



Figure 01 | No Small Plans

# TEENS: Let's Give Them Some Space

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# Avoiding Tragedy; Creating a Space for Teenagers

A Design Thesis Submitted to the  
Department of Architecture and Landscape Architecture  
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by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Architecture

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# THESIS PROPOSAL

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# THESIS ABSTRACT

At a time when we can find numerous divisions between ourselves and the next person, there is one thing that every adult has in common: we were once a teenager. Like any experience, being a teenager comes with moments of both good and bad. However, many adults would agree that when recalling their time of adolescence, they cringe as negative memories flood their mind first.

Teenagers experience tragedies on a regular basis. Some are minor moments of discomfort and some are major moments of grief. What is important to remember, as adults removed from that stage of life by years of life experience, is that as a teenager, many negative experiences, albeit sometimes small, create a sense of tragedy.

The goal of this thesis research is to empathize with a demographic that we can all relate to, and so easily dismiss. Many of us don't enjoy thinking about the years of braces, prom photos, and puberty. Actually, a lot of us figure "If I got through it, you can too!" without acknowledging that we have the ability to do more than causally cheer teenagers on through what we view is bound to be a series of unfortunate events.

This thesis research offers a suggestion for how to prevent tragedies in the lives of teenagers in the form of a carefully curated program and intentionally designed environment. The concept is simple:

Teenagers need some space.

# THEORETICAL ASPECT

When well designed, built environments can positively impact teenagers psychologically by alleviating the potential for tragedy. Being a teenager consists of enduring conflicting desires and emotions, societal teachings that scrape at internal desires, and because of those it can be a tumultuous period of development leading to confusion and frustration from both teenagers and the adults that love them. By mapping the teenage psyche and gaining a greater understanding of psychological effects of the experience of being a teen, we can develop a deeper sense of empathy toward a demographic that is often forgotten. Greater understanding and empathy will lead to better design for people that we all know and once were.

Studying the psychological experience of teenagers in this thesis will include mapping the teenage psyche, listing tragedies endured by teenagers, and identifying settings that avoid those tragedies. The system of inquiry for this thesis study is intersubjective landing at the intersection of objective and subjective views. As described in *Architectural Research Methods* by Linda Groat and David Wang, “Ontologically, it assumes that

although there are multiple diverse viewpoints regarding sociocultural realities, it is nevertheless possible to achieve shared understandings of those realities.”

Similarly, they described the epistemology of a study that is intersubjective as one that views knowledge with an understanding of sociocultural engagements. This thesis understands the value of studying subjective content and suggests executing primarily qualitative research through observation of personal anecdotes, varying views from authors of young adult books, and interpretation of social and cultural experiences.

Strategies that will be used to study the teenage psyche will include a combination of historical research, qualitative research, and case study research. The historical research will include an interpretation of studies of past theories such as Sigmund Freud’s theory of the structure of the mind in the book “The Ego and the Id” and Nietzsche’s theory regarding the birth of tragedy between Apollo and Dionysus in Greek mythology. These theories create the framework through which this thesis study is viewed. Both Freud

and Nietzsche describe the intersection of two forces that are different, but not necessarily opposite. This thesis understands that because the forces do not create a dichotomy, the forces may overlap at times leading to a space in between understood as the Ego in Freud's theory.

Qualitative research in this thesis will include several tactics such as recollection of personal anecdotes, the study of teenage experiences recorded in young adult books, and the creation of experiential collages. The list of tragedies endured by teenagers will begin with recollection of personal anecdotes from my experience of being a teenager. That list will then be supplemented by experiences described in young adult books from a variety of authors and books. Tragedies to teenagers may appear trivial to a mind more fully formed, but this thesis understands that some moments truly are experienced as tragic in the mind of a teenager. A guided study with a group of teenagers will result in experiential collages to be included in the qualitative research. The study will include an explanation of Sigmund Freud's theory of the id, ego, and superego. The teenagers will be asked to create a collage that identifies the instinctive

desires of the id and the culturally imposed desires of the superego that they experience.

Case studies will also be analyzed as a strategy to study the built environments that teenagers spend time in, but that are not their first or second place of social interaction. The first and second places are often home and school for teenagers, so the case studies will focus on the typology of third places. Examples of these case studies will include schools and third places such as libraries, cafes, and recreation centers.

The culmination of the research completed for this thesis will consist of three distinct elements: a map of the teenage psyche, a list of tragedies endured by teenagers, and a list of settings that avoid those tragedies. The map will consist of several elements including a visual explanation in the form of graphics, a structural diagram, and a literary description for extended explanation. The list of tragedies and settings to avoid them will connect visually and through an expanded description of how a well-designed space can lead to the alleviation of teenage tragedy.

# PROJECT TYPOLOGY

Generally, teens are either at home or at school. When they are not at one of those two places, where are they? A third place. A third place is defined as a place that is neither of one's two primary social environments. For teenagers, those primary social environments are home and school usually. Yet, they don't have many third spaces that are constructive, healthy, or safe.

This design thesis will primarily be a third place for teenagers. It will consist of a program developed to alleviate tragedies typically encountered in adolescence such as loneliness, poor grades, and body insecurity. While many of the spaces will be intentionally designed for the use of teenagers, the design will also account for usage by others when teens may be at school or home.

Spaces that will be included in the project are a wellness space, a work/study space, and flexible investigation space amongst a variety of others.

# MAJOR PROJECT ELEMENTS

## Freedom

Teenagers need space to experience freedom in a safe and healthy way. Giving them an outlet to find freedom within appropriate boundaries will help alleviate the desire to find freedom on more dangerous and destructive paths.

entertainment space  
creative studio  
social space

## Health

Both mental and physical health are important for teenagers. Giving them a space to develop mental health in an inclusive and inviting environment is important. The site will include spaces to develop mental and physical health.

wellness center  
green space

## Growth

Teens are looking for growth. They desire new experiences, personal development, and a greater understanding of the world. This project will give teenagers a space to investigate new ideas, hobbies, cultures, and more.

quiet zone  
flexible learning area  
career resources

Figure 02 | My Block, My Hood, My City



Figure 03 | My Block, My Hood, My City

# USER DESCRIPTION

Chicago teenagers, people between the ages of 13 and 19 years old, are the primary users of the site. The site will be designed specifically as place to be used by teenagers when they are not at school or home. The program will include a variety in spaces with the intention that it will be inclusive and welcoming to all teens, no matter their interests.

Located in the Wicker Park community of Chicago, this site will be especially accessible to teens in the surrounding communities such as Logan Square, Lincoln Park, and North Center. However, the site is located near a blue line transit stop creating accessibility to any teen utilizing the Chicago public transit system.

When the teens are at school or home the site will be utilized by others. For example, during school hours the site will invite students to visit on field trips. The site will also host classes, workshops, and other events open to the public to maintain usage and efficiency.

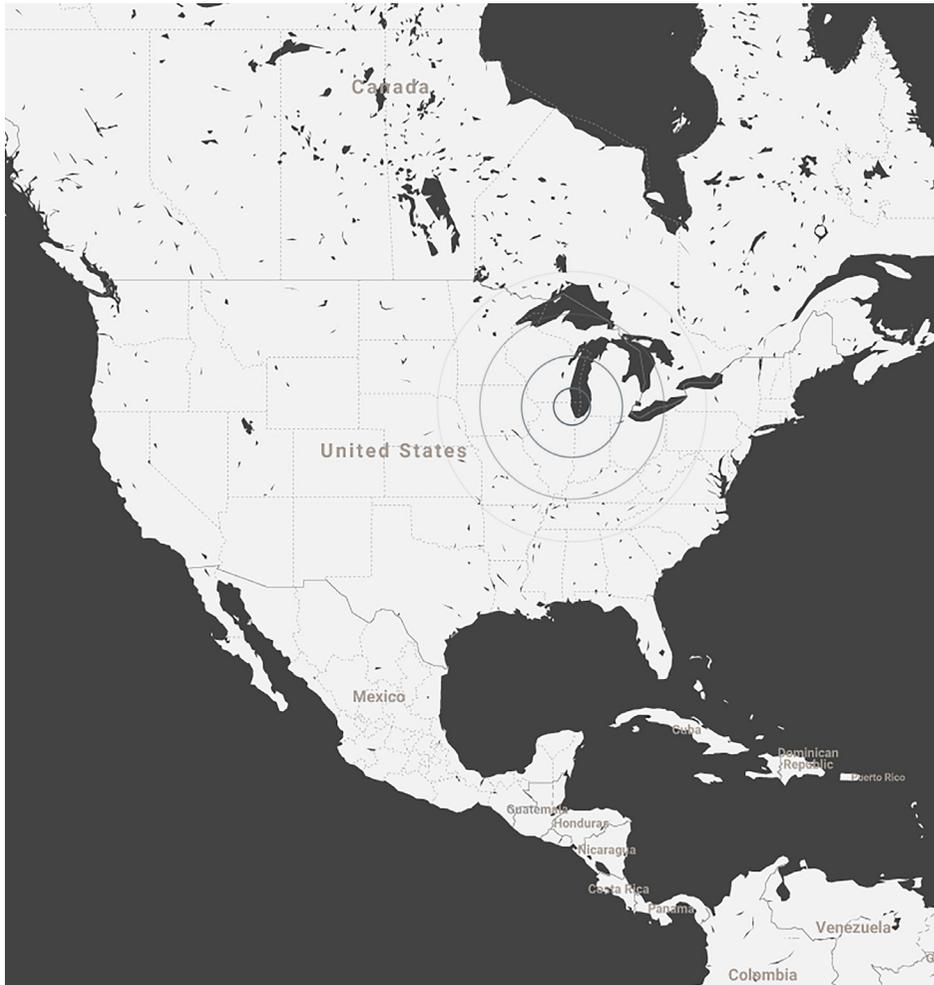


Figure 04 | Site Location

## Site

The site is located in the Wicker Park community of Chicago, Illinois. Chicago is the nearest metropolitan area with a need for programs designed to help teenagers.

## Why Wicker Park?

1. **Hustle-Bustle.** Wicker Park is a busy community with lots of action, people, business, and general hustle-bustle.
2. **Function.** The current level of local traffic and action will help bring people to the site during the day when teens aren't there.
3. **Success.** This thesis project is meant to be an example of one solution to alleviating tragedies in teens. Implementing it in a location that is likely to succeed, gives it a greater chance to influence other communities afterward.
4. **Teens.** Wicker Park's northern neighboring communities have the highest density of teens in Chicago. Locating the site just outside of their neighborhood gives them the sense that they are "getting away" while being nearby.
5. **Adults.** With all the activity happening in Wicker Park, there are lots of adults around. For the program to alleviate tragedies, supervision is required, but at arms length. Adults interacting with surrounding businesses are built-in supervision and serve as role models.
6. **Community.** Wicker Park is diverse, lively, and welcoming community. It is the perfect location for a program like this to find local support and encouragement.



Figure 05 | Site Location



Figure 06 | Site Location

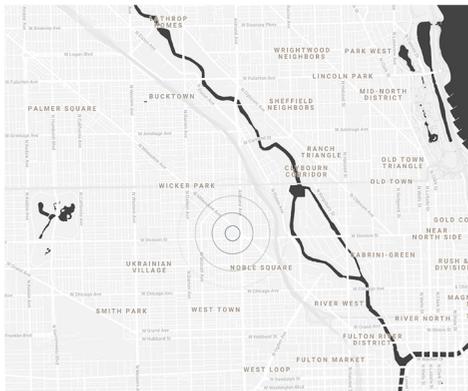


Figure 07 | Site Location

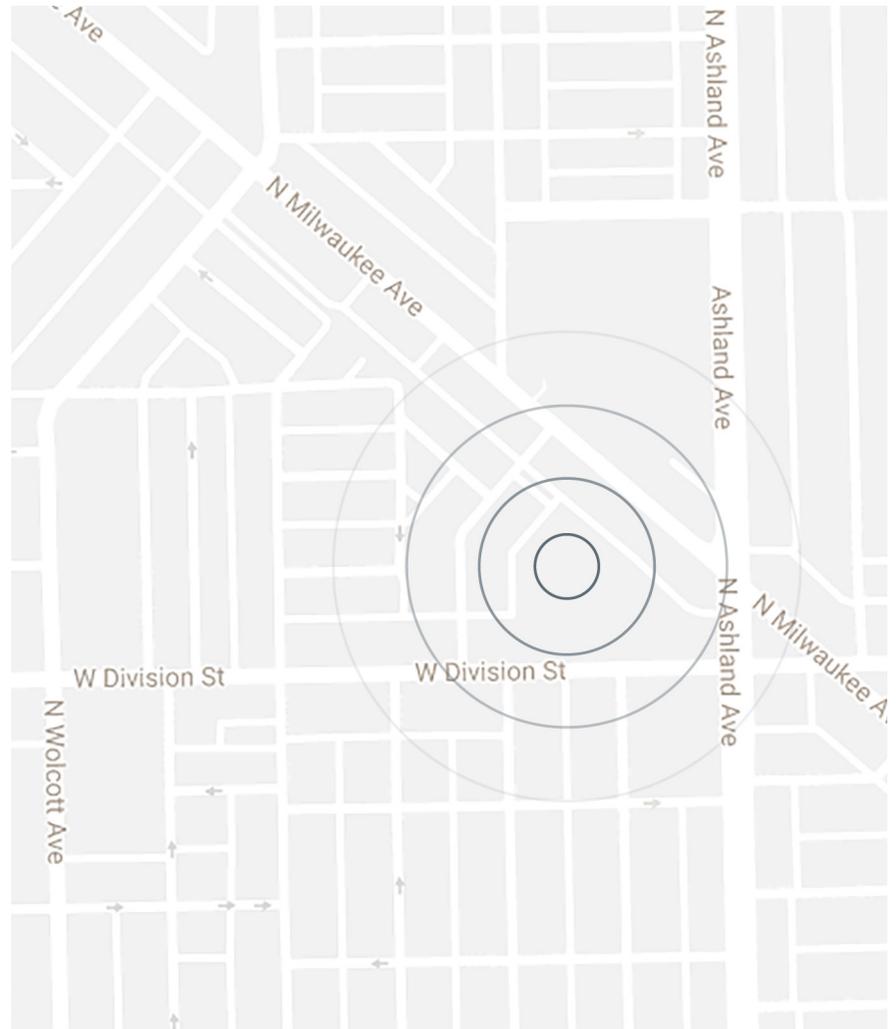


Figure 08 | Site Location

# PROJECT EMPHASIS

## Identify Teenage Tragedies

Through the study of young adult novels and experiential collages, this thesis aims to identify typical tragedies experienced by teenagers.

