



2007

WS 1207 Community Workshops

Katherine M. Thomas
Virginia Commonwealth University

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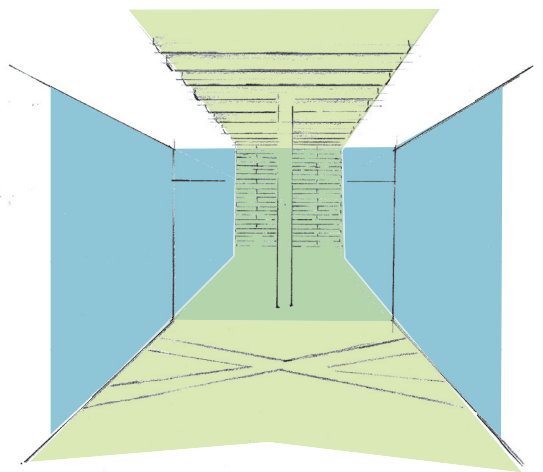
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WS 1207

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS



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ABSTRACT



In the past ten years, Richmond's urban core has experienced substantial growth in popularity as a place to live and work. New luxury condos, renovated homes and apartments, new galleries, shops, and restaurants are all hallmarks of Richmond's urban renewal. More and more people are seeking the upbeat life of the city's core.

Existing low income urban neighborhoods are attracting buyers with a focus of renovation and gentrification. Over time the neighborhoods are revitalized house by house and as a result, attract new higher income buyers. It is easy to get caught up in the excitement of the city's revitalization. The process of gentrification of existing neighborhoods creates positive results – renovated historical homes, picturesque city streets, reduced crime rates, new local business opportunities, and increased tax revenues for the city.

However, there are unavoidable downsides to gentrification. As property values in each area increase, long time residents of the original low-income neighborhood, who cannot afford rising real estate taxes, are forced to cut back already tight budgets or sell their homes. The increasing housing prices also narrows the availability of low to mid income housing opportunities. Often lower income buyers end up paying the top dollar amount they can afford just to get their foot in the door.

Existing residents and financially stretched new homeowners can find it difficult to manage the costs of up-keeping or renovating their home to suit their needs. Unexpected maintenance requirements such as roof leaks, dripping faucets, running toilets become a financial burden. Functional and emotional design needs are considered a luxury and are put on hold. The pride of homeownership can fail very quickly, especially in an area where change and renovation is surrounding them. Lower income homeowners often feel left out and alienated by their neighborhood and community as the area is gentrified.

This poses an interesting problem for the design community who can be seen as offenders to existing neighborhoods by designing a property into a higher price tag. This not only affects the single property but encourages others to do the same by appealing to people's desire and competitive need to 'keep up with the Joneses'.

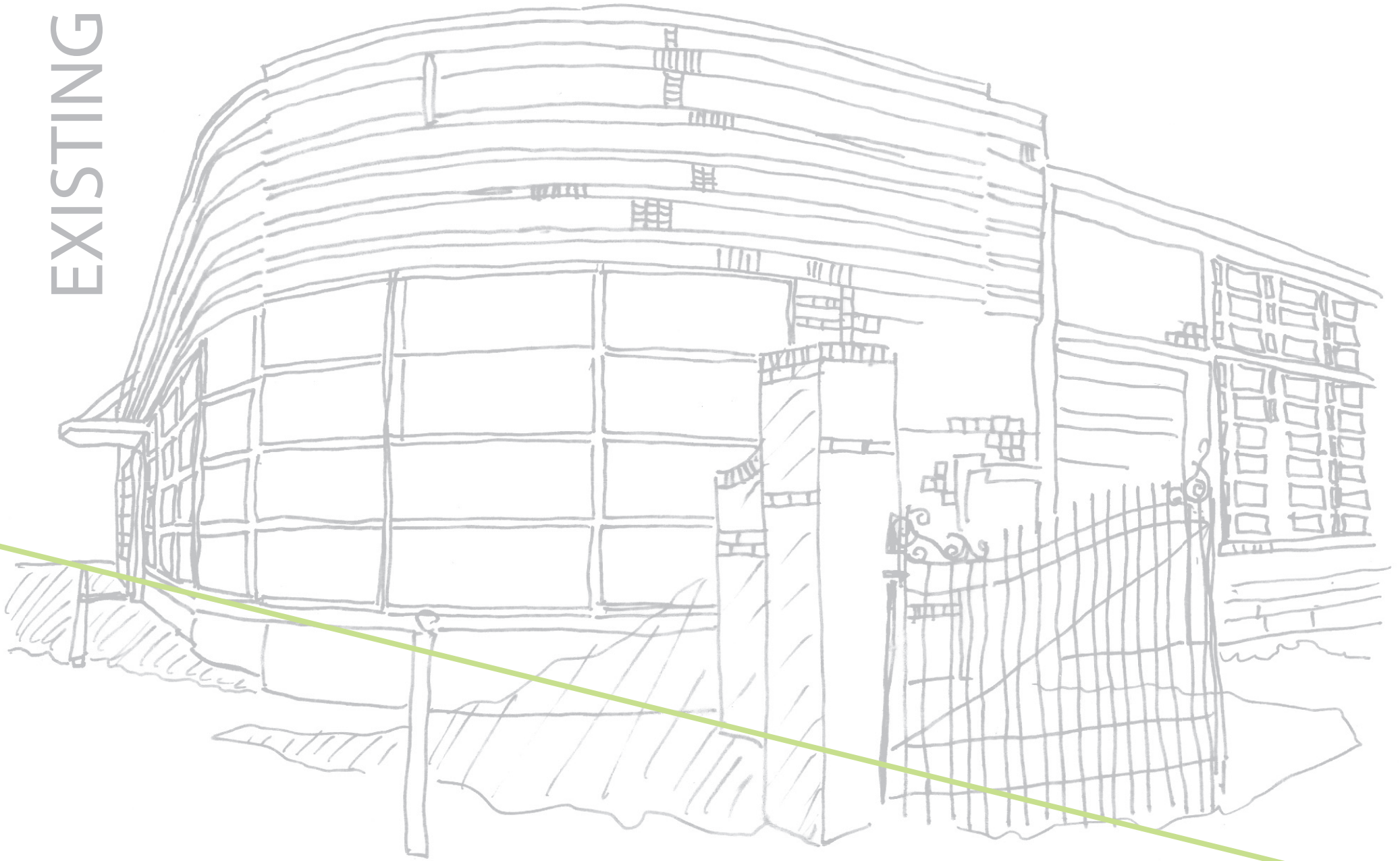
For my thesis, I have chosen to adapt the abandoned office/warehouse at 1207 North Boulevard for use as a community workshop for all of Richmond's urban neighborhoods. The community workshop's focus will be to provide open workshops, classes, a resource library and design consultation to low and middle income homeowners, affordable housing properties, and community parks. In addition, the center welcomes all of Richmond city residents to join and partake in 1207's resources in order to grow a multi-faceted community focused on improving the lives of all of Richmond City's residents.

The center will function as a gathering space for all urban residents and will promote both the individual and the community through a 'Do It Yourself' approach to home design and care that will instill pride and self reliance to all members of the community.

The design of the center will have to appeal and attract a diversity of cultures, incomes, and education levels; otherwise the hope of a mixed community will die before it ever begins. The design's affect on the overall atmosphere will be considered on its ability to encourage use and interaction of the user within the created environment. How do I go about it, how much do I plan, and how will I know when to stop and leave it to the will of the user?



EXISTING SITE



1207 NORTH BOULEVARD
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA



WEST FACING FACADE



SOUTH FACING FACADE



NORTH FACING FACADE



1207

North Boulevard is a single story, brick building constructed in the 1950's at the end of the commercial development boom in the area. Once farmland, the addition of the rail station on Broad created an opportunity to focus the area as a commercial center for Richmond, called Scott's Addition. Scott's Addition quickly became home to bottling factories, glass factories, radio stations, and car dealerships. 1207 was originally designed as a Ford Motor Company parts store.

Scott's Addition was mostly developed through the early 20's till the early 50's with a wide array of architectural styles. Several buildings, including 1207, incorporated Art Deco inspired details, which tied directly into the area's

The interior of 1207 is divided into two sections parallel to Boulevard, running north to south. The break in sections is notated on the exterior by materials. The space closest to Boulevard is the smallest section and would have been the public service area of the parts store. To signify its importance, the area's exterior is encased in decorative brickwork. Inside, the front space has a main open area and three small offices clustered on the north wall. The front space spiffed itself up for the public with a pressed tin ceiling and finished gypsum partition walls. Later renovations raised the dividing wall to the ceiling and added heating ducts and sprinklers.

The back area is seven times larger than the front and is also predominately open with three areas sectioned for use. Running the full length of the north wall is a mezzanine section that houses offices on the ground level and storage areas above. The center of the back area is punctuated by a rectangle shaped double level office and storage area. The third section is an additional mezzanine storage platform on the back south wall.

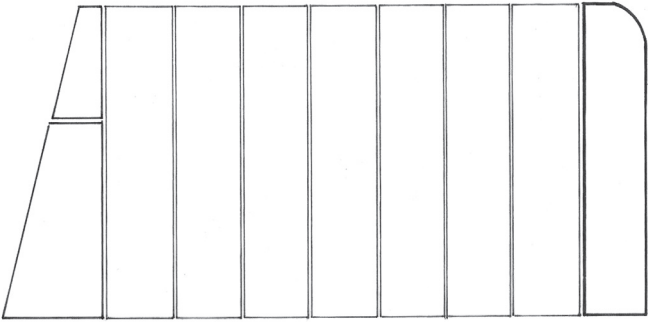
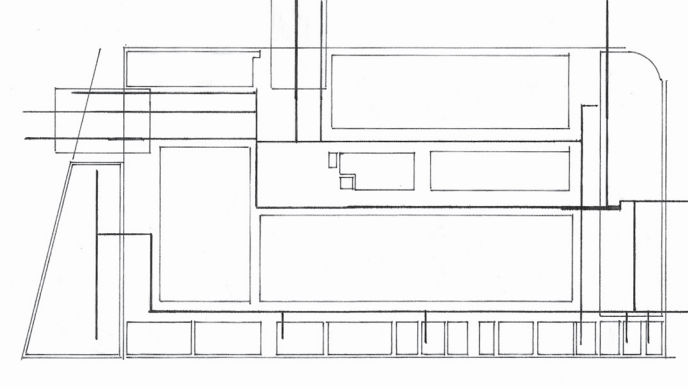
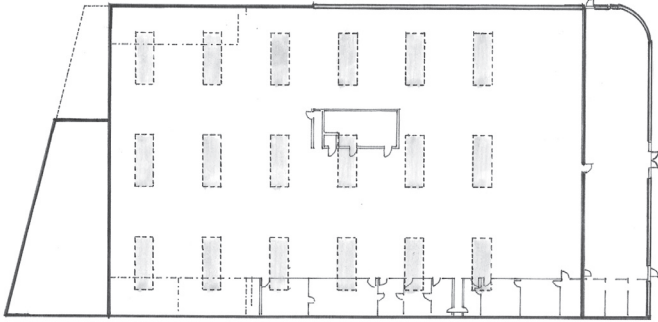
1207 showcases its deco style on its front façade with decorative brick work forming a streamlined five stripe horizontal band above another band made of metal framed glazing that stretches across the face and wraps around the curved wall that connects the front with the right side parking area. The main entry is located on the front, and is a double glass door with steel framing and hardware, topped with a cantilevered rectangle awning wrapped in steel. The front and right side house the only windows, the front's windows form a four high horizontal band of metal framed glazing that wraps around to the right side. Here the building façade breaks in consistency in quality of brickwork, and continues on as a painted cinder block box. The front of the right side is dominated by a huge bank of windows, nine high metal framed glazing, and interjected squares of glass block, broken up by entry doors and a garage bay door. The back half of the right side is broken only by a single garage bay. The back half of the building has an additional covered dock area with 2 loading bays with rolling garage doors and an exit door.

