

The Old Soul of Design



— THE BRIDGING OF TIME AND PLACE THROUGH THE —
REBIRTH OF HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

THE OLD SOUL OF DESIGN

A Design Thesis Submitted to the
Department of Architecture
North Dakota State University

By

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

North Dakota State University Libraries Addendum

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Introduction





Image 1.1

Narrative

Passion Paragraph:

Can the critique of modern dwelling be resolved through the restoration and integration of old architecture and the stories it carries? And can these pieces of historic architecture be reshaped to bridge time and place?

Following the critique given by several philosophers and cultural critics, there is a distinct neglect for the stories of historic architecture which contributes to the disconcerting attempt to dwell within our modern cities. Considering the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger's, critique in his essay *Building Dwelling Thinking*, is it possible that our technology has advanced so far that we have forgotten what came before us, that which allowed us to dwell in a place in a meaningful way? Working through historical architecture, I hope to answer my proposed Thesis Questions.

The next few pages of writing highlight the inspiration and argumentation I took from two readings. The first being "Lessons of a Dream" by Karsten Harries and the second being "Monumentality and Contemporaneity in the works of Tarkovsky, Goldsworthy, and Zumthor" by Anne Bordeleau.

*“Architectural historians give you information;
the neighborhoods give you passion.”
- Antoinette Lee*



Theoretical Research/ Justification

- Can my critique of modern dwelling be resolved through the restoration and integration of the old?
- How can we best preserve the history that architecture carries with it across the great state of North Dakota?
- Can the preservation of deteriorating farm buildings across North Dakota bring cultural and philosophical benefits to those within the area?
- Can my work redefine what we believe it means to dwell?
- Would any alterations to these buildings destroy the very soul of the material I am so desperately trying to preserve?
- How can I bridge time and place with historic architecture?

I have noticed two glaring issues across our nation. These issues being the horrifying neglect for our historic pieces of architecture and the disconcerting attempt to dwell within our modern cities and homes. I sense the public's sharp disconnect from what it means to dwell as well as how we used to dwell.

Our first step we must take is attempting to define what it means to build and to dwell.

“Only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build.” – Martin Heidegger

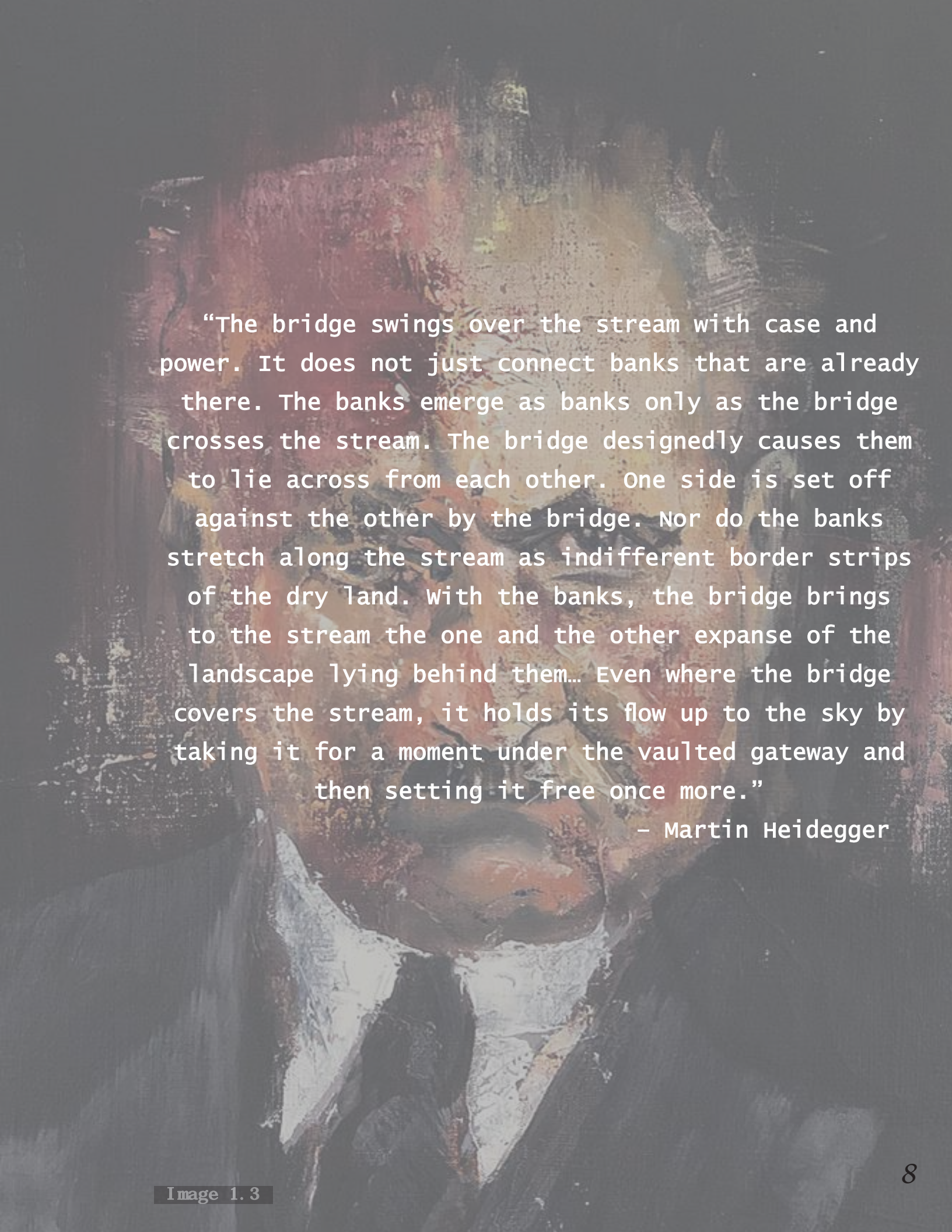
Dwelling, according to Heidegger, is to remain in place and to be situated in a certain relationship with existence. This “existence” is represented and contained within Heidegger’s suggestion of the fourfold. This “fourfold” made up of the mortals (us), earth (the ground beneath our feet), sky (the air above our heads), and divinities. Divinities is commonly referred to as a form of greater power, in most cases spiritual, but is also understood to be the immortal flow of culture. The recognition of culture outliving us and the impact it has on the future.

Heidegger looks at the origins of the German word “bauen” - “to build” and claims that it has lost its original meaning of “being” in a certain place. Heidegger then proceeds to argue that the manner in which we dwell is the manner in which we are and how we exist on the face of the earth – an extension of our identity, of who we are.

If we are to pursue the ideal form of dwelling, we must understand the impacts of our actions on the future through the rediscovery of the impacts that the old soul of design had on us.



Image 1.8



“The bridge swings over the stream with case and power. It does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream. The bridge designedly causes them to lie across from each other. One side is set off against the other by the bridge. Nor do the banks stretch along the stream as indifferent border strips of the dry land. With the banks, the bridge brings to the stream the one and the other expanse of the landscape lying behind them... Even where the bridge covers the stream, it holds its flow up to the sky by taking it for a moment under the vaulted gateway and then setting it free once more.”

– Martin Heidegger

Next, we must justify the use of these pieces of history as our bridges of time.

Heidegger once again presents himself a useful bases for the proposed argument. Explaining how the banks of a river only come to be defined once a bridge is constructed between them. Heidegger argues, the bridge provides a sense of space.

Out of several possibilities along the river, the construction of a bridge was the site in which a place was constituted. A bridge is a manifestation of the fourfold which is at the base of all dwelling.

Now, just as the bridge connects the banks we can bridge time, defining and linking two moments in time. Uncovering and rediscovering history within the present.

Finally, the importance of a moment in time.

While discussing the works of Andy Goldsworthy, Peter Zumthor, and Andrey Tarkovsky, Anne Bordeleau draws an important comparison between their works and the impacts they have on the flow of time and the moments of said time. Each one of them providing the viewer with a new perspective on said moment in time.

Whether it be Andy Goldsworthy's illustrations of the temporary marks humans can make on the flow of natural time. Through his works of art, uncovering the essence of materials and determining what they are capable of. The Kolumba Museum, by Peter Zumthor, which allows history and the present to meet. Forming a new reality in one moment in time. Framing the beauty and intertwining with the history to create a non-intrusive vessel for the soul of the architecture.



Image 1.4

Or even Andrey Tarkovsky's ability to, through his films, sculpt in time a moment that skews our special perception while additionally skewing our experience of time.

One of the goals of the modern architect is to express something durable in "...the face of incessant movement." This incessant movement being our impatient human desire to progress through time as quickly as possible, blind to the moments of beauty and atrocity within and outside our time. We are incapable of seeing ourselves if we live solely in the present while burring who we are. Just like looking in a mirror, truly seeing who we are is only possible by stepping back and observing ourselves through a different perspective in the moment.

Anne Bordeleau states - "...: a willingness to stand beside time, or between times. If architectural monumentality can make time momentarily tangible, architectural contemporaneity can permit a slippage in time, an anachronistic positioning that does not align with any single moment."

I want to allow the viewer to step out of the novelty of current times and appreciate the beauty of the moment by stepping back and standing beside time. The soul of the old architecture's materials can be the frame for a new moment. A monument in the immortal bridge that is time.

“Nature comes to be understood increasingly as available material, to be used and be disposed of when no longer of use. That includes human beings.”

I will not condone the eugenics of architecture. The casting away of the undesirable from lack of understanding of the inherent significance that they carry. I shall shed light on the link in our human existence to the dwellings life and what it means to dwell. A light to show what the eyes can's see. Just as the tangible materials of architecture, time is a material connecting the past and present.

“Building that serves the requirements of dwelling must preserve and represent the tensions between private and public domains, house and temple, building and architecture, building and nature.”

The next two pages are filled with various jarring images I created to illustrate the sharp contrast between our current dwelling situation and the past. Enunciating the tension that resonates between the two ways of dwelling.

They also highlight the challenges I face with choosing the proper site and the undesirable outcomes that I may find myself with if I do not carefully proceed.

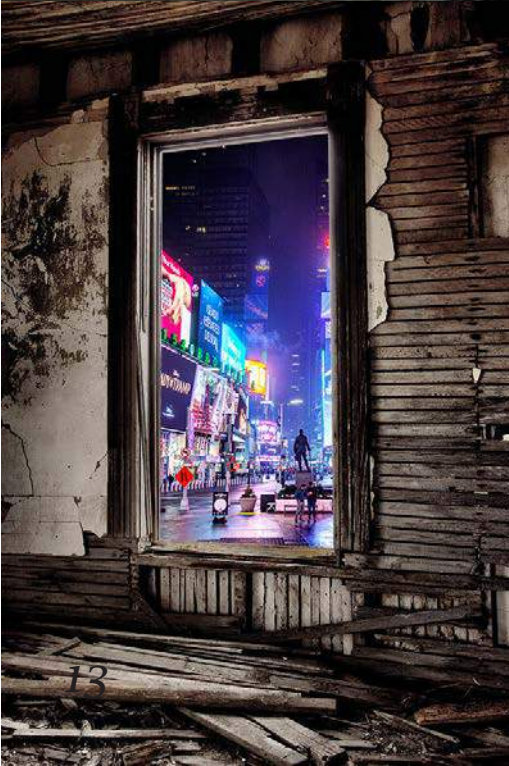


Image 1.5



Image 1.6

Defining Research Methodology

The specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic.

- Unifying idea
- Topic research leading to discovery of new ideas and tools to help you answer related questions
- Testing of new ideas and tools
- Formulate those opinions into a proposed intervention
- Formulation of your own design opinions

Project Typology



Historic Restoration:

The typology and aim of my thesis is to research, discover, and develop ways of preserving the architectural history that scatters the North Dakota great plains. My thesis proposal is clearly classified as a historic preservation mission and I shall be proceeding as my research suggests.

Research





Image 2.1

Case Studies

Case Studies:

- Kolumba Museum by Peter Zumthor
- Lake Fork Barn Reception Hall by Heritage Barns
- The Menokin House by Machado Silvetti
- Canyon Barn by Studio mwworks

Each one of these case studies highlights a different approach to historic restoration and preservation. All of them highlighting the beauty and soul within the materials. I hope to draw inspiration from each method and integrate the findings into my own project.



Image 2.2



Image 2.3



Image 2.4



Image 2.5

Kolumba Museum

The Kolumba Museum was designed by Peter Zumthor and completed in 2007. Situated in Cologne, Germany, a city that was almost completely destroyed in world war II, the museum houses the Roman Catholic Archdiocese's collection of art which spans more than a thousand years. The structure rests on and encompasses the former ruins of the Church of St. Kolumba, which was destroyed during the events of world war II, and the remains of the Gottfried Bohm chapel.





