

# American Porch Life

Social Worlds Beyond the Household

Work of the  
**University of Arkansas Community Design Center**  
an outreach center of the  
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UA

***The best part of this house is the  
veranda. But I would enlarge it. I want  
a veranda with a house attached!***

Rutherford B. Hayes  
19<sup>th</sup> President of the United States



President Rutherford B. Hayes and Lucy Webb Hayes at his Spiegel Grove estate in Fremont, Ohio, 1887





The 1963 March on Washington DC for Jobs and Freedom viewed from the Lincoln Memorial. The rally culminated with Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

# Frontiers of the Porch

Between **Canonical** and **Vernacular**  
Between **Collective** and **Individual**  
Between **Visibility** and **Invisibility**  
Between **Commerce** and **Community**

*'Home,' in England an intimate and emotionally-laden word, in America became almost interchangeable with 'house.' Here was both less privacy and more publicity. Americans lived in a new realm of uncertain boundaries, in an affable, communal world which, strictly speaking, was neither public nor private: a world of first names, open doors, front porches, and front lawns, and naturally too, of lunch counters, restaurants, and hotel lobbies.*

Daniel J. Boorstin  
*The Americans: The National Experience*

The porch was a deeply civilizing force in the development of American cities and institutions. Rather than simply see the porch as an element superadded to a house, it is more useful to consider its *liminality* and mutability in grasping the porch's true transformative agency. A "floating signifier" that absorbs more meaning than it emits, the porch intertwined new combinations of home and economy, not unlike the American urban grid. **Through various urban mutations associated with its own rescaling—monumentalization, urbanization, medicalization, frontiering, and placemaking—the porch animated new settlement processes across the U.S.** It galvanized new notions of hospitality and spirituality, convening and vacationing, even the electing of presidents. Likewise, the porch suggests compelling future imaginaries.

## Resilience

**Porches as instruments of resilience**

## Urbanism

**Porches and how we gather**

## Symbols and Monuments

**Porches and how we present ourselves**

## Dwelling

**Porches and the way we live**



credits and sources



## Wither the Porch: A Tool of Nostalgia or Transformation?

The porch has become associated with “folk politics” and its nostalgia for a time when porches animated cultural, social, and material transformations in everyday life. **Porches are now what historian Kristin Ross, quoting cultural theorist Raymond Williams, calls “residual” forces: “effectively formed in the past, but . . . still active in the cultural process.”** Is there a consequential future for the porch?

A form of the collective realm, the porch holds the key to forging the cooperative relationships necessary to build resilient communities. Resilient communities equip us to grow back stronger from the disequilibrium associated with disaster, economic precarity, deficits in youth and elder care, loneliness, and ecological deprivation.

**Ross argues that the *anachronistic*—like the seemingly outdated porch—has a history of metamorphizing into powerful regenerative forms. This is particularly relevant now, as everyday life and *home*—more than the *workplace*—is today’s key site of social change.**

**Nineteenth-century resort life was public in every way. Yet, the vacation’s cosmopolitan ethos, fulfilled through the urban porch, evolved into a private affair by the 1880s.**

*The shift to Newport by some New Yorkers reflected a change in social values from taking a vacation that was publicly oriented to one that was completely private. Among the rich, to see and be seen in public was no longer the fashion, so they avoided the hotels in favor of summer homes, where they could entertain their exclusive circle of friends with a staff and amenities comparable to those of a hotel.*

Theodore Corbett  
*The Making of American Resorts: Saratoga Springs, Ballston Spa, Lake George*

**The “sitting porch” widespread on Southern houses expressed the influence of the region’s warm and humid climate on pre-modern living and social habits. Did technology render the porch anachronistic in the twentieth century?**

*Americans did not consciously decide to abandon front porches in the 1950s, but that was what happened. Over the past three decades streets had been widened and congested with smelly, noisy automobiles, so residents across the country went inside for television and climate control, and they retreated to the backyard patio for casual social gatherings.*

Richard L. Perry  
The Front Porch as Stage and Symbol in the Deep South

**An obsession with privacy paralleled the retreat from the public.**

*In this transition from porch to patio, there is an irony. Nineteenth-century families were expected to be public and fought to achieve their privacy. Some of the 19th-century sense of community was achieved because of this expectation for forms of social interaction that the porch facilitated. Twentieth-century men and women have achieved a high degree of privacy in the patio, deck, or condominium balcony, but in so doing have lost daily touch with a sense of community.*

Richard H. Thomas  
From Porch to Patio

*In a microcosm, the forces that lead to the decline of the porch as a place of transition between the private and the public realm have eviscerated both those domains of their capacity to educate a citizenry for self-government. The porch—as an intermediate space, even a sphere of ‘civil society’—was the symbolic and practical place where we learned that there is not, strictly speaking, a total separation between the public and private worlds.*

Patrick J. Deneen  
A Republic of Front Porches



People in the Sun, Edward Hopper, 1960

*At the level of the individual, are the ‘mental habits’ encouraged by the automobile a source of indifference or even animus to porch life? Or are they a product of this indifference?*

*Straightforwardly: socialize the porch. Convert—democratically—private property to public, like the highways. Assemble publics to debate what can be called the ‘infrastructure question’, the question of what is to be shared in common and the responsibilities that this sharing entails.*

Reinhold Martin  
The Ends of Liberalism





# Resilience

Porches as instruments of resilience





Galleries [in Upper Guinea trading posts] also became a place of social elegance, evidenced by the wearing of one's best robes and kaftans while entertaining there. This legacy is, perhaps, remembered in the vernacular speech of Trinidad where the term 'gallerying' refers to dressing with style and individuality.

Jay D. Edwards  
Creolization Theory and the Odyssey of the Atlantic  
Linear Cottage

## Antecedents of the American Porch: A "Melting Pot" of Porch Traditions

### U.S. History is the Story of Migrations and Creolization

The *Columbian Exchange* following Christopher Columbus' 1492 voyage to the Americas was the single largest hemispheric transfer of cultural and biotic material in flora, fauna, and disease between Old and New Worlds. It also brought multiple vernacular traditions of home and porch to the United States. Porch traditions from Europe including Italian, Dutch, French, Greek, and Spanish influences, were *creolized* with typologies introduced from West Africa via the Caribbean, India through the British, and Native American and Pacific Island traditions already present in the U.S.

**Creolization of the porch between West Africa and North America, for example, transferred domestic hospitality of the home to new forms of village-based public hospitality and commerce.** As historian Jay Edwards argues, creolization—more than simple blending or hybridization—is wildly innovative, even generating unpredictability. "This capriciousness is revealed both in the ways in which elements from different cultures are continuously reassembled, and in the simultaneous reinterpretations established by different groups of users, usually Creoles."



Spanish Colonial Balconies, Santa Cruz, Canary Islands



French Colonial, Habitation Zévallos, Le Moule, Guadeloupe, 1873



Houses, Kumasi, Ghana, 1888



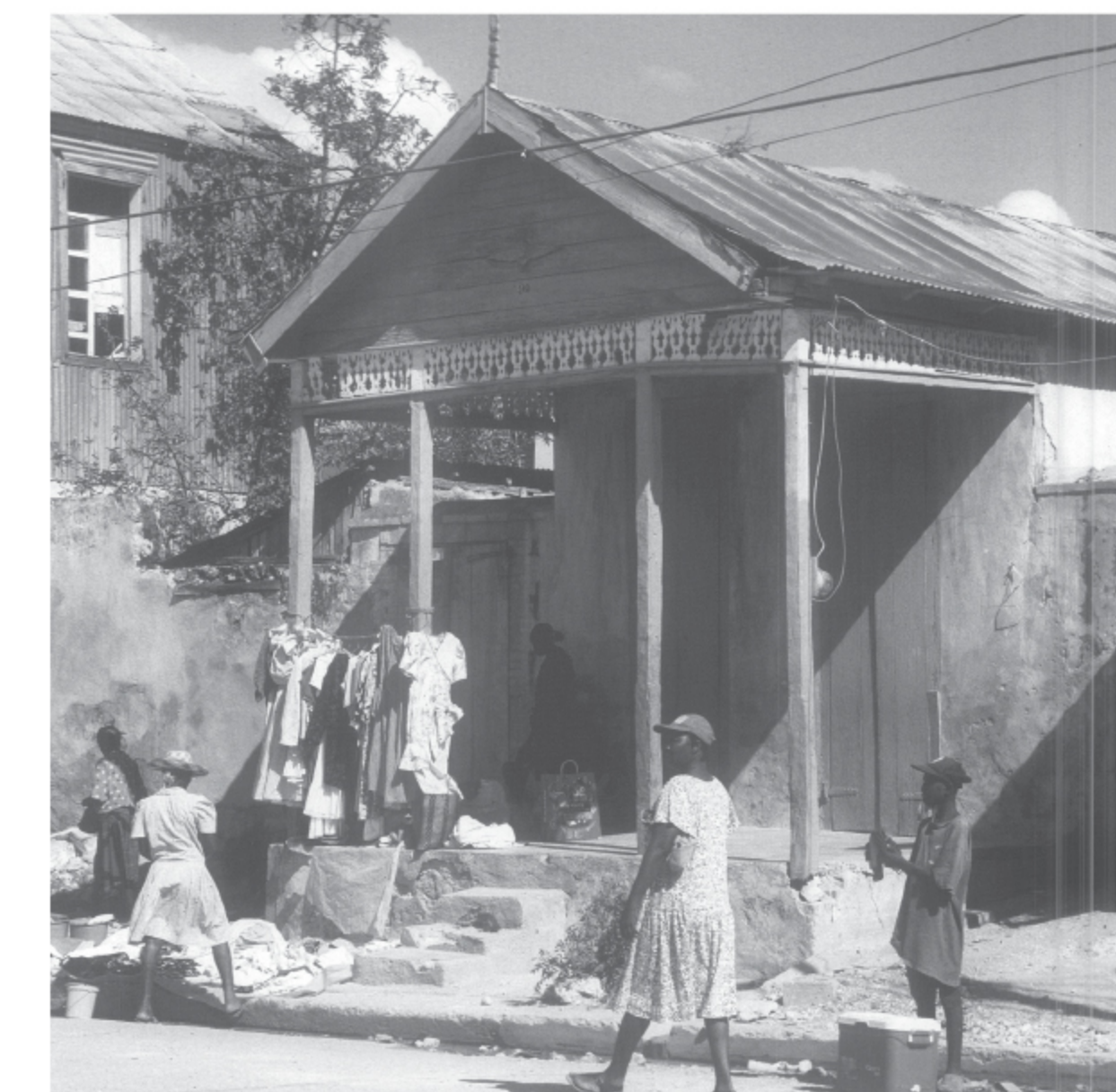
Fale Tele, Samoa, 1930



Stoa of Attalos, King Attalos II, Athens, Greece, 2nd century BC, reconstructed 1952



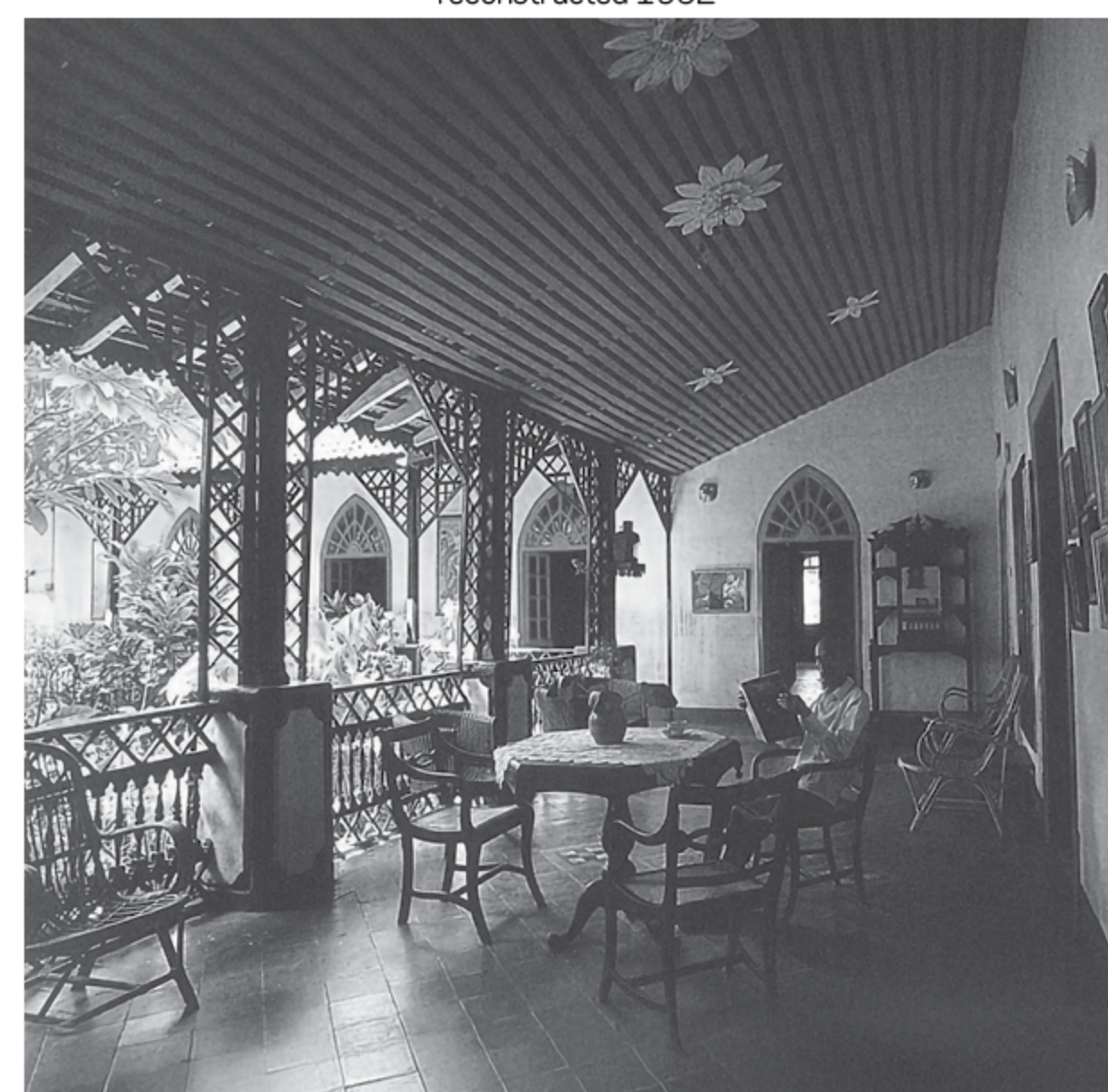
Portuguese Colonial Balconies, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau



West African Shotgun Porches, Haiti



The Old Town Hall of Amsterdam, Pieter Jansz, Netherlands, 1651



British Colonial Verandah, Goa, India



Indo-Saracenic, Mysore Palace, Henry Irwin, Mysore, India, 1897



Spanish Colonial, The Piazza at Havana, Dominic Serres, Havana, Cuba, 1762



Arcade of San Luca, Bologna, Italy, 1793



Villa Barbaro, Andrea Palladio, Maser, Italy, 1560



Spanish Colonial Portales, San Marcos, Mexico, 1898



French Colonial, Maison des Esclaves, Goree Island, Senegal, 1784



View of a Town, Jacob Vrel, Netherlands, 1662



*Superstition, myth and subjectivity were merely displaced by modernist functional living that emphasized purity, hygiene, sunlight and fresh air. Not until the triple-drug therapy breakthrough in the 1950s did an objective treatment regime definitively dissociate architectural design from treatment and resultant physical recovery.*

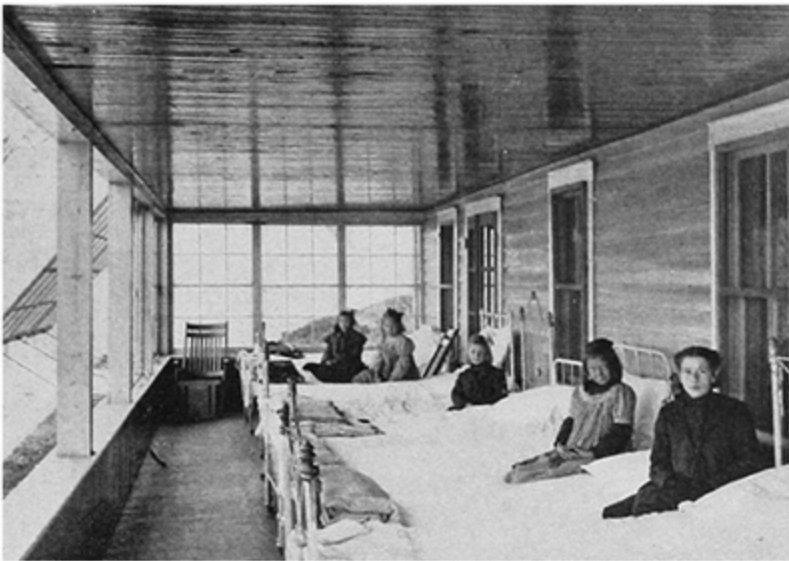
Margaret Campbell  
Strange Bedfellows: Modernism and Tuberculosis

# Sleeping Porches: Epidemiology, Modernity, and the Medicalization of the Porch

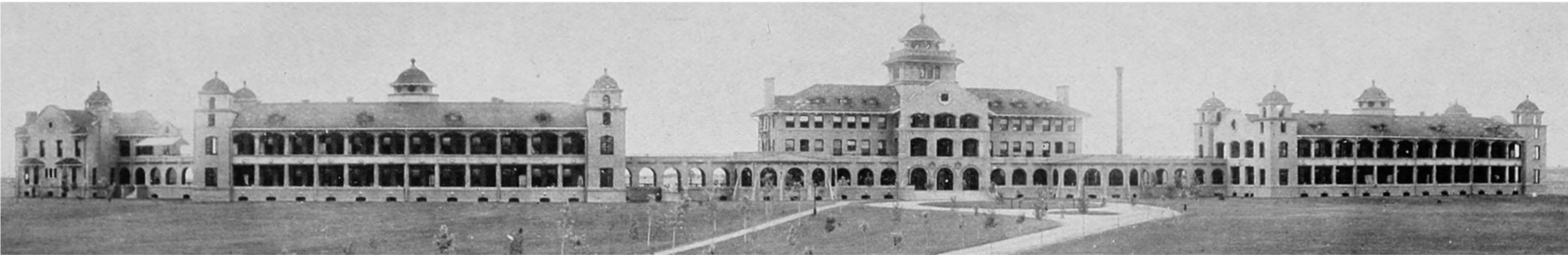
The sleeping porch arose as a social center for good health in boarding schools, apartment buildings, and resorts, while functioning as a therapeutic in sanitoriums for infectious respiratory diseases like tuberculosis and influenza. New conceptions of disease, their transmission (epidemiology) and cure, shaped relationships among architecture, the environment, and the individual at the outset of the twentieth century. Theories about the relationship between respiration, disease, and factors in air quality, ventilation, pollution, and urban filth, governed healing practices for common pulmonary diseases. Exposure to open air and sun was an important treatment. Open-air convalescing was widely practiced even during the winter and supported by the screened porch when mosquitoes and flies were prevalent in the summer.