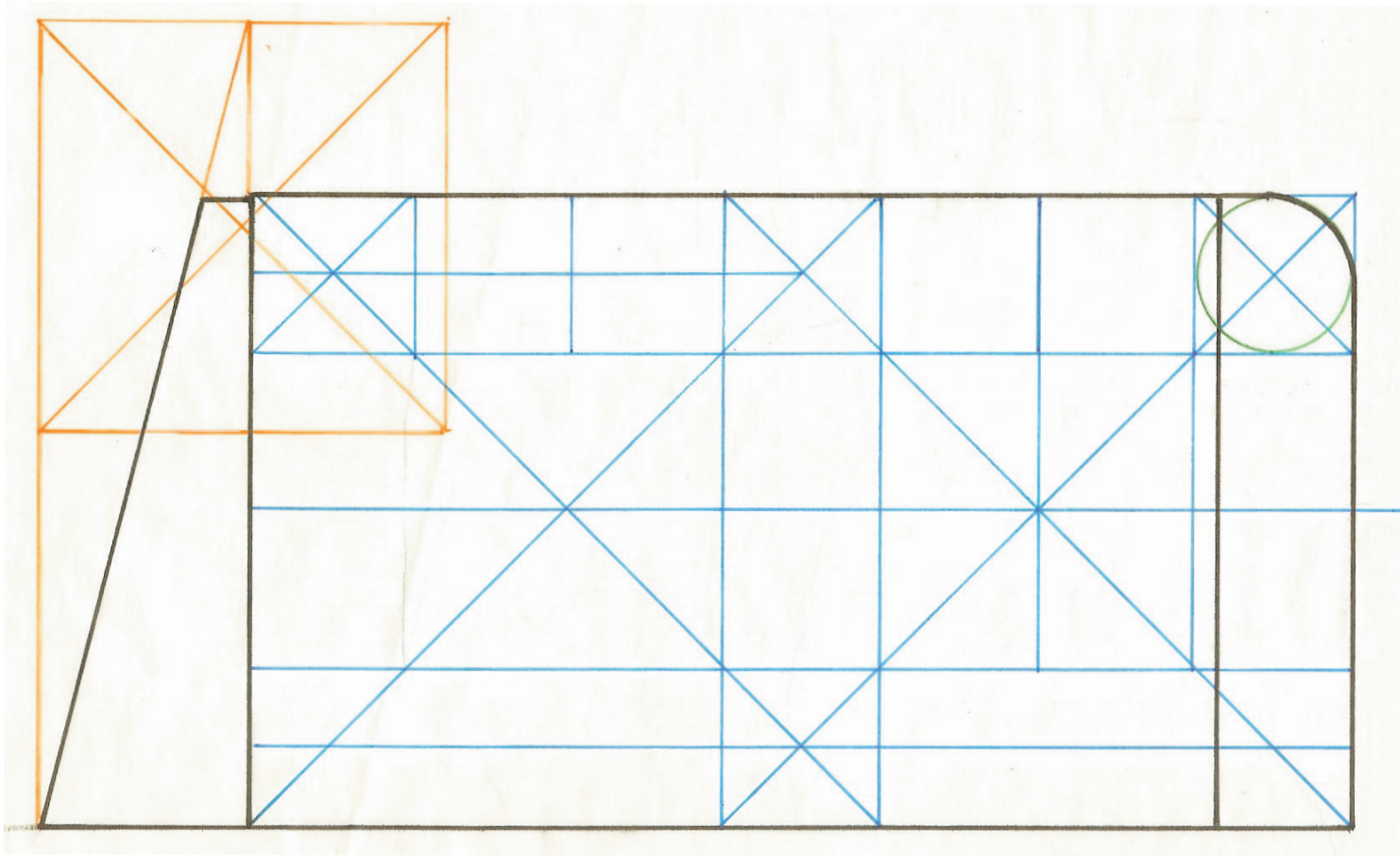
The back area served as the functional working and storage space with limited customer access. The space is marked on the exterior by the change from decorative brick to painted concrete blocks. Inside, the space is also strictly utilitarian with exposed ceiling, concrete block partition walls, exposed steel I-beams, and open steel grating for mezzanine stairs and platforms. Rigid electrical conduit streaking across surfaces and hanging fluorescent housings intensify the overall harsh environment. The back area's atmosphere is improved substantially by the large amount of natural daylight from the wide expanse of 10' high glazing sections on the south wall, as well as a grid of 18 rectangular skylights that break up the ceiling area. Four large garage doors access the outside, two at ground level on the south wall, and 2 loading docks on the back side. Currently these doors are steel, but can be changed to glass models for additional light.

1207 is in disrepair, but has several clear advantages as the location of a community workshop. First and foremost, 1207 is located in a long standing commercial area and will not result in the gentrification of residential neighborhoods. The building is located on the bus line, with additional access from area neighborhoods by car, bike and foot traffic. There is on-street and off-street parking, with five entrances on three sides, two garage doors, and two loading docks. Large expanses of glazing and skylights allow light inside. The interior is predominately open with minimal anticipated demolition waste from deteriorated partitions. 18' high ceilings, including 2' of open rafters will easily accommodate the substantial ventilation and dust management systems required in metal, wood and finish workshops.

Disadvantages are more economically based, the biggest being the overall disrepair of the building. A substantial amount of broken windows will need to be replaced and upgraded to low-e glass. The inside's energy performance is also an issue with an insubstantial heating and cooling system, zero insulation, and concrete floors throughout.