## Map the Mind of Teens

Understanding the mind of teenagers from the perspective of Sigmund Freud's theory of the personality will help to consider a range of tragedies and how to solve them.

## Create a Program that Alleviates Teenage Tragedies

Using the catalog of tragedies and the mind map, this thesis will create a program that alleviates tragedies experienced by teenagers.

# GOALS OF THE THESIS

One goal of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of the psychological experience of being a teenager. This thesis aims to study what experiences are traumatic for teenagers and why.

Through a stronger understanding of the teenage psyche, this thesis would like to garner empathy for a demographic that is both relatable and neglected. The goal is to use the research to educate others on what teenagers are experiencing psychologically, and generate empathy in order that it may lead to greater consideration for designing for teens.

A final goal is to utilize the research to develop an architectural program that alleviates tragedies in the lives of teenagers. The program will then be implemented in the thesis design with the goal of suggesting one solution to alleviating teenage tragedies.

# PLANS FOR PROCEEDING

Using the completed research I will begin to refine the proposed program and start schematic design techniques. Incorporating the concept of the psychic divide into the design while creating spaces that solve tragedies will be the goal. Scale will be an important factor to monitor in the preliminary stages of design.

Because visual communication is important in conveying the thesis idea, preparing deliverables early will be crucial. Determining what products will be part of the final presentation will help guide how time and energy is spent moving forward. Frequent checks regarding the relationship between the thesis question and design solution will ensure that a cohesive solution is reached by the end.

This thesis project plans to complete the design aspect of the thesis by following an aggressive, yet reasonable schedule, in order that it may end with a project that eloquently responds to the question: can a carefully curated program help to alleviate tragedies in the lives of teenagers?

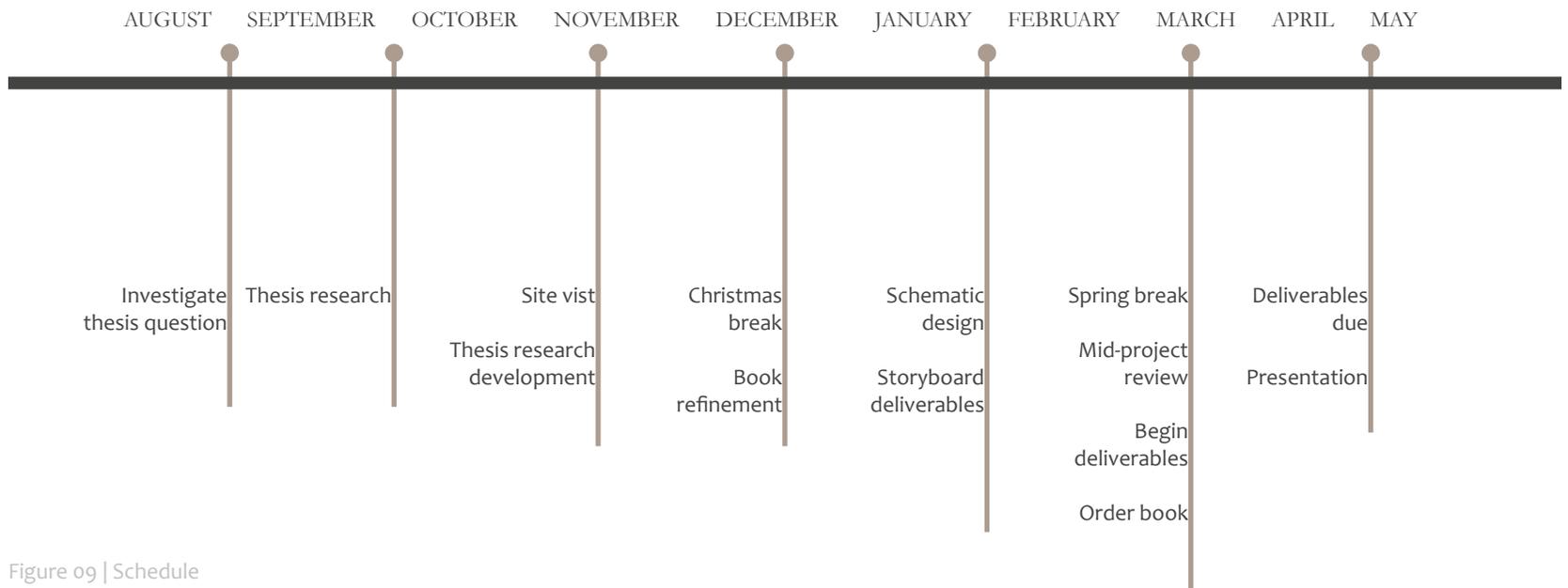


Figure 09 | Schedule



# THESIS RESEARCH

# RESULTS FROM THE THEORETICAL PREMISE

## Literature Review:

### The Ego and the Id

By Sigmund Freud

In “The Ego and the Id” Sigmund Freud introduces readers to his theory of the personality. He discusses the three elements that make up a person’s personality and titles them the id, ego, and superego. Each part operates on different motives and within varying contexts.

The id is the part of the brain present from birth. It is unconscious and instinctual. The id is seeking freedom and has no sense of time or morals. This part of the psyche is seeking immediate gratification and pleasure. The id is often recognized as the chaotic part of the trio.

The superego is the part of one’s personality that is learned from parental figures, teachers, and society. It is developed over time and is partially conscious and partially unconscious. The superego abides to laws and morals, desiring perfection. The personality’s sense of right and wrong comes from the superego.

The ego is the third part of the personality. It negotiates between the desires of the id and superego to reach a balanced psyche. Like the superego, the ego is partially conscious and partially unconscious.

What is most important about the theory of personality that Sigmund Freud presents is that all three pieces are important, and the id and superego are not in direct competition of each other at all times. It is also valuable to consider both the id and superego objectively; neither is good or bad. Viewing the personality structure in this way is crucial when implementing it into the thesis research.

Sigmund Freud’s theory of the personality will be used in the thesis research to understand how to create the most effective program to alleviate tragedies in the lives of teens. For example, creating an environment that is desirable for teens will include pleasing desires of the id. Meanwhile, in order to create a space that parents are okay with, desires of the superego must be met. To design a program that is effective, both parties and parts of the personality have to be addressed.

Sigmund Freud’s structure of the personality can be supported by several other relationships identified in history. Examples are listed to the right.



## Literature Review:

### No Small Plans

By Gabrielle Lyon, Devin Mawdsley, Kayce Bayer, Chris Lin, Deon Reed

A graphic novel written by Gabrielle Lyon with the collaboration of teen fellows at the Chicago Architecture Center, No Small Plans is meant to serve as a modern day Wacker's Manual to teach young students about the urban organization of Chicago.

The novel follows groups of teenagers as they journey through their city at three different time periods: the past, present, and future. Each time period serves as a chapter in the book offering insight to the life experiences teenagers might encounter and have to work through.

#### 1928 - The Past

The chapter covering the past recounts experiences of racism.

#### 2017- The Present

The chapter covering the present addresses gentrification in one of Chicago's many communities.

#### 2211- The Future

The chapter covering the future takes a look at a growing problem of isolation.

This graphic novel offers readers a better understanding of city planning from the perspective of teenagers, which makes it a valuable tool when designing for teenagers in Chicago. The book is crucial to consider in the thesis research because it gives a voice to teens and the issues they've identified in their own communities.

The second section of the book draws attention to gentrification and how it negatively affects communities and families. While one teen stops to talk with an elderly neighbor, she explains that their neighborhood is always changing and that it is the community members' jobs to be actively involved in the community events. Teenagers are valuable members of every community. Giving them the ability to interact with local businesses and events gives them a sense of ownership and pride in their home.

In the third and final time period, the future, the students partake in a community meeting. While discussing potential building typologies for their project, community members point out that it might be nice to create a space for teenagers to interact face-to-face. The teens agree that getting offline and physically in front of people would be good.

In this section the teens also bring up the value of libraries, specifically that they are a good place for people to go to get out of their homes for a bit. This reiterates the value of third places for teenagers.

Figure 10 | No Small Plans | The Past



Figure 11 | No Small Plans | The Present



Lastly, in the third section the teens also explain how to get people from different communities to interact with each other. One teens points out that entertainment spaces bring people from all over into one spot generating social interactions over common interests. This is a good way to bring people together and strengthen the ties across various neighborhoods. An entertainment space will be included in the thesis design program for this reason.

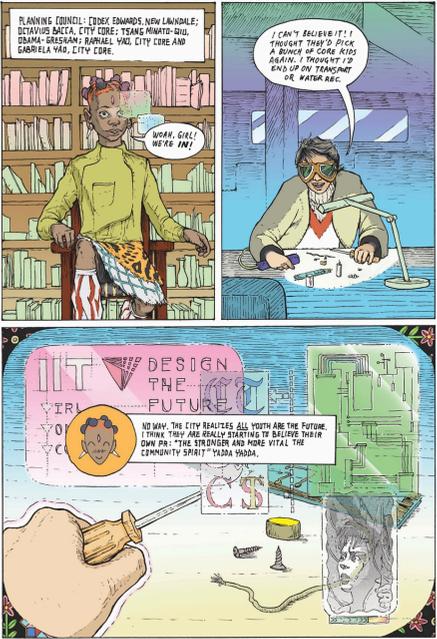


Figure 12 | No Small Plans | The Future

Figure 13 | No Small Plans | The Future

## Catalog of Tragedies

Gathered from personal experiences and stories told through young adult novels, a list of tragedies that teenagers endure during adolescence has been created. The list includes narratives describing situations that are generally unpleasant. Some of the tragedies are simply a part of growing up and not necessarily mitigated through architecture. However, some of the tragedies that are depicted have the potential be alleviated through the careful design of an environment for teenagers. An example of that catalog is included to the right.

### Having Embarrassing Parents:

Paper Towns

By John Green

In the adventurous young adult book Paper Towns there is a point when three characters discuss why one is unable to bring his girlfriend home. When Quentin and Ben express their confusion as to why Radar is hesitating to bring his girlfriend home, Radar is quick to remind them why: he has embarrassing parents. "IT IS NOT MY FAULT THAT MY PARENTS OWN THE WORLD'S LARGEST COLLECTION OF BLACK SANTAS". Quentin, the main character, goes on to describe the scenery at Radar's house including all of the black Santas that filled the shelves. And not long after that he suggests to Radar, "You just gotta tell her, man... you just gotta say, 'Angela I really like you, but there's something you need to know: when we go to my house and hook up, we'll be watched by the twenty-four hundred eyes of twelve hundred black Santas.'"



Figure 14 | Young Adult Novels

## Mind Map

The diagram to the left is a map of the teenage mind. Sigmund Freud's concept of the personality was used to organize various traits and desires. The map includes other theories that reinforce Freud's concept of the personality such as Apollo & Dionysus, Jekyll & Hyde, and the neocortex & reptilian complex.

This framework was used to create the experiential collages, which later led to the curation of the program.

This thesis recognizes the importance of incorporating spaces to alleviate tragedies from both parts of the psyche in order to have a balanced result.