Maine State Sanatorium, Hebron, Maine, 1911



Loomis Sanatorium, Liberty, New York



Agnes Memorial Sanatorium, Denver, Colorado, 1908



Adirondack Cottage Sanitarium, New York, 1901



North Reading State Sanatorium, North Reading, Massachusetts, 1911



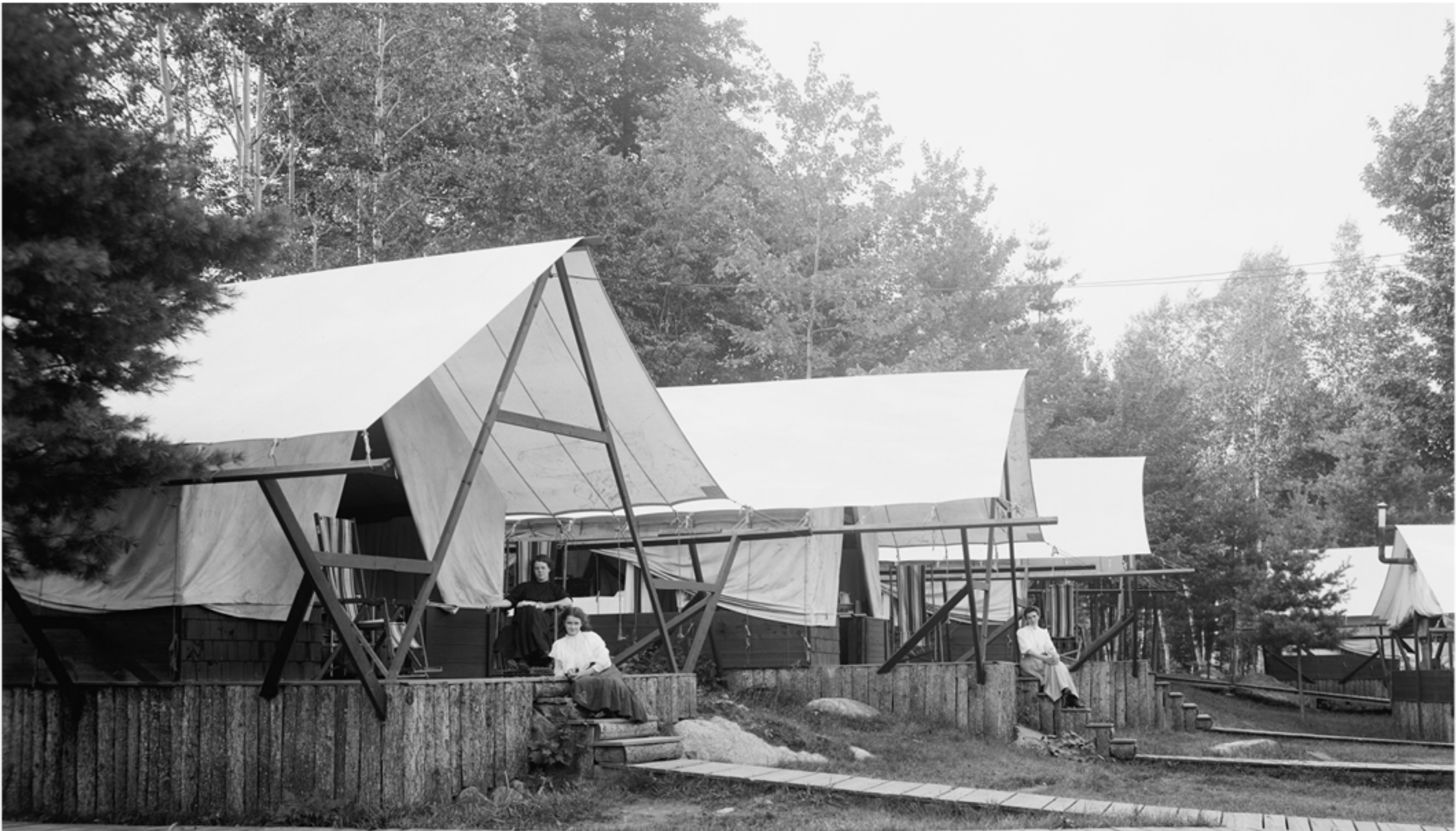
Virginia State Farm, Richmond, Virginia



Edward Sanatorium, Towson, Maryland



Delaware State Sanatorium, Wilmington, Delaware



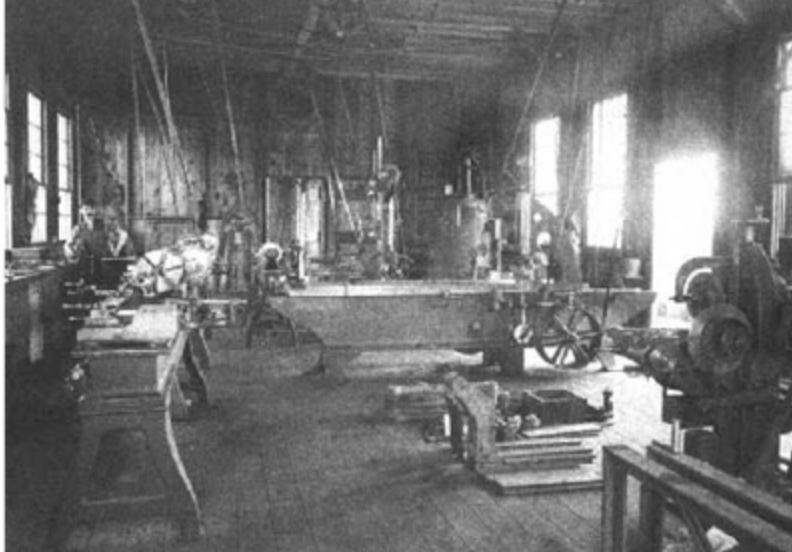
Ray Brook State Sanatorium, Adirondacks, New York, 1920



Iowa State Sanatorium, Oakdale, Iowa



Benjamin Gilbert with his wife and daughter, binding the sieves for the screen porch, 1818



The Red Mill, where woven wire cloth used in screen porches was invented, 1888

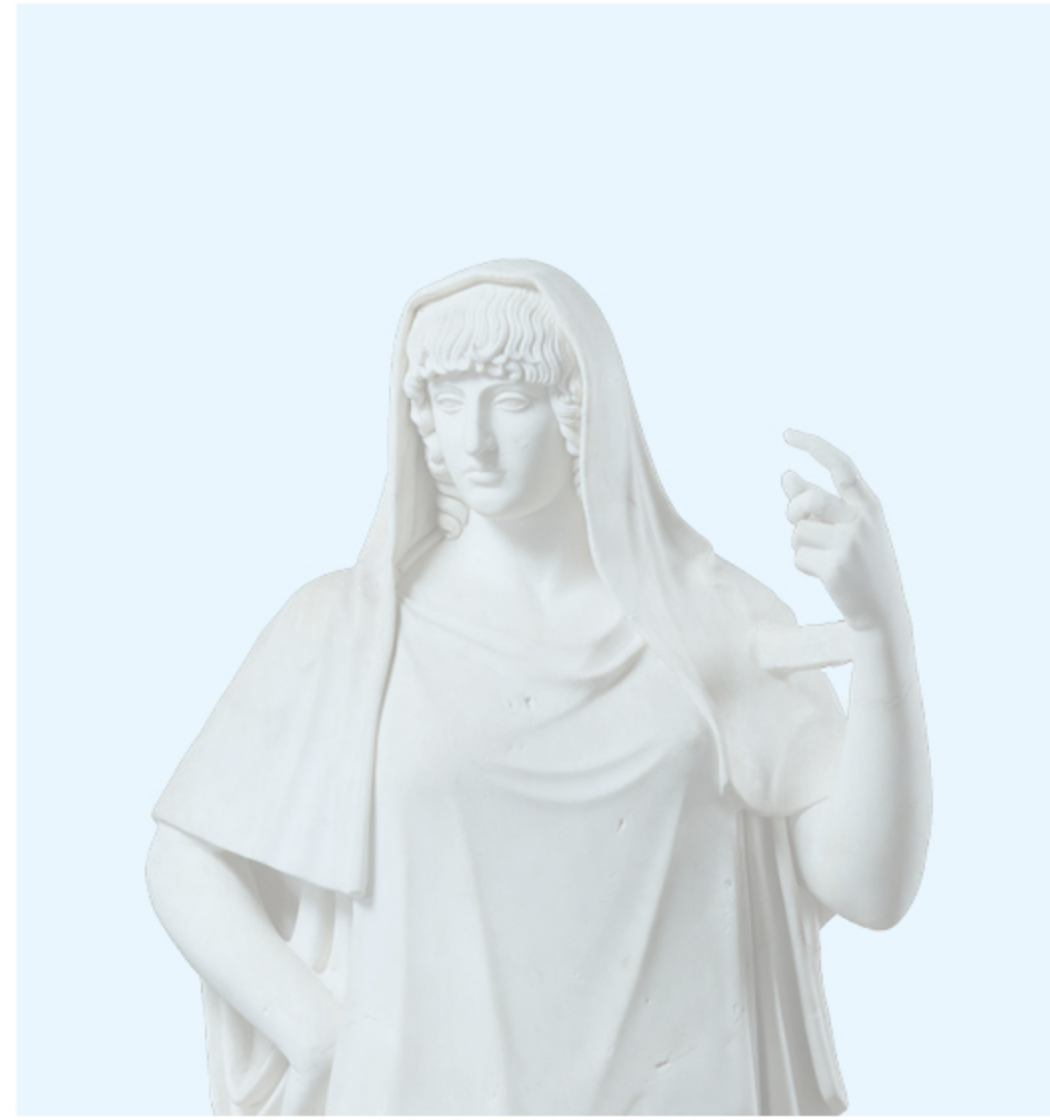




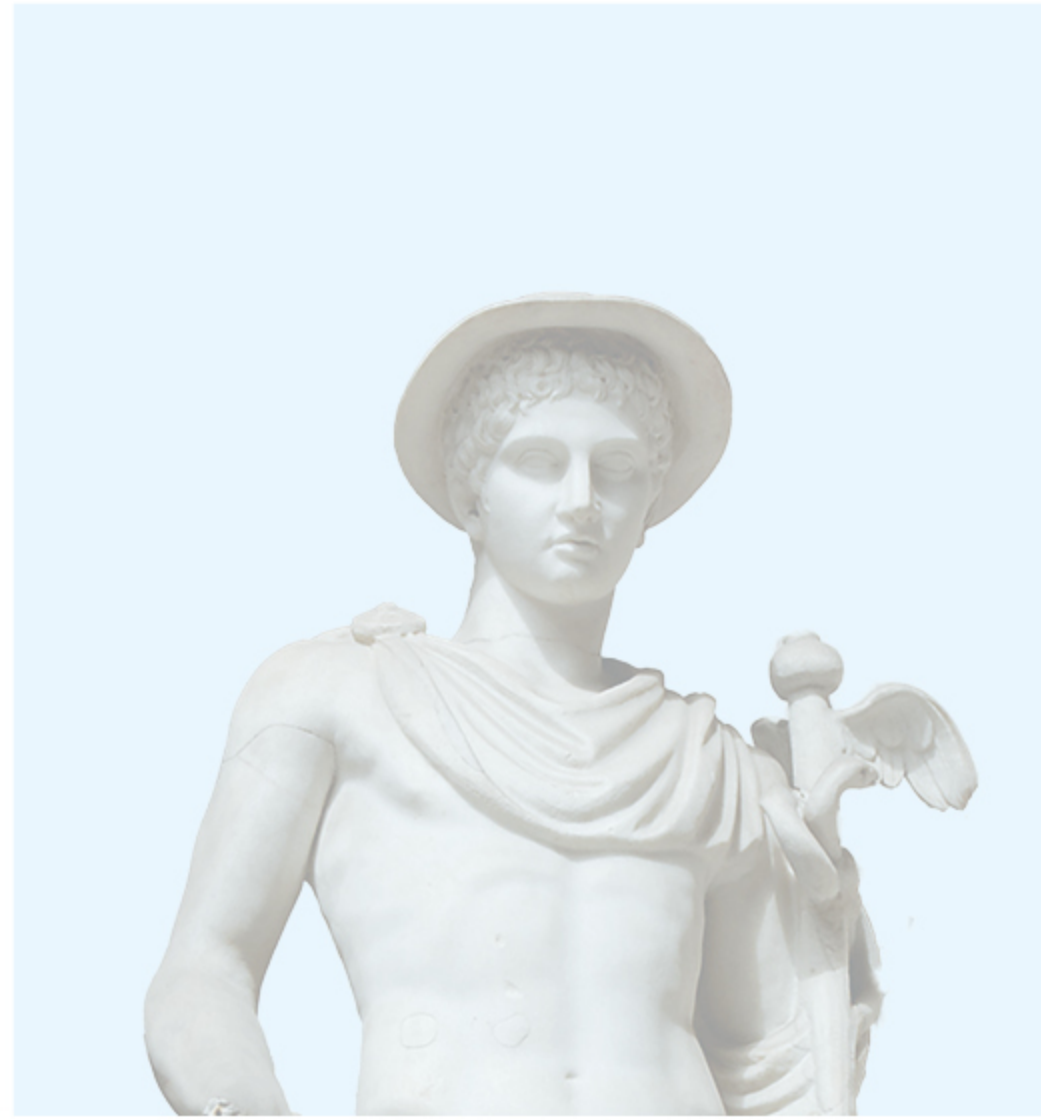
# Urbanism

## Porches and how we gather





Giustiniani Hestia, 460 BC



Hermes Ingenui, 2nd century BC

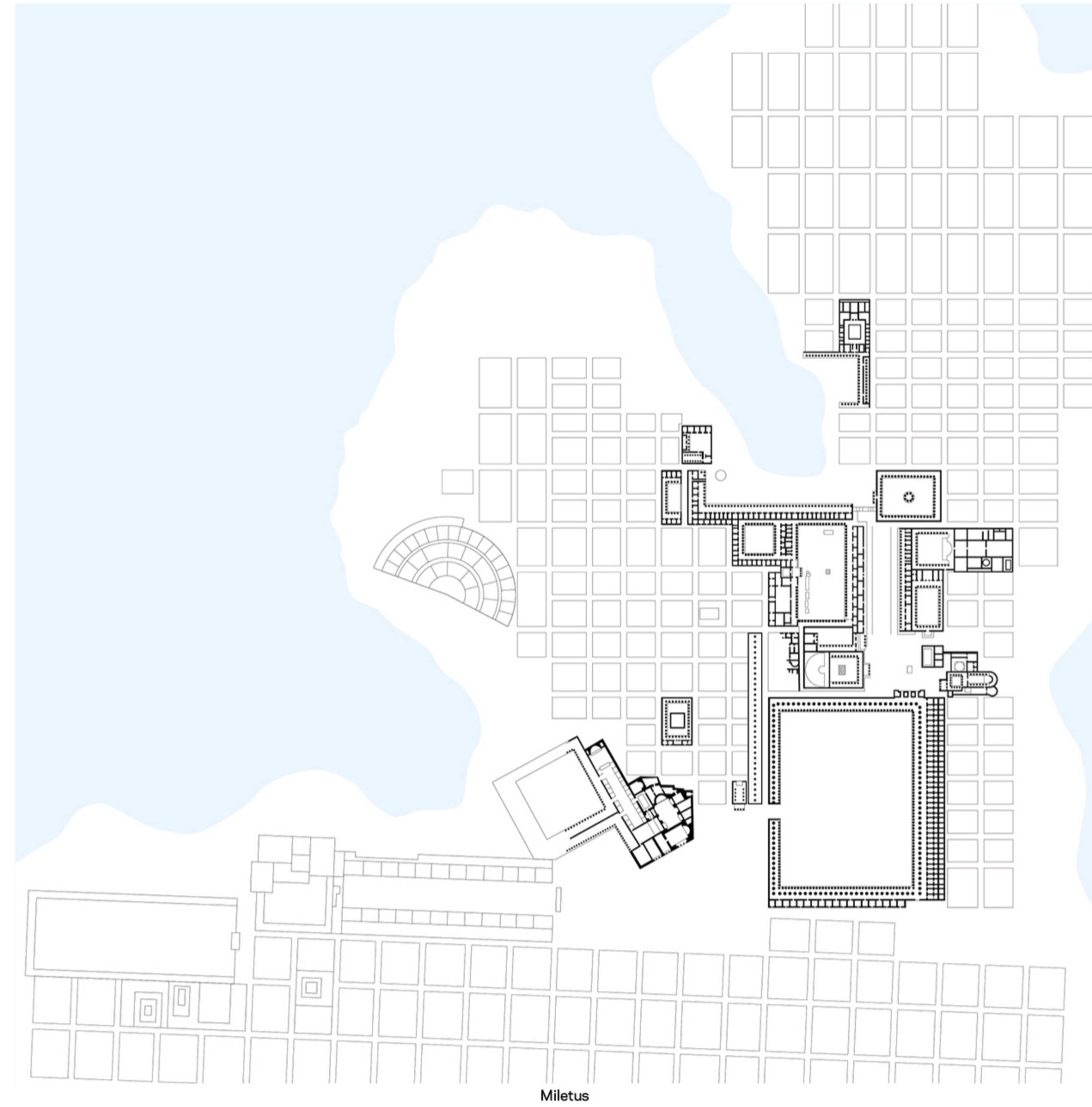
## Hearth and Porch Two Ways of Dwelling

Hestia—Goddess of the Hearth

Hermes—God of Travel, Trade, and Diplomacy

Philosopher Edward Casey outlines two basic modes of dwelling and ways to understand the city: ***inhabitation*** in which we are settled and centered, and ***orientation*** in which we are in motion, exploring or seeking better acquaintance of a place. **Porches are places of orientation as they host “freedom of movement and plasticity of aim.”** The American city favors mobility more than centeredness, and the porch captures this structure of extension more than the hearth and forms of centering.

