





**Core Idea:**  
Empathy Through Design

*Second Floor Apartment*

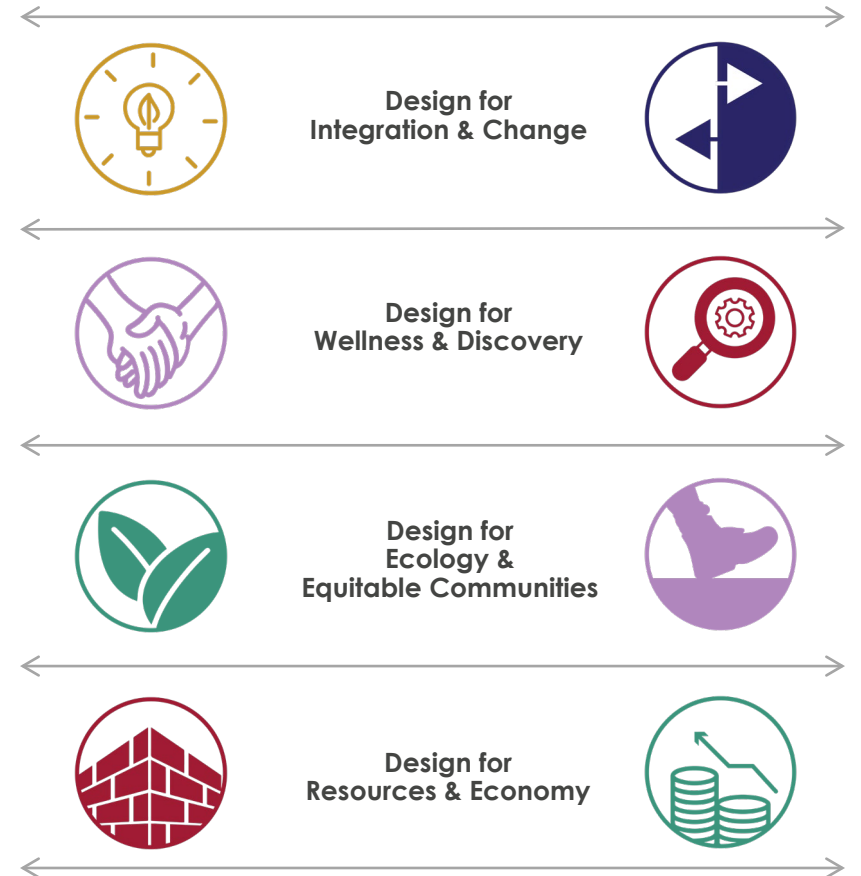
Every person, regardless of means, deserves to live in a space tailored towards their health and well-being; a space woven within the materiality and fabric of their community.

- **Empathy Through Design**
- **Resiliency Through Renovation**



The Miller Building is a case study in how a derelict building in a historic district of the city can be re-imagined as a supportive and sustainable opportunity to provide transitional living for formerly homeless community members.

Through considerable coordination, a shared vision centered on **empathy through design** and **resiliency through renovation** influenced every aspect of the project and can be examined through the following means.

