

Ellen T. Leslie Botanical Classrooms

Louisville, Kentucky
The Waterfront Botanical Gardens, Client

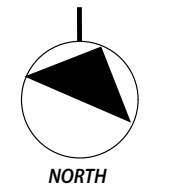
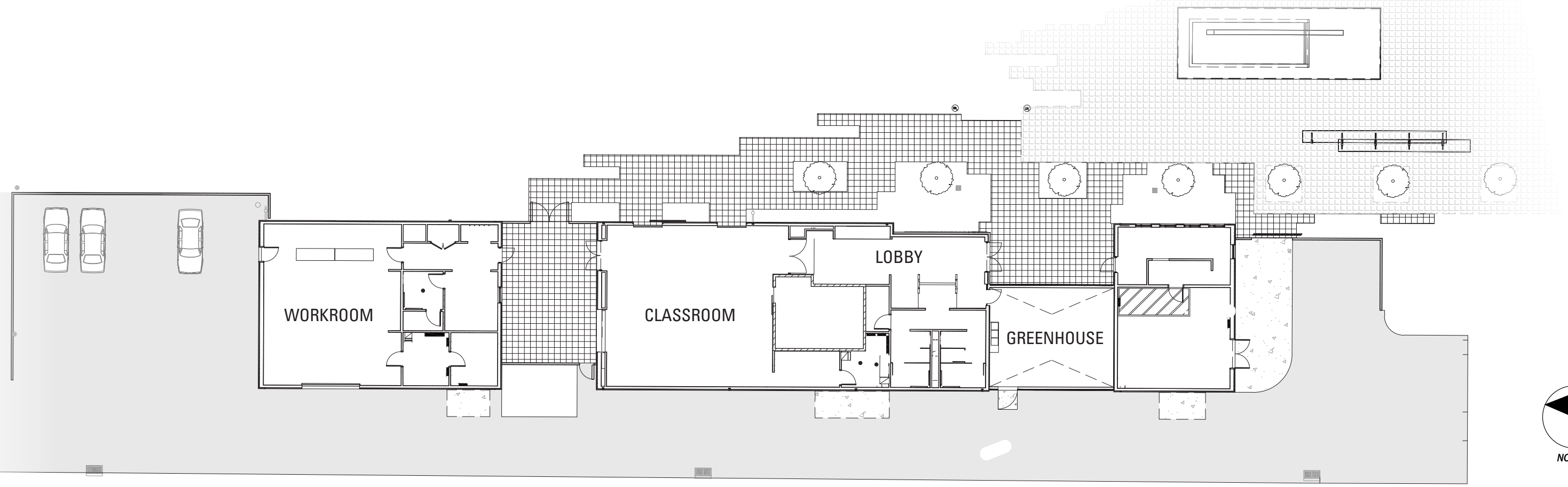
As the earth edges closer to environmental collapse, the education of our children (and adults) in what makes a harmonious and sustainable world has become even more pressing. To this point, the non-profit client asked the design team to remember its core vision to “plant seeds and grow minds for more sustainable cities,” and its mission to “cultivate urban botanical gardens that educate, inspire, and enhance appreciation of the relationship between plant life and a healthy environment.” This project provided the much-needed physical space for hands-on education, both in a classroom setting and in its embedded teaching greenhouse.

The project is located at a young urban botanical garden. The gardens already included a multi-purpose event space but lacked space devoted purely to education. The building site, located on a former landfill, is a sliver of land located between an existing entry plaza and a major interstate highway. The site provides not only a separation of the gardens from the highway, but from the highway it serves as a “billboard” for the gardens. The form of the structure, although reminiscent of a “barn” shape, did not want to feel too agrarian – thus its slick metal skin and integrated gutters. It is intended to sit softly in the background and serve as a backdrop to the existing curvilinear event space. The greenhouse, located at the building entry, becomes a lit beacon at night for passers-by. Although handwash sinks are not typically located in a lobby, they are an essential part of student flow – from greenhouse (dirty hands) to the classroom space. The lobby also includes a “museum wall” that explains how the property was once a landfill. The program includes a classroom, greenhouse, offices, storage, kitchenette, and restrooms. A courtyard classroom separates it from a workshop for the staff horticulturalist.

