

Recover in Place:

Architecture for Living and Well-being in San Francisco's Tenderloin District

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Abstract

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Cities in the United States have grappled with issues of substandard living in downtown neighborhoods known as skid rows. Their reputation for homelessness, drug abuse, and mental disorders disconnects them from the rest of the city despite the efforts to provide social services. Since these social issues tend to correlate with one another, solutions must take a holistic approach so residents can fulfill their needs of housing, wellness, and community or individual and collective well-being.

Architecture can play a role in improving the quality of life in skid row neighborhoods. With the Tenderloin District in San Francisco as the site of intervention, this thesis proposes a supportive housing and wellness center to provide a recovery environment for residents facing homelessness, mental disorders, and drug abuse. With community being vital to recovery, the project explores the use of spaces that foster healthy interactions between diverse user groups and reintegrate the marginalized back into society.

As an urban piece, the project also must address its relationship to the neighborhood's public realm. Designing a project in the Tenderloin acknowledges the challenges of the prevalence of undesirable behavior among its population. Spaces should provide a sense of security but also be welcoming and engaging to the general public.

RECOVER IN PLACE

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The urban dilemma of homelessness, mental disorders, and substance abuse

Major cities in North America have grappled with the issue of substandard living for the last century. Homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health are critical topics that affect the quality of life of the residents of the city. Studies have suggested that homelessness and mental illness and substance abuse are correlated. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), one in five people who have experienced homelessness has mental health disorders, and one in three suffer from substance abuse. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a vulnerable group, the chronically homeless, as individuals living without permanent housing for over a year or four or more episodes within three years. (National Alliance to End Homelessness) Around a third of this population have severe mental disorders and two thirds suffer from substance abuse. (SAMHSA, 2017)

Many efforts have been made to provide housing and social services for the homeless population that is growing over the years. However, less attention has been given to the complex

needs of this diverse demographic. Shortages in affordable housing and strict policies have limited access to support services for homeless people who had more challenging issues. Furthermore, reductions of government funding for corrective institutions like prisons and psychiatric hospitals has led to many mentally ill people being removed from these facilities. As a result, this at-risk population must resort to squalid housing or the streets. Inaccessible housing, inadequate recovery and social support services, and the inability to seek help due to their mental impairment have hindered recovery for this population.

The mentally ill homeless is one of the most vulnerable and most stigmatized demographic in major cities across the country. The common perception of this group of people as drug abusers and criminals leads to their ostracism from the public realm and even support institutions. In major cities, this neglected population often congregate in the neighborhoods known as “skid rows”.



Figure 1-1: A homeless person in Skid Row, Los Angeles

Skid row districts in large U.S. cities have a reputation for crime and disorder, typically seen as places to be avoided by residents and visitors. But often these impoverished urban districts are the only places where marginalized populations can find a way to survive. While skid row neighborhoods are notorious as the location of seedy businesses, drug trafficking, and street people, they are also home to homeless shelters, low-rent housing, soup kitchens and other social services. Many nonprofit and charity organizations are located in these areas in order to better the vulnerable group nearby. These institutions attract the population in need of their services.

The term “skid row” has its roots in the logging industry in 19th century Seattle, when logs were slid along passageways called “skid roads”. (Figure 1-2) Skid Road was named after one of these streets which today is known as Yesler Way, located in Seattle’s old downtown, Pioneer Square. At the turn of the



Figure 1-2: Historic ‘skid road’ in Seattle

century when the logging industry collapsed and workers who resided in the old downtown lost their jobs, “Skid Road” evolved into the present term that is used to describe an area of socioeconomic downturn. (Symon, 2010) These areas became a place of flophouses, brothels, drug trafficking, and violence.

Beginning in the 1960s, migration to the suburbs and reduced funding of social services by the government led to further neighborhood decline, including federal cuts to prisons and mental health institutions. In the 1980s the Reagan administration also decreased funding for public housing and hospitals. As a result, mentally ill patients were forced to relocate to skid row areas because of the availability of vacant, low-cost housing. (Demirel, 2016) One such housing type is the single room occupancy (SRO) apartment. Formerly worker housing, hotels, and flophouses, SROs have dwelling units of minimal square footage, typically eight feet by ten feet (ccsroc.net) and shared bathrooms and kitchens. Over the years, absent building owners have paid little attention to the existing conditions of the SROs. Unkempt living conditions, lax management, and the lack of services have made most SROs undesirable living environments. As the housing stock filled up and aged structures were torn down for new construction, those who are less fortunate end up in the streets. Since the 1980s the mentally ill in the street emerged as the main face of the homeless population as perceived by the public. Some turn to destructive behaviors involving drugs and crime. As a result,

high crime rates and drug trafficking have exacerbated the living conditions of the skid rows. Neighborhoods identified as skid rows are found in cities like Seattle, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

Tenderloin, San Francisco's 'skid row'

In downtown San Francisco, a city known for its historic center for trade and present tech boom, the Tenderloin is a neighborhood with a high concentration of homelessness, poverty, and public disorder. (Figure 1-3) Spencer Michels of PBS Newshour (2014) describes the Tenderloin as the "... soft underbelly of San Francisco for decades: drug dealing and drunks, prostitution, the homeless and mentally ill, troubled veterans, and impoverished new immigrants; 28,000 people live in the 40-square-block area in single-room occupancy hotels and dingy apartments." (Figure 1-4)

While some skid row neighborhoods in US cities, like Pioneer Square in Seattle, have experienced revitalization and gentrification, the Tenderloin has retained its blighted character. As San Francisco's cost of living increases, government policies preserving the Tenderloin's SRO housing stock and city rent controls have kept the neighborhood affordable. Furthermore, resistance from the local residents and nonprofit organizations have also limited new development, preventing the neighborhood from being priced out. (Kamiya, 2013) However, the cost of keeping



Figure 1-3: Tenderloin district, San Francisco's 'skid row' neighborhood



Figure 1-4: SRO Apartments, Tenderloin



Figure 1-5: Inside an SRO in the Tenderloin

the neighborhood affordable means that little progress has been made to improve the quality of life. Gary Kamiya, writer from the Bay Area, comments on the Tenderloin, "It is San Francisco's most glaring contradiction, an island

of need in a sea of prosperity.” (Kamiya, 2013) While its surrounding neighborhoods continue to progress and prosper, development in the Tenderloin remains stagnant.

The unfavorable environmental and social conditions have continued to hinder recovery of marginalized groups living in the Tenderloin and discourage people from entering the neighborhood. The undermaintained streets and derelict buildings are plagued with crime, vermin, and waste that is harmful to residents. Syringes and human waste in public areas are health hazards to the homeless as well as passersby. Many SRO hotels cram residents in cubicle sized rooms with shared bathrooms and kitchens. (Figure 1-5) Residents are also vulnerable to tuberculosis and other contagious diseases that can be contracted from emergency shelters and the streets. Poor living conditions and neighborhood crime can increase post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and sleeplessness for residents and worsen physical and psychological health especially for those suffering from mental disorders. (Sullivan and Chang, 2011, 113) In addition, the Tenderloin’s abundance of liquor stores and informal drug markets encourages destructive behavior. The prevalence of crime and vice and the lack of access to recovery and social services cut off opportunities for social and community capital.

In addition, San Francisco mental health support services are inadequate to support the thousands of its homeless people with severe mental illnesses, including those who live

in the Tenderloin. The 2015 San Francisco Homeless Count report shows that 62 percent of the chronically homeless have substance abuse disorders, and 55 percent have “psychiatric and emotional conditions”. (Figure 1-6) (ASR, 2015) In an article on San Francisco’s mentally ill homeless, advocates stress that the City “needs a fully supported system of mental health care that’s matched to individuals’ needs and provides seamless, uninterrupted housing.” (Allday, 2016) Because of co-occurring disorders related to mental illness and substance abuse, and the lack of services to treat them, homeless people suffer from more debilitating physical and mental disorders and live an average 25 years shorter than the general population. (CSH, 2014) Consequently, living in the streets in a crime-ridden environment that lacks social and health support can hinder the recovery of those who suffer from substance abuse and mental disorders.

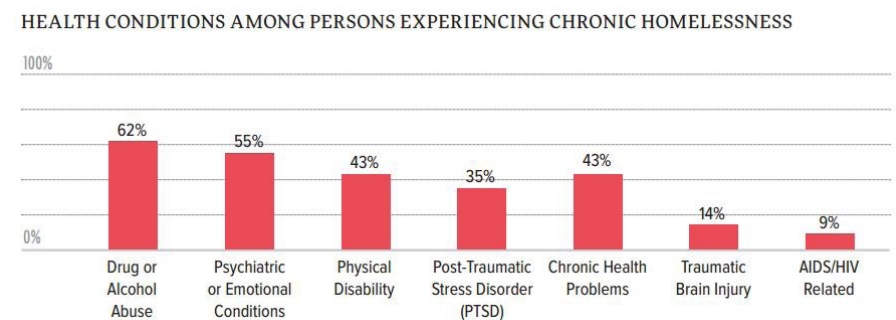


Figure 1-6: San Francisco homeless survey, Applied Survey Research, 2015

Rationale

The blighted built and social environment in the Tenderloin has a negative impact on its residents and reputation. This thesis responds to the City's need for more recovery services for homeless people with mental disorders as well as offer improvements to urban health. People who face homelessness, substance abuse, and/or mental disorders need a safe and healthy living environment that facilitates recovery and well-being of individuals and of their community. Architecture plays a role in meeting this group's need for housing and recovery and support services that promote a sense of well-being. (Figure 1-7) In addition, architecture can create a therapeutic spatial environment that encourages residents to recover from their psychosomatic conditions, improve social ties, and restore their dignity as productive members of society. The design project will also address the relationships between the marginalized population, the service providers and the general public by providing spaces for integrated community support and public outreach, with the goal of raising the quality of life in the Tenderloin.

Project proposal: "Recover in place"

For this thesis, the project proposes a mixed-use development that includes supportive housing for the chronically homeless and a wellness center that provides recovery and community facilities for the many residents in the

Tenderloin facing addictions and mental disorders. Locating the project in the Tenderloin allows these services to be easily reached by the vulnerable population as well as foster social and community capital and improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. The project also hopes to integrate with local nonprofit organizations, businesses, and other institutions to foster a holistic healing environment for the marginalized demographic, hence enabling residents to "recover in place". The proposed development also seeks to engage with the public realm where different services are provided for the diverse local population and to activate underutilized sites with positive community interactions.

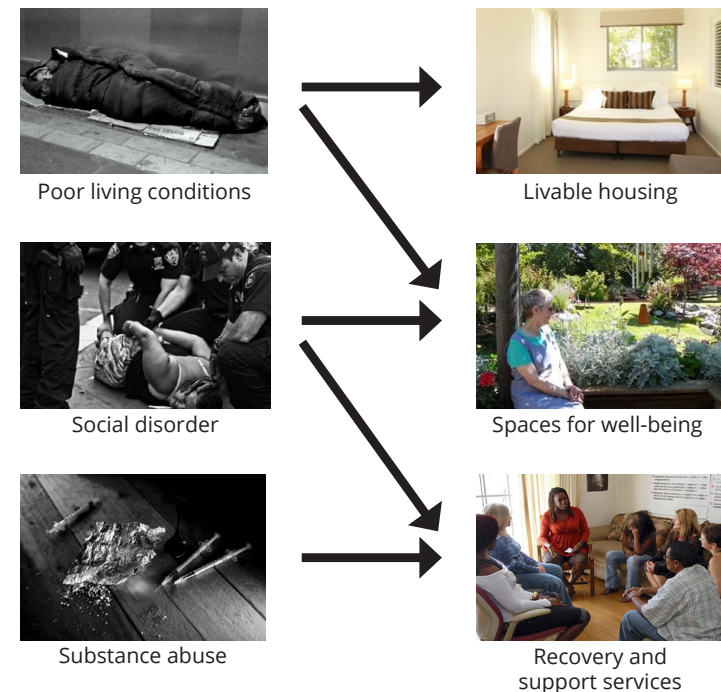


Figure 1-7: Housing, therapeutic spaces, and recovery and support services

Chapter 2

Framework

This chapter explores supportive housing and wellness center as a social programs and as architectural types. Case studies of existing supportive housing and wellness center projects will be examined in order to explore how architecture can serve as a healing environment for occupants who face the traumas of homelessness and mental disorder.

Supportive housing as social program

The supportive housing model came into prominence when the U.S. Federal government acknowledges the need for permanent housing as the basis of recovery among the homeless population. It stems from the idea of Housing First, a housing program that is a reaction of the traditional Housing Readiness approach. The two programs are based on different principles regarding the eligibility of housing for the homeless. (Figure 2-1)

Efforts to provide housing for the homeless have traditionally been based on the Housing Readiness model. In this “stairway” approach, the individual must go through several stages, moving from homeless shelters to transitional housing to permanent housing. The process requires the applicant

to fulfill certain requirements in order to advance to better housing, including having a criminal free record and abstaining from drug and alcohol use. In the book *Accommodating Difference*, author David Clapham explains that Housing Readiness assumes that personal failings are the root cause of homelessness, and that behavioral issues must be addressed before they are qualified for permanent housing. (2015, p. 164) The aim of sober facilities is to prevent disorderly behavior by minimizing negative peer influence in the premises. For the many homeless people who have severe addiction problems, criminal records and/or mental disorders, policies based on the “stairway” approach can prevent them from accessing housing services and cause them to risk eviction should they experience relapse. Furthermore, Housing Readiness relies on temporary living facilities such as emergency shelters and transitional housing. Often “shelter-resistant” people decline

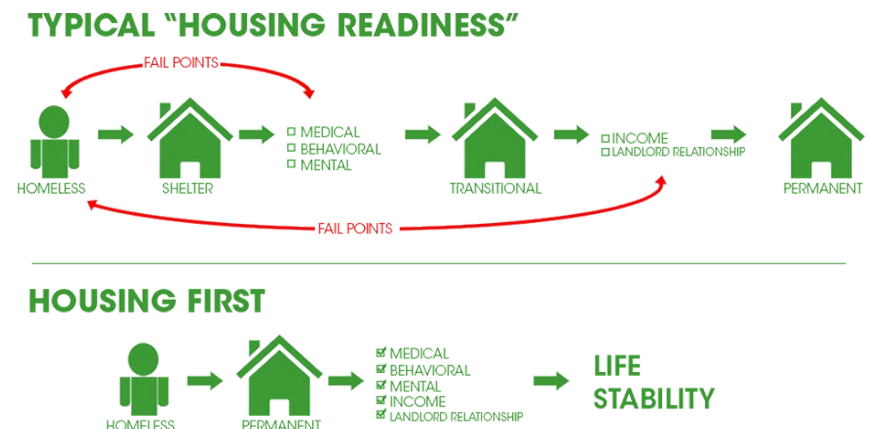


Figure 2-1: Housing Readiness versus Housing First

these kinds of housing services because of the perceived poor living conditions of shelters and the complicated procedures of application.

The Housing First model, a recent alternative approach to housing the homeless, seeks to address the constraints of the Housing Readiness model. Housing First came into prominence in the 1980s with the passing of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act in 1987. (HUD, 2007) In this system, permanent housing is regarded as a basic need of survival, accessible to everyone regardless of any criminal background or behavioral issues. After they are settled in their housing, residents are encouraged to deal with recovery at their own pace. Housing First puts the emphasis on individual self-esteem and confidence as a motivation to change, a contrast from Housing Readiness which puts focus on “social control and merit”. (Clapham, 2015, p. 172)

Sociologists and politicians alike have argued that there are many benefits to supportive housing. Having permanent housing reduces the anxiety the homeless face in the streets in relation to individual safety and comfort. Putting the homeless into housing also frees up streets and public spaces for more productive activity and improves street life. In addition, government studies have confirmed that Housing First supportive housing can produce cost savings compared with other housing solutions. A report in 2002 states that a person on supportive housing reduces taxpayers’ cost by \$20,000

a year. In comparison, a person who is chronically homeless puts a social and financial burden on hospitals, psychiatric care and emergency shelters. (Figure 2-2) (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2017) For example, in Philadelphia living in a supportive housing costs \$76 a night, compared with \$92 for transitional housing, \$164 for a prison, and \$1185 for a psychiatric hospital. (Pathways to Housing PA, 2017) Supportive housing also benefits the health of residents. In a recent study in Denver, Colorado 50 percent of those living in supportive housing improved in physical health, 43 percent in mental health, and 15 percent reduced substance use. (Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2014) In summary, government and

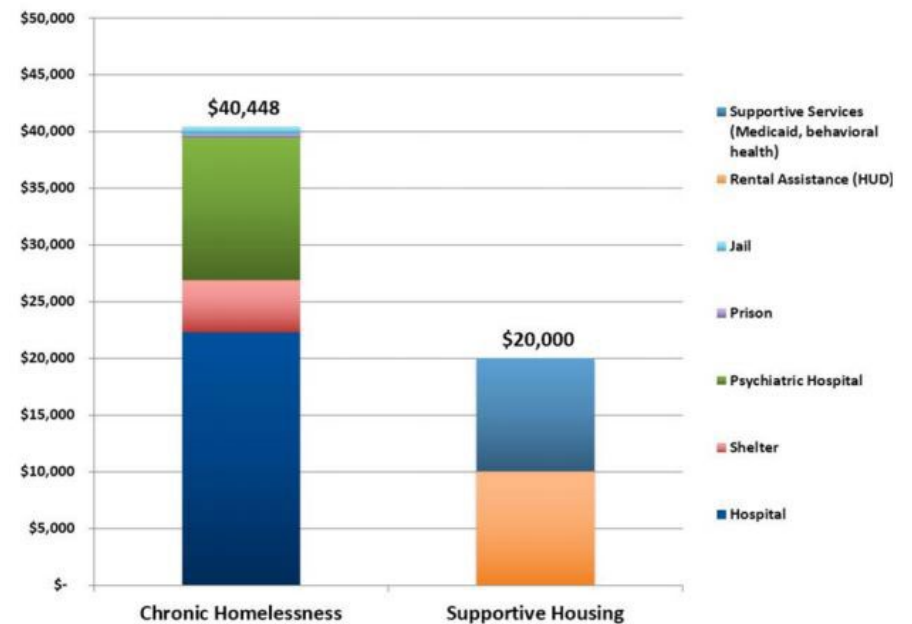


Figure 2-2: Cost comparison between chronic homelessness and supportive housing

nonprofit organizations that work with supportive housing agree that “Housing is health care”. (Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2014)

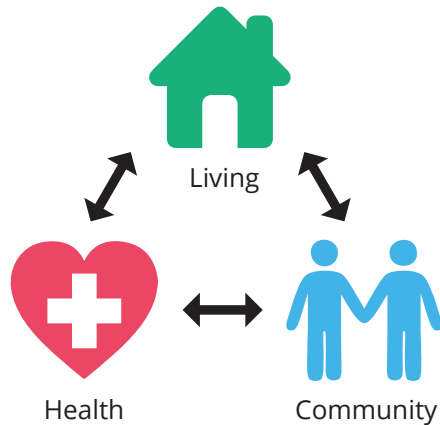


Figure 2-3: Triple benefits to supportive housing

Learning from Bud Clark Commons

But the success of supportive housing relies not just on its effectiveness as a social program but also as an architectural institution. Despite the ability of government services to provide housing for the homeless and better return on their financial investments, ineffective design can still result the housing that is as unlivable as the streets.

