# IMAGINATIVE EMPATHY

## IMAGINATIVE EMPATHY

Christina Machen



#### Dad,

Words will never describe how proud I am to be your daughter. Throughout my whole life, you have been my hero and number one fan. Your leadership, words of wisdom, and unyielding faith are truly admirable. Growing up, you always taught me to stay in the fight no matter how hard things get and to have grit. You have shaped me into the independent, confident, and tenacious person I am today and for that, I will always be grateful. I am so proud of your thirty years of dedicated service working with your "shoulders". Your career gave our family so many great memories, along with hardships that made us all stronger. Thank you for always believing in me every step of the way. I love you forever, Honey Badger!



#### Mom,

One of my favorite people on earth! I am eternally grateful that God gave me a mom like you, loving, honest, smart, kind, and selfless. Throughout my whole life you have been my North Star, the person I depended on the most. You gave me my fearless independence, compassionate heart, and unwavering faith. Always reminding me to count my blessings and seek my worth in God. From the moment dad joined the military, you dedicated your life to being the best mom you could be, sometimes having to play both roles of mom and dad. I could not have made it through these last three years without your constant support. Thank you for always believing in me every step of the way. I love your forever, Ma!



#### Garrett,

Thank you for supporting me through all of the highs and lows these past three years. Your unwavering encouragement has meant the world to me. Thank you for being my light through it all. See you at the altar June 24th! I love you forever, Jase!

#### Family + Watson,

Thank you for supporting me through my undergraduate and graduate school journey. Seven years in the making! I could not have done this without the love and support from y'all. Thank you Watson for all of the endless puppy kisses and snuggles when I needed them the most! I love y'all forever, Christopher, Katelyn, Harley girl, Logan, Roro, and Watson!

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Thank you.

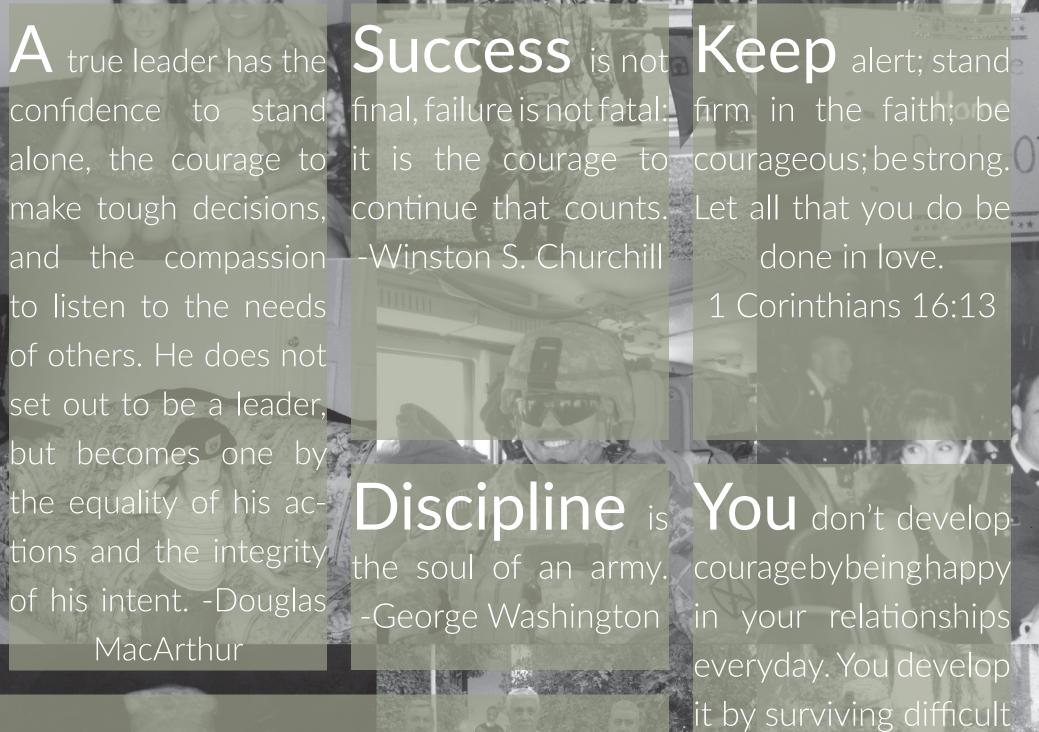




# THE FABRIC

# OF A FAMILY

**Ultimately,** leadership is not about glorious crowning acts. I and motivated to do their best to achieve it, especially when the stake It is about laying the groundwork for others' success, and then standing



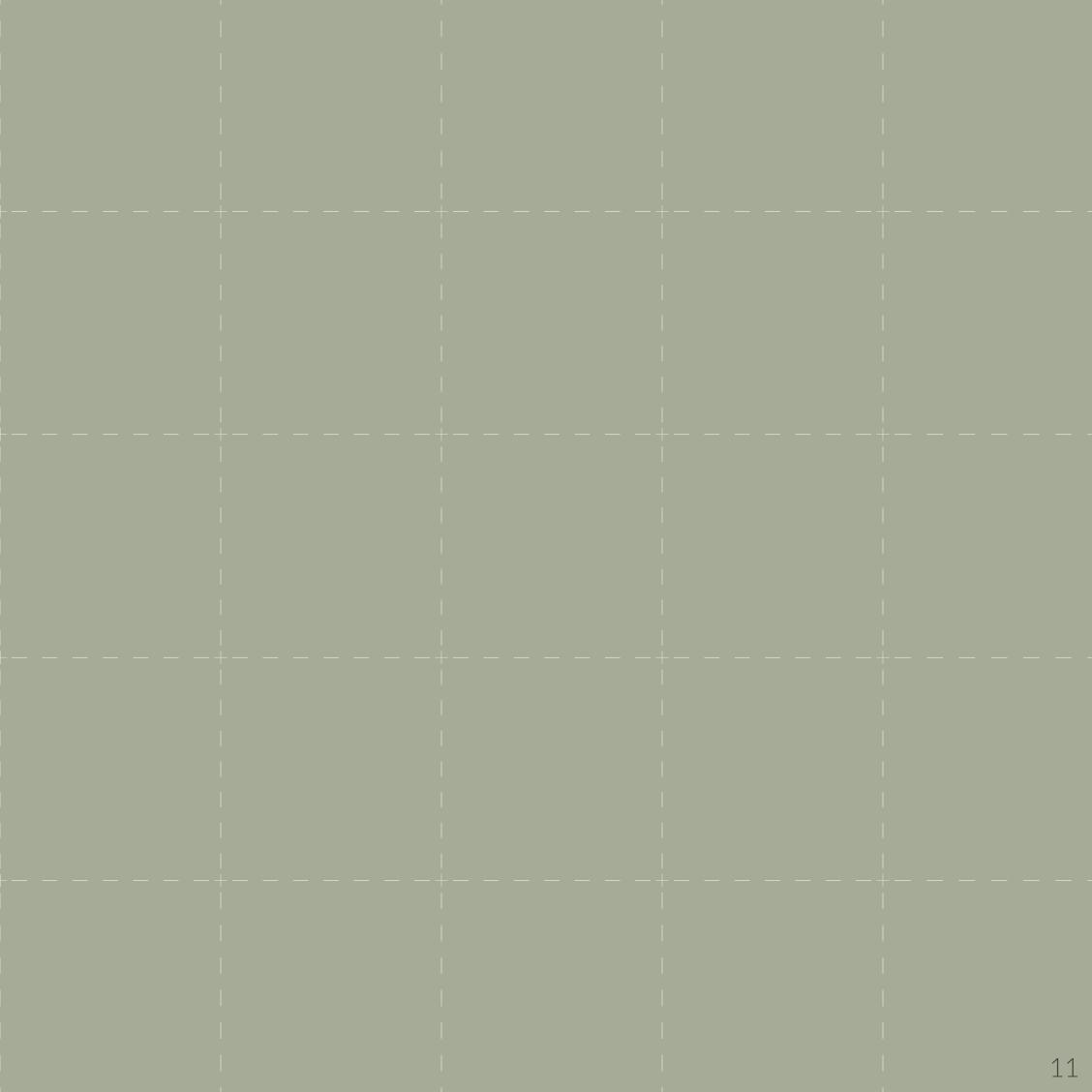
t's about keeping your team focused on a goal times and challenging s are high and the consequences really matter. adversity. -Epicurus ng back and letting them shine. -Chris Hadfield

done in love. 1 Corinthians 16:13

George Washington in your relationships everyday. You develop it by surviving difficult

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## MOTIVATION



For every past, present, future military member and their families.

#### IMAGINATIVE EMPATHY

#### adjective/noun

imaginative empathy is the ability to gain insight into the experiences of others through embodied imagination, stepping in and out of your own personal perspectives.

-Psychology Today

#### in architecture

the designer placing him/herself in the role of the future dweller and testing the validity of the ideas through this imaginative exchange of roles and personalities.

-Juhanai Pallasmaa

## Generational

In 2016, data was collected by the Pentagon that showed 80% of recent troops come from a family where at least one parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle, sibling, or cousin have worn their nation's uniform. More than 25% have a parent who has served.

### The Machen Go



Grandmother, London WWII

## eneration of Service



Grandfather, Basic Training



Father, 82nd Airborne Division



Brother, Basic Training

## RESEARCH

This project has a complementary interest in architecture both as design and expereince. This book will discuss unique details of the design put into both aspects. For that reason, all design decisions based on the form and appearance of the building will be found in this location on each page in grey.

## ABSTRACT

Uncertainty, breaks in routine, high anxiety, stress, depression, trauma, PTSD, and long-term mental health and wellness injuries; are obstacles a United States Military family can face on a daily basis. While these families are healing, they are in a heightened state of thoughts and emotions that can be affected by their surroundings. During this time, psychology and architecture create a complementary relationship. The environment can impact their mind, body, and sense of well-being. Imaginative Empathy is a design proposal for a retreat center adjacent to the historic San Antonio Mission Trails. This retreat is for military members and their families. The retreat center aims to create a safe and healing space for military families who have experienced trauma related to service. The design is centered around providing community-based therapeutic services and activities to help families overcome the effects of trauma, improve their relationships, and build resilience. The design principles are guided by trauma-informed and trauma-responsive care-based approaches.

This project has a complementary interest in architecture both as design and expereince. This book will discuss unique details of the design put into both aspects. For that reason, all design decisions based on the user's experience of the building will be found in this location on each page in green.

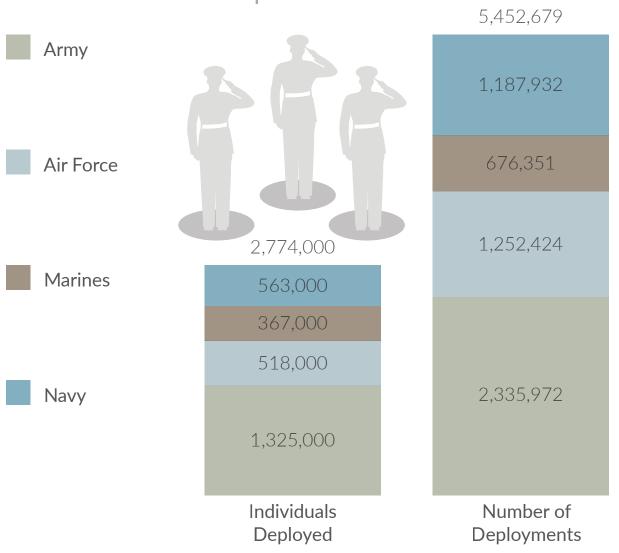


Missed Christmas Day, 2007

It is a common occurence that holidays, birthdays, and other special events will be missed due to a parent's deployment.

