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CHEROKEE NATION®
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Office of the Principal Chief

Chuck Hoskin Jr.
Principal Chief
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Bryan Warner
Deputy Principal Chief
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September 15, 2025

TO: Johnny Jack Kidwell, *Speaker of the Council* ; Kevin Easley, *Deputy Speaker*; Joshua Sam, *Secretary*

CC: Bryan Warner, *Deputy Principal Chief*; Cabinet; Sub-Cabinet, Chuck Garrett, CNB *Chief Executive Officer*; Molly Jarvis, CNB SVP & COO Cultural and Economic Development; Travis Owens, VP of Cultural Tourism; Cherokee National Historical Society: Chairwoman Christine Neuhoﬀ, Jack D. Baker, Bill Davis, Brenda Partian, Calvin Rock, Mildred Taylor and Susan Plumb.

FR: Chuck Hoskin, Jr, *Principal Chief*

Administration Memorandum Advising Council of Proposed Replacement Cherokee Heritage Center

The purpose of this memorandum is to transmit, consistent with proposed legislation, a plan endorsed by the Cherokee National Historical Society for a replacement Cherokee Heritage Center facility.

Background

In 2020 Deputy Chief Warner and I proposed, and the Council unanimously approved, the [Cherokee Heritage Center Act of 2020](#) (LA 10-20, September 24, 2025). After five years of dedicated work by Cherokee Nation Businesses Cultural and Economic Development team and the newly reformed Cherokee National Historical Society, the act has produced precisely the intended results: acquire the Heritage center property, assets and records from the predecessor Cherokee National Historical Society and put Cherokee Nation on a path to reimagine and rebuild the Cherokee Heritage Center as a world class facility for history, culture and research. The facility, established in 1967, is now owned and controlled by Cherokee Nation and we can collectively shape its future, with the continued and indispensable guidance of the new Cherokee National Historical Society authorized by the act.¹

¹ The Act authorized the new CNHS, referred to in the act as CNHS (2020), consisting of appointees from all three branches of Cherokee Nation government as well as members selected by those appointed members.

It is difficult to overstate the deliberated, methodical and laborious task undertaken by CNHS and the many who have supported its work since 2020. The effort took patience, trust and a determination to work together. In fact, the foregoing only describes the efforts working with the predecessor CNHS, whose cooperation was indispensable to moving forward. Since the enactment of the Cherokee Heritage Center Act of 2020, the work of successor CNHS and supporting staff and leaders continued, putting Cherokee Nation in a position to accomplished what so many had long sought: a Cherokee Heritage Center to serve us today and to serve future generations in a new state of the art facility.

On August 8, 2025, CNHS passed a resolution endorsing a plan for a replacement facility, which it had developed over a period of years working with Cherokee Nation CED and third party consultants. The plan calls for a \$50 million facility on the site of the current facility in Tahlequah. On August 30, 2025, I [announced](#) during the [State of the Nation address](#) that Deputy Chief Warner and I would send CNHS' plan to council for review.

Proposed Authorizing Legislation, Forty-Five Day Review and Comment Period, Public Release.

On September 12, 2025, Deputy Chief Warner and I sent legislation to the Council amending the Cherokee Heritage Center Act of 2020. That legislation is pending committee hearings on September 25, 2025, and, if approved, would be subject to final council action at a special council meeting I have called for later in the day on September 25, 2025.

The proposed legislation would authorize \$50 million to implement the CNHS endorsed plan. It reaffirms the continuing role of CNHS in advising as to the construction and operation of the new facility. Significantly the legislation provides for a 45 day review and comment period for the Council as to the CNHS endorsed plan.

Although the legislation is not yet law, it provides that the 45 day review and comment period can begin as early as September 15, 2025, upon my submittal of the CNHS endorsed plan to the Council. This memorandum is that submittal. To maximize transparency, Deputy Chief Warner and I are also making the renderings available for review by the general public through media releases and public release of this memorandum on Cherokee Nation's website.

Current and former members of the CNHS (2020) since its inception in 2020 include: Christine Neuhoff, Jack D. Baker, Bill Davis, Brenda Partian, Calvin Rock, Mildred Taylor, Susan Plumb and Matt Anderson. The relevant aim of the Act, particularly with respect to the structure of CNHS 2020, was to empower a body with a degree of independence from Cherokee Nation government to conduct the work of developing a new Cherokee Heritage Center. CNHS (2020) has served in that role so well. Likewise, Deputy Chief Warner, the Council and the Judiciary have done our part by exercising restraint from managing CNHS' work so that the CNHS endorsed product is truly a product of its thoughtful deliberation.

If the legislation is approved by Council (as drafted in relevant part), funding authorization is effectively paused for the 45-day comment and review period which will conclude October 30, 2025. Obviously if the Council has fundamental concerns about the plan which cannot be resolved through the ordinary course of implementing the plan, the Council has my commitment to revisit the matter, legislatively if need be.

On a separate track, Cherokee Nation Businesses Board of Directors will consider issuing such special dividend fund and executing such agreements with Cherokee Nation as warranted consistent with the Cherokee Heritage Center Act. Thanks to the work of CNB CED, I undertake that CNB has informally budgeted for this \$50 million project and anticipate approval of funding from the CNB board of directors.

The CNHS \$50 Million Heritage Center

The CNHS plan has my full endorsement. It represents an investment in Cherokee art, culture and research that will serve the Cherokee people for generations to come. The architecture and landscape is magnificent and befits a great people with a great history and rich culture. Although a \$50 million facility is ambitious and will fund a facility worthy of the purpose it serves, I appreciate that CNHS and the CNB CED team designed the facility so that future phases can be designed and constructed.

Honoring the Great Legacy of the Original Cherokee National Historical Society

We would do well to remember that the proposed facility replaces an aging one, opened in 1967, that had long housed our treasured records and artifacts thanks to the care and attention of the original Cherokee National Historical Society, founded in 1963. The passage of time, the aging of structures and the change in Cherokee Nation's fiscal strength led us to the point where action to reimagine the Heritage Center for the 21st century was both needed and possible at the same time. The ingredients needed to take this action was leadership across our government our businesses and the original CNHS. Deputy Chief Warner and I are proud to have contributed to that along with the Council, CNHS and CNB. But, in the case of the original CNHS, that institution provided a uniquely powerful type of leadership that is often in short supply around the world: a willingness to cede ownership and control in the name of doing what is right. *The original CNHS literally forced the sun to set on its own legal existence so that the sun might rise over a new Cherokee Heritage Center, guided by a new CNHS.* For that reason, the original Cherokee National Historical Society and its succession of board members across more than five decades are true Cherokee Nation patriots.²

² The role of Cherokee Nation Attorney General Chad Harsha is certainly worth memorializing here. Then serving the administration as Secretary of Natural Resources, he not only helped draft the Cherokee Heritage

Conclusion

For the reasons set forth herein the referenced \$50 million Cherokee Heritage Center replacement facility plan is hereby transmitted to Council for a period of review and comment.



Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation

Attachments:

CNHS endorsed Cherokee Heritage Center Replacement facility.

Proposed amendments to Cherokee Heritage Center Act of 2020 (2025).

CNHS resolution of August 8, 2025

Center Act of 2020, he led the Act's implementation during the crucial early stages during which authority and ownership was transferred from CNHS (1963) to Cherokee Nation.

CHEROKEE HERITAGE CENTER

CONCEPT DESIGN PRESENTATION

AUGUST 8, 2025

SafdieArchitects

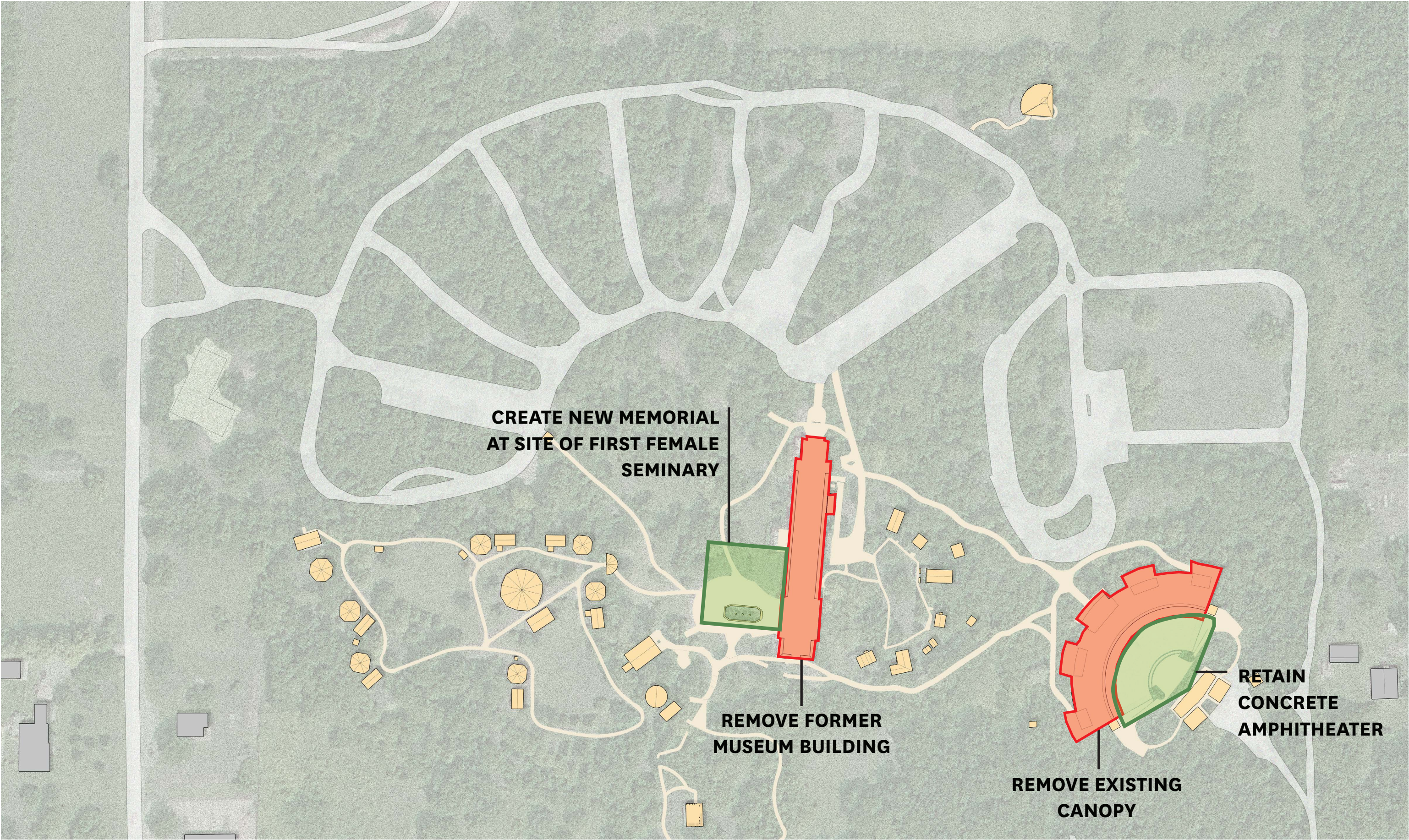
PWP LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



