



Columbia GSAPP, Portfolio  
M.Arch 2022-2025  
Brandon Jose Gil

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01

# (Un)Belonging Inheritances

**Type:** Adv VI Studio, Spring 2025

**Collaborator:** Benji Vassar

**Instructor:** Karla Rothstein

**Location:** Manhattan, New York

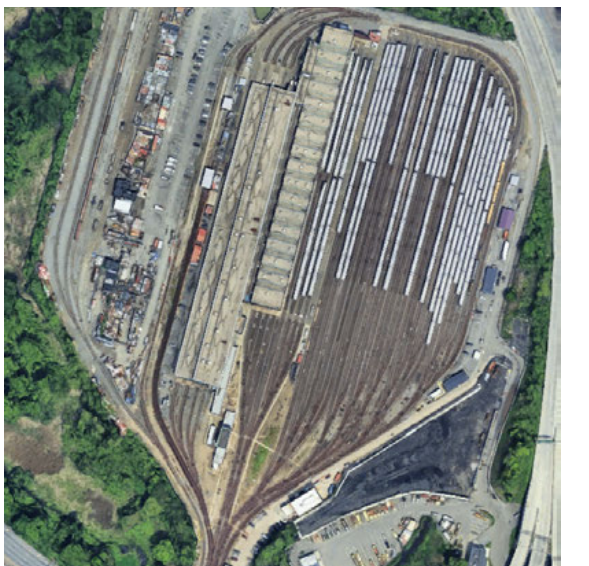
As New Yorkers,  
We are handed down all the layers of physical infrastructure  
Built by previous generations of city-dwellers.  
One such common inheritance is the subway system  
belonging to both no one and everyone.

This liminal status informs our perception,  
That the subway is something to be passed through, skipped over, a  
means to an end.  
Rarely allowing for a chance to pause.

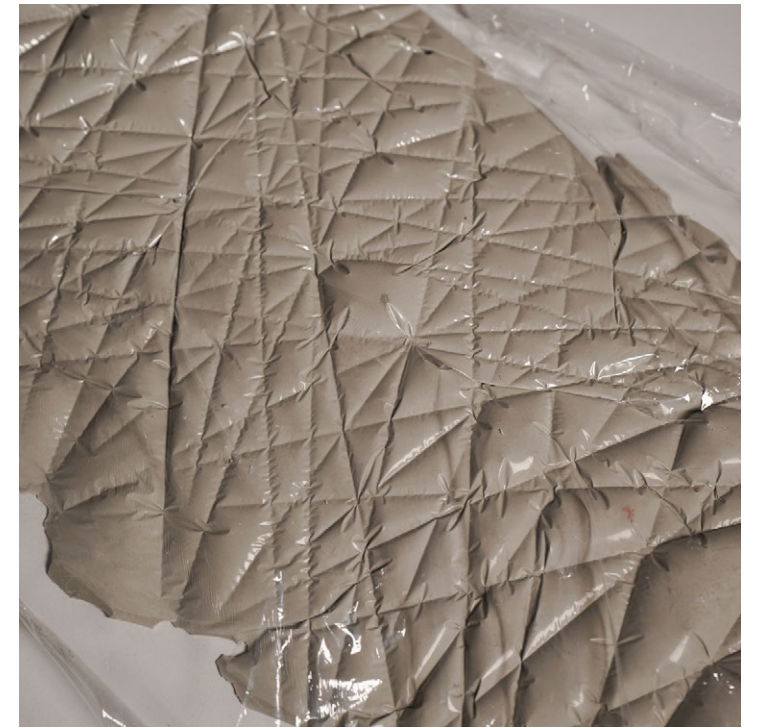
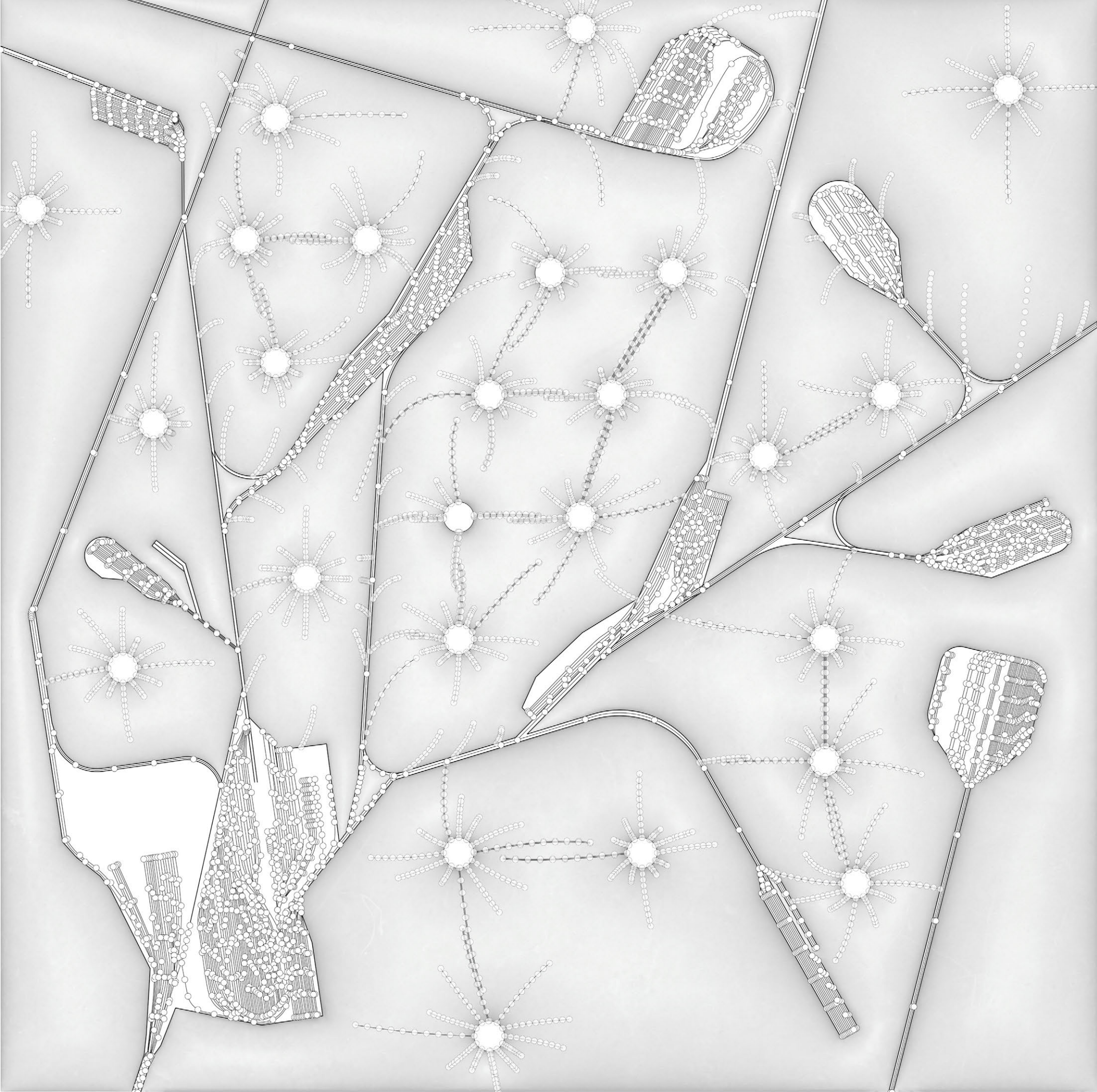
But in a system and city that belongs to us all,  
Arises a growing need for a new type of reflection.  
A dignified, visible procession of mortality woven into the everyday,  
Where the frenetic energy of the city collides with moments of  
stillness  
As an urgent reminder that we are all mortal.

Bryant Park Station – a key civic core,  
Poses an opportunity to transform the passage to the underground  
not merely as a transition from street to subway,  
But as a flow that induces a shared remembrance of life's  
interdependence, simultaneity, and impermanence.





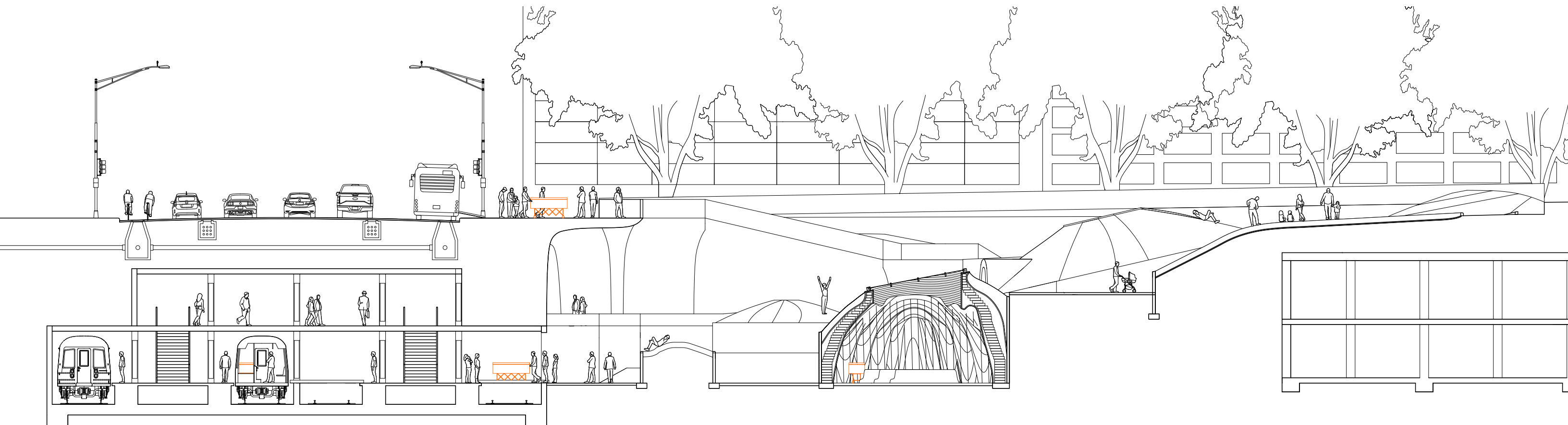
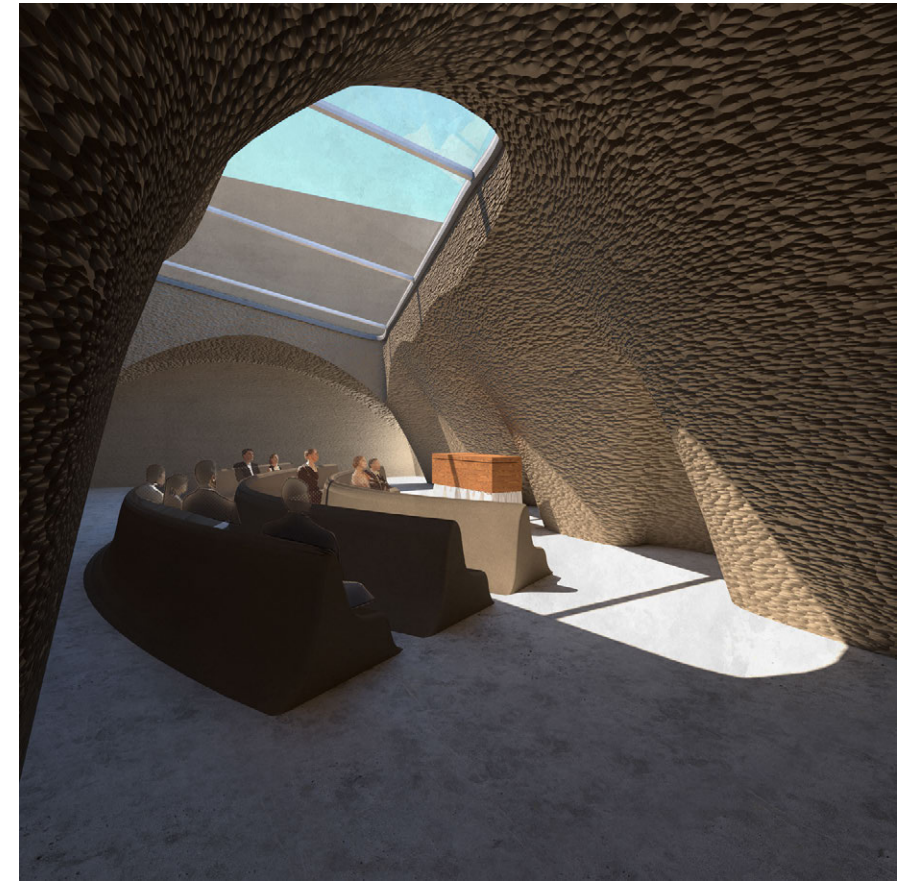




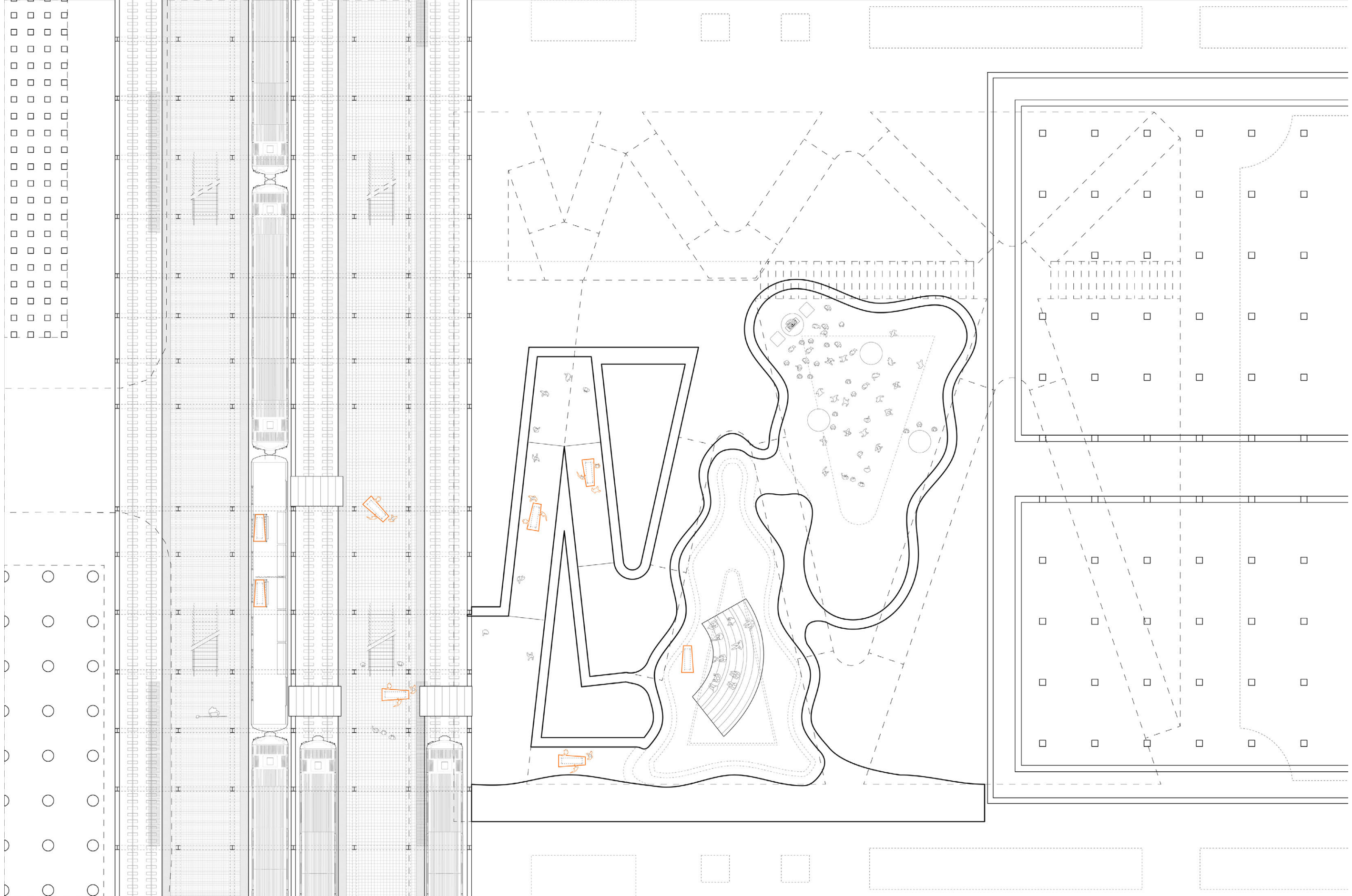

















Funerary Procession  
Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun  
10 AM - 2 PM, 6PM - 10 PM



