LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE + MFA VIDEO GAME DESIGN

PORTFOLIO



GRAYSON BORCHARDT

PREFACE

The following work represents a selection of projects completed during my career as a landscape architect at SWA and LJA, as well as academic work from Texas Tech University and my Master's in Video Game Design. Across both physical and digital environments, my focus has always been the same: designing spaces that evoke emotion, guide experience, and tell a story through world building.

Landscape architecture taught me how terrain shapes behavior, how sightlines create tension, and how material, scale, and movement influence emotion. Whether designing commercial landscapes or grading plans in West Texas, I was learning how to craft immersive environments grounded in realism and purpose. That foundation now drives my work in interactive spaces.

My passion for first person shooters began with the original PlayStation and deepened through franchises such as Medal of Honor, Halo, Call of Duty, and Battlefield. These games did more than entertain me. They transported me into grounded, believable conflicts where environment, pacing, and narrative weight mattered. The cinematic realism of creators like Taylor Sheridan and the gameplay innovation led by developers such as Vince Zampella shaped my understanding of what modern combat storytelling can be.

My work today reflects that influence. I focus on designing immersive FPS environments that prioritize combat flow, environmental storytelling, and grounded realism. Whether building narrative driven levels in Unreal Engine, scripting gameplay systems in C#, or constructing hybrid 2D and 3D worlds, my goal is always the same: to create spaces that feel authentic, emotionally charged, and mechanically engaging.

Titles like Battlefield 6 represent the scale and ambition I strive toward. I am driven to contribute to projects that honor the legacy of games like Medal of Honor and Halo while pushing the genre forward through believable worlds and meaningful player agency.

I stand at the intersection of environmental design and interactive storytelling. My background in shaping real world landscapes, combined with my technical training in game development, allows me to approach level design with discipline, authenticity, and narrative intent. My goal is to build first person shooter worlds that resonate with players long after the mission ends.

It matters not how strait the gate
How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the master of my fate
I am the Captain of my Soul.

INVICTUS
William Ernst Henly

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HIGHWATER

PROJECT INFO

CLASS: VIDEO GAME MARKETING AND PUBLISHING

ROLE: GAME DESIGNER

LOCATION: LOS ANGELOS, CA

ELEVATOR PITCH

Highwater is a near future military narrative set during an invasion of the United States, where a small Texas militia known as Bandit 817 rises to defend their homeland against a technologically superior occupying force.

Blending grounded tactical combat with immersive, diegetic systems, the game strips away traditional HUD elements and power fantasy to create a suffocating, emotionally driven experience where survival is victory and every loss reshapes both the battlefield and the spirit of those fighting on it.

Through dynamic terrain destruction, evolving AI behavior, and deeply personal storytelling, Highwater explores brotherhood, faith, and the psychological cost of resistance in a world where home has become the front line.

12 HOURS TOTAL

- **ACT 1** **Urban Guerrilla Warfare** | Dallas and Fort Worth
- **ACT 2** **Rural Offensive** | Texas Hill Country
- **ACT 3** **Final Stand** | Austin

INSPIRATION



KEY DESIGN PILLARS

DESTRUCTION

Destruction in Highwater is systemic and persistent, not scripted spectacle. Every material responds according to its properties. Wood splinters and burns, concrete fractures under structural stress, steel bends before collapse, and trees shear apart under artillery fire.

Bombardments permanently reshape the terrain, carving craters that become improvised trenches and altering sightlines across the battlefield. Roads collapse, trenches cave in, and fire spreads dynamically through flammable debris, forcing constant repositioning.

Smoke and dust linger, providing tactical concealment rather than momentary visual effect. The battlefield does not reset between encounters. It evolves with every explosion, turning the environment itself into a strategic and emotional variable beyond what traditional destruction systems offer.

REALISM

Realism in Highwater is driven by grounded systems and a dark, consequence focused narrative that rejects spectacle. Combat is physical and disorienting, injuries linger, suppression alters perception, and the battlefield permanently evolves through destruction. All HUD elements are removed in favor of fully diegetic UI, with information delivered through physical maps, weapon checks, radio chatter, and environmental cues. The gritty story of loss and psychological strain ensures every encounter feels human, vulnerable, and real rather than heroic.

NARRATIVE TIMELINE

GLOBAL STRATEGIC COALITION

ALLIES

2028 — 2029 — 2030 — 2031 — 2032 — 2033 BEGGINING OF GAME

2028
The war in Ukraine ends, but instability spreads. Russia, Iran, and China consolidate power into the GSC, presenting themselves as a stabilizing counterweight to Western influence while quietly expanding control over global energy and trade routes.

2029
GSC forces covertly embed themselves across South America under humanitarian fronts. Operation False Prophet begins, launching a false flag campaign that paints the United States as a global aggressor and fractures domestic trust.

2030
A staged massacre at the southern border ignites nationwide unrest. Anti America and pro GSC movements erupt into violent riots, exposing deep internal divisions the coalition deliberately inflamed.

2031
Several U.S. states sign a Pact of Neutrality, believing isolation will protect them. Behind the scenes, GSC aligned officials prepare logistical corridors for what is no longer theoretical invasion.

2032
Accusing the United States of war crimes, the GSC moves openly. States secede under pressure, federal cohesion collapses, and GSC forces land in Houston, beginning the occupation that sets Highwater in motion.

ACT 1

3 Hours
Urban Guerrilla Warfare | North Texas

MISSION 01 | FALL OF NEW YORK

MISSION 02| TBD

MISSION 03| TBD

MISSION 04| TBD

MISSION 05| TBD

MISSION 06| TBD

ACT 2

3 Hours
Rural Offensive | Texas Hill Country

MISSION 07 | THE LAST MISSION

MISSION 08| TBD

MISSION 09| TBD

MISSION 10| TBD

MISSION 11| TBD

MISSION 12| TBD

ACT 3

3 Hours
Final Stand | Austin

MISSION 13| TBD

MISSION 14| TBD

MISSION 15| TBD

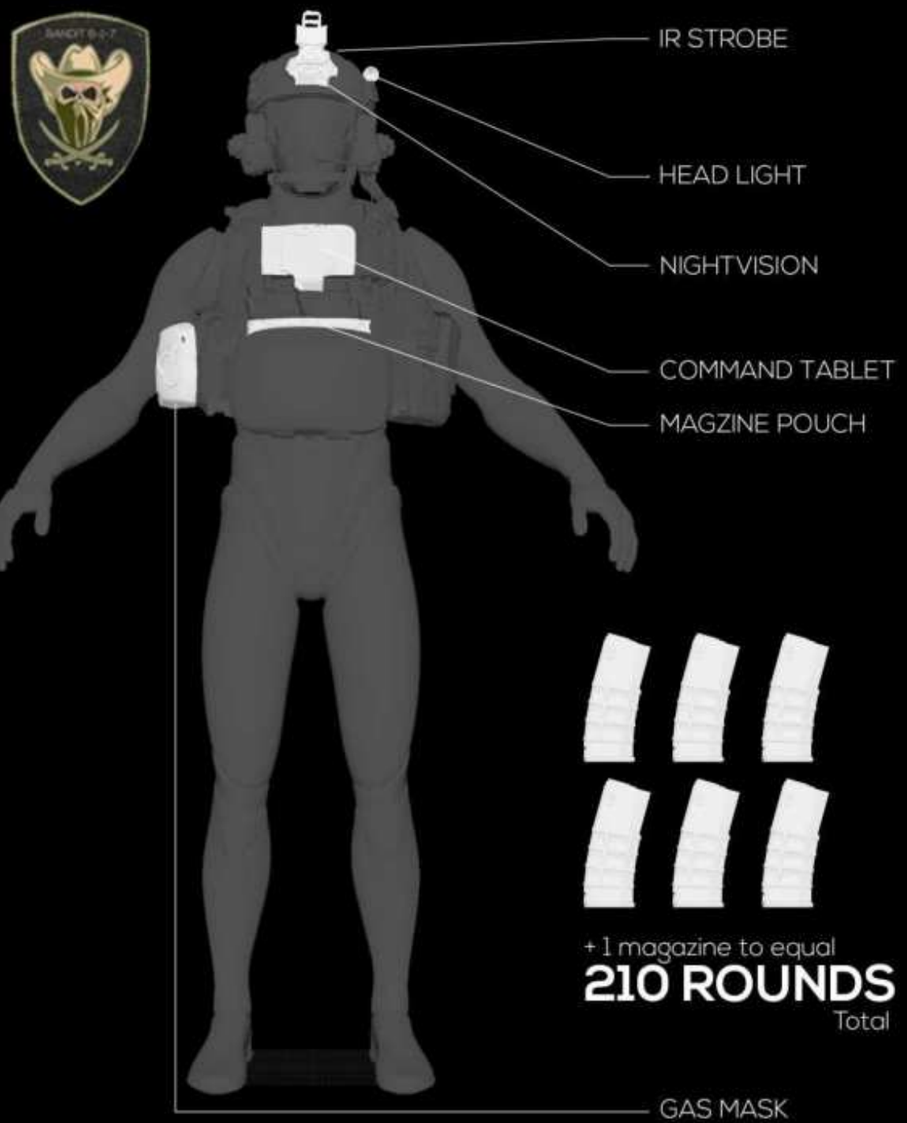
MISSION 16| SIEGE OF AUSTIN

MISSION 17| MOMENTO

MISSION 18| LINE IN THE SAND

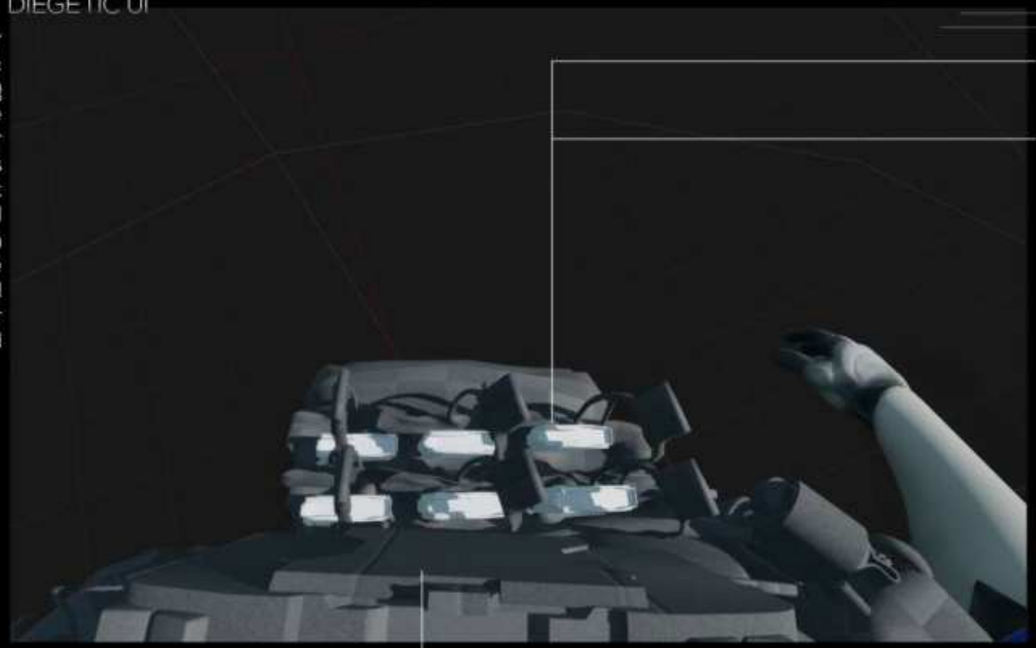
DIEGETIC UI AND REALISM

Highwater removes all traditional HUD elements and embeds every layer of information directly into the player's physical presence. Reloading reflects this philosophy through two distinct inputs: tapping reload performs a fast magazine swap without checking remaining supply, while holding reload triggers a pouch check animation that visually confirms how many magazines remain before committing to the action. Each magazine also integrates a real world technique by loading a tracer as the fifth to last round, giving players a visual cue through the weapon's fire that a reload is approaching without relying on on screen counters. Objectives, drone feeds, and points of interest are accessed through a chest mounted tablet rig that doubles as the pause interface, keeping all navigation and information grounded in diegetic interaction. Identification systems remain fully in world, with IR strobes differentiating units at night using blue for friendly forces, green for the player's squad, and red for hostiles, while functional night vision goggles must be physically lowered and raised. A gas mask clipped to the vest becomes essential when debris and smoke fill the air after structural collapse, tying environmental destruction directly into survival mechanics and ensuring the entire experience remains immersive, tactile, and grounded in realism.



+1 magazine to equal
210 ROUNDS
Total

DIEGETIC UI

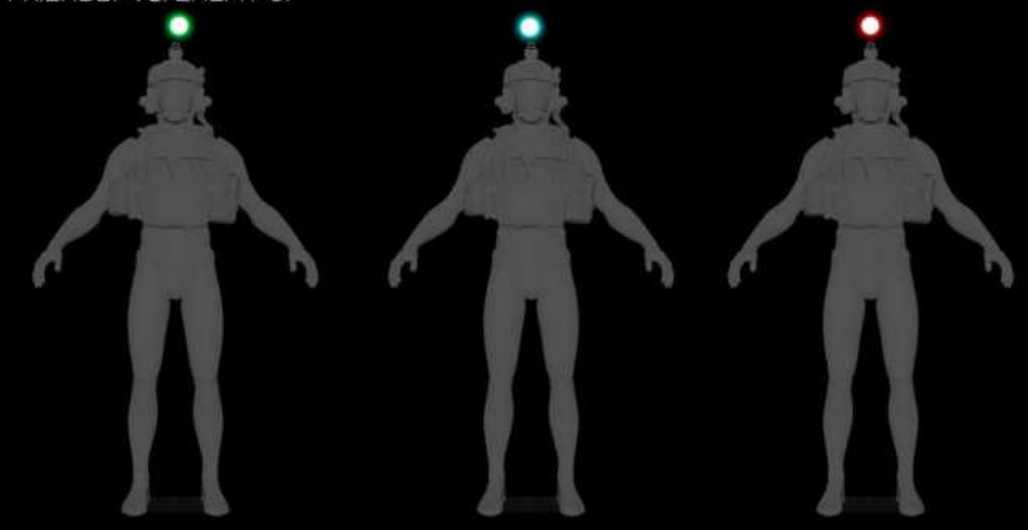


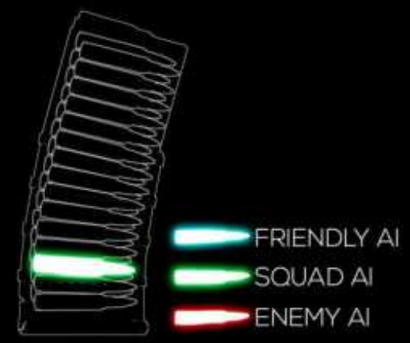
FUTURE ADDITION OF COMMAND TABLET





FRIENDLY VS. ENEMY UI





STROBE & TRACER COLOR
- FRIENDLY AI
- SQUAD AI
- ENEMY AI

EACH GAME MECHANIC FOR THE PLAYER IS TIED TO ACTUAL MODELS ON THE PLAYER PAWN. THE ONLY WAY OF KNOWING IS TO CHECK.

ADVANCED LEVEL DESIGN

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY

ROLE: GAME DESIGNER

LOCATION: LOS ANGELOS, CA

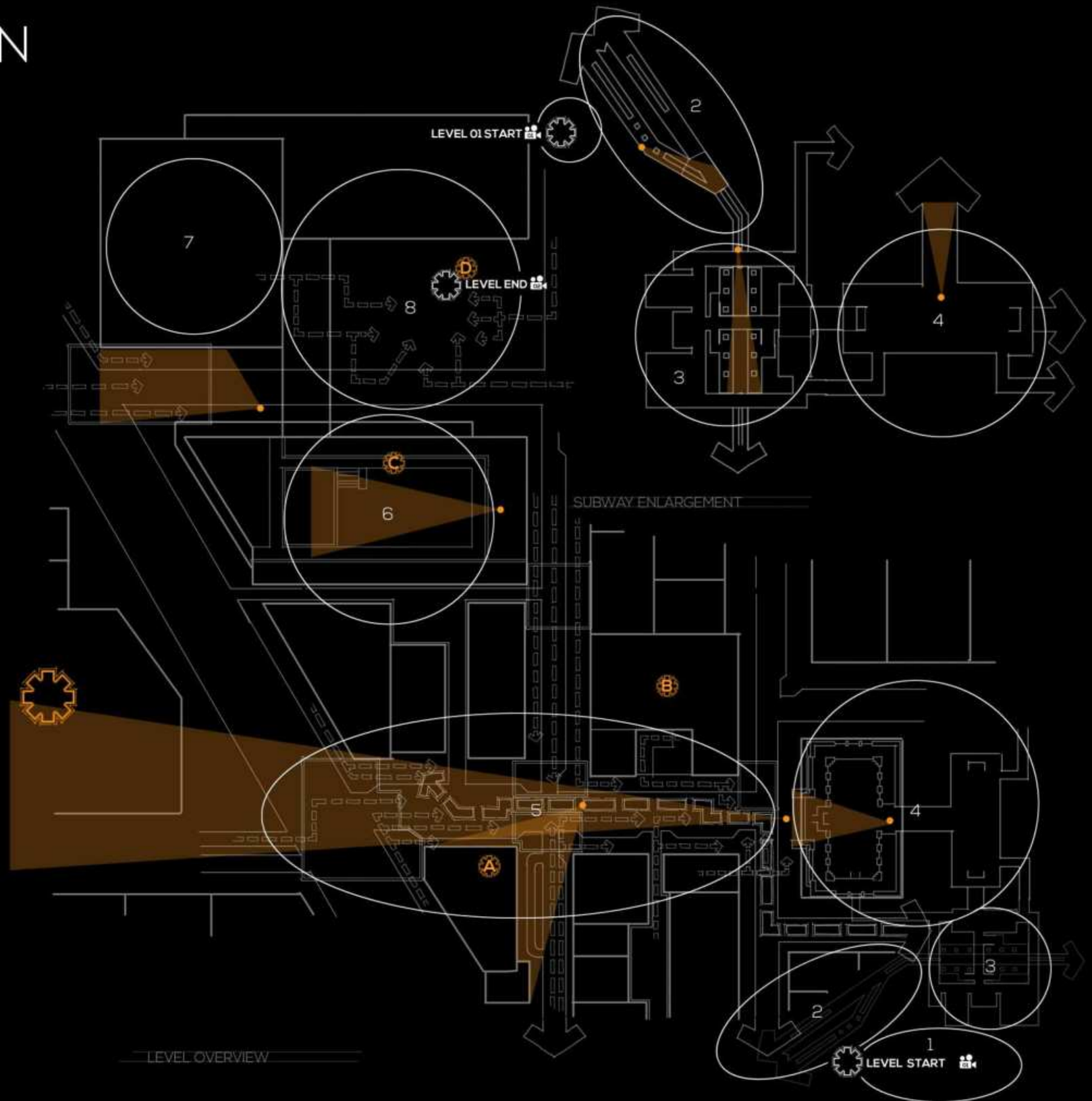
GAME OVERVIEW:

Genre: First Person Shooter
Engine: UE 4.5 | Platform: PC

MISSION OVERVIEW
The game opens in New York City as GSC forces begin their first large scale incursion onto American soil, targeting infrastructure to fracture communications, cripple evacuation routes, and establish a beachhead in the symbolic heart of the nation. The player assumes the role of a MARSOC Marine infiltrating through sewer systems alongside his squad to reinforce a collapsing National Guard defense, fighting through subway tunnels rigged for demolition while civilians flee, hide, or are discovered in the chaos. What begins as a counteroffensive quickly shifts into a desperate delaying action as command confirms the city will fall, and the objective becomes buying time for innocents to escape across the river before the final radio transmission echoes through the smoke: "Broken Arrow."

NARRATIVE PLACEMENT AND EMOTIONAL INTENT
As the opening mission of Highwater, Fall of New York establishes the scale, tone, and inevitability of the invasion while stripping away any illusion of victory. Unlike traditional FPS introductions built around triumph, this mission is structured around controlled collapse, forcing the player to witness the disintegration of infrastructure, command cohesion, and civilian safety in real time. The Broken Arrow call signals not only the loss of the city, but the death of national certainty, transitioning the narrative from federal military response to the deeply personal resistance story that unfolds in Texas, where the player will later assume the role of the Marine's brother.

VISUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AESTHETIC
The level captures New York in the moment between normalcy and ruin, where glass towers reflect smoke plumes rising from targeted bridges and power stations, and emergency lights flicker across rain soaked pavement. Subway tunnels are claustrophobic and unstable, lit by failing fluorescents and the sparks of damaged rail systems, contrasting sharply with the open urban canyons above where armored columns advance through debris and stalled traffic. The color palette leans into cold steel blues, concrete grays, and emergency reds, gradually desaturating as infrastructure collapses and smoke thickens, visually reinforcing the suffocation and inevitability that define the mission's emotional arc.



PLAYER FLOW AND LEVEL OBJECTIVE



LEVEL OVERVIEW

1 USE TUNNELS TO REACH SUBWAY

Reports confirm sleeper cells detonating infrastructure across Manhattan. You infil through the sewer system beneath the city as explosions ripple overhead, moving through maintenance tunnels to reach the main subway lines before the enemy collapses them completely.

2 CLEAR OUT SUBWAY TUNNELS

The tunnels are already unstable, concrete cracking as the enemy rigs charges along the rail lines. Fight through scattered resistance in the dark and smoke, securing a path forward while the city above begins to fracture.

3 CLEAR SUBWAY PLATFORM

The platform is in chaos. Luggage is scattered, bodies lie still, and civilians hide between pillars as smoke fills the air. Push the enemy back while forcing a path for survivors toward the exits.

4 FIND ALTERNATE ROUTE

Heavy machine gun fire seals the primary stairwell and pins your squad in the corridor. Move through maintenance hallways to flank the position while debris falls from the ceiling.

5 AVOID TUNNEL COLLAPSE

An RPG strikes the wall ahead and buries the escape route in rubble. With no retreat, you must push directly through the machine gun nest to survive the failing tunnel system.

6 REGROUP WITH NATIONAL GAURD

You emerge near Grand Central into an unnatural silence broken by distant gunfire. Link up with a National Guard unit holding the street line as pressure mounts from advancing forces.

7 HOLD POSITION FOR ARMOR

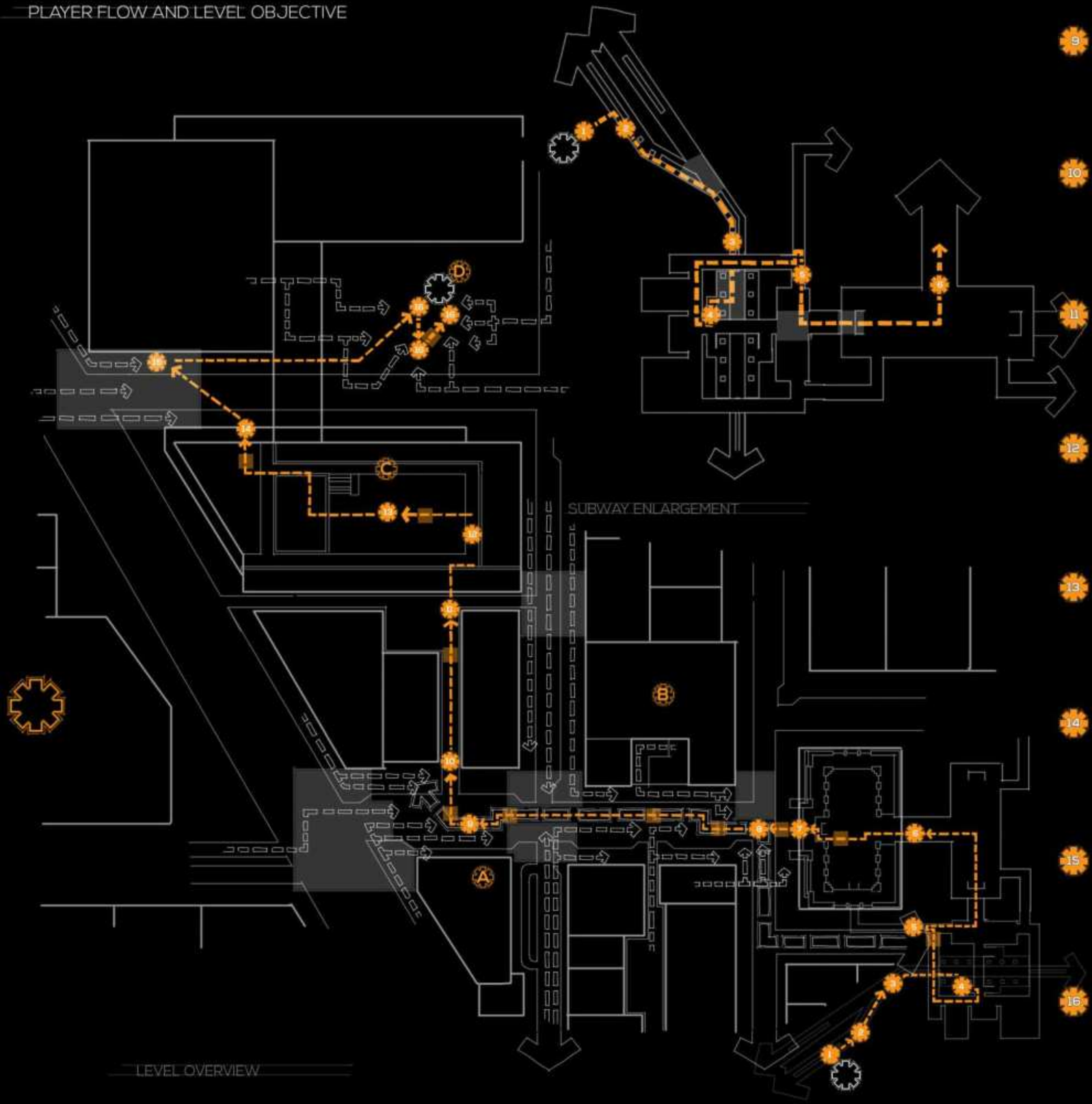
Enemy units surge down the avenue as Guard troops wait for armored reinforcements. Hold the intersection under relentless fire to prevent the line from breaking.

8 USE ARMOR FOR COVER

The first armored vehicles arrive under a storm of incoming rounds. Move behind the advancing armor as one vehicle after another is disabled and the battle begins to turn.



PLAYER FLOW AND LEVEL OBJECTIVE



9 USE TANK AS COVER
The final tank absorbs the full weight of the enemy barrage. Advance in its shadow and use its sacrifice to break out of the kill box.

10 ESCAPE THROUGH THE ALLEY
Cut off from the main street, your only exit is a brick wall at the end of a narrow alley. Sprint under fire while your team plants charges to breach the barrier.

11 BREACH THE SCHOOL WALL
The explosion tears through the outer wall and dust engulfs the courtyard. Clear the hallways quickly as lockers lie overturned and classrooms stand abandoned.

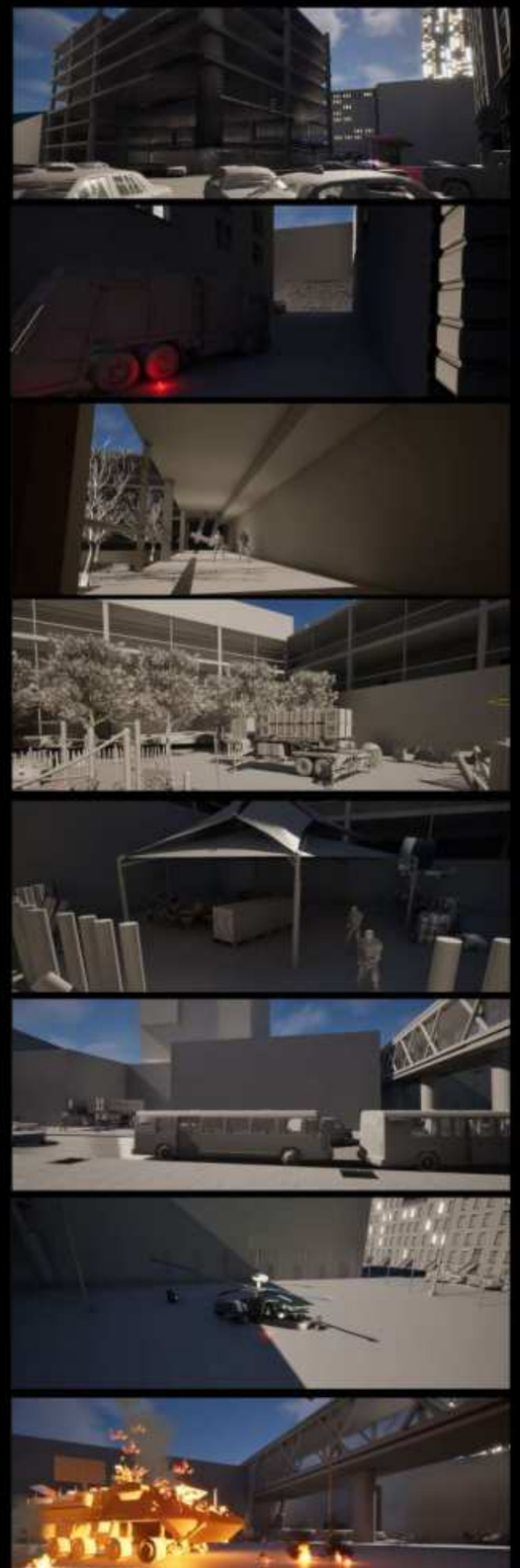
12 DESTROY ENEMY ANTI-AIR
Anti air launchers have been positioned in the school playground to deny air support. Destroy the installation and realize the occupation was planned long before the invasion began.