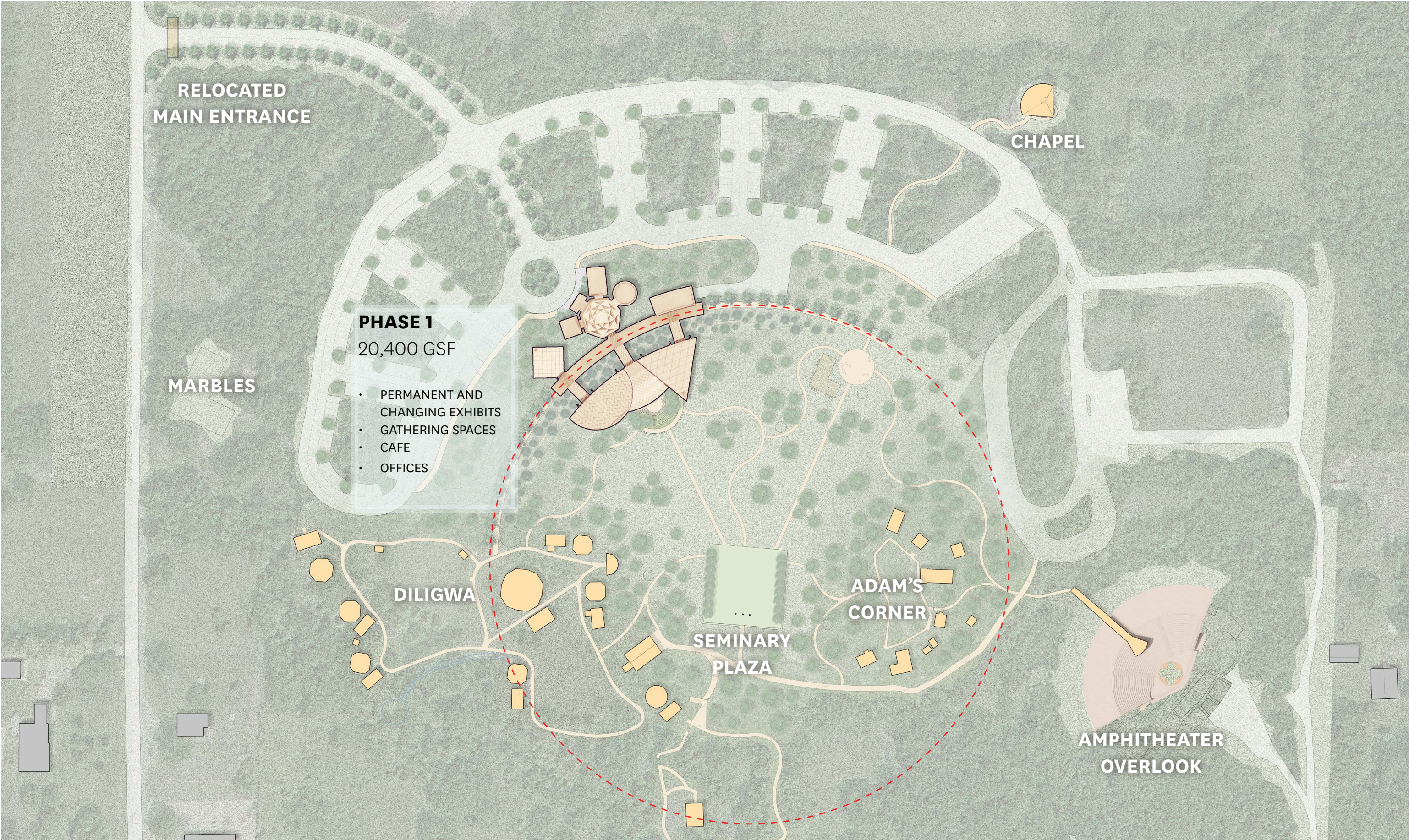
luci
CREATIVE



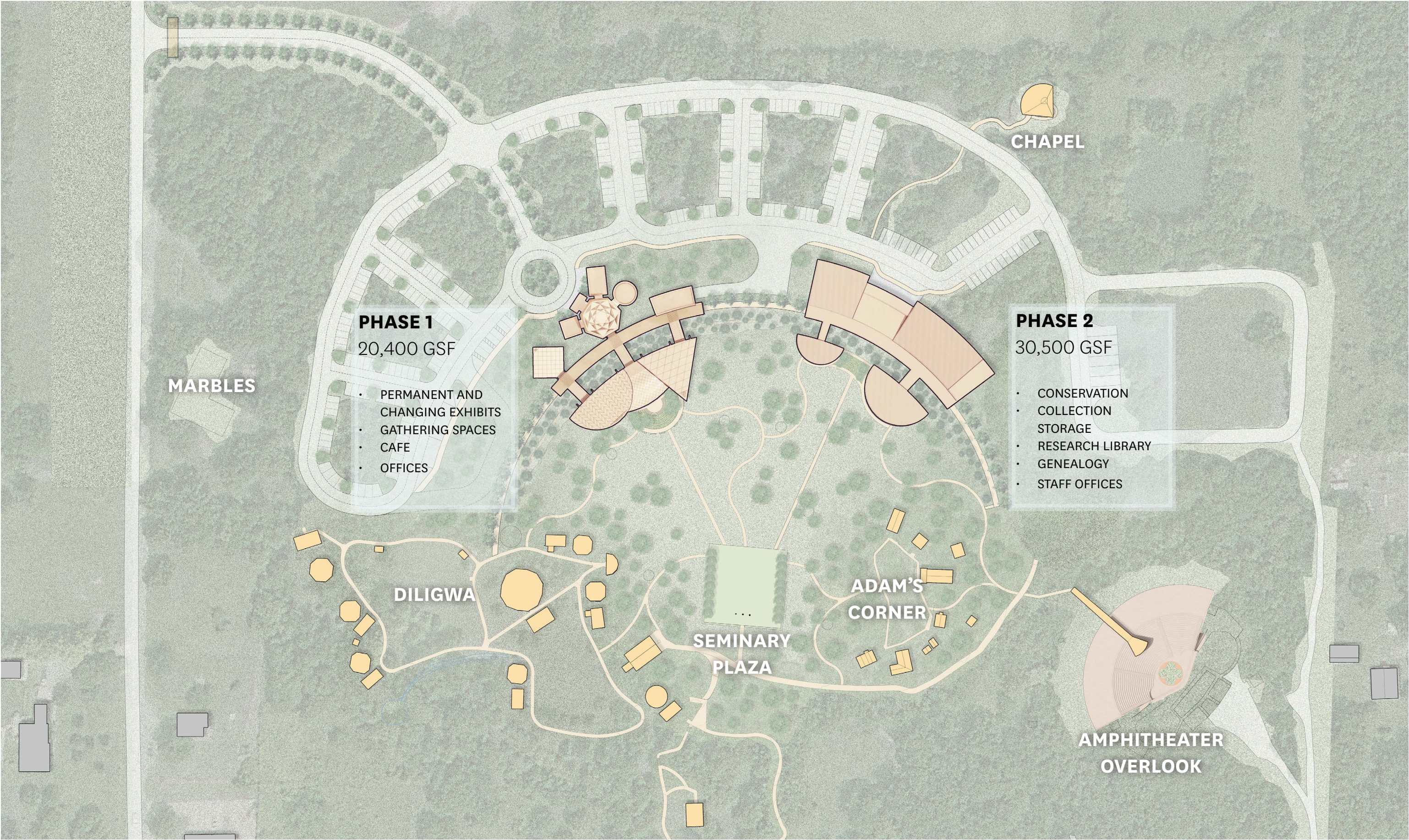
SITE STRATEGY | REORGANIZATION



SITE STRATEGY | PHASE 1



SITE STRATEGY | ALL PHASES



SITE STRATEGY | NETWORK OF TRAILS







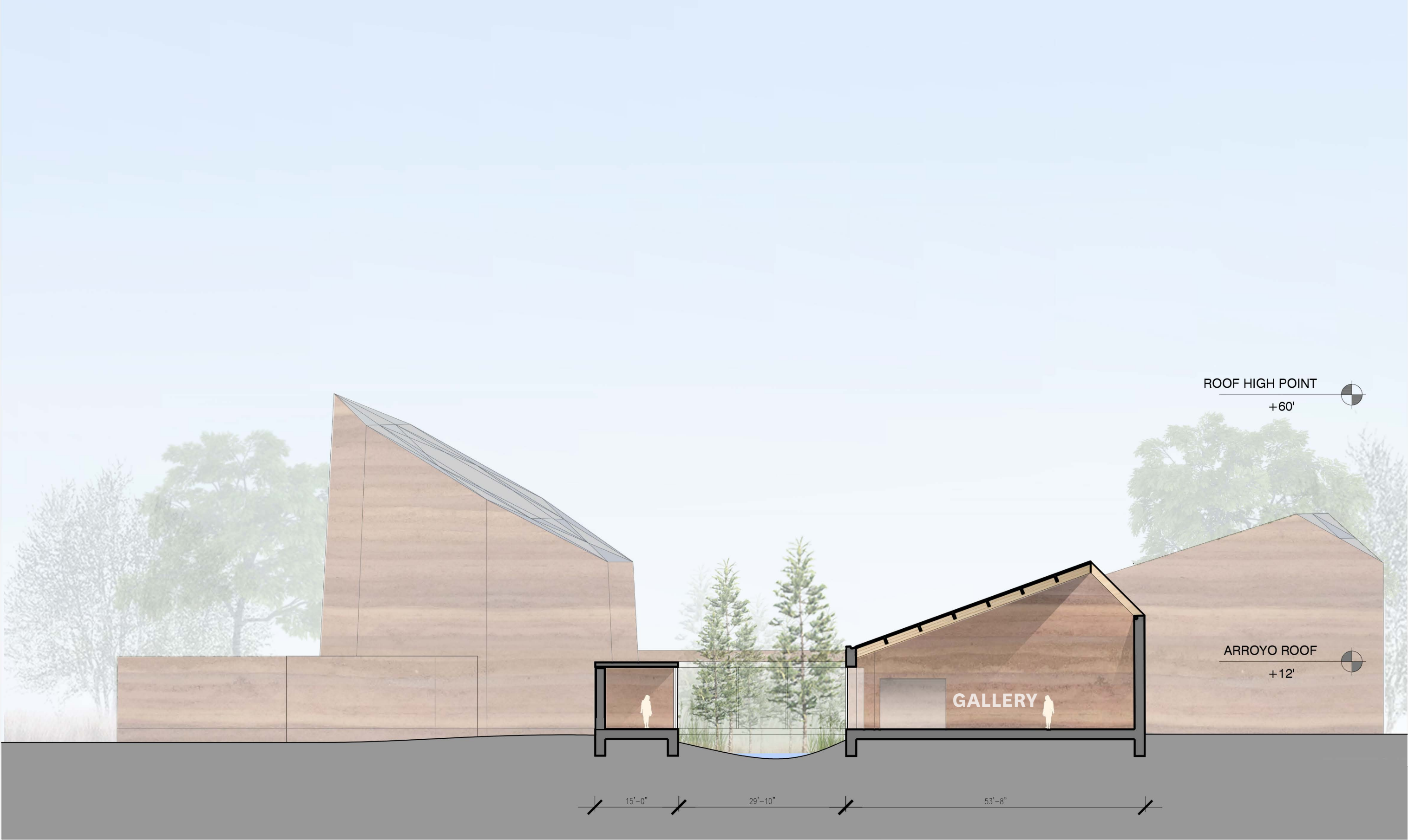




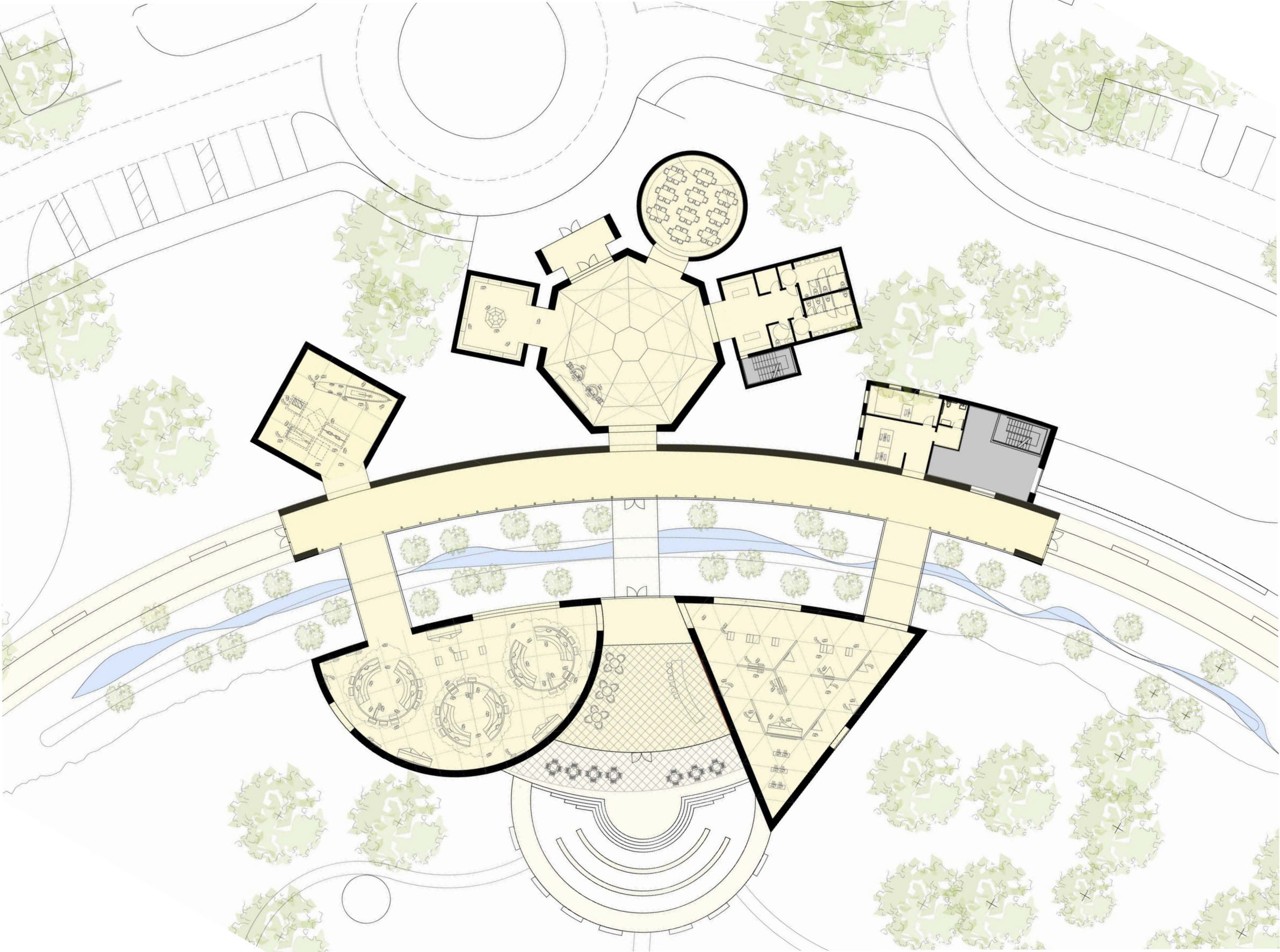
CONCEPTUAL SECTION A | PHASE 1



