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Designing for the Latino Population in Poughkeepsie, New York: Community Centers and Affordable Housing

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Designing for the Latino Population in Poughkeepsie, New York:
Community Centers and Affordable Housing

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Urban Studies Department Thesis

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Introduction

Community buildings and affordable housing are vital to creating a well-functioning city. Small cities like Poughkeepsie, New York often seem to lack high quality civic or social services such as community centers or low-income housing.¹ Due to this lack of quality city provided infrastructure, immigrants often create their own community institutions in cities. For example, immigrants often run their own businesses, schools, and religious sites to support their communities.² This directly relates to the concept of Latino Urbanism and how Latino immigrants in cities have changed their urban environment to support their needs for resources such as affordable housing and community buildings.

There is a thriving Latino community in Poughkeepsie that is often left out of traditionally city sponsored social and civic services such as community spaces and affordable housing units. A design for these kinds of buildings could help support the underprivileged Latino population. Latino immigrants, particularly from the Oaxaca region of Mexico, first began moving to Poughkeepsie in the 1990s.³ These immigrants are low-wage and low-skill workers which means that are the type of people that could benefit from more community buildings and low-income housing.

In the wake of gentrification in Poughkeepsie, these low-income immigrant communities were displaced, especially around lower Main Street and high-rise, low-income housing was

¹ Leonard Nevarez and Joshua Simons. “Small–City Dualism in the Metro Hinterland: The Racialized ‘Brooklynization’ of New York’s Hudson Valley.” *City & Community* 19, no. 1 (March 2020): 19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12429>.

² Allison Arlotta, Ethan Boote, Yiyang Li, Adam Lubitz, Morgan O’Hara, Siri Olson, Ziyi Tang, Katherine Taylor-Hasty, and Erica Avarmi. “Past as Prologue: Preservation as a Tool For Social Inclusion in Poughkeepsie, NY.” Columbia GSAPP. Columbia University, 2017.

<https://www.arch.columbia.edu/student-work/3358-preservation-as-a-tool-for-social-inclusion-in-poughkeepsie-ny>, 20

³ Nevarez and Simons, “Small–City Dualism,” 28

built to varying degrees of success for the families.⁴ There are also “Ethnic Centers” and “Heritage Centers,” mostly centralized around Middle Main Street where much of the Latino Community is based.⁵ These types of buildings provide some of the support that this project is designing for. However, by taking into consideration Poughkeepsie’s history and the concepts of Latino Urbanism the created design is more supportive for the Latino community in the city.

Understanding the demographics, urban issues, and design considerations for the city has informed the design of a proposal for an affordable housing and community center development at the site of the Office Furniture Building on Main Street in Poughkeepsie. The proposal questions how a design for a community center and low-income housing can be realized in Poughkeepsie and, in the future, could have ramifications for urban planning and design in the city. The following sections give the background information necessary to understand the intricacies of the community and housing needs for Poughkeepsie’s Latino population through the lens of affordable housing, community development, and Latino Urbanism.

Background:

Theories of Latino Urbanism

Looking at the theoretical background of Latino Urbanism, community centers, and affordable housing better places this issue into context. Firstly, the concept of Latino Urbanism shows how the Latino population in the United States has shaped cities into its own based on their specific ethnic and cultural needs. Davis explains in *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the US City* that the growth of the Latino immigrant population in the United States, often coming from a wide variety of countries, has fostered a need to move beyond traditional

⁴ Arlotta et al., “Past as Prologue”, 35

⁵ Ibid, 20-21, 45

neighborhoods made by African-Americans and European immigrants and has instead promoted the growth for a Latino form of urbanism.⁶ This remaking of the city through their own form of urbanism is the basis of many of the urban initiatives happening in Poughkeepsie in support of the Latino community. The proposed design of this project takes this concept of Latino Urbanism into account, trying to emulate this theory and acknowledge its history without co-opting or appropriating it.

Furthermore, the need for community spaces is especially emphasized and important to Latino Urbanism as a theory and encourages the importance of community building designs for Poughkeepsie. Latino culture encourages “micro-entrepreneurship” and many Latin American and Caribbean cities have seen communities grow out of the commercial use of public streets.⁷ In North America, however, these low-income and uniquely Latino means of working are often discouraged. For example, in cities like New York and Los Angeles, high percentages of police funding goes into intimidating street vendors who make their income selling Latino products such as *paletas*, *champurrado*, and *tamales* on the streets.⁸ And yet, these streetside vendors are integral to the idea of building communities through Latino Urbanism. This problem highlights the need for more designated community space for Latinos in cities as well as points to the low-wage jobs that many Latino city dwellers take up. This also hints at the need and importance of affordable housing for low-income Latino workers.

In terms of Latino Urbanism as a building block for understanding affordable housing and community buildings in Poughkeepsie, it is important to understand the influence of transnationalism. Latino urbanism is built on the transnational communities across the globe that help to make up the populations of cities both within and beyond the literal mapped boundaries of

⁶ Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the US City*. London, UK: Verso, 2000, 39

⁷ Ibid, 53

⁸ Ibid, 53

the city.⁹ This means that urban initiatives for Latino populations are not solely for citizens of a certain city. When thinking about Poughkeepsie, for example, the Latino community being considered is not only those living in the city proper but also the transnational population living across the globe in the countries that the Latino families of Poughkeepsie originate from.

Concepts of Community Centers

Turning to the concepts behind community centers, helps frame the importance of these kinds of buildings in the ways they can support neighborhood populations. Community centers are described as a place in cities for both socializing and a resource where citizens can come together to help one another.¹⁰ This is especially important because disadvantaged populations, such as Latinos in Poughkeepsie, are more likely to use community centers.¹¹ Community buildings are particularly important in building and maintaining social relationships between already formed communities. “A community center creates social networks and social capital through the activities it provides... People interact with each other and talk about their life and their problems. Micro-social worlds are created with their own norms and give shape to trust. Because of that trust, people feel comfortable in sharing problems and start undertaking action together to solve them.”¹² Building trust and maintaining a social network within the Latino community thus serves as the foundation of designing a community center in Poughkeepsie.

⁹ Davis, *Magical Urbanism*, 77

¹⁰ R.G.H. van Urk, “How Can a Community Center Contribute to Social Cohesion?,” *How Can a Community Center Contribute to Social Cohesion?* (BMS: Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences, 2016), <http://purl.utwente.nl/essays/71095>, 7

¹¹ *Ibid*, 7

¹² *Ibid*, 32

Importance of Affordable Housing

Lastly, in terms of theory, is the background of affordable housing for Latinos. Looking briefly at the history of affordable housing for Latinos in New York, the importance of low-income housing came with the decline of immigration and the rise of suburbanization as these trends threatened the growth of cities in the United States.¹³ Between the 1930s and the 1960s fair housing organizers worked to promote state and federal subsidies which helped to bring affordable housing to low-income New Yorkers, especially African-Americans and Puerto Ricans, as well as modernized the city in the eyes of the middle class.¹⁴ This means that affordable housing became a priority starting in the 1930s, but not necessarily to support the Latino community in particular, especially with the underlying goals of appealing to the modernization and updating of New York to middle class standards.

Even in the last year however, the need for low-income housing for Latinos in the United States has persisted. It is noteworthy that, “fewer than one-half of Hispanics access homeownership (47 percent) compared with nearly three-fourths of Whites (73 percent). They also have a higher likelihood of living in high-poverty neighborhoods.”¹⁵ This low rate of homeownership and connection to low-income urban areas demonstrates how clearly there is a need for affordable housing for urban Latino populations. Income is the main contributing factor to the low homeownership rate for Hispanics, but that is not to say the issue is not confounded by other systematic ethnic related difficulties. It is thought that language barriers and immigration

¹³ Nicholas Dagen Bloom and Matthew Gordon Lasner, eds., *Affordable Housing in New York: The People, Places, and Policies That Transformed a City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 4

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 4

¹⁵ Claudia Aiken, Vincent J. Reina, and Dennis P. Culhane. “Understanding Low-Income Hispanic Housing Challenges and the Use of Housing and Homelessness Assistance.” *Cityscape* 23, no. 2 (2021): 123–58. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27039955>, 125

status may play a role in the difficulty in finding affordable housing as English deficiency can, at times, contribute to foreclosures and undocumented immigrants often find themselves in more expensive and predatory leases.¹⁶ It is also noteworthy that generally low-income groups have higher housing costs than higher income households and low-wage working Latinos often lack affordable housing options and thus are more likely to be housing cost-burdened than even low-income Whites.¹⁷ Due to these facts, it is clear that affordable housing is a greatly needed resource for urban Latino populations, which hints at the importance of community centers as well in supporting these underserved populations.

¹⁶ Aiken, Reina, and Culhane. "Understanding Low-Income Hispanic Housing," 125

¹⁷ Ibid, 125

Chapter One:

History of the Latino Community in Poughkeepsie

The Beginnings: Community Engagement

In the early 1900s Poughkeepsie was known as a growing and diverse small city. Throughout the history of the city, Poughkeepsie has been characterized by its unequal immigrant communities, starting with Europeans and later being populated by Mexican migrants. How these immigrant groups have interacted and created community infrastructure, both physically and socially, forms the historical basis for understanding the necessity of Latino community buildings in the present day. The beginning of the twentieth century brought about the three hundredth anniversary of Henry Hudson sailing the Hudson River and the one hundredth anniversary of Fulton's first steamboat excursion on the river, thus calling for the first important community celebrations and parades, which ultimately displayed the already unequal neighborhoods of the city.¹⁸ Most community events during this time were organized by the "Public Conference on City Affairs," formed in 1907.¹⁹ Community events and buildings were often used to promote specific values, especially in terms of assimilating immigrant groups.

For example, Poughkeepsie became known for its Arbor Day celebrations organized by genteel and good governance reformers with goals to "improve the quality of growing cities" through beautifying the environment and encouraging civic engagement in contrast with rowdy National holidays such as the Fourth of July.²⁰ As another example, the opening celebrations of the Poughkeepsie-Highland Bridge included a "grand parade," speeches, a baseball game, a clambake, a "gala ball," fireworks at Woodcliff Park; music and fireworks at Riverview Park;

¹⁸ Harvey K. Flad and Clyde C. Griffen, *Main Street to Mainframes: Landscape and Social Change in Poughkeepsie*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009. Accessed October 3, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central, 63

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 109

²⁰ *Ibid*, 101

and a block dance on Church Street, from Market to Academy street.²¹ These types of events aimed to bring together the diverse communities of Poughkeepsie while also promoting reformer's agendas of beautifying the city and assimilating its residents.

During the early 1900s, community buildings also played a role in unifying the city, however often under different pretenses. Influenced by the "White City" ideal popularized by the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, many public and semi-public political and economic buildings on Market and Main Streets aimed to promote "civic virtues" in the city.²² On the other hand, during the 1920s, immigrant groups had also created their own community buildings to bring together their specific ethnic populations. As explained in *Main Street to Mainframes: Landscape and Social Change in Poughkeepsie* organizations such as the Italian Center and the Polish Club were vital to immigrants finding a national identity in collaboration with their preexisting identities revolving around specific locations and regions for which they immigrated from.²³ For example, immigrants created community initiatives such as religious groups at St. Joseph's Church and volunteering through the Italian Center as a means of sharing native languages and customs.²⁴ These types of community centers did not necessarily reflect the goals of reformers, but rather subverted the aim to assimilate immigrants. Throughout the history of Poughkeepsie this tension between assimilation and separation of immigrant communities continues, especially in terms of the Latino population.

The twenties in Poughkeepsie brought the first known immigrant from South America, however still European in ethnicity. Tony di Rosa, a sixteen year old Italian boy, first immigrated to Buenos Aires from Italy and then, in 1927, came to New York City by himself where some of

²¹ Flad, *Main Street to Mainframes*, 123-124

²² *Ibid*, 71

²³ *Ibid*, 89-90

²⁴ *Ibid*, 89-90

his relatives lived.²⁵ In search of a job, di Rosa was sent to Poughkeepsie, despite not knowing the city. He was able to easily fit in with the Italian immigrants because of community buildings like the aforementioned Italian Center.²⁶ It is examples like these that show the importance of community centers in welcoming immigrants and fostering an environment supportive of migrants in the city.