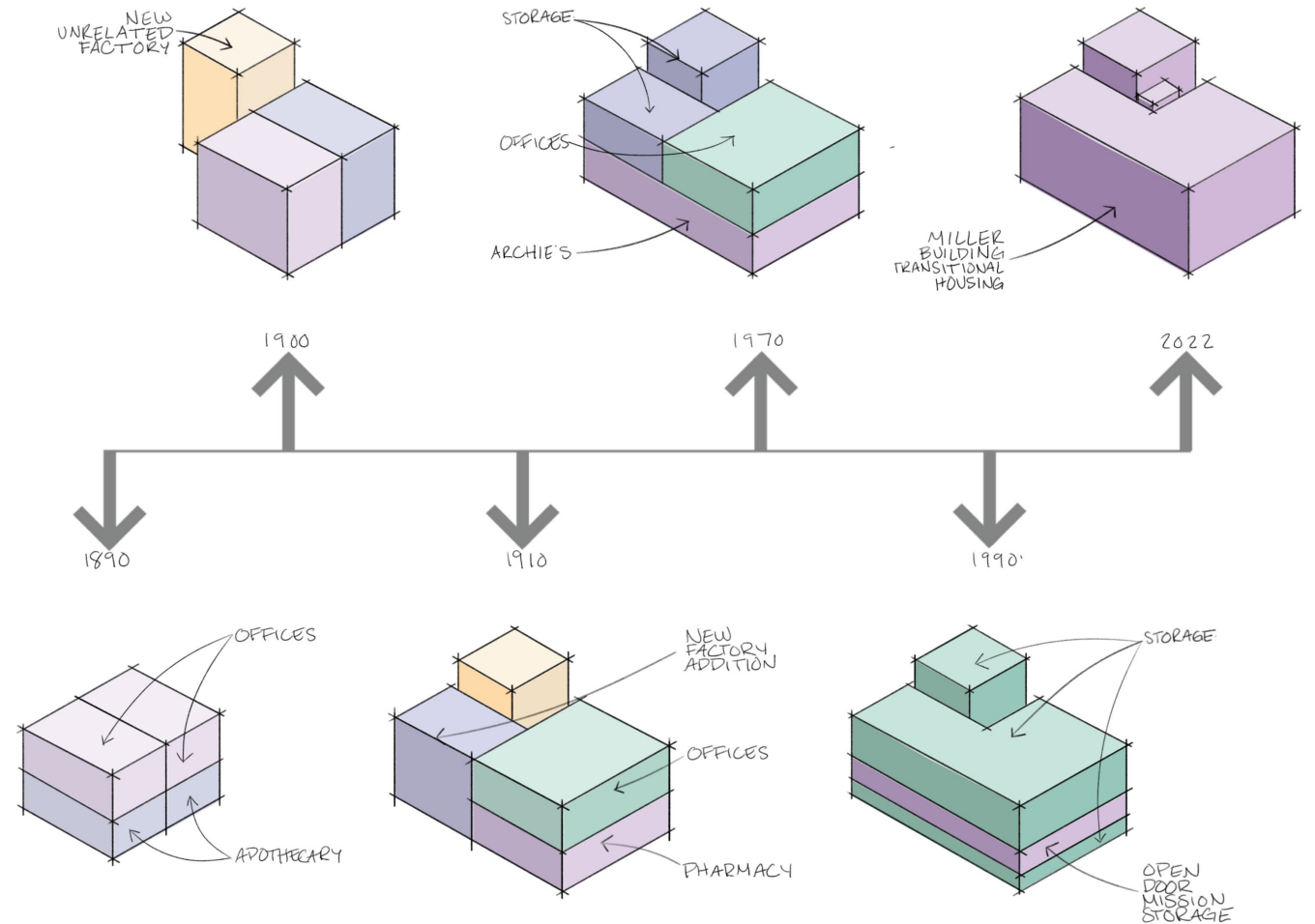


# Design for Integration & Change



**Resiliency Through Renovation:** Existing structure and materials were preserved and reinforced to guarantee longevity and ensure a wider, more diverse program in the future. A critical first step was to understand the history and use of the building over 130 years.

**Capturing History:** A merging of old and new, the history of the building was captured through preservation and re-use of materials to provide a supportive yet familiar place for individuals to re-establish themselves..



**Use Over Time:** Over 130 years the Miller Building was expanded and re-purposed multiple times.



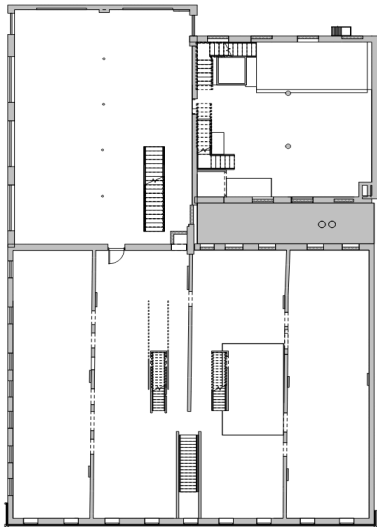
**Integration & Change:  
Existing Upper Floors**

*The existing patchwork of openings and markings on the floor speak towards cycles of re-use and abandonment.  
The interior masonry wall would become the separating wall between kitchens and living rooms.*

## I. Capturing:

Extensive documentation provided assessment of limitations and opportunities of existing conditions and future remediation.

Tours with ownership group were conducted to identify historic elements and materials that could be preserved.

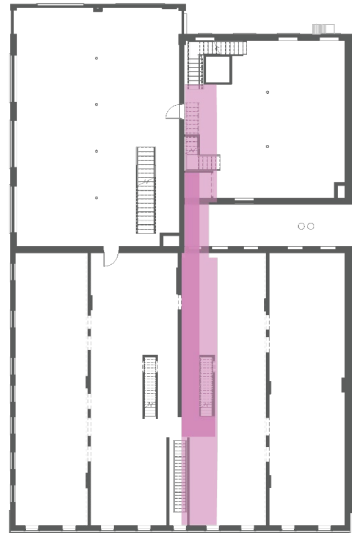


Existing Plan

## II. Connection:

Functionality and tenant wellness considerations emphasized the need for straightforward connections.

