

Jonathan Manzo
Infrastructural Urbanism

Jonathan Manzo

Capital Projects, Design Strategy & Infrastructure Lead



Before training as an architect, I worked in the film and television industry, as a location scout, production manager, and line producer. The methods and skills I honed in film production, whether it be by negotiating agreements and permits, writing budgets, assembling crews, or overseeing production, remain in my toolbox and have been invaluable to my career in architecture.

Similarly, an interest in infrastructure as a form of civic space took root in graduate school and grew into over a decade of work in the electrical utility industry, primarily through my practice (urb-in, founded in 2013) and a client side design leadership role with Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) in San Francisco. This work, part of a \$1.2 billion capital projects portfolio, delivered critical infrastructure and garnered multiple awards from the AIA.

The infrastructure work brought opportunities to work and collaborate in other typologies, whether it be adaptive reuse, cultural, or housing projects, and motivated me to pursue licensure. I have successfully completed five of six ARE divisions.

In the next phase of my professional life, the goal is to create real and lasting change through design excellence and equity in the built environment. My portfolio provides an overview of my infrastructure and design work. Looking ahead, I am seeking new collaborators and larger platforms to develop a fuller practice of infrastructural urbanism.

Project roles are identified as Design, Design Lead, Design Supervision, Strategy, or a combination of these, as applicable.

I. Infrastructure as Civic Space



II. Territorial / Strategic Work



III. Social Infrastructure



IV. Publications & Awards



I. Infrastructure as Civic Space

Client: Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E)

Role: Design Supervision

Design Teams: Tatiana Bilbao Estudio • TEF Design • Stanley Saitowitz Natoma Architects • Jensen Architects

Location: San Francisco

Dates: 2010–2023

From 2010–2023, I led the client side design supervision for Pacific Gas & Electric Company’s (PG&E) \$1.2 billion portfolio of utility infrastructure projects across the San Francisco Bay Area.

My role was not to design each building, but to design the process that enabled design excellence—developing project briefs, assembling interdisciplinary teams, aligning stakeholders, and guiding projects from concept through implementation. While architects designed the buildings, my work helped shape the conditions that made those projects possible.

Program Framework

- Design Excellence
- Community Benefit
- Stakeholder Alignment

Representative Program Investments

- \$400M+ San Francisco Substation Modernization
- \$261M Egbert Switching Station
- \$196.8M ZA-1 Transmission Line



Hunters Point Substation 2016 – 2023
Tatiana Bilbao Estudio / TEF Design
Advanced through pre-construction



Larkin Switchgear Building – 2020
TEF Design
AIA San Francisco, Architecture Merit Award, 2020
Architectural Record, November 2019



Potrero Substation – 2018
Stanley Saitowitz Natoma Architects
AIA San Francisco, Architecture Citation Award, 2020
Architectural Record, August 2021



Mission Substation – 2014
TEF Design
Published in Architectural Record, February 2016



Martin Substation – 2014
TEF Design



Embarcadero Substation – 2018
Stanley Saitowitz Natoma Architects
Published in Architectural Record, August 2021



Egbert Switching Station — Under Construction
Jensen Architects

Larkin Switchgear Building



Client: Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E)

Role: Design Supervision

Design Team: TEF Design • Horton Lees Brogden Lighting Design • Creo Landscape Architecture

Location: San Francisco

Dates: 2016 – 2020

Awards: AIA San Francisco, Architecture Merit Award, 2020



The Larkin Switchgear Building demonstrates how critical utility infrastructure can contribute to the public realm while meeting complex operational, security, and sustainability requirements.

The project established ambitious sustainability objectives, including a pathway toward Net Zero Energy certification, while advancing a design approach that integrated architecture, landscape, lighting, and infrastructure.

The completed facility is a highly technical utility building and an architectural and civic asset.





Client: Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E)

Role: Strategy, Design Supervision and Design

Location: San Francisco

Dates: 2010 - 2023

In 2010, I was retained as a key consultant to PG&E Corporate Affairs to develop a cohesive site strategy coordinating three areas of work: remediation, land planning, and infrastructure modernization.

Rather than proceeding as isolated efforts, these streams of work were coordinated to support the site’s transition from a former industrial facility to a future mixed-use waterfront district.

The timeline on this page, together with the projects on the pages that follow, illustrates the strategic initiatives deployed to reconnect the site to the community and establish a foundation for redevelopment. During this period, in 2013, I established my practice, urb-in.

Remediation

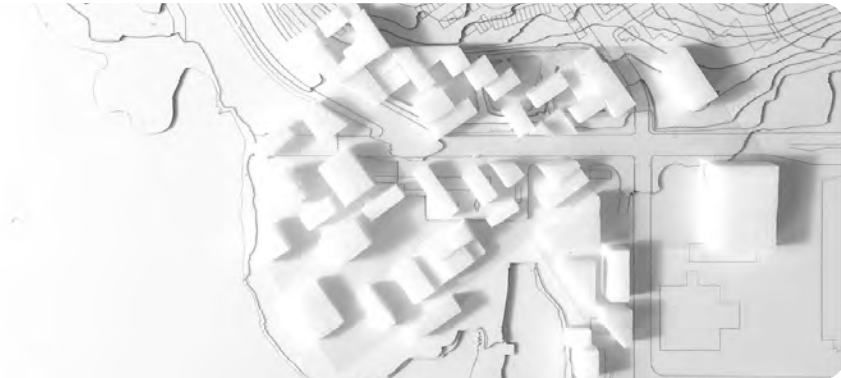


2016 SHORELINE

Land Planning



2014 – 2022 NOW Hunters Point



2018 – 2022 VISIONING

Infrastructure Modernization



2014 – 2023 Hunters Point Substation Modernization

Public Activation

Shoreline Restoration



Client: Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E)

Role: Design Supervision

Design Team: Envelope • Studio O • RHAA • ARUP • Manuel Miranda Practice

Location: San Francisco

Dates: Hunters Point Shoreline (2012–2016) and NOW Hunters Point (2013–2022)

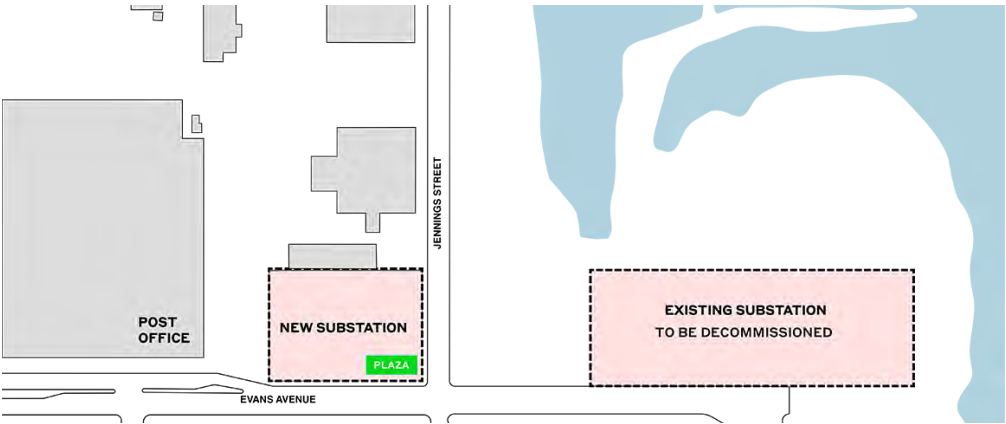
NOW Hunters Point and the Hunters Point Shoreline were developed as complementary components of a broader strategy to reposition the former power plant site for future redevelopment.

