

# Barrio San Antonio and Miles Neighborhoods' Community Center

211 S. Fremont Ave.



July 2009



**THE DRACHMAN INSTITUTE**

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA · TUCSON, ARIZONA

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The Drachman Institute is a research and public service unit of the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at The University of Arizona dedicated to the environmentally sensitive and resource-conscious development of neighborhoods and communities. The Drachman Institute, in particular, focuses its research and outreach activities on the proposition that housing is the building block of neighborhoods and neighborhoods are the building blocks of communities. The work of the Drachman Institute therefore facilitates the development of demographically diverse neighborhoods, rich in environmental amenities and built form good-quality, well-designed, regionally-appropriate housing that conserves land, energy and water.

### **Disclaimer**

*The information in this report is intended as guidance for the Barrio San Antonio and Miles Neighborhoods in informing decisions related to this project. The research, public design process, and design recommendations were achieved to the best knowledge and judgment of the Drachman Institute staff and employees, and is subject to verification by the City of Tucson, Pima County, or other parties prior to implementation of any action.*

In the Fall of 2008, Drachman Institute received a request from the Barrio San Antonio and Miles Neighborhood Associations for technical assistance. The neighborhoods were seeking the facilitation of community process and the development of a conceptual design for a community center. The building designated for this use is located at 211 S. Freemont Avenue in Tucson, Arizona, on a large piece of otherwise undeveloped land owned by Pima County; the building itself is currently used by the county as a storage facility. In order to be used as a functional community center, the structure requires an adaptive reuse that would improve the building and add amenities. The Drachman Institute worked with the neighborhoods to form a proposed conceptual design for the new center. The public process was as follows:

### **January 2009**

Initial meeting with neighborhood leaders to understand the community vision for the center

### **March 2009**

Presentation of three preliminary schemes to the neighborhood residents and leaders; feedback gathered for each design

### **May 2009**

Presentation of a revised design to neighborhood residents and leaders; feedback gathered on the design

### **July 2009**

Conceptual design finalized.

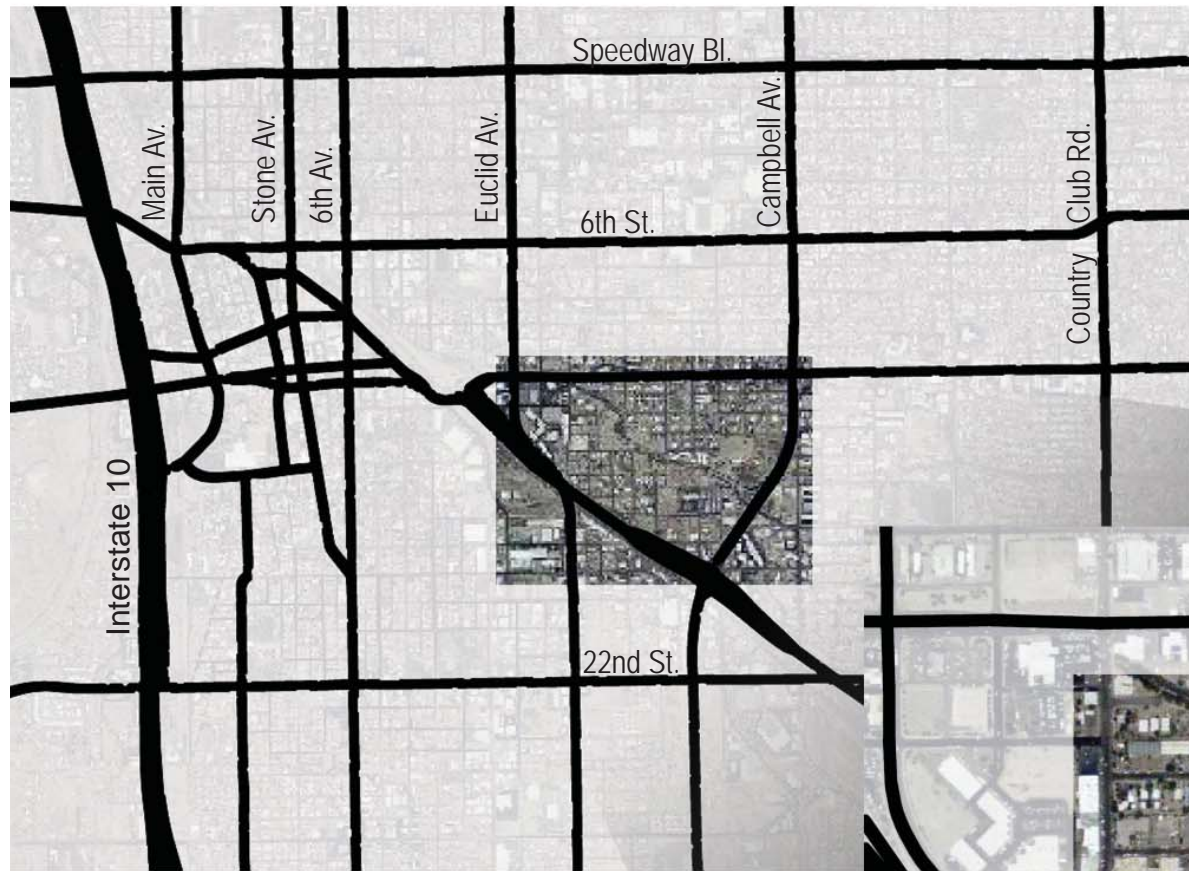
The rest of this section will provide an overview of the physical location of the future community center building. This analysis helps inform design in many ways by providing information regarding transportation to the site, limitations or opportunities posed by surrounding land uses, and appropriate visual character.



## MILES NEIGHBORHOOD

## Context Project Location

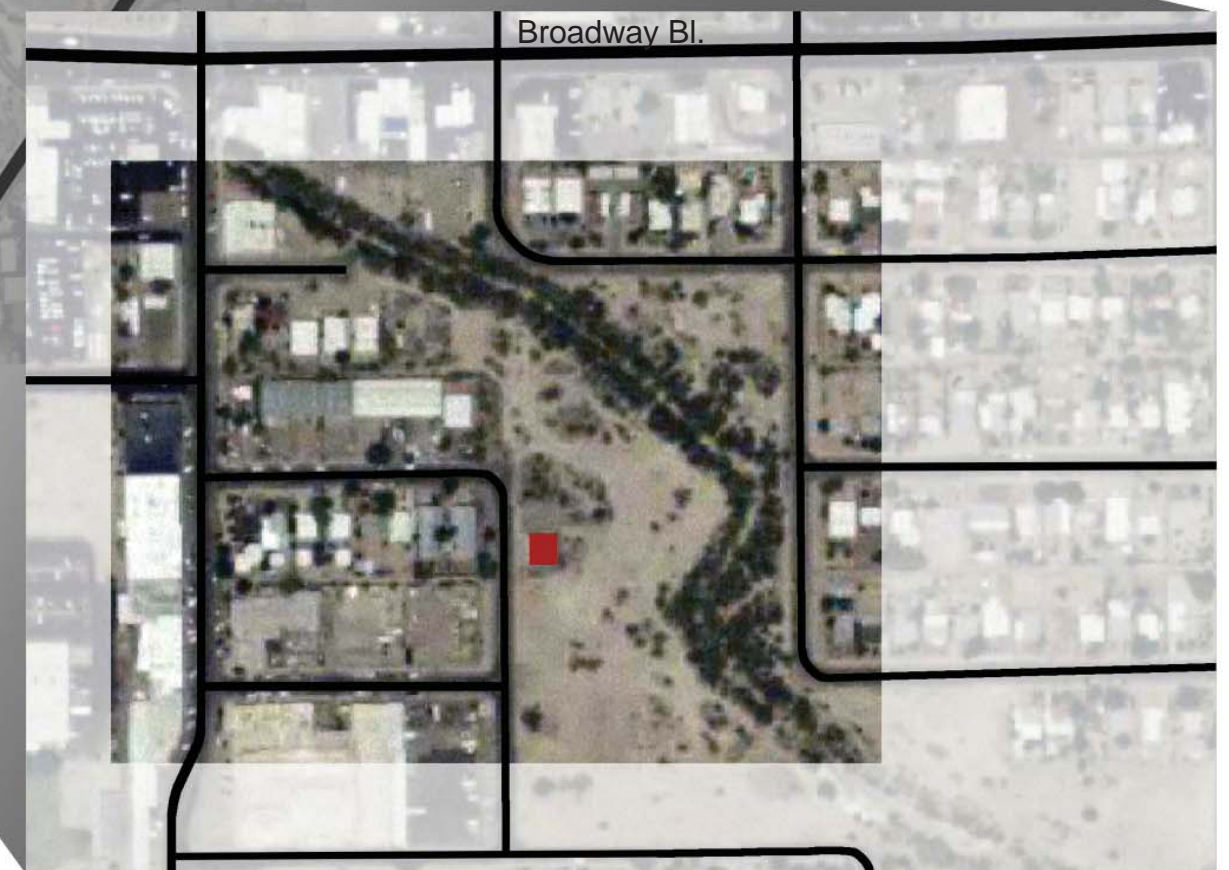
211 S. Freemont Ave. is located east of downtown Tucson, Arizona, within the Barrio San Antonio Neighborhood. The site is situated in a large area of undeveloped land that borders the Arroyo Chico, a major urban drainageway.



