

**Any Mummers Allowed in the Pool? Queering Vernacular
Typologies in Outport Newfoundland**

by

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Abstract

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador's unique cultural mythology and traditional architecture is directly related to a heteronormative way of living, with relatively no evidence of queerness in representations of place or the built environment. This narrative creates a contradiction between queer identity and Newfoundland identity that leaves many rural queers to struggle finding individual and collective identity. This project creates a queer space in rural Newfoundland through understanding the traditional aspects of the cultural landscape and then developing an architectural language of queering. It is argued that the traditional practice of mummering is an inherently queer aspect of the province's culture that blurs the lines between the real and the magical, creating queer space. The mummery's costuming is studied, along with theories of queer space and post-modernism, developing working methods of exaggeration, collage and masking to design a queer camp and bathing pavilions in the rural town of New-Wes-Valley.

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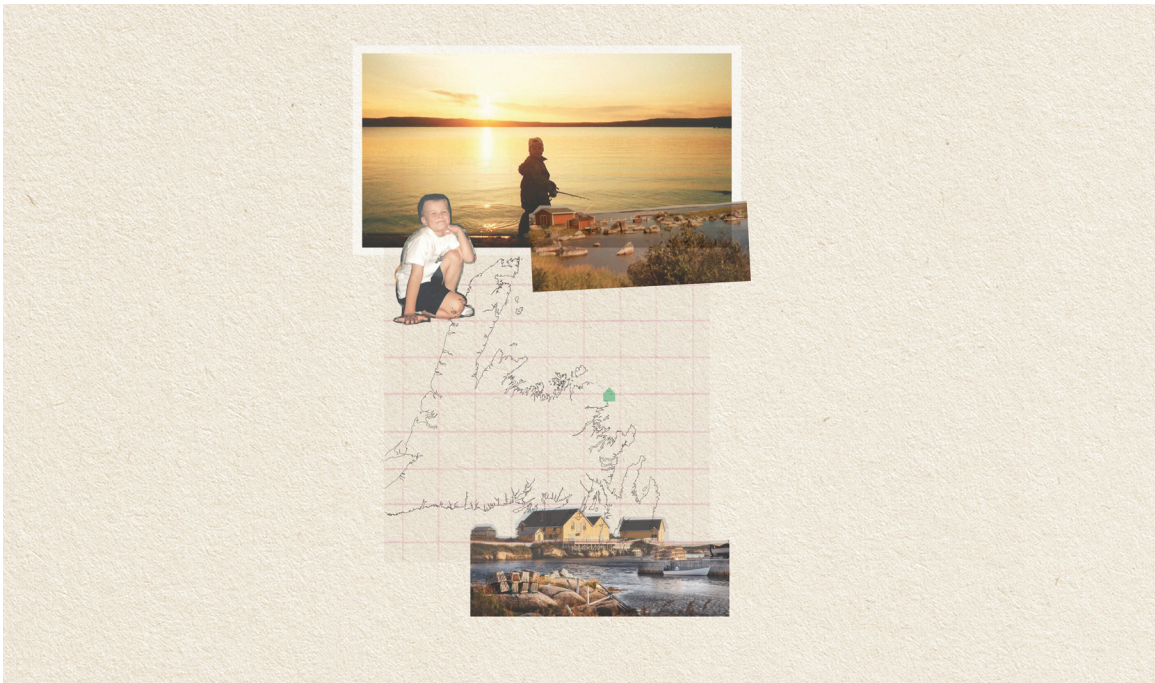
Chapter 1: Introduction

A Personal Start



Standing by my family wood shed at South West Pond, 1997

This thesis developed from a deeply personal starting point. As a gay man from outport Newfoundland, I understand the complex contradiction between rural and queer culture. I have a profound sense of adoration and connection to my province, hometown, and the people who live there. However, I also understand the isolation of being queer in a small town; the difficulties of growing up different and the longing for a place where there are others like me. Gerald Pocius writes that belonging in Newfoundland is created through maintaining a series of spaces that are filled with appropriate objects for specific behaviours (Pocius 2000, 25). I started to wonder, if these traditional spaces, objects and behaviours exclude queerness, how can queer people truly belong to this place?



Home collage

Terminology

Queer

The use of the term queer in this project will denote any individual who's romantic, sexual, sex or gender identity does not fall within the societal normalities of heteroromantic, heterosexual, cis-sexed or cis-gendered. This wording allows for a simplistic umbrella that encompasses a wide variety of complexly diverse individuals; However, its usage is also an act of reclamation. The term queer has historic roots as an offensive and derogatory slur towards the forementioned individuals. More recent uses of the term by LGBT+ individuals and academics is a method of diminishing its meaning and power as an insult to the community (Cottrill 2006, 360). And while these individuals may have vastly different identities, experiences and relationships with the concept queerness they are united through shared events and representations. One of the common myths regarding queerness is that it is an urban phenomenon. Mary Gray, Colin Johnson and Brian Gilley write in their text *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Queer Studies*:

Many rural queers struggle with reconciling their deep connection to or pride in their hometowns with the popular representation of their communities as backward, ignorant, and unlivable – not just for queer folks, but for anyone with taste or class. They feel they are not supposed to see their communities as viable places to live, and they are told that they need to choose between being queerly out of place in the country or moving to a big city to finding legitimate visibility. (Gray, Johnson and Gilley 2016, 15)

Rural

Much like the term queer, rural can be a highly complex term; it may cover a vast variety of locations, peoples and mindsets. When one typically thinks of the term rural, it is associated with population size and density. Stats Canada

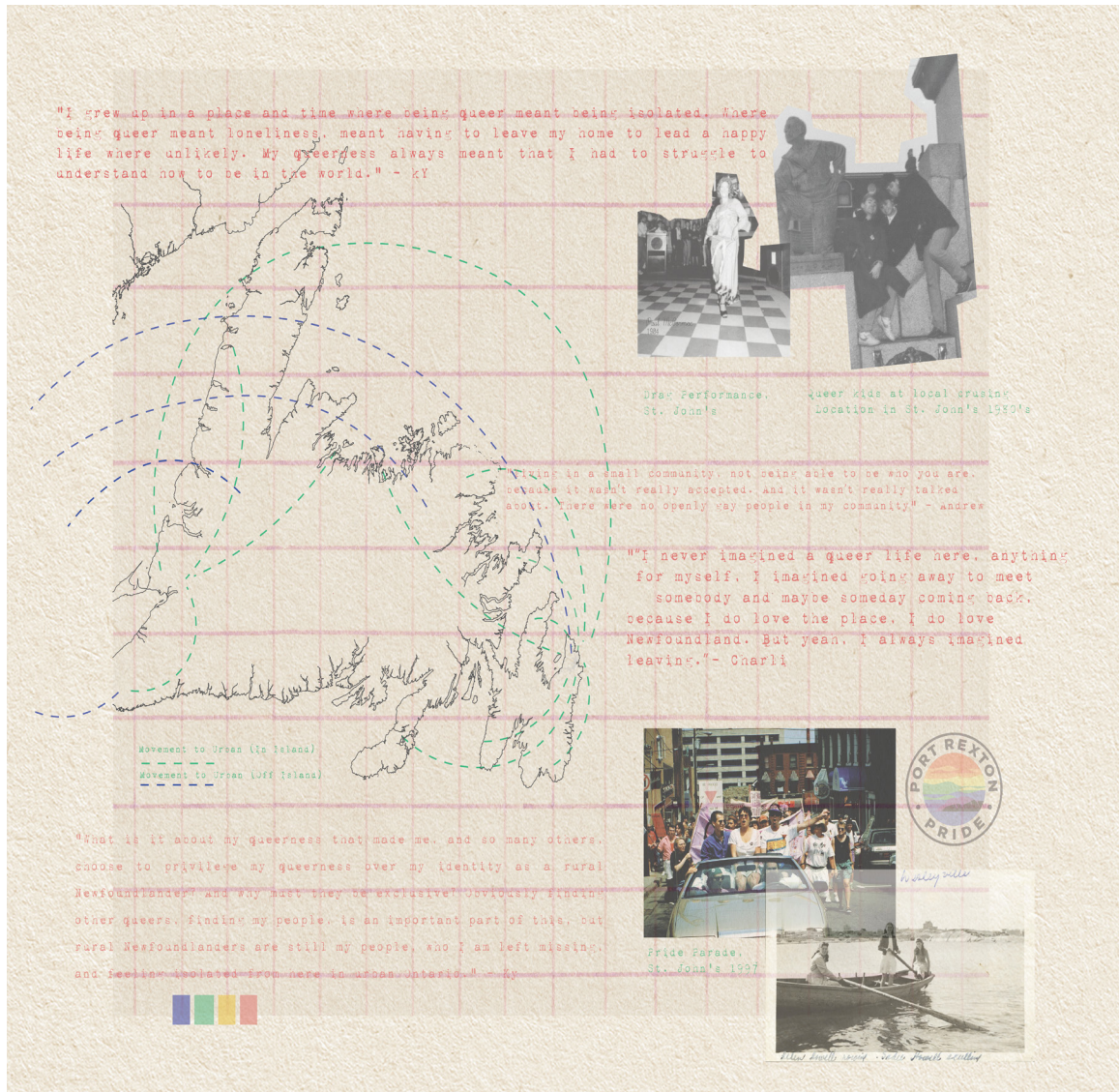
currently defines rural as “the population outside settlements with 1,000 or more population with a population density of 400 or more inhabitants per square kilometre” (Statistics Canada 2016). However, Gray et al argue that the concept of rural is:

First and foremost a name we give to an astoundingly complex assemblage of people, places and personalities... it is simultaneously everywhere in general and nowhere in particular. It is ever present and yet a thing of the past. It is at once archetypal and atypical”. (Grey, Johnson and Gilley 2016, 4)

When people refer to ruralness they are not only referring to population and density, they also are referencing common myths regarding ruralness such as conservative political views, religious overtones and backwards thinking (Grey ,Johnson and Gilley 2016, 2).

Rural Newfoundland

Defined by physical distance from the rest of Canada and its expansive land mass filled with tiny coastal communities, the island of Newfoundland has become intrinsically linked with the concept of ruralness. Alvin Simms and Robert Greenwood state that the province has the highest proportion of the population living in rural locations in Atlantic Canada at 60% (Simms and Greenwood 2015, 1). Only 28 of its 276 municipalities are categorized by Stats Canada as urban, with only one falling into the large urban category, the capital city of St. John’s (Statistics Canada 2016). The provinces large land mass and sparse settlement pattern also renders travelling between rural and urban locations quite difficult. However rural this province may be defined as; it is still home to many queer individuals whose stories and histories have been virtually un-represented.



Queer Newfoundland Collage (Base map from Ersi Canada 2020, quotes from Pearce 2018)

With limited access to queer spaces and under-representation, there exists a tension between Newfoundland identity and queer identity both at the scale of the individual and the collective. Both Ky Pearce's dissertation "Gay By the Bay: Feeling Queer, Feeling Newfoundland", and Sarah Moore's dissertation "When I Came Out: Coming Out and Personal Experience Narratives in Newfoundland and Labrador" conduct interviews with queer Newfoundlander's. These writings reinforce the notion that most of these

individuals feel a deep sense of connection to place; However, they are unsure how to assimilate into it properly. These individuals lack more than just a safe space, or a gay bar argues Pearce; they have no cultural reference as to how one might live a queer life in rural Newfoundland (Pearce 2018, 114). Queers from this location struggle with conflicting cultural narratives that try to force their lives into recognizably queer boxes.

Objective

The project aims to develop a queer space in rural Newfoundland through the design of a LGBT+ summer, bathing pavilions and swimming pool. The cultural practice of mummering is studied to distill and translate a design methodology of queering traditional Newfoundland typologies.

Chapter 2: Mythology

The very utterance of the term mythology conjures visions of fantastic tales of ancient men and powerful gods, it is how we learn about both the world and ourselves as humans. Roland Barthes explains in his text *Mythologies* that we can apply the concept of myth to even the contemporary and mundane; myth transforms the reality of the world into an image of the world (Barthes and Lavers 1972, 109). Ian McKay writes that myth is created through “a collection of decontextualized artifacts – old ballads, sayings, superstitions, customs, handicrafts – whose values lay not in the functions they performed for those who employed them, but in their status as isolated relics of an older and better time” (McKay 1994, 22). In short, myth is created by decontextualizing history and exaggerating it. This exaggerated narrative created through mythology lays the foundations for us to form both collective and individual identity.

Collective Identity

Mythologies allow entire groups of people to create a sense of collective identity through imagined communities. In his text, *The Quest of the Folk*, McKay argues that these imagined communities created through myth allow groups of people who live in different locations and may never even meet each other to have a common identity (McKay 1994 15). He illustrates this through an example of a postcard from Nova Scotia titled “A Simple Life, House 8 x10 Mill Cove, N.S”. The postcard depicts two men, a woman, and three children standing next to a small fisheries building near the ocean. While Nova Scotia’s was historically filled with different races, cultures and hardships, this popularized

framing of fisher-folk living a simple and charming life in the picturesque landscape became the defining reading of the province; so much so that it came to define what it meant to be a Nova Scotian (McKay 1994, 9).

Moore states that imagined community and sense of belonging is a crucial need for members of a marginalised culture such as queers, who are oppressed and excluded from mainstream society (Moore 2017, 29). Queer people, who are not necessarily bound by geography, can create these imagined communities through something as simple as watching a television show. Rebecca Kern uses the example of queer women creating imagined community through watching *The L Word*. “Viewers interacted with the show, found personal, socio-political, and cultural validation within and beyond the show, forming membership in a mediated, imagined, community” (Kern 2014, 434).



A Simple Life, House 8 x10 Mill Cove, N.S (McKay 1994, xii)

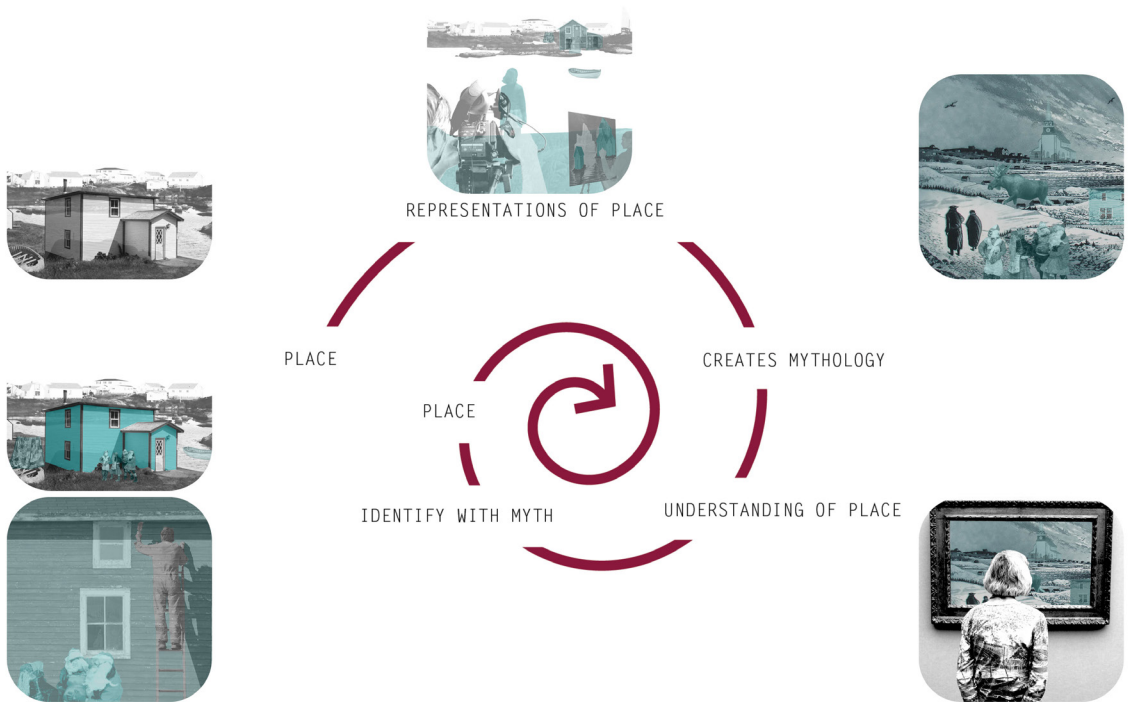
Individual Identity

These imagined communities generated through myth also allow for individuals to form a sense of self identity. Jerome Bruner states in his essay *Myth and Identity* “it would perhaps be more appropriate to say that the mythologically instructed community provides its members with a library of scripts upon which the individual may judge the internal drama of his multiple identities” (Bruner 1959, 350). We can place ourselves in relation to these myths and determine if we identify with them or not; some individuals may feel included or excluded by myth and others may reject it outright. The concept of heritage is a myth that ultimately creates insiders and outsiders. McKay states that “all heritage is someone’s heritage and therefore logically not someone else’s” (McKay 1994, 41). Chapter 4 will discuss how Newfoundland’s heritage has been exclusionary to queerness. While there are existing myths about queerness that allow for individuals to gain a sense of identity some individuals do not want to associate or be understood in these terms. Pearce states from personal experience that “I did not struggle to have my queerness recognized. In fact, if anything, I struggled for them to recognize me on my own terms rather than within popular understandings of queerness” (Pearce 2018, 10).

Architecture as Myth

Architecture is a form of mythology that defines an image of the world, the built environment can lead us to group and self identity. Pallasmaa states that “architecture reflects, materializes and eternalises ideas and images of ideal life. Buildings and towns enable us to structure, understand and remember the shapeless flow of reality and, ultimately, to recognize and remember who we are” (Pallasmaa 2012, 71)

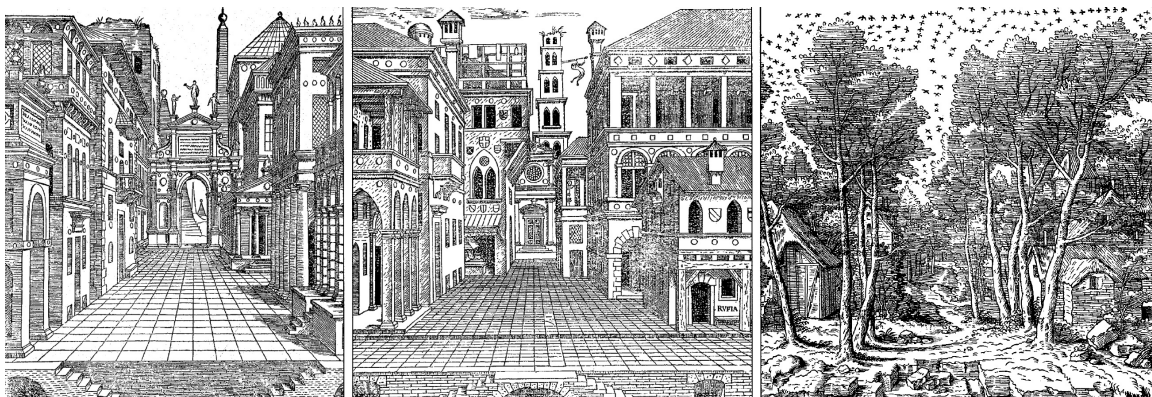
Essentially, architecture is capable of creating an idealized image of the world that we may find collective belonging in. He also argues that “instead of creating mere objects of visual seduction, architecture relates, mediates and projects meanings. The ultimate meaning of any building is beyond architecture; it directs our consciousness back to the world and towards our own sense of self and being” (Pallasmaa 2012, 11). Aaron Betsky writes that architecture “allows us to place ourselves in the world, define ourselves in relation to others, and create another, artificial world that replaces the one we have remade” (Betsky 1997, 7).



Mythical Cycle Diagram

Chapter 3: Queer Space

Queer space is mysterious, liminal and often hard to describe. Aaron Betsky writes that “queer space often doesn’t look like an order you can’t recognize, and when it does, it seems like an ironic or rhetorical twist on such an order” (Betsky 1997, 18). Betsky relates queer space to the realm of myth through referencing Sebastian Serlio’s tragic, comic and satyric scenes. The tragic scene is where important stories are told, in classical settings, filled with tales of triumph and death. The comic scene represents the everyday, mundane and vernacular aspects of life. While the satyric scene takes place in a miraculous mix of the real and the artificial, the factual and the imagined. He argues that queer space is like the satyric scene, it “functions as a counter architecture, appropriating, subverting, mirroring, and choreographing the aspects of daily life” (Betsky 1997, 26). He further writes that queer space is created through two distinct mechanisms, the closet and the mirror.



The Tragic, Comedic and Satyric Scenes, Sebastian Serlio, 1537 (Betsky 1997, 24)

The Closet



A night at Studio 54 (Dowd 2012)

The concept of the closet is integral to the idea of queer space. Groz states that the closet provides a sense of safety and security for queers, allowing them to “not be seen as gay, but to feel safe as gay” (Grosz 2001, 9). It is in this space that we conceal ourselves but also begin to define ourselves as human beings. Betsky writes that the closet is a beginning point, a place where you can construct identity and define yourself in the dark recesses of your soul (Betsky 1997, 17). Groz further argues that what most queer communities have done is “invent a very large closet, enclosing a whole nightlife scene, bar scene, probably a whole capitalist, consumer scene as well, as spaces of both heterocentric containment and gay freedom” (Grosz 2001, 9). Essentially queer people, even after coming out, have had to create safe spaces that are exclusive to queers. Detached from the heteronormative society, these spaces provide a safe space for queer individuals to express themselves freely and openly.

The Mirror

The second aspect of queer space is the mirror. It is an alternate and unreal world that reflects our own. According to Betsky the mirror is “a strangely haunting space, one where the world comes back to us in a reversed manner. Everything is still there, in place but out of place. As a result, mirror space both affirms and confuses us” (Betsky 1997, 21). He further states that the mirror space is “free and open, shifting and ephemeral, and yet constrained by its lack of reality. The mirror is good for nothing else than appearing; as soon as you look away from it, it

ceases to function” (Betsky 1997, 17). This ephemerality has become a defining aspect of queer space, creating fleeting moments between individuals within the ruins of old spaces, on the outskirts of society and within hidden interiors.

Queer Mythologies

Queer mythologies have constructed an idea of queerness that consist of urban context, coming out narratives and promiscuous lifestyles. These ideas of queerness have been capable of providing both collective and individual identity for many queer individuals all around the world. However, these myths can be limiting and exclusionary; specifically, for people living in rural locations, people of colour and trans individuals. Pearce states that:

The gay imaginary still conjures the image of a white, upper middle class, athletic and able-bodied, urban, gay man. The gay imaginary is composed of cultural narratives of queerness and suggests what is normal for “gay” people, such as migrating from rural to urban spaces, coming out of the closet during high school to all and sundry, and fitting our experiences and identities into clearly delineated boxes. The gay imaginary is staggeringly homonormative, and often transphobic and misogynistic, but influences all aspects of queer experiences, legitimizing or delegitimizing particular behaviours, identities, and people. (Pearce 2018, 120)

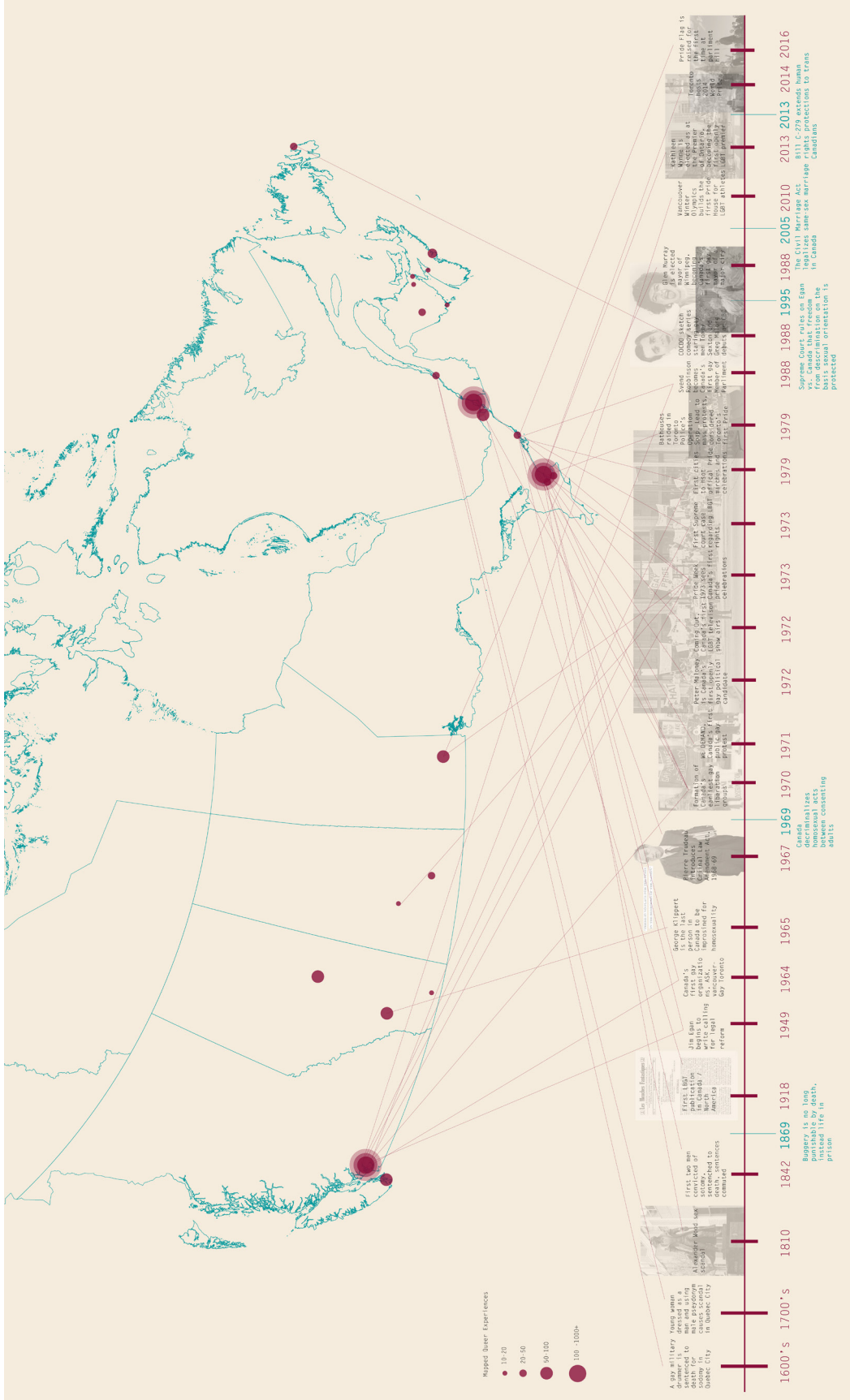
One of the main myths regarding queerness is that it occurs in urban settings. The term metronormativity, defined by Judith Halberstam, has come to define this urban/rural queer dichotomy.