## DEPLOYMENT

## U.S troop deployments between 9/11 and September 2015



2.77 MILLION service members have served on 5.4 MILLION deployments since 9/11. A bulk of the soldiers on these deployments serve in the Army.

Deployments can prove to be highly disruptive to family life with some spouses reporting that their children experienced behavioral and peer-related problems during those long periods of absense.

On average each deployment can last anywhere from 6 months to 14 months. Coming home from deployment is an adjustment for everyone in the family.

Around 225,000 soldiers who served with the Army deployed at least three times or more.

Another adjustment that all military families face is starting over. On average, most military families move every 2.5 years.

## FAMILY TRAUMA

Reliving moments of a deployment or moving consistently every 2.5 years can lead to emotional trauma.

"Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, crime, or — natural disaster. —

Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longe term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea."

-American Psychological Association

#### There are 3 classifications of trauma

Acute

Results from a single incident

Chronic

Repeated and prolonged

Complex

Exposure to varied and multiple traumatic events, often of an invasive, interpersonal nature



"Trauma that affects an entire family unit and is often discussed in conjuncition with generational trauma or trauma that is passed through generations.

Family trauma can be especially difficult because though it affects a family unit, each individual may experience their trauma differently."

- Transformations Care Network

If no coping skills are established after a traumatic event, symptoms will prolong and result into deeper psychiatric disorders.

## PTSD

"Post-traumatic stress disorder is a psychiatric disorder that is triggered by a terrifying event, either experiencing it or witnessing it.

Most people who go through traumatic events may have temporary difficulty adjusting and coping. People with PTSD have intense, distrubing thoughts and feelings related to their experience that last long after the traumatic event has ended."

- American Psychiatric Association

PTSD is recognized by four distinguished symptoms.

#### Intrusion:

Intrusive thoughts such as repeated, involuntary memories; distressing dreams; or flashbacks of the traumatic event. Flashbacks may be so vivid that people feel they are re-living the traumatic experience or seeing it before their eyes. Example: loud noises triggering the brain or night terrors.

#### Avoidance:

Avoiding reminders of the traumatic event may include avoiding people, places, activities, objects, and situations that may trigger distressing memories. People may try to avoid remembering or thinking about the traumatic event. They may resist talking about what happened or how they feel about it. Example: dissociating from family and friends.

#### Alterations in Cognition and Mood:

Inability to remeber important aspects of the traumatic event, negative thoughts and feelings leading to ongoing and distorted beliefs about oneself or others (e.g., "I am bad," "No one can be trusted"); distorted thoughts about the cause or consequences of the event leading to wrongly blaming self or others; ongoing fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame; much less interested in activities previously enjoyed; feeling detached or estranged from others; or being unable to experience positive emotions (a void of happiness or satisfaction). Another example of dissociating.

#### Alterations in Arousal and Reactivity:

Arousal and reactive symptoms may include being irritable and having angry outbursts. Example: being triggered by what others may see as small or insignificant.

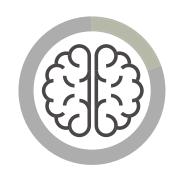
70 PERCENT of adults experience at least one traumatic event during their lifetime





1 IN 13 PEOPLE will develop PTSD at some point in their life

20 PERCENT of people who experience a traumatic event will develop PTSD





Prevalence of PTSD in the US is equal to the TOTAL POP-ULATION OF TEXAS

## TRAUMA INFORMED

When an organization such as a retreat is aiming to help patients cope with PTSD from traumatic events, it is important for them to determine whether they are going to be trauma informed or trauma responsive.

Trauma informed addresses organizational culture and practice. Trauma Informed Care is defined as a universal framework that required changes to the practices, policies, and culture, so all staff have the awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to support trauma survivors.

As a result of an increased risk of substance abuse disorders due to trauma, most treatment centers and medical professionals in the addiction field can be described as "trauma informed."

Simply put, trauma informed takes trauma into account as a treatment plan is developed.

## TRAUMA RESPONSIVE

If you are seeking to maximize the effectiveness of treatment and motivate people to seek treatment in the first place, an organization needs to become "trauma responsive."

Trauma Responsive seeks to anticipate the potential existence of trauma so that its aftermath can be appropriately addressed at all levels of an organization.

To be successful in trauma responsive, everyone in the organization needs to buy into the organization's trauma response ethos.

These two principles guided the user experience and program for my retreat center. My design of multiple buildings on the site with varying levels of healing and privacy encouraged the user to have moments of self-exploration.

## COMMUNITY

Community is a feeling of fellowship with others due to sharing common aspects of your life. Communities are ever-changing. This reigns especially true for military communities.

When brainstorming ideas for my design, I knew that community would be my highest priority. Coming from a military family background, I knew that in the sensitive times these families are facing, giving them that sense of community through my design would make my retreat successful.

When you live on a U.S. Military Installation, especially overseas, and the only familiarity of America around you are the commissary, PX, and your next-door American neighbors, you band together to create a great sense of community for one another. This makes for a unique experience. Every family is there for the same reason. It was the service member's next duty station.

I was born at Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center at Fort Hood, Texas. This was my first introduction to a military community, and it was a unique experience. Fort Hood is an Army installation. In size, Fort Hood is the largest military installation in the world, but in population, it ranks third; 43,199 active-duty military, 421,286 retirees/survivors/family members, and 7,477 civilians/contractors. This allows Fort Hood the capacity to host at least 500,000 military personnel alone. The military population is the majority of the city of Killeen's population.

Apart from the rich culture, architecture, and history, my time living overseas was also a unique experience. This was my first time living on a base that had all branches of service. USAG Stuttgart has approximately 23,000 community members. In comparison to Foort Hood, this was a small military community. Two different experiences with a sense of community as the denominator.

"Being part of a community can positively affect mental health and emotional well-being. Community involvement provides a sense of belonging and social connectedness. It can also offer extra meaning and purpose to everyday life." - HeadtoHealth



Division I



Run 1-504, FSG (Family Support Group) May 1989 - Ft. Bragg, NC



Research shows that individuals who have a strong sense of purpose and meaning in life tend to have better mental health, overall well-being, and cognitive functioning compared to those who lack a sense of purpose. Individuals with a sense of life purpose are less likely to have heart attacks, strokes, and dementia. - Psychology Today

Every time my dad deployed, my family's sense of purpose was to drive on with our lives back home. This was so my dad did not worry about us and could focus on the mission he had to do.

During the design process, I selected activities that would give the user community, a sense of purpose, and self-reliance. Helping them realize the potential they have within themselves.

The activities are:

- Pottery | Studio
  - A Chapel
- Potting Haus
- Outdoor recreation

- Dining

## USER NEEDS

Healing from the psychological and physical trauma endured during deployment and re-unification with family can require long-term and short-term comprehensive therapy based on the individual and severity of the trauma. Short-term treatments focus on how you can improve your life currently, focusing on issues you are experiencing in your day-to-day life. Long-term therapies often look more at the past, helping you understand both yourself and how your history may affect what you do today. The primary treatments for people with PTSD are short-term psychotherapies, specifically Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT). CBT for PTSD is trauma-focused, meaning the trauma event(s) are the center of treatment. CBT focuses on identifying, understanding, and changing thinking and behavior patterns. For active duty service members, their understanding of their thoughts and emotions is critical. Coming home from a deployment is a re-insertion for the active duty service member, not only into everyday society but their families as well. They have to re-program how they think and their day-to-day actions. Evidence indicates that patients who suffer PTSD need to feel the following when receiving treatment; safety, trust, self-reliance, empowerment, control, orientation, inspiration, and appreciation. With these user needs in mind, how can the built environment accomplish these? Researchers have drawn the conclusion that our surroundings can be seen as the foundation for who we were a year ago, who we are today, and who we will be in a year.

## INTENTIONS

It was important during the design process that the environment in which the trauma occurred and the retreat space had no similarities—leading the user to feelings of panic and discomfort.

This project aims to create spaces in which active duty service members and their families can restructure their sense of identity and heal the trauma that has taken place.

An important goal was to create a familiar space with a strong sense of community and peaceful surroundings.

# SITE

# **TEXAS**

Texas is home to fifteen military bases. Most of the bases cluster around San Antonio and Corpus Christi. In 2021, a census was conducted to see how many active duty and reserve members were stationed in Texas. Texas is the second largest, with a population of 174,598. This number does not include active duty service members' families or retired Veterans and their families.

To the right, you will find all fifteen military bases in Texas labeled and represented in grey.

Fort Bliss

El Paso
Psychiatric Center

Big/Spring
State Hospital

Nor

Dy

For

Goodfellov

Laughlin Air

Force Base

Naval Air S

Force Ba



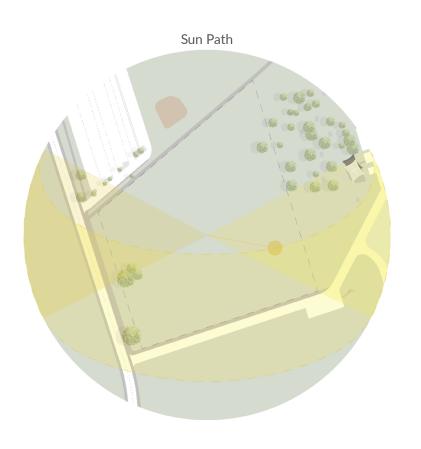
While I am focusing on the family unit healing from trauma, I found it important to locate the state hospitals throughout Texas. Texas is home to eight psychiatric state hospitals. Most of the state hospitals are clustered around all of the major cities in Texas. As of 2021. Texas has 2,240 beds available, with waitlists close to 2,000. It is also important to note that throughout Texas, there are 323 mental health facilities and clinics. These clinics would be your first approach to receiving help.

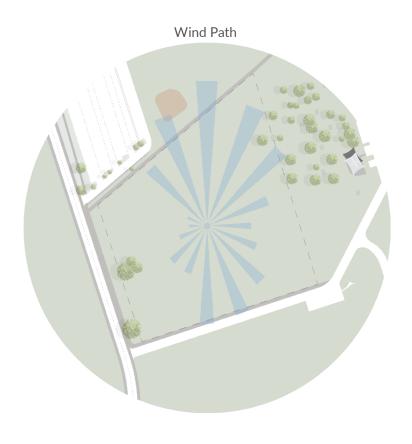
To the left, you will find all eight state hospitals in Texas labeled and represented in white.

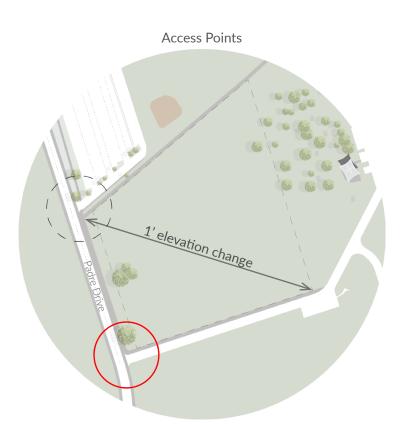


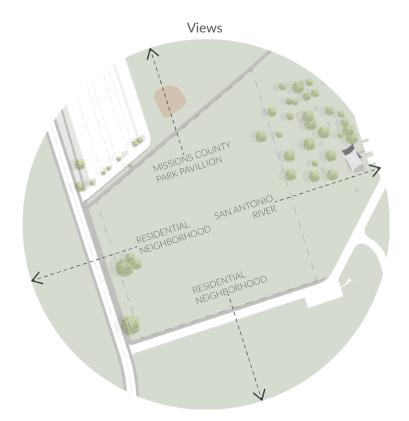


# SITE ANALYSIS









# PADRE PARK San Antonio, TX 7.6 Acres | 331,056 Sq. Ft

Padre Park. The site is untouched and Currently, the site has two access points.









### SITE PLAN

The master plan for this project encompasses six different building types; all centered around community and healing. To the right, you will find the site plan-oriented plan north.

