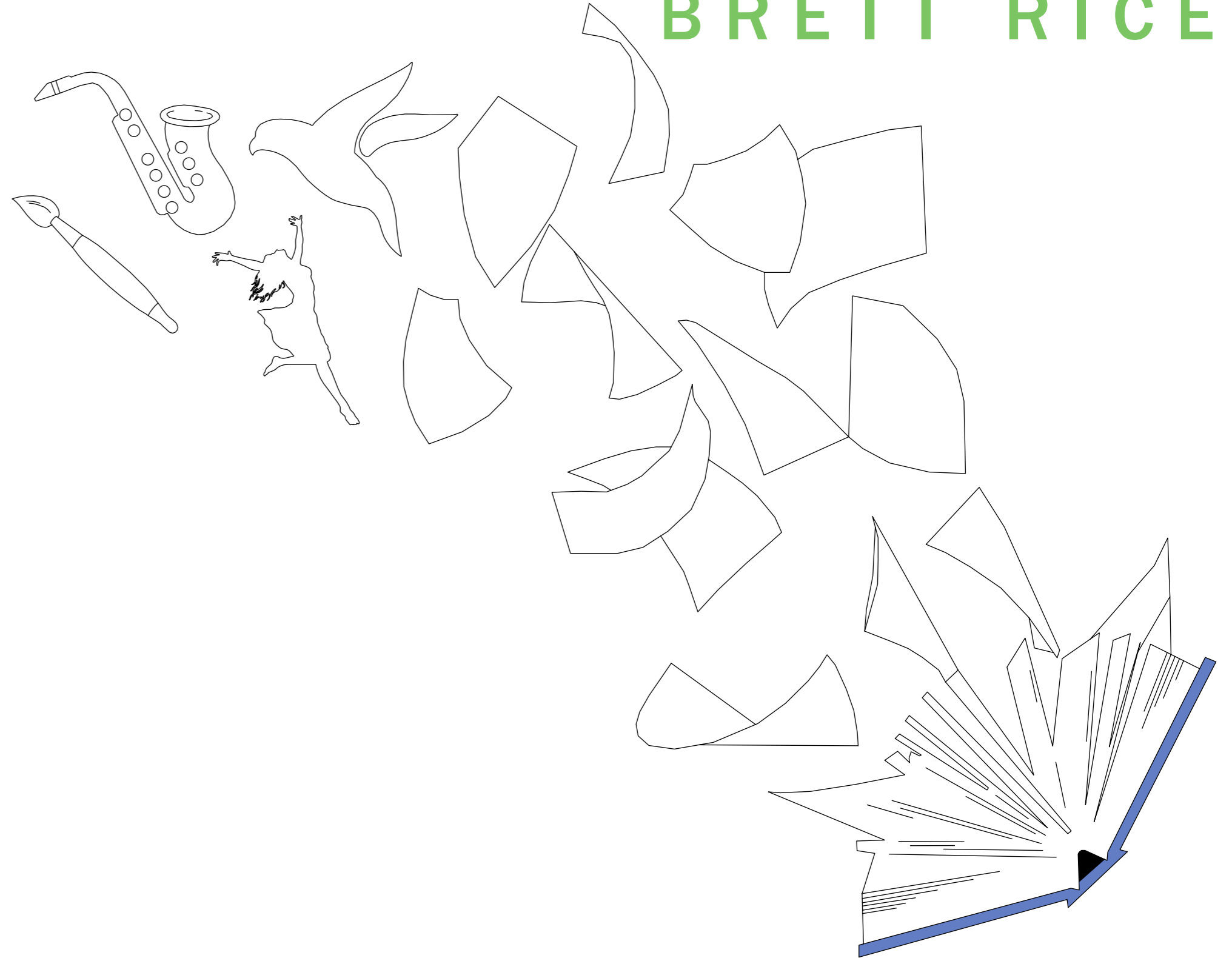


re imagination

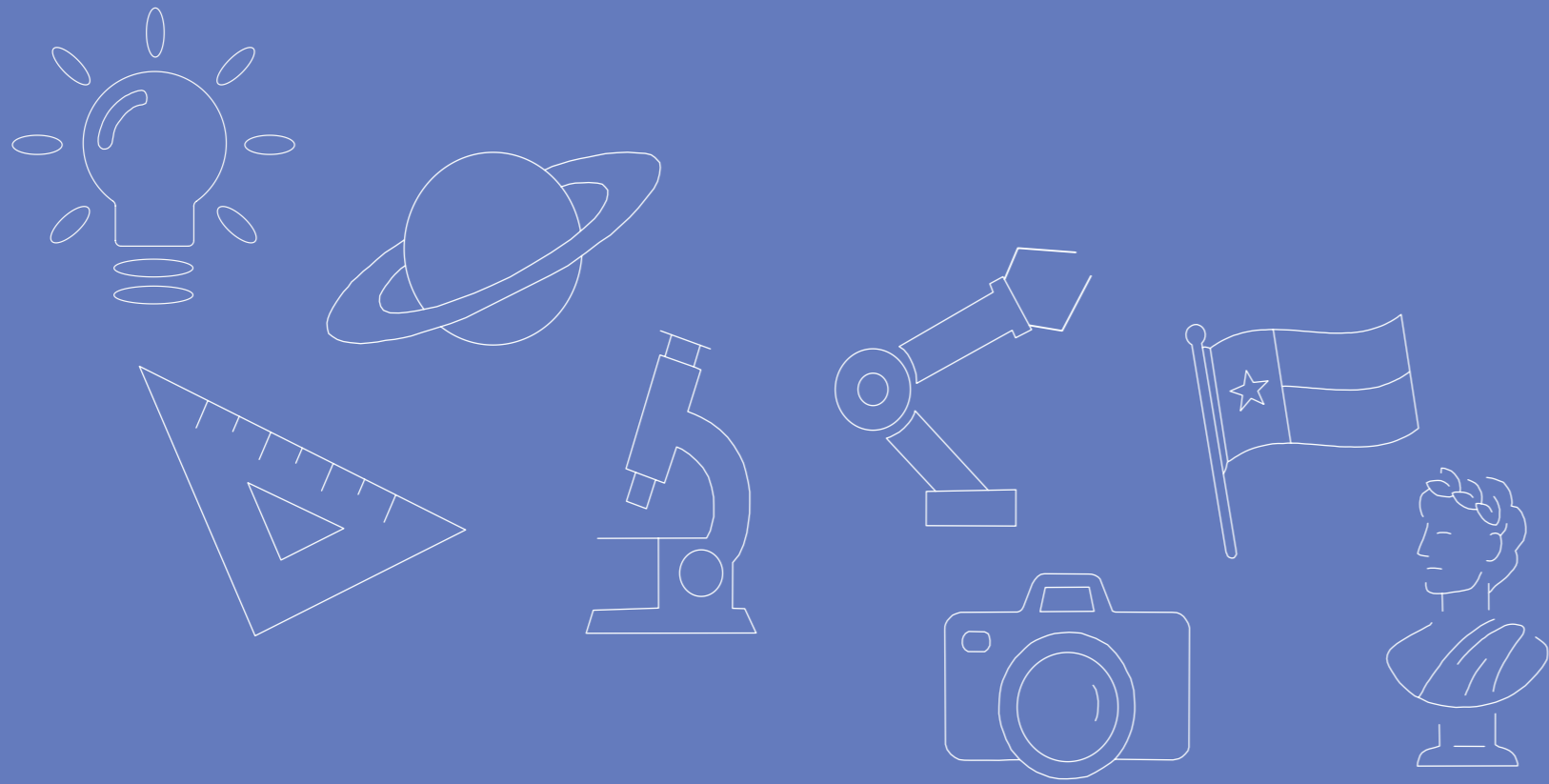
BRETT RICE



2023

BRETT RICE

REIMAGINATION



re
imagination
BRETT RICE

COMMITTEE

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Member: Dr. Stephen Caffey

Member: Dr. Elizabeth Roumell

Professor: Brian Gibbs

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my Lord Jesus Christ for blessing me with the opportunity to write this book. Thank You Mom and Dad for always supporting and believing in me. I would not be where I am today without you both. A special thank you to my committee for their continued support and leadership throughout this process.

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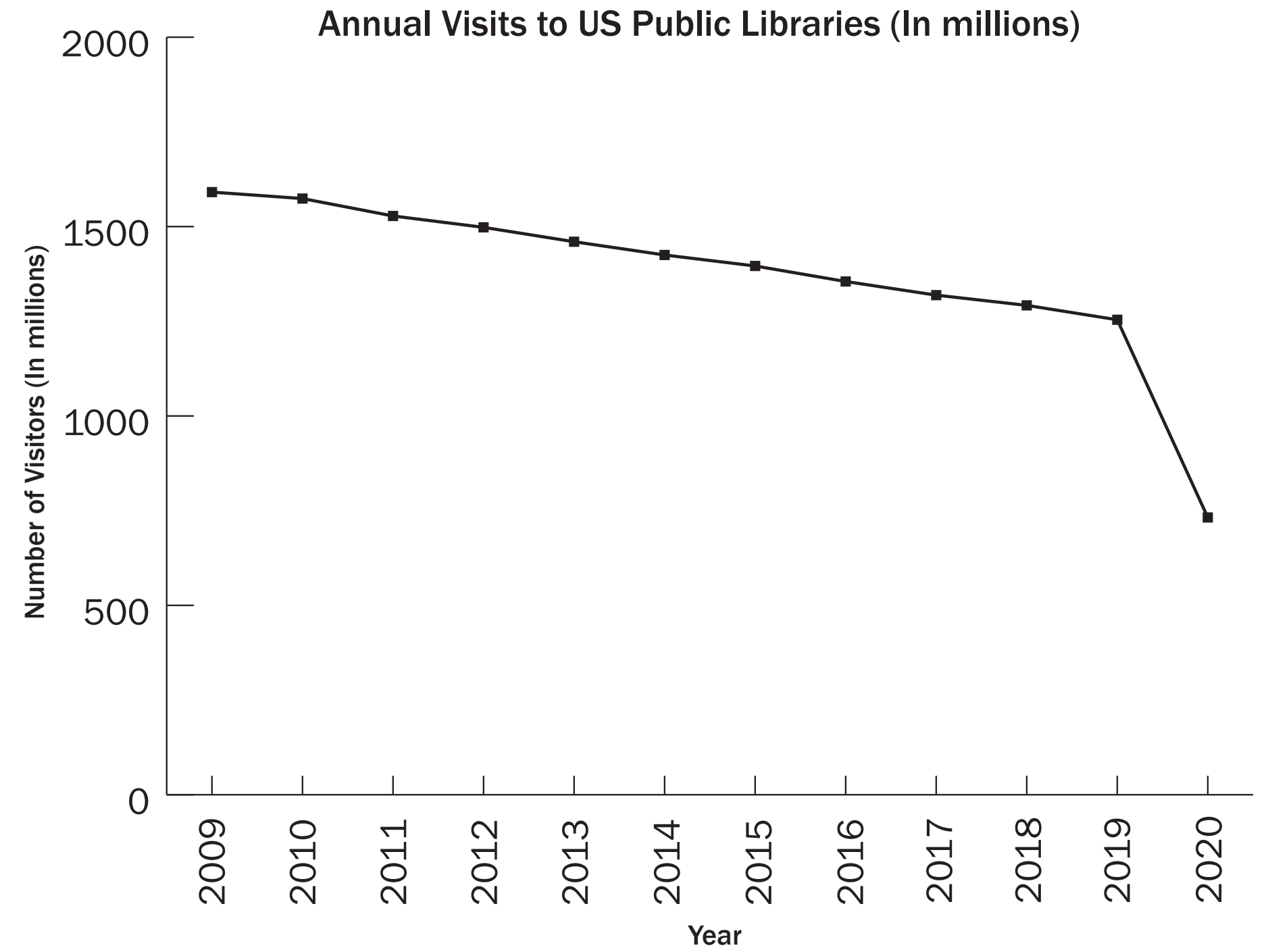
CONCEPT

ABSTRACT

Public libraries were first designed to provide resources and tools for the community to learn and grow. However, in recent years, fewer and fewer people have been visiting their local libraries due to the rise of technology and the lack of the public wanting to leave the comfort of their own homes. In order to revive the outdated public library, this project hopes to integrate a learning center with adaptive programs to accommodate the public with tools to equip and prepare through changing times. This project looks to reimagine and rethink how public libraries are designed to become more effective to the user and the community as a whole. This project investigates how the public could best be served through social interaction and adaptive programs. Growing up with educators as parents, I have always been around the learning process and have been intrigued with the development of learning and the tools and resources used to achieve knowledge. When looking at locations to develop my building, I looked to the cities in the United States with the lowest literacy rate. I found that San Antonio, Texas was near the top of that list, and I wanted to focus my research on this urban area. Through this project, I hope to accomplish a functional design that meets the needs of the public in a way that is accommodating, while fostering social harmony and cultural interaction.

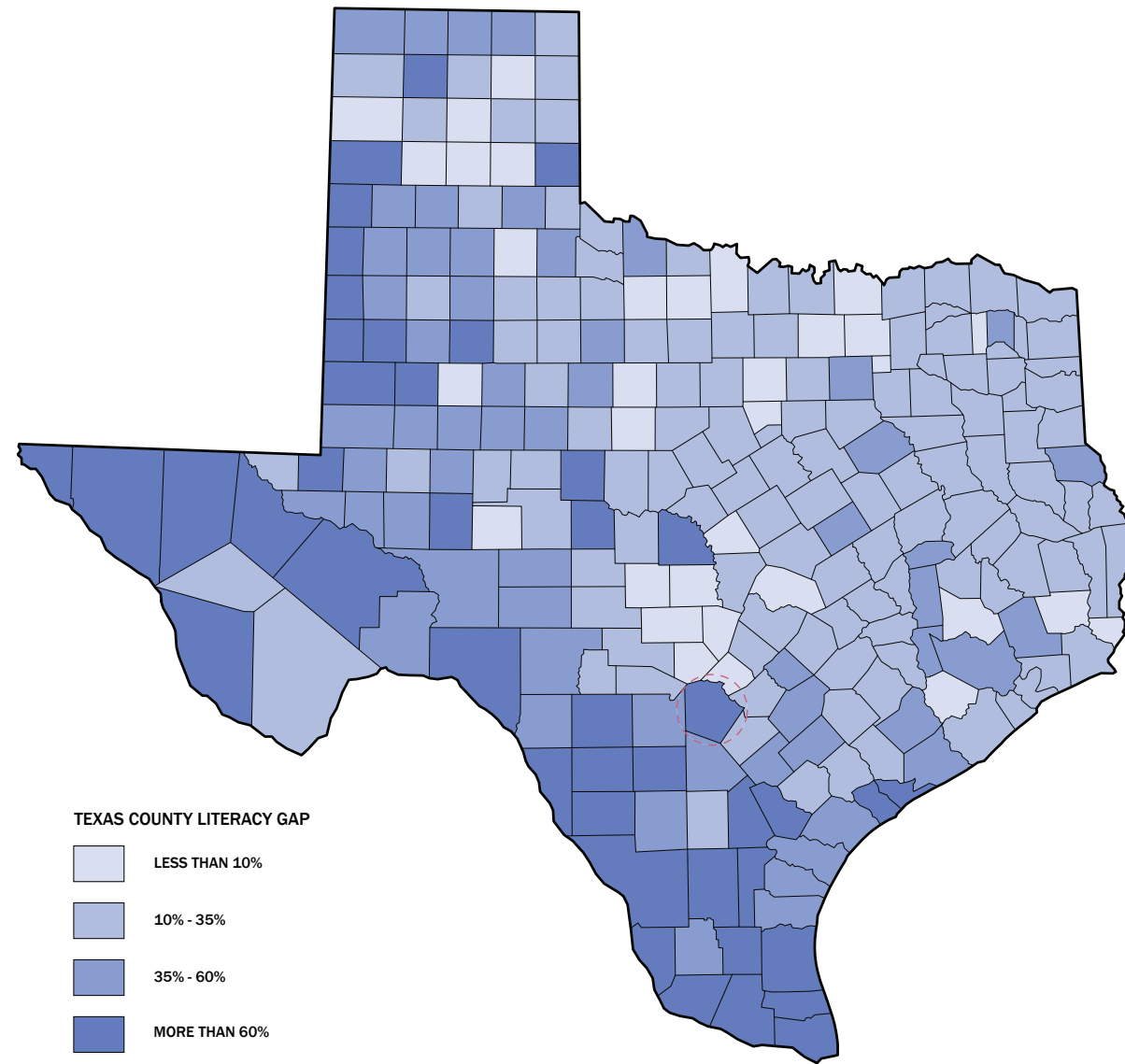
PROBLEM

Despite it being designed as a resource for the community, the public library in the United States of America has seen fewer visitors in the last decade. This decline is partly due to the rise of technology and lack of public funding.