Metronormativity perpetuates the queer myth of “migration from the rural to the urban as a spatial narrative within which the subject moves to a place of tolerance after enduring life in a place of suspicion, persecution and secrecy” (Grey, Johnson and Gilley 2016, 13). Historic events seen as sociopolitical defining moments for queers, such as Stonewall and Operation Soap, aid in normalizing this metronormative sexual/gender expression (Grey, Johnson and Gilley 2016, 13). A mapping of historic queer moments and memories in Canada reveals there is an obvious concentration in large urban centers such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

This queer bias towards the urban is tied with concept of coming out of the closet. Most queer individuals feel they must wait until they move to a city before coming out; or face the pre-conceived hardships of living openly queer in rural locations (Gray, Johnson and Gilley 2016, 15). Moore states that most queer youth from rural Newfoundland do not feel comfortable coming out until they leave their rural towns and sometimes even the province itself (Moore 2017, 135). She also states how the coming out narrative has been mythologized through its constant telling, performance and representations.

The story of coming out may be often repeated, rehearsed, stylized, reconstructed and changed over one’s lifetime, but the coming-out events are factual episodic events that do not change. What changes are the choices that the narrator makes on what stories to tell, what information to include or omit, and to whom one would tell the story. Therefore, the coming-out story, and all of its variants, is a popular and well-recognized narrative in the queer community. (Moore 2017, 28)

Through this constant telling of these stories however, queer individuals are able to build group belonging and find self-identity.



Queer mapping of Canada (data from Queering the Map 2020, base Map from Ersi Canada 2020)

Chapter 4: Newfoundland Space

Newfoundland Settlement

Rural towns in Newfoundland have a settlement pattern that appears to be random and chaotic in nature; however, it is directly related to the harvesting of natural resources, traditional family structures, and social hierarchy. Robert Mellin states that European settlement in outport Newfoundland was established through proximity to fishing grounds, a sheltered harbour and access to other natural resources such as fur bearing animals and forested areas (Mellin 2003, 11). These rural towns are organized by extended-family neighbourhoods that reinforce a traditional and heteronormative way of living. Mellin states that “the old family home was inherited by the youngest son, but all sons got some land. They would either build a new house [on their parents land] or buy one and launch it to their land”.



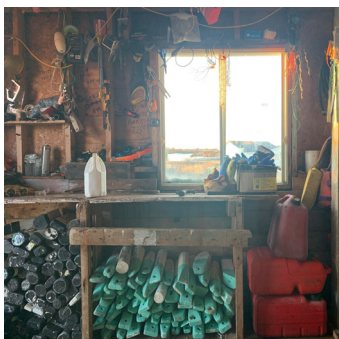
Aerial photo showing settlement patterns, Newtown, New-Wes-Valley (Kolarova 2019)



Traditional salt-box house (Heritage Foundation Newfoundland & Labrador 2020)



Traditional biscuit-box house (Heritage Foundation Newfoundland & Labrador 2020)



Fishing stage interior,
Wesleyville, New-Wes-
Valley

(Mellin 2003, 48) This built environment promotes the act of marriage between a man and woman, so they may procreate and continue the family work and lineage. Living in a location with this type extremely close settlement pattern also means that residents develop an acceptable spatial grid they use day in and day out, with little space for acts of queer deviance. (Pocius, 2000 64). Residential and working buildings are typically free of ornament, built in the “saltbox” or “biscuit box” form and constructed with wood. Public buildings such as a post office or church tend to have a differing roof shape and may be more ornamental signifying their public function and role in the town’s social hierarchy (Mellin 2003, 36).

Men’s Sphere

The spatial order and daily activities of rural towns in Newfoundland are rigidly divided by gendered norms. Pocius states that:

Men essentially know the landscape spaces beyond the confines of the house and yard. They work the woods, the country, the coast and the water and thus learn the specifics of naming that enable such activities. Young boys travel into the woods or out in a boat with their fathers or older brothers to learn about these spaces, apprenticing to become familiar with the nuances of the spatial grid around them. (Pocius 2000, 91)

Men’s work traditionally includes fishing, hunting and harvesting the land and they utilize woodworking to produce the tools necessary for these tasks. When men are not working, they tend to socialize in the landscape or in outbuildings such as fishing stages, stores and barns. They may often write their names, and dates of visiting, on the walls of outbuildings creating a visual record of social connections (Pocius 2000, 93).



Fishing stage, Newtown,
New-Wes-Valley

The structures and objects men design and build are typically utilitarian in nature with little regard for any sense of aesthetic. The fishing stage for example, is a one-story structure built close to the water, sometimes in the water, with a foundation of wooden stilts or a cribbed pier. They are traditionally painted white or red ochre on the exterior, while the interior is unfinished wood. Various make-shift shelving, storage and counter surfaces are affixed to the exposed studs (Mellin 2003, 173).

Women's Sphere

Women's space in rural Newfoundland towns has been regulated to the house and garden. Pocius states that "women are required to demonstrate a more focused, more compact spatial knowledge; they are responsible not merely for knowledge of particular space, but for its



Traditional women's interior design, Benjamin Barbour House



Layers of wallpaper
in traditional house,
Valleyfield, New-Wes-Valley



Traditional Newfoundland
patch quilt, (Artisan Market
Twillingate 2018)

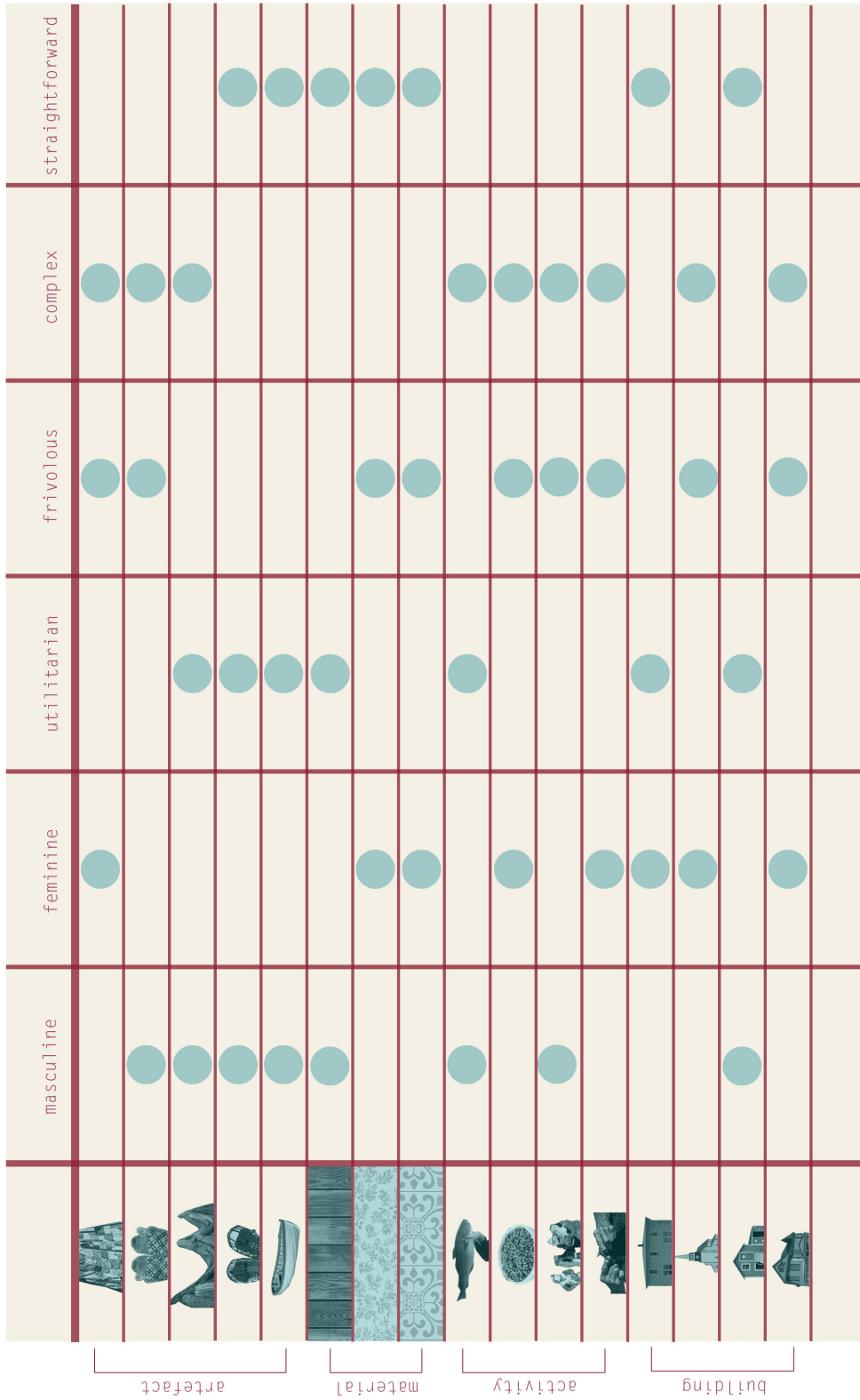


Traditional trigger mittens
(Woodsohop Fogo Island
2021)

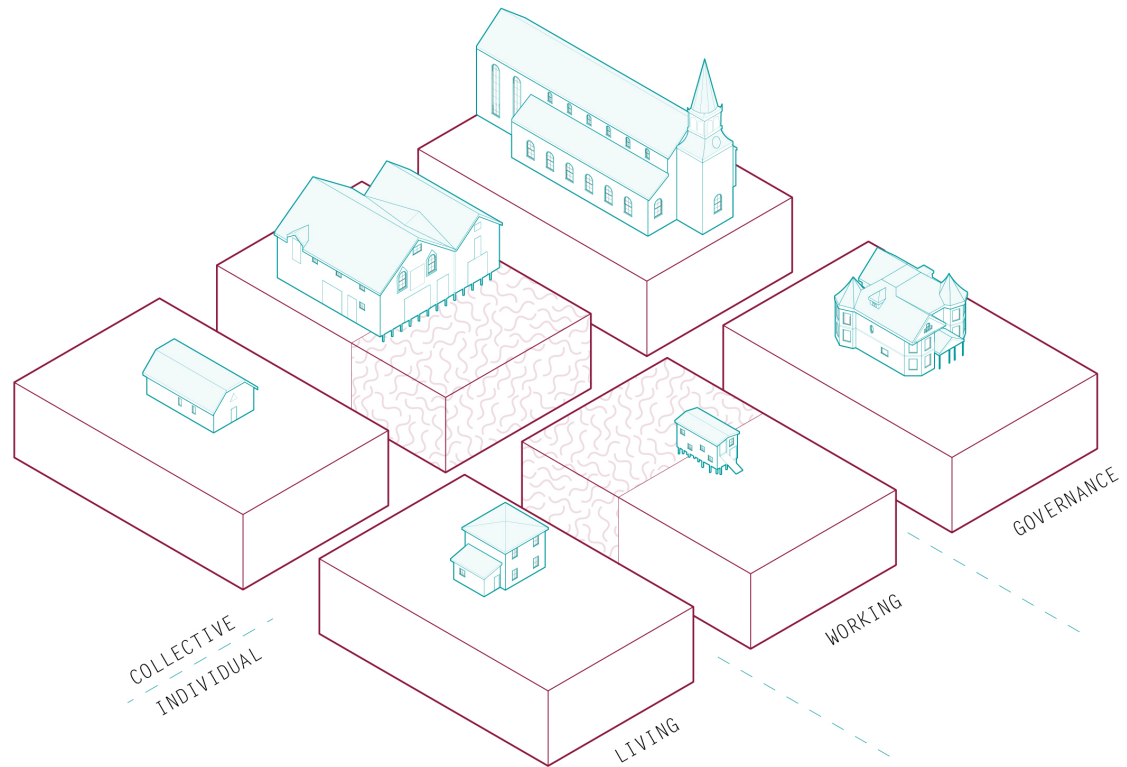
constant re-creation". (Pocius 2000, 94) While men built the house, women constantly re-build it from the inside at a more intricate level through use of colour and pattern and decoration. One example is the act of wallpapering, annually or semi-annually women would re-wallpaper their houses as an act of control over the space. (Pocius 2000, 97) Women are also recognized for keeping small kitchen gardens and decorative garden beds near the home. One can typically trace social relations between women in a town as they would often share flowers with friends and relatives. (Pocius 2000, 97). Womens Craftwork is traditionally conducted through textiles such as quilting, knitting and crocheting.

Newfoundland Mythologies

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has been framed similarly to that of McKay's previously mentioned Nova Scotia example in *The Quest of the Folk*; a land filled with happy people living a slow-paced life near the ocean. However, this framing of the province has been exclusionary to the concept of queerness and queer people. The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador is responsible for upkeep and safeguarding of both the tangible and intangible aspects of Newfoundland culture; "those it finds to be worthy of commemoration and protection". (Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland & Labrador 2020) Within their list of 955 designated structures, six common building typologies have come to define the outpost town: (1) the house, (2) the outbuilding, (3) the merchant's home, (4) the hall, (5) the warehouse and (6) the church. Many of these buildings have been decontextualized and have changed programmatic use over time as most towns have developed past the old way of life. Modernization, abolishment of



Artefact, material, activity, building chart



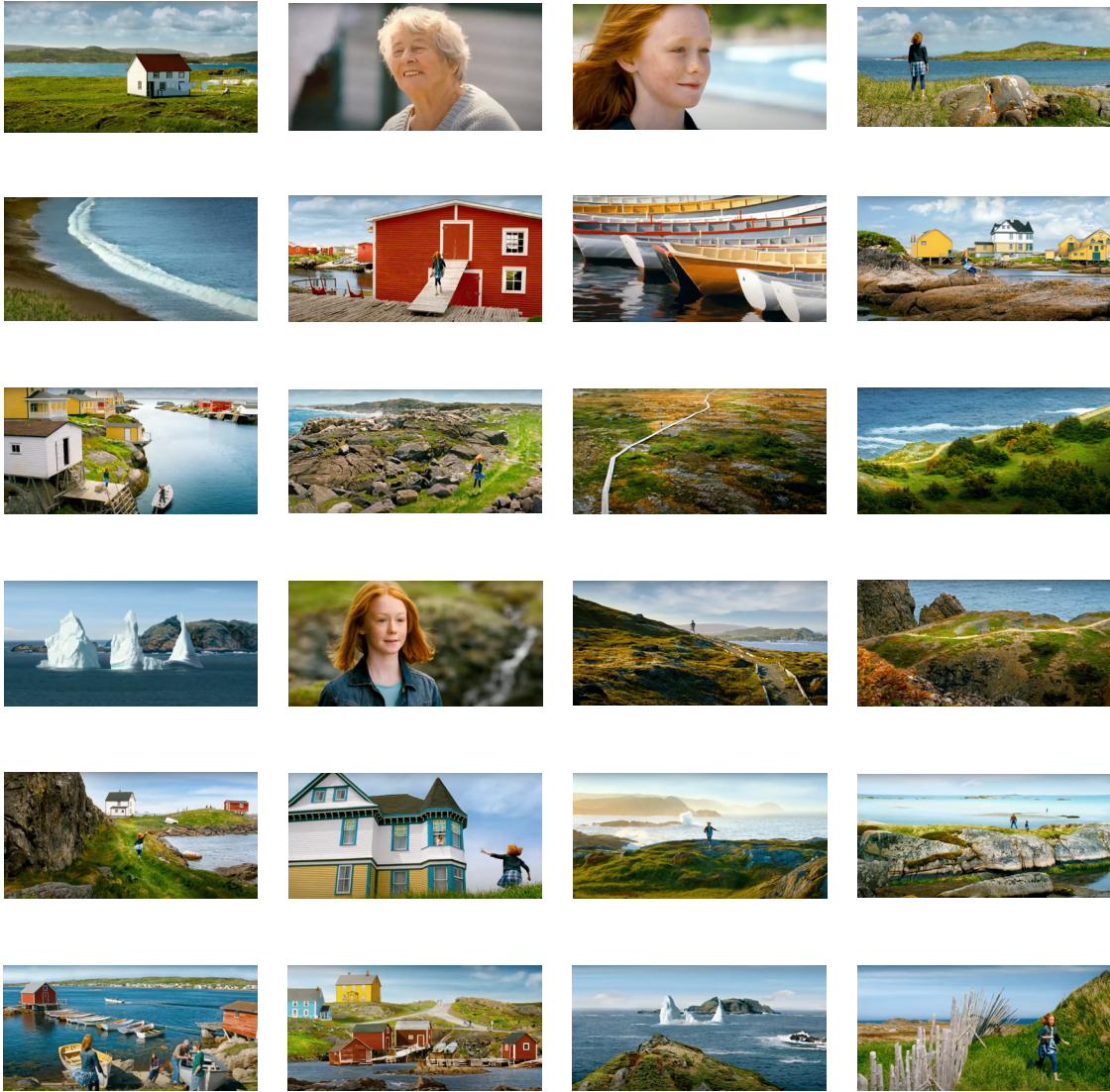
Traditional outport building typologies

the merchant system, collapse of the cod fishery, and the decline in the churches power in society has led to a decline in these vernacular structures over time. However, their constant upkeep and representations in art and media have allowed them to enter the realm of mythology, becoming iconic symbols of the simple outport way of life.

Tourism

The framing of the island as an ocean playground filled with colourful houses and enjoyable people has been done largely through tourism development. This can be seen in the advertisement released by the provincial government in 2012 titled "Iceberg Alley". The commercial follows a young red-headed girl as she traverses the

Newfoundland landscape, encounters friendly strangers, watches an iceberg collapse and plays near traditional colourful buildings. A narrator speaks over the footage, “all of a sudden you’re nine again and then it hits you, you’re way more fun than you remember – welcome to iceberg alley”. Taryn Sheppard writes that advertisements depicting Newfoundland in such a way is “a complex place branding technique at work behind these scenes, one intended to construct a fictional place tailored to the vacation fantasies of others. The landscapes are super-vast, the streetscapes are supersaturated, the nature is ultra-pure. It’s hyper- real” (Sheppard 2012, 14) These depictions decontextualize recognizably newfoundland landscapes, buildings and activities and spins a new narrative for the place. However, these representations seem to have influenced the place itself through what Sheppard describes as a “jellybean row” effect with new builds and older houses being painted vibrant colours to align with this crafted narrative. (Sheppard 2012, 14)



“Iceberg Alley” television advertisement (Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism 2012)

Artworks



David Hoddinott, *Moonrise Over the Bay*, 2017 (Dave Hoddinott Gallery 2017)

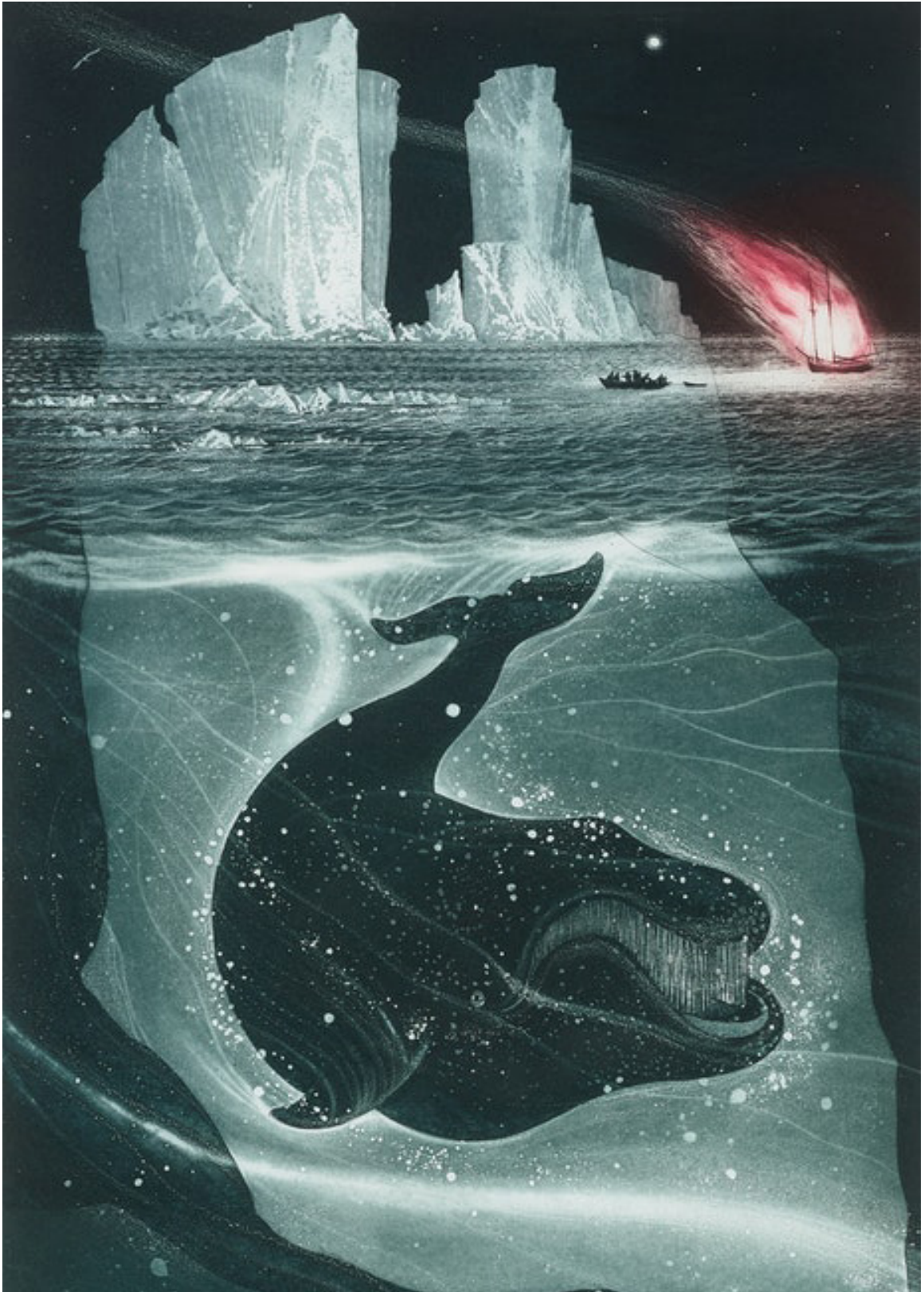


Adam Young, *Shed Party 2*, 2017 (Lane and Young 2020)

Most artistic representations of Newfoundland depict the place in a similar manner to that in which it has been framed through tourism. Paintings and photography tend to depict rural life on the island as simplistic, charming and carefree. Some artists even represent the outpost as a highly saturated and whimsically distorted manner such as contemporary painter, from Fogo Island, Adam Young. However, another way in which outpost life has been framed is brutal, isolating and filled with hardship. This can be seen in the works of printmaker David Blackwood, specifically his series depicting the sealing industry in his hometown of Wesleyville. His prints with dark and muted colour palettes portray the very real and dangerous moments out outpost life such as drowning, freezing and starvation that many rural Newfoundlanders once faced. Michael Crummey describes Blackwood's depictions of Newfoundland as mythical, timeless and ancient, a more nuanced depiction in comparison to the kitsch and colourfully nostalgic depictions (Lochnan et al. 2014, 115). His work takes iconic Newfoundland symbols and applies them to traditionally mythical motifs, compositions and stories.



David Blackwood, *Hauling Job Sturge's House*, 1979 (ArtCan n.d.)



David Blackwood, *Fire Down on the Labrador*, 1980 (Cowley Abbott 2021)

Chapter 5: Mummering

Mummering is a visiting tradition brought to the island of Newfoundland by early European settlers. Its earliest reference in written text is in the 1842 book entitled *Excursions in Newfoundland*. During the twelve days of Christmas people dress in costume and visit the homes of their rural townsfolk, who must attempt to guess their appearance. The mummers' arrive at the door, knock, and exclaim the phrase "any mummers allowed in" which indicated the start of the ritual as announcing entry is uncustomary in rural towns (Lochnan et al 2014, 98). Canadian painter David Blackwood writes that the mummers "voices were disguised by the use of ingressive speech producing a queer and unsettling falsetto. Body shape, gender, gait even familiar gestures, were altered by padded costumes and clever props" (Zigrossi, Blackwood and Forsyth. 2003, 2). The mummers are expected to perform some type of entertainment such as singing, playing instruments, dancing or a scripted play. Once the identities are guessed correctly the mummer will lift the veil and the host will normally reward the mummers with refreshments. The mummers then move, in groups, to the next house and repeat the ritual (Lochnan et al 2014, 98).

