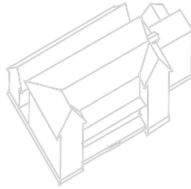


AN IDYLLIC RECLUSION

TRAVEL  TO "ANOTHER WORLD"

YIDI LI
DREXEL UNIVERSITY
M.S. INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
GRADUATE THESIS



AN IDYLLIC RECLUSION

Wellness Retreat for Anxiety Relief and Spiritual Healing

YIDI LI

ADVISOR: LISA PATUSKY

DREXEL UNIVERSITY

M.S. INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

GRADUATE THESIS

2022 - 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When I began my thesis design, the first question I asked myself was, "Is a life without anxiety possible?" Many of us have become accustomed to waking, working, and sleeping amidst anxiety. How can we transition from a constant state of anxiety to one where we occasionally experience it but are predominantly happy?

Achieving a life without anxiety becomes possible when we free ourselves from the compulsive pursuit of specific goals and the sense of belonging they provide. It's vital to understand who we are, cultivate a consistent sense of peace, and build self-confidence. Nature plays a therapeutic role in promoting mental health by reducing activation in the amygdala — the stress-related brain area — and by preventing mental disorders like anxiety and depression.

My thesis explore the possibility of leading a less anxious life by leveraging the therapeutic effects of natural environments and practices such as yoga and meditation. It will delve into how architecture, intertwined with the natural environment, can nurture a closer bond between individuals and nature. This bond, supplemented by mindfulness practices, can mitigate anxiety, enhance psychological well-being, and ultimately boost our happiness index, leading to a more peaceful daily existence.

TOPIC STATEMENT

My thesis will explore how to alleviate anxiety by creating a functional nature-involved built environment. I will explore this by designing a place embedded in the natural environment, experienced through procession, to allow for stress reduction. My aim is to create a space to help combat anxiety and connect us with nature.





- PROJECT** Bushiju·Lin | 不是居·林
- LOCATION** Hangzhou, China
- ARCHITECT** TAOA | 陶磊建筑事务所
- INSPIRATION** Introduce the natural landscape into the interior and embrace nature





PROJECT YAZA | 野在山川

LOCATION Huzhou, China

ARCHITECT Ke Xie, Yang Zhao

INSPIRATION The layout of the house is laid out according to the situation of the mountain, hidden in the dense mountain forest





PROJECT Y Hotel & Kitchen

LOCATION Hainan, China

ARCHITECT Ke Xie

INSPIRATION Hidden underground, hidden in nature, let the light tell the answer





- PROJECT** Rammed-Earth Yoga Studio
- LOCATION** Somerset, England
- ARCHITECT** Invisible Studio
- INSPIRATION** Made of local rammed earth materials, the skylight is used as the medium of light to promote the dialogue between the space and the natural environment.

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SITE INFORMATION

ADDRESS No. 1 Daci Mountain, Huhu Road

LOCATION Hangzhou, China

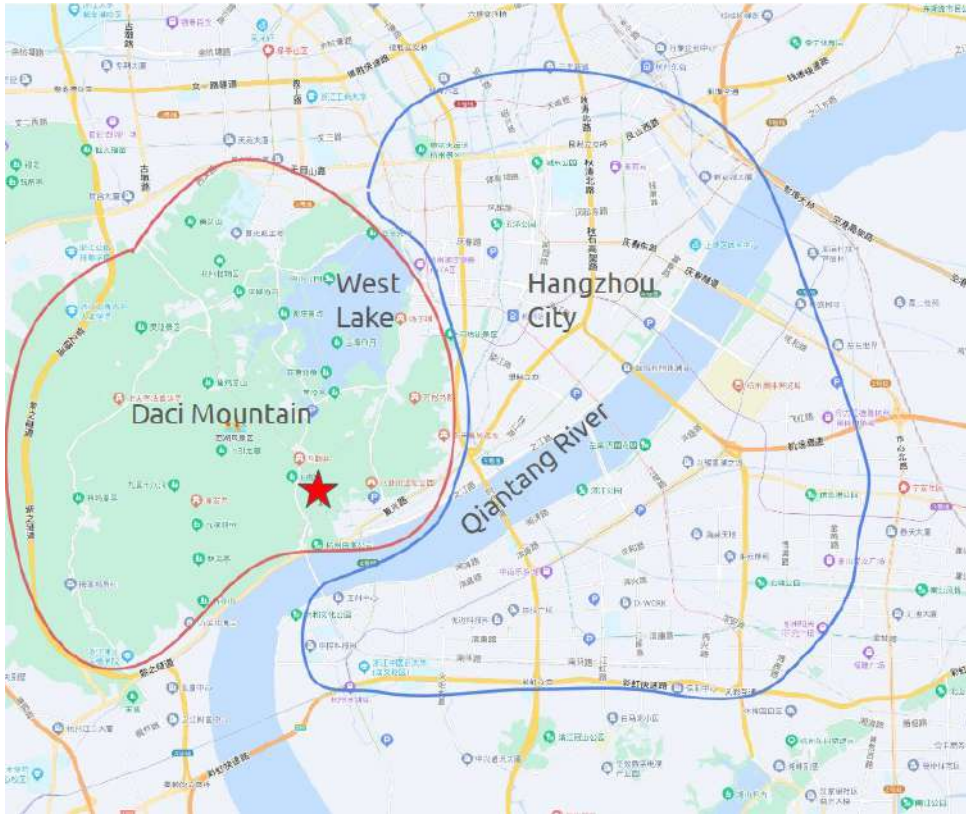
YEAR BUILT 1930s

MATERIALS Brick Masonry and Wood-Framed Structure

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION About 800 square meters (about 8611 sf)

AREA





★ Site Location

○ West Lake Scenic Area

○ City Area

- The site is hidden at the foot of Daci Mountain in the West Lake Scenic Area.
- Leaning against the mountains, overlooking the West Lake and featuring a panoramic view of the Qiantang River.
- It was included in the historical building protection list in Hangzhou.
- In 1934, the priest of Hangzhou Catholic Church purchased land to build this summer villa.
- At the beginning of liberation, the villa was transferred to the troops stationed and used until it was returned to the church in 2014.

RENOVATION INTENT

Keep calm and unwind.

External appearance: retains and restores the unique style of the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures and the changes of different historical periods in historical buildings;

Internal function upgrades: make reasonable updates according to the functions of wellness retreat;

Surrounding environment: retaining the original trees and vegetation, a unique courtyard environment such as landscape pools, bamboo fences, bamboo-patterned cement, and four-season flowers and plants will be create with ingenuity.

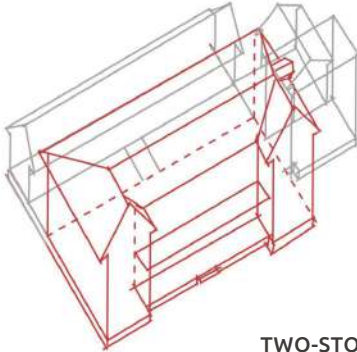


SITE ANALYSIS

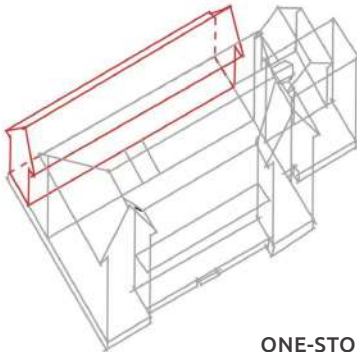
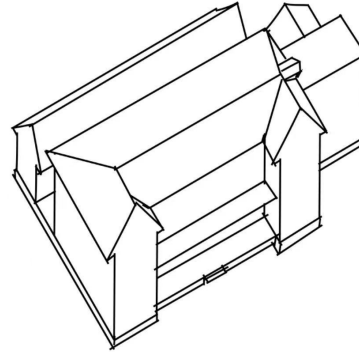
The main building is a two-story building with north-south bays. The two-story main building and the one-story auxiliary building are built in parallel, and the two are connected by a long and narrow patio.

There are not only the imprints of old western-style houses with strong western styles such as the overall rough stone platform, green bricks and brick arch rings, but also the corridor on the first floor of the south facade is painted with a large piece of red paint, and the stylized column structure reflects the style of the army.