13 HOLD OFF ENEMY AMBUSH
Eliminating the anti air exposes your position to surrounding forces. Enemy infantry flood the courtyard and push through stairwells while you hold long enough to create an escape route.

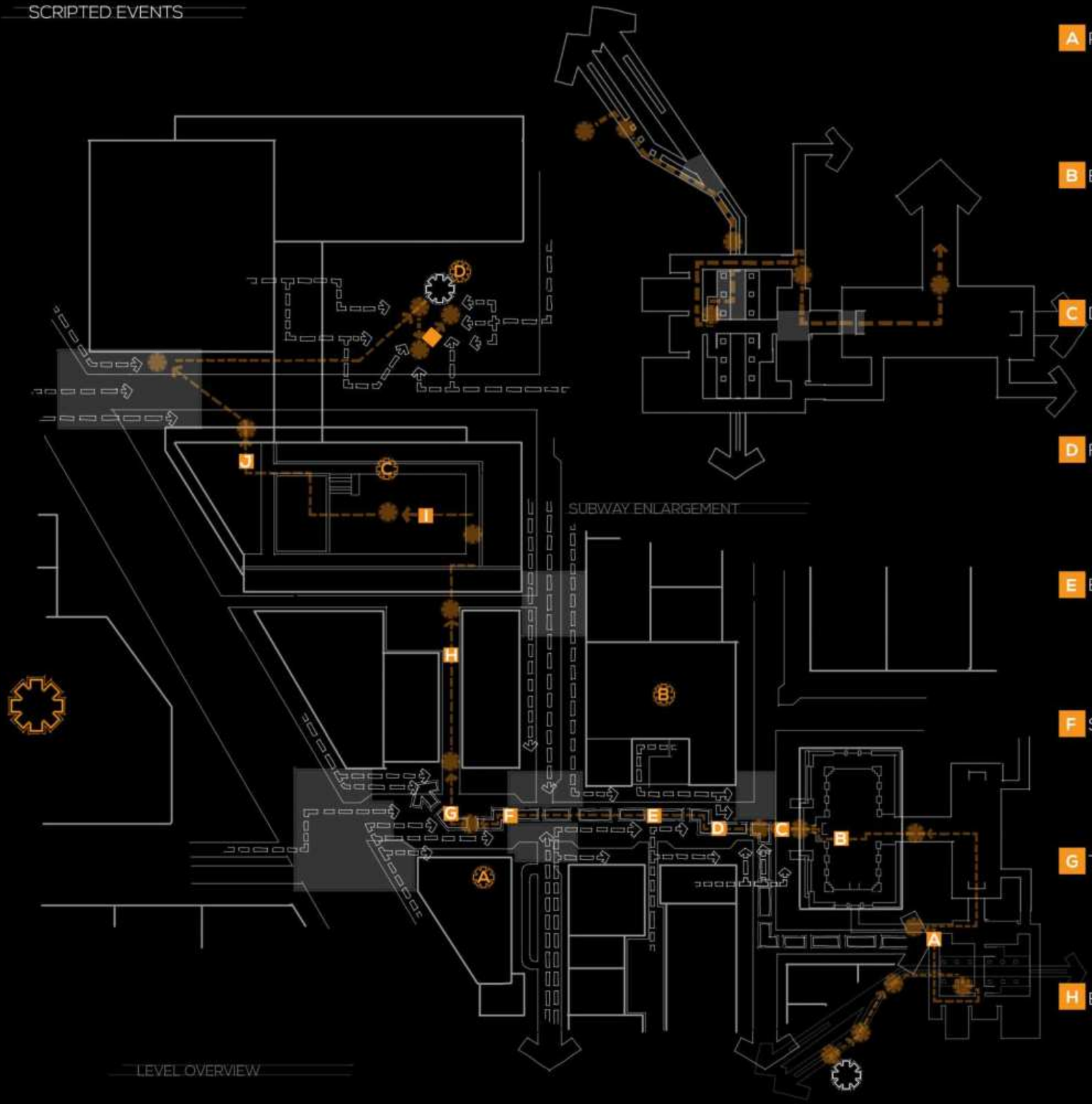
14 DESTROY 2ND ANTI-AIR
An Apache answers your call and makes a desperate gun run to open a corridor. As missiles strike nearby structures, eliminate a second anti air position before the helicopter is targeted.

15 RESCUE DOWNED APACHE PILOTS
The Apache spirals into the high school basketball courts across the street. Fight through debris and a collapsed skybridge to reach the pilots before enemy forces secure the crash site.

16 SURVIVE
Enemy air strikes hammer your position as you pull the wounded from the wreckage. Command confirms the city will fall and orders you to hold the line long enough for civilians to escape across the river. The radio crackles with the final call. Broken Arrow.



SCRIPTED EVENTS



A RPG DESTROYS HALLWAY

Entering the corner trigger launches an RPG that detonates against the wall. The corridor collapses inward and debris fills the air, forcing the player to crawl free through choking dust.

B EXPLOSIONS START

Crossing the turnstile trigger activates a coordinated blast sequence. Glass shatters overhead and smoke rolls across the platform as the station transforms into a war zone.

C DOG FIGHT OVERHEAD

Linking with the Guard activates a skyline trigger that sends a jet screaming overhead. A strike downs it mid flight, collapsing a facade into the street and covering the avenue in a heavy dust cloud that blinds both sides.

D FIRST ARMOR DESTROYED

Taking cover behind the armored column activates a proximity trigger. A missile strikes the lead APC, destroying it and collapsing the bistro beside it as injured civilians stumble from the rubble.

E ENEMY ARMOR DESTROYED

As the player advances through the dust, a street trigger spawns enemy armor at the far intersection. A second trigger brings a friendly AI to the player's side who fires a javelin and destroys it, only to be sniped seconds later.

F SECOND ARMOR DESTROYED

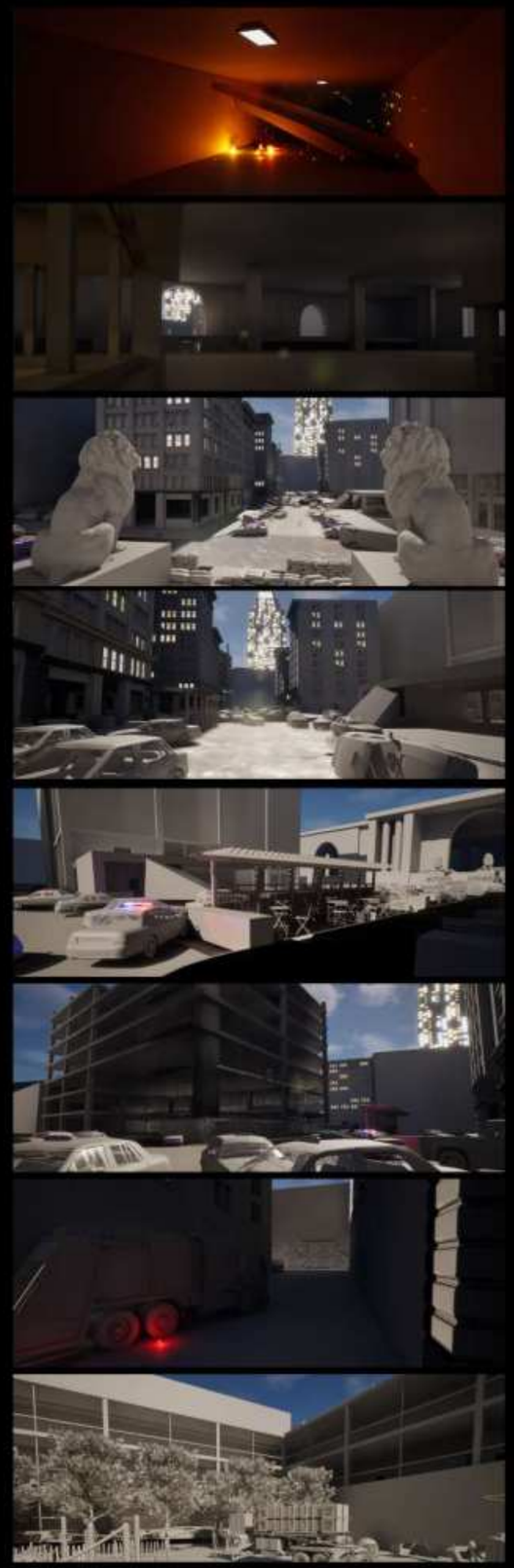
Advancing behind the next APC keeps you in the dust cloud as rounds ricochet off steel. A second trigger fires and the vehicle erupts beside you, forcing a desperate scramble forward.

G THIRD ARMOR DESTROYED

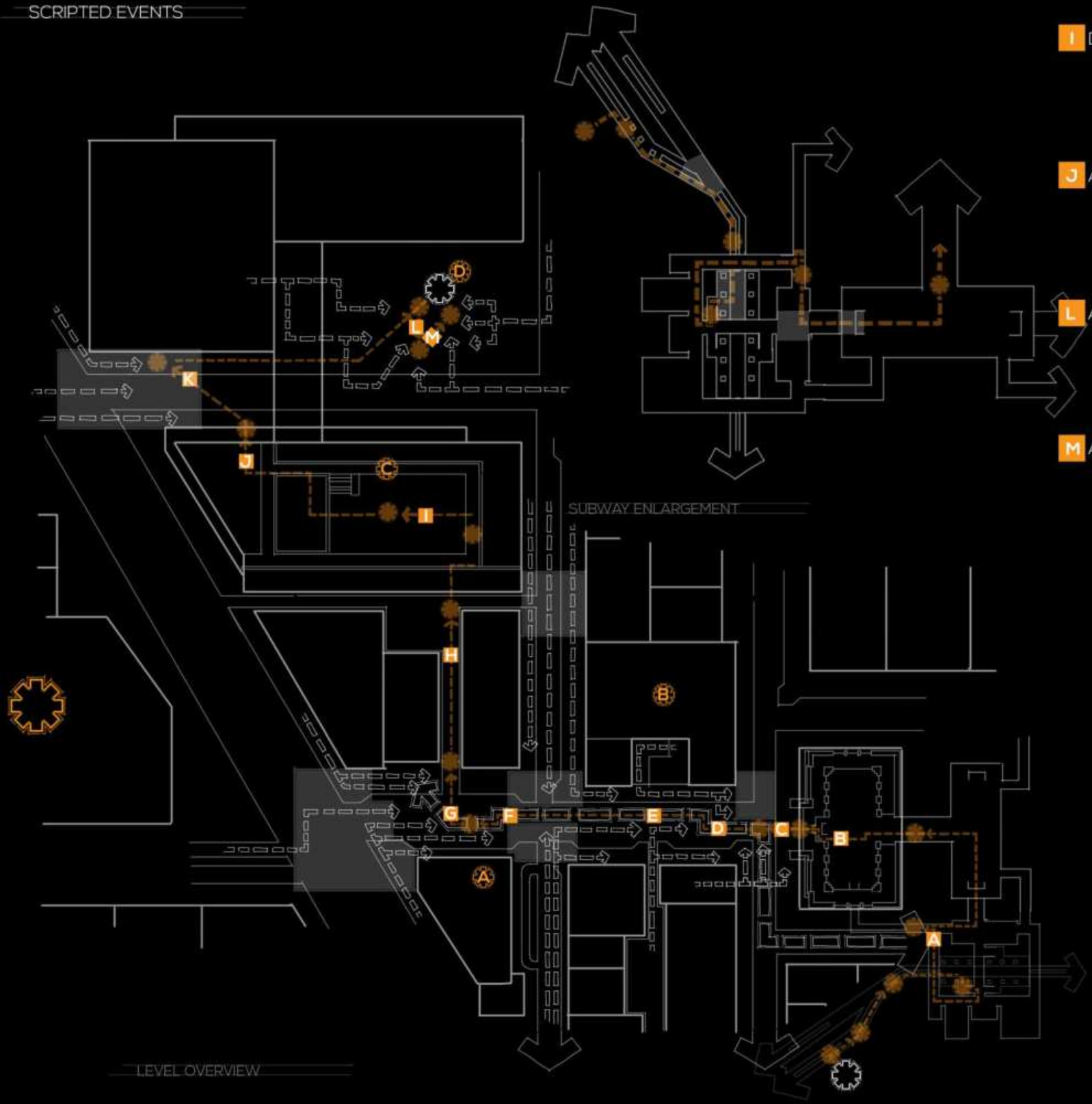
As the tank at the front pushes through the smoke, a retreat trigger plays a final radio call. Moments later it is struck and crashes into a building facade that begins to collapse.

H BREACH SCHOOL

Reaching the alley end activates the breach trigger. Charges detonate and the wall gives way, revealing a dark hallway where the war spills into a school.



SCRIPTED EVENTS



LEVEL OVERVIEW

I DESTROY ENEMY ANTI-AIR

Interacting in the courtyard trigger begins the planting sequence. The detonation silences the launcher as playground equipment burns around it.



J APACHE SHOT DOWN BY 2ND ANTI-AIR

Advancing to the entrance activates a missile trigger tied to the Apache overhead. The helicopter spirals into a nearby building and crashes into the basketball courts.



L ARMOR EVAC ARRIVES

Dragging the pilot into the evac trigger opens the APC under heavy fire. Bombs strike moments later and the screen fades through concussion and smoke.



M ARMOR IS DESTROYED

Control returns in a ringing haze as final enemy waves close in. Activating the last trigger transitions to the Broken Arrow call as the city disappears beneath falling debris.



LEVEL IMAGES





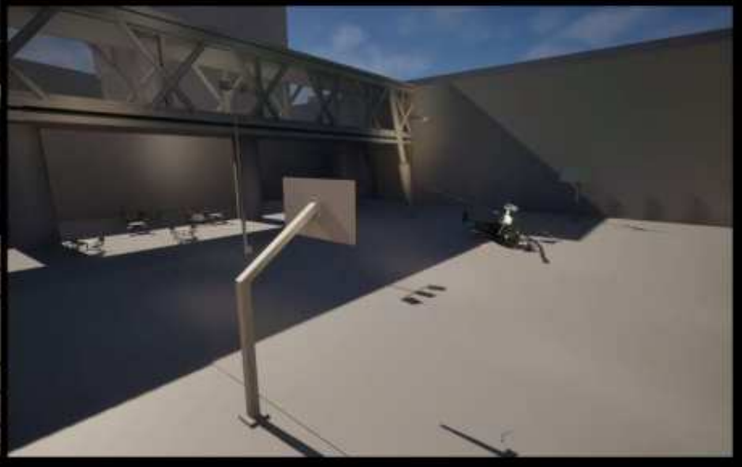










INTRO TO LEVEL DESIGN

PROJECT INFO

GAME:	HIGHWATER
ROLE:	GAME DESIGNER
LOCATION:	LOS ANGELOS, CA

Genre: First Person Shooter
Engine: UE 4.5 | Platform: PC

MISSION OVERVIEW
Bandit 817 deploys into West Texas as the last friendly held oil refinery comes under full scale assault, a facility built in secret beneath the GSC's surveillance and protected by a fortified Spanish mission turned militia stronghold. The player lands under active fire, witnessing helicopters shot from the sky before fighting through collapsing trench lines and retreating toward the mission walls, where the defense makes its final stand. As they fall back along the same road where fleeing families were massacred by the GSC as a warning, the battle transforms from a military objective into a desperate and deeply personal fight for memory, home, and honor.

NARRATIVE PLACEMENT AND EMOTIONAL INTENT
Positioned at the midpoint of Highwater, this mission marks the moment where belief begins to fracture as Bandit 817 loses both the refinery and one of their own, a squadmate who charged forward knowing his family was trapped inside. The massacre of civilians and the fall of a symbolically sacred stronghold forces the militia to confront the brutal reality that this war is no longer about land or industry, but about survival against an enemy willing to erase entire bloodlines. This is the emotional breaking point where hope gives way to grief, loyalty is tested under unbearable loss, and the spirit of the resistance begins to crack under the weight of sacrifice.

VISUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AESTHETIC
The level captures the stark realism of West Texas through wide open horizons, dry mesquite brush, sun bleached earth, and the muted tans and burnt oranges of desert soil under a pale blue sky. The refinery looms industrial and skeletal against the landscape, contrasted by the warm limestone and weathered wood of the Spanish mission inspired by the Alamo, blending historical architecture with modern military fortifications. Dust in the air, heat haze on the horizon, oil flames flickering in the distance, and long evening shadows reinforce the grounded neo western tone while anchoring the level in authentic regional design.











FOCAL POINTS AND OVERVIEW

FLOW AND LEVEL OBJECTIVES



1 **FIND F.O.B. HEADQUARTERS**
Land under distant artillery and follow the Captain through smoke to the forward base. The briefing confirms the refinery is failing and the trenches are collapsing.



2 **FOLLOW SUPPLY CONVOY**
Move with the last convoy toward the front as explosions light the horizon. The men ride in silence knowing the line may not hold.



3 **GET TO TRENCH ENTRANCE**
Drop into the trench network and relieve exhausted defenders. Enemy fire reshapes the ground as you take the front line.



4 **HOLD THE LEFT FLANK**
Infantry push through smoke along the left sector. Hold position and avoid armor until anti armor teams respond.



5 **REINFORCE FOR FRONTAL ASSAULT**
A full assault hits the center trench and sections begin to fail. Move quickly to stabilize the breach.



6 **PROVIDE COVER FOR RETREAT**
Command orders a fallback as the trench line gives way. Provide suppressive fire so forces can withdraw to the mission.



7 **FALL BACK TO SPANISH MISSION**
Cross open ground under artillery toward the stone stronghold. The refinery burns behind you as the perimeter shrinks.



8 **HOLD THE MISSION WALLS**
Take position along the walls as enemy fire pounds the structure. Each impact shakes what once felt sacred.



9 **FALL BACK TO MISSION CHAPEL**
The outer wall falls and defenders retreat inside. Fight to the chapel where families shelter in fear.



10 **SURVIVE**
The final assault breaches the mission interior. Hold what remains of the line as sacrifice replaces hope.

SCRIPTED SEQUENCES AND EVENTS



A SUPPLY TRUCKS START MOVING

Crossing the entrance trigger activates the convoy sequence. Supply trucks begin rolling toward the old Spanish mission as dust trails rise behind them and distant artillery echoes across the plains.



B TRUCKS HIT BY DRONE SWARM

Following the convoy triggers a drone attack event overhead. The swarm descends and destroys the lead trucks, blocking the road and forcing the player toward the old bridge under smoke and burning wreckage.



C APACHE HELICOPTER GUN RUN

Halfway down the dirt road a canyon trigger activates a low flying Apache pass. Two helicopters sweep through the valley and rake advancing enemy forces in a thunderous gun run.



D ARTILLERY HITS F.O.B. ABOVE

Moving along the cliffside activates an artillery strike trigger tied to the ridge above. Shells crash into the F.O.B., sending rock and debris raining down as medics scramble through the chaos.



E ENEMY TANK CUTS OFF PATH

Pushing between trench lines activates an enemy armor spawn trigger ahead. A tank rolls into view and seals the route, forcing evasive movement as friendly rockets streak toward it.



F JETS SHOW OF FORCE

Providing cover fire activates a retreat trigger linked to friendly air support. Jets roar overhead in a low pass, kicking up massive clouds of dust that mask the fallback toward the mission walls.



J ANTI-AIR DEFENSES DESTROYED

Holding the mission wall activates a rear defense trigger focused on the F.O.B. A distant explosion destroys the anti air system, leaving the mission exposed to incoming aircraft.



K FINAL DEFENSES BREACHED

Sustained pressure at the wall activates the final breach trigger. A blast throws the player backward as the outer defenses collapse and enemy forces surge through the smoke.



LEVEL SCREENSHOTS







INTRO TO 3D MODELING

PROJECT NAME- ODST x GHOST CROSSOVER

COMPANY: NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY

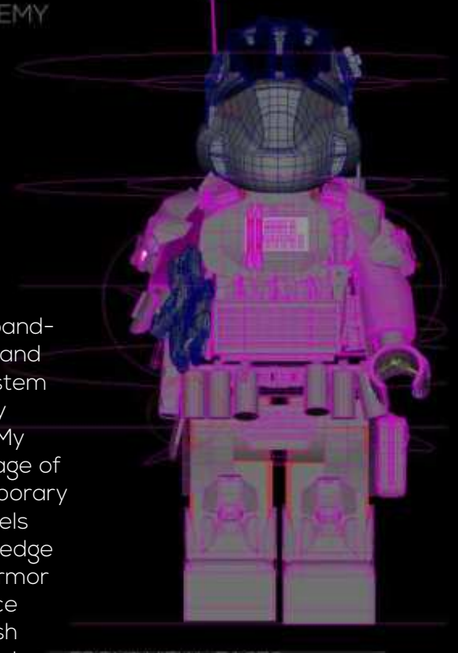
ROLE: 3D ARTIST

LOCATION: LOS ANGELOS, CA

GAME OVERVIEW:

Project Overview
Engine: MAYA

For my final Intro to 3D Modeling project, I expanded the assignment beyond a single minifigure and designed a full custom LEGO ODST armor system inspired by Halo, blended with modern military equipment and grounded battlefield realism. My goal was to merge the clean geometric language of LEGO with the darker, grittier tone of contemporary military shooters, creating a character that feels both sci fi and believable. I focused heavily on edge cleanliness, polygon efficiency, and modular armor design so the model reads clearly at a distance while holding up under close inspection. To push the character design further, I developed five class based variations inspired by the Battlefield class system, imagining how an ODST game could combine Halo's aesthetic with a more tactical, immersive combat experience.



FRONT VIEW- FACES



FRONT VIEW - ODST HELMET



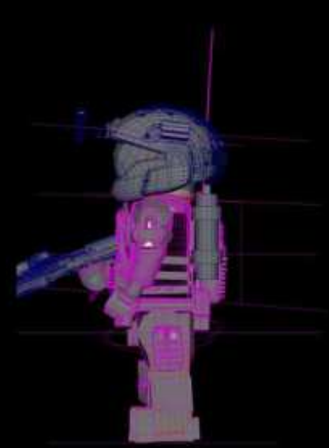
ODST LEGO ARMOR



RIGHT SIDE- FACES



BACK SIDE- FACES



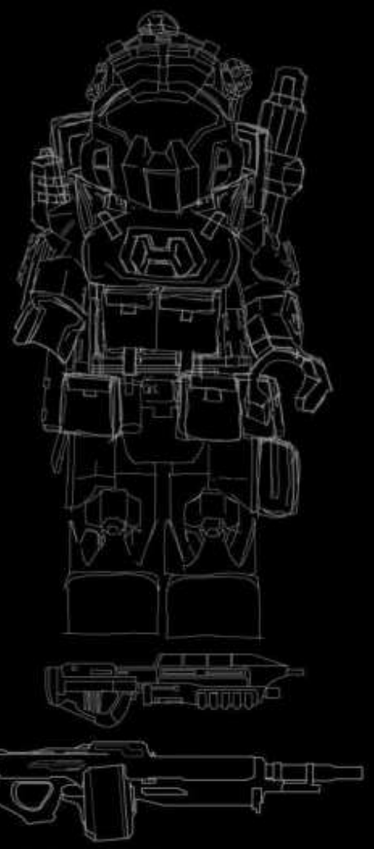
LEFT SIDE- FACES



FRONT VIEW- GHOST MASK

DESIGNING FOR MULTIPLE ROLES

MACHINE GUNNER



CHANGES TO MAKE

The Machine Gunner represents the heavy support class, similar to Battlefield's Support role. This variation includes reinforced chest and shoulder armor, deployable cover barriers mounted on the back, and a belt fed machine gun with additional squad ammunition stored across the torso and hips. The bulkier silhouette communicates durability and sustained firepower, grounding the sci fi armor in realistic heavy infantry logic.

COMBAT ENGINEER



CHANGES TO MAKE

The Combat Engineer reflects a hybrid of Battlefield's Engineer and gadget specialist roles. This version carries a large tactical tablet for drone deployment and battlefield scanning, along with a rocket launcher, anti personnel mines, and explosive charges for vehicle and structure denial. Equipped with both an assault rifle and SMG, the engineer reads as adaptable and equipment focused, with added utility pouches and reinforced gloves to visually emphasize their technical function.

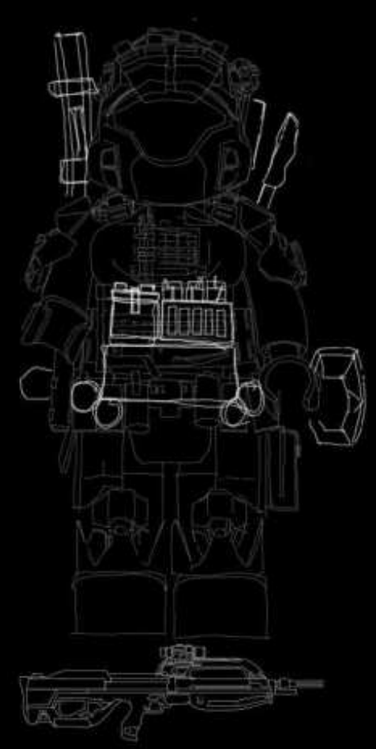
COMBAT MEDIC



CHANGES TO MAKE

The Combat Medic variation draws directly from Battlefield's Medic class, built around survivability and squad sustainment. This version carries a standard assault rifle but features chest mounted defibrillators, a compact stretcher system mounted on the back, and wrist armor modified with a vitals monitoring interface. The cleaner front profile paired with visible medical tools creates an immediate readability while reinforcing the grounded realism of a darker ODST experience.

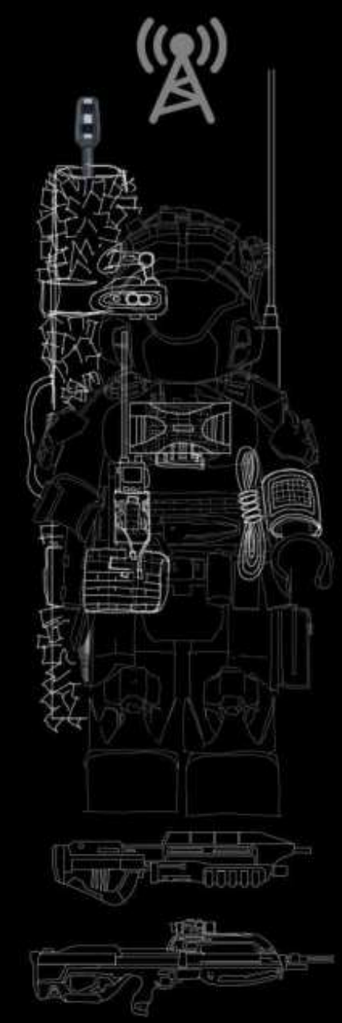
RIFLEMAN



CHANGES TO MAKE

The Rifleman serves as the adaptable backbone of the squad, similar to Battlefield's Assault class. Armed with a battle rifle and supported by breaching equipment such as a sledgehammer, bolt cutters, C4, and a shotgun, this version emphasizes versatility in both ranged combat and close quarters engagement. The gear layout balances aggression and utility, reinforcing the idea of a flexible frontline infantry operator.

JTAC



CHANGES TO MAKE

The JTAC functions as a recon and overwatch hybrid, combining elements of Battlefield's Recon class with forward air control responsibilities. Equipped with a sniper rifle, radar equipment, deployable traps, and helmet modifications for enhanced targeting and surveillance, this variation visually reads as the squad's intelligence and fire support specialist. A chest mounted tactical tablet allows for coordination of orbital drops and strike calls, blending Halo's sci fi scale with the grounded command and control systems seen in modern military operations.

LYKAIOS AND GAIA'S MALUS

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY

ROLE: GAME DESIGNER

LOCATION: LOS ANGELOS, CA

GAME OVERVIEW:

Genre: 2D Action Platformer
Engine: Unity | Platform: PC

Lykaios follows the journey of a warrior raised in Sparta but destined for something far greater. Abandoned as a newborn and raised in the brutal Spartan agoge, Lykaios displayed unmatched instincts, strength, and a deep connection with the wild. When King Leonidas summons Sparta's finest to defend Thermopylae, Lykaios is chosen—but before he can march to war, a prophecy changes his fate.