The Bud Clark Commons in Portland, Oregon is a supportive housing that faced challenges with its formerly homeless residents. (Figure 2-4) Completed in 2011, this project designed by Holst Architecture was lauded for its award winning, state-of-the-art design that provides housing and supportive services

and incorporates sustainable systems with its LEED Platinum certification. (Korn, 2014) The City of Portland invested \$47 million in this “crown jewel” project to serve as a model in its provision of low-barrier entry housing for the homeless. (Korn, 2014) Located in Old Town, Portland’s skid row neighborhood, Bud Clark Commons includes a homeless shelter and day care center at the lower levels with 130 studio apartment units above. Two nonprofit organizations manage the building: Transitional Projects manages the shelter and the day center, and Home Forward owns the housing above. (Korn, 2014)

Bud Clark Commons has been successful in providing essential life services to hundreds of homeless people in the community. The day center occupying two levels provides a common area, counseling rooms, mail services, a hygiene center equipped with washrooms, showers, and laundry, a computer room, a barber shop, and other facilities. (Figure 2-5) (ArchDaily, 2011) The building also features two courtyards serving as spaces of refuge. Within two years of its opening, 100 residents connected with a mental health provider, and 41 sought treatment for substance abuse. (Manning and Rudman, 2011) The results show the promising effects of providing supportive services in conjunction with housing for the formerly homeless.

Despite the Commons’ ability to excel in its design and services, within a few years managers and tenants complained of numerous incidents of crime and drug trafficking among



Figure 2-4: Bud Clark Commons, Portland. Glass wall facade in front is the day center

residents. The Portland Tribune reports that in 2013 there were over 500 calls to police related to public disturbances, theft, and other crimes related to drug activity in the building. Furthermore, some tenants left or were evicted from the building. Despite the social disorder much like the street environment, many tenants indicated that they were satisfied with the living spaces and services they would otherwise not receive when they were homeless. (Korn, 2014)

The social challenges Bud Clark Commons face confirm that living facilities for homeless people with drug and mental disorders need proper management and adequate services for well-being. As an effort to end chronic homelessness, the project targets the most vulnerable group who are at most

risk of severe harm and death. (Korn, 2014) Jason Isbell, a recovering drug addict and frequent visitor of Bud Clark Commons, criticized the lenient policies in the apartments, and stressed that this kind of facility needs “to ensure that people are using this place as an opportunity to improve their lives rather than do the same thing indoors.” (Korn, 2014) Similarly, HUD stresses that even if this challenging demographic is housed, “their ongoing substance use will affect others” and “undermine social/therapeutic health.” (2007, p. ix) Because low-barrier entry housing involves sheltering people with severe addictions and behavioral problems, the need for accessible services onsite, including health clinics and community spaces, is critical to recovery. Architecture can play a key role in ensuring that residents can recover and experience a sense of well-being and dignity. The spatial design of these facilities can help better connect the services to the user group.

Design for recovery and well-being

Government reports and user experiences provide evidence that an engaging recovery environment centered on the individual and the community is the first step to motivate a struggling individual to recover. (CSH, 2014) A 2007 study of Housing First by HUD suggests that some “programs can ameliorate some of the worst social effects of persistent drug abuse through close and proactive contact with the client and

steady commitment on the part of an interdisciplinary team”.

(p. ix) In his study of the Tenderloin district David Gurley reports the experiences of a formerly homeless resident named Ed. Ed explained that relationships with someone outside of his demographic, namely a healthcare worker, were the key to his recovery from drug addiction,

Villages, community, that is the way out. It’s the only way out. When I got to the point where people didn’t want anything from me, not money, not drugs, not anything except me as a person... I was able to get out. (Gurley, 2010)

Personal testimonials like these support the statistical data that confirms that a healthy and diverse supportive network facilitates recovery among vulnerable individuals. Many supportive housing projects and wellness centers have incorporated common spaces in the buildings such as lounges, dining halls, and gardens. These spaces promote more face-to-face contact with their in-house neighbors and service providers, increasing their ability to form and maintain social ties. (Sullivan and Chang, 2011, p. 109) Designers can make these communal spaces engaging to support a thriving community.

In addition, architecture can also provide therapeutic benefits for the psychological and physical well-being of individuals as well as help to develop community. Researchers Craig Zimring and Jennifer Dubose from Georgia Institute of Technology, report on architectural strategies that incorporate

evidence based design where building elements are found to be linked to health and well-being. (Zimring and DuBose, 2011, p. 206) An example of evidence-based design proven by numerous studies is biophilic design, based on the human connection to nature. (Frumkin and Fox, p. 234) Human contact with natural elements has shown to reduce stress and anxiety, improve cognitive functioning (Browning et al., 2014), and reduce aggression and violence. (Sullivan and Chang, 2011, p. 113) Examples of biophilic design include incorporating natural light and natural features like water and greenery. (Browning et al., 2014) Large openings and views to natural settings have shown to reduce occupant stress and accelerate recovery. (Sullivan and Chang, 2011, p. 110) Other design practices that have proven to facilitate recovery include the integration of recreational and community gathering spaces. (Browning et al., 2014)

The Bud Clark Commons in Portland incorporates some of these elements in the design of the day center. The glazed façades of the common room provide ample daylighting. (Figure 2-5) The courtyards provide refuge for occupants with its green landscaping. The gated main courtyard acts as a threshold area that eases the transition from the streets to the day center. As a residential building, however, Bud Clark Commons is designed much like a conventional apartment building. (Figure 2-6) In order to serve its vulnerable occupants, the facility could better address their specific needs. The



Figure 2-5: Common room in day center overlooking the courtyard, Bud Clark Commons

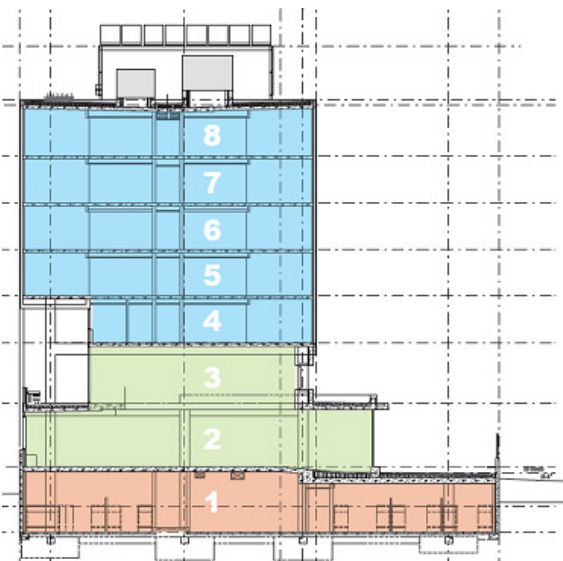


Figure 2-6: Section of Bud Clark Commons. The apartments promotes an isolating environment with the double loaded corridors and disconnect with the day center.

double loaded corridor plan, commonly applied in conventional apartments, creates an isolated, cramped environment. Moreover, the apartments are programmatically separated from the day center, with their entrances located on opposite sides of the building. This means that apartment residents may never pass through the day center nor its entry courtyard, undermining the potential for residents to use these spaces. The lost opportunity for Bud Clark Commons illustrates that buildings not only need to provide well designed supportive spaces, but also make them easily accessible to their residents.

Star Apartments

Star Apartments, located in Skid Row, Los Angeles, is a supportive housing project that demonstrates how architecture can enhance the spatial relationships between the recovery environment and its users. (Figure 2-7) The building is managed by the Skid Row Housing Trust, a nonprofit organization that provides housing services within the neighborhood. Designed by architect Michael Maltzan, Star Apartments responds to Skid Row Housing Trust’s vision in prioritizing good design in its buildings. The intent is that low-income housing should resemble market housing to avoid segregation and enhance quality of life for residents who once faced the trauma of homelessness. The Trust hopes to counter the notion of “trauma-informed design” in many institutional projects like shelters and mental health facilities that tend to be budget and



Figure 2-7: Star Apartments, Los Angeles

utility driven. (Kilston, 2014) In her article on Skid Row Housing Trust projects, Lyra Kilston notes “... dark corridors, stark fluorescent lightings... [and] anonymous spaces” to describe such spaces that hinder recovery. (Kilston, 2014) Mike Alvidrez, executive director of the Trust, suggests that housing projects should “mitigate some of the ill effects of homelessness by bringing in good design, ample light and generous landscaping.” (Kilston, 2014)

Like Bud Clark Commons, Star Apartments adopts a Housing First model with on-site recovery services. (IIT) Unlike the former’s double loaded corridor plan, Star Apartments employs a more open configuration in the common spaces with outdoor corridors that spatially connect the residential levels to the wellness center below. (Figure 2-8) The open

common areas also enhance daylighting and surveillance among the neighbors.

The six-story building includes wellness services at the bottom two levels with 102 studio housing units above. The ground floor contains a medical clinic and the headquarters of Los Angeles County Department of Health Services’ Housing for Health Division. (Anderton, 2016) The floor above is the wellness center, which features a community garden, a community kitchen and dining room, an art therapy room, a community room, a library, and exercise facilities including a running track and a basketball court. Community gardens and exercise spaces have shown to promote physical health and social interaction. (Figure 2-9) (Frumkin and Fox, 2011) Similarly, experts suggest that “recreation and physical activity can help offer an alternative lifestyle for opioid addicts”, because similar neurological reactions are produced that make users feel ‘high’. (Ibrahim and Jones, 2017)

The wellness center, accessible to both residents in the building and the neighborhood, becomes the apartment’s nucleus of community bonding. Bill Fisher, a tenant who tends the garden, describes the space “a refuge from the ‘madness’ of the streets outside.” (Anderton, 2016) In addition, daily formalized activities and programs are offered to encourage community engagement, making Star Apartments and other SRHT buildings feel more like “college dorms than social services facilities”. (Kilston, 2014)



Figure 2-8: Exterior circulation, Star Apartments



Figure 2-9: Wellness center with running track and community garden, Star Apartments

A report released in 2014 from the Skid Row Housing Trust shows the benefits of providing on-site recovery services in its housing. Within 90 days of moving in to an SRHT building, 90 percent of its residents have utilized the onsite services. 71 percent used the physical health treatment services, and 65 percent participated in substance abuse recovery services. (Skid Row Housing Trust, 2014) Not only did the apartments provide the basic need for housing, its attractive recovery services also encourage well-being among the residents.

Old Town Recovery Center

The Old Town Recovery Center in Portland is also studied for its design of the spaces one would find in a wellness center. (Figure 2-10) The building is run by Central City Concern (CCC), a local nonprofit organization that provides recovery, housing, and employment services for the disadvantaged

population within the Old Town neighborhood. Central City Concern is nationally recognized for the holistic services it offers for individuals facing homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse. (Romm, et al.) The recovery center provides multidisciplinary health services to residents with mental disorders. The three-story building contains outpatient clinics, individual and group counseling rooms, a multipurpose fitness room, and community spaces for the clients and the public. Some key design elements include the central courtyard encircled by a quiet waiting area that doubles as circulation, and a ceremonial staircase that takes patrons to the upper level clinic. (Figure 2-11) The Old Town Recovery Center is connected to the adjacent Richard Harris building, which contains a primary-care clinic and prescription counter on the ground level, an acupuncture room on the second floor, and recovery housing apartments above. The buildings have several waiting rooms for specialized appointments.



Figure 2-10: Old Town Recovery Center, Portland

The Old Town Recovery Center has the notable design feature of a series of team rooms dedicated to CCC's Peer Delivery Service. Clients have group sessions with an interdisciplinary team of health specialists, case managers, and social workers. The team features at least one mentor who was previously enrolled in CCC's programs and can share their recovery experiences. Graduates of the program can later work for CCC as peer mentors themselves. (Hubert, 2017) The 'living room' on the ground floor, equipped with lounge seating and a kitchen and dining area, is a mingling space for client and provider interaction.

SERA, the architecture firm behind the project, incorporates therapeutic design into the spaces. The central courtyard is enclosed with glazing extending to all three levels, providing greenery, daylighting, and wayfinding for its occupants. (Figure 2-12) Wood materials and natural tones create a calming ambience. Glass is incorporated throughout the spaces for surveillance and transparency of program. Large openings in the facades increase natural light in the spaces. Since some of the clients exhibit challenging behaviors, the calming spatial environment also benefits the staff.

The design of the Old Town Recovery Center expresses a distinct separation between the safe recovery environment of the private realm and the rough street scene of the public realm through its materiality and program. The street facing façades incorporate a glazing system that appears semi-



Figure 2-11: Ceremonial staircase and inner waiting room and courtyard, OTRC

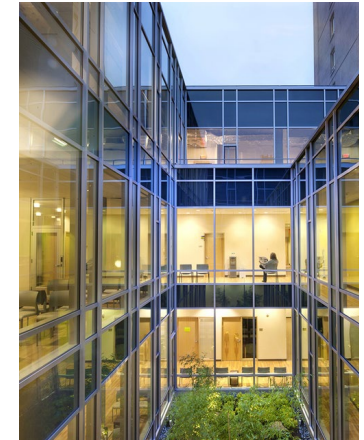


Figure 2-12: Interior courtyard, OTRC



Figure 2-13: Ground floor plan, OTRC

opaque on the outside to shield the patients and workers from the rough exterior environment. In a similar manner, the community rooms, exam rooms, and counseling spaces are located either on the second floor or deep within the building. Conversely, the living room, fitness room, and seminar

room are all located at the corner of the building to express the connection between the services and the public. The semi-opaque glazing and the monotonous façade, however, undermine this design expression as these spaces cannot be clearly distinguished from the outside.

The building structure is designed to provide additional floors of housing above in the future. The housing component will accommodate both low-entry housing and recuperative care for homeless residents who need continuous health support in a sheltered environment. (Hubert, 2017) Taking on CCC's 'Housing Choice' model, homeless residents are given the option to stay in a 'Housing First' building for those who only want housing, or in a 'Recovery Housing' building for those who wish to pursue recovery in a sober environment. (USICH and Post, 2017)

Findings and design challenges

The findings from literature and precedents show that accessible recovery and social services and a therapeutic built environment are crucial to well-being among the vulnerable population. With recovery as the driving principle of their designs, Star Apartments and Old Town Recovery Center demonstrate design strategies that promote a holistic, community-based recovery environment for people experiencing the traumas of marginalized living. Serving as urban sanctuaries in their Skid Row neighborhoods, the

buildings allow their residents and users to 'recover in place' with therapeutic architecture and accessible community amenities.

A common challenge these projects face is dealing with the relationship between the public and private realms. Since these buildings are situated in rough neighborhoods, much of the effort in the design is on sheltering the private realm. However, extending this gesture to the street level can result in a barricade, an inactive storefront that creates a space ideal for loitering and other undesirable activity and an unwelcoming entry for building users. To make the amenities inside welcoming to the public, users should feel comfortable as they enter the building. (Figure 2-14) This thesis proposes to explore design strategies that address both security in the private and public realms as well as activation at the street level.

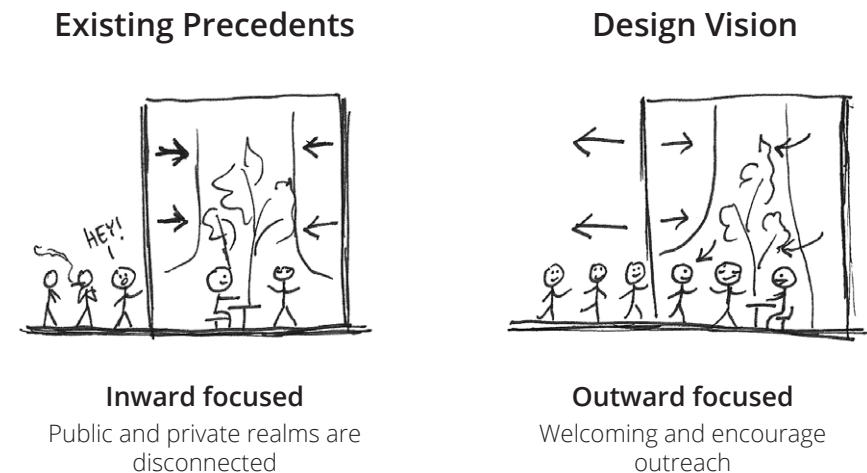


Figure 2-14: Sketch comparing the inward focused precedents and outward focused design vision

Another finding is that occupants of supportive housing tend to be limited to people facing homelessness and care workers. This results in these buildings being segregated and undermined of their relevance to the general public. As previously mentioned, healthy interactions with peers of different backgrounds can facilitate recovery. The vision for this

thesis allows for the inclusion of more diverse user groups to reintegrate these services and their users into society. (Figure 2-15) The Tenderloin has this advantage with the influx of tech workers migrating into the neighborhood in recent years. People who live in the Tenderloin can also benefit from using these spaces even if they are not seeking recovery.

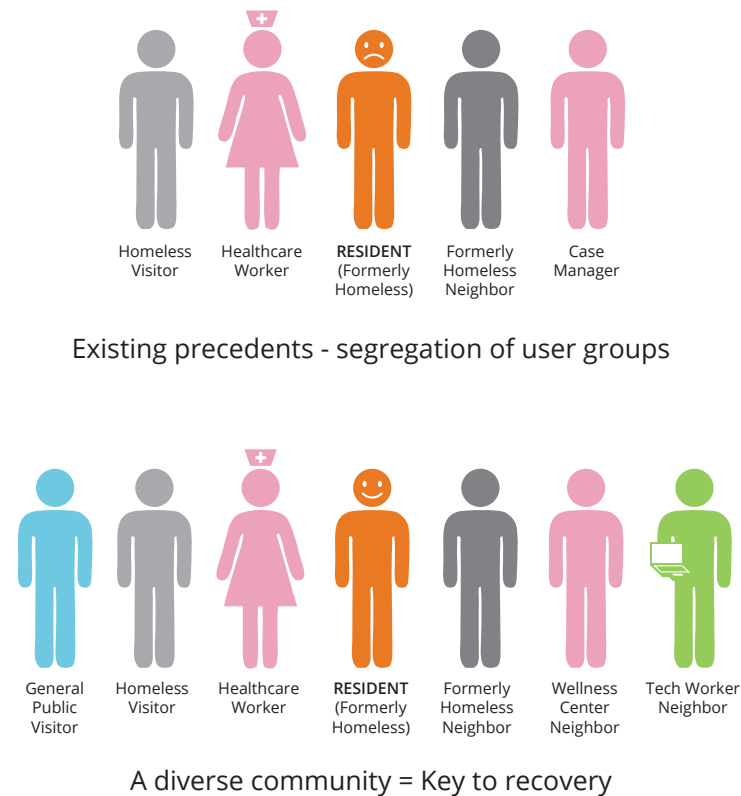


Figure 2-15: Existing precedents cater to limited user groups. The project vision seeks to integrate a diverse community

Chapter 3

Methods

Goals and objectives

The thesis proposes the design of a supportive housing and wellness center that serves a challenging demographic in the Tenderloin district in San Francisco. It will demonstrate that architecture can serve a role by not just providing a program of supportive spaces but also by expressing them as accessible, functional, and engaging spaces. Recognizing the benefits of community support and therapeutic design as drivers of recovery, the thesis proposes an architecture that focuses on the design of community and therapeutic spaces so that users can recuperate in a restful environment. The community areas should be designed for diverse social interactions between different user groups, whether in the wellness center or in the housing. The project will also incorporate biophilic and other evidence-based-design elements to give these spaces therapeutic benefits for their recovering users.

