University had visited Fallingwater and spoken highly of it. She paused, turned toward Guan seated in the audience, and reminded him of his earlier promise to provide several slides. Guan nodded in response, prompting light laughter from the audience. Luo then continued without hesitation, the brief exchange folding smoothly back into the flow of her presentation.²⁹

Beyond formal academic settings, recollections also record Luo’s appearance at a student-faculty gathering, where she once performed a bel canto vocal piece.³⁰ This episode was remembered not as a pedagogical gesture, but as part of her everyday life and long-standing engagement with vocal training. It entered students’ memories as another dimension of her presence rather than as a performance meant to instruct.

Within Chinese academic discourse, the honorific *xiansheng* (“先生”) is not simply a gendered term. Since the modern period, it has been used to address intellectuals recognized for their scholarly authority and judgment, emphasizing professional standing rather than biological sex. It is in this sense that Luo Xiaowei came to be widely addressed as *xiansheng*: not as a denial of her gender, nor as a substitution into a male role, but as recognition of an academic position formed through sustained teaching, judgment, and public presence.³¹

Yuen Tang: Biographical Background

Yuen Tang was born in 1944 in Shanghai. She received her undergraduate education in architecture at

²⁹ “Lai, “My Five Encounters with Mr. Luo Xiaowei,” 126.”

³⁰ “Zheng, “Reading The Collected Works of Luo Xiaowei,” 160.”

³¹ “Zheng, “Reading The Collected Works of Luo Xiaowei,” 160.”

Tsinghua University, graduating in 1967. Shortly thereafter, she entered professional practice at the Jiangxi Provincial Architectural Design Institute. Her early career coincided with the Cultural Revolution, a period in which architectural education and professional development were severely disrupted.³²



Figure 3. Yuen Tang Photo³³

With the reopening of higher education after 1978, Tang returned to formal study and enrolled in the graduate program in architecture at Tongji University. She completed her master's degree in 1981. In later reflections, she recalled this period as an important moment of intellectual recovery, noting in particular her exposure to architectural history and theory through lectures by senior scholars such as Xiaowei Luo.³⁴

After graduation, Tang joined the Shanghai Architectural Design and Research Institute, where she spent the majority of her professional career. Over several decades, she led more than fifty large and medium-scale public building projects and numerous competition entries, many of which received national recognition. Her long-term practice within a major design institute provided the institutional context in

which she developed her architectural ideas.³⁵

Spanning architectural education before the Cultural Revolution, professional practice during its aftermath, and sustained work in the reform era, Tang's career reflects the reconstitution of architectural practice in China after 1978. This trajectory situates her as a figure whose work bridges historical rupture and continuity, and provides a foundation for understanding her architectural position and later theoretical reflections.

Architectural Position and the Shanghai Library

Yuen Tang articulated her architectural position most clearly through the design of the Shanghai Library, which she described as an attempt to allow architecture to grow out of the cultural and historical conditions of the city. In her own writing, she emphasized that major public libraries often function as cultural representatives of their cities and therefore cannot be conceived as autonomous architectural objects detached from their urban context.³⁶

³² "Editorial Office of China Survey and Design, "The Life and Professional Achievements of Master Tang Yuen," *China Survey and Design*, no. Z1 (2005): 119."

³³ "Lai, "My Five Encounters with Mr. Luo Xiaowei," 126."

³⁴ "Yuen Tang, "Tang Yuen in Her Own Words," *World Architecture*, no. 5 (2016): 26, 124, <https://doi.org/10.16414/j.wa.2016.05.010>.

³⁵ "Editorial Office of China Survey and Design, "The Life and Professional Achievements of Master Tang Yuen," *China Survey and Design*, no. Z1 (2005): 119."

³⁶ "Yuen Tang, "Tang Yuen in Her Own Words," *World Architecture*, no. 5 (2016): 26, 124, <https://doi.org/10.16414/j.wa.2016.05.010>.



Figure 4. Shanghai Library Photo³⁷

For Tang, Shanghai is characterized by historical layering and cultural hybridity. She referred to the city's southern Chinese origins, its traditional urban fabric, and the presence of early modern Western architecture formed during the colonial period. Rather than treating these elements as stylistic sources to be copied, she framed them as a cultural condition that required architectural translation. The Shanghai Library was thus conceived as a contemporary institutional form mediating between different architectural traditions.³⁸

This position is evident in her treatment of material and architectural detail. Tang explained that the rusticated granite base of the building drew inspiration from the heavy stone construction of early twentieth-century buildings along the Bund, yet she explicitly rejected direct imitation. Instead, the stone base was articulated through continuous horizontal lines, producing a restrained sense of weight and stability appropriate to a civic institution. She described this strategy as “absorbing the spirit rather than copying the form” of historical architecture.³⁹

³⁷ “Jixin Ni and Xifu Cai, “Architects Talk about Architecture—Tang Yuen: Architecture as the Expression of Urban Culture,” *Nature and Humanity*, no. 3 (2006): 2, 20–25.”

