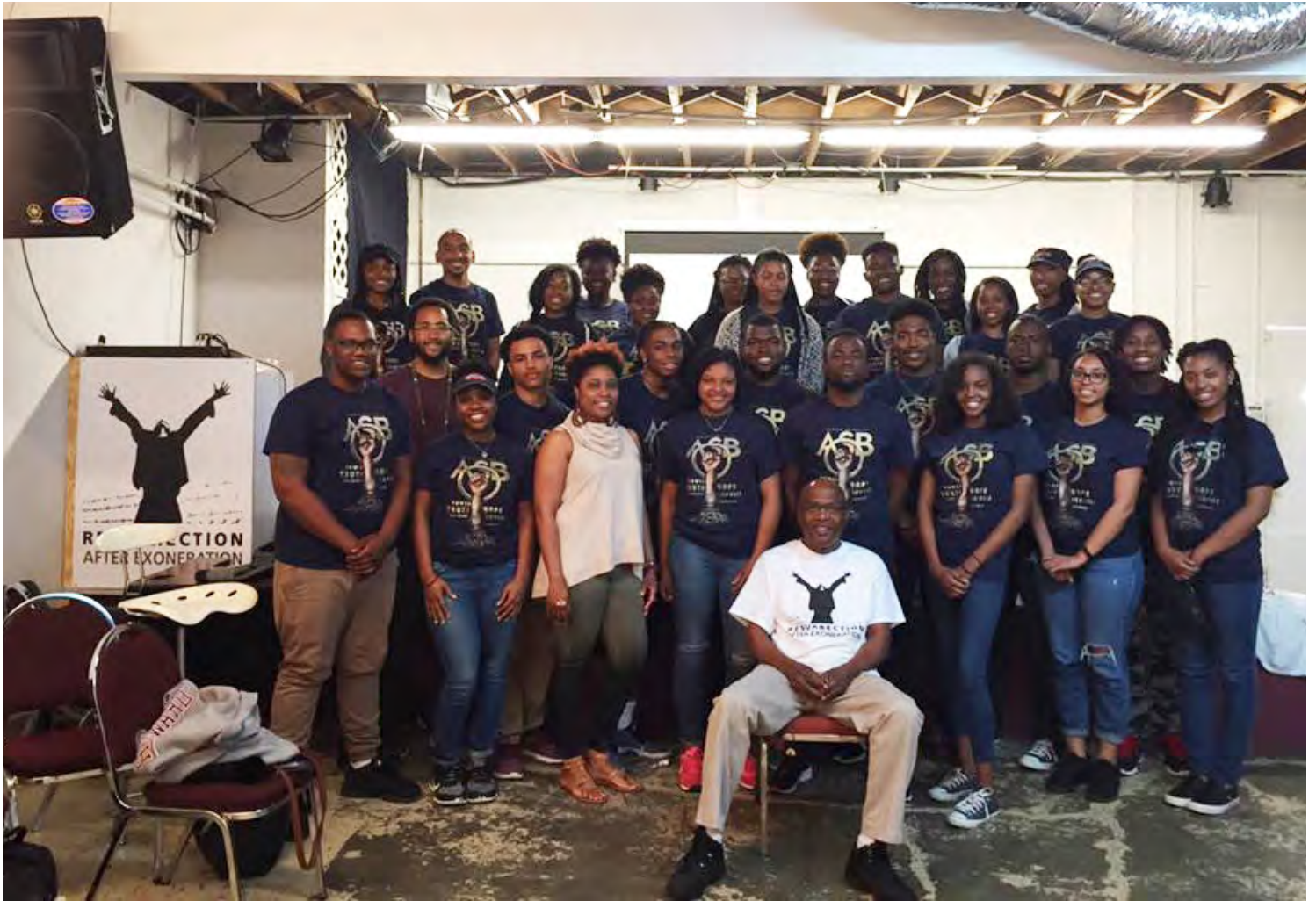




RESURRECTION
After
EXONERATION



REINVIGORATING RAE
DESIGN VISIONING 2020



Resurrection after Exoneration's mission is to promote and sustain a network of support among exonerated prisoners, to reconnect them to the community, and help provide access to educational and financial opportunities, counseling and health services. Resurrection after Exoneration will also serve all formerly incarcerated individuals through a holistic approach to reentry, while creating a collective voice to demand reform in the criminal justice system.

