



# Common Ground

Bridging the Gap through Generations  
Adaptive Reuse of an Intergenerational Learning Center

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# problem statement

With a society that is so generationally segregated, how can an adaptive reuse project bridge the generational gap between young children and our aging population within a historic building?

claim

This thesis explores how preschoolers and the elderly interact and learn from one another and how a bond like this can rise above differences in age and ability.

Implementing an Intergenerational Learning Center into the historic St. Louis County Jail helps revitalize the downtown Duluth area and creates a space no longer reminiscent of its harrowing past.

# justification

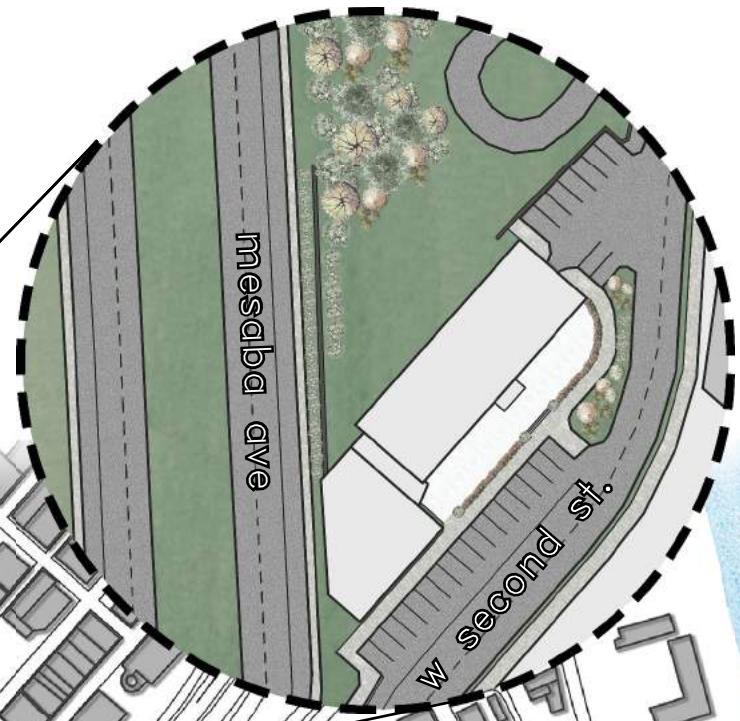
With the demand for senior housing on the rise, building designs need to evolve to provide stimulating and engaging environments for the elderly to retire to in order to eliminate social isolation and loneliness within the elderly community.

Adaptive reuse allows existing, obsolete infrastructure to breath new life and positively influence the needs of a community.

site

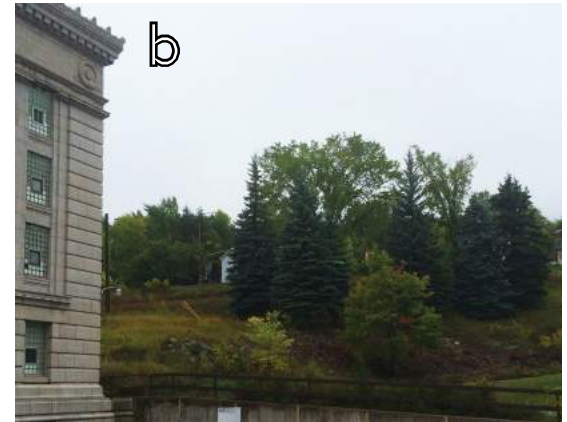
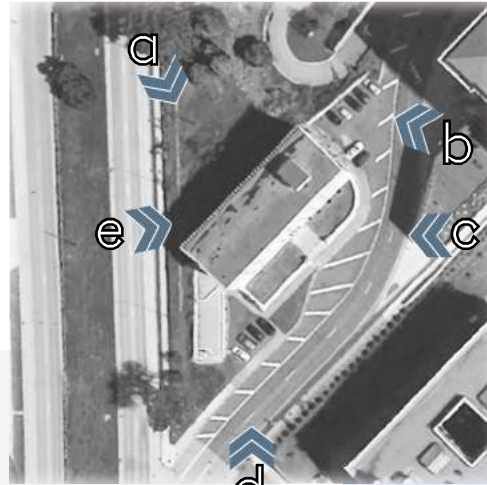
521 West Second Street  
Historic Civic Center  
Downtown Waterfront District