³⁸ “Ni and Cai, “Architects Talk about Architecture—Tang Yuen,” 21.”

³⁹ “Ting Lin and Jie Wang, “Dialogue with a Master—Tang Yuen: Seeking a Path of Coexistence between Historic Preservation and Urban Development,” *Chinese and Overseas Architecture*, no. 11 (2012): 15–16, 18–19, <https://doi.org/10.19940/j.cnki.1008-0422.2012.11.004>.”

Tang assigned particular importance to architectural detail as a site where cultural meaning becomes legible. She compared architectural detail to narrative elements within a novel, arguing that cultural expression emerges through the accumulation of carefully resolved parts. In the Shanghai Library, this approach is reflected in the integration of different architectural languages, including the juxtaposition of Western classical columns with references to the Chinese *dougong* bracket system. These elements were treated not as symbolic oppositions, but as parallel structural vocabularies allowed to coexist within a single architectural order.⁴⁰

A similar strategy appears in the treatment of the courtyard landscape. Within the inner courtyard, Tang introduced a small pavilion whose formal inspiration can be traced to traditional Chinese pagodas. Rather than reproducing their layered form or ornamental complexity, she reduced the pavilion to a simple geometric volume and employed modern materials and construction techniques, most notably glass. Here, historical reference operates through spatial memory rather than visual resemblance.⁴¹



Figure 5. Shanghai Library Courtyard Photo⁴²

⁴⁰ “Ni and Cai, “Architects Talk about Architecture—Tang Yuen,” 21.”

⁴¹ “Ni and Cai, “Architects Talk about Architecture—Tang Yuen,” 21.”

⁴² “Jixin Ni and Xifu Cai, “Architects Talk about Architecture—Tang Yuen: Architecture as the Expression of Urban Culture,” *Nature and Humanity*, no. 3 (2006): 2, 20–25.”

Environmental considerations further shaped the design. Tang criticized contemporary foreign libraries that relied on sealed block-like forms and full mechanical air-conditioning, arguing that such models were ill-suited to local conditions. In response, she introduced internal courtyards within the building mass to improve natural lighting and ventilation. This strategy allowed the library to maintain a compact institutional form while responding to climatic and operational realities.⁴³

Taken together, these design decisions articulate Yuen Tang's architectural position: an approach that resists stylistic imitation and symbolic display, and instead treats architecture as a culturally embedded practice shaped through translation, restraint, and material judgment. In the Shanghai Library, architectural meaning emerges not through overt historical imagery, but through controlled mediation between tradition and modernity.

Theory and Writing in Architectural Practice

Yuen Tang emphasized the importance of on-site engagement in architectural practice. In her essays and interviews, she argued that architectural judgment cannot be formed through drawings alone, nor through abstract ideas detached from construction. For her, the site was not a secondary stage of design, but the place where architectural thinking took shape — through direct contact with materials, structure, and spatial conditions during the building process.⁴⁴

⁴³ "Ni and Cai, "Architects Talk about Architecture—Tang Yuen," 21."

⁴⁴ "Yuen Tang, "Tang Yuen in Her Own Words," *World Architecture*, no. 5 (2016): 26, 124, <https://doi.org/10.16414/j.wa.2016.05.010>.

This emphasis on on-site work was closely connected to her position as a scholar-architect. Tang did not separate design practice from reflection and writing. Alongside a long career in professional practice, she authored numerous books and essays on architectural design, urban context, and building typologies, including studies on hotel architecture and urban renewal. These texts did not aim to construct theory at a distance from practice; rather, they emerged from accumulated experience on real projects.⁴⁵

Within this framework, Tang held that architecture should grow from its specific environment, a position already evident in her sustained engagement with Shanghai's layered urban history.

Crucially, Tang did not establish professional authority through theoretical discourse alone. Her position emerged from long-term institutional practice, a substantial body of built work, and the careful articulation of experience through writing. Rather than foregrounding identity or adopting overt critical stances, she occupied a stable place within the discipline through sustained engagement with architectural work itself.⁴⁶

Taken together, Yuen Tang's work demonstrates a mode of architectural thinking grounded in professional responsibility. Her career suggests that attention to culture, history, and urban context can be developed from within architectural practice, rather than from a distance. In this sense, her architectural authorship was shaped less by declaration than by continuity, judgment, and long-term presence in the field.

