



2025 AIA INDIANA AWARDS SUBMISSION
PATACHOU AT NICKEL PLATE

Category: New Construction (<\$5M)

Type: Hospitality

Address: 8654 E 116th St, Fishers, IN 46038

Substantial Completion: 12/13/2024

ARCHITECT’S STATEMENT

Exploding with population growth, the community of Fishers has been thoughtful and intentional in cultivating their downtown Nickel Plate District into a well-recognized, mixed-use area with unique, cultural identity—earning the distinction of becoming an official Indiana Cultural District.

The opportunity to bring Café Patachou to Fishers represented more than geographic expansion of an established, beloved restaurant—it was a chance to further activate a small, yet prime property at the nexus of the Nickel Plate Trail, the main street thoroughfare, and surrounding multi-family housing.

A key part of the City’s and numerous stakeholders’ efforts was a master vision and plan for transforming an abandoned rail line that ran through the district into an activated linear park named ‘The Nickel Plate Trail’ for residents and visitors to enjoy year-round. This project’s location, while small in footprint, was enormous in potential to activate a critical ‘node’ in the district.

The original wood-framed structure on the site which housed an old bar and grill presented numerous issues which limited its ability to best serve patrons inside the building and restricted optimal pedestrian engagement around it. In a desire to preserve and improve its function as a local dining meet-up, a developer engaged our team to create a new, long-lasting structure designed specifically to draw people in and around the area.

Our team was next engaged by nationally recognized restaurateur, Martha Hoover, to translate her Café Patachou concept into Fishers’ specific community context. As a six-time James Beard Foundation semifinalist, Hoover’s brand represents elevated casual dining that feels both sophisticated and welcoming—a delicate balance that required architectural translation. The building site presented unique opportunities with its high visibility and community presence, demanding a design that could serve as both a neighborhood destination and a brand ambassador.

The project faced several critical design challenges. The building’s exposure on four public sides created complex space planning requirements, as back-of-house operations needed strategic placement away from public views while maintaining operational efficiency. The compact urban footprint demanded maximum spatial efficiency to achieve the client’s primary goal: accommodating the greatest number of patrons while optimizing back-of-house workflow.

The site’s trapezoidal shape was a significant, inherent constraint. The design needed to solve for maximizing both occupancy capacity and circulation within and around

the building. Additionally, busy vehicle traffic along the primary, five-lane street into downtown and the adjacent trail traffic were challenges the design needed to address. The design also needed to establish Café Patachou’s distinctive brand presence within a competitive suburban restaurant market while honoring the architectural character established at the original location.

Finally, mid-design process budget reductions required creative cost saving strategies that would still meet brand and project goals.

SPACE OPTIMIZATION

The architectural solution strategically organizes the compact, 3,000 sf footprint through thoughtful space planning that balances public and service functions and accommodates maximum guest capacity without sacrificing the intimate dining experience essential to the Café Patachou brand.

A FOUR-SIDED INVITATION

The building’s four-sided exposure informed a design approach that creates a transparent presence with an invitational posture for patrons and passersby no matter the side. A variety of brick colors, shapes, textures, and patterns are used to create a dynamic façade and visual interest throughout the interior and the exterior. The rounded brick corner softens the edge between the sidewalk and outdoor seating area along the trail, celebrating the site’s distinguished shape.

An expansive canopy supported by round steel columns and glulam timber beams form the restaurant’s ‘front-porch’, offering a formal welcome to its guests. It exudes a casual, upscale vibe and functional protection from weather elements. Adding dining vignettes under the canopy increased its seating capacity and placing it next to the plaza creates further opportunities for engagement with community events.

RESTRAINED DRAMA

Once inside the restaurant, the design’s signature “Dried Thyme” color palette of calming green-blue tones and floral wallcovering crafts a dramatic backdrop of fantasy and whimsy. A plethora of glazing with oversized window shears illuminate the interior dining space with a sense of sophisticated freshness. Material transitions from exterior to interior create continuous spatial flow. The coffee bar and banquettes continue the continuity and mimic the exterior with its softened

corners and clean lines. Carefully proportioned casework pays homage to the original Meridian-Kessler location while feeling timeless, yet modern. An oversized, four-sided central banquette upholstered in a luxurious bouclé fabric organizes circulation and offers a focal point for the communal dining experience.

