What is ALDB? Architect-Led Design Build

GLUCK+

What is ALDB?
Architect-Led Design Build

GLUCK+

An integrated process—from the earliest phases of conception to the final details of construction.

In an industry where delivering successful architectural projects is an ongoing challenge, Architect-Led Design Build offers a unified approach to design and construction by establishing a single point of responsibility. One team championing thoughtful design and quality construction, from start to finish.

This booklet outlines the core principles behind ALDB and demonstrates how, by simultaneously prioritizing design and construction, it distinguishes itself from other delivery models such as conventional Design Bid Build and Contractor-Led Design Build.

Take responsibility. Don’t accept reasons why it can’t be done.
Only seek the answers to ***how*** it can be done.

—Peter L. Gluck

Disclosure No. 1

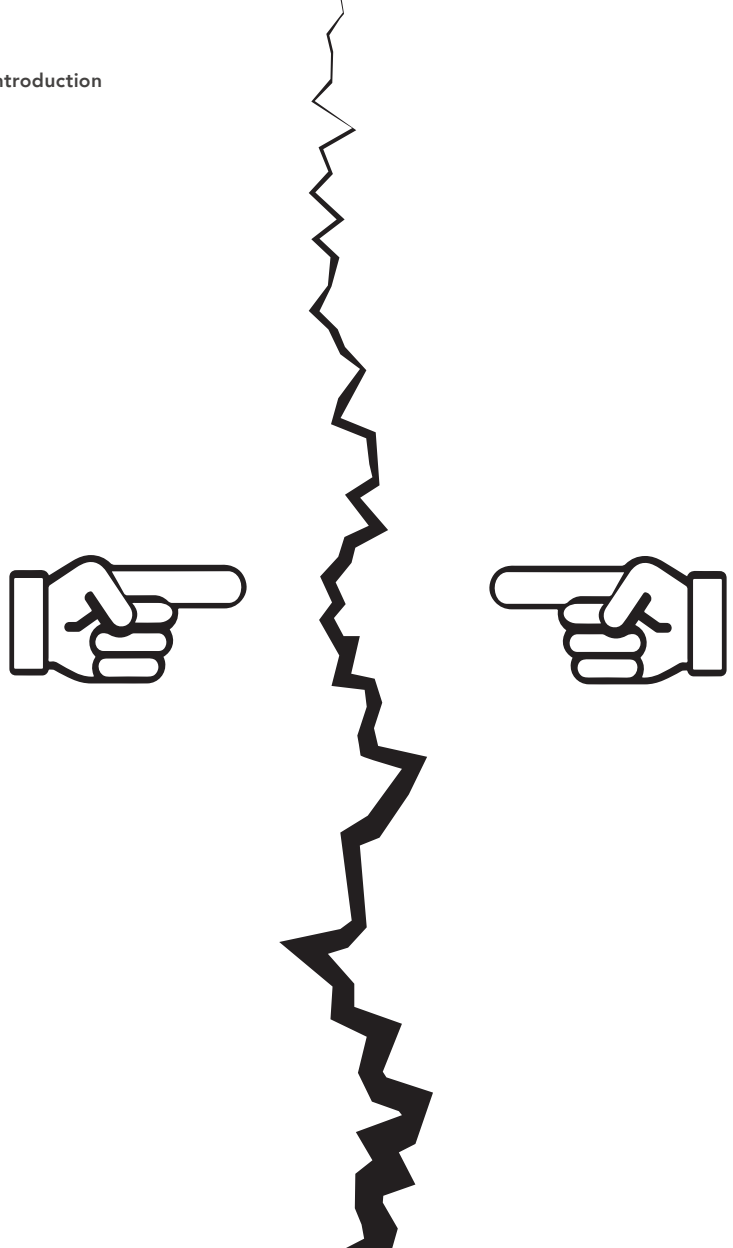
Designing a building is full of potential

The most successful projects start with an owner's priorities. When grounded in a clear vision, design responds to the owner's real needs while leaving room for long-term goals and future possibilities.

Disclosure No. 2

Building a building is full of risk

Budgets can spiral, schedules can slip, and miscommunication can lead to costly mistakes. For owners the process often becomes stressful and overwhelming.



Disclosure No. 3

The conventional method of building is broken

It separates those who design (architects) from those who build (contractors), putting them at odds and leaving the owner stuck in the middle.

Disclosure No. 4

Architect-Led Design Build repairs the process

ALDB doesn't eliminate construction challenges, but it handles them more efficiently while protecting what matters most to the owner. It balances design quality with budget and schedule, all with the goal of delivering the highest quality project possible.

The Wall

On Project Delivery Methods

At the core of Architect-Led Design Build is a simple idea: design and construction are not separate acts—they are deeply interconnected, two sides of one continuous process.

However, such an integration is difficult to achieve when architects are relegated to a traditional role.

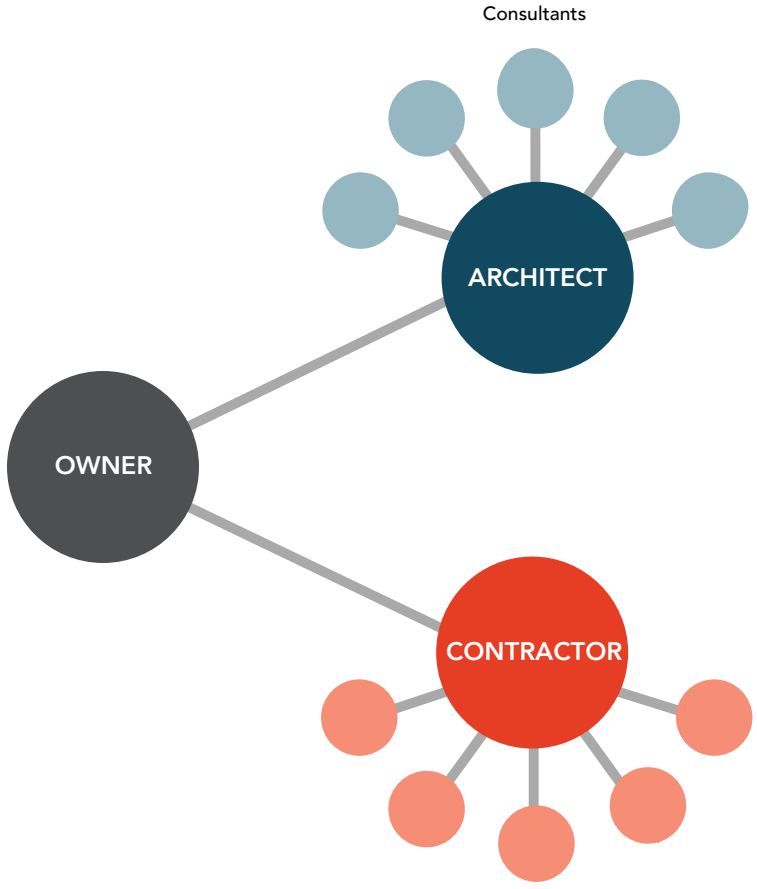
What is this traditional role? What is the way most buildings are built? Who actually builds them, and under what arrangements?

Before diving deeper into ALDB, it's important to understand how project delivery methods shape the design and construction process, as well as define the responsibilities of the key parties involved—owner, designer, and builder.

Design Bid Build (DBB) · The conventional framework

The most common project delivery method: the owner hires an architect to design and a contractor to build. Separately.

The architect and contractor each bring their own set of technical consultants and subcontractors. The intent is to create a system of checks and balances between the two parties, but each operates under separate commitments, with distinct and often conflicting priorities and risks.



Design Bid Build Diagram

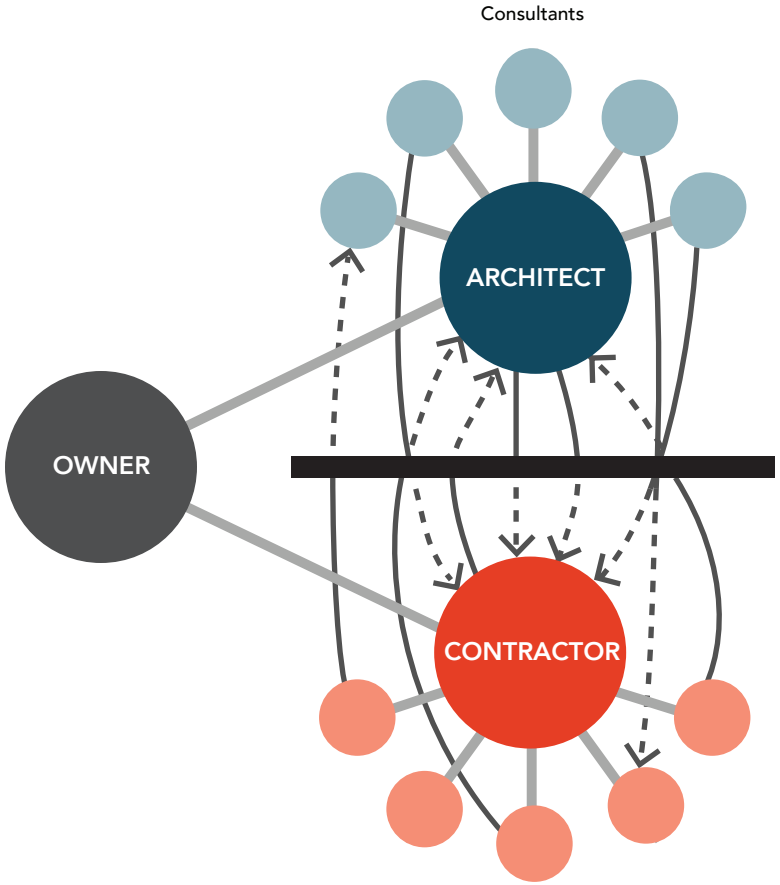
The conventional delivery method

Design Bid Build (DBB) · The problem

A wall exists between the two parties.

Each player is charged with fulfilling their own role. The wall is legal, cultural, and certainly adversarial. There is real need for information sharing and strategic decision making, but communication is filtered through cumbersome contractual processes designed to protect against liability rather than facilitate problem-solving.

When inevitable conflict occurs between stakeholders, the owner becomes the arbiter, a judge in an arena where the owner has little experience or knowledge.



Design Bid Build Diagram

The conventional delivery method

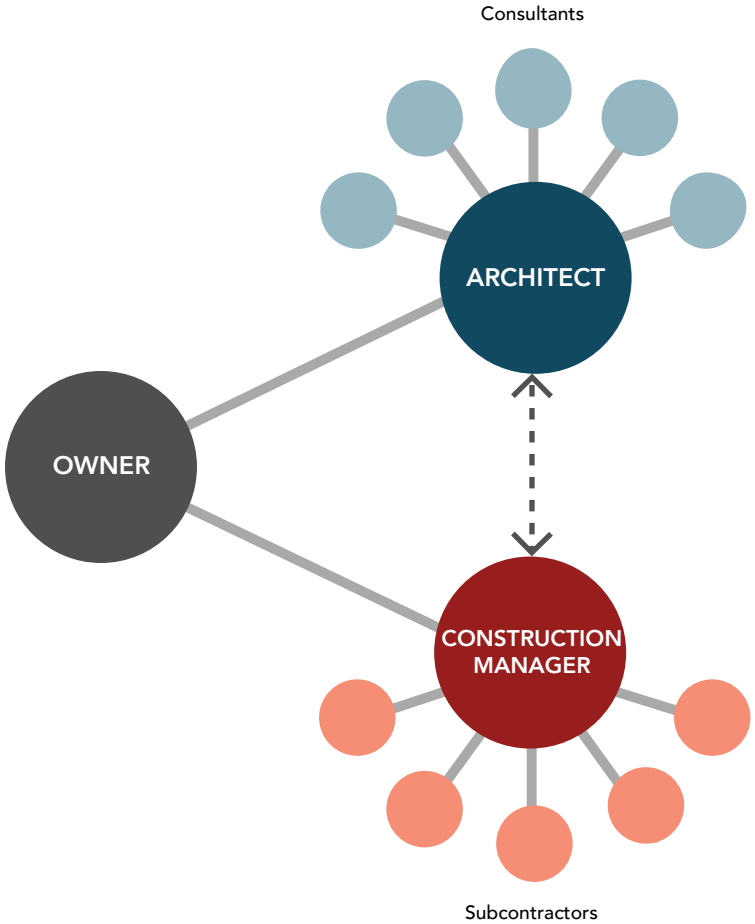
Construction Manager as Constructor (CM)

Emerging in the 1970s in response to growing project and construction complexity, the Construction Management (CM) model introduced a new player: the construction manager, who often takes on financial risk through a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP).

Brought in early to advise on design, the CM also holds the trade contracts. This shift gives contractors greater influence and decision-making power, while providing architects with valuable construction feedback early in the design process.

Unlike Design Bid Build, this model gives owners a clearer picture of costs earlier in the process.

While coordination improves, design and construction still operate in separate spheres with conflicting incentives—dividing responsibility and, ultimately, the project's priorities.



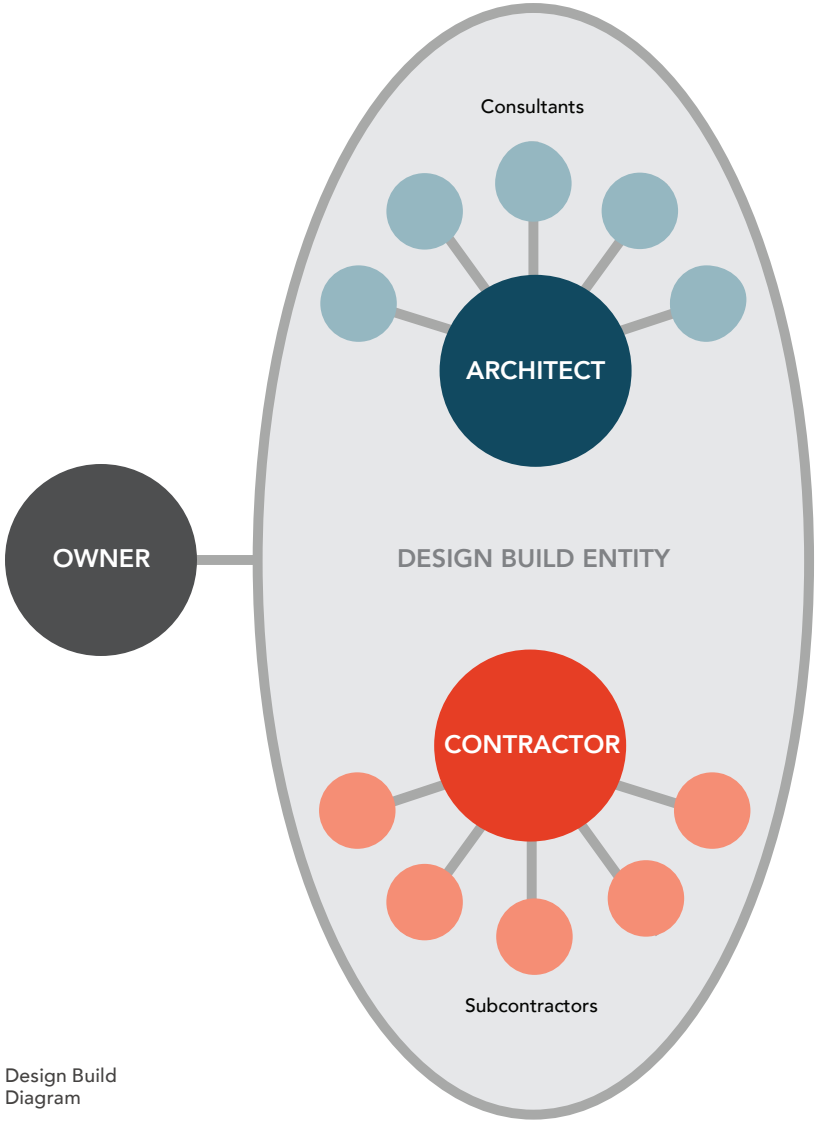
Construction Manager as Constructor Diagram

Design Build (DB)

The main advantage of this delivery method is that one entity is responsible for both design and construction. This creates a single point of responsibility and streamlines the relationship with the owner. With fewer contractual boundaries, coordination can be faster, decision-making more efficient, and disputes potentially reduced.

