

2022 MERIT

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LYCEUM

A traveling fellowship in Architecture



The Friesenhahn Descent
LF-9955

The Friesenhahn Descent: Project Statement

"Into the underland we have long placed that which we fear and wish to lose, and that which we love and wish to save."

- Robert Macfarlane

IN WHAT WAYS CAN ARCHITECTURE EMBODY PRESERVATION IN BOTH FORM AND FUNCTION?

The Friesenhahn Descent proposes a strategy of connecting people to the site through the creation of atmospheric spaces that speaks to the emotional experiences one has when interacting with the cave. The proposal likewise is sunken into the earth to create an informal connection to the cave proper as well as to preserve the existing brush of Ashe juniper trees on the surface.

The connections between the above and below ground conditions are detailed by a series of reveals to the sky through the form of light wells or courtyards - each responding to different narrative/atmospheric qualities of the space through abstract forms that protrude from the ground.

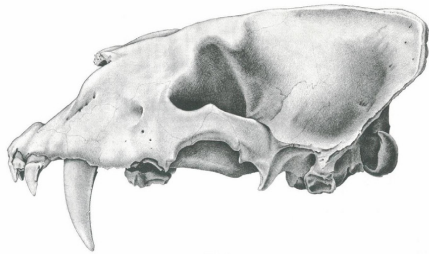
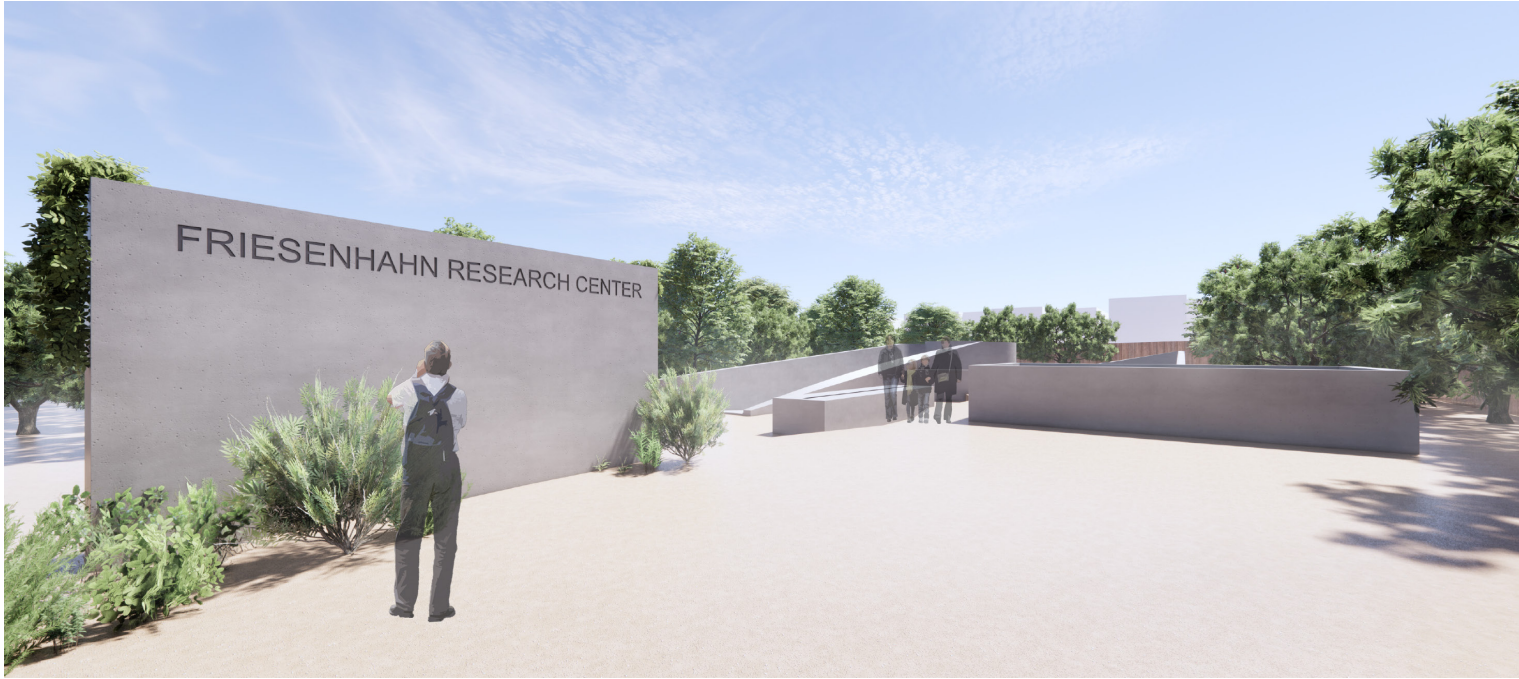


