

## The Immigration Station: Designing for Dignity at the U.S./Mexico Border

Caroline Colella

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the IMMIGRATION STATION:  
**Designing for Dignity** at the U.S./Mexico Border



EL PASO, TEXAS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*compiled final drawings for Library Research Award submission*

*School of Architecture oral/visual presentation given 4.28.2020*

CAROLINE BERNADETTA COLELLA

PROF. SEAN PATRICK NOHELTY

B . ARCH THESIS DESIGN STUDIO 2020

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME SCHOOL of ARCHITECTURE

## THESIS STATEMENT

Architecture is a powerful tool man can employ for the promotion of human dignity. Architecture has the power to convey identity, express welcome, and make humans aware of their inherent value regardless of the situation.

**Our built environment is a reflection of who we are and a testament to what we aim to be.**

Through the promotion of human dignity and celebration of identity, new traditional architecture on the southern border of the United States will serve as a beacon of hope allowing immigrants and Americans alike to *dare to dream*.



**PRE-DESIGN**

# A VISION for HOPE: the 21st century immigration station

“Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door”-Emma Lazarus



continuing the legacy of immigration in the United States.

LEFT and BELOW: Ellis Island, America's first immigration station constructed in 1892. Ellis Island will be examined closely for its architectural, programatic, and urbanistic precedent



RIGHT: Angel Island (programatic precedent)

Texas State Capitol Building and MMW's Chicago World's Fair Complex (American Civic stylistic/ ideological precedent)

BELOW: Latin precedent - Nicaraguain Capital, Puebla, Mexico Opera House, Spanish Colonial churches in Mexico and Honduras



the APPROACH:  
CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING for ARCHITECTURE



These pillars of Catholic Social Teaching were incorporated as a crucial part of the design guidelines for this thesis design proposal. Catholic Social Teaching is a call to participate in society in a way that celebrates the sanctity of human life and experience in the light of the Gospel. Based on the foundation of human dignity, C.S.T. serves as a reminder that we must respond to the “signs of the times” - or the distress and social queues of our world.

When dealing with architecture, in this case for some of the most vulnerable seeking asylum on the Southern Border of the United States, it is imperative to employ Catholic Social Teaching when pursuing a solution. This design proposal, though secular in nature, serves as an architectural experiment that places the dignity of migrants at the forefront of the immigration discussion, valuing C.S.T. principles in aesthetics and in program.

This informed architecture is a call for a more compassionate bureaucracy and ultimately, a better world.

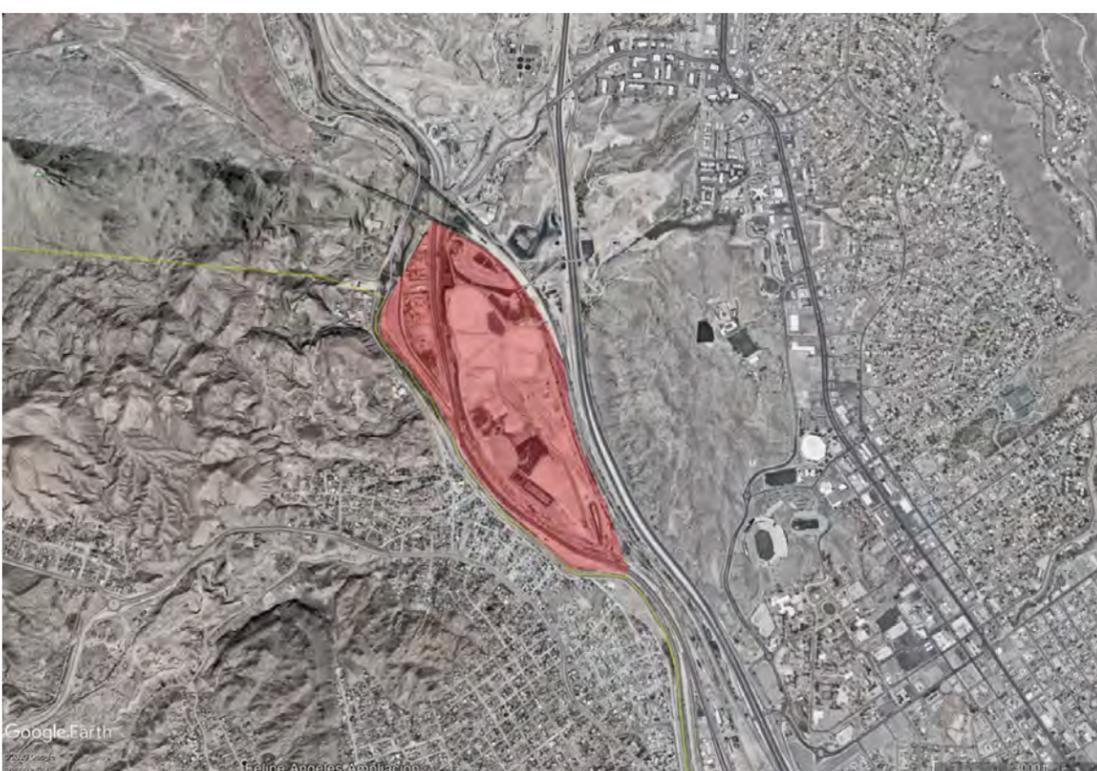
# SITE LOCATION : the United States/Mexico Border - El Paso, Texas



The Station will straddle the U.S. Mexico Boarder with El Paso, TX being the main point of entry to the United States.



This strip of the Border is enclosed by the two neighboring cities Juarez on the Mexican side and El Paso on the American side. Though neighboring cities, the two cities are dramatically different in their stability, safety, infrastructure and urban make up. Also of note is that the cities are both being encroached upon by mountainous terrain from the North and South West.



The selected site is a 0.05 sq. mile site that is currently unoccupied. Just north of the main centers of Juarez and El Paso, this piece of land is the closest piece of land to the cities that is awaiting development and is close enough to both cities to accept those migrants traveling through/around Juarez for entry to the United states while at the same time offers its own distinct sanctuary apart from Juarez that is still only a short distance away from El Paso.