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INTRODUCTION

PROJECT OUTLINE

Building upon the legacy of founder John Thompson, Resurrection After Exoneration (RAE) now seeks a renewal of its building and programming in order to continue important work in providing both services and education to exonerees. The following pages outline design and renovation ideas that will allow for continued success, expanded programming, and sustainable operations into the future.

In New Orleans, prosecutorial misconduct is systemic. The voices of the exonerated men and women who have been mistreated by the system is crucial in building education about reform needed within the system.

RAE serves exonerees, helping with reentry after the traumatic experience of wrongful incarceration, providing medical, financial, legal, and educational services to break the cycle of dependence and poverty. RAE also provides education and outreach about how people become wrongfully convicted.





JOHN THOMPSON CENTER

PROGRAM



Past events at RAE

LEGACY OF RAE

Louisiana is a leader in the United States in exonerations, and leads the nation in death row exonerations. With rampant judicial and prosecutorial misconduct, false accusations, bad forensic evidence, mistaken identification, and until recently, convictions by non-unanimous juries, Louisiana is a hot bed for wrongful convictions. Our exonerees have little to no recourse or resources for the trauma a wrongful conviction can impose financially, physically, and mentally.

RAE lives on in the honor and memory of its founder John Thompson, who passed away in October of 2017. The home and resources he created in a run-down building to provide home-going support for exonerated men in Louisiana has the potential to finally embody his dreams with redesigning and rebuilding assistance from you.

RENOVATION AND RENEWAL

The RAE house is deep in the heart of the community in which it serves, and has the potential to be a central point of service and support by offering many services for exonerated men and women, as well as families of wrongfully convicted people trying to access help for their loved ones within the prison system.

With support, RAE will renew its role as a safe, supportive space for a community drastically impacted by wrongful incarceration and also provide hope for families who are waiting for their loved ones to be released.

PROGRAM

RAE has worked with a number of partners to thoughtfully redesign the building with a focus on *flexibility* and *accessibility*. The renewed RAE house will include more useful programming and community gathering space that can be used for meetings, providing services, and many types of events held by RAE and its partners. Office space is also provided to accommodate GED services, educational programming, counselors, attorneys, case workers, and other small non-profits that work on criminal justice reform.

The proposed designs bring additional light into the building, provide ADA compliance and improve overall accessibility, enhance the event space for performances, create inviting entryways at both ends of the building, add a warming kitchen, and provide modern office amenities and flex-use space. Together these new features allow for sustainable operation through new rents, accommodate a wider range of events, and further align RAE's capacity with its mission to serve exonerees and their families.

The space has tremendous potential for modeling best practices in one-stop reentry services, as well as being able to provide community, safety, and support for exonerated and formerly incarcerated men and women upon their release.





RESEARCH

PRECEDENTS

RAE has been and will be known as a healing place. With this in mind, it is important to create spaces that are welcoming to all: exonerees, the formerly incarcerated and their families, and guests. Spaces suitable for comfort and privacy will be paired with access to services and immersion in the arts.

The project team investigated a number of spaces used for community events and office uses to build consensus around a common approach to renovating the RAE building. Important factors included selecting furniture and materials well-suited to the planned spaces and adding built-in features to make the best use of limited interior space.





Computer training, exoneration, and art events at RAE.



