LaSalle-Backus Elementary School



NOVEMBER 19, 2026 – CFA CONCEPT DESIGN PRESENTATION

REFERENCE NUMBER CFA-3713

DGS DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES BUILD MAINTAIN SUSTAIN

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

GCS | SIGAL

PERKINS EASTMAN DC
DESIGNING THE DISTRICT

AGENDA

- Site Context & Site Analysis
- Modernization Design
  - Exterior Design
  - Plans



LaSalle-Backus
Elementary School

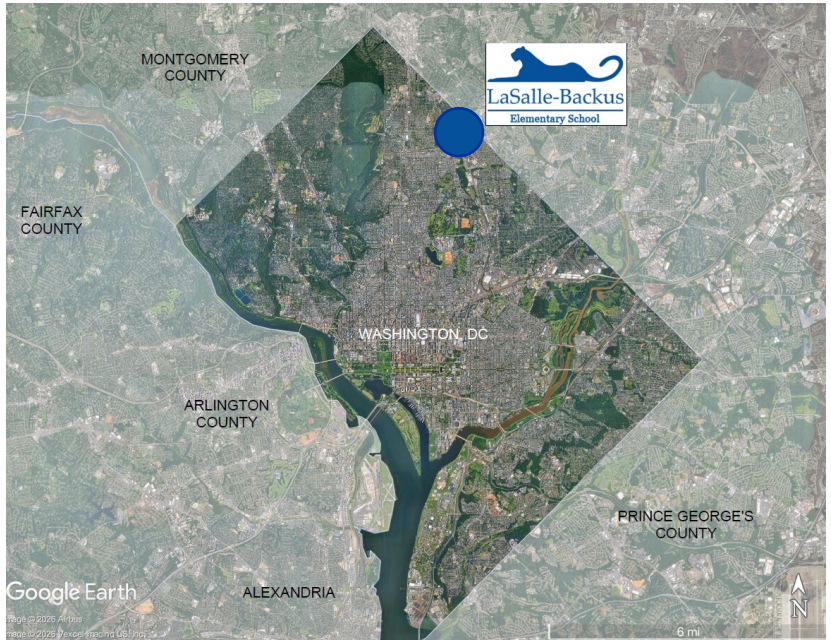


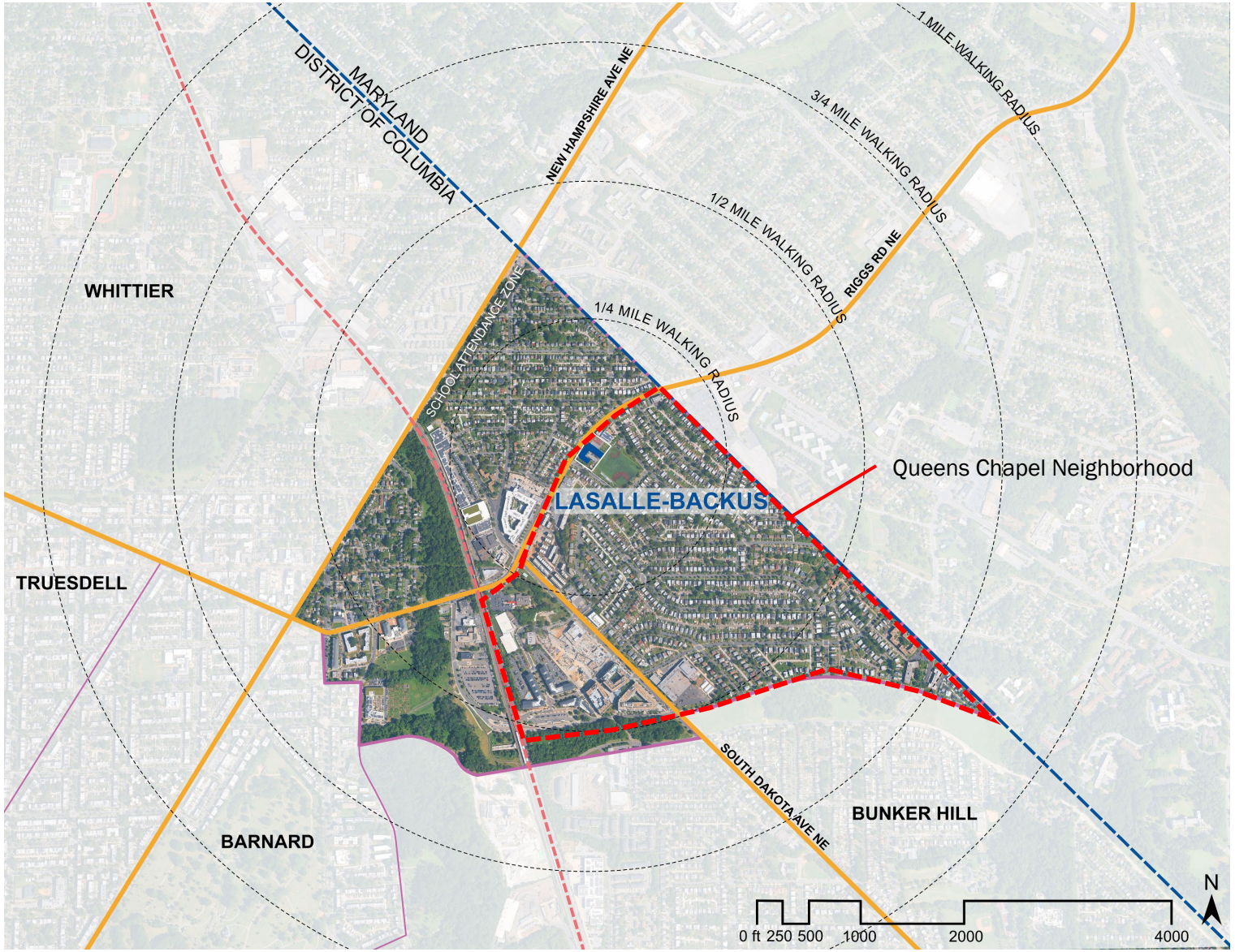
Project Context

501 RIGGS RD NE

LOCATION

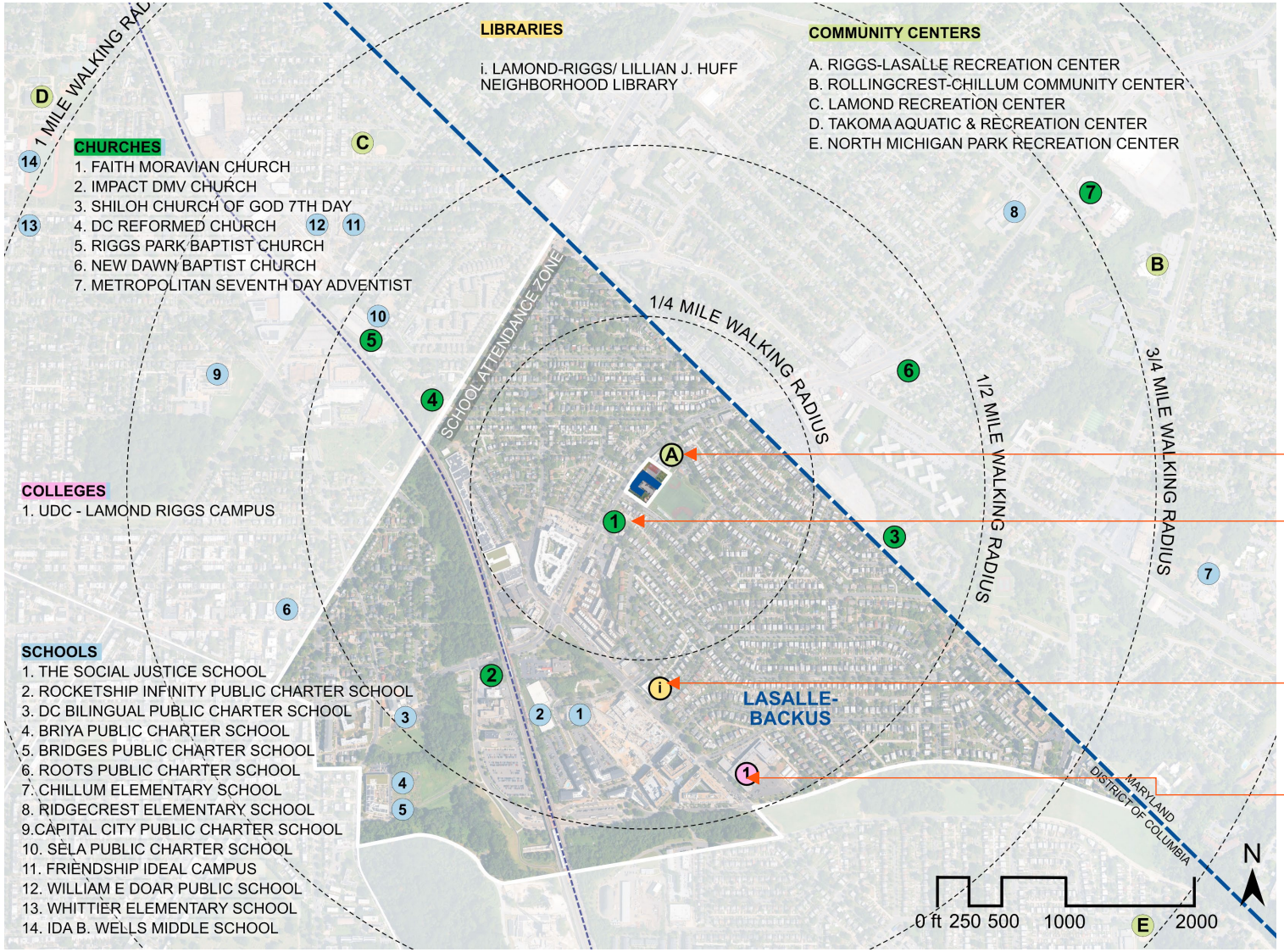
SITE CONTEXT





COMMUNITY AMENITIES

SITE CONTEXT





RIGGS-LASALLE RECREATION CENTER



FAITH MORAVIAN CHURCH



LAMOND–RIGGS / LILLIAN J HUFF NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY



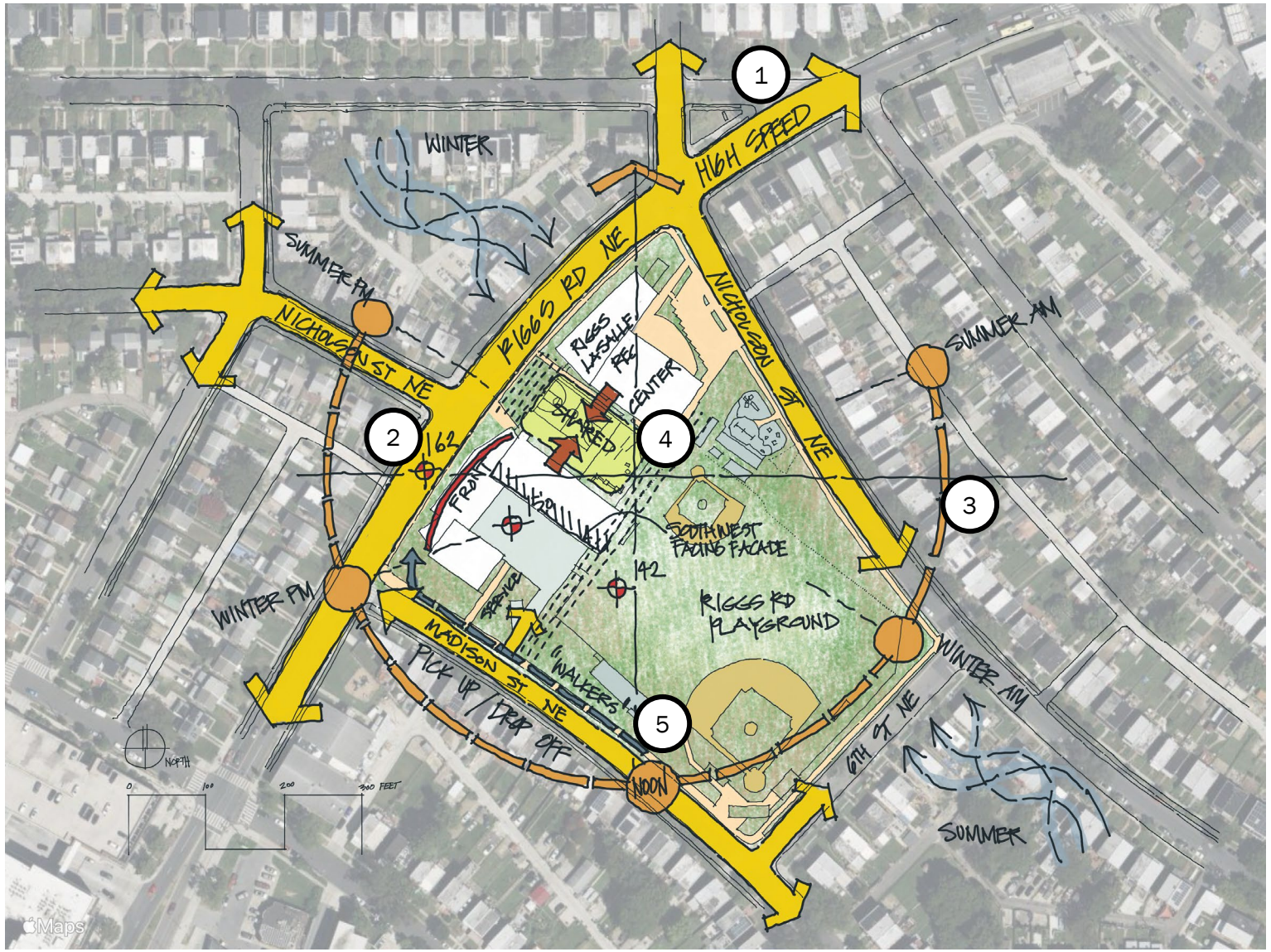
UDC LAMOND–RIGGS CAMPUS

SITE PLAN

EXISTING BUILDING



SITE ANALYSIS



1. Traffic Hierarchies and Site Access: Riggs Road NE serves as a primary high-speed arterial along the site's northwest boundary, requiring clear buffering, whereas the lower-speed neighborhood streets (Madison St NE and Nicholson St NE) provide safer conditions for student pick-up/drop-off and dedicated pedestrian walking routes.