INTEGRATED COMFORT

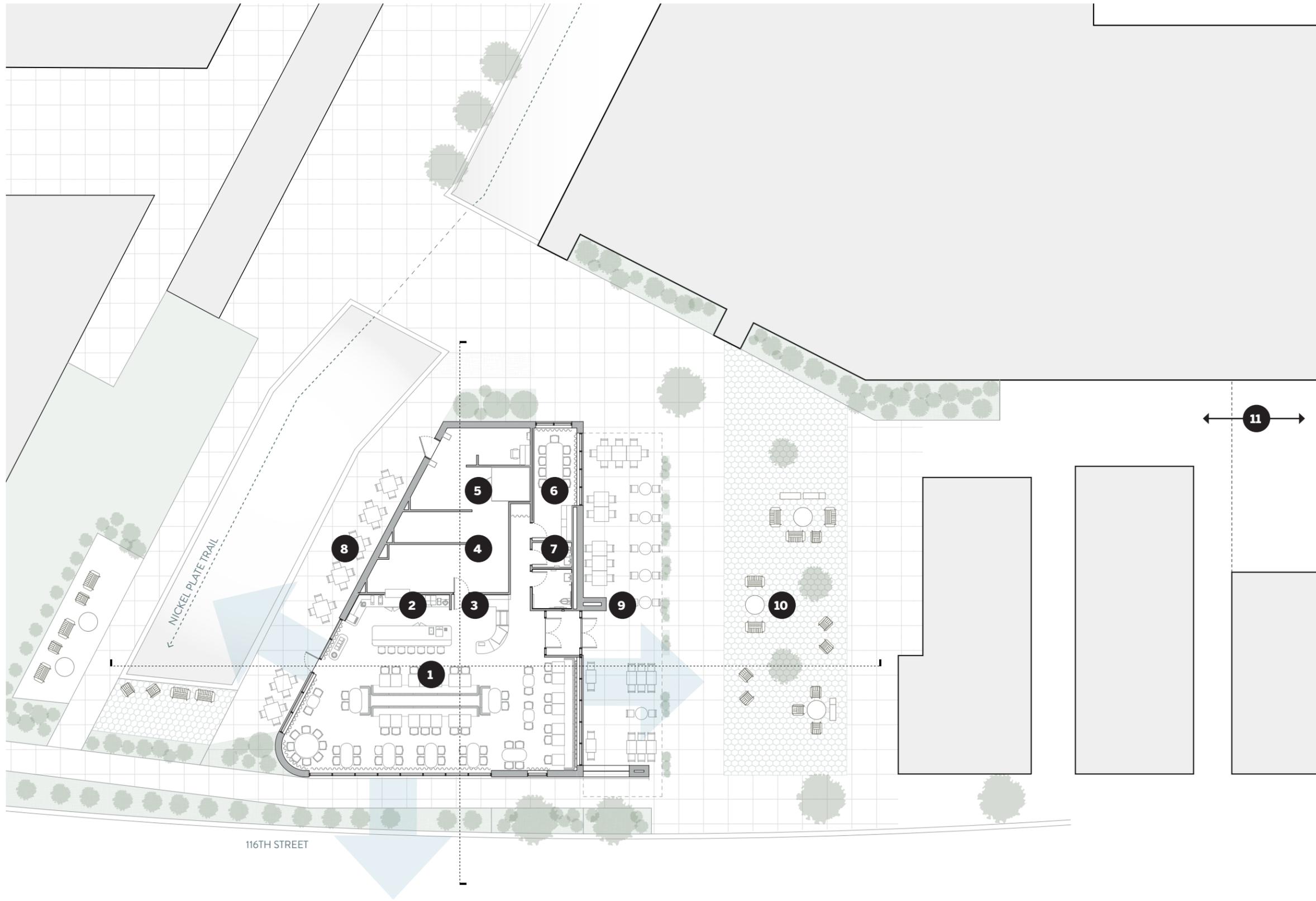
Integrated building systems support the hospitality experience with carefully planned lighting for precise dining ambiance. Comprehensive audio systems that permeate indoor, outdoor, and service spaces to ensure acoustic comfort amidst the lively social atmosphere and the adjacent street noise.

The holistic design creates a distinctive architectural presence; one that feels both sophisticated and approachable, embodying the Patachou brand’s philosophy and one that delivers a new destination for people to gather and socialize. The project acts as an intentional connective node and amplifies the growing vibrancy of the Nickel Plate Cultural District.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

