

2023 Clifford Wong Prize in Housing Design

GSD 1202 // Fourth Semester Core Studio
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SIDEWALK STUFF
adaptive reuse cohousing

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This cooperative housing proposal challenges the illusion of self-sufficient private accumulation by promoting material sharing on an infrastructural scale for maximum return on investment. **By reframing domestic life through shared goods, it reorders American consumerism and redirects waste streams to foster a circular economy.** This approach prevents material and energy over-consumption while cultivating invaluable human relationships and purpose.

Focused on suburban sprawl and its typologies (the American suburban home), this proposal acknowledges their mass production and saturation across the United States in the early 20th century. **The attic, garage, and basement informally emerged as spaces for celebration and exchange.** The office park typology, characterized by deep floor plates and parking lots, also evolved alongside suburban sprawl.

Our site features four vacant office buildings surrounded by parking lots and adjacent homes. Characters representing American domesticity and comfort emerge, shaped by industrialization, post-war growth, and disregard for energy and waste streams: **1. The Self Storage Warehouse, 2. The Scrap and Salvage yard, 3. The Big Box Store, and 4. The Distribution Center.**

To redefine domesticity, we challenge the characters' relationship with material goods and consumption. **The office buildings become satellite storage spaces, detached from homes.** Infrastructural elements from various typologies inform the plan logics, creating tension between upper units and characters below.



The organizational strategies of each character inform the logics of each building. The self-storage unit prioritizes stacked garages, the workshop offers flexible maker space, the Amazon warehouse emphasizes linear efficiency, and the big box store aligns with shopping shelving logics. We embrace informal markets like online buy-nothing groups and community flea markets, extending the life of goods and creating communal wealth. Combining the logistical prowess of Amazon and the big box store with the buy-nothing circular economy, we highlight a linear flow from receiving to shipping.

Strategically, the site becomes a field where row houses fill spaces between buildings, absorbing existing structures and creating shared spaces. Everett Ave agitates this strategy, generating new streets, plazas, and alleys that maintain suburban tropes while achieving density. Modest and light, units are manufactured on-site, using adaptable modules for varying family sizes and structures. The circular economy diverts consumption from landfills, visually transforming personal and domestic scales.

This proposal increases housing density while maintaining private residential spaces. The design introduces discomfort in the sharing and displacement of material belongings while preserving suburban luxuries in a consolidated manner. By removing commodities from the market economy, we extend material lifespans and enhance non-commodifiable human relationships.





Adjacent to our site, the warehouse in direct proximity to the home demonstrates the limitless ease of consumer accumulation--we require extra storage for our overflowing goods, regardless of the size and luxury of the single family home.

Site History

Sources: US Census 2020 ACS 5-Year Survey, Fire Insurance and Real Estate Atlases of Boston, Rag Shop District Fire, 1973 Spencer Grant

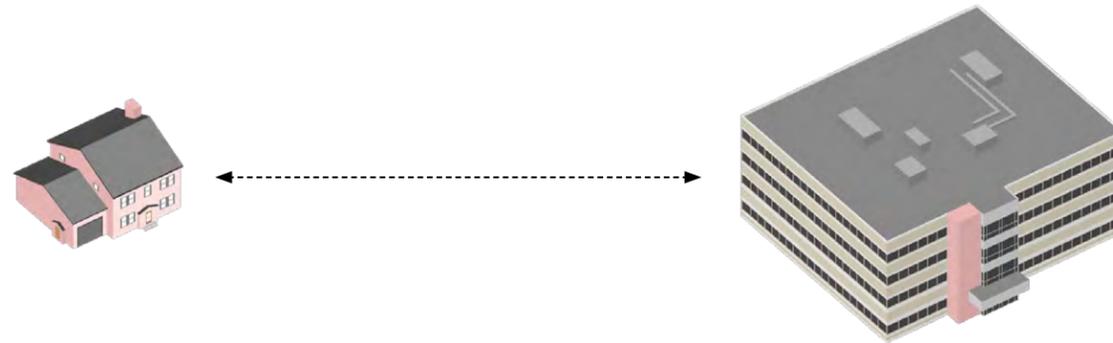


Chelsea, MA, is a city of majority minority residents, a poverty rate of 24%, and over 58% of residents living in family units. Our new plan alludes to a past site history, pre-Chelsea fire. It once hosted salvage dealers and machine shops across the entire the block. Note that within our site boundary, a Sanborn map shows dozens of smaller parcels - contrasting the current condition of four large contiguous parcels.



The Suburban Home

Uniquely American and the result of industrial thinking, the suburban home lent itself to mass production and distribution. With an abundance of land and reliance on the car, sprawling subdivisions emerged with repetitive elements such as the attic, garage, and yard. These spaces are informal yet uniquely positioned to host rich celebration.



The Office Park

A quintessential American type, characterized by surrounding big box stores and a sea of parking lots, grew alongside suburban sprawl. Present and future health pandemics keep these parks in check: deep floor plates and limited frontage make converting this typology to housing difficult.

Sources: Sears Roebuck Catalog Home 1936, American Subdivision / Cul-De-Sac
Ian Lockwood for Bloomberg, Block Party
Minnesota New York Times, Renaissance Technologies by Strehl

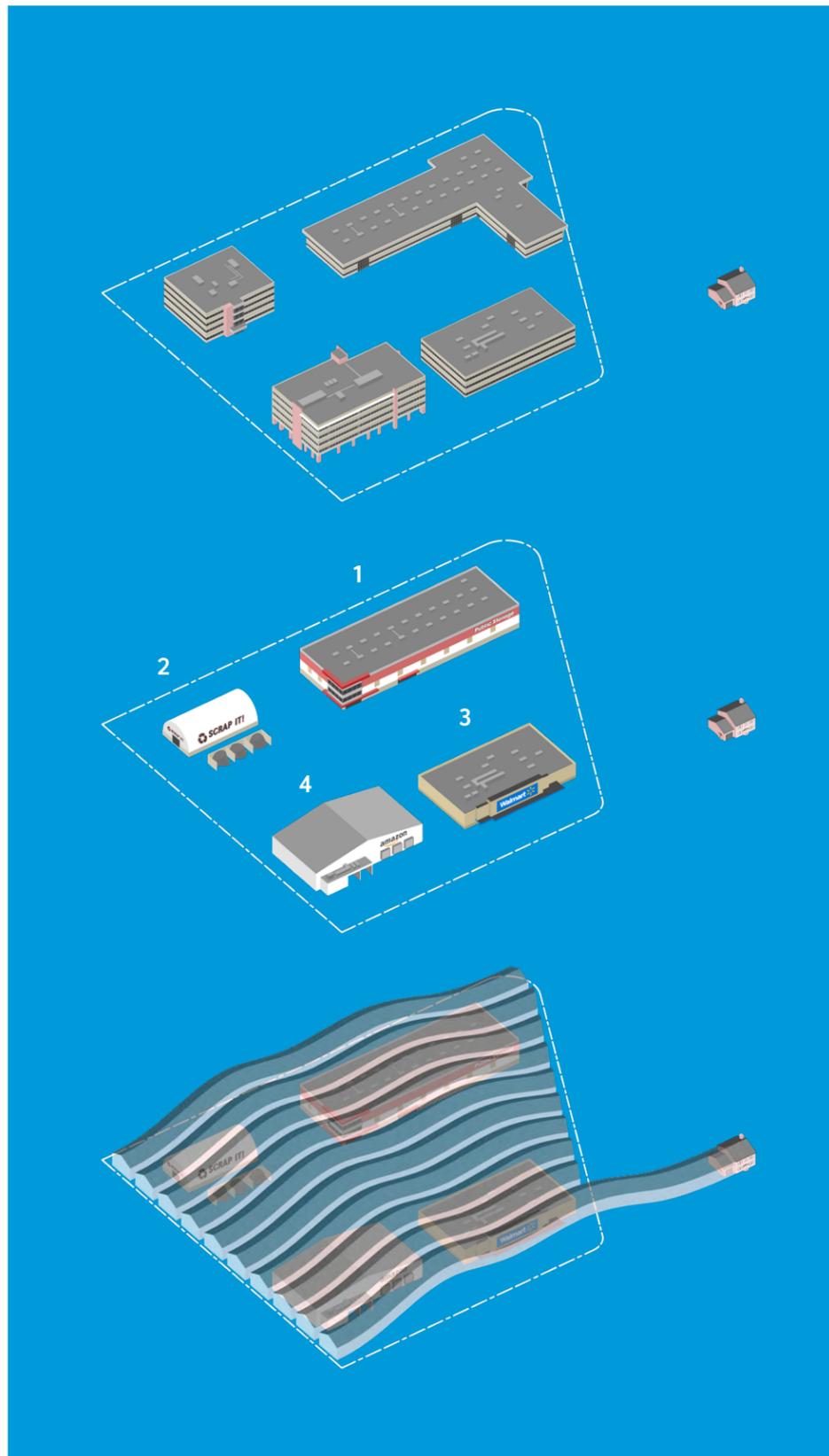


Why Office Buildings Are Still in Trouble

Hybrid work, layoffs and higher interest rates are leaving lots of office space vacant and hurting the commercial real estate business.

Give this article 196





01
existing
conditions:
vacant office
buildings and
adjacent single
family homes

02
vacant office
park buildings
are recast as
satellite storage
spaces

03
the home is
stripped down to
essential living
functions and
extruded across
the site



THESIS: American Consumerism, Slowed

By reframing domestic life through the lens of shared goods, this proposal takes American consumerism and renders it contained and re-ordered. In the act of redirecting waste streams and sharing goods in a circular economy, we not only avoid over-consumption of material and energy but also build human relationships, kinship, and purpose--infinitely valuable and non-commodifiable resources.