2. Topographic Elevation Change: The site features a 20-foot drop in grade, sloping downward from the higher elevation along Riggs Road NE (162 ft) to the lower elevation of the athletic fields and open green space at Riggs Playground (142 ft).

3. Solar Orientation and Microclimate: The building layout incorporates a prominent southwest-facing facade that absorbs significant afternoon sun, with mapped seasonal solar arcs (summer/winter AM/PM) and prevailing wind directions informing daylighting and shading strategies.

4. Shared Recreational Infrastructure: A centralized green space functions as a shared outdoor playground, directly linking the elementary school with the adjacent Riggs-LaSalle Recreation Center to maximize community asset utilization.

5. Pedestrian Circulation: Student walking paths are strategically routed along the quieter residential corridor of Madison Street NE, safely guiding pedestrians into the main entrance area while keeping foot traffic separated from heavy vehicle flows.

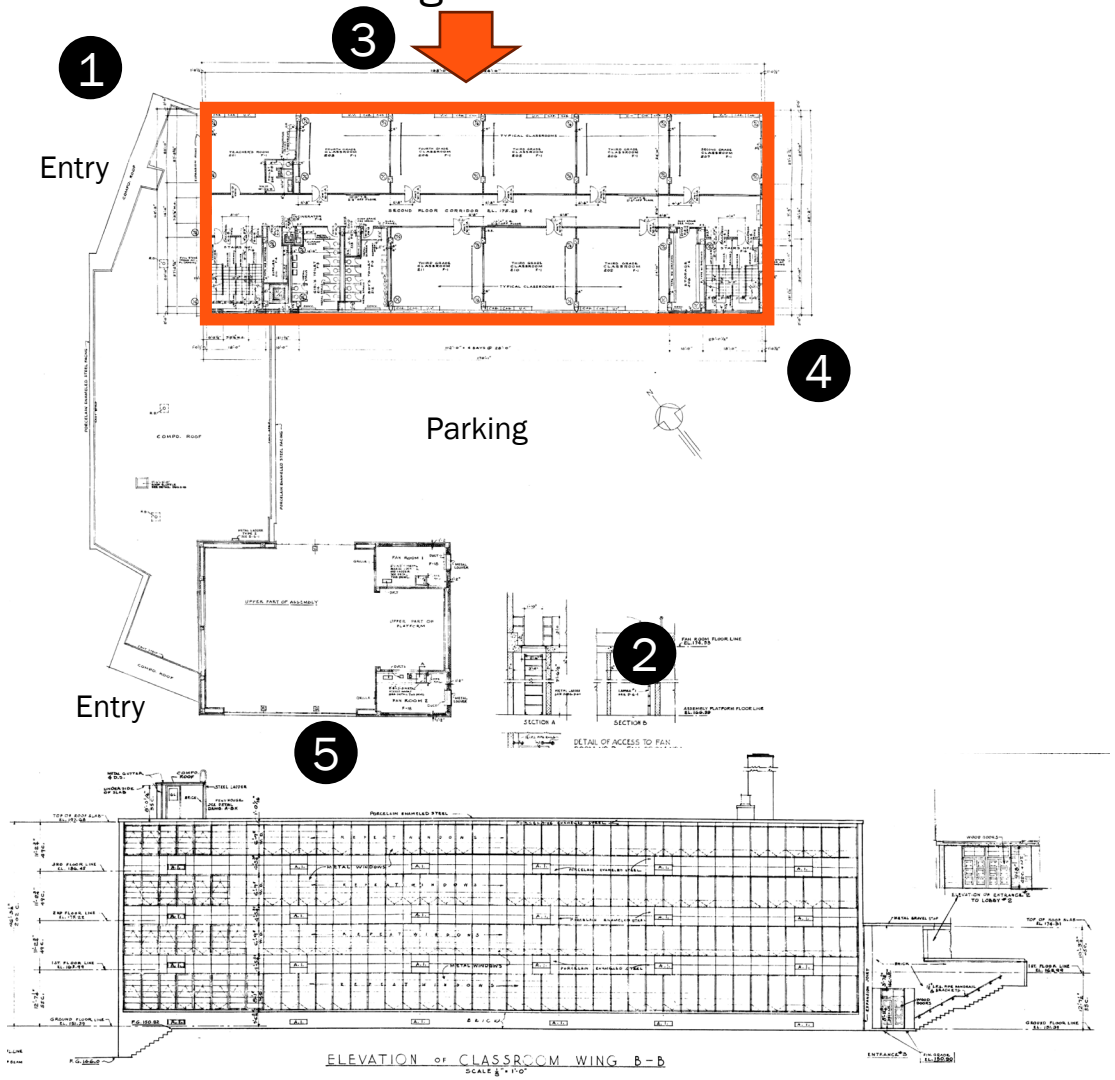
Context


Riggs-LaSalle
Rec Center
LaSalle-Backus
Elementary
Nicholson ST NE
Madison ST NE
Riggs Road

EXISTING BUILDING

Rhees Burket Architect, 1956

Portion of existing structure to remain



North Elevation (only structure to remain)



Entrance on Riggs Rd.



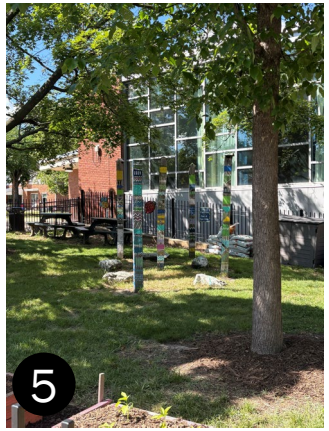
Entrance from Madison St. to parking lot



Classroom elevation



Façade facing the field

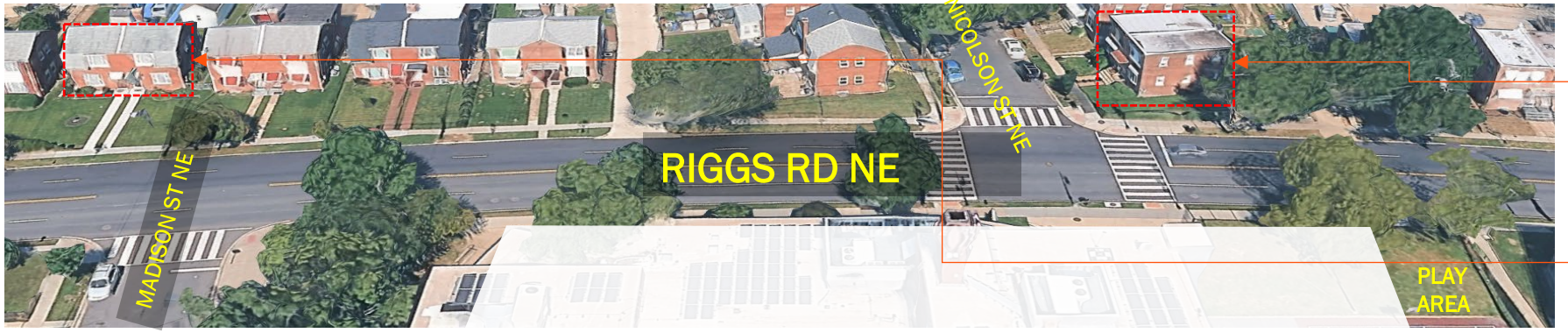


Garden

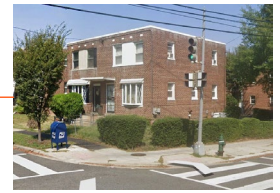
CONTEXT

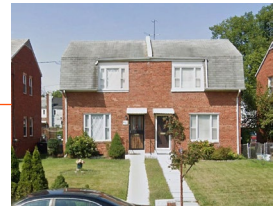
STREET FRONTAGES ALONG RIGGS RD & MADISON ST, NE





Residential typology examples













CONTEXT

STREET FRONTAGE ALONG NICHOLSON ST & 6TH ST NE





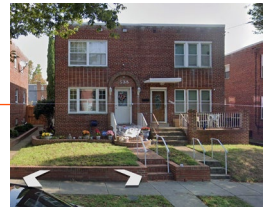
Residential typology examples

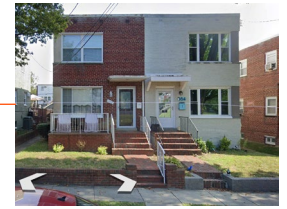












CONTEXT

FRONTAGE ALONG NORTHEAST SIDE OF PLAY AREA – RIGGS-LASALLE COMMUNITY CENTER





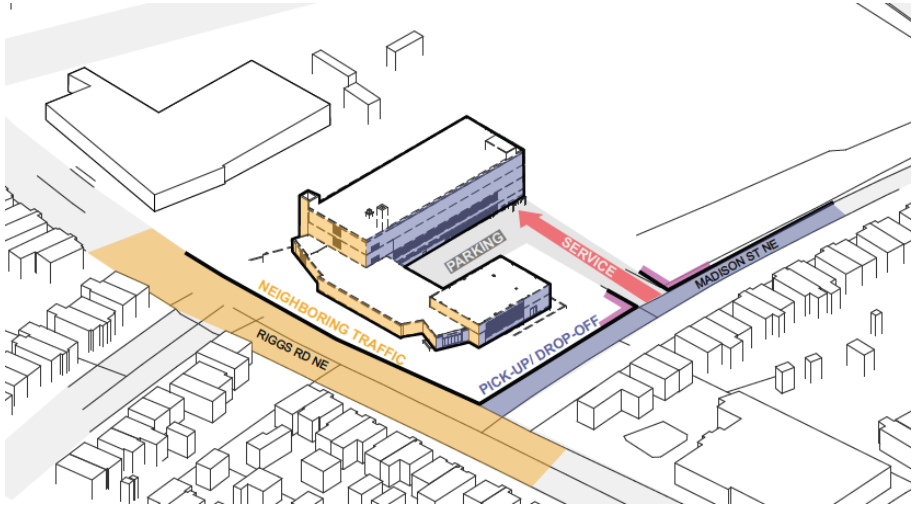


VIEW FROM NICHOLSON ST NE

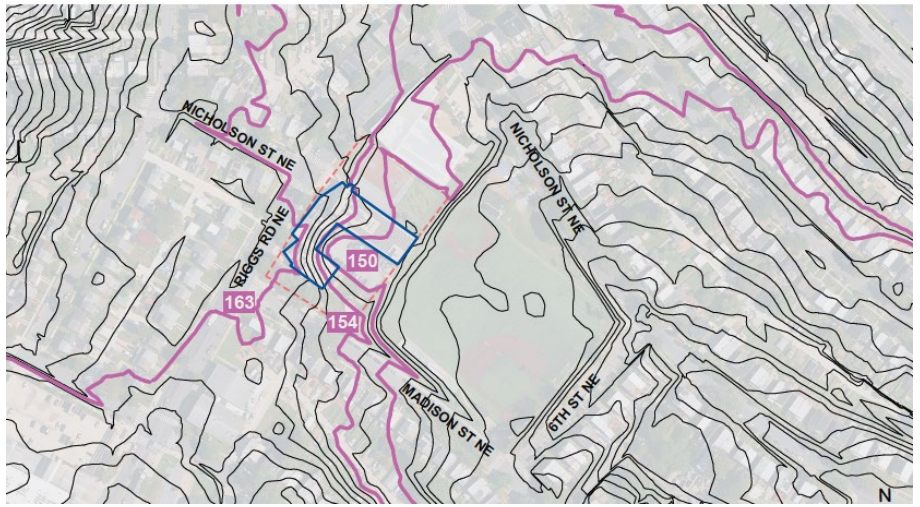


VIEW FROM RIGGS RD NE

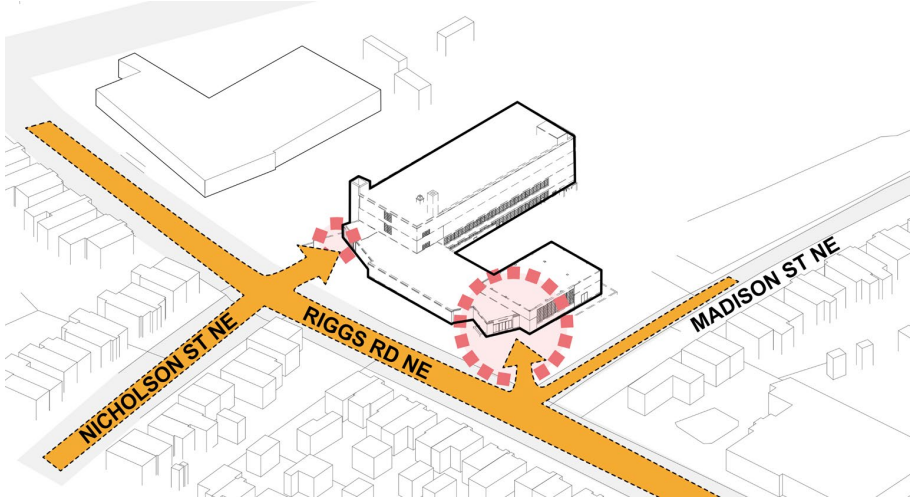
SITE CONSIDERATIONS



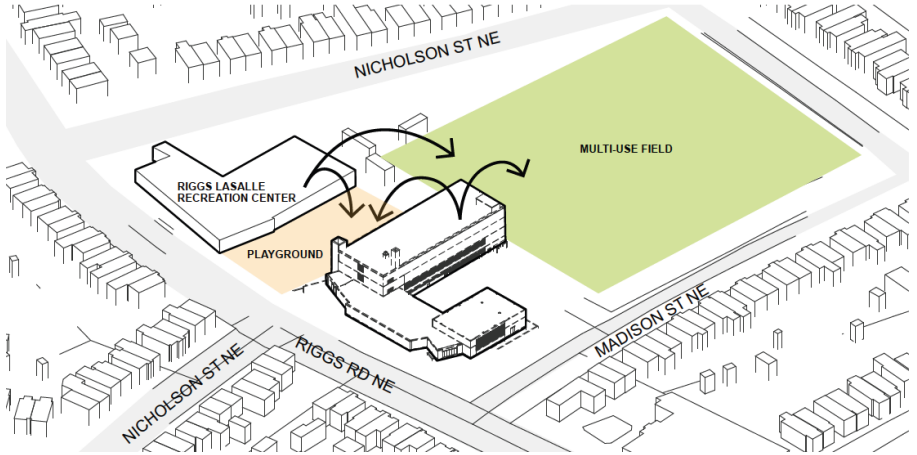
Frontage & Safe Access



Topography



Civic Presence



Shared Amenities

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM (SIT)