The Oracle of Delphi reveals that Gaia's sacred tree, the source of balance between the mortal and divine realms, has been stolen. As the son of Artemis, Lykaios is the only one capable of restoring harmony. His journey takes him across ancient Greece, battling both mythological creatures and divine deception to uncover the truth behind the theft.

With hand-drawn environments and characters, the game blends fast-paced combat, environmental storytelling, and mythology-driven narrative into an immersive 2D platforming experience.

Role: Lead Artist & Narrative Designer
As the Lead Artist and Narrative Designer for Lykaios, I focused on building a visually compelling world that enhances storytelling and immersion. My key contributions included:

Character & Environment Art – Designed and illustrated all characters, environments, and UI elements in Photoshop.
Narrative Design – Developed the storyline, mythology, and world-building, ensuring a deep connection between visuals and gameplay.
Visual Storytelling – Used lighting, color palettes, and animation cues to emphasize emotional beats and gameplay significance.
Gameplay Integration – Created assets optimized for fluid animation and seamless level transitions.
Lykaios showcases my ability to merge art and narrative design, crafting a cohesive visual and storytelling experience within a 2D action platformer



EARLY CONCEPT SKETCHING

DESIGNING THE CHARACTER

CREATING LYKAIOS FROM THE GROUND UP



COMPLEMENTARY COLOR THEME





ANALOGOUS COLOR THEME



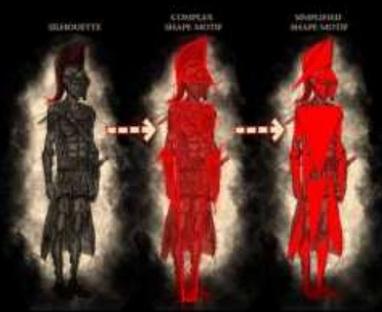


FINAL LYKAIOS DESIGN

ANALOGOUS COLOR THEME 02



CREATING CHARACTER SILHOUETTE



STUDYING SHAPE LANGUAGE



LYKAIOS 1ST EDITION

CREATING THE NARRATIVE THROUGH WORLD-BUILDING

During the creation of Lykaios' environments, I focused on visual storytelling through color and atmosphere, drawing inspiration from the film 300 to distinguish the tranquility before war and the chaos during battle. The game begins in the Greek countryside, where I used soft, bright colors to reflect a world at peace, untouched by conflict. This serene landscape is not only a representation of harmony and natural beauty but also a reflection of Artemis, Lykaios' mother, and her connection to nature. Though he does not yet understand it, Lykaios feels a deep bond with the wilderness, the wind in the trees, and the stillness of the land, sensing an unrecognized tie to the goddess of the hunt and protector of the wild. However, as war erupts and Lykaios embraces his divine heritage, his perception shifts—he now sees both the mortal realm and the divine battlefield intertwined. In the remade Greek countryside, the colors darken, infused with the hues of war and the presence of the gods, visualizing the Fog of War swallowing Spartan soldiers as their patron, Ares, God of War, leads them into battle. The once vibrant landscape is now scarred, burned, and trampled, symbolizing not only the destruction of Sparta's warriors but of nature itself—a brutal contrast to its earlier beauty. This dual-layered reality—where the clash of gods mirrors the struggles of men—becomes a powerful representation of Lykaios' transformation, the cost of war, and the fragility of the world he must fight to protect.



SPARTAN COUNTRYSIDE



SPARTAN COUNTRYSIDE AFTER DIVINE INTERVENTION



THE ABYSS OF OTHRYS



GAMEPLAY HUD OVERLAY



THE VEIL OF ARTEMIS



ARTEMIS GODDESS OF THE HUNT AND PROTECTOR THE WILD



THE HESPERIAN GROVE

In Lykaios, I used color and environmental storytelling to create a subconscious connection between the Veil of Artemis and the Abyss of Othrys, reinforcing the bond between Lykaios and his mother, Artemis, even when she isn't physically present. The Veil of Artemis, a mystical, fog-laden swamp, serves as the place where Lykaios discovers his true self, hidden from the world yet deeply connected to nature. The biophilic design of distant shrines and temples scattered throughout the mist provides a sense of internal comfort, drawing upon the divine energy of Artemis. The same soft, ethereal glow that radiates from these sacred places echoes Artemis' divine colors, subtly hinting at Lykaios' lineage before he fully understands it.

I used the Veil of Artemis as a structural underlay when designing the Abyss of Othrys, creating a subconscious familiarity for the player. While they may not immediately recognize it, the layout, spacing, and environmental cues will make them feel as if they have been here before—mirroring the narrative connection that Artemis has always been guiding Lykaios from afar. However, the Abyss of Othrys is a stark contrast in tone, where the serene blues and greens of Artemis' domain give way to the encroaching darkness of Kronos' power. The Abyss reflects nature being overpowered by the relentless march of time, as twisting roots turn brittle, vibrant flora fades to ash, and ancient structures crumble under an unforgiving weight. The same colors that once represented guidance and life now struggle against decay, visually reinforcing the battle between Artemis' nurturing presence and Kronos' destructive force.

This intentional mirroring of environments builds an unspoken narrative, allowing the world itself to tell the story—that Artemis is with Lykaios, shaping his path, even as Kronos seeks to erase it.

SKEWERLICIOUS

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY

ROLE: GAME DESIGNER

LOCATION: LOS ANGELOS, CA

GAME DEMO AVAILABLE UPON REQEST

GAME OVERVIEW:

Game Studio 1 – New York Film Academy, Burbank

Game Overview
Genre: Action-Adventure / Platformer
Engine: [Unity] | Platform: [PC]

Skewerlicious follows Chef Macaroni, a once-passionate chef who mysteriously shrinks down to the size of his ingredients. Now trapped inside his own refrigerator, he must battle rogue ingredients, explore bizarre fridge civilizations, and rediscover his love for cooking.

Each level transforms different fridge compartments—the frozen tundra of the freezer, the condiment towers, and the takeout cityscape—into dynamic worlds. Players solve food-based puzzles, navigate platforming challenges, and uncover the secrets of this miniature culinary universe. The game combines whimsical storytelling, immersive world-building, and creative level design to turn an ordinary fridge into an epic adventure.

Role: Environment & Theming Designer
As the Environment & Theming Designer for Skewerlicious, I focused on bringing the fridge world to life by creating immersive environments that felt both believable and fantastical. My key contributions included:

World-Building & Theming – Designed a fridge-based society where leftovers and ingredients had unique cultures and ecosystems.
Environment Design – Developed visually rich levels inspired by fridge compartments, ensuring distinct gameplay experiences.
Asset Placement & Level Flow – Structured interactive spaces, platforming routes, and environmental storytelling elements.
Narrative Integration – Embedded the game's story and themes into the fridge world, making the environment a key part of the player's journey.
Lighting & Atmosphere – Adjusted lighting and color schemes to enhance mood, from the icy blues of the freezer to the neon glow of condiment towers.
Through my work on Skewerlicious, I gained hands-on experience in environmental storytelling, world-building, and immersive level design, crafting a miniature universe full of personality and adventure.




HOTEL
IT'S MILK !!!!!
FOR RENT
IT'S MILK !!!!!
LOW PULP
HIGH UP ORGANIC
HEAVY CREAM
Enjoy
Thank You
MORË
CHANDON
Enjoy
Thank You

MIYAKO HOTEL- AN ADVENTURE GAME

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY

ROLE: GAME DESIGNER

LOCATION: LOS ANGELOS, CA

GAME DEMO AVAILABLE UPON REQEST

GAME OVERVIEW:

Game Studio 1 – New York Film Academy, Burbank

Genre: Action-Adventure | Cozy
Engine: [Unity] | Platform: [PC]

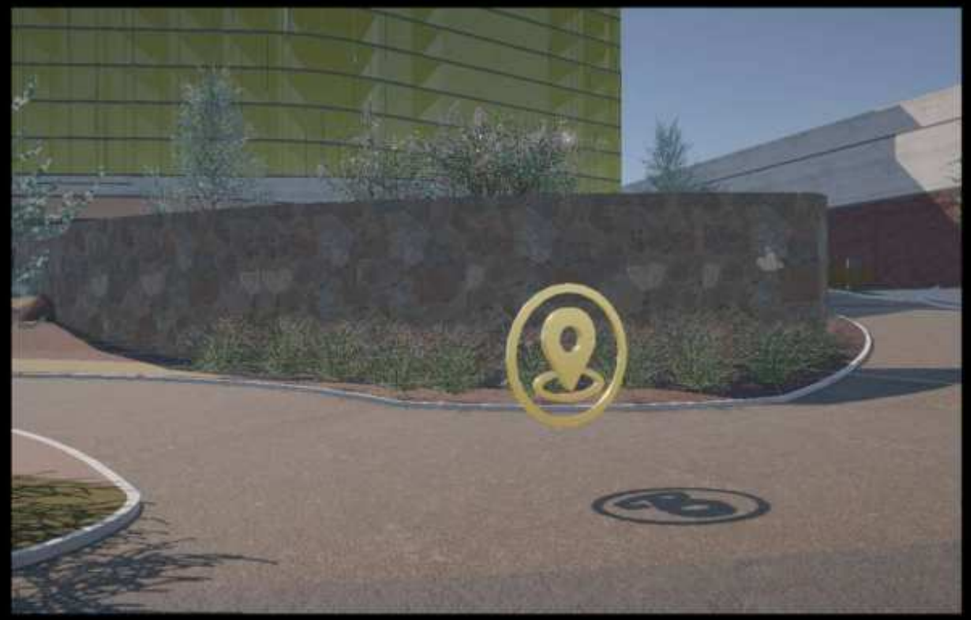
Miyako: An Adventure Game is a first-person exploration game that brings to life a real-world site I worked on during my time at SWA Group, now fully recreated in Unity's HDRP. Players explore the Miyako Hotel and its surroundings, discovering key landmarks and uncovering the design details that make the space unique.

Throughout the experience, players search for location icons, each bringing them closer to completing the game while triggering fly-overs and image slideshows that showcase different sections of the hotel and landscape. The game serves as both an interactive architectural visualization and an engaging adventure, blending real-world design with digital storytelling.

Role: Lead Developer & Environment Artist
As the sole creator of Miyako: An Adventure Game, I was responsible for both coding and environment development, building the project from the ground up. My key contributions included:

Full-Scale Environment Creation – Modeled and developed the Miyako Hotel and its surroundings based on real-world designs from SWA Group.
Game Mechanics & Programming – Built the base code for the game, handling player movement, interaction systems, and progression tracking.
Visual Fidelity & Optimization – Implementing Unity's HDRP to enhance lighting, reflections, and material quality for a visually stunning experience.
Interactive Elements – Designed location-based triggers that guide players through the site, unlocking flyovers and image showcases.
Ongoing Development & Expansion – Currently expanding the project into a fully playable FPS Multiplayer/Battle Royale map, integrating immersive world-building to highlight my skills in level design and game environments.
Miyako: An Adventure Game serves as a testament to my ability to bring real-world designs into interactive digital spaces, combining environmental storytelling, world-building, and technical development into one cohesive experience.











MIYAKO HYBRID HOTEL

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: SWA GROUP

ROLE: PROJECT MANAGER

LOCATION: PLANO, TX

PROJECT GOAL:

A luxury hotel adjacent to Toyota's U.S. headquarters presented an opportunity to explore the intersection of Japanese landscape principles and the regional vernacular of Texas. The client sought a design that would remain authentic to traditional Japanese aesthetics, customs, and spatial organization while adapting to a new environmental and cultural context. Japanese landscape architecture is defined by its intentional composition, restraint, and deep integration with nature, fostering an intrinsic sense of harmony. Successful cross-cultural design necessitates more than stylistic adaptation—it requires an analytical approach to spatial relationships, materiality, and cultural symbolism. Through this project, I engaged in a process of contextual interpretation, ensuring that the final design was not an imitation, but rather a respectful translation of Japanese design philosophy within a Texan landscape.

SITE ANALYSIS & AREAS OF FOCUS

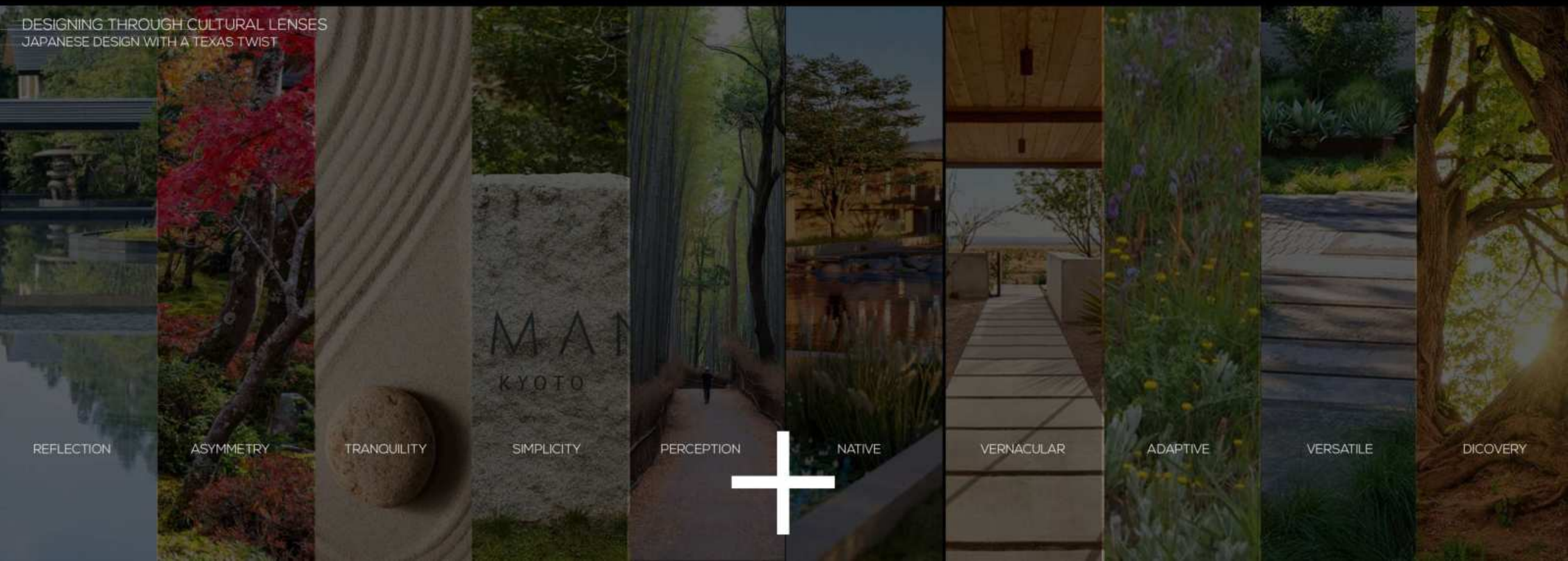


USER MOVEMENT & SPACES OF THE CROWD



POINTS OF INTEREST AND TARGET VIEWS





ARCHITECTURAL THEME- "THE LANTERN"



Lanterns hold profound significance in Japanese design and culture, symbolizing guidance, illumination, and spiritual presence. Traditionally found in temples, gardens, and tea houses, they serve both functional and symbolic roles, representing the connection between light, nature, and mindfulness. In the context of this project, the lantern crowning the building functions as a beacon, much like a lighthouse, guiding guests toward the hotel and reinforcing the theme of arrival and transition. Beyond its practical role, it pays homage to the cultural heritage of tr (stone lanterns), which historically marked sacred spaces and pathways. By integrating this element at the highest point of the structure, the design acknowledges Japan's reverence for light as a symbol of knowledge, hospitality, and spiritual enlightenment, establishing a dialogue between tradition and contemporary architectural expression.

LVL. 03 POOL

Positioned on the third level as a pivotal link between the hotel and event space, the pool terrace functions as both a circulatory node and a destination within the larger spatial framework. Overlooking the garden and adjacent pond, it offers guests a serene retreat while reinforcing the hotel's broader commitment to harmonizing built and natural environments. The integration of rooftop gardens and pools presents a distinct set of structural, environmental, and spatial challenges, requiring an approach that balances engineering constraints with experiential quality. Thoughtful design interventions ensure that these constraints are transformed into opportunities, crafting an elevated experience that enhances both aesthetic value and user engagement.

JAPANESE GARDEN

Designed as a secluded sanctuary, the garden serves as a retreat for contemplation and relaxation, centered around a reflecting pool that amplifies its sense of serenity. This space is not only a visual respite but also a multifunctional environment, accommodating a performance stage, bocce court, outdoor spa patio, and ample seating to encourage both social engagement and solitary reflection. By balancing programmatic diversity with spatial tranquility, the garden creates a dynamic yet harmonious extension of the hotel, where guests can immerse themselves in a curated experience of nature, leisure, and introspection.

HOTEL VALET & ENTRY

First impressions are fundamental in shaping a guest's experience. Upon arrival, visitors are welcomed by a striking natural stone wall, drawing inspiration from the work of renowned Japanese architect Tomoaki Uno. This element serves as both a visual landmark and a material expression of authenticity, grounding the design in traditional craftsmanship and contemporary refinement. As guests pull into the valet, the transition from the outside world begins—the urban environment dissolves, replaced by the immersive tranquility of a Japanese garden. Upon stepping out of their vehicle, they are enveloped by the soft cascade of falling water, a sensory cue that enhances the atmosphere of calm and introspection. This carefully choreographed sequence leads seamlessly into the lobby, where sleek modernism meets timeless Japanese design, establishing an immediate dialogue between tradition, materiality, and experience.

MIYAKO ENTRY

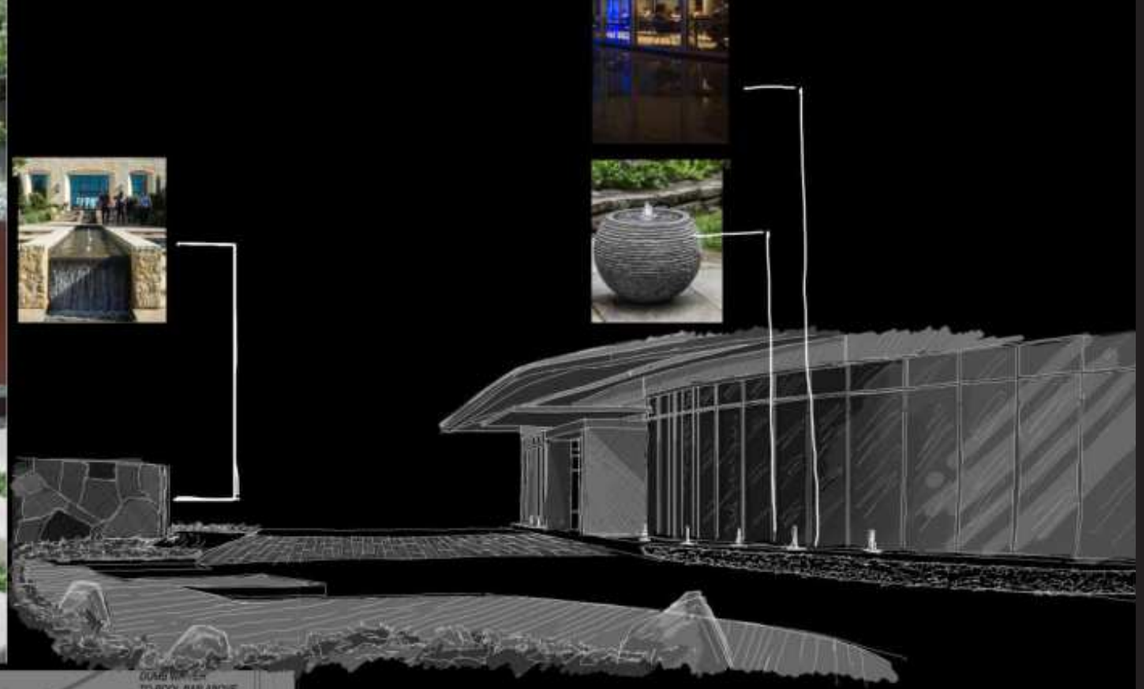
Rooted in traditional Japanese design principles, the entry experience was crafted through a deep study of foundational elements, including clean lines, spatial transitions, and regional materiality. The approach emphasizes sensory engagement, ensuring that the moment guests arrive, they feel transported into a space of intentional tranquility. Upon stepping out of their vehicles, the hustle and bustle of the city fades, replaced by the gentle rhythm of cascading water from the natural stone wall and the soft bubbling of the reflecting pool anchoring each side of the entry. This auditory landscape is complemented by delicate ornamental grasses, selected for their adaptive resilience to the North Texas climate, while carefully curated planting beds infuse the air with floral aromas, reinforcing the garden's role as a multi-sensory retreat. The interplay of sound, movement, and fragrance transforms the threshold into an immersive entry sequence, where Japanese traditions are reinterpreted within a contemporary Texan context.





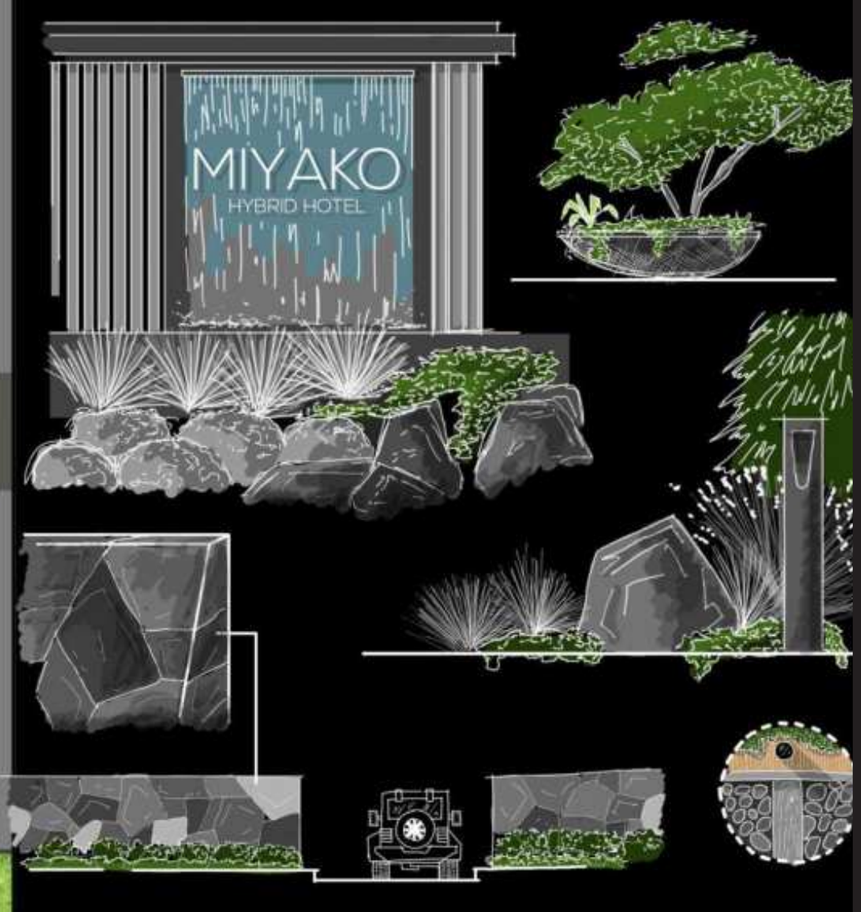








ORIGINAL CONCEPT SKETCHES











MIYAKO GARDEN

From the hotel lobby, guests are offered a framed view into the hidden garden, a tranquil retreat designed to dissolve the stresses of the outside world. The journey into this space is guided by an elegant spiral staircase, gracefully positioned within the reflecting pool. Inspired by the floating lanterns of Japanese tradition, the staircase becomes a living reflection, casting intricate patterns across the water's surface and reinforcing the theme of lightness and serenity.

To the west, an event lawn and stage provide a flexible venue for gatherings, performances, and celebrations, while guests seeking relaxation can retreat to the spa's outdoor patio or gather around fire pits and social seating areas. On the east side, a bocce court, subtly concealed behind a custom-designed wall blending Japanese and Texan influences, offers a more intimate recreational experience. The court's adaptable design allows it to transition into a covered outdoor dining space, extending the garden's capacity for larger events. Through its layered program and thoughtful spatial composition, the garden balances active engagement and contemplative retreat, creating an experience that is both versatile and deeply immersive.



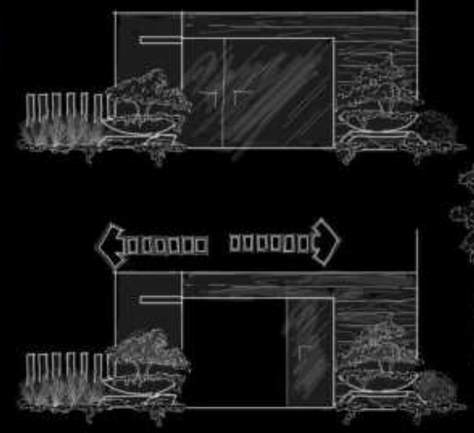








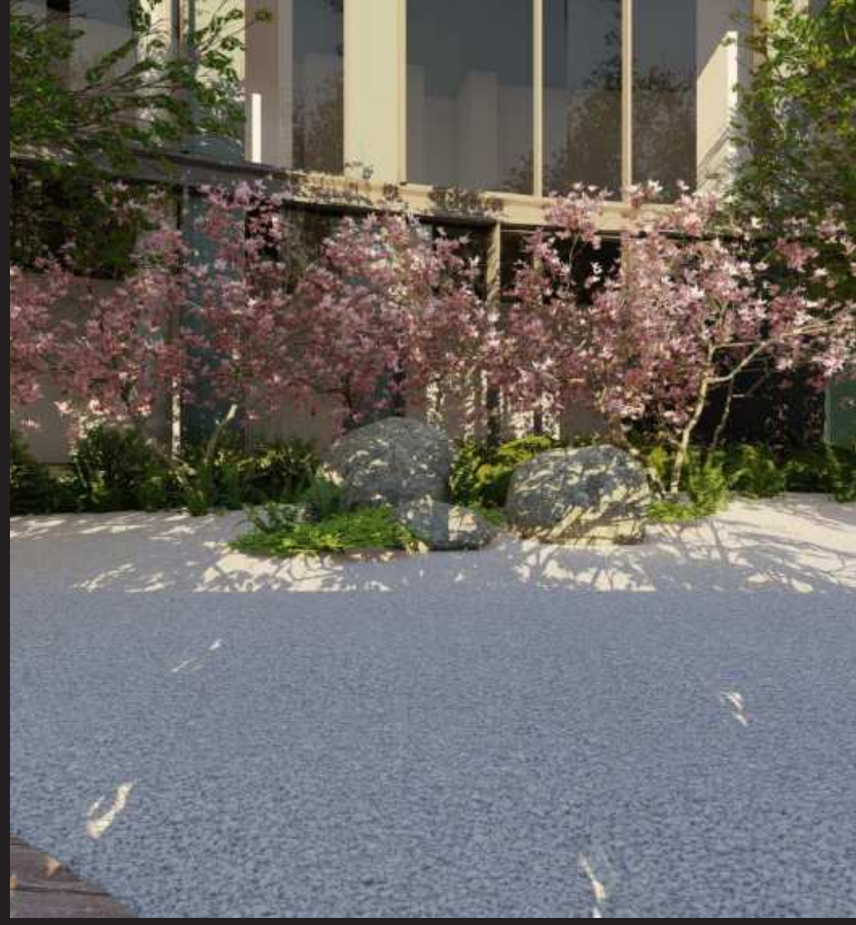


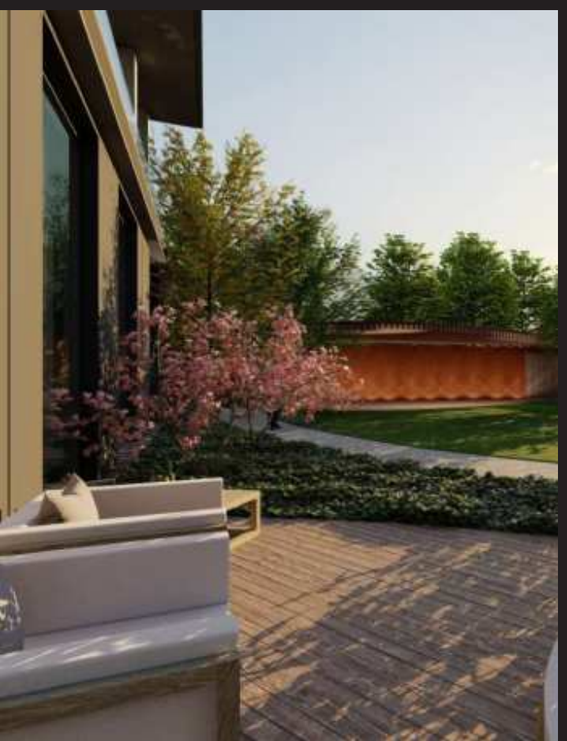
















CADENCE

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: LJA ENGINEERING

ROLE: LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

LOCATION: NORTH TEXAS

PROJECT GOAL:

As the lead designer, I was responsible for developing the thematic vision and design strategy for this expansive housing development in North Texas. With only the word "Cadence" as a conceptual starting point and the existing site as a framework, I worked to translate this abstract idea into a cohesive and compelling design narrative. The process began with hand-sketched explorations, refining these initial concepts into AutoCAD site plans and SketchUp models to establish spatial relationships and design intent. To effectively communicate the vision, I developed rendered perspectives and presentation materials, guiding the client through the conceptual process and securing their support for the proposed direction. This project underscored the importance of visual storytelling and iterative design, ensuring that the final outcome was not just a reflection of a theme, but a fully realized experience-driven community.

