

KOL RINAH SYNAGOGUE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Kol Rinah is a recently unified Jewish faith congregation, joining two legacy congregations on a newly acquired property that previously served as a Baptist Church near the center of a growing business district in St. Louis, Missouri. A new limestone addition containing Sanctuary and Entry is carefully linked to a fully renovated 1950's-era Church and School Building to become the new home of Kol Rinah. The design of the Synagogue respects and honors the rich history of both congregations, while looking toward the future with optimism and hope. The architecture and landscape strive to create a dynamic environment for this diverse and inclusive community, serving three primary functions: Gathering, Learning, and Prayer.

The stone mass of the addition is quiet, seeking beauty and eloquence with an economy of means. A new entry sequence and arrival space serves as a clearly defined, singular entrance for the entire Synagogue. Approaching on a fully accessible and graceful incline, visitors of all ages and abilities meander through a lush, fragrant garden of native plantings designed to control stormwater runoff. The light-filled entrance graciously welcomes visitors throughout the day, transforming into a beacon in the evening to invite entry and enliven the surrounding streetscape.

The sanctuary is a solid vessel containing an unexpected, double-height volume for worship and prayer. This sacred space is lined with white oak, bathed in diffuse light pouring in from a clerestory window high above the sanctuary floor. Ambient illumination from above is in dialogue with a sharper, direct light from the west entering through a thin vertical cleft in the south facade. This warmer light illuminates the east-facing Ark Wall from a concealed source, harnessing the symbolic and transcendent dimension of natural light while providing a dramatic backdrop for the Bimah. In conjunction with a sculpted ceiling and absorptive treatments, the angled wall also serves as an acoustic device, helping tune the space for speech and vocal music. Acoustics, material, and light are carefully composed to create a warm, tranquil space inspiring contemplation and spirituality.

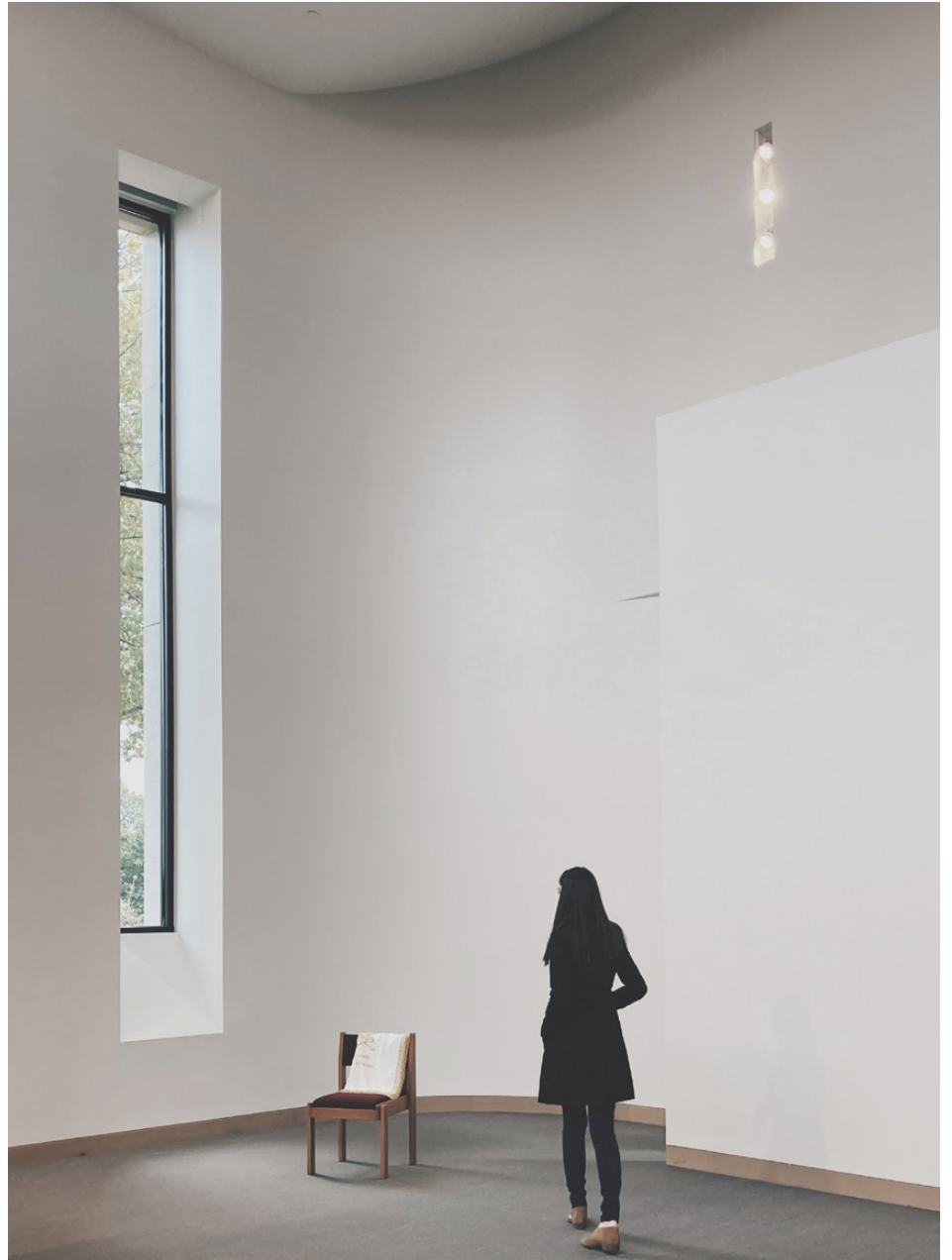
The limestone cladding of the addition responds to the limestone trim of the existing buildings as well as several adjacent structures. The stone is regionally sourced from the Flint Hills in Kansas, 380 miles from the site. The limestone's warmth, variation, and natural occlusions reveal its geologic formation and embedded regional history. Masonry cavity wall is utilized with concrete masonry backup and cold-formed metal framing at the two 'carved' conditions. Control joints are concealed (one exception), most notably at the quirk-mitered southwest corner. All of the stone panels are 2-1/4-inch thickness, with lighter toned 2-FT by 6-FT panels set in contrast to darker toned 6-IN by 6-FT panels. The tooled mortar joints ease the surface, exhibiting the hand of the mason. Natural stone helps connect the Synagogue to its place, providing an expression of civic presence and permanence for Kol Rinah.