I drew inspiration from images of old forts to position the buildings on the site. The welcome center, lodging units, and chapel create interior courtyards that are the site's central axis. Upon entry into these interior courtyards, the chapel is the center focal point, resting on a reflecting pool. The chapel at the end of the interior courtyards has a symbolic spiritual meaning; as the user gets closer to the chapel, they are moving upward and onward. The lodging unit's orientation serves two purposes; one, they develop a sense of security and safety when walking the interior paths of the site, and two, they create a lateral axis with the patios facing into the courtyards, drawing the user to participate within the community.

Another design principle that I believed to be important was symmetry. Scientist Alan Lightman says, "symmetry represents order, and we crave order. It helps us make sense of the world around us." These positive effects can help with the mental healing of someone with PTSD.

With the paths on the site intertwining, it pushes the user into exploration and discovery, which are essential to healing.



# DESIGN

Architecturally, the goals of this project were to create a retreat that was integrated with nature so the user felt drawn to explore. Each building on the site, apart from the lodging units, uses the same two materials, brick and steel. Two strong and durable materials symbolically give the user that feeling amongst themselves. With these strong materials, the user feels safe, protected, and comfortable. Design inspiration was also drawn from the environment to create spaces where you could be inside but feel like you are outside, allowing for moments of retreat while still receiving the mental benefits from nature. The design maintains a modern design with warmth and welcome.

The drawings and renderings are organized as follows; rendering, plan, zoomed-in plan, and rendering. The renderings prelude the corresponding plan on the next page. For the units, potting haus, and chapel plans, you will find a green dashed box indicating the perspective in which the rendering was captured.

#### ARCHITECTURAL QUESTIONS

#### one

how can we as designers evoke a positive therapeutic outcome by placing the human experience at the center of our design for ptsd?

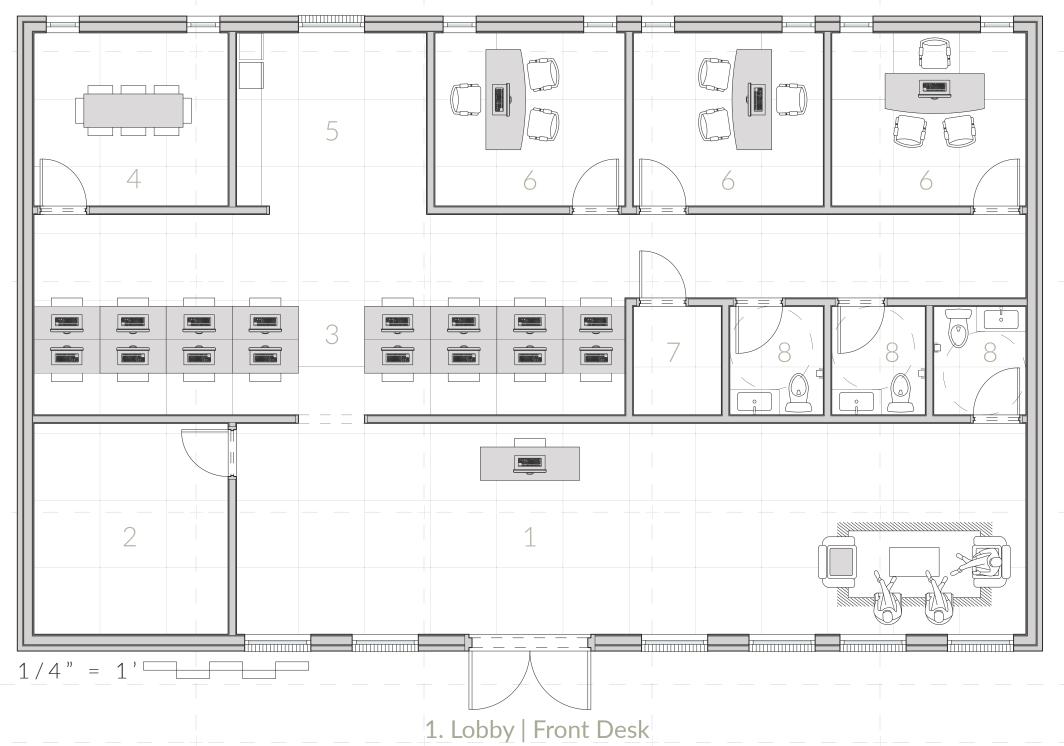
#### two

how can the design of a military retreat center bring forth community and ease family transitions?

The project's goals were to create an experience for the user in which they felt drawn to explore outside. There was a hierarchy of spaces created from intimate to open within each building, leaving the user with options to experience nature, healing, and community in their own pace.

# WELCOME CENTER

The welcome center is the first building that the user interacts with. This is where they will check-in, ask questions, and get information about classes and therapy sessions. Primarily, this space is intended for the staff to work and collaborate.



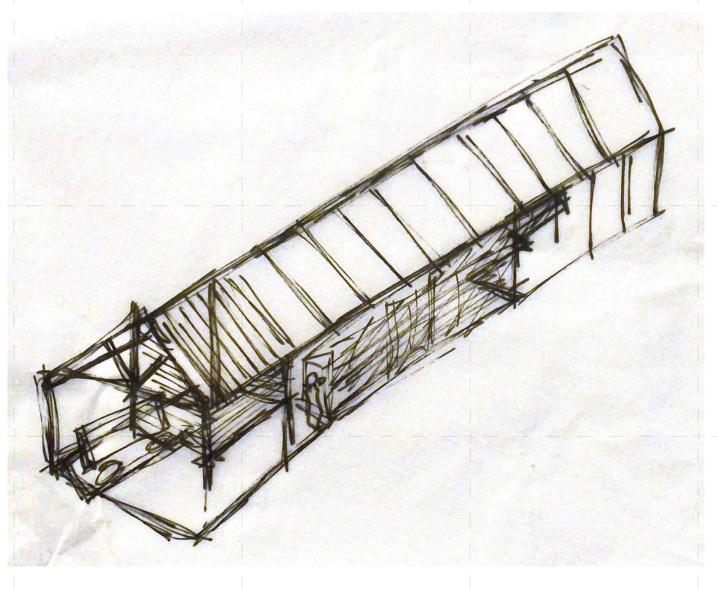
- 2. Storage
- 3. Staff space
- 4. Conference Room
- 5. Staff Lounge
- 6. Offices
- 7. Mechanical
- 8. Restrooms

## THE LODGING

The units are where the family will stay during their time at the retreat. On the three levels of hierarchy previously mentioned, the units sit at the most intimate level of healing and refuge. The site has sixteen units total: eight one-bedroom one-bath and eight two-bedroom one-bath. The word "family" could mean a multitude of things. During the design process, I had the notion that for this retreat space, a family could be different than what you see traditionally, and it wasn't my place to limit the type of family that came to receive treatment. The design allows for a family to be two parents mourning the death of their child who served, colleagues who worked the same mission together and are struggling to reinsert themselves back into their daily routine, and the family whose parent served while the other parent watched over the children and kept the home operation in movement during a deployment.

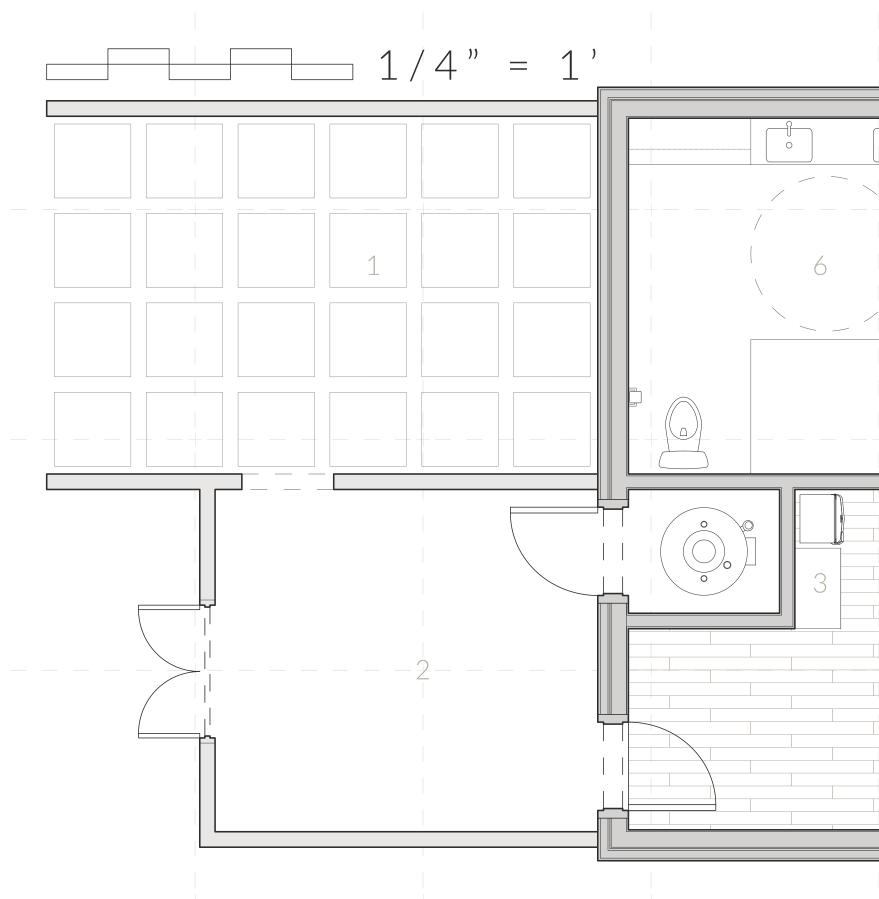
At total capacity, the retreat can house 48 patients. In future development of the master planning, I believe that the units can be adapted to accommodate more families at once. The best course of action would be to turn the units into two stories and create a second story with additional rooms, bathrooms, and a shared loft area. This would allow for a family of 4+ to come and stay at the retreat under one roof.

