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FRAYSER TRANSFORMATION CENTER:
COMPASSIONATE ARCHITECTURE THAT FOSTERS COMMUNITY AND FAMILY BY
STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EACH

Victor Mature Robinson Jr.

The University of Memphis
2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my mother Brenda Robinson for giving me support throughout my academic career. I also thank my grandparents, aunts, and uncles for their financial and emotional support. Finally, I would like to thank Sherry Bryan, Michael Chisamore, Jennifer Barker, and Pamela Hurley, my classmates, friends, and staff of the Department of Architecture for both challenging and supporting me throughout my architectural education.

ABSTRACT

Robinson, Victor Mature. M. arch. The University of Memphis. May 2014. Frayser Transformation Center: Compassionate Architecture that Fosters Community and Family by Strengthening the Relationships between Each. Major Professor: Michael Chisamore.

This project explored the use of Compassionate Architecture and its ability to inspire social change within a community. A Transformation Center, which would teach the skills needed to become a successful adult, was designed to respond to the lack of transitional and social space for young adults. The Center is a public facility that contains multiple spaces for learning the necessary life skills needed to transition into adulthood. These included many of the skills that are not taught in high school: household skills, family techniques, and community involvement, which are all taught and learned in a communal, hands-on manner. The design of the Center places the communal spaces at its heart and support spaces around them. This arrangement allows the social ties to be created while learning takes place. The end goal of this design allows the transformed teen the opportunity to share their learning with others in the community, therefore helping to create a new, stronger, transformed community with well-prepared adults.

Growing up in Memphis, Tennessee in an area that could be considered disadvantaged, I reflected on the things that allowed me to navigate the substandard conditions and flourish into a successful college student. Family, Community, and Compassion are what I consider the building blocks of a well-rounded individual. Family is the first level of comfort and learned experiences. They teach you many things about the world before you are old enough to experience it. They also provide support when the world deals you unexpected challenges. Community keeps neighborhood and family bonded together. Neighbors are like auxiliary parents that keep watch over the child while the parents are not available. Community acts as an extended family outside the home and provides help through life's challenges. Compassion is what allows us to be connected to one another. Compassion helps strengthen the bonds between people and allows us to understand others similarities and differences.

Family, Community, and Compassion, however, are not the only things that inspired me to become the person I am today. My desire to be an architect came from experiences in childhood. House hunting adventures with my mother spawned my interest in architecture and design. I began to study the floor plan of houses and would often pretend family members were clients and would design homes to accommodate their lifestyles. This experience was important because it taught me that my designs could effect the way people lived and functioned in their everyday lives. An architecture internship in Nashville, Tennessee was another life changing experience for me. I was able to sit-in on design meetings for the Music City Convention Center and the Museum of African American Music, Art, and Culture. These meetings changed my entire perspective on architecture from a more design-based process to a process that was more experiential. Observing how many different people were involved was eye-opening; there were English professors, story writers, museum designers, technology specialists, and many others who created the experience of the museum. Seeing the architect's passion as he described walking through and experiencing the building was amazing, and it changed me. At that moment I realized architecture was the story or experience that was to be given to society. The experience had the ability to make someone aware of themselves and others; design could positively influence society.

I feel this is very important as our culture is becoming more self-oriented, worried only about things that affect us individually or our particular community. No one is really willing to look at a holistic view of society. However, there are a few things that inspire me about humanity. After several economic downturns it seems people are finding more communal ways to survive, thereby reforming an outdated system. This spark of cooperation makes me believe that society may be ready to actively solve the problems of the greater community.

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INTRODUCTION



MANIFESTO

Architecture has diminished diversity. It seems architecture has buried its head in the sand and followed the class system. Architecture aims to please the wealthy and forget the poor. Evidence of this can be seen in the distribution of amenities within the city. The great parks and places for family often exist in close proximity to valuable real-estate.

Architecture has created isolation within the community; not only among communities but also among the citizens of the same community. Levittown, Pennsylvania is a great example. The person that could not afford a car was left behind in the city while those with cars could flee to the suburbs. However people within the settlement stayed in homes that turned their backs towards the street and focused more on the personal backyard. I believe architecture should create togetherness within society. This allows us to understand our differences.

Architecture that creates togetherness places the backyard in its subordinate secondary place and makes the front of the house speak to the community. This may be accomplished through homes nestled closely to a narrow tree-lined pedestrian-filled street or garages oriented to the rear alley.

Architecture that creates togetherness aspires to achieve the visions of the Garden City. This type of architecture would bring us all back to the same neighborhood. Big affluent mansions would proudly share the street with smaller homes and apartments. The poor, rich, and middle class would have opportunities to intermingle based on their simple proxemics.

Architecture that creates togetherness would make community accessible to everyone. This means putting communal and civic gathering places within walking or transit distance of homes. This would encourage people to walk and interact with neighbors on a common stroll to the corner store or neighborhood library.

Architecture that creates togetherness gives those less understood a place to develop and express themselves within the neighborhood. That feared and misunderstood teen could be a part of a place that breaks down the barrier between adult and adolescent psyche.

Architecture that creates togetherness goes beyond the visual and experiential aspects of design and begins to influence personal subconscious. This subconscious is what creates compassion.



THESIS IDEA

Since architecture has diminished diversity and created isolation within the community by removing togetherness, there needs to be a focus in architecture on creating places within the neighborhood that encourages togetherness and communal relationships. The purpose of this thesis is to create a neighborhood facility that fosters family and community through personal development and communal activity. Some questions that will be explored are: what affect does diminished community have on family? How can community spaces be designed to support family? And, how can compassionate architecture influence change within a community? These questions are investigated with the belief that architecture that creates togetherness is compassionate, and compassion is the thread that connects community and family.

CONTEXT

The site for this project, seen in figure 1, is located in Frayser, a past suburb of Memphis, Tennessee. After researching diminished diversity and the effects of sprawl on youth, Frayser began to stand out as an ideal place for a facility that fosters family and community. The Frayser community is geographically very large and has suffered from its physical layout. The community has low density and is designed for an automobile lifestyle, with its wide streets and strip shopping centers surrounded by asphalt parking. Frayser also has a relatively young, disadvantaged population with large families. The area saw a major loss of jobs and retail during the 1970's as development of the city grew eastward which left the community broken with little diversity, vacant properties, and few community spaces.

The only major asset for families in the area is the Ed Rice Community Center. A recent survey from Frayser Futures shows there is a need for a larger library or computer hub, a resource center, dance studio, community meeting space, movie theater, bowling alley, or skating rink. Frayser is a community that has a population divided by a lack of social and communal spaces. A facility that fosters family and community would be a great asset to reconnect the residents of Frayser and make the community a more attractive place to live.



FIGURE 1. Frayser Aerial View, from Google Earth, 26 August 2011.

This body of literature will present how past neighborhood design has effected the social connections of families and communities today. The idea of Compassionate Architecture and how it could negate the negative effects of neighborhood design and reconnect families and community will also be discussed. This section will also describe why the Frayser community was chosen.

COMMUNITY: Definition

What makes community is a hard question to quantify. Main Street USA is probably the best example of how a community is built. Main Street USA was relatively small scaled and tucked away in the center of neighborhoods. As seen in figure 2, large parking lots were rarely needed since the small shops that made up Main Street were within walking distance of the neighborhoods they served.

There are two unique characteristics of Main Street USA that begin to define what makes community. The first is the interior neighborhood location. This walkable location allows easy access for people within the neighborhood while also providing a place outside of the home and workplace to socialize. Homes were usually built with front porches as shown in figure 3, so there was interaction with a neighbor along the walk. The second unique characteristic of Main Street USA is that the businesses located on the street served the immediate community around them. Shops, coffee houses, gardens, and the like catered to the people that had immediate access to them. These small scale neighborhood stores helped to increase interaction between people in the neighborhoods. In *Celebrating the Third Place*, a young lady is describing how informal collective efforts of the community helped to fund a struggling friend's band trip. The key thing to note from this story is the communal, collective effort: "essential to informal collective effort is the habit of association, and essential to informal associations are places where people may gather freely and frequently and with relative ease."¹ Therefore, the first half of the definition for community is a place where people can gather and easily socialize with one another.

The second part of the definition for community comes from the psychological and emotional connections to a place. Part of what differentiates place from space is the emotional connections to spaces which make them places. As the reading about 'Third Place' continues, a woman gives her account of what emotional ties made the space into a place. "Adults in these places knew me and they cared about me, not in an overbearing or intrusive way, but enough so I noticed I wasn't invisible. I had a name and people used it sometimes to steer me back in the right direction."² In this quotation emphasis is placed on making the woman feel special. This place within the neighborhood was a place where she could be remembered and defined as a person. So what does all this mean for community? It justifies that community is composed of two parts a physical place and a psychological tie to that place. Therefore, community will be defined as a place that helps define an individual as a person through small informal associations between people in a neighborhood—a place that not only cares about the neighborhood but also about the people that are part of it.



FIGURE 2. Overton Square-The Early Years, Photo by Dave Darnell, 1980.



FIGURE 3. Midtown Memphis, Flickr photo by turvynknox, 2009.

1. Ray Oldenburg, *Celebrating the Third Place: Inspiring Stories about the "Great Good Places" at the Heart of Our Communities* (New York: Marlowe & Company, 2001), 2.

2. Ray Oldenburg, *Celebrating the Third Place*, 10.



FIGURE 4. Advertising for Housing Styles in Levittown, Levittown Documents, 1951.



FIGURE 5. Aerial view of Levittown, Photo by Meyer Liebowitz, The New York Times Photo Archives, 1957.

3. "Levittown: Documents of an Ideal American Suburb," <http://tigger.uic.edu/~pbhales/Levittown.html>, accessed October 15, 2013.

4. James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-made Landscape* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 115.

5. *Ibid.*, 115.

COMMUNITY: Decline

The creation of the interstate highway system had an effect on the community. The automobile provided an easy and fast way of commuting which led to a redistribution of the population from dense urban cores to the countryside. Levittown, New York is a great example of this redistribution of residents. Levittown was a low density development located away from the urban core. Levittown was deemed the "new form of American community, an extended cluster of neighborhoods with 'village centers' to hold the elements together."³ This new form of America is known today as suburbia. The homes in Levittown were designed with similarities to homes of 'Main Street' with each home containing a small green plot of land that was surrounded by a picket fence, however, the homes were removed from the sidewalk at least thirty feet and large lawns separated them from the street. As seen in figure 4, the houses also turned their backs to the street as family spaces were re-oriented to face the backyard and the bedrooms fronted the street. This idea of the home removing itself from the street and becoming inward focused discouraged social interactions that helped create community since people now looked at the backyard missing the opportunity to visually connect with walkers.

The neighborhood's layout also changed as the streets that once were narrow and made for people were now wide and designed to accommodate vehicular traffic. The small corner stores located within the neighborhoods that were places for informal socializing were also moved from the center of the neighborhood to the edges near the highway since supermarkets were now the growing trend. This resulted in large parking lots since the use of a car was more convenient for transporting goods home. Schools and other neighborhood social places followed the same trend and were made larger to accommodate many neighborhoods instead of one, this can be seen in figure 5. The greater distance between people and the places where they socialized had a detrimental effect on the community: "children and elderly people were the biggest losers since they were stuck in their immediate environments, the elderly at least had seen the world and knew there was more than a housing subdivision but the children were stuck in this one dimensional world."⁴ This statement indicates that the child is now isolated from others in the community due to the relationship of the home to neighborhood social places. The required use of an automobile for everyday life left those without access to them at a disadvantage in terms of enjoying community life, "since almost all communities designed since 1950 required a car to practically go anywhere those who could not afford the car became disadvantaged."⁵ The new design of the American community slowly began to erode the social interactions that made strong communities. Walking was no longer encouraged by street design and those that walked were on streets that faced bedrooms and homes with no porches; the community was in decline.

COMMUNITY: Present

The present day community has diminished diversity due to the lack of informal public spaces. The continued separation of those with transportation and those without has eroded the tight-knit community and created socially isolated cities. This isolation of one human from another results in bored and selfish individuals.

The absence of an informal public life was described as the cause of stress in America. Since people have become more separated and individual causes of stress are felt to be due to social issues and the cure is individual. In countries such as France people recuperate in bistros and in Germany people relax amid rousing company in their beir garten but in America we turn to massages, mediating, jogging, hot tubbing, or escape fiction to relieve oneself from stress. Others take full advantage of their freedom to associate; we glorify our freedom not to associate. With the absence of informal public life living becomes more expensive since means to facilitate relaxation are not publicly shared but are privately owned, about 2/3 of the GNP Gross National Product is based on personal consumption.⁶

The key things to take from this passage are the negative effects that the lack of informal social public spaces is having on individuals. According to Jane Jacobs, “cities succeed by enabling people to connect with one another, humans are a social species and our greatest gift is our ability to learn from others.”⁷ Diversity is being diminished in American cities because our entertainment has become individualized. Figure 6 shows a typical family home in America with a few couches that all gather around a large television. While this individualization allows the family to be entertained it lessens the diverse interactions that come from more public gatherings. In the previous quote Jane Jacobs stated the greatest gifts to humans is learning from others, therefore, diversity has also been lost with respect to community entertainment. Larger and more social ways of entertaining such as the community movie pictured in figure 7, allows people to associate and learn from one another and interact with people they may not see in a private entertainment situation. Since people now have the ability to have their own personal entertainment at home they can invite only the people that they want to associate with. This increased individuality leads to segregation of various subcultures, age groups, and gender from one another in the community. This declined state of the American community must be addressed by both planners and architects.



FIGURE 6. Home Entertainment is Counter-Cyclical, blog.tmcnet.com, 2008.



FIGURE 7. 6th Annual Outdoor Movie Night in Yaletown, yaletowninfo.com, 2013.

6. Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place*, (New York, NY: Marlowe & Company, 1999), 10.

7. Edward Glaeser, *What a City Needs*, (New York, NY: New Republic, 2009), 5-6.



FIGURE 8. Petit Chateau de la vallée du Loir, Flickr Photo by Didier-Lg, 2006.



FIGURE 9. Farnsworth House, Mies van der Rohe, <http://ifitshipitshere.blogspot.com/2011/04/new-lego-farnsworth-house-look-at.html>, 2011.

8. Marcia McNally, Chapters in Compassion, Places: Forum of Design for the Public Realm Vol. 18, 2006, 37.

9. Gonzague Leroux, "The Human Element in Architecture," December 2, 2011, Accessed October 15, 2013, <http://landofcompassion.com/2011/12/02/the-human-element-in-architecture>.

COMPASSIONATE ARCHITECTURE: Definition

The way in which architects should address the issues of diversity and community is through Compassionate Architecture. However, to understand what compassionate architecture is, the term compassion must be understood. A good definition for the term compassion is "a deep awareness of the suffering of another coupled with the wish to relieve it."⁸ This definition comes from an architect in Louisiana that specializes in designing for health. The key word in this definition is *awareness*. Awareness of an issue is needed first before the issue can be addressed. If architects do not bring particular issues to light which architectural design can address, then no one will understand the true impact architecture can have in solving such issues.

Historically, architecture has focused on styles or movements but not necessarily on changing society. Romantic styles of architecture were popular during the Renaissance period and catered toward the elite, as seen with the Chateau in figure 8, while the Modernist movement focused on efficiency and mass production. One goal of the Modernists was to create mass produced, easy-to-assemble housing; however, the designs of the homes, such as the Farnsworth House seen in figure 9, did not take into account how humans socialized with one another. In his famous statement 'less is more', Mies van der Rohe was focused on the understanding of the materiality of architecture more so than the effect it could have on society. Just as nurses use compassion to soothe the mind of an ailing patient, architects must use compassionate architecture to address the social problems of greater society. In this way compassionate architecture is "architecture that aims to help its user become true and beautiful people."⁹ Compassionate architecture thereby is architecture that responds to its users and helps them to become better people, looking beyond the physical aesthetic, or style, by creating change within the user.

COMPASSIONATE ARCHITECTURE: The Garden City

Ebenezer Howard's Garden City was a good attempt at compassionate architecture. The Garden City was designed as a solution to the issues of cities and rural growth. Figure 10 shows a circular city surrounded by rural space with large green parks circling its interior. In the mid-1800s, there was substantial growth within the city of London, England. There was so much growth that many felt the city would become overpopulated. This idea coupled with crime and the dirtiness of the city led to the growth of smaller cities in rural areas surrounding London. Several planners at the time believed the cities surrounding London would eventually allow the city to fail since the people preferred fresh air and more rural landscapes. However, since London continued to create manufacturing jobs people still moved to the city. Ebenezer Howard designed the Garden City to "combine the advantages of both" city and country and "have the disadvantages of neither" and would therefore "prove the most powerful of the three"¹⁰. Howard's Garden City brings to light the issue of people and their want for both urban and rural environments and aims to solve the issue in a way that makes both sides happy, therefore keeping with the definition of compassionate architecture. The physical layout of the city was also designed compassionately since Howard placed the homes in the central streets of the city to provide "ample recreation grounds within very easy access of all people."¹¹ This can be seen in figure 11. Equal access would improve city life for all the inhabitants of the Garden City.

Howard's goal for the city was to establish "a scientific distribution to take the place of chaos, a just system"¹² that would eliminate selfishness and "awaken the soft notes of brotherliness and good will"¹³ and would "place in strong hands implements of peace and construction, so that implements of war and destruction may drop uselessly down"¹⁴. The Garden City has the same segregation of homes as in Levittown, the difference is that Howard looked at the communal, emotional, and health needs of the people and tried to provide for them. Just as Howard's Garden City aimed to bring peace to its inhabitants the Transformation Center, through its design, aims to bring changes to a community with the goal of improving people's lives.

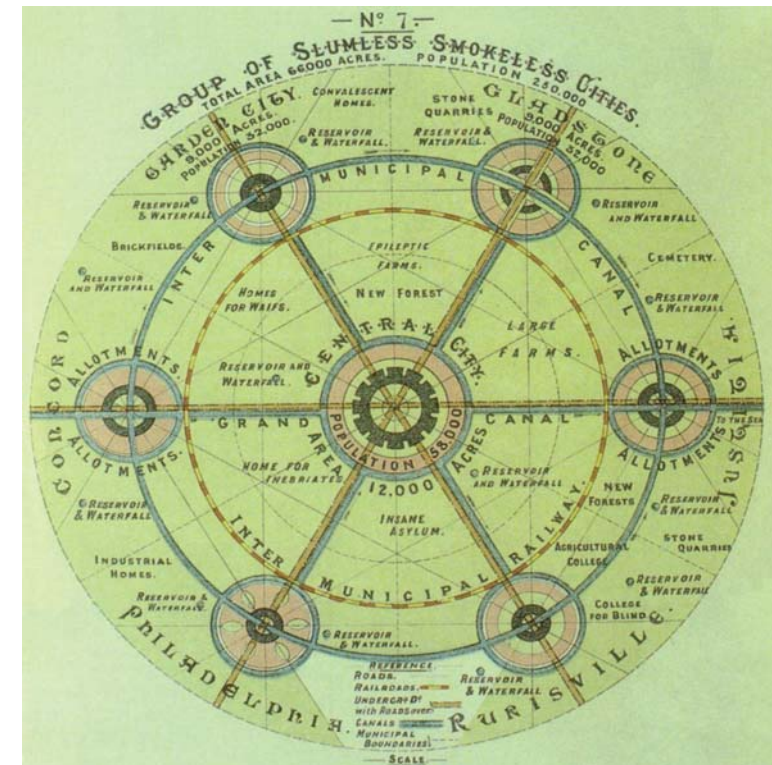


FIGURE 10. The original Garden City concept, Ebenezer Howard, 1902.

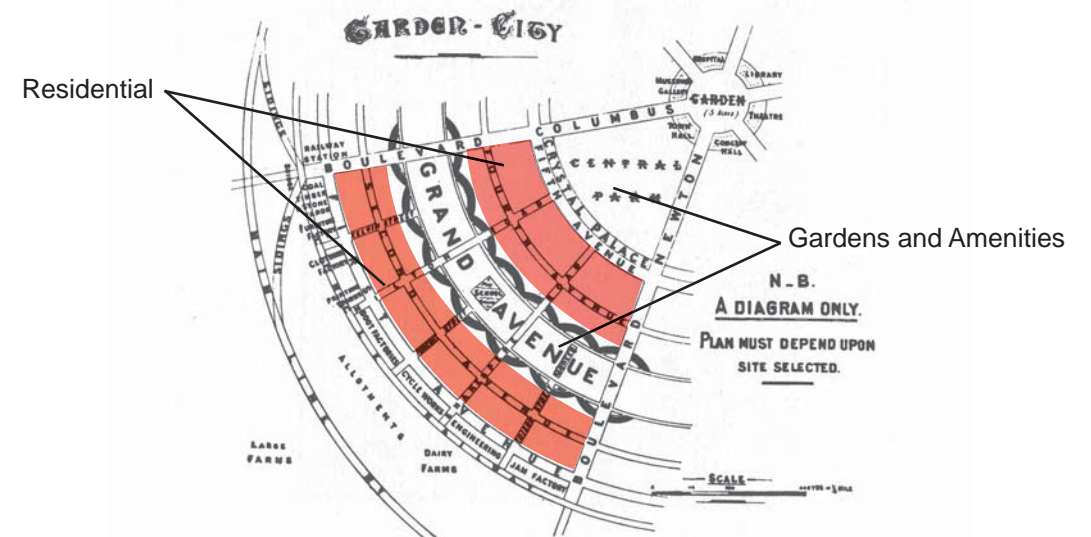


FIGURE 11. Garden-City, Grand Avenue, Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, 1902.

