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# Rethinking the Library:

Can the Design of a Public Library Inspire  
*both* the Activation of a Small Town *and*  
Deactivation of the Socioeconomic Barriers  
Therein?

by

Colby Clifton Mitchell

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Architecture

Major: Architecture

The University of Memphis

May 2013



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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my ever loving wife, Amber and my son, Jackson, for their patience and support of my endeavors in continuing education; To my mother, Vallary, who guided me on the path of art and architecture; to my father, Louis, who encourages me daily in perseverance and faith; and most of all to my Heavenly Father that makes this all possible.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the entire University of Memphis Department of Architecture for their endless efforts in getting the Master of Architecture program accredited during my tenure and their great trust in allowing my colleagues and me to take part in the process. I would like to acknowledge my other committee members – To Sherry Bryan, for her belief in me and my ambitions for this thesis, even to the point of traveling alone to my hometown to discuss my direction with the mayor and others; to Michael Hagge, for his continual support and belief in me throughout my time in the department and recommendation in my graduate assistant position in the Campus Planning and Design office; To Jimmie Tucker, whose experience and guidance in libraries has aided this project to be optimal in design. Most of all, I would like to acknowledge my major professor, Jim Williamson, for his guidance over the years. His breadth of architectural knowledge under the tutelage of Louis I. Kahn has passed down to me as Kahn once quoted, “I felt first of all joyous. I felt that which joy is made of, and I realized that joy itself must have been the impelling force, that which was

there before we were there and that somehow joy was in every ingredient of our making. I think joy is the key word in our work. It must be felt. If you don’t feel joy in what you’re doing, then you are not really alive.”

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my colleagues, Anthea Comas, Robert Paulus, Theodore Risch, and Jesse Webb for your dedication, encouragement, and fraternal spirit along this journey.

## Abstract

Mitchell, Colby Clifton. M.Arch.  
The University of Memphis. May 2013.  
Rethinking the Library: Can the Design of a Public Library  
Inspire *both* the Activation of a Small Town *and* the  
Deactivation of the Socioeconomic Barriers Therein?  
Major Professor: James F. Williamson.

Growing up in Marianna, Arkansas, I recall the memories of places that are dear to my heart. Yet, many of these places have either been demolished or sit vacant, leaving only the memories that others and I relive as we pass by. Despite economic downfalls throughout the city's existence, it has still found a way to press forward. If one takes into account other small towns in the Delta, Marianna, like many others, has continued to decrease in population and job resources. I foresee a technologically-advanced library within the heart of downtown Marianna where people of all ages and backgrounds can access not only books, but also the endless amount of resources the world has to offer through the Internet. Even more, I foresee priceless stories being told and advice being disseminated by word of mouth to the fellow sitting across the table, or the voice heard over one's shoulder – "This is the way, walk in it."

## Preface

In the fall of 2012, I took a Comprehensive Studio course under Professor Michael Chisamore who gave us the option of choosing our own studio project, given that it should relate to your thesis topic, in hopes to better prepare one for thesis. In that comprehensive studio, I chose to design a youth center for my hometown of Marianna, Arkansas (Appendix I-Q). Professor Chisamore, along with Professor Sherry Bryan and my colleagues, traveled with me to Marianna with the intent to explore the comprehensive studio project as well as the thesis topic more thoroughly. Another step towards preparing for this thesis was taking on the challenge of submitting a design for the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) design competition. The project was to renovate an existing library in a low-income neighborhood (Appendix G, H).

Both projects afforded me the opportunity to get a glimpse of what this master's thesis could be. Not only did these prerequisites set me on a path to develop a strong thesis, it enthused me to press toward some day having them built. Presenting my ideas to the community, starting a Facebook page dedicated to this thesis, keeping close contact with Marianna's Mayor and other prominent figures, along with other initiatives taken, community engagement has become a lifelong priority for me and I will not rest until I have done all that I can and more to give back to Marianna, Arkansas.

*From the source to the page, from page to the net  
Have we caught every text intended for us to catch?  
Filtered and trickled down; how fickle the content  
Have we considered the complex or mentioned the context?  
Have we realized the meaning of form that Kahn stressed?  
How could we have done more, for like Mies we've done less.  
Thumbs text, swipe, stretch, click, next, re-fresh  
No longer do we put our souls on scrolls we scroll down and yes!  
We're impressed by how thin the Mac gets  
Yet the thinner the Mac gets the less we seem to access.  
What is there left to look? What is there left to learn?  
Most of all, it's our future generations I'm concerned.  
For out of the MacBook we can back look  
Before we fill the cloud in the virtual atmos-phere.  
For I fear, if we don't, we'll scrap books  
And by that, not meaning cut and pasting scrapbooks.  
Perhaps hooked on how fast we can flash media  
But 'media' was derived from the Latin word 'medium'  
We need them, both-and to balance our old plans  
The day has now come for all three to hold hands  
A beautiful romance, book and computer, iMarry  
Under a steeple amongst people and the chapel? -Library*

*A poetic expression by the author*

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Figure 1. Population  
([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marianna\\_AR\\_001.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marianna_AR_001.jpg))



Figure 2. Marianna Bridge  
([http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3e/Marianna\\_AR\\_011.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3e/Marianna_AR_011.jpg))

## Chapter 1: Rethinking Who?

### Who Knows?

What mere man would consider building upon the ruins of the great city of Rome? I doubt any, but to preserve such a place would not be deemed unthinkable. Now, on a much smaller scale, the community that I have been instrumental in preserving is not Rome, but it is the very notion of revitalizing a city that I believe has brought so much attention to my work. Marianna is my Rome!

There are too many dwindling communities in America today, which is so unfortunate given the advancements in technology, transportation, and access to the needs and wants of life. Everything today seems to be but the touch of a button away; the sending of a text or the click of a mouse. Hence, these advancements make the fabric that holds small communities together less and less important – small businesses, mom and pop shops, family-owned establishments and the like. “Keeping the doors open” has proven more of a challenge than ever before. With that in mind, there is

hardly the desire to remain in such a community. But then there are the even smaller numbers who have been deeply rooted in the community for whatever reason. These are those who care about the general welfare of the people and what the future holds for those residents.

How is the “natural state” of Arkansas thought of besides a small, agriculturally-driven expanse of land? Maybe a few recognize it as the home of the 42nd U.S. President William “Bill” Clinton (Figure 3) or the home state of Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart.

An even harder question to answer can be found in asking about Marianna, AR. Who on earth knows where that is? Many individuals even get Marianna confused with Marion, AR. Of those who do in fact know of my hometown, many recognize it as the home of the Chamber’s Brothers, a family cartel of gangsters who



**Figure 3. President Bill Clinton**  
([http://msnbcmedia.msn.com/j/MSNBC/Components/Photo/\\_new/121217-bill-clinton.380;380;7;70;0.jpg](http://msnbcmedia.msn.com/j/MSNBC/Components/Photo/_new/121217-bill-clinton.380;380;7;70;0.jpg))

expanded their unlawful practice to Detroit, Michigan, some 40 years ago. We seem to get recognition for the less commendable things. However, in recent years there has been a change of pace. The James Beard Foundation, which promotes good eateries in America, annually honors restaurants, chefs and others, recently announced that Jones Barbecue has been designated one of 2012s American classics (Branley, 2012) (Figure 4).

Like most of the state of Arkansas, Marianna has traditionally been agriculturally-driven mostly due to its rich soil, acres of flat land, and major crops of cotton, soybeans, and rice. With this being the case, some of the toughest challenges could come in the politics of change and transformation. My argument, however, is not to alter the town's primary economic resource in the form of agriculture, but to enhance the lives of the citizens through civic space. The most passionate architects know how to tap into the concerns of the largest stakeholders as well as those who care about the physiological, environmental, and educational well-being of the community.

## Who's Who?

Marianna was founded as the village of Walnut Ridge in 1848 by Colonel Walter H. Otey. Its name was changed to Marianna four years later, and, by 1858, the city was relocated three miles downstream on higher ground and where the L'Anguille River was navigable throughout the year (Lancaster, 2012, para. 2). The population was

4,115 in the 2010 Census (Figure 1). Lee County is named after the commander of the Confederate forces in the Civil War, General Robert E. Lee, who has a statue that rises out of the heart of the town square. Marianna, along with surrounding communities, is a part of the Delta which spans across Crowley's Ridge, a plateau dividing the Arkansas Delta down the middle for miles along the Mississippi River just southwest of Memphis, TN.

The people of Marianna, AR – like so many other small, rural towns in the United States – share a rich history. There are many stories to be told of natives who worked tirelessly to develop such a place. Marianna was once a dominant region in wealth, population and political power and a major producer of the nation's cotton, rice, and soybean crops. This all changed in the 1920s as cotton prices collapsed and the beginning of the Great Depression led to the community becoming one of the poorest in Arkansas. Years later, industrialization of farming continued the downward spiral, and at the turn of the century well-paying jobs began to dissipate, plants shut down, and many people were forced to move to larger cities like



**Figure 4.** Jones BBQ  
([http://media.arkansasonline.com/img/photos/2012/04/20/resized\\_99265-jonesbarbqdiner5631\\_99-15742\\_t728.JPG?268341e6cd9f2dbb5da7a7ef3377e116f3d68a26](http://media.arkansasonline.com/img/photos/2012/04/20/resized_99265-jonesbarbqdiner5631_99-15742_t728.JPG?268341e6cd9f2dbb5da7a7ef3377e116f3d68a26))

Little Rock, AR and Memphis, TN. In the last decades of the twentieth century, Marianna began experiencing a population decline similar to that of the Delta overall (Lancaster, 2012, para. 12).

According to the current Mayor of Marianna, Jimmy Williams, the town proudly hosted seven manufacturing plants at one time, including the Coca-Cola Company. Poverty stricken and highly dependent on government aid, Marianna continues to suffer from the lingering plagues of socioeconomic barriers, racial divide, and low educational achievements. With the combination of such plagues as substandard education and socioeconomic barriers still lingering in Marianna (known by its alias as "The City Beautiful") (Figure 5), it brings into question exactly what single building type could begin to change these pandemics.

The aforementioned plagues highlight education. Academic proficiency is a glaring disparity in Lee County and the betterment of education could be a remedy to correct them all. Along with this disheartening

situation, Lee County has always had de facto dual school systems; one private with predominately white students and the other public having predominately African Americans, despite the 1968-69 desegregation enactments. This travesty continued 10 years after Arkansas gained negative attention with the Little Rock Nine (Figure 6), nine African American students involved in the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School. Over the 150 plus years of Marianna's existence, the socioeconomic, educational, racial and political status of the townspeople has been an ongoing issue. The question, then, is what can "bind" the people of Marianna together? To bring such an ambitious undertaking into fruition would require persistence and dedication. However, it would take more than just special connections, donations and grant funding. It would take finding strength in the common people of the town, and, when that is not enough, the memories that have been recorded in my mind of the city I was raised in and fell in love with. Some will share my passion, but many will not. What critics must understand is the appreciation of brick and mortar serving as key ingredients in the melting pot of a community (figure 7).



Figure 5. Postcard  
(<http://www.moodycollectibles.com/pixfiles2/2643.jpg>)



Figure 6. Little Rock Nine  
(<http://media.npr.org/programs/morning/features/2007/sep/littlerock/eckford200-b59a959cd97dc8e68c87ef62d5da21e322bdc7c0-s6-c10.jpg>)

Could a common civic structure such as a library be the solution? The design of this library would be intended for the young, aged, well-off and struggling, black and white and in between. It should serve as a place for the educated as well as the uninformed, the bored and the busy, technologically advanced and simple at heart.

The power of architecture as a symbol has proven to be evident and real. Brick and mortar i.e. buildings, have simply been overlooked as a part of the urban fabric. People are integrally woven together through all building types. A library – being a civic building type – should function as a thread sewing all patrons to knowledge. A way in which to keep the people of Marianna tightly knit is to somehow evoke the same spirit and passion for Marianna I have and hopefully that can come through the rethinking of the library as more than just a storing place for books to occasionally be checked out. Sadly, many do not see the importance of uplifting and sustaining the community or returning to contribute in any fashion. The consensus seems to be an attitude of “leave it be,” and whether the community withers and dies or grows to flourish, little care is given. But if the latter is to be, someone has to take the lead (figure 8).



**Figure 7.** Busy Day in Marianna (c.1910)  
(<https://www.facebook.com/#!/photo.php?fbid=10151160893115094&set=o.101884139912544&type=3&theater>)

# Residents share ideas on ways to improve LC

Steering committee reviewing suggestions

Residents of Lee County on Monday shared ideas on ways to improve the area during a public forum designed to gather information for the reNew East Arkansas project.

The project is being managed by the East Arkansas Planning and Development District and is being funded through a \$2.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Jennifer Watkins, with Building Communities, shared with residents information that was gathered earlier in the day during a meeting of the county's steering committee before opening the meeting for discussion.

The issues suggested by county residents covered a wide variety of topics ranging from quality of life issues to economic strategies.

Some of the quality of life issues mentioned included affordable housing, arts and culture, communications and public relations, energy conservation, multi-modal



Sharing ideas

Photo by Katie West

Marianna native Colby Mitchell discusses ideas for a youth center and library project during the reNEW East Arkansas meeting held Monday in Marianna. Numerous residents attended the meeting and shared ideas on ways to improve the county and the services offered.

transportation infrastructure, local and healthy foods, mixed use development and proactive zoning, parks and recreation, public health and welfare, beautification efforts, public safety and family and social services.

"The most important factor in any of these is desire," Watkins said of any strategy being brought into a community. "If the community says we don't want any of that here, it doesn't make sense to put it in the plan."

Watkins explained that the main purpose of Monday's meeting was to determine what the community wants and what

volunteers are willing to do to help achieve the goals.

Participants at the meeting were asked to review a list of possible things that could be improved in Lee County. Residents were also asked to consider giving their time to either lead programs or help achieve some of the goals in other ways.

Some of the added public concerns included drainage, day care, side walks, streets, design standards for the downtown historic area, vacant lots, beautification, public transportation, overnight facilities, termite insurance, youth activities, senior citizens,

jobs, and better access to the Internet.

One audience member, Colby Mitchell, spoke briefly about a youth center and a library project he is looking at for Marianna.

"I have a great affinity for Marianna" Mitchell said. "I want to focus on the youth to give them a reason to stay focused and educated."

Mitchell is studying to become an architect, and said his hope is to provide the youth with a place to go and do research as well as a safe place to hang out. Mitchell is working on redesigning an existing library

See IDEAS on Page 5

Wednesday, October 17, 2012 - 5

## IDEAS

Continued from Page 1

for his master's thesis and had chosen the Marianna Library to redesign.

One of the other major issues on which comments were voiced concerned the Internet.

"Internet access is a problem here in the public," said Shirley Dukes. Dukes said she also believes that public outreach programs to get parents involved with their children is also needed.

Mattie Allison also agreed that youth and parental involvement is something the community should focus on.

Data collected from the meeting will be discussed by the steering committee at a meeting today.

Figure 8. Sharing Ideas (K. West. (2012). Courier Index, pp.1,5.)

## Chapter 2: Rethinking Why?

### Why a Library?

Why a library as opposed to some other building type? While gathering ideas about what this thesis would be about and what building type would best address my affinity towards Marianna, I discussed the possibilities at length with several individuals. On July 5th, 2012, I met with Mayor Jimmy Williams to discuss my ideas. Expressing to him my motives for reactivating downtown Marianna as the primary objective of my thesis, we searched for what building type would serve this goal best. Of the building types mentioned, a visitor's center was the first. Unbeknownst to me, there was already a \$4.5 million visitor's center under construction on the outskirts of town near Bear Creek. However, my ideal site location for a visitors center in Marianna would have anchored Highways 1 and 79, the major intersection in town. A visitor's center should be highly visible and easily accessible to all, especially tourists. Following, we discussed a hotel, which Marianna had the most potential of getting built according to the mayor. Over the past several years, the possibility

of a 50 to 60 bed, small hotel has been discussed. The issue, he claimed, was the challenge of maintaining a 50% occupancy rate year round. "Most people come in for the holidays, funerals and family reunions." (Williams, personal communication). Outside of those events, the fear was that the said occupancy rate would not be met and so this idea remains improbable.

Also, joining in on this meeting was Ms. Nancy Apple, chair of the town's historic registry committee. When a library was mentioned, she quickly targeted the existing library (Appendix G), its low usage by the general public and the fact that it only housed 3 computers. Even worse, it doesn't offer internet access (Figures 9 and 10). At the time, a library was not on the top of my list of building types, and so we moved on rather swiftly to the next option.

Ms. Apple informed me of the University of Arkansas Community Design Center (UACDC) and their master planning efforts done in Marianna in 2001. She handed me a copy of the 60-page document to help my efforts. This was useful and appreciated in that



Figure 9. Computers  
(Author)



Figure 10. No Internet Sign  
(Author)

many master plans get “shelved” and nothing ever gets done once they are completed, either due to the lack of funding or people’s motivation declines over time given no immediate and obvious improvements. Even more bothersome, those who are inclined to develop such plans tend to not follow up with previous plans of similar context. The groundwork has been laid. Why not follow up? Therefore, I intentionally made it a priority to follow up on the plans and did so initially by proposing a design for a youth center on the site the master plan had identified, located on Mississippi Street. This design was undertaken in the fall semester of 2012 in Advanced Architectural Design Studio at the University of Memphis under the tutelage of professor Michael Chisamore as a prerequisite to this thesis (Figure 11).