ENGAGEMENT

Small Center and RAE convened a wide range of stakeholders including people and organizations who have held events in the building, allied organizations, existing tenants, RAE leadership, and formerly incarcerated and impacted people. The project team worked collaboratively to envision RAE's reopening, clarify its purpose and possible programming, cultivate a support network of allies and possible funders, and consider design possibilities that would both build upon the legacy of RAE and expand the range of services provided and events held in the building.

Through a series of meetings over 10 weeks, the team settled on design and renovation priorities that would best serve RAE and its constituents. Planned improvements make efficient use of funding, focusing on improvements that will make the building's operation sustainable and welcoming to an even bigger audience of exonerees, allied organizations, and others.





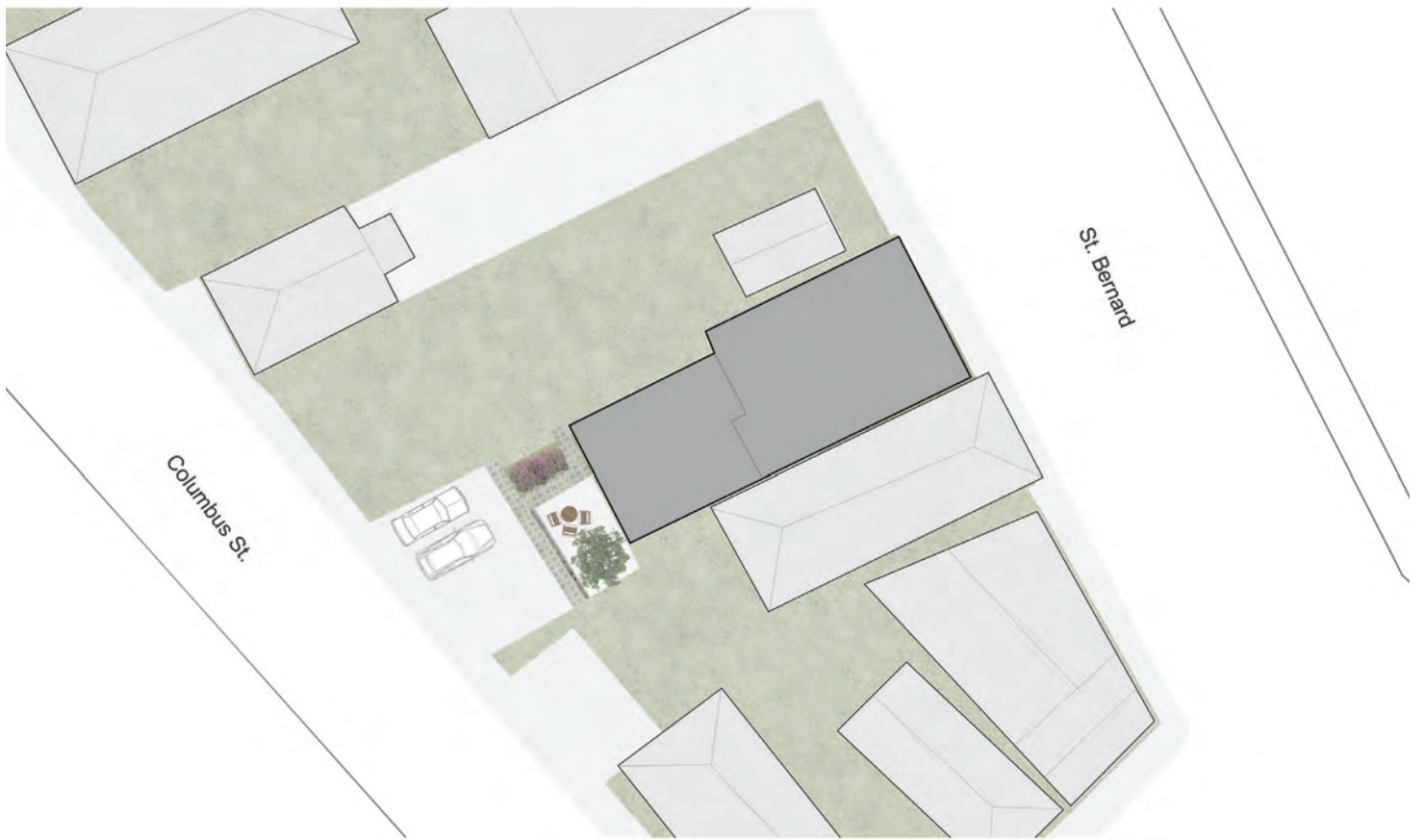
DESIGN

SITE

Resurrection After Exoneration is located at 1212 St. Bernard Avenue in New Orleans' 7th Ward. It has become known for its criminal justice reform events, provision of services to exonerees and their families, and its storefront presence. RAE's commercial storefront is occupied by Real Gentlemen Barbershop, which is itself owned and operated by an exoneree who also mentors neighborhood youth.

The RAE house is centrally located in New Orleans historic core, with significant foot traffic and good access to public transit. It is well-positioned to serve a constituency from across the city and metro area. Nearby partners include The Promise of Justice Initiative, Free-Dem Foundations, and Voice of the Experienced.