10. W. A. Eden, "Studies in Urban Theory. II: Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City Movement," *The Town Planning Review* 19, (Summer 1947), 134.

11. Ibid., 140.

12. Ibid., 141.

13. Ibid., 142.

14. Ibid., 142.

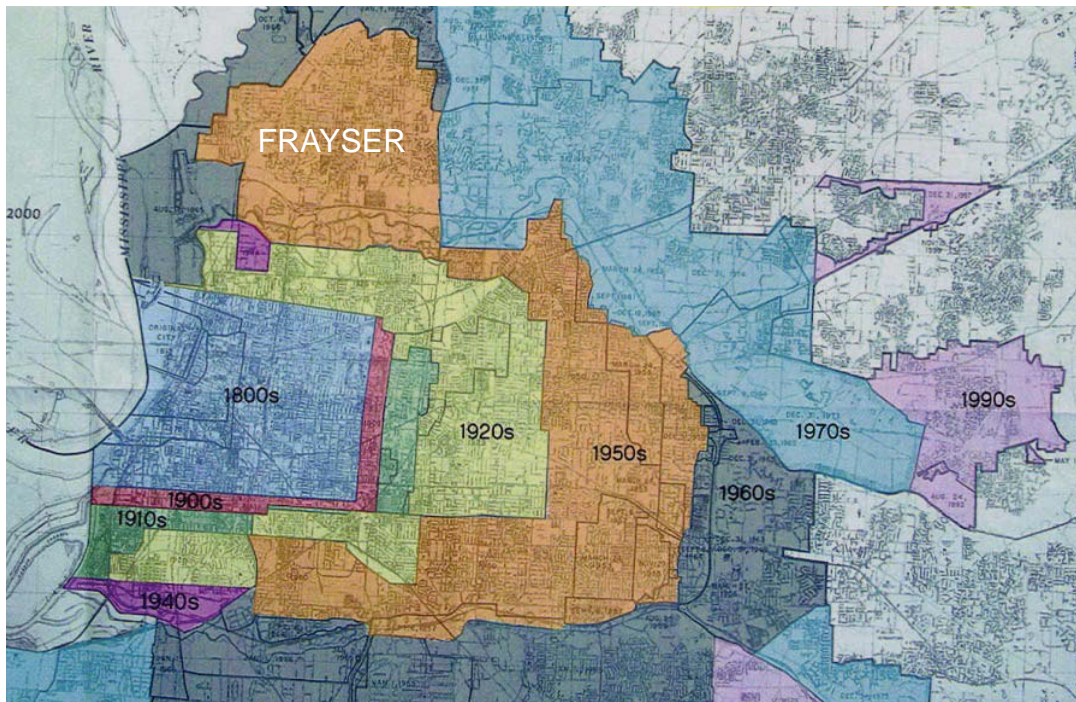


FIGURE 12. Annexation Map, Smart City Memphis, 2013.



FIGURE 13. Frayser Skateland, Photo from Facebook group “Grew Up in Frayser and Proud of It”, 1990s.

15. City-Data,” accessed October 15, 2013, <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Frayser-Memphis-TN.html>.

FRAYSER COMMUNITY: Why Frayser?

The location deemed best for the Transformation Center is an area of Memphis, Tennessee known as Frayser. Frayser is located on the northern side of the city adjacent to the I-40/240 Interstate loop. Like Levittown, Frayser was an early suburb of Memphis that developed in the 1950s with the automobile. Figure 12 shows the city of Memphis relatively contained within the parkways system in the 1930s. By 1950 there was an explosion of growth around the city with Frayser occupying the top portion of the highlighted 1950s region. This rapid growth of single family detached homes in Frayser left it with similar issues as Levittown. The development was initially aimed at working class citizens that had a vehicle to traverse the city. The area was home to bowling alleys, Skateland seen in figure 13, the Northgate shopping center, and many other car accessible social places. Frayser was a self-sustaining community until the demographic change in the 1970s and 1980s. As the city kept expanding eastward the affluent population followed the new development, leaving the Frayser community empty. The abundance of vacant properties resulted in lower land values which allowed a new disadvantaged group of residents to move into the community. This low density community filled with lower income residents could no longer sustain the shopping centers so many of the retailers and family entertainment venues left the region. Frayser is the Levittown of Memphis, created from a similar growth pattern.

“The current community of Frayser has an impoverished population with about 42.3% of its residents below the poverty level. There also is a density of about 2,236 people per square mile which is less than that of the greater city of Memphis which is 2,335 people per square mile. Frayser has a higher concentration of families at about 57.7% compared to a metro average of 46.4% and the average family size is larger at 2.9 people per household versus 2.6.”¹⁵ From this data it can be seen that the Frayser community has a large number of low-income, large families living in non-walkable, non-communal environments. Another important piece of data is the relative young age of the residents when compared to the greater city and the high crime rate. The average commute time to work is about 30 minutes, suggesting there are not many jobs present in the community. The community of Frayser, as it currently exists, has diminished and is not conducive for families. The jobs are far from the region, there is no entertainment which has created an isolated community. There needs to be a place in the Frayser community where families and the community can come together, socialize, and strengthen the bonds that create great neighborhoods. There also needs to be a place especially for teenagers, to prepare them for living in the adult world. Local high schools focus on preparing students for college life but offer little preparation for adulthood or family.

WHY A TEEN PLACE: Teen Issues

As teenagers are the future parents and future residents that determine the economic vitality and stability of the Frayser community, it is important to create a center specifically for teens, family, and community. Currently the fabric of the family has been lost with many single-family households and many teens having no positive role models. This could explain the high crime rate. An online website reported several risk factors that cause teens to join gangs, including “lack of jobs, poverty compounded by social isolation, domestic violence, negative peer networks, lack of parental supervision, and early academic failure and lack of school attachment.”¹⁶ Having a place specifically for teens that connects them with the community and teaches them life skills would eliminate several of the risk factors that exist in the Frayser community. The website also includes reasons why teenagers join gangs. Of those, a sense of family, need for money, family history/tradition, and excitement were the ones that stood out as things that could be attained or accomplished at the Transformation Center. Teens also need their own place because there are not many places designed or welcoming to teens. Figures 14-16 show examples of the issue of place for teens: The child has a playground, the adult talks and supervises, but the teen stays at home bored. According to Ray Oldenburg,

The youth of today’s society have been shut out. As Oldenburg reflects on a time when the community would gather outdoors, cook stew together and everyone would enjoy the day late into the night with friends and family. He then stated that today adults have driven a wedge between themselves and youths. He attributed this wedge between adult and teen with the idealized neighborhood of Levittown. His study showed the neighborhood was perfect for little children and adults but was hated by many teens. The movies and shopping centers were too expensive and located too far for the teens to have access while the local school was closed after hours. The bars and recreation centers were designed for adults and the teens were left with nothing to do. Oldenburg said since there were no places for teens and no supervision the teens began hanging on corners and hosted parties in their homes. He also said recreational places that did allow teens would usually put out due to loud noise which bothered the adults. The teen then took their frustrations from boredom out on adults through vandalism and alcohol consumption.¹⁷

This passage coincides with many of the youth activities taking place in the Frayser community: many teens drink, smoke marijuana, commit robberies, and vandalize for excitement. It also shows that there is a strong need for a transition place that would allow teens to express themselves within the adult community. In Levittown, even after the adults recognized the neighborhood was not friendly for teens, they did not build them a place to gather. This was because the adults were not sure if



FIGURE 14. Woodland Discovery Playground, photo from <http://365thingstodoinmemphis.blogspot.com>, 2011.




FIGURE 15. Mom and Child, by ACLA and Broadimage, 2013.



FIGURE 16. Bored Teen, by Beata Wawrzyniuk.

16. Gang Alternatives Program, “Why People Join Gangs,” accessed November 12, 2013, http://www.gangfree.org/news_press.html.

17. Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place*, (New York, NY: Marlowe & Company, 1999), 268-269.



the teens were responsible enough to have something of their own. The adults then decided that school, home, and work were the only acceptable places for teens.

WHY A TEEN PLACE: Need for Transition Space

This leads to a need for a transition space within the Frayser community. The transition space would allow the teenager to cope with being a young adult and learn how to become a successful adult. The school system is already overwhelmed with issues and does not have the capacity to teach teenagers life skills or responsibility. “The only things teens are responsible for in school is putting away their things and playing in the school band or electing class officers, the same amount of responsibility is present in kindergarten.”¹⁸ There are several organizations in the Frayser community trying to mentor teens but the mentors often are located in places that teens do not frequent. In Frayser there is community abandonment and many teenagers possess little to no neighborhood pride and have few positive family or community connections. This is why I am proposing the Frayser Transformation Center.

18. Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein, *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 1171.

FRAYSER TRANSFORMATION CENTER

The Frayser Transformation Center offers a solution to strengthening community and family through experiential learning within the existing neighborhood fabric. Typically, cities revert to large mixed-use redevelopments as a catalyst for change in the community. While this type of development works, it often displaces many of the residents and shifts the problem around to other areas rather than solving the deeper issue of creating community within itself. Figure 17 shows the general ideas behind this center. What makes the Transformation Center special is its goal of strengthening self through family and community. For teens that do not have a strong family or community presence, the center can provide that family and community.

There are many issues that teenagers struggle with, some of which are family, friends, relationships, and money. The goal of this Transformation Center is to teach the teen how to balance issues that can distract them from their life goals. The Center aims to teach the teen by exposing them to the community and giving them the opportunity to be involved in local meetings, activities, and events. The sequence in figure 18 illustrates the goals of the Transformation Center. In each picture, the semi-transparent disk with a hole in the middle, is being pulled off-center by what would be everyday issues in a teen's life. The more one issue influences the teen the more the teen loses sight of himself or herself which can be seen via the reflection in the mirror through the center hole. As the teen learns to balance the occurrences in life they begin to get a clearer view and understanding of themselves. The Transformation Center is addressing the issues of the teen with family and community in a compassionate manner. Before designing the center I looked at several precedents of what could be considered teen and community places. Each precedent inspired certain physical or programming ideas for the Frayser Transformation Center.



FIGURE 17. Community Diagram, Illustrates creating a building to create community rather than rebuilding the neighborhood to create community, by Victor Robinson, 2013.

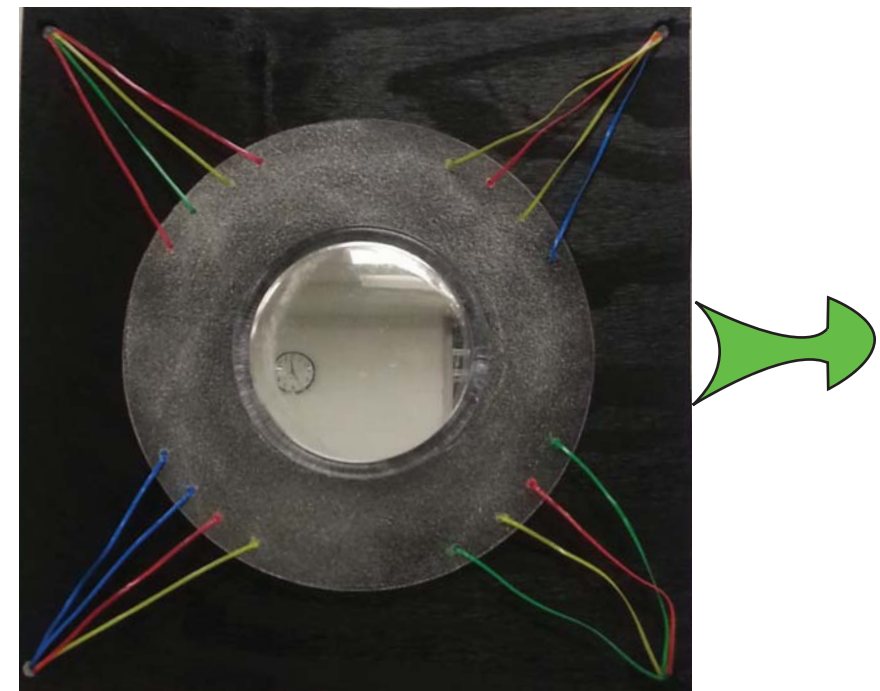
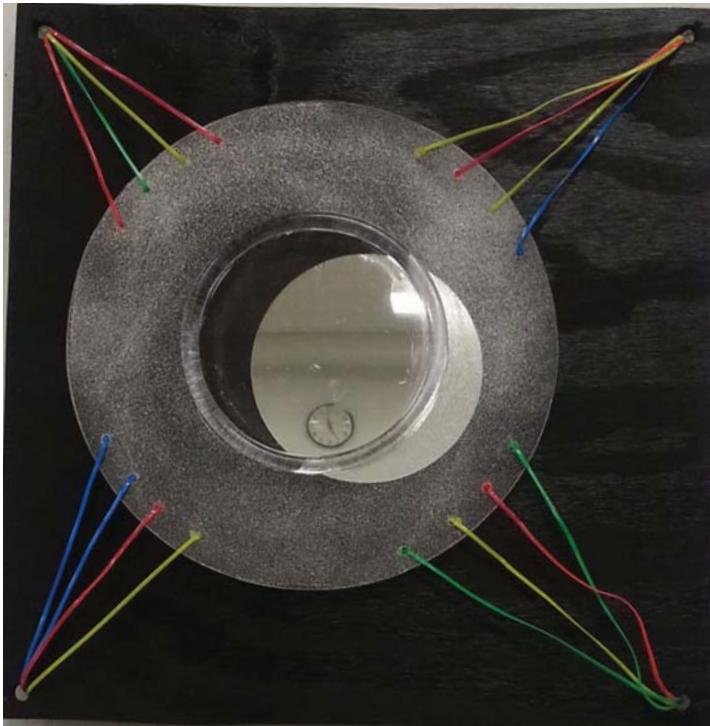
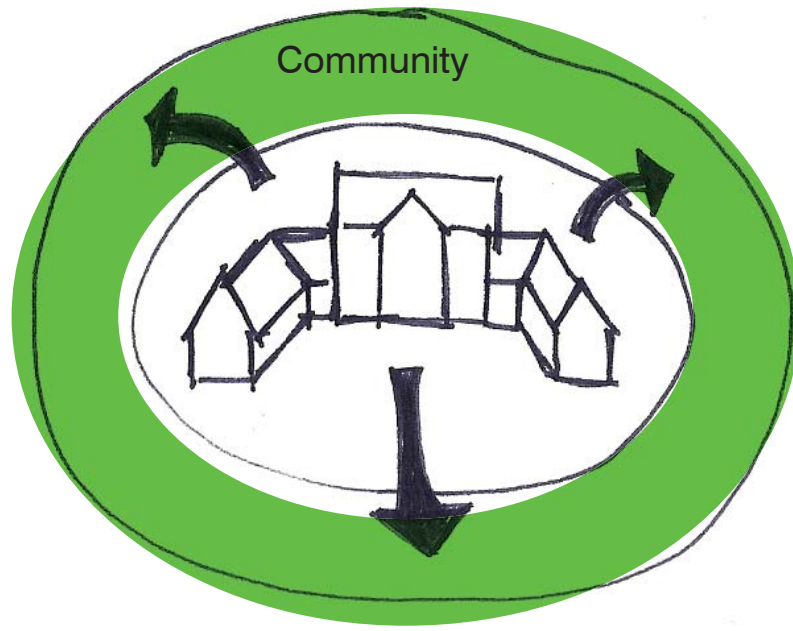


FIGURE 18. Inspiration Piece, Teen Life, Mirror on painted wood, by Victor Robinson, 2013.



PRECEDENTS: BRIDGES Center

The BRIDGES Center, designed by Building Studio Architects, was built in 2004 in Memphis, Tennessee. The building was designed to hold the Bridge Builders Foundation and The Workplace, which are organizations that serve to “unite and inspire diverse young people to become confident and courageous leaders committed to community transformation.”¹⁹ The structure contains an adult wing and youth wing separated by a grass outdoor space. As shown in figures 19 and 20, a large truss system was placed over the Bridge Builders portion of the building and was tilted to create an open, two-story, multi-use activity space. Parking was placed on the roof of the building to allow the full site to be used and to produce a more urban street presence.

This project was chosen because of its similarities of user context and program to the Frayser Transformation Center. The building contains many multi-functional, dual-purpose, experiential learning spaces that require a wide variety of operating hours. The most noteworthy feature of the BRIDGES Center is the relationship between the structure and the sidewalk. The building invites the community in through the use of a large green plaza located in the center of the structure that serves as an activity space for the center and also as an impromptu community amphitheater pictured in figure 26. Figure 23 shows the east side of the building which welcomes the public with an area of covered seating placed beneath the parking structure, which provides a shaded space with game tables and views into the office space. The communal and activity spaces are located in the transparent portion of the structure which provides a visual connection to the outside community. There is also a parking lot and community garden on the roof of the building shown in figure 22. Since the Frayser Transformation Center also serves to connect the community, similar exterior community spaces will be needed to accomplish this task and make the public feel welcomed in the center. Informal gathering spaces will also give the community a place to meet and socialize.

Some things that can be improved for use in the Frayser Transformation Center are the outdoor green space and the informal community spaces. The outdoor green space at the BRIDGES Center is meant to be a public place but lacks a true physical connection to the street. The east side of the space has a water feature that separates the green plaza from the entry and this water can only be crossed via narrow uninviting planks shown in figure 30. The west end of the green space opens to the street but there are no walkways or activities present to pull the community into the space. Also, the informal community spaces do not serve the community well since the community garden is located on the roof and lacks visibility and connection to the street. The roof of the structure also has limited hours which makes the rooftop garden accessible only during certain portions of the day.

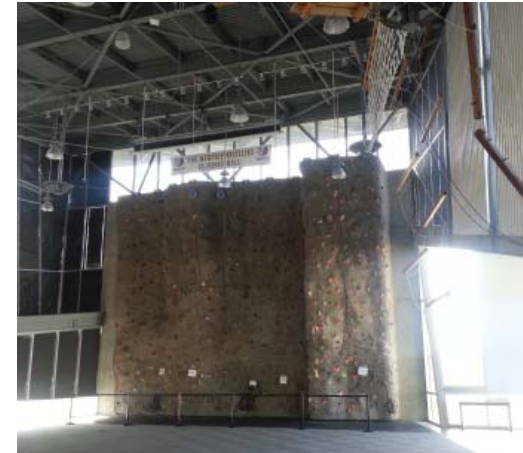


FIGURE 19. Interior activity space, by Victor Robinson, 2013.



FIGURE 20. Aerial View BRIDGES, photo from Google Earth, 26 August 2011.



FIGURE 24. BRIDGES Southern Facade, photo from buildingstudio.net, accessed 2013.



FIGURE 25. Transparency highlights, photo edited by Victor Robinson, 15 October 2013.



FIGURE 28. West Planter Bed, photo from buildingstudio.net, accessed 2013.

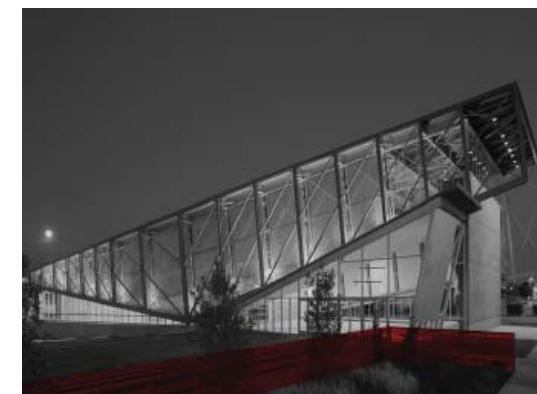


FIGURE 29. Barrier Fence, photo edited by Victor Robinson, 15 October 2013.

19. “Who We Are,” Accessed October 15, 2013, <http://www.bridgesusa.org/whoware>.

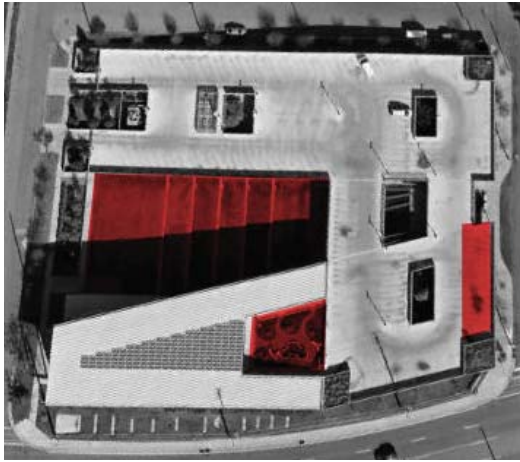


FIGURE 21. Aerial View BRIDGES with highlights, photo edited by Victor Robinson, 15 October 2013.