duluth, mn





# site reconnaissance



# history



1889



1889

1923



1923



1995









Images from *The Duluth Herald* in 1923

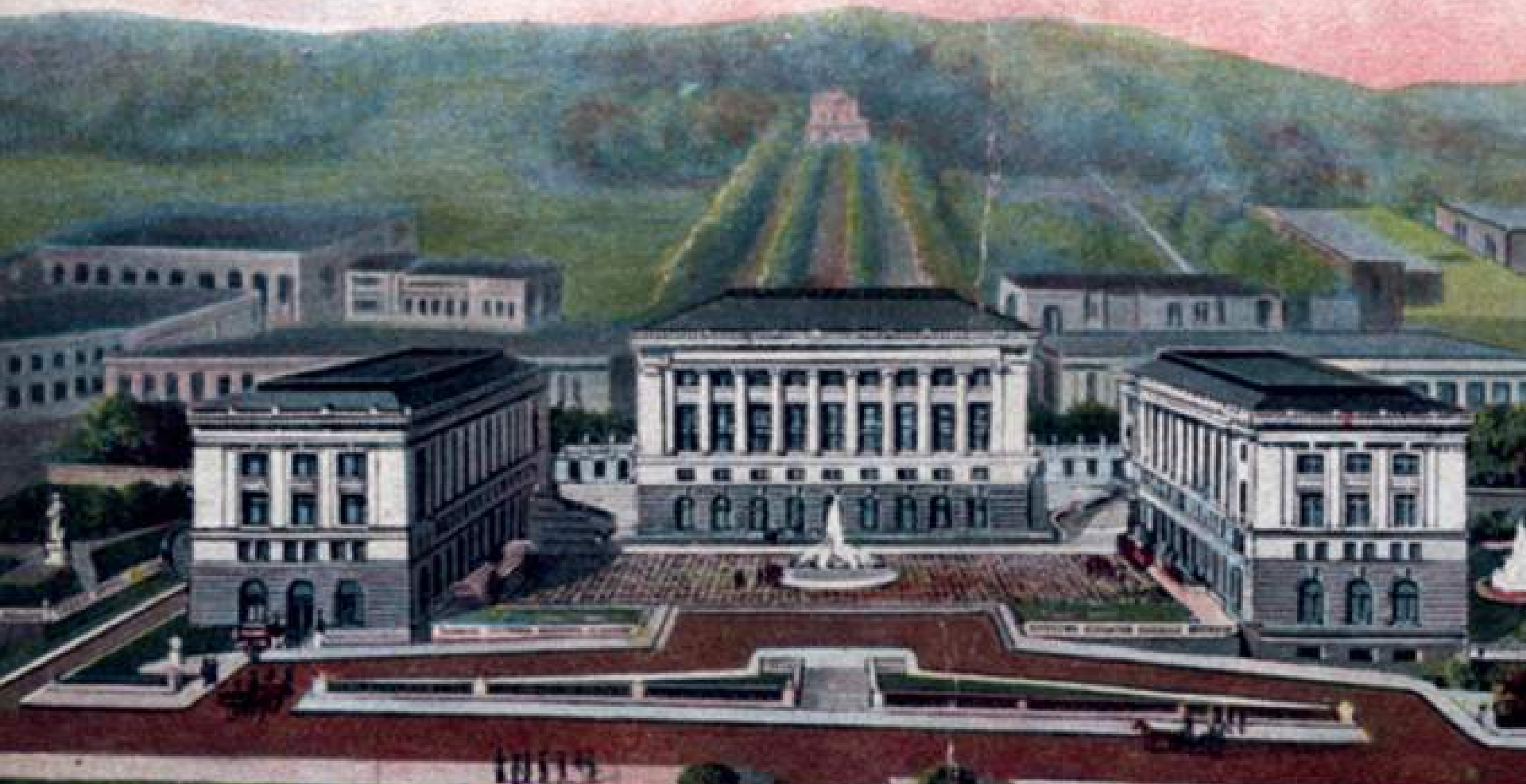








city beautiful movement



1889

Proposed Court House Group, Duluth, Minnesota



# city beautiful movement

*The great privilege is given to all to develop strength of character, to lead clean and honest lives, to render diligent and worthy service, to help others and to be loyal citizens of the republic and obedient to its laws.*



duluth panorama, 1905

# evolving design standards

The number of adults 65 years and older is expected to double within the next 30 years.