A follow-up meeting with Mayor Williams was set for September 5th, 2012. Those in attendance for this meeting included the director and coordinator of the University of Memphis Architecture Program, Professor Sherry Bryan, Professor Michael Chisamore, and my colleagues, Anthea Comas, Robert Paulus, Ted Risch,

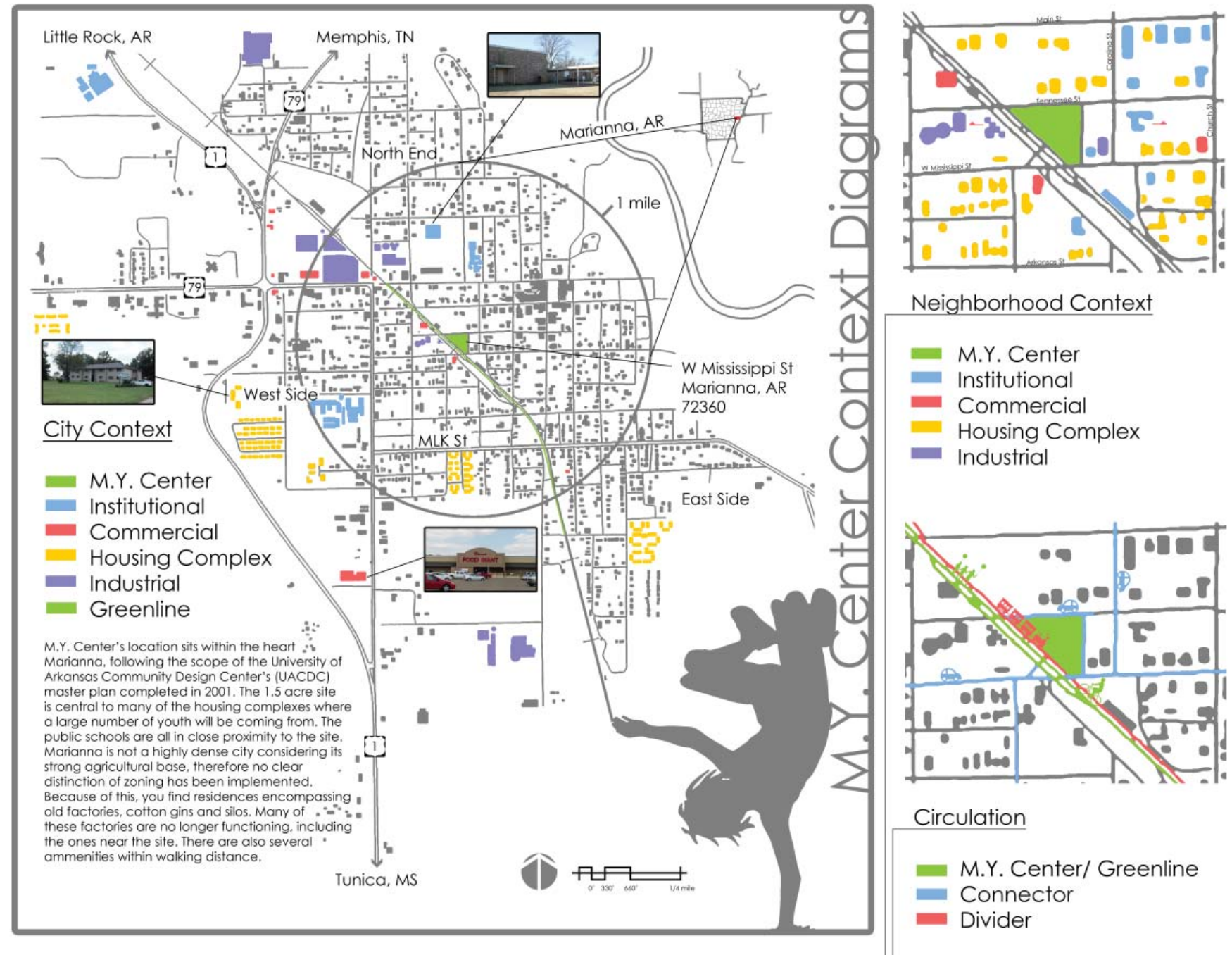


Figure 11. Youth Center Site (Author)



and Jesse Webb. I reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting held in July and followed with my thoughts on what the heart of Marianna was – the people. Therefore, I wanted to propose a thesis project that the entire population could benefit from. I put on the table my desires for a new civic center. Not only would it involve all of Marianna’s citizens because of its diverse program, but it also followed the UACDC master plan to place one in the heart of downtown. Other possibilities discussed included a sustainable factory as a major job creator.

## Why Not a Library?

The goal of this meeting was to solidify a strong thesis project, and while we let the ideas simmer, the mayor mentioned some other key factors in my decision making process. He alluded to the recent loss of nearly 20% of the population due to jobs being outsourced, primarily factories and plants shutting down, that resulted in a \$70,000 annual decrease to the town’s revenue. “At one time, we had five plants...it’s tough to compete with

the global market.” (Williams, personal communication). Mayor Williams also noted what used to take 50 people now takes only 5, specifically in reference to factory-type jobs. Factors like these ought to give one extra incentive to rethink the strategies concerning job retention. The

same factors force one to question the role of the public library in a community, which has traditionally been an anchor and a hub for job resources. In this role, a library would function as the proverb goes – *give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a*



**Figure 12.** Teach a Man to Fish  
(<http://cdn.c.photoshelter.com/img-get/10000urUqwfkohJw/s/850/850/Father-teaching-a-son-to-shoot-fish-with-a-bow-and-arrow.jpg>)

*man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime* (Figure 12). My goal, again, was to choose a thesis project right then and there in the presence of the mayor, professors, and colleagues. Unfortunately, there was no consensus at that time. However, what finally settled the idea of 'why a library' came shortly thereafter. As I rummaged through some old design projects and documents from my undergraduate experience at the University of Memphis, I stumbled upon a manifesto, *My Rome*, I composed for Professor Jim Williamson's Determinants of Modern Design course. The parameters for that research paper were to imagine oneself ten years in the future as a well-established and renowned architect submitting to the American Academy in Rome for the Rome Prize, awarded each year to thirty emerging artists and scholars in the early or middle stages of their careers who represent the highest standard of excellence in the arts and humanities (C, Celenza, 2013) (Figure 13). Skimming over the manifesto written in 2009, my search for a thesis project came to an end as I ran across these lines - "... but with any large scale project and lots of funding, there was stringent questioning and dialogue about what was needed most for the city. The suggestions ranged

from a new food court to a multi-functional recreational center. My response was a bit narcissistic. 'Yes, the town could use those facilities! Why not even a movie theatre or Wal-Mart?' I concluded that the core of what the

town needed most was exactly what I wanted to give them - Knowledge. Though, knowledge is nothing that can be forced upon any given person, so the risk was there as to whether or not this decision would be the best, but I was willing to take that chance. I thought as a wise man would; give a man a fish and you feed him for the day, but to teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime. Therefore, my case and point revolved around giving the people book knowledge and, if wished, they may research and find the resources necessary to bring whatever they personally felt the town needed most, just as I had done. I wanted to empower them." That excerpt clearly defines what I was to choose as a thesis. It all had come full circle! Not only did I unknowingly choose my thesis project three years prior, I had also chosen the site.

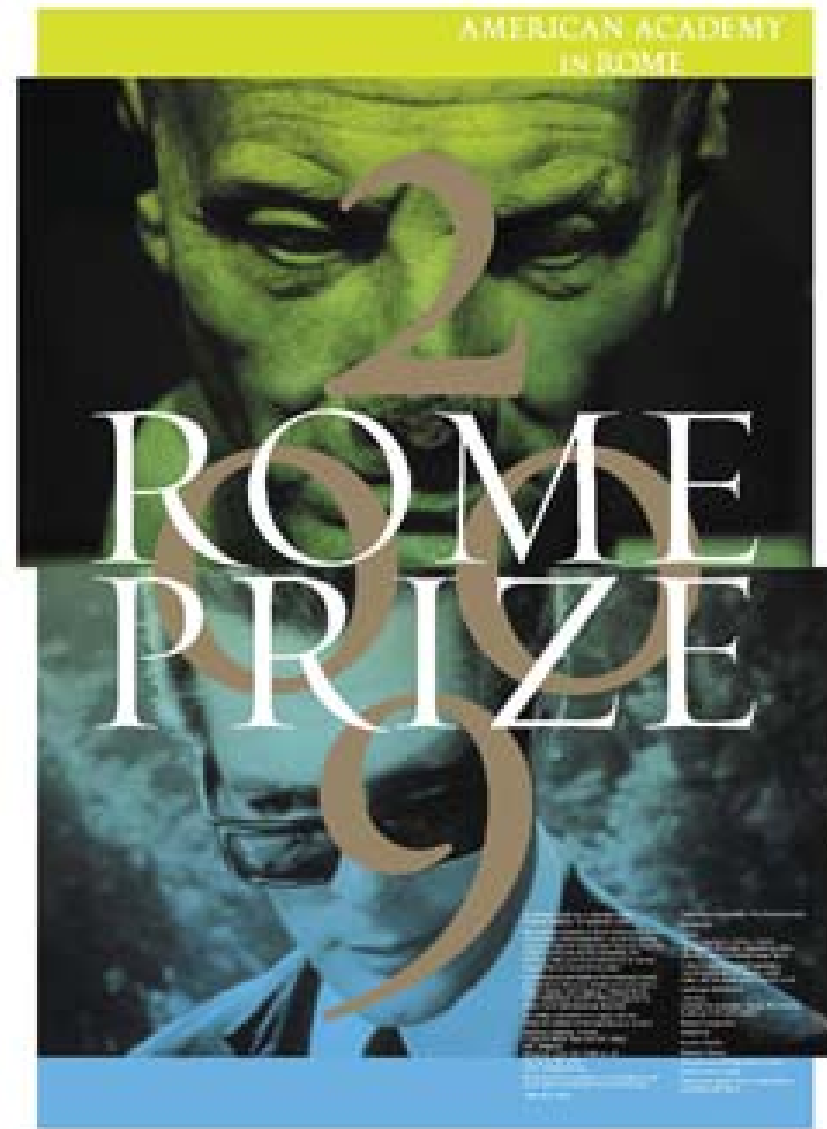


Figure 13. 2009 Rome Prize Flyer  
([http://blog.hometta.com/storage/rome-prize.jpg?\\_\\_SQUARESPACE\\_CACHEVERSION=1241456865385](http://blog.hometta.com/storage/rome-prize.jpg?__SQUARESPACE_CACHEVERSION=1241456865385))

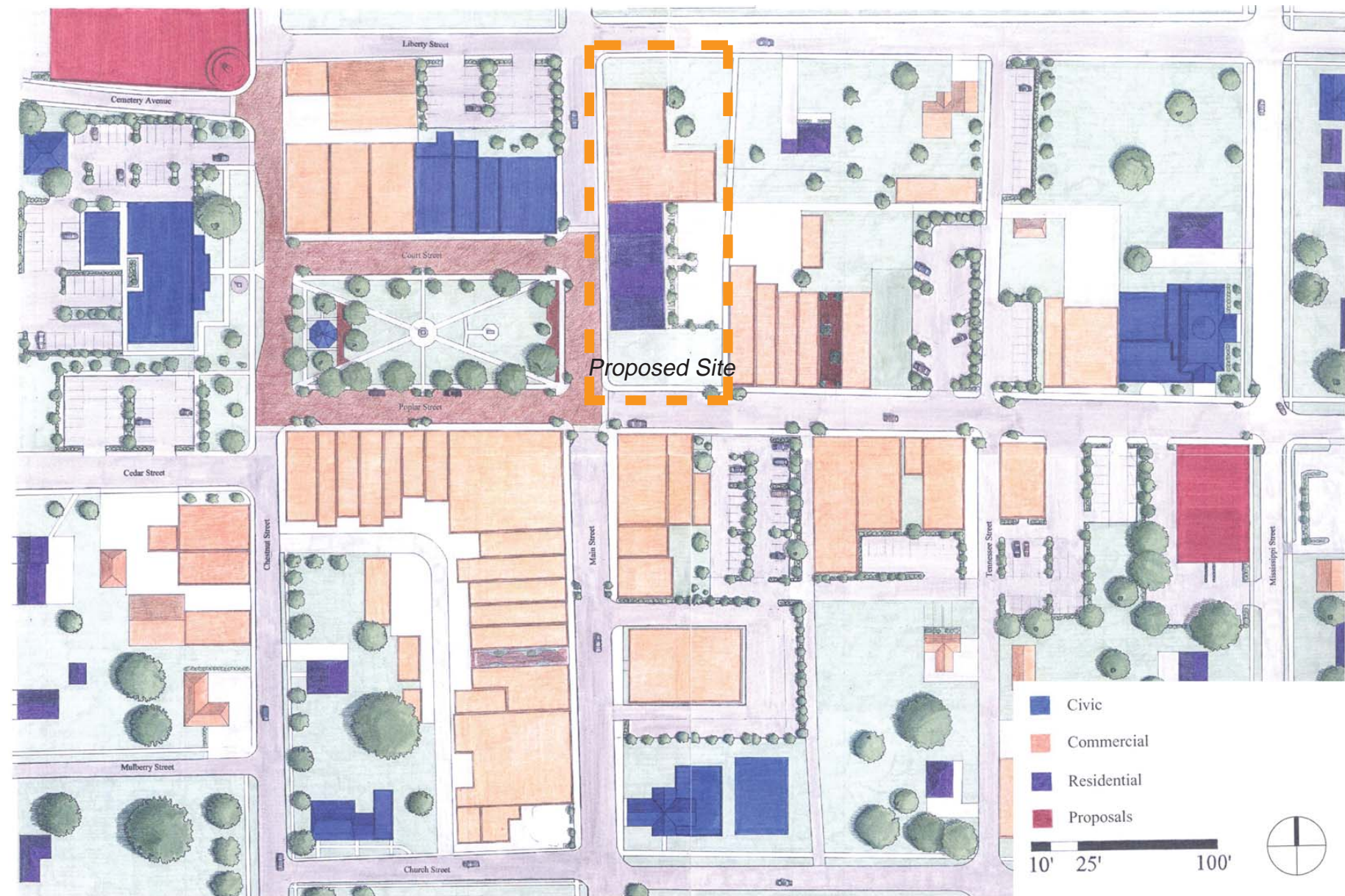
## Chapter 3: Rethinking Where?

*"Because of the agriculture and farmers who owned acres of land, they were not very excited about any new construction on their front, so just about all new construction was limited to the inner city, which didn't lend much space, but providentially I was in the business of preservation. Fortunately, there was the perfect location. Like most towns, at the heart of the community is a courthouse, which was the case in Marianna. Directly across the street from the courthouse lies the court square which includes a wooden pavilion, park benches, a statue of Robert E. Lee and the U.S. flag. Directly south of court square was where my treasured piece of land awaited..."*

*(My Rome, Author)*

### Where are the Options?

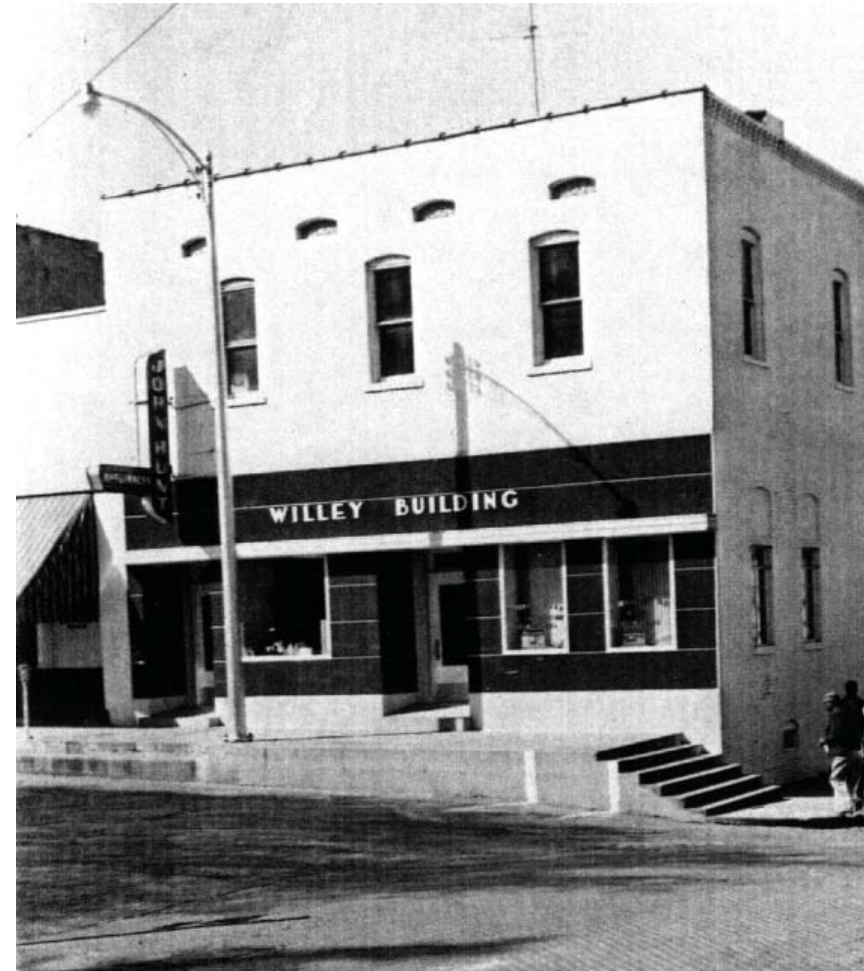
This excerpt from *My Rome* ultimately helped me settle on the library's site on the corner of Poplar and Main, but before taking the easy approach in selecting this site,



**Figure 14.** UACDC Master Plan  
(Marianna Revitalization, Marianna, AR, Summer 2001)

other research was conducted to choose the most fitting site. Taking note of Marianna's existing library located one block west of the central business district, I realized that land use and zoning have not been truly considered in years past. The existing library is surrounded by residential land use, and the site on Poplar and Main at the core of downtown currently has a residential-multifamily use. This incongruity needed to be reconsidered through a master plan. Referring back to the UACDC master plan (Figure 14), it called for a civic structure to be placed on the site and further supports my final decision.

Other site considerations included renovating one of the buildings west of Court Square i.e. the Willey Building (Figure 15), a former hotel, which is now vacant. The Gentry Public Library in Gentry, Arkansas, provided a great example of what could be done to a renovated structure in the downtown core (Figure 16). This library also included a "pocket park," an amenity Marianna is familiar with, having one adjacent to The Poplar Street Grill and Courier Index. The other site that was considered is situated on the corner of Poplar Street and Mississippi Street where Hotel Marianna once stood (Figure 17).



