



MEGAN DANG

ECOLOGICAL ENTANGLEMENTS



Ecological Entanglements

Graduate Architecture Portfolio 2020-2024

This edited collection is a curated sequence of visuals encompassing an ongoing three-year exploration of ecological entanglements. The book explores the relationship between humans and nature at a time when these forces are eroding. Challenging the time of the 'Anthropocene,' as humanity makes its way through permanent planetary changes to the earth's systems through climate change, the collection of projects brings optimistic light to a dystopian reality. It poses the question: ***are there more or less ways to work with nature? How might we create perspectives and enact practices that build community across spaces and species, constructing relationships with nonhumans beyond the discourse of destruction?*** As a human myself, I attempt to speculate these pressing concepts of ecology and entanglement as a tool to combat social and cultural issues at large. Of course, examining these questions as a single human under the constraints of an academic calendar can only go so far. I want to thank my collaborators, family, and friends for this unforgettable journey.

- Megan D.

Flow Hub

Marine Life, Mussels

Adv. V_Fall 2023_Critic: Amina Blaksher
Collaborator: Rose Zhang

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Hemp Core

Agriculture, Hemp Waste

Adv. VI_Spring 2024_Critic: David Benjamin
Collaborator: Rose Zhang

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Terrace School

Urban Farms and Spaces for Protest

Core II_Spring 2021_Critic: Gordon Kipping

28

Scaffold Lot

Community Center

Core I_Fall 2020_Critic: Alessandro Orsini

40

Soft-Home

Waste Systems, Air Pollution

Core III_Fall 2021_Critic: Alicia Olushola Ajayi
Collaborator: Rose Zhang

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Sap Lab

Invasive Species, Tree Sap as a Biomaterial

Adv. IV_Spring 2022_Critic: Lindsey Wikstrom

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Damascus Room

Secular Spaces

Building Islam_Spring 2024_Professor: Ziad Jamaledine

78

Microbes-Topia

Visualizing Bacteria

Subject_Object_Spring 2024_Professor: Suchi Reddy
Collaborator: Isaiah Graham, Jess Kuntz

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FlowHUB

ADV V__ Wetropolis:
Wet Architecture & Electric
Mobility in a Post-Crisis City
Fall 2023

In Collaboration with
Rose Zhang

Studio Critic: Amina Blacksher

In 2053, the current site of Spring Studios has transformed into a bustling hub where native blue mussels flourish: FlowHub. The public space is designed to purify the building's water supply. It nurtures the burgeoning ecosystems within the newly established flood zone by assisting the tide, filtering water, and distributing nutrients. Our vision of 2053 prioritizes the prosperity of non-human actors to develop a new, more harmonious coexistence with nature.

Our initiative is based on the established framework of Spring Studio. At Spring Studios,

our hub is for native blue mussels serves to filter, clean, and rehabilitate the water, supporting the river's prosperity and any newly established habitats in the flood zone. Overfishing and industrial pollution in the 19th and 20th centuries led to a significant decline in the blue mussel population, and our design aims to restore and surpass what it once was. Water quality—embracing factors like temperature, salinity, turbidity, dissolved oxygen (DO), pH, pathogen presence, and food supply—is crucial to promote a healthy ecosystem. Mussels filter and recalibrate water and function as highly effective bio-sensors, outperforming their digital counterparts.



Section Detail Model



HUDSON RIVER

New York City's Tide Chart 10.03.51

(ft)

6

4

2

0

0 4 12 18 0

(h)

5:46 AM

NOW

0.25 nautical miles

(40.724, -74.001)

(40.724, -74.004)

(40.721, -74.002)

(40.719, -73.999)

(40.719, -74.002)

16 JUDSON HEALTH CENTER

SPRING STUDIOS

CHOOSE A RIDE

PUFFBOAT

RIDE IN A 4-SEATER BOAT

25 KNOTS

PUFFBOAT SHARE

RIDE WITH OTHERS

21 KNOTS

SEA LEVEL RISE 2050s LOW TIDE

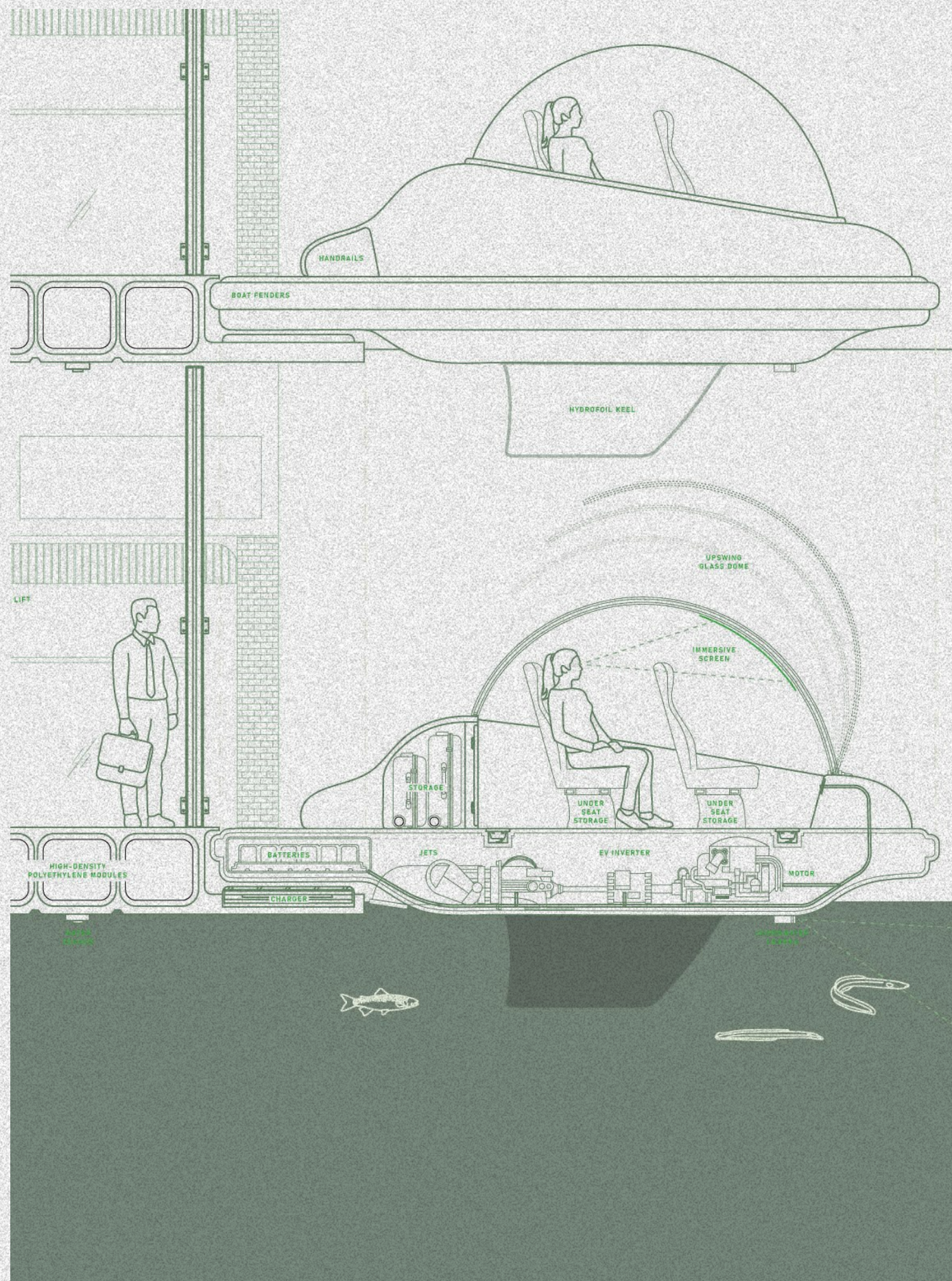
SEA LEVEL RISE 2050s HIGH TIDE

NO ENTRY ZONE (RIVER)