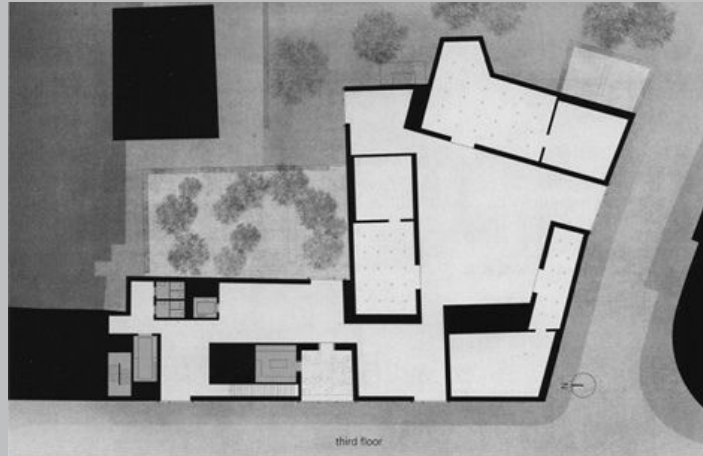
The facade of grey brick integrates the remnants of the church's facade into a new face for the contemporary museum. The large surfaces of the interior walls were to be coated without adding any expansion gaps. This ruled out using materials that are hard and brittle. Naturally, it was also the aesthetics which led Peter Zumthor to choose clay as a building material. He was drawn to a light grey colour he developed himself, which soon was given the name Kolumba grey. The new building develops seamlessly from the old remains whilst respecting it in every detail. The strategically placed holes within the brick walls defuse light within the ruins and chapel. The sixteen exhibition rooms contain the most varying qualities with regard to daylighting, proportion, pathways, and size.



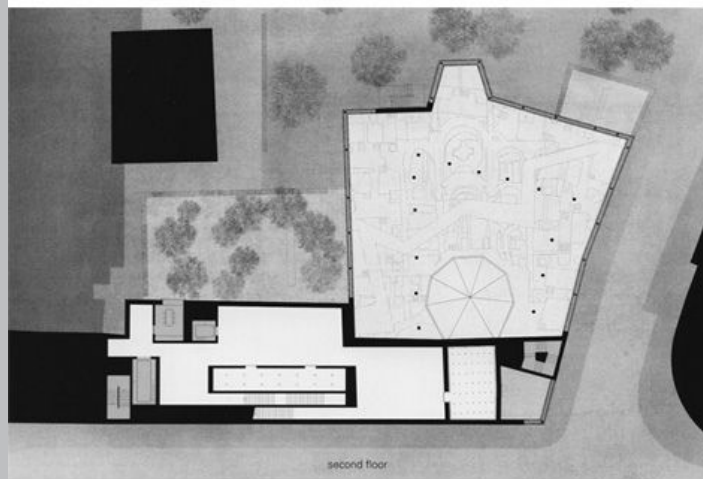
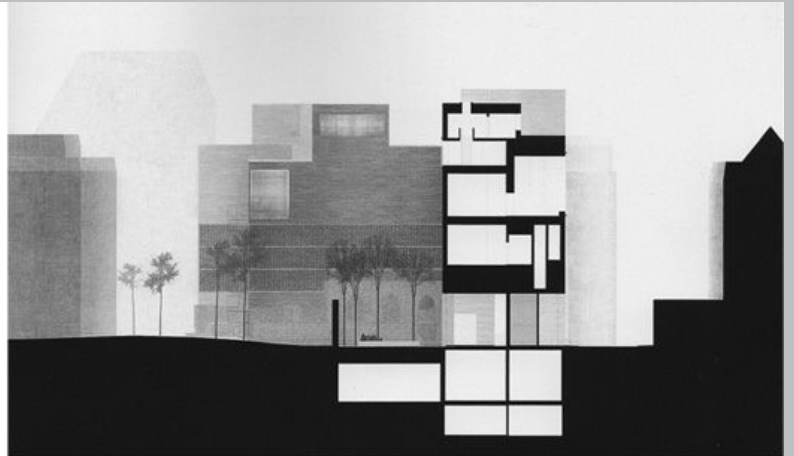
Image 2.8



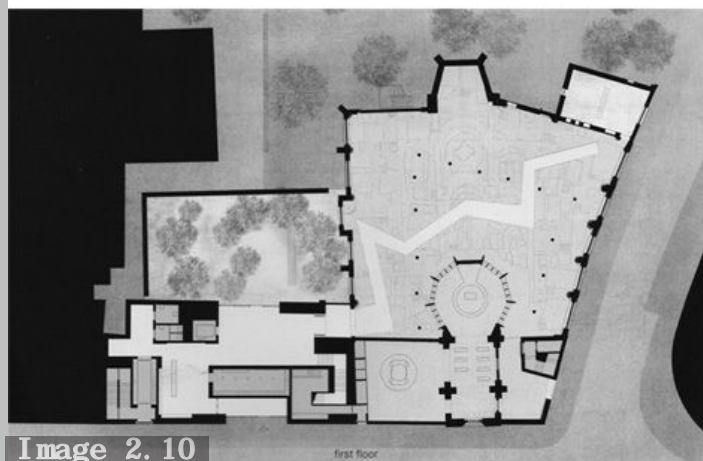
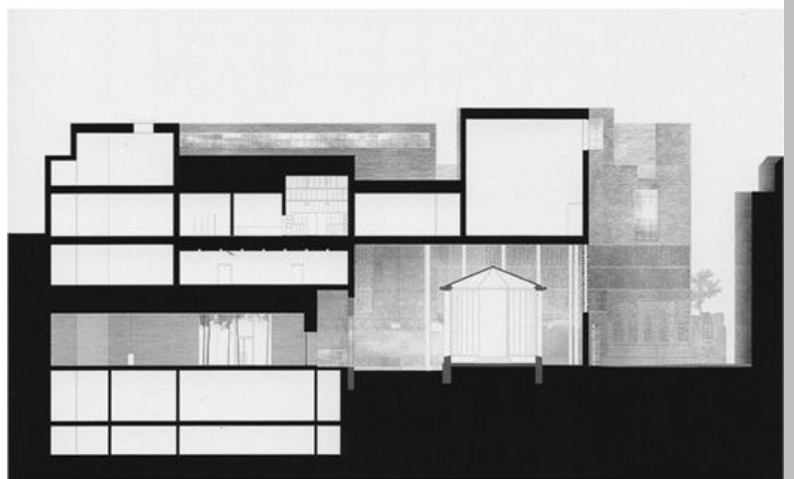
Image 2.9



third floor



second floor



first floor

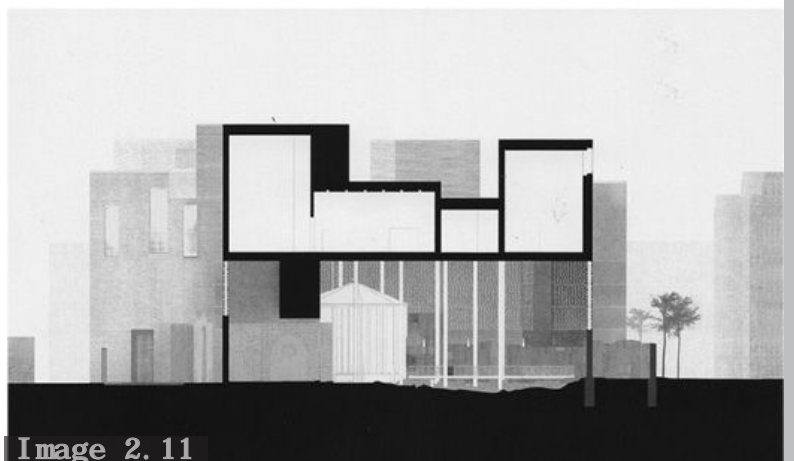
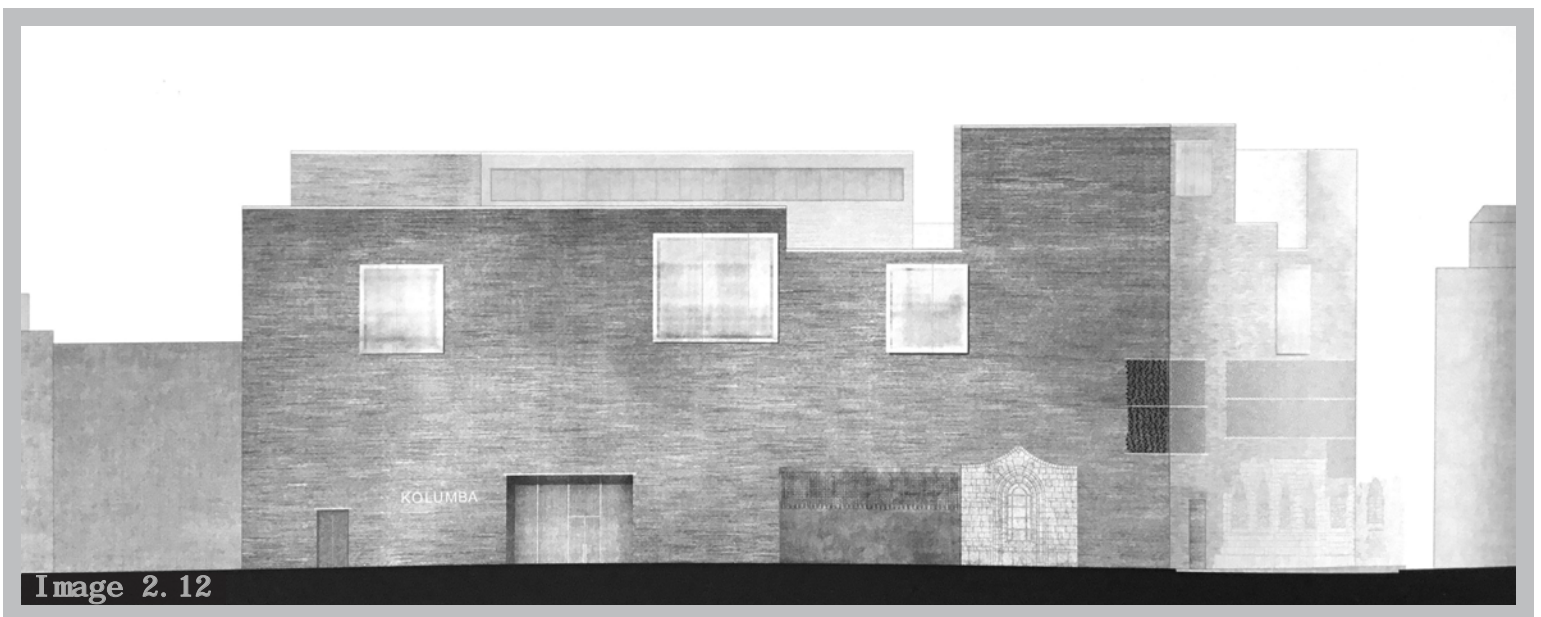


Image 2.11

My interpretation of the Kolumba Museum:

History holds up the present. We build off what has been built and create to open the door for creation. Peter Zumthor gave new life and purpose to the degrading structure, proving the strength and integrity of the material and its history. Allowing history and the present to meet and form a new reality, different from the one previously presented to the original inhabitants or the observers of the bare ruins. Framing the beauty and intertwining with the history to create a non-intrusive vessel for the soul of the architecture. The final act is handing it to the public, allowing them to experience the art and history to its fullest with the help of your guiding hand.



Lake Fork Barn Reception Hall

The Lake Fork Barn Reception Hall was originally constructed circa 1853 in Shartesville, PA and has a hand carved, oak tree structure. It is a German-styled barn frame that was originally built to house dairy farming operations. What makes it stand out from all other hand carved barns is its sheer size which dwarfs most others. It also sports canted queens posts (the wood pieces that go diagonally to support the rafters) which are not commonly found in this particular style of barn.

Original Barn





Image 2.14

The original barn was transported and restored in Emory, TX by Heritage Restorations. It stands out at its new location as an unusual Texas barn venue.

The Heritage Restorations team was able to get in contact with the original owners who were also the family that constructed the barn in 1853. The family had lived and worked on the same piece of land for over 150 years! The stories of the families immigration accross the Atlantic, from Germany to Pennsylvania, are now collected in Texas within the walls and materials of this amazing structure.



Image 2.15



Image 2.16

My interpretation of the Lake Fork Barn Reception Hall:

A beautiful blend of old and new. Allowing the old structure and old memories to house new stories and share the happiest day of peoples lives. The interior provides a backdrop that highlights the craftsmanship of the skilled hands that crafted the wooden posts, beams, and rafters. Another takeaway from this project is the site. It is a surreal location for an already beautiful piece of architecture. It shows how a design can be impacted and elevated by an ideal location.



The Menokin House

The Menokin House reconstruction and preservation efforts are headed by Machado Silvetti and begun in 2015. The Menokin house was once the home of Francis Lightfoot Lee and was originally constructed in 1769. The project is currently underway and on track to be completed in 2024.