**Figure 15. Willey Building**  
(Marianna Revitalization. Marianna, AR. Summer 2001)



**Figure 16. Gentry Public Library**  
(<http://ad009cdnb.archdaily.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/1297369614-91785c-1000x790.jpg>)



**Figure 17. Hotel Marianna Former Site**  
(Author)

## Where is the Site?

After much thought, the site on Poplar Street and Main Street was deemed the best for the library, not only for its proximity to the heart of downtown and that it bookends Court Square(Figure 18), but that it also provides the opportunity to strengthen the corner of Main Street and Poplar Street by relocating the existing housing above shops on Poplar Street(Figure 19), therefore freeing the site for the new library to expand eastward. The existing farmers market tent and playground would also be relocated further east (Figure 20).



*Figure 18.* Court Square 1977  
(<https://www.facebook.com/#!/photo.php?fbid=10150836717455094&set=o.101884139912544&type=3&theater>)

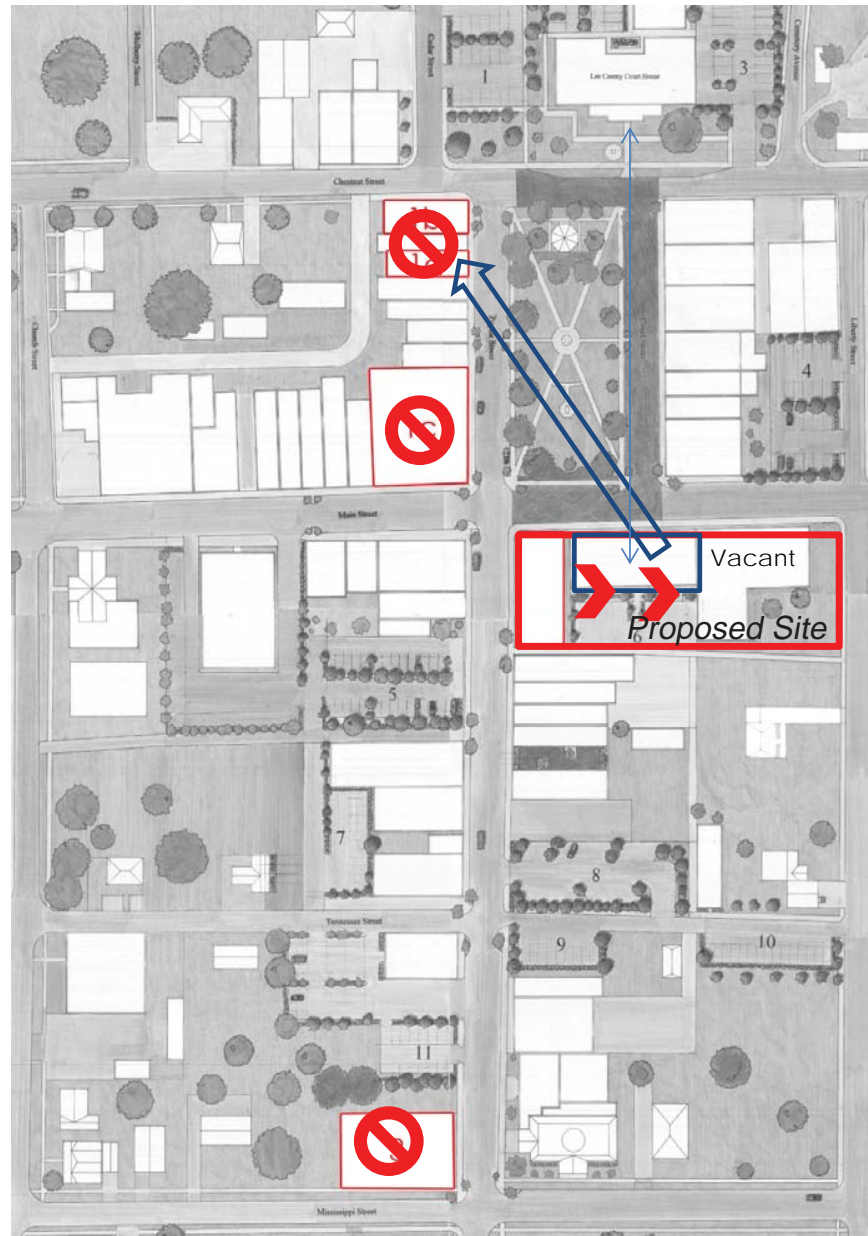


Figure 19. Relocation Plan  
(Author)



Figure 20. Poplar Street + Main Street (2012)  
(Author)

## Chapter 4: Rethinking What?

### What is a Library?

What is a library? This is *both* a simple *and* complex question. In the case of this thesis, it must be answered by addressing the traditional and the contemporary – specifically tailored for Marianna. The simplest way to address this question was to look at both categories side by side (Figure 21). They each begin with a source. That source could literally be anyone or anything that inspires one to write. The source, whether intentionally or not, passes its knowledge down to an author, regardless of whether that author was a willing participant in seeking that knowledge. Yet, here is where the two categories of the traditional and contemporary library part ways.

The author in the traditional sense has been credited in general as being authentic, reliable and unquestionable concerning his writings and resources. Over the centuries, however, authors and their trustworthiness have become more and more

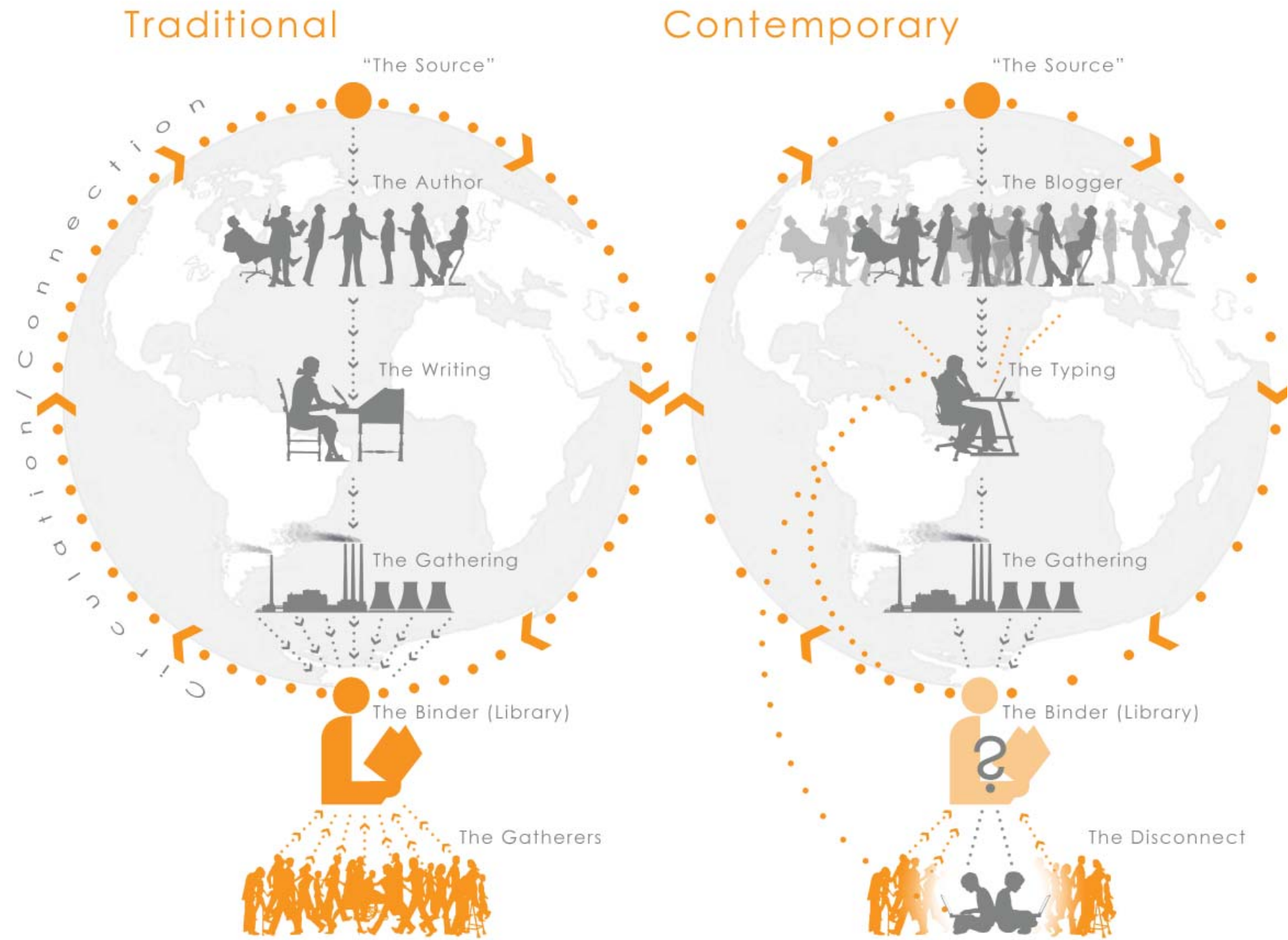


Figure 21. Form Diagram (Author)

questionable. As time passes and mankind's general knowledge has been thought to have increased, authors of the past and even more so today, have been under a microscope. In many cases, they have been found to be fallible and not completely reliable in all of their references. Hence, the title of *author* has been reduced to that of *blogger* in the minds of many. This is due to the fact that many writings and/or the passing along of knowledge in today's society can in some way or another be said to be opinionated, in spite of how reputable the person and their sources and resources may be. So while the scholarly author of the past carefully takes his time to compose each sentence, using stone or clay, advancing years later to a quill, dipped in ink to convey each line of truth written on papyrus or parchment, the blogger types (what's a typewriter?!). With his media being a laptop, iPad or iPhone, the time in which it takes to compose a body of knowledge by typing is reduced considerably and therefore composing the body of knowledge becomes more of a leisurely undertaking as opposed to the concentrated efforts by authors of the past.

While the medium used to convey knowledge

has changed, the message should be deemed just as reliable – or shouldn't it? To recall historical evidence that before a scribe would even write the name of God, he would first wash himself and then he would use a new pen, says a great deal not only about the medium used, but the time in which it took to record a message (Williams, 2000). Because one can record a message and get the information to the next person in a fraction of the time one could in the past, knowledge has become less appreciated. Therefore, if one can ctrl+C, ctrl+V information with today's technology, who's to say that information was thoroughly considered line by line before disseminating it to others? Reverence of writing has also decreased with the advancements in technology. The phenomenon of multitasking has steadily decreased the surety of transposing scholarly writing and increased the errors therein.

Beyond this juncture, the traditional composition of multiple pages of text would be gathered and bound together by some publishing company to then be dispersed to stores, homes, businesses, and libraries. While this binding continues today, it happens at a

much lesser rate, in that writings no longer have to be published (which also reflects legitimacy), but can be sent directly to the intended readers bypassing all the scholarly systems of checks and balances through social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and even search engines like Wikipedia. Messages can be uploaded within a matter of seconds for the entire world to see. Both the author/blogger and receiver now have the option to remain in the comfort of their place of residence, barely moving a finger to gain information and/or recompose it. Instead of the arduous task of flipping a page, we now simply swipe. Instead of going through the grueling efforts to handwrite a message, we type, text or voice activate *Siri* (Figure 22) to do it for us.



**Figure 22.** Siri  
(<http://images.apple.com/ios/siri/siri-faq/images/hero.jpg>)



## What is its Relevance Today?

After a careful observation of the traditional and contemporary roles of the library, the question that begs to be answered is how does the library of today remain a relevant factor in society? What does the *rethought* library possess that the traditional does not? According to *Building Library 3.0*, the new library user is one who is used to being able to contribute, comment, and lend the weight of their personal responses to websites and services. They interact. So: give them interactive spaces, and take the collection out of the two-dimensional flat page and into four-dimensional activities (Evans, 2009, p.25). What does a space like this look like? Minus the obvious, could it be a place where not only individuals “tag” their comments on a particular post, but that post be made (with discretion) public to those using the same space. This would not only promote more virtual discussions, but it has the potential to recreate verbal interaction as users view and respond “on the cuff” within a social media room. The notion of “tagging” is to attach oneself to a particular subject, conversation

or issue, whether they are light-hearted or serious matters. To attach is to connect and connectivity is of the utmost importance in today’s virtual domain. Words like “linked,” “share,” “follow,” are all indicative and evident of our desire to be “in the know.” If nothing more, a library should function as a place where all can connect to the same sources together at the same time, with opportunities to share their individual opinions and findings. Problem solved? Not quite. The issue here is not resolved once one is connected together under one roof. The individual wants to be connected on his way to the “one roof,” and remain connected after his departure. This becomes the greatest challenge to the library as we know it and our obsessions with mobility have threatened many building types.

In *Do We Really Need Libraries?*, John Blagden (1980) argued “in assessing the overall performance of a library there would appear to be two basic approaches (a) from the viewpoint of the user, i.e., how effective is he, how he spends his time, what is the relationship between information inputs and effective performance (assuming

of course that the information input can be isolated) and (b) from the viewpoint of the library manager, i.e., what proportion of users were reached, what proportion of documentation borrowed was read, what proportion enriched the thinking of that individual, and did this enrichment lead to any contribution to organizational effectiveness (p.24)?

Blagden’s (1980) assessment of overall performance today would be much more difficult to evaluate because of the dwindling number of library-goers. Inherently, he concluded his book with these words: “Many books end with a plea for more research and I am afraid this one is going to be no exception. What the [librarian] profession requires is a sustained attack on the problem of developing a methodology by which the performance of a library can be more effectively assessed (p.145). This difficulty of assessing the effectiveness should not mean we abandon libraries altogether. In fact, according to *The Future of Public Libraries in an Internet Age*

[...]there is a future for public libraries in the Internet age. Even with the vast and growing amount of information available on the Internet and more competition for public funding, Americans say that public libraries will continue to play a vital role in communities. A strong majority say that if their public library were to shut down, they would feel 'that something essential and important has been lost, affecting the whole community'.

(Wooden, 2006, p.4)

One, however must still face the realities of the unyielding growth of technology. So what do we do? *Either* we keep the libraries *or* go entirely digital? Must this issue be addressed by taking an affirmative stance: either-or? Architect Robert Venturi (Figure 23) made a proclamation in his 1966 manifesto *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* that has made a lasting impression on me and the profession as a whole.

[...] I am for richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning; for the implicit function as well as the

explicit function. I prefer "both-and" to "either-or," black and white, and sometimes gray, to black or white. A valid architecture evokes many levels of meaning and combinations of focus: its space and its elements become readable and workable in several ways at once. But an architecture of complexity and contradiction has a special obligation toward the whole...It must embody the difficult unity of inclusion rather than the easy unity of exclusion. (Venturi, R. 1966, p.16)

I subscribe to Venturi's theory of "both-and." The future of the library should adopt the same theory. The tangible feeling of a book in one's hand while turning pages, simultaneously inhaling the newness (or oldness) of the volume is the essence of a library. Therefore, it goes without saying that books literally bind us to libraries and for the nature of such a place, the book should forever maintain relevance. However, technology must be given its due recognition and rightful place beside the book. *Both* book *and* technology, together, make for an efficient and effervescent place in which learning and human relations pique one's interest.



**Figure 23. Robert Venturi**  
(<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/.a/6a00d8341c630a53ef0120a616c804970c-400wi>)

## What are the Threats?

The dependence on mobility has grown so strong that we unconsciously find ourselves checking emails, Facebook and Twitter on our way to a library, and upon arrival, won't put the mobile device away until seated at a computer station. It makes one question why he came to the library in the first place when he could have "Googled" it from his previous location. One may think to himself, "I was comfortable where I was – soft couch, temperature to my liking, kitchen behind me. What was I thinking getting up, dressed and out in traffic and the elements to do what I could have done from home?" This mentality of comfort and extreme convenience has caused human interaction and credible resourcefulness to suffer. Recently the New York Times published a letter from a professor at Boston University in response to an article " *College Libraries Set Aside Books in a Digital Age.*" He bemoans the fact that many students rely exclusively on on-line research materials. I found the following comments extremely thought-provoking. He writes:

[...] Reviewing the term papers for classes in 'Nationalism in Post-Soviet Eurasia' and 'Negotiation in World Affairs' this spring, I have found an almost direct correlation between the best grades and whether students used books as well as materials accessible by computer. Even though students were instructed to use and cite several required books in their papers, some chose to rely entirely on sources that begin http//. This group of papers benefited from the latest reports on demonstrations in Kiev and Bishkek, but they lacked the depth and long view acquired by spending a few hours with a real book. Last but not least, there is the problem of evaluating sources. Many seem to regard the Wikipedia online encyclopedia as no worse than a standard, hard-copy encyclopedia. One of my students thought he had discovered the truth about Russia from a Trotskyite newspaper he found on the Web. Who was Trotsky? He did not know or care.

(Blumenthal, 2005)

There is also the threat of isolated learning/research and the lack of human interaction, both of which detract from our accuracy of information gathering and proper development/enhancement of social skills (Figure 24).