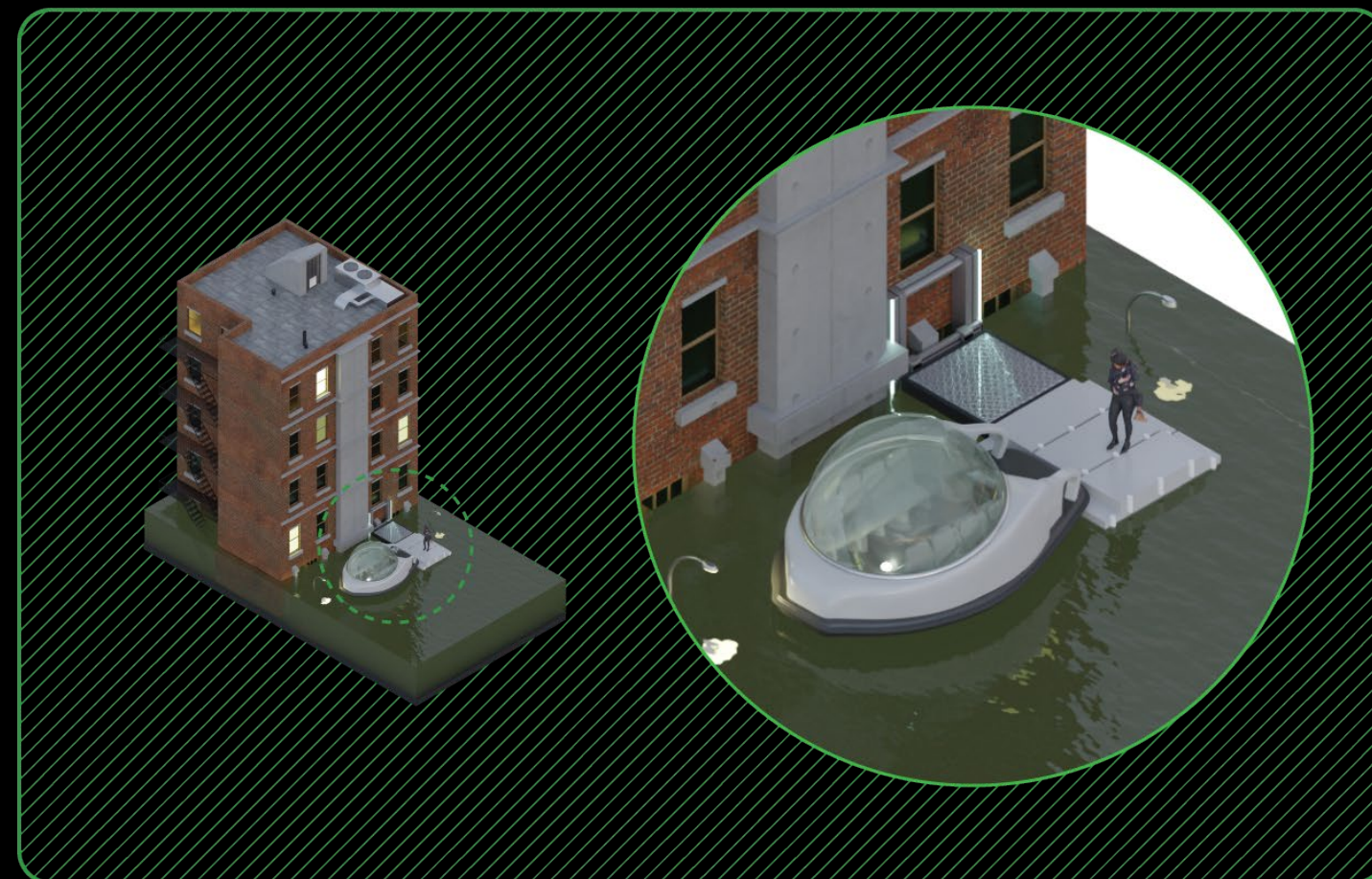
PUFF BOAT STATIONS



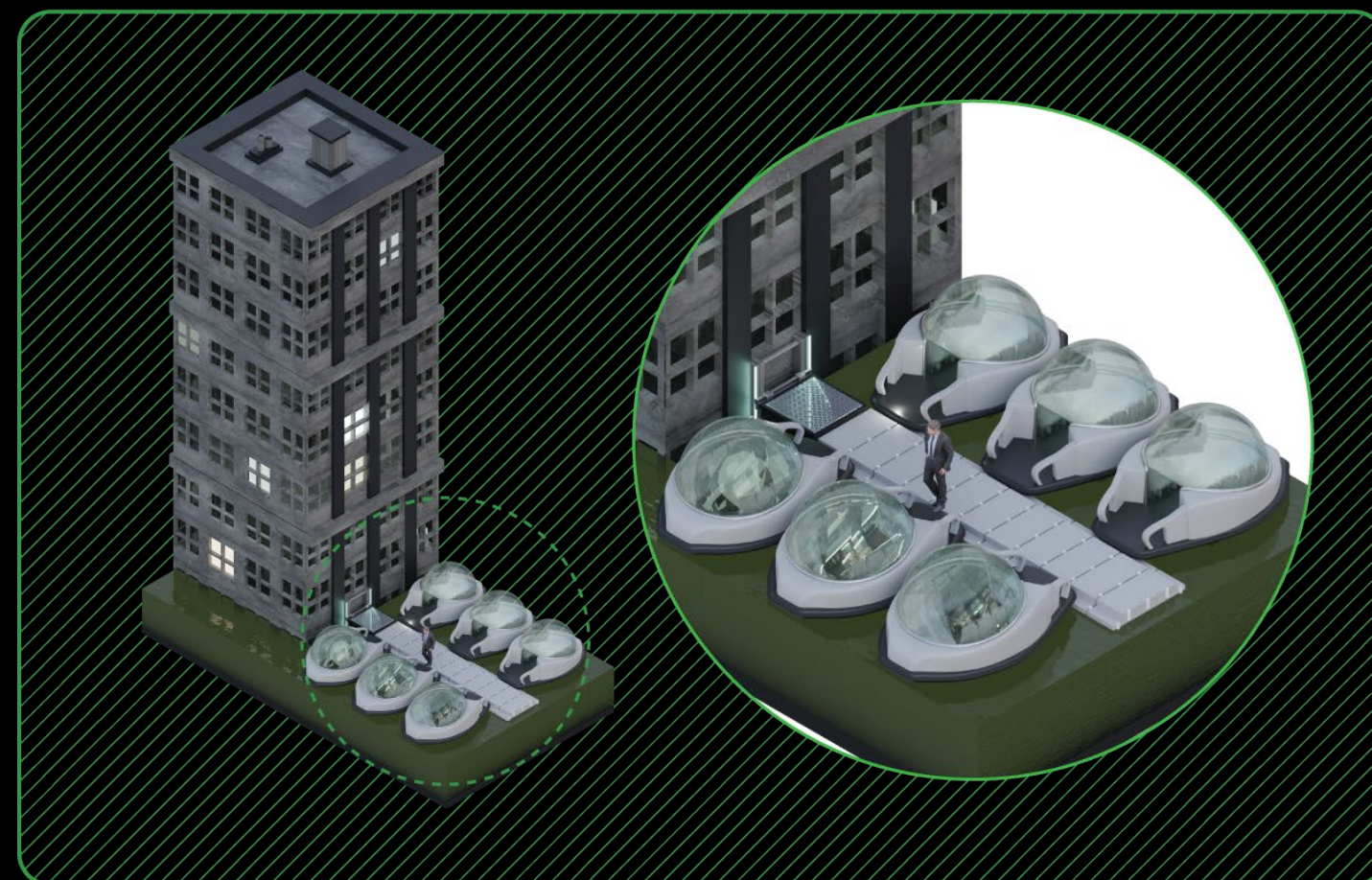
Underwater
View of
PuffBoat



PuffBoat Elevation and Section

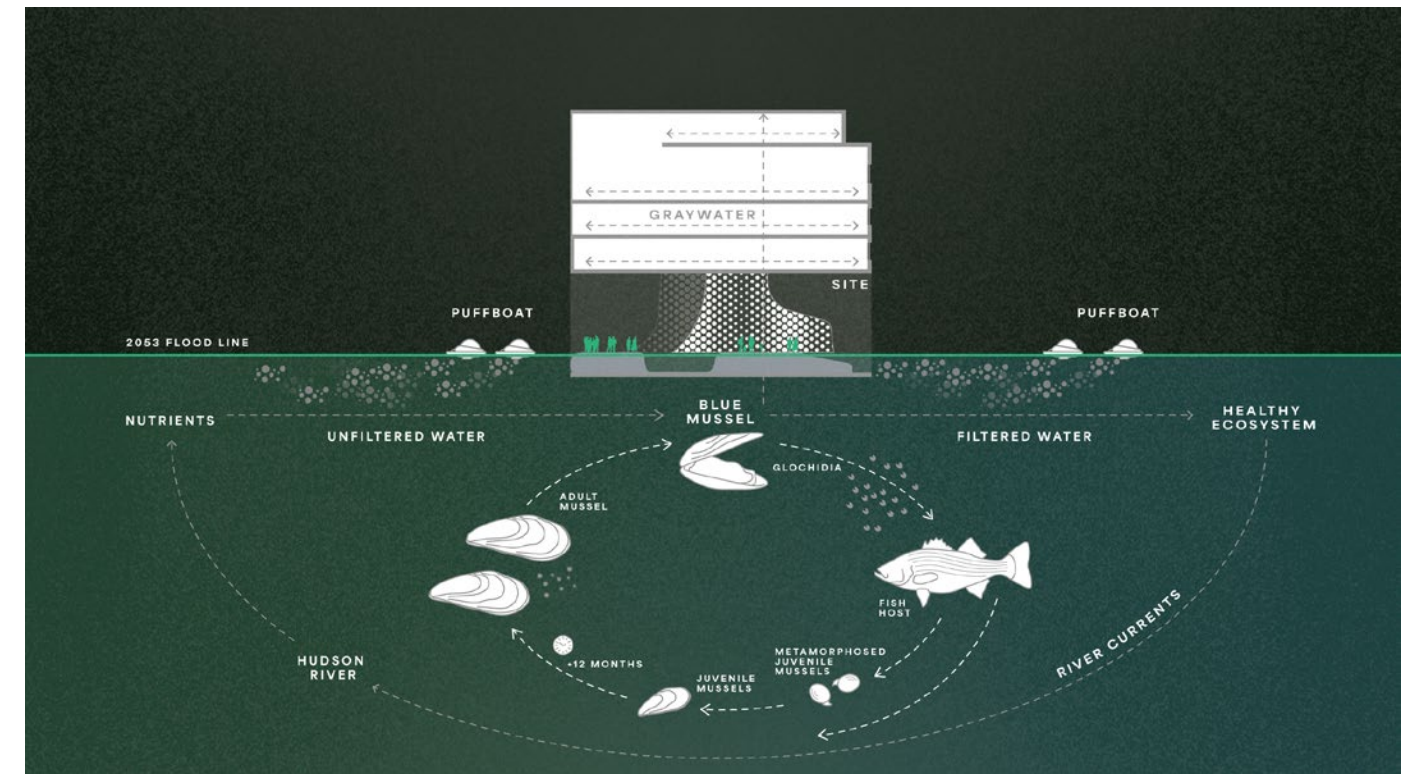


PuffBoat size XS/XL Docking Station





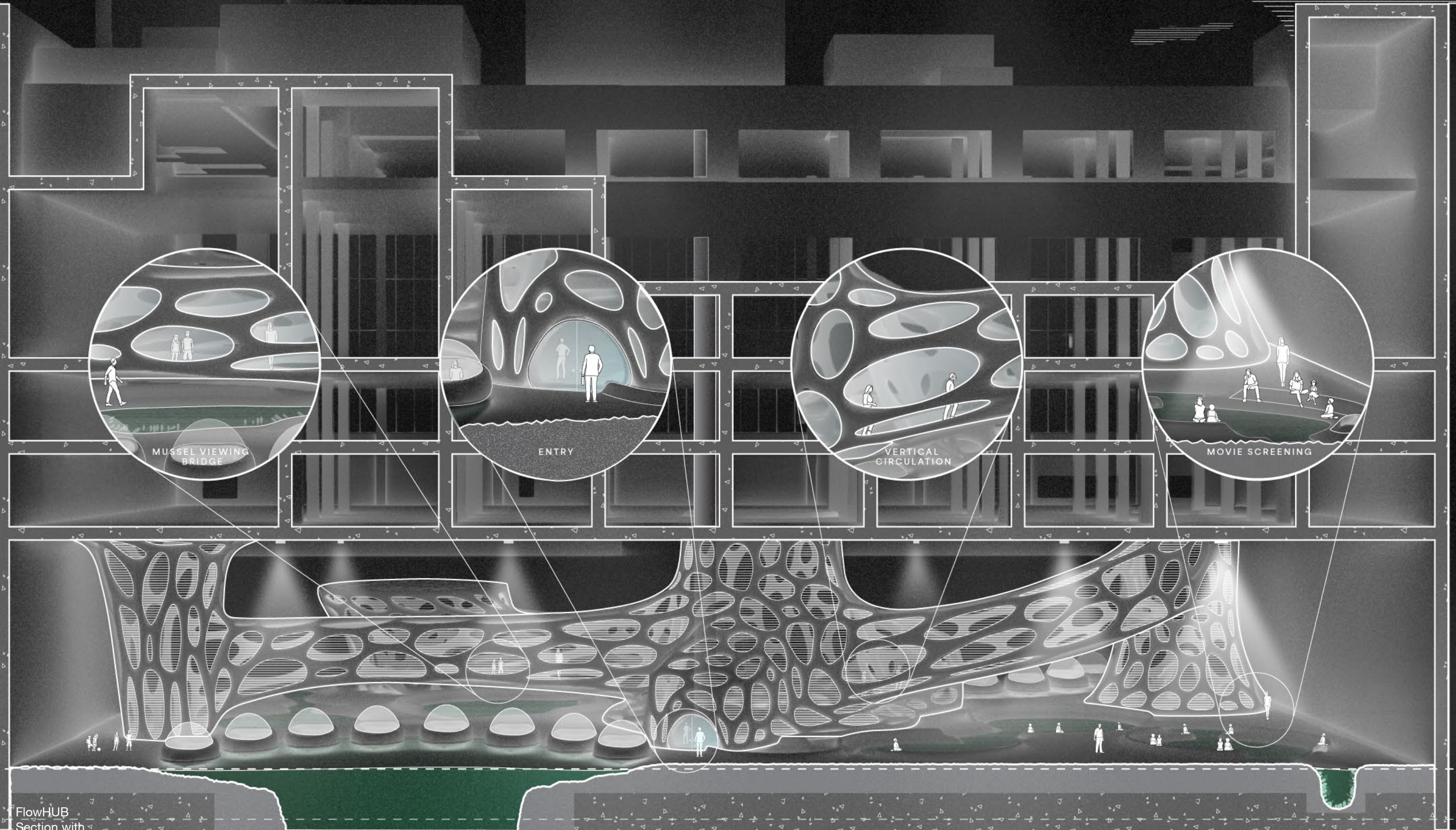
View of 2053 FlowHUB Mussel Ponds



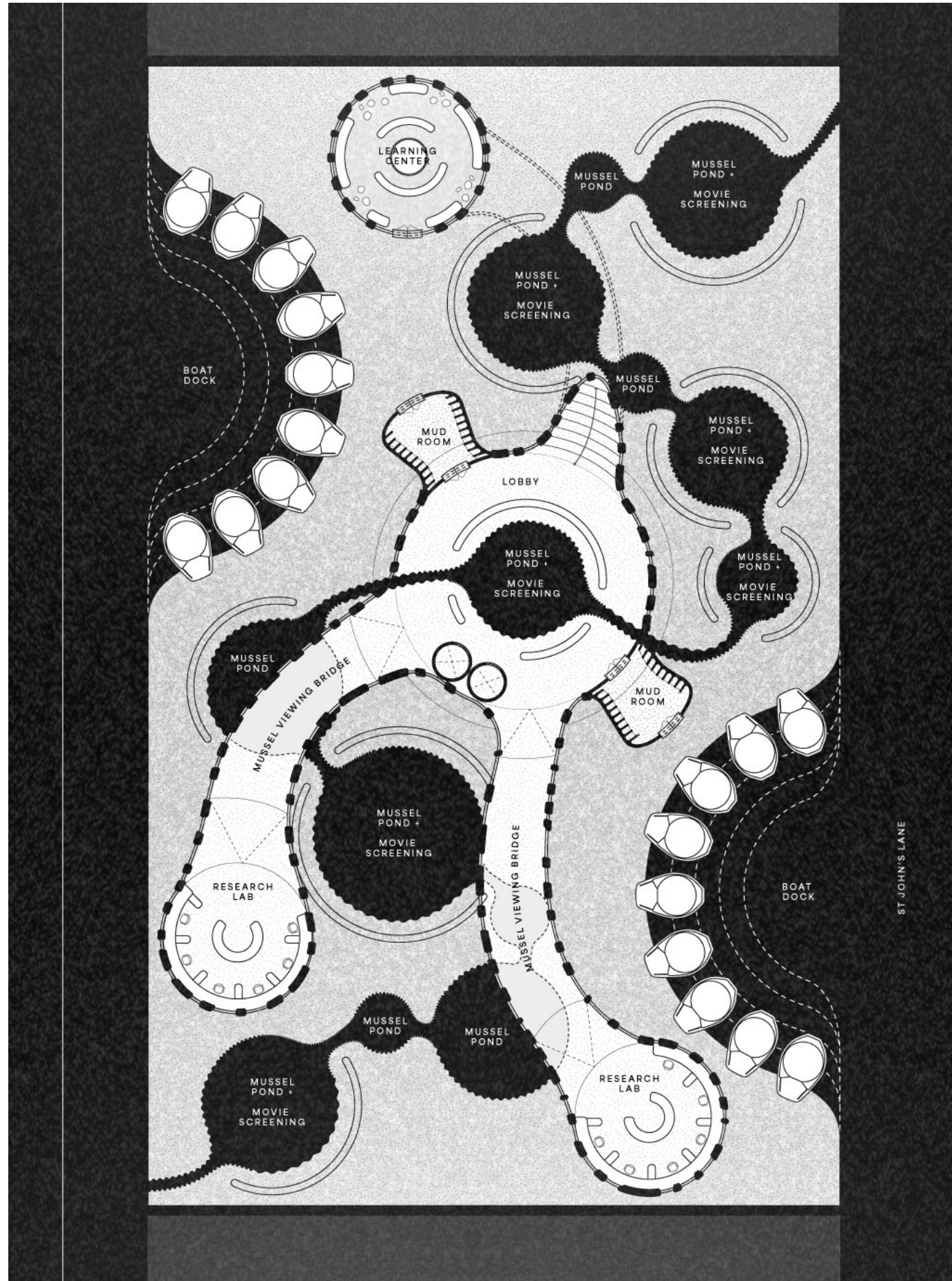
Mussel Filtration System Overview



Section Detail Model

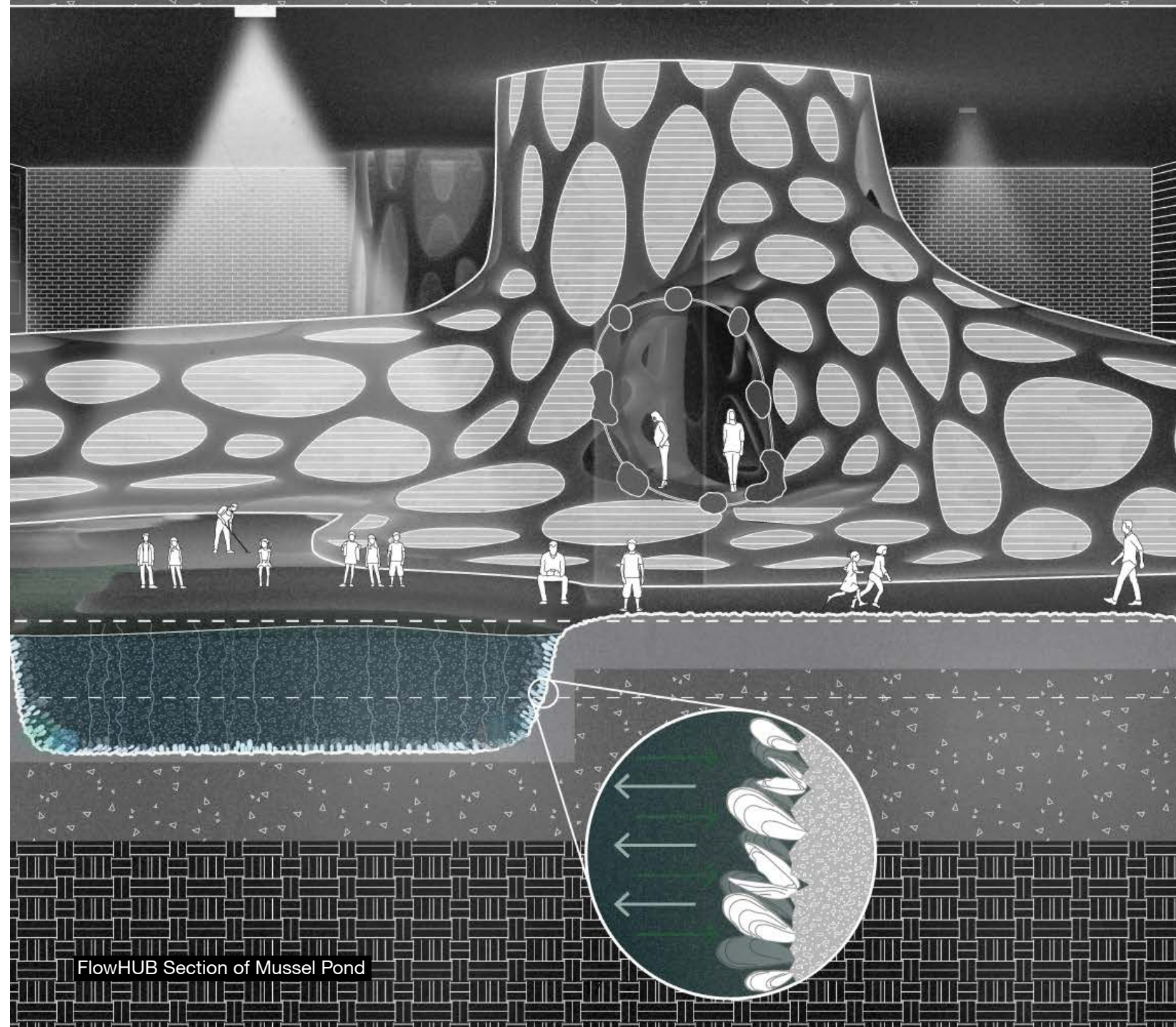


FlowHUB
Section with
Zoom Vignettes



Ground Plan

We use Hempcrete to create a filtration system that provides crevices for mussels to inhabit. The center accommodates approximately 7,000 mussels, which can purify as much as 105,000 gallons of water every day. To slow down the current and give mussels ample time to cleanse the water, we have created pockets of mussel ponds that function as filters. The filtered water is then released into the Varick St. stream. As time passes, these mussels will continue to aid new ecosystems, providing ongoing support in the face of an inevitable climate crisis.



FlowHUB Section of Mussel Pond

HempCORE

ADV VI_ Open : Designing
Systems for Carbon Removal,
Buildings, and Equality
Spring 2024

In Collaboration with
Rose Zhang

Studio Critic: David Benjamin

In response to the climate crisis, there is an urgent demand for environmentally sustainable construction materials. Our proposal aims to meet this need by exploring hemp waste as a viable alternative.

Hemp is renowned for its low carbon footprint and ability to continuously sequester CO₂ throughout its life cycle, making it a promising material choice. Since its legalization in 2018, hemp has gained popularity among farmers; however, the issue of hemp waste management remains largely unaddressed. Classified as

‘hazardous,’ hemp waste is often disposed of through burning, exacerbating environmental concerns.

Our solution involves harnessing this waste to address disposal challenges and expand existing living spaces. Introducing Hempcore--a flat-pack panelized balcony system that integrates with various housing typologies.

View of Balcony System





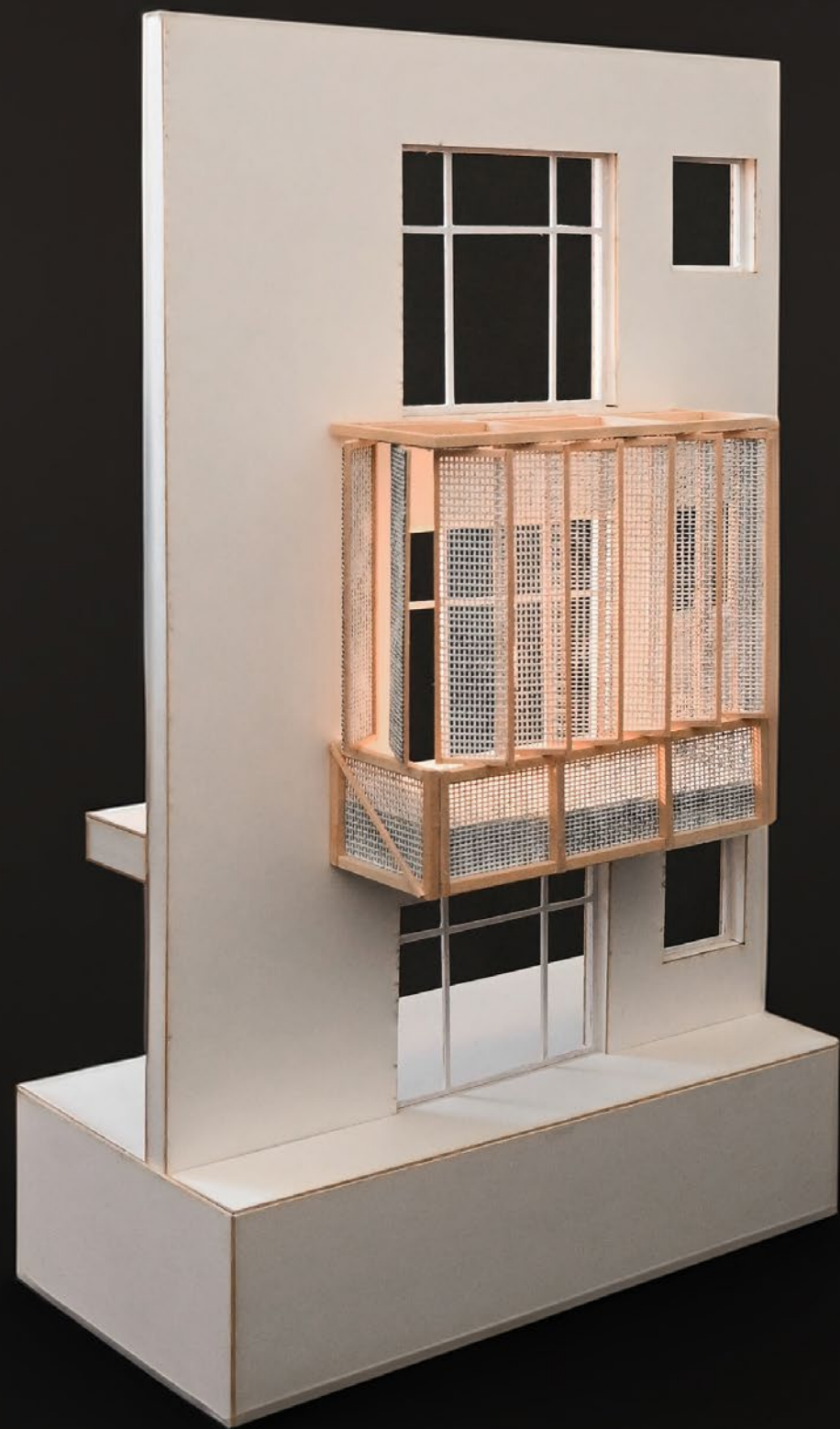
- 1** 100g Rockite, 50ml Water, 50g Hemp
- 2** 50g Rockite, 60ml Water, 35g Hemp, 100g Mussel Powder
- 3** 50g Rockite, 50ml Water, 35g Hemp, 100g Oyster Powder

- 4** 70ml Water, 35g Hemp, 200g Oyster Powder
- 5** 50g Rockite, 60ml Water, 15g Hemp, 120g Mussel Powder
- 6** 50g Rockite, 60ml Water, 15g Hemp, 120g Oyster Powder

- 7** 55ml Water, 15g Hemp, 160g Mussel Powder
- 8** 55ml Water, 15g Hemp, 160g Oyster Powder
- 9** 60ml Water, 50g Hemp, 160g Oyster Powder

- 10** 100g Rockite, 100ml Water, 50g Hemp, 100g Sap
- 11** 100g Rockite, 100ml Water, 25g Hemp
- 12** 100g Rockite, 100ml Water, 16g Hemp

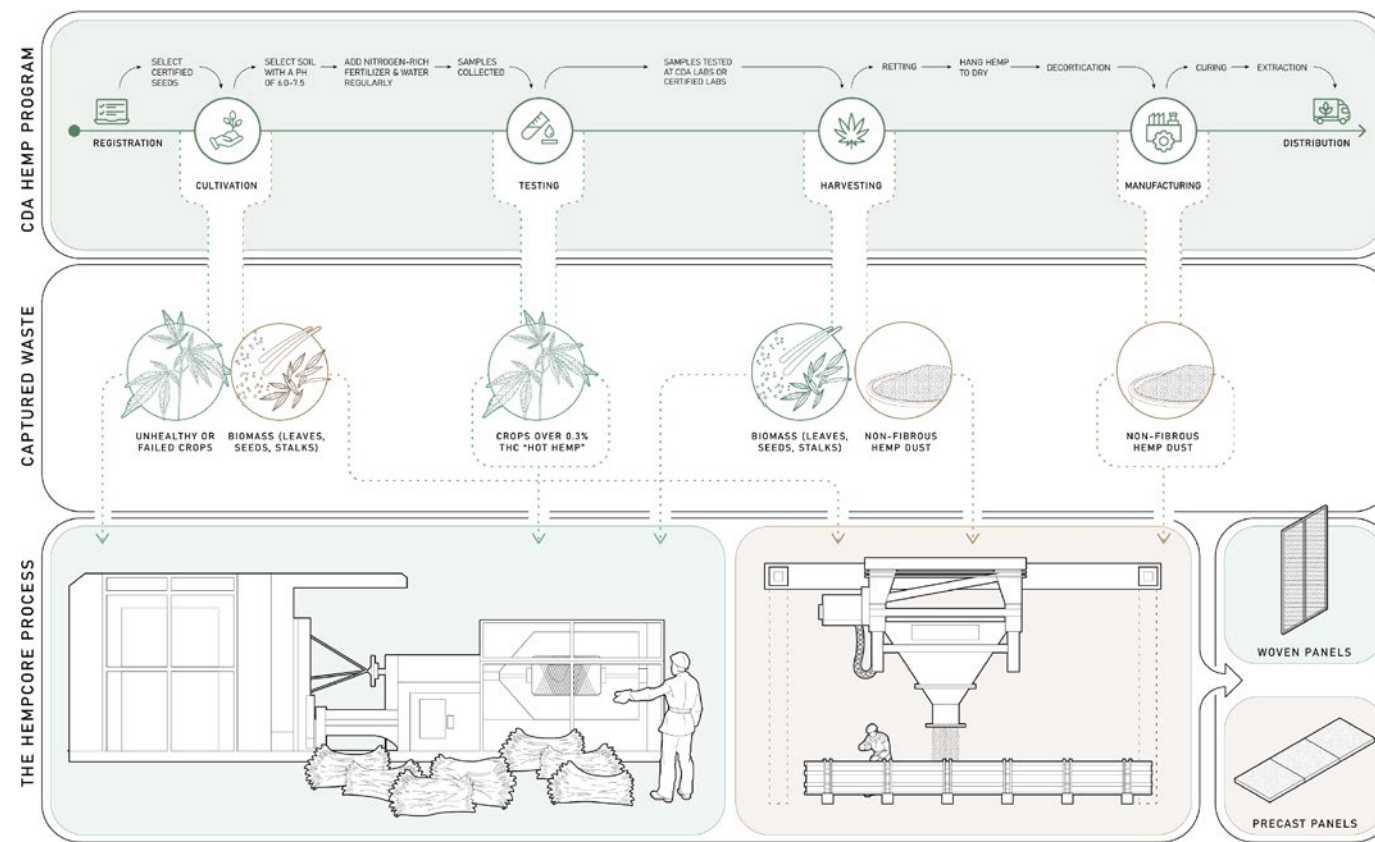
- 13** 100g Rockite, 100ml Water, 10g Hemp
- 14** 100g Rockite, 100ml Water, 10g Woven Hemp