But how exactly does the design build model function in practice?

In theory, it promises integration and collaboration between designers and builders. However, the structure often places the contractor in the lead role, shaping the project's direction from the outset. This can unintentionally shift priorities and affect the timing and quality of design decisions, undermining the project's objectives.



Design Build Diagram

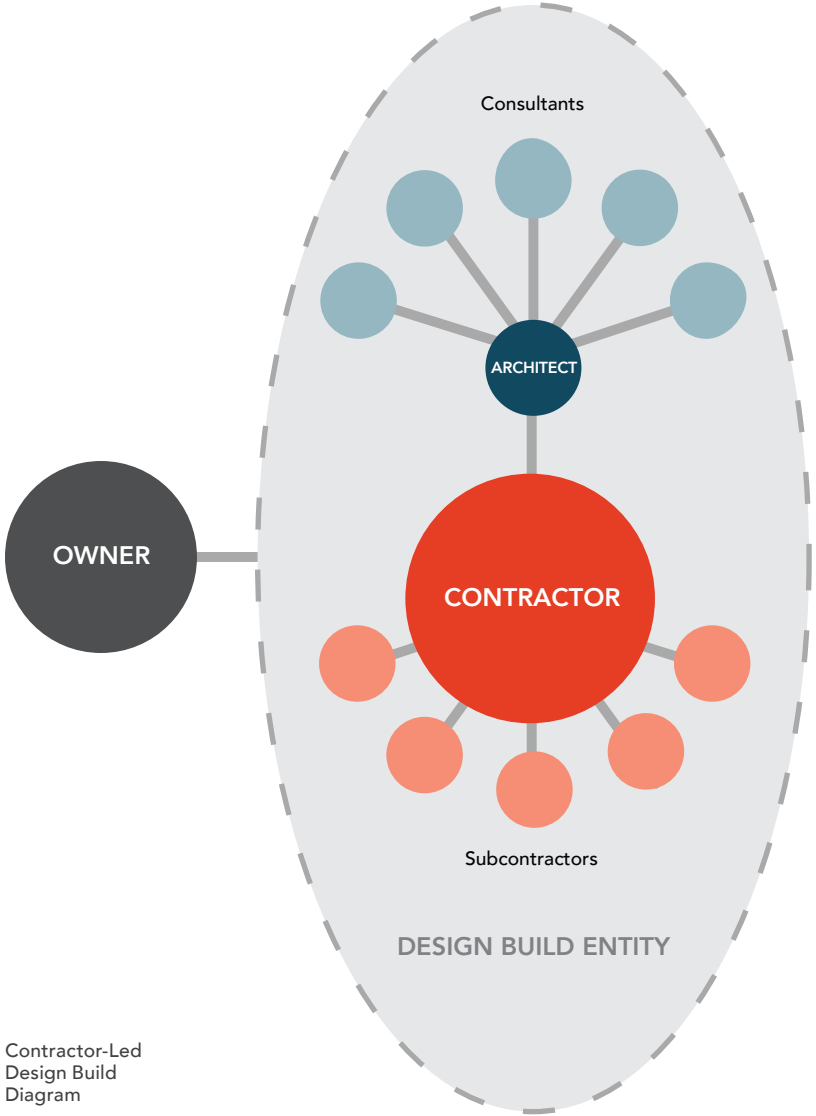
Contractor-Led Design Build (CLDB)

Most design build projects are, in practice, *build-design*.

Because the contractor represents the largest financial stakeholder, priorities can be skewed toward construction efficiency over design quality.

Design—an invaluable asset that creates spatial quality, functional ease, pride, and a sense of belonging, increasing a building's long-term value—is often given lower priority than cost and schedule. Architects may be hired like consultants, limiting their influence and the benefits of integrated design.

When design has limited influence, the full potential of a project is compromised.



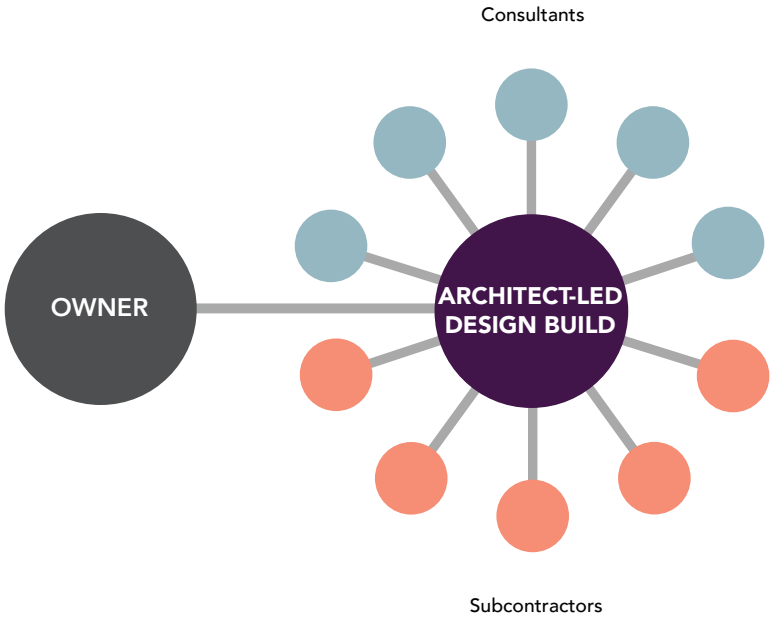
Contractor-Led Design Build Diagram

Architect-Led Design Build (ALDB)

One solution is to merge the interests, knowledge, and talents for design and construction. In ALDB, one team holds every contract—with design consultants and subcontractors alike.

At GLUCK+, this difference is not just structural, it's cultural. We are fully integrated. We're not combining separate teams. We are the same people. The architects who design and detail the building in the office are also on the jobsite, running construction, meeting with trades. This continuity creates a direct feedback loop, with real-time problem-solving and faster decision-making that does not compromise design for expediency.

The benefits are clear: deeper collaboration, a more responsive, iterative design process, and ultimately both shorter project duration and lower cost. Construction informs design early, and design continues to shape construction throughout—resulting in better buildings, true architecture.



Architect-Led Design Build Diagram

A truly integrated team

ALDB Fundamentals

Architect-Led Design Build @ GLUCK+

Leading the process, end to end

With Architect-Led Design Build, the owner benefits from a single point of communication and accountability—the team assumes full responsibility for leading the entire project. At GLUCK+, this means taking complete ownership of both the design and construction, from start to finish, in the office and on site.

Through our two integrated entities—GLUCK+ Architecture and GLUCK+ Construction—this approach fosters open communication, shared knowledge, and cultural alignment, all essential to creating exceptional buildings. Ultimately, it is the strength of the design that drives a project's success—functionally, practically, artistically, and, most importantly, in service to owners and communities.

GLUCK+ Architecture

The same people designing and building in the office and on-site.

GLUCK+ Construction

Clients and architects discuss materials and mockups on site at Duke Marine Laboratory.

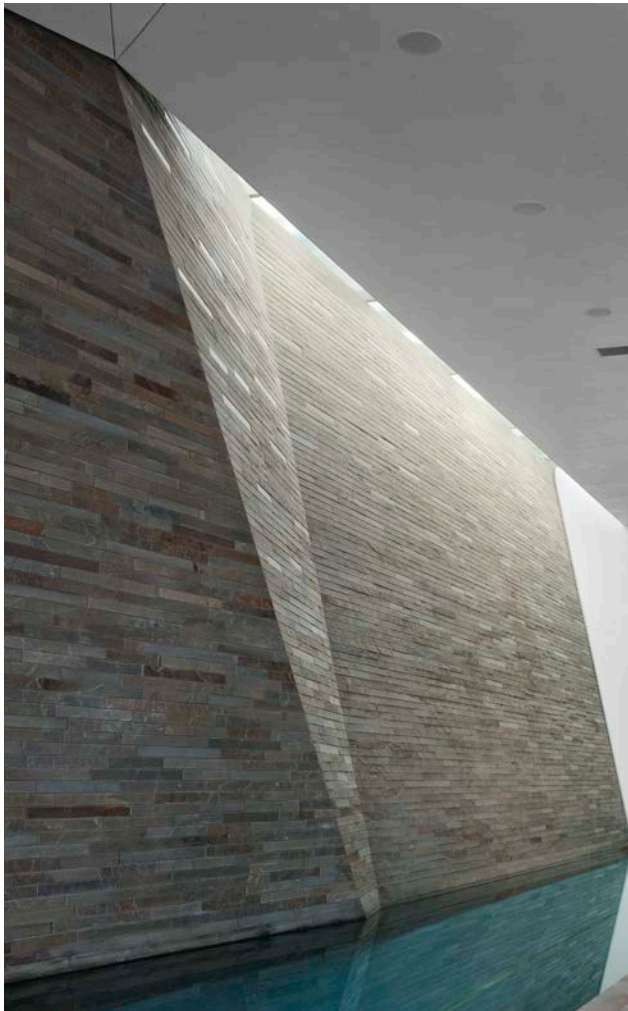
Assessing the facade mockup on site with 145 Central Park North's owner.

Building while designing, designing while building

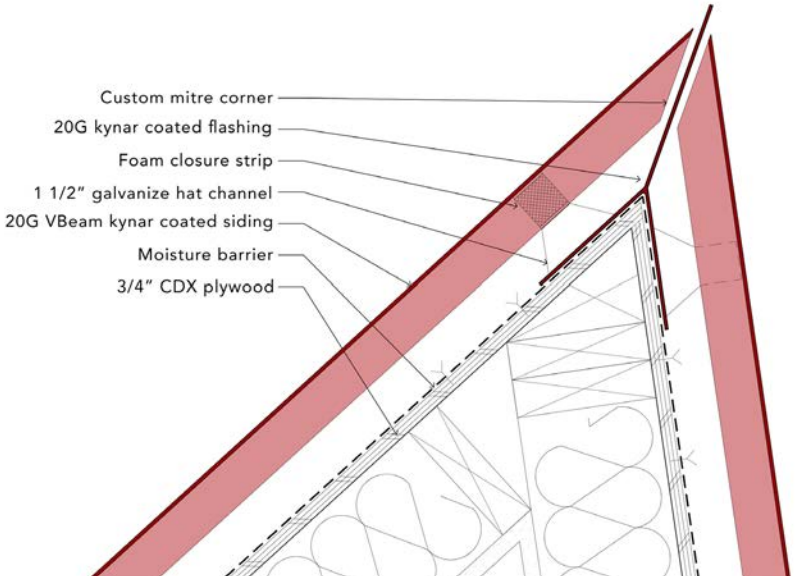
Architects design better when they understand how buildings are built. They gain strategic insight, learn how to integrate building systems, and recognize where investment makes a meaningful design impact—and where it doesn't. Likewise, contractors become better builders when they understand which aspects of design matter most to the owner.

With Architect-Led Design Build, knowing the ***why*** behind the ***how*** leads to more intentional decisions, fewer compromises, and stronger outcomes. The result is a building that delivers lasting value—to the owner and to those who use it every day.

Practicing ALDB, architects wear many hats.



From lines of thread marking where different materials meet to the final result: a complex detail designed, laid out, and built by the same team.
No surprises. No handoffs.
Just continuity, start to finish.



Plan detail

Architect-Led Design Build allows the flexibility to design custom-made solutions and execute very precise details at very low cost.

To cut corrugated metal at a desirable angle, GLUCK+ bought a panel saw and modified it with a rotating platform.

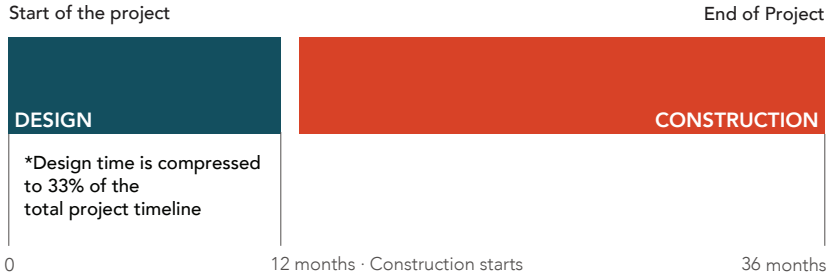
Little Ajax corner details are watertight and airtight, elegant and affordable.

Extending design through time

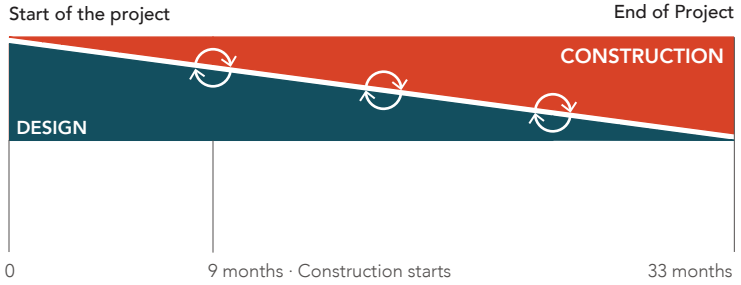
Architect-Led Design Build hinges on the valuable knowledge architects gain through direct engagement with construction. By incorporating feedback from subcontractors early in the process, ALDB turns potential construction challenges into opportunities for refinement. Hands-on involvement in building helps architects better understand costs and align design intent with real-world conditions.

For owners, this means more informed decisions throughout the process and a design that adapts without losing its value—stretching through time from concept to completion, shaped and strengthened by each step of construction. This ongoing adaptability helps uncover smarter, more effective solutions that deliver more value per dollar spent.