**Figure 24.** The Disconnect  
([http://www.visualphotos.com/photo/2x4831771/frustrated\\_boy\\_using\\_laptop\\_BLD082175.jpg](http://www.visualphotos.com/photo/2x4831771/frustrated_boy_using_laptop_BLD082175.jpg))

## What's the Binder?

Binders simply hold things together. Therefore an underlying question of this thesis is whether a public library can act as a binder to hold a small community together. Can it act in its civic presence, to bind people by oath or obligation to become more loyal citizens? There are six critical points that must be addressed in today's library, understanding the hierarchy of the passing along of knowledge: **books, food + beverage, social media, comfort, sustainability and natural lighting.**



Figure 25. The Binder  
(Author)

The book (Figure 25) represents not only the physical manifestation of a library and its most inherent amenity but also the passing along of invaluable information. In addition to this, the contemporary library should embody food and beverage services (Figures 25, 28 [16], and 40). A study session accompanied with a pastry and cup of coffee has become a common sighting in Starbucks and other similar places, taking potential patrons away from the library. However, by inserting this convenience into the library, one now has more of an incentive to go to the library. Social media (Figures 25, 29 [1], 37, 44 and 45) are highly attractive complements to the contemporary library. Just like billboards were meant to attract travelers, interactive social media functions the same way in this project through a large tech wall (Figure 37). It would reel pedestrians in from the street, not only promoting social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter, attracting teens and young adults, but it would also tap into the entire community by displaying upcoming events, local news, etc. The social media zone on the second level (Figure 29 [1]) would have large screens encouraging social interaction, not only within the room, but to connect with others around the world. It would also act as a place of lounging (Figures 44 and 45), making use of contemporary, yet comfortable

seating. While many think of the traditional library as a place to "keep quiet," this zone breaks down those barriers by allowing young people to enjoy the library freely. Sustainability lends a role in addressing energy savings by way of solar panels on the roof that would power exterior lighting and clocks on the north facade (Figures 30, 32, and 36) indicating different time zones of major cities - Marianna included - so that patrons would feel a greater sense of their importance and bearings in this age of globalization. Reusing rainwater (greywater) would also be a sustainable strategy, collected through a wishing well (Figures 28, 30 and 37). This water could be used for landscape irrigation, dish washing, and/or flushing toilets. The last binding point would be that of natural lighting (Figures 25, 28, 29, and 35), a key element in any public library and has been considered from all directions in this project. Louis Kahn coined the phrase "served vs. servant" spaces. This can be seen in the main floor plan as servant spaces i.e. mechanical rooms, restrooms, and storage spaces turn themselves over to the served spaces (in this case primarily the open space for the stacks) to receive north daylighting, which is best for reading. Other key rooms include the conference rooms showing activity from the street and the children's area placed near the relocated playground.

## Chapter 5: Rethinking How?

### Site Plan

Addressing the immediate site and the design approach and relationships to the surrounding context, the arrangement of the site plan is made clear through five points:

- Open book
- Community Engaging
- Formal Response
- Informal Response
- Binding (figure 26)

The main entrance located at the corner of Poplar Street and Main Street functions as the “open book,” having two walls that act as the cover of a book would (red). The patron figuratively walks into an “open book,” ready and willing to take part in what the library has to offer. One of the walls acknowledges the past by way of a quote mounted on the wall and found

in Marianna’s existing library (Figures 34, 36 and 37):

*“Give me a book with records old*

*To find a family story told*

*Let me as long as life shall last*

*Live for today but revere the past.”*

*-Unknown*

Beyond the open book is the community engaging response to the program (purple). The community room is strategically placed on the western-most portion of the site, having a high level of transparency facing Poplar Street so that passersby may visually engage the meetings taking place within (Figures 28 [17], 35, and 41). The more formal response of the project aligns itself physically as well as aesthetically with the Courthouse (blue). Six twenty-foot bays span across the site Court Street (Figure 31). The informal response (green) picks up beyond the edge of the liner buildings as the library’s curvilinear facade wraps itself around to the east, addressing the relocated playground area. Continuing to wrap around to the south on the second level, the glass facade could be thought as a “wave of the future” with the social media room beyond (Figures 32 and 33).

Tying all four of the aforementioned elements together is the binder, or in this case, the main entrance vestibule (yellow). It is named “the binder not only because it is the space where the open book’s angles meet, but because it is a vestibule filled with natural light, beckoning patrons in from the street (Figures 28 [1], 34, and 38). The urban frontage of the library is completed by situating the building at the very edge of the sidewalk on the north and west with tree plantings all around the site, making an appeal for walkability (figure 26).

Accessibility to the site is paramount at the northwest corner, incorporating a very modest sloping ramp that blends smoothly into the three-tiered plinth (Figure 37). A secondary entry point is at the rear of the site by way of an existing alley. Minimal parking is placed in the rear of the site for librarians and assistants, the handicapped, and book drop-off. Additional parking can be found along the street as well to the east of the site, shared with other businesses along Poplar Street (Appendix E, Image 4).

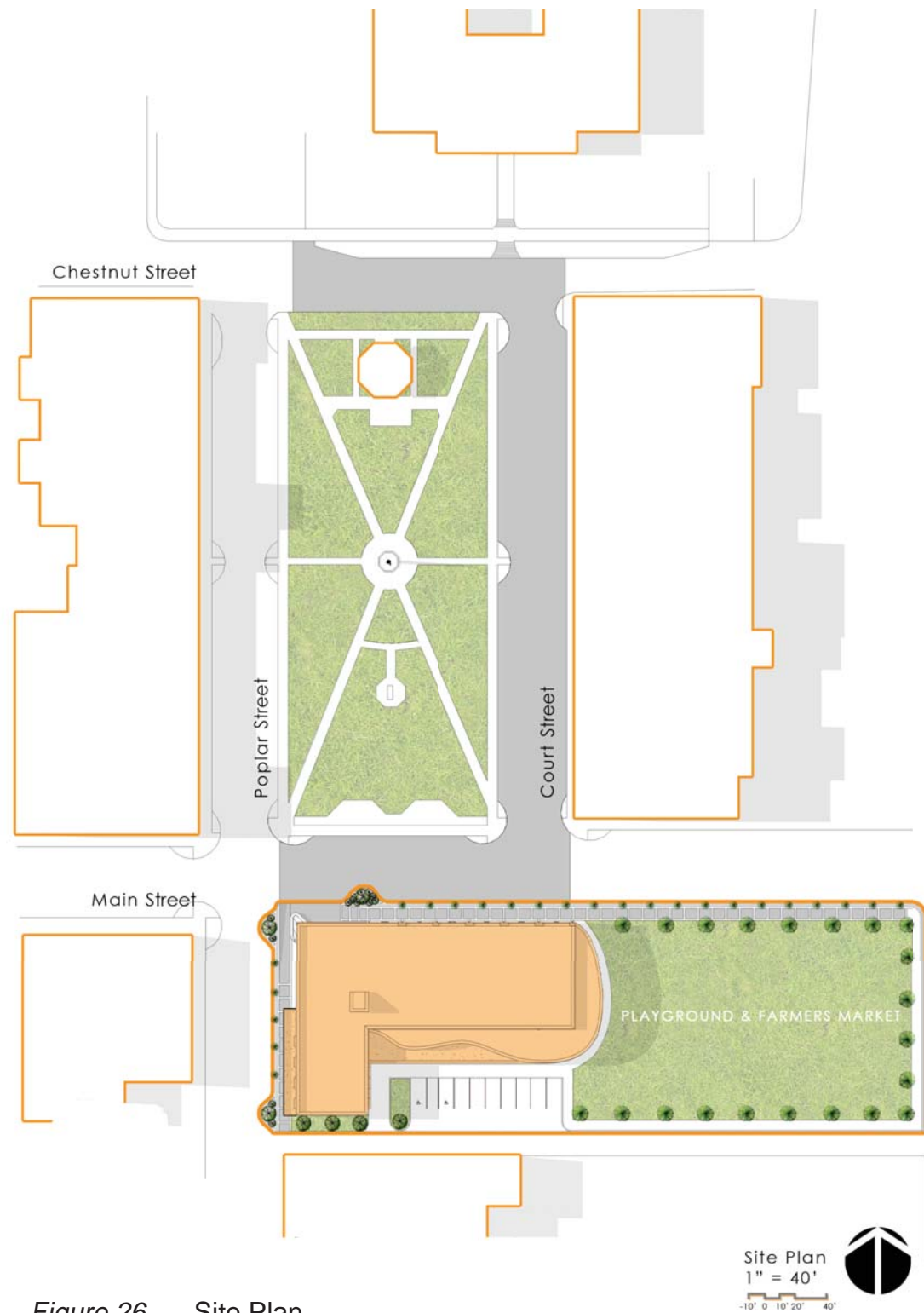
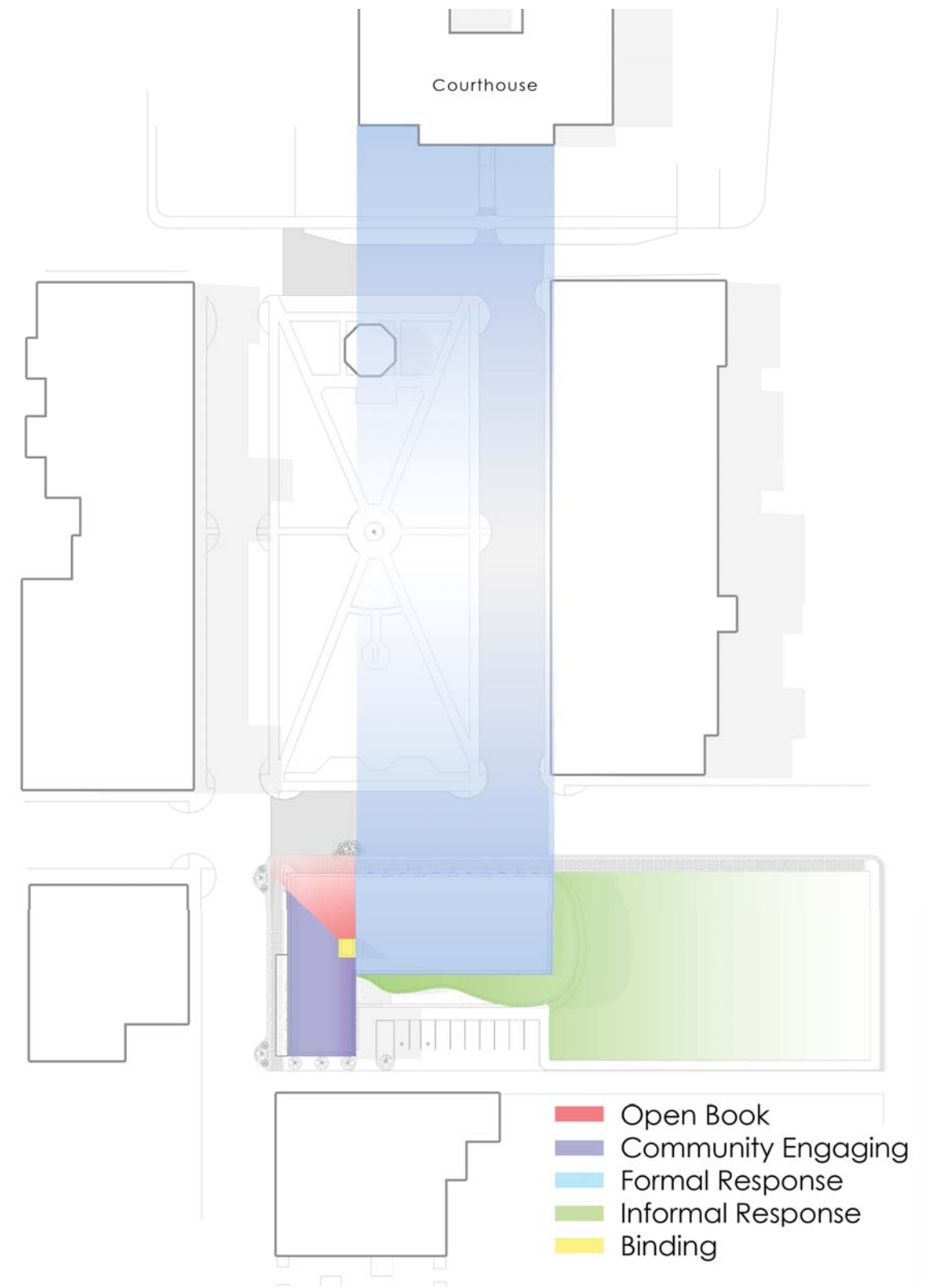


Figure 26. Site Plan  
(Author)



## Precedent Studies

Referring back to an initial concept of this thesis, just as a library begins with a source that passes knowledge along, so does a designer look to other sources for learning. The four main precedents examined in this thesis include:

1. Phillips Exeter Academy Library
2. Julia Yates Semmes Branch Library
3. Gentry Public Library
4. Hunters Point Community Library

The Exeter Library designed by Louis Kahn stands as a stellar example of two of the most essential elements that make up a good library, and these are (a) having adequate and proper use of natural light and (b) providing visual ease of circulation. Kahn rarely relied on artificial lighting to make a statement in his buildings. Rather, he used to his advantage the natural forms of the building to create spectacular sources of light to fill a space, particularly in Exeter. Kahn established a conducive environment for patrons to enjoy a book

washed in natural light. The openness of the library was also important. Patrons ought to visually understand the layout of the space where the stacks are located. It should be easily navigable and have clear sight lines for security purposes. Exeter does both and these principles have been applied in this thesis (Figures 39 and 42).

The Julia Yates Semmes Branch Library creates clear sight lines for security purposes, and also frees up floor space for other programmatic functions by using a space frame structure. In this thesis, this three-dimensional structural design is used to support the roof loads of the “open book” plaza in addition to the main floor stacks area (Figures 34, 36, and 39).

The most relied upon precedent for this thesis was Marlon Blackwell’s design of the Gentry Public Library. Its programmatic square footage (12,000 sf) helped determine this thesis’ program primarily for Gentry’s close proximity and population to that of Marianna’s (Appendix F). It also incorporated the “double-

functioning element,” another one of Robert Venturi’s notable concepts, seen in its columns that not only function to hold up the structure, but also incorporate lighting and additional shelf space for books, a feature integrated in this project (Figures 28 [5], 39, and 43). Gentry Public Library also makes use of a pocket park and the renovation of a vacant downtown building, a sustainable alternative approach to ground-up construction.

Hunters Point Community Library by Steven Holl marries the book and computer, whereas many traditional libraries separate the two. Holl gives the patron a better opportunity to engage the book. He realized that many library-goers today either bring their own laptops or come just to use the library’s computers. Therefore, in an effort not to forget the presence of the book, he simply brought the book and patron closer to one another, in hopes that a book might be referenced much more than it would be if isolated from the computer. This idea was incorporated in the open space of this thesis (Figures 39, 42, and 43).



Gentry Public Library  
Both Column and Stack



## Phillips Exeter Academy Library

Exeter, NH  
Louis I. Kahn  
1965

Natural Light  
Ease of Circulation

The placement of carrel spaces at the periphery was the product of thinking that began years earlier when Kahn submitted proposals for a new library at Washington University. There he dispensed with the traditional arrangement of completely separate library spaces for books and readers, usually with book stacks on the periphery of the library and reading rooms toward the center. Instead he felt that reading spaces should be near the books and also to natural light. For Kahn, the essence of a library was the act of taking a book from a shelf and walking a few steps to a window for a closer look: "A man with a book goes to the light. A library begins that way. He will not go fifty feet away to an electric light."



## Julia Yates Semmes Branch Library

San Antonio, TX  
RVK Architects  
2005

Structure (Space Frames)  
Visual Connectivity

Sustainable features include rainwater collection, automated light dimming, and enhanced mechanical controls for reduced electrical and water usage. The space frame roof structure creates a column-free interior and dramatic overhangs.



## Gentry Public Library

Gentry, AR  
Marlon Blackwell  
2007

Program  
Double-Functioning Elements

The program includes space for a public library, a community room, and a city history and genealogy collection. There is an open lot adjacent to the library which had remained undeveloped since the city was established in the late 19th century. Here an urban pocket park is placed allowing access from Main Street and the community room. To the south of the building, a new urban plaza of grass and concrete pavers acts as a community space for events such as book fairs. At the front elevation a new load-bearing steel plate and glass curtain wall system activates the street and the public library with north light and integrated display shelves for books.



## Hunters Point Community Library

Queens, NY  
Steven Holl  
2014

Stacks and Computers  
Beacon of Light

Located on a prominent site along the East River, the design for the 21,000 square foot Queens Library at Hunters Point takes inspiration from the views of Manhattan and Roosevelt Island. Glazed cuts in the recycled foamed aluminum facade allow users to great views toward the city as they move up a series of perimeter stairs. The program's separation into children's area, teen area and adult area, can be read in the carved cuts of the east face of the building, one façade opening for each area. Yet the programmatic divisions are fluid.