FIGURE 22. Roof Garden, by Victor Robinson, 2013.



FIGURE 23. Community Gathering Space, by Victor Robinson, 2013.



FIGURE 26. Interior Green Space, by Victor Robinson, 2013.



FIGURE 27. Adult Wing Street Facade, by Victor Robinson, 2013.



FIGURE 30. Ceremonial Bridge, by Victor Robinson, 2013.



FIGURE 31. Western Gathering Space, photo from buildingstudio.net, accessed 2013.

The truss system allows the high activity spaces to exist in one large room. The BRIDGES Center uses public outdoor spaces to welcome the public into the facility via visual connections and physical connection into the spaces. In figure 21, the highlighted spaces are the public spaces.

The exterior structure of the truss also allows for high transparency into the activity space from both the street and interior green space. The level of transparency differs between the BRIDGE Builders and the adult Workplace learning facility as seen in figures 25 and 27.

Some public spaces lack a clear physical connection with the community. In figure 29, there is no path into the green space; a fence closes the green space off from the public. In figure 30, a large water feature and narrow cat-walks discourage the public to enter the green space. In figure 31, there is a large concrete wall that blocks views into the large activity space.

PRECEDENTS: Gary Comer Youth Center and College Prep

The Gary Comer Youth Center, pictured in figure 32, is a 74,000 square foot youth center located in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Chicago, Illinois. The center was designed by John Ronan Architects and opened in 2008, to provide “a constructive environment for youths to spend their after-school hours.”²⁰ The Center is housed in two buildings separated by a large parking lot that doubles as practice space for the local drill team. Both the activity building and the educational building have a very communal atmosphere: “extensive use of glazing inside the building allows visual access between the different spaces to foster a sense of community between the various building users.”²¹ To achieve this communal atmosphere, support activities in both buildings open into one central space. In the activity building the support spaces open to a large gymnasium/auditorium, and in the learning space the classrooms open to the administration block placed at its center.

The bars of support that wrap the large spaces contain classrooms that can be adapted or expanded to accommodate the changing needs of the community. The large gymnasium space can also be transformed into an auditorium with a stage for performances.²²

Just as community is important, so is adaptability, and the Gary Comer Youth Center provides a high level of multi-use spaces to sustain the functionality of the building.

Similar techniques are used in the Frayser Transformation Center to help create a sense of community among the Frayser youth. Within the design, attention has also been paid to the environment. There are two large sustainable features in the center: the vegetable roof garden and porous pavement. Not only have these features been incorporated to reduce environmental impacts but they also serve the purpose of educating the users about nutrition and sustainability while providing food for the campus and for local restaurants. Fully integrating site, strategy, and curriculum plays a major role in the design of the Frayser Transformation Center.

The Gary Comer Youth Center also provides a great example of how color can be used to suggest a certain user group. The facility uses bright reds and blues to denote the space is meant for a younger clientele. This notion of colors is used more sparingly in the Frayser Transformation Center but will be incorporated to suggest an appropriate user.



FIGURE 32. Gary Comer Center, by Jasmin Shah, 2012.



FIGURE 35. Gary Comer Aerial, photo from Google Earth, 2012.



FIGURE 36. Gary Comer Vegetated Spaces, photo edited by Victor Robinson, 2013.

20. “Gary Comer Youth Center,” *e-architect* database online. Accessed 2013. http://www.e-architect.co.uk/chicago/gary_comer_youth_center.htm.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*



FIGURE 33. Gym, by Jasmin Shah, 2012.



FIGURE 34. Auditorium, by Jasmin Shah, 2012.

In figures 33 and 34, the adaptability of the space can be seen. The space can be transformed from a gymnasium into an auditorium.



FIGURE 37. Gary Comer Roof Garden, photo from greenroofs.com, accessed 2013.

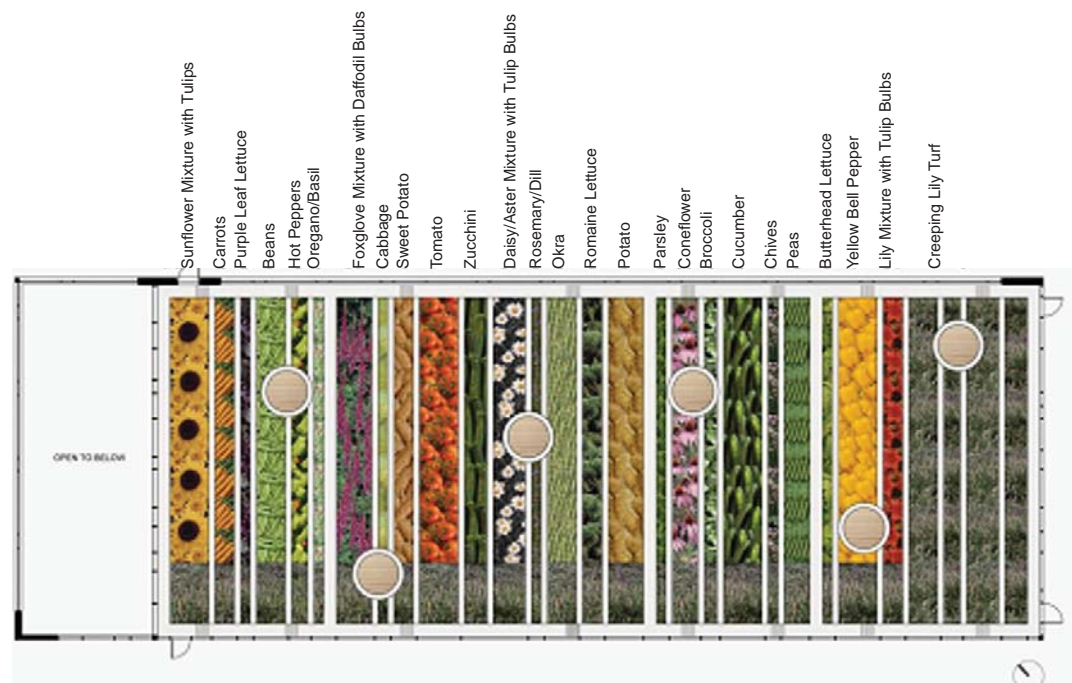


FIGURE 38. Gary Comer Roof Garden Plan, photo from greenroofs.com, accessed 2013.

In figures 35 and 36, the green vegetable garden and porous pavement parking lot are highlighted. Both help to slow water run-off and the green roof reduces solar heat gain and heat loss. In figures 37 and 38, the vegetable garden is shown. The garden produces food for the center and extra food is sold to four local restaurants.

PRECEDENTS: Gary and Janice Podesta Teen IMPACT Center

Designed by Lesovsky, Donaldson, Zagaroli, Wohle in 2003, the Teen IMPACT Center, seen in figure 39, is located in Stockton, California and is the activity portion of a larger facility for the teen community. The Center, pictured in figure 39, is approximately 18,000 square feet and serves to build confidence through communal activities such as dance, performance, and art; improve social skills and community with group recreational activities; and, create one central spot for teenagers to gather that is safe.

Characteristics about this center that stand out are the wide variety of activities available for the teenager. Not only are these activities fun, but also allow for self expression. Activities include bowling, skating, basketball, graffiti art, photography, dance, and movies—allowing the users to make a mark on the physical space and in the community. A study found, “Art also can be used as a self esteem booster from the compliments received by others.”²³ Diverse activities like this help to balance the learning portion of the center. The Frayser Transformation Center will provide similar activities that could serve as a draw for local residents.

The Teen IMPACT Center also excels in the use of community events as activities for teenagers. The teens take the skills they are learning in dance, art, photography, and other activities and put on shows for the community. These performances help to connect the teens with the community through performance. The center itself is also open to the public with rentable event spaces.

The Frayser Transformation Center takes this idea of a communal facility one step further and contains spaces where the public can interact and learn with the students at the Center.



FIGURE 39. Teen IMPACT Center, photo from teenimpactcenter.org, accessed 2013.

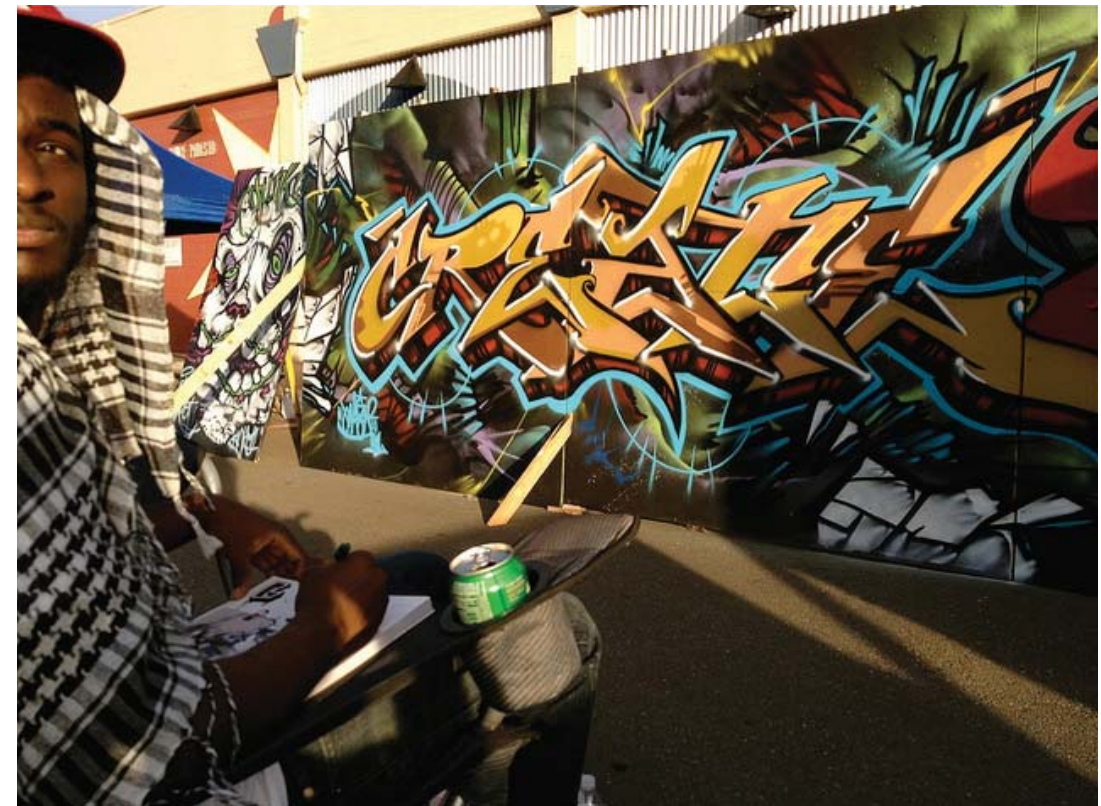


FIGURE 41. Graffiti Art, photo from teenimpactcenter.org, accessed 2013.

23. Christina Pili, “The Effects of Art on the Brain of an Underprivileged Child,” accessed November 18, 2013, <http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/exchange/node/1799>.



FIGURE 40. Game Room, photo from teenimpactcenter.org, accessed 2013.



FIGURE 42. Multi-Use Space, photo from teenimpactcenter.org, accessed 2013.



FIGURE 43. Basketball Court, photo from teenimpactcenter.org, accessed 2013.

In figure 40 the various recreational activities provided by the center are shown. There is a four lane bowling alley along with a game room. A snack bar is also located in the back of the room.

In figures 41,42, and 43 various curriculum based activities are pictured. Art, break-dancing, and basketball are just a few activities that allow for self expression.

DESIGN SOLUTION

Area Analysis

The Frayser Area of Memphis, Tennessee encompasses 37.6 square miles hilly, tree-filled terrain. The area occupies the northwestern portion of the city to the north of the Interstate loop as pictured in figure 44. The area has several assets that already have outreach programs that could be enhanced with the addition of the Transformation Center. Figure 50 shows there are several churches and schools that encircle the selected site. The Frayser Development Corporation also is in close proximity to the site and will be relocated to the site to provide assistance in financial education and home ownership.

Since Frayser is located in close proximity to downtown Memphis, the city and investors have taken on several housing and streetscape projects. Vacant apartment complexes have been renovated or put on a list for demolition. Figure 45 shows nearby vacant apartments. There have also been several new infill housing projects in the area with the largest being the Wolf River Bluffs subdivision. This project consists of 200 homes surrounding a lake and wooded walking trail.

There are several sites that were considered for the Frayser Transformation Center. The first was located at 3004 Overton Crossing Street and was bordered to the north by Whitney Avenue and to the south by Clifton Avenue. This site was considered due to its central location within the Frayser Community as a whole. The second site considered was located in Frayser Park on Rugby Place next to the Ed Rice Community Center. This center already serves as a place for teenagers to gather and there is plenty of existing infrastructure. The community center is small and outdated and does not contain many meeting spaces apart from the gym. While this site is in a good location, it is isolated from pedestrian traffic due to its location in a large park on a major road.

This site is at the center point between the two churches and schools. Figure 49 shows the view looking across the street from the center. Figure 51, shows the views that both the high school and elementary school have towards the site. It also shows the site's close proximity to the major roadway. Figure 46 is the view from the high school while figure 48 is the view from the elementary school. This area of Frayser seems to have reached a turning point and the Transformation Center would serve as the activator to bring the community back together to create more growth and investment.

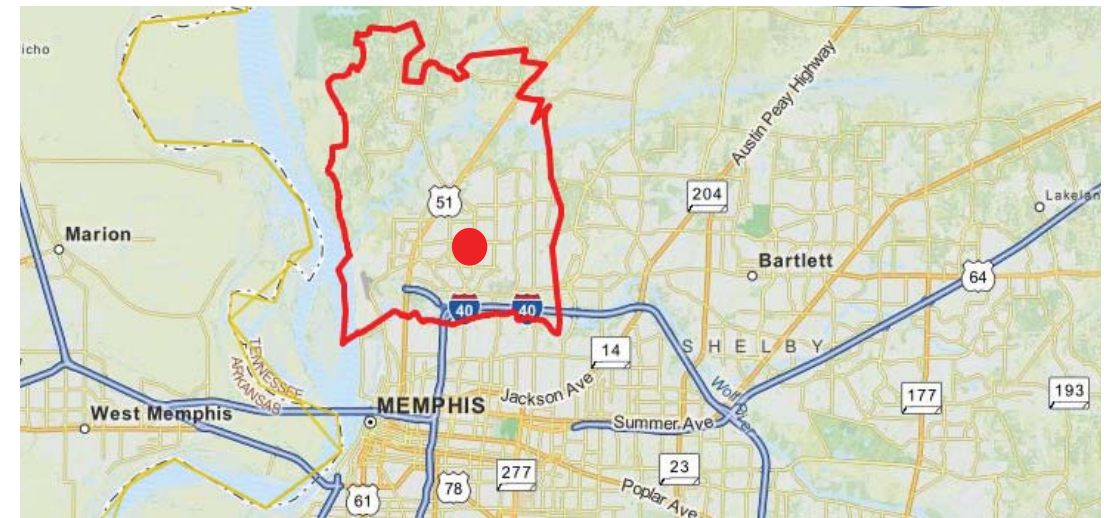


FIGURE 44. Frayser Region, from city-data.com, accessed 2013.



FIGURE 45. Abandoned Apartments, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 46. View From Frayser High School, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 47. Frayser High School, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 48. View From Frayser Elementary School, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 49. Dellwood Avenue Panorama, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

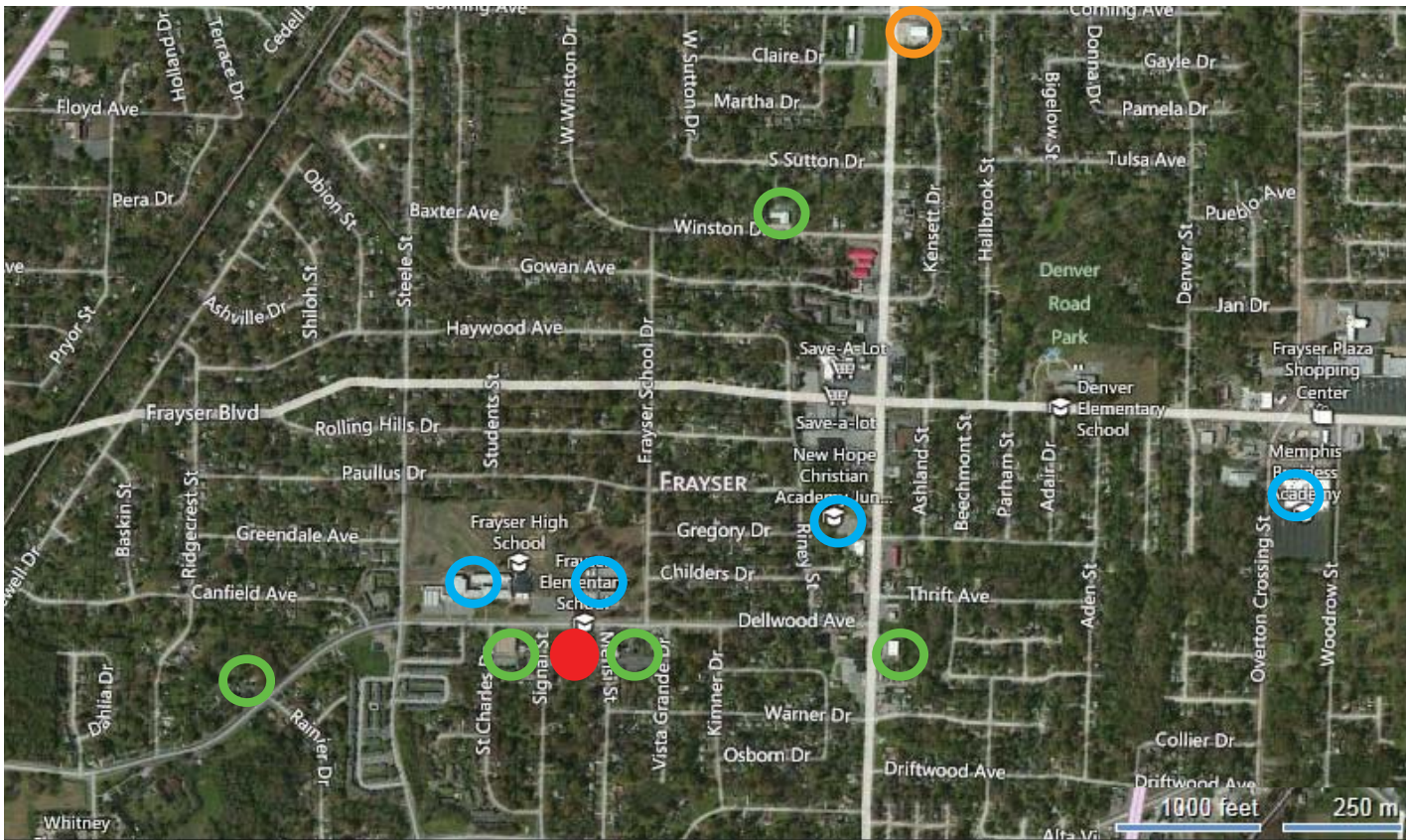


FIGURE 50. Site Aerial, by Victor Robinson, 2013.