EXISTING BUILDING STUDIES

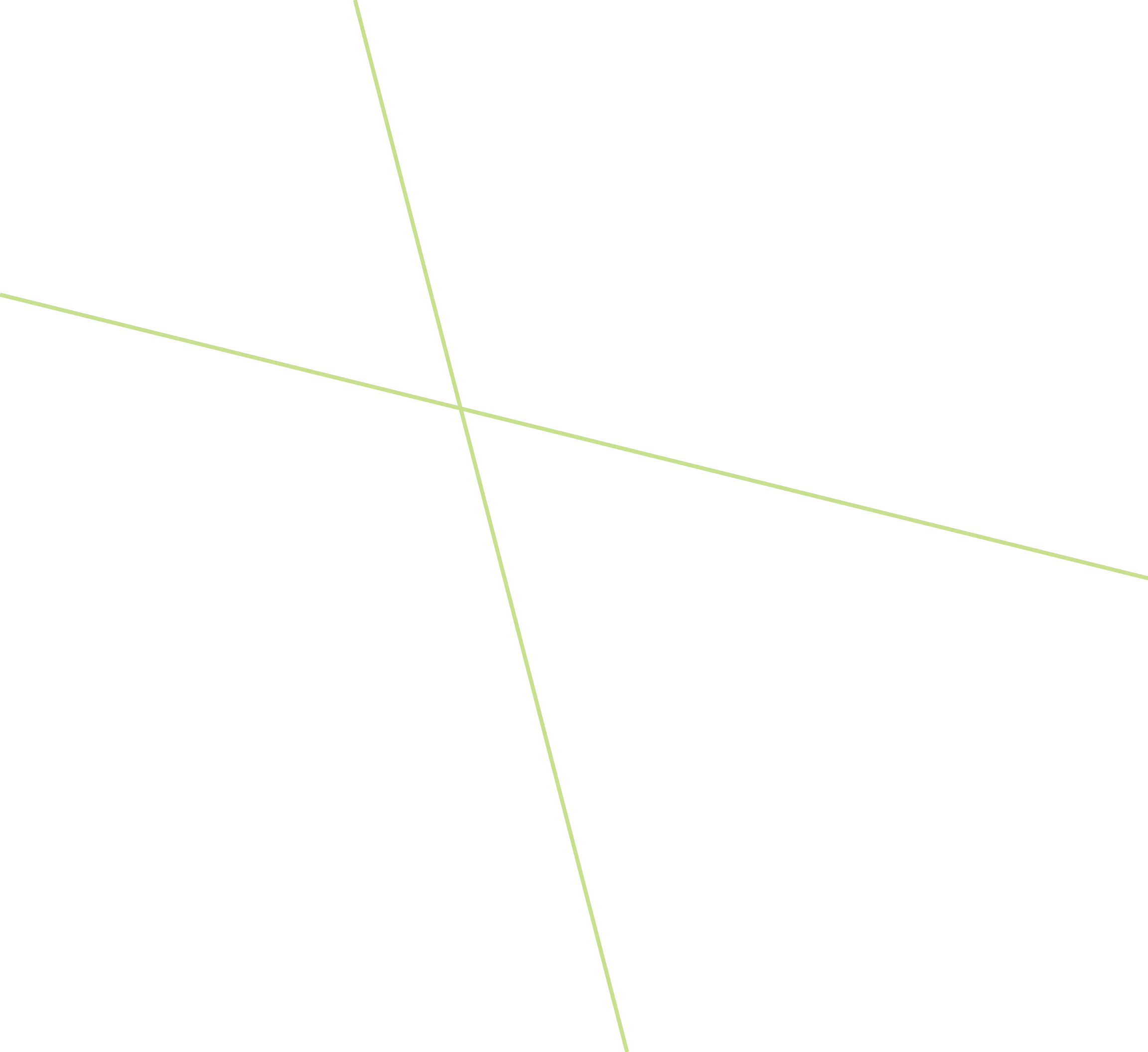




GEOMETRY SITE ANALYSIS

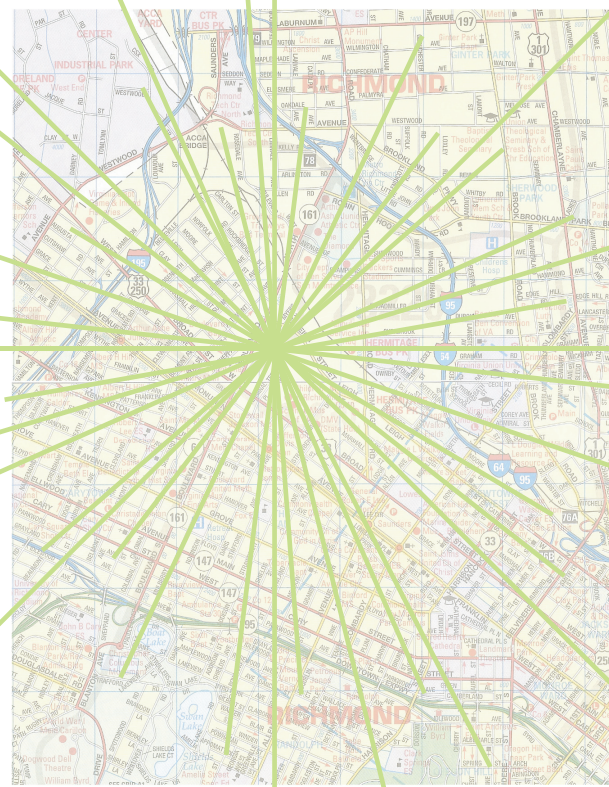
Large overlapping squares form a center path from the south to the north sides of the building.

The diagonal lines crossing through the center of the squares creates a new pattern of diagonal squares that run a central path from the west to the east side of the building.



CONCEPT





During the study of the existing building, a model was created showing the center points of every neighborhood in the city and a point for the location of 1207. Extending lines from the center point of the neighborhood through the location point of 1207 created a thick pattern of overlapping lines. Imagining this pattern in a 3 dimensional form passing through the interior space of 1207 created an interesting relationship of the spaces created in-between the lines. Seeking to incorporate the idea of the space created in-between the lines with the existing building led back to the Geometry Analysis with the overlapping squares. Two strong patterns in the analysis were identified as creating space in-between lines. The first is the two main overlapping squares that share the center space running south – north of the building. The second pattern is formed by the diagonal lines of the main squares, creating a central dominant diagonal square that connects to half diagonal squares at the center points of the main squares. These two patterns were adapted as a grid for initial space planning.



Continuing the idea of the space created in-between lines, these photos were taken of a temporary fence constructed in the Battery Park neighborhood to secure an area damaged by repeated flooding.

The chain link fence creates a barrier for that surrounds the park for blocks on all sides, and separates the residents from the flooded neighborhood park. The fence will stand for the next three years as a broken sewer pipe, that causes flooding in the area with every rain, is fixed. The fence itself is made of diagonal metal squares that connect to each other at the corners, forming a larger, stronger structure through the in-between links. The structure is not unlike the residents of Battery Park. The initial flooding of the park damaged and condemned several houses, apartments, and caused the permanent closing of the local elementary school.

The disaster mobilized neighborhood residents and encouraged large amounts of participation from everyone in the area. The Battery Park Neighborhood Association has seen huge increases in attendance and is looking for a new venue to hold its monthly meetings. The Association is currently re-adapting the elementary school into a community center and promoting and planning the future restoration of the park.

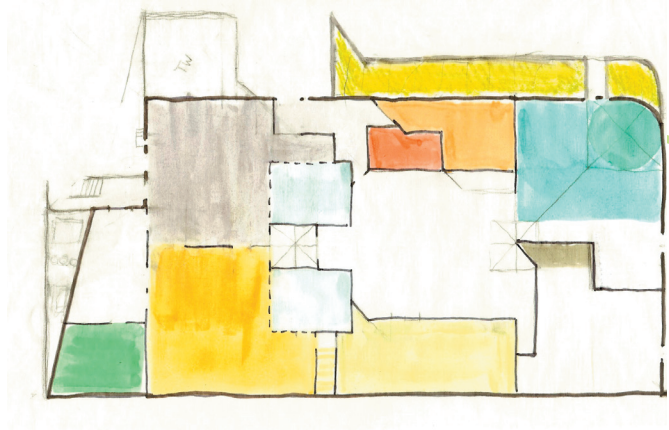
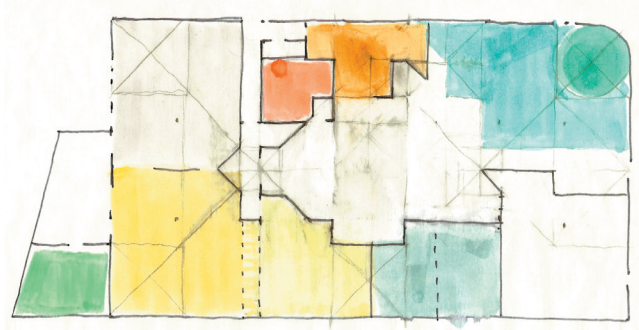
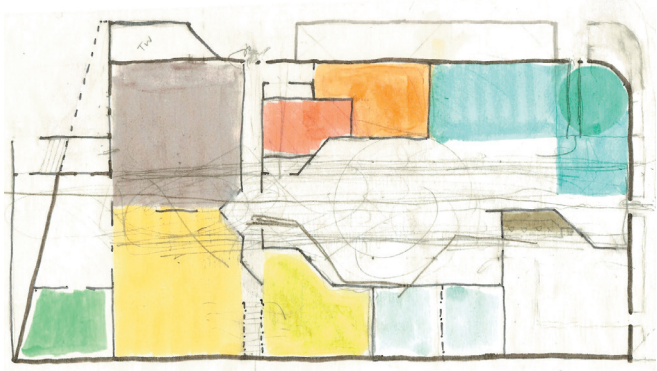
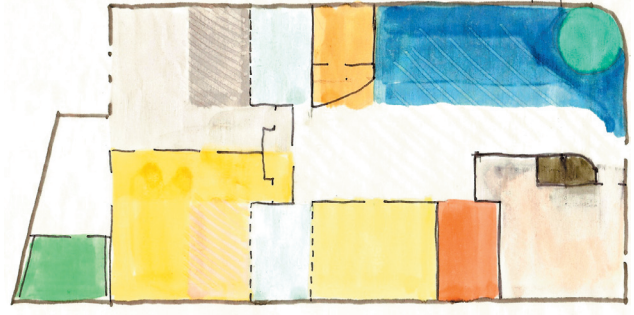
IN-BETWEEN PATTERNS AND SITES IN RICHMOND

The chain link fence prompted additional photographic study of examples that form an 'In-between' pattern or are in a stage of 'In-between' similar to the stage the of Battery Park, waiting for its time to be revitalized.





SOLUTION



Wood Workshop:

- Work tables for 5 – 10, adjustable height
- Material storage
- Tools
- Secure supply storage
- Help desk

Metal Workshop:

- Work tables for 6 – 9, adjustable height
- Material storage
- Tools
- Secure supply storage
- Help desk

Finish and Paint Room:

- Paint booth
- Wash area
- Drying area

Sewing and Upholstery Workshop:

- Standard sewing machines stations for 6
- Two serger/overlock sewing machine stations
- Cutting tables
- Upholstery tables, adjustable height
- Fabric roll storage
- Supply storage
- Help desk

Design and Construction Resource Library:

- Shelving for books, magazines and dvd's
- Seating Area
- Design Consultation Area –
 - Material and finish library
 - Consultation/Presentation table
 - Pin up space
- Computer lab -
 - 4 desktop computer stations

Two Classrooms:

- Optional format for lecture or studio classes

Reception/Information desk

Coffee shop:

- Order and drink prep counter
- Light fare food prep
- Storage

Open gathering area:

- for use as general and coffee shop seating, and for events such as neighborhood association meetings

Administration Office:

- Office space for 8 full time people –
 - Executive Director
 - Director of Wood Workshop
 - Director of Metal Workshop
 - Director of Sewing/Upholstery shop
 - Marketing Director
 - Customer Relations Director
 - VCU Volunteer/Project Coordinator
 - Office Manager