Launched during site remediation in 2013, NOW Hunters Point continued through 2022 as a platform for community engagement, temporary activation, and partnership development. Over its run, the program hosted 319 events and exhibitions on-site and across the surrounding neighborhood, drew more than 66,000 visitors, and partnered with 20 Bayview–Hunters Point community organizations.

Constructed in 2016, the Hunters Point Shoreline transformed a former industrial edge into a restored public landscape with native habitat and new recreational access. The design was developed with community engagement integrated throughout via NOW Hunters Point programming, stakeholder collaboration, and agency coordination.



Hunters Point Substation Modernization



Client: Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E)

Role: Design Supervision

Design Team: Tatiana Bilbao Estudio • TEF Design • Creo Landscape Architecture

Location: San Francisco

Dates: 2014 - 2023

The Hunters Point Substation Modernization Project replaces aging transmission and distribution infrastructure with a contemporary facility designed to improve reliability, operational flexibility, and environmental performance.

The project is designed to meet Zero Net Energy standards and incorporates streetscape and landscape improvements that extend its civic presence beyond the facility boundary.

The project was fully permitted but put on hold in 2023.



Strategic Redevelopment Framework

Beyond Remediation: A Vision for the Hunters Point Power Plant Site

Client: Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E)

Role: Design Supervision, Design

Collaborators: Tatiana Bilbao Estudio • Studio MLA • PAU • Sheppard Mullin • Manuel Miranda Practice

Location: San Francisco

Dates: 2018 (Updated 2021)

Deliverable: 157-page Redevelopment Framework

Focus Areas: Land Use • Housing • Sustainability • Resilience • Mobility • Community Development

urb-in worked in partnership with a multidisciplinary team including Tatiana Bilbao Estudio, Studio MLA, PAU, Sheppard Mullin, and Manuel Miranda Practice to author *Beyond Remediation: A Vision for the Hunters Point Power Plant Site*, a redevelopment framework for PG&E’s 32-acre former power plant property.

The document synthesized years of community engagement, environmental remediation, interim activation, policy research, and multidisciplinary design work into planning principles, development guidelines, and conceptual design scenarios intended to guide future investment and implementation.



Conceptual 1,500 unit build-out

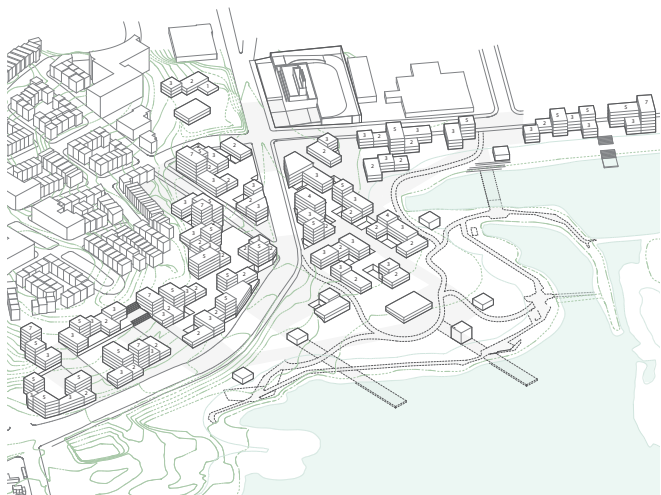


Strategic Redevelopment Framework

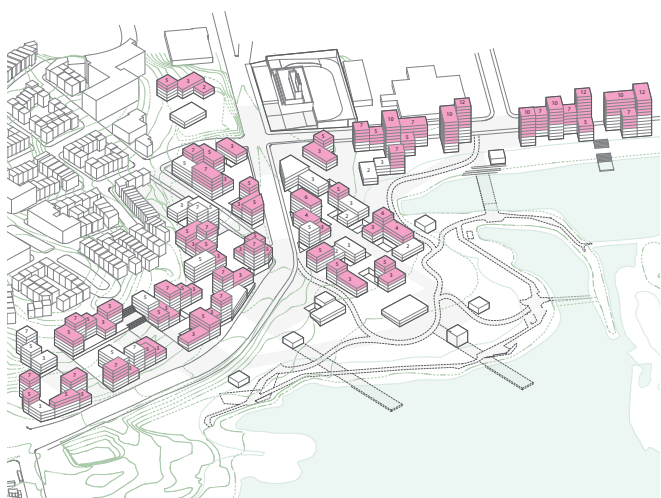
Beyond Remediation: A Vision for the Hunters Point Power Plant Site

Density Studies

1,000 Housing Units



1,500 Housing Units



2,000 Housing Units

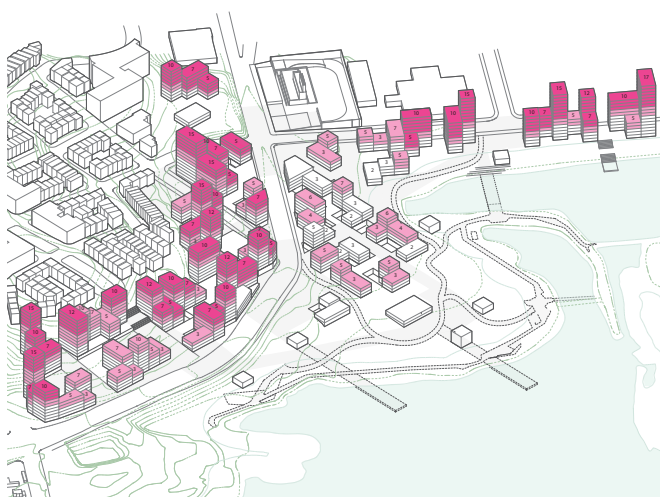
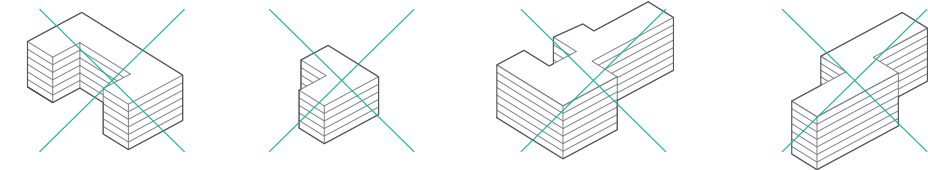