# DESIGN PROPOSAL

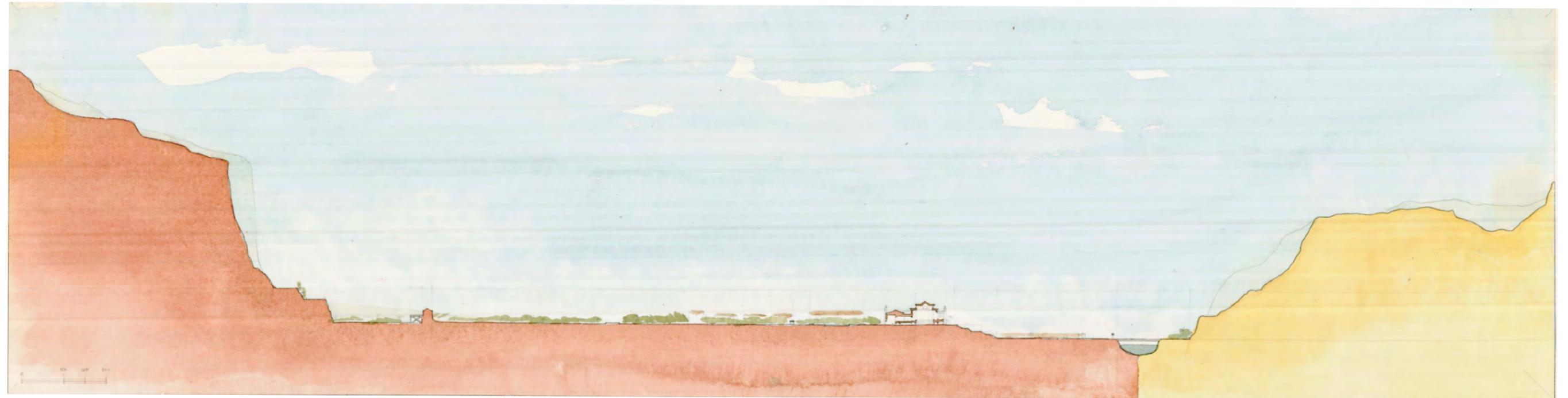
*PRESENTATION DRAWINGS*



## SITE PLAN

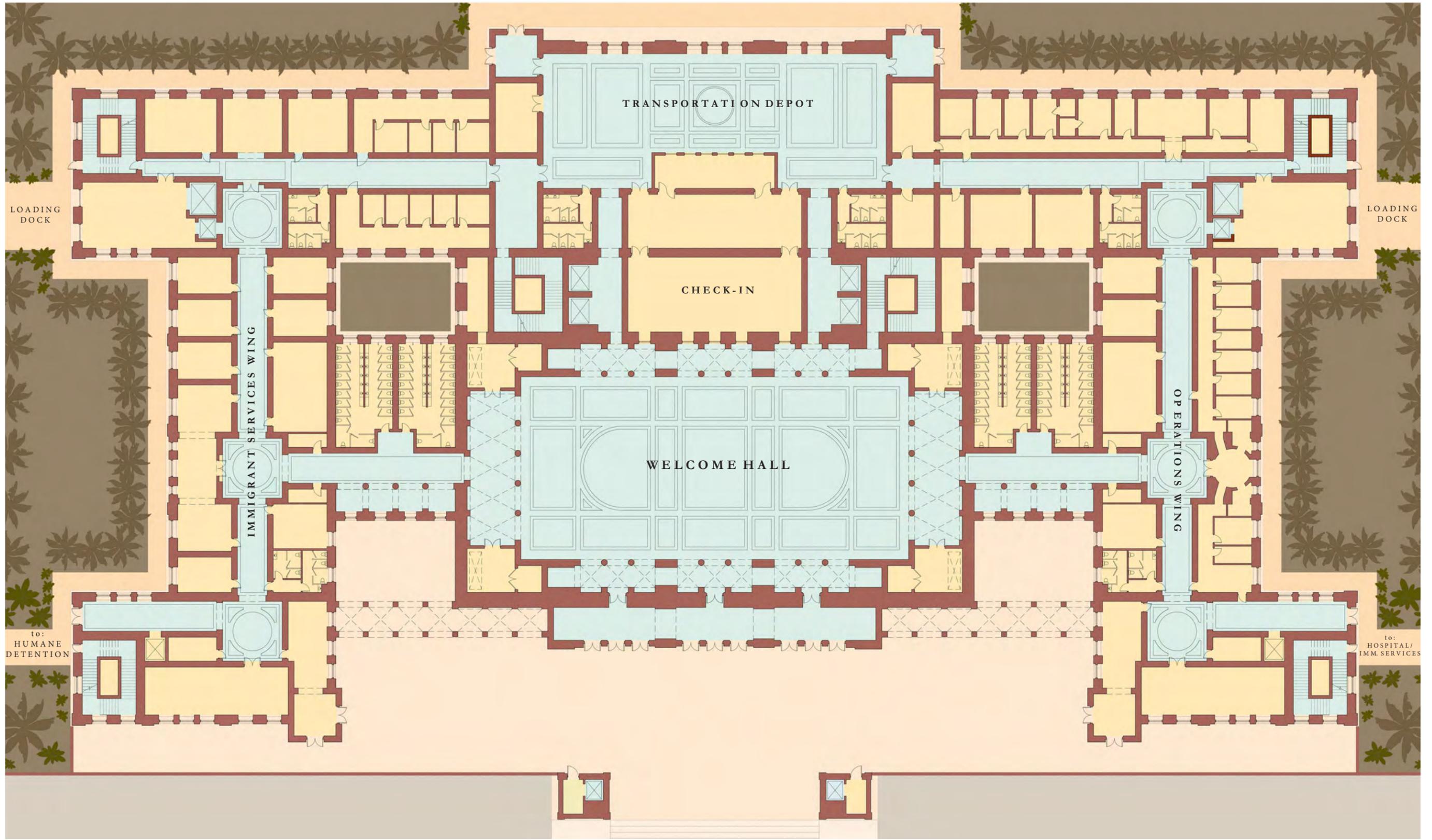
plan shows entirety of design proposal and includes the three phases of building (shown darkest to lightest) as well as the proposed international bridge, resting loggia, and re-routing of the highway I-10 to the campus to serve immigrant needs

site program includes the main processing station and sequence, military requirements, a hospital, an immigrant services quad, and an emergency asylum housing component