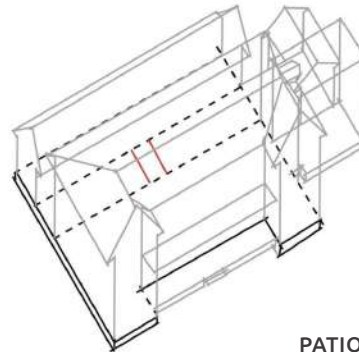
EXISTING BUILDING MODEL



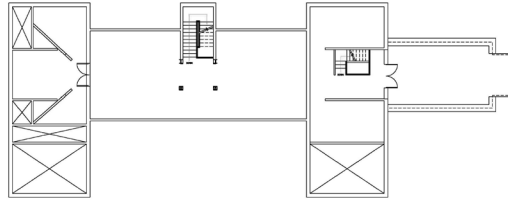
TWO-STORY BUILDING



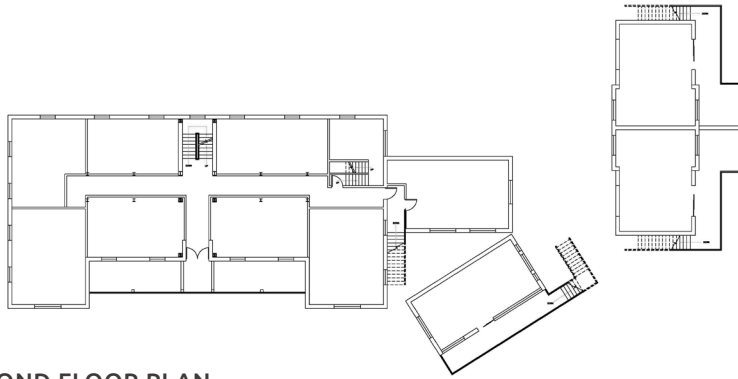
ONE-STORY AUXILIARY
BUILDING



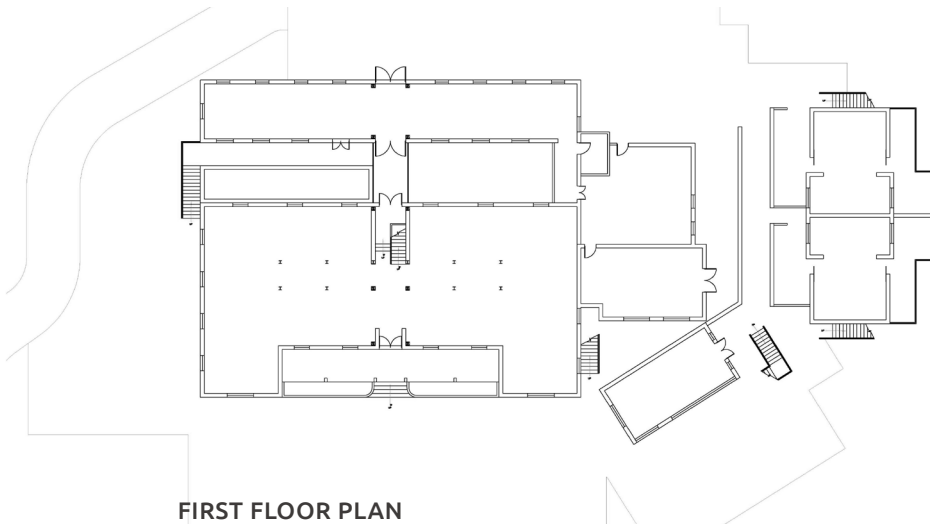
PATIO



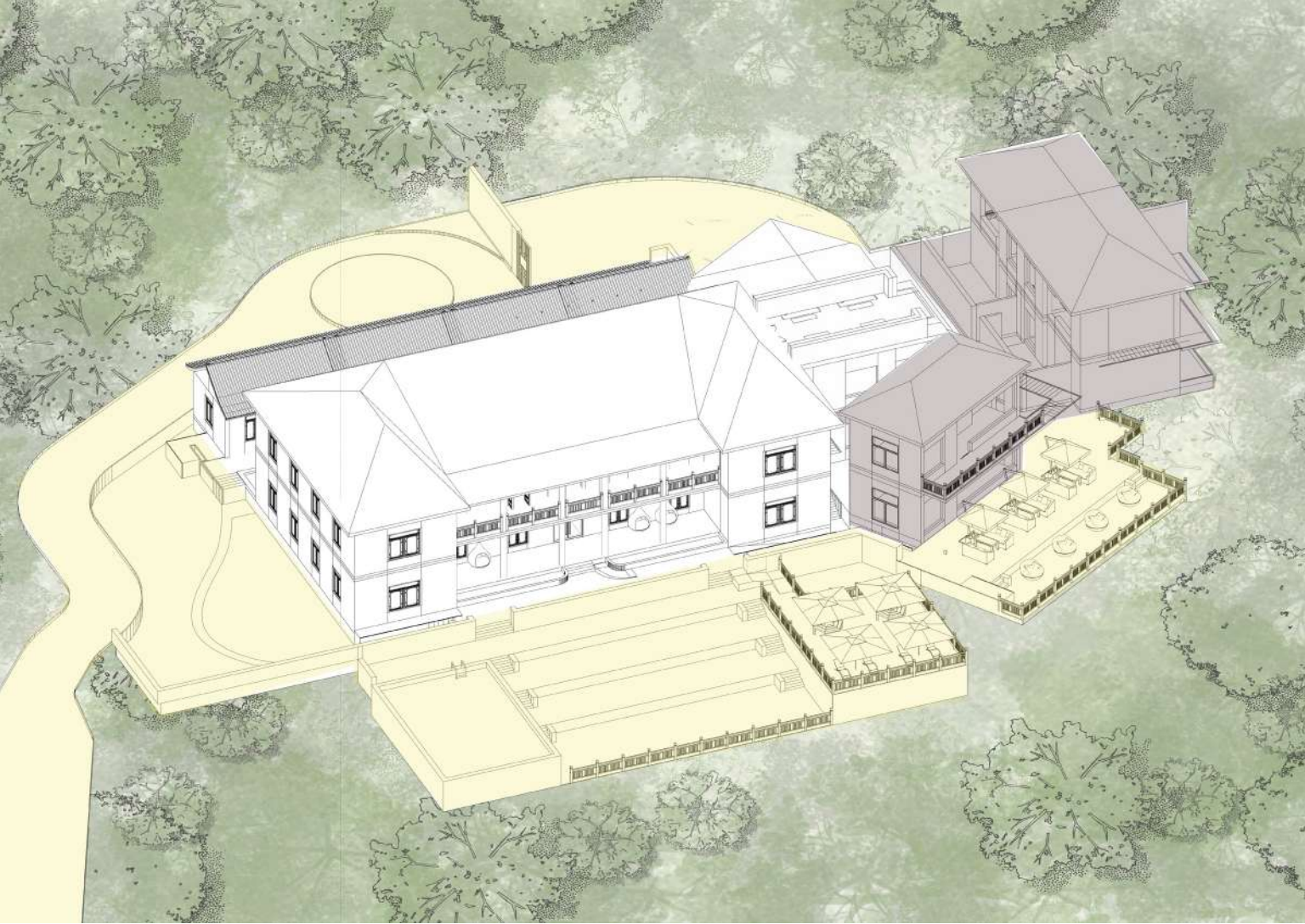
THIRD FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



The additional space adding to the site in this project are the two two-story buildings built from last renovation (brown) and the exterior area (yellow)

EXTERIOR AXON

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DESIGN INTENT

This thesis project seeks to explore the way in which the building structure and interior environment can be used as a tool to connect people to nature through visual experience, materials, textures and feelings with the hopes of impacting the emotional and philosophical connections to who they are and express their most authentic self.



INTERIOR

DESIGN PROBE: EXPERIENCE

At the wellness retreat, guests find themselves in an oasis of serenity where the boundaries between the man-made and natural worlds seamlessly merge. Even within the confines of its meticulously crafted structures, one is enveloped by the essence of nature. The gentle rustling of leaves, the melodic chirping of birds, and the soft interplay of sunlight and shadows collaborate to weave a therapeutic tapestry of experiences. Every nook and cranny of this retreat is designed to foster an intrinsic connection between the visitor and the surrounding environment. Here, one doesn't merely observe nature; one becomes intertwined with it

EXTERIOR



DESIGN PROBE: MATERIALS

The materials used in the design include plaster coating, black lacquer, rattan weaving materials, raw wood, wooden flooring, metal textures, cotton fabric, and linen. These materials, chosen with an emphasis on natural and sustainable sourcing, help create a harmonious and tranquil environment for our guests to unwind and rejuvenate.

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WELLNESS RETREAT

Tuning into nature can be a truly revitalizing experience. Spending time outdoors can have health benefits such as improving cognition, reducing stress, improving attention and focus, and restoring energy to our minds.

This wellness retreat offers a synergistic wellness experience to help people reconnect to life's potential and achieve optimal wellbeing.

The cuisine, the environment and even the architecture are designed to support and enhance the wellness therapies and establish a deeper connection to who you are.