Over half of older adults experience social isolation, which is closely related to and can lead to depression and an overall physical and mental decline. (Stevenson, 2014)



# evolving design standards

Older adults living in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods have higher levels of social interaction and psychological well-being compared with those residing in suburbs or less inviting neighborhoods.

Living in walkable communities results in higher chances of knowing your neighbors, participating in politics, and engaging socially.

-American Journal of Public Health, 2013

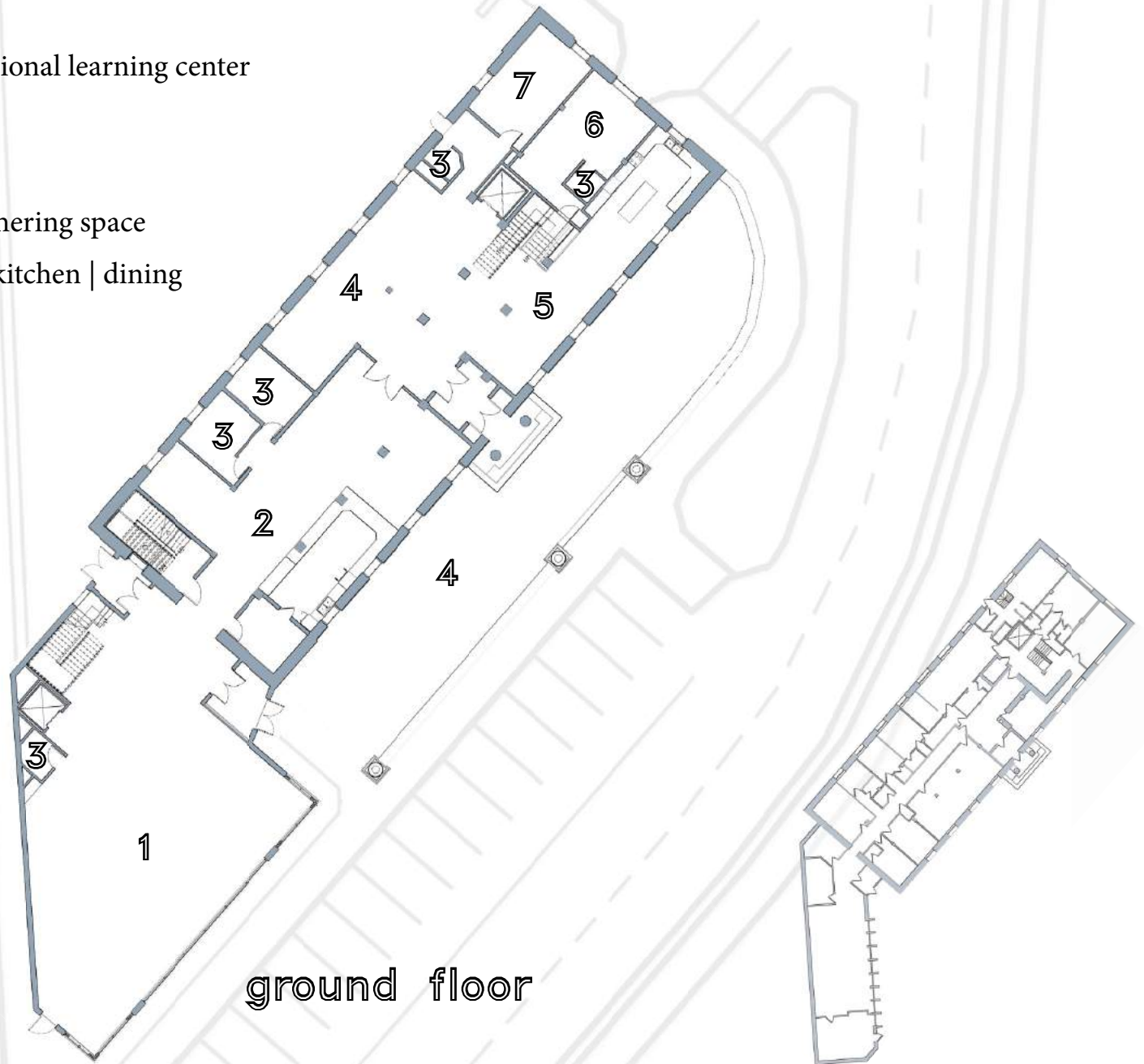


# evolving design standards

Rehabilitating the historic St. Louis County Jail to accommodate a mix of independent elderly living apartments, learning spaces for preschoolers, and Intergenerational living and learning spaces will help revitalize the downtown Duluth area and create a space no longer reminiscent of its harrowing past.

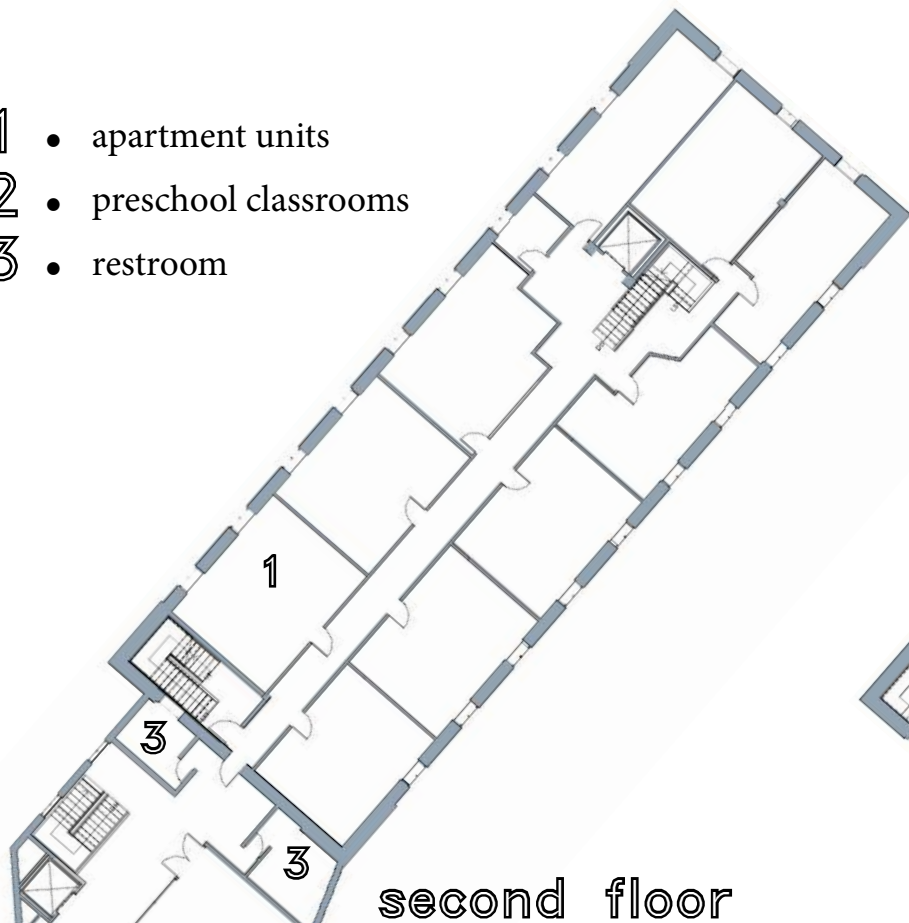


- 1 • intergenerational learning center
- 2 • coffee bar
- 3 • restroom
- 4 • resident gathering space
- 5 • communal kitchen | dining
- 6 • offices
- 7 • storage



