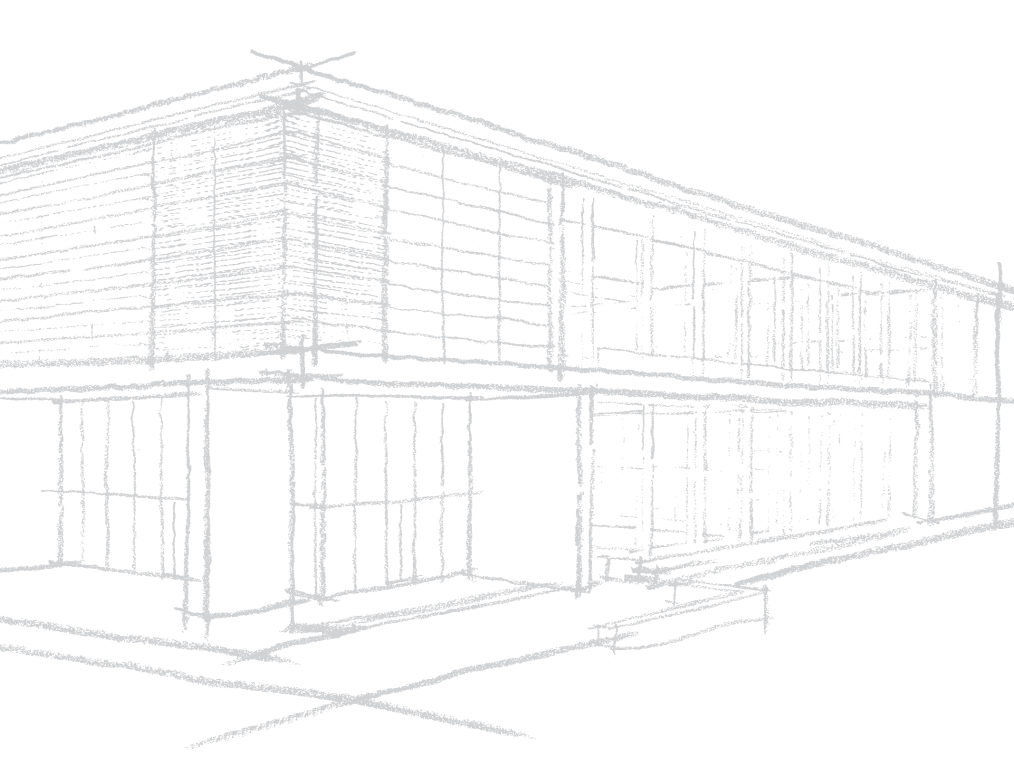


# CONTEMPLATIVECOMMONS

*Enabling Flourishing in UVA's Third Century*

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA



**THOMAS JEFFERSON  
CREATED A  
CONTEMPLATIVE  
GROUNDS—  
IN THE 21ST  
CENTURY HOW  
DOES UVA DEEPEN  
CONTEMPLATION  
AND ENABLE STUDENT  
FLOURISHING?**

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*This institution of my native state, the hobby of my old age, will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind, to explore and to expose every subject susceptible of its contemplation.*

— THOMAS JEFFERSON

## 2

# STUDENT FLOURISHING



The Contemplative Commons embodies a new model of higher education at the University of Virginia that is based upon immersive, experiential, and participatory forms of deep learning that facilitate student flourishing.

This innovative complex of indoor and outdoor spaces will enable us to bridge persistent gaps in higher education between the *academic* and *residential*; the *intellectual* and *personal*; *learning* and *research*; *faculty* and *students*; and *mind* and *body*, as well as among the University's diverse *schools* and *disciplines*. No other site on Grounds so faithfully corresponds in design and intention to Thomas Jefferson's vision for the original Academical Village—to deeply connect the University community in life, learning, and research through integrated natural and built environments and spaces for both intense collaboration and quiet reflection. The Contemplative Commons was designed to enable student flourishing through transformative deep learning, innovative collaborations across multiple schools, the integration of learning and research to constitute a living laboratory, immersive engagement, and integration with nature. It also aims to offer a deeply inclusive environment welcoming students from diverse backgrounds and supporting efforts towards social and environmental justice.



# TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

**CUSTOMIZABLE STUDIOS WILL ENABLE HIGHLY EXPERIENTIAL, ENGAGED, AND PARTICIPATORY FORMS OF DEEP LEARNING THAT FOSTER NOT ONLY ACADEMIC EXPLORATION AND INNOVATION BUT ALSO PERSONAL AND SOCIAL WELLBEING AND DEVELOPMENT.**

With creative and hidden storage for equipment and furniture, these studios will be configurable to a variety of forms, including academic classroom; innovation lab; live performance space; intramural physical activity venue; collaboration space; contemplative research labs; or co-curricular space for contemplative activities. The future of University learning extends beyond the lecture and seminar, requiring precisely such diverse and flexible spaces that UVA currently lacks. These learning studios will be convertible to accommodate small or large groups; physical activities or cerebral reflection; workshops or conventional lecturing; and quiet reflection, transformative sensorial experiences, or noisy brainstorming. Included are a vast *Convergence Studio* with approximate capacity for 319 seated and over 500 standing individuals and six other studios of various sizes provisionally named the *Cyprus Studio* (intermediate), the *Dogwood Studio* (small), the two-floors-high *Vision Studio*, the technology-enabled arts-based *Immersive Studio*, the artistically-designed *Light Studio*, and the highly experiential *Conservatory*.

# 6 INNOVATIVE COLLABORATIONS



**LOCATED WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF THE EIGHT SCHOOLS ON CENTRAL GROUNDS, THE CONTEMPLATIVE COMMONS WILL PHYSICALLY AND PROGRAMMATICALLY INTERSECT WITH FACULTY, STUDENTS, STAFF, AND VISITORS ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS AND DISCIPLINES.**

The site and design embody the vision of a more deeply integrated university by supporting intense pan-University collaborations, team-oriented projects, multidisciplinary programs, and informal networking in curricular and co-curricular contexts. Situated in the *Dell valley* alongside a beautiful pond surrounded by lovely walkways, contemplative sitting places, and a botanical garden of native Virginia plants, this site has been a prominent part of UVA's landscape throughout its history. Including a new walking bridge across Emmet Street that will reroute student traffic through one of the University's most important natural areas, the Contemplative Commons will also function as a serene space connecting academic and residential life for students.



**PUBLIC SPACES**



**FORGING CONNECTIONS**



# LIVING LABORATORY

**THE CONTEMPLATIVE COMMONS AS A WHOLE WILL FUNCTION AS A LIVING LABORATORY THAT CREATIVELY BLENDS LEARNING ACTIVITIES WITH ACTIVE RESEARCH DISCOVERY.**

Every learning, practice, and engagement space, including embedded outdoor spaces, will have *integrated data-gathering capacity and technology* to meet a changing paradigm in research: to study people in their natural, lived, social contexts instead of in an isolated, sterile laboratory. From The Forge — a suite of office, meeting, and research lab spaces — researchers will be able to observe activities, monitor brain function, assess heart rate, gather biological data, record environmental data, and perform other scientific research in real time throughout the space. This living laboratory dimension supports the University's human-oriented and social science research, as well as expands opportunities to systematically research its own learning programs and activities in a virtuous cycle of reflection, analysis, and enhancement.

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# IMMERSIVE ENGAGEMENT



**TO SUPPORT IMMERSIVE AND LONGER-TERM EXPERIENTIAL EVENTS, PROGRAMS, AND RESEARCH, THE BUILDING WILL INCLUDE DINING FACILITIES AND HIGHLY-CONFIGURABLE COLLABORATIVE SPACES AND WILL BE OPEN ALL WEEK FROM EARLY MORNING TO LATE NIGHT.**

A contemplative model of higher education enables the kind of immersive experiences that foster deep levels of collaboration, self-reflection, and social interaction. Early morning to late night open hours seven days a week, radically flexible studio spaces, an integrated cafe, and the capacity to host catered events will make the Contemplative Commons a powerful new University resource for hosting extended and intensive student and faculty programming, community engagement programs, alumni learning sessions, and various other programs to enable and forge new relationships and partnerships across disciplines, schools, and social sectors.



DINING

# 12

# INTEGRATION WITH NATURE



**AN EXTRAORDINARY ARRAY OF DISTINCT OUTDOOR SPACES, INCLUDING ROOFTOP CONTEMPLATIVE GARDENS, A LARGE COURTYARD WITH ENCLOSED TREES, AND A CONTEMPLATIVE CAFÉ WILL BE FULLY INTEGRATED WITH THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, WHILE A LIVING GREEN BRIDGE WILL CONNECT THE CONTEMPLATIVE COMMONS TO THE MAIN PART OF CAMPUS AND THE RESIDENTIAL AREA.**

This project adheres to renewed understanding that the mind, body, and nature are deeply interconnected, such that thorough exposure to diverse and authentic natural environments within our built environments is key to human health, happiness, and productivity. All of the natural spaces at the Contemplative Commons will be programmable, open to anyone passing through the site, and supportive of data collection and research. In addition, the building's architecture will maximize the use of natural materials and emphasize the senses through applications of water, minerals, and living plants and trees inside and out.