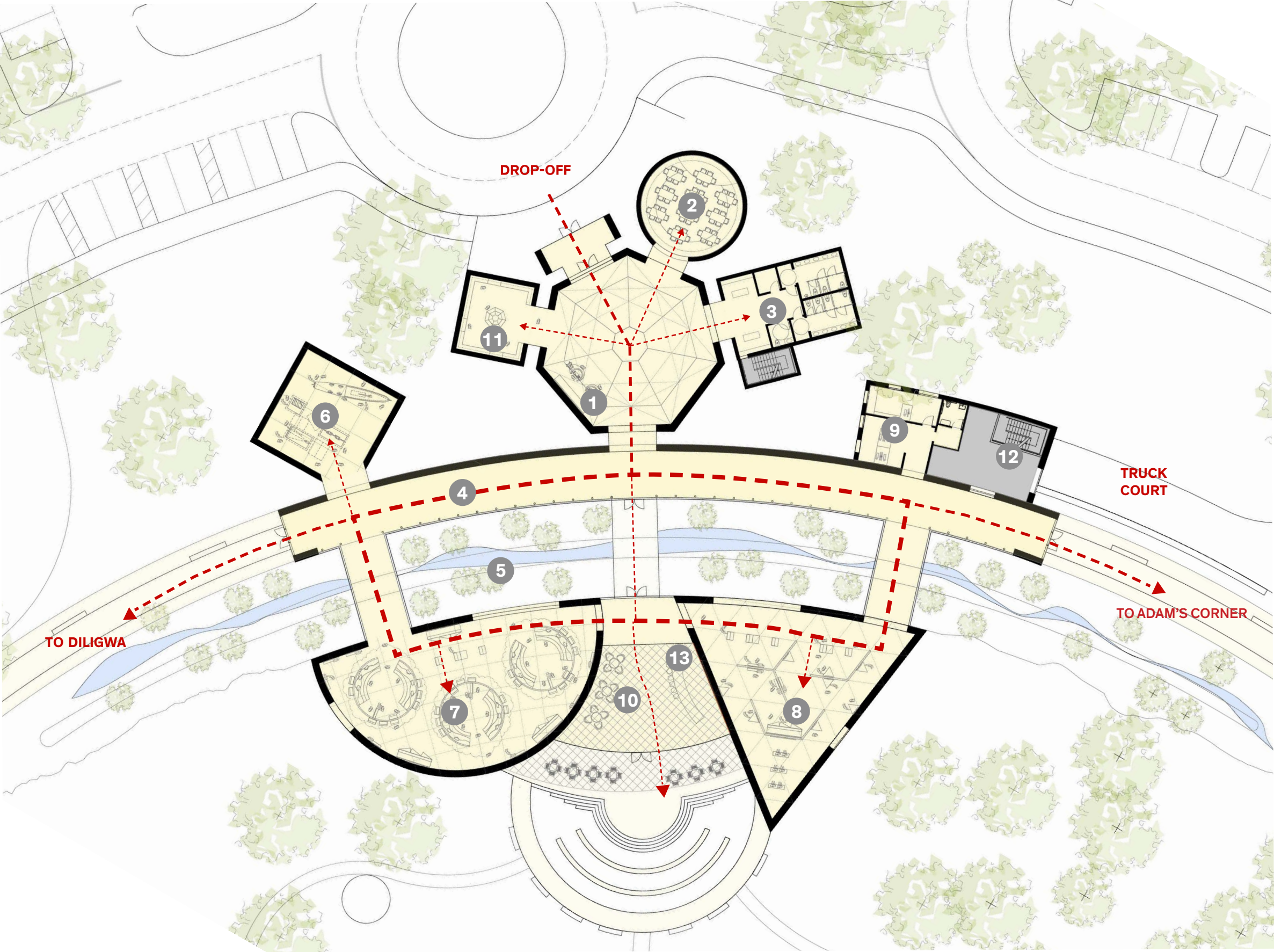
CONCEPTUAL SECTION B | PHASE 1



CONCEPTUAL PLAN | PHASE 1



CONCEPTUAL PLAN | PHASE 1

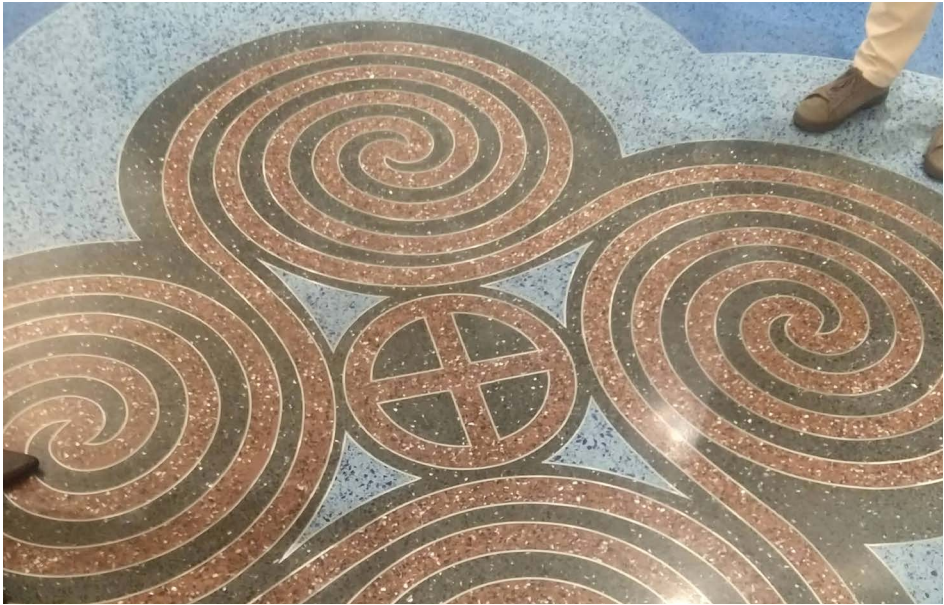
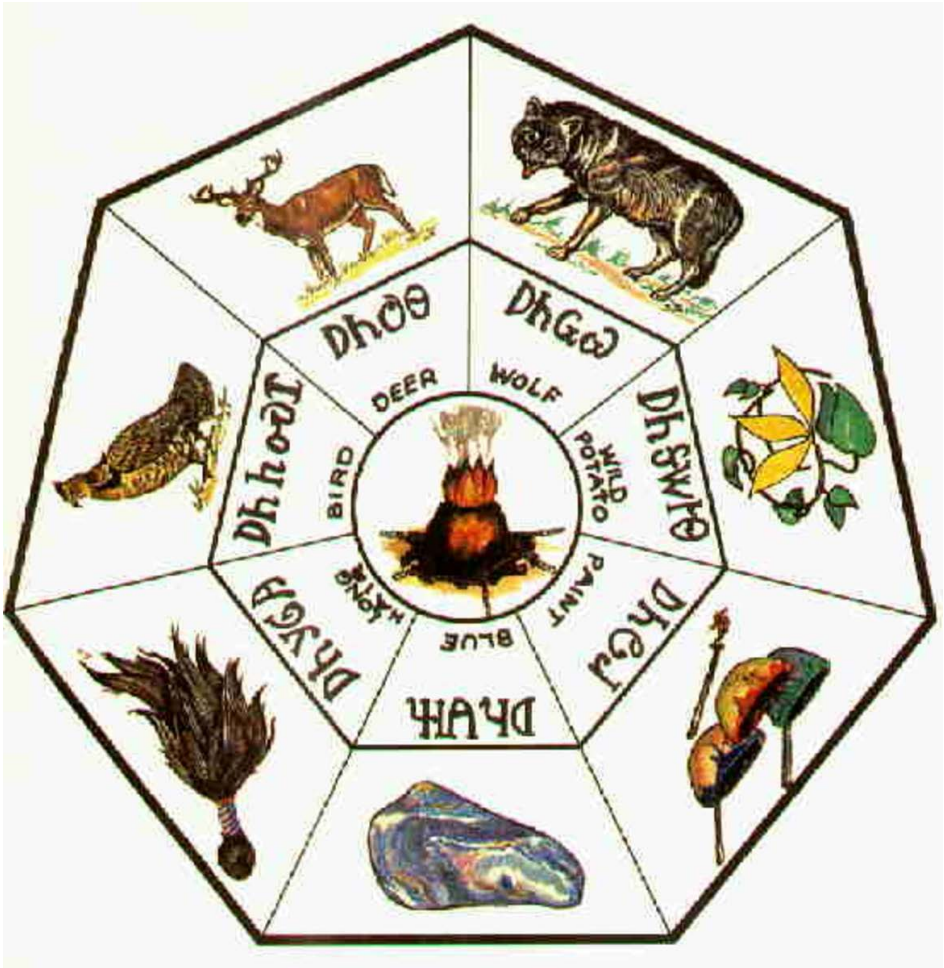
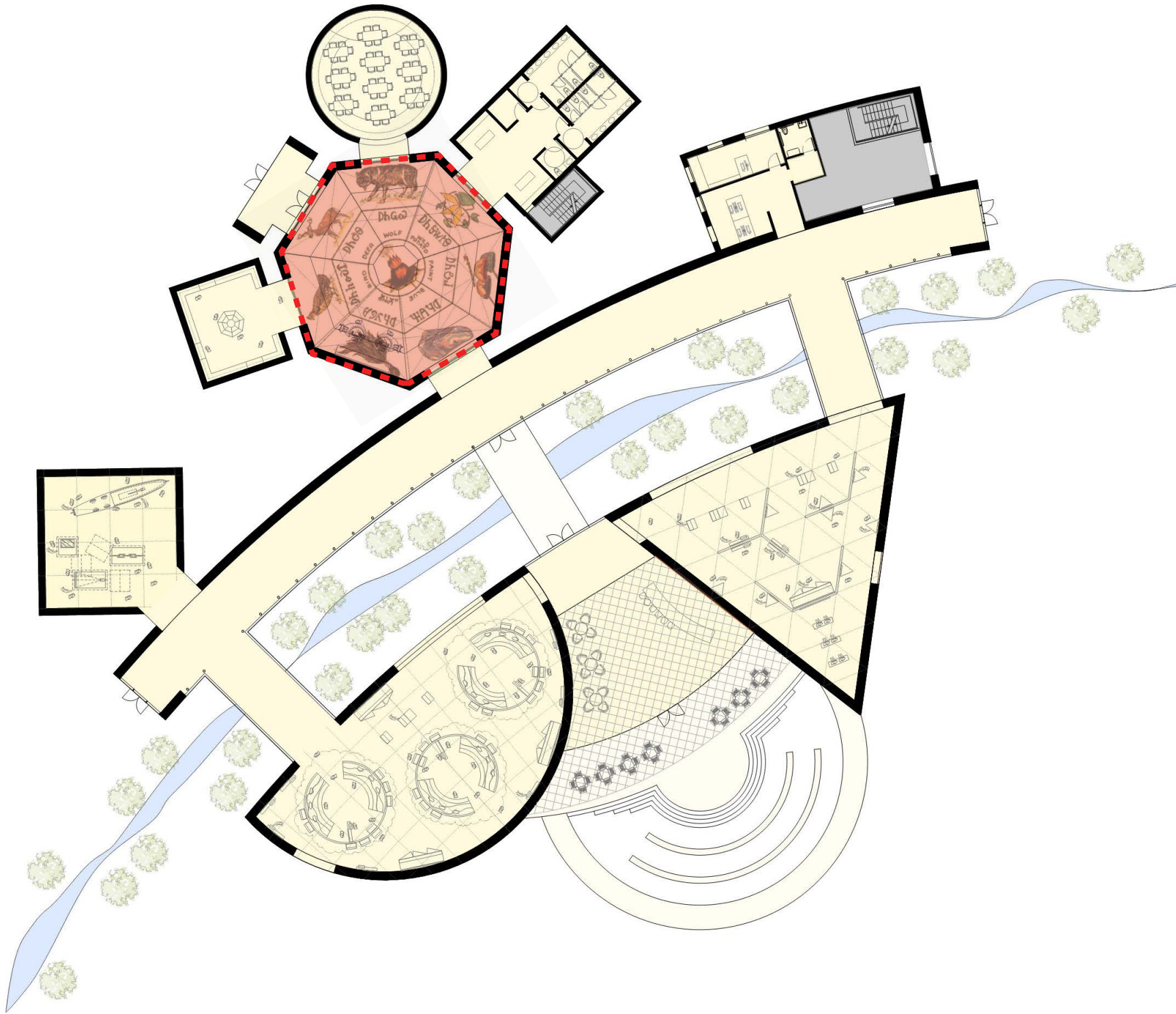


PHASE 1

- 1 LOBBY & GATHERING
2,400 GSF
- 2 MULTIPURPOSE
1,000 GSF
- 3 TOILETS & LOCKERS
1,000 GSF
- 4 ARROYO HALL GALLERY
5,000 GSF
- 5 ARROYO
0 GSF (UNCONDITIONED)
- 6 SMALL GALLERY
1,200
- 7 PERMANENT EXHIBITS
3,500 GSF
- 8 CHANGING EXHIBITS
2,800 GSF
- 9 OFFICES & RESTROOM
600 GSF
- 10 CAFE
1,000 GSF
- 11 GIFT SHOP
600 GSF
- 12 MECHANICAL
1,000 GSF
- 13 SERVERY
300 GSF
- PHASE 1 TOTAL
20,400 GSF



