



RIVERBANK DISCOVERY CENTER

PROJECT BRIEF



CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY CENTER

The task for this project is to design a nature center on a newly-rezoned riverside property in the Lower Price Hill neighborhood in Cincinnati. The new project is to be an educational destination and an opportunity for exposure to nature for children ages K-8 who live in the city, and may not have the same access to nature that more suburban or rural children have. Currently, access to the site is very limited. It is located beyond flood walls and train tracks, and is covered in dense brush and new forest.

PRECEDENTS



THE WOODS

I drew a great deal of inspiration for this project from “The Woods” at the Duke Energy Children’s Museum in Cincinnati. The Woods is a large playscape modeled to look like an Ohio forest. While its primary goal is play, children find opportunities to learn throughout the space in a variety of interactive ways.



ST. FRANCIS SERAPH

Throughout the semester, we had an immersive opportunity to learn more about the way children think and the ways in which they have fun. We conducted an after school program focused on design for the students of St. Francis Seraph school. We were each paired with one or two students, and worked to design a building for a “Kids City.” Some of the projects produced included an underwater hotel, a gymnastics stadium, and a video game store.

CONCEPT



EBB AND FLOW

Inspired by the riverfront site, I chose a concept that describes the tides. Though one typically associates tidal ebb and flow with oceans, most large bodies of water are subject to tidal behavior. In my design, this concept manifests itself in the ebb and flow of highly active spaces (flow) and less active spaces (ebb) as well as in the spaces in which people move and rest throughout the building.

THE CENTER

OUTDOOR MINI-THEATER
A small stage is surrounded by several benches in a mini-theater outdoors.