SIT KICK-OFF (06/02/2026), SIT CONCEPT PRESENTATION (09/29/2026), SIT FEEDBACK SESSION (10/06/2026)

- Reestablish LaSalle-Backus as historic anchor of community
- Building design should support inclusivity
- The school community is welcoming, inviting, and warm
- Maintain connection to the Community - student stewards
- Create a safe arrival

NEW SCHOOL DESIGN



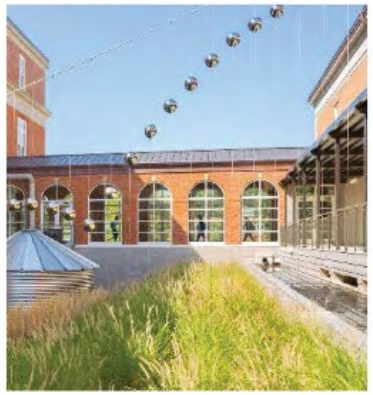
DESIGN PRINCIPLES



Provide Safe Access



Prioritize Daylight



Engage the Outdoors



Create a Vertically Integrated Campus



Emphasize Inclusion



Connect to the Community

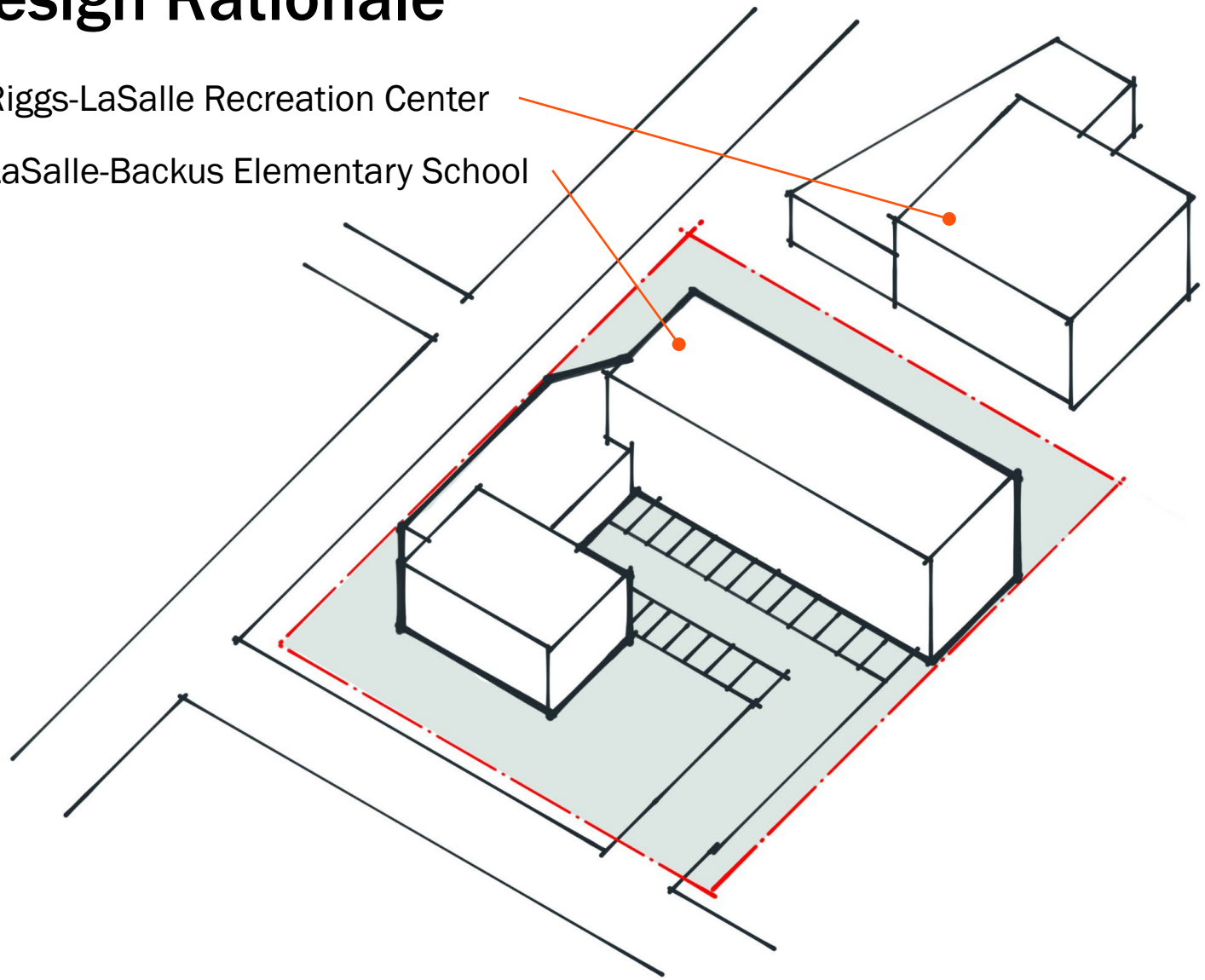


Design the Library as Heart of the School



Project a Civic Presence

Design Rationale

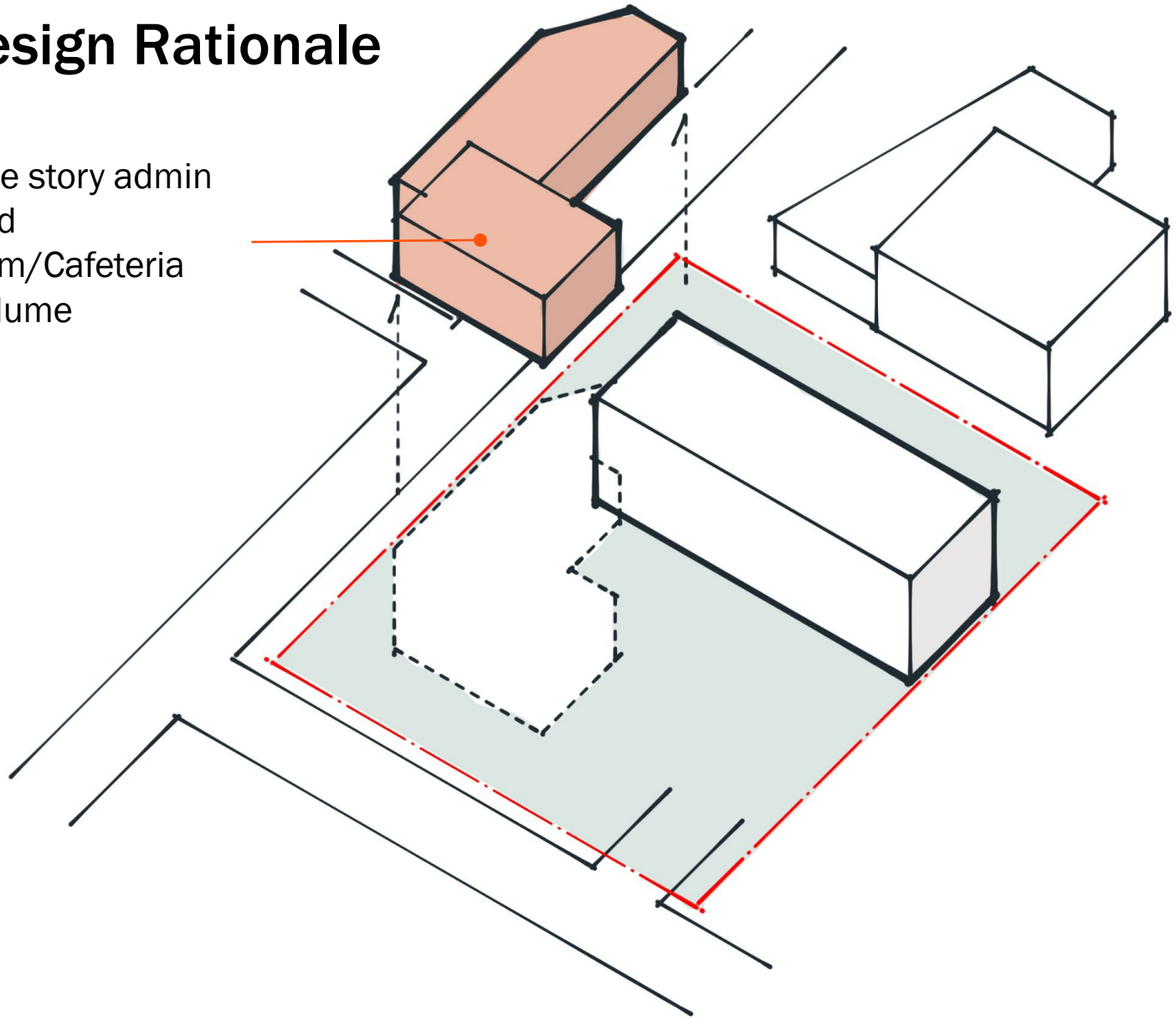


Existing Massing

The existing school occupies a tight site and is organized into three parts: a four-story academic wing, a one-story administration block, and a two-story gym over cafeteria. The courtyard, rather than serving as play space, is used for parking. The playground shared with the adjacent community center is a joint-use resource.

Design Rationale

One story admin
And
Gym/Cafeteria
Volume



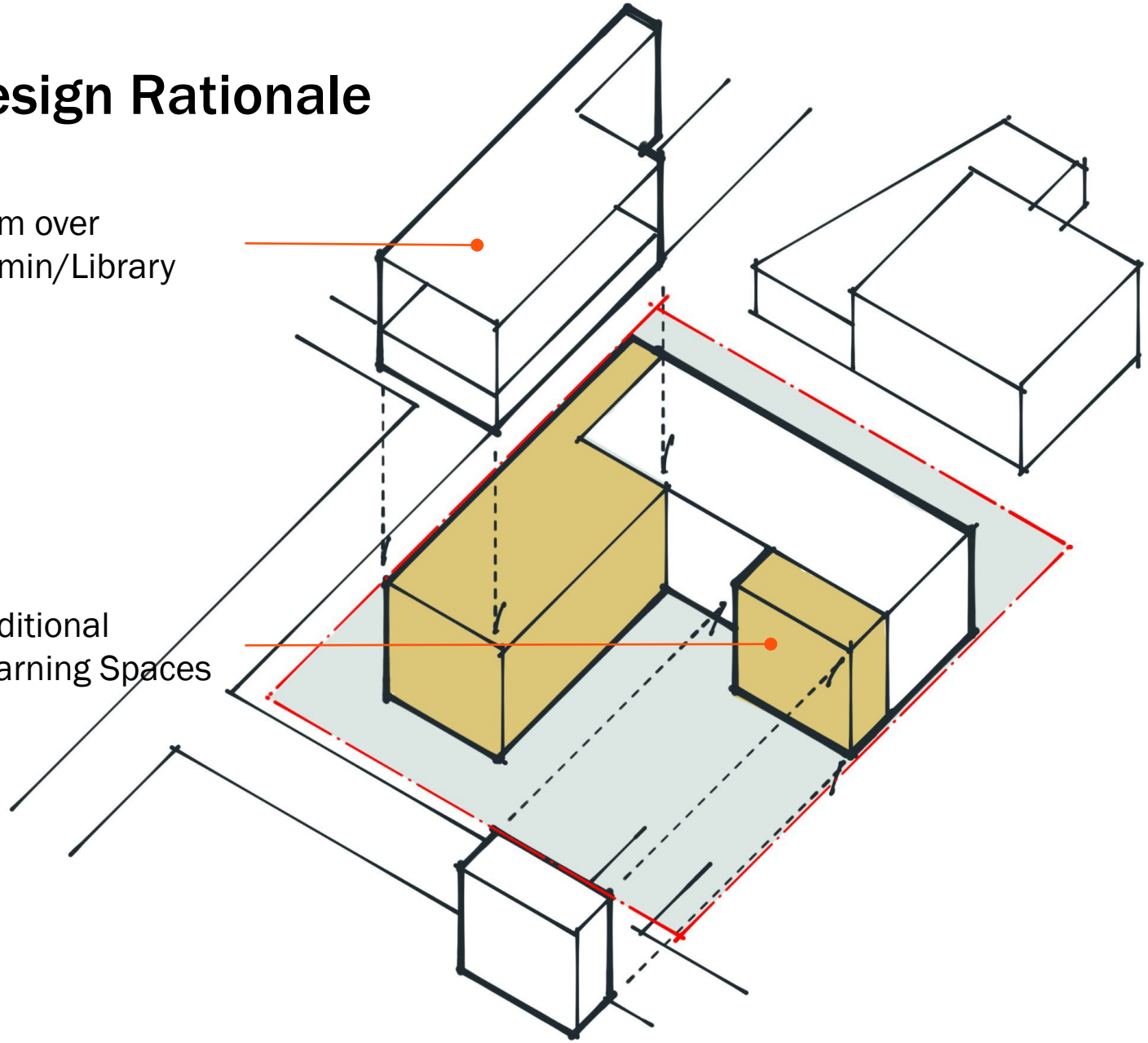
Removing Shared Program and One-Story Admin

Following the design brief, the four-story academic wing is preserved while the one-story administration block and the gym-over-cafeteria volume are removed. Demolishing these two pieces frees the southwest portion of the site, creating room for a new addition.