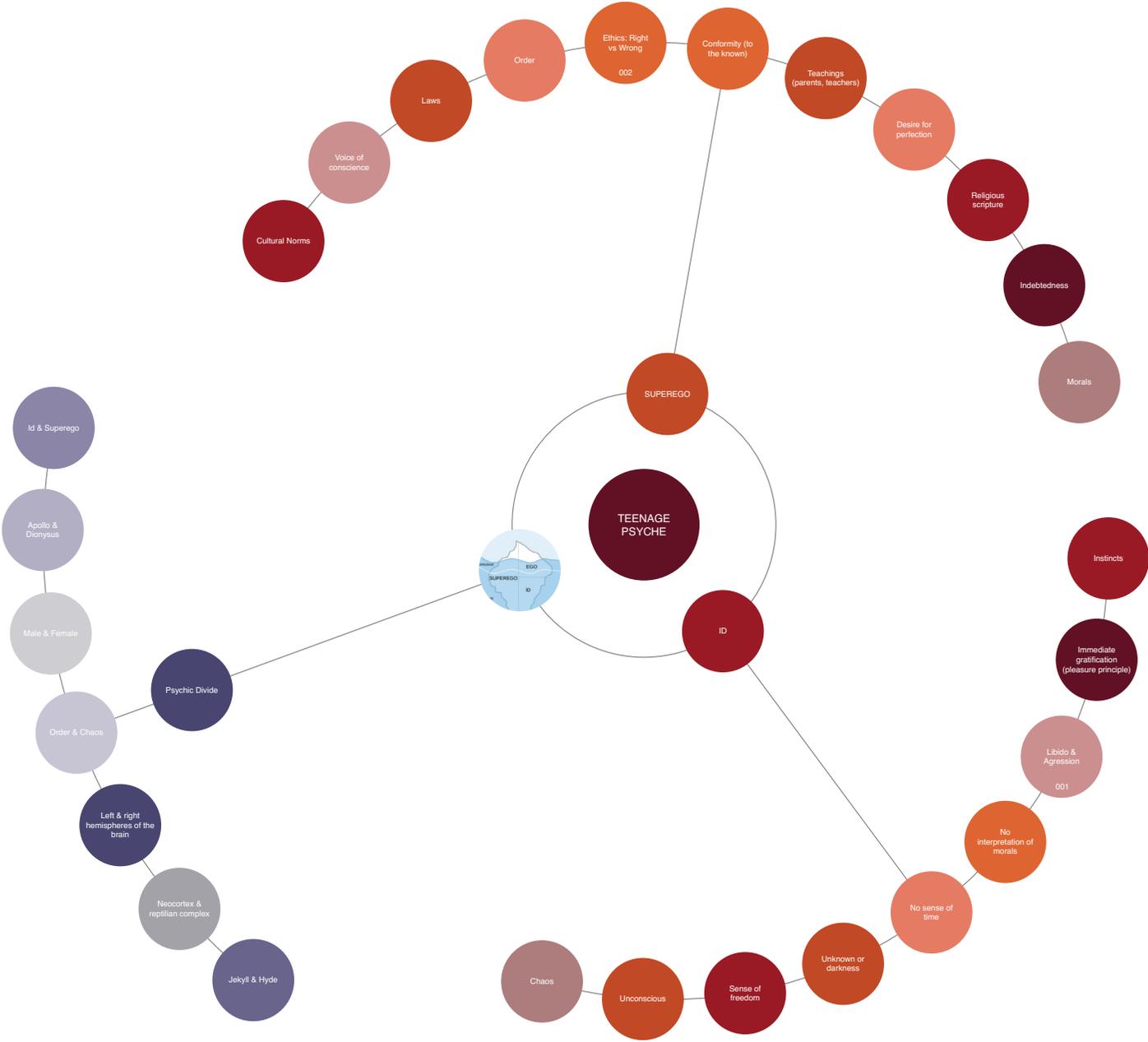


Figure 15 | Mind Map

## Experiential Collages

An experiential collage is a collection of images and words that form an artistic product conveying a personal experience. Experiential collages can be used as a form of research when participants are given guidance as to the what experience they should be representing in their product. The collages can then be studied to identify similar experiences that the participants are displaying. Using experiential collages as a form of research allows participants flexibility to answer freely with the information they feel is most relevant. It also provides participants with the chance to provide data without the intimidation of lots of questions. Studies using experiential collages are qualitative in nature because the data is generated by researchers visually associating images and correlating experiences. Therefore, studying experiential collages is a good technique for creating research for what is primarily a qualitative thesis.

The following collages were designed by teenagers at Parker High School in Parker, South Dakota. After an introduction to Sigmund Freud's theory of the personality, the teens were instructed to represent desires of the id and superego in their experience as a teenager.

Analysis of the collages led to a list of spaces that could potentially meet the desires represented in the images. Spaces addressing the influence of both the id and the superego made the list in equal parts. The list of spaces drawn from the collages was incorporated into the program design for this thesis project. A breakdown of those spaces with examples of images that suggested that environment, is included on the following page.



## Food & Beverage

Many of the collages include images of coffee and food. Many of the artists used images of healthy food.



## Entertainment Space

Entertainment is important to teenagers. Viewing entertainment offers teens a sense of freedom and excitement without immediate parental supervision.



## Social Space

It is important for teenagers to be social with others their age. Loneliness, a common tragedy in many teens, can potentially be alleviated with more face-to-face interactions.



## Flexible Learning

The collages represent a variety of miscellaneous images, many of them suggesting travel. A flexible learning space can provide teens with a space to enjoy new experiences.



## Quiet Zone

Some teens just need a quiet space. School and home may be places of loud noise, so a place of quiet relaxation and focus might be what they're looking for.



## Wellness Center

A wellness center will give teenagers a safe environment to burn energy, develop self-confidence, and learn about both mental and physical health.



## Career Resources

The final years of adolescence are a time for teens to begin learning about how they can contribute to society while making a living. Learning about their options can help alleviate stress.



## Creative Studio

Teenagers want to express themselves and feel unique. A creative studio will offer students a space to investigate and express their creativity.

# RESULTS FROM THEORETICAL PREMISE

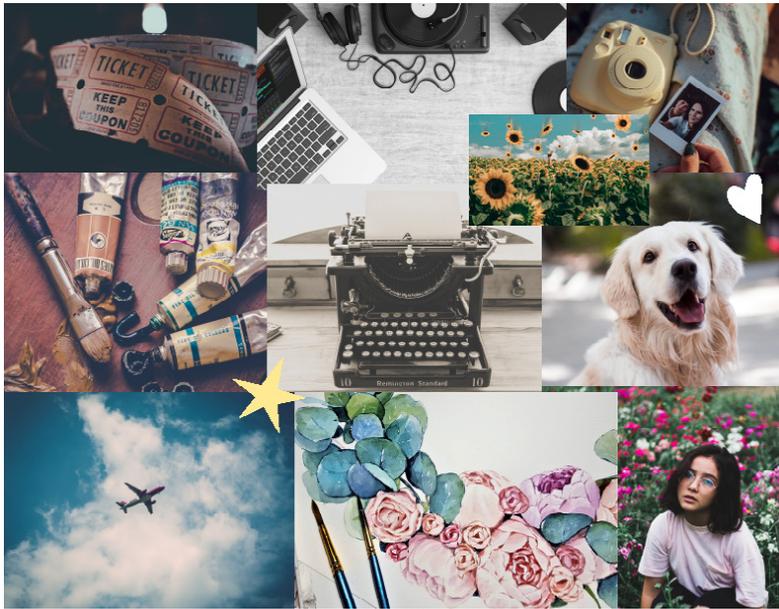


Figure 16 | Experiential Collage 01



Figure 17 | Experiential Collage 02





Figure 20 | Experiential Collage 05



Figure 21 | Experiential Collage 06





Figure 24 | Experiential Collage 09

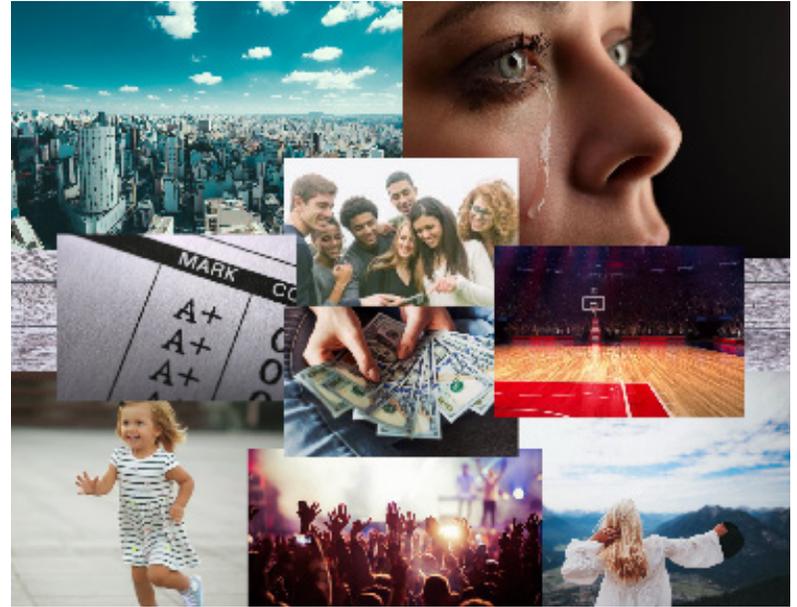


Figure 25 | Experiential Collage 10



Figure 26 | Experiential Collage 11



Figure 27 | Experiential Collage 12





Figure 30 | Experiential Collage 15

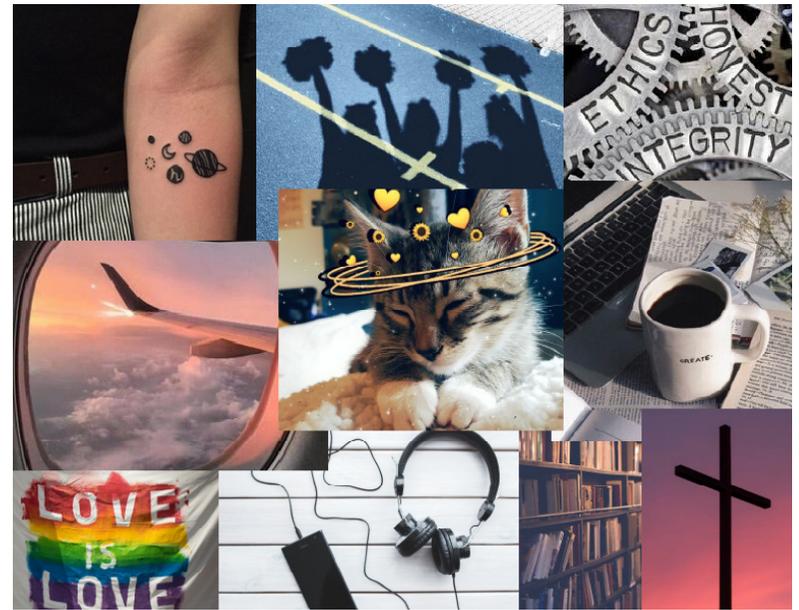


Figure 31 | Experiential Collage 16

# Case Studies

## Sawada Coffee

The success of Sawada Coffee can be attributed to a blend of four strengths: menu, location, diversity, and atmosphere. 2008 Free Pour Latte Art World Champion, Hiroshi Sawada curated a simple and well-received beverage menu with several specialty Japanese drinks. What's more valuable for designers to study are the remaining strengths of location and diversity.

Location is often one of the most important considerations for business owners. Sawada Coffee found home in the West Loop it was “such a culturally rich, restaurant-orientated neighborhood that I just wanted to be a part of the culture” explained Sawada in an interview with Adam Arcus.

Diversity flows through the drinks served, the international customers staying at the Soho House across the street, and the partnership between Sawada and local restaurant owners. Many of the drinks have a Japanese influence.