Jinxiu Zhang: Architecture as Cultural Continuity

⁴⁵ "Mengchao Gu, "A Successful Case of Ecological Conservation of Historic Architecture—A New Contribution by the Scholar-Architect Tang Yuen," *Architecture*, no. 6 (2014): 73–74."

⁴⁶ "Linglin He and Jiaqi Gao, "Tang Yuen: Urban Regeneration as a Continuous Thread in the History of Urban Development," *Green Building* 13, no. 2 (2021): 4–6."

Jinxiu Zhang (born 1936) occupies a distinctive position in modern Chinese architecture through her sustained effort to reconcile modern construction with historical continuity. Educated at Tsinghua University (1954-1965) under leading figures in architectural history and traditional studies, she developed an early sensitivity to China's architectural heritage. After completing her education, Zhang chose to work in Xi'an, a city whose dense historical layers would become central to her architectural thinking. Over the course of her career, she rose to become Chief Architect of the China Northwest Architecture Design and Research Institute, leading a number of major civic and cultural projects.⁴⁷



Figure 6. Jinxiu Zhang Photo

Zhang's architectural position is most clearly articulated through the Shaanxi History Museum (1991), her first major independent project. Rather than adopting either historical imitation or abstract modernism, she sought a contemporary architectural language grounded in Chinese historical structure. Drawing on the spatial order of Tang-dynasty palatial architecture, the museum employs a clear axial organization, hierarchical massing, and courtyard sequences, while relying on modern materials and construction techniques. Traditional elements such as dougong brackets were reinterpreted as structural components

⁴⁷ "Yimiao Yang and Ruixia Fu, "Seeking the Grandeur of the Tang Dynasty in the Millennium-Old Capital," *Xinhua Daily Telegraph*, August 26, 2022, 10."

rather than applied decoration, allowing historical tectonics to operate within a modern institutional building. This approach later came to be described by Zhang as the "New Tang Style": neither revivalist nor internationalist, but an attempt to translate historical principles into contemporary form.⁴⁸



Figure 7. Shaanxi History Museum Overview⁴⁹

Beyond individual buildings, Zhang articulated a broader architectural stance that emphasized harmony between architecture, history, and urban context. In her writings on "harmonious architecture," she warned against both superficial historicism and placeless modernity, arguing that architecture must respond to its specific cultural, spatial, and temporal conditions.⁵⁰ Her later projects, including the Daming Palace Danfeng Gate Heritage Museum, extended this position to the scale of urban intervention, where architecture functioned simultaneously as cultural symbol, protective structure, and contemporary public space. Through these works, Zhang demonstrated a mode of architectural authorship rooted in continuity rather than rupture, one that sought modernity not through rejection of the past, but through its careful transformation.⁵¹

⁴⁸ "Jinxiu Zhang, "Design of the Shaanxi History Museum," *Architectural Journal* 9 (1991): 18-24."

⁴⁹ "Zhang, "Design of the Shaanxi History Museum," 18-24."

⁵⁰ "Jinxiu Zhang, "An Exploration into Harmonious Architecture," *Architectural Journal* 9 (2006): 9-11."

⁵¹ "Jinxiu Zhang, "Chang'an's Fertile Ground Nurtures Past and Present: Design of the Daming Palace Danfeng Gate Heritage Museum," *Architectural Journal* 11 (2010): 26-29."

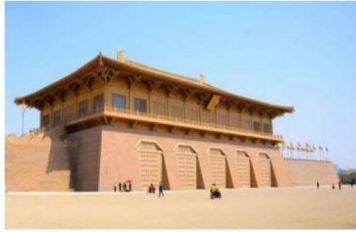


Figure 8. Danfeng Gate Photo⁵²

As a woman architect working within China's state design system, Zhang rarely framed her work in explicitly gendered terms. Yet her career trajectory — marked by leadership, authorship, and control over major public commissions — was exceptional in a profession long dominated by men. Rather than foregrounding difference, Zhang asserted professional authority through built work, institutional responsibility, and theoretical articulation from within practice. In this sense, her career offers a model of architectural agency grounded in persistence, judgment, and cultural responsibility, expanding the ways in which women's contributions to modern architecture can be understood.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the careers of Xiaowei Luo, Yuen Tang, and Jinqiu Zhang not as representative figures of "women architects," but as architects whose professional frameworks were formed under specific historical and institutional conditions. Rather than approaching gender through explicit discourse or self-identification, the analysis has focused on how architectural authority and professional continuity were established in a context shaped by material scarcity, restricted educational access, and strong institutional regulation.

⁵² "Zhang, "Chang'an's Fertile Ground Nurtures Past and Present: Design of the Daming Palace Danfeng Gate Heritage Museum," 26–29."