To Brighton Beach  
via Express, weekdays.  
Other times take  to 34 St for 

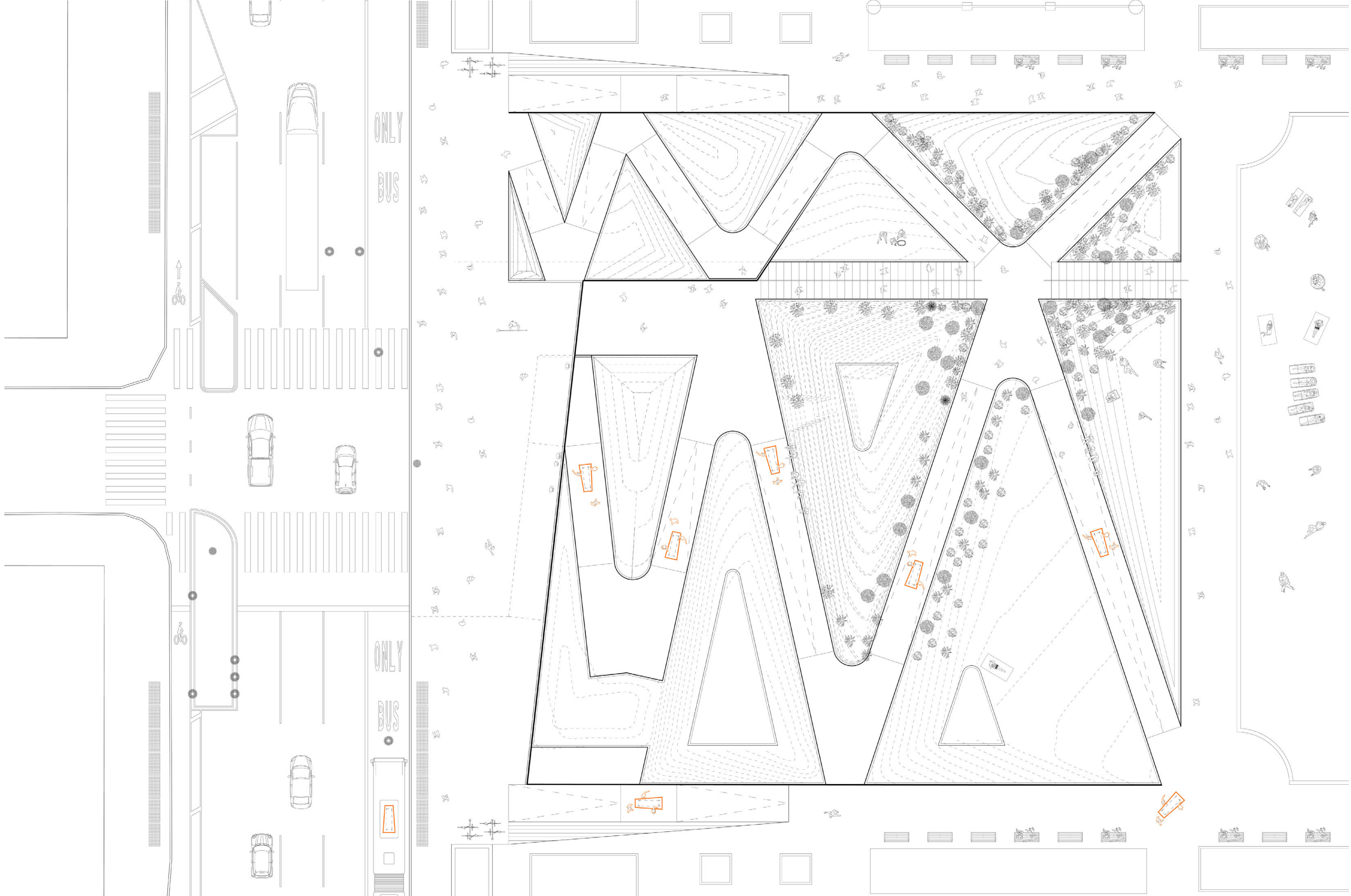


To Coney Island  
via West End  
all times

Downtown &  
Brooklyn via  
6 Av Express

42 St -  
Bryant  
Park





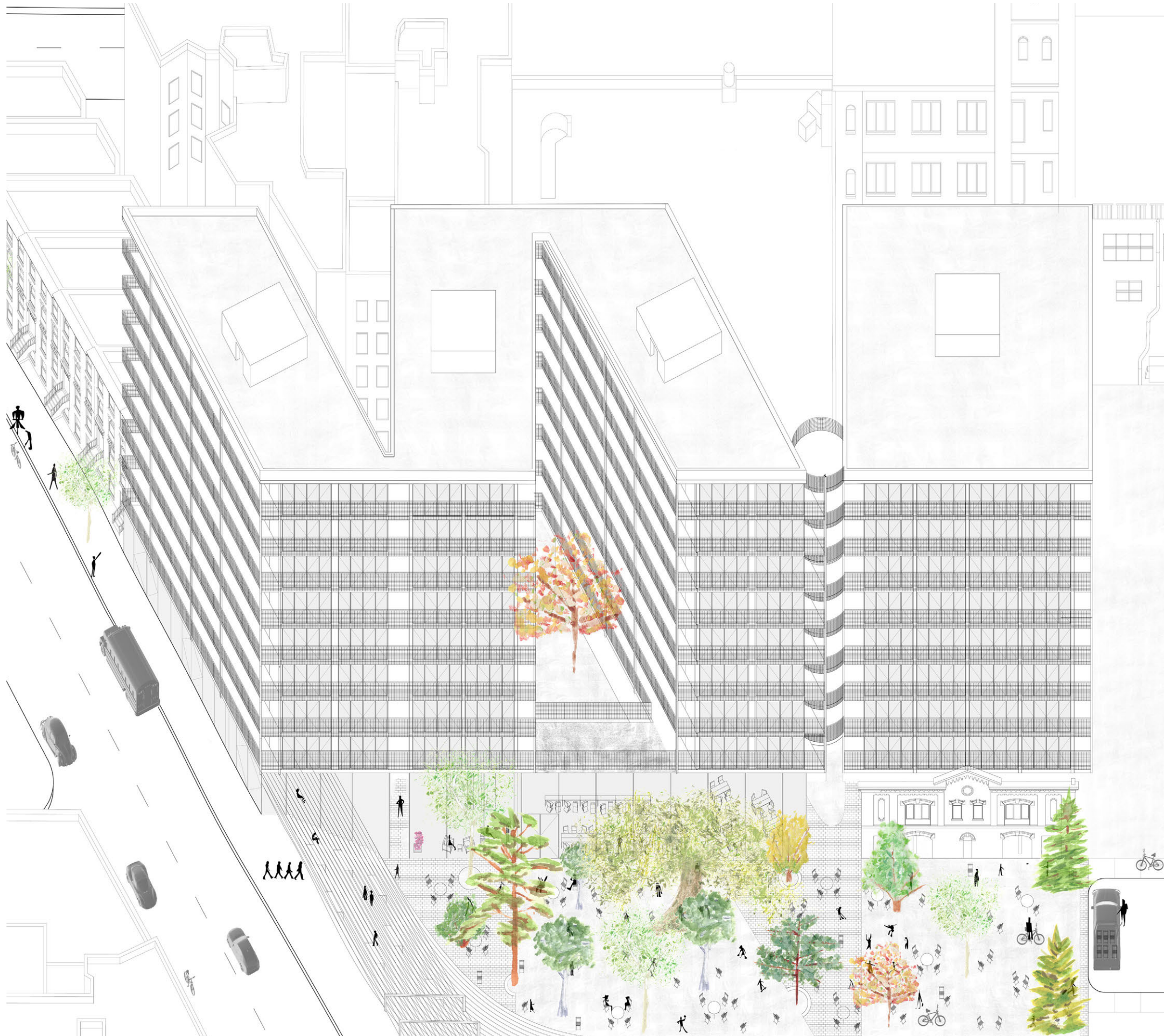












02

# Time Passages

## A Story About Living

**Type:** Core III Studio, Fall 2024

**Collaborator:** Rory Peckham

**Instructor:** Christopher Leong

**Location:** Harlem, New York

On our site visit, we immersed ourselves in the neighborhood's unique character and documented the neighborhood vernacular. We concluded that the context is built up with humble materials that become more expressive when people take them over. We then realized that when people inhabit a space, change is the most extraordinary part of living. This is what we call a recalibration of life: spaces that deal with the expansions and compressions that follow people's life cycles.

Living is centralized around the permanent functions of the building: the core, bathroom, and kitchen with adaptable spaces and walls being located on the perimeter of the core. These walls can be easily opened up to merge two adjoining spaces, either creating larger 1-bedroom units or combining two studio units. The perimeter is the place where expression happens, a space that hosts looser amenities such as the living room, dining room, bedroom, and a continuous balcony. It allows for all units on the same floor to be connected, allowing for more neighborly connections and a broader sense of community.

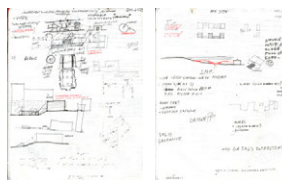
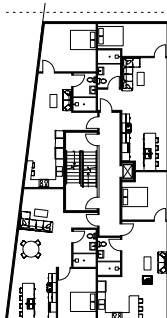
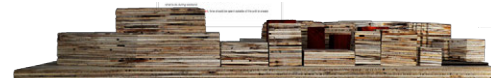
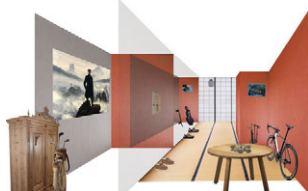
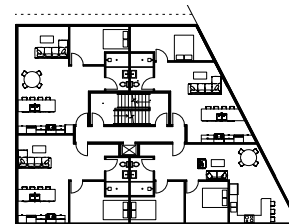
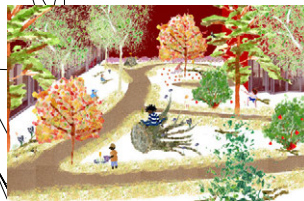
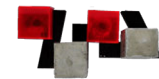
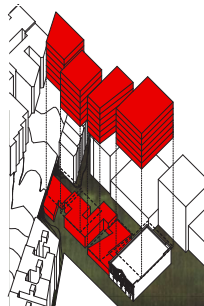
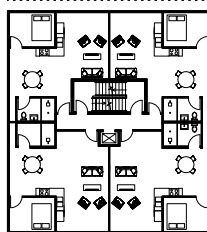
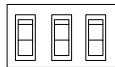
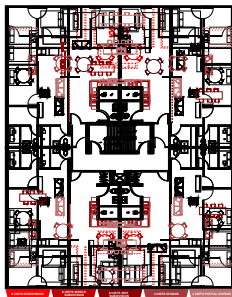




The central 'spine' on the ground level was the only design element that remained unchanged during the search for the best massing strategy. The restraints of the site, quickly led to the development of 'tower' massings.



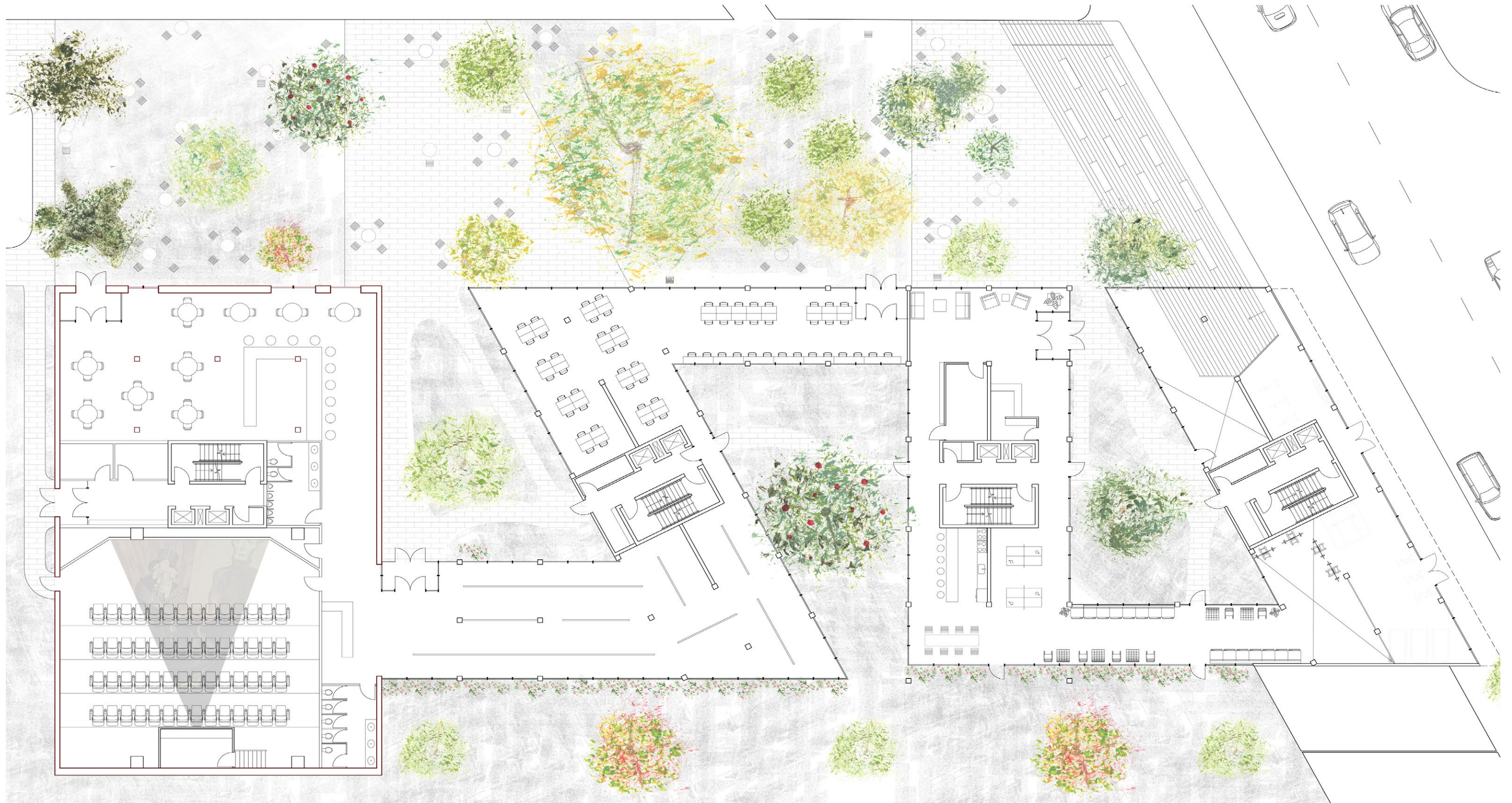




Mid-review wall layout

# A Story About Living





The form is borrowing from the vernacular of the existing buildings to situate the building more within its context in the neighborhood





Ground Level/Unit Connection



Aerial View Through 129th St

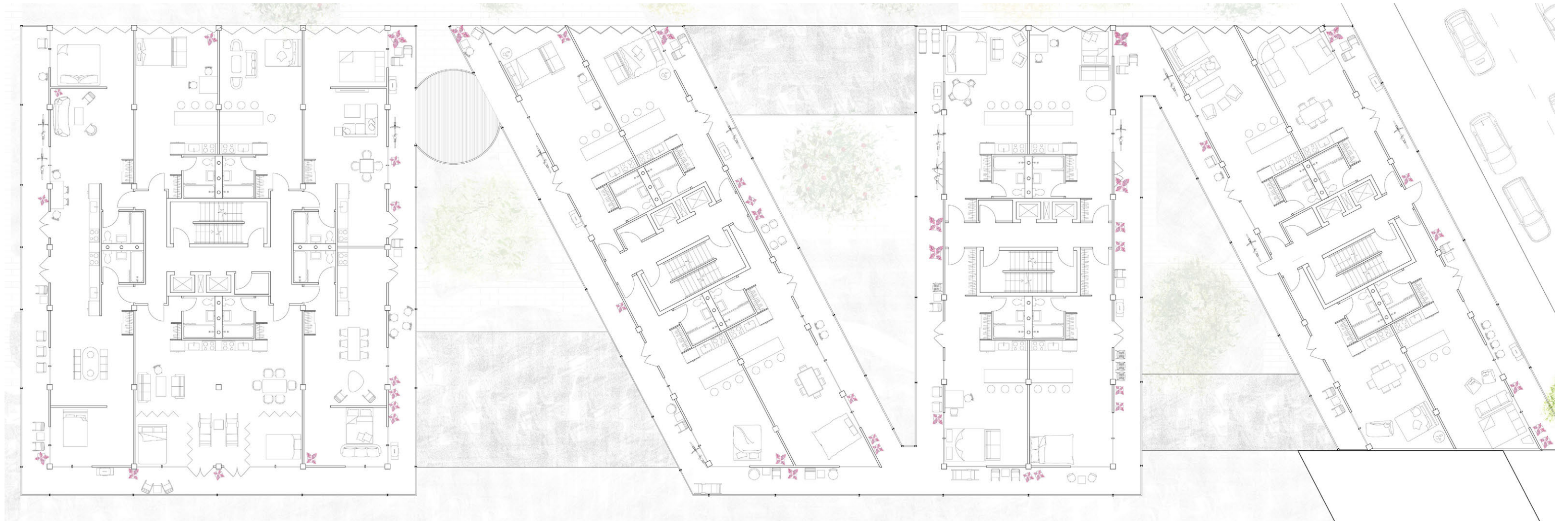


Aerial View along Convent Ave



While the facade is rediscovering the ordinary through the vernacular, the interior is rediscovering itself through its inhabitants.