Urban Renewal: The 1940s to the 1970s

The Housing Act of 1949 and the 1956 Housing Act, “... declared that every American, regardless of income or origin, was entitled to ‘a decent home and a suitable living environment’”²⁷ This ruling by Congress directly influenced housing goals in the City of Poughkeepsie, but unfortunately perpetuated a period of urban renewal and gentrification that directly impacted the immigrant population. In 1964 Poughkeepsie attempted to “beautify the city” and provide new housing options to low-income citizens, but in reality removed blighted homes and never replaced them.²⁸ One year later, in 1965, as a local version of the federal Housing and Urban Development agency (HUD), the Poughkeepsie Urban Renewal Agency (PURA) was formed with the goals of redeveloping, rehabilitating, and/or demolishing five designated areas of concern.²⁹ In years to come, initiatives by PURA would greatly contribute to the exclusion of low-income populations in the city, especially immigrant communities.

During the Federal Government’s “War on Poverty” in 1967, Poughkeepsie was one of sixty-three cities chosen for the Model City initiative with the aim to, “do for the city residents’

²⁵ Flad, *Main Street to Mainframes*, 84

²⁶ Ibid, 84

²⁷ Ibid, 223

²⁸ Ibid, 224

²⁹ Ibid, 224

human service needs what urban renewal was intended to do for their physical surroundings.”³⁰ The Model City initiative supposedly required citizen participation, however the results for disenfranchised groups were less than desirable and did not take into consideration their needs. Working class areas of Poughkeepsie, such as Main Street where many of the immigrant communities were located, were designated as “blighted” during this time. The Model Cities program supported displacement as a means for redevelopment which resulted in a housing crisis since the low-income apartments created by the program could not sufficiently house the hundreds of displaced citizens.³¹ By this time, and in response to housing disparities, white-black relations began to sour, hinting at issues Hispanic immigrants would encounter years down the line.^{32 33}

As the Model City program continued into the 1970s, Poughkeepsie also continued to create these public housing units to make up for urban renewal initiatives that removed pre-existing low-income housing. During this time the People’s Housing Development Corporation (PHDC) was created to address housing concerns.³⁴ The PHDC in Poughkeepsie had the admirable goal of awarding grants for home ownership, rehabilitation, moving expenses, and household necessities rather than focusing on rental of public “project” apartment units.³⁵ The group even gave a grant to the AME Zion-Trinity Housing Development Corporation for the creation of a community room in the Harriet Tubman Terrace Housing Development, but in the

³⁰ Flad, *Main Street to Mainframes*, 229

³¹ Allison Arlotta, Ethan Boote, Yiyang Li, Adam Lubitz, Morgan O'Hara, Siri Olson, Ziyue Tang, Katherine Taylor-Hasty, and Erica Avarmi. “Past as Prologue: Preservation as a Tool For Social Inclusion in Poughkeepsie, NY.” Columbia GSAPP. Columbia University, 2017. <https://www.arch.columbia.edu/student-work/3358-preservation-as-a-tool-for-social-inclusion-in-poughkeepsie-ny>, 35

³² Flad, 227

³³ Arlotta et al., “Past as Prologue,” 20

³⁴ Flad, 235

³⁵ Ibid, 235

end “political and racial tensions” caused strife in these initiatives.³⁶ From these housing concerns it is clear to see how the failed attempts at improving the city further contributed to the tension between whites and low-income immigrant communities in Poughkeepsie, which by the 1970s were becoming predominately from Latin America.

Latinos Make their Mark: The 1970s and 1980s

Post World War II, immigrants to Poughkeepsie expanded beyond European populations to include Caribbean, South and Central American, Middle Eastern, and South and East Asian communities, with the greatest number of migrants coming from Mexico.³⁷ These immigrants created a sense of community by setting up their own community institutions, such as shops, schools, and religious centers, for each individual immigrant or racial group.³⁸ Furthermore, ethnic centers supported immigrant community events such as weddings, parties, community gatherings, festivals, dances, and competitions.³⁹

The Mexican migrants in Poughkeepsie fostered communities both in the city and back in their villages throughout this period in the city’s history. In the early 1980s many men moved from San Agustín, Oaxaca to Poughkeepsie to better support their families’ economic needs, thus creating what Mountz and Wright call a “transnational migration” characterized by continued community involvement across the two countries of the United States and Mexico.⁴⁰ Many of the original Mexican migrants to Poughkeepsie did not necessarily come to stay, but rather planned

³⁶ Flad, *Main Street to Mainframes*, 235

³⁷ Arlotta et al., “Past as Prologue” 18-19

³⁸ Ibid, 20

³⁹ Arlotta et al., “Past as Prologue”, 20-21

⁴⁰ Alison Mountz and Richard A. Wright. “Daily Life in the Transnational Migrant Community of San Agustín, Oaxaca, and Poughkeepsie, New York.” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 5, no. 3 (1996): 403–28. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dsp.1996.0017>, 404-407

to earn money for their families and then return to Oaxaca.⁴¹ In keeping with their community, Oaxacan men in Poughkeepsie often lived their lives as similar to back in Mexico as possible. For example, they lived with *paisanos* (fellow villagers), answered the phone in Spanish, socialized with fellow immigrant friends, organized within the community structures from their villages, and generally followed the ways of life that they would have in Oaxaca.⁴²

Due to this strong connection with villages back in Mexico, the Latino population in Poughkeepsie was quite insular in nature during the eighties. Mountz and Wright further explain this insularity and how it relates to marginalization of Mexican immigrant groups in the city:

This marginalization is self-induced by insularity, transience, and undocumented status, but is also imposed by the native-born's ignorance of the Oaxacan population... Some churches now offer services in Spanish, but these services remain separate from the larger English-speaking congregations. The limited interaction between Oaxacans and the social and economic environment of Poughkeepsie also occurs because the Mexicans do not view their existence in Poughkeepsie as disconnected from San Agustín. Rather, they have traveled temporarily to other parts of the extended labor market within [the Oaxaca/Poughkeepsie community]...⁴³

This raises the question of how community centers and events have the potential to bring together native Poughkeepsians and immigrants to form a more unified or mutually understood population in the city.

Community Initiatives: The 1990s and 2000s

Much like Italian immigrants during the 1920s that came from specific regions of Italy, Mexican immigrants during the 1990s came to Poughkeepsie primarily from Oaxaca as Mountz and Wright began to hint at, and even more specifically immigrated from the villages of La

⁴¹ Mountz and Wright, "Daily Life in the Transnational Migrant Community," 409

⁴² Ibid, 409

⁴³ Ibid, 409-410

Ciénaga, San Agustín, and Zaachila.⁴⁴ The results of this migration from a centralized location to Poughkeepsie created a tight knit population that extended between Mexico and New York. There is an obvious comparison between Italian immigrant ethnic centers, which aimed to support specific migrant populations and often perpetuated the tight knit nature of the communities in response to assimilation efforts, and the organization of the Latino community as it was starting to grow in the 1980s and boomed in the 1990s. The strong sense of community indicates a need for gathering spaces and housing options that directly support these immigrants in the city.

Arts and cultural events and centers seemed to be the main manner of fostering a sense of community during the 1990s in Poughkeepsie. For example, the Dutchess County Arts Council put on arts, food, and ethnic festivals in order to promote activity on Main Street and the waterfront, as well as hosted music and holiday events.⁴⁵ The Bardavon Theatre and the Barrett Arts Center also brought communities together through art initiatives on Main Street. In regards to the Barrett Art Center, sculptor Jeep Johnson formed a City Arts Partnership (CAP) subset of the center in the nineties which used a “trolley” to bring visitors to art locales throughout Main Street.⁴⁶ Locations such as The Galleria Mall, Christ Church Episcopal, and St. Mary’s Roman Catholic churches and events like *Liga Independiente de Fútbol Asociado*, ESL classes, and church services called *misa español* allowed for Mexican immigrants to commingle with other Poughkeepsians.⁴⁷ For children, community involvement started with the formation of the Children’s Museum in 1993 and the Children’s Media Project in 1994.⁴⁸ These kinds of

⁴⁴ Mountz and Wright, “Daily Life in the Transnational Migrant Community,” 18-19

⁴⁵ Flad, *Main Street to Mainframes*, 360

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 360

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 331

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 360

community centers and events helped to bring together the different, and often separated groups that inhabited Poughkeepsie.

Another example of community support that helped the population of Poughkeepsie thrive was the focus on community farming in the 1990s. The idea of community farming in the city comes directly from immigrant populations, starting with Italian-Americans in the Mount Carmel neighborhood who shared backyard gardens.⁴⁹ By the nineties this formally transformed into Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) which aimed to provide food to members who helped with planting and harvesting crops as well as contributed to building a more supportive community through food supply initiatives at homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and food pantries.⁵⁰ The act of being a member of a CSA was one way to find a community, but also the CSAs themselves acted as means of engaging with the community by interacting with homeless shelters and social services. In 1998 in Poughkeepsie, the Poughkeepsie Farm Project (PFP) was created as the first urban CSA with the goals of providing education, food security, and organic crops to homeless shelters, food pantries, and the “Lunch Box” at the Family Partnership Center.⁵¹ Community Supported Agriculture was a great force in the promotion of community engagement between different populations in Poughkeepsie, but also hinted at the struggles of food insecurity and homelessness of immigrant groups, especially Mexican migrants.

The U.S. Census of 2000 indicated that the Hispanic population in Dutchess County, which included the Mexican majority in Poughkeepsie, had doubled from 9,765 in 1990 to 18,060 in 2000 and rose to 25,976 by 2007 with even more undocumented immigrants.⁵² As indicated in the 1990s, however, the Hispanic population struggled financially compared to other

⁴⁹ Flad, *Main Street to Mainframes*, 347

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 346-347

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 347

⁵² *Ibid*, 330

groups in Poughkeepsie. In 2000, the median household income on Main Street, where most Mexican immigrants lived, was the lowest of any area at only \$15,758 in comparison to \$29,389 for the entire city and \$54,086 for Dutchess County.⁵³ Mexican migrants were forced to leave Oaxaca in the first place due to policies such as the North American Free Trade (NAFTA) which lowered the price of corn in Mexico by favoring U.S. corn crops, thus putting smaller farms in Mexico out of business.⁵⁴ This meant that immigrants from Mexico were often leaving one struggling economy in their home country for another, albeit slightly better, struggling economy in Poughkeepsie.

One ever so slight advantage of this fact to Oaxacan immigrants was that minimum wage jobs in Poughkeepsie were much higher than in Mexico. In the nineties in Oaxaca eighty percent of rural workers made less than ten U.S. dollars a day in wages.⁵⁵ The economic downturn in the immigrant neighborhoods around Main Street also meant that the area was not thriving commercially as it once had been through community efforts in the early nineties. However, this allowed for immigrants to essentially make the area their own by creating a “Latino landscape,” especially seen in the “aspiring Latino entrepreneurial class,” which opened businesses in the vacant storefronts all along Main Street.⁵⁶ Now active shopfronts helped to revitalize downtown Poughkeepsie for the betterment of the Latino population, but also the greater Poughkeepsie community in general.

Another important community initiative for Mexican migrants was Hudson River HealthCare’s (HRHCare) photography workshop in the summer of 2003. HRHCare is a network of ten community and migrant health centers, and the workshop they led was an Unseen America

⁵³ Flad, *Main Street to Mainframes*, 331

⁵⁴ Rebecca Mina Schreiber, *The Undocumented Everyday: Migrant Lives and the Politics of Visibility*, University of Minnesota Press, 2018, 84-85

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 85

⁵⁶ Flad, 331

project called Communities without Borders: A Bridge for Health which engaged with Mexican immigrants in Poughkeepsie and their community in the village of La Ciénaga in Oaxaca, Mexico.⁵⁷ “HRHCare viewed Communities without Borders as a way to reach out to Oaxacan migrants living in Poughkeepsie and to encourage them to serve as *promotores* and *promotoras de salud* (health advocates) for the organization,” particularly in the post-9/11 period in which undocumented migrants avoided health and social services due to fears of being deported.⁵⁸ The initiative co-opted other community groups and locales such as the Family Partnership Center, the Latino Roundtable, the Association for Hispanics to Obtain Resources and Assistance (AHORA), churches, and laundromats to spread the word about the workshop.⁵⁹ The end result of the Communities without Borders project was a series of photos that portrayed the “undocumented everyday” including celebrations, social interactions, and low-wage work life.

