

APRIL 30, 2026 @ IRVINE, CA

# 1st MASONRY ARCHITECTURE STUDENT'S DESIGN COMPETITION

IRVINE, CA

## CALIFORNIA MASONRY SUMMIT & EXPO

APRIL 30, 2026

**Press Release**

[www.CaliforniaMasonryCouncil.org](http://www.CaliforniaMasonryCouncil.org)



APRIL 30, 2026 @ IRVINE, CA

# 1st MASONRY ARCHITECTURE STUDENT'S DESIGN COMPETITION

# \$12,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS



The California Masonry Council (CMC) is pleased to announce the 1<sup>st</sup> Masonry Architecture Design Student Competition Winners, during the 2025-2026 academic year.

The program is intended to challenge undergraduate and graduate students, working individually or in teams, to explore a variety of design issues related to the use of masonry materials in design and construction. Concrete Block (CMU) or Brick (clay) must be used as a prominent material with special emphasis placed on innovation, resiliency, and sustainability.

The competition allows students to explore the many functional, and aesthetic uses for Masonry Materials. Students will get a chance to research and learn about many features as: fire resistance, sustainable materials, thermal mass and energy efficiency, constructability, aesthetics and architectural features, durability, resilience, ballistic resistance, and low maintenance costs.

CMC highly encourages students to design with materials that are locally manufactured and locally sourced within CA.

Our competition is divided into 2 different categories:

**1- Concrete Block (CMU)**

**2- Brick (clay products)**

## **HIGHER EDUCATION BUILDING FACILITY**

Students will have the freedom to design a building in a higher education campus of their choosing within California.

A significant component of campus life that would enhance the student experience in a campus. It can be a replacement for an existing building, or a new building you consider to be necessary.

APRIL 30, 2026 @ IRVINE, CA

# 1st MASONRY ARCHITECTURE STUDENT'S DESIGN COMPETITION

Thank you to our Competition Sponsors!



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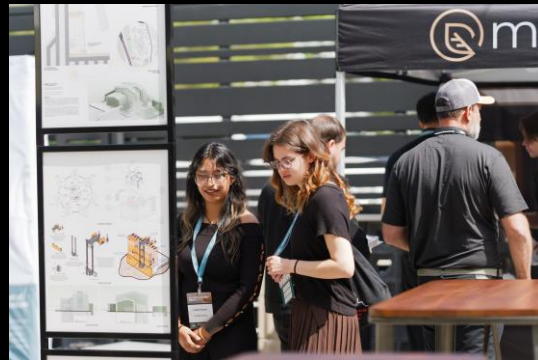
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We are honored to present the Jury for our 1<sup>st</sup>  
Architecture Competition for Students in California.

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# CALIFORNIA MASONRY SUMMIT & EXPO

## APRIL 30, 2026

2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the California Masonry Summit & Expo

Building a sustainable and resilient future with masonry...

**1987** Inspector's Handbook 1<sup>st</sup> edition marks the start of an era of leadership & continued partnership with ICC.

**1990's** Over the course of a decade, MIA sells over 22,000 books, publishes 16 new publications, becoming the best technical masonry resource for contractors and the AEC industry in CA.

**2000's** California Masonry Council (CMC) is founded as division of MIA to promote and advance masonry in CA. CMC partners with AEC orgs, creating programs and content, uniting the masonry trade and the AEC community.

**2023** MIA's industry stewardship expands under John Chrysler's leadership as Executive Director being recognized with TMS President's Award "R" Fellow Membership '22, & collaborating in TMS review cycles.

**2025** CMC is the largest growing masonry org in world with 12,000 members in 14 states and 13,000 in companies each valued at \$25M.

**2026** MIA merges into CMC kicking off a new era paving masonry & CA in the future, continuing and expanding its technical focus. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the California Masonry Summit & Expo will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the California Masonry Summit & Expo. CMC continues to create new programs and content, always masonry.

www.CaliforniaMasonryCouncil.org

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# 1<sup>st</sup> Place Concrete Block

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# DOS MANTOS

1<sup>st</sup> Place  
Concrete Block  
College of the Canyons

## \$3,000 SCHOLARSHIP



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# DOS MANTOS

# 1st Place – Concrete Block

**EXISTING PORTION OF PARKING CONVERTED TO PROPOSED STUDENT HOUSING LOT**

**50' x 37' x 37' PLOT ON-LAND FOR PROPOSED STUDENT HOUSING PROJECT**

**MASSING V1**  
**MASSING V2**  
**MASSING V3**  
**MASSING V4**  
**MASSING V5**  
**MASSING V6 CHOSEN MASSING & SITE APPLICATION**

**MASSING & SITE STUDY**

**PROPOSED MACRO SITE PLAN (ENLARGED)**

**EXISTING MACRO SITE PLAN**

**PROJECT: DOS MANTOS**  
Location: College of the Canyons, Santa Clarita, CA  
Type: Student Housing (Student Village) - CMU

**Description:**  
Dos Mantos is a compact student housing prototype designed for the California Masonry Council design competition under the Concrete Block category. Located at 20400 Roswell Canyon Road on a 50-foot by 37-foot campus lot, the project proposes two 200-square-foot mono-chambered modular units per floor, each with a private bathroom, kitchenette, and storage. The site and code requirements identified in the original proposal include 80% occupancy, Type III construction, R-2 zoning, and a 14-foot fire zone, enabling optimal density and passive performance control to the design.

