

Historic Preservation Board

Wednesday, October 15, 2025 at 5:00 PM
Room 24 (Ground Level of City Hall) and
Zoom



MEMBERS

Brad Miller, Chair
Valerie Paquin-Gould, Vice Chair
Hilary Bassett
Michael Hutchins
Robert O'Brien
Brian Sosebee
Rob Whitten

HYBRID PARTICIPATION:

The Historic Preservation Board invites the public to attend the meeting **in person or Zoom** pursuant to the Remote Meeting Policy adopted by the Historic Preservation Board. Prior to the meeting, please check the Agenda Center <https://portlandme.portal.civicclerk.com> to view memos and reports which will be posted by the end of the day on the Friday before the Historic Preservation Board meeting.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Allow your computer to install the free Zoom app to get the best meeting experience. If you are not able to attend either in person or via Zoom, a recording will be available in the [Agenda Center](#) following the meeting.

For more information on how to use zoom, please go here: <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/18148b5d-f26e-472f-8d2c-245db97e5c27?cache=1800>

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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PUBLIC COMMENT INFORMATION:

To submit written public comment on an agenda item, email hp@portlandmaine.gov. Submissions must be received by 12:00 pm **the day before** the Historic Preservation Board meeting to guarantee their inclusion in the agenda packet. All submissions must include the commenter's name and legal address. To help ensure your comment is submitted for the correct item, please include the name of the agenda item (see below).

AGENDA:

1. ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

2. REPORT OF ATTENDANCE AT THE MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

i. Communications

Adopt of Historic Preservation Board Procedural Rules: Bassett, Hutchins, Miller, O'Brien, Paquin-Gould, and Whitten present. Sosebee absent.

Historic Designations Interactive Web-Based Map: Bassett, Hutchins, Miller, O'Brien, Paquin-Gould, and Whitten present. Sosebee absent.

Workshop

Updates to the City of Portland Historic Resources Design Manual: Bassett, Hutchins, Miller, O'Brien, Paquin-Gould, and Whitten present. Sosebee absent.

3. REPORTS OF DECISIONS AT THE MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

i. None

4. COMMUNICATION AND REPORTS

i. None

5. PUBLIC HEARING

i. None

6. WORKSHOP

i. Review of New Construction and Sitework; 142 Free Street; Portland Museum of Art, Applicant. Plan Number: HP-00038-2025.

**STAFF MEMORANDUM
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM
PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**



TO: Chair Miller and Members of the Historic Preservation Board
FROM: Evan R. Schueckler, Historic Preservation Program Manager
DATE: October 10, 2025
RE: 142 Free Street – FIRST WORKSHOP – New Construction and Sitework
PROJECT ID: HP-00038-2025
MEETING: October 15, 2025

Owner: Portland Museum of Art
Architect: LEVER Architecture & Urban Projects Collaborative

A sign announcing the Historic Preservation Board’s meeting on October 15, 2025 was posted at the property, and 30 notices were sent to neighboring property owners within 100 feet of the subject property.

PROJECT SCOPE

Construct new site enclosure and associated sitework.

Dimensions:

Overall Height: 25’
Footprint: 65’ x 150’

Material Specifications:

Foundation	Not applicable
Siding	Wood
Trim	Wood
Roofing	Fabric and cable
Windows	Not applicable
Doors	Gates, wood and metal