Traditional mummering began to fade on the island due to confederation with Canada and modernization; However, has seen a revival and transformation. Ni Shuilleabhain states that "in more recent years the tradition has experienced something of a revival, and today it has to an extent become symbolic of the uniqueness of Newfoundland culture, epitomizing what differentiates the province from the rest of Canada" (Lochnan et al 2014, 105). This can be



Mummers at Tom Sullivan's House (Laskow 2016)



Mummers at Harry's Harbour in Green Bay 1962 (Laskow 2016)

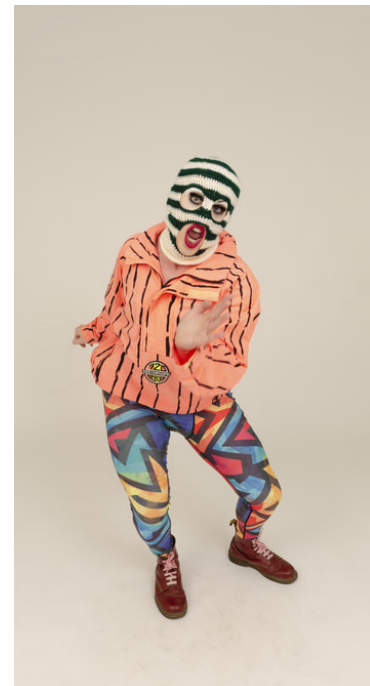
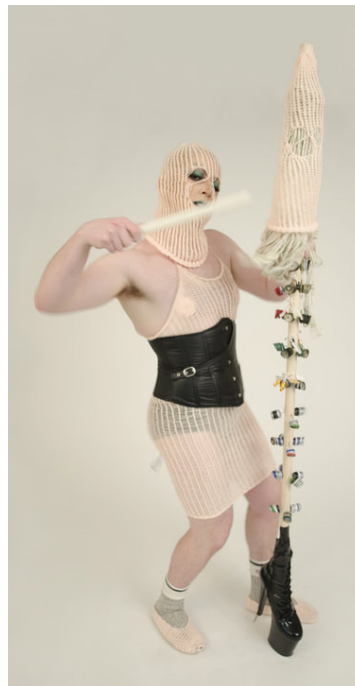


Mummers Festival 2016 (Laskow 2016)

seen in the large-scale events held such as the weeklong mummer's festival, held in the capital city of St. John's, and mummering parades across the island (ArtsNL, 2014).

Much more than a visiting tradition, mummering blurs the lines between the real and the magical. Blackwood writes that mummering felt like "you were participating in something incredibly ancient – a ritual as old as life itself" and that "the mask provided a release from the normal social obligations and inhibitions, allowing you to say and do things which would otherwise be impossible" (Zigrossi, Blackwood and Forsyth 2003, 4). Lucas Morneau, who performs under the stage name the Queer Mummer, has linked mummering to the art of drag. He states :

Both drag and mummering are tools for the multi-vocal expression of identity, and both blur and subvert the gender binary. Therefore, both drag and mummering queer public space in one way or another and give license to possibilities beyond the two sex, two gender system; offering concrete reconfigurations of gender and gender performance. (Morneau 2018, 24)



The Queer Mummer Thesis Exhibition (Morneau 2018)

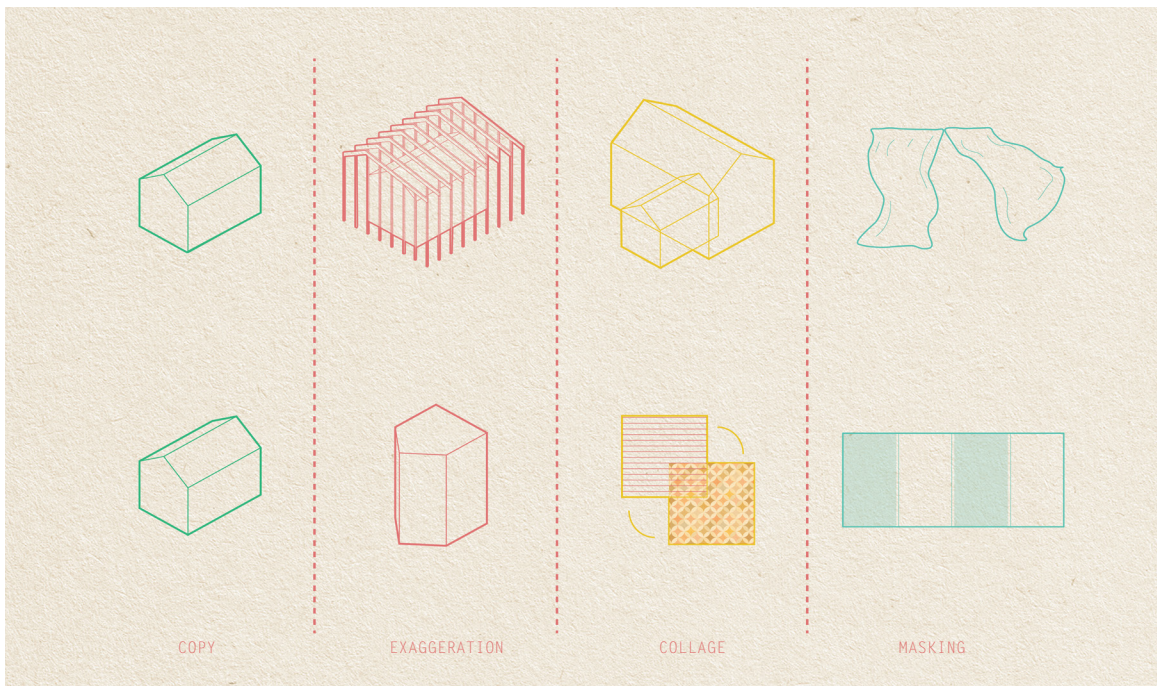
Ni Shuilleabhain states that “once the mask was removed, visitors reverted to their normal social roles and the social order, was in a sense, restored”. (Lochnan et al. 2014, 103). Therefore the act of disguise and the mummers costuming is the tool by which space is queered and individuals feel safe to express themselves in ways outside typical social structures.

Chapter 6: Design Method

To develop an architectural methodology of queering, a study is conducted of the mummer's transformation process, distilling elements from costuming and then translated into design tools. The act of decontextualizing and distorting is at the heart of both mythologies and the creation of queer space and can also be applied to the concept of the mummer's costume. First, the body is padded to hide its true form and provide an exaggerated silhouette, second the mummer collages together both masculine and feminine articles of clothing, finally a veil or mask is applied to conceal the face. To convert this to an architectural language, first a copy of a traditional building typology is made. Exaggeration is used to play with the buildings scale and form, by using a secondary structure, or flipping the buildings elevation to plan to distort its appearance. Collage forces two different typologies together, and mixes or inverts the traditionally masculine and feminine material palette. While Masking utilizes textiles or a combination of transparent and translucent facade systems to reveal and conceal the bodies of the inhabitants.



Mummers costume diagram



Architectural methodology diagram

Imitation

The first step of the design process is to make a copy of a traditional Newfoundland building typology (the house, the hall, the outbuilding, the warehouse, the merchants house or the church) to be distorted. The post-modern era seen a return to the idea of imitation, allusion and historical reference in architectural design. Venturi writes in *Learning from Las Vegas* “allusion and comment, on the past or present or our great commonplaces or old clichés, and inclusion of the everyday in the environment, sacred and profane – there are what are lacking in present-day modern architecture” (Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour 1977, 53). Jencks uses Venturi and Rauch’s Franklin court in Philadelphia to illustrate the concept of allusion. A ghostly steel frame, of a universally recognizable house form, sits in an amusing neo-colonial garden filled with archaeological remains and uplifting quotes. Jencks writes “it’s fitting to the urban context, its within both popular and elitists codes, its ugly and beautiful and thus could be called first pro-monument of post-modernism” (Jencks 1977 ,88).



Robert Venturi, Denise Scott-Brown and John Rauch, Franklin Court, Philadelphia, 1976
(National Parks Service 2017)

Exaggeration



Robert Venturi and John Rauch, Guild House, Philadelphia, 1963 (Ostapkovich 2014)

After a copy of a typology is made it is distorted through the exaggeration method. Drawing from mannerism and pop art, exaggeration is a design method used to make thoughtful commentary through architecture, achieved through distorting shape, scale and changing context. According to Venturi adjusting the scale and context of the familiar has a strange and revealing power (Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour 1977, 53). Venturi discusses this method through his design of the Guild House. He states “the windows in Guild House look familiar, they look like, as well are, windows and in this respect their use is symbolic. But like all effective symbolic images, they are intended to look familiar and unfamiliar. They are conventional elements used slightly unconventionally” (Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour 1977, 91). The method of exaggeration can even be seen in contemporary Newfoundland projects such as the Fogo Island Inn, taking vernacular elements of the fishing stage and scaling it up to the size of a modern hotel. In



Todd Saunders, Fogo Island Inn, Fogo Island (Dezeen 2014)



Philip Pratt, The Rooms, St. John's Newfoundland, 2005 (The Rooms 2021)

the documentary “Strange & Familiar: Architecture on Fogo Island”, architect Todd Saunders discusses how his work would be somewhat familiar to his grandfather if he were alive to see it; however, it would be rather queer (Knight and Connolly 2015). The Postmodern style is also found in the capital city of St. John's, in the museum and gallery The Rooms. The building is designed by taking the form of traditional outbuildings and dramatically distorting the scale to the size of a large civic building. To employ exaggeration in this project a secondary structure is placed around the initial copy, similarly to how the mummer pads the body to distort its silhouette; or, the building's elevation is switched to plan.

Collage



Charles Moore, Piazza d'Italia, New Orleans, 1978 (The Cultural Landscape Foundation 2020)

Collage is utilized to mix together multiple typologies and play with traditionally masculine and feminine ideas of space and material. The post-modernists used collage to blend together different historical styles, contemporary references and materials to produce their works of architecture. This method took sometimes vastly removed objects and elements and forced them together for witty and ironic commentary. Collaging also allowed many different groups and individuals to identify with the architecture through its nature of complexity. Jencks uses Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia to illustrate the collage method utilized by the post-modernists.

For historians there are references to the Marine Theatre of Hadrian and the triumphal gateways of Schinkel; for the Sicilians there are references to archetypal piazzas and fountains; for the modernists there is an acknowledgement of skyscrapers and the use of current technologies (the neon and concrete); for the lover of pure architectural form there are cutaway impostes finished in speckled marble and most sensuous use of polished stainless steel. (Jencks 1977, 146)

Through collaging differing typologies and masculine and feminine materials, as the mummer does with clothing, the architecture begins to be queered and create a space that neutralizes gender.

Masking

The final design tool employed is masking, to reveal and conceal the inhabitants of the structure. Forsyth writes that the mummies portray the world of the magical, and the mummies veil is the magician's wand, it allows for the mummer to reveal and conceal their identity during the mummering ritual (Zigrossi et al. 2003, 5). The masks nature is ephemeral just as the concept of queer space is, being activated by users. Blackwood relies heavily on the white lace mask in his paintings depicting the mummies, blurring the face, and indicating which stage of the ritual is being depicted. Two methods are used to mask within the project,

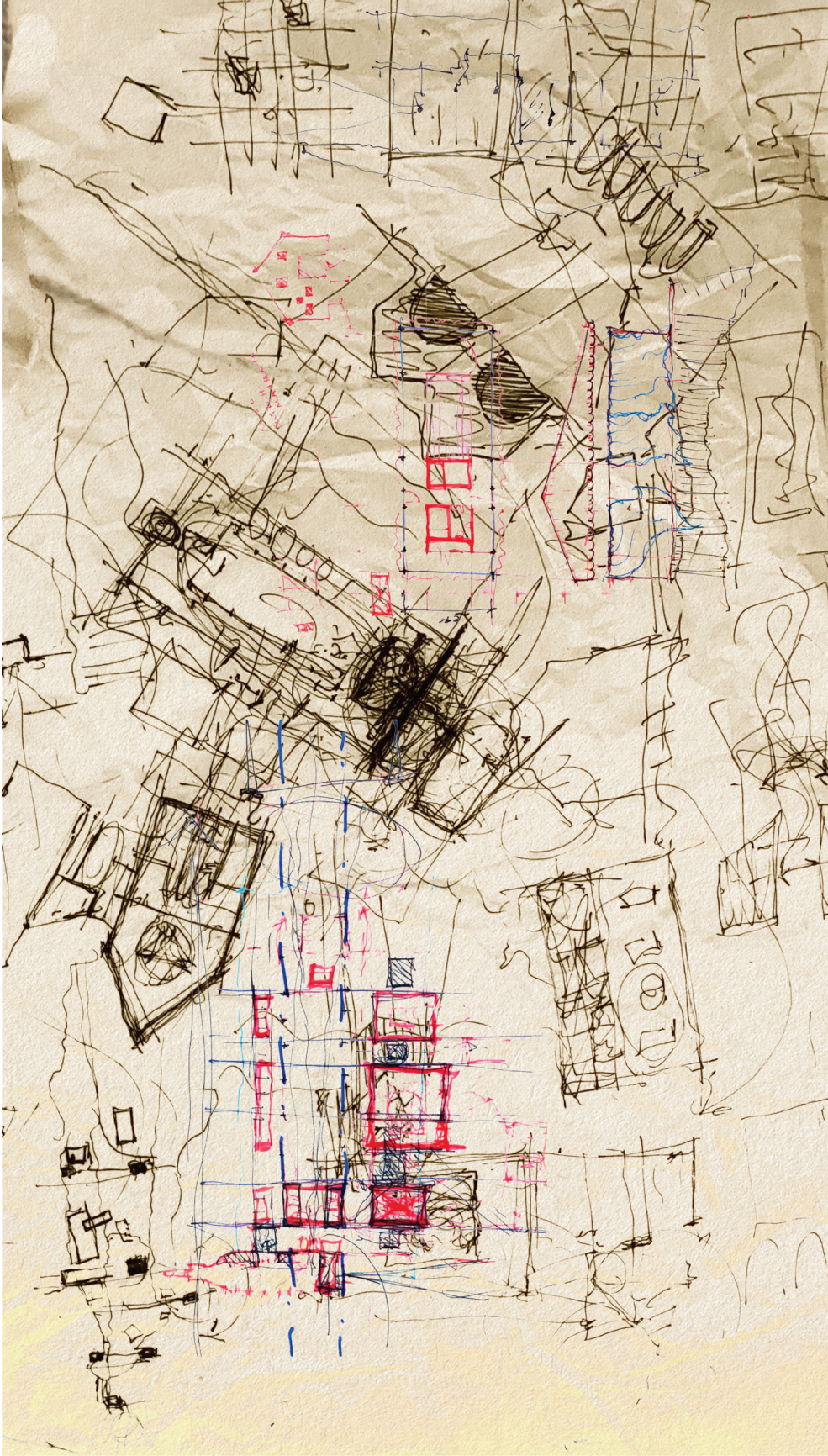


Pound Cove Mummies crossing Cold Harbour Pond, David Blackwood 1985 (Fine Art Collector 2019)

using textiles that users can control to create a façade; or, translucent and transparent façade systems that become activated as users interact with them , displaying either the full body or a silhouette in the buildings elevations.



Young Mummer from Wesleyville, David Blackwood 1983 (Artsy 2021)



Process sketches



Conceptual collages

Chapter 7: Site

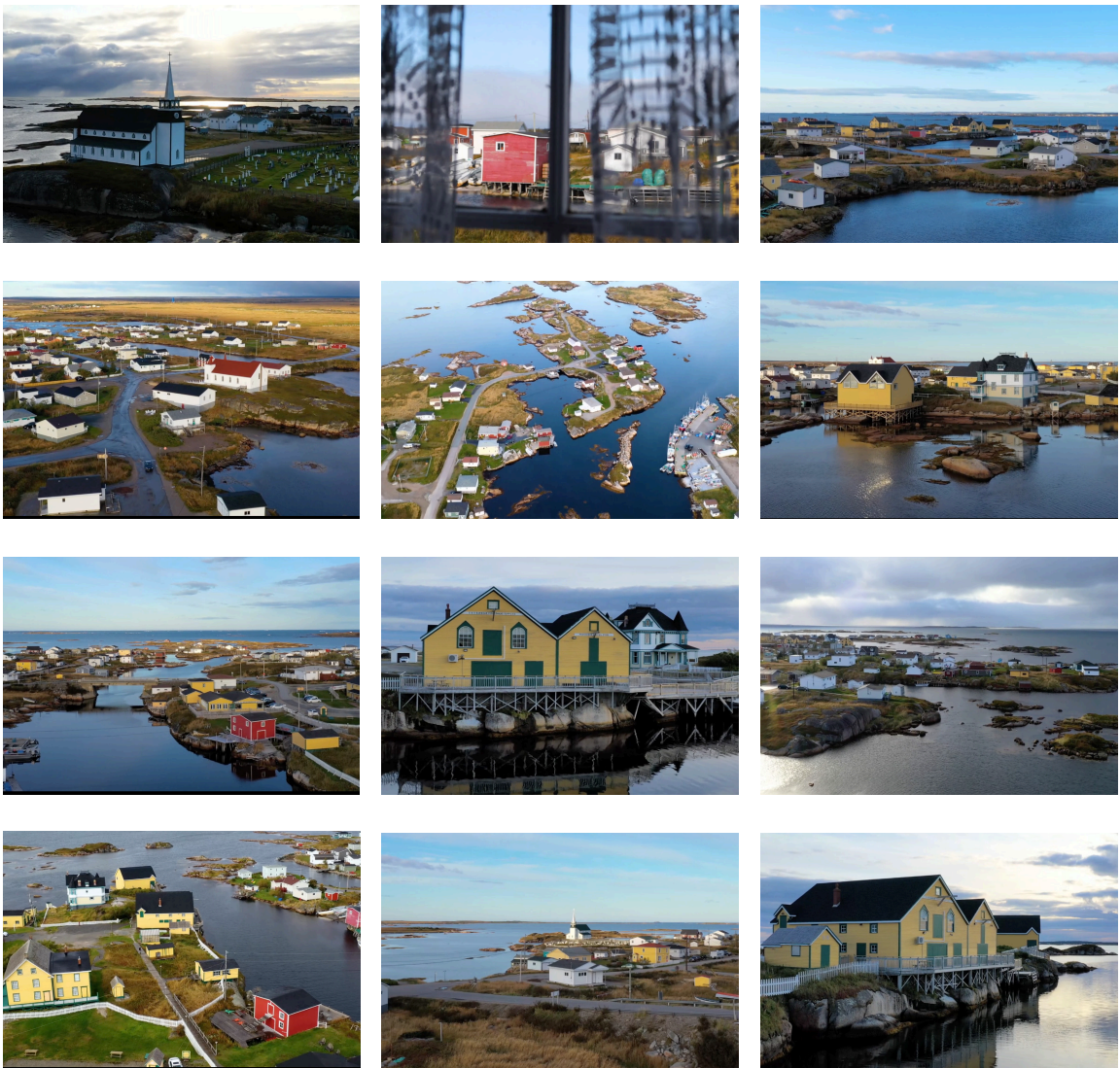
Located on the north-east coast of the island, the town of New-Wes-Valley, sits at a fairly central location between the provinces two anchoring urban centres on the east and west. It is also the setting for both the tourism and artwork by David Blackwood previously mentioned. The town is comprised of 8 small communities that amalgamated in the early 2000's (Newtown, Templeman, Pound Cove, Wesleyville, Brookfield, Badger's Quay, Pool's Island and Valleyfield) (Lochnan et al. 2014, 42).

European Settlers first started to settle on small islands off the coast of New-Wes-Valley such as Swain's Island, Bragg's Island and Pinchard's Island in about 1810. They settled on these islands as it gave them close proximity to the cod fishing grounds. Families started to move inland with the start of the Labrador fishery in the early 1850's as the seal fishery necessitated larger schooners which required deeper harbours than those available on the islands. The population of the islands slowly declined until their complete abandonment with the provincial resettlement program which began in 1949 (Lochnan et al. 2014, 75).

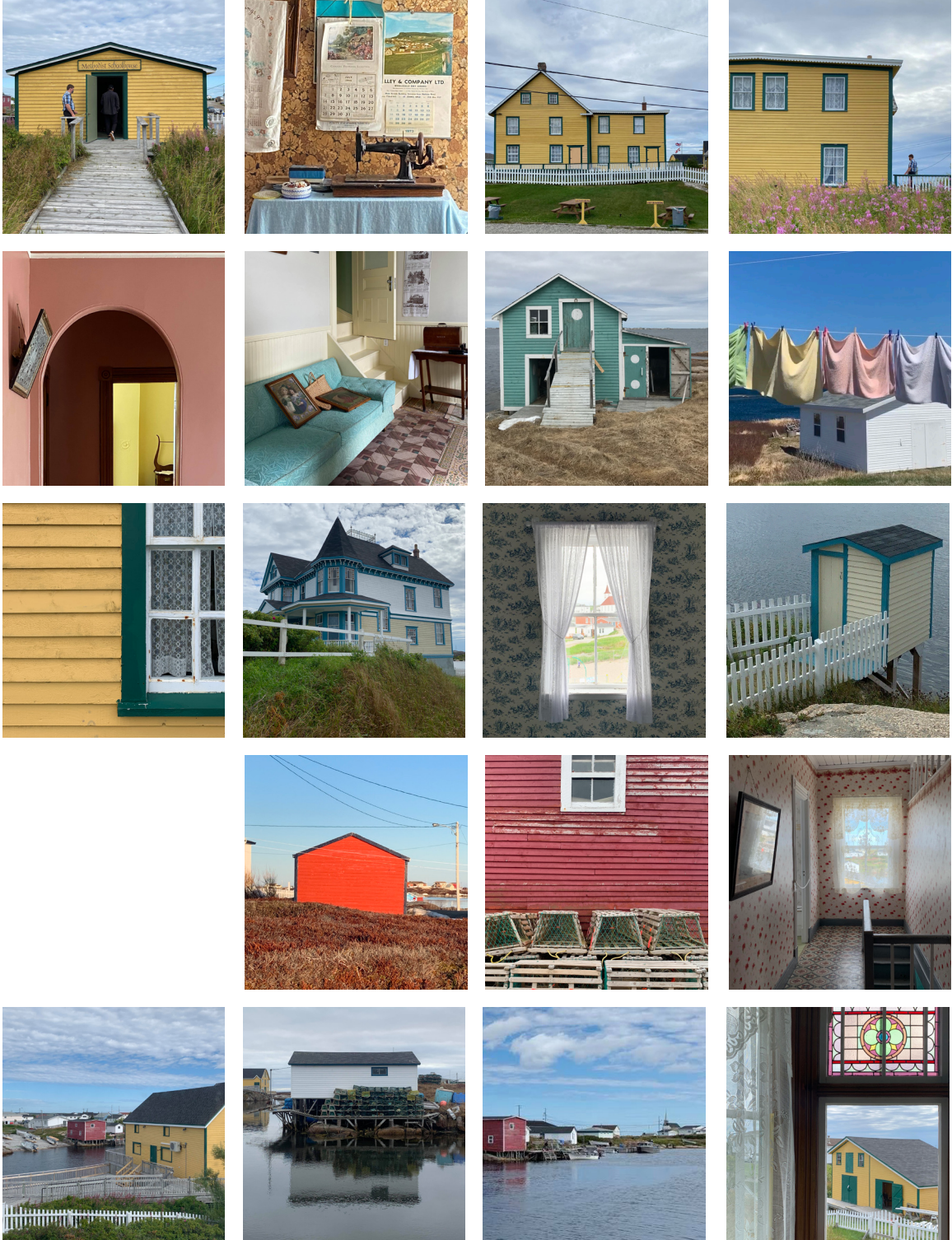
The town managed to stay relatively prominent on the north east coast after the cod moratorium of 1992, as the town had already switched to harvesting of shellfish prior (Adey 2020). There was also an emphasis placed on historic tourism and arts in the town, with the development of the Barbour Living Heritage Village, in 1991, in the community of Newtown. This tourist site consists of 19 buildings consisting of traditional homes, a sealing

museum, theatre, actors residence, restaurant, craft shop and various outbuildings which sees hundreds of tourists visit each year (Cape Freels Historic Trust 2020).