For this competition, the original CMU concept is reworked into a light CMU and rammed-earth assembly with concrete block serving as the primary structural and infill masonry. Where available, the proposed specifies performance-based CMU, a thermal-mass block that passively stores captured CO2 during production. Rammed earth is retained primarily as passive and architectural conditions for sound buffering and thermal mass. Additional features include a rainwater harvesting system, a greywater system, and a water reuse system across the project's environmental life beyond the walls. Dos Mantos provides modeling on both structure and performance systems, offering a resilient model for small-scale campus housing.

**BASEMENT LEVEL**  
**GROUND LEVEL**  
**PLOT PLAN**

**SECTION A**  
**SECTION B**  
**SECTION C**

**NORTH ELEVATION**  
**EAST ELEVATION**

**SOLAR CHIMNEY**  
**FLAME RESISTANT**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**EARTH SHELTERED**  
**PASSIVE COOLING**  
**NATURAL INSULATION**  
**CAPTURE & REUSE**  
**WATER CISTERN**  
**PHOTOVOLTAIC**  
**NET ZERO ENERGY**  
**INCLUSIVE DESIGN**  
**FIRE PIT**  
**GREEN WALL**

**BUILDING EXPRESSION**

**PULLEY SYSTEM**  
The pulley is located at the end of a steel cable, setting in a trough between the pulley and a block. The CMU wall and formwork are being clamped together on the hollow top edge of the CMU.

**FORMWORK SYSTEM**  
The formwork is attached to a base component that allows for the transfer of the foundation formwork. This tool allows system to align vertically to the pulley system to allow a vertical track system to align.

**HAND WINCH SYSTEM**  
The hand winch component is a cast steel wood base or aluminum plate to hold the winch. It allows for easy turning. They are the directional pulleys, each placed at both ends of the main component to fully control the wall while in place. This main component has an anchor located at the top.

**VERTICAL TRACK SYSTEM**  
This works as the main linking system between the steel track, formwork, and pulley system. It is used to align and vertically adjust between all these systems. Two aluminum tracks are placed vertically aligned to the clamps on each system.

**TERRALINK SYSTEM**  
The TerraLink System is a vertical component based on rammed earth and vertical track system. The hand winch is fixed to the foundation formwork below. It is connected to the vertical track system. The vertical track system is connected to the hand winch. Together, these parts allow the rammed earth, formwork, and assembly of the light CMU are centered upon each system.

**RAMMED EARTH**  
**PULLEY SYSTEM**  
**FOUNDATION FORMWORK**  
**FORMWORK SYSTEM**  
**VERTICAL TRACK SYSTEM**

**NORTH ELEVATION**  
**EAST ELEVATION**

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# 1<sup>st</sup> Place Brick

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# LUMINBRICKS PAVILION

1<sup>st</sup> Place  
Brick  
UC Berkeley

\$3,000 SCHOLARSHIP



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# LUMINBRICKS PAVILION

1st Place – Brick

## LuminBricks Pavilion

### Revival of Ohlone History + Architecture

Every year, thousands of people pass through the base of the Sather Tower, but very few actually stop and stay. It's a place you move through, not one you occupy. This project started by questioning why such an important center of campus does not invite people to linger, and how it could become a space that holds both people and meaning.

Located at the center of the University of California, Berkeley, the pavilion is rooted in acknowledging the Huchun (Ohlone) (Yu'yun), the original inhabitants of this land. While land acknowledgments are often spoken in classrooms, there is little on campus that physically reflects that history. This design aims to change that by creating a space where that history is not only remembered, but experienced in a direct and everyday way.

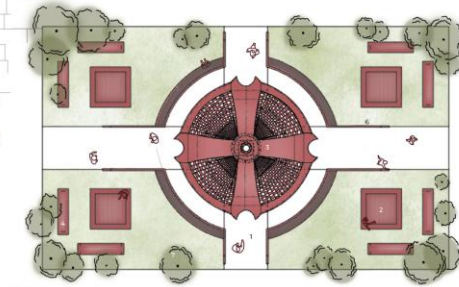
The form takes inspiration from traditional dome-shaped indigenous dwellings of the Bay Area, re-interpreted through brick. Brick was chosen intentionally because it already exists across Berkeley's campus, tying the pavilion into its surroundings while also allowing for a reinterpretation of something older. The construction shifts between running bond and herringbone patterns, especially across the ground plane, where the woven lattice reflects ideas of connection and community. The structure is defined by a series of lead-bearing arches that create both enclosure and openness.

These arches are not decorative. They provide shade, places to sit, and moments to pause. This came directly from observation. Over several weeks, it became clear that while nearby spaces like Memorial Glade attract large groups of students, the Campanile courtyard does not offer the same comfort or flexibility. There are not enough places to sit, lie down, or gather. This pavilion responds by building those opportunities: directly into the design, including curved seating, a conversation pit, and multiple levels that reflect the varied spatial organization found in traditional Ohlone environments.

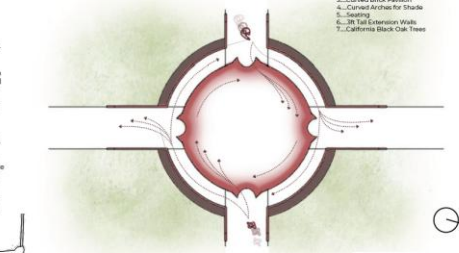
At the center of the pavilion, an oculus opens the space to the sky. Below it sits the Berkeley Sphere, reframed within a column of light. Light and rain move through the opening, making the space feel active and changing rather than fixed. The walls extend outward along four axes, subtly guiding people toward the center while keeping the structure fully open. There are no doors and no strict boundaries. People can move through freely, just as they already do on campus.