KEYWORDS

Get Away and Break Routines

Time to Reflect, Renew and Restore

Unwind in Nature

Enjoy Healthy Inspired Cuisine

Unplug from Multitasking

Benefit from Yoga and Meditation

Healing and Growth

WEEKLY ITINERARY

This wellness retreat introduces fresh and varied programs every week, each with a different focus. The program cycle starts on Sunday afternoon and ends the following Sunday morning. guests are encouraged to participate in consecutive weeks of programs to maximize their wellness journey.

For instance, the meditation program. This includes scheduled sessions in the early morning and evening, topped off with relaxing and stretching before bedtime. Interspersed throughout the day are engaging activities such as hiking, tea times, and healthy cooking classes.

Alternatively, another example of the yoga program, which is one of the many other courses on offer. With diverse selection of programs, guests can find a suitable time and course to suit their needs and return for repeated visits.

YOGA FOR HEALTH & HEALING ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

		SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
EARLY MORNING	7:30	Yin Yoga	Yin Yoga	Yin Yoga	Yin Yoga
	8:00				
	8:30				
	9:00				
	9:30				
MORNING	10:00	CHECK OUT Last Program End (7 Days)	Eating by the Season Chinese Health Guidelines	Tea Ceremony Workshop	
	10:30				
	11:00				
	11:30				
NOON	12:00			Tiger Spring Hiking Longjing Tea Tasting	Cooking Class Healthy Chinese Cuisine
	12:30				
	13:00				
	13:30				
AFTERNOON	14:00	CHECK IN New Program Start (7 Days)	Tea Sharing Meet New Friends		Tea Sharing Optional
	14:30				
	15:00				
	15:30	Tea Sharing Meet New Friends	Yang Yoga	Yang Yoga	Yang Yoga
	16:00				
	16:30				
	17:00				
17:30					
18:00					
18:30					
19:00					
EVENING	19:30	Sound Healing Meditation	Progressive Relaxation	Sound Healing Meditation	Progressive Relaxation
	20:00				
	20:30				
		Yoga	Meditations	Coaching/Workshops	Entertainment
*Dining time is no included in activity schedule. Breakfast: 6:00-7:30; Lunch: 11:30-13:00; Dinner: 17:30-19:00					

EDULE

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Morning Meditation	Yin Yoga	Yin Yoga
Lingyin Temple Tour by Appointment	Mindfulness Workshop	Cooking Class Healthy Detox Cuisine
	Tea Sharing Optional	
	Yang Yoga	Yang Yoga
Sound Healing Meditation	Movie Night	Progressive Relaxation
Cultural Activity	Body Work/Physical Exercises	

YOGA FOR HEALTH & HEALING

Yin/Yang yoga is a practice that balances the slow-paced Yin yoga with the traditional Yang yoga (Ashtanga and Hatha).

Yin/Yang yoga has its roots in China in the Taoist concepts of yin — a feminine, passive, cooling energy — and yang — a masculine, dynamic, warming energy.

Just as the Taoists believe that yin and yang complement each other and one cannot exist without the other, the Yin/Yang yoga practice uses both types of yoga to provide both physical and spiritual balance.

FINDING EMOTIONAL BALANCE & FREEDOM ACTIVITIES

		SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	
EARLY MORNING	7:30	Mindfulness Meditation	Mindfulness Meditation	Mindfulness Meditation	Mindfulness Meditation	
	8:00					
	8:30					
	9:00					
	9:30					
MORNING	10:00	CHECK OUT Last Program End (7 Days)	Eating by the Season Chinese Health Guidelines	Tea Ceremony Workshop		
	10:30					
	11:00					
	11:30					
NOON	12:00			Tiger Spring Hiking Longjing Tea Tasting	Cooking Class Healthy Chinese Cuisine	
	12:30					
	13:00					
	13:30					
AFTERNOON	14:00	CHECK IN New Program Start (7 Days)	Tea Sharing Meet New Friends	Tea Sharing Meet New Friends	Tea Sharing Optional	
	14:30					
	15:00		Tea Sharing Meet New Friends	Loving-Kindness Meditation	Body Scan Meditaion	Focused Meditaion
	15:30					
	16:00					
	16:30					
	17:00					
	17:30					
EVENING	18:00	Stretching & Movement	Natural Flow Movement	Stretching & Movement	Natural Flow Movement	
	18:30					
	19:00					
	19:30					
	20:00					
	20:30					
		Yoga	Meditations	Coaching/Workshops	Entertainment	
*Dining time is no included in activity schedule. Breakfast: 6:00-7:30; Lunch: 11:30-13:00; Dinner: 17:30-19:00						

FINDING EMOTIONAL BALANCE & FREEDOM - MEDITAION

ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Jiuxi Yanshu Hiking by Appointment	Mindfulness Meditation	Mindfulness Meditation
	Embracing Oneself Workshop	
		Cooking Class Healthy Detox Cuisine
	Tea Sharing Optional	Tea Sharing Optional
Body Scan Meditaion	Visualization Meditation	Focused Meditaion
Stretching & Movement	Movie Night	Natural Flow Movement
Cultural Activity	Body Work/Physical Exercises	

Meditation involves focusing one's attention on a particular object, thought, or activity, with the goal of achieving a calm and clear state of mind. Through regular practice, meditation can help individuals develop a greater awareness of their thoughts and emotions, allowing them to better manage and regulate their emotional responses.

Studies have shown that meditation can lead to increased activity in the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain associated with regulating emotions and attention. Furthermore, meditation has been shown to increase gray matter in areas of the brain associated with learning, memory, and emotional regulation.

Through these neurological changes, meditation can help individuals experience a greater sense of calm, peace, and relaxation. It can also help reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress, as well as improve overall mood and well-being.