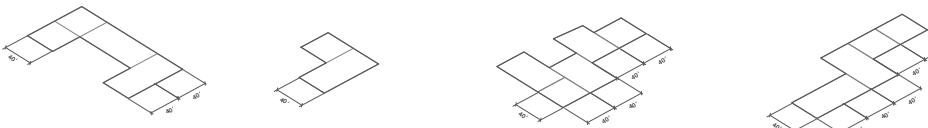
Figure 45: Alternate Density Studies
Credit: Tatiana Bilbao Estudio

Massing Guidelines

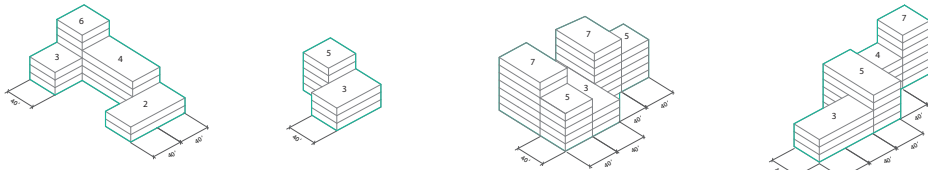
The goal is to avoid homogeneous massing where possible, and encourage more staggered, controlled, or varied approaches. All scenarios comply with San Francisco Planning and Zoning Guidelines for massing and bulk.



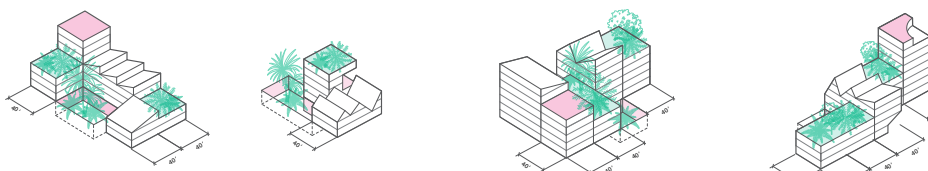
STAGGERED FOOTPRINT
The footprint is divided into modules of 40 feet.



CONTROLLED ENVELOPE
A different height is set for each of the modules, enabling views towards the shoreline. This also allows more opportunities for roof terraces and greater connection to the outdoors for residents.



VARIED ROOF TYPES
Basic rules are established to allow a multitude of roof types. Roofs should be seen as spaces for water reclamation, energy capture, and active programming, and not just mechanical appurtenances.



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Streetscape

Any proposal for developing the property should prioritize the design of a new street grid that connects the development to the existing city transportation network. Currently, the site is an "island" apart from the normative urban fabric. A pedestrian-oriented streetscape could re-connect the site to the neighborhood and city.

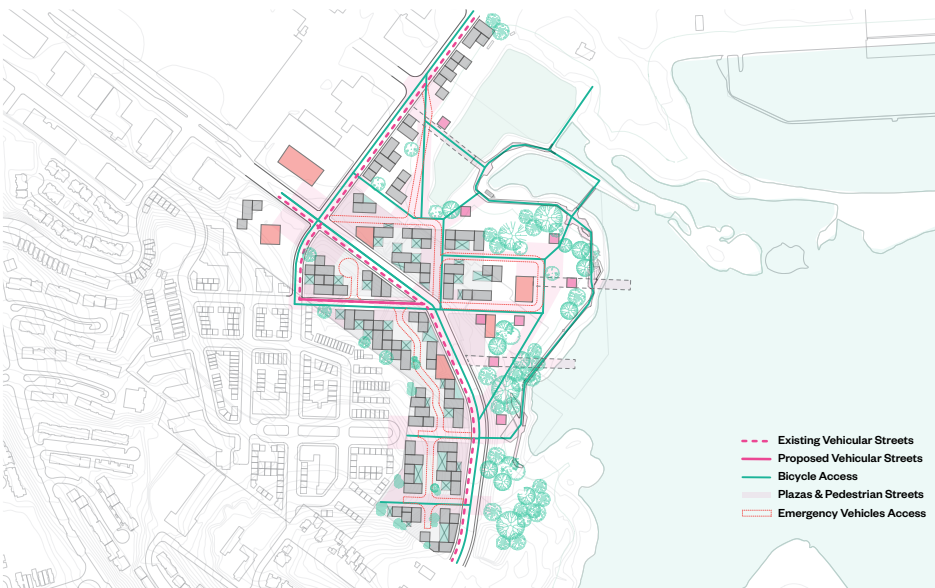
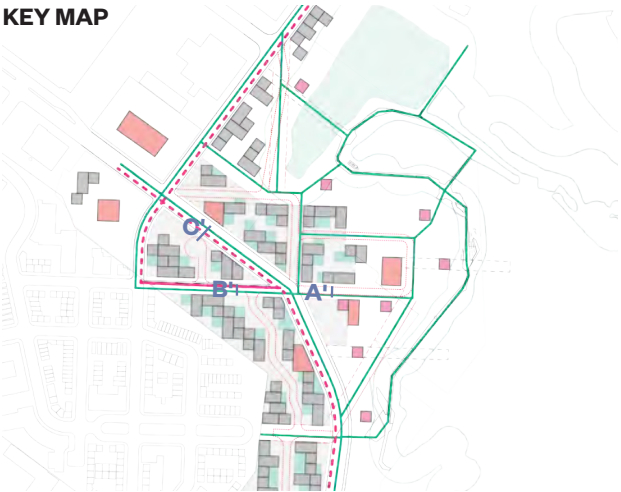


Figure 42: Proposed Street Grid

KEY MAP



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III. Social Infrastructure

The projects in this section explore how architecture can be deployed as a form of social infrastructure. Across several typologies, I used adaptive reuse, new housing models, and cultural programming to expand access to space, strengthen community institutions, and create lasting neighborhood value.

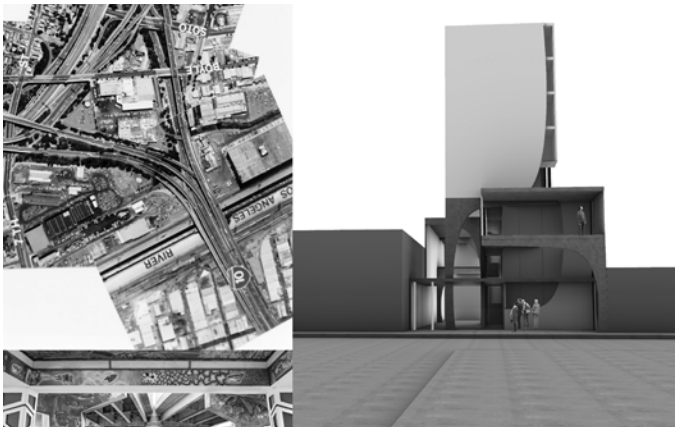
The work includes built projects, competition entries, and design studies completed as both a design lead and collaborator.