- Office space for 4 part time/volunteer people

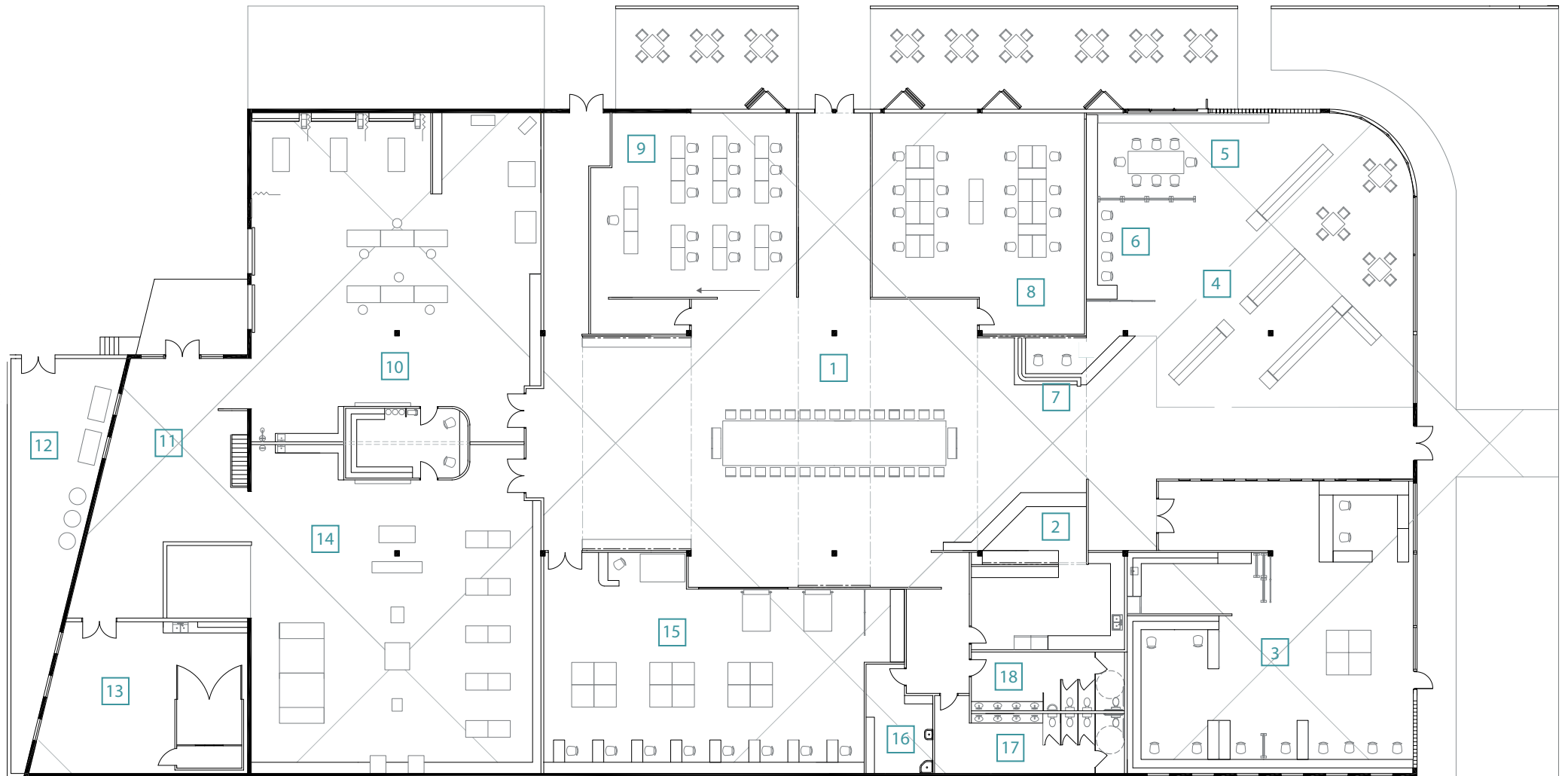
- Office storage and supplies

- Kitchenette

Public Restrooms

Custodial room

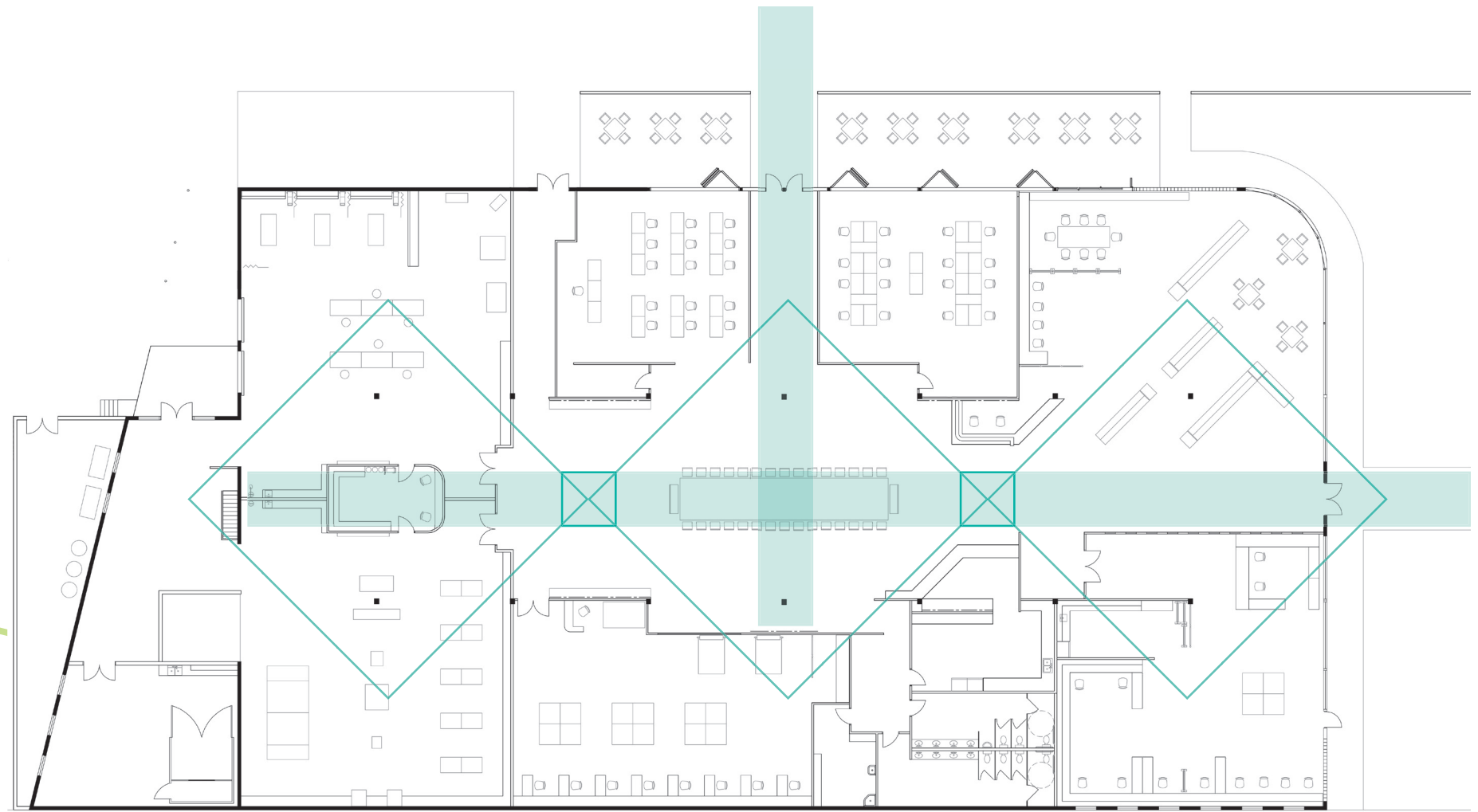
- Outdoor space for location of dust management systems and air compressors



□ PLAN KEY

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Public Space | 10 | Metal Workshop |
| 2 | Coffee Shop | 11 | Shared Work Storage |
| 3 | Administration Office | 12 | Dust Collector and Air Compressor |
| 4 | Resource Library | 13 | Finish and Paint Room |
| 5 | Design Center and Conference | 14 | Wood Workshop |
| 6 | Computer Lab | 15 | Sewing and Upholstery Workshop |
| 7 | Reception | 16 | Maintenance |
| 8 | Classroom | 17 | Public Restroom |
| 9 | Classroom | 18 | Public Restroom |





MAIN DIVISIONS OF SPACE

The concept for WS 1207 is for it to be an ‘In-between’ space in several forms. This is first evident in the location of the workshop in a physical space that is easily reached from all points in the city and be available for use by any city resident.

1207 will function as both a community center and a workshop, providing a comfortable space for meeting friends for coffee, upholstering your old couch, building a shelf, or holding your next neighborhood association meeting.

‘In-between’ is also identified in several stages within the overall design of WS 1207. First in the floorplan, then the goals for the space’s atmosphere, and then the design details of a pendant light.

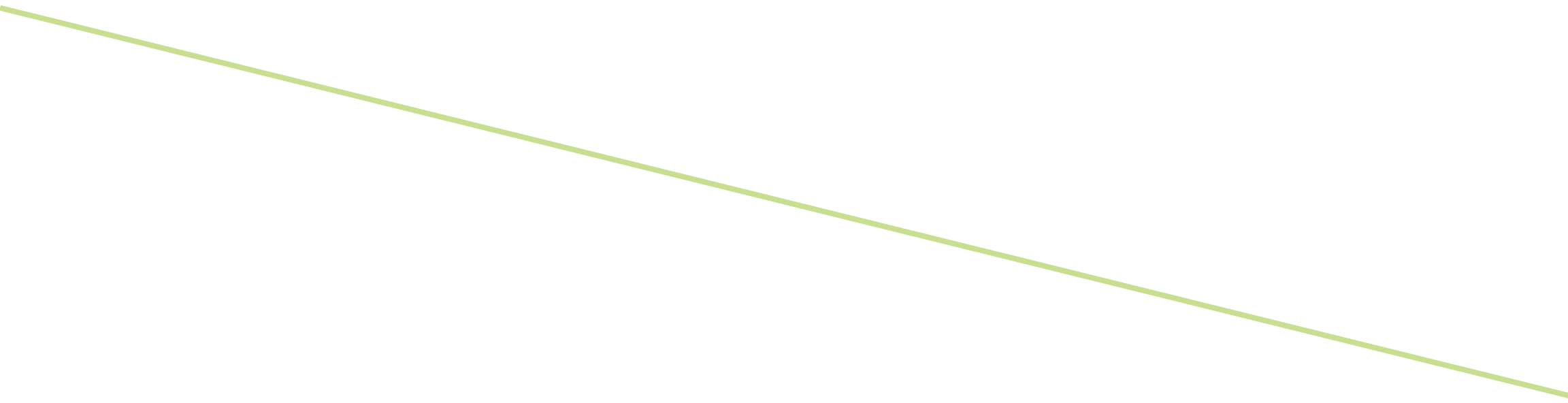
The floorplan is organized by a grid of diagonal squares that become a painted pattern on the floor itself. The floorplan uses the connection of the squares that occur in the main pathways as a connection for the different sections of function within the space.

