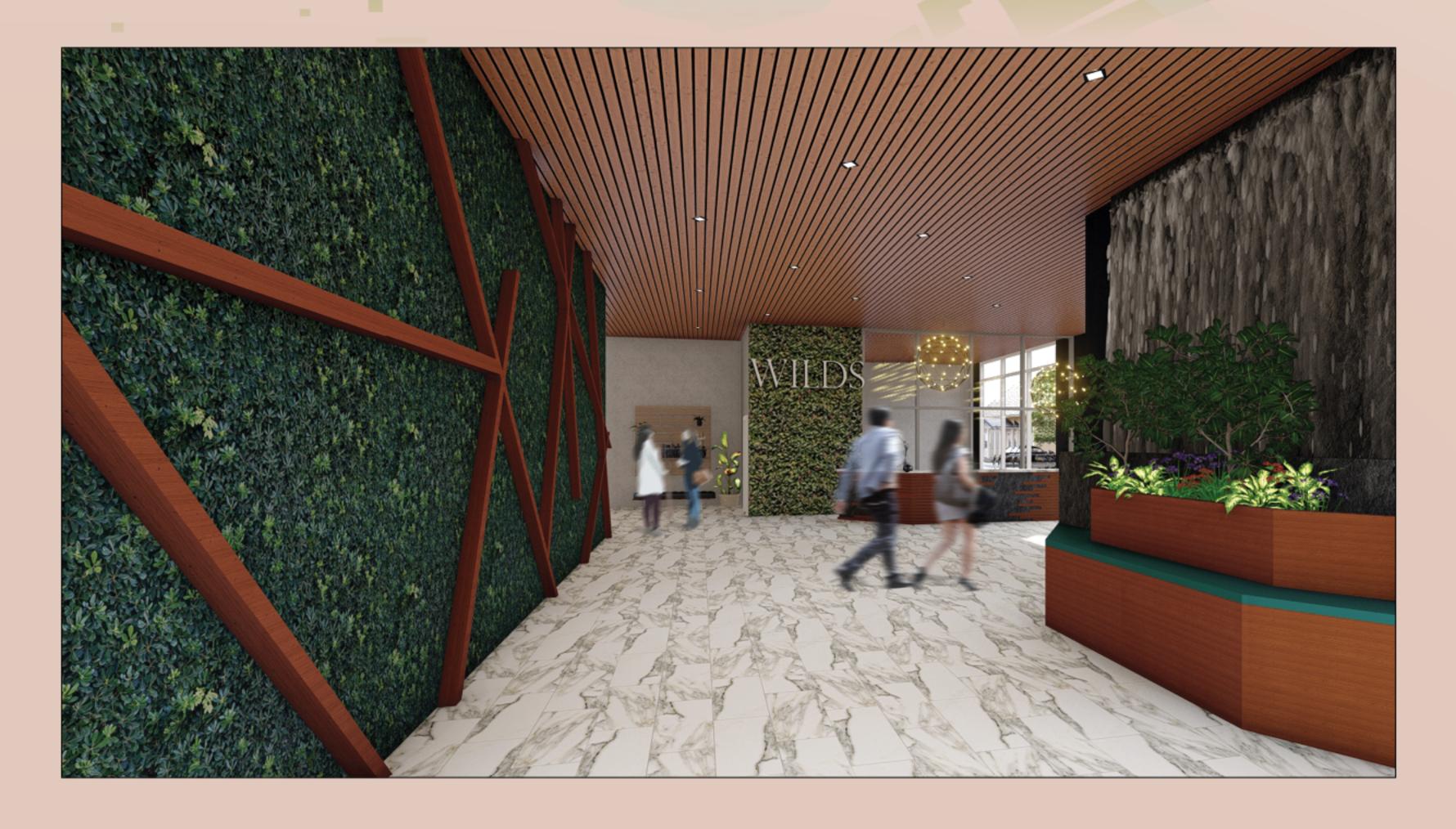
FORCE OF NATURE

INTERCONNECTING ARCHITECTURE AND NATURE

Architects and designers truly have almost utter control over our built environment. Throughout time, us as humans have built this sort of isolation from nature and the idea of this interconnection with nature being important is starting to become recognized once again. Americans, on averagev spend approximately 90% of their time indoors and almost 70% of which is spent at home. Within larger cities the connection with nature progressively has declined leaving the people that reside within very limited access to the natural world. We as designers and Architects have to find a way to change the way we design cities and buildings to connect with nature rather than disconnect.