FIGURE 1
Lateral view of skull (TMNH 933-3883)

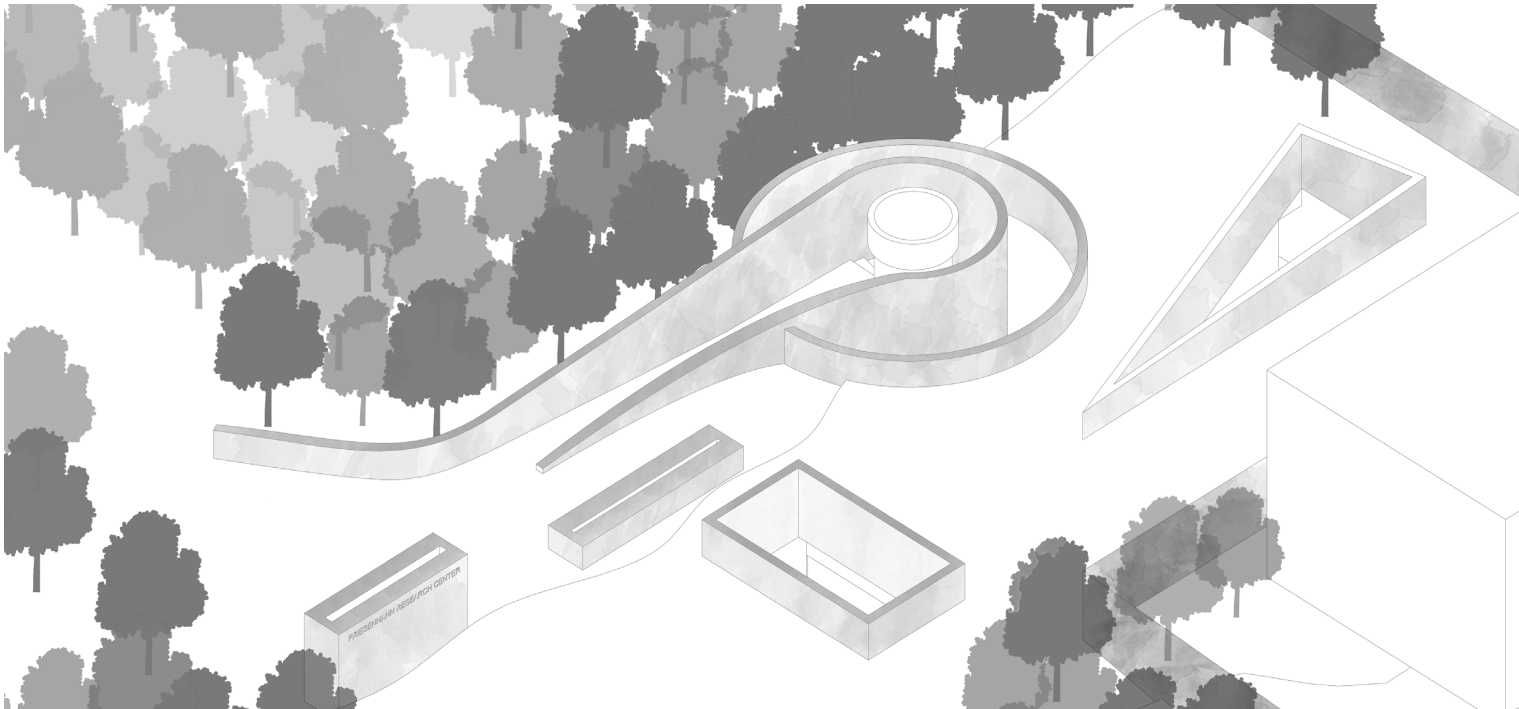




Above ground:
Upon entry of the site, one is greeted with a series of concrete monolithic structures of varying sizes and shapes. It is upon further approach that it becomes apparent that each of these forms creates direct visual connections with the spaces below. With an emphasis on preservation, the above ground forms and the below ground structure does not harm the existing foliage but instead adds more potential for green space and growth.



▲ Perspective at mouth of the cave below the cover of the Ashe Juniper brush.



◀ Aerial view of the research center upon approach.