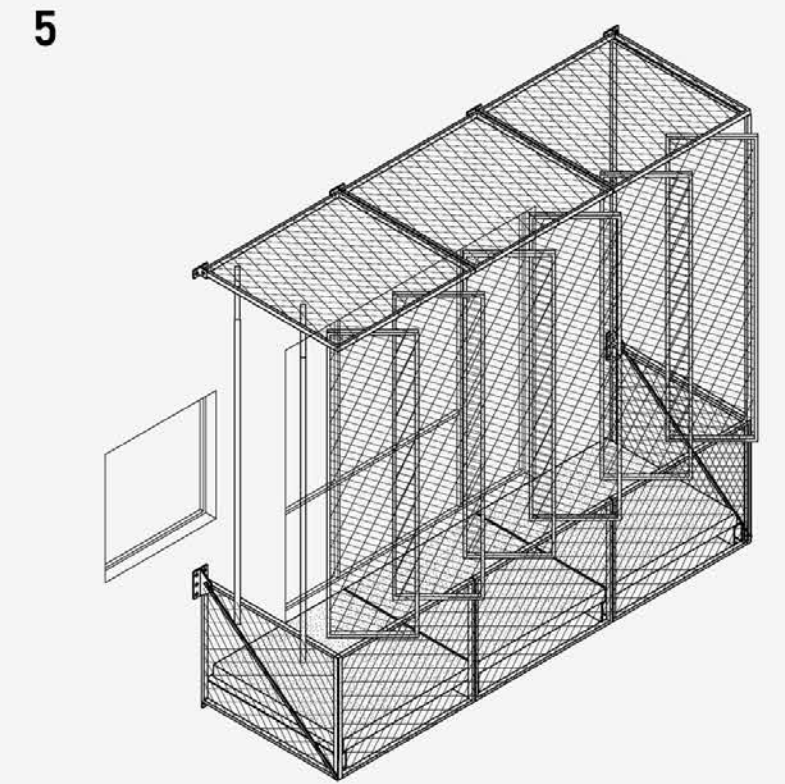
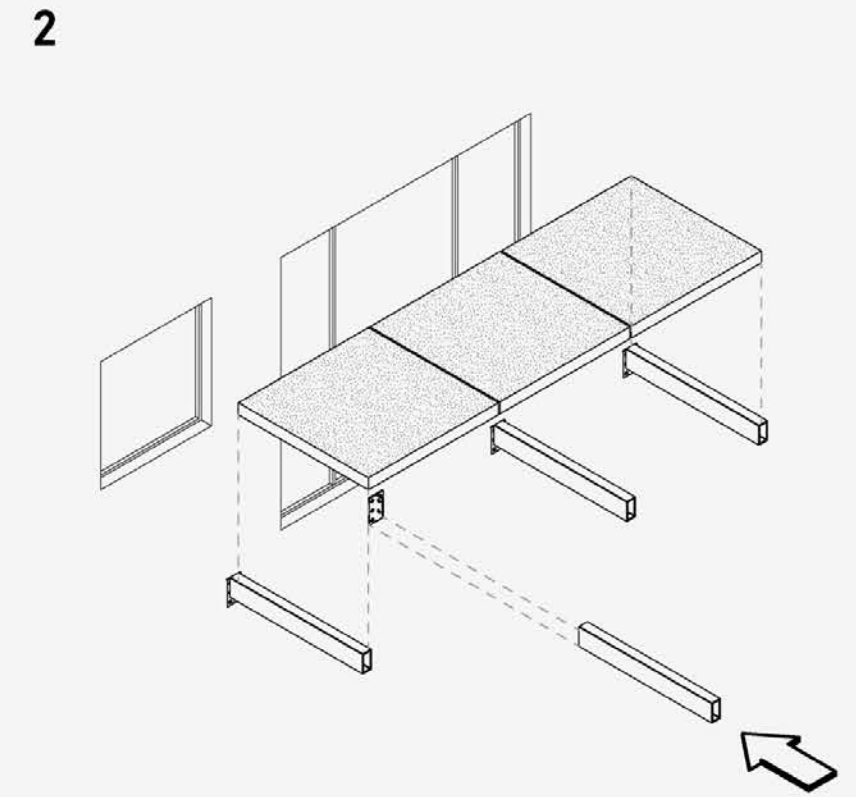
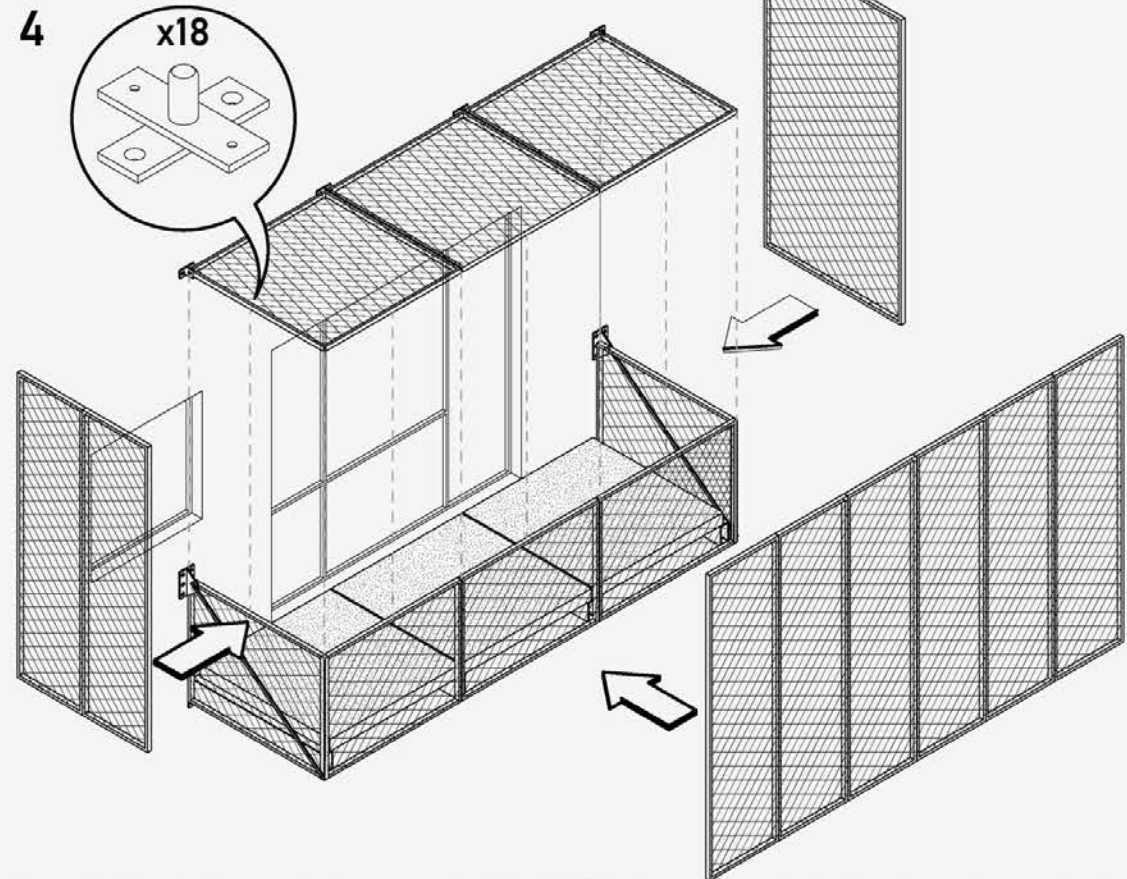
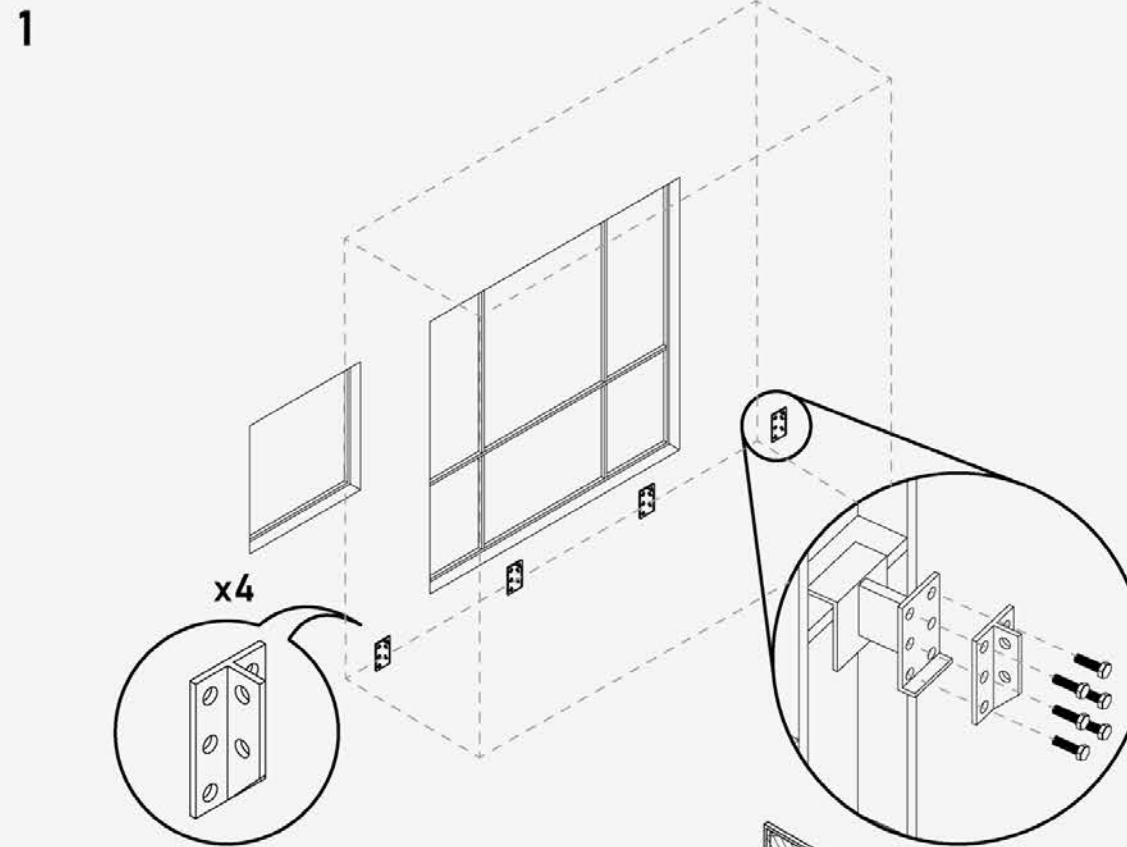
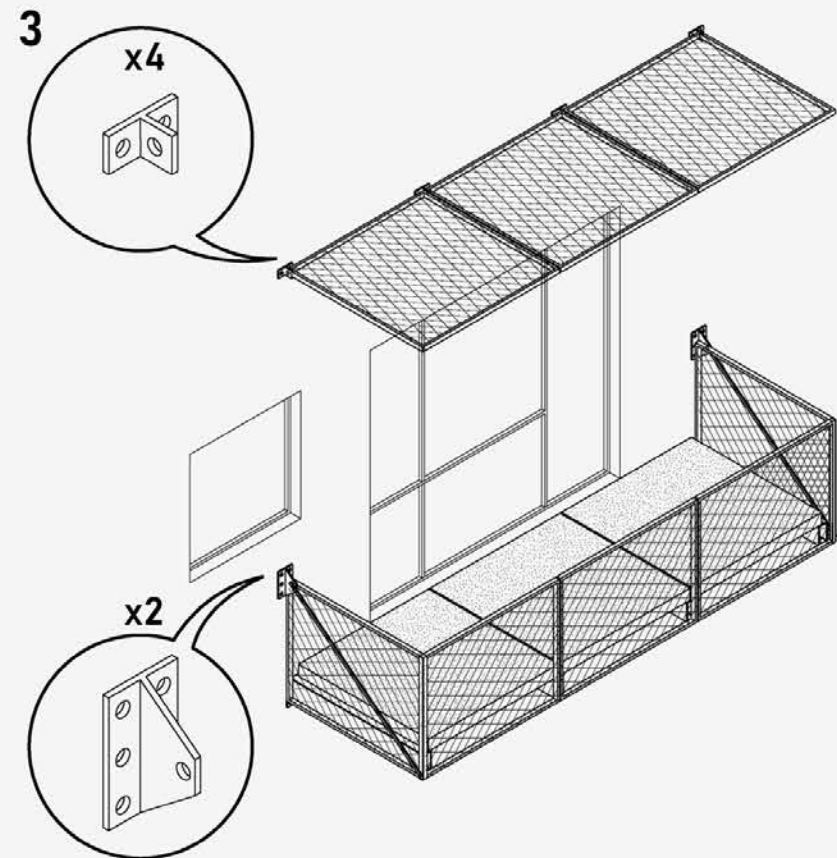
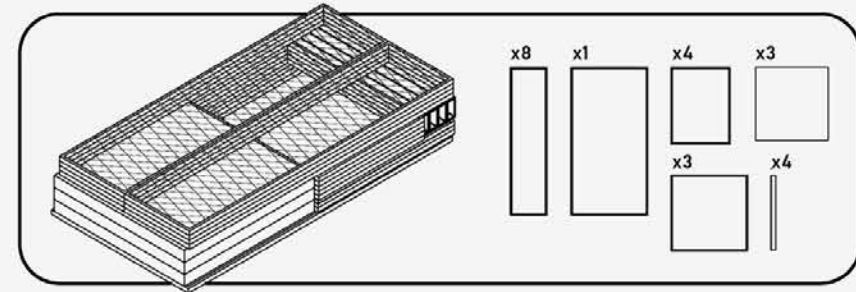
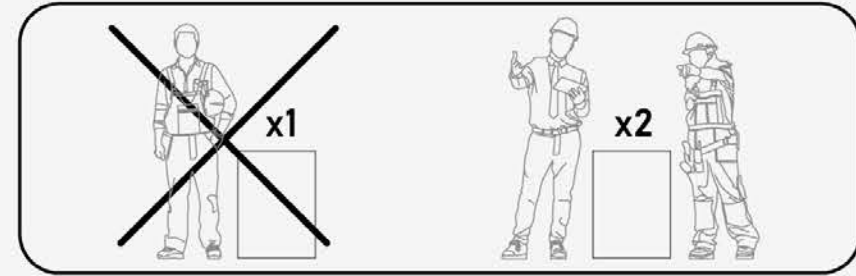
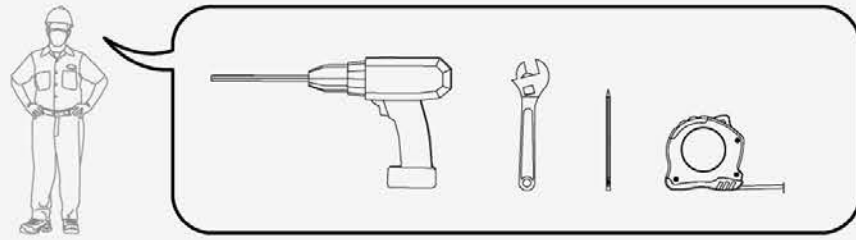
Section Balcony Model



Utilizing Hemp Waste Proposal



Hemp Waste System





Interior Balcony View



Interior Balcony View Model

TerraceSCHOOL

Core II_ Extinction Rebellion
(XR) School

Spring 2021

Studio Critic: Gordon Kipping

Fostering cross-generational interaction is crucial for sharing knowledge. The project aims to promote this intersection within the community by addressing the issue of isolation that many seniors face. Additionally, the project seeks to serve as a public platform for educating both seniors and youth about the pressing concerns of climate change and ecological degradation.

The project's aims to promote intergenerational practices is rooted in the dynamic energy of the East Village art scene and the powerful activism

of Extinction Rebellion (XR), which utilizes performative protest and public art. By creating a public corridor and providing semi-public access to urban farms, the school emphasizes the importance of social inclusion and collective growth, fostering a sense of community between generations in both learning and green spaces.