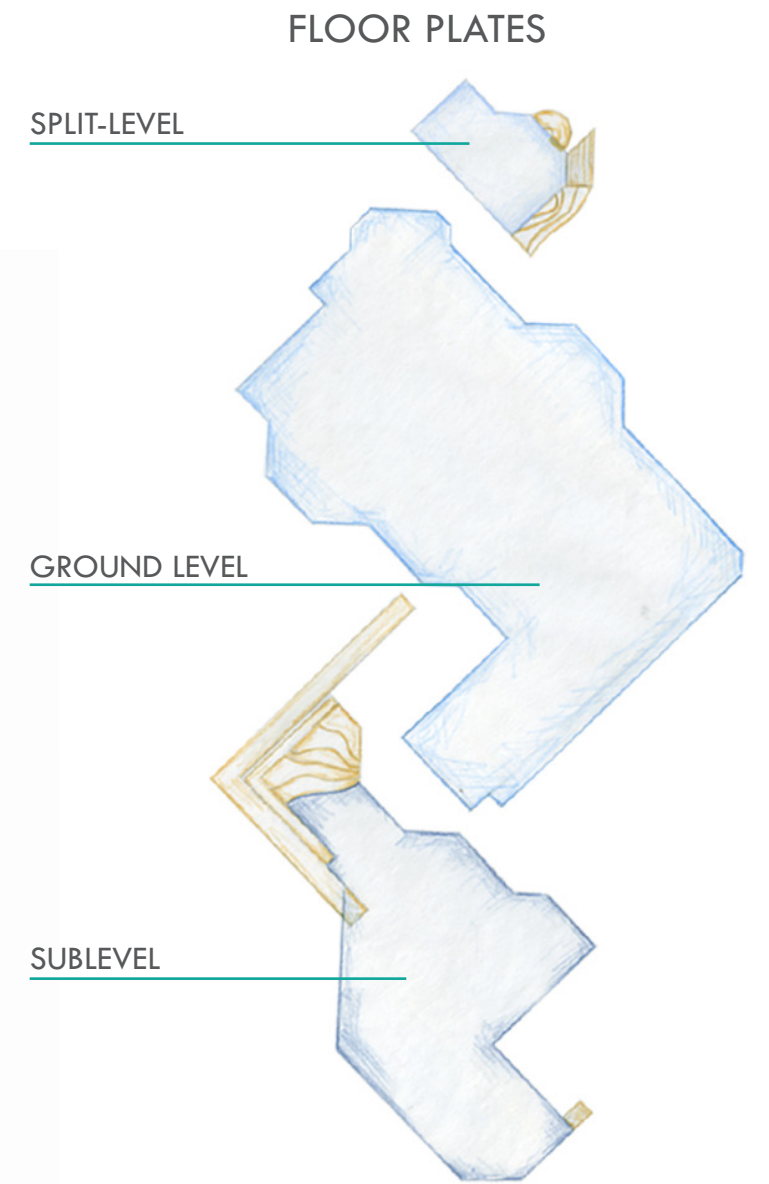
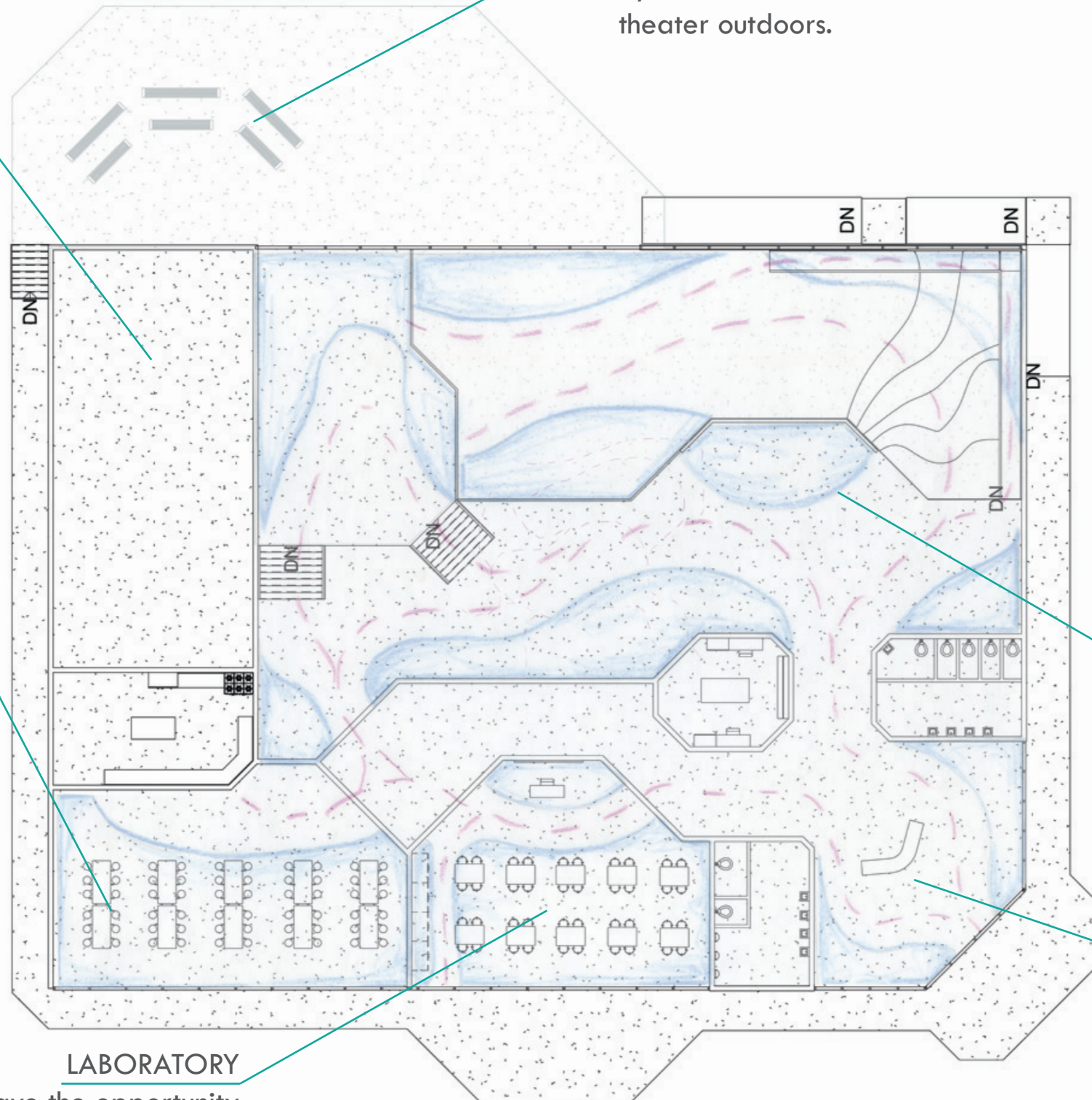
STORAGE
A large storage space is provided for exhibit materials and other miscellaneous items.

MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
A multi-purpose room, complete with small industrial kitchen allows for meals to be prepared and served within the building.

LABORATORY
Students will have the opportunity to learn through scientific experimentation in a small laboratory.

EXHIBIT ROOM
Children will have the opportunity to learn and play in a multi-level, interactive exhibit space.

RECEPTION
A staff member will greet students during the week and miscellaneous guests during weekend hours.



FIELD TRIP TO RIVERBANK

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM

Students will arrive on the site early in the morning, shortly after their school day would typically start. Field trips may be reserved during the week, but the Center will not be available for reservation during the weekends, when it will be open to the public.