Statistics from Words Rated, *Library Visit Statistics*

PROBLEM

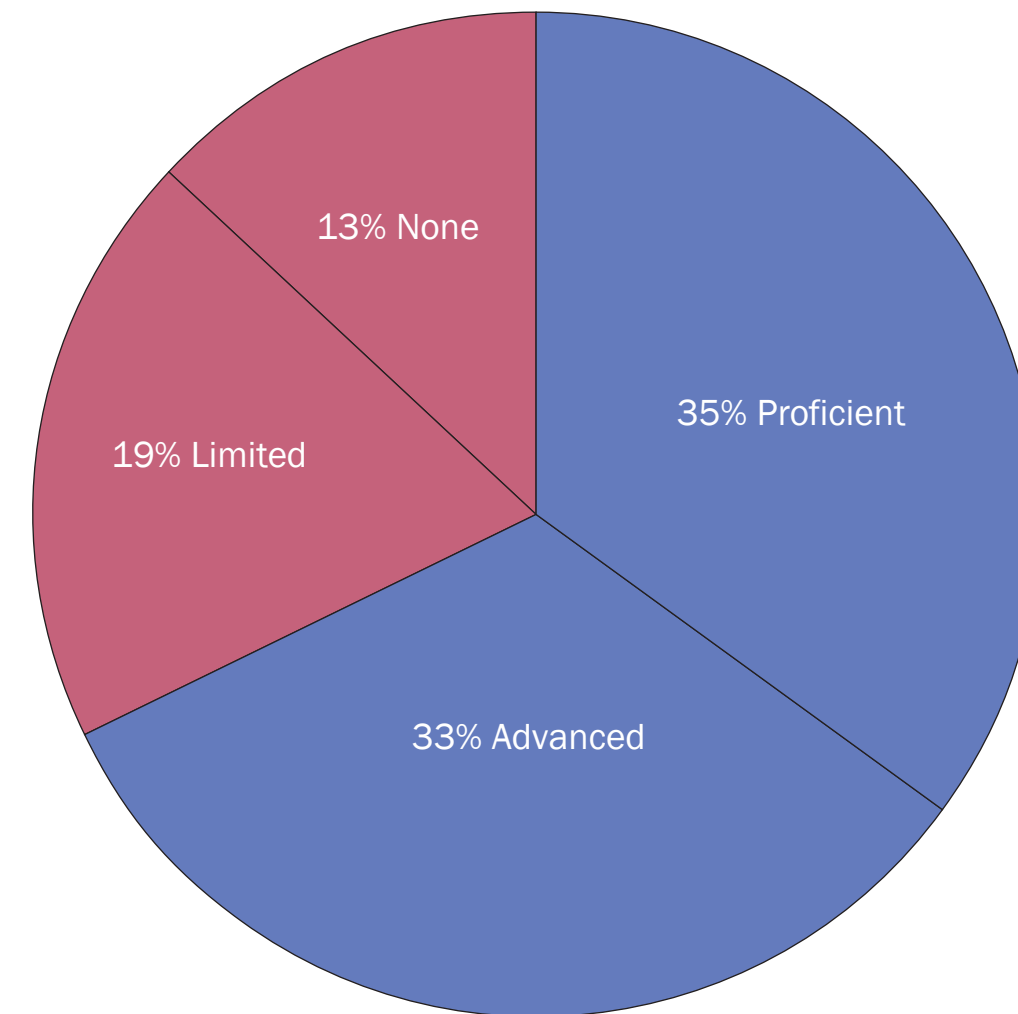


Texas ranks forty-ninth in literacy rates in the United States. The map shown to the right depicts the literacy level of each county in the state of Texas. The western border of Texas along the Rio Grande River has a higher number of population that are illiterate compared to the remainder of the state. Low literacy rates can be correlated to low income and poor health conditions.

TEXAS COUNTY LITERACY GAP

Statistics from Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, *Literacy Gap Map*

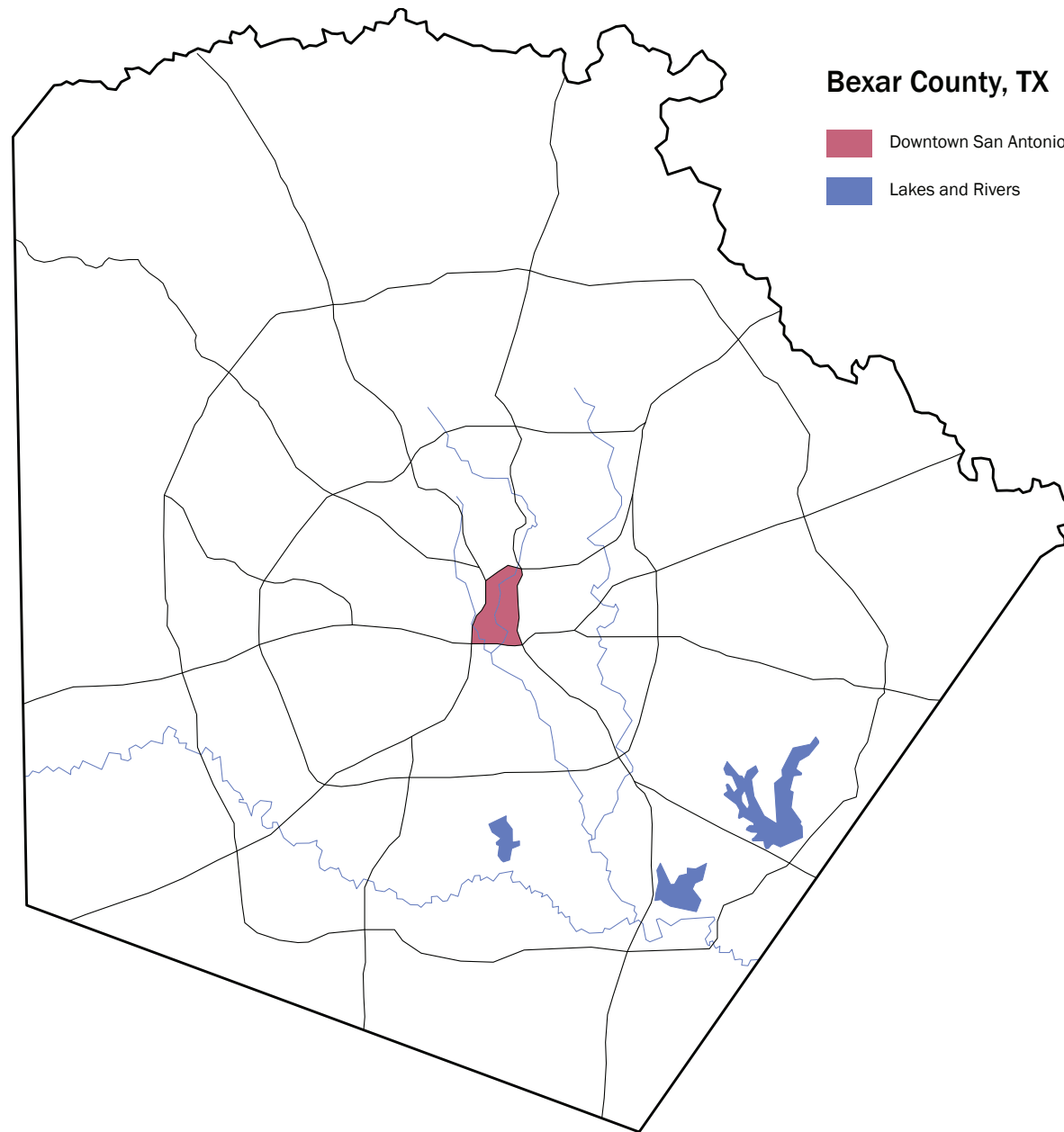
Digital Literacy Skills in the US



Statistics from PIAAC, *Survey of Adult Skills*

The graph shown to the left illustrates the digital literacy skills of workers between the ages of sixteen and sixty-four in the United States. From the Pandemic, studies have shown that there is a large number of the population that are digital illiterate. Approximately one-third of the US has limited to no skill in digital literacy. Since society is moving to a technology driven environment, more and more people are falling behind and are unable to find and communicate information through technology.

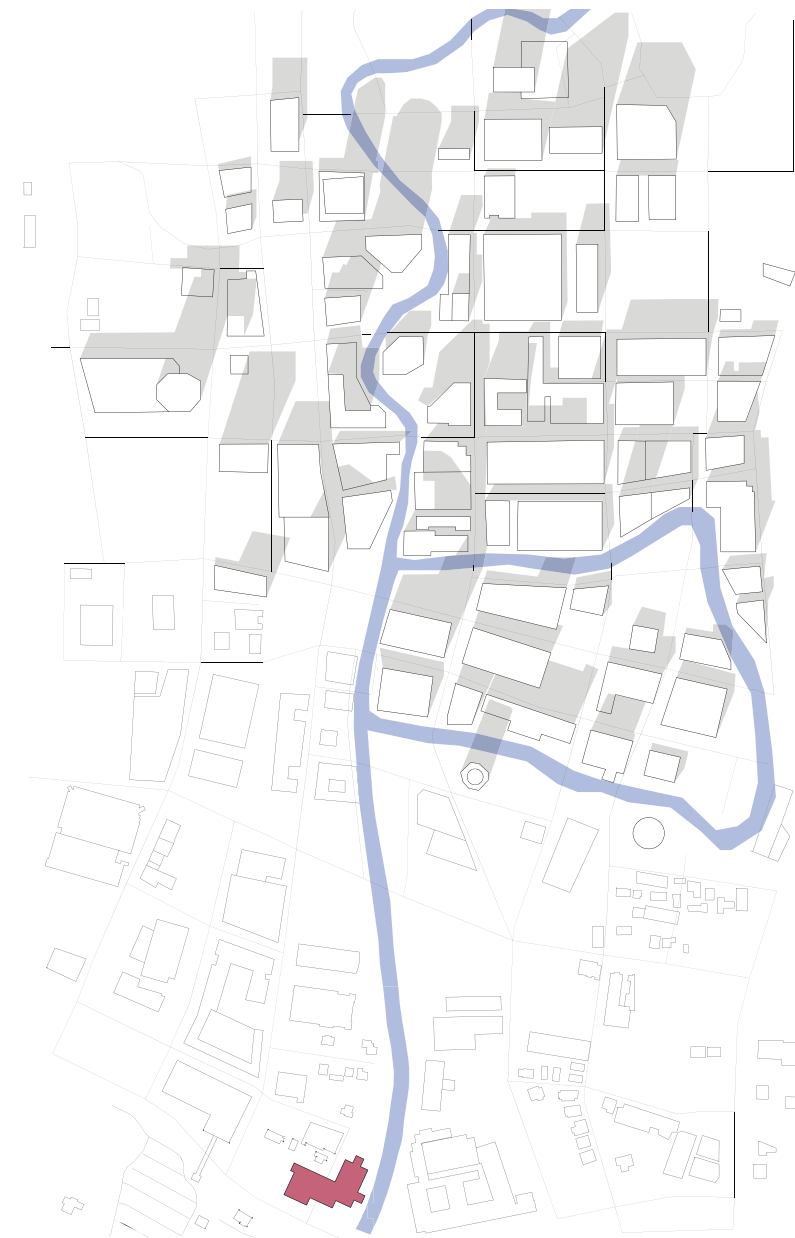
SITE



San Antonio, Texas has a diverse population that is full of a rich history. The city has a culturally integrated Mexican influence that dates back to 1836. With a population of 1.4 million, San Antonio has the seventh highest population in the United States where roughly sixty five percent classify as Hispanic (Census Bureau). However, roughly twenty five percent of San Antonio is considered illiterate. Texas ranks 49th out of 50 with the lowest literacy rate in the United States. It felt appropriate to incorporate a learning center into a public library in this area to accommodate and serve the public. This dense location is constantly growing each year and provides an opportunity to spark change in the learning process.

San Antonio has become a destination spot for tourists to visit the famous Alamo, riverwalk, and Sea World while experiencing authentic Mexican traditions and culture. Approximately thirty four million tourists visit San Antonio, Texas annually that help boost the local economy and provide the story of San Antonio to be told to visitors. The site for the building is located in the heart of San Antonio near the downtown and adjacent to the Riverwalk enabling more visitors to experience what this space has to offer.

SITE





Photographed by Koichiro Aitani, 2022

EXISTING

Photographed by Koichiro Aitani, 2022





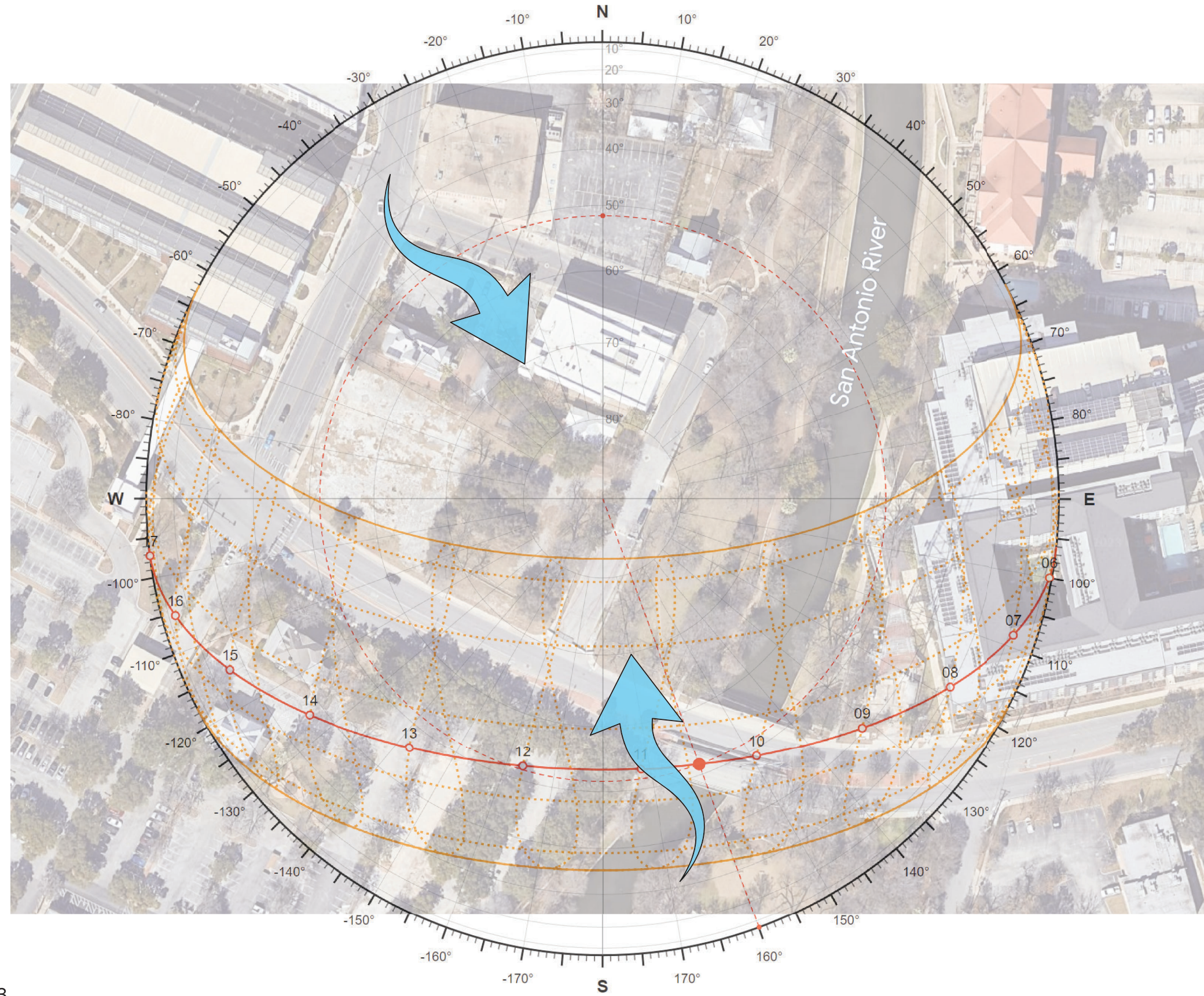
Photographed by Koichiro Aitani, 2022

EXISTING

Photographed by Koichiro Aitani, 2022



SITE



ANALYSIS

The sun diagram illustrates that the location of the existing site receives the most sunlight from the south. This allows shading to be utilized on the north side of the site. The wind blows from the southeast and northwest for the majority of the year. The pedestrian pathway can serve as a wind tunnel to provide cooling by creating a breezeway through the site.