Across all three cases, the most decisive constraints shaping architectural careers emerged before professional practice itself. Access to architectural education, sustained training, and the possibility of long-term engagement with the discipline were already filtered by structural conditions such as family background, economic resources, and institutional pathways. In a period marked by material scarcity and limited access to higher education, these conditions determined who could enter architectural training and who could remain within it.

Although official biographies and professional records from this period tend to de-emphasize personal and familial background, available evidence suggests that these trajectories were shaped rather than incidental. Luo Xiaowei's early exposure to music, dance, and sport implies a household capable of supporting sustained cultural training.⁵³ Zhang Jinqiu grew up within a family deeply embedded in construction and architectural practice.⁵⁴ Tang Yuen's ability to enter Tsinghua University, work professionally during the Cultural Revolution, and later return to graduate study at Tongji University similarly points to forms of educational continuity that were far from universal at the time.⁵⁵ While the available literature does not allow for a detailed reconstruction of Tang's personal circumstances, these patterns nonetheless indicate that architectural formation required levels of material, educational, and institutional support inaccessible to most.

In this sense, the key structural challenges faced by women architects in this period were less about

⁵³ "Zheng, "Reading The Collected Works of Luo Xiaowei," 160."

⁵⁴ "Yimiao Yang and Ruixia Fu, "Seeking the Grandeur of the Tang Dynasty in the Millennium-Old Capital," *Xinhua Daily Telegraph*, August 26, 2022, 10."

⁵⁵ "Yuen Tang, "Tang Yuen in Her Own Words," *World Architecture*, no. 5 (2016): 26, 124, <https://doi.org/10.16414/j.wa.2016.05.010>.

exclusion within the profession than about the earlier conditions that made professional entry and continuity possible at all. Gender operated not as an explicit barrier articulated in discourse, but as part of a broader system in which access to education, stability, and cultural capital was unevenly distributed long before architectural practice began.

Within these shared constraints, however, Xiaowei Luo, Jinqiu Zhang, and Yuen Tang developed markedly different architectural frameworks, shaped through distinct modes of life and work. For Xiaowei Luo, architectural authority was closely tied to attentiveness to everyday life. Her sensitivity to urban experience, art, and daily perception informed both her historiographical position and her teaching practice. Architecture, for her, was inseparable from lived experience. Intellectual rigor coexisted with a cultivated enjoyment of life, forming a framework in which scholarly authority emerged through alignment between thinking, living, and teaching.⁵⁶

Jinqiu Zhang's professional framework was forged within the high-intensity conditions of design institute labor. Archival accounts emphasize endurance and sustained commitment, including her continued participation in frontline design work during pregnancy and shortly after childbirth. While shaped by institutional demands rather than personal declaration, her experience reveals how architectural practice intersected with bodily and domestic life. Beyond the workplace, architectural thinking continued through engagement with urban planning and domestic design, suggesting a framework shaped through constant negotiation between professional labor and limited personal time.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ "Lu, "My Teacher, Professor Luo Xiaowei," 36."

⁵⁷ Yuan Zhan, "Zhang Jinqiu: Being a People's Architect," *Guangming Daily*, May 26, 2022, https://epaper.gmw.cn/gmrb/html/2022-05/26/nw.D110000gmrb_20220526_1-01.html.

Yuen Tang's personal life remains largely absent from written records, yet indirect descriptions offer insight into her professional ethos. Recollections of her office, dominated by meticulously organized project materials, point to a mode of practice grounded in precision, responsibility, and technical judgment. Her emphasis on on-site engagement and constructional rigor reflects an architectural framework shaped through sustained involvement with building as process rather than abstraction.⁵⁸

Taken together, these cases suggest that gender did not manifest as a unified experience or explicit strategy. Instead, it became legible through different ways of inhabiting architectural life — through attentiveness, endurance, discipline, and the management of constrained time and resources. Architectural frameworks emerged not as theoretical positions adopted in advance, but as lived structures formed through daily practice and long-term professional presence.

In this sense, gender functions less as a theme within their work than as an analytical perspective through which conditions of architectural formation become visible. The relative absence of overt gender discourse in their narratives does not signal irrelevance, but reflects a historical context in which professional legitimacy was secured through continuity, competence, and institutional alignment. By focusing on modes of work and framework formation, this study reframes women's architectural practice not as an exception to dominant histories, but as integral to the production of architectural knowledge and authority in modern China.

⁵⁸ "Yue Wu, "Interview with Tang Yuen: Leading the Renovation and Preservation of Shanghai History Museum, Peace Hotel and More, Sewing Fine Stitches into History," *Shangguan News*, May 27, 2018, <https://m.jfdaily.com/wx/detail.do?id=90875&t=1536969620250&userAuth=1>".

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