Another goal for the thesis is to address the building's public and private realms and strengthen their relationship with one another. The design of the public realm is critical with respect to the Tenderloin. The building must present itself as a recovery space and establish its presence in the urban fabric through

its architectural language. Unlike the more insular precedents, this project proposes to be both a sanctuary and a welcoming center, balancing inward and outward looking qualities. The more public zones at the street level should not only provide a refuge for patrons from the oppressive street environment, but also seek to encourage people in the neighborhood to use the facilities. The private realm, such as the residential and clinical areas, should provide refuge for individuals as well as surveillance so occupants can keep an eye out for one another.

Neighborhood analysis

The Tenderloin: Past and present

The Tenderloin district in San Francisco is a unique skid row neighborhood among North American cities in that it is surrounded by some of the most prosperous neighborhoods in the United States, yet remains one of the most blighted neighborhoods in the city. The Tenderloin has been regarded as San Francisco's entertainment district from as early as the 19th Century with its theaters, taverns, and brothels. After the great earthquake and fire in 1906, existing buildings were destroyed and replaced with SRO hotels to provide rapid rehousing for the growing population. (Kamiya, 2013) The SROs originally accommodated transient workers, but over the years have become low-income housing for marginalized groups including people with mental disorders who were displaced from institutions in the late 20th century. (Kamiya, 2013)

For many decades the Tenderloin has been a desolate neighborhood until tech companies began moving downtown in the 2000s. In 2012 when the social network company Twitter moved its headquarters on Market Street in a vacant historic building across from Civic Center, this part of the city saw its first glimmer of revitalization. (Joyner, 2012) Today the tech companies that have moved into the area near the Tenderloin become a divisive subject. They are either perceived as drivers of revitalization who bring wealth and innovation, or facilitators of gentrification threatening to drive out the low-income community. Strong neighborhood activism has kept the Tenderloin affordable. (Levy, 2015) Randy Shaw, director of the nonprofit organization Tenderloin Housing Clinic, explains that despite the opulence in the rest of the City, the Tenderloin could be “San Francisco’s last working-class neighborhood, the only one that “cannot be gentrified” due to its political and local protections. (PBS Newshour, 2014) The Tenderloin’s long history of strong activism to protect its lower-class residents has contributed to its continuing reputation as a resilient neighborhood.

Neighborhood context

The Tenderloin is situated in the heart of downtown, bounded by Geary Street to the north, McAllister Street to the south, Van Ness Avenue to the west, and Mason Street to the east. (Figure 3-2) The southeast corner boundary is Market



Figure 3-1: Map of San Francisco showing the Tenderloin District

Street, San Francisco’s main street and corridor for vehicles, buses, streetcars and rail. The neighborhood is close to Civic Center and Powell Street stations of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Municipal Railway. Typical to neighborhoods north of Market Street before the grid shift, the Tenderloin follows a 475-foot by 350-foot block configuration. The street grid north of Market is oriented 9 degrees off east-west. Where the grid approaches Market Street, irregular shaped blocks and complex street intersections are created.

East of the Tenderloin is Union Square, San Francisco’s retail district named after its eponymous public plaza. Powell Street,



Figure 3-2: Neighborhood map of the Tenderloin and surrounding areas

the next main street east of Mason, features the cable car line popular with tourists. Toward the southwest is the Civic Center district, home to government, civic and institutional buildings. The district is characterized by large-scale, monumental buildings and public spaces. Several streets north is Nob Hill, an affluent residential neighborhood. Southeast of the Tenderloin is the South of Market neighborhood (SOMA), a mixed socioeconomic neighborhood and home to Twitter and other

tech companies. West of the Tenderloin are Hayes Valley and Western Addition, formerly low-income neighborhoods that have been gentrified. The strip along Market Street is the Mid-Market district, a blighted area that recently being revitalized since the 2010s with the arrival of tech companies like Twitter. (Figure 3-4)

The Tenderloin has a diverse building stock contributing to its granular urban fabric. Small corner stores, liquor stores,



Figure 3-3: Clockwise from left: Tenderloin, Civic Center, Union Square, Western Addition

theaters, and nonprofit organizations dominate the business scene. The Warfield and Golden Gate Theaters near Market Street are historic landmarks that have been hosting shows since the 1920s. (Figure 3-5) Public parks and plazas in the Tenderloin and its neighboring blocks include the Tenderloin Playground and Boeddeker Park, Union Square in the retail district, and United Nations (UN) Plaza and Civic Center Plaza in the Civic Center district. The UN and Civic Center Plazas serve as places of gathering and recreation, as well as illegal transactions and homeless encampments. (Figure 3-6)

The Tenderloin is notable for its copious SRO apartment buildings, of which at least over a hundred remain. (Figure 3-7) The apartments vary in size but most take the form of an I, E, or U-shaped plan to accommodate fenestration in the units. Some of these buildings have small businesses and services on the ground level. Nonprofit organizations own a portion of the SROs to make the units permanently affordable. Some SROs have been converted to budget hostels and luxury hotels, especially those near the retail district and Van Ness Avenue.



Figure 3-4: Twitter headquarters



Figure 3-5: Golden Gate and The Warfield Theaters



Figure 3-6: UN Plaza

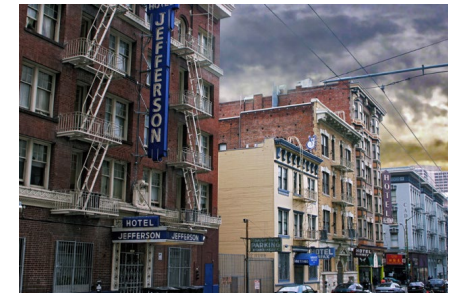


Figure 3-7: Historic SRO hotels in the Tenderloin

Hotel conversions can be a driver of revitalization but also bring about the displacement of local occupants. To protect the affordable SRO housing stock, hotel conversion projects require developers to pay into a fund for affordable housing projects. (Kamiya, 2013)

The Tenderloin is home to many nonprofit organizations, including the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation, Tenderloin Housing Clinic, Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing, and Community Housing Partnership. These groups provide affordable housing and social services to residents facing financial burdens and/or homelessness. Hospitality House and Hamilton Families provide shelters and other social services to the homeless. Charity organizations such as GLIDE Foundation and St. Anthony's are longtime establishments that provide free food and social services to homeless and low-income residents. Healthright 360 is a nonprofit organization that provides integrated health services to the marginalized population.



Figure 3-8: Building Use in the Tenderloin



- PUBLIC PLAZAS AND PARKS:
- 1 - Alfred E. Boeddeker Park
 - 2 - Tenderloin Children's Playground
 - 3 - Civic Center Plaza
 - 4 - UN Plaza
 - 5 - Sergeant John Macaulay Park
 - 6 - Turk and Hyde Mini Park
 - 7 - Union Square

Figure 3-9: Public parks and plazas in the Tenderloin neighborhood and beyond

New developments

Developments in recent years have helped improve the quality of life in the Tenderloin. The Alfred E. Boeddeker Park rebuilt in 2014 features a basketball court and community clubhouse that overlooks the park through its glass facade. (Figure 3-10) (Lee, 2017) This public park provides an area of refuge and social interaction for the residents. The Kelly Cullen Community, which reuses a historic YMCA building, provides housing for the chronically homeless as well as a health clinic and a community center that reuses the building's existing gym and auditorium. (Figure 3-11) (TNDC, 2012)

The Tenderloin has been the site of many proposals for new developments. One such development is an affordable family housing apartment with a full-service grocery store at street level. (David Baker Architects) Additionally, as part of the City's plan to redevelop the Mid-Market, market rate housing and hotel complexes along Market Street have been proposed, including one originally designed by renowned architecture firm

Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG). (Figure 3-12) The original proposal includes a community arts space that could activate one of the most crime-ridden blocks in the city. (King, 2015) (Nevius, 2011) More recently, BIG's design was replaced with a more modest design by Handel Architects, where the arts space is removed to accommodate more housing units. (Figure 3-13) (King, 2015) Although this proposal is intended to add more capital to the blighted area, it has not addressed the context of the marginalized neighborhood.

Despite these new facilities available in the Tenderloin, services dedicated to health recovery are insufficient to serve its high homeless and mentally ill population. Major health institutions for this marginalized group like the Zuckerberg General Hospital and Healthright 360 are far from the neighborhood. (Figure 3-14) Moreover, the Tenderloin lacks a facility dedicated to the new architectural development that promotes recovery and wellness. Existing facilities in the area have unpromising entry façades. (Figure 3-15)



Figure 3-10: Boeddeker Park



Figure 3-11: Kelly Cullen Community



Figure 3-12: Proposed condominium and arts center by BIG (unrealized)



Figure 3-13: Proposed condominium in Mid-Market by Handel Architects

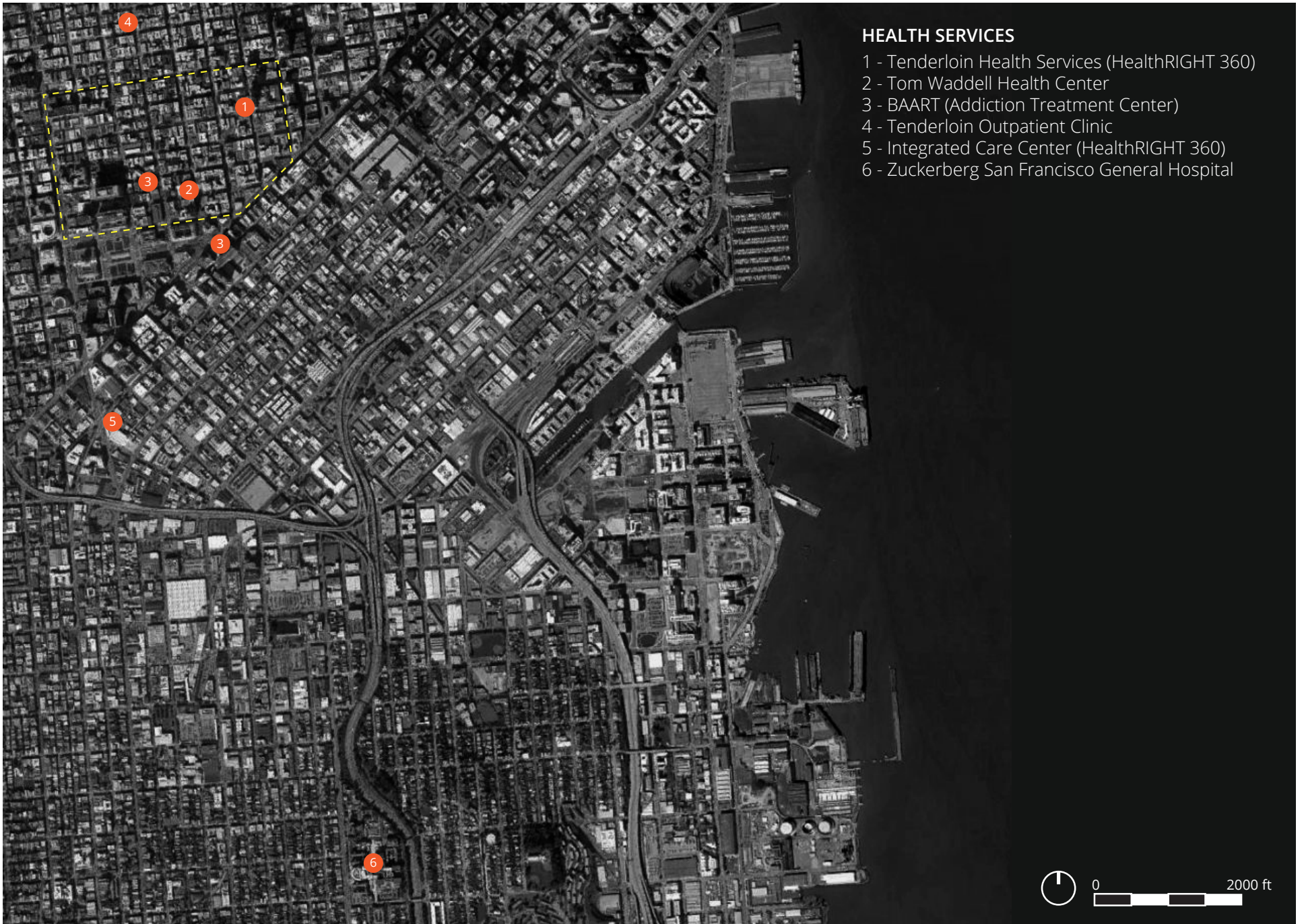


Figure 3-14: Nearby health services for the marginalized population

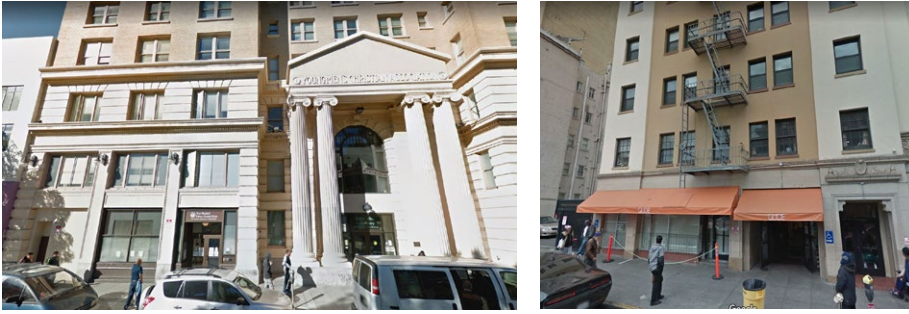


Figure 3-15: Health institutions in the neighborhood have a less than promising entry facade (Clockwise from left: Tom Waddell Clinic, Tenderloin Health Services, BAART, Urgent Care Clinic)



Figure 3-16: Aerial view showing selected site within the Tenderloin neighborhood

Site selection

The main factors for selecting a site include its current underutilized condition and proximity to social services and neighborhood networks and activity. The site chosen is located on a triangular block bounded by Market Street, Golden Gate Avenue, and Jones Street. (Figure 3-16) Locating the project on this block on Market Street activates the underutilized portion in one of San Francisco’s most visible areas. The design seeks to benefit the public while still being connected to the underserved neighborhood to the north.



Figure 3-17: Aerial view showing selected site

Program of spaces

The thesis program consists of a housing component and a wellness center component. (Figure 3-17) A public component is also incorporated into the design to address the needs of community engagement with the public realm. The design considers a podium design approach, where the program transitions from public to private. The wellness center takes up the bottom levels, while the housing occupies the upper levels. With the communal spaces along the core, the spaces will also

be spatially integrated to encourage interaction between the different areas of the program.

1. Housing

The residential component of the proposed project will primarily be permanent supportive housing in response to the City's mission to end homelessness through Housing First. As statistical reports and resident experiences confirm, a diverse group of tenants is critical to maintain the stability of the

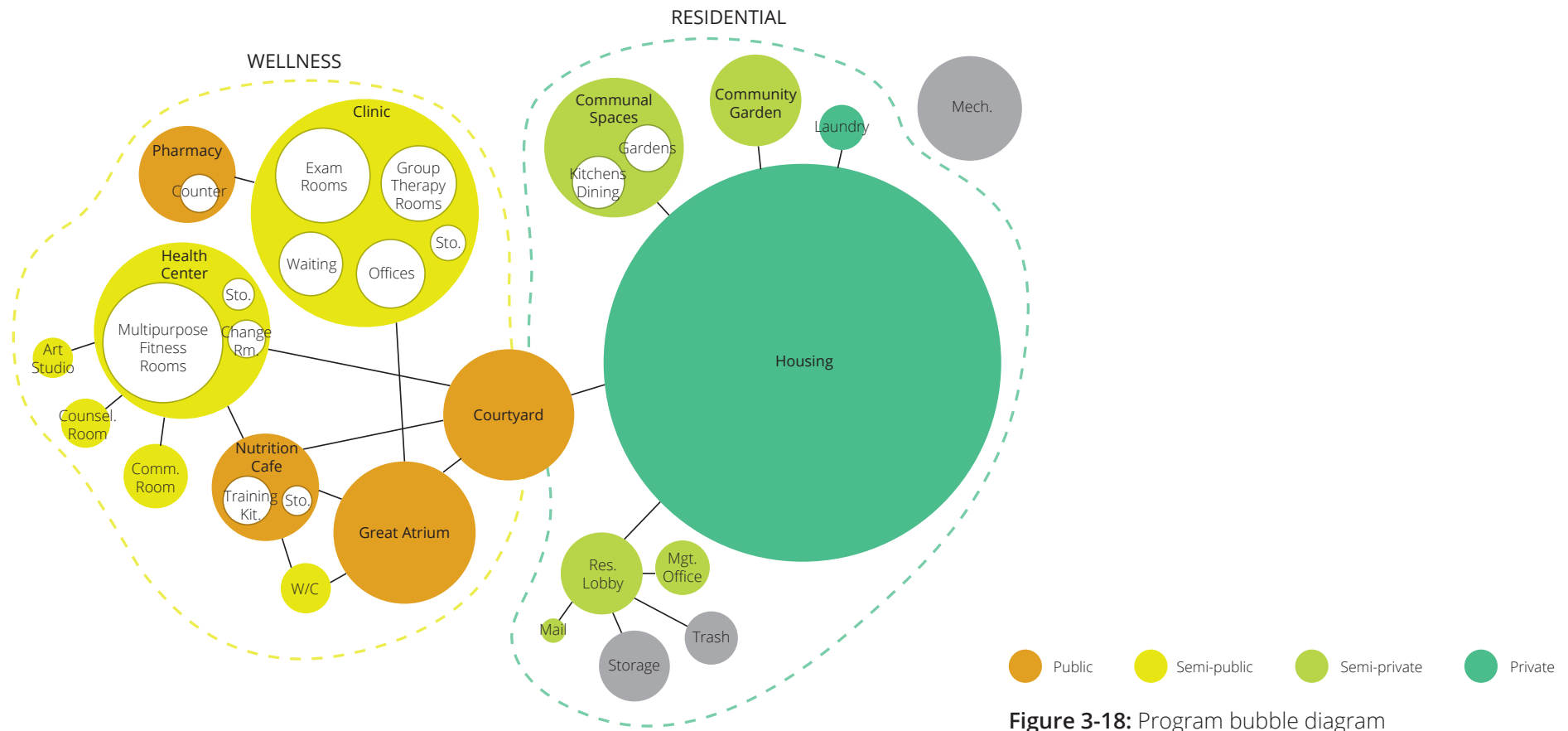


Figure 3-18: Program bubble diagram

living environment. Based on Central City Concern's Housing Choice model, dedicating some of the units as sober Recovery Housing provides residents with the options to choose their preferred service. In addition, a portion of the units will be dedicated to market rate housing. The target tenants will be people who work in the recovery center or the nearby non-profit organizations and tech companies. The mixed tenancy ensures a diverse mix of occupants and makes the building economically feasible.