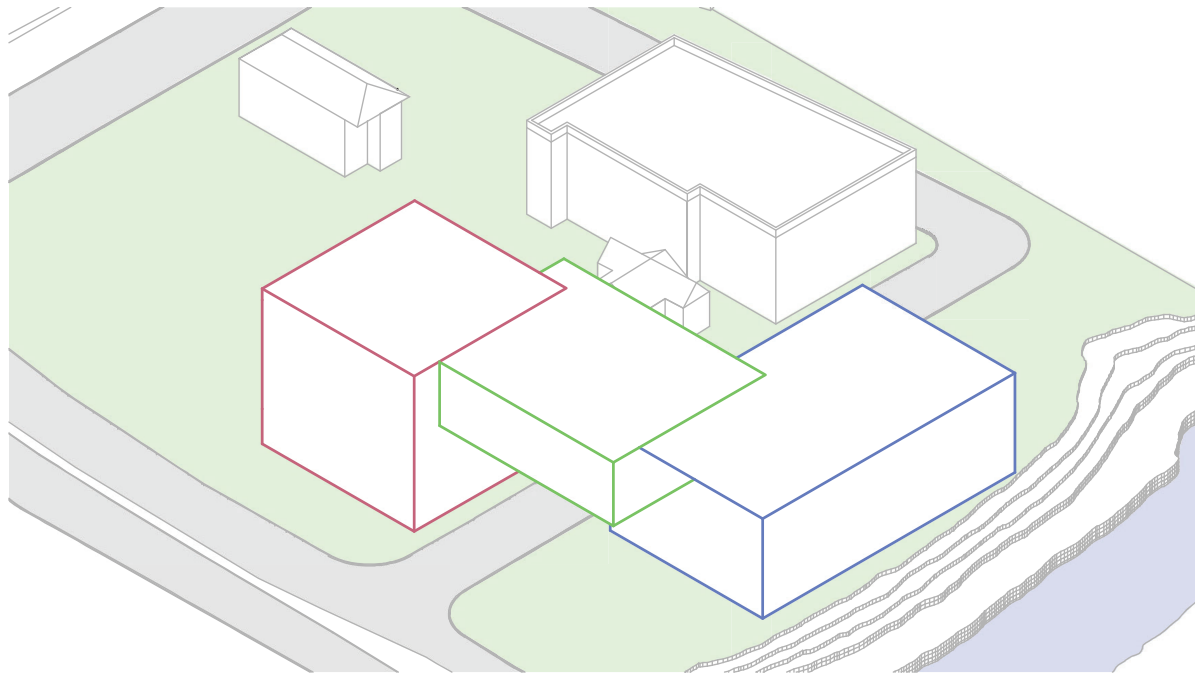
SITE



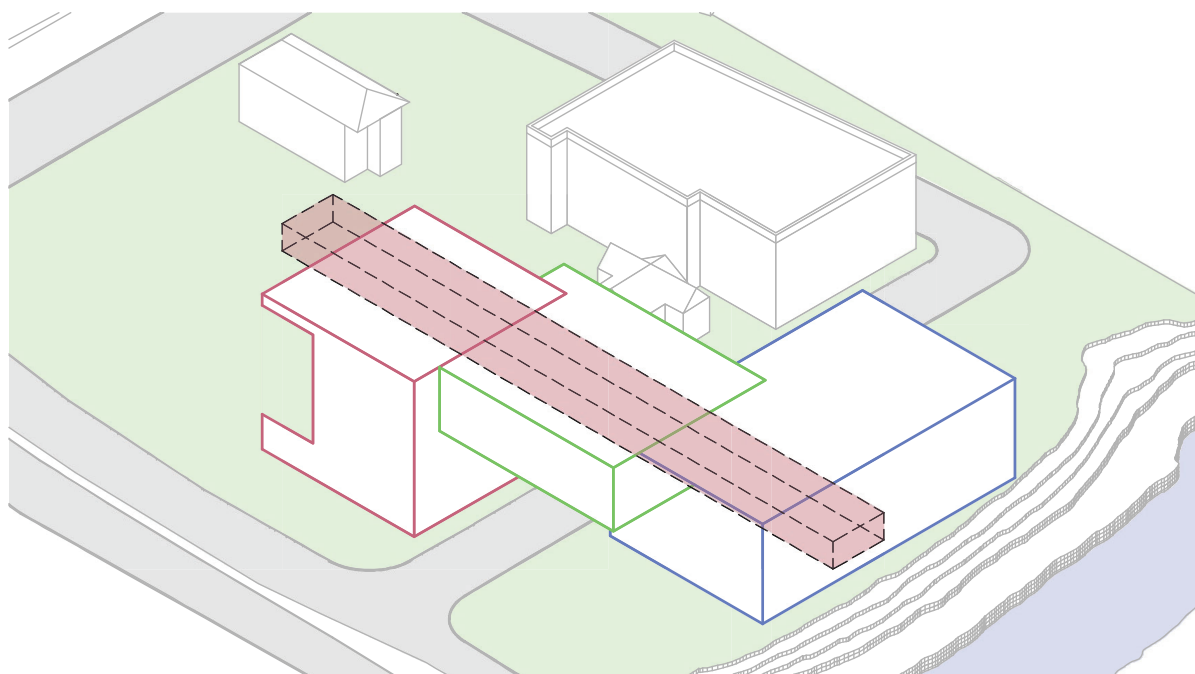
ANALYSIS

The location of the existing lot allows the building to be connected into the urban landscape of San Antonio through its proximity to the downtown and movement that occurs along the Riverwalk. The proposed building responds to the adjacent buildings to provide accessibility and continuity of movement. The east side of the building is located along the San Antonio River and provides direct access to the extension of the Riverwalk. The site is incorporated into the building through the edge conditions set by the river and Cesar Chavez Boulevard. The path that cuts through the building provides access to both sides of the site that serves as a connection point. The south facing elevation of the building responds to the harsh sun by the establishment of the shading curtains along the edge of the glass glazing placed deliberately to allow certain views outward while providing comfortable shading to the interior.

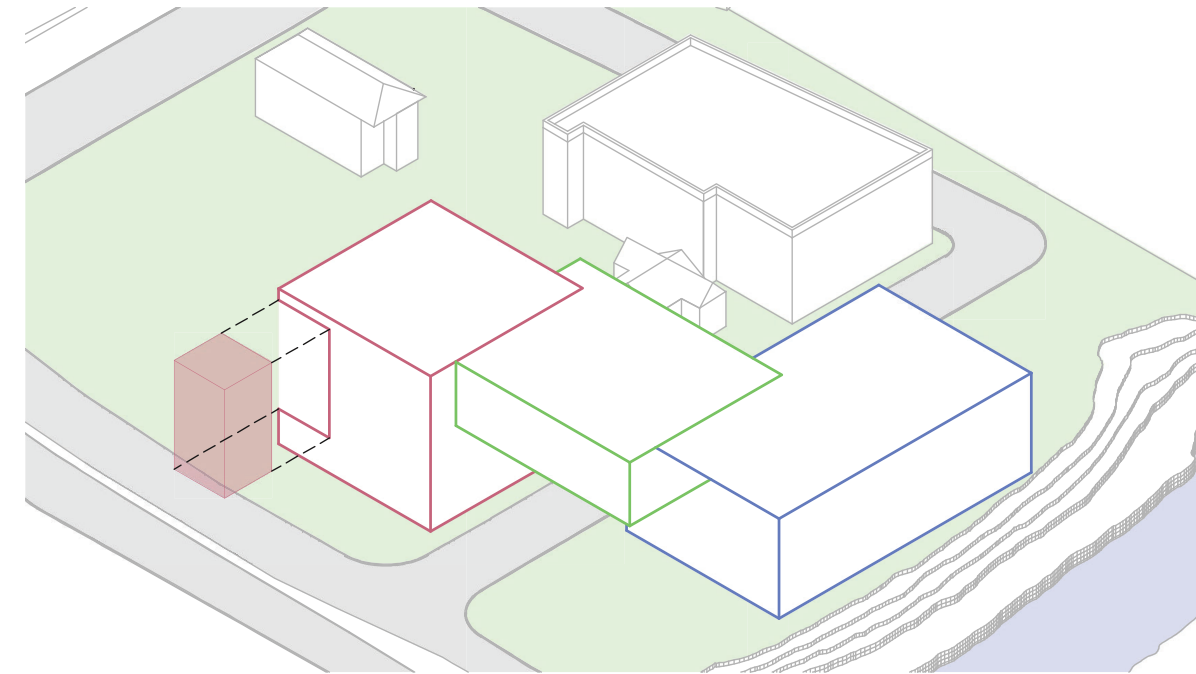
PART I



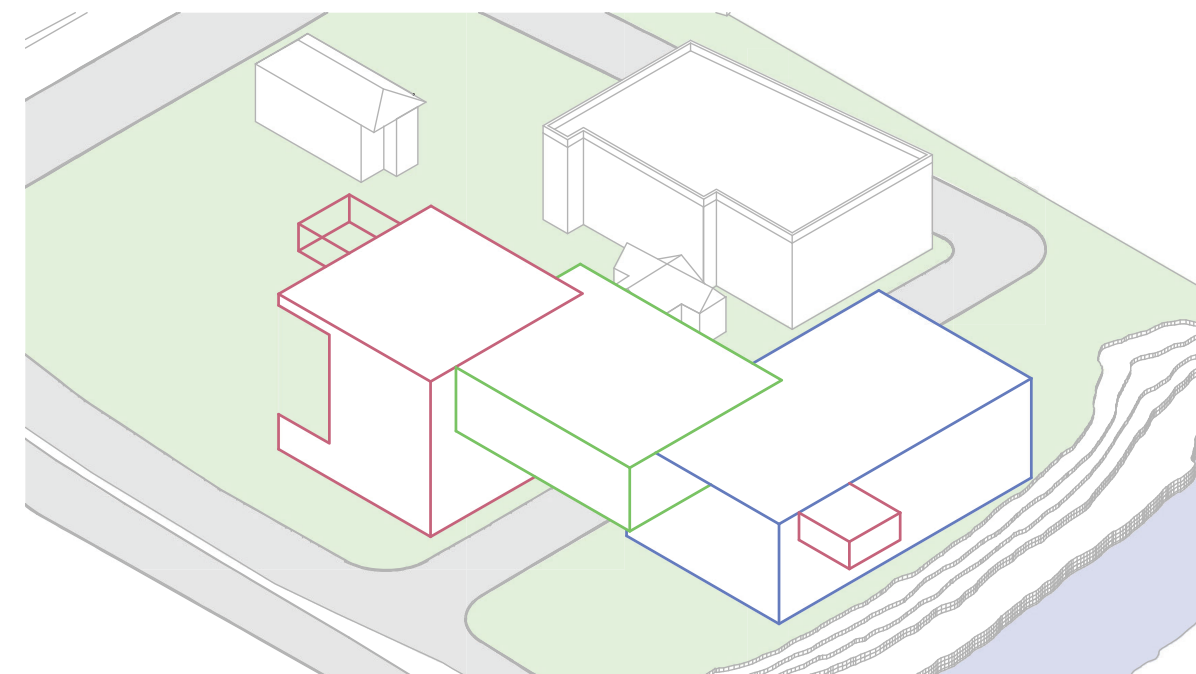
To represent the integration of social interaction and building program, it felt appropriate to convey these ideas through the form of the building. The building is based on three intersecting volumes that connect over a pedestrian walkway. The orientation of these buildings faces north towards the downtown area while providing views to the beautiful San Antonio River.



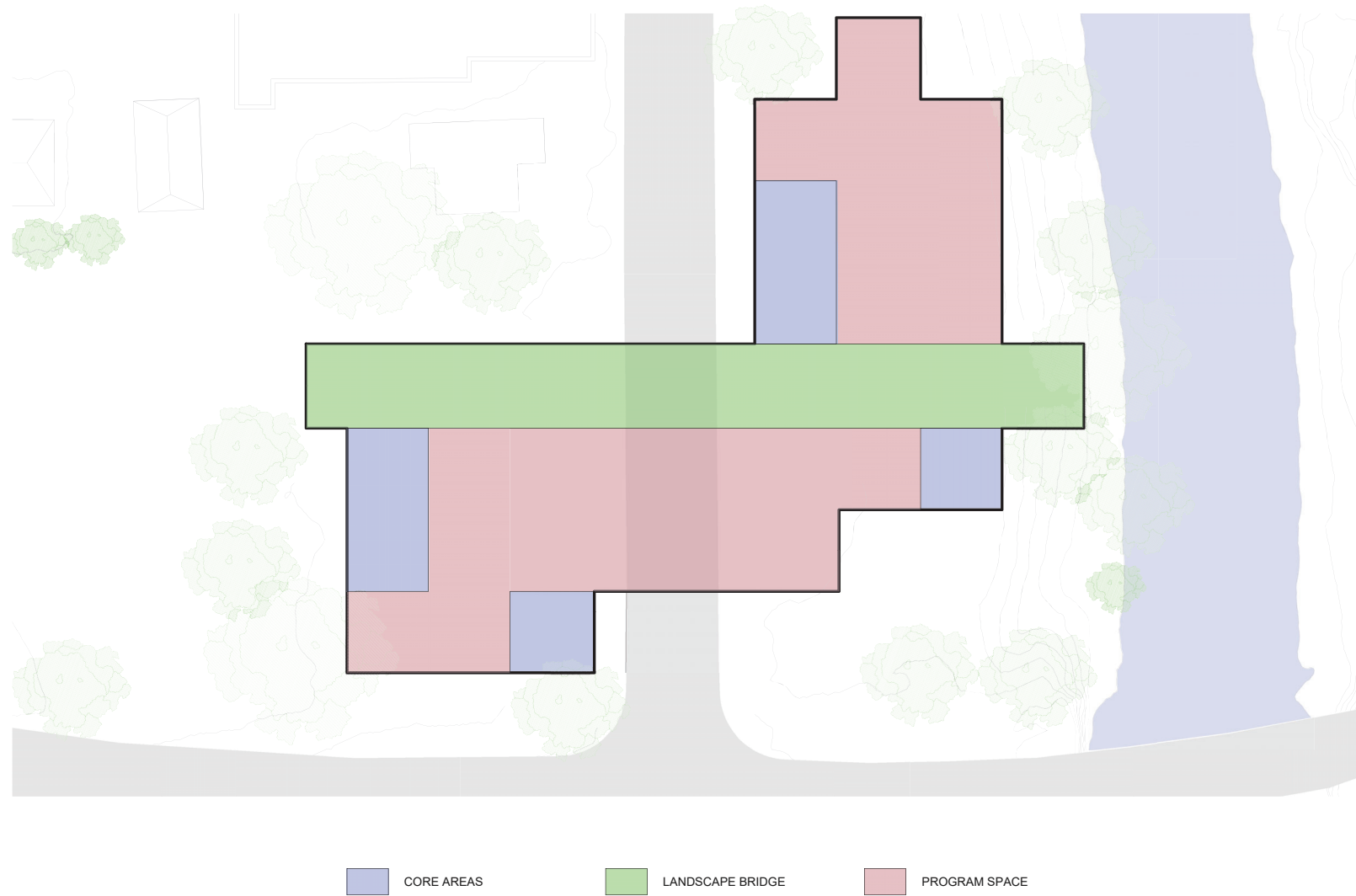
PART I



Through consideration, it was decided to convert the paved area on the east side of the lot to a park area. That park would then allow the opportunity to be extended into the building through a landscape bridge that would connect the two sides of the building together. This extension of the park would help the user navigate through the building while adding greenery to the learning developmental senses. This idea of movement through the building allows the viewer to interact with the spaces.

