

Growing, preparing, and consuming are three facets of food that contribute to enhancing inter-generational community living. Food has the ability to operate as a tool for increasing the health of individuals, communities, cities and even regions. It can bring vitality and conviviality to urban life encouraging social exchange and interaction. This research explores the three facets of food; growing preparing, and sharing; through literature review of concepts and ideas that contribute to the designed environment. Each study is then analyzed using psychologist Abraham Maslow's study of the hierarchy of human needs for individual generations as well as a mixed group of generations. Maslow's study identifies the necessary elements that increase human satisfaction. In an example of this study, Love and Belonging, one of Maslow's needs, can be achieved by a study shown to have improved relationships by eating dinner together every night for people of all ages. From this exploration and analysis, one can determine design elements and/or design solutions for inter-generational community living that improve the quality of life. The significance of this research is to provide designers with a tool that can be used to promote healthy environments that strengthen community life for inter-generational living and provide opportunities for multiple generations to grow and flourish together.



kirby thomas

Food for Thought: Creating a Model for Urban Inter-generational Living





food for thought

“Through growing, preparing, and sharing, food can contribute to an improved quality of life and a healing sense of place for people of all ages.”

My grandmother lived with my immediate family for eight years. We had what one might call an inter-generational household with my parents and four sisters. The mix of generations offered many mutually benefitting circumstances. As the kids in my family grew up and left the house after high school, the success of our dwindling inter-generational arrangement began to fail, keeping my grandma from the healthy supported lifestyle she had before.

Why Food

The concept of food is the key to the formation of this new inter-generational model. “Food is much more than just a means of survival. It permeates all other aspects of our lives” (Cramer et al., 2011). This paper poses that food can contribute to an

improved quality of life and a healing sense of place for people of all ages in order to create a sustainable model for urban Inter-generational Living. Alice Waters, creator of esteemed restaurant Chez Panisse located in Berkley, California, is a well-known leader of the food revolution, supporting public and environmental health through her words and actions. To further her quest, Alice Waters developed a program called Edible Schoolyard as model for schools to provide students with a nutritious meal and an education about the food system within their daily curriculum. The students at Martin Luther King Junior Middle School, work alongside their teachers and learn how to grow, harvest, and prepare fresh produce and then share the food at communal dining tables (Waters, 2008). Fundamentally, by growing,



Edible Schoolyard | Alice Waters

preparing, and sharing, Alice Waters is “[fostering] a better understanding of how the natural world sustains us, and [promoting] the environmental and social well-being of our [...] community” (The Edible Schoolyard Berkeley, 2012). Through this concept food becomes much more than a means of survival. Through growing, preparing, and sharing, food can contribute to an improved quality of life and a healing sense of place for people of all ages.

Improving the Quality of Life

The framework for improving the quality of life was built upon this knowledge of the successes and downfalls of my personal living situation. The five most important issues that I believe affected my grandmothers quality of life were poor nutrition, loneliness, monotony, exclusion, and



Improve Nutrition



Promote Lively Environments



Foster Supportive Relationships



Engage Surrounding Area



Encourage Active Lifestyles

5 Guiding Principles | Growing

inactivity; issues that did not exist when everyone was living at home. In response to those issues, the five guiding principles to an improved quality of life, not only for aging adults but for people of all ages, are to improve nutrition, foster supportive relationships, promote lively environments, engage surrounding area, and encourage an active lifestyle. By achieving these principles, there is potential for the success inter-generational living.

Growing

“For the people who are involved in creating or maintaining a garden, satisfaction can be found in the tangible transformation of a site, the productivity of cultivation and the resulting nutrition, the fulfillment of community open-space needs, meeting neighbors and working together, and fostering a more sustainable and

healthy community” (Hou et al., 2009).

Improve Nutrition:

Gardening has been brought to educational environments like the Edible Schoolyards because it can be used to teach about nutrition (Hou et al., 2009). Teachers at Martin Luther King Elementary noticed that children were more likely to eat something that they have never tried before if they had grown it themselves (Franck, 2005).

Foster Supportive Relationships:

Within schools, students also learn about each other through working together as a team (Franck, 2005). This interaction among students also exists

between students and adults. By working as a team with the same common goal, everyone works together on equal terms (Franck, 2005) establishing a base for building inter-generational bonds. The same effect was found in community gardens and urban farms as well with regards to removing the boundaries of differences in age, ethnicity, class, and gender (Doron, 2005).
Promote Lively Environments
The time for building these social relationships within the garden exists because there is a level of commitment necessary for maintenance (Hou et al., 2009). Due to this level of commitment required, the environment



Preparing + Growing | Showcase Kitchen

becomes enlivened in the sense that it is visited often. The act of gardening within the urban context also can bring life to the environment by bringing neighbors together creating a new social space (Doron, 2005).

Engage Surrounding Area: By providing an opportunity to grow food within the city, a new and developing concept, the surrounding area can “experience a chance to be stewards of the land” (Franck,

2005). For most urban dwellers, it may be their first time discovering gardening however, at the EECO Farm, whether experienced or inexperienced, “there is a vigor brought by the scores of individuals coming together” (Cooper, Holmes, 2006). From the inexperienced gardener to the neighbor passing by, there is interest in



Improve Nutrition



Promote Lively Environments



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Encourage Active Lifestyles

5 Guiding Principles | Preparing

discovering the rewarding benefits of the garden combined with many potential opportunities to get involved. The surrounding area could garden, or attend a garden tour, harvest fair, or educational workshop (Hou et al., 2009).