CREATING DESIGN

A NAME AND SITE

CADENCE noun
ca•dence

- the beat, time, or measure of rhythmical motion or activity
- a rhythmic sequence or flow of sounds in language
- a regular and repeated pattern of activity

CREATING FORM

When thinking of cadence, what comes to mind? The beat, rhythm, or pace? With such a fluid and interpretive concept, I took a broader approach, exploring how soundwaves create form in music. This abstraction became the foundation for the design language, where movement and flow were visually translated into the built environment. To reinforce this connection, I overlaid a color inspired by Spotify, a platform that has become a defining force in the modern music industry, subtly tying the development's theme to a wider cultural context.

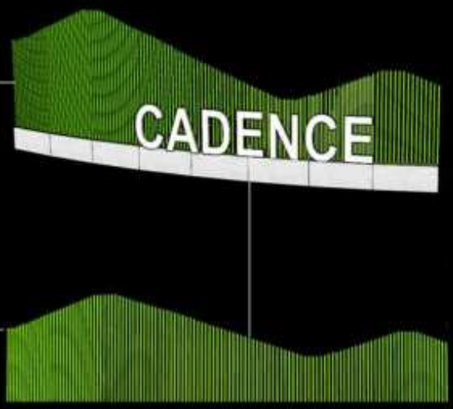
SKETCHING

Building upon this inspiration, I sketched multiple iterations, exploring how cadence could manifest in both grand gestures and intricate details throughout the site. These ideas were not confined to major landscape elements but were also embedded within smaller design moments, creating a layered experience for future residents. This iterative process ensured that the theme was not just a visual motif but an immersive environmental narrative.

3D MODEL

Once the conceptual foundation was established, the next step was to transition the design into AutoCAD and SketchUp. The iterative nature of the process required constant refinement, bouncing between hand sketches and digital models to maintain flexibility and precision. Effective file management and workflow optimization were essential in balancing creative exploration with efficiency, ensuring that the final design was both thoughtfully crafted and practically executable. This structured yet adaptive design approach allowed the theme of cadence to be expressed not just through form but through the entire design process, seamlessly connecting concept, visualization, and execution.





CREATING A COLOR PALETTE

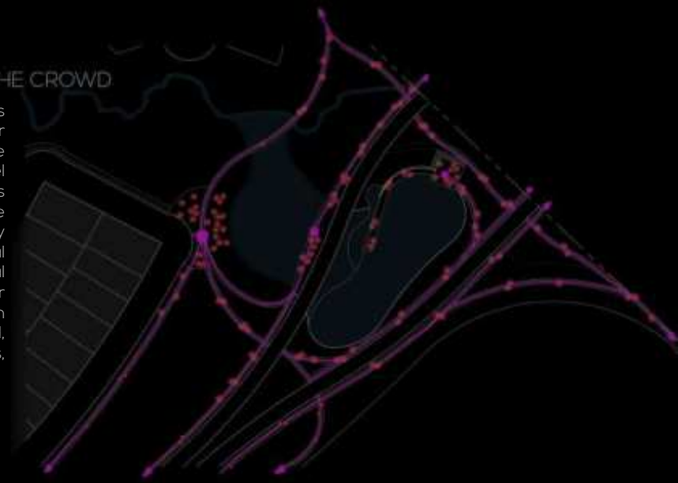
IMPLEMENTING COLORS

FINALIZING THE DESIGN

DESIGNING THE SITE

USER MOVEMENT & SPACE OF THE CROWD

The success of any spatial design is rooted in how well it accommodates user movement and crowd dynamics. Even the most visually stunning environment can feel disjointed or overwhelming if circulation is poorly planned. Understanding how people instinctively navigate a space—how they think, move, and interact—is fundamental to designing a site that is both functional and immersive. By first establishing a clear flow and movement strategy, other design elements can be introduced and refined, ensuring that spatial composition enhances, rather than hinders, user experience.



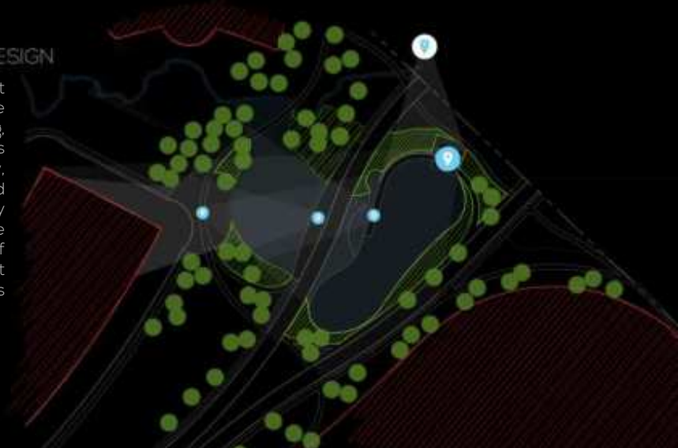
POINTS OF INTEREST & TARGET VIEWS

Beyond movement, lasting impressions are shaped by sensory engagement. The human brain recalls what it perceives through its senses, with sight being the most immediate and impactful. To create a memorable experience, I first identified key congregation points—areas where users naturally gather. By overlaying these spaces with existing and proposed site conditions, I was able to establish view corridors, directing visual attention to high-impact focal areas that serve as anchors for the design.



ENHANCING VIEWS THROUGH DESIGN

With these sightlines and points of interest defined, the next step was to curate the user's experience by strategically framing, blocking, and revealing views. This process allows for controlled moments of discovery, where unsightly elements are concealed and breathtaking vistas are gradually unveiled. By guiding the user's perspective in this way, the design fosters a sense of anticipation and wonder, ensuring that each transition through the space feels intentional and unforgettable.





SENSE OF PLACE

The entry sign's color palette and stylistic elements are intentionally echoed throughout the site, appearing subtly in fencing details, plant arrangements, and pathway accents. These small but deliberate touches strengthen the site's identity, allowing users to experience continuity in design as they move through different spaces. By integrating these elements naturally, the landscape reinforces a cohesive sense of place, ensuring the design remains memorable and immersive.

USER MOVEMENT

Unlike traditional developments where an entry monument is a singular element, Cadence's entry experience is the entire park itself. A looped walking trail guides users through a thoughtfully curated sequence of points of interest, each strategically placed to function as both a destination and a moment of discovery. This approach ensures that movement through the space feels organic and engaging, transforming the entry into a dynamic, interactive experience rather than a static visual marker.

AUDIBLE BARRIERS

A key aspect of designing for real-world experiences is addressing environmental factors, such as vehicular noise from adjacent roadways. To mitigate these disruptions, a multi-tiered waterfall was incorporated, with multiple impact points that generate a consistent, soothing soundscape. This approach not only drowns out unwanted noise but also enhances the atmosphere, reinforcing the tranquil character of the park while serving as a visual and auditory focal point.

POINTS OF INTEREST

The human brain is naturally drawn to focal points at the apex of a path, treating them as a destination or goal. Understanding this instinct, key points of interest were placed at these natural apexes, ensuring that users feel a sense of anticipation and reward as they move through the site. Upon arrival, sightlines are carefully framed to reveal breathtaking views, creating unexpected moments of discovery that heighten the overall experience.

VISUAL BARRIERS

Visually disruptive elements such as roads, infrastructure, and rear-facing homes were carefully integrated into the landscape rather than hidden behind traditional fencing. While fences can serve a functional purpose, they often feel imposing and disconnected from the natural environment. Instead, a combination of trees, shrubs, and sculpted earthwork was used to create a more organic, visually seamless barrier, ensuring that the natural beauty of the site remains uninterrupted.

CREATING MOMENTS

By layering thematic consistency, spatial movement, sensory engagement, and environmental integration, the design of Cadence becomes a dynamic series of experiences, rather than just a collection of spaces. Each design decision contributes to a gradual unfolding of moments, ensuring that the site is not only aesthetically compelling but also emotionally resonant. Every turn in the path offers something new to discover, making the experience feel both intentional and ever-evolving.


CADENCE







DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: SWA GROUP

ROLE: LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

LOCATION: DALLAS, TX

PROJECT GOAL:

Collaborating with a multidisciplinary team from SWA Group and Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos, two internationally recognized design firms, I contributed to the competition entry for the Dallas Museum of Art, an ambitious reimagining of one of Texas' most significant cultural institutions. My role focused on modeling, rendering, and diagramming, translating the project's complex architectural and landscape vision into clear, compelling visuals for the competition's judges.

Beyond assisting with design communication, I played a role in shaping the Main Street connection, a key component of a larger green corridor weaving through downtown Dallas. This intervention aimed to strengthen urban connectivity, seamlessly integrating the museum into the broader cultural and ecological framework of the city. By merging architectural intent with landscape-driven urban strategies, the proposal sought to redefine the museum's relationship with its surroundings, fostering a more accessible, engaging, and environmentally conscious public space.

REIMAGINING THE DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART

INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION

WINNER TO VIEW FULL FINAL PRESENTATION VISIT:

https://competitions.malcolmreading.com/dallasmuseumofart/gallery/nieto-sobejano-arquitectos

CREATING UNIFIED DESIGN

UNITY OF LANDSCAPE AND ARCHITECTURE

UNDERSTANDING ARCHITECTURAL INTENT





CIRCULATION

Using the architect's circulation maps we unified the project by reinforcing their design with our green connection.

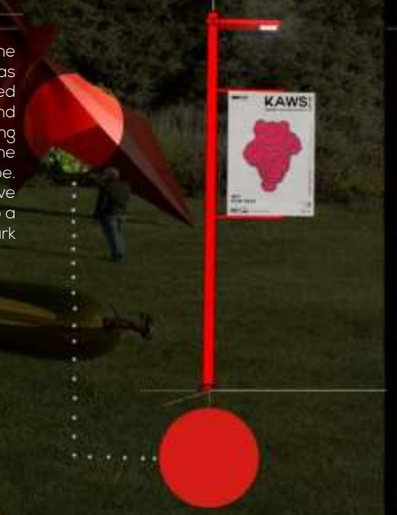
LIGHTING

Used to reinfore the main circulation

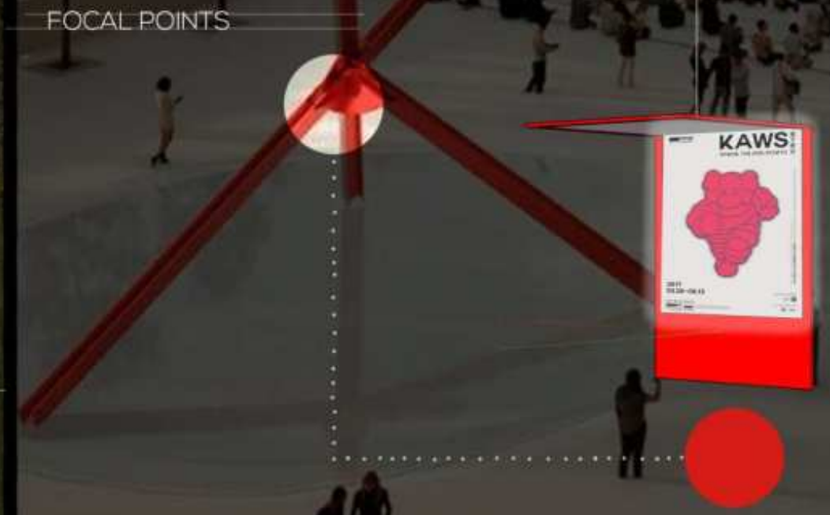
UNITY THROUGH MATERIALITY

LIGHTING

Using the recognizable red from the iconic sculpture in front of the Dallas Museum of Art, I modeled and designed streetscape elements that extend into the green connection, creating a seamless transition between the museum and the surrounding landscape. These elements establish a cohesive sense of place while paying homage to a sculpture that has served as a landmark for decades.

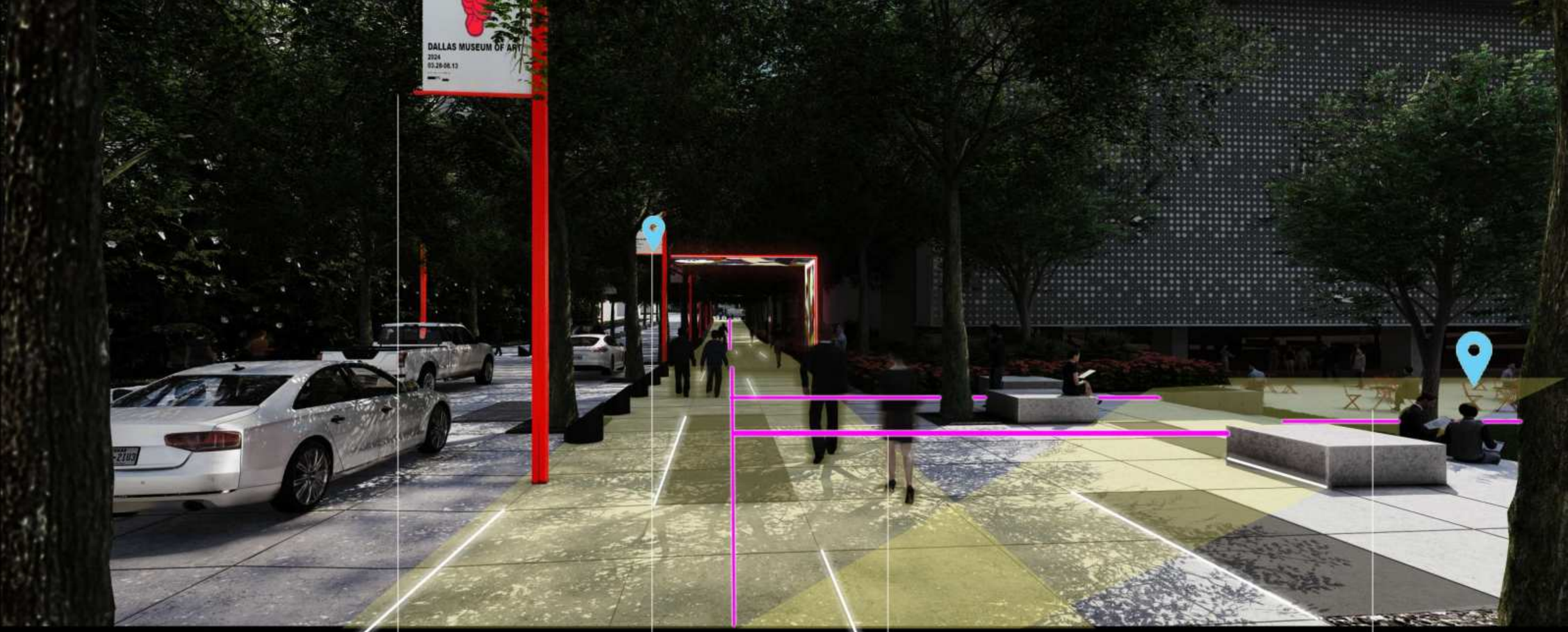


FOCAL POINTS



SAFETY





SENSE OF PLACE

Drawing inspiration from the historic art installation, the light poles and focal points echo its form, reinforcing a site-specific identity. By integrating elements rooted in the museum's unique history, the design fosters public engagement and cultural continuity, ensuring the space resonates with both visitors and the local community.

POINTS OF INTEREST

A sequence of visual elements guides users through the site, creating moments of discovery and intrigue along the linear axis of the green connection. This layering of experiences keeps users engaged, encouraging them to explore beyond the museum and into the extended landscape.

REINFORCING MOVEMENT

To highlight movement along the pedestrian trail parallel to the museum, I incorporated embedded LED lighting within the concrete pavers, visually reinforcing the sense of direction and rhythm. This subtle intervention enhances the user experience, making movement feel synchronized with the design itself.

DESIGNING TO THE HUMAN SCALE

Designing within a dense urban environment required addressing the scale disparity between users and surrounding high-rises. By prioritizing human-scaled design, the space remains inviting, utilizing layered tree canopies and smaller architectural elements to soften the impact of towering structures and create a more intimate, approachable setting.


KAWS
WHERE THE END STARTS
DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART
2024
03.28-08.13


DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART
2024
03.28-08.13


KAWS
DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART
2024



DALLAS DESIGN DISTRICT

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: SWA GROUP

ROLE: LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

LOCATION: DALLAS, TX

PROJECT GOAL: As part of the design team for the Dallas Design District, I played a key role in the schematic design process, contributing to concept development, 3D modeling, and graphic production. My work was integral to communicating the project vision, ensuring that design ideas were effectively translated into visual representations for stakeholders.

Located less than a mile from the Dallas Museum of Art, the Design District has long been a catalyst for urban revitalization. With new investors seeking to reimagine its future, our team was tasked with transforming their vision into a tangible, innovative master plan, reinforcing the district's role as a cultural and design hub within the city.

DESIGNED FOR USERS VS. TO PROTECT USERS
THE DIFFERENCE IN STREETSCAPE DESIGN

While all streets may appear to be designed the same, in actuality their designs can vary drastically depending on their intended use. In the following diagram you will see the comparisons of the streetscape design between the Dallas Museum of Artr and the Dallas Design District.

FOR USERS VS. TO PROTECT USERS

At the Dallas Museum of Art, the streetscape prioritizes pedestrian movement and seamless urban integration. Instead of traditional curbs, bollards define pedestrian zones, allowing flexible circulation between the museum, plaza, and street. Continuous paving materials eliminate harsh separations, reinforcing a shared-space concept where pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles navigate with heightened awareness. This approach enhances accessibility and fosters engagement, ensuring the museum remains an inviting part of the public realm.

In contrast, the Dallas Design District takes a structured approach to pedestrian safety due to its high-traffic commercial setting. Traditional curbs and controlled crosswalks regulate movement, while landscape buffers and on-street parking create a protective barrier between pedestrians and traffic. These elements preserve clear sightlines, ensuring users feel safe while engaging with storefronts, galleries, and dining options. By balancing safety with accessibility, the design enhances the district's walkability while accommodating vehicular flow.

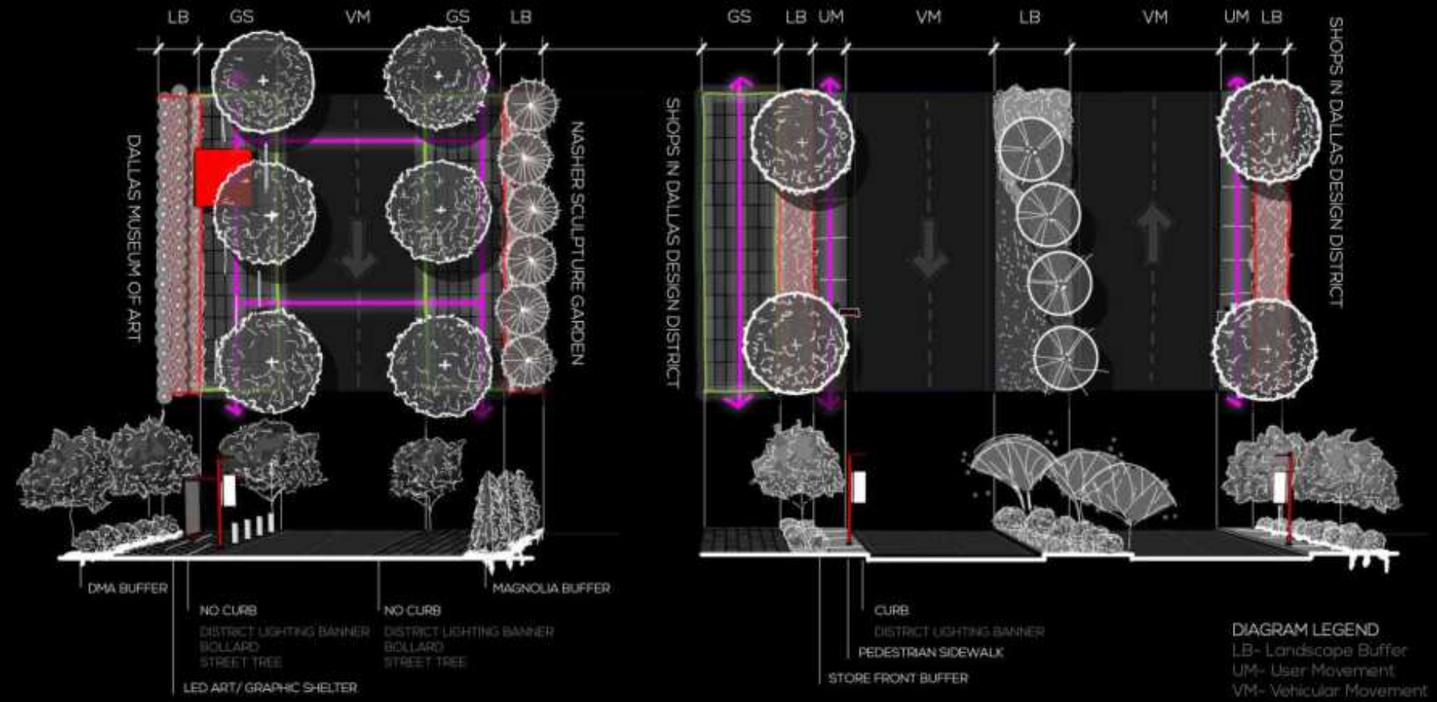


DIAGRAM LEGEND
LB- Landscape Buffer
UM- User Movement
VM- Vehicular Movement
GS- Gathering Space

CREATING ENVIRONMENTS WITH REALISM
USING CITY CODE AS A BASE FOR DESIGN

APPLICABLE CODES IN DALLAS, TX
CITY OF DALLAS STANDARDS
CITY OF DALLAS COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN MANUAL

CITY OF DALLAS STREET PROCESS MANUAL

CITY OF DALLAS THOROUGHFARE PLAN

DALLAS CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT STREETS AND VEHICULAR CIRCULATION PLAN

CITY OF DALLAS BIKE PLAN

FEDERAL AND STATE DESIGN GUIDELINES
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

TEXAS ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

TXDOT ROADWAY DESIGN MANUAL

AASHTO GREEN BOOK

NACTO URBAN STREET DESIGN GUIDE



	Frontage	Sidewalk Clear	Buffer/ Furnishing/ Curb	Parking	Travelway	Median
Mixed-Use	●	●	●	●	●	●
Commercial	●	●	●		●	●
Residential	●	●	●	●	●	
Industrial	●	●	●	●	●	
Parkways	●	●	●		●	●
Woonerf	●	●	●	●	●	
Alleys					●	

TYPICAL STREET TYPES AND ELEMENTS



KEY FEATURES
1 WIDE PEDESTRIAN ZONES FOR HIGH PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC
2 ENGAGING FRONTAGES FOR PLEASANT PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE
3 ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTAION FOR FLEXIBILITY OF USE
4 ON-STREET PARKING TO PROVIDE CONVIENCE PARKING ALONG THE TRAVELWAY
5 STREET AND PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING FOR SAFETY AND COMFORT
6 TREES AND LANDSCAPING FOR AESTHETICS AND SHADE OR BUFFER
7 FURNITURE AND AMENITIES FOR IMPROVED USABILITY OF THE STREET

ADDITIONAL FEATURES MAY INCLUDE
WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE FOR ENHANCING THE USER EXPERIENCE

WHERE FEASABLE TO ACCOMMODATE SPECIFIC TRANSPOTAYTION MODES; PROVISION OF AN OFF-STREET PATHWAY FOR BICYCLES AND MICRO-MOBILITY DEVICES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

CITY OF DALLAS APPROVED TREE LIST

LARGE SIZE TREES	
AMERICAN ELM	Ulmus Americana
CEDAR ELM	Ulmus crassifolia
LACEBARK ELM	Ulmus parvifolia
SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA	Magnolia grandiflora
BUR OAK	Quercus macrocarpa
CHINKAPIN OAK	Quercus Muehlenbergii
LIVE OAK	Quercus Virginiana
SHUMARD OAK	Quercus Shumardii
SYCAMORE	Plantanus occidentalis
MEDIUM SIZE TREES	
TEXAS ASH	Fraxinus Texensis
TRIDENT MAPLE	Acer buergerianum
CHINESE PISTACHE	Pistacia Chinensis
MEXICAN REDBUD	Cercis Canadensis var. Mexicana
EASTERN RED CEDAR	Juniperus Virginiana
BOIS D' ARC	Maclura pomifera

WHILE THESE ARE NOT ALL OF THE TREES ON THE LIST THEY REPRESENT THE REQUIREMENTS BY THE CITY. BEFORE DESIGNING THE GROWING CONDITIONS SHOULD BE EXAMINED TO DETERMINE THE BEST TREE TO USE.



VEGETATIVE BUFFER

A vegetative buffer composed of trees, shrubs, and groundcover introduces both ecological and functional benefits to the streetscape. Beyond enhancing biodiversity, this layered planting strategy provides an implied barrier between pedestrians and storefronts, reinforcing a sense of safety while maintaining an open and welcoming retail environment. The buffer also contributes to temperature regulation, air quality improvement, and aesthetic continuity, strengthening the overall urban ecology of the Design District.

SENSE OF PLACE

To establish a strong sense of place, I incorporated the recognizable "Design District Red" into key site elements, including lighting, seating, and custom overhead structures within the sunken plaza entry. This intentional use of color helps visually unify the district, creating a distinct identity that connects the redevelopment with its existing cultural fabric while reinforcing the area's brand and history.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Unlike traditional urban points of interest, this design employs a subtle, intuitive approach due to the flexibility required for future storefronts. A raised boardwalk subtly guides user movement, narrowing circulation before opening into seating areas, subconsciously signaling a transition between spaces. This intentional spatial rhythm encourages users to pause, gather, and engage, making the district feel both fluid and naturally navigable despite its evolving commercial program.











K.E.R.A. HEADQUARTERS OPTION 01

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: SWA GROUP

ROLE: LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

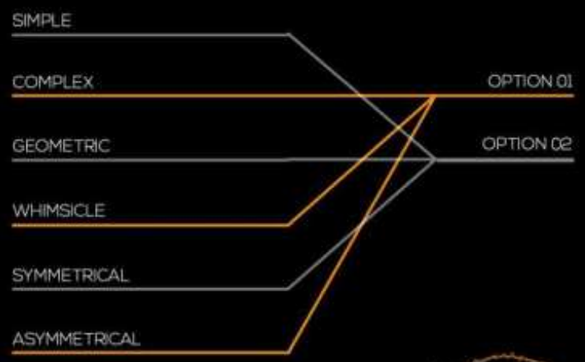
LOCATION: DALLAS, TX

PROJECT GOAL: For this project, I was responsible for 3D modeling and rendering, supporting the team in visualizing two distinct design approaches for the redevelopment of an existing office headquarters into a mixed-use site incorporating residential, commercial, and office spaces. The following pages illustrate Option 01 and Option 02, each exploring different urban design strategies while aligning with the client's goals.

This project is accompanied by infographics that highlight the benefits of exploring multiple design solutions, demonstrating how two completely different approaches can still address the same objectives through shared core principles. The ability to think in multiple design languages is essential in both architecture and game design, where problem-solving often requires iterating from different perspectives. My approach to design is rooted in this flexibility, allowing me to uncover creative and efficient solutions to complex challenges—whether in the built environment or interactive digital worlds.

OPTIONS EQUALS OPPORTUNITIES

Every project comes with a unique set of clients, stakeholders, and expectations, each bringing personal preferences and priorities to the table. Ensuring that all voices feel heard and considered is key to building consensus, but managing diverse input can be overwhelming. This challenge can be addressed early in the conceptual design phase by presenting one to three distinct options. This approach opens a dialogue, allowing stakeholders to evaluate pros and cons across multiple solutions. Through discussion, these options can be refined and merged into a single cohesive design, ensuring that the final outcome is both inclusive and strategically aligned with project goals.