Indigenous artwork and historical information are integrated into protected surfaces, while openings between bricks allow natural light to filter in, creating shifting patterns of light and shadow throughout the day.

More than anything, this project is about creating a place people actually use. Not just to pass through, but to sit, gather, learn, and reflect. It is meant to feel natural to the campus while also introducing something that has been missing, a physical space that acknowledges the land's history and brings people into it.



Top Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

## Xu'cyun Territory

### A History of Indigenous Resilience in the Bay Area

**Legend**

1. Physics North
2. Memorial Glade
3. Wheeler Hall
4. South Hall

## Materiality + Efficiency

**Brick (clay)**

Manufacturer: McNear Brick & Block from San Ramon Northern California (proximity to site)

Why? Enhancing the traditional clay brick specified by manufacturer. Shows historic roots of construction material made by hand.

Use Pavilion is completely made and supported by brick. Using tension forces and small steel wire.

**Sierra Nevada Granite**

Manufacturer: Cold Spring Granite from Raymond, Madera County, California

Why? To mirror the grounded feel and is consistent with the rock tectonic material scheme. Use Setting saw that remains cool and durable.

**Asymmetric Expansion of Pavilion**

## Features + Advantages + Sustainability

**Thermal lag:** Brick walls can delay heat transfer by **6-10 hours** during heating/cooling energy by **5-15%**

**Typical lifespan:** **100-500+ years**

**Maintenance:** Mortar repointing every **50-100 years**

**Compressive strength:** **20-60 MPa (≈ 3,000-9,000 psi)**

**Ballistic Resistance:** **8-12 in** masonry walls can stop many handgun rounds

**Fire rating:** **4-8 hour** fire resistance for the masonry walls (Melting point of fired clay = 1,000-1,200°C (1,830-2,180°F))

**Daylighting Efficiency (IEQ Credit):** Natural light illuminates **75% of occupied space**, reducing reliance on artificial lighting.

**Reduced Energy Demand (Energy & Atmosphere):** Passive daylighting can reduce overall building energy use by **up to 40%**.

**Temporary Guides or Molds Create the Curve**

First, workers install light wooden formwork or guide ribs that define the desired curve of the wall or roof.

These guides trace the wave or curvilinear shape of the structure.

They do not carry loads permanently; they only support the bricks during construction.

This allows the geometry of the vault to be precisely controlled before bricks are placed.

**Thin Brick Layers Are Laid Over the Formwork.**

Workers then place thin layers of brick along the curved guide surface.

Bricks remain straight.

The curvatures come from slight rotations and mortar joints.

Because the vault is very thin (sometimes only a few brick layers), it behaves like a structural shell rather than a heavy wall.

**Steel Reinforcement to Inserted in the Joints**

This steel wire or bars are placed inside the mortar joints.

This system is called "rebarbed column" (cordame armada).

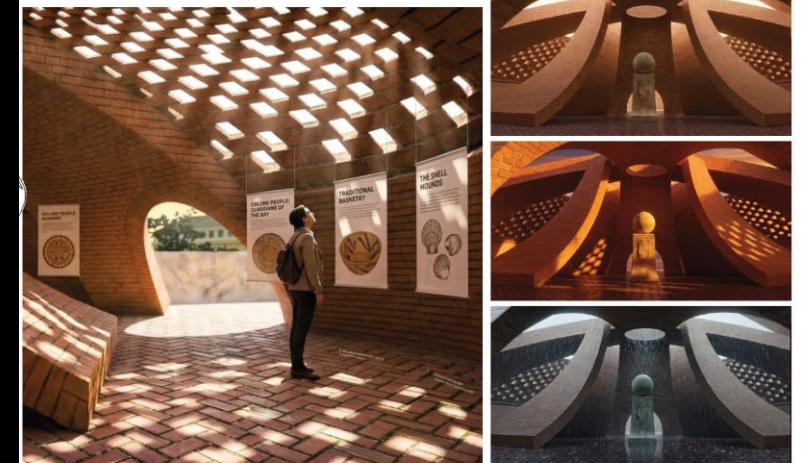
**Mortar is Poured to Lock the Structure**

Mortar is added around the reinforcement and bricks.

Once hardened, the bricks, steel reinforcement, mortar all work together as a continuous curved shell.

**Temporary Formwork System Construction by Eladio Dellese**

## Layers of the Land



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**2<sup>nd</sup> Place**  
**Concrete Block**

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# BLOCK TO BREATHE

2<sup>nd</sup> Place  
Concrete Block

University of Southern California (USC)

\$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP



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# BLOCK TO BREATHE

# 2nd Place – Concrete Block



**BLOCK TO BREATHE**

Reprogramming CMU as the Lungs of a 24-Hour Library  
Site location: USC Lessey Library (University of Southern California)

In a 24-hour academic library, students remain made for hours surrounded by light, air, and sound. These building operator constraints, yet the desire to improve indoor climate, movement, and the human experience, led to a multi-performance system. The library becomes not only a conventional but also an experimental, with an indoor landscape and an overcast landscape that helps to support student life.