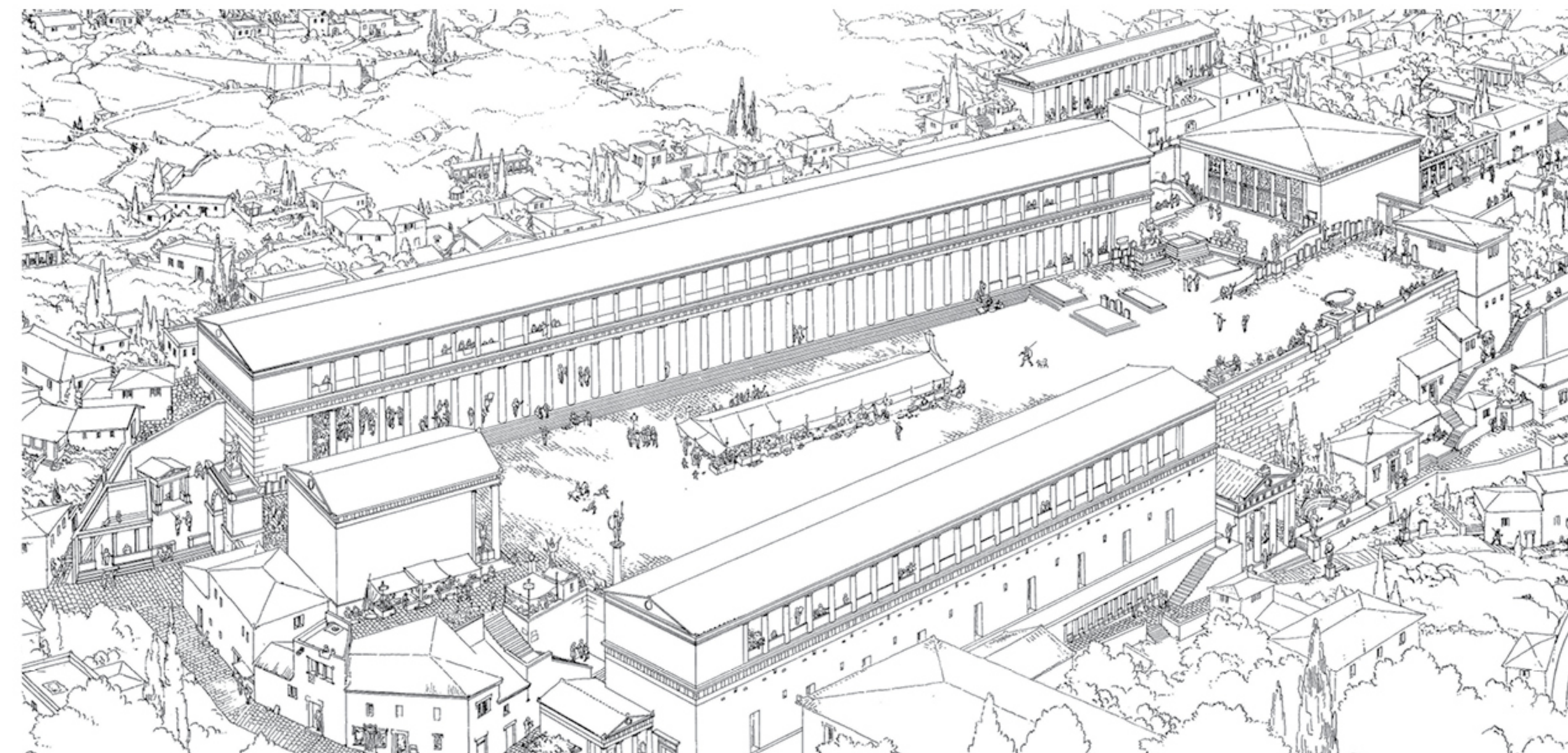
Architect Paolo Coppola Pignatelli pairs the ancient Greek Olympus gods, Hestia/Hermes, to explain these complementary functions in human settlements. Hestia is the goddess of hearth and home. As the source of heat and light, the hearth had a centering function in both Greek homes and the decision-making centers of council halls. Hermes, the god of travel, trade, and diplomacy, presided over borders, roads, commerce, motion, and language, and lives in agoras and streets. “Hestia is steady, centric, domestic, pure, introverted. Hermes is mobile, vectorial, public, ambiguous, extraverted.” The Greek city Miletus reflected Hermes’ motion, centerless dynamic space, excessive linearity, exchange, and communication. Not surprisingly, the Greek Revival in America elevated the porch to a new urban semiotic celebrating Cartesian order and expansiveness.



Miletus



Stoa of Attalos, King Attalos II, Athens, Greece, 2nd century BC, reconstructed 1952



The Agora at Assos, J. T. Clarke, F. H. Bacon, and R. Koldewey, 1902

## Miletus, a City of Porches ... “everything an edge and nothing a center”

*And, verily, it is Miletus—this city designed by Hippodamus on axes set at right angles and divided into zones depending on the functions to be performed by each—that the public function is forever severed from the private and becomes fitted into spaces specifically arranged to cover different activities: the market place, the political center, the ceremonial ritual center, the agora. The geometrical concept of the universe presides over the spatial and political organization of the city. . . . In becoming more and more geometrical, however, it (the polis) will tend increasingly to expand and differentiate its growth along axes, in zoning plans, in developers’ profiteering.*

Paolo Coppola Pignatelli  
The Dialectics of Urban Architecture: Hestia  
and Hermes

**In the U.S.—where  
most of the country  
is apportioned by the  
Public Land Survey  
System onto a one-  
mile grid—porches,  
city grids, and  
democracy codify a  
unique Cartesian order  
facilitating social and  
economic mobility.**



View from above in the USA, Imperial County, California



*If a porch is a skin, it is also a stage. Climb onto a porch and you put on a costume; for a moment, you wear the house of another.*

*Porches and camps inhabit an air saturated with words and tales and music.*

Charlie Hailey  
*The Porch: Meditations on the Edge of Nature*

## The Prayer Porch of the American Camp Meeting

### From Tent and Cottage Colonies to Resorts and Cities

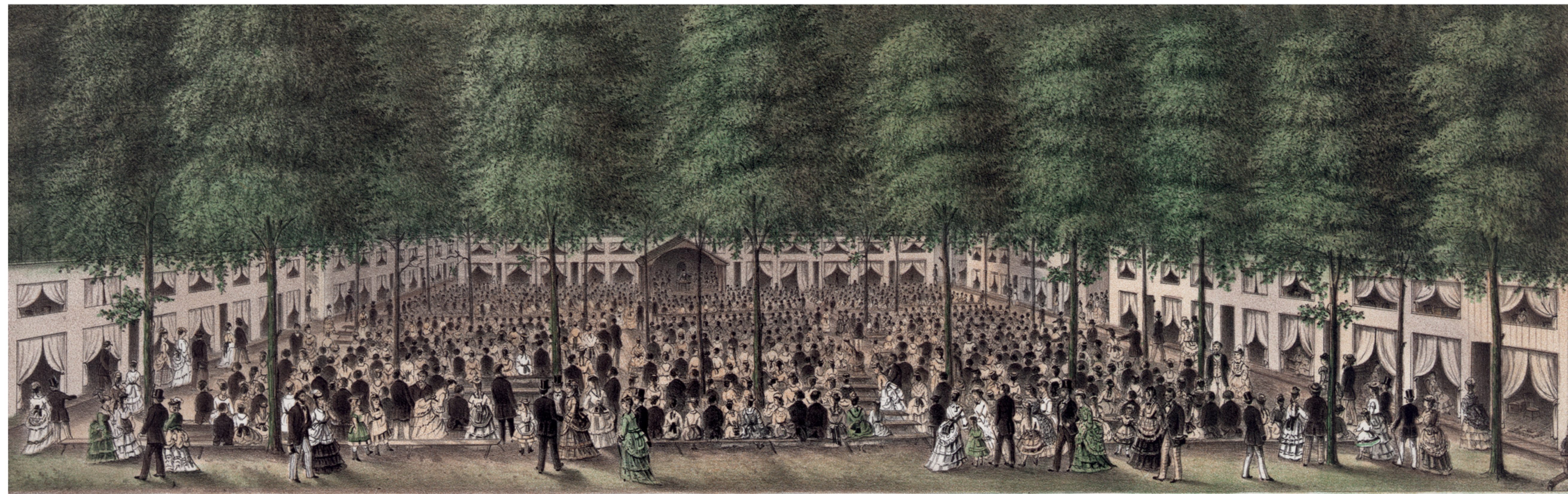
The American camp meeting had its roots in eighteenth-century Scottish Presbyterian outdoor ceremonies, later becoming large religious revivals in the woods where thousands assembled. Families built a canvas city around a lawn anchored by a tabernacle for assembly and preaching.

**Porches, important for hosting prayer sessions and socializing, evolved from cloth tent constructions to wooden cottage fronts on boardwalks, and eventually a commercialized resort system by the twentieth century.**

With the introduction of public lighting in the late nineteenth century, revival camps became secularized magical forest cities whose social appeal and leisure orientations eclipsed religious purposes. Some camp meeting sites became incorporated towns, the most well-known being Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts and Ocean Grove in New Jersey.

*Themes of astonishment, of having been transported from the mundane world into a fairyland, the shock of a miniature city dedicated to joy, pervasive religious feeling, nature, and social density permeated the new decade [1870s], even with the resort's blatantly commercial edge.*

Ellen Weiss  
*City in the Woods: The Life and Design of an American Camp Meeting on Martha's Vineyard*



West Branch Camp Meeting, W. H. Rease, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, 1872



Tent, Wesleyan Grove, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, 1844



Tents, Wesleyan Grove, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, 1875



Tent life at Ocean Grove, Ocean Grove, New Jersey, 1906



Indian Fields Methodist Campground, near Saint George, South Carolina, 1848



Indian Fields Methodist Campground, near Saint George, South Carolina, 1848





Gladstone Camp Meeting, Salem, Oregon, 1878



Tents and Cottages, Ocean Grove, New Jersey, 1896



Asbury Park, New Jersey, 1904



Cottage, Wesleyan Grove, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, 1869



Clinton Avenue, Wesleyan Grove, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, 1875



Cottages, Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, 19th century



Oak Bluffs with Wesleyan Grove to the right, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, 2014



Modern day plan of Oak Bluffs and Wesleyan Grove, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts



*There's no place like it. No resort. No spa. It is at once a summer encampment and a small town, a college campus, an arts colony, a music festival, a religious retreat, and the village square.*

*Chautauqua is part of the American imagination. It belongs with Concord, Massachusetts, or Hannibal, Missouri, or Springfield Illinois, as one of those places that help define who we are and what we believe in. It has its own mythic force.*

Historian and author David McCullough

## Chautauqua: Every Building a Porch and the Chronic Holiday

### Education Retreats and the Middle-Class Penchant for Self-Improvement

Almost every building in Chautauqua (a Haudenosaunee word)—public, private, boarding house, and cottage—has a porch in this pedestrian enclave where cars are parked at the edge of town (population: 3,946). Founded in 1874 as an education retreat for Methodist Sunday school teachers in upstate New York, Chautauqua Institution-cum-town evolved to become a national forum for the exchange of ideas. **Community design featuring the porch supports the four pillars comprising Chautauqua's pedagogy: Arts, Education, Religion, and Recreation.** Social life underwrites Chautauqua's mythical status. Like camp meetings, a 4,000-seat central amphitheater hosts a daily schedule of morning religious services, a lecture by a nationally acclaimed speaker at 10:45 am, followed by rehearsals and an evening concert during the summer season. Throughout the town's 750-acre (304 ha) historic core, programs in visual arts and crafts, performance arts, and literary and scientific workshops, as well as lake-oriented recreation, fill daily life. The atmosphere combines carnival with learning. At its peak in the 1930s, Chautauqua franchised more than 1,200 mini-Chautauquas, having brought its pedagogy to small towns and penitentiaries across America.



Chautauqua Lake, Chautauqua, New York, 1900



The Arrival Pier, Chautauqua Lake, New York, 1907



A city of porches, Chautauqua, New York



Vincent Avenue, Chautauqua, New York, 1930



Streets with multi-story porches, Chautauqua, New York



Chautauqua founders Lewis Miller and John Vincent, 1870



Athenæum Hotel, Chautauqua, New York



68 Keystone Cottages, Chautauqua, N.Y.  
Keystone Cottages, Chautauqua, New York, 1909



Athenæum Hotel, Chautauqua, New York



The side porch of the Athenæum Hotel with hanging flower baskets above the rocking chairs. An umbrella used for shade can be seen further down the porch. Chautauqua, New York, 1940



Victorian Cottage with a porch, Chautauqua, New York



Keystone Apartments, Chautauqua, New York



Glen Park Cafeteria, where a crowd waits after the Sunday amphitheater church service. Chautauqua, New York, 1970



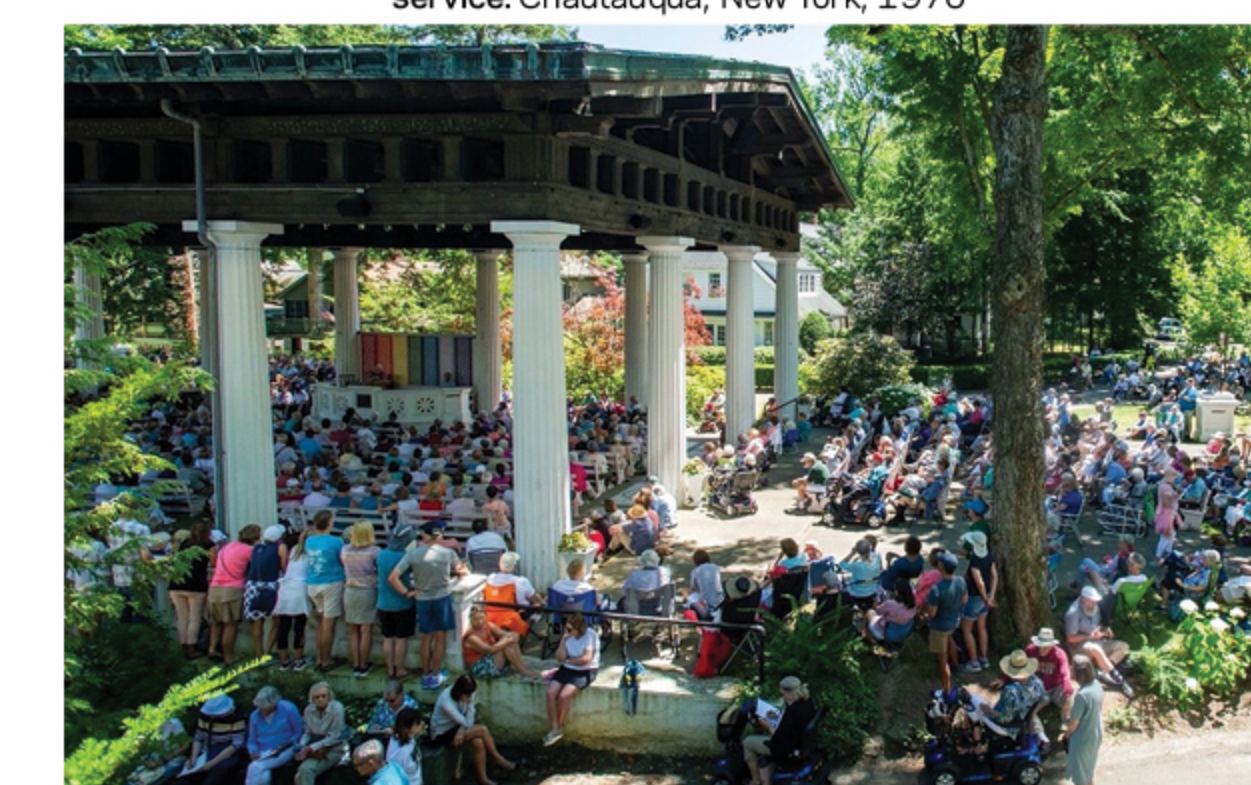
A recognition day for "flower children", 1930