**Site Context at City Scale**



**Site Context at Block Scale**

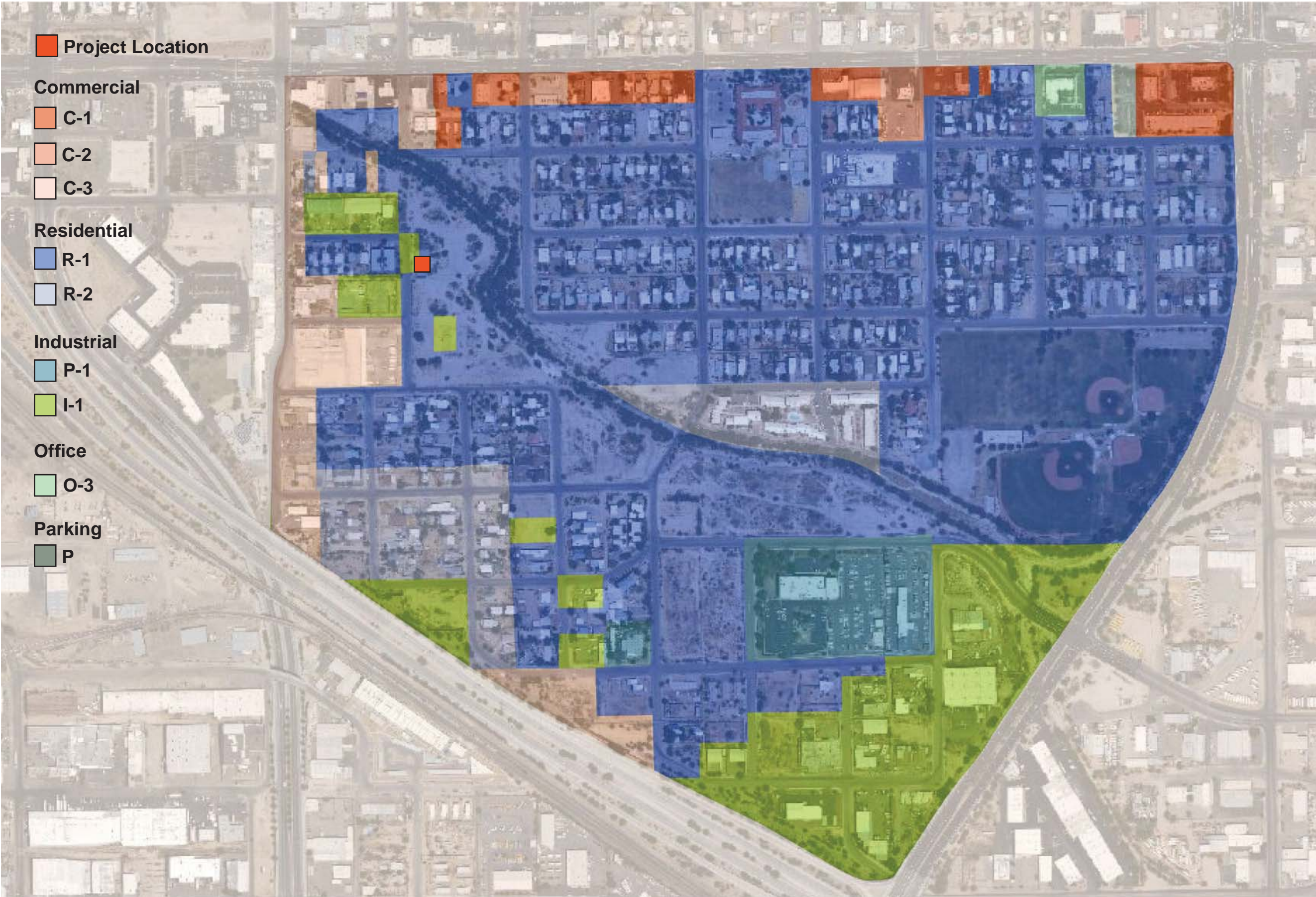


**Site Context at Local Scale**

## Context Neighborhoods

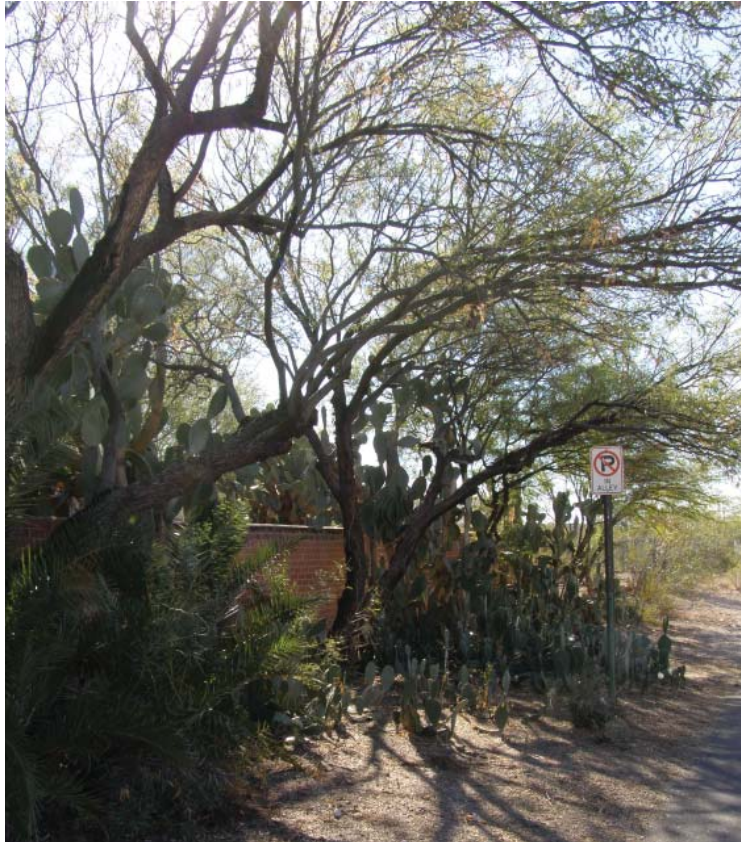


The site lies within Barrio San Antonio, but is located close to the Miles Neighborhood as well. Together, these neighborhoods are bounded by key vehicular routes: Broadway Blvd. to the north; Kino Parkway to the east; and Aviation Parkway to the south and west. These thoroughfares create significant barriers to pedestrian traffic, making a community center within the neighborhoods an important local resource.



The whole site is zoned I-1, or light industrial. Blocks of this zoning designation are scattered throughout Barrio San Antonio as this area originally serviced the adjacent railway lines prior to the construction of the Barraza Aviation Parkway. The site is also near a strip of local businesses development along South Park Avenue called the Lost Barrio. The area directly surrounding the site is all residential zoning.

## Neighborhood Character Miles Neighborhood





## Context The Arroyo Chico Project

The future community center is the only building located in a large area of open space adjacent to the Arroyo Chico. These parcels, including the one on which the building sits, are owned by Pima County Flood Control. Currently, the area shown on the map at left is in the process of becoming a series of storm water retention basins meant to alleviate flooding situations in the 4th Avenue/downtown districts of Tucson. This stage of the Army Corps of Engineers Arroyo Chico Project is the third set of such basins, the other two being the Randolph Park driving range and Cherry Fields, both located to the east of this site.

Though the community center site is within the Arroyo Chico Project planning boundary, any improvements to the building are outside the scope of the project. While Pima County is willing to convey ownership of the building and the land it sits on to the neighborhood, there are several complicating factors. Barrio San Antonio would need an entity to receive the property. The neighborhood is reluctant to form a non-profit to serve in this capacity as it would mean assuming liability. A preferred alternative would be for the City of Tucson Parks & Recreation Department to take ownership. Neighbors have expressed a willingness to give up direct control over the community center for the City taking on the liability for the site. However, the City does not currently have the funds available to make the purchase. The ownership of the center and means of achieving the repairs and improvements suggested in this documents are therefore unclear at this time.



 Project Location

The following section contains a brief site analysis of the community center property at 211 S. Fremont Ave. The existing conditions of the building and land parcel are looked at to determine what assets should be preserved or perhaps improved upon. Suggested facilities and activities derived from community input and site opportunities are provided at the end of the section.

Site Analysis 211 S. Fremont Ave.



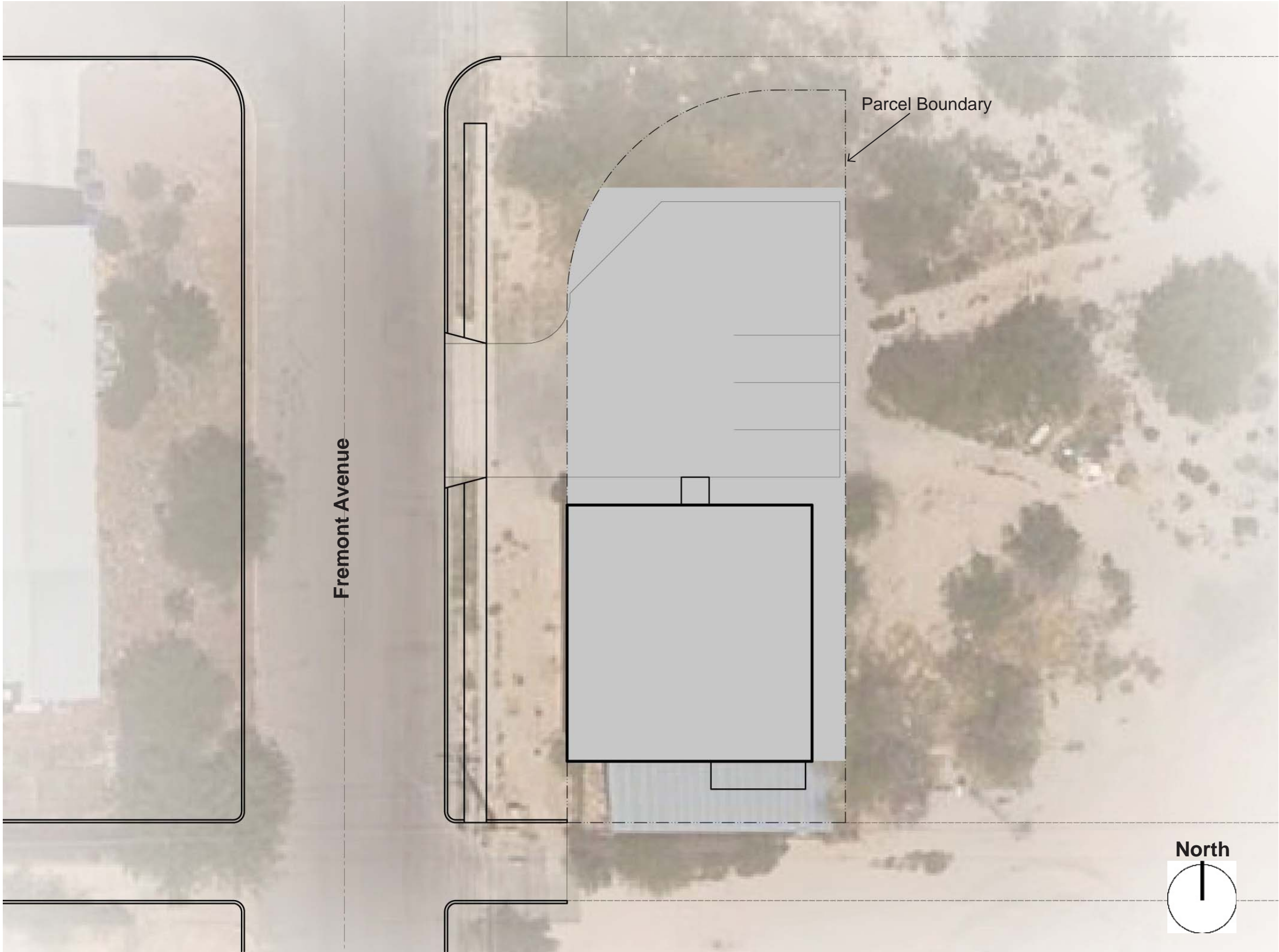
**Looking toward the building from the northwest**

The north currently the main entry side of the building facing onto the parking lot. The western side of the building facing Fremont Ave. presents a solid wall, which is not inviting to visitors.



**Looking toward the building from the southeast**

The south side of the building features a porch and roll-up garage door service entrance. There is another similar opening on the eastern side of the building.



The dashed and dotted lines on the plan pictured here indicate the original plat for this parcel. There was an alleyway planned to the south of the building, but this was never implemented. The building’s intended use was for shipping and receiving, so there is minimal parking. Because most neighbors will walk to the site and there is ample on-street parking, the parking lot was not deemed to need expansion.

During the course of this project, Pima County indicated to the Drachman Institute that the property line for the building could be ignored as all of the surrounding land is unimproved and owned by the County as well. Therefore, the conceptual designs which appear later in this document disregard the boundary shown on this map.

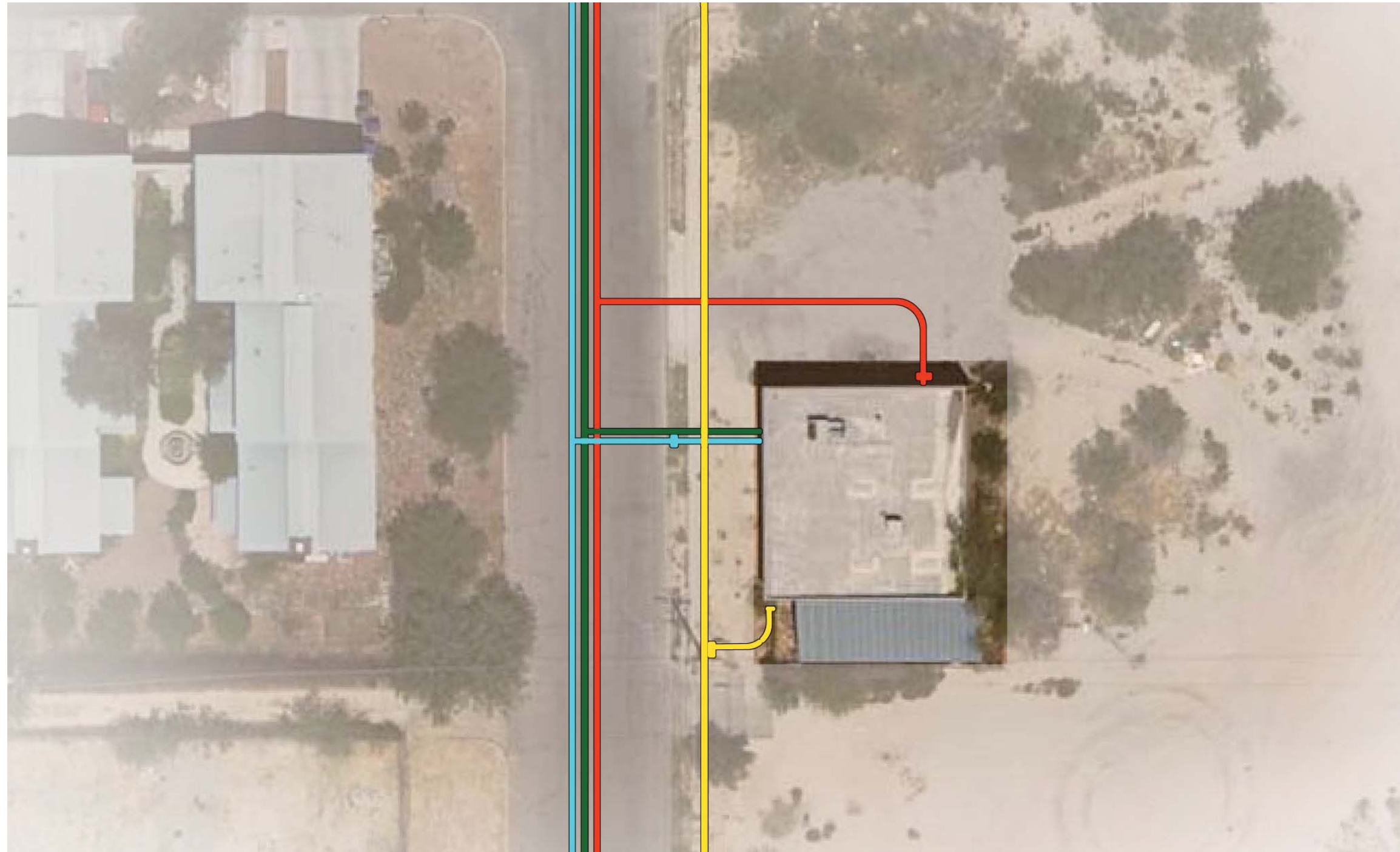
 **Buildable Area**

**Site Area**  
6,265 square feet

**Existing Parking**  
four spaces

Site Plan

## Site Analysis Utilities





There are a few patches of dense vegetation near the building. As much as possible, these should be preserved as native plant life provides shade, controls wind and water erosion, and serves as wildlife habitat.



This graphic indicates how water is flowing off and around the building. At the moment, the roof drains to the east; some of this water appears to flow out into the open space where it percolates into the soil. The remaining water drains around the building and is conveyed to the street.

In its current configuration, the building is therefore not making good use of storm water, which could be harvested and used on site.



**View West**

Looking west from the site gives views across Fremont Ave. to some private residences and some light industrial functions.



**View North**

Views to the north of the site similarly take in primarily light industrial, but also include pockets of dense native vegetation and a lovely vista of the Santa Catalina Mountains.



**View East** Looking east from the site provides views of the open space and Arroyo Chico, with the Rincon Mountains in the distance.