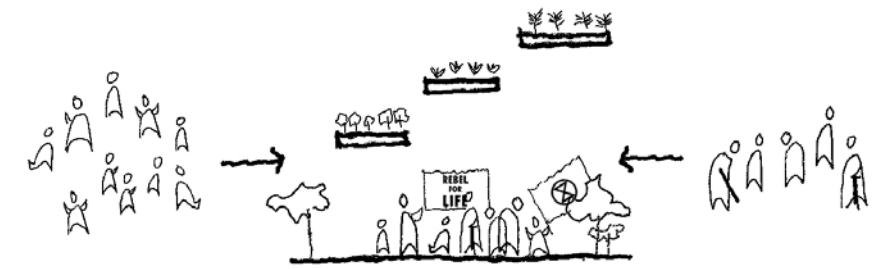


Exterior Entrance View



Outdoor Gallery and Protest Space

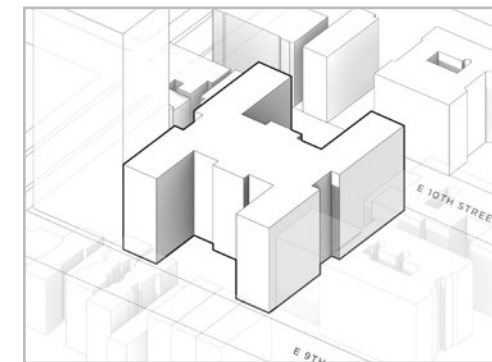
Concept Sketch



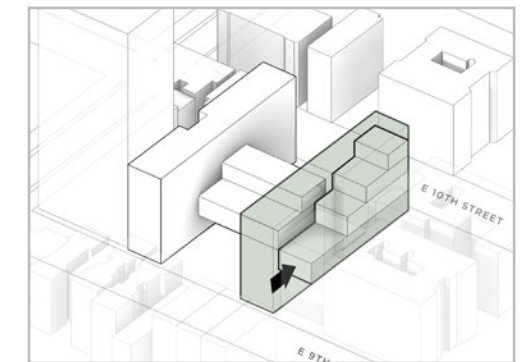
Youths

School

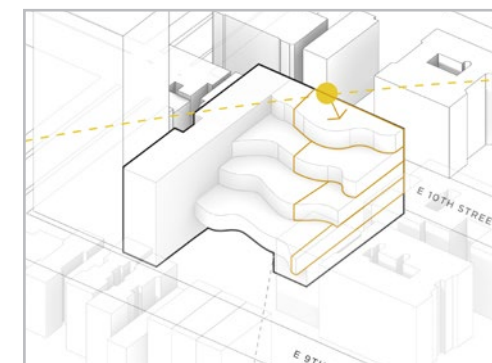
Seniors



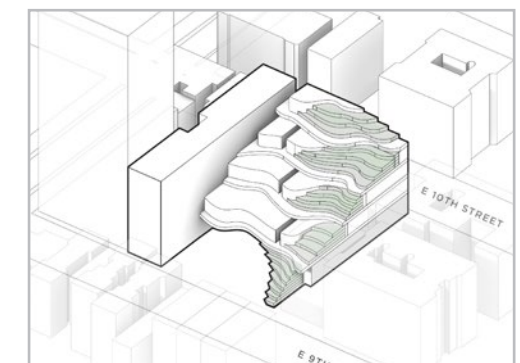
Existing building



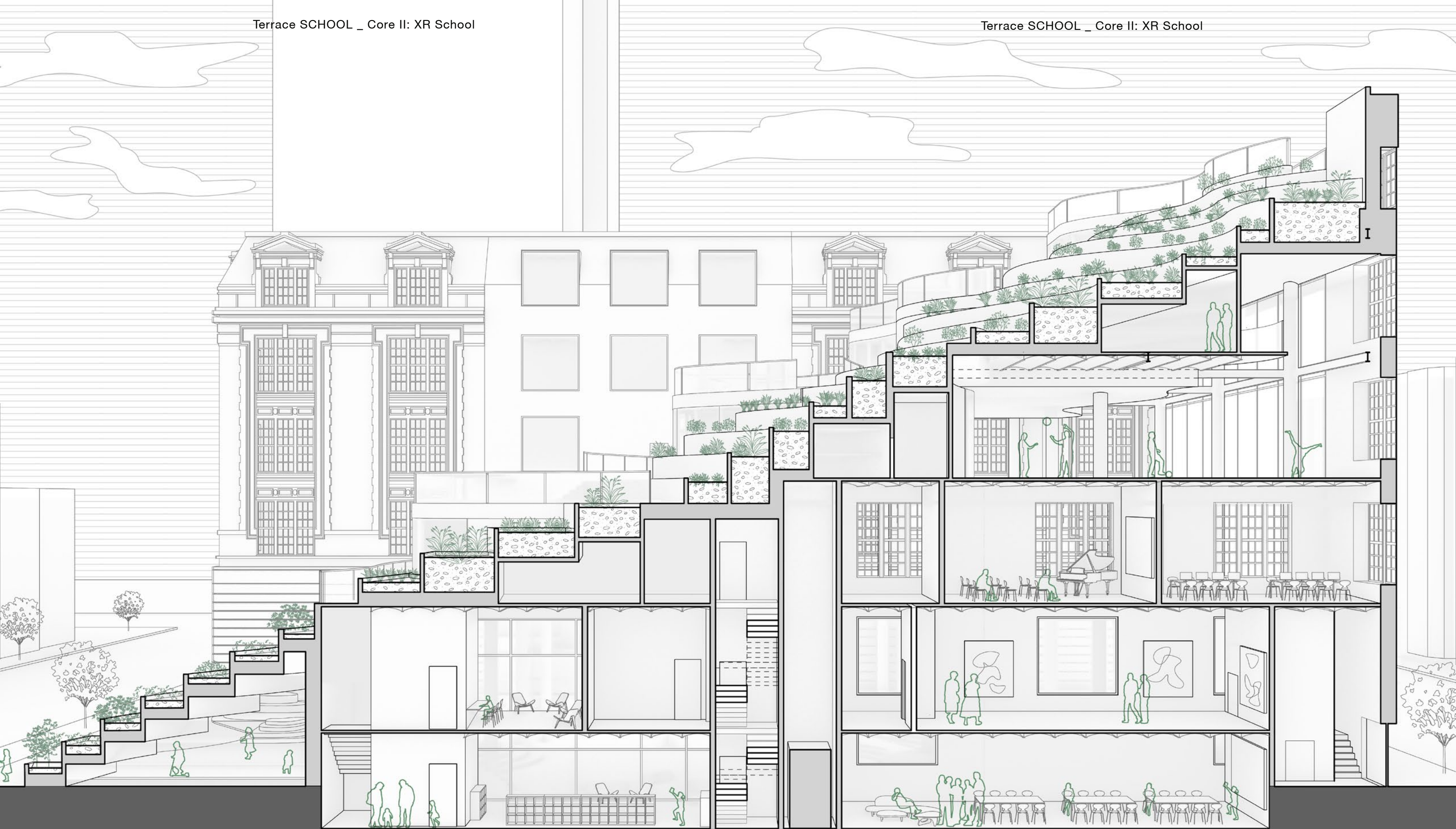
Partial demolition



Determine sun exposure area



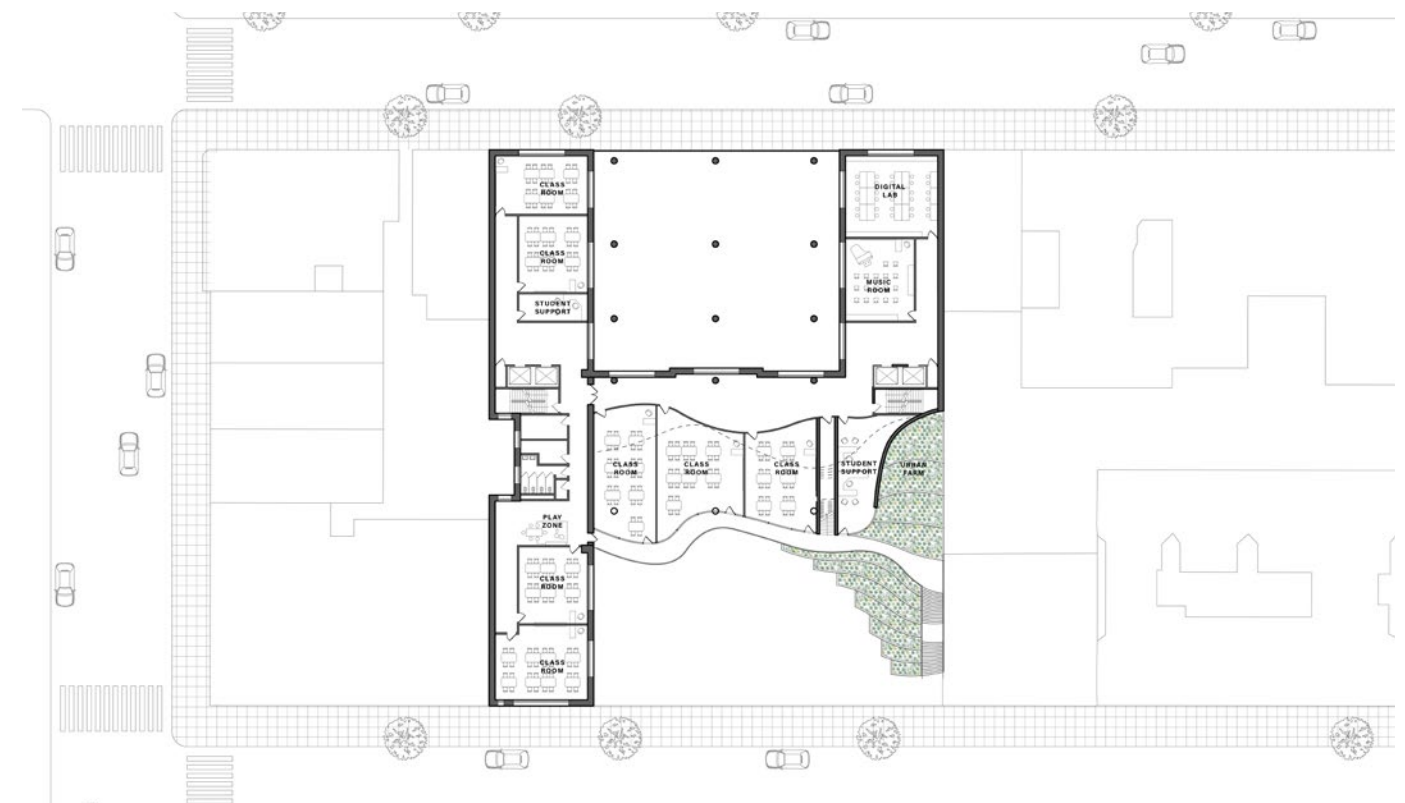
Insert urban farm + Classrooms



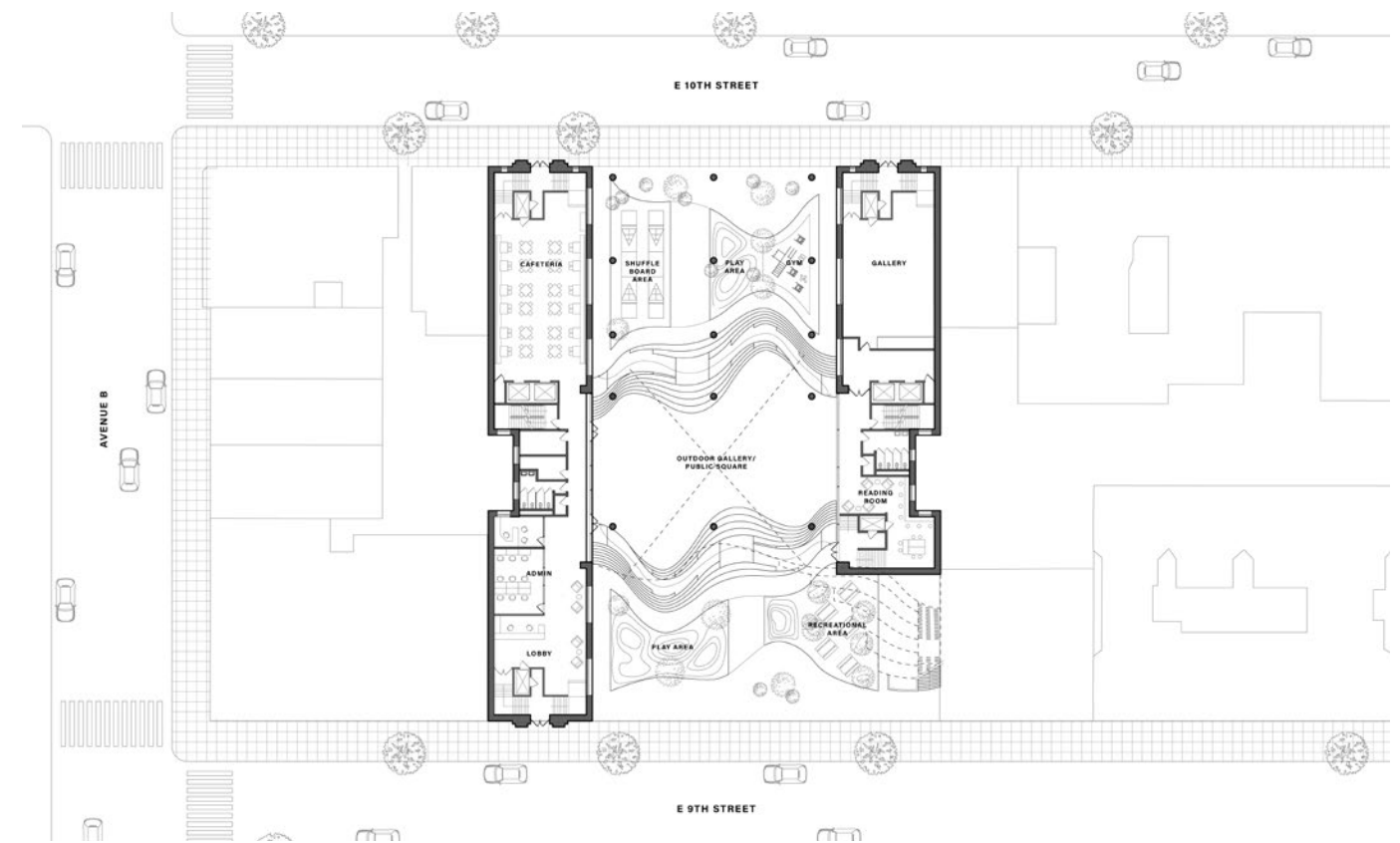
Section of Urban Farm, Classrooms, and Community Spaces



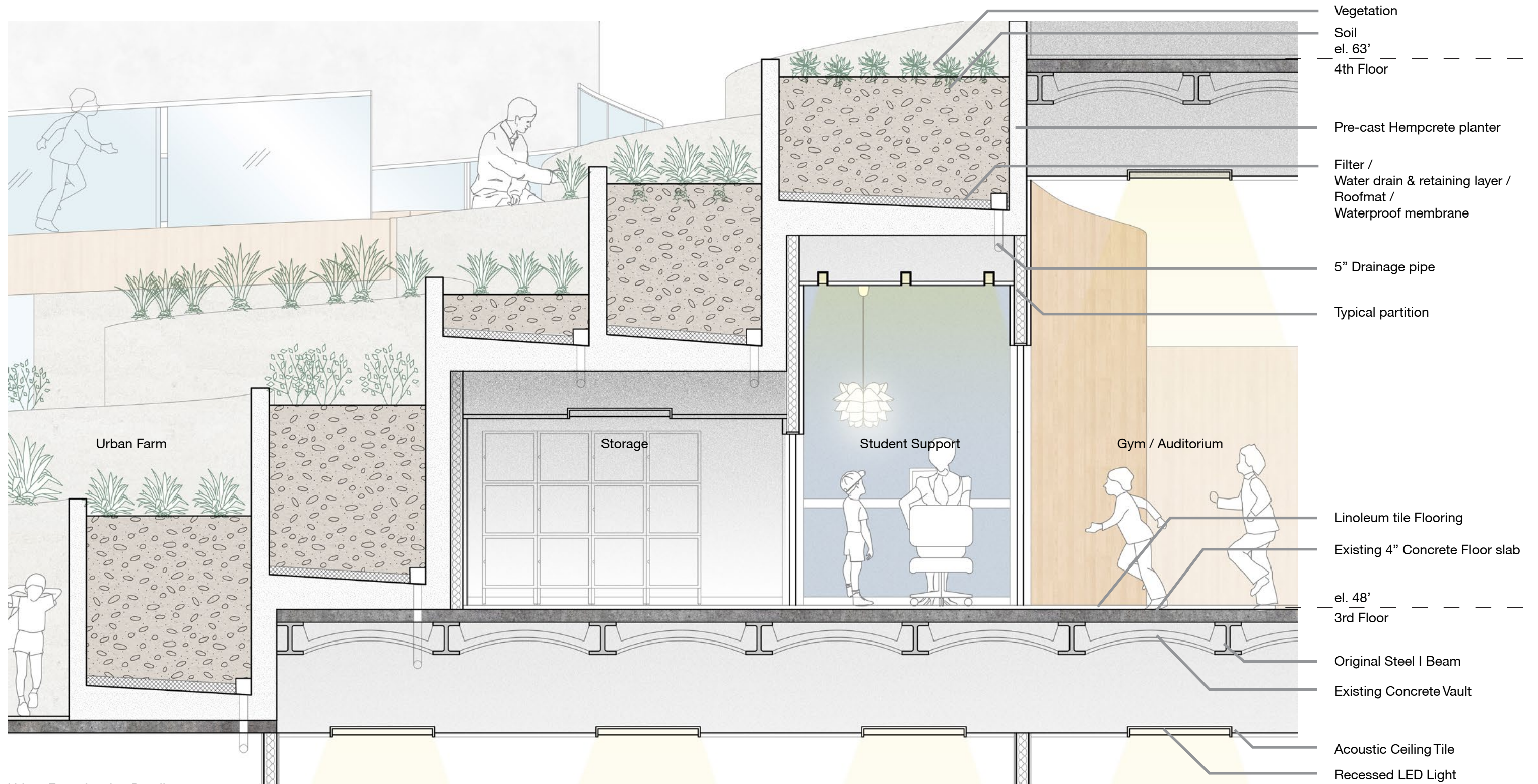
Outdoor Gallery and Protest Space



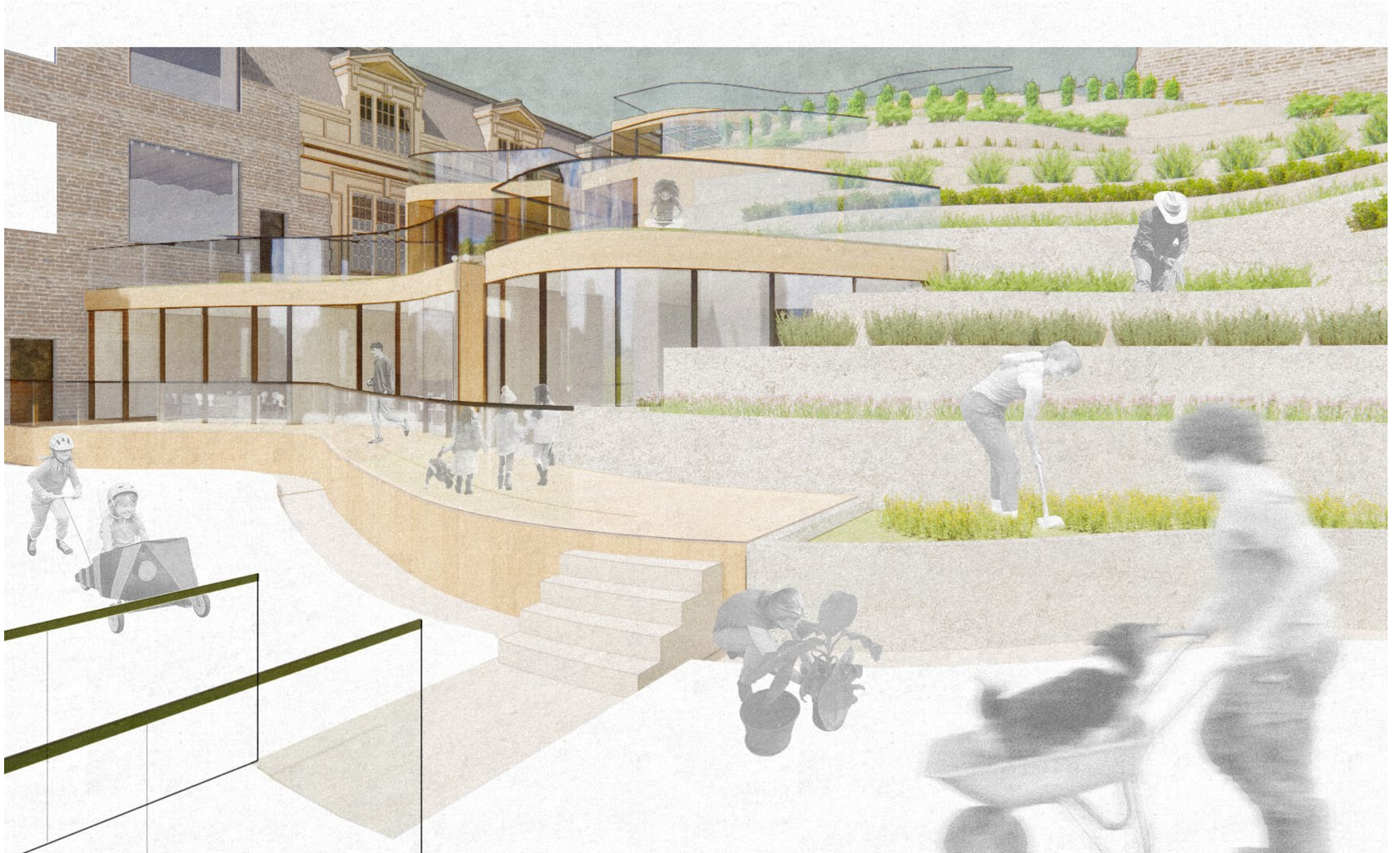
First Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan



Urban Farm Section Detail



Urban Farm and Classrooms

ScaffoldLOT

Core I_ Broadway Stories/
West Harlem

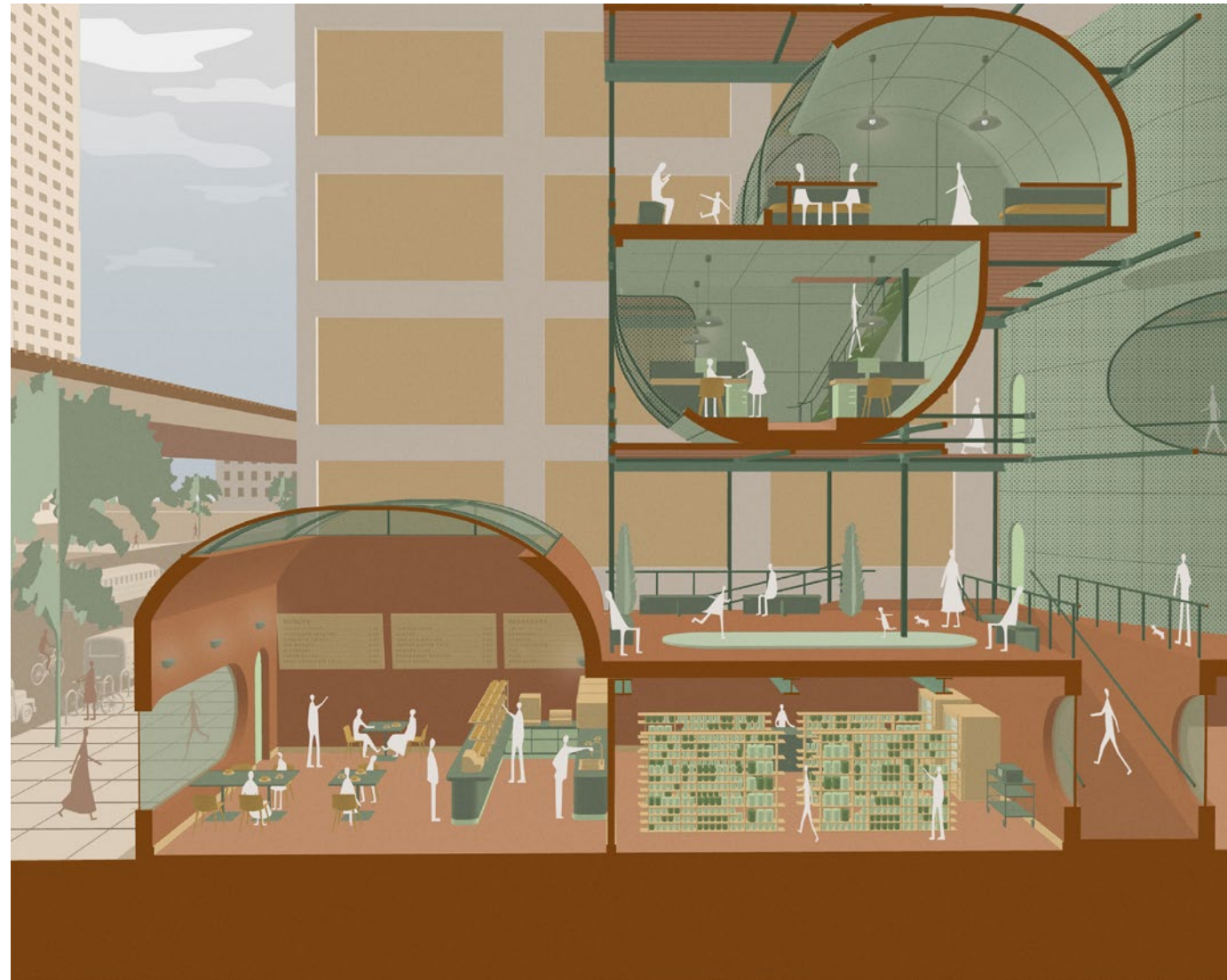
Fall 2020

Studio Critic: Alessandro Orsini

The initiative is situated in the parking lot of Columbia University and is a joint effort with the Harlem Business Alliance (HBA), a non-profit organization that aims to promote economic empowerment within the West Harlem community by providing education, assistance, and advocacy for black-owned businesses and entrepreneurs. The construction is attached to the Columbia Nash building, utilizing scaffolding as an architectural solution to the disruption caused by the university's campus expansion plan.