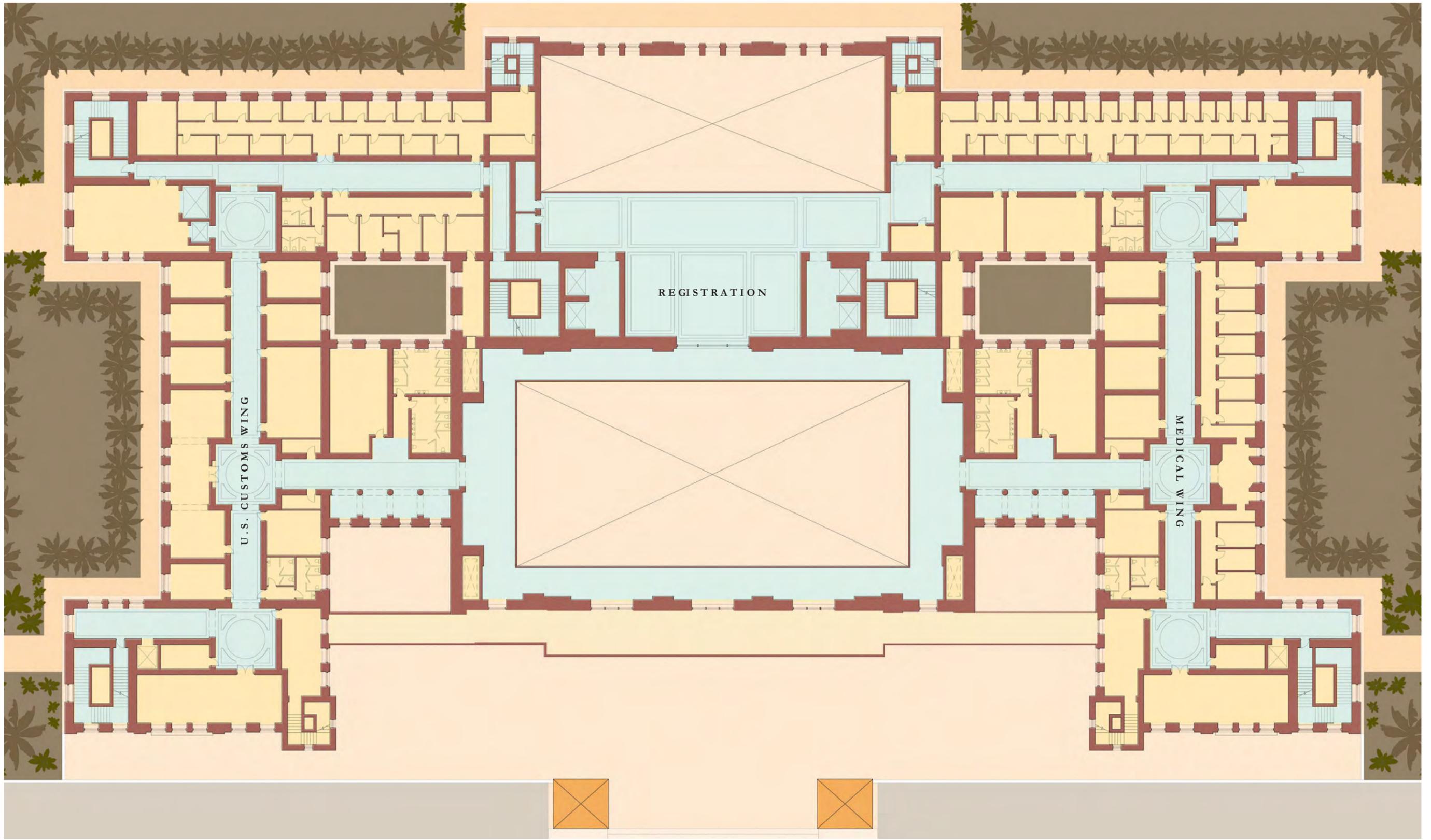


## SITE SECTION

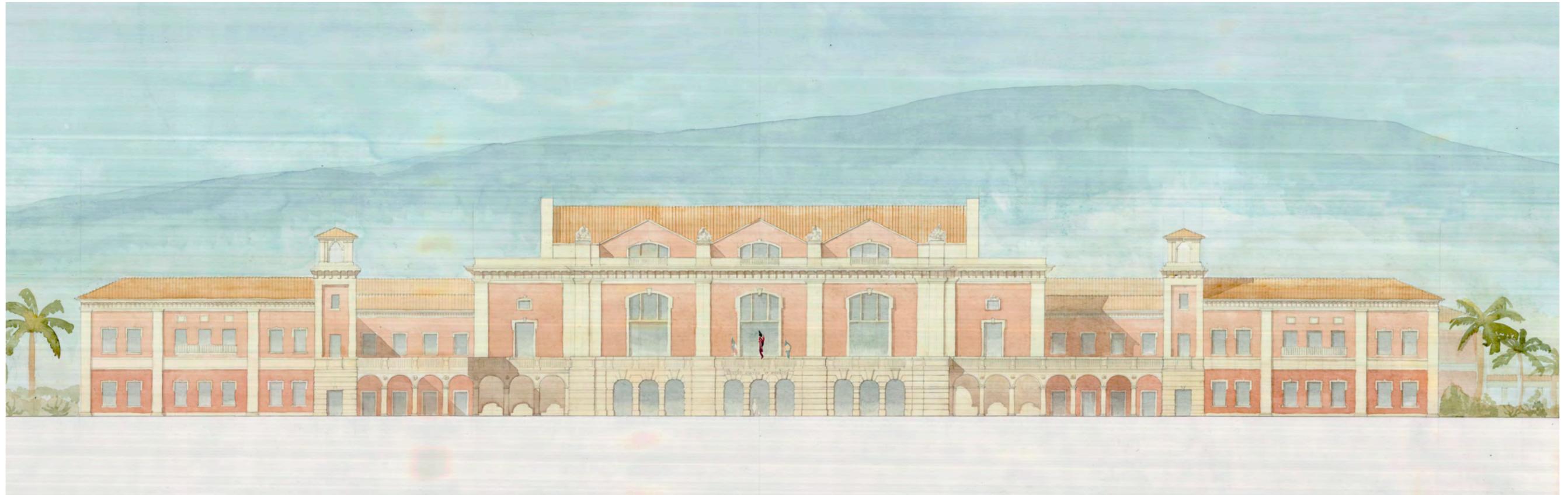
section through site juxtaposes the mountain topography on both sides of the border with the site's flat plateau



# GROUND FLOOR PLAN



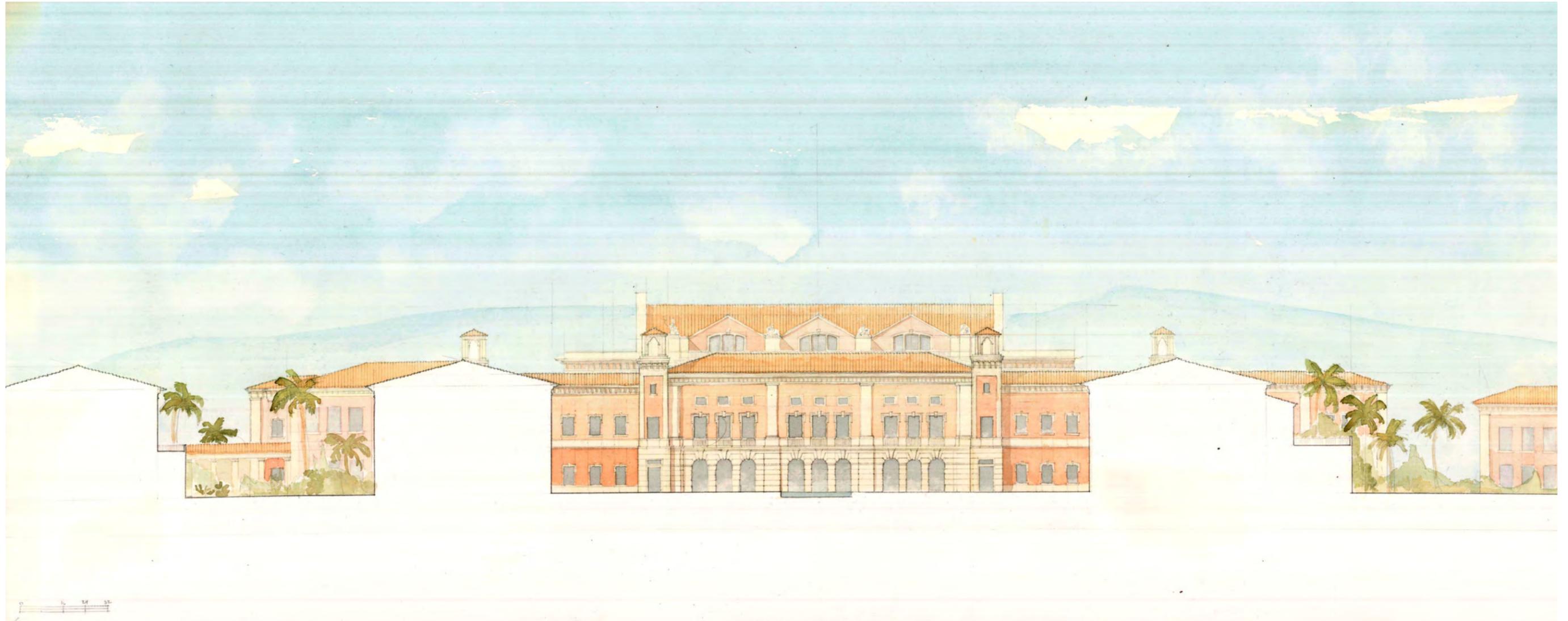
## SECOND FLOOR PLAN



## WELCOME FACADE

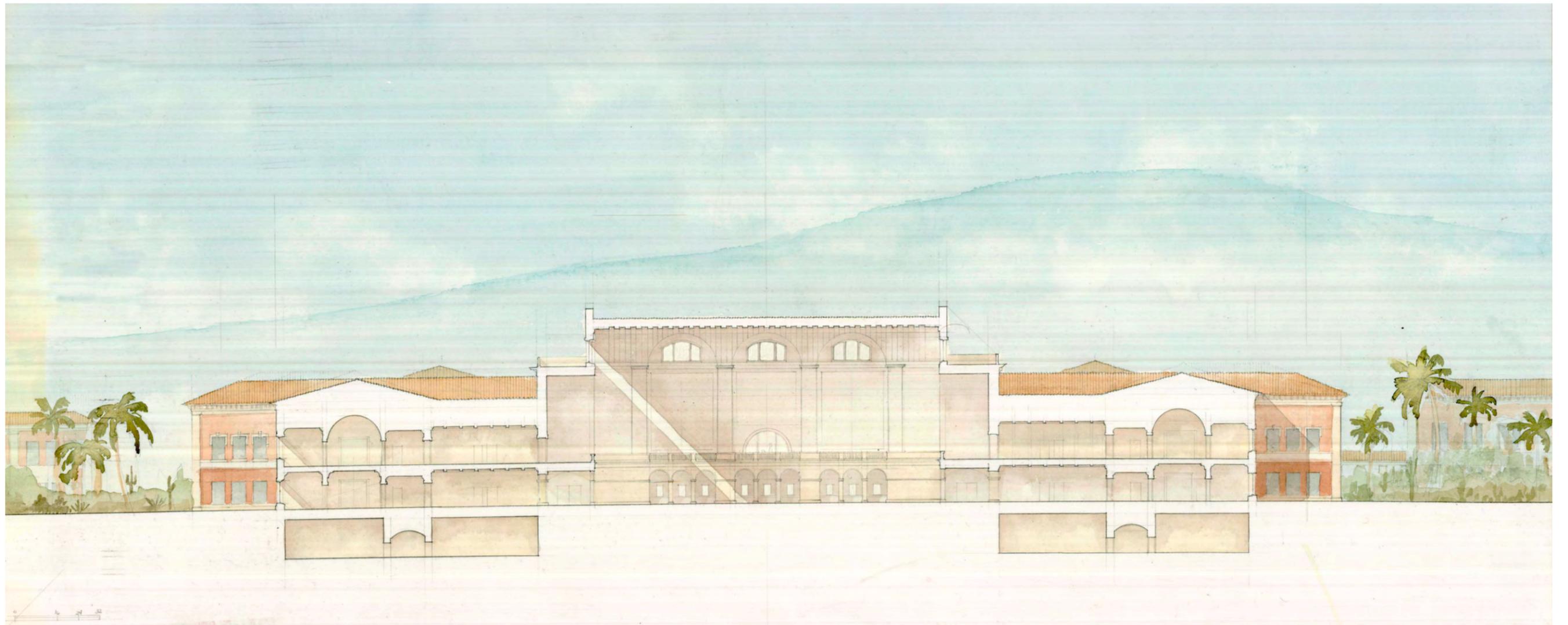
main facade for the immigrant's approach