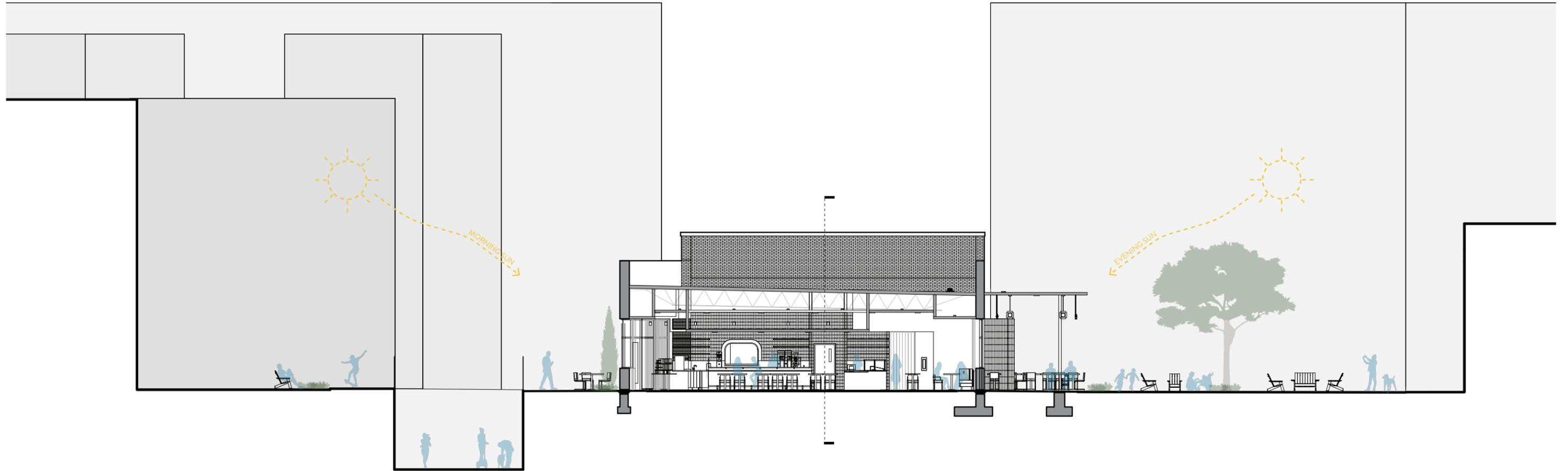
RESILIENT + CONTEXT-SENSITIVE

The design created a new structure with contextual sensitivity and longevity in mind. In both scale and materials, the building nods to its adjacent historic buildings, while infusing an additional timeless character into the downtown landscape. The new site design responds to its recent shift in function from rail to trail by offering the district’s visitors a place to meander, gather, and linger. The building’s shape, honest palette of masonry, wood, and glass, and careful detailing all inform a new empathetic pedestrian experience.

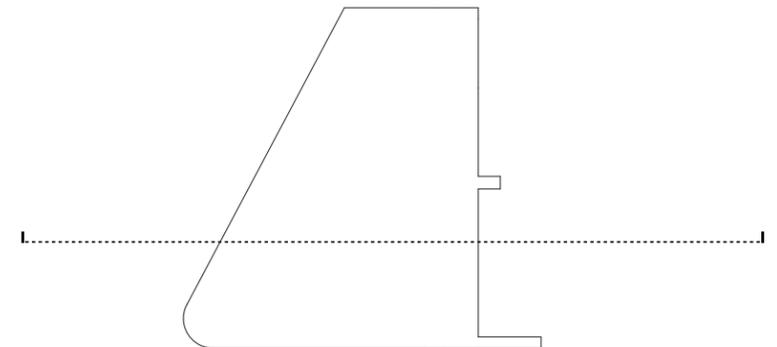


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- 1 Main Dining Room
- 2 Coffee Bar
- 3 Host Stand / POS
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Prep
- 6 Private Dining Room
- 7 Restrooms
- 8 Open Patio
- 9 Covered Patio
- 10 Plaza
- 11 Vehicular Breezeway



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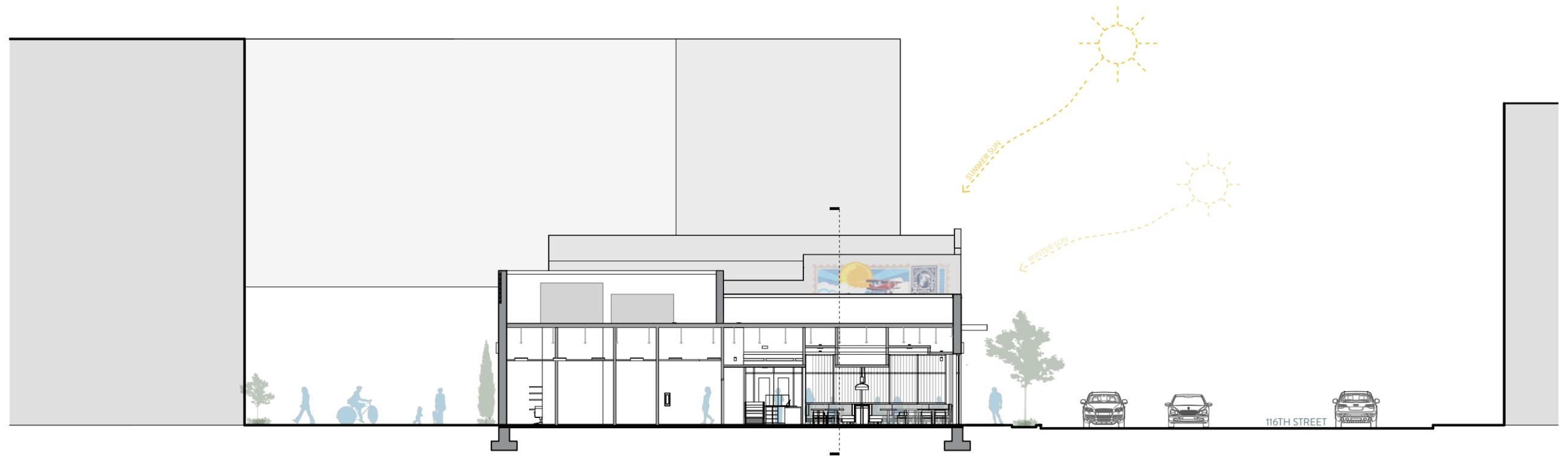