Section of Community Center



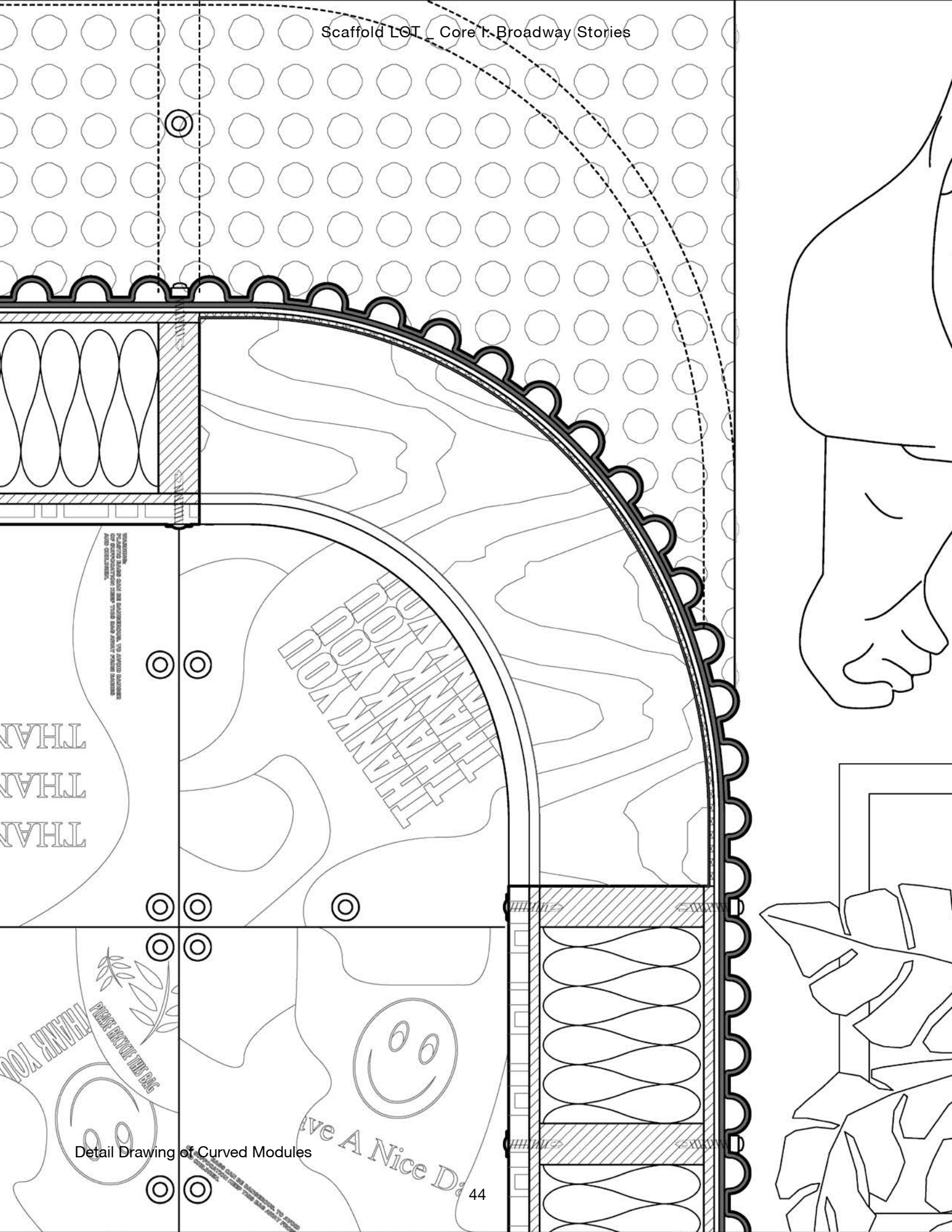
Section of Community Center



Model of Cafe Interior



Model of Community Center



Detail Drawing of Curved Modules



1:1 Detail model of Curved Modules



1:1 Detail model of Window Modules

Core III __ Housing
Fall 2021

In Collaboration with
Rose Zhang

Studio Critic: Alicia Olushola Ajayi

Our housing proposal reimagines systems of waste as a means to restore environmental comfort and facilitate a reclamation of sensory ownership. Historically, the South Bronx has been disproportionately affected by the municipality's waste management system. The distrust between urban governance and its inhabitants was exacerbated by resulting health injustices, environmental inequality, and a loss of home. How can systems of waste be reimagined as a means to restore environmental comfort and facilitate a reclamation of sensory ownership?

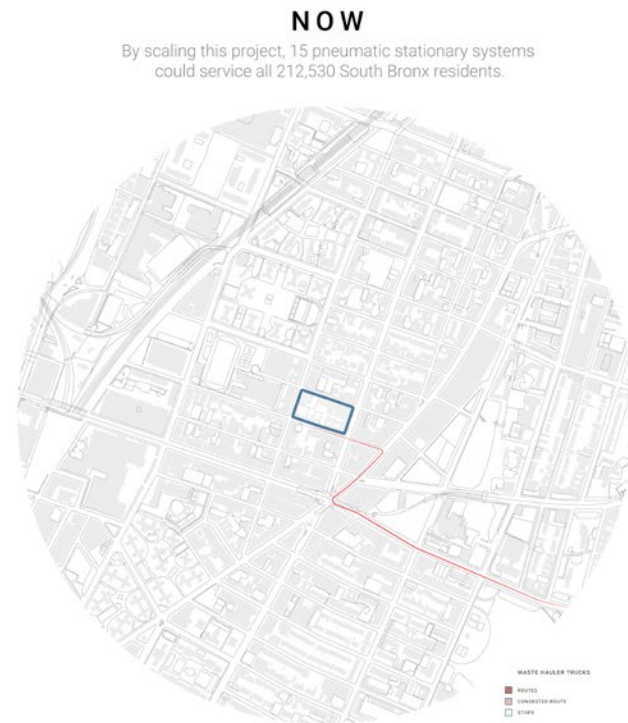


Project Model

Our housing proposal reimagines systems of waste as a means to restore *environmental comfort* and facilitate a *reclamation of sensory ownership*.



VS

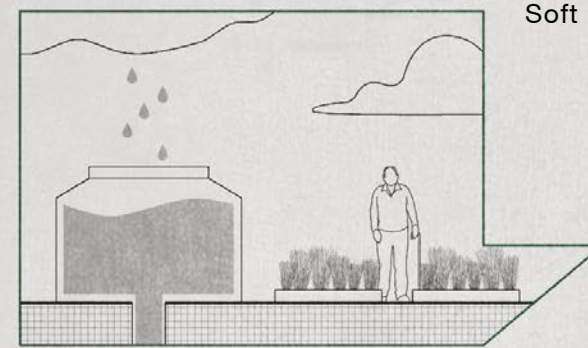


47,450 miles driven per year
25,550 driving hours per year
7,200 trucks traverse the South Bronx every day

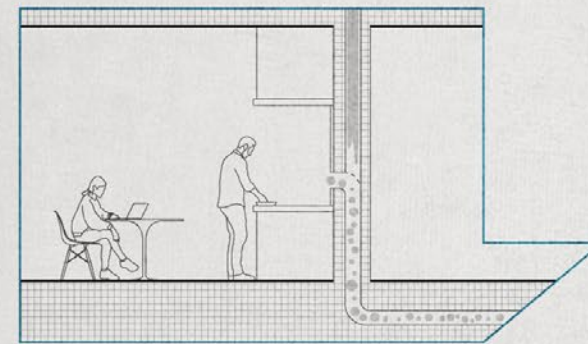
328.5 miles driven per year
36.5 driving hours per year
15 trucks traverse the South Bronx every day