watercolor and pencil on paper | original drawing 2.75ft x 6.5ft

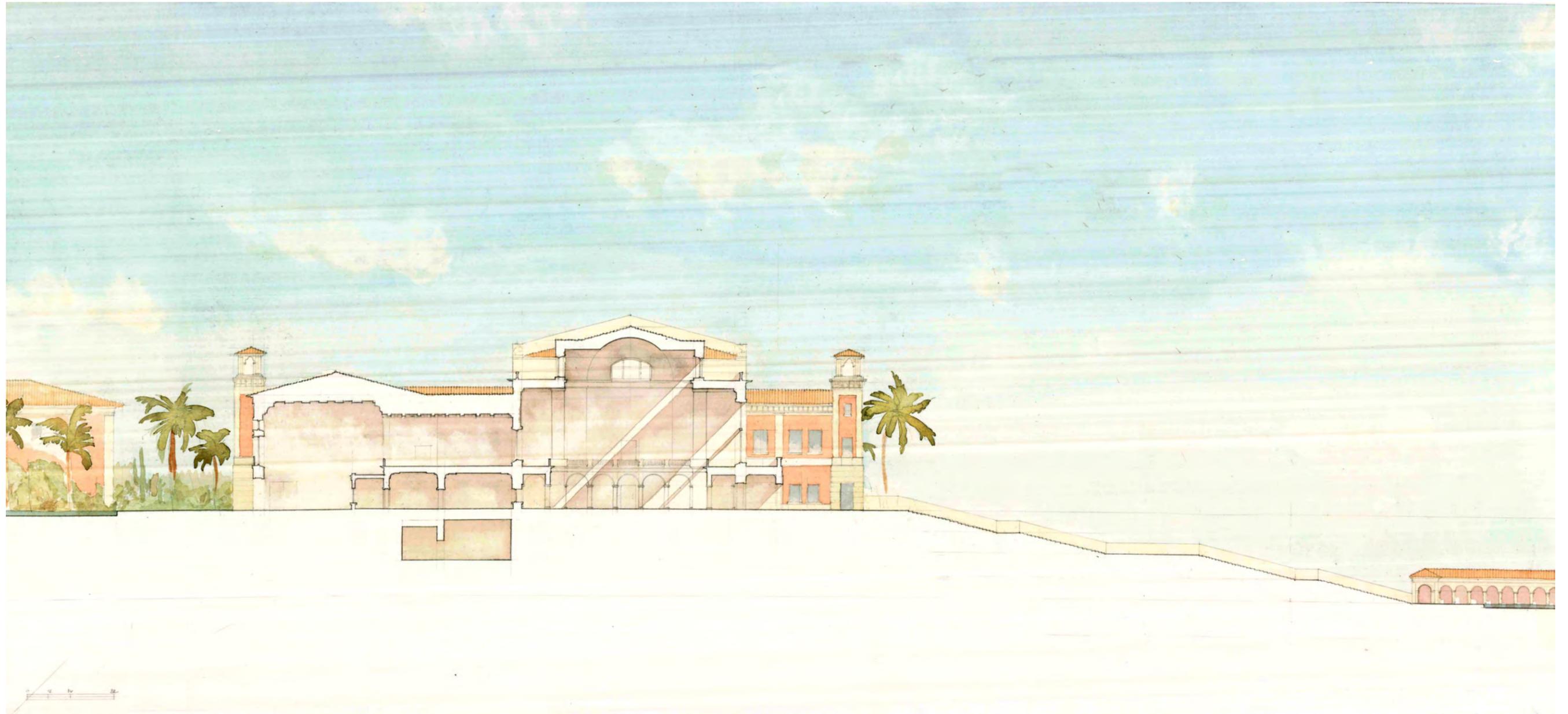


## REAR STATION ELEVATION

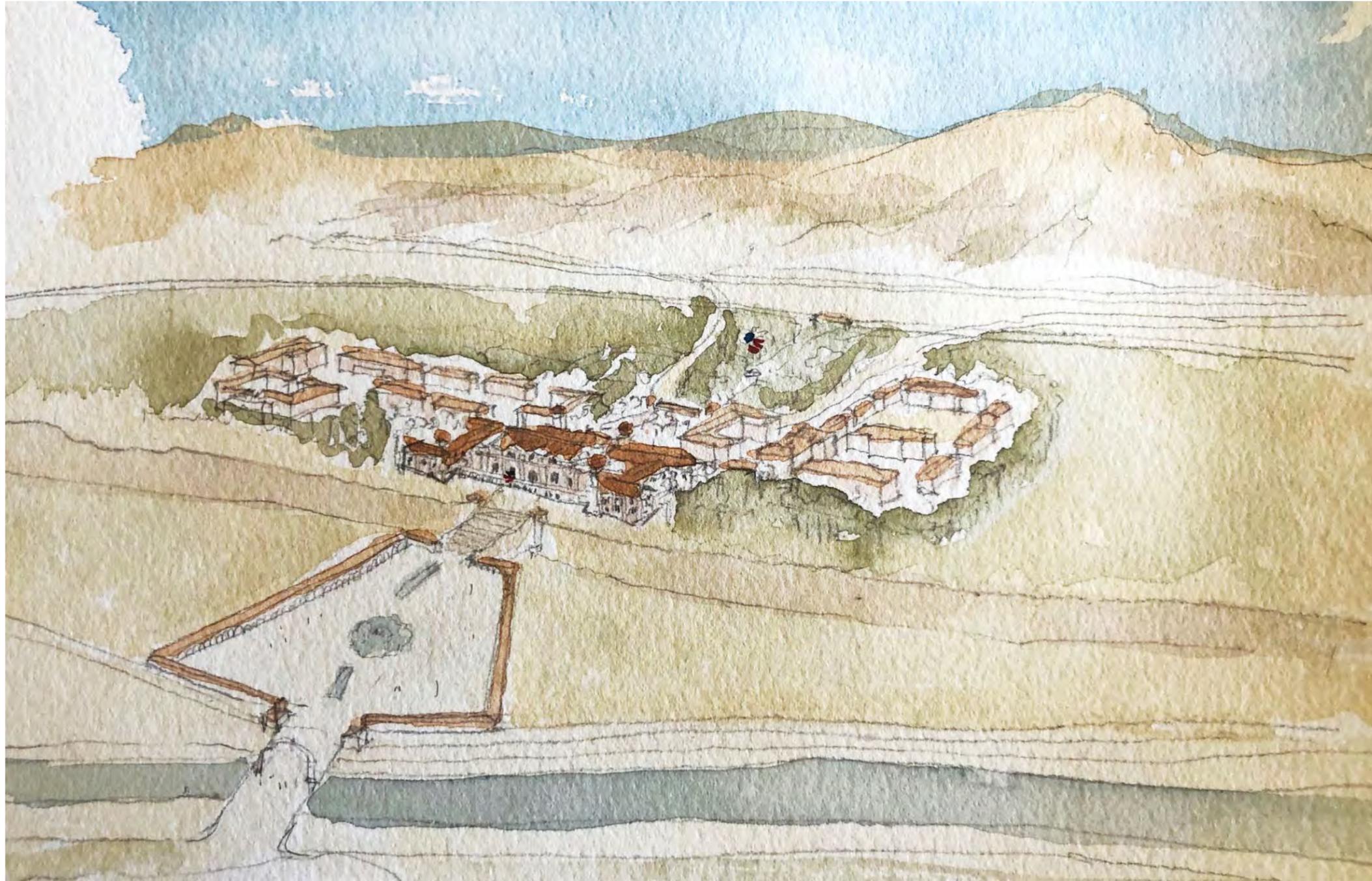
view from reflecting pool plaza, cut through hospital and military buildings