Nature has been long thought of as having a positive impact on our wellbeing as humans. We as humans are naturally interconnected with the natural world around us. Humans have this sense of need to emerge themselves to the outside world. Nature not only can make one feel better emotionally, but physically as well. It can generate many positive emotions, such as calmness, joy, and creativity and can facilitate concentration. Nature connectedness is also associated with lower levels of poor mental health, particularly lower depression and anxiety. Within today's day and age, mental health is a huge conversation and is nothing to take lightly and progressively seems to grow worse year after year. The environment around us, no matter what type it is, has the power to affect our mental and physical health in a positive or negative way. However, a natural environment has been proven to affect humans in a positive way. Incorporating nature within an everyday lifestyle can help create a feel-





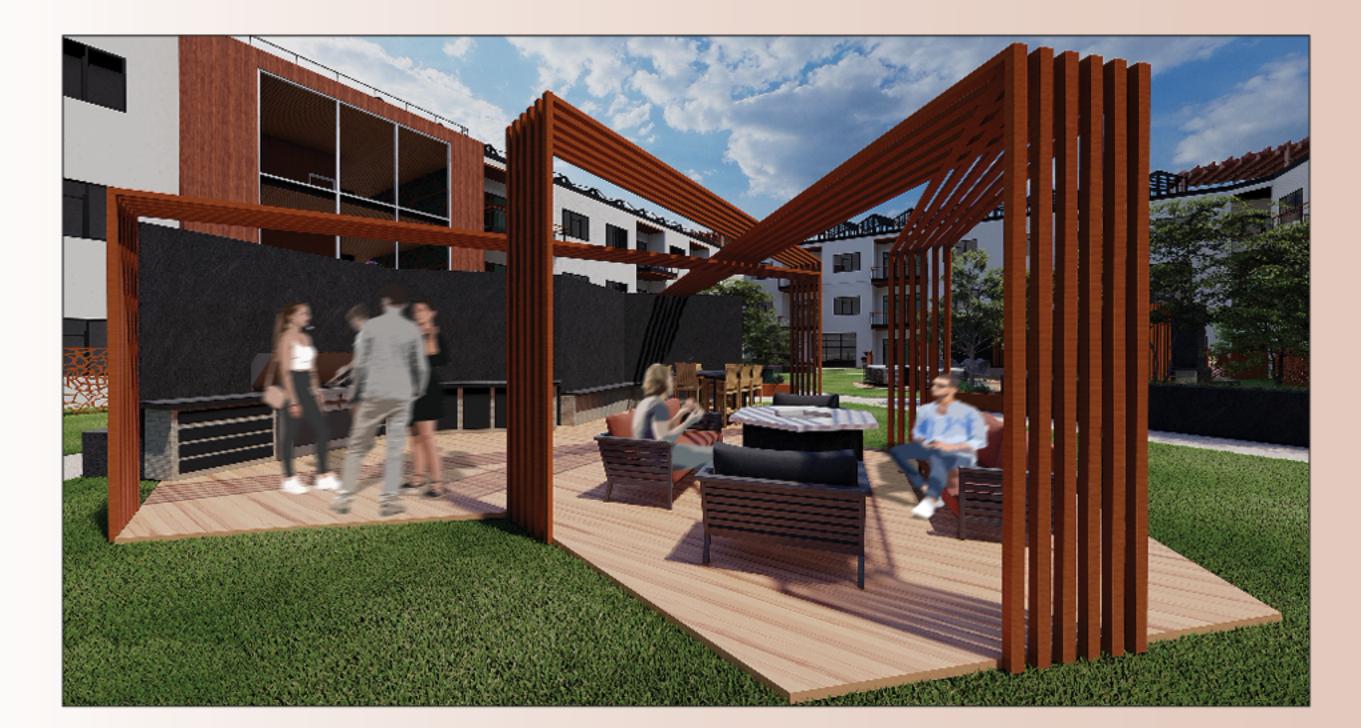
- NATURAL MATERIALS -

Natural elements and materials are an important concept to this design. Incorporating natural elements and materials within a built environment can be a contributing factor of increased human health, positive feelings, stress reducer and overall emotional well-being. Natural scenery in general can not only make people feel better emotionally but physically as well. Natural materials such as wood and stone are used throughout the design and the elements within.



Vegetation is crucial to this design and is planted throughout the whole building. With the use of planters, living walls, and ground coverage, incorporating all different types of vegetation allows for the design to become more immersed into a natural atmosphere. This is done by including small trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses and all different types of plants throughout. To provide the idea of "ground coverage" the use of artificial turf was used to cover the majority of the central courtyard and the rooftop. This provides a natural appeal to the space with minimal maintenance.