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC CONTEXT

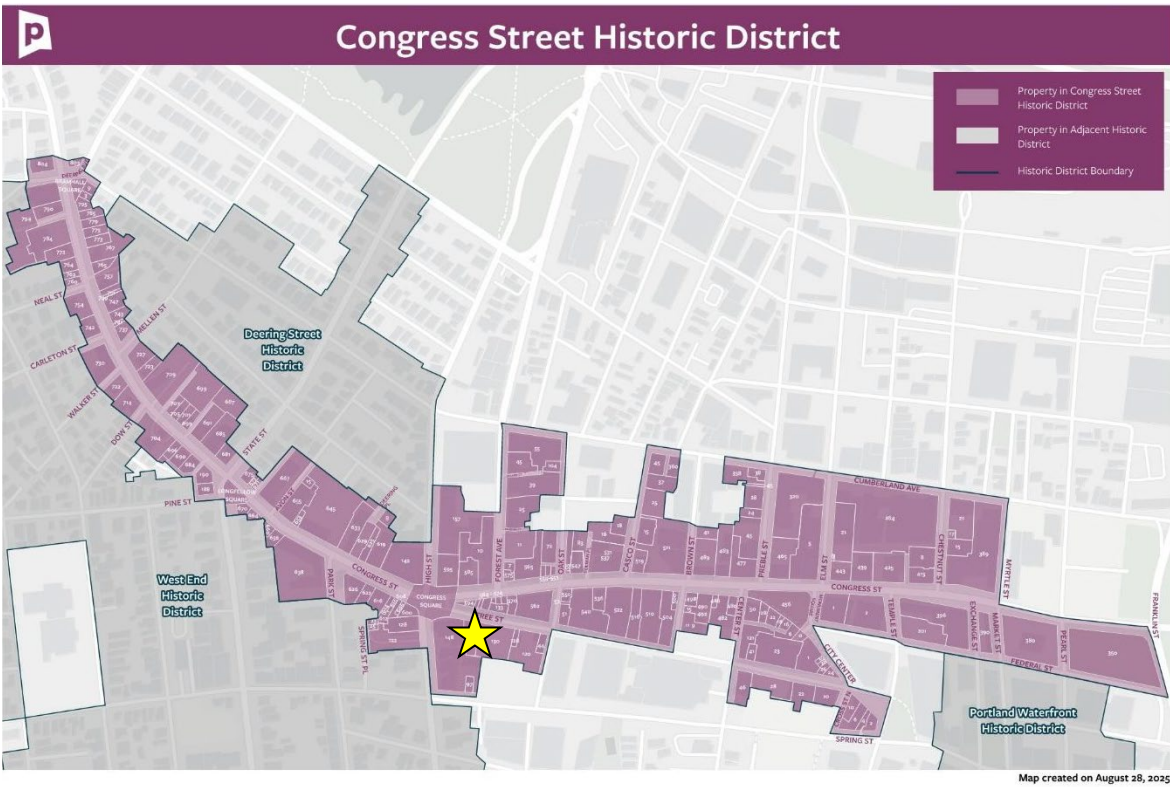


Figure 1: Map of the Congress Street Historic District showing location of 142 Free Street.

The visual character of the Congress Street Historic District is rich and varied thanks to a layered historical development. The result is an area with structures from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, and which represents nearly every period of American architecture ranging from Colonial to Post Modern. The district also represents a variety of architectural typologies including residential, commercial, mixed-use, civic, religious, and institutional at widely varied scales. Structures range from two stories to fourteen, generally exhibiting a greater concentration of high-rise buildings than any other Historic District in Portland.

Despite the variety of styles, period, and scales of architecture within the district, there are several urban design characteristics that serve to unify the area. First, with few exceptions, the structures that line Congress are built up to the street, creating a strong street wall and sense of enclosure. Second, the historic buildings exhibit high quality materials and a high level of craftsmanship. Third, the majority of the commercial structures, particularly those built during the 19th and early 20th century, share a basic visual organization with an identifiable base (storefront level), middle, and top (cornice or cap). The buildings that depart from these unifying elements are typically the oldest residential buildings that pre-date the commercial context, or civic/institutional buildings.



Figure 2: 2017 general view of Congress Street looking east from Congress Square showing the variety of scale and architecture found within the historic district.

The immediate context of the proposed development reflects the diversity of the overall district with a mix of commercial, and institutional buildings of varying scales. Congress Square is grounded by four impressive buildings, all individually designated Landmark structures:

- The Payson Wing of the Portland Museum of Art (148 Free /7 Congress Square): A monumental postmodern institutional building with a distinctive first-floor portico, arched openings, and limited fenestration.
- The Schwartz Building (600 Congress): A medium-sized commercial building with a large storefront, regular upper-story fenestration, and a distinctive clocktower.
- The Congress Building/State Theater (142 High): A large neoclassical commercial building with a pronounced two-story base, prominent cornice, and consistent fenestration.
- The Charles Q. Clapp Block/H. Hay Block (594 Congress): A lower-scale commercial building with a significant amount of fenestration/transparency arranged regularly.



Figure 3: 2006 views of the Payson Wing (left) and Schwartz Building (right).



Figure 4: 2006 views of the Congress Building (left) and Charles Q. Clapp Block (right).

Along Free Street, the district extends to Oak Street on the south side, and to Brown Street on the north side. The character of Free Street is less consistent than along Congress Street as the north side of the street features several facades that are largely the rears of buildings along Congress Street. Additionally, the street has experienced more demolition such as at the proposed development site and the adjacent parking lots. Regardless, there are several contributing buildings along the block the reinforce the general patterns of the district:

- 133 Free: a low-scale block, likely originally built as a row of houses, which have been converted to commercial uses.
- The Frye Building (44 Oak): A medium-size neoclassical commercial building with a two-story base, prominent cornice, and significant amounts of fenestration.



Figure 5: 2006 views of the 133 Free (left) and the Frye Building (right).

Additional information on the Congress Street Historic District can be found on the city website: <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/1548/Historic-Designations>

STAFF COMMENTS

The Portland Museum of Art is proposing to construct a new site enclosure and associated sitework at 142 Free Street to create an outdoor space in which the Museum plans to host future programming. The Museum has indicated that this project is intended to be temporary until they are ready to apply for and construct a future addition. However, because no timeframe has been given for when the proposed site enclosure might be taken down and the Historic Preservation ordinance does not contemplate approvals for limited time frames, the Board should review this project as it would any permanent intervention.