Figure 27. Precedent Studies  
(Author)



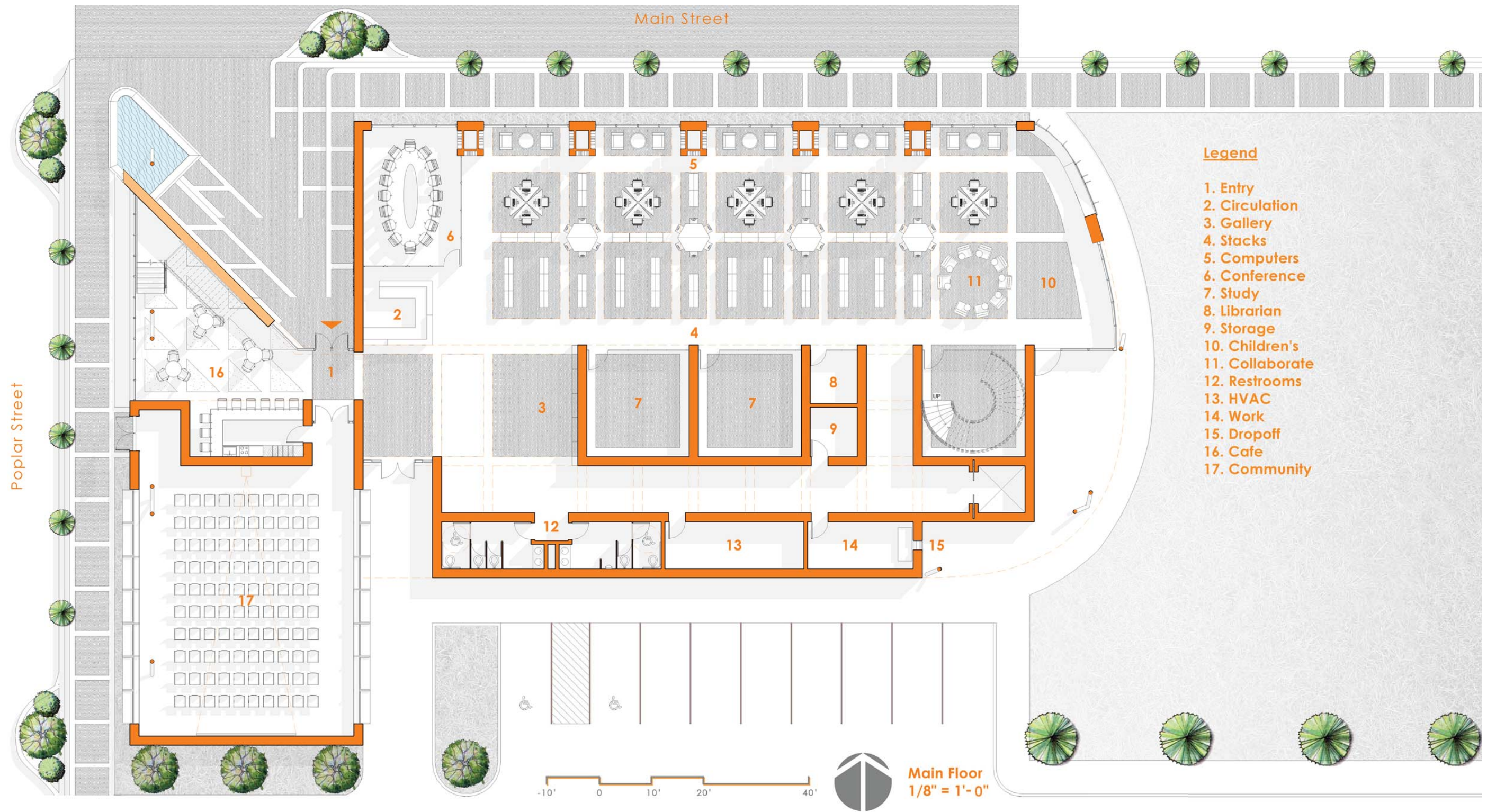


Figure 28. Main Floor  
(Author)

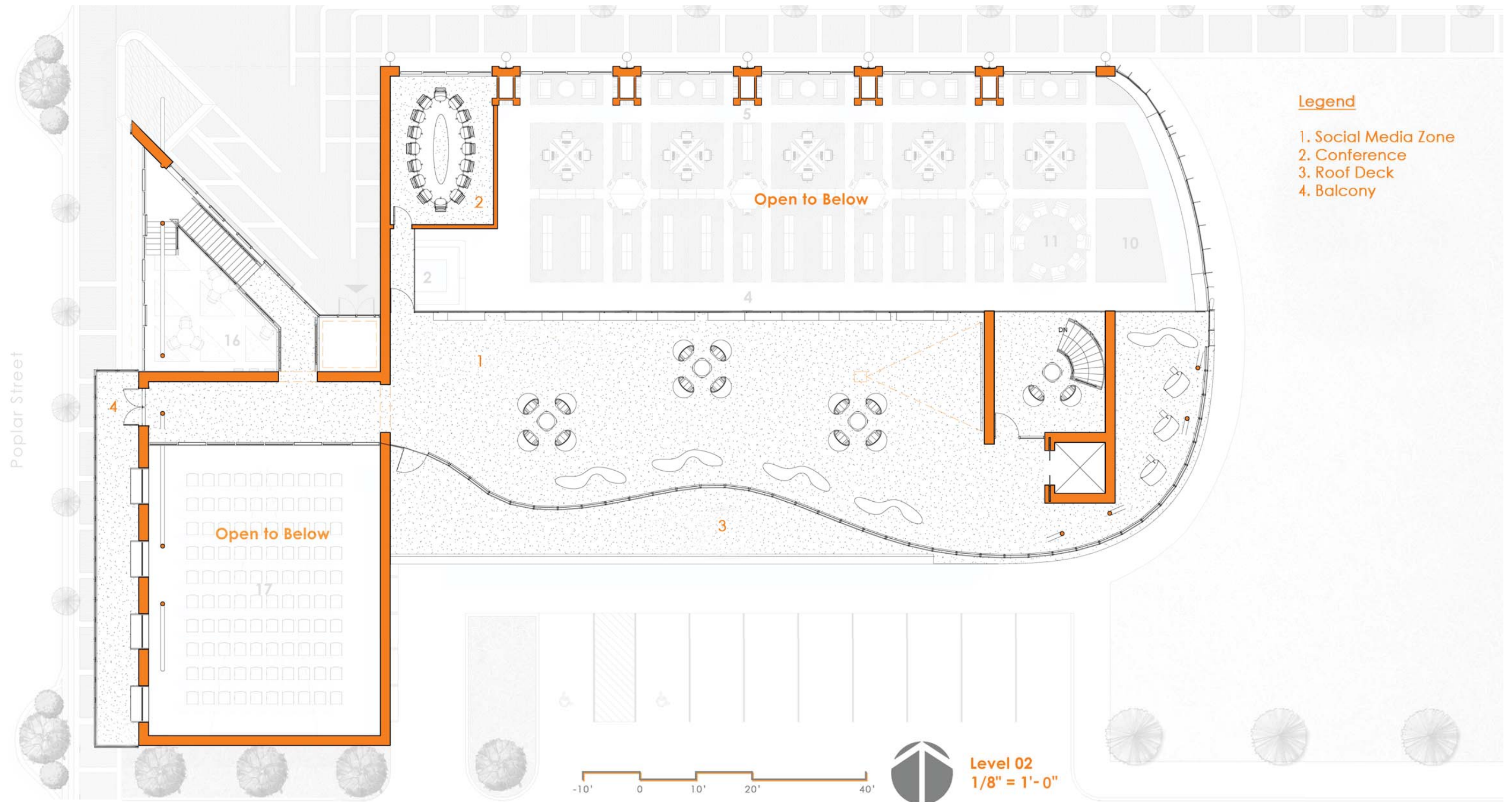


Figure 29. Level 2  
(Author)



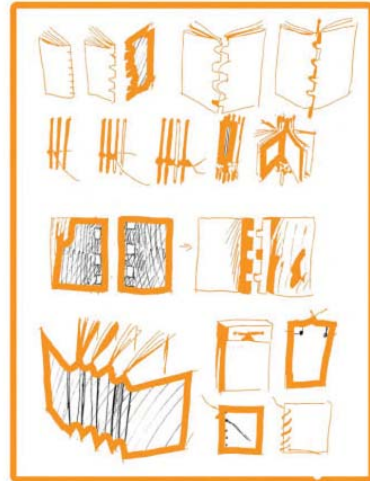
### Solar Panels

- Powers Exterior Lighting, Clocks, and Tech Wall



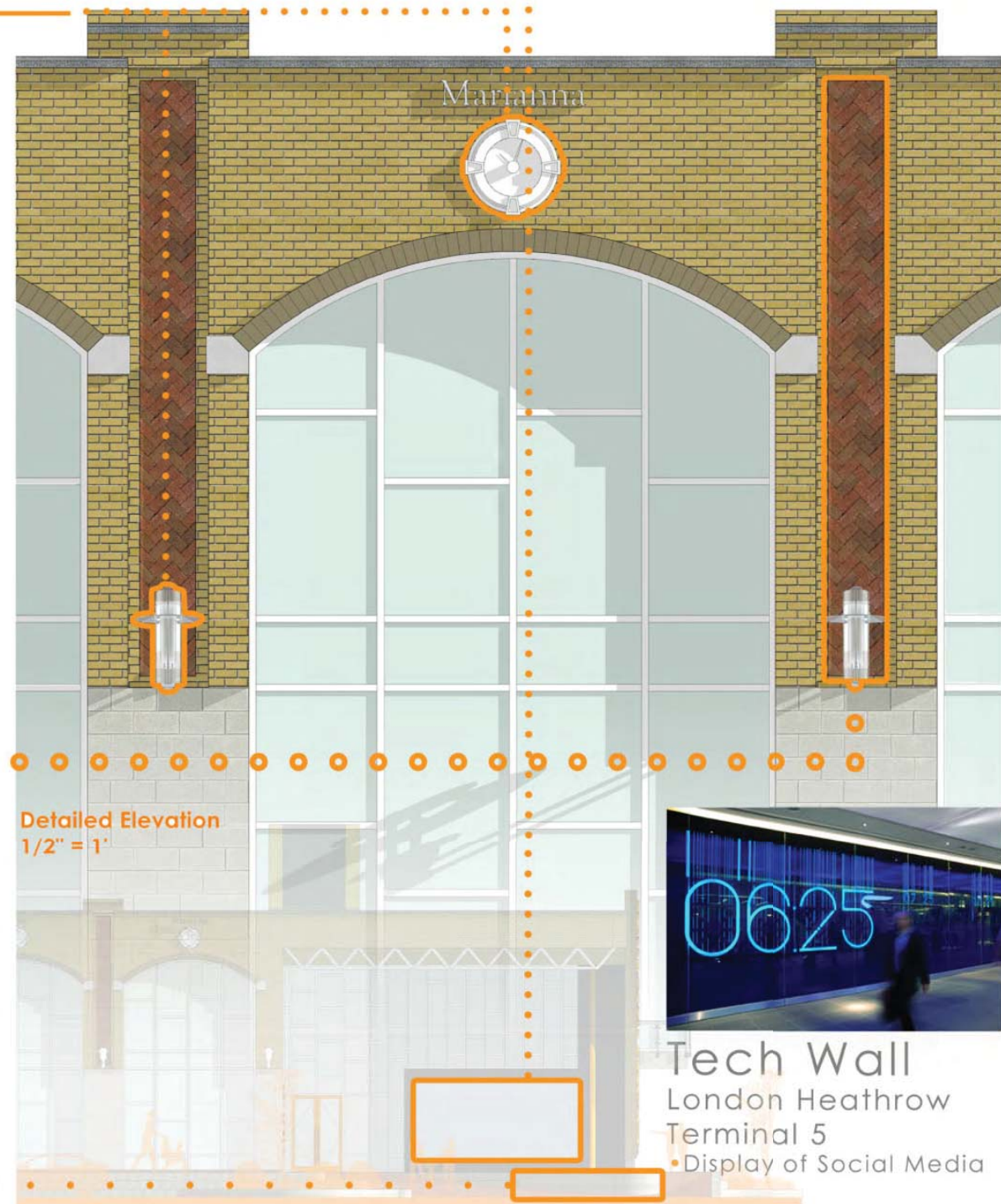
### Herringbone Paving

- Marianna, AR
- Binding Wall Relief



### Courthouse

- Marianna, AR
- Beaux Arts Style
- Limestone Base
- Yellow Brick Cladding
- Segmental Arch
- 8/8 Windows



Detailed Elevation  
1/2" = 1'



### Tech Wall

- London Heathrow Terminal 5
- Display of Social Media



### Rainwater Harvest

- Julia Semmes Library
- Wishing Well
- Grey Water



### Sonic Chair

- Comfort

Figure 30. Materials  
(Author)

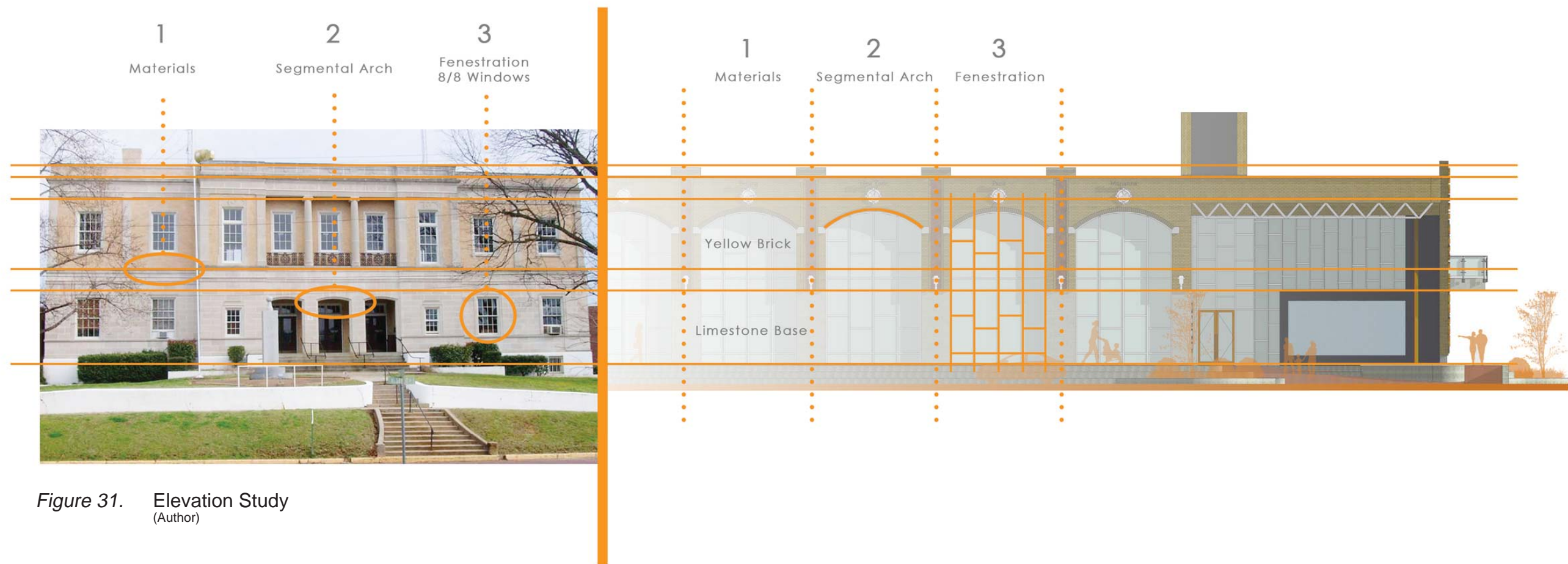


Figure 31. Elevation Study  
(Author)



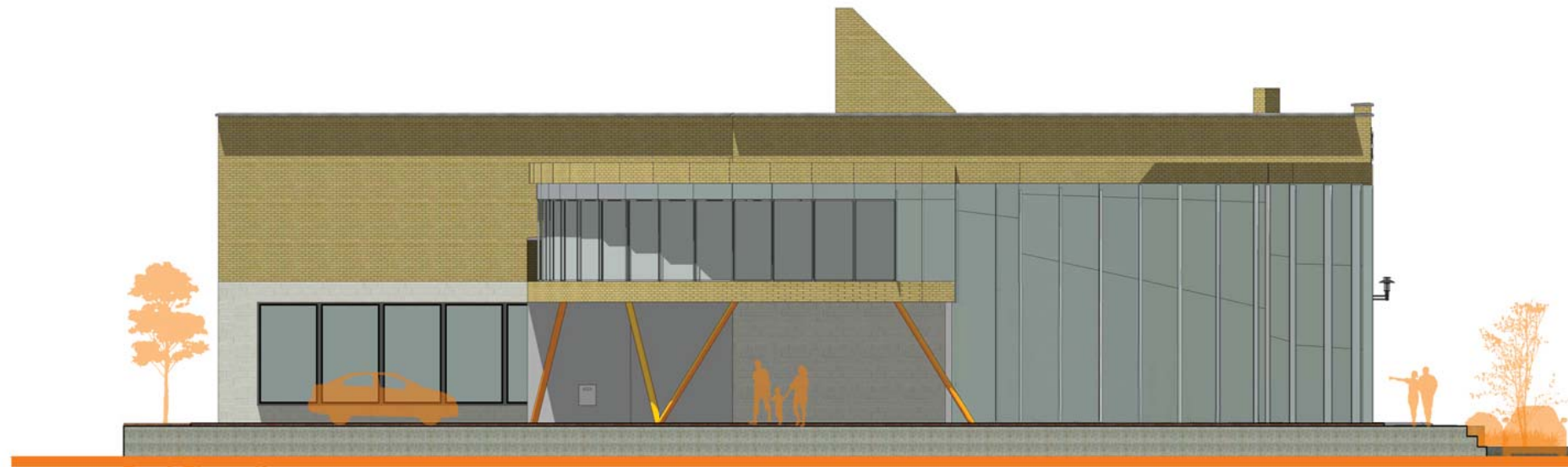
North Elevation  
 1/8" = 1'-0"



South Elevation  
 1/8" = 1'-0"



Figure 32. N-S Elevations  
 (Author)



East Elevation  
1/8" = 1'-0"



West Elevation  
1/8" = 1'-0"

Figure 33. E-W Elevations  
(Author)

