

2019

XIWEN MA

FOREST IS THE THERAPIST

Forest is the Therapist

Physical Therapy Center at Mueller Community

Xiwen Ma

COLOPHON

Final Project | 04. 2019

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DEDICATION

To my family

I dedicate this work to my family and boyfriend. Their love has been the major spiritual support in my life.

A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, Guoying and Weiqiang whose words of encouragement and support throughout the process.

I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my boyfriend Xingjian for being there for me throughout the entire final project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Gratitude to all mentors

First and foremost I express my wholehearted thanks to my chair, Michael O'Brien, for his dynamic guidance, suggestions and encouragement throughout the project process. I am highly indebted to his perseverance, which helped me to present this work in the right perspective.

I express my deepest gratitude to my member, Kirk Hamilton, for his informative input and opinions from the field of healthcare facilities, healing architecture, and physical therapy design.

I am very thankful to my member, Chang-Shan Huang, for providing me advice about landscape design that helped me greatly in this work.

I sincerely appreciate my studio instructor, Brian Gibbs, for his advice and useful technical support to carry out this final project.

I also want to thank Ray Pentecost for his instruction in programming approach and research in healthcare articles.

As a final word, I would like to thank each and every individual who has been a source of support and helped me to achieve my goal and complete my final project successfully.



ABSTRACT

Physical Therapy Center

The project is based on the vision of a healing architecture and the latest research about the future of physical therapy. The vision of placing patients in the center of their own treatment focuses on creating a positive working environment, the use of natural materials, and surroundings that stimulate activities within the physical therapy center. The design proposal is integrated into the project by reinforcing the potential of the site, using sustainable materials and merging the indoor and outdoor spaces, both physically and mentally.

The aspiration is not to create a physical therapy center with the appearance of a healing architecture, but to be a part of its surroundings and Mueller community. This three-story building includes the special parts of the program such as fitness center, interior garden, and therapy pool. These facilities are regularly used not only by patients but also their families and members of the local community.



[HEALTH]

A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

*1948 constitution of the World Health Organization
(WHO 2003)*



Introduction

Wellbeing + Nature
Framework
Therapeutic Modality
Learning from Other Projects

INTRODUCTION

Nature + Well-being

QUESTION: How to create a therapeutic environment for patient and a stimulating place for community at the same time?



Figure 1.1

Determinants of Health

Many factors combine together to affect the health of individuals and communities. Whether people are healthy or not is determined by both their circumstances and environment. To a large extent, factors such as where we live, the state of our environment, our income and education level, and our relationships with other people all have considerable impacts on health.¹

Health Equity

Healthy People 2020 defines health equity as the "attainment of the highest level of health for all people." One of the primary goals of this project is to achieve health equity by eliminating health disparities and achieving optimal health for all Mueller residents. The physical therapy center addresses health equity through its program, research, and design.



Figure 1.2

Celebrate the Strength of Mueller

Access to physical activity resources (e.g., parks, bike paths, playgrounds) may differ. Even when these resources are geographically close and appear accessible, some residents may encounter barriers which may limit the use of these resources.

Lack of universally accessible facilities for vulnerable population and those with mobility issues can be barriers. Thus, the location of new Physical Therapy Center is based on the public resources and context in Mueller community.

The first impression on visiting the site is that sunlight casts shadows among the trees. The starting point of the design work was to create a place where the building could blend into the natural environment.

Forest is the Therapist

As a physical therapy center, the care

concept is based on the idea that creating a stimulating environment increases the well-being of patients and facilitates a positive impact on their recoveries.

The "Forest" design concept aims to encourage people use their five senses to reconnect with nature.

The Forest Therapy concept of "forest bathing" is inspired by the Japanese practice of Shinrin-Yoku. Studies have shown broad health benefits: stabilizing and improving cognition and mood as well as strengthening the immune and cardiovascular systems.²

Integrating Daylight with Design

Light is critical for a medical environment because it affects people's psychology and physiology. Several studies have shown the importance of light in reducing stress and fatigue, regulating circadian rhythms, speeding the patient's recovery, and

fatigue, regulating circadian rhythms, speeding the patient's recovery, and reducing medical error. In addition, windows with adequate natural daylight in workplace increases staff satisfaction. Therefore, integrating light in the medical environment is beneficial to both patients and staff.

Figure 1.1: A Health Map for the Local Human Habitat, Barton and Grant (2006) based on a public health concept by Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991).

Figure 1.2: 2017 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

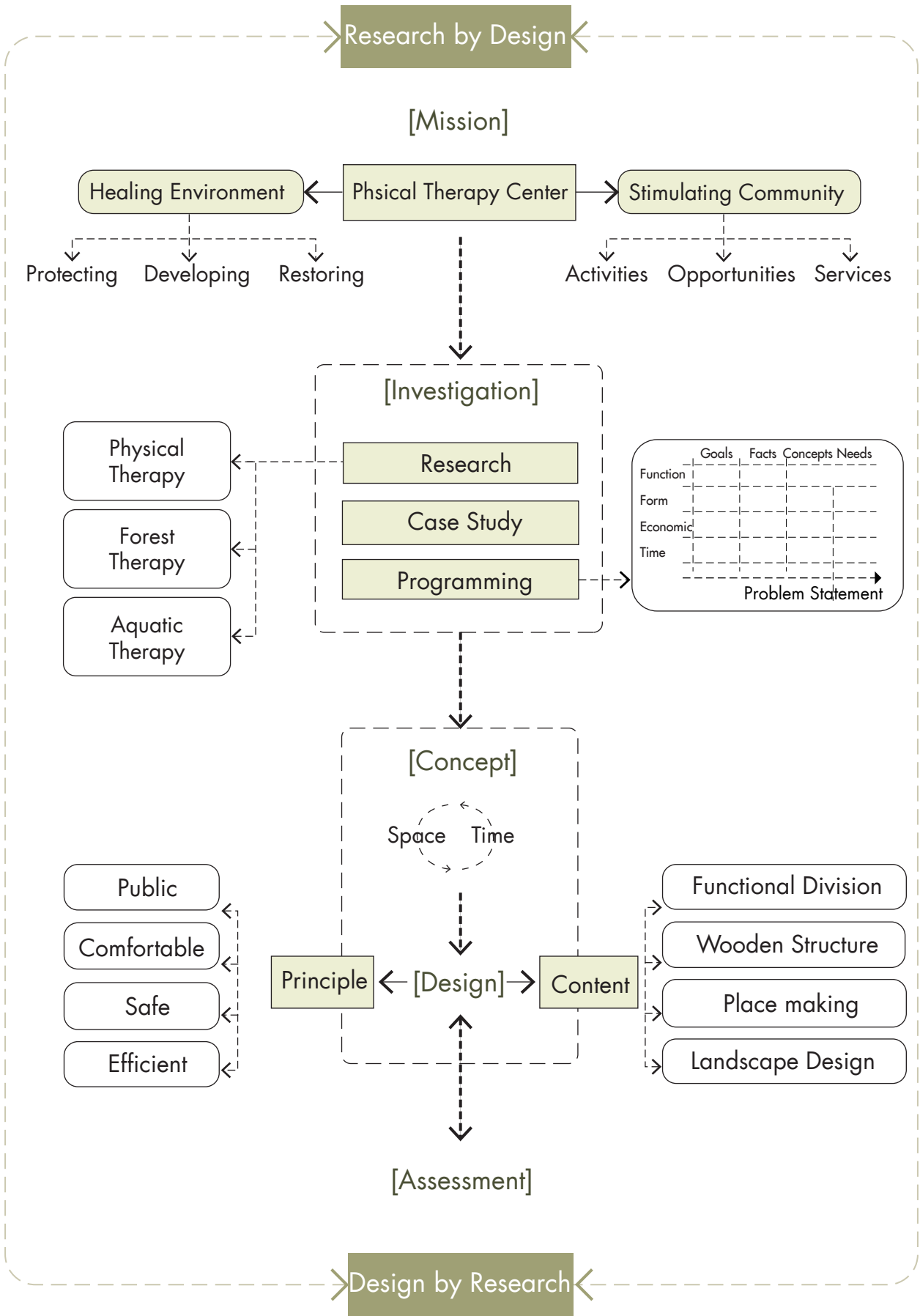
- 1. Content adapted from Healthy People 2020 and CA Health and Safety Code.*
- 2. Lee, J., Tsunetsugu, Y., Takayama, N., Park, B.-J., Li, Q., Song, C., Miyazaki, Y. (2014). Influence of Forest Therapy on Cardiovascular Relaxation in Young Adults %J Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine. 2014, 7.*

FRAMEWORK

Research & Design

This project is accomplished by the method of “research by design” and “design by research”.

The first stage is to identify the mission of this project and then become familiar with organization, operation, activities, and needs through Investigation. By this stage, a clear problem statement is generated to guide further design. A general concept follows the program as a response to the problem. A specific design approach in multiple dimension finally delivered. The assessment part could be further steps to acomlish the loop of design and research.



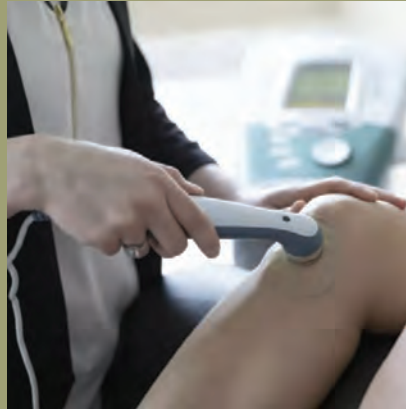
THERAPEUTIC MODALITY

Physical therapy treatment

Exercise



Ultrasound



Electrical Stimulation



Traction



Joint Mobilization



Massage



Heat



Ice



Iontophoresis



Laser & Light Therapy



Kinesiolog Taping



Whirlpool



CASE STUDY

01 Community

Punggol Neighbourhood and Polyclinic

Location: Singapore

Category: Community Center

Architect: Serie Architects

Area: 27000.0 sqm

Project Year: 2018

Oasis Terrace is a new generation of community centres developed by Singapore's Housing and Development Board to serve its public housing neighbourhoods. It comprises communal facilities, shopping, amenities and a government polyclinic.