This project challenges that condition by reimagining concrete as an environmental system rather than an enclosed shell. Instead of adding more mechanical systems, the design reprograms the building itself into a breathable system. Concrete masonry units (CMU), typically perceived as heavy and inert, are reprogrammed as a multi-performance system capable of providing shade, filtering noise, and supporting experiential structures.

Through a curved, double-layer CMU strategy, the facade reprograms shade, filtration, and performance. Light and movement are no longer blocked, but guided and filtered into the building. The result is a reconfigurable learning environment that improves comfort, supports well-being, and activates the library as a living, breathing environment.

**Masterplan**

**Concept Diagram**

**Materials Diagram**

**Concrete blocks type**

**Architecture Form Diagram**

**Isometric Diagram**

**Funtions & Activities Diagram**

**Legend**

- 1 Main Entrance
- 2 Lobby Lounge / Cafe
- 3 Indoor Landscape
- 4 Cafe seating
- 5 On-roofing space
- 6 Pocket space
- 7 Step seating
- 8 Social area
- 9 Amphitheater
- 10 Stage / Presentation Area
- 11 Rooftop entrance
- 12 Rooftop Seating
- 13 Curve Step Seating
- 14 Planting area
- 15 Existing pool

**BLOCK TO BREATHE**

The design reprograms the library from landscape to architecture by interior, expanding its site beyond an enclosed reading room into a layered learning environment. The proposed response activates the exterior by permeability to interior, creating a gradual movement of study, work, movement, and social interaction. It also opens the possibility of future connections to the second-floor library, transforming traditional areas into spaces that can support long-term urban activation and growth.

**Floor Plan**

**Section 1**

**Elevation 1**

**Elevation 2**

CMU is reprogrammed as a multi-performance system, where each block type serves a clear role. Solid CMU is used to create structure, shade, and study spaces, providing strength, fire resistance, and thermal mass for stability and durability.

Reused CMU forms a curved, breathable facade. Through controlled opening and closure, it filters airflow and daylight, reducing heat gain and supporting passive cooling.

The curved form works with the building section and a perforated roof to create a breathable surface. Not all fans and windows are cooler or to open into the space. These strategies improve energy efficiency and reduce reliance on mechanical systems.

"Solid and porous CMU work together as a system, combining structure and filtration to create a more adaptive and controllable environment."

**BLOCK TO BREATHE**

**Reimagined through performance, CMU becomes structure, filter, and space in one system — performing, adapting, and sustaining life.**

Block to Breathe redefines CMU as more than a wall — it becomes a responsive environmental system. The library is no longer an enclosed container, but a breathable living facade that supports climate, movement, and well-being. Through permeability, porosity, and material intelligence, the project transforms a static structure into a living architecture for contemporary learning.

**BLOCK TO BREATHE**

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# 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Brick