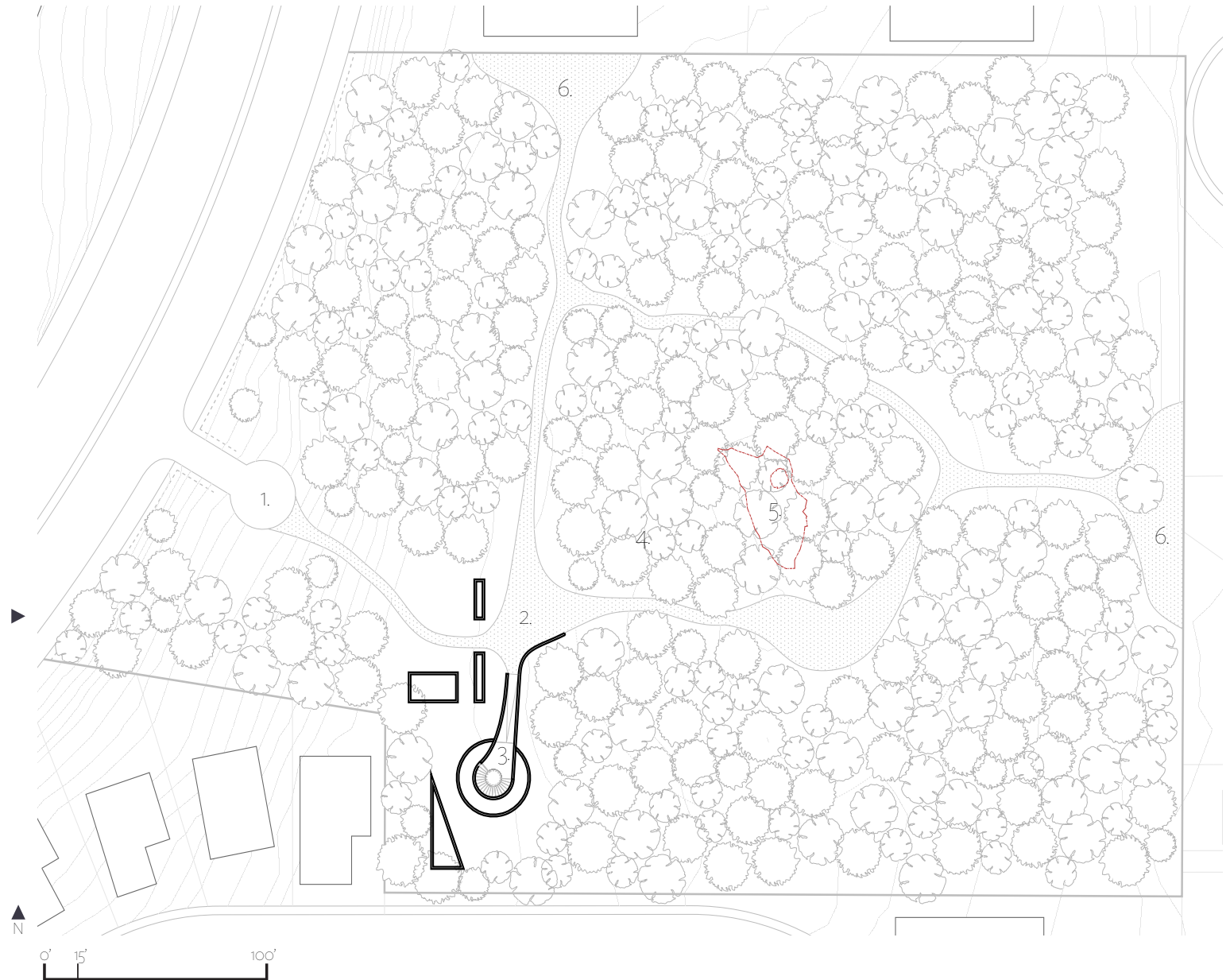
The Friesenhahn Descent - Site Plan

The proposed location for the Friesenhahn Descent is the South-Western most corner of the site, creating a transition point between the path that connects to the exterior context (suburbia) and the inner context of the SPZ Area. At the junction point of the inner path and the research center is a set of two monolithic light wells that act as the threshold both displaying the name of the site as well as creating moments of intrigue with the abstract forms.