HIKING & TOUR MAP

① TIGER RUN SPRING HIKING

Distance: 1.2 km

Time: 17 minute walking

Great spring water for making Longjing Tea

② JIUXI YANSHU HIKING

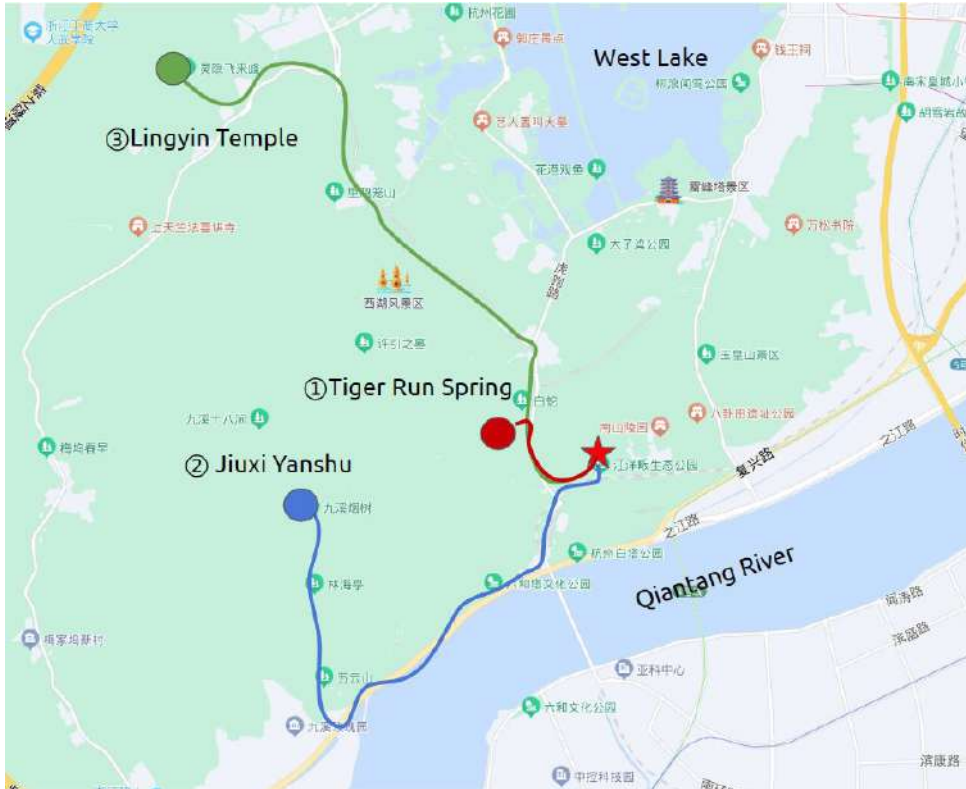
Distance: 5.5 km

Time: 5 minute bus + 50 minute hiking

③ LINGYIN TEMPLE TOUR

Distance: 7 km

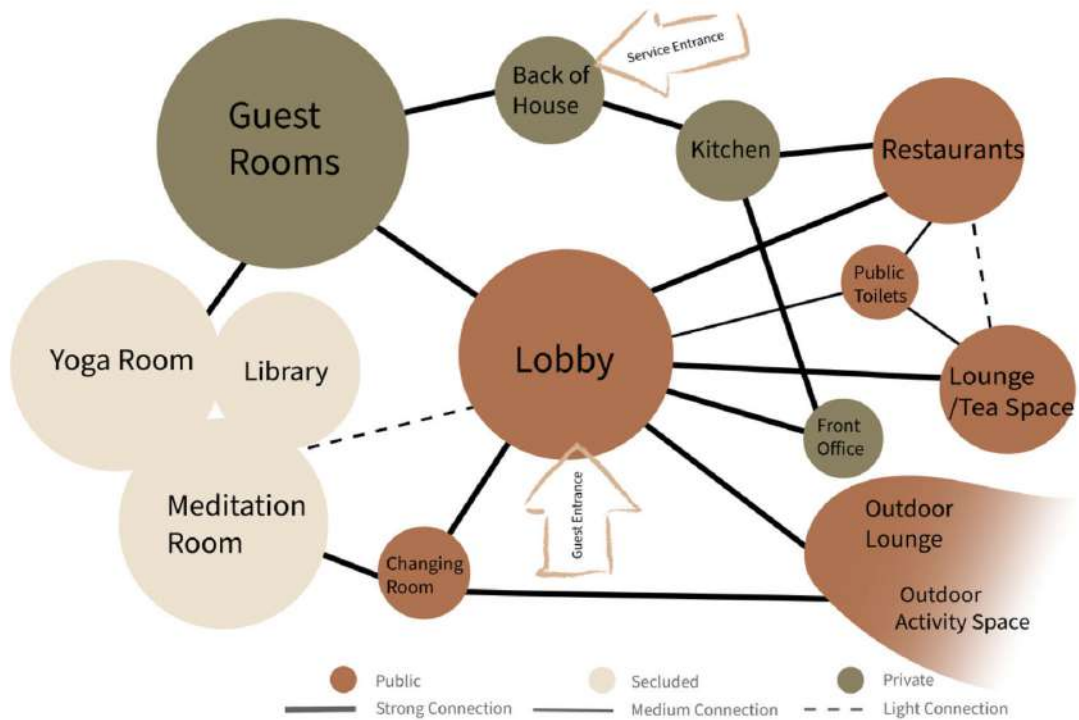
Time: 14 minute driving



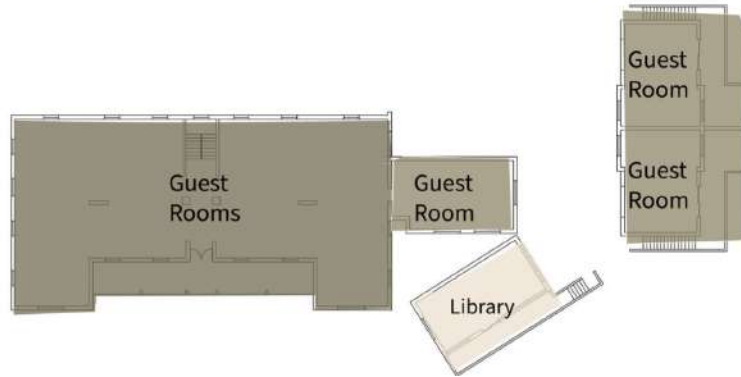
★ Site Location

● Destination Location

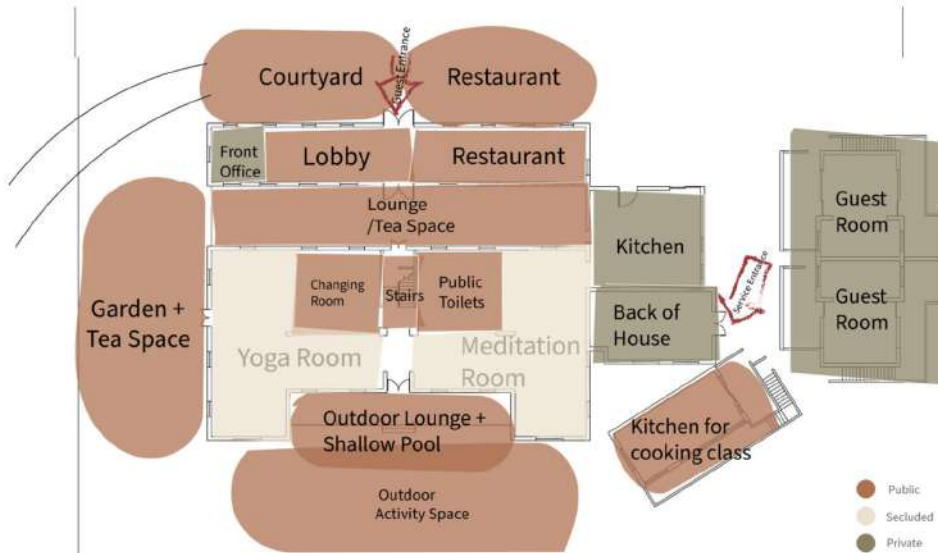
ADJACENCY DIAGRAM



PRELIMINARY PROGRAM-IN-SITE BLOCKING DIAGRAMS



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

- Public
- Secluded
- Private

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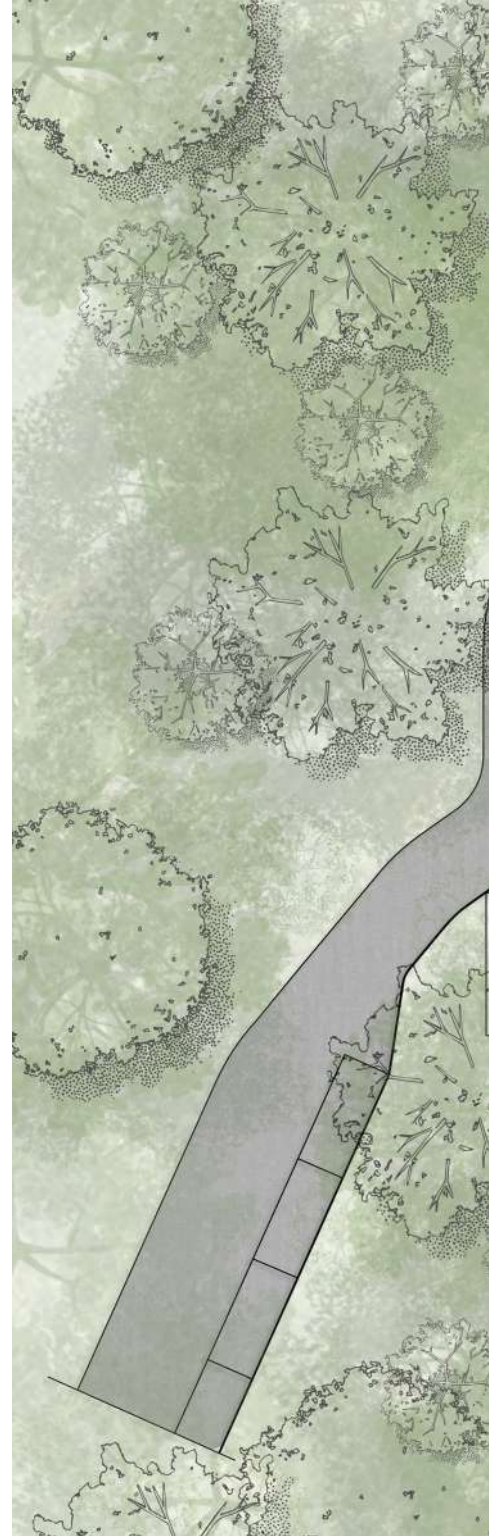
FIRST FLOOR - GATHERING GROUND