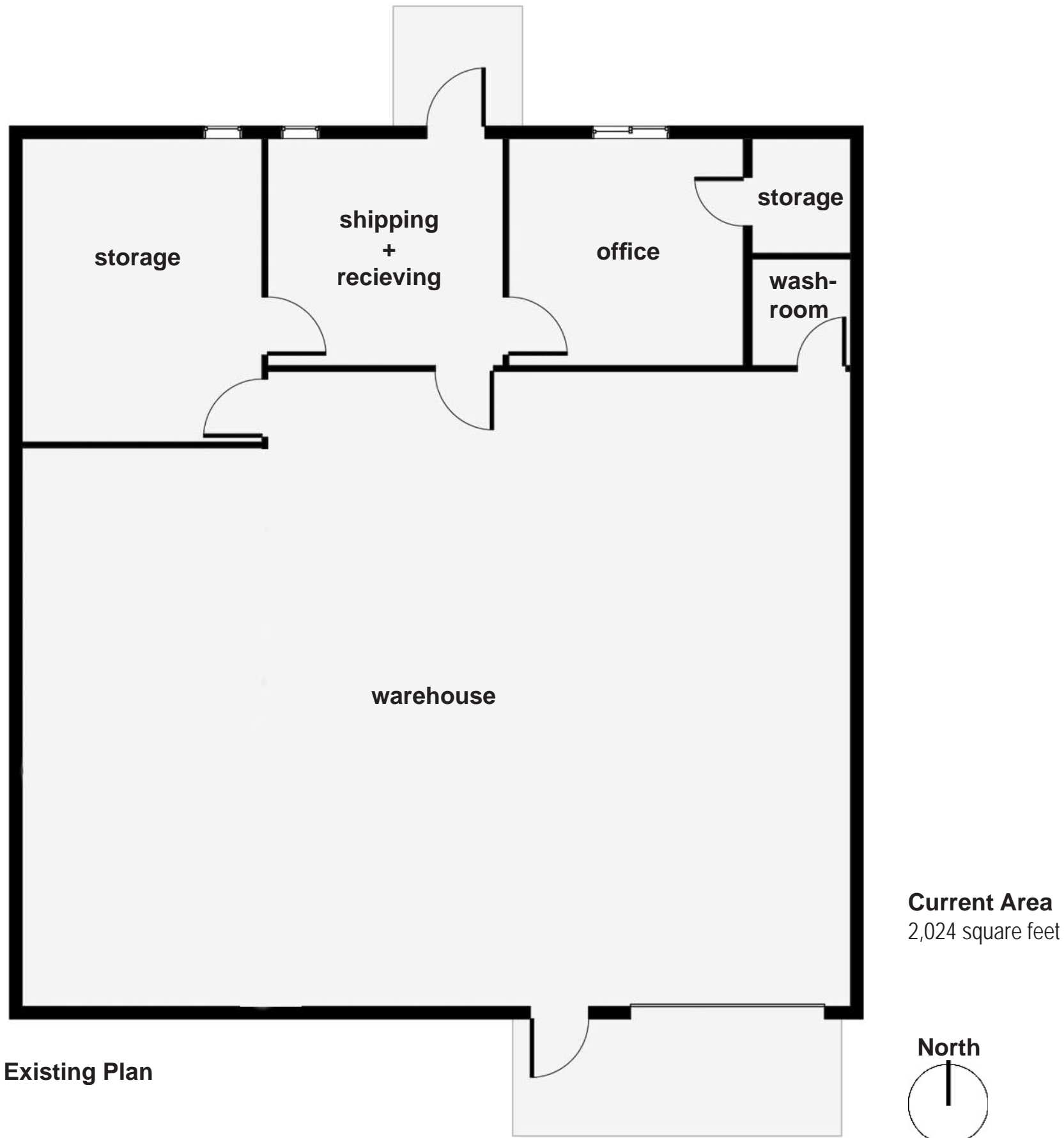


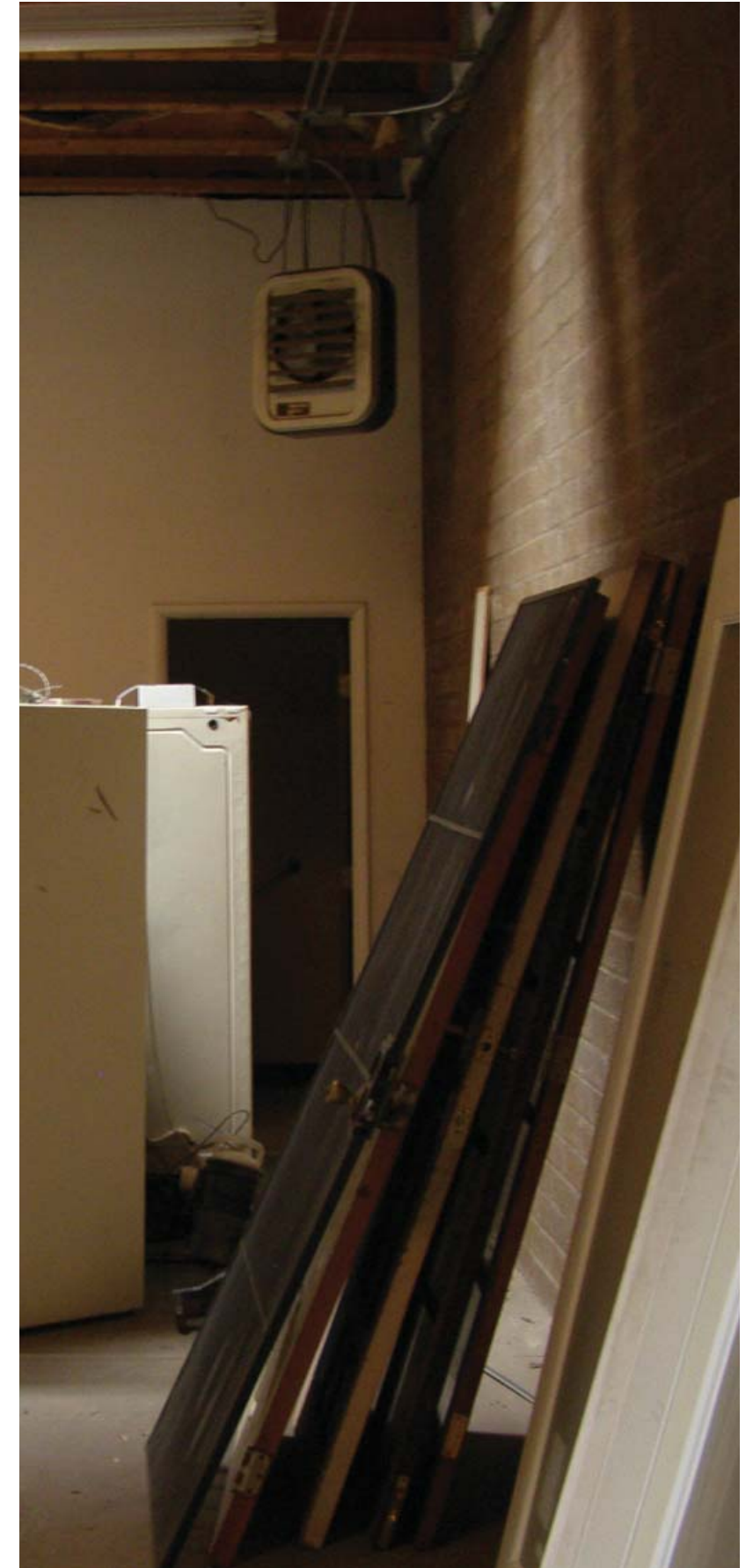
**View South** Past the open space to the south are several private residences which provide community surveillance of the site. Mission Linen can be seen at right.

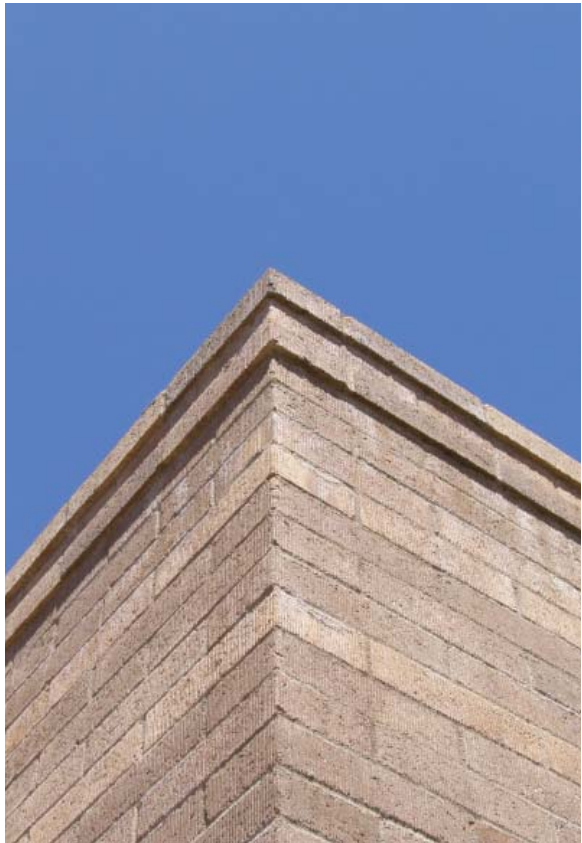
# Site Analysis Existing Layout

The building is currently being used as temporary storage by the real estate department of Pima County. Reusable building materials from demolished structures are kept in this location.

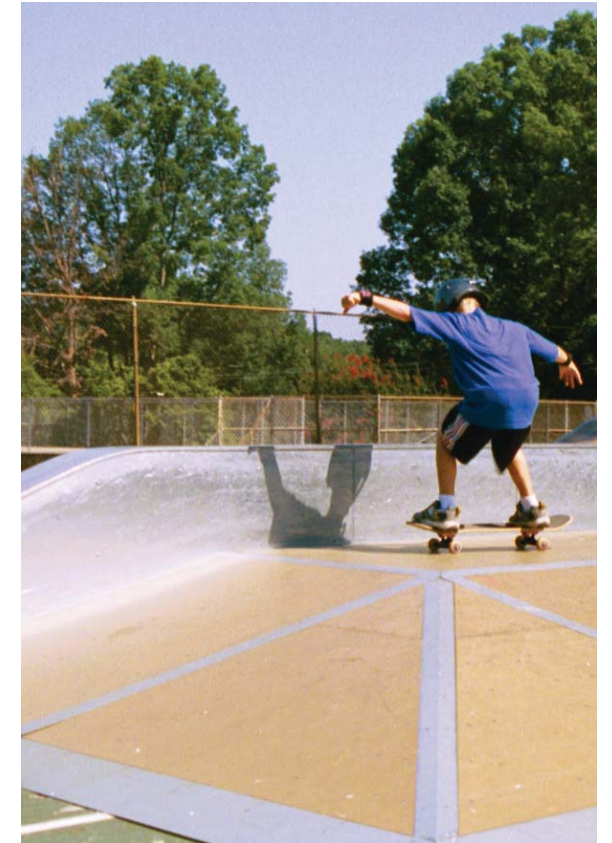
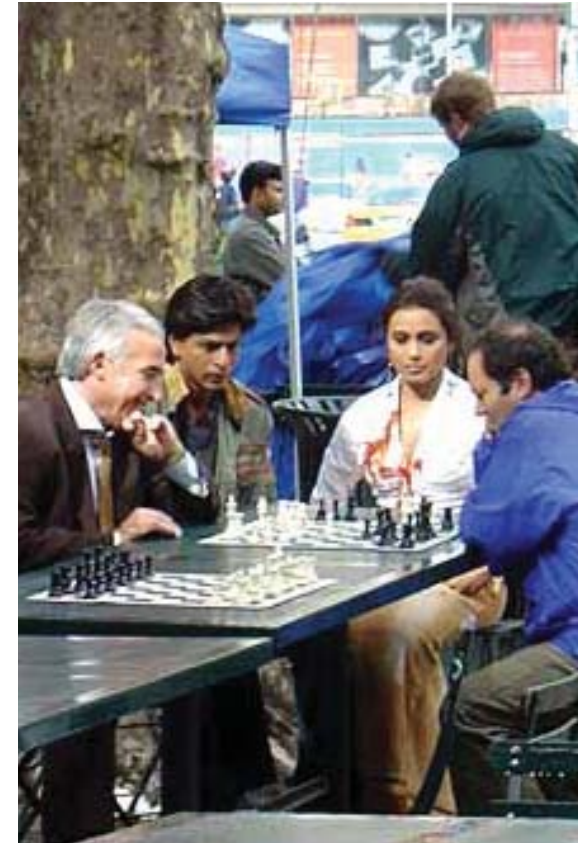
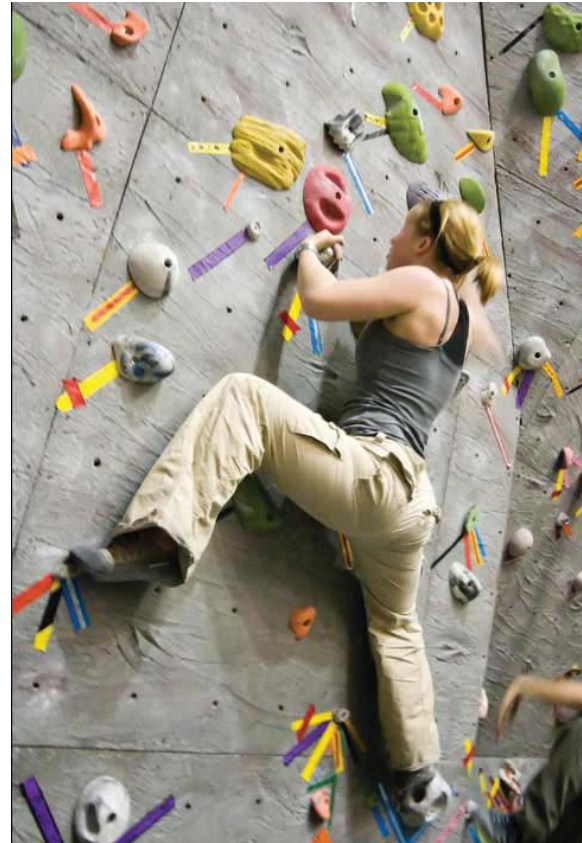
As shown on the following page, the structure is in need of some repair. While the shell, foundation, and roof appear to be sound, insulation is peeling from the walls, the ceiling and partitions are in poor condition, etc. The condition of the utilities (plumbing and wiring) will need to be checked and possibly updated.