Economy of Exchange

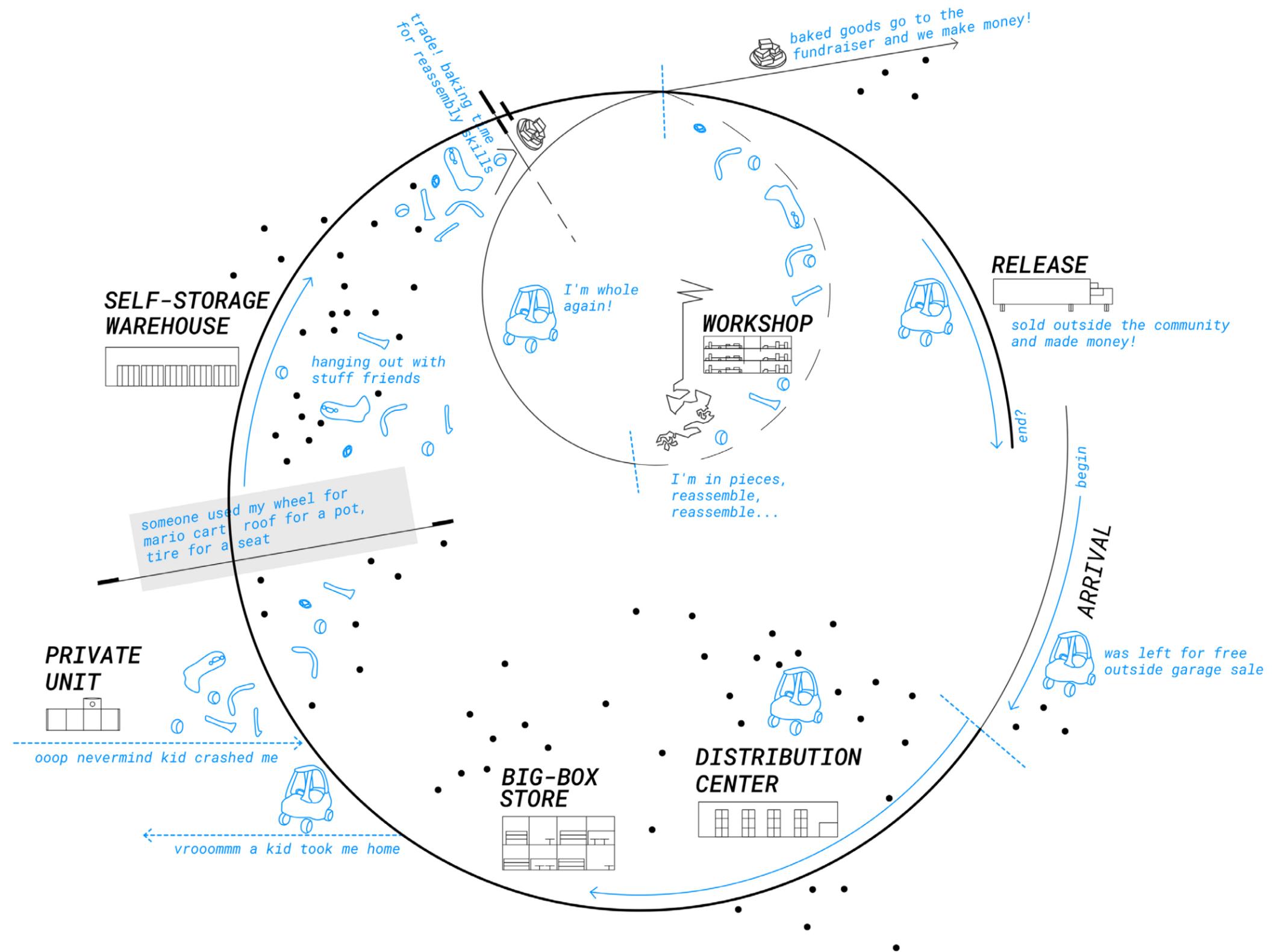
The conversion of a partially vacant office park to a buy-nothing co-housing development invites material sharing at the scale of infrastructure that maximizes return on investment rather than the illusion of self-sufficient private accumulation.

This involves direct social labor and self-organized frameworks to manage pools of resources of collective use value that contradict the market logic of the city as private asset and commodity.

Here, the disaggregated grassroots economies popularized by buy-nothing groups borrow from the logistics of Amazon and Walmart in our proposal. This small-scale, low-commodity exchange has the weight of larger logistics to inform a new economy. This ingredient of an invisible network of sharing is grafted onto the cooperative while also producing its own currency value.

Certain objects--such as a Fisher Price toy car--are only pertinent in our lives for a brief thread of time. If we assume object as protagonist, the toy car may find shelter in one home, seek maintenance and repair, be exchanged with friends, and outlive a short life of individual use.

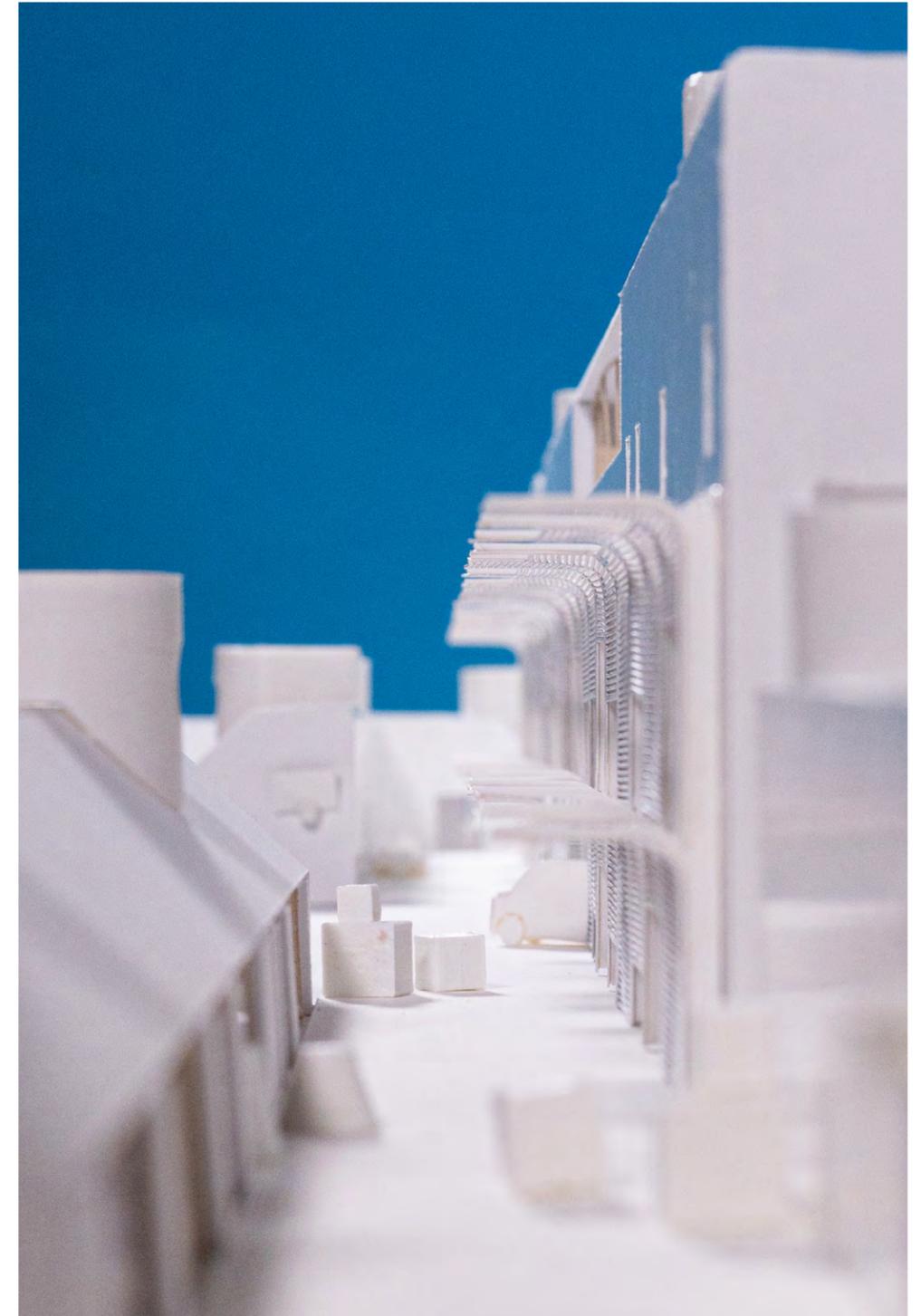
Day-in-the-life of a toy car:





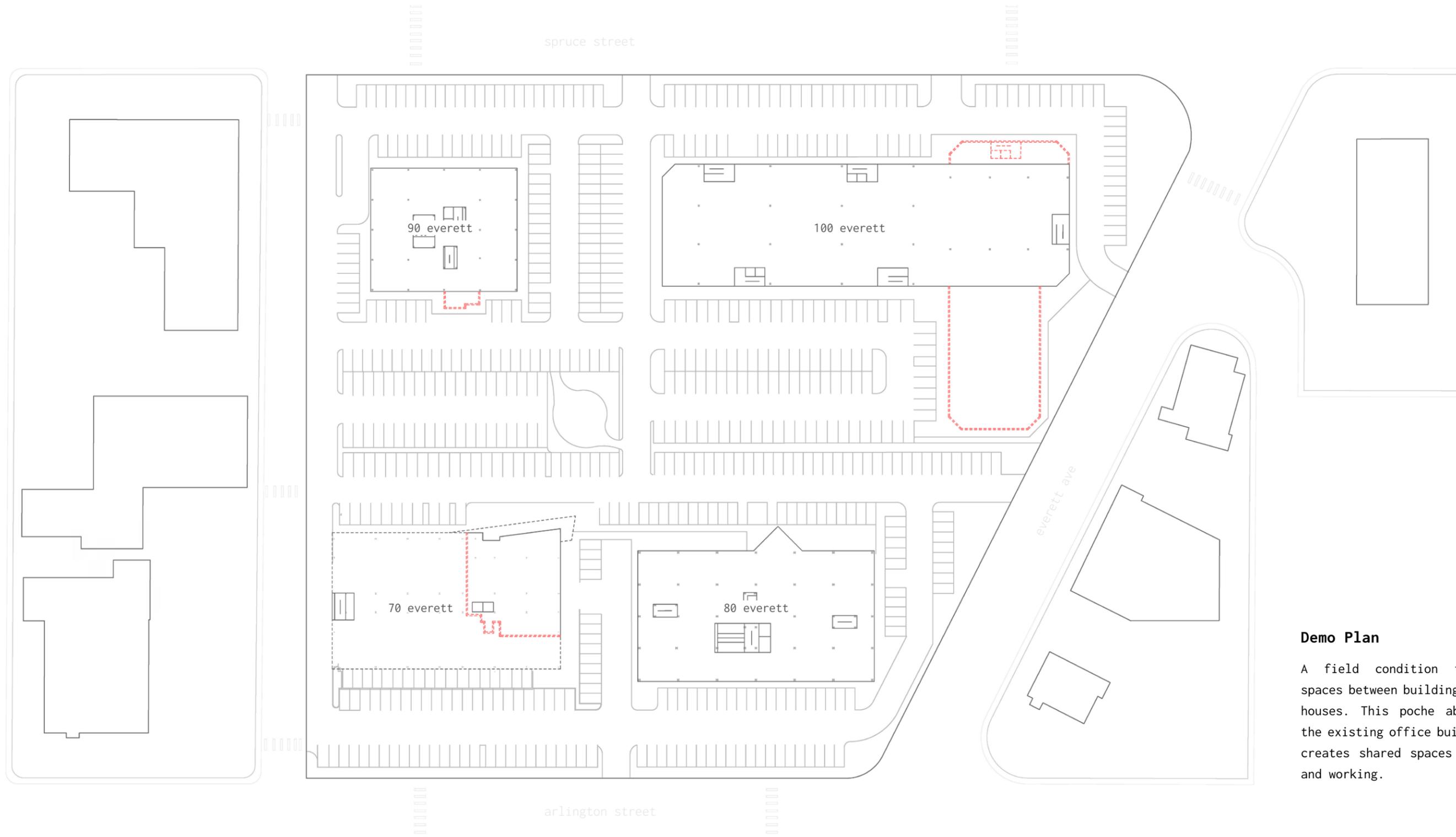
New Standards of Comfort

Discomfort arrives in the zones of negotiating control of your belongings, while comfort is provided in maintaining suburban luxuries and tropes such as private living, visible roof lines, and individual yards.





24"x 72" physical model
scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Demo Plan

A field condition fills the spaces between buildings with row houses. This poche absorbs all the existing office buildings and creates shared spaces for goods and working.





New Blocks, Streets

Three new north-south arteries emerge, each four units deep.

This division produces three scales of circulation, from trucks on the more heavily trafficked western corridor (where the workshop and distribution center can directly receive), to cars on the interior network, to more human and pedestrian friendly campus condition on the eastern frontage.

- alley to satellite
- circulation





Site Plan

The organizational strategies of each character informs the logics of each building.

The self-storage unit prioritizes stacked garages, the workshop provides deeper and more flexible maker spaces, the amazon warehouse sympathizes with linear one-directional efficiency, and the big box store subscribes to a model of shelving for shopping that follow the logics of living units above.