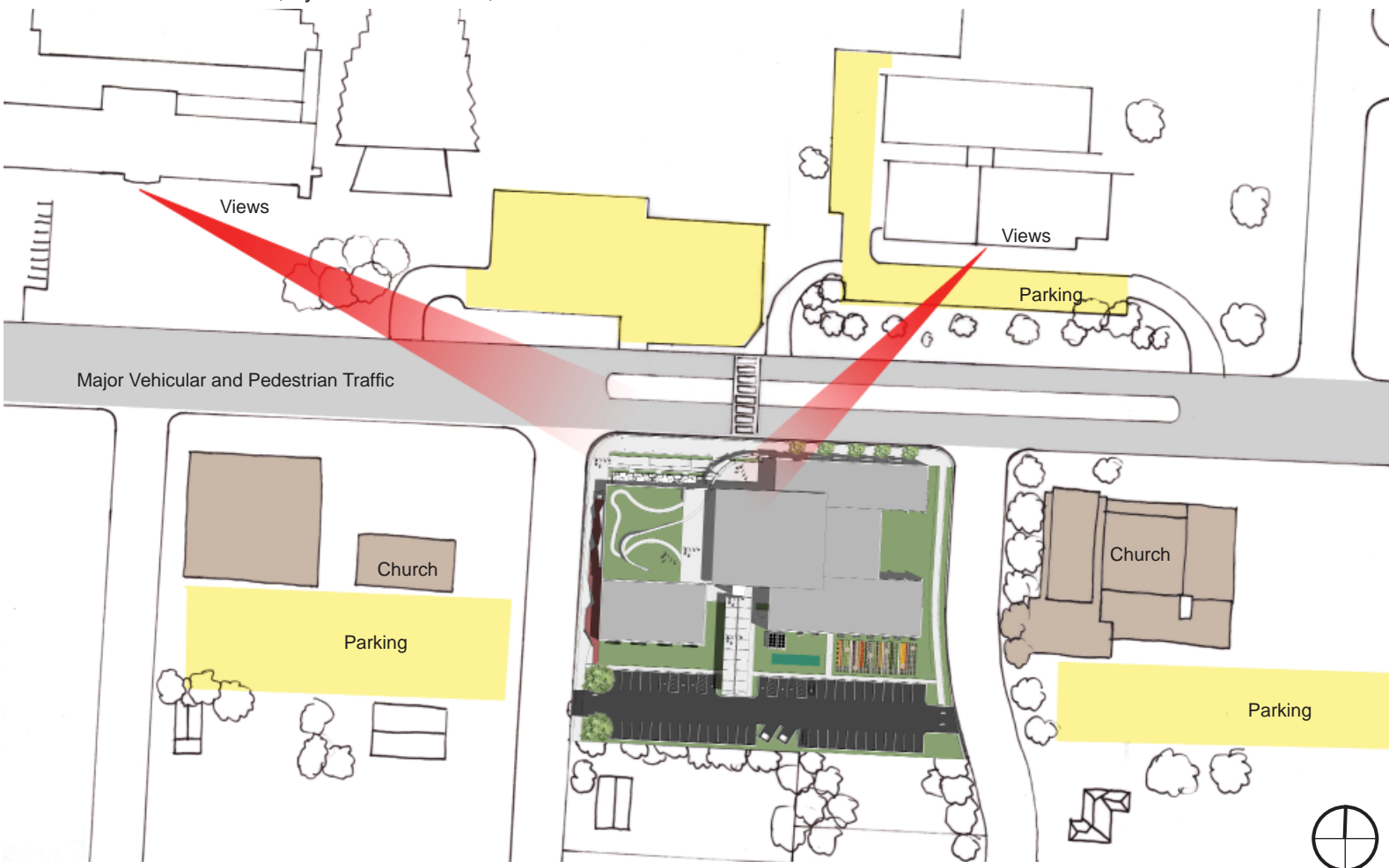


FIGURE 51. Aerial Analysis, by Victor Robinson, 2013.

Area Assets

- Site
- Frayser Development Corporation
- School
- Church

The assets within this area will both serve and be served by the Frayser Transformation Center. This center will serve primarily as an after school place for local school students and as a collaborative space that the local community can use.

Site Assets

- 2 Churches
- Frayser Elementary
- Frayser High School
- 3 Parking Lots with over 50 spaces each
- Gymnasium

SITE ANALYSIS

The site that was chosen for this Transformation Center is located at 1577 Dellwood Avenue and is situated immediately across the street from Frayser Elementary School and Frayser High School. Pictured in figure 52, this site has a prime location for the teenage demographic and serves as an after school social space for students. This site is located in one of the more dense neighborhoods in Frayser with several apartment complexes nearby. There are churches located on the east and west side of the site and an existing Life Enrichment Center at a nearby intersection. The proximity to the churches and schools makes the community portion of the Transformation Center more plausible to serve as a location for outreach classes. The site itself is approximately 2.27 acres and contains an abandoned and deteriorated 24,001 square foot church, a parking lot, and open green space. The existing building had a good structure and open spaces on the interior and this seemed like it would be a good structure to repurpose. However, after settling on the function of the building and pedestrian atmosphere that was desirable, the existing structure became less efficient for a communal facility. Figure 53 shows a series of diagrams illustrating these situations. Figure 54 shows the existing site conditions and view to and from the site while figure 55 shows the proposed site plan.

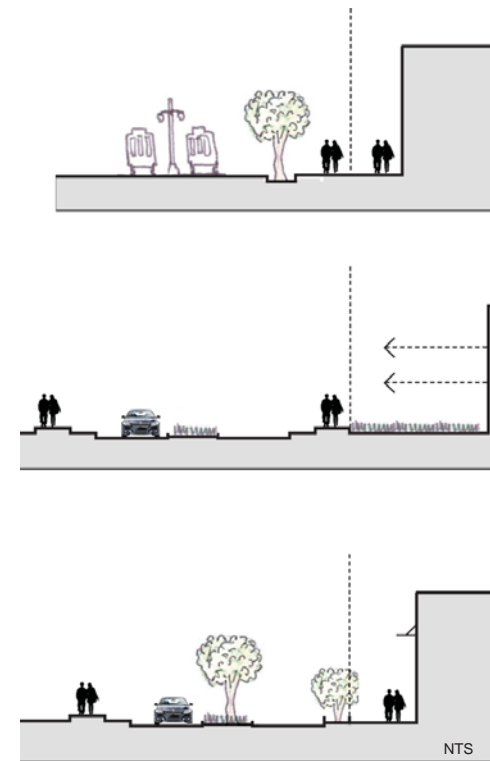


FIGURE 53. Urban Streetscapes Diagram, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 52. Highlighted Site, edited by Victor Robinson, 2013.



FIGURE 54. Existing Site Conditions and View Diagram, by Victor Robinson, 2013.

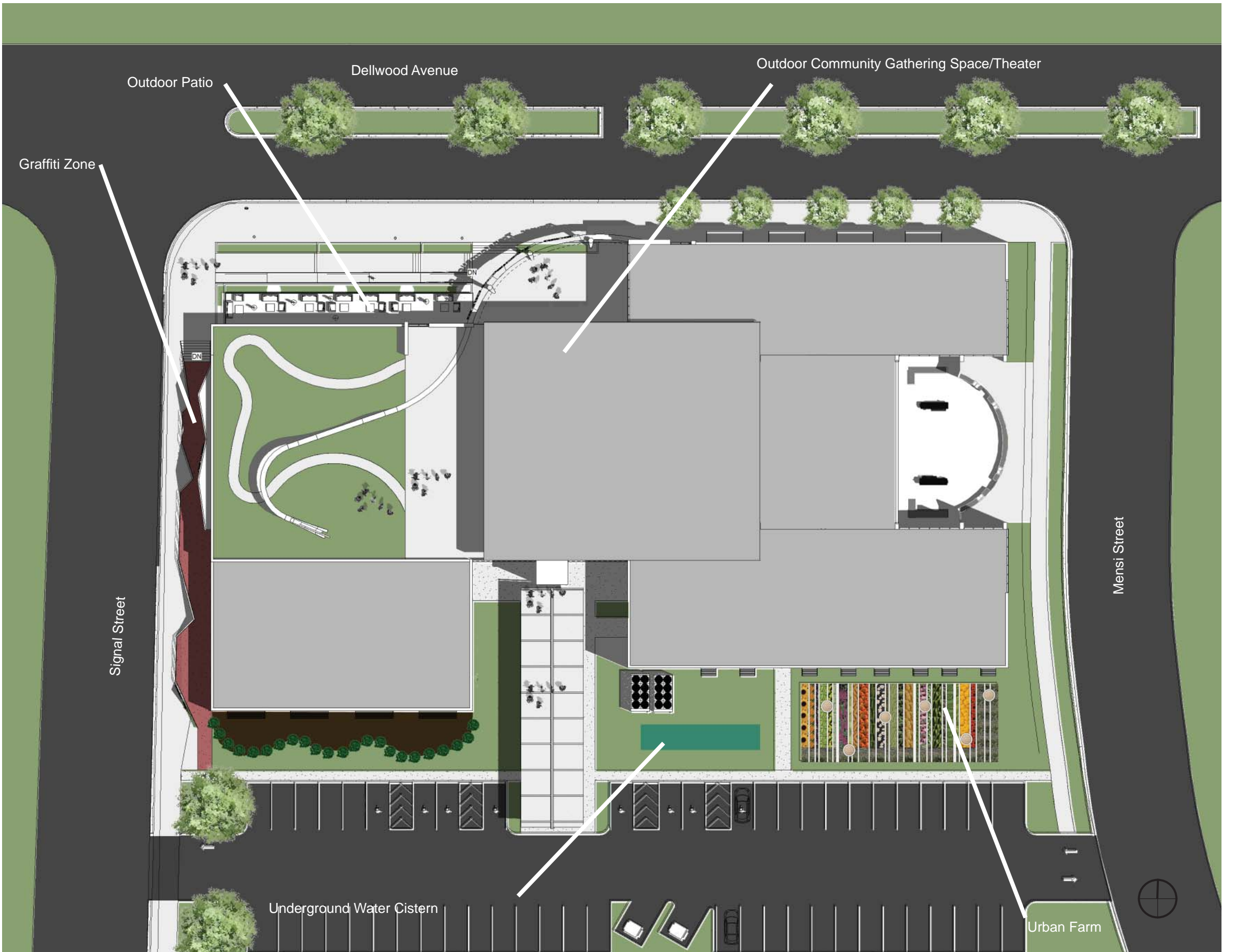


FIGURE 55. Site Plan, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

20 60

NTS

25

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ BUILDING CONCEPTS

The first step in creating the Transformation Center was to develop a program that focused on the needs of the teenager but also promoted community and family interaction. Figure 56 shows the three major components decided for the program: a learning center, community activity center, and a day care. The learning center was chosen because of the Center's need to educate the users in life skills. Therefore, classrooms, dance space, art space, computer lab, learning kitchen, urban garden, offices, and a large, central-group-learning space were all needed to achieve the educational goals of the facility. The community activity center was an equally important component for the Transformation Center because it provided a place for fun and community collaborations. The community activity center includes a large communal event space, a snack bar, game room, outdoor theater, and seating space. The final component of the Transformation Center is a day-care. The day-care facility was chosen due to the high number of teen pregnancies at the high school. The day-care center allows the teen parent to attend school and focus on their education while knowing the child is nearby and in good hands. These three components serve as the guide for the development of the Center's design.

The concept for the building itself relies heavily on findings from research on community and precedents of communal learning facilities. Figure 59 shows the progression of the concept from idea to building form. The idea starts with a box with a central heart. The heart represents the generator of relationships and community. The arrows represent users that circulate through this space. As the diagrams progress, the heart becomes the central spine of the building. Functions located within this central spine are the communal and relationship generating spaces from the program such as the family room and event space which can be seen in figure 60. This generator space includes both the learning center and community activity spaces. The last image within this figure shows how the heart space becomes transparent and opens to the surrounding community and support spaces of the building. The series of arrows shows how various users matriculate through the space, come together in the central space, and then leave as changed individuals. The green line represents users involved in the learning programs at the center, the yellow line represents the general community passing through, and the black line represents community users of the facility. This building form allows everyone in the community an opportunity to use the facility and promotes a very active and social learning environment, which strengthens community and family. In figure 57, the section diagram shows how all the interior support spaces focus into the central heart space of the center. Figure 58 shows the vertical spatial relationships between the three main uses of the facility. The public space in the center further emphasizes the importance of welcoming the outside community into the space.

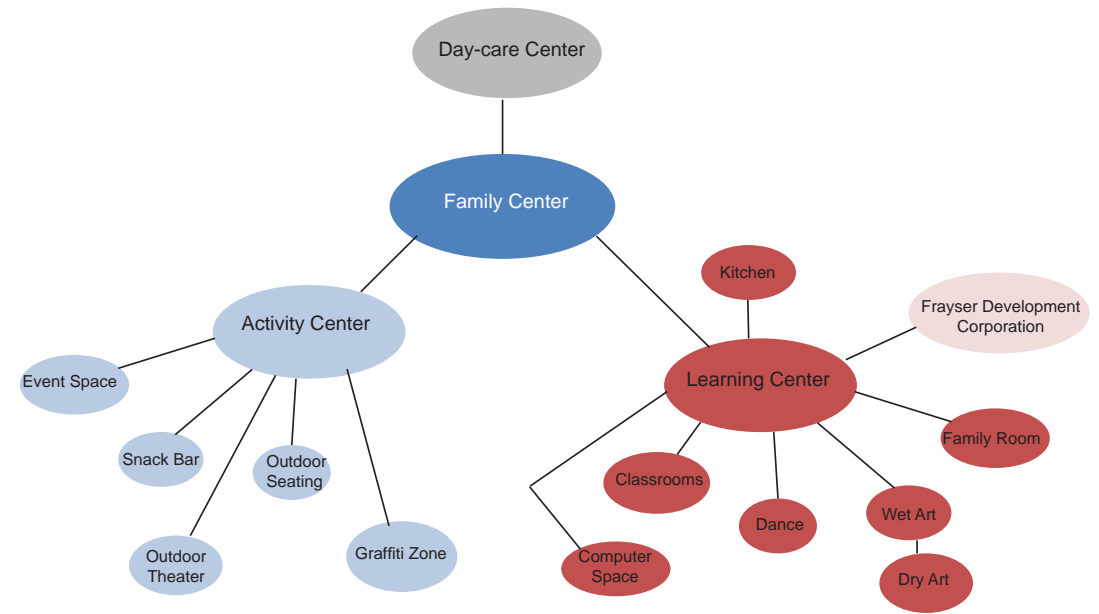


FIGURE 56. Spatial Relationship Diagram, by Victor Robinson, 2013.

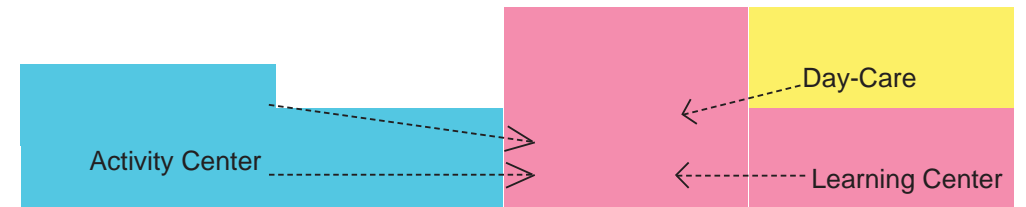


FIGURE 57. Section View Diagram, by Victor Robinson, 2013.

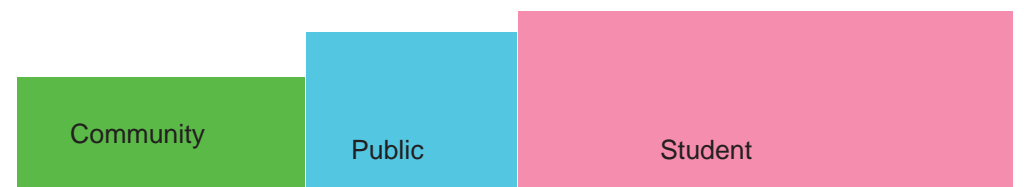


FIGURE 58. Vertical Function Diagram, by Victor Robinson, 2013.

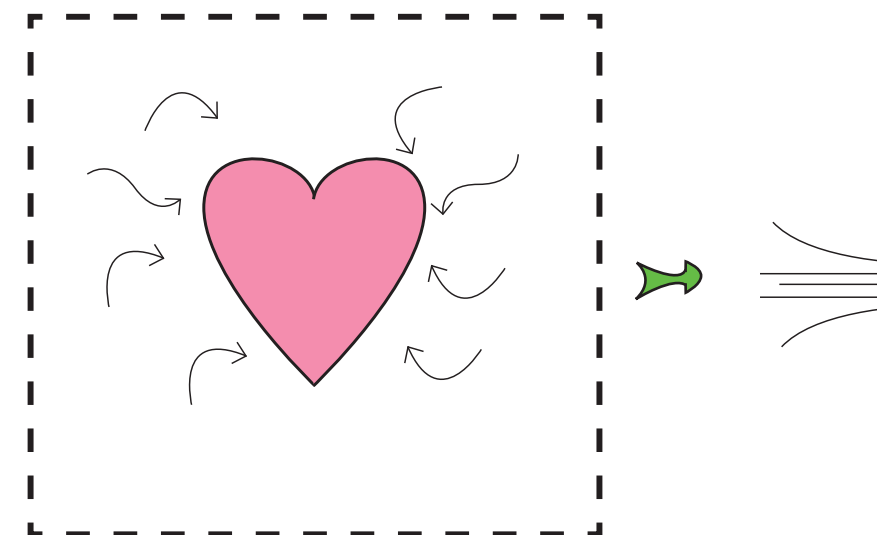
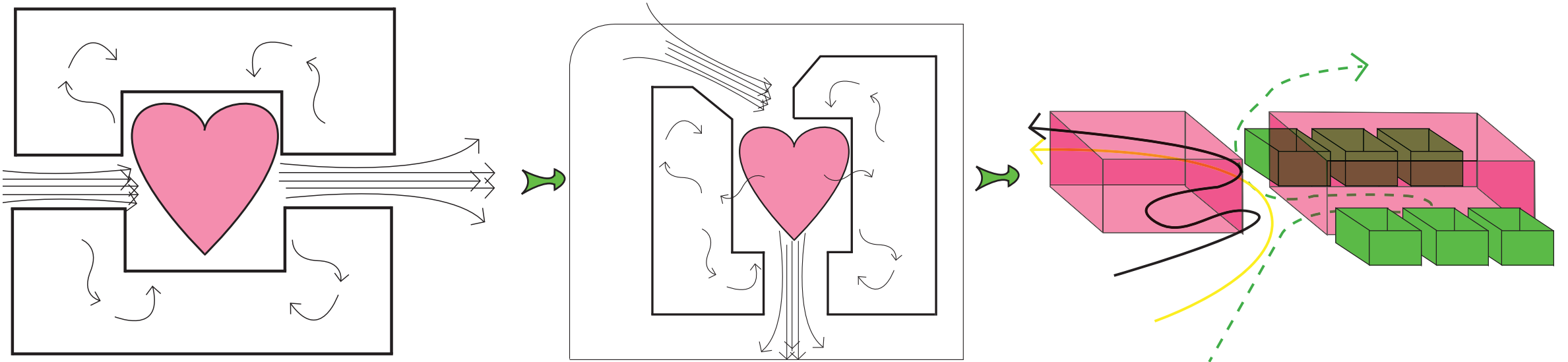
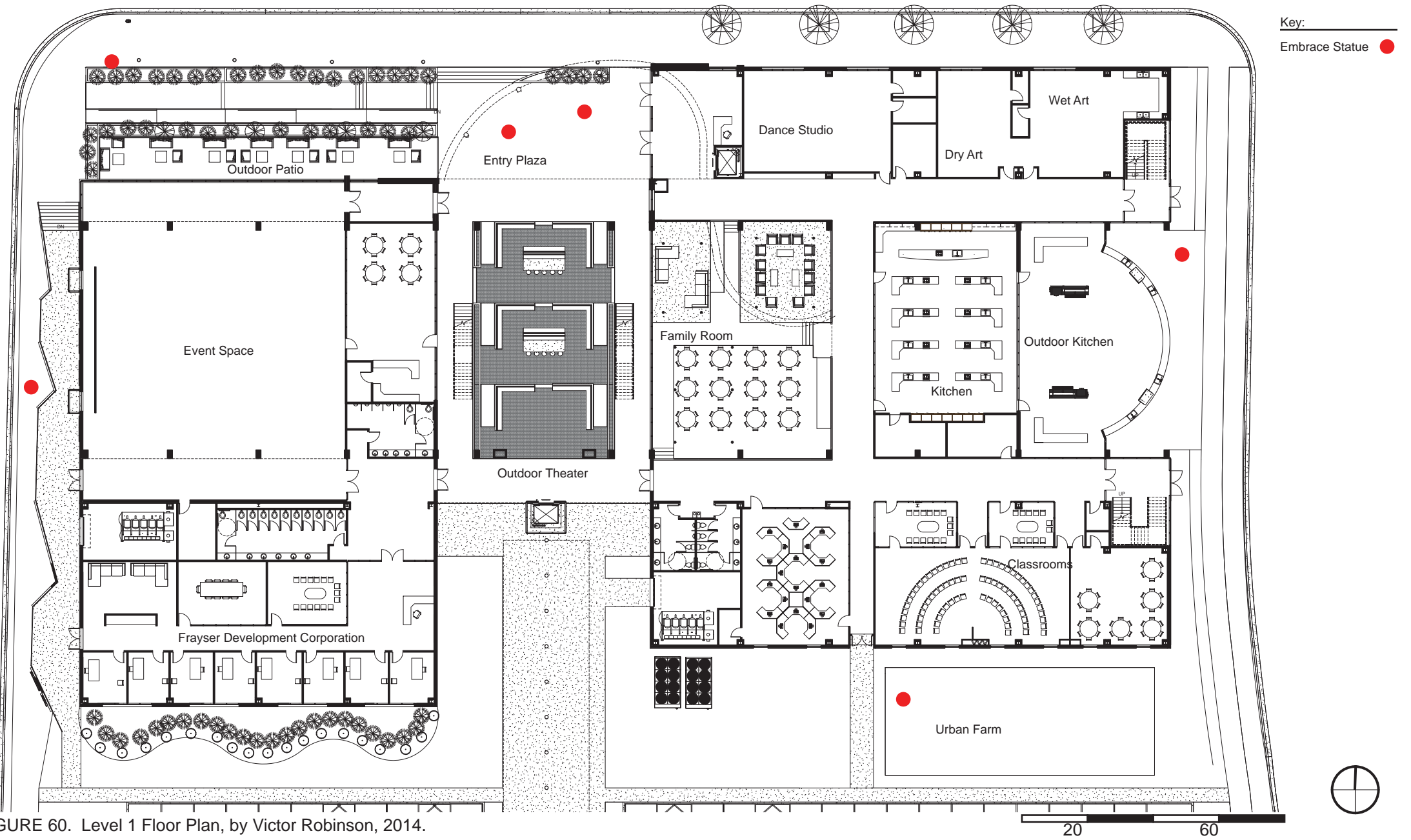


FIGURE 59. Form Diagram, by Victor Robinson, 2013.