The housing component targets the single homeless demographic, and consists of studio housing units. Based on the micro-unit design, each unit has its own bathroom and kitchenette. Shared living with two-bedroom units is also included for residents who wish to have roommates for peer support. From a budget standpoint, shared living can also reduce the number of kitchens and plumbing fixtures. As a common practice in subsidized housing, residents pay 30 percent of their income on rent.

Communal spaces: Communal spaces within the residences encourage social interactions among residents enabling them to look out for one another. The thesis also explores the communal areas as both functional and aesthetic spaces including gathering spaces, quiet sitting areas, kitchen and dining, and gardens.

Community garden: The garden acts as a communal space and a source for nutritious food, healthy lifestyle, and

supplemental income from the sale of the produce. The grown produce can be distributed to building residents, food businesses in the building, and charities.

2. Wellness Center

The Wellness Center provides an assortment of health programs that include clinical facilities, community gathering areas, and retail dedicated to health and well-being. The diverse program for users with different needs and interests promotes an integrated approach to recovery. In addition, the spaces incorporate a therapeutic environment since recovery is support by a sensory experience. Some of the services provided in the wellness center are modelled on the Old Town Recovery Center.

Clinic: The clinic provides onsite recovery services for physical and mental illness and substance abuse therapy. While a clinic is located two blocks away, the proposed in-house clinic alleviates the patient burdens from the existing clinic facility and provides specialized services centered on group-based, holistic therapy. The clinic would most likely be run by a nonprofit organization that caters to the underserved population.

Assertive Community Treatment Center: Inspired by Central City Concern, the assertive community treatment center provides peer delivery services for people who face substance abuse, mental disorders, and homelessness. The team features

at least one mentor who can also share their experiences with recovery from similar struggles.

Pharmacy: In conjunction with the clinic, the pharmacy responds to the lack of such amenities in the immediate Tenderloin area. While there are two CVS Pharmacies near the site but their location on the other side of Market Street in SOMA makes them disconnected from the Tenderloin. The retail establishment adds street presence to the block through its storefront and provide the building a source of income.

Nutrition Café: The Nutrition Café offers traditional coffee shop fare as well as healthy food services that cater to both the underserved residents and professionals who work nearby. The café can also provide employment opportunities for individuals enrolled in job training programs offered by nonprofit organizations.

Fitness facilities: The fitness area provides multiple types of facilities from which the users can choose. An open aerobics room accommodates different kinds of fitness activities. Classes and personal training will also be offered. On the other hand, facilities should be distinguished from the gym at the nearby Kelly Cullen Community.

Essentials center: A drop-in center provides essential and social needs for people who are currently homeless. Amenities will include a hygiene center with washrooms and showers, counselling services, a laundry and a barber shop. Since this program accommodates a marginalized demographic, it is

critical that the spaces are integrated into the building into in a way that dignifies the homeless users and makes the general public feel comfortable.

3. Public

Like any other building in an urban setting like San Francisco, the public realm is crucial to the vitality of the street life. The building is more than just supportive housing and wellness center. It is a part of the public urban fabric where people interact with it. Since making the building inviting to the public is a design goal for the thesis, dedicated public spaces will be incorporated into the project. The public realm also enables the mingling of people with diverse social backgrounds even if they do not need to use the support services. However, because the Tenderloin has a sizable population of people with difficult behaviors, security is also a key factor in the design of the public spaces.

The Great Atrium: The “great atrium” is an enclosed open multipurpose space that provides a “safe haven” from the seedy streets for people in the Tenderloin. This space will feature seating and gathering areas to create an “urban living room” experience as popularized by Danish architecture firm COBE. (cobe.dk) To ensure that the plaza is a safe, cooperative environment, the space will also require strong supervision achieved by the onsite attendants, workers from the wellness center, and users of the space.

Courtyard: The courtyard is a landscaped space containing greenery and other natural elements. As a therapeutic space and a wayfinding element, the courtyard should ideally be visible from the outside to draw people into the “safe haven”. Contrasting the great atrium, the courtyard has a more tranquil environment. An additional threshold will be needed to protect it from potentially unruly users. The courtyard is connected to the atrium and is visible to common areas.

Food and retail: Street level commercial establishments enhance the street presence and revitalize the underutilized streets. Spaces would be rented out to businesses that focus on well-being and social equity. The businesses would also be appropriate to the community and should accommodate both the low-income and the tech worker demographic. A diverse set of businesses also ensures financial feasibility and social equity.

4. Service space

Even though service spaces like circulation and back of house are considered to be of secondary importance here, they play an integral role in shaping the spatial environment. Poorly configured spaces can draw undesirable activity. The design of the spaces should encourage surveillance, comfort, and positive social interactions. As the project is on an urban site on Market Street, parking will be omitted from the program.

Design methods

The design of the project draws its inspiration from the aforementioned case studies, and at the same time envisions solutions to the architectural challenges they pose. The thesis will explore a “healing vessel” concept that foregrounds transparency and accessibility. (Figure 3-19) The massing wraps around the central courtyard and forms an open vertical shaft. The atrium, wellness center, and housing are visually connected through the central core. The shaft creates an ideal setting for communal spaces in the residential floors by increasing views, daylighting, and visibility.

In a neighborhood that has seen little new development, this project will provide an opportunity for architectural innovation. Its location on San Francisco’s main street allows

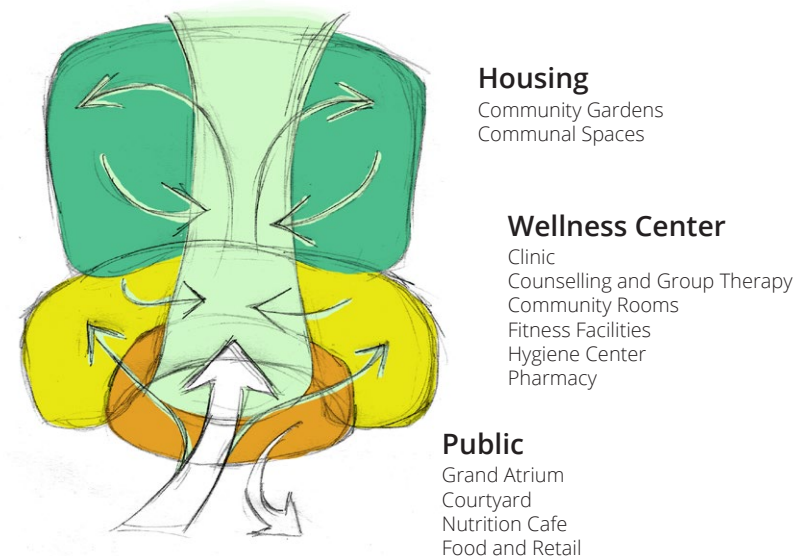


Figure 3-19: The ‘Healing Vessel’: Integrating Housing and Wellness

the project to push its architectural limits not only as an urban sanctuary in a blighted neighborhood but also a landmark that provides a source of pride for residents from the neighborhood and the city. At the same time, the project needs to respect the existing context of the urban fabric predominated by historic SRO buildings. Therefore, the architecture must be ambitious yet humble to ameliorate the Tenderloin's public image but retain the spirit of its proletarian community.

Delimits and limits

Acknowledging the complexity of the supportive housing and wellness center project, some parts of the project will be simplified for the purposes of the thesis. This thesis provides a general configuration of the programmed spaces to show their scale and relationships to adjacent spaces. In reality, any details on space planning would be determined by the developers.

Since permanent supportive housing is the preferred model to handle homelessness, transitional housing and shelters are not considered for the scope of this thesis. While families make up a large portion of the overall homeless population, the focus on the single demographic responds to the social context of the Tenderloin. Another assumption is that an arbitrary organization would run the housing and wellness programs. Should this project become a reality, contenders for the development would most likely be local nonprofit organizations that could provide these services.

Chapter 4

Site Analysis and Design Response

Site analysis

The proposed design project will be located on two properties within the triangular block. (Figure 4-1) The west lot contains a parking lot with a 'tooth' that extends out to Market Street. The 'tooth' contains a single-story building that is boarded up. The east lot contains the Hollywood Billiards building. The southwest corner contains a three-story building that was formerly Prager's Department Store. (Ellinger) Today this building houses ground floor retail, a mosque, and the Community Housing Partnership, a nonprofit organization that provides services for people facing homelessness. The wedge-shaped building at the east corner of the block is San Cristina, a historic SRO that has been converted to supportive housing. (chp-sf.org)

The parking lot on the northwest corner of the block was formerly the site of the Paramount Theater. (Figure 4-3) The main entrance was on Market Street at the 'tooth' of the lot. The auditorium was on the area that is now the parking lot. The Hollywood Billiards building previously contained small businesses and a strip club on the Market Street face and a pool table lounge above before it became vacant for seven

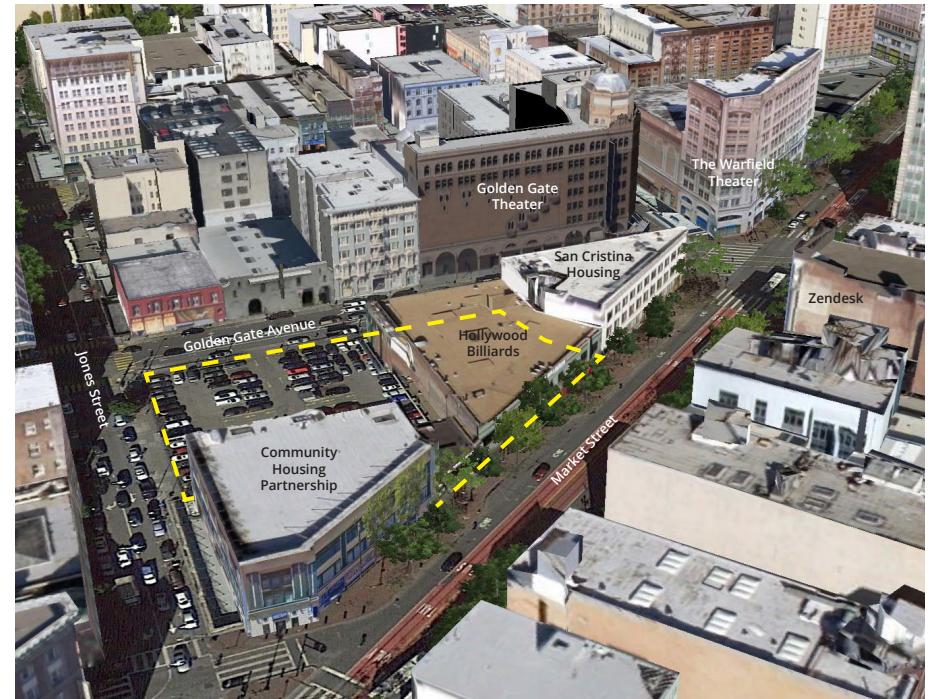


Figure 4-1: Aerial view of site

years. (Dineen, 2014) While that property was in the process of being redeveloped, The Hall, a food hall, was established as a placemaking project during a three-year interim period. (Figure 4-4) Intended to be temporary, The Hall sought to activate the underutilized space before the project begins construction. After The Hall closed in October 2017, the building was repurposed as an event space for graffiti art before it gets demolished for a future condominium development. Another condominium is proposed on the parking lot. (King, 2014) For the purpose of this thesis these unbuilt condominiums will not be realized. The Hollywood Billiards building and the adjacent vacant building will be demolished. The San Cristina



Figure 4-2: Street views of the site



Figure 4-3: Former Paramount Theater



Figure 4-4: The Hall

Apartments and mixed-use building will remain as they are of historic value to the neighborhood.

Site details

As previously mentioned, the triangular block is bounded by Market Street to the southeast, Golden Gate Avenue to the north, and Jones Street to the west. The wide Golden Gate and Jones are minor vehicular streets that run in one direction. Golden Gate Avenue runs eastbound and Jones Street runs southbound. Most inner streets in the Tenderloin run in alternate direction to as a traffic calming strategy. Market Street, San Francisco's vehicular artery, is 60 feet in width to accommodate vehicular, bike, and streetcar traffic.

The two properties are fairly large compared with the other lots in the inner neighborhood. The west block, 1066 Market, is 26,500 square feet in its area. The east block, 1028 Market, is 14,000 square feet. The combined square footage is 40,500 square feet. The large lot areas can accommodate more program. However, the project should also address human scale like the smaller lots in the neighborhood.

Zoning

The properties are located in a C-3-G Zoning District. The height-bulk district is 120-X, which allows for a maximum height of 120 feet. The floor area ratio is 6 to 1. The project makes use of the zoning limits to increase density and extend

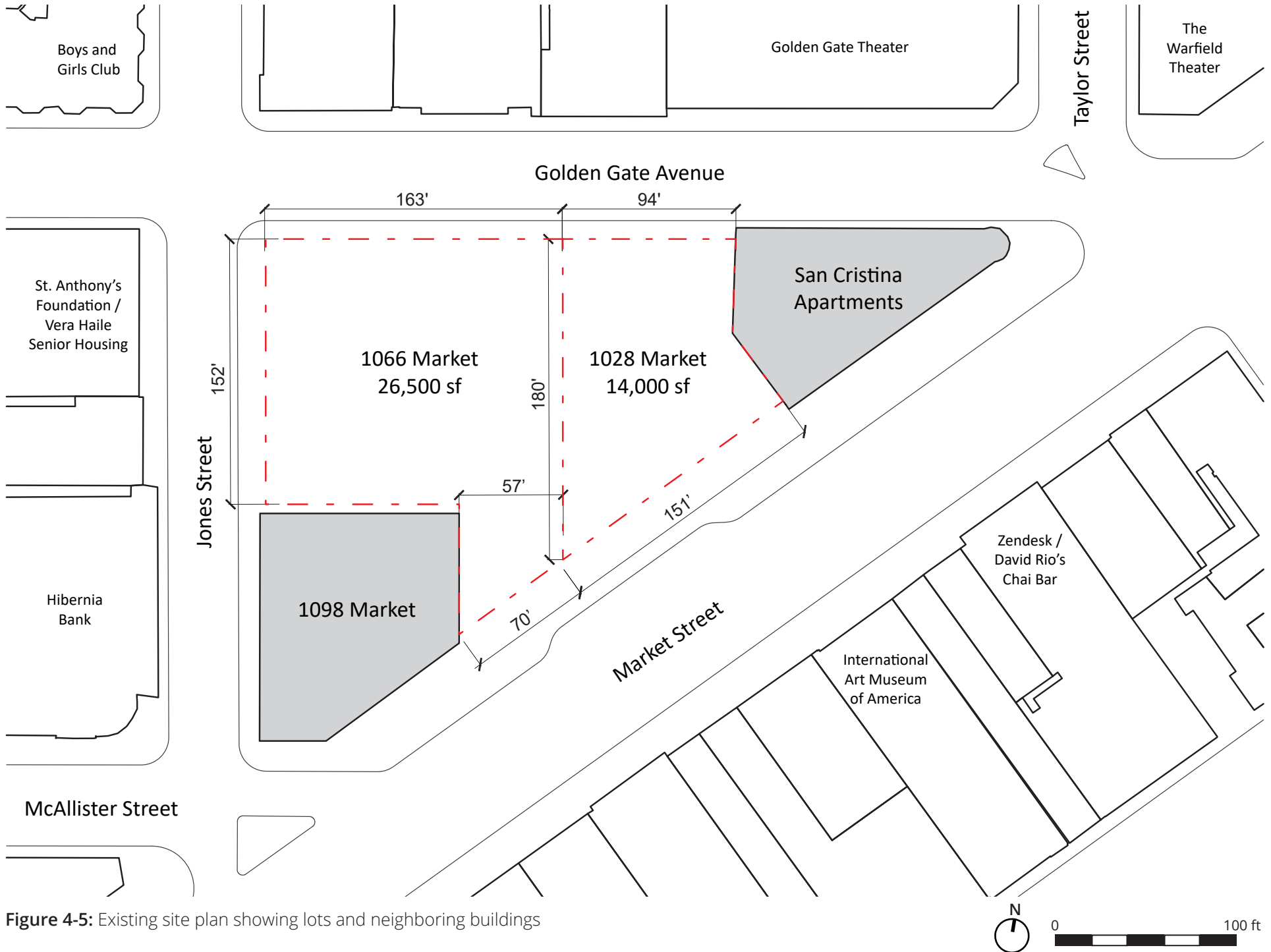


Figure 4-5: Existing site plan showing lots and neighboring buildings

the city skyline, while respecting the mid-rise character of the neighborhood.

Site adjacencies

The site is close to many sites of interest. To the northeast are the iconic Golden Gate and The Warfield theaters that hold musical theater shows and concerts respectively. Across Jones Street is St. Anthony's Foundation, a local charity organization that provides dining room and social services on the lower two floors of the Vera Haile Senior Housing apartment. (Figure 4-7) (Mercy Housing, 2015)

Much of the site's surroundings are currently underutilized. The streetscapes on Golden Gate Avenue and Jones Street are dominated by empty storefronts and blank walls. (Figure 4-6) The Hibernia Bank on Jones Street, a bank building of historic significance, has been unoccupied for decades, becoming a hotbed for undesirable activity with its many nooks. (Figure 4-8) The historic building is being restored to provide office and assembly space in the future. (Nolte, 2016)

On the other side of Market Street is a remarkable mosaic of activities showing a neighborhood in transition. Zendesk, a tech company, occupies the historic Furniture and Carpets building. Businesses along Market Street range from low-key retail to the more recent dining establishments catered to the affluent tech workers. (Figure 4-9) However, the wide street width of Market Street, along with the grid shift, make the other

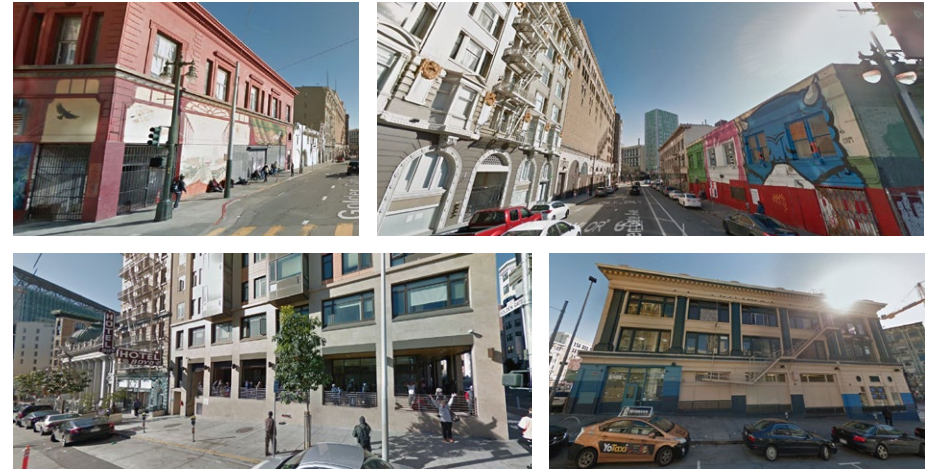


Figure 4-6: Underutilized street fronts around site



Figure 4-7: St. Anthony's Foundation

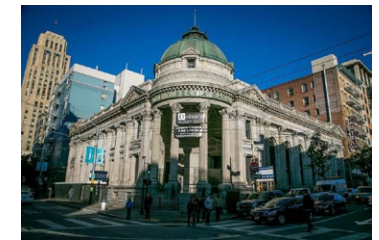


Figure 4-8: Hibernia Bank Building



Figure 4-9: Zendesk in the historic Furniture and Carpets Building on Market Street

side of the boulevard feel disconnected from the site. Sixth Street, the closest street in SOMA to the site, is notorious for its high presence of drug activity. The proposed project seeks

to activate the underutilized block on the Tenderloin side of Market, complimenting the activity and building granularity of the SOMA side.