Initial thought process

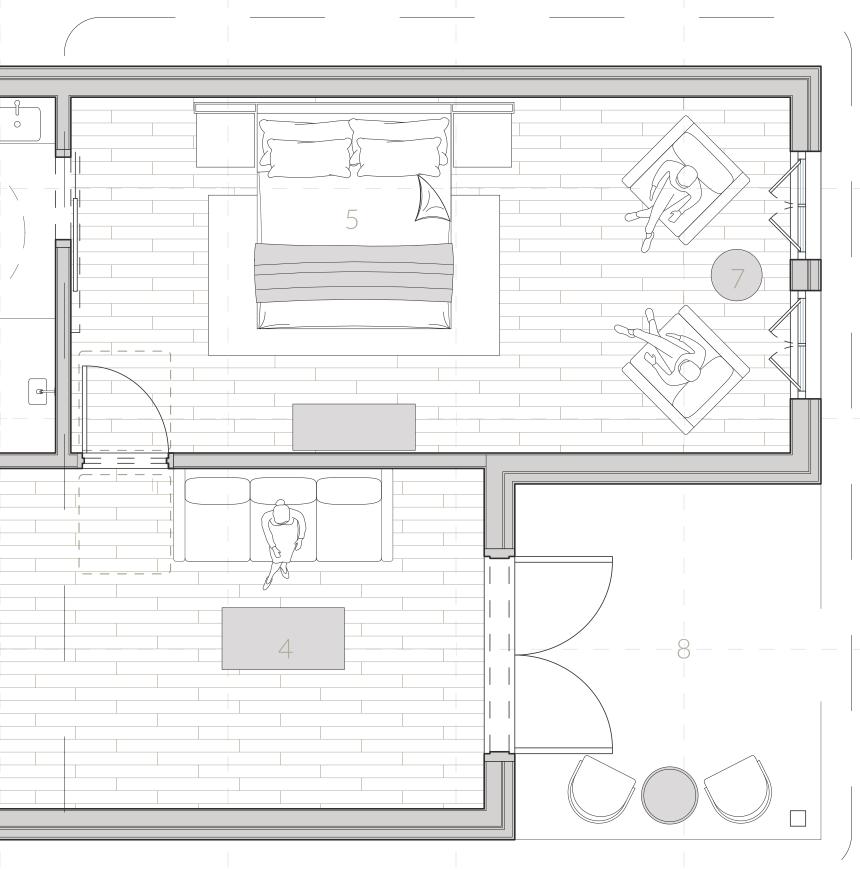








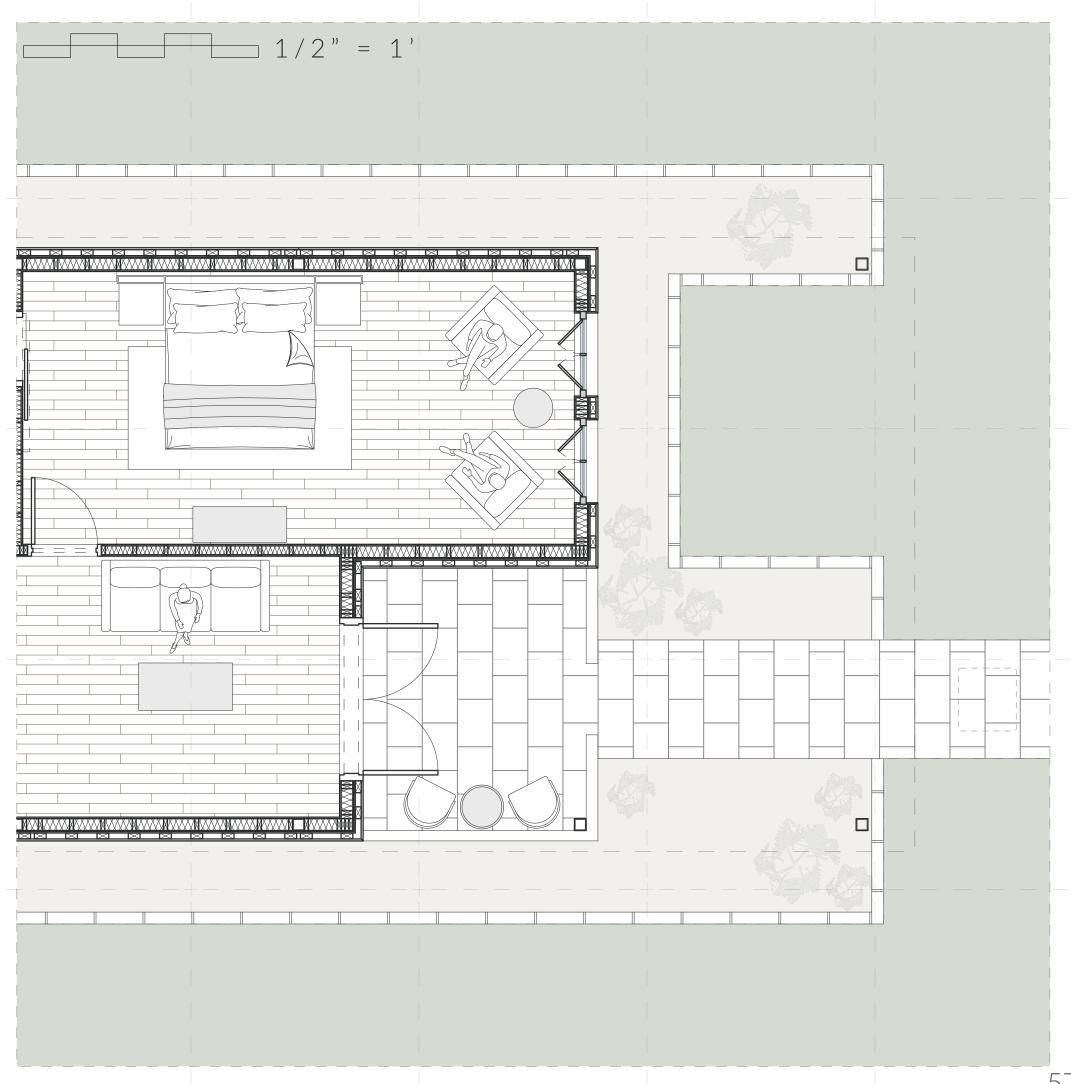
The lodging units were designed with optimal space efficiency for someone with PTSD and trauma. The spaces are slightly bigger than an average studio apartment but not as big as a residential house, allowing the resident to feel comfortable in the area but not claustrophobic. The HSS truss begins at 9' and pitches at 14', allowing the user to experience moments of compression and expansion within the unit.



The lodging units were designed for the user to feel secure and protected while being close and engaged with the community. The warm finishes aim to make the user feel comfortable in this temporary space.

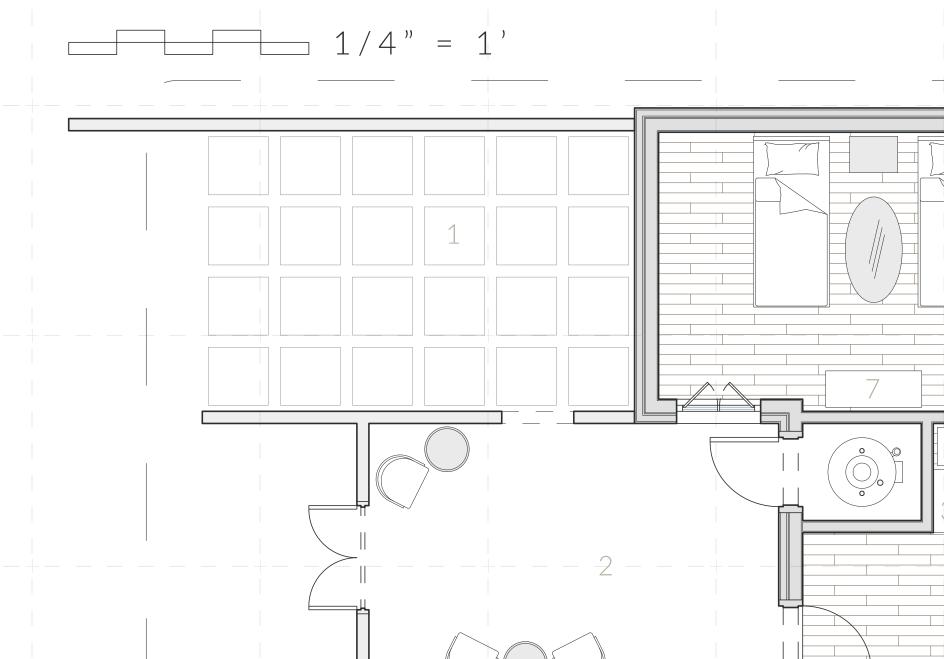
- 1. Car Port
- 2. Private Entrance
- 3. Kitchenette
- 4. Living Room
- 5. Master Bedroom
- 6. Bathroom
- 7. Sitting Area
- 8. Private Patio

The lodging units were designed around the idea of creating various opportunities to experience nature based on the users comfort level. From the previous plan, you can see the residents have a private patio entrance that allows the user to sit and observe their surrounds from that private point of view. In the master bedroom, there is a seating area with shutters that are divided into four panels, allowing the the bottom ones to remain shut for privacy while opening the top and allowing for natural daylight to illuminate the room during conversation and relaxation. This creates a hybrid of intimate and public views of nature. Finally, each unit has a private back patio that opens to the interior courtyards of the site. If a user feels inclined, they are choosing to experience and observe the community happening around them. This is the most public level to experience nature, within the lodging units.