Density with Suburban Amenities

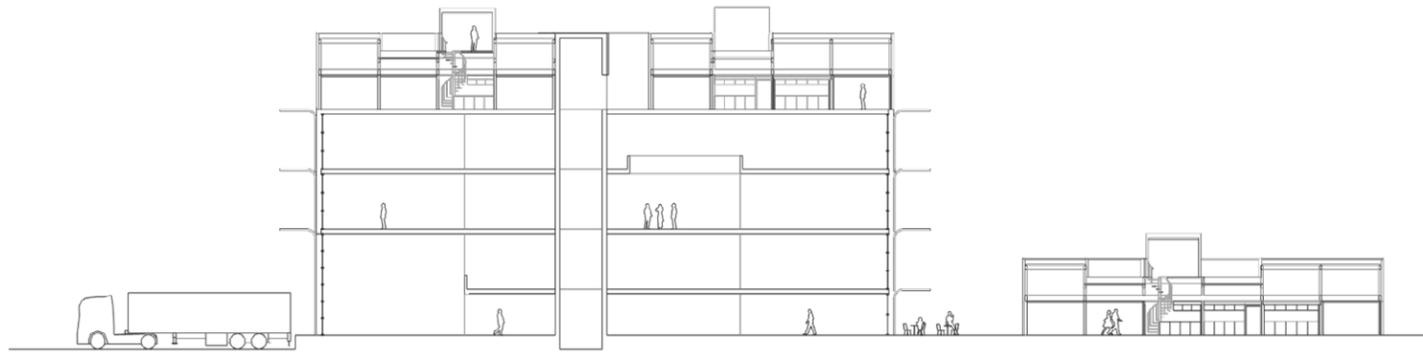
The mat gesture is reconciled with a density of 550 beds and ample private and public green spaces. The hollowed out existing buildings receive a light touch. Artificial ground planes are stacked, as new streets, plazas, and alleys emerge.

These back alleys connect neighbors in unexpected ways as different grains collide across the site. Visible, but also tangible, roof lines maintain a sense of human scale.



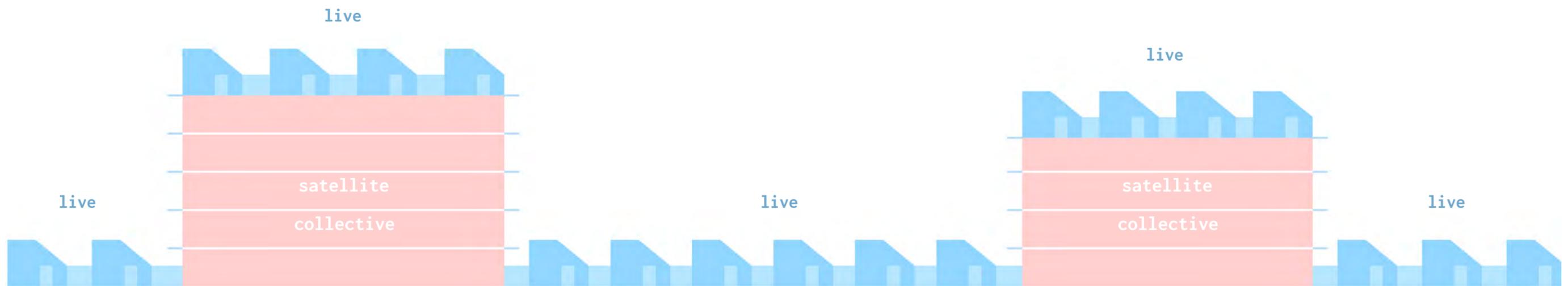
Rising Sea Levels

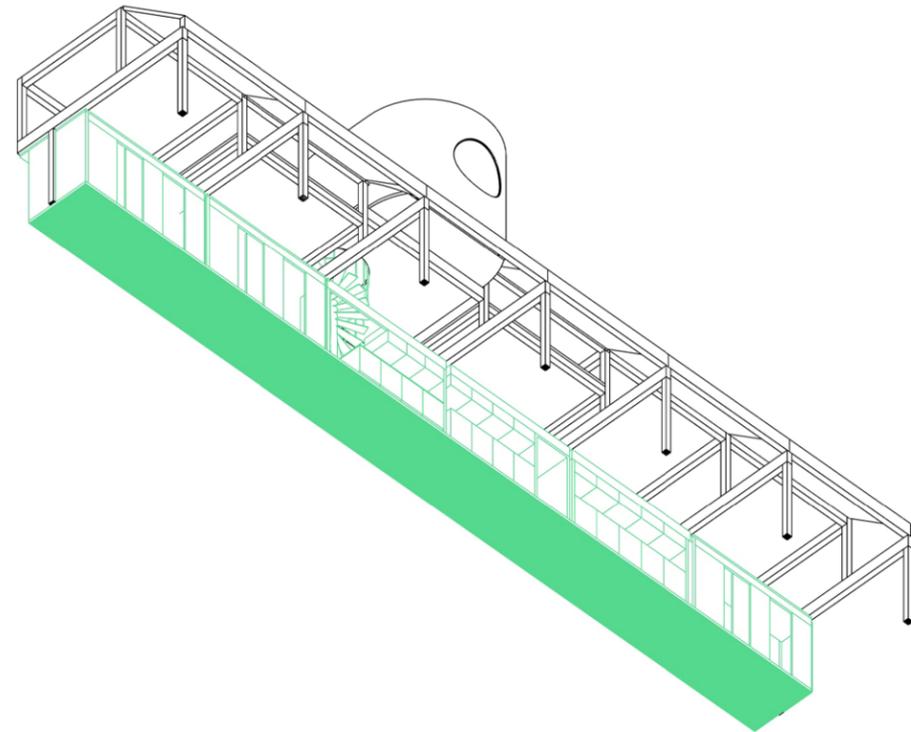
The entire site is elevated 3 feet above grade to address flooding, while also highlighting the plinth-like nature of artificial stacking.



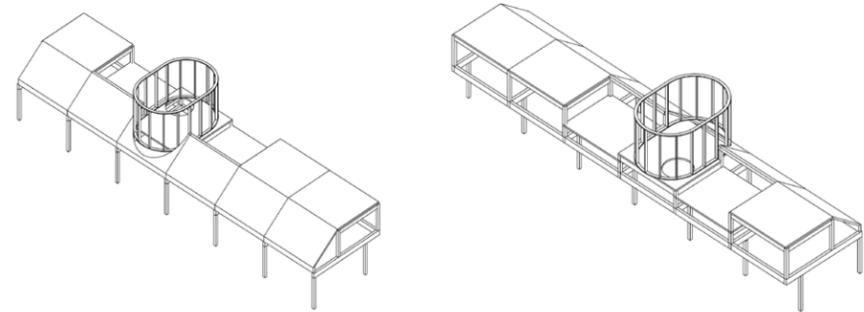
Program
Parking = 120-200
Communal Open Space = 60,000 SF
Private Open Space = 100,000 SF
Total New Construction = 120,000 SF

Units Mix (1-4 beds)
1 bed: 325 sf (typ. 400-625 sf)
2 bed: 550 sf (typ. 850 sf)
3 bed: 600 sf (typ. 950sf)
150x Ground Level = 400 beds
60x Roof Level = 150 beds
Total = 550 beds

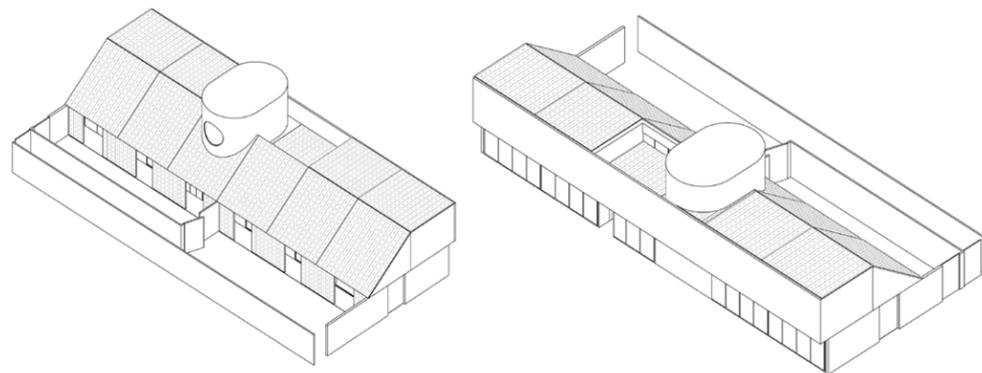




unit frame rests on a shelf, or service spine



manufactured on site via stick frame or pre-fabricated offsite (market forces)