The life and character inside a home is a form of self expression. As time progresses the needs of a family or individual may change. Children are born, raised and grow up in these spaces while parents grow older: these expansions and compressions are part of a natural life cycle.



Garden



Expanded Double Unit



Continuous Balcony





03

# Harlem Pods

**Type:** Core I Studio, Fall 2022

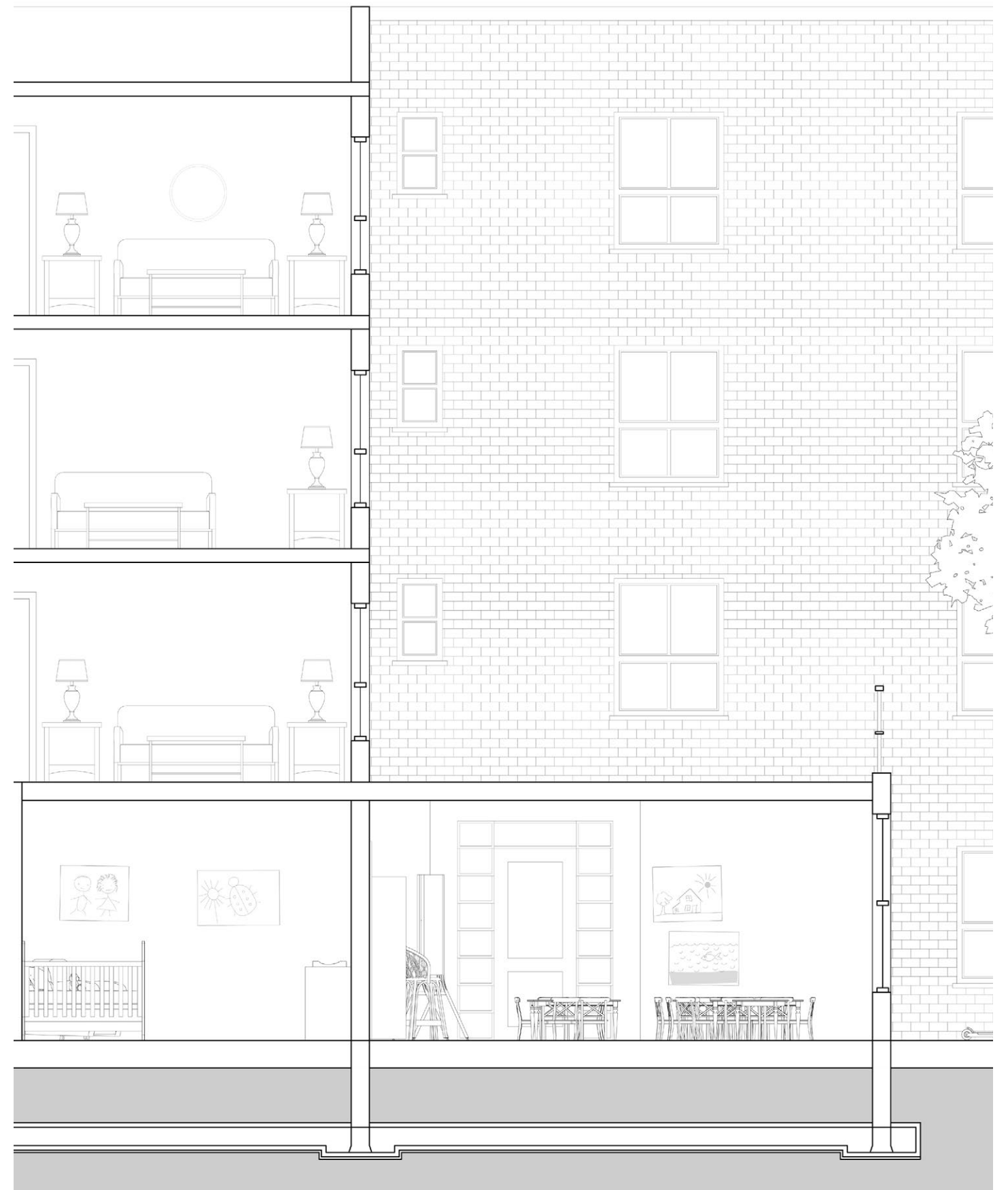
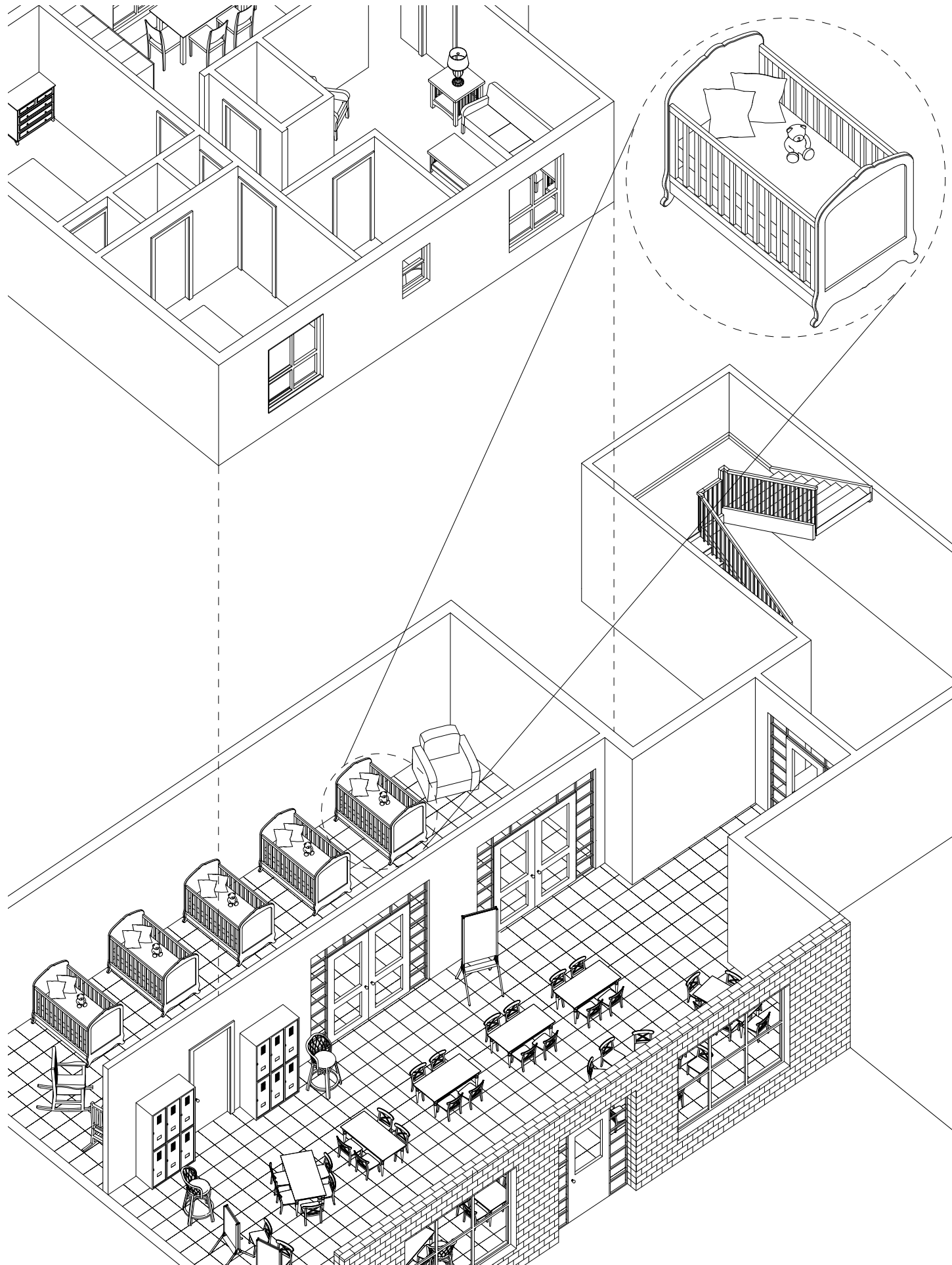
**Instructor:** Virginia Black

**Location:** Harlem, New York

Harlem Pods is a childcare center located at the historic Harlem River Houses which was the first federally funded public housing project in NYC. After decades of neglect and lack of funding from NYCHA and the federal government, the Harlem River Houses have continued to rapidly deteriorate resulting in a rise of vacant units throughout the complex. My design intervention is located inside 2 vacant units of the complex and is centered around the children's needs.

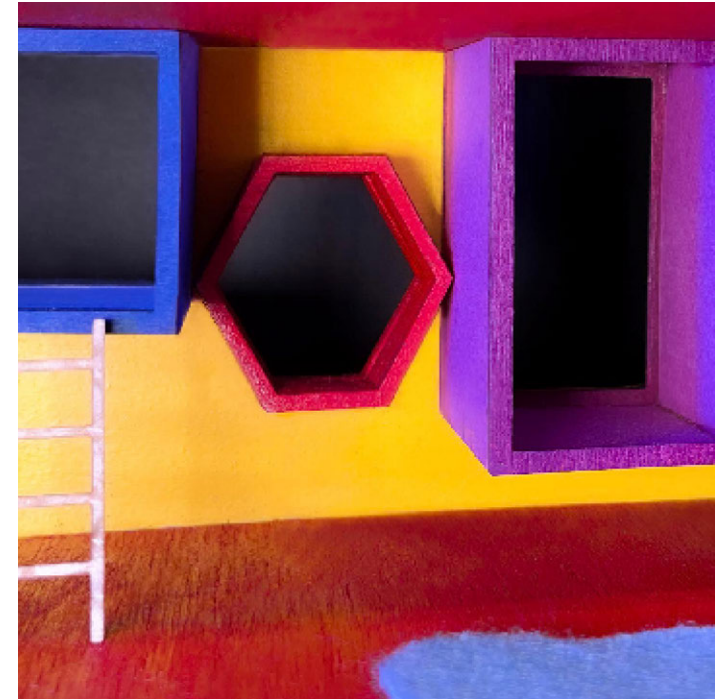
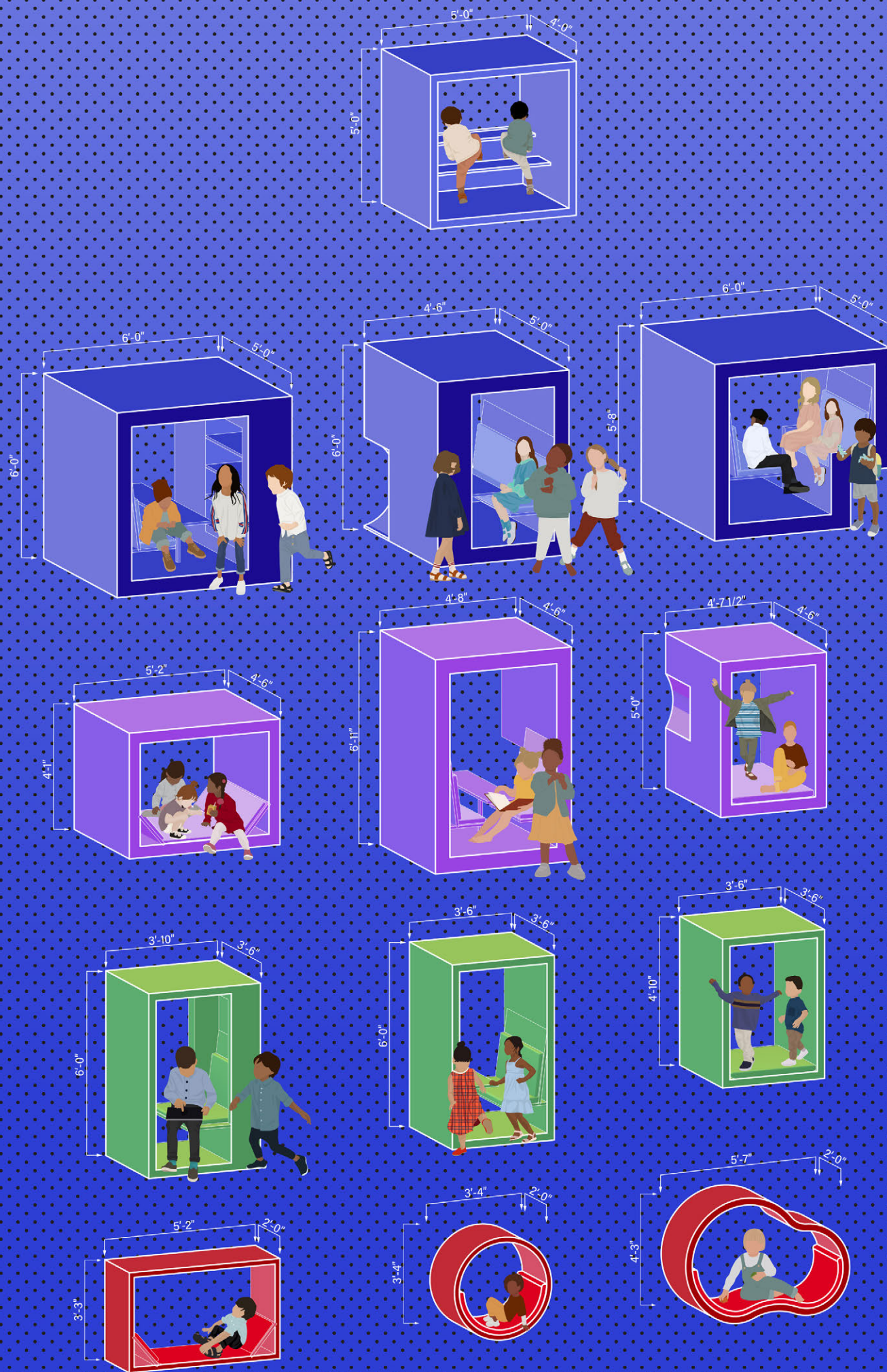
The focal point of the design are these colorful child size 'pods' present throughout the interior and exterior of the project, and serve as a safe space for the children to occupy. The pods vary in shapes which allow for a multitude of different seating or resting positions, and also vary in sizes to allow for the larger pods to accommodate multiple children while the smaller pods are more focused on solitary use. It was crucial to create an environment that was focused on the health, behavior, learning, and growth of the children while also allowing them to have access to spaces where they can be alone.





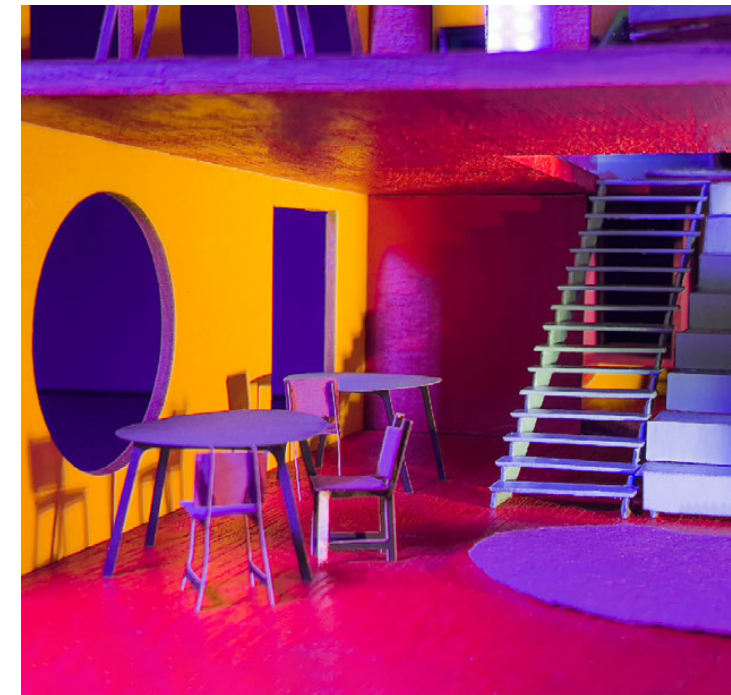
Initial research on the Harlem River Houses expanded into the analysis of the daycare center inside the complex, which ultimately led to the basis of the project throughout the semester.