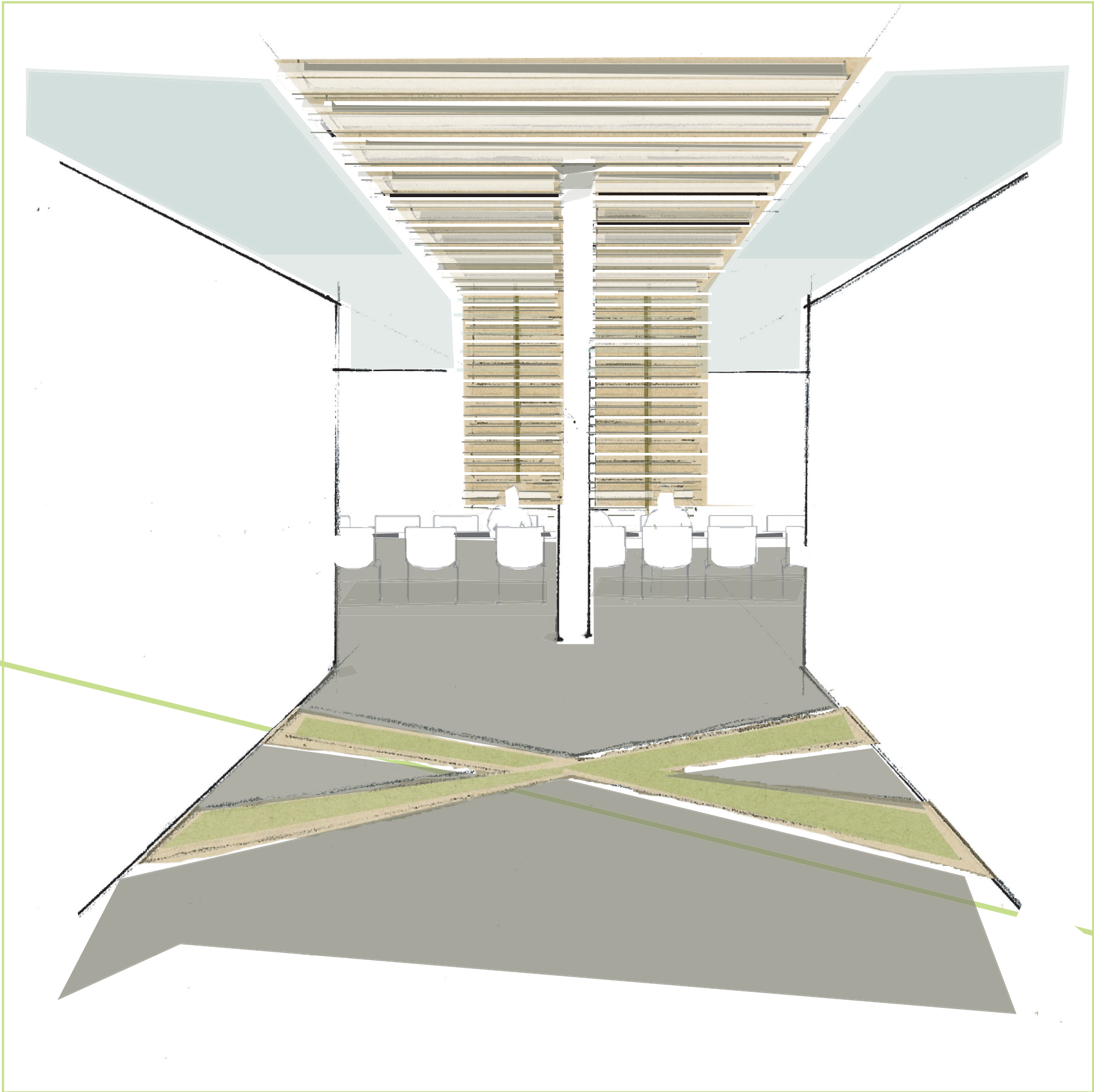
‘In-between’ also relates to the overall atmosphere of the space. Anyone who has ever gone through a renovation is familiar with the mess that exists in the middle of your project. Things are always a little rough, exposed and it’s the initial mess that allows you to really get in there and stop worrying about the construction wasteland you will soon be making. 1207 is designed to encourage people to actually make use of the space by using reclaimed, un-perfect materials in structural forms reminiscent of common home details that present a gently used, comfortable façade that is familiar but not immediately comparable to community user’s homes.

This is expressed in the 2 x 4” wall detail and overhang that is created from salvaged shipping pallets. The 2 x 4” structure hangs over your head and extends down the walls, in some areas becoming seating. The structure frames in the open gathering space on each side like a front porch with the area in-between a constant block party.

On top of that nothing will stay the same – WS 1207 will always be in a stage of in-between with interior furniture and details created, altered, and fixed in its workshops. Seating will be missing some days, either being repaired, or having a padded cushion attached in the sewing shop. Pendant lights can be added to with new sections created by community members.



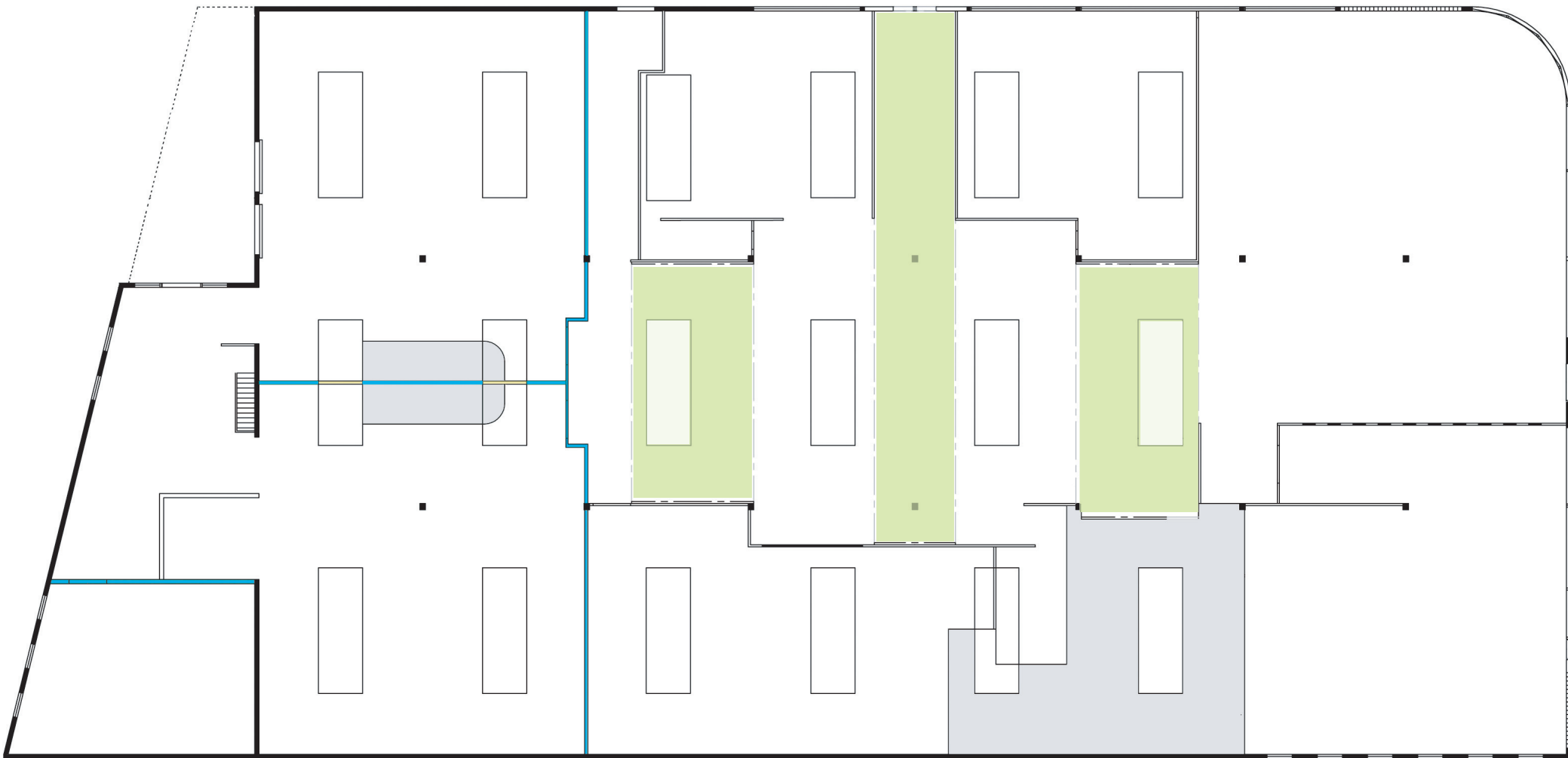




SOUTH ENTRY

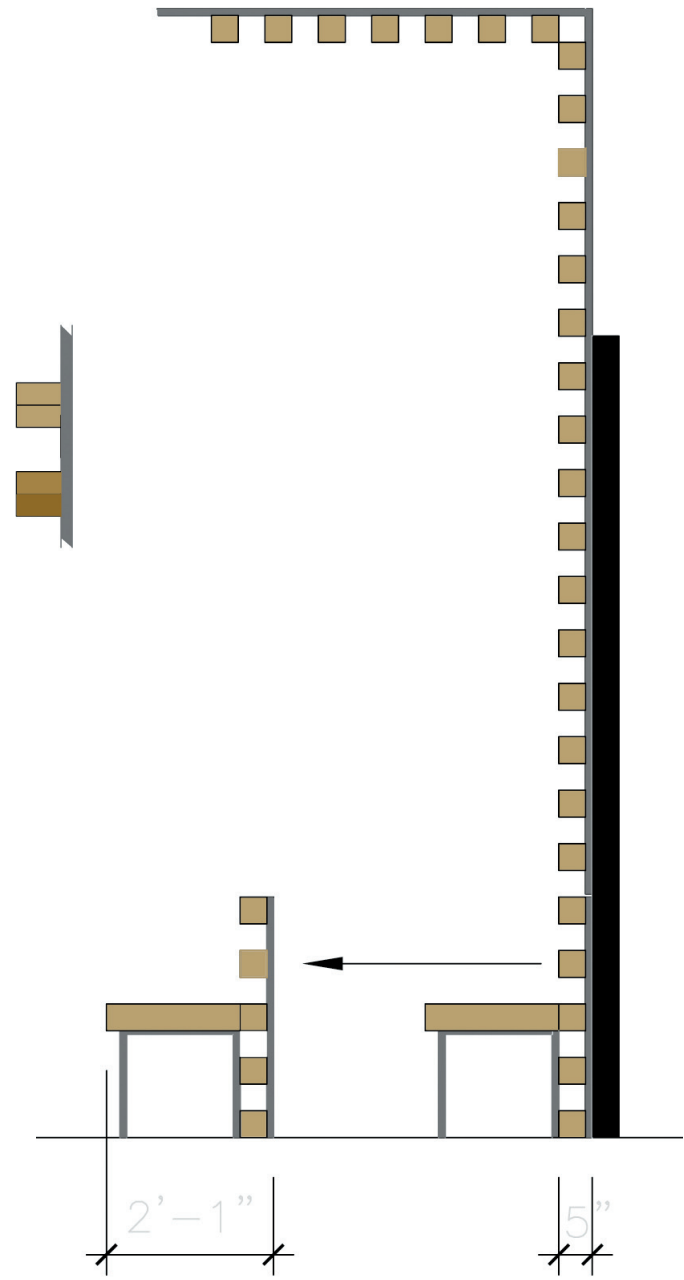
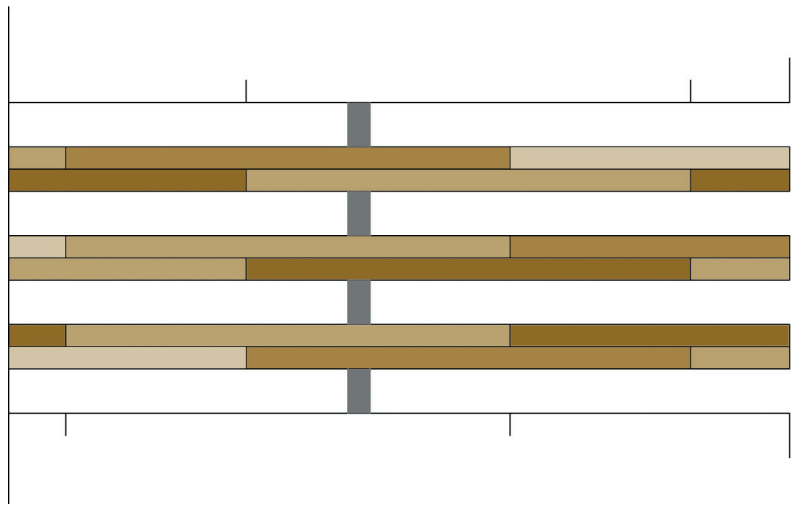