GREAT HALL | SEVEN SIDED GATHERING SPACE

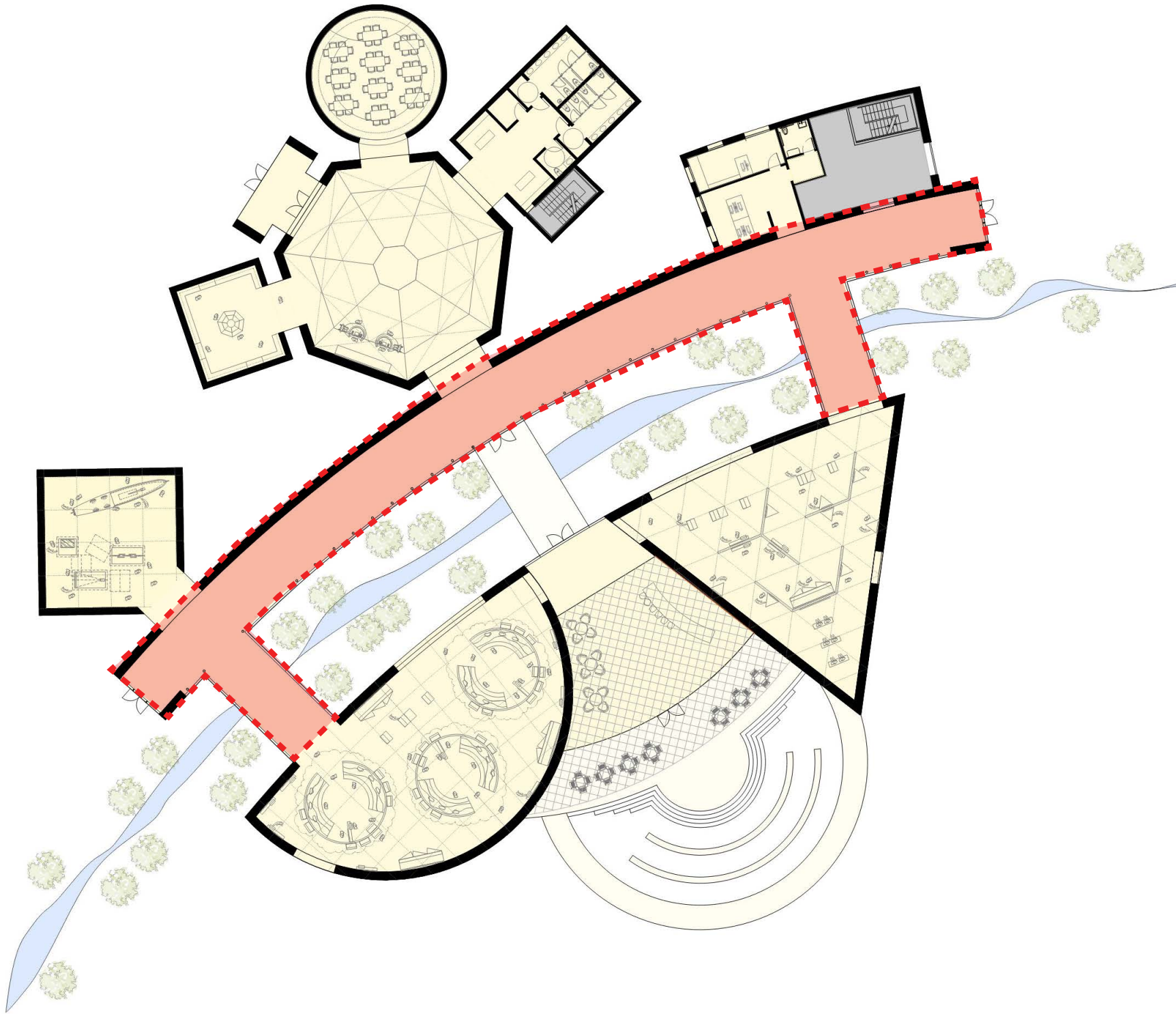




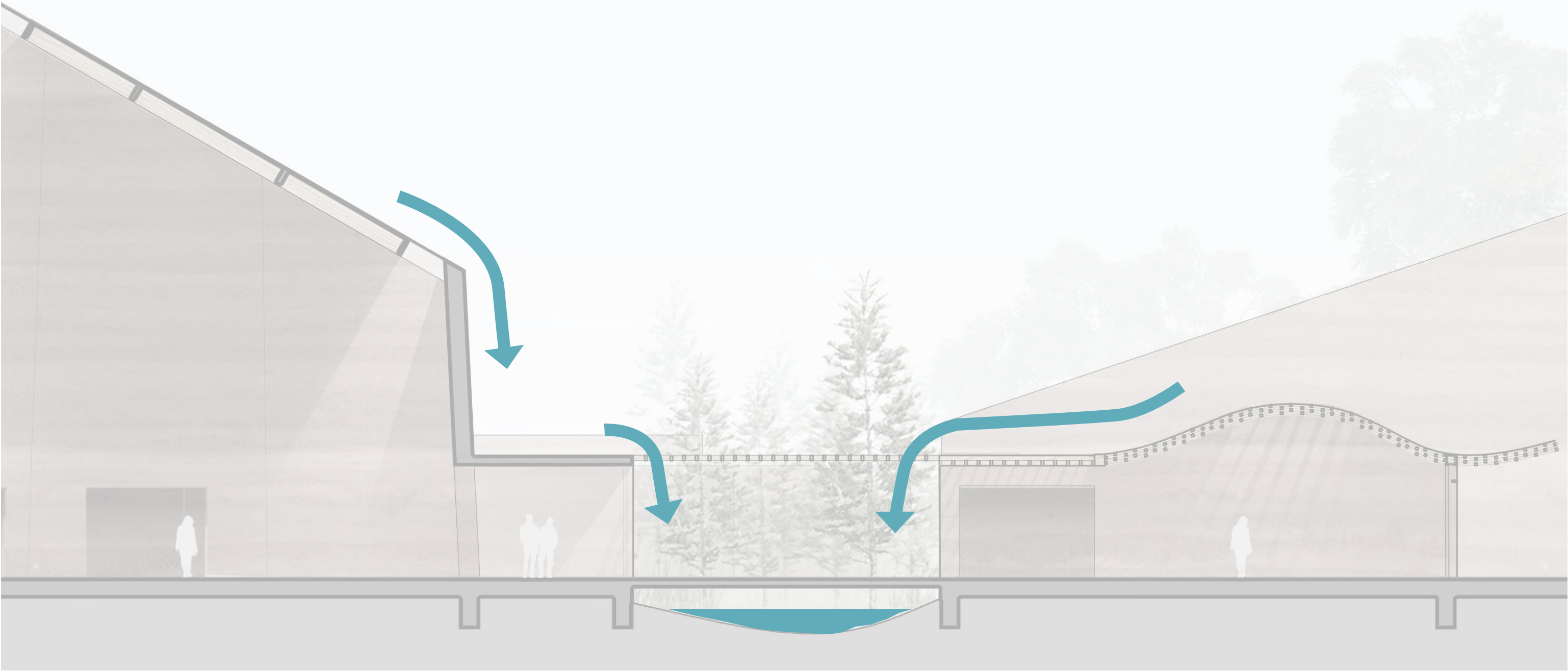




ARROYO HALL | HIGH TRANSPARENCY WALKWAY AND GALLERY



ARROYO | EPHEMERAL STREAM