Beyond HRHCare’s initial goal of bringing health services to Mexican migrants and encouraging community engagement of Oaxacan immigrant groups, the initiative had larger political repercussions. Participants in the workshop were inspired to organize “A Day without an Immigrant” community events in response to nationwide protests in March of 2006.⁶⁰ The event was described as a day to boycott businesses by Latino immigrants and allies to show the importance of this population on the United States economy.⁶¹ Furthermore, the boycott, march, and rally was in response to the HR 4437 Act called the Sensenbrenner-King Act or the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Act which had the goal of making living in the United States without proper immigration documents a felony as well as

⁵⁷ Schreiber, *The Undocumented Everyday*, 79

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 80

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 88 & 93

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 113

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 113

criminalizing anyone who assisted undocumented immigrants.⁶² These are the types of community engagements, but also community struggles, that Mexican immigrants in Poughkeepsie face as the city moves into the last ten years. The turbulent history in terms of Latinos in Poughkeepsie questions how the population can be best supported through community engagements in the present day.

⁶² Schreiber, *The Undocumented Everyday*, 113

Chapter Two:
Market Profile

Recent History: “New Immigrants,” (Un)Affordable Housing, and Community Organizations

Looking at the recent history of Latinos in Poughkeepsie shines a light on the demographic makeup of the city and helps clarify the need for affordable housing and community buildings for this population. A second wave of “new immigrants,” the majority coming from Agustín, Oaxaca, Mexico, began arriving in Poughkeepsie in the 1990s.⁶³ During this influx of Mexican immigrants to the area one out of every seven Poughkeepsie residents considered themselves Hispanic, making the city one of the largest communities of Latinos in the Hudson Valley area.⁶⁴ Many of these immigrants worked low-paying, low-skill jobs, further suggesting a need for affordable, low-income housing.⁶⁵ By 2014, Mexican majority tourism sector jobs such as “recreation, lodging, dining, transportation, and shopping... accounted for 6.6 percent of Hudson Valley employment.”⁶⁶

Unsurprisingly, this wave of “new immigrants” to Poughkeepsie, and thus a sudden change in the city’s demographics highlighted the need for both affordable housing and community centers for struggling populations. White residents often chose to move out of Poughkeepsie in exchange for the pricier suburbs. As Nevarez and Simons puts it, “small cities may compete with suburbs in terms of affordability, but their consumer opportunities and public services are often of low quality—often a factor for population exodus from small cities.”⁶⁷ This

⁶³ Leonard Nevarez and Joshua Simons. “Small–City Dualism in the Metro Hinterland: The Racialized ‘Brooklynization’ of New York’s Hudson Valley.” *City & Community* 19, no. 1 (March 2020): 16–43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12429>, 28

⁶⁴ Ibid, 28

⁶⁵ Ibid, 28

⁶⁶ Ibid, 28

⁶⁷ Ibid, 19

meant that low-income immigrants did not have the luxury of being able to afford the suburbs, nor could they access high quality public services.

To make matters worse, the higher income populations that decided to stay in Poughkeepsie contributed to gentrification efforts that have continued to make the city unaffordable for many Latino immigrants. Riverfront new residential constructions in the last decade and the opening of the “Walkway Over the Hudson” in 2009 are trendy new housing options and community spaces, but are not tailored to lower-income Latino immigrants.⁶⁸ Farmers markets are another example of recent gentrified happenings in Poughkeepsie that exclude the new immigrants in the city. While many Latino immigrants work in agriculture they are often left out of farmers market booths in favor of more “photogenic” and whitewashed sellers that cater to food and farming blogs.⁶⁹ That is to say, higher income, often white Poughkeepsians in recent years have benefited from the Latino community and yet this immigrant population does not see the same opportunities or resources as their white neighbors.

Despite the struggles with gentrification efforts in Poughkeepsie however, there are some organizations and “revitalization” efforts in recent years that have specifically helped support the Latino community in the city. Firstly, was the rebranding of a section of Poughkeepsie’s Main Street as “Middle Main”. The Middle Main neighborhood has helped to build a sense of community through placemaking initiatives, signage, entrepreneur leadership training, community trash clean-ups, and surveys with the goal of creating an area that citizens feel is worth being cared for.⁷⁰ Placemaking in this case has clearly helped to support the community in

⁶⁸ Nevarez and Simons, “Small-City Dualism in the Metro Hinterland,” 29

⁶⁹ Ibid, 34

⁷⁰ Allison Arlotta, Ethan Boote, Yiyang Li, Adam Lubitz, Morgan O'Hara, Siri Olson, Ziyue Tang, Katherine Taylor-Hasty, and Erica Avarmi. “Past as Prologue: Preservation as a Tool For Social Inclusion in Poughkeepsie, NY.” Columbia GSAPP. Columbia University, 2017.

<https://www.arch.columbia.edu/student-work/3358-preservation-as-a-tool-for-social-inclusion-in-poughkeepsie-ny>, 83

Middle Main more generally, but has also specifically helped Latino immigrants. Recent efforts at building a sense of community in the area helps to make Poughkeepsie feel like a desirable place to live and helps the immigrant community feel that the city wants them to live there. After years of being ignored, increased interest in the immigrant population is mutually beneficial for both the city and Latino community.

Community centers more specifically have populated Middle Main in recent years, contributing to this sense of community in the neighborhood. One of the most significant is the Mid-Hudson Heritage Center that is in charge of operating the gallery space, Art Centro, which has been reusing historic buildings on Main Street such as the Glebe House for art shows, exhibitions, and community events.⁷¹ Mid-Hudson Heritage Center is particularly important because it has the goal of providing a “community gathering space that honors the region’s cultural diversity through historical exhibitions, art events, meeting space, and workshops.”⁷² This reflects the idea that the culturally diverse population, Latino community members included, can benefit from this manner of community engagement and support. The organization has been so popular that in 2013 Art Centro was able to expand into a space that provides artist studios and educational programs to the community.⁷³

Furthermore, in the past decade in terms of affordable housing and community space development there have been significant efforts by Hudson River Housing. The organization is known for developing affordable housing options which many Latino immigrants take advantage of in the city. Hudson River Housing is a strong proponent of the Middle Main Initiative with the goal of, “investing comprehensively in community engagement strategies, real estate rehabilitation projects, and socially-oriented business development,” in order to participate in

⁷¹ Arlotta et al., “Past as Prologue”, 45

⁷² Ibid, 99

⁷³ Ibid, 99

“cultural districting development”.⁷⁴ This idea of cultural districting development that is seen not only through the work of Hudson River Housing, but also Mid-Hudson Heritage Center, directly reflects the importance of creating more community buildings and affordable housing that would support both the development of Poughkeepsie and the building of the Latino community in the city.

What is the “Market” Makeup?: Demographics of Poughkeepsie Today

City of Poughkeepsie, NY

*Population, Census, April 1, 2020: 31,577*⁷⁵

*Figure 2.1.*⁷⁶ Sex (2020)

Male	49.2%
Female	50.8%

*Figure 2.2.*⁷⁷ Income & Poverty

Median household income (in 2019 dollars), 2015-2019	\$43,794
Persons in poverty	19.4%

⁷⁴ Arlotta, “Past as Prologue,” 99

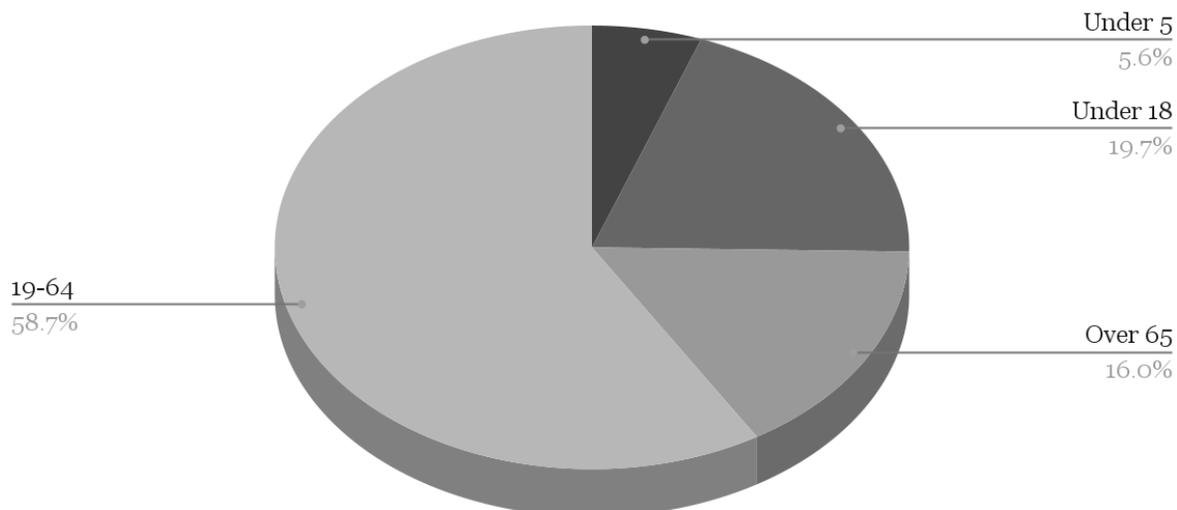
⁷⁵ U.S. Census

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ibid

Figure 2.3.⁷⁸ Age (2020)

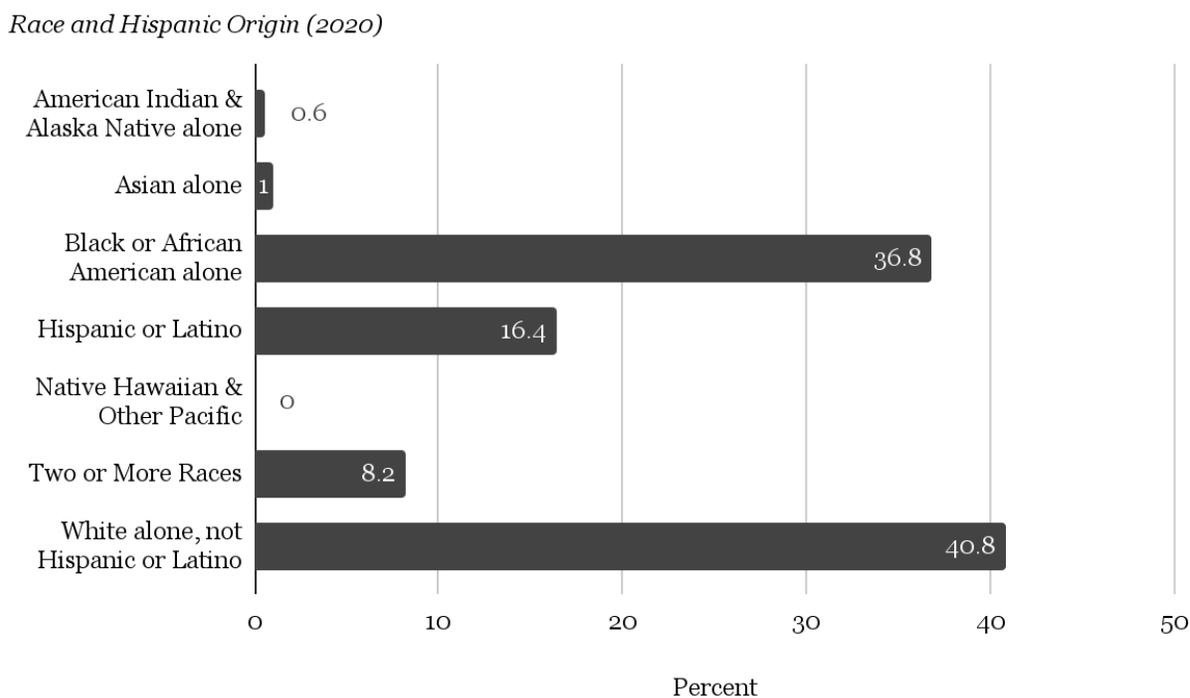
Age (2020)

Figure 2.4.⁷⁹ Housing (2015-2019)

Owner-occupied housing unit rate	34.7%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units	\$196,800
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage	\$1,954
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage	\$821
Median gross rent	\$1,113
Households	12,891
Persons per household	2.28
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+	18.6%

⁷⁸ U.S. Census⁷⁹ Ibid

Figure 2.5.⁸⁰ Race and Hispanic Origin (2020)



Looking at the recent 2020 United States Census data for the City of Poughkeepsie paints a better picture of the demographics of the city and helps to contextualize the Latino community within the population. The city currently has a population of 31,577, with a nearly fifty:fifty male to female ratio (Figure 2.1).⁸¹ The majority of the population falls between the ages of nineteen and sixty four years old (Figure 2.3), meaning that most Poughkeepsians are within working age.⁸² In terms of how this relates to the need for affordable housing in the city, it is important to analyze the poverty and housing data for Poughkeepsie. The poverty level of the city is at 19.4 percent, much higher than the national rate of 11.4 percent.⁸³ On top of this, it can be seen that the median household income is only around \$43,000 (Figure 2.2), while the nationwide median

⁸⁰ U.S. Census

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Ibid

is around \$68,000.⁸⁴ This means that the median household income is more than fifty percent higher than Poughkeepsie's median. It is clear that, compared to other populations in the United States, the city is faced with more poverty issues than most. For this reason it seems justifiable that Poughkeepsie in general would benefit from more affordable housing options and community buildings to support struggling citizens.