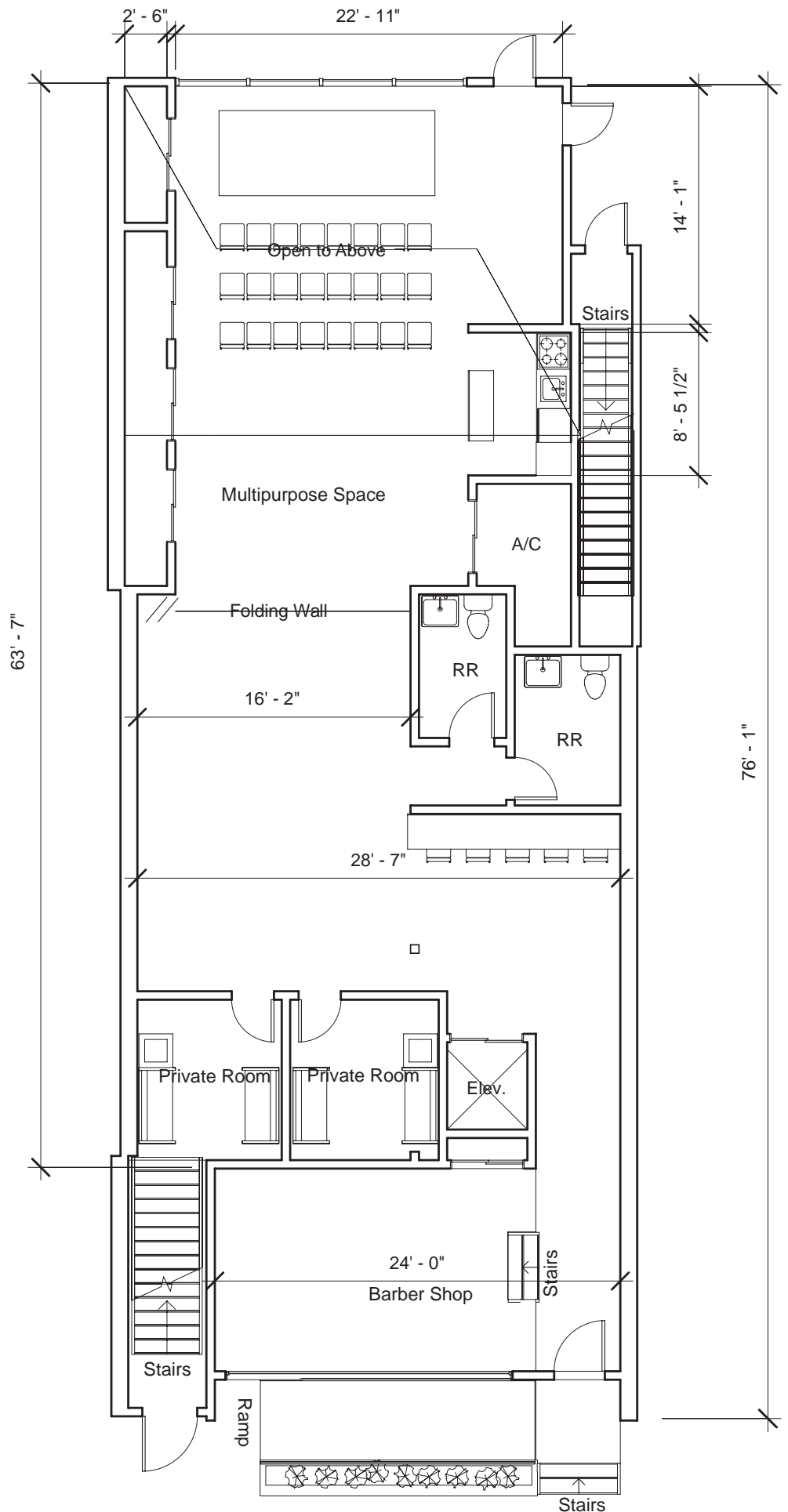


The landscaped exterior patio provides a dynamic backdrop for the interior gathering space, and will allow crowds to overflow outside. Green infrastructure elements will improve the site's drainage and reduce localized flooding. Finally, three dedicated parking spots and a handicap accessible space will be provided to ensure office workers enjoy dedicated parking and evening events can accommodate caterers, performers, and others.