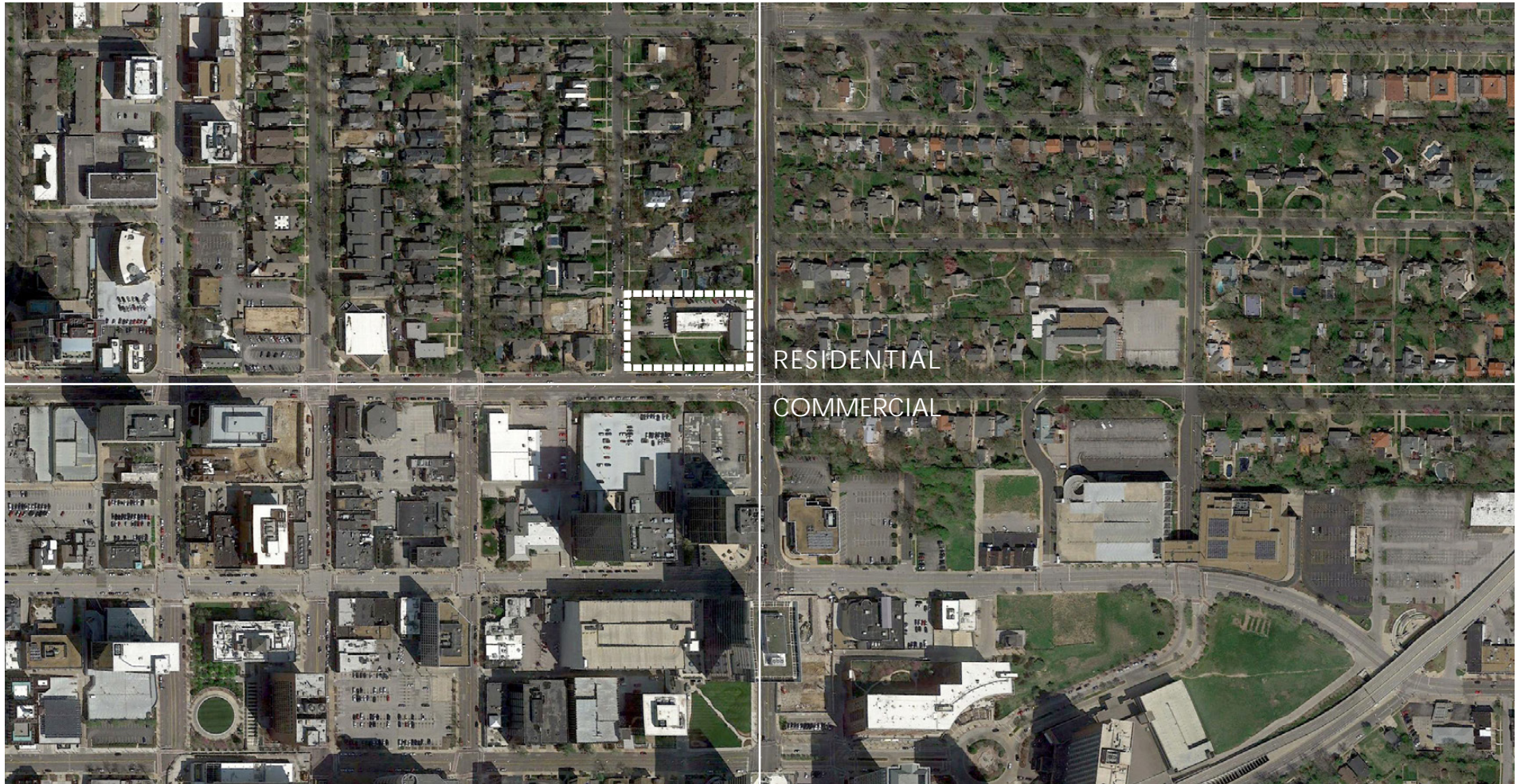