These facts of income and poverty data in Poughkeepsie are further complicated by the statistics relating to the Latino community in particular in the city. Firstly, the housing demographics note that almost nineteen percent of the people five years of age and older speak a language other than English at home (Figure 2.4).⁸⁵ It would not be unfair to assume that the majority of these households are speaking Spanish, especially when looking at the Race and Hispanic Origin information for the City of Poughkeepsie. Figure 2.5: Race and Hispanic Origin, compiled from the 2020 Census Data, shows that around sixteen percent of the population in the city identifies as Hispanic or Latino.⁸⁶ When combined with the eight percent of Poughkeepsians who identify as two or more races it is easy to see how these two populations most likely make up the majority of citizens speaking a language other than English, and that that language is likely to be Spanish.⁸⁷ From these assumptions, it is not hard to imagine that the Latino community in Poughkeepsie is part of the demographics that could benefit from affordable housing opportunities and supportive community spaces.

⁸⁴ U.S. Census

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Ibid

Community and Cultural Needs

After considering the “market” of Poughkeepsie more generally from the Census data, it is important to look at the community and cultural needs of the Latino community specifically. *Tierra y Libertad: Land, Liberty, and Latino Housing* by Steven Bender is an excellent example of the economic, social, and legal constraints that Latino populations face in terms of housing in New York State and how new housing services could enhance the community. Bender notes that Massachusetts and New York State are tied with the lowest rate of Latino homeownership at only twenty six percent⁸⁸ This is in part due to the segregated nature of housing markets in much of New York which makes buying an affordable home even more difficult for the Latino population.⁸⁹ This fact serves as an example of both the economic and social difficulties in finding affordable housing as a Latino in Poughkeepsie. It is clear that Poughkeepsians could benefit from more affordable housing options. Furthermore, services like low-income housing would help to increase the low statistic of the twenty six percent homeowner rate of Latinos in the State.

Segregated housing practices in the State of New York are further complicated by unfair loan practices aimed at minorities trying to pay for housing. For example, in 2006 the New York State Attorney General found that Countrywide Home Loans was practicing unfair lending as seen by the discrepancies in loan pricing for Black and Latino customers versus Anglo buyers.⁹⁰ In Poughkeepsie it can be seen that housing costs per month including mortgage costs are around \$2,000 (Figure 2.4), while median income is only about \$44,000 (Figure 2.3).⁹¹ This means that around fifty percent of income is going towards housing costs through the year. Considering that

⁸⁸ Steven W. Bender, *Tierra y Libertad : Land, Liberty, and Latino Housing*. New York: New York University Press, 2010. Accessed February 3, 2022. ProQuest Ebook Central, 6

⁸⁹ Ibid, 6

⁹⁰ Ibid, 50

⁹¹ U.S. Census

in New York State Latinos are likely facing pricing discrepancies in loans when paying for housing, it is easy to see the kinds of economic and systemic restraints placed on Latino communities within the housing market in Poughkeepsie.

However, this is not to say that the desire to live in a house is an unachievable goal for low-income Latino immigrants in the city. Bender makes it clear that Latinos do wish to own homes.⁹² He writes that, “no doubt the needs of rural Mexican farm workers in California may differ from those of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in New York City. Regardless of their background, however, most Latino/as aspire to homeownership, and at minimum to decent housing, whether rented or owned.”⁹³ This proves that Latinos in Poughkeepsie deserve, and would benefit from, affordable housing options in the city despite any economic, social, or legal deterrents. Moreover, Latino immigrants entering the housing market can actually be beneficial for more than just their ethnic community. It is important to remember that immigrants moving into cities help to revitalize these urban areas. For example, in the 1970s in New York’s Flushing, new immigrants moving into the area helped to boost home prices and thus boosted the economic viability of the once struggling neighborhood.⁹⁴ Due to this fact, it is clear that providing affordable housing options for the Latino community in Poughkeepsie as a response to both their needs and desires would enhance their quality of life and also be mutually beneficial to the city as a whole.

New Housing and Community Buildings Suggestions

“Past as Prologue: Preservation as a Tool For Social Inclusion in Poughkeepsie, NY,” lays out some suggestions for potential housing designs in the city that could help to alleviate the

⁹² Bender, *Tierra y Libertad*, 146

⁹³ *Ibid*, 146

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 176

constraints Latinos face, and also to specifically uplift the community. Firstly, with the creation of the Middle Main initiative, it seems that Main Street, or the surrounding neighborhood, is a prime location for affordable housing and community buildings in part because of the preexisting immigrant-owned businesses that are thriving in the area.⁹⁵ Furthermore, Main Street has been designated as a, “holistic mixed-use commercial corridor,” which should include housing options and community centers as well as the businesses that are already there.⁹⁶

Beyond focusing on Main Street as a location for housing and community resources for the Latino population in Poughkeepsie, it is also important to note that heritage sites are particularly significant to the Latino immigrant population in the city.⁹⁷ Arlotta et al. uses the Underwear Factory as an example of a model for mixed-use community space, which reflects the values of Latino citizens.⁹⁸ However, the authors are also careful to note that the values that different populations are fostering in heritage sites often vary widely and can at times be contradictory.⁹⁹ The Fall Kill Plan also plays a role in supporting “economic vitality” through community engagement along the creek which will help build a stronger business core in the Middle Main neighborhood in Poughkeepsie¹⁰⁰ It is this fact that supports the idea of creating a mixed-use, housing and community space in the city in conjunction with the Fall Kill Plan and Middle Main initiative that would be supportive of the Latino population in Poughkeepsie. Furthermore, the cultural needs of Latinos in Poughkeepsie suggests that focusing on heritage-sites would be particularly beneficial for the community. For this reason, the idea to rehabilitate an existing structure in the neighborhood as a mixed-use new housing and

⁹⁵ Arlotta et al., “Past as Prologue,” 14

⁹⁶ Ibid, 14

⁹⁷ Ibid, 95

⁹⁸ Ibid, 99

⁹⁹ Ibid, 95

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 82

community building is a suggested design in response to the needs of the Latino community in Poughkeepsie.

Chapter Three: Design Proposal

Precedent Projects

The aim of this design is to rehabilitate the old Office Furniture Building in downtown Poughkeepsie into a joint affordable housing and community center development that will serve the Latino population of the city in particular. The design is a rethinking of the proposal by Urban Green Foods, LLC to convert the current building into a “79-room boutique hotel”.¹⁰¹ Urban Green Foods’ fifteen million dollar redesign of the Office Furniture Building includes amenities such as a gym, conference space, bakery, and roof terrace with a bar. Much of the facade, with historic elements such as the windows, signage, and clock, are to be restored in the design. There are elements to this design that are especially conducive to the idea to design an affordable housing and community center development, but there are important changes that need to be made to make the design suitable for this type of building.

A primary precedent for the design proposal is the Fall Kill Creek rehabilitation project by MASS Design.¹⁰² This project aims to create outdoor community space along the Fall Kill Creek, specifically in the Middle Main section. The Fall Kill Creek redesign will provide new access areas for the creek as well as areas for “ecological education, recreation, and public enjoyment.”¹⁰³ The plan also attempts to help the Middle Main neighborhood grow economically by working with neighborhood partner initiatives.¹⁰⁴ Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show the site plan for the design which is located in downtown Poughkeepsie and engages with preexisting community buildings in a way that aims to uplift the surrounding population.

¹⁰¹ Eric Anderson and Matthew Cordone, “PDF” (Poughkeepsie, 2019), 1-28

¹⁰² “Fall Kill Creek,” MASS Design Group (MASS Design Group, 2016), <https://massdesigngroup.org/work/design/fall-kill-creek>, 1.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 1.

Figure 3.1.¹⁰⁵ Fall Kill Creek Site Plan

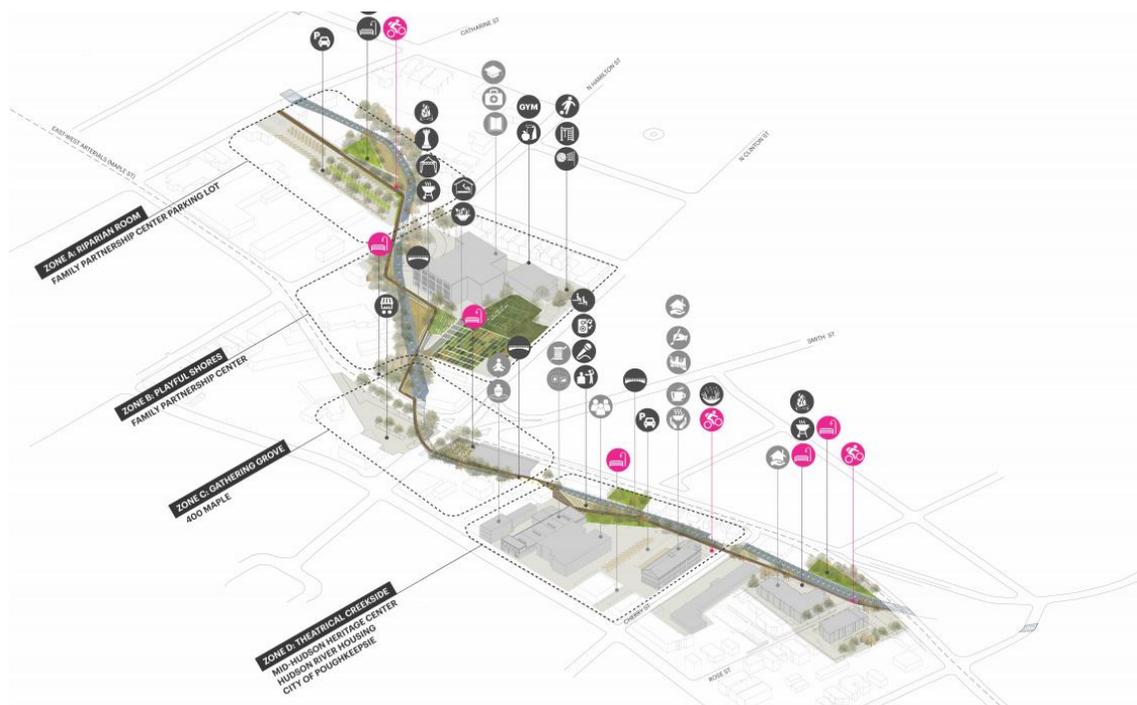
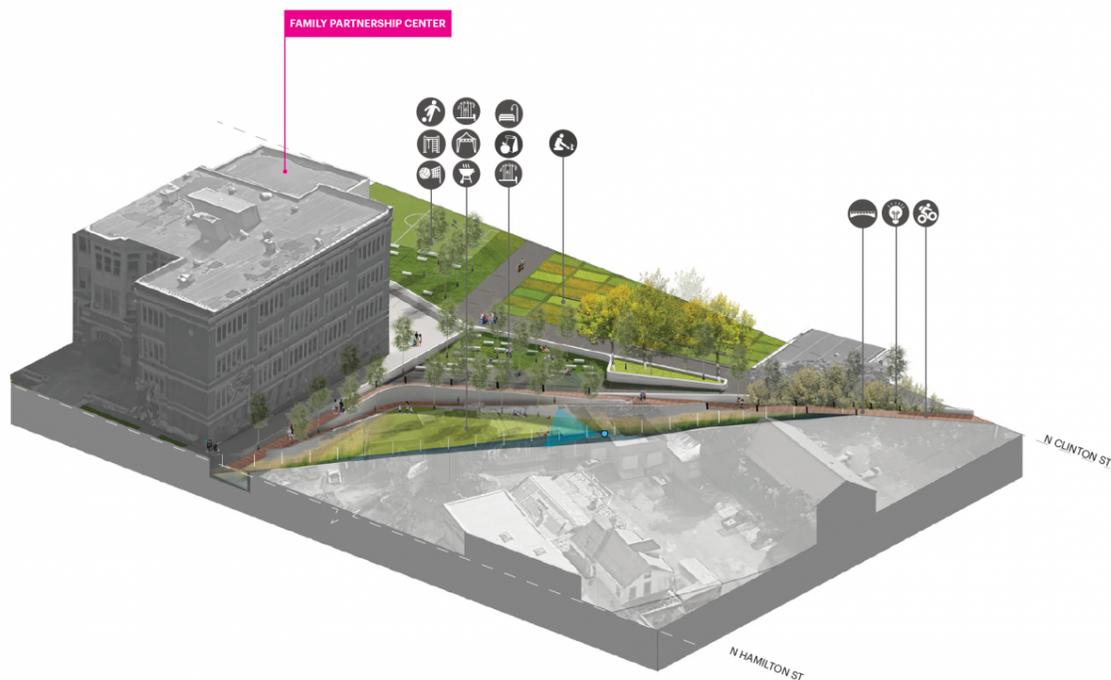


Figure 3.2.¹⁰⁶ Fall Kill Creek Site Plan, enlarged



¹⁰⁵ "Fall Kill Creek," MASS Design Group, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 1

What is compelling about the MASS Design project as a precedent for the Office Furniture Building apartments and community center proposal is the commitment to supporting the surrounding neighborhoods with the design. Also, the plan to create a sense of community through engagement, education, and recreation aligns with the proposed need for a community center more specifically through the Office Furniture Building design proposal. As related proposals, the two designs could actually work in collaboration. The sites are only about an eight minute walk away from one another, and with similar design goals, they could work in conjunction to better support the surrounding area, especially the Latino population in the case of the Office Furniture Building restoration and redesign.

