



Covenant House Care Center Lobby

Re-envisioning Strategy for Covenant House New Orleans



CONTENT

INTRO	4
CONTEXT	
Neighborhood	10
Building	12
Plan	14
DESIGN	
Principles	20
Process	22
Concept	24
Proposal	26
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	40





“ We stress the reality of the present moment and encourage belief in their potential for the future.”

work and mission

For 33 years, COVENANT HOUSE NEW ORLEANS (CHNOLA) has served and advocated for youth and young families experiencing homelessness, human trafficking, and exploitation. Emergency crisis intervention and safe shelter is provided to all youth ages 22 and under. CHNOLA offers extensive residential care and comprehensive services. The overarching goal of CHNOLA's professional services is to help youth achieve housing stability, heal from past trauma, tap into their innate resilience, and hone their skills to forge new pathways to independence and successful living.



Covenant House's **CONTINUUM OF CARE** includes community outreach, 24/7 crisis care, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing. For young people seeking hope and help, the Care Center represents the first step in enrolling in CHNOLA's residential programs. The Care Center intervenes in times of crisis and facilitates the transition to a life of independence and security in safe, stable housing. Professional staff and youth together form an individualized case plan considering each resident's unique needs (trafficking survivors, foster care youth, pregnant or parenting youth, LGBTQ+, or youth with mental health and/or substance abuse issues).

CHNOLA residents receive medical and behavioral healthcare, substance abuse counseling, education, financial literacy, life skills development, employment opportunities, legal assistance, and much more. Comprehensive services address the myriad of social problems related to the cycle of poverty and limited economic mobility affecting youth. Covenant House averages over 200 young people each night. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, CHNOLA has continued to provide open-intake, safety, shelter, healthcare, and support to young persons in need. It has expanded its Wellness and Education & Vocation programs, as well as its Two-Generation program providing specialized care to young families. Similarly, the Human Trafficking team targets the specific needs of trafficking survivors.



For youth facing homelessness and trafficking, the decision to walk through our front door represents a new chapter in their lives."

Covenant House

IMMEDIACY

In crisis, needing life's basics of food, clothing and shelter, young people come to Covenant House day and night and are accepted without question or cost.

SANCTUARY

Covenant House offers young people protection and safety. We stress the reality of the present moment and encourage belief in their potential for the future.

VALUES COMMUNICATION

At Covenant House, lasting, caring relationships are built on unconditional love and absolute respect. We teach our youth the benefits of positive values like honesty and trust.

STRUCTURE

Stability is uncertain when facing homelessness or human trafficking. We offer young people guidelines, plans, and options— not rules and regulations that will impede them.

CHOICE

Change, freely chosen, brings the surest progress. We assist our young people in making positive decisions about their future.

context

Covenant House occupies a site on N Rampart street adjacent to the French Quarter in New Orleans. Despite its significance as a 'historic' avenue bordering the oldest part of the city, the area surrounding Covenant House has experienced some challenges regarding safety and security. The re-envisioning of the outer lobby and courtyard space forms an important component in positioning Covenant House within its context as a destination for young people in need. Creating a welcoming, supportive environment for new and existing residents in accordance with standards of trauma-informed care would allow Covenant House to offer stronger connections with its constituents and to remain a reliable anchor within the surrounding community.