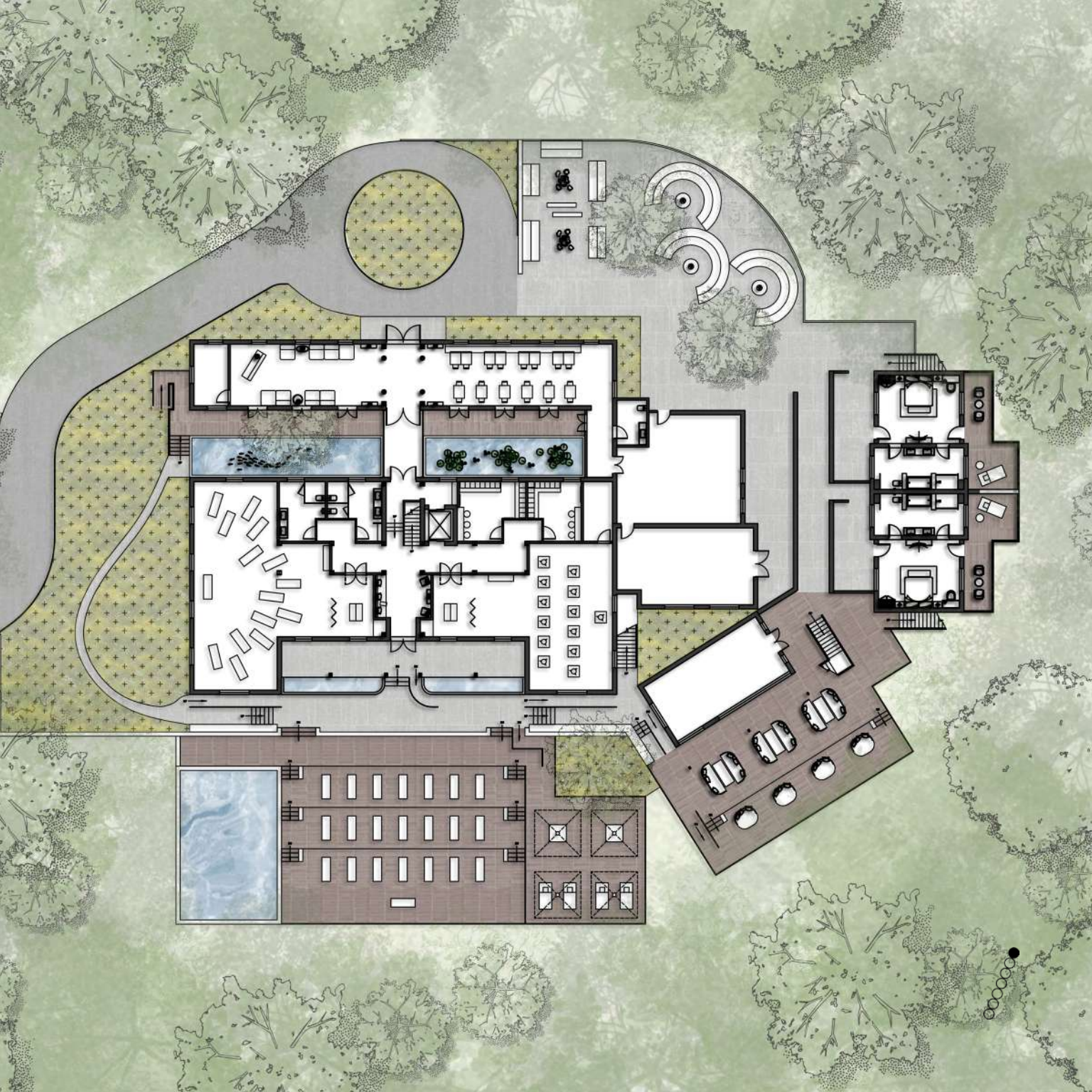
SECOND FLOOR - GUEST ROOMS + READING SPACE