ARROYO | EPHEMERAL STREAM

Flowing



Non-flowing



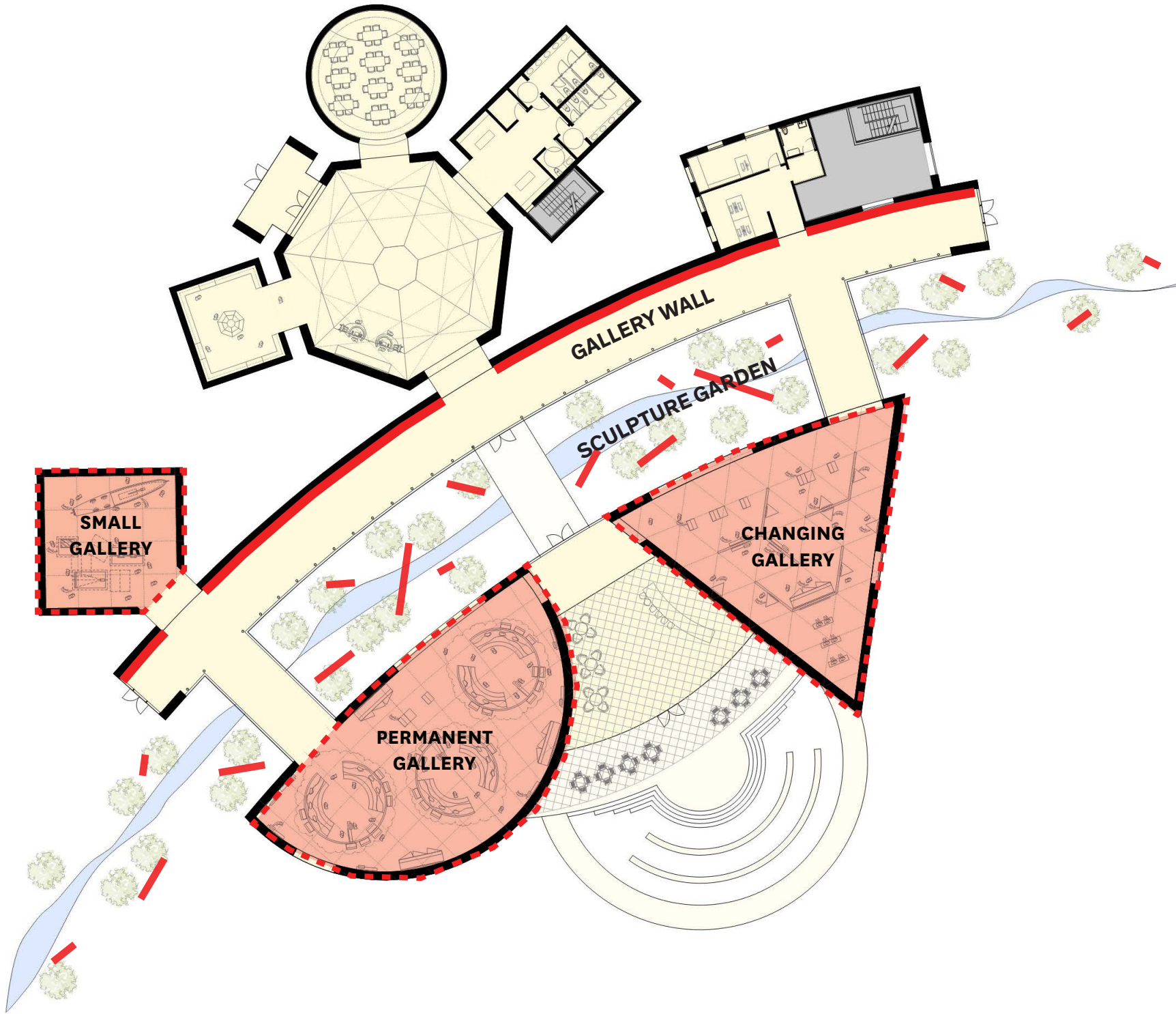
Dry



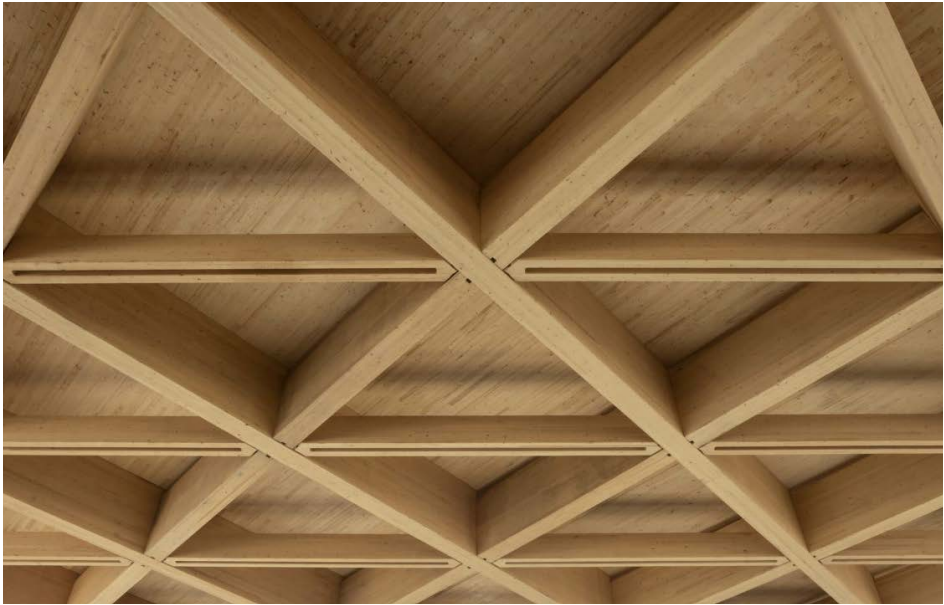
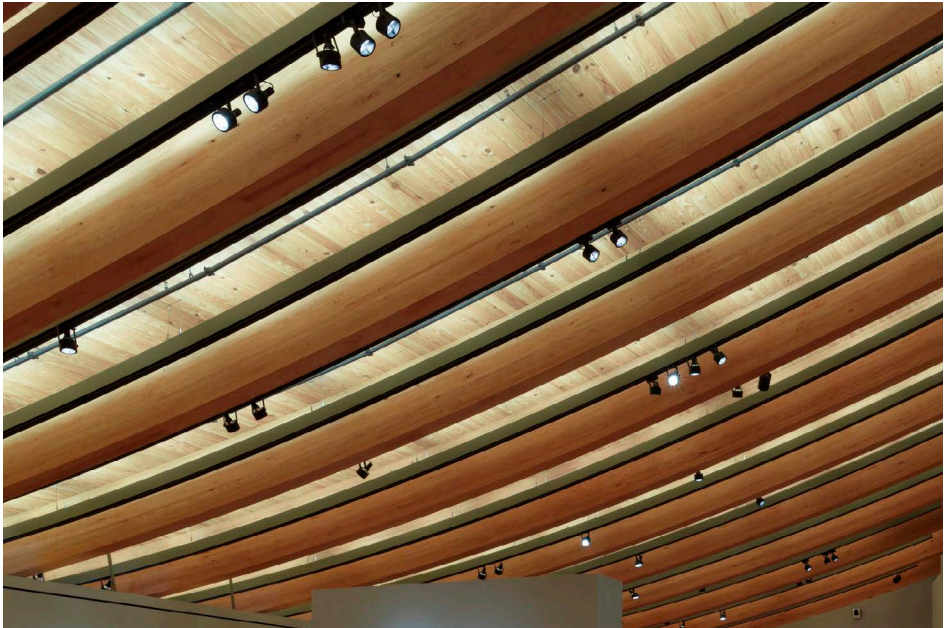
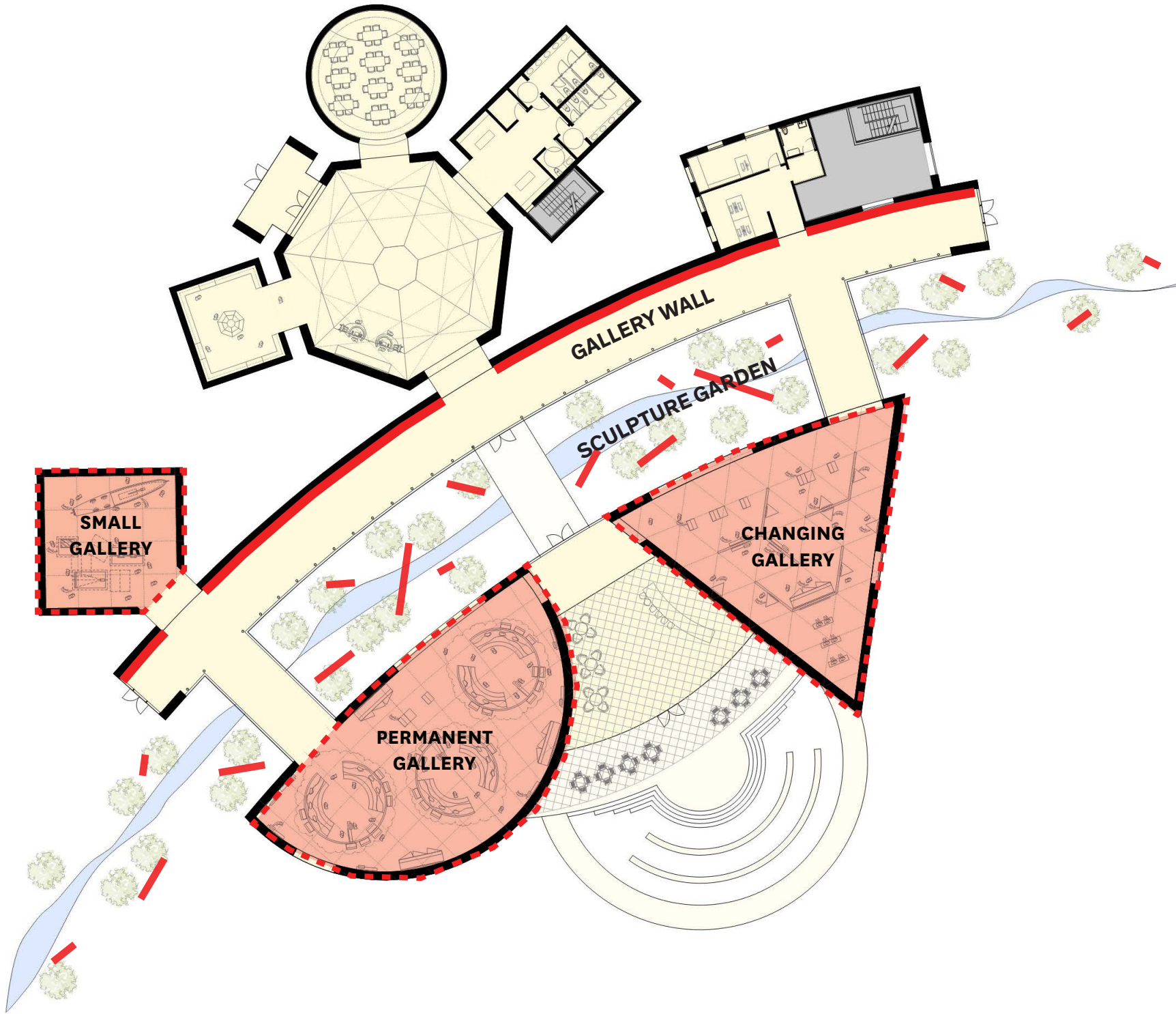