The gardens play more than just an aesthetic role in the community; they are a collective horticultural project. By bringing residents together to plant, maintain and enjoy them, the gardens help nourish community bonds.



© Hufton + Crow

CASE STUDY

02 Structure

Believe in Better Building

Architects: Arup Associates Location:
Osterley, Isleworth, Isleworth, Greater
London, United Kingdom
Category: Other Facilities
Area: 3850.0 sqm
Project Year: 2014



The first multi-storey timber commercial office in the UK, it demonstrates the use of offsite prefabrication and timber construction to achieve a unique workplace in half the normal time-frame.

The building is an exemplar of sustainable design, focused on creating specific, holistic, integrated conditions for optimising the health and well-being of Sky's staff and visitors: quality day-lighting, air quality, natural material selection including the extensive use of natural wood, and a design that adapts itself to the user's requirements.



© Simon Kennedy

CASE STUDY

03 Interior garden

Special features included in SCB's exterior scope of work are a pedestrian bridge to the central parking facility, two bridges to the adjacent Prentice Women's Hospital, a Sky garden, sky lobby and overlook. Interior features included in SCB's scope of work are a freestanding oval elevator bank, suspended whale exhibit, Captain Streeter coffee bar, aquarium, illuminated information desks, garden market-themed food court, healing garden, entertainment stage, and a tree house.

Nick Merrick © Hedrich

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

Location: Chicago, IL

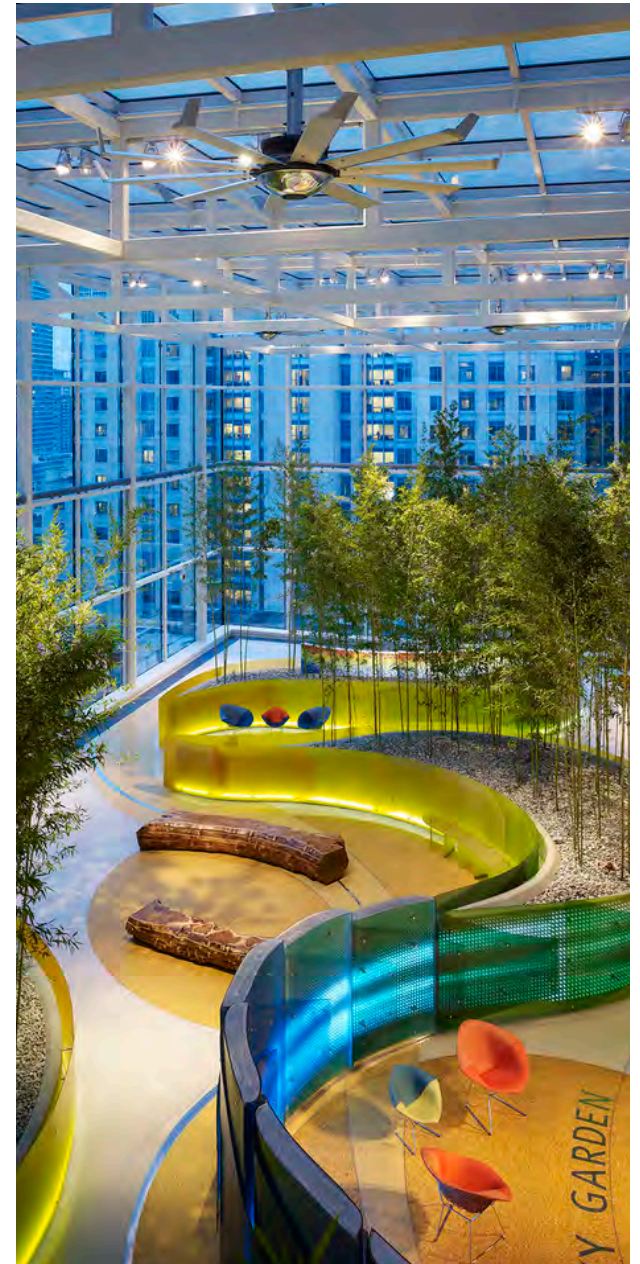
Category: Hospital

Architect: Anderson Mikos, Solomon

Cordwell Buenz, ZGF

Area: 116128.8 sqm

Project Year: 2012



CASE STUDY

04 Daylight

Sports Hall in Vorarlberg

Architects: Dietrich | Untertrifaller
architects, Bregenz/Munich/St.
Gallen/Vienna

Location: Austria

Category: Sports hall

Area: 2435.0 sqm

Project Year 2014



The lighting concept was specially designed for the sports hall. Teamgmi developed a concept using the VELUX Daylight Visualizer and evaluated the incidence of light. Highly insulated building with 3-pane glazing. Special roof windows give the hall extensive daylight.

In addition to the static construction, the light guidance over the 56 light domes is very important, as it illuminates the entire playing field together with the light band in the façade. This also saves significant amounts of artificial light and contributes to energy efficiency.

© Dietrich

Generation

Background
Site
Program

BACKGROUND

Mueller Community, Austin



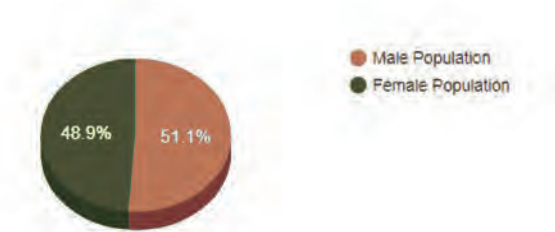
Mueller is a 711-acre Planned Unit Development (PUD) in the east-central portion of the city of Austin, Texas, United States. The project is in the process of long-term development on the former site of the Robert Mueller Municipal Airport. Mueller is intended to be a pedestrian-oriented, interactive mixed-use community, and a model for responsible urban planning and development.

The ambitious effort to redevelop Robert Mueller Municipal Airport into a mixed-use urban village in the heart of the city has helped Austin chart new directions. Mueller is envisioned as a sustainable community that is meeting extensive goals in housing and economic development.



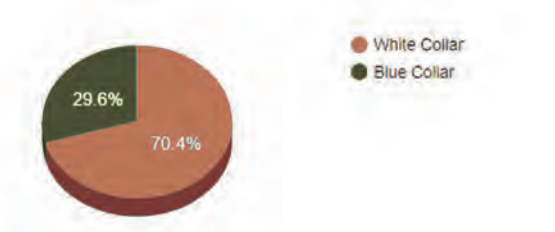
Mueller Population Demographics

Total Population	35,963
Male Population	18,394
Female Population	17,569
Percent Change Since 2000	-0.8 %
Percent Change Since 2010	5.3 %
Median Age	32.12



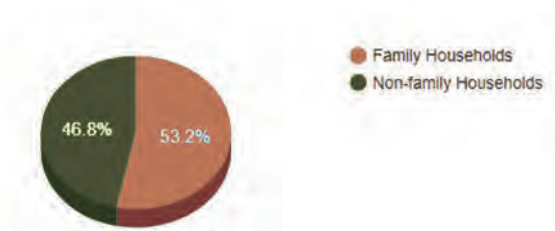
Occupational employment in Mueller

White Collar	1,544
Blue Collar	648



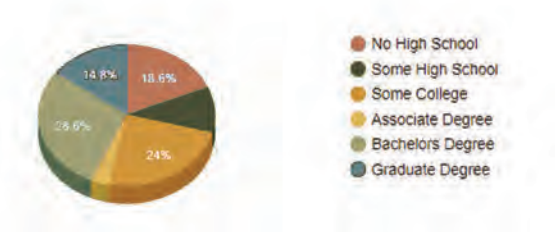
Number of Households in Mueller

Total Households	14,024
Family Households	7,462
Non-family Households	6,561
Households With Children	4,298
Households Without Children	9,726
Average People Per Household	2.37



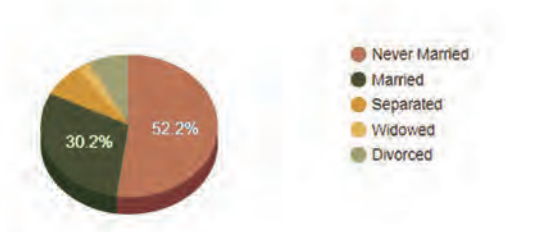
Mueller Education Statistics

No High School	3,561
Some High School	1,999
Some College	4,589
Associate Degree	658
Bachelors Degree	5,472
Graduate Degree	2,827



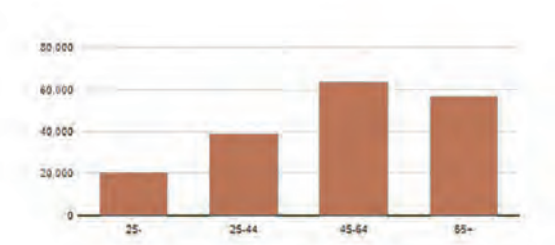
Marital Status in Mueller

Never Married	11,569
Married	6,694
Separated	1,627
Widowed	600
Divorced	1,688



Household Income and Average Income in Mueller

Median Income Under 25	\$20,979
Median Income 25-44	\$39,272
Median Income 45-64	\$63,875
Median Income Over 65	\$57,088



The 711-acre Mueller site, vacated when Austin's airport relocated in 1999, is well on its way to becoming home to approximately 36,000 people, 13,000 permanent employees, 10,000 construction jobs, and approximately 140 acres of public open space.

Mueller is an area in East Austin, Travis County, Texas with a population of 35,963. There are 18,394 male residents living in Mueller and 17,569 female residents.

The total number of households is 14,024 with 2.37 people per household on average. Total household expenditures in Mueller are below the national average.

The median age of the current population is 32.12 with 6,694 people being married and 15,484 being single.

The employment numbers show that there are 70% white collar employees and 30% blue collar employees in Mueller.