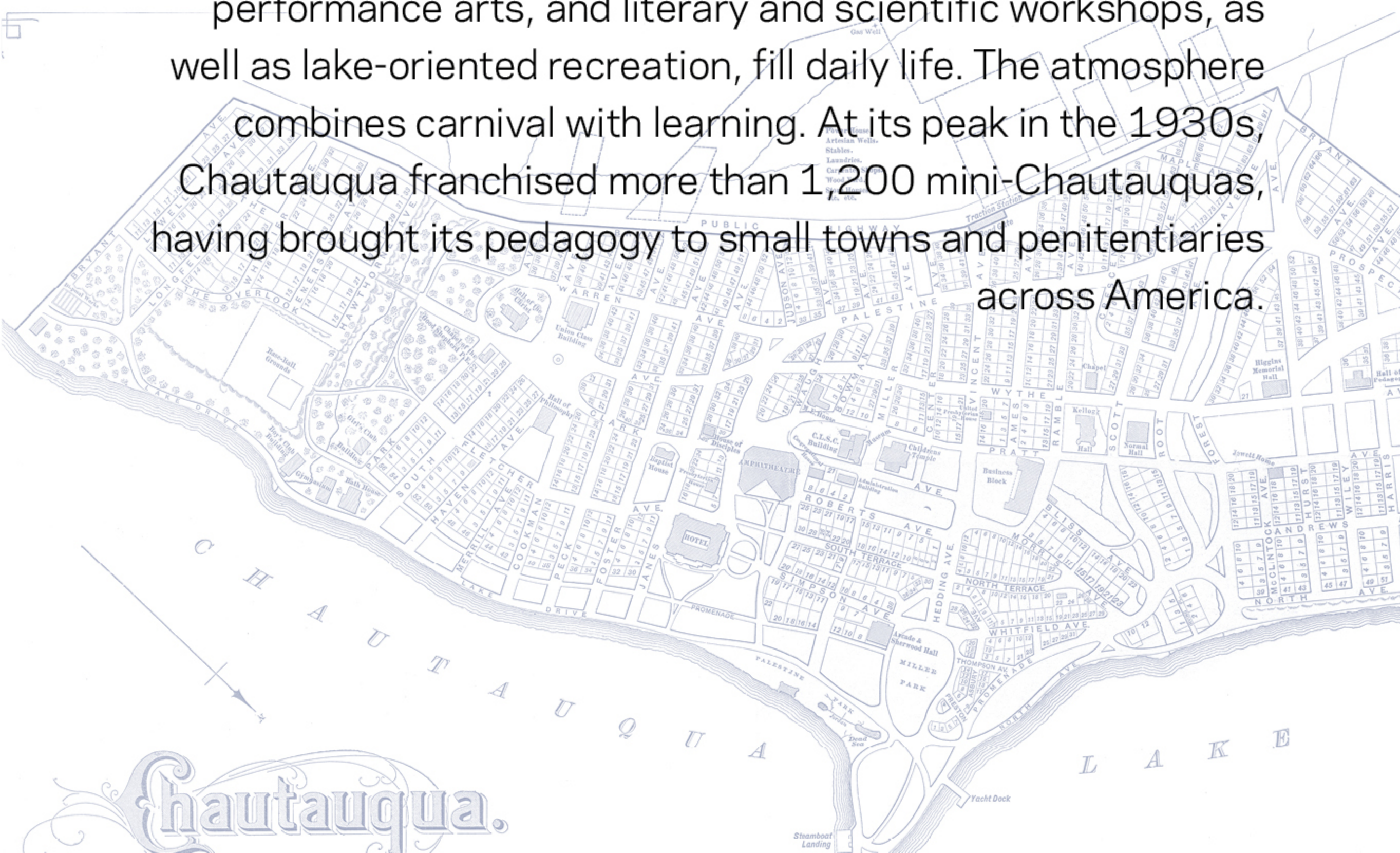
Porch overlooking the street, Chautauqua, New York



Post-Office Building, Chautauqua, New York



Hall of Philosophy, Chautauqua, New York





*In truth, in courting the emphasis at the spas [resort hotels] was on chivalry, the display of manners, rather than on the serious business of marriage, let alone sexual relationships. Women of varying social convictions believed that the presence of the opposite sex was necessary for pastimes such as dancing, listening to music, and even walking.*

*Women could, however, become aggressive in practicing the art of seeing and being seen; they provided an air of gentility, eventually helping to create the social season journalists so minutely scrutinized and reported to the outside world.*

Theodore Corbett  
*The Making of American Resorts: Saratoga Springs, Ballston Spa, Lake George*

## Miles of Colonnades at Resort Hotels—Social Theater and New Urban Forms

### Cosmopolitan Networks of Socialization and Hospitality

The Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga Springs alone had over one mile (1.6 km) of colonnades overlooking its streets and gardens. Socializing became the most important pastime at the resort. Women seeking visibility set the etiquette for engagement through front porch life at an urban scale (women's suffrage movement reinforced this search for public visibility). Besides the traveler, hotels were open to town residents for socializing, dining, shopping, and later electioneering and conventioneering. **A translocal setting for diverse vacationing classes, domestic and foreign, the hotel became the American city's first truly cosmopolitan institution.** Towns emerged around remote colonnaded resorts, sometimes innovating new urban forms like the boardwalk in Atlantic City, the manicured urban pleasure garden in Saratoga Springs, and the Del Coronado's tent city in San Diego. Henry Flagler's and Henry Plant's hotel complexes, built to complement their separate railroad lines in Florida, eventually became urban college campuses.



United States Hotel's Pleasure Garden, Elias Benedict, Saratoga Springs, New York, 1836



Congress Hall Hotel, Gideon Putnam, Saratoga Springs, New York, 1811



United States Hotel, Elias Benedict, Saratoga Springs, New York, 1836



Hotel del Coronado and Tent City, Reid & Reid, Coronado Island, California, 1900



Hotels and the Atlantic City Boardwalk, Atlantic City, New Jersey, 1900



The Chalfonte and the Atlantic City Boardwalk, Atlantic City, New Jersey, 1910



Steel Pier, Steel Pier Company, Atlantic City, New Jersey, 1898



*The Western town is quite successful at externalizing parts and programs of single houses into single program structures, resulting in a town structure more akin to a single household ... By atomizing, exploding, and ultimately isolating all of its domestic features into 'single-room structures,' the town is able to still cohere these disparate parts into one structure. ... Thereby a whole is created—a sense of familiarity without families.*

Alex Lehnerer, Jared Macken, Jayne Kelley, Lorenzo Stieger  
*The Western Town: A Theory of Aggregation*

# Frontiering: The Western False Front in Making the Instant Western Town of 1860-1890

The “Spaghetti Western” ... Where Art Imitates Life

The porch figured prominently in the film imagery of the Spaghetti Western, a popular subgenre of the American Western produced in Europe during the 1960s and 1970s. These mostly Italian productions were influenced by pioneer filmmaker Sergio Leone who was fascinated with the American West and its frontier ethos. Movie sets reflected the real but vanquished western prairie towns hastily built to service westward migrations and resource extractions. The figure of the porch was amplified through a flat vertical “western false front” masking a house form behind for commercial uses. **Drawing on the expedient mobility and scale of the house, the western false front projected an image of stability and success within an economy of expendability.** In these loose fit towns without infrastructure or streets, the porch and its wooden walks—figures of home—provided instant coherence and civility.



High Noon, Fred Zinnemann, 1952



Western town set viewed from behind, Culver City, California, 1965



Downtown, Elkhart, Texas, 1870



High Noon, Fred Zinnemann, 1952



Town set for western films, Culver City, California, 1965



Main Street, Placerville, California, 1866



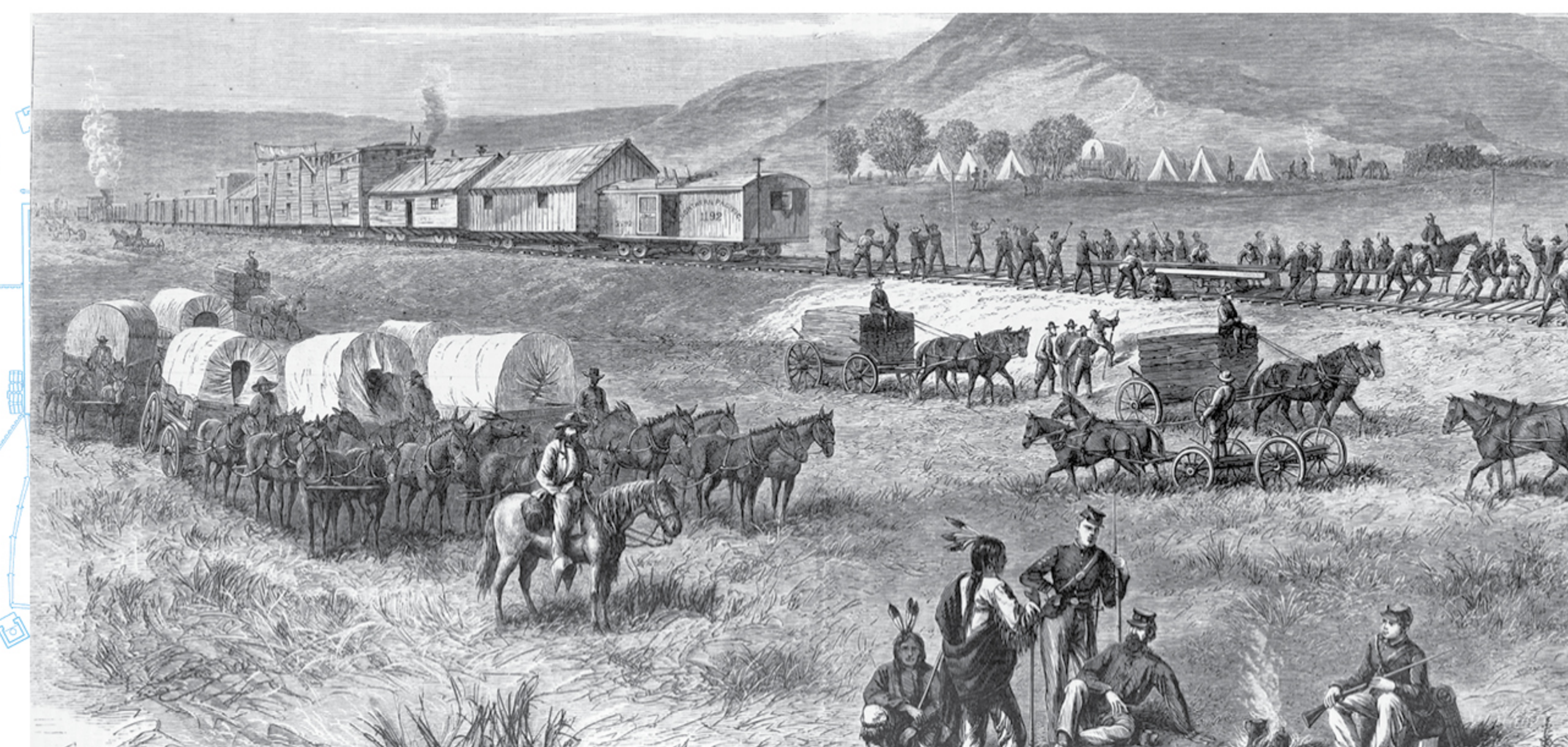
Once Upon a Time in the West, Sergio Leone, 1968



High Plains Drifter, Clint Eastwood, 1973

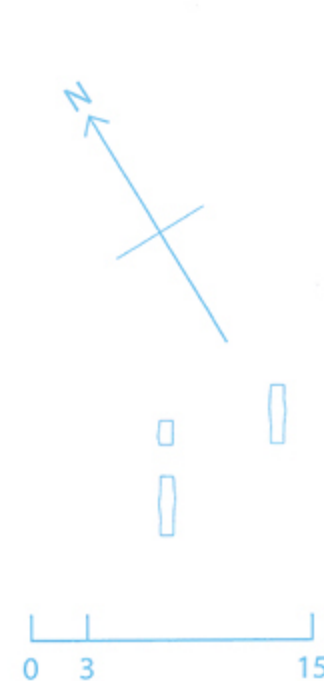


Main Street, Duncan, Oklahoma, 1894

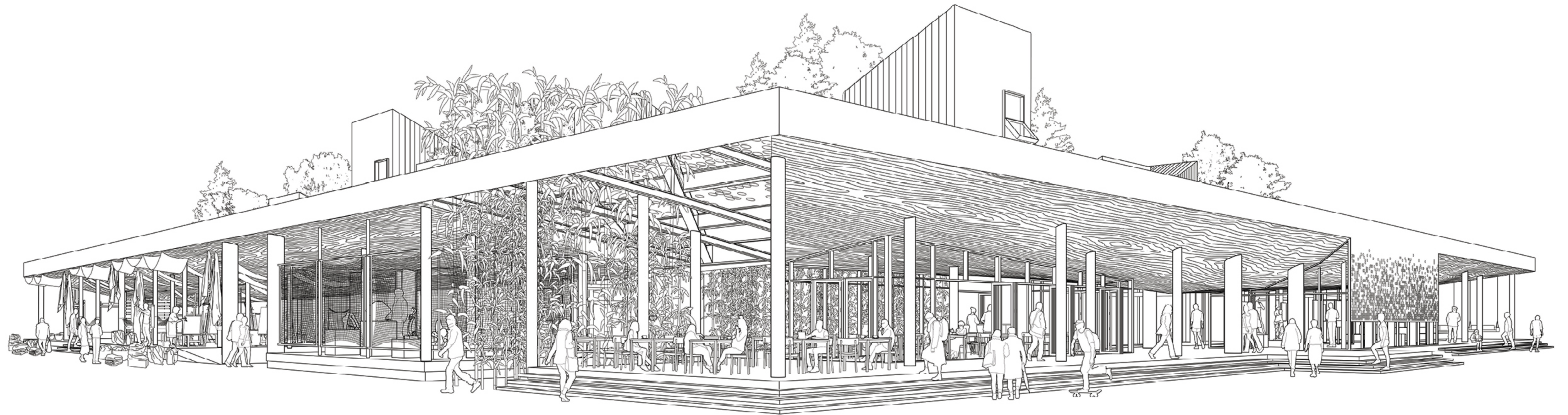


Railroad Building on the Great Plains, A.R. Waud, 1875

Plan of Rio Bravo, Alex Lehnerer, Jared Macken, Jayne Kelley, Lorenzo Stieger, *The Western Town: A Theory of Aggregation*, 2013