The atmosphere within Sawada Coffee is reflective of the rough exterior on the outside. The exterior has the

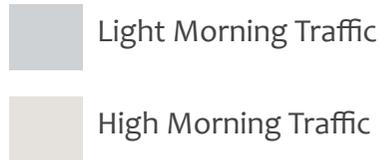
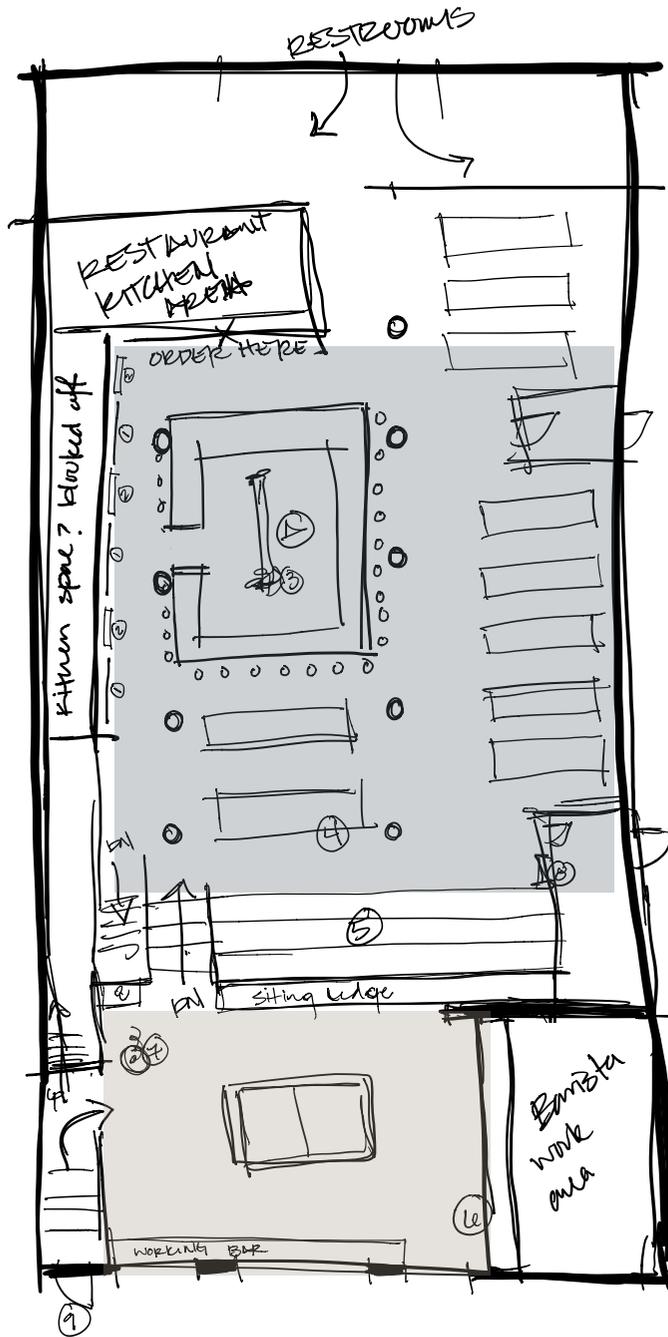
industrial feel that the West Loop is known for with graffiti covering the bricks and Sawada's edgy brand image gives it an urban touch. Inside, customer's find dark spaces lightly lit with string lights hanging from the ceiling for an intimate feel. A sense of grit stems from the skulls and skateboards along the walls, and this is what creates the subtle draw to youth: taboo. Skateboarding has become increasingly difficult to enjoy as Chicago laws crack down on skateboard use within various districts in the city. Sawada coffee offers a communal space for those within the skateboarding community.

Within Sawada Coffee are long tables serving as good working surfaces for groups of students studying together or individuals who want some room to spread out. The big tables invite collaborate and socializing while the dark atmosphere creates an intimate space good for relaxing or working. The hints of a taboo hobby surrounding customers creates a sense of community and comrodary around those who are searching for opportunities to simultaneously fit in and be unique.



Figure 32 | Sawada Coffee Site Visit

RESULTS FROM THEORETICAL PREMISE



- ① TVS ② SPEAKER
- ③ CRAZY STATUE w/ DISCO BALL
- ④ ME ⑤ STAIR / STEPS
- ⑥ ORDER HERE
- ⑦ SUPREME PUNCHING BAG
- ⑧ DIRTIES DUMP ⑨ ENTRY

Ⓐ DIRTY BAR  
WITH VERY  
OLD-FASHIONED  
STIP-VIBES.

Figure 33 | Sawada Coffee Plan Sketch

## Sawada Coffee Site Visit

While in Chicago I had the chance to visit Sawada Coffee twice, once in the morning while it served coffee and later that evening while it served smoked barbecue. Both experiences were enjoyable in their own way.

In the morning I sat with a vanilla latte sketching and observing what made Sawada Coffee so successful. My initial thought was that all the seating options gave any visitor a chance to make their experience there exactly what they wanted. The ping pong table appeared to be in high demand as people rotated consistently in and out of chairs there. The thin counter against the large factory windows was another seating favorite. Anyone that chose to sit in this area, shown in the lighter color in the sketch, was stopping for just a brief amount of time and clearly expected the hustle and bustle of to-go orders to circle around them. For those of us who were looking for a place to stay awhile, there is a lower level with long tables perfect for spreading out and getting comfortable, shown in the darker color in the sketch.

Something interesting was happening in the lower section when I looked around at all the focused visitors. Every single one of us had our back to the noisy elevated area around the ping pong table. This is an important note to consider in the design of this thesis. It shows that some people want to quietly work independently, but have a busy sense of life whispering in the background. The thesis design should include spaces for both quiet and social interactions to occur within close proximity.

Another unique experience I had while visiting in the morning was the preparation of the restaurant for later that day. Restaurant staff was slowly wheeling barrels from here to there, replacing crates, and lining garbage cans. This was oddly comforting. I had the sensation that none of the staff was remotely concerned with what or how I was doing. They were just indifferently allowing me to be in their space watching them like a younger sibling. I immediately felt a small sense of victory for witnessing this intimate and cool process. Translating this sensation into the thesis design would help a desirable environment for teenagers.

The interior architecture in this space creates quite an atmospheric experience. Strong columns stand in painted concrete and help the brick walls hold the exposed ceiling up. This place feels clean enough to be a restaurant, but rough enough to be comfortable and inviting. Black and white paint are chipping on every architectural surface to reveal black and white paint underneath. Orange lighting warms the industrial coolness radiating from structure. Possibly my favorite part of the atmosphere in Sawada Coffee is the thumping R&B music. The volume is set perfectly to fill the room while permitting conversations at a normal volume and focus for individuals. Creating a space for loud music and open conversations is important when creating a space teenagers want to work in. Translating this environment into the thesis design will be valuable in creating a successful design.



Figure 34 | Sawada Coffee Site Visit

### Music Played

"Throw Your Hands in the Air"  
Cyress Hill

"Come Close"  
Common + Mary J. Blige



Figure 35 | Sawada Coffee

A variety of seating is available at Sawada Coffee. Each option presents customers with a unique experience. Pictured above are visitors on large steps



Figure 36 | Sawada Coffee

The ping pong table shown above was surrounded by coffee drinkers the morning I visited. Using unique furniture is a good way to create a more comfortable and relaxed experience. This technique will be used in the thesis design.



Figure 37 | Sawada Coffee

In the evening Sawada Coffee comes alive as its counterpart business Green St. Smoked Meats takes over. While in Chicago, I was lucky enough to visit the space for both business ventures. When I arrived in the evening this room was incredibly packed and everyone was shoulder-to-shoulder at both the community tables and in the line that was winding through all the tables.

Having a space that can translate from one business to another from morning to night is good technique to maintain usage throughout the day. This concept will be applied in the thesis design to ensure efficiency through maximum usage.



Figure 38 | Sawada Coffee Site Visit



Figure 39 | Sawada Coffee Site Visit





Figure 42 | Sawada Coffee Site Visit

## Colectivo Coffee

Colectivo Coffee differs from the previous coffee shop analyzed in that it is a chain with multiple locations in Wisconsin and Chicago. Yet, as the photos to the right show, each Colectivo Coffee has a unique appearance that blends into a cohesive brand.

This coffee shop celebrates life and enthusiasm with energetic color palettes and brightly-lit interiors. When possible, Colectivo incorporates a heated outdoor patio with fireplaces for year-round use or large operable openings to bring the outdoors indoors.

Like Sawada Coffee, Colectivo speaks to a specific community of people. In this case, the community consists of those who are passionate about living environmentally friendly lives.

Colectivo pushes people together with tightly configured seating and intimate spacing, while maintaining a light and airy atmosphere. Because it is a chain and the locations are larger, there is greater opportunity to meet new people.



Figure 43 | Colectivo Coffee



Figure 44 | Colectivo Coffee



Figure 44 | Colectivo Coffee

Figure 46 | Colectivo Coffee



Figure 47 | Colectivo Coffee



Figure 48 | Colectivo Coffee

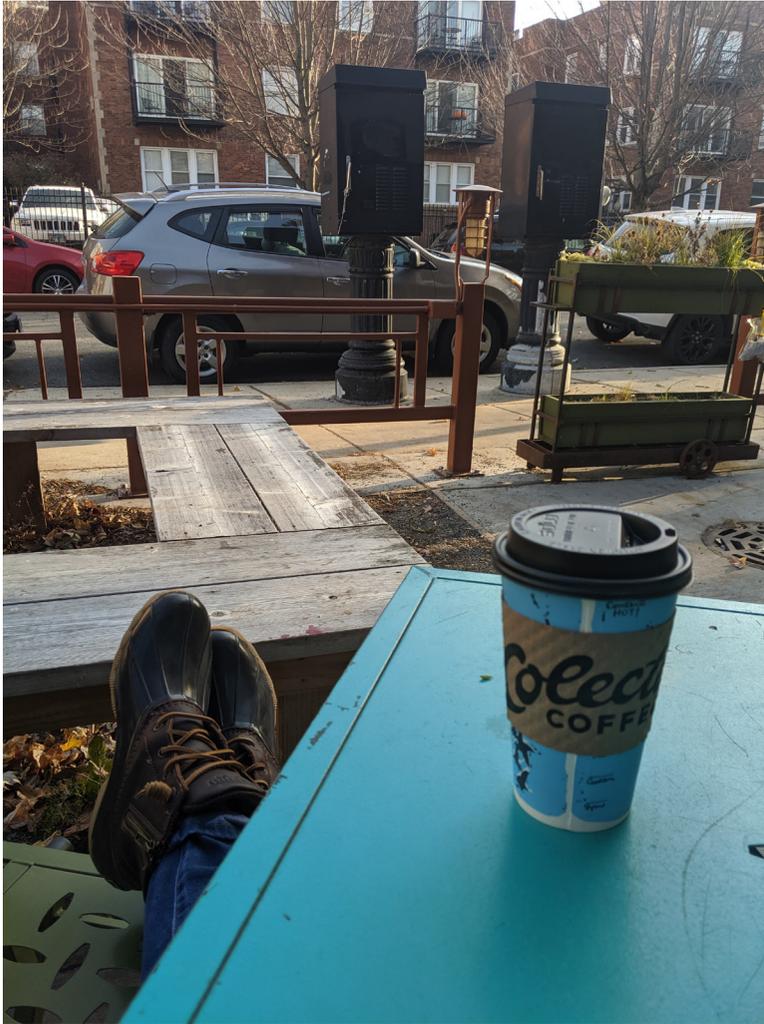


Figure 49 | Colectivo Coffee Site Visit

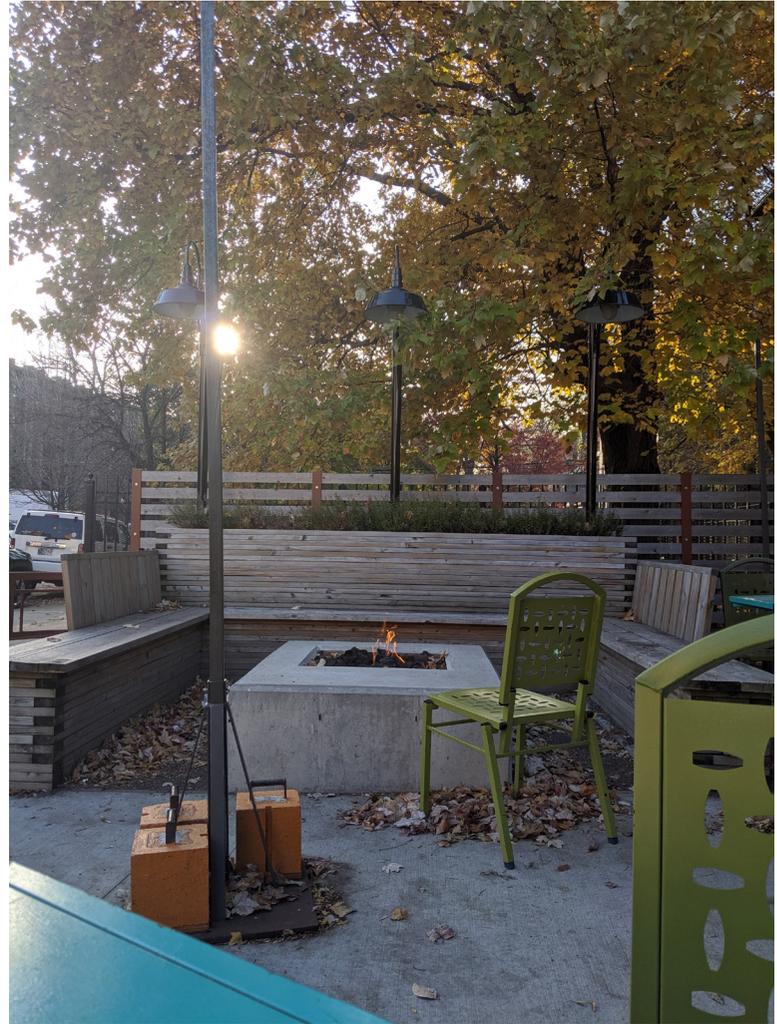


Figure 50 | Colectivo Coffee Site Visit

## Colectivo Coffee Site Visit

While in Chicago I visited the Colectivo Coffee in Lincoln Park. The Sunday afternoon brought many people out to enjoy the beautiful weather. When I stopped into the coffee shop I was brushing shoulders with the people and walls around me. This is a pleasantly intimate environment. Tables were full in the primary seating area, an enclosed patio. After ordering a caramel-apple cider I waited in line and listened as several people after me ordered the same. Once I had my drink and took a sip I understood why it was such a popular selection- it was delicious.