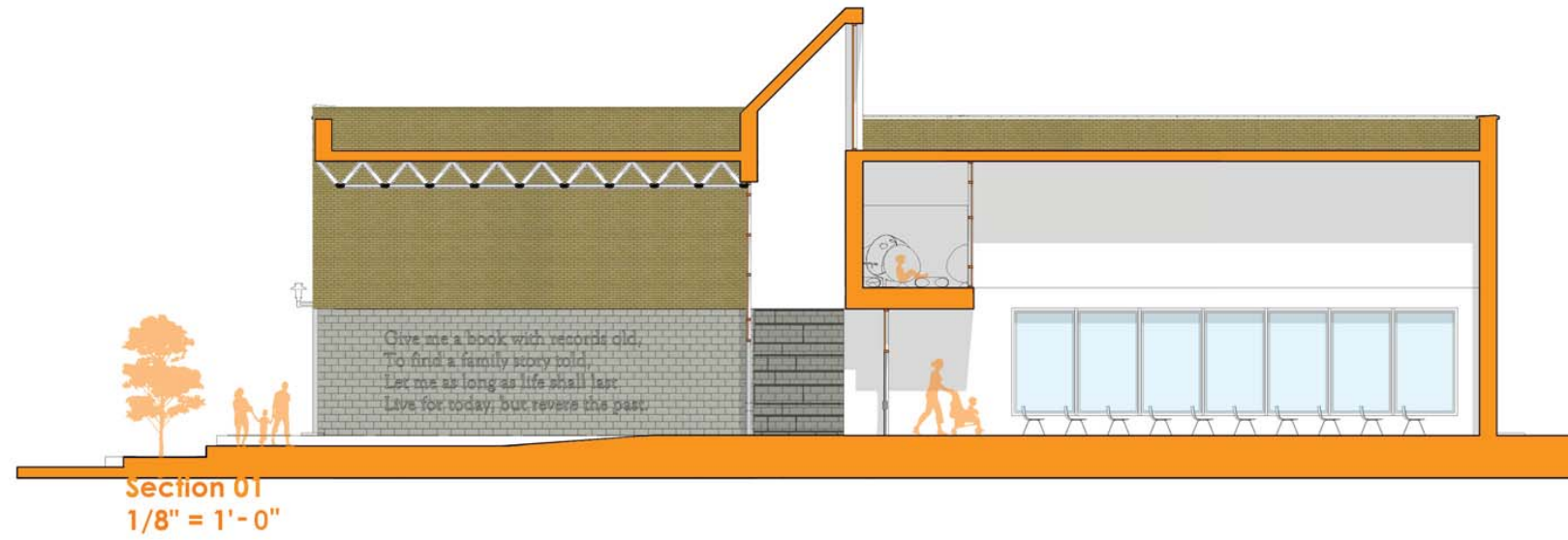
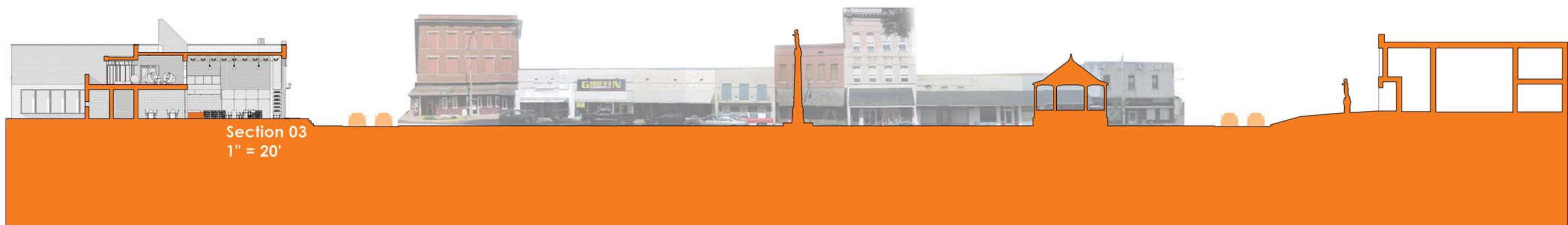


Figure 34. Transverse Sections  
(Author)



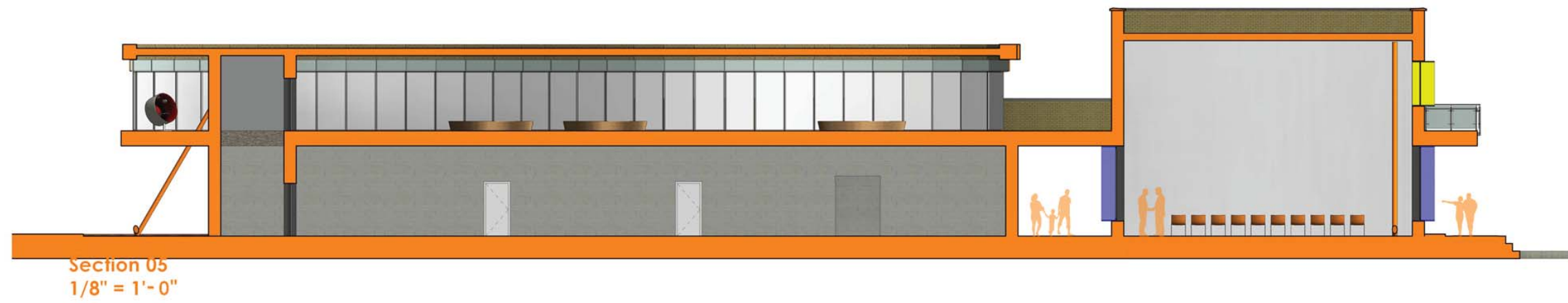
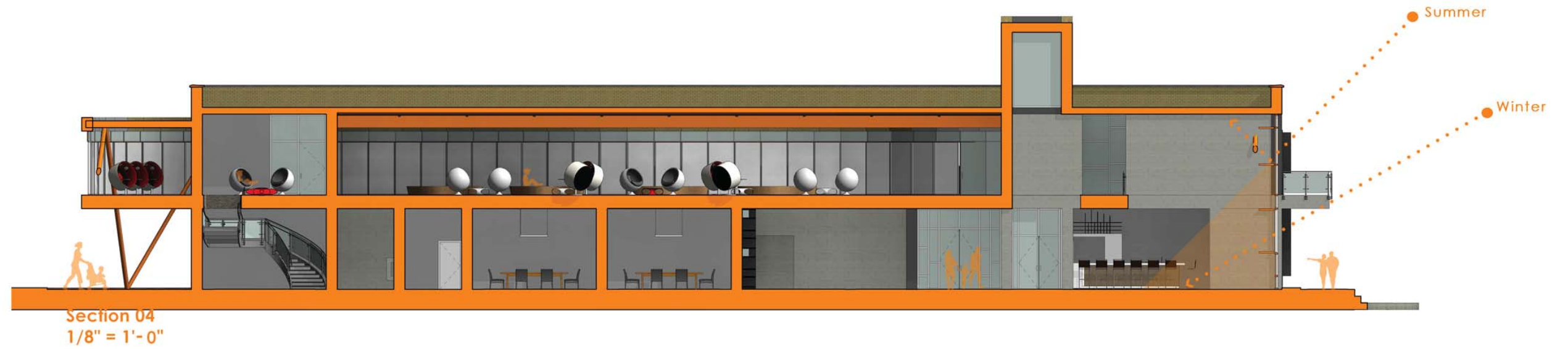


Figure 35. Longitudinal Sections  
(Author)







Figure 36. View from Poplar + Main  
(Author)

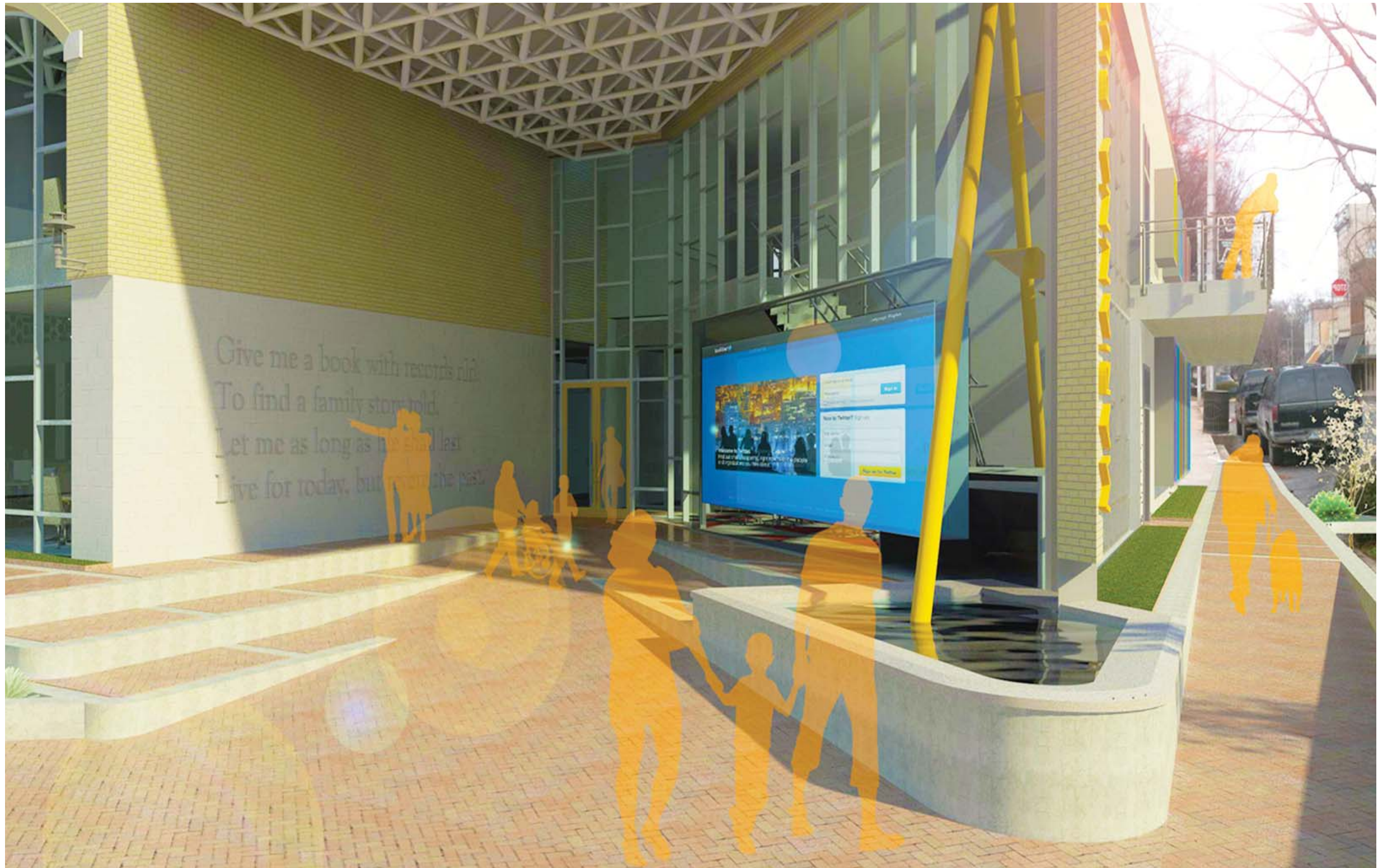


Figure 37. Main Entrance to Library  
(Author)



Figure 38. Gallery  
(Author)



Figure 39. Circulation Desk  
(Author)



Figure 40. Cafe  
(Author)



Figure 41. Community Room  
(Author)



Figure 42. Stacks  
(Author)



Figure 43. Study  
(Author)





Figure 44. Social Media Room 01  
(Author)

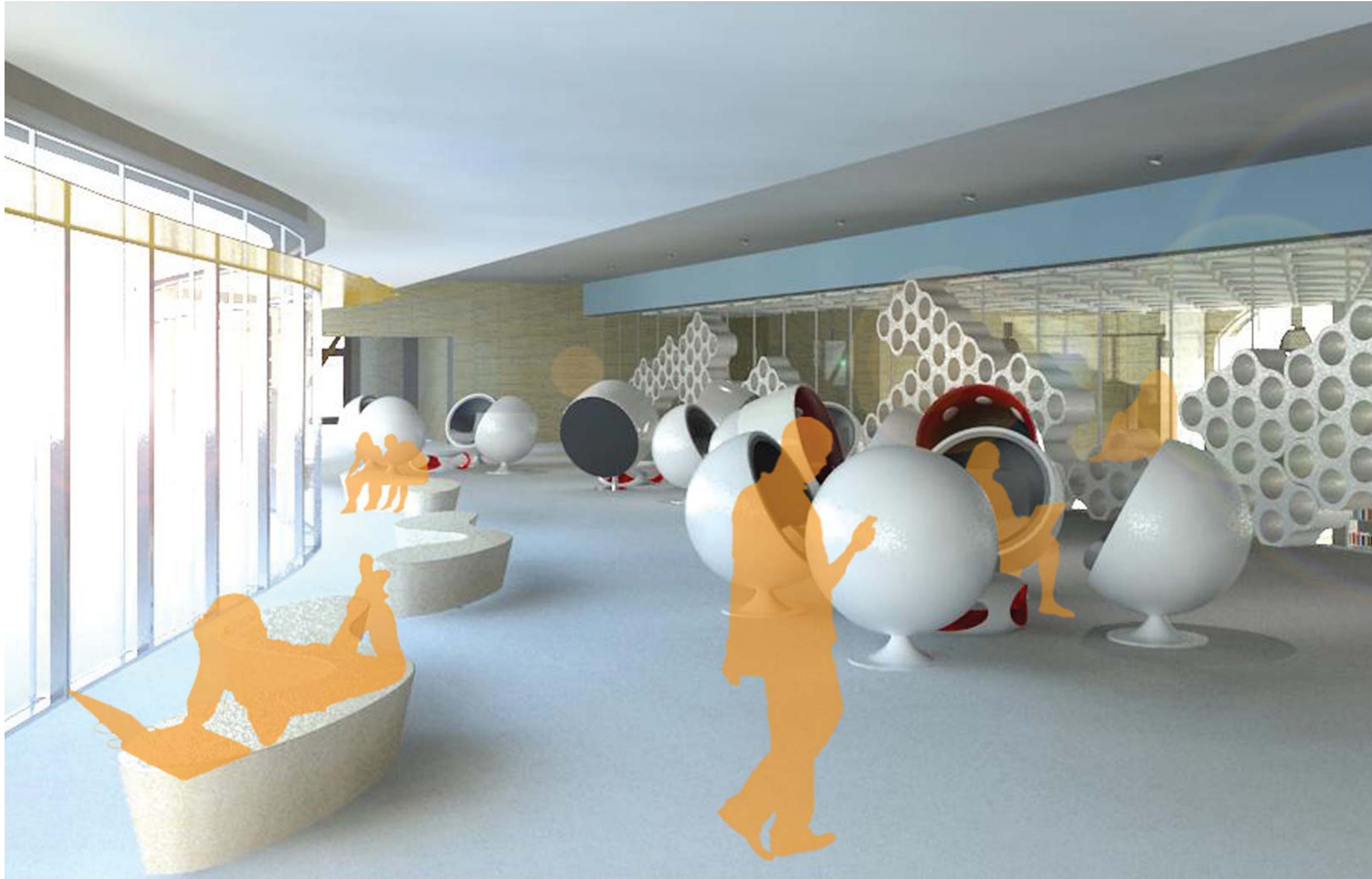


Figure 45. Social Media Room 02  
(Author)



Figure 46. View from Court Square  
(Author)



Figure 47. Beacon  
(Author)

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

Louis Kahn once said "A man with a book goes to the light. A library begins that way. He will not go fifty feet away to an electric light (Kahn, 1991)." I submit that with today's technology, a man with a digital book can go anywhere. Everywhere is here! The library of today (and tomorrow) must continue to bridge the gap between the digital divide of people and technology. As prevalent as electronic devices are, one cannot assume that people from all walks of life have these amenities readily available, if at all. Guy Aillion, graduate architecture student from South Africa wrote in his thesis abstract

[...] 'Bit by bit' our society is moving through an Information Age characterized by a global shift towards an increased need for Information. In an instantaneous age of digital information, the ability to access the world's knowledge from anywhere by anyone is a new reality, but one not yet true for communities on the other side of a digital divide. (Aillion, 2009)

Unfortunately, Marianna is faced with some of the same challenges of those from third world countries in terms of technology. What a library of this magnitude could potentially do for Marianna, no other building type could, and that is to **activate people** through the six binders of books, food and beverage, social media, comfort, sustainability, and proper lighting while **deactivating the town's socioeconomic barriers** through common paths, ease of access, location and the common thread of knowledge.

*"Give me a book with records old  
To find a family story told  
Let me as long as life shall last  
Live for today but revere the past."  
Unknown*

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Marianna, AR is home. It is a *place* where one learns good **values** and where life is simple. It is an incubator for **family life**, where boys become men and girls, women. **Small** in size, yet big in the sense of community and **pride**. It is such a place that has inspired me to **return**, to give back, and to thrive.

Inspiration

ARCH 7930 Architecture Thesis Research

transcendence

direction

support

people

Appendix A  
Inspiration Board 1



Permanence resonates in many of my favorite pieces of architecture, from Paestum to the Louvre. **Stone** being one of the most noble and **natural** materials used in design is a **rarity** in this economy. Not only should architecture exhibit permanence in its **materiality**, but even more so in the **memories** of those who experience that space.

Implication

ARCH 7930 Architecture Thesis Research

persistence

firmitas

anchor

place

Appendix B  
Inspiration Board 2



Architects that I've been inclined to the most are those who are just as much poets as they are designers. Philosophies and specific methodologies justify their works and give them a greater meaning. One theory that has inspired me most comes from Robert Venturi's manifesto *Complexity + Contradiction in Architecture* - "both/and"

Inclination

ARCH 7930 Architecture Thesis Research



pei



imhotep



venturi



kahn

Appendix C  
Inspiration Board 3



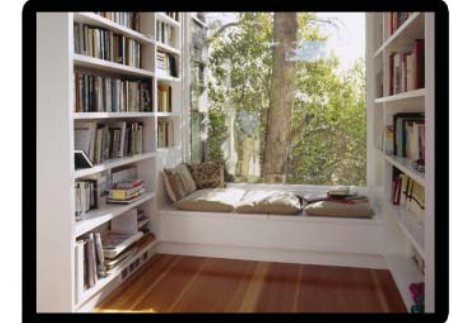
Marianna, AR is home. It is a place where one learns good values and where life is simple. It is an incubator for family life, where boys become men and girls, women. Small in size, yet big in the sense of community and pride. It is such a place that has inspired me to return, to give back, and to thrive. So, what does Marianna need?

Inspiration

ARCH 7930 Architecture Thesis Research



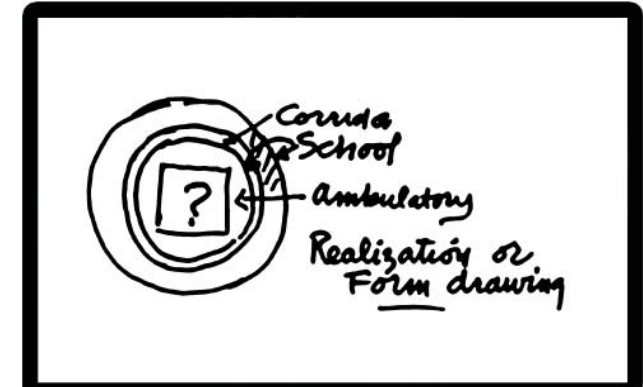
"both/and"



knowledge



recollection



what does my thesis want to be?