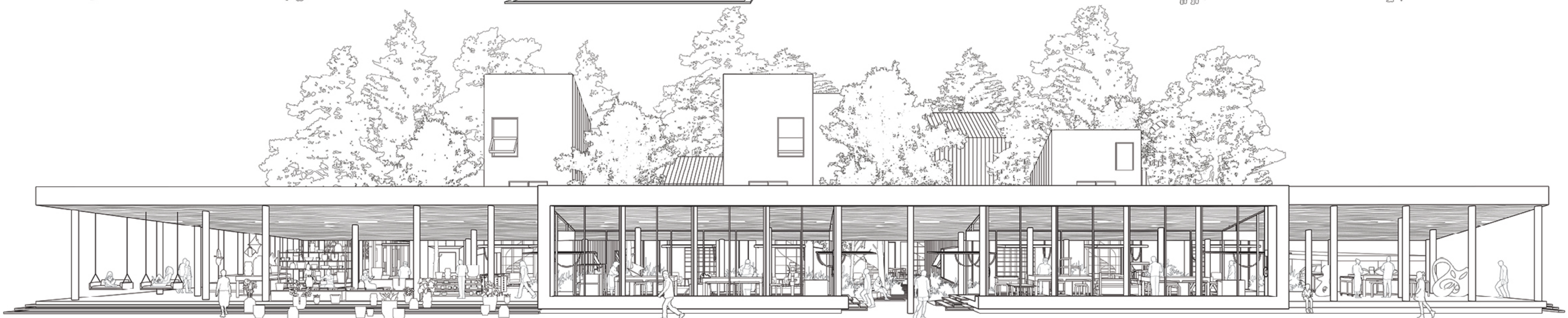




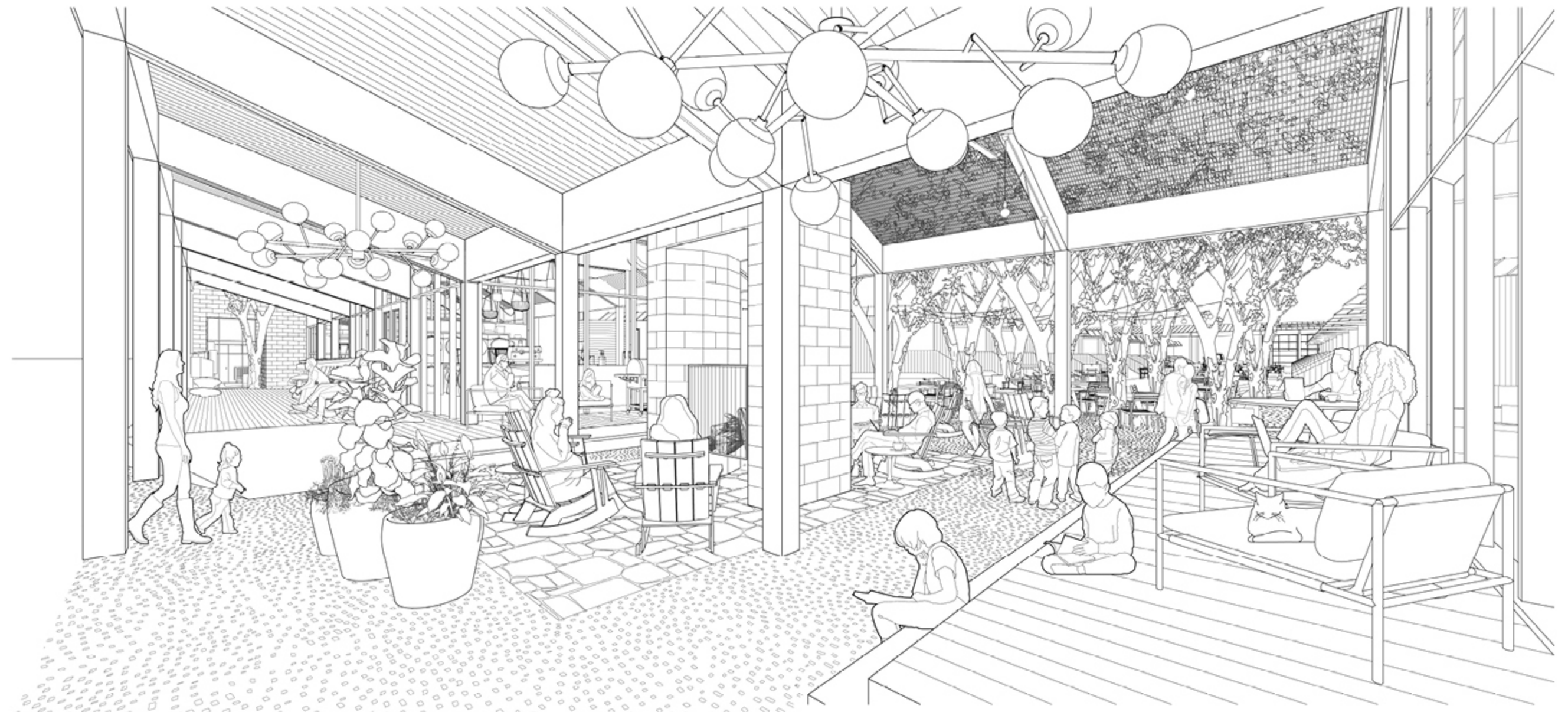
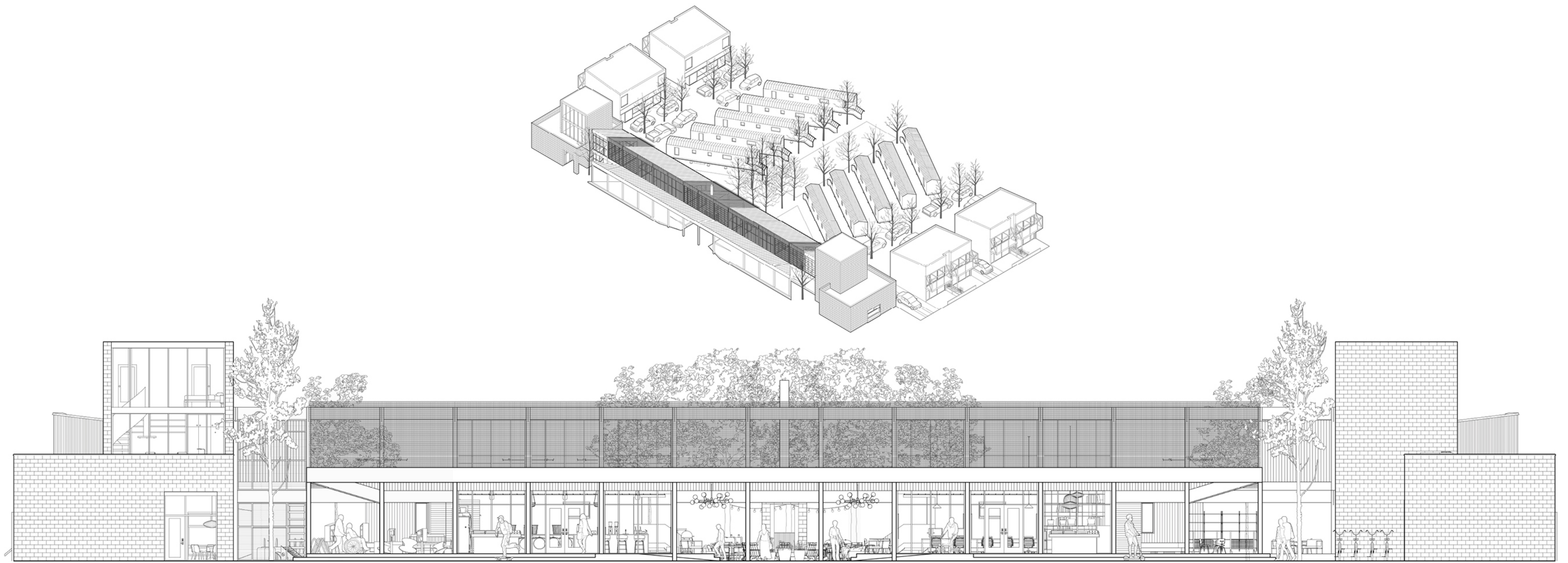


## Porch as Medium

Students ask: How might the porch support productivity in a live-work artist community?





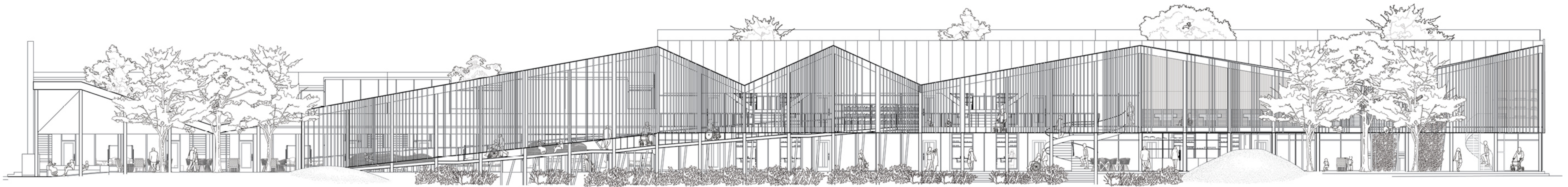
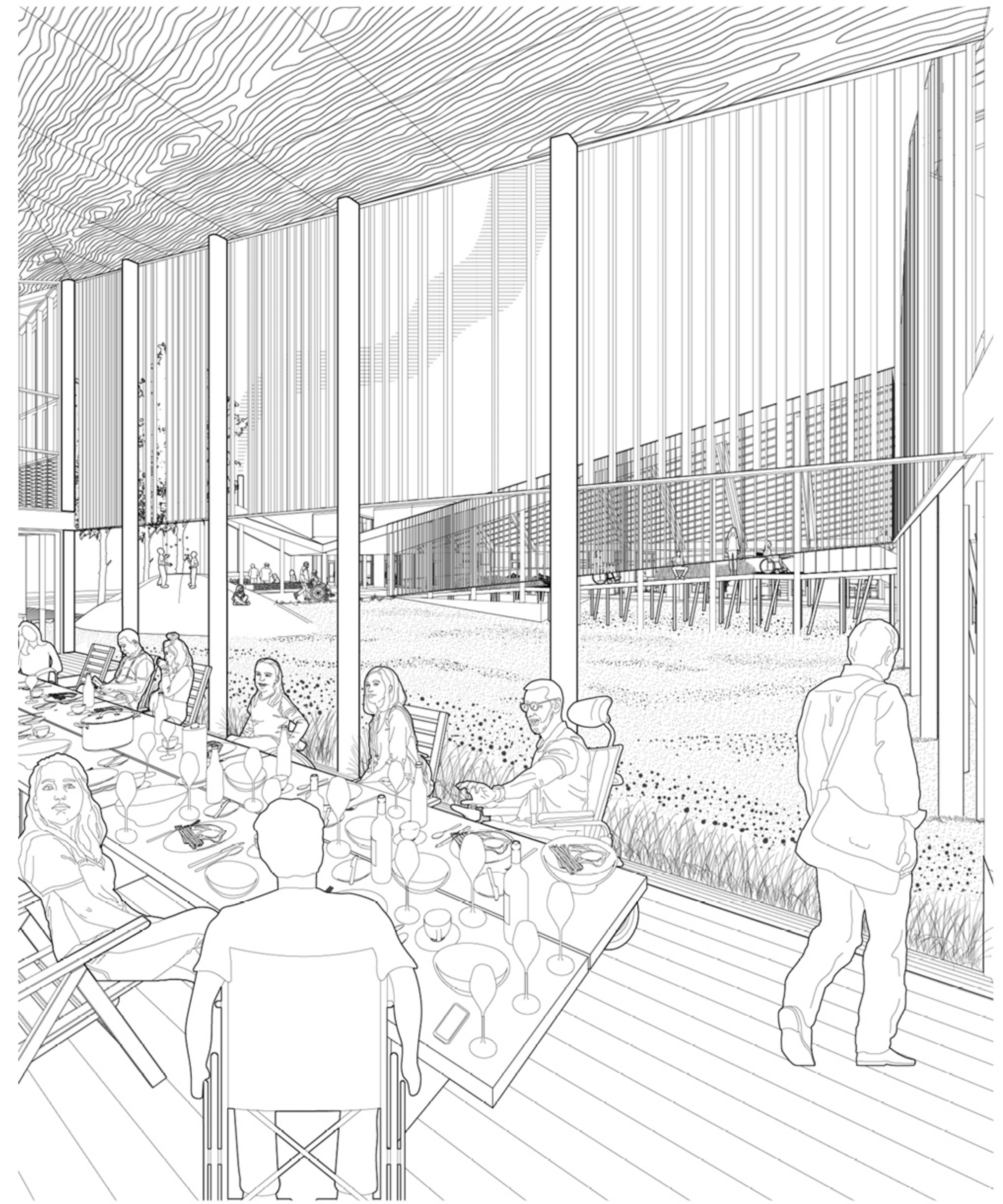
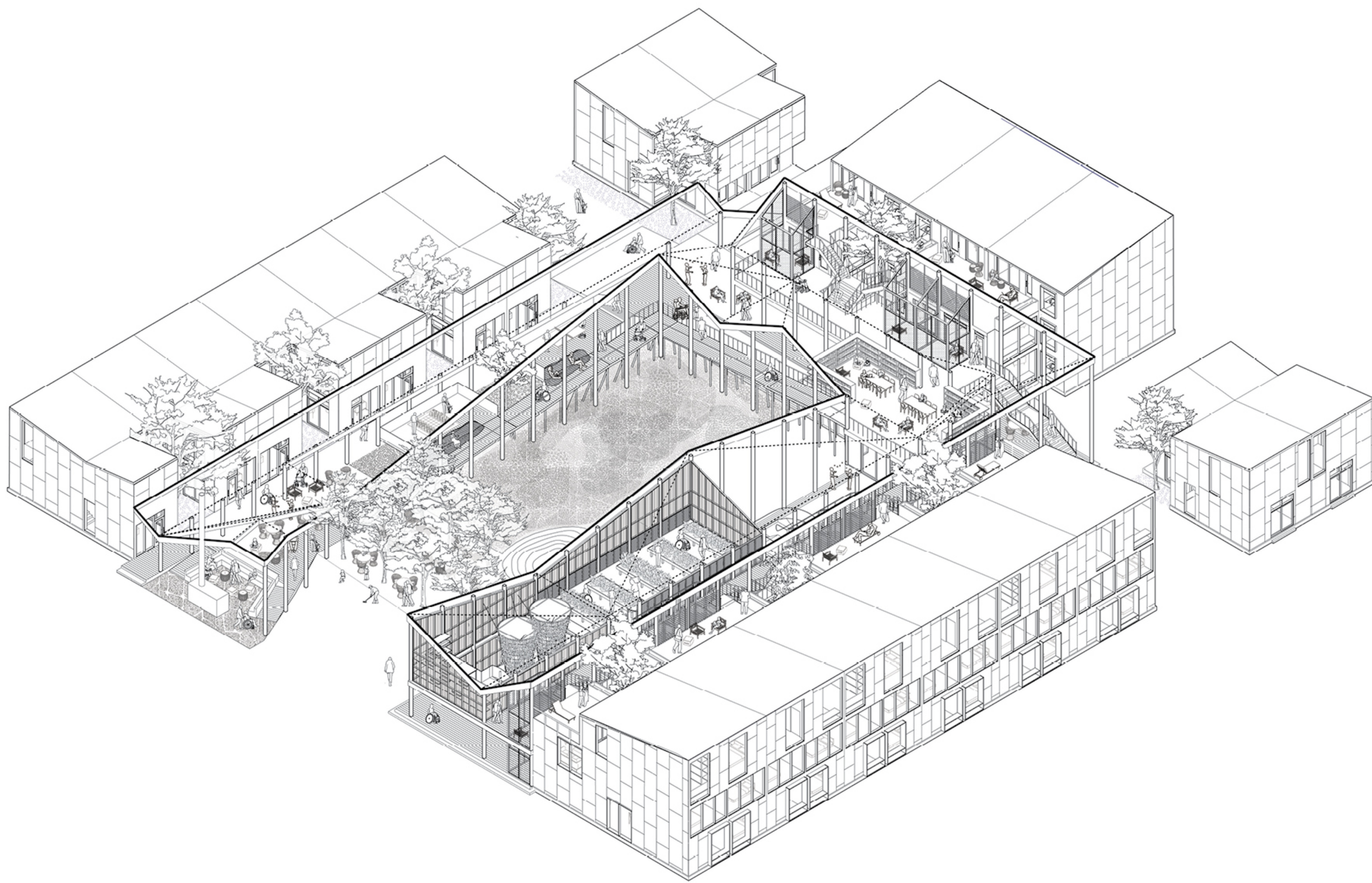


## Porch as Path

**Students ask: Could the porch create acceptance of mobile homes for disaster relief and affordable housing solutions in cities?**