Because the seating inside was full I chose to take my cider outside to join a couple others outside. It was mitten weather, but warm enough to enjoy being outside with a hot drink. I selected one of the colorful metal patio tables and got comfortable. I watched as several groups rotated through the seating around the fire pit. It was the primary attraction to anyone who found themselves outside.

Implementing an outdoor space that can be used year-round in Chicago would be a valuable addition to the thesis design program.

## 826CHI

According to its website, “826CHI is a non-profit creative writing, tutoring, and publishing center dedicated to amplifying the voices of Chicago youth.” While in Chicago I paid a visit to this incredible operation and learned how to design an effective program for helping teenagers avoid tragedy.

Designed by Gensler through pro-bono services, this space offered the nonprofit 826CHI a new location to welcome students into their torturing and writing programs. What’s incredible about this design is the concept of “secret agent” that is wound through the program.

Storefront in the front. Secret agent in the back. At 826CHI you’ll find a storefront on Wicker Park’s most active avenue, North Milwaukee Ave. The storefront sells a variety of fun products, gifts, and writings from the secret agents in the back. Those secret agents? They are the 3,500 Chicago students that visit 826CHI for the numerous programs they offer.

## Statistics

Below are statistics found on the 826CHI website from the 2017-18 year.

### Students:

3,595 1st-12th Grade Students Served  
51.3% English Language Learners Served (ASTW)

### Programs:

5 Programs  
319 Program Sessions  
898 Program Hours  
146 Student Publications

### Volunteers:

287 Active Volunteers  
20,267 Volunteer Hours

### Schools:

114 Schools  
111 Teachers  
48 Zip Codes  
39 Wards

2017 - 2018 Survey Results

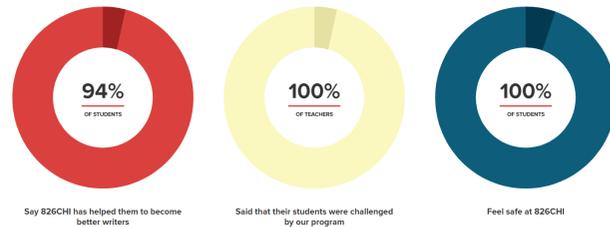


Figure 51 | 826CHI



Figure 52 | 826CHI | Gensler

The program at 826CHI is unique and valuable to consider when design the thesis program. When I stopped at the Secret Agent Supply Co. I met Gabby FeBland, the Communications Coordinator at 826CHI, and she gave me a tour of the secret agent space behind the storefront and gave me more information about operations at 826CHI. While walking through the colorful workshop in the back, Gabby explained to me that students are welcome here anytime, even when they aren't specifically in a session. She explained that, "Many students come early to their sessions and just hang out because they don't have anywhere else to go." This reinforces the theory that there is a need for a third place for teenagers in Chicago.

During the tour there were several students independently working at the large tables. I asked Gabby how the space is used during the day when students are expected to be at school. She explained that the hold field trips from all ages throughout the day. Because 826CHI is all about writing and reading, the students are guided through activities such as group story-writing. Students are given prompts and asked to help solve problems through story.

The secret agent space, the area where workshops are held, is big enough to hold a crowd, but small enough to be intimate. Program spaces include an administration station, conference room, small stage, and open work area.

For the thesis design I will incorporate their technique for maintaining usage throughout the day. Hosting field trips for schools and other programs is a good way to advertise the space to teens and increase efficiency.

The site location is located in 826CHI's back alley. The thesis design will take this into consideration when designing for connection with local attractions.

826CHI was the inspiration for the site selection. The site is located in the center of a triangular lot surrounded by commercial buildings on two sides and residential buildings on one. Access to the site will be through any of the five alleyways penetrating the site. This unique location adds to the secret agent sense of "flying under the radar" while maintaining safety and interest.

Figure 53 | 826CHI | Gensler



Figure 54 | 826CHI | Gensler



Figure 55 | 826CHI | Gensler



Figure 56 | 826CHI | Gensler



Figure 57 | 826CHI | Gensler

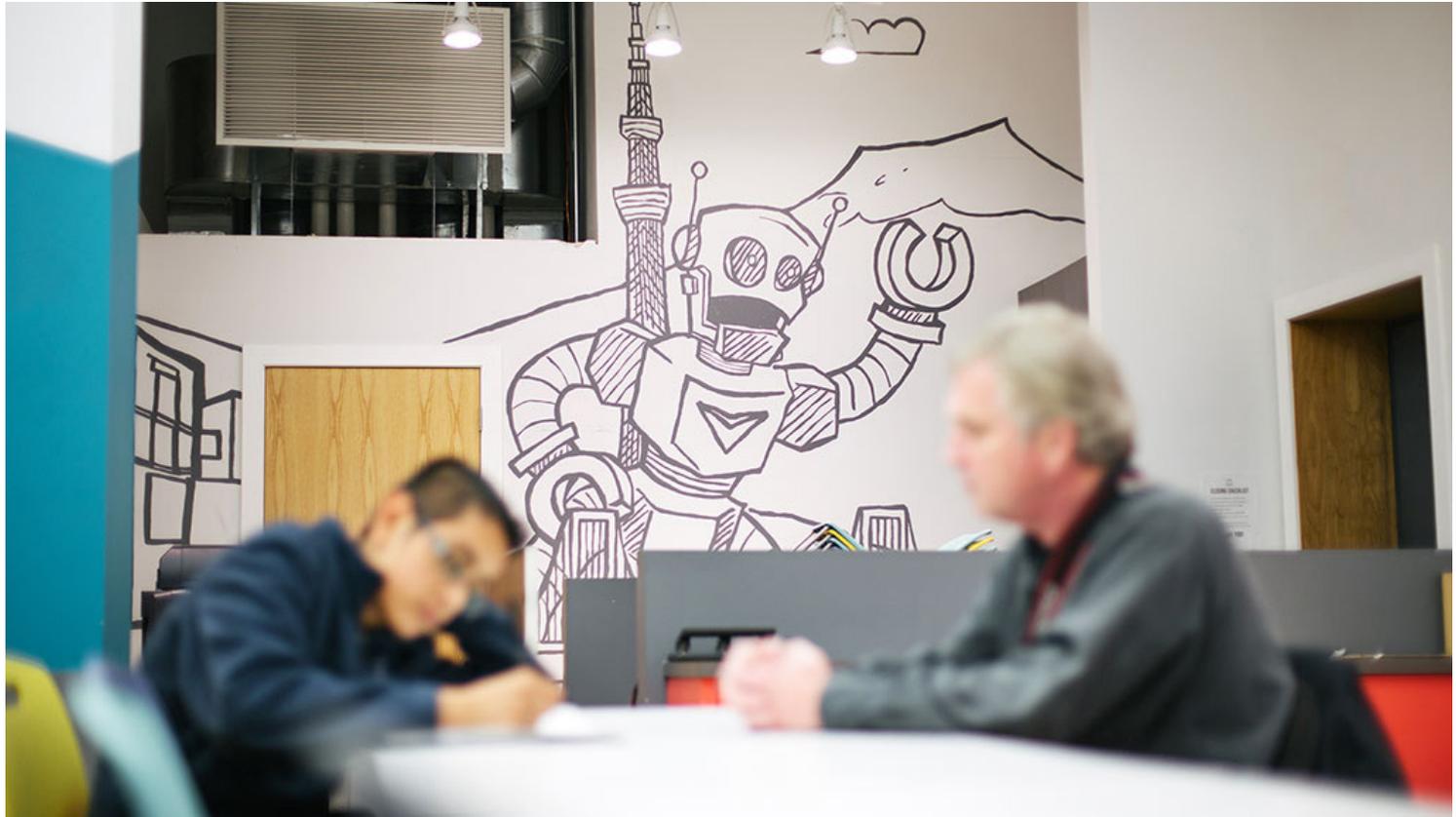


Figure 58 | 826CHI | Gensler

# PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Teenagers make up a vulnerable demographic. Many of them would disagree with a passionate testament of strength stemming from feelings of invincibility, which makes them even more vulnerable. Teenagers need that spirited tenacity, though. It's what gets them through a stage of life filled with difficulties, unpredictability and trauma, and into adulthood. I imagine it's what got each of us through adolescence.

What's interesting is that while many of us can remember our time as teens, we are also quick to push our experience to the back of our minds where our memories won't bother the present. Unfortunately, this habit is hindering our ability to be empathetic and understanding to a demographic that needs us. We have an opportunity as adults that we were once teenagers, to use our design skills and compassion for people to create an environment specifically for teenagers.

When well designed, built environments can positively impact teenagers psychologically by alleviating the potential for tragedy. Being a teenager consists of enduring conflicting thoughts and emotions, societal teachings that scrape at internal desires, and because of those it can be a tumultuous period of development leading to confusion and frustration from both teenagers and the adults that love them. This thesis research aims to garner greater empathy for teenagers and suggest a solution to help alleviate teenage tragedies.

# HISTORICAL, SOCIAL, & CULTURAL CONTEXT

In his book “The Great Good Place,” Ray Oldenburg offers readers the follow explanation for decline in quality public places.

*"In our zeal to keep kids 'off the streets' and contain them to safer places, we contribute to the further deterioration of our public space. As we shuttle our children from one safe and certified adult to another, the streets continue to deteriorate in accordance with the negative view help toward them."*

As a society we have become exclusive in designing third places. Frequently, spaces are designed for adults only or for children, and not very well. In his book, Oldenburg explains that by cornering children, including teenagers, away to safe areas, we have made undesirable third places. Teens are not interested in being tucked away safely. They would rather interact with the chaos and hustle-bustle of busy public avenues.

This thesis aims to design an environment that teenagers can take ownership of and enjoy by including them in the local activity and excitement in Wicker Park, Chicago.

Chicago is a city with over 70 communities and social crisis of teenage tragedies. Many teens have no where to go but the streets when not at home or school. They need better options that are attractive to them and alleviate the tragedies they face. 826CHI, a nonprofit sharing an alleyway with the site, is one of several organizations aiming to help teenagers through programs outside of schools. Another organization working to alleviate teenage tragedies is My Block, My Hood, My City. The fact that theses programs have been established demonstrates the need for an environment designed specifically for teenagers. This thesis hopes to contribute to the incredible work these organizations have done by designing a program that can serve teenagers and prevent tragedy in Chicago.

# SITE/CONTEXT ANALYSIS

The site for the thesis project is located in the Wicker Park community of Chicago. The site is surrounded by buildings and only accessible through alleyways as shown to the right. Two sides of the site are surrounded by commercial buildings. The third side is enclosed by residential buildings.

This site was a parking lot until recently when construction started on a highrise residential building. View corridors on the sight line up with the alleys. There is one park several blocks north, but the site would benefit from a green space as it is surrounded by hardscape. Nearly every building surrounding the site is a minimum of three stories, so the site truly feels enclosed. This will help to block wind from the site.

The sensation of being enclosed within the site will benefit the design in feeling secretive and intimate for the teenage users.