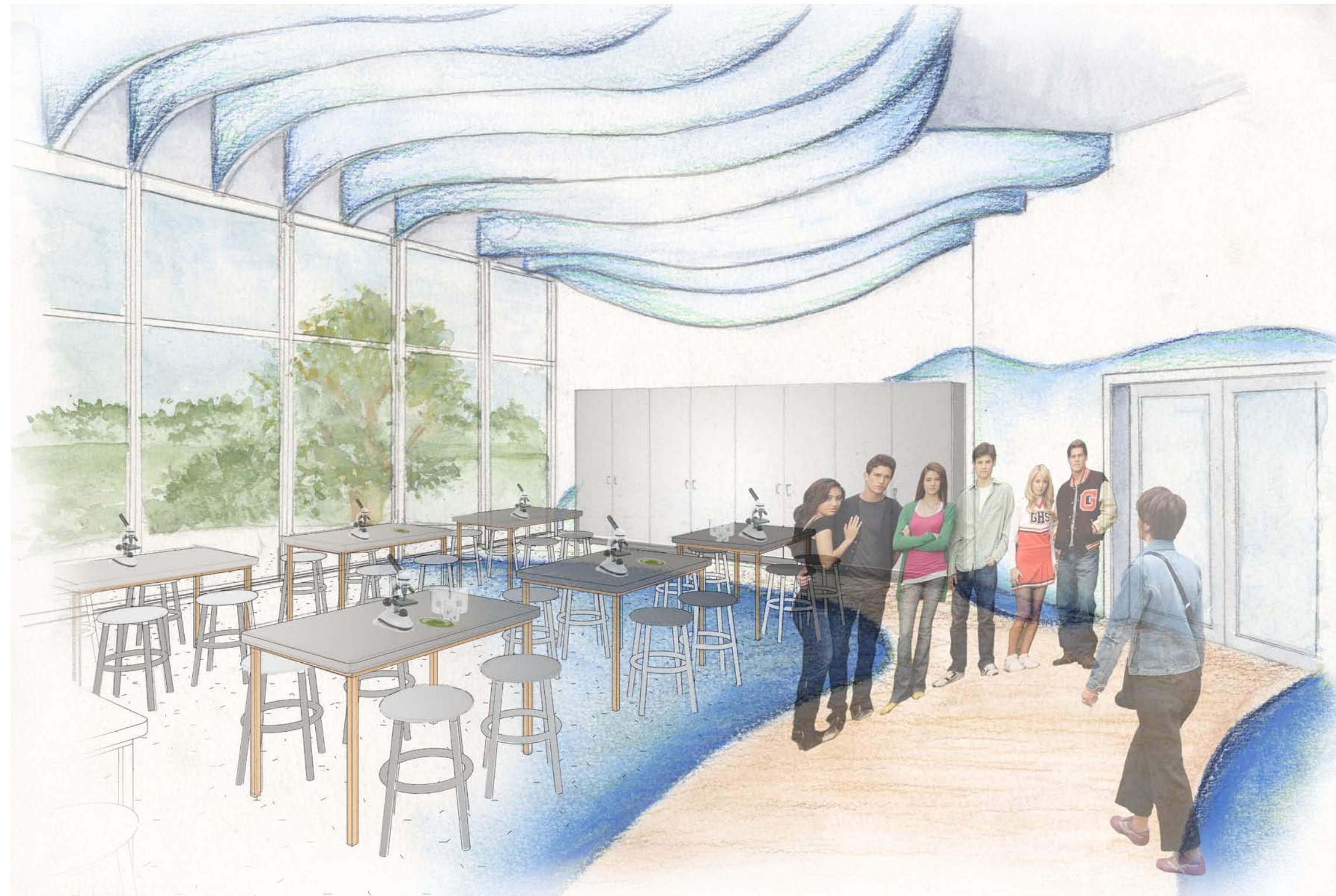
RECEPTION



9:30 - 9:45

Students will receive a short welcome from a staff member of Riverbank, detailing the experiences to come. A glimpse of the exhibit space can be seen as the students make their way to the laboratory for their next activities.

THE LAB



9:45 AM - 11:30 AM

In the laboratory, students will have the opportunity to learn about river ecology through experimentation from a guest instructor. Students will perform experiments according to their grade level.

LUNCH



11:30 AM - 12:15 PM

Students will have lunch in the multi-purpose room, which is adjacent to its own kitchen. A community garden next to the Center will provide fresh, local food for the kitchen.

EXHIBIT EXPLORATION



12:15 PM - 1:15 PM

Students will be given a scavenger hunt which they will fill in with information gathered from the exhibit space. A greater degree of independence can be experienced by the children in this more open environment.

THE NEXT STEP

A SITE PLAN

I think the next step in this project, should it continue, is to develop a site plan. This proposed plan includes an access road that goes all the way around the site, walking paths throughout the site and down to the river and creek, a community garden for growing food to supply both the kitchen and the community members with fresh produce, and a scenic pond.