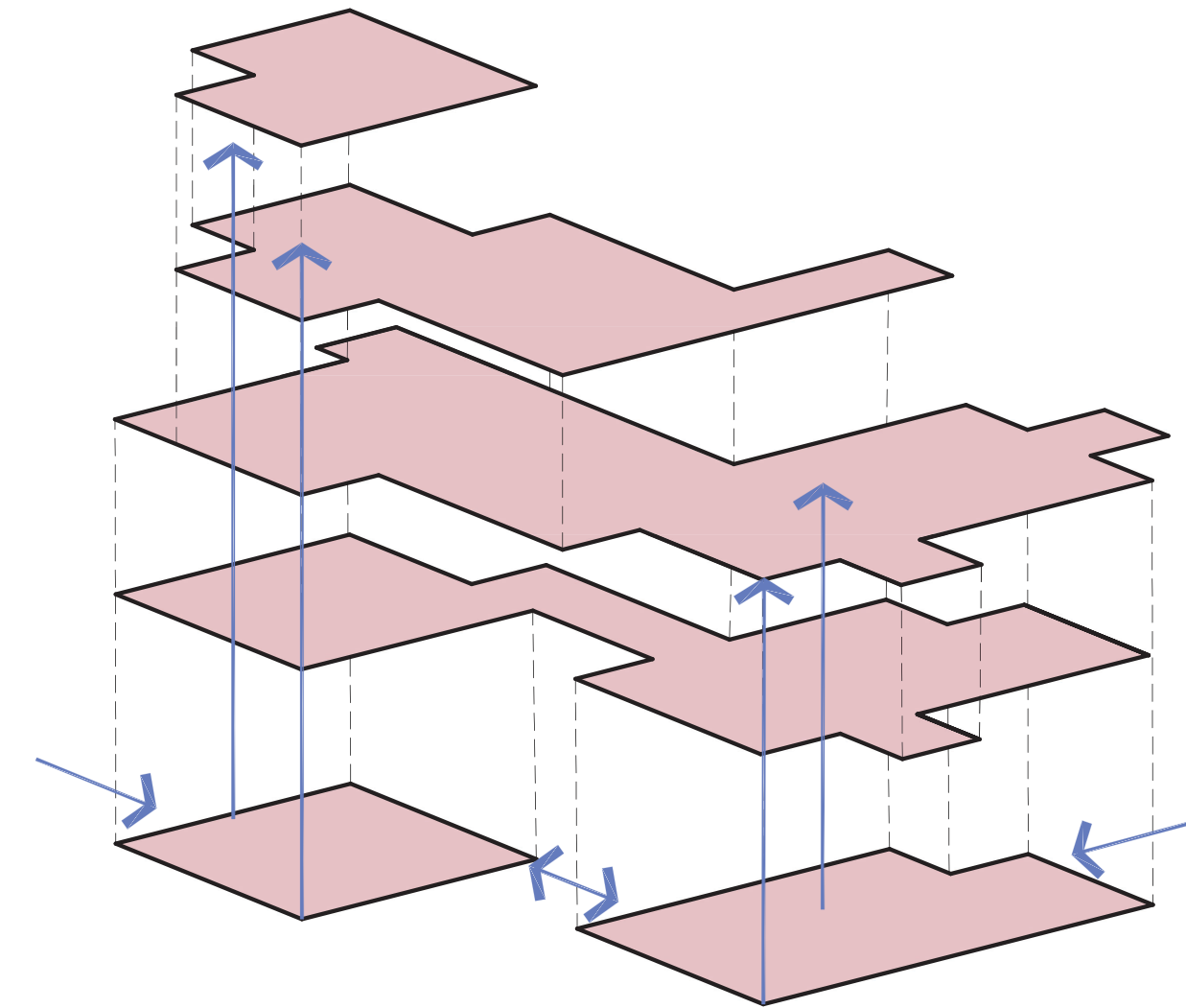


PROGRAM



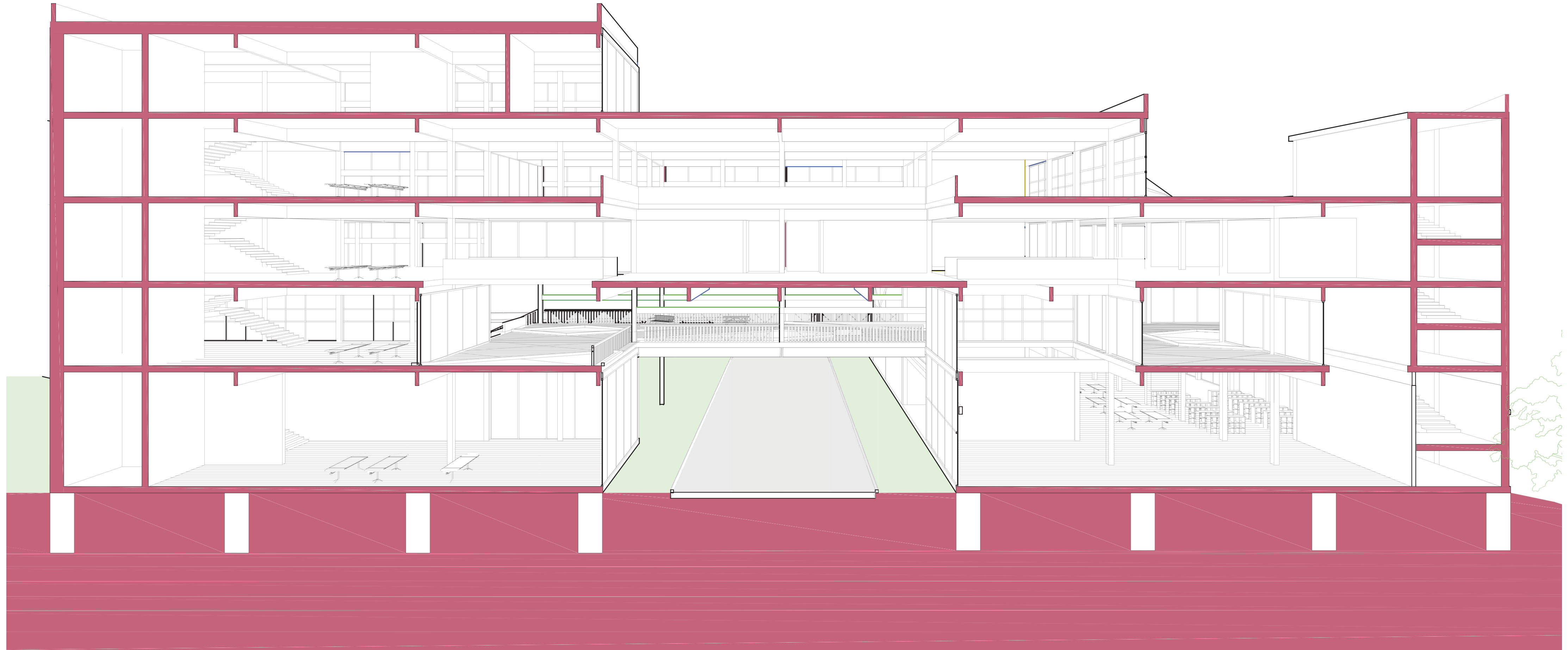
The core areas are located on the back sides of the building to provide views to the San Antonio River. The landscape bridge connects the two sides of the building together while serving as a wayfinding element. The bridge helps to navigate the user to experience different moments of the building. The program space is placed along the center spaces to bring people together and allow collaboration to occur.

CIRCULATION



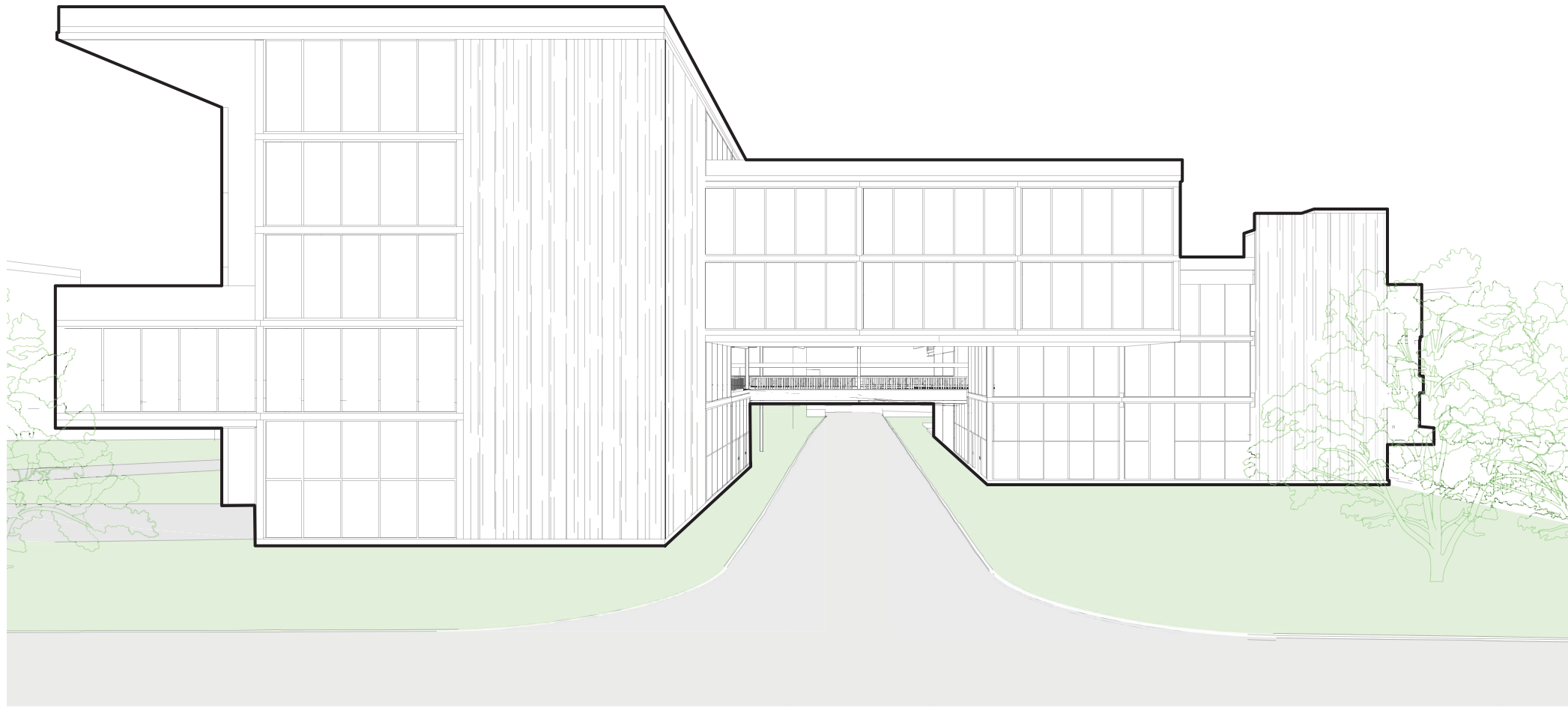
The single building starts out as two separate volumes on the ground floor that later become integrated. As the user progresses throughout the building and moves upward the buildings become integrated with one another. This integration within the building encourages the user to become part of the building to help activate it.

BUILDING

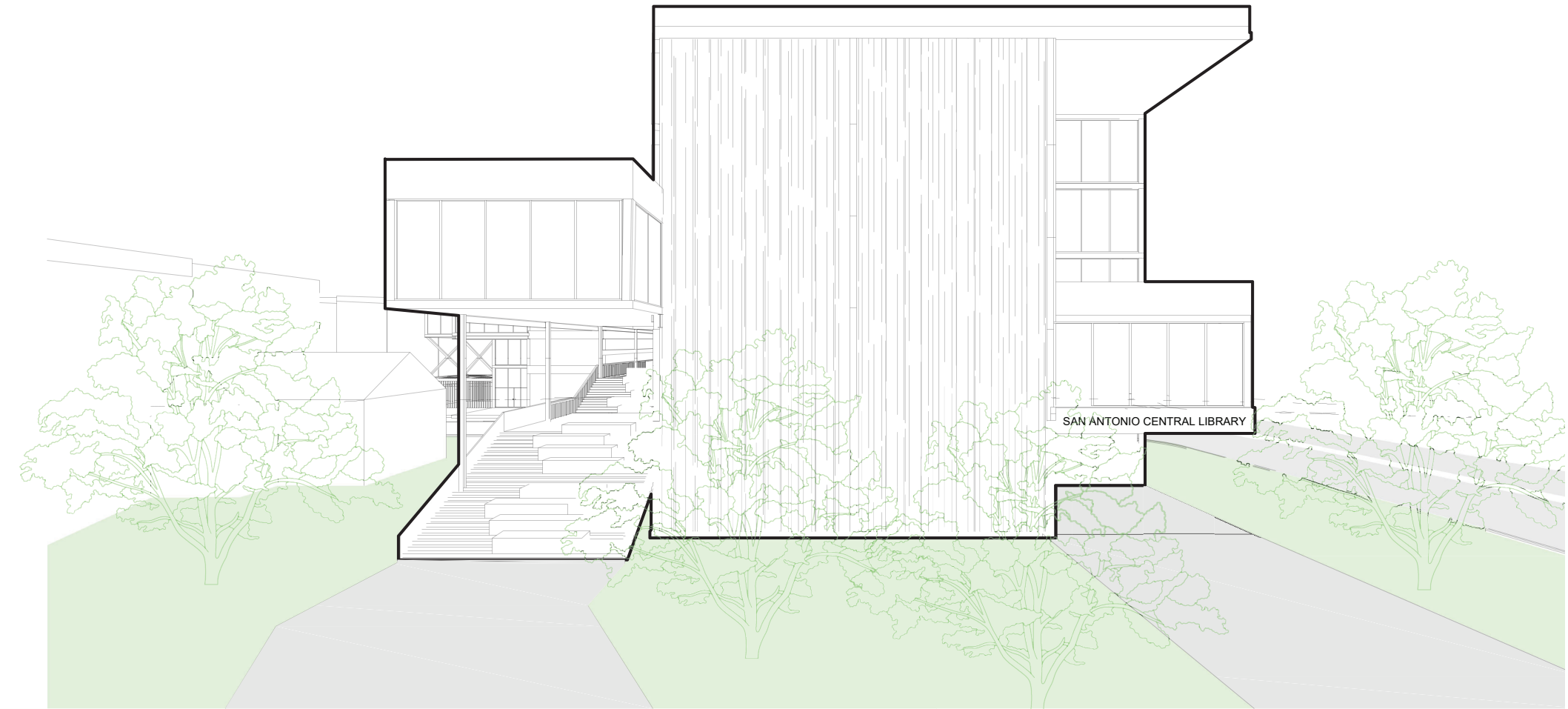


SECTION BB

**SOUTH
ELEVATION**



**WEST
ELEVATION**



GROUND FLOOR

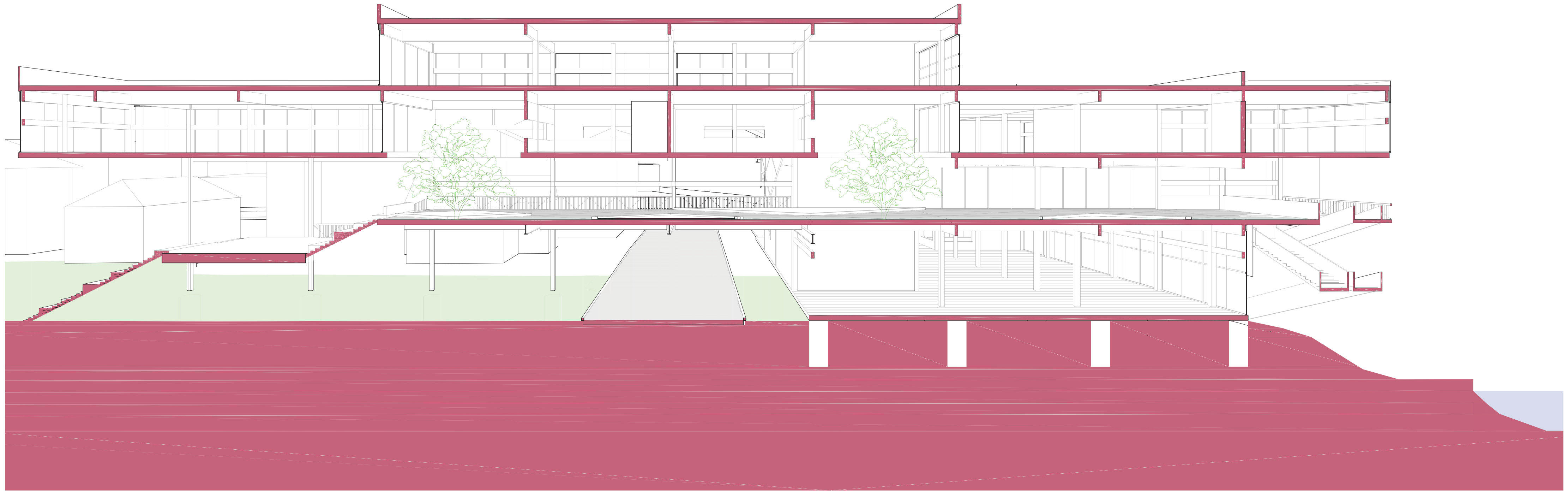


- | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. ENTRANCE | 5. ELEVATOR | 9. LOBBY | 13. MEN RESTROOM | 17. MUSIC ROOM | 21. CLASSROOM |
| 2. SERVICE DESK | 6. MECHANICAL ROOM | 10. LIVING ROOM | 14. WOMEN RESTROOM | 18. PRIVATE STUDY ROOM | 22. COLLABORATION SPACE |
| 3. OFFICE | 7. BOOK COLLECTION | 11. COMPUTER AREA | 15. LANDSCAPE BRIDGE | 19. AUDIO/VISUAL ROOM | 23. ART STUDIO |
| 4. PRINTING AREA | 8. OUTDOOR PATIO | 12. STORAGE | 16. MAKER SPACE | 20. PERFORMANCE STUDIO | 24. MUSEUM EXHIBIT |



DESCRIPTION

The floor plans help to organize the flow and circulation throughout the building. The placement of the core areas and egress stairs was carefully placed to maximize the views and provide easy accessibility to the user. The integration of spaces reemphasizes the idea of people coming together to experience something special. Retractable walls and rooms intersecting other rooms can be seen as overlapping spaces that encourage social interaction and activate the community.