A central corridor concept emerged, straddling 3 buildings and requiring a new addition in the lightwell. Vertical circulation is provided by the new stairs and elevator.

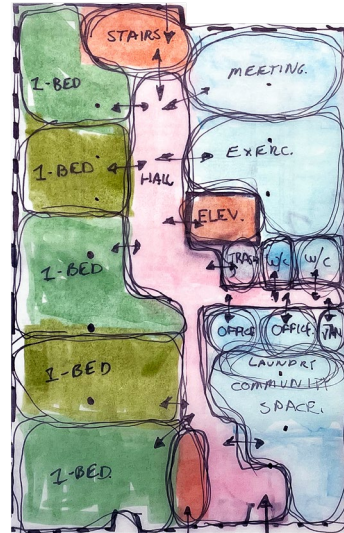


Existing Corridor Layout

## III. Concept:

Emphasis on daylight and exterior envelope improvements dictated early design.

Improved building safety, equitable access, and tenant needs pushed the concept towards completion.

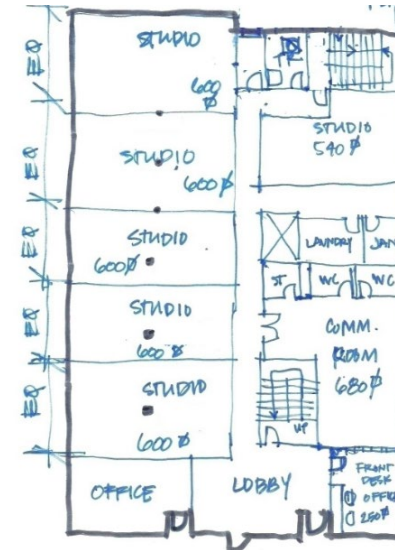


Initial Bubble Diagram

## IV. Consensus:

Input from the ownership group, future contractor, design team and consultants, funding sources, and preservation specialists further articulated the concepts.

Several rounds ensured buy-in from all stakeholders.

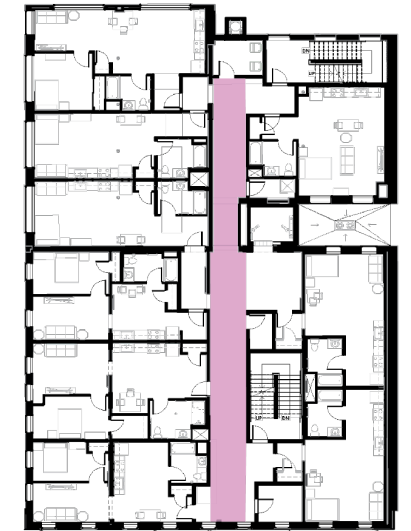


Refined Concept

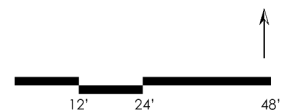
## V. Completion:

Reinforced with a tighter envelope, straightforward layout, and accessibility / safety in mind.

Preserving existing masonry and openings while re-utilizing removed materials help preserve the history of the building through its next stage.



Final Plan





**Integration & Change:  
Before & After Corridor**

*The final corridor unifies the three buildings and stretches the full length of the building.*

# Design for Wellness & Discovery



Many homeless individuals have experienced considerable trauma around housing, interfering with and eventually preventing them from finding permanent housing and escaping the cycle of homelessness.

**Empathy Through Design:** The design team incorporated elements of Trauma Informed Design and WELL Building Standards into the project, reflecting the mission of the non-profit to provide safe and supportive housing. The goal was that regardless of an individual's experience, they would feel welcome.

- **Wayfinding:** Complicated existing layout simplified.
- **Nature:** A tenant is never more than one room from a window. Tans and warm browns are emphasized, uniting existing building elements with new finishes. Comfort is brought in through biophilic decorations and plants.
- **Lighting:** Exterior lighting is maximized and celebrated with decorative historic windows.
- **Autonomy:** The tenant can control their surroundings for their own comfort with operable windows, blinds, temperature controls, light controls, and visual/auditory privacy.
- **Place:** 130 years of history are re-used and on display.
- **Health:** The staircase is placed prominently at the entrance to promote use over the elevator.
- **Staff:** Wellness extends to staff spaces with ample light and considerations for safety, security, and privacy.







