



CATEGORY: RENOVATION / ADDITION

PROJECT TYPE: NONPROFIT CENTER FOR COWORKING + ENTREPRENEURSHIP

ADDRESS: 642 N MADISON STREET, BLOOMINGTON, IN 47404

SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION: OCTOBER 2018

ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT

The Mill is one of the last remaining structures in the historic Showers Brothers furniture factory complex in Bloomington, Indiana. Built in 1915 and dubbed the "Dimensional Mill", it served to process logs into veneer and lumber for furniture-making. Inspired by the history of the Dimensional Mill, The City of Bloomington Redevelopment Commission envisioned a collaborative workplace with nodes for creative collisions, where technology and innovation entrepreneurs could discover and accelerate ideas. This playful yet peaceful space echoes the handmade sensibility of the past as small businesses owners and dreamers come together to shape the future.

In the case of the Dimension Mill, the primary design objective was to convert the crumbling shell of this historic sawmill into a model example of a sustainable, collaborative workplace. Challenges to the redevelopment included extensive moisture damage to the wood structure and floor, the need for a new lower-level floor and footings, and an improved thermal envelope, while maintaining the character of wood and brick on the interior.

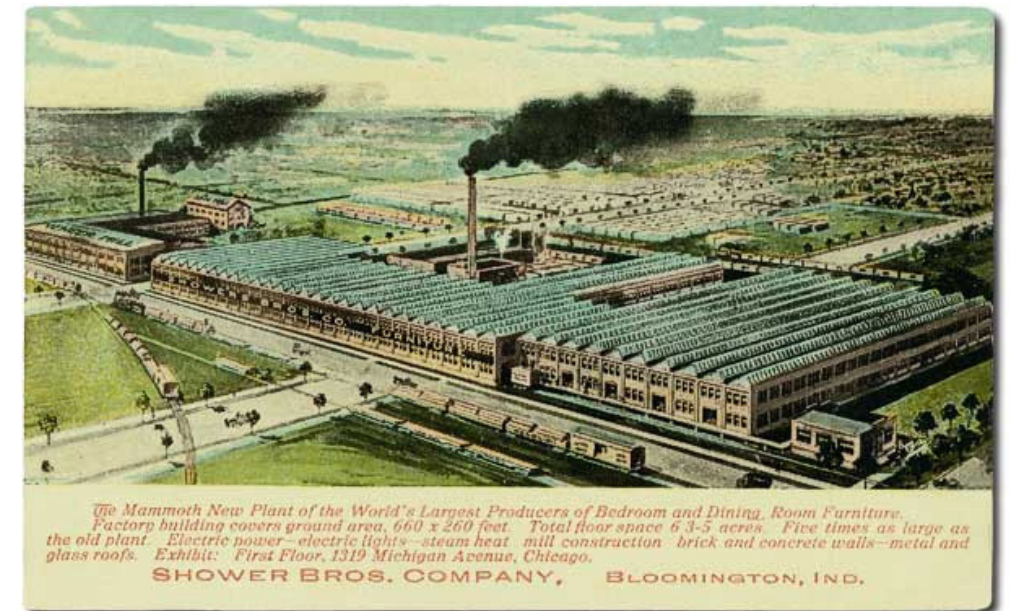
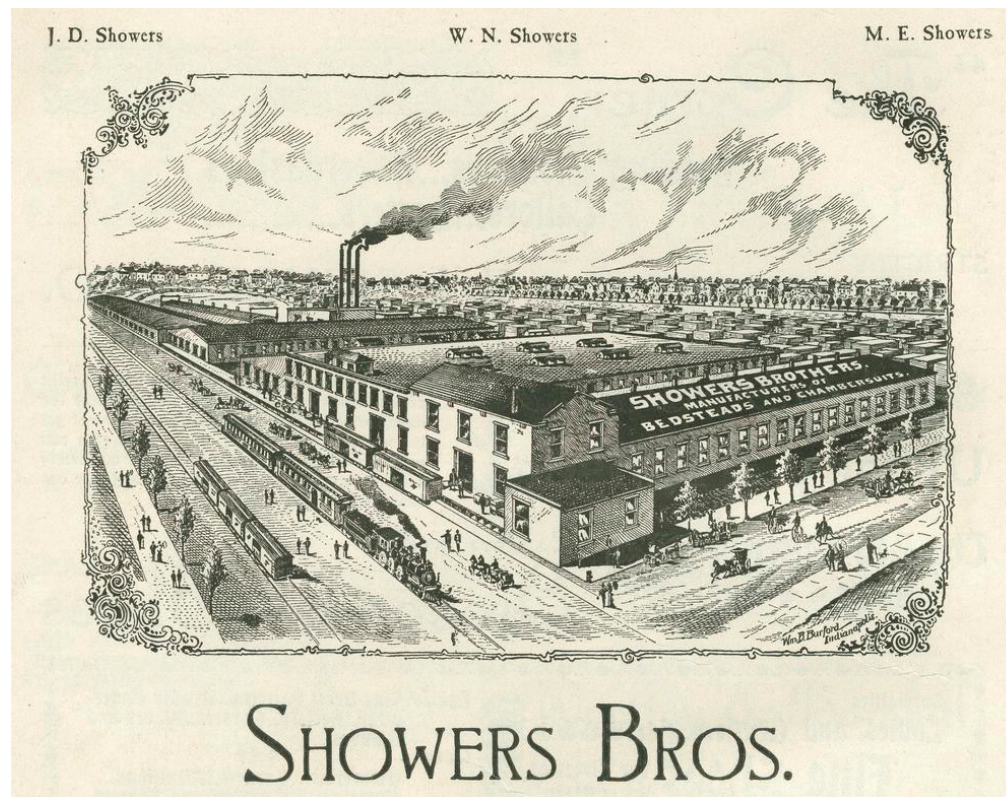
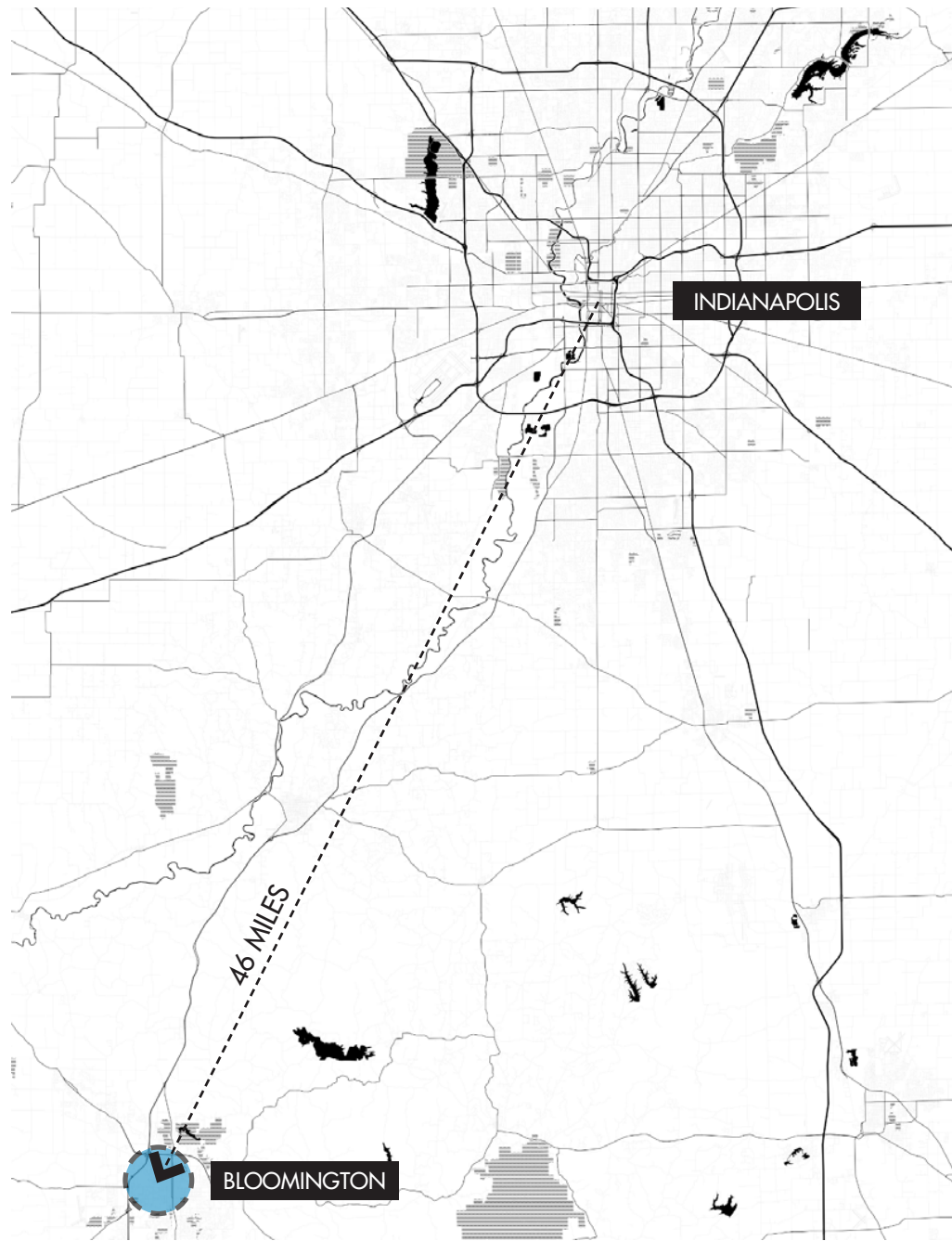
The vision for this renovation began with using the assets of the existing building form - a sawtooth roof which covered 90% of the building. Against tremendous challenges of settling and structure sagging, all 770 linear feet of the original north-facing skylight were rebuilt with new thermal glazing. On the south-facing slopes of the sawtooth roof, 225 solar panels were added to generate electricity for the various work and social spaces. On a typical day, the skylight provides generous light for all the open workspaces.