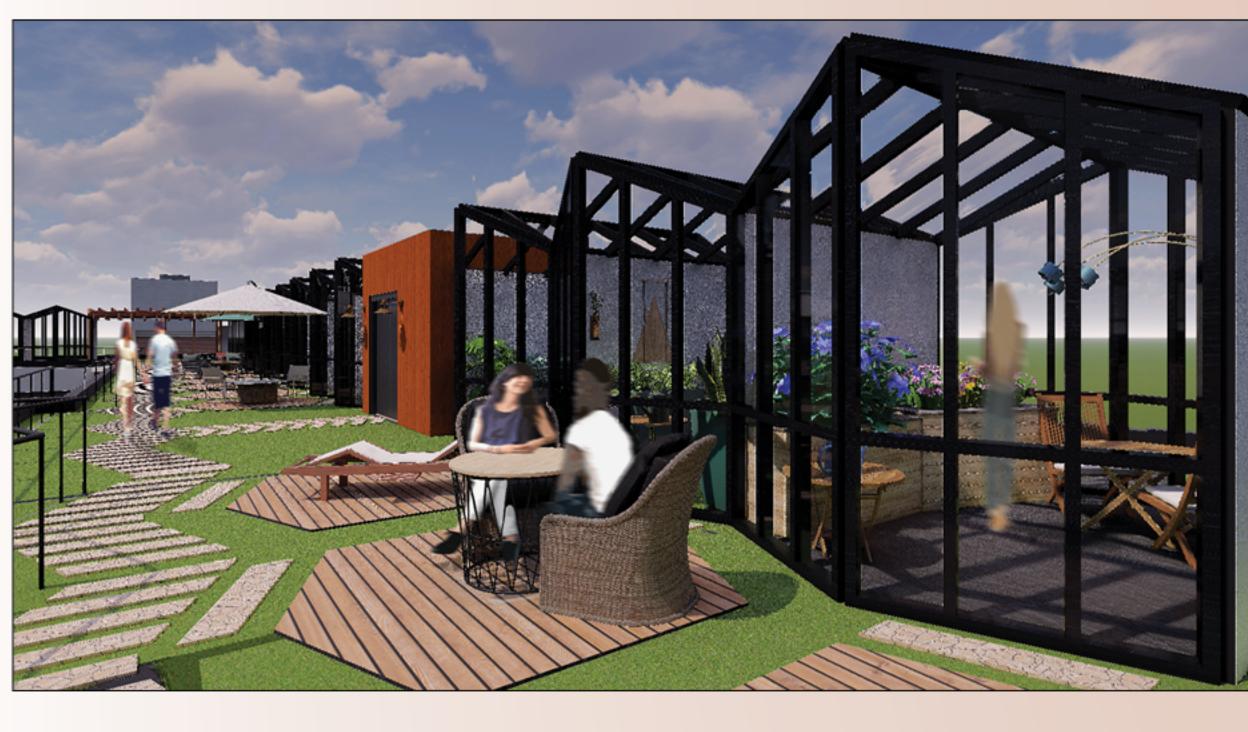
- FIREPLACE -

On the South side of the courtyard, another lounge area was placed, designated mainly for a more separated lounge space to enjoy a fireplace table in a more open space. This area is pushed outwards from the building leaving it without much of the building to surround it. This space provides not only the fireplace table but also, cushioned couches and chairs and two bench swings.



- BENCHES -

There are two unique benches located along the walkways within the courtyard. These benches are made up of the same stone and wood materials that have consistently been used throughout the area. These benches have pots attached to the back of them used for a backrest that include flower beds and small trees for slight shading. Plants can act as a natural happiness booster, particularly flowering plants. Flowers have been found to release oxytocin and dopamine, the neurotransmitters associated with motivation, feeling of security, peace and love.



- LARGE GARDEN AND WATER FEATURE -

Adding on to the crucial elements within my courtyard remain two water features that have large gardens attached to them. This feature not only adds a decorative touch to this landscape but it can have positive health benefits primarily reducing blood pressure and stress levels while they are also believed to increase energy, focus, and alertness. Further enhancing the ambiance of the space, a water feature also brings texture and can soften lines of the environment surrounding it fostering relaxation and peace.



- COMMUNITY ROOM -

Within this building, attached right off the central courtyard is a large community room meant to be used and reserved out by the residents. This space allows for 24/7 access to a recreational room that provides a full kitchen, lounge area, TV, pool table, dart board and garage doors that open up to the exterior patio that also provides a grill and lounge spot. This gives residents extra space to have company and bring people together. Allowing this 24/7 access and open access to the courtyard, this provides residents of all lifestyles recreational opportunities.



Located within the heart of the courtyard are two spaces designated for residents to be able to enjoy the outdoors and is a multi-use space. This area provides a large grill with surrounding countertop space, a long patio table, a bench, a tabletop fireplace and cushioned couches and chairs. Providing residents with a large lounge space to enjoy at any time of the day with any company they want may encourage them to spend more time outdoors.