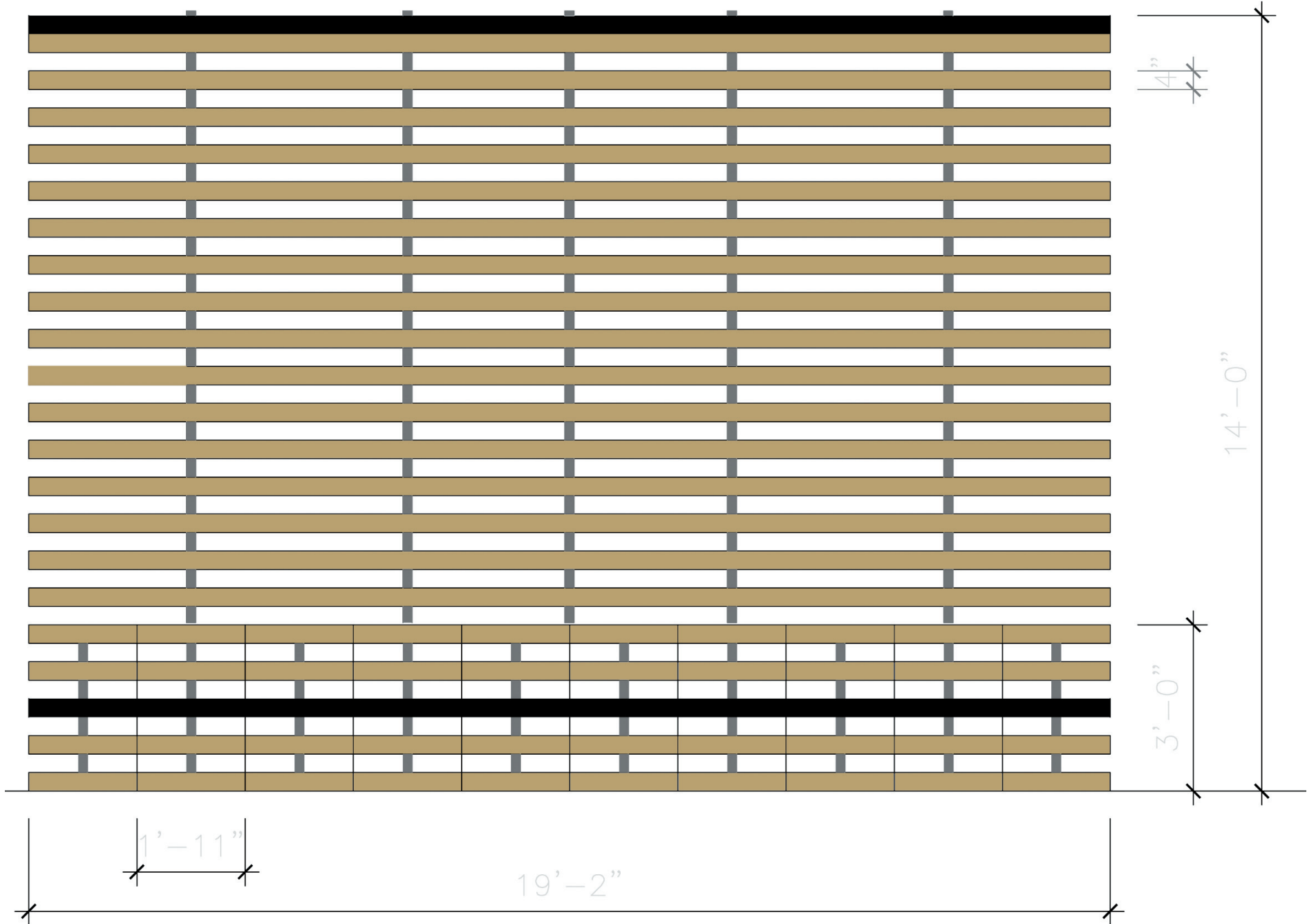
CEILING DETAIL



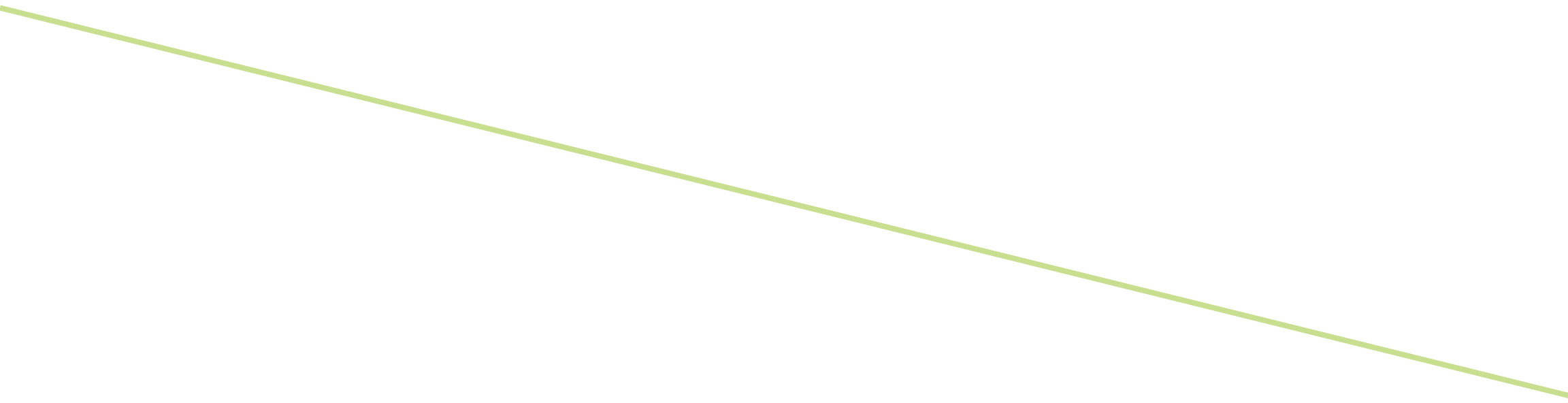
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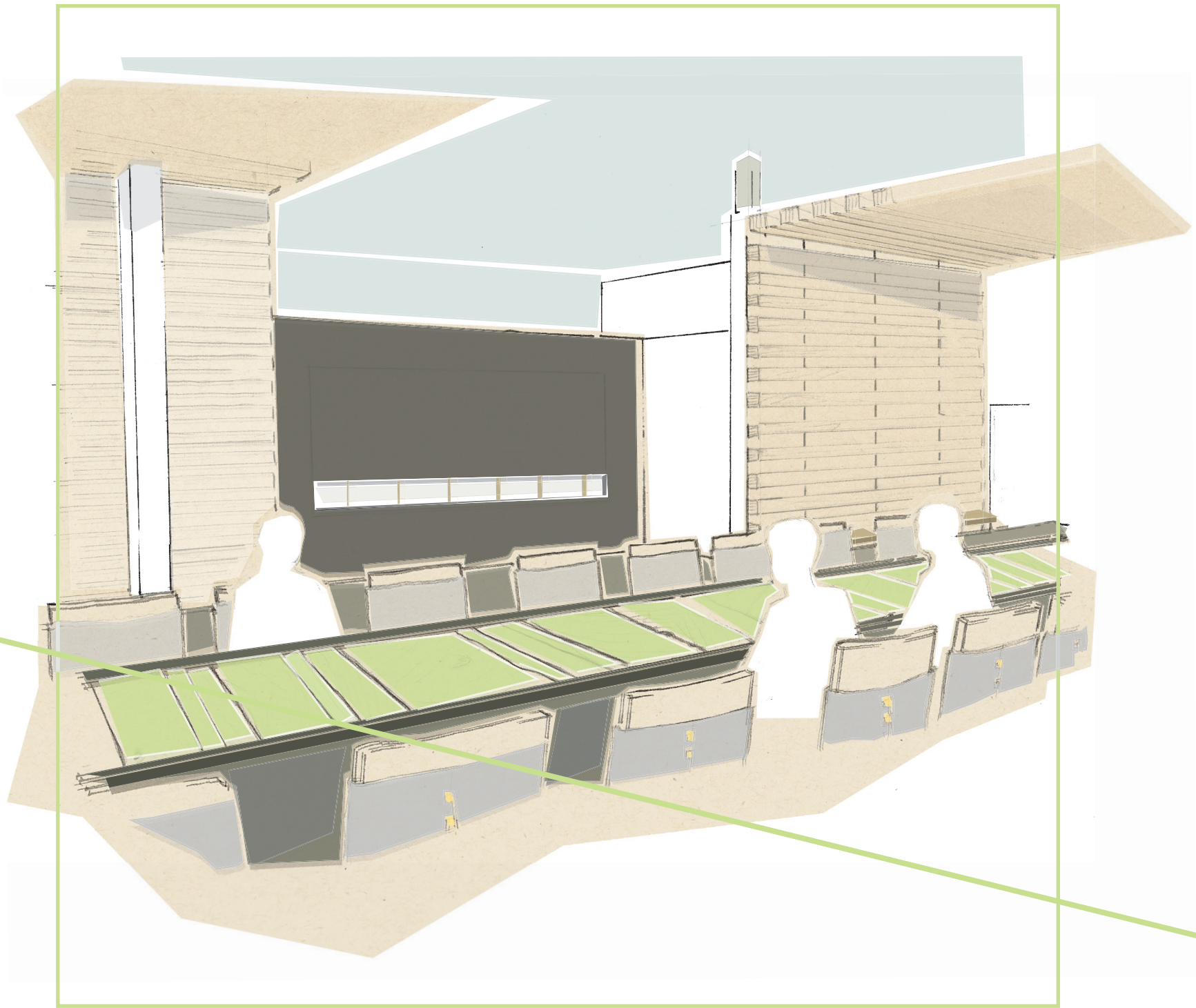
- 18' 0" HIGH WALL
- 14' 0" HIGH WALL
- CEILING HEIGHT 10' 0"
- 14' 0" HIGH TWO BY FOUR OVERHANG