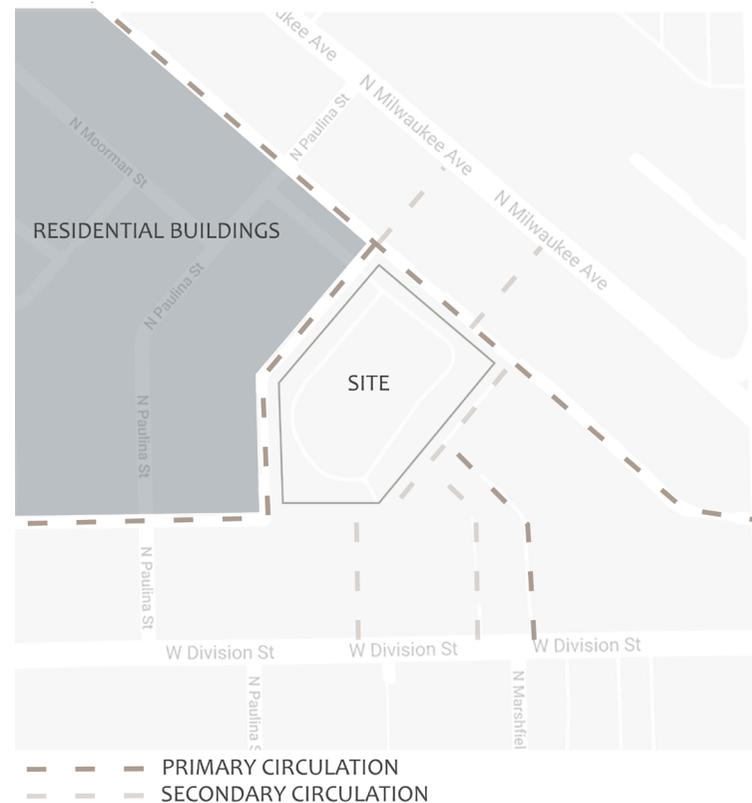


Figure 59 | Site Map

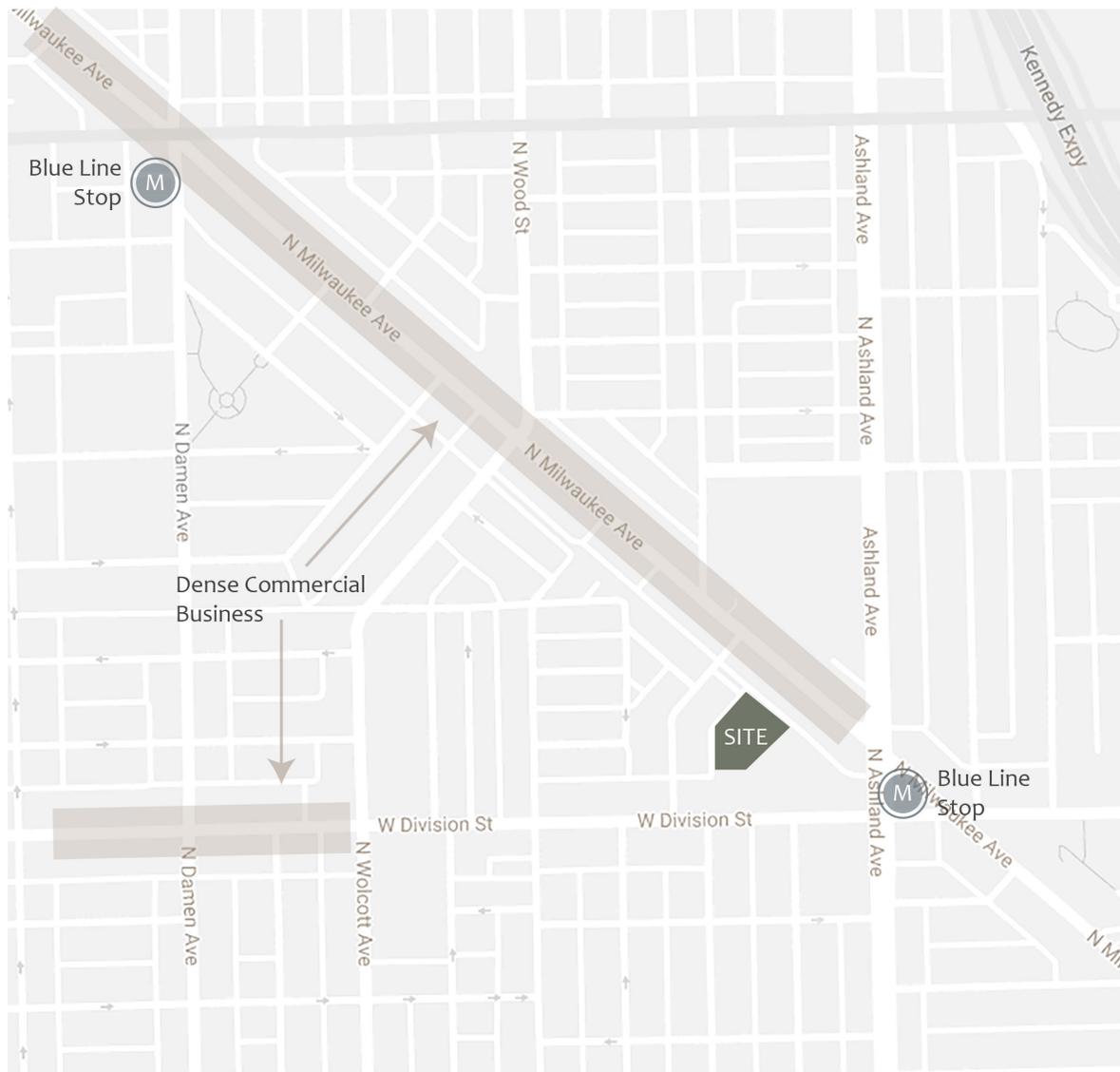


Figure 60 | Site Map



Figure 61 | Site Analysis

The photo to the right is the view of the site from Milwaukee Ave. The two towers are part of the core for the residential building being constructed.

This lot is home to a pop-up shop on occasion, but will always be open as public space because it was donated to the community in 2008. The plaque posted on the site read the following.

"During the first half of the 20th century, Mautene Court served as a staging area for deliveries to the thriving retail and garment manufacturing district along Milwaukee Avenue. In the 1970s Mautene Court was converted into a public space for all to enjoy. Redesigned in 2008, Mautene Court is being dedicated in memory of Jan Metzger, community leader and avid supporter of public green spaces, this 21st day of May 2011."



Figure 62 | Site Analysis



Figure 63 | Site Analysis



Figure 64 | Site Analysis



Figure 65 | Site Analysis

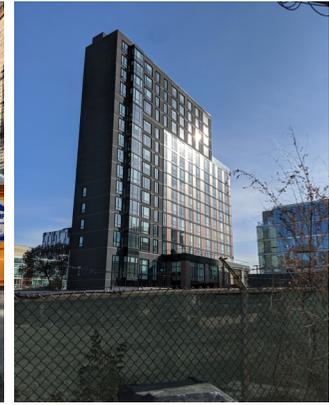


Figure 66 | Site Analysis



Figure 67 | Site Analysis



Figure 68 | Site Analysis



Figure 69 | Site Analysis



Figure 70 | Site Analysis



Figure 71 | Site Analysis

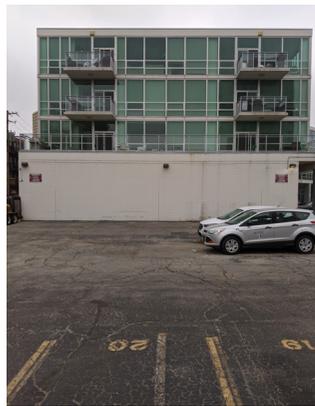


Figure 72 | Site Analysis

Figure 73 | Site Analysis



Urban art covered the walls of Wicker Park. Because the site is only accessible through alleys, urban art will be implemented as a way to pay homage to the existing environment and allow the teenagers to feel welcome.

Part of the program includes a creative studio. Because creative expression is so important, the building will also become a canvas for the teenagers to utilize in their self-expression. Not only will give them an opportunity to express themselves, it will also give them a chance to build self-confidence and earn a sense of ownership over the site.

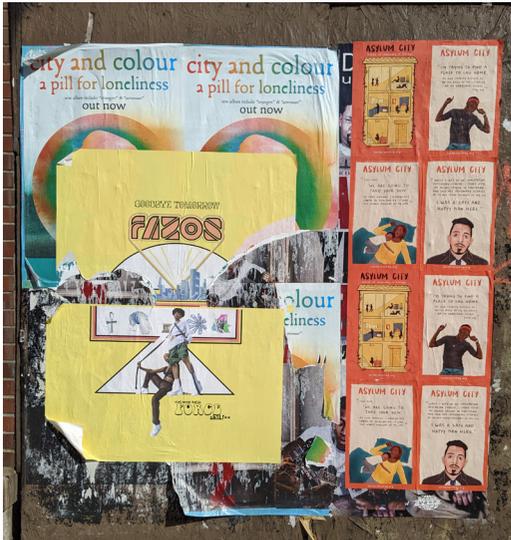


Figure 74 | Site Analysis



Figure 75 | Site Analysis



Figure 76 | Site Analysis

These site photos show the materiality of the buildings surrounding the site. Wicker Park has industrial elements throughout the community in both small details and large rail lines. Many buildings have brick facades with some materials changes for interest.



Figure 77 | Site Analysis

Figure 78 | Site Analysis



Figure 79 | Site Analysis

Figure 80 | Site Analysis



Figure 81 | Site Analysis



Figure 82 | Site Analysis



Figure 83 | Site Analysis



Figure 84 | Site Analysis

Figure 85 | Site Analysis



Figure 86 | Site Analysis



Figure 87 | Site Analysis

# Performance Criteria

## Behavior Performance

Because the design of this site will be focused on teenagers, usage times will be unique throughout the day, week, month, and year. However, in order to make the project efficient usage will be required even when teenagers may not be there. In order to do this, the project program will account for when teens may or may not be at the site, and how to maintain usage accordingly. This will be evaluated in the final design by the identification of how the site is used at various times throughout a day, week, month, and year. At a minimum, if usage is maintained during general business hours throughout the year, this goal will be considered met.

## Psychological Impact

The primary focus of this thesis is to prevent teenage tragedies. This will be accomplished through the intentional design of a program that alleviates the potential for tragedy. An example might be the inclusion of a study/work space for students to work on school, so that they can achieve their grade goals. Including the study/work space prevents bad grades, which many teenagers identify as tragedies based on my research. Evaluation of this criteria will be done through the presentation of a program that prevents tragedies for teenagers.

## Spatial Relationships

Within the design for the site, spaces need to be carefully positioned in proximity to each other. Spatial volumes also need to be considered from area to area. The spatial matrix will be used to identify the proximity and interaction of spaces. This will be evaluated in the final design by determining if the floor plans appropriately relate spaces according to the matrix.

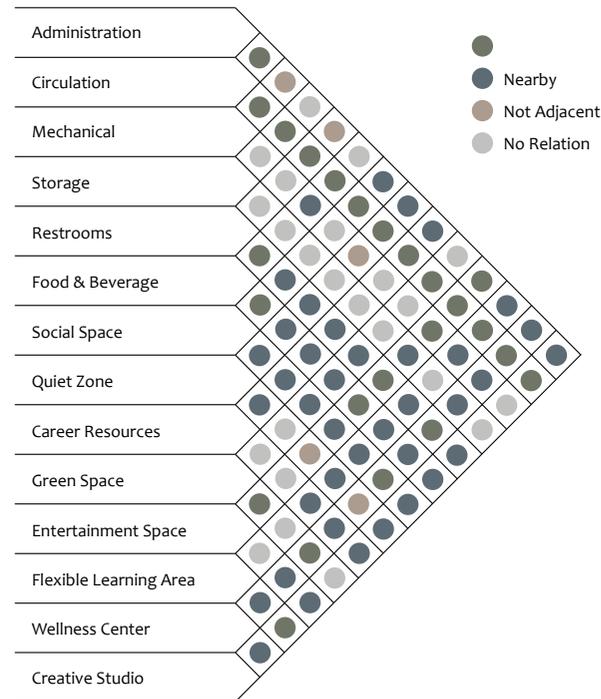


Figure 88 | Spatial Matrix

# Spatial Volume Distribution

- 3% Administration
- 8% Circulation
- 8% Mechanical
- 5% Storage
- 5% Restrooms
- 8% Food & Beverage
- 9% Social Space
- 9% Quiet Zone
- 5% Career Resources
- 12% Entertainment Space
- 7% Flexible Learning Area
- 14% Wellness Center
- 7% Creative Studio