Exterior windows were replaced with operable wood windows to allow users access to fresh air during mild weather. In two existing overhead door locations, new insulated glazed overhead doors provide daylighting and encourage activities to spill outdoors. A variable refrigerant flow (VRF) heating and cooling system was installed in the Mill to provide optimum efficiency and allow for the many individual work studios to have full control over their zones; a number of movable partitions and pivoting panels allow the space to be arranged for multiple levels of privacy and functionality.

Creating a two-story event space became an opportunity to showcase the history of the Dimension Mill. Five structural bays of original wood flooring and supports were removed to open the event space. The wood flooring was re-used, and more than forty 4x12 joists were salvaged and milled into new tabletops, work surfaces, and a staircase leading to the event space.

While much of the interior aesthetic references the Dimensional Mill's history, the finishes of the renovation evoke modernity and progress. In this spirit, half of the interior lighting was designed and installed by Platformatics, a Bloomington-based technology start-up focusing on POE (power over ethernet) controlled LED lighting. The incredibly efficient lighting not only provides illumination throughout The Mill with very little energy use, but also creates dramatic lighting effects by allowing the lights to be color tuned and even programmed to synchronize with music for events.





HISTORIC STRUCTURE

The Showers Brothers Company was founded in 1868 as a furniture and coffin-making shop in downtown Bloomington Indiana. By 1920, Showers Brothers produced more than half of the furniture manufactured in the United States - more than 700,000 pieces of furniture every year. Their motto was "From the Tree to the Trade" with sixteen train-car loads of furniture distributed from the factory daily.

Showers Bros Company produced furniture from raw materials brought by rail to the factory complex. The Dimension Mill sat adjacent to a large drying kiln, which served to process lumber and veneer into workable materials. Showers Bros were the first to develop laminate wood products and even coined the term "laminating." However, the demand for furniture waned during the Great Depression, and the company ceased operations in the 1950's after being acquired by another furniture company. From 1959-1994, The Mill was used by Indiana University for storage, though most of the factory complex was destroyed in a fire in 1969. The Mill was later purchased by the City of Bloomington and repurposed to its current use in 2018.



EXISTING STRUCTURE





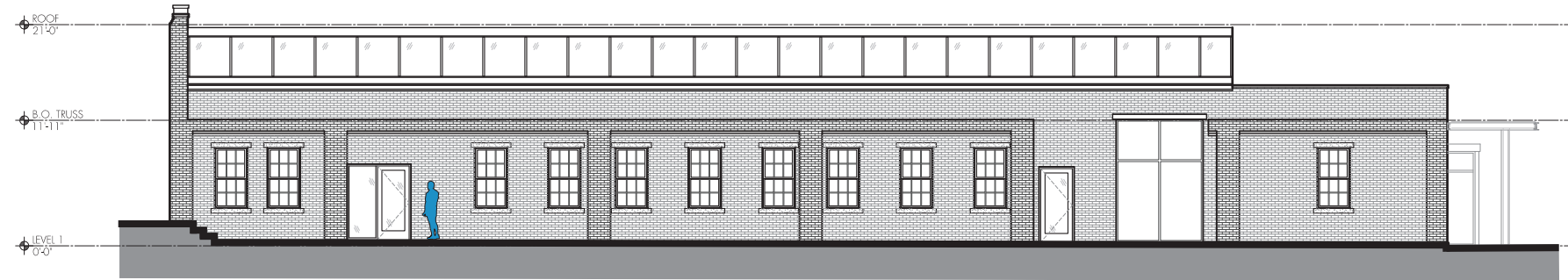
SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

scale: 1/16" = 1'