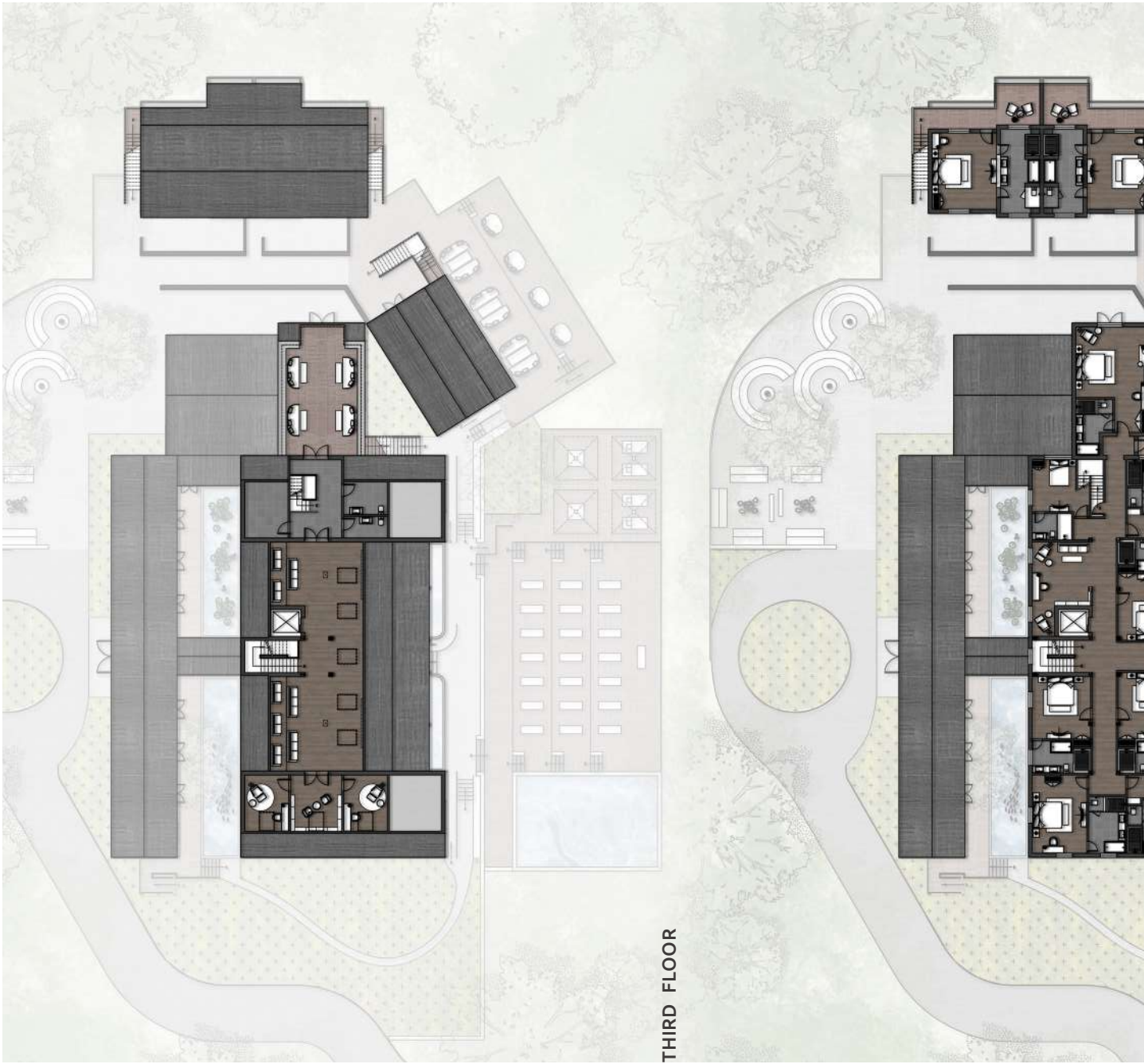
THIRD FLOOR - ENTERTAINMENTS + TERRACE

SITE PLAN

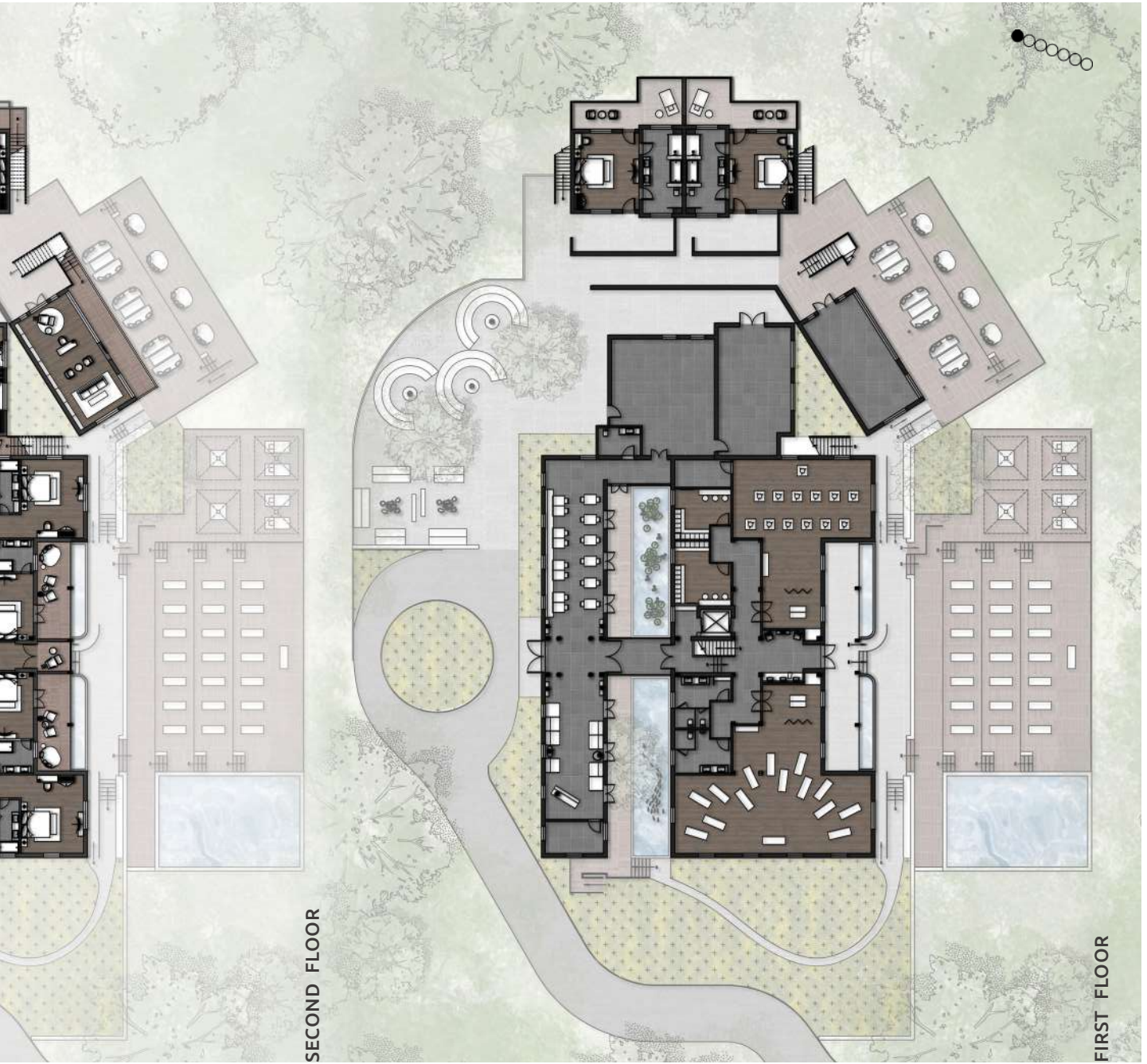
The outdoor area encompasses several spaces designed for a variety of activities: a tea tasting area, a fire pit area, dining area, rest area, outdoor yoga zone, swimming pool, and garden. Depending on weather conditions, yoga and meditation classes may be held either indoors or outdoors.







THIRD FLOOR



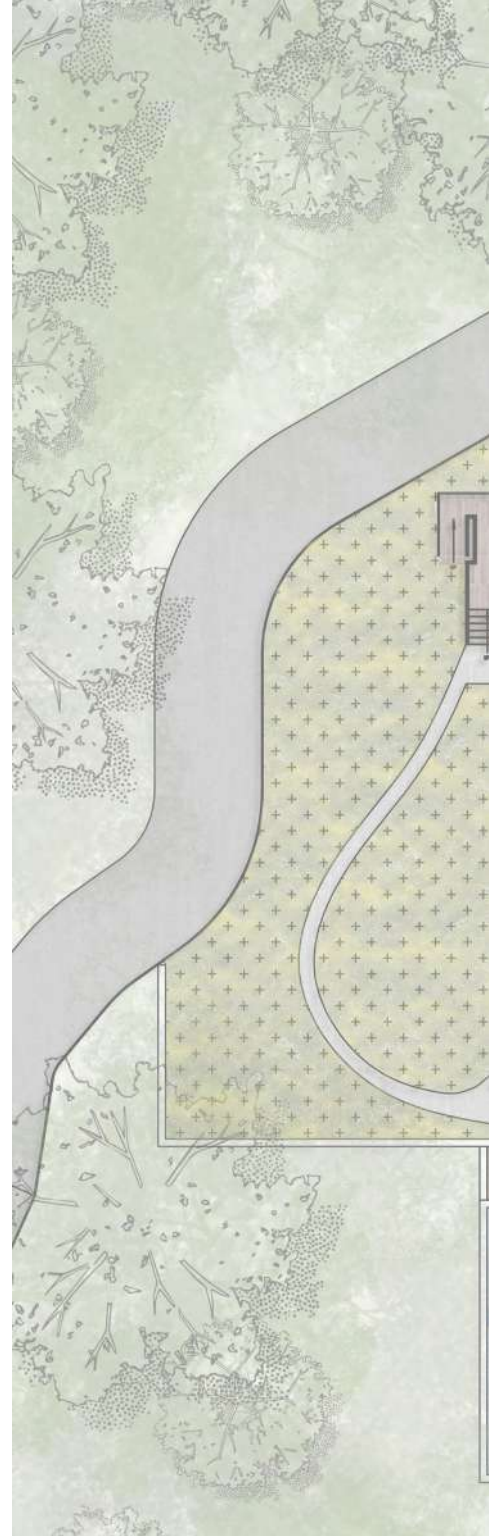
SECOND FLOOR

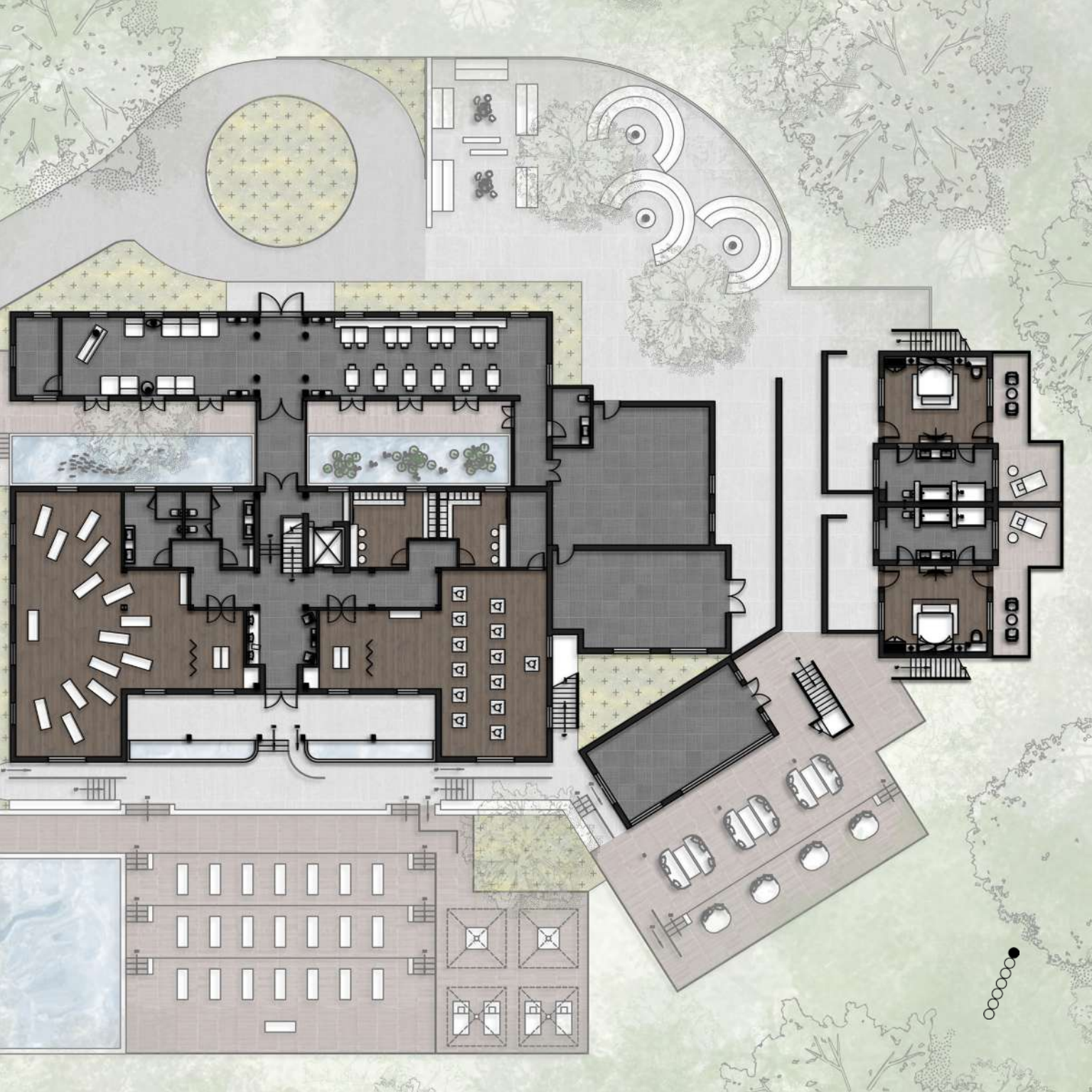
FIRST FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

On the ground floor, guests will first enter the lobby from the north, with the dining area situated on the opposite side.