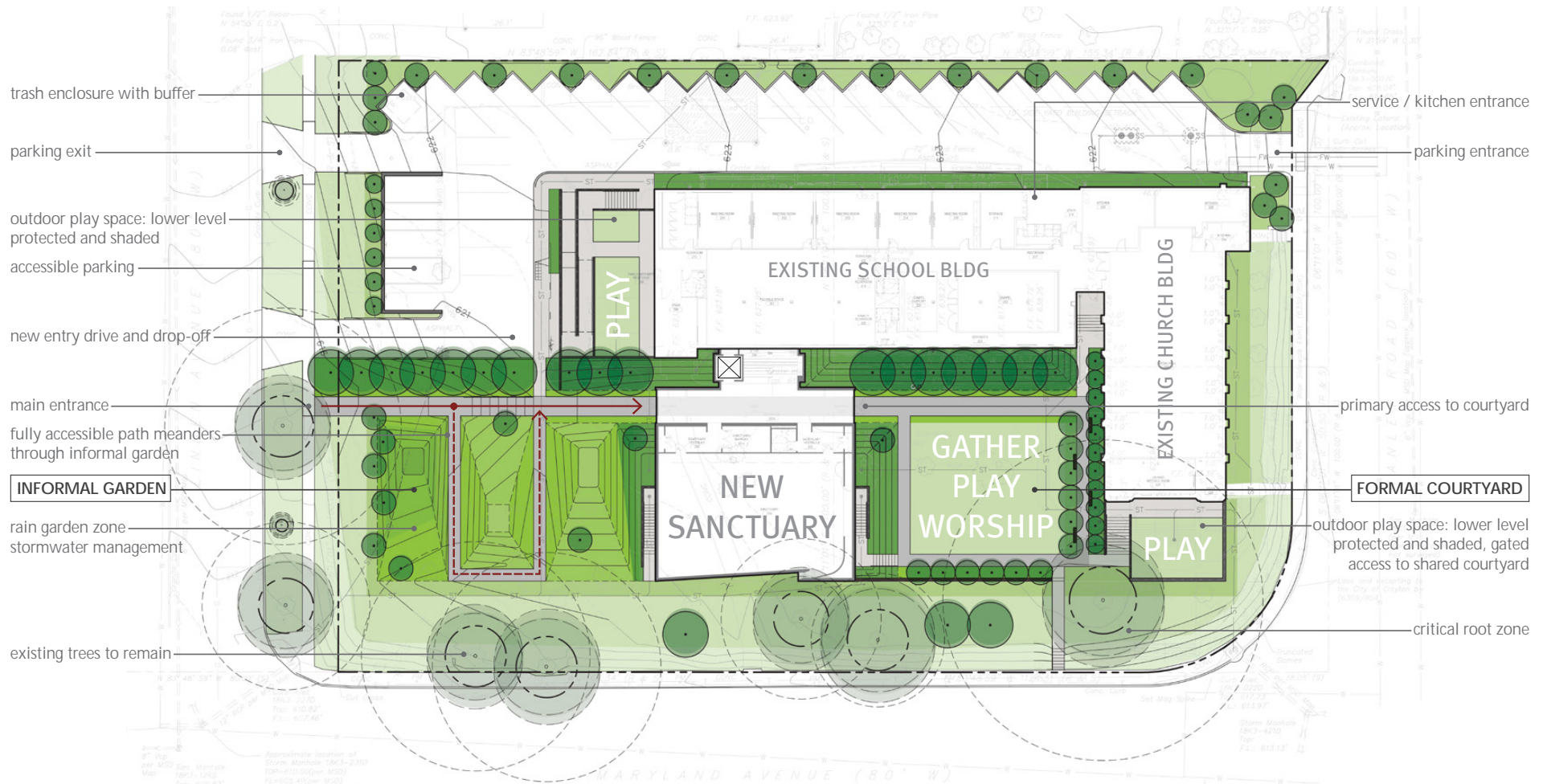


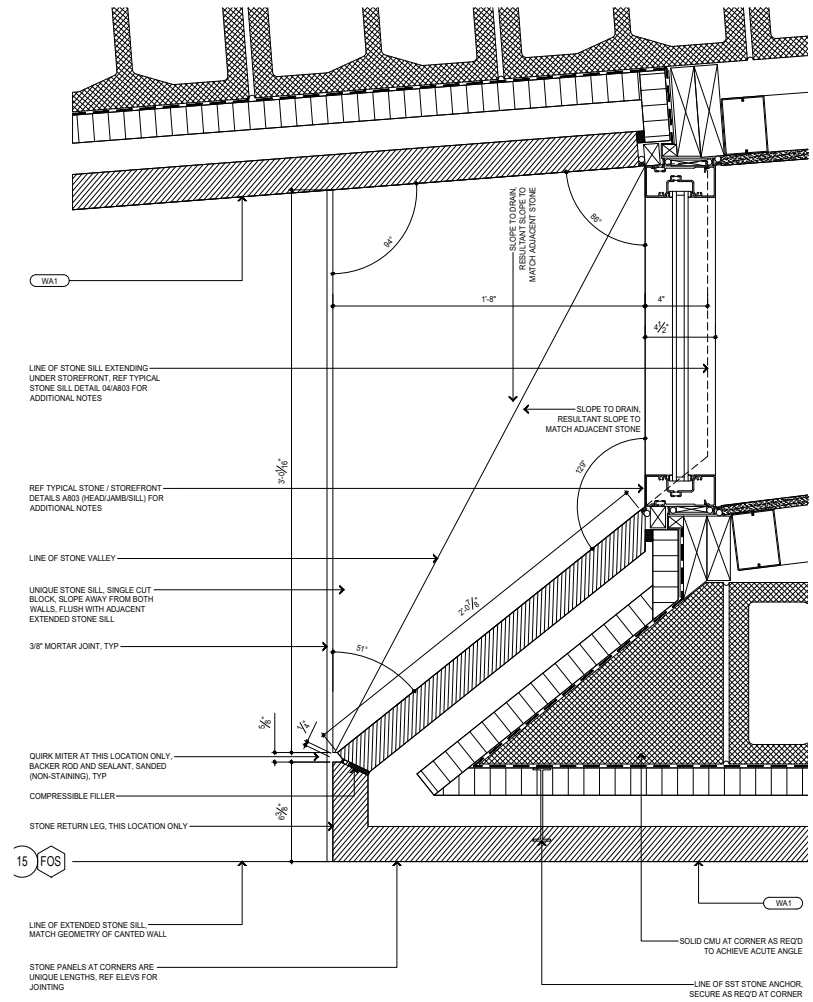