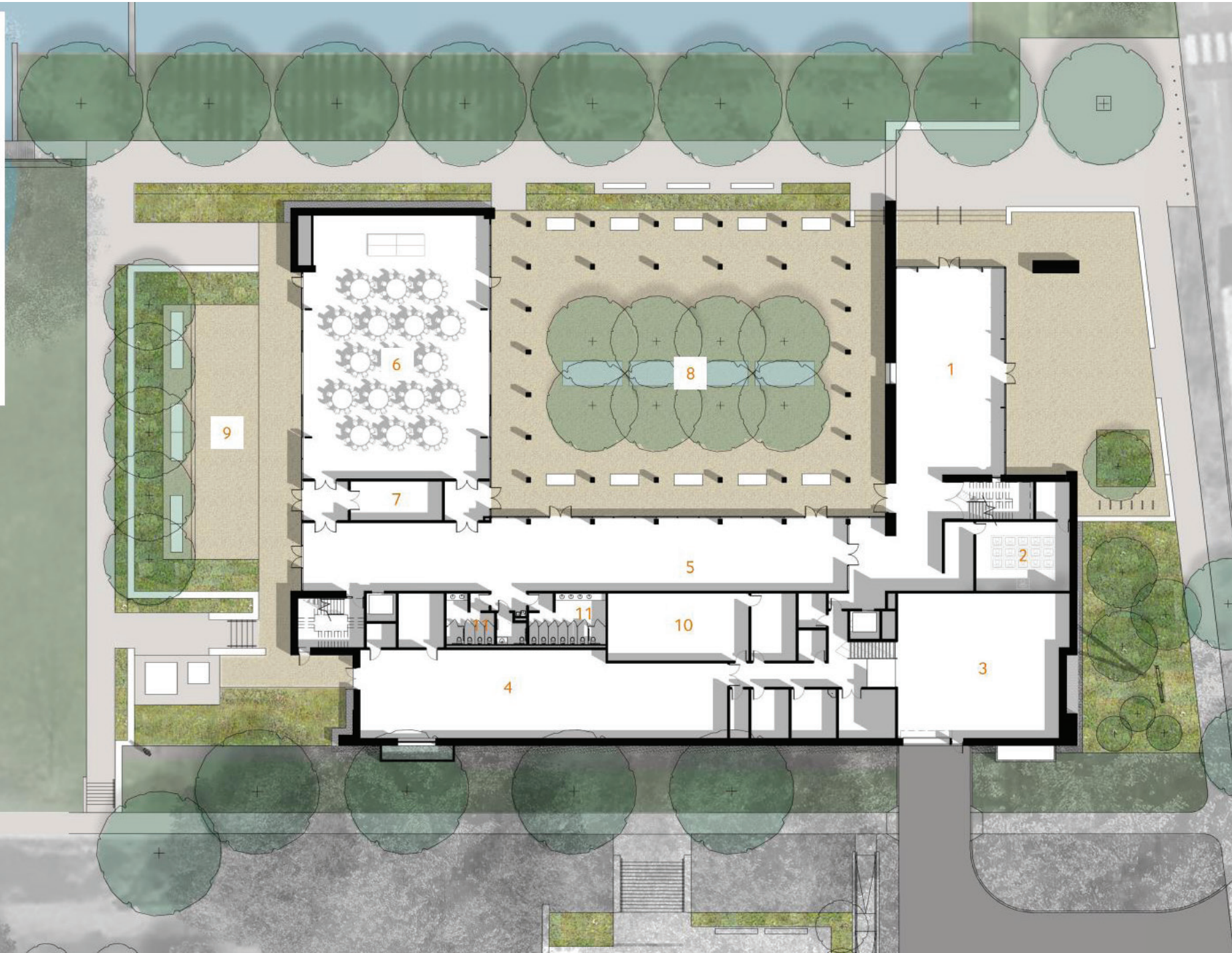


# 14

## BUILDING PLANS

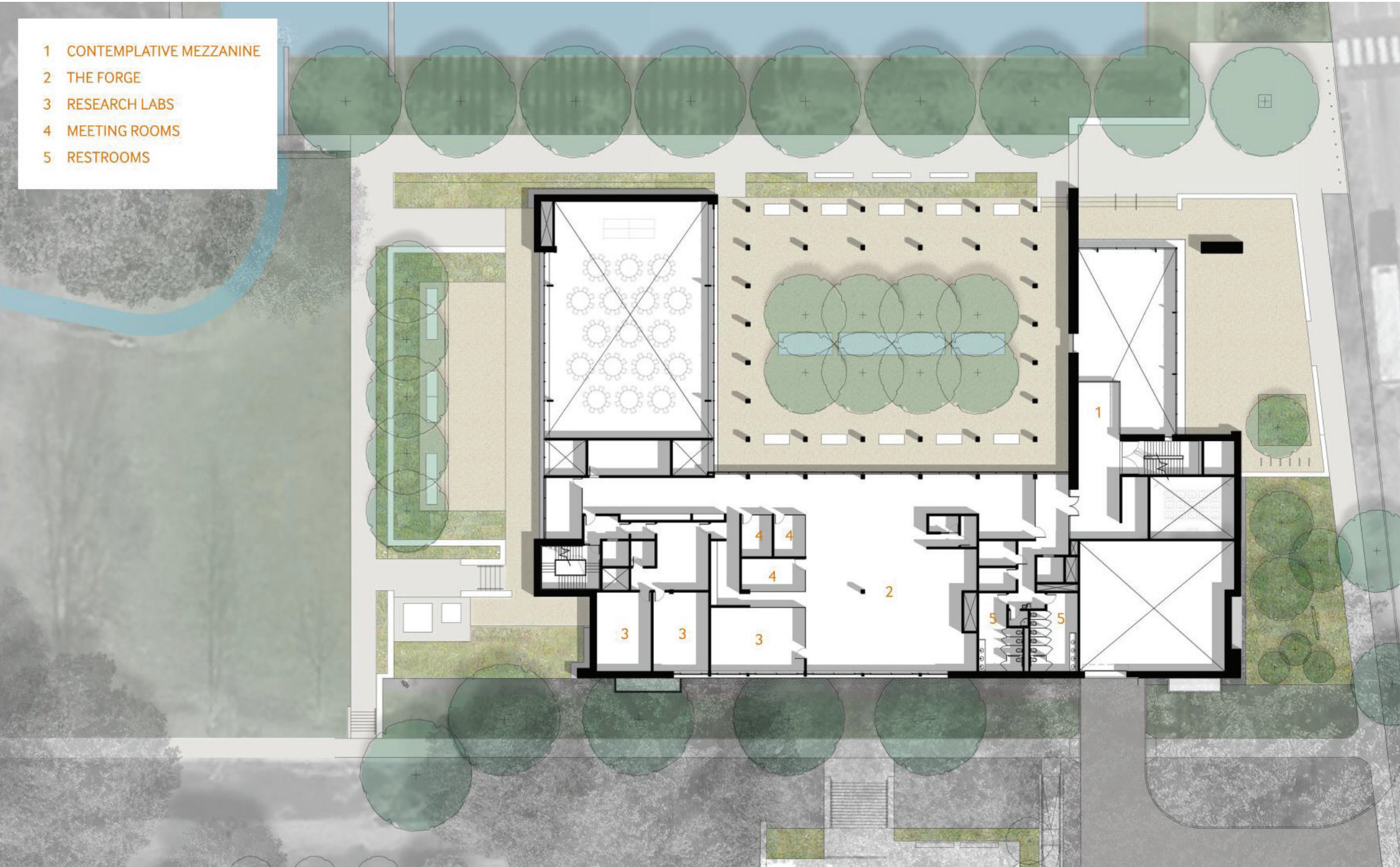
### FIRST FLOOR

- 1 FIRST FLOOR LOBBY
- 2 IMMERSIVE STUDIO
- 3 LOADING DOCK
- 4 MECHANICAL
- 5 CONTEMPLATIVE CAFE
- 6 CONVERGENCE HALL
- 7 STORAGE
- 8 DELL CONTEMPLATIVE COURTYARD
- 9 WESTERN TERRACE
- 10 KITCHEN
- 11 RESTROOMS