Uninhabited for more than 50 years, the house was once a fine example of 18th century Georgian architecture has come close to being reduced to near rubble. Only two original walls and parts of two chimneys remain standing. Matthew Webster, architectural conservator and manager of architectural collections for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation stated, “If you were to reconstruct the house, you’d cover up some of the most interesting stuff,” he says. “With glass, we can actually see how an 18th century building comes together.”

The designers wanted to stay true to their original vision of not reconstructing the house, but showing it in its parts and pieces so that they could teach people how these pieces were fabricated and fit together. Another driving factor was the assumption that just rebuilding the original structure would not catch the eye of the public.

As Calder Loth, the former senior architectural historian at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and honorary Menokin Foundation trustee explains, “The success of the glass house project could also mean that other buildings like Menokin, whose original fabric is on the brink of destruction, may no longer be considered hopeless.” This project is a great example of how restoration efforts can drive the preservation of our history across the nation, just as I hope to accomplish.

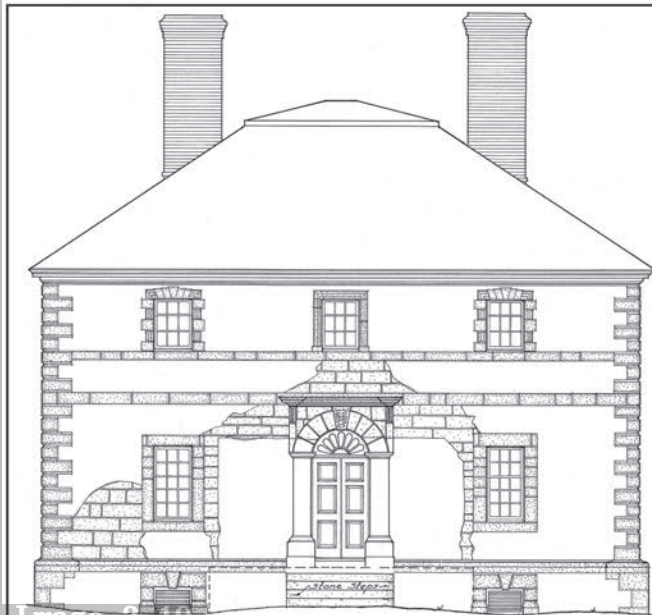


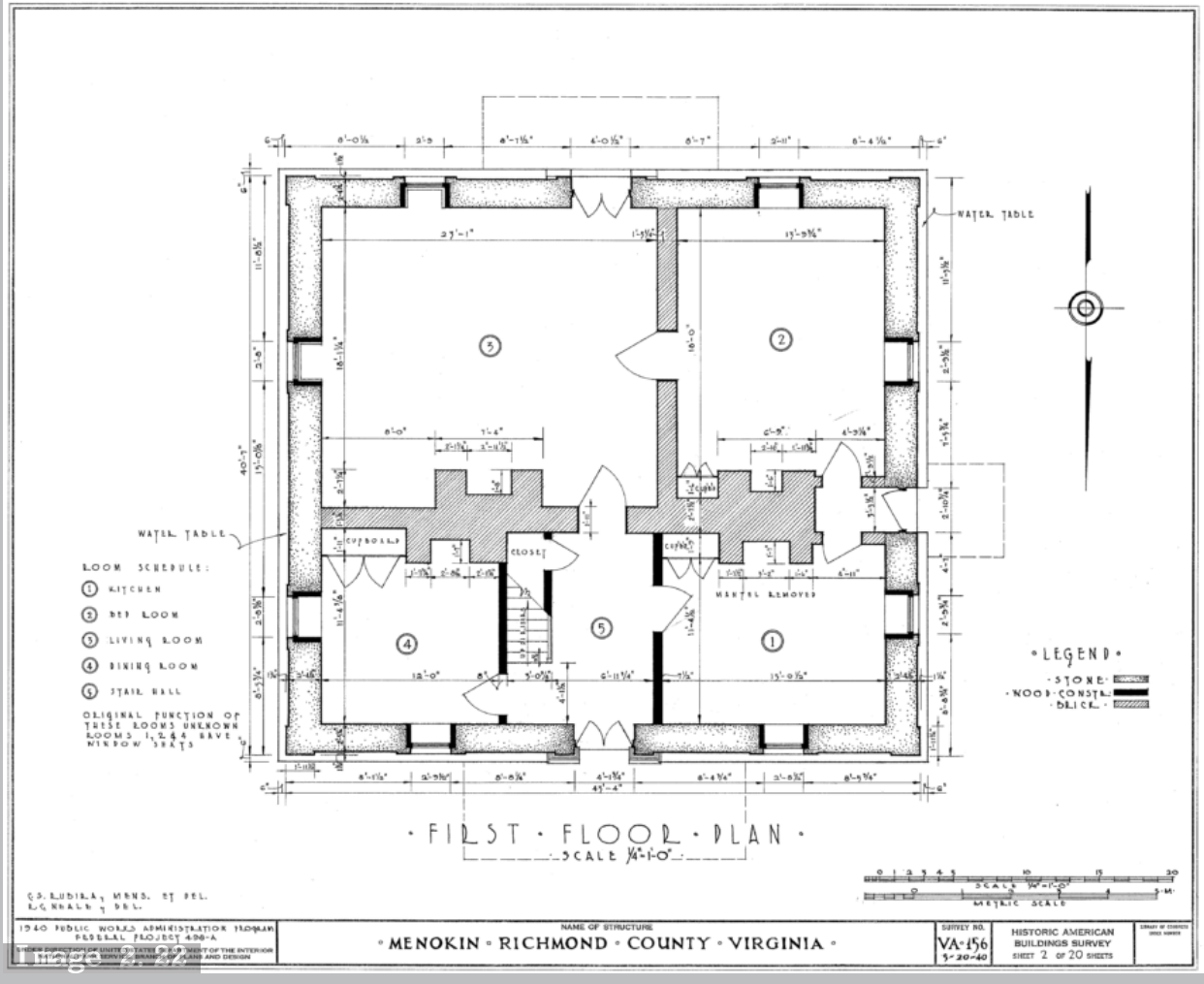
Image 2.19



Image 2.20



Image 2. 21



My interpretation of the Menokin House:

A shell that protects but does not try to heal the destruction nor cover it up. Unlike most, it does not try to recreate or imitate what once was. It presents a sharp contrast and tension between the old and the new. A window into the past presenting the inevitable ruin of time for all to see. The soul of the architecture shown through as a bright beacon of hope for those who wish to preserve the souls of our historical architecture. Our attempt as humans to stop the flow of time for a moment.



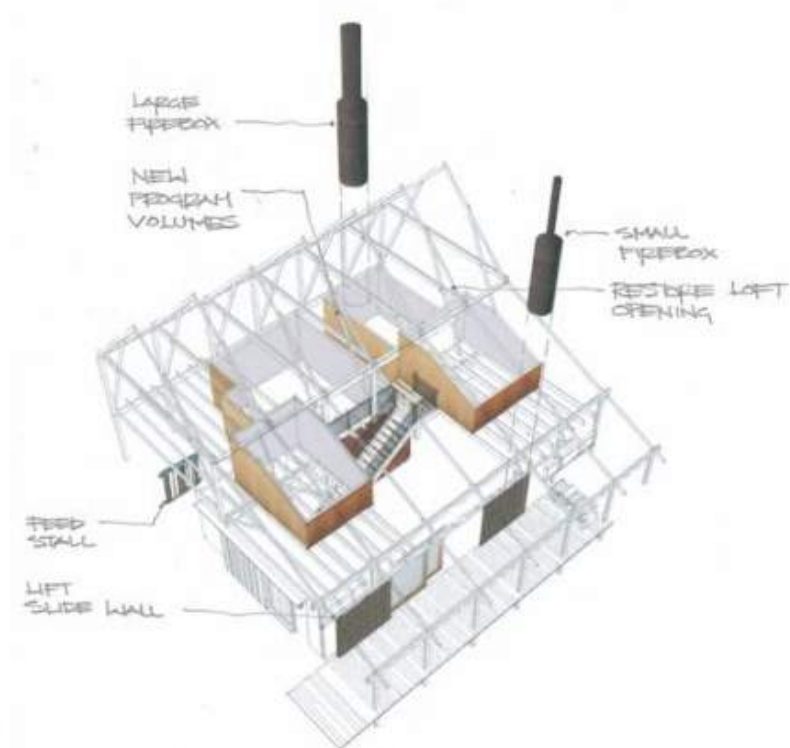
Image 2.23



Image 2.24

Canyon Barn

The Canyon Barn is located in East Cascades, Washington. This century old barn was converted into a three-bedroom home through the works of Studio mwworks. The intent was to create a functional and comfortable home without damaging the integrity of the original barns form. Almost all materials added to the project were salvaged from the original site and building or other salvage yards. Even the light fixtures and dining table were crafted from materials found on the surrounding site.



Re-purpose old floorboards are reused, framed and arranged to form the entry wall

The Canyon Barn showed success in updating an aging barn without losing sight of the history embedded within the original materials and form. Not only was the original building minimally altered, mwworks worked hard to leave the immediate site as organic as possible.



Arguably the largest alteration of the barn came with the glazing. To give an open feel and bring more natural light inside, the architects created a large, glazed section spanning from the floor all the way up to the roof. It runs through the center of the facade and is framed by wood-paneled walls on either side with the pitched roof sheltering it from above.

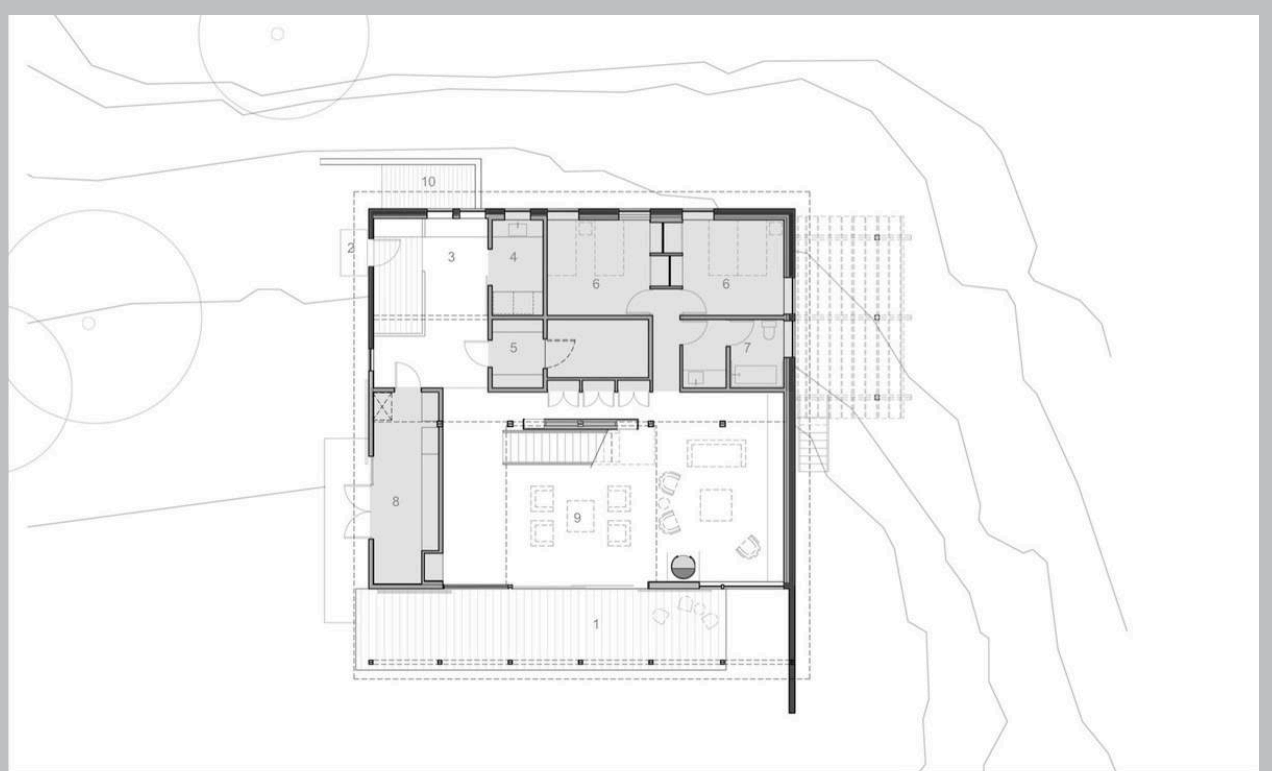


Image 2. 28

Ground Floor Plan 1 Porch 2 Entry 3 Entry / mudroom 4 Laundry 5 Cold storage
6 Bedroom 7 Bath 8 Storage 9 Family room 10 Outdoor shower