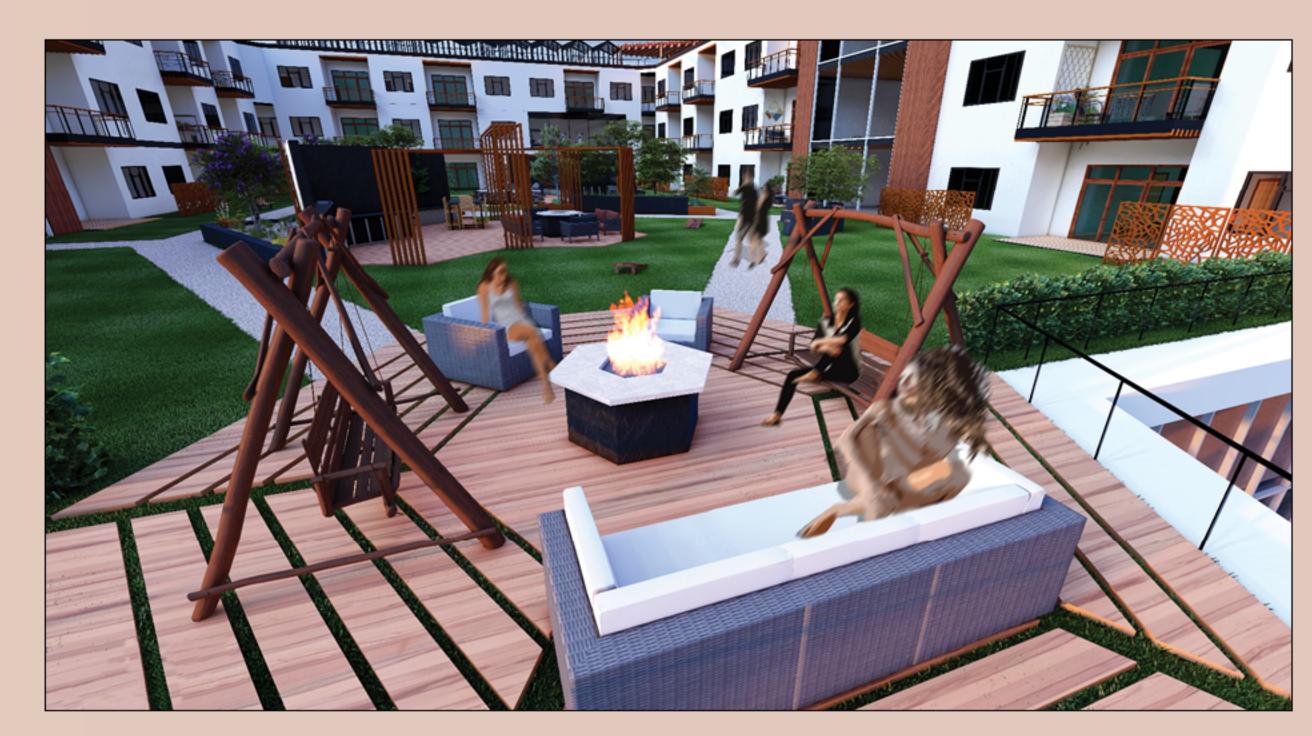
RESTAURANT

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

INCLUDES: 1-3 BED UNITS

LIBRARY

LIBRARY



- GARDENS -

Located in multiple spots along the walkways within the central courtyard are large stone and wood garden spaces that consist of multiple types of grass and small trees. These not only add a decorative touch to the space but trees also provide shade and add to the natural environment atmosphere that this thesis is shooting for. An environment that includes natural elements and plants brings a positive outlook on life and helps boost people into feeling more alive and active.



- ROOFTOP GREENHOUSES -

Each apartment complex comes with its very own greenhouse that is located on the rooftop. These are 120 SF in size and each have its own individual patio space. This gives residents the opportunity to create their own natural living space whether they want to grow their own vegetables all year long or cultivate their favorite plants. Gardening has been shown to lighten mood and lower stress and anxiety levels. This serves as a separate personal natural environment for residents to enjoy alone or with company.



- RECREATIONAL GREEN SPACE -

Open green space is crucial to this design and the reasoning behind this whole project. Leaving large open green spaces opens it up to endless possibilities. These spaces can be used for anything whether it is for sports or just to lay out in the sun. This idea grants residents the opportunity to just be outside in the natural environment and under the sun without having to necessarily leave the comfort of their home or having to search for open/public areas within the city. Constantly seeing and being around plants can have a subliminal effect on our mind and body making us feel more calm and relaxed.





