

Marie H. Reed Community Learning Center

Washington, DC :: Institutional Architecture

The transformation of the Marie H. Reed Community Learning Center in Washington, DC, reflects a vibrant celebration of education, wellness, diversity, globalism, and community.

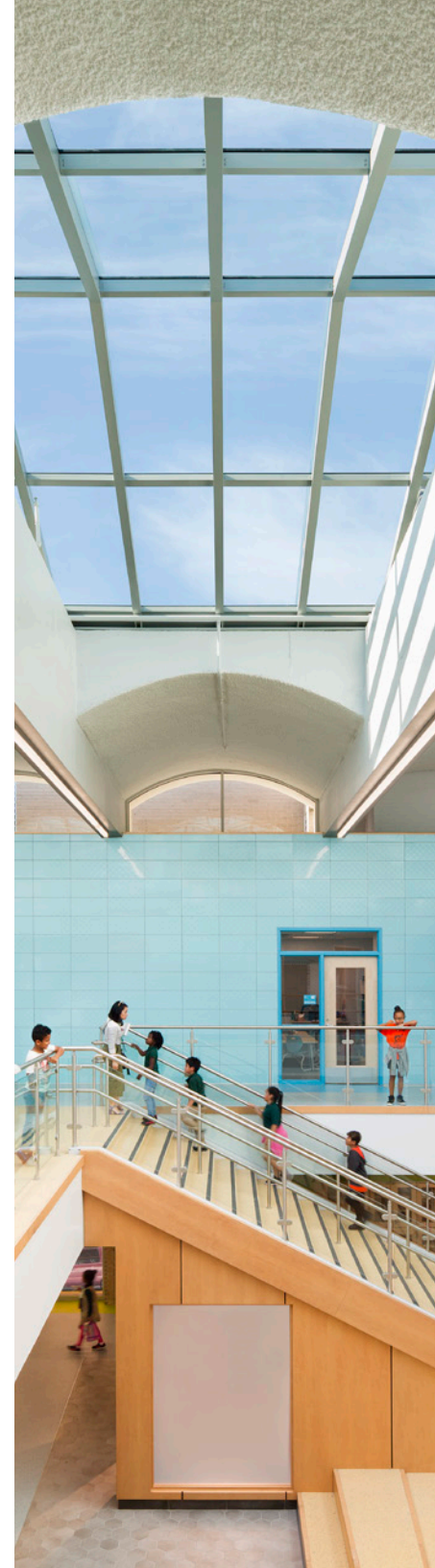
Set in the heart of the Adams Morgan neighborhood, the Center's history dates to the late 1960s when planning began for an elementary school that would embrace desegregation and serve as a hub for its multicultural community. Originally opened in 1977, the Brutalist building was designed as an inwardly-focused, open-plan concept school—an educational approach that was popular in the 1970s. In addition to the elementary school, the Center accommodates outposts of several community organizations, including the DC Department of Parks and Recreation, Community of Hope, Children's National Medical Center, and the United Planning Organization, which provide recreation facilities, public health clinics, and an infant care center. Prior to the renovation, minimal changes had been made in the 50 years since the building's opening, and operations within the open-plan space presented a wide range of difficulties for the school and its community partners.

Every space within the facility has been transformed through an ambitious modernization, which carefully addressed the needs of both the school and the wider community. A robust participatory design process facilitated collaboration among a broad stakeholder group including teachers, parents, building staff, and neighbors. The design team met with the stakeholders on a monthly basis over the span of two years and together hosted a series of workshops, presentations, and field trips. In tandem with the renovation, Marie Reed Elementary School students developed a history of the school; the student work will be displayed in the Legacy Walk, an exhibit area located adjacent to the school's main entry.

The Center promotes the development of global citizens with an emphasis on knowledge, character, and values. To elevate this mission, the renovation began by peeling away much of the imposing masonry facing 18th Street to create a more transparent, welcoming presence. Inside and out, the design facilitates gathering and interaction to engender a strong sense of community. The overall building organization was made safer and more efficient by defining a primary circulation spine that features important commons areas and stairways: an internal street and the Grand Commons are centrally located within the school, and a new cascading stair located along the west façade flows down to the lower level recreation areas.

At the upper level, classroom neighborhoods surround multiple central learning commons. A balance between the enclosed classrooms and the open common spaces resolves acoustical challenges and provides celebratory spaces for the school's assemblies, small gatherings, and self-directed exploration. Rich colors and patterns in the finishes, publicly commissioned artwork, multilingual signage, and engaging graphics all highlight the Center's heritage as a place for diversity and community spirit.