Another source of inspiration for the design proposal is the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum (MHCM) (Figure 3.3). The building that houses the museum was once part of the Innis Dye Works company.¹⁰⁷ Constructed in 1880, the building was used as part of the pulverizing and storing of materials to create dyes, but has since been remodeled and is now being reused as the MHCM. The rehabilitation utilizes both the existing structure as well as a modern extension that serves as inspiration for the Office Furniture Building design proposal in that both buildings mix the new and the old in an attempt to embrace Poughkeepsie's history while also bringing in contemporary design elements.

¹⁰⁷ Anthony P Musso, "What's the History behind Poughkeepsie's 'Piano Factory'?", *Poughkeepsie Journal*, July 7, 2020, <https://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/news/2020/07/07/poughkeepsies-piano-factory-building-began-innis-dye-works-1880/5381870002/>, 1.

Figure 3.3.¹⁰⁸ Mid-Hudson Children’s Museum



The mission of the Mid-Hudson Children’s Museum also aligns with the proposal’s goals and further connects to the inspiration behind the community center aspect of the design. MHCM aims to support, “school readiness, health and wellness, and community building,” through its programming and “is dedicated to engaging and serving a diverse audience of families from all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.”¹⁰⁹ This directly reflects the inspiration behind the need for a community center at the Office Furniture Building site. Furthermore, the Children’s Museum operates the very popular Poughkeepsie Waterfront Market, a public farmer’s market at the museum’s Pavillion.¹¹⁰ Initiatives such as these show how community designs like the museum can be beneficial for Poughkeepsians.

¹⁰⁸ *MID-HUDSON CHILDREN’S MUSEUM IN POUGHKEEPSIE, 92.7/96.9 WRRV* (), accessed March 22, 2022,

<https://wrrv.com/mid-hudson-childrens-museum-in-poughkeepsie-plans-expansion/>, 1.

¹⁰⁹ “About Us,” Mid-Hudson Children’s Museum (Mid-Hudson Children’s Museum), accessed March 22, 2022, <https://mhcm.org/about/organizational-profile/>, 1.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 1.

Lastly, the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory (PUF) is a precedent project for the mixed use design being proposed for the Office Furniture Building. Similar to the other precedents, the Underwear Factory is located in downtown Poughkeepsie on Middle Main and is a redevelopment of a historic factory building.¹¹¹ PUF was designed by Hudson River Housing and is described as a renovated historic building that now functions as apartments, commercial space, and for community use. The building aims to bring together the arts, food, education, and community space as a means to uplift the Poughkeepsie population, especially those who are underprivileged. This goal is shared by the proposal for a mixed-use redesign of the Office Furniture Building.

¹¹¹ “Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory,” Hudson River Housing (Hudson River Housing, June 15, 2021), <https://hudsonriverhousing.org/what-we-do/strengthen-communities/poughkeepsie-underwear-factory/>, 1.

The Site

The site for the Office Furniture Building rehabilitation is located at 375 Main Street in Poughkeepsie, placing it in what is considered Middle Main Street (Figure 3.4). To the left of the lot is a pedestrian alley which has some trees and serves as the entrance to the historic Chance Theatre. The alley facing side also features murals and signage that is original to the building. The building is backed by Crannell Street which conveniently has a public parking lot. Within one block of the building there are many useful amenities and buildings, including restaurants, shops, salons, and office buildings. Most notably among these businesses are Casa Blanca Grocery Inc., the Tropical Fresh supermarket, and the City Drug Pharmacy which ensure that there is fresh food and medical supplies accessible to the site within walking distance.^{112 113} Also located on this block are Latino restaurants such as Pat’s Kitchen, Mariscos Acapulco, and Nelly’s which indicates a population of Latino residents in the area, in addition to prominent Latino businesses such as ABCLatino, Floreria Jasmin, and El Covarruvias.^{114 115 116 117}

¹¹² “Poughkeepsie Is Great,” *Poughkeepsie Is Great* (blog), 2014,

<https://sopony.wordpress.com/2014/06/28/tropical-fresh/comment-page-1/>, 1.

¹¹³ “City Drug Pharmacy,” Facebook (City Drug Pharmacy), accessed March 22, 2022,

https://www.facebook.com/CITYDRUGPK/?ref=page_internal, 1.

¹¹⁴ “Pat’s Kitchen,” Facebook (Pat’s kitchen), accessed March 22, 2022,

https://www.facebook.com/PatsKitchenMainst/?ref=page_internal, 1.

¹¹⁵ “ABCLatino,” ABCLatino (ABCLatino), accessed March 22, 2022,

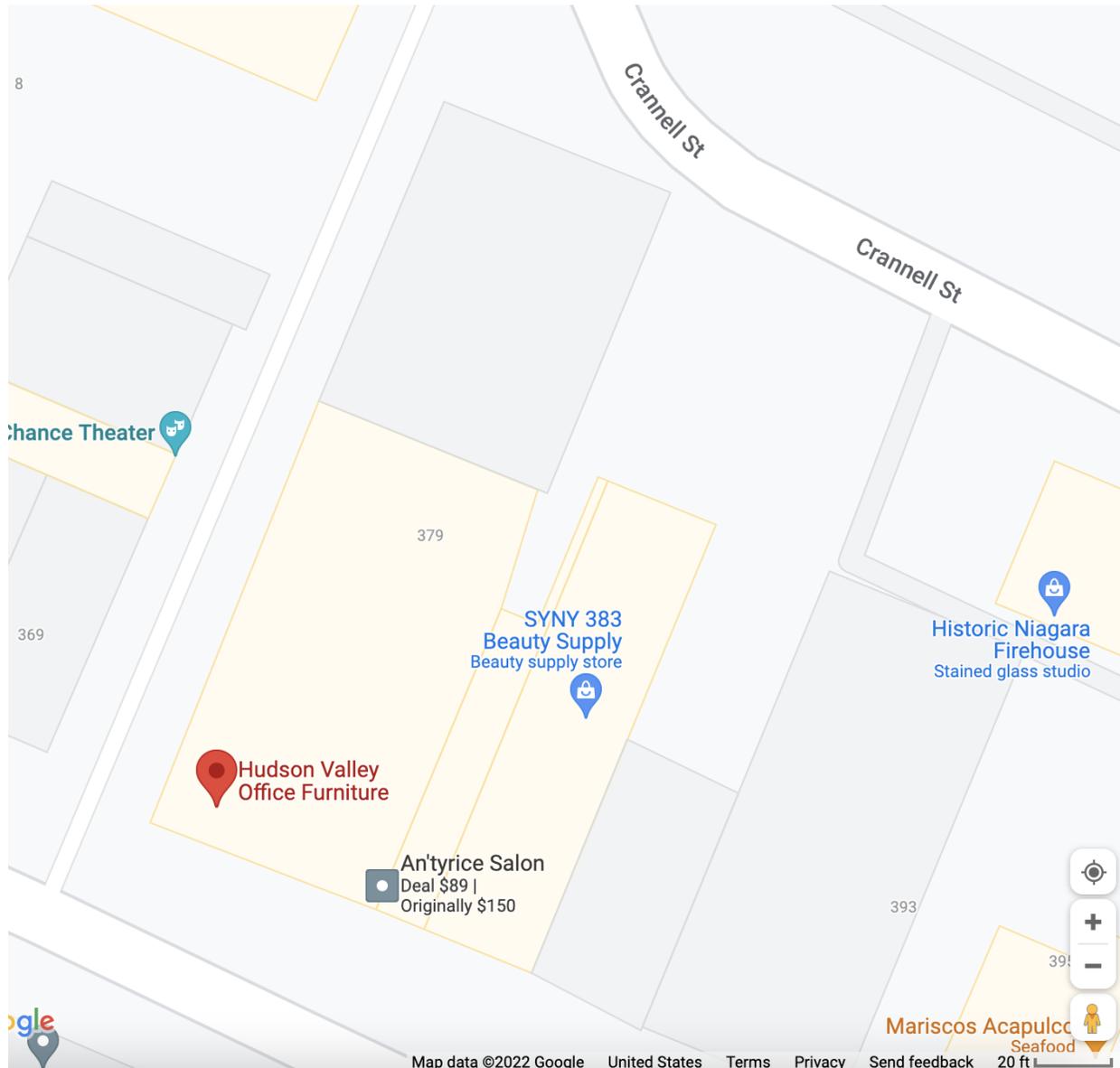
<https://servicios.abclatino.com/>.

¹¹⁶ “Jasmin’s Flower Shop,” JASMIN’S FLOWER SHOP (Jasmin’s flower shop), accessed March 22, 2022, <https://jasminflowers12601.weebly.com/>.

¹¹⁷ “El Covarruvias,” Facebook (El Covarruvias), accessed March 22, 2022,

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057256427178>.

Figure 3.4.¹¹⁸ Hudson Valley Office Furniture Building Site



¹¹⁸ *Google Maps, Google Maps* (Google, 2022), <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Hudson+Valley+Office+Furniture/@41.702383,-73.9239591,18.43z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x89dd3e7209d9951d:0xca3a67a6bd03838a!8m2!3d41.7025252!4d-73.9243438> .

Figure 3.5.¹¹⁹ Doty and Humphrey Drug Company/Perlmutter Furniture



¹¹⁹ *Hudson Valley Office Furniture*, photograph, *MapsUs.net* (MapsUs.net), accessed March 22, 2022, <https://mapsus.net/US/hudson-valley-office-furniture-5594453>.

Looking at the site more specifically, the Office Furniture Building was originally the Doty and Humphrey Drug Company in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Figure 3.5).^{120 121} Then, in 1925 the building was bought by Joe Perlmutter and was completely renovated into a furniture store.¹²² Perlmutter expanded the building to include the property on 379 Main Street as well.¹²³ The current structures include a five story section on the Crannel Street side, a four story section on the right facing Main Street, and a three story section on the left facing Main Street. Historic elements from these original designs that remain on the building include the front windows, cornice, and clock. Also historic to the building are the old Perlmutter Furniture sign and the Hudson Valley Office Furniture lettering on the alleyway side and Crannel Street side respectively. The building that currently stands at 375-379 Main Street has been the site of the Hudson Valley Office Furniture store since 1986, but the company is selling the space and consolidating into their Newburg, NY location.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ *N.A.R.D. Journal* (Madison, WI: National Association of Retail Druggists, 1922), <https://books.google.com/books?id=NvFLB7fxNFcC&pg=PA577&lpg=PA577&dq=%22doty+and+humphrey%22+poughkeepsie+ny&source=bl&ots=jUUzxju5fj&sig=ACfU3U2sgJnoRJv4lvTA3dI1kdTtGH6rPw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi70eCe9tX2AhX5j4kEHS8fCfYQ6AF6BAg-EAM#v=onepage&q=%22doty%20and%20humphrey%22%20poughkeepsie%20ny&f=false>, 577.