Appendix D  
Inspiration Board 4



# Site Images



## Index

1. NW Corner looking SE
2. NW Corner NE
3. Accessibility
4. Wall Mural/Parking
5. Farmer's Market Tent
6. Brick Paved Road
7. Corner Planter
8. ADA Ramp Apts.
9. Courthouse
10. Sidewalk/Street Parking
11. NW Corner looking NW
12. NE Corner looking West
13. NE Corner looking SE
14. Stairs
15. Courtyard Square Apts.
16. Alley looking West
17. NE Corner Utilities
18. Gen. Robert E. Lee
19. Benches North of Site
20. Playground
21. Court Square
22. Pavilion

## Appendix E

Site Images

**Department of Architecture**  
**University of Memphis**  
Spring 2013

**Thesis Program - Mitchell**

Thesis Statement:

- Re-thinking the Library: Can the design of a public library inspire both the activation of a small town and deactivation of its socioeconomic barriers?

Program & Square Footages:

- Stacks\_1200
- Checkout Desk\_200
- Librarian Office\_200
- Children Area\_600
- Computer Area\_800
- Social Media Room (Teens/Young Adults)\_800
- Cafe'\_1000
- Archives\_2000
- Copy Room\_200
- Study Space\_600
- Community Room (Lecture Hall)\_2000
- Kitchen\_400
- Non-Assigned (Restrooms, Mech, Circ, etc.)\_2000
- Rooftop Terrace\*
- Park\*
- Parking\*
  - **Total 12,000 sf\*\***

Appendix F

Thesis Program

\*Not included in overall building sf

\*\*Program Square Footage based on/relative to Gentry Public Library in Gentry, AR

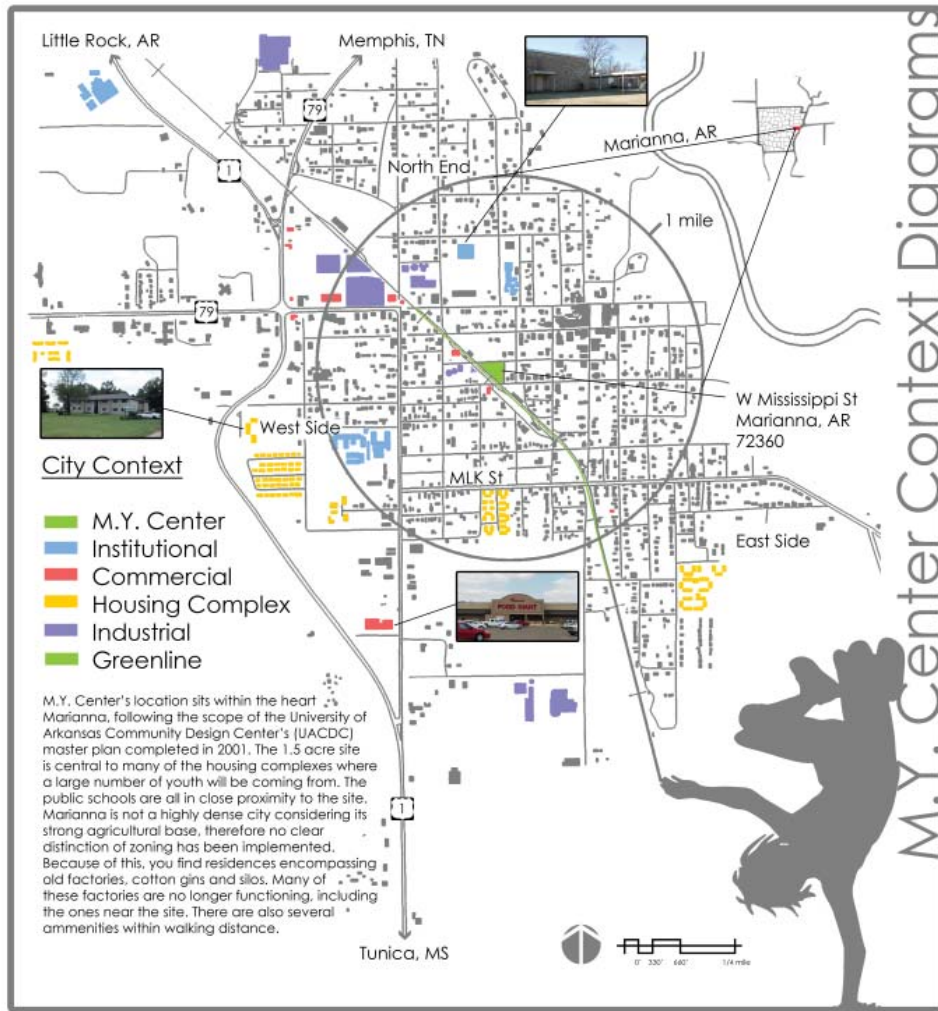


rethink

Appendix G  
AIAS Competition Board 1



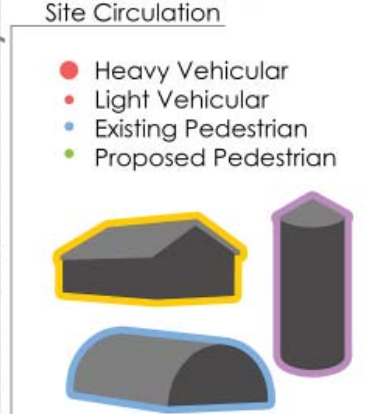
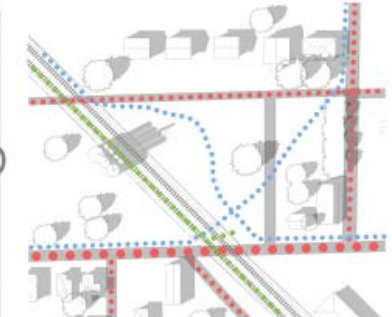
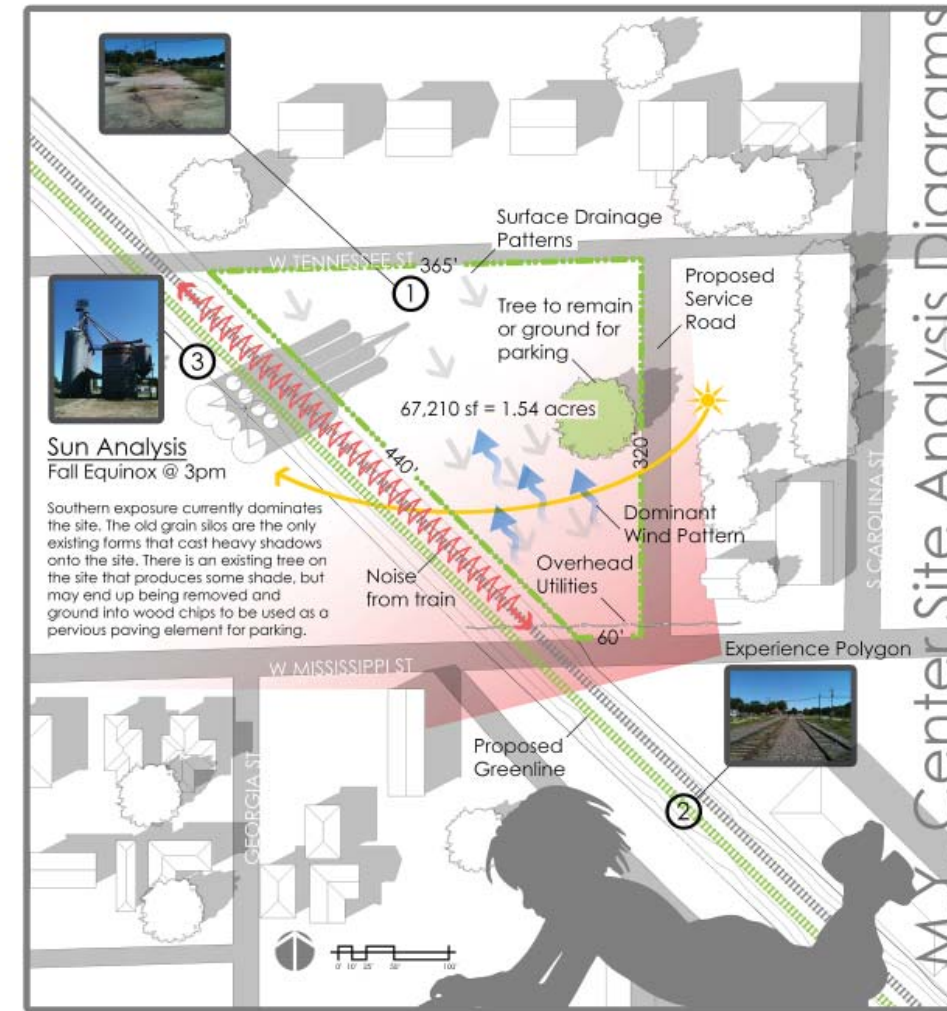
Appendix H  
AIAS Competition Board 2



The neighborhood context includes several single family residences and churches. Marianna has very active youth groups within local congregations that will feed into the site because of its prime location.

Directly to the west of the site are two railroad tracks, one of which functioning as freight and the other, not at all. The tracks link several neighborhoods together, creating the opportunity to convert the dormant track into a greenline. This will allow the youth to safely travel to the site, as many of them will likely come to the youth center by foot or bike. There is no active transportation system in Marianna.

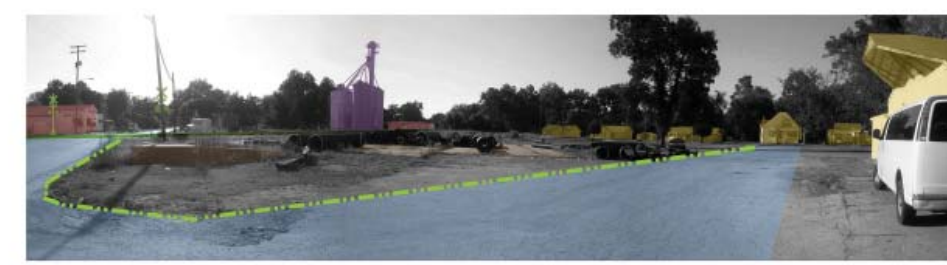
This site section shows the diversity of Marianna from one block to another, including an old factory, a green line, railroads, residences and a church.



The site circulation indicates that the majority of vehicular traffic will come from W Mississippi Street. Currently, there is very little pedestrian traffic that traverses the site; the greenline will change that.

Prevailing forms near the site include the typical country and colonial style "boxes" with pitched roofs as well as a few industrial cylindrical and conical shapes. When these building types are pared down to their essentials, you get some rather "playful" forms that could fittingly work themselves into a youth center.

This 180 degree experience polygon highlights the diversity of the site from a nearby convenience store to the vernacular architecture of Marianna, AR.



# Appendix I

## M.Y. Center - Context



**IBC Codes + Occupancy Loads**

- Storage, mech, etc 300 gross = 121 = 2
- Classrooms 20 net = 1817 = 4
- Locker Rooms 50 gross
- Swimming Pools 50 gross = 727 = 3
- Deck 15 gross = 2422 = 4
- MY Space Exterior Wall Seats Length 166 ft (3) = 498 ft
- MY Space Interior Wall Seats Length 121 ft (3) = 363 ft
- 861 ft x 12 = 10332 = 574 = 2

**New Construction**

- Gym 108x68 = 7344 108x12 = 1296 / 18 = 72 Occupants
- Swimming 108x68 = 7344 108x12 = 1296 / 18 = 72 Occupants
- Classrooms 126x20 = 2520
- M.Y. Space L1 5093
- M.Y. Space L2-4 3836 (3) = 11508
- 861x12 = 10332 / 18 = 574 Occupants

33,809 sf

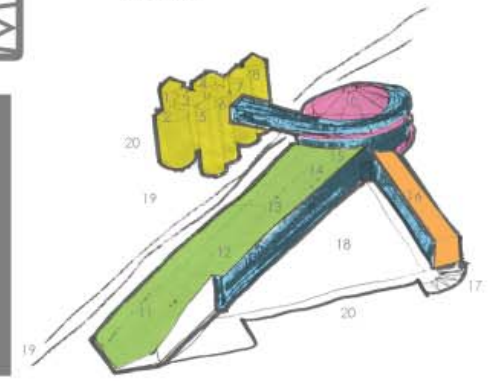
**Adaptive Reuse**

- Large Silos 478 (3) = 1434
- Small Silos 218 (5) = 1090
- 2,524 sf

**Gross Square Feet**  
36,333 sf

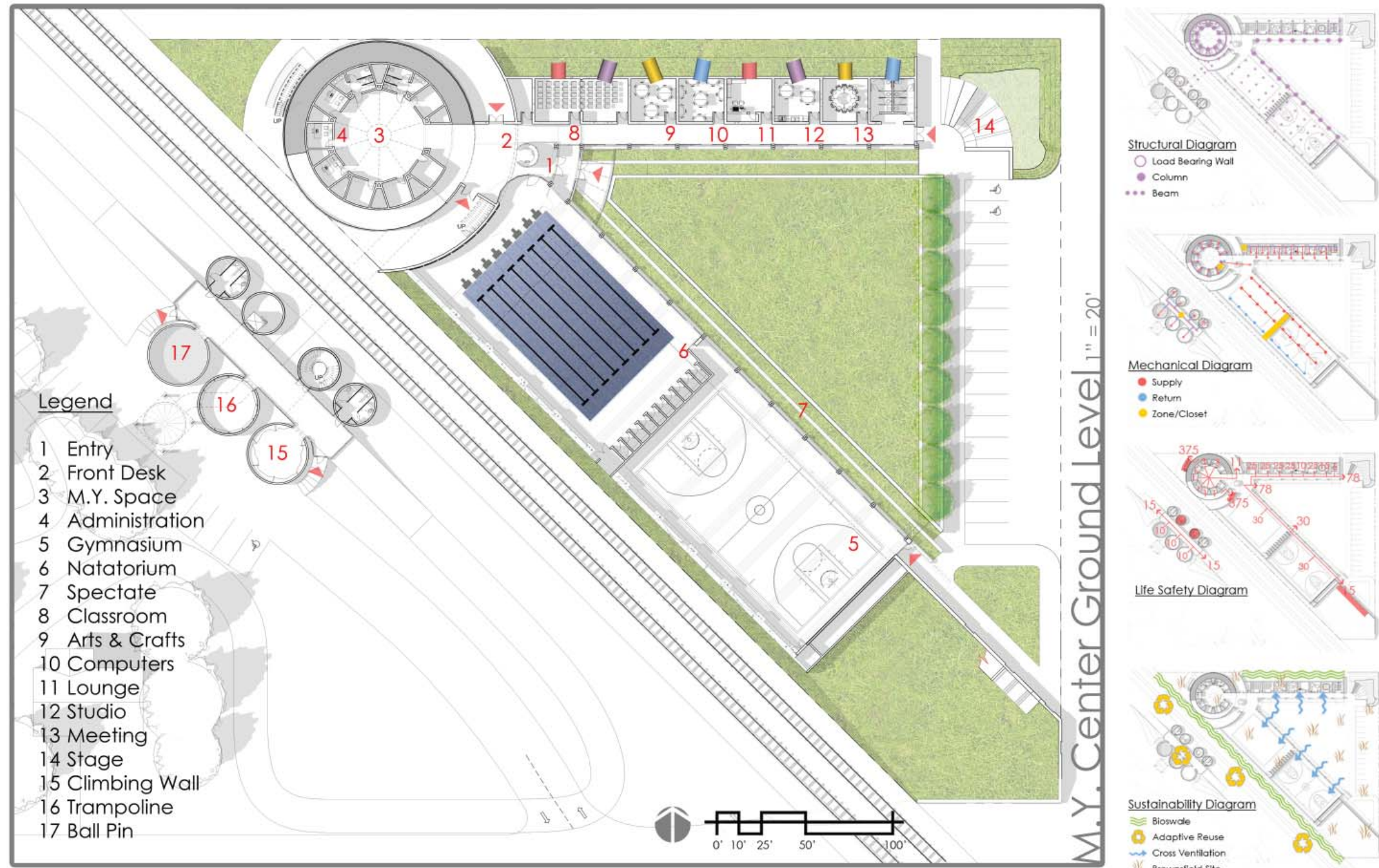


- 1 Watch
- 2 Climbing
- 3 Jump
- 4 Ball
- 5 Restroom
- 6 Stair
- 7 Elevator
- 8 Maps
- 9 Bridge
- 10 Storage/Admin
- 11 Sems
- 12 Gymnasium
- 13 Mechanical
- 14 Swim
- 15 Exercise
- 16 Learn
- 17 Outdoor Learning
- 18 Play
- 19 Walk
- 20 Car



