

The Elwood Hotel & Suites

Lexington, Kentucky
David Bader & Hilda Delgado, Owners

The Elwood Hotel & Suites building was originally a part of the adjacent Campbell House Hotel, with a façade in the same style and language. It was then sold and was separately run as a low-cost independent inn with no affiliation to The Campbell House. It carried with it a persona of a cheap hotel for many years and fell from the level of quality The Campbell House is known for. When the building was acquired by the current owners, there was a desperate need to give the building its own identity and make a clear distinction between it and The Campbell House. It needed to clearly communicate the high level of service and experience that the owners were intending to provide. The Elwood addresses these by offering valuable amenities, a focus on well-being, and a sense of locality addressed in its branding and design.

The existing building was extremely outdated and in need of serious cosmetic upgrades, both inside and out, as well as full MEP upgrades. The budget was tight. The covid pandemic presented challenges that not only included the way the design team worked, but elevated construction costs and created long lead times. Because of these constraints, the renovation required that construction funds be carefully used to maximize the outcome. This meant that the public areas would receive a total gut renovation while the guestrooms were limited to cosmetic changes and updates. Locally sourced items, such as decorative accessories, flooring, and millwork, became essential.

Programming was important for the first floor, where a restaurant, bar, kitchen, ADA guest rooms, and public ADA restrooms had not existed before and now needed to be added. Guest rooms received deliberate cosmetic renovations, such as paint, accent ceilings, new carpet, custom furniture, new shower fixtures, new lighting, and epoxy over the existing restroom tile. In a cost-saving gesture, guest room doors were painted instead of replaced. The existing elevator remained but received a new cab finish. Corridors received new paint along with hand-painted murals, creating an entirely new guest experience.

In order to address the exterior of the building while maintaining a tight budget, a few significant moves were made. Four large out-of-scale columns, located at the end of the building, were removed. (They seemed to indicate building entry but were only there to give the building a “colonial” look. There was no entry here, only an emergency egress door.) The existing white vinyl double-hung windows were replaced with more modern windows with thinner mullion profiles and black frames. The first floor received new storefront windows and glass doors at a larger scale than the originals, allowing daylight into the new restaurant and bar. The entire building was re-painted to create a cohesive feel. Lastly, to fully separate The Elwood from The Campbell House, a large-scale mural was painted onto the front and side of the building to give it an entirely different aesthetic than the hotel next door.