¹²¹ Anonymous, *The Pharmaceutical Era*, vol. 57 (D. O. Haynes & Company, 1923), https://books.google.com/books?id=57TmAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA538&lpg=RA1-PA538&dq=%22doty+and+humphrey%22+poughkeepsie+ny&source=bl&ots=JDhE_vk7Z3&sig=ACfU3U3mM4SJozWuhzyum4K0Tz4OhBRA9Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi70eCe9tX2AhX5j4kEHS8fCfYQ6AF6BAg8EAM#v=onepage&q=%22doty%20and%20humphrey%22%20poughkeepsie%20ny&f=false, 538.

¹²² “Perlmutter Furniture Store Is Observing 25th Anniversary,” *Poughkeepsie Sunday New Yorker*, October 29, 1950, p. 9A, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/12866371/poughkeepsie-journal-10291950joseph/>, 9A.

¹²³ “Perlmutter Furniture Store,” *Poughkeepsie Sunday New Yorker*, 9A.

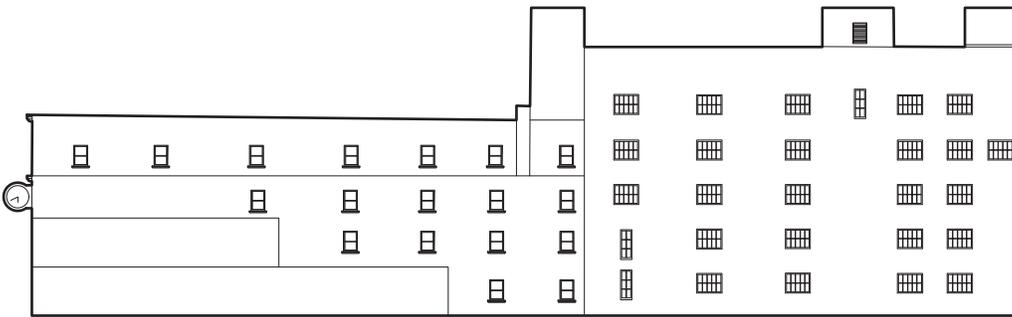
¹²⁴ “Services,” The Wow Guys (Hudson Valley Office Furniture), accessed March 22, 2022, <https://thewowguys.com/services/>, 1.