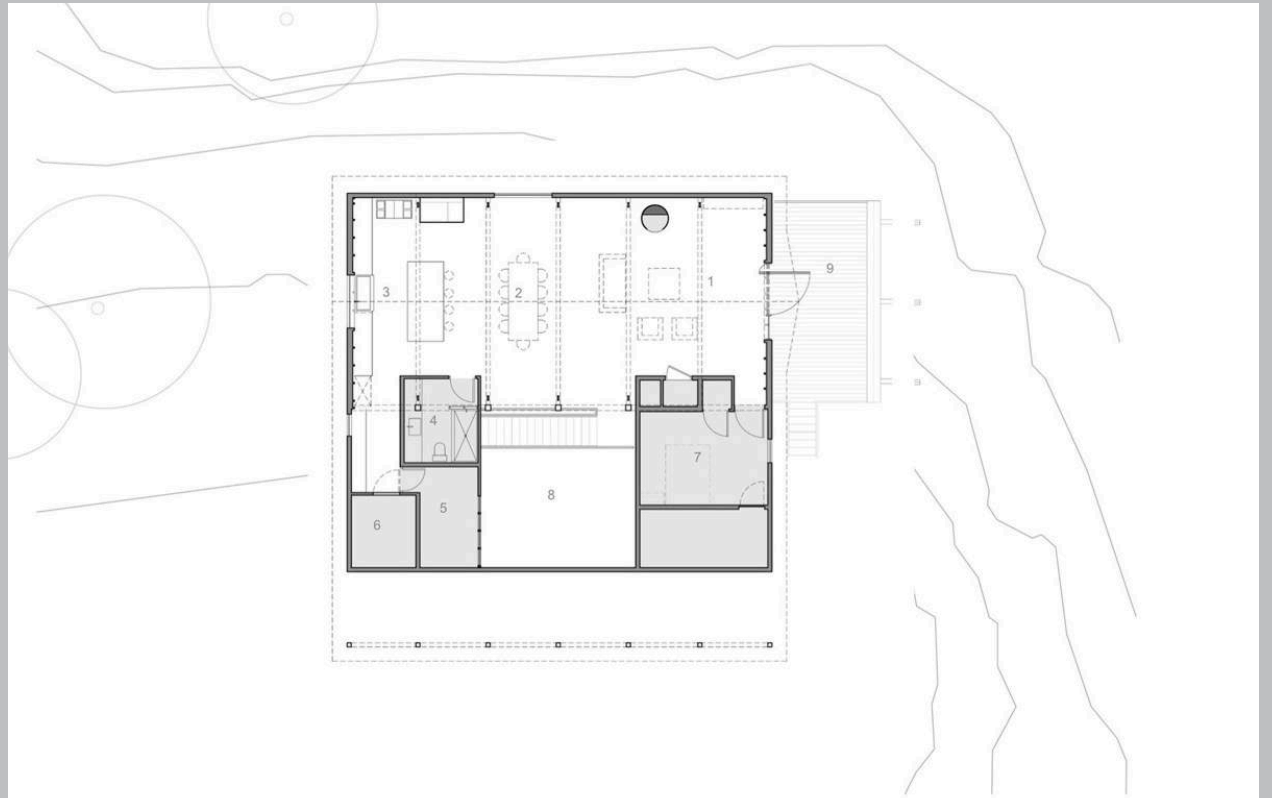


Image 2. 29

Second Floor Plan 1 Great room 2 Dining 3 Kitchen 4 Bath 5 Kids' loft
6 Pantry 7 Bedroom 8 Open to below 9 Deck



Image 2.30

My interpretation of the Maltby Barn:

This barn is a perfect example of the ways you can integrate modern functions into a historic form. Instead of altering the feeling you get as you dwell within the barn, mwworks highlights the comfort of the rustic interior and its spaces. Creating a cozy retreat imbued with the stories and history of the rugged terrane it is embedded in. Consideration for the surrounding nature and the nature of the barn itself are the key takeaways from this project.



Image 2.31

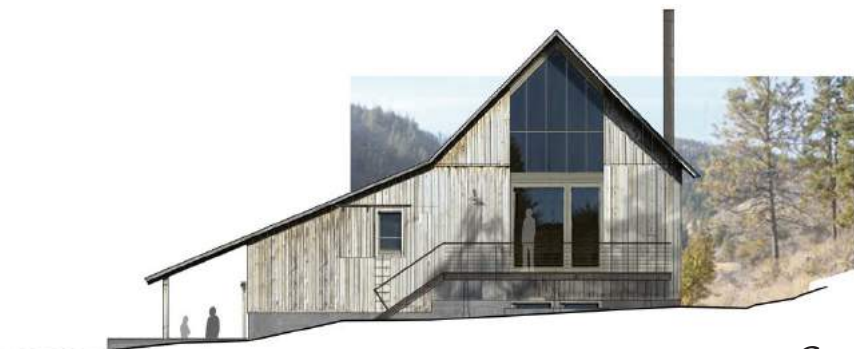


Image 2.32

Project Context





Image 3.1

Goals

- Provide a ND agricultural history museum and event space for the city of Fargo, ND.
- Shed a light on the current and potential beauty that will soon be gone.
- Use old ways of dwelling to redefine our current idea of what it means to dwell.
- Tell the stories of the materials and those who came before us.



Project Emphasis

The main project emphasis will be placed on the restoration of the large barn that graces the cover of my thesis proposal. I drive by it every time I drive back to my hometown and every time I think to myself it is really sad I may outlive this beautiful piece of North Dakota history. This barn has been a driving force in the development of my thesis mission and I feel a duty as an architect and North Dakota native to see its theoretical restoration through. Maybe one day I may find this theoretical restoration turns to a reality.



Image 3.3

Client/Users

The target client/user base for my thesis will be the general public of Fargo, North Dakota. As I stated in my project emphasis description, there is one barn in particular that I hope to re-purpose as an agricultural history museum and community space located within the heart of Fargo. Using the history of agricultural architecture to frame the storied of our people's history will touch the souls of those who experience the rebirth of barn.



Project Elements

Target of Preservation:

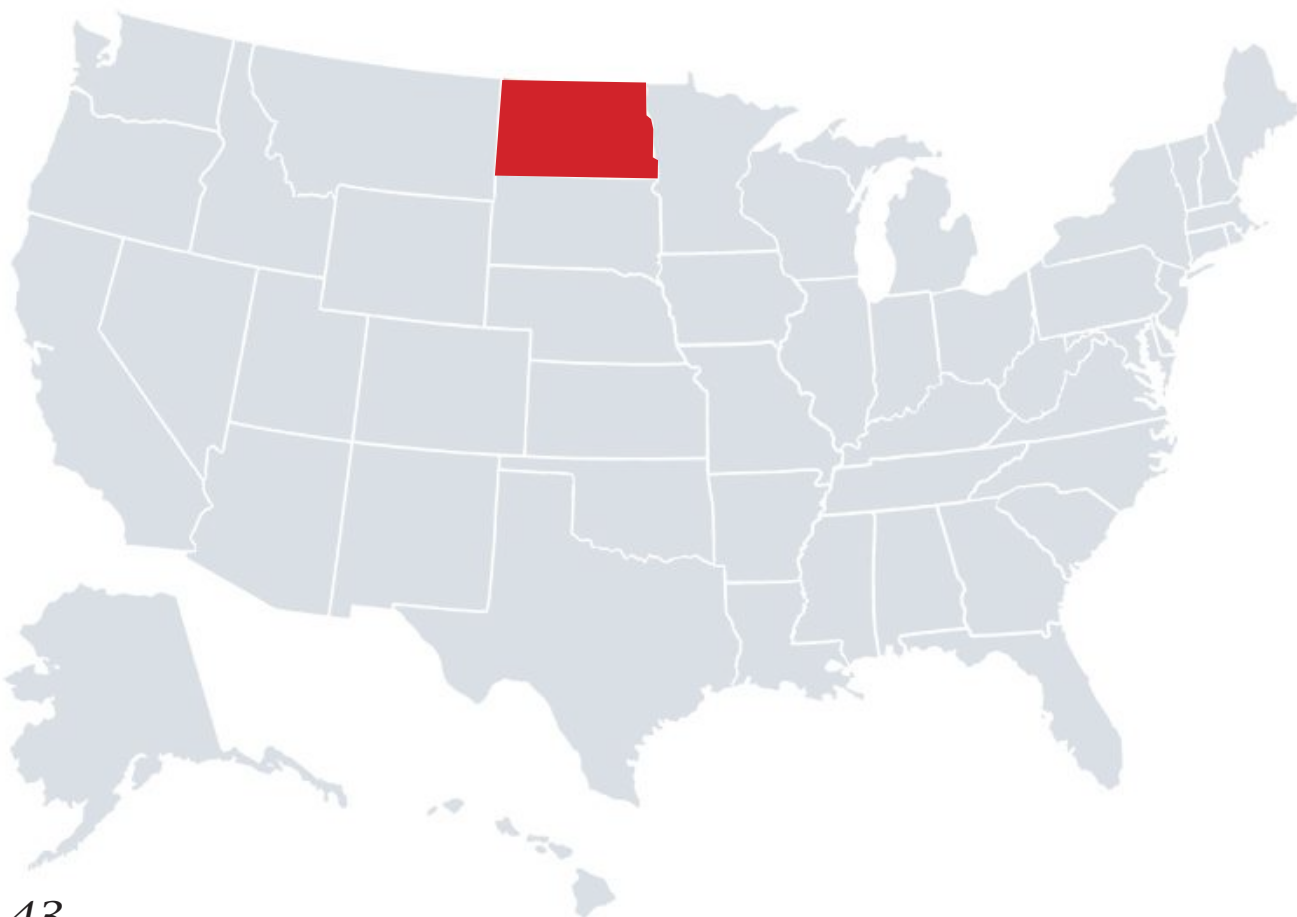
- Barns
- Homes
- Granaries
- Grain Bins
- Sheds
- Other outbuildings

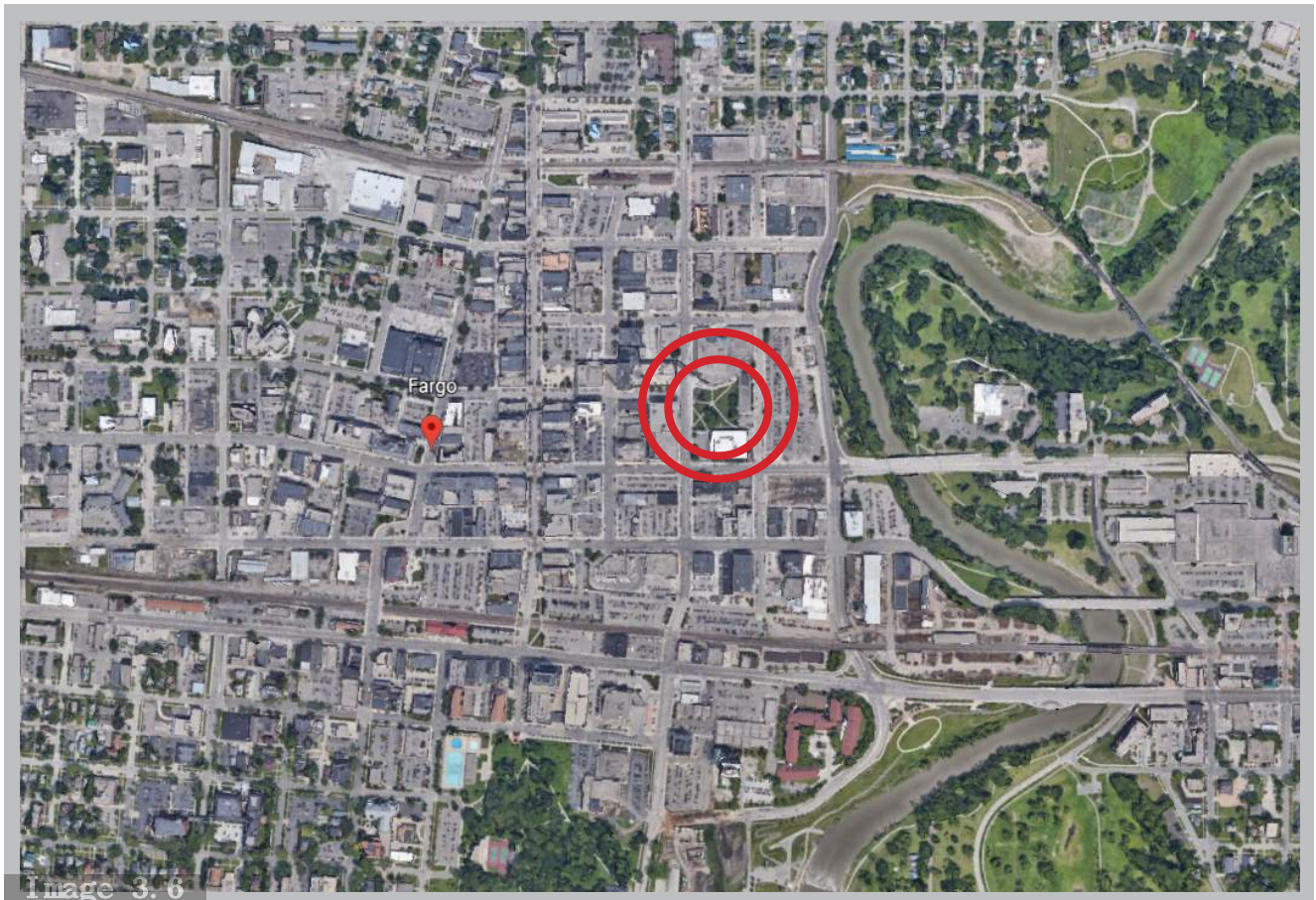
Topics of Research:

- Innovation in Historical Preservation
- Material Restoration and Preservation
- Barn Home Case Studies
- North Dakota Historic Building Case Studies

Site/ Site Justification

As I stated previously, my site will be the located within the state of North Dakota. Since my building will be transported from one site to another I will provide detailed documentation of its previous and final location. I chose North Dakota as my focal point because of personal experiences I have had growing up in the agricultural community of ND. A local site will also allow me to personally visit both the old and new sites of my thesis.