City Labs Boyle Heights – 2015
urb-in
Toledo Capital Development



Boyle Tower – 2018
MUTUO / urb-in
Toledo Capital Development



XOLA – 2021-2024
urb-in
Toledo Capital Development

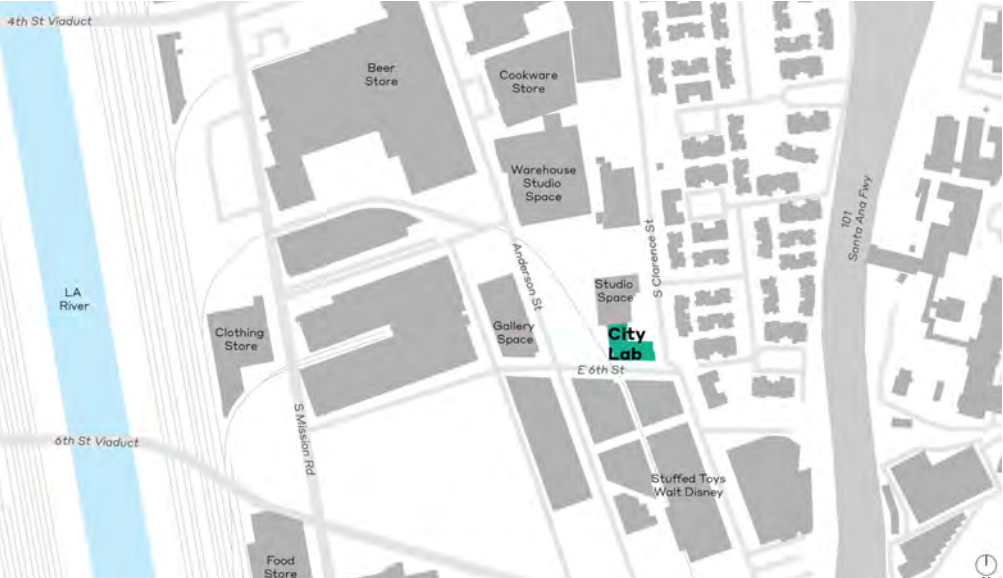


Junior House / Senior House / Middle House – 2021
urb-in
Portland Society of Architects
The Complete City: Filled In — Design Competition, Second Place

City Labs Boyle Heights

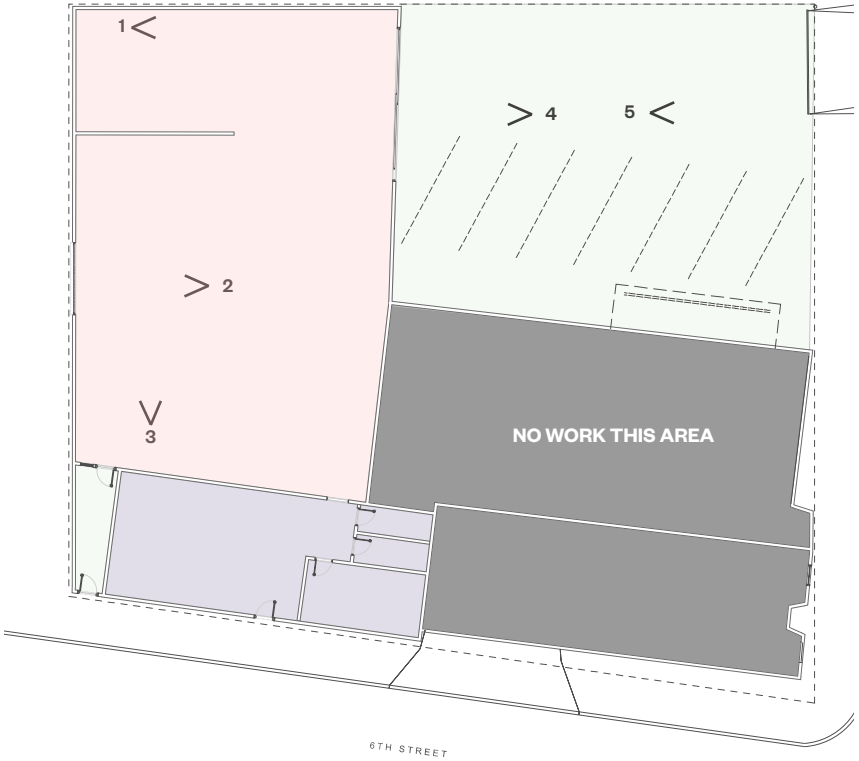
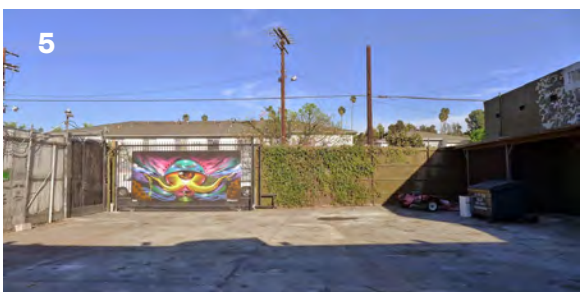
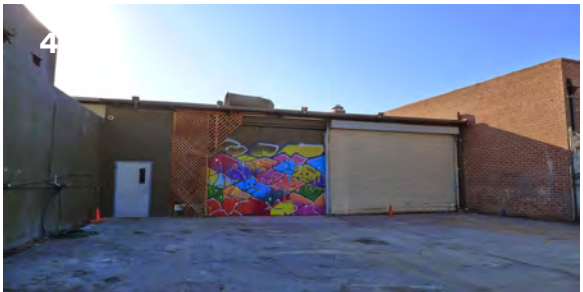
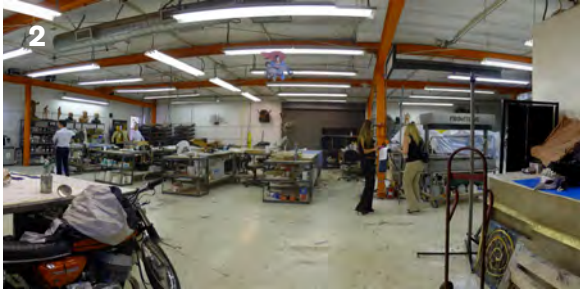
Client: Toledo Capital Development
Role: Design Lead
Location: Los Angeles
Completion: 2015
Scope: Adaptive reuse, tenant improvements, construction documentation
Project Size: ~7,600 square feet