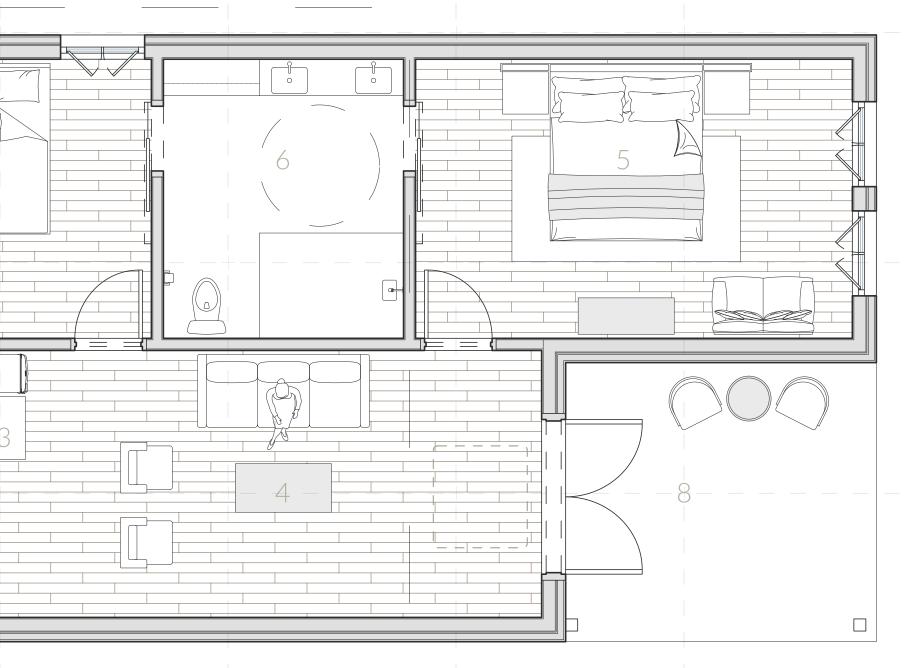




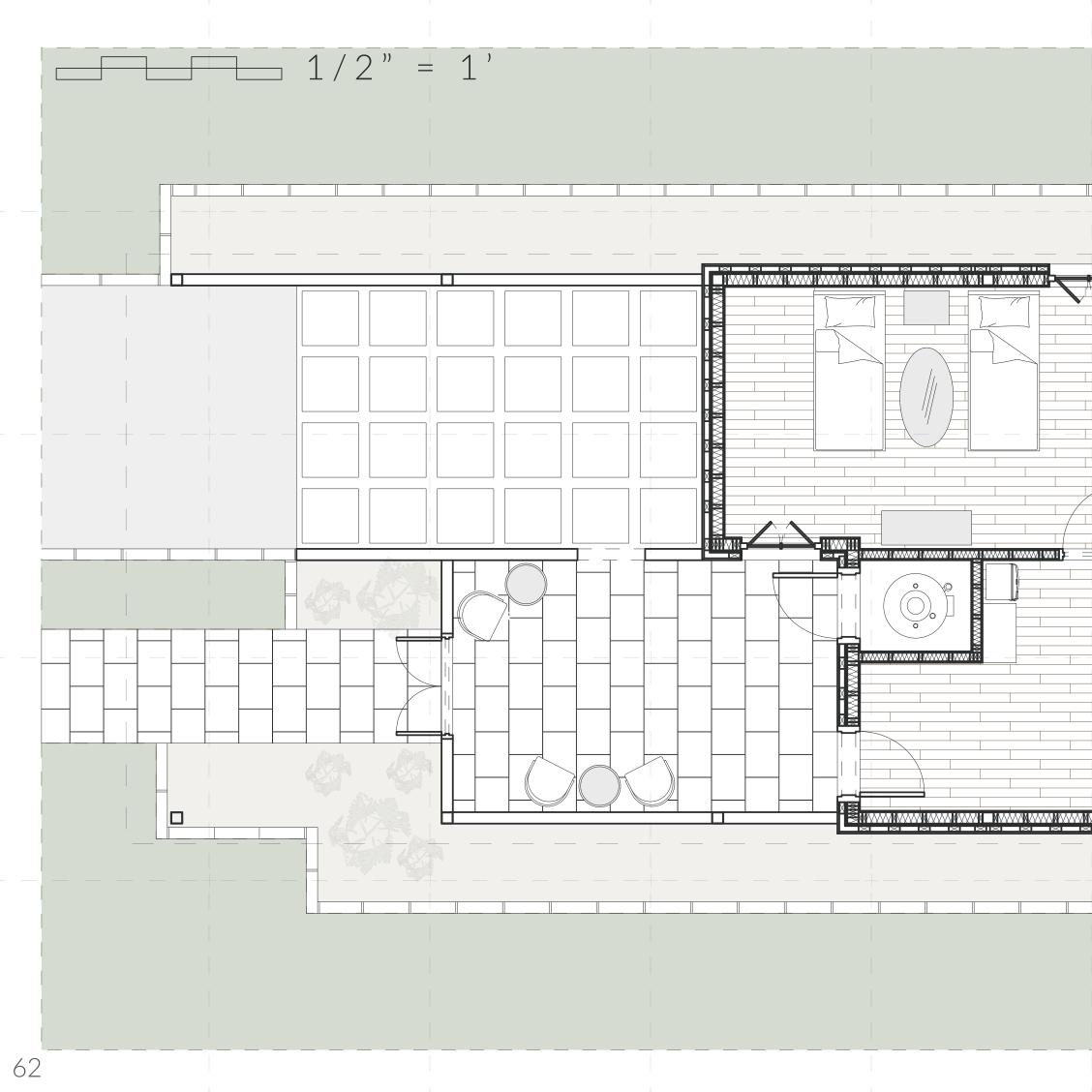


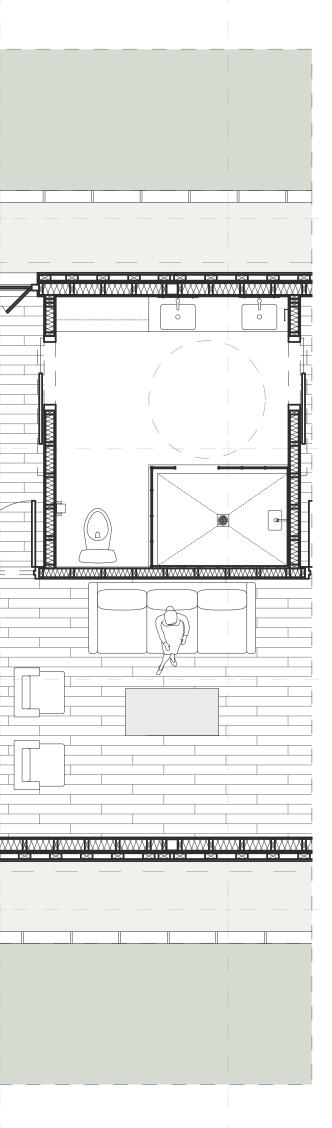


This is a plan for a 2B 1 B unit. The only difference between the two units is the addition of a second bedroom, a slightly bigger private patio entrance, and a slightly bigger living room. The structural system is the same, with the addition of an extra 12' column bay.



- 1. Car Port
- 2. Private Entrance
- 3. Kitchenette
- 4. Living Room
- 5. Master Bedroom
- 6. Bathroom
- 7. Second Bedroom
- 8. Private Patio

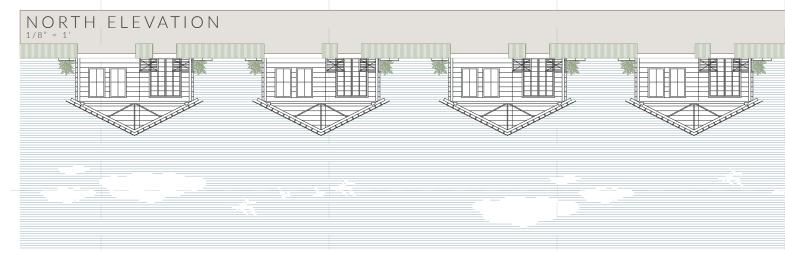




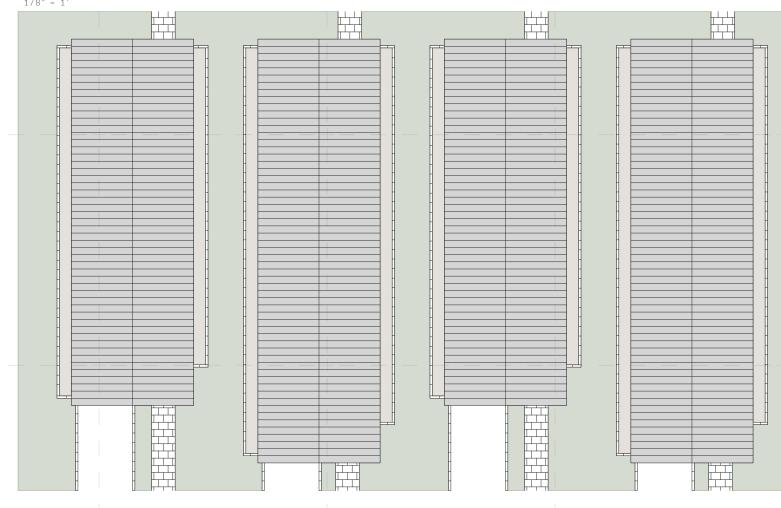
Each unit has landscaped gardens around the perimeter. The user is free to come outside and care for the landscape during their time at the retreat, allowing for a therapeutic activity right by their area of refuge and providing some with a sense of comfort.



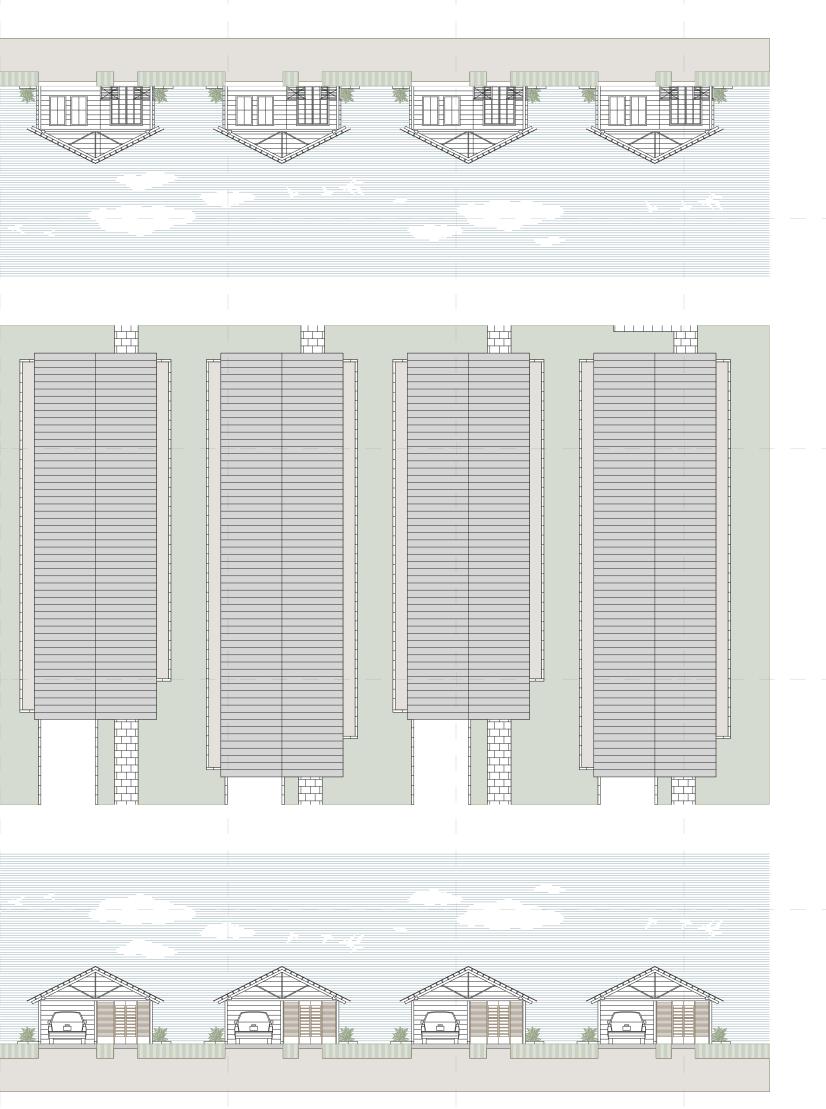




#### LODGING ROOF PLAN











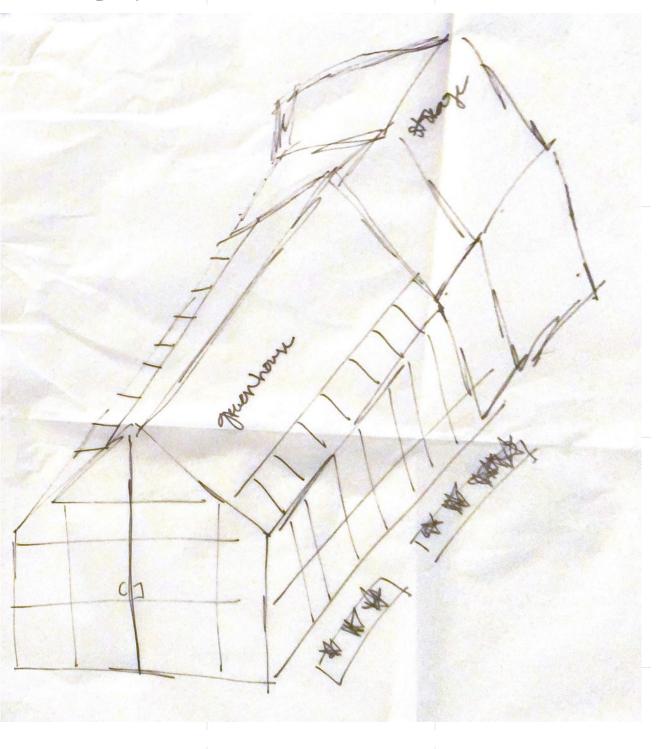
# THE POTTING HAUS

The Potting Haus serves as a form of art therapy. The idea was to give the user a variety of therapeutic outlets.

When a user experiences the Potting Haus, they can participate in pottery, drawing, or potting. This is one of the buildings that serves as the central hub for community engagement between users.