Design Rationale

Gym over admin/Library

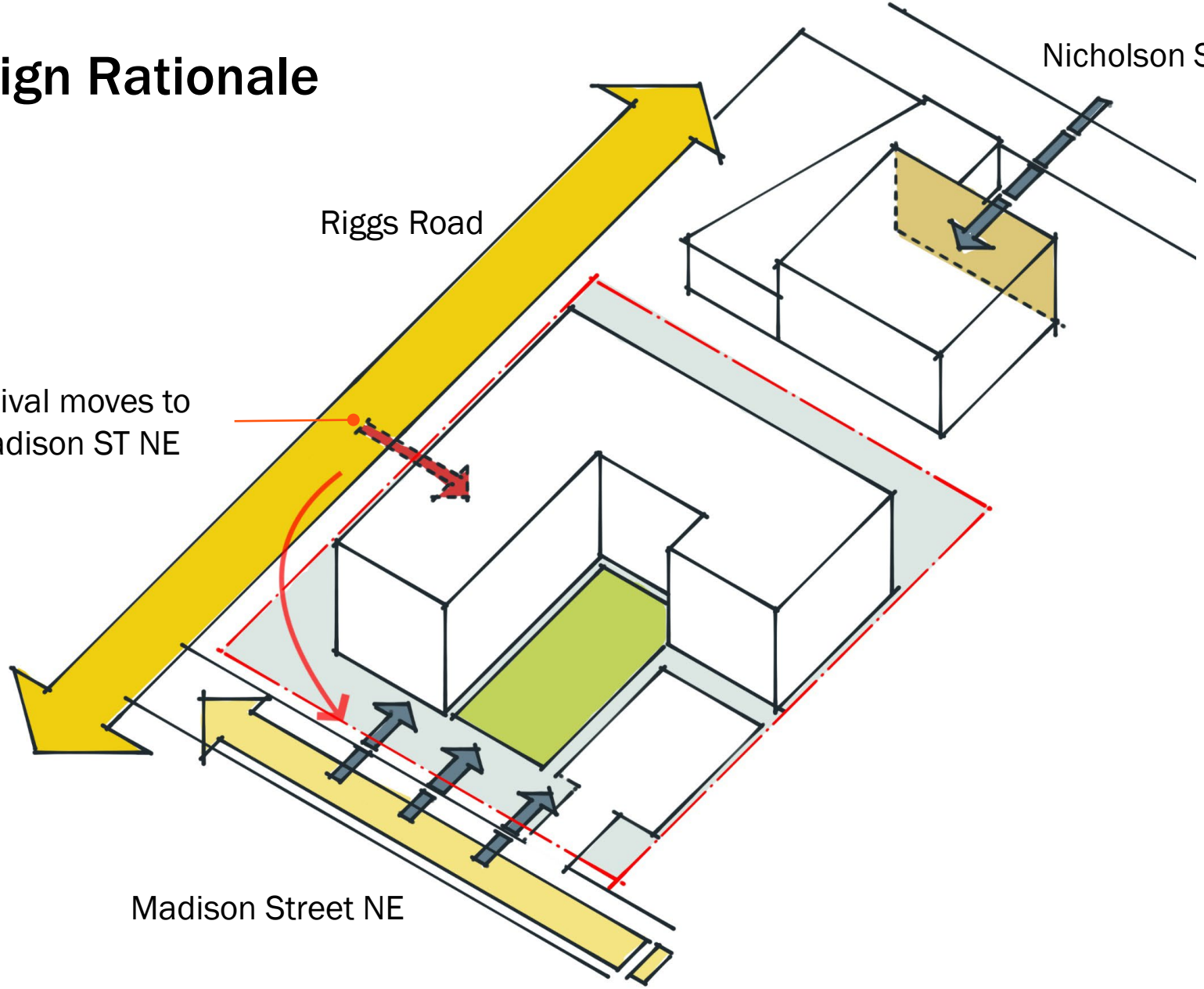
Additional Learning Spaces



New Program Intervention: Gym, Admin, Library

The proposal inserts new program through two interventions. A larger volume along the Riggs Road frontage extends the school to the south, while a smaller volume attaches to the east side of the preserved academic wing. Together they wrap the existing building and define the site's edges.

Design Rationale

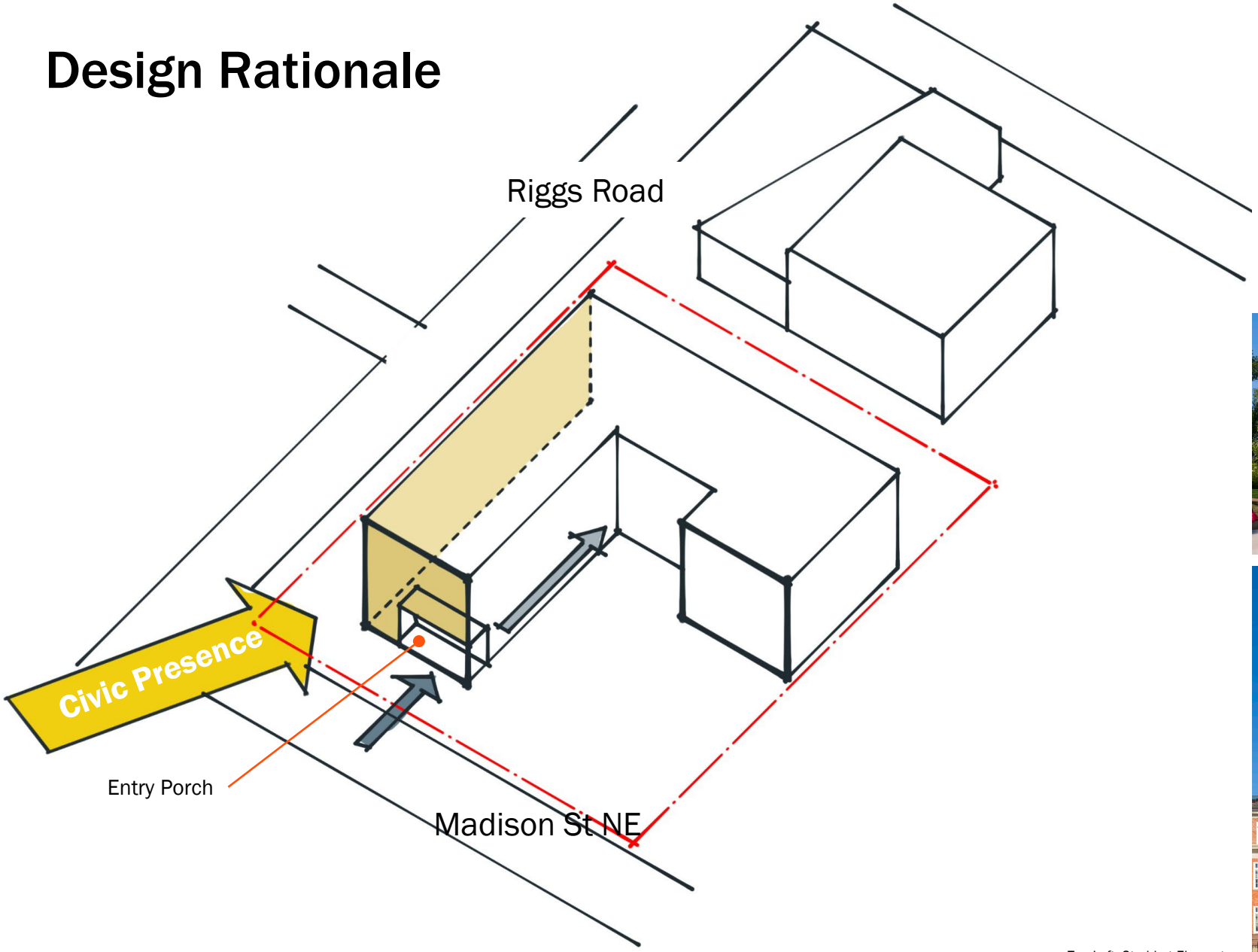


Reorienting Entry to Madison

The new volume reorients the courtyard and arrival place south toward Madison Street. Riggs Road is busy and presents hazards to pedestrians, so moving the entry to quieter Madison Street creates a safer, more fitting arrival sequence. A dedicated play courtyard, separate from parking is created.

The Riggs-LaSalle Recreation Center uses the same strategy, with its entrance on Nicholson Street.

Design Rationale



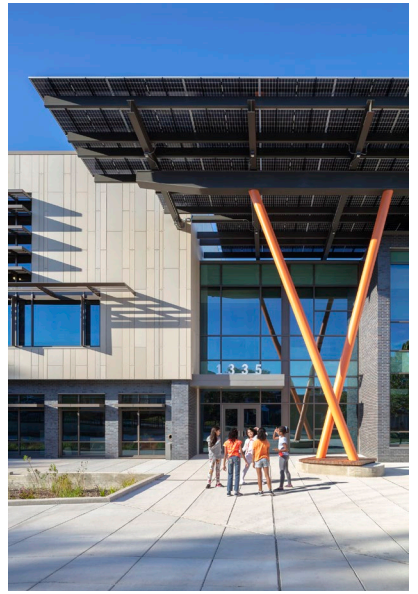
Reinforce Civic Scale on Riggs

The school operates at two scales. Along Riggs Road, a taller civic-scale facade gives the building public presence and anchors the corner. The main entrance, tucked around the corner on Madison Street, is emphasized by this massing, making the corner the clear point of arrival.



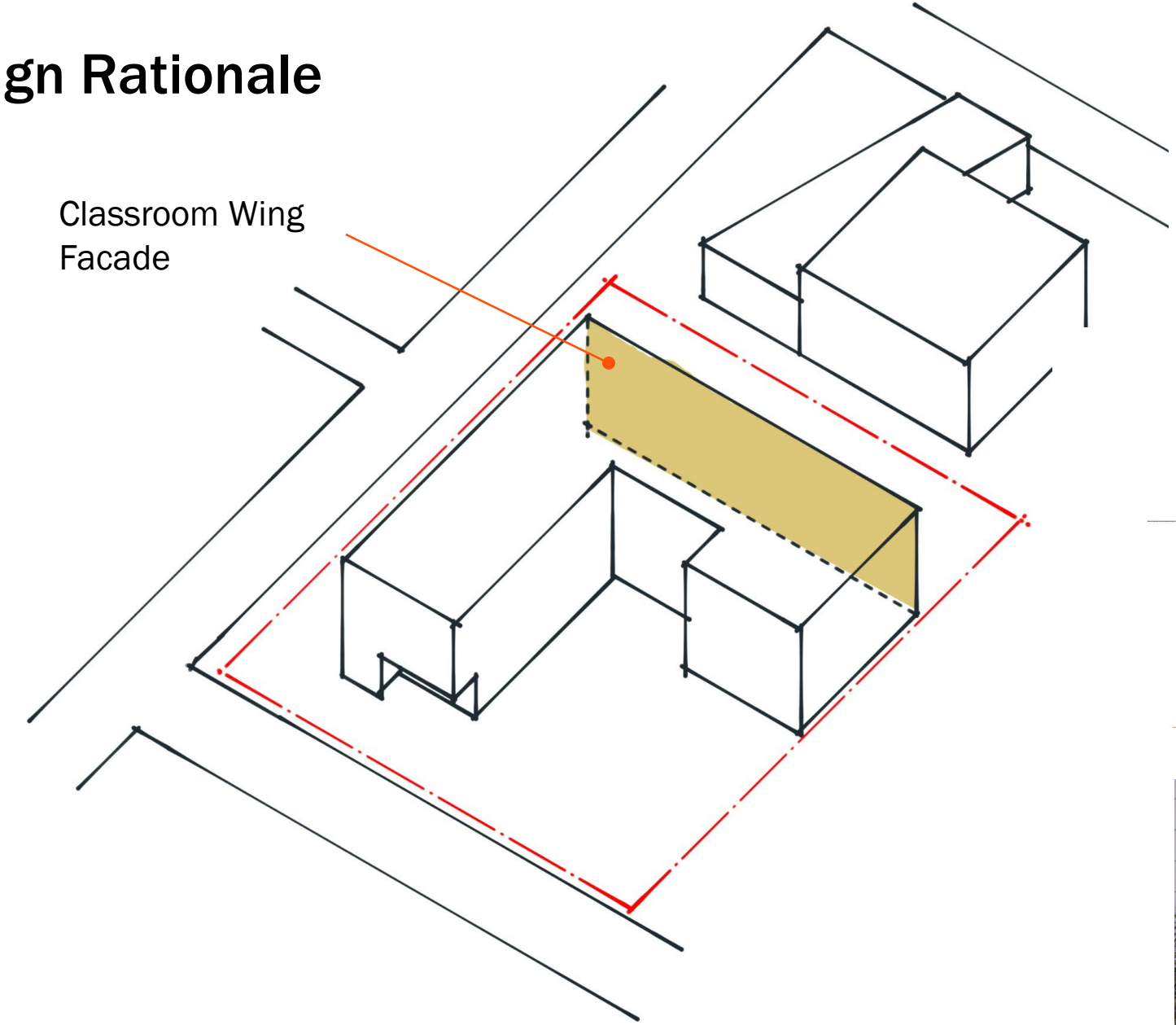






Top Left: Stoddert Elementary
Top Right: DC International
Bottom Left: Roosevelt High School
Bottom Right: John Lewis Elementary School

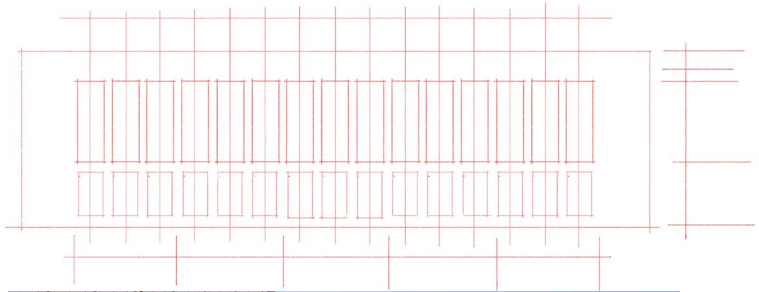
Design Rationale

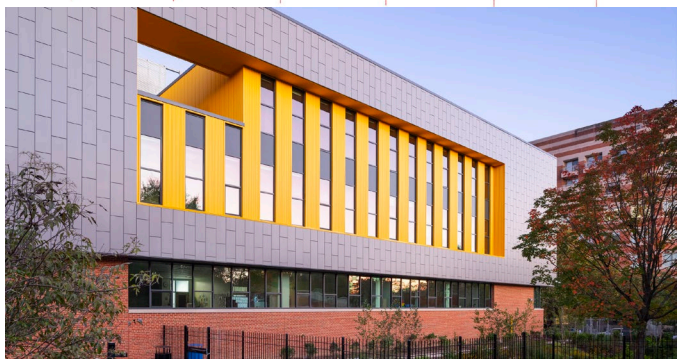


Scale Contrast: Classroom Human Scale

In contrast to the civic scale on Riggs Road, the classroom facades facing the shared playground and community center offer a chance to create human-scaled elements. Here the building shifts to the scale of a child, with details, windows, and textures that feel approachable and welcoming.