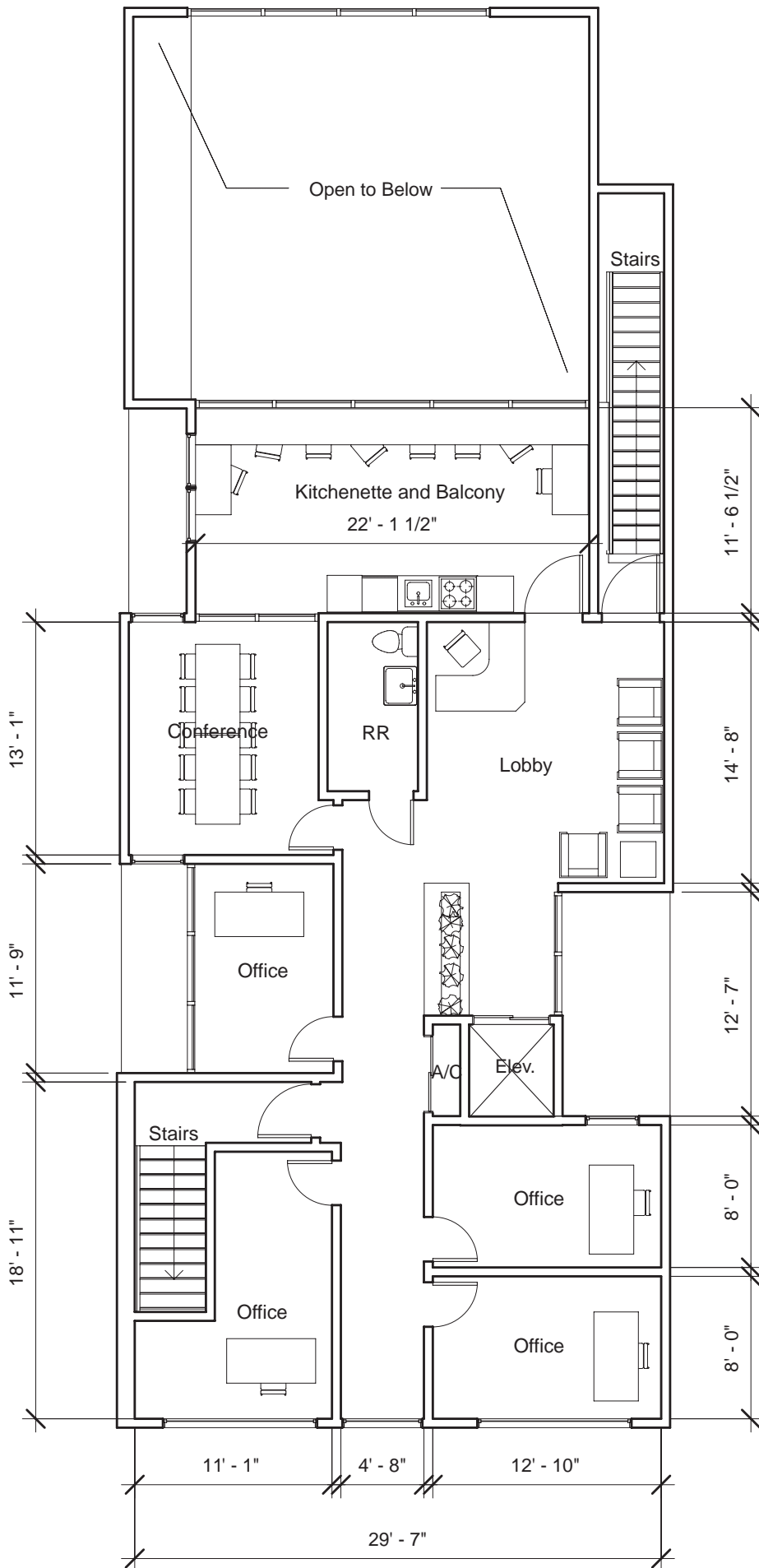
DESIGN CONCEPT

RAE will offer the neighborhood an active and open space where community can come together and be a part of healing and important reform work. This comprehensive renovation scheme opens up the event space with an expanded double-height area including balcony viewing for performances and a warming kitchen for catered events and food/bar service.