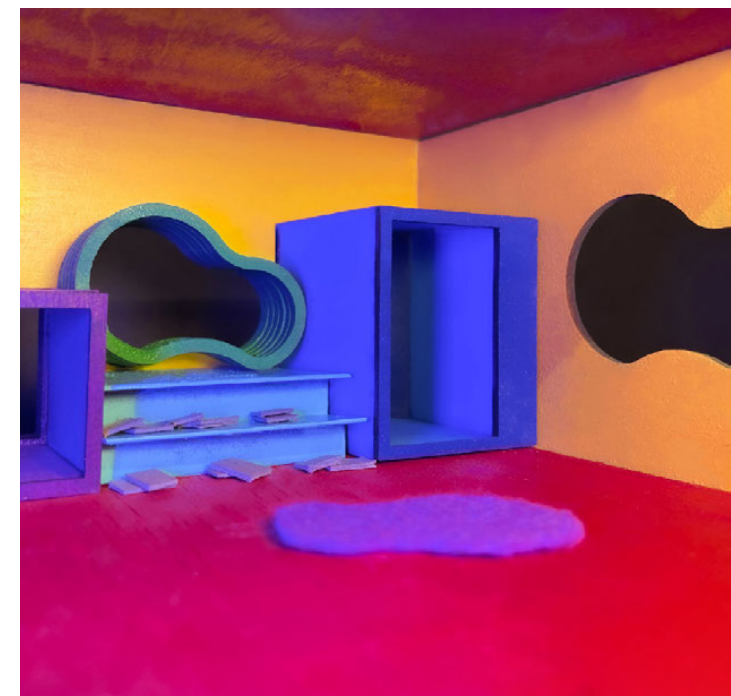


Each pod is designed with bright colors, soft textures, and playful decor to create a warm and stimulating environment for the children to explore and engage in a variety of activities.





Interior Lower Level

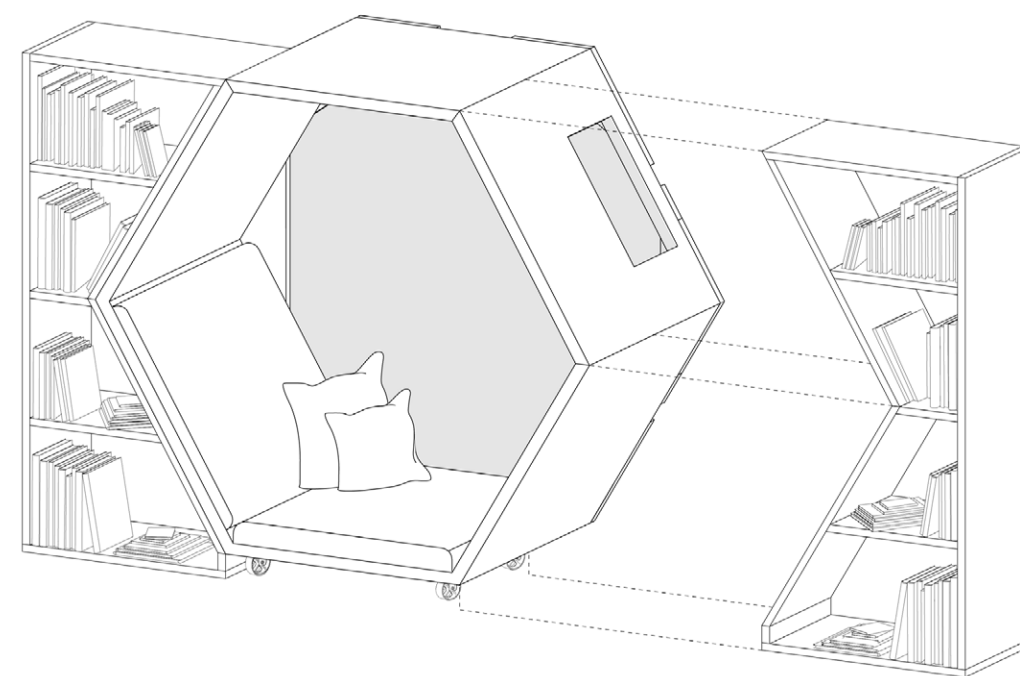


Interior Upper Level along Facade

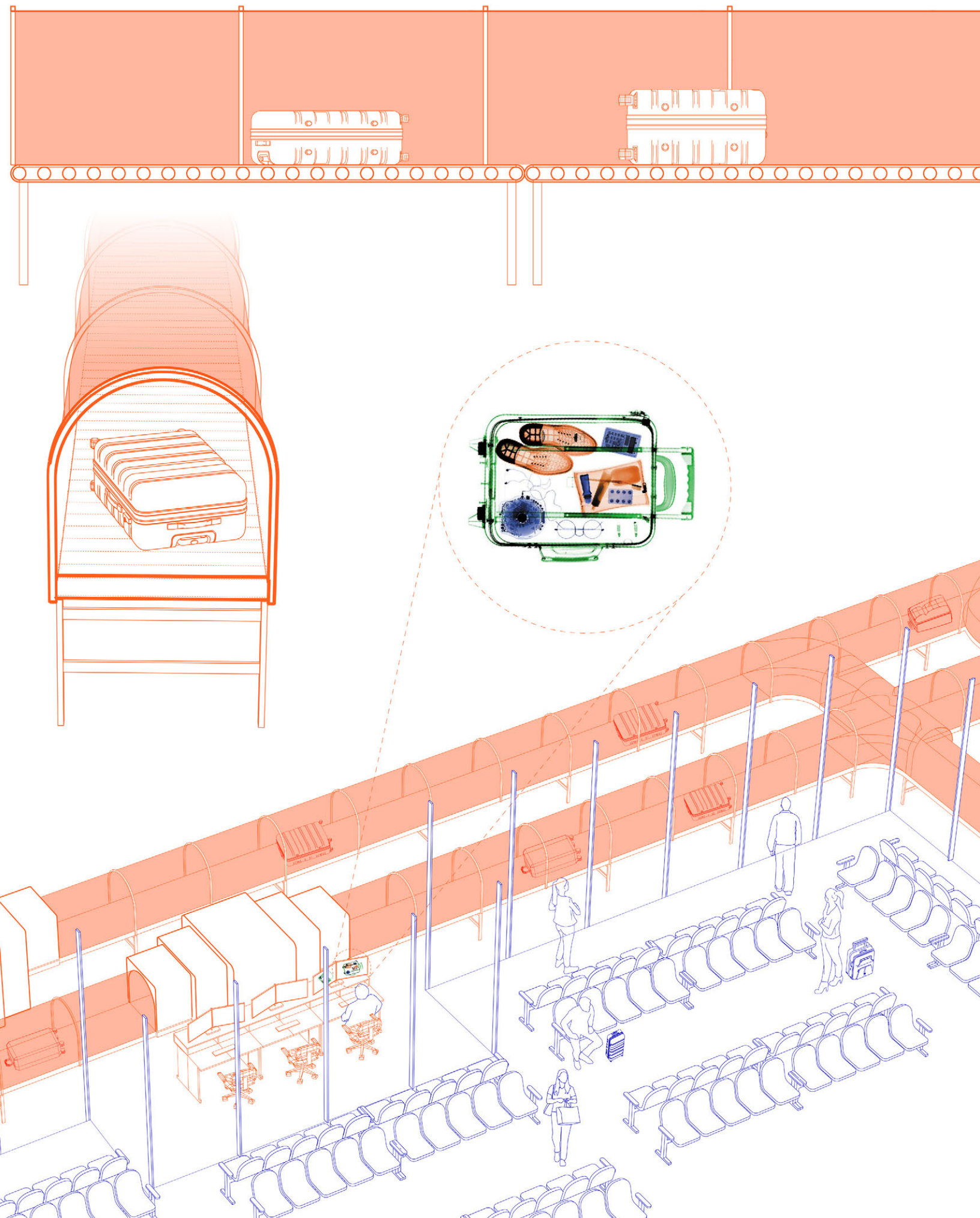




1:1 Model of Reading Pod







## 04 Post 9/11 Security Vision

**Type:** Core II Studio, Spring 2023

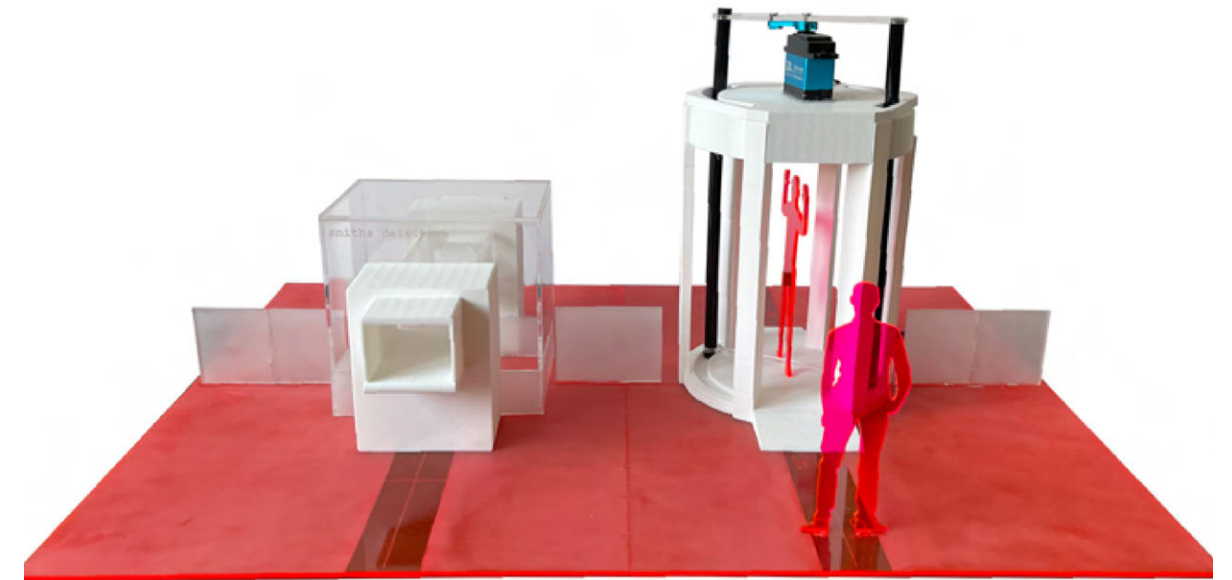
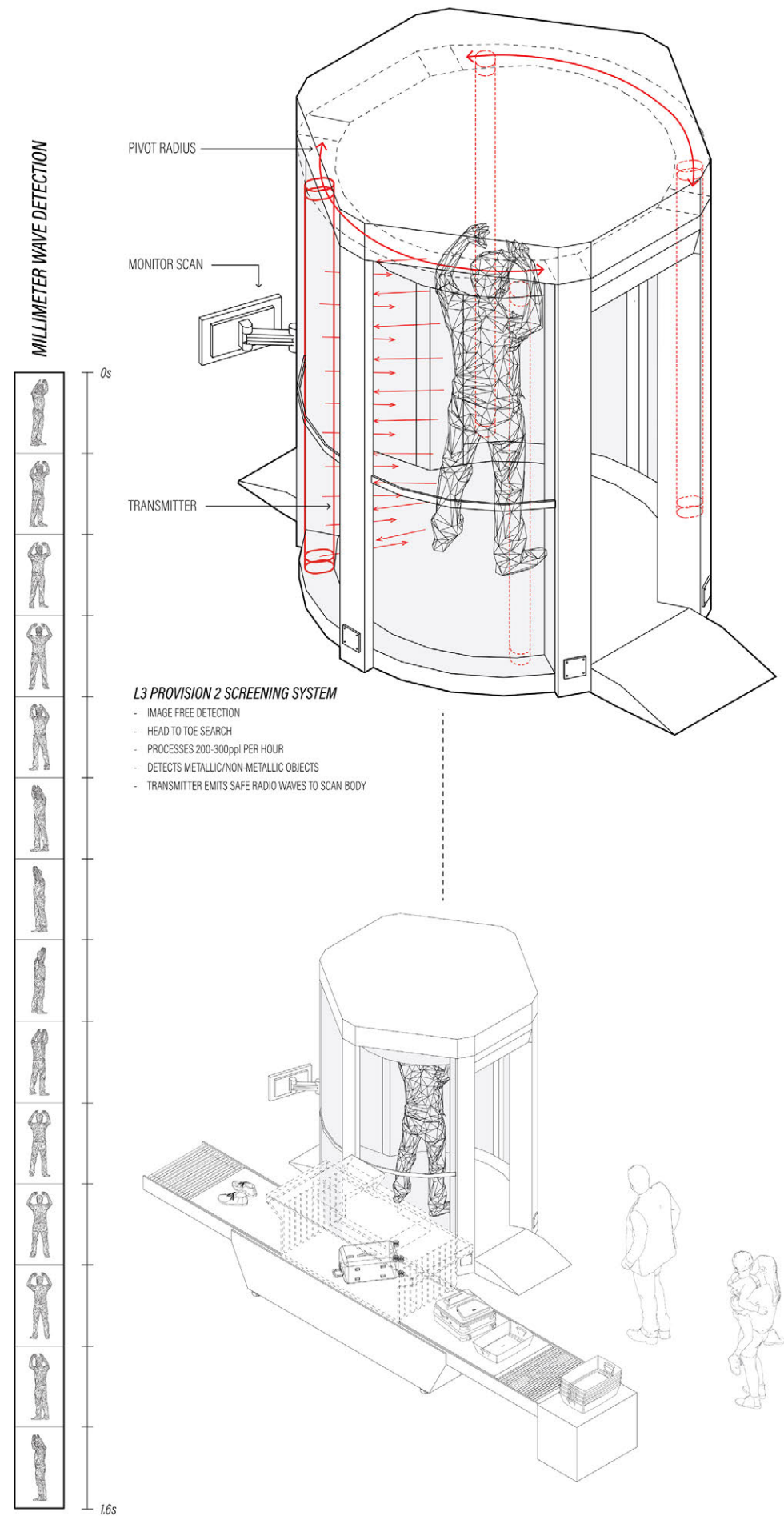
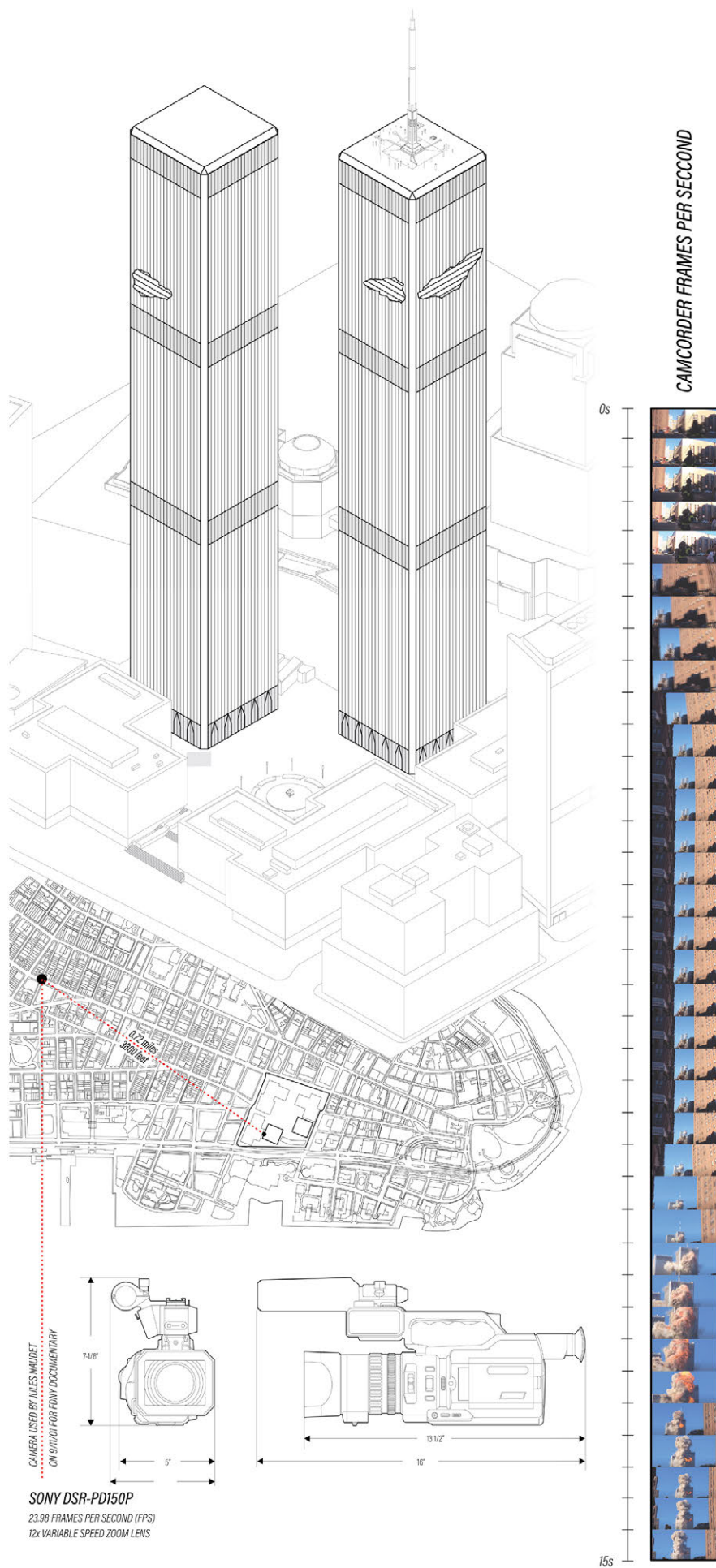
**Instructor:** Mark Wasiuta + Jarrett Ley

**Location:** Queens, New York

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, resulted in significant changes to security procedures in airports around the United States. Many of these security procedures have been constantly changing due to the advancement of technology and certain events that have revealed security flaws, but apart from the security checkpoint most of these procedures are not visible to travelers.