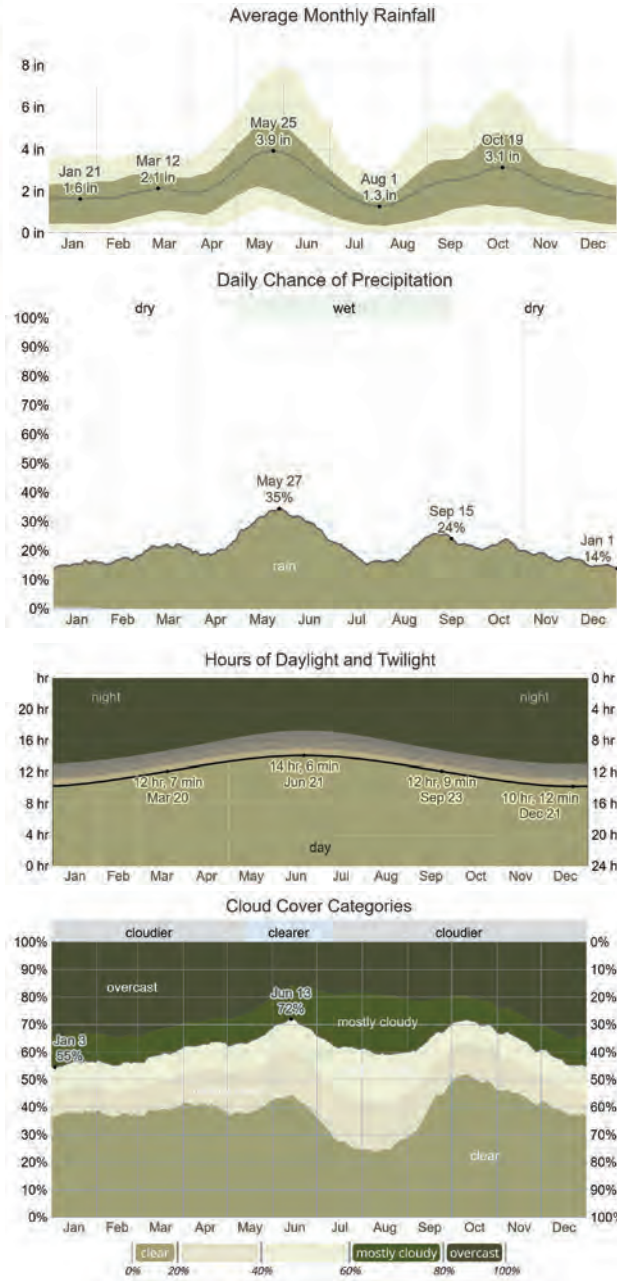
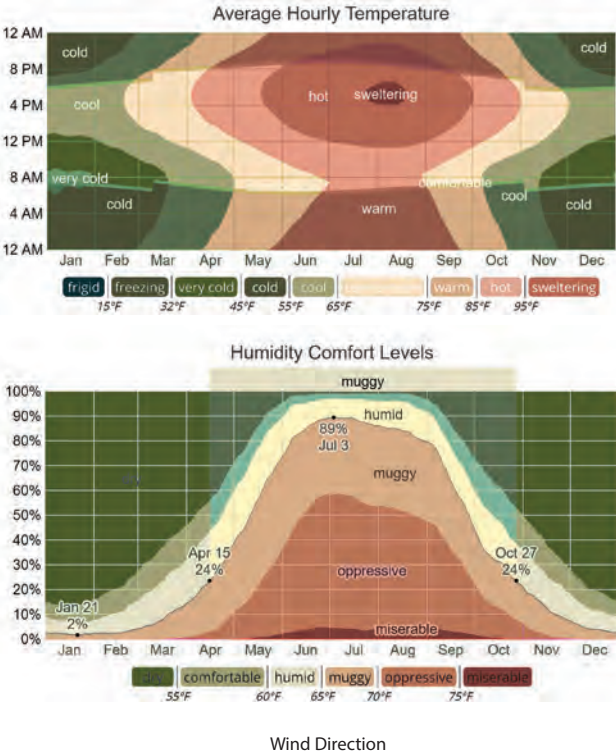
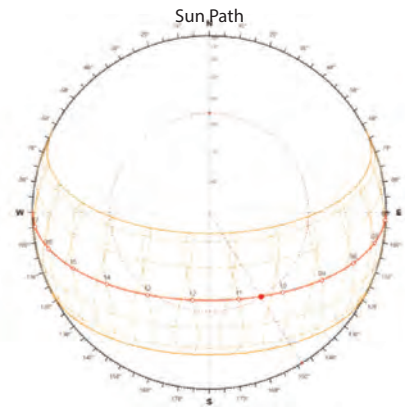
SITE

Current situation



Adjacent to the axial road of Mueller, the physical therapy center is located in a residential area where a community linear park is planned for the public. The first impression on visiting the site is that sunlight casts shadows among the trees. The starting point of the design work is to create a place where the building could blend into the natural environment.

In Austin, the summers are hot and oppressive; the winters are short, cold, and windy; and it is partly cloudy year round. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from 43°F to 97°F and is rarely below 30°F or above 102°F.





Public Corner



Bus stop



Bicycle lane



Sidewalk



Tower park



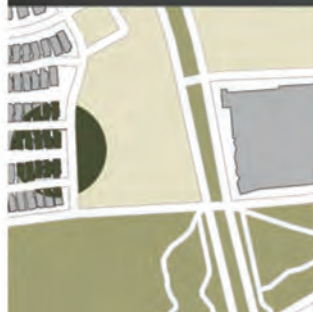
Linear park



Apartment elevation



Housing elevation



Parking



PROGRAM

Human-Centered Design

“Design for whom?” might be the primary question when we are talking about design. During design process, I paid close attention to who I was designing for: the future users of the space.

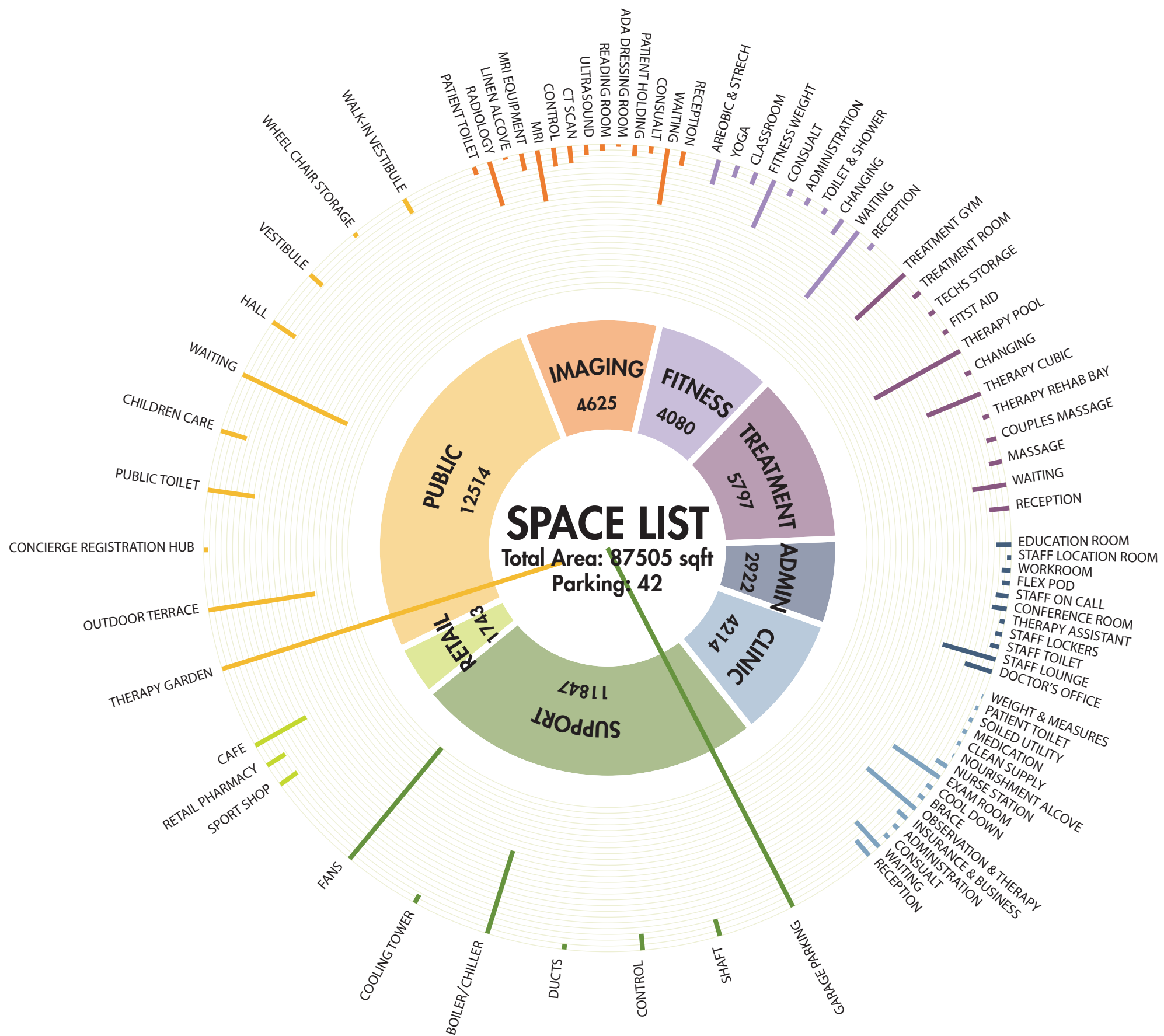
This project’s programming is based on the Pena’s Problem Seeking method to achieve a clear problem statement. This will guide the following design.

Problem Statement

The contradiction within the site has brought conflicts between:

- People & Vehicles
- Residents & Patients
- Oppressive weather & Comfortable environments

	Goals	Facts	Concepts	Needs
Function	Patient: Reduce stress Family: Confidence Staff: Pride Building-nature: be a part patient-resident: socialization pedestrian-vehicle: separate	Research Data collection Building Code	Human-centered design Involuntary activities community equity	Function Area Details
Form	Be part of the regular community life Stimulating environment Sustainable	Research Data collection Building Code	“Forest bathing” Nature contacting Durable material	Function Area Details
Economic	Initial budget: Appeal investment Operating costs: Long-run development Life cyclecosts: Sustainable	Research Data collection Building Code	Community build Moneymaker & moneybags From cradle to cradle	Function Area Details
Time	Present: Developing healthy Community Future: Celebrate community strength	Research Data collection Building Code	Stimulating	Function Area Details



*100 sqft per space



Design creates culture.
Culture shapes values.
Values determine the future.