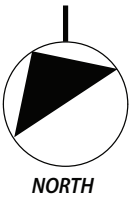
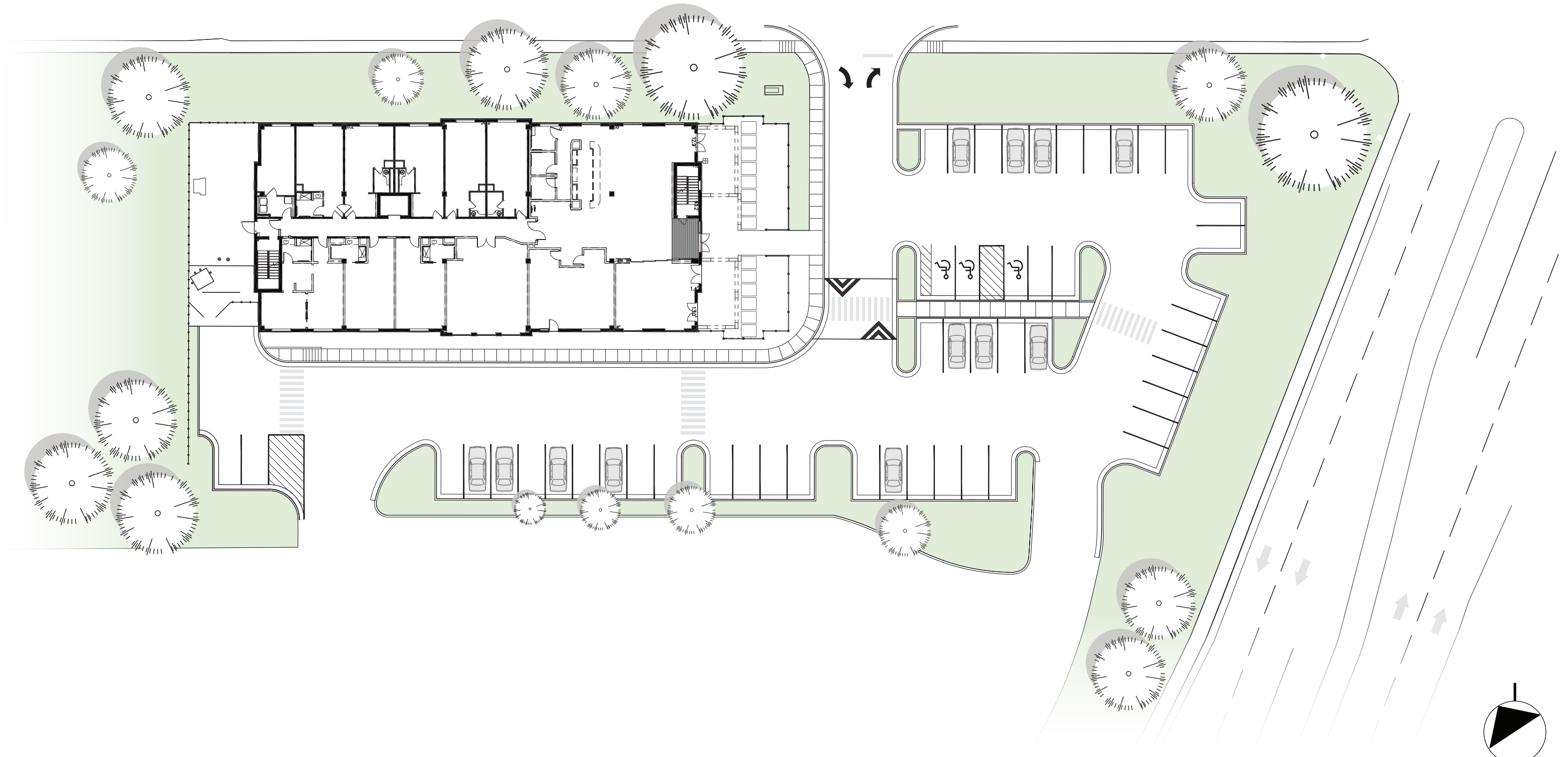
Although situated along a high-traffic arterial between downtown Lexington and its suburbs, the hotel was originally only accessed by entering the Campbell House parking lot and driving behind an adjacent free-standing drugstore. It needed this entry to be re-thought to create its own identity and separate it from The Campbell House. To accomplish this, two big moves were made. First, an entry drive was added to a side street that allows visitors to directly access the hotel without driving through The Campbell House’s entrance and parking lot. Secondly, as a visual cue for guests, the main entry to the hotel lobby (including the restaurant and bar) was re-oriented to face the main road, rather than along the side facing the Campbell House. A front porch was added here to create a “sense of Kentucky”. These clues were further accentuated by the full-scale wall mural. Furthermore, the existing tall roadside sign was removed and replaced with a much more aesthetic, eye-level sign advertising both The Elwood and the Fiddletree Restaurant and Bar.