A study of the existing materials reveals the structural possibilities of the building as well as showing what materials may be appropriate for improvements.



Community brainstorming generated a list of desired uses for the community center, which are depicted here. The design alternatives in the following section were planned around the needs of residents while engaging in these activities.

The conceptual design phase of the project reflects a collaborative process between the Drachman Institute and the Barrio San Antonio and Miles communities. After gathering the background information presented in the preceding sections of this document, Drachman produced three preliminary designs for the community center. All three add architectural features to the existing building shell, working with the basic geometric shape of the structure. In addition, neighbors expressed an interest in green building practices, which is in keeping with the Drachman Institute design philosophy. Every scheme therefore includes resource conservation elements such as water harvesting and energy efficiency via solar and allowing natural daylight. Some schemes also added significant programmed outdoor space (patio, garden, etc.).

These preliminary concepts were presented to the neighborhoods for feedback; this feedback is presented here after the concept drawings. Drachman then synthesized the strongest elements from the three plans (as determined by the input from residents) into one scheme. This revised scheme underwent the same process of community presentation and feedback as the preliminary plans. The result was a final proposed scheme, which is presented toward the end of the section. For easy reference, the document concludes with a summary of the three preliminary plans.

- Pop-outs soften the rectangular profile of the building
- Angled entry provides sense of movement and invites visitors into the assembly space
- Utility spaces are grouped and screened
- Reduction of eastern and western facing windows to prevent excessive heat gain
- Graphics on eastern facade invite users into building
- Vestibules and window niches expand and enliven interior space.
- Northern window-walls link the assembly space to vegetated areas and views
- Reading niche in library provides solar access for winter warmth and a sunlit space
- Pass-through window and buffet link Kitchen directly to assembly space for community events or cooking classes
- Kitchen can be secured
- Partial height partition defines Library and assembly space, while maintaining a strong physical connection and sense of openness
- Rainwater is harvested from the roof of the building and collected in cisterns for use in landscape spaces



## Plan Key

**Assembly Room**  
728 square feet

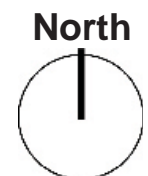
**Library**  
349 square feet

**Meeting Room**  
254 square feet

**Kitchen**  
120 square feet

**Utility Room**  
30 square feet

**Washrooms**  
357 square feet





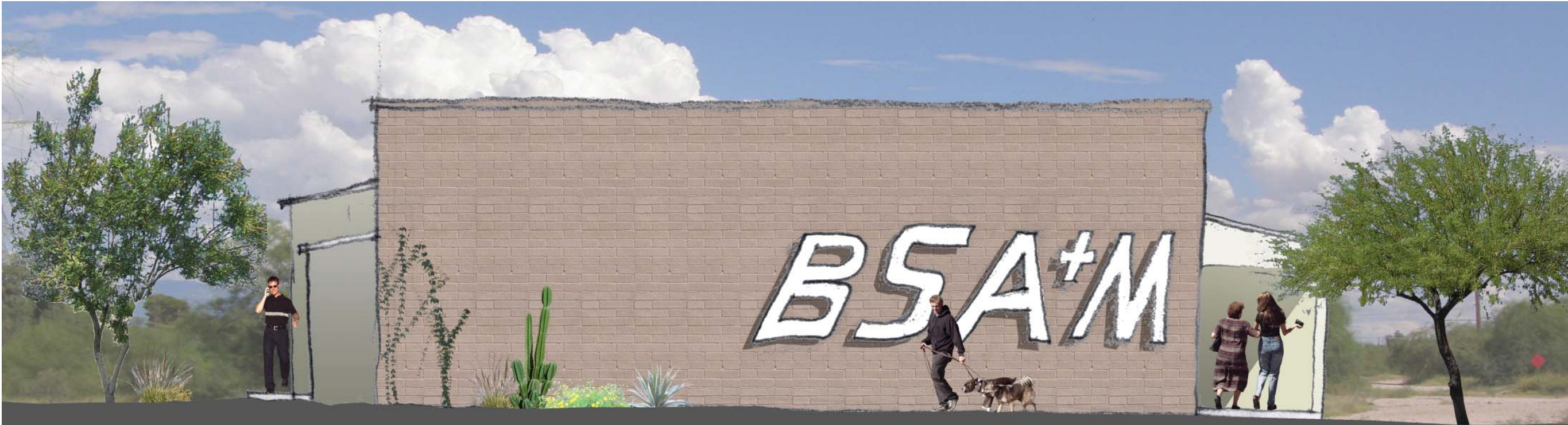
North Elevation



South Elevation

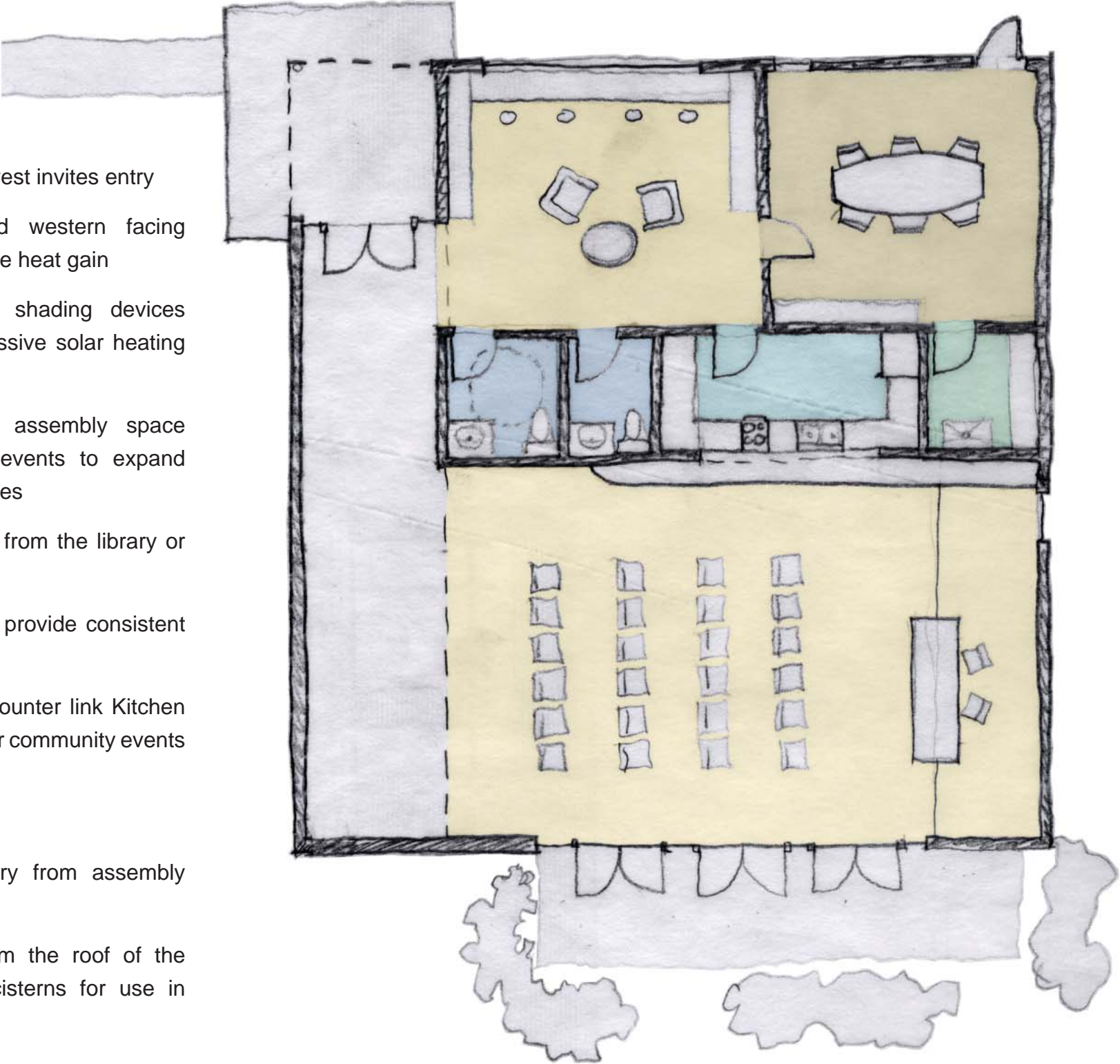


East Elevation









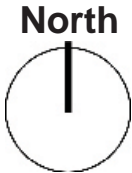
West Elevation

- Entrance vestibule in Northwest invites entry
- Reduction of eastern and western facing windows to prevent excessive heat gain
- South facing glazing and shading devices provide opportunities for passive solar heating in winter
- Operable window wall in assembly space provides light and allows events to expand outward into landscape spaces
- Utility spaces are accessed from the library or the conference room
- North oriented library areas provide consistent light quality for reading
- Pass-through window and counter link Kitchen directly to assembly space for community events or cooking classes
- Kitchen can be secured
- Service core screens library from assembly space
- Rainwater is harvested from the roof of the building and collected in cisterns for use in landscape spaces



Plan Key

-  **Assembly Room**  
735 square feet
-  **Library**  
270 square feet
-  **Meeting Room**  
240 square feet
-  **Kitchen**  
105 square feet
-  **Utility Room**  
42 square feet
-  **Washroom**  
273 square feet





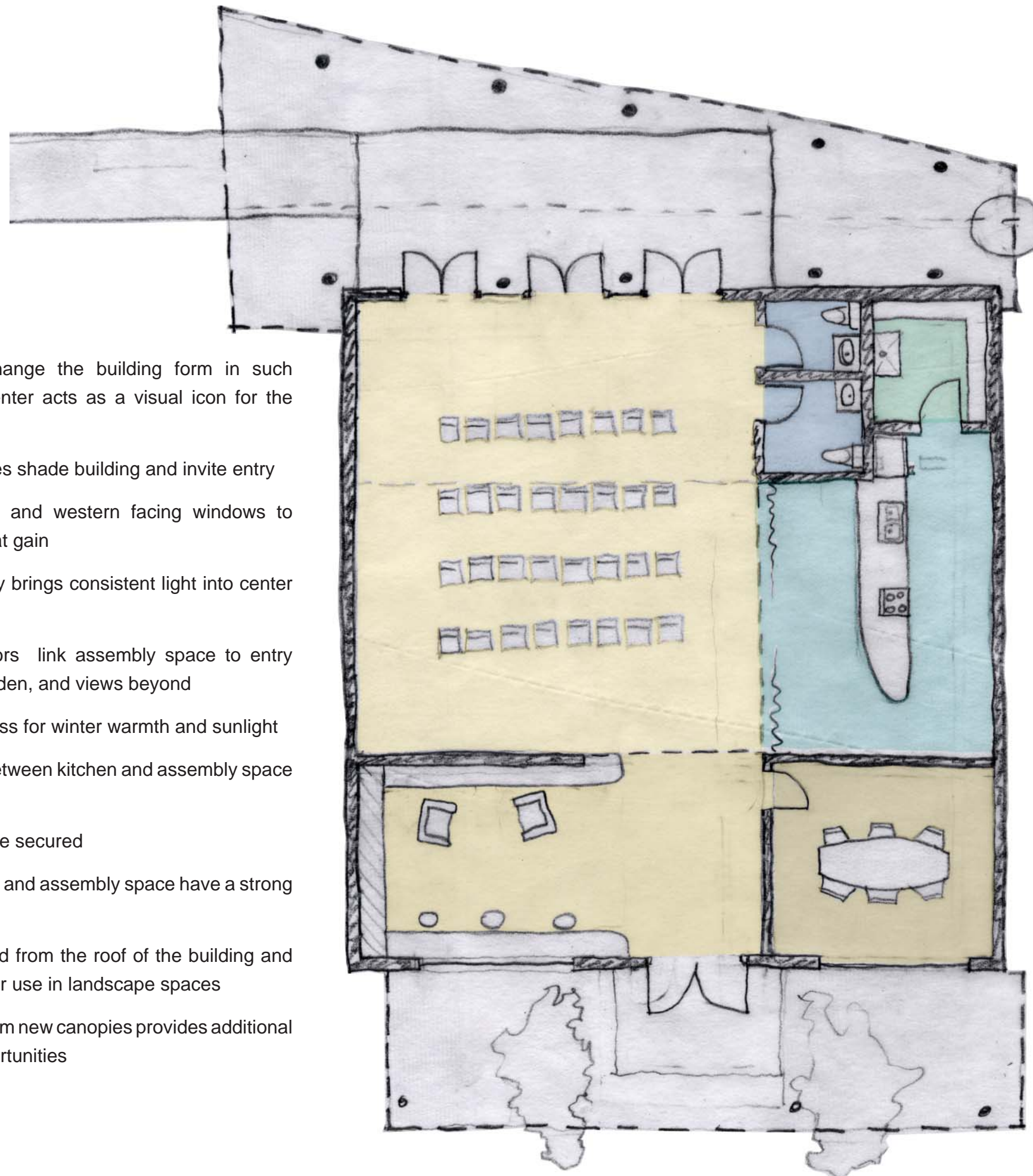


East Elevation



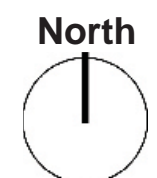
West Elevation

- Additive elements change the building form in such a manner that the center acts as a visual icon for the neighborhoods
- Large exterior canopies shade building and invite entry
- Reduction of eastern and western facing windows to prevent excessive heat gain
- North facing clerestory brings consistent light into center of building
- Northern double doors link assembly space to entry porch, community garden, and views beyond
- Library has solar access for winter warmth and sunlight
- Moveable partitions between kitchen and assembly space increases flexibility
- Kitchen can partially be secured
- Library, meeting room, and assembly space have a strong link
- Rainwater is harvested from the roof of the building and collected in cisterns for use in landscape spaces
- Additional roof area from new canopies provides additional water harvesting opportunities