Encourage Active Lifestyles:

Another rewarding experience found within the garden is gardening as a source of leisure and restoration through physical activity. Gardening is a “popular leisure-time activity of people 65+” (Wells, 1997). Their studies have shown physical and psycho-social health improvements such as lowering cholesterol, blood pressure, mortality and an increase in physiological well-being and social integration.

Preparing

Improve Nutrition:

Cooking is one of the most interesting and worthwhile things we humans can do. It can also be one of the most important as well (Pollan, 2013). Michael Pollan, author of numerous food publications and graduate professor of journalism at UC Berkeley, stated, “Cooking [...] is the single most important thing you can do for your health.” By cooking at home, meals are more likely to include healthy fresh ingredients than those on restaurant menus (Gupta, 2014). Further studies have shown that an average of 50% more calories

and fat intake dining out versus cooking at home, and those who cook at home at least five times per week are more likely to be alive after ten years (Easton, 2013). Unfortunately, “We spend less time in the kitchen than ever” (Pibel, 2014). Studies have shown that Americans have been transitioning to eat away from home more and cook at home less (Smith et al., 2013).

Foster Supportive Relationships:

Eating out does not always involve a sit down restaurant either. It has become more common practice for people to eat alone; essentially eating only to “fuel the tank”. People are becoming more aware of this

missing element of their lives that they had been given in the past, which is the social connection that food provides (Something to Chew On, 2013). “Cooking [...] for someone close to you forges bonds based on kindness, compassion, and love” (Gupta, 2014). In a community cooking environment, an organization transformed into a non-judgmental social group because the main focus was on cooking (Barg). Similar to the equalizing

effect achieved in community gardens, working together to accomplish a common goal has the potential to form a mutual level of support and foundation to build relationships and a sense of community (Barg). Promote Lively Environments: Cooking has the ability to draw attention; whether it’s through sight, smell, sounds, taste, or touch. Within the city food enriches our senses through the ways in which it is produced,

displayed and consumed (Franck, 2005). For this reason open restaurant kitchens are becoming increasingly popular. The idea of transparency in the kitchen allows for consumers to have a sense of where their food is coming from, as well as provides a form of entertainment (Tuttle, 2012). Engage Surrounding Area: Preparing food can engage the surrounding area in the form of education. With the increase of purchasing prepared food, the knowledge of how to cook fades away (Franck, 2005). One can learn cooking skills, nutritional tips, and recipes (Barg) and learn about the natural world as well (Pollan, 2013).



Preparing + Sharing | Restaurant Kitchen



Improve Nutrition



Promote Lively Environments



Foster Supportive Relationships



Engage Surrounding Area



Encourage Active Lifestyles

5 Guiding Principles | Sharing

Encourage Active Lifestyles:

Cooking is a common physical activity offered in elder living communities. Although the activity requires minimal effort, for an elderly person it engages the brain and provides a opportunity for self fulfillment.

Sharing

The sharing of food can be understood in multiple ways. In this paper sharing has two different implications. The first meaning the eating of food together and the second meaning the providing of food for others.

Improve Nutrition:

It is common knowledge that a nutritious diet has numerous health benefits; preventing disease, strengthening the immune system, increasing life expectancy, etc. (Robbins, 2006). By providing

healthy food that is easily accessible, those who do not have the time, the desire, or the ability to prepare a nutritious meal for themselves or those around them can attain these significant health benefits.

Foster Supportive Relationships

The sharing of meals can also improve health in terms of social support, both emotional and instrumental (Successful Aging). When people come together for a meal, they also come together to maintain their relationships with one another (Korthals, 2004). Esther, a beloved teacher in charge of the Edible Schoolyard program at her school, had a true “belief in the power of the table

to bring people together and give them a place to commune (Waters, 2008). Family dinners with young children have been found to be important because there is a sharing of conversation and education of manners and the “art of adult conversation” (Something to Chew On, 2013). Eating together has the potential to create bonds (Gupta, 2014) and offer time for valuable interaction (Schwier et al., 2005). Promote Lively Environments This interaction and consumption of food that “encourages social exchange [...] brings vitality and conviviality to urban life” (Franck, 2005). As William Whyte, the director



Preparing + Sharing | Inter-generational Family Room

of the Street Life Project in New York City well known for his research on the use of public urban plazas, stated, “If you want to seed a place with activity, put out food. In New York, at every plaza or set of steps

with a lively social life, you will almost invariably find a food vendor at the corner and a knot of people around him – eating, schmoozing, or just standing” (Whyte, 1980).

Engage Surrounding Area

Which leads to his next idea about food having the ability to attract people who further attract more people (Whyte), potentially engaging the surrounding area. Sharing meals is a reason for people to come together (Schwier et al., 2005). In yet another meaning of sharing, sharing the knowledge of eating fresh local produce and

recycling of leftovers creates an educational opportunity for the understanding of the cycle of life, “from seed to table and back again” (Waters, 2008).