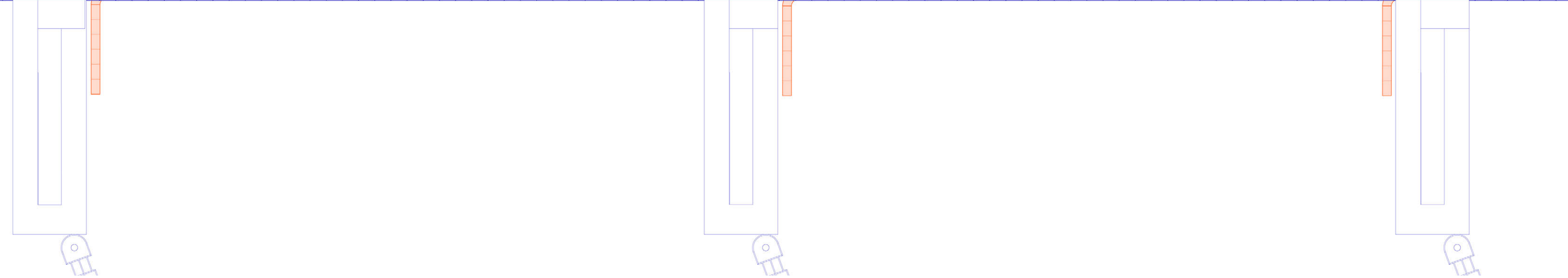
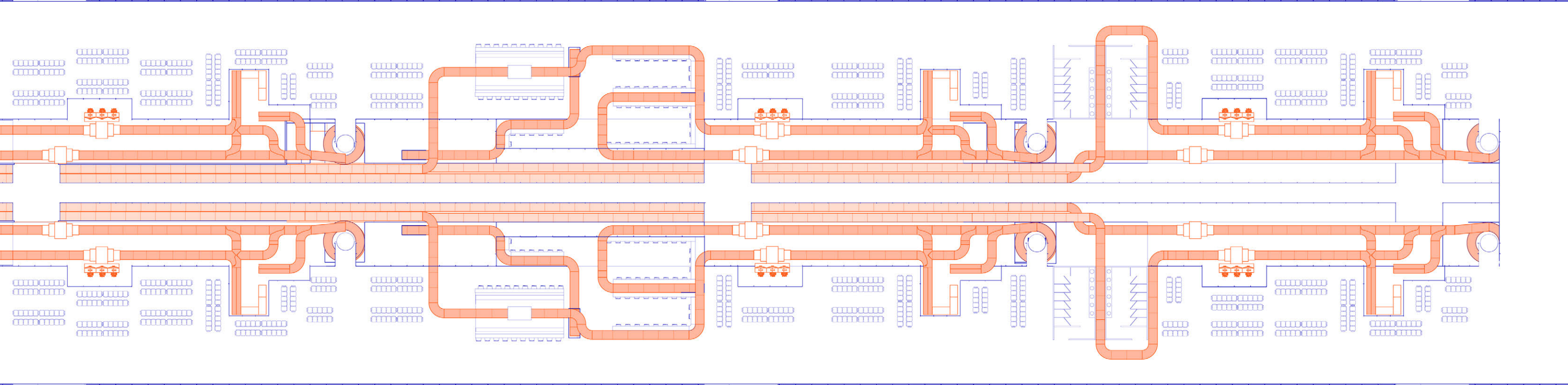
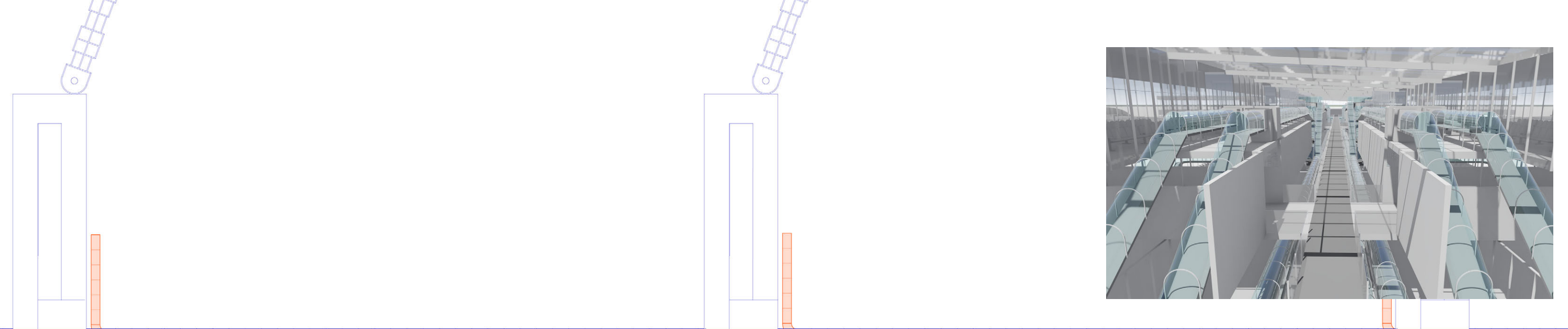
My intervention puts all the current security procedures on display and is present in key areas throughout the airport terminal. Starting at the baggage check in, the typically underground and invisible world of conveyor belts are made visible through a glass enclosed, circular, descending, and temporarily disappearing track of conveyors that is placed directly below the main path of traveler movement. Travelers are able to form a deeper understanding of all the complex mechanisms, components, systems, and measures of security, through the exposure of these procedures.





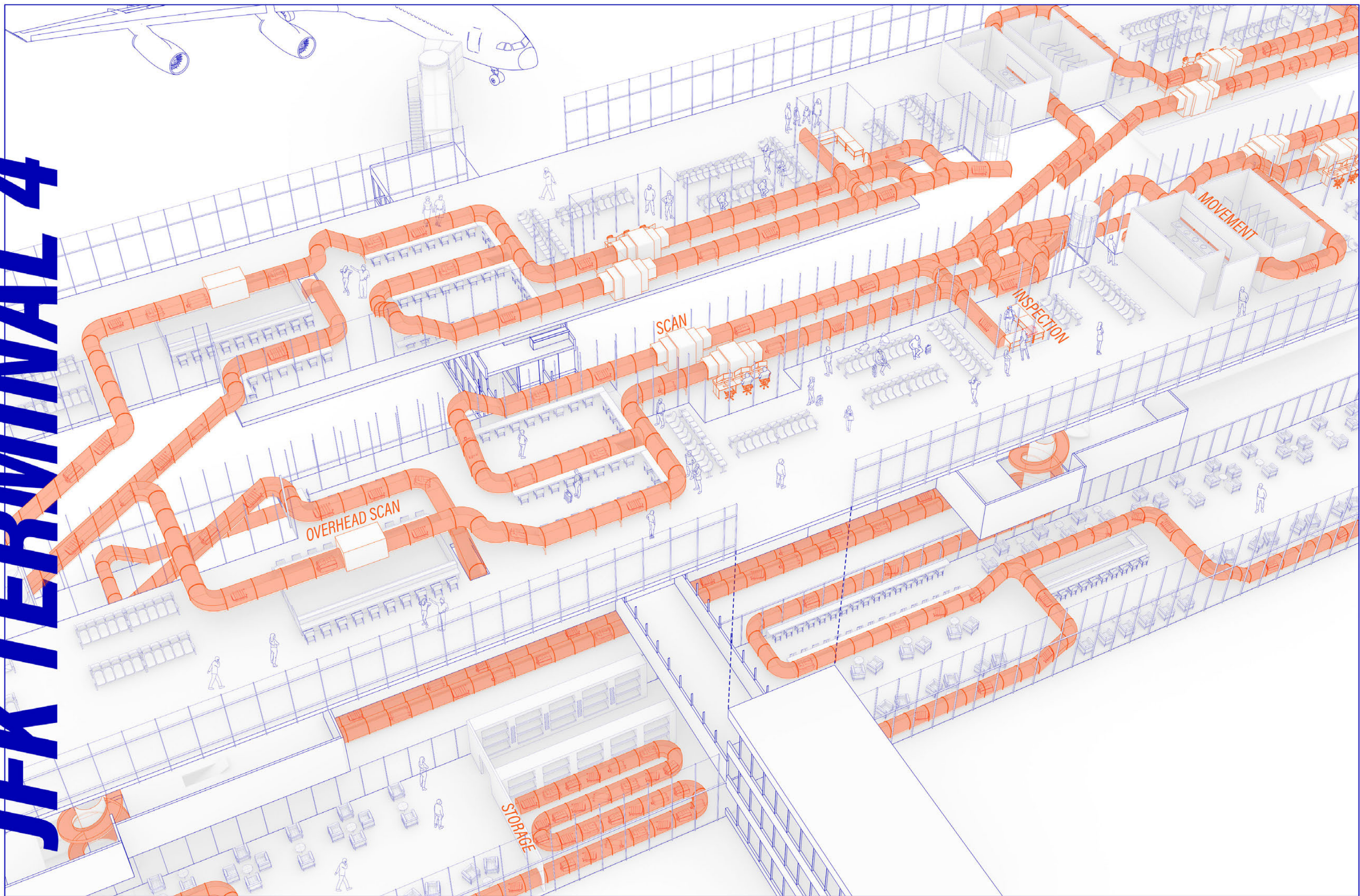
Digrammatic Model of Security Checkpoint

The analysis of heightened surveillance in airports, opened up the conceptual framework that would develop, to make surveillance visible rather than hidden.