The site as a whole is connected by a series of dirt paths that lead to moments of reveal in sections of the brush where the Ashe Juniper naturally parts - creating rest sites for tours around the site.

To access the research center, one must descend a ramp that leads to an elevator that mimics the vertical passage of the Friesenhahn cave.

- 1. Parking/Turn Around
- 2. Path
- 3. Main Entrance Ramp
- 4. SPZ Area
- 5. Friesenhahn Cave (Old)
- 6. Rest Zones



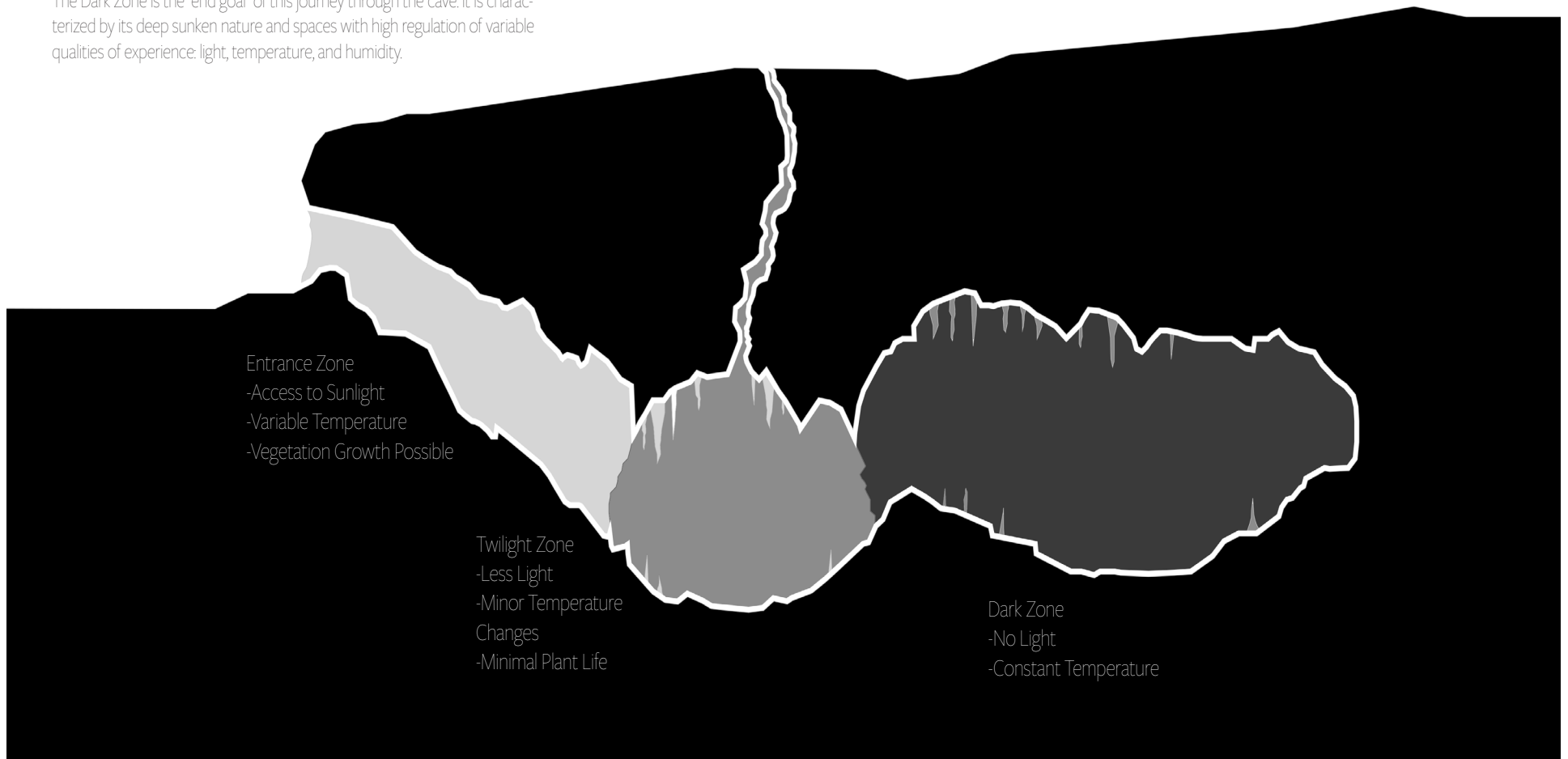
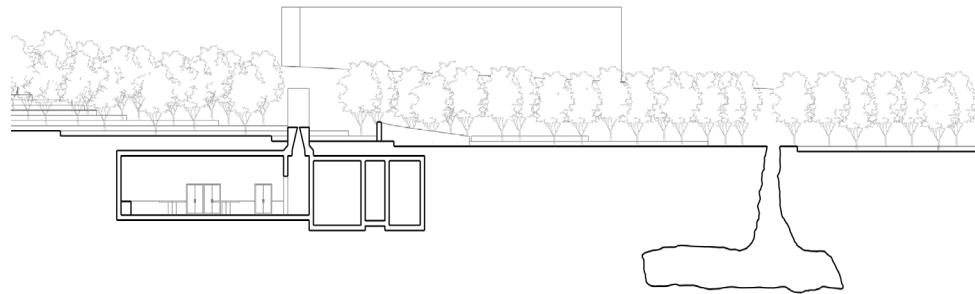
The Friesenhahn Descent - Conceptual Narrative