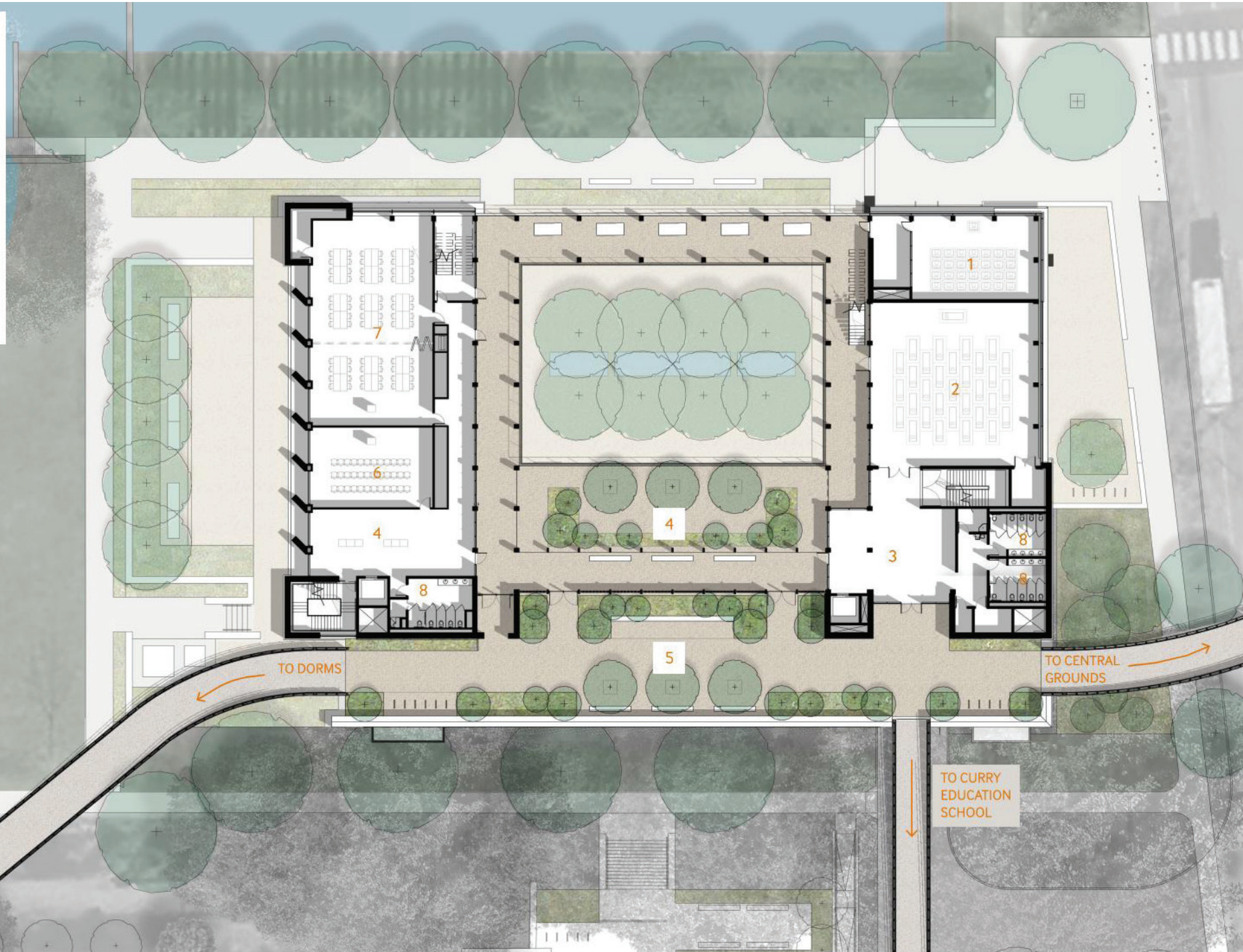
# SECOND FLOOR

- 1 CONTEMPLATIVE MEZZANINE
- 2 THE FORGE
- 3 RESEARCH LABS
- 4 MEETING ROOMS
- 5 RESTROOMS



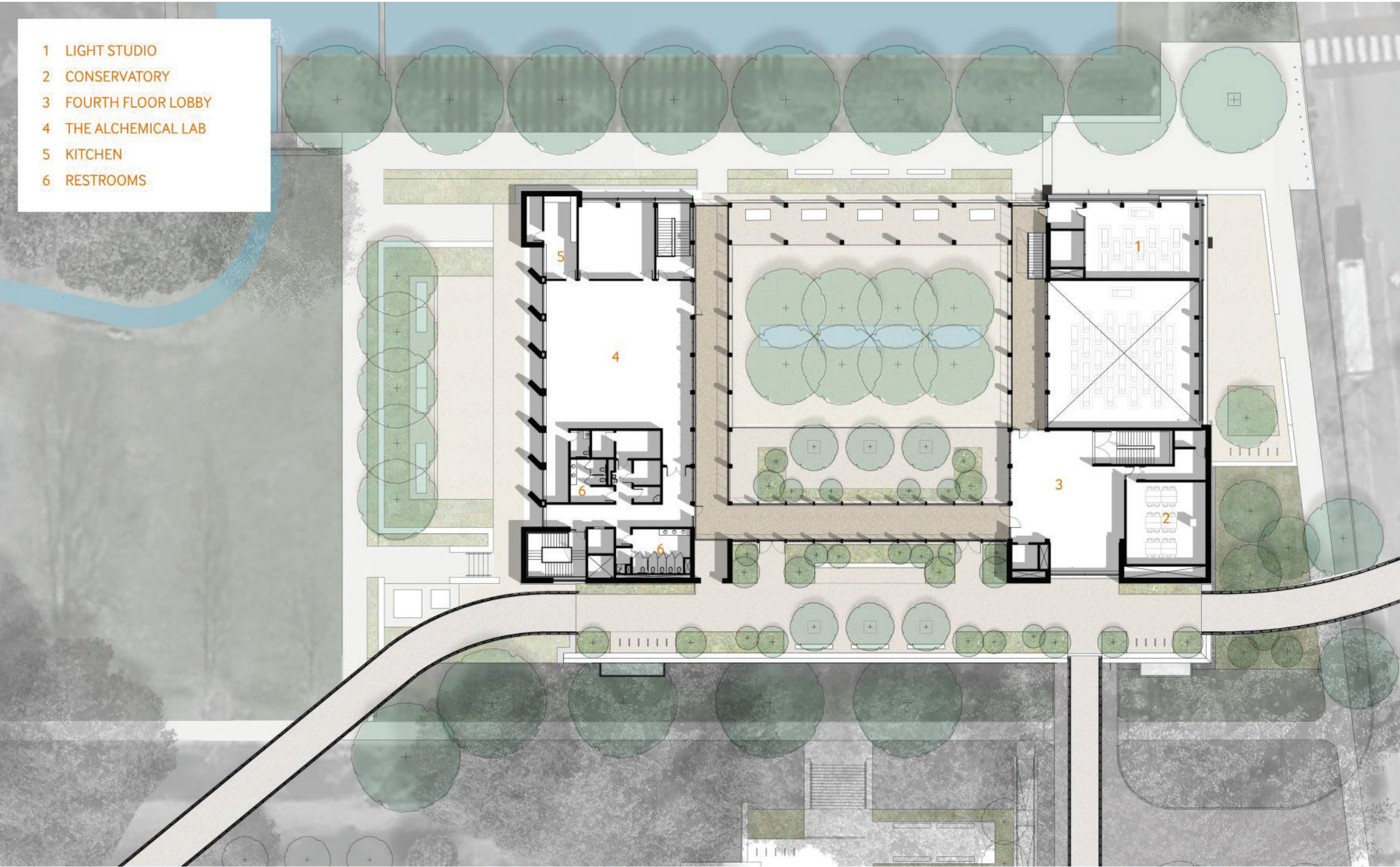
# THIRD FLOOR

- 1 SANCTUARY
- 2 VISION STUDIO
- 3 THIRD FLOOR LOBBY
- 4 SOUTH ROOFTOP GARDEN
- 5 LIVING BRIDGE
- 6 DOGWOOD (SMALL) STUDIO
- 7 CYPRUS (INTERMEDIATE) STUDIO
- 8 RESTROOMS



# FOURTH FLOOR

- 1 LIGHT STUDIO
- 2 CONSERVATORY
- 3 FOURTH FLOOR LOBBY
- 4 THE ALCHEMICAL LAB
- 5 KITCHEN
- 6 RESTROOMS







CONTEMPLATIVE  
SCIENCES CENTER



UNIVERSITY  
*of* VIRGINIA



aidlin darling design

VMDO

NELSON  
BYRD   
WOLTZ  
LANDSCAPE  
ARCHITECTS



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UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

PO Box 400290

Charlottesville, VA 22904

+1 434.982.6057