Relationship between site and networks

As an urban piece, the site is connected to different types of networks at city and neighborhood scales. The site is close to many local nonprofit and charity organizations that provide outreach to marginalized populations. (Figure 4-10)

Located on Market Street, the site is well served with many transit options. (Figure 4-11) Bus and streetcar stops are located within the block enabling people to travel to different parts of the city. The site is located between two BART / MUNI metro stations: Civic Center to the west and Powell Street to the east. The famous cable car lines are located two blocks east on Powell Street. There is also a bikeshare station on the other side of Market Street.

The site is situated between two prominent plazas. (Figure 4-12) The UN Plaza to the west has a reputation for being a hangout for transients and drug dealers. A concrete fountain, the sculptural centerpiece of the plaza, has been misused for dumping biological and drug waste. (Murphy, 2004) The cable car turnaround to the east is a vibrant tourist hub. The public program for this project responds to these adjacent spaces to create a chain of plazas along Mid-Market. To establish its unique identity, the proposed plaza seeks to establish a

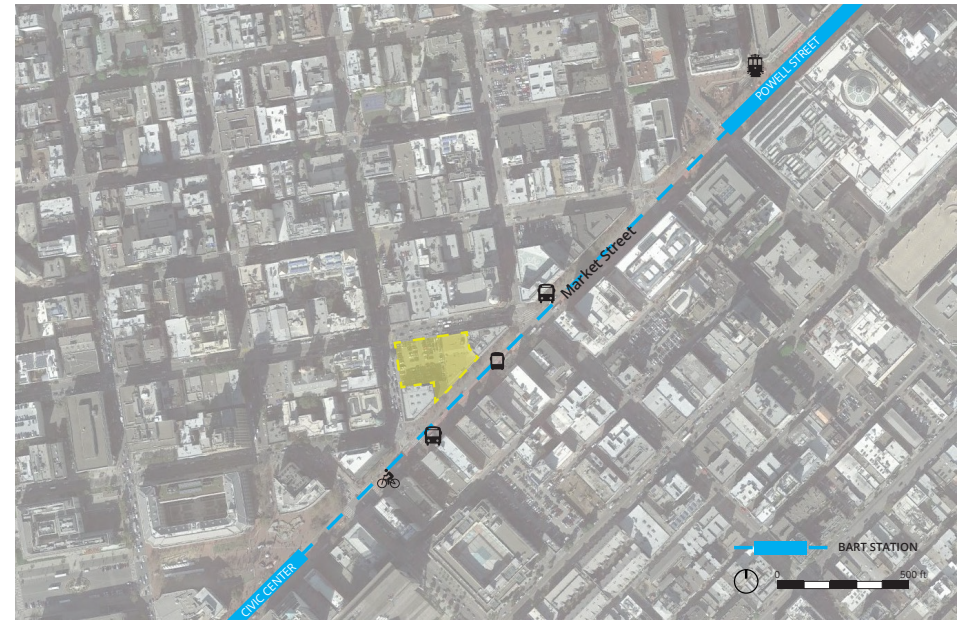


Figure 4-10: Public Transit access near site



Figure 4-11: Creating the chain of plazas along Mid-Market



Figure 4-12: Nonprofit and charity organizations in the area

gateway from the busy Market Street to the local Tenderloin neighborhood to the north.

Community vision through public art

The building at the northeast corner of Golden Gate Avenue and Jones Street is covered with a series of murals by local artist Mona Caron. (Figure 4-9) Two paintings in the mural series feature the parking lot site. The first painting, 'One Way', shows the existing condition as an underutilized street corner. The second painting, 'Another Way', depicts a utopian depiction of the same scene. Taking input from the local community, Caron envisioned the site as a park with community gardens and showcase areas for performers and artists. The Hollywood Billiards building next door is transformed into a community



Figure 4-13: View of the Tenderloin by Mona Caron (Left: 'One Way', Right: 'Another Way')

center with workshops and recreational facilities. (Mona Caron) The residents Caron encountered were immortalized in the murals as users of the space.

This thesis project seeks to echo the community vision of community expressed in this mural that brings together the local community, even those who have no need for supportive housing and wellness center services. Having multiple users can bring diversity and make the spaces attractive to the general public.

The environment of communal spaces

San Francisco has a mild temperate climate year-round. Situated between the Pacific Ocean and the California mainland, the city possesses both maritime and Mediterranean microclimates. (Golden Gate Weather Services, 2009) Located in the central eastern portion of the city, the site is on the leeward side of the hills and is fairly removed from the water. Its location produces a mild microclimate ideal for

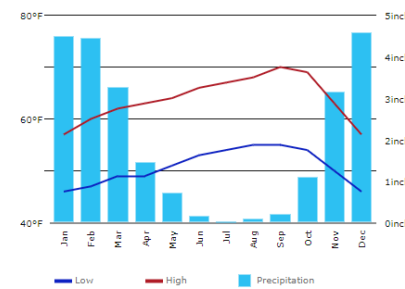


Figure 4-14: Climate of San Francisco

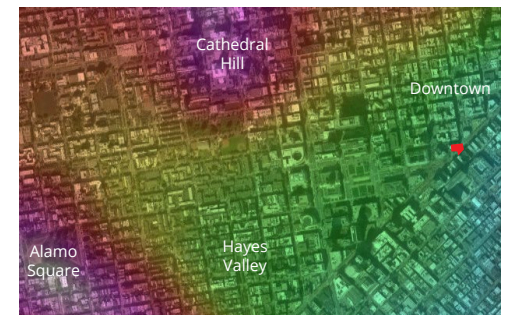


Figure 4-15: Topography of site showing hills to the west

passive design strategies in the design of the project. The dry Mediterranean climate of San Francisco makes the exterior space an ideal setting for activity spaces. Many communal spaces in San Francisco, like the Embarcadero Center, make use of the exterior environment. (Figure 4-15)

Several precedents were examined for the design of communal spaces. The Nanyang Technological University Learning Hub in Singapore has a central core that acts as circulation and breakout space for study and rest. (Figure 4-16) The communal area pops out to the edge in various parts of the building. The unconditioned central core relies on natural ventilation and daylighting. Greenery is incorporated throughout the communal areas, with railing planters and garden terraces. The atrium element takes inspiration from

IBM Plaza in New York City. The IBM Plaza is a privately owned public space with flexible seating and food kiosks. (Figure 4-17) Planters and ample daylighting make the space a relaxing environment for nearby workers. The glass enclosure provides a sense of refuge for the patrons yet welcomes passersby with transparent views into the space.

Design response

The proposal for this thesis project incorporates the 'healing vessel' idea mentioned earlier in response to the site context, community needs, and climate. To improve the street condition of the Tenderloin, the ground floor should contain active public program so the streets can be well utilized. The great atrium, café, and other retail space can activate the street level with



Figure 4-16: Embarcadero Center, San Francisco



Figure 4-17: Nanyang Technical University Learning Hub, Singapore



Figure 4-18: IBM Plaza, New York

beneficial activity and provide a safe environment. The clinic would ideally be on the upper level where the environment can be sheltered from the streets and maintain a sense of privacy. The residential units on the upper floors should have visual and spatial connection to the wellness center and the courtyard where the residents can access these spaces that promote well-being. The communal spaces are situated along the core where mixing among building users can occur and these spaces are most visible. Different types of communal spaces in the public, wellness center, and resident program provide the needs and desires of the different occupants. To emphasize the importance of community in this thesis project, some of the communal spaces extend out to the building edge to make them visible to the street. Visual elements in the communal areas also make these spaces engaging.

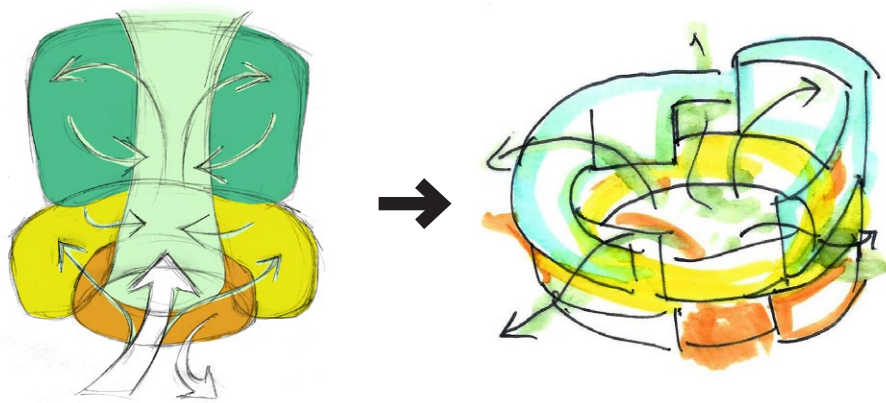


Figure 4-19: Responding to the site context and program needs, the 'healing vessel' concept is evolved where the programs are better integrated with one another and communal spaces extend to the outside

The 40,500 square-foot lot area and 120-foot height limit can accommodate a large building complex. Combining with the 6-to-1 floor area ratio, the building can have a generous gross floor area of 243,000 square feet. A challenge to designing a building this size is respecting human scale in a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood like the Tenderloin. This can be achieved by dividing up the massing and street level façades and maintaining the existing lot boundaries.

Early design concept

As a building in an urban setting, the proposed project should be fitting to the neighboring context while making it stand out as an attractive public space and wellness center. Each street façade presents a unique canvas for the proposed building. The buildings on the block allow the project to continue the rhythm of the urban fabric with their street level storefronts and tall upper level heights. The design also responds to the idiosyncrasies in the block. On Market Street, the existing appendage on the west lot is an ideal location for the atrium and main entrance. The atrium entry echoes the entrance of the historic Paramount Theater, acting as a gateway to the space. The narrow atrium also contrasts the wider façades of the adjacent buildings, allowing this space to act as a centerpiece that stands out on its own. The remaining faces, less defined in its existing condition, enable a more open-ended design while retaining the existing rhythm façades

of the neighboring buildings. The project also responds to the non-rectilinear forms of the retained buildings by wrapping its mass along their edges.

The area where the atrium is located extends to the other side of the building on Golden Gate Avenue. The opposite end of this space forms the entrance to the wellness center. The lobby has a multi-level height that brings the floors of the wellness center together and divides the façade. Visitors entering from the atrium can get a direct view of the wellness center and vice versa. The atrium and wellness center lobby area also divide the mass. In the middle is the courtyard that is enclosed by the building mass, with communal spaces placed along the core.

Retaining the two lot boundaries results in the residential component being divided into two buildings and breaking up the massing form. The two residential buildings can have distinct expressions in their forms while complementing each other in their design. Having two buildings also allows two disparate housing types: low-barrier entry and sober recovery housing, to situate in separate buildings and have their own entrances.

To make the public plaza a thoroughfare to the Tenderloin neighborhood, another entrance lobby is provided at the corner of Jones and Golden Gate. The entrance and adjacent businesses activate an underutilized street corner. Since the site is located on hilly topography where the ground slopes up

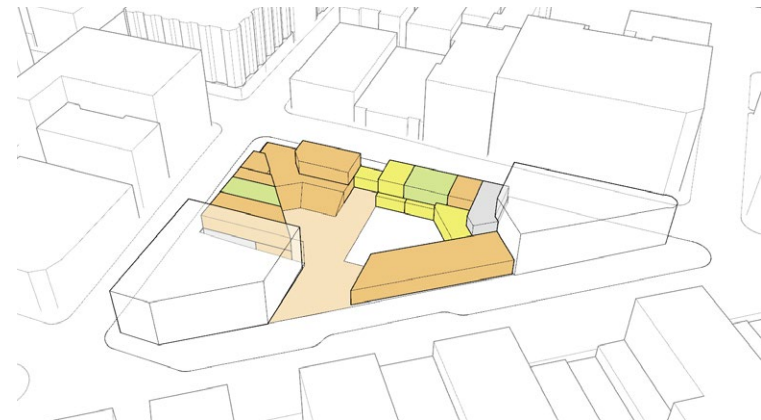
toward the northwest, the corner of Jones and Golden Gate is over 13 feet higher than the Market Street entry. As a result, stairs would be required for pedestrian to get from Market Street to the Jones and Golden Gate intersection. The stairs can also act as a seating area for a performing space and acts as a centerpiece in the courtyard. Similarly, program along Jones and Golden Gate are a floor above Market.

Program massing

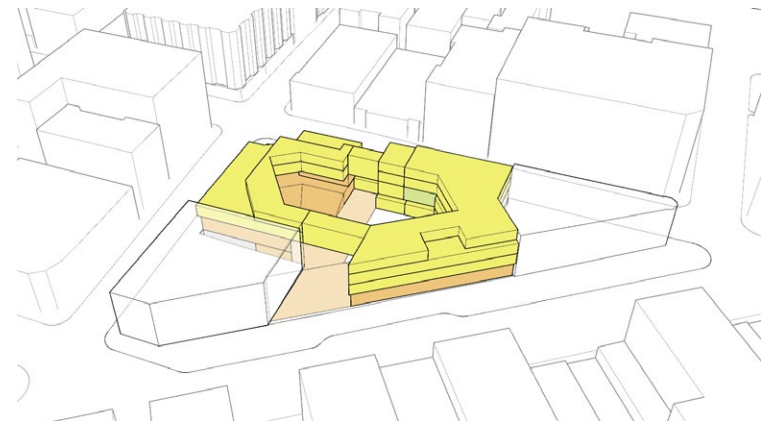
The public enters the building through the great atrium and into the courtyard. The stage stairs take people up to the second floor and access to the northwest corner. Commercial and dining spaces surround the perimeter of the building and the courtyard to activate the public realm and bring more 'healthy eyes on the street'.

The wellness center, taking on a loop form, binds the programs together and optimizes the circulation in the space. The floors will contain programs that are more private like clinics, offices, and workshops.

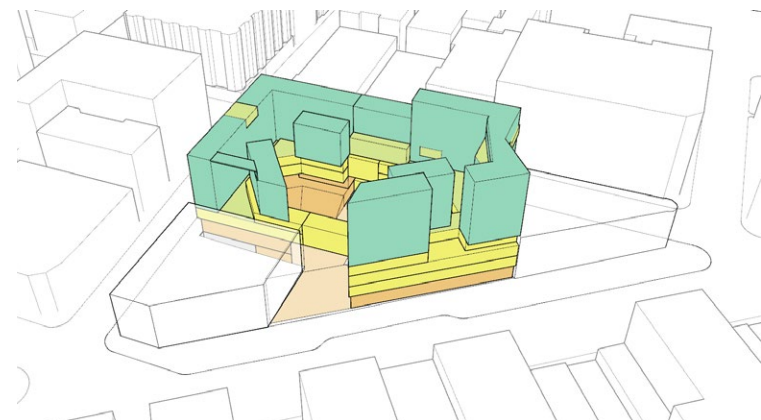
The residential levels stacked above feature an open corridor and communal spaces for various activities. The housing mass wraps around the site with communal spaces in the core. The communal areas penetrate parts of the housing mass to connect these spaces to the outside. Breaking the housing mass also adds to the granularity of the Tenderloin's urban fabric. The massing of the residential units takes on 20 feet and 6 inches depth with a 5-foot hallway. To increase density on the large site, additional housing units are placed along the core. Voids are incorporated into the circulation area to bring daylight and increase neighborhood watch.



Project base



Wellness



Residential

Figure 4-20: Massing study (right)

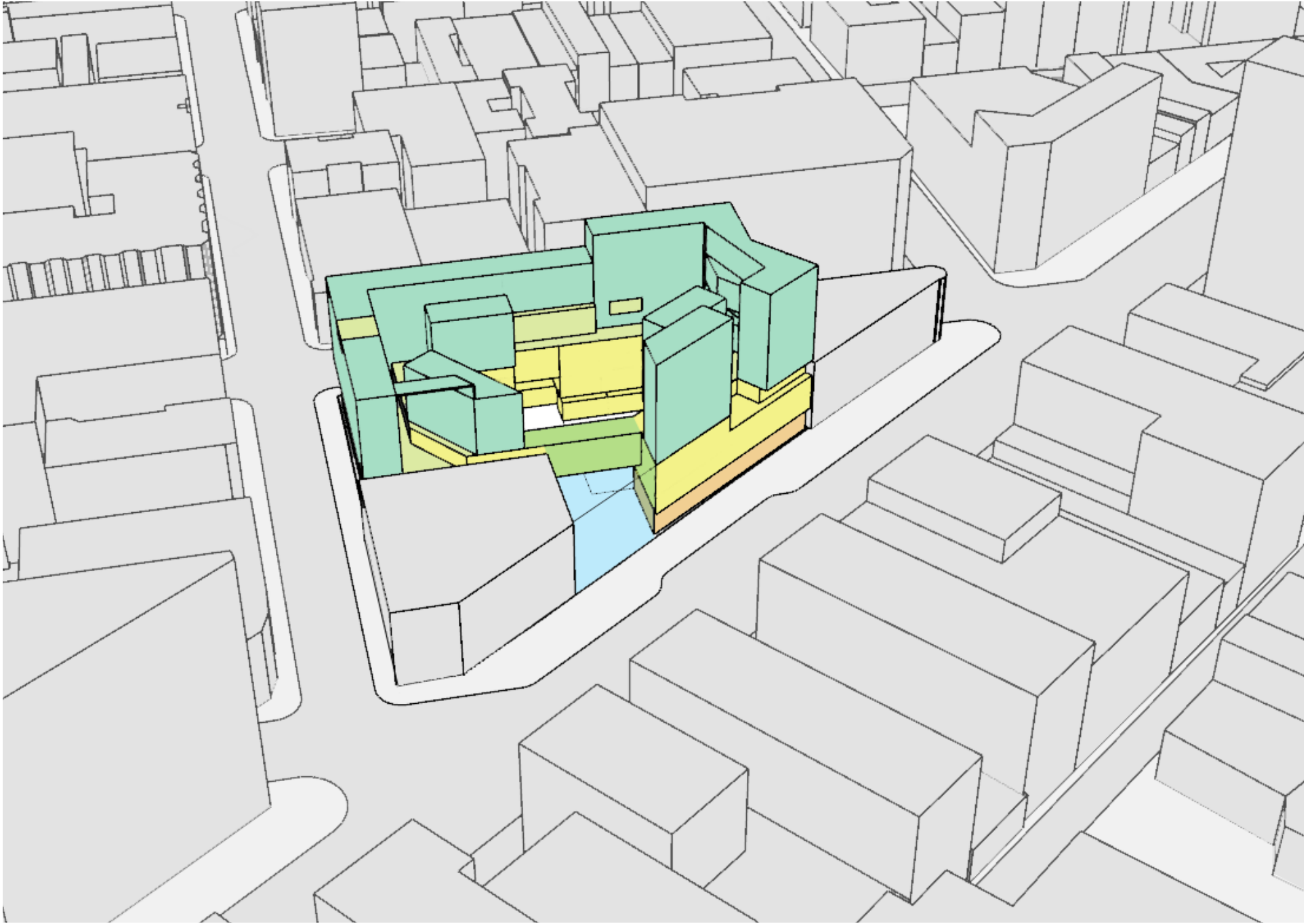


Figure 4-21: Massing model of building in site

Chapter 5

Design Development



Figure 5-1: Site Plan

The public zone, welcoming a larger demographic, features a performing space and flexible café seating. The wellness center features breakout spaces for socializing and retreat. The supportive housing, with residents who have faced homelessness, features a variety of health and community-oriented amenities that encourage well-being. Examples of amenities include community gardens, exercise and games stations, retreat patios, and an event room.