Staff would also note that while fences or other small site features are typically reviewed as site work, because of the scale and street presence of the proposed enclosure, this project should be reviewed against the Standards for New Construction to ensure that the work is compatible with the context of the Congress Street Historic District. In reviewing the proposed site enclosure, staff have identified two primary areas where the Board is recommended to discuss the design: The composition of the Free Street façade and the choice in materials.

Regarding the Free Street façade, the applicant is proposing to construct a large frame which establishes the outline of a street wall. The enclosure would then be set back from the frame to create a curved plaza along the street. The wall of the enclosure along Free Street is then proposed to be solid except for a large central opening which would contain a gate, providing access to the site. The Board should consider how this proposed facade relates to the patterns of the Congress Street Historic District, in particular with regards to proportion and arrangement of openings and to walls of continuity and enclosure.

The enclosure is largely proposed to be constructed of wood, though construction details provided at a future point will provide further detail on the assembly of the wooden elements. The “roof” is proposed to be an open-air structure made up of cable and fabric. The Board should consider how the proposed materials relate to the character of the typical materials of the Congress Street Historic District in terms of color, texture, and scale. Staff would encourage the Board to focus on the materials of the enclosure as they will be most visible. The “roof” structure will be less prominent, but will have some visibility and presence.

ANALYSIS OF APPLICABLE REVIEW STANDARDS

Subsection 16.6.4 - Standards for review of additions and new construction:

Standard A. Scale and form	
<p><u>1. Height</u> The height of the addition or new construction shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation when viewed from any street or public open space.</p>	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
Yes	The proposed new construction will be a single story, with a height that is equivalent to a typical two-story building. The surrounding context, especially along Free Street, exhibits a variety of building heights ranging from one to seven stories. The proposed two-story height falls within this range of building heights. Additionally, the top of the front façade is proposed to align with a horizontal datum on the Congress Square façade of the Landmark Payson Wing of the Portland Museum of Art.
<p><u>2. Width</u> The width of the addition or new construction shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation when viewed from any street or public open space.</p>	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
Yes	The proposed new construction will fill the width of the subject parcel. The surrounding context features a variety of building widths. Typically, buildings similarly fill the full widths of their parcels, with little to no space between buildings. The proposed structure would follow this pattern, maintaining only a small gap between it and the Payson Wing.
<p><u>3. Proportion of principal facades</u> The relationship of the width to the height of the principal facades shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation when viewed from any street or public open space.</p>	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
Yes	The proposed new construction will feature a primarily horizontal proportion. The surrounding context features a variety of façade proportions, with horizontal facades being very common. The proposed structure is in keeping with the range of proportions found throughout the Congress Street Historic District.

4. Roof shape	
The roof shape of the addition or new construction shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation when viewed from any street or public open space.	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
Yes	The proposed new construction will not feature a solid roof; however, along Free Street, the flat top of the primary façade will present as a flat roof. The side elevation, facing the adjacent parking lot will feature a more dynamic and sweeping roofline. The Congress Street Historic District features a variety of roof forms, with flat roofs being very prevalent. It's also typical for side elevations or secondary facades to feature more varied and dynamic roof lines. The proposed flat-roof-like form at the primary façade is in keeping with the typical roof forms of the surrounding context.
5. Scale	
The size and mass of the addition or new construction in relation to open spaces, windows, doors, porches, and balconies shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation when viewed from any street or public open space.	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
For Board Discussion	The proposed structure will be a single story, but feature a more monumentally-scaled height given the proposed public assembly/institutional use of the site. Larger first stories are common throughout the surrounding context, especially for civic and institutional buildings. The Board should consider whether the size of the doors/openings and other façade elements are of an appropriate scale relative to the overall scale of the façade.

Standard B. Composition of principle facades	
1. Proportion of openings	
The relationship of the width to height of windows and doors shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation.	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
For Board Discussion	The proposed new construction will include one set of vertically proportioned gates/entrances in the Free Street façade and some areas along the side where the walls are lower. The Free Street façade is also proposed to include a curved recessed area right along the street which makes the primary façade read as a single large horizontal opening, up until the more solid wall of the fence/site enclosure. The surrounding context features primarily vertically-proportioned openings; however, more horizontal openings are common in first-floor storefronts and in some groupings of upper-story openings. The Board should consider whether the proposed proportions of these openings along the front façade are appropriate to the surrounding context.