SIMPLE OR CMPLEX

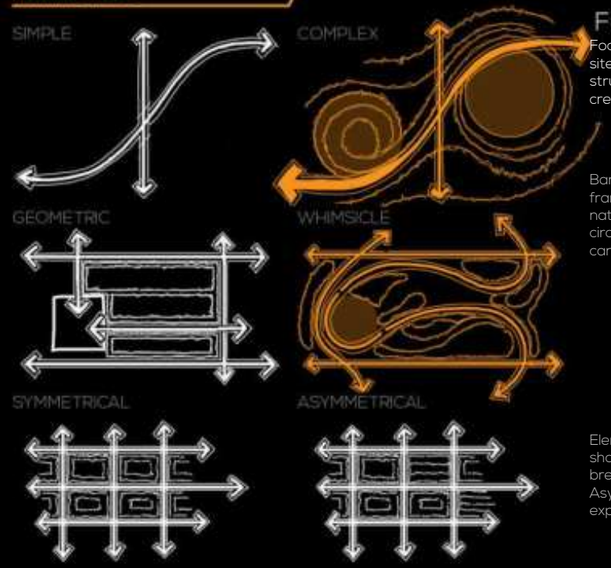
Developing multiple design options requires casting a wide conceptual net, incorporating varied design philosophies to explore the full range of possibilities. A simple, streamlined approach—rooted in historical precedent—creates a sense of clarity and visual continuity. In contrast, complex designs layer elements dynamically, shifting user attention through overlapping geometries, contrasting textures, and controlled chaos. Each approach establishes a distinct experience, allowing the design to communicate tone and emotion based on its composition.

GEOMETRIC OR WHIMSICLE

Circulation plays a pivotal role in user experience and spatial perception. Geometric designs, governed by strict 90° and 45° angles, create predictable, linear movement, where sightlines extend indefinitely and navigation feels structured. In contrast, whimsical designs embrace fluidity, guiding users through meandering paths with no clear endpoint, encouraging exploration and discovery. The element of surprise in whimsical layouts fosters a sense of journey, making each turn an invitation to uncover something new.

SYMMETRICAL OR ASYMMETRICAL

Both symmetrical and asymmetrical design techniques serve to direct user attention, though they do so in distinct ways. Symmetry establishes order and rhythm, providing a sense of balance and predictability, while asymmetry disrupts repetition, highlighting contrast and uniqueness. Often seen in traditional Japanese gardens, asymmetrical designs mirror the imperfect beauty of nature, creating spaces that feel organic, evolving, and reflective of life's inherent unpredictability.



ACHIEVING THE SAME GOALS WITH DIFFERENT TECHNIQUE

PHYSICAL BARRIERS

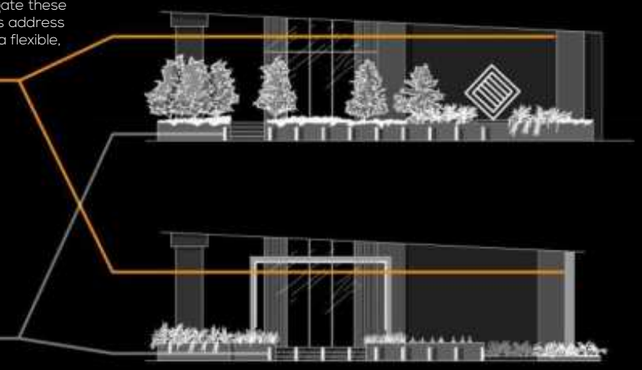
When developing multiple design options, it is essential to resolve site constraints across all variations. Whether addressing topography, pedestrian movement, or circulation flow, each solution must effectively navigate these issues while maintaining a distinct identity. Ensuring that all options address key site challenges streamlines the design process and allows for a flexible, adaptable outcome.

WALLS

A key challenge in the design was separating the parking garage entrance from the main entry, ensuring safety and intuitive navigation. Both Option 01 and Option 02 achieve this with a physical barrier. Option 01 integrates a concrete wall into the structure, while Option 02 utilizes a 3D-printed artistic wall, balancing functionality and design innovation.

BOLLARDS

Bollards serve as a semi-permeable barrier, allowing free pedestrian movement while restricting vehicles. Their placement enhances safety and wayfinding, subtly guiding circulation without the visual weight of a solid wall.



IMPLIED BARRIERS

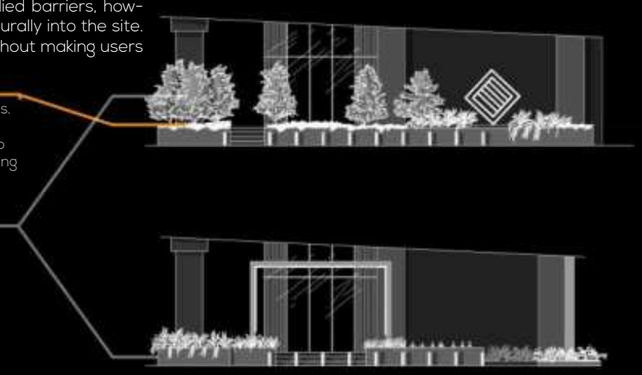
Barriers define space by restricting movement and framing sightlines, but solid structures can appear harsh in the landscape. Implied barriers, however, subtly guide circulation and perception, blending naturally into the site. Thoughtful placement of these elements controls flow without making users feel confined.

TREES

Trees function as implied barriers, shaping circulation and sightlines. Their placement can soften built elements or block access. Evergreen conifers form dense buffers, while deciduous trees help break up structures. This layering adds depth and variety, enhancing spatial experience year-round.

PLANTERS

Planters act as both visual and physical barriers, defining space through elevation changes and density. Adjusting plant height and arrangement can naturally guide movement and block sightlines. Integrating a variety of vegetation ensures a functional yet visually engaging buffer.



FOCAL POINTS

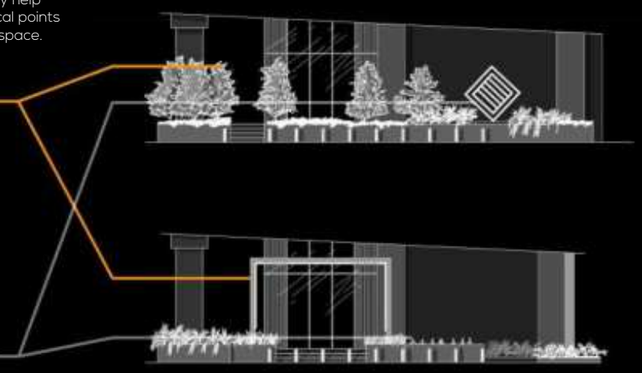
Focal points guide user attention, establishing spatial hierarchy within a site. Whether sculptures, landscape elements, or architecture, they help structure circulation and define key areas. Strategically placing focal points creates a rhythm, ensuring a clear, engaging progression through space.

PORTALS

Barriers block movement, while portals invite passage by framing visual and physical transitions. A well-placed portal naturally draws users forward, defining entry points and circulation flow. Material shifts, lighting, or structural contrast can reinforce spatial clarity and intuitive navigation.

FOCAL ENTITIES

Elements like art, water features, and trees act as focal points, shaping both aesthetics and navigation. Beyond decoration, they break monotony, define gathering spaces, and enhance wayfinding. Asymmetry adds intrigue, naturally guiding users toward key experiential moments within a space.









K.E.R.A. HEADQUARTERS OPTION 02

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: SWA GROUP

ROLE: LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

LOCATION: DALLAS, TX

PROJECT GOAL:

Building upon the previous layout, this option emphasizes a more artistic and immersive approach, integrating custom-designed elements throughout the site. These features highlight the architectural character, reinforcing a cohesive visual language by applying consistent materials and design motifs across multiple spaces. This strategy engulfs users in the design, ensuring that the site feels curated and intentional.

To provide the client with an accurate and realistic vision of the final outcome, high-detail 3D modeling and rendering are essential. Every element—from architectural details to the specific plant selections—is carefully represented, ensuring the design is both visually compelling and technically precise before implementation.



VISUAL BARRIER

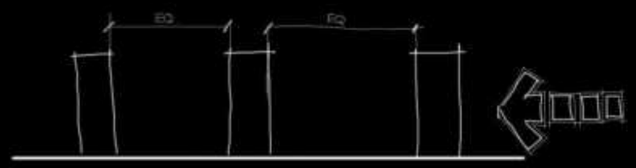
Understanding the need for a physical barrier to conceal the parking garage, I designed a custom organic-patterned wall intended for laser cutting or 3D printing. Whether fabricated from metal with a reflective finish or high-gloss plastic, the material choice ensures a visually striking yet lightweight structure. This approach softens the impact of a rigid barrier, introducing a sculptural quality that seamlessly integrates into the overall site design. Unlike conventional solid walls, this artistic solution filters light and shadow, adding depth and movement to an otherwise static element.





CREATE RHYTHM AND REPETITION

Incorporating repeated elements along trails or roads establishes a natural sense of rhythm, subtly guiding users through the space. This rhythmic pattern can influence the pace at which users experience a site, slowing movement in areas of interest while reinforcing continuity and cohesion. In this design, rhythm is achieved through a series of internally lit columns, strategically placed along the path. By illuminating from within, these columns maintain visual impact both during the day and at night, ensuring the site remains engaging and immersive across all lighting conditions.



TERMINUS OF VIEW POINT

As the rhythmic elements guide users along the approach, the accent wall serves as an anchor, framing the entry drive and creating a memorable threshold. This design merges the visual barrier and the illuminated columns, reinforcing a unified material and lighting language. The placement of this element strategically separates users from the outside world, allowing them to become fully immersed in the architectural experience upon arrival. By blending functional screening with aesthetic layering, the entry sequence fosters a sense of transition, marking the shift from the urban environment into a curated spatial experience.





DESIGNING WATER FEATURES

LOCATION

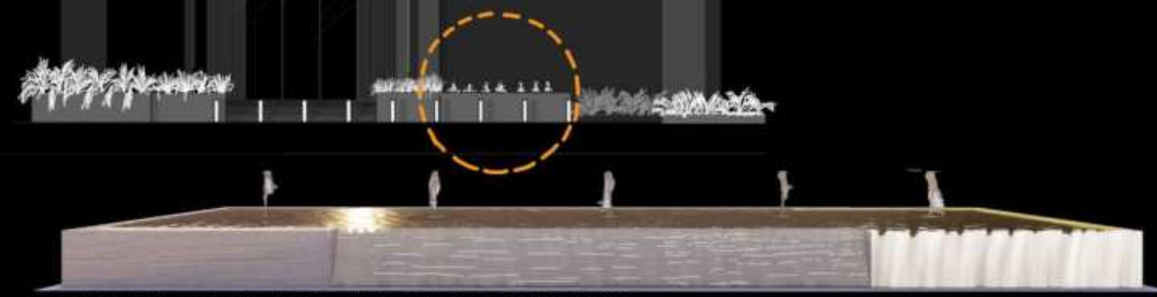
Depending on its intended function, the placement of a water feature plays a critical role in its effectiveness and impact. In this design, the water feature needed to serve three purposes—acting as a physical barrier, a focal point, and an audible screen to mask the valet area. Positioning it strategically between key circulation zones ensures it not only guides guests but also enhances the overall sensory experience of the space.

USE

As both a visual and acoustic buffer, the water feature required multiple fountains to generate sufficient sound to block the noise of incoming traffic. By placing it between the valet and the upper plaza, the water feature becomes a functional sound barrier, absorbing and dampening car noise more effectively than if it were positioned closer to the building. This placement also enhances user comfort, ensuring that the upper plaza remains an undisturbed, serene environment.

LOOK

With the project being a high-end development, the materiality and detailing of the water feature needed to reflect its luxury aesthetic. A honed limestone veneer was selected to provide a refined, sophisticated finish, elevating the feature beyond functionality into an architectural statement. Thoughtfully chosen materials ensure that the water feature's visual identity aligns with the overall design language, reinforcing both aesthetic cohesion and experiential quality.

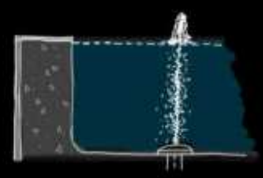


EDGE CONDITIONS AND THE EFFECTS ON WATER

When modeling a design, a strong understanding of construction documents is essential to ensure that renders accurately reflect real-world feasibility. Clients often view renderings as definitive, making precision in dimensions and materiality crucial in maintaining their trust. Every small detail matters, from structural elements to edge conditions, which influence both functionality and aesthetics. Below are examples of different edge treatments, each with distinct pros and cons. For this project, I designed an edge profile that aligns with the sleek, modern architecture, opting for a traditional edge that best complements the building's overall aesthetic.

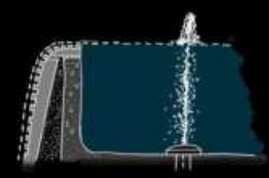
TYPICAL EDGE





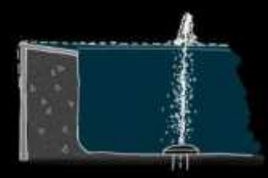
RIPPLING WATER





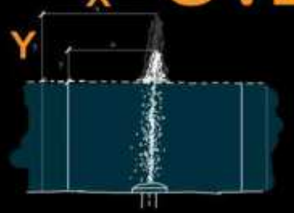
INFINITY EDGE





FOUNTAIN HEIGHT AND SPLASH RADIUS

3 : 1



The splash radius of a fountain is crucial in high-traffic areas like walkways and valet zones, where overspray from chlorinated water could impact pedestrians and vehicles. To prevent disruption, this design removes an infinity edge, keeping water contained within the basin. By controlling the bubbler's splash pattern, the feature remains refined and functional, avoiding excess water and maintenance issues.











LA CANTERA RESORT & SPA

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: SWA GROUP

ROLE: PROJECT MANAGER

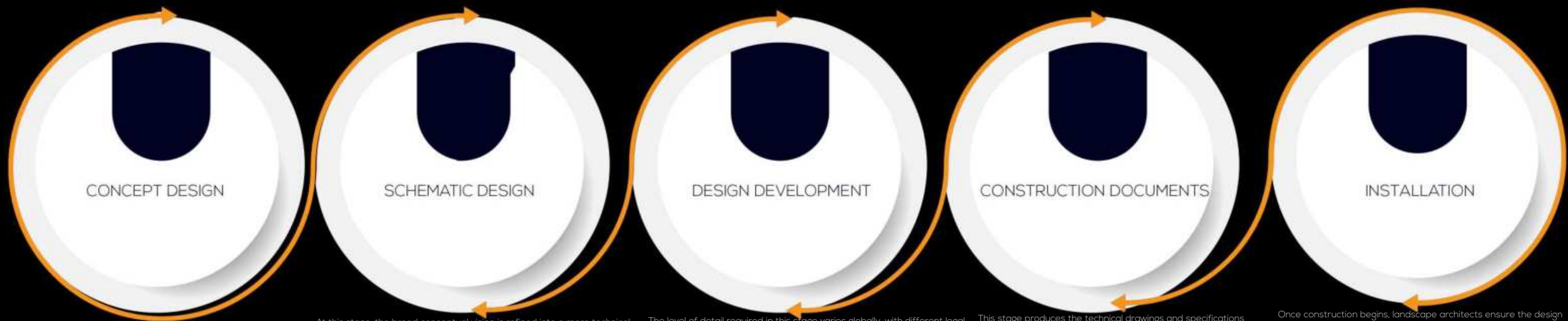
LOCATION: SAN ANTONIO, TX

PROJECT GOAL: La Cantera is a renowned luxury resort nestled in the Texas Hill Country, known for its elegant design and high-end amenities. As part of an expansion effort, the owner and developer sought to introduce new programmatic elements to revitalize the resort and spa, including new villas, a kid's club, and a luxury event barn. However, due to budget constraints and rising development costs, only the event barn remained in the final scope.

Designed in collaboration with HKS Architects, the event barn embraces the existing Spanish architectural style, seamlessly integrating into the resort's aesthetic. Leading the landscape design team presented new challenges, requiring me to adapt quickly while managing design iterations, deadlines, and coordination with architects. In the following pages, I will outline my design approach, problem-solving strategies, and the process of executing each phase of the project, demonstrating how I navigated the complexities of high-end resort expansion.

PROCESS OF PROJECT MANAGMENT

FLOW CHART OF PROJECT AND RELATED APPLICATIONS



The concept design phase is where the landscape architect translates initial ideas into tangible proposals, establishing the fundamental spatial organization and design intent. This stage is highly iterative, incorporating a balance between programmatic requirements, environmental constraints, and aesthetic ambitions. Site analysis plays a crucial role, assessing factors such as topography, climate, soil conditions, vegetation, hydrology, accessibility, and existing infrastructure to determine the best strategies for development.

The primary goal of this phase is to create conceptual plans and diagrams that illustrate:

Spatial relationships between program elements
- Circulation and movement patterns
- Key constraints and opportunities
- Landscape character and thematic direction
- Supporting documents may include:

Illustrative site plans and diagrammatic overlays
- Precedent studies showcasing relevant case studies
- Initial material palettes and mood boards
- Regulatory documentation for planning approval (where applicable)

At this stage, the broad conceptual vision is refined into a more technical and feasible design, ensuring it aligns with both client expectations and real-world site conditions. Landscape architects work to resolve major design challenges, including:
- Site grading and drainage strategies to mitigate erosion and flooding
- Vehicular and pedestrian circulation ensuring accessibility and safety
- Integration of hardscape and softscape elements to balance built and natural features
- Coordination with architects and engineers to harmonize site and structural design
- This phase also serves to identify and mitigate potential conflicts early, ensuring that solutions are integrated before construction costs escalate. Key documents may include:

- Rendered site plans and elevations showing refined spatial organization
- 3D models and perspective views for clearer visualization
- Preliminary construction details and material specifications

Clients often view the initial concept as final, requiring education on the progressive nature of design refinement. Design development ensures that creative ideas are practically achievable while maintaining aesthetic and functional intent.

The level of detail required in this stage varies globally, with different legal and industry standards dictating the extent of documentation needed for tendering and construction.

In some countries, design development drawings focus on conceptual aesthetics, providing:
Colored plans and rendered sections for presentation
Material palettes with general annotations
Preliminary cost estimates based on standard material pricing
In the U.S. and other highly regulated markets, this phase requires:

Highly detailed plans and sections defining exact dimensions and materials
Material schedules specifying finishes, colors, and installation methods
Preliminary cost analysis and bidding packages
The Design Development phase is often structured through incremental sets at 50%, 80%, 90%, and 100% completion, each refining:

Materials & finishes (paving, furniture, lighting, etc.)
Site layout & grading (topography adjustments and drainage solutions)
Planting plans (species selection, placement, irrigation considerations)
This documentation provides contractors and cost estimators with the level of precision required for feasibility assessments before transitioning into full construction documents.

This stage produces the technical drawings and specifications necessary for construction, serving as formal instructions for contractors. These documents bridge the gap between design vision and execution, requiring careful coordination to prevent conflicts between landscape, architecture, lighting, and engineering systems.
The Construction Documentation package includes:
- Grading plans defining elevation changes
- Site layout plans specifying hardscape materials and dimensions
- Planting plans & schedules listing species, sizes, and specifications
- Irrigation and drainage plans ensuring proper water management
- Detail drawings for site furnishings, paving, and lighting

At this stage, the 50% Construction Document set transitions into 100% completion, integrating:

- Revisions for site constraints
- Client and contractor feedback
- Final detailing for constructibility and cost-efficiency
- These refined documents ensure clarity in bidding, permitting, and construction execution.

Once construction begins, landscape architects ensure the design is executed as intended, reviewing progress, addressing challenges, and making adjustments through addendums and site visits. While contractors handle construction, architects oversee quality control and compliance.
The construction process follows these phases:
- Demolition & Site Clearing – Preparing the site
- Utilities & Infrastructure – Installing drainage, irrigation, and electrical systems
- Grading & Earthwork – Shaping topography for stability and drainage
- Hardscape Construction – Building pathways, plazas, and retaining walls
- Softscape Installation – Planting trees, shrubs, and groundcover
- Final Completion & Quality Control – Verifying alignment with design specifications
- Landscape architects also:

Review submittals and shop drawings for material compliance
Address field adjustments through addendums
Conduct site inspections to ensure construction quality
Clarify design intent to contractors
Even after completion, landscapes evolve, requiring ongoing maintenance strategies. Post-installation evaluations fine-tune irrigation, plant health, and material performance.

SITE CONTEXT

LA CANTERA RESORT AND SPA

GOLF SHOP

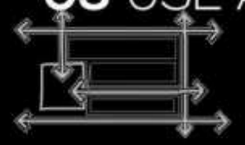
SPA

VILLAS

01 UNDERSTAND YOUR SITE

02 REMEMBER THE USER

03 USE A FORM AND STYLE



04 CREATE AND LINK SPACES



05 THE FUNCTION OF PLANTS



06 STRUCTURE THE PLANTING



07 HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANT FEATURES

SITE CONTEXT





CONCEPT DESIGN

TURNING INSPIRATION INTO DESIGN





I

H

F



















DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

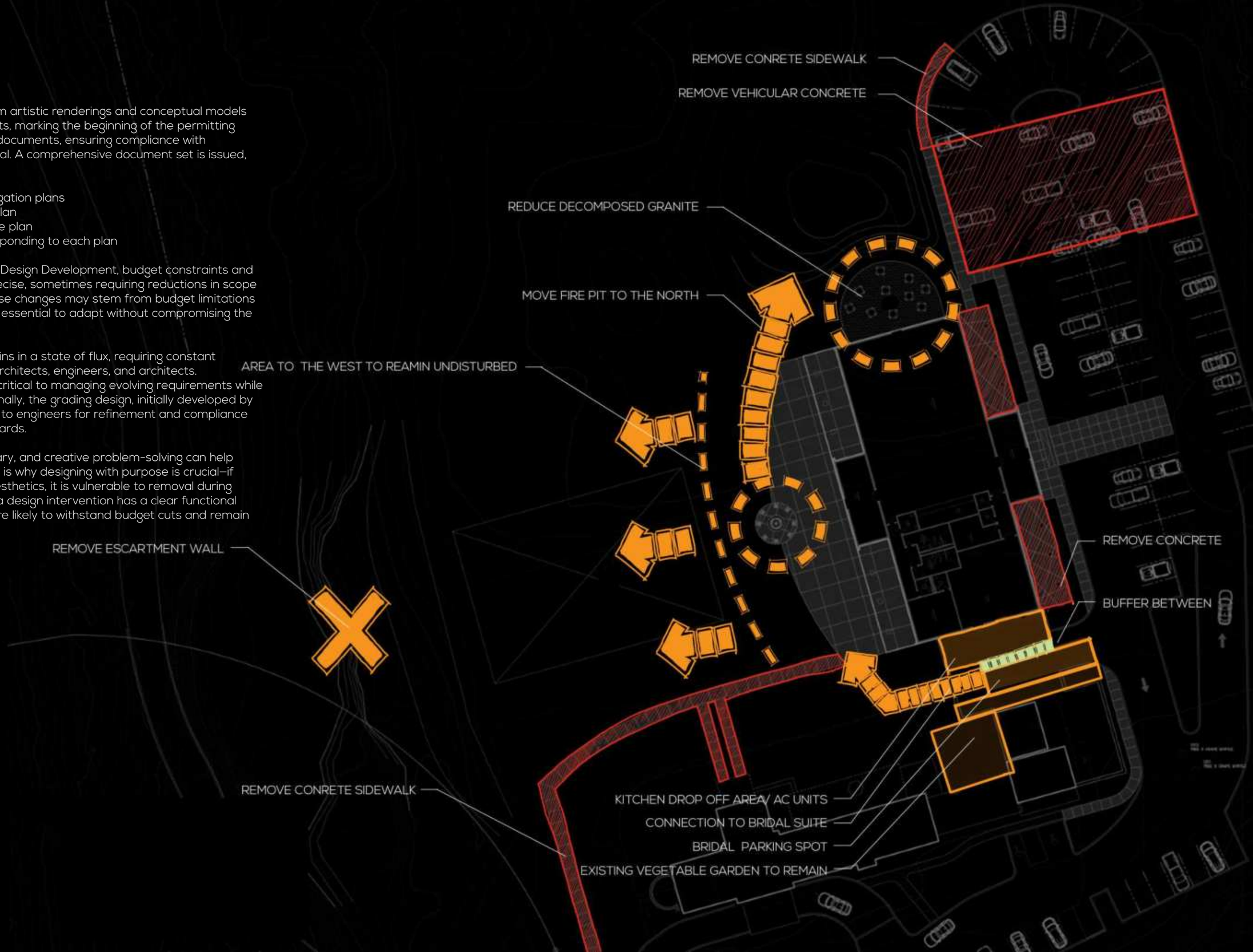
At this stage, the project shifts from artistic renderings and conceptual models to technical construction documents, marking the beginning of the permitting process. The city will review these documents, ensuring compliance with regulations before granting approval. A comprehensive document set is issued, including:

- Tree preservation and mitigation plans
- Materials plan and layout plan
- Grading plan and landscape plan
- Construction details corresponding to each plan

As the project progresses through Design Development, budget constraints and cost estimations become more precise, sometimes requiring reductions in scope or modifications to the design. These changes may stem from budget limitations or architectural revisions, making it essential to adapt without compromising the original design intent.

During this phase, the design remains in a state of flux, requiring constant coordination between landscape architects, engineers, and architects. Organization and adaptability are critical to managing evolving requirements while preserving design integrity. Additionally, the grading design, initially developed by the landscape team, is handed off to engineers for refinement and compliance with structural and drainage standards.

Not all design changes are necessary, and creative problem-solving can help preserve key design elements. This is why designing with purpose is crucial—if an element is included solely for aesthetics, it is vulnerable to removal during value engineering. However, when a design intervention has a clear functional or experiential justification, it is more likely to withstand budget cuts and remain integral to the final project.











CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS- 100% SET

WHAT ARE CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

The purpose of construction documentation is deceptively simple: instruct the landscape contractor on what to install, where, and how. These technical documents consist of two primary components: visual drawings and verbal specifications. Unlike Preliminary Design, which focuses on evoking emotion and conceptual intent, Construction Documentation is about precision and clarity. This phase is the culmination of research, design thinking, and technical coordination, transforming ideas into tangible, buildable reality.



TREE PRESERVATION PLAN

A Tree Preservation Plan assesses and identifies trees, shrubs, and other ecological elements to be retained, evaluating their environmental function and potential impacts of development. It outlines mitigation measures, protective strategies, and best practices for removal where necessary. The goal is to balance landscape intervention with conservation, ensuring that preserved trees are properly protected and managed throughout construction.



GRADING AND DRAINAGE PLAN

A Grading and Drainage Plan is critical in managing stormwater runoff, preventing erosion, and ensuring site accessibility, particularly on sloped terrain. This document defines the site's topographic adjustments using:

- 1' contour lines to illustrate grading changes
- Spot grades marking key elevation points
- Slope percentages for compliance with ADA accessibility standards

Proper grading ensures that walkways, roads, and site features are functionally integrated, directing water flow efficiently while maintaining aesthetically and structurally sound spaces.



MATERIALS PLAN

A Material Plan serves as a technical roadmap, detailing all hardscape materials and site elements. It includes:

- Existing site features and new architectural/ engineering components
- Material callouts referencing a materials legend
- Specifications, codes, and purchasing information

The materials legend provides precise data on measurements, finishes, colors, and sources, ensuring quality control and consistency in procurement and installation.



LAYOUT PLAN

A Layout Plan may be integrated with the Material Plan, provided it remains graphically legible. This plan ensures precise placement of all design elements by defining:

- Lengths, widths, and turning radii
- Sidewalk joint spacing and dimensions
- Construction-friendly measurements

To minimize installation errors, dimensions adhere to whole numbers or standard fractions (¼", ½", ¾"), reducing misinterpretation and ensuring that the design can be easily constructed with accuracy.