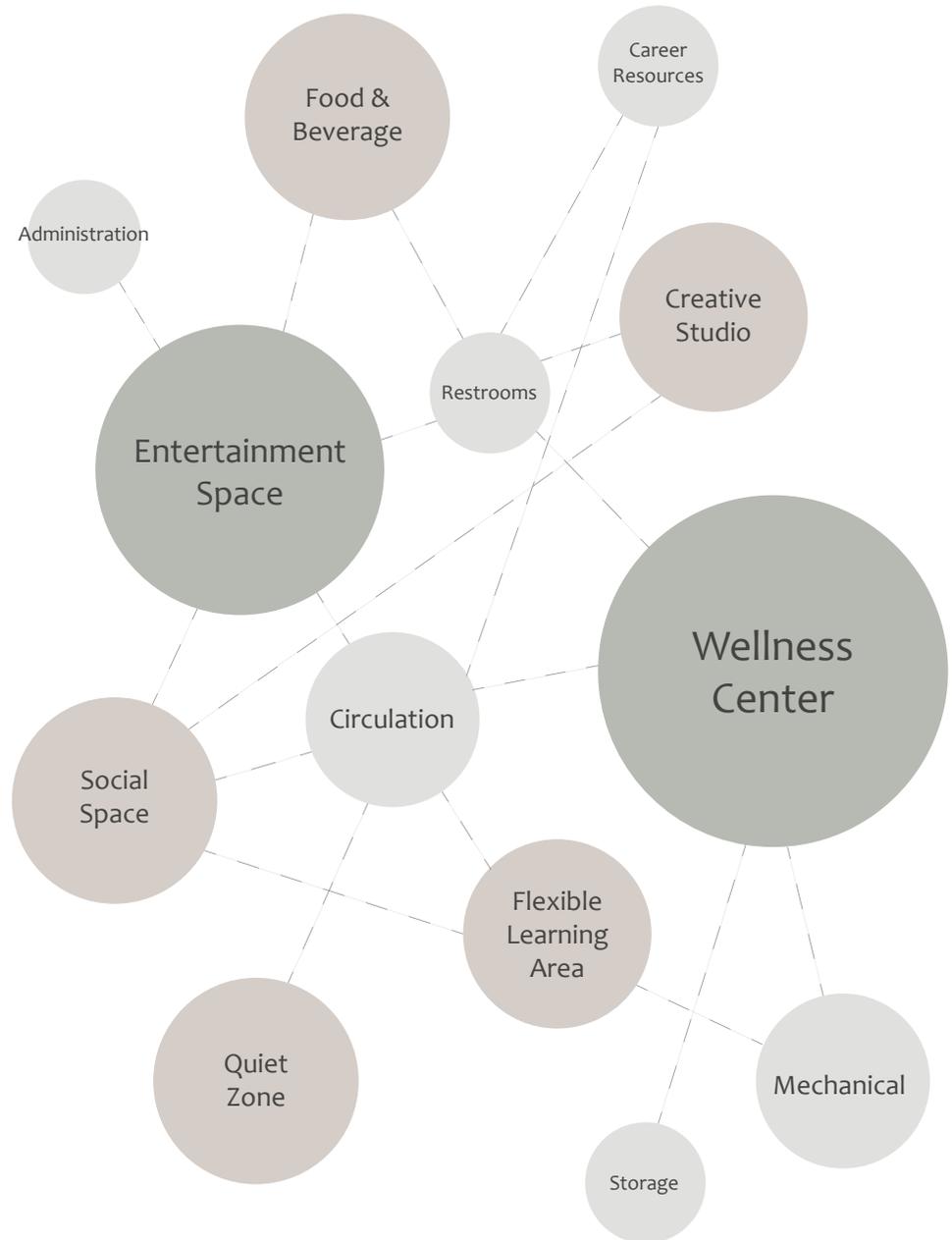


Figure 89 | Spatial Interaction Net



DESIGN  
SOLUTION

# RESEARCH INFLUENCE

This diagram demonstrates the relationship of the research elements and the translation into the program. On the left is a sample of the catalog of tragedies. Those tragedies connect to spaces, identified from experiential collages, that are marked by one line if they appeal to the desires of the id or two lines if they appeal to the desires of the superego.

For example let's start with self expression on the left. Self expression could hypothetically become a tragedy if someone chose to express themselves by getting a tattoo. To the teen that may not seem like a bad decision, and it might not be, but to their parents it might be an irreversible mistake leading to arguments and frustration at home. If the teen could express themselves in another way, perhaps that tragedy could be avoided. Perhaps that other way is through a creative studio that allows them to try out print making. The creative studio, on the yellow bar is marked with one white line indicating that the space satisfies desires of the id. This is because activities occurring within a creative studio or maker space generally stem from one's urge to investigate their inner personality and express their individuality.



# SITE SELECTION

One of the most important considerations in this project was where to place it. Why is Wicker Park, a community in Chicago, Illinois, the selected site for this project? Wicker Park contains all the elements required to make a successful space for teenagers. First, Wicker Park is located just south of the two communities most densely populated with teenagers. Locating the site just outside of their neighborhood gives them the sense that they are “getting away” while still being nearby.

Wicker Park also has adults with watchful eyes interacting with the varying types of local businesses within the community, which serve as indirect supervision. Because Wicker Park is diverse, growing, and located on the Blue Line, teenagers have easy accessibility to an environment that welcomes them and is in the middle of the hustle and bustle of life. The site is located on the interior of a triangular block and only accessible through alleyways. This adds to the experience of being somewhere secretive and unknown, which fulfills the teenager’s desire to gain new experiences.

# DESIGN SOLUTION

Now I'd like to propose an architectural solution to alleviate the potential for tragedies in the lives of teenagers. The typology is varied with mixed uses, but at times it is a market space, a food hall, an educational classroom, a quiet get away, and a wellness center.

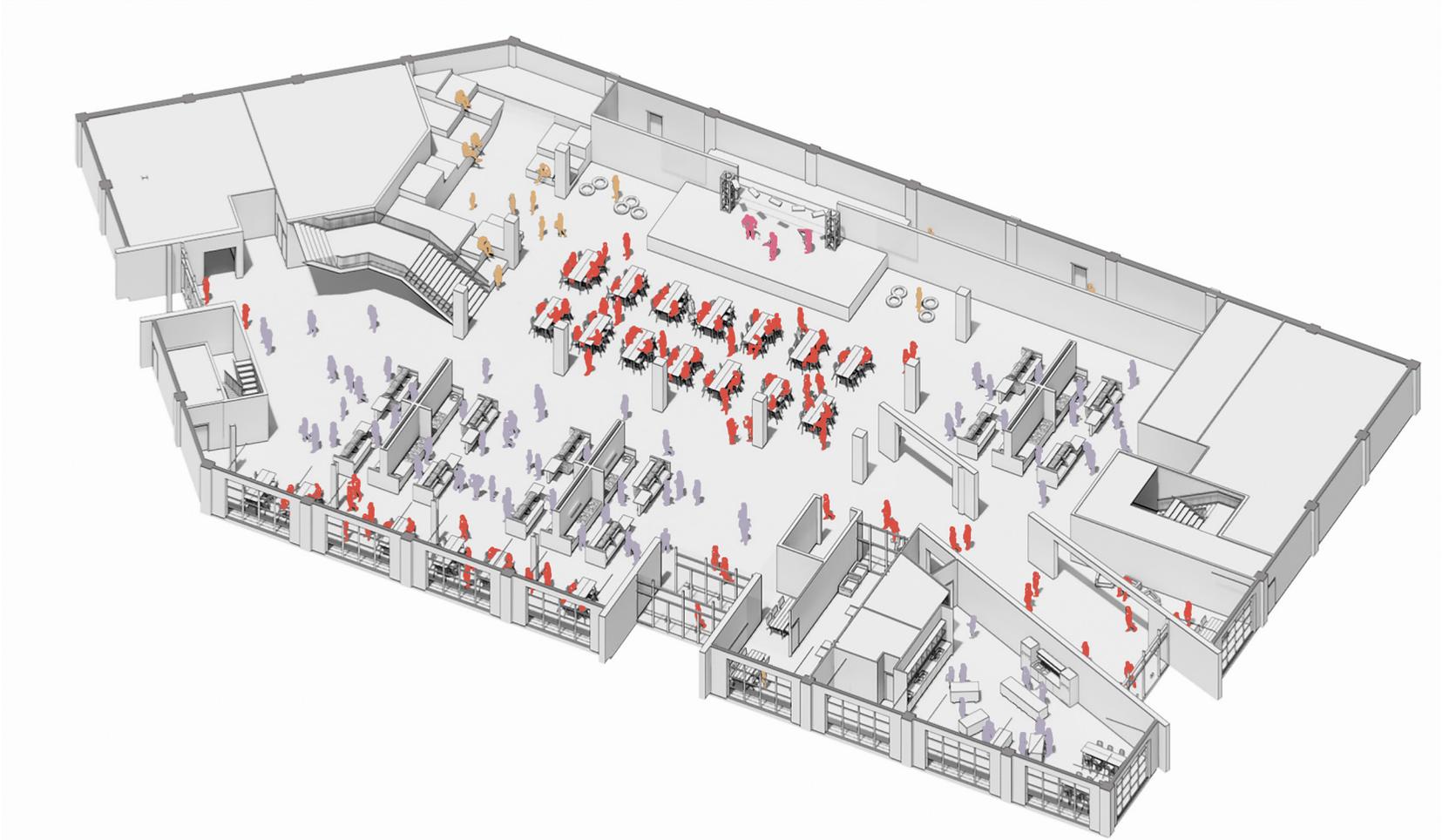
From the exterior you'll notice a nod to materials found neighboring the site. This was an intentional design decision to respect the existing structures and ensure the building found its place nestled in the alleyway. You might also notice the physical manifestation of a gradation that occurs within the program inside. The heavier weight of brick creates a sense of strength for lots of activity and movement happening on the first level. As the eye moves to the metal panels on the second level, one will notice the walls pulling back and the mullions pulling up reflecting a decrease in public interaction. The third level is airy and light with wide panes of glass meeting each other at butt joints to allow as much natural light into the private and quiet working spaces within.



WALKWAY

# LEVEL ONE

Inside, the building follows a gradation of characteristics in the program from level one to three. At the lower level the physical activity, noise, and chaos is great. It is very accessible and public with three entry corridors and community seating overlooked by the floors above. Color coded to reflect the program they are a part of, the people indicate the various uses of each space. You might notice that from image to image, the people may be in the same space but are identified by a different color. This is because some spaces and activities crossover and mix into others naturally.



# FOOD HALL

The first floor consists of a food hall serving the public. These food stalls will be operated by local restaurants that have agreed to partner with teenagers to employ them, educate them in business practices, and contribute in giving them personal growth opportunities.



# COMMUNITY SEATING

Community seating under the atrium is the primary public meeting area for the building users. It allows for flexibility with movable furniture and encourages social interaction amongst those sharing long tables. This space can be used for dining during meal times, and as working surfaces, meeting locations, or simply social stations at other times. Social interaction is crucial to a teenager's personal development. A tragedy experienced by most teenagers at some point, is loneliness, but giving them a third place for social interaction might help alleviate that tragedy. This environment is casual enough for them to feel comfortable having fun, while safe enough that their guardians will not be concerned about them hanging out here after school or on the weekends.



# STAGE

The same space can also be used to enjoy entertainment. Giving teenagers a place to express themselves through performance gives them a chance to demonstrate their individuality, build confidence, and strengthen skills. This space can also be used to enjoy watching someone else perform on a Friday night. Teenagers have a strong desire to get out of the house and go do something fun, which can lead to poor decisions or hanging out with bad influences. This space gives teens a chance to have a fun and exciting night under the indirect supervision of the young adults also there to enjoy a good meal and beverage.



# SKATE ZONE

On the first floor, building users can find the skate zone tucked into a corner. This space is flexible and casual allowing users to skate, climb, and hang out. The skate zone is a part of the wellness component of the program because it gets people to be physically active. Many of the tragedies identified in the research, such as aggression, low-self esteem, or depression, might be alleviated through wellness spaces. Other areas in the building that are also considered part of the wellness center will be marked by users of the same color shown here.



# LEVEL TWO

On the second level public interaction drops off. Market stalls similar to the ones below, offer goods and products other than food. Businesses within these stalls will follow the same guidelines regarding teenagers as those in the food hall, perhaps even selling products made or designed by teens. Social spaces can be found throughout the second level as well as wellness environments. Offices for various organizations and the creative studio are also located on the second level.



# MAKERSPACE

The makerspace on the second level offers teenagers a place to creatively express themselves and gain new experiences. Sometimes when teenagers express themselves, it results in illegal activity, aggressive behavior, or trouble at home. This creative studio will serve as a constructive outlet for many teenagers looking to express themselves.