<p><u>2. Rhythm of solids to voids</u> The relationship of solids to voids in the principal facades shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation.</p>	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
For Board Discussion	The proposed new construction does not include openings other than the primary gates/entrance in the Free Street façade and some areas along the side where the walls are lower. The Free Street façade is proposed to include a curved recessed area right along the street which makes the primary façade read as a single large opening, up until the more solid wall of the fence/site enclosure. It is typical for the first floors of buildings in the Congress Street Historic District to include large areas of glass for storefronts. The Board should consider whether the proposed pattern of openings along the front façade is appropriate to the surrounding context or whether additional openings/transparency or areas of solid should be incorporated into the primary façade to better relate to the surrounding context.
<p><u>3. Rhythm of entrances, porches, and other projections or recesses</u> The relationship of entrances, porches, and other projections or recesses to sidewalks shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation.</p>	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
For Board Discussion	The proposed structure will have one central entrance set within a curved, recessed area that occupies the full width of the front façade. Recesses for entrances are common within the Congress Street Historic District, though recesses are typically only big enough to accommodate the entrance doors. Larger recesses are more common on civic and institution buildings. The Board should discuss whether the proposed full-width recessed area is compatible with the patterns of the surrounding context.
<p><u>4. Relationship of materials</u> The relationship of the color and texture of materials (other than paint color) of the principal facades shall be visually compatible with the predominant materials used on the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation.</p>	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
For Board Discussion	The proposed new construction will largely be constructed of wood, with a fabric canopy system covering most of the site. Brick, stone, terracotta, metal, and glass are the most common building materials within the Congress Street Historic District, though wood is often found as a trim material or in other limited capacities. While this standard does not require that the materials themselves should exactly follow the pattern of historic material choices, the Board should consider how the proposed wood relates in color and texture to the historic materials used throughout the district.

Standard C. Relationship to street	
<u>1. Walls of continuity</u>	
Facades and site features, such as masonry walls, fences, and landscape masses, shall, when it is a characteristic of the context, form cohesive walls of enclosure along the street to ensure visual compatibility with the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation.	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
For Board Discussion	The proposed structure will be constructed right along the street; however, the front façade will feature a curved recessed area for its full width. Buildings in the surrounding context are typically built right along the street establishing a very consistent street wall. The primary departures from this pattern are older buildings that pre-date Congress Street’s advent as a commercial corridor, and civic or institutional buildings which sometimes feature plazas or other landscaped areas along the street. The Board should consider whether the proposed structure sufficiently reinforces the street wall of Free Street, and how the proposed recessed area relates to that street wall and the contributing site of Congress Square.
<u>2. Rhythm and spacing along streets</u>	
The relationship of the addition or new construction to the open space between it and adjacent buildings, structures, objects, or sites shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation.	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
Yes	The proposed structure will largely occupy the full width of the site. Properties within the Congress Street Historic District generally fill their full site, leaving little to no space between buildings. The proposed structure follows this pattern of being constructed close to the adjacent property.
<u>3. Directional expression of principal facades</u>	
The addition or new construction shall be visually compatible with the directional character of the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation, whether this be vertical character, horizontal character, or nondirectional character.	
Standard Met?	Staff Comments
Yes	The proposed structure will feature a primarily horizontal expression given the proportions of the primary façade; however, this will be broken up by the columns that frame the bays of the front and side facades. Buildings within the Congress Street Historic District feature a variety of directional expressions with many featuring elements that contrast vertical facades with horizontal detailing and vice versa. The directional expression of the proposed façade is in keeping with the variety of expressions found in the surrounding context.

4. Streetscape, pedestrian improvements

Streetscape and pedestrian improvements and any change in the appearance thereof located adjacent to any addition or new construction shall not be incongruous with the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites of the historic designation.

Standard Met?	Staff Comments
For Board Discussion	The proposed structure will feature a curved, recessed area right off of the street. Buildings in the Congress Street Historic District are primarily constructed right along the street with minimal on-site streetscape amenities. The Board should consider how the proposed recessed area fits with the pattern of the surrounding context, including Congress Square.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Project Summary
2. Plans
3. Materials Narrative



7 CONGRESS EXTENSION (Name TBD)

A Temporary Cultural Annex in the Heart of Portland's Arts District

Located at 142 Free Street | Launching Summer 2026

7 CONGRESS EXTENSION is a temporary civic space from the Portland Museum of Art, transforming a lot near Congress Square into an outdoor hub for art, gathering, and community imagination.

It hosts rotating installations, performances, open-air studios, and workshops—a living sketch of the future: visible, participatory, and always in motion.

Seasonal Programming:

- Rotating **artist commissions, engagement, and workshops with the public**
- **Green space**, rest zones, and pop-up performances
- **Outdoor Office** with ample seating for meeting, lunch, and Free Wi-Fi
- **Third Thursday programming** in partnership with local organizations
- Outdoor installations and **participatory public art**
- **Youth-driven** summer projects and storytelling
- **Community collaborations** with businesses and nonprofits including interested parties such as Creative Portland, City of Portland, Hearts of Pine FC, Portland Squash, and Allagash Brewing and beyond...

Spring (Apr–Jun): Site launch, mural & poetry wall, family workshops

Summer (Jul–Aug): Monthly events, youth projects, live performances, movies

Fall (Sep–Oct): Storytelling, community showcases, Outdoor Office hours

Winter (Nov–Mar): Occasional activations, light-based art

Mission:

To turn a lot into a dynamic public space that connects people through art, ideas, and shared civic life.