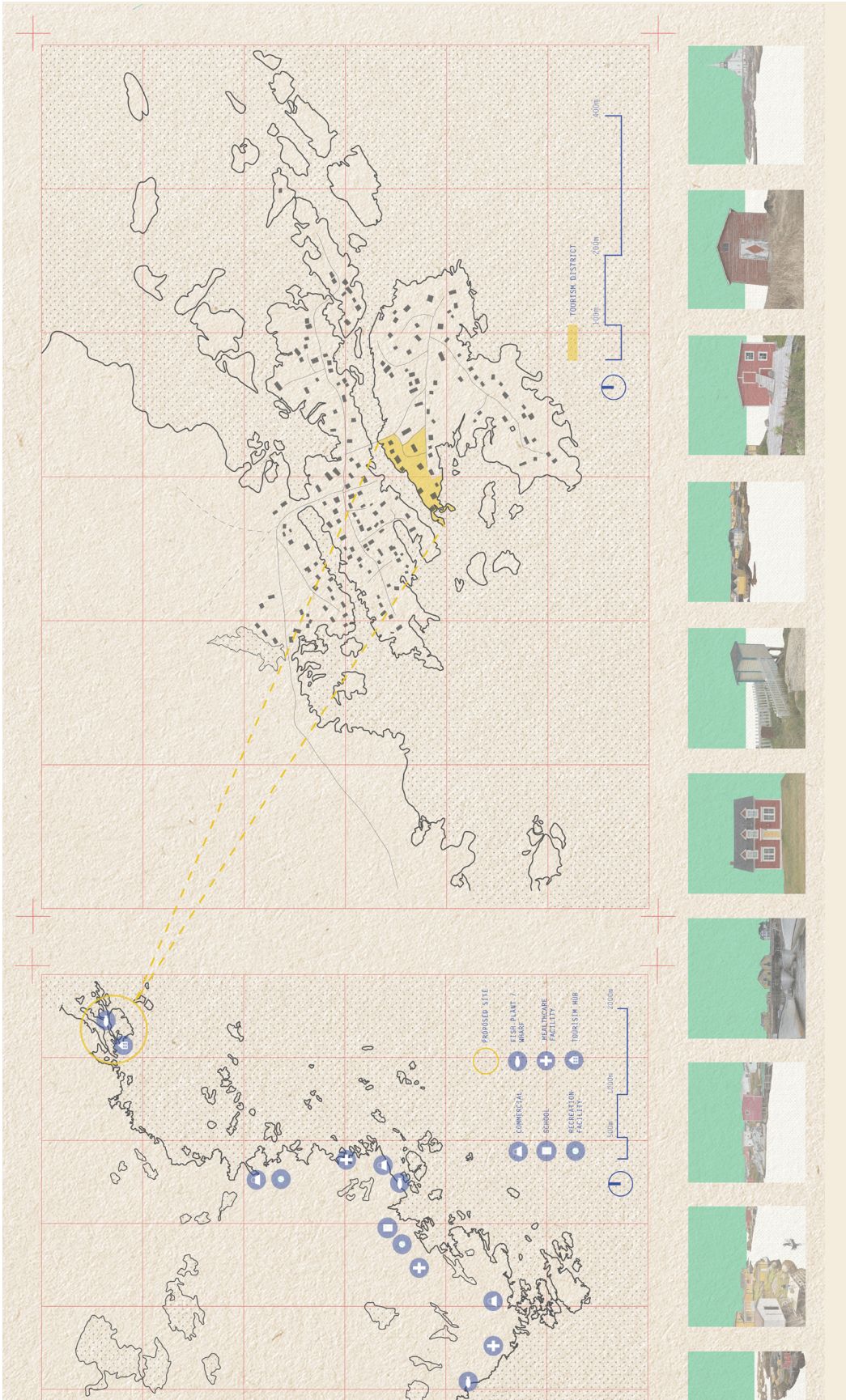
The site is viewed as a pristine and idyllic version of rural Newfoundland life that can be displayed to outsiders. Siting the project here allows for queer people to engage with traditional practices, such as mummering, while also reviving and transforming them.



Aerial Photos of Newtown (Kolarova 2019)



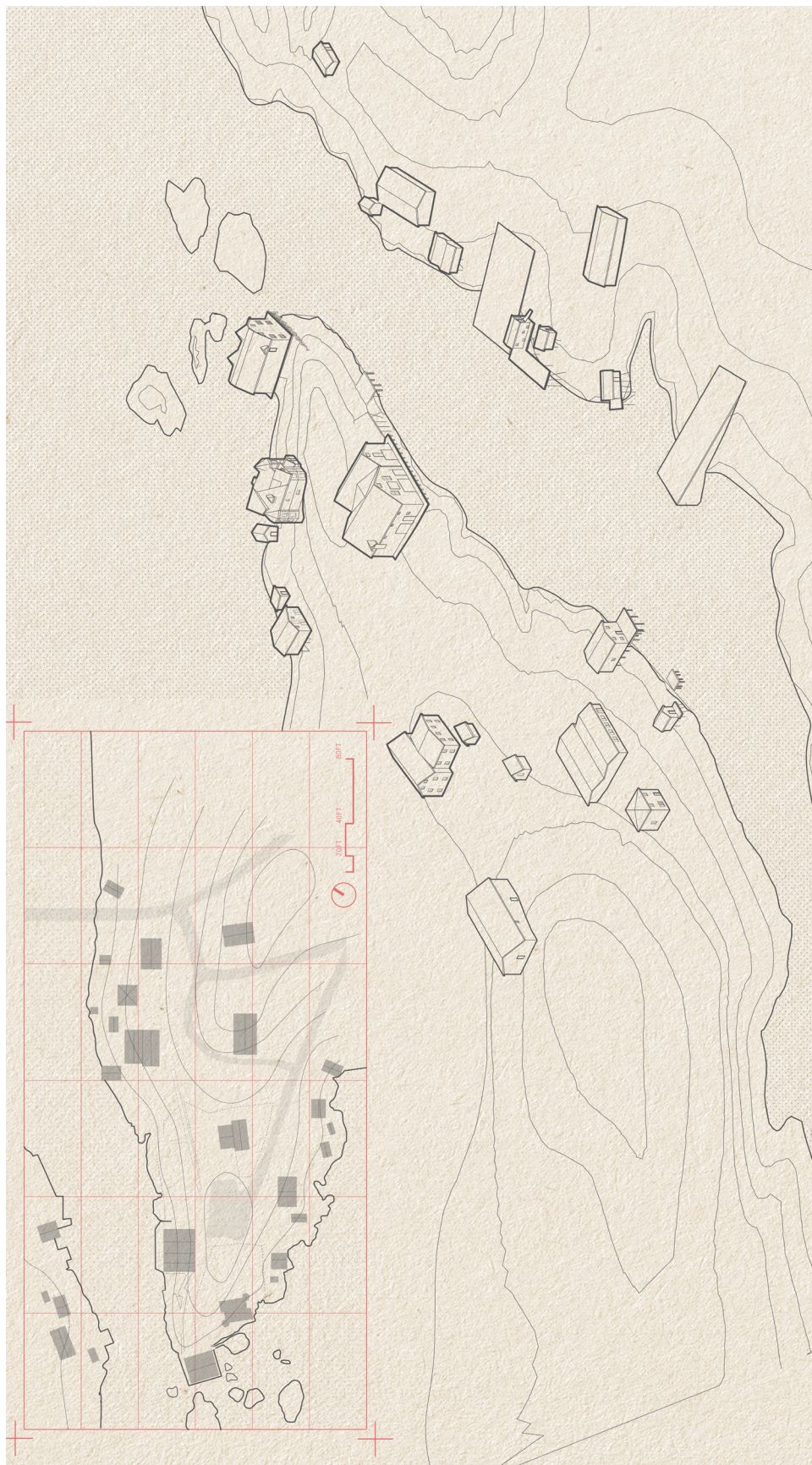
Photos from site visit July 2020



Map of New-Wes-Valley, map of Newtown and photos of Newtown (base map from Ersi Canada)



Site plan / elevation of the Barbour Living Heritage Village



Site axo

Chapter 8: Program

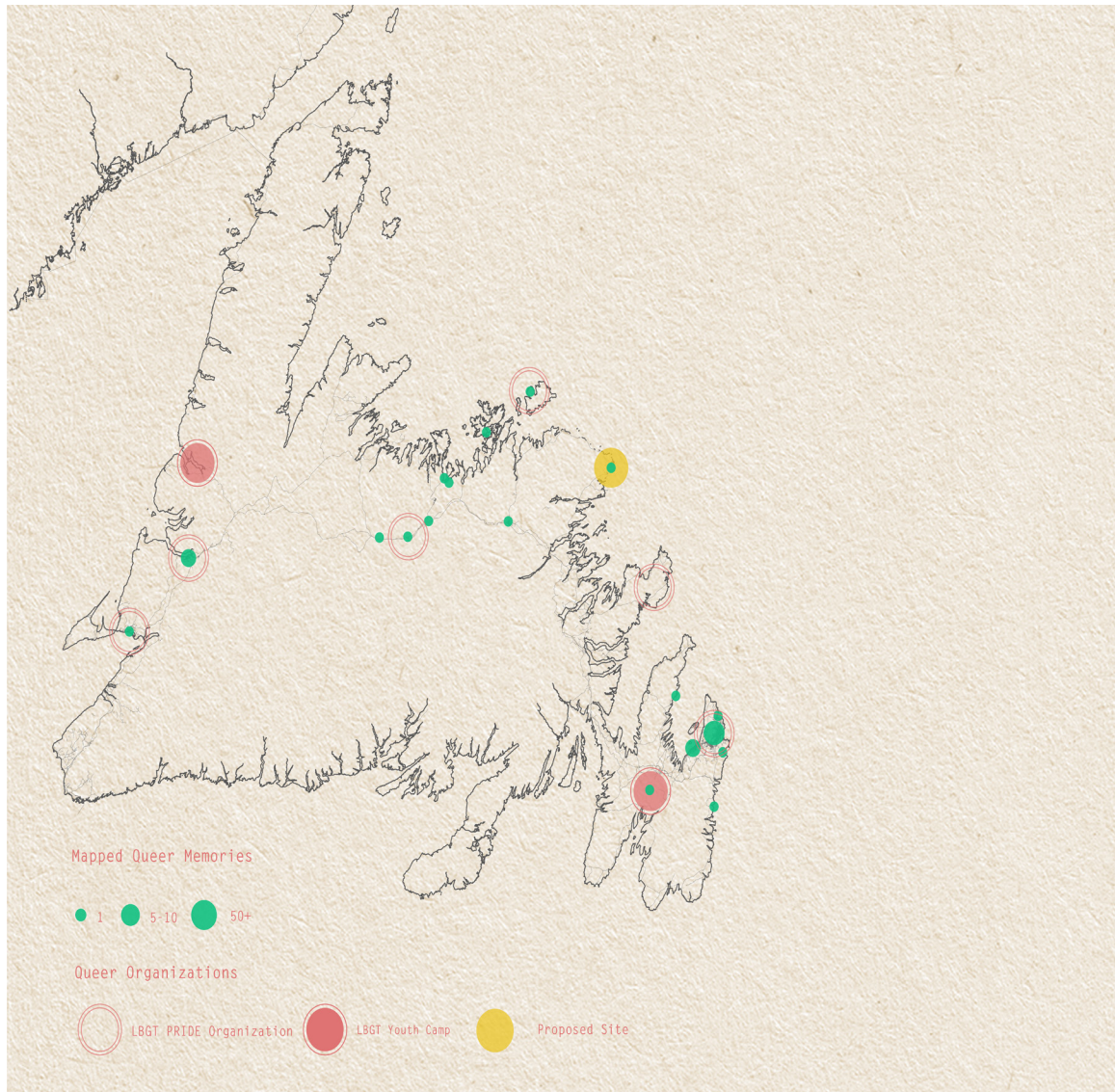
The program of the project is developed through a series of mapping at various scales to provide a space for not only queer people, but tourists and locals as well. The project incorporates a camp and bathhouse into the pre-existing network of Buildings at the Barbour Living Heritage Village in Newtown, New-Wes-Valley.

Camp

ALGBT+ camp would provide queer people with a safe space in a rural setting and an opportunity to learn and engage in traditional Newfoundland culture. A queer mapping of the island of Newfoundland illustrates that most queer memory, spaces and organizations are in or near the island's urban centers on the east and west coast. There are currently two LGBT+ youth camps located in these areas as well. Therefore, the project aims to provide a camp in the central region of the island where there is currently none. Queer camps are important for the development of queer youth and their ability to bring queer awareness back to their own towns and cultivating relationships with other queer people.

Pearce states

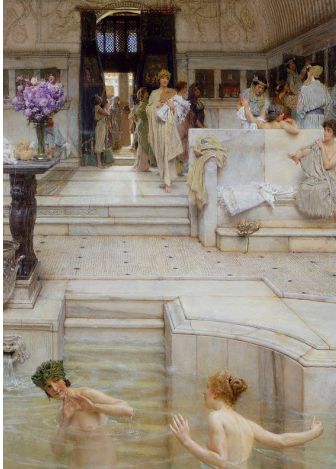
These queer summer camps have a lot of positive impacts on the lives of campers who attend, and the communities they call home. Beyond allowing queer youth to escape their homes for a week and be with other queer youth, regardless of whether it is in an urban or rural space, this time is no small relief, and very significant! This type of organization also provides the youth who attend language and resources needed to establish grass-roots community groups in their own communities and schools. (Pearce 2018, 126)



Queer Newfoundland mapping (base map from Ersi Canada, data from Queering the Map 2021)

Swimming

The bathing program is implemented into the project due to its associations with queerness and potential to bring increased urban traffic to the site. A.P. van Leewen writes in his text *The Springboard in the Pond*, that swimming is the sport of the romantics that “oscillates between joy and fear, between domination and submission, for the swimmer



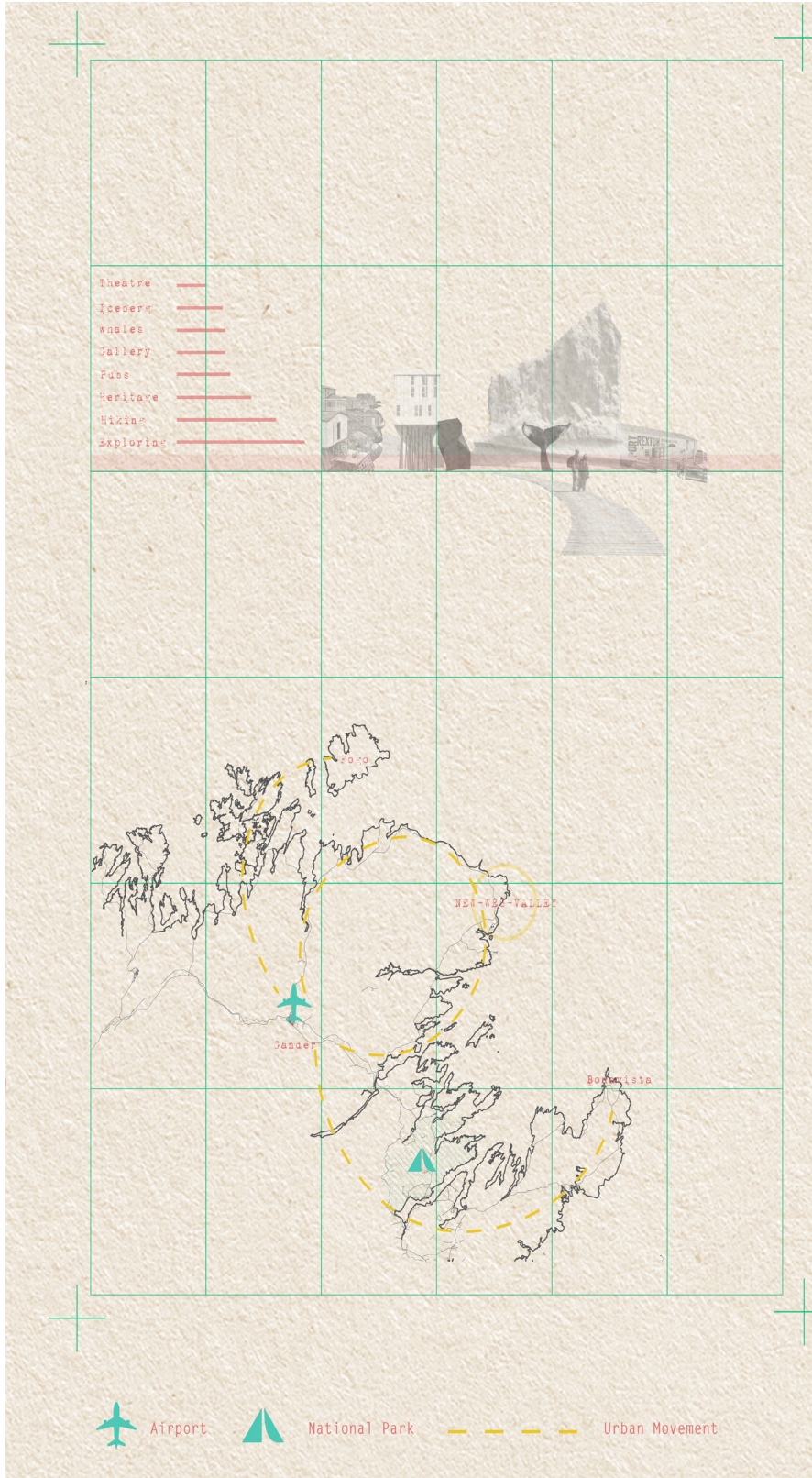
A Favourite Custom, Sir
Lawrence Alma-Tadema
(Tate Modern Museum 2021)

delivers himself with controlled abandonment to the forces of gravity, resulting in sensations of weight and timelessness” (Leeuwen and Searing 1998, 2). Humans have always had the desire to become one with the element of water, with Betsky arguing that some of the first queer coded spaces began with the ancient Baths. He states that “what made the [Roman] baths queer was first of all their call to the body to return to itself, to enjoy itself and, perhaps, its mirror image” (Betsky 1997, 36).

Most tourists visiting the central region of the island are interested in finding a sense of escape and relaxation in the area, while interacting with the local culture and landscape. According to the government of Newfoundland & Labrador’s tourism reports for 2016, some of the top activities for tourists included exploring, hiking, heritage tourism, local pubs, galleries, whale, theatres and whale and iceberg watching (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador 2016, 13). The Bathing program would provide visitors with a unique experience currently not available on the island, while also catering to the sense of escape and relaxation they desire.

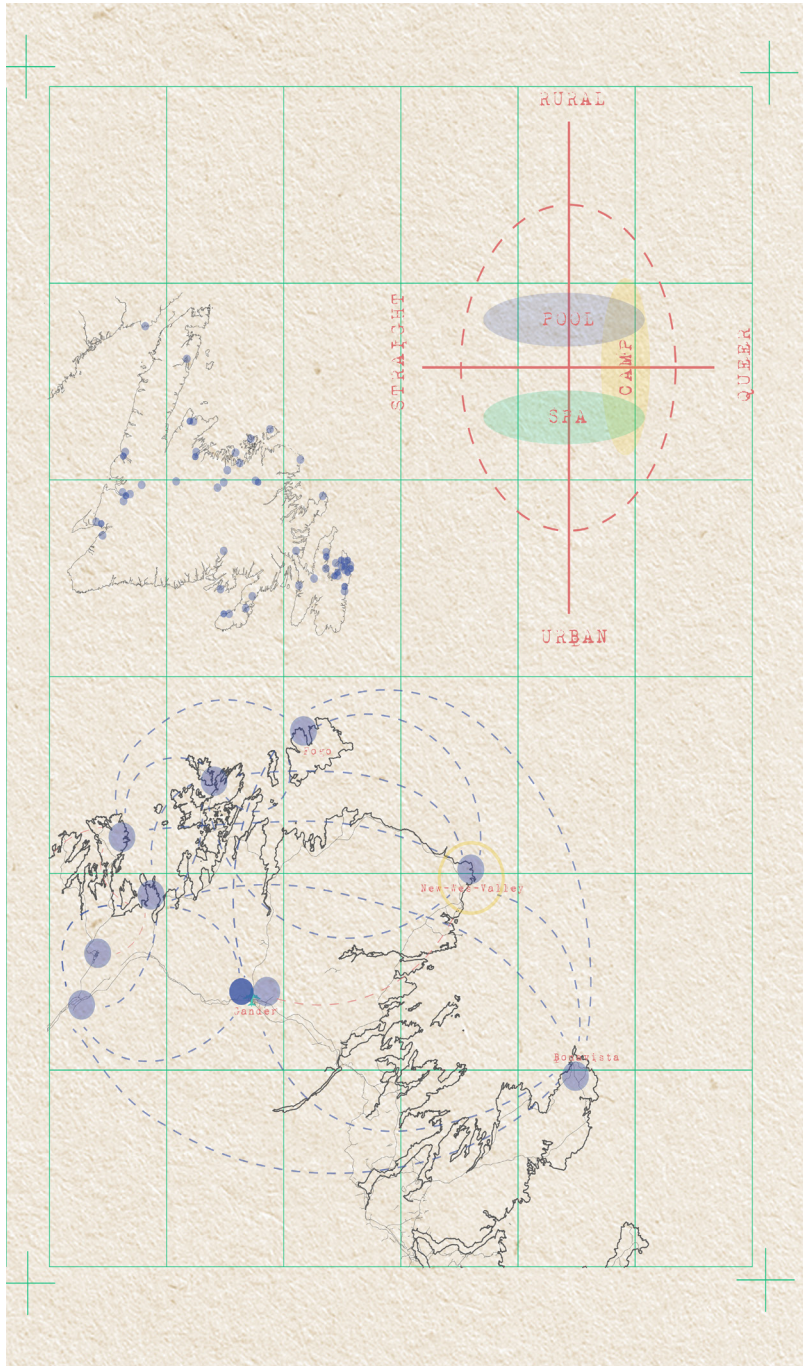
Recreational Pool

Along with the bathhouse program, a recreational pool is added to the project to attract locals to the project. One of the main rationales’ locals move from town to town within the central region is for recreation purposes. There are many ice rinks located all throughout the region, mainly in towns with higher populations. Locals and residents from neighbouring towns come together to play hockey or figure skate, or travel to distant towns to participate in tournaments; in turn, creating connections between rural



Urban movement and activities mapping (base map from Ersi Canada 2020)

Newfoundlanders. However, there is only one swimming pool located in the region, in the urban town of Gander. Incorporating a recreational swimming pool into the project attracts locals and residents from nearby towns.

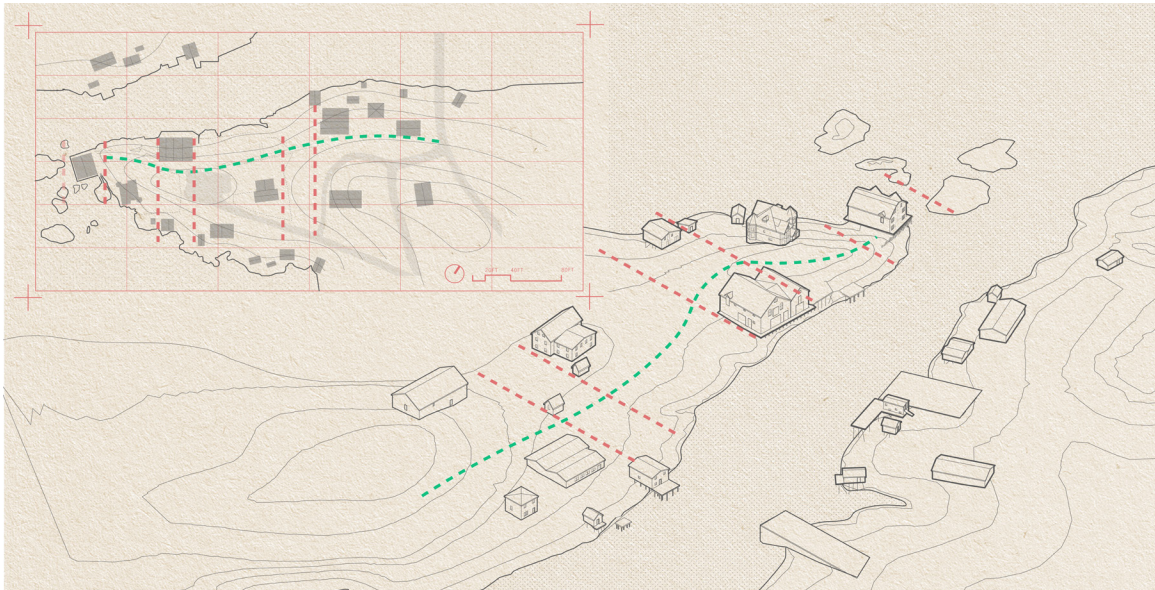


Rural movement and activities mapping (base map from Ersi Canada 2020)

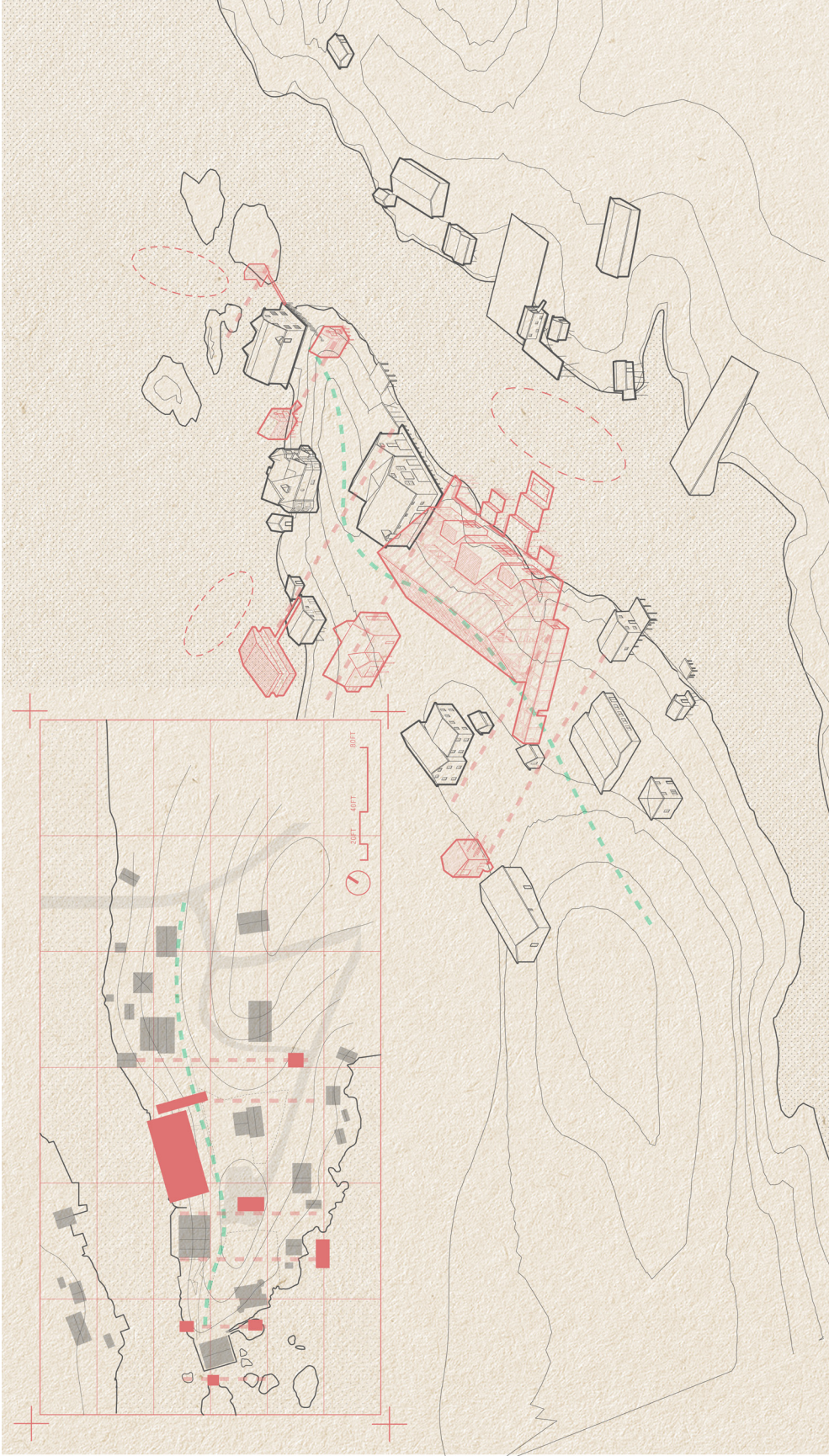
Chapter 9: Design

Site Strategy

The site strategy aims to reconfigure movement through the site while also blending in with the existing fabric and gaining access to key views. A boardwalk currently creates the main route of circulation, which runs parallel to the water, as tourists are guided through the site. The overall site strategy runs cross-grain, reconfiguring and queering the sites spatial grid. Four camp buildings are scattered throughout the site while keeping in proximity to the existing historic houses. Three bathing structures are sited to gain access to natural swimming locations and provide users with diverse views and varying degrees of privacy.