My intended site is located within the city of Fargo, ND. Placing the dwelling alongside our modern idea of living right next to the Fargo Civic Center and Fargo City Town Hall. Allowing it to clash with the currently held notion of what it means to dwell. To quote Karsten Harries once again, “Building that serves the requirements of dwelling must preserve and represent the tensions between private and public domains, house and temple, building and architecture, building and nature.” with this revitalization I hope to create a beacon of inspiration for those within North Dakota and neighboring states.

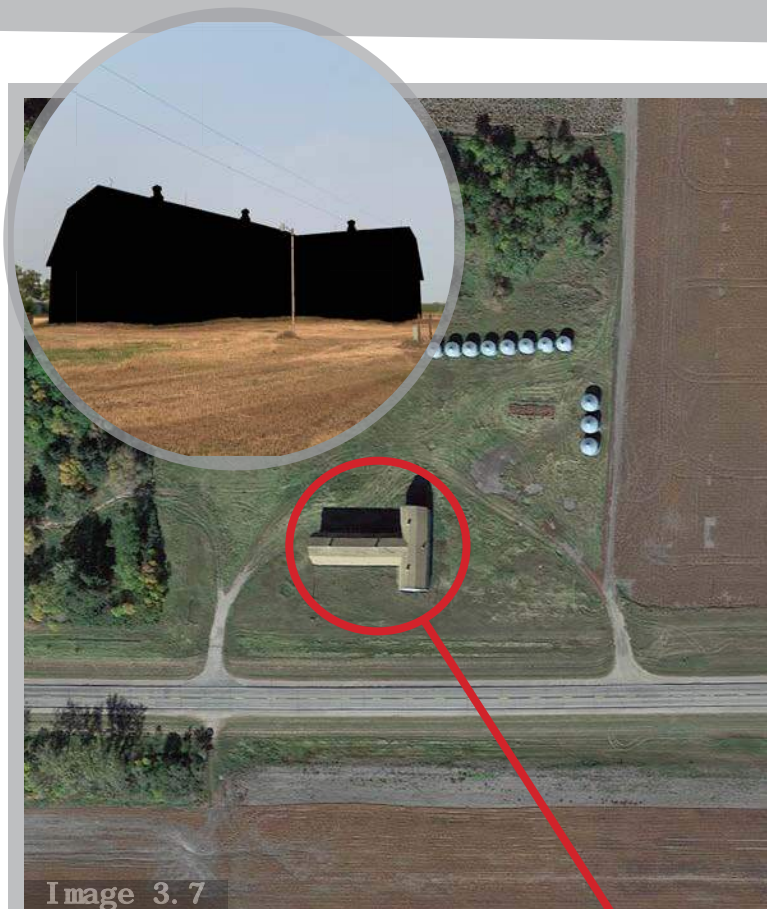


Image 3.7

The current resting place of the Barn is roughly 7 miles East of Cooperstown, ND. The site used to contain an old home that was previously relocated and restored, but now is made up of the barn and a few grain bins.

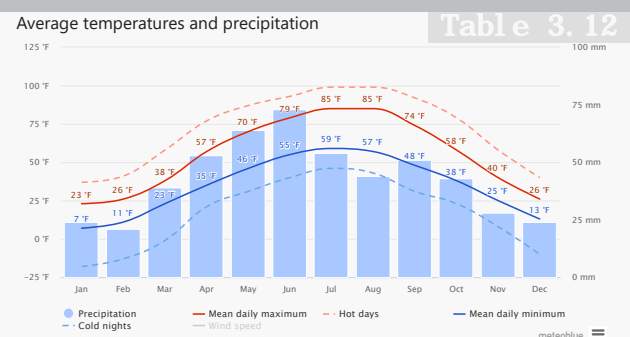
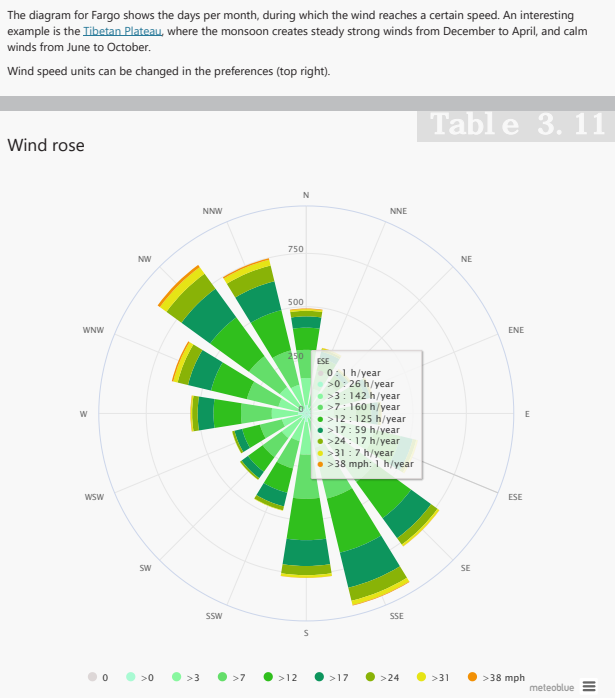
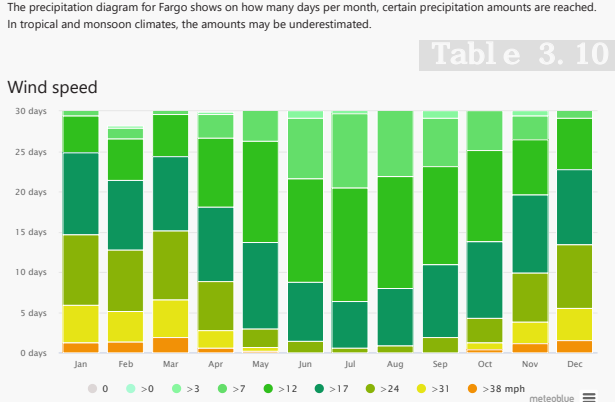
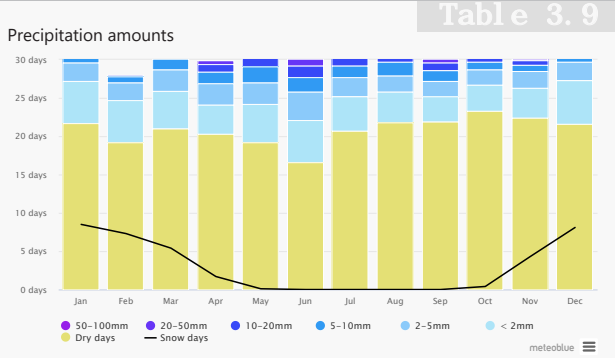
The Journey

The future site of the Barn will be the open field between the Fargo Civic Center and Fargo City Hall. The area is currently used for outdoor events and city green space. Transported and altered to an urban setting, this project seeks to give the old structure a new life while continuing to be a testament to the passage of time and the soul carried within the material.



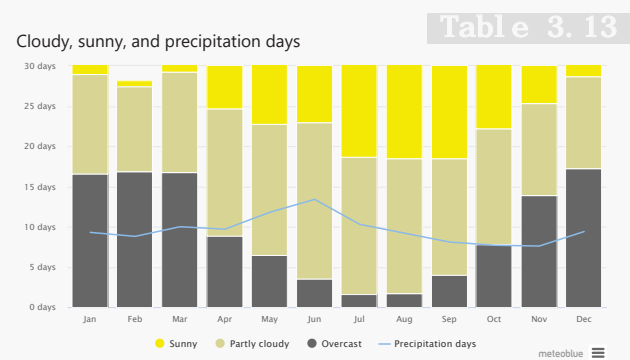
Image 3.8

These are some current weather studies of the city of Fargo that I will reference throughout the design phase of my project.

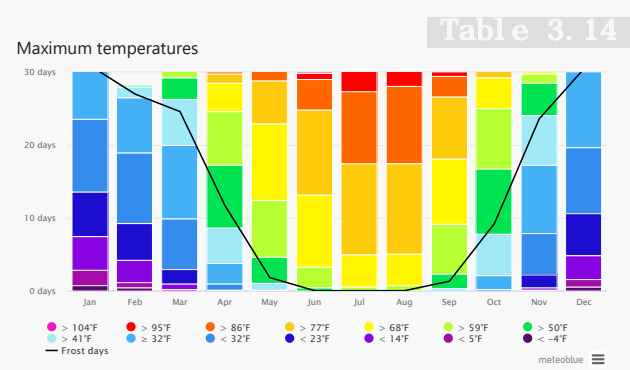


The "mean daily maximum" (solid red line) shows the maximum temperature of an average day for every month for Fargo. Likewise, "mean daily minimum" (solid blue line) shows the average minimum temperature. Hot days and cold nights (dashed red and blue lines) show the average of the hottest day and coldest night of each month of the last 30 years. For vacation planning, you can expect the mean temperatures, and be prepared for hotter and colder days. Wind speeds are not displayed per default, but can be enabled at the bottom of the graph.

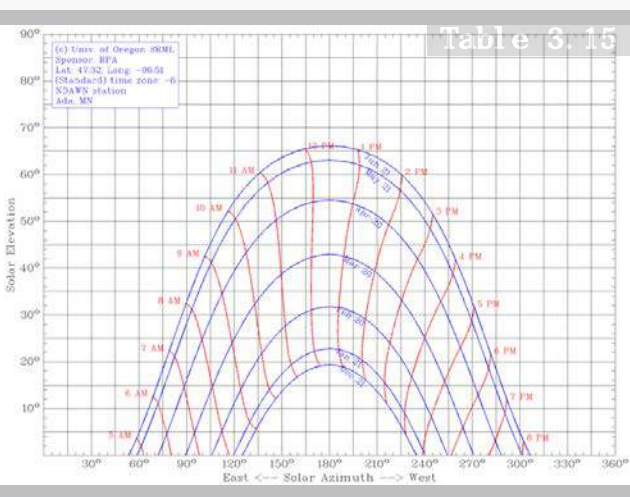
The precipitation chart is useful to plan for seasonal effects such as [monsoon climate in India](#) or [wet season in Africa](#). Monthly precipitations above 150mm are mostly wet, below 30mm mostly dry. Note: Simulated precipitation amounts in tropical regions and complex terrain tend to be lower than local measurements.