Context: Boyle Heights, Los Angeles



Design Challenge

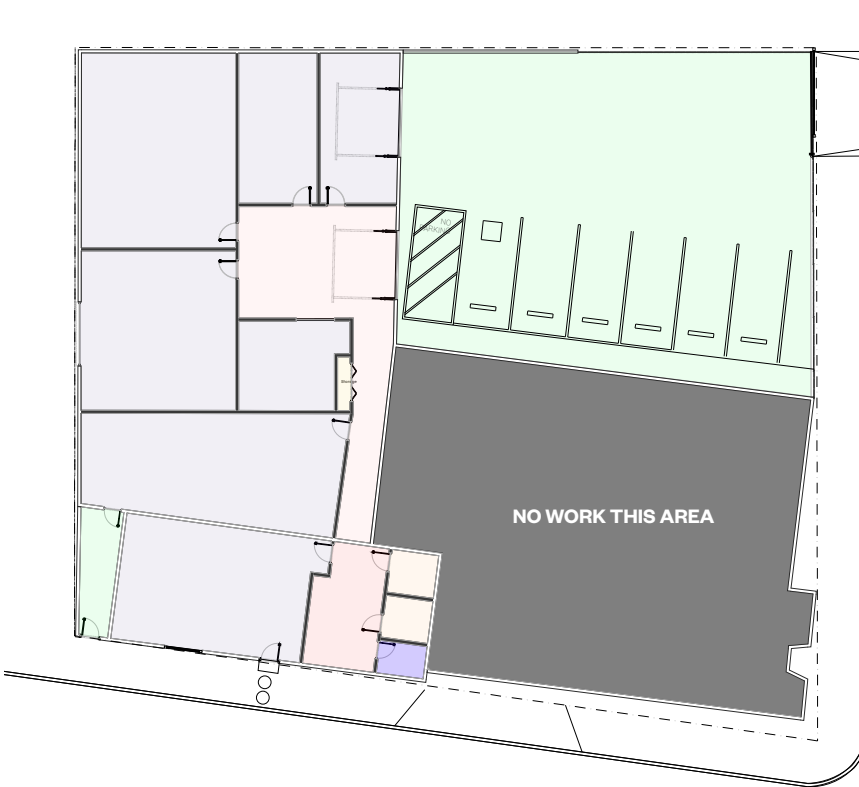
The existing warehouse presented a series of architectural constraints. The design needed to accommodate the client's program for six tenant suites and shared amenities while preserving the industrial character of the building, reconciling varying roof heights, and introducing natural daylight into the deep floor plate.



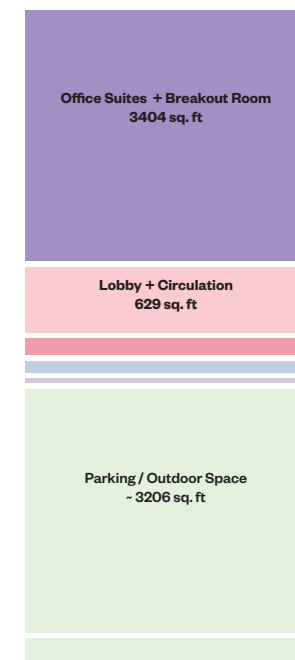
Existing Program



Outdoor Entry
107 sq. ft.



Built Program



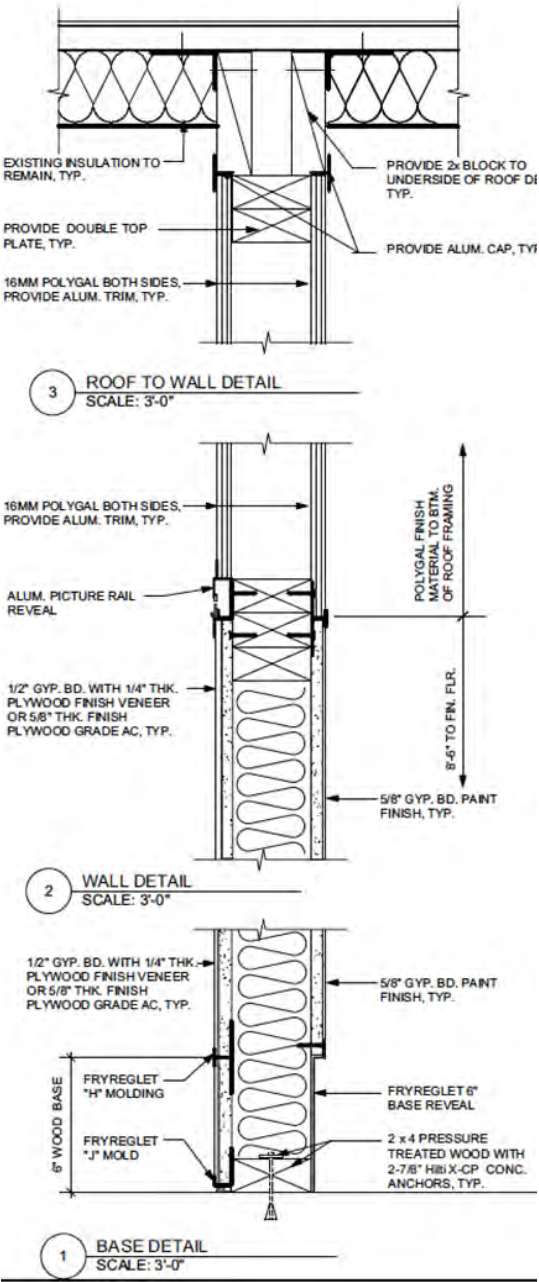
Lounge
206 sq. ft.

2 ADA Bathrooms
100 sq. ft.

Storage + IT
55 sq. ft.

Outdoor Entry
107 sq. ft.

City Labs Boyle Heights



An 8'-6" plywood datum organizes the tenant spaces while translucent polygal clerestories transmit borrowed daylight, preserve openness, and reconcile varying ceiling heights.



Construction Progress

Project Narrative

City Labs Boyle Heights transformed an existing industrial warehouse into a flexible workspace for entrepreneurs, small businesses, and community organizations while preserving the character of the original structure.

The program connected the warehouse with an existing office building to create six tenant suites, a shared conference room, lobby, kitchen/lounge, IT room, and two ADA-compliant restrooms. The lobby was designed as an extension of the adjacent parking court through a pair of glazed overhead doors, allowing the space to function as an indoor-outdoor gathering area for community events and weekend programming.

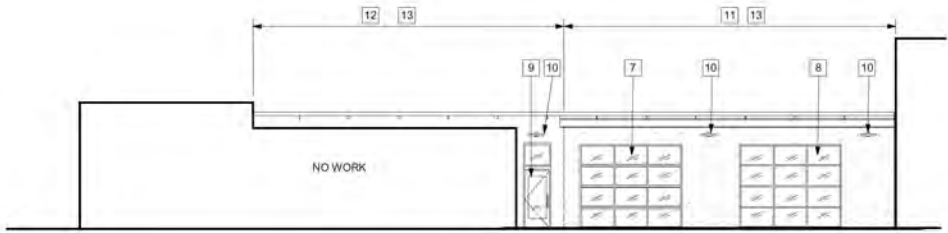
A primary design challenge was introducing daylight into the deep warehouse floor plate. Apart from two existing skylights and the original roll-up doors, the building had little access to natural light. The differing ceiling heights between the warehouse and office structures further complicated the design.

The solution established an 8'-6" plywood-clad datum that organized the new interior spaces while preserving the scale of the existing warehouse. Above this datum, translucent polygal panels admitted borrowed daylight deep into the plan while accommodating the varying roof heights. New glazed garage doors further increased daylight, natural ventilation, and visual connection between the interior and exterior gathering spaces.

