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Constructed Landscape

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Joy House Project

Michael Hughes



The Joy House, one of seven buildings operated by the nonprofit Providence Network, provides up to two years of temporary shelter and counseling for women and children affected by domestic violence. The client's programmatic requirements were initially limited to pragmatic code compliance issues. Specifically, the Providence Network wanted to establish a daycare facility in the southwest corner of the building and had hired a local contractor to renovate and upgrade the interior. As part of a larger renovation financial provisions of \$14,000 had been set aside for a fire egress ramp that was required

for daycare facilities to meet minimum fire-safety standards established by the state licensing commission. An agreement was reached between the Providence Network, the general contractor, and the University of Colorado in which the design/build team would be the subcontractors in charge of the design and construction of the ramp and surrounding landscape.

Given that the existing building filled nearly the whole site, the space available for the project was limited to a 9 foot by 100 foot alley-like strip adjacent to a 10 foot by 24 foot deck located on the

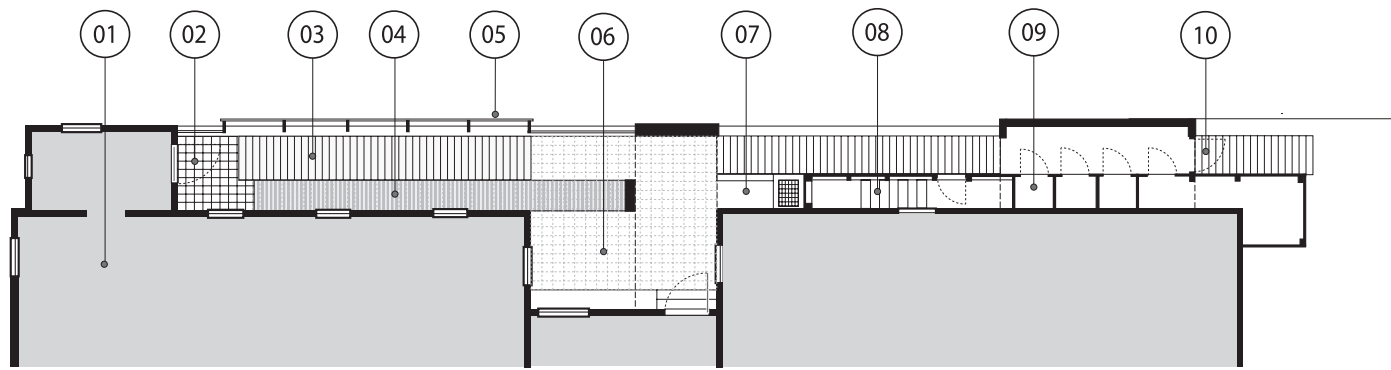
north side of the building. Filled with toys, bikes, and debris, the Joy House residents felt that the north side of the site was not a safe place for the children to play in its current condition. As a result the front porch and sidewalk on the south side of the building served as the de-facto playground. However, due to the nature of the shelter and the recent experiences of the residents, there was significant apprehension about the exposed, public nature of the sidewalk. Concerns regarding the potential for harassment by fathers and ex-spouses conflicted with the mothers' desire to allow the kids to play.

The design strategy extends the limited interior, public space within the 14-unit, 3-story apartment complex creating a much-needed social space for the shelter's adult residents and a protected play area for their children. The initial programmatic requirement of a fire egress ramp was expanded to include a variety of outdoor seating areas, play space, privacy screens, a barbecue, and storage facilities. Infrastructural provisions for a planned second-story balcony, depicted in the model images, were included in the completed project such that the balcony can be easily installed when funding becomes available.



Before, above and after, below





Key: 1 Daycare, 2 Landing, 3 Ramp, 4 Grass Play Area, 5 Privacy Screen, 6 Courtyard, 7 Barbecue, 8 Boiler Room, 9 Storage, and 10 Entry



Ramp to west, before



Ramp to west, after