**Wellness & Discovery:  
Daylighting Section**

*South facing windows in the corridor ensure that anyone entering the corridor from an apartment, stair, or elevator immediately knows where they are in relation to the rest of the building and the surrounding neighborhood.*



**Wellness & Discovery:  
Before & After Apartment**

Openings through masonry were minimized, helping to create unique apartments. When openings were required, they were aligned with windows to ensure maximum access to exterior light.

# Design for Ecology & Equitable Communities



Almost the entirety of the Miller Building lot is taken up by the building. Improving ecology and equitable communities involved improving efficiencies and identifying what the surrounding community requires.

**Resiliency Through Renovation:** By improving what is there, notable improvements to ecology can be made and equitable communities can be developed.

- **No New Parking:** Tenants take mass-transit and no additional space from the community was set aside for parking.
- **Mass Transit:** The bus stop is directly outside the lobby entrance, allowing for the space to be a climate-controlled waiting area for tenants. Half a dozen bus routes stop right outside the front entry.
- **Centrally Located:** Renovating existing property means tenants are already centrally located with many shops, services, and exercise trails within half a mile.
- **Celebrating Health:** Stairs are the first option people see when they enter. Windows to the stairway increase visibility.
- **Community:** Meeting and community spaces are located front and center.
- **Improved Water Treatment:** Updated drainage prevents runoff from entering surrounding streets and is treated at the combined treatment plant.
- **Preserving Nature:** Surrounding trees were preserved during exterior renovations.



*Northward: Entertainment options.*

*Eastward: shops and hundreds of miles of accessible trails.*

*Westward: Shops & Services.*



**Ecology & Equitable Communities:  
New Corridor**

*Painted with the Open Door Mission's signature color, the stairs immediately draw the eye of tenants and guests.*



**Ecology & Equitable Communities:  
Before & After Lobby**

*Removing a wall along the façade opened the lobby. Existing tin ceilings were removed and re-purposed in community spaces. A warm and inviting entry provides a temperature-controlled space to wait for guests or public transportation.*