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# EUCALYPTUS LANE

2<sup>nd</sup> Place  
Brick

Cal Poly Pomona

\$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP

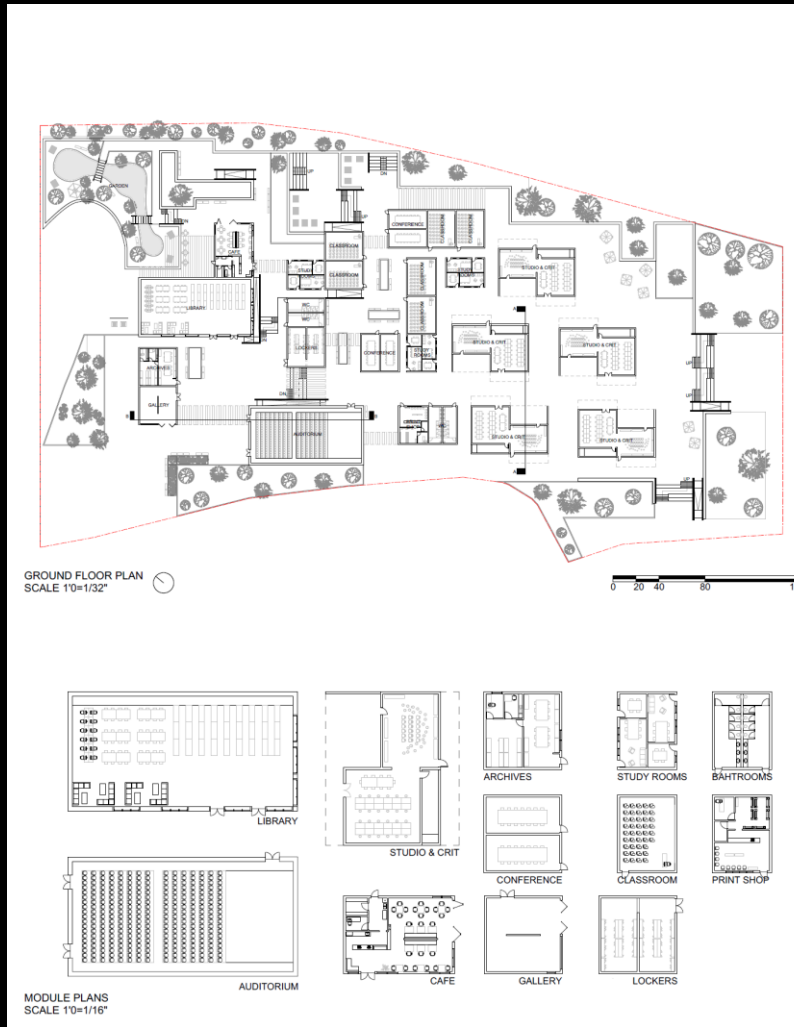
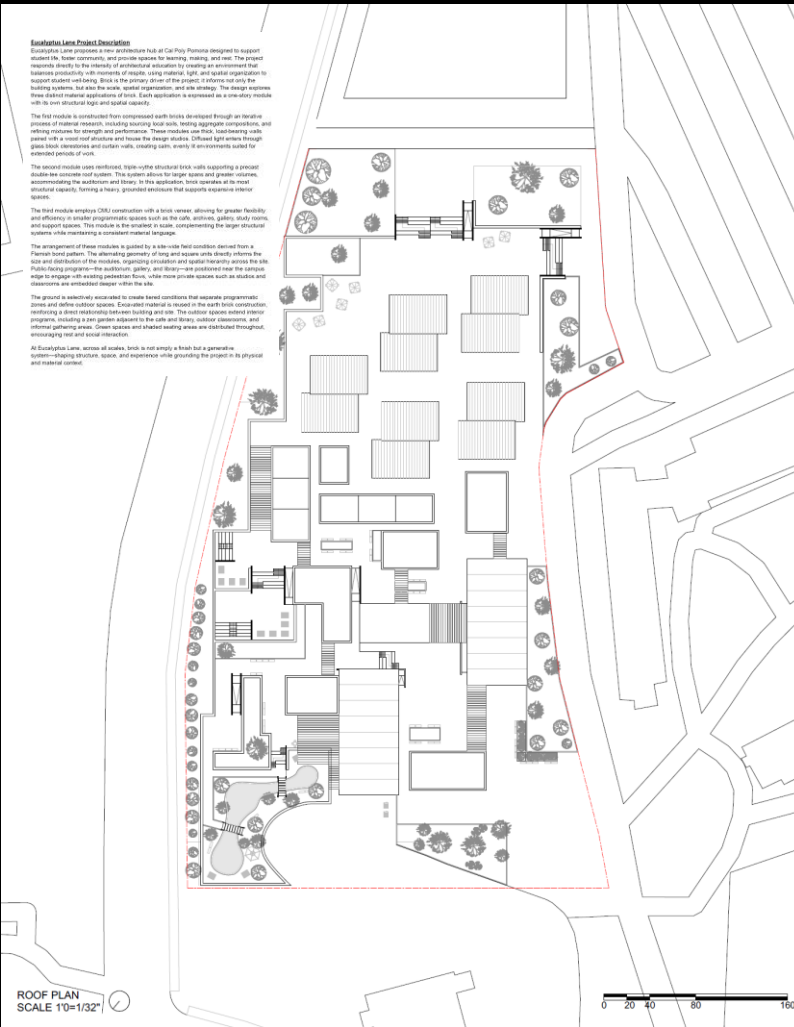


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# EUCALYPTUS LANE

2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Brick



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**3<sup>rd</sup> Place**  
**Concrete Block**

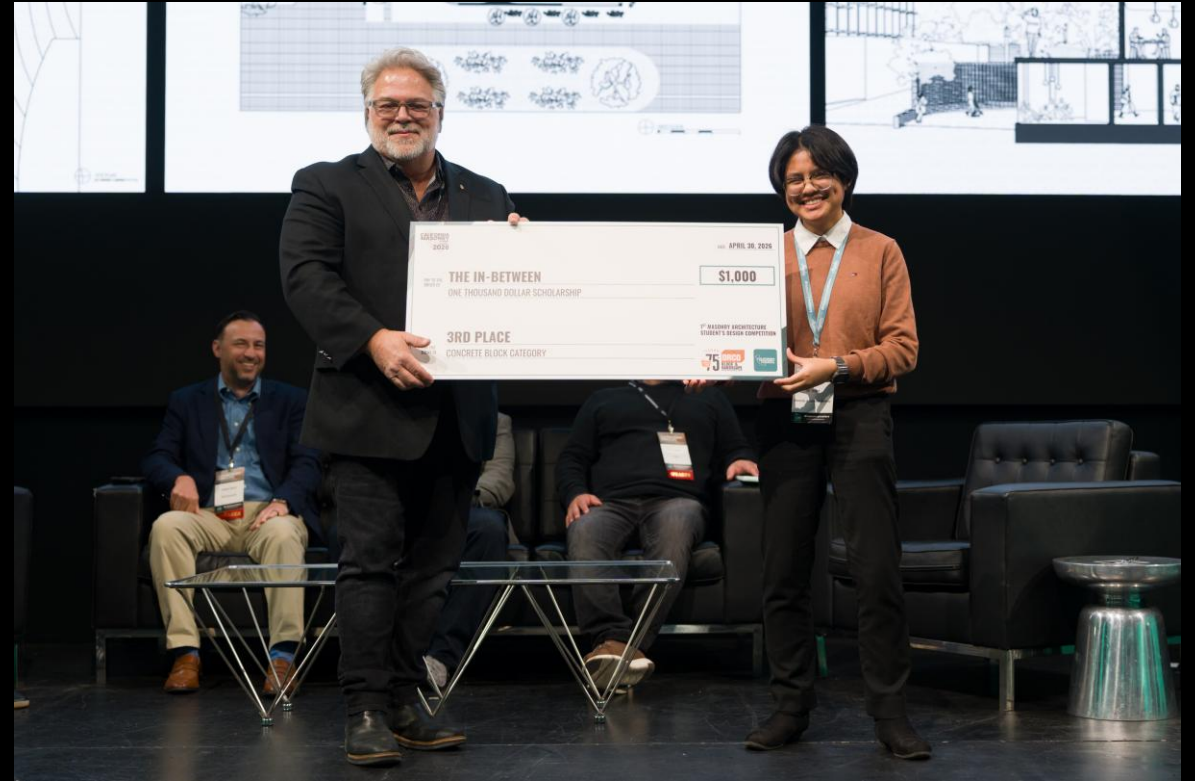
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# THE IN-BETWEEN