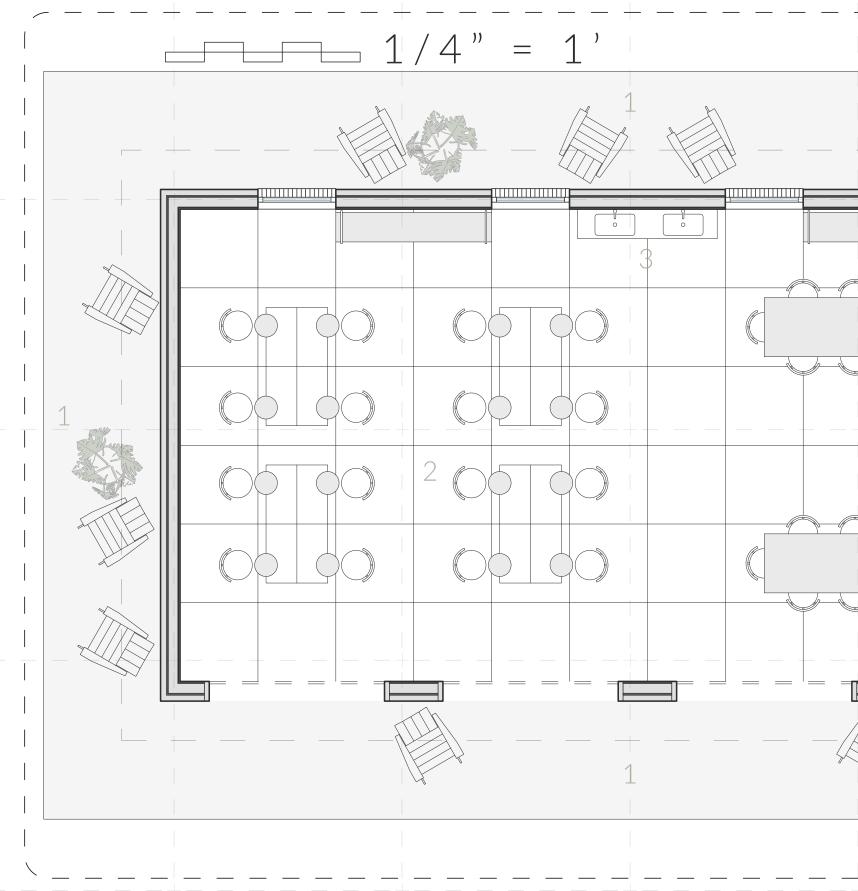
During the creation of pottery, the artist is forced to focus entirely on the task at hand, that is, molding, shaping, and spinning the clay. This leaves little to no room for intrusive feelings commonly associated with PTSD to flood the brain at this time. The artist will often experience a welcome reprieve from symptoms as they continue to work with the clay. The main goal of pottery as a form of therapy isn't about creating a masterpiece; it is about the process of self-expression and self-discovery—a key component to the user's need for someone dealing with trauma and PTSD. Often individuals who have PTSD have a hard time appropriately expressing their emotions. When a person living with PTSD feels they can express themselves through clay, this gives them a sense of worth and self-confidence. Feeling connected to the world around you is critical for someone who has PTSD. The beauty of pottery is that you are working with a substance-clay-that is from the earth. The tactile manipulation of this earthy substance makes the user feel more connected with life.

Initial thought process

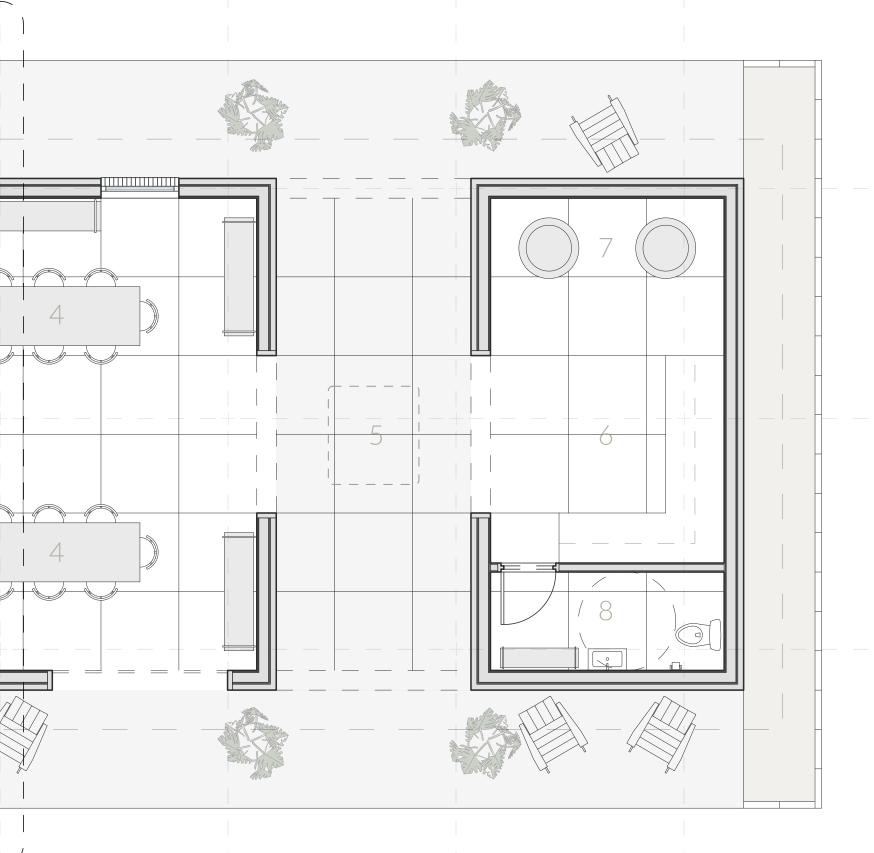








The Potting Haus was designed to create various opportunities to experience nature. Out of the three levels of hierarchy, this is the most exposed method of healing and immersion into the community. Towards the plan south end of the building, before you exit onto the patio, the Potting Haus has four glass garage doors that roll up during the day to allow natural light and ventilation. If there is inclement weather, they can be rolled down, giving the user the feeling of being in nature while being protected from the elements. The patio is surrounded by plant beds filled with Poppy flowers, the flower that symbolizes the military. This provides a visual break for the user, whether inside, creating, or sitting on the patio relaxing. The Potting Haus has a lateral axis that allows a continuous flow between the central part, where the pottery takes place, and the sub-building, where the potting and firing of the clay take place. There is also a breezeway that allows users to enter from whatever direction they are coming from.



- 1. Patio
- 2. Potting Wheels
- 3. Wash Area
- 4. Studio Workspace
- 5.Breezeway
- 6. Potting Area
- 7. Kilns
- 8. Bathroom

The Potting Haus was designed to foster the highest levels of socialbility. This is where the user signals they want to engage with the community. Having the building be so open with the large glass garage doors rolled up gives a visual welcome to the user. They have the freedom to walk in and join the community if they feel inclined to do so. This provides the user with a sense of control that they can think is missing due to their PTSD.









# THE CHAPEL

Healing from trauma and PTSD encompasses physical and emotional aspects as well as spiritual. Therefore, the retreat center has a place for the user to meet and worship God at whatever stage they are spiritually.

The chapel is designed with a minimalist approach, so the user can fully direct their attention away from themselves and onto the healing that God reveals to us through Himself and His creations. If a user is not religious, the chapel still offers a great moment of self-reflection in peace and solitude.

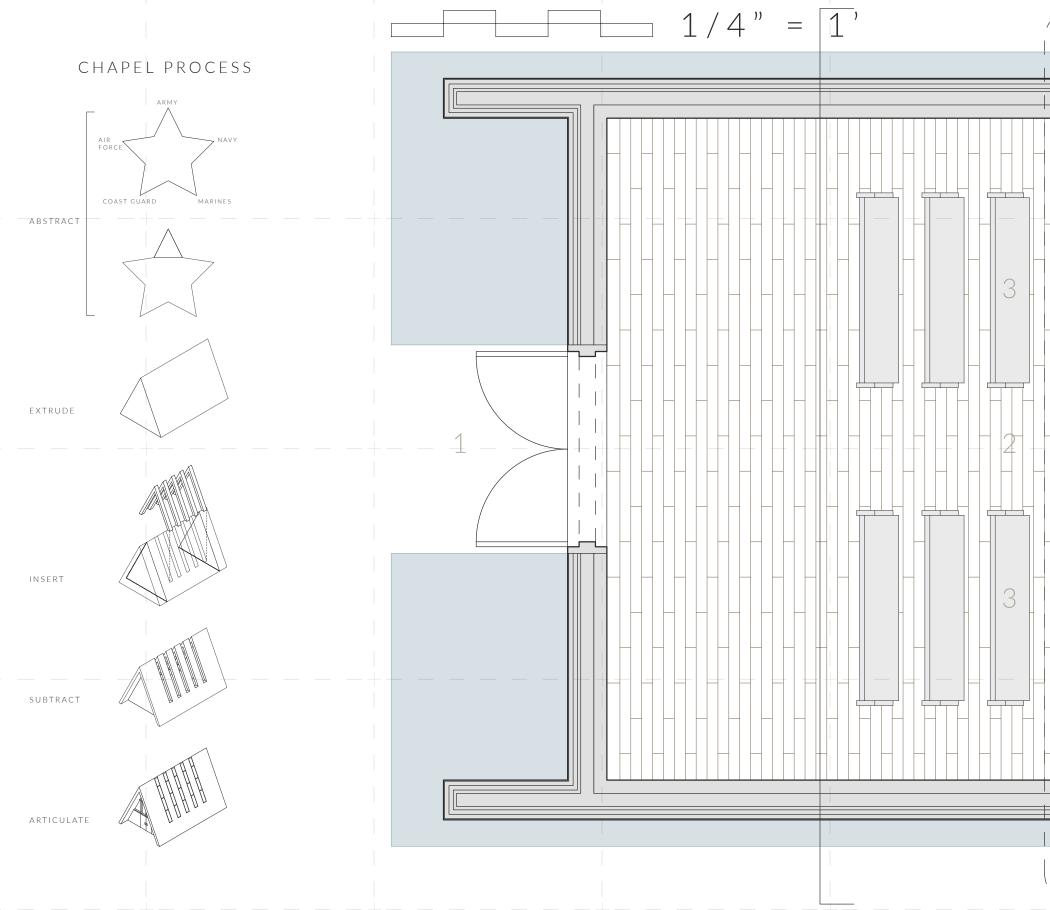
The beauty and simplicity of the chapel are a reminder that God is merciful enough to make this world beautiful for us to inhabit. This is a moment where the user can realize how loved and valued they are by the people who surround them because they are loved by the one who made them in His image.