Encourage Active Lifestyles

“People are spontaneously inspired and attracted by activity and the presence of other people” (Gehl, 2010). Lively environments where food is shared, such as food markets, provide these opportunities for spontaneous activity resulting in physical movement. Even the act of coming together to share food is also a physical act and

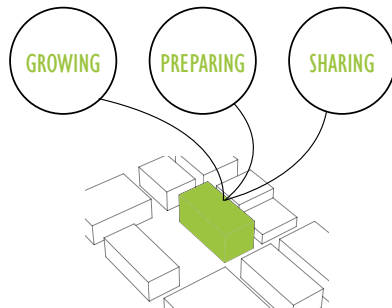
one that is important to note for an elderly adult.

Creating a Healing Sense of Place

Wilbert Gesler, in his book “Healing Places,” analyzes environments known for their healing capabilities. As part of his research he establishes four common aspects common

to healing environments; the natural, social, symbolic, and built. It will be important to create a healing sense of place within an inter-generational environment because having opportunities to heal within one’s living environment, no matter the different circumstances among people of all ages, adds to an improved quality of life. By using Gesler’s four aspects

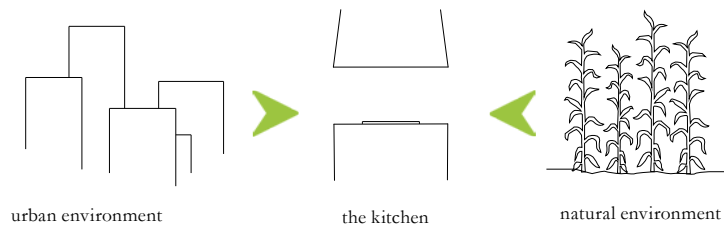
Built



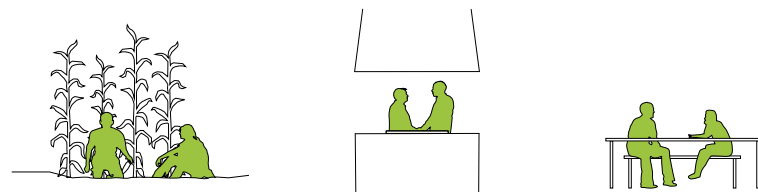
Natural



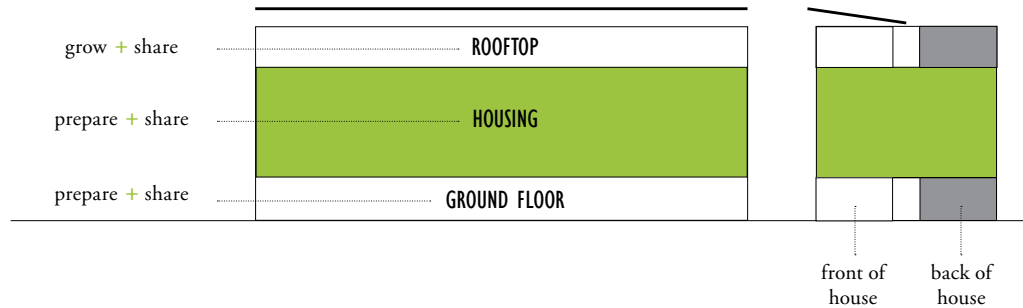
Symbolic



Social



Gesler’s Four Aspects of Healing Environments



Architectural Proposition

of healing environments as the framework, this notion of food to create a healing sense of place can be achieved.

Natural:

The aspects of the natural healing environment that apply to food are the belief in nature as healer. The growing aspect of food has been shown to relieve stress and heal those suffering from health problem through horticultural therapy (Doron, 2005) where one can benefit from “psychological restoration, connection to nature, cultural expression, self-esteem, and personal growth”. Studies have also shown that people find value in gardening as relaxation (Kaplan, 1973) or as an escape from the stresses of urban life. The plants themselves

hold therapeutic properties by “responding to care by growing” (Hou et al., 2009).

Social:

The healing aspects of the social environment were addressed in numerous ways throughout the paper as one of the 5 principles to improve the quality of life; Fostering Social Support. These aspects include equality in social relations and social support. The activities of gardening, preparing food, and sharing a meal all have this potential.

Symbolic:

Symbolically, the transformation of natural produce into a meal through the cooking process connects the natural world with the social world. From wild to civilized; the act is transcending

taking something ordinary and turning it into something special (Pollan, 2013). An article entitled, “Reclaiming the Joy of Real Food,” refers to this transformation of taking quality ingredients and converting them into “delicious home-cooked food” (Gupta, 2014). Gesler’s aspect achieved is the creation of meaning that kitchen is not just a kitchen but a connection from the urban environment to the natural world.

Built:

The built environment is perhaps the most important of the four in achieving an improved quality of life through a healing sense of place. It transforms the five principles of an improved quality of life as well as the three other healing environments into an architectural proposition for a model of urban inter-generational living. Architecturally, this study can be applied to a building that provides the opportunities to grow, prepare, and share within an urban context.