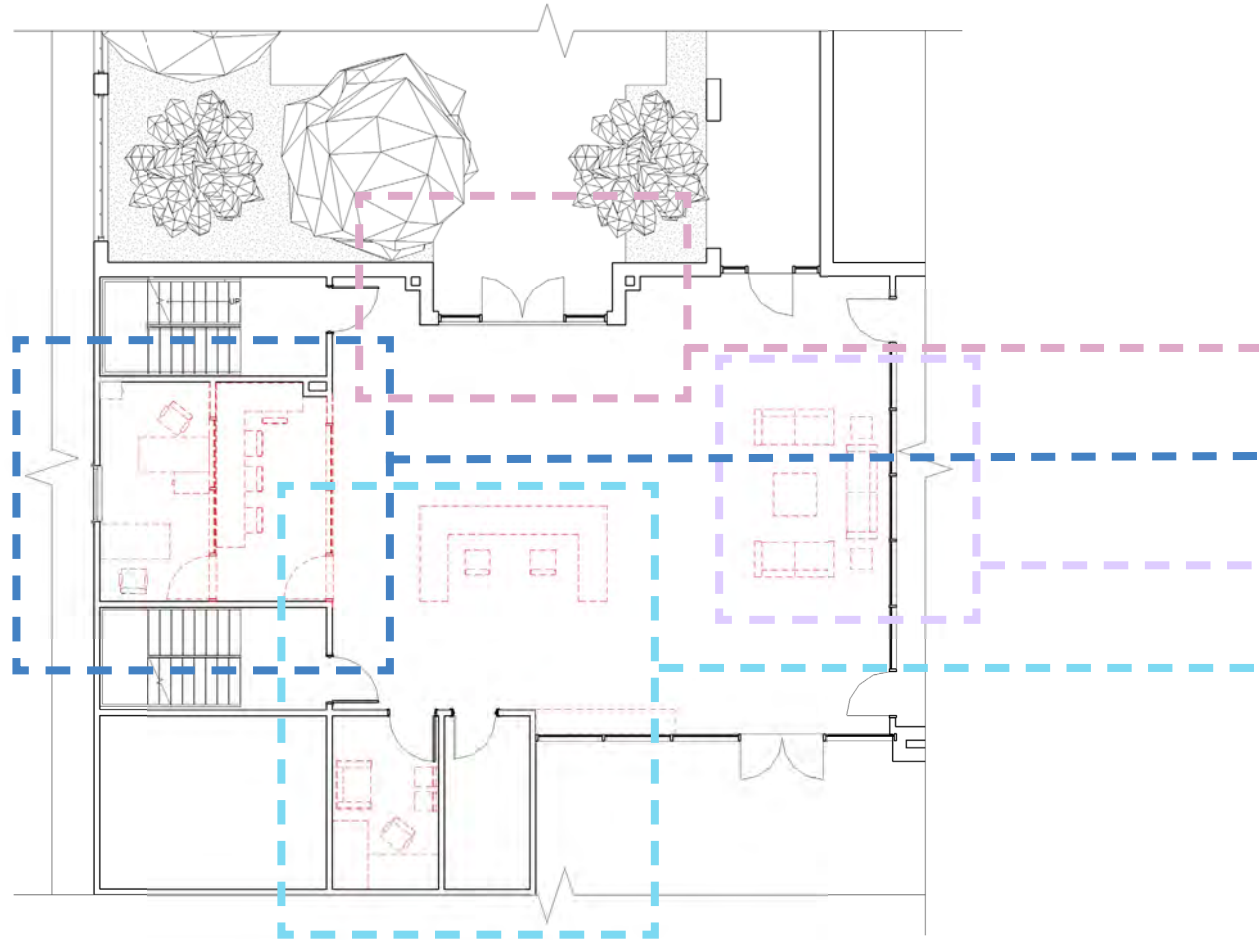


entrance

The Care Center Lobby is in need of re-envisioning to optimize the utilization of the current space and adapt to the evolving needs of staff and residents. The lobby welcomes young people at all hours as they take first steps to overcome the serious challenges of homelessness or human trafficking. The staff answers to calls from young people seeking help and ensures that those arriving for intake are met with compassion and respect in a welcoming atmosphere. Upon entering the building, visitors and future residents often wait to meet with staff for intake, case management or other needs in the sitting area before being directed towards other areas of the building.



existing lobby space



program zones/opportunities



ENTRANCE

courtyard, entrance doors/ security check point



CASE MANAGER OFFICE + INTAKE OFFICE

glass enclosure, desks, chairs, seating, shelving



WAITING AREAS

in-take/case manager waiting, front desk check-in, general waiting/meeting point



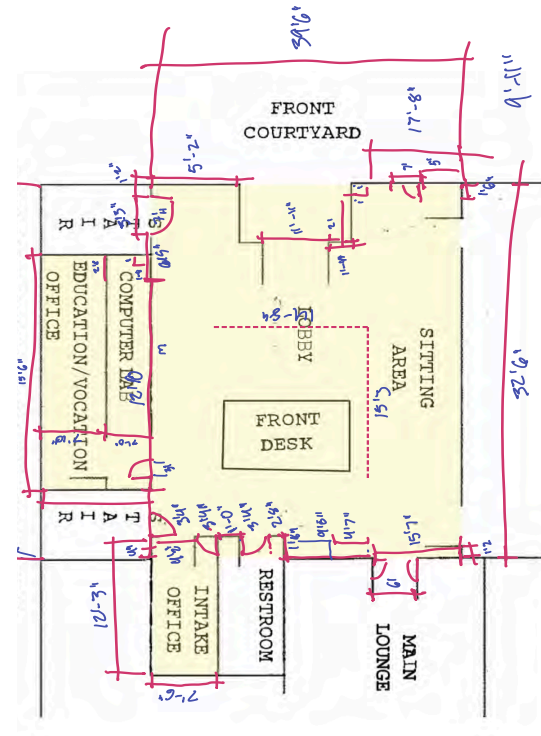
RECEPTION

front desk, storage/equipment, staff lounge, bathroom

challenges

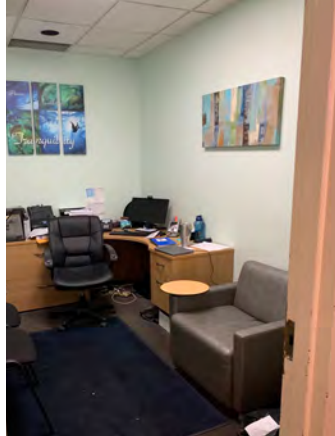
The front desk serves as a safety checkpoint for all visitors, ensuring that the campus acts as a sanctuary for the youth. Due to its central location, the lobby is constantly buzzing as a hub of communication and interaction among staff and residents, and is in need of an atmosphere of organized, protective care.