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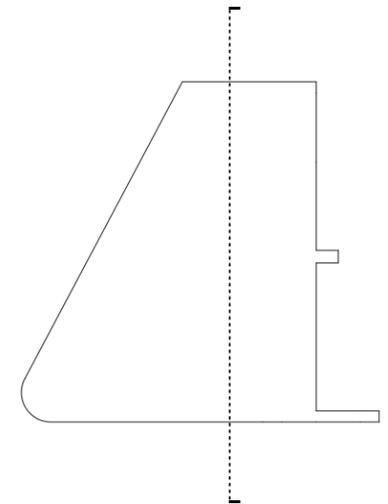
Patatcha
GREAT WINE
CRAFT BEER

Patatcha

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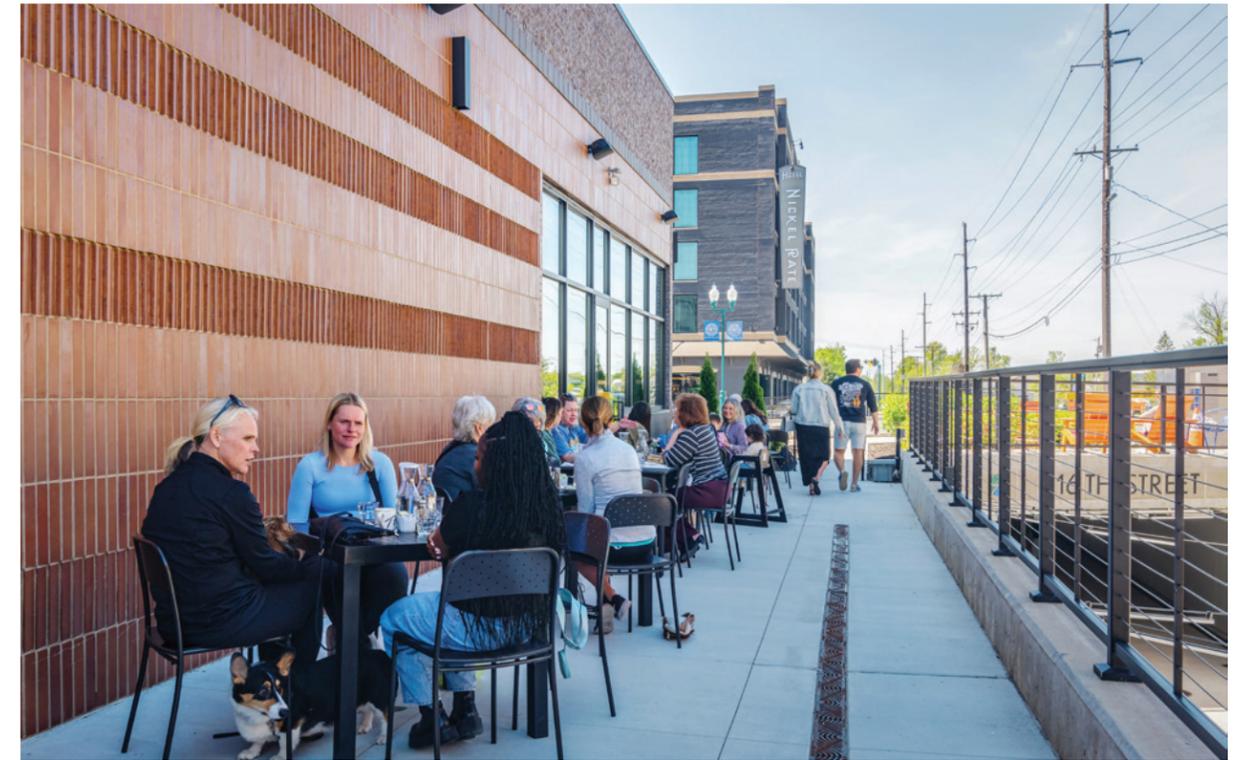


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NICKEL PLATE STATION

Menu
BREAKFAST
LUNCH
COFFEE
PASTRIES



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GATE
Patashan



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