Current Truck Route versus Pneumatic System Proposal

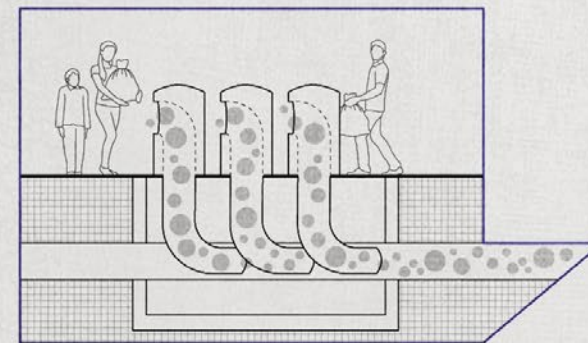
Waste System Diagram



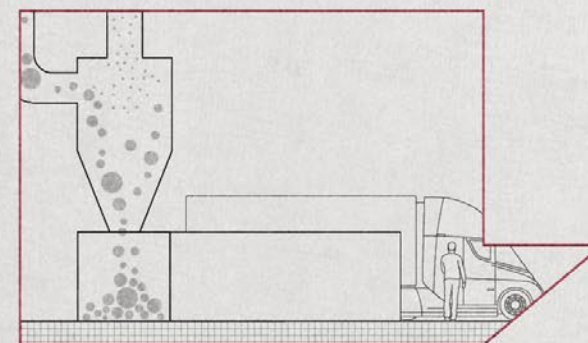
ROOFTOP:
RAINWATER COLLECTION TANK



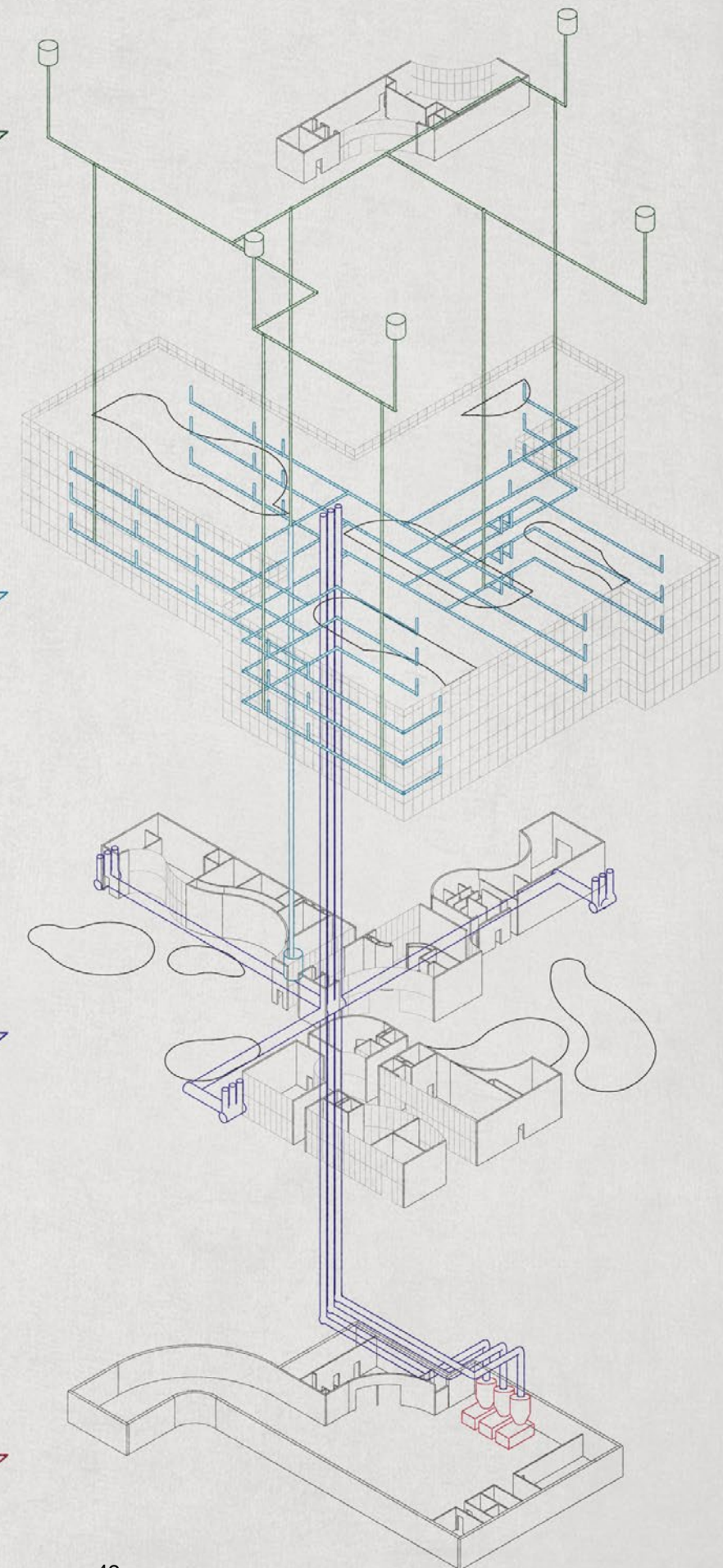
RESIDENCE FLOORS:
COMPOST PIPE SYSTEM FILTERED W/ RAINWATER

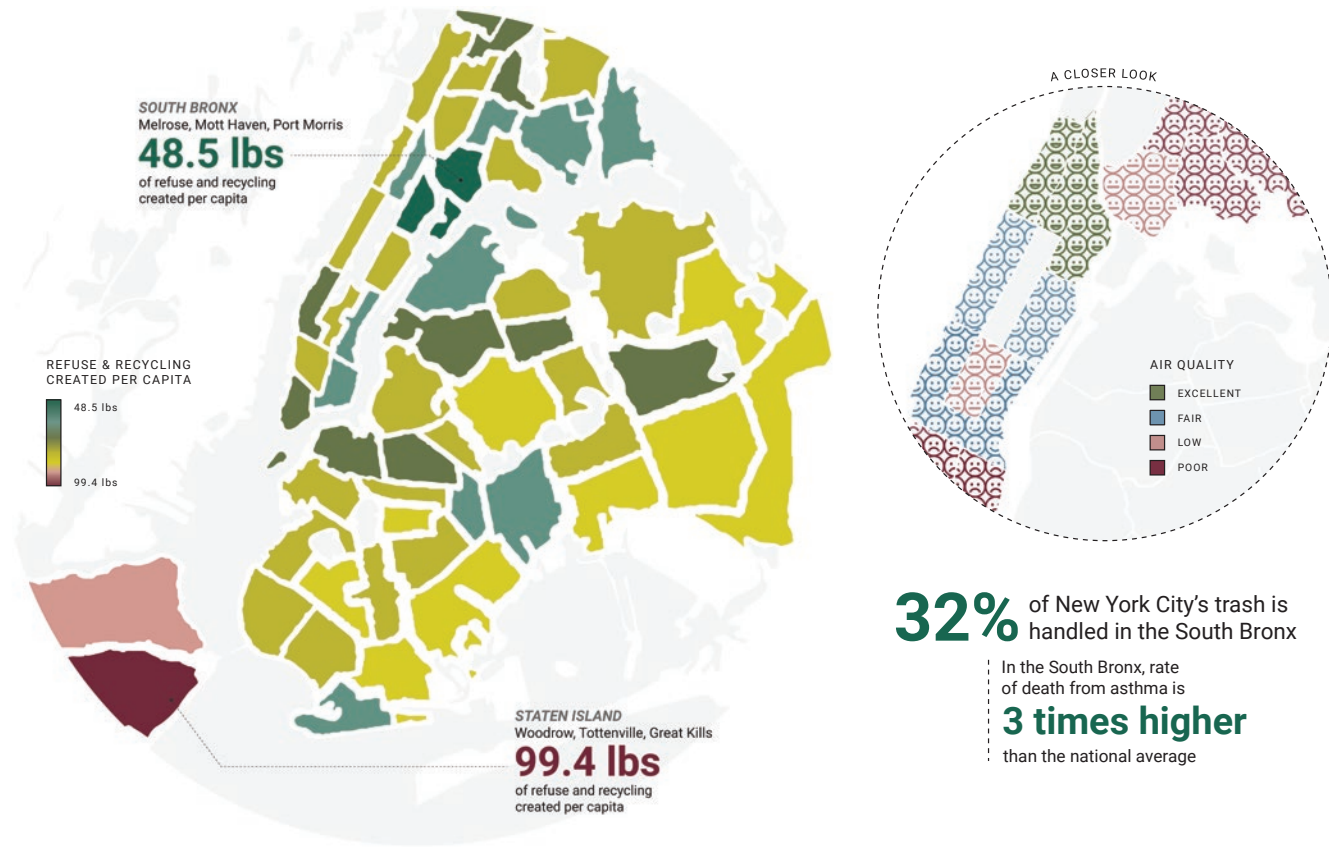


GROUND FLOOR:
OUTDOOR LOAD STATIONS

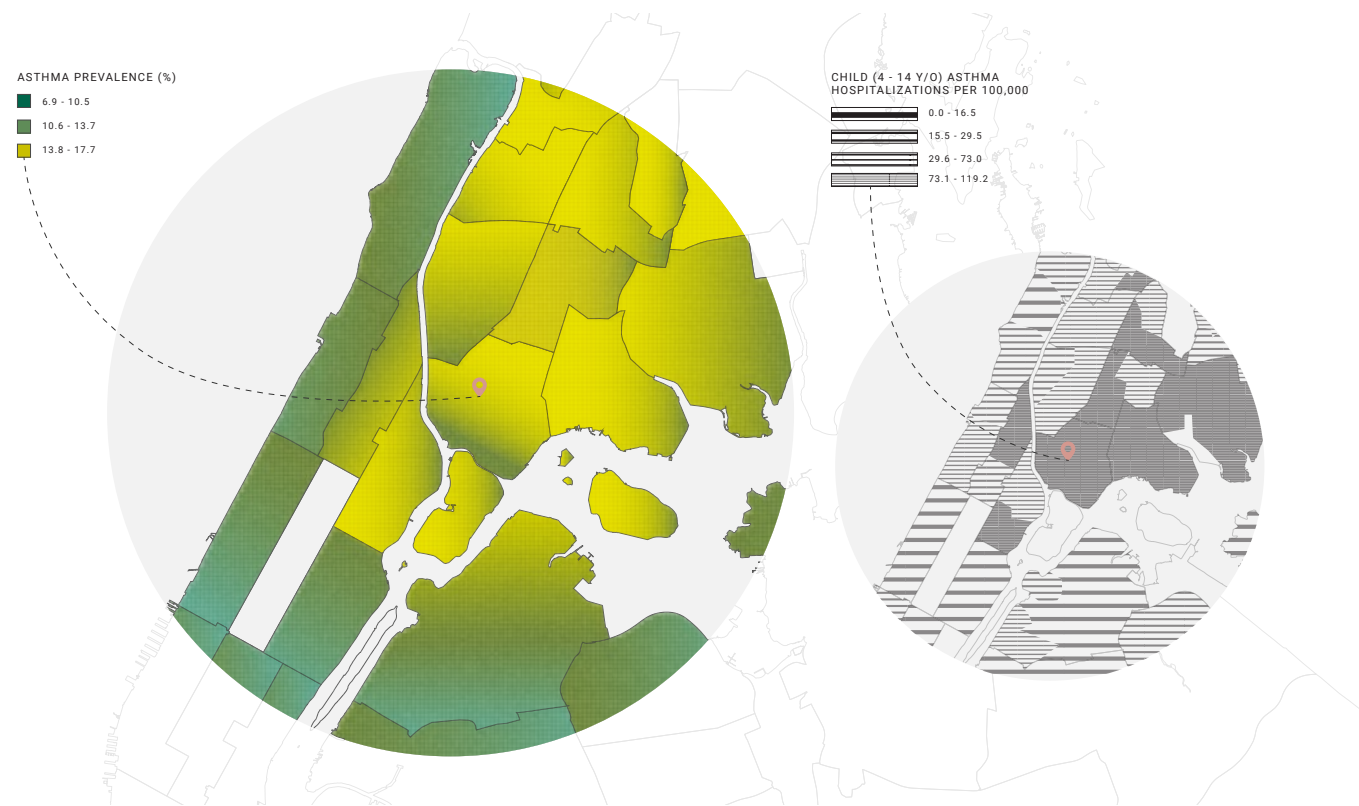


UNDERGROUND:
CYCLONE SEPARATOR & ARM ROLL BOX





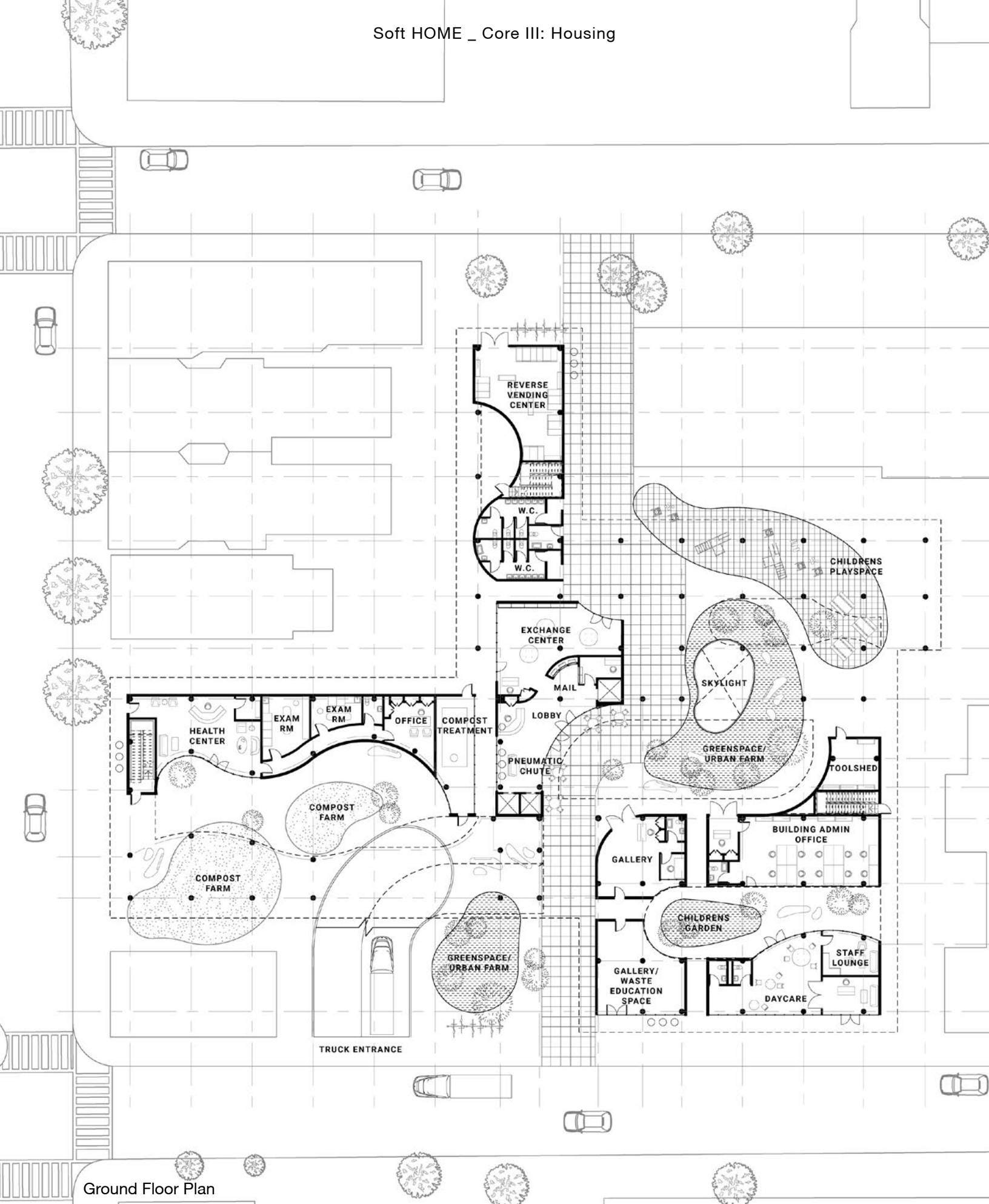
New York City Waste Map



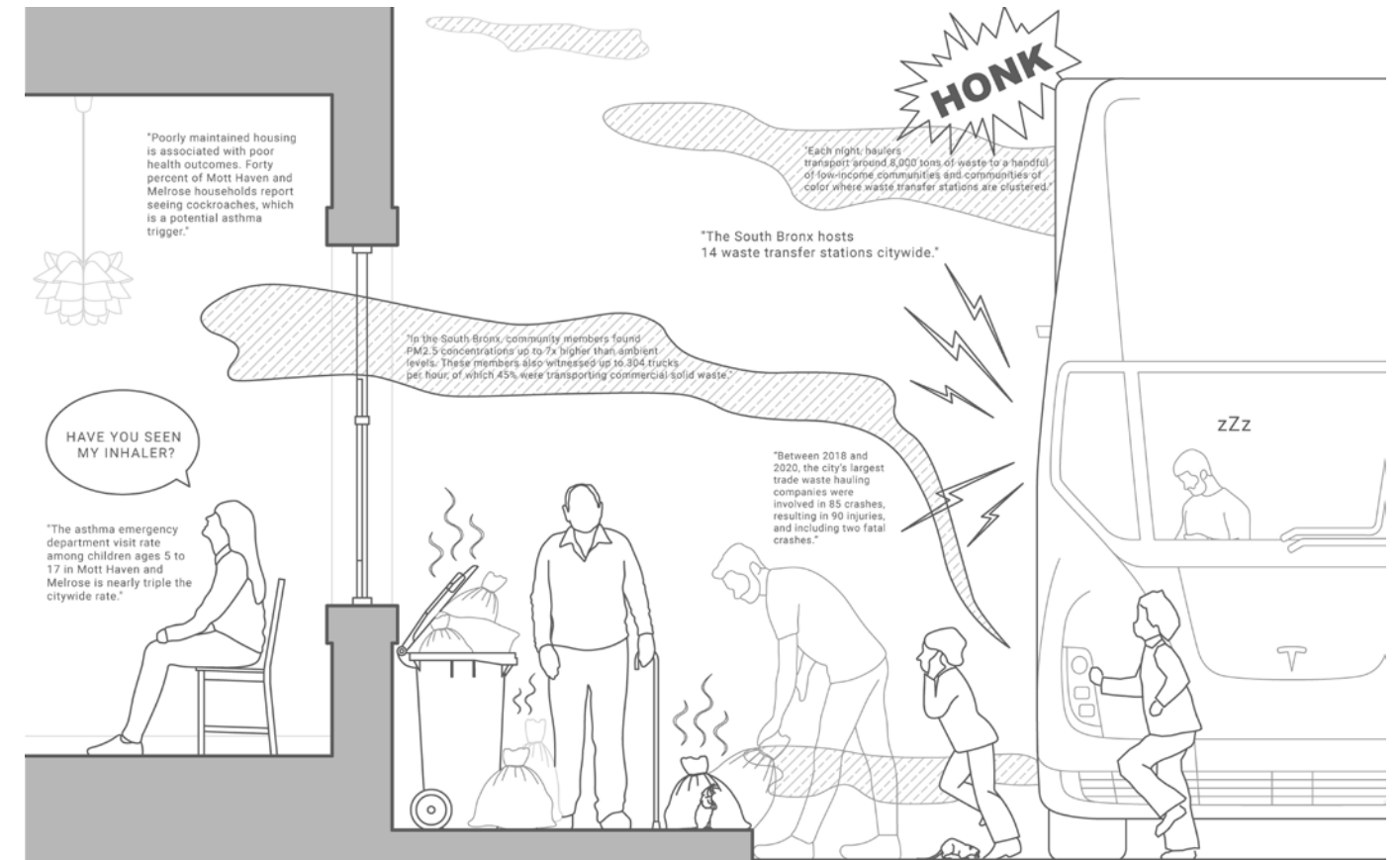
Asthma and Child Hospitalization Map



Corridor View



Ground Floor Plan



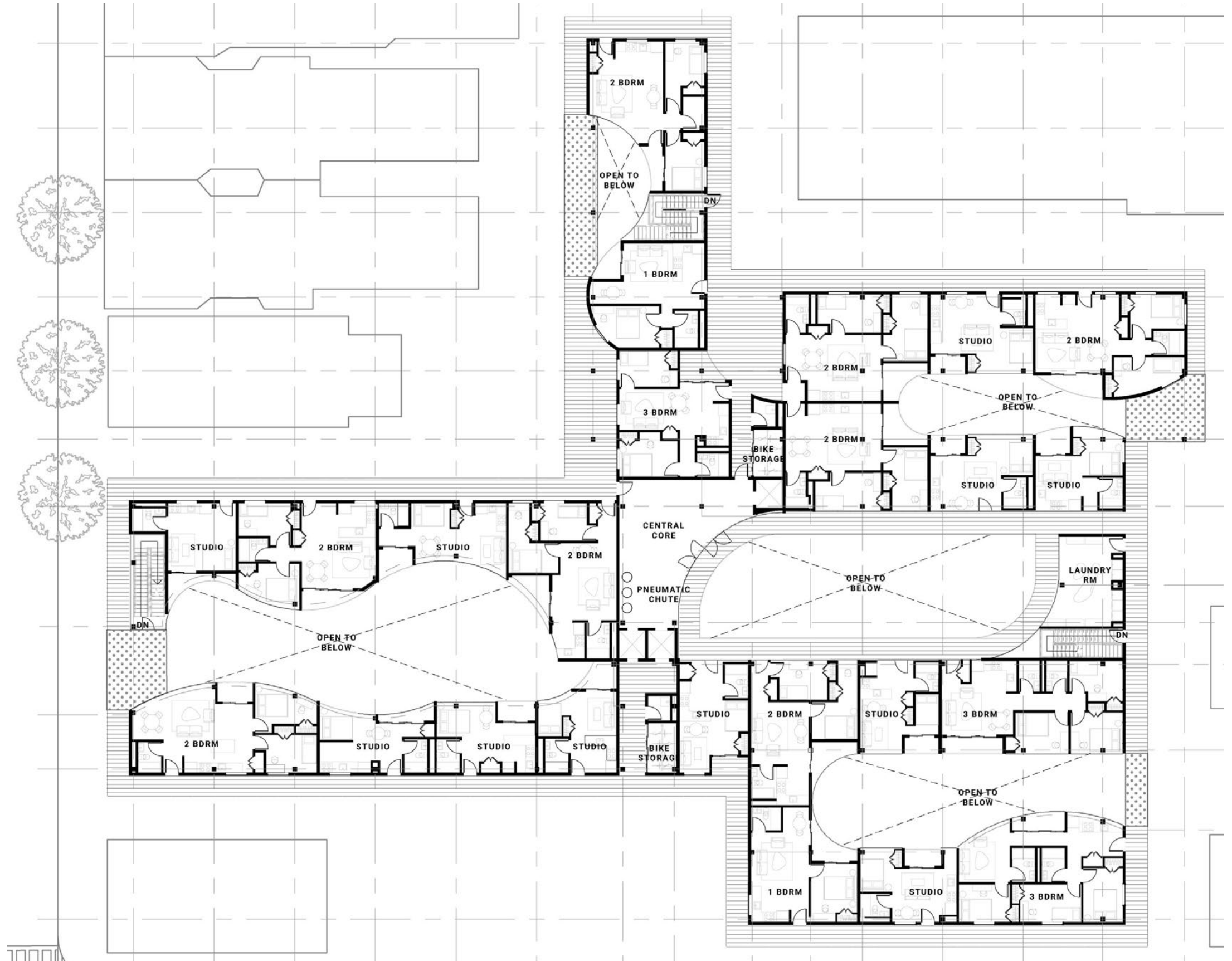
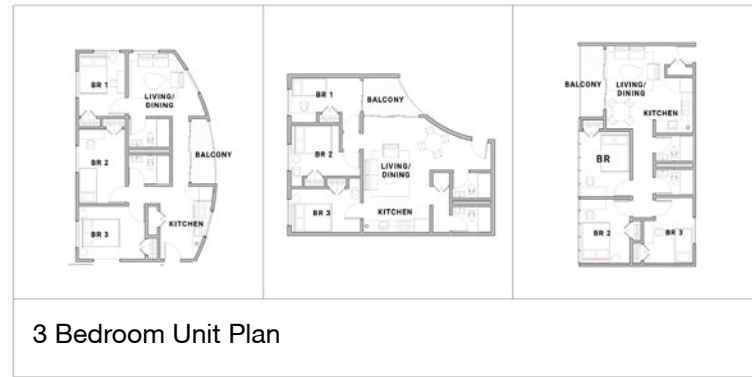
Current Environmental Comfort Issues in the South Bronx



Ground Floor Urban Farm View

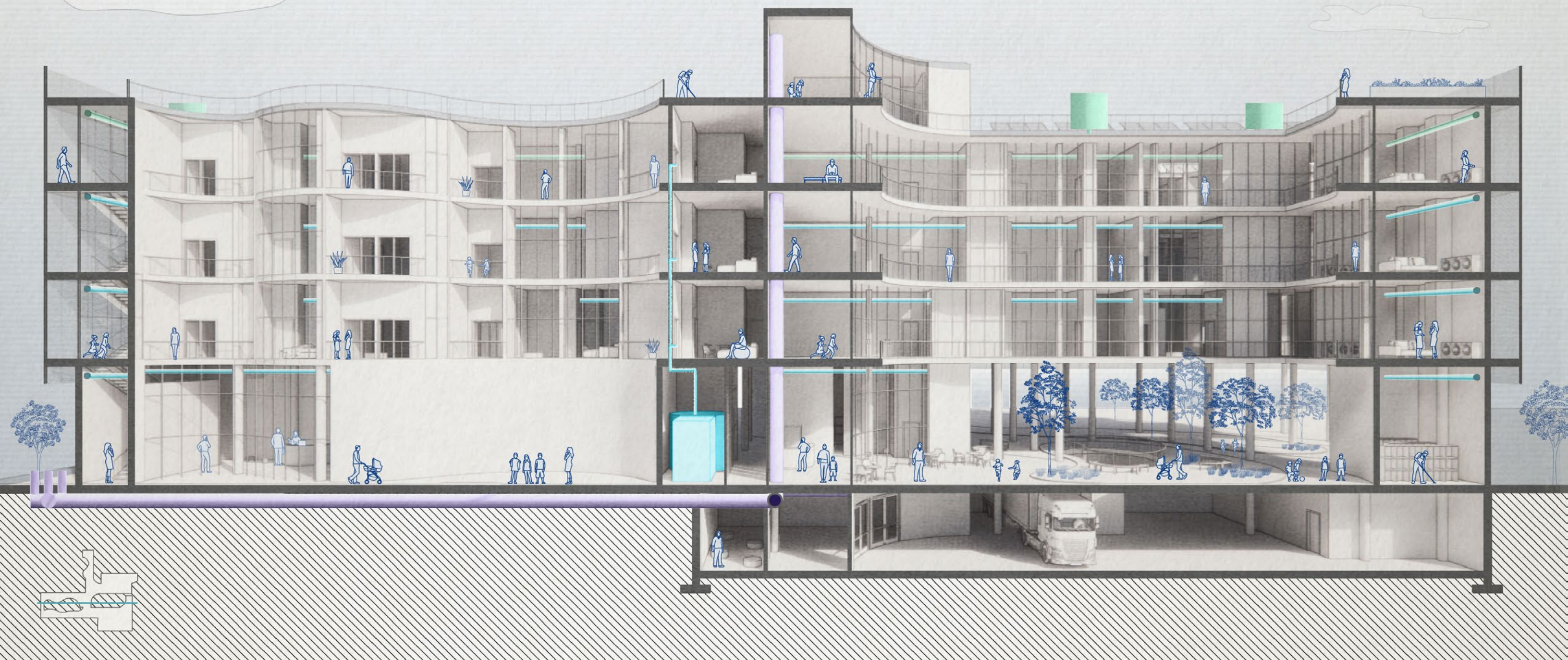


Exterior View



LEGEND

- COMPOST SYSTEM
- MAIN PNEUMATIC SYSTEM
- RAINWATER TANK SYSTEM



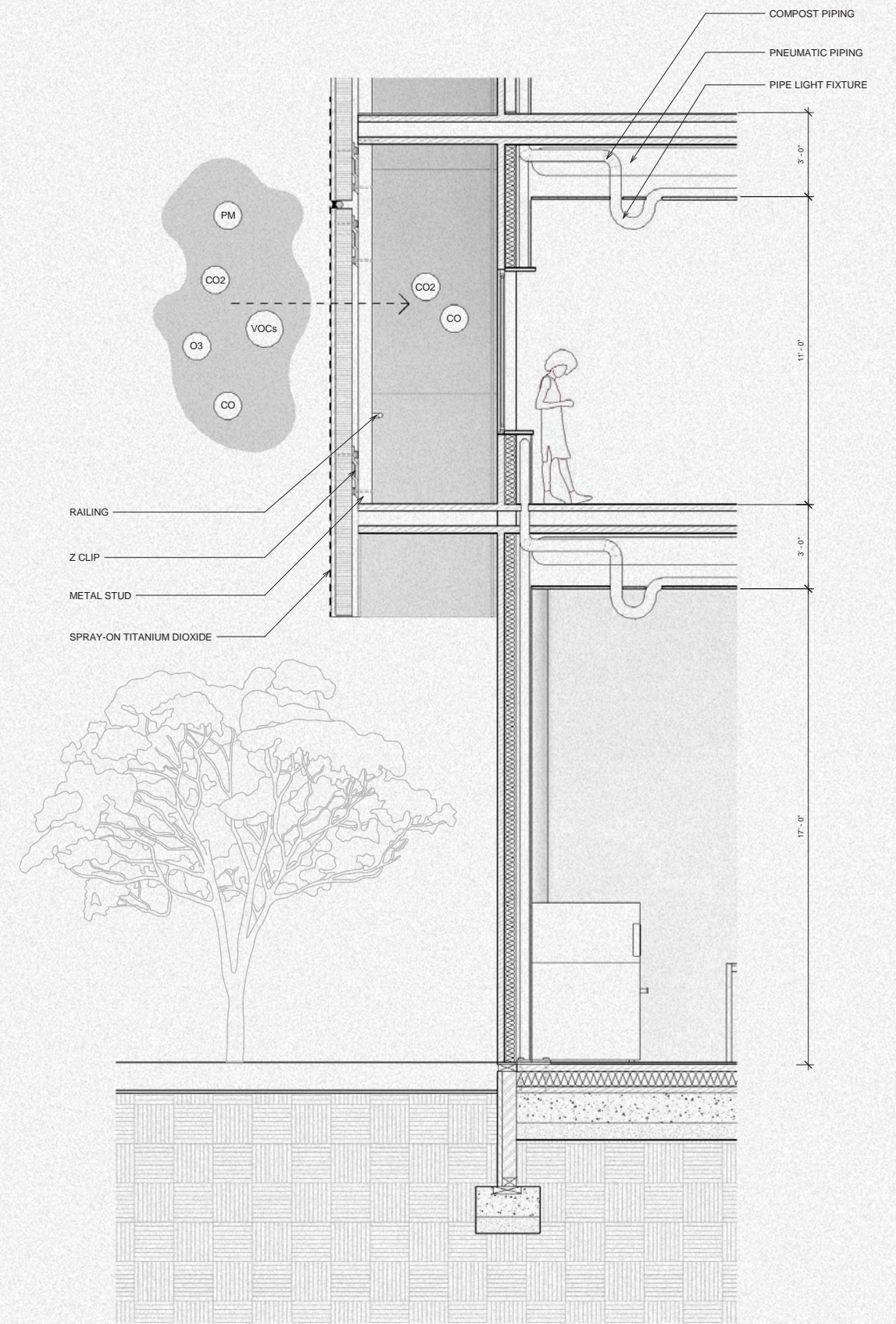
Section of Waste Systems



South Elevation



Exterior Night View



Facade Detail

SapLAB

ADV IV__Fringe Timber: The Ethics of Care in a Vertical Commons

Spring 2022

Studio Critic: Lindsey Wikstrom

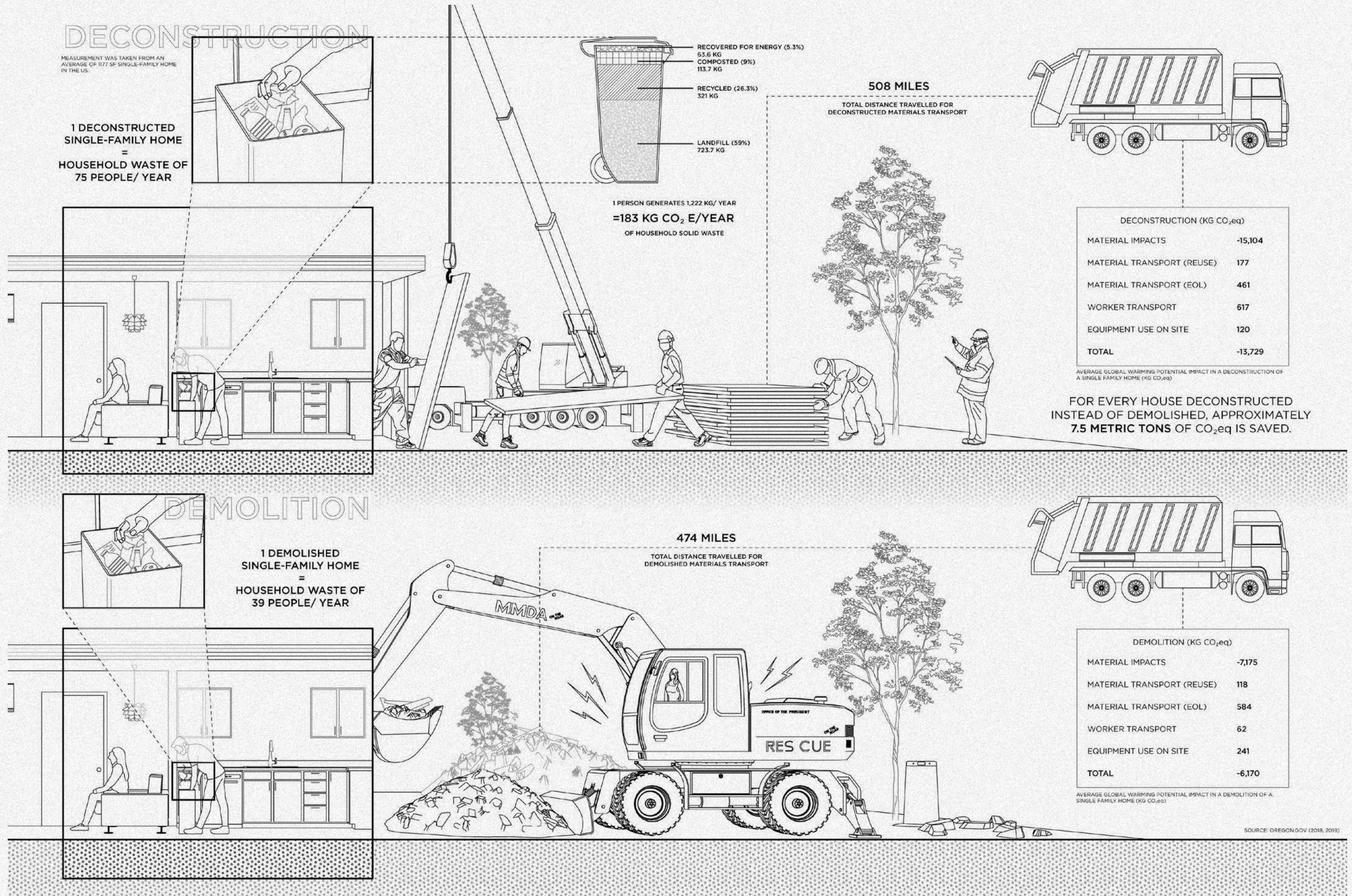
The proposal reimagines the integration of invasive species (Hemlock Woolly Adelgid) into the project's infrastructure as a means to preserve the native Eastern Hemlock trees population. How can humans collaborate with other species to form new structures without depleting the earth's natural resources?