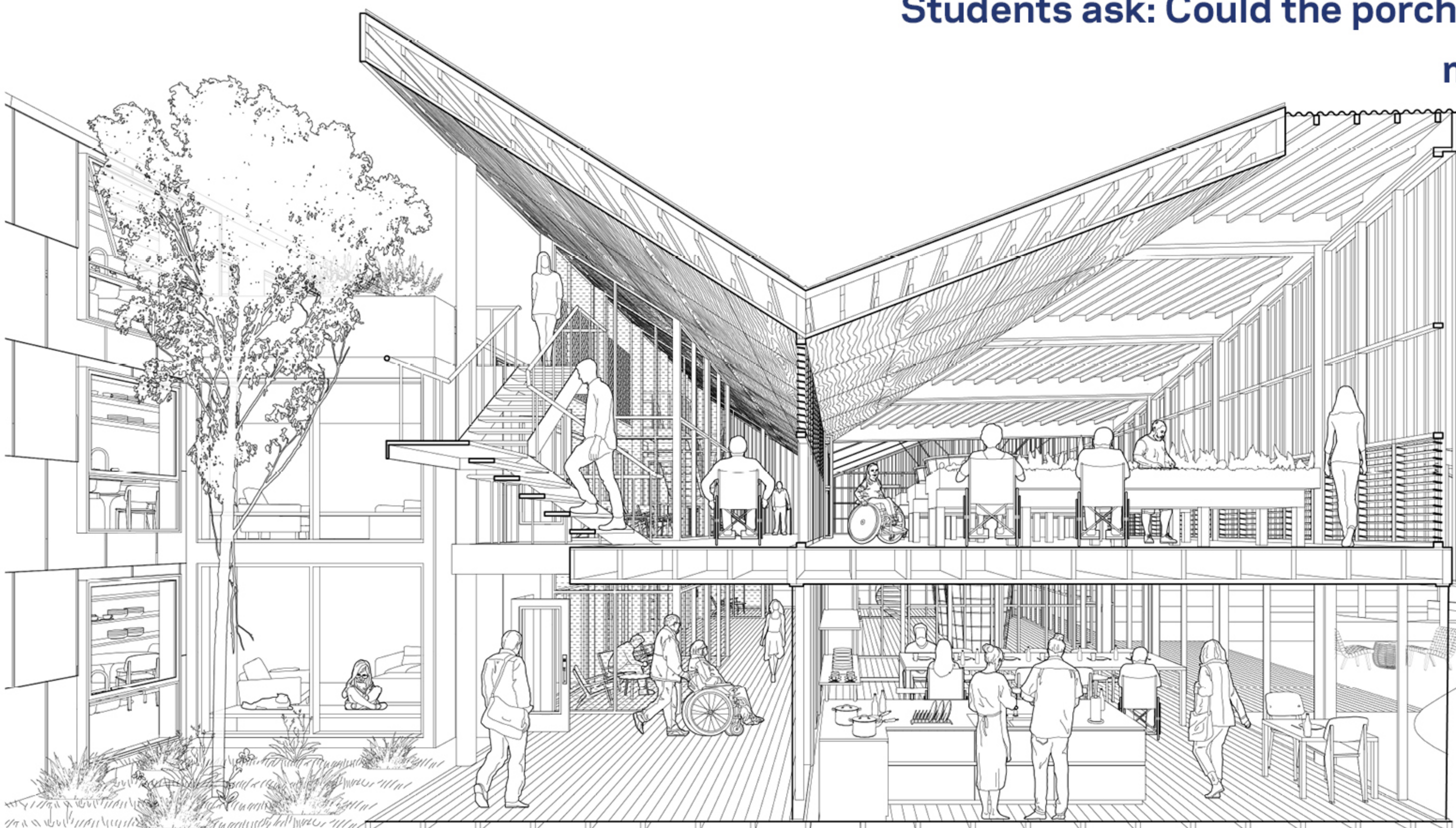




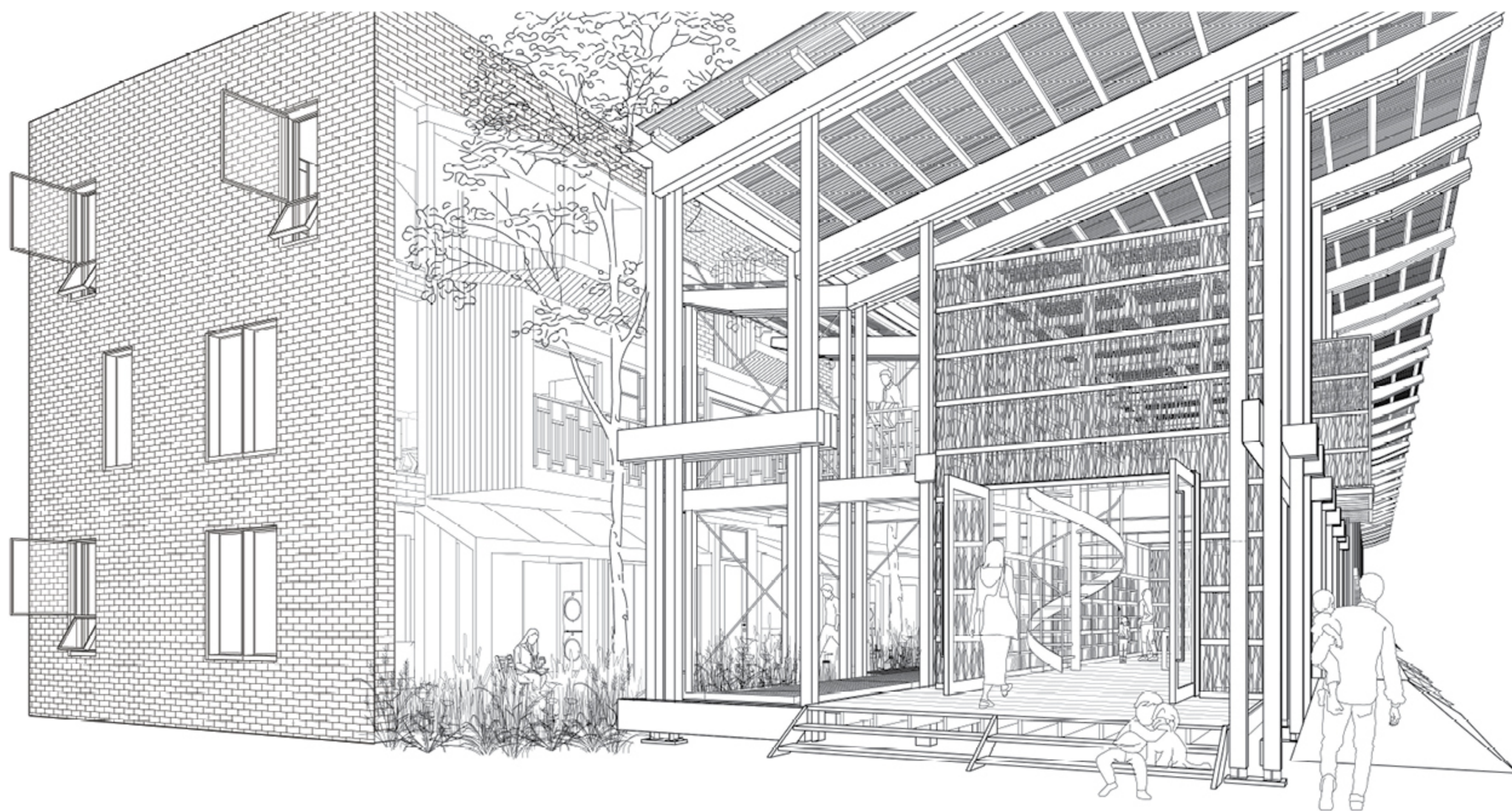
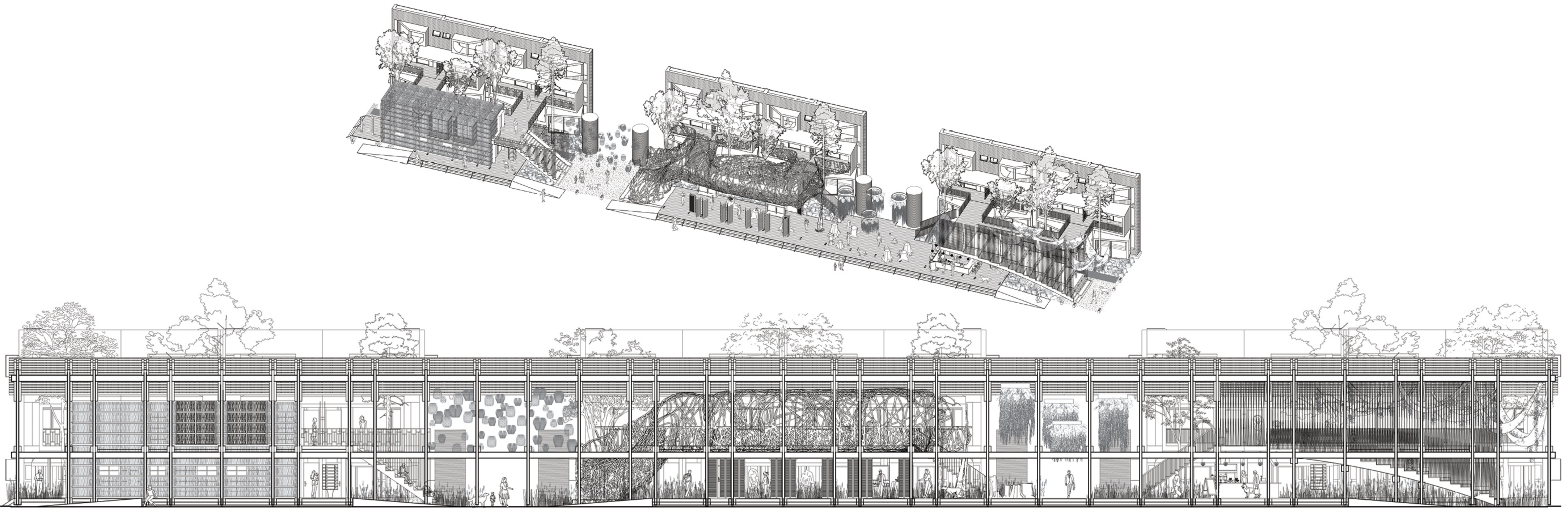


## Porch as Node

Students ask: Could the porch originate a new kind of social environment for mobility-impaired and neurodiverse residents?

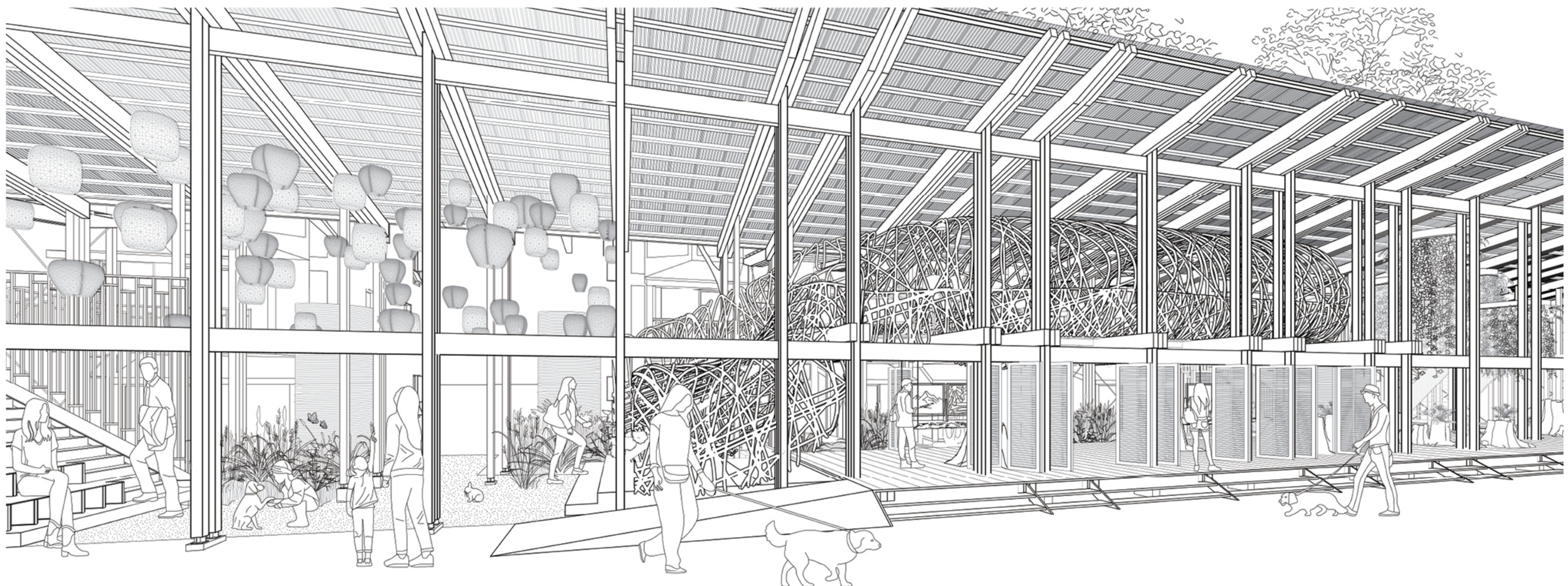






## Porch as Edge

Students ask: How might the porch redeploy landscape to address nature-deficit disorder and promote mental well-being in cities?







# Symbols and Monuments

Porches and how we present ourselves





University of Hawaii Administration Building, Vladimir Ossipoff, Hawaii, 1949



Cummins Corporate Office Building, Kevin Roche, Columbus, Indiana, 1983



Kimbell Art Museum, Louis I. Kahn, Fort Worth, Texas, 1972



University Religious Center, Killingsworth, Brady & Associates, Los Angeles, California, 1966



Pacific Unitarian Church, Carleton M. Winslow Jr., Palos Verdes, California, 1965



Magnavox, Risley and Gould, Torrance, California, 1960



Saint John's Abbey, Marcel Breuer, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1979



San Diego Country Club, Irving Gill, California, 1910



State University of New York, Edward D. Stone, Albany, New York, 1963



The Stuart Building, Edward D. Stone, Pasadena, California, 1958



State University of New York, Edward D. Stone, Albany, New York, 1963

... we have simply to search out and elucidate those aspects of architecture that draw their origin, their order and their identity (their very quidditas) from an embeddedness in fulfilling a way of life. We will find that they will all revolve around the difference between the building viewed as an object ... and the building viewed as a framework for the actions of men, a place of enactment and celebration, a theatre that makes action possible (methexis) ... a framework in which, to use the phrase of Aldo van Eyck, 'Space becomes Place and Time becomes Occasion'.

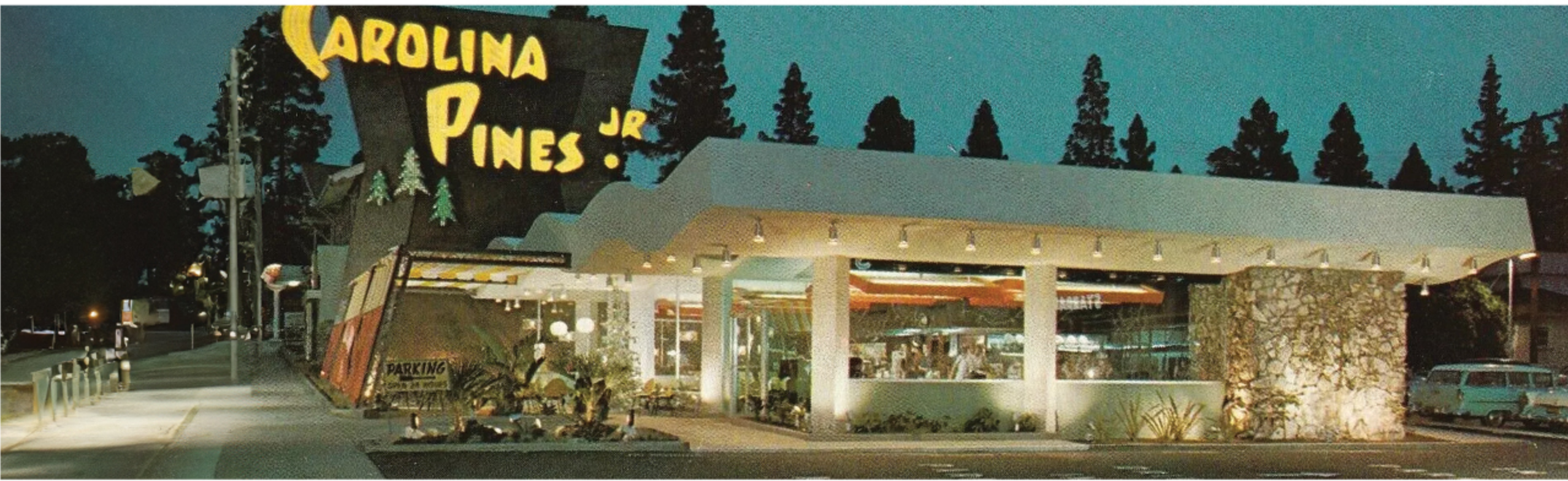
Colin St John Wilson  
*The Other Tradition of Modern Architecture: The Uncompleted Project*

# The Porch in Modernism

## Other Traditions of Modernity Beyond Functionalism and the International Style

The decline of the porch in the twentieth century can be attributed to multiple cultural forces including the emergence of the car and new architectural ideas under the banner of modernist progress. The rise in street pollution, dust, and noise attending the mass adoption of the automobile after the 1920s, and the advent of television and air conditioning in the 1950s pulled people indoors. Meanwhile, orthodox modernism bypassed the porch as tacitly *retardataire* or anachronistic. Architecture with avant-garde leanings grew dissociated from the street, de-emphasizing connection to the social and physical environment. However, an “other tradition” of modern architects like Frank Lloyd Wright, Rudolf Schindler, Eliel and Eero Saarinen, Irving Gill, and Edward Durell Stone, along with scores of regional modern architects, maintained embeddedness in place through street frontality and nuanced urban-architectural transitions in building design.





Carolina Pines Jr. Restaurant, Armet Davis Newlove Architects, Los Angeles, California, 1955



Biff's Coffee Shop, Los Angeles, California, 1950



The Penguin Coffee Shop, Armet Davis Newlove Architects, Santa Monica, California, 1959



The Penguin Coffee Shop, Armet Davis Newlove Architects, Santa Monica, California, 1959



Pann's Restaurant, Armet Davis Newlove Architects, Los Angeles, California, 1958



Wich Stand, Armet Davis Newlove Architects, Los Angeles, California, 1957



Wich Stand, Armet Davis Newlove Architects, Los Angeles, California, 1957



Torch's Tacos, Chioco Design, Austin, Texas, 2016



Mel's Drive-In, Armet Davis Newlove Architects, Sherman Oaks, California, 1959



Covina Bowl, Powers, Daly, & DeRosa, Covina, California, 1950

Evolving from the mid-century dream, ADN [Armet Davis Newlove] brought futurism, optimism, and hope to the everyday experience. Dining at an ADN-designed restaurant was more than just a meal; it fulfilled a social need for the typical American family to be a part of the post-war Modernism movement, one that fit right in with an affordable home, a new fast car, and a dream of space travel, topped off by a fresh cup of coffee.

Alan Hess  
Googie Modern: Architectural Drawings of Armet Davis Newlove

# “Googie Modern”: When Architecture Began with the Roof

## Mid-Century Automobile Oriented Commercial Development

The term Googie was popularized in 1952 by Douglas Haskell, editor of *House & Home* magazine, to describe an early commercial vernacular designed around the automobile in Los Angeles. Inspired by architect John Lautner’s 1949 design for Googie’s coffee shop on Sunset Boulevard, the term captured a strip highway architecture characterized by an iconic roofline, large signage, plate glass walls, artful illumination, and open-plan interiors. The aesthetic was scaled to appeal instantly from a windshield. Despite the space-age look, early examples of restaurants, coffee shops, bowling alleys, and motels were urbane, maintaining the street edge and pedestrian amenities with porches, sidewalks, and outdoor dining. As historian Alan Hess observes, Googie establishments project the social bustle of the interior onto the street through “a panoramic glass wall that allows the space to unite visually with the boulevard outside.”

**A floating signifier, the porch absorbed the automobile. Super-roofs provided surplus exterior space that sheltered walk-ins, outdoor dining patios, drive-ins, drive-throughs, and porte-cocheres.** As much substantive experimentation shaped the design of Googie buildings as the pedigreed mid-century modern houses and institutional facilities celebrated by the design professions.





29<sup>th</sup> U.S. President Warren G. Harding  
Marion, Ohio  
1921 - 1923



25<sup>th</sup> U.S. President William McKinley  
Canton, Ohio  
1897 - 1901



23<sup>rd</sup> U.S. President Benjamin Harrison  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
1889 - 1893



20<sup>th</sup> U.S. President James Garfield  
Mentor, Ohio  
1881

*The Founding Fathers' negative impression of seeking office seemed to loom over the campaign process during the nineteenth century. The first generation of American leaders lived out the adage, 'the office seeks the man, not the other way around'. Common thought held that stumping made candidates seem too aggressive . . . By the 1880s candidates such as Garfield and Harrison did not want to seem disinterested in running . . . Front porch campaigning allowed them to connect to voters, make prepared statements that would be reprinted in newspapers across the country the next day, and maintain their dignity as candidates at a time when acceptable activity for a presidential contestant was a matter of debate.*