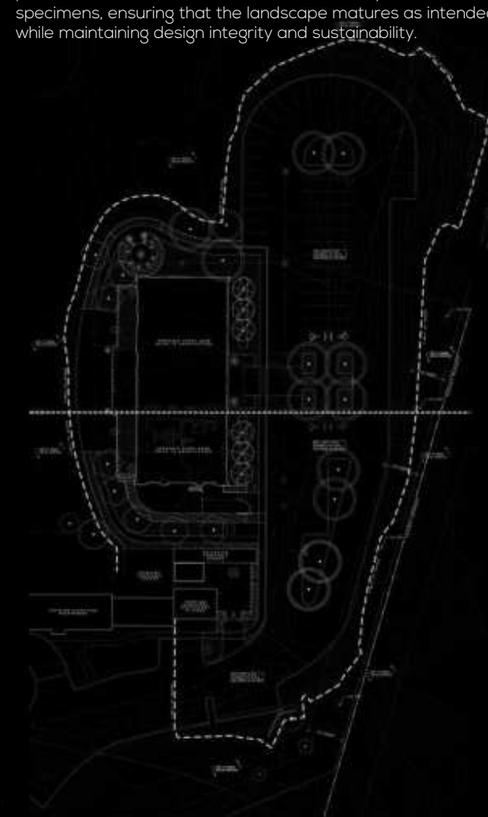


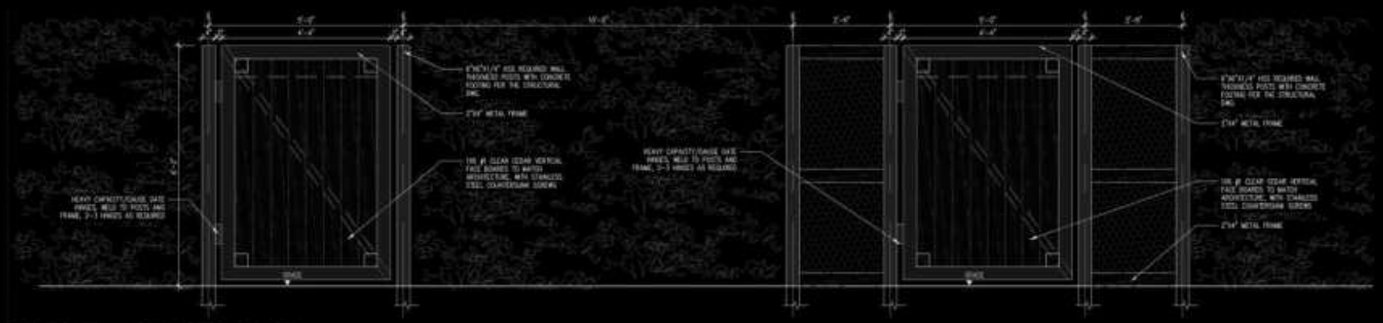
PLANTING PLAN

A Planting Plan provides a detailed layout for trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and grasses, ensuring aesthetic cohesion and ecological function. It references:

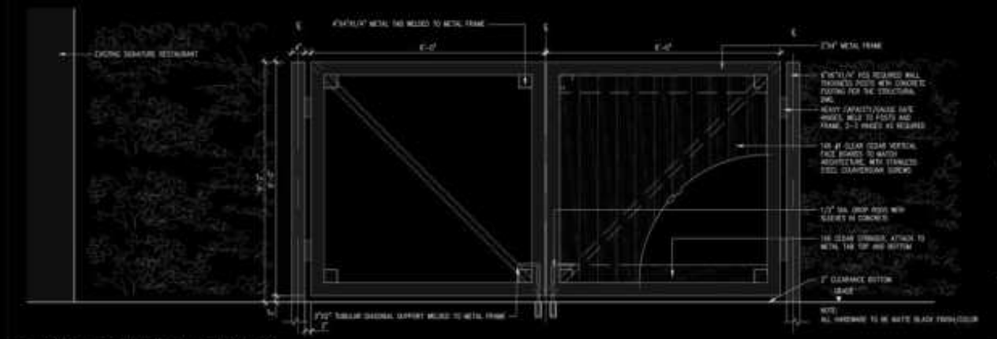
- A planting legend specifying species, sizes, and colors
- Applicable codes and standards
- Guidelines on plant health and appearance at installation

By standardizing plant quality expectations, the plan helps prevent the use of dead, weak, or aesthetically unsuitable specimens, ensuring that the landscape matures as intended while maintaining design integrity and sustainability.

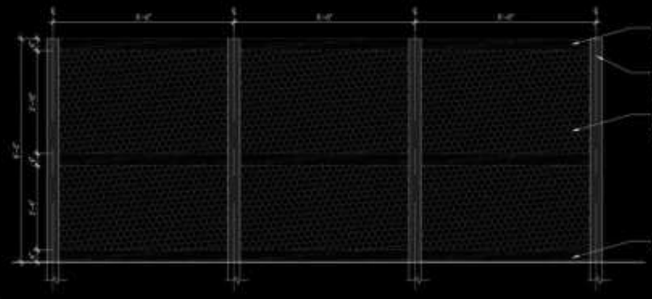




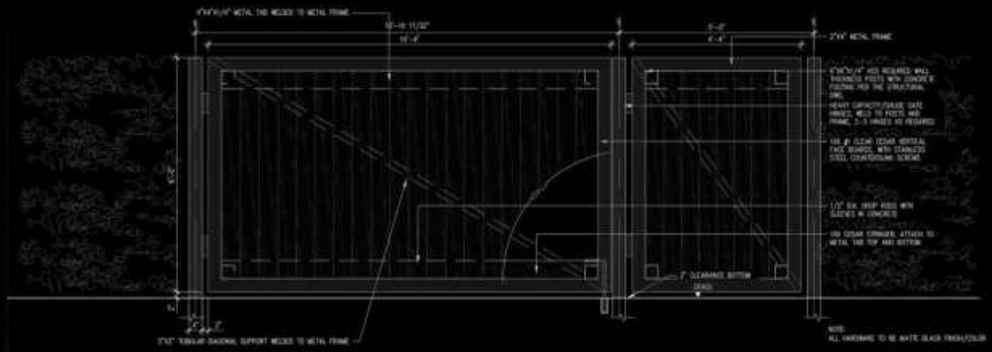
03 PEDESTRIAN GATE AT VEGETABLE GARDEN



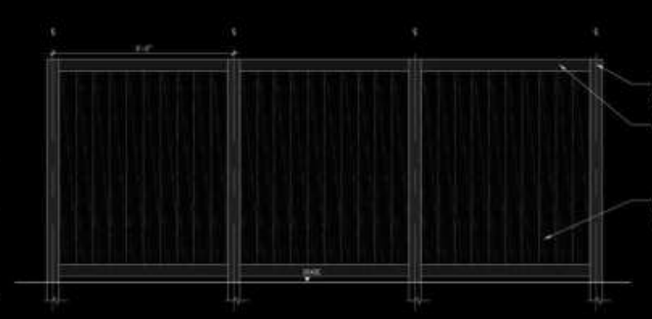
02 VEHICULAR SWING GATE AT SIGNATURE



02 SIGNATURE RESTAURANT GARDEN FENCE



01 VEHICULAR SWING GATE AT EVENT BARN



01 EVENT BARN PRIVACY FENCE



TOWNELAKE PARK

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: LJA ENGINEERING

ROLE: LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

LOCATION: MCKINNEY, TX

PROJECT GOAL:
Townelake Park is an integral part of a larger green corridor, offering an opportunity to transform an underutilized public space into a regional destination. With existing flooding and traffic challenges–alongside a lack of community engagement–the city sought a comprehensive redesign to elevate the park to the status of North Texas landmarks like Klyde Warren Park and the Dallas Arboretum.

As a lead designer, I was responsible for developing and presenting the final design vision to city officials, ensuring that every element of the park was thoughtfully crafted to enhance functionality, accessibility, and user experience. My role included designing key site features, such as:

- Bathroom structures for convenience and accessibility
- A treehouse & adventure play area to engage children and families
- Workout stations promoting fitness within the natural setting
- A light park creating a dynamic nighttime experience
- An amphitheater for community events and performances
- A modern playground and dog park, catering to diverse users

To secure funding and public support, I developed high-quality renderings and video presentations, which the city leveraged in grant applications, public meetings, and news coverage. These visuals were featured by local news agencies, bringing attention to the redevelopment efforts.

SITE CONTEXT





MAP LEGEND

PROJECT BOUNDARY

25' PIPELINE EASEMENT

25' SEWER EASEMENT

15' WATERLINE EASEMENT

POTENTIAL WETLAND

POTENTIAL FLOODPLAIN

A

AE

FLOODWAY

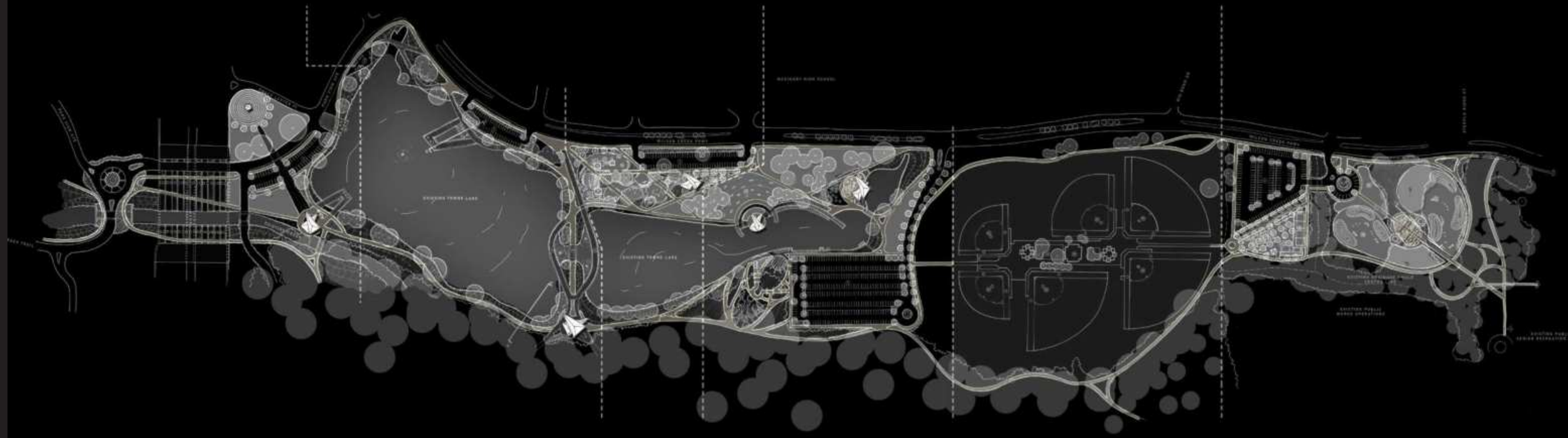
SITE ANALYSIS

Townelake Park has been a longstanding part of the McKinney community, featuring an existing pond and sports fields, but its potential remained underutilized. Our design approach focused on enhancing the park holistically, ensuring that it not only provided recreational opportunities but also addressed critical environmental challenges—particularly flooding issues.

By increasing the site's hydrological carrying capacity, the redesign helps mitigate stormwater concerns while creating a more resilient and ecologically functional landscape. Beyond infrastructure improvements, the success of a public space is measured by its ability to enhance social, environmental, and economic structures. The Townelake Park redesign aims to strengthen community engagement, promote environmental stewardship, and drive local economic growth, transforming it into a vibrant and enduring public asset.

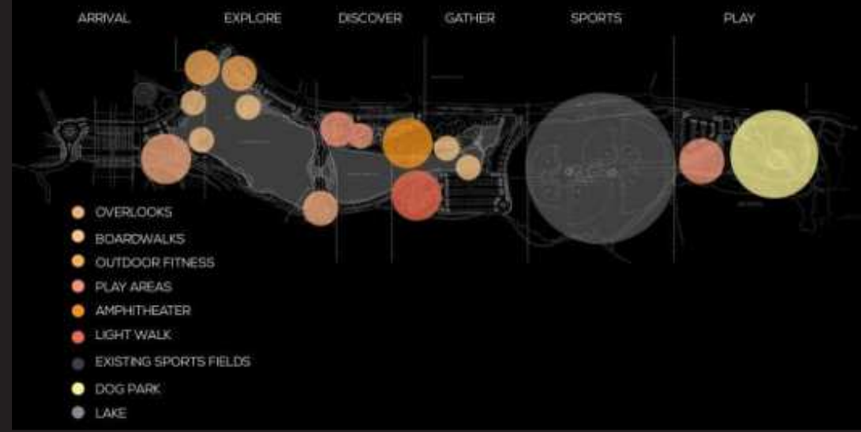
TO VIEW THE OVERALL TOWNELAKE VIDEO SCAN THE QR CODE:

ARRIVAL EXPLORE DISCOVER GATHER SPORTS PLAY



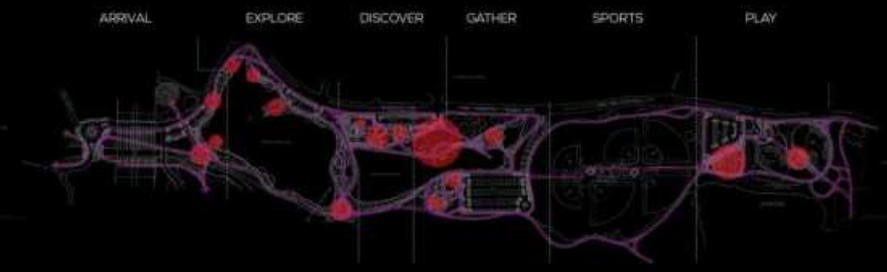
SITE ANALYSIS & SCOPE OF WORK

The redesign of Townelake Park creates a sense of discovery and excitement at every turn. Visitors are drawn into the landscape through stunning overlooks and boardwalks that gracefully weave around the pond, offering serene waterfront experiences. The design also features a treehouse that elevates users into the canopy, allowing them to engage with the existing forest from a completely new perspective—blurring the lines between built space and nature.



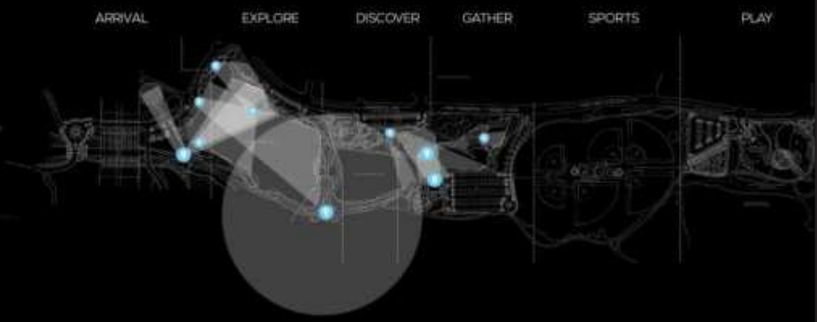
USER MOVEMENT & SPACES OF THE CROWD

The user movement strategy was developed around an interconnected web of trails, all stemming from a primary perimeter loop that encircles the park. This approach ensures continuous connectivity, allowing users to explore diverse recreational spaces without disrupting the site's natural flow. Along the way, small nooks and programmed spaces are nestled into the landscape, seamlessly integrating activity zones with quiet retreats, reinforcing the organic movement of visitors through the park.



POINTS OF INTEREST & TARGET VIEWS

The design philosophy was strongly influenced by the site's natural long views across the lake, guiding the orientation of key program elements. By strategically positioning major features—such as the amphitheater, boardwalks, and gathering spaces—to take advantage of these picturesque sightlines, the park creates a visually stunning experience where every moment is framed by the serene beauty of the lake and its surrounding landscape.



ARRIVAL

WELCOMNING • EXCITING • BEAUTIFUL

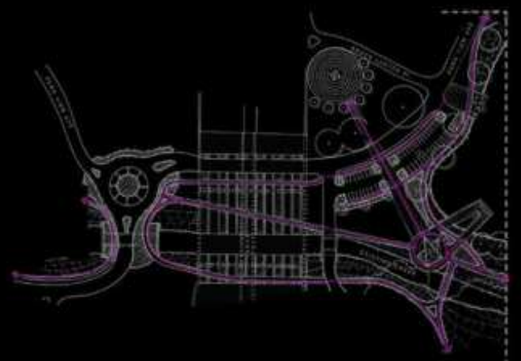
SITE PLAN & PHASE GOALS

The arrival experience is the first impression that shapes how visitors engage with Townelake Park. As users exit the highway, a grand entry monument rises above the tree canopy, serving as a visual guide that seamlessly directs them into the site. On the opposite side of the highway, the Park View Ave entrance welcomes guests with an enhanced traffic circle, featuring a rotating sculpture installation by local artists. This design not only creates a strong sense of identity but also provides a platform for showcasing diverse artistic styles throughout the year.

To preserve the park's natural beauty, underpass parking was strategically integrated, keeping vehicles out of sight and maintaining unobstructed views of the landscape. As visitors exit their cars, they are immediately introduced to thematic wayfinding elements, starting with a modern entry sign designed in the phase's signature color palette. This subtle but intentional use of color and design continuity helps guests subconsciously map out the different phases of the park, reinforcing a sense of cohesion across its diverse spaces.

Thoughtful wayfinding plays a crucial role in enhancing visitor navigation and creating a memorable, intuitive experience, ensuring that every aspect of the park feels connected, engaging, and easy to explore.

USER MOVEMENT



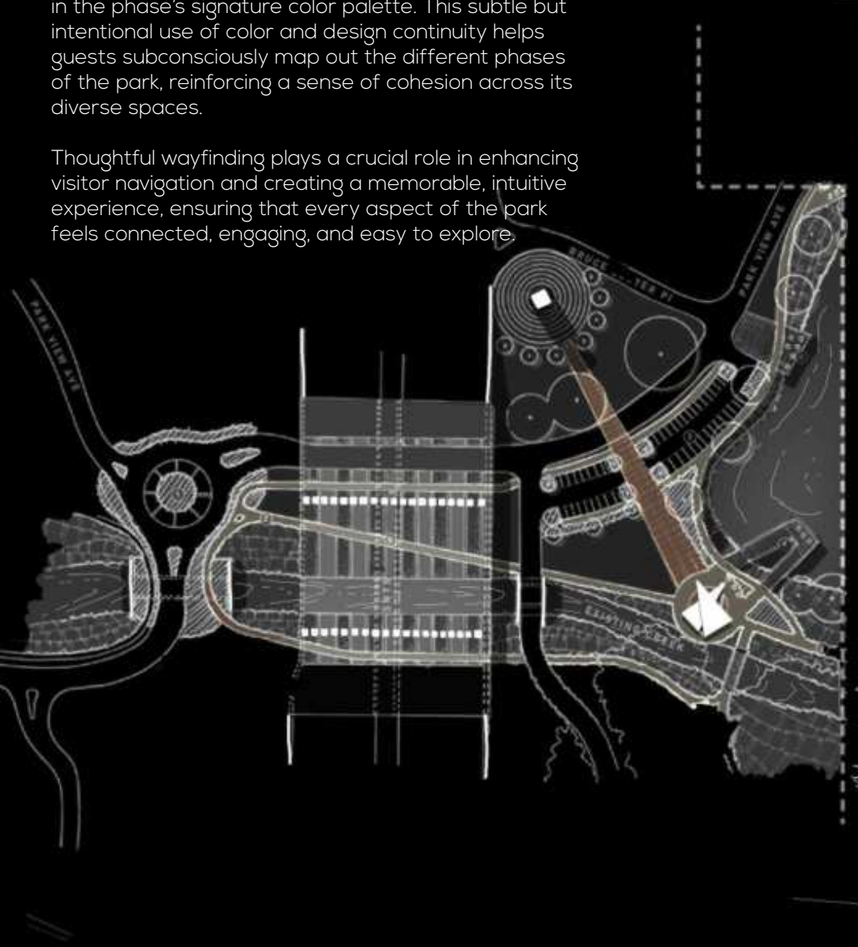
POINTS OF INTEREST & TARGET VIEWS



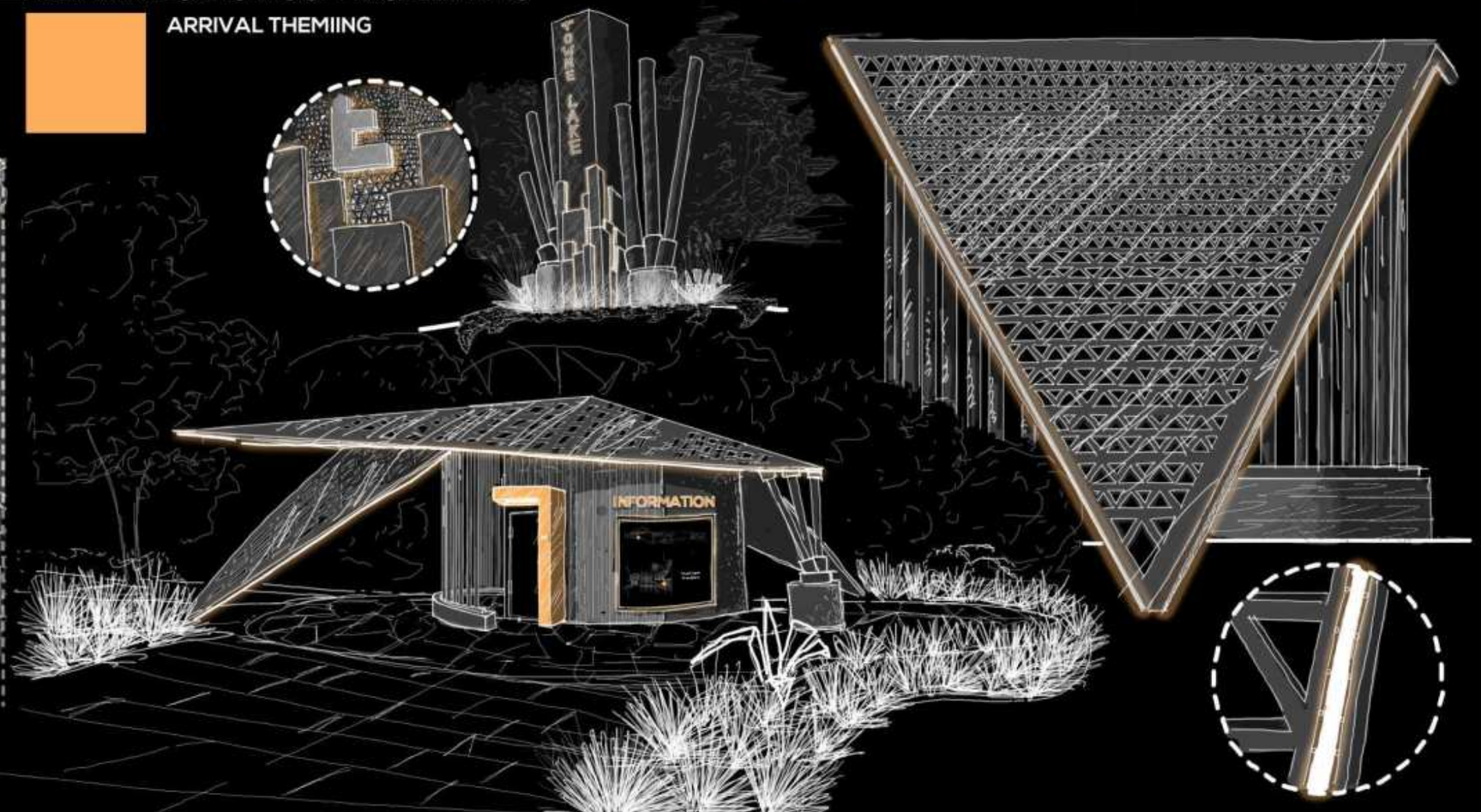
PERSPECTIVE VIEWS



PRELIMANARY SKETCHING OF PHASE ELEMENTS



ARRIVAL THEMIING








ARRIVAL



ARRIVAL

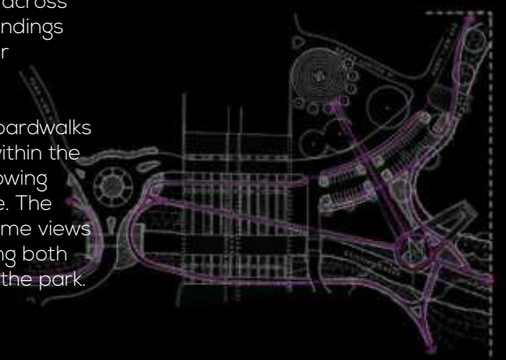
WELCOMNING • EXCITING • BEAUTIFUL

SITE PLAN & PHASE GOALS

Townelake Park offers two outdoor workout locations, seamlessly connected to the greater walking trail network, providing users with flexible fitness options while encouraging movement across the park. These workout stations integrate natural surroundings with exercise opportunities, creating a balanced space for recreation and wellness.

As guests walk along the trail, they encounter elevated boardwalks extending into the lake, rising into the treehouse hidden within the foliage. This unique structure ensures full accessibility, allowing visitors to experience the canopy from a new perspective. The boardwalk's support structure is carefully designed to frame views of the amphitheater and central water fountain, enhancing both the scenic experience and visual connectivity throughout the park.

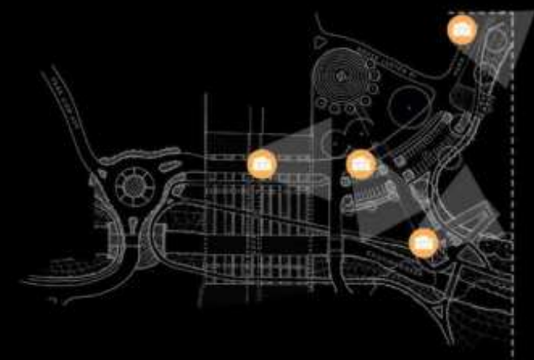
USER MOVEMENT



POINTS OF INTEREST & TARGET VIEWS

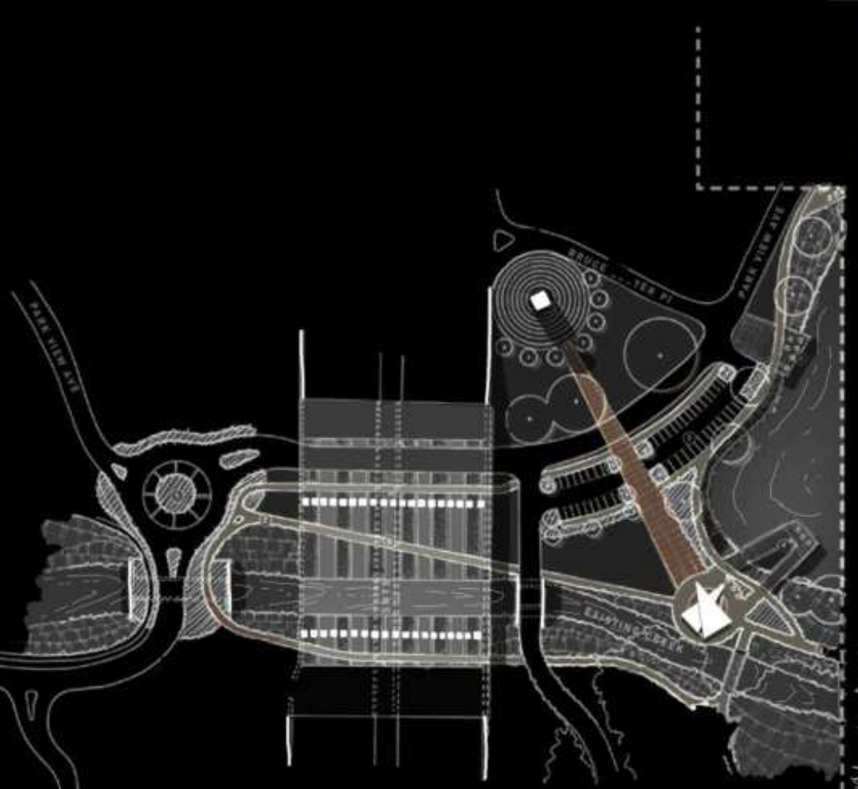


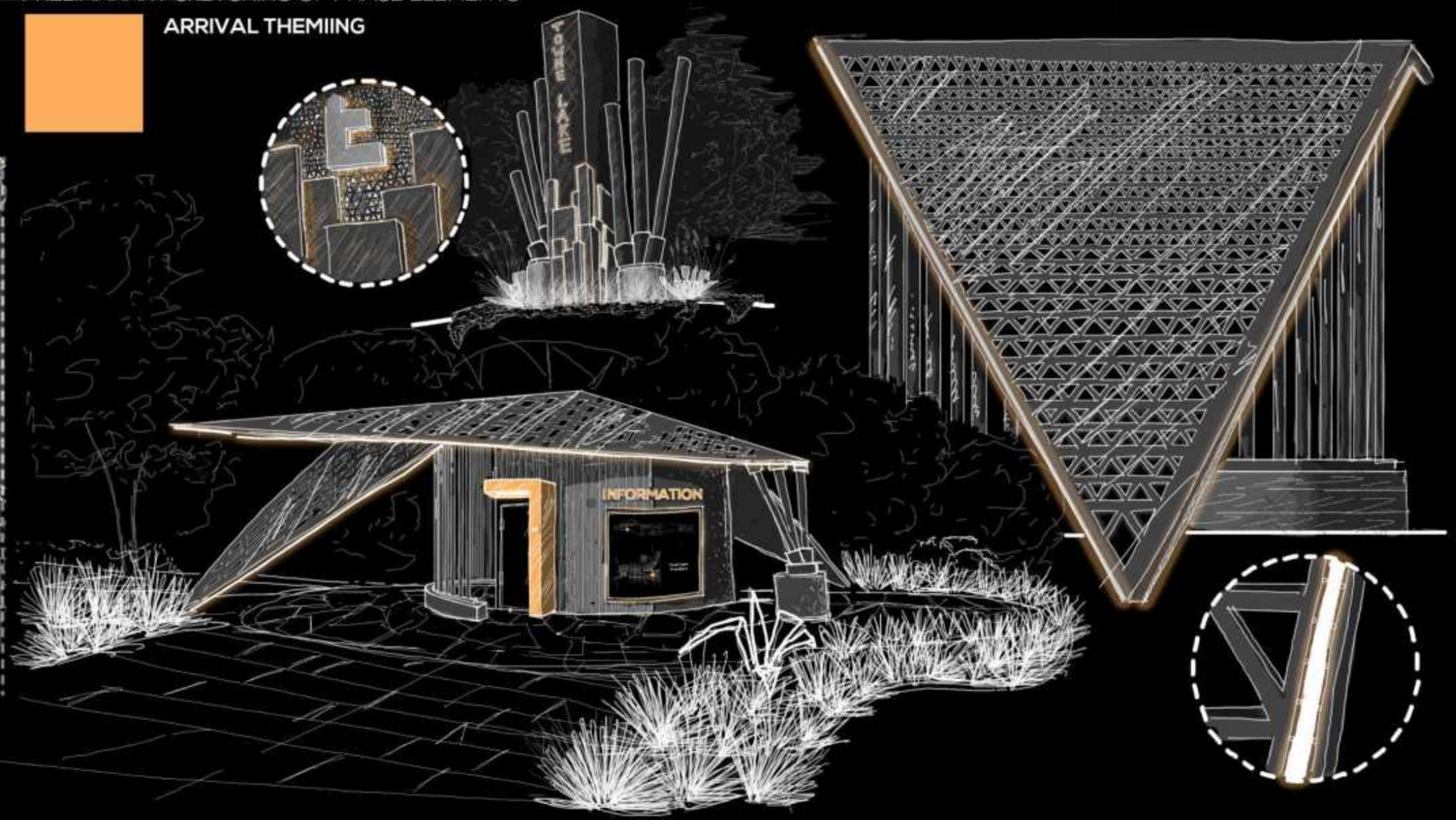
PERSPECTIVE VIEWS



PRELIMANARY SKETCHING OF PHASE ELEMENTS

ARRIVAL THEMIING






EXPLORE


COMMELAKE
FITNESS COURT



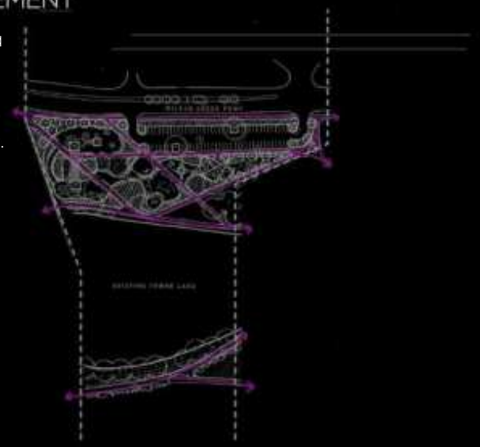


SITE PLAN & PHASE GOALS

The Discover Phase is dedicated to families and children, featuring a one-of-a-kind playground designed to spark creativity, imagination, and exploration. This space is fully accessible, incorporating modern design techniques and insights from behavioral specialists to ensure that children of all abilities can enjoy a truly inclusive play experience.