Robbert L. Peters



Design Proposal

Concept
Site
Space
Technical



Special attention was paid to making the facility accessible by walk. Visitors to the building are encouraged to linger, meet with colleagues, take a class in the fitness center, or take a coffee or work break.



CONCEPT

Forest is the therapist

The care concept is based on the idea that creating a stimulating environment increases the well-being of patients and facilitates a positive impact on their recovery. To achieve a balance of context, needs, and architectural forms, design strategy is not to imitate nature, but rather to use natural materials and forms to generate certain qualities of a forest.

The project is conceptualized in an abstract forest, represented by a series of wooden columns, beams, branches and other construction components. Forest Therapy is a concept of "forest bathing", which is a slow, mindful walk in the woods or a nature area where people use their five senses to reconnect with nature.



Health equity:
Being part of the community



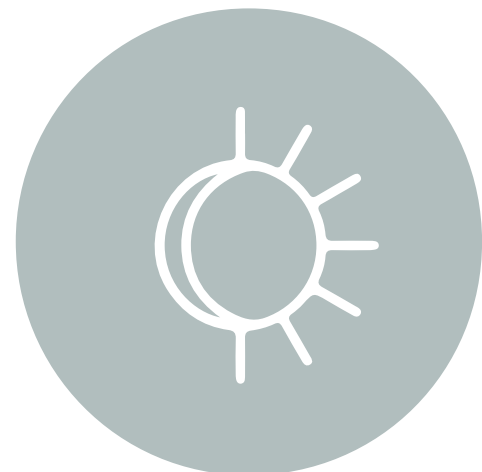
Structure:
Creating a column forest



Nature:
Interacting with nature



Lighting:
Integrating daylight



SITE

Nature is the therapist

Urban dwellers brought to a natural environment for a few days had:

Less mental fatigue

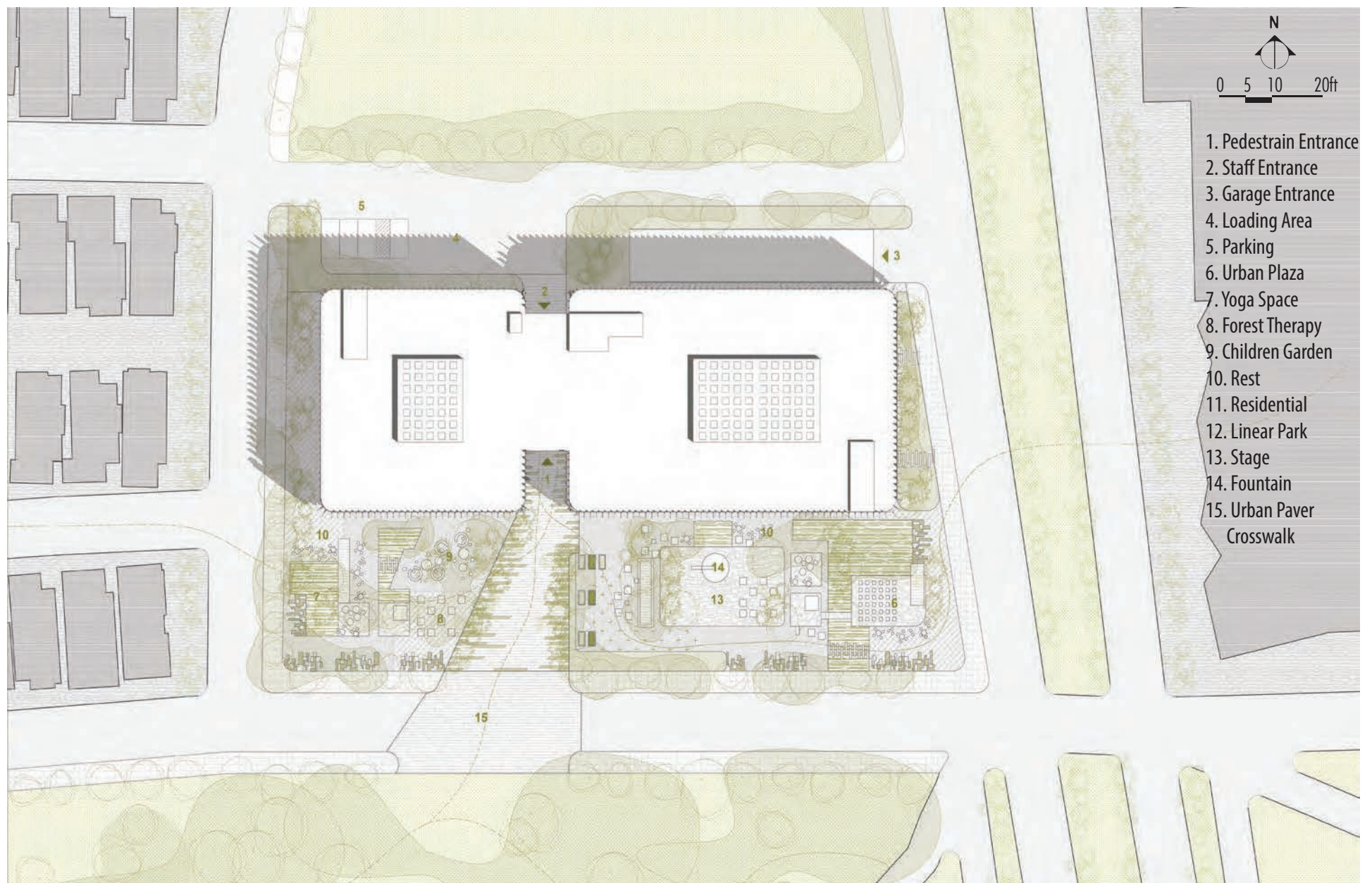
Less irritability & accidents

Increased problem solving

Increased concentration

(Herzog et al. 1997)

Making therapy part of regular community life, not secluded to a place of illness.



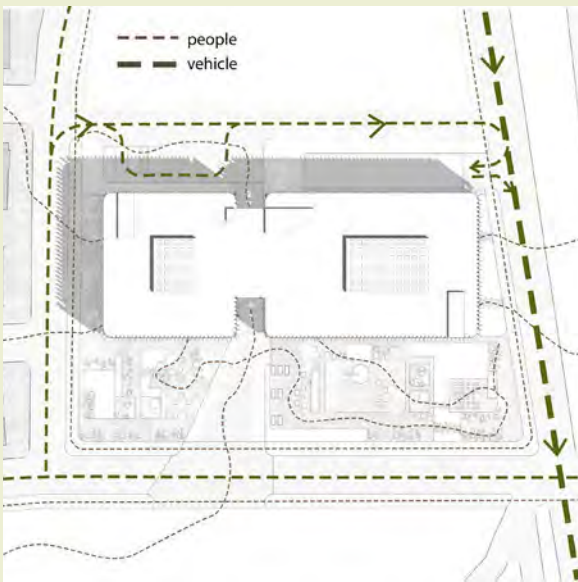
Health equity: Being part of the community

The project offers positive spaces to serve its neighbourhoods. A crosswalk directs people from linear park into the site where they can find urban plaza, yoga, forest therapy, children garden and exercise space.

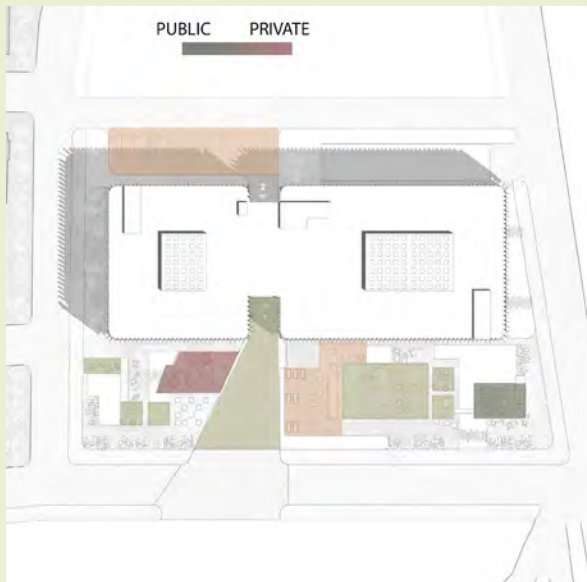
By bringing residents together to stimulate acitivities, the project help nourish community bonds.



Context



Conectivity



Public



Yoga Space



Children garden

SPACE

Garage



Health equity: Being part of the community

For providing more open space to public and blended into surroundings, the parking is located on the garage level.