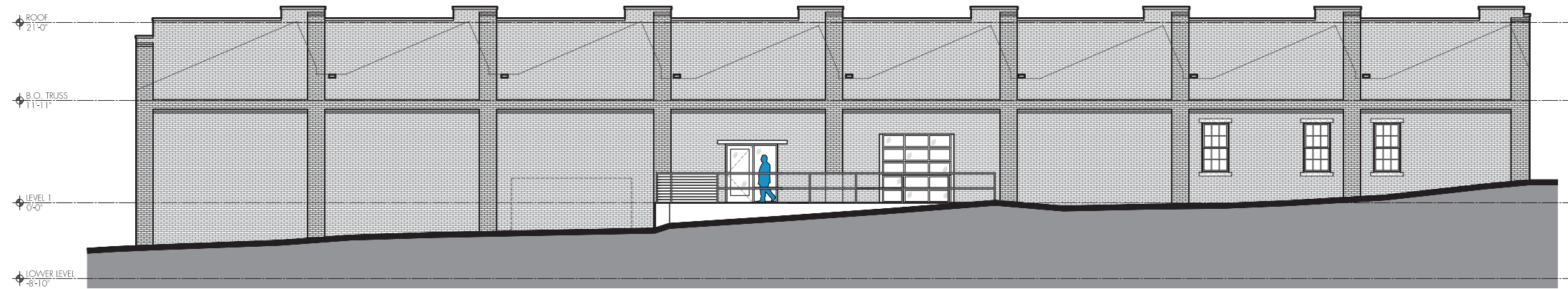
NORTH ELEVATION

scale: 1/16" = 1'



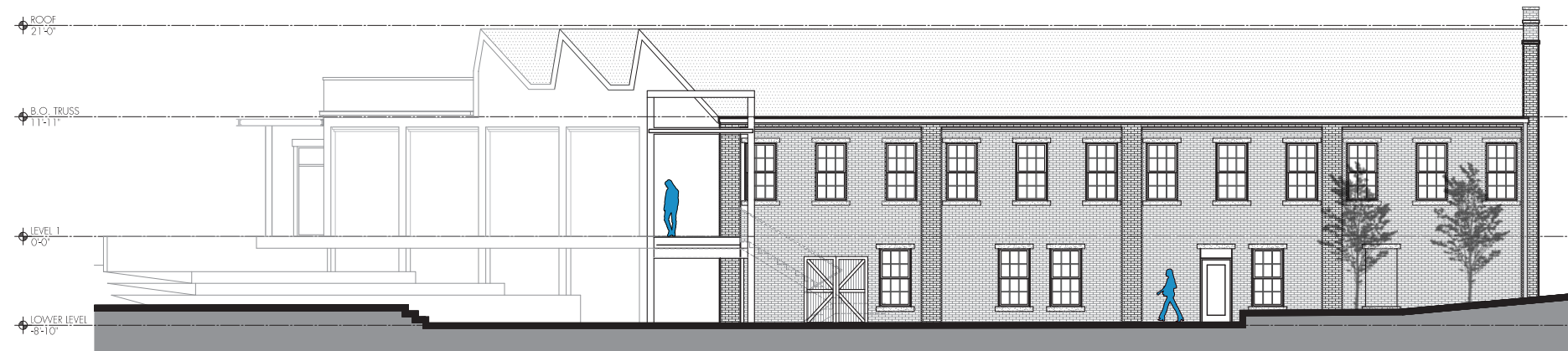
EAST ELEVATION

scale: 1/16" = 1'



SOUTH ELEVATION

scale: 1/16" = 1'