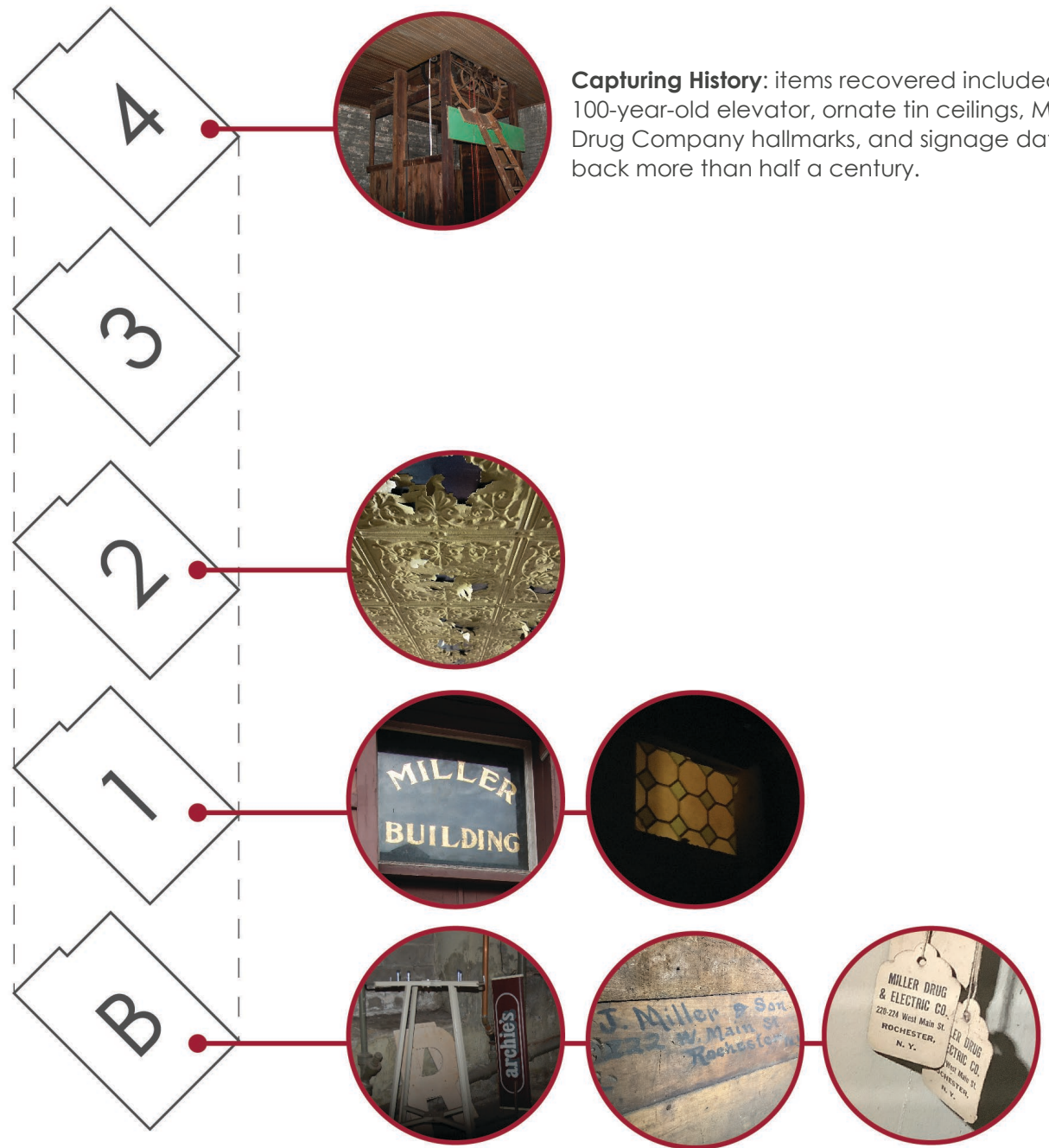
## Design for Resources & Economy



The Miller Building has sought new purposes over 130 years, resulting in an abundance of existing materials. While much had to be removed, attempts were made to re-use as much of the existing material as possible, reducing the need to buy new materials.

**Resiliency Through Renovation:** Major supply chain complications and Covid-related hurdles required constant communication between stakeholders to resolve and progress the project.

- **Capturing History:** Input was sought early in the project from the Historic Preservation Office on historically significant building elements worth preserving.
- **Tin Ceiling.** The existing tin ceilings were re-used as wainscoting and ceiling finishes on the first floor, reducing the need for new materials.
- **Existing Openings:** The design preserved existing openings to create unique and cozy diversification of spaces. When bricks had to be removed, they were kept and re-purposed.
- **Roof Lumber:** A significant amount of quality lumber was salvaged for use on future projects from a removed built-over roof.
- **Sense of Place:** Special plans were created to salvage various items from the building for re-use in decorating the space and to provide a historical connection to the building's past.



**Capturing History:** items recovered included a 100-year-old elevator, ornate tin ceilings, Miller Drug Company hallmarks, and signage dating back more than half a century.



**Resources & Economy:  
Salvaged Ceiling**

*The design team was able to see beyond the decrepit existing conditions and imagine the recovery and reutilization of the ornate tin ceilings.*



**Resources & Economy:**  
Staff Offices

*The beautiful views, plentiful sunlight and comfortable spaces are extended to staff.*



# Community Impact Award

How we value people is reflected in how we as a community value space. Abandonment, neglect, and deterioration of buildings is a tangible experience forced by chance on those most often in greatest need. It permeates the environment with moldy stale mustiness in the air, discolored rings on the ceiling, dust caked in corners, and cold rooms that are poorly lit. In the face of such experience, the community impact goal was simple and straightforward; to renovate an abandoned century old building that had a lot of character and give it a new life as apartments for those escaping poverty and beginning their next great adventure. Completing this task required significant collaboration between the client, Open Door Mission; the agency assisting with state tax credits, the State Historic Preservation Office; Hueber-Breuer Construction; and a team of structural and mechanical engineers. Through the entire process the future tenant came first, influencing the layout.

Situated on a primary mass transit corridor, The Miller Building provides 24 transitional living apartments. Support was first gathered by the surrounding building owners who came together behind the client to recognize the good work Open Door Mission was doing in helping the homeless in the area. By transforming the Miller Building, the corner entrance to the Cascade District would be transformed from a derelict building into a hub of residents, community outreach, and support. Exterior brick facades were reappointed, new windows were installed, and new storefronts were placed. Opening the facade, both building fronts were cleaned up and altered to provide a uniform aesthetic.

Stepping into the Miller Building, tenants and staff enter a large, well-lit lobby which also acts as a space for waiting for the bus in bad weather. New materials and flooring mix with historic wood and brick to create a series of unique common room spaces. Stairwells are prominently displayed, offering a quicker and healthier alternative to taking the elevator. Individual rooms incorporate the high ceilings and unique window conditions of the historic building, resulting in charming spaces that are small, but comfortable and full of light.

The corridors are aligned with windows, reducing confusion and always providing a sense of place. Gradual changes allow wheelchair accessibility to nearly every apartment.





Existing



Construction



Complete

Evolution of Vertical Circulation



*This project brought the community together in a meaningful way to serve those who most need our help.*