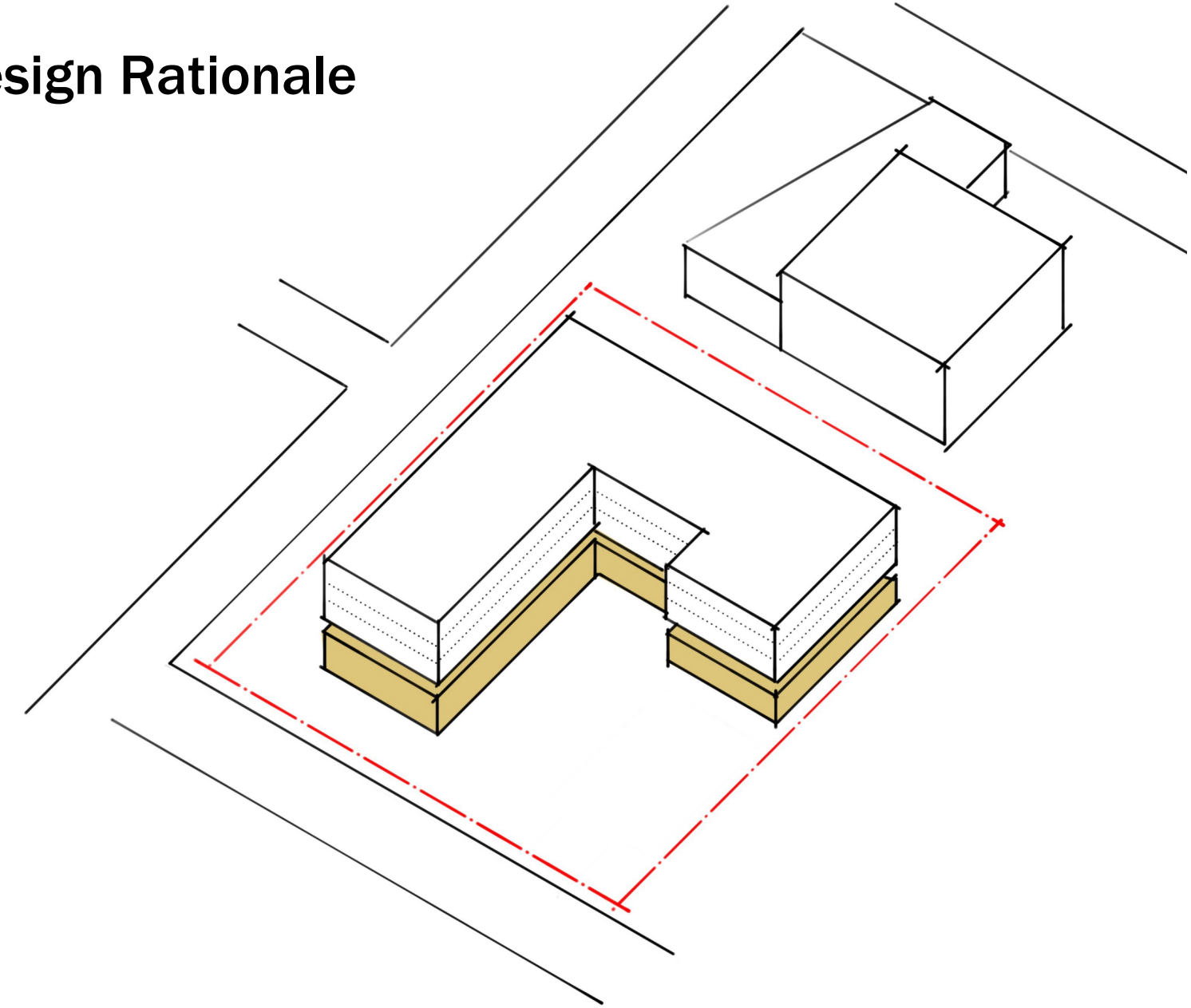






* Francis Stevens Elementary School

Design Rationale



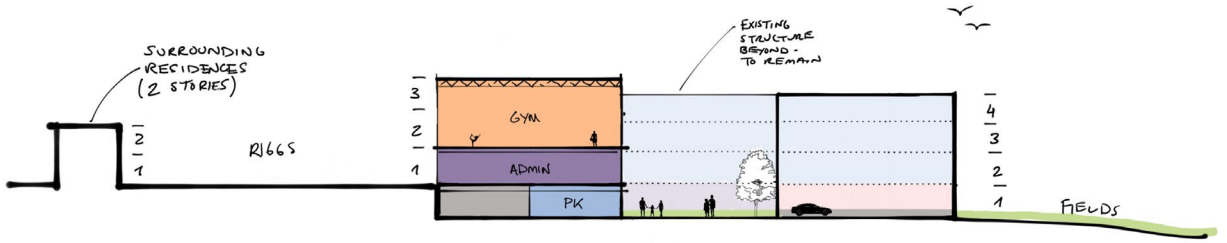
Base Level Podium

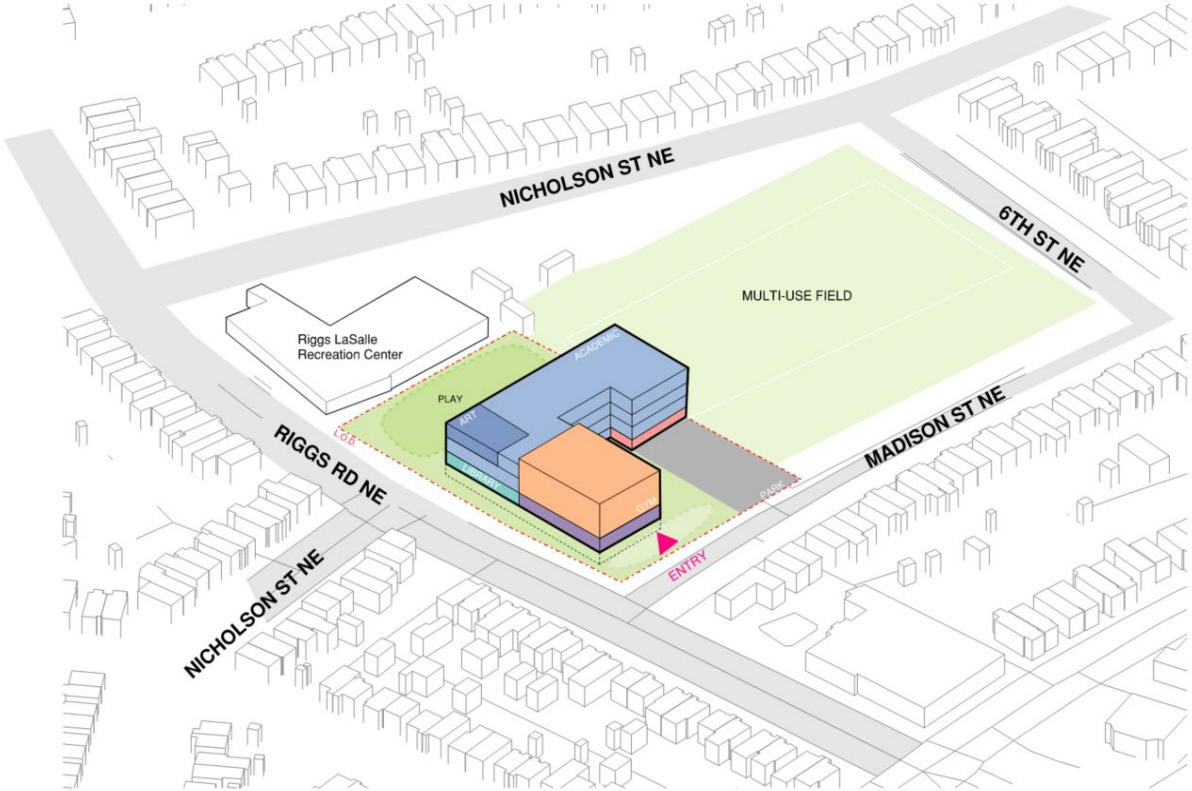
The building straddles a significant (1 story) grade change from west to east on the site. At the main entry on Madison, and along Riggs, the building reads as a 3-story structure. On the courtyard, field and playground sides, the building expresses 4 stories. The first story of the building is articulated with distinct brick coursing to mitigate the height of the building as the grade changes.