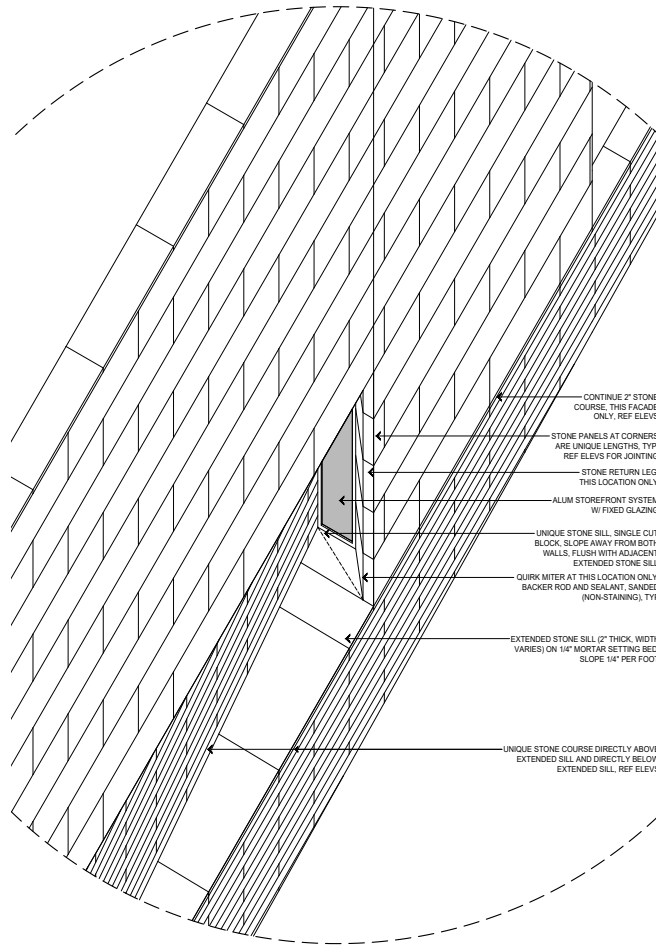