## Plan Key

- Assembly Room**  
810 square feet
- Library**  
351 square feet
- Meeting Room**  
195 square feet
- Kitchen**  
286 square feet
- Utility Room**  
64 square feet
- Washroom**  
273 square feet





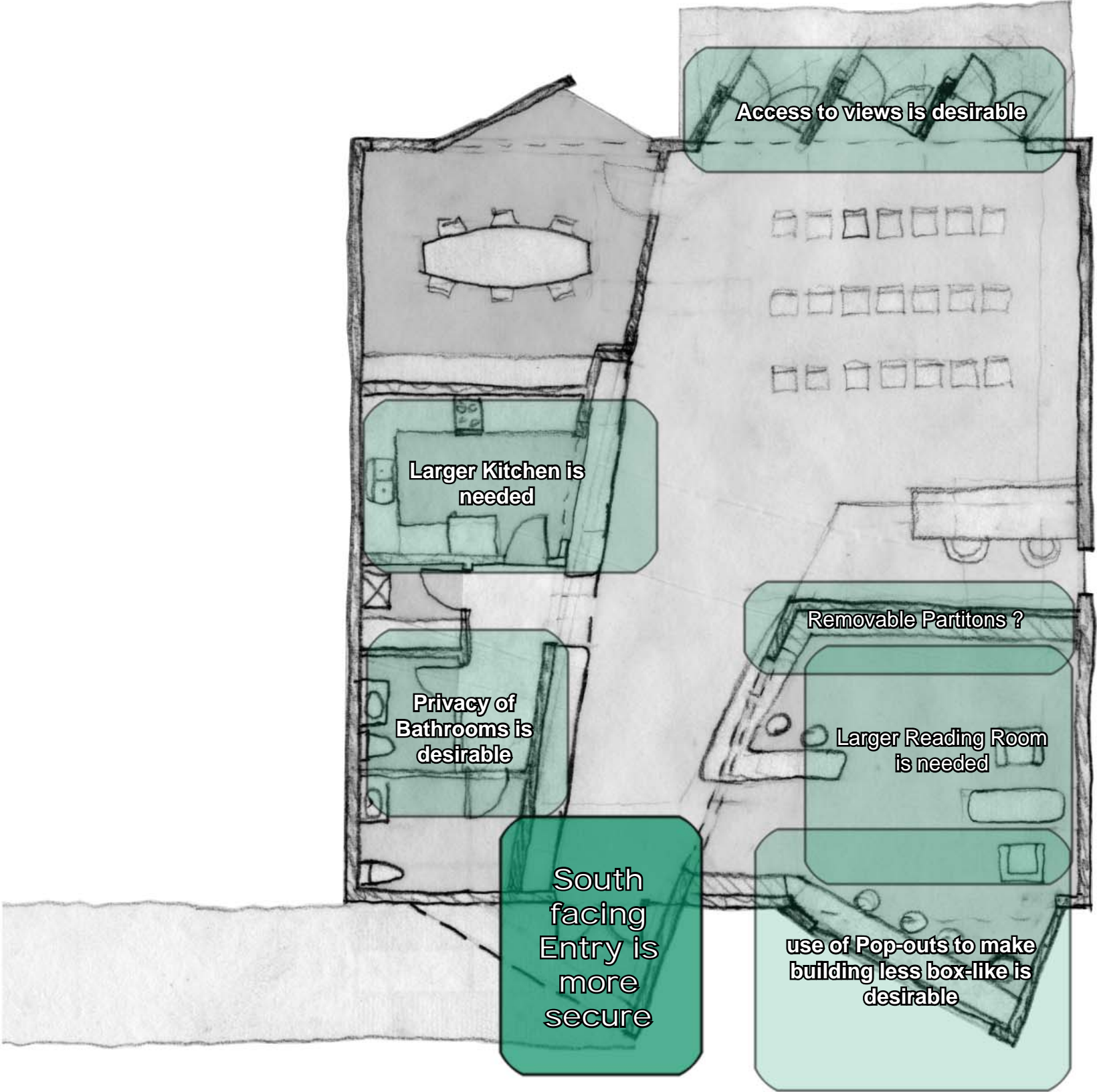


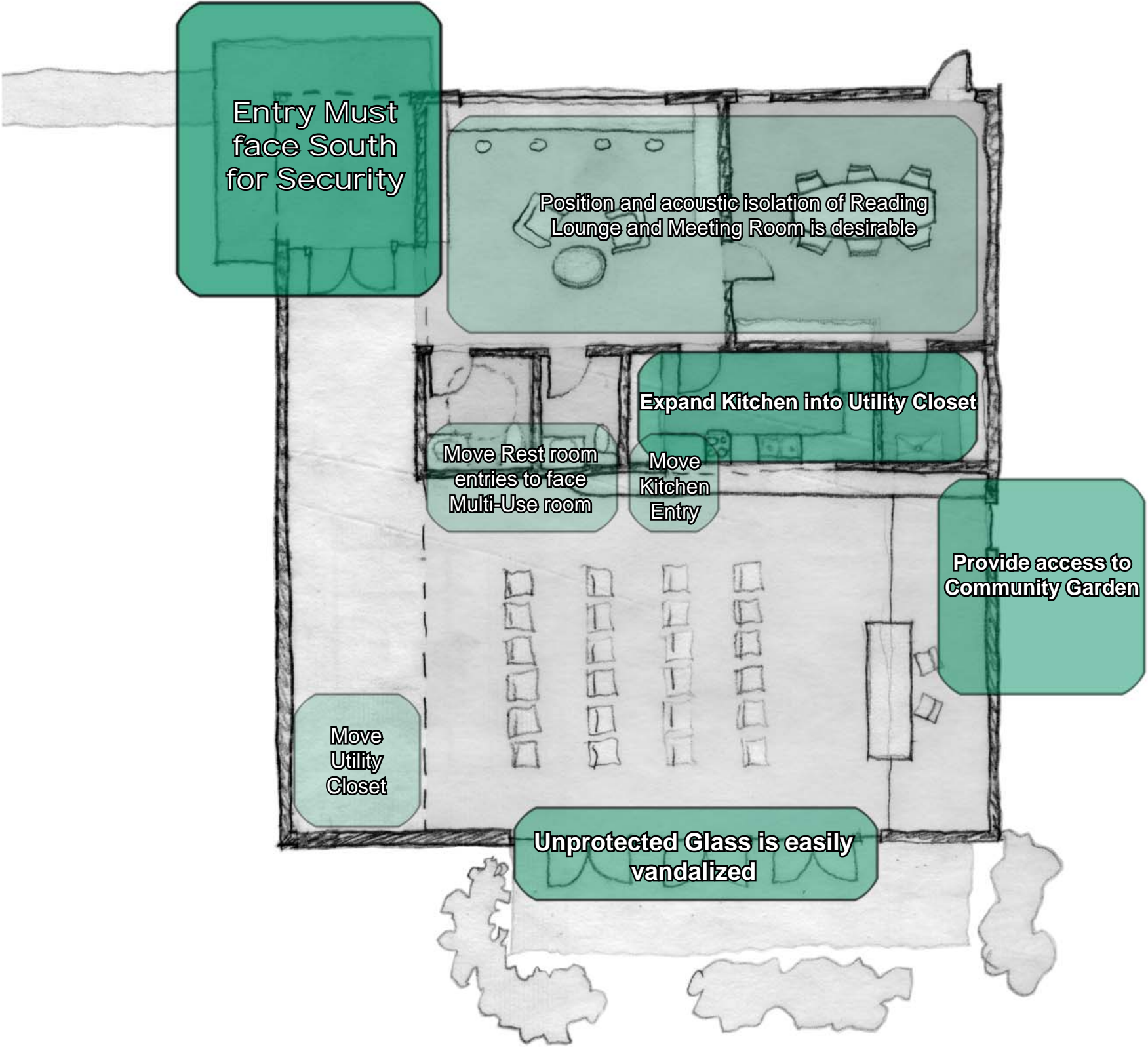
East Elevation

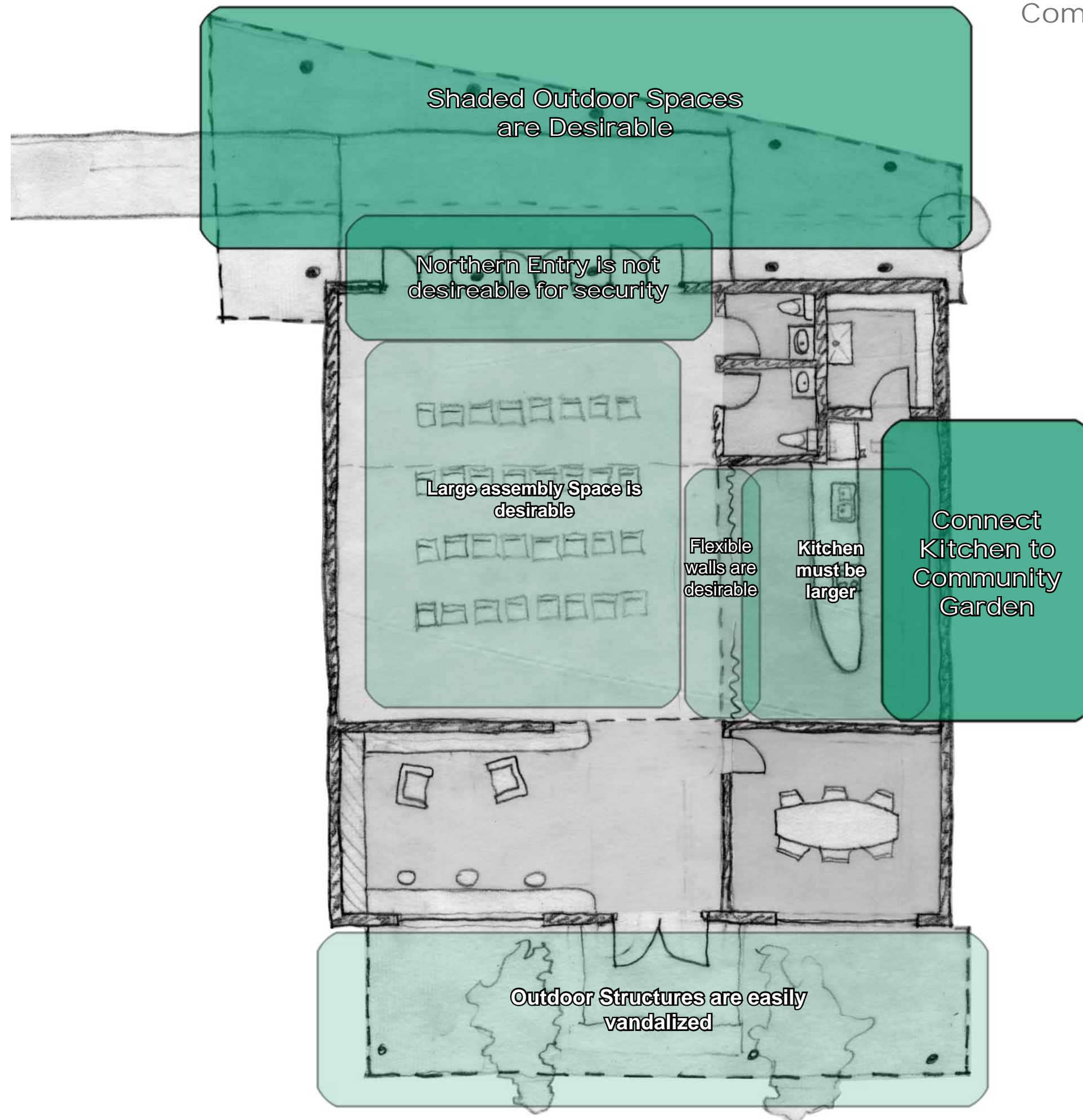


West Elevation

The three preliminary schemes were presented to residents for thier input. During the meeting, each resident was given copies of the plans on which to make notes about their likes and dislikes. These notes were compiled and are shown here. The darker boxes with bold text show comments that were of greater concern and/or were mentioned by multiple people.