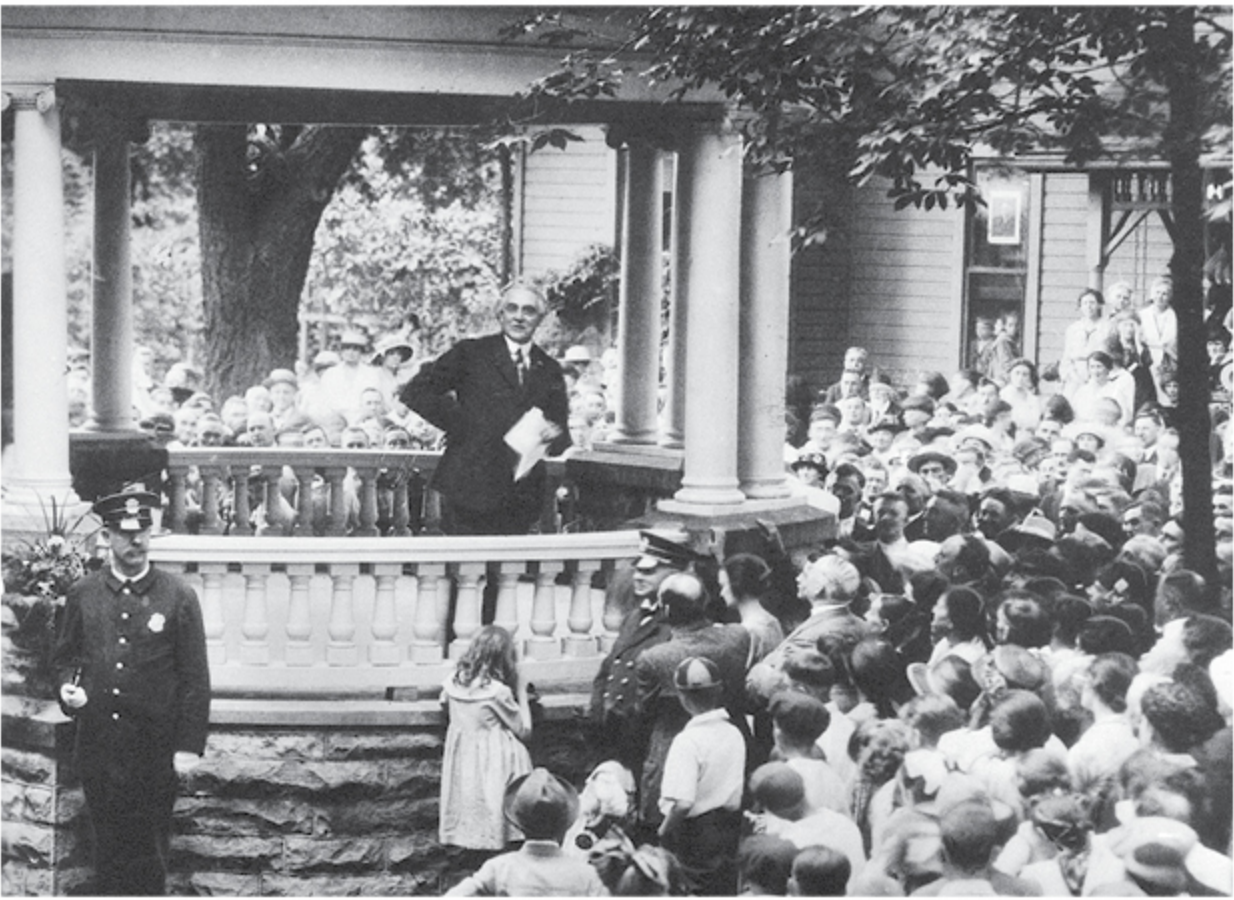
Jeffrey Normand Bourdon  
*From Garfield to Harding: The  
Success of Midwestern Front Porch Campaigns*

## Four Candidates Become U.S. President Campaigning from Their Front Porches

### Front Porch Presidential Campaigns Across Two Gilded Ages

Between 1880 and 1920, four U.S. Presidential candidates conducted their general campaigns from their home porches rather than “stump” (travel to make speeches) across the nation. They won their elections as the nation paraded to their front porches from train stations to meet the candidate and his family, hear speeches, and exchange gifts. This made the candidates appear folksy and family centered. All four candidates were Republicans associated with northern industrial interests who ran on a nativist platform of protecting family, home, community, jobs, and industry—an “America First” campaign. **The porch galvanized a shift from *spectacle* politics to an analytic educational politics centered around reading about issues, orderly meetings, and expert opinion. Here, the porch evolved from space to place.**

Such political engagement relied on a national railroad network and mass newspaper media. Republicans owned the railroads and subsidized voter travel to candidates’ homes, even building a spur line to James Garfield’s town of Mentor, Ohio. Ironically, this street theater of porch, family, and small-town America were, largely, mass marketing campaigns staged while the U.S. overtook Great Britain as the world’s leading economic power.



Harding accepts the nomination of his party, Marion, Ohio, 1920



William McKinley campaigning from his Porch, Canton, Ohio, 1896



The Notification Committee, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1888



Treaty of Mentor, Mentor, Ohio, 1880



National Woman's Party activists gather outside the home, Marion, Ohio, 1920



McKinley addressing the "Chicago Wheelmen", Canton, Ohio, 1901



Men standing with 1888 Campaign Ball, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1888



African American Civil War veterans visit James A. Garfield, Mentor, Ohio, 1881



Interpreting the Oracle, Rollin Kirby, 1920

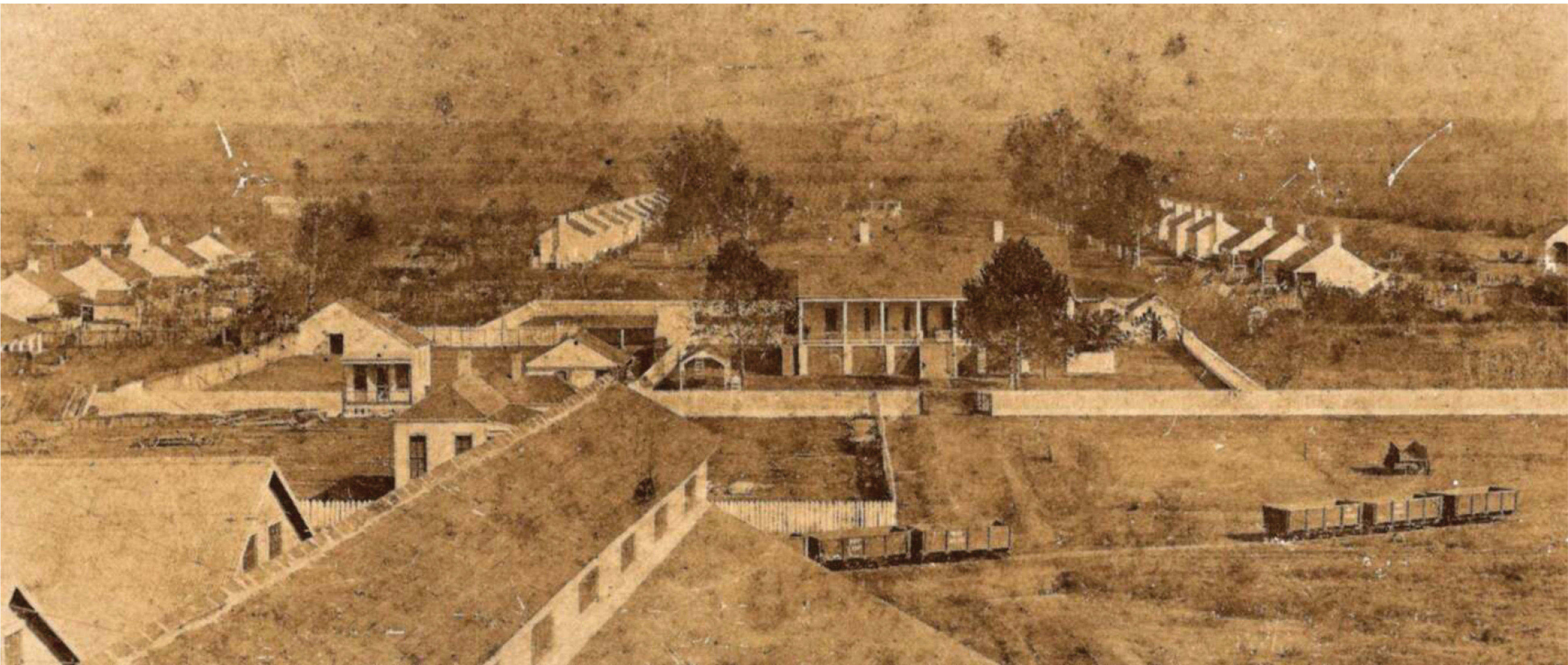


A delegation come to see Republican presidential candidate William McKinley, Canton, Ohio, 1896



Campaigning from Front of House, Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1888





The Clark Plantation of Houmas, Darrow, Louisiana, 1840



Oak Alley Plantation, Vacherie, Louisiana, 1839



The Whitney Plantation, Wallace, Louisiana, 1790



Houmas House Plantation and Gardens, Darrow, Louisiana, 1840



Slave cabin, Eufaula, Alabama



A formerly enslaved African-American couple is shown at their cabin. 1890



Knowlton Plantation, Perthshire, Mississippi



The former slave quarters of Destrehan Plantation, Destrehan, Louisiana

The Evolution of the Atlantic Linear Cottage—the Shotgun House—Originating in West Africa



Indigenous and early colonial architectural form, Haiti



Indigenous and early colonial architectural form, Haiti



West African Shotgun Porch, Haiti



West African Shotgun Porch, Haiti

*The white landscape, or more precisely the great planter's landscape, was both an articulated and a processional one. It was articulated in the sense that it consisted of a network of spaces—rooms in the house, the house itself, the outbuildings, the church with its interior pews and surrounding walled churchyard, the courthouse and its walled yard—that was linked by roads and that functioned as the setting for community interactions that each had their own particular character, but worked together to embody the community as a whole.*

Dell Upton  
White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia

Dual Histories of the Porch  
During Slavery: Visibility  
and Invisibility

White and Black Porchscapes in the “Plantation Ideal”

**In terms of race, gender, and class, porches as floating signifiers have hosted conflicting histories in the same space.** In the pre-Civil War American South, the “plantation ideal” came to dominate the region’s self-perception by centralizing the image of the White planter in the built environment. Black slaves were subordinated as the “audience” to the planter, according to historian John Michael Vlach. The plantation landscape was not simply an agricultural logistics complex but a visual town order codifying power. In its idealized form, **the planter’s house—the “big house” ringed with a veranda—was the center of a sprawling complex, while slave quarters were either hidden or centralized to amplify the visibility of the big house.** When slave house porches were arranged to aggrandize procession to the big house, it’s not clear that porches were used by slaves. Despite the oppressive master/slave order, African Americans created subaltern territories of cultural production within the plantation order centered around music, religion, storytelling, food production, and technical crafts . . . beyond the porch.





Fort William Henry Hotel, Thomas & Griffin Thomas, Lake George, New York, 1911



Fort William Henry Hotel, Thomas & Griffin Thomas, Lake George, New York, 1911



Fort William Henry Hotel, Thomas & Griffin Thomas, Lake George, New York, 1911



Ponce de León Hotel, Henry Flagler, St. Augustine, Florida, 1885



Ponce de León Hotel, Henry Flagler, St. Augustine, Florida, 1885



Ponce de León Hotel, Henry Flagler, St. Augustine, Florida, 1885



Ponce de León Hotel, Henry Flagler, St. Augustine, Florida, 1885



Tampa Bay Hotel, Henry Plant, Tampa, Florida, 1888



Tampa Bay Hotel, Henry Plant, Tampa, Florida, 1888



Tampa Bay Hotel, Henry Plant, Tampa, Florida, 1888





Grand Hotel, Mason & Rice, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1887



Grand Union Hotel, Gideon Putnam, Saratoga Springs, New York, 1836



Grand Hotel, Mason & Rice, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1887



Grand Hotel, Mason & Rice, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1887



Grand Union Hotel, Gideon Putnam, Saratoga Springs, New York, 1836



Grand Union Hotel, Gideon Putnam, Saratoga Springs, New York, 1836

### Nineteenth-Century Hotel Types

Adapted from A.K. Sandoval-Strausz, *Hotel: An American History*



#### Luxury hotel

was an ornate first-class complex for wealthy clientele with numerous social, dining, and shopping amenities—usually the most esteemed landmark in a city.



#### Commercial hotel

was built in downtown commercial districts to accommodate business travelers in the service of trade, and featured sample rooms for salesmen to display wares.



#### Middle-class hotel

was an affordable family-oriented hostelry that provided a modest but respectable environment with limited services.



#### Resort hotel

emerged from the quest among urbanites to improve their health at springs and spas in a remote wilderness setting within a day's travel from a city.



#### Railroad hotel

served as way stations on long-distance rail lines, including lodging and dining for passengers and railroad service workers.



#### Settlement hotel

was a quickly constructed structure to serve start-up towns, especially those along westward migration routes. This type used multi-story porches for business meetings and platforms from which to make speeches and announcements.

*Hotels would anchor new cities along an advancing western frontier, extending settlement across the continent; they would transform the American home by providing new models for urban living; they would give rise to new behaviors essential to the struggle against racial segregation.*

*But long before hotels adopted the logic and forms of twentieth century industrial capitalism, they had played a significant role in the elaboration and expansion of nineteenth century commercial capitalism. . . . hotels functioned as headquarters and outposts for an urbanizing commercial system.*

A. K. Sandoval-Strausz  
*Hotel: An American History*

## The Porch in the Formation of the Hotel as a Social Technology

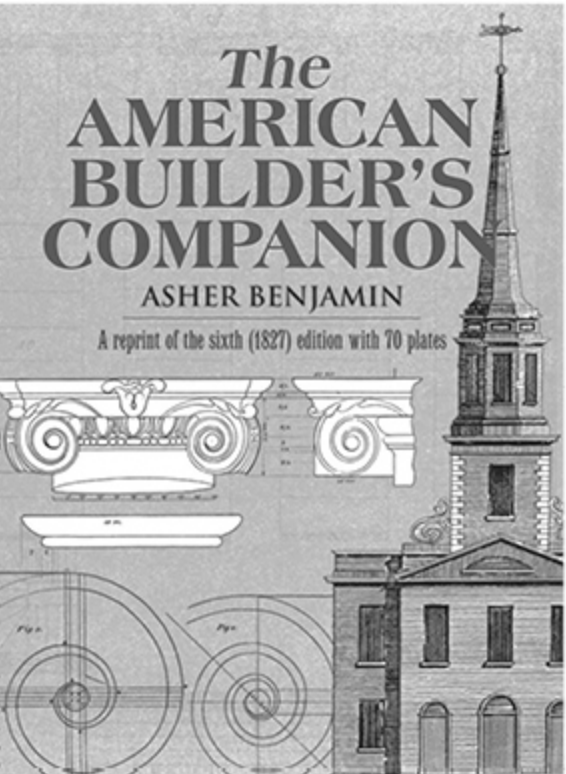
### The Nineteenth-Century Resort Hotel: Verandas, Wilderness, and Railroads

Porches played a major role in the development of the American hotel as “a social technology”, according to A. K. Sandoval-Strausz in his history of the American hotel. Replacing provincial public houses (inns) based on household hospitality, the hotel arose after the War of 1812 as a commercially-scaled response to heightened frontier development, metropolitanization, and newfound tourism. Among the new hotel types in an emergent national system, porches were key to the business models of the resort and settlement hotel. Settlement hotels—what historian Daniel Boorstin called “booster hotels”—were crossroads establishments to promote Western start-up cities.

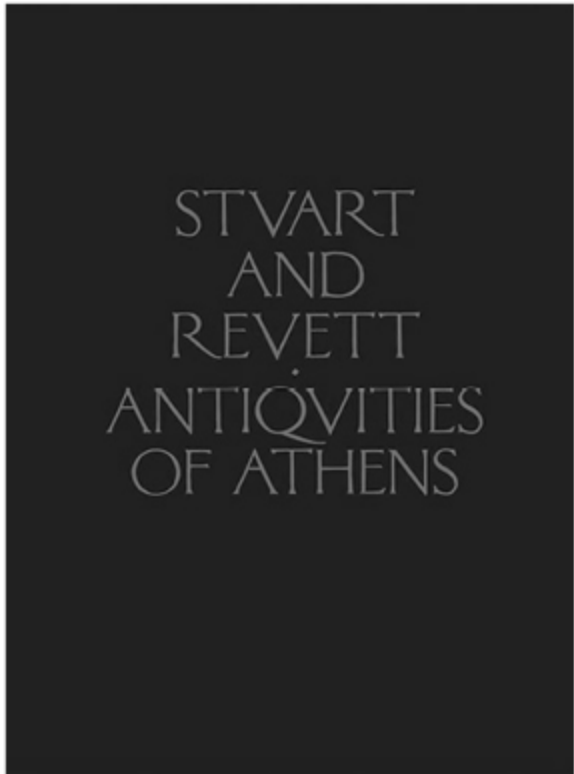
The resort hotel was a wilderness destination for urbanites seeking escape from the city, initially to improve their health at nearby mineral springs. The veranda was the interface between dramatic water, mountain, or forest scenery and resort amenities. **The veranda also became the stage for new expressions of hospitality, status, and conviviality (e.g., “marriage markets”) among diverse populations traveling from afar.** Sandoval-Strausz argues that the social life of resort hotels quickly eclipsed health as the main driver of their popularity.