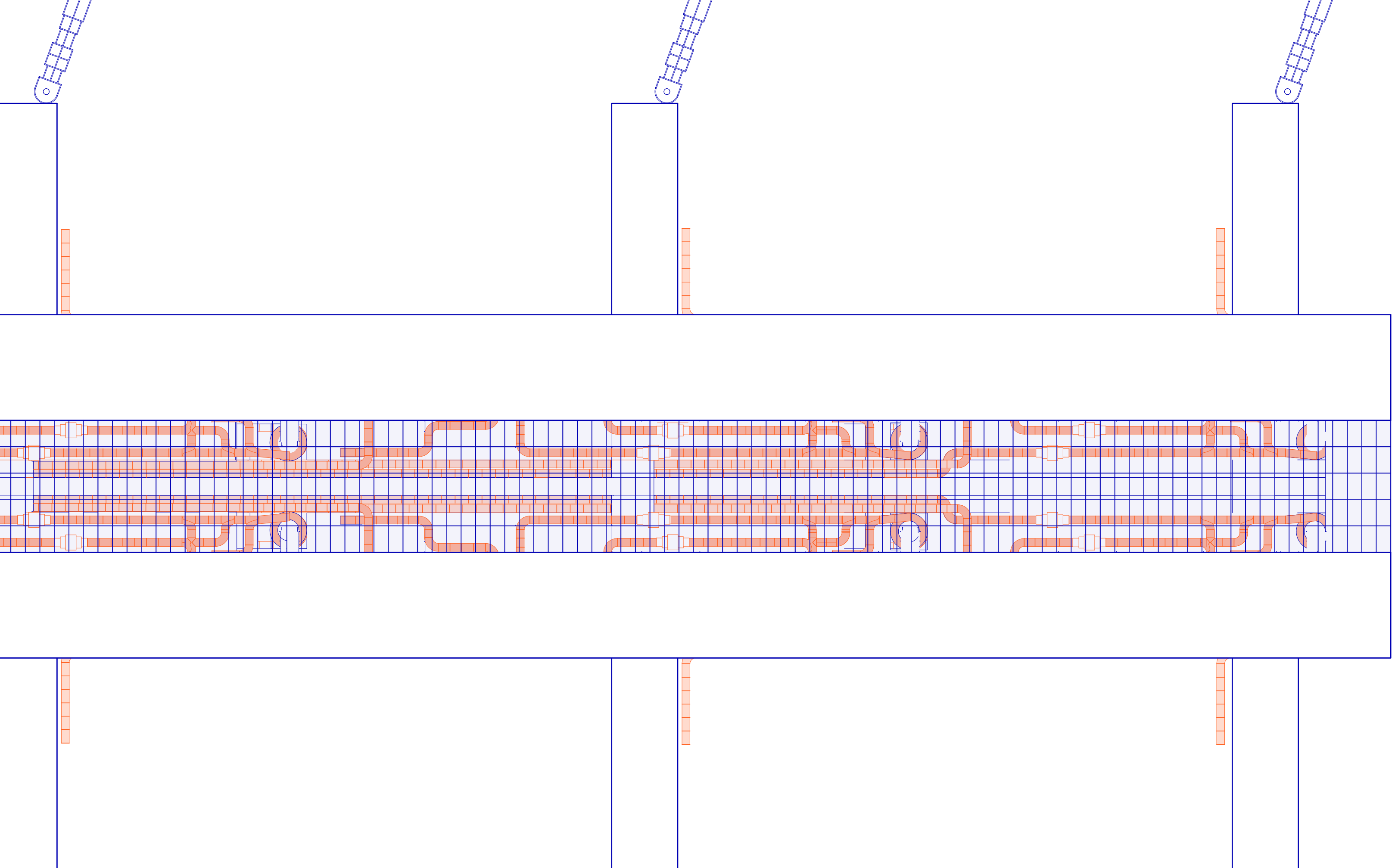




# JFK TERMINAL 4











05

# Team La Borda

## Construction and Life Cycle Systems

**Type:** Tech V, Spring 2024

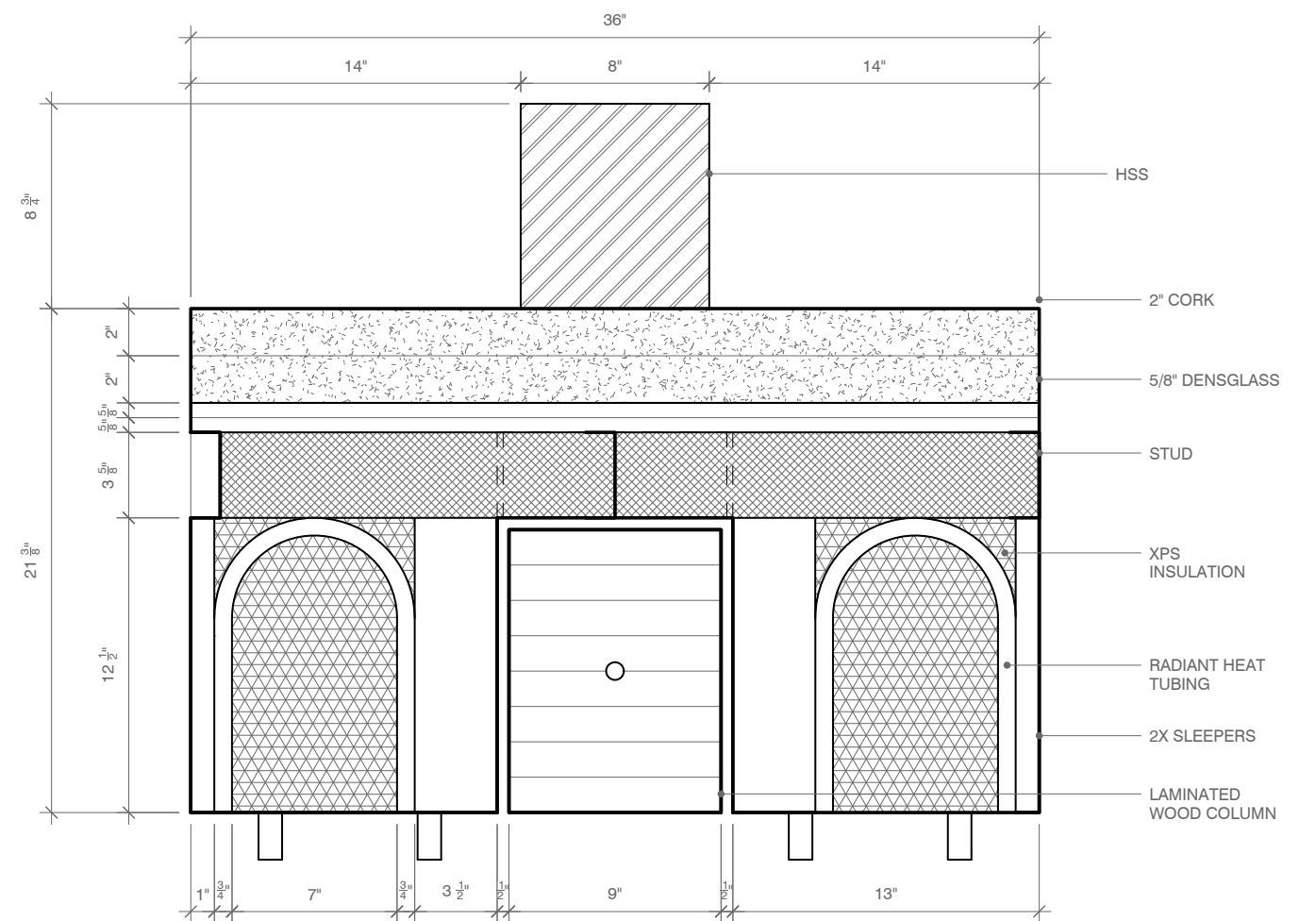
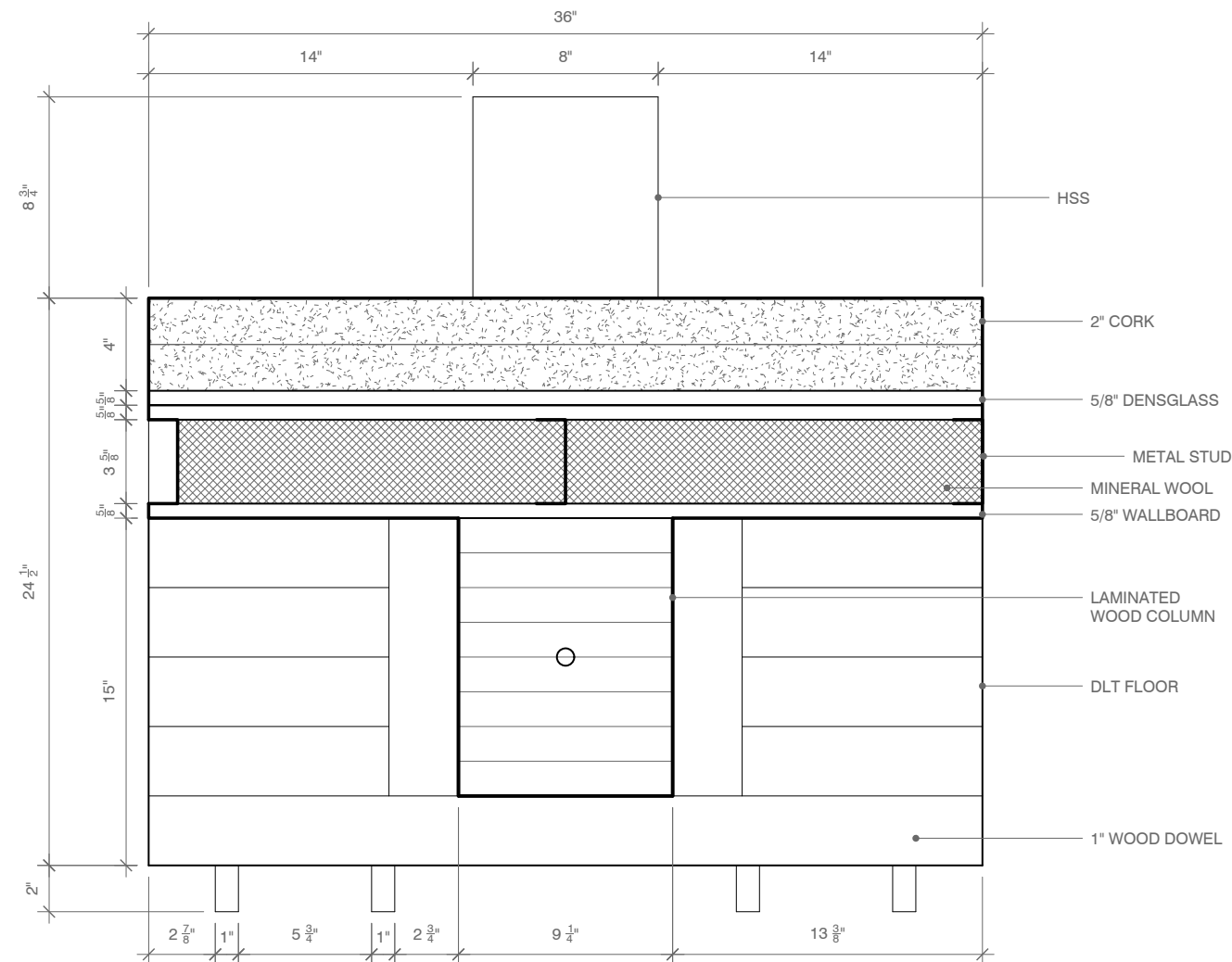
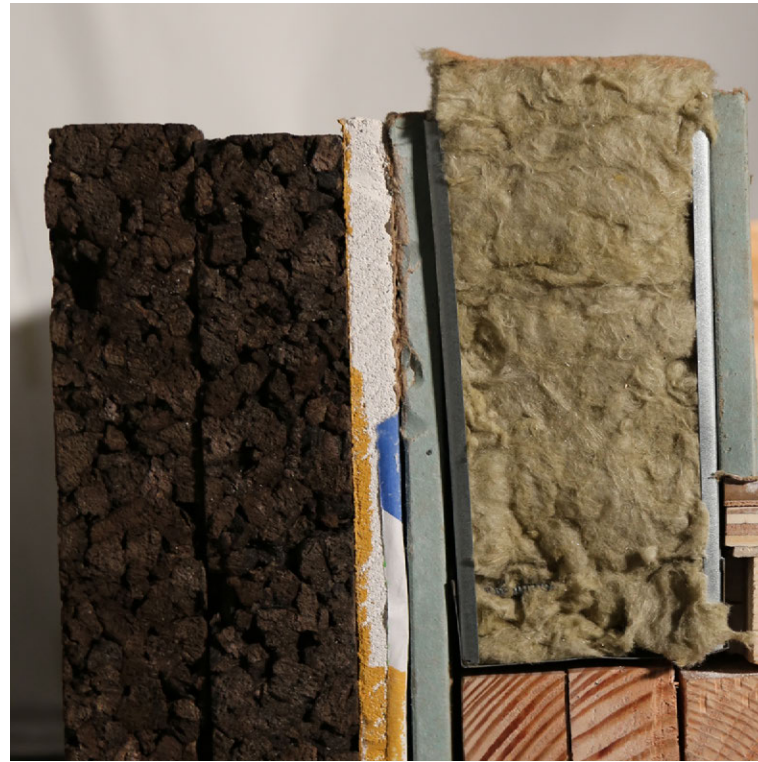
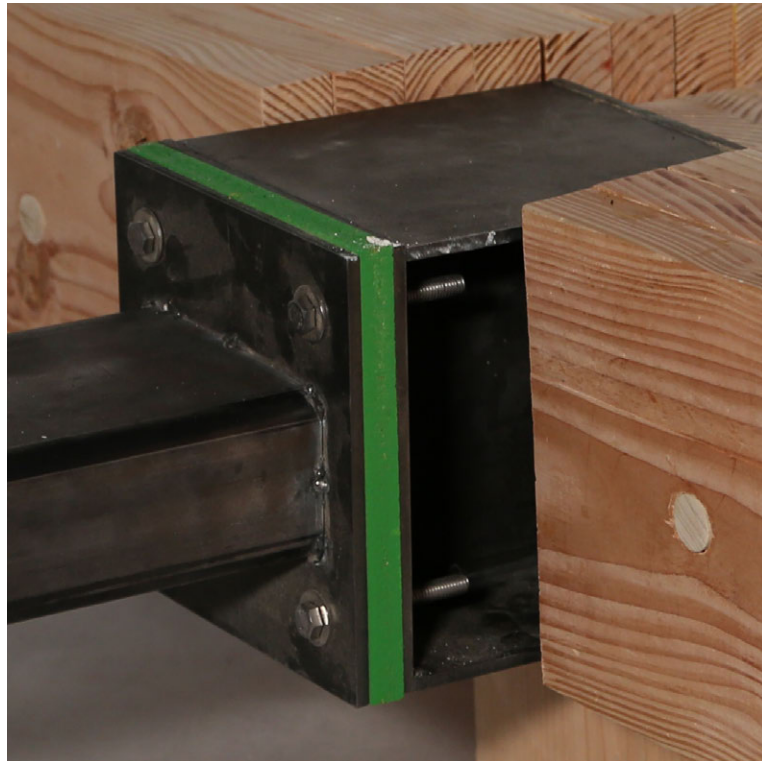
**Collaborators:** Jordan Howard, Rory Peckham, Jackson Key

**Instructor:** Lola Ben-Alon + Thomas Schaperkotter

Tech V offered a hands-on understanding of how things actually get built. As a four person team we chose one of our former studio projects, to develop and fabricate a full-scale 1:1 mock-up of a ‘chunk’ of the building. We researched material sourcing, the life cycles of materials, costs, and constructability.

For fabrication of the ‘chunk’, we used the true materials of the full-scale building and based our fabrication process off of shop drawings.





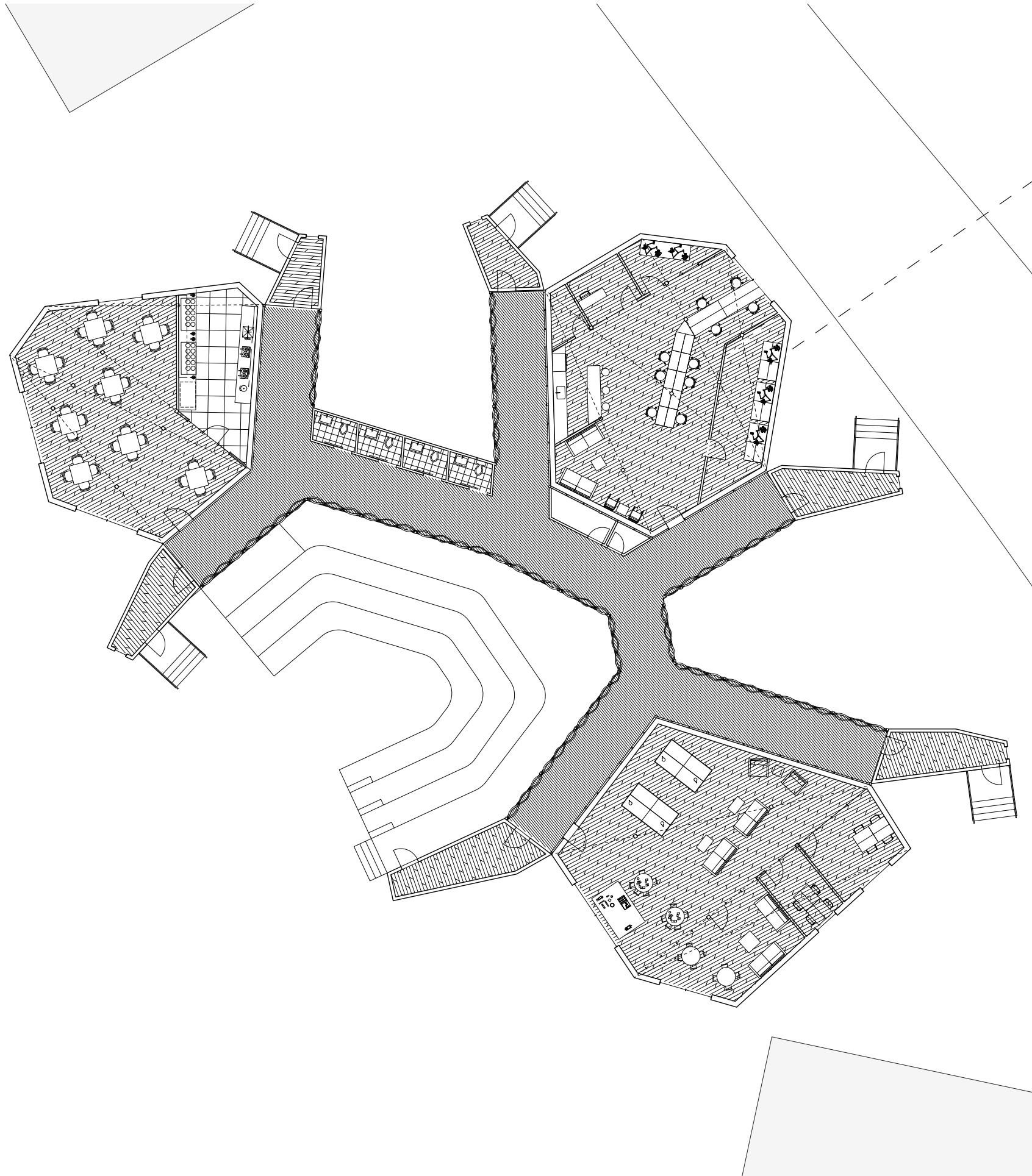












06

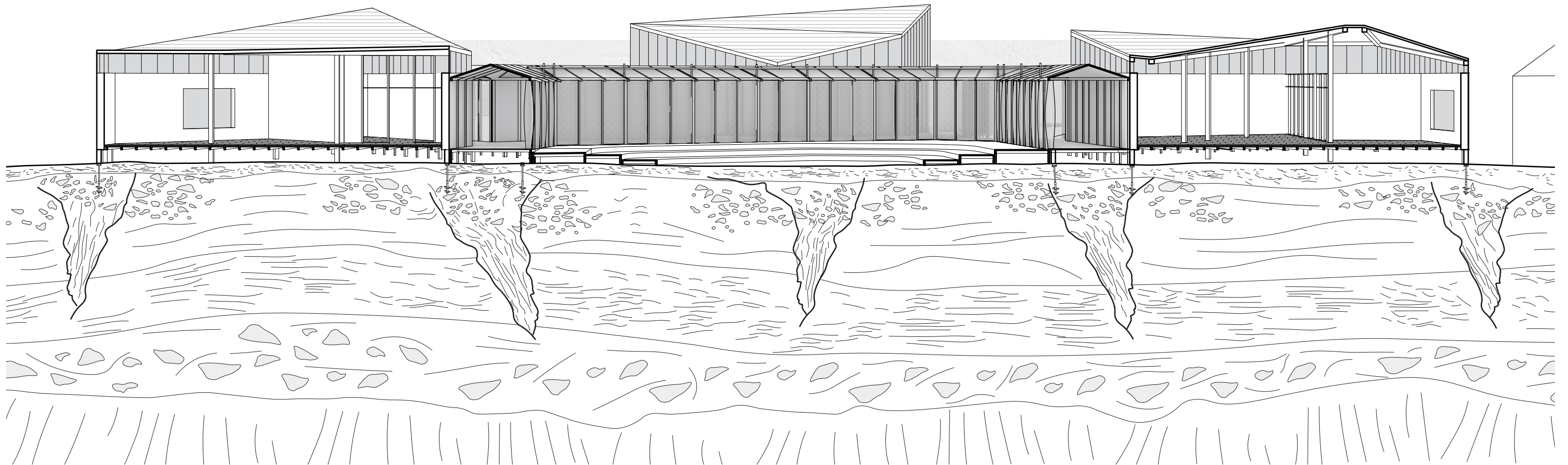
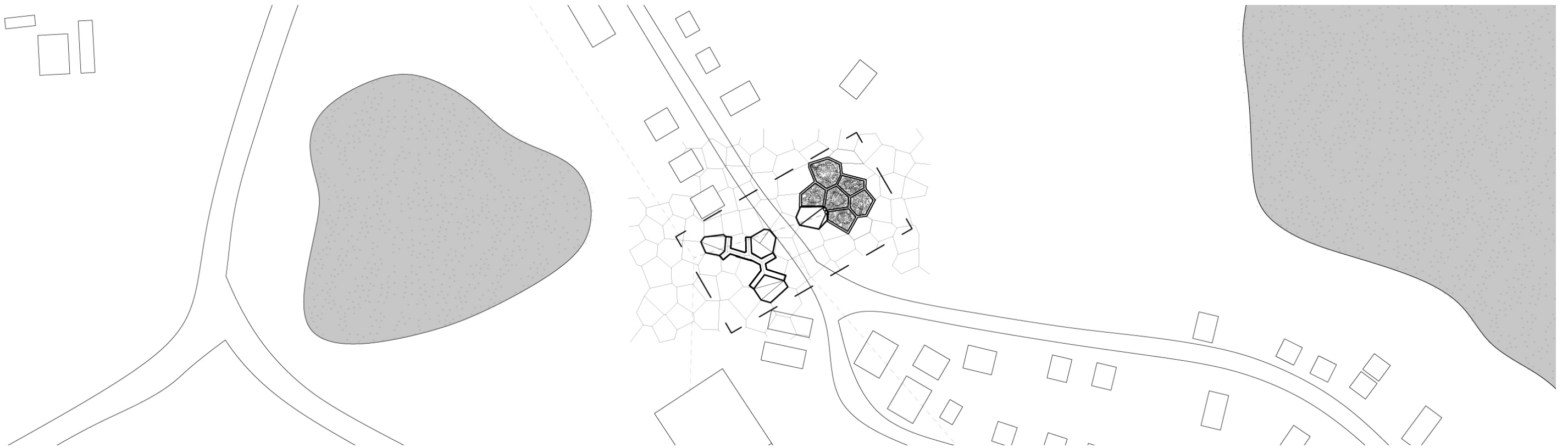
# Thawing Landscape