The current intake office and education & vocation spaces provide critical privacy to staff and new residents as they complete the intake process; These small spaces also often find themselves hosting impromptu meetings and storing staff belongings. Currently there is no staff lounge anywhere on site. Both spaces have outgrown their current locations. This lobby is central to Covenant's work and mission both because of its central location within the Care Center and because of its role in welcoming young people taking their first steps into Covenant House.

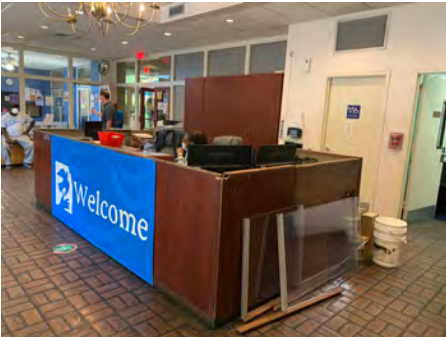


CASE MANAGER + INTAKE OFFICE

COMPUTER LAB



ENTRANCE/LOBBY



FRONT DESK



WAITING AREA



ENTRANCE FROM COURTYARD

ENTRANCE

1. add 'permanent' security checkpoint/threshold
2. courtyard signage to direct residents, visitors

FRONT DESK

1. make it a pivotal point in the space
2. streamline internal organization/storage
3. accommodate visual access to multiple flows of people
4. prioritize campus safety + trauma-informed experience
5. incorporate signage

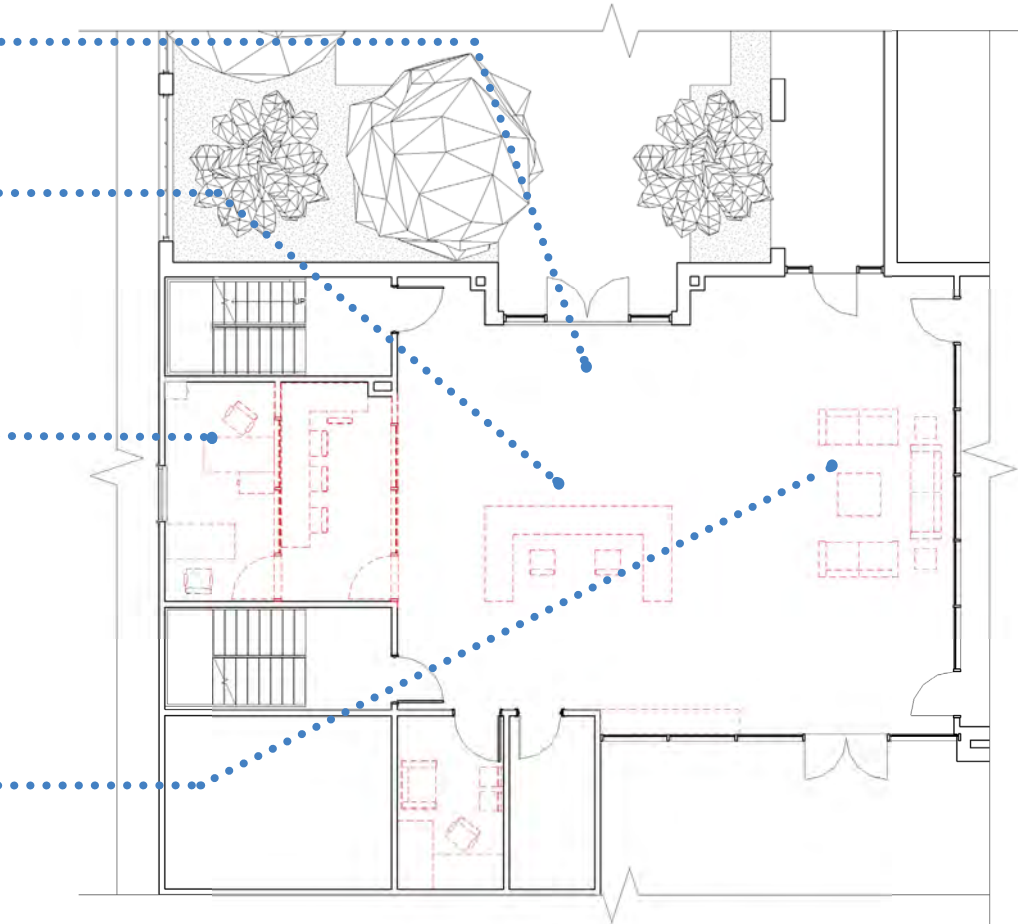
CASE MANAGER + INTAKE OFFICES

1. current computer lab to be moved to other area in building
2. repurpose current intake office as a 'staff wellness lounge' (break room, storage for personal belongings, and self-care)
3. redesign current education & vocation computer lab to house case manager/outreach team
4. Relocate intake and discharge services to the current education & vocation office.