By embracing and transforming an aging building, the newly renovated Marie H. Reed Community Learning Center impresses on young minds valuable lessons of stewardship, global awareness, and neighborhood legacy.



an urban oasis
for a diverse community



Before





18th Street

East Wing

Internal Street

Bridge

Champlain Street

West Wing

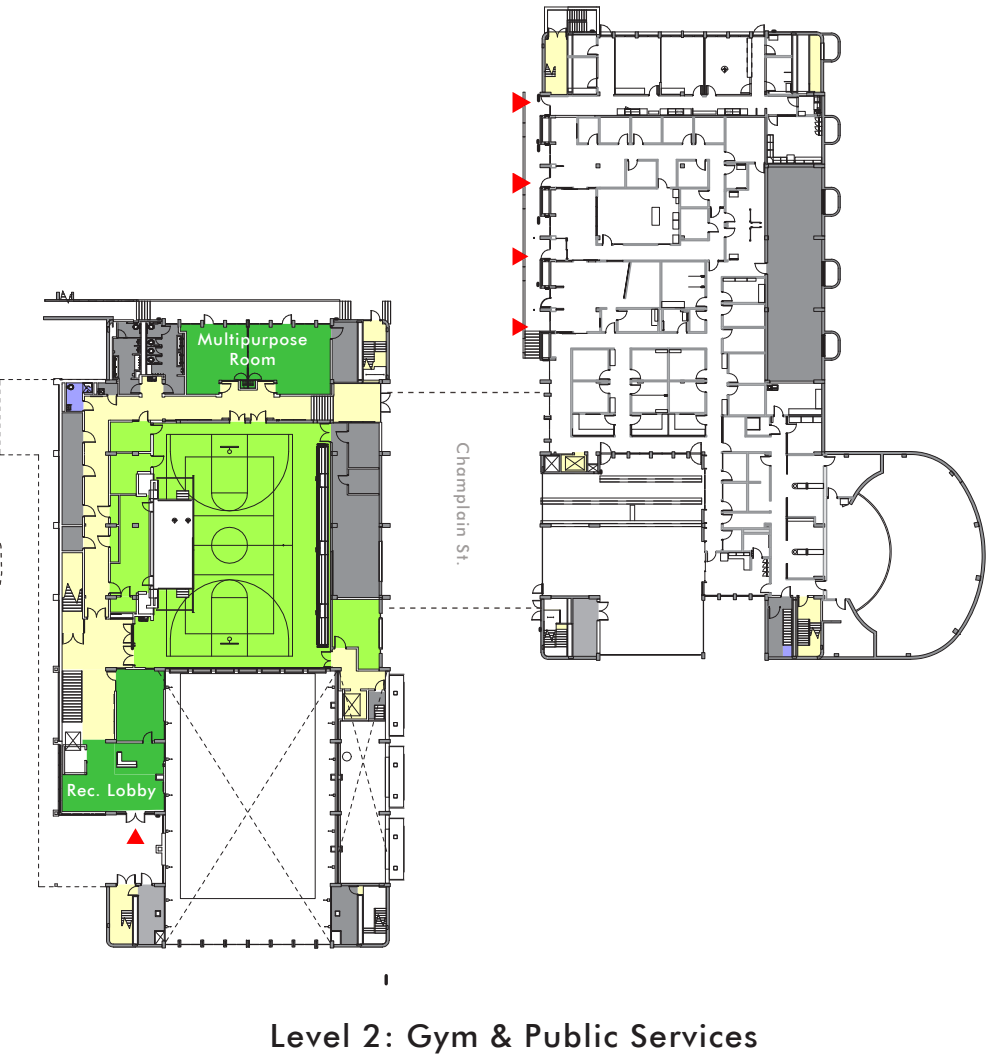
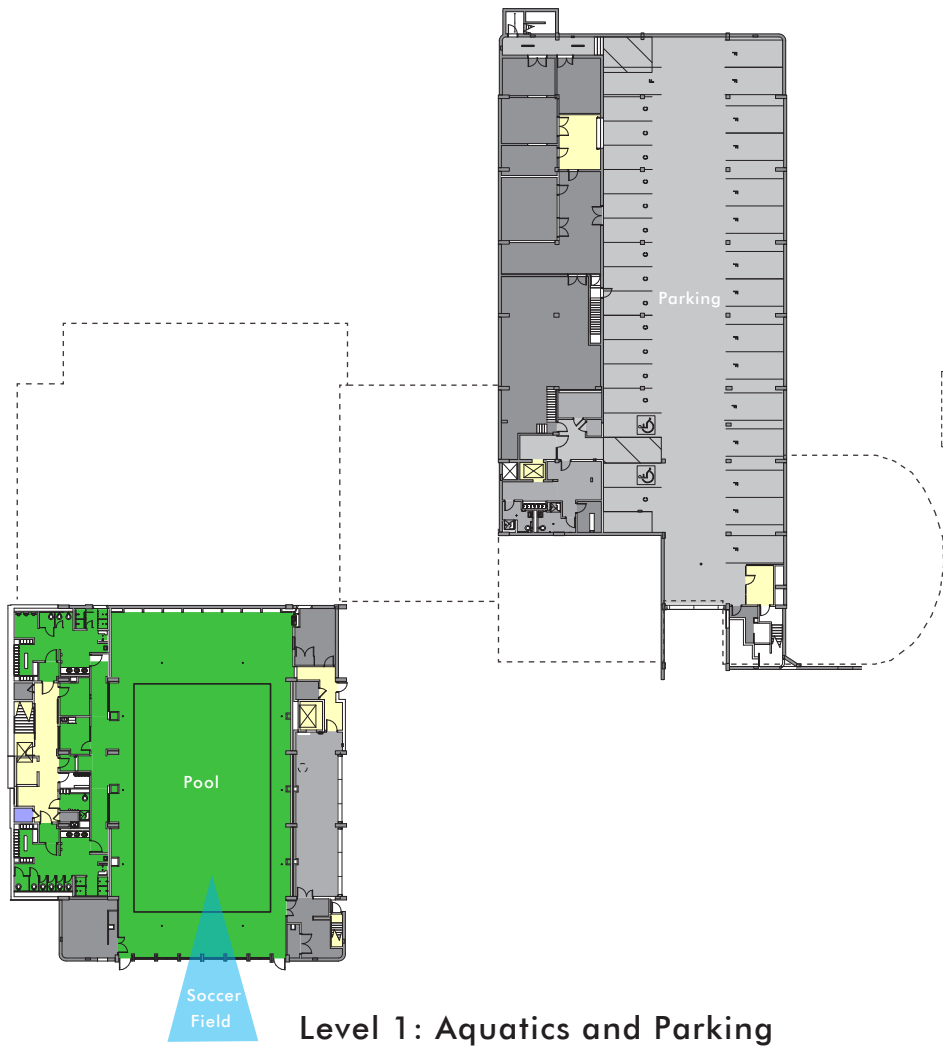
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|---|------------------------------------------|----|---------------------------|
| 1 | Entry to School | 8 | Basketball court |
| 2 | Entry to Rec Center | 9 | Handball court |
| 3 | Entry to Day Care & Health Clinic | 10 | Pool & soccer field plaza |
| 4 | Upper plaza and seating | 11 | Tennis court |
| 5 | Terraced bioretention & sculpture garden | 12 | Cistern |
| 6 | Interactive sculpture | 13 | Playground (Children) |
| 7 | Playground (Older Kids) | 14 | Edible Hill Garden |
| | | 15 | Outdoor Classroom |
| | | 16 | Student Gardens |