By studying the behavior of invasive species (HWA), this informs how the project can utilize the species to benefit the forest's ecosystem. Following the principles of a circular economy in wood manufacturing, the project acts as

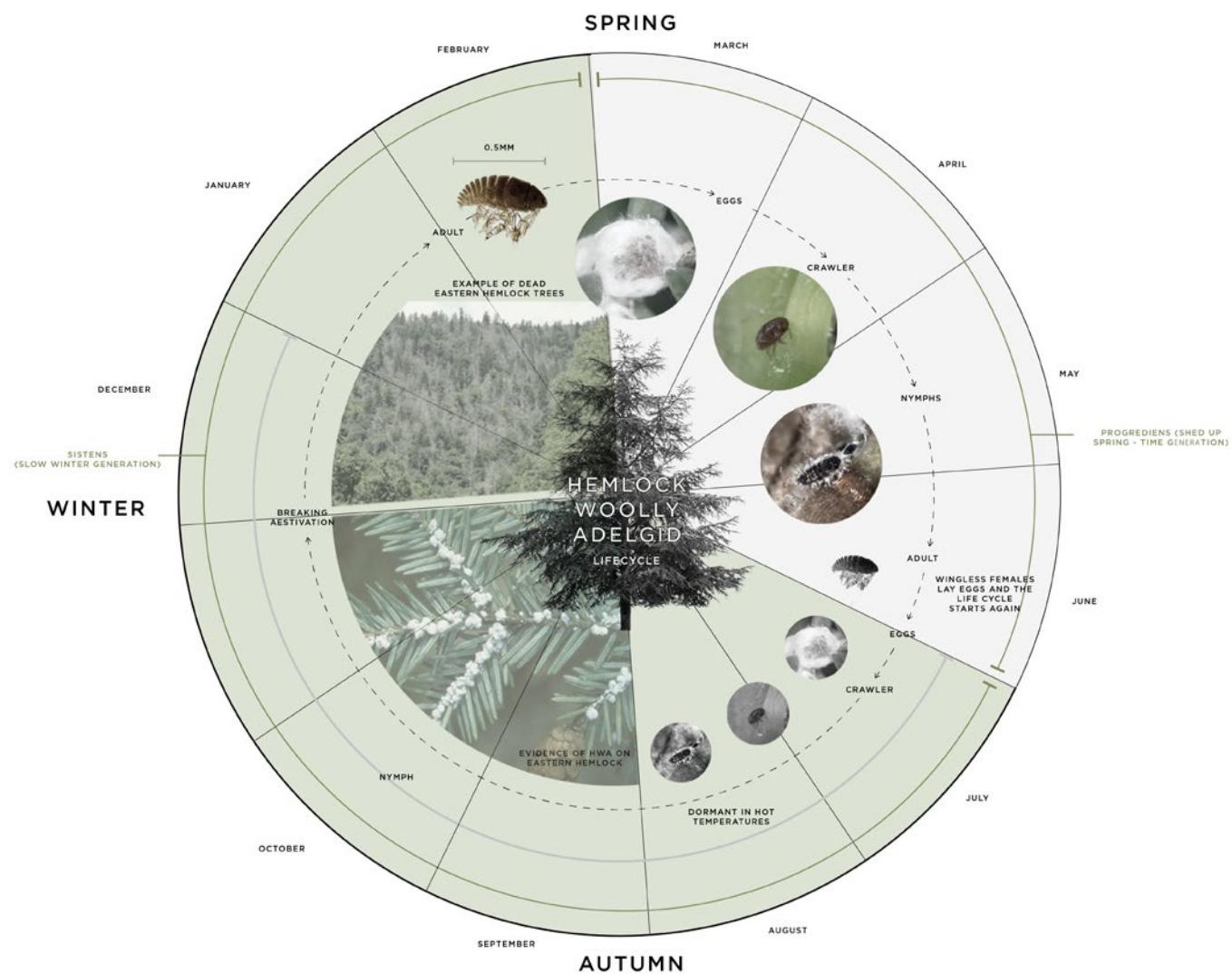
a network between human and the natural environment to further adapt ourselves to the inevitable climate emergency future. How are we able to follow similar models such as silk manufacturing to further collaborate with other species?

More information on Hemlock Wolly Adelgid:
<https://arccg.is/KrDD9>





Waste of Deconstruction Versus Demolition of Wood Frame Single Family Home



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Life Cycle



Silkworm

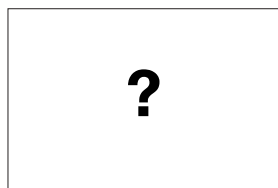


Silk

=



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid



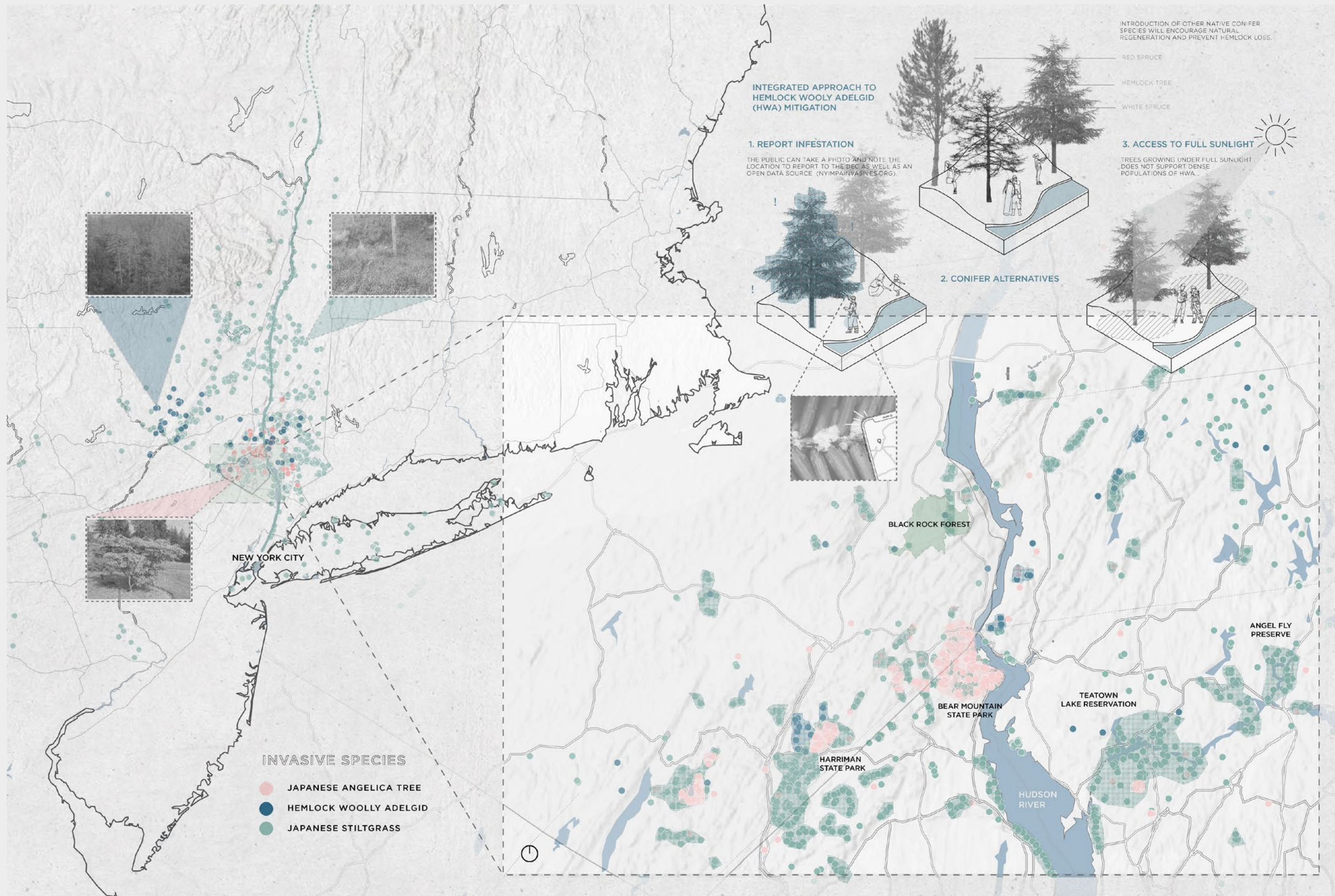
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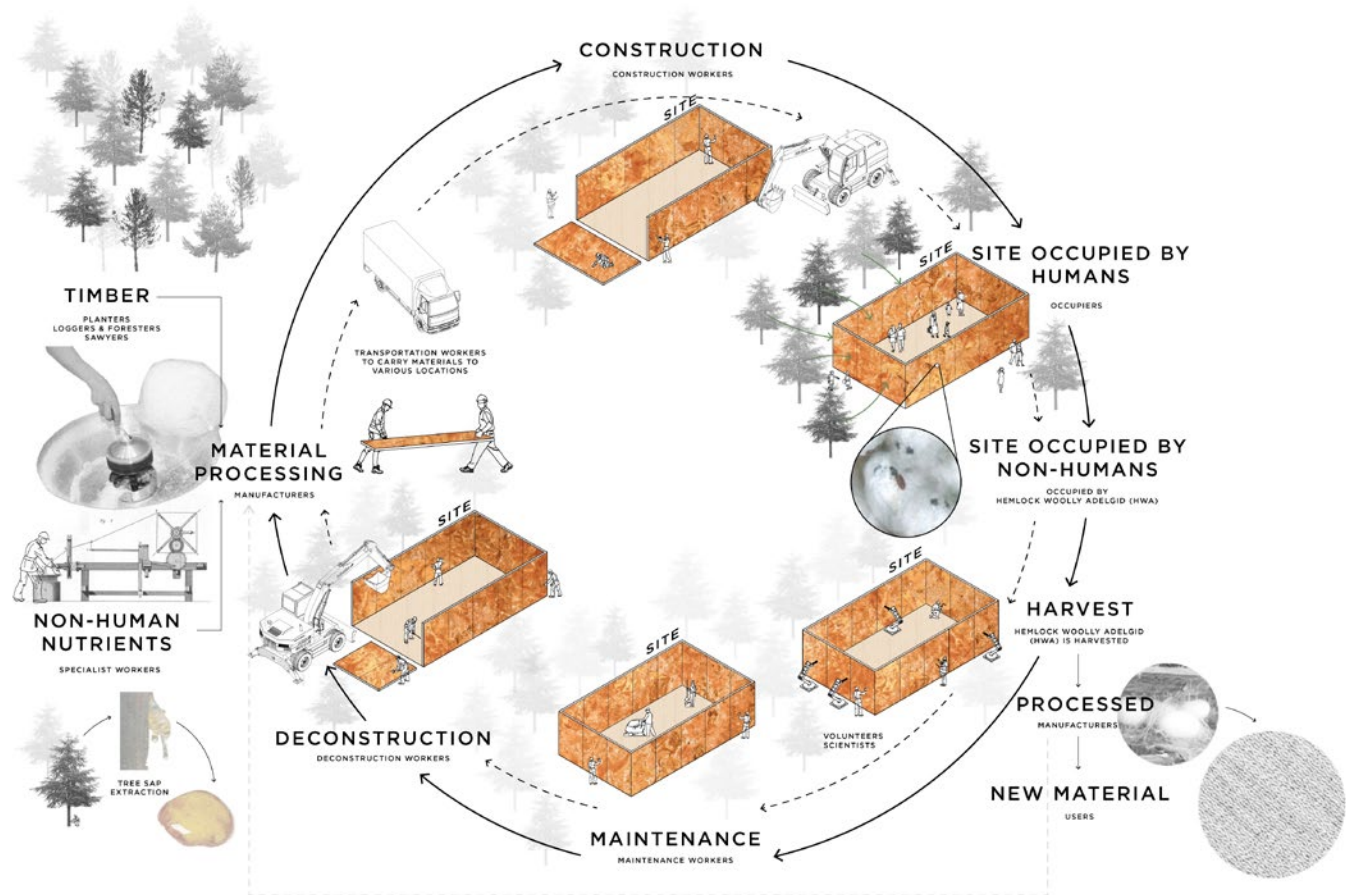
The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid are aphid-like insects that feed on the sap at the base of Eastern Hemlock needles which disrupt the nutrient flow, causing the needles to fall off. Without the needles, the Eastern Hemlocks starve and die, usually within 3-5 years within the initial attack.

To protect themselves, HWA generates woolly wax ball coatings. These coatings can serve as a marker for foresters to identify infested sites.



Research Facility and Mass Timber Factory





Project System Overview

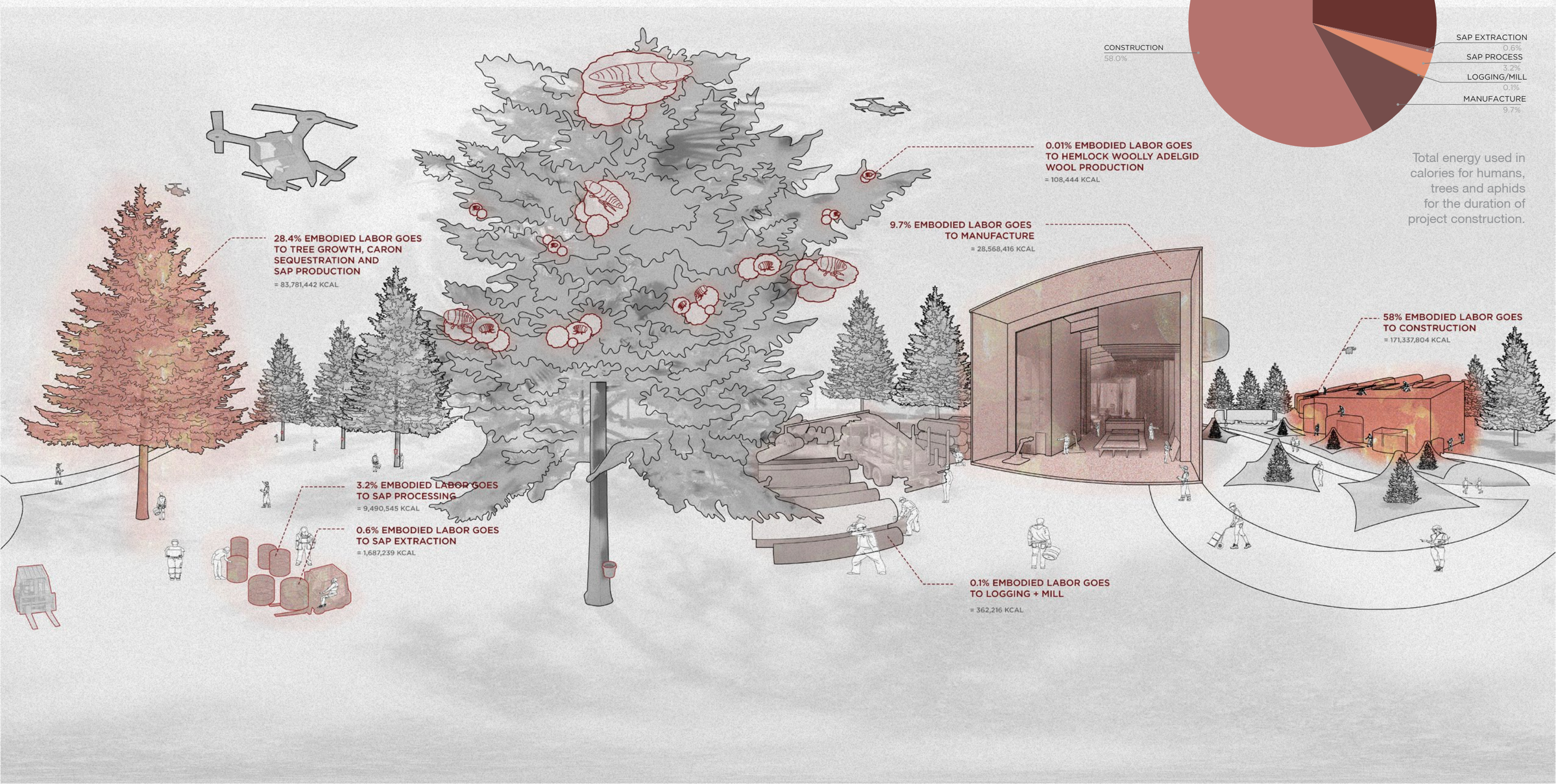


Research Facility Section



Model of Research Facility made with Sap

The research highlights the embodied labor and carbon in the production and construction process of mass timber and tree sap for a Hemlock Woolly Adelgid research facility. It explores on the relationship between human and non-human. The investigation centralizes the integration of invasive species (Hemlock Woolly Adelgid) to the project's infrastructure as a way to preserve the native Eastern Hemlock trees population.