2 x 4" OVERHANG DETAIL



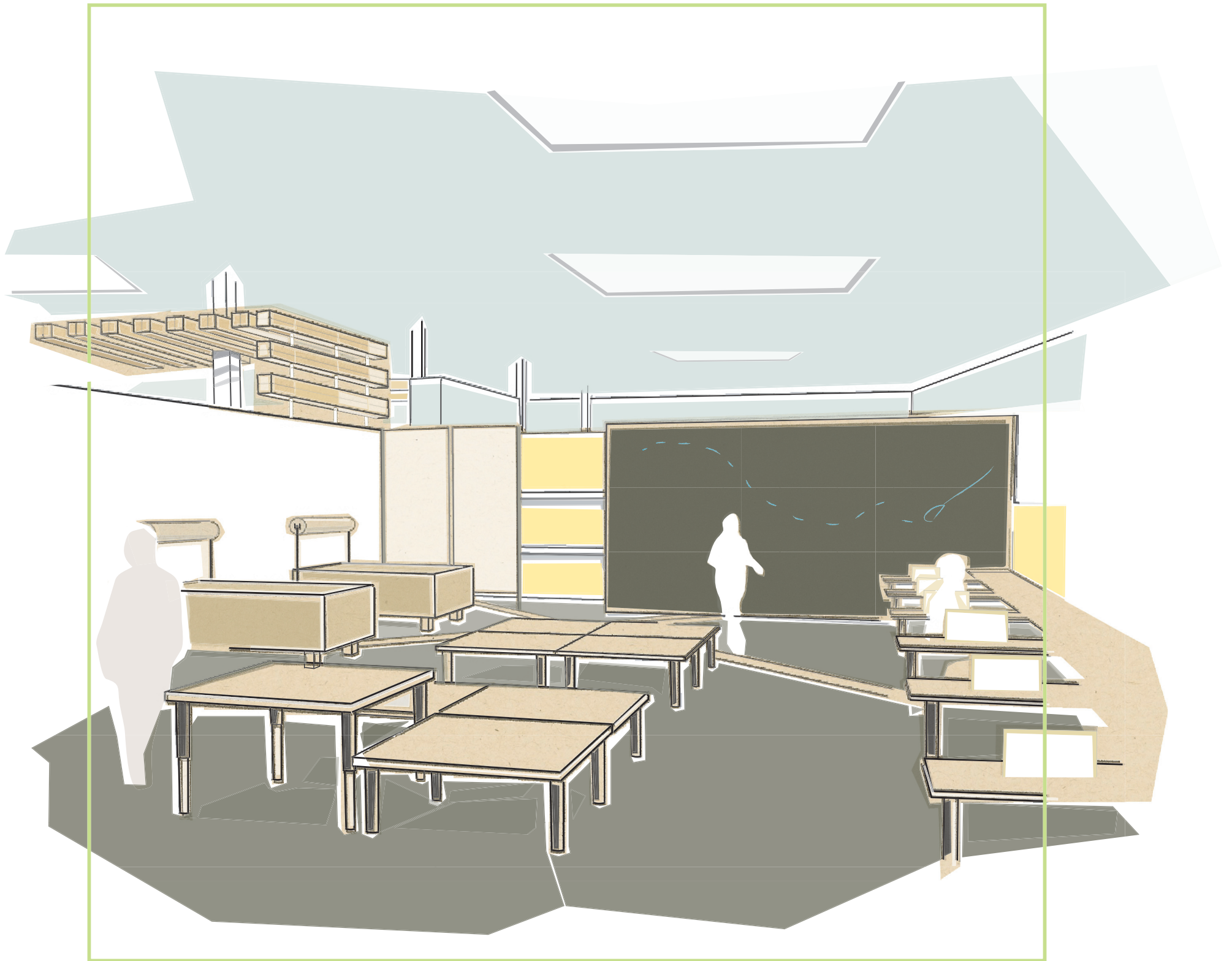


CENTRAL PUBLIC GATHERING SPACE

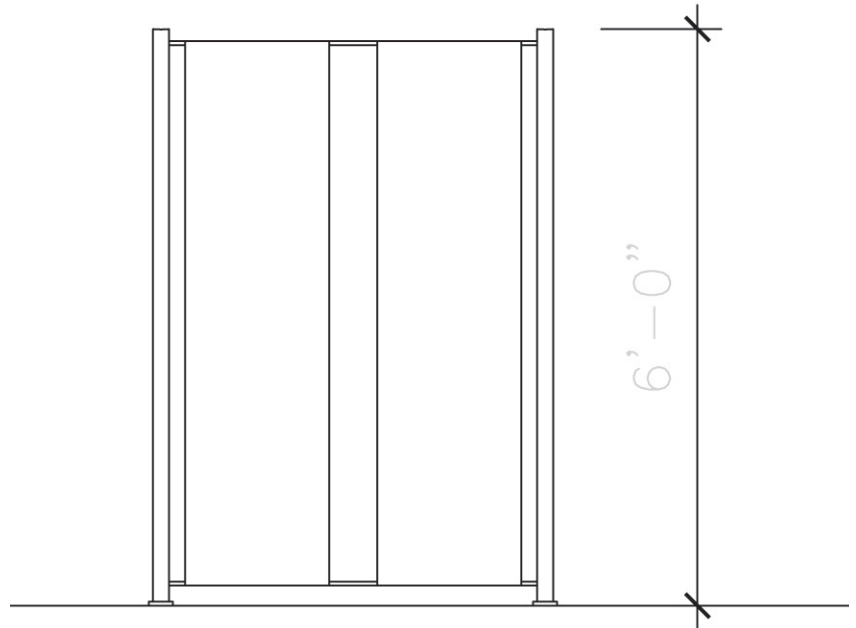




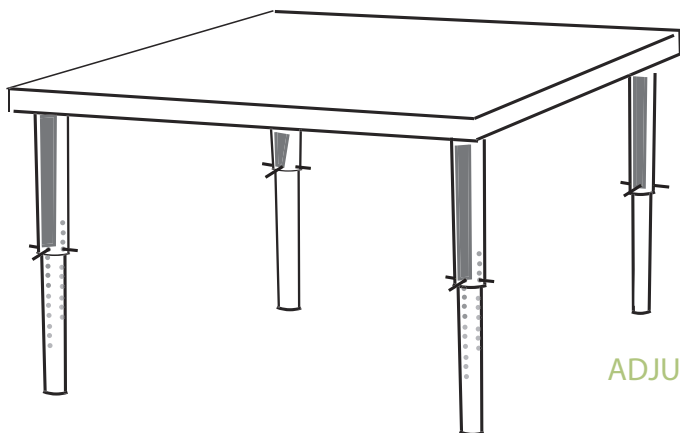
FROM WEST ENTRY - RESOURCE LIBRARY AND RECEPTION



SEWING WORKSHOP



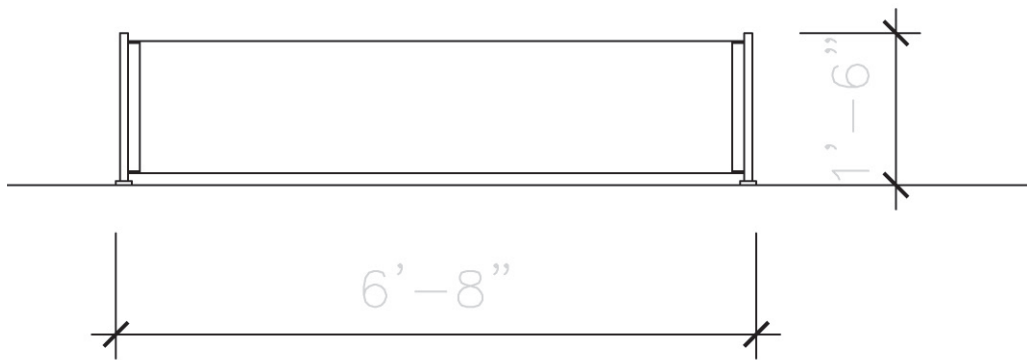
TYVEK DIVIDER PANELS



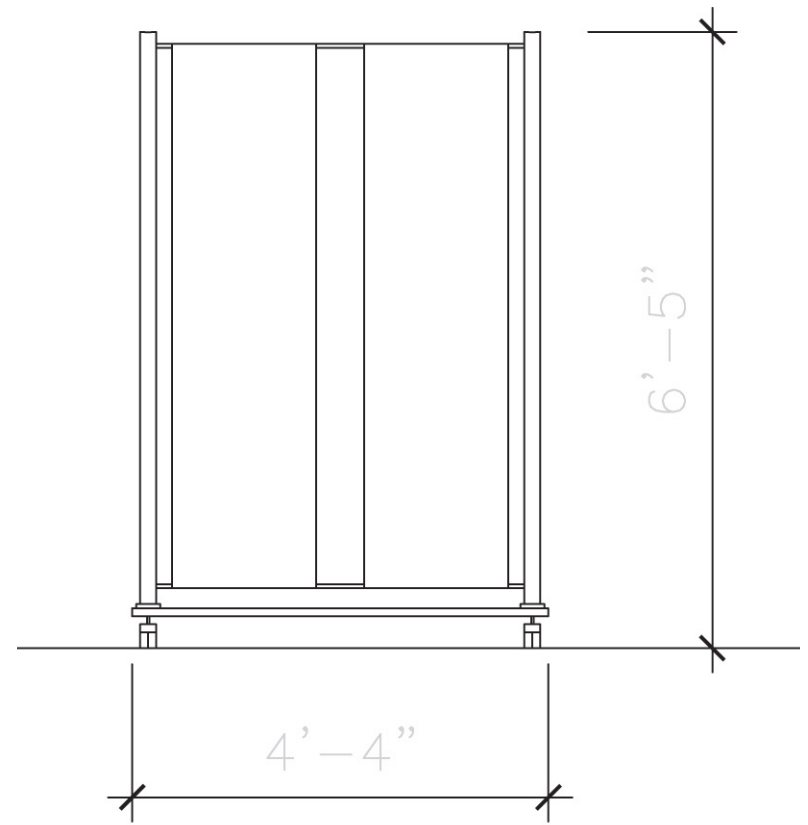
ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT TABLES