modules with endless aggregations for oscillating family sizes

Accommodating & Modest Units

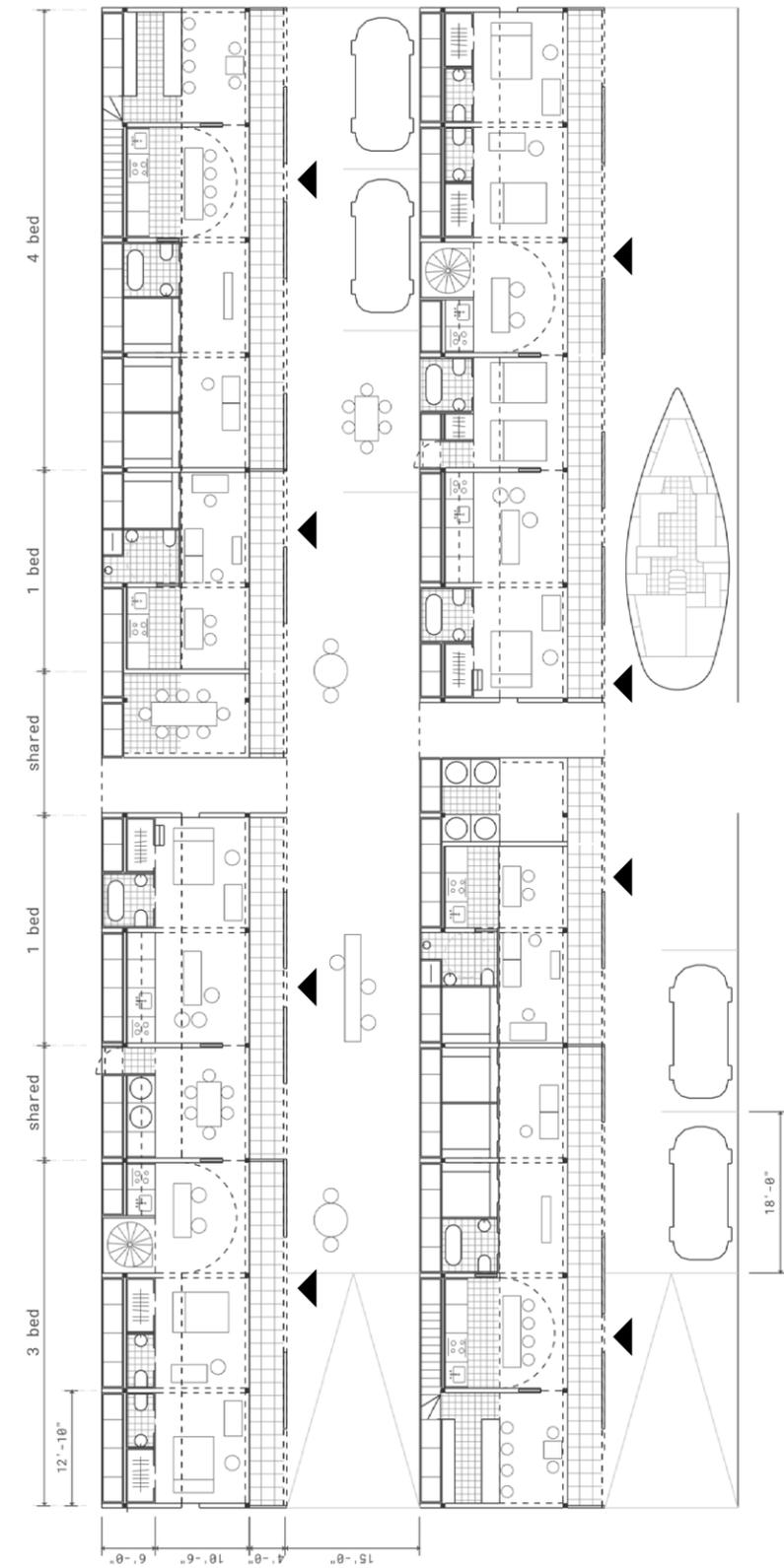
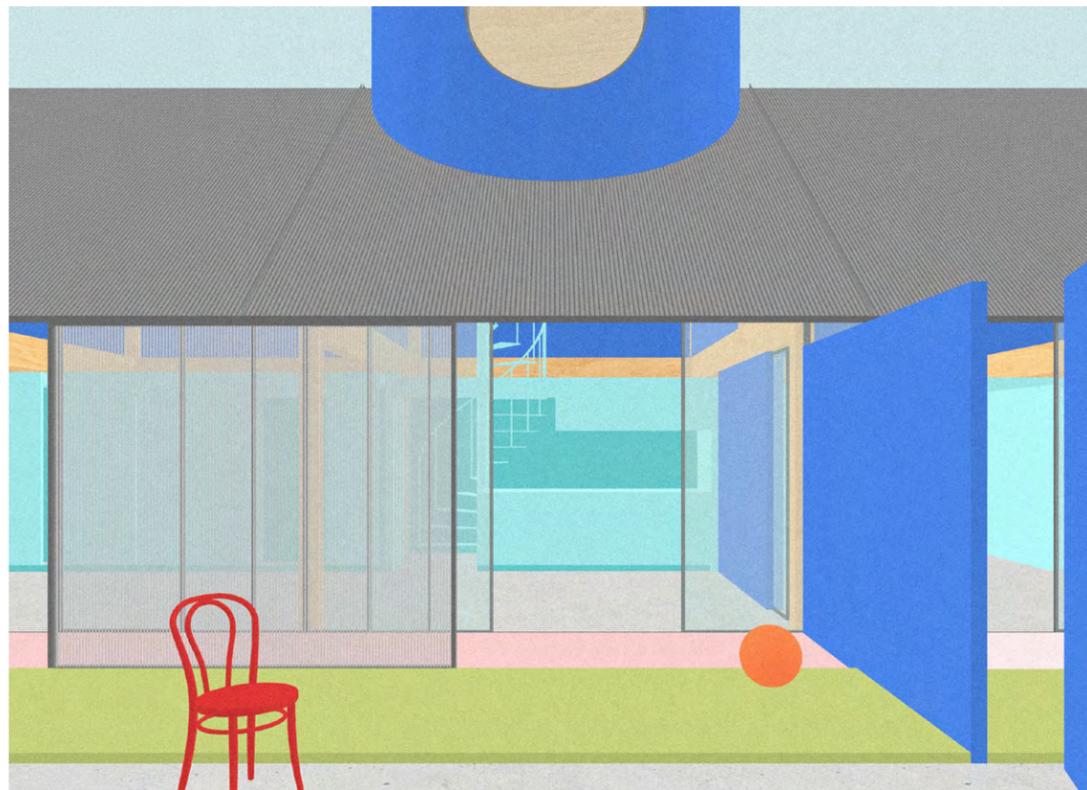
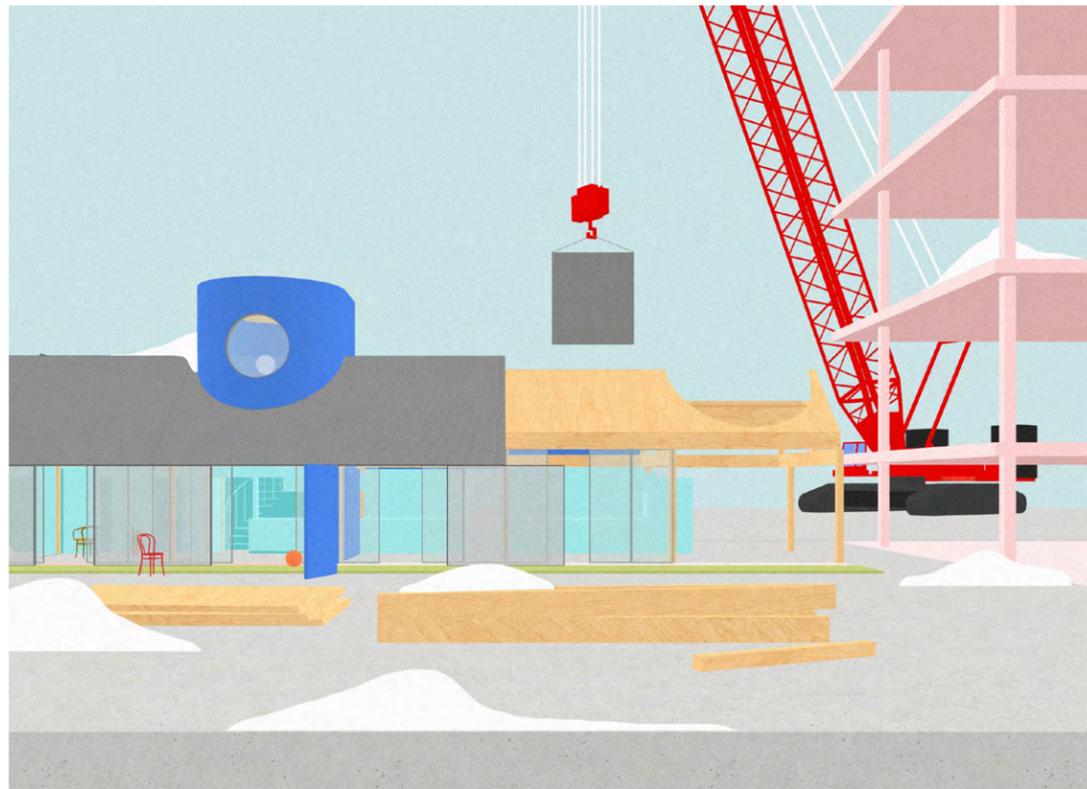
Units infill the site quickly in endless configurations. The units oscillate in depth to accommodate different types of spaces, whether they be accessible washrooms or larger enclosed bedrooms.

Units are arranged in an enfilade style organization with a semi-conditioned southern hallway for entry and horizontal connection between rooms. Units are oriented east west to maximize cross ventilation with prevailing south winds.

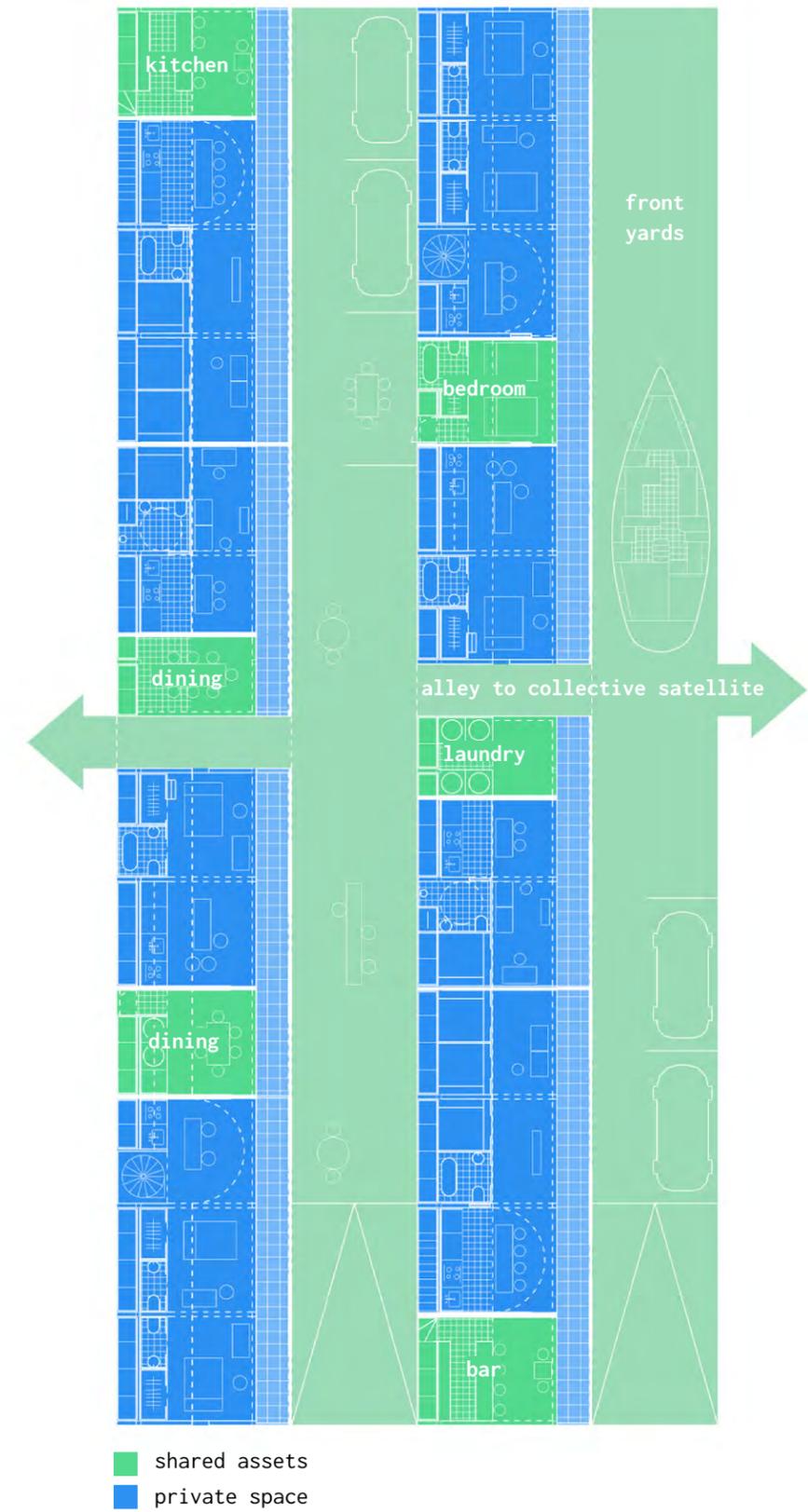
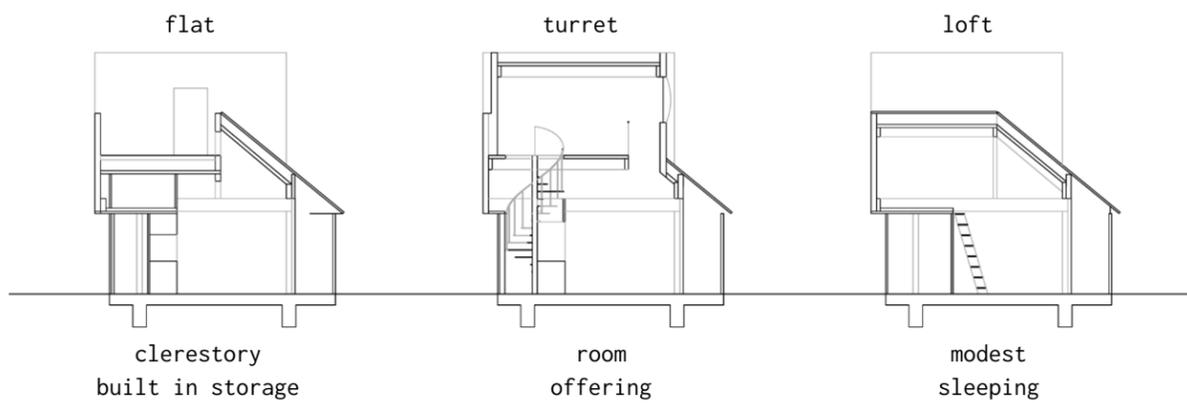
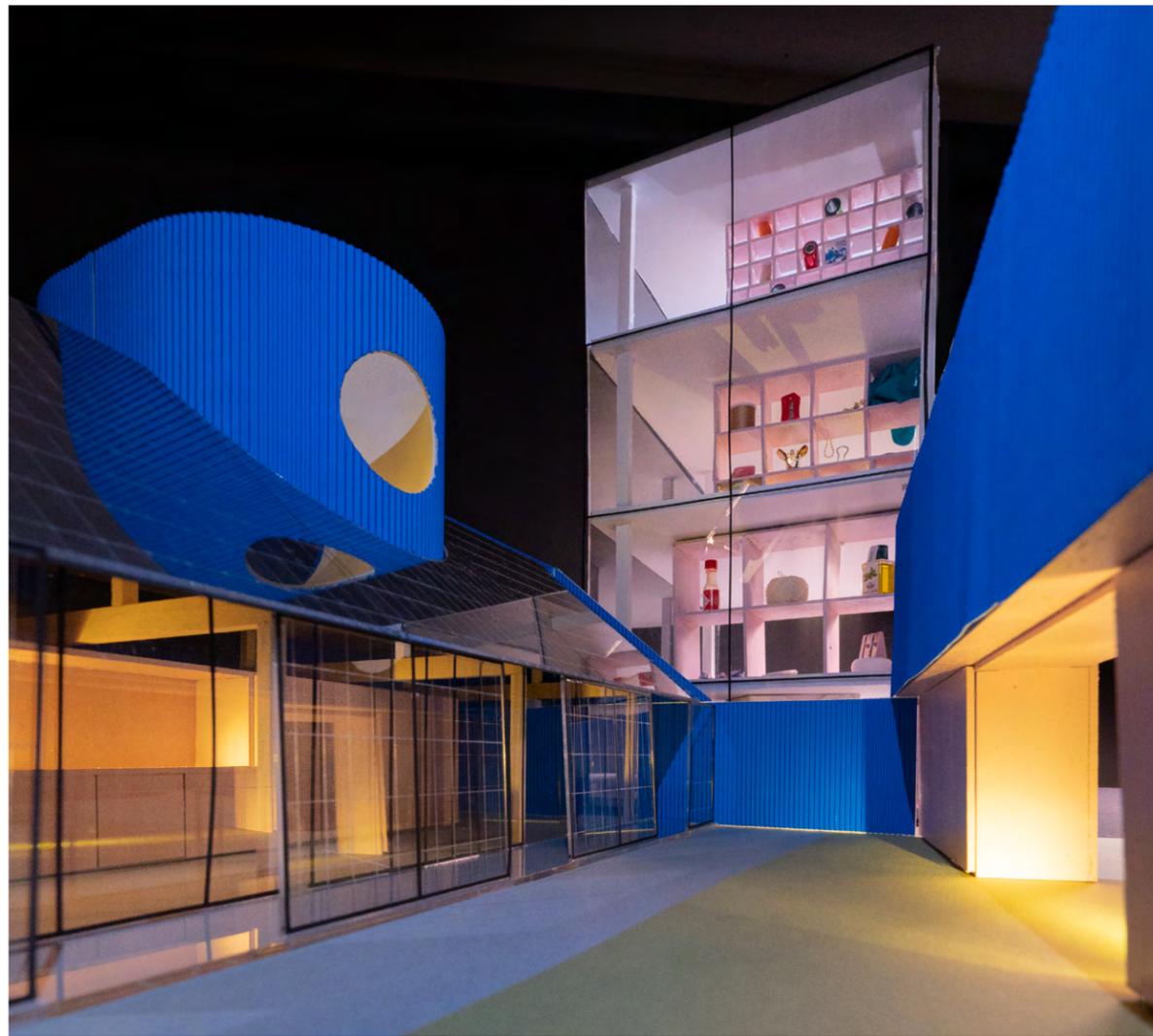
Alleys create connective tissue between domestic units. Back alleys connect neighbors in unexpected ways as different grains collide across the site.