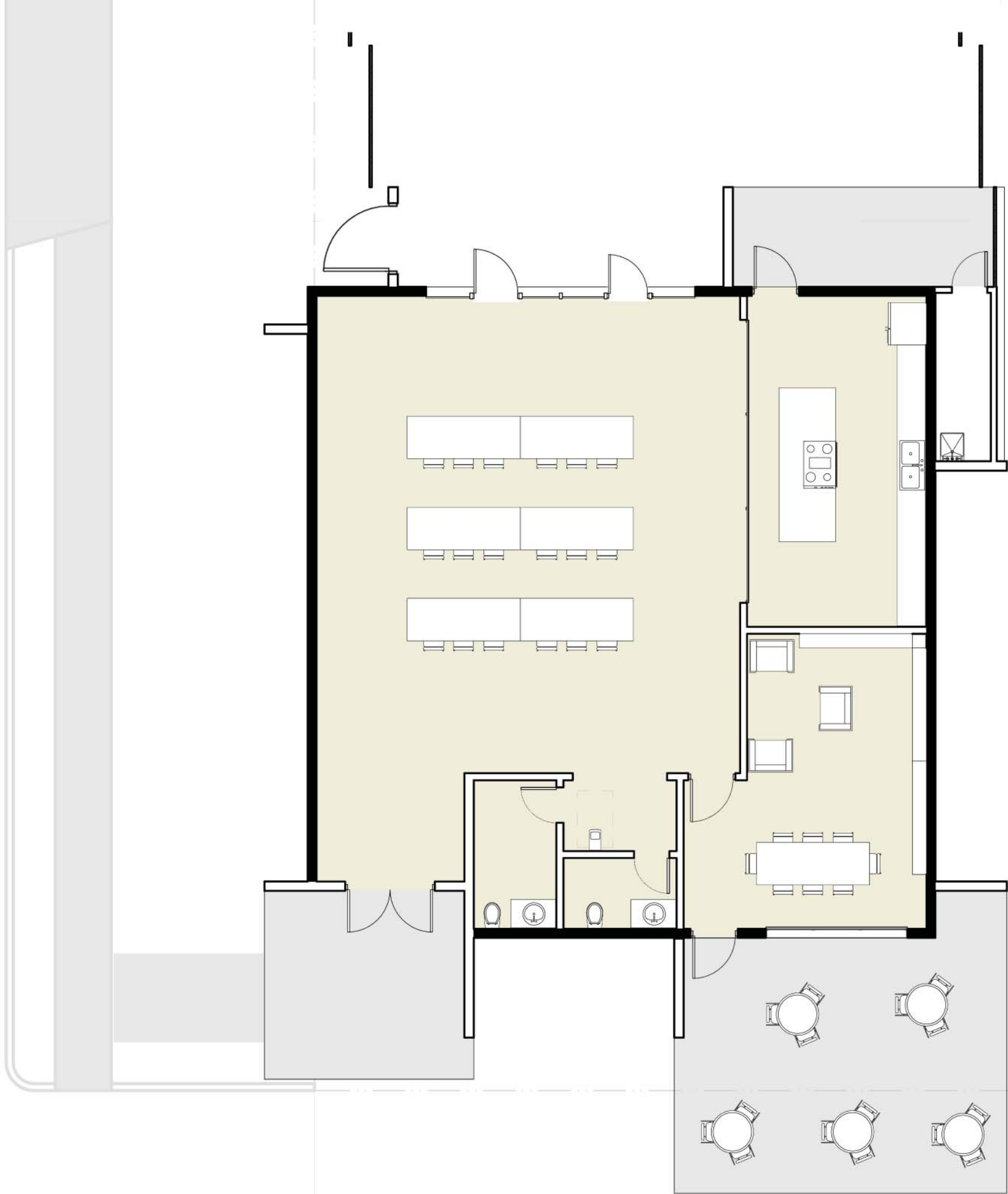


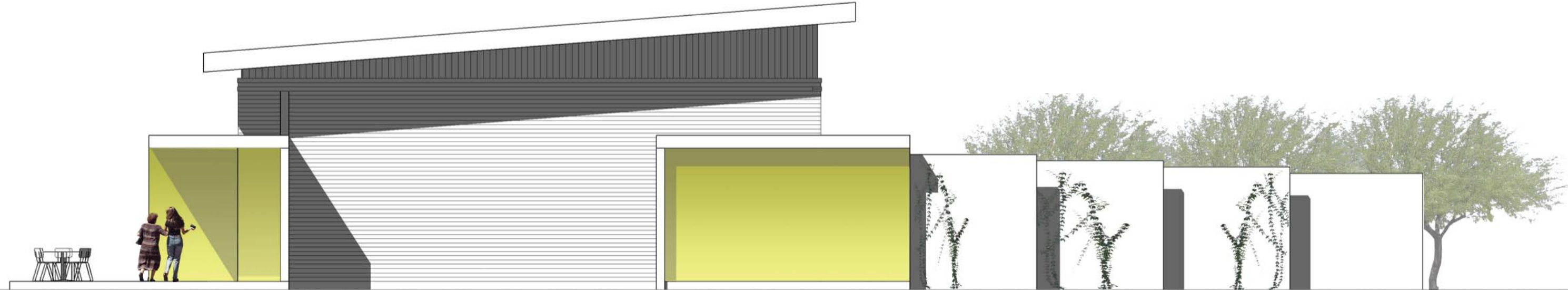


## Revised Scheme Site Plan

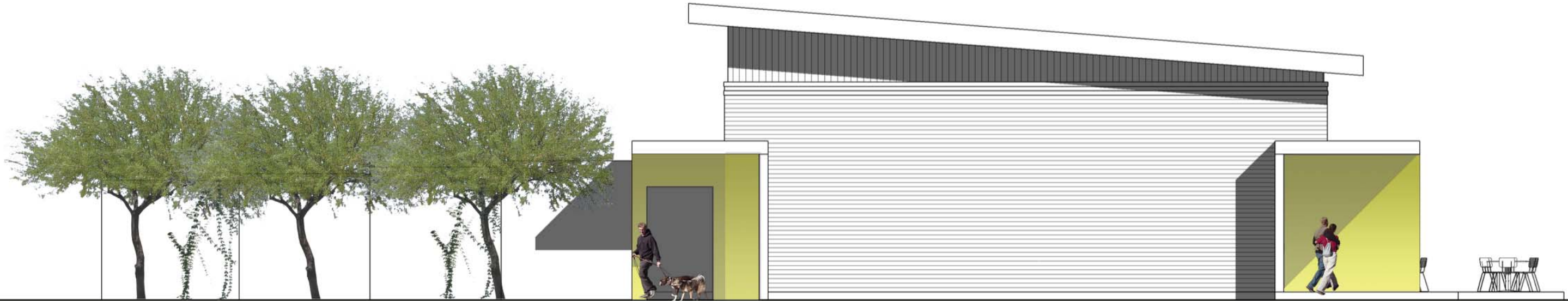
The feedback from the preliminary schemes was used to generate one revised scheme that was developed in greater detail. This plan was then presented to the community for further input.