City Labs Boyle Heights



Existing East Elevation



New East Elevation



Marketing Rendering



Postscript

City Labs continues to serve Boyle Heights as a flexible workspace for entrepreneurs, nonprofits, artists, and community organizations. The project demonstrates how modest architectural interventions—strategic daylighting, adaptable planning, and the reuse of an existing industrial structure—can create lasting social and economic value.



Boyle Tower

Client: Toledo Capital Development
Role: Design
Collaborators: MUTUO + urb-in
Location: Los Angeles, CA
Dates: 2016 - 2018

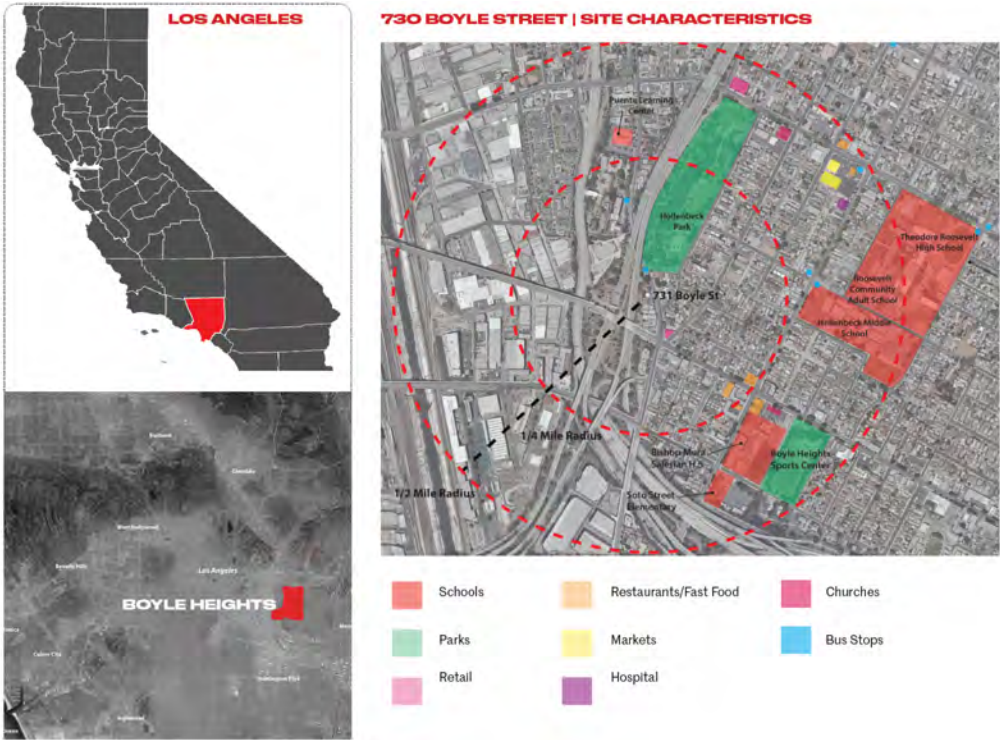
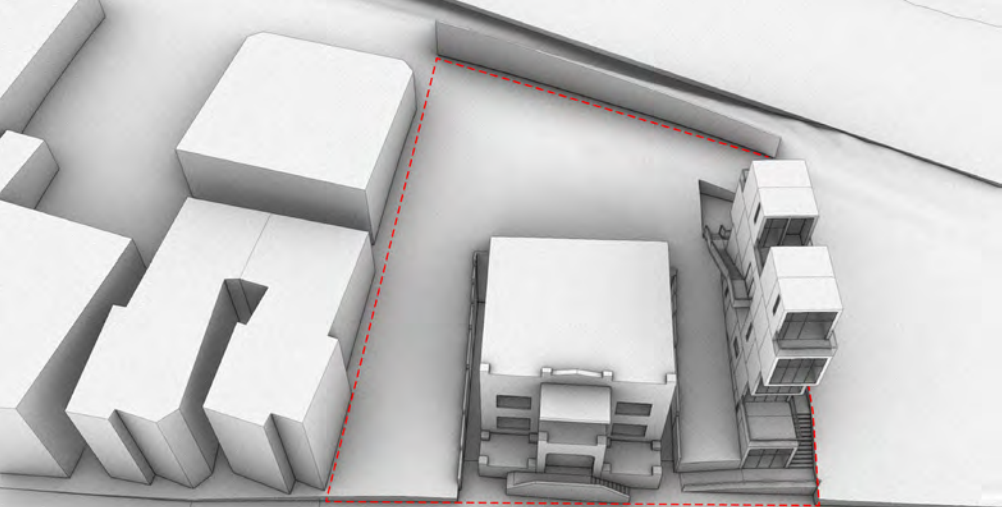
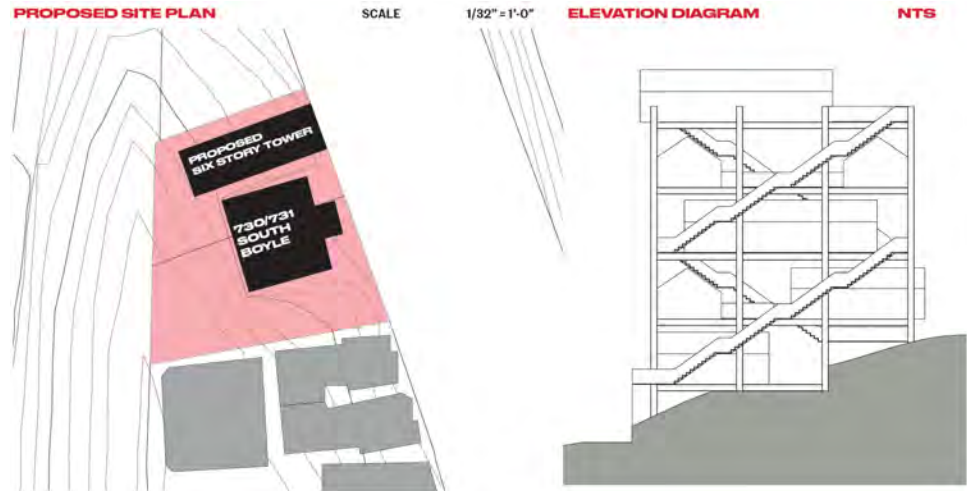
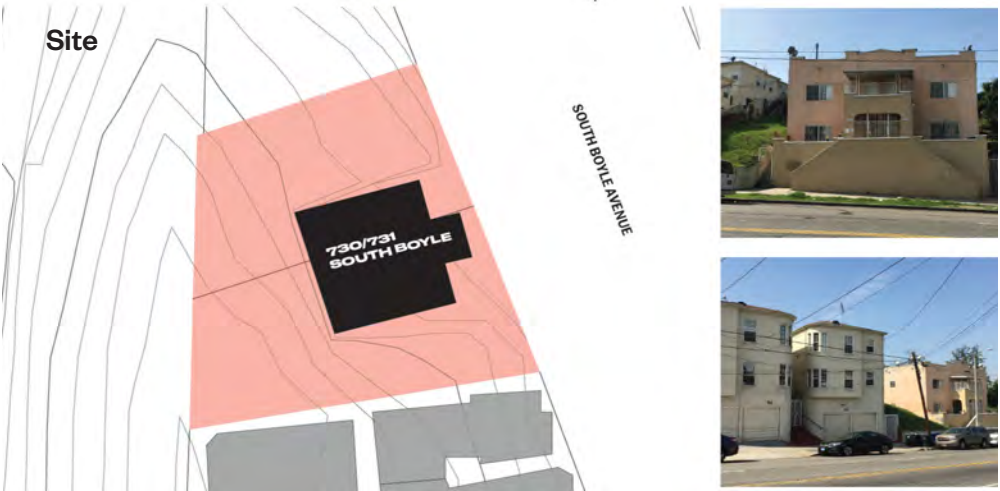
Awards:
2018 AIA Los Angeles Next LA Honor Award for Excellence in Architectural Design