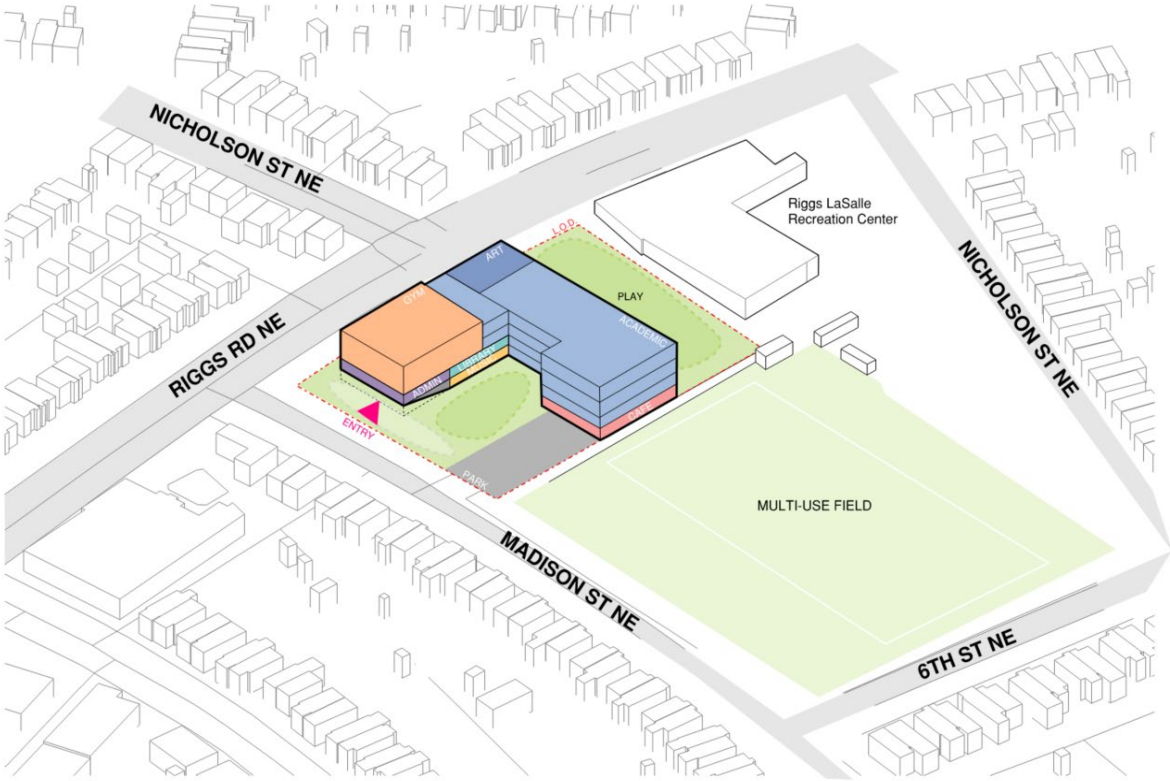


* Tobin Montessori and Darby Vassall Upper Schools

CONCEPT MASSING / SECTION







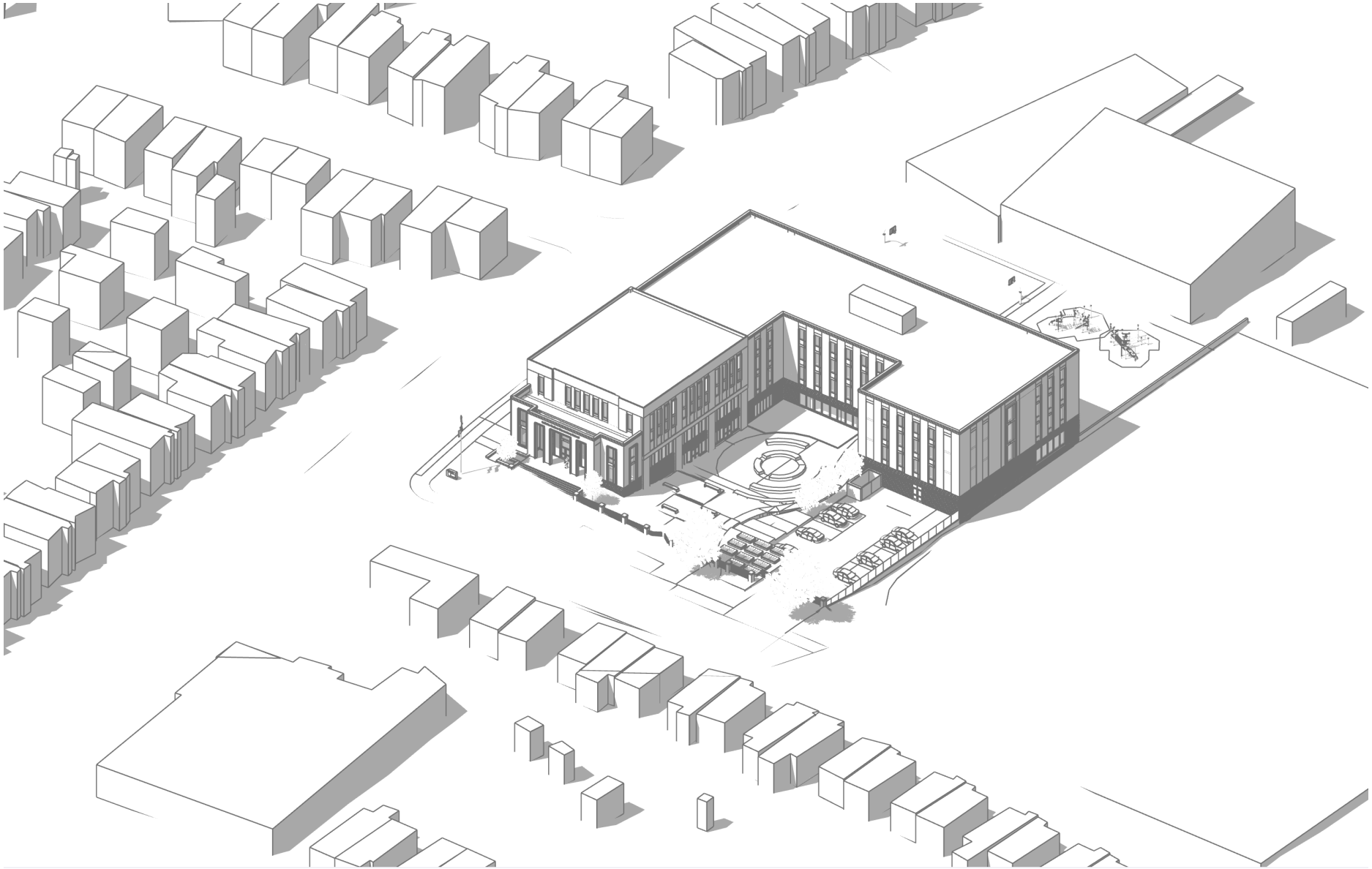
CAFE | GYM | ADMIN | LIBRARY | ACADEMIC | MUSIC/ ARTS

PLAN ORGANIZATION

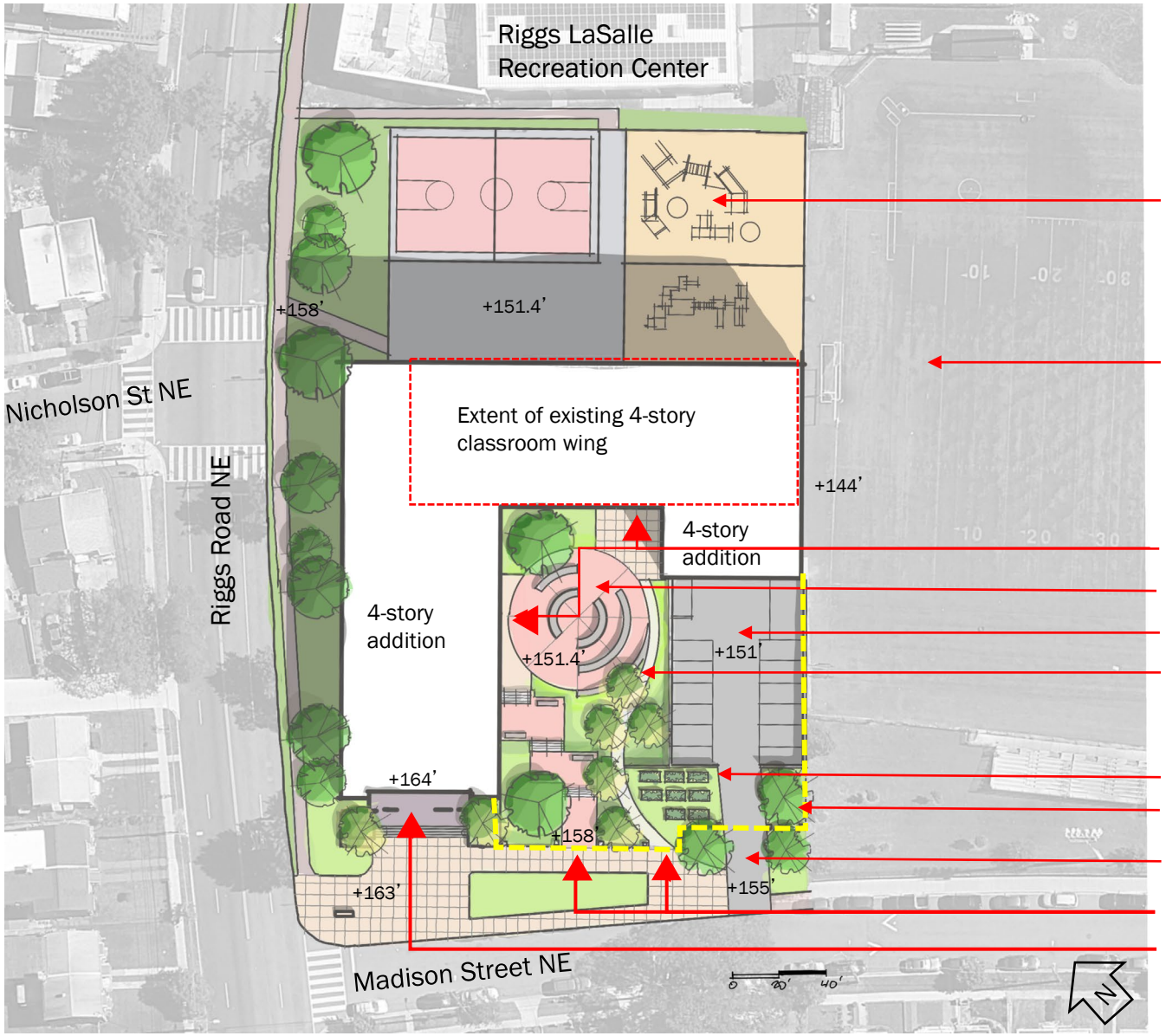
- Civic presence on Riggs Rd. & Madison St intersection
- Entry plaza off Madison to provide a safe entry sequence for students
- Parking concentrated on east side of site (away from pedestrians)
- After hours access to Gym, Cafeteria, academic program is easy to secure
- Cafeteria connected to play spaces and to courtyard



MASSING



SITE PLAN


Riggs LaSalle
Recreation Center
Nicholson St NE
Riggs Road NE
Madison Street NE
+158'
+151.4'
Extent of existing 4-story
classroom wing
+144'
4-story
addition
4-story
addition
+151.4'
+151'
+164'
+158'
+163'
+155'
0
20'
40'
N
Shared Play area
Recreation Center playing field
Courtyard access from school
Outdoor classroom
Parking / loading
Sloped walk
Planted garden
Proposed fence line
Driveway at existing curb cut
Secondary entrances
Main entrance

MAIN INTERSECTION - RIGGS RD & MADISON ST



MAIN ENTRY VIEW – COURTYARD ON MADISON



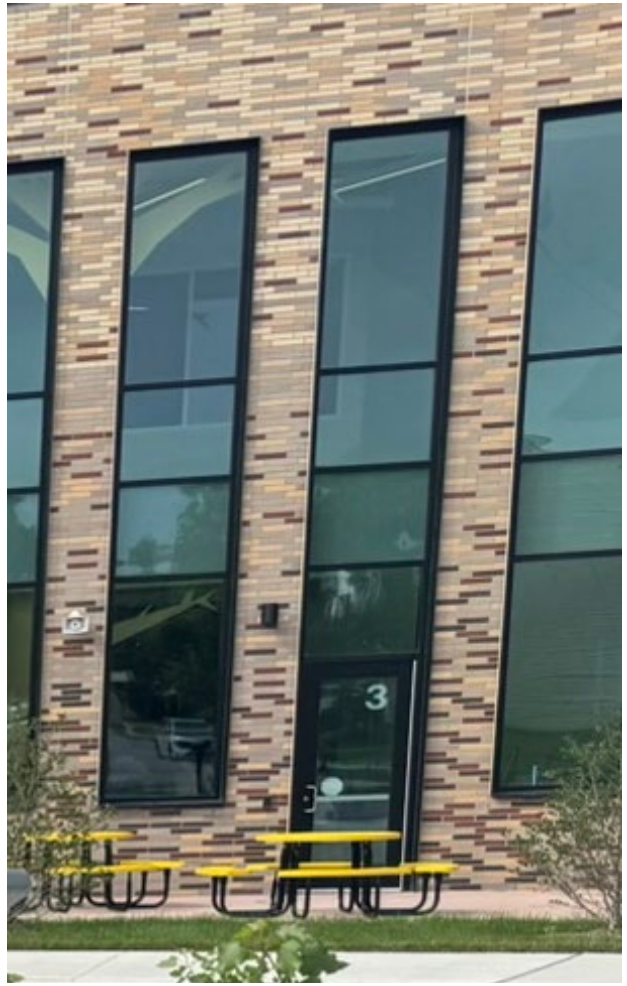
VIEW FROM FIELDS



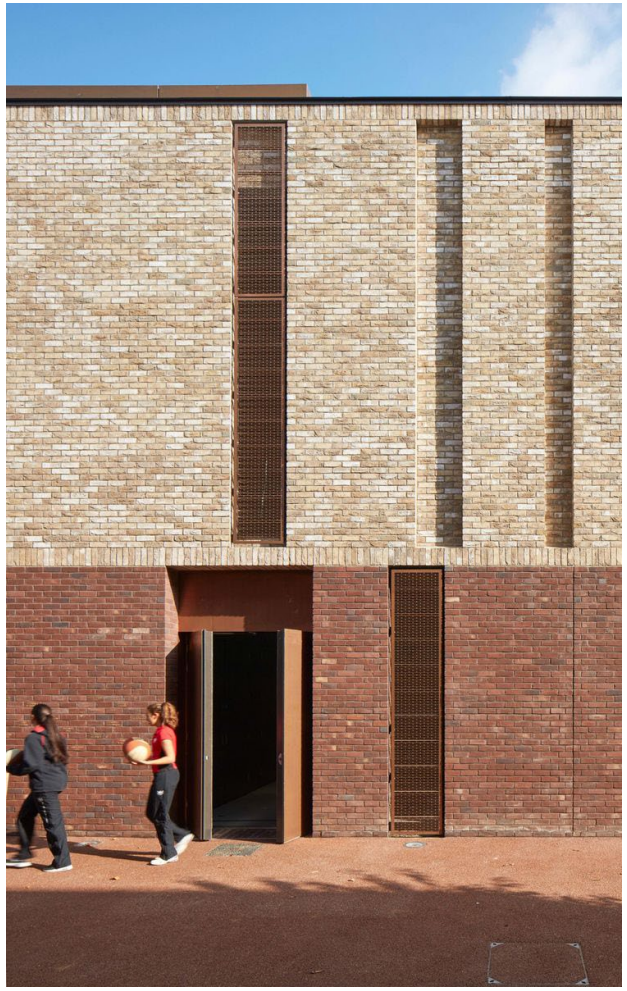
VIEW FROM PLAYGROUNDS



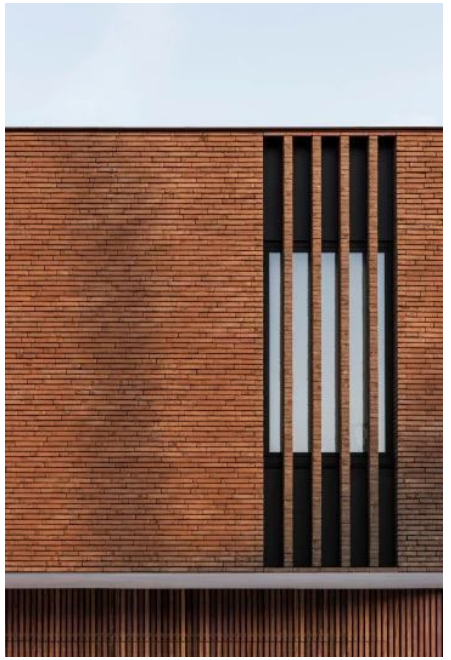
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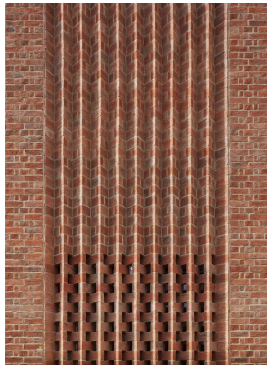
Forestal Elementary School, North Chicago, Illinois
Perkins Eastman



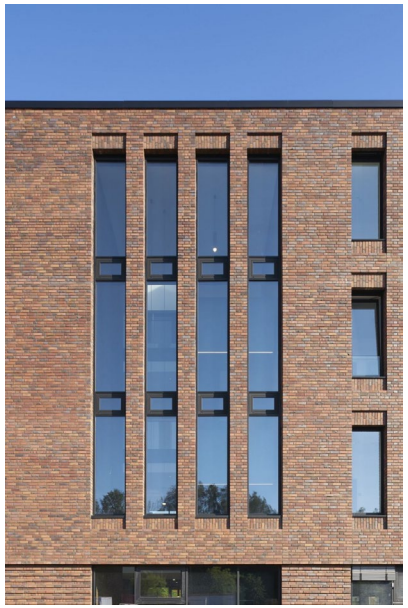
Hampton Sport and Fitness Center, Goldphin and Latymer School,
West Londing, UK
Walters and Cohen Architects