ground floor

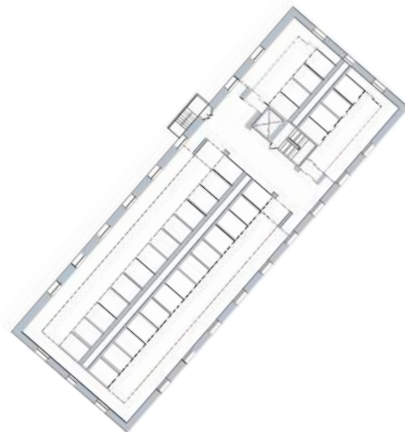
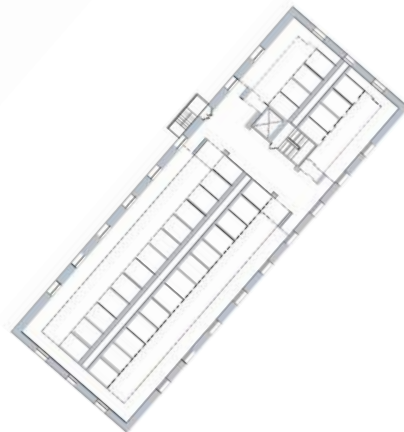
- 1 • apartment units
- 2 • preschool classrooms
- 3 • restroom



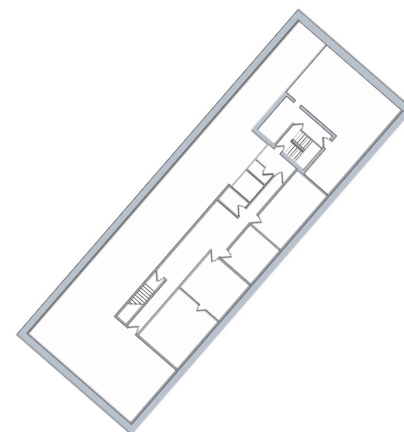
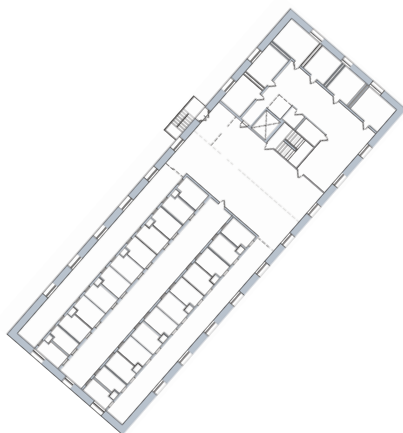
second floor



third floor



- 1 • lofted apartment units
- 2 • lofts
- 3 • communal gathering space



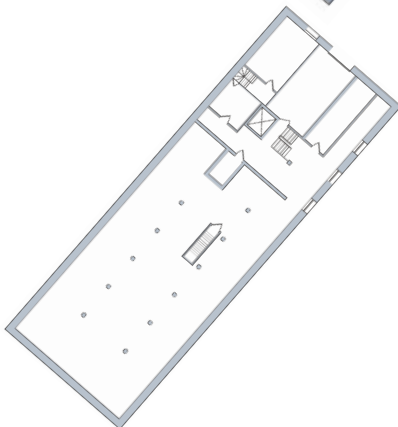
- 1 • individual resident storage
- 2 • exercise | therapy room
- 3 • restrooms
- 4 • laundry facilities
- 5 • service provisions
- 6 • mechanical



basement



the past



the future





Creating spatial vitality by transforming static, old spaces into dynamic, spirited living environments.



typical living environment



lofted living environment

# intergenerational living and learning center





# welcoming environment

Character-defining architectural features of the historic St. Louis County Jail create an opportunity to bring new life and spirit into the space in order to bolster successful intergenerational social interactions.



Creating a flexible, welcoming environment by  
transforming a formerly suppressive and cellular jail  
facility into a bright, sustainable, and livable  
Intergenerational Learning Center



view from the neighboring federal courthouse





# promoting community connectivity

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# scales of justice

Located on the edge of downtown, this site has the ability to showcase and create a cozy backyard neighborhood environment as well as emphasize the bustling downtown atmosphere





liberty

justice





# scales of justice

Public spaces on the first floor allows more social interaction to occur on-site. Creating an inviting site design also helps engage the residents and locals to experience the surrounding areas and will welcome them into the building.