Traditional Design Bid Build



Architect-Led Design Build

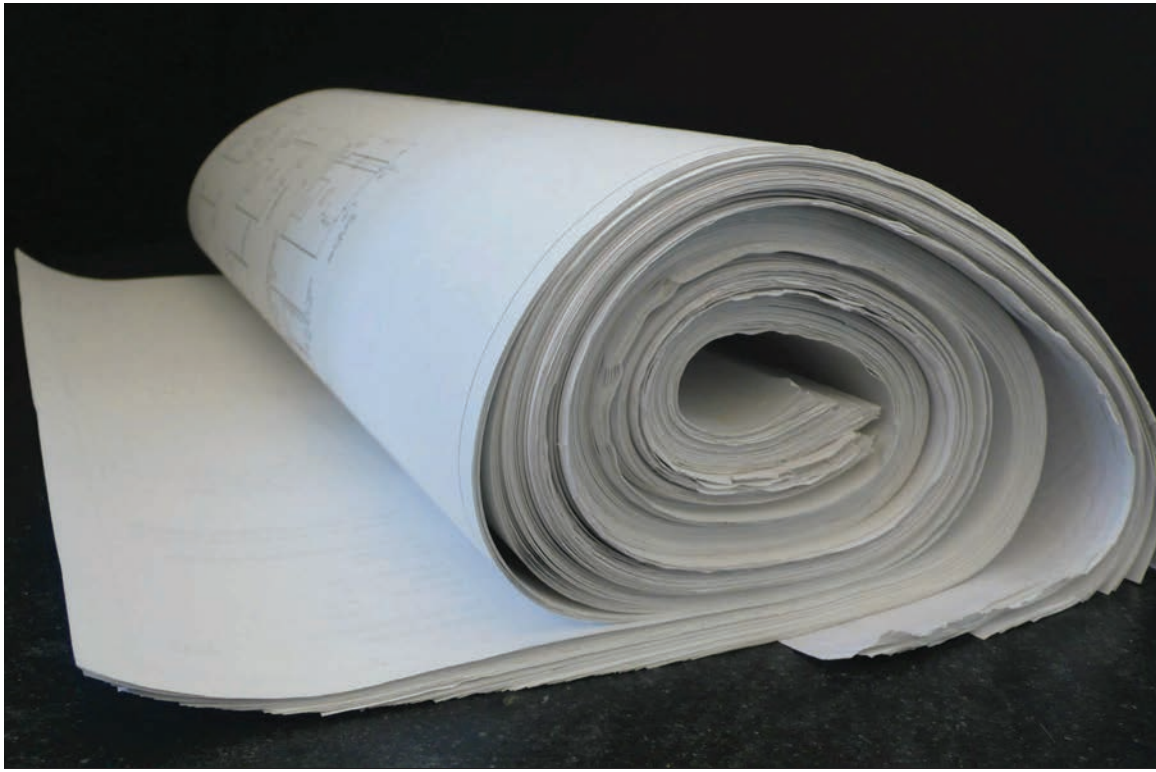


Architect-Led Design Build creates opportunities for feedback between architects and subcontractors and can reduce the project timeline.

Drawing differently

In the traditional delivery method, the general contractor either breaks apart a single roll of drawings to parse information to each trade or sends the full set to every subcontractor, leaving them to determine what falls within or outside their scope. This often leads to confusion, gaps, and overlap in the work to be bid and completed.

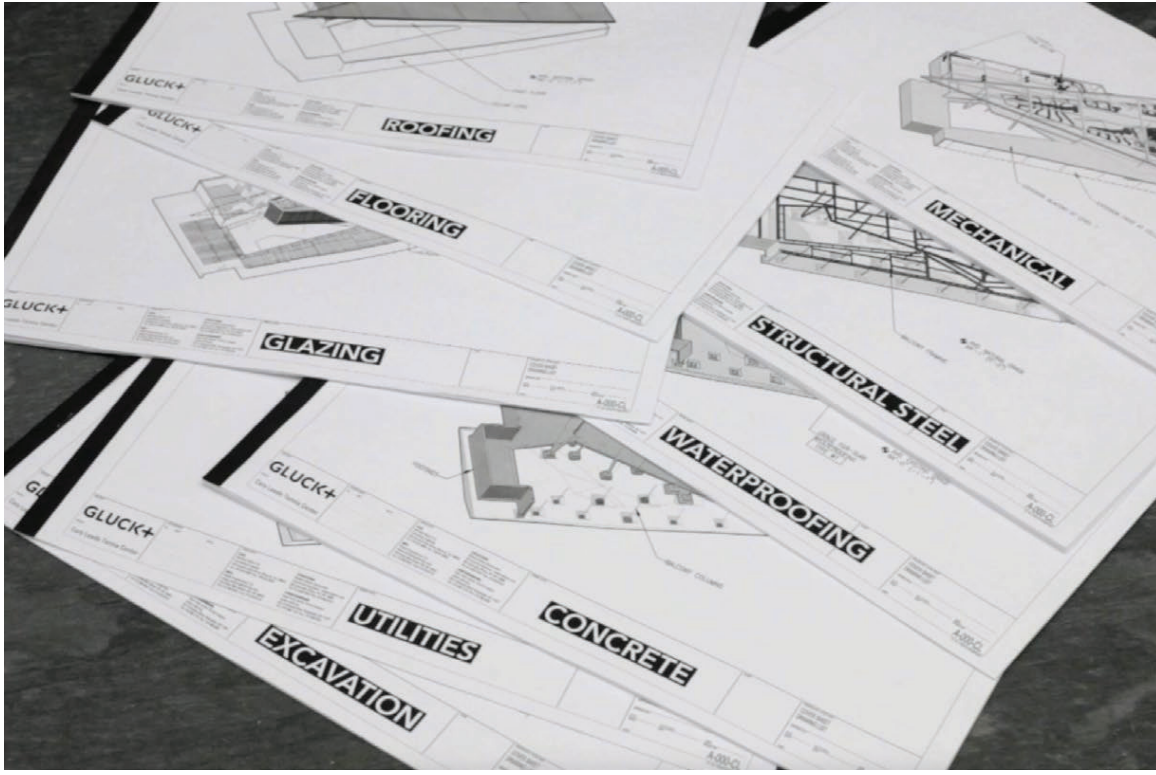
For owners, confusion can result in inaccurate bids, missed details, and costly changes down the line.



Construction can involve over 30 separate trades, making conveying information an important part of design.

When architects understand construction, they can organize vast amounts of information into concise packages tailored to each trade. These customized trade sets are conceived for specific tasks, delivered at the moment they're needed, and represent clearly defined scope.

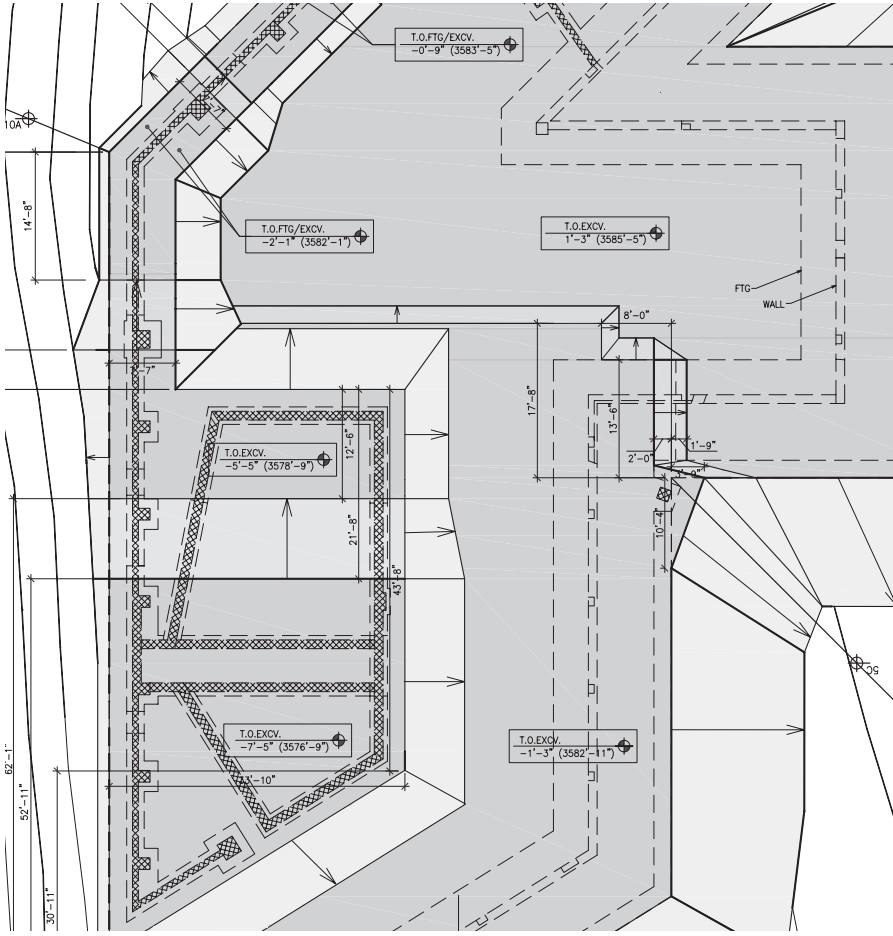
The clear delineation of scope reduces hidden estimating contingencies, resulting in cost savings. Tailored drawings also provide clear direction and relevant information during construction, further saving time and money.



Trade sets result from speaking and working with the trades on site, learning from them during design and construction.

Where should an architect's involvement end? With a scaled drawing on paper—or a full-scale layout on site? At GLUCK+ we see layout as the logical extension of drawing the building.

Supporting the subcontractor in this critical phase prevents costly errors, saving time and money for the owner.



Left: Excavation layout spray painted on site by GLUCK+

Right: Lower level excavation plan drawing by GLUCK+

GLUCK+ assists electrical subcontractor with light fixture layout to coordinate with other MEP trades

Delivering quality design at every budget

Although all projects benefit from ALDB's efficiency and design quality, these advantages are especially significant in contexts where design resources are often limited.

Applying the principles of Architect-Led Design Build to tighter budgets and underserved communities helps extend the benefits of thoughtful, high-quality architecture to a broader range of projects.

GLUCK+ has designed and built over 30 institutional projects, along with affordable housing developments in economically disadvantaged areas of New York and New Jersey.

The Stack, New York; Cary Leeds Center for Tennis & Learning, Bronx; WHIN Music Community Charter School, Washington Heights

Scaling to serve all projects

Architect-Led Design Build is not limited to the capabilities of the design builder. It's a flexible framework that enables collaboration with a wide range of contractors, trades, and enterprises. When scaled, it supports strategic partnerships tailored to any project type or size.

As projects grow more complex, they often require partners who bring expertise in managing complex construction logistics. ALDB fosters collaboration without compromising design. It helps preserve intent, explore better detailing, and maintain the sense of craft that defines architectural quality. For owners, this means retaining design integrity—even at large scale —while ensuring the project remains well-coordinated, on time and on budget.

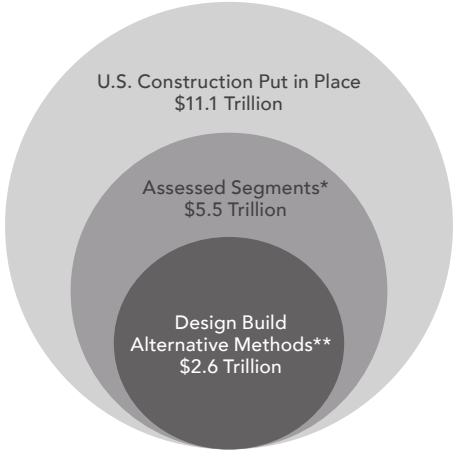
At Bridge – 205 Race, GLUCK+ partnered with the CM to find the best structural system and lower the cost of the facade.

Keeping pace with the industry

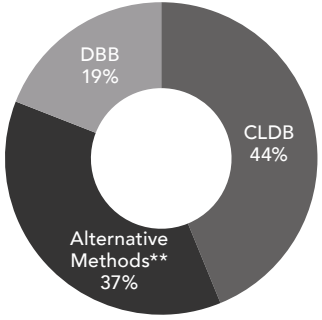
Alternative delivery methods—including Architect-Led Design Build—are gaining significant traction in the United States' construction industry.

From 2019–2023, they accounted for 37% of assessed Construction Put in Place (CPiP) spending. That share is projected to rise to 47% between 2024–2028, equaling the market share of Contractor-Led Design Build ($2.6 Trillion) and surpassing Design-Bid-Build, which is expected to fall to just 11%.

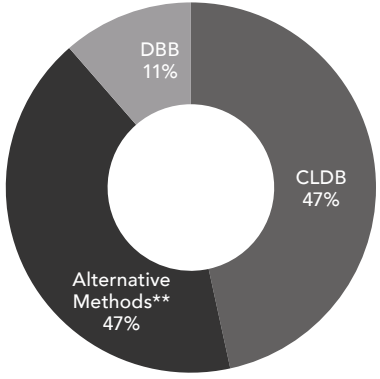
This signals a continued shift toward more integrated, collaborative models—exactly where ALDB thrives.



Construction Put in Place (CPiP) spending
2024 – 2028 forecast



2019 – 2023 CPiP
Assessed Segments
$4.0 Trillion



2024 – 2028 CPiP
Assessed Segments
$5.5 Trillion

* Assessed Segments include: Manufacturing, Highway/Street, Educational, Commercial, Office, Water/ Wastewater, Transportation, Health Care, Amusement and Recreation, Communication, Lodging, and Other (Public Safety and Religious)

**Alternative methods include ALDB as well as CM/GC, CMAR, EPC and IPD

Source: DBIA | Design-Build Utilization Study Key Findings Report. January 2025 FMI Consulting

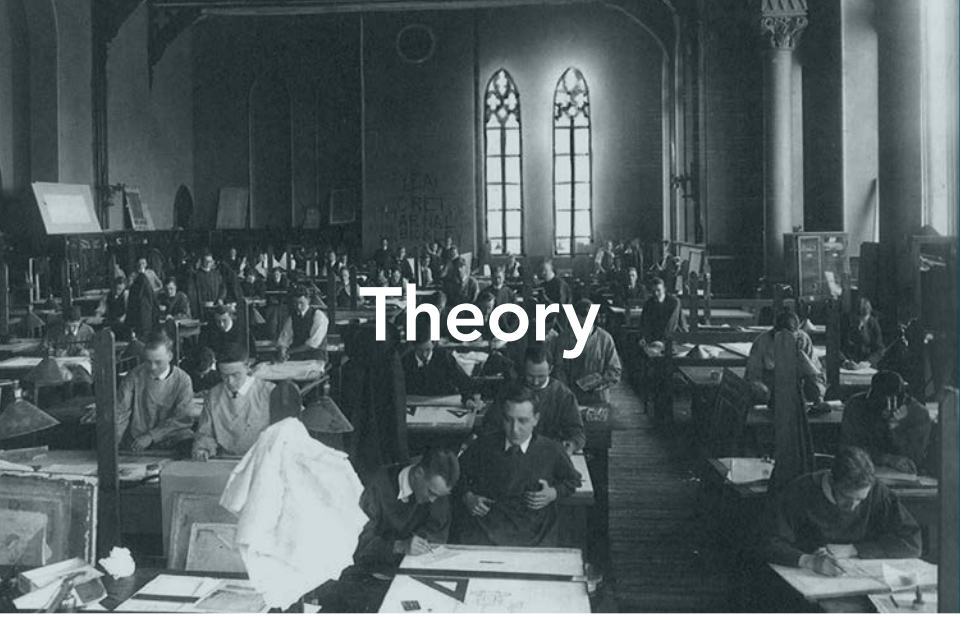
DBB - Design Bid Build
CLDB - Contractor-Led Design Build

P.S. Architect-Led Design Build Is Not a New Thing

It means demystifying construction—engaging in a very messy world of making things, designing them, altering them, making them work.