Residential Villa, Harelbeke, Belgium
Dehullu Architecten

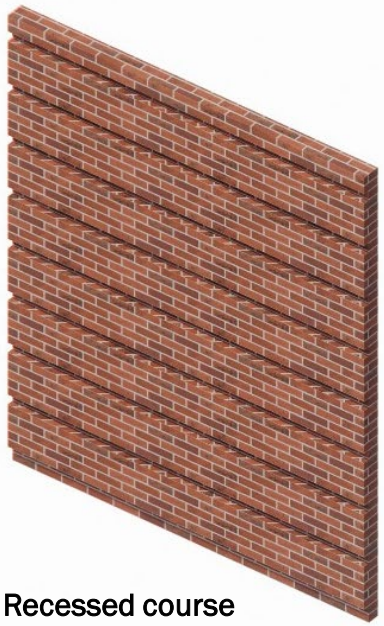


Dorothy Garrod Building, Newnham College University of Cambridge, Walter and Cohen Architects

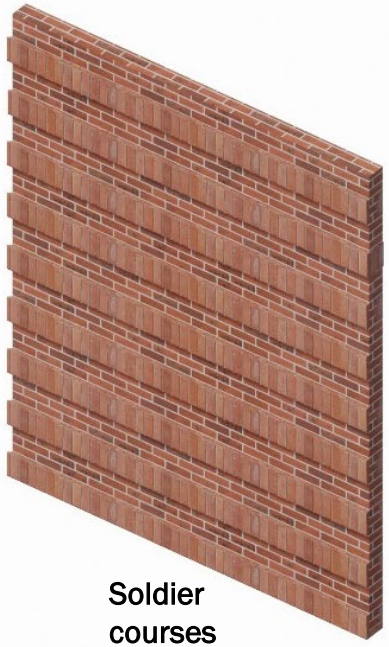


PhoenixWERK, Dortmund, Germany
SHA Scheffler Helbich Architeckten

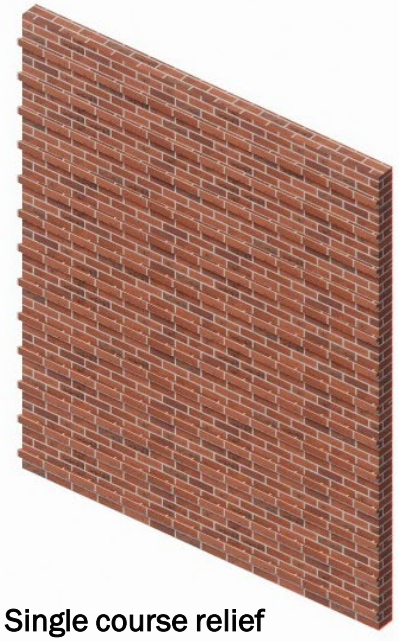
BUILDING BASE RUSTICATION



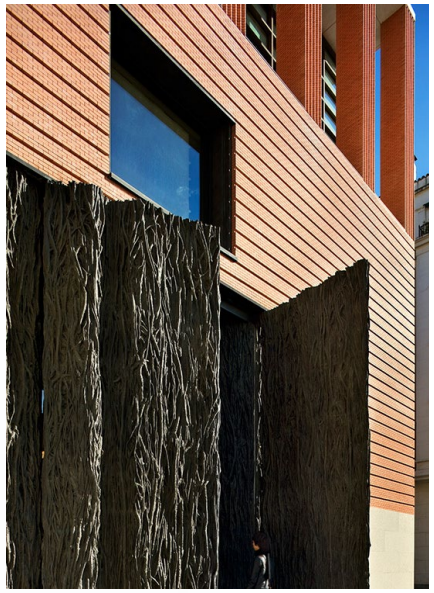
Recessed course



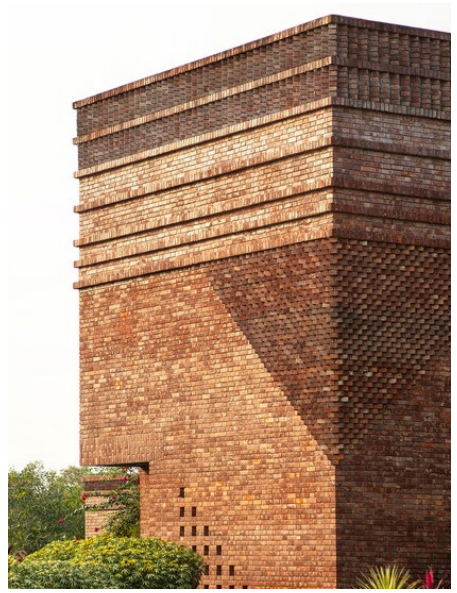
Soldier courses



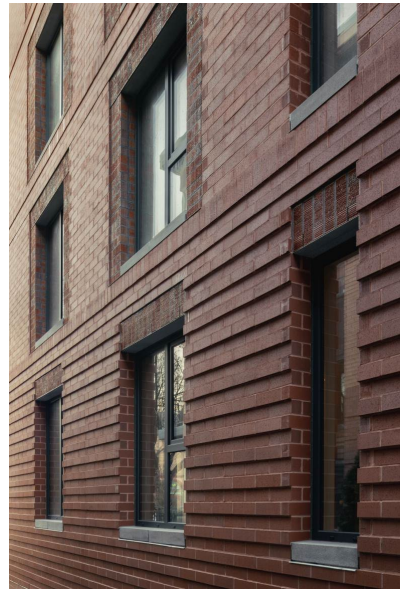
Single course relief



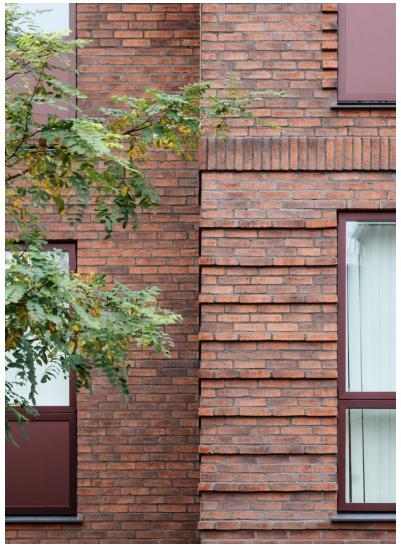
Recessed course -
Prado Museum Extension, Spain
Rafael Moneo



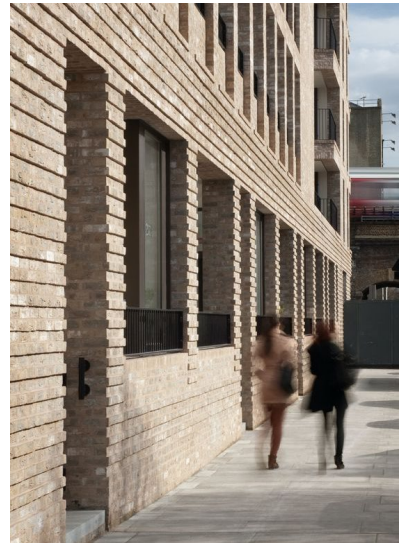
Soldier courses -
Bandhan Residential School of Business, Kolkata India
Abin Design Studio



Single course relief -
301 Vanilla Madison Wisconsin, USA
Residential Building
Sala Hars Architects



Single course relief & Soldier course -
Falkoner Alle 118, Denmark Residential
Mangor & Nagel A/S



Single course relief -
Silchester Housing, London, UK
Haworth Tompkins

BUILDING MATERIALS



1. Facebrick Palmetto Medium Red wire cut
2. Arriscraft Masory Units- White Evolution
3. Glass – 40% to 70% VLT (sim to Viracon VRE-65)
4. Longboard Wood Look Metal Extrusion Sofit
5. Composite Metal panel (at Fascias)