A network of families and friends can tile dwellings together in both East/West, but also North/South configurations.



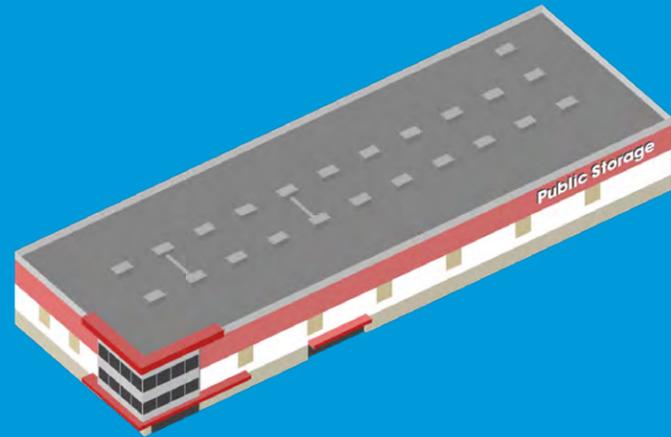


enlarged unit plan



enlarged unit plan

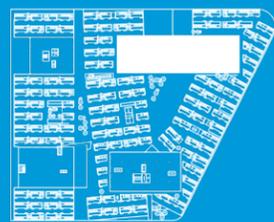




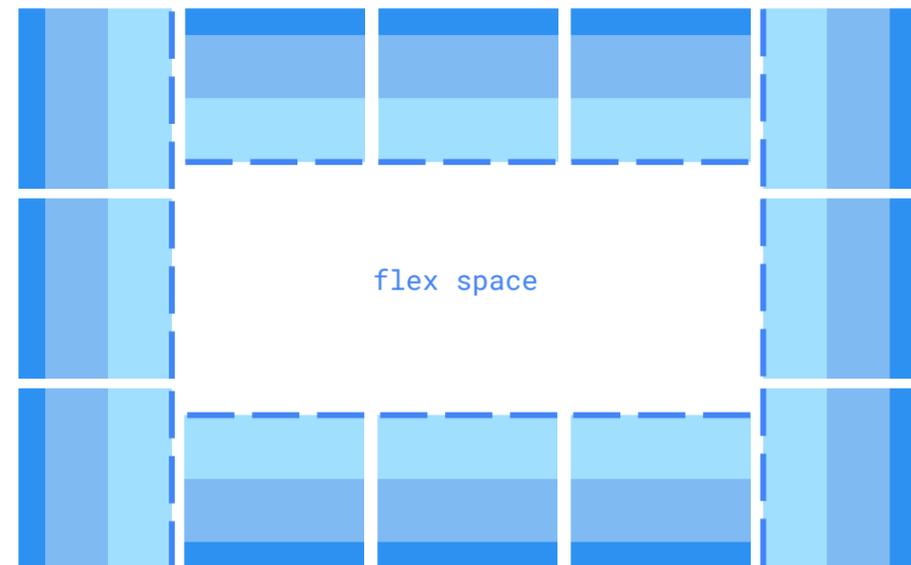
1. The Self-Storage Warehouse

Life in the suburban garage spills outward into the street from the inner workbench, through the collection of stuff, and onto the driveway. The deep floor plates provide an opportunity to create the same conditions of suburban connectivity, rotating the garage around a flexible space that mimics the social condition of a cul-de-sac.

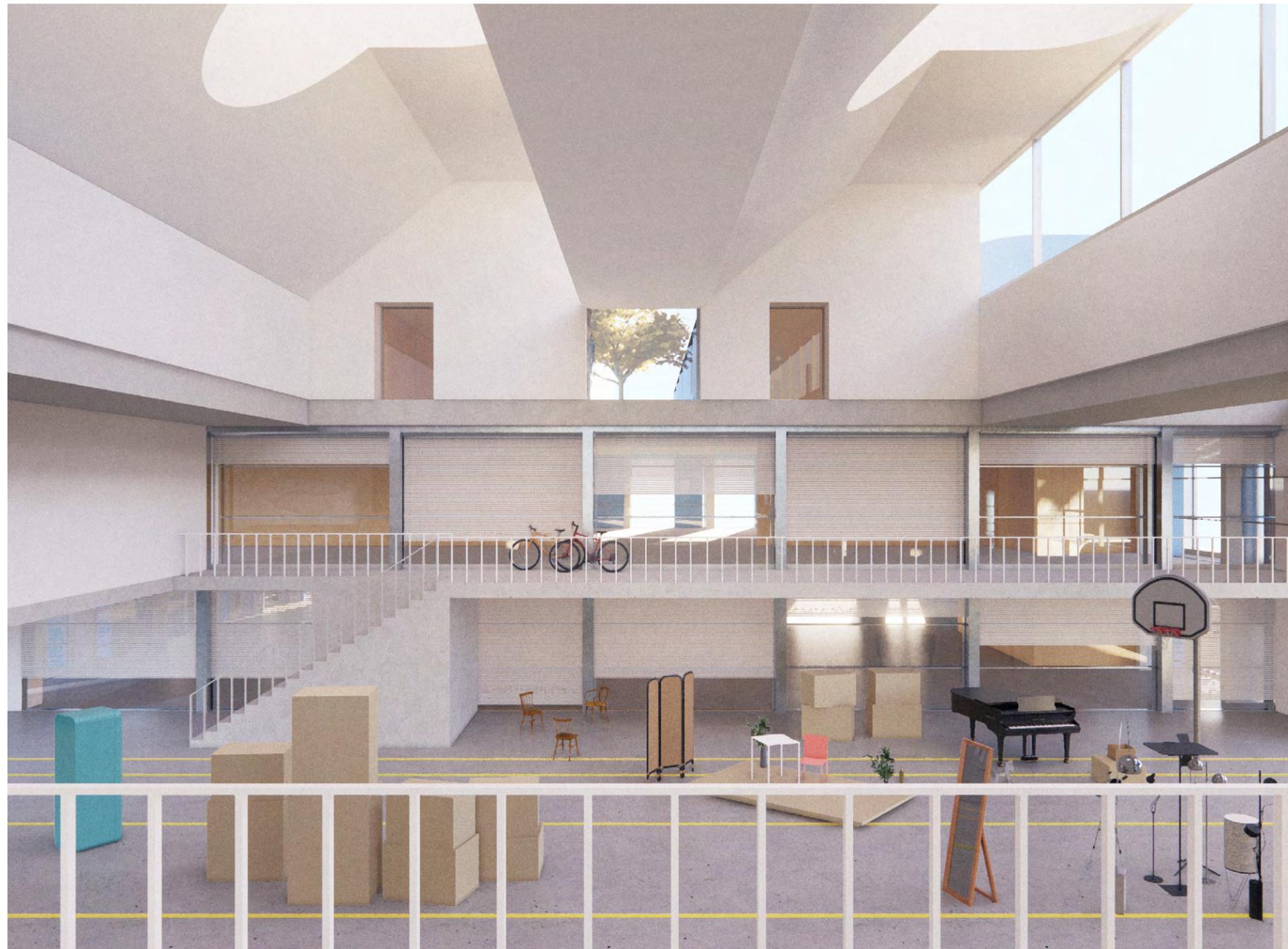
100 Everett offers a central block party condition that is open for public receiving by car and foot, flanked on either side by garage storage.