Initial thought process

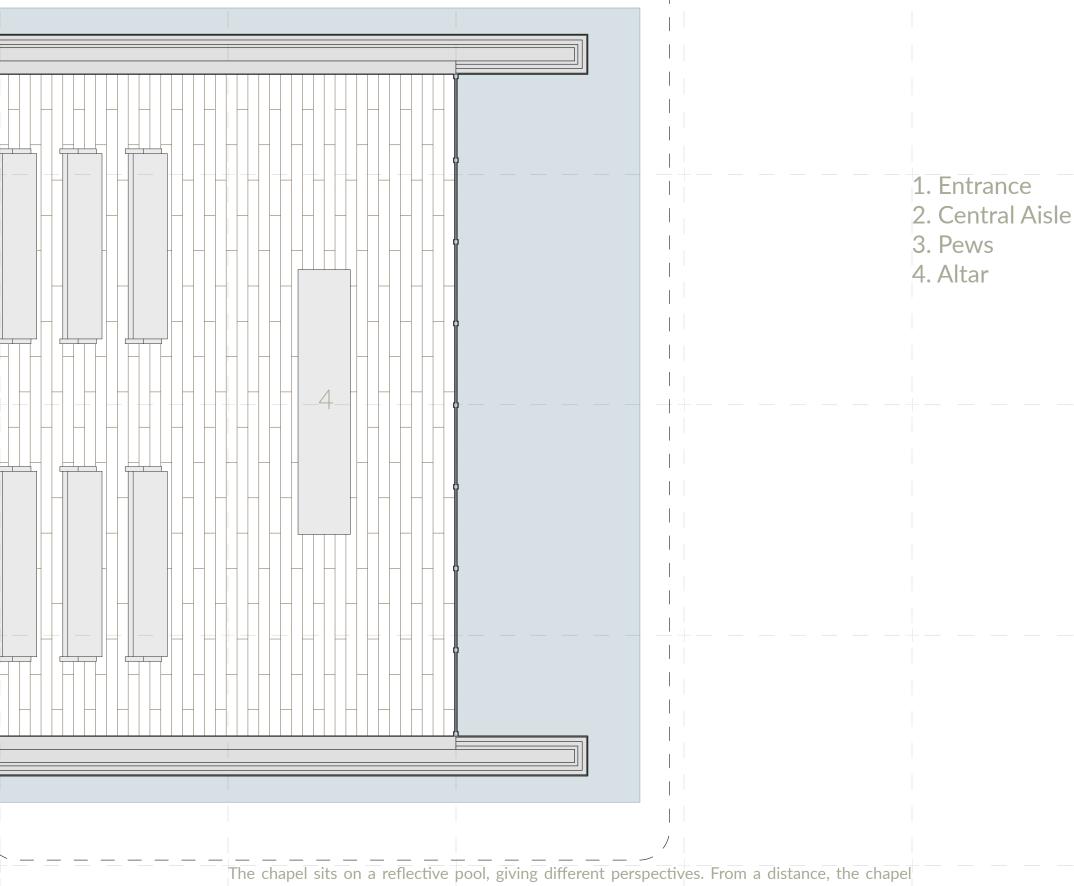
The path to healing: Recovered





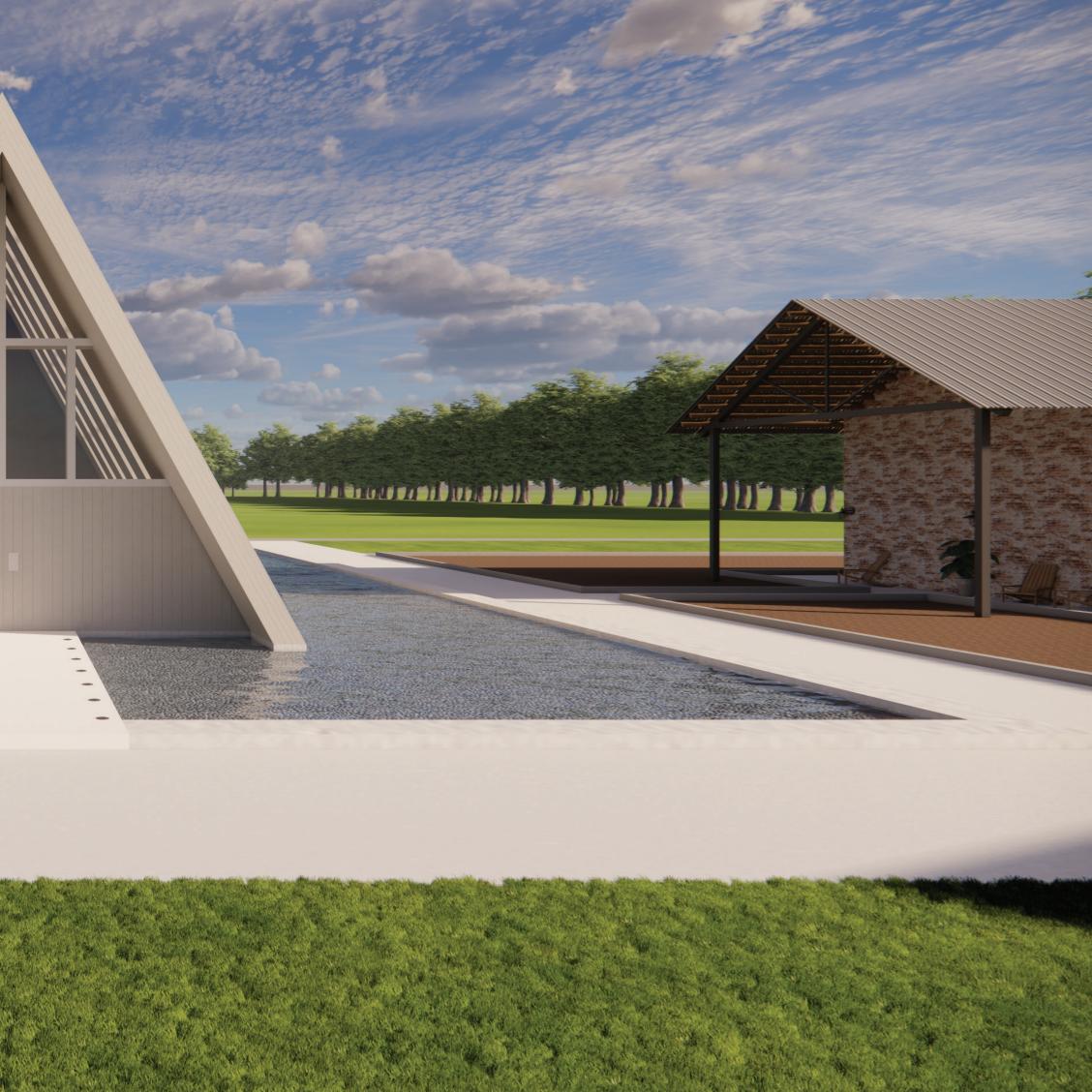


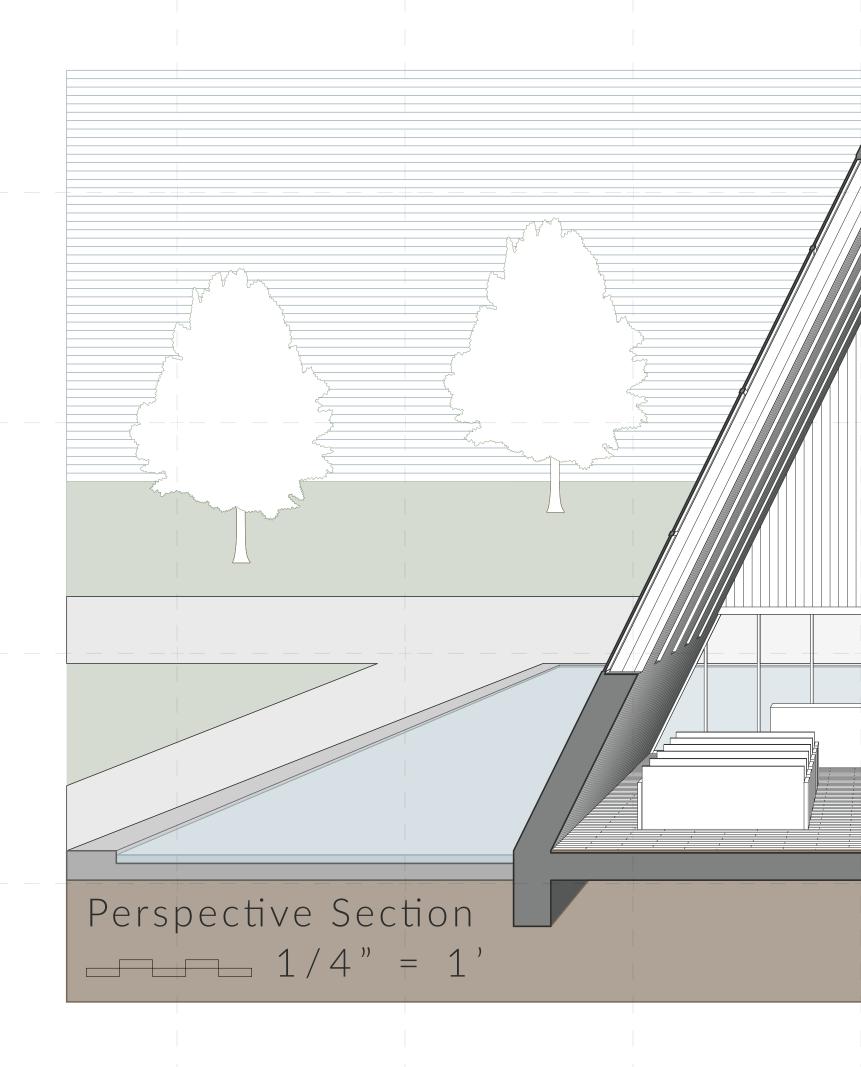
The form of the chapel was an abstraction of a five-point star, the symbol of the military representing all five branches. I took one of the five tips and extruded it vertically; I then inserted five skylight windows to represent the five military branches. The primary material of the chapel is Cross Laminated Timber (CLT). This was chosen for one of two reasons, the minimalist aesthetic, and its strength and durability. They are creating symbolism between the material and the user. Military members and their families must have strength and durability to get through the tough times they face. The chapel entrance is divided into two materials, glass and CLT. The other end of the chapel is the inverse, divided into glass windows on the bottom and CLT on top. The glass behind the altar allows the user to witness the creations surrounding the chapel.

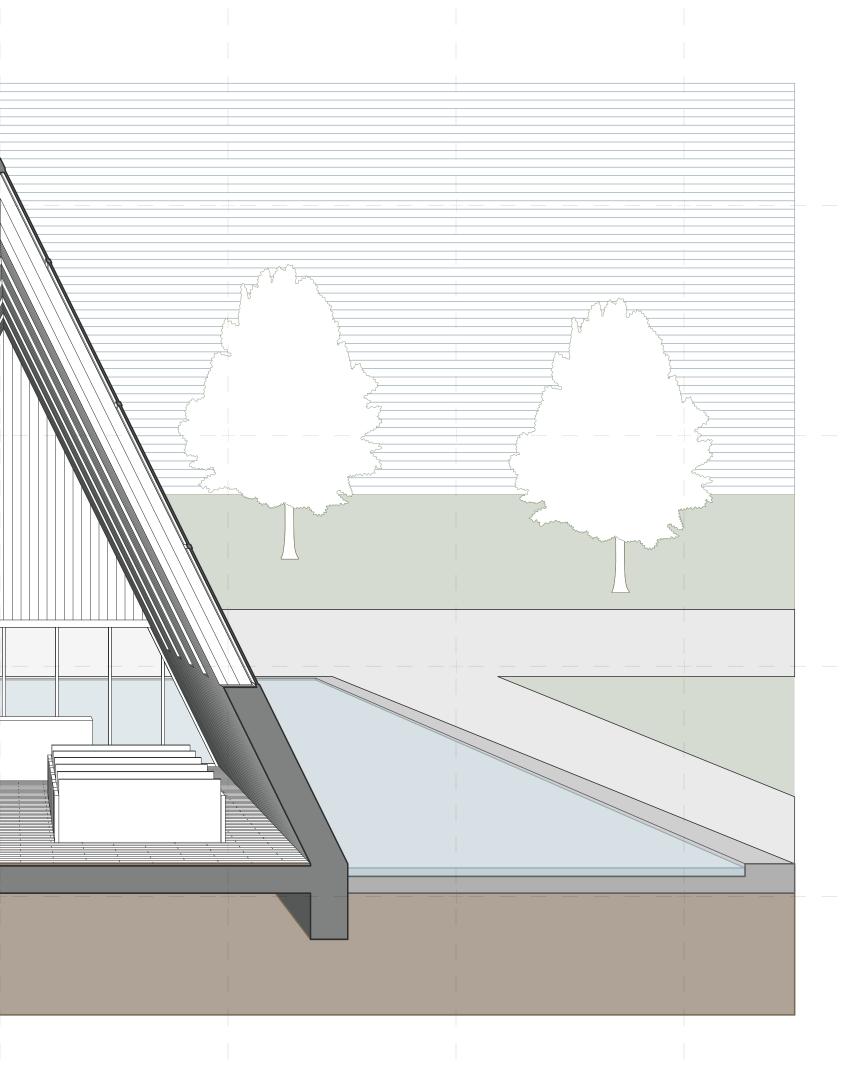


The chapel sits on a reflective pool, giving different perspectives. From a distance, the chapel appears to be floating. On arrival, you have to walk across the water to enter, giving the user the perception of physically leaving the rest of the retreat center to cross over and enter the chapel. The last is the interior perspective; the water creates a visually pleasing serenity for whoever is within the chapel. By watching the water slowly pass by, the user can truly escape, relax, and heal.