Structure: Creating a column forest

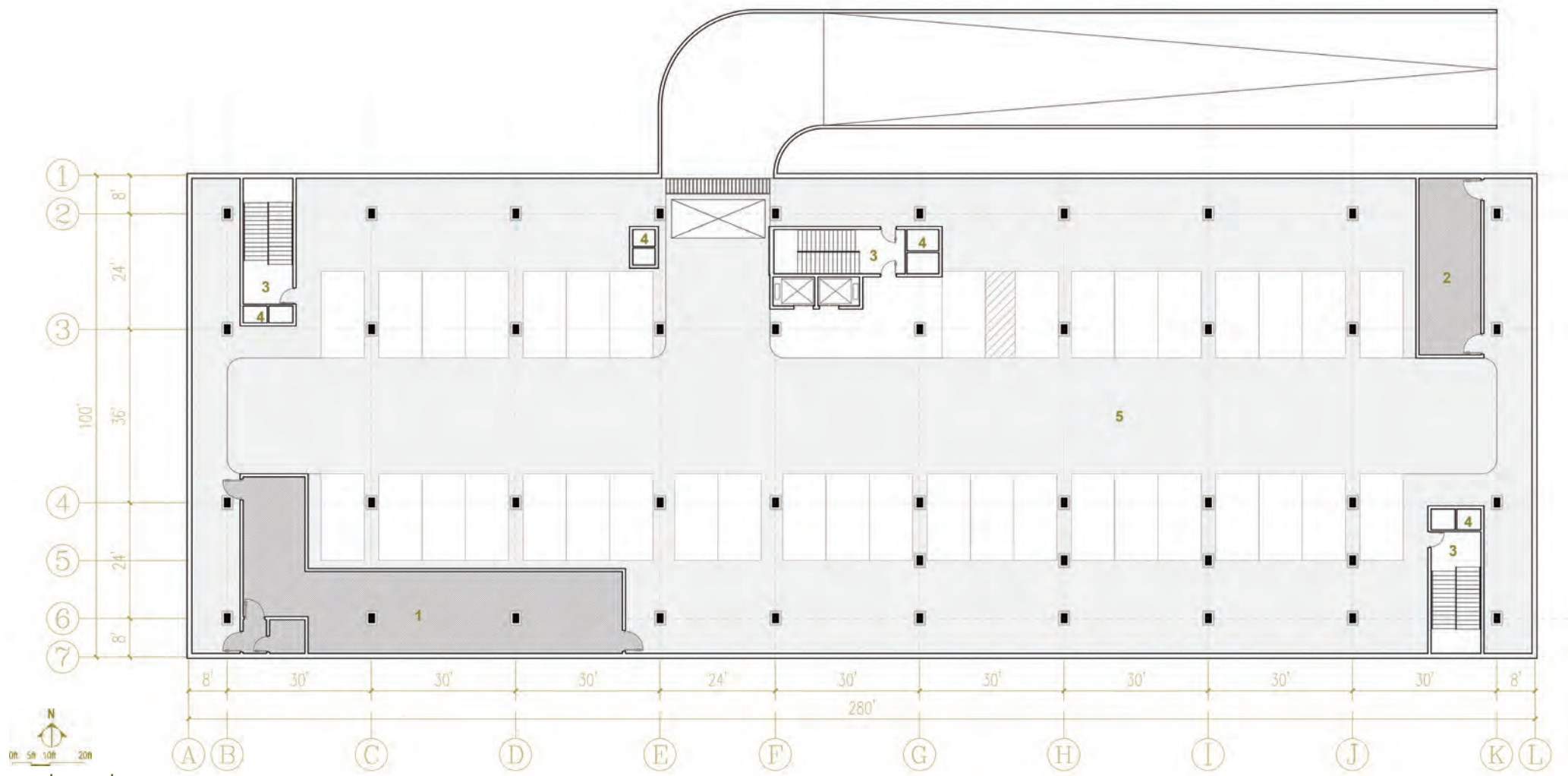
Following the "Forest" concept, concrete columns at garage level are shaped in a wedge form to create a "column forest". The arch concrete beam also help to generate a forest scenario.

Lighting: Integrating daylight

TGP FIRELITE structural glass panel mounted in the ground provide refraction of daylight into the garage underground.

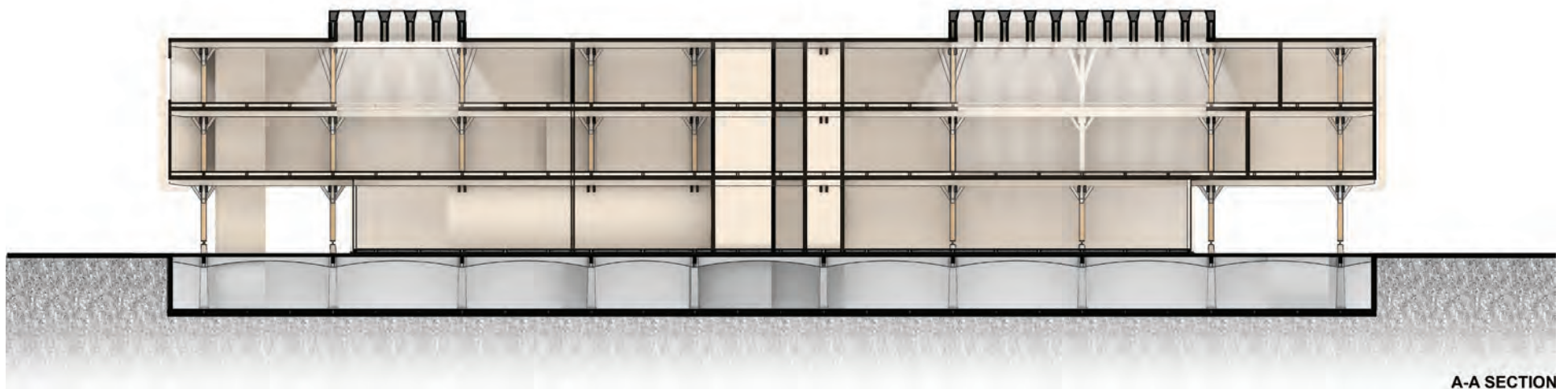
At night an inverted effect occurs: artificial light radiates from the garage underground, penetrating upward through the glass panels.





-1 Floor Plan

1. Boiler / Chiller 2. Storage 3. Fire Stair 4. Shaft 5. Parking



A-A SECTION

SPACE

Ground Floor



Health equity: Being part of the community

The exterior appearance is a series of vertically rhythmic wooden panels which create a vertical pattern to conceptualize a thick wood. To help the main building blend into its

Structure: Creating a column forest

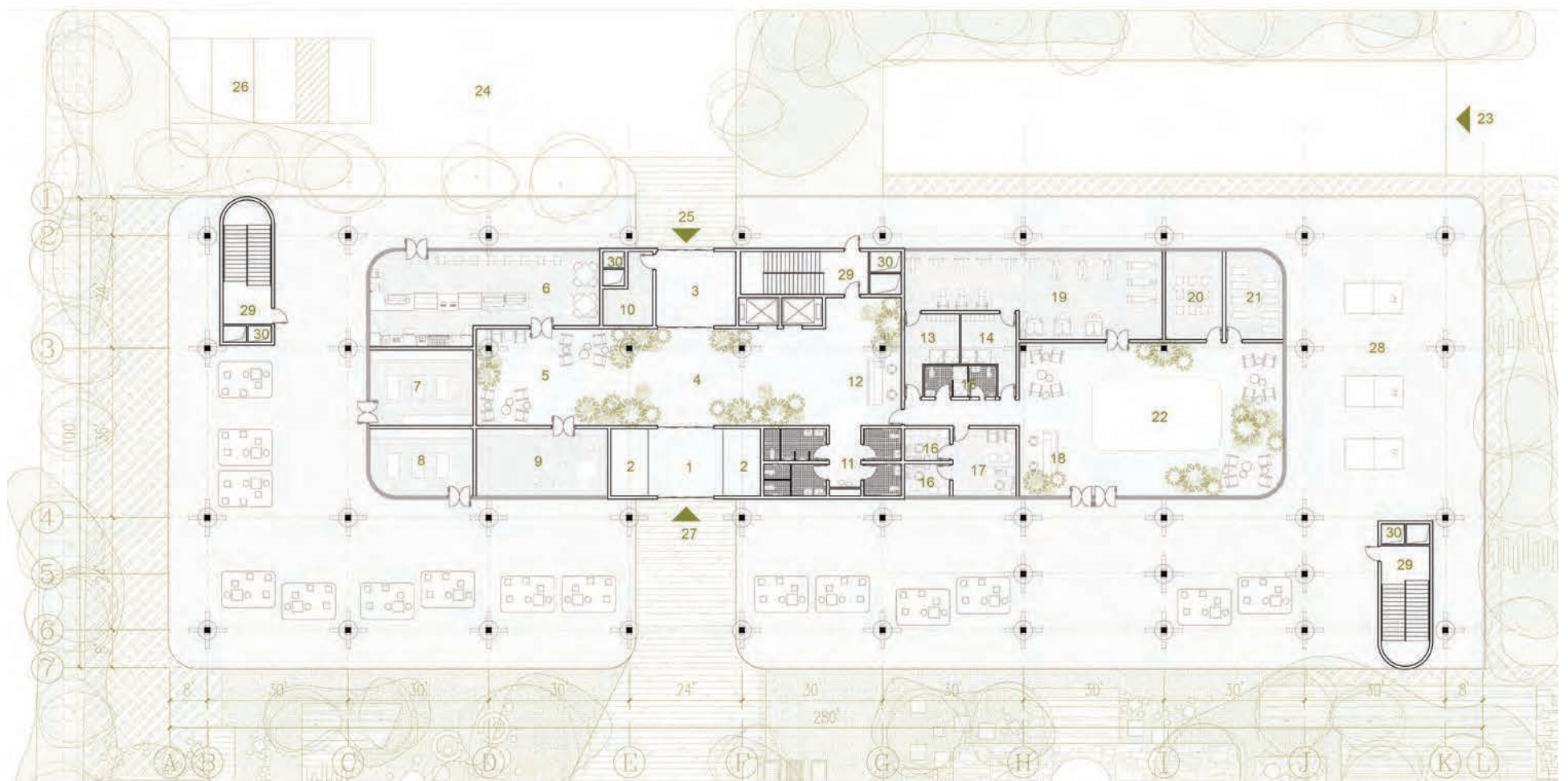
Columns change from concrete to timber with a steel connection at ground level. The glass penetration in the ground provides space for the column to express a “roots down, shoots up” concept.

Nature: Interacting with nature

The fitness center can be accessed by the main entrance which opens to the urban plaza and is aimed at the public.

The transparent facade encourages patients to interact with nature and engage in more physical activities.





1st Floor Plan

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Walk-In Vestibule | 6. Cafe | 11. Public Toilet | 16. Administration | 21. Yoga | 26. Parking |
| 2. Wheel Chair Storage | 7. Retail Pharmacy | 12. Registration Hub | 17. Consult | 22. Aerobic & Stretch | 27. Pedestrian Entrance |
| 3. Vestibule | 8. Sport Shop | 13. Female Changing | 18. Reception | 23. Garage Entrance | 28. Exercise Area |
| 4. Hall | 9. Child Care | 14. Male Changing | 19. Fitness Weight | 24. Loading Area | 29. Fire Stair |
| 5. Waiting | 10. Guard | 15. Toilet & Shower | 20. Classroom | 25. Staff Entrance | 30. Shaft |

The centrally located entrance zone grants the visitors an overview of the building to minimize confusion and encourage a sense of security. The stairwell separates the vertical access from entrance space.

The ground floor serves as a foyer with reception, cafeteria, shops, and child care. These functions have been reduced to a minimum so that the largest part of floor space is reserved for the fitness center.