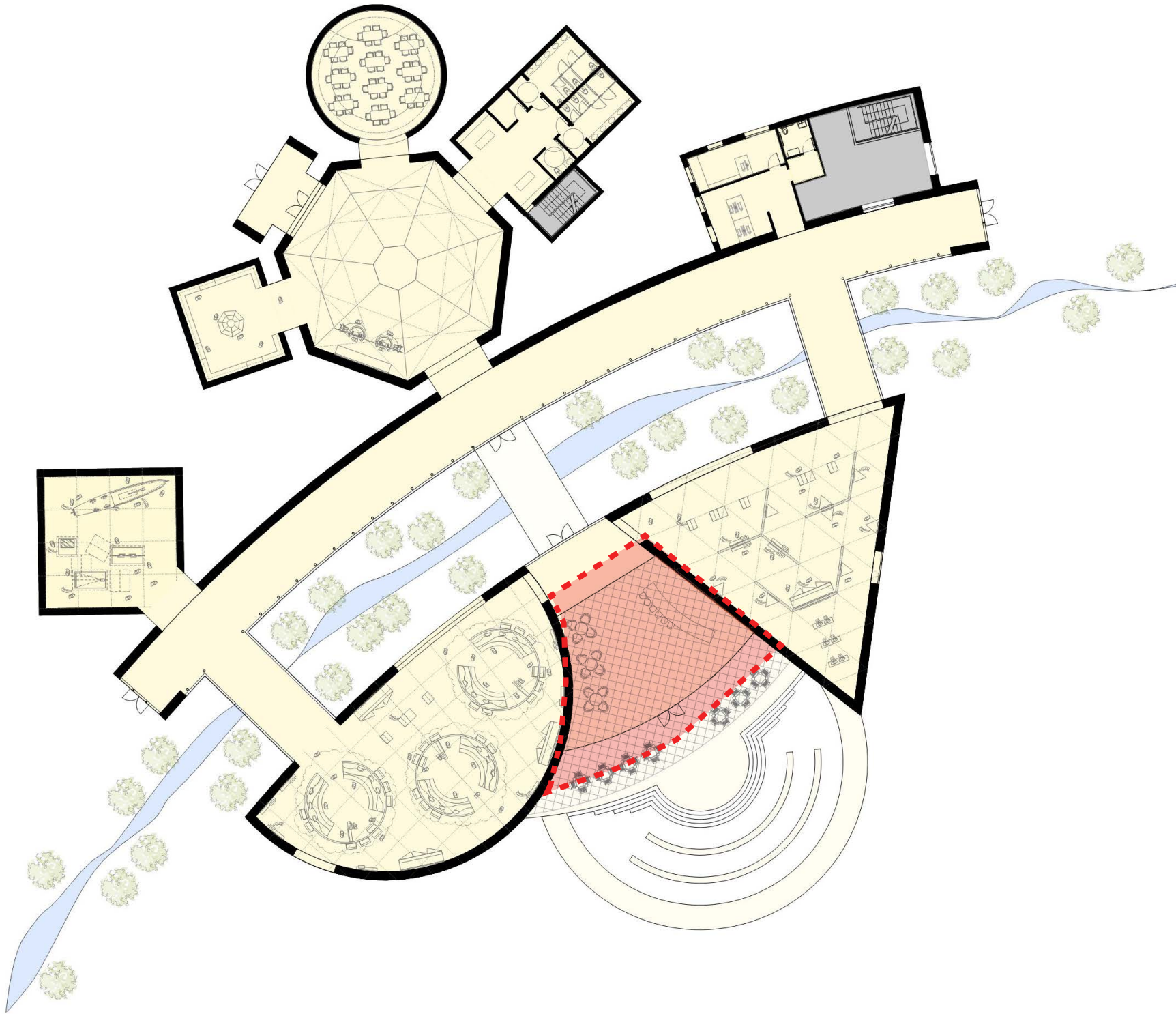
GALLERIES | EXHIBITING CHEROKEE STORIES, ART AND CULTURE



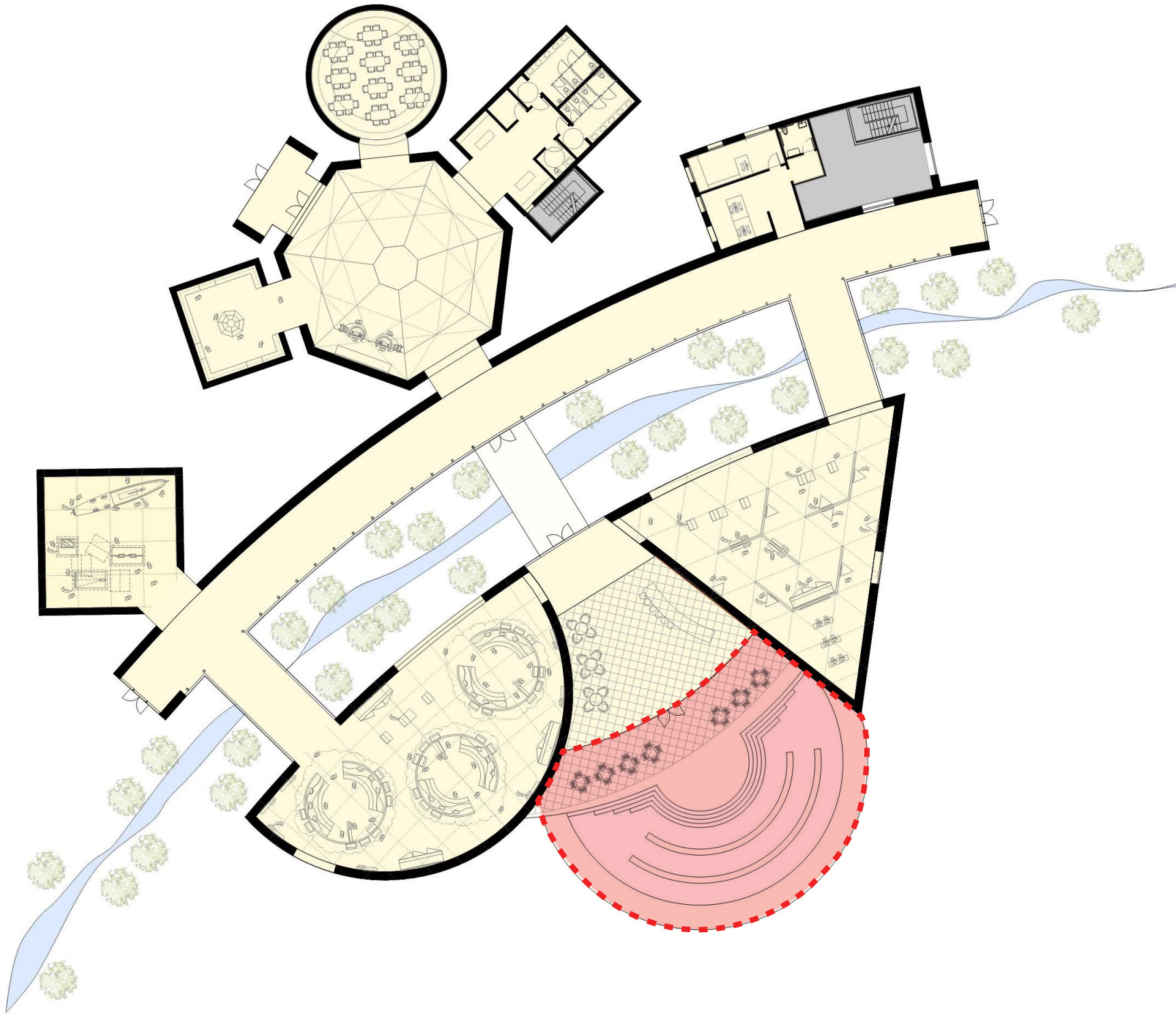
GALLERIES | EXHIBITING CHEROKEE STORIES, ART AND CULTURE



CAFE | SOCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SPACE



CAFE TERRACE AMPHITHEATER | SOCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SPACE









TSA-LA-GI AMPHITHEATER | EXISTING CONDITIONS



TSA-LA-GI AMPHITHEATER | PRESERVING MEMORY

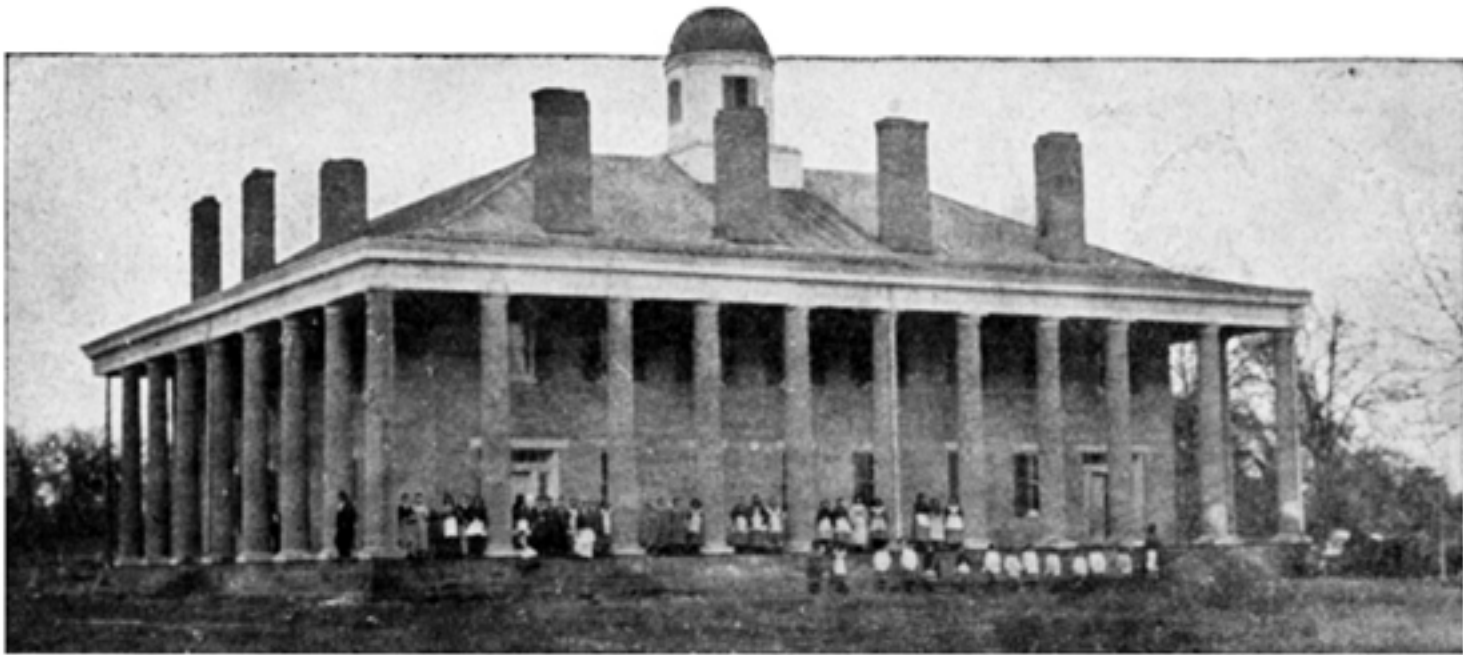


TSA-LA-GI AMPHITHEATER | MEMORIAL OVERLOOK





FIRST FEMALE SEMINARY | PAST & PRESENT CONDITIONS







WADO

SafdieArchitects

PWP LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



luci
CREATIVE

An Act

Legislative Act _____

THE CHEROKEE HERITAGE CENTER ACT OF 2020 – 2025 AMENDMENTS

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CHEROKEE NATION:

Section 1. Title and Codification

This legislative Act shall be titled and codified as the "**Cherokee Heritage Center Act of 2020 – 2025 Amendments**," and shall be codified at Title __, Historical Societies and Associations, Chapter 1, of the Cherokee Nation Code.

Section 2. Findings

The Council of the Cherokee Nation finds that:

- A. The property, buildings and archival holdings housed at the Cherokee Heritage Center are precious and irreplaceable resources for the Cherokee Nation and the Cherokee people, with such property described as:

East 230.0 feet of E/2 of NE/4 of NW/4, less and except the South 205.20 feet thereof, in Section 15, Township 16 North, Range 22 E.I.M, Cherokee County, State of Oklahoma, containing 6.00 acres, more or less,

and

S/2 of NW/4 of NE/4 and NE/4 of SW/4 of NE/4 and the S. 400.0 feet of SW/2 of NE/4 of NE/4 and W/2 of NW/4 of SE/4 of NE/4, and a tract of land described to wit: Beginning at a point of 200.0 feet E. of the NE corner of W/2 of SW/4 of SE/4 of NE/4; thence S. 200.0 feet; thence W. 1115.0 feet, to a point 200.0 feet S. and 75.0 feet E. of the NW corner of the SE/4 of SW/4 of NE/4; thence NW on a direct line to the NW corner of said SE/4 of SW/4 of NE/4; thence E. 1190.0 feet, more or less to the point of beginning; in Section 15, Township 16N, Range 22 I.B.&M., Cherokee County, State of Oklahoma, containing 44 acres, more or less.

- B. A state of emergency exists concerning the safe storage of the Nation's archival records held at Cherokee Heritage Center due to insufficient storage facilities at Cherokee Heritage Center, requiring immediate action;
- C. Since 1963, the Cherokee National Historical Society (CNHS) has served an indispensable role in the preservation and management of the Cherokee Heritage Center and its archival holdings, particularly during periods of time in which the Cherokee Nation lacked sufficient resources to perform such functions directly;

- D. Legislative Act 15-85, making the Cherokee Heritage Center the repository of Cherokee Nation's archives, likewise served the critical objective of preserving and protecting Cherokee Nation's archives, particularly during periods of time in which the Cherokee Nation lacked sufficient resources to perform such functions directly; and
- E. Cherokee Nation's growth, financial resources and expertise in historic preservation and museum management, warrants a transition towards its direct control and ownership of the Cherokee Heritage Center, all while preserving a vital role for a reconstituted Cherokee National Historical Society.

Section 3. Purpose

The purpose of this Act is to facilitate the transfer of Cherokee archives and collections of the Cherokee Heritage Center to Cherokee Nation. To establish a new Cherokee National Historical Society organized under the laws of the Cherokee Nation as a successor to the Cherokee National Historical Society, Inc., organized under the laws of the State of Oklahoma in 1963. To authorize Council appropriations and relevant executive branch memoranda of agreement consistent with the purposes and policies of this Act. As amended, the further purpose of this Act is to authorize the construction of a replacement Cherokee Heritage Center by amending the Cherokee Heritage Center Act of 2020 with a new sub-section 1009 of Section 4 of the Act, which authorizes funding at a prescribed level, delays authorization pending a review and comment period by the Council of the Cherokee Nation and reaffirms the ongoing role of the Cherokee Nation Historical Society, referred to in the Act as CNHS (2020) as an advisory body in connection with the construction and operation of the replacement Cherokee Heritage Center.