Strategically located, the playground connects to trails leading directly to the amphitheater, allowing families to enjoy both daytime play and evening events. By integrating play, accessibility, and connectivity, this phase transforms the playground into a hub of energy and interaction, ensuring that every child has access to the childhood experiences they deserve.

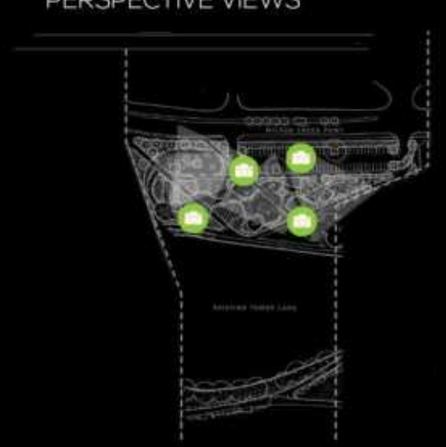
USER MOVEMENT



POINTS OF INTEREST & TARGET VIEWS



PERSPECTIVE VIEWS

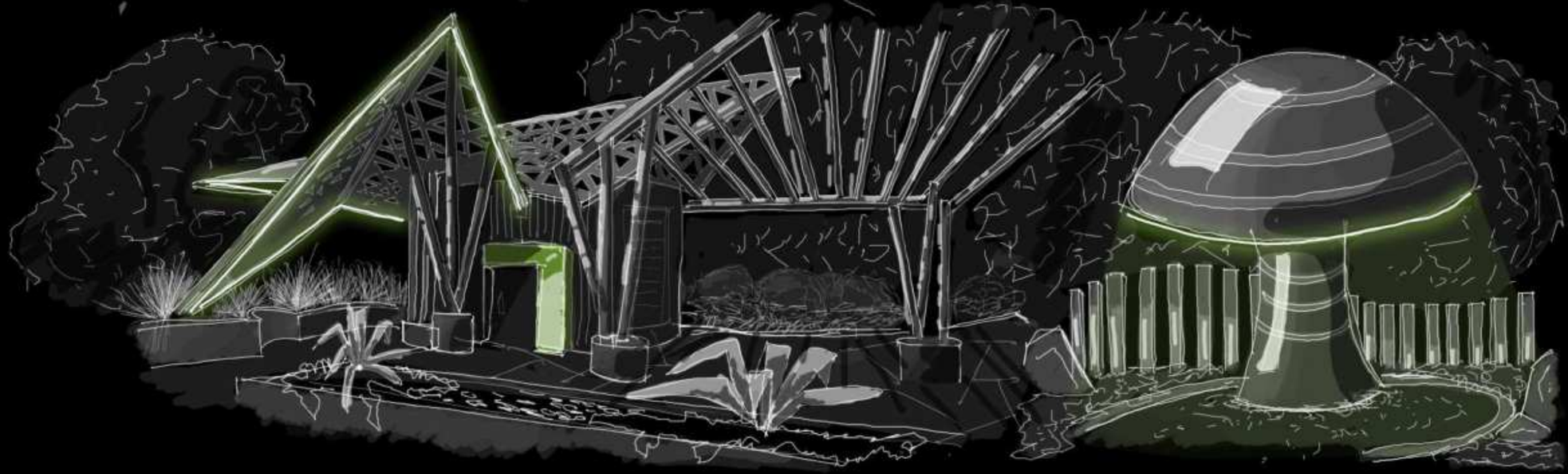


PRELIMANARY SKETCHING OF PHASE ELEMENTS



EXPLORE THEMIING






DISCOVER







GATHER

WORKOUT • DISCOVER • WONDER

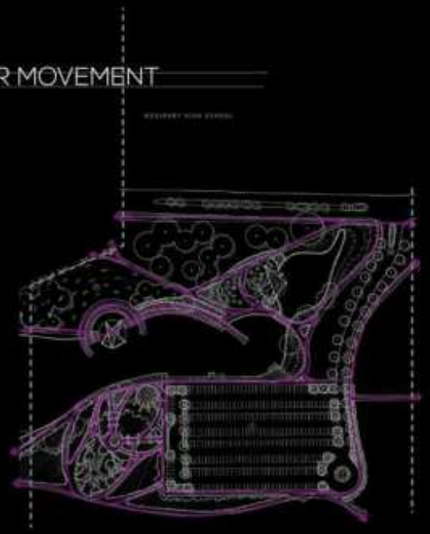
SITE PLAN & PHASE GOALS

This phase focuses on activating the lake's edge, making it a functional and engaging waterfront destination. Starting at the northern amphitheater, a boardwalk extends along the shoreline, leading to an outdoor working space equipped with Wi-Fi, allowing visitors to work remotely in a natural setting.

Coupling this workspace with food trucks and social gathering spaces ensures the park remains vibrant and active throughout the day. Moving south along the lake, visitors will find a dock for paddleboard, kayak, and paddle boat rentals, bringing dynamic activity to the water's surface.

Further down, the boardwalk leads to the Light Walk, an immersive installation where artistically designed light features are woven into the existing foliage, creating a breathtaking nighttime backdrop for the amphitheater and lakefront.

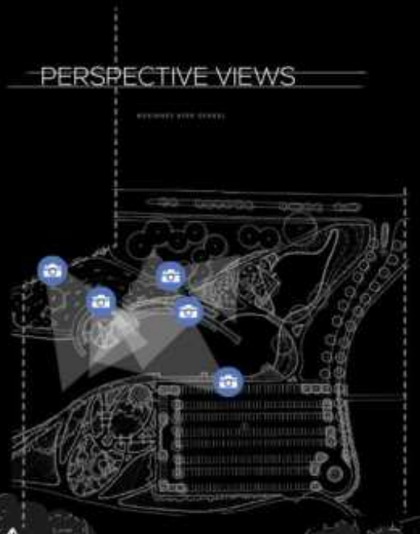
USER MOVEMENT



POINTS OF INTEREST & TARGET VIEWS



PERSPECTIVE VIEWS



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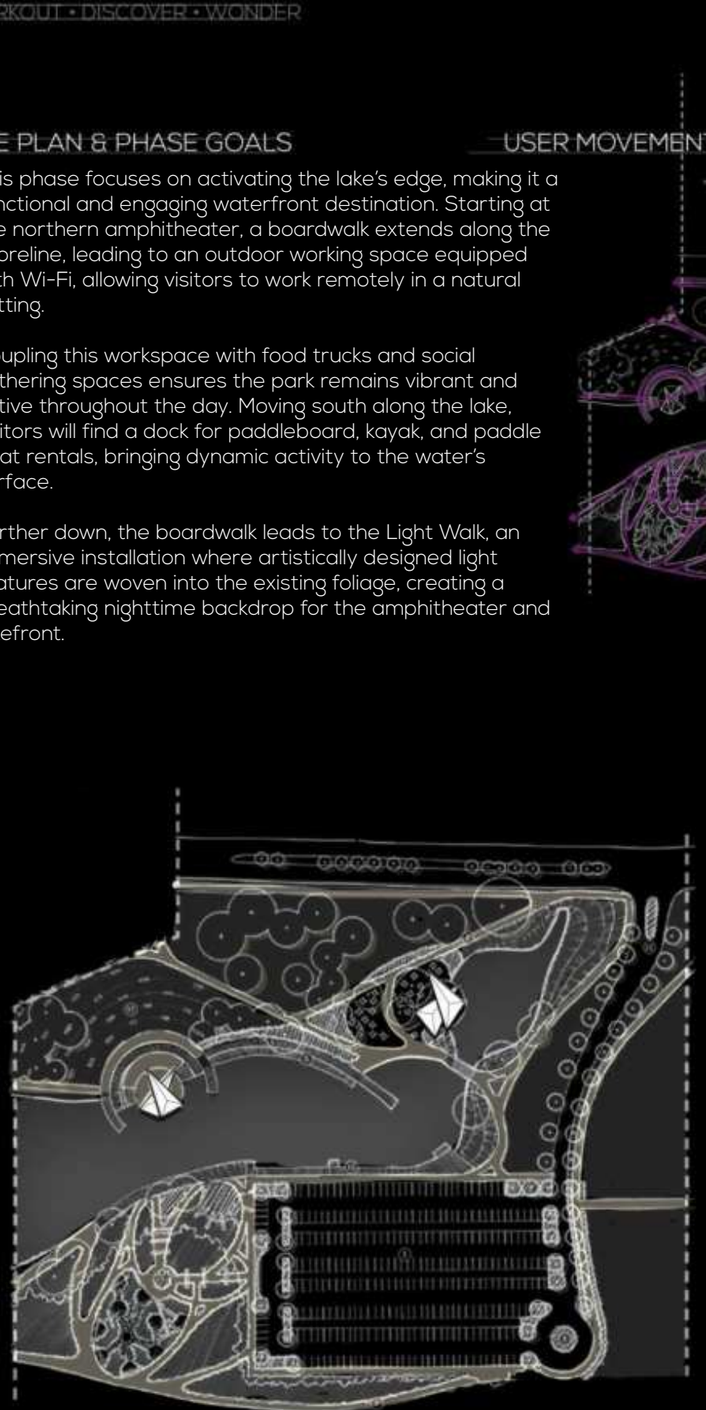
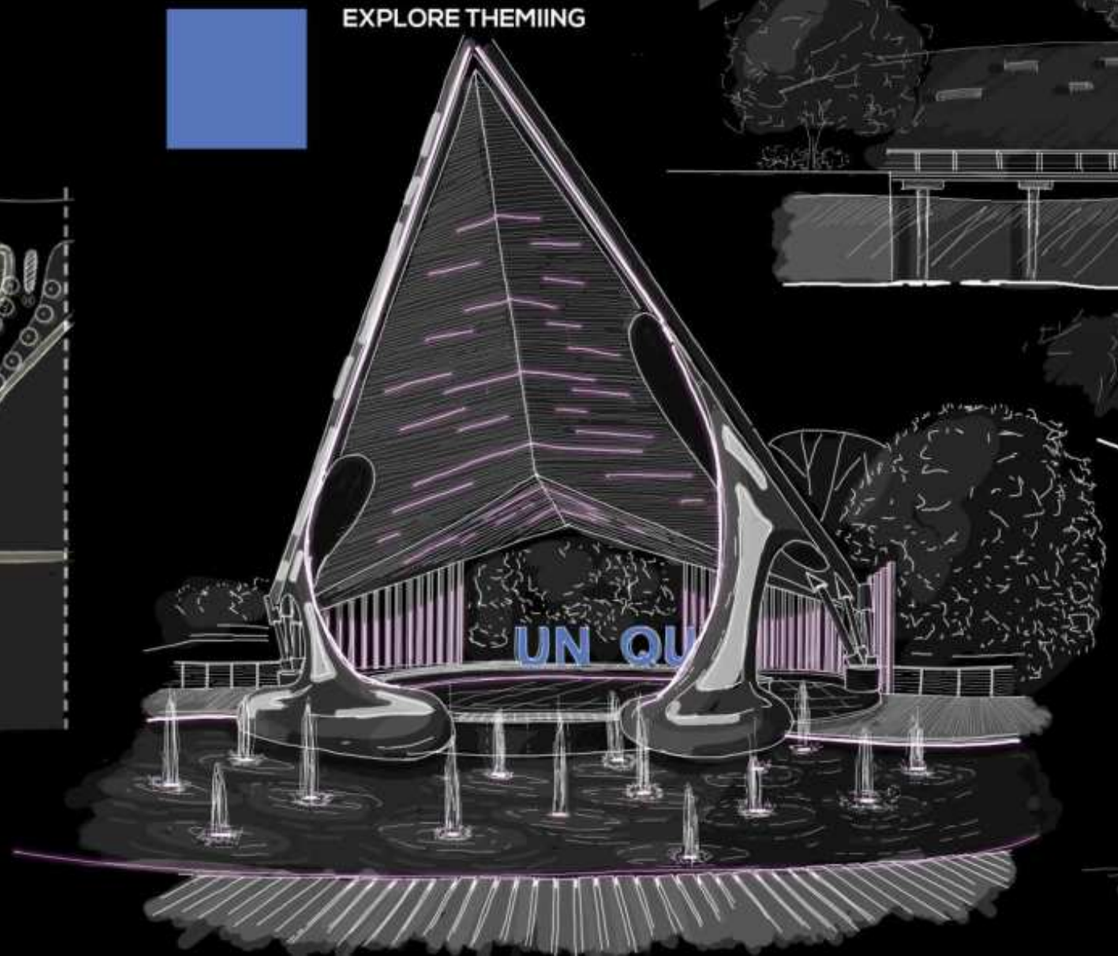
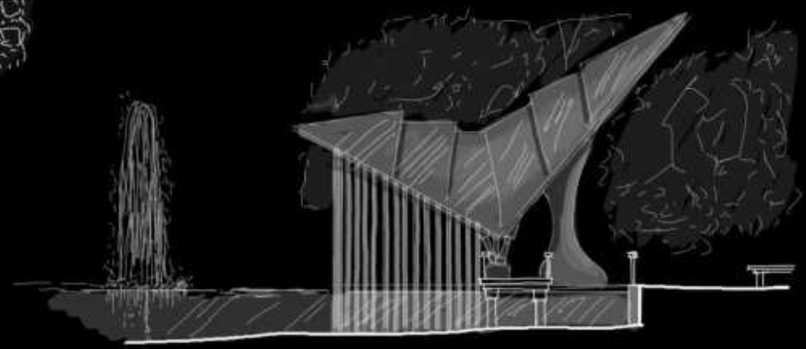











GATHER







PLAY

WORKOUT • DISCOVER • WONDER

SITE PLAN & PHASE GOALS

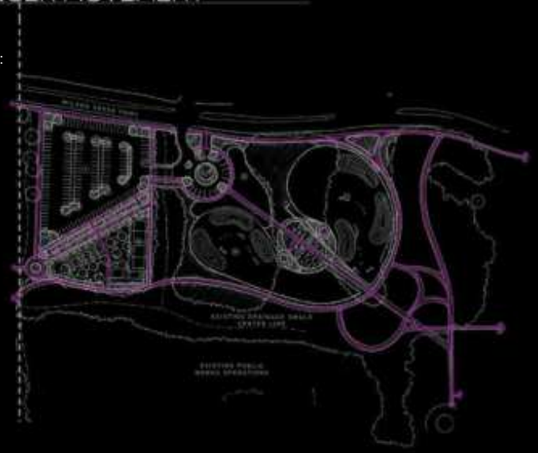
Anchoring the eastern end of the site, the Play Phase is designed as a lively, multi-use activity zone, featuring:

- Outdoor games & sand volleyball courts
- Food trucks & gathering spaces
- A weekly farmers market plaza

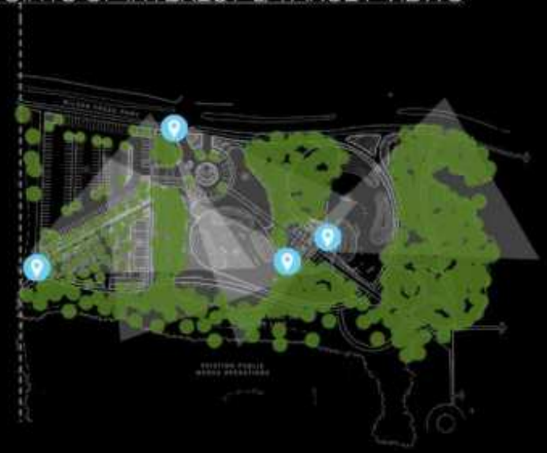
The entry plaza, located near the existing baseball fields, serves as a drop-off and pick-up hub, seamlessly transitioning visitors into this energetic district. Further west, within the existing tree canopy, lies the dog park's central plaza, featuring separate areas for large and small dogs. Here, visitors can relax while their pets play freely, making it an ideal location for dog owners attending the farmers market or exploring the park.

By blending recreation, social engagement, and natural integration, the Play Phase ensures that Townelake Park becomes a daily destination for people of all ages and interests.

USER MOVEMENT

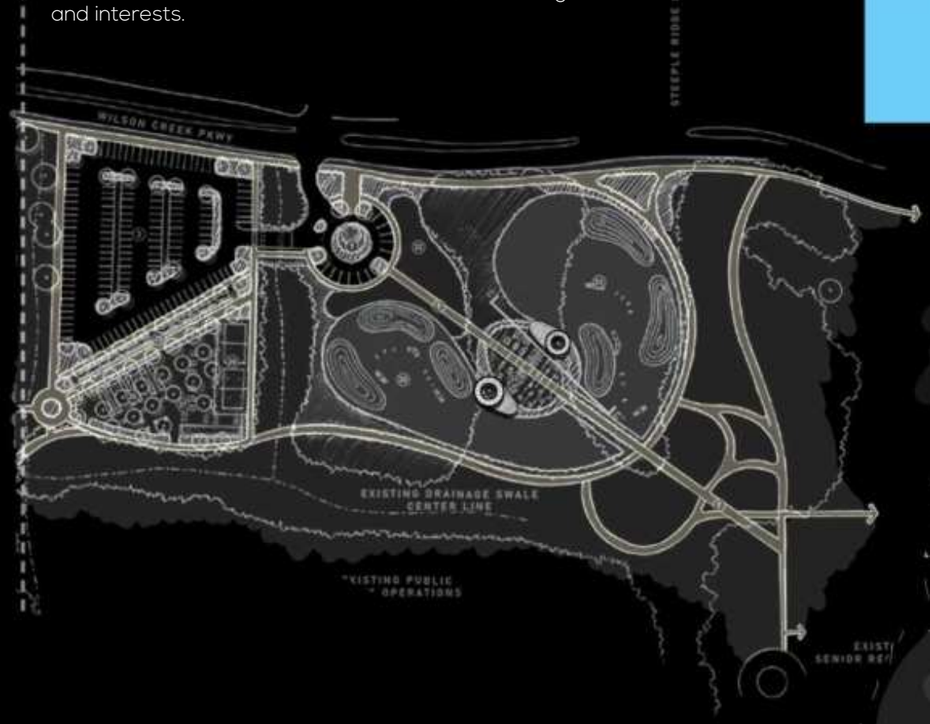


POINTS OF INTEREST & TARGET VIEWS



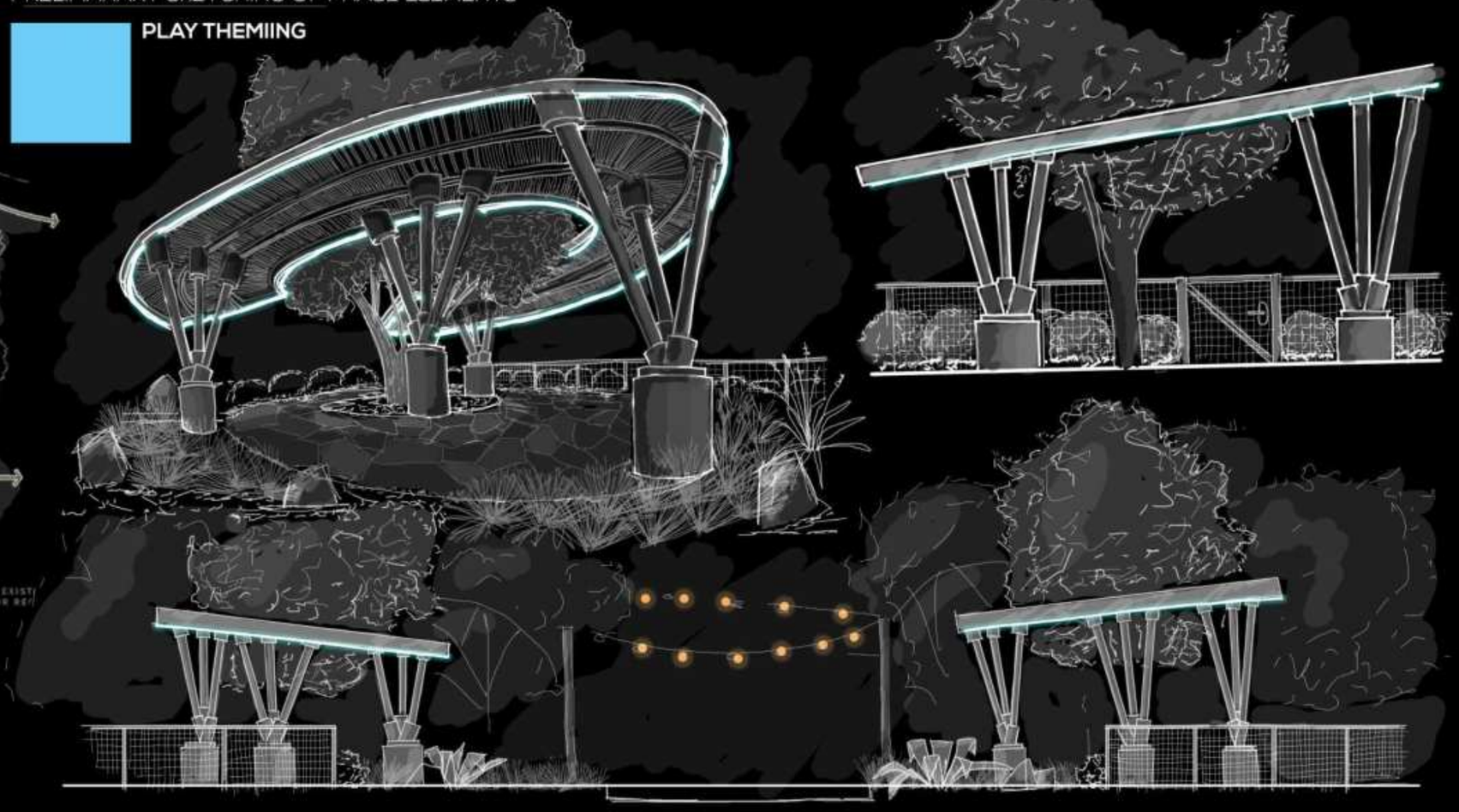
PERSPECTIVE VIEWS





PRELIMANARY SKETCHING OF PHASE ELEMENTS

PLAY THEMIING








PLAY





SMART BORDER

PEOPLE NATURE NATIONS

PROJECT INFO

COMPANY: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ROLE: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE STUDENT

LOCATION: EL PASO, TX

PROJECT GOAL:

As part of our semester project in urban planning, our class embarked on a research trip to El Paso, Texas, where we were tasked with identifying a pressing urban issue and exploring how landscape architecture could provide solutions.

Focusing on border crossings between El Paso and Juárez, I examined the current state of the ports of entry and quickly realized that the challenges extended far beyond infrastructure inefficiencies. The Rio Grande, once a vibrant ecosystem, has been concreted over, leading to the loss of native vegetation and critical wildlife habitats. Additionally, the border checkpoints are uninviting, failing to provide a welcoming environment for the thousands of people who pass through daily.

Beyond aesthetics and functionality, my research uncovered the wider environmental consequences of these infrastructural choices. The loss of natural riverbanks and permeable landscapes has significantly impacted water quality downstream, disrupted migratory wildlife corridors, and contributed to urban heat island effects. This project aimed to explore ecological restoration, sustainable infrastructure, and human-centered design strategies that could redefine the border crossings, transforming them into functional, environmentally responsible, and community-oriented spaces.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

RESEARCH AND DATA

SOCIAL

When designing urban and regional projects, it is essential to analyze not only environmental factors but also the social and economic dynamics that shape the area. A comprehensive study of demographic and economic data provides insights into trends related to wealth, gender, and race, helping to identify patterns that influence urban development and accessibility.

For a deeper understanding of border activity, I examined traffic density and transportation modes at El Paso's ports of entry. By leveraging U.S. Customs data, I compiled a dataset detailing vehicle, pedestrian, and commercial traffic volumes across all three ports, allowing for a holistic view of cross-border movement.

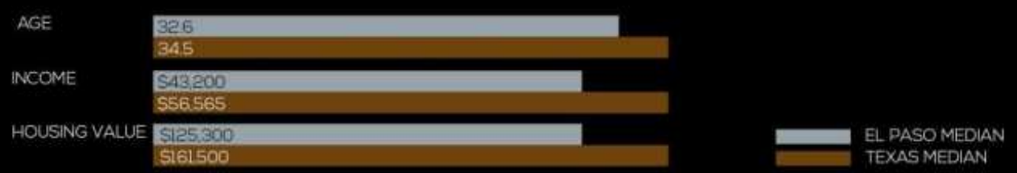
These data points paint a broader picture of El Paso and the border region, revealing not only how people and goods move through the city but also the economic and infrastructural pressures affecting the ports of entry. This approach ensures that proposed solutions address both physical infrastructure and the socio-economic realities shaping the urban fabric.



Male (49.3%)
Female (50.7%)
Other



Hispanic (80.7%)
White alone (13.1%)
Black alone (3.6%)
Asain alone (1.4%)
Two or more (0.9%)
American Indian (0.2%)
Pacific Islander (0.04%)
Other (0.01%)



EL PASO PORT OF ENTRY CROSSINGS

	2010	2014	2015	TWO-YEAR TOTAL (2014-15)	CHANGE (2010-15)	CHANGE (2014-15)
TRUCKS	710,363	746,817	758,074	1,504,891	1.5%	6.27%
PERSONAL VEHICLES	9,967,959	11,573,468	12,247,409	23,820,877	5.8%	5.8%
PEDESTRIANS	6,930,357	6,523,026	6,847,689	13,370,715	5.0%	-1.19%

KEY PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS

PEOPLE

At its core, this project is about connection—linking people, nature, and nations in a way that transforms the border crossing experience. Ports of entry are typically designed for efficiency and security, but they lack a welcoming presence. My goal was to reimagine these spaces as places where people don't just pass through, but where they feel encouraged to pause, gather, and enjoy their surroundings. By incorporating parks and gardens into each port, the design fosters a sense of community and respite, turning an often stressful transition into a more humane and inviting experience.

NATURE

The separation from nature at the border is stark—where a once-thriving river ecosystem existed, a concreted channel now dominates, stripping the area of its biodiversity and natural beauty. One of the pillars of this project is ecological restoration, focusing on revitalizing the Rio Grande and its surrounding environment. To achieve this, the design implements:

- Phytoremediation – Using plants to naturally filter pollutants from the soil and water
- Low Impact Development (LID) – Managing stormwater sustainably while reducing runoff
- Bioretention Systems – Capturing and treating pollutants before they reach the river

Beyond environmental restoration, the project also seeks to educate visitors about the importance of the region's ecosystems, fostering a greater appreciation for nature through signage, exhibits, and interactive spaces.