As traverse the corridor, the yoga room lies to the west, just past the restroom. To the east, is the changing room and meditation room. Additionally, there is a separate building to the east, housing two guest rooms under ADA standard.







RESTAURANT / LOBBY SECTION

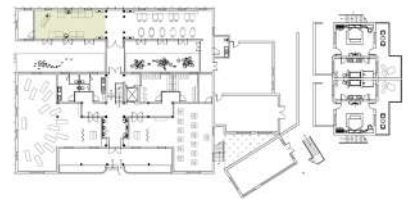


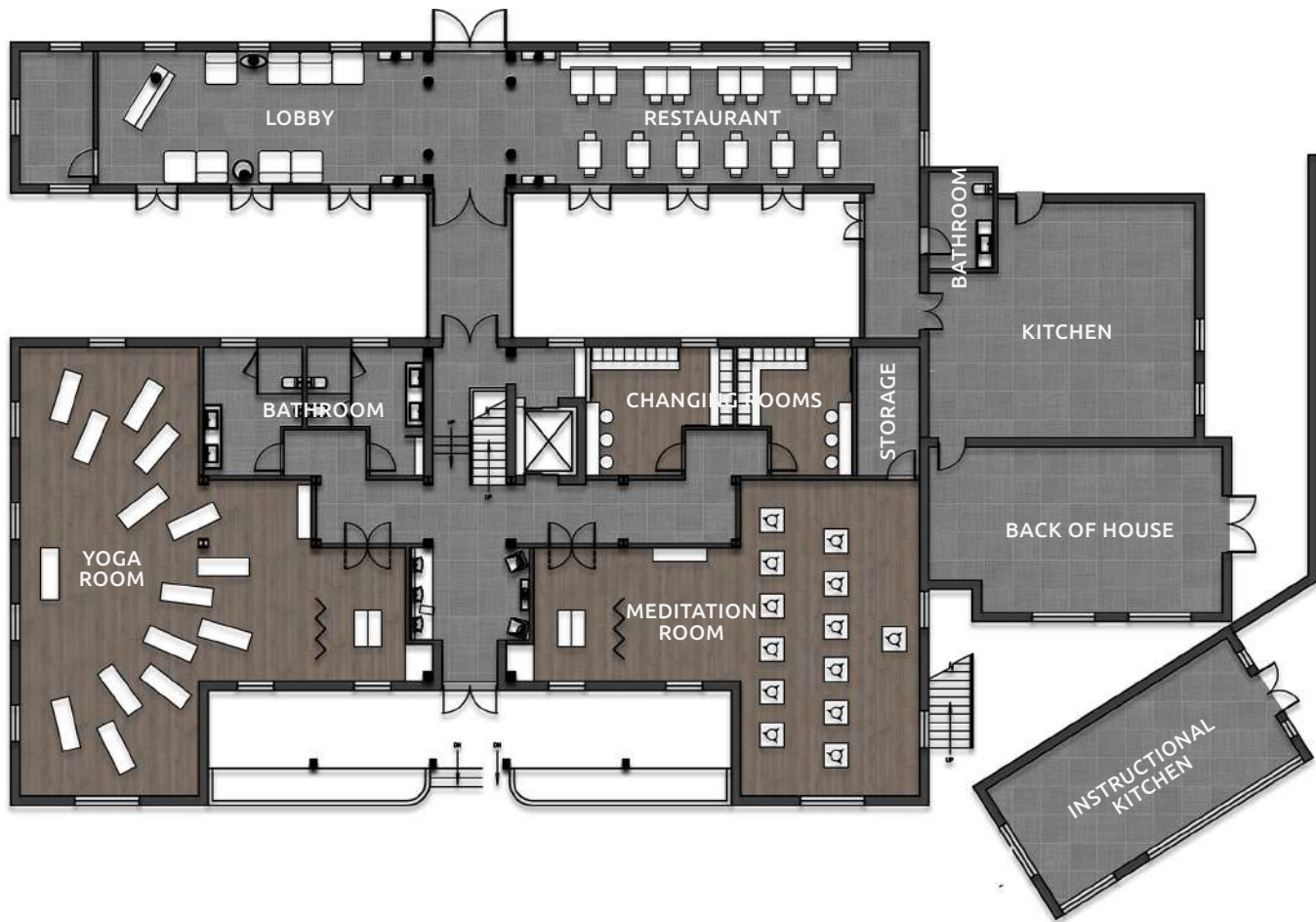


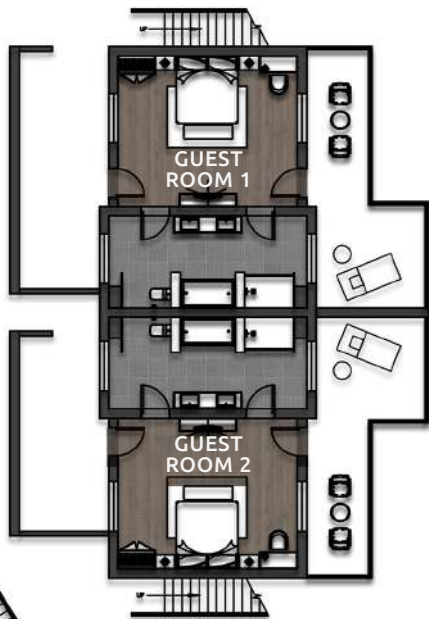


LOBBY

The lobby is designed to feel homey and welcoming, brings the relaxed comfort one feels when returning to their own home. This design element adds a warm and personal touch to the wellness retreat, making guests feel at home from the moment they step through the doors.







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YOGA ROOM

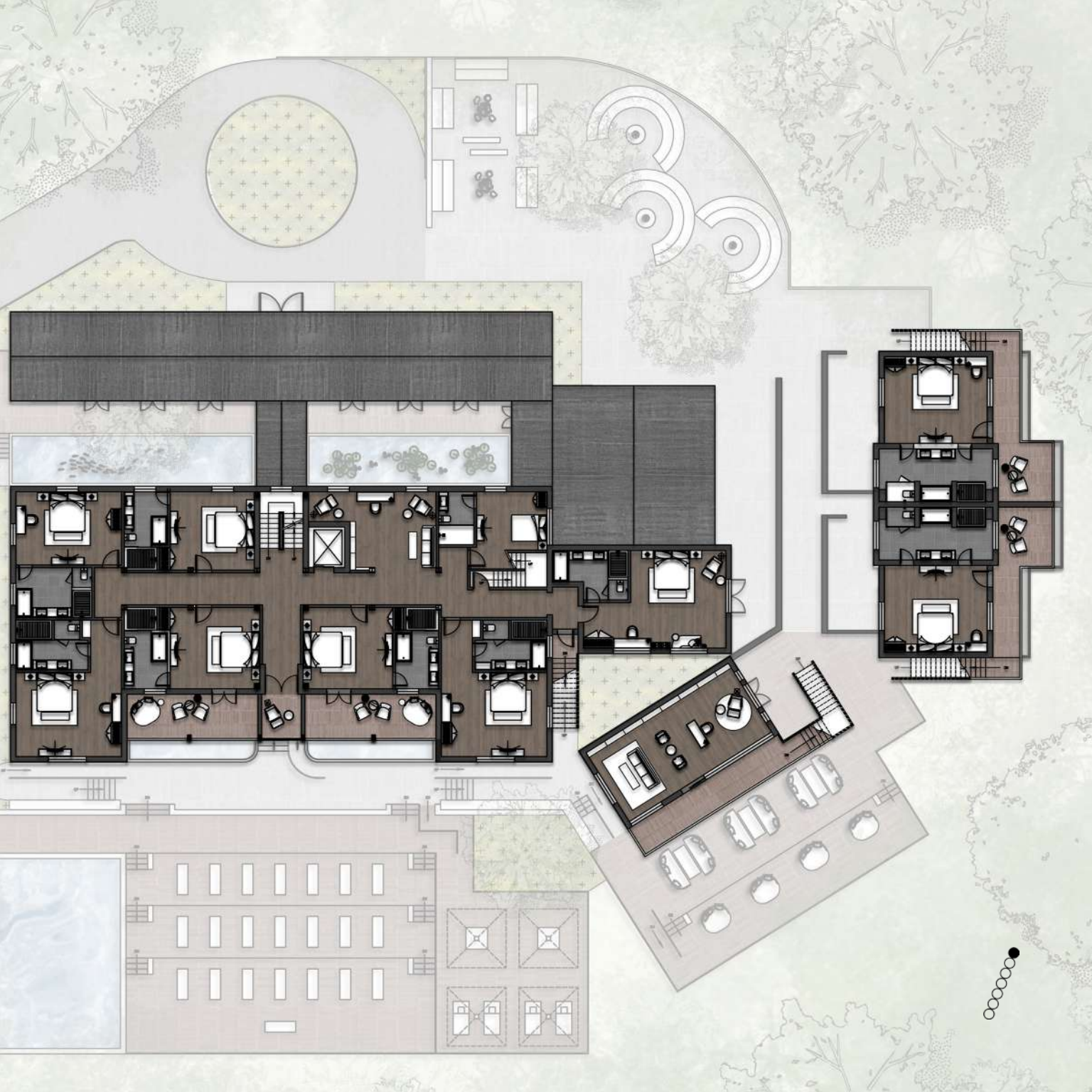
Morning yoga sessions are typically held on the outdoor yoga platform, allowing participants to breathe in the fresh air and invigorate dormant senses. In contrast, evening yoga practices usually take place inside the yoga room, basking in the soft glow of the setting sun for a day-end stretch and relaxation. The location of our yoga classes will be adjusted based on temperature and weather conditions, ensuring the most conducive environment for practice.