Inter-generational Building Community

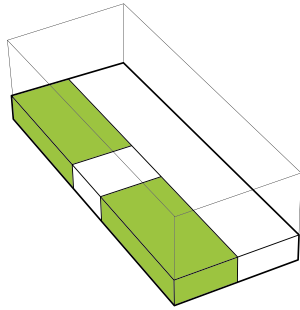
Architectural Proposition

The Farmstead, an architectural proposal for urban inter-generational living, applies this concept of growing, preparing, and sharing. The “food” program of the building includes a rooftop farm, showcase kitchen, resident family rooms, restaurant kitchen, and food market. Each space is specifically designed to offer unique opportunities to grow, prepare, and/or share food. The inter-generational community required by the program is the key to the building’s success. In addition to the residents there would be farmers, a professional chef, and culinary students; each group meant to support the each other, as well as provide way to sustain the building.

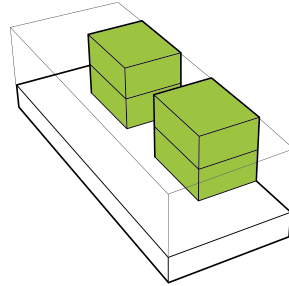
Conclusion

This paper poses that food can contribute to an improved quality of life and a healing sense of place for people of all ages in order to create a sustainable model for urban inter-generational living. Through growing, preparing, and sharing, food was shown to have the ability to contribute to improving the quality of life based upon the framework of the five guiding principles; improve nutrition, foster supportive relationships, promote lively environments, engage surrounding area, and encourage an active lifestyle. Then, through Gesler’s study of

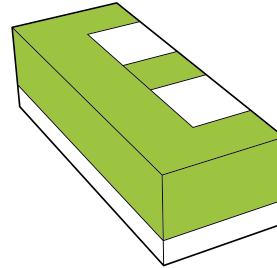
the four healing environments as the framework, food was shown to have the ability to contribute to create healing sense of place which provided the means to form an architectural proposition for inter-generational living. In conclusion, this notion of food is significant in the formation of a model for inter-generational living because it has the potential to achieve environments that offer many opportunities to improve the quality of life and create a healing sense of place for a community of all ages.



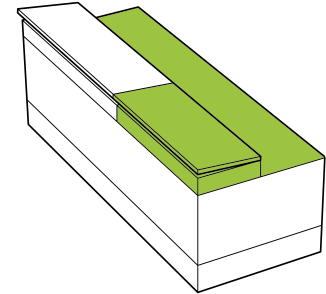
THE KITCHEN &
THE FARMSTAND



THE FAMILY ROOMS



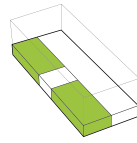
THE UNITS



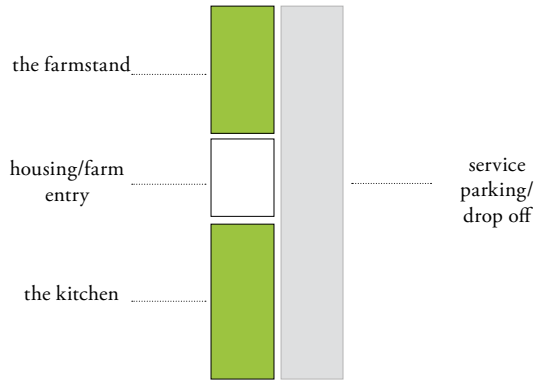
THE FARM &
THE SHOWCASE
KITCHEN



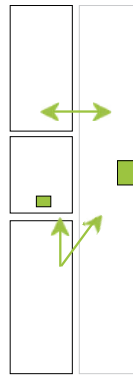
The Kitchen & Farmstand



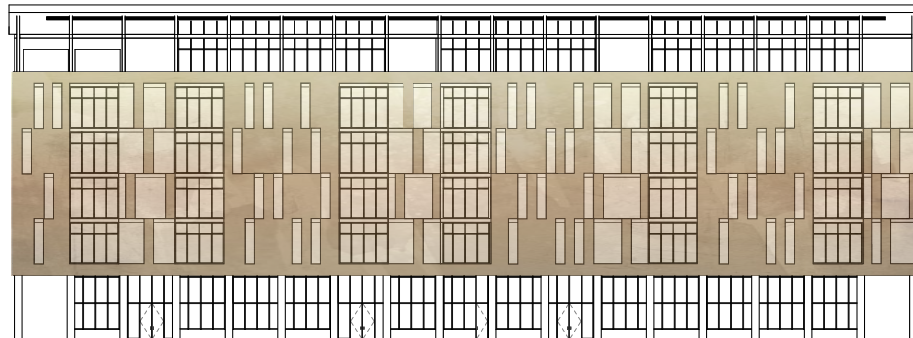
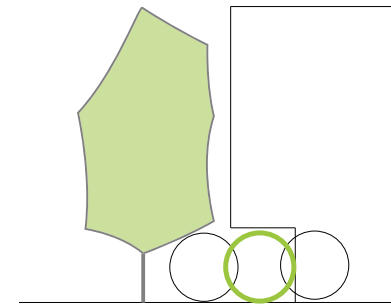
Program