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ BUILDING CONCEPTS

Figure 61 highlights the Heart Spaces of the building. In the floor plan those spaces are the event space, outdoor theater, family room, and kitchen. The spaces are referred to as heart spaces because they are the spaces that generate the relationships between community and teen. These spaces are visually connected with each other and the outside community to reinforce the idea of togetherness.

Figure 62 shows the relationship of the various community spaces within the building. One goal for this center was to give everyone a place to feel welcome. This diagram shows there is a space for community, public, and students. The community space is for users from the community to assemble for various reasons. The public space are for any members of the community that are not participating in events to assemble and remain within synergy of the facility. The student space is located opposite the community space and serves as the place where students can learn in a public yet protected environment in close proximity to all members of the community.

Figure 63 shows the various public spaces which are open to all members of community on the site. These spaces on the floor plan include the graffiti zone, outdoor patio, outdoor theater, urban farm, and rooftop park above the event space. The majority of the public spaces are located around the community portion of the building as noted in figure 60. The public spaces are positioned outside the transparent portions of the building so the student and public remain visually connected to one another.

Figures 64 and 65 explain what makes a well used outdoor public space. Both diagrams show public spaces that are used by many people. Bryant Park and a gathering space on the campus of Tennessee State University. The commonalities from each space were noted. Both public spaces are located off of a main path of pedestrian traffic, located between buildings, and are sunken a few feet below the surrounding terrain. Important to note is both spaces have access to food and shade. Similar design choices were used in designing the outdoor theater space for the center. The outdoor theater space is adjacent to the main pedestrian pathway, sunken a few feet below grade, is shaded and close to food. The family room on the interior of the space also shares similar design ideas.

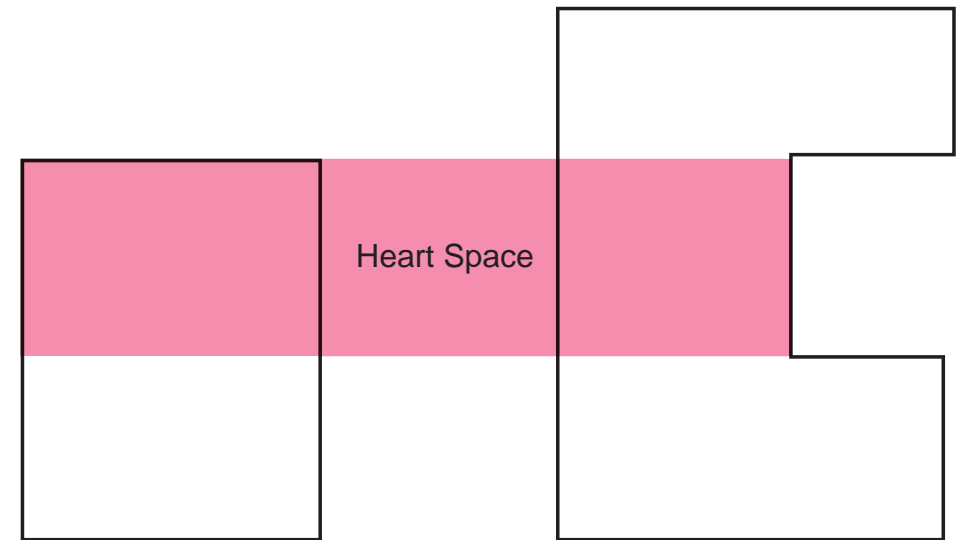
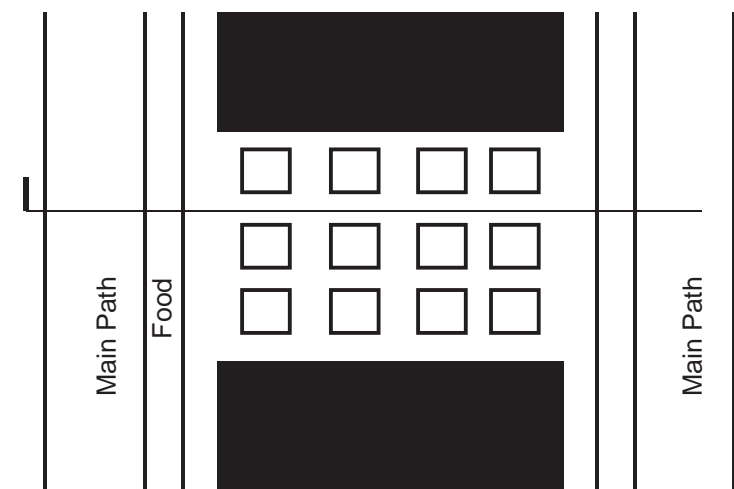


FIGURE 61. Heart Space Diagram, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

The heart space of the center contains the large community spaces that generate interactions between community, students, and families.



FIGURES 64. Bryant Park Diagram, by Victor Robinson, 2013.

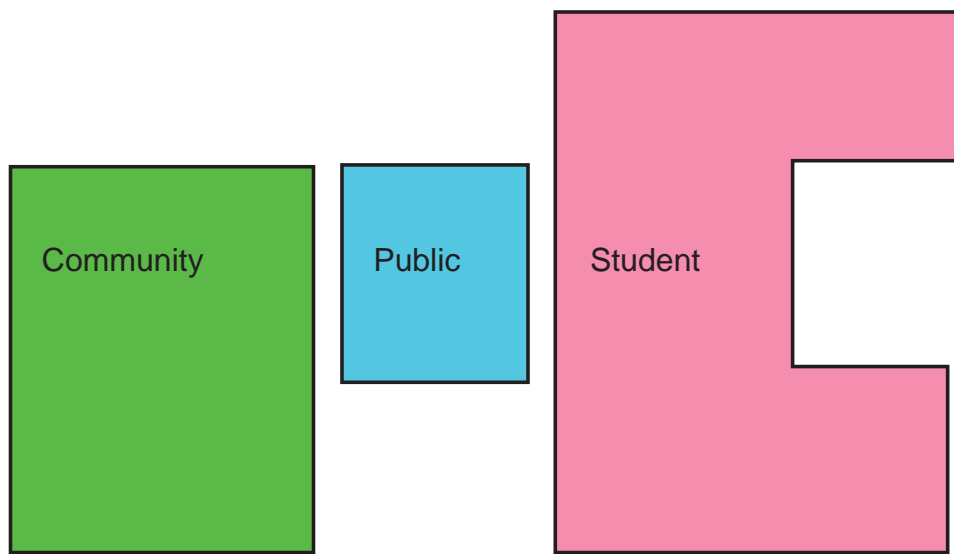


FIGURE 62. Functionality Diagram, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

This diagram shows the relationship between community spaces (green), public spaces (blue), and student spaces (pink). The diagram shows there is a space for everyone in the community even those that are not involved in any programs. The hope would be to get them interested in participating.

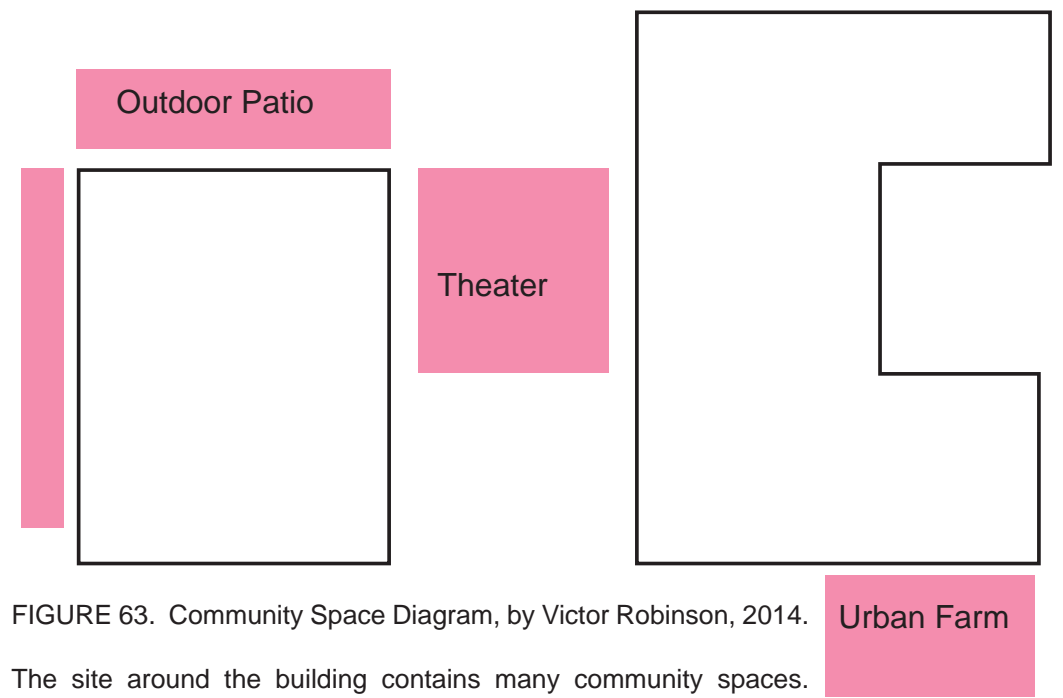


FIGURE 63. Community Space Diagram, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

The site around the building contains many community spaces. These spaces allow members of the community to interact with the physical building, its members, and one another, strengthening neighborhood relationships.

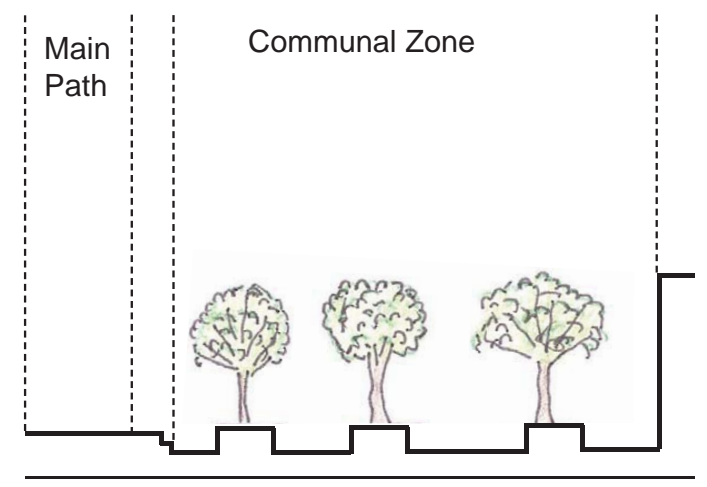
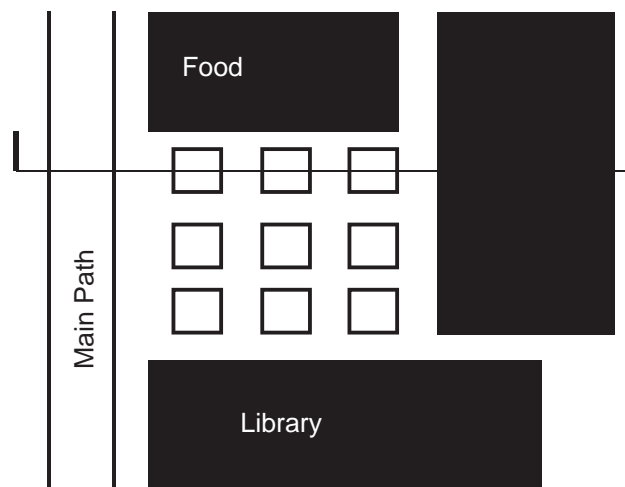
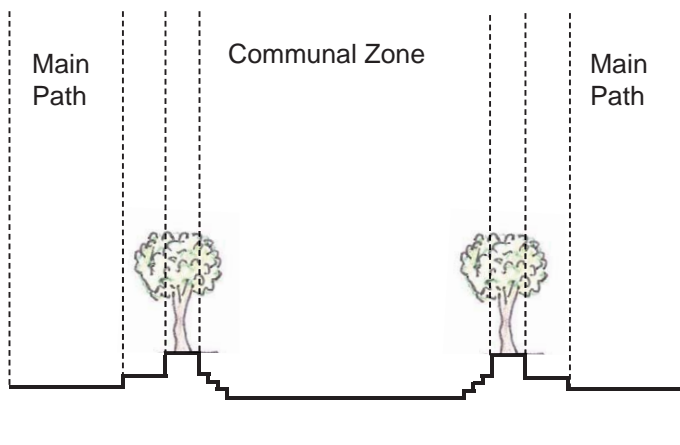


FIGURE 65. Tennessee State University Diagram, by Victor Robinson, 2013.

Level 1 Floor Plan and Renderings

The following descriptions numerically relate to the views shown from the floor plan. Each description tells the user experience of the space and how that experience or design relates to the theory.

1. The ribbon wrapping the front plaza is an energetic piece that captures the attention of the community and welcomes them into the heart spaces of the Transformation Center. This central space is left open to encourage community members to inhabit the space. The ribbon serves as a gateway to the entry plaza, which leads to the heart spaces.

2. The Graffiti Zone serves the purpose of connecting the community with the physical building. As indicated in research, teens need places that allow them to connect to the community and express themselves. The graffiti zone allows an opportunity for creative expression. The location of this area also faces the open corner of the site making it highly visible for high school children leaving school and traffic on the major thoroughfare of Dellwood Avenue. Visitors on the sidewalk can walk up to the chalkboard walls and leave messages or pictures to share with others or they may go on the raised platform to view or “tag” a wall with paint. The window bump-outs allow users on the interior of the event space to experience the graffiti art from inside the building.



FIGURE 66. View 1, Front Plaza, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 67. View 2, Graffiti Zone, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

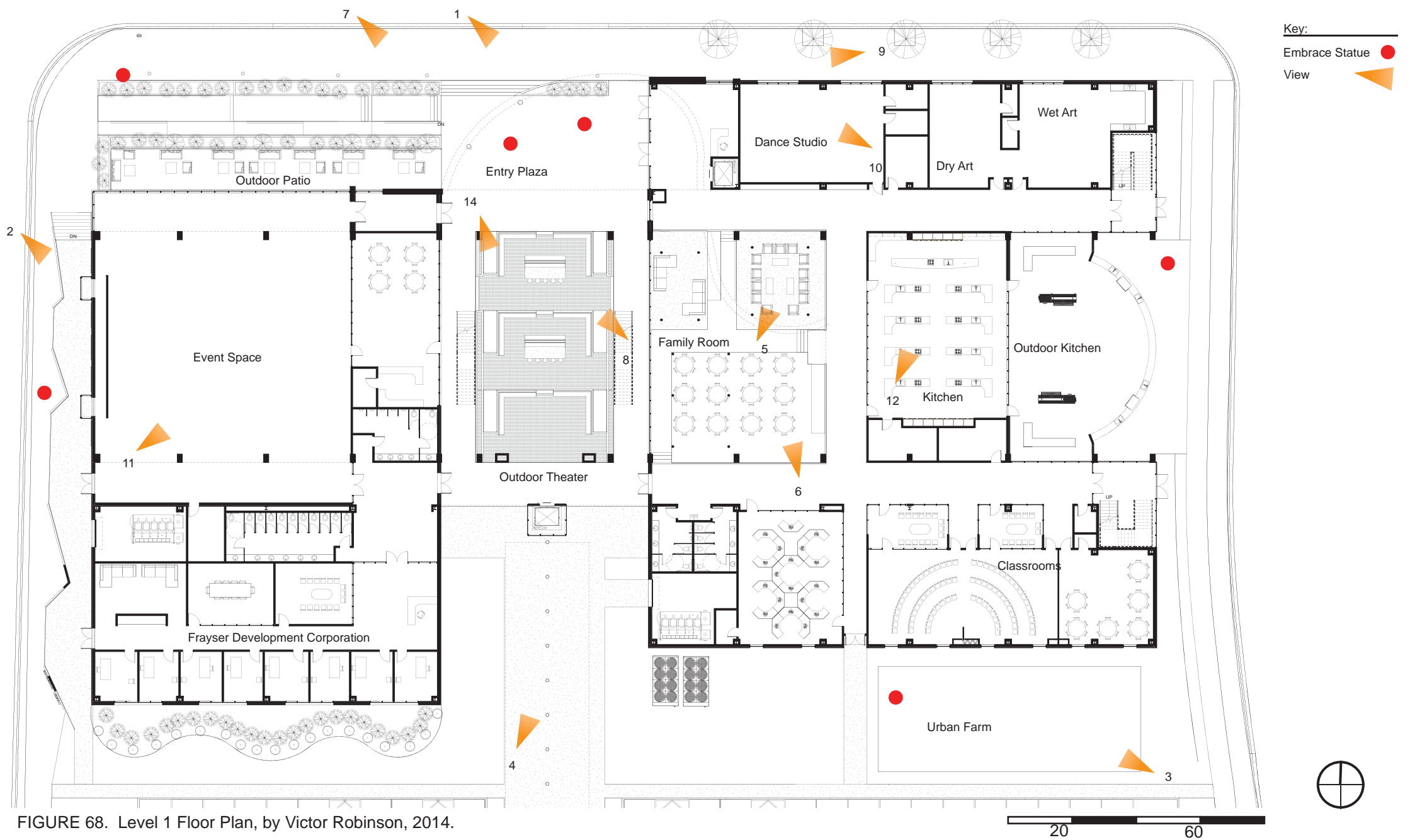


FIGURE 69. Embrace Statues, by Victor Robinson, 2010



High Five Statue, by Nabil K Mark, 2012



Girl with Statue, by Bob, 2011

The embrace statues are located in various places around the site. The statues vary in size and are performing open ended compassionate gestures. The statues are designed for people to complete the gesture or mimic them. The statues set the appropriate atmosphere of the center in various spaces.

3. The urban garden serves as a functional garden for the culinary program and as an educational tool to teach users about healthy food and how it is grown. The garden is placed near the sidewalk so more people can experience it. Below are a series of pictures that show the effect various colors have on the facility. The red color scheme is overpowering for the community since there are few colors of that bold in the surrounding neighborhood. The gray color scheme works well with the surroundings but is not an energetic color. The green color scheme was chosen because both the high school and elementary school share this as a school color and the green blends into the natural landscape allowing the facility's function to show first.

4. The canopy shelter serves as an educational tool on sustainability and as a rear entry into the heart space. The glass, butterfly roof funnels water into a central gutter which leads to a nearby underground water cistern. The water is then used to irrigate the urban garden. The canopy is also designed to funnel users from the parking lot to the central space. The canopy divides the walkway and takes the focus away from the central elevator shaft as users walk on either the left or right side of the supports.

5-6. The large family room serves as the heart of the educational portion of the facility. It is the relationship generator. The central location visually connects with the technology room, kitchen, dance studio, theater, game room, and day-care allowing all members of the family and community to interact. Dinners are prepared by culinary students for the community and take place in a portion of this room. Informal group and family discussions also take place in this room but are hosted in the smaller seating areas tucked underneath the upper platforms. This space, through its transparency and function, reinforces communal and experiential learning.

7. The northwestern corner is meant to open to the community while remaining separated. The raised balcony allows the energy from the event space to spill out into the neighborhood. The transparency of the corner facade also allows the user to feel welcomed to the space and to view what is going on inside.



FIGURE 70 and 71. View 3, Urban Farm Red Scheme, gray scheme, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 72. View 3, Urban Farm Green Scheme, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 73. View 4, Butterfly Roof at South Elevation, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 74. View 5, Family Room Discussion Space, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 75. View 6, Family Room, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 76. View 7, Night Render, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

8, 14. Research indicated there was a need for more informal gathering spaces in communities. This large open-air theater/gathering space acts as the place where anyone from the community can meet and socialize. There is a community snack bar adjacent to this space and movies are hosted here periodically to allow families the opportunity to interact with one another. Large glazing on either side visually connects this space with the interior family and community spaces. This is done to connect those in the outside community with those on the inside and encourage them to enter the building and participate in the programs offered at the center.

9, 10. The northeastern facade of the building is focused on user experience. Dark bricks run in a stack bond cover the lower portion of the facade to bring the building to a human scale. Large floor to ceiling windows covered by overhangs open into the high energy spaces which allows the passerby a chance to experience the activity in the center while feeling sheltered between the window, overhang, and tree canopy.

11. The event space serves as a place where families and community members can hold events such as reunions or community council meetings. This space may host community skate nights and also serves as a place where teens can share their talents through dance, concert, or exhibitions. This space allows students the opportunity to show off their talents to the community and earn money while doing it.