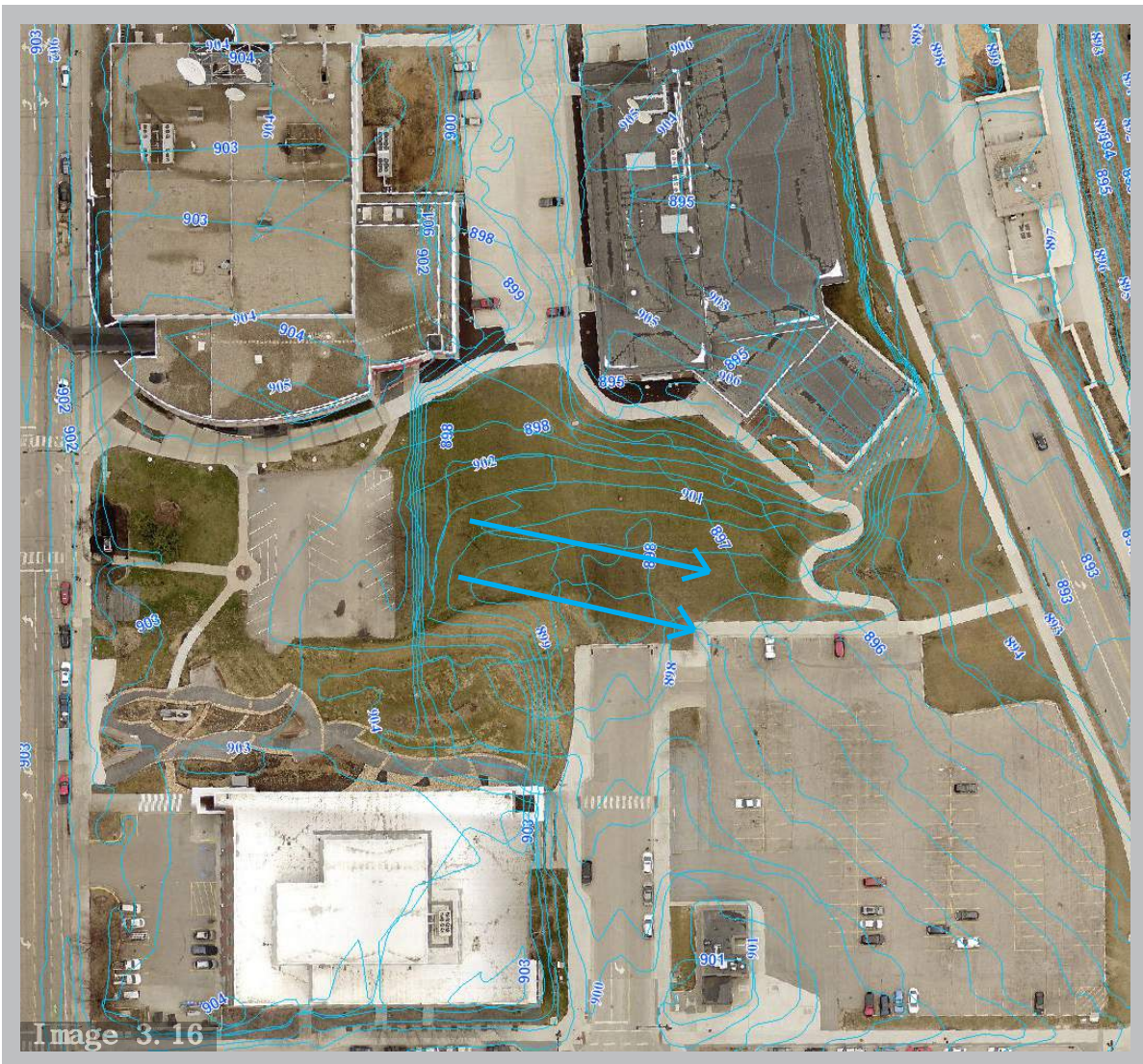


Note: In tropical climates like in Malaysia or Indonesia the number of precipitation days may be overestimated by a factor up to 2.



The maximum temperature diagram for Fargo displays how many days per month reach certain temperatures. [Dubai](#), one of the hottest cities on earth, has almost none days below 40°C in July. You can also see the [cold winters in Moscow](#), with a few days that do not even reach -10°C as daily maximum.





Analysis of the new site's topography can help to inform proper placement of the structure. There are two main factors I wanted to understand. The first being the amount of grading to be done and the ground that will need to be moved. I want to make sure I am altering the topography of the site as little as possible. The second being the water runoff of the site. Fortunately, it seems as though the water is easily drained off the site down the hill to the Red River. My goal is to not alter the current runoff path and thoughtfully design around it.

Environmental Impact

“The greenest building is one that is already built.”

New construction and the embodied energy within a building cannot measure up to the positive environmental impact restoring a historical piece of architecture has. Most old buildings were designed before most modern heating and cooling systems were invented, relying on natural factors to heat and cool and cutting out some of the largest environmental impactors. I plan to retain these natural ways of regulating a buildings temperature while transporting and restoring the barn in question.

The impact that the relocation of the barn will have on the new site is going to be as minimal as possible. The idea is to construct an adequate foundation to support the barn and then terraform the landscape around it. Incorporating new green spaces that make the building feel like it was always there. Providing an increase in useable green space compared to what is currently offered at the site.

Program

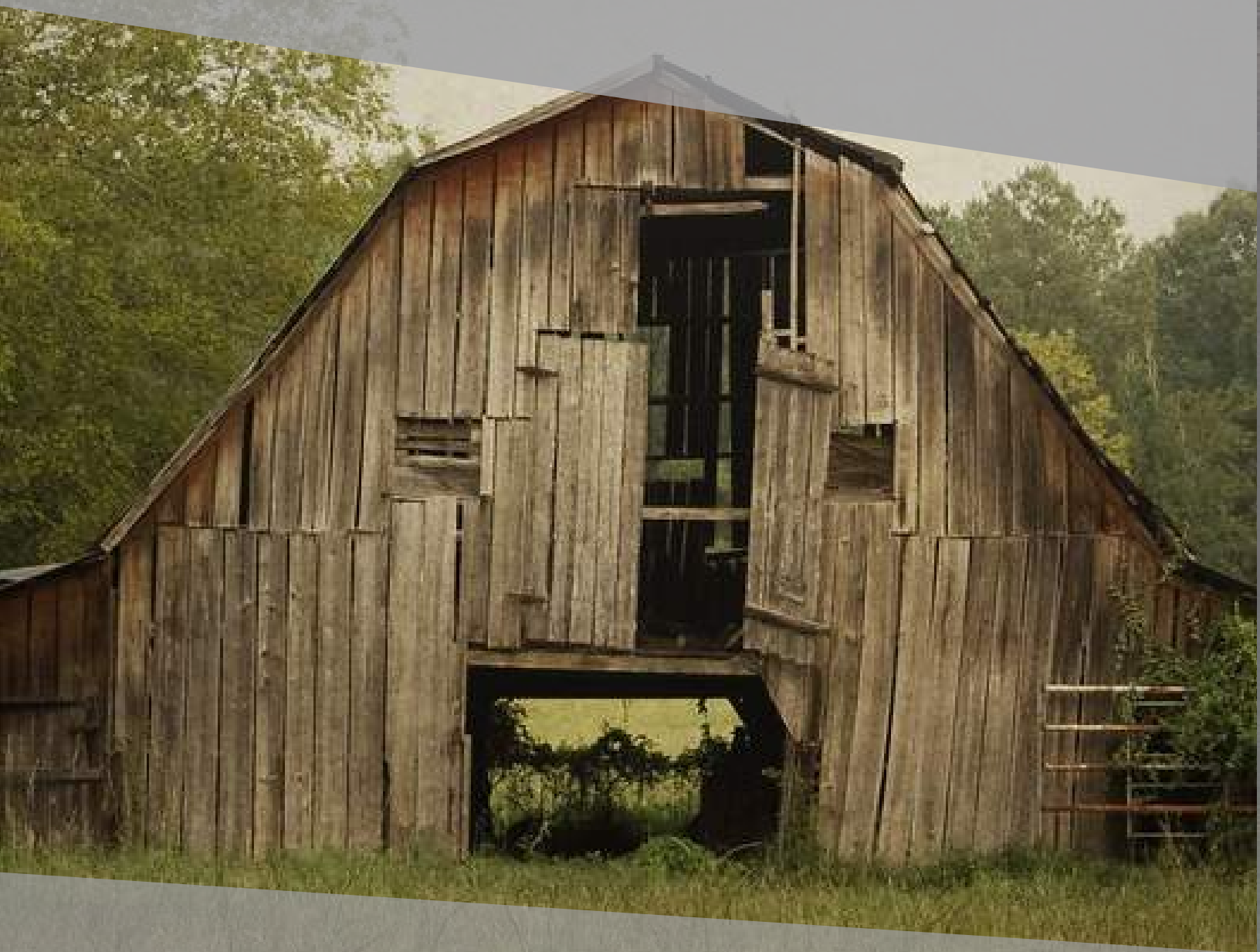




Image 4.1

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION SUMMARY

Like many of the old dwellings scattered across our nation a majority, if not all, were constructed entirely for functional purposes or pure survival with access to limited resources.

On the other hand, every brick, board, nail, shingle, etc. was utilized with the utmost care by the ones who would be utilizing or living there. Can the precision and care put in be seen as anything other than art?

This Barn shall be the that very bridge of time and place.



THE ARTIFACT

The barn's hayloft door, tattered and rotting. Over the course of a year the wind had managed to rip it from both of its hinges. The perfect opportunity arose for me to tell stories through this bridge of time and place.

I use the tattered hayloft door as backdrop to project a collage of images, some created by me to illustrate the bridge of time and place, others of the sites and existing buildings of my project. Scattered within the video are words spoken by the soul carried within the materials of our forgotten historic pieces of architecture.

The video : <https://youtu.be/OjifmFGmvfU>



Image 4.3

The Old Soul of Design

...too much space smothers us much more than if there were not enough.

Uncovering and rediscovering history within the present.

...represent the tensions between private and public domains.

Only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build.



THE DESIGN

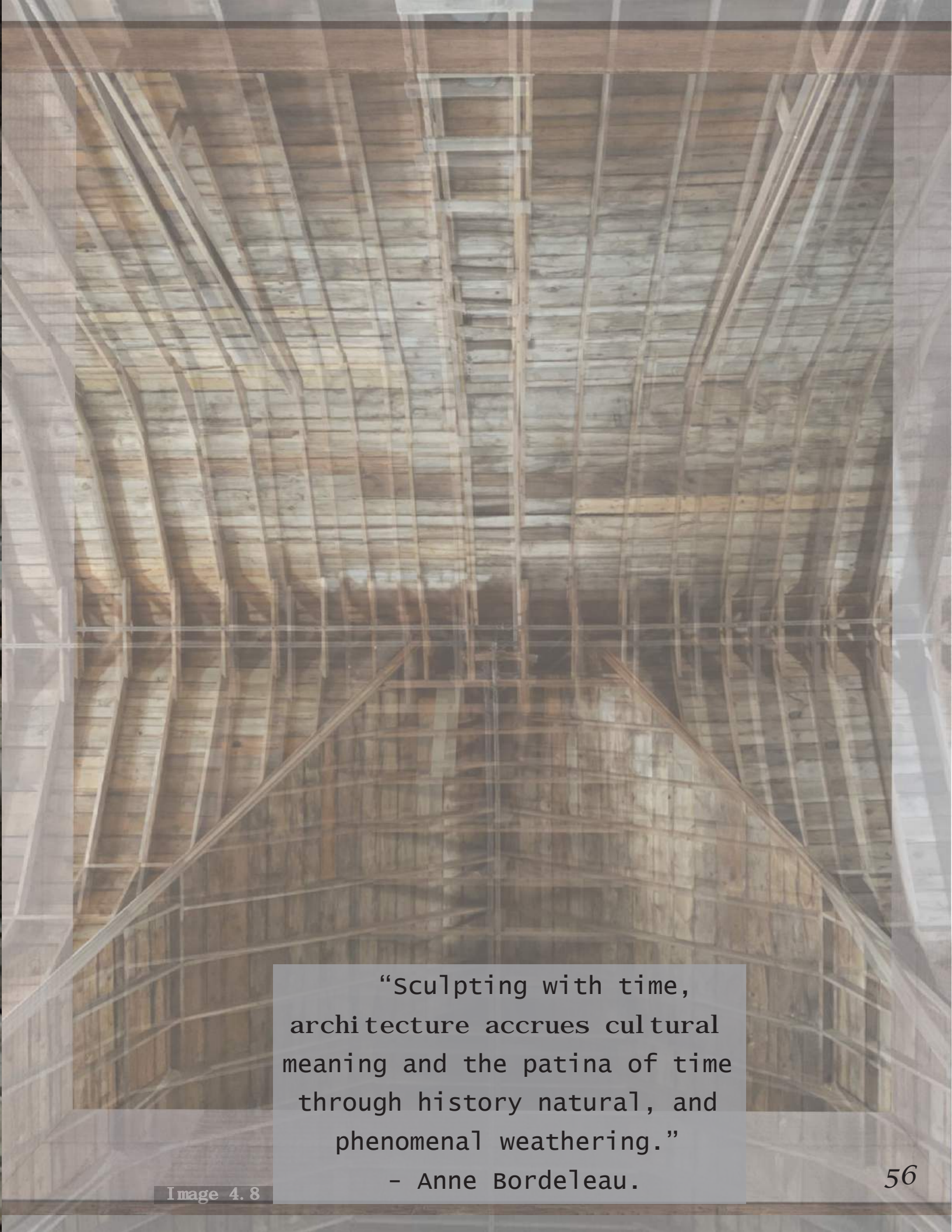


Image 4.6



Image 4.5





“Sculpting with time,
architecture accrues cultural
meaning and the patina of time
through history natural, and
phenomenal weathering.”