# ORGANIZATION OFFICES

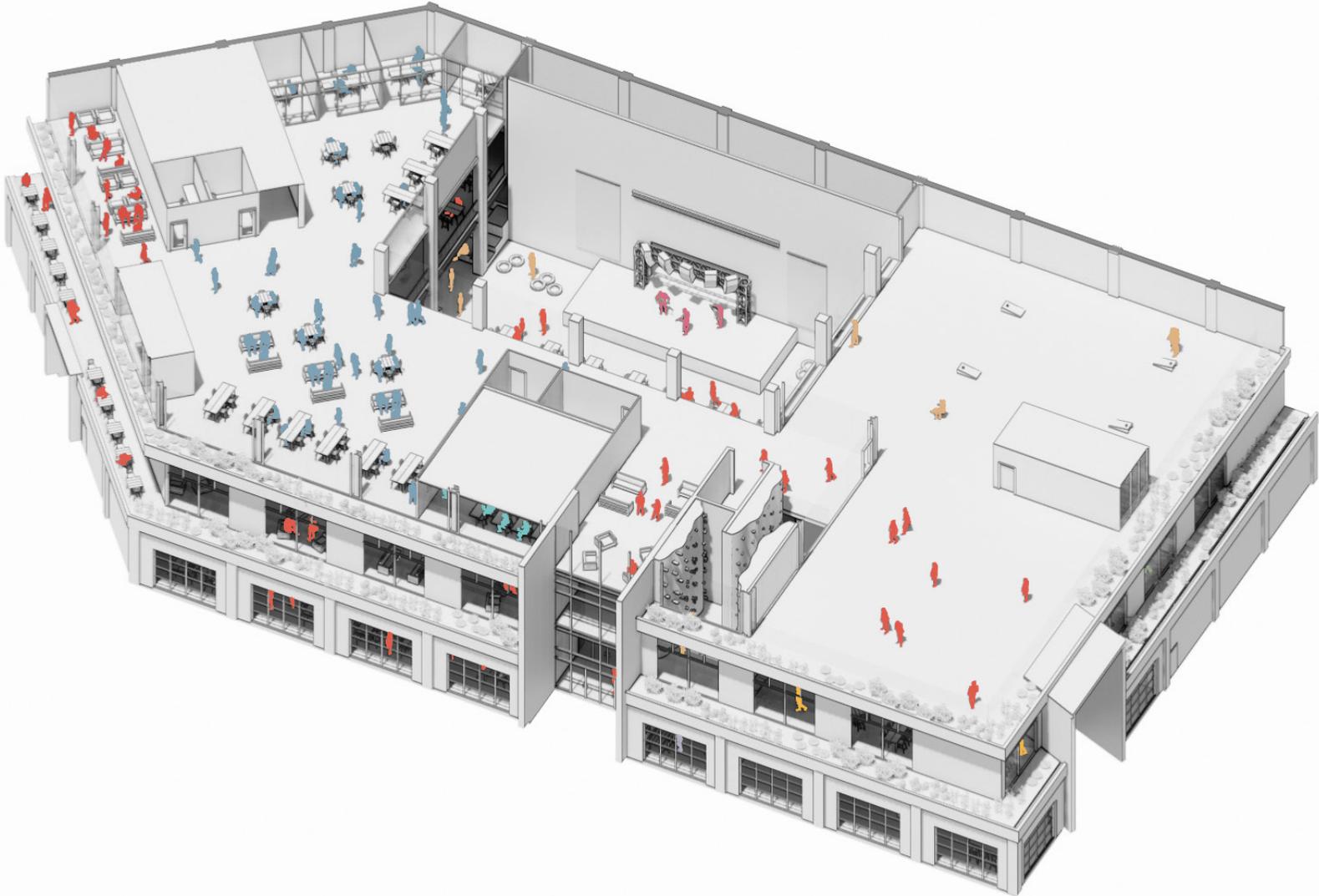
Offices for the organizations that are already positively influencing teenagers can be located on the second level. They add an extra layer of supervision from their view of community seating from the second level. The organizations are accessible by both the public and teenagers, and can play a part in ensuring that teenagers benefit from the activities within the building. Housing the offices of the various nonprofits within close proximity will help them to collaborate and reach more teenagers. In this image you'll notice one of the concrete corridors bring people into the building. It is one of the places where teenagers can express themselves and place ownership over their environment.



# LEVEL THREE

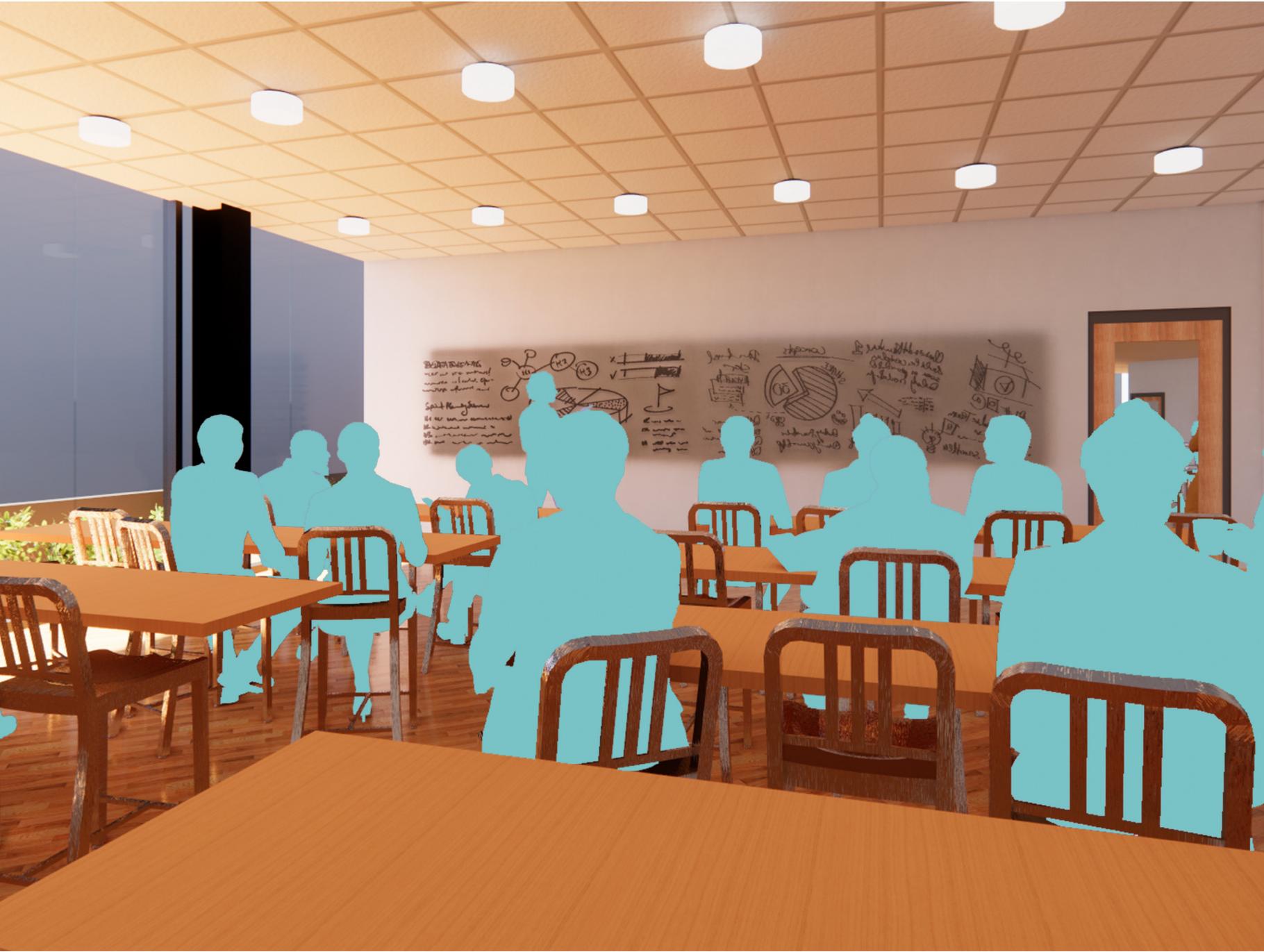
The third level of the building takes in more natural light, and becomes quieter and more focused. The third floor is far more private with learning spaces and quiet zones while maintaining social spaces.

It's important to realize that as stated before, loneliness is one of the most common and painful tragedies experienced by teenagers. Loneliness is even felt by introverted people that we assume want to be alone. Placing quieter social areas amongst the working spaces gives teens of any personality the chance to be a part of socialization while maintaining their personal needs for independence.



# FLEXIBLE LEARNING

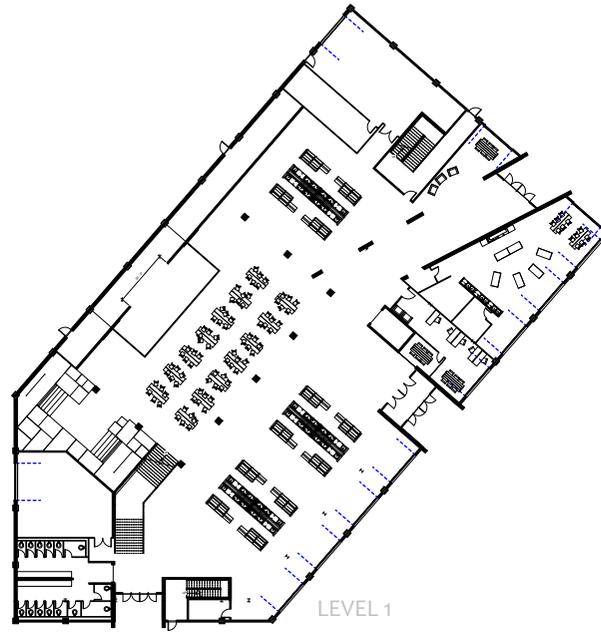
This flexible learning space can serve a variety of purposes. It can be a large group meeting space, a classroom, or a theater. Teenagers have a strong desire to GO. They want to see new spaces, have new experiences, learn new things. This space is meant to give them a place to creatively do that without creating tragedies through spur-of-the-moment decisions.



# FOCUS ROOMS

These focus rooms, located on the third floor give users a space to work in small groups or individually in a quiet environment. Some teens come from noisy homes and need a place to escape for some peace. Other teens are facing the tragedy of getting poor grades and what that may mean at home. This space can help to alleviate the potential for both tragedies by giving teenagers a flexible but quiet environment.

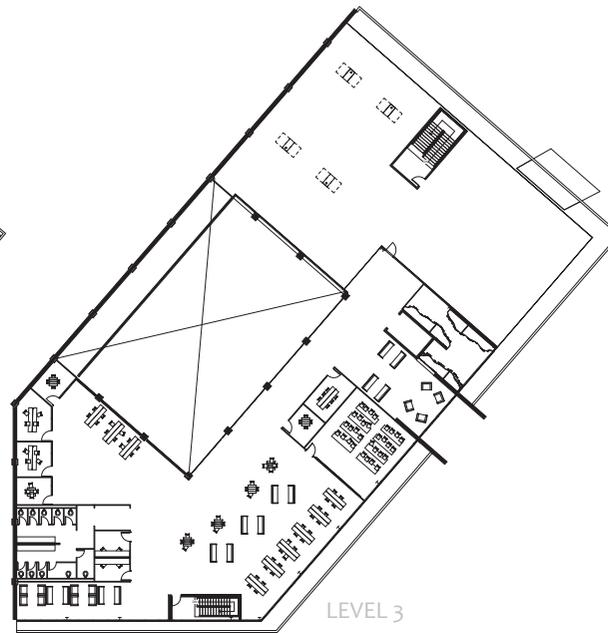
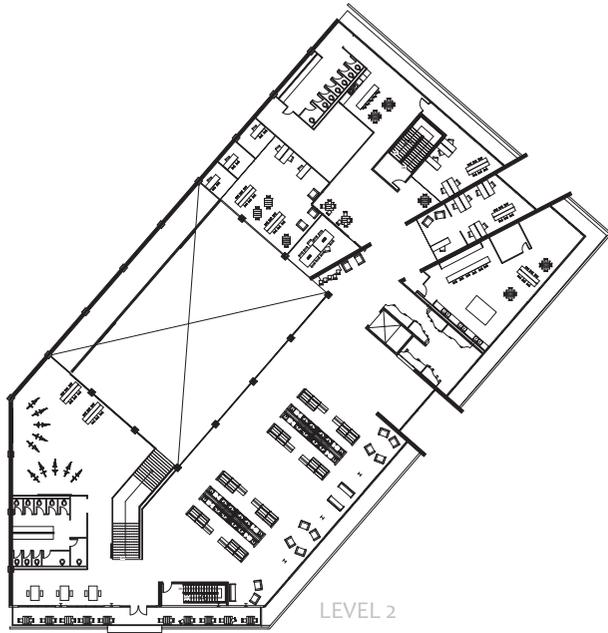




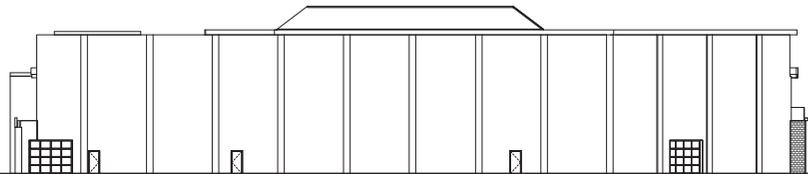
WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



# Appendix

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# Previous Design Studio Experience

## 2nd Year

Charollette Grueb  
The Tea House | Moorhead, MN

Cindy Urness  
Small Dwelling | Cripple Creek, CO  
Montessori School | Fargo, ND

## 3rd Year

Regin Schwaen  
Nekoma Pyramid | Nekoma, ND  
Nevis Cabin | Nevis, ND

Bakr Aly Ahmed  
Tri-Valley Culinary School | Fargo, ND  
Afordable Housing | Fargo, ND

## 4th Year

Don Faulkner  
Highrise Capstone | Miami, FL

David Crutchfield  
Moving City Urban Design | Future America