**Type:** Adv V Studio, Fall 2024  
**Instructor:** Leslie Gill + Khoi Nguyen  
**Location:** Tuktoyaktuk, Canada

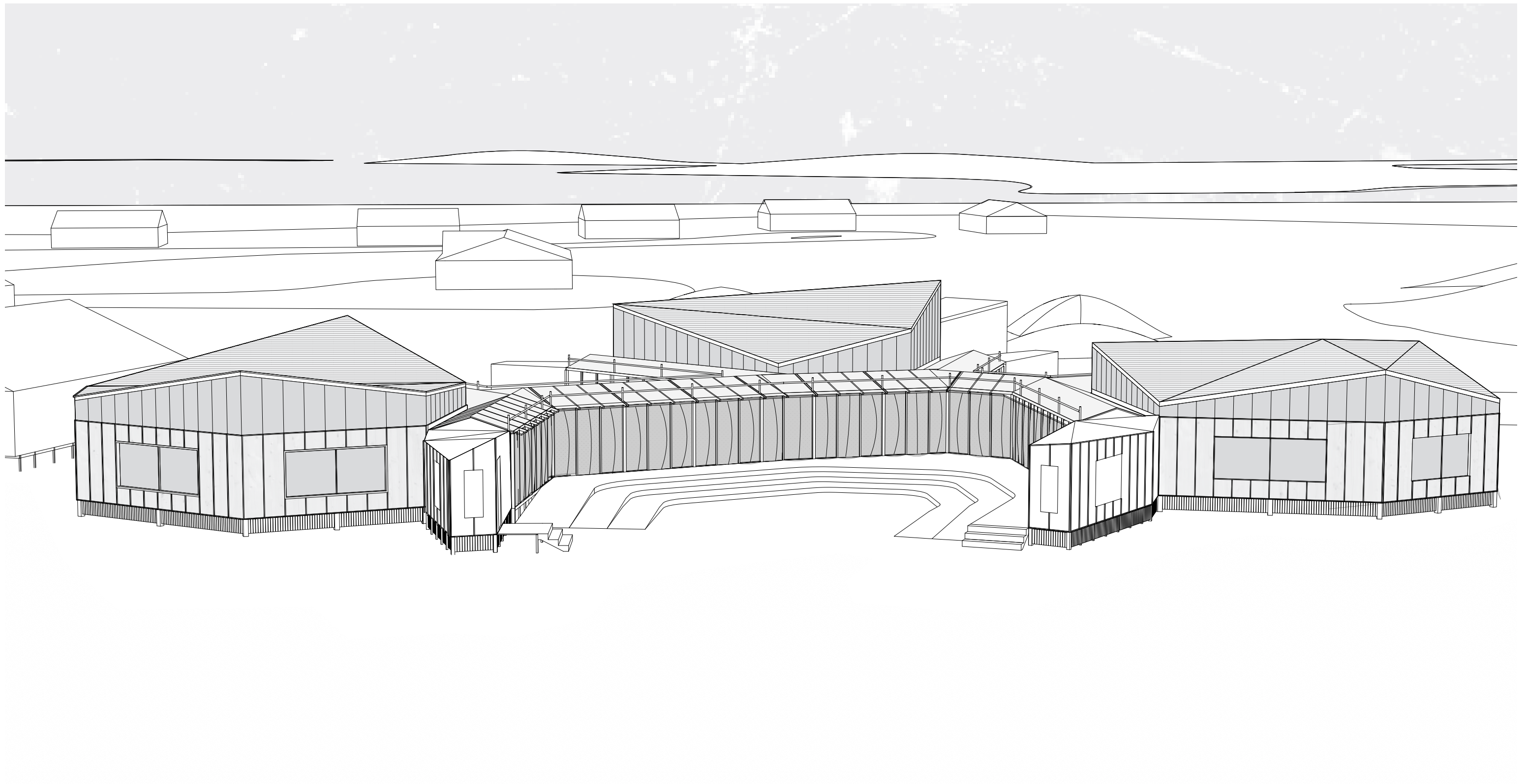
Arctic permafrost is a layer of frozen soil, rock, organic material, and embedded ice that holds significant amounts of carbon dioxide and methane. When thawed, it can release large quantities of these gases into the atmosphere while also forming unique landforms known as thermokarsts. These ponds typically form in clusters, influenced by the patterns of ground ice and ice wedges that provide strong foundational points.

In response to these challenges, the proposed design archive is situated in Tuktoyaktuk, a small hamlet in Canada’s Western Arctic which is heavily affected by permafrost thaw and land loss. The archive is divided into two main sections: one dedicated to a methane capture system utilizing inflatable structures placed over existing thermokarst ponds to produce biogas for local energy use, and the other designed for community engagement. Anchored to the foundational structure of the underlying ice wedges, the community-focused section includes a communal kitchen for fishing-related activities, a research hub supporting the methane capture efforts, and recreational spaces intended for the hamlet’s younger residents.

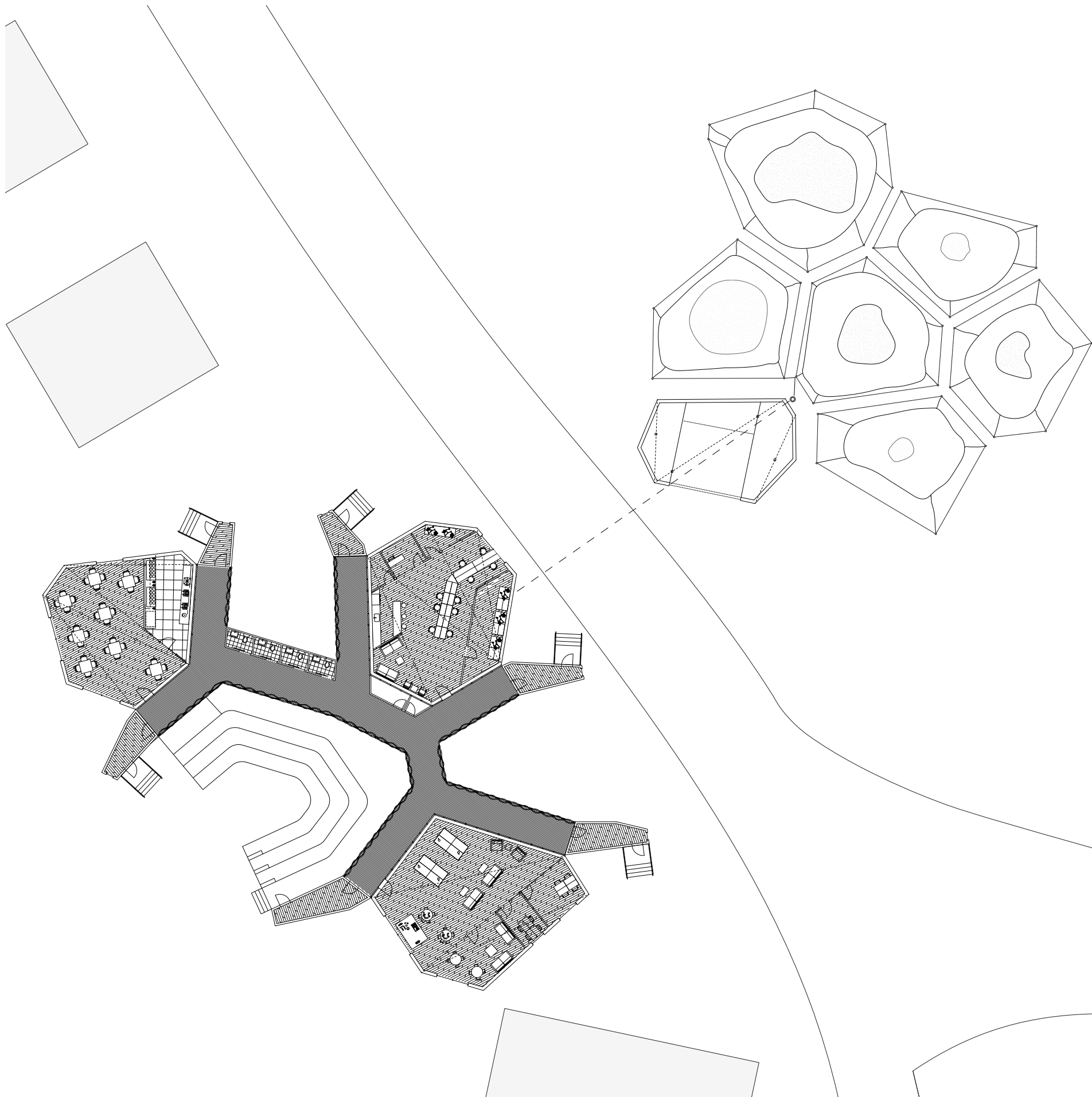








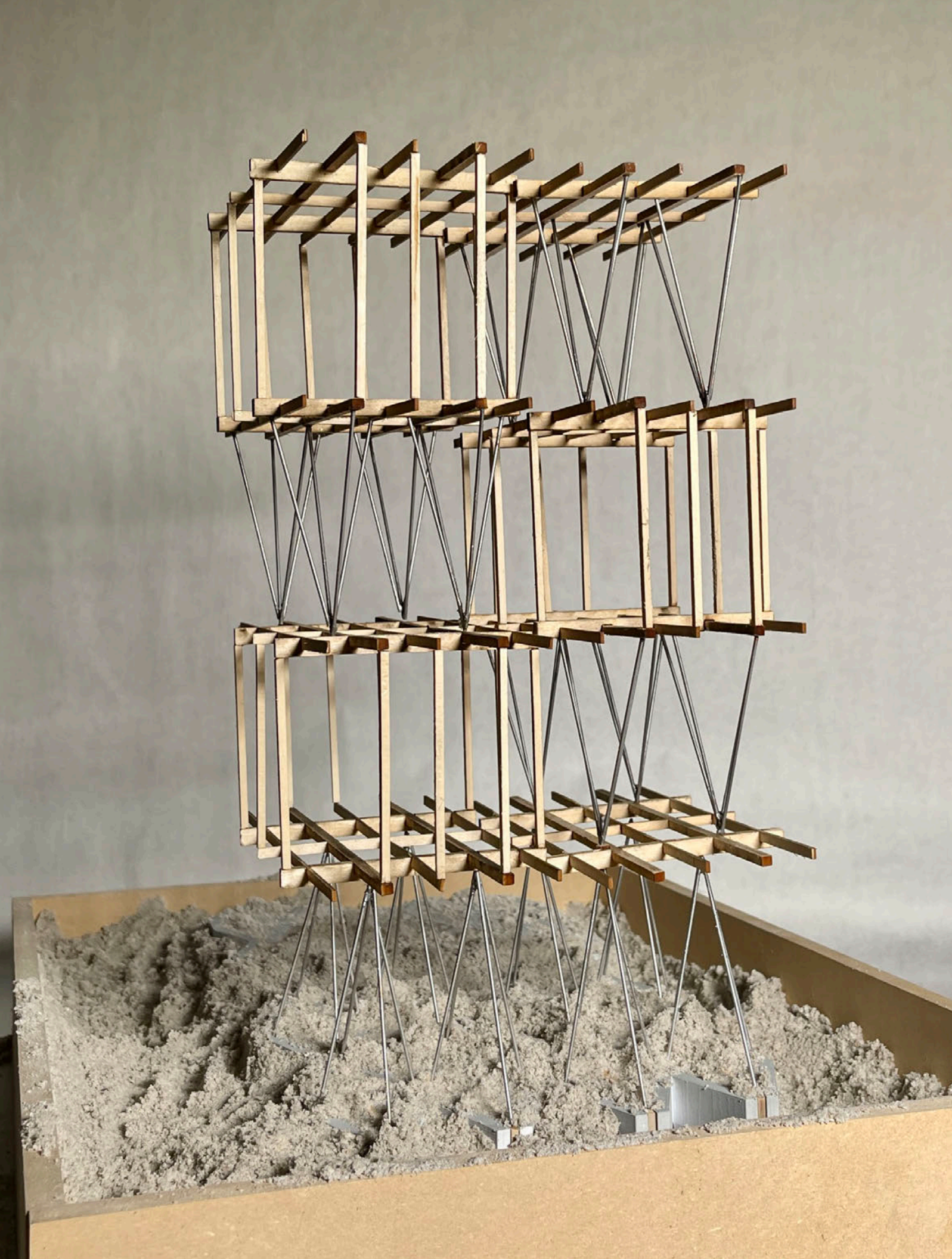












07

# Montauk 'Retreat'

**Type:** Adv IV Studio, Spring 2024

**Instructor:** Bob Marino

**Location:** Montauk, New York

The town of Montauk, sits at the eastern most point of Long Island, NY and has become a hotspot that locals and tourists enjoy during the summer months. However, due to climate change and increased sea level rise much of Montauk is at risk of being swallowed by the ocean in upcoming decades.

The design proposes a system of modular units supported by a movable foundation that would enable the architecture to gradually move inland in a leapfrogging strategy in response to shifting shorelines. The spaces are organized around two spatial typologies: an enclosed, occupiable unit designed for year-round habitation, and an open area that is supported by thin framing that creates flexible outdoor space. This exterior steel framework is not densely built, allowing it to serve as an adaptable threshold or communal gathering space.