suburban garage

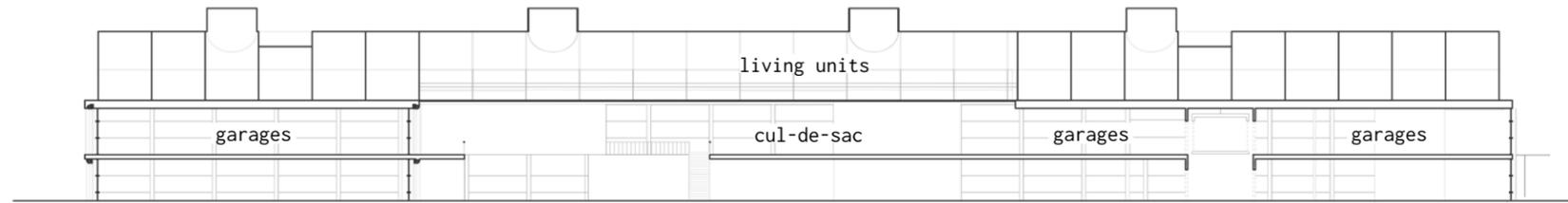


office building



Cul-de-Sac Flea Market

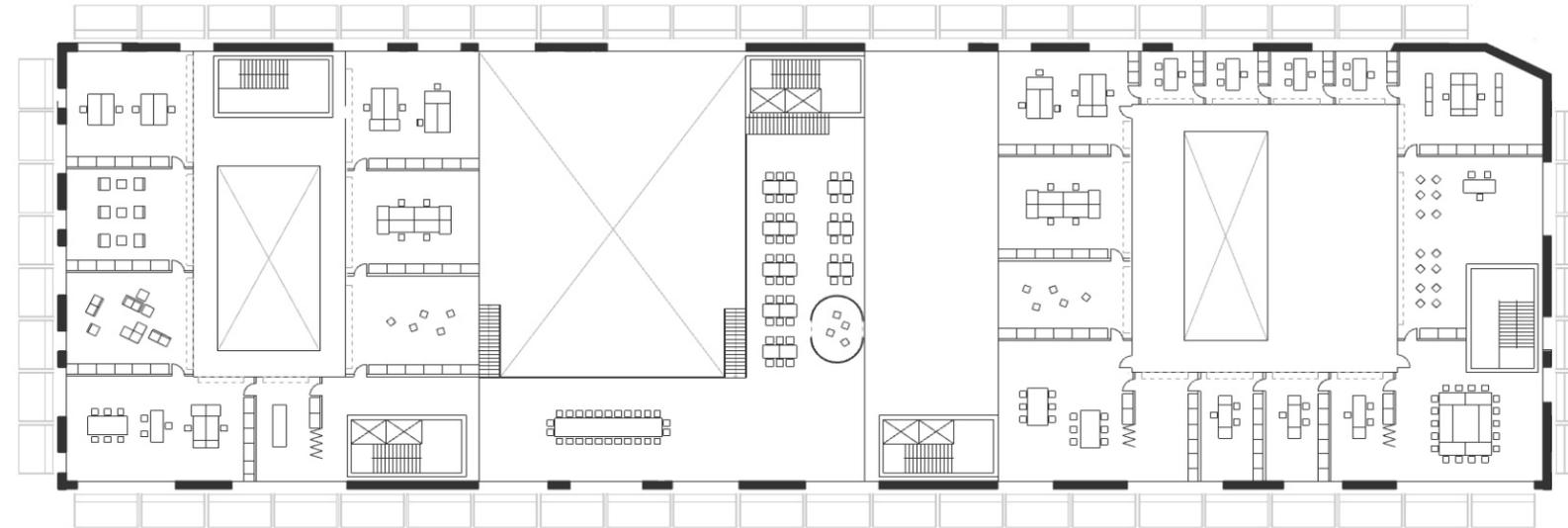
The figure of the living unit typologically transforms into the factory sawtooth oculus. In this case, becoming a public flea market forum for exchange to supplement the material coop of the development.



e/w section

Gathering between Garages

Central linkages connect the spaces across the removed floor plate, creating visual connections and conditions for gathering. The rooftop plan shows catwalks that extend across the north and south perimeter.

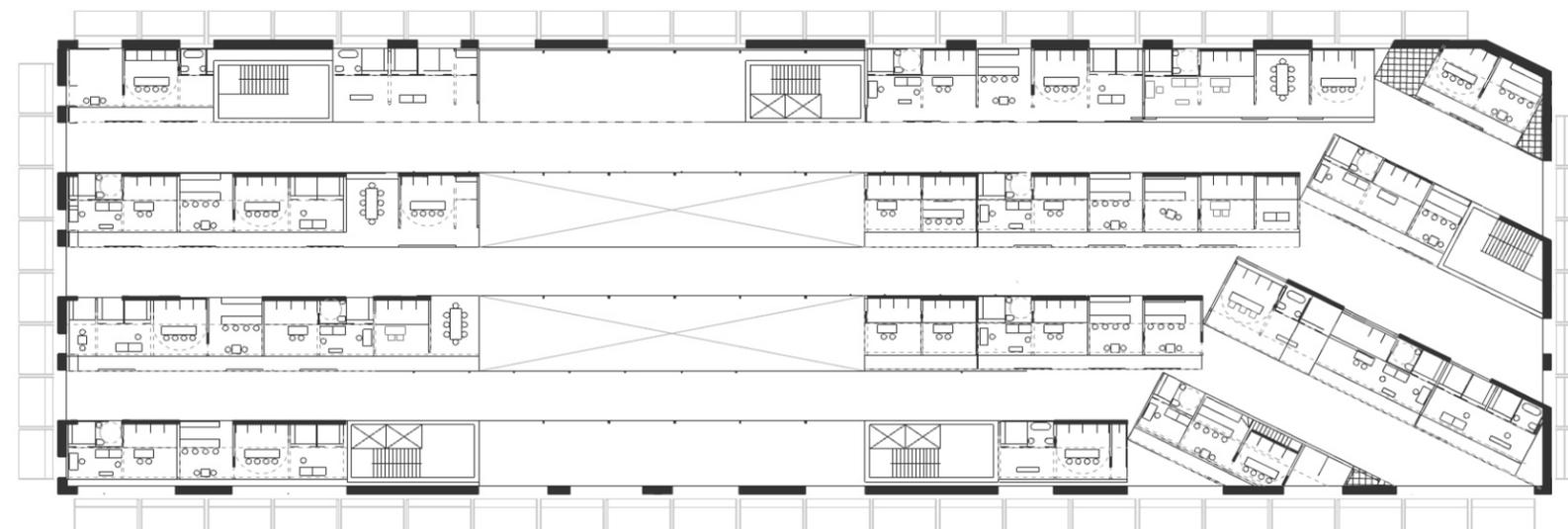


second floor

Unit Bar Informs Plan Shelving

The units atop have limited influence on the plan: residential facades extrude down in section to inform shelving layouts.

The roof enclosure is an extrusion of the rooftop units in the form of a hollowed atrium. The north face and turrets are glazed to bring in light.



roof plan

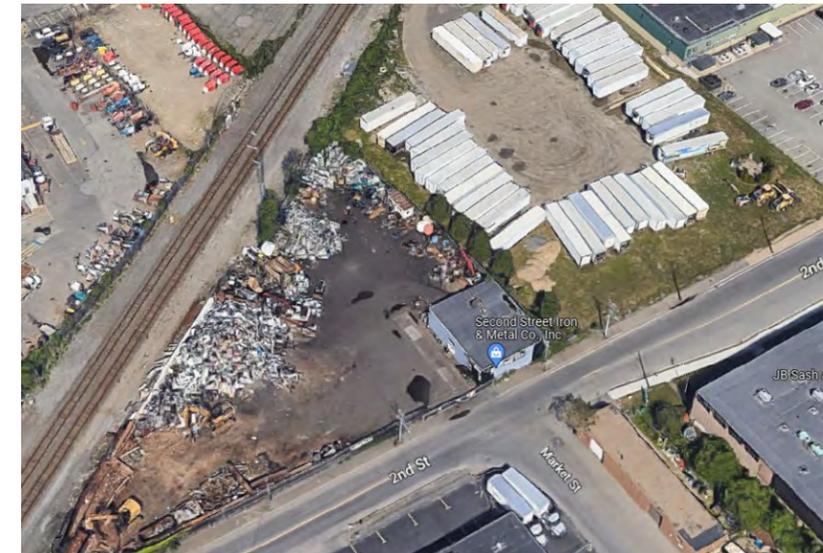
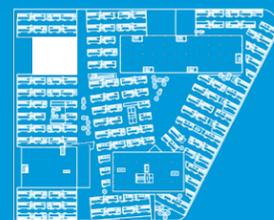


2. Scrap and Salvage

The office building is recast as a satellite workshop space to filter and maintain shared goods.

Bars of each unit spine extrude down from rooftop units into interior workshops to become nodes for hosting tools, wet walls, etc.

An abundance of landfill and recycling yards are in direct proximity to the site.



Scrap & Salvage Yard (5 mins. away)
Everett, MA



Schnitzer Northeast, Mystic River (5 mins. away)
Everett, MA



Roof Plan - Residential Units



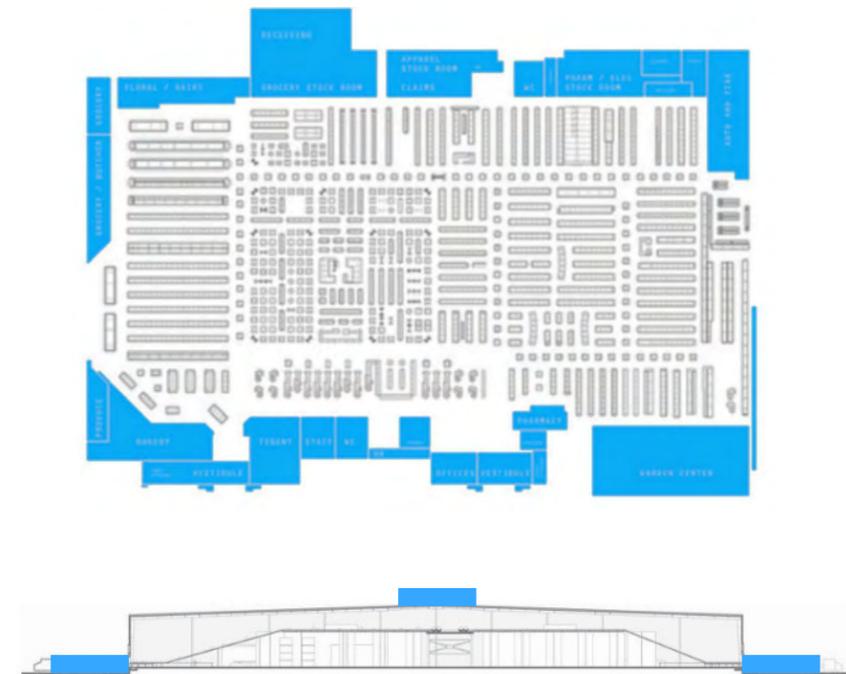
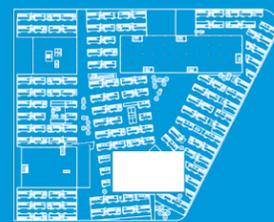
Typical Plan - Workshop & Maker Space



3. The Big Box Store

The Walmart Supercenter organizes its floor plan based on populist demands, producing an emphasis on surface and enclosure. The urban condition is evocative of the big box store plan. The ground floor receives and circulates goods from the distribution center (plan west), displaying goods on shelves to mimic consumer shopping.