Ground Floor

The ground floor sets the storefronts on Market Street. Patrons enter the building through the great atrium that overlooks the courtyard and wellness center inside. With a glass façade on the Market Street face and the roof, the atrium provides a sense of protection when patrons enter the space. The sunlight, planters, and flexible seating make this space inviting. Next to the atrium is the food center that runs along the rest of the Market Street façade. The open floor plate accommodates flexible configurations for the food businesses and make the space feel open. The food center aims to continue the legacy of The Hall, but providing more options accessible to people of various socioeconomic backgrounds. The Nutrition Café, the flagship business, offers nutritious grab-and-go food fare to promote a healthy lifestyle in the community. The café connects to the atrium that acts as a spill-over seating area.

Entering deeper into the atrium is a spacious courtyard. The courtyard is divided into two zones. The western zone is the stage steps, designated as a performing area and seating space. The steps, which take patrons to the second floor, acts as a centerpiece of the space with its wood surface. The eastern zone, intended to be more relaxing in nature, features tree coverage, landscaping features, and patio seating. This courtyard is distinguished from the rest of the floor with a different paver pattern. The pavers are a safer alternative to grass groundcover that would otherwise conceal hazardous waste.

Community and wellness spaces are also established on the ground level. The Essentials Center, on the opposite side of the food center, provides drop-in services for homeless people. The Essentials Center is integrated as part of the wellness center to overcome the stigma behind the homeless day center. The barber shop and the laundromat offer views to the courtyard where the space can be watched over. The kitchen and living room, inspired by the one at Old Town Recovery Center, acts as a culinary training workshop and a lounge area for patrons at the wellness center. The reception area across from the atrium provides counter services like mail and appointments. The hygiene center and lockers are located at the back of the building for privacy reasons. For security purposes, these spaces are accessed as allowed by the front counter.



Figure 5-3: View from Market Street

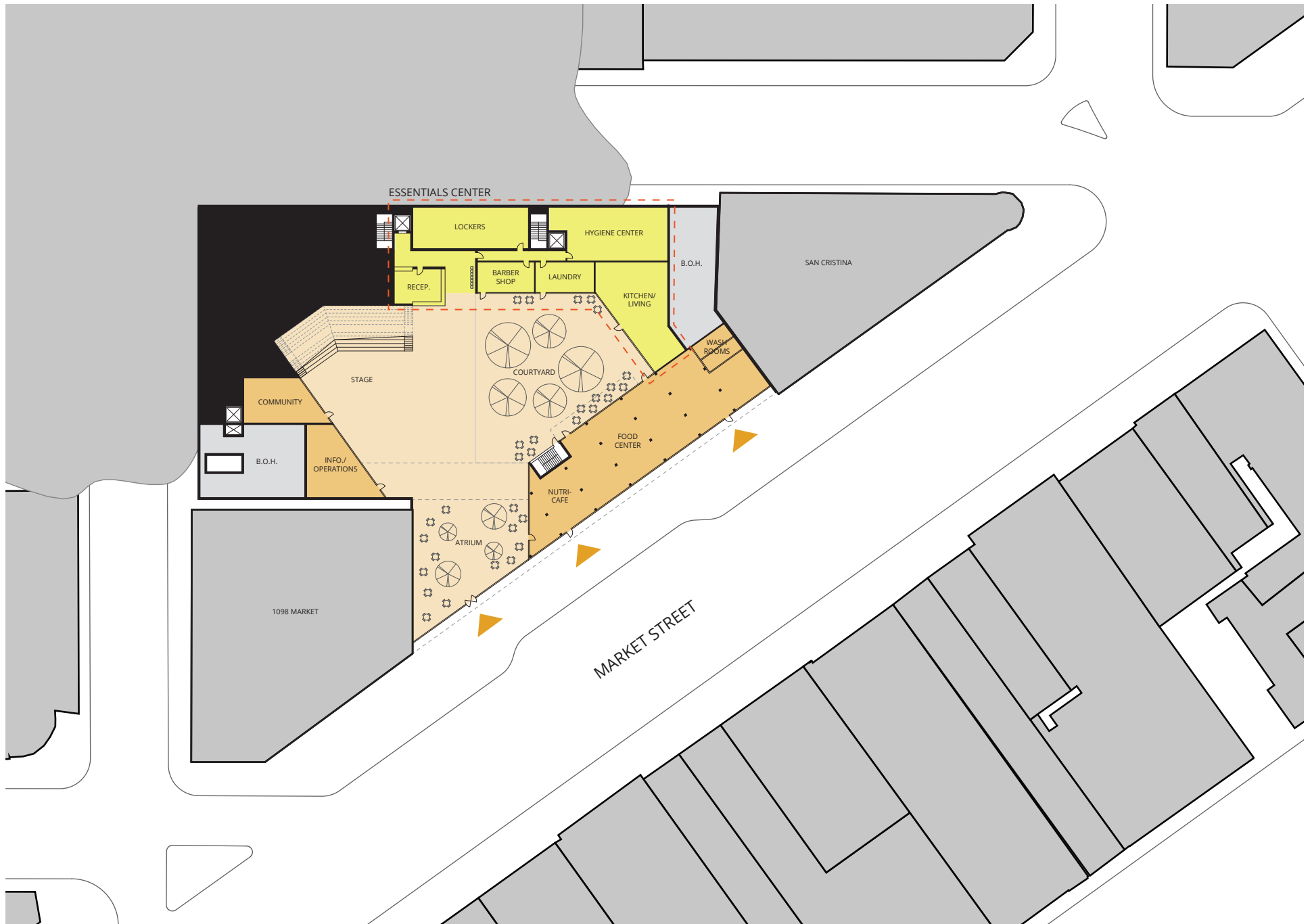


Figure 5-4: Ground Floor Plan



Figure 5-5: View of great atrium into courtyard



Figure 5-6: View of the core area

Second Floor

The second floor contains entries and storefronts of establishments along Golden Gate Avenue and Jones Street. The corner lobby provides access to the stage steps and the wellness center. Street level retail with a variety of businesses activates the street façades. Another grab-and-go food business is anchored at the corner lobby to make that space engaging. A gallery space showcases art by local artists. The wellness center main entrance, located on Golden Gate Avenue, has a direct visual connection to the atrium on the other side. A ceremonial staircase runs along the multi-height lobby that leads patrons to the wellness center services upstairs. Two separate residential entrances, one on each street, take residents to the housing above.

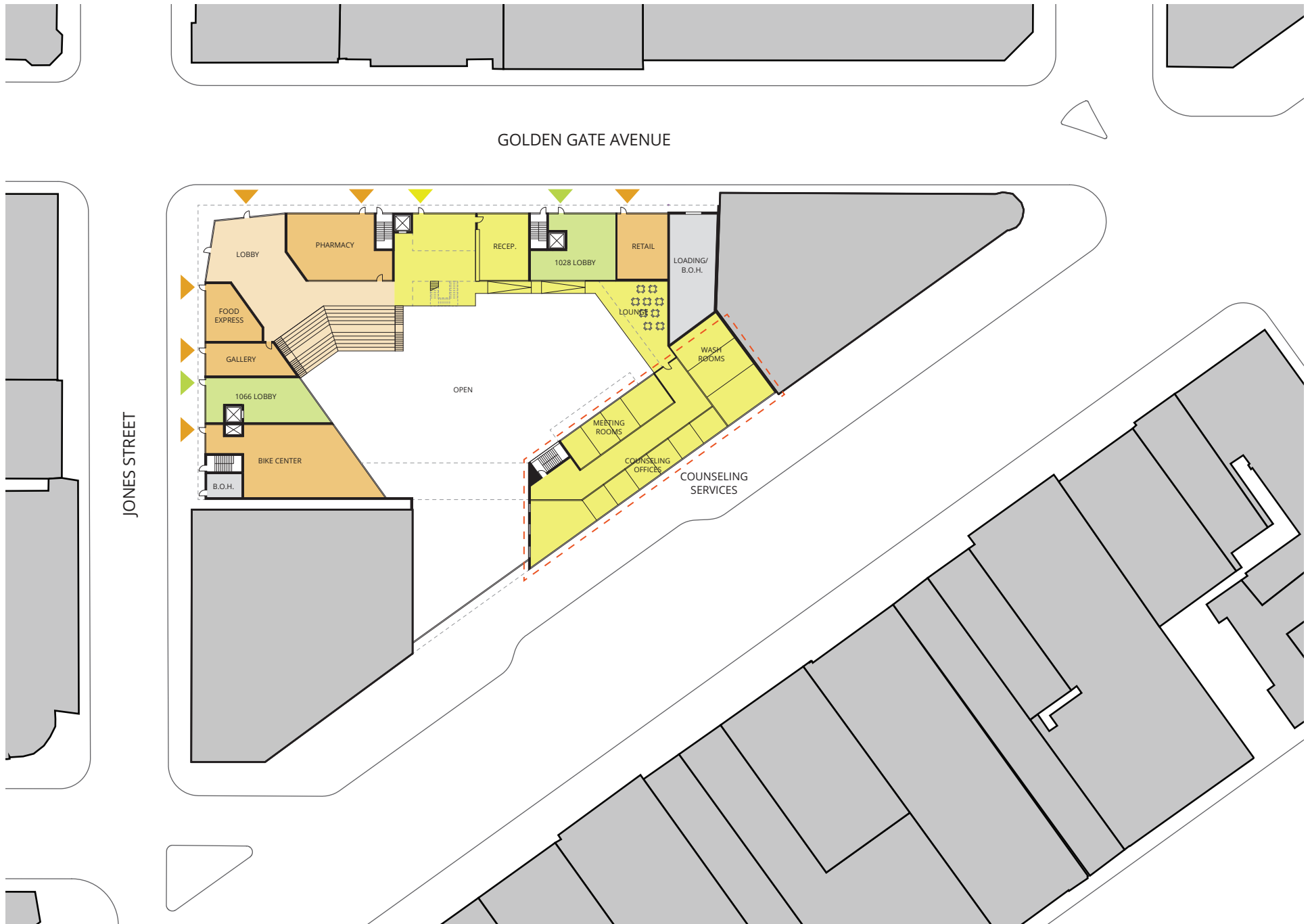
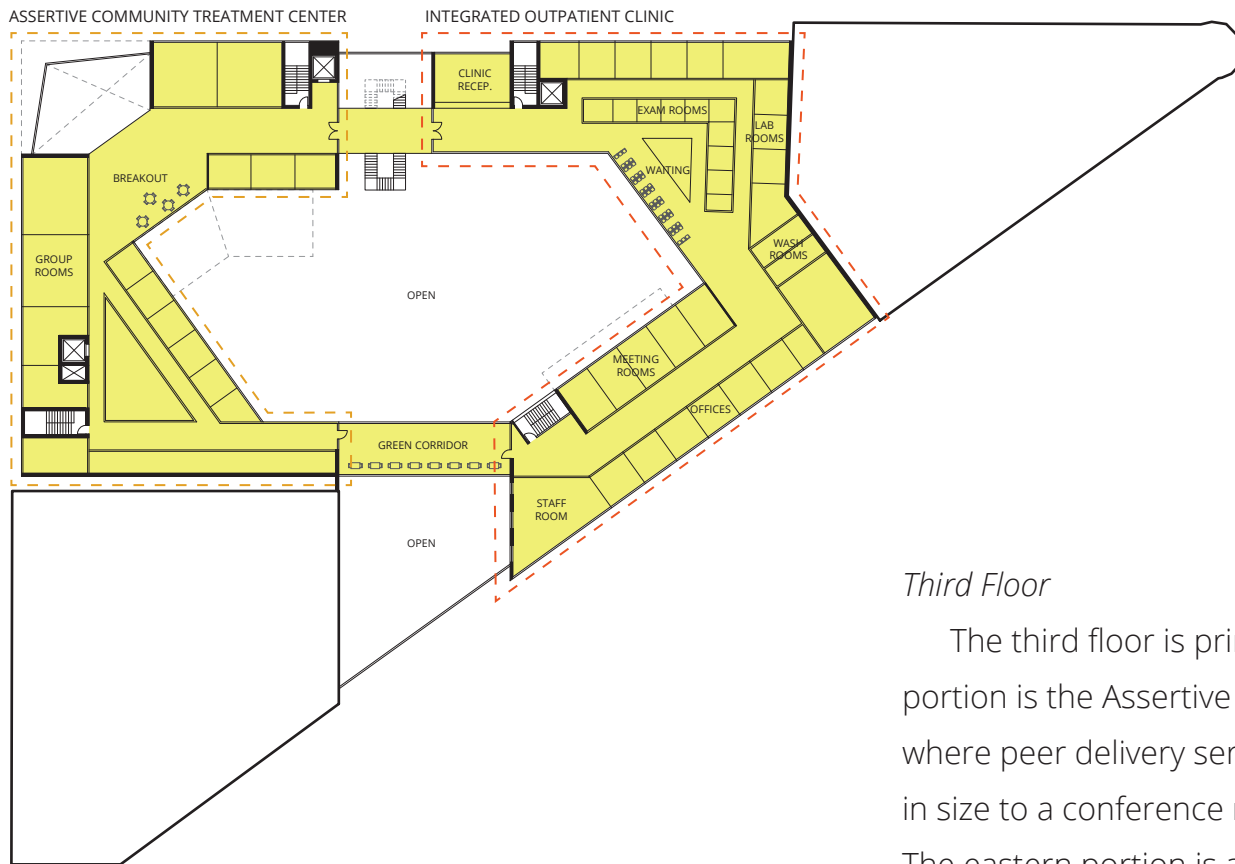


Figure 5-7: Second Floor Plan



Figure 5-8: Exterior view from the Golden Gate Avenue and Jones Street intersection

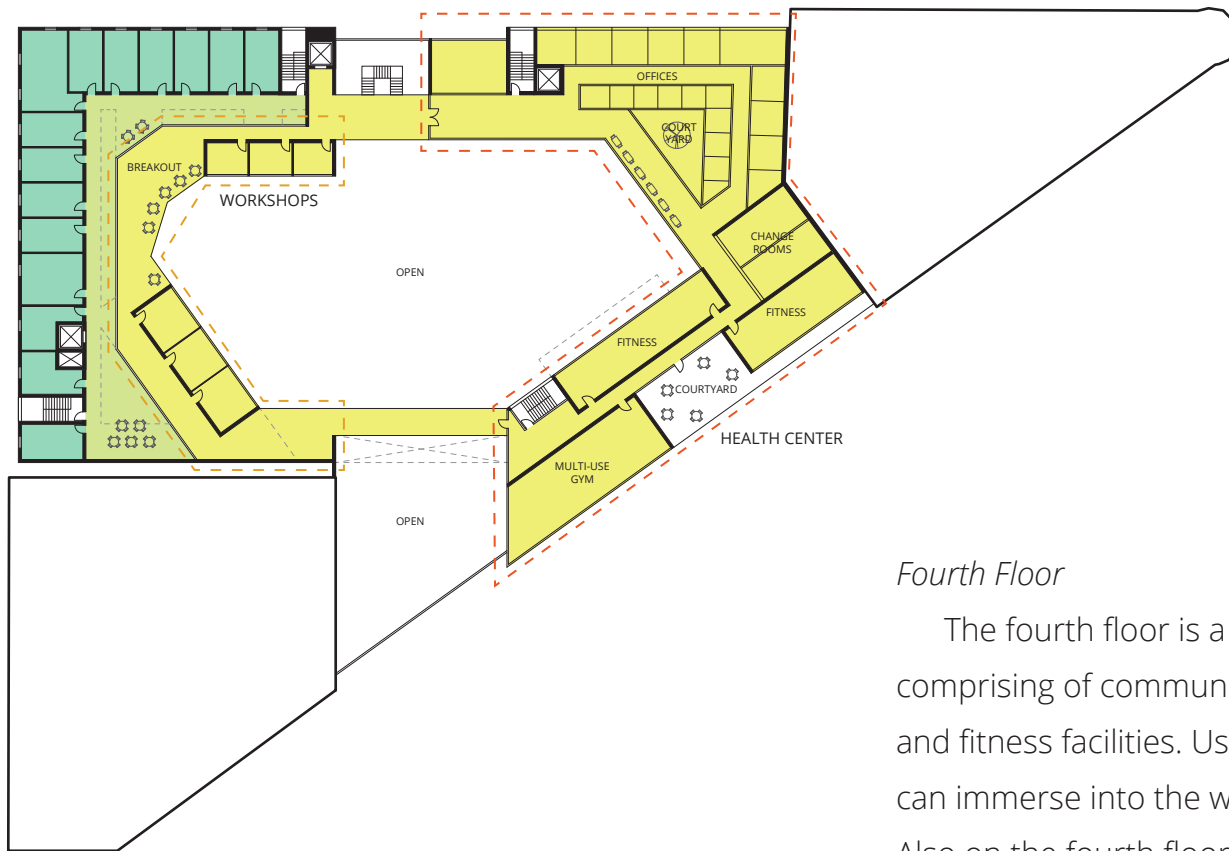


Third Floor

The third floor is primarily the wellness center. The western portion is the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Center where peer delivery services are held. The group rooms, similar in size to a conference room, accommodate a team session. The eastern portion is an integrated outpatient clinic. The user progresses from the semi-public waiting area to the more private exam rooms. Patients can get a view of the courtyard in the waiting area. Offices continue along the two branches. The “green corridor” that completes the circulation loop doubles as a retreat area for occupants facing stress. Wire trellises with greenery are installed along the glass walls to create a therapeutic environment while having views to the courtyard and the atrium.

Figure 5-9: Third Floor Plan





Fourth Floor

The fourth floor is a continuation of the wellness center, comprising of community-oriented spaces such as workshops and fitness facilities. Users outside of the patient demographic can immerse into the wellness center through these amenities. Also on the fourth floor is the first floor of housing in the west building. The housing spatially connects to the wellness center. The glass wall provides separation between the private and public while maintaining transparency for residents to be acknowledge the presence of the wellness center. Some parts of the fourth floor are semi-conditioned.

However, spaces that need condition like the fitness center, workshop spaces, and offices, are enclosed. A running track is a hypothetical intervention that encircles the floor and passes different breakout spaces.