The design concept for this proposal originated with a study of cave typology and terminology - there being vast banks of knowledge in each category - that led to the development of the figure below. Three major zones of activity are depicted here: the Entrance, the Twilight, and the Dark - and informed the spatial and programmatic conditions of each space.

The Entrance Zone is characterized by spaces lit by direct natural light, open layouts, and visual connections to the surrounding context.

The Twilight Zone is a departure from the open characteristics of the Entrance and narrows physically in form as well as receives less natural light. The Twilight marks instances of transition.

The Dark Zone is the "end goal" of this journey through the cave: it is characterized by its deep sunken nature and spaces with high regulation of variable qualities of experience: light, temperature, and humidity.



Entrance Zone
-Access to Sunlight
-Variable Temperature
-Vegetation Growth Possible

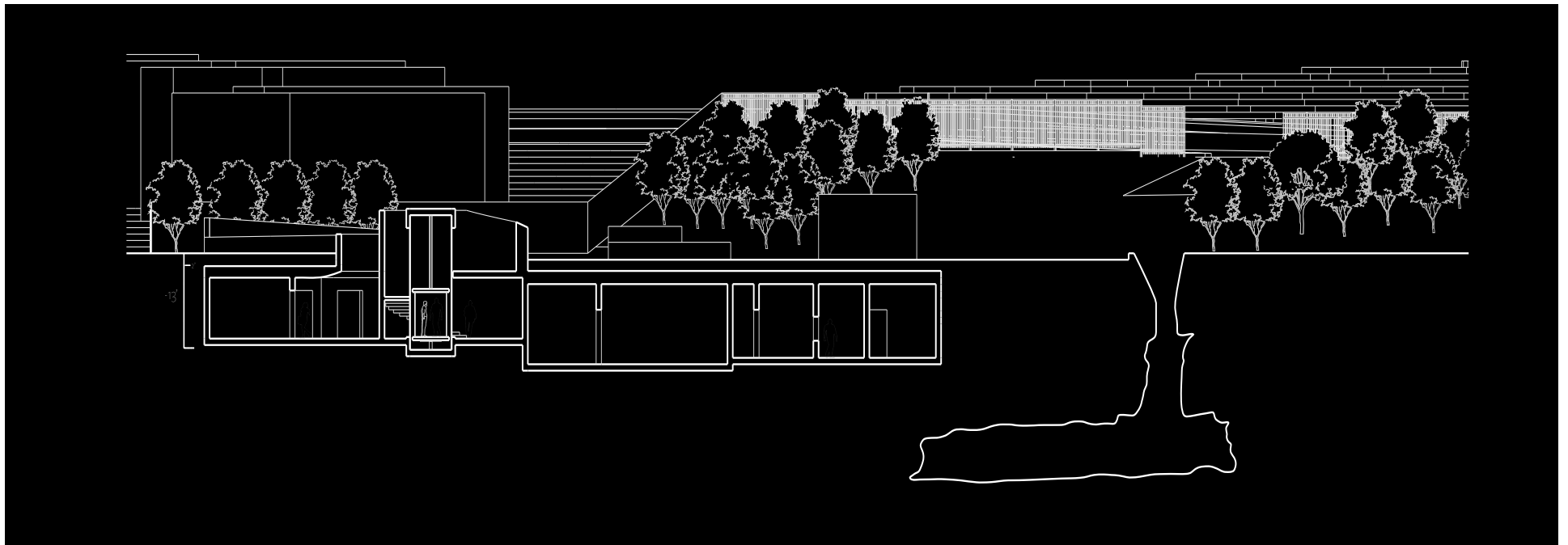
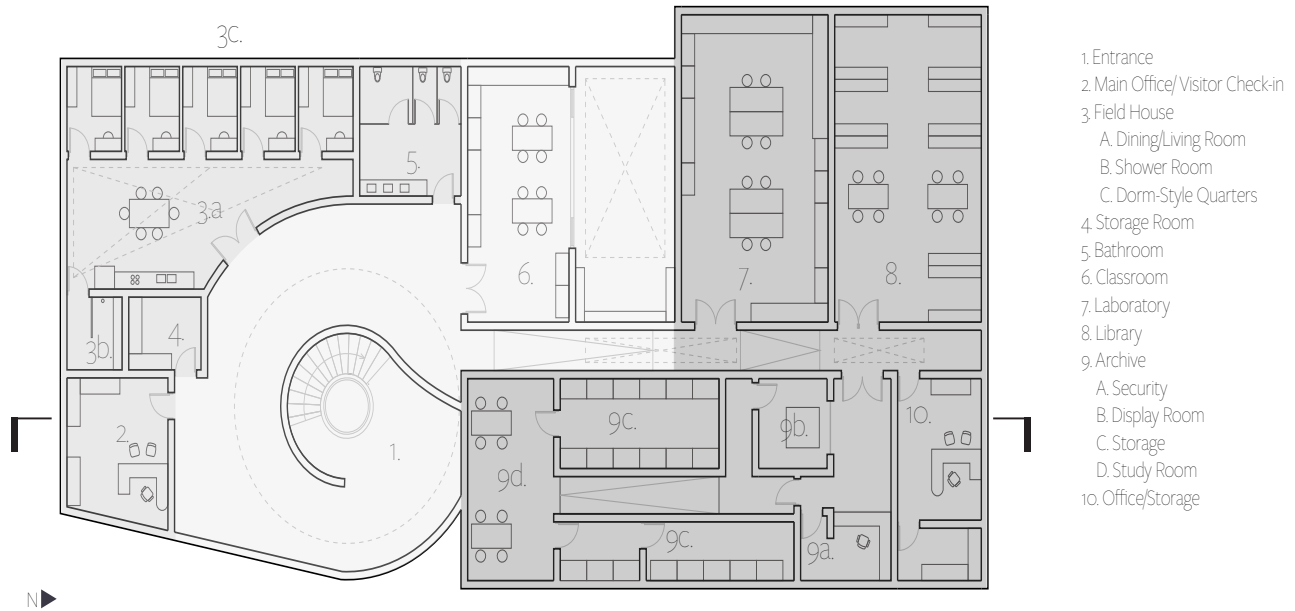
Twilight Zone
-Less Light
-Minor Temperature
Changes
-Minimal Plant Life