12. The kitchen is a high energy space that opens to the exterior of the building and the family room. The kitchen teaches nutrition and cooking which are essential aspects of healthy living. The culinary program allows students to serve the community and prepares them for culinary school if that is their interest. The countertops are positioned in a manner that allows a visual connection from the exterior of the building into the interior spaces.

13. The game room acts as a place for informal social fun for people involved in the programs at the Center. The game room occupies the second floor, north façade of the building and opens to the street, the interior family room, and day-care. Two gaming islands above the family room and offer space for a human scale chess game and table top board games. The islands are visible to the children in the day-care center and the islands are open to the family room which allows for verbal communication with those below. The game room contains table games such as pool and air hockey, along with the video gaming areas that cluster around a curving wall. This allows users to play separate games but still remain close to one another. The seating used is circular couches that create pockets for people to socialize as small groups or as larger groups. This room is meant to create social interactions through play and gives the user an opportunity to laugh and play with others.



FIGURE 77. View 8, Outdoor Theater, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 78. View 9, Front Walkway, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 79. View 10, Dance Studio, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 80. View 11, Event Space, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 81. View 12, Kitchen, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 82. View 13, Game Room, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

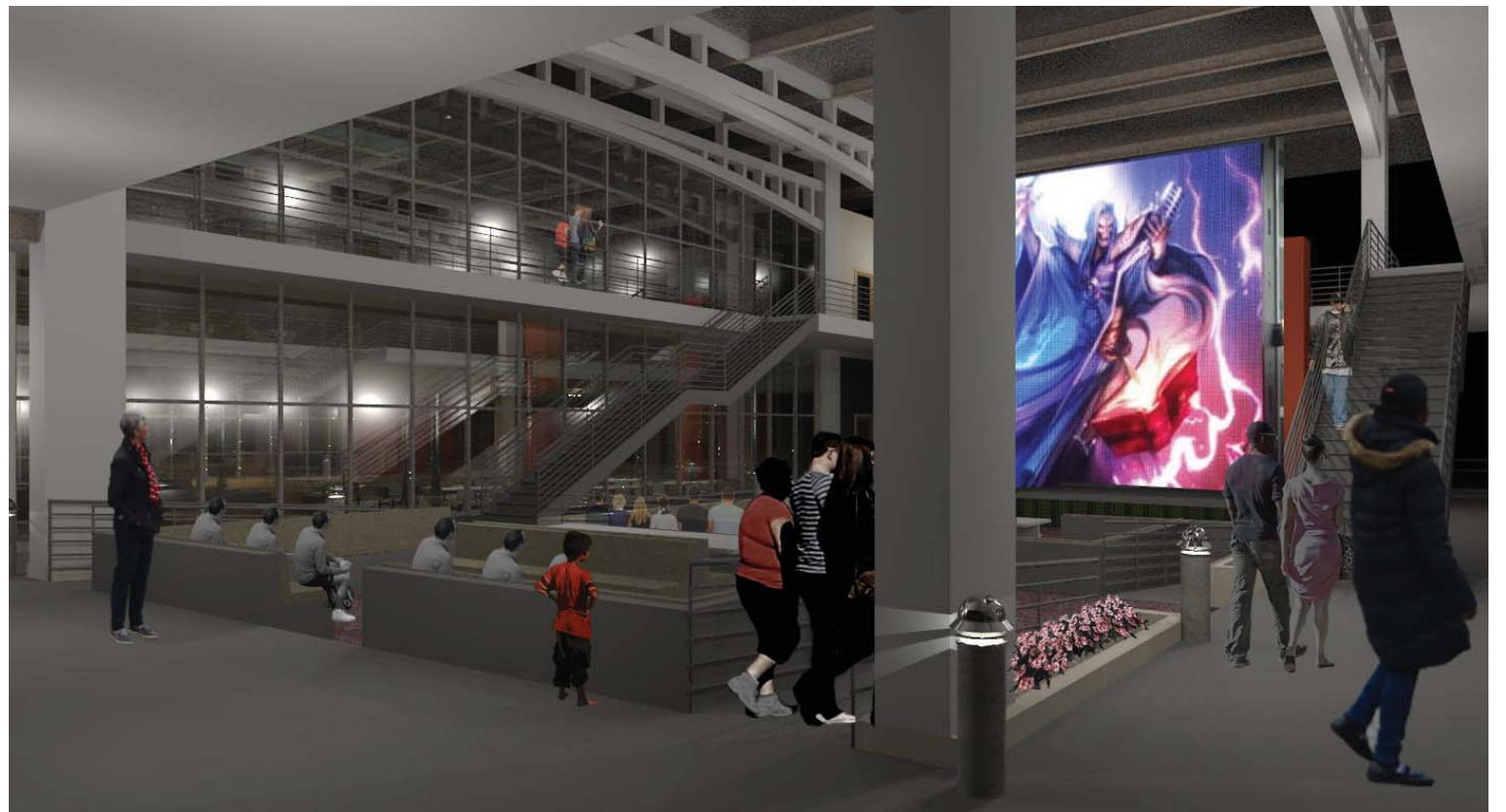


FIGURE 83. View 14, Outdoor Theater Night, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

Level 2 Floor Plan and Renderings

15, 16. The day-care on the second floor where children can remain separated from, but connected to the general public, has large windows which open into the family room and game room and the views continue out to the other community spaces. This day-care center gives teens that are enrolled in Frayser High School a place to drop off their children during school hours so they can focus on their education. This removes the burden of finding quality child care from the teen. The center hosts children from 6 weeks to 5 years and has a dedicated class room for parenting classes.

17. The rooftop community park serves as a recreational space for the day-care center and as a park for the neighborhood after hours. It also serves as a sustainable feature since the vegetated roof minimizes water run-off and reduces the heat island effect.



FIGURE 84. View 15, Upper Family Room, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

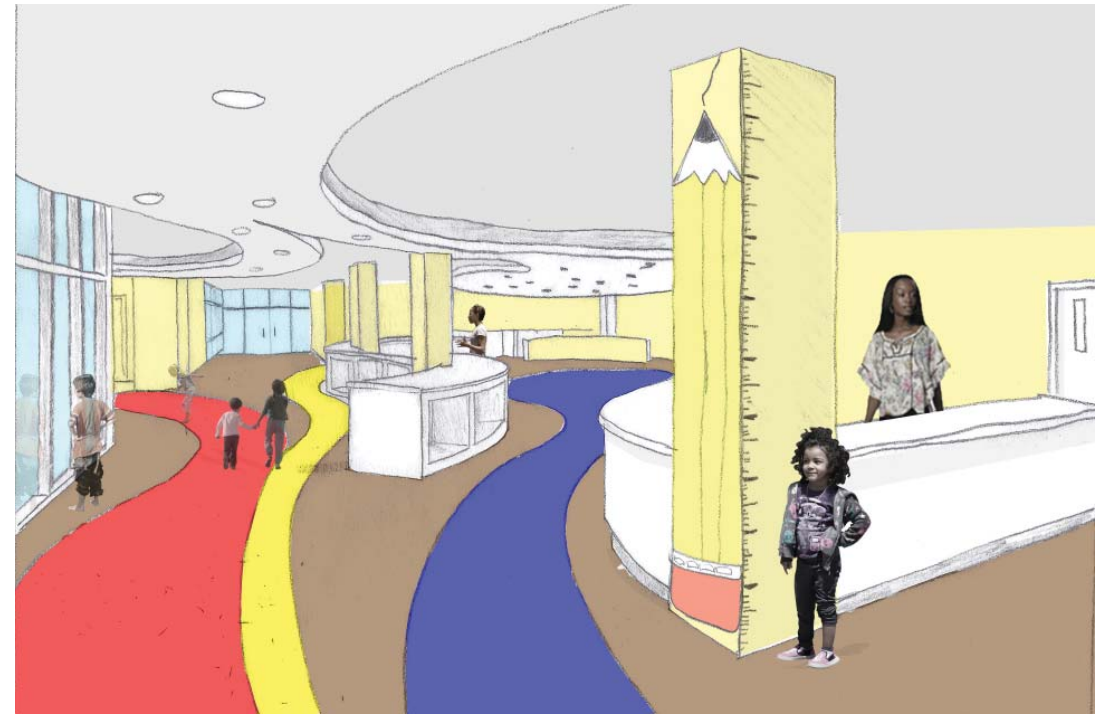


FIGURE 85. View 16, Day-Care Entry, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 86. View 17, Rooftop Park, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

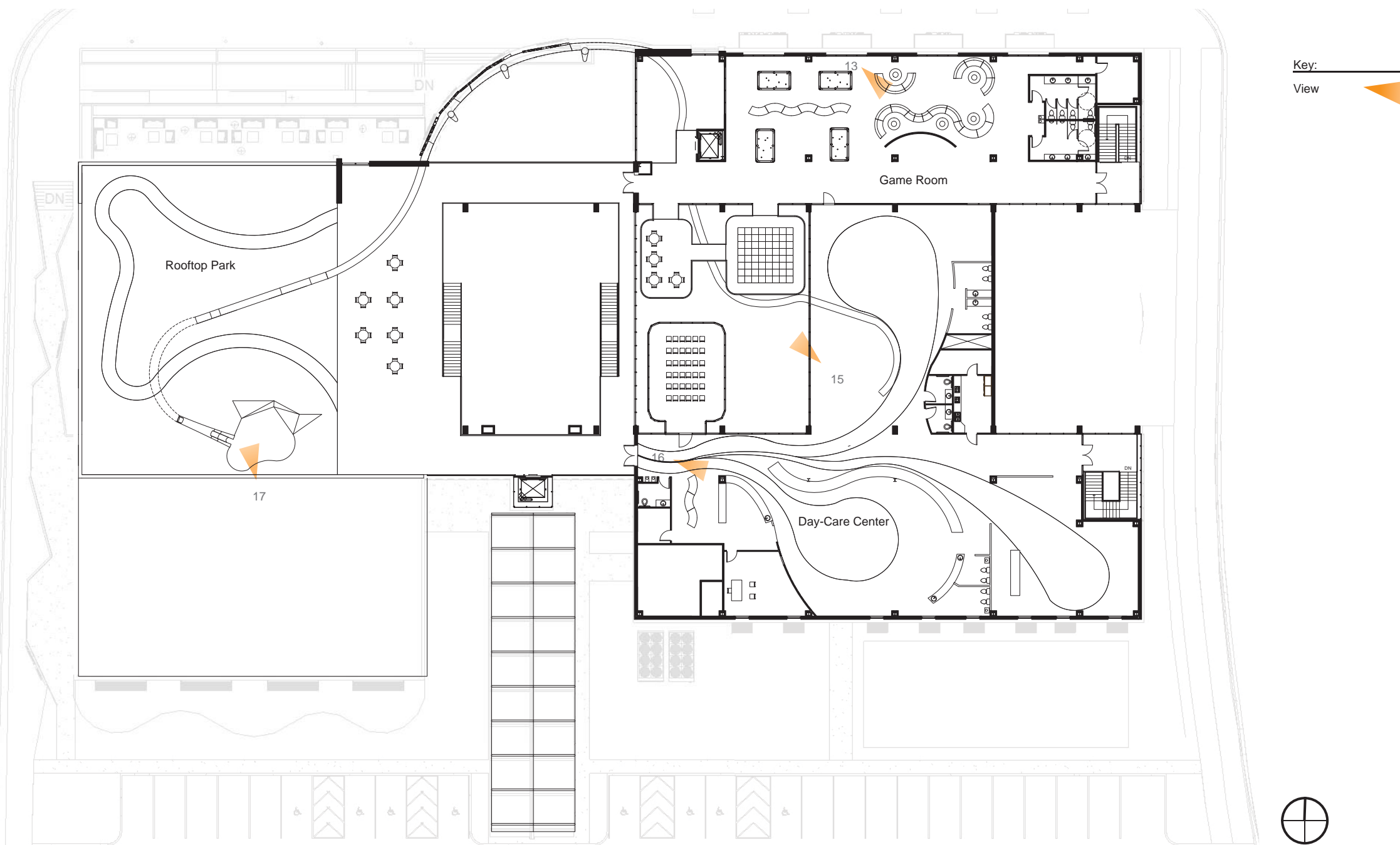


FIGURE 87. Floor Plan Level 2, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



Elevations and Section



FIGURE 88. North Elevation, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

On the north elevation levels of transparency are present. The learning portion of the building has glazing broken with overhangs while the community portion of the building has a full transparent wall to connect with the northwestern corner.

The rooftop park is also located at this public corner.



FIGURE 89. South Elevation, by Victor Robinson, 2014.

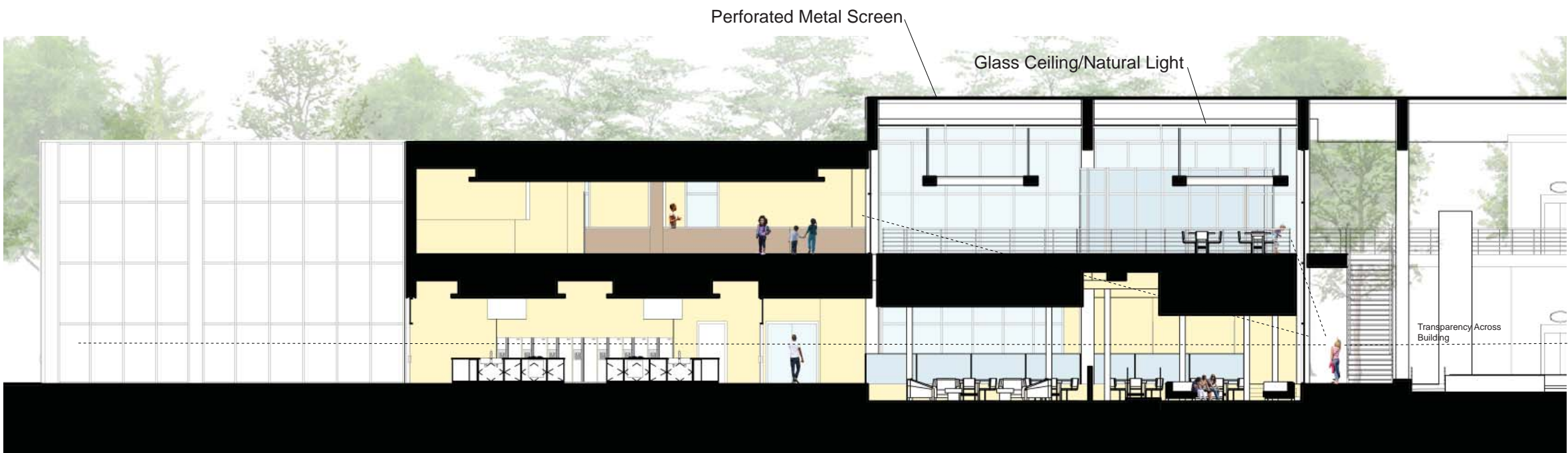


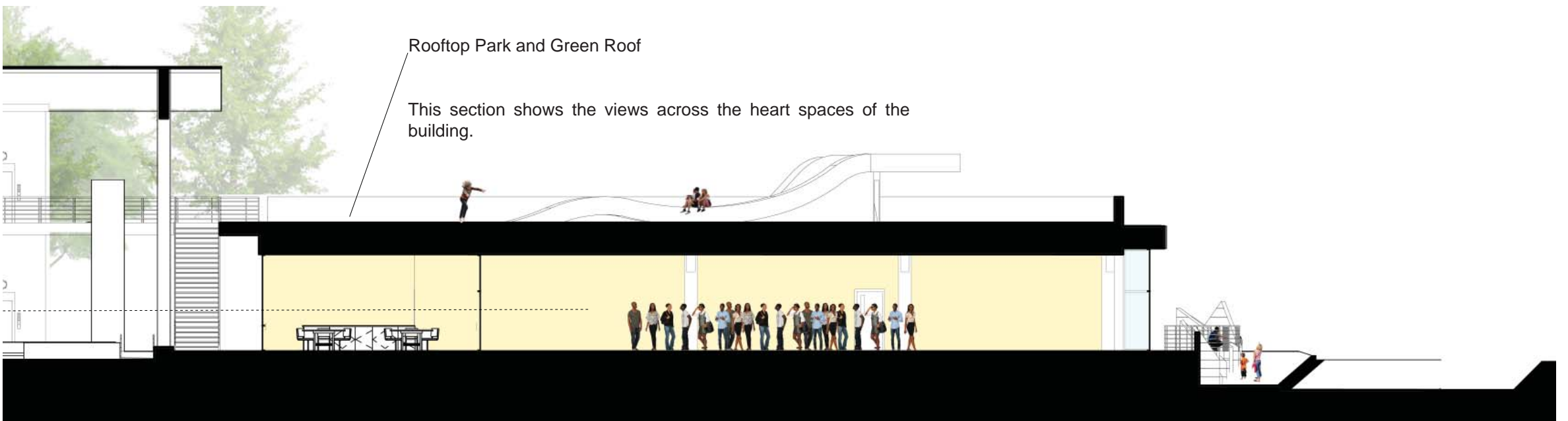
FIGURE 90. Section 0.1, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 91. West Elevation, by Victor Robinson, 2014.
 The west elevation displays the public facade of the building. The graffiti zone is located on the pedestal a few feet above the sidewalk to showcase the art to the community. Chalkboard walls are located on the sidewalk level to be easily accessed by the community.



FIGURE 92. East Elevation, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



Rooftop Park and Green Roof

This section shows the views across the heart spaces of the building.



Sustainability

Figures 93 and 94 show the sustainable features of the building, a description of each is listed below.

Water Cistern - The water cistern collects rain water from the roof of the main building and rear walkway. The water is used to irrigate the site. Capturing rain water helps to minimize storm runoff into the local sewer system.

Rooftop Park - The rooftop park serves three purposes: it reduces water runoff, helps to insulate the roof, and reduces the heat island effect. The roof also has the benefit of added green space for the community.

Urban Farm - The urban farm helps reduce trips to the store as vegetables are grown on site. The farm also reclaims land that would ordinarily remain barren with grass.

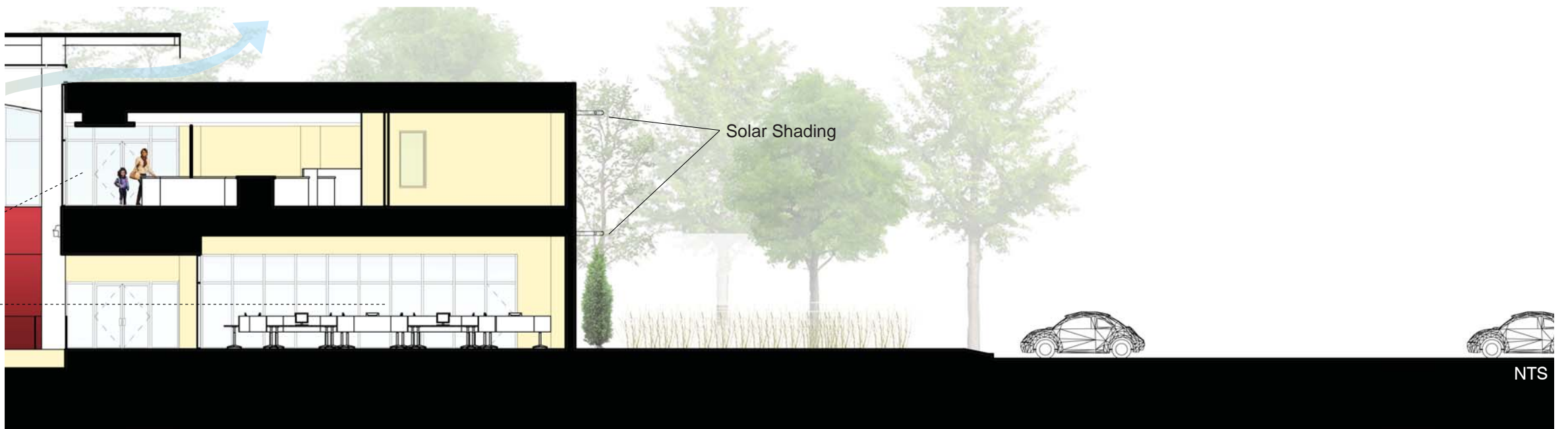
Natural Ventilation - The interior double height family room has operable windows near the top and at the bottom which allows the central space to be vented. Natural ventilation can reduce cooling costs during certain times of the year but serves a bigger purpose of delivering fresh air into the building.



FIGURE 93. Section 0.2, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



FIGURE 94. Site Sustainability Plan, by Victor Robinson, 2014.



SUMMARY

The Frayser Transformation Center after used compassionate architecture to respond to the needs of the Frayser community. The center was successful at creating togetherness and diversity of all levels through the use of highly transparent and communal spaces. The form of the center used design ideas from the past that centered around the home, family, and community. The abundance of outdoor space was given to the community to gather, display art, eat, and socialize. This was a gesture to let the community know that everyone was welcome to inhabit and experience the space.