## LONGITUDINAL BUILDING SECTION



## TRANSVERSE BUILDING SECTION



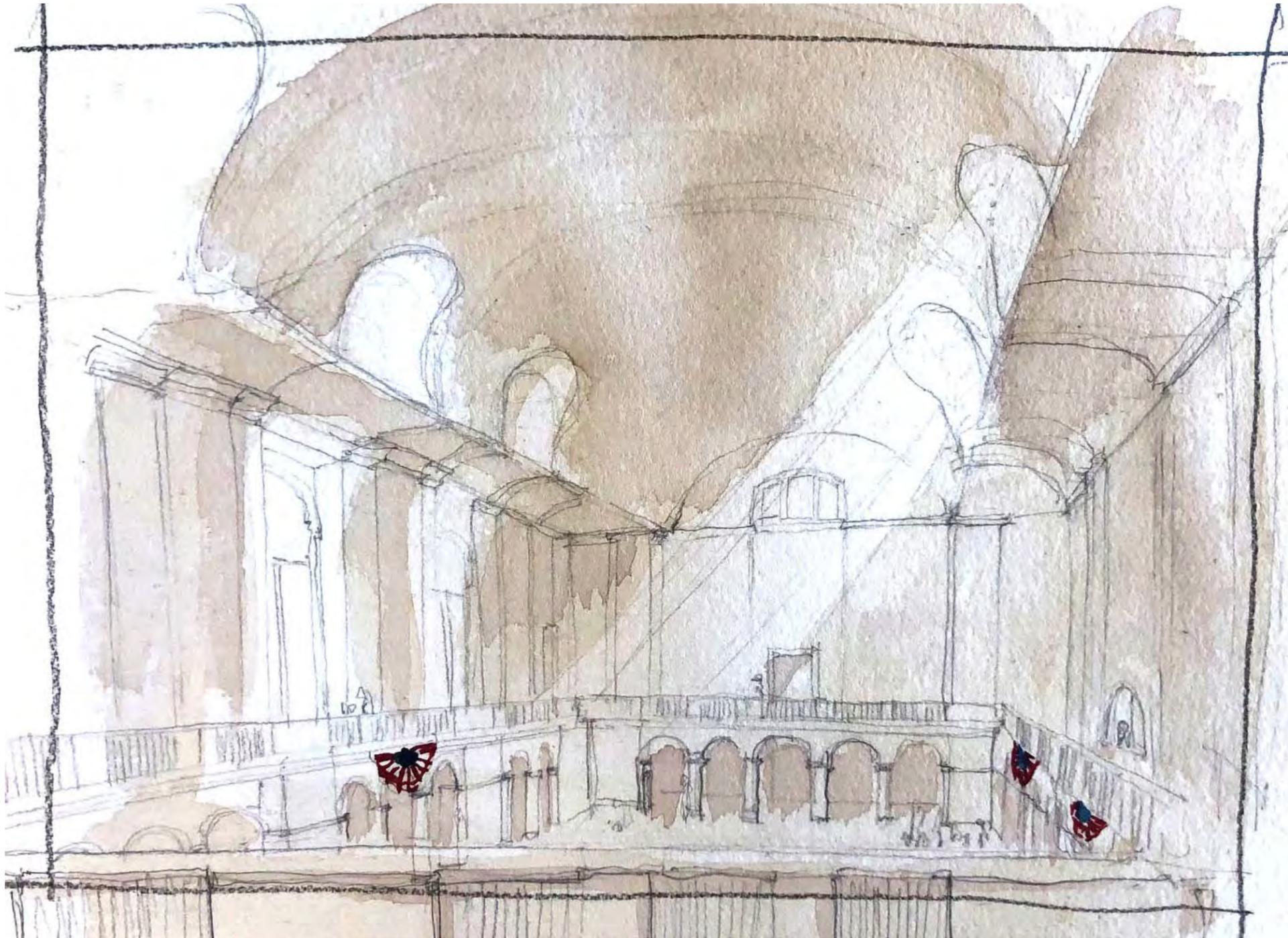
## AERIAL VIEW of PROPOSAL

from the Mexican side of the Border



## ENTRANCE VIEW of LOGGIA and COMPLEX

from just past the first security checkpoint



## WELCOME HALL INTERIOR

from the mezzanine balcony



**“ HEADED HOME ”**

perspective from the bus migrants would take as they travel from the station towards their new lives in America



THANK YOU

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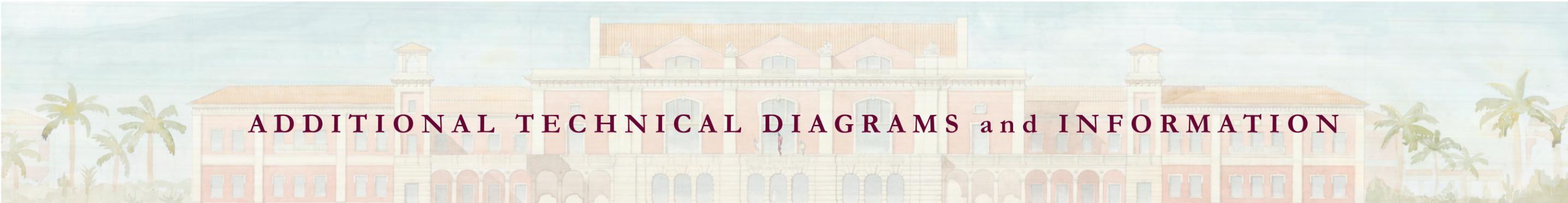
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A watercolor illustration of a large, multi-story building with a central tower and palm trees. The building is rendered in shades of red, orange, and yellow, with a prominent central section featuring a tower and arched windows. The scene is set against a light blue sky and green foliage. The text "ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL DIAGRAMS and INFORMATION" is overlaid in a dark red, serif font across the middle of the illustration.

**ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL DIAGRAMS and INFORMATION**

Project Title: **The Immigration Station: Designing for Dignity at the U.S./Mexico Border**

Location: **El Paso, Texas**

Number of Stories: **2 + a basement**

Building Height in feet: **85' to the tip of the Welcome Hall hipped roof**

Gross Area per floor: **55,000sqft (floor 1)**

**38,000sqft (floor 2)**

Description of Use of Building: **The Station is primarily for welcoming/processing asylum seekers at the Southern Border of the United States. The goal is to use architecture as a means to humanize and dignify immigration in America today.**

Main General Occupancy Group: **A-3 (most closely matches the train station type)**

Accessory Occupancy Groups: **B, F, I**

Special Use Occupancies: **none in the main building of the campus**

Accounting for How Many Guests Per Day: **2,000**

Using Table 503 Chapter 5 of the Building Code:

Construction Type Selected for Main Occupancy: **Type 3A Construction**

Allowable Height: **60ft**

Allowable Modifications due to Sprinklers/Increase in Area Frontage: **60FT+25FT = 85FT = roof hip**

U.T.E.P.