Figure 5-10: Fourth Floor Plan





Figure 5-11: View of green corridor in wellness center



Fifth Floor

From the fifth floor up is the housing program. Various types of communal spaces are integrated into the space, mainly along the core. In some parts of the building, the communal spaces reach out to the street façades to strengthen the connection between the enclosed and the outside. The fifth floor accommodates large open terraces for community gardens. Responding to San Francisco’s mild and dry climate, the circulation spaces are open to the air to provide daylighting and views to the communal spaces and wellness center. Acting as streets in the residences, the greenery, natural light, and amenities promote a more pleasant experience for residents returning home.

Figure 5-12: Fifth Floor Plan





Figure 5-13: Residential communal area looking over garden, west building

Residential units

The typical residential unit is a studio microunit with its own bathroom, kitchenette, and bedroom. Residents are encouraged to use the communal spaces as living rooms. The housing floors have a modified double-loaded corridor. The inner units form clusters to create void zones. The voids along the corridor allow daylight to pass through the housing levels. The spaces between the unit clusters form the communal spaces.

Structure

The building uses concrete as the main structural material. A concrete frame structure is fitting for San Francisco's location in a high seismic zone and the height of the building at 120 feet tall. Moreover, the concrete floor plate can be exposed in the exterior communal spaces where HVAC elements need not be placed underneath. While building structure is not deeply explored in this thesis, it is assumed that shear walls are located where the building needs seismic and structural support.

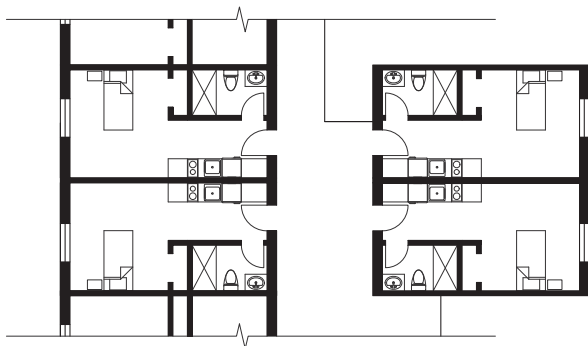


Figure 5-14: Typical unit group floor plan

Materiality and details

The minimalistic facades of the building reflect the simple urban fabric of the Tenderloin and the neighborhood's identity as a working-class neighborhood that is resilient to gentrification. The façade distinguishes the residential and wellness center. The residential zone has a solid stucco wall with punched windows that provide a sense of privacy. The façade for the wellness center, incorporating glazing and panels, is more transparent, allowing views to the core and streets. The ground level façades have transparent storefronts to enhance 'healthy eyes on the street' connection.

Variations in material, details, and greenery add interest to the building's appearance. Since many of the residents have experienced living in hostile environments, the design of the details should encourage well-being. Earth tones and wood elements complement the off-white main façade. Some interior facing façades take on an ochre shade to visually enhance the building's form. Incorporating wood on the railings and openings creates a more compassionate user experience. Wood shutters are incorporated in the core facing windows for added privacy. Railing planters are placed in spaces that receive more daylight, notably the south facing areas. Trees and other planters are placed throughout the communal spaces to attract users.



Figure 5-15: Residential communal area, east building

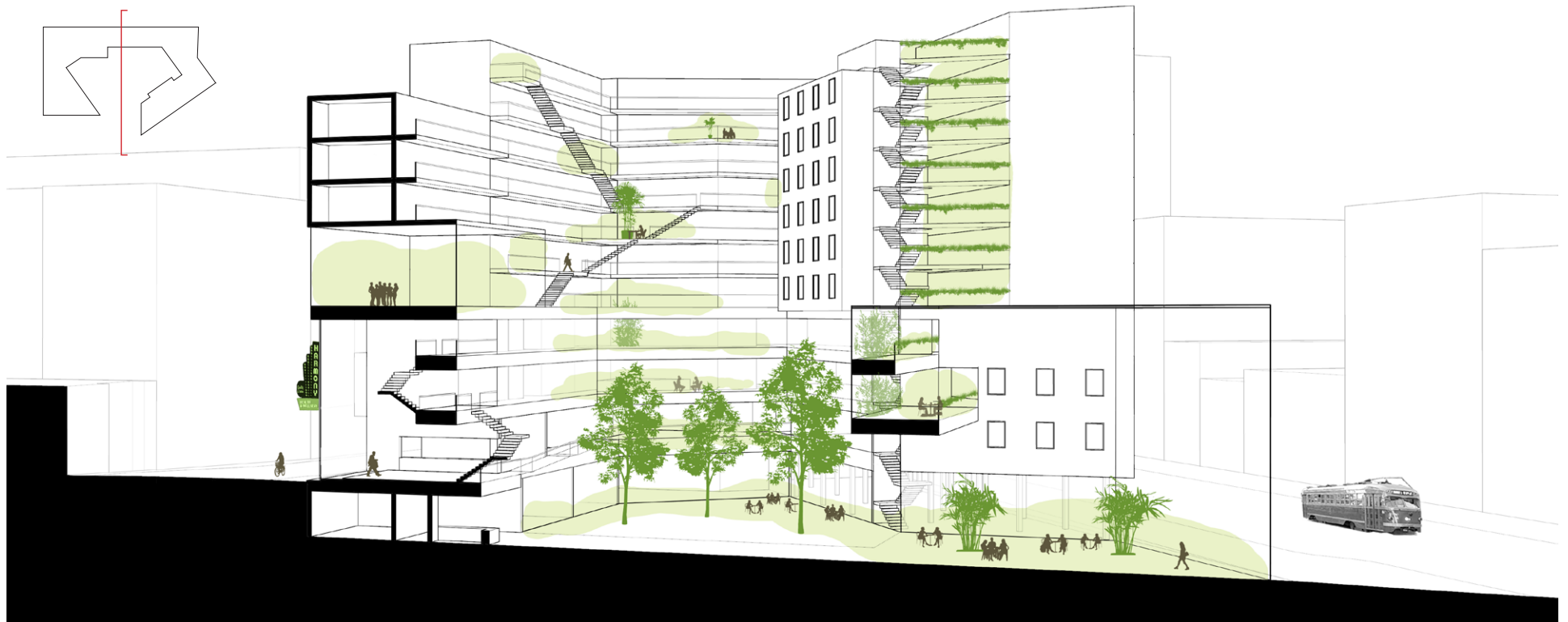
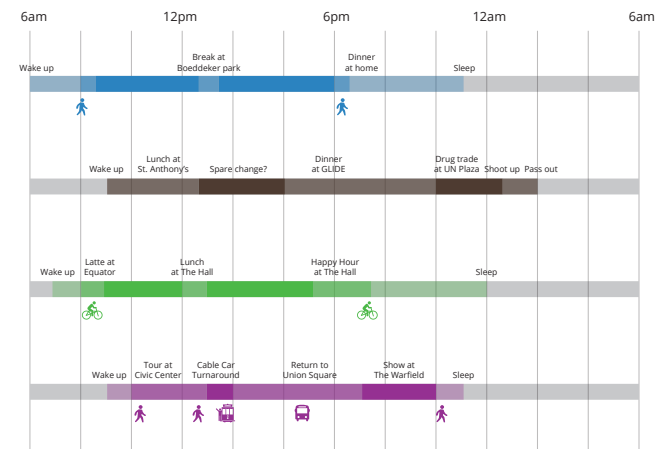


Figure 5-16: Section perspective looking east, showing communal spaces, greenery, and neighboring context

The future collective narrative

As an addition to the urban fabric, the proposed building project compliments neighboring establishments with its communal amenities, health services, and housing. The building engages with the social atmosphere from day to night. In the morning, users can grab a coffee or juice in the Nutri-café while on their way to work at the wellness center or the tech companies nearby. After people get off work in the evening, they can dine at the food center, use the wellness center's workshops and fitness facilities, or sit at the courtyard steps to watch a show by a local performer. Moreover, the building encourages greater safety on the streets for people who use the theater venues nearby. At night, housing residents provide casual surveillance. Since there will still be homeless people in the area, the atrium can be used as a drop-in center for those who need a shelter where essentials amenities are available. However, to ensure this space remains a 'safe haven', behavioral policies and staff supervision are appropriated to ensure people in the building are safe and in harmony with one another.

Activity timeline of users: present



Activity timeline of users: future

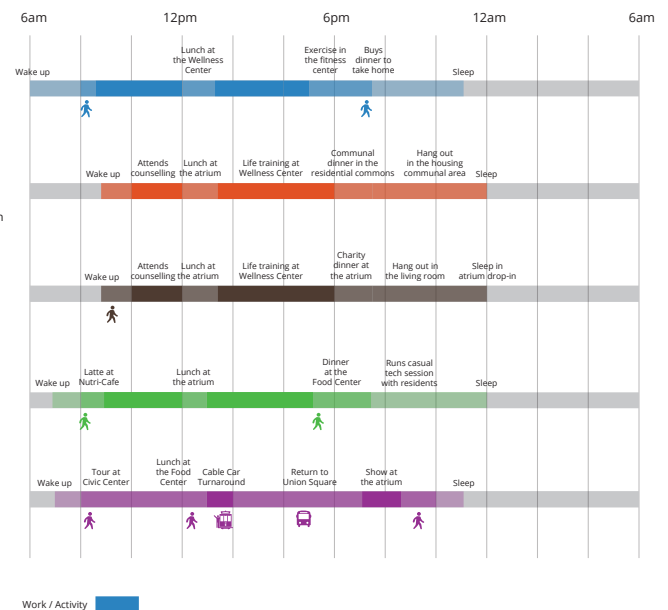


Figure 5-17: Timeline showing activity use among users before and after the development of the housing and wellness center

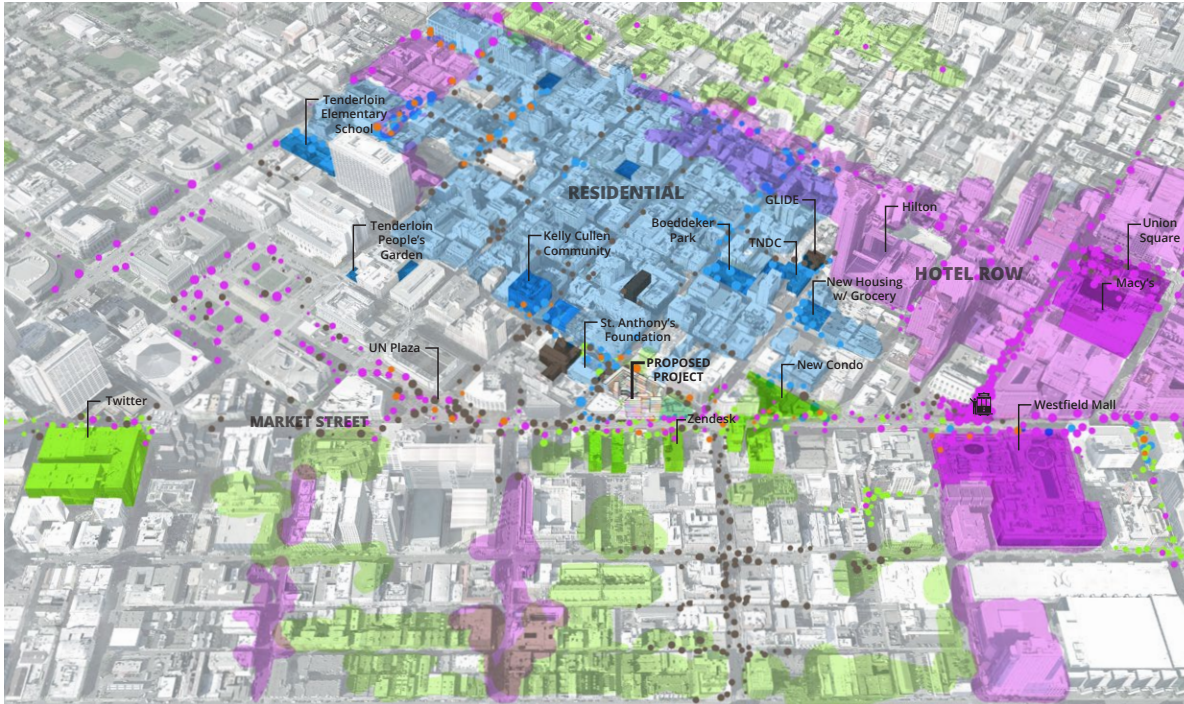


Figure 5-18: Aerial view of the neighborhood in the future, day

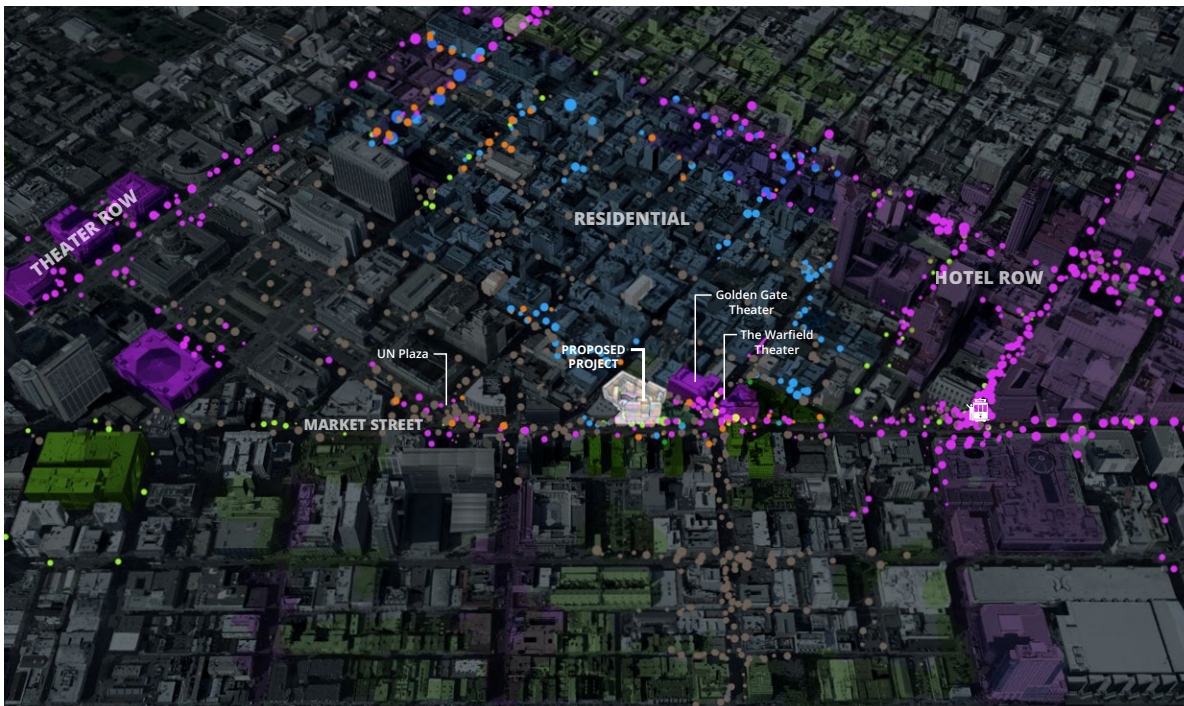


Figure 5-19: Aerial view of the neighborhood in the future, night

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The proposed supportive housing and wellness center seeks to bring vitality to the neighborhood that is in much need for revitalization. This thesis argues that the human needs of security and positive social interactions can be addressed through architecture. The built environment can incorporate therapeutic elements and interactive spaces that are welcoming for residents who have struggled with homelessness as well as the general public.

The problems of homelessness and drug epidemics in our cities are social problems that are too complex for any single intervention to solve. However, this thesis argues that architecture can play a role in encouraging people to “recover in place.” The design of a supportive housing and wellness center seeks to provide an example of how spaces for recovery, well-being, and community awareness open a way for residents in blighted neighborhoods like the Tenderloin to restore their sense of dignity and reintegrate the neighborhood with the rest of the city.



Figure 6-1: Signpost for Tenderloin Walking Tours conducted by veteran resident Del Seymore

Appendix

Additional case study research

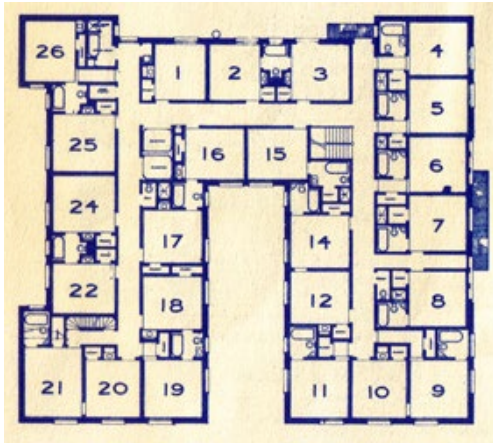


Figure A-1: Floor plan of an SRO



Figure A-2: Commons in the Day Center, Bud Clark Commons



- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| SHELTER | | HOUSING | |
| 1 | Donation Entry | 1 | Accessible Unit |
| 2 | Main Entry | 2 | Typical Unit |
| 3 | Reception | 3 | Laundry |
| 4 | Shelter Commons | 4 | Balcony |
| 5 | Exercise Room | | |
| 6 | Offices | | |
| 7 | Kitchen | | |
| 8 | Courtyard | | |
| 9 | Sleeping Rooms | | |
| 10 | Bathrooms | | |
| 11 | Storage | | |
| HOUSING | | | |
| 12 | Lobby | | |
| 13 | Offices | | |
| 14 | Mail | | |
| COMMON | | | |
| 15 | Loading | | |
| 16 | Mechanical | | |
| DAY CENTER | | | |
| 17 | Public Courtyard | | |
| 18 | Entry | | |
| 19 | Reception | | |
| 20 | Commons | | |
| 21 | Multipurpose | | |
| 22 | Kitchen | | |
| 23 | Barber | | |
| 24 | Computer Lab | | |
| 25 | Library | | |
| 26 | Laundry | | |
| 27 | Hygiene Center | | |
| 28 | Clothing Room | | |
| 29 | Offices | | |
| 30 | Copy Room | | |