East Elevation



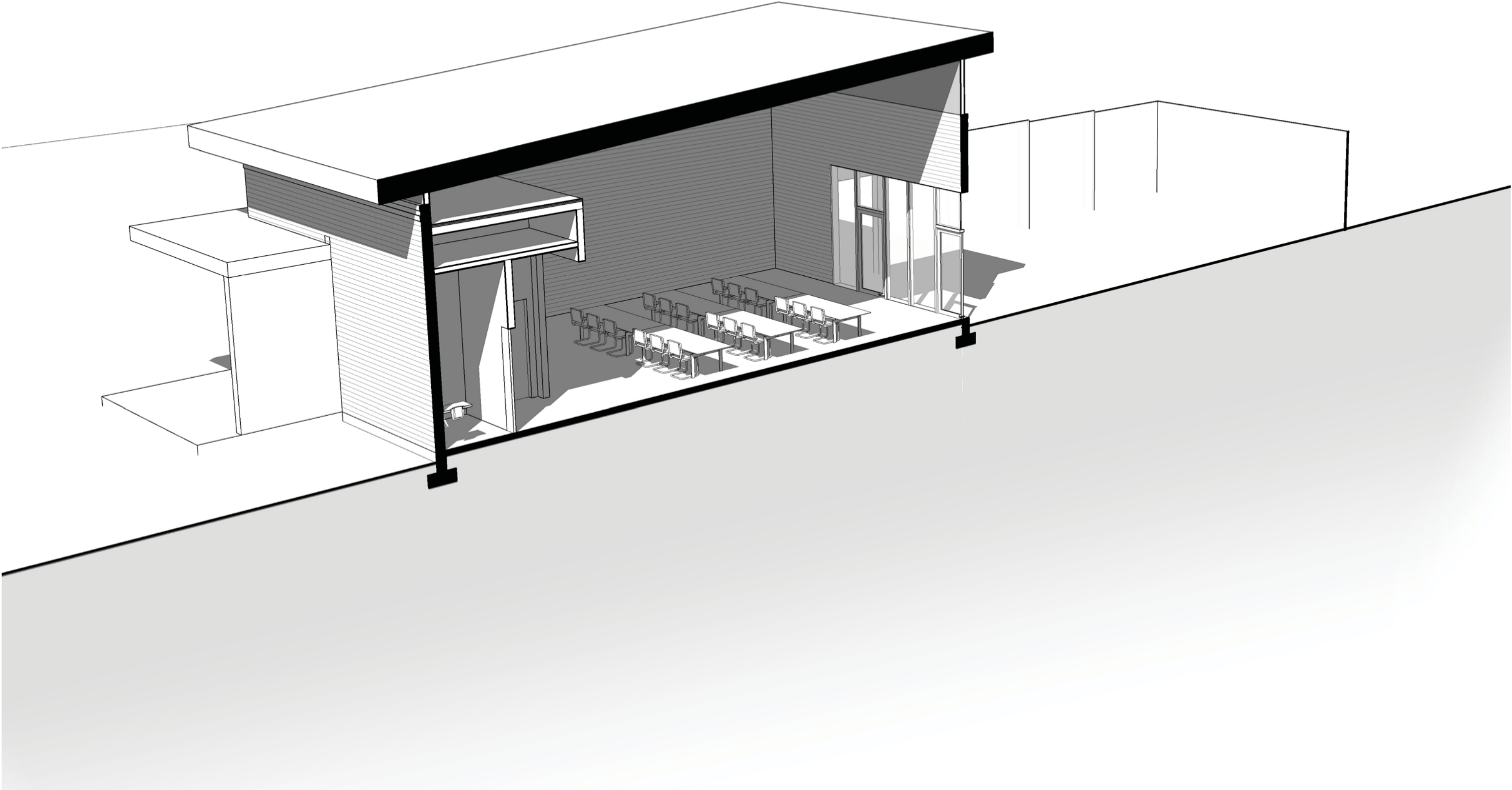
West Elevation

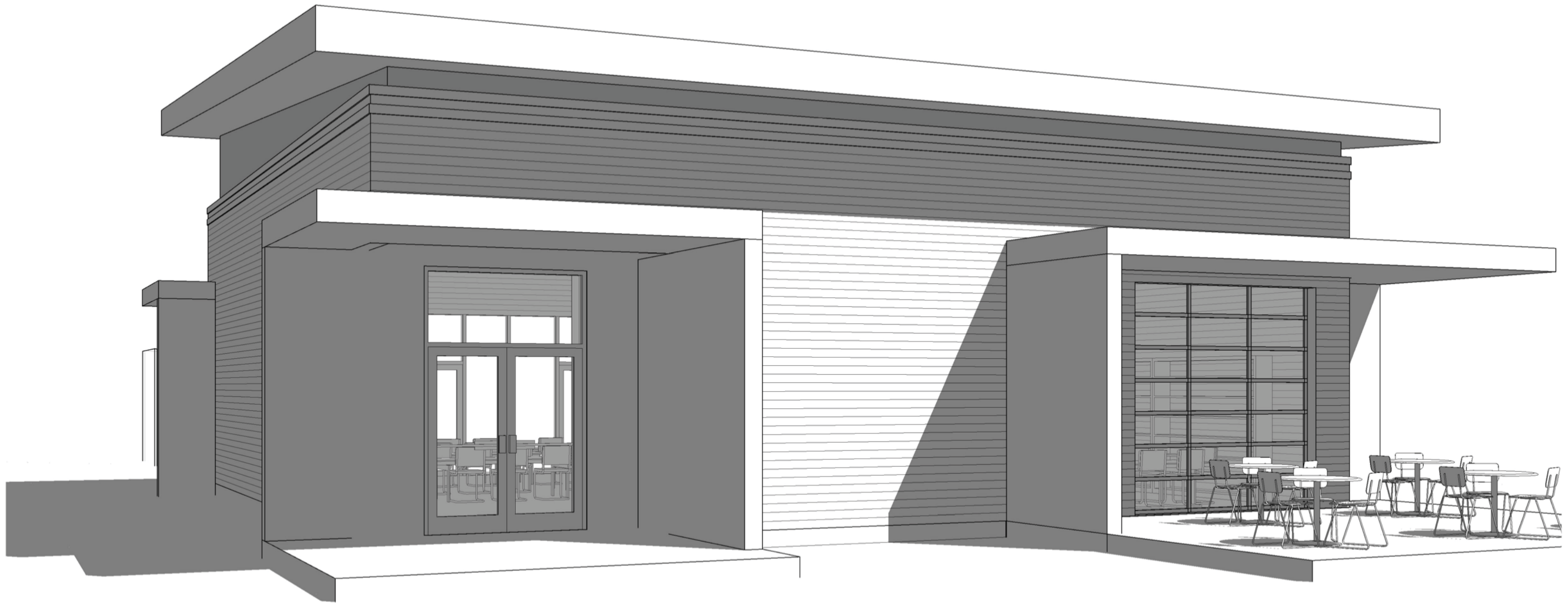


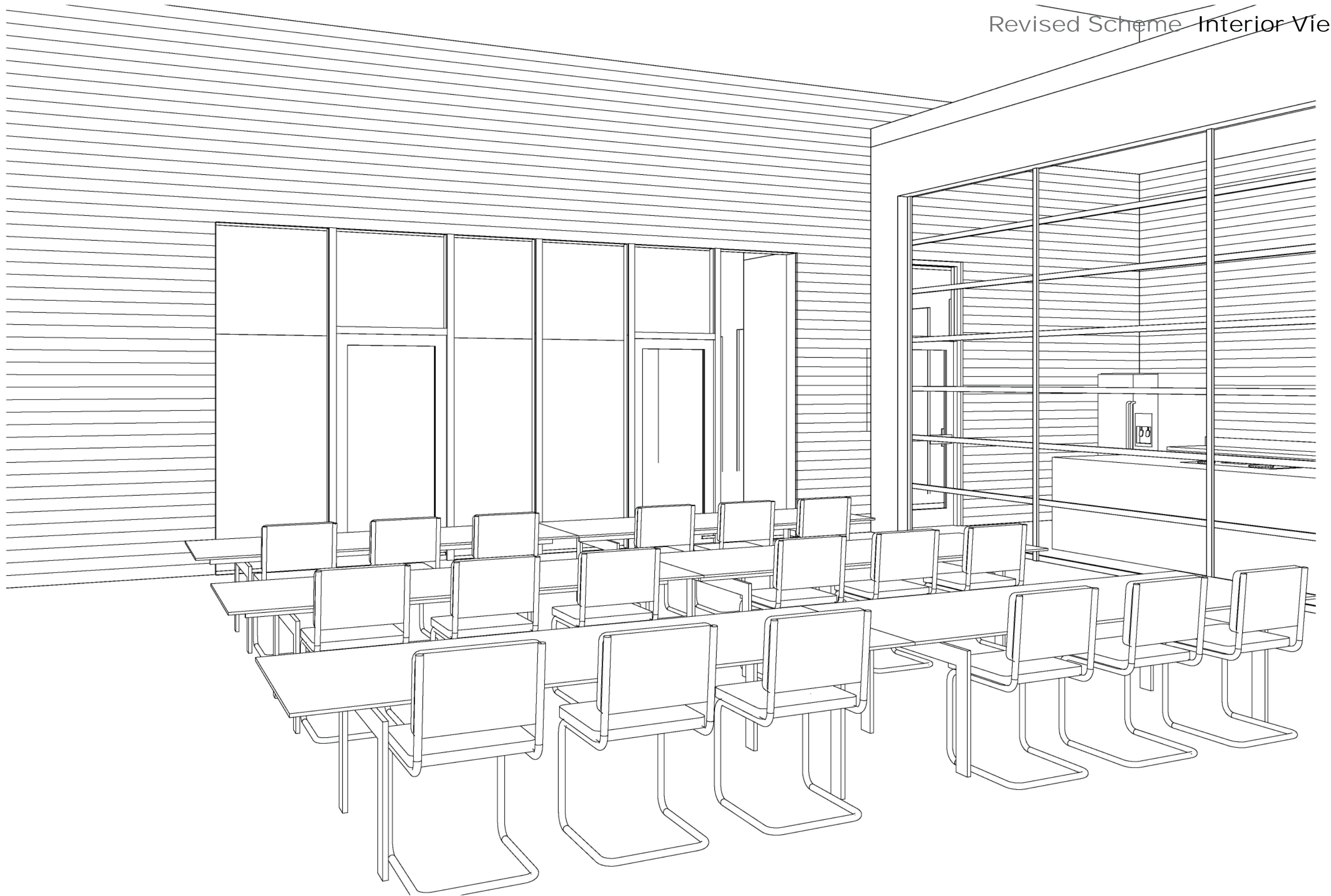
North Elevation

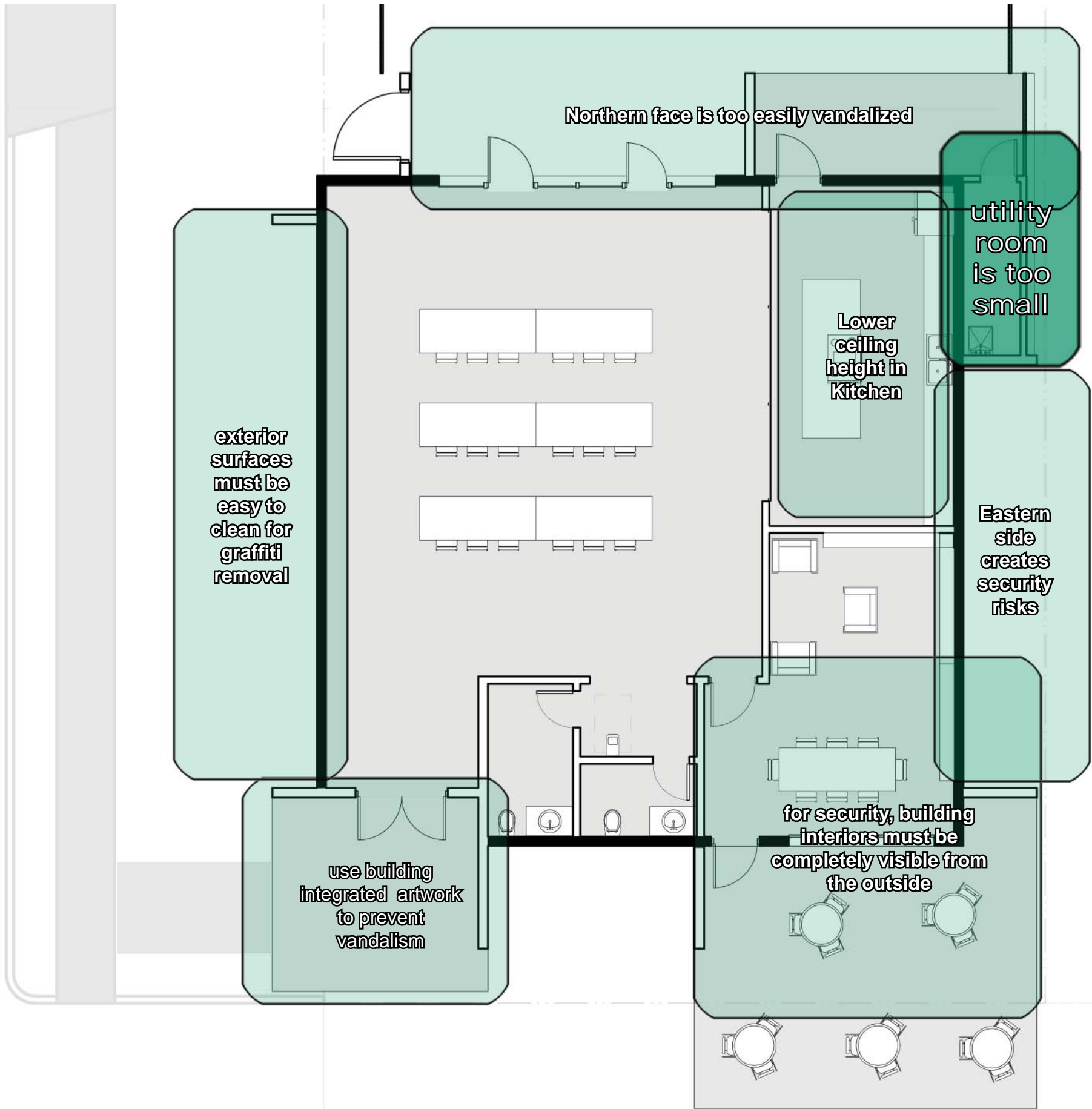


South Elevation









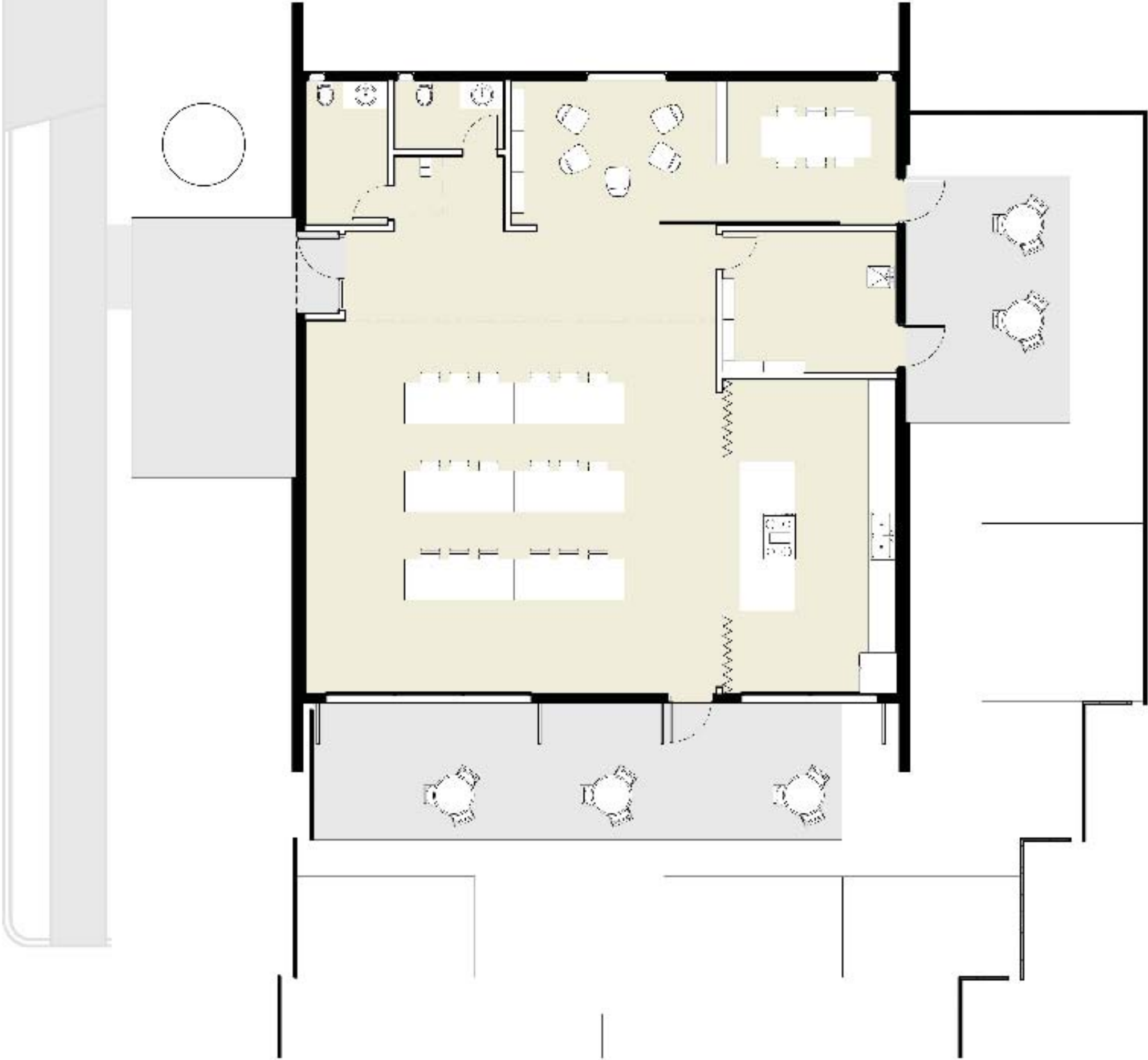
incorporate more sustainability strategies including recycled materials, water harvesting, and cooling towers