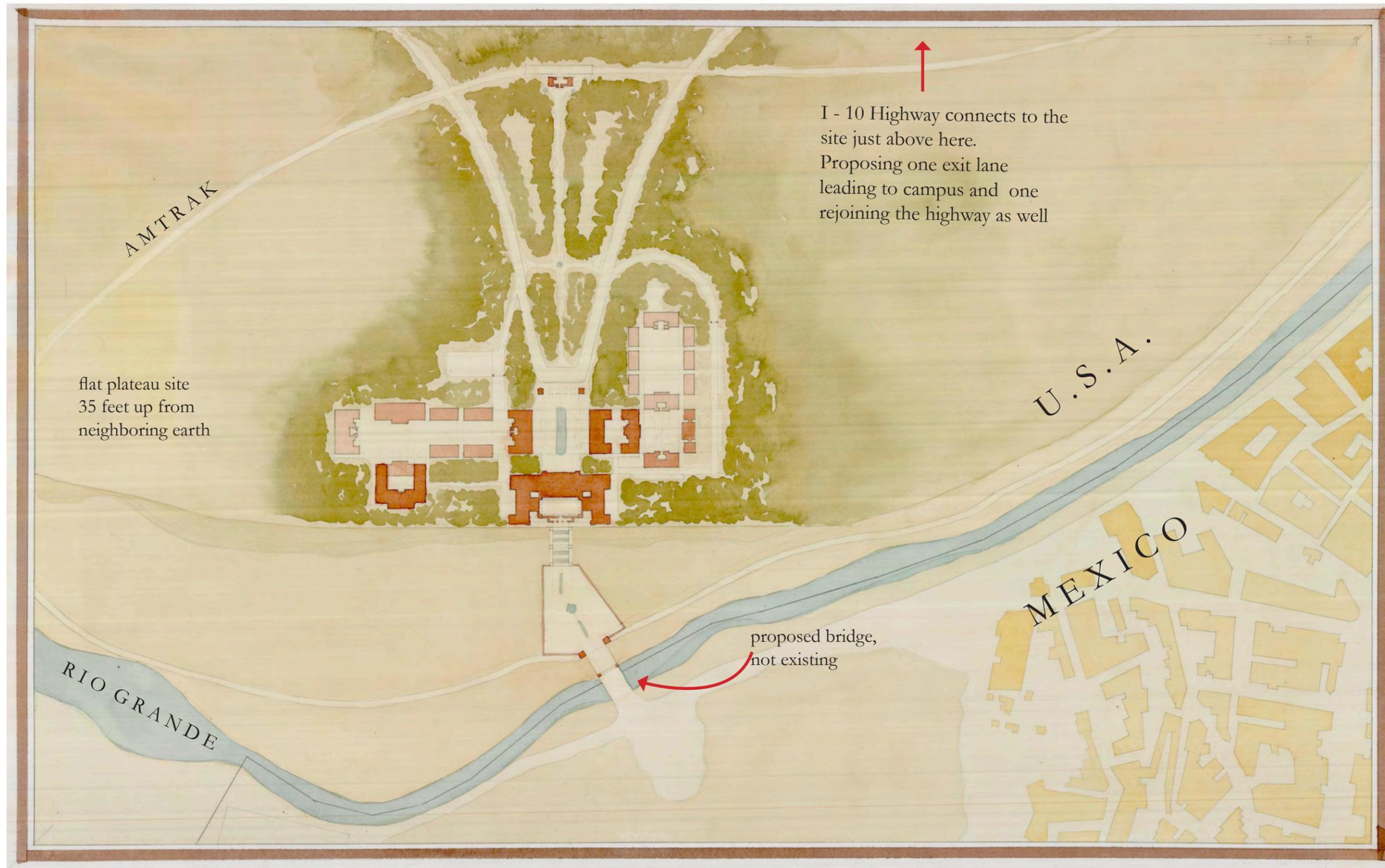
3 MILES TO  
DOWNTOWN  
EL PASO

FRANKLIN  
MOUNTAINS

CIUADAD  
JUAREZ

\*EL Paso sees on average over 300 days of sun per year

SITE CONDITIONS



flat plateau site  
35 feet up from  
neighboring earth

I - 10 Highway connects to the  
site just above here.  
Proposing one exit lane  
leading to campus and one  
rejoining the highway as well

proposed bridge,  
not existing

## SITE PLAN

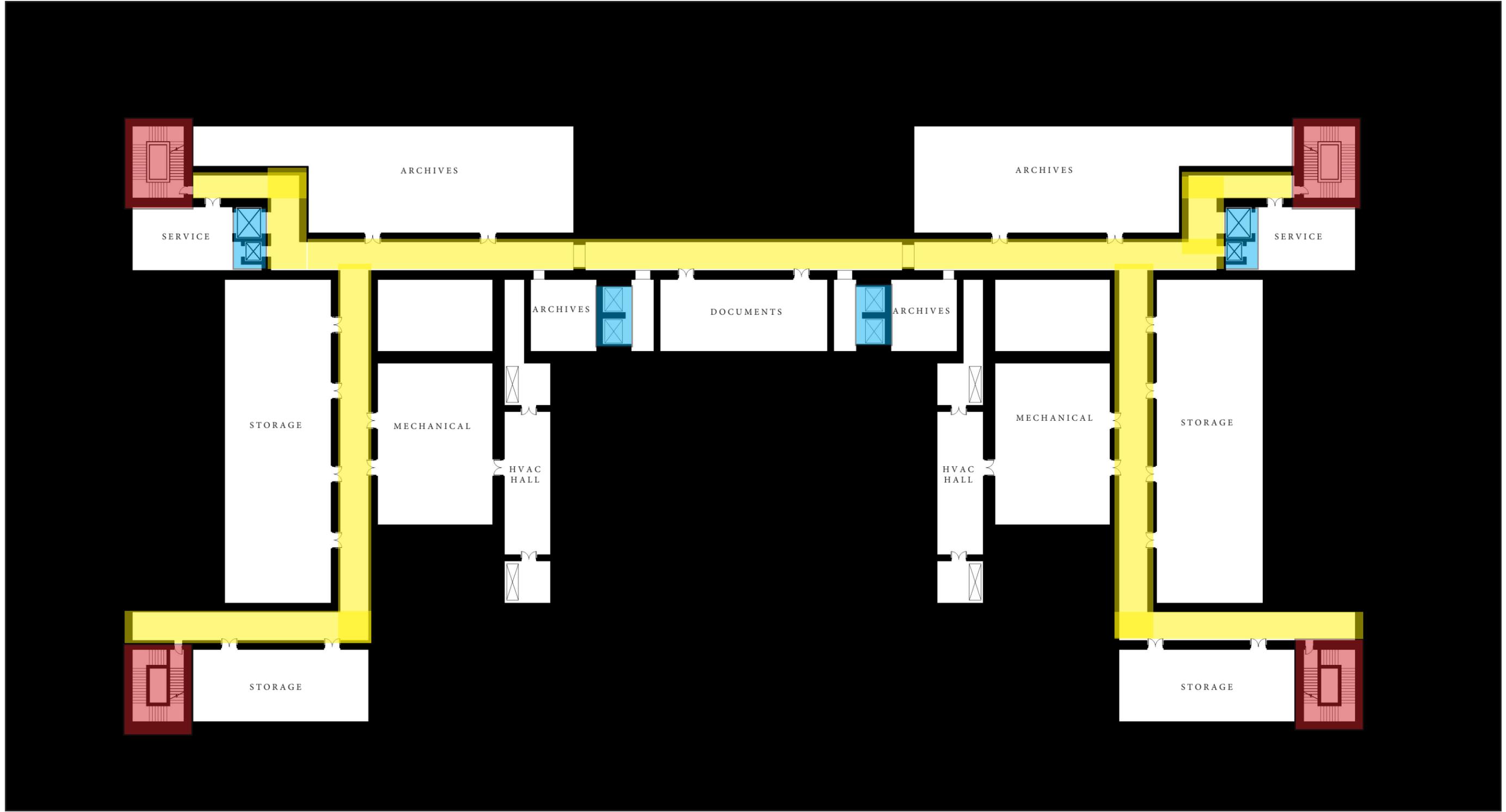
(Illustrates the three phases of the overall masterplan for the site.)





SITE CONDITIONS

-  vehicular circulation
-  pedestrian
-  loading docks
-  parking areas



EGRESS and ACCESSIBILITY

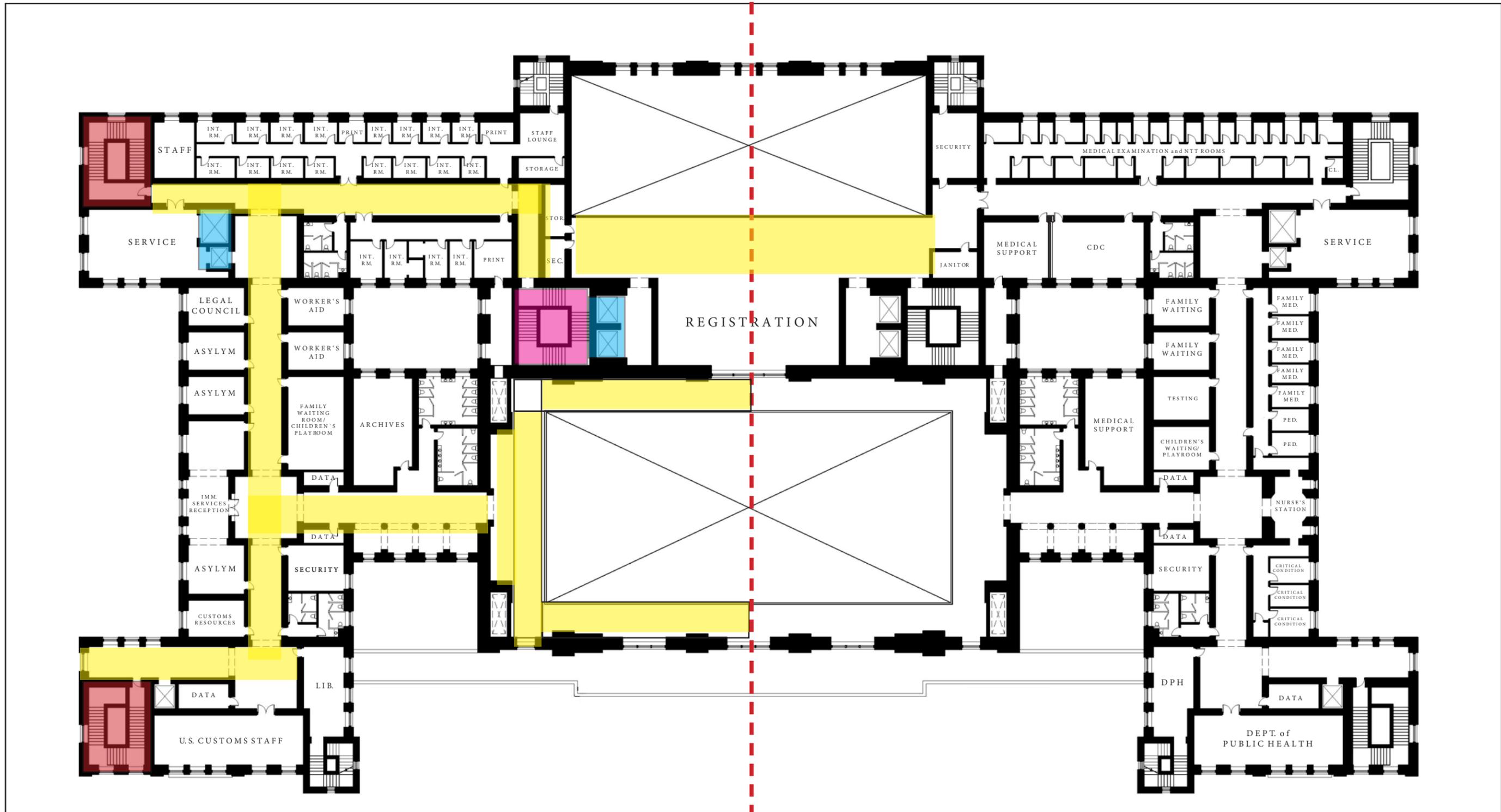
BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