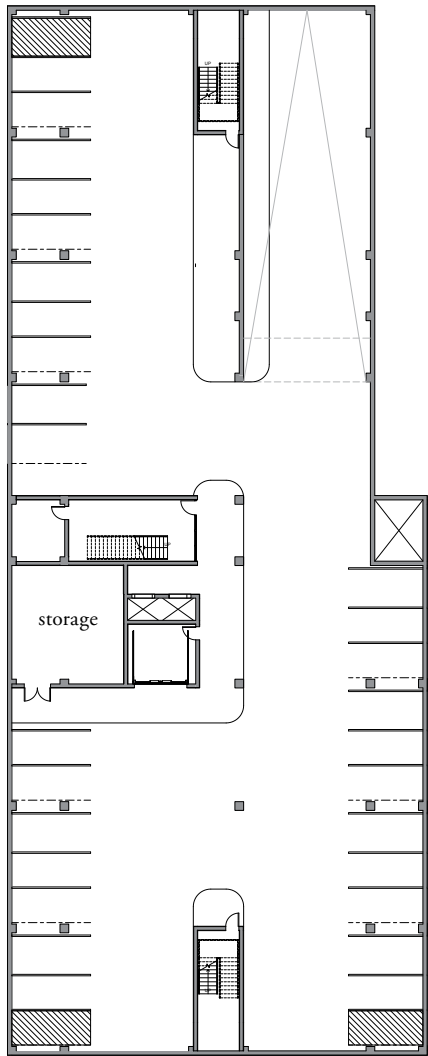


Service Circulation

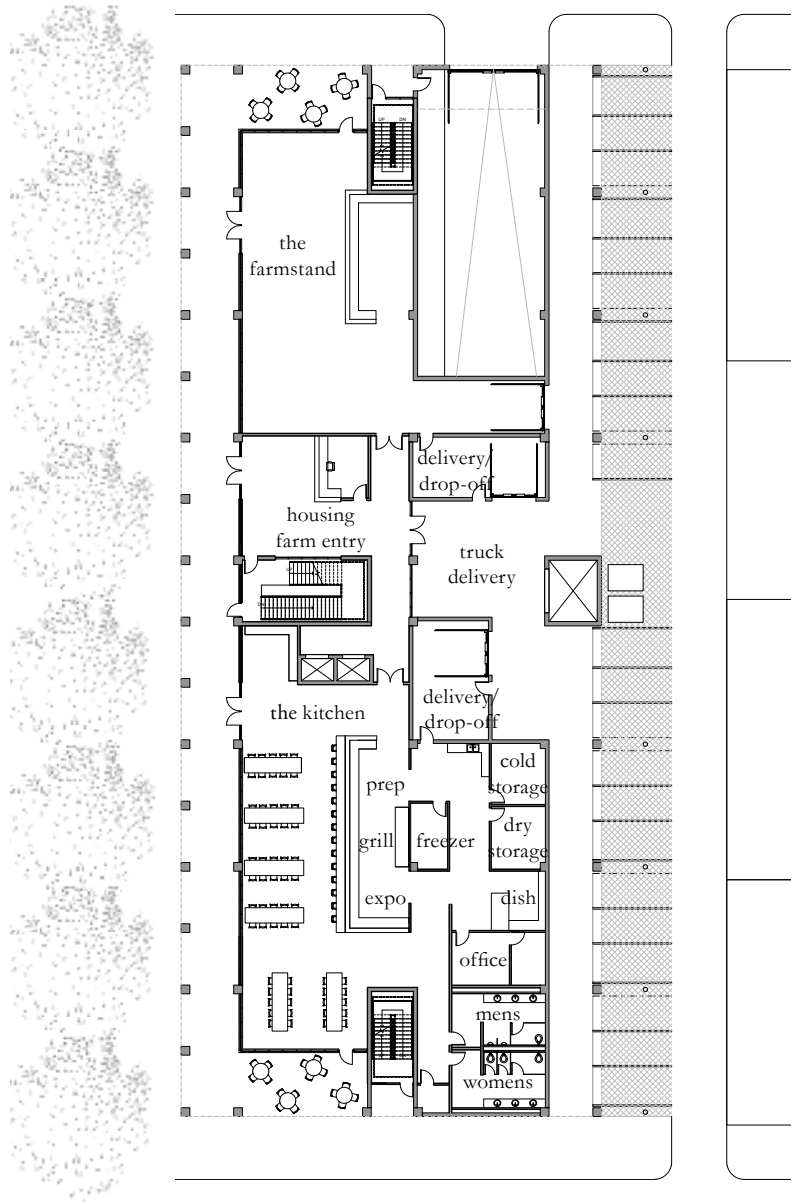


Responding to the Park

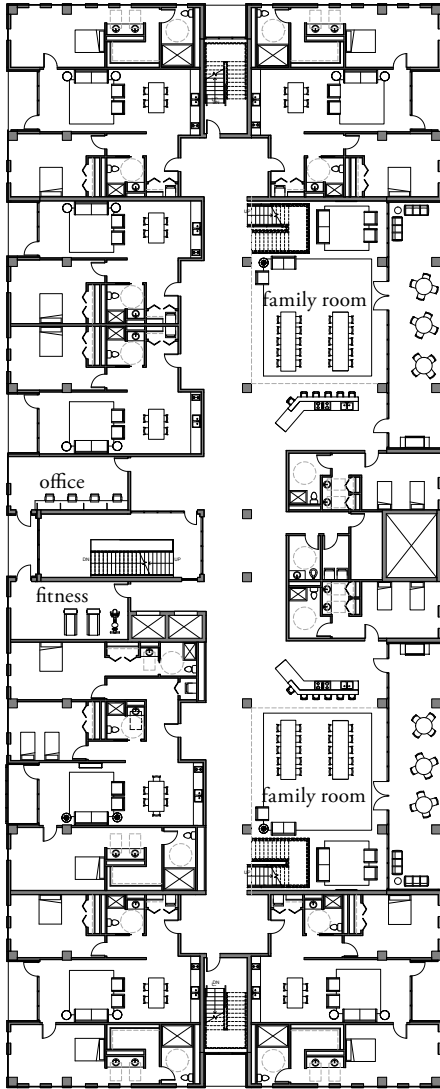




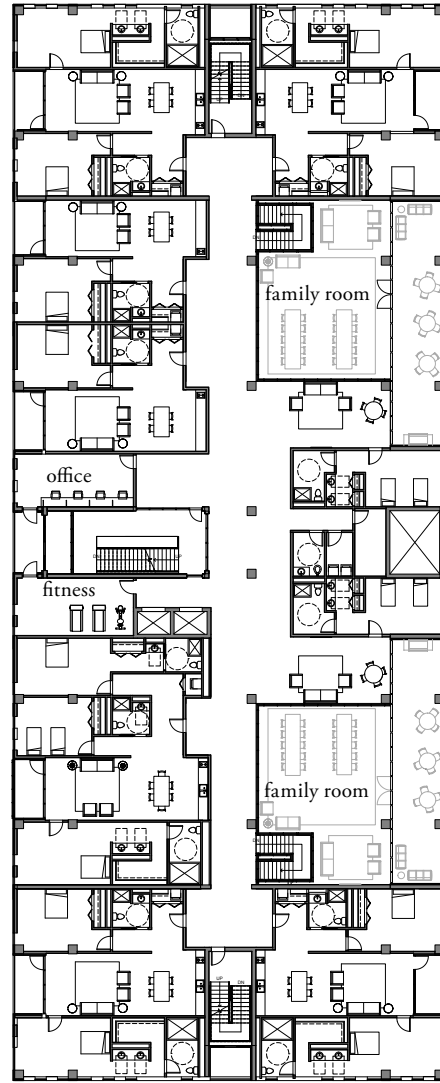
Parking Garage



Ground Level

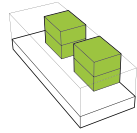


Levels 2 & 4

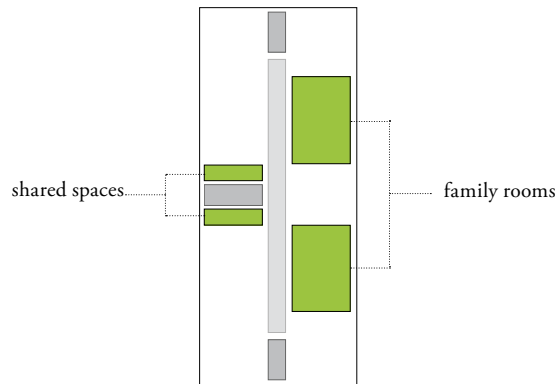


Levels 3 & 5