Vision:

7 CONGRESS EXTENSION will be a dynamic, temporary public space that is guided by artists and open to all. This site will serve as a testing ground for new ideas; a catalyst for civic life; a renewed investment in Portland's Arts District; and a visible symbol of cultural momentum during a time of transformation.

Guiding Principles:

1. **Artist-Centered:** Artists shape the space and programming
2. **Community-Driven:** Local partnerships and public input are central
3. **Accessible & Inclusive:** Free, low-barrier engagement opportunities
4. **Visible Momentum:** Signals progress toward PMA's future campus

Safe & Sustainable: Built with care for people and environment

Portland Museum of Art

Temporary Community Space

August 19 2025

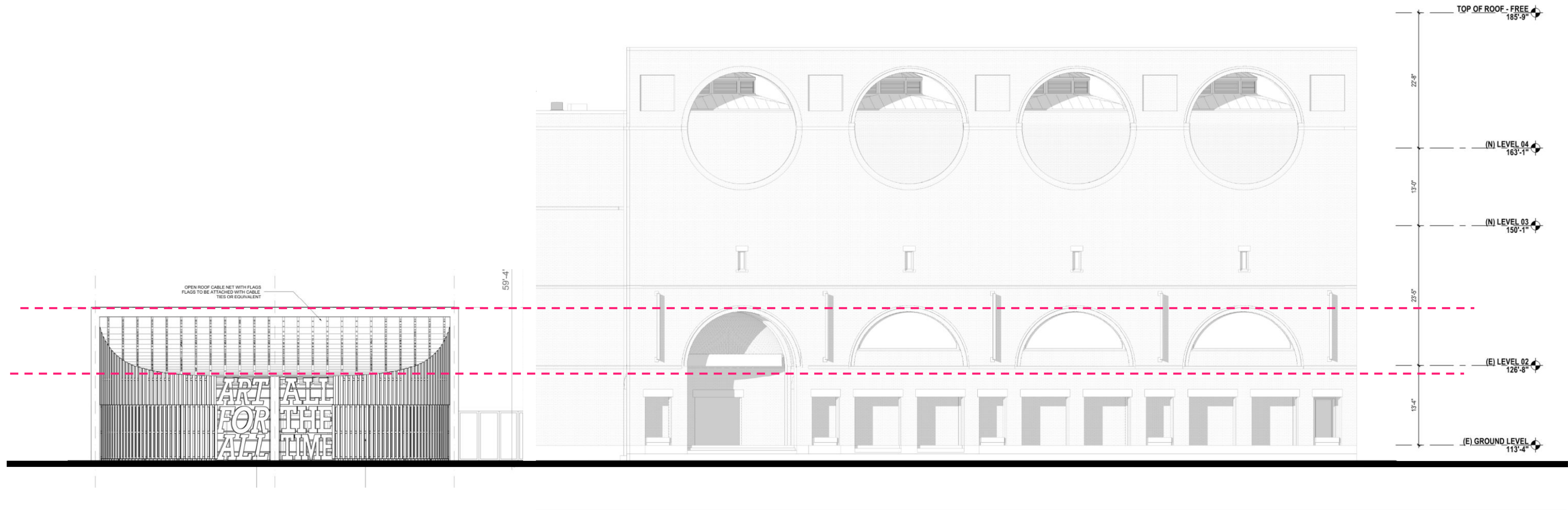


PORTLAND MUSEUM *of* ART

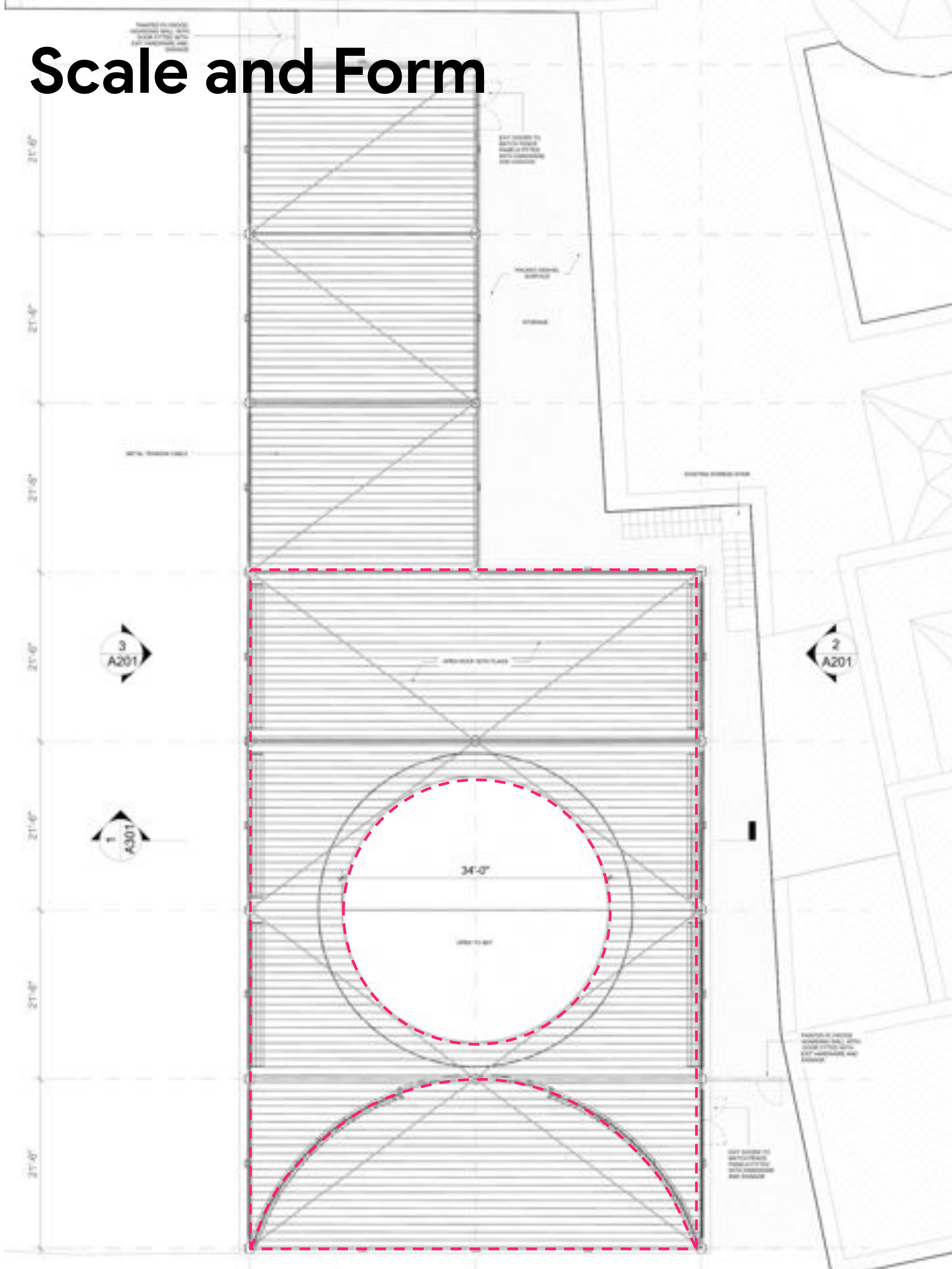
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Scale and Form

The **width and height** of the Temporary Community Space respects the scale and proportions of the arches and openings on the Payson Building's façade. The width of the structure utilizes the site's width to create a street wall consistent with the surrounding urban conditions.