For centuries, architects were responsible for the design and construction of buildings.

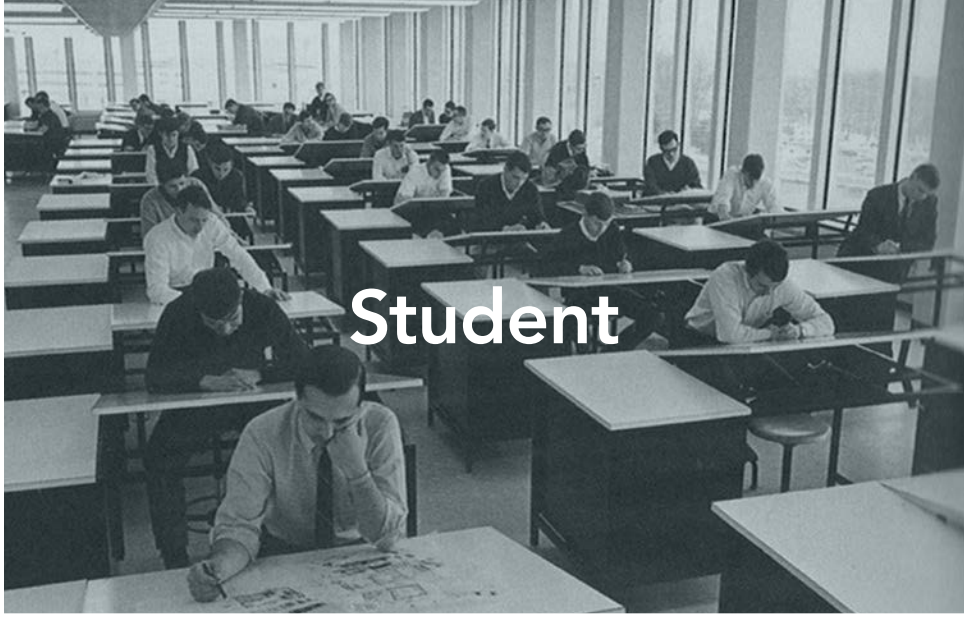
But over time, architects isolated themselves from the messy world of construction, limiting their scope of responsibility.



Distinct from the mason and carpenter, the architect became a practitioner of the liberal arts.

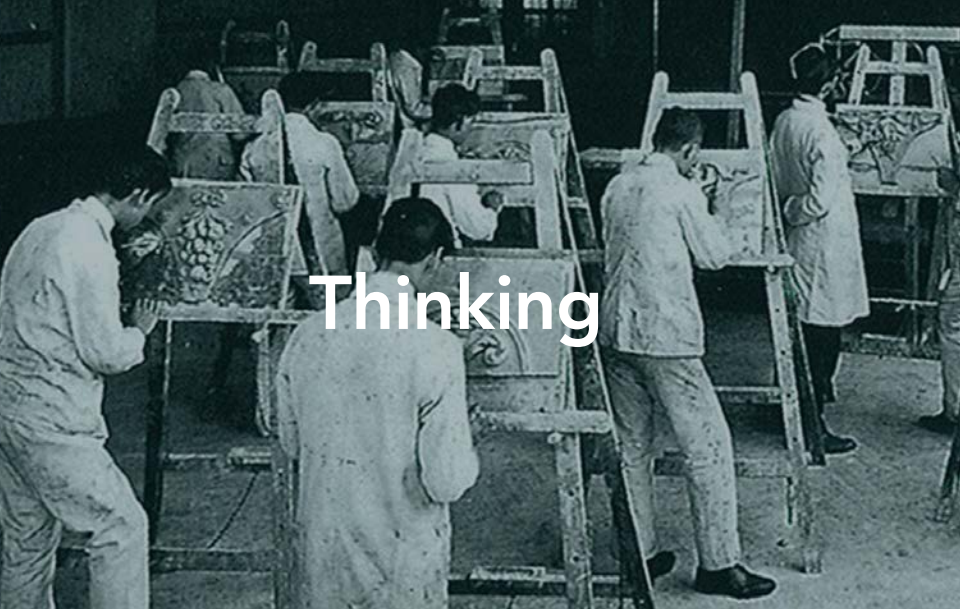
Architectural education shifted to the academy.

Conceptual skills are refined in studios and construction is hardly studied, nor learned on the job.



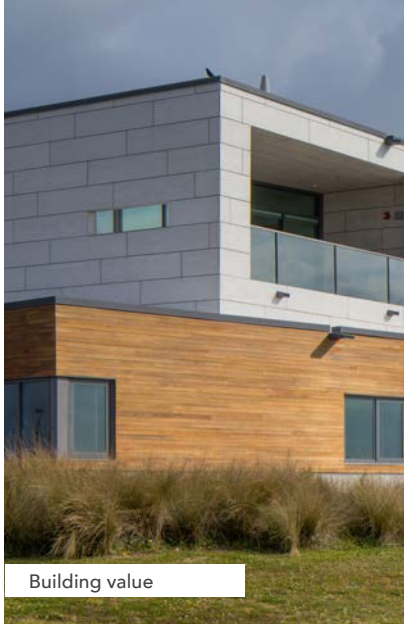
A fear of litigation, liability and risk pushed architects to remove themselves more and more from construction.

Many architects today go their entire career without taking control of how their drawings translate into a building.



ALDB goes back to the roots of architecture: the same people are thinkers and makers, designing and building, on paper and on site.

ALDB Case Studies


Building value


Building craft


Building on time


Building coordination


Building strategy


Building partnerships

Building Value
Duke University Marine Laboratory

Collisional Commons

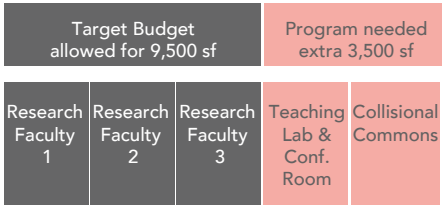
Duke University's new Marine Science Research Lab, set on a barrier island off the North Carolina coast, was designed not around a bold architectural statement, but around spaces that foster collaboration. Former Marine Lab Director Cindy L. Van Dover coined the idea of the Collisional Commons—informal areas with the potential to reshape how students, faculty, and staff engage, where ideas can collide outside the structure of lab work.

At its core, the Collisional Commons includes two elements: a central indoor hub for both spontaneous and planned interaction, and sheltered outdoor spaces that invite people to gather, even in tough coastal weather.

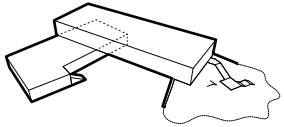
The challenge? Delivering a LEED Platinum building in a hurricane zone, on a tight budget within a small-town construction environment—without compromising the vision.

Real value design

After a month of programming, it became apparent that Duke's vision required more space than originally anticipated. Following the first round of design, drawings were prepared for pricing: estimates came in 37% over the target budget. For owners, this is a familiar dilemma: the quickest way to cut costs is to reduce square footage by eliminating program. But in this case, doing so would have meant sacrificing the very heart of the project.

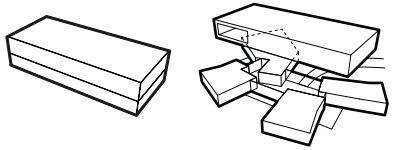


Programming
(1 month)

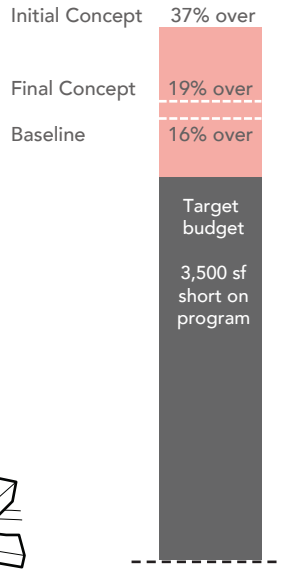


Initial Concepts
Schematic Design
(2 months)

Pricing Trade Sets
Meet w/ Subs
(2 months)



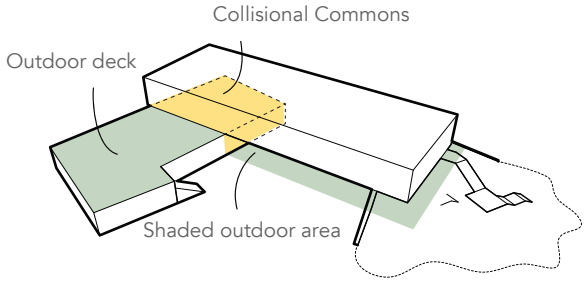
Optimization
Baseline and Final Concept
(1 month)



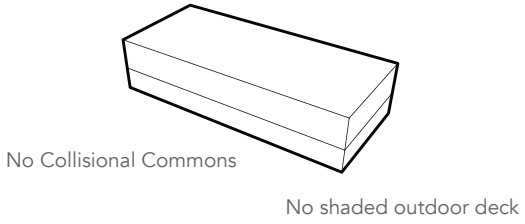
Budget Comparison

Even a stripped-down version was 16% over budget—proof that resorting to this baseline alone wouldn't get it done. ALDB provided the control to rethink details, adjust design, and work directly with trades—delivering the full vision at just 3% above baseline, with far greater architectural value. This process allowed the owner to make an informed decision.

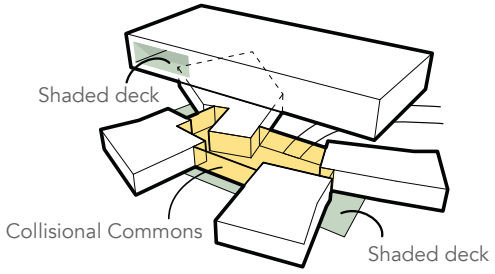
At the start of any project, it's critical to align design intentions with the budget. Architect-Led Design Build makes this possible by bringing cost knowledge into the earliest stages of design. When designers are also builders, meaningful cost alignment happens during schematic design—not after the design is complete, when changes are harder to make and often compromise quality.



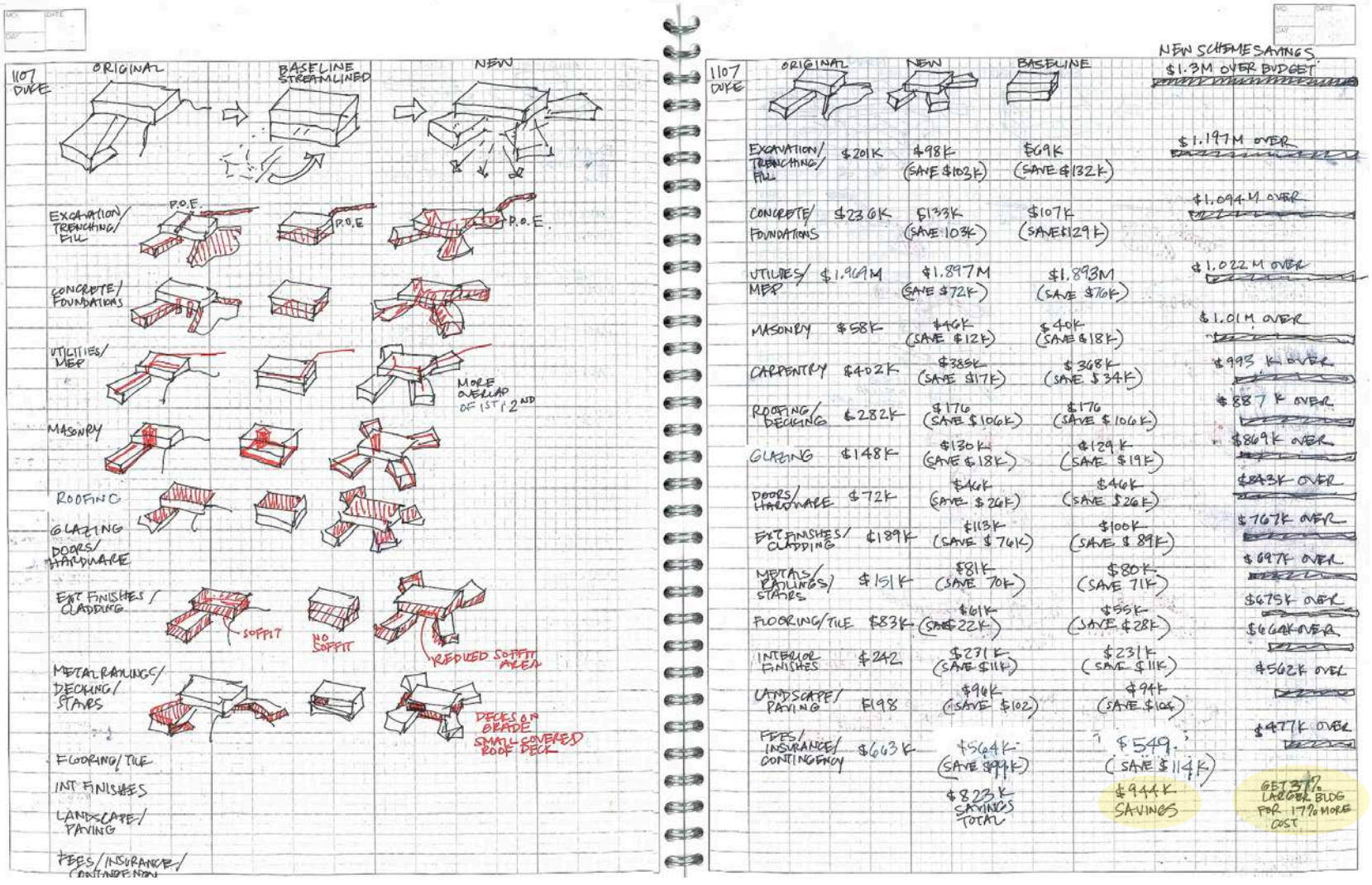
First concept:
Full program, overbudget



Baseline:
Stripped-down, lacking collaborative program, still overbudget



Final concept:
More value per square foot—true to Duke's vision.



A page from the sketchbook, where form and cost are studied side by side.