ADMINISTRATION DESK DETAIL

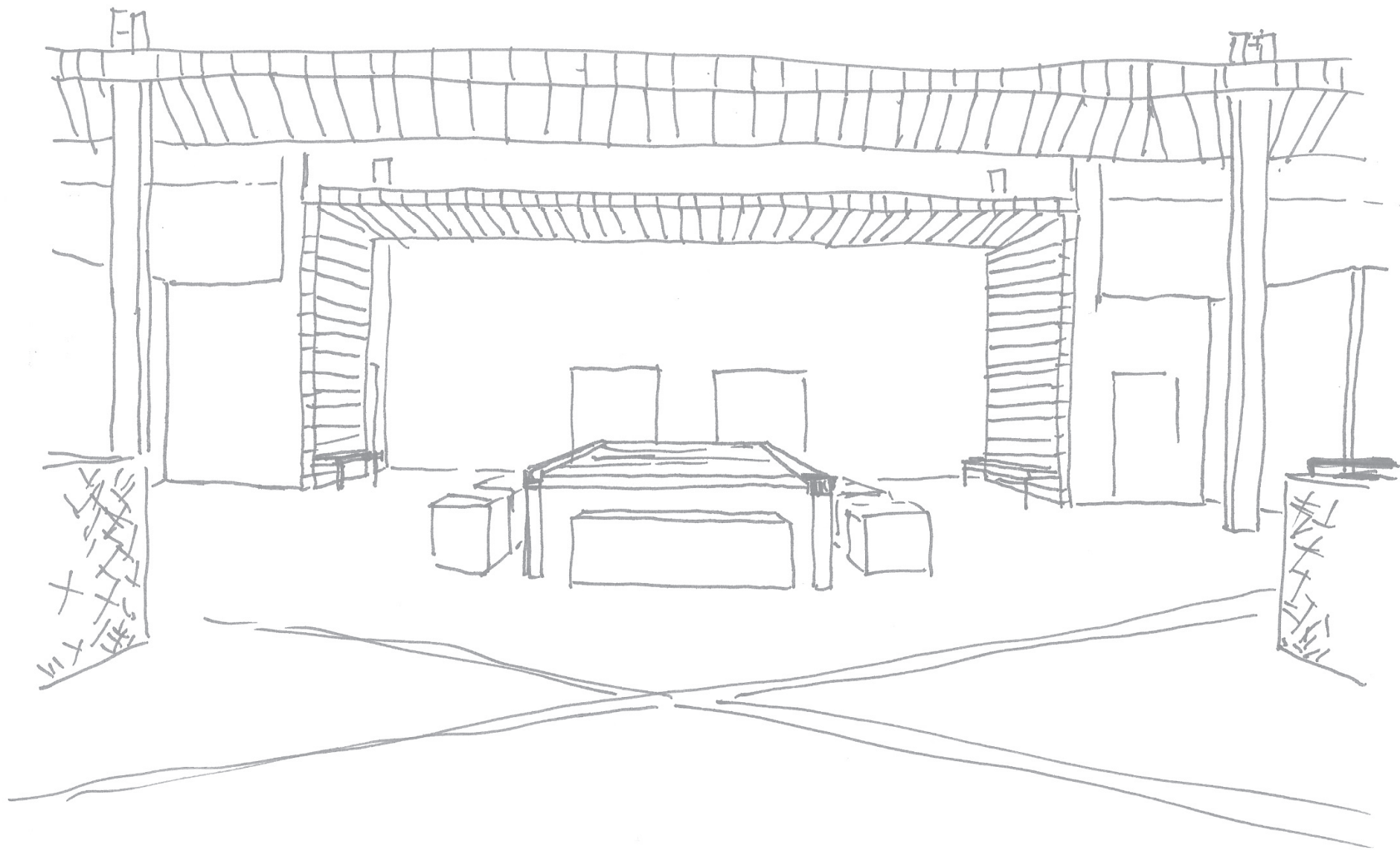


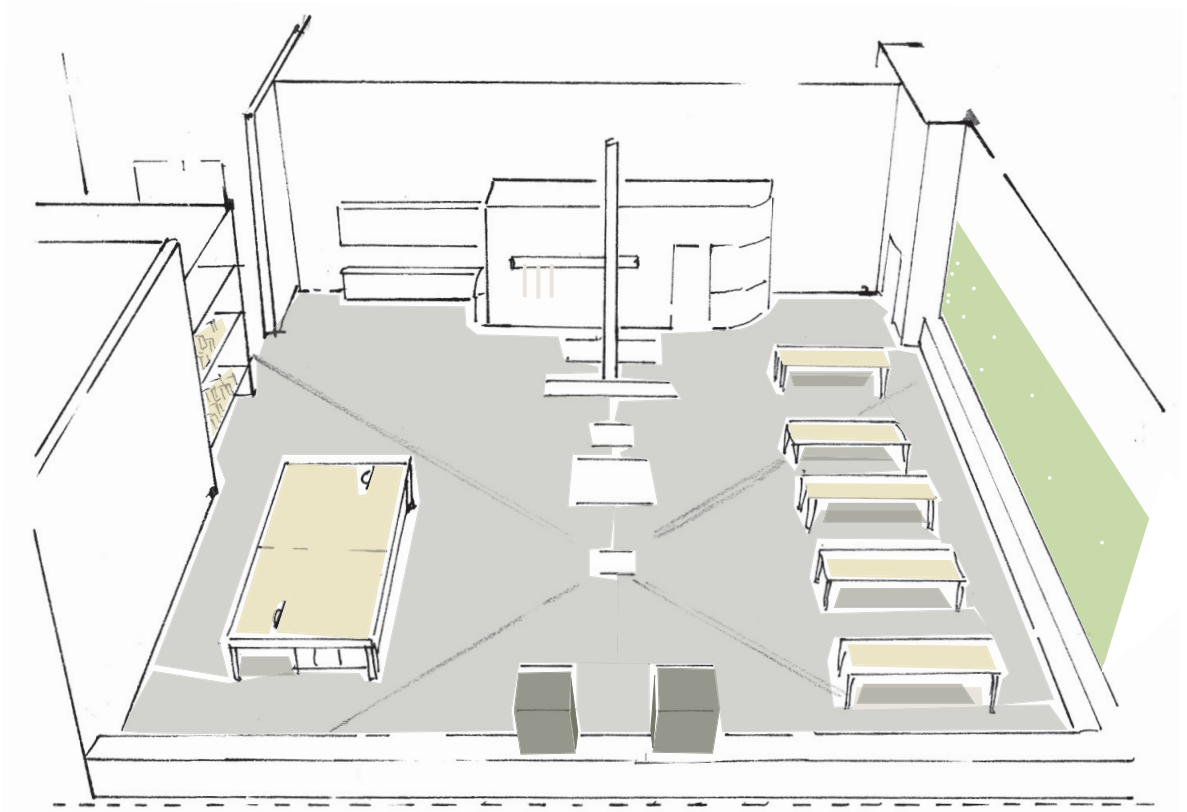
TYVEK DESK PRIVACY PANEL



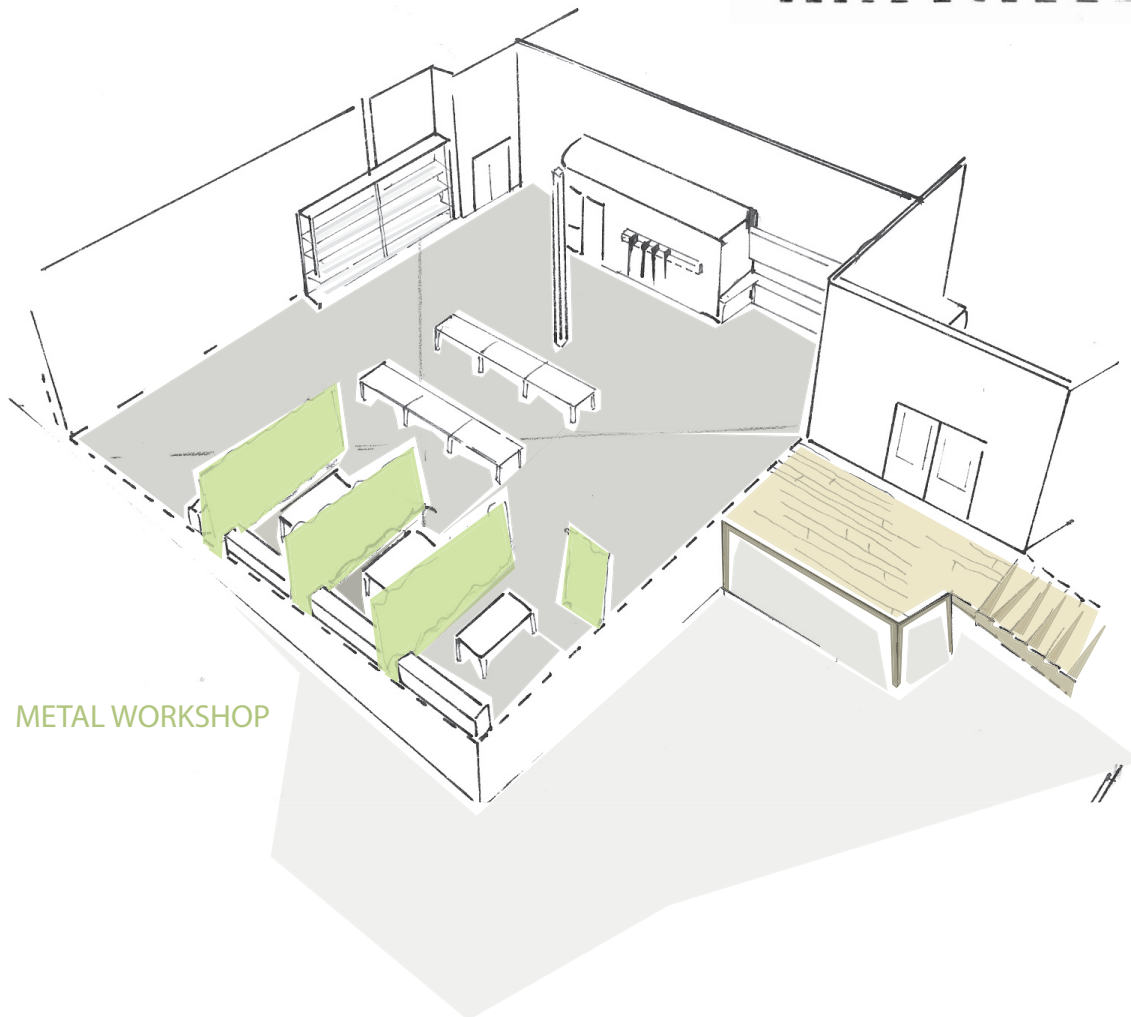
MOBILE TYVEK PRIVACY PANEL







WOOD WORKSHOP



METAL WORKSHOP





CLASSROOMS

Classrooms feature moveable walls for open use when classes are not scheduled