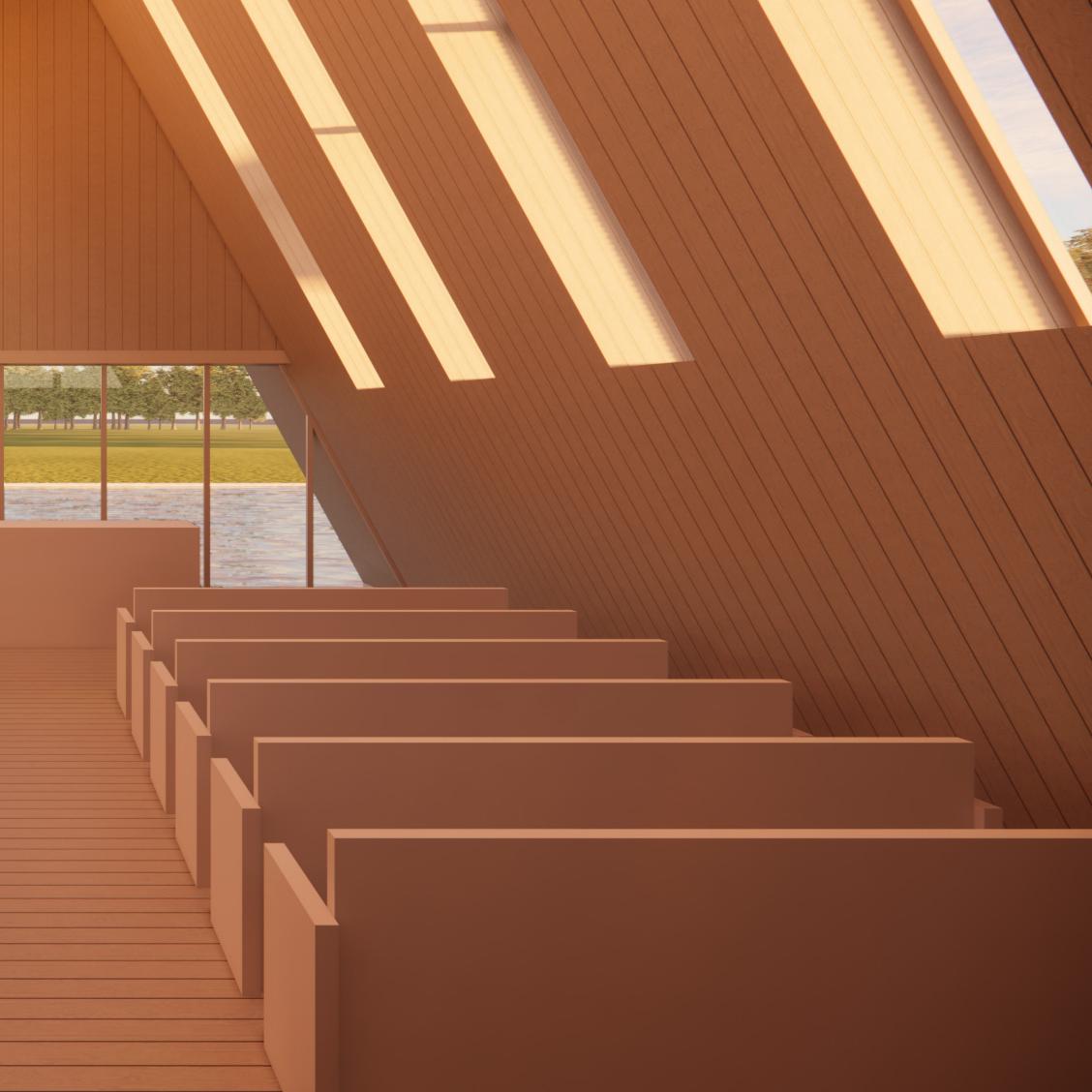








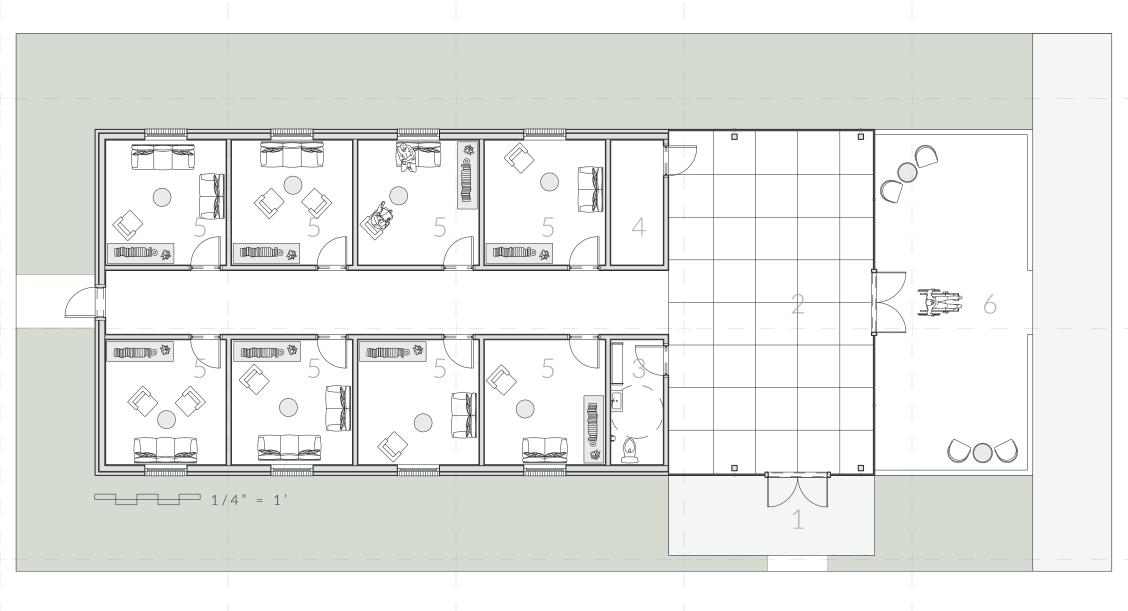




## THE COUNSEL

The counseling building serves as the user's most traditional form of therapy. This is where they can attend classes and therapy sessions individually or as a family.

Most of the building uses German Shmear brick as a facade, and the other part uses a glass curtain wall. The curtain wall faces the side of the chapel. While the user waits for their therapy session, they can sit inside or outside and look at the chapel.



- 1. Entrance
- 2. Lobby
- 3. Bathroom
- 4. Mechanical
- 5. Counseling Rooms
- 6. Patio

## DETAILS



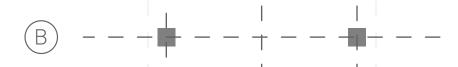














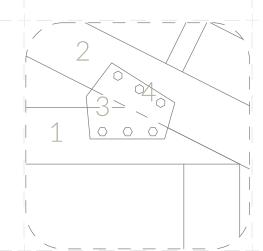
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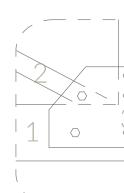
#### **CENTER PLAT**

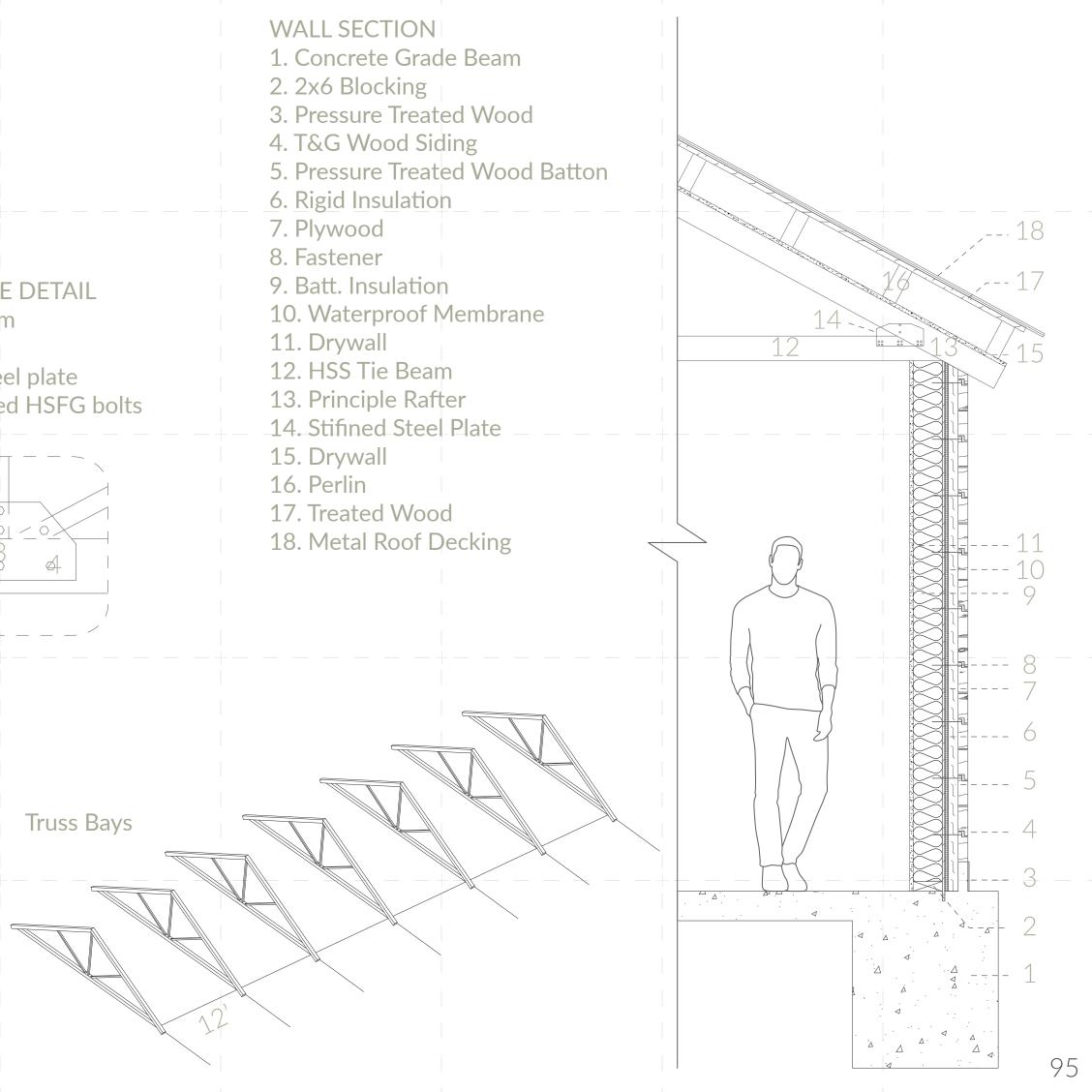
- 1. HSS tie-bear
- 2. HSS strut
- 3. Stinfined ste
- 4. Pre-tensione

#### **CORNER PLATE DETAIL**

- 1. HSS tie-beam
- 2. Rafter
- 3. Stinfined steel plate
- 4. Pre-tensioned HSFG bolts







# EPILOGUE

In conclusion, military families, on average, higher face regular families. situations than These highstress situations lead devastating health to mental stress consequences, which can detract from their unity as a family.

By creating a built environment, like my retreat, that serves the therapeutic needs of PTSD survivors and lends itself to the natural environment, this project was designed to remind the user that they deserve healing, peace, and restoration of their family unit.

Drawing attention to the beauty of nature and reinforcing the symbolism of healing through form, function, and materials, each building and space of this project has the intention of helping the user feel value and resilience within themselves. They are not alone.

I want to call attention to my fellow military children and families. This project is for us. For every spouse that had to pick up the role of both mom and dad when the other parent was deployed. When you are a military child, you see the world differently. You hear first-hand experience of the unjust that happens around the world. You are exposed to trauma, violence, anxiety, and high-pressure situations at a young age. Military children and their families possess invaluable strength that will follow them on every path they encounter. I would not be who I am today if not for this lifestyle I was born into.

To my future self, I hope you continue to hold your convictions close to your heart and fight for what you think is right. Use architecture as your voice to serve others and remember who recieves all the Glory. Now go kick ass!

### REFERENCES

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