The program for the facility was divided into three major spaces community, public, and student. The community spaces were highly transparent and located on the corner at the main pedestrian and vehicular paths. The community space included an outdoor patio, event space, and the Frayser Development Corporation's office. The event space was designed for students, families, or community corporations to host events. This placed community members and teens in the same space allowing them to interact with one another. This also gave the teens a chance to learn about what goes on in community meeting and helps get them involved. Families also could use the space for reunions or parties putting them in close proximity to other members of the community allowing various families to meet community members.

The public space contains the theater, rooftop park, and graffiti space. These spaces were designed to allow any member in the community an opportunity to interact with the building. The rooftop park after school hours becomes a public park, with a walking trail, seating, and a playground. The rooftop park added a much needed asset to the neighborhood. The graffiti zone allows community members to physically leave a mark on the facility allowing for self expression and conversation as people pass by. The outdoor theater space serves as the relationship generator for families, movies are hosted in this space on various nights and this allows families the opportunity to socialize together within the neighborhood further strengthening the connections between people of the community. The theater is also a place that attracts people of all ages since movies are for everyone. Teens operating the concessions area get to make extra money while meeting others from the community.

The learning center contains the family room, day-care, game room, kitchen, computer lab, and dance studio. The learning center incorporated the idea of community and learning. The atmosphere of the learning center was designed to have the feel of the 1930s community. People of all ages inhabit the space learning to cook, write resumes, dance, and take family classes. The setting was designed to be less formal and more experiential as people are allowed to learn from one another.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Frayser Transformation Center responds to the unique community in which it is located. I recommend that future community driven projects be built using the same principles of compassionate architecture. A center of this magnitude and purpose should be built in every major neighborhood in the city with each responding to the specific needs of that neighborhood. These facilities would help to reconnect people in communities first then those connected people would have a larger impact on the metropolitan area.

After facilities are present in city neighborhoods I would recommend that planners incorporate the same principles but on a larger scale to neighborhood design and redevelopment. This would further reinforce community relationships and strengthen the city as a whole.

The principles of compassionate architecture could be used in any building type located in urban areas. Office buildings could be designed with more transparent and communal spaces on the lower floors and schools could be designed as places that function both during and after school hours. These buildings could serve the community during all times of day and would host a more diverse cliental.

APPENDICES

Research Report

The program is color coded to show the separation of the three main functions within the building. The rooms were sized and the qualities of the space were determined from precedents.

Room Name	Square Footage	% of Overall	% of Available	Equipment / Services / Notes	Qualities of the Space
	14980.00				
Social Hall-Event Space	6750	45	0.30	large social hall which can be used for a variety of events including small concerts, roller skating, banquets, dances, community meetings, etc.	Natural light that can be controlled, relaxed environment that can also be made formal
Outdoor Seating	2680	18			
Snack Bar	800	5	0.04	Contains room for small concession items to be sold chips, nachos, hot dogs. Microwave, sink, refrigerator, easy to clean	Open space central to outside seating, event space
FDC Suite	1800	12	0.08	Contains offices and meeting space for Frayser Development Corporation	
Office Suite	1800	12	0.08	tables, chairs, equipment	
Women's Room	400	3	0.02	accessible	
Men's Room	300	2	0.01	accessible	
Mechanical/Electrical Room	400	3	0.02	Electrical panel, computer server	
Storage Closet	25	0	0.00	Paper storage	
Janitor Closet	25	0	0.00	Vacuum and janitor storage	
Total	14980	100	100.00		

Learning Building

Room Name	Square Footage	% of Overall	% of Available	Equipment / Services / Notes	Qualities of the Space
	17472.00				
Family Room	3350	19	0.11	Gathering space for family social events	Natural light that can be controlled, relaxed environment
Lobby	750	4	0.02		Open and transparent
Outdoor Kitchen	2881	16	0.09		Backyard Feel
Reception Counter	100	1	0.00	Desk and counter	visibly connected to main entry
Dance Studio	1200	7	0.04	Seating and storage	Visible from street, high energy
Wet Art	999	6	0.03	Space for sinks and clean up	Visual connection to reception area and/or work area
Dry Art	750	4	0.02	Desks	Centrally located, and placed near entry door, highly visible space.
Learning Kitchen	2200	13	0.07	Kitchen Islands, with tv monitors for instructional learning	Clean and Home feeling
Kitchen Storage	240	1	0.01		
Break Out Room 1	336	2	0.01	space for small groups, with chairs	
Break Out Room 2	198	1	0.01	space for small groups, with chairs	Centrally located, and placed near entry door, highly visible space.
Computer Room	1200	7	0.04	Computer Desks and seats	
Classroom	770	4	0.03		
Classroom	770	4	0.03		
Classroom	770	4	0.03		
Male Restroom	180	1.030	0.006		
Female Restroom	180	1.030	0.006		
Electrical Closet	60	0.343	0.002		
Server Room	60	0.343	0.002		
Storage	240	1.374	0.008		
Storage	213	1.219	0.007		
Janitor Closet	25	0	0.00	Vacuum and janitor storage	
Total	17472	100	100.00		

Second Floor

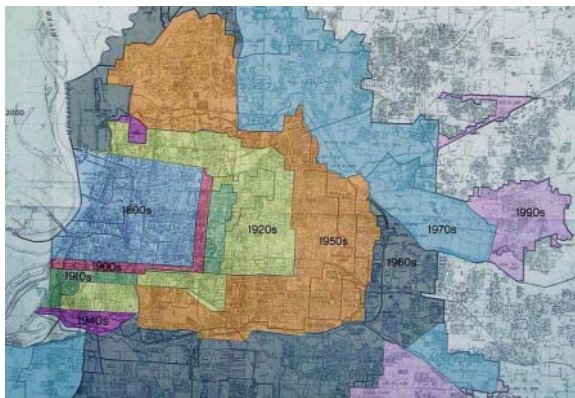
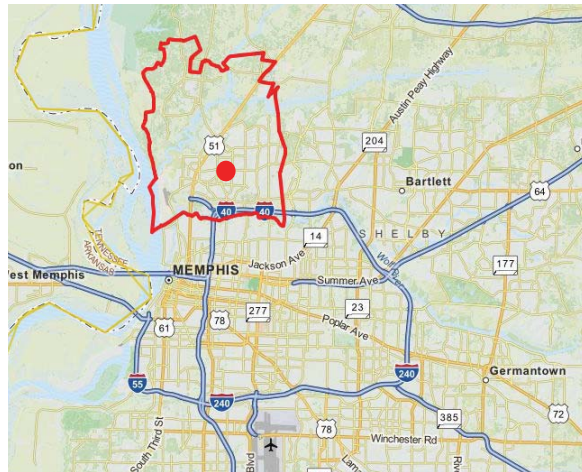
Room Name	Square Footage	% of Overall	% of Available	Equipment / Services / Notes	Qualities of the Space
Day Care	10116.00				
Check-in Area	181	1	0.01		
Directors Office	270	1	0.01	Desk, Chairs, Small File Cabinet	
Waiting Lobby	458	2	0.02	Chairs and Table	
Restrooms	66	0	0.00		
Restrooms	66	0	0.00		
Diapering Area 1	172	1	0.01	Non Pours Surfaces, Low Toilets, sink	
Diapering Area 2	172	1	0.01	Non Pours Surfaces, Low Toilets, sink	
Kitchen/Snackroom	1801	9	0.09	Tables, Chairs, Stove, Refrigerator	
Group Room 1-2yrs	2068	10	0.10	Climbing, crawling, pulling area. Toys, Books, Storage, Rest Area	Bright Colorful, Educational and Energetic Space
Group Room 3-5yrs	2889	14	0.14	Climbing, sitting, play area. Toys, Books, Storage, Rest Area	Bright Colorful, Educational and Energetic Space
Storage Closet	125	1	0.01		
Storage Closet Food	248	1	0.01		
Outdoor play area	6546	32	0.32		High energy and creative space
				Room functions as main gathering social space for youth, should include TV, couches, video gaming area, many outlets, pool tables.	Transparent space, fun atmosphere
Game Room	5000	25	0.24		
Women's Room	36	0	0.00	accessible	
Men's Room	36	0	0.00	accessible	
Storage Closet	100	0	0.00	Paper storage	
Total	20234	100	200.02		
Grand Total	52686				

Site Analysis

The following series of boards are the final boards for the site analysis. For more information about the site refer to pages 22 through 25.

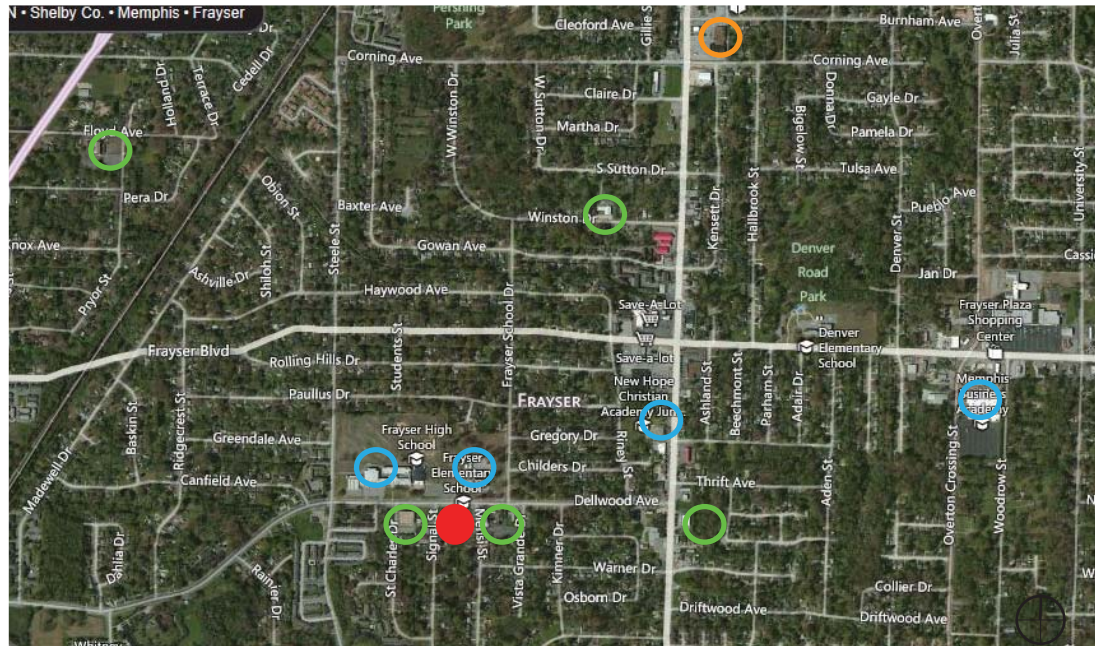
INTRODUCTION TO FRAYSER

Frayser shares many commonalities with Levittown. Frayser was once a fast growing car dependent suburb that has homes designed like those in Levittown with large front yards separating the house from the street. Frayser also is dominated by strip shopping centers and its amenities are separated by long distances.



Site Analysis

INTRODUCTION TO FRAYSER



The assets within this area will both serve and be served by the Frayser Transformation Center. This center will serve primarily as an after school place for local school students and as a collaborative space that the local community could use.

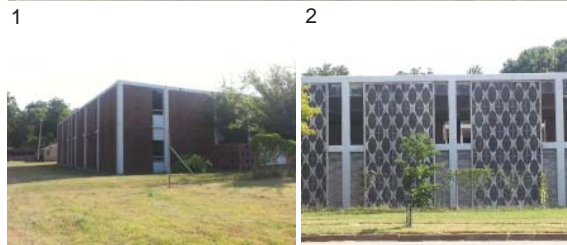
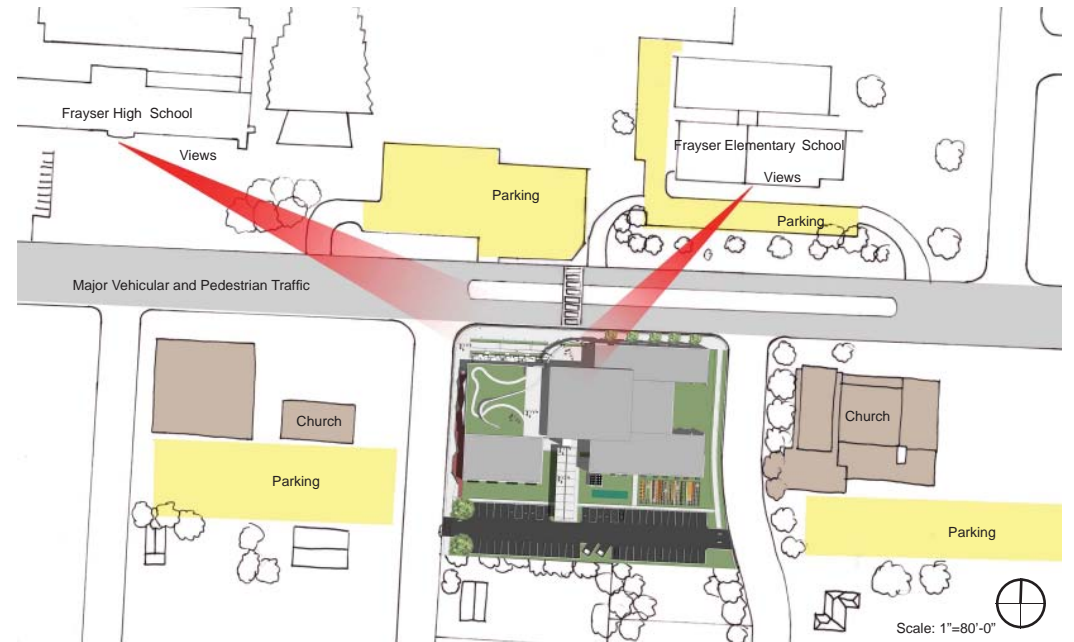
Area Assets

- Site
- Frayser Development Corporation
- School
- Church

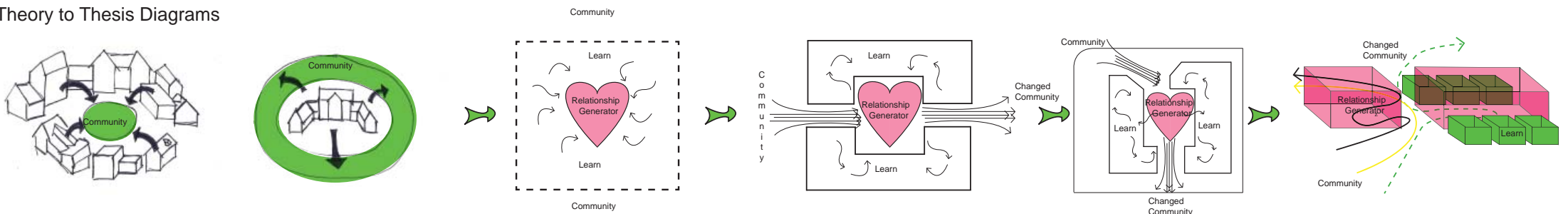


SITE CONDITIONS

The site was home to an abandoned church. This site includes a parking lot along its southern edge and a vacant green space along the western edge. The existing structure was in very bad condition as there were no windows, mechanical equipment, or flooring.



Theory to Thesis Diagrams



Building Codes

Initial Code Analysis (10/16/13)

Project Frayser Family Center Designer Victor M. Robinson Jr Date 10/16/2013

Project Phase: Conceptual Schematic Design Development Construction Documents

1. What is the overall Occupancy Classification of your building? Group B ~~E Educational~~ ~~Business~~
Describe the Occupancy Building is mainly used to educate teenagers
2. Are there any Accessory Occupancies or is your building mixed use? Mixed Use
What are these occupancies? I-2, A-2, A-4
Are there any ratings needed between the occupancies (table 302.3.3)?

3. What is your Building Construction Classification? Building Classification is Type II
Are there multiple construction systems?
Describe: The structure consists partly of an existing reinforced concrete structure with concrete T roof deck. The rest of the structure will consist of a steel structural system with metal stud walls. Exposed steel members are present in Gymnasium
4. What is the allowable height and square footage of your building (table 503)?

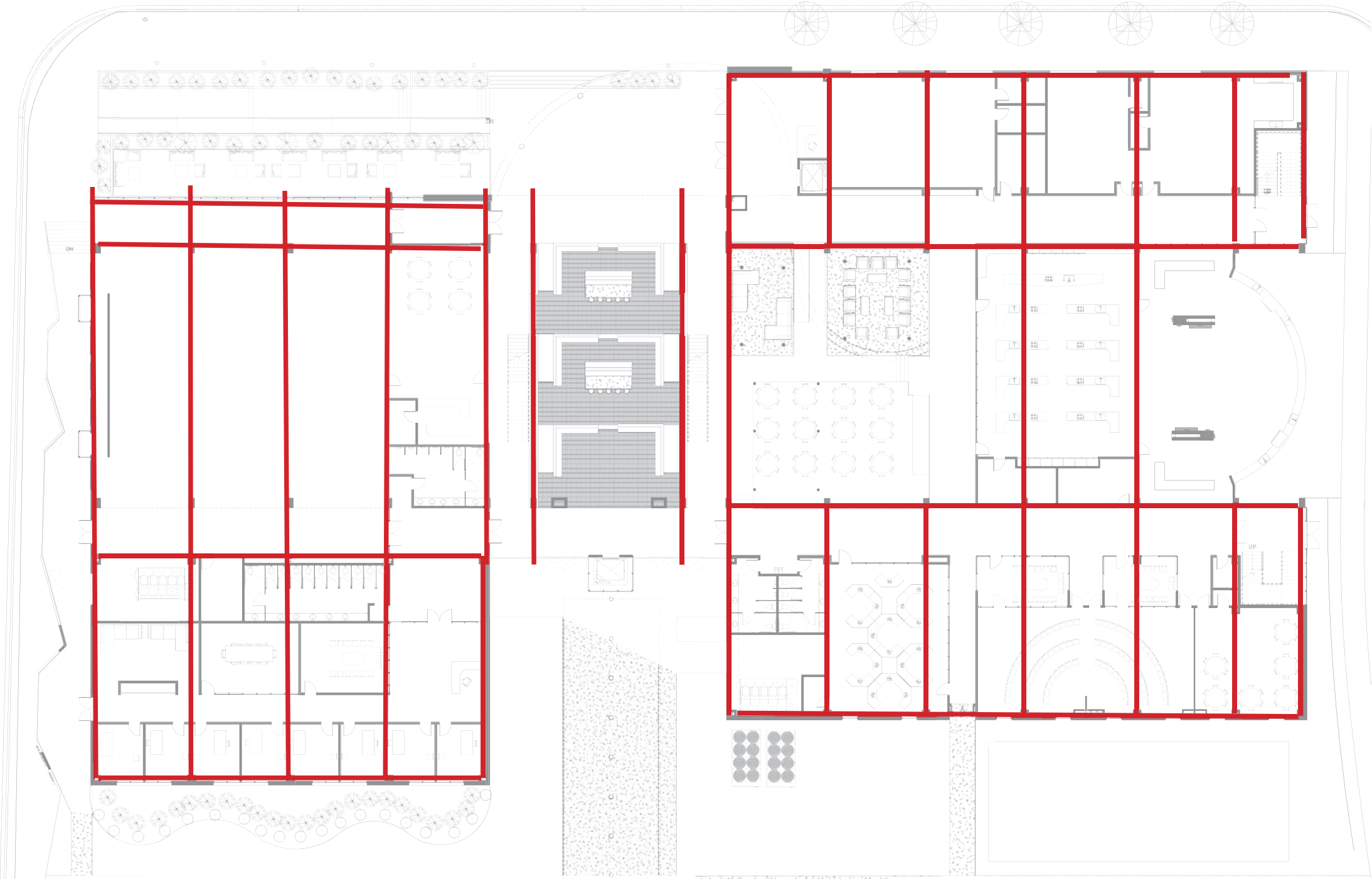
A-2 Event Space	2 Type IA UB	
I-2 Day Care	2 stories 15,000	Type IA 1 story 11,000 IB
E Resource Center	3 stories 26,500	Type IA 14,500 IB
A-4 Gym	3 stories 15,500	Type IA
5. What is the Maximum Travel Distance to an Exit (tables 1004.2.4; p166 BCI)? 200ft
6. What is the Maximum Common Path of Travel (section 1004.2.5; page 167 GCI)? ~~100ft~~ 75ft
7. What is the Maximum Dead End Distance (section 1004.3.2.3; p171 BCI)? ~~20ft~~ Spinkled
8. What is the calculated occupancy for each room in your design at this point (table 1003.2.2.2)?
This will need a plan showing each room and noting the square footage and number of people code assigned by code on an attached sheet.
9. How many exits will you need for your project and what is their width (table 1003.2.3 & 1004.2.1 & 1005.2.1; p162 BCI)? 4 Exits
This is both the minimum width and calculated width, show your calculation on an attached sheet.
10. What is the minimum width of an aisle and corridor (section 1004.3)?
4ft or 72 inches serving more than 49 occupants
11. How much parking is required by local ordinance? 3 accessible spaces