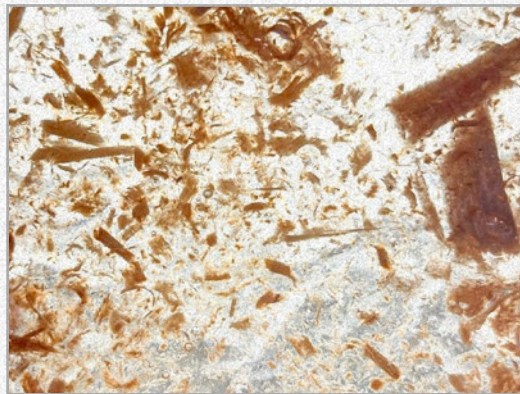
Material Testing



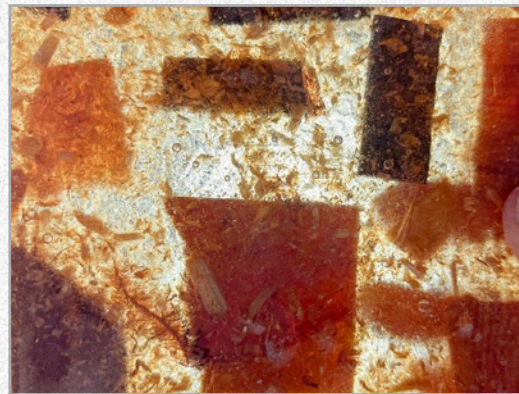
1.
50% Sap (Not Melted)
50% Saw Dust



2.
70% Sap
30% Saw Dust



3.
90% Sap
10% Saw Dust



4.
50% Sap
20% Saw Dust
30% Wood Chips

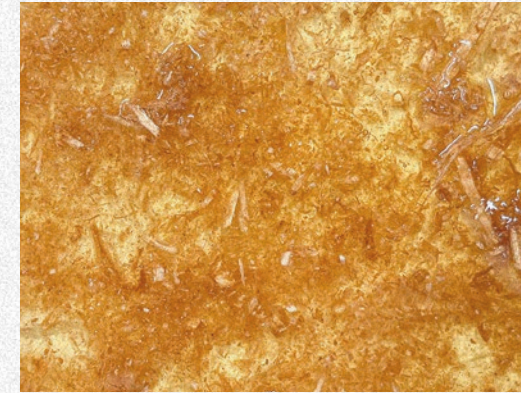


5.
100% Sap (Laser Cut Etched)



6.
80% Sap
20% Saw Dust

Material Testing



7.
80% Sap
20% Saw Dust



8.
60% Sap
20% Saw Dust
20% Wood Chips



9.
40% Sap
20% Saw Dust
40% Wood Chips



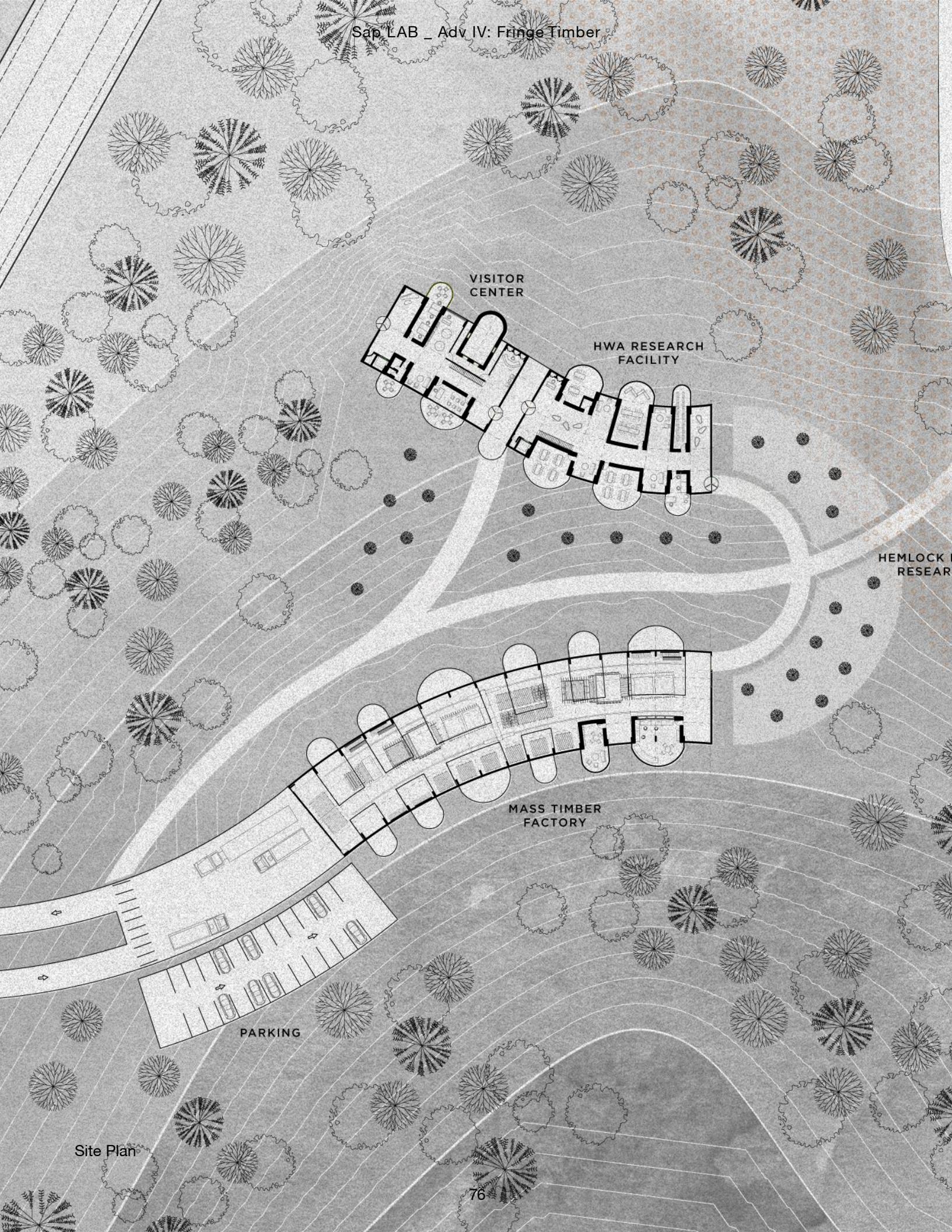
10.
30% Sap
20% Saw Dust
50% Wood Chips



11.
40% Sap
50% Saw Dust
10% Wood Chips



12.
100% Sap
(Laser Cut Etched)



Site Plan



Research Facility Collage



CLT Factory View

DamascusROOM

Building Islam
Spring 2024

*Art institutions and the
reproduction of secular spaces*

Professor: Ziad Jamaledine

The reproduction and display of the 'Damascus Room' in contemporary museums and its collection has become the subject of a new method of foreign appropriation of domesticity. The cultural exportation for displaying Damascus Rooms has become prevalent in both Western and non-Western art institutions. This zine aims to catalog and create a taxonomy of current Damascus Rooms across museums, offering images and analysis that extend beyond their architectural significance.

The Damascus Room's evolution has been the focal point for such dialogue between cultures and civilizations as it condenses an interpretive time capsule of private domesticity in a public museum setting. However, what is important to note is the narrative of the curator-as-author and the creation of the room's style through contemporary museums and their Islamic Art department. Similar to Nouvel's Louvre Abu Dhabi, in Biln's words, "Nouvel recognizes that whatever the 'Arab' is, it will remain out of the grasp of his architecture; that any dualities presented in the work will always remain within the interpretative economy of the West."

The cataloging project/zine hopes to illustrate the collecting practice done by European dealers and curators of fragmented Syrian interiors to be displayed as a marvel relic of "Islamic Art." What is not told to visitors is the process of purchasing, de-installing, and exporting of these spaces. The conception to display the rooms is linked to earlier travel experiences of the European cultural elite who have recalled the caliber of the Syrian domestic architecture they visited. Art dealers then appropriated Damascus Rooms as charming display environments for a heterogeneous range of Middle Eastern objects that appeal to private clients and museum curators.

To hold possession of an interior in a museum's permanent collection is a novelty, much different from the traditional mediums of works of art. Taken into question the renowned 2011 reopening of the "The Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a pinnacle question to interrogate is, in Nasser Rabbat's words, "How can a museum reconcile its traditional mission of showing, explaining, and contextualizing art with other, para-artistic aims—diplomatic, political, and, dangerously, ideological?"

The Damascus Room at the MET lives between cultural and artistic. As a curatorial team, the overall goal is to create a space for education and speculation on the culture through art. Interior replications, such as the Damascus Room, provide an architectural ambiance and space to contextualize artifacts on a semi-immersive scale. Distinctive local traditions of the Ottoman Empire, such as wood carving, carpets, and metalware, can all be seen represented in Damascus Rooms across the globe. It attempts to synthesize a wider context, allowing for the broadest and most nuanced understanding of each artifact. Such an approach becomes a contemporary curatorial trend of emphasizing the unity and linearity of Islamic art instead of only rooting the art in specific geographies and linguistic realms of the Islamic World.

The Damascus Room allows the curators to superimpose and distort their preconceptions of Islamic Art. It puts architectural elements at the forefront and reimagines the everyday life of a Syrian household. It fragments the context of the domestic to a singular space where visitors can marvel at the intricacies of what life during the Ottoman Empire was like. This method of displaying Architectural History is a selective tool constructed by Western museums in the late 19th century that cleanses the labor and craft of the people into a sterilized environment where one can simply gaze at the space but not enter it. In line with Andrew McClellan's essay "Cosmocharlatanism," the Damascus Room is part of a colonial practice of collecting in the name of cosmopolitanism and the assumption that only powerful institutions, like Western museums, can safely preserve the world's heritage.

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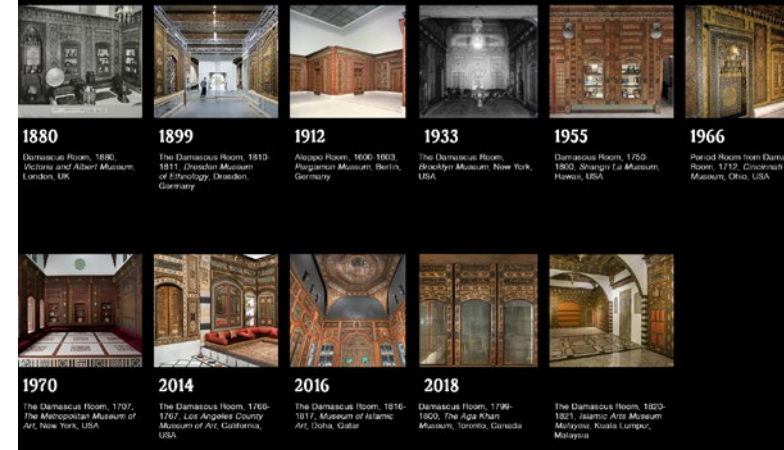
Frederick Leighton, 2nd Earl of Rosbery, 1852-1906, *The Damascus Room*, 1887-88. Oil painting on canvas.



James Ward, *An Upper Room in the House of Mohamed Aga Chikriani, Damascus, May 1847*. Watercolor painting on sketchbook page, 41.8 x 29.8 cm, London, USA.

The "Damascus Room" is a period room that recreates a residential reception chamber (qa'a) typical of the late Ottoman period in Damascus, Syria. The interiors were a private dwelling space for urban notables and featured wood paneling, conical alcove doors, windows, and ceilings well decorated in bright colors, metalwork, and calligraphy.

Aquisition Timeline



1880
Damascus Room, 1880, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

1899
The Damascus Room, 1891, Dresden Museum of Ethnology, Dresden, Germany

1912
Alippo Room, 1600-1800, Pergamon Museum, Berlin, Germany

1933
The Damascus Room, Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA

1955
Damascus Room, 1750-1800, Shugart La Museum, Hawaii, USA

1966
Period Room from Damascus Room, 1712, Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio, USA

1970
The Damascus Room, 1707, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

2014
The Damascus Room, 1769-1767, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, USA

2016
The Damascus Room, 1816-1817, Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar

2018
Damascus Room, 1799-1800, The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, Canada

2018
The Damascus Room, 1800-1802, Islamic Art Museum Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

How the "first" Damascus room was procured by Caspar Purdon Clarke in January 1877

(later sold to South Kensington Museum for £850)

"I was taken to the houses of people who were anxious to sell but desirous of keeping from other residents the knowledge of their being compelled to part with heirlooms. Thus I acquired the Damascus Room now in the Museum and a unique pair of large panels of tiles with sunken niches now forming a part of Sir Frederick Leighton's Arab Hall. Many objects were offered upon the condition that they would be received as a gift but a return present in money would be received. This was nearly always a genuine offer made on account of a superstitious repugnance to sell family relics and the genuineness proved by the lowness of the sum asked. [...] The Damascus room was accepted as a gift, the return presented being fixed at £10 for the owner's family and £5 for the servants."

V&A Archive, ED/SA/265 (Official Visit), memo by Caspar Purdon Clarke, dated June 11, 1883.

'Ataba

Tazar



The MET, New York, USA



The MET, New York, USA

Windows



LACMA, California, USA



The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, Canada



Dresden Museum of Ethnology, Dresden, Germany

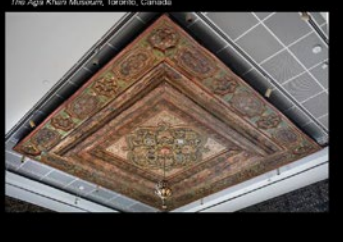


The MET, New York, USA

Ajami Ceilings



Dresden Museum of Ethnology, Dresden, Germany



The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, Canada



The MET, New York, USA

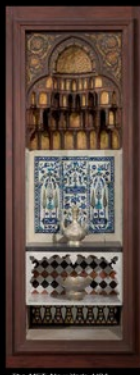
Calligraphy



ویدار قاب و رفاه اندوخته ای چون - در پیش وقت که عارفان از آن است
House of prosperity and pleasure, built with generosity, may rejecting
you be preserved eternally.
کاروان فرخنده و دیوان آرزوی دستاورد - بخاری نام برده است
Hands of nobility erected you in the highest dignity. Those seeking refuge
here are shields that protect them from destruction.
تاریک است منزلت این بستان و شادمانی - اگر در درونش دوستان از آن است
Turbidness and congratulations on your subjects, and the well-revered
summoner (?) warbles.
ویدار ای که این بستان است - در پیش وقت که عارفان از آن است
Riches in your address, for he who build you surpasses the planets
and stars in glory.
خیابان بر سر راه است - در پیش وقت که عارفان از آن است
For it comfort is given in every difficulty, ferocious lions come to it prostrate.
اصحاب این بستان است - در پیش وقت که عارفان از آن است
A hand that sits on its own throne who supports, as the sea waves
when it tumbles.
اصحاب این بستان است - در پیش وقت که عارفان از آن است
A family branch which bases its root to the most noble of men derives
more significance from high-born glory.
اصحاب این بستان است - در پیش وقت که عارفان از آن است
Then anyone who wears nobility as a cloak and is clothed in all splendor
among members.
اصحاب این بستان است - در پیش وقت که عارفان از آن است
They have made the office of noble and find of the commander's subvention,
time a slave, and the proud has been enslaved.
اصحاب این بستان است - در پیش وقت که عارفان از آن است
Raman is happy to purchase one of your items, and enjoy what has
been erected with such care for you.
اصحاب این بستان است - در پیش وقت که عارفان از آن است
Lazurizing in the shade of a life of ease, you achieve what you desire
in spite of enemies.
اصحاب این بستان است - در پیش وقت که عارفان از آن است
What has come to us is the case of what you have built so strongly as
a house for which wisdom cries out, "Rejoice!"
اصحاب این بستان است - در پیش وقت که عارفان از آن است
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Wall Panels, The Damascus Room, 1707, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

Niches



The MET, New York, USA



Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio, USA



Shugart La Museum, Hawaii, USA

Ajami/ Gesso Relief



LACMA, California, USA



Pergamon Museum, Berlin, Germany



Dresden Museum of Ethnology, Dresden, Germany



LACMA, California, USA



Wall from a Damascus Room, as installed at South Kensington Museum, Museum Guildbook photograph, Victoria & Albert Museum Archive, London, UK



Damascus House, 1833, Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA

Fragmented Damascus Rooms



Model of the Damascus Room used by Victoria Rooms, 1890. Pencil and watercolor on card, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK



Damascus House, 1833, Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA



A gathering of men in a reception room with wall textile cover, 1987, Nahiyet ad-Darbaniyya

Are contemporary museums appropriating the "Damascus Room"?

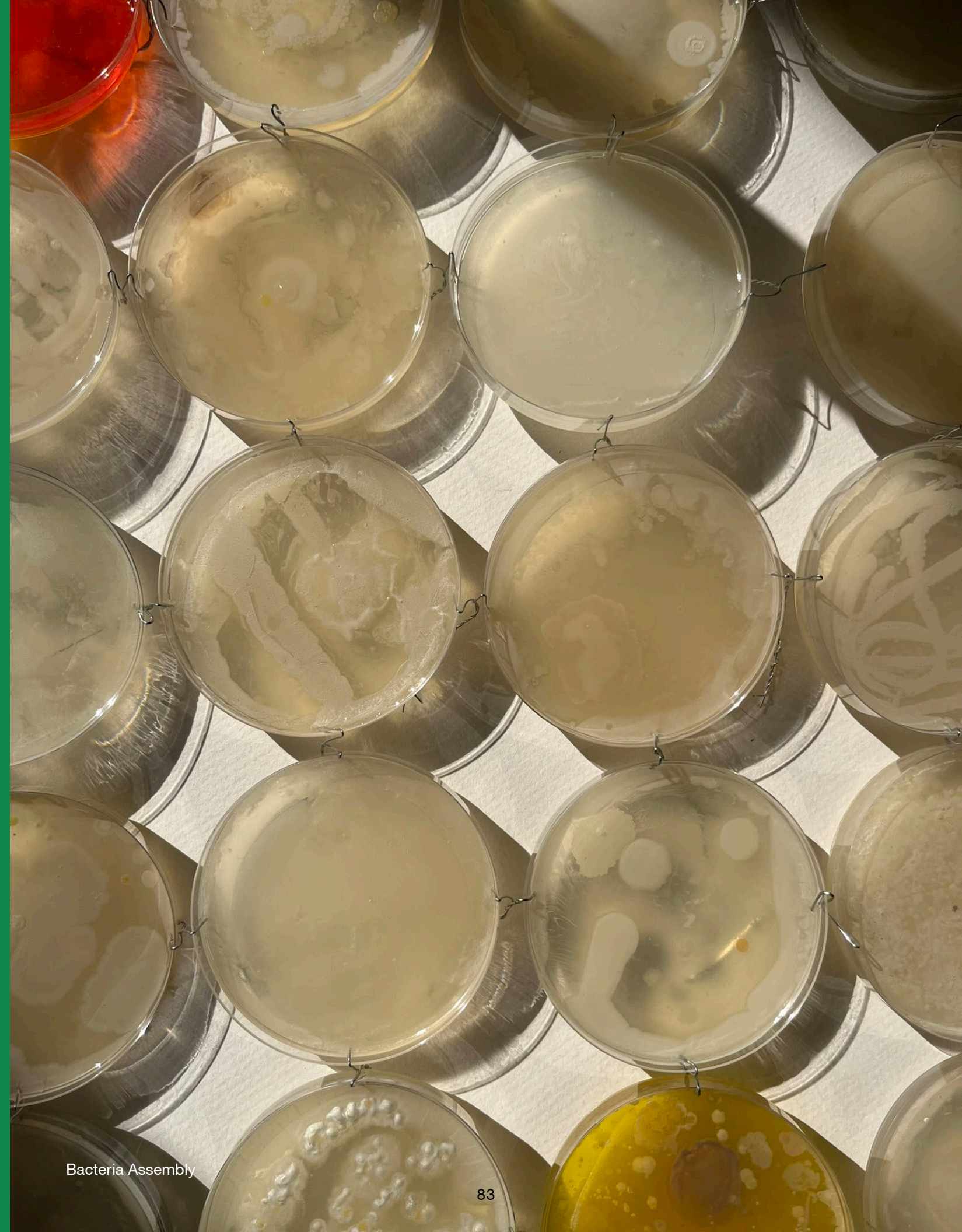
MicrobesTOPIA

Subject_Object
Spring 2024

In Collaboration with
Isaiah Graham, Jess Kuntz

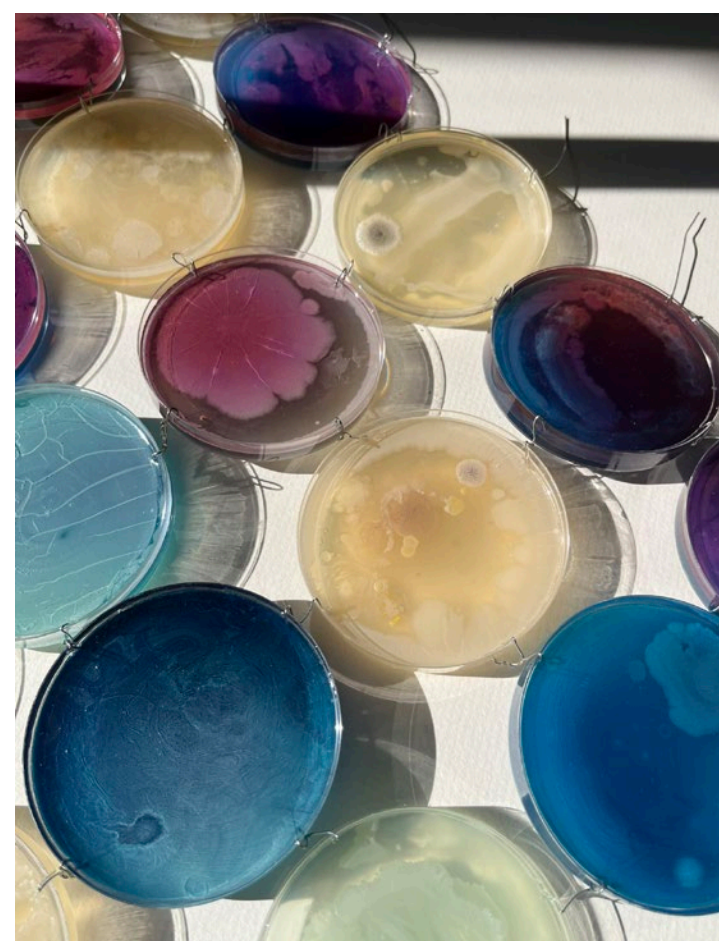
Professor: Suchi Reddy

The concept of beauty is subjective and varies greatly from person to person. What is considered beautiful to one may be deemed repulsive to another. While bacteria is a ubiquitous presence in our daily lives, it is often viewed in a negative light. Our project seeks to transform our perception of these microorganisms and provide a fresh perspective on the invisible entities with whom we share our daily existence.



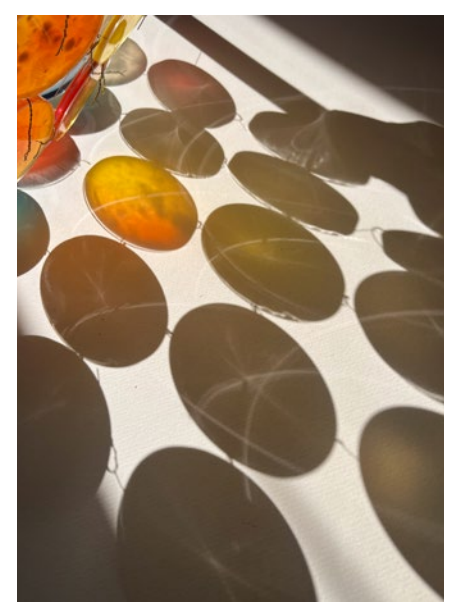


Bacteria Module



Bacteria Module Assembled

Bacteria Module Shadows





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