3<sup>rd</sup> Place  
Concrete Block  
UC Berkeley

\$1,000  
SCHOLARSHIP



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# THE IN-BETWEEN

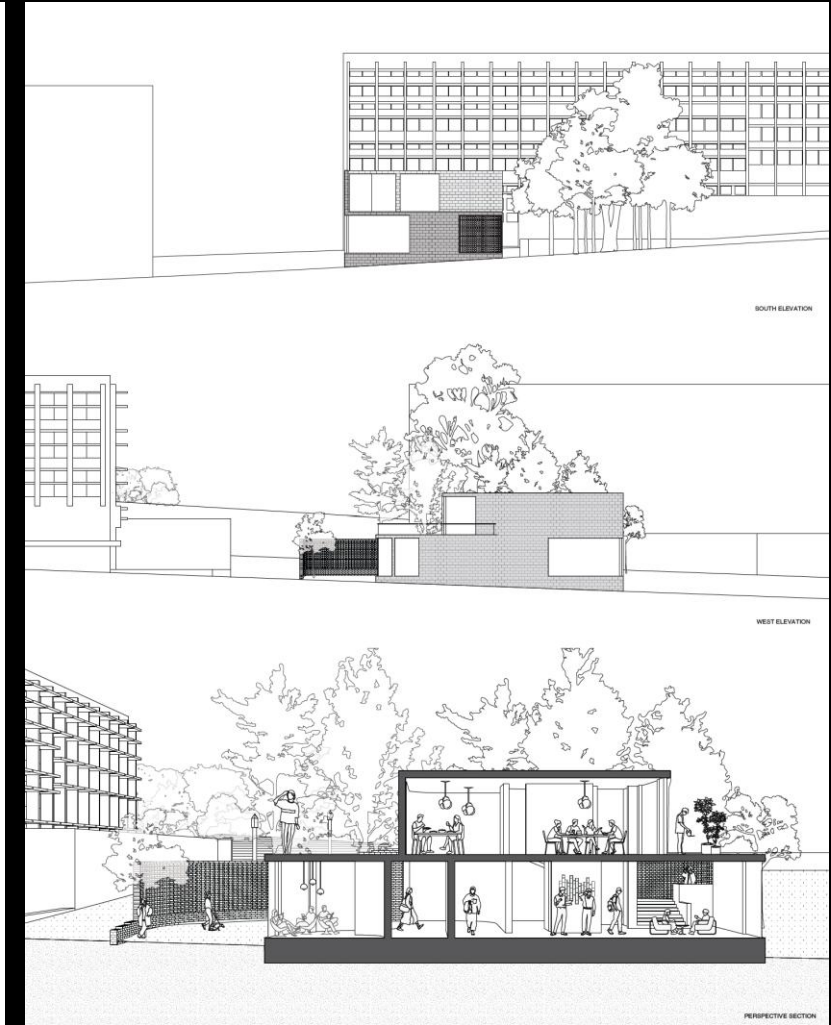
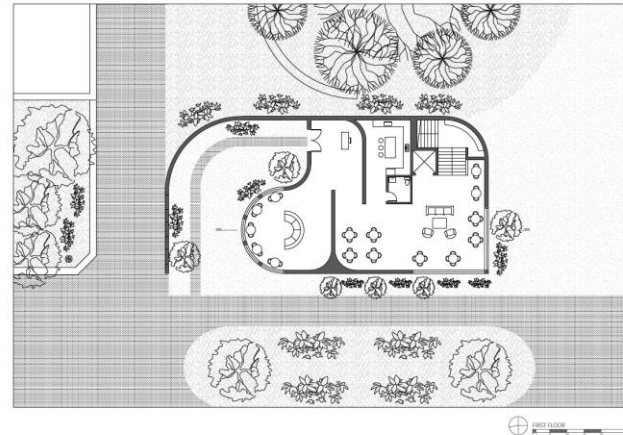
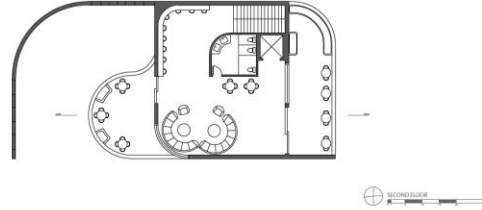
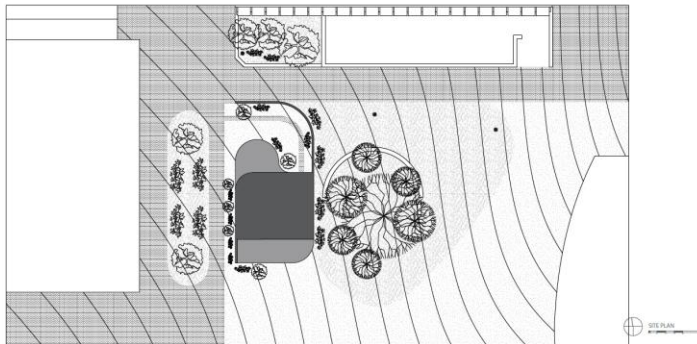
## PROJECT DESCRIPTION-

At the University of California, Berkeley's College of Environmental Design, hard working students put in long hours meeting deadlines and creating the future built environment. These students need a comprehensive study space that goes beyond the normative hours of Bauer-Wurster Hall to accommodate their ongoing work. Our project, The In-Between, proposes a 24-hour lounge dedicated to undergraduate and graduate students for their idea development. Located south of the existing college, this site is optimal for both the sun path of the region and its proximity to the main building.