64' 32' 0' 64' 128'

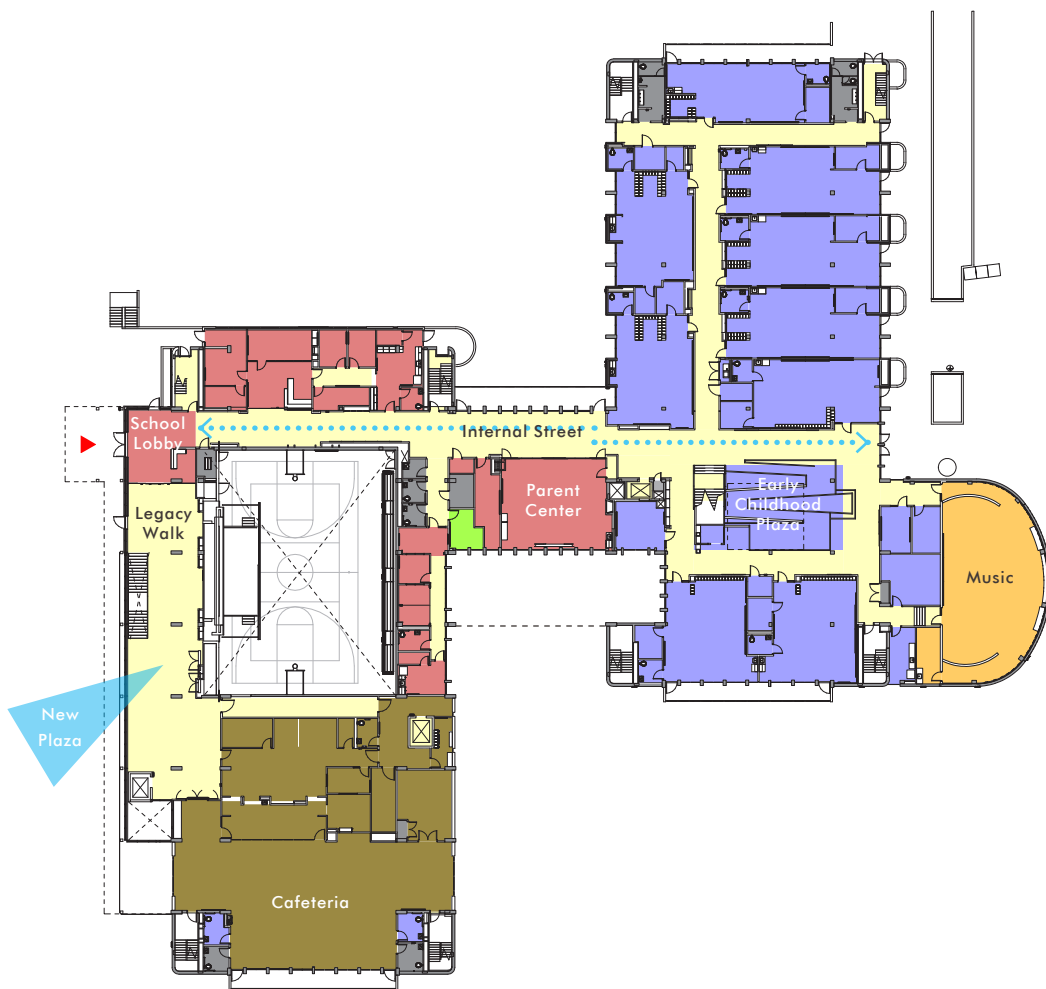
a **welcoming**
and **vibrant** entry experience