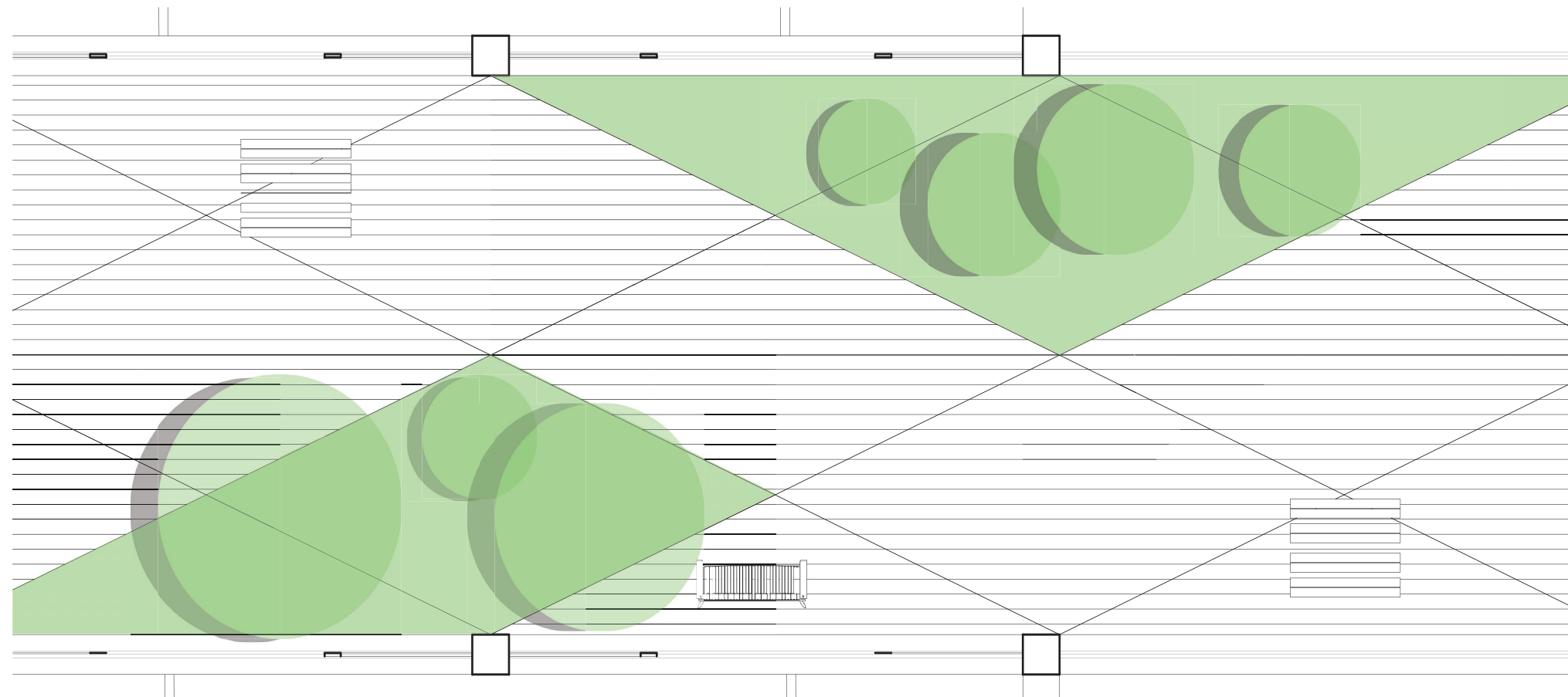
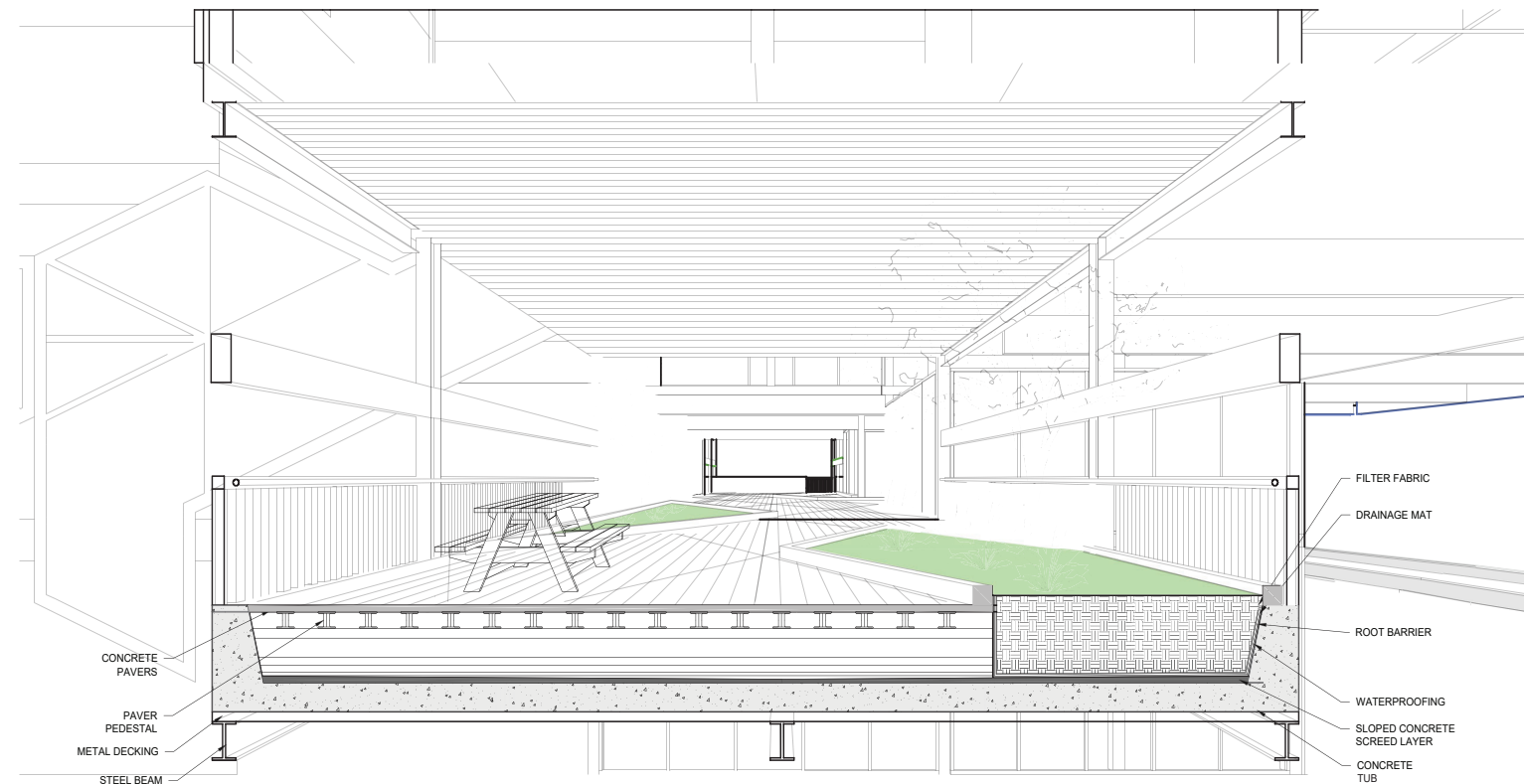
SECOND FLOOR



DESCRIPTION

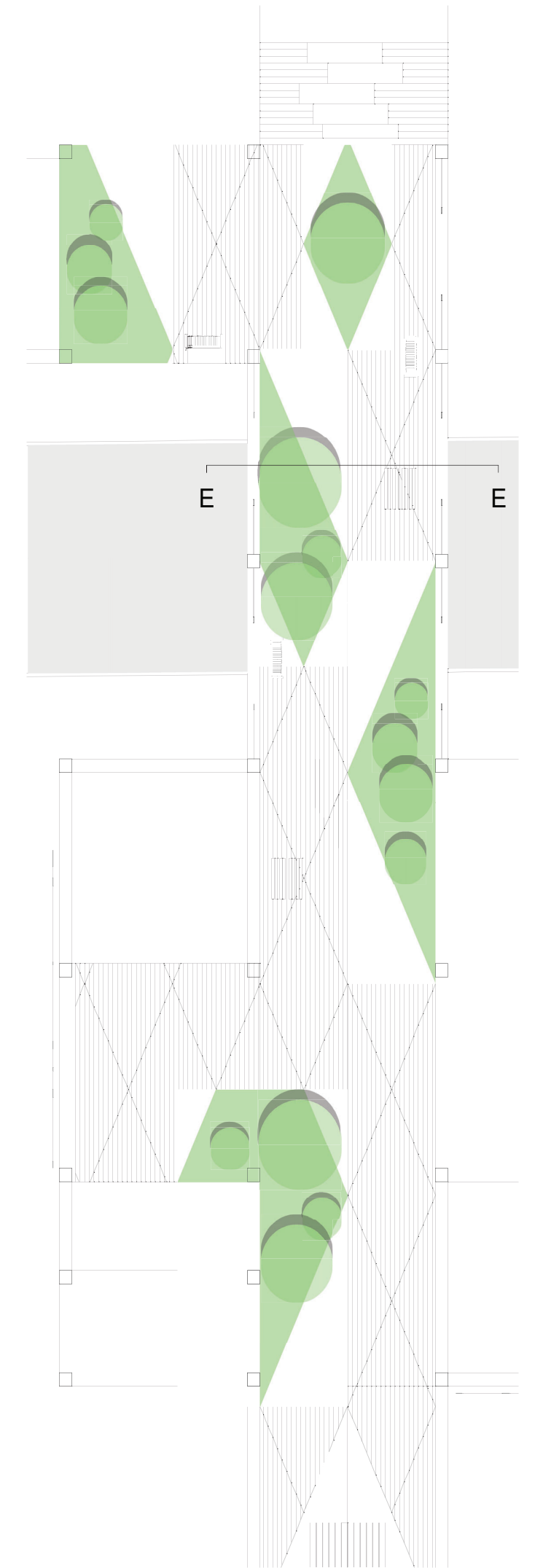
The second floor begins to bring the two sides of the building together. The landscape bridge serves as a connecting piece while providing access into the building. The east side of the building houses the musical areas while providing views to the San Antonio River and downtown. The technology maker space is located on the east side of the building where innovation and collaboration takes place.

LANDSCAPE BRIDGE

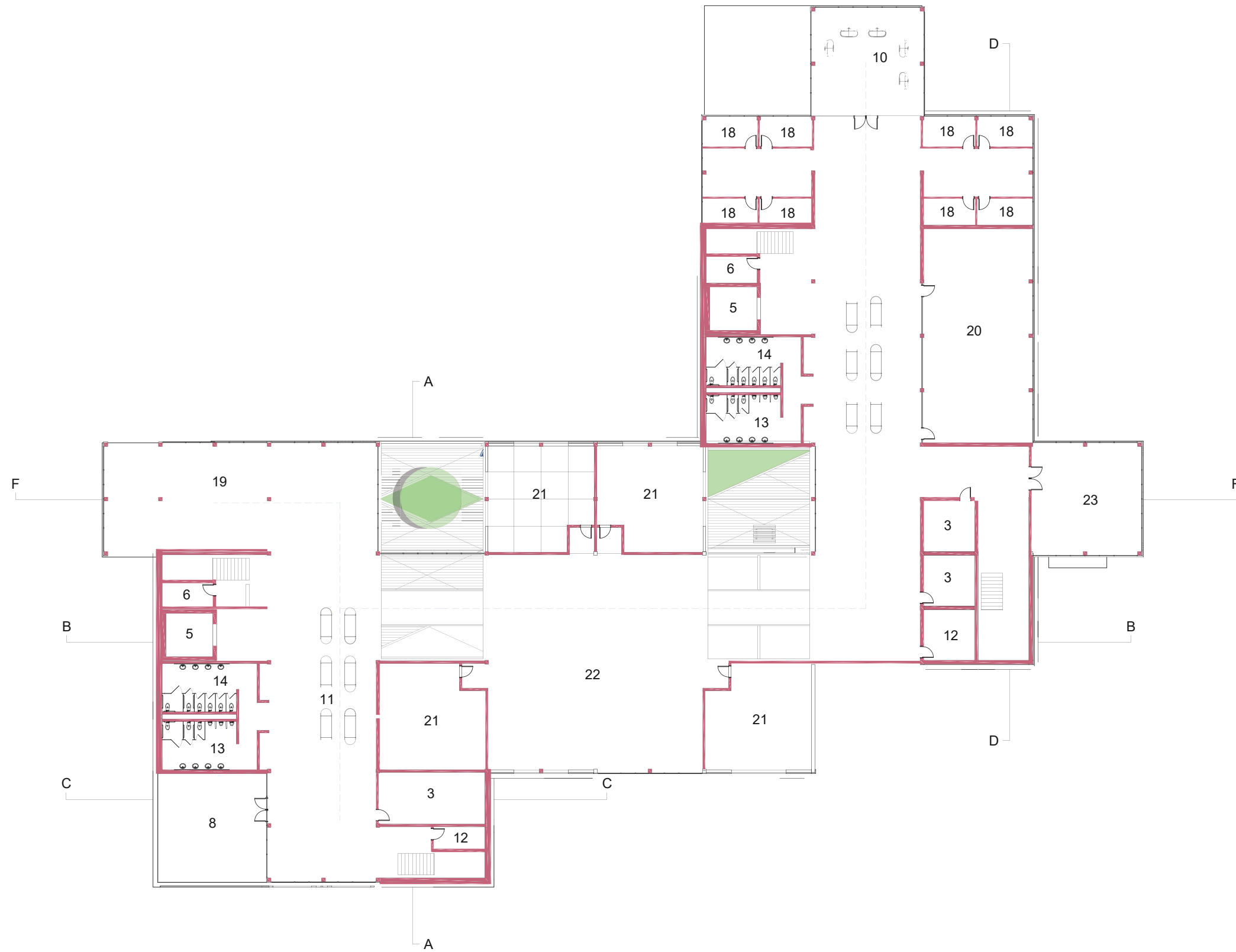


ANALYSIS

On the west side of the site, there is an open space that was converted into a park area. This park was designed to be extended through the building connecting the building together via a landscape bridge from the east side park to the riverwalk. This landscape bridge helps to provide greenery throughout the building that sparks learning and activates the senses, ultimately creating a comfortable environment. This landscape bridge is composed of concrete and steel that juxtaposes the rest of the building material of mass timber. This contrast of material directs the viewer to this space that provides a focal point for this green space. The green plants create a relationship with the natural mass timber in the interior of the building. The landscape bridge helps to direct the viewer to the other side of the building while creating a connection point. The landscape bridge spans over Aubry Street and extends all the way to the San Antonio River. This path provides direct access from the Riverwalk directly into the building. The ends of the landscape bridge contain stairs that provide access into the building. The bridge is full of green plants and seating that provides an outdoor area for the user to experience. The bridge connects other parts of the building together and provides a way-finding navigation tool for the user. The landscape bridge was designed to be open and accessible at night even when the building is closed. Lighting is utilized below eye level to direct foot traffic while illuminating the plants and greenery.

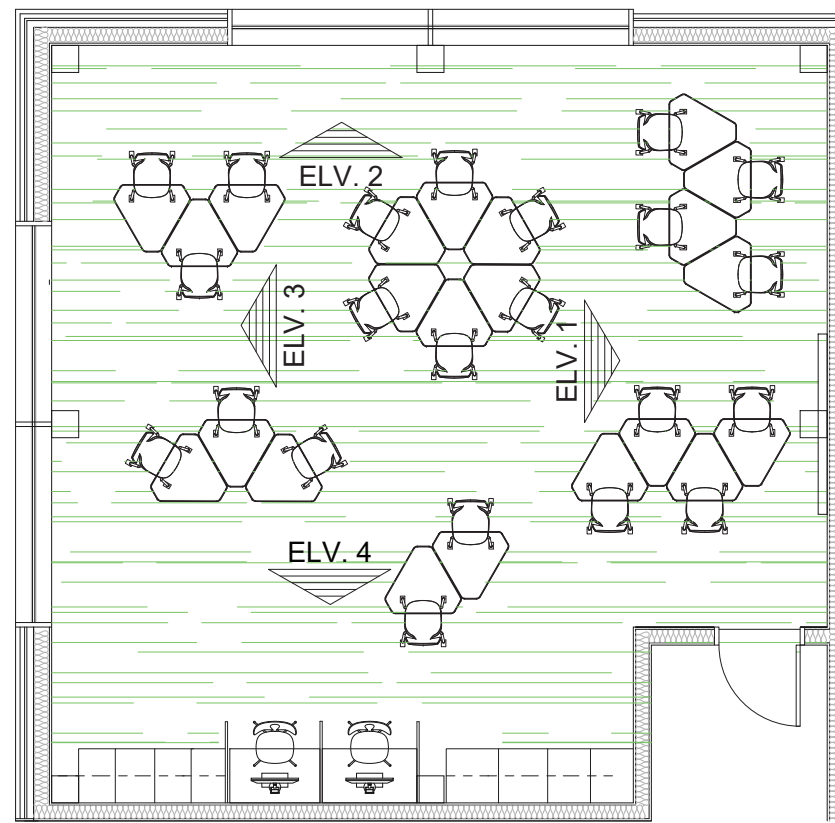


THIRD FLOOR

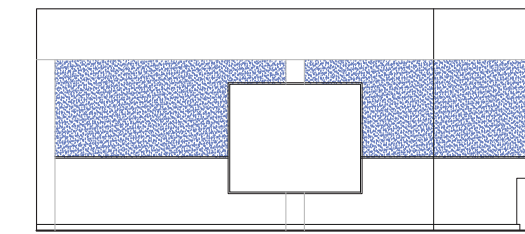
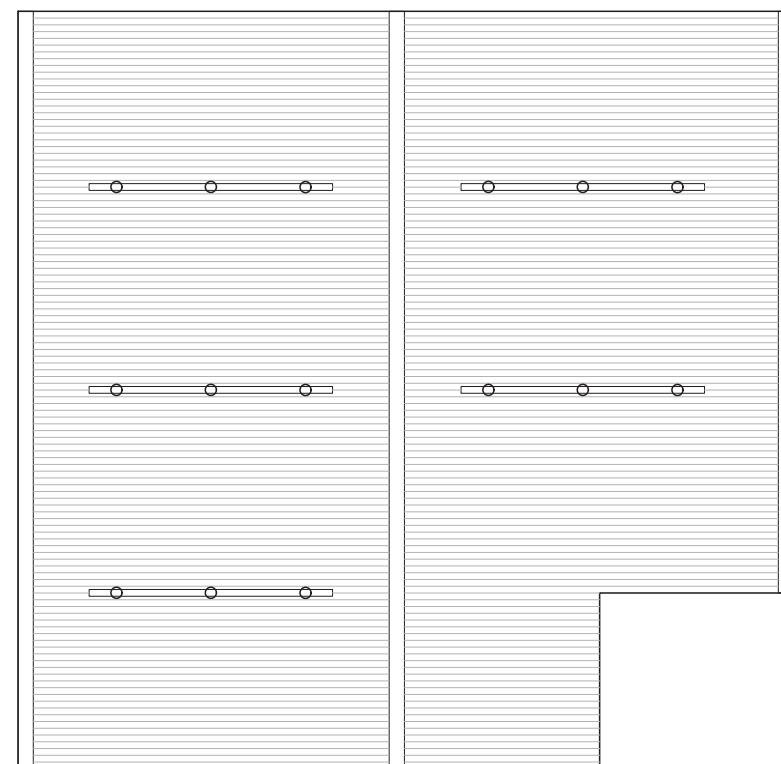


DESCRIPTION

The third floor embraces the learning experience. This floor houses the classroom areas and finally brings both sides of the buildings together. With views down into the landscape bridge and to the elevated exterior, this floor explores the creative thinking process. With both public and private spaces, this floor allows the user to experience different environments.