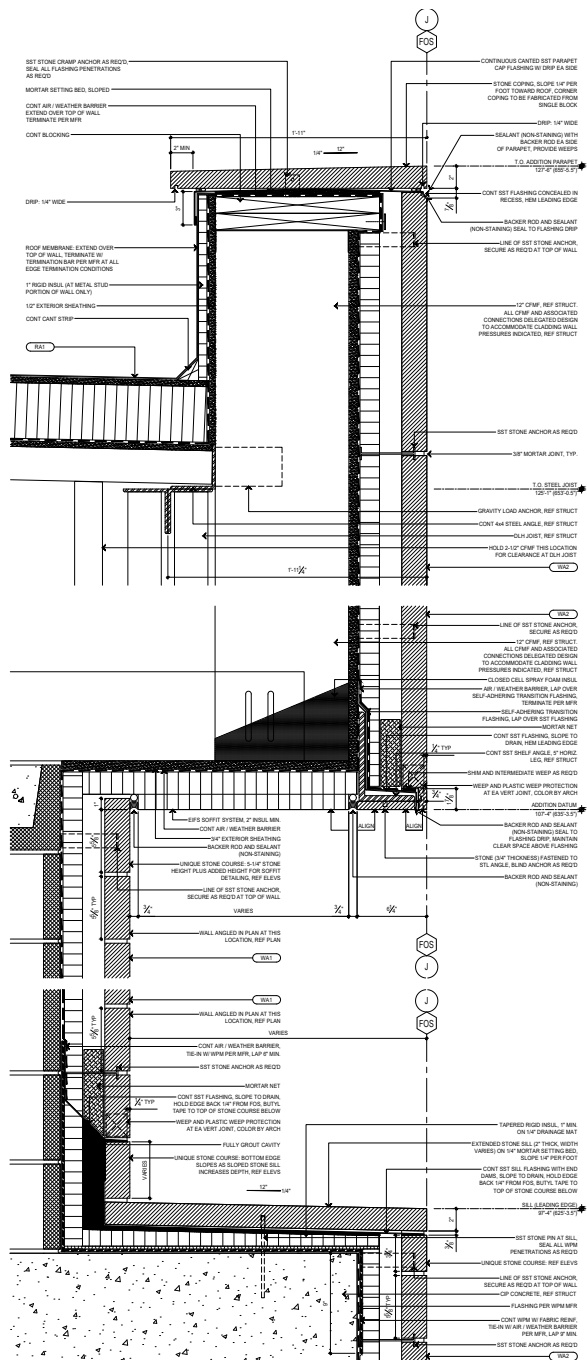












TRADITION & INNOVATION

Close collaboration with quarries, fabricators, and masons allow insight to production methods, material and labor efficiencies, as well as detailing strategies. Informed by tradition, digital fabrication tools offer new possibilities for architectural stone.