More building, better value

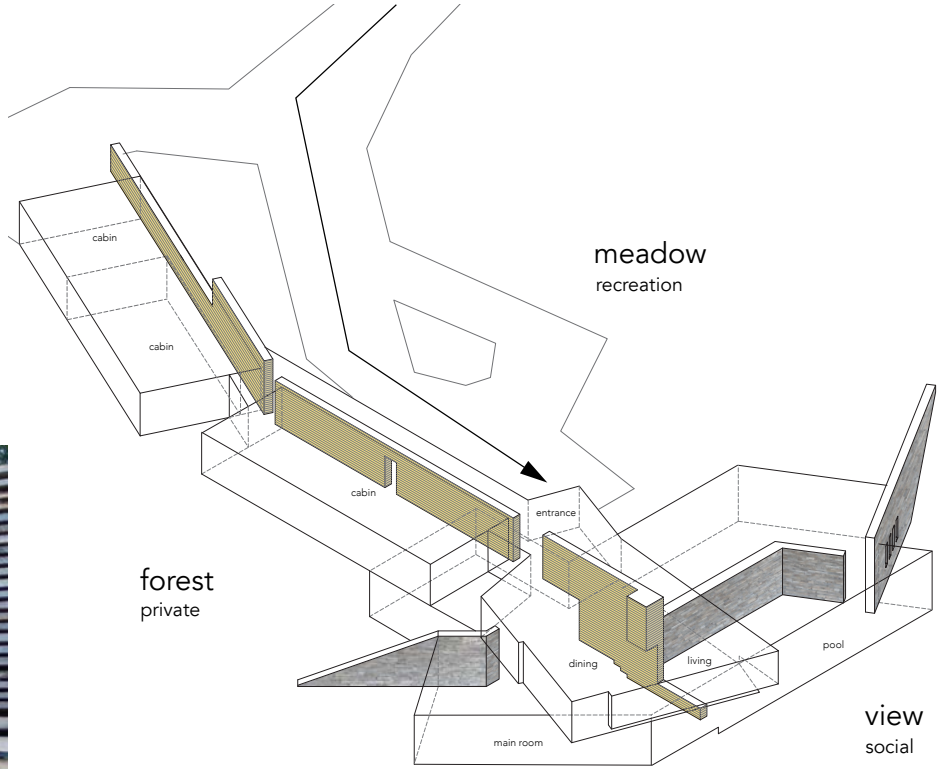
As concepts become reality, Architect-Led Design Build ensures continuity—from scaled models that explore spatial possibilities to full-size material mockups, ALDB brings clients into the process.

Building Craft
Blue Ridge House

Inspired by tradition

A meadow, a forest, and a view: the three milieus at Blue Ridge House are woven together, both conceptually and spatially, by a traditionally crafted wood wall.

This continuous wood wall guides how people move, gather, and experience this family retreat. A home grounded in its setting—both in how it's lived and how it's made.



The Blue Ridge Mountains are known for their lumber mills; stacks of sticked, drying timber still dot the landscape and fill local history. The home's woodwork draws from this tradition.

Stacked lumber

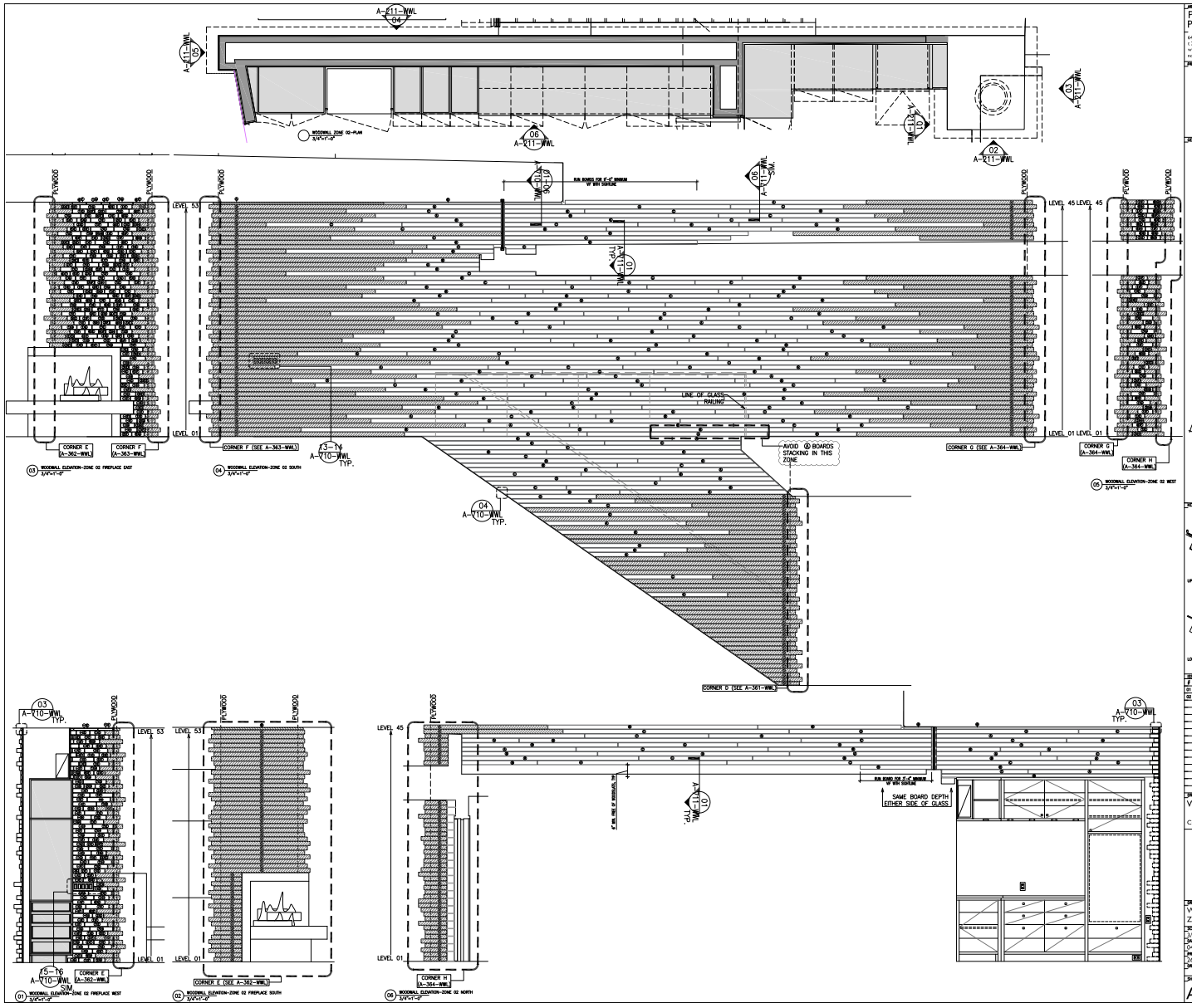
For the wall to evoke a true stack of drying lumber, it needed to combine the skills of local craftspersons with our conceptual vision. After in-house design studies, GLUCK+ partnered with a nearby sawmill to test dimensions, assembly techniques, and material efficiencies. With a clear understanding of how it would be built, the team created precise piece drawings and layout maps so the sawmill could fabricate in bulk. The result was remarkably cost-effective and deeply rooted in place, aligning the building with its landscape and regional history.

In a typical design bid build process, this level of customization would likely have been handed off to a specialty fabricator, driving up cost and risking compromise. By shifting fabrication to the world of industrial lumber, and staying involved from concept through construction, a high-quality solution became a reality at a fraction of the typical price.

Top:
Early foam model illustrating the aesthetic intention of the wood wall.

Bottom:
Further 1:1 wood studies built in the office.

Drawings mapping
the wall assembly.



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t 212 690 4950 f 212 690 4961
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northcarolina@plgpartners.com

PROJECT

GENERAL NOTES

Ⓐ = DEPTH 3/4"
Ⓑ = DEPTH 1 1/2"
Ⓒ = DEPTH 3"
Ⓓ = DEPTH 4 1/2"
Ⓔ = DEPTH 2 3/4"
Ⓕ = DEPTH 3 1/2"
Ⓖ = DEPTH 5"
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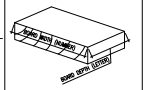
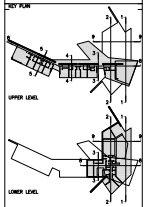
Ⓚ = DEPTH 3"
Ⓚ = DEPTH 4 1/2"
① = WIDTH 8 1/4"
② = WIDTH 6"
③ = WIDTH 4 1/2"
④ = WIDTH 3 3/4"
⑤ = WIDTH 6 3/4"
⑥ = WIDTH 7 1/2"
⑦ = WIDTH 1'-0 3/4"
⑧ = WIDTH 7"
⊖ = CUT TO FIT IN FIELD



KEY PLAN



ISSUE / REVISIONS

#	DATE	NOTES
01	04.13.2009	CONST. DOCS PART 01 ISSUE
02	04.22.2009	CONST. DOCS PART 02 ISSUE

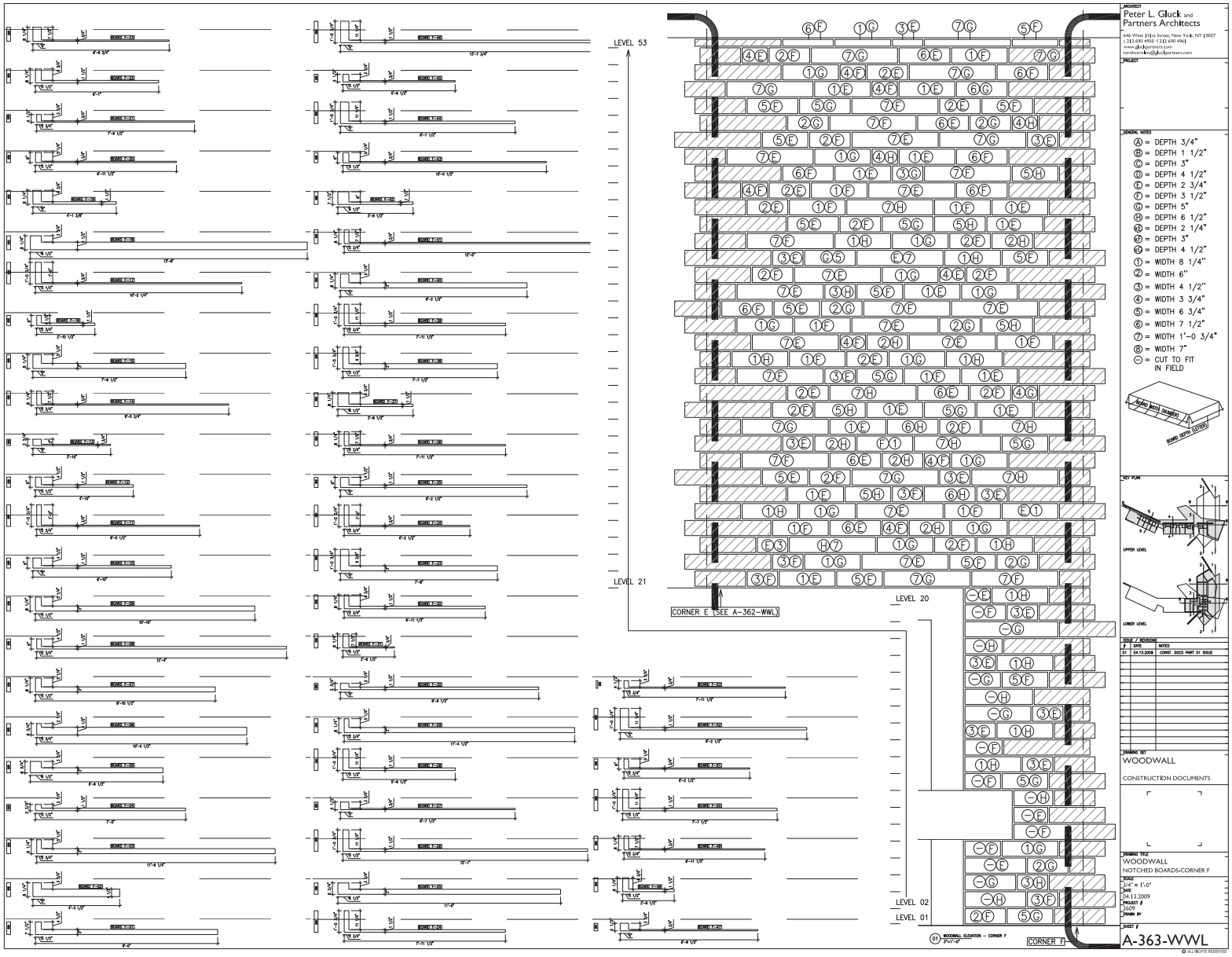
DRAWING SET
WOODWALL
CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

DRAWING TITLE
WOODWALL ELEVATIONS
ZONE 02

SCALE
3/4" = 1'-0"
DATE
04.22.2009
PROJECT #
0609
DRAWN BY

SHEET #
A-211-WWL

Piece drawings for fabrication in the sawmill.



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KEY PLAN

ISSUE / REVISIONS		
#	DATE	NOTES
01	04.13.2009	CONST. DOCS PART 01 ISSUE

DRAWING SET
WOODWALL
CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

DRAWING TITLE
WOODWALL
NOTCHED BOARDS-CORNER F

SCALE
3/4" = 1'-0"
DATE
04.13.2009
PROJECT #
2609
DRAWN BY

SHEET #
A-363-WWL

Milling the timber
from solid logs.

Mockups test the techniques
and expression of the wall.
The final result follows.