Circulation Diagram



Site axo with design interventions

Camp Buildings

The camp provides users with a safe space for queer expression in a rural setting and an opportunity to engage in and learn about traditional Newfoundland culture. With the existing buildings and new programming added campers can engage in traditional practices such as fishing, woodworking and textiles. They can also put off plays at the theatre and share bathing space with both locals and tourists. Three small cabins house public programming at the main level with sleeping space above, while a common house services them all and provides additional sleeping space.

Crafting Cabin

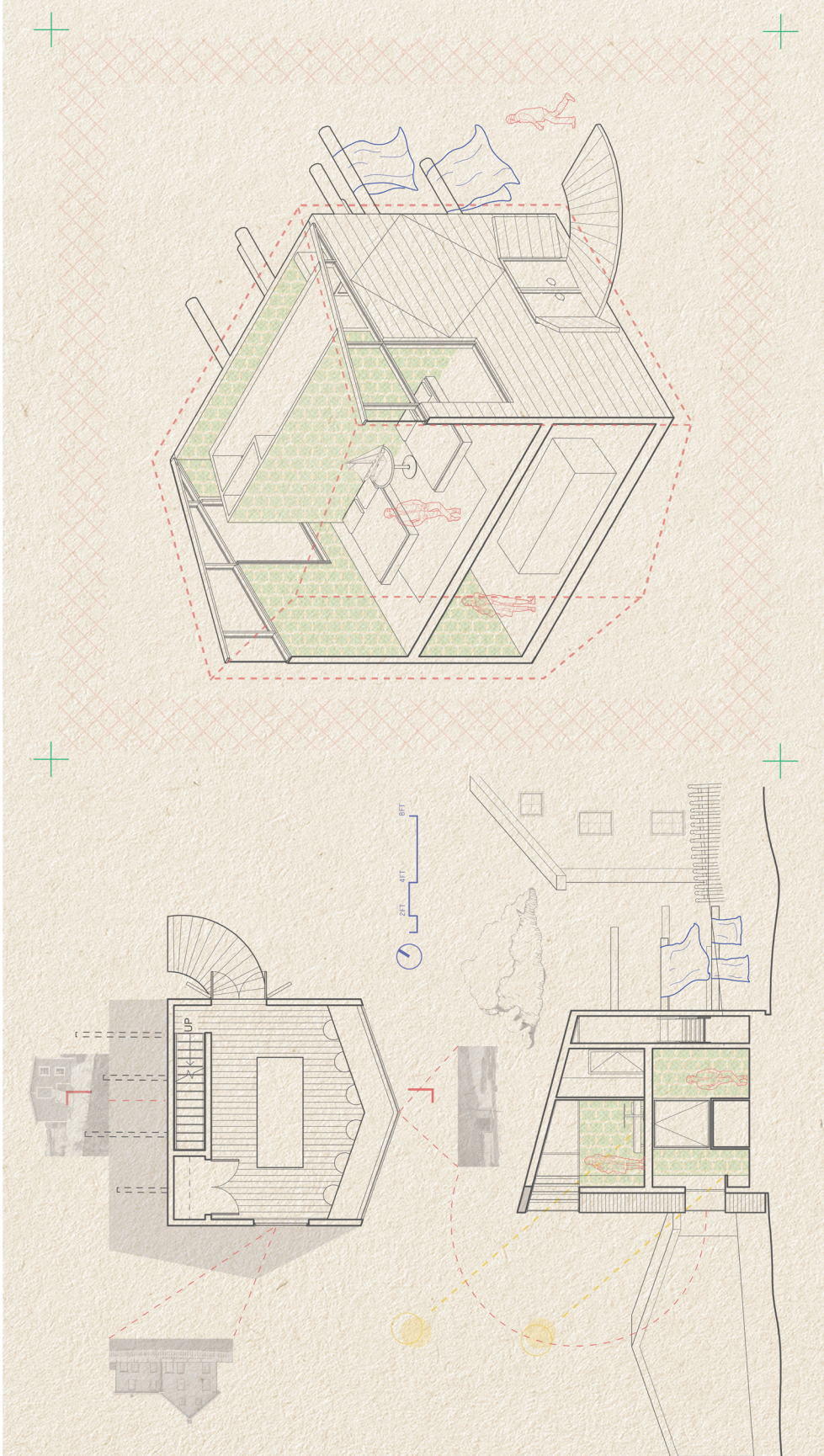


Adjcent fishing stage

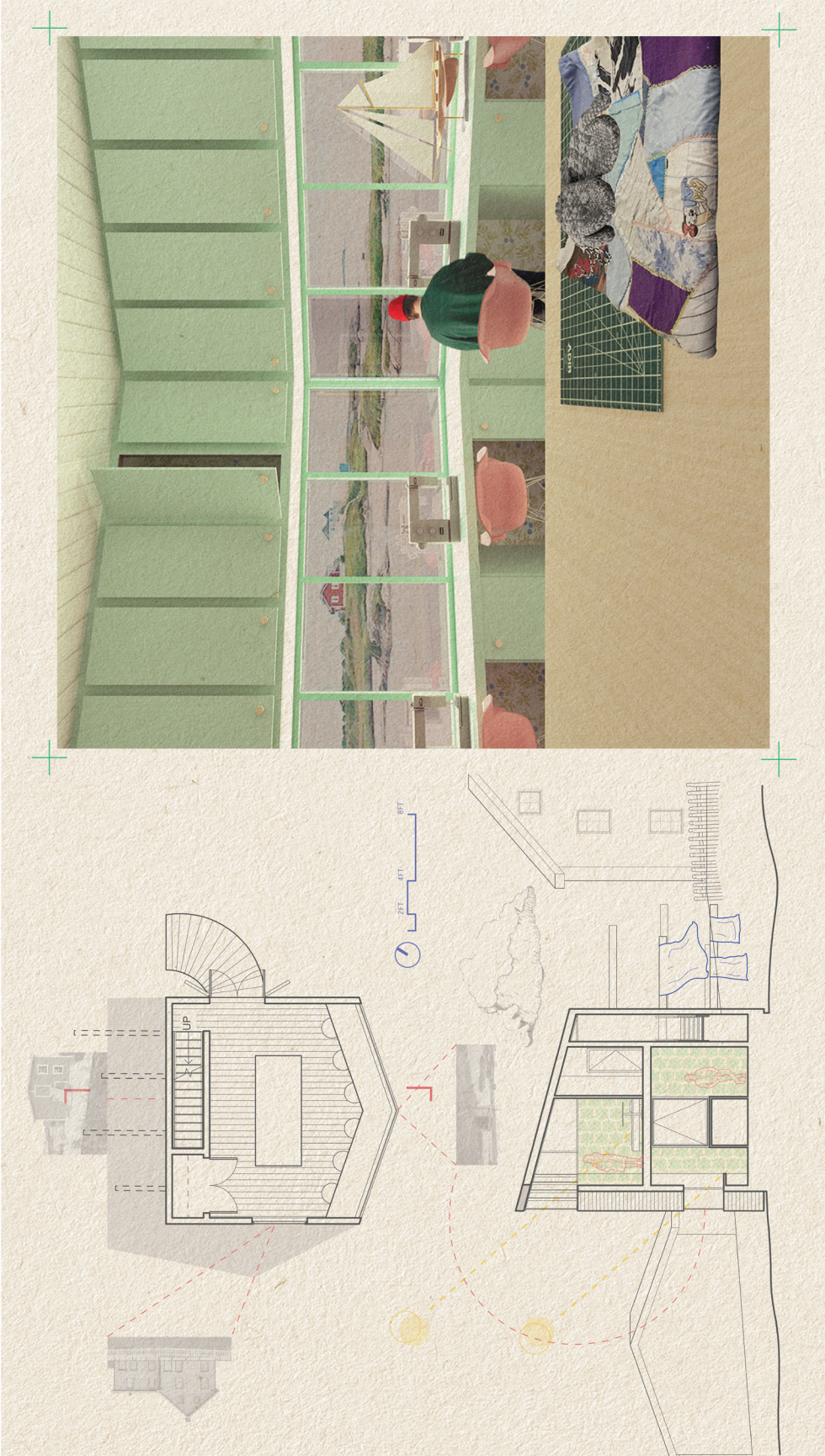


Diamond entry detail on local fishing stage

The first building campers would encounter is the crafting cabin, located near the craft shop. The crafting cabin makes a copy of the adjacent fishing stage and uses the exaggeration method, switching the elevation to plan, tipping the building over onto its side. Interior finishes are inverted using collage, filling the traditionally wooden structure with colour and texture. The main level becomes a communal crafting space while the second floor becomes sleeping space. The buildings “stilts” can be used for campers to display their textiles works at the end of the day and to dry clothing and towels after swimming. An exaggerated diamond adorns the facade, the local symbol for a structures opening, and disorients a locals preception of the entry.



Crafting cabin plan, section and sectional axo



Crafting cabin plan, section and interior render

Common House

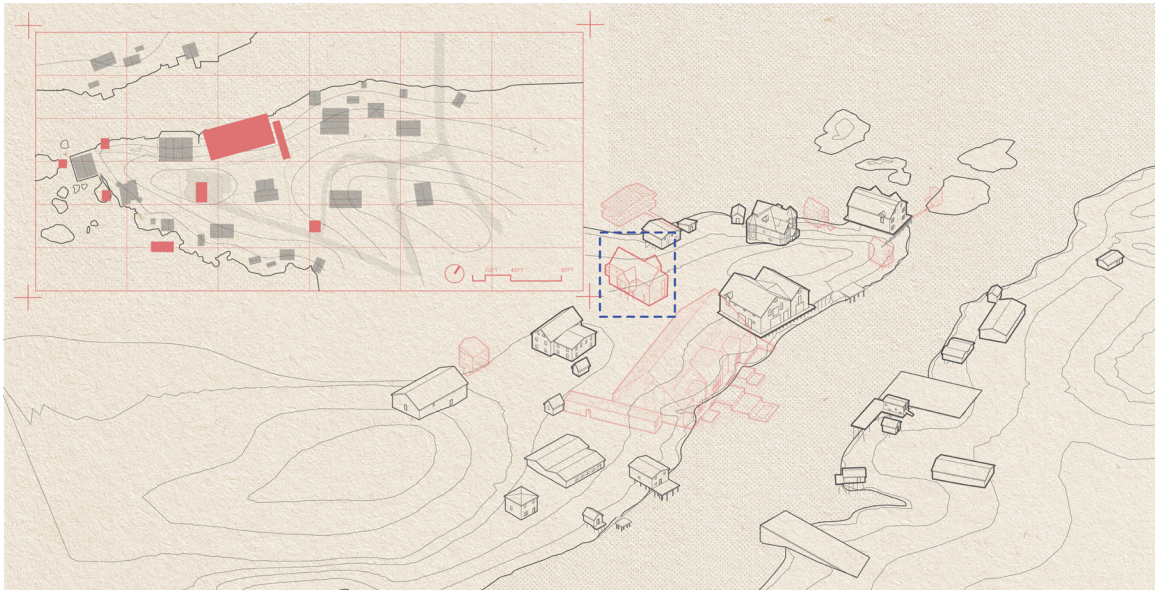


Traditional house form



Traditional outbuilding form

After settling into a cabin, campers and visitors can access additional amenities at the common house located in the center of the site near the historic houses and the theatre. The common house is developed using the collage method, taking the outbuilding typology and colliding it with the traditional house typology. The main floor provides campers and visitors with communal kitchen, dining, hang out space and laundry. Both masculine and feminine coded materials are juxtaposed to finish the interior, neutralizing the gender of the space. The second floor provides showers and sleeping space for 16 individuals in built-in bunk beds.



Common house siting



Common house plan, section and exterior render



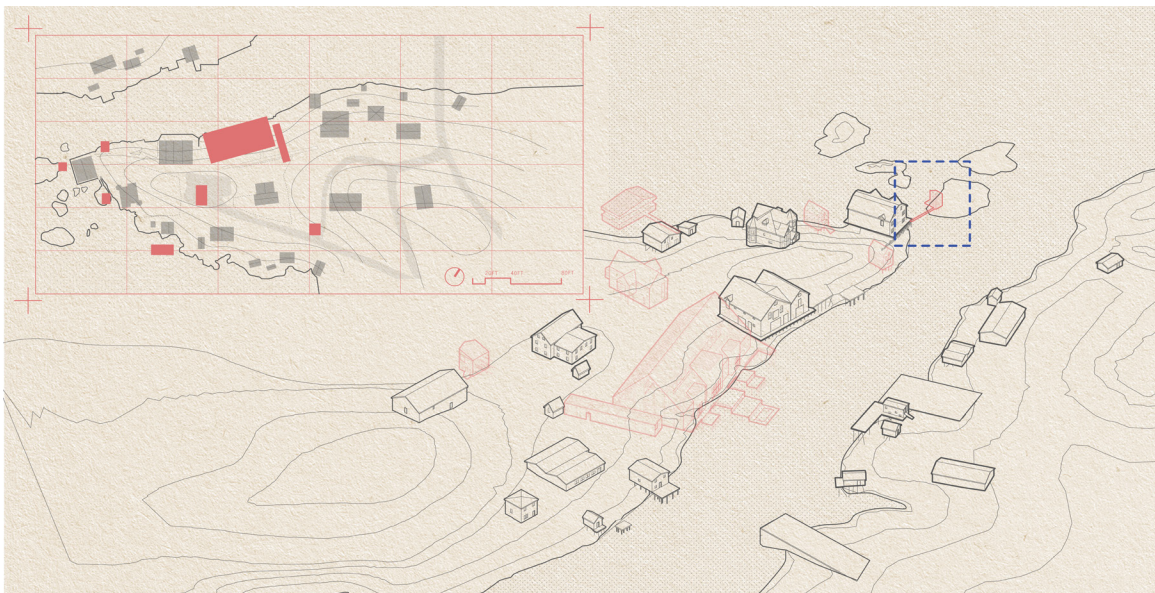
Common house plan, section and interior render

Bathing Buildings

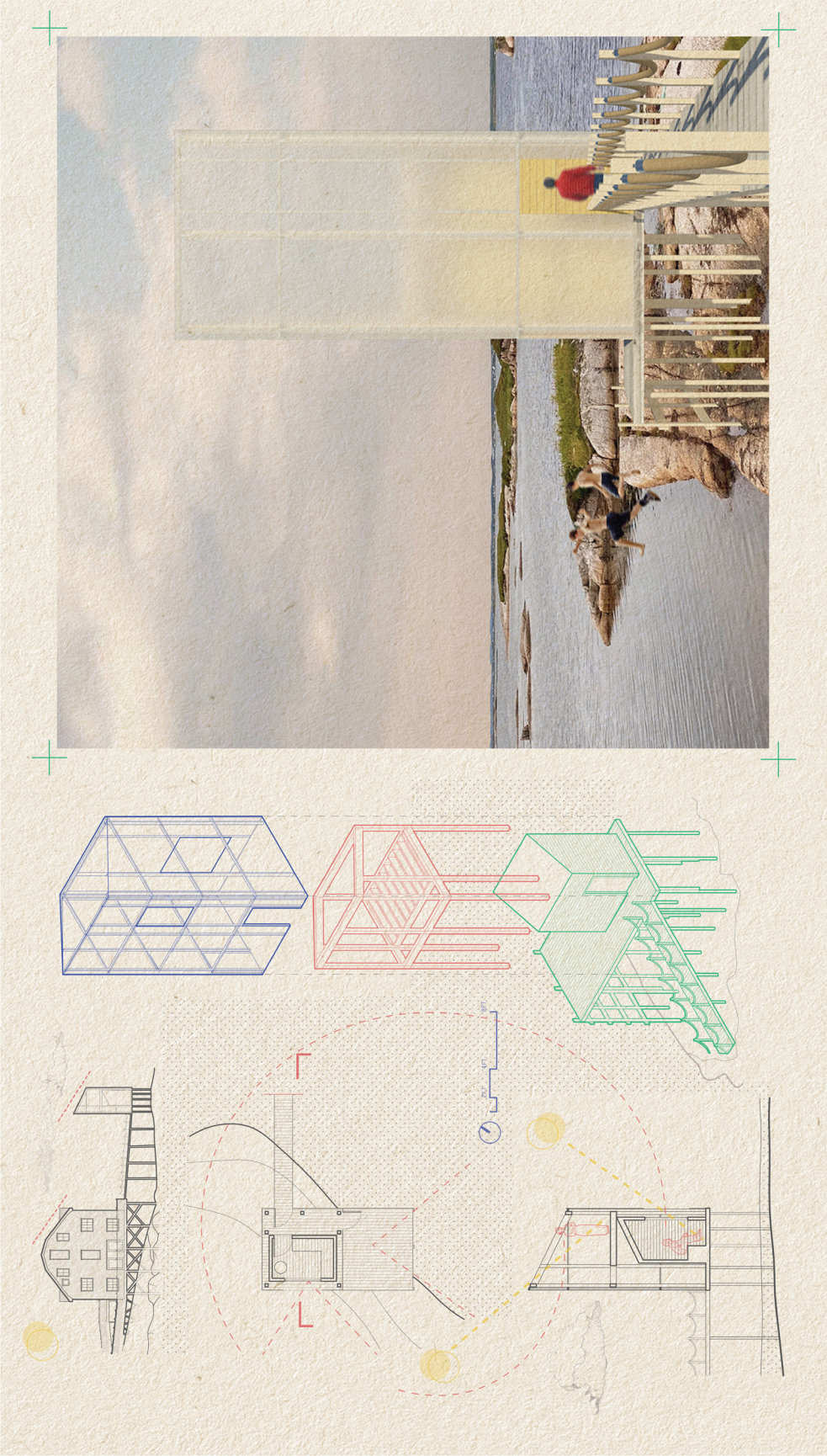
Bathing buildings are scattered along the site providing bathers with unique views and varying bathing experiences. A small sauna provides a private experience with direct views of the ocean. A medium scale hot tub pavilion gives views of the ocean and surrounding landscape; while the main pool houses a recreational swimming pool in the site's front elevation.

Sauna

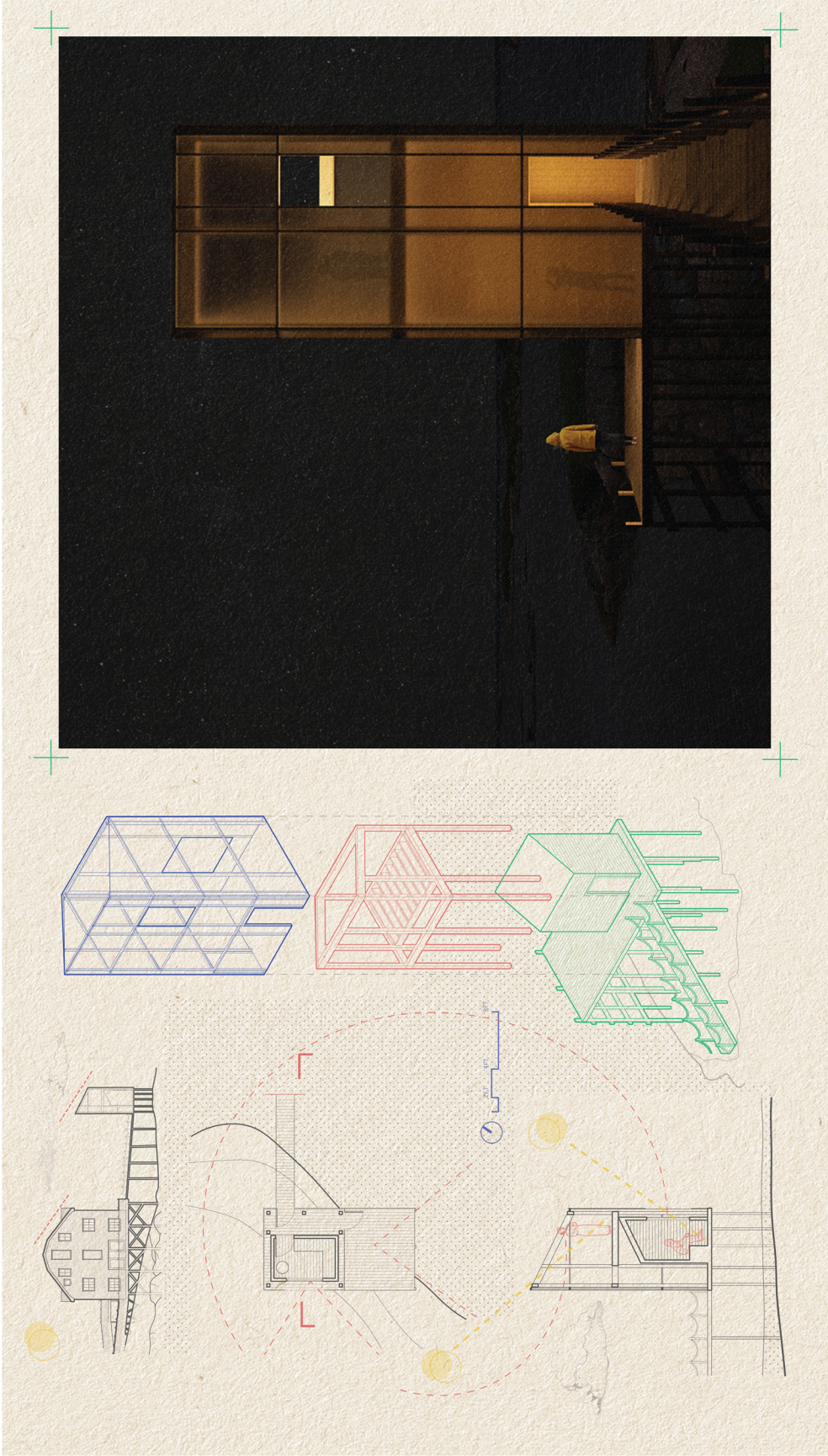
The sauna can be rented out for a few hours by tourists or campers and accommodates 2-3 users at a time. The form responds to the roofline of the adjacent museum, allowing for privacy from the site at the rear and a view out to the water at the front. A small and compact sauna is housed within a copy of a traditional outbuilding that provides a framed view of the ocean. The wharf can be used for cold plunging into the ocean and sunbathing. Secondary structure



Sauna siting



Sauna site elevation, plan, section and daytime exterior render



Sauna site elevation, plan, section and nighttime exterior render

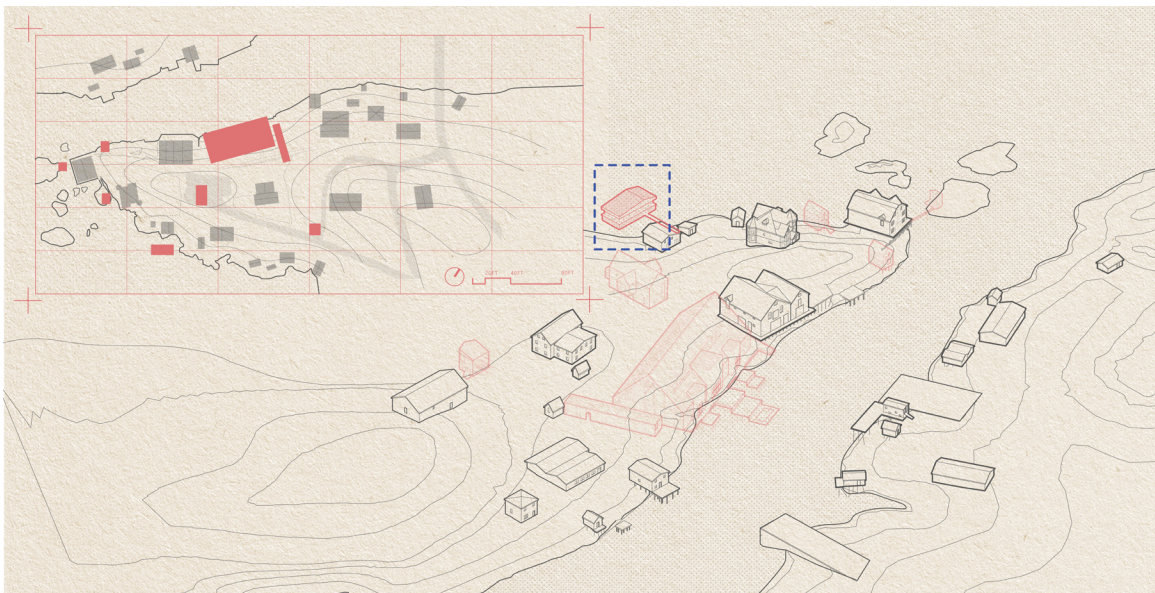
exaggerates the form of the pavilion and provides a rest deck on the second level, accessed via a ladder, where users can lounge or stargaze at night. A polycarbonate cladding masks the façade turning user's bodies into silhouettes in the elevation.