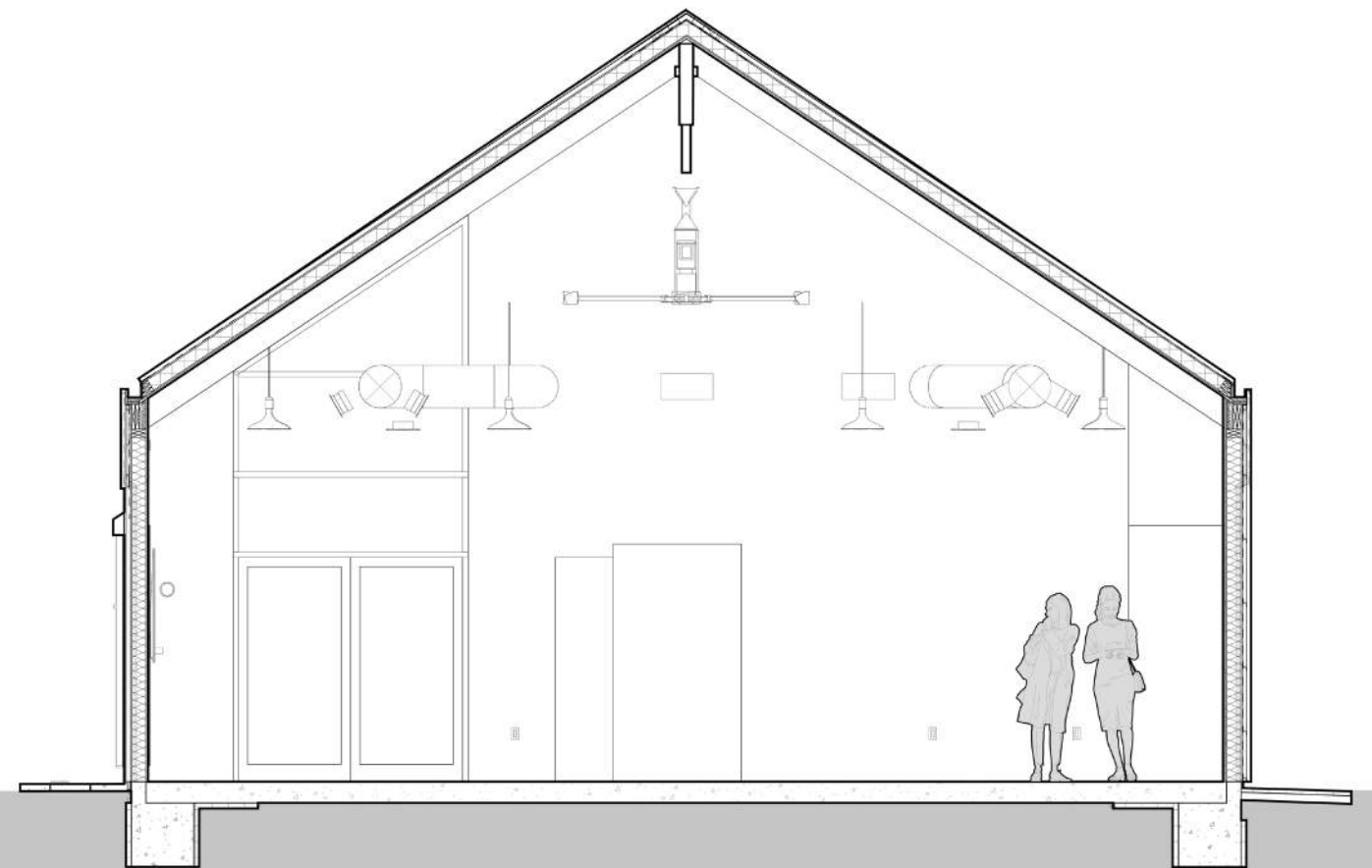
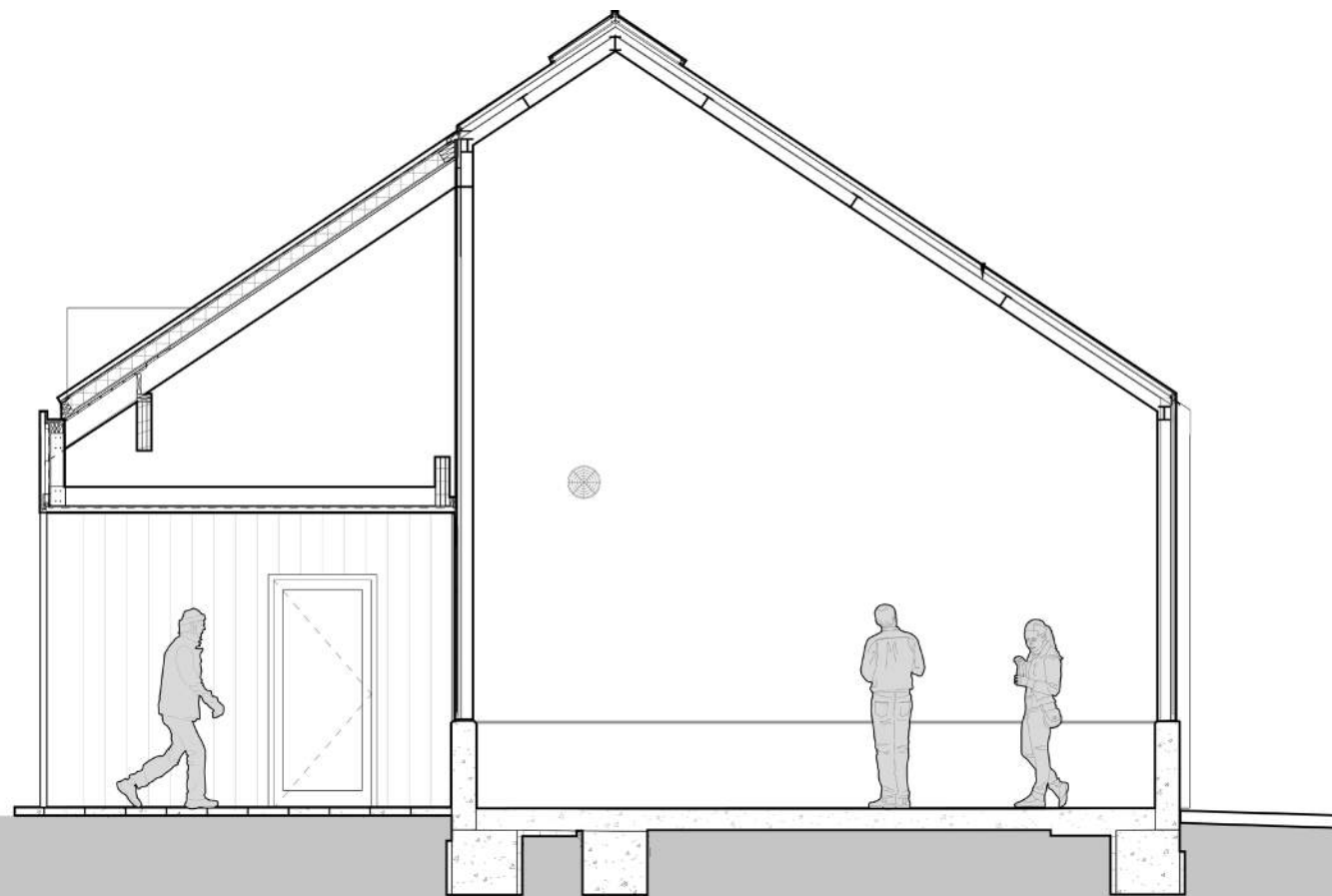
The building was specifically designed to excite and educate children from the inner city by offering the opportunity to experience nature and engage in hands-on learning about plants and the environment. The very nature of the structure being built over a once-blighted landfill serves not only as a solution to a nationwide problem but as an important educational tool. All the project materials were selected with cost and durability in mind. Floors throughout are finished concrete except where tile was utilized in restrooms. Wood interior walls and ceilings at the classroom are both durable and low-maintenance. Exterior wood surfaces are cedar and connect the design to the existing event space across the plaza.