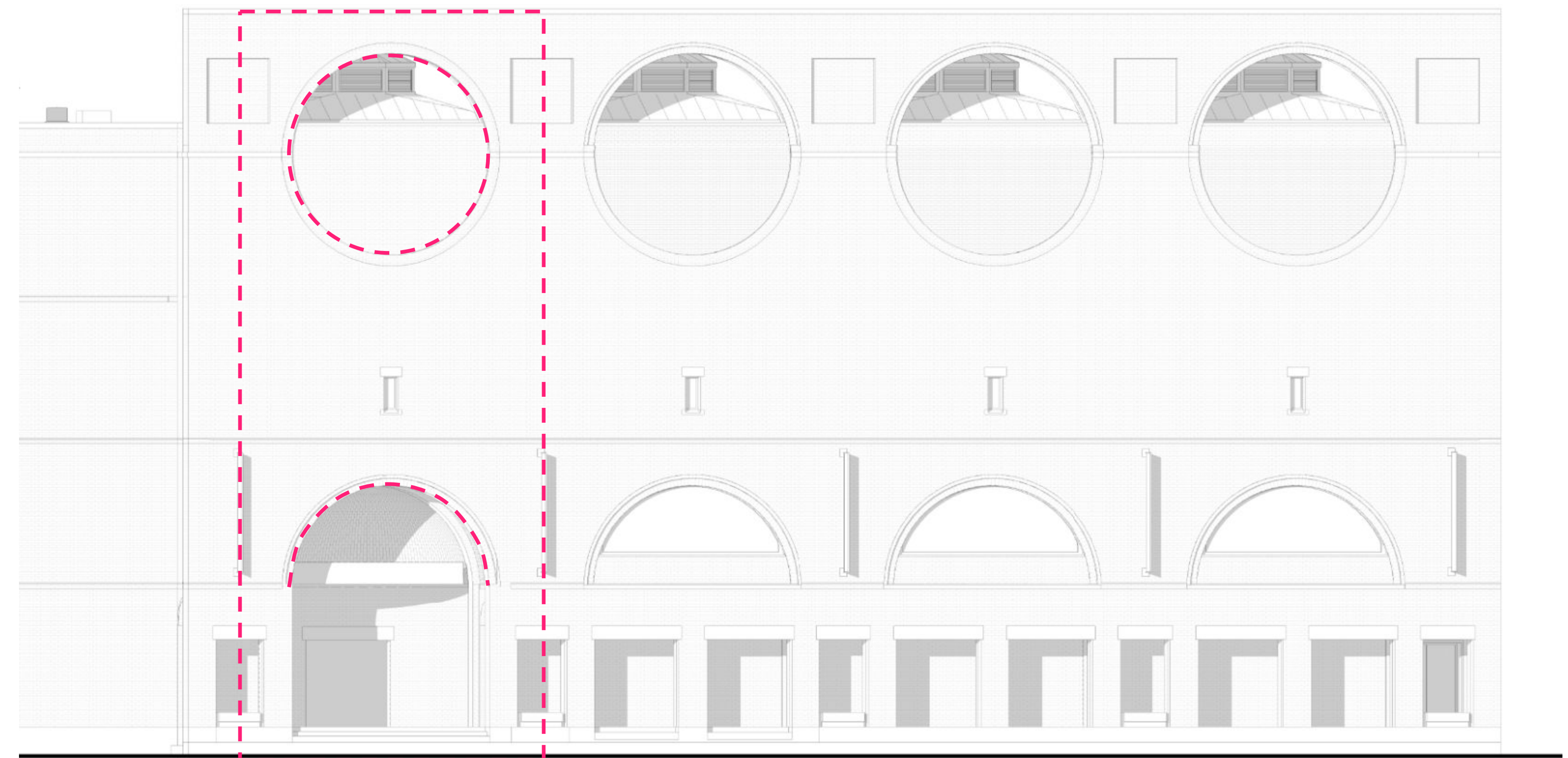


Scale and Form

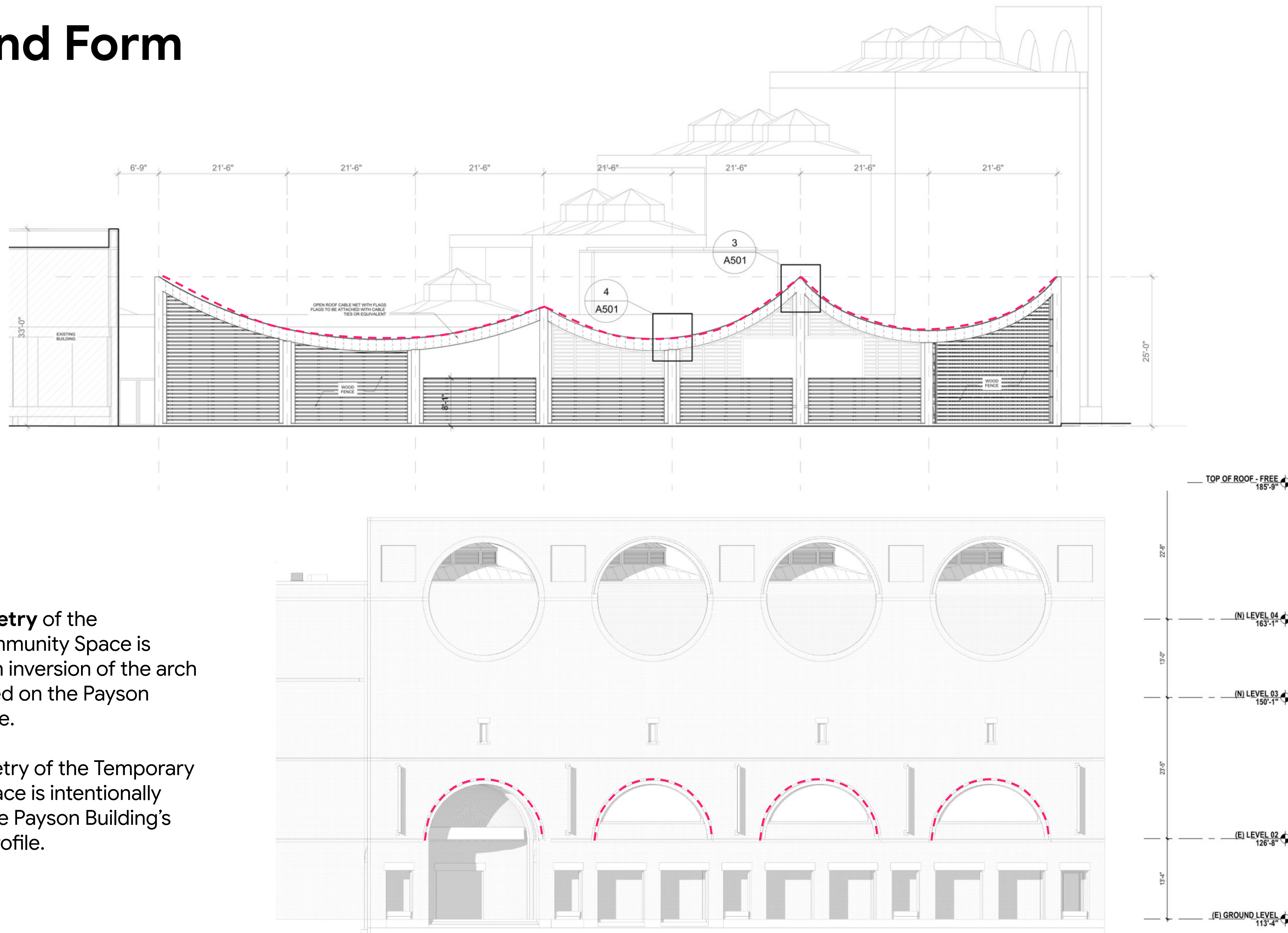


The **plan geometry** of the Temporary Community Space is derived from the underlying circular and arched motifs of the Payson Building's façade.

The structure creates a consistent edge along with