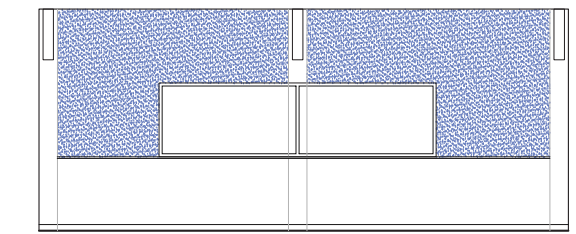


CLASSROOM



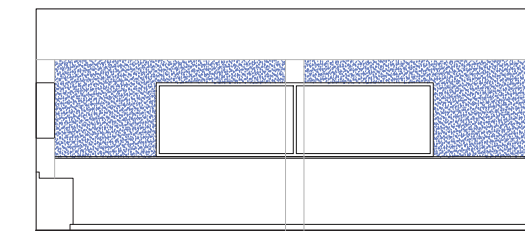
ELEVATION 1

1/4"=1'0"



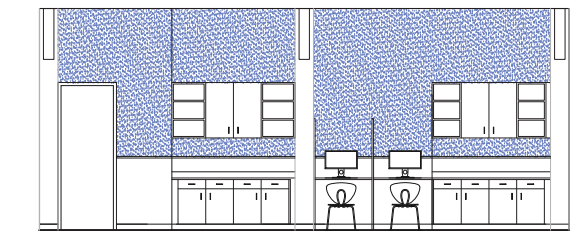
ELEVATION 2

1/4"=1'0"



ELEVATION 3

1/4"=1'0"



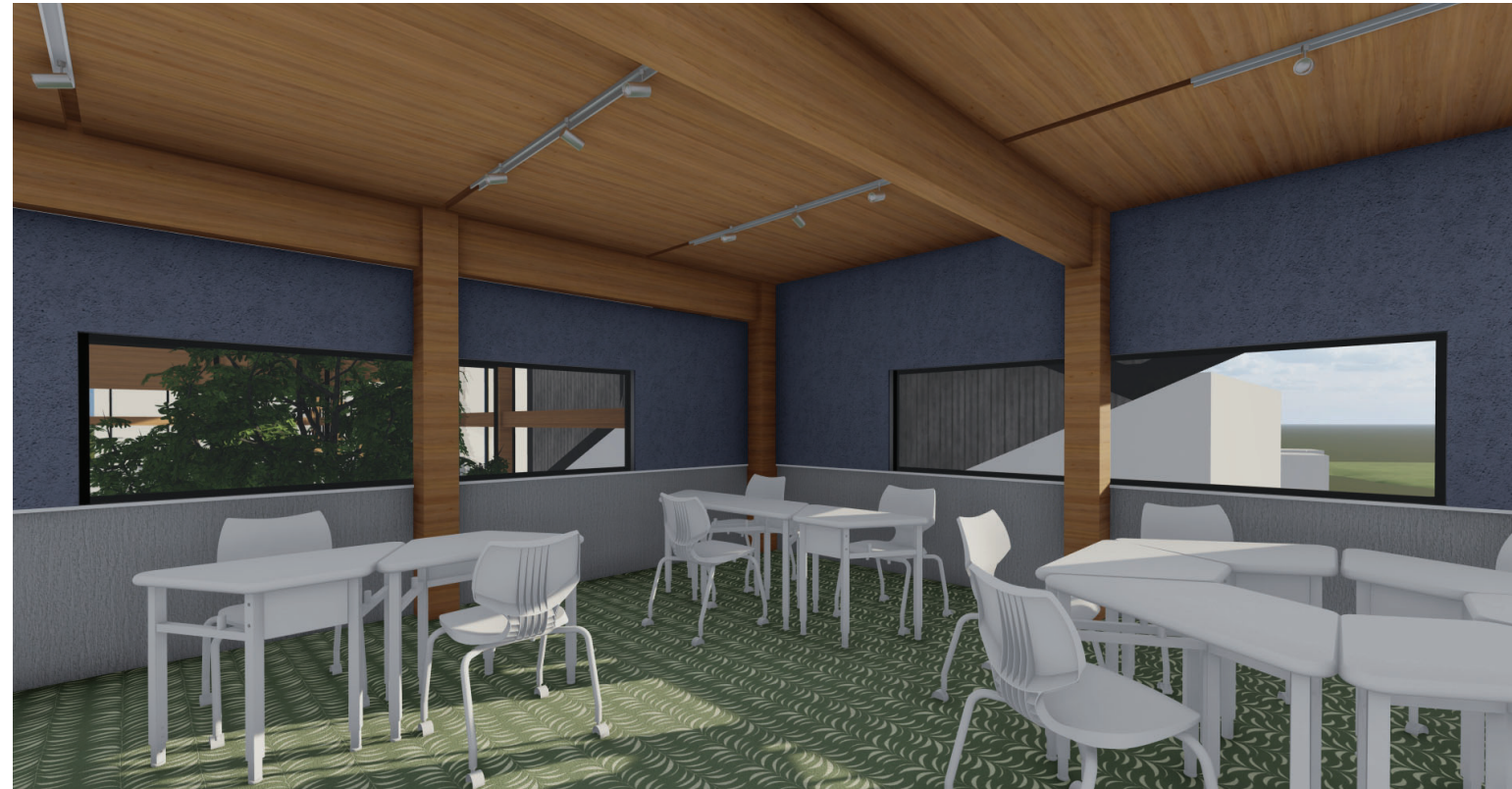
ELEVATION 4

1/4"=1'0"

ANALYSIS

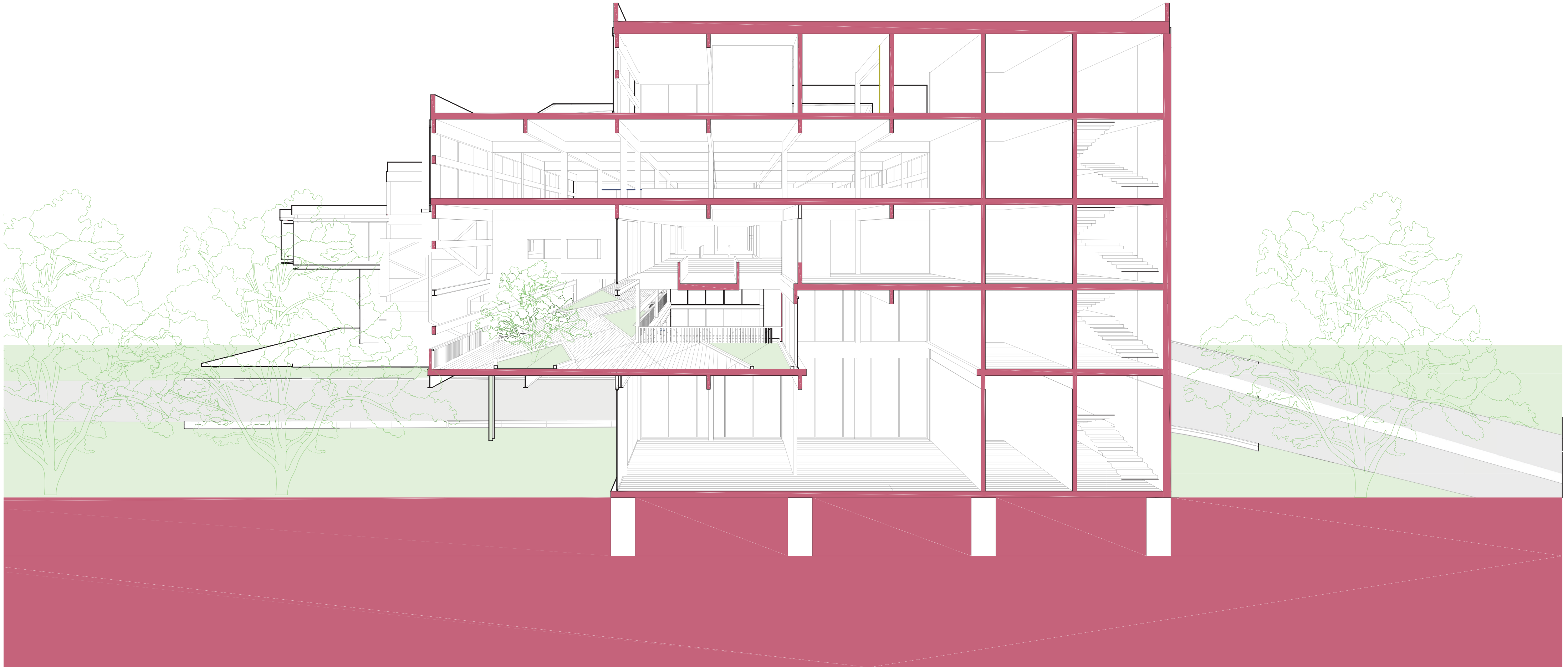
The adult learning center is full of flexible classroom space that caters to the public. These spaces are used to equip adults with knowledge including digital literacy, how to write resumes, proctoring exams and teaching those who have not had the opportunity to excel in the work force. This space is designed to celebrate and inspire those who use it. It is intended to make guests who come not feel embarrassed or intimidated, but comfortable and supported through careful guidance and relaxing spaces. This classroom space invites collaboration and is used for flexible learning activities by utilizing flexible furniture and promoting a comfortable learning environment. The design decisions help to spark continuous learning and create life-long learners by activating the senses of the user.

INTERIOR

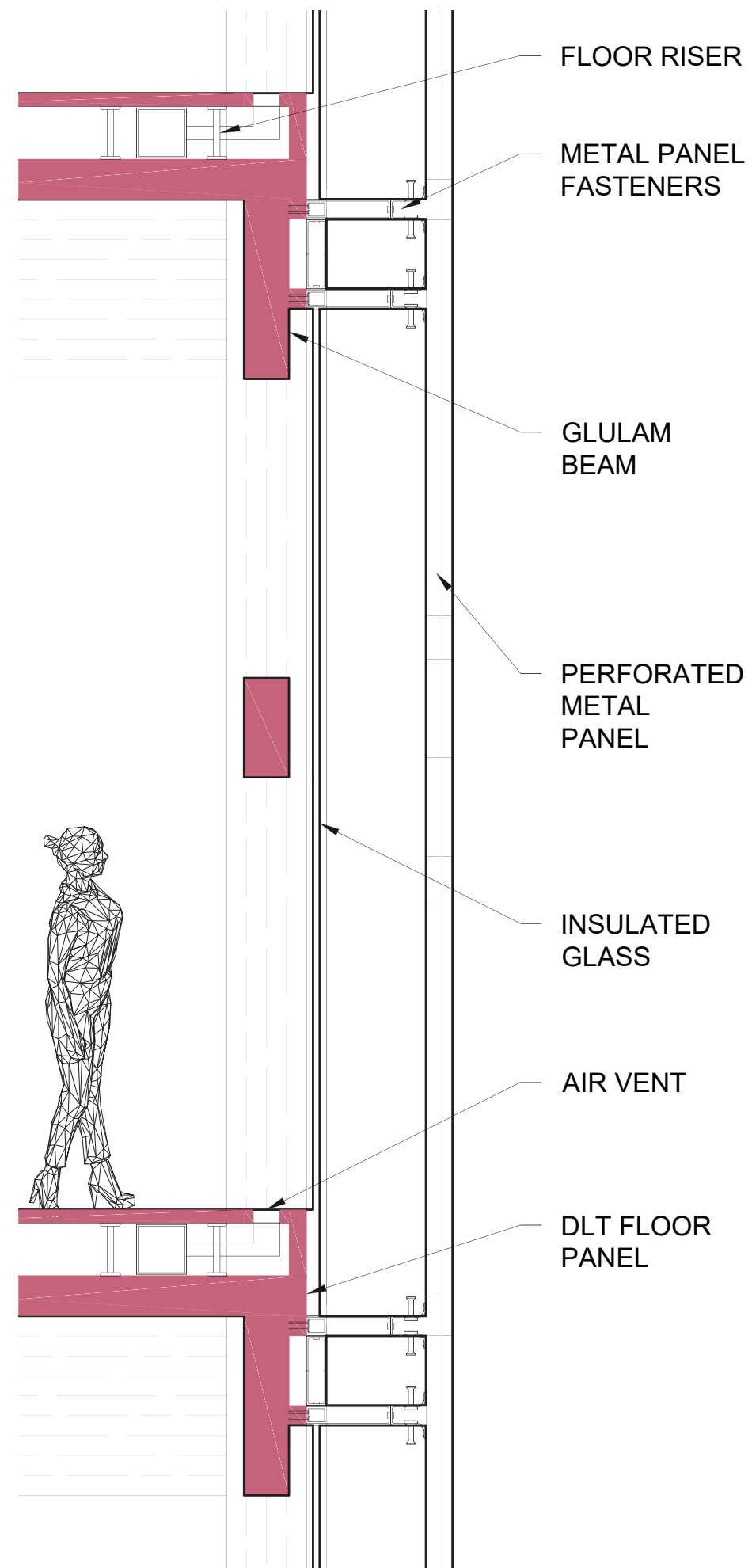


ANALYSIS

Natural light, green landscapes, and carpet flooring all play a part in creating a comfortable environment that encourages and fosters learning. These classroom spaces utilize the teaching method of “guide by side”. This teaching style helps the adult feel respected while helping them to become more involved in the learning experience. Moveable chairs and tables help to recreate the space and allow the space to become flexible and used for many different functions. Because adults do not like to be talked down to, this space is level and exemplifies that everyone is on the same level. Because there is a wide demographic of adults coming to this space from all walks of life, the classroom space accommodates and allows those with disabilities to experience the same learning opportunities. Acoustical panels and large projector screens are used to help create a quality sound and visual experience for the user. Ordinarily these adult learning spaces are taught in facilities that are available such as the basement of churches and strip centers. This new adult learning center aims to provide a place that celebrates learning, full of resources, and is welcoming to create life-long learners.



SECTION AA



WALL SECTION

The wall section illustrates the layering of materials that separates the interior from the exterior. The section demonstrates the exterior glazing that is utilized while incorporating the architectural concept through the building. The layering of materials symbolizes the layering of a person. The untold stories they possess and the depth behind each person can be visualized through the outer skin of the building. The wall section also includes the outer skin that wraps the building and forms into a shading roof along the walkable roof platforms. This extension of the skin exemplifies the idea that this building belongs to the people. This attachment of the building envelope is shown to symbolize the people taking hold of this building, making it their own, and embracing it.