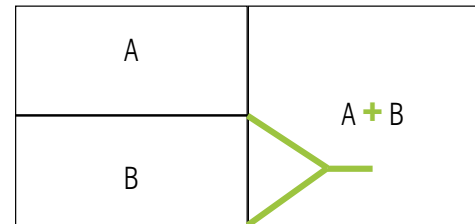
The Family Rooms



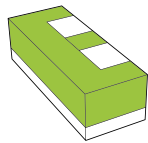
Program



Double Height Space



The Units



Utilization

total number of units: 40

1 bedrooms: 8

2 bedrooms: 16

3 bedrooms: 4

24	28
24	28

12	12
12	12

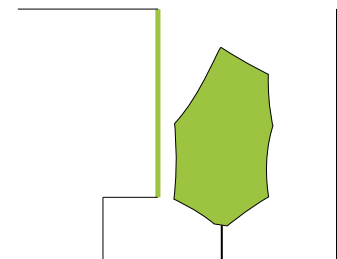
Alley Buffer

total max:

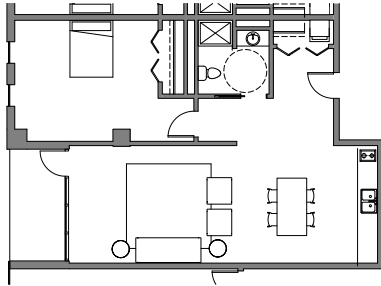
104

total min:

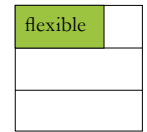
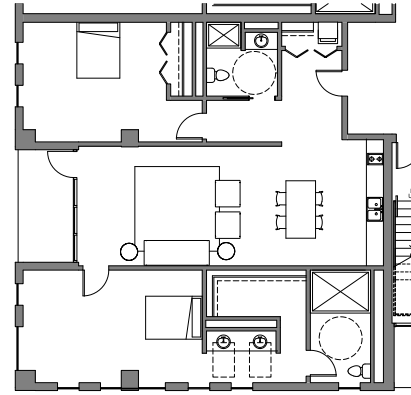
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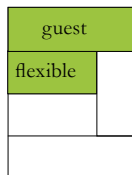
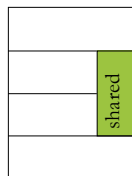
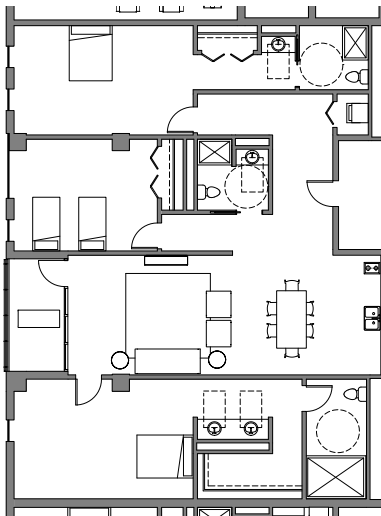
1 Bedroom



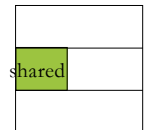
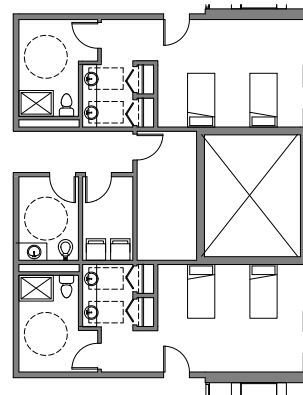
2 Bedroom

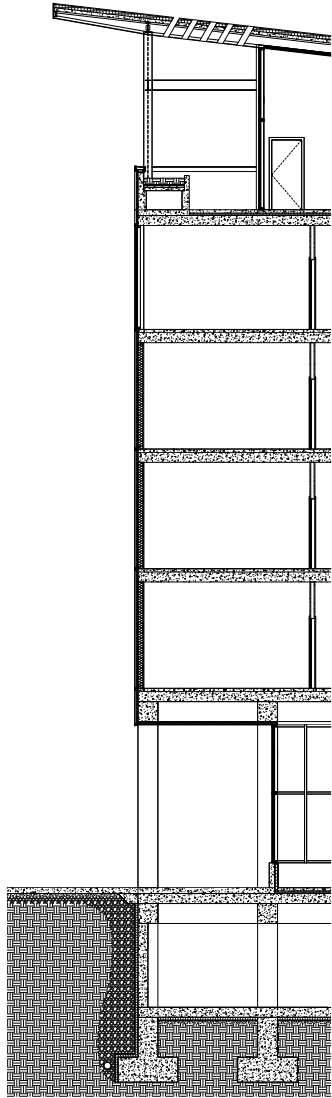


3 Bedroom

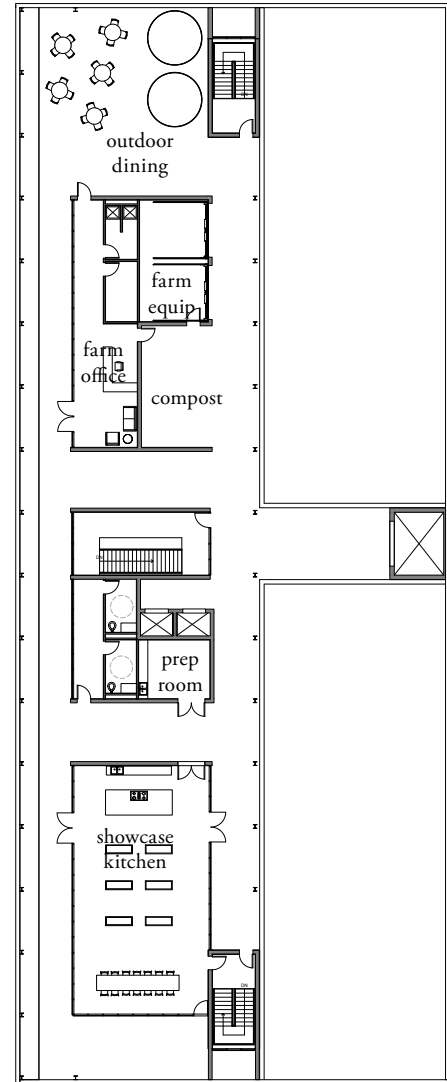


Students



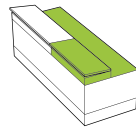


Wall Section

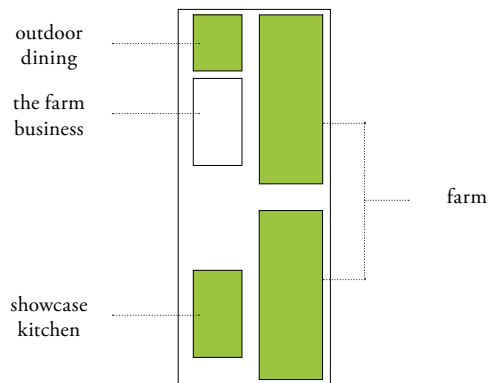


Level 6 (Rooftop)