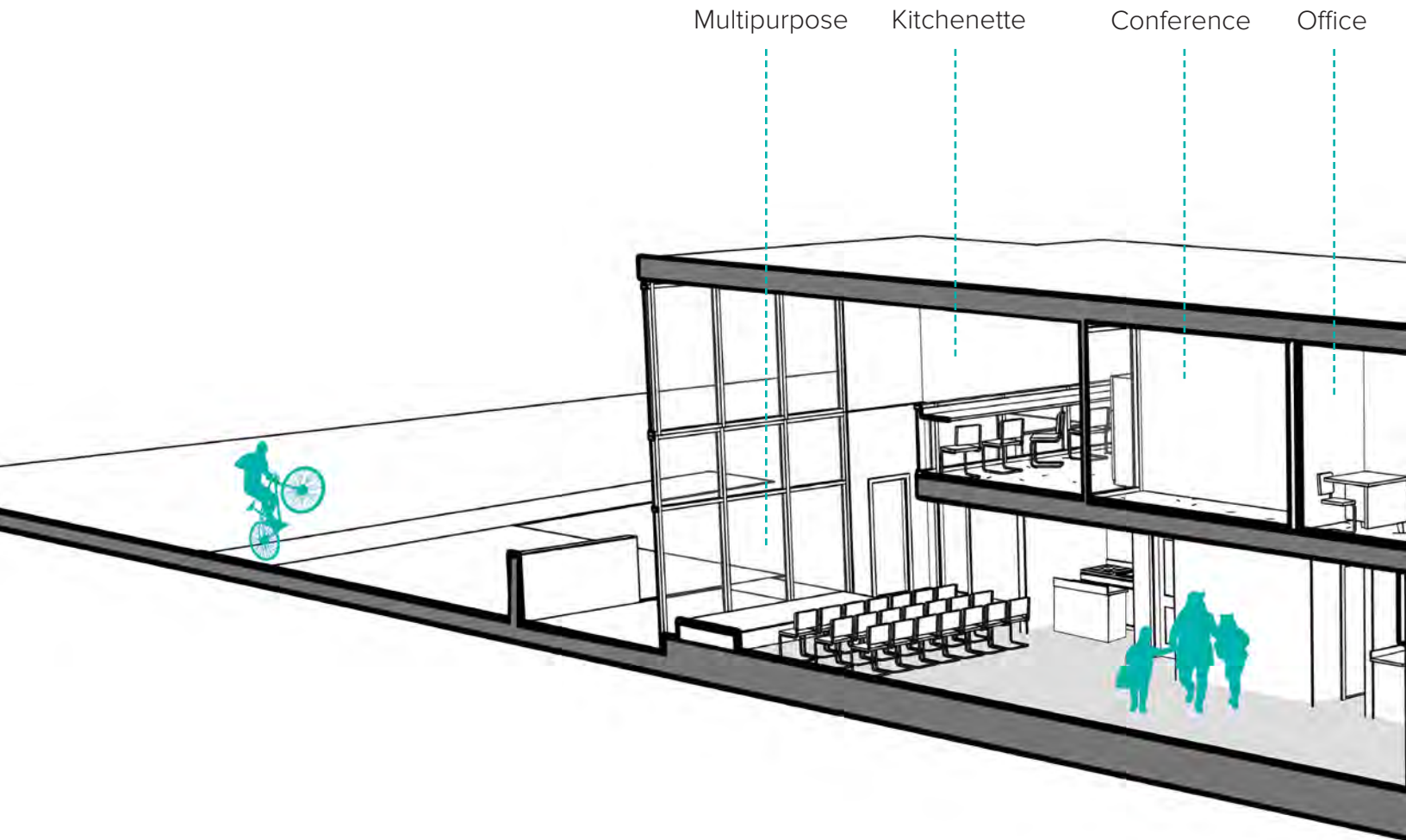


The first floor alters both the front and rear entrances for improved accessibility, and includes a warming kitchen and bar for events, along with new finishes throughout. A double-height space is opened above the stage to provide a spacious performance area and to accommodate sound and light equipment.



The second floor is reconfigured for offices, counseling, and service consultations while a new rear stair leading to parking and an elevator make the second floor accessible to all. Additional square footage is added to accommodate a lobby, conference room, and kitchenette, all shared by the associated office spaces. A new balcony overlooks the performance space below.





WHO WILL USE THE IMPROVED RAE SPACE?