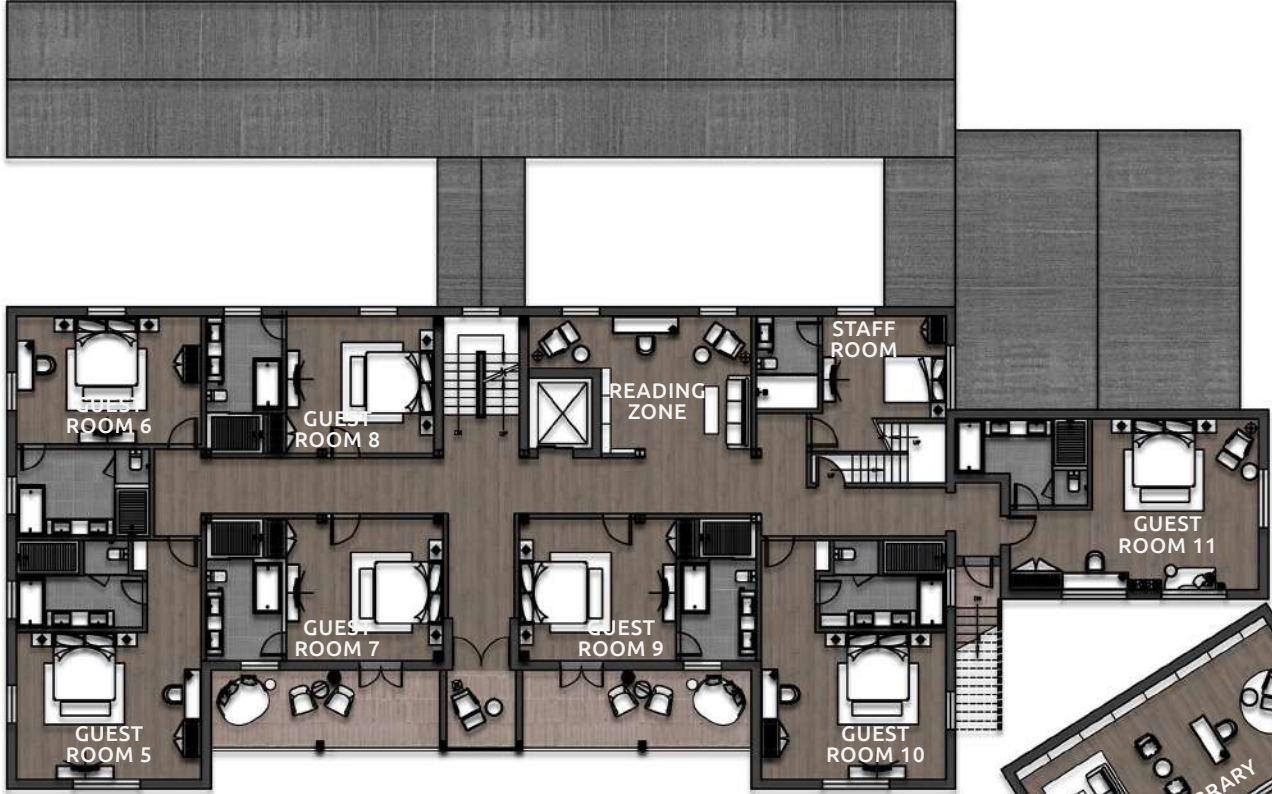


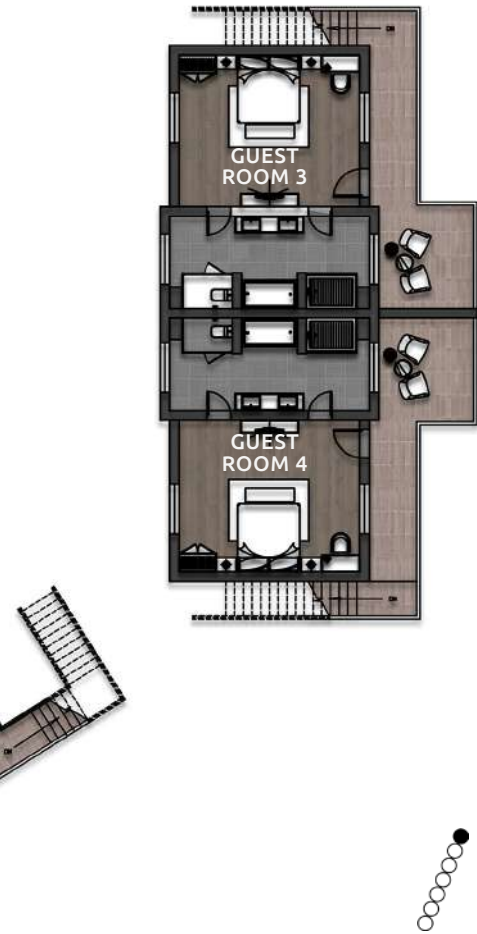
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

The second floor is primarily dedicated to guest accommodations, complemented by a reading space and a separate library which promotes relaxation and introspection, providing guests with a environment to unwind and enrich their minds with a good read.









SECOND FLOOR PLAN

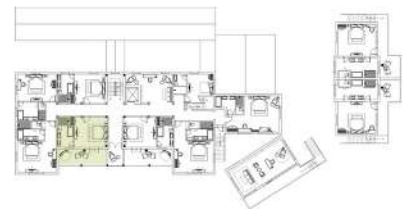
The second floor is primarily dedicated to guest accommodations, complemented by a reading space and a separate library which promotes relaxation and introspection, providing guests with an environment to unwind and enrich their minds with a good read.





GUEST ROOM

The primary materials used in guest rooms are sourced from nature, bringing the essence of the outdoors into indoor spaces. This design choice fosters a seamless connection between the interior and the natural environment, offering guests a grounding ambiance that promotes relaxation and wellbeing.



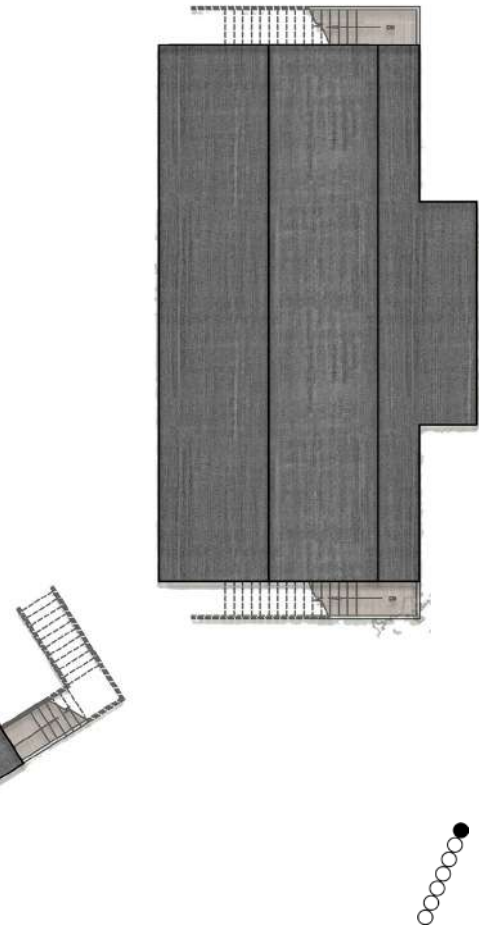
THIRD FLOOR PLAN

On the third floor, we have a movie screening room, separate reading rooms designed for contemplation, and an outdoor terrace. This layout offers a variety of leisurely pursuits, allowing guests to enjoy films, peaceful reading, or simply bask in the tranquility of the outdoor terrace.









THIRD FLOOR PLAN

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EAST - WEST SECTION

East - West



section cut through the restaurant, corridor, reasroom, yoga room, to the outdoor activity space