# rehabilitation



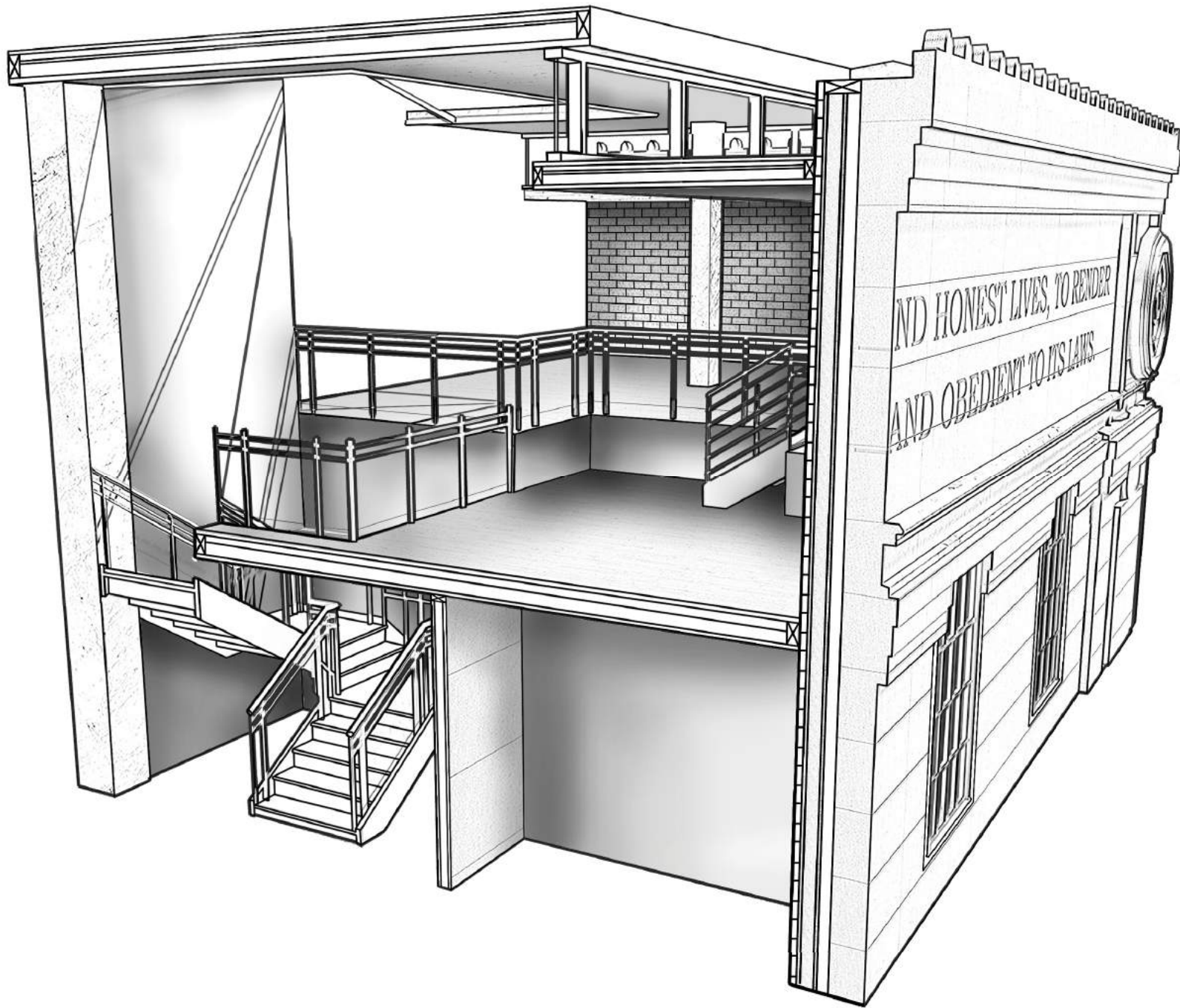
Physical and mental “scars” of the existing building are a part of the history of the site and there is an opportunity for those to be emphasized and celebrated.



revitalize the community

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AND HONEST LIVES, TO RENDER  
AND OBEDIENT TO ITS LAWS





With neither their pasts nor futures in common,  
the relationships between the young children and the  
elderly residents exist entirely in the present.