1/32" = 1' (all plans at the same scale)



- elevator
- exit discharge
- exit stair





EGRESS and ACCESSIBILITY

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1/32" = 1' (all plans at the same scale)



- exit access stair
- elevator
- ➔ exit
- exit discharge
- accessible bathrooms
- exit stair



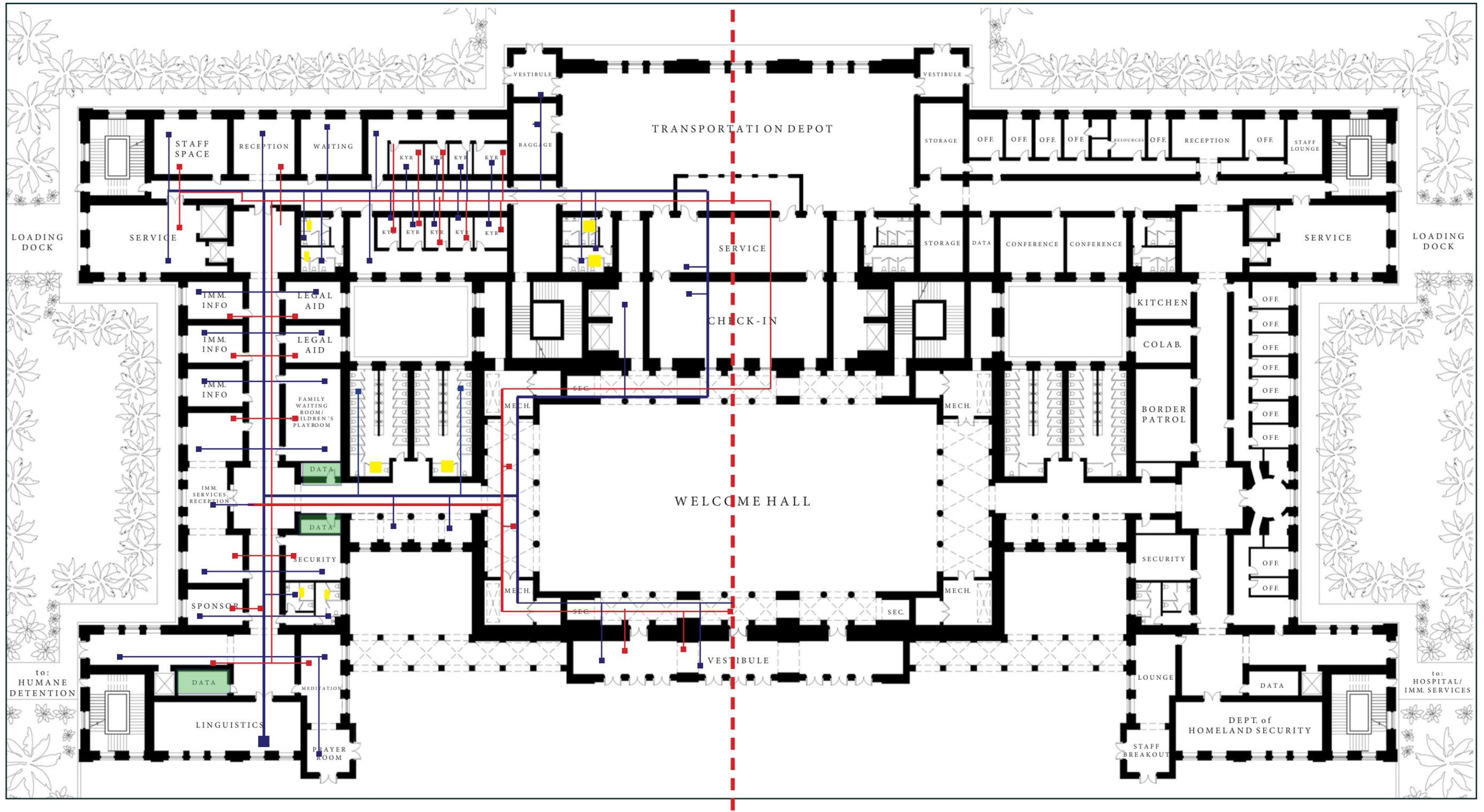
HVAC and DATA DISTRIBUTION

BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

1/32" = 1' (all plans at the same scale)



- return grille
- supply diffuser
- HVAC closet
- boiler
- chiller

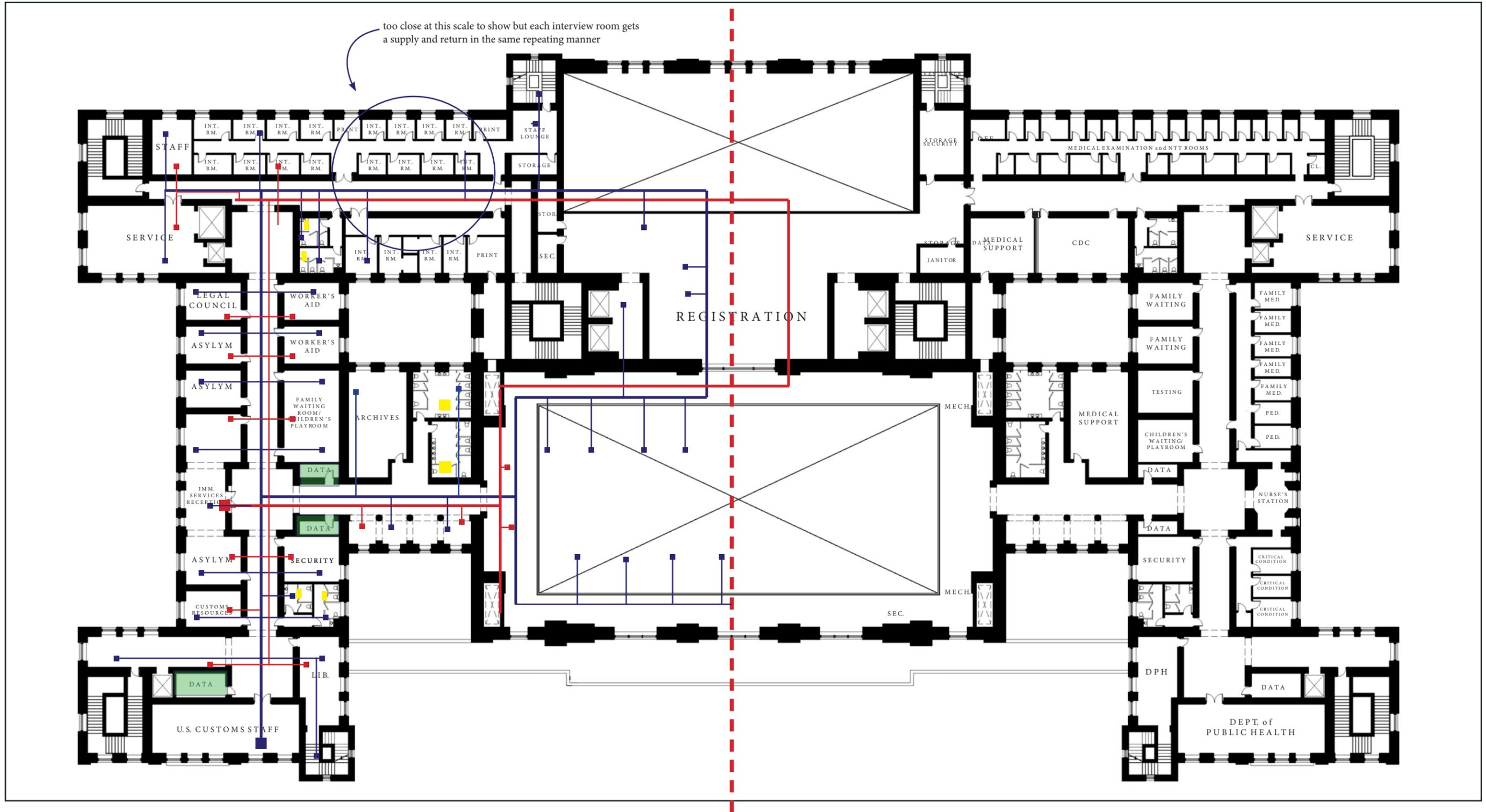


# HVAC and DATA DISTRIBUTION

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1/32" = 1'