Hot Tub Pavilion

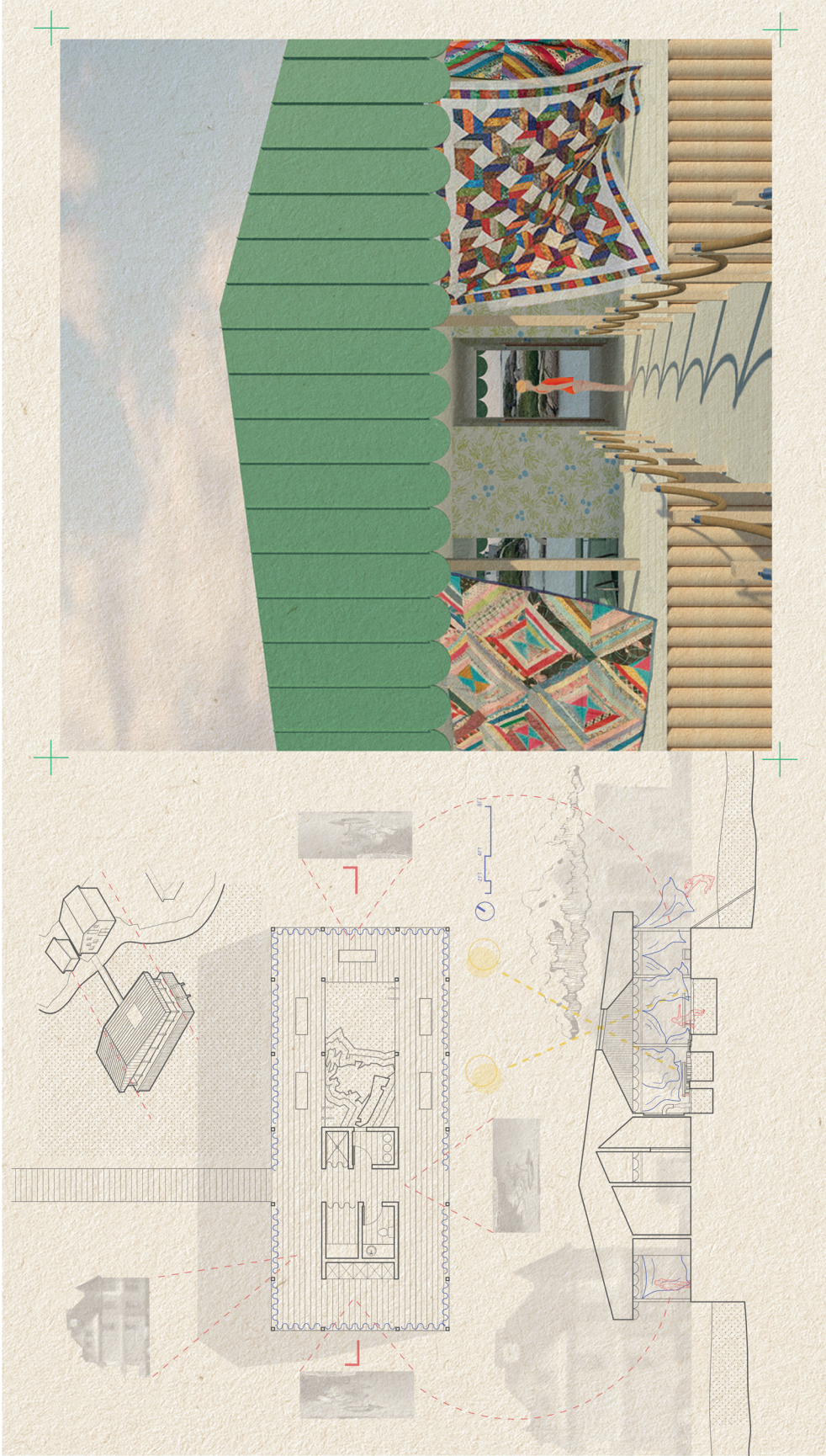


Adjacent asymmetric storage shed

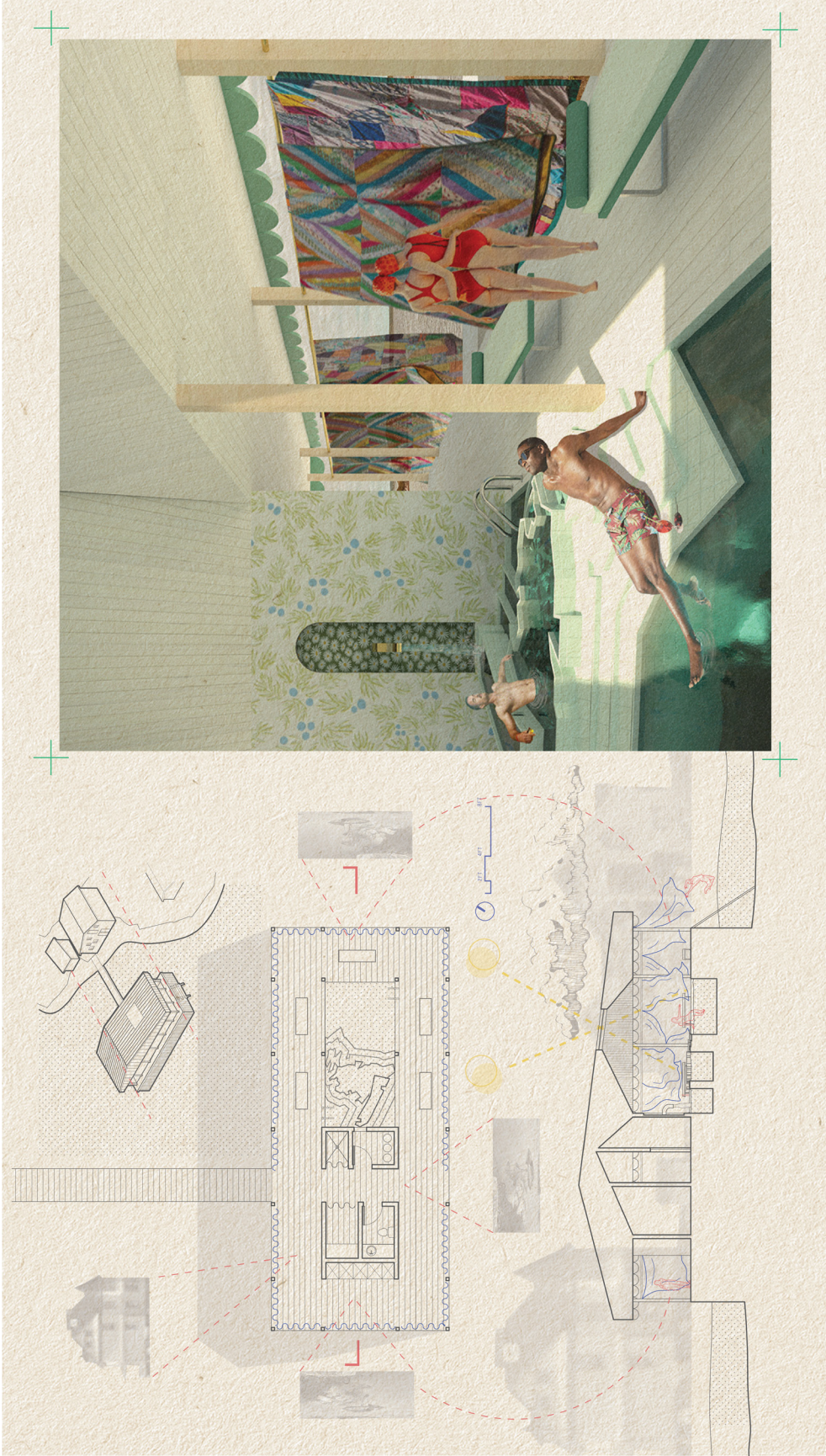
Bathers may also utilize the medium size bathing pavilion to the south for a more communal experience. This bathing pavilion makes two copies of the form of the neighboring asymmetric storage shed. One becomes a void allowing for a hot tub and skylight, while the other becomes a service core for the pavilion. A secondary structure is placed around the core and the pool to exaggerate the buildings appearance and provide rest space. The pavilion is masked through creating a façade of quilted textiles, allowing the users to control the level of privacy while bathing. The hot tub is created by scaling down the profile of the island of



Sauna siting



Hot tub pavilion axo, plan, section and exterior render



Hot tub pavilion axo, plan, section and interior render



Charles Moore, Stepped pools in the shape of Italy, Piazza d'Italia, New Orleans, 1978 (Lange 2014)



Charles Moore, Orinda House, Orinda, California, 1962 (Lange 2014)



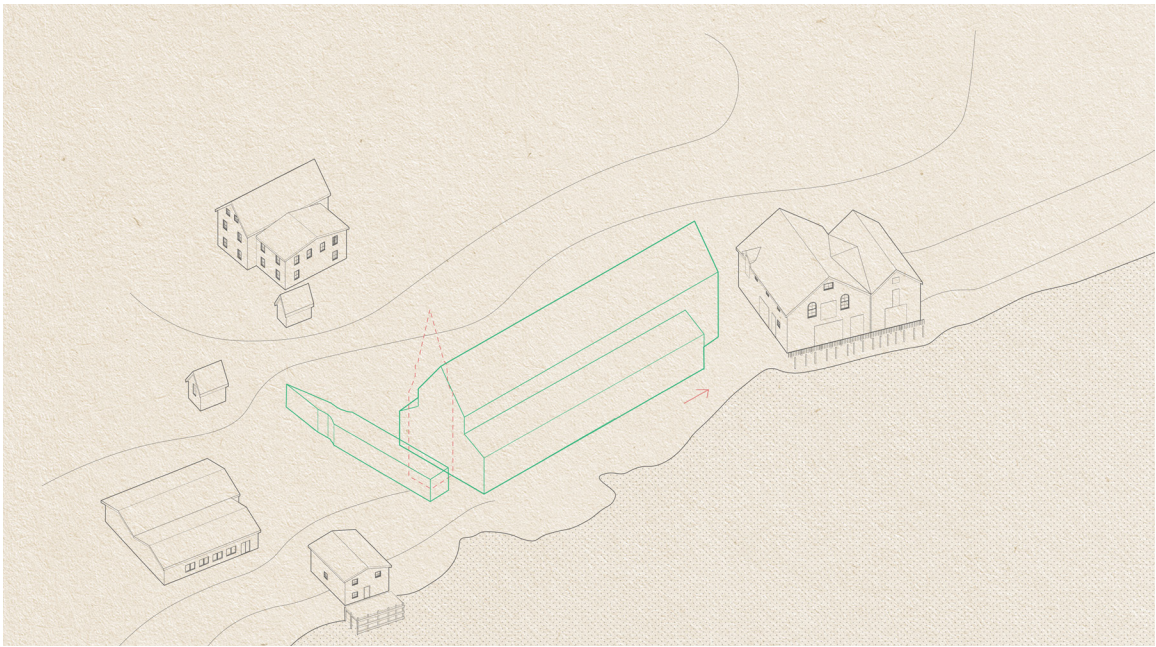
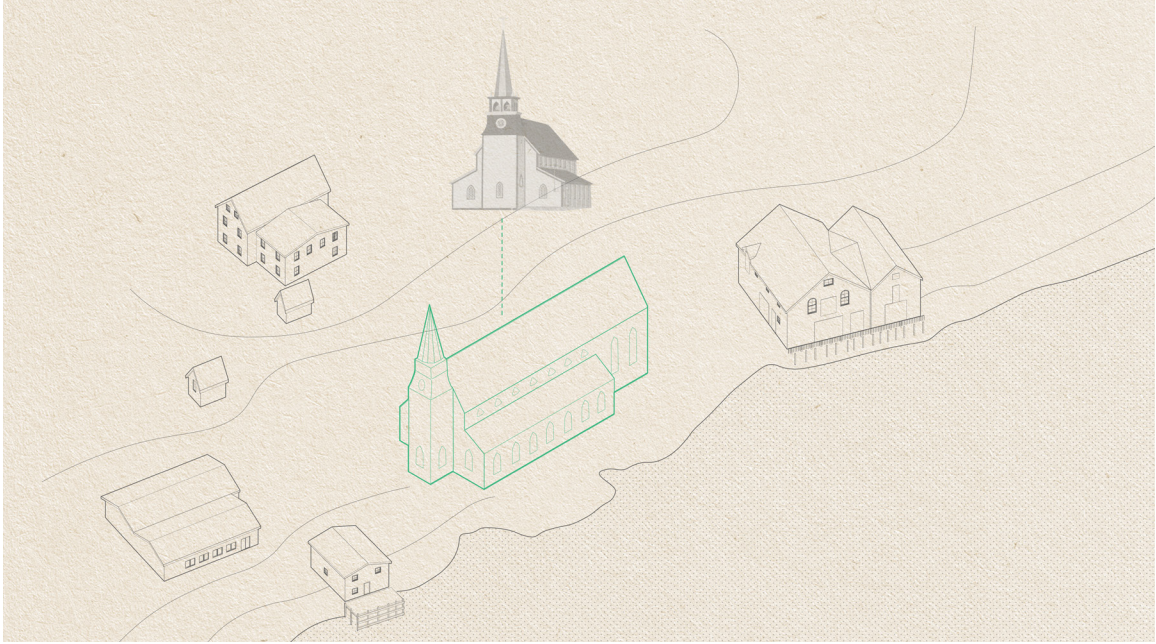
St. Luke's Anglican church, Newtown, Newfoundland

Newfoundland to create stepped pools. Detailed elements reference Charles Moore's work, such as the skylit tub in Orinda House and the geographic pool outline in Piazza d'Italia.

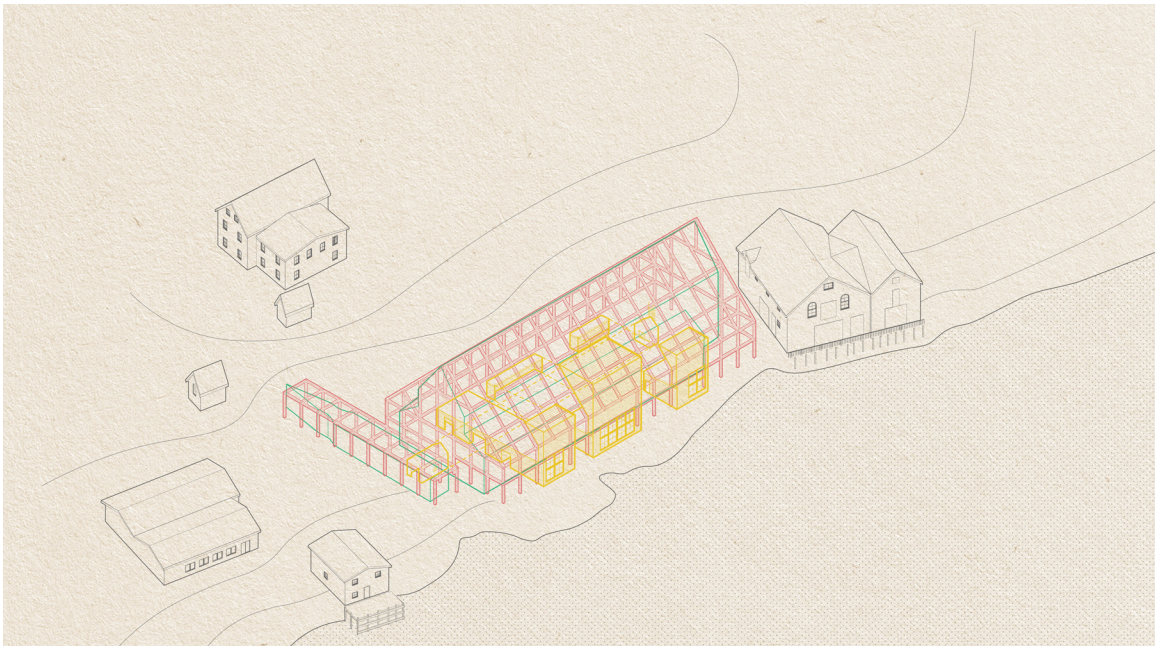
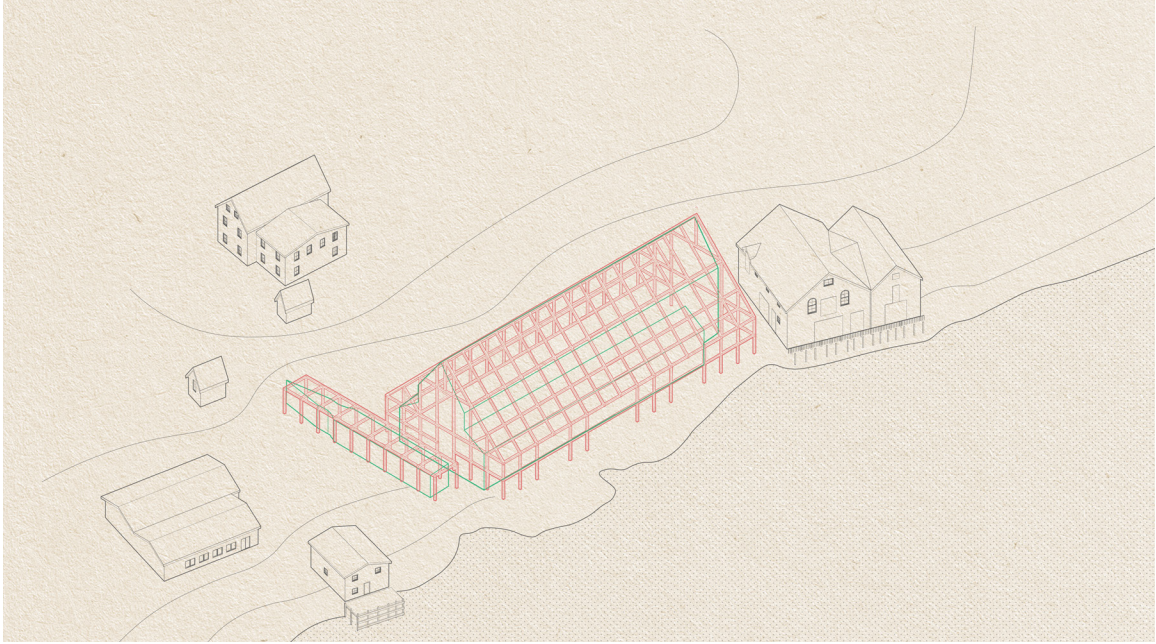
Main Pool

Design Method

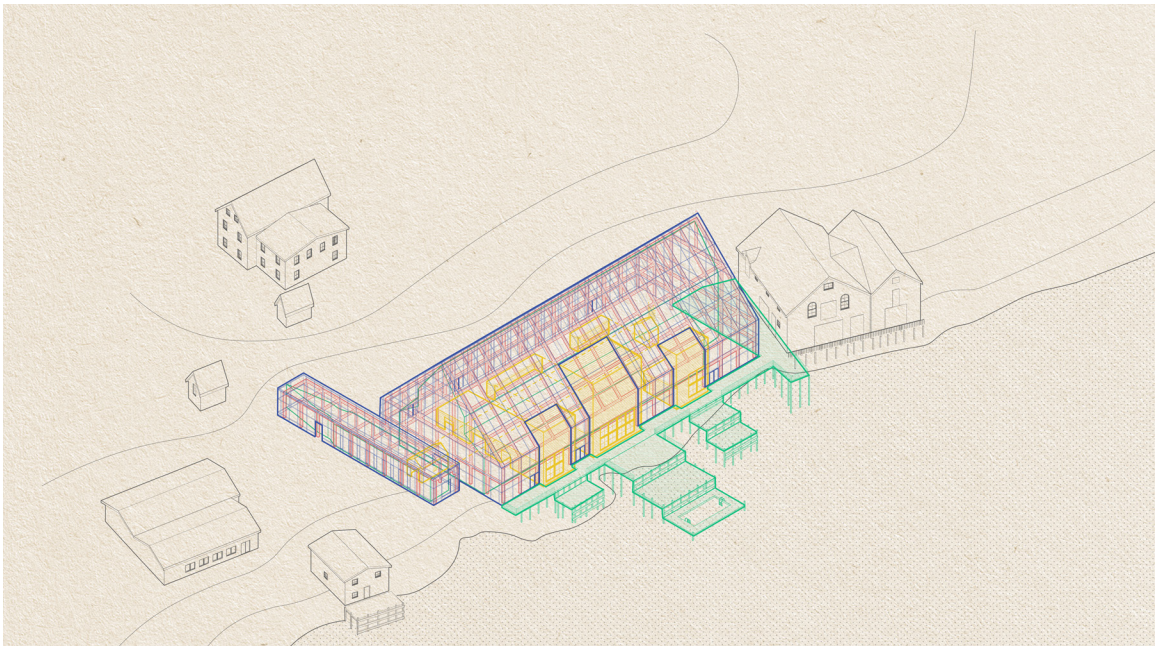
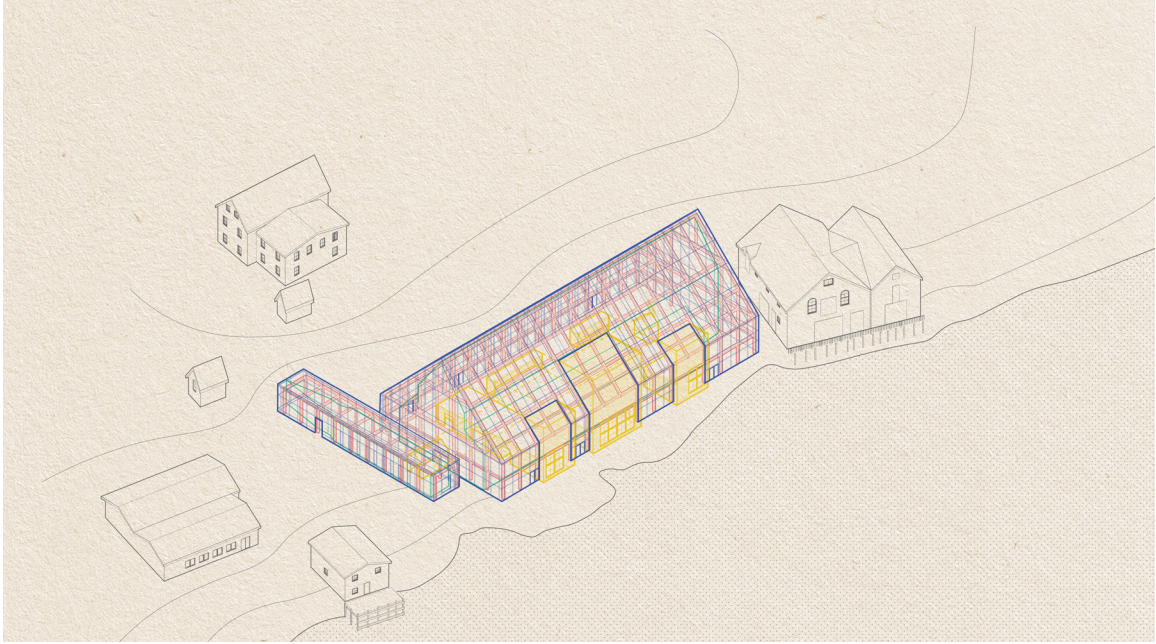
The main pool is located on the waterfront between the theatre and restaurant and occupies a significant space in the waterfront elevation that would be seen while approaching the site. It is designed by making a copy of the nearby church (St. Luke's Anglican Church), an institution that has been historically opposed to queer people, and reclaims it on the site. The church is in the Newfoundland gothic revival style that can be seen in many towns across the province. The form is stretched to accommodate a recreational swimming pool; while the tower is detached and switched from elevation to plan creating a ramping lobby down to the pool and cutting through the main line of circulation on the boardwalk. Using the exaggeration method, a timber structure slides over the church distorting its exterior appearance and creating a liminal space between inside and outside. The waterfront building typology is collaged into the project as a response to the immediate context, while providing the building with services and additional bathing space. A glazing system, with both transparent and frosted portions slips over the timber structure masking the building and revealing and concealing the bodies within. An exterior deck is placed to the west, creating a shared plaza between the theatre and the pool and series of stepped wharves extend from the building allowing access sunbathing and natural swimming in the ocean.