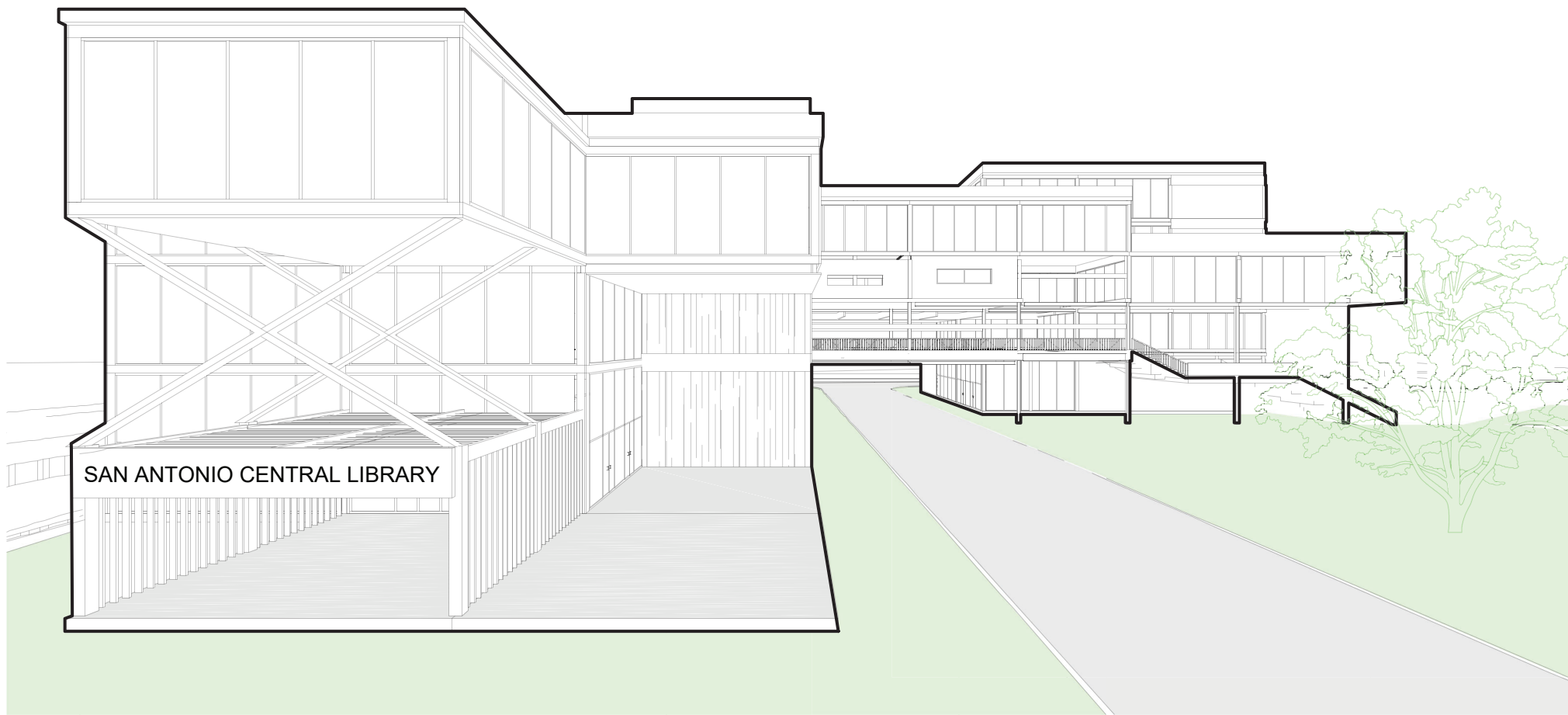
FOURTH FLOOR



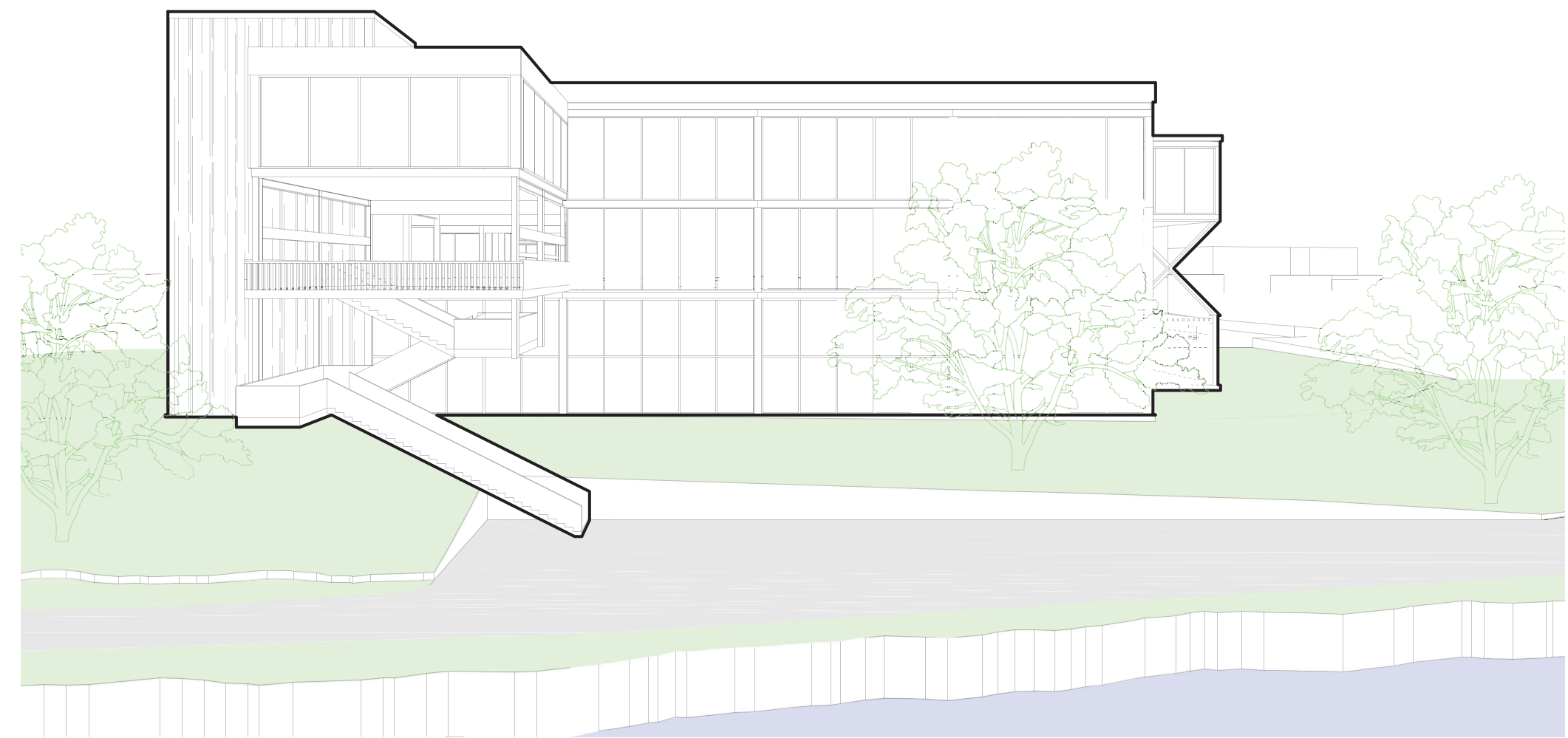
DESCRIPTION

The fourth floor allows views down into the central collaboration space. The walk across around this double height space also includes study rooms and study spaces. This walkway circulates to the exterior and allows access onto the outside deck. This outdoor deck includes an adaptive space where flexible program can take place.

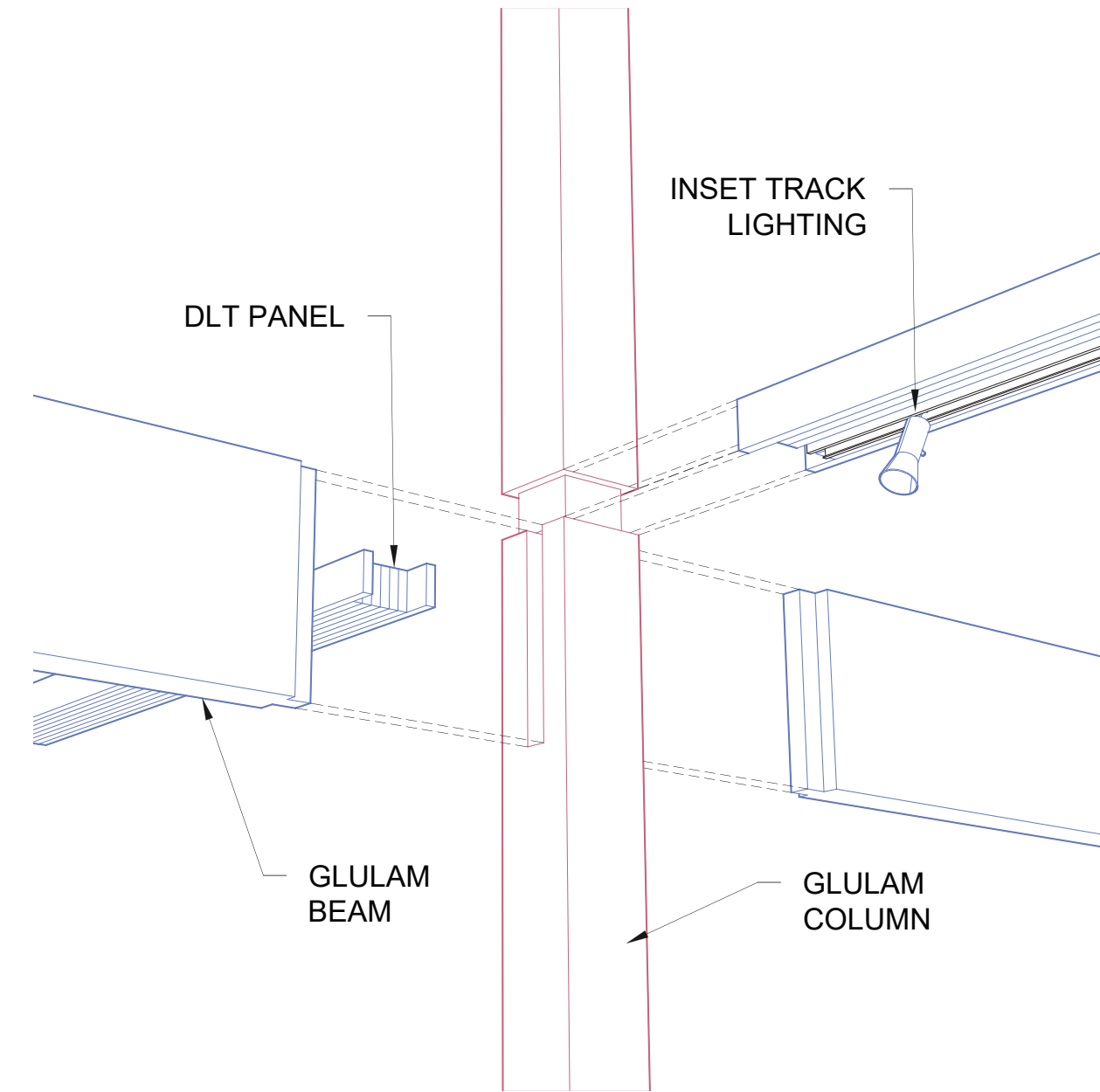
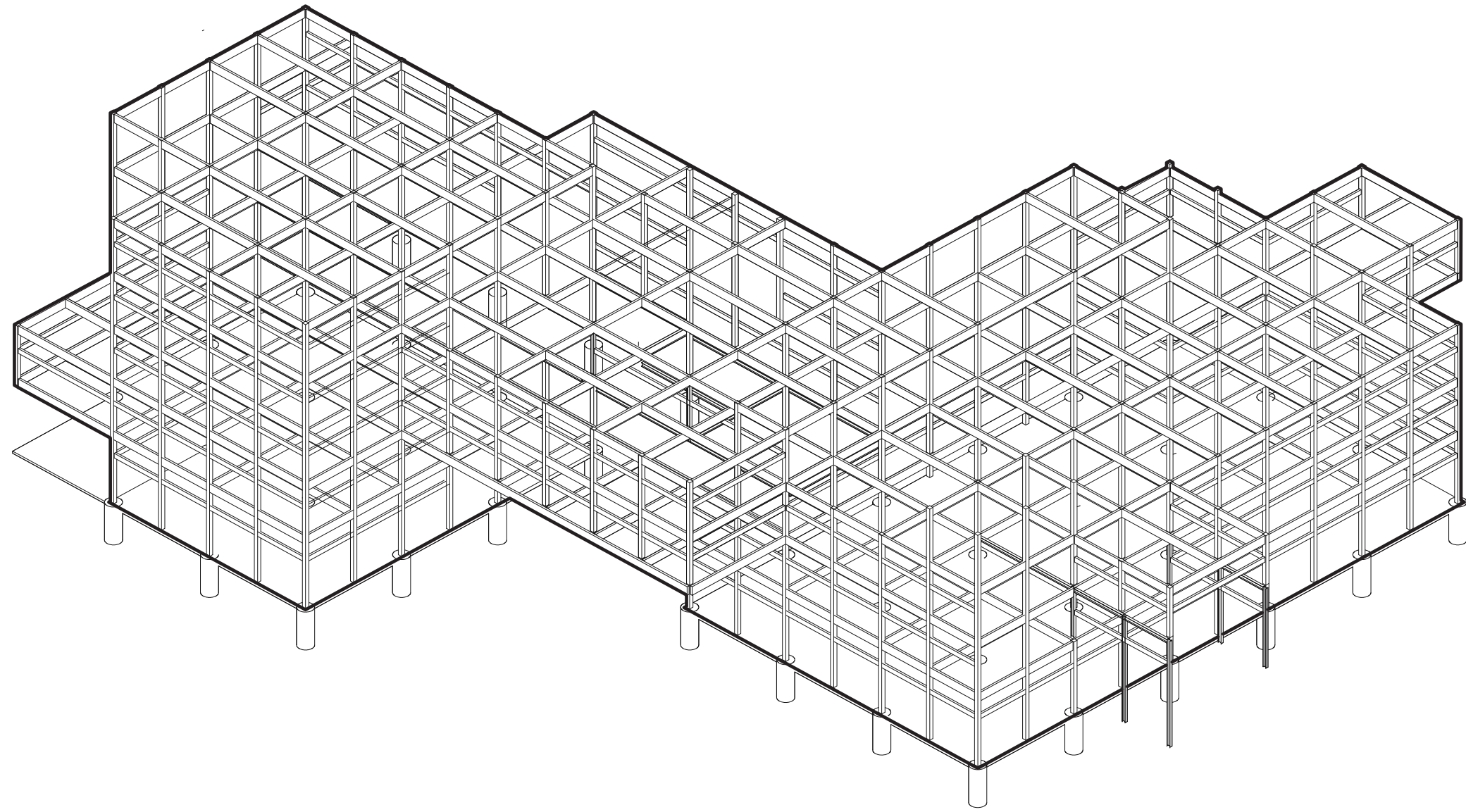
**NORTH
ELEVATION**