Building on Time
Lady Liberty Academy

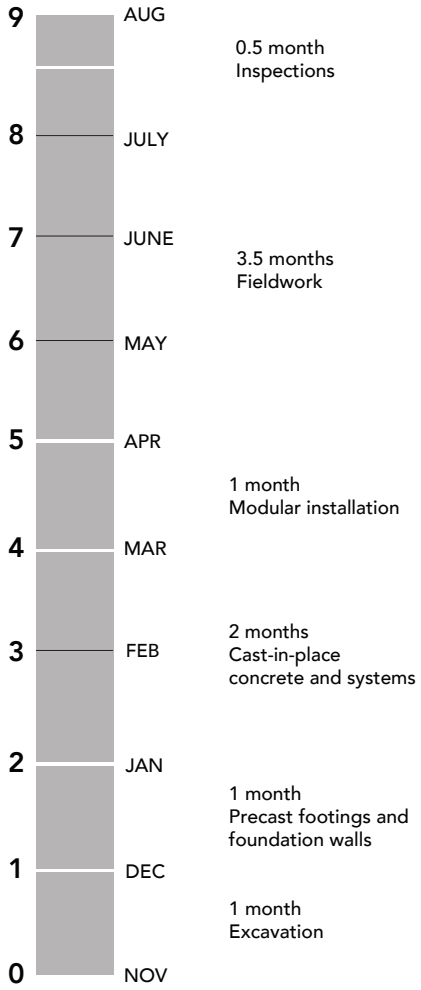
Resourcefulness against the clock

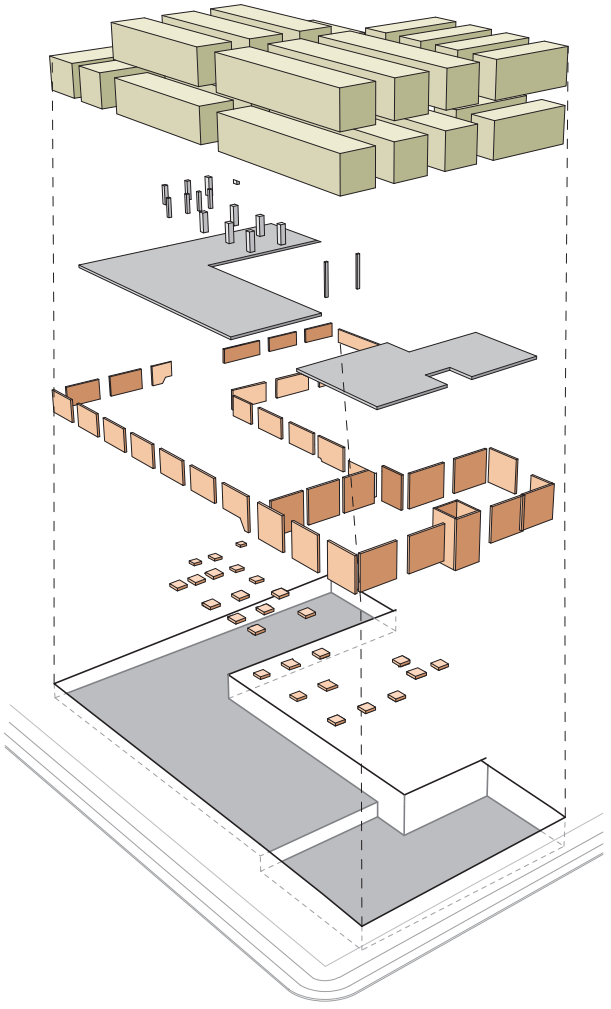
It is common for non-profits to have limited financial resources, but Lady Liberty Academy Charter School was also short on time. To keep their charter, they needed a building—and they needed it fast. The entire process, from design through construction, could not take more than nine months.

Initial drawings scoped for pricing made it clear: typical on-site construction would be too expensive, and the schedule unachievable. To deliver the project on time and on budget, the entire process had to be rethought.

With ALDB, project constraints become drivers of innovation—enabling timely, cost-effective solutions without compromising quality.

What method could deliver both speed and quality? Off-site construction made it possible.



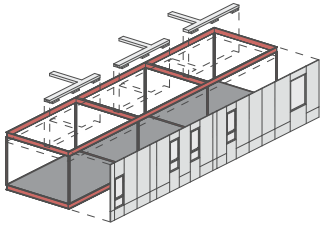


As much off-site as possible

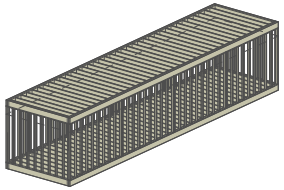
A trip to Pennsylvania—the capital of off-site wood construction in the Northeast—led to bids from several modular manufacturers. Accustomed to single-family homes, wood-only builders weren't comfortable tackling a school. Steel and concrete alternatives were significantly over budget. But one manufacturer stood out in their experience with both wood and steel systems. Through discussions back and forth, a hybrid solution emerged: steel frame with wood-stud infill walls, floors, and ceilings.

This approach reduced both cost and weight, bringing the project closer to budget. Further conversations revealed another benefit: the lighter system could be placed on a precast foundation, avoiding winter concrete pours and saving valuable time. The result: a building delivered on time and on budget, ready for the school year.

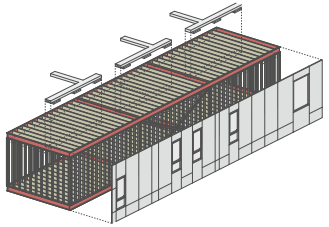
The project's success hinged on rethinking methodologies of both design and construction. One without the other wouldn't have worked. It takes an integrated team and an integrated process to think outside the proverbial box, to deliver on time and on budget.



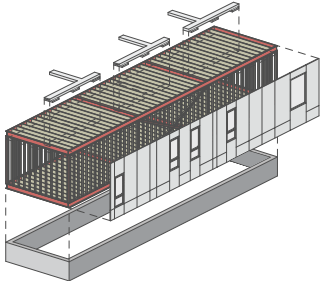
Off-site steel & concrete construction
On-site foundations.
$290/sf



Off-site wood framing
On-site foundations, cladding & MEP
$275/sf



Hybrid construction
On-site foundations
$235/sf



Hybrid construction
Pre-cast foundations
$225/sf

The precast elevator pit and foundation walls—fabricated entirely off-site—were key to meeting the deadline, turning even the foundations into a prefabricated system.


LADY LIBERTY ACADEMY

Building Coordination

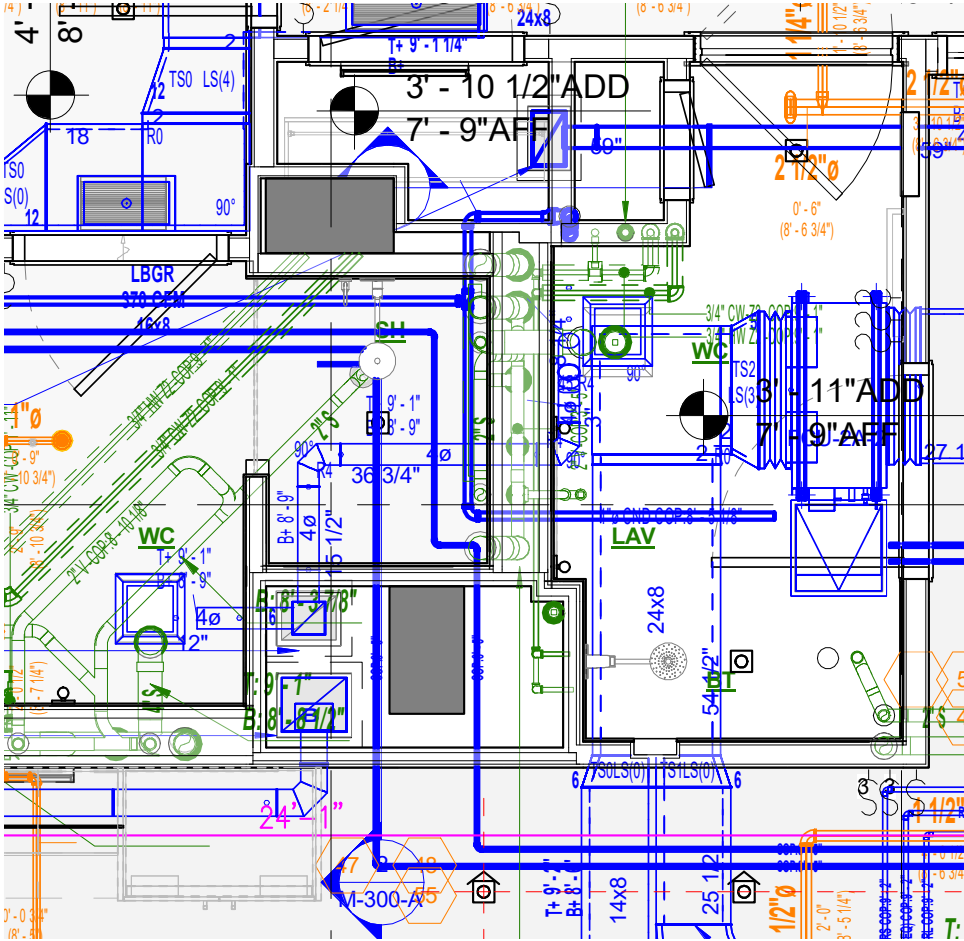
145 Central Park North

Sorting out the information

Drawing is a fundamental tool for architects, but coordinating a construction site requires more than just architectural drawings.

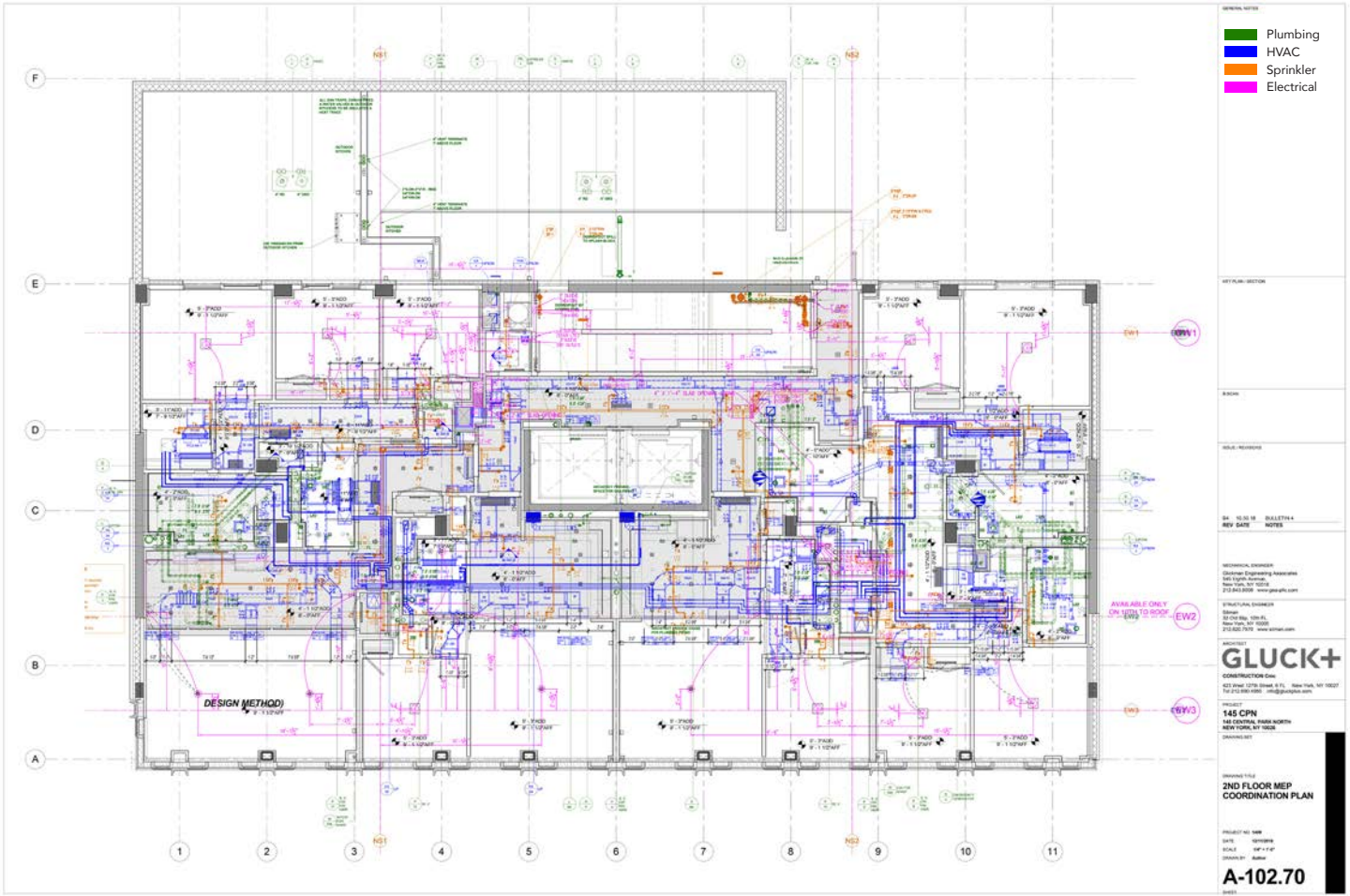
In a traditional design bid build process, complex drawings are handed to all trades, regardless of their specific scope or schedule. This approach significantly increases the risk of confusion, overlap, and errors.

The 2nd Floor MEP Coordination Plan, for example, overlapped many layers of information—mechanical, electrical, structural, sprinkler, plumbing, and more. It was a crucial tool to coordinate the various systems, but nearly impossible for any single trade to interpret effectively on-site.



145 CPN
2nd Floor MEP
Coordination Plan

An unreadable drawing leads to unnecessary confusion.



This internal working drawing overlaps plumbing, mechanical, sprinkler and electrical trades to ensure the work is coordinated. Once coordinated, the information can be clearly conveyed to each separate subcontractor to efficiently and accurately perform their work.

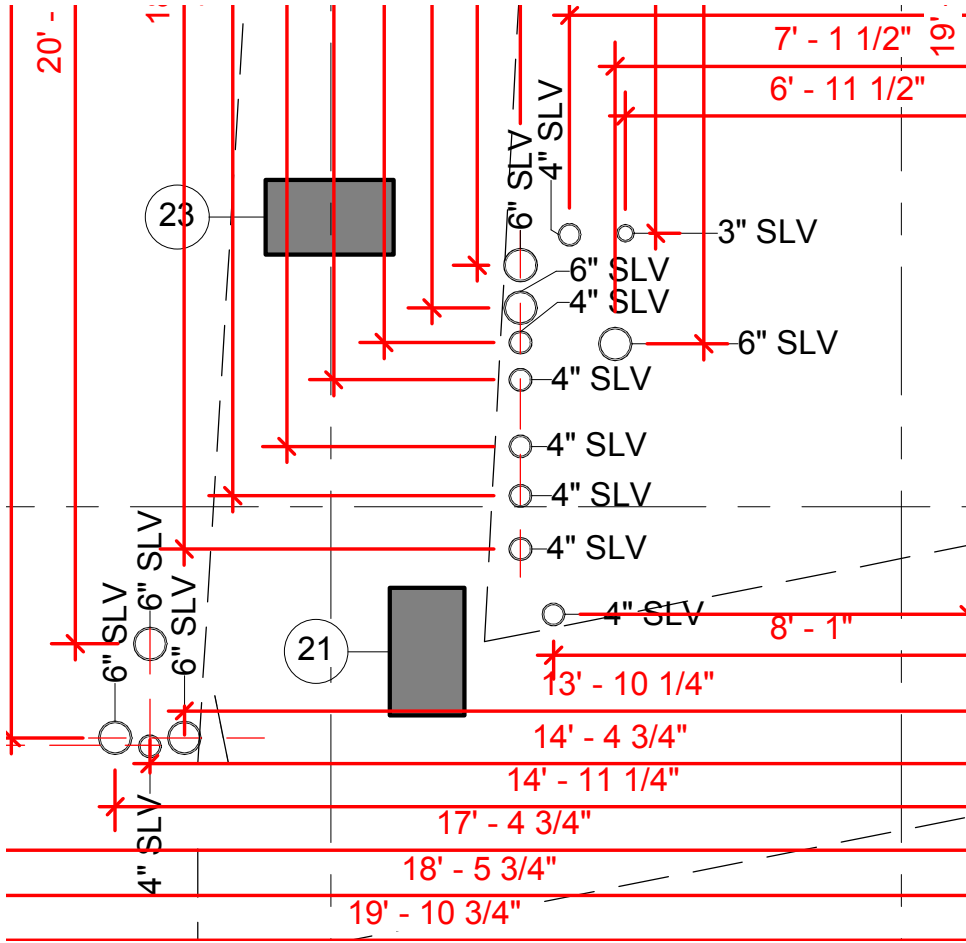
Tailoring drawings to the trade

As architects who build, GLUCK+ aligns each drawing to the sequence of work on site—embedding time-sensitive information relevant to each trade when they need it. This results in clear, task-specific drawings that clarify construction. Some may only be used for an hour, but these instructions take into account what is coming down the line, coordinating the work between trades.