NATIONS

El Paso and Juárez are two cities divided only by a river, yet their history, culture, and people are deeply intertwined. This project aims to emphasize that no political or physical boundary can truly separate these communities. Using public art installations, this message will be visually reinforced, allowing visitors to experience a sense of unity and shared history as they cross the border.

This theme is also embedded in the functional redesign of the ports, ensuring that crossings are more welcoming, efficient, and reflective of the deep-rooted connections between these two nations. By integrating design, nature, and art, this project aspires to reshape the perception of border crossings, making them symbols of unity, resilience, and cultural continuity rather than mere gateways between nations.

PORTS OF ENTRY SITE ANALYSIS

CITY OVERVIEW

Represented by the orange circle, El Paso's downtown district sits adjacent to the first port of entry, presenting a key design opportunity. Modern urban research emphasizes walkability in high-density districts as a critical factor in the health and economic vitality of a city. This project capitalizes on that connection, strengthening pedestrian-friendly corridors between the port and downtown, transforming the area into a seamless extension of El Paso's urban core.

The green highlights identify existing public green spaces in El Paso and Juárez, including parks, golf courses, and sports complexes. These assets, though fragmented, provide a foundation for expanding connectivity between urban and ecological systems. The red band represents the embankment of the Rio Grande, a critical element of the design framework. Restoring and enhancing the river corridor is fundamental to the project's goals of environmental resilience and urban regeneration.

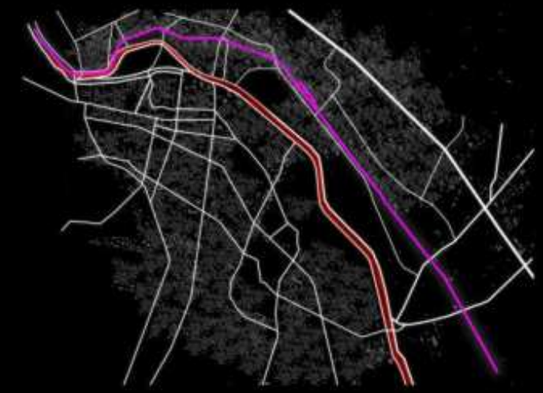


NON POINT SOURCE POLLUTANTS

The project prioritizes pollution mitigation from two major transportation systems—highways and railroads—both of which contribute to the degradation of water quality and ecological health. Revitalization efforts focus on restoring the Rio Grande by implementing a comprehensive stormwater management strategy that includes:

- Phytoremediation to naturally filter contaminants from runoff
- Low Impact Development (LID) techniques to reduce impervious surface impact
- Bioretention systems to treat groundwater before it reaches the river

Each transportation corridor will be integrated with customized buffer zones to prevent runoff pollution from directly entering the Rio Grande. By overlaying high-impact areas, the project identifies target sites where these restorative interventions will be most effective.

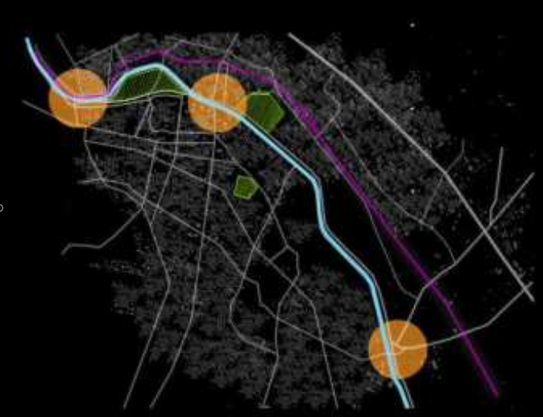


SITE ANALYSIS

To establish the design framework, I overlaid non-point source pollution data with a site analysis map, revealing the most critical zones for intervention.

Orange circles mark the three ports of entry, serving as primary sites for infrastructure and public space improvements.
The blue corridor represents the Rio Grande, where riverbed restoration and a phytoremediation buffer will be dedicated to improving water quality.
Purple and white zones indicate the railroad and highway networks, each requiring tailored remediation strategies.
For highways, phytoremediation techniques will be designed to absorb hydrocarbons and road-related contaminants, preventing them from flowing into the watershed. Railroads, which pose a unique challenge due to metal pollutants from trains, will be buffered with specialized vegetation and filtration systems to mitigate their ecological impact.

By analyzing these overlapping systems, the project establishes clear design parameters, ensuring that every intervention directly addresses urban connectivity, ecological health, and sustainable infrastructure development.



PORT OF ENTRY #1

UNITY OF NATIONS

The first port of entry is situated within downtown El Paso, making it a key connection point between the U.S. and Mexico. Given its urban setting, the design prioritizes walkability and accessibility, ensuring a more welcoming and efficient pedestrian experience. To achieve this, I developed a pedestrian promenade west of the traffic lanes, seamlessly guiding visitors from the border crossing into the heart of downtown.

This port is centered around the theme of connection between nations, reflected in the design elements, materials, and spatial organization. The process diagram (seen right) details the step-by-step development of each design component, illustrating how inspiration, function, and meaning informed the final concept.

Additionally, I created elevations and technical details that explain the integration of sustainable infrastructure, specifically:

Low Impact Development (LID) – Reducing stormwater runoff and improving water infiltration
Bioretention Systems – Capturing and filtering roadway pollutants before they enter the watershed
Phytoremediation Techniques – Utilizing vegetation to absorb contaminants and restore ecological balance
Diagrams and elevations serve as essential tools in communicating how these systems function within the site, demonstrating their practical application and long-term environmental benefits. This approach ensures that the redesigned port is not just a transportation hub, but also a symbol of unity, sustainability, and forward-thinking urban design.

UNITY OF NATIONS EXPRESSED THROUGH ART



INSPIRATION FOR THE WORK

Alone, we can do so little.
Togetjer, we can do so much.
Helen Keller



America is God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming
- Israel Zangwill

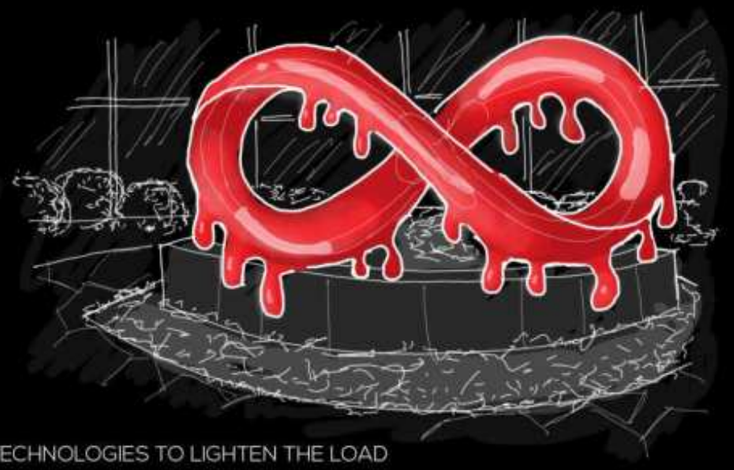
Two countries bound together by geography



TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF PEACE



THE KNOWLEDGE OF UNITY



PORT OF ENTRY #1- PROGRAMMING

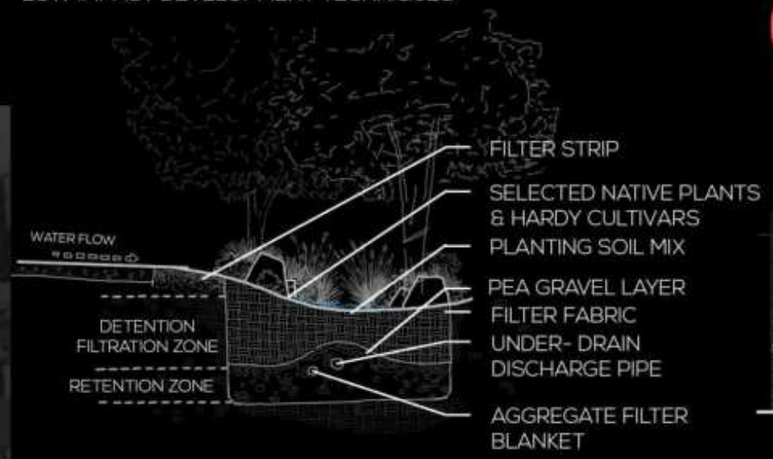
1- Entry From Mexico
2- Bioretention/ Phytoremediation Zones
3- Public Art
4- Green Roof
5- Parking
6- Secondary Entry
7- Tertiary Entry
8- Exit to Downtown El Paso



DESIGN INTERVENTIONS

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT AND GREEN GREEN TECHNOLOGIES

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES



BIORETENTION AND PHYTOREMEDIATION

PHYTOREMEDIATION FOR PARKING LOTS

1- AIRFLOW BUFFER
Tree species that trap particulate matter from the air. These pullutants will wash off in the first rain and collect in the followin system.

2- STORMWATER FILTER
Typically salt- tolerant plants that will filter out pollutants from the buffer strip.

3- SURFACE FLOW WETLAND
Plants and soild that filter out pollutants in a series of designed wetlenads



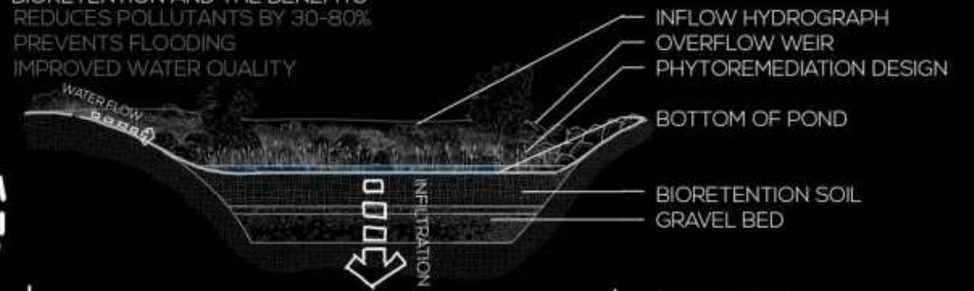
INTEGRATING GREEN TECHNOLOGIES TO LIGHTEN THE LOAD

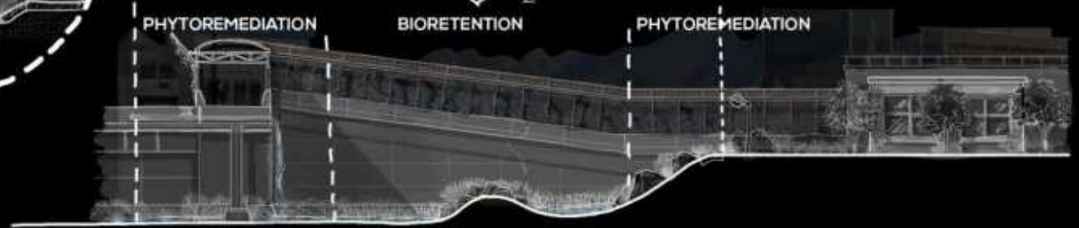
SOLAR



ENTRY FROM CIUDAD JUEREZ

BIORETENTION AND THE BENEFITS
REDUCES POLLUTANTS BY 30-80%
PREVENTS FLOODING
IMPROVED WATER QUALITY





BIORETENTION AND PHYTOREMEDIATION OF BRIDGE RUNOFF

PORT OF ENTRY #2

UNITY BETWEEN PEOPLE

Located adjacent to a large public park, the second port of entry embodies the project's central theme—connecting people. By transforming this crossing into a safe, welcoming, and comfortable space, the design fosters social engagement and cultural exchange, shifting the perception of border crossings from transitory spaces to community-centered environments.

A key design intervention involves retrofitting the port's roofs with extensive and intensive green roofs, enhancing thermal comfort, stormwater management, and ecological integration. This implementation process is detailed in the green roof section on this page.

Public art installations further reinforce the theme of human connection and generosity:

"The Good Samaritan" – Representing compassion and mutual aid across borders
"The Giving Hand" – Symbolizing unity, shared resources, and hospitality
This port is also uniquely positioned over an active railroad, presenting a direct opportunity to integrate phytoremediation strategies for mitigating railway pollutants. The site elevation at the bottom of the page illustrates the design guidelines for this integration, demonstrating how natural filtration systems will absorb and neutralize contaminants before they reach the river.

UNITY OF NATIONS EXPRESSED THROUGH ART



INSPIRATION FOR THE WORK

"Remember there's no such thing as a small act of kindness. No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted"
- Aesop

- "You have two hands: One to help yourself, the second to help others"
- - Audrey Hepburn

- "I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy" -
Rabindranath Tagore

THE GOOD SAMARITAN



THE GIVING HAND



PORT OF ENTRY #1- PROGRAMMING

1- Entry From Mexico
2- Bioretention/ Phytoremediation Zones
3- Public Art
4- Green Roof
5- Low Impact Development
6- Secondary Entry
7- Tertiary Entry
8- Connection to Adjacent Park
9- Exit to El Paso



DESIGN INTERVENTIONS

INTEGRATING GREEN ROOFS

DIFFERENT CLASSIFICATIONS OF GREEN ROOFS

EXTENSIVE GREEN ROOFS

Extensive green roofs are designed to reap the benefit that green roofs offer at minimal cost and with very little maintenance.

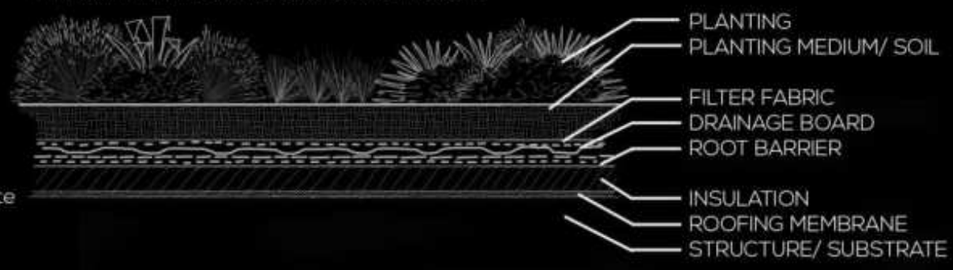
BIODIVERSE GREEN ROOFS

Biodiverse green roofs are low maintenance roofs designed to create or replace natural habitats.

INTENSIVE GREEN ROOFS

If you want a garden on your roof, perhaps if you are hoping to plant shrubs and have a mown grass area, this solution is the most appropriate, but it is the heaviest and requires the same maintenance of any garden.

IMPLEMENTATING EXTENSIVE GREEN ROOFS

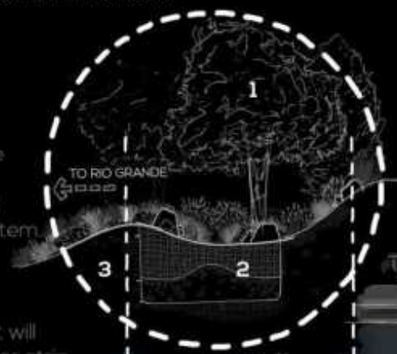




MAIN ENTRY FROM UNITED STATES

BIORETENTION AND PHYTOREMEDIATION

PHYTOREMEDIATION FOR TRAIN TRACKS



1- AIRFLOW BUFFER
Tree species that trap particulate matter from the air. These pullutants will wash off in the first rain and collect in the followin system.

2- STORMWATER FILTER
Typically salt- tolerant plants that will filter out pollutants from the buffer strip.

3- MULTI- MECHANISM BUFFER
Heavily vegetated buffer along railyards will mitigate organic contaminants.

RAILYARD UNDER BRIDGE TO MEXICO

PORT OF ENTRY #3

UNITY WITH NATURE

The third port of entry highlights the human relationship with nature, reinforcing the idea that we thrive when we protect and restore the environment. This connection is emphasized through the art installations on-site, which are detailed in the art inspiration section to the right.

The native grassland between the port and the Rio Grande serves as an ideal location for phytoremediation, extending down the length of the river corridor to improve water quality and habitat restoration. The elevation below illustrates this system in action, showing how strategic planting zones will mitigate pollutants and stabilize the riverbanks.

Understanding regional environmental conditions is essential for successful ecological restoration. This is reflected in the section above, which identifies El Paso as part of USDA Zone 8B. This classification informs plant selection, ensuring that species used in the design are climate-adaptive, drought-tolerant, and require minimal irrigation. By prioritizing resilient native and adaptive species, this project promotes long-term ecological health and sustainability while enhancing the visual and experiential quality of the port.

UNITY OF NATIONS EXPRESSED THROUGH ART

INSPIRATION FOR THE WORK



- **"If the environment is happy, people will laugh and your grief will go away."**
  - - Srinivas Mishra

- **"Land really is the best art."**
  –Andy Warho

- **"The earth is always changing...readjusting to our existence. Each era is full of unique challenges"**
  - Val Uchendu

THE PROTECTOR



MOTHER NATURE'S LOVE



PORT OF ENTRY #1- PROGRAMMING

1- Entry From Mexico
2- Bioretention/ Phytoremediation Zones
3- Public Art
4- Green Roof
5- Low Impact Development
6- Secondary Entry
7- Tertiary Entry
8- Connection to Adjacent Park
9- Exit to El Paso



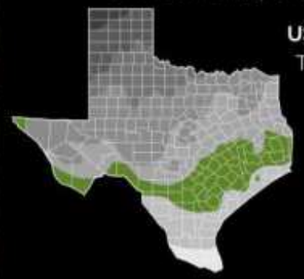
DESIGN INTERVENTIONS

NATIVE AND ADAPTIVE PLANTS

NATIVE AND ADAPTIVE PLANTS FOR EL PASO

A native plant is "a plant that has evolved in a given place over a period of time sufficient to develop complex and essential relationships with the physical environment and other organisms in a given ecological community."

-Doug Tallany, Professor of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware



USDA HARDINESS ZONE 8B

TRANS- PECOS, MOUNTAINS AND BASIN

MIN. AVERAGE TEMPERATURE

15- 20°

NATIVE TREES

Cottonwood (Populus sp.)
Desert Willow (Chilopsis linearis)
Honey Mesquite (Prosopis glasulosa)
Mondell Pine (Pinus eldarica)
Live Oak (Quercus Virginiana)

NATIVE SHRUBS

Desert Spoon (Dasylirion wheeleiri)
False Yucca (Hesperaloe parviflora)
Big Sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata)
Silver Sagebush (Artemisia cana)
Mahonia (Mahonia repens)

NATIVE GRASSES

Gulf Muhly (Muhlenbergia capillaris)
Deergrass (Muhlenbergia rigens)
Side-oats Grama (Bouteloua curtipendula)



BIORETENTION EXITING SITE

RIVER PHYTOREMEDIATION

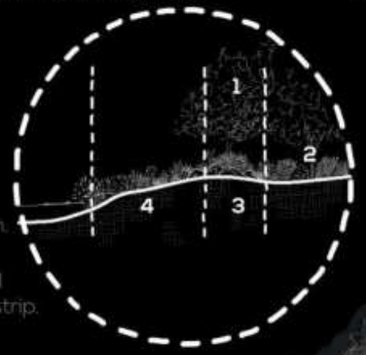
PHYTOREMEDIATION FOR RIVER CONNECTIONS

1- AIRFLOW BUFFER
Tree species that trap particulate matter from the air. These pullutants will wash off in the first rain and collect in the followin system.

2- STORMWATER FILTER
Typically salt- tolerant plants that will filter out pollutants from the buffer strip.

3- STABILIZATION MAT
Vegetation capping is used to restrict contaminants and people from interacting

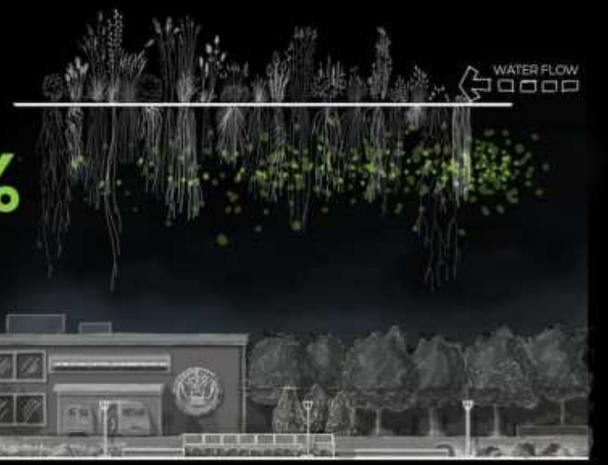
4- MULTI- MECHINISM BUFFER
Heavily vegetative buffer along the river to remove organic contaminants.



GRASSES AND POLLUTANTS

REDUCES POLLUTANTS BY

30-80%



COURTYARD ESCAPE AND PHYTOREMEDIATION TO RIO GRANDE

GRAYSON BORCHARDT



PHONE: 817. 709. 9202

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

E-MAIL: grayson.borchardt@outlook.com

EDUCATION -

I earned my B.S. in Landscape Architecture from Texas Tech University, where I built a strong foundation in commercial and residential design, construction documentation, grading, and large scale site planning. My work blended technical precision with artistic vision, combining digital workflows and hand rendering to shape environments that told stories through space.

After graduating in 2020, I worked full time at LJA Engineering before transitioning to SWA Group, where I contributed to complex, large scale projects and developed experience in coordination, leadership, and execution. Across these roles and additional residential contracting work, I focused on designing immersive physical environments that balanced form, function, and emotion.

I have since earned my Master's in Video Game Design from New York Film Academy in Burbank, where I specialized in level design, world building, and environmental storytelling with a primary focus on first person shooters. I work extensively in Unreal Engine, blueprint systems, and C#, building playable spaces that emphasize flow, tension, player psychology, and cinematic immersion. My goal is to merge my background in real world environmental design with interactive systems to craft grounded, believable, and emotionally impactful game worlds.

ABOUT MYSELF -

I was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas, where my fascination with immersive spaces began long before I understood what design truly was. Places like the Fort Worth Water Gardens and Sundance Square showed me how environments could transport people, shift emotion, and create memory. A visit to Washington, D.C. in high school solidified that understanding as I experienced firsthand how landscape and architecture can evoke reverence, reflection, and power.

At the same time, video games were shaping my imagination. From the first PlayStation to late night clan battles in Halo 3 and Call of Duty, I was drawn to the worlds as much as the gameplay. I recreated scenes with Legos, studied level layouts subconsciously, and became fascinated with how space, pacing, and sightlines could generate emotion and tension.

As a Division I athlete, injuries forced me to step away from competition, including a broken elbow and fractures in both hips. During those periods, games became more than entertainment. They became an escape and a source of connection. When Call of Duty: Warzone launched in 2020, it reunited my closest friends during the isolation of the pandemic. That experience reinforced what I already believed. Games create spaces where people connect, compete, and find meaning.

Today, my focus is on designing first person shooter experiences that combine grounded realism, environmental storytelling, and strong spatial flow. I want to build worlds that feel lived in, authentic, and emotionally charged.

INTERESTS -

My background in landscape architecture instilled a deep respect for resilience and sustainability. Witnessing the devastation of the British Virgin Islands during the 2017 hurricane season reinforced my belief in designing environments that respond to real world forces. Studying in West Texas further shaped my perspective on conservation and the responsibility designers carry when shaping landscapes.

The games that inspired me growing up, including Medal of Honor, Assassin's Creed, The Elder Scrolls, and Fallout, showed me that interactive worlds can preserve history, explore morality, and immerse players in powerful narratives. I have long admired figures such as Audie Murphy, whose story of courage and sacrifice represents the kind of human depth I hope to honor through interactive storytelling.

My goal in AAA development is to design first person shooter worlds that feel authentic in their geography, believable in their systems, and meaningful in their narrative weight. I bring the discipline of a trained environmental designer, the technical capability of a gameplay focused developer, and the personal drive of someone who has experienced firsthand how powerful immersive worlds can be.

I am committed to building environments that do more than look compelling. I want them to move players, challenge them, and stay with them long after they put the controller down.

GRAYSON BORCHARDT
gr.borchardt@student.nyfa.edu | Linkdin: Grayson Borchardt | 817.709.9202

Education
New York Film Academy – Burbank, CA (Graduated December 2025)
M.A. in Video Game Design

Texas Tech University – Lubbock, TX (Graduated 2020)
B.S. in Landscape Architecture

Game Design Experience
Game Design Studio I – Skewerlicious | Systems Designer & Environment Artist | CA
- Contributed to system design and narrative structure for a 2D stylized art game.
- Designed and illustrated background environments supporting tone, pacing, and story progression.
- Collaborated in cross disciplinary team pipeline from concept through playable prototype.

Game Design Studio II – Aquatoss | Systems Designer & Environment Artist | CA
- Reimagined a classic water ring toy into a cozy puzzle experience inspired by match style progression systems.
- Designed core gameplay systems governing ring physics, progression loops, and reward mechanics.
- Created and implemented a stylized 3D underwater reef environment in Unity.
- Focused on player feedback systems, readability, and relaxing environmental tone.

Game Design Studio III – Greener Pastures | Game Designer & Environment Artist | CA
- Designed and modeled the player island hub, floating town, and environmental assets for a hybrid 2D and 3D world.
- Built and implemented 3D environments in Unity, integrating lighting, materials, and animated elements.
- Coded environmental systems including swimming fish AI and ambient underwater effects to enhance immersion.
- Translated lessons from prior projects into improved world cohesion, performance optimization, and pipeline efficiency.

Game Design Studio IV – Demon Lord's Dance Castle | Game Designer & Level Designer | CA
- Designed a hybrid tower defense and rhythm combat game centered on player created pathing systems.
- Developed modular tile variants and board layouts for both defense and dance battle phases.
- Established cohesive gothic hell kingdom art direction through 2D asset creation and UI layout design.
- Balanced gameplay systems governing enemy flow, tile placement logic, and difficulty scaling.

Highwater | Creator and Lead Designer | CA
- Designed and prototyped a narrative driven first person shooter set in a near future occupied Texas.
- Built graybox and final environment spaces in Unreal Engine focusing on combat flow, sightlines, and environmental storytelling.
- Implemented gameplay systems using Blueprint and C#, integrating AI behavior, mission scripting, and level progression logic.
- Developed immersive world building rooted in realistic geography, architecture, and emotional narrative pacing.
- Directed creative vision, level iteration, and environmental art pipeline from concept to playable vertical slice.

Landscape Architecture Experience
SWA Group, Dallas, TX (October 2022 – October 2023)
Landscape Architect
- Led projects in a project manager capacity for university and hospitality designs.
- Developed concept packages, hand graphics, and high-end commercial design solutions.
- Created and reviewed construction documents for project submittals.

LJA Engineering, McKinney, TX (July 2020 – May 2025)
Landscape Designer
- Responsible for designs, hand graphics, and concept packages for commercial clients.
- Developed 3D models in SketchUp and Lumion.
- Created and reviewed construction documents for submittals.

ALPHATERRA, Fort Worth, TX (March 2018 – 2022)
Founder | Landscape Designer
- Established and managed my own landscape design company, specializing in high-end residential projects.
- Designed and developed custom landscape solutions for luxury residential properties.
- Created hand-rendered residential and commercial designs for installation bids.
- Collaborated with architects and contractors to produce commercial bid packages and execute client visions.

MP Studio, San Antonio, TX (January 2019 – August 2019)
Landscape Architect Intern
- Created Photoshop site plans, elevations, and perspectives.
- Hand-rendered site plans for design charrettes and presentations.
- Assisted in producing client packets, PowerPoints, and infographics.

Parkhill Smith & Cooper, Lubbock, TX (June 2018 – December 2018)
Landscape Architect Intern
- Created Photoshop renderings and hand-rendered sketches for client presentations.
- Assisted with final layouts, construction documents, and AutoCAD grading plans.

Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX (June 2018 – January 2019)
Research Assistant – Landscape Architecture
- Contributed to the redesign of Texas Department of Transportation offices.
- Created schematic designs and Photoshop renderings for the project.
- Assisted in finalizing landscape designs with the project team.

Archiverde, Dallas, TX (Spring Break 2018)
Landscape Architect Intern
- Built SketchUp models for high-end residential designs.
- Assisted in construction document completion and residential site surveys.

Naturescapes, Hudson Oaks, TX (May 2017 – 2022)
Landscape Architect Intern
- Assisted in implementing and installing residential landscape designs.
- Developed hand-rendered sketches for client bids and proposals.

Skills
Game Design & Development
Unreal Engine (In Progress)
Unity (In Progress)
Visual Studio

3D Modeling & Rendering
Maya
Blender
SketchUp
Lumion

Architecture & Engineering Software
Civil 3D
AutoCAD
Revit
Adobe Creative Suite
Photoshop
Illustrator
InDesign
Audition
Paint

Hand Rendering & Graphics
Concept Sketching
Site Plans
Elevations

Project Management & Technical Skills
Team Leadership
Client Presentations
Construction Documents
Budgeting & Scheduling
Creating Office Standards