Figure A-3: Floor plans, Bud Clark Commons



Figure A-4: Star Apartments, street view



Figure A-5: Section, Star Apartments

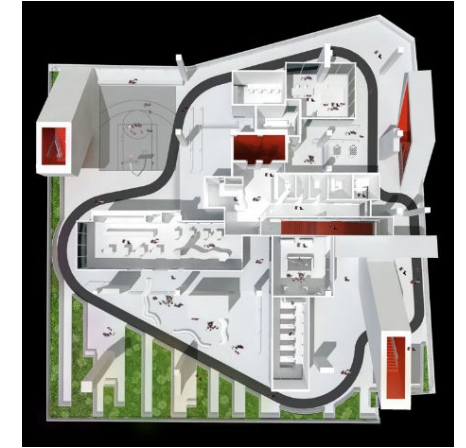


Figure A-6: Wellness Center floor plan, Star Apartments



Figure A-7: Activity in Star Apartments



Figure A-8: Living room, Old Town Recovery Center



Figure A-9: Corner facade of OTRC



Figure A-10: Proposed housing expansion for OTRC

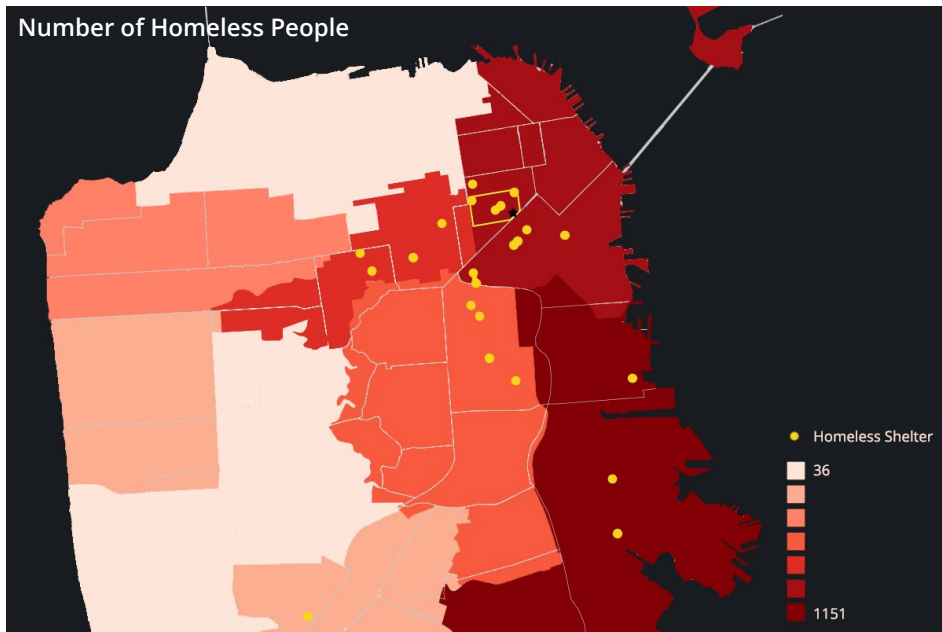
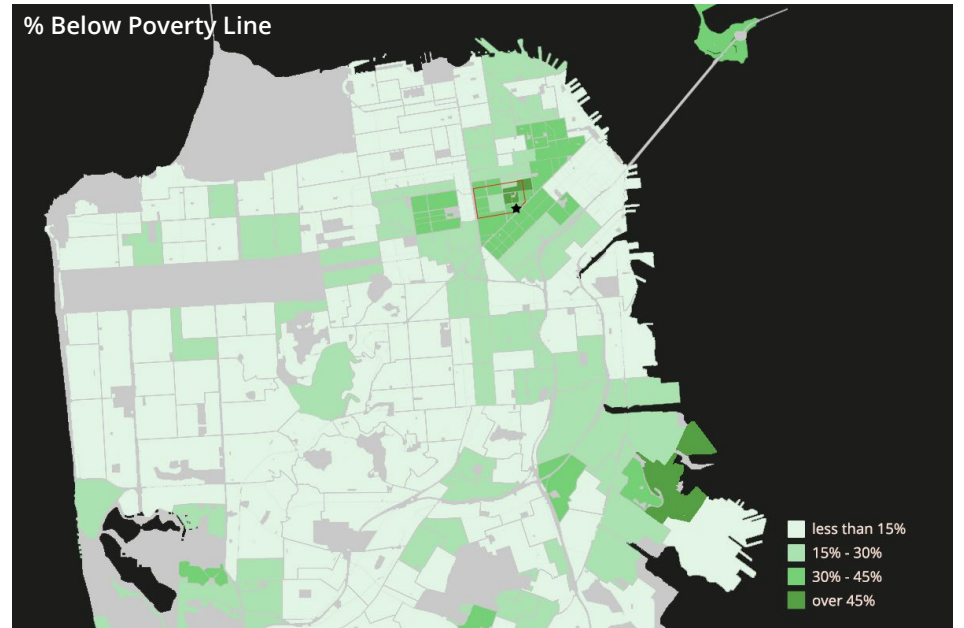
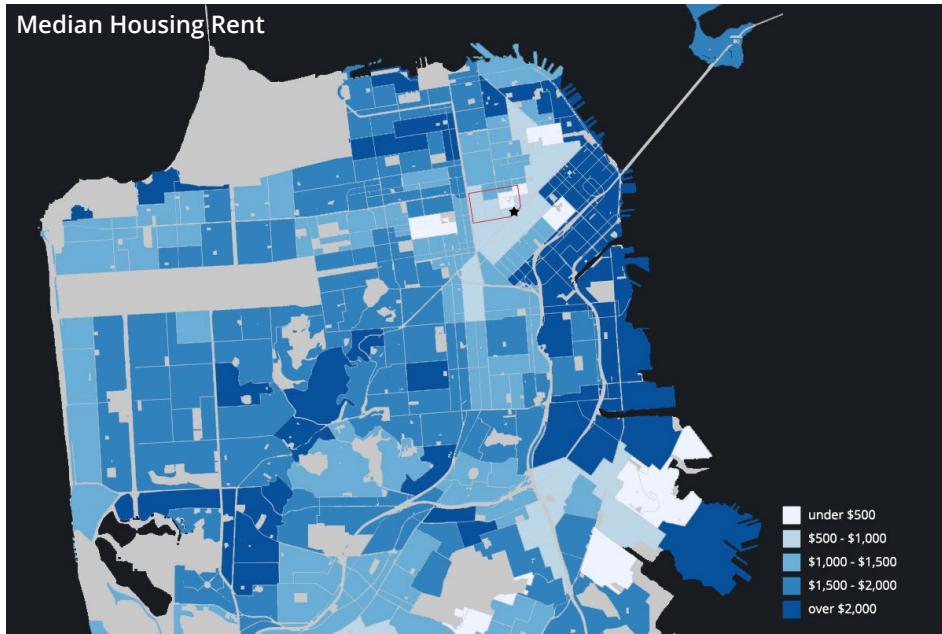


Figure A-11: Census Data of San Francisco, SimplyAnalytics



Figure A-13: The Hollywood Billiards building before its vacancy



Figure A-12: Additional site photos



Figure A-14: The Canvas, the graffiti-focused event space after The Hall closed



Figure A-15: Site plan showing building with the Mona Caron murals



Figure A-16: A local performer depicted in Caron's mural

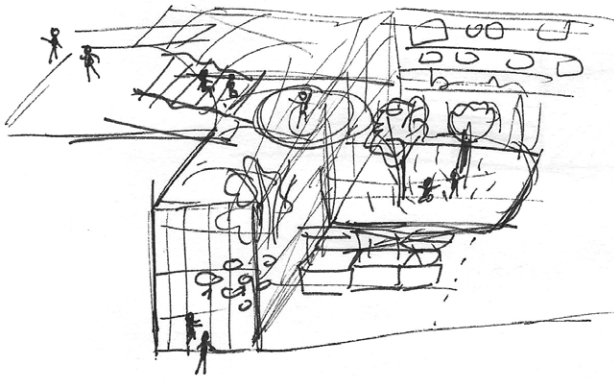
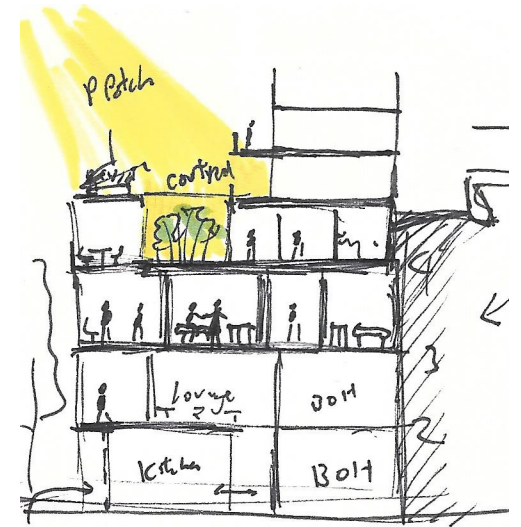
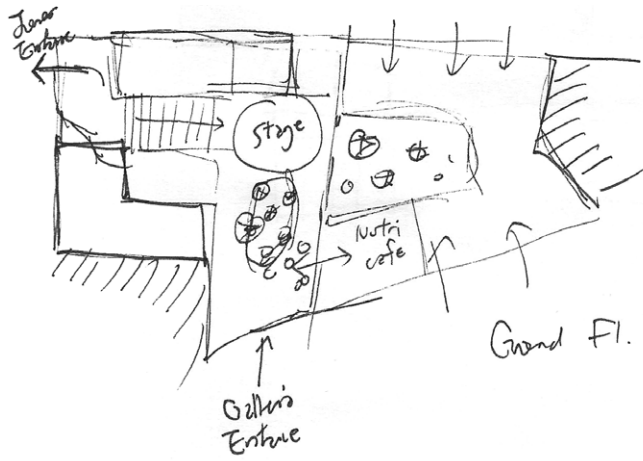


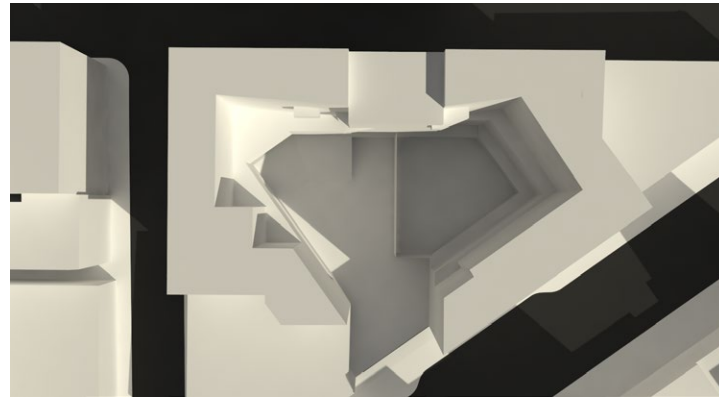
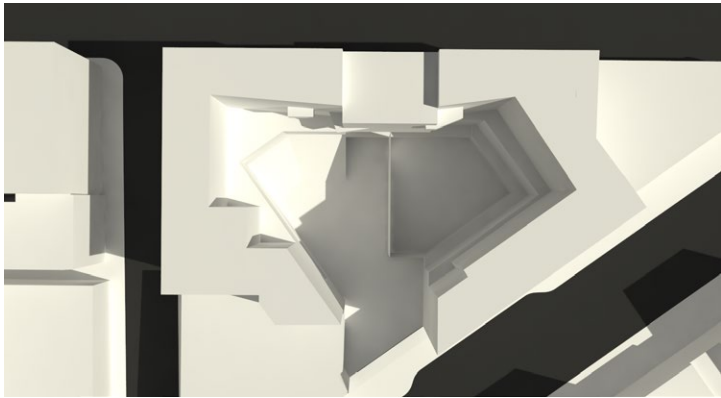
Figure A-17: Initial sketches of design



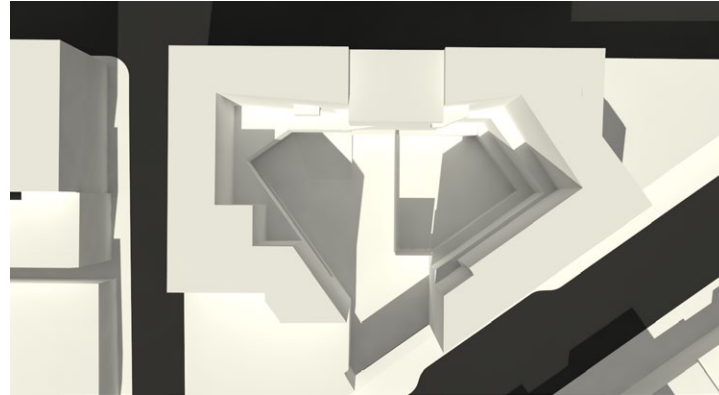
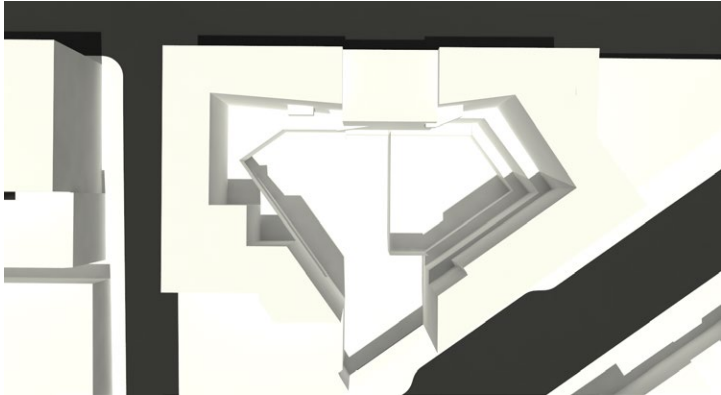
Figure A-18: Photomontage of design idea

June 21

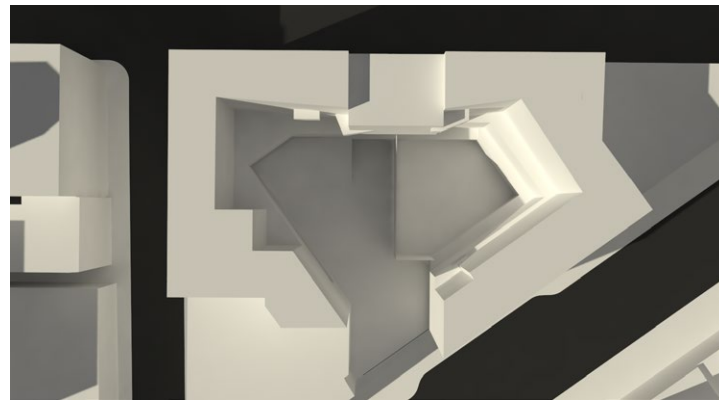
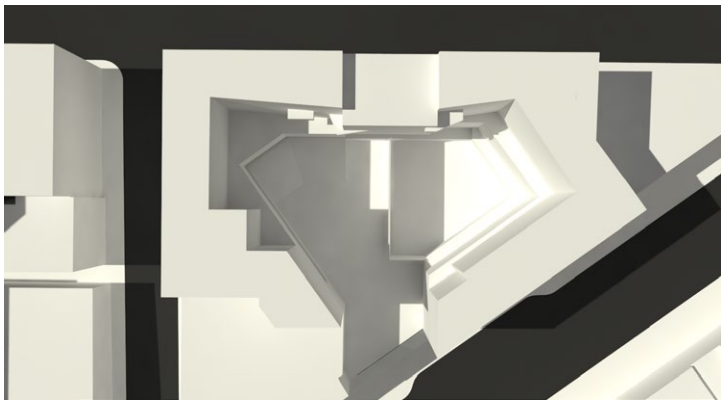
September 21



9 am



12 pm



3 pm

Figure A-19: Shadows study model

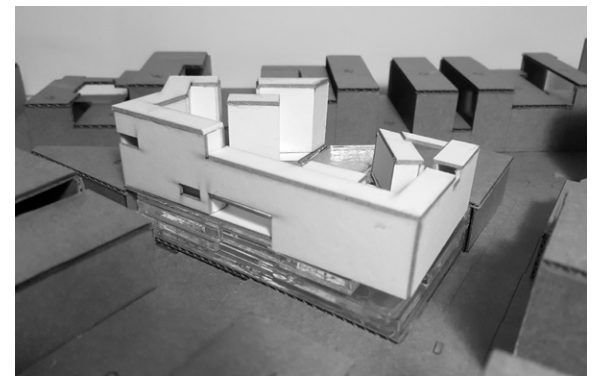
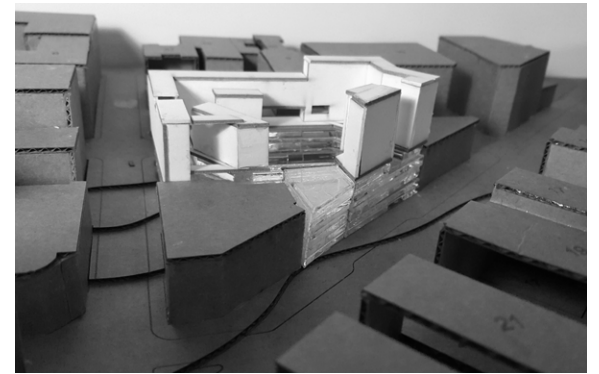
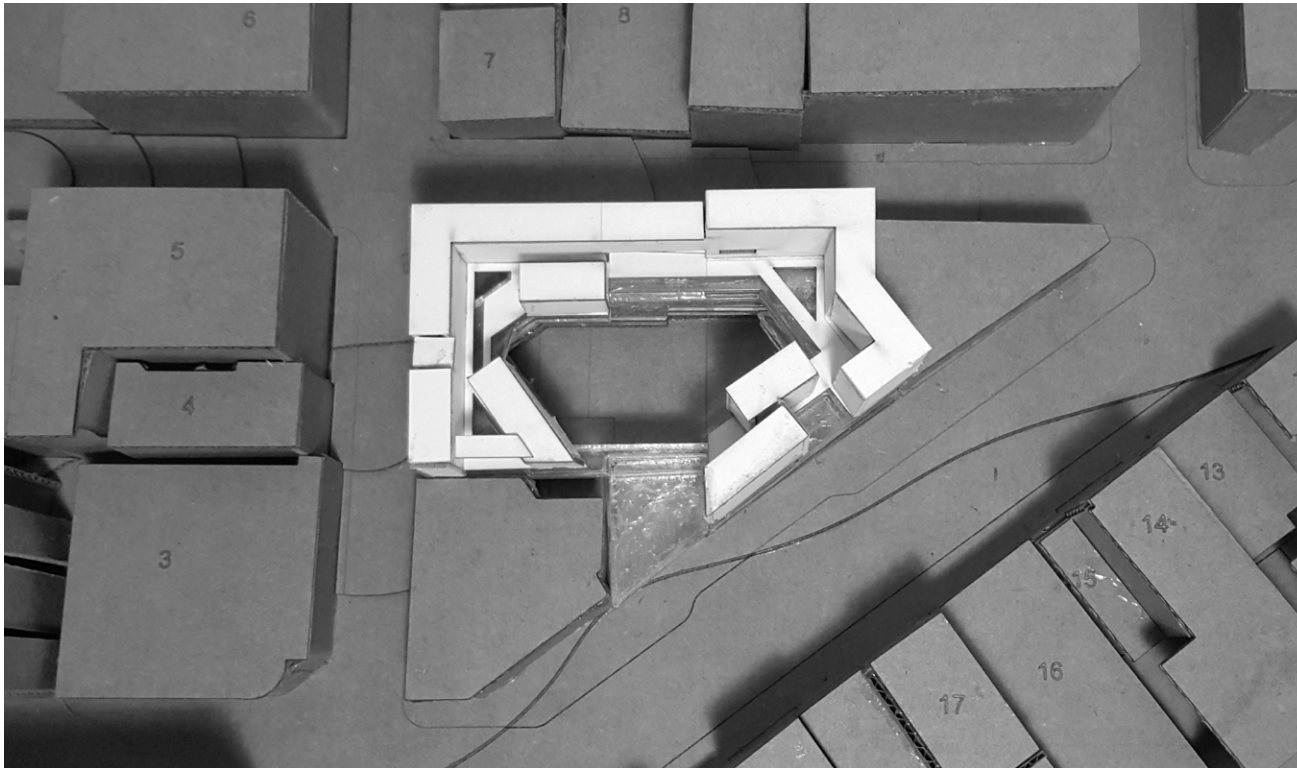


Figure A-20: Massing model

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