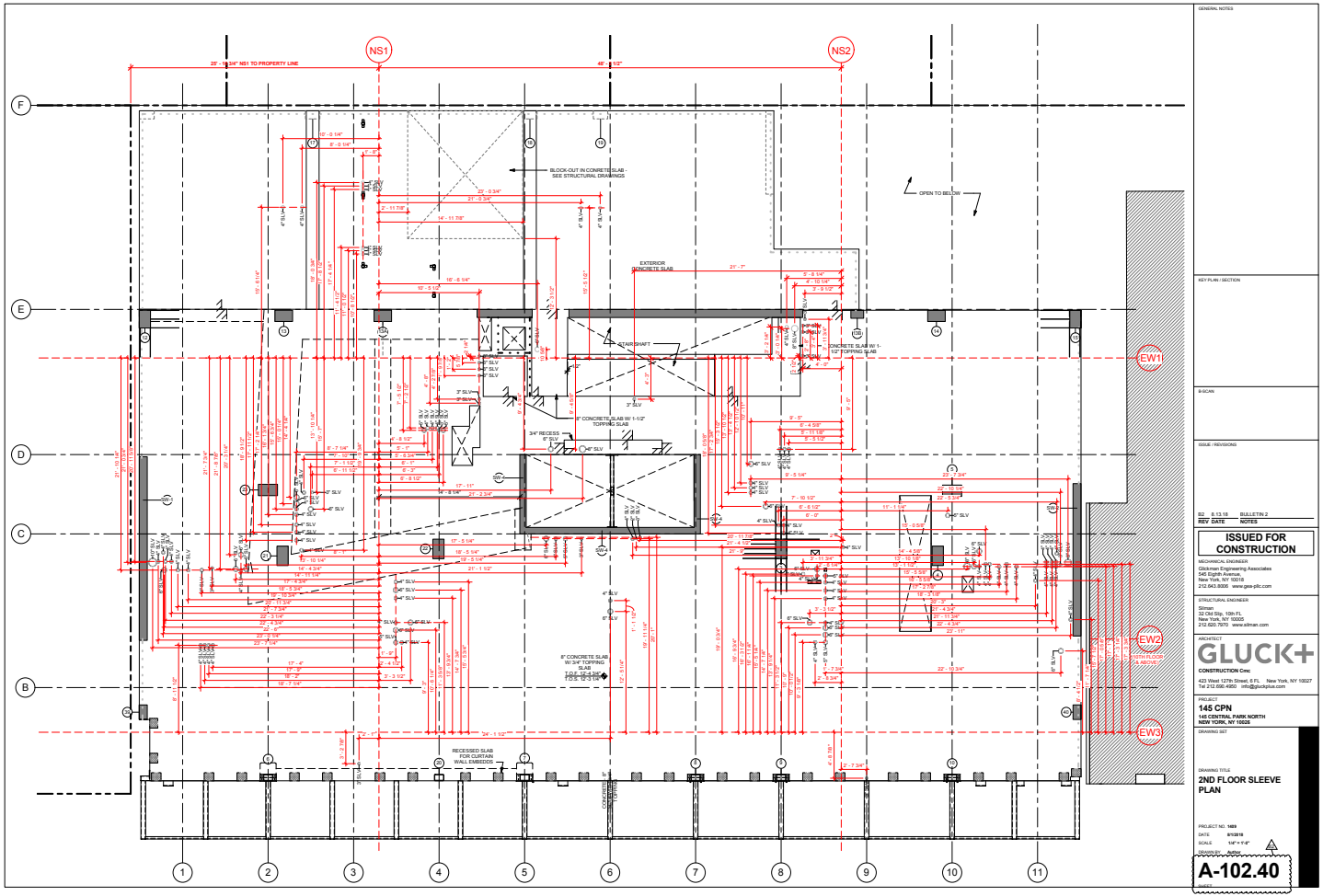
In a typical project, architects and engineers usually outline general requirements—like the size of a pipe—but not exactly where it should go or when it should be installed. The communication gap between designer and contractor often leads to delays, confusion, and rework.

At 145 Central Park North, the 2nd Floor Sleeve[1] Plan showed only what the concrete subcontractor needed to place sleeves for future conduit and piping before the slab was poured—avoiding costly change orders or drilling into finished concrete. This kind of targeted coordination means a smoother process, fewer surprises, and greater confidence that budget and schedule will stay on track.

[1] (Plastic tubes that are cast into the concrete to accommodate conduits as they pass through walls, floors, or other structures).



145 CPN
2nd Floor MEP
Sleeve Plan
Clearly defined scope.



Sleeve details—diameter and placement—are clearly distinguished, allowing the concrete subcontractor to locate them effortlessly before pouring the slab.

When building systems and hidden infrastructure work seamlessly, all attention stays on the architectural experience.

Building Strategy
House to the Beach

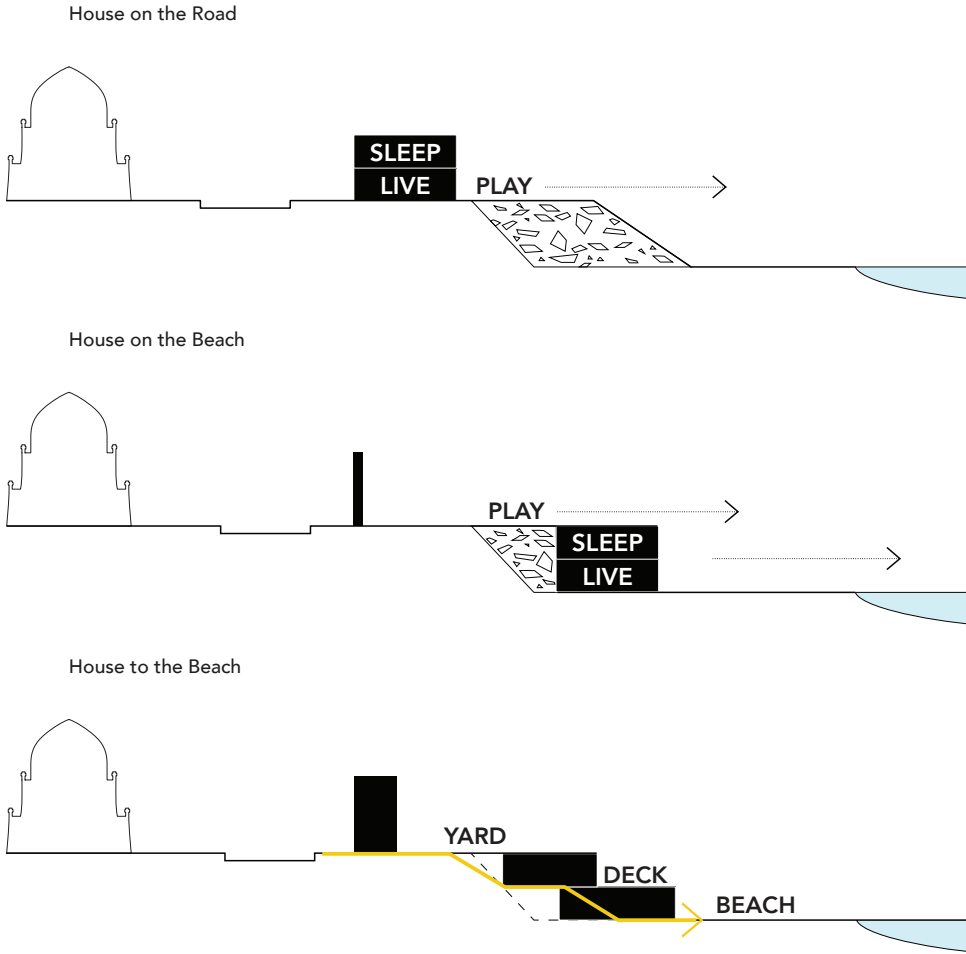
Thinking-making at its best

The idea behind House to the Beach is simple yet ambitious: views from both bluff and beach. The concept of the house emerged from the strategy required to build it.

The remarkable site was undervalued due to its history: much of the bluff had been extended with construction debris from nearby projects. Wary buyers feared inflated—or even prohibitive—foundation costs.

The easiest solution was to build on stable natural grade—near the busy street and too close to a massive temple. Moving the house toward the bluff's edge would have meant costly soil removal, replacement, and compaction due to the debris-filled ground.

By splitting the program and embedding half the house into the bluff, the design stretches the structure across the entire site—replacing debris with living space. As one descends the light-filled stairway, private rooms remain tucked away from the main circulation, while public living and dining areas gradually open up toward the beach. This creates a more varied and intentional relationship between building and landscape—maximizing usable space and enhancing privacy and views.



Losing weight

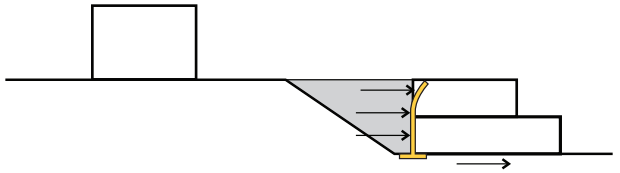
However, the strategy required a very tall retaining wall to prevent the entire structure from sliding. The first solution, proposed by the structural engineer, was shockingly expensive. Looking for alternate scenarios, preliminary drawings were produced and shared with various subcontractors for pricing.

During this very technical investigation, a foundation subcontractor—specializing in highway construction—proposed the use of aerated concrete, a material little known to the residential construction industry.

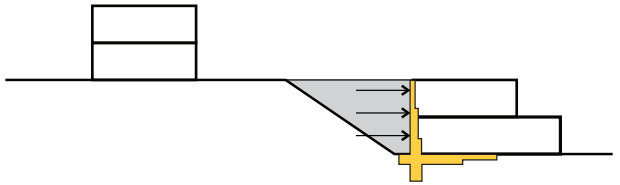
Aerated concrete is lightweight and porous, reducing the lateral load of the fill—and significantly lowering the cost of the retaining wall. Because the project was still early in design, the material was seamlessly integrated—reducing foundation costs by $250,000.

Cost savings rather than a cost overrun.

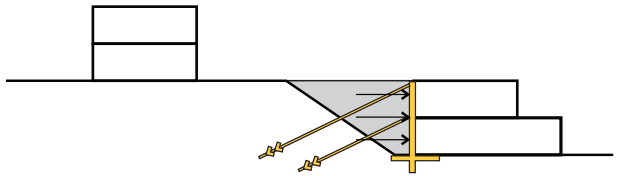
Typical retaining wall is Insufficient.



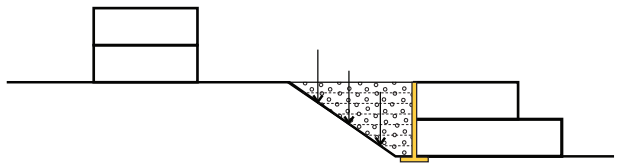
Thick retaining wall with key footing is expensive.

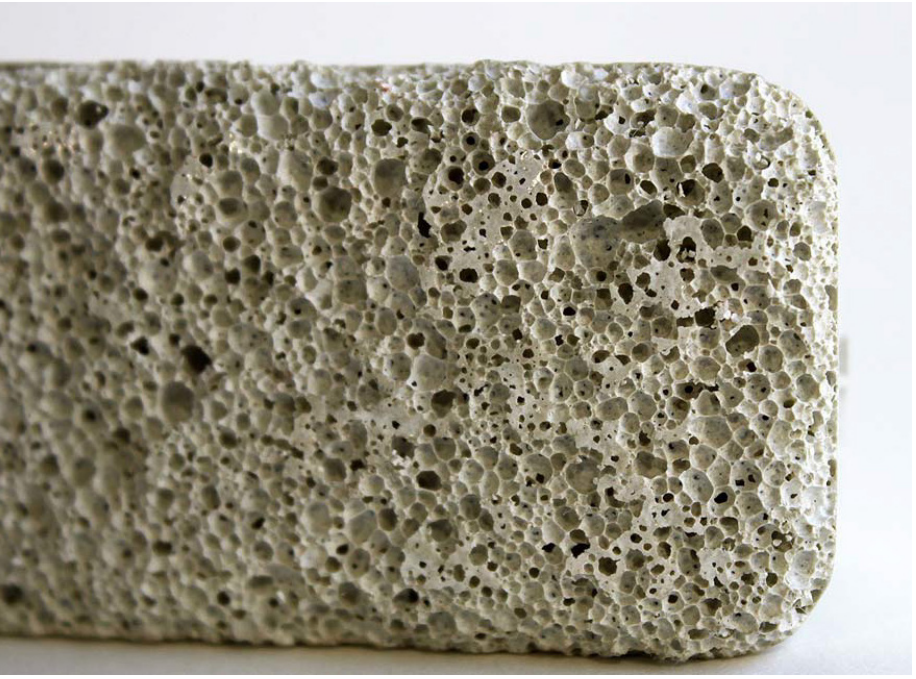


Retaining wall with tiebacks is expensive.



1′ wall with aerated concrete backfill is sufficient and economical.





Using aerated concrete reduced wall thickness, minimized rebar diameter, and eliminated the need for a deep key footing.

Building Partnerships

Bridge – 205 Race

ALDB works in big projects

Bigger, more complex projects benefit from pairing architect and contractor roles in a true design build partnership. A hybrid model works well when the team is fully integrated—success depends on combining design and construction expertise effectively.

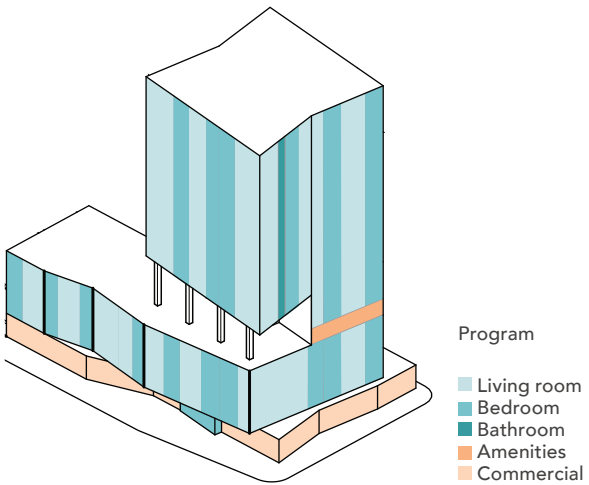
In the case of Bridge – 205 Race, when the project was bid in the traditional way, cost exceeded the budget. As architects invested in preserving key design elements—the facade, materials, and detailing—builder knowledge helped reduce costs without sacrificing quality.