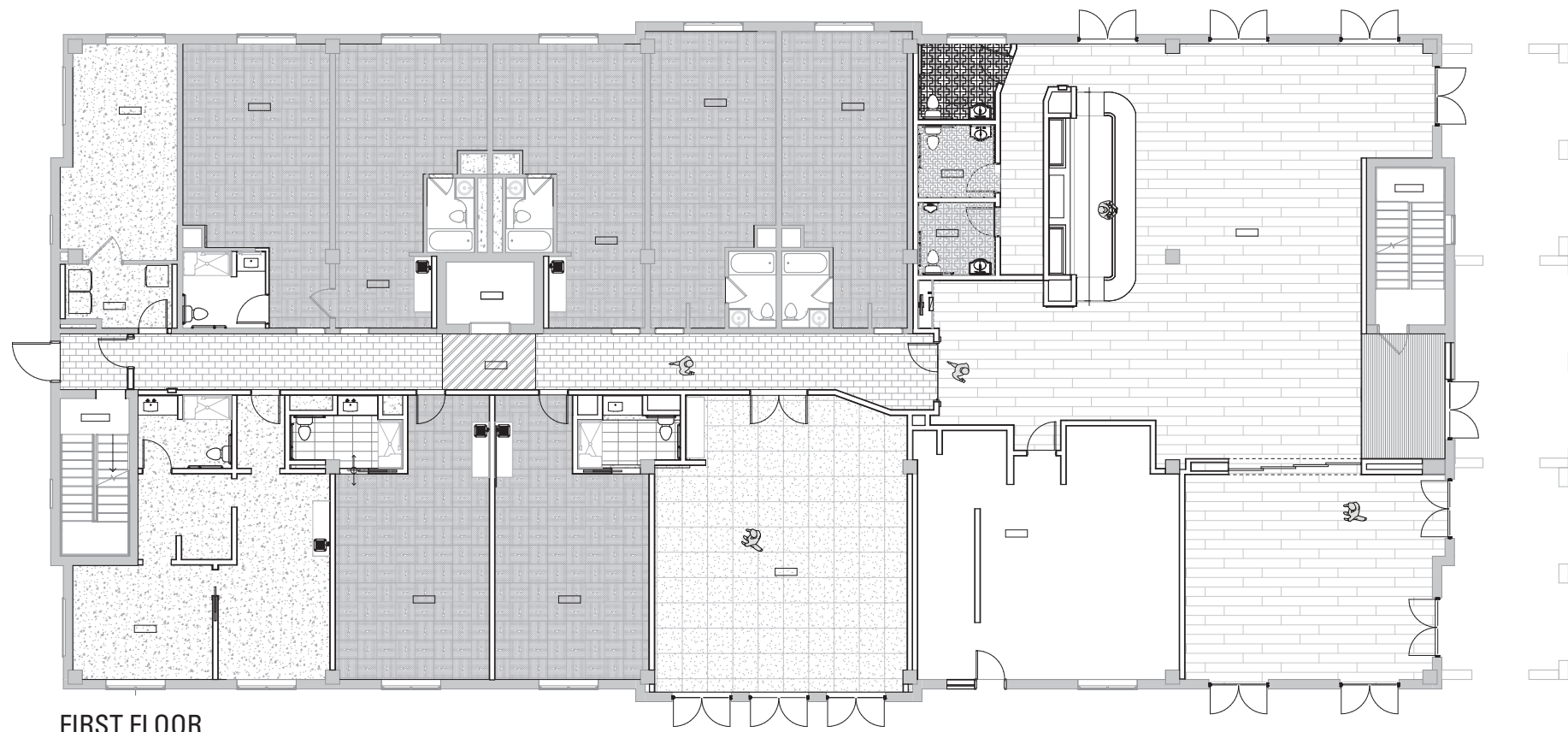
The added porch serves as outdoor dining space and was specifically sized to break up the new front façade of the hotel. Vertically it cuts the front elevation below 50% to consider proportions and dimension of the building as a whole. The porch spills out into a curated outdoor space complete with lounge furniture and firepits. Landscaping helps attract passersby from the busy road and creates fun outside options for those staying for a drink or socialize.

Elwood Hotel & Suites is a vibrant, warm, and charming welcome to the Bluegrass State. Named for the “Woman’s Horse,” the first woman-owned horse to win the Kentucky Derby, the Elwood possesses the true spirit of a Kentucky woman--warm, genuine, upbeat, gracious, and ready to throw an amazing soirée. The new front porch is equipped with rocking chairs that are reminiscent of watching the Kentucky sunset over fields on a summer night.