Can infrastructure construction systems be adapted to deliver compact, affordable urban housing?

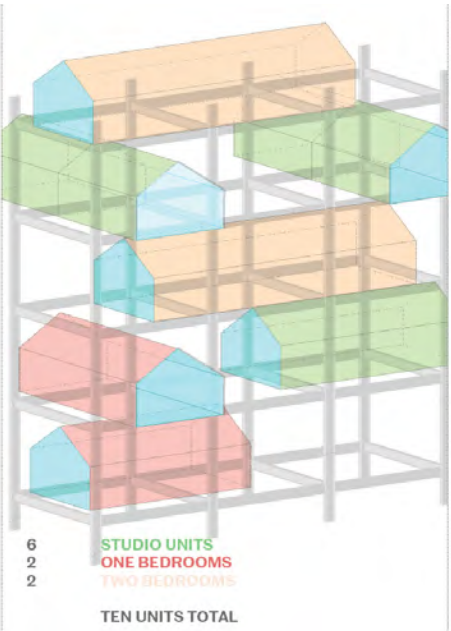


Our research pointed toward adapting an existing system – reinforced pre-cast concrete boxes, commonly used on infrastructure projects – to create a viable solution for building modern, compact, affordable housing (micro-units) in Los Angeles.



The system was intended to:

- Build vertically and create a distinct architectural presence.
- Use a repeatable construction logic to maximize spatial flexibility while minimizing initial cost.
- Advance a new model for compact housing, design excellence, and sustainable construction.



Museo de Arte Xicano en Los Angeles (XOLA)



Client: Toledo Capital Development
Role: Design, Design Supervision
Design Teams:
Phase I: Pre-design (shown on this page) urb-in
Phase II: Tatiana Bilbao Estudio & Studio MLA
Location: Los Angeles
Dates: 2021 – 2024

XOLA is a mixed-use proposal for Boyle Heights, Los Angeles, combining affordable housing with a cultural institution. Early design studies explored how the spatial and structural logic of Los Angeles freeway infrastructure could be reinterpreted as civic space, creating a framework for housing, culture, and public life.

Early concept development was undertaken jointly with MUTUO before the two practices advanced independent design proposals. The work presented here reflects urb-in’s development of the project during the pre-design phase.

Following completion of the pre-design phase, urb-in assembled and managed the interdisciplinary design team, engaging Tatiana Bilbao Estudio and Studio MLA to lead the architectural and landscape design process.



Affordable Housing
17,300 sq. ft.

Museum
11,500 sq. ft.

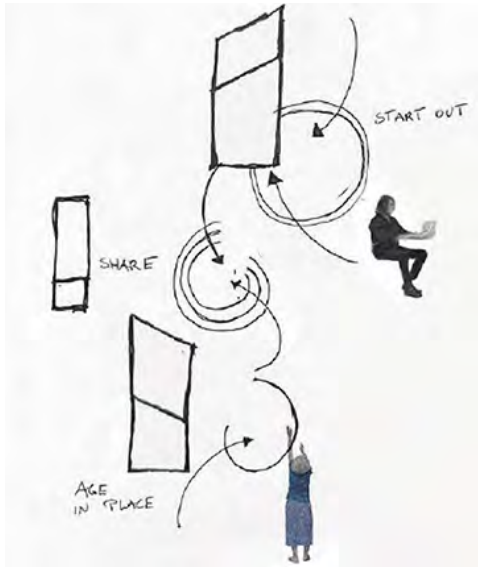
Access & Community forum



Junior House, Senior House, Middle House Competition Project

Organization: Portland Society of Architects

Role: Design
Location: Portland, Maine
Date: Spring 2021
Recognition: Second Place

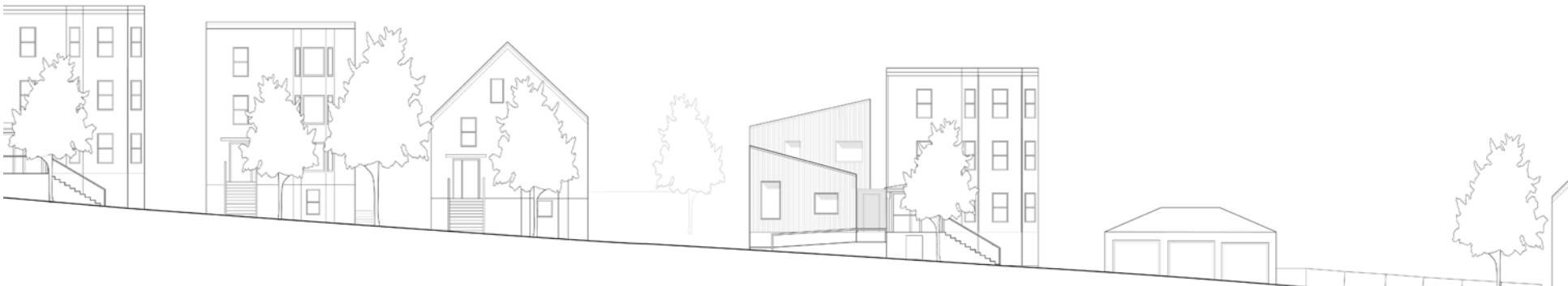


The Portland Society of Architects Complete City: Filled In competition explored the potential of a new city ordinance permitting accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

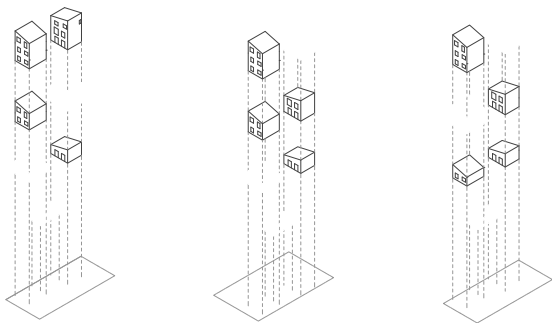
Rather than adding a single accessory dwelling, the proposal reimagines the parcel as a small intergenerational housing community that fully utilizes the allowable building envelope.