Dark Zone
-No Light
-Constant Temperature

The Friesenhahn Descent - Floor Plan

Below Ground:

The sequence of programs and spatial conditions are broken down into the major groups of the Entrance, Twilight, and Dark Zones. The sequence that leads to the large opening and the classroom at the core of the structure is a highlight of the Entrance zone. Branching off of those spaces are the living quarters: a dormitory style condition as well as a handful of supplementary programs (bathrooms, storage, etc.). In the Dark Zone is the Laboratory, Library, and the Archive - three significant spaces for research and preservation that require much stricter access and more stable conditions.



The Friesenhahn Descent - Atmosphere



Entry Sequence

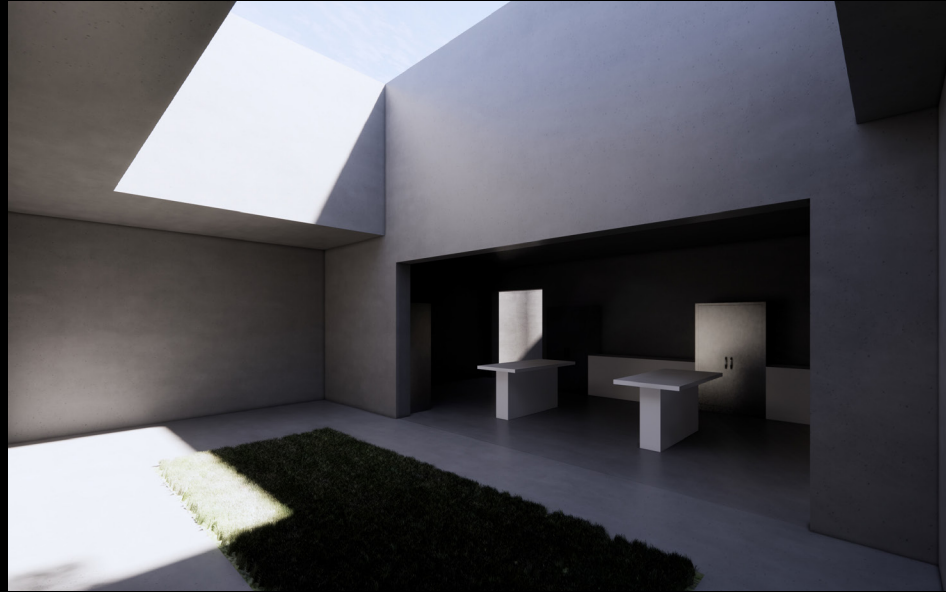


Corridor to the Archive



Entry to the Archive

The Friesenhahn Descent - Atmosphere



The Classroom



The Living Quarters



Living Quarters - Room

Below the ground level are moments of contrast; spaces that reveal to the sky and others that minimize and reduce in scale. Through the conceptual narrative of the cave a visitor may experience a wholly different condition, depending on if they are researchers or simply just observing.

The major goal of this proposal is the connection of people to the site, which is especially difficult when the site in question is inaccessible to a vast majority. Through this scheme, begins the exploration of emotional connections to the site - creating architecture who's form comes secondary to presentation of the moments within.

Ultimately the Friesenhahn Descent is an approach to creating a threshold to the site through the creation of an intermediary space that is accessible to all and connects - in spirit - to the history of the Friesenhahn Cave. It is architecture that reduces its presence above ground and preserves the atmosphere of the Underland - appreciating the spaces that would otherwise be long forgotten.