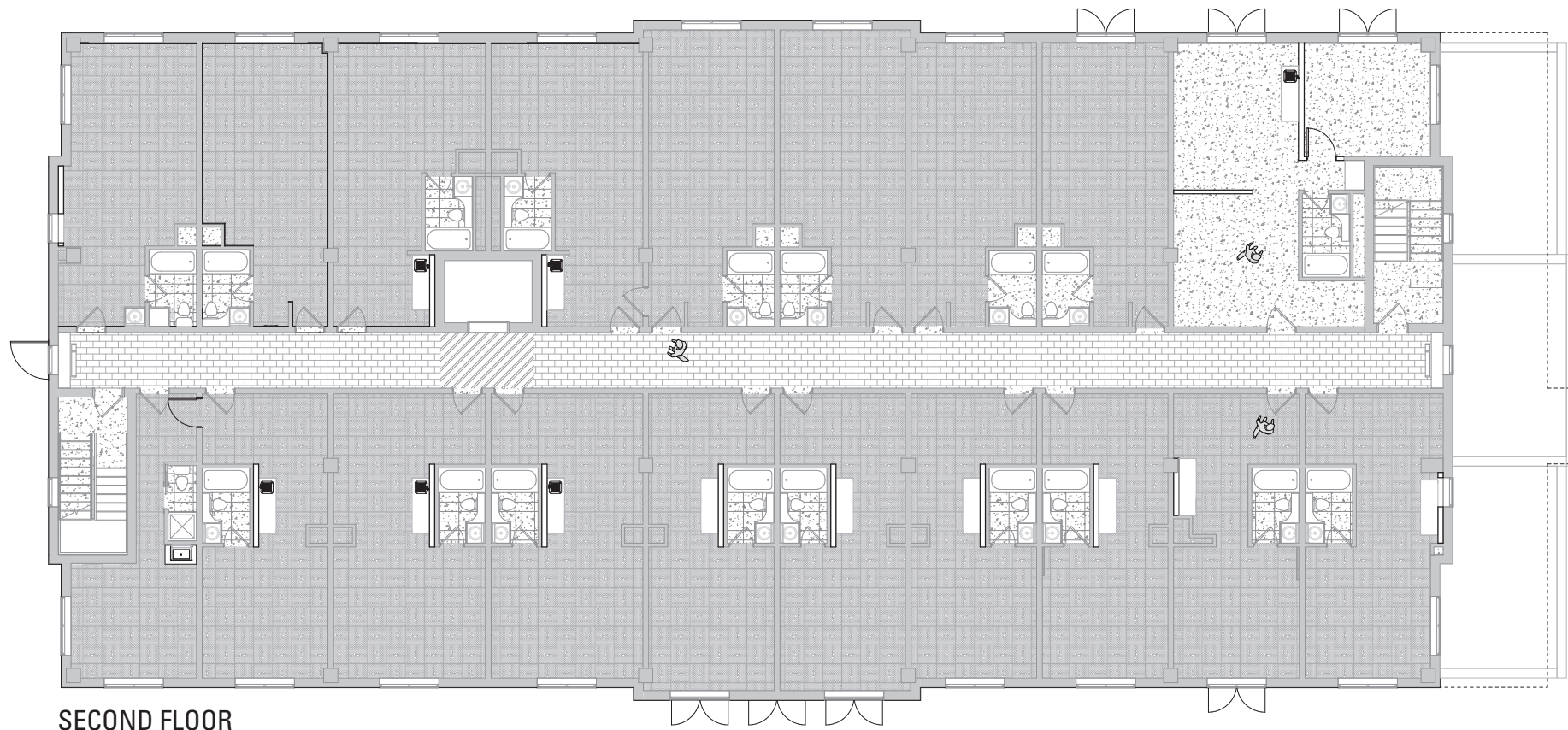
Indoors, the Fiddletree restaurant features a hand-painted, large-scale botanical mural and an abstracted sunset captured in the tile behind the bar. Flooring was reclaimed from Kentucky barns and brings a warmth and charm to the public spaces. The bluegrass seeps into the restrooms via floral ceilings and ginkgo leaf wall sconces. In the guest rooms, abundant and invigorating natural light streams through the large windows and nurtures the plants in every suite, which combined create a serene and relaxing atmosphere for guests. Furniture includes warm, comfortable fabrics in an eclectic mix of styles. Wood spindle lanterns throughout have the feel of Kentucky crafts. Guest rooms include further nods to the Kentucky through ginkgo leaf motifs on the custom armoires and room dividers modeled on a horse stable door. Tweed-patterned carpet in the guest rooms conjures the spirit of a debonair equestrian, dressed in their best.→

SITE PLAN



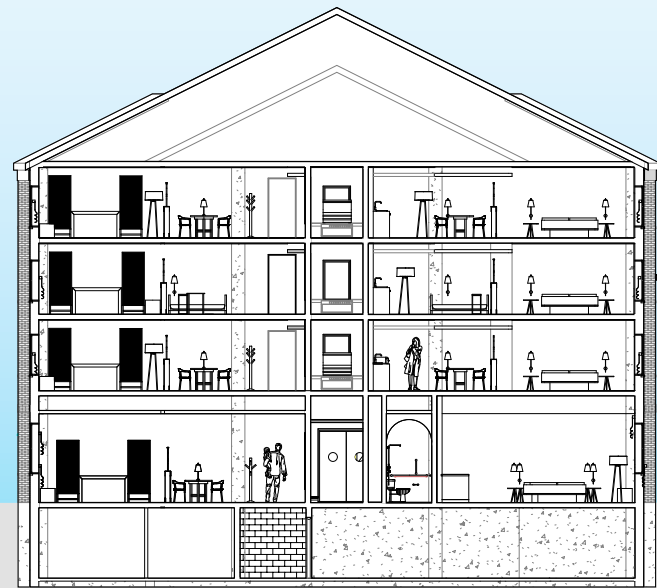


FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

SECTIONS









fiddletree













BEFORE