Well-being is accentuated through the use of wood on wall and ceiling surfaces (for a sense of warmth), operable garage doors (for both light and fresh air), large ceiling fans and high spaces (for air movement) and of course plant life (air purification, nature, sustainability, and emotional support). The courtyard provides an enclosed exterior educational space that compliments the larger botanical garden just outside its limits. Bright colors and wall murals were utilized to give visual excitement to the interiors.





SECTIONS





LIFETIME WEALTH STRATEGIES

SAM SHINE FOUNDATION

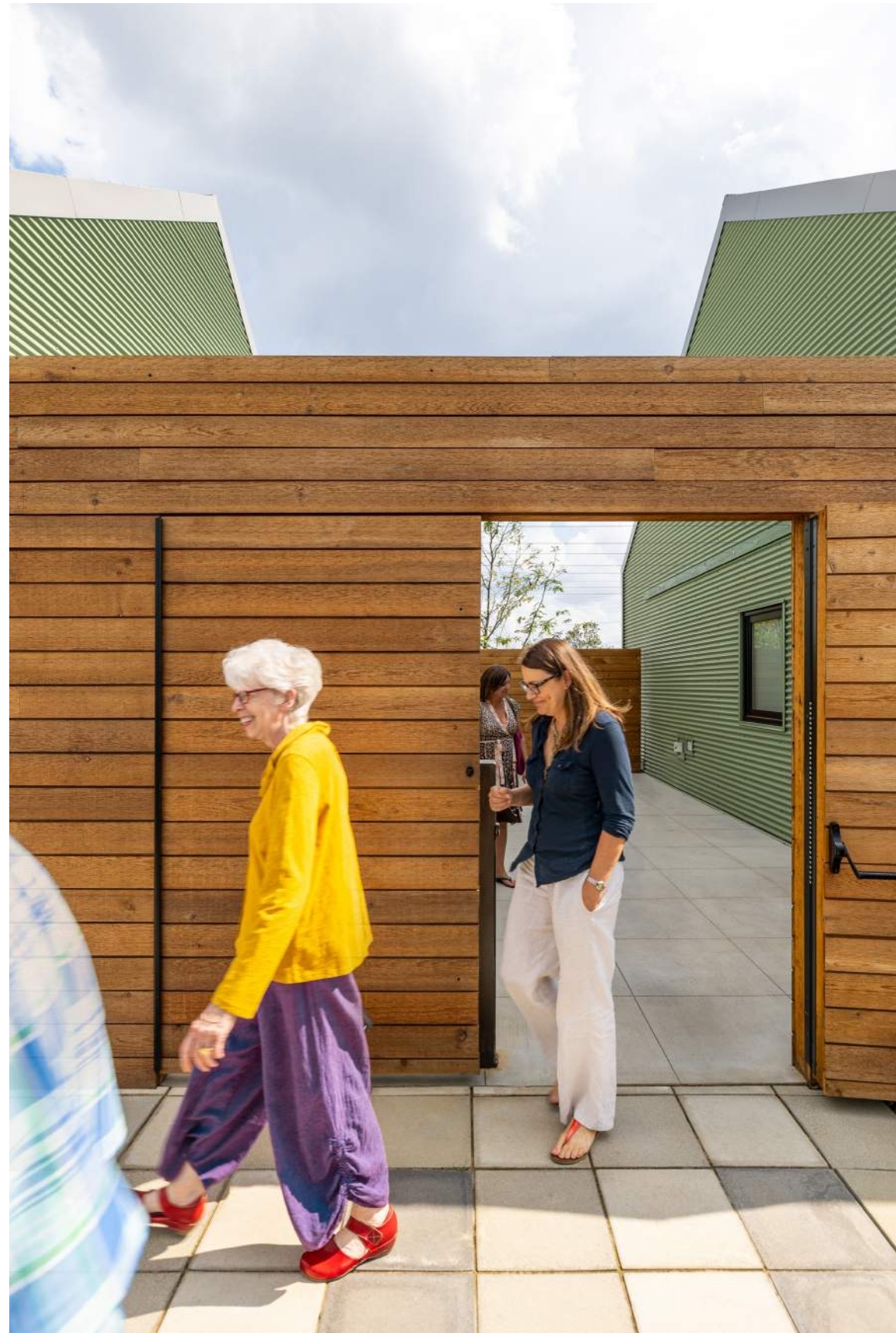
CONSTANCE STORY AND LARRY G. PIERCE

NORVIN, EDIE, BRAD, AMY, GREG & MATTHEW RAQUE



ELLEN T. LESLIE
BOTANICAL CLASSROOMS







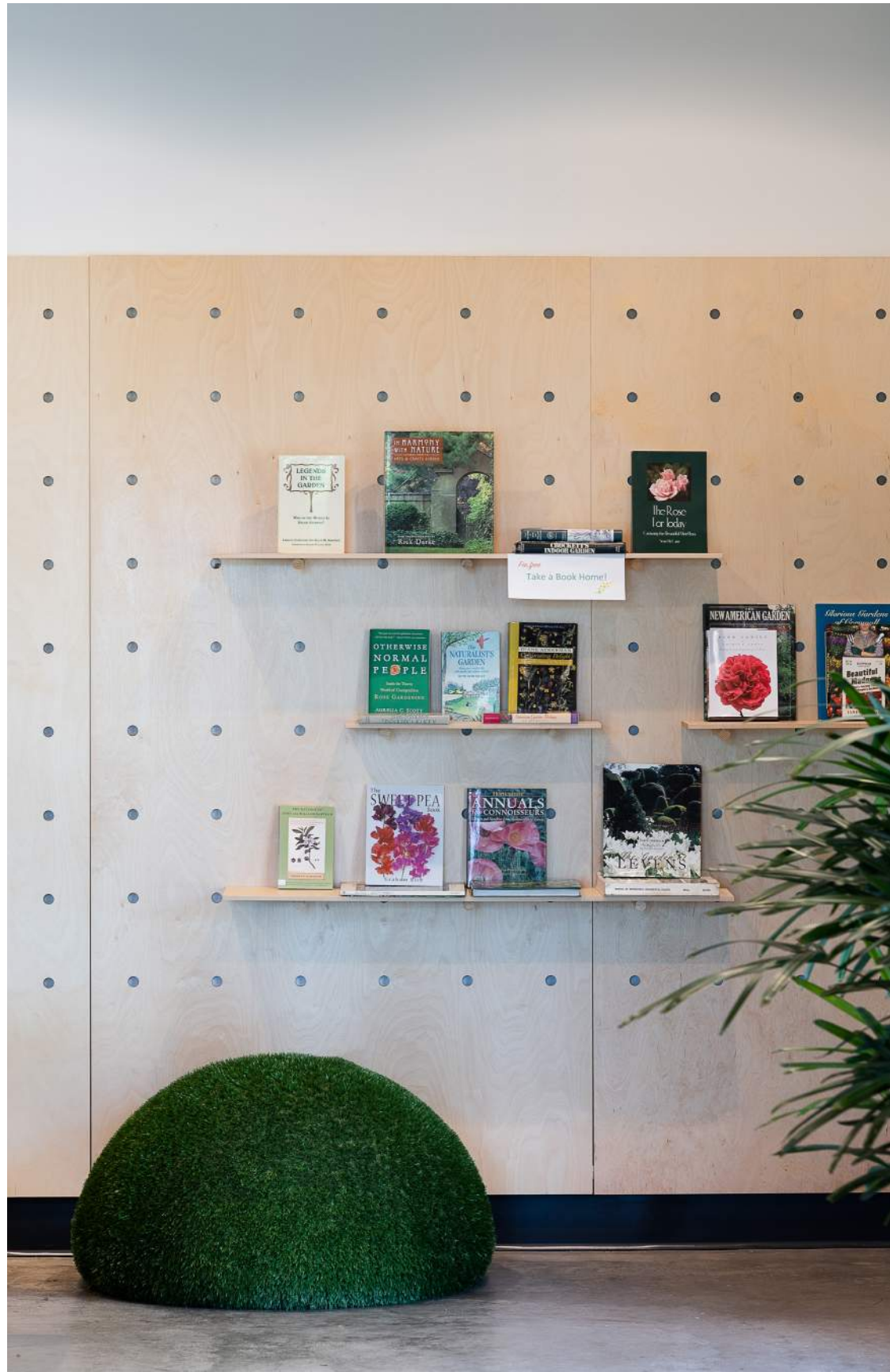
ELLEN T. LESLIE
BOTANICAL CLASSROOMS





W
♿
WOMEN

M
♿
MEN







Teaching Greenhouse

Aspirator





WATERFRONT BOTANICAL GARDENS