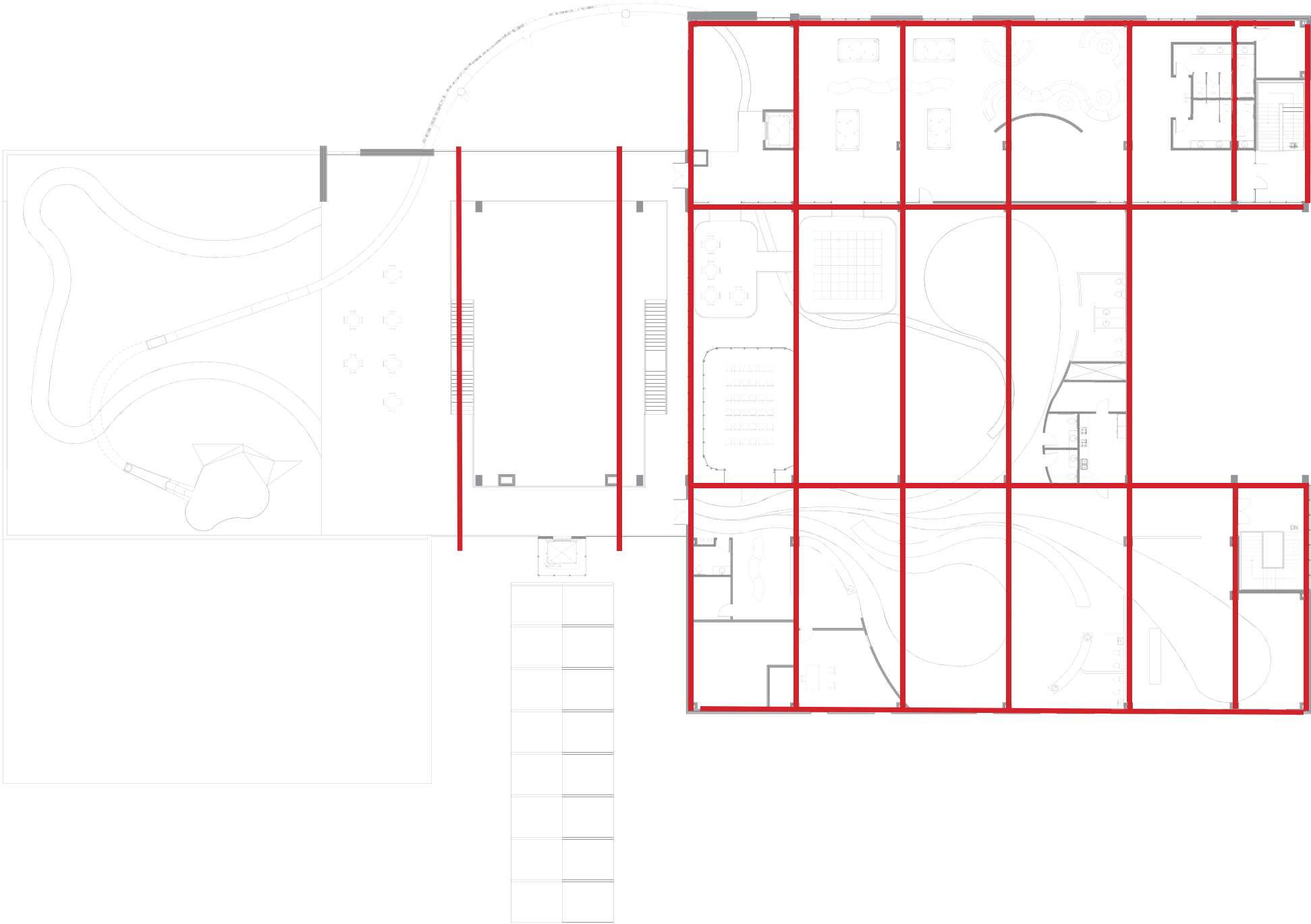
Sustainability

To view the sustainable features of this building please refer to pages 40 - 41.

Structures

The structure of this building uses a steel framing system that consists of beams and columns with a light gauge steel frame attached.





Environmental Systems

To view the environmental systems of this building please refer to pages 40 - 41.

Exterior Materials

The exterior materials used on this structure are brick and painted corrugated metal. To view materials used on this building please refer to pages 32,33,38 and 39.

Interior Finishes

The interior finishes used in this structure are paint, vinyl flooring, hardwood, and tile. To see the various interior finishes refer to pages 33-36.

FRAYSER TRANSFORMATION CENTER

Bridging the gap between high school and adulthood through experiential learning with family and community

INSPIRATION COMMUNITY PAST COMMUNITY DECLINE COMMUNITY PRESENT THE TEENAGER

The major inspirations for this project were crime headlines, my family, and my community.



Community of the past represents a time of family and connectedness. Many neighborhoods had homes close to the street and front porches to sit on and greet the neighbors. There were places within the neighborhood such as bakeries, libraries, corner stores, schools, and parks that not only met the needs of the community but provided a place for informal socializing between adult, child, and neighborhood leaders.

Community decline happened as the automobile and interstate system gained popularity. This opened up the rural land for development and the types of communities built were very different when compared to the inner city neighborhoods. As a result the community became less connected. Levittown, New York was a great precedent for this phenomenon.



The present community is very private and inward focused. Many families have private home entertainment systems and private game rooms. This environment limits social interaction and learning with other people.



"The youth of today's society have shut out" Ray Oldenburg



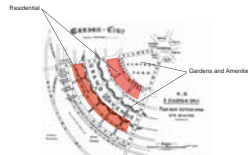
INTRODUCTION TO FRAYSER

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COMPASSIONATE ARCHITECTURE/PROGRAM

Architecture that creates togetherness is compassion, and compassion is the thread that connects community and family. How can compassionate architecture be designed that fosters community and family and strengthens relationships between each? Compassionate Architecture recognizes a problem and aims to solve it. In this particular case the problem is the lack of togetherness and community within Frayser. Ebenezer Howard's Garden City was a good precedent for Compassionate Architecture his city aimed to bring peace to its inhabitants.



Room	Area	Notes
Reception	1,200	Open plan reception area with seating and information desk.
Classroom	2,500	Large open plan classroom with flexible seating and technology integration.
Activity Room	1,800	Multi-purpose activity room with various zones for different types of activities.
Pool	1,200	Indoor swimming pool with lounge area and changing rooms.
Game Room	1,000	Game room with pool tables, arcade games, and board games.
Library	1,500	Library with reading area, study tables, and digital resources.
Office	800	Office space for staff and community members.
Storage	500	Storage area for equipment and materials.
Restroom	300	Restroom facilities for users.
Plant Room	200	Plant room for maintenance and utility services.
Roof	1,000	Roof area for outdoor activities and green spaces.
Landscaping	500	Landscaping and outdoor seating areas.
Other	1,000	Other miscellaneous spaces and outdoor areas.
Total	13,000	Total Area

PRECEDENTS

Gary Comer Youth Center

The Gary Comer Youth Center provides a great example of transparency both to the inside community and outside community. The center uses transparent walls to visually connect the learning spaces to central faculty blocks. High activity spaces are also placed within view of the greater community on the exterior of the structure. This center also has many multi-use spaces that can be used both for formal and informal events. The center also integrates a sustainable site strategy with the learning curriculum. An urban farm is located on the roof and the food is used by the students in the culinary program.



Teen Impact Center

The Teen Impact Center incorporates fun activity spaces into the learning curriculum. The building also contains space for students to leave their mark through expressive art.

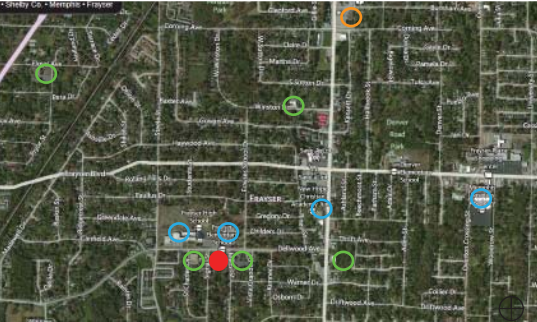


BRIDGES Center

The Bridges Center provides a great example a space that interacts well with the surrounding community. It contains communal space at the exterior street faces, a large outdoor amphitheater for community events, and a large community room in the interior for team building exercises.



INTRODUCTION TO FRAYSER



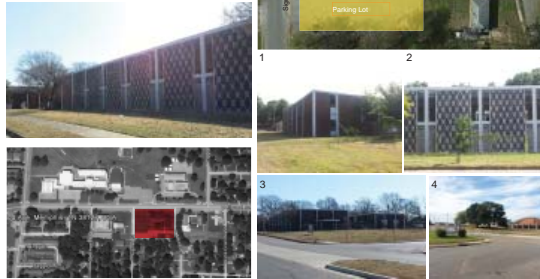
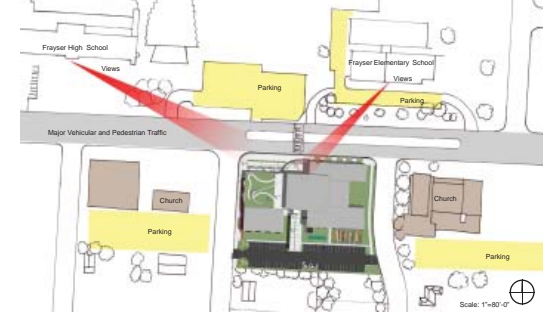
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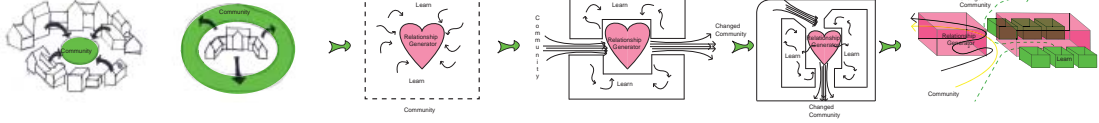
Final Boards

SITE CONDITIONS

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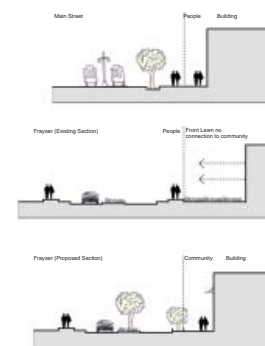


Theory to Thesis Diagrams



SITE PLAN

Streetscape Diagram

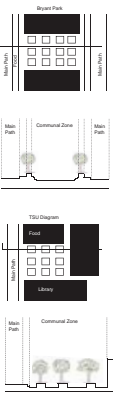


Sustainable Site Features

Water Cistern - The water cistern collects rain water from the roof of the main building and rear walkway cover. The water is used to irrigate the site. Capturing rain water helps to minimize storm run-off into the local sewer system.

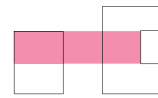
Rooftop Park - The rooftop park serves three purposes. It reduces water run-off, helps insulate the roof, and reduces the heat island effect. The vegetated roof absorbs the sun rays. The roof also has the benefit of added green space for the community.

Urban Farm - The urban farm helps reduce trips to the store as vegetables are grown on site. The farm also reclaims land that would ordinarily remain barren with grass.



Heart Space Diagram:

The heart space of the center contains the large community spaces that generate interactions between community, student, and families.



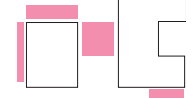
Functionality Diagram:

This diagram shows the relationship between community spaces (green), public spaces (blue), and student spaces (pink). The diagram shows there is a space for everyone in the community even those that are not involved in any programs. The hope would be to get them interested in participating.



Community Spaces Diagram:

The site around the building contains many community spaces. These spaces allow members of the community to interact with the physical building, its members, and one another. Strengthening neighborhood relationships.



FLOOR PLAN LEVEL 1



FLOOR PLAN LEVEL 2

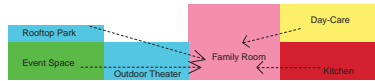
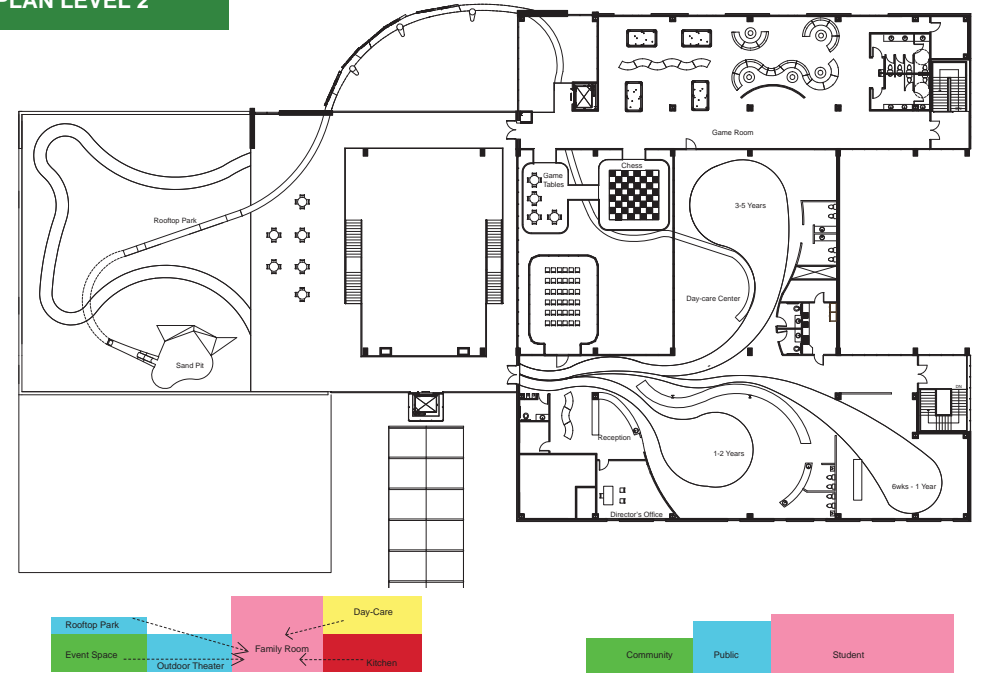


Figure 54 Section View Diagram

Figure 55 Vertical Function Diagram



Final Boards

RENDERINGS / NORTH ELEVATION



RENDERINGS / SOUTH ELEVATION

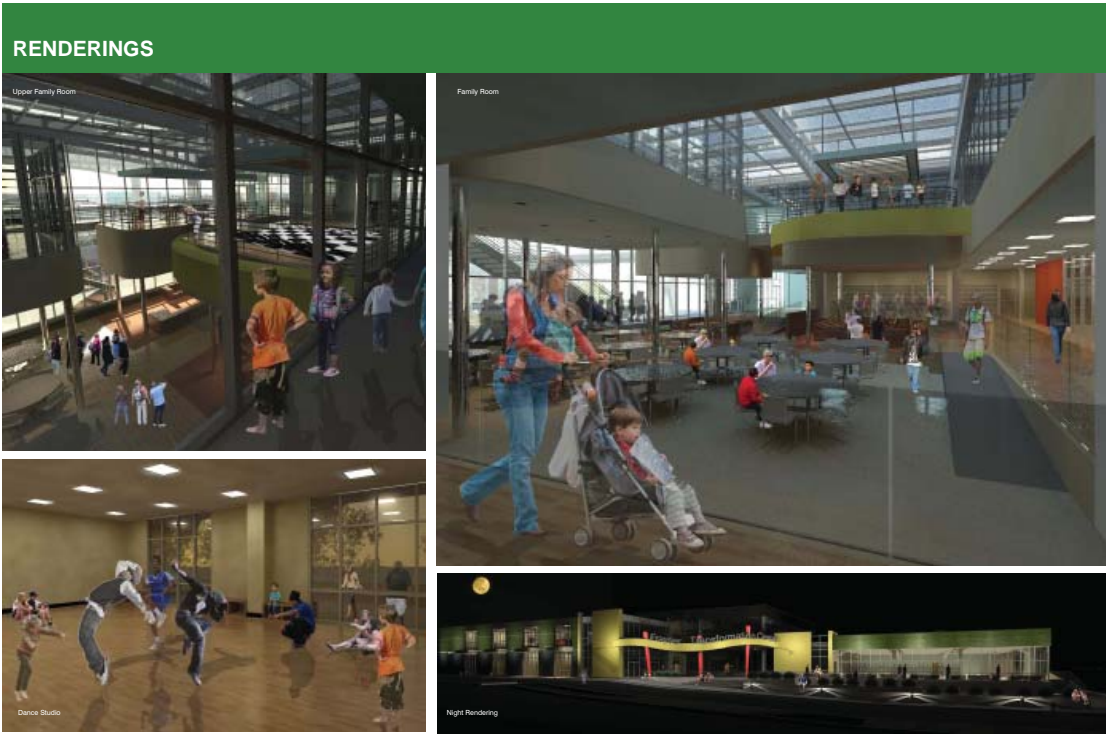


RENDERINGS/ WEST ELEVATION



RENDERINGS / SOUTH ELEVATION





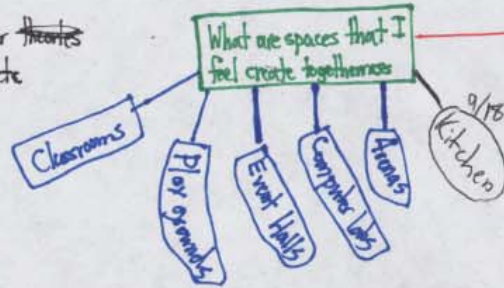
Process

Google Scholar - Imm library loans What do I need to convey understanding and give knowledge reading Theories + Theorist that belong to community + family creating (Architecture + Psychology) ←

- Jane Jacobs (Community) (Social Responsibility) [connect these theories + things you find to map] understand who wrote, part in time, movement, also critiques. (Find definitions of compassion or community combined from several sources) (Quotable Pieces) User, program, site

- Ebenezer Howards (Garden City) his ideas on togetherness
- Psychology of knowledge of teenager + family; education + socializing

Supplemental Theory (More detail into what is need to know about other theories disciplines + how they relate to site, user, etc)
 - More specific to what doing



Research Map

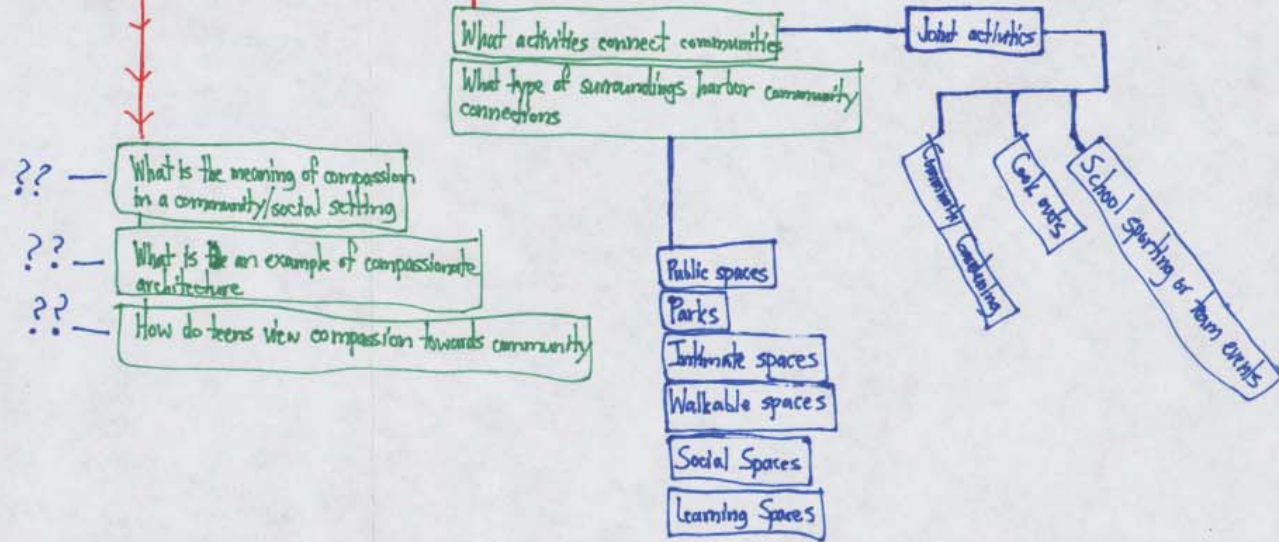
1a) I need to develop definitions of what I want to define community as with respect to compassionate architecture. Combs of several things (link to statements from manifests etc. Lottown (limited diversity))

Cards Have Problems Purpose Questions

- What type of psychological activities influence family
- What are the issues that cause dis-connects within families
- What environments foster happy families

For Thurs. Chapter 4 + 5
 - Bring Tabs *laptop folders, dividers
 - Complete Index Cards

3) Architecture that creates togetherness is compassionate, and Compassion is the thread that connects community and family



Keep track of readings + writings notes etc.

- Skim relevant items
- place in map
- If needed read in Depth

• annotated bibliography for Readings needed (Ref citation at top, blurb in middle why relevant, why meaning, what author doing) reference through wikipedia; sums up what you've learned from article @ bottom free write what your thoughts about article

- In sketch book write any ideas that may be to log to project and doesn't quite fit.
- 1b) • Merge Introduction into one document