WAITING AREA

1. separate into different waiting areas

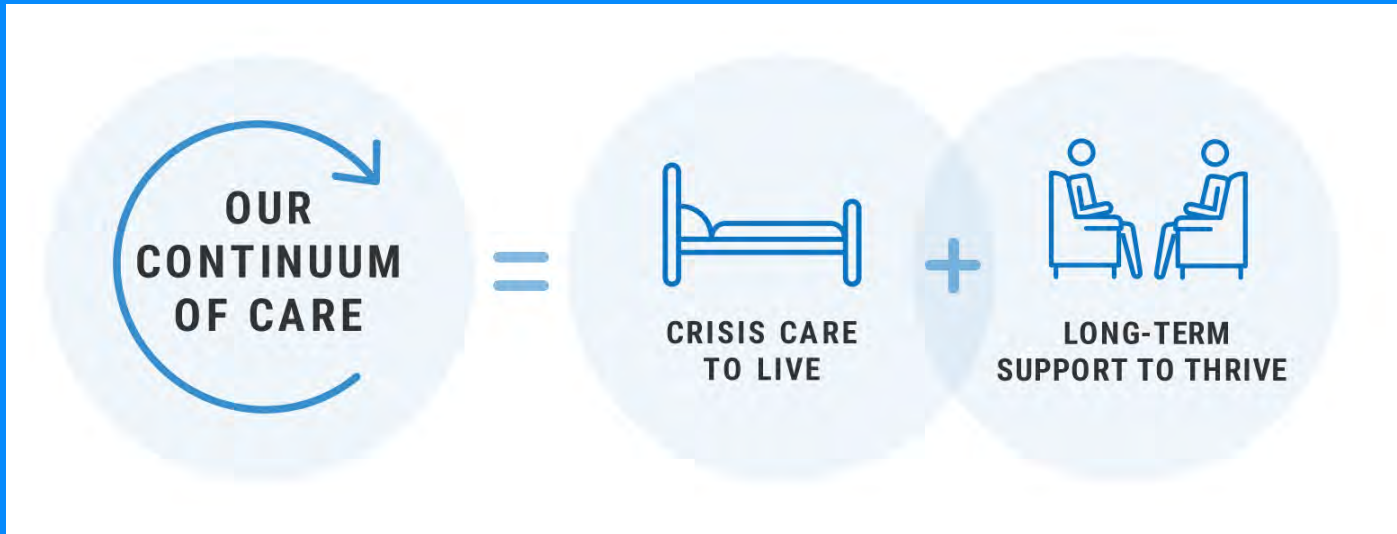
challenges



EXISTING PLAN LOBBY

“

To offer the best care possible to all of our residents, it is crucial that we adapt to changing needs and growing programs, while also meeting the needs of our staff. We believe that this visioning project will be our own first step in reaching these goals within this space.”