Each level is informed by the non-orthogonal units above to create sheared shelving and host existing retail storefronts along the building perimeter.



source: Prototypical Walmart Plan and Section. Jesse LeCavalier, The Rule of Logistics



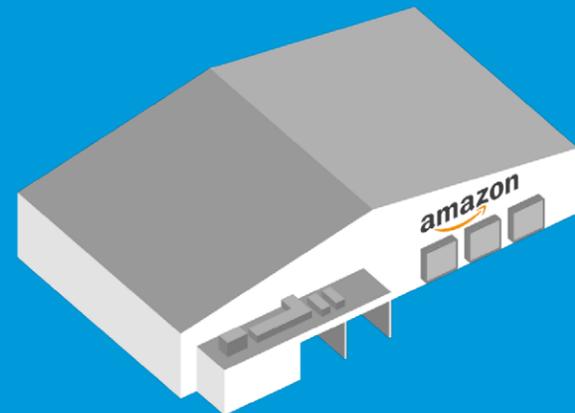
site plan: evocative of the big box store plan



Roof Plan - Residential Units



Typical Plan - Big Box Cooperative

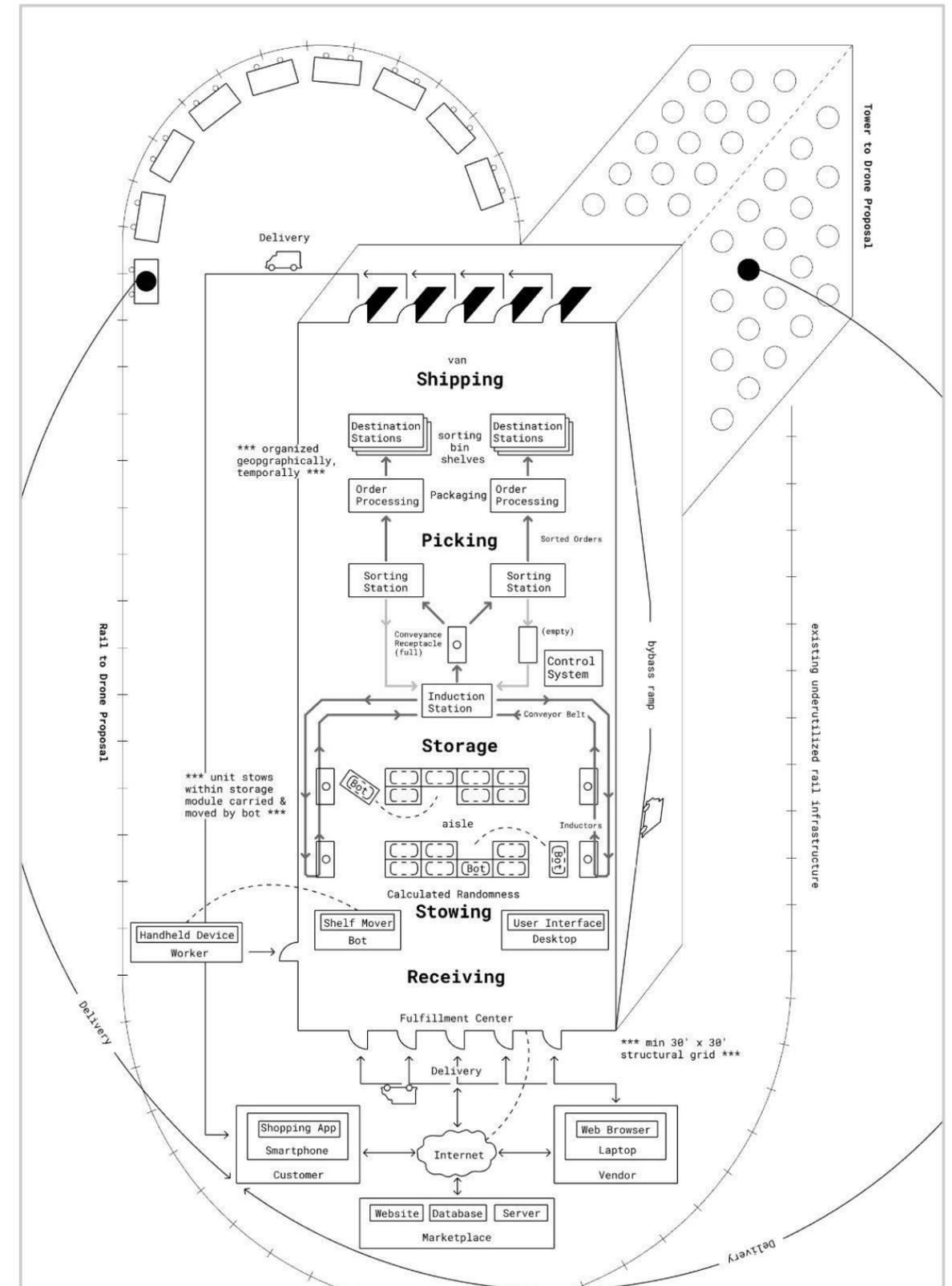


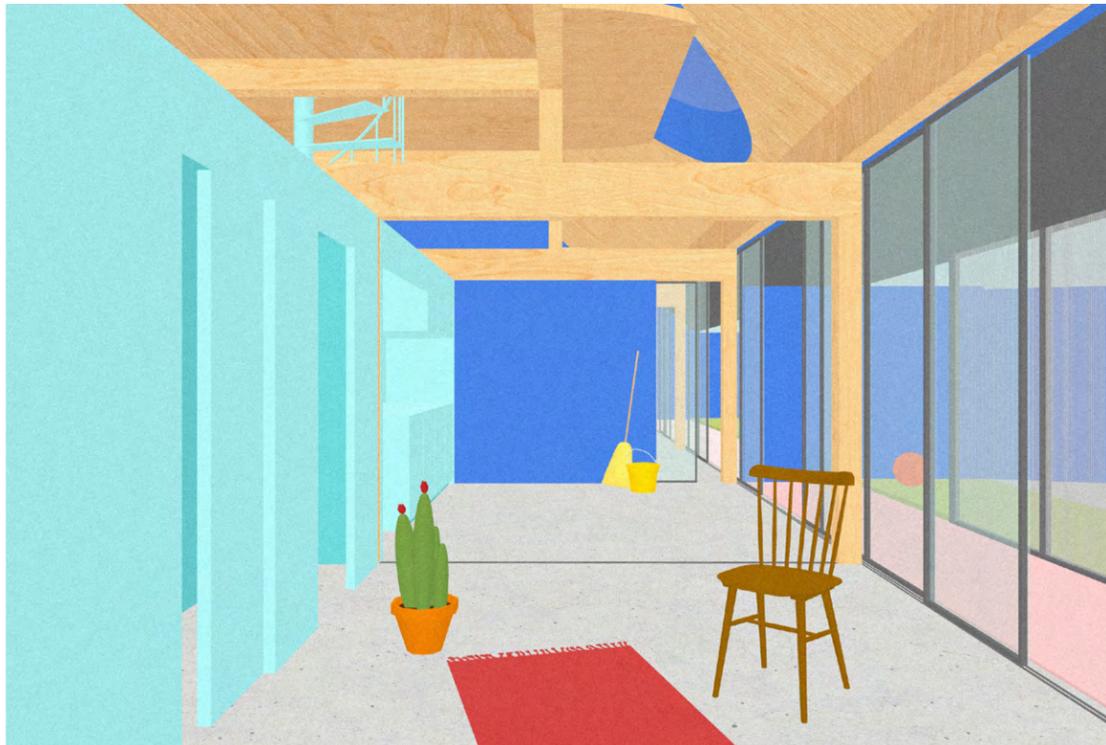
4. The Distribution Center

Informed by Amazon warehouse logistics, the distribution center receives, stores, and ships merchandise in high quantities and speeds.

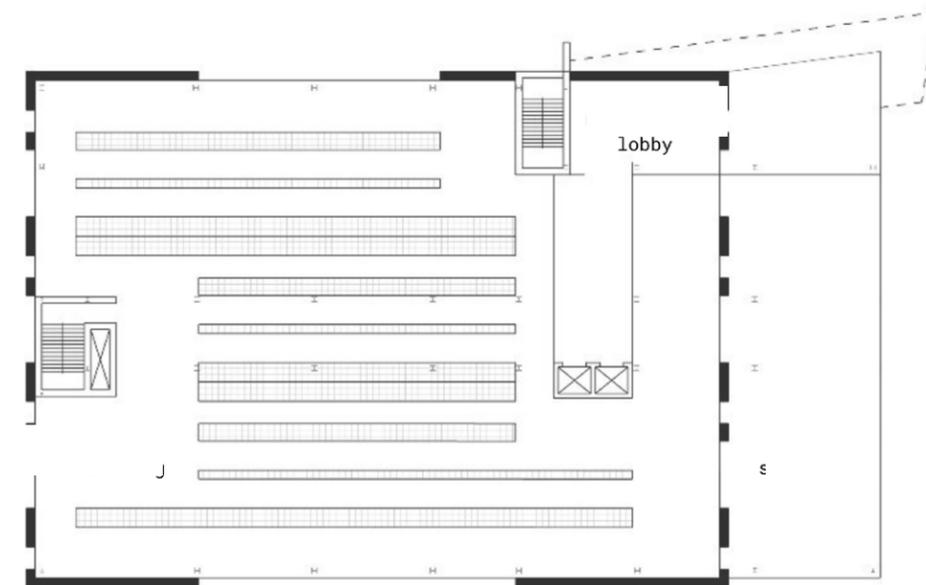
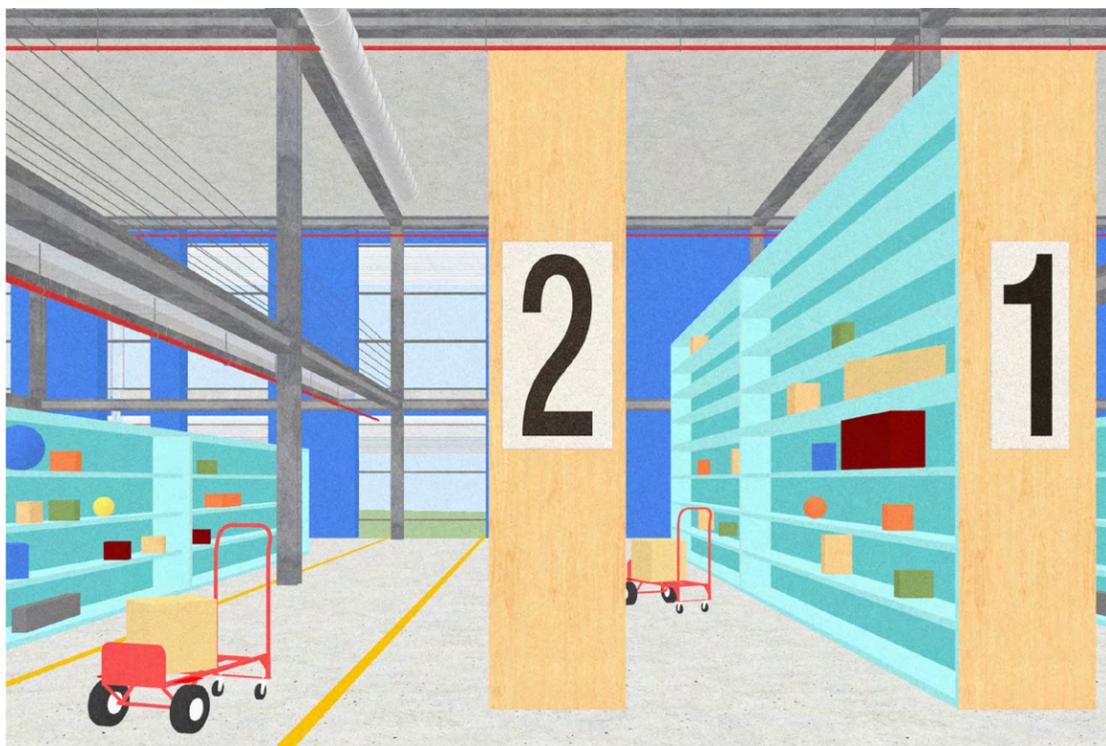
Receiving, Stowing, Storage, Picking, and Shipping - pillars that organize the linear flow of the DC. Calculated randomness has become the heart of this e-commerce model to prioritize speed.