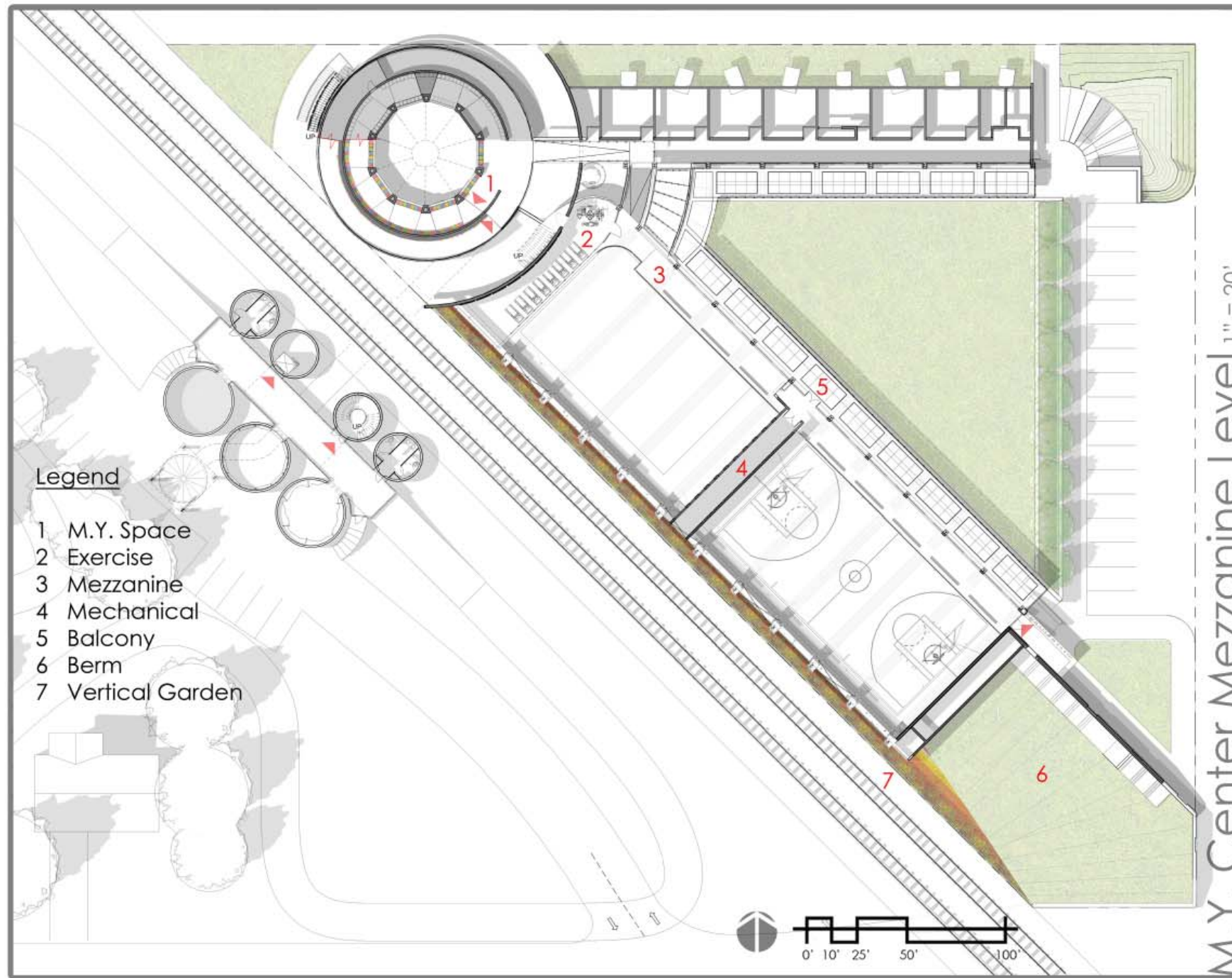
Appendix J

M.Y. Center - Site Plan



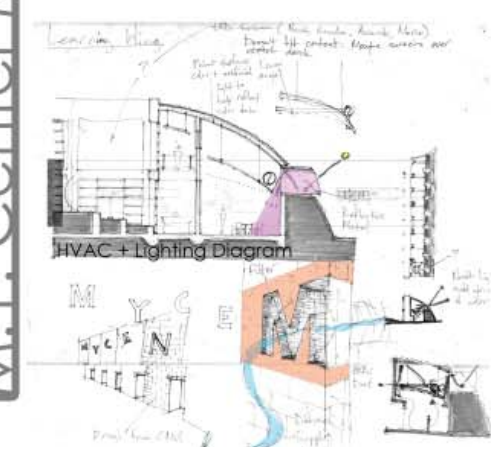
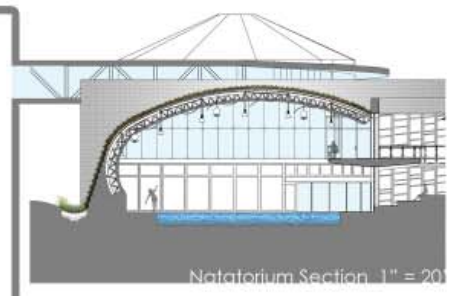
## Appendix K

M.Y. Center - Ground Level



**Legend**

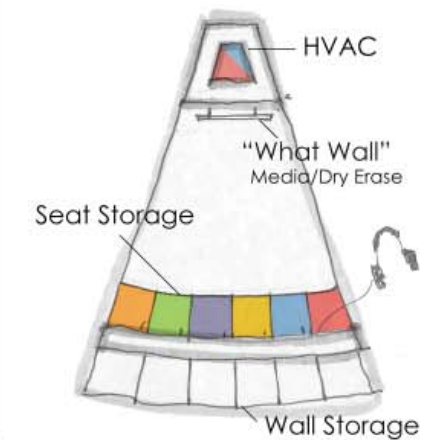
- 1 M.Y. Space
- 2 Exercise
- 3 Mezzanine
- 4 Mechanical
- 5 Balcony
- 6 Berm
- 7 Vertical Garden



M.Y. Center Mezzanine Level 1" = 20"

Appendix L - Mezzanine





Program @ the "Pie Slices"

- 3 Floors Total w/ 10 Pie Slices per Level
- "What Wall"  
Info for Students + Community
- 30 Total Slices
  - 12 for K-12 Lee County School District
  - 12 for K-12 Lee Academy
  - 01 for Daycares
  - 03 for General Information
  - 02 for Video Games
  - Tutoring Sessions

Additional Precedents

- Guggenheim Museum  
New York  
Frank Gehry
- High Museum  
Atlanta  
Richard Meier

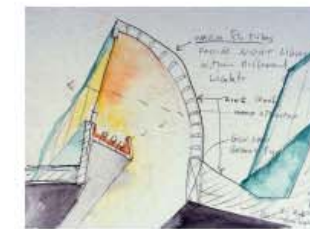
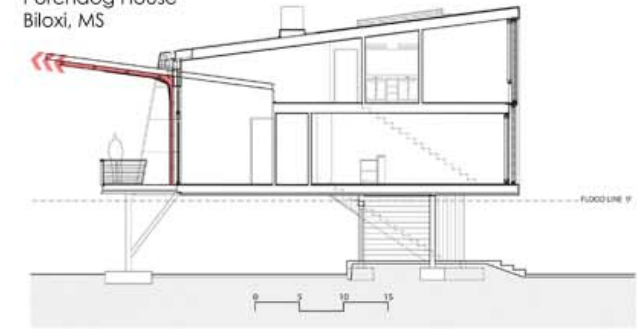


Appendix M

M.Y. Center - M.Y. Space



Marlon Blackwell  
Porchdog House  
Biloxi, MS



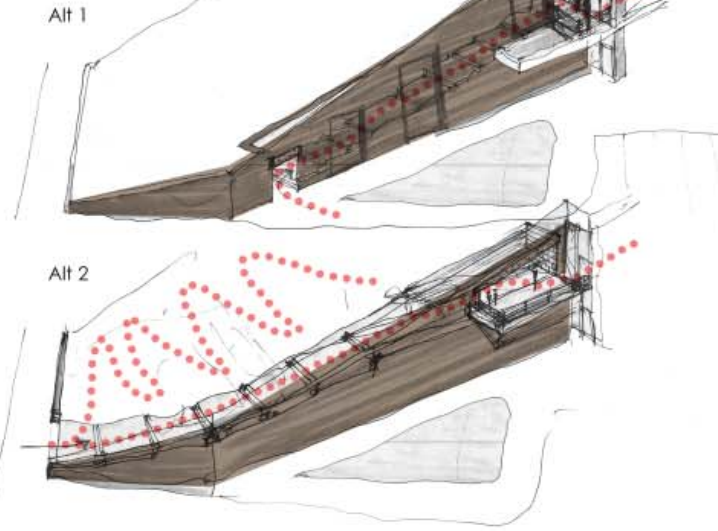
Steven Hall  
St. Ignatius Chapel  
Seattle, WA



Appendix N  
M.Y. Center - Exterior



Retaining Wall + Berm  
Accessibility



Bas Relief

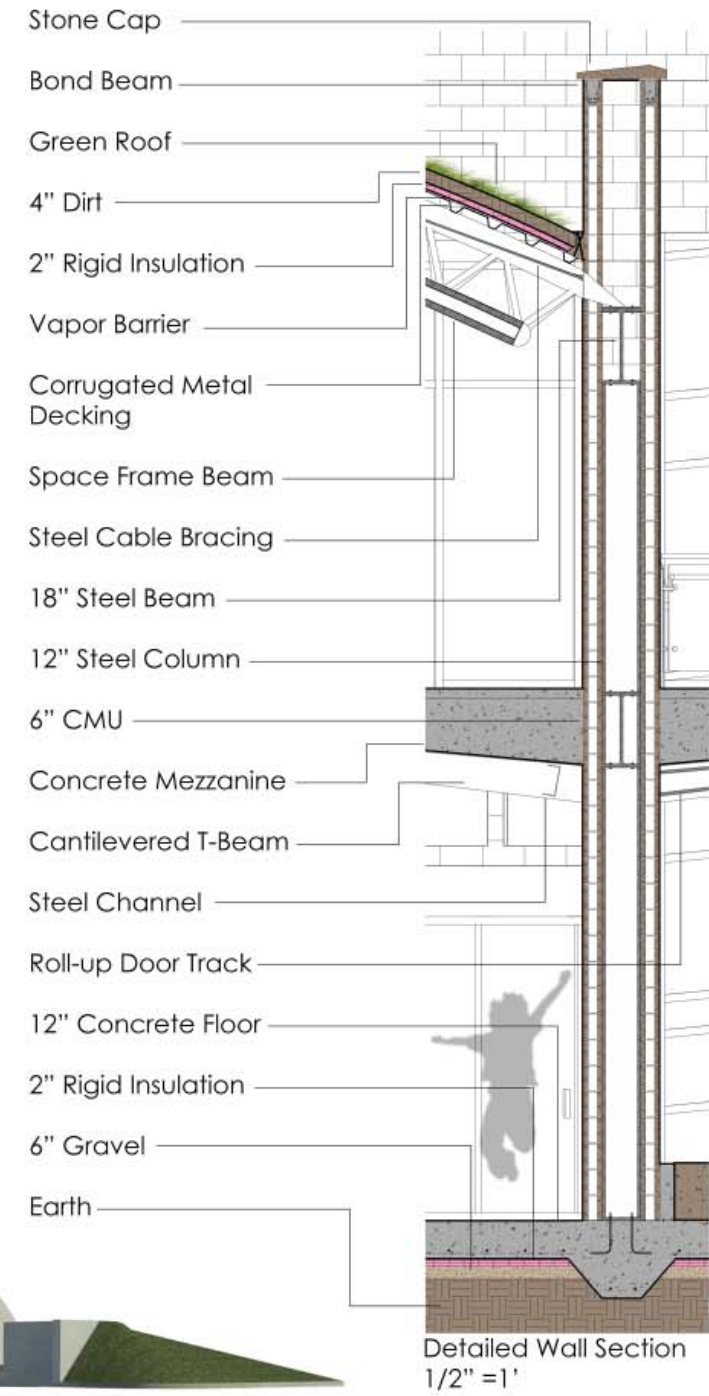
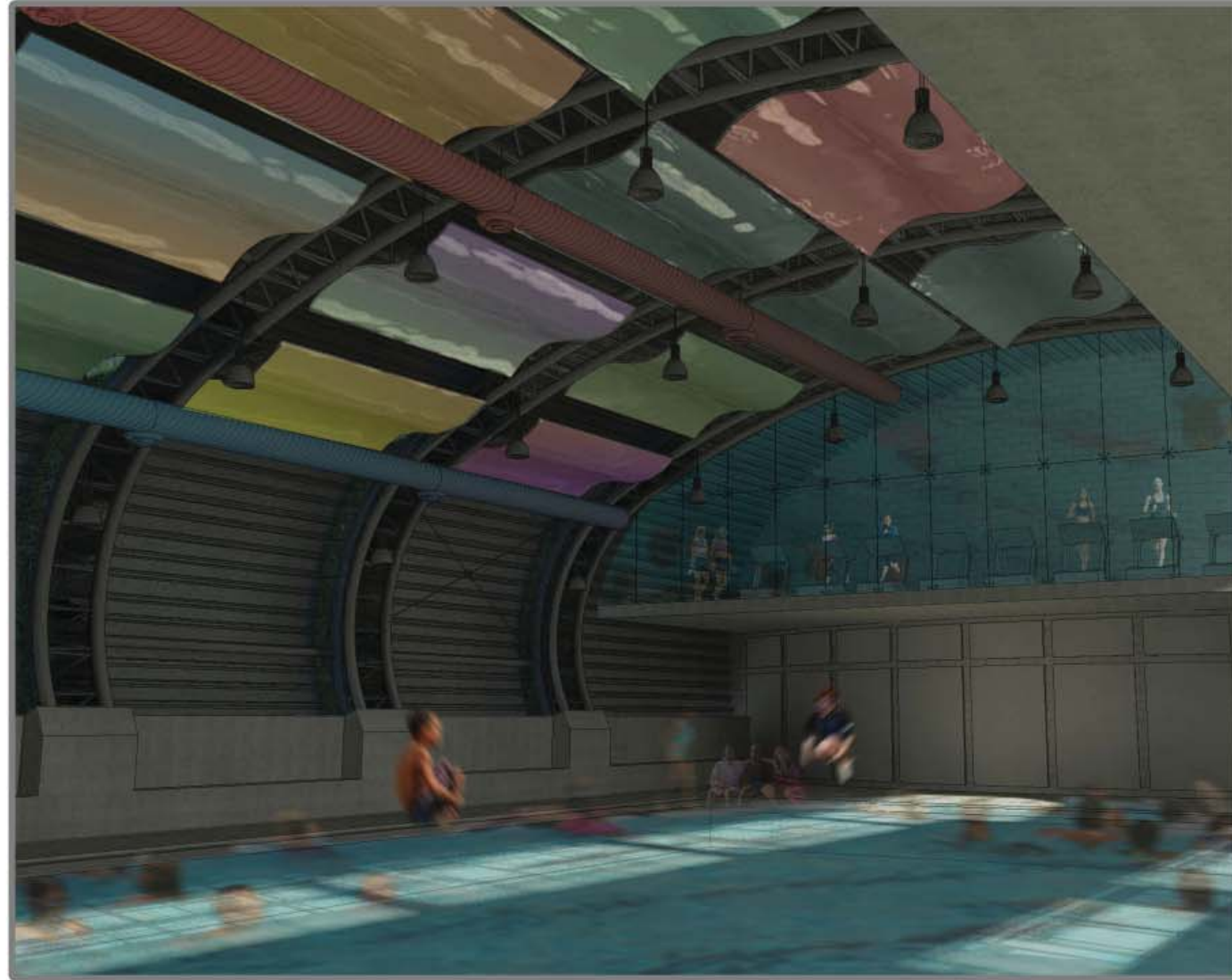


Super Graphics



Appendix O

M.Y. Center - Gymnasium



## Appendix P

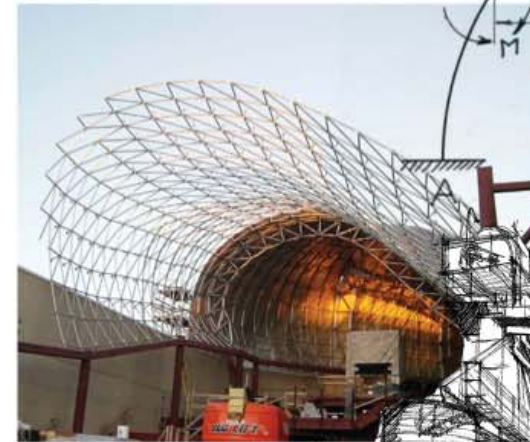
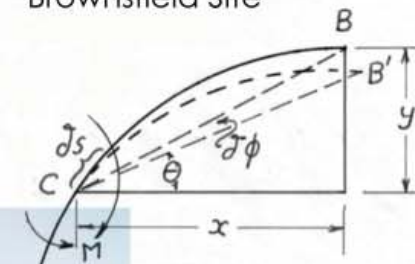
M.Y. Center - Natatorium



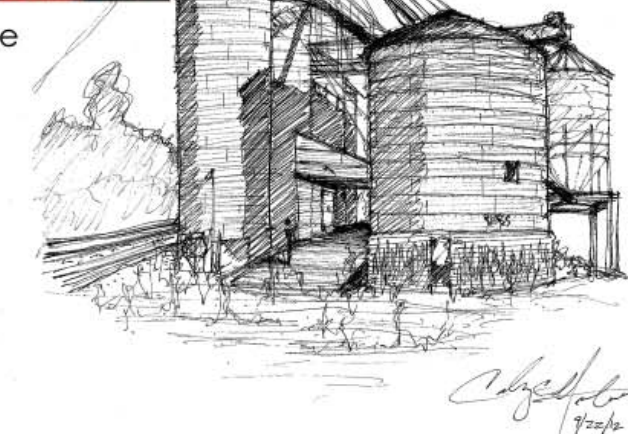
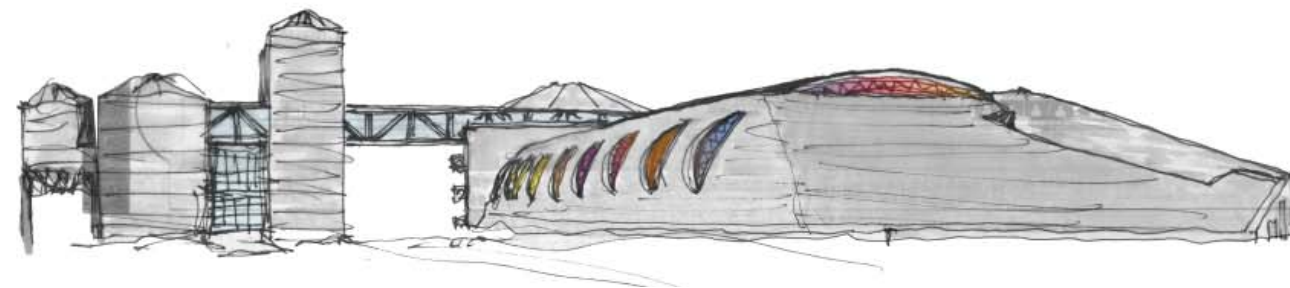
Bioswale



Brownsfield Site



Space Frame



## Appendix Q

M.Y. Center - Greenline

# Rethinking the Library