CONSIDERATIONS

Aesthetics – balance visual interest with soothing environment, reduce clutter

Artwork – provide calming distractions, possibly through landscape inspired art

Color – use cool colors (blue, green, purple), avoid institutional white walls

IMPLEMENTATION

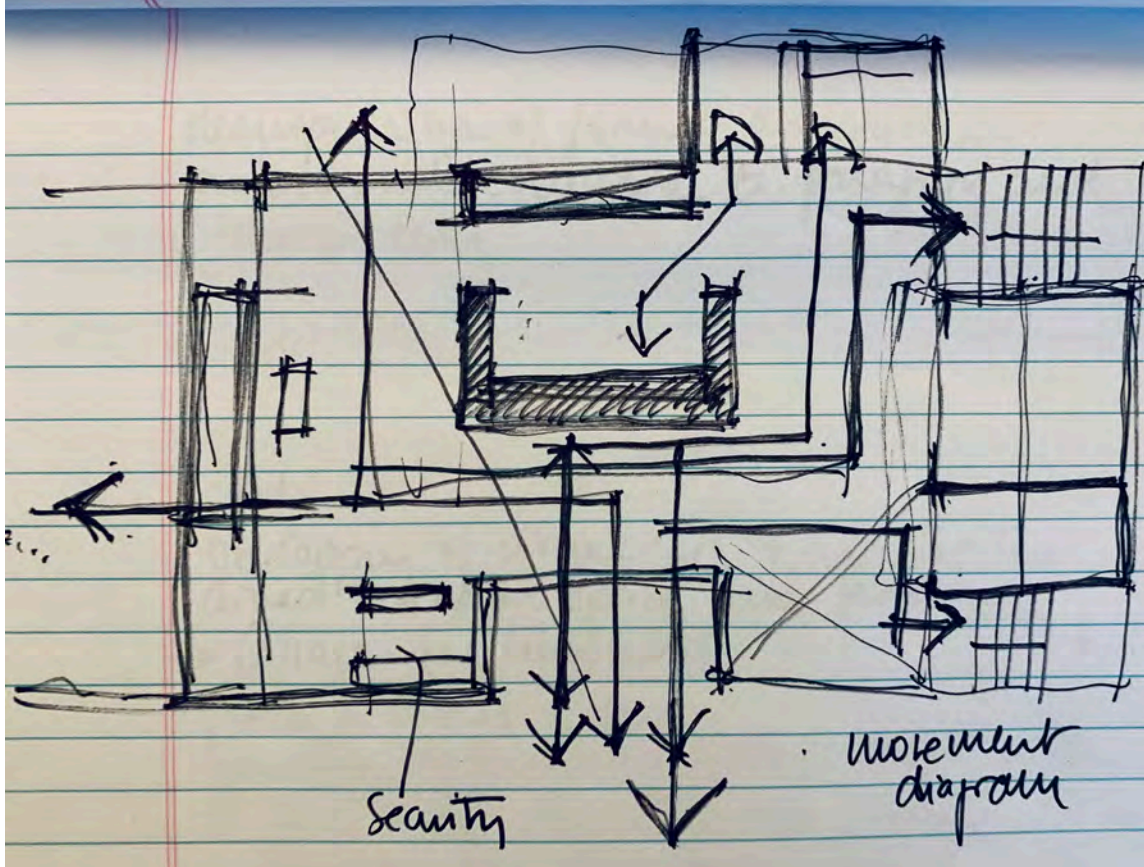
Furnishings – encourage small group socialization and use natural materials

Lighting – mimic natural day-lighting where not available (yellow light, not blue)