- return grille
- supply diffuser
- exhaust (WC)
- data



HVAC and DATA DISTRIBUTION

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1/32" = 1' 

- return grille
- supply diffuser
- exhaust (WC)



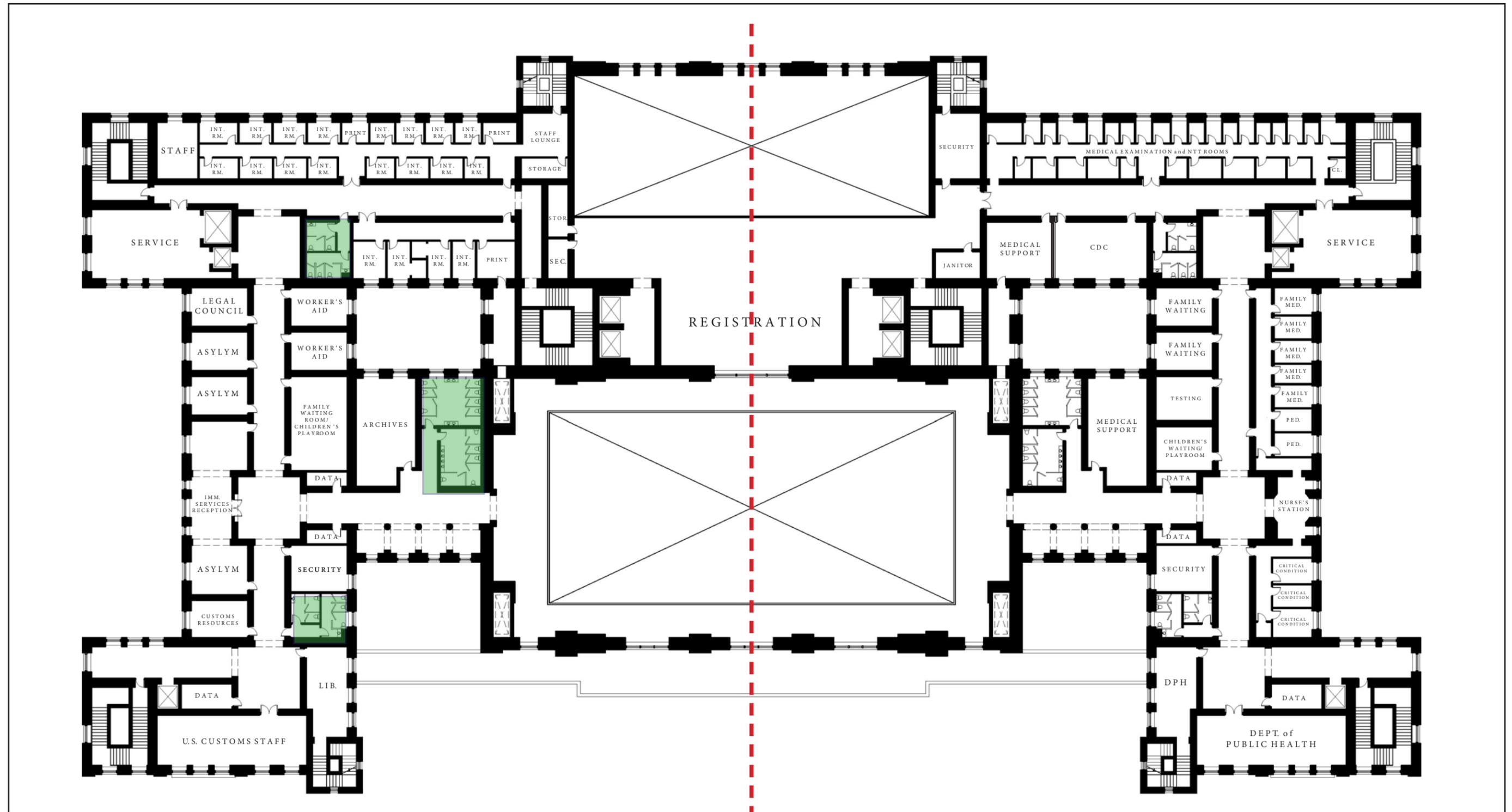
STRUCTURAL LAYOUT (8" hollow core concrete slab and stone masonry construction)

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1/32" = 1' 

- bearing walls and slab placement indicated
  - 8" slabs may span upto 30ft
- (ref: *Studio Companion*)

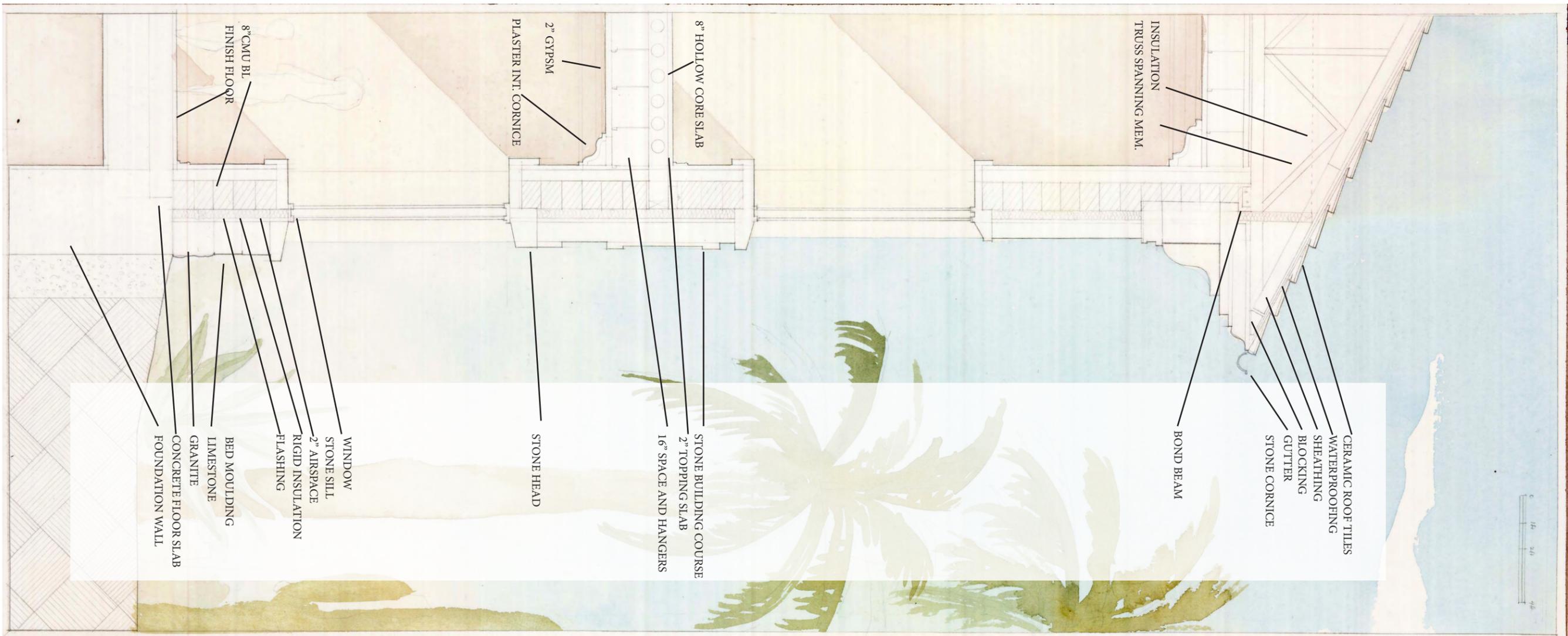




PLUMBING DISTRIBUTION

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1/32" = 1' 



TECHNICAL SECTION