- Anne Bordeleau.

The materials
communicate out-loud the
decades contained within
them. Only time can make a
floorboard creek this way
and bring out the scent
of every fiber contained
within it.





Image 4.9



Our work as architects impacts the flow of time and the moments of said time, providing the public with a new perspective on a moment in time.



Image 4.11





Image 4.12

Through studies of Martin Heidegger's work, we are able to rationalize and justify the transporting...

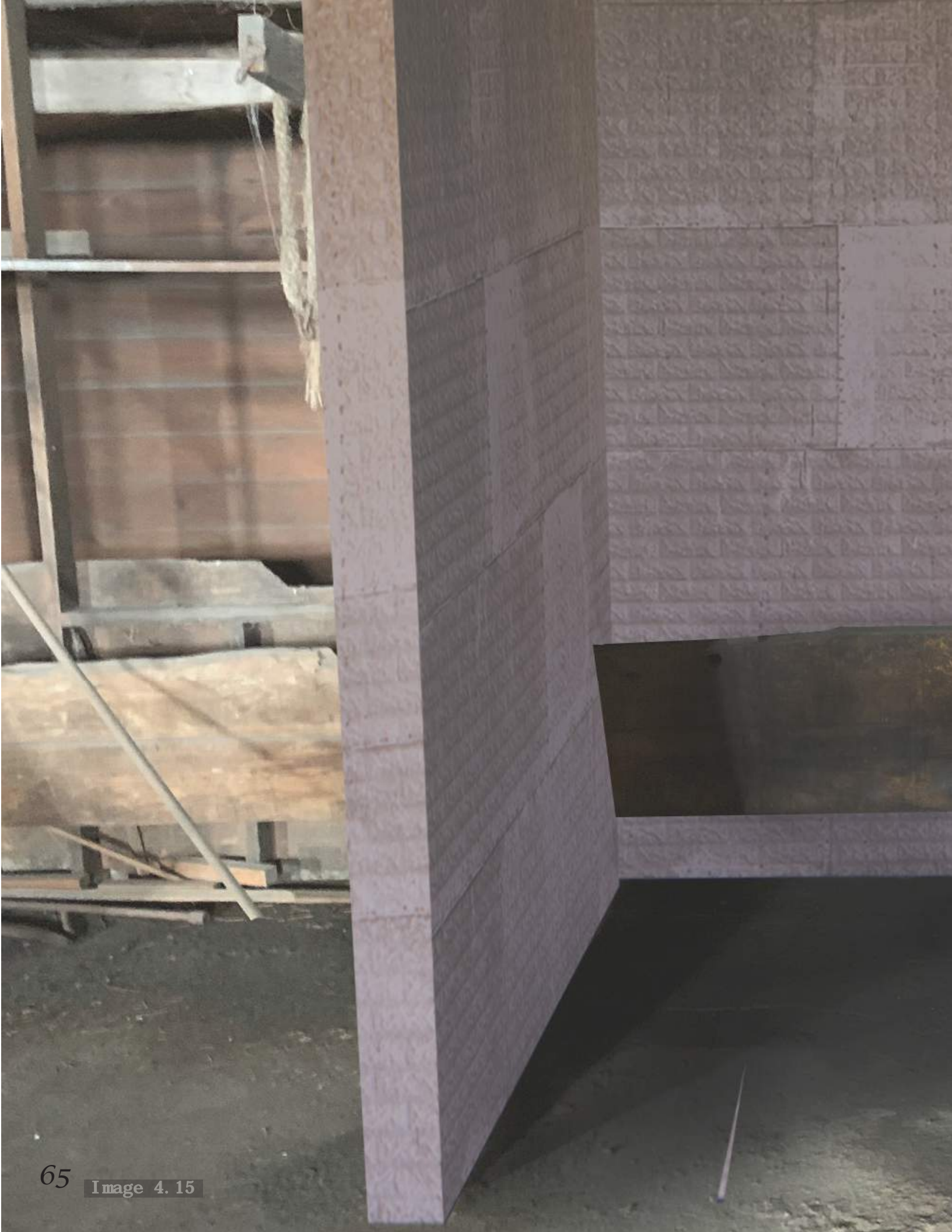


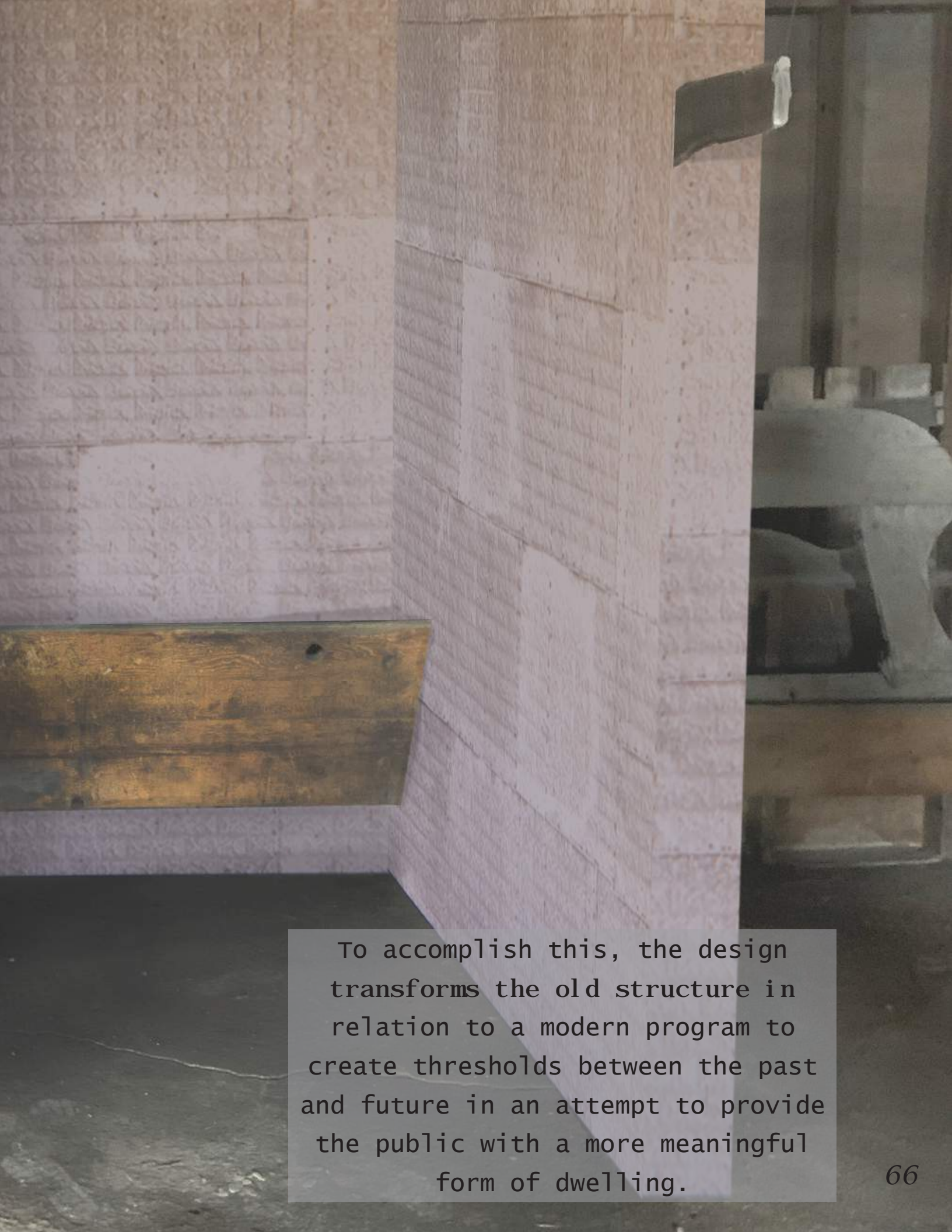
Image 4.13

...and alteration of the historic architecture as a bridge of time and place. Suspending the old within the new encompassed and framed by the old soul and history.



Image 4. 14





To accomplish this, the design transforms the old structure in relation to a modern program to create thresholds between the past and future in an attempt to provide the public with a more meaningful form of dwelling.





Image 4.17

Placing the dwelling alongside our modern idea of dwelling. Allowing it to clash with the currently held notion of what it means to dwell. Using the new to frame and contrast the old. Bringing forth the beauty within the soul of the materials.





This vessel shall house the agricultural history of North Dakota and provide opportunities to populate the space with vendors during farmers markets and city events.







Allowing the public to bring their own life and culture into the space. Contrasting yet transforming the inherent soul of the architecture and bridging the stories and experiences of the space.

To quote Karsten Harries, "Building that serves the requirements of dwelling must preserve and represent the tensions between private and public domains,..."



... house and temple, building and architecture, building and nature."







Now, just as the bridge connects the banks, we can bridge time and place.

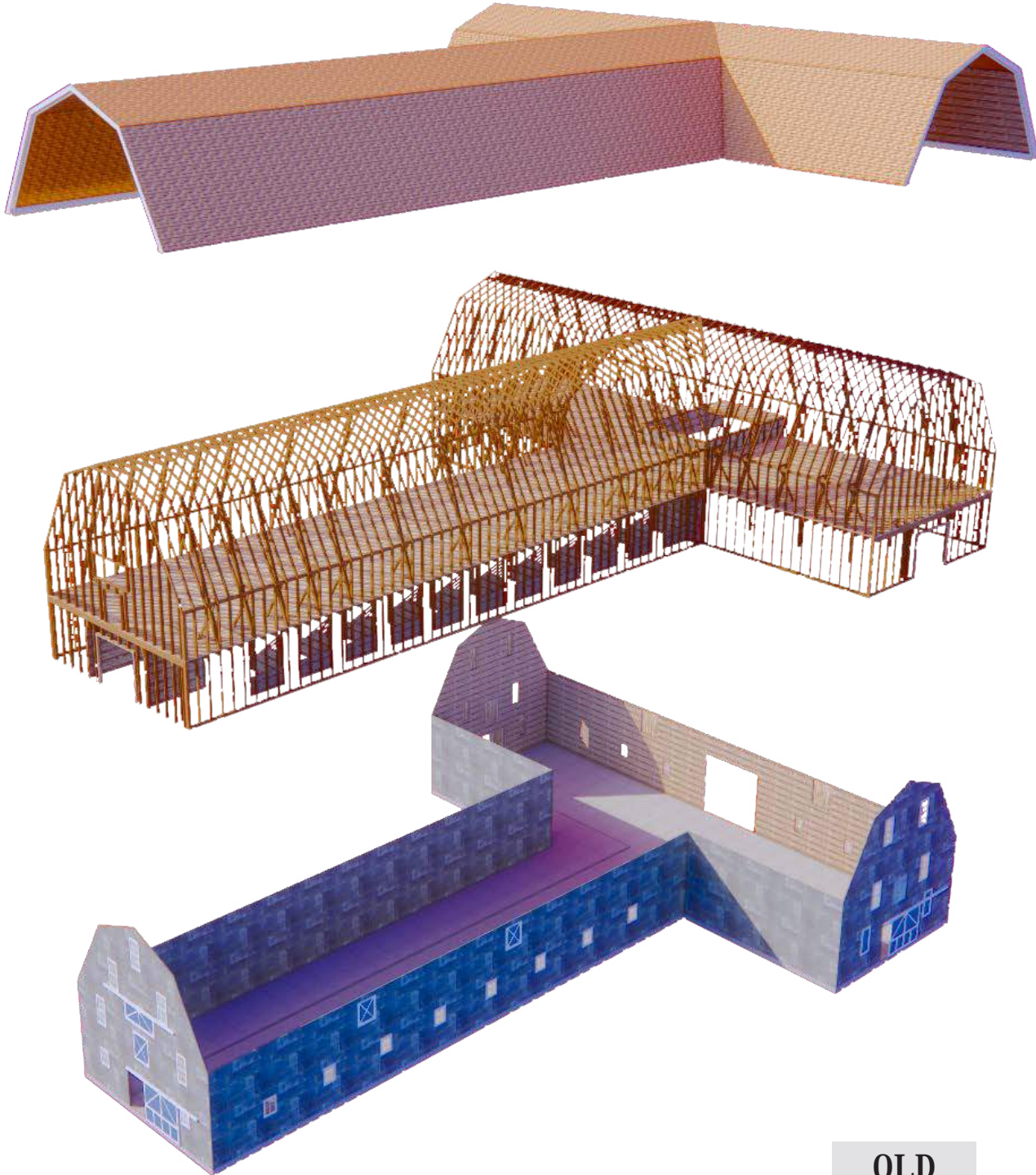
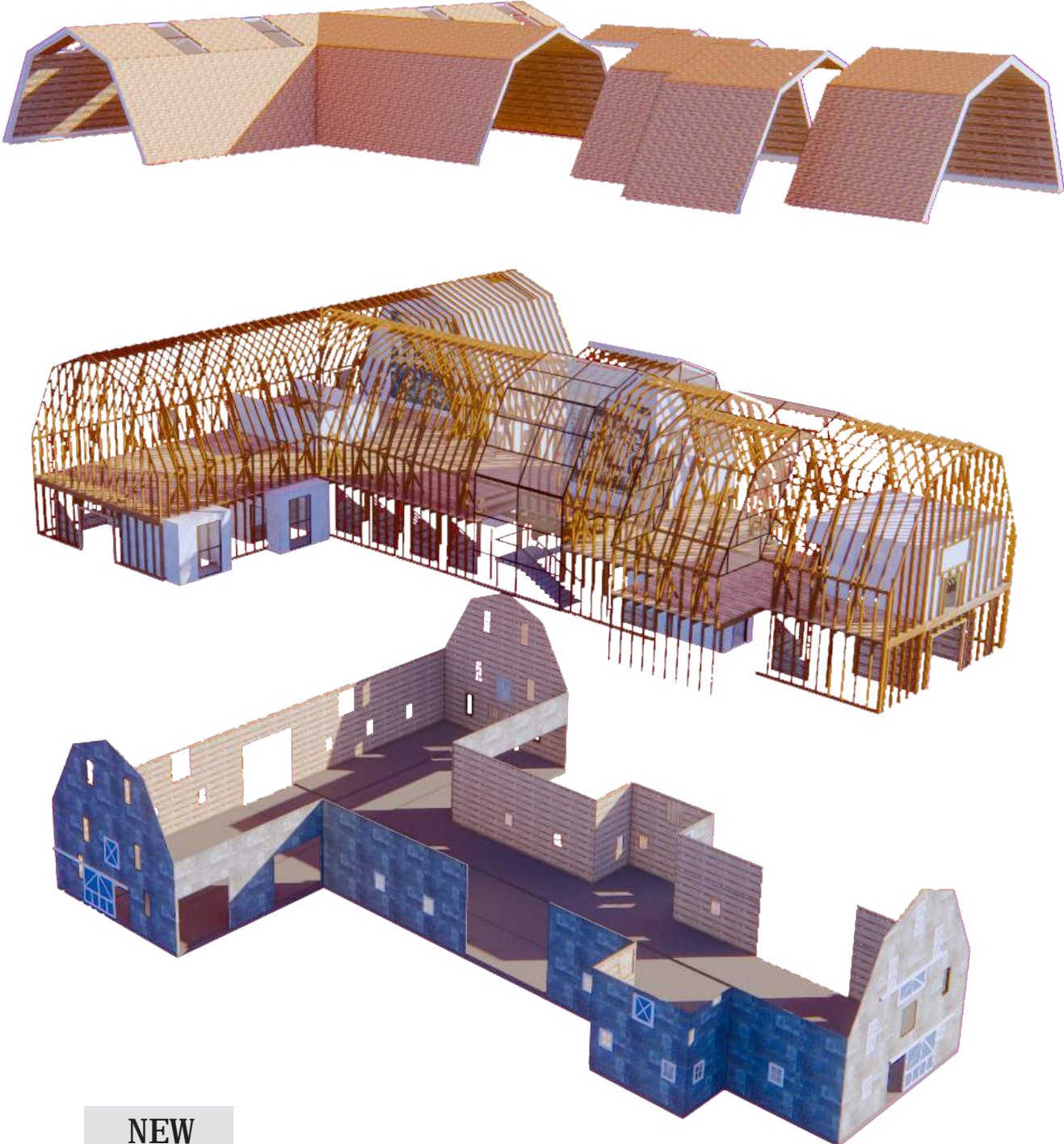