Section 4. Substantive Provisions

§ 1001. Establishment of Successor Cherokee National Historical Society: The Principal Chief is authorized to file articles of incorporation to establish the Cherokee National Historical Society (hereinafter "CNHS (2020)"), under the laws of the Cherokee Nation, upon the earliest of:

- A. Receiving written notice that Cherokee National Historical Society, Inc, established in 1963 under the laws of the State of Oklahoma (hereafter "CNHS (1963)"), has dissolved; or
- B. Confirming that CNHS (1963) has transferred ownership of all land, buildings, equipment, assets, collections and historic documents to the Cherokee Nation; or
- C. 30 days of enactment of this Act.

§ 1002. Structure of CNHS (2020): CNHS (2020) shall be governed by a Board of Directors, (hereafter "Board"), which shall be subject to the following requirements:

- A. The Board shall be composed of no more than seven (7) members, all of whom must be citizens of the Cherokee Nation and appointed as follows:
 - a. One appointed by the Principal Chief, Seat 1, for an initial 7 year term,

and succeeding 5 year terms thereafter;

- b. One appointed by the Council of the Cherokee Nation, Seat 2, for an initial 6 year term, and succeeding five year terms thereafter;
 - c. One appointed by the Supreme Court of the Cherokee Nation, Seat 3, for a five year term and succeeding 5 year terms thereafter; and
 - d. Four additional members shall be appointed by the aforementioned initial board members (Seats 1-3) as follows:
 - i. Seat 4, for an initial term of 4 years and succeeding 5 year terms thereafter;
 - ii. Seat 5, for an initial term of 3 years and succeeding 5 year terms thereafter;
 - iii. Seat 6, for an initial term of 2 years and succeeding 5 year terms thereafter; and
 - iv. Seat 7, for an initial term of 1 year and succeeding 5 year terms thereafter.
- B. No member of the Board shall be an elected official of the Cherokee Nation, nor be a spouse or relative within the first degree of consanguinity of an elected official of the Cherokee Nation.
- C. The Board may create such additional non-governing auxiliary bodies as it deems appropriate to support fundraising, public outreach, or to provide subject matter expertise and support.
- D. The Board may establish membership criteria for the purpose of fundraising and public engagement.
- E. The Principal Chief, Deputy Principal Chief, Speaker of the Council of the Cherokee Nation and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Cherokee Nation shall serve as non-voting ex-officio members of CNHS (2020).
- F. The CNHS (2020) Board shall adopt bylaws, rules, procedures and other policies consistent with this Act, a copy of which shall be provided to the Principal Chief and the Council of the Cherokee Nation.
- G. CNHS (2020) Board members shall be entitled to any lawful reimbursement of expenses in connection with their board service and may receive compensation for said service should any such compensation be provided through the Cherokee Nation appropriation process or through such other enactment of the Council of the Cherokee Nation.

§ 1003. Express Authority: CNHS (2020) shall have the authority to:

- A. Raise funds in support of endowments and capital projects, in consultation with

Cherokee Nation.

- B. Advise Cherokee Nation generally on programming, archival holdings, transfer efforts, budgetary needs, maintenance of physical plant and capital improvements.
- C. Appoint members of its Board or auxiliary bodies to search committees for the positions of Executive Director, Archivist and Collections Manager or comparable positions.
- D. Draft, review and provide comment to Cherokee Nation on job descriptions, prerequisites and compensation levels for the positions of Executive Director, Archivist and Collections Manager or comparable positions.
- E. Conduct, via executive session, confidential written annual reviews of CHC Executive Director and Archivist, to be provided to the Executive Director's, Archivists' and Collections Manager's (or comparable positions) immediate supervisors. Said annual review shall be made a part of the Executive Director and Archivists personnel file and shall not be subject to disclosure under Cherokee Nation's FOIA or Government Records Act.
- F. Develop strategic plans in consultation with Cherokee Nation.
- G. Produce a written annual report to the Principal Chief and the Council of the Cherokee Nation on the state of the entity's affairs by the conclusion of each fiscal year, including recommendations for actions to be taken in the succeeding fiscal year.
- H. Occupy reasonable office space in such Cherokee Nation facilities as the Cherokee Nation shall provide for CNHS (2020) operations.

§ 1004. Express Limitations of Authority: CNHS (2020) is expressly prohibited from:

- A. Purchasing real property.
- B. Renting or leasing real property or office space, except for property or space provided by the Cherokee Nation under an agreement made in accordance with this Act.
- C. Directly employing staff.

§ 1005. Reversion in Event of Dissolution of CNHS (2020): Upon dissolution of CNHS (2020) its assets and obligations shall revert to Cherokee Nation.

§ 1006. Archival Repository: Legislative Act 15-85 is hereby amended and Cherokee Nation shall be its own repository for the records and archives of the Cherokee Nation.

§ 1007. Strategic Operating and Capital Plan for Cherokee Heritage Center: By April 30, 2021, CNHS (2020) shall deliver to the Principal Chief and Council of the Cherokee Nation a proposed strategic plan for review and approval by the Principal Chief, following a review and comment period by the Council of the Cherokee Nation of no less than 30 days.

§ 1008. Actions Required of CNHS (1963): Within 60 days of enactment of this Act,

or for such additional period of time authorized by the Principal Chief not to exceed an additional 60 days, CNHS (1963) shall:

- A. Deliver to the Principal Chief a report on the timeline for its dissolution or a report setting forth why continuation of CNHS (1963) is required to meet some legal or fiduciary obligation that cannot be met by CNHS (2020); and
- B. Cause and otherwise facilitate the transfer of all real and personal property, holdings and archives to meet the purposes and policies of this Act.

§ 1009. Authorization for Construction of Replacement Cherokee Heritage Center: The Council, having taken legislative notice of a resolution dated August 8, 2025, approved by CNHS(2020) for a replacement Cherokee Heritage Center, attached to this act as Exhibit B, hereby authorizes expenditures for said facility provided said authorization:

- A. Does not exceed \$50,000,000.
- B. May be facilitated through the expenditure by or special dividend from Cherokee Nation Businesses, pursuant to such memoranda of undertaking or other agreements executed by the Principal Chief for such purpose, a copy of which was by provided to the Council within 60 days of execution,
- C. Is effective beginning in fiscal year 2026, no sooner than 45 days following the submission to the Council by the Principal Chief on or after September 15, 2025, of sufficient renderings substantially depicting the facility endorsed by CNHS (2020) in its resolution of August 8, 2025 (Exhibit B), this time frame constituting a 45 day period of review and comment by the Council,
- D. Requires CNHS (2020) to continue in full force and effect as an advisory body with additional responsibilities or advising as to the construction and eventual operation of said facility consistent with the purposes, obligations and policies of this Act,
- E. Distinct elements included within the campus of the new Cherokee Heritage Center which are eligible capital projects for expenditures under the Public Health and Wellness Fund Act, as amended, may be funded pursuant to that Act above said authorization, at the discretion of the Principal Chief,
- F. Nothing herein supplants the Council's role in appropriations or oversight as it relates to the construction of said authorized facility.

Section 5. Coordination: The Principal Chief is authorized to execute agreements or such memoranda of understanding with Cherokee Nation Businesses and other entities including but not limited to CHHS (1963) and CNHS (2020) to effectuate the purposes, obligations and policies of this Act.

Section 6. Provisions as cumulative

The provisions of this act shall be cumulative to existing law.

Section 7. Severability

The provisions of this act are severable and if any part of provision hereof shall be held void the decision of the court so holding shall not affect or impair any of the remaining parts or provisions of this act.

Section 8. Emergency Declared

It being immediately necessary for the welfare of the Cherokee Nation, the Council hereby declares that an emergency exists, by reason whereof this Act shall take effect immediately upon its approval and signatures.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Council of the Cherokee Nation at a duly called meeting on the _____ day of _____, 2025, having _____ members present, constituting a quorum, by the vote of _____ yea; _____ nay; _____ abstaining.

Johnny Kidwell, Speaker
Council of the Cherokee Nation

ATTEST:

Joshua Sam, Secretary
Council of the Cherokee Nation

Approved and signed by the Principal Chief on this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation

ATTEST:

Shella Bowlin, Secretary of State
Cherokee Nation

CHEROKEE NATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Resolution No. 2025.04

BOARD RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF BUILDING PLANS FOR
A NEW CHEROKEE HERITAGE CENTER

WHEREAS, the Cherokee National Historical Society (“CNHS”) has long been the steward of Cherokee culture, history, and education through the operation and promotion of the Cherokee Heritage Center; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee Heritage Center has served as a vital cultural institution for the Cherokee Nation and broader public, preserving historical archives, promoting traditional arts, and providing essential educational programming; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the 2021 Memorandum of Agreement executed between the Cherokee Nation, CNHS, and Cherokee Nation Businesses, LLC the parties have committed to a shared vision of revitalizing and enhancing the Cherokee Heritage Center through long-term collaboration; and

WHEREAS, the CNHS Board of Directors and the CNHS Building Committee have been intimately involved in the development and planning of the new state-of-the-art Cherokee Heritage Center from its earliest stages. This involvement has included ongoing consultation with project stakeholders, active participation in strategic planning discussions, and thorough review and feedback on architectural plans. The Board’s guidance has helped ensure the planned Cherokee Heritage Center reflects the values, priorities, and history it is intended to preserve and celebrate; and

WHEREAS, the current building plans represent a transformative step toward ensuring that the Cherokee Heritage Center remains a world-class facility capable of celebrating our stories, safeguarding our archives, and fostering cultural understanding for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, the new facilities will significantly enhance the Cherokee Heritage Center’s capacity to support Cherokee artists, preserve the Cherokee language, expand educational and genealogical research services, and showcase the vibrancy of Cherokee lifeways in a modern and respectful environment;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of the Cherokee National Historical Society, upon the recommendation from the CNHS Building Committee, does hereby express its full support for the building plans for the new Cherokee Heritage Center in alignment with the enduring mission of CNHS to preserve the history, culture, language and education of the Cherokee People.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board encourages the continued collaboration among CNHS, Cherokee Nation, and CNB in the strategic planning, fundraising, and execution of these building plans to ensure a property worthy of celebrating the past and future of the Cherokee Nation.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution be transmitted to the Principal Chief and Deputy Chief of the Cherokee Nation, the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council, and Cherokee Nation Businesses, LLC Board of Directors, as a formal expression of this Board's support.

Adopted this 8 day of August, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clinton D. Newberry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized initial "C".