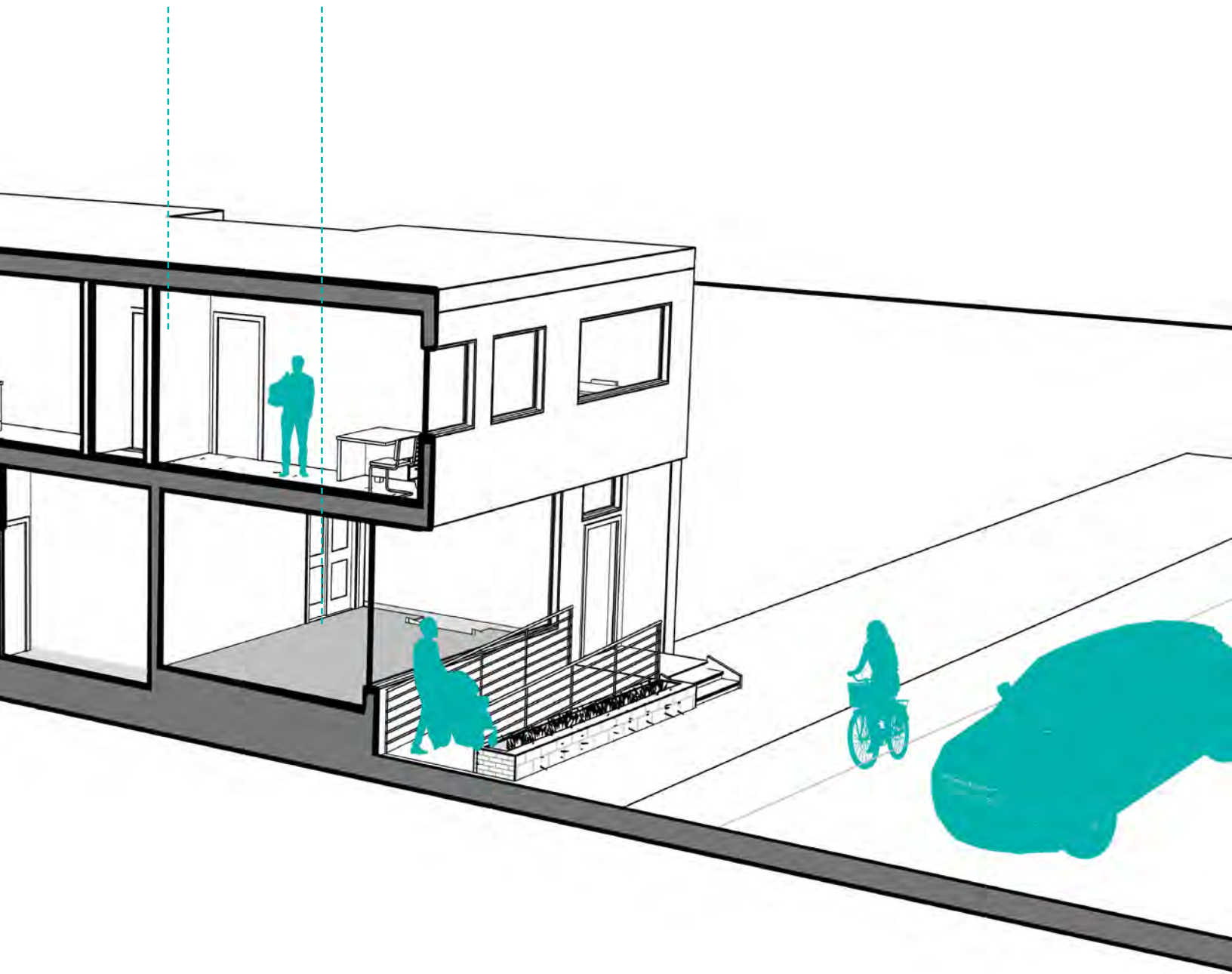
Exonerees, formerly incarcerated and impacted people, social workers, social justice organizations, business trainers and incubated businesses, medical professionals, community organizers, and many more.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN HERE?


Night programming for youth, yoga, meditation, theater, art, dance, spoken word, expungement clinics, legal services, business training, resumé workshops, physical and mental health consultations, trauma-informed therapy, and more.

Office

Barber Shop





A nighttime architectural rendering of a modern house. The house features large glass windows and a covered outdoor area with string lights. In the foreground, a woman in a black dress with a bright green sash walks towards a dark car. Two men in dark jackets and caps are talking near a large bush of orange flowers. The ground is paved with a pattern of green and grey tiles.

The RAE house lot spans from St. Bernard Avenue to Columbus Street, providing an opportunity to improve parking and accessibility. While visitors can enter the property from St. Bernard, they will find dedicated off-street and handicapped parking on Columbus Street. The planned addition of green infrastructure and landscaping enhance this “rear” entryway, provide space for an outdoor garden memorial to RAE founder John Thompson, and create a backdrop for the main interior event space that will now look out onto a lush landscaped environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



PROJECT TEAM

This collaborative endeavor to envision the future of Resurrection After Exoneration was an effort of multiple stakeholders from several allied organizations:

Resurrection After Exoneration (RAE) & Partners

Laverne Thompson	RAE
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Norris Henderson	Voice of the Experienced
Anna Sacks	Voice of the Experienced
Denise Strong	Advisor & Friend
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Mercedes Montagnes	The Promise of Justice initiative
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Albert & Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design

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RESURRECTION

AFTER EXONERATION

THE ALBERT AND TINA

SMALL
CENTER

FOR COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