Inspired by the additive growth of the New England farmhouse, **the project organizes three distinct residential volumes around a shared communal core**, allowing the development to support changing household needs across generations.

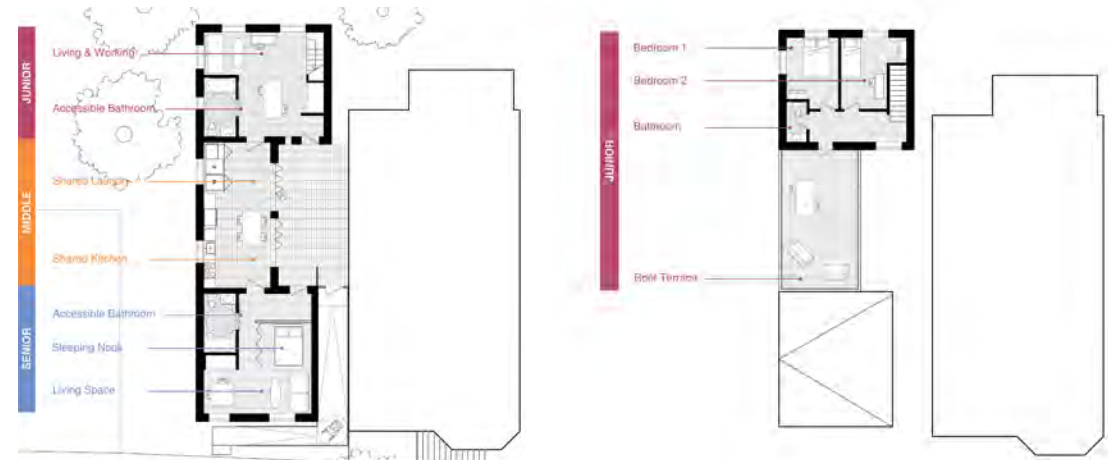
Designed as an all-electric, Passive House–informed project utilizing CLT construction, the proposal addresses affordability, resilience, and changing household needs over time.



Configuration studies



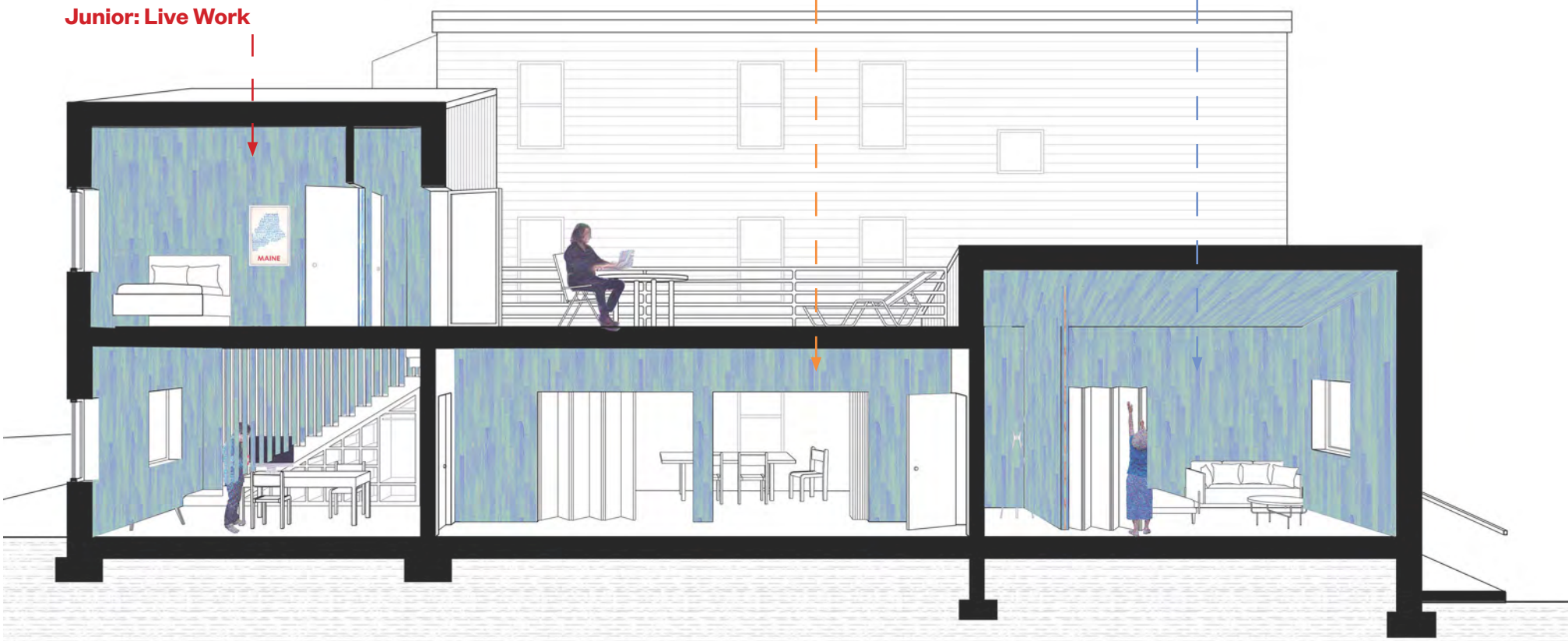
Live/Work Housing + Aging-In-Place Housing + Shared Amenities



Junior: Live Work

Middle: Shared Amenities

Senior: Accessible Unit



IV. Publications & Awards

Selected writing, publications, and professional recognition spanning architecture, infrastructure, and urban design

Writing

2022 — On-Site Review, Issue 41 – Infrastructure
“Remediation and Redemption: Hunters Point Power Plant”

Selected Press

2021 — Maine Home + Design — The Complete City: Filled In
2021 — Architectural Record — PG&E Electrical Substations
2020 — Architectural Record — Community Engagement
2019 — Architectural Record — Larkin Street Substation Addition Illuminates an Industrial Corner in San Francisco
2016 — Architectural Record — Luminous Revivals: PG&E Mission Substation
2013 — KQED News — A Chance for Bayview Residents to Tell Their Stories

Awards

2021
Portland Society of Architects
The Complete City: Filled In — Design Competition, Second Place
Role: Design

2020
AIA San Francisco
Architecture Merit Award — Larkin Substation (Larkin Switchgear Building)
Role: Design Supervision

2020
AIA San Francisco
Architecture Citation Award — Potrero Substation
Role: Design Supervision

2019
AIA San Francisco
Commendation in Urban Design — Hunters Point Shoreline
Role: Design Supervision

2018
AIA Los Angeles
Next LA Honor Award for Excellence in Architectural Design
Role: Design (in collaboration with MUTUO)

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