SPACE

Second Floor

Structure: Creating a column forest

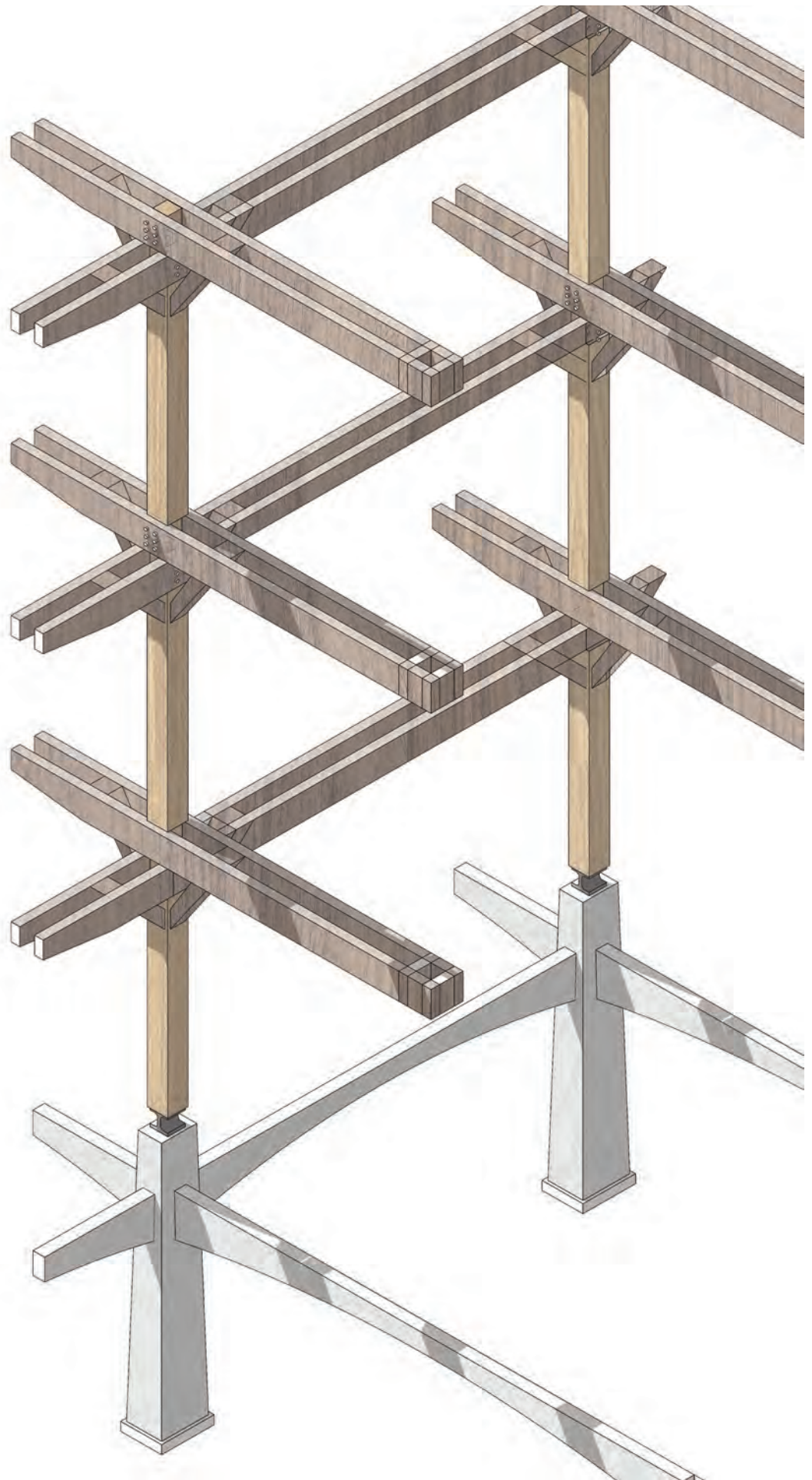
The wood columns are designed in shape of a tree trunk with branches that support the loads from beams. The “trunks” bear the loads from the double-layer beams down to the truncated pyramidal bases, creating an abstract forest.

Nature: Interacting with nature

Wood serves as a natural humidity controller in this environment: when the indoor air is extremely dry, it will release moisture, and it will absorb moisture when the indoor air is too humid.

Lighting: Integrating daylight

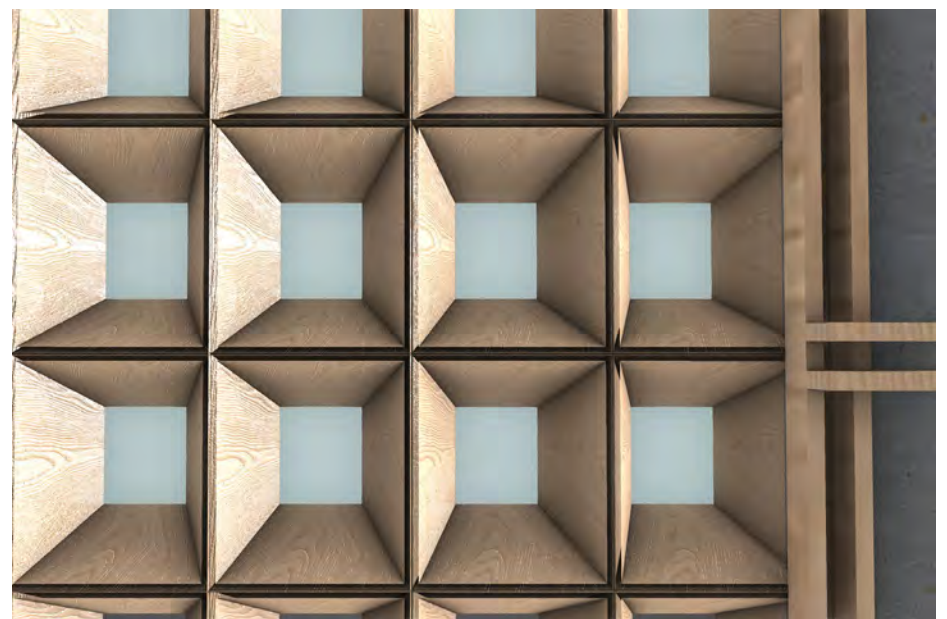
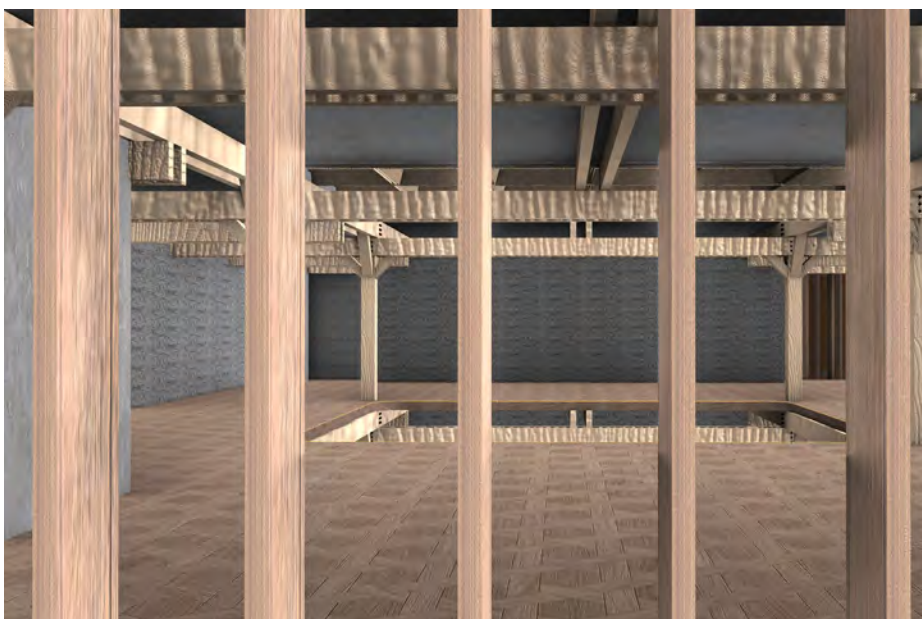
An atrium in each side of building illuminates the building in a soft way. Natural light reflected by wood surfaces give the building a character of the warmth and peace.





2nd Floor Plan

- | | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Public Toilet | 8. Nurse Station | 15. Fire Stair | 22. Conference Room | 29. ADA Dressing Room | 36. Radiology |
| 2. Waiting | 9. Nourishment Alcove | 16. Therapy Cubic | 23. Education Room | 30. Ultrasound | 37. Flex Pod |
| 3. Reception | 10. Clean Supply | 17. Doctor's office | 24. Consult | 31. CT Scan | 38. Workroom |
| 4. Observation | 11. Medication | 18. Staff Lounge | 25. Administration | 32. Control | 39. Staff Location Room |
| 5. Brace | 12. Soiled Utility | 19. Therapy Assistant | 26. Staff on Call | 33. MRI | 40. Outdoor Terrace |
| 6. Cool Down | 13. Patient Toilet | 20. Staff Toilet | 27. Reading Room | 34. MRI Equipment | 41. Shaft |
| 7. Exam room | 14. Weight & Measures | 21. Staff Lockers | 28. Patient Holding | 35. Linen Alcove | |



SPACE

Third Floor

Structure:
Creating a column forest

The heavy timber structure remains visible yet meets fire code requirements.



Nature:
Interacting with nature

An interior healing garden located on the top floor with skylight provides a stimulating area for patients' physical activities, which speeds up their recoveries.



Lighting:
Integrating daylight

The atrium is lit by a daylight from above . The daylight gaps with etched glass panels inlaid allow light penetrates through roof round the building, casting stratified beams over the various wooden structural components.