change the direction of roof slope for water harvesting

consider daylighting with light shelves and clerestories

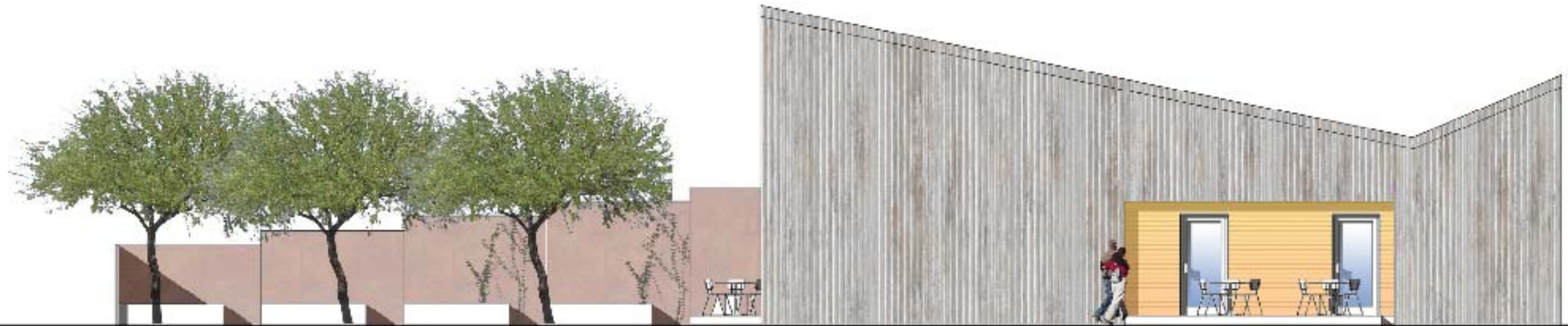
Incorporate curves







West Elevation



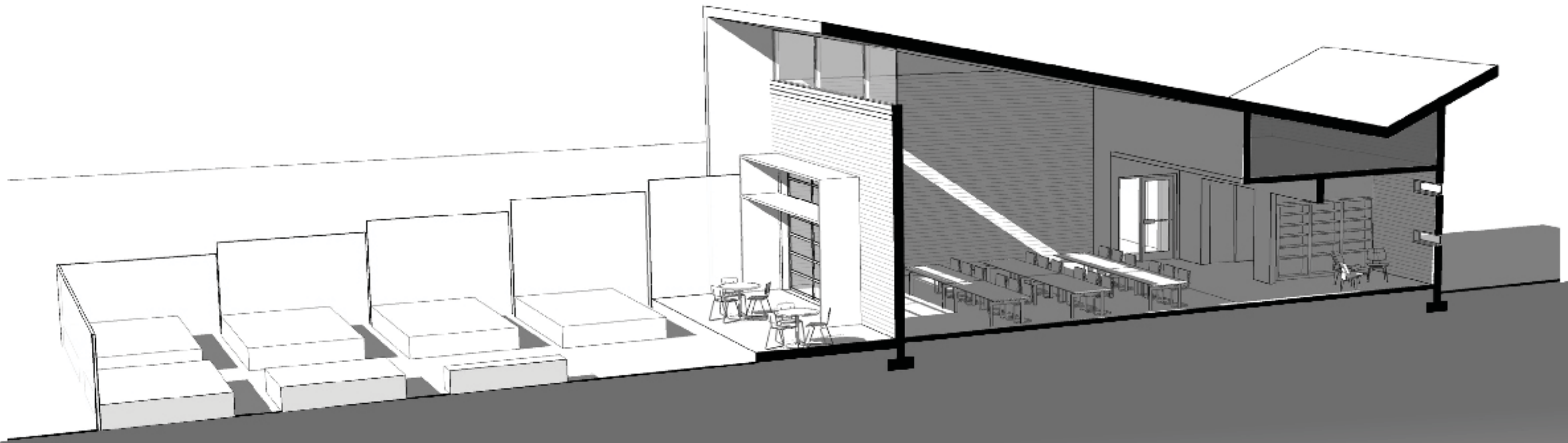
East Elevation

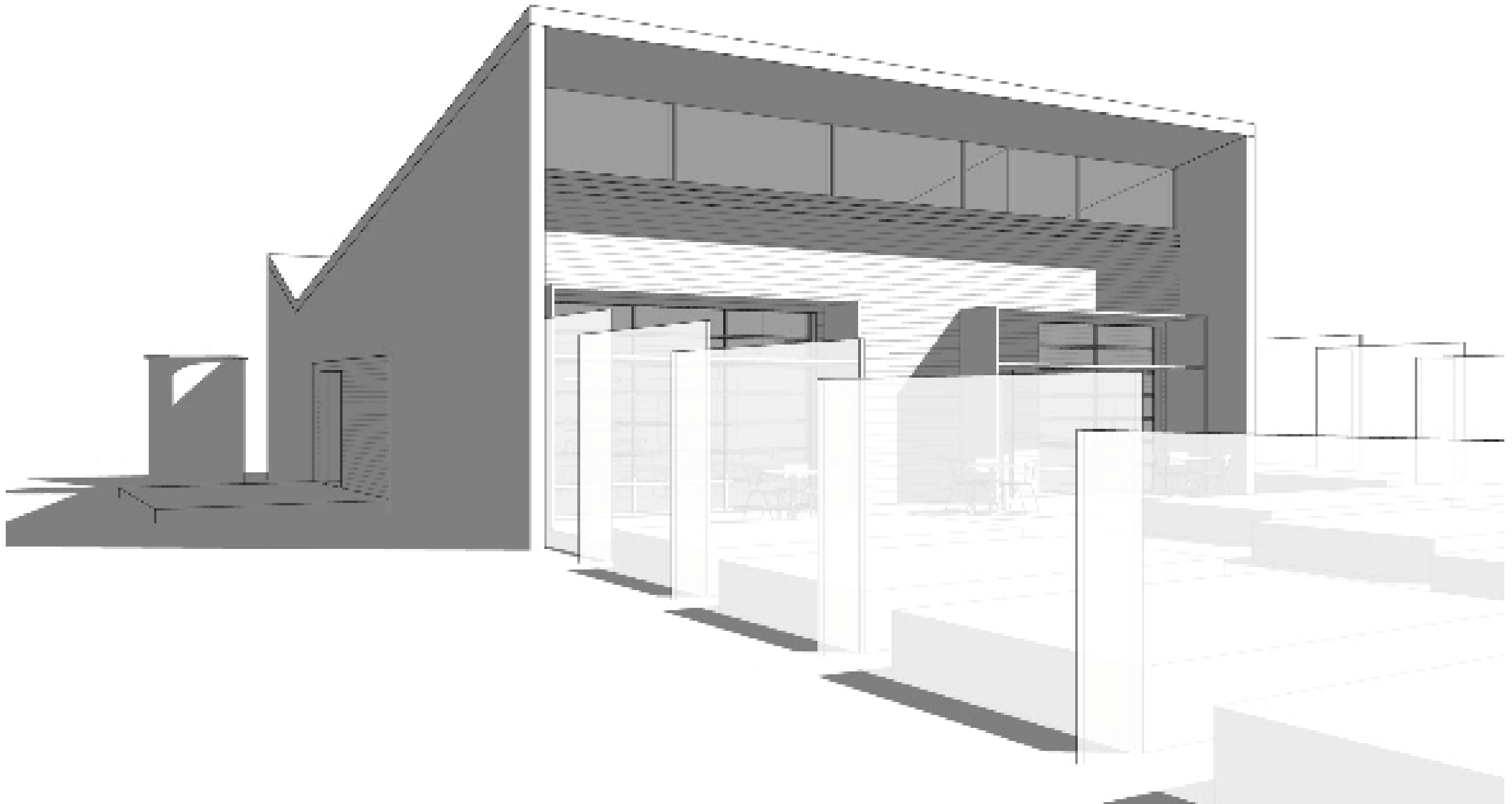


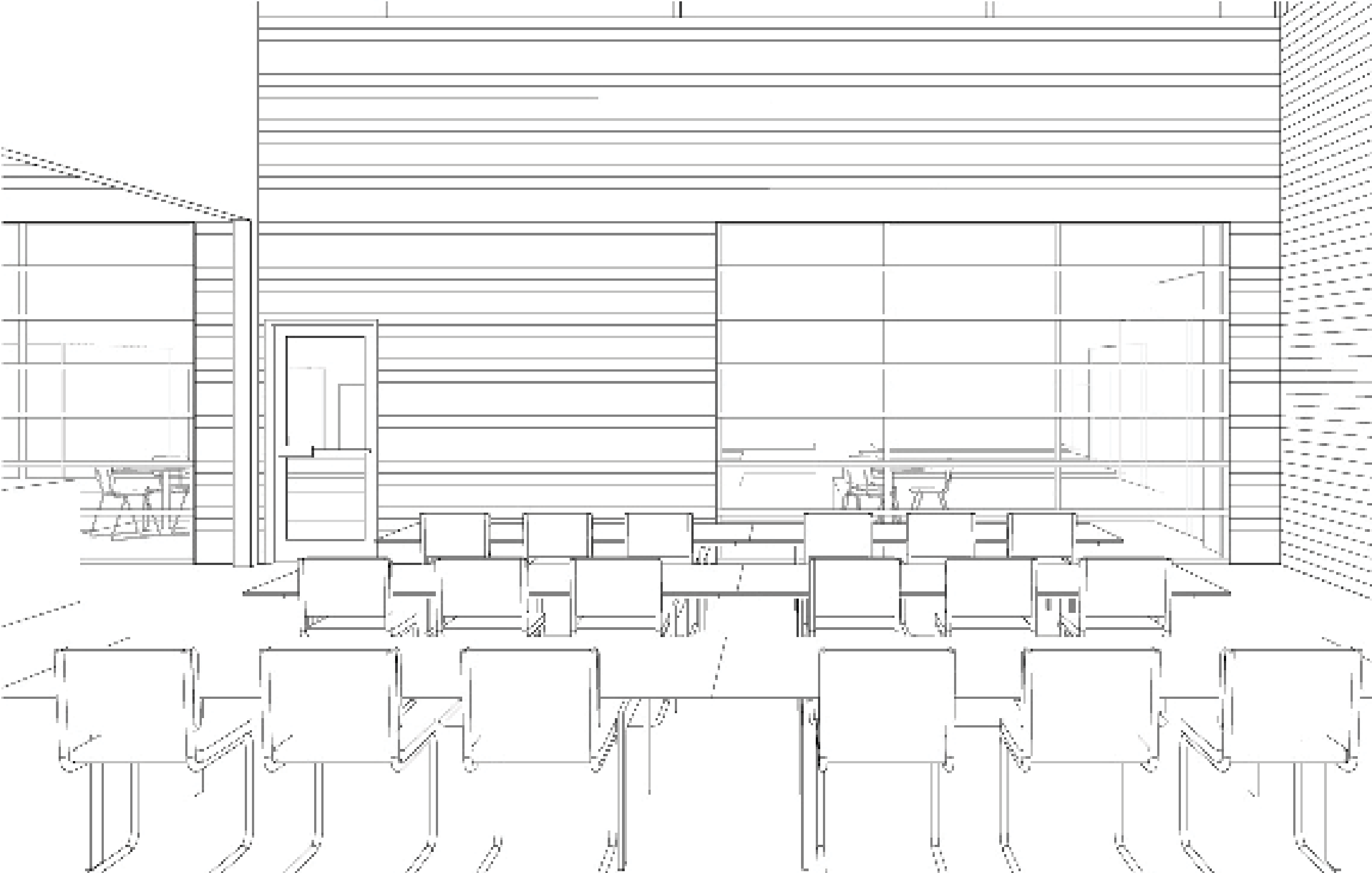
North Elevation

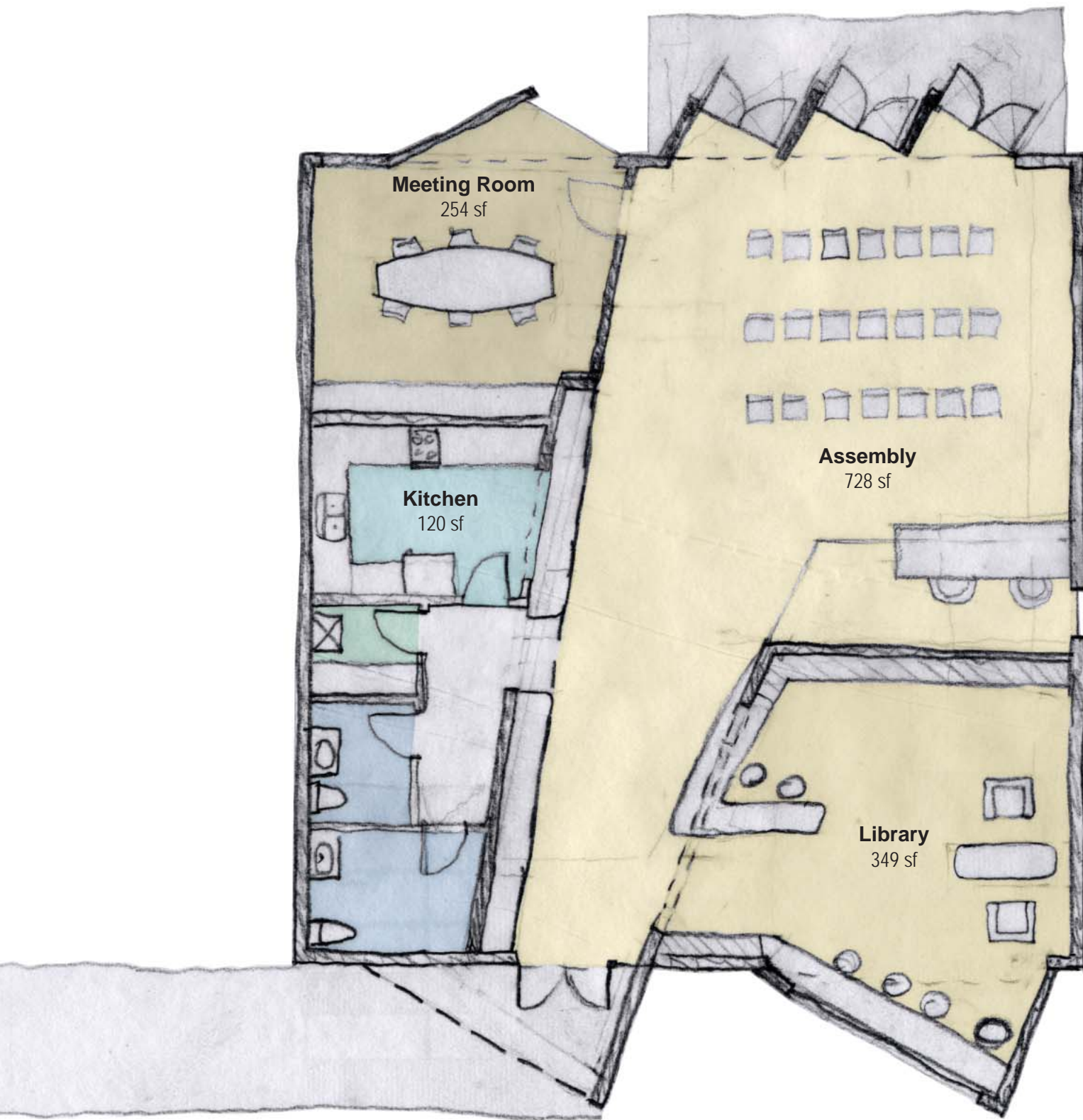


South Elevation









Plan



North Elevation



South Elevation



East Elevation



West Elevation