property line which is bookended by the brick facades of the wings of the Payson Building.



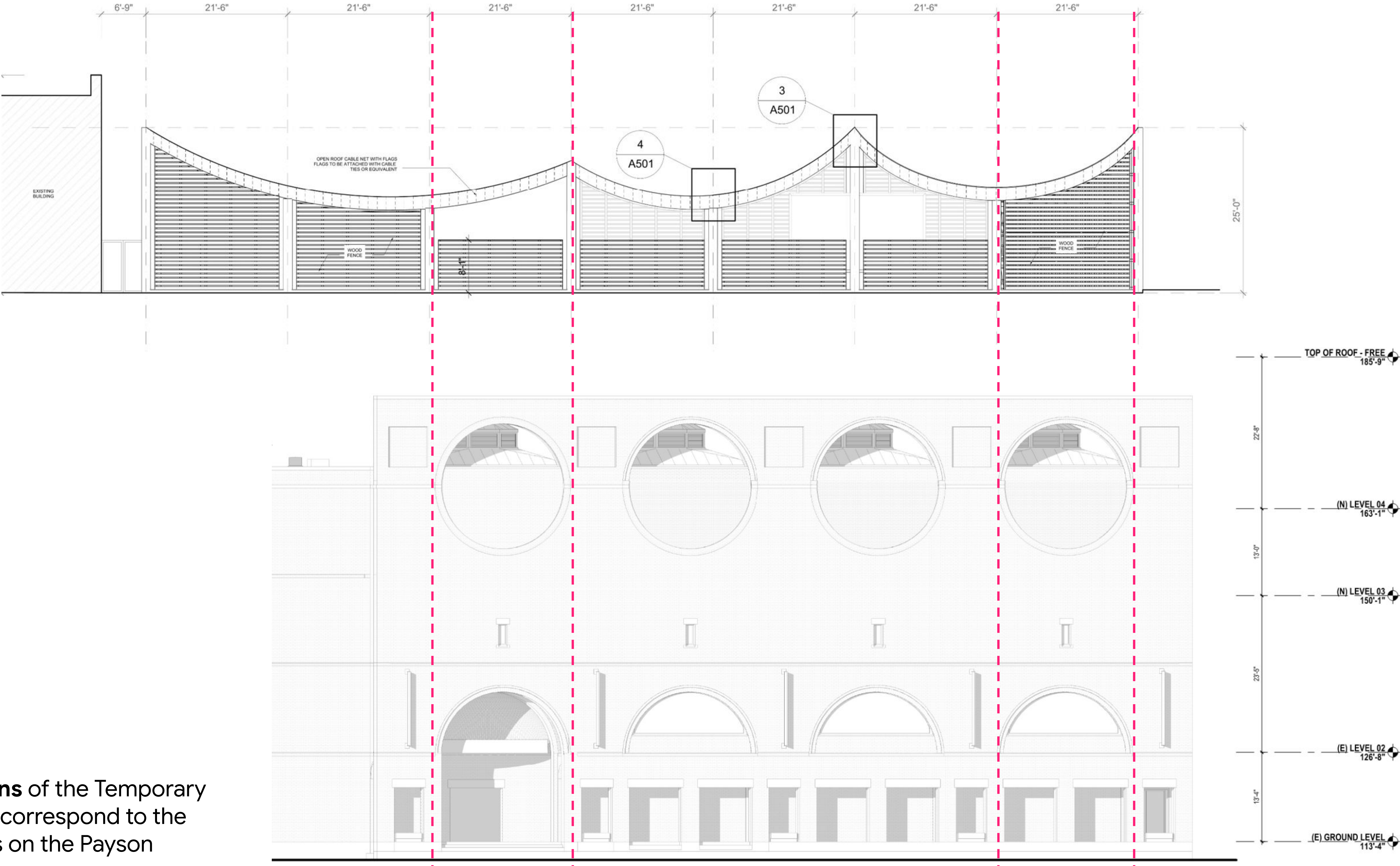
Scale and Form



The **roof geometry** of the Temporary Community Space is conceived as an inversion of the arch forms articulated on the Payson Building's façade.