Organized as an open and cohesive space, it allows users to work both collaboratively and independently, accommodating a range of specific needs. This project emphasizes comfort, accessibility, and convenience that the existing college currently lacks.

Taking advantage of the sun path and orientation of our site, we explored different materials within the scope of masonry. Intrigued by the idea of a 'perforated facade', we created specific moments where the sun is able to shine through the holes of the brick wall, casting a diffused light throughout the space. This proposal integrates brick and glass, balancing the quality of light and thermal comfort present within the different pockets of working space. This is highly significant considering the insulation issues present within Bauer-Wurster Hall. These bricks are sourced from Pacific Clay Products, a local producer of masonry in Riverside County, CA. Its lighter appearance reflects sunlight, ensuring less heat absorption throughout the day. This acts as a natural cooling system, allowing for daylight to diffuse into the space through this 'perforated facade'. The use of brick and glass creates interesting visuals as the space is produced by juxtaposing material changes between transparent and solid. These contrasting visual conditions speak to the nature of the form as it creates moments that become private and public space for the users.

Designed as an annexed space to Bauer-Wurster Hall, this structure provides a comfortably lit lounge space that overlooks a pleasant view of the surrounding landscape and pedestrian traffic. The In-Between provides an alternative place that breaks away from the traditional work space, supporting a productive and welcoming environment for students.



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# Honor Mention Concrete Block

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**FLIP**  
**Honor Mention**  
**Concrete Block**  
**UC Berkeley**

**\$500 SCHOLARSHIP**



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## FLIP

In 1873, a Catholic church was built but was nearly destroyed in a 2009 fire, leaving only its bell tower and stone walls. This project represents an unique opportunity to transform an abandoned church into a community hub in Liverpool.

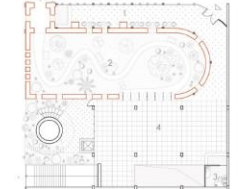
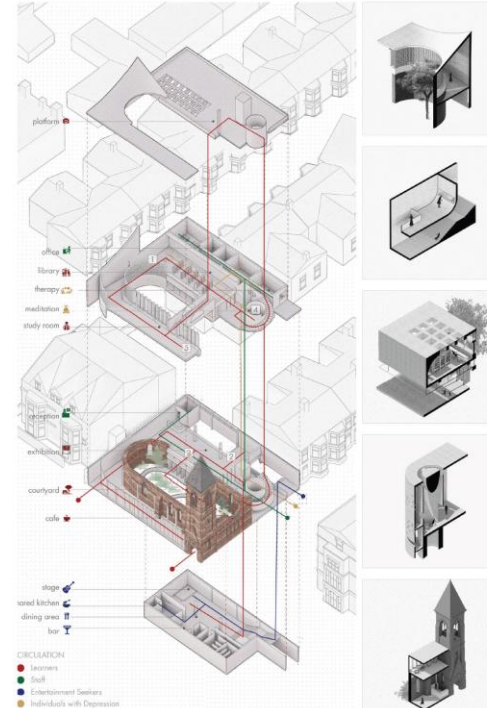
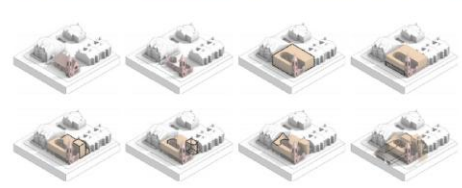
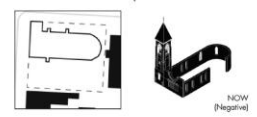
The site is largely surrounded by residential areas. According to research, twenty percent percent of people in this area grapple with profound psychological issues. On the residential church, as a place of solace and spiritual healing, will bring great relevance within the context of contemporary Liverpool.

Therefore, the renovation of this church is not merely about preserving its physical form, it is fundamentally centered on the reimagining of collective experience while consciously providing individuals with a sacred refuge for spiritual solace.

Translating its interior into an courtyard, the original materials are now part of the focal space, and interior walls have become exterior. This change strategies us from the historic, making reflection on the past from a present, alternative standpoint. As visitors engage the space, the old church retains the focal point, allowing the central garden to be viewed from multiple perspectives.

The project prioritizes sustainability by utilizing grey recycled bricks as the primary building material. Sourced from an nearby local scrap filtration and sorting center, these bricks are produced through a recovery, utilization and refurbishment process where three million high-beam firing. The material achieves a remarkably low carbon footprint of approximately 0.77 kg of industrial carbon per kilogram, which is nearly equivalent of best found in traditional clay bricks. Visually, the grey bricks create a sophisticated dialogue with the city's history.

The design flips the positive and negative spaces, turning interior church into exterior garden. The design strategy involves several memory, healing, and reflection. On the community center will be a reminder of the past, a critique of history and a place to find solace for the next.