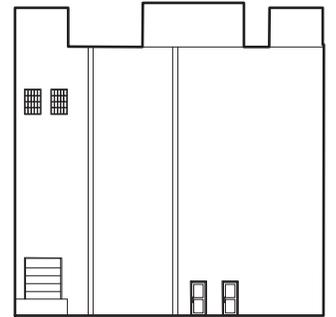
SOUTH ELEVATION



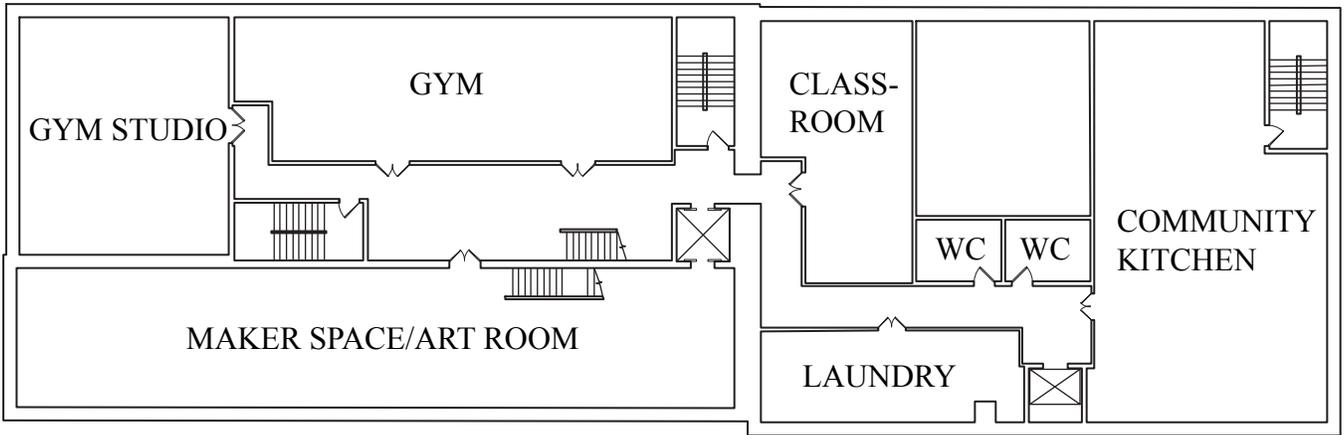
WEST ELEVATION



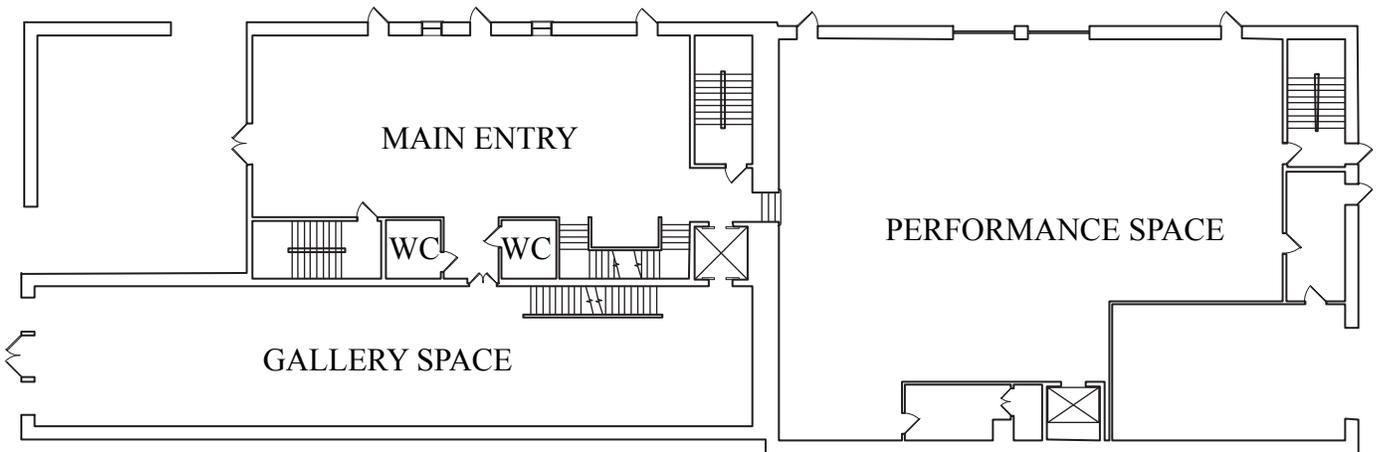
EAST ELEVATION



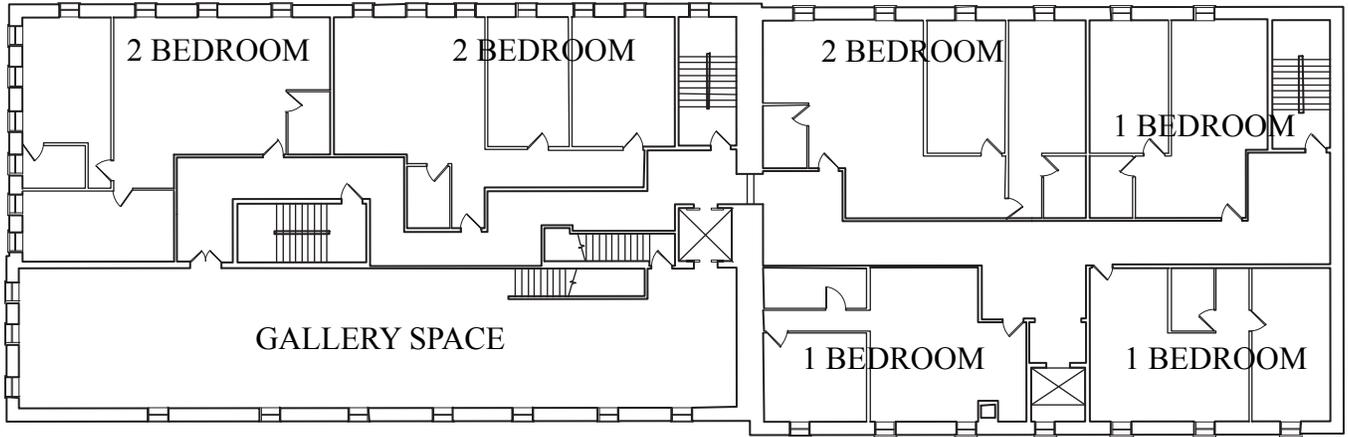
NORTH ELEVATION



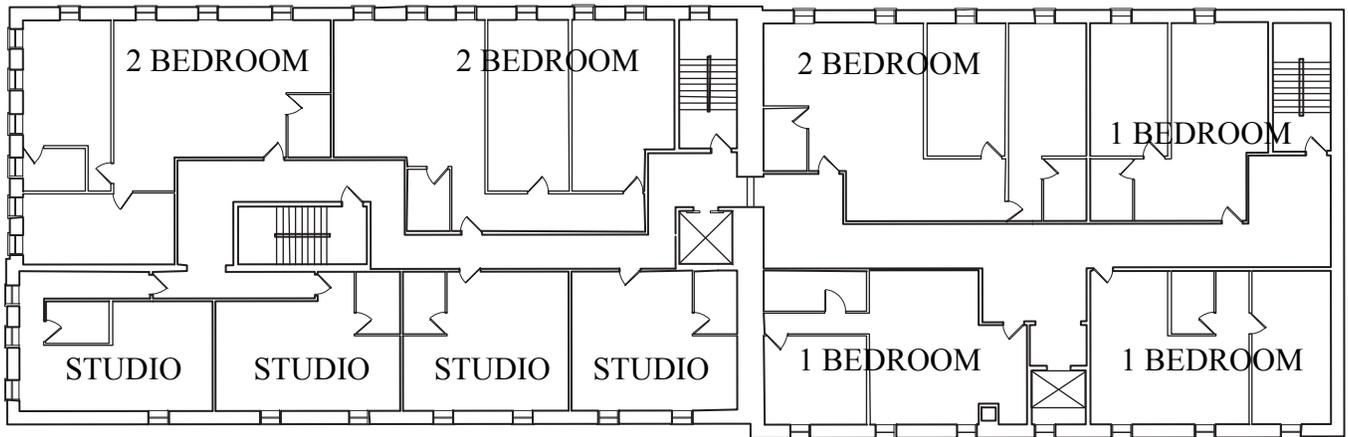
BASEMENT



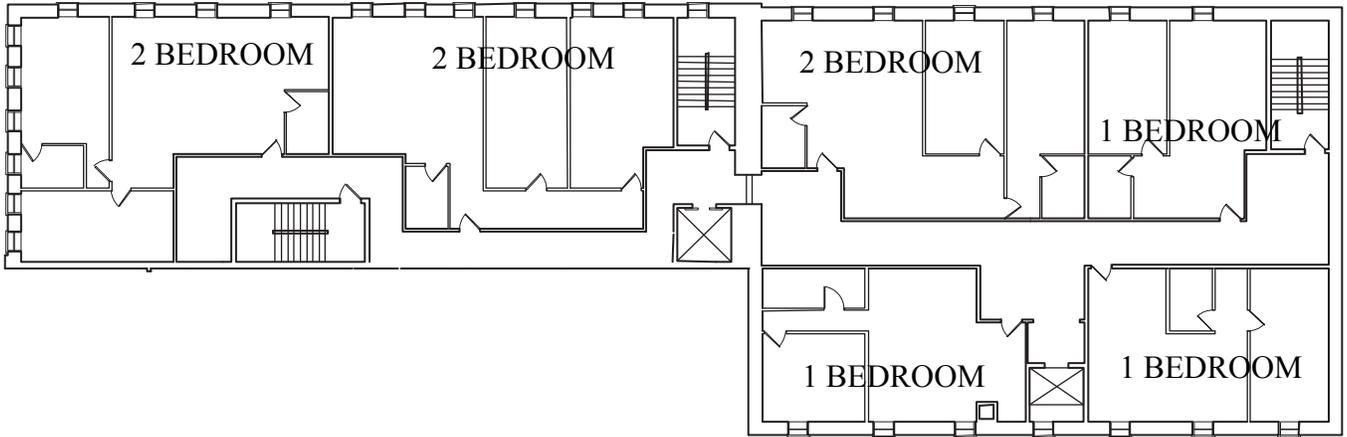
FIRST FLOOR



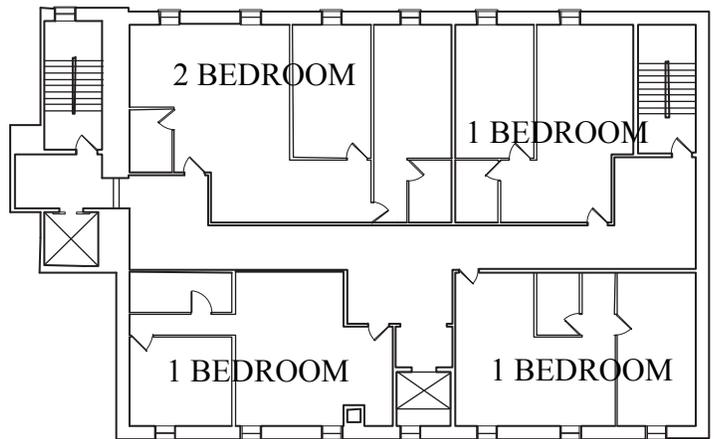
SECOND FLOOR



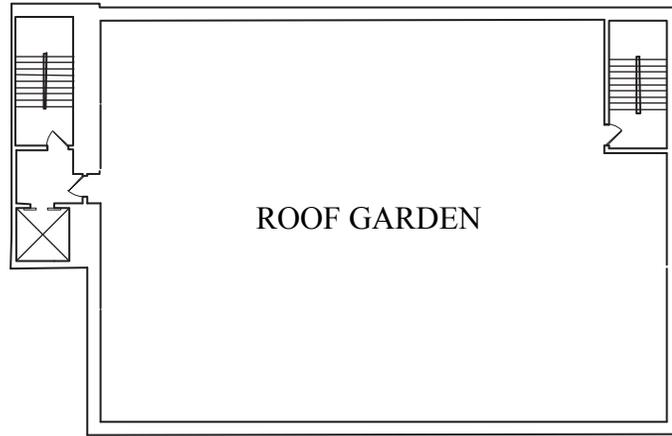
THIRD FLOOR



FOURTH FLOOR



FIFTH FLOOR

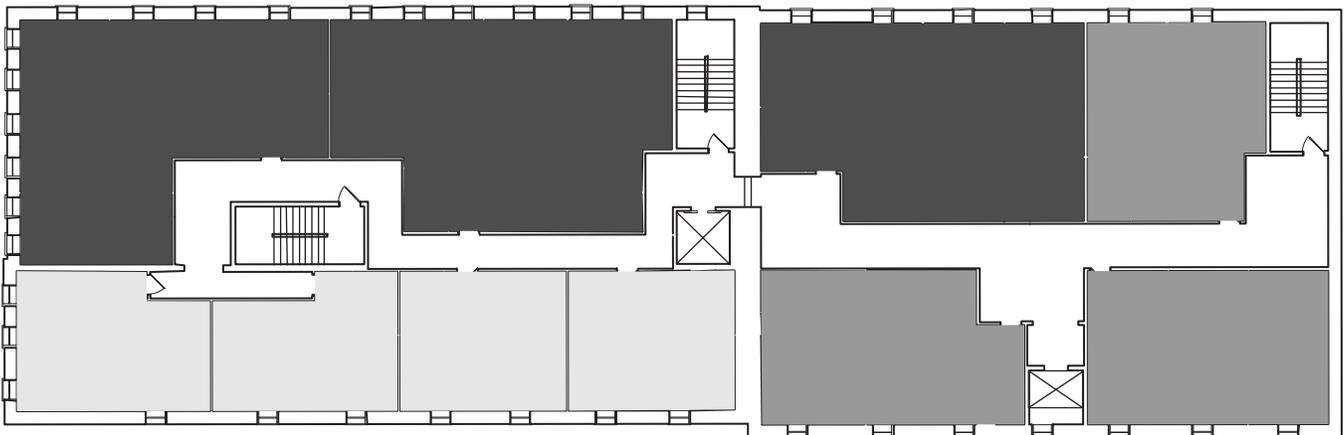
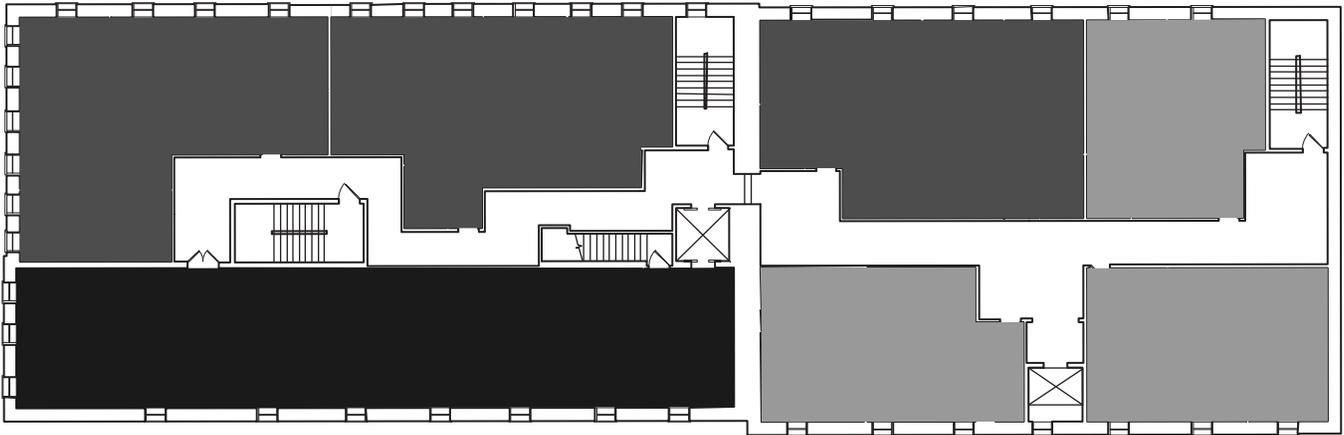


ROOF DECK



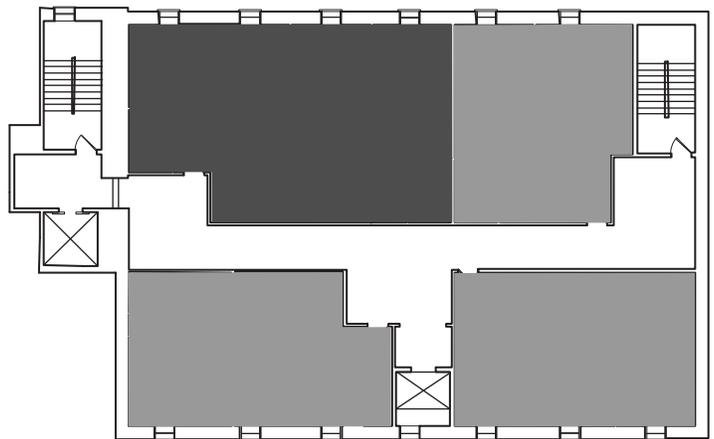
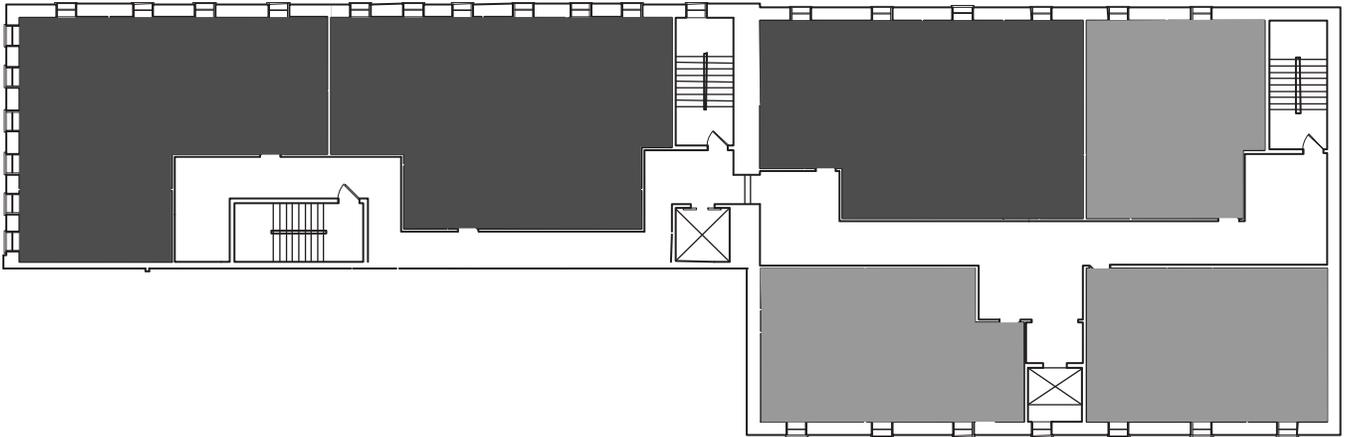
KEY

-  COMMUNITY SPACES
-  2 BEDROOM
-  1 BEDROOM
-  STUDIO



KEY

-  COMMUNITY SPACES
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- KEY**
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KEY

-  COMMUNITY SPACES
-  2 BEDROOM
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-  STUDIO





Design Description

The proposed design takes the plans by Urban Green Foods, LLC for a boutique hotel and bakery and reworks them to better support the low-income population in Poughkeepsie.¹²⁵ The proposed design has no connection to current transactions related to the building, but reimagines the hotel proposal to better fit the needs of the community. Entering on the first floor, the plan includes a formal entry or lobby area as well as a gallery space and a spacious performance area in the back of the building. Moving down to the basement, the proposal includes a maker space/art studio directly below the gallery for easy access, as well as a gym with studio space for fitness classes or dance practices. In the back end of the building there is a classroom and community kitchen in addition to the laundry room for the apartments above. The gallery also continues up onto the second floor.

The second, third, fourth, and fifth floors are the main apartment areas. In total there are ten two bedroom apartments, twelve one bedroom apartments, and four studio apartments. The two bedroom apartments are all approximately 1,100 square feet and include two bathrooms. The square footage of the one bedroom apartments is 750 square feet while studios are around five hundred square feet. Each of these apartments include one bathroom. The approximate occupancy of the total complex is seventy inhabitants. Lastly, the roof of the back section of the building would include a roof deck garden that would serve as an additional community space.

The exterior elevations of the building proposal are mostly the same as what the Office Furniture Building already looks like with a few important additions. The south elevation is the front of the building as seen in Figure 3.6. The plan here would be to restore the cornice and windows to their original design. The west elevation is situated along the alleyway. Again, the windows and cornice would be restored, along with the clock and the Perlmutter Furniture Co.

¹²⁵ Eric Anderson and Matthew Cordone, “PDF” (Poughkeepsie, 2019), 1-28

sign. This side of the building is currently also painted with murals as seen in Figures 3.7 and 3.8. Lastly, the north elevation, which is the back of the building, would preserve the Hudson Valley Office Furniture sign seen in Figure 3.9.

*Figure 3.6.*¹²⁶ South Elevation of Hudson Valley Office Furniture Building



¹²⁶ *Development Project - Opportunity Zone 375 Main St*, photograph, *LoopNet* (Poughkeepsie: CR Properties Group, LLC), accessed March 22, 2022, <https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/375-Main-St-Poughkeepsie-NY/24801792/>.

Figure 3.7.¹²⁷ Mural on West Elevation with Perlmutter Furniture Co. Sign



Figure 3.8.¹²⁸ Mural on West Elevation



¹²⁷ *Development Project - Opportunity Zone 375 Main St*, photograph, LoopNet

¹²⁸ Ibid

Figure 3.9.¹²⁹ Hudson Valley Office Furniture Sign



Design Analysis

The proposal to rehabilitate an old building on Middle Main in Poughkeepsie takes precedent from many of the projects previously mentioned. The aim of this proposed design to reuse a historic building in the city acknowledges Poughkeepsie's urban history. Also, the tie between community centers in historic buildings such as the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum and the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory, situates this complex in a style vocabulary that is already established for the city. Since the population of Poughkeepsie is familiar with the design concepts surrounding the precedent example buildings, the Office Furniture Building affordable apartments and community center will fit into the preexisting styles of the city. Furthermore, in contrast with the design that is currently being proposed for the Office Furniture Building site, it is clear from the need and history of the Middle Main area that affordable housing and community areas are better suited to the needs of the city than a boutique hotel would be.