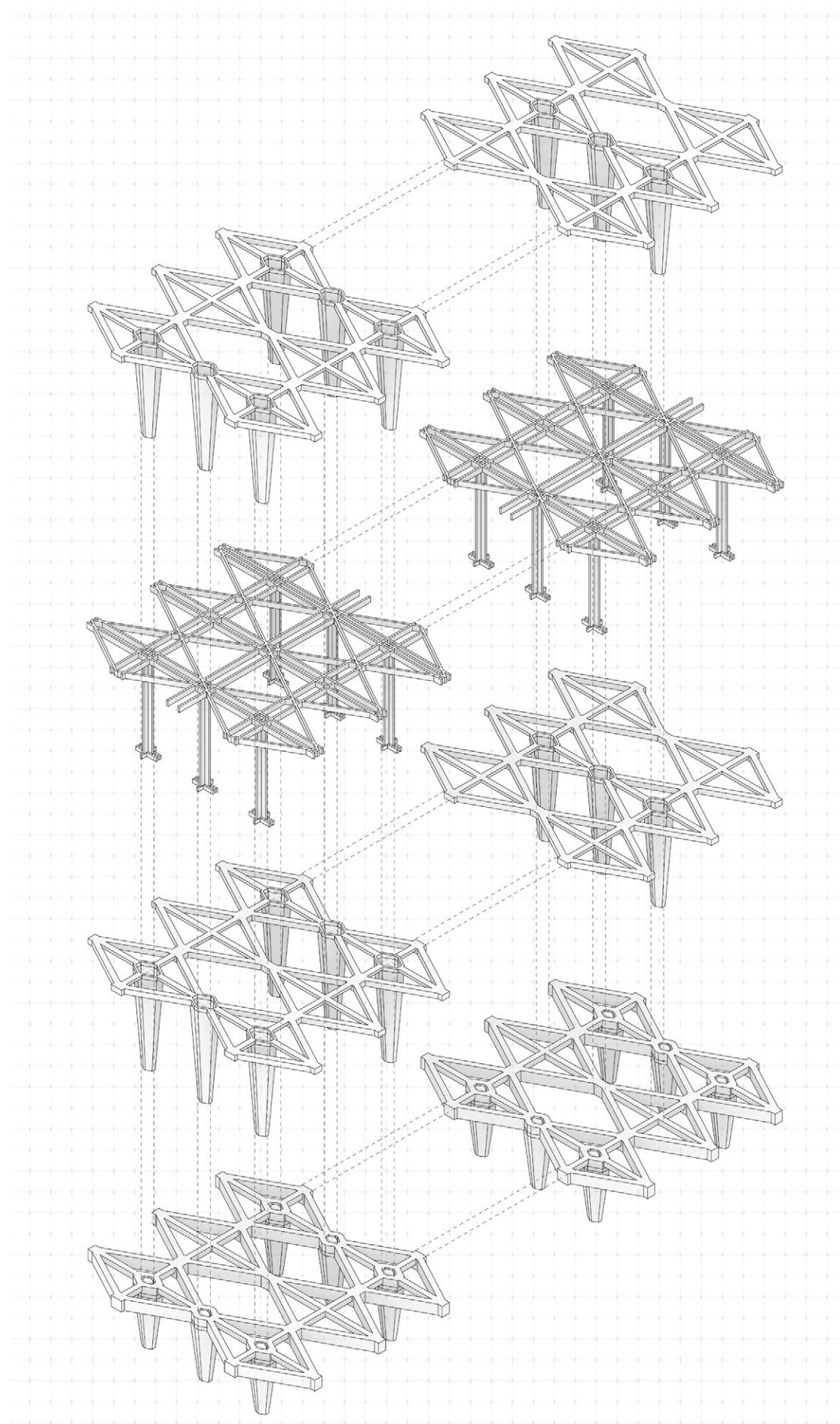




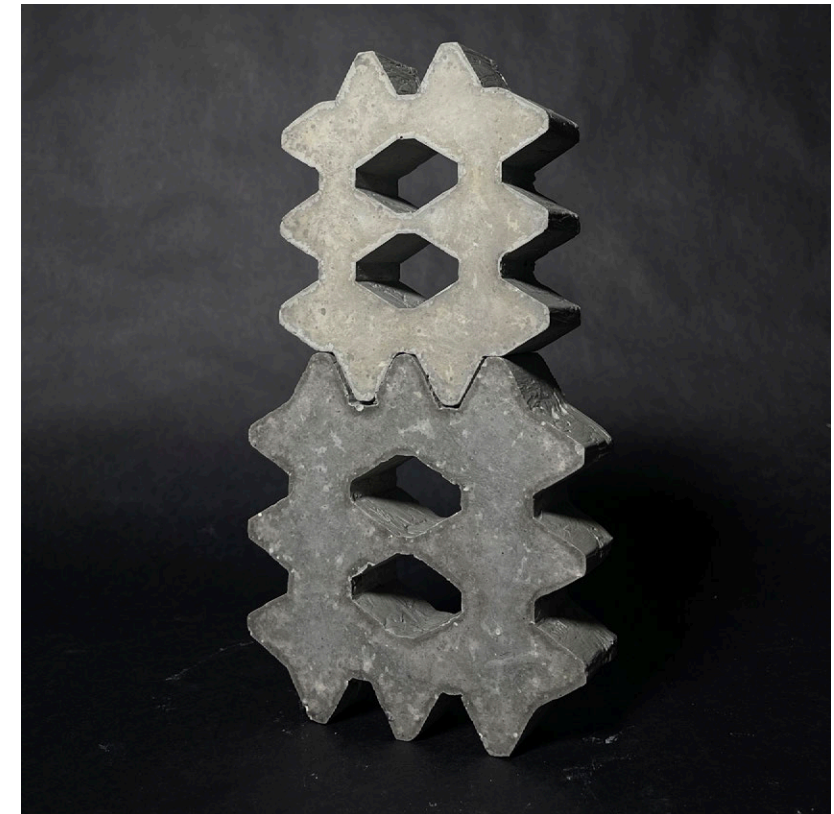
Montauk shoreline, Winter 2024



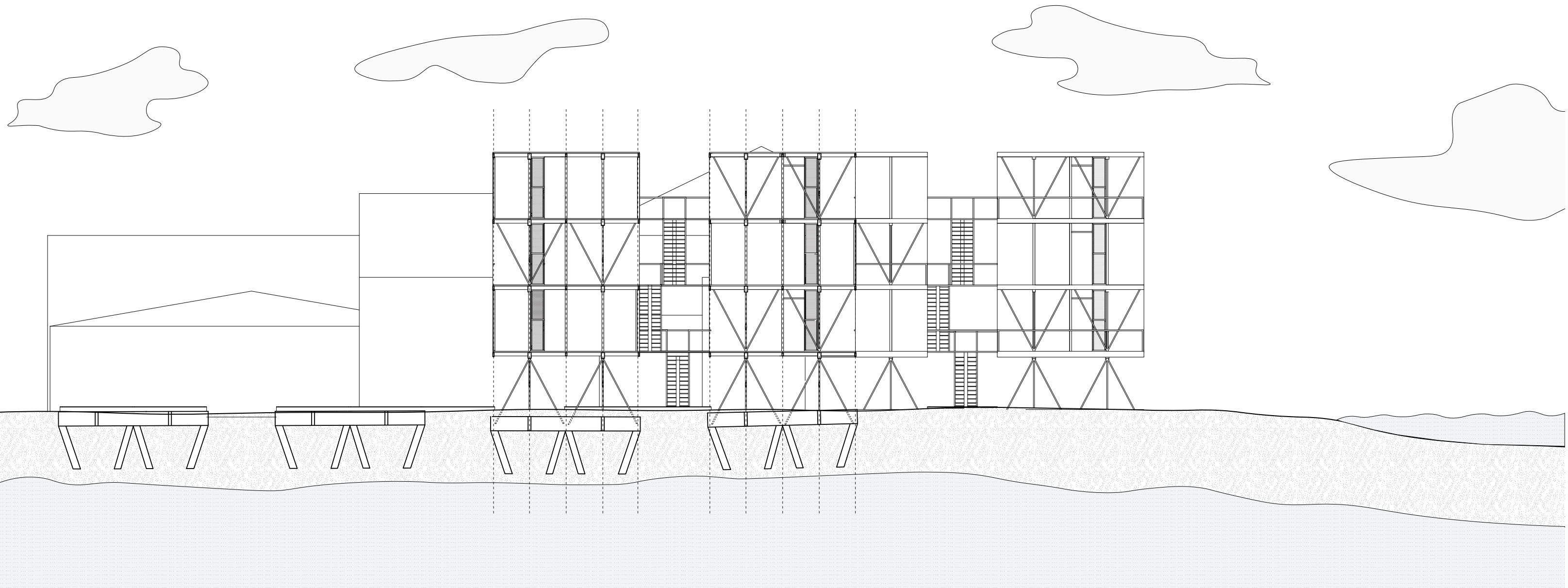
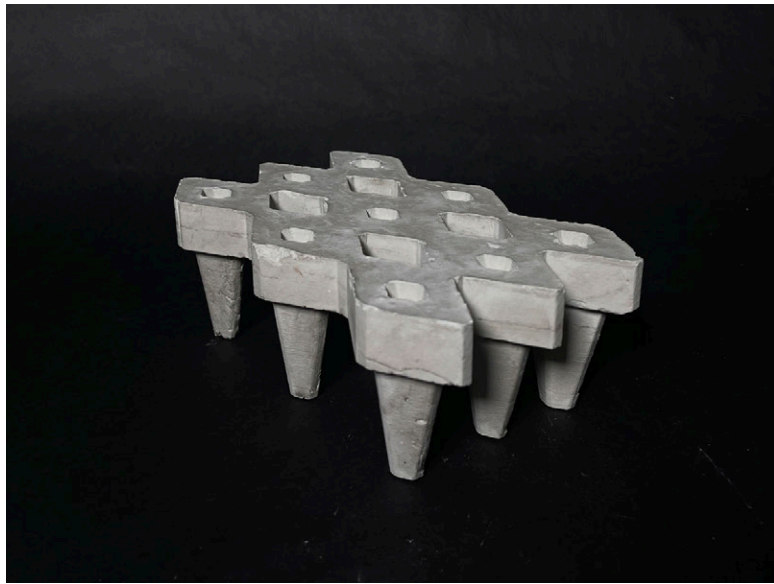
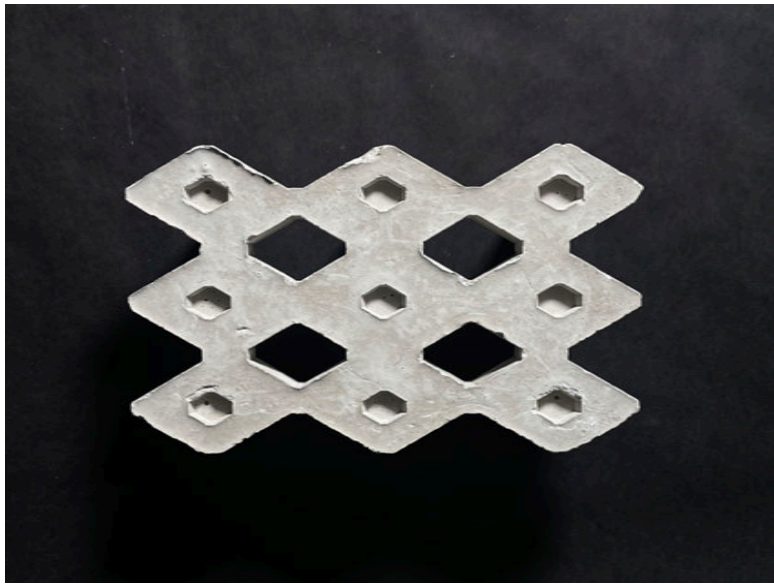




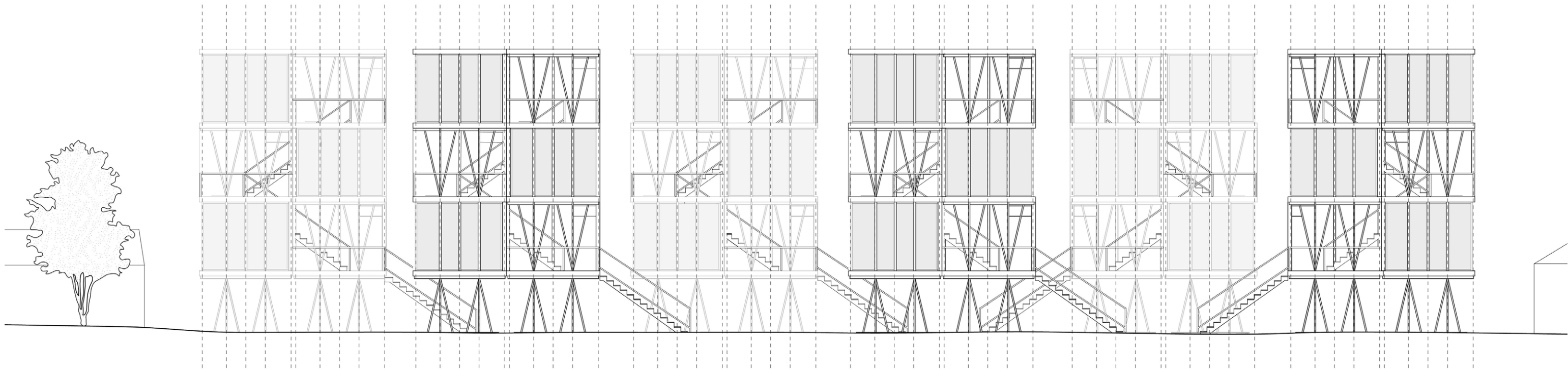
Stackable Foundation Studies



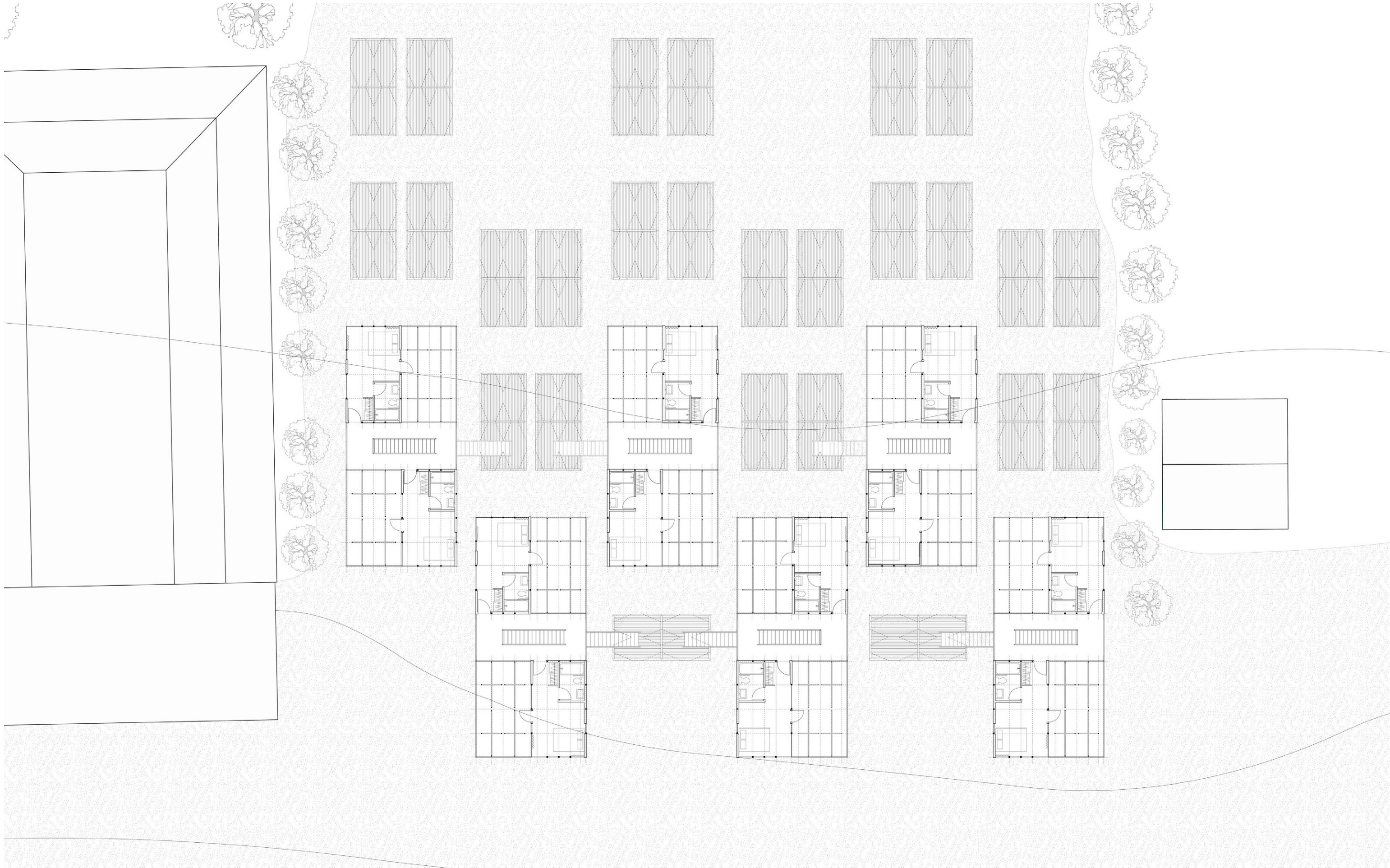








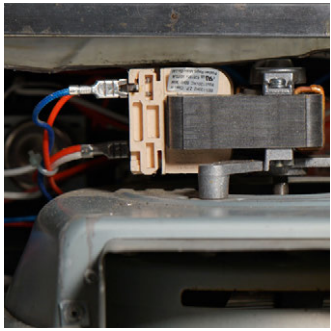
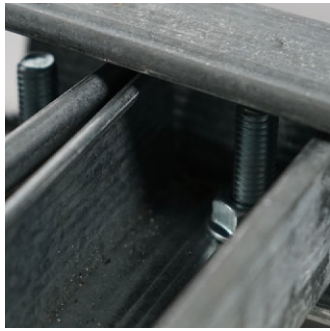
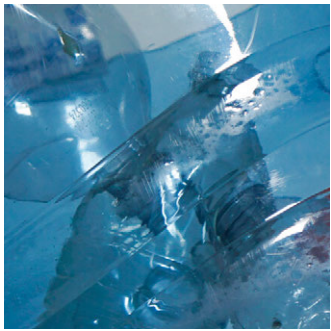












08

# Make

**Type:** MAKE, Elective, Spring 2024  
**Instructors:** Ada Tolla + Giuseppe Lignano





‘Plastic’



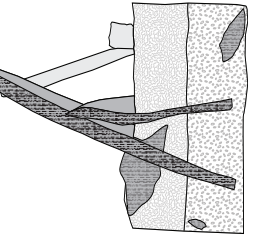


‘Wood’





# ‘Concrete’





Thank you!

Karla Rothstein  
Leslie Gill  
Khoi Nguyen  
Bob Marino  
Chris Leong  
Mark Wasiuta  
Jarrett Ley  
Virginia Black  
Ada Tolla  
Giuseppe Lignano

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