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# Honor Mention Brick

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# MARQUEZ CHARTER ELEMENTARY

## Weaving Community with Earthen Threads

### Honor Mention - Brick

#### Cal Poly Pomona

# \$500 SCHOLARSHIP



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# MARQUEZ CHARTER ELEMENTARY

# Honor Mention - Brick

## MARQUEZ CHARTER ELEMENTARY

*Weaving Community with Earthen Threads*

The Palisades fire of January 2025 tore through the Palisades neighborhood in Los Angeles County, claiming 12 civilian lives and over 6,800 buildings, homes, and structures. Marquez Charter Elementary was one of them.

This project is a sustainable, radically accessible design for a new campus, where the community can heal and grow for years to come.

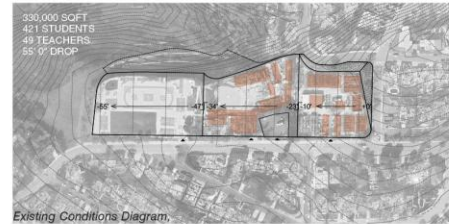
The design focuses on creating continuity throughout the site, leveraging walls of compressed earth blocks (unfired brick) as unifying elements, because of their capacity for both beauty and long-term safety.



## SITE RESEARCH

Our emphasis on continuity emerged from a careful examination of pre-existing conditions: the steep topography splits the site into 3 platforms, sloping 8-11 feet along their length, and dropping 13 feet between platforms.

This, in combination with the small student body and large square footage made the original campus feel fragmented, and necessitated separate circulation options for able-bodied vs. disabled students.



Existing Conditions Diagram

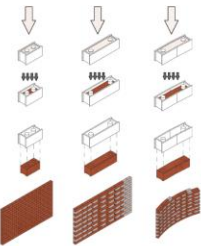
## MATERIALITY/CONSTRUCTION

After comparing research across material types, we chose 8" x 16" x 8" Compressed Earth Blocks as our modular component for the design, as they were the best option between sustainability, structural stability, and fire resistance.

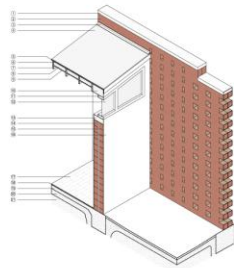
Block Type	Dimensions (in)	Carbon Footprint (kgCO2/kg)	Normalized Energy Consumption (MJ/kg)	Compressive Strength (psi)	Fire Rating
CMU	8" x 16" x 8"	0.15 - 0.5	0.6-2.0	2,500	2-4 Hours
Brick	7.5" x 3.5" x 11.5"	0.2 - 0.48	0.5-0.9	2,500	4-8 Hours
CEB	8" x 16" x 8"	0.08 - 0.202	0.15-0.5	1,500	2-4 Hours

Sample Research- Comparative Material Properties

Production would be done by the Aurum Press 3000 by DwellEarth equipped with a custom mold. Dirt from the site, and locally sourced clay and sand would be utilized.



CEB Construction & Assembly Process Diagram



Construction Detail Axonometric

Recycled concrete will act as a binding agent to further reduce carbon footprint, and maximize strength. The CEB blocks, as our base modules, now act as the origin and catalyst for the entire design, with the organizing geometry and spatial considerations emerging from the structural properties and dimensions of an individual block.

## SCHEMATIC DESIGN

Utilizing the slenderness ratio of a CEB wall, maximum heights were determined and utilized to calculate the smallest possible radius for a circular arrangement of blocks. These circles, with tangents, allow us to create a series of ramps with enough length for 1:20, accessible slopes.

These ramps blend into the topography and serve as the single, ubiquitous circulation option for all users, solving the site's fragmentation. Programmatically, we maintained the previous campus's use of three distinct zones, with classrooms at the top, followed by shared amenities in the middle, and a kindergarten campus/play spaces at the bottom.

WIDTH 8"  
LENGTH 16"  
JOINT: 1/2"

$$MN \text{ RADIUS} = [8 \times (160.5) + 1] \div 2 = 22'$$

WIDTH 8"  
LENGTH 16"  
JOINT: 3/8"

$$MN \text{ RADIUS} = [8 \times (160.375) + 1] \div 2 = 29'$$

RESULTING CIRCLE SIZES (FT)



WIDTH 16"  
LENGTH 16"  
JOINT: 1/2"

$$MN \text{ RADIUS} = [16 \times (160.5) + 1] \div 2 = 44'$$

WIDTH 16"  
LENGTH 16"  
JOINT: 3/8"

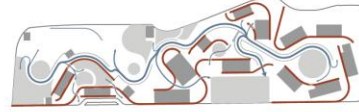
$$MN \text{ RADIUS} = [16 \times (160.375) + 1] \div 2 = 58'$$



Structural/Geometric Calculations



Base Geometry Diagram



Parti/Circulation Diagram



Program Diagram

## DEVELOPED DESIGN



Site Plan & Section



Library Elevation



Upper-Grade Classrooms Elevation



Exterior Render



Interior Render



Auditorium Section



Kindergarten Section

## SPATIAL EFFECT

Utilizing porosity within the walls as a strategy, as well as a natural material palette of wood and plaster for finishes and interior, we were able to lessen the spatial "heaviness" associated with block construction. This, in combination with varied roof types and strategic daylighting creates beautiful spaces for communal learning.



1/8"-1'0 Model Photo



1/32"-1'0 Model Photo

Congratulations!

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Thank You!

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