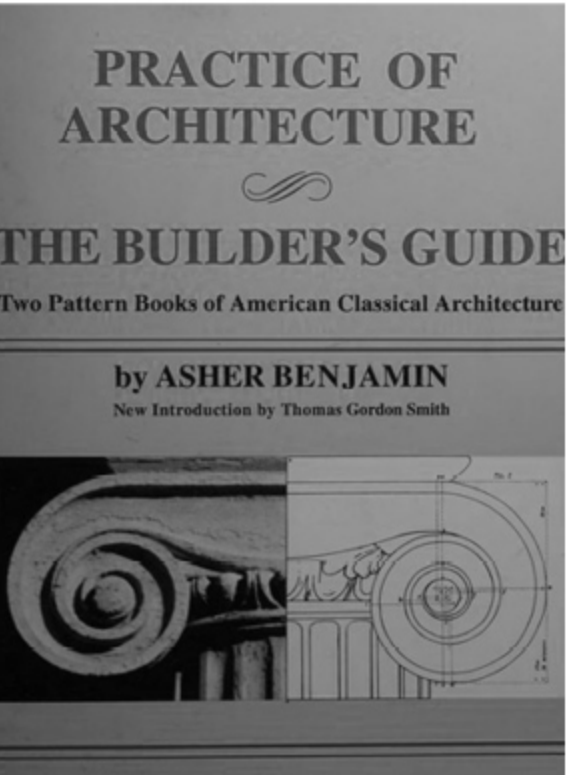
**New Architectural Pattern Books in the Nineteenth Century that Transmitted the Language of Classical Architecture**



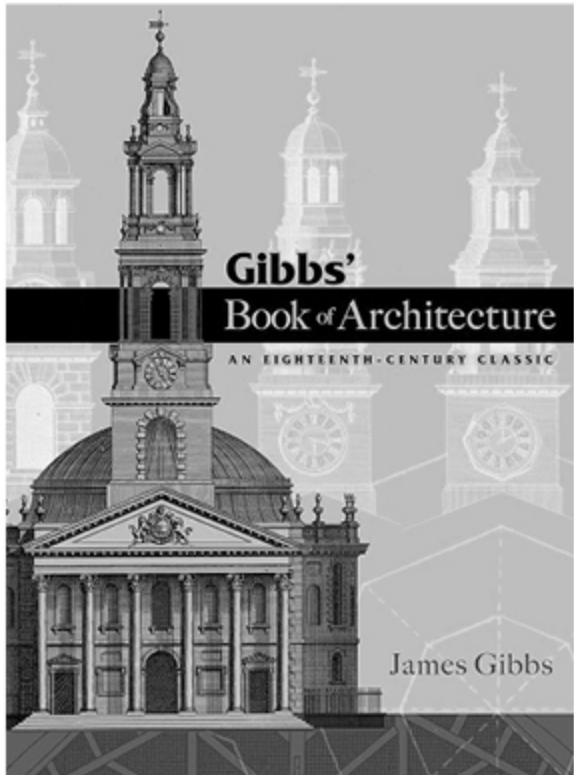
*The American Builder's Companion*, Asher Benjamin, 1826



*Antiquities of Athens*, Nicholas Stewart and James Revett, 1762



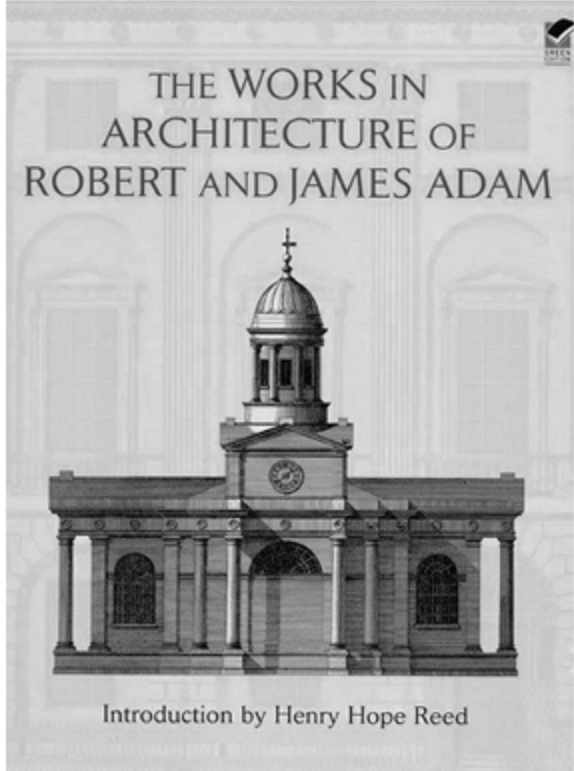
*Practice of Architecture*, Asher Benjamin, 1833 and 1839



*Book of Architecture*, James Gibbs, 1778



*I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura* (The Four Books of Architecture), Andrea Palladio, 1570, the first English edition published in 1738 by Isaac Ware



*Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, James Adam, late 1770s

Neoclassical Revivals were accompanied by the professionalization of architecture in the U.S. beginning with the nation's first professionally-educated architect, British-American Benjamin Latrobe (1764-1820). Latrobe was architect of the first version of the U.S. Capitol as well as the Philadelphia Water Works. Previously, well-educated gentlemen-amateur architect who studied European classical architecture pattern books were behind the nation's architectural accomplishments. One example is Founding Father and the third U.S. President Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826). Jefferson studied Palladio as he prepared plans for his self-coined "academical village" at the University of Virginia, the Virginia Capitol, and his estate Monticello.

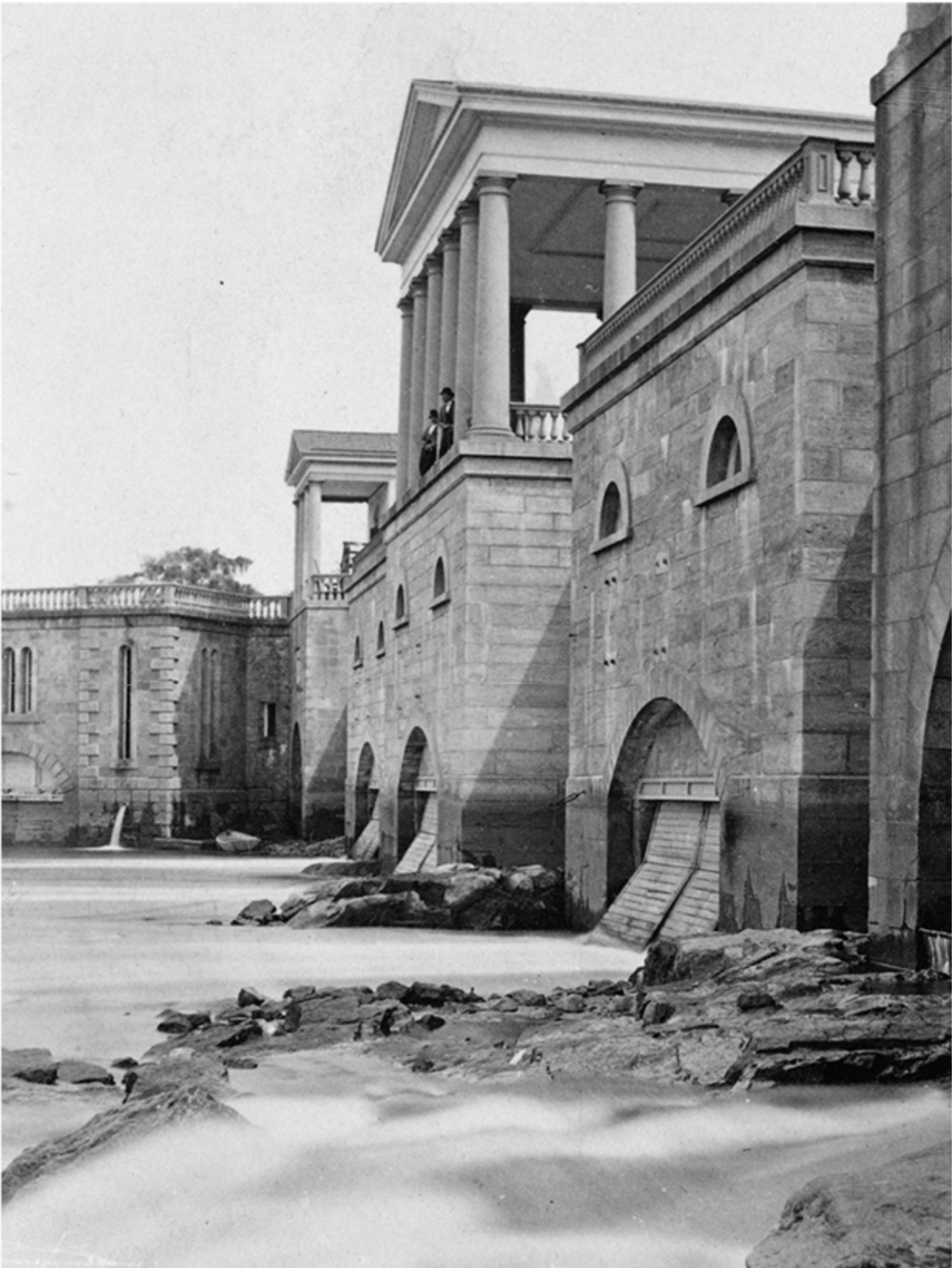
Neoclassicism was a watershed for the U.S. built environment in terms of scale, symbolism, and theoretical knowledge, as historian William Pierson notes in his *American Buildings and Their Architects*. "Architecture of the colonial period had been limited by the knowledge of the gentleman-amateur, and in construction to that which could be accomplished by the carpenter and the bricklayer. With but one known exception, not a single important building of the colonial period was vaulted." The porch, too, was classicized and rendered monumental at an urban scale.



Fairmount Water Works, Benjamin Latrobe and Frederick Graff, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1812



Fairmount Water Works, Benjamin Latrobe and Frederick Graff, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1812



Fairmount Water Works, Benjamin Latrobe and Frederick Graff, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1812



Fairmount Water Works, Benjamin Latrobe and Frederick Graff, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1812



Pennsylvania Station, McKim, Mead, and White, New York City, 1910



Union Station, Daniel Burnham, Columbus, Ohio, 1897



New York Public Library, John Mervin Carrere and Thomas Hastings, New York City, 1911



Louisville Water Works, Theodore Scowden, Louisville, Kentucky, 1860





University of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1819



University of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1819



University of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1819



Arkansas State House, Gideon Shryock, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1833



U.S. Department of the Treasury, Robert Mills, Washington D.C., 1836



Market House, Thomas Grimes, Fayetteville, North Carolina, 1838



United States Capitol, William Thornton and Benjamin Latrobe, Washington D.C., 1800



St. Philip's Church, Edward Brickell White, Charleston, South Carolina, 1835

Although manifestly derived from the ancient architecture of ancient Greece it [Greek Revival style] was both literary and pictorial in conception, and because it was unencumbered by any technical or formal predispositions it became equally accessible to all levels of society. Nowhere in American history up to this time had a mode of building been so closely identified with the common man, and in its fulfillment of a common need it assumed all the characteristics of a national style.

William H. Pierson, Jr.  
*American Buildings and Their Architects: Volume 1, The Colonial and Neoclassical Styles*

## New Publics: Classical Order and the Porch's Monumentalization

New institutions seeking expressions of order and authority after 1800 looked to the Greek Revival building idiom, distinguished by its columnar porch embodying the Classical Orders. **By America's post-revolutionary period, the Founding Fathers' incorporation of classical philosophies to underwrite Enlightenment-based political institutions was matched by a turn to classicism in architecture.** American Neoclassicism included a variety of Federal, Regency, and Renaissance styles, highlighted by the enthusiastic adoption of Greek Revival—America's first truly national building style. Greek Revival architecture was developed through a new professional class of architects using architectural pattern books produced in Europe and the U.S. As if the U.S. was the natural heir to Greek democracy, the Greek Revival style became so popular it entered the American vernacular. Greek Revival marked the advent of bigness in the U.S. economy: metropolitanization, big banking, industrialization, continent-wide infrastructure building (canals then railroads), specialization, and frontier development, heralding the end of the nation's colonial phase.





# Dwelling

Porches and the way we live







#### Arcade

is a porch or walkway made from a series of arches with either pier or column supports.



#### Charleston Side Porch or Piazza

is a gallery along the side of a town house facing west or south, overlooking a side yard. The porch is the circulation system for these one-room wide town houses introduced to the U.S. in the mid-1700s by Caribbean migrants.



#### Colonnade

is a classical porch with a row of eight or more columns supporting an entablature. It can be free-standing, like a Greek stoa, or attached to a building, even wrapping the building as a continuous perimeter.



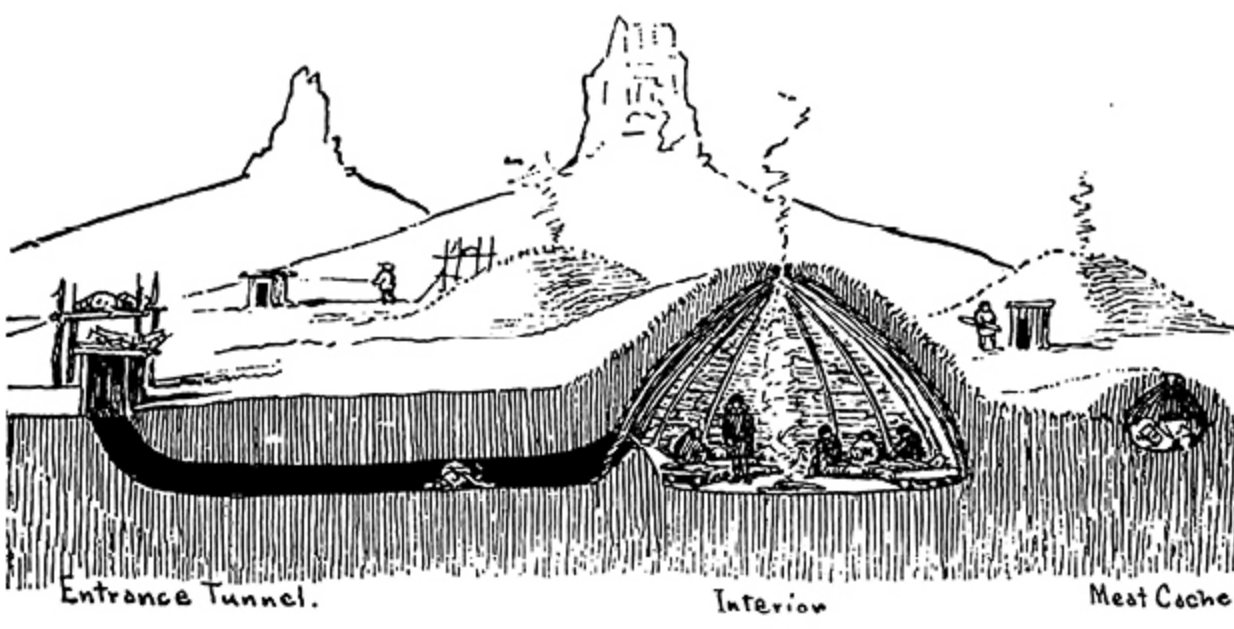
#### Dogtrot

is a breezeway connecting two residential building masses in the hot and humid American South. While sharing one roof, independent housing functions optimize ventilation for natural cooling.



#### Gallery

derived from the French word *galerie* is a shallow porch or multi-storied porch used as a promenade. In French-settled American cities like New Orleans, galleries were often built over the sidewalk providing covered public passage.



#### Inuit Antechamber

is the main entrance to a distant winter house connected by a tunnel to keep the coldest air out of the earthen interior space.



#### Lanai

is a Hawaiian term for a roofed outdoor living area that extends interior living space to the outdoors.



#### Loggia

is an Italian term for a gallery that is recessed into the body of a building, sometimes on the ground floor of the building. Verandas are roofed structures attached to the outside of a building.



#### Monterey

is a two-story balcony porch in coastal California that mixed local Hispanic and Anglo traditions introduced by New England migrants between the 1830s and the 1850s.



#### Piazza

is an antiquated reference used by Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to designate a porch that is used as a living space beyond a simple covered entry.



#### Portal

is a Spanish term indicating a porch or passageway that extends along a side of the building to connect rooms, like a veranda.



#### Portico

is a classical porch with a row of seven or less columns supporting an entablature framing a building entrance.



#### Ramada

is an open shelter with a fabric or grass roof fronting the collective summer house and individual houses of southwest Native American tribal compounds.



#### Shotgun Porch

built by African slaves and freedmen throughout the Americas was likely derived from houses in West Africa. Shotgun houses are narrow one-room wide houses without hallways as rooms are stacked one behind the other.



#### Stoop

derives from the Dutch word *stoep* designating a step or platform that foregrounds a building entrance. Most stoops were uncovered, though more elaborate ones had a small roof covering side benches.



#### Veranda

is a roofed open-air hallway or porch across or around a building. The building tradition was brought to America by the British from India, though the origin of the word is unknown.

*Every economic stratum had its porch. . . . Different incomes meant different forms of porch life.*

Michael Dolan

*The American Porch: An Informal History of an Informal Place*

## Genealogy of the American Porch: A “Melting Pot” of Porch Traditions

### U.S. History is the Story of Migrations and Creolization

The *Columbian Exchange* following Christopher Columbus’ 1492 voyage to the Americas was the single largest hemispheric transfer of cultural and biotic material in flora, fauna, and disease between Old and New Worlds. It also brought multiple vernacular traditions of home and porch to the United States. **Porch traditions from Europe including Italian, Dutch, French, Greek, and Spanish influences, were creolized with typologies introduced from West Africa via the Caribbean, India through the British, and Native American and Pacific Island traditions already present in the U.S.** Notably, the Transatlantic Slave Trade transferred new cultural and agricultural material, including technologies, from Africa to the New World.

Vernacular architecture refers to domestic and utilitarian buildings constructed within shared customs of place, materials, and techniques by local builders without professional or academical guidance. They exist outside canonical traditions of architecture and buildings designed by architects. While porches were diffused throughout the U.S., identifiable porch traditions existed within regionally specific architectural idioms.





**Bank**  
Mount Holly, New Jersey, 1821



**Boardinghouse**  
Dorchester County, South Carolina, 1790



**Courthouse**  
Mount Holly, New Jersey, 1796

*Indeed, the design and construction of houses became a locus for debating broadly shared concerns about cultural development. Moreover, by thinking through the variety of counterpublics that undertook the multivalent meanings of the domestic, we can move away from separating a masculine public world from a private feminine space. The house is not a realm removed from a larger public world, but the lens through which Americans of both genders and from a variety of different political and social orientations, a host of counterpublics, sought to examine the state of the Republic.*

Duncan Faherty  
*Remodeling the Nation: The Architecture of American Identity, 1776-1858*



**Firehouse**  
Milton, Massachusetts, 1881



**House of God**  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1866



**Meetinghouse**  
Boston, Massachusetts, 1762



**Post House**  
Hinsdale, New Hampshire, 1816



**Public House**  
West Caln, Pennsylvania, 1805



**Schoolhouse**  
Springfield, Vermont, 1790



**Statehouse**  
Boston, Massachusetts, 1713



**Trading Post**  
Williamsburg, Virginia, 1737



**Warehouse**  
Pawtucket, Rhode Island, 1793

## A Nation of Houses Begot a Nation of Porches

### Building Blocks of a New Republic

The national identity of the United States was formed around the figures of the citizen and the gabled house. The household in colonial America was the basic unit of economic production and social reproduction. It was not until the nineteenth century that institutional typologies were formulated with orientations beyond the house. Throughout their history, Americans mobilized the house as a metaphor for assessing their political and social conditions, while vernacular house forms offered the geometrical models for constructing public buildings across the built environment.

Public buildings were developed through vernacular forms of the *house*—**courthouses**, **houses of worship**, **schoolhouses**, **meetinghouses** or **town houses** (archaic term for city halls), **public houses** (inns/taverns), **boardinghouses**, **statehouses**, **firehouses**, **post houses**, and **warehouses**. Likewise, commercial buildings, including stores, trading posts, and banks, reflected house forms. Rather than the private retreat that it is now, the domestic sphere before the twentieth century was a prism through which to enact a larger public life in America.





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**Client/Sponsor**

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