3rd Floor Plan

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1. Public Toilet | 6. Therapy Rehab Bay | 11. Techs Storage | 16. Consult | 21. Staff Lockers | 26. Fire stair |
| 2. Waiting | 7. Jacuzzi | 12. Therapy Pool | 17. Administration | 22. Doctor's office | 27. Shaft |
| 3. Reception | 8. Sauna | 13. First Aid | 18. Staff Lounge | 23. Fans | |
| 4. Massage | 9. Female Changing | 14. Treatment Gym | 19. Therapy Assistant | 24. Therapy Garden | |
| 5. Couples Massage | 10. Male Changing | 15. Staff on Call | 20. Staff Toilet | 25. Outdoor Terrace | |



4" Growth medium
Filter fabric
Gardendrain GR50 drainage layer
Moisture retention mat
Protection layer
Root barrier
Water membrane



Muhlenbergia capillaris



West indian lantana



Monarda fistulosa



Carex texensis

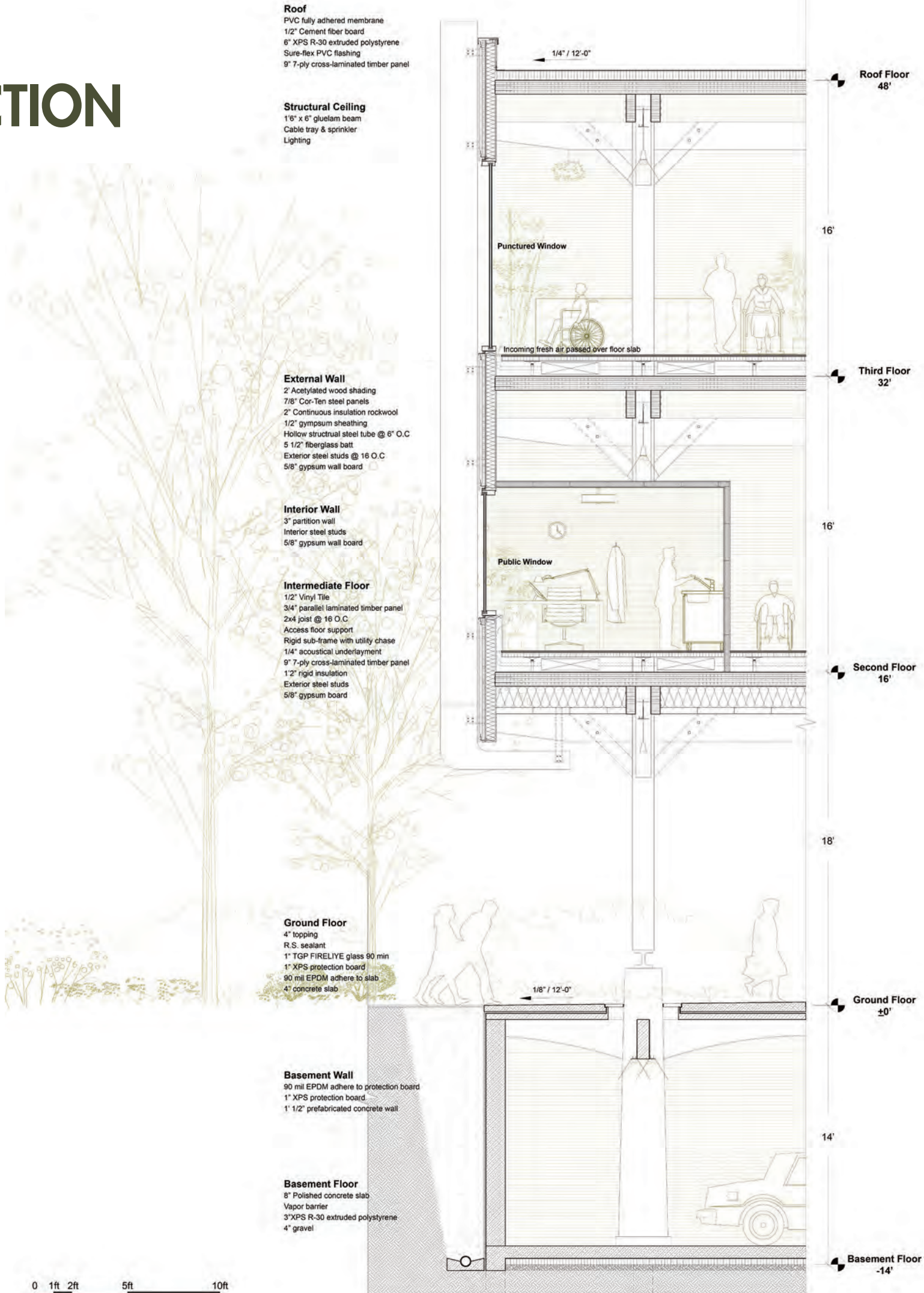


Peacock plant



Swiss cheese plant

WALL SECTION



FACADE

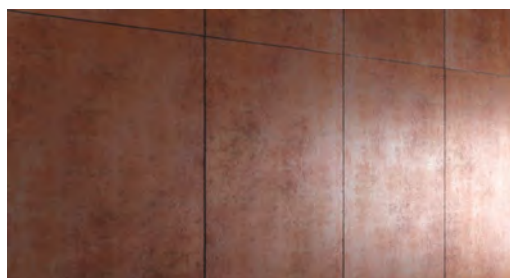
Accoya modified shading:

- Dimensionally stable
- Outstanding durability
- Design flexibility
- Improved aesthetics

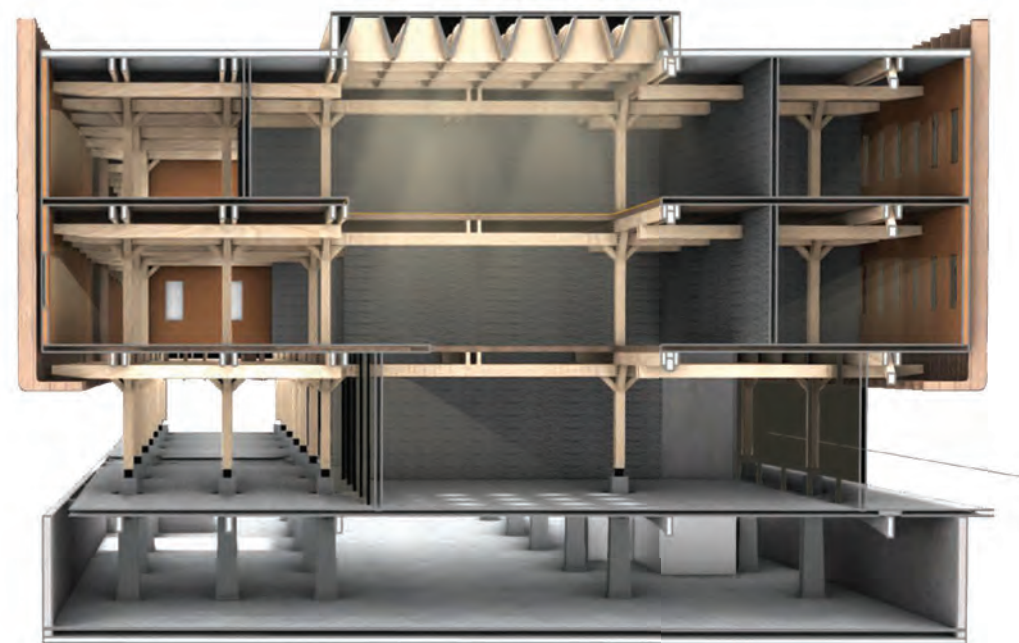


Corten rainscreen cladding:

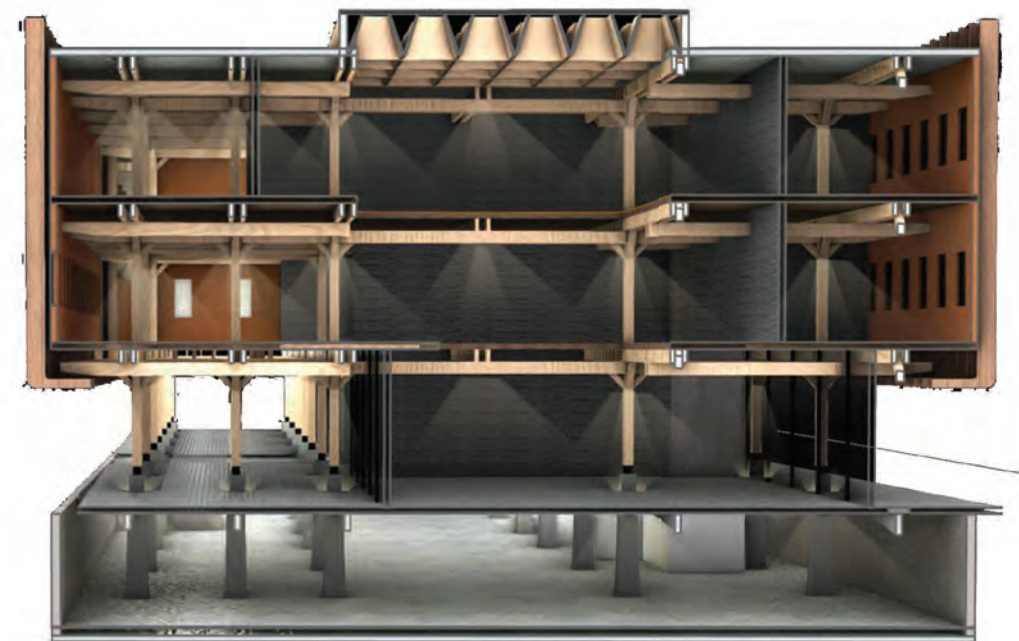
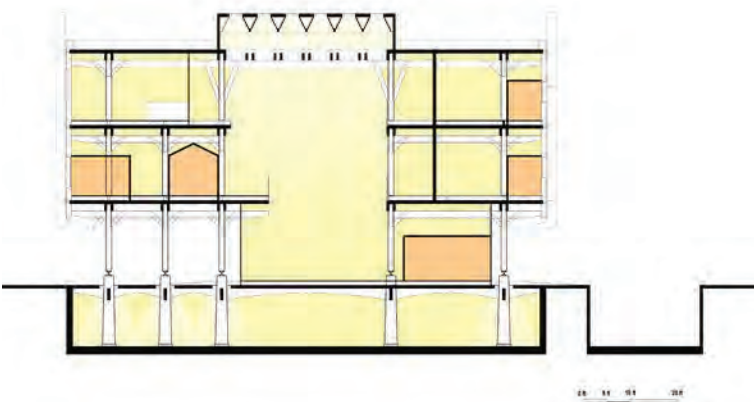
- Natural weathering properties
- Steel self-repairs after abrasions
- Recycled material
- Low solar reflectivity
- Reduced installation costs