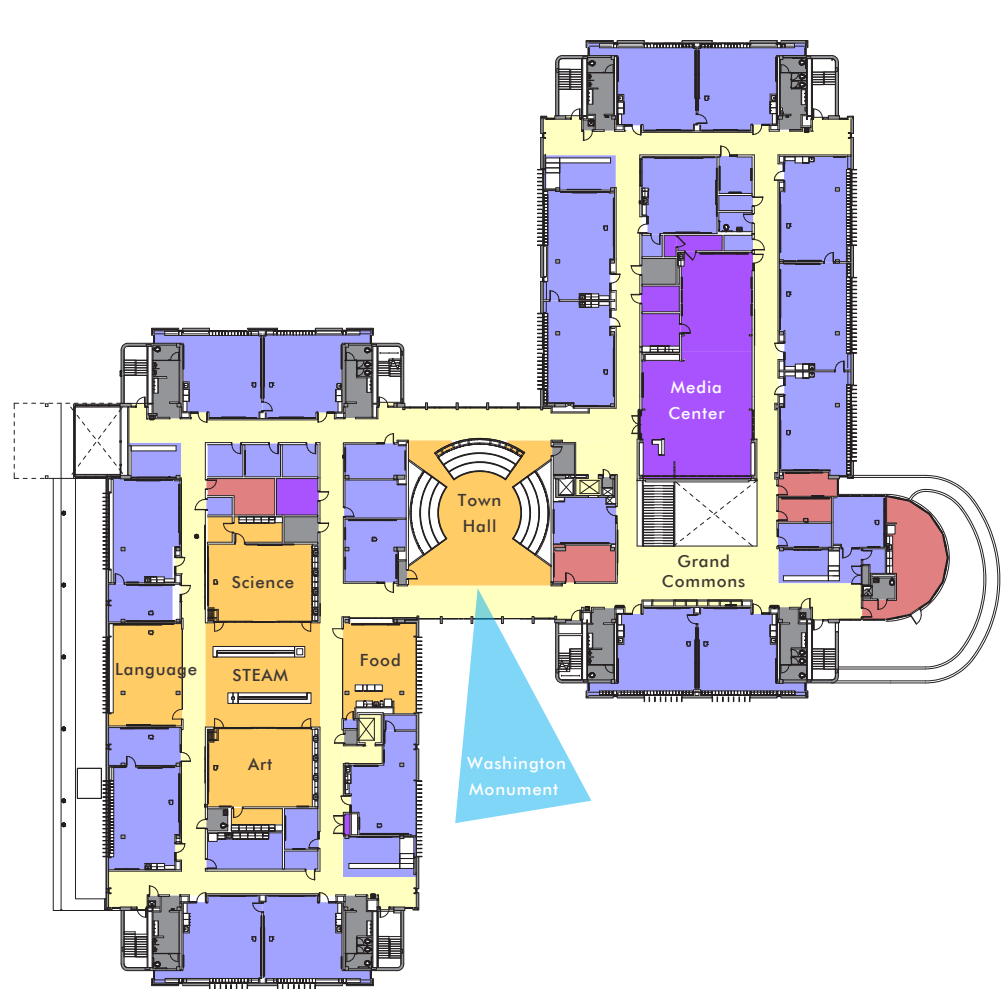


- Circulation
- Building Support
- Physical Education
- Aquatics Center
- Parking
- Public Services





Level 3: School Lower Level



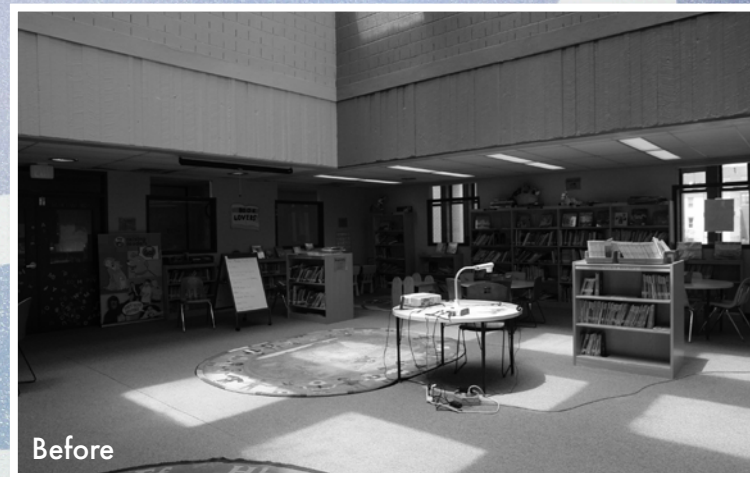
Level 4: School Upper Level



- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Circulation | Building Support | Food Service |
| Physical Education | Special Classrooms | Administration |
| Aquatics Center | Core Classrooms | |



performance and
play enliven learning

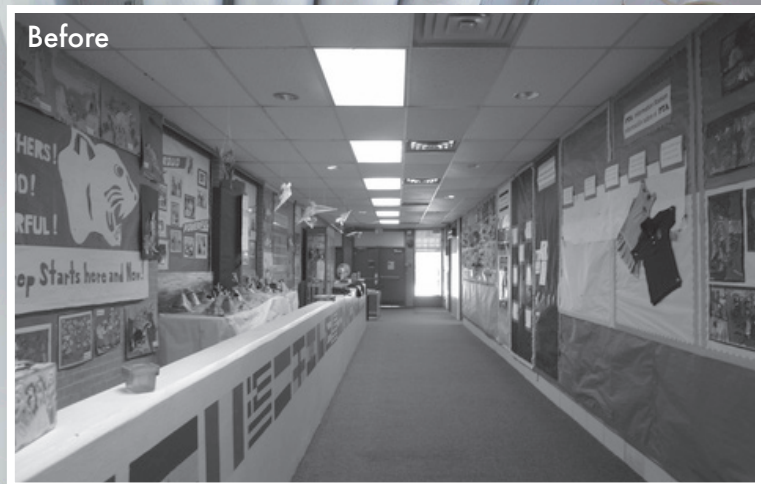


Before

flexible, naturally-lit, and colorful classrooms
encourage **creativity** and **success**



