



ELEVATIONS

Building on the dynamic character of 13th Street, the 6-story front façade is conceived as a series of layers. A brick façade with raised-seam metal cladding above forms a backdrop that connects the building with the traditional fabric of this Philadelphia street. In contrast, a floating plane of boldly-colored cement board floats forward of this backdrop, punctuated by a large scale opening to announce the building’s entrance. This floating panel serves to reduce the perceived mass of the building and mediate between the differing scales of neighboring structures. It also creates an interstitial zone behind it where most of the building’s through-wall louvers and other mechanical penetrations are hidden.



JOHN C. ANDERSON APARTMENTS



This project is a 56-unit affordable senior housing development, located at the heart of the “Gayborhood” section of Philadelphia’s historic Washington Square West neighborhood. The area is the traditional center of LGBT life in the Philadelphia region, and activists within that community were instrumental in securing major funding to enable this project’s development. They also remained heavily involved through-out the project’s programming and design. John C Anderson Apartments is the first project to be developed in the eastern United States with such involvement and with a mission of providing inclusive “LGBT-friendly” affordable senior housing. Its realization has been the source of great community pride.

MASSING AND SECTIONS

The development fronts on 13th Street where it is surrounded by older mixed-use structures ranging from 4-14 stories in height. It also extends back to Camac Street, one of Philadelphia’s narrowest and most charming “little streets” where cobblestone paving and 2-4 story historic structures still prevail. Sides of the parcel are bounded by a neighbor’s party wall and a narrow service alley.

Anderson’s plan configuration and building massing were largely driven by these neighboring conditions. The structure steps down from 6 stories to 4 stories as it approaches the smaller scale of Camac Street. The wing that runs along the service alley is arranged in a single-loaded configuration so as to minimize the impact of nuisances emanating from that alley and a high-rise structure only 6’ away. This approach allows for the creation of the project’s large sun-filled courtyard space. It also insures that all residents enjoy either a street or central courtyard view. A roof terrace above the 4-story section of the building provide additional outdoor amenitie for residents, and has become the spot for “sunris yoga”.

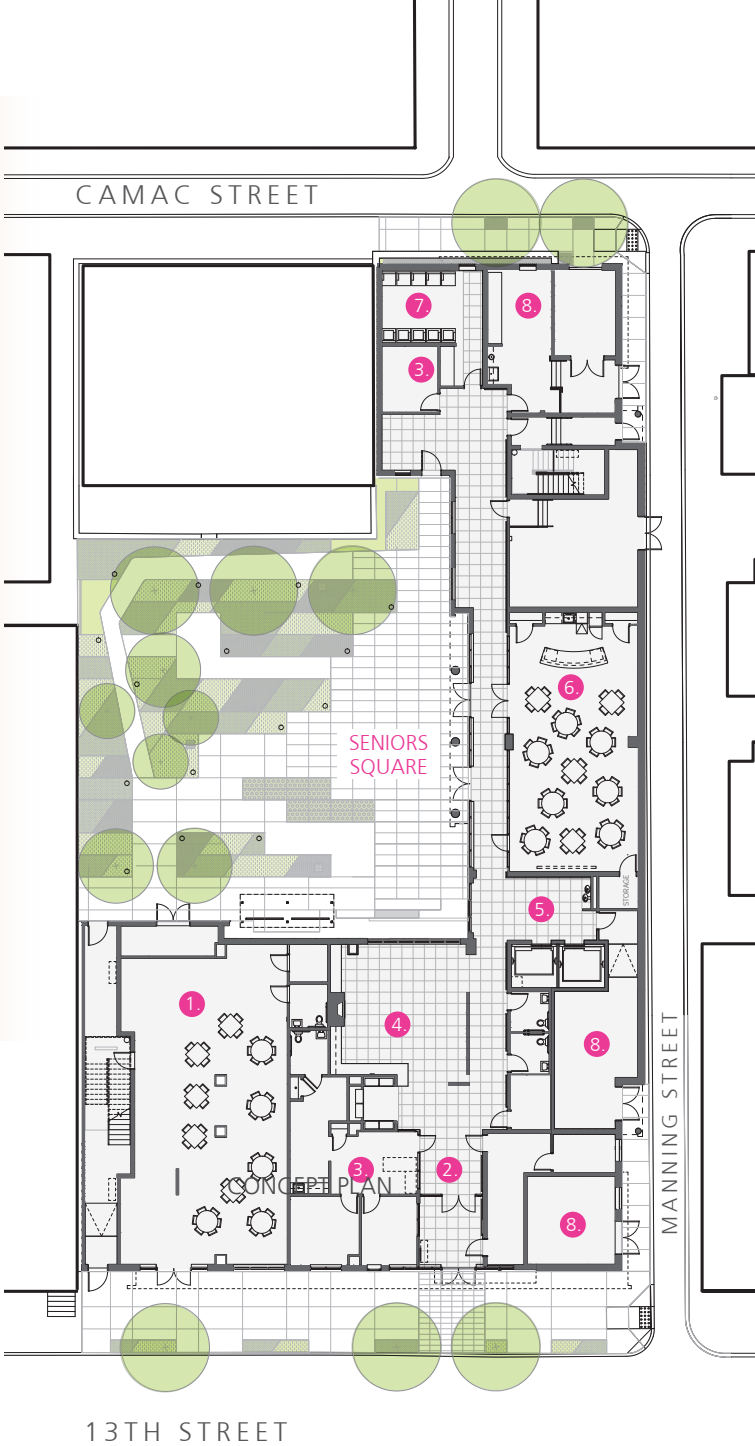
BUILDING ENVELOPE & SUSTAINABLE FEATURES