Here, the units have the least impact on the plan below: the warehouse is simply filled with air to accommodate the flow of goods.

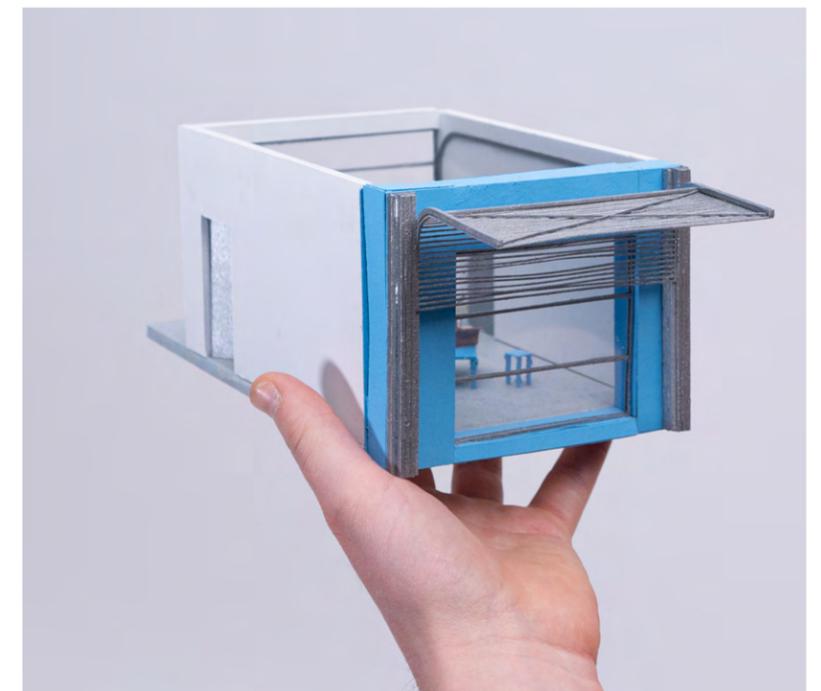
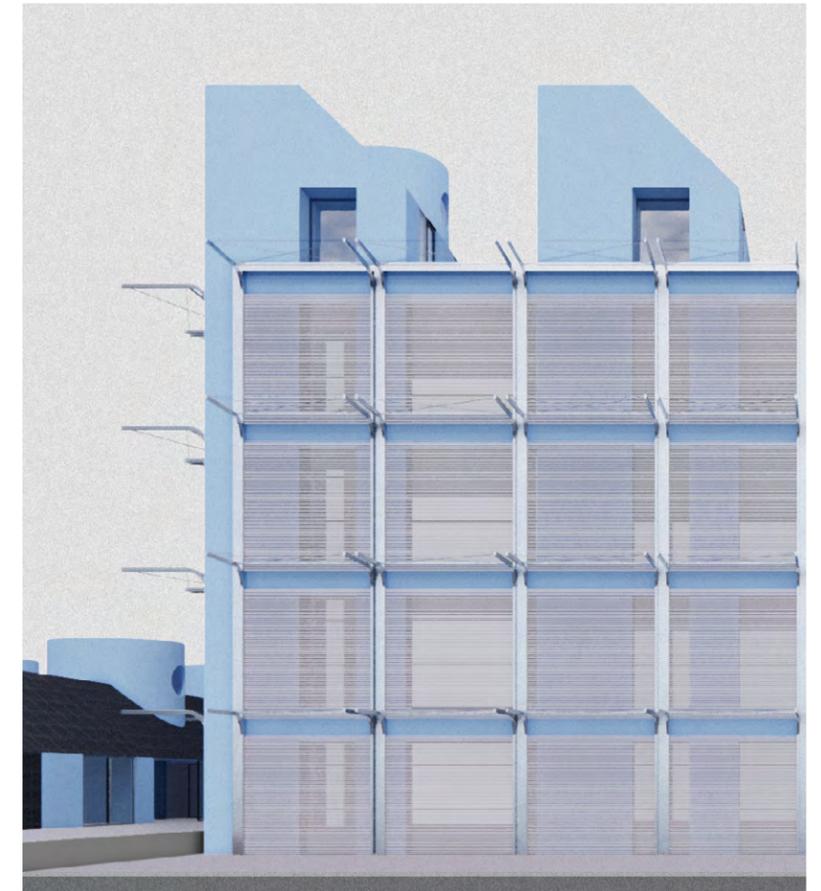
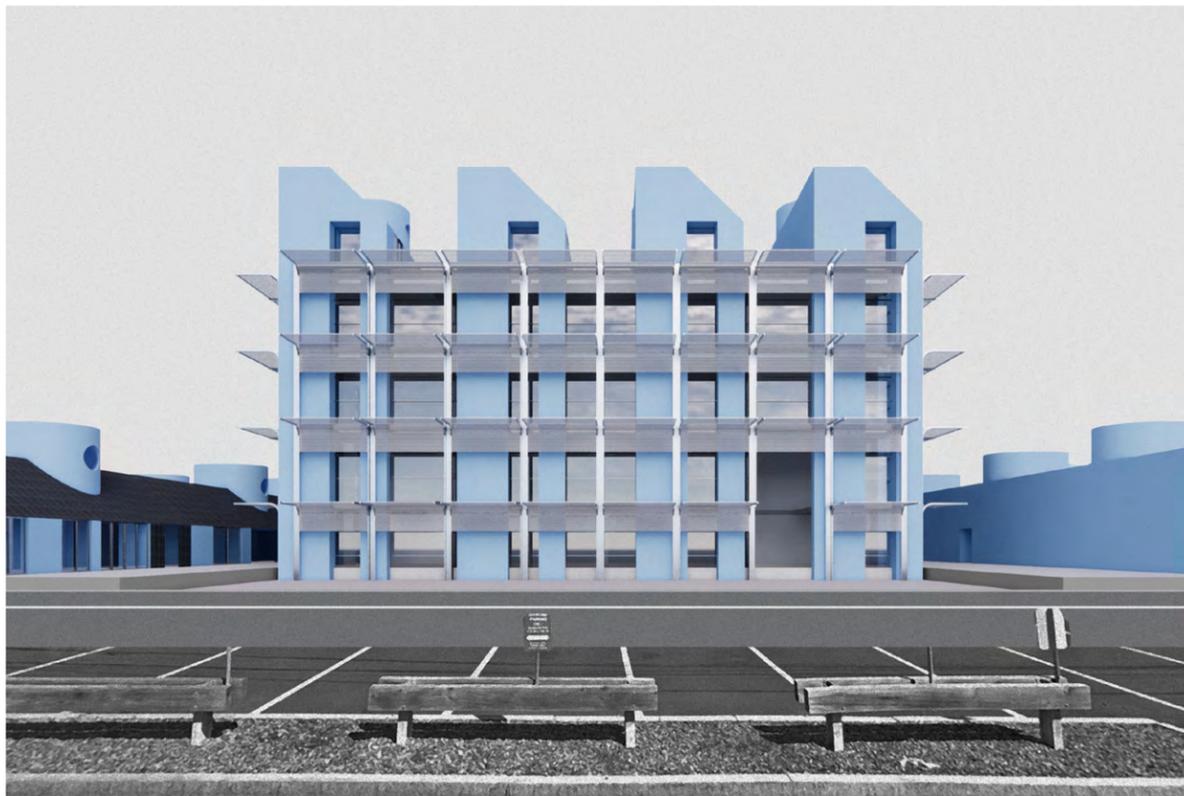
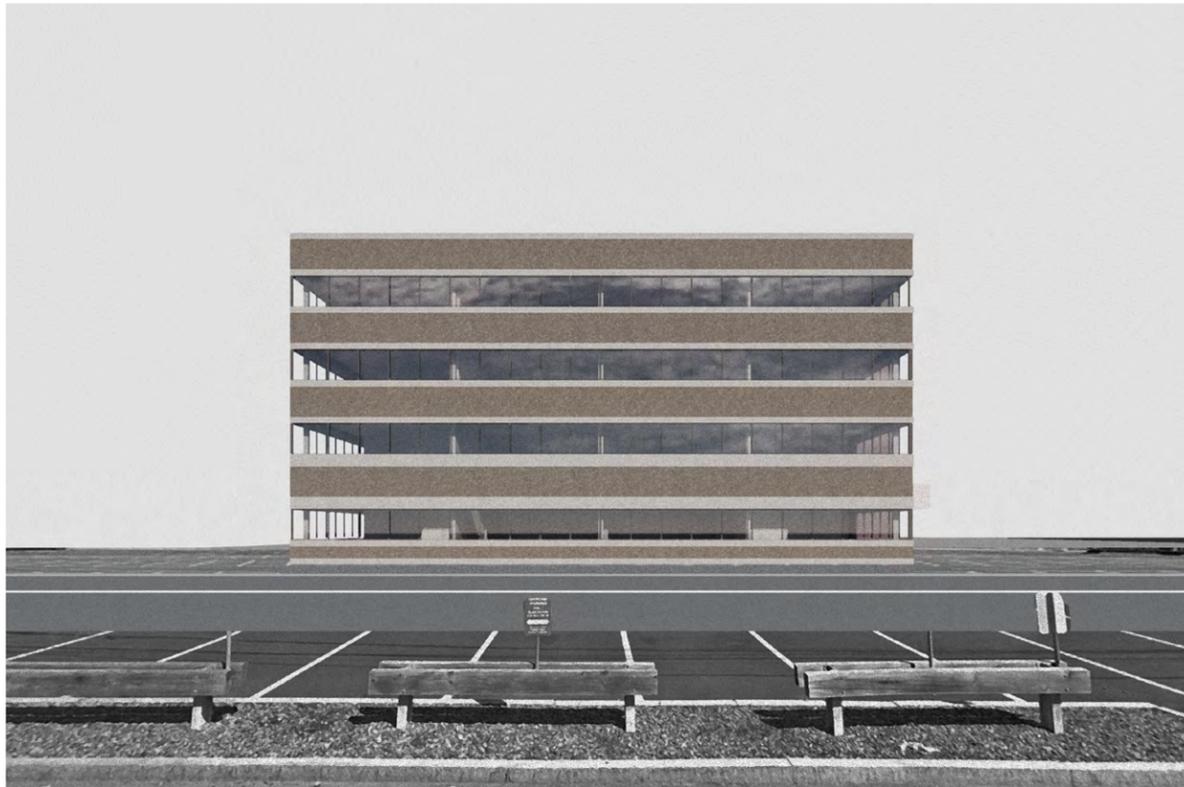




Roof Plan - Residential Units



Typical Plan - Distribution Warehouse



Facade

The suburban garage door is inverted, aggregated across the surface of each facade, and put into conversation with the stacked unit behind.

The building becomes creature-like, spiked and armored when the doors close.





Consumerism, Re-ordered

In summary, by reframing domestic life through the lens of shared goods, this proposal takes American consumerism and renders it slowed, contained, and re-ordered. By removing commodities from the market economy, we extend the life of materials goods and expand the opportunity for non commodifiable, infinitely valuable human relationships.