Originally hired for architectural design only, GLUCK+ was later asked to join the construction team. Responsibilities were shared for bidding, trade selection, and updating construction documents as needed. On-site supervision ensured subcontractors' questions were answered promptly and accurately, while the general contractor handled logistics, operations, site management, bonding, and labor relations.

In this way, everyone's strength was used to its fullest, maximizing the capacities of all the team members, ultimately delivering an otherwise unfeasible project successfully.

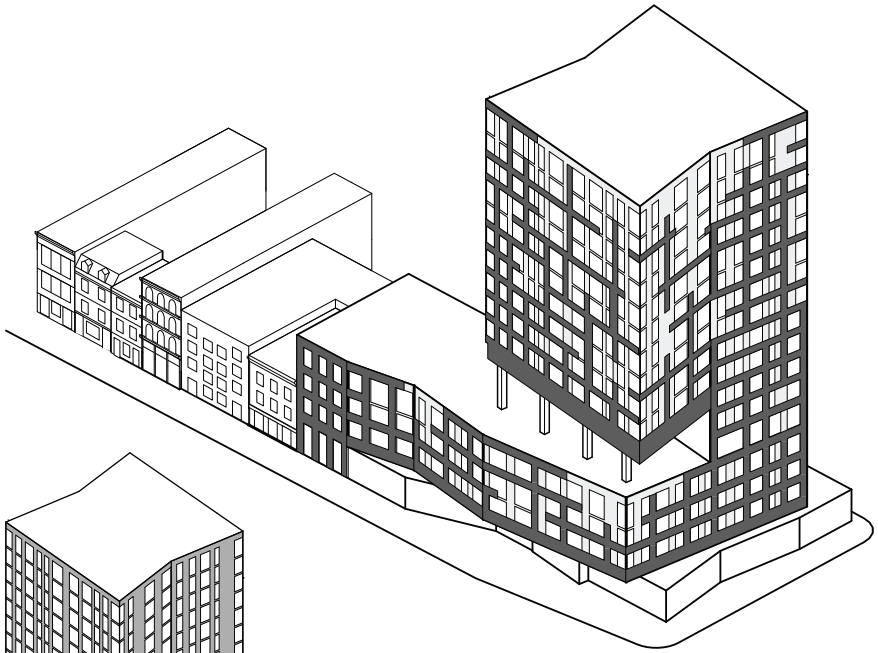
From windows to window walls

The benefits of ALDB were especially clear in the facade. To make the building more affordable, the floor plans repeat—apartments with the same window size and placement are stacked from the 2nd to the 18th floor. This repetition cut costs and simplified construction, but it also risked making the building look flat and repetitive. To avoid this, the team alternated the opaque parts of the facade between back-painted glass and metal panels. The result is a subtle transition: more solid at the bottom, more glass at the top.

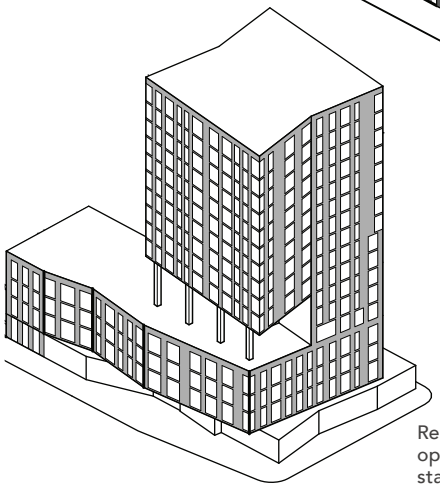


Program

- Living room
- Bedroom
- Bathroom
- Amenities
- Commercial

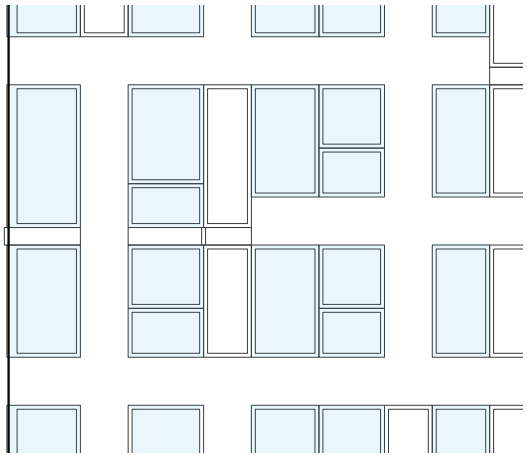


Metal panels create a subtle transition across the facade.

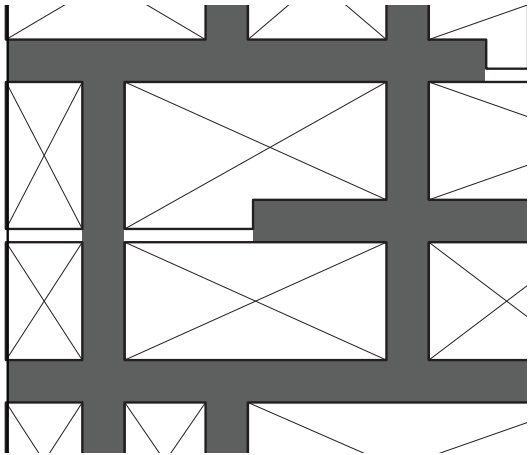


Repetitive openings follow stacked program

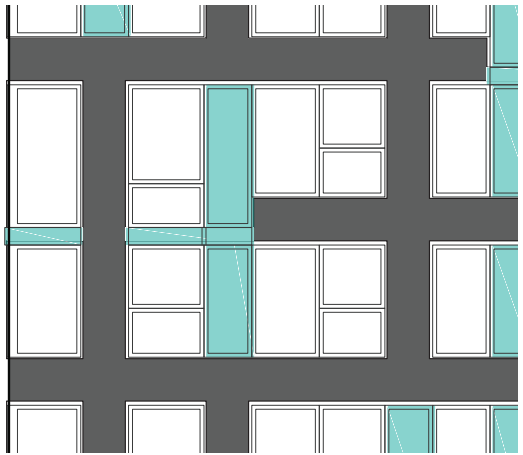
The standard solution of a full unitized curtain wall was too expensive. Rather than abandoning the design idea, the combined team—architect, contractor, and subcontractors—worked to design a hybrid wall system: areas of window wall alongside more affordable conventional framed exterior walls clad in metal panels. This balance of economy and expression is what gives the building its identity.



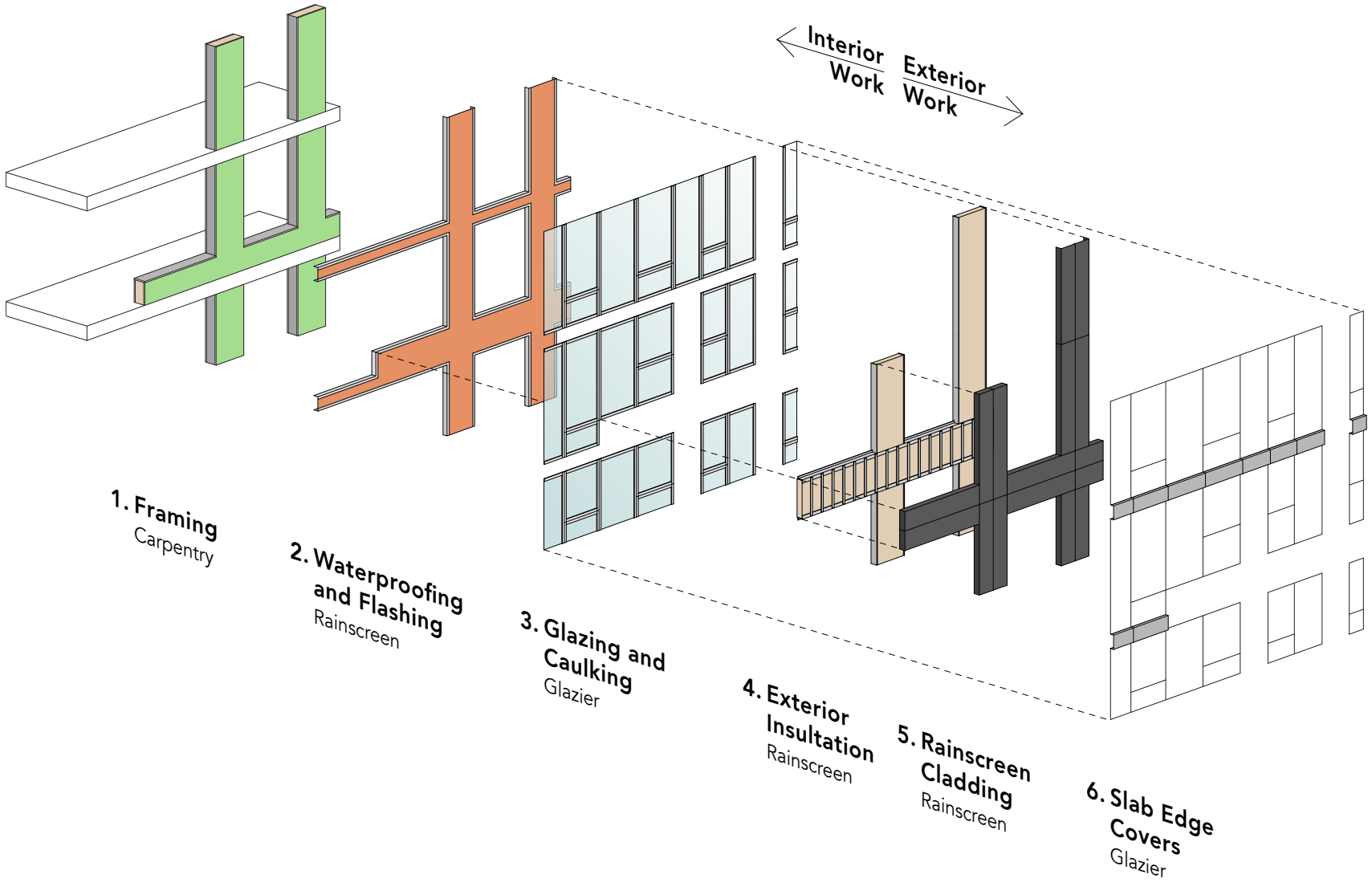
Repetitive windows follow stacked program



Frame wall with metal panels, a more cost effective solution



Back-painted glass adds rhythm and variation to the facade at a moderate upcharge



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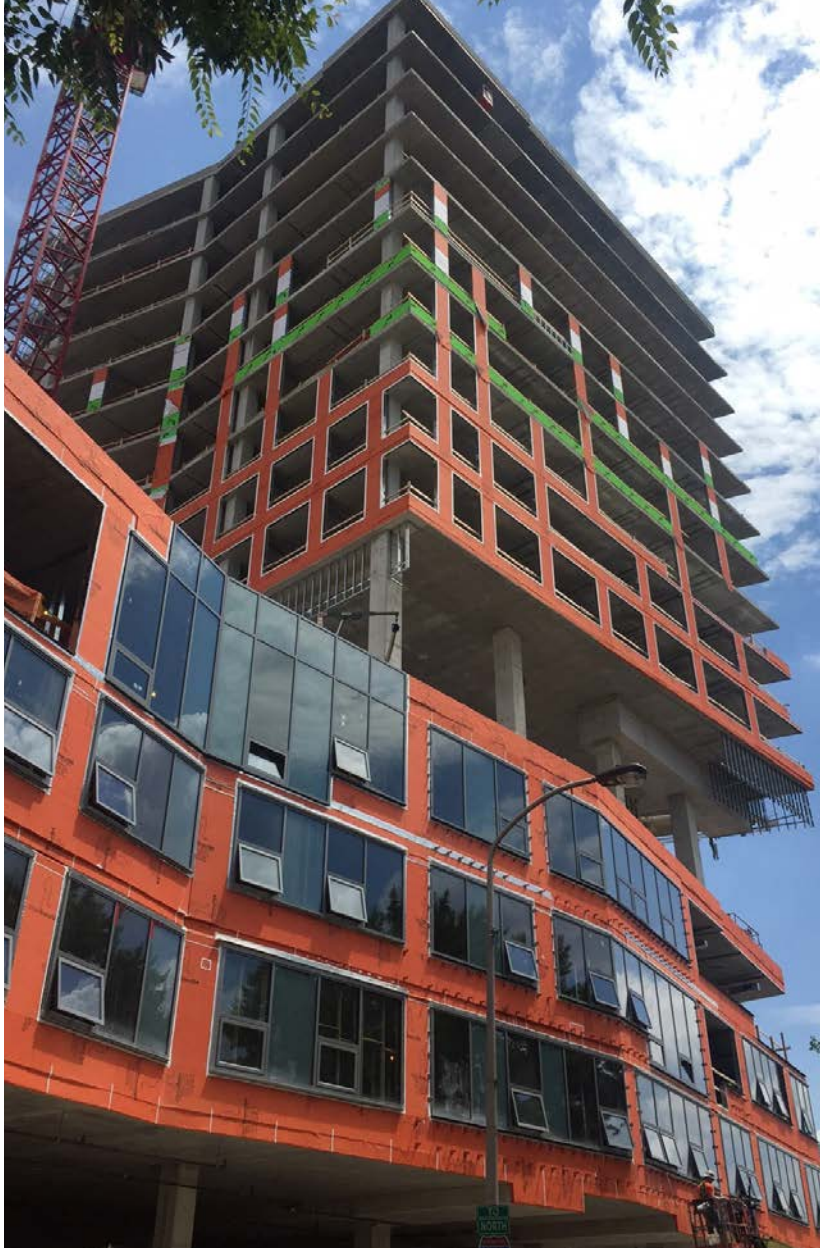


ONLY


GLUCK+

Awards for ALDB Projects (selection)

2025 Special Design Award, Innovation in Adaptive Reuse Design, WHIN School
Society of Registered Architects/NY Council (SARA/NY)

2022 Design Award of Excellence, California House
Society of American Registered Architects (SARA)

2021 Design Award of Excellence, Cary Leeds Center for Tennis & Learning
Society of American Registered Architects (SARA)

2019 Design Award of Merit, Sustainability, Bridge – 205 Race
American Institute of Architects New York (AIANY)

2017 Residential Architecture Winner, Artist Retreat
The American Architecture Prize

2016 Citation of Merit, Design Excellence Award, House to the Beach
American Institute of Architects (AIA Chicago)

2016 Architecture and Design Award, Duke University Marine Laboratory
Society of American Registered Architects (SARA)

2015 American Architecture Award, The Stack – 4857 Broadway
The Chicago Athenaeum & The European Centre for Architecture

2013 Architecture Merit Award, Tower House
American Institute of Architects New York (AIA NY)

2013 House of the Month, House in the Mountains
Architectural Record

2012 Award for Excellence in Design, Cary Leeds Center for Tennis & Learning
NYC Public Design Commission

2010 Architecture Honor Award, The East Harlem School
American Institute of Architects New York (AIANY)

2007 Show You're Green Award of Excellence, Little Ajax Affordable Housing
American Institute of Architects (AIA)

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GLUCK+ Booklet Series · II
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