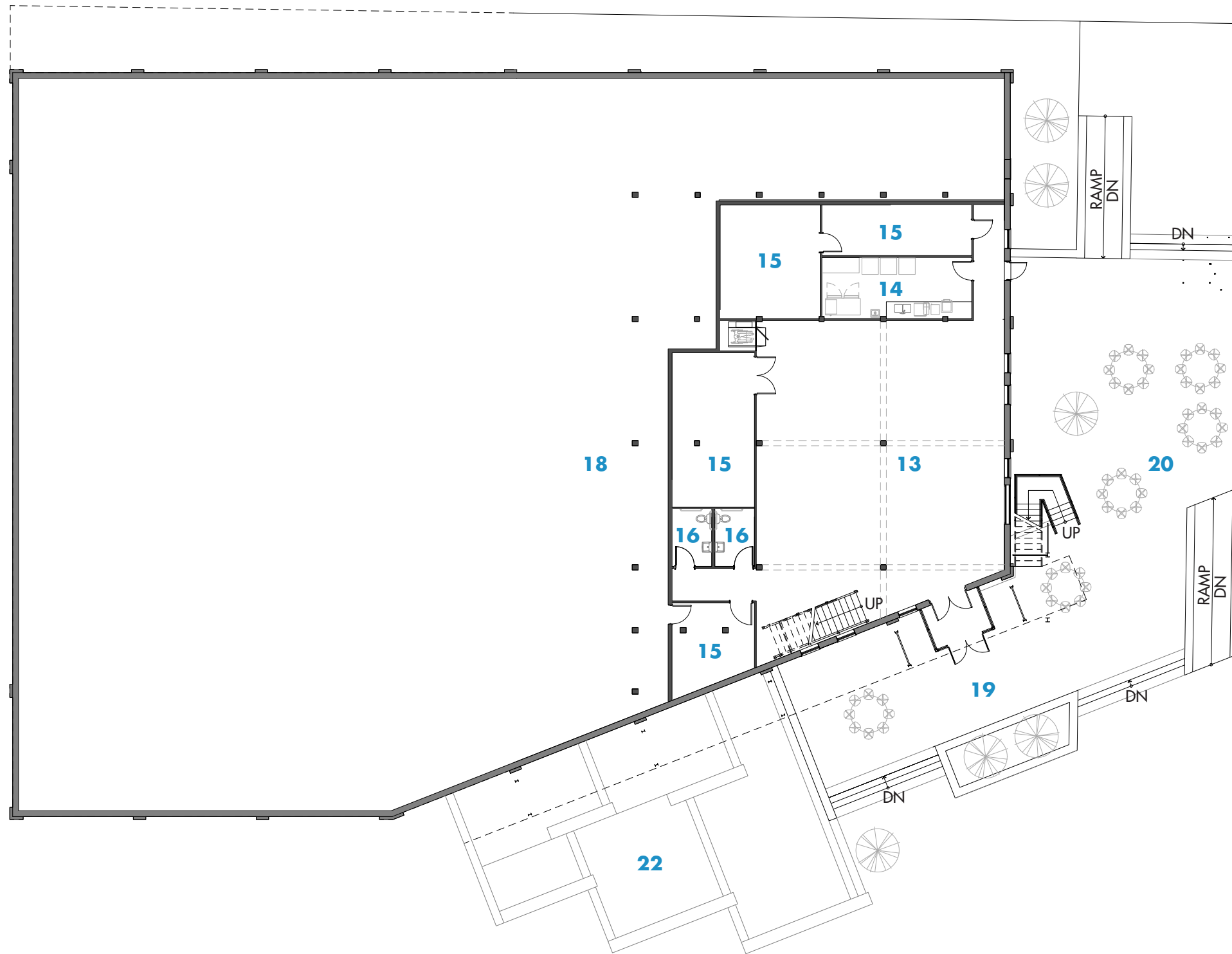




LEVEL 1 PLAN

scale: 1/16" = 1' ↻

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|----|----------------|----|----------------------|
| 1 | RECEPTION | 12 | MOTHER'S RM |
| 2 | CLASSROOM | 13 | EVENT SPACE |
| 3 | MEETING | 14 | CATERING |
| 4 | STUDIO | 15 | STORAGE/MECH. |
| 5 | PODCAST STUDIO | 16 | RESTROOM |
| 6 | OPEN WORK | 17 | OPEN TO BELOW |
| 7 | DEDICATED WORK | 18 | CRAWLSPACE |
| 8 | COLLABORATION | 19 | ENTRY PLAZA |
| 9 | PHONE | 20 | EVENT PLAZA |
| 10 | CAFE | 21 | RAISED WALKWAY |
| 11 | BIKE | 22 | TERRACED LANDSCAPING |



LOWER LEVEL PLAN

scale: 1/16" = 1' ↻

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|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 RECEPTION | 12 MOTHER'S RM |
| 2 CLASSROOM | 13 EVENT SPACE |
| 3 MEETING | 14 CATERING |
| 4 STUDIO | 15 STORAGE/MECH. |
| 5 PODCAST STUDIO | 16 RESTROOM |
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OPEN WORK - BOOTHS

THE MILL | 12









BRANDING INTEGRATION

The Mill engaged local graphic designers Armin Vit and Bryony Gomez-Palacio of UnderConsideration, LLC to develop a brand identity for the project. Working from the construction drawings, they took inspiration in the form of the iconic sawtooth roof. The sawtooth not only reflects the structure but gives a nod to the original use of the building - saws cutting wood.

Armin and Bryony created a comprehensive system of graphics and developed a typeface which complements the simplicity of the sawtooth mark. In collaboration with them, the brand design is integrated back into project through signage and a commissioned mobile reception desk built by Nick Allman Design + Fabrication.