Design sequence drawings step 1 and 2



Design sequence drawings step 3 and 4

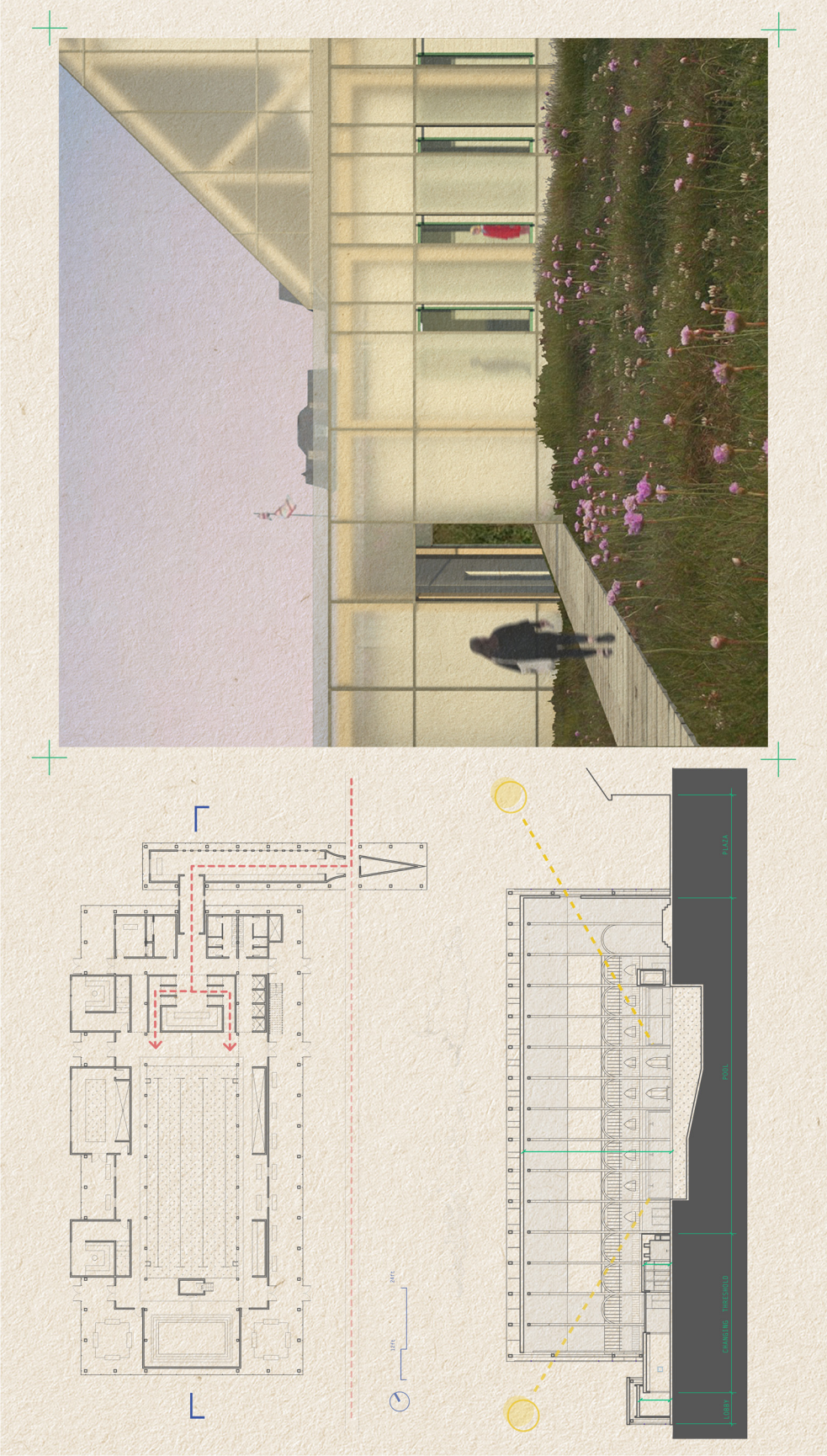


Design sequence drawings step 5 and 6

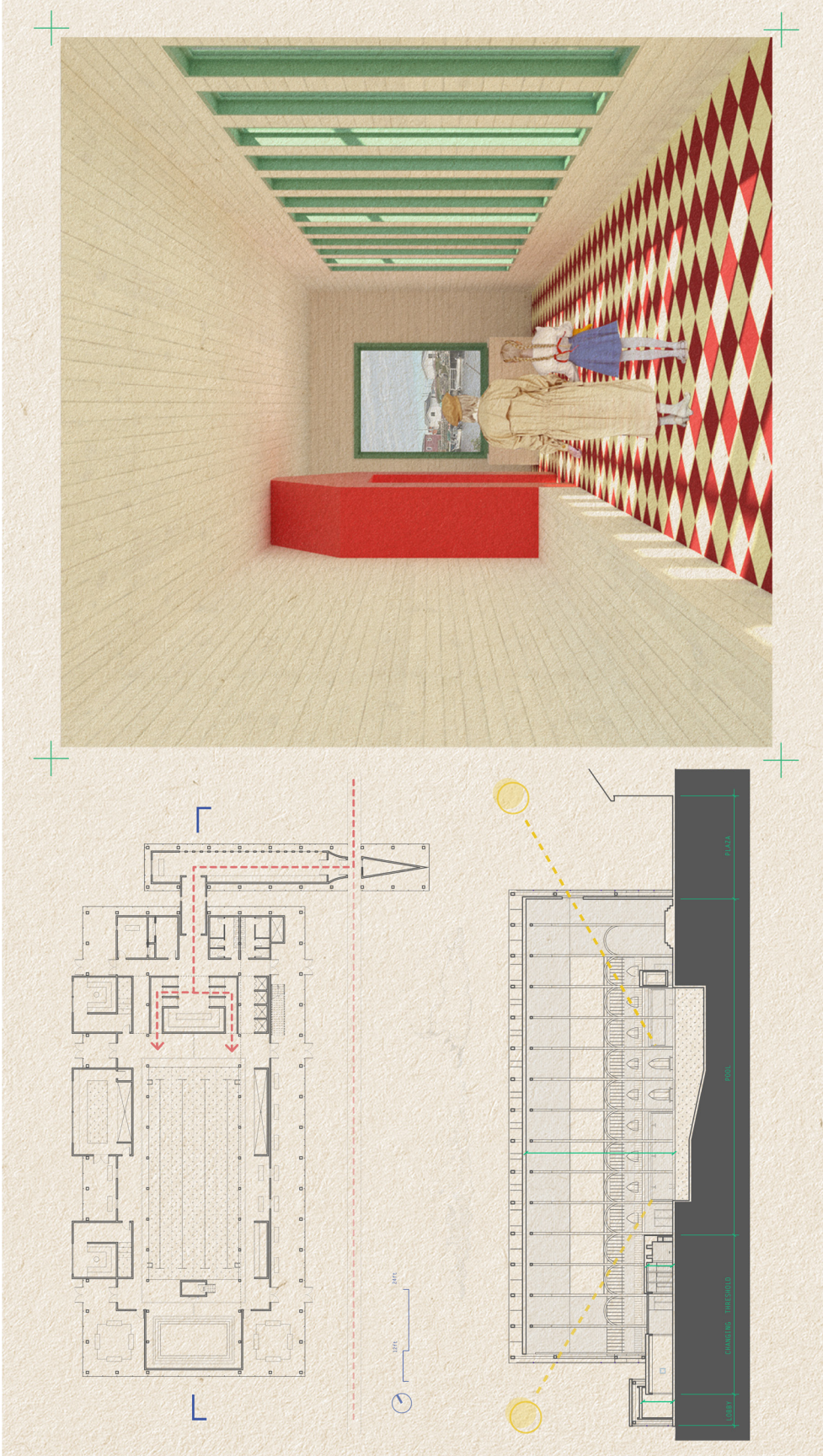
Entry Sequence

The entry sequence is designed so that bathers are unaware of the nature of the space as a church typology until they have passed the threshold and changed clothing. The ceiling height in the lobby and change area is intentionally compressed adding to the drama of experiencing the full height space upon passing the threshold.

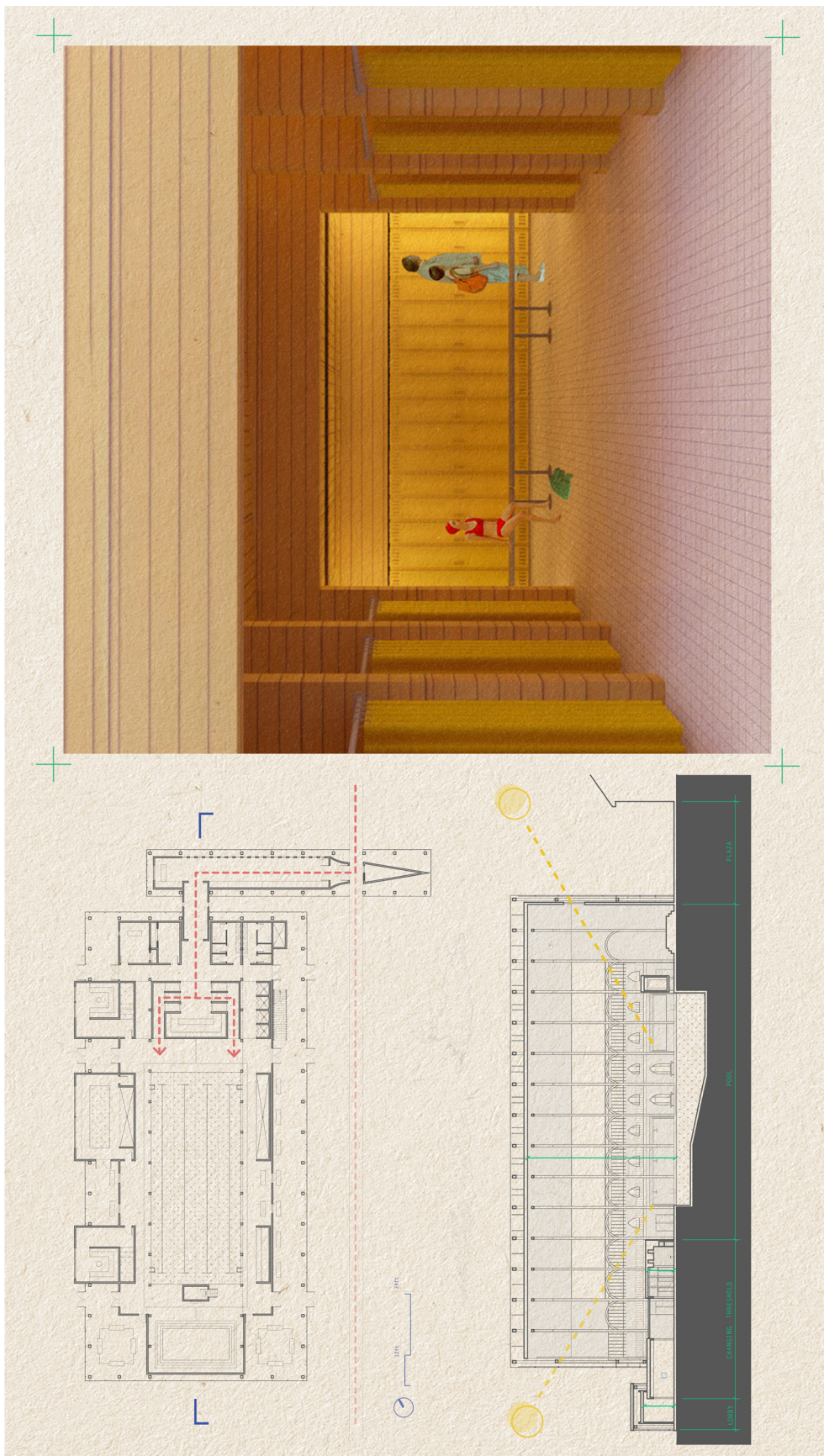
Bathers enter from the main boardwalk where they walk down the gently ramped lobby, the façade is staggered between transparent and translucent allowing patrons at the adjacent restaurant to see glimpses of both the full body and silhouettes as bathers walk to the pool. A direct view of the nearby fishing structures is framed at the end of the long lobby. A small and compact gable form creates the threshold between the lobby and the main swimming space, just as the traditional fishing building provides a transition from the land to the water, and manifests as a lifeguard pavilion and diving board at the opposite end of the plan.



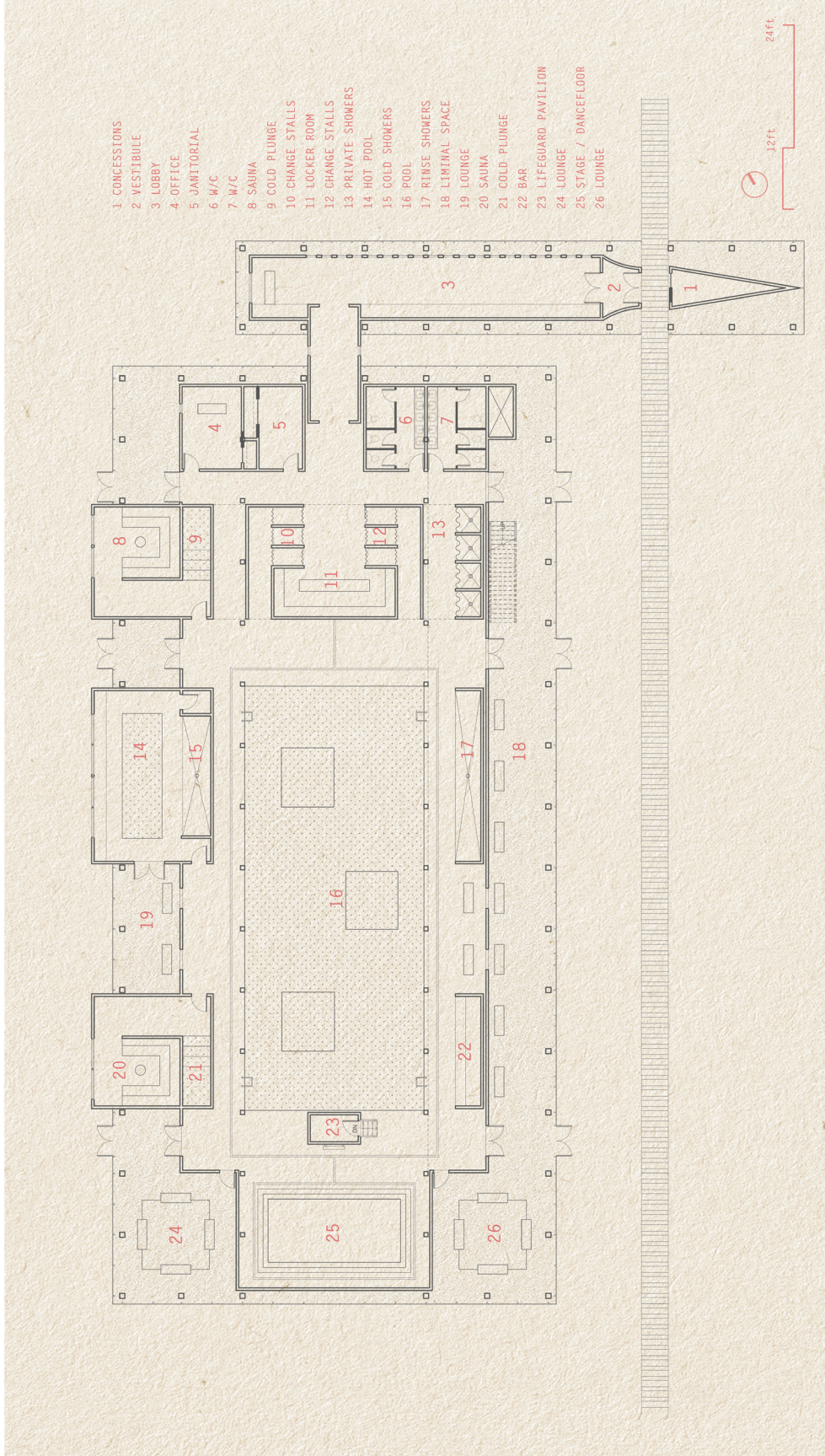
Entry sequence plan and section. Render showing approach to entry and the full bodies and silhouettes in the lobby



Entry sequence plan and section. Render showing lobby, framed view and gable threshold



Entry sequence plan and section. Render showing locker room and changing threshold



Floor Plan

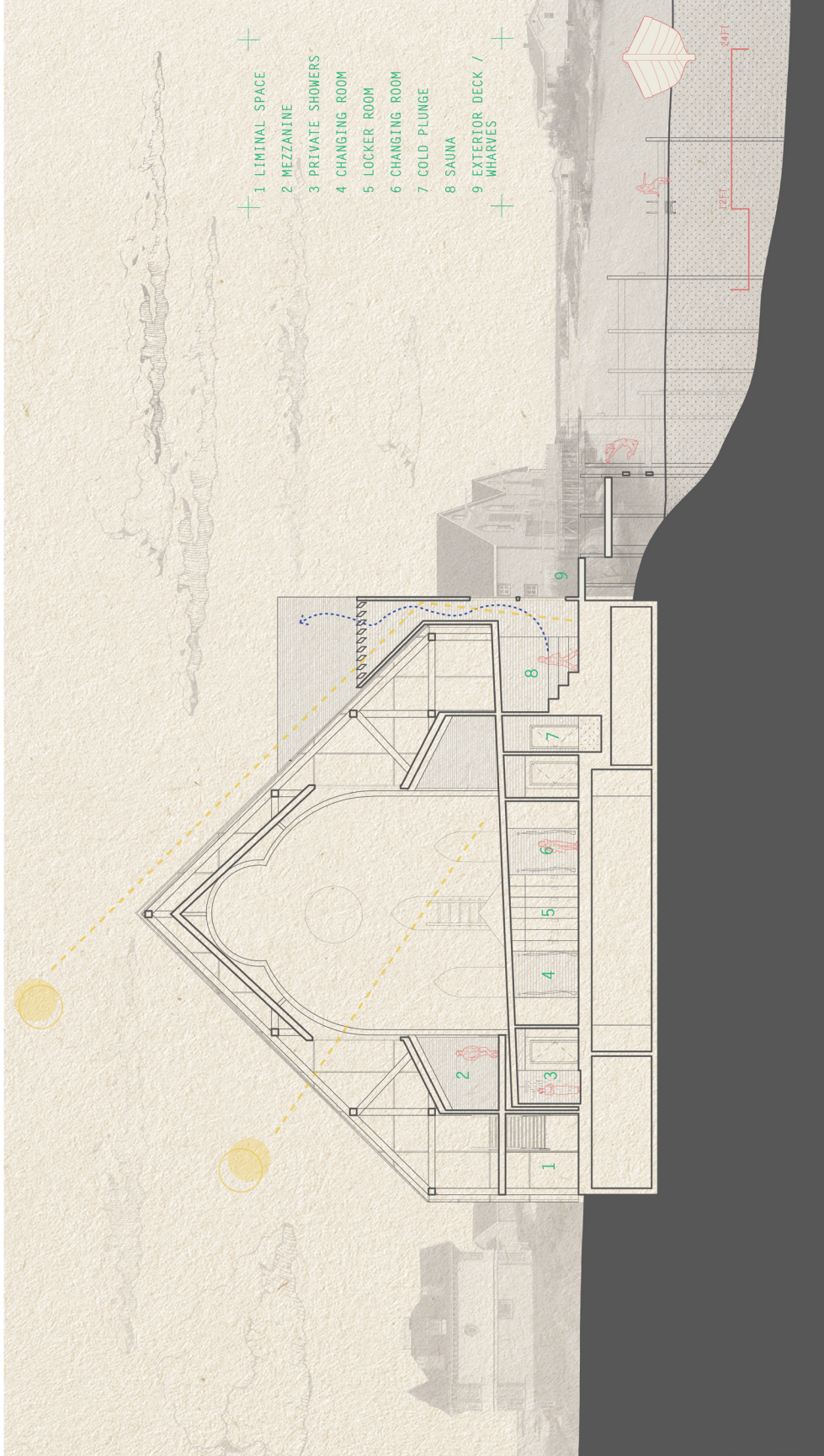
Swimming Space and Bathing Rooms

After passing this line between wet and dry bathers arrive in the main pool space. This space houses a 25m swimming pool with 4 lanes. Two sauna rooms with cold plunges and a hot tub room with cold showers are located towards the waterfront. These bathing rooms at the waterfront provide users with privacy from the main swimming space and a direct view of the surrounding landscape and architecture, while also putting their bodies on display in the front elevation for outsiders to observe.

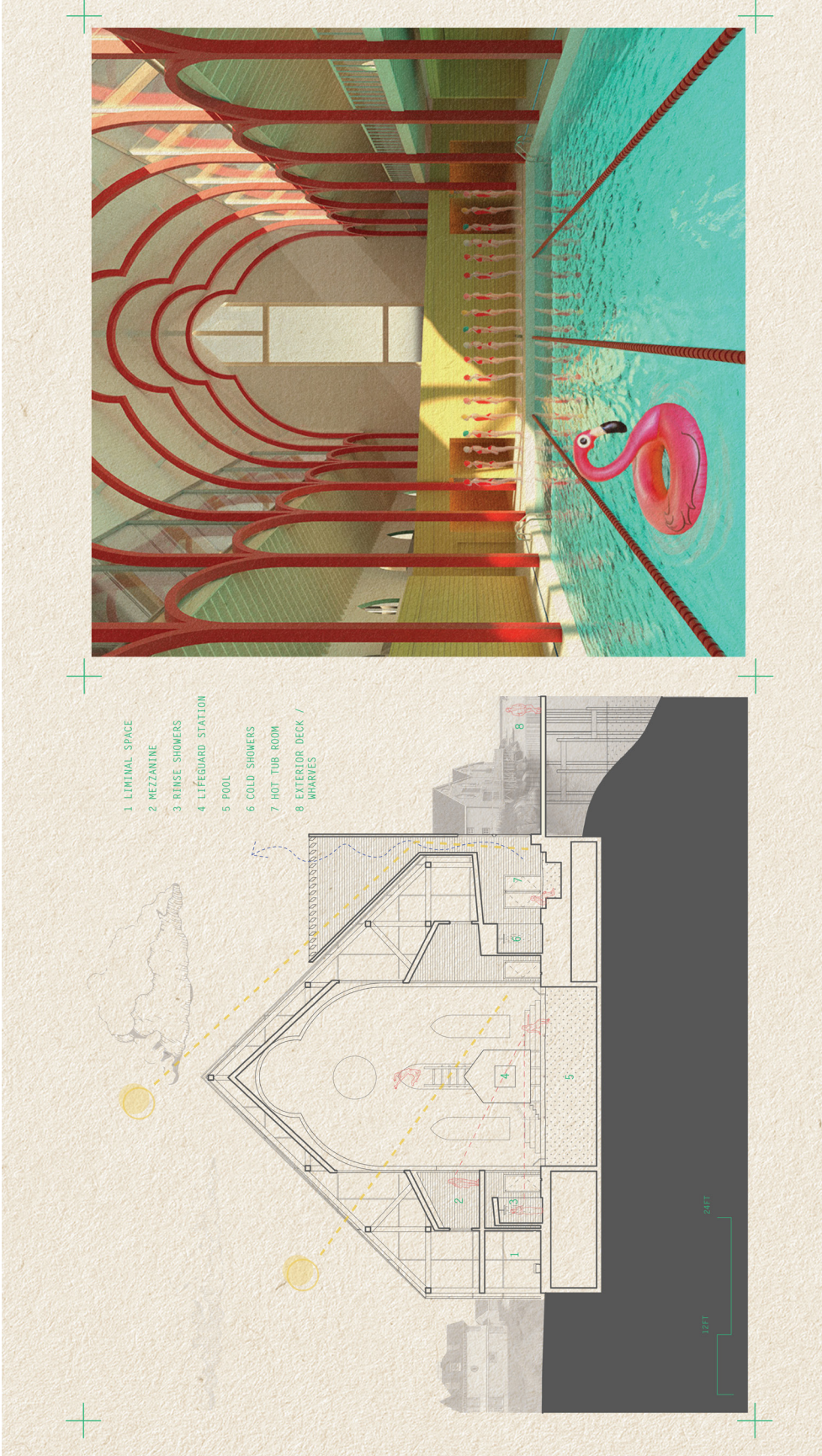
A shed roof allows forms collaged into the building to slide under the mezzanine at the rear; at the waterfront the form reaches upward, to receive direct sunlight and allow for ventilation of the bathing rooms. These forms are clad in the sites signature yellow wood and respond to the height and massing of the adjacent theatre on the exterior, blending in with the surrounding context and further concealing the identity of the building.