PRECEDENTS FOR PUBLIC ART













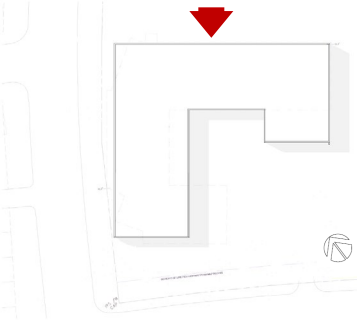


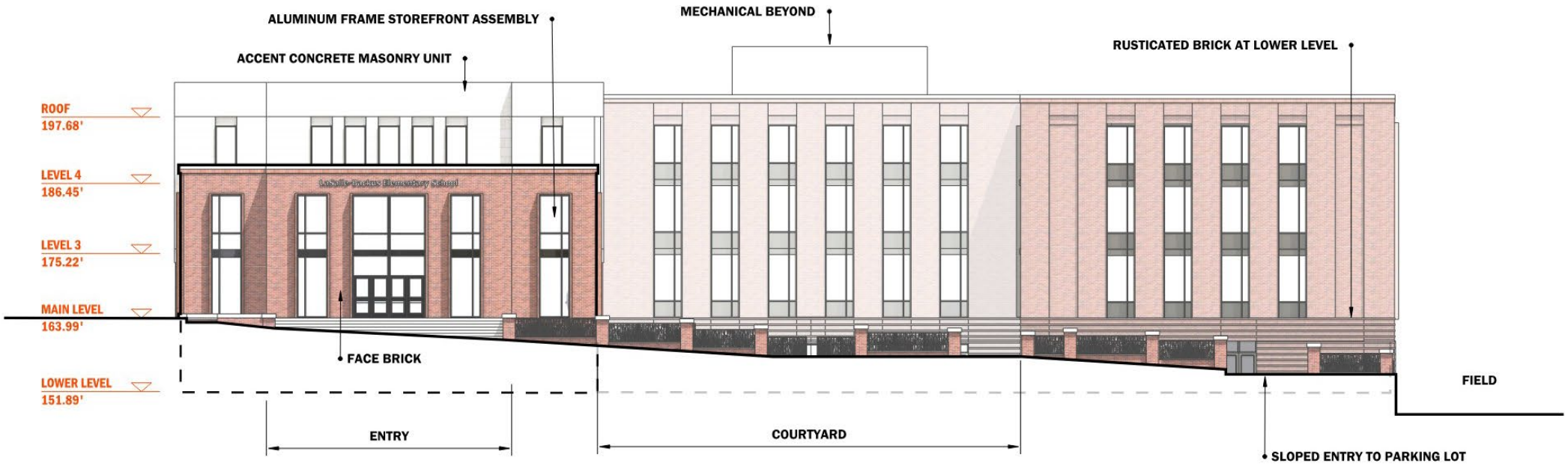


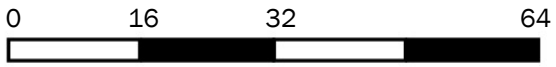


Public art to be incorporated at child height around fencing/ landscape elements

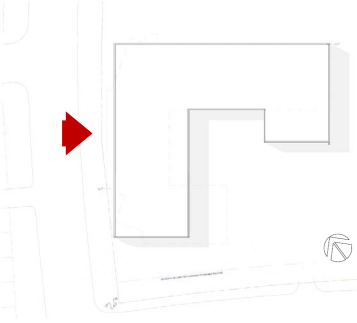
SOUTH ELEVATION

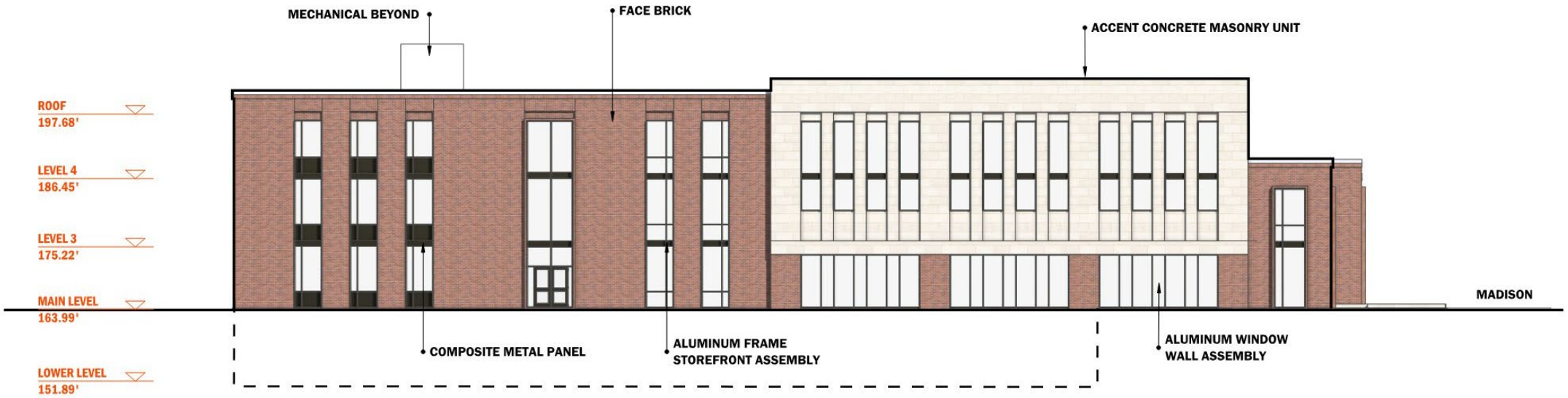


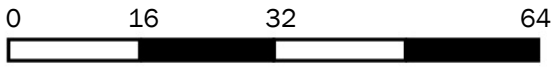




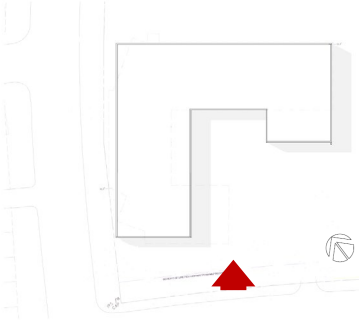
WEST ELEVATION

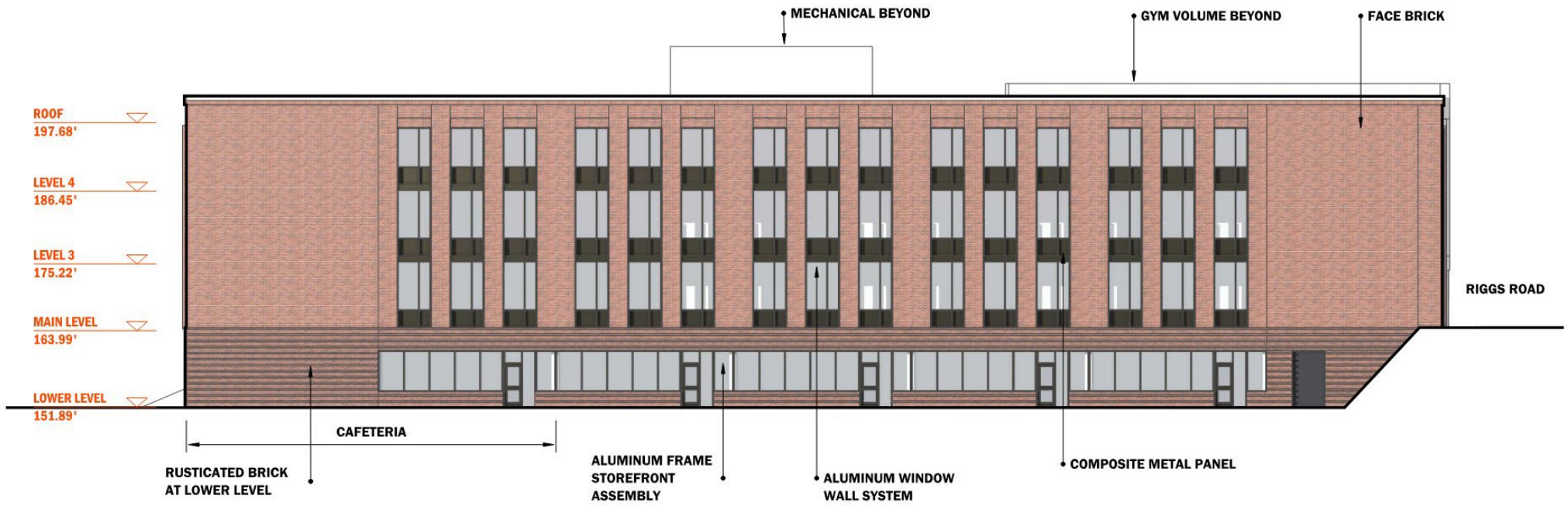


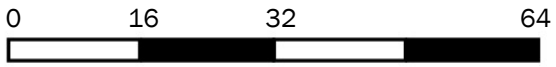




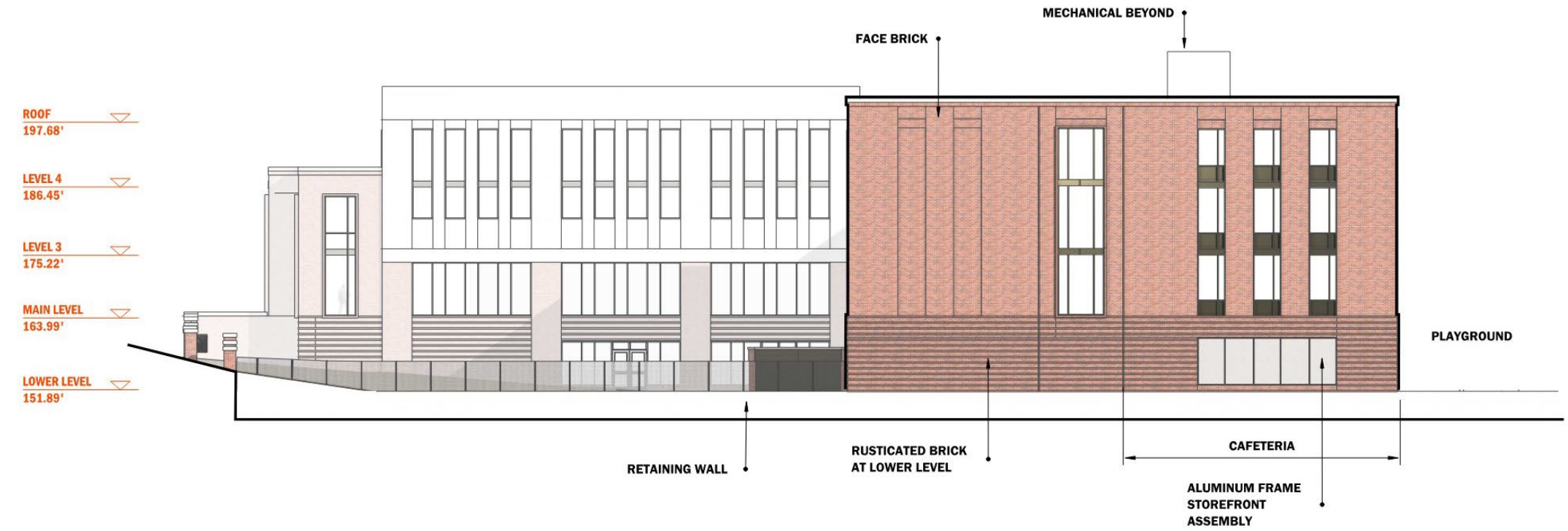
NORTH ELEVATION





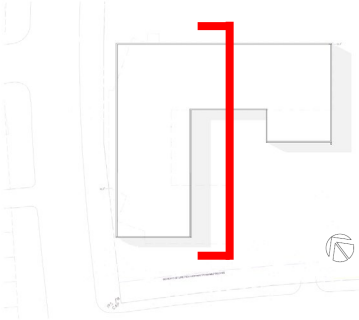


EAST ELEVATION

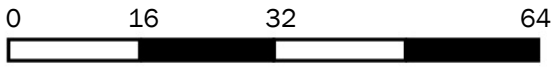


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SECTION – LOOKING WEST

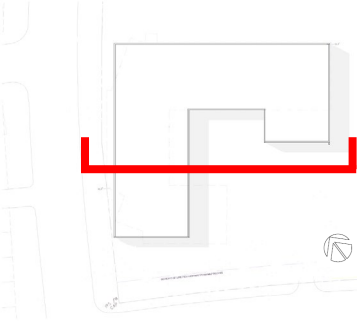


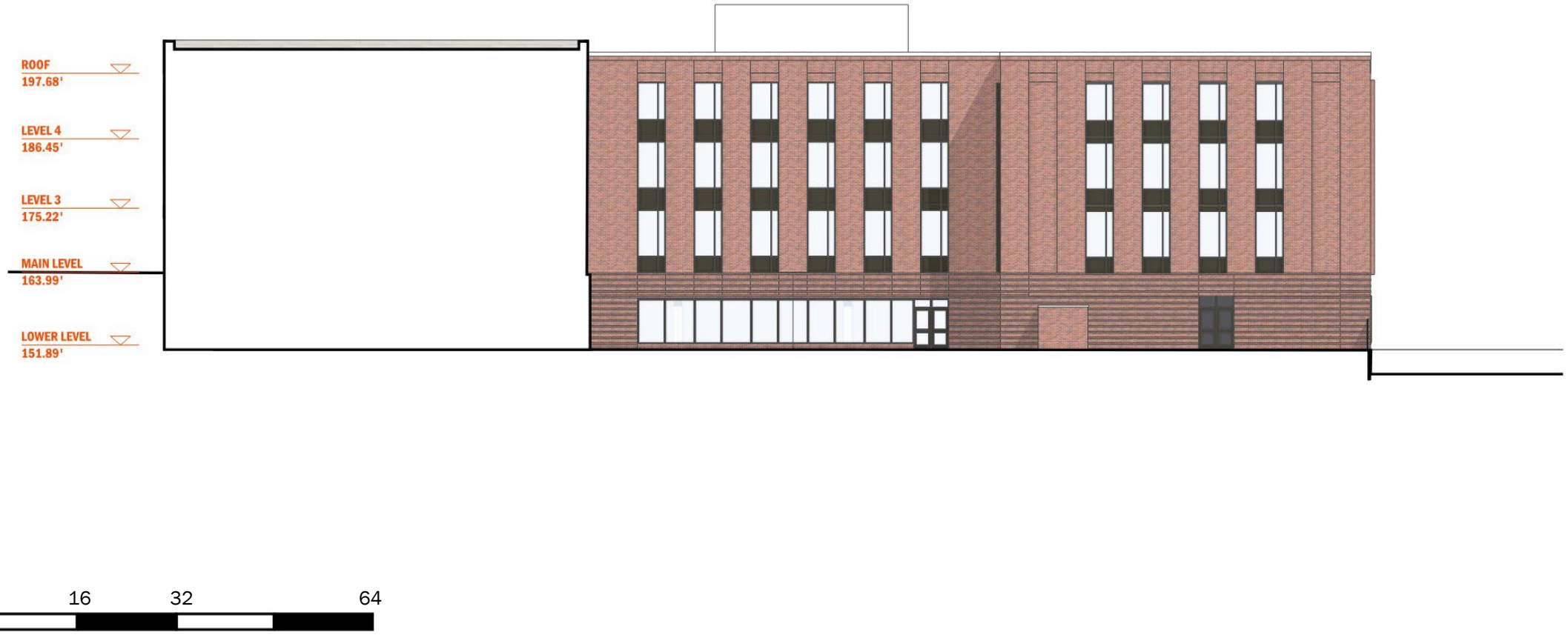




SECTION – LOOKING NORTH

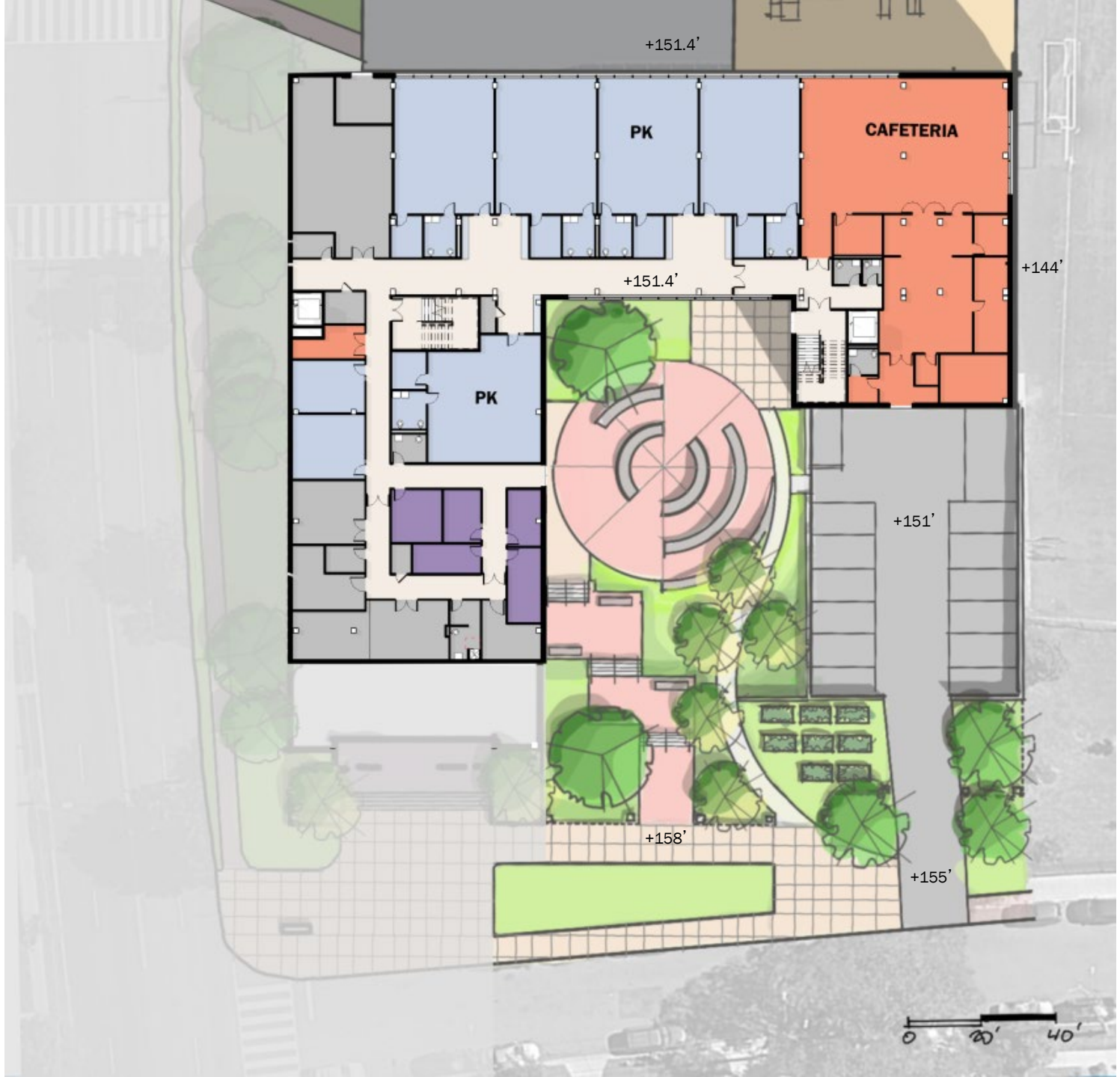
OPTION 1





LOWER LEVEL PLAN

- Academic
- Library
- Health Services
- Student Dining
- Physical Education
- Visual Arts
- Performing Arts
- Building Services
- Circulation
- Administration



MAIN LEVEL PLAN

- Academic
- Library
- Health Services
- Student Dining
- Physical Education
- Visual Arts
- Performing Arts
- Building Services
- Circulation
- Administration



LEVEL 3 PLAN

- Academic
- Library
- Health Services
- Student Dining
- Physical Education
- Visual Arts
- Performing Arts
- Building Services
- Circulation
- Administration



LEVEL 4 PLAN

- Academic
- Library
- Health Services
- Student Dining
- Physical Education
- Visual Arts
- Performing Arts
- Building Services
- Circulation
- Administration



DESIGNING THE DISTRICT