Image 4.23

OLD

Defining and linking two sites
and moments in time.



NEW

Image 4. 24

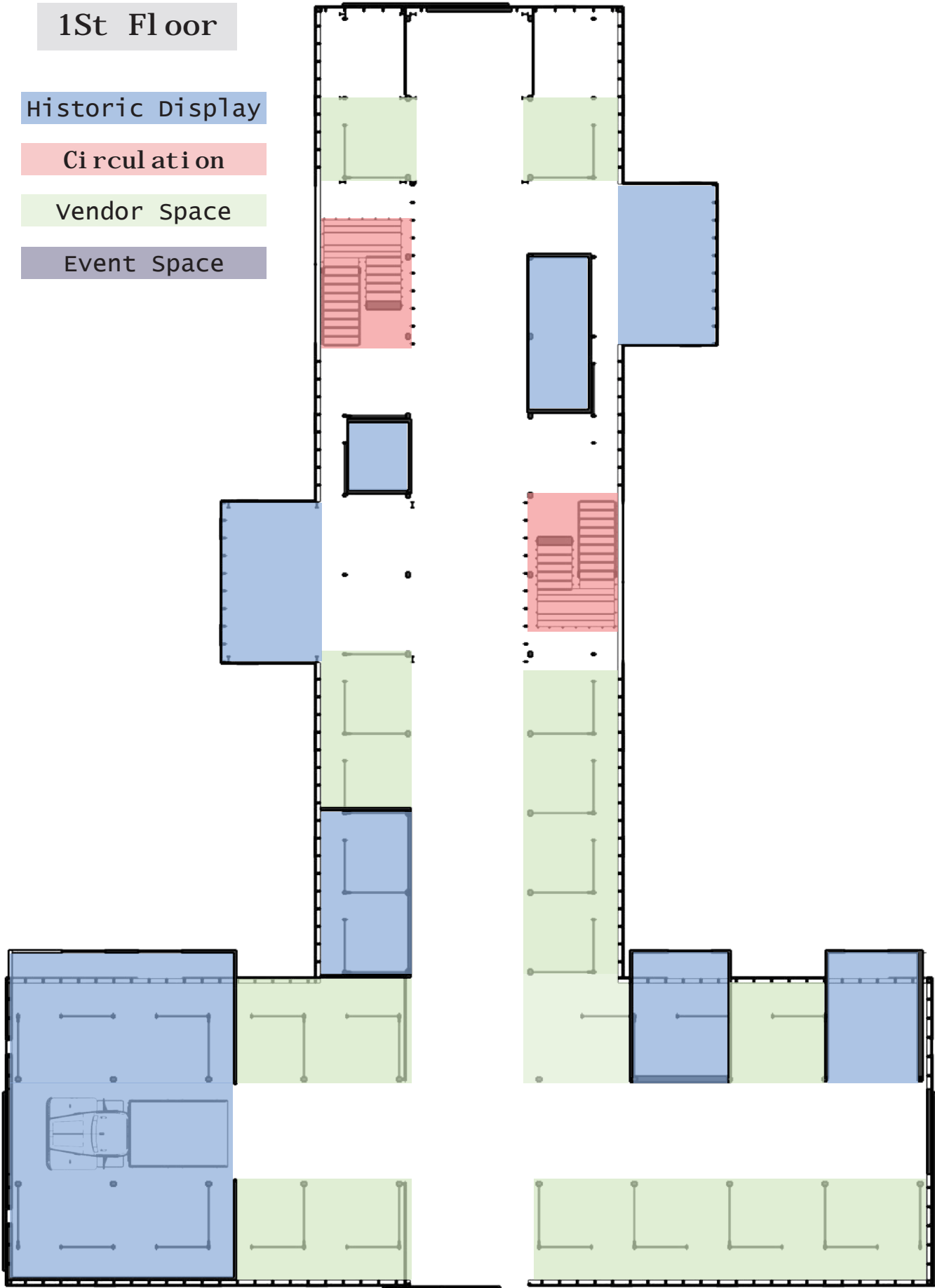
1St Floor

Historic Display

Circulation

Vendor Space

Event Space



2nd Floor

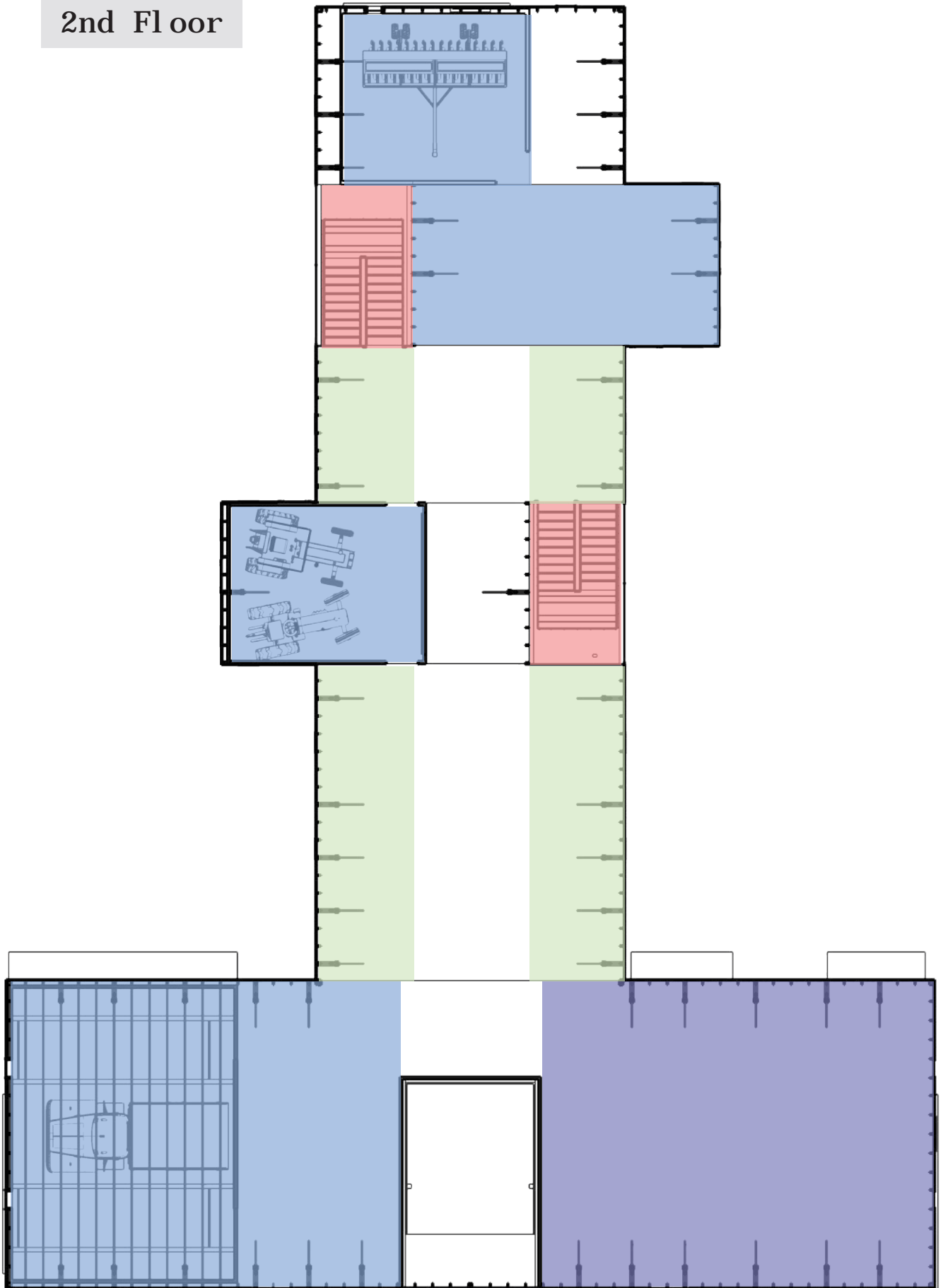


Image 4.26



OLD

Image 4. 27



NEW

Uncovering and rediscovering
history within the present.
Bringing it forward for all to see.







Image 4.29



Design Process Documentation

Design Investigation Methods:

- Computer Programs
- Artifact Creation
- Collage
- Story Telling

Modeling Software:

- Sktchup
- AutoCAD

Imagery Software:

- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe Illustrator
- Adobe InDesign
- Enscape

Appendix





Image 5.1

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Previous Studio Experience

2nd Year:

Fall: Charlott Greub

Tea House - Fargo, North Dakota

- Detailed site analysis and consideration

Spring: Amar Hussein

Apartment Complex - Fargo, North Dakota

- High capacity, inviting housing for the newly imigrated

3rd Year:

Fall: Niloufar Alenjery

WWII Battle of the Bulge Memorial - Bastogne, Belgium

- Expressing a story and emotion through architecture

Spring: Bakr M. Aly Ahmed

Single Family Dwelling - Fargo, North Dakota

- Designing with environmental constraints

4th Year:

Fall: Mark Barnhouse

Highrise - Miami, Florida

- Large scale, detailed design developement and documentation

Spring: David Crutchfield

Fargo2050 Plan - Fargo, North Dakota

- Reimagining and developing the NDSU major street crossings

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