Exterior walls are designed to function as high performance rain screens while still adhering to strict budgetary constraints. This was achieved in part by limiting the palate of exterior finish materials to modest-cost ones such as fiber cement panels, and then relying on changes in color and edge detailing to add variation and richness to the facades. An array of solar panels on the structure’s main roof is used raise the temperature of water entering the building’s central domestic hot water heaters, thereby substantially reducing energy costs. The project also includes a large area of vegetated roofing and an underground storm water detention system which together reduce discharge into the City’s sewer system by more than 20% over the site’s previous development.

GOALS & NEIGHBORHOOD INTEGRATION

The project’s sponsors were eager to minimize the sense of generational segregation often associated with senior housing developments by creating a building that feels welcoming to passers-by and is fully engaged with the broader surrounding neighborhood. At the same time, the need to provide a safe and secure environment as residents “age in place” was very well understood.

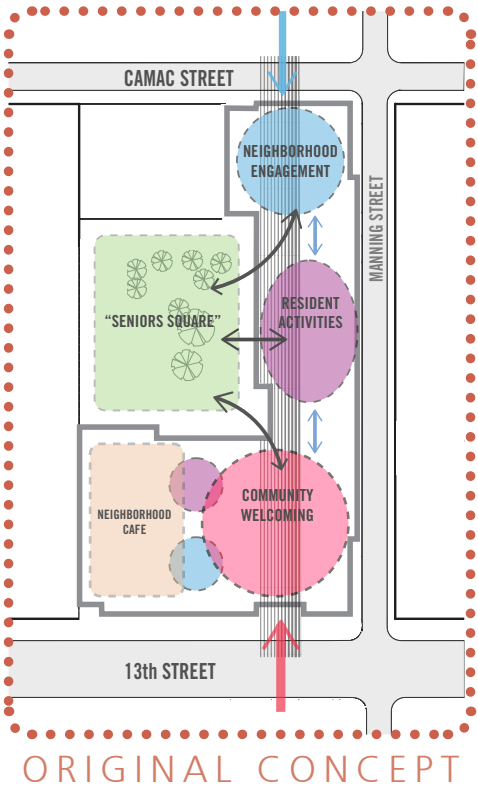
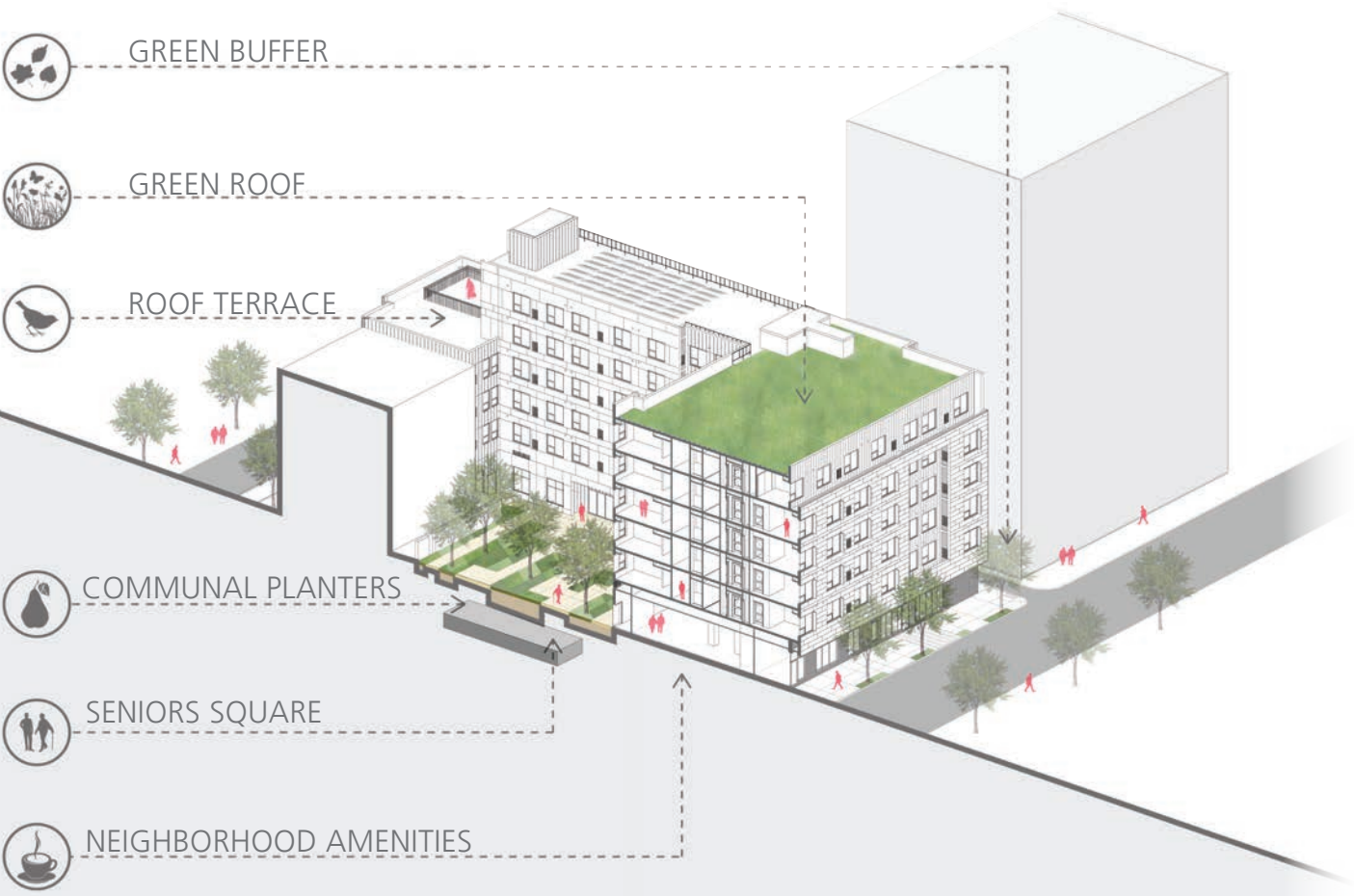
The original concept organized resident common facilities along a ground-floor interior circulation spine that could be accessed at each end from entries on both 13th & Camac Streets. While the secondary (Camac Street) entry was eventually eliminated for control purposes, the goal of organizing ground floor spaces so that they could be shared with the broader community on a limited basis remained. The resulting design includes a 1,000 square foot multi-purpose room, informal lounge spaces, an alcove for a growing LGBT-oriented library, and other support services, all organized around a large internal courtyard that’s been dubbed “Seniors Square”. The Square includes a variety of passive recreational spaces as well as areas for bicycle parking, grilling, community gardening, and other active uses. Pedestrians walking past the development’s main entrance are given a glimpse of this rare urban oasis, and the building’s management has begun to make the space available for special neighborhood-wide events.



13TH STREET

GROUND FLOOR

- 1. NEIGHBORHOOD CAFE
- 2. ENTRY / LOBBY / MAIL
- 3. OFFICE / RESIDENT SERVICES
- 4. LOBBY / COMMUNITY LIVING ROOM
- 5. ELEVATOR LOBBY
- 6. COMMUNITY MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
- 7. LAUNDRY
- 8. BUILDING SUPPORT SERVICES



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