Greenery – encourage connections to natural environment & reduce stressors

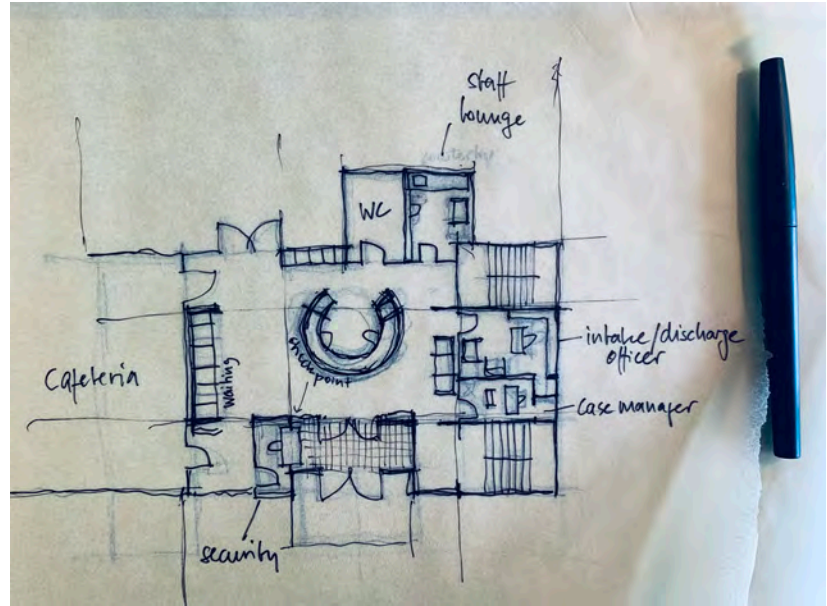
MAINTENANCE

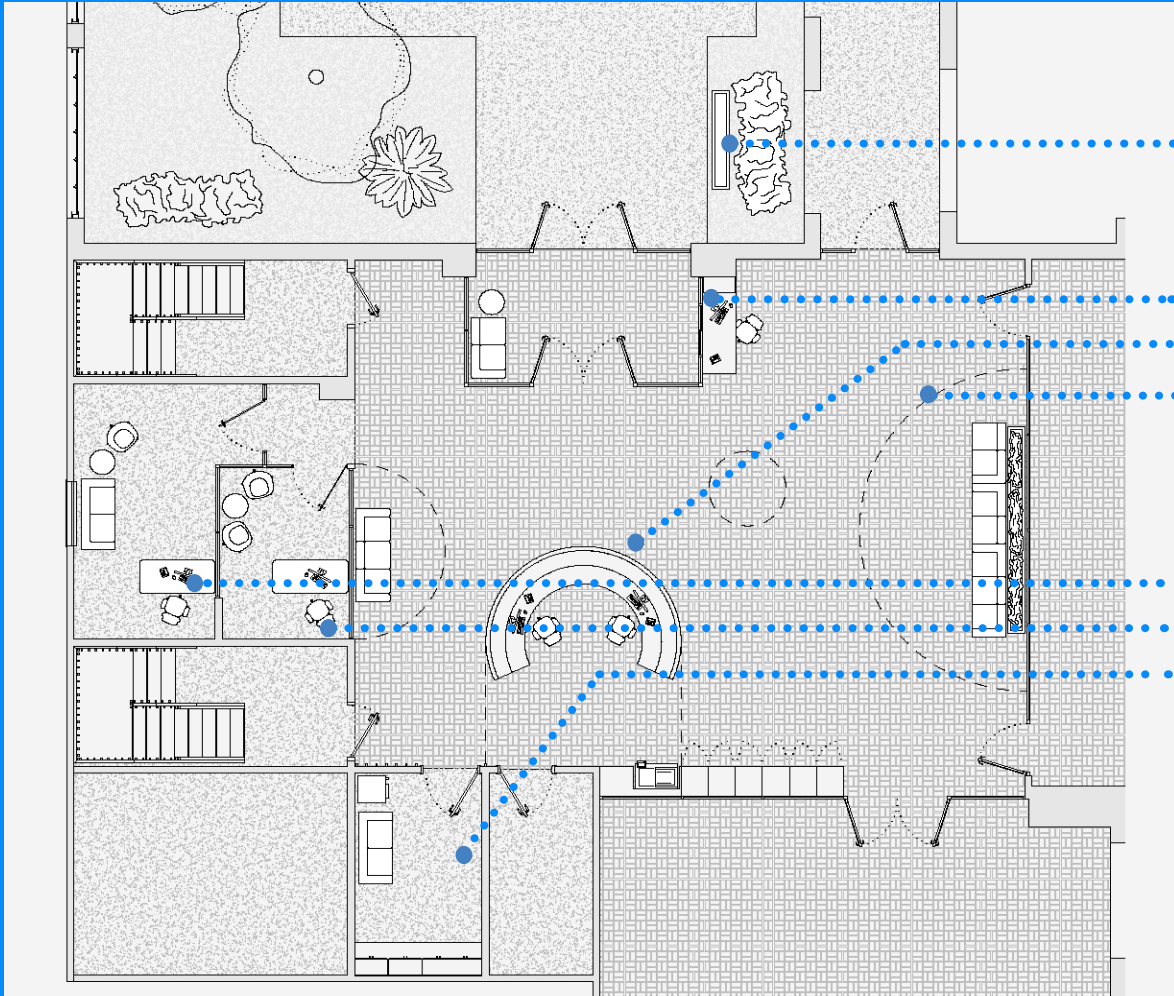
Durability – design for material longevity



process

Covenant House and the Small Center for Collaborative Design worked closely together to identify existing challenges and to establish goals for the renovation of the Care Center lobby. During several meetings with leadership, staff and residents, constituents provided valuable input that helped to shape a clear agenda and vision focused on community, safety and logistics.





design criteria

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Signage – direct visitors within courtyard
- Entrance – balance safety protocols with welcoming feel
- Front Desk – serve as first point of contact w/ residents & visitors
- Lounge Space – accommodate visitors & one-on-one casual meetings

IN-HOUSE PROGRAMMING

- Intake Office – provide space for arriving residents to meet w/ staff
- Case Manager Office – provide space for current residents to meet w/ staff
- Staff Room – provide space for staff to rest

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Flow – allow for varying traffic of residents, staff, and visitors

Atmosphere – encourage comfort through trauma informed design practices

the building

The 24/7 Care Center welcomes young people to meet their immediate needs. A generous ground floor lobby connects visitors to resident apartments on upper levels, a cafeteria, Intake and Case Manager offices and additional programming of the building, located adjacent to a large courtyard towards the rear of the building. Visitors enter the Care Center via a central courtyard off of N Rampart Street. Newly envisioned, highly visible signage will direct them towards the Care Center Lobby entrance, ensuring an atmosphere of organized, protective care.