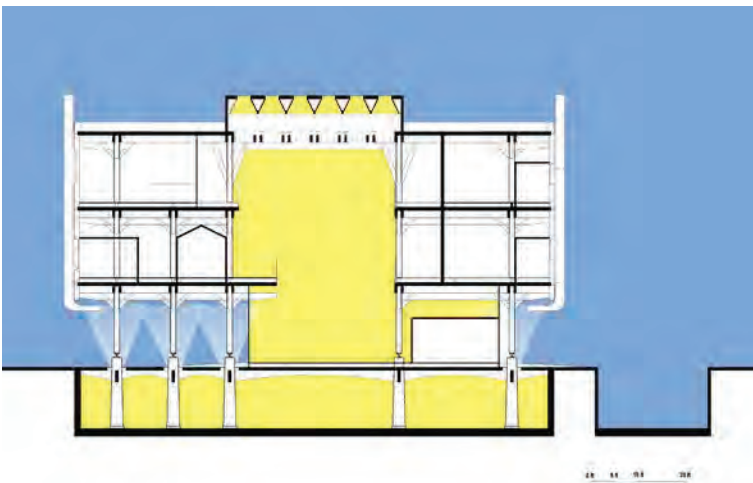
LIGHTING

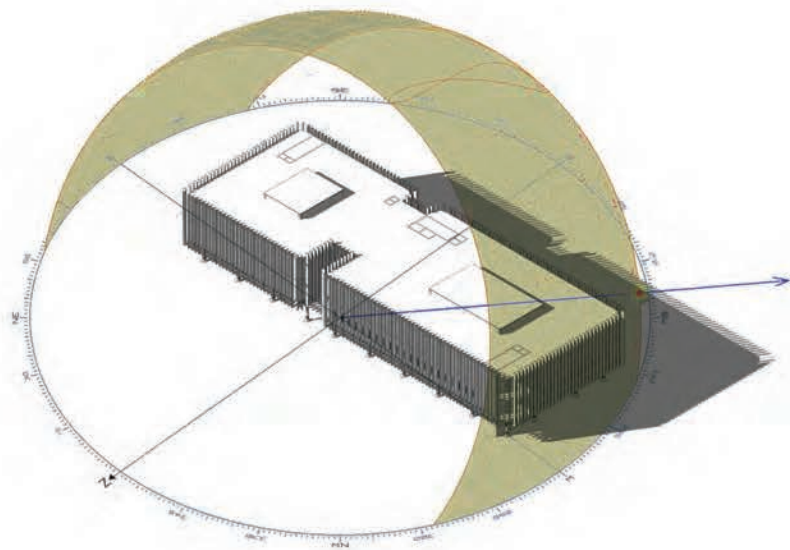


Natural light in day time

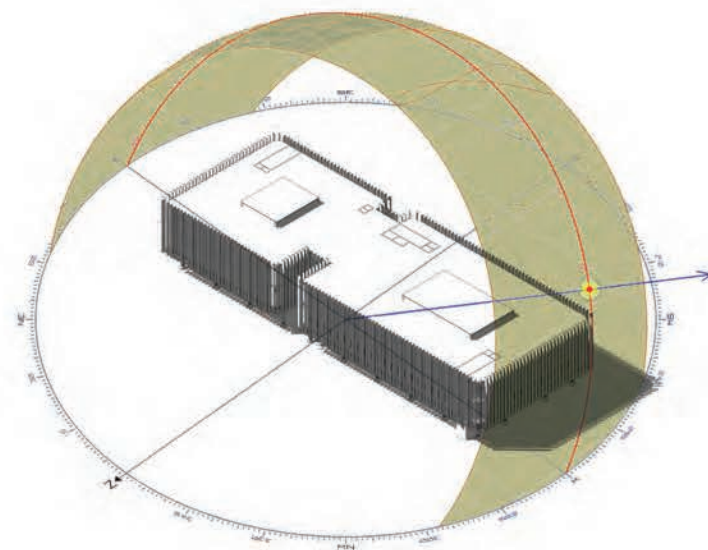


Artificial light in night time

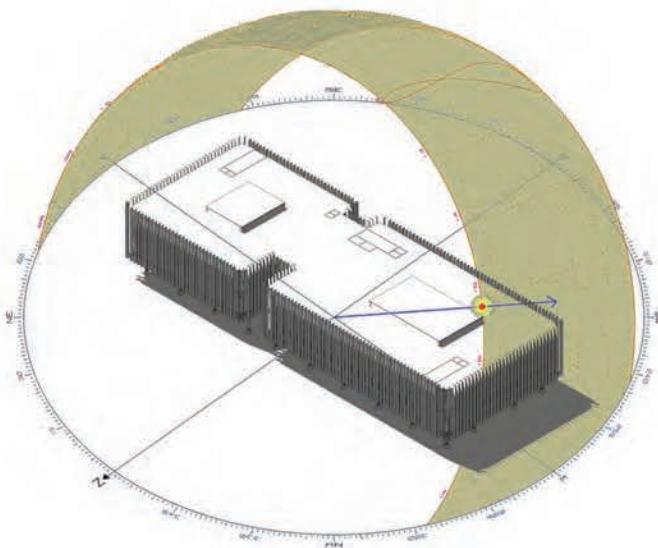




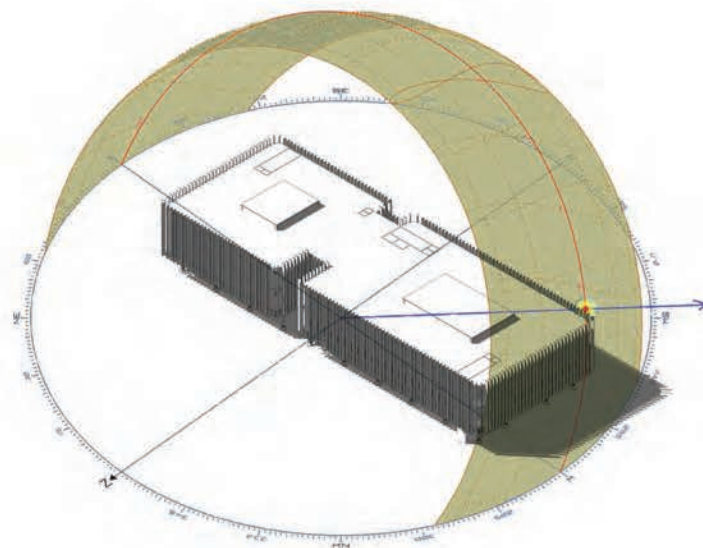
Winter Solstice



Spring Equinox



Summer Solstice



Autumn Equinox

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

How to create a therapeutic environment for patient and a stimulating place for community at the same time is a big challenge in this project. While, the challenges also as the opportunities, give the answer in this project.

One biophilia hypothesis implies that people have an inherent tendency to contact with nature.¹ Inspired from the “forest” concept, Timber was the natural choice for the construction material. On the technical considering, timber used indoors will stabilize moisture content. The use of natural light and views foster a healthy interior environment, while sunscreens, shading and efficient glazing enhance energy efficiency within the building.

Opening portions of private spaces for public use is a strategy for promoting spatial equity within a community, offering members from all sectors of the

community the opportunity to access and enjoy space in the urban landscape. Special attention was paid to making the facility accessible by walk. Visitors to the building are encouraged to linger, meet with colleagues, take a class in the fitness center, or take a coffee or work break.

As a human-centered design, the building aims to inspire an integrated structure for delivering high-quality services. Design process is focused on users’ needs and satisfaction. Patients who needs physical therapy are vulnerable and sensitive for negative impactions. Patients’ family members sometimes are a neglected group, while they play an indispensable role in the healing process. The design incorporates special emphasis on waiting spaces and zones that can provide space for stress management, relaxation, and respite. Through the use of planting, wood material, and natural lighting, a stimulating environments strategy

promotes intuitive wayfinding that guides users to clinics, with public areas provided to weave wellness and health education opportunities throughout.

This project consolidated wellness, prevention, and restoring functions to create an approachable physical therapy center. Clinics for physical therapy included in this building, along with ancillary support spaces such as radiography and consulting offices for nutrition, wellness, and education services. A diverse partition format with standardized key rooms provides flexibility for the future, encouraging efficient performance and staff utilization.

1. Kellert, S.R., and E. O. Wilson 1993





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EDUCATION

2011.09 - 2012.09	Urban Planning
2012.09 - 2016.07	Bachelor of Architecture School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Beijing University of Technology, China
2017.09 - current	M.Arch Candidate College of Architecture, Texas A&M University

PROFESSION

2014.02	MAD Architects Intern architects. Residential project. (Plan & section drawings, Renderings)
2014.07 - 09	Beijing Institute of Residential Buildign Design & Research Co.,Ltd Intern architects. Hotels project. (Plan & elevation design, presentation package)
2016.07 - 11	Crossboundaries Architects Intern architects. HOUSE VISION Project. Educational project. Participate project.
2017.02 - 08	CoBuilding Architects, Urbanists & Consultants Co.,Ltd Assistant architect. Commercial project. Residential project. Exhibition design.

ACADEMIC

2015.01	“Jurong VISION 2050” International Forum on Urbanism Winter school. Future urban development in Singapore
2018.02	SES Student Healthcare Design Competition TAMU team. Resilient architectrual design
2018.02 - 06	UIA Public Health Group International Comperition - Honourable Mention Leader of project. A Moudular Prefabricated Community Health Centre
2018.11	AIA/AAH STERIS Student Design Charrette TAMU team. Neorological specialty

HONOR

Texas A&M University Scholarship Endowed by Edward J. Romieniec

PROFICIENCY

Photoshop	■■■■■■■■■■	Sketching	■■■■■■■■■■
Illustration	■■■■■■■■■■	Water Color	■■■■■■■■■■
AutoCAD	■■■■■■■■■■	Oil painting	■■■■■■■■■■
Sketchup	■■■■■■■■■■	Model Making	■■■■■■■■■■
Vray Render Engine	■■■■■■■■■■	Photography	■■■■■■■■■■
Revit Architecture	■■■■■■■■■■	GIS	■■■■■■■■■■
Rhino	■■■■■■■■■■		
Lumion	■■■■■■■■■■		
UCL Depthmap	■■■■■■■■■■		