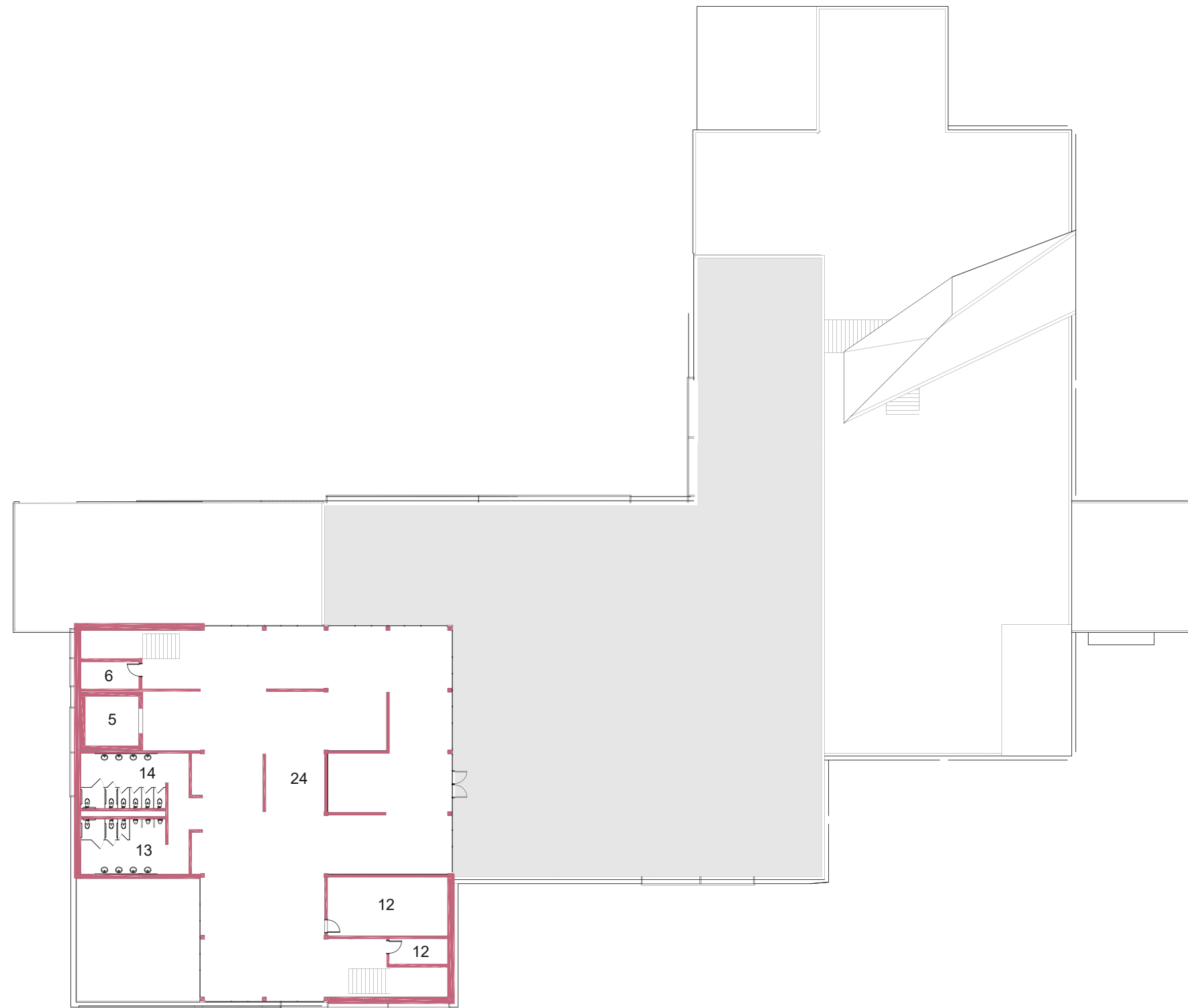
**EAST
ELEVATION**



MASS TIMBER STRUCTURE

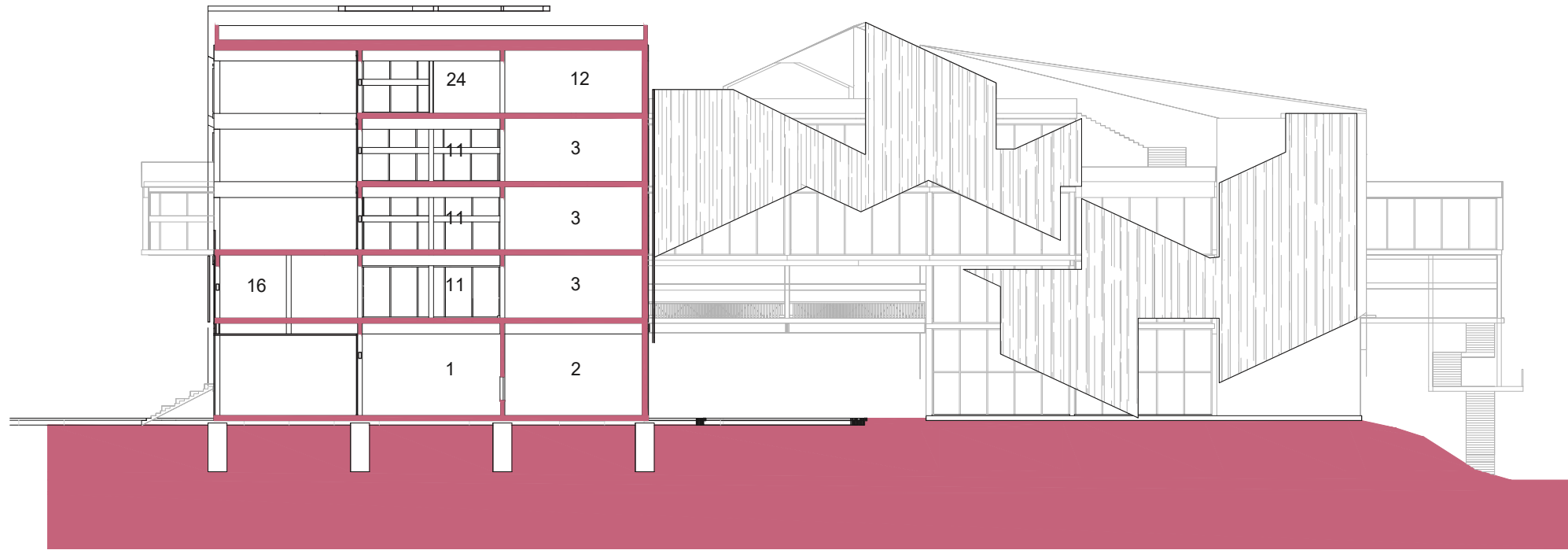


FIFTH FLOOR



DESCRIPTION

The fifth floor is composed of a museum space that doubles as an art gallery. This floor also allows access onto an outdoor deck. This top floor allows the user to look back on their journey and appreciate where they came from. This highest floor allwos views to the downtown and surrounding context.



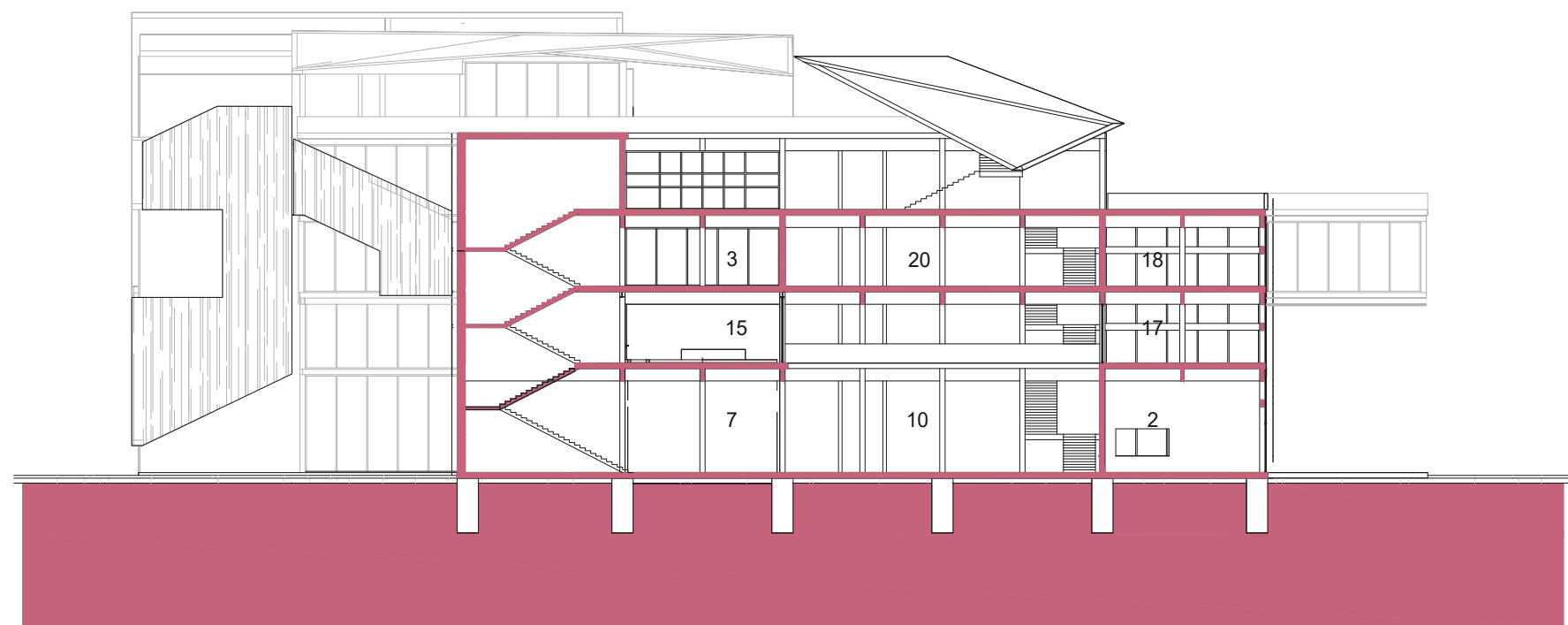
SECTION CC

1/16"=1'0"

BUILDING SECTIONS

ANALYSIS

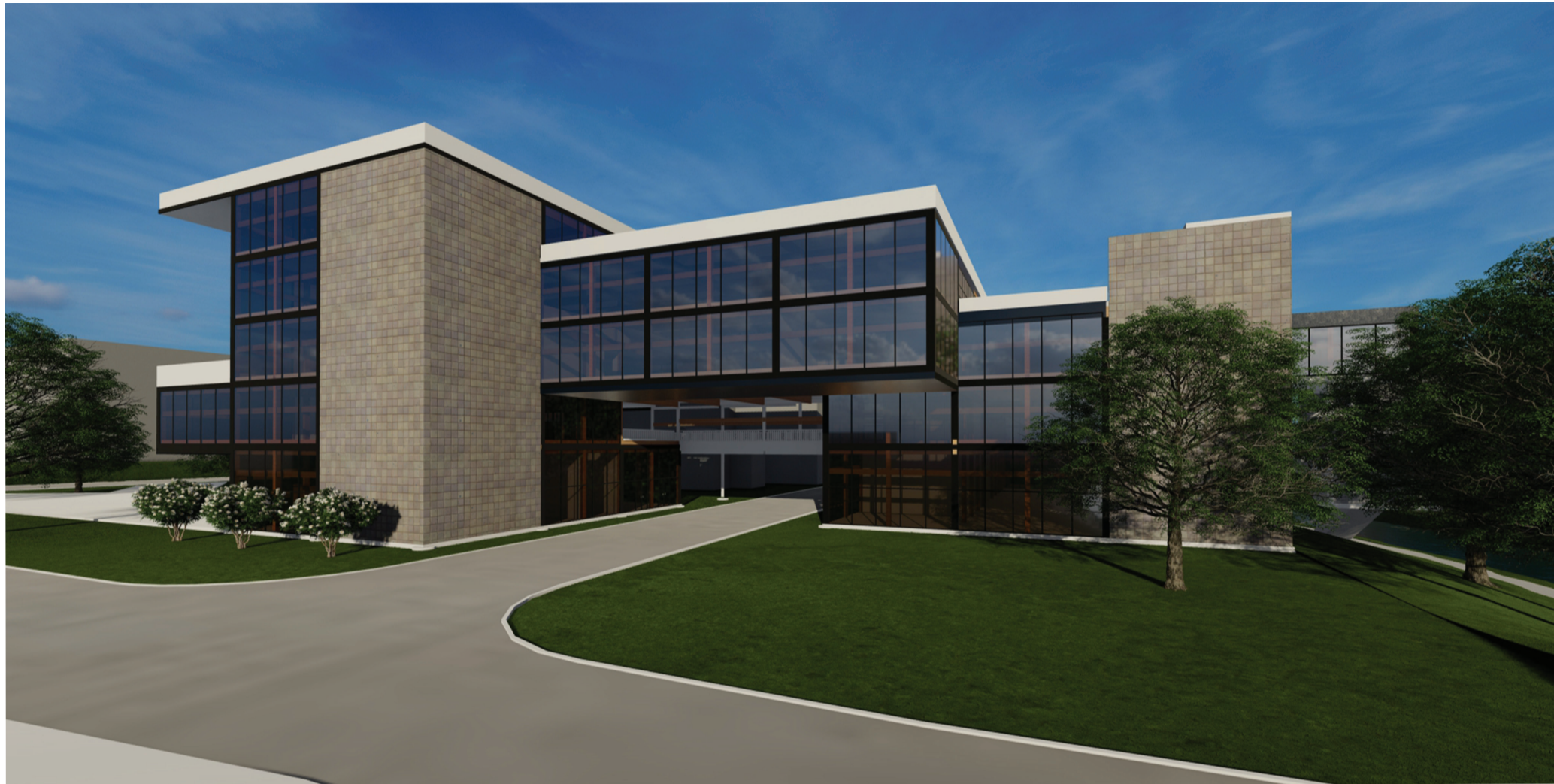
The building sections give the viewer a deeper understanding of the adaptive program included inside the building. The section provides a look at the overlapping of spaces while illustrating which spaces house certain programs. The building section is able to demonstrate the relation with the surrounding context by providing a step-down approach to the adjacent Riverwalk. The building section tapers down to the water-front and allows for walkable roof areas and views to the downtown. The mass timber structure can be seen from the building sections along with the glass envelope that surrounds the building. The warmth of the interior wood resembles a natural environment that provides the user with a comfortable surrounding while reading and learning. The transparent glass utilized throughout the building allows for appreciable views while providing a relationship between the interior and the exterior.



SECTION DD

1/16"=1'0"

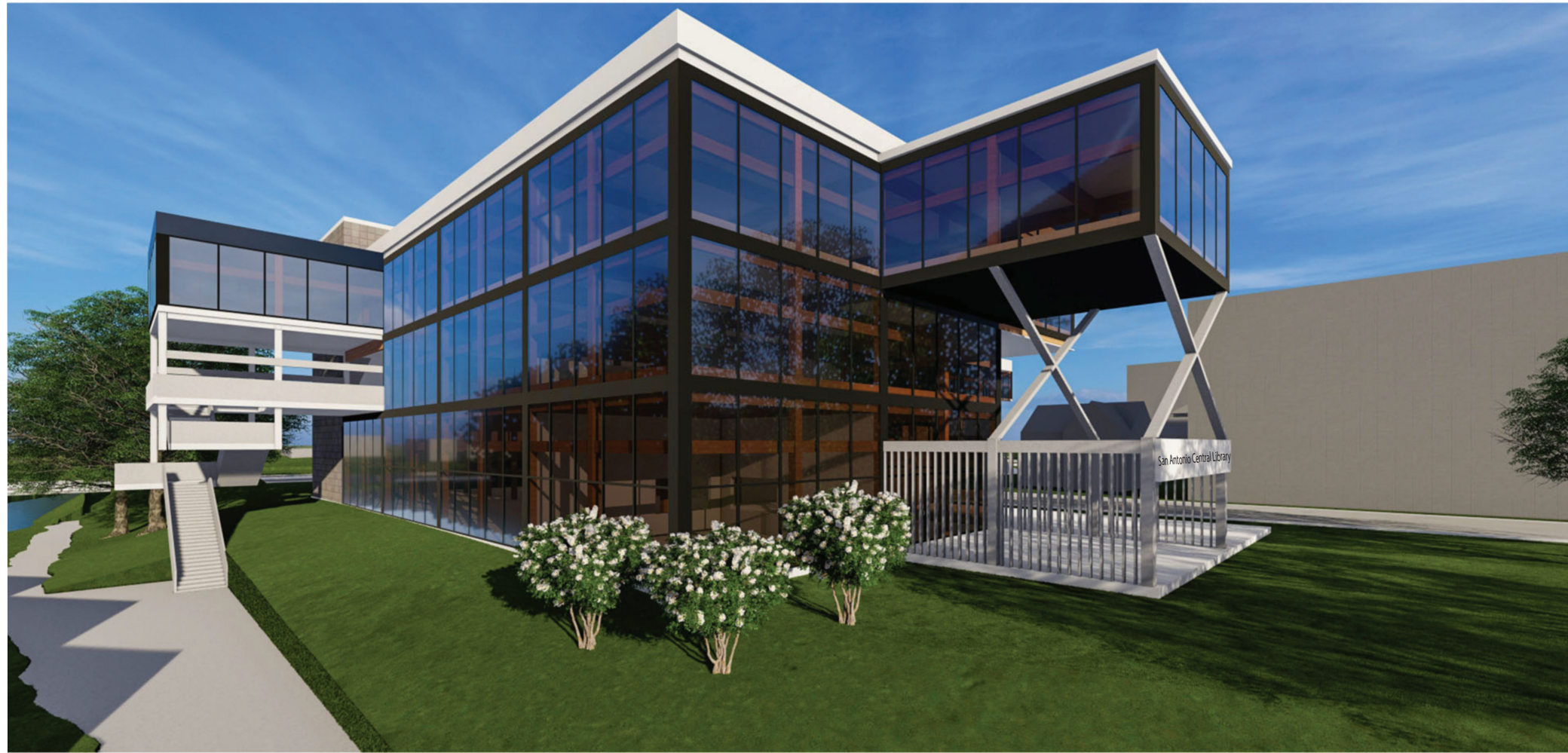
EXTERIOR



ANALYSIS

The building skin was designed to ultimately tell a story. The clear glass that surrounds the building symbolizes the transparency of a person. The modularity of the exterior provides the user with a clear understanding of how the building functions while creating a sense of vulnerability. The idea of “passing down of knowledge” is expressed on the exterior where sections of the building integrate and merge together. The crisp exterior is reflected to the interior and is met with a mass timber structure that aligns with the exterior and provides spatial organization. The glass facade allows glimpses into the building that sparks curiosity among the users. This community hub was designed to spark social interaction through the sharing of ideas and stories that each person possesses. The glass mullions were designed to give the building a sense of verticality while providing instances where the user can clearly see through to the exterior without any obstructions.

EXTERIOR



ANALYSIS

The clear exterior provides a symbolic palette where the user can visit this center and tell their story and make it their own. The cantilever portions direct the viewer inside while establishing the entrances through a contrasted void. The core areas are clad with modular burnished concrete masonry units to create a contrast with the glazing that houses the electrical and plumbing features. The voids created by the glass building skin provide direct views to the exterior and were carefully placed with relation to the program of the interior spaces. Kinetic shading curtains placed along the edge of the glass help to provide shading for the harsh sun in San Antonio. This learning center utilizes natural light and this glass facade helps to create certain moments of views and experiences throughout the building. To encourage social and cultural interaction, this building utilizes many materials and layers to represent cultural diversity and the connection that is experienced. By celebrating the purity of the exterior, the user is able to feel comfortable about entering space that is unashamed of expressing what it truly is.

CONCLUSION

Through this project, the designer was able to gain insight into how a public library can be reimagined to spark social interaction through adaptive learning. The project was able to foster social interaction through the location and development of occupiable spaces. This project has helped the designer to visualize how adult learning can become sustainable and utilized in the city of San Antonio, Texas. Through this study and analysis, it can be concluded that the reimagination of a library can greatly benefit the community and provide avenues for the public to begin again.

“The question, O me! so sad, recurring - What good amid these, O me, O life?”

Answer.

That you are here - that life exists and identity, that the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse”.

-Walt Whitman

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