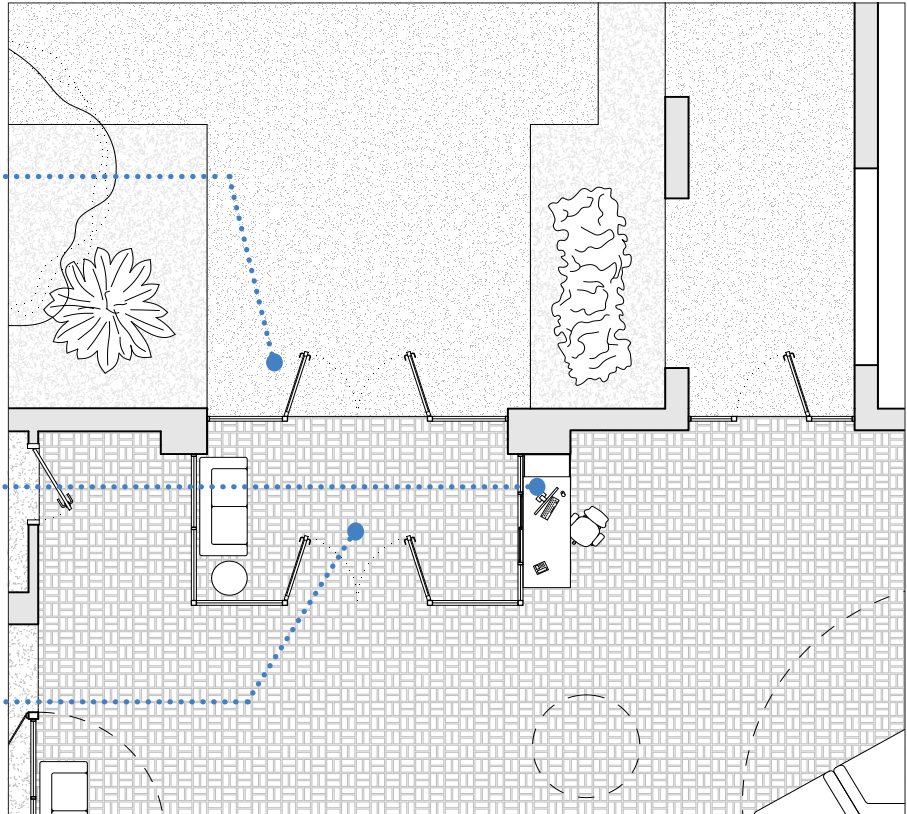


entrance

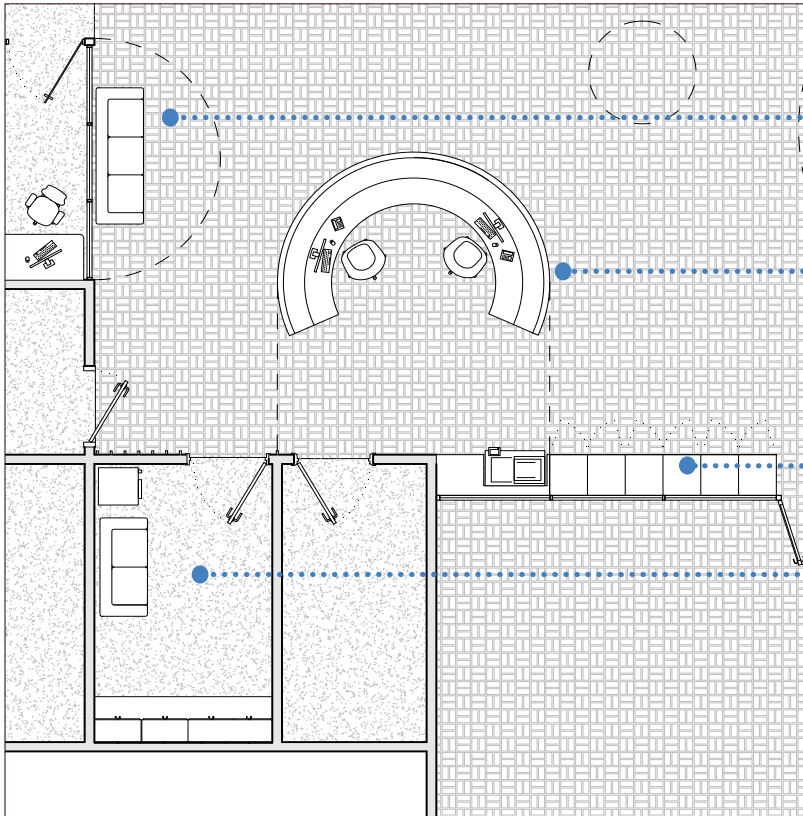
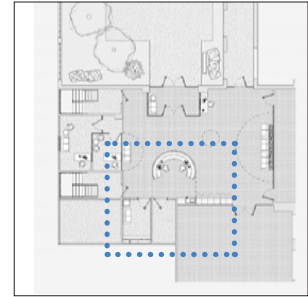
storefront moved outwards to accommodate more space

security station with built-in desk and shelving and security window opening to entrance