Before



placemaking, identity
and **culture** infuse hallways



Before

awe-inspiring and
cross-disciplinary common spaces

GOLD



TARGET

34%



WATER CONSERVATION

68%



STORMWATER BIO FILTRATION

90%



CLASSROOM DAYLIGHTING

52%



ENERGY REDUCTION

34%

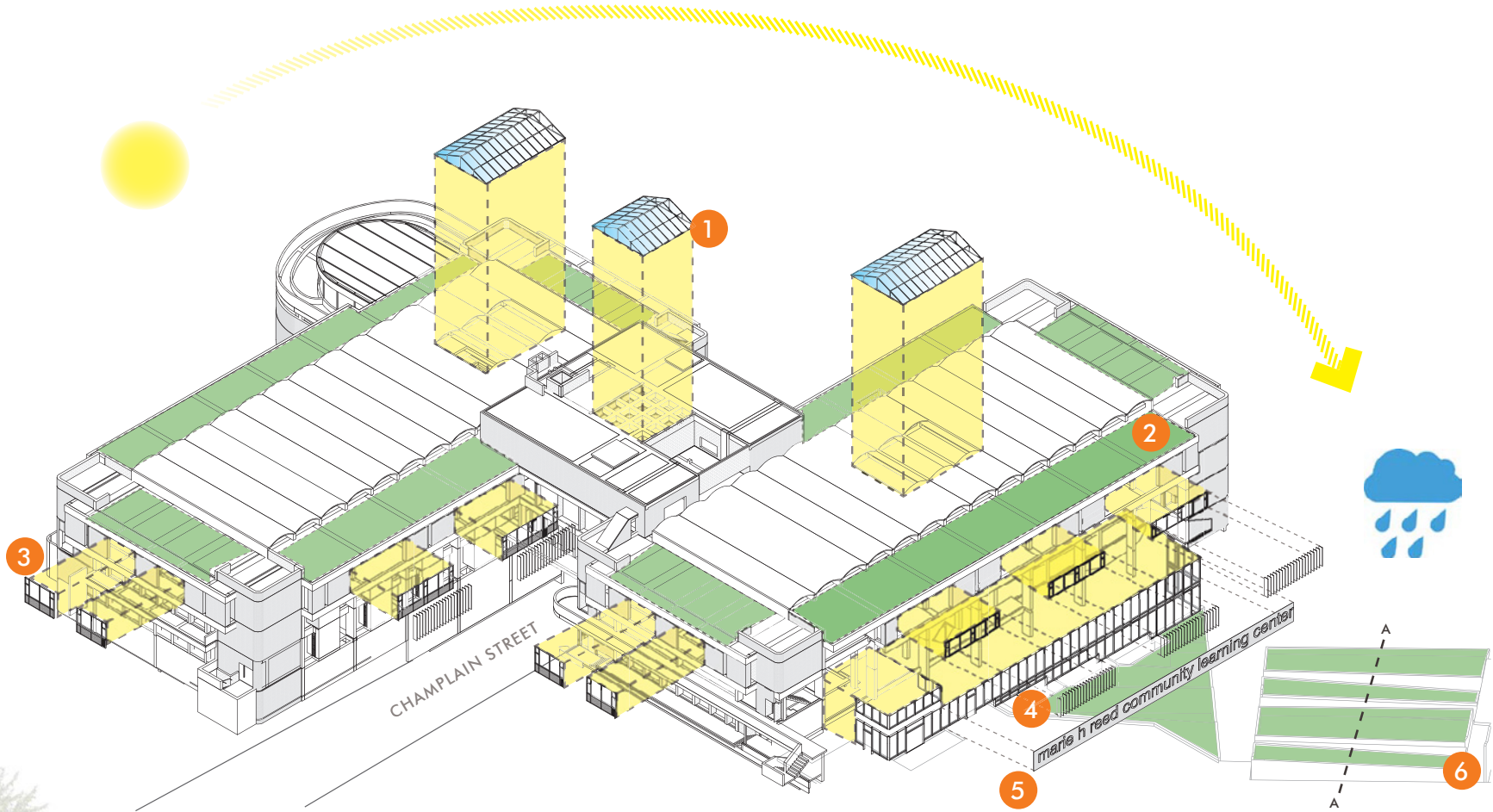


ENERGY COST SAVINGS

=

\$94,506

PROJECTED ANNUAL SAVINGS



- 1** Skylights with smart glass technology
- 2** Green Roof
- 3** New glazing replaces existing brick panels

- 4** Vertical fins on East/West facades
- 5** Metal scrim shading at new curtain wall
- 6** Stormwater Management bioretention areas