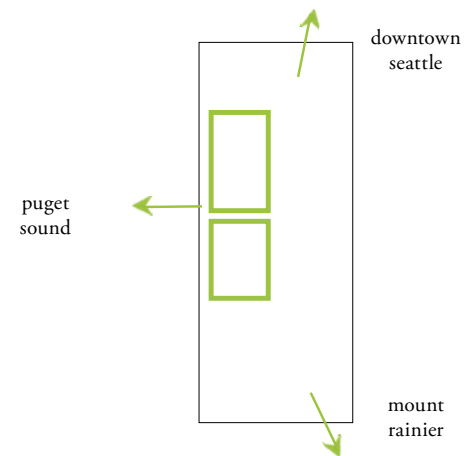
The Farm & Showcase Kitchen



Program



Access to Views and Walking Loop



Generative Forces

Site Conditions

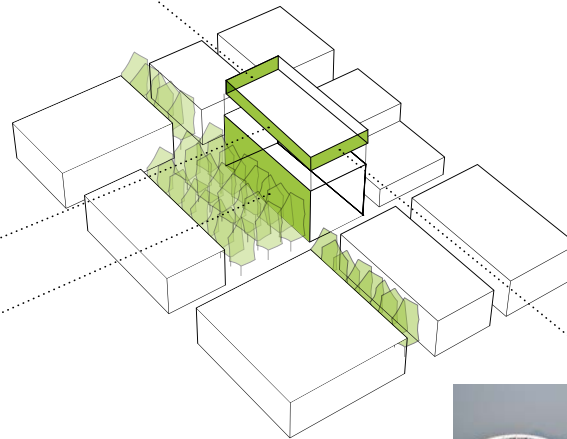
downtown seattle



puget sound

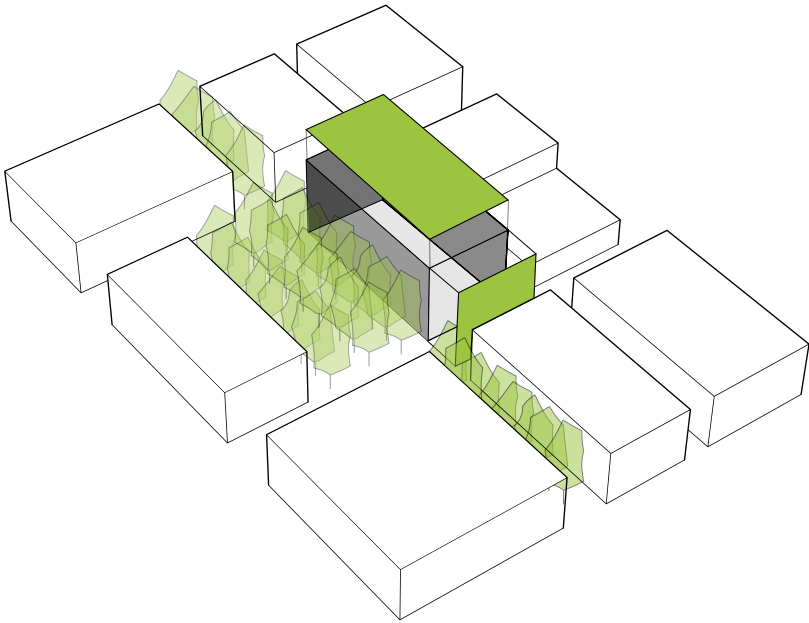


occidental park



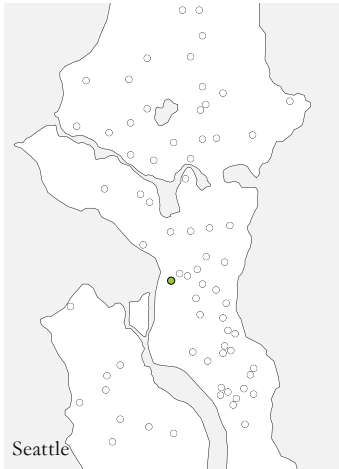
mount rainier

Bioclimatic Conditions



- sun
- shade

Site Context



- location of site
- urban community gardens



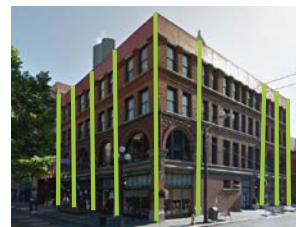
- small grocery store
- restaurant / cafe



Historic Distric



Block Form



Bay Repetition



Continuous Bar

Precedents

Design Concepts

1. Visiting Chef Restaurant
Gather by D'Amico
Minneapolis, Minnesota

visiting chef + museum restaurant

3. Campus Restaurant
Cultivate
University of Washington

student gardens + campus restaurant

2. Community Garden
Willowsford Farm
Ashburn, Virginia

farmed land + food stand + cooking classes

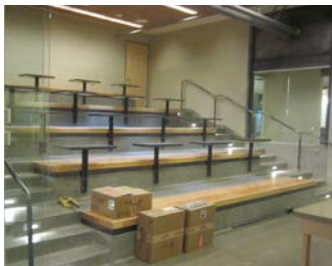
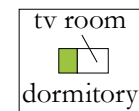
Designed Environments



1. Chef's Kitchen Restaurant
Bar Sajor
Pioneer Square District, Seattle



3. Communal Kitchen
Alder Hall Dormitory
University of Washington



2. Classroom Kitchen
Dormitory Dining Hall
University of Washington



4. Multi-service Kitchen
Seniorenresidenz Spirgarten
Zurich, Switzerland



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