interior glass storefront



reception/staff



waiting area for Intake/Case Manager offices

circular reception desk for multilateral views throughout lobby space

storage with integrated printer

staff lounge w/ countertop, coffeemaker and seating

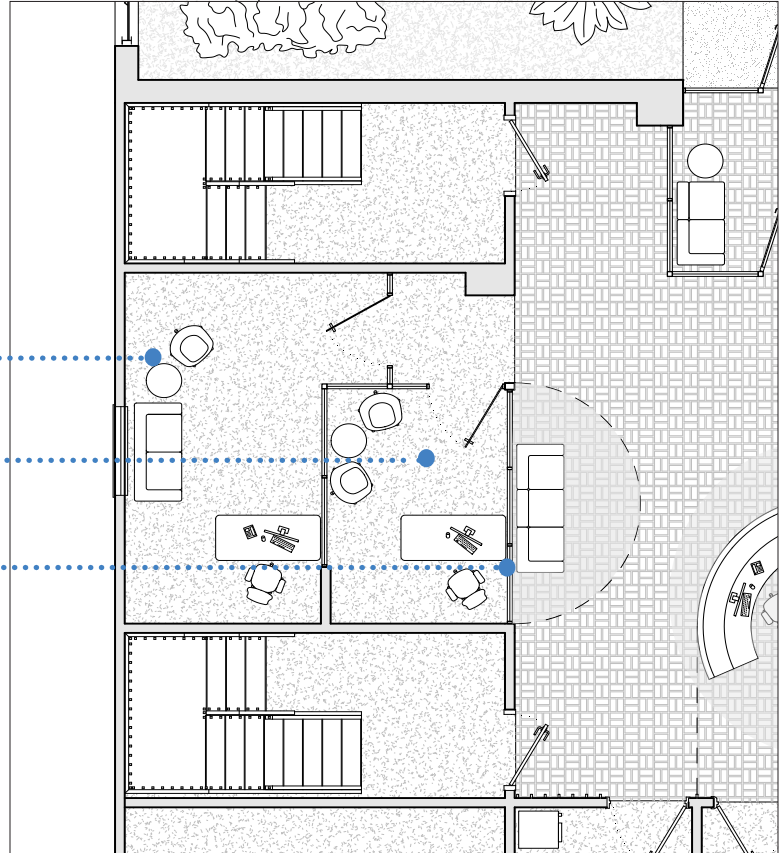


offices

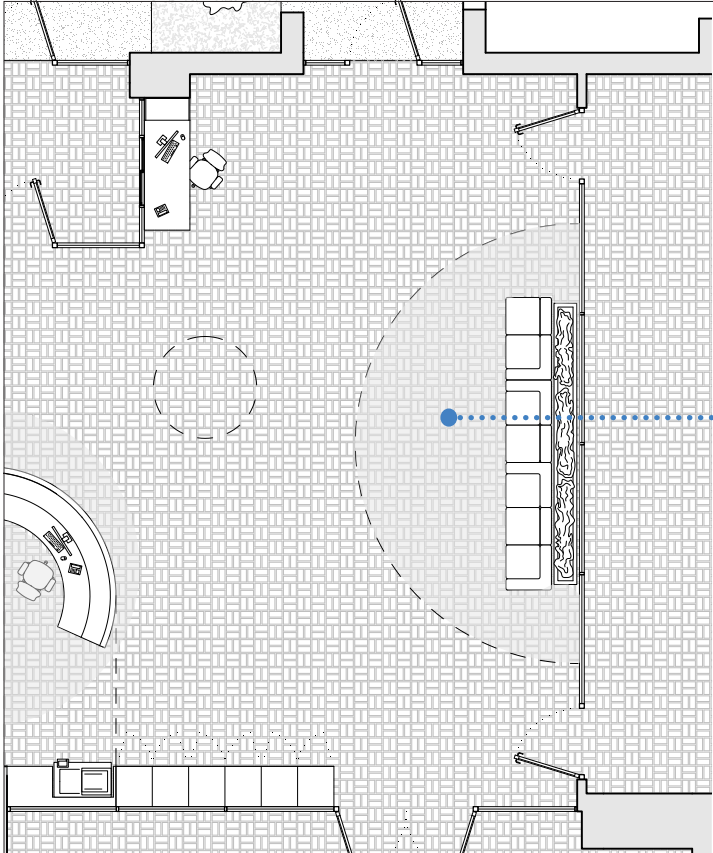
Intake office

Case Manager office

new glass enclosure with graphics



waiting



waiting area general public





entrance/security checkpoint

ceiling louvers (wood/fabric)

ceiling cutouts for light fixtures
(building systems located above)

staff lounge behind

front desk

security check point/waiting area

security desk

front desk/back of house









front desk/entrance

entrance/front desk







Staff

Rheneisha Robertson, Executive Director
Brian Gorman
Wyatt Hines
Haley Khoury
Greg Fortenberry
Jane Helire
Sheri Combs
Vantrelle Payton
Cynthia Fouts
David Crumpton
Railyn Price
Deneen Jackson
Kahlise Ward
Additional Covenant House Staff
Covenant House Residents



Design Lead

Cordula Roser Gray, AIA/crgarchitecture

Tulane School of Architecture Students

Nicholas George
Karan Sharma

Staff

Nick Jenisch, Project Manager
Ann Yoachim, Director
Emilie Taylor Welty, Assistant Director Design/Build
Jose Cotto, Collaborative Design Project Manager