During the day, the pool can be used by locals and campers for swimming lessons and recreational swim. Viewers may observe from the mezzanine above while rinse showers are located below along the side of the pool, putting the body on display and creating lines of desire between users. Clearstory windows borrow light from the exterior and illuminate the space.

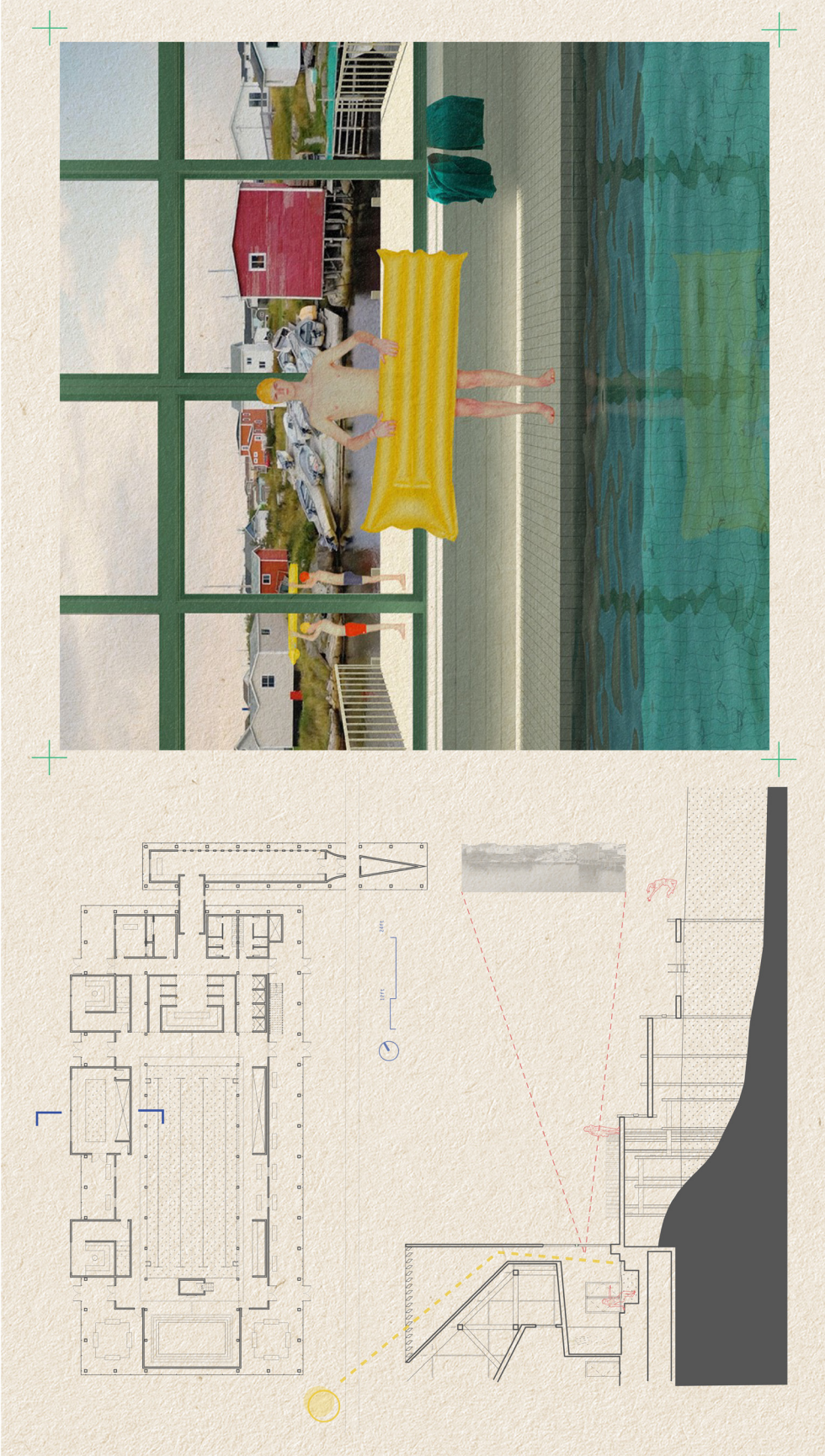
To access the exterior deck, wharves and natural swimming one would pass through the liminal space surrounding the original church form. In this transitional space the floor is finished in a rough stone that bathers must walk across barefoot, referencing the difficulties of coming out and being openly queer in the context.



Section through private showers, changing area and sauna



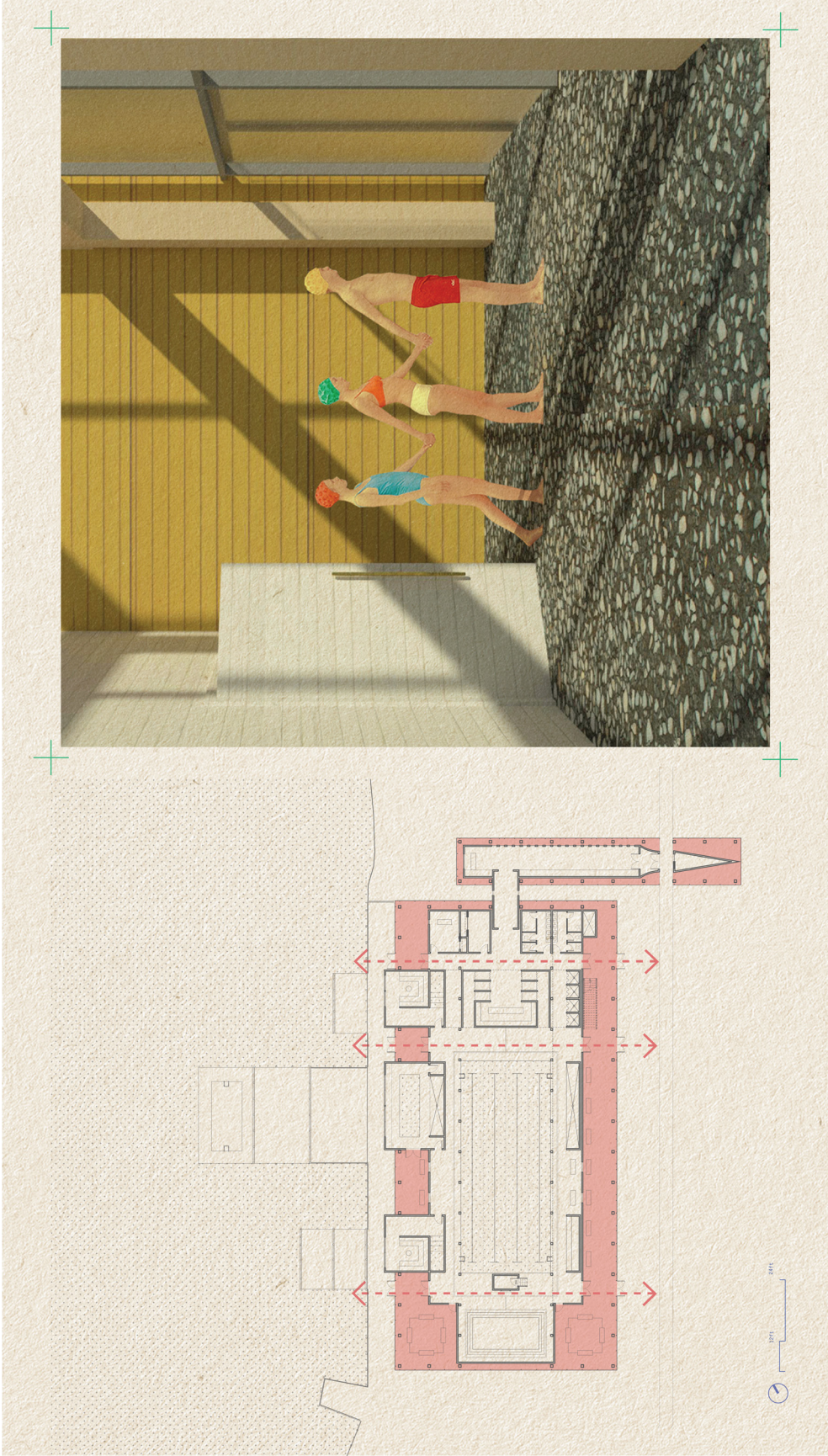
Section through rinse showers, main pool and hot tub room



Plan and section through sauna and render of hot tub room



Front elevation

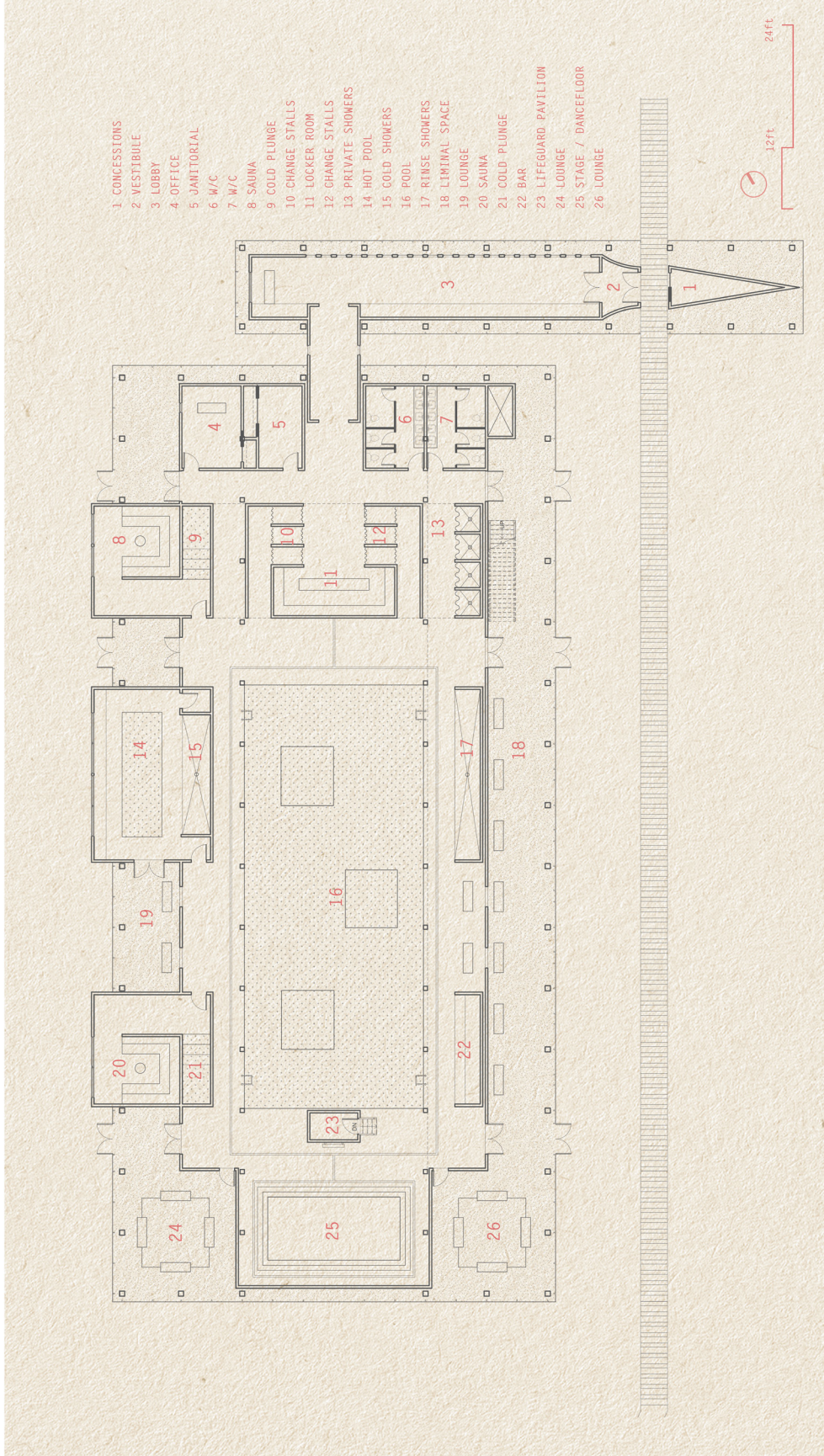


Threshold detail, plan and render

Mummers' Masquerade Club

On the last day of camp as the sun sets the space starts to transform, transitioning from a simple pool into an event space that would bring together all three users, queer people, tourists and locals for a mummer's carnival club experience. Users are guided through the building using red lighting as a wayfinding system and may dress in mummers' costumes or masks, creating a queer space that allows for a subversion from the binary of gender performance and sexual expression. The space functions as a counter architecture, appropriating, subverting and mirroring becoming an ironic twist on traditional order.

Platforms are placed in the pool for dancing and lounging, while two lounges flank the apse in the liminal space. A bar is located poolside and the apse of the church hosts an elevated platform that can be used as a performance stage or dancefloor. The façade at the stage uses the transparent and translucent masking technique allowing those in the plaza to peer into the space or see exaggerated silhouettes as users bring the space to life on the dancefloor.



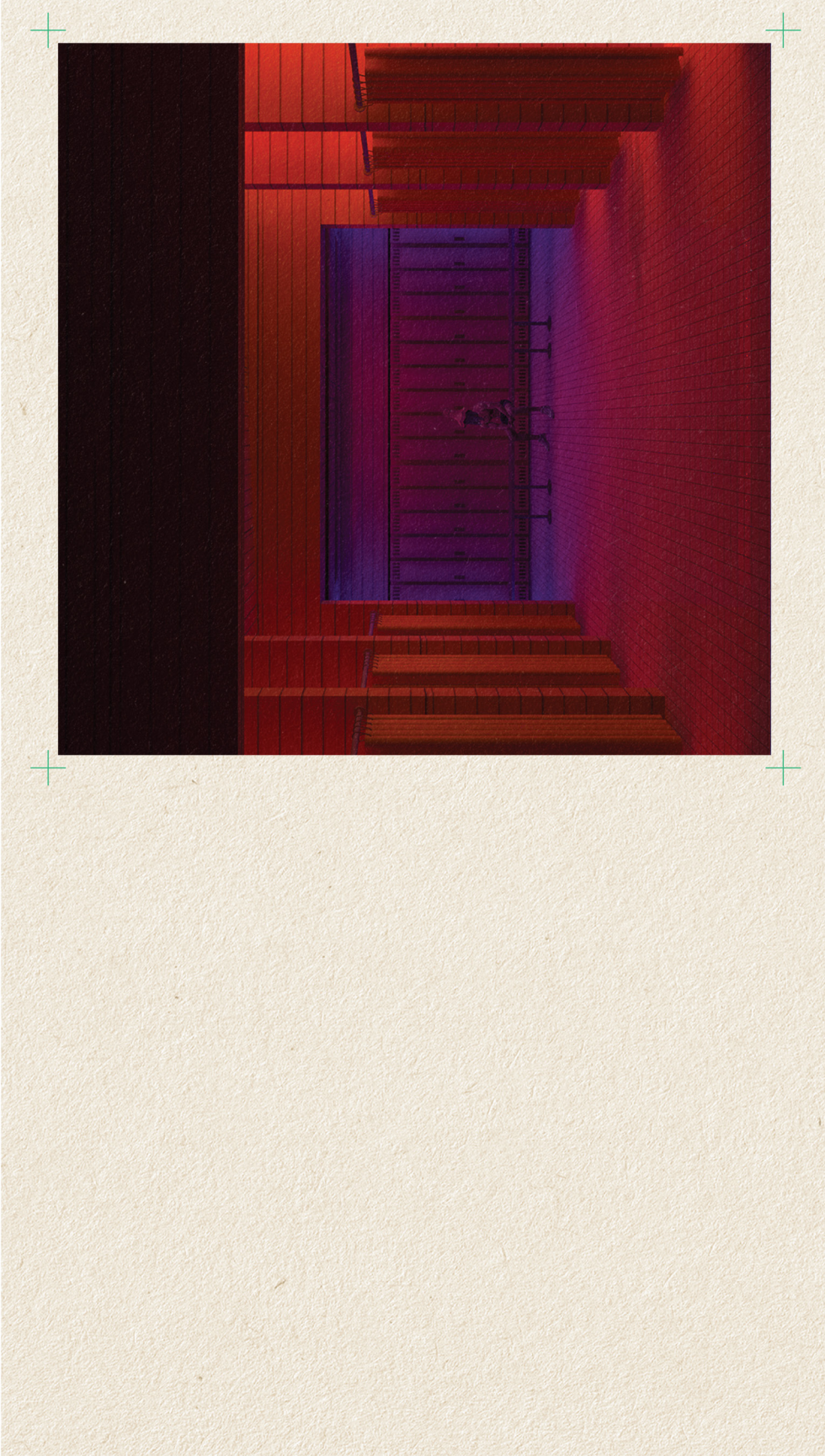
Floor Plan with dance platforms installed in pool



Day vs night render



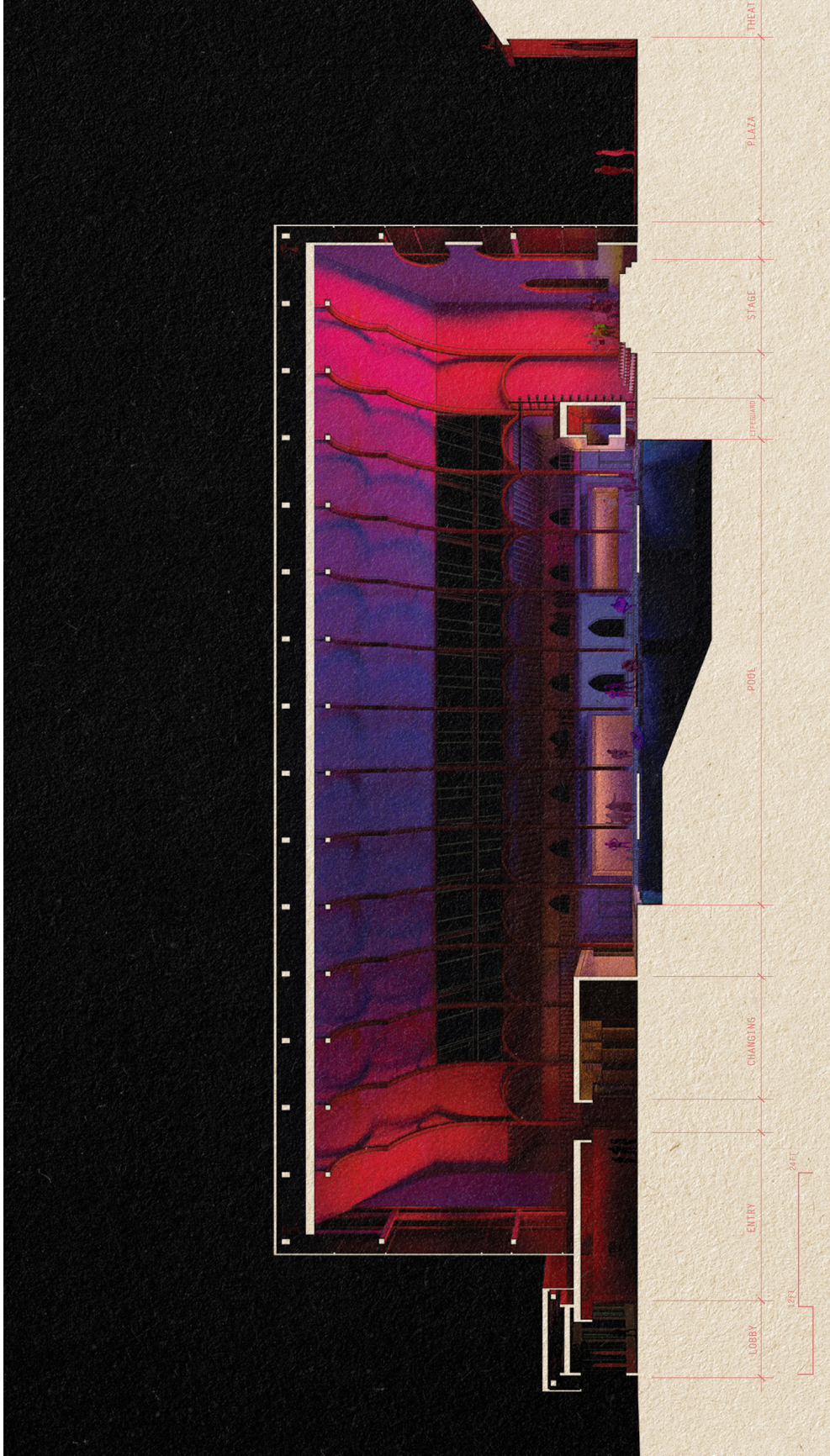
Night entry experience, red light guides users through the building



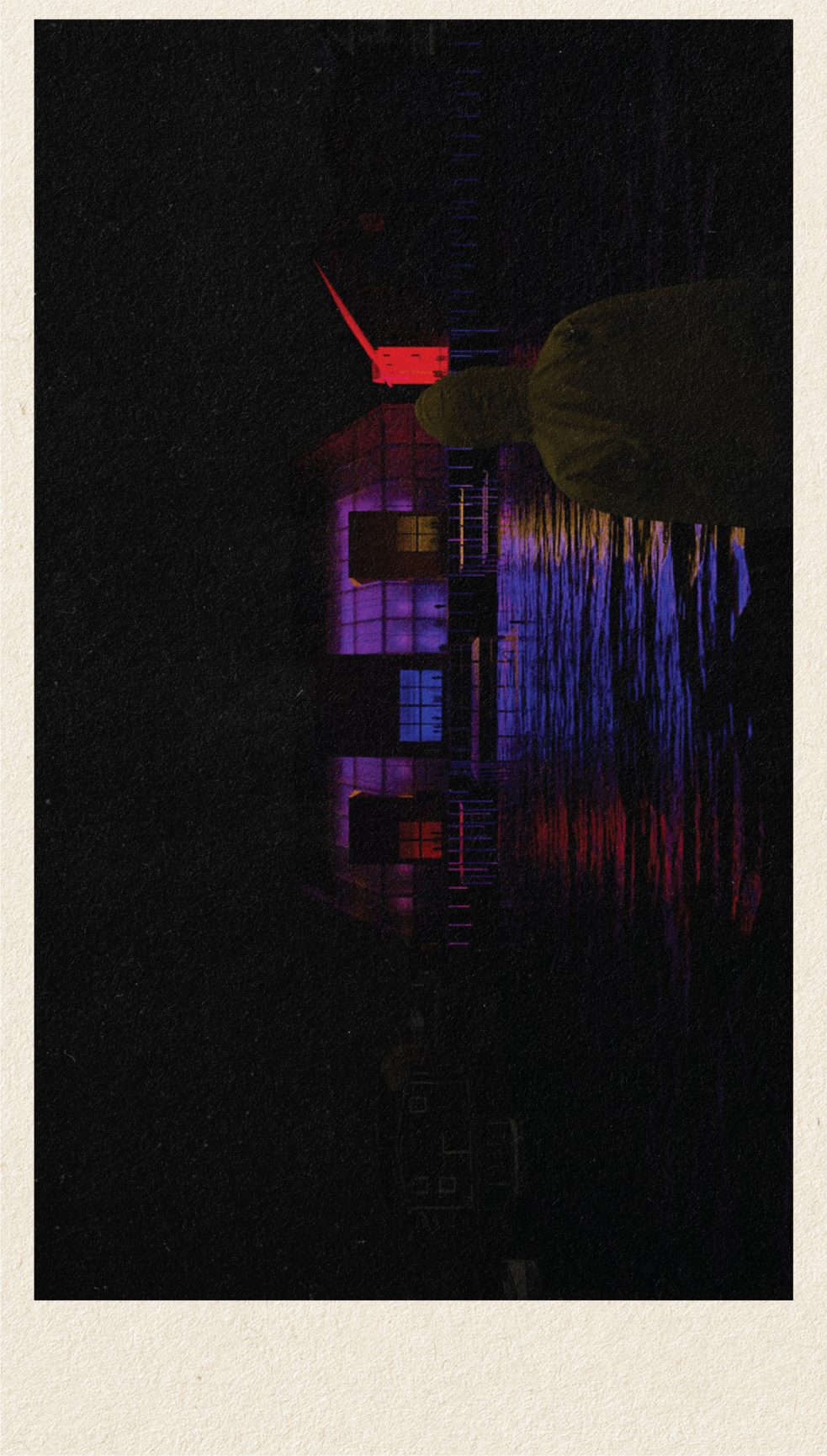
Changing / locker room at night



Hot tub room at night



Section through space at night



Front elevation at night

Chapter 10: Conclusion

This thesis attempted to provide a space for queer Newfoundlander's in a rural setting while also exploring how queerness can manifest in the architecture of place. With very little cultural representation, rural queers often struggle with finding individual and collective identity in place. The stories of queer Newfoundlanders highlight the contradiction they feel with queer identity and Newfoundland identity; causing many to leave the place they call home and never return.

The project argues that we may begin to find both individual and collective identity in representations of place; however, that most representations of place are distortions of the truth. A study of both queer space and Newfoundland space lays the foundation for how the two opposing spaces may begin to converge to form a new type that is rooted in both place and queerness.

Finding inherent queerness in the traditional cultural landscape with the practice of mummering granted a method of queering both typologies and program. Distilling working tools of imitation, exaggeration, collage and masking by studying the mummies' costume developed an architectural language for queering traditional typologies. While the mixing of the traditional village setting with a queer camp, bathing pavilions and mummies' club provides access to queer space for rural Newfoundlander's and representation in a space that has become synonymous with Newfoundland culture.

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