¹²⁹ Randy Calderone, *Hudson Valley Office Furniture Sign*, photograph, *Randy Calderone Photography* (Poughkeepsie), accessed March 22, 2022, <http://www.randycalderonephotography.com/>.

In terms of the site, being located between Market Street and Pershing Avenue, and thus in the Middle Main neighborhood, places the building in a perfect location for supporting the Latino population in particular. It was important when choosing a site for the proposed design that there would be grocery stores and pharmacies within walking distance, which is true of this spot. In addition, there are businesses in the neighborhood which directly relate to the Latino population. Both the Caribbean and Mexican restaurants in conjunction with ABClatino just across the street, makes it clear that the site of this building would be a location that is not only open to Latinos in the city, but would be welcoming to them. The diversity of Latino regions reflected by the restaurants and ABClatino help to paint a picture of a neighborhood in which the Latino residents and community members using the building would be supported beyond the walls of the Office Furniture Building itself.

Looking more specifically at the design proposal for the building, there are certain elements of the community center that speak to the Latino population as well. Latino artists from in and around the city could be specifically highlighted in the gallery space, as well as receive priority for renting the art studio space. If the existing murals could be maintained on the building throughout the rehabilitation that would be a great way of preserving the look and feel of the current design, but if not, Latino community artists could be commissioned to create artwork for the outside of the Office Furniture Building as well.

The gym studio could support the Latino population by holding classes for cultural dance. For example the Grupo Folclórico de Poughkeepsie Tradición could practice and teach dance in that space in preparation for La Guelaguetza, which is a Mexican holiday celebrated in the city that includes dance performances by this group and others.¹³⁰ Also the classroom and community

¹³⁰ Ximena Hidalgo-Ayala, “GUELAGUETZA LLEGA A UPSTATE NEW YORK.” *Impacto*, Jul, 2014.

kitchen could host events that are particularly supportive for the Latino community in Poughkeepsie. English as a second language classes, cooking for special cultural holidays, and job skills and preparation courses are some ideas of events that could take place in these spaces that would be helpful to low-income Latinos in Poughkeepsie.

Lastly, following the tradition of community farming and agriculture as a means of employment but also a history of division between high and low-income residents in the city, the community rooftop garden could be a space that would allow the Latino residents to come together to grow food their own way. Users could potentially utilize the area to grow foods native to their countries of origin and that are important to cultural cuisine. All of these community initiatives in the building would hopefully encourage Latino residents to move into the apartments to further solidify the sense of community and support both in the proposed development and in the surrounding Middle Main neighborhood.

Conclusion

In summation, the importance of community buildings and affordable housing for the function of a city is clear, potentially even more so in Poughkeepsie for the Latino population. Beginning by framing the issue through the concept of Latino Urbanism, affordable housing and community buildings have been a main goal of Latino immigrants in cities as Latinos have shaped their urban environments. Throughout the history of Poughkeepsie however, the large Latino immigrant community has been left out of city sponsored social and civic programs such as community spaces and low-income housing options. And yet, these immigrants are the low-wage and low-skill workers who would benefit the most from these services.

As is the case with many cities in the United States, gentrification in Poughkeepsie displaced these immigrant communities, especially on Main Street. High-rise public housing was provided to displaced families by the city, but were not necessarily successful.¹³¹ Affordable housing like this example is the main goal of this project's proposal. However, by taking into account Poughkeepsie's history and theories such as Latino Urbanism, the design is much more supportive of the Latino community in the city. Understanding the demographics, urban issues, and design considerations for the city has informed the design proposal for an affordable housing and community center development at the site of the Office Furniture Building on Main Street in Poughkeepsie. The proposal questions how a design for a community center and low-income housing can be realized in Poughkeepsie and could have ramifications for future urban planning and design in the city.

¹³¹Allison Arlotta, Ethan Boote, Yiyang Li, Adam Lubitz, Morgan O'Hara, Siri Olson, Ziyue Tang, Katherine Taylor-Hasty, and Erica Avarmi. "Past as Prologue: Preservation as a Tool For Social Inclusion in Poughkeepsie, NY." Columbia GSAPP. Columbia University, 2017. <https://www.arch.columbia.edu/student-work/3358-preservation-as-a-tool-for-social-inclusion-in-poughkeepsie-ny>, 35

The theoretical background of Latino Urbanism, community centers, and affordable housing contextualizes these issues. The proposal for this project takes this concept of Latino Urbanism into account through the design. For example, the need for community spaces is especially emphasized by Latino Urbanism and encourages the importance of community building designs for Poughkeepsie. Latino Urbanism also shows the need for affordable housing for low-income Latino workers in the city. Finally, using Latino Urbanism as a building block for understanding affordable housing and community buildings in Poughkeepsie, illuminates the importance of transnationalism. When thinking about Poughkeepsie, the Latino community being considered is not only those living in the city but also the transnational population living across the globe in the countries that the Latino families of Poughkeepsie originate from. The final design tries to support these communities both in the city and around the world.

The concepts behind community centers also help frame the importance of these kinds of buildings in the ways they can support neighborhood populations. Mainly, community centers build trust and maintain social networks within the Latino community, which serves as the foundation of designing a community center in Poughkeepsie. Looking briefly at the history of affordable housing for Latinos in New York, the interest in creating low-income housing came with the decline of immigration and the rise of suburbanization in urban areas because these trends threatened the growth of cities in the United States.¹³² Affordable housing became a priority for cities starting in the 1930s, but not necessarily to support the Latino community in particular. Furthermore, even today, the need for low-income housing for Latinos in the United States continues. It is clear that affordable housing is a greatly needed resource for urban Latino populations as well as community centers in supporting these underserved populations.

¹³² Nicholas Dagen Bloom and Matthew Gordon Lasner, eds., *Affordable Housing in New York: The People, Places, and Policies That Transformed a City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 4

The recent history of Latinos in Poughkeepsie and the demographic makeup of the city demonstrates the need for affordable housing and community buildings as well. The wave of “new immigrants” to Poughkeepsie, and thus a sudden change in the city’s demographics, highlighted the need for both affordable housing and community centers for struggling populations. Higher income, often white Poughkeepsians have benefited from the Latino community working for them and bringing life to the city, but this immigrant population does not see the same opportunities or resources as whites. Despite this, there are some organizations and “revitalization” efforts in recent years that have specifically helped support the Latino community in the city. After years of being ignored, it has become clear that increased interest is mutually beneficial for the city of Poughkeepsie and Latino immigrants. Community centers specifically have populated Middle Main over the past few years, which contributes to a sense of community in the neighborhood. Most notably, in the past decade Hudson River Housing has made significant efforts in the areas of affordable housing and community space development.

The recent 2020 United States Census data for the City of Poughkeepsie shows the demographics of the city and helps to contextualize the Latino community within the population. Low-income and high poverty rates in Poughkeepsie are especially felt by the Latino community. It is clear through this data that the Latino community in Poughkeepsie are a part of the demographics that could benefit from affordable housing opportunities and supportive community spaces.

In suggesting new housing and community building plans, “Past as Prologue: Preservation as a Tool For Social Inclusion in Poughkeepsie, NY,” explains ideas for potential housing designs in the city that could help to alleviate the constraints Latinos face, and also specifically uplift the community.¹³³ For example, Main Street has been designated as “a holistic

¹³³ Arlotta et al.

mixed-use commercial corridor,” which should include housing options and community centers as well as the pre-existing businesses.¹³⁴ It is also important to note that heritage sites are significant to the Latino immigrant population in the city. For this reason, the rehabilitation of an existing structure in the Middle Main neighborhood as a mixed-use new housing and community building is a suggested design in response to the needs of the Latino community in Poughkeepsie.

The aim of the final design is to rehabilitate the old Office Furniture Building in downtown Poughkeepsie into a joint affordable housing and community center complex that will serve the Latino population of the city in particular. The site for the Office Furniture Building rehabilitation is located at 375 Main Street in Poughkeepsie, placing it in what is considered Middle Main Street. This site is particularly beneficial because of the prominence of Latino businesses on the block such as ABClatino, Floreria Jasmin, and El Covarruvas.^{135 136 137} As a historic site, the Office Furniture Building was originally the Doty and Humphrey Drug Company in the late 1800s and early 1900s which relates back to the use of historic buildings as community spaces.^{138 139} The building that currently stands at 375-379 Main Street has been the

¹³⁴ Arlotta et al., “Past as Prologue”, 14

¹³⁵ “ABClatino,” ABClatino (ABClatino), accessed March 22, 2022, <https://servicios.abclatino.com/>.

¹³⁶ “Jasmin's Flower Shop,” JASMIN'S FLOWER SHOP (Jasmin's flower shop), accessed March 22, 2022, <https://jasminflowers12601.weebly.com/>.

¹³⁷ “El Covarruvas,” Facebook (El Covarruvas), accessed March 22, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057256427178>.

¹³⁸ *N.A.R.D. Journal* (Madison, WI: National Association of Retail Druggists, 1922), <https://books.google.com/books?id=NvFLB7fxNFcC&pg=PA577&lpg=PA577&dq=%22doty+and+humphrey%22+poughkeepsie+ny&source=bl&ots=jUUzxju5fj&sig=ACfU3U2sgJnoRJv4lvTA3dI1kdTtGH6rPw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi70eCe9tX2AhX5j4kEHS8fCYQ6AF6BAg-EAM#v=onepage&q=%22doty%20and%20humphrey%22%20poughkeepsie%20ny&f=false>, 577.

¹³⁹ Anonymous, *The Pharmaceutical Era*, vol. 57 (D. O. Haynes & Company, 1923), https://books.google.com/books?id=57TmAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA538&lpg=RA1-PA538&dq=%22doty+and+humphrey%22+poughkeepsie+ny&source=bl&ots=JDhE_vk7Z3&sig=ACfU3U3mM4SJoZWuhzyum4K0Tz4OhBRA9Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi70eCe9tX2AhX5j4k

site of the Hudson Valley Office Furniture store since 1986, but the company is selling the space which opens the site up for this design proposal.¹⁴⁰

The proposed design takes the plans by Urban Green Foods, LLC for a boutique hotel and bakery and reimagines it to better support the low-income population in Poughkeepsie.¹⁴¹ Some of the community center amenities in the redesign include classrooms, a community kitchen, and a gallery. The second, third, fourth, and fifth floors are the main apartment areas. Additionally, the roof of the back section of the building would include a roof deck garden that would serve as more community space. In contrast with the design that is currently being proposed for the Office Furniture Building site, it is clear from the demographics, history, and urban issues of the Middle Main area that affordable housing and community areas are better suited to the needs of the city than a boutique hotel would be. In terms of the site, being located in Middle Main places the building in a perfect location for supporting the Latino population. The diversity of Latino regions reflected by the restaurants and ABClatino, for example, helps show how the neighborhood is home to many Latino residents. Because of this, community members using the building would be supported beyond the walls of the Office Furniture Building itself.

Other design elements of the community center that speak specifically to the Latino population include murals, the gym studio for cultural dance, the kitchen for cooking during special cultural holidays, and classrooms for English as a second language classes or job skills and preparation courses. These are some ideas of programming and events that could take place in the designed spaces that would be especially helpful to the low-income Latinos in

EHS8fCfYQ6AF6BAg8EAM#v=onpage&q=%22doty%20and%20humphrey%22%20poughkeepsie%20ny&f=false, 538.

¹⁴⁰ “Services,” The Wow Guys (Hudson Valley Office Furniture), accessed March 22, 2022, <https://thewowguys.com/services/>, 1.

¹⁴¹ Eric Anderson and Matthew Cordone, “PDF” (Poughkeepsie, 2019), 1-28

Poughkeepsie. All of these community initiatives in the building would hopefully encourage Latino residents to move into the apartments to further solidify the sense of community and support both in the complex and in the surrounding Middle Main neighborhood.

Moving forward there are still questions that remain unanswered. To further develop this proposal there would have to be a policy proposal regarding the distribution of the affordable housing units. Creating a development of this type would obviously be intriguing to people beyond the Latino community which could further contribute to gentrification, so specific criteria for who can live in the space as well as some sort of organizational structure to run the building would have to be put in place. The exact costs of each apartment would also have to be determined. This would help in better understanding the overall effectiveness of the plan for affordable housing options through this design. These concerns are beyond the scope of this proposal, but are important to how this design could be further evolved to be a fully realized development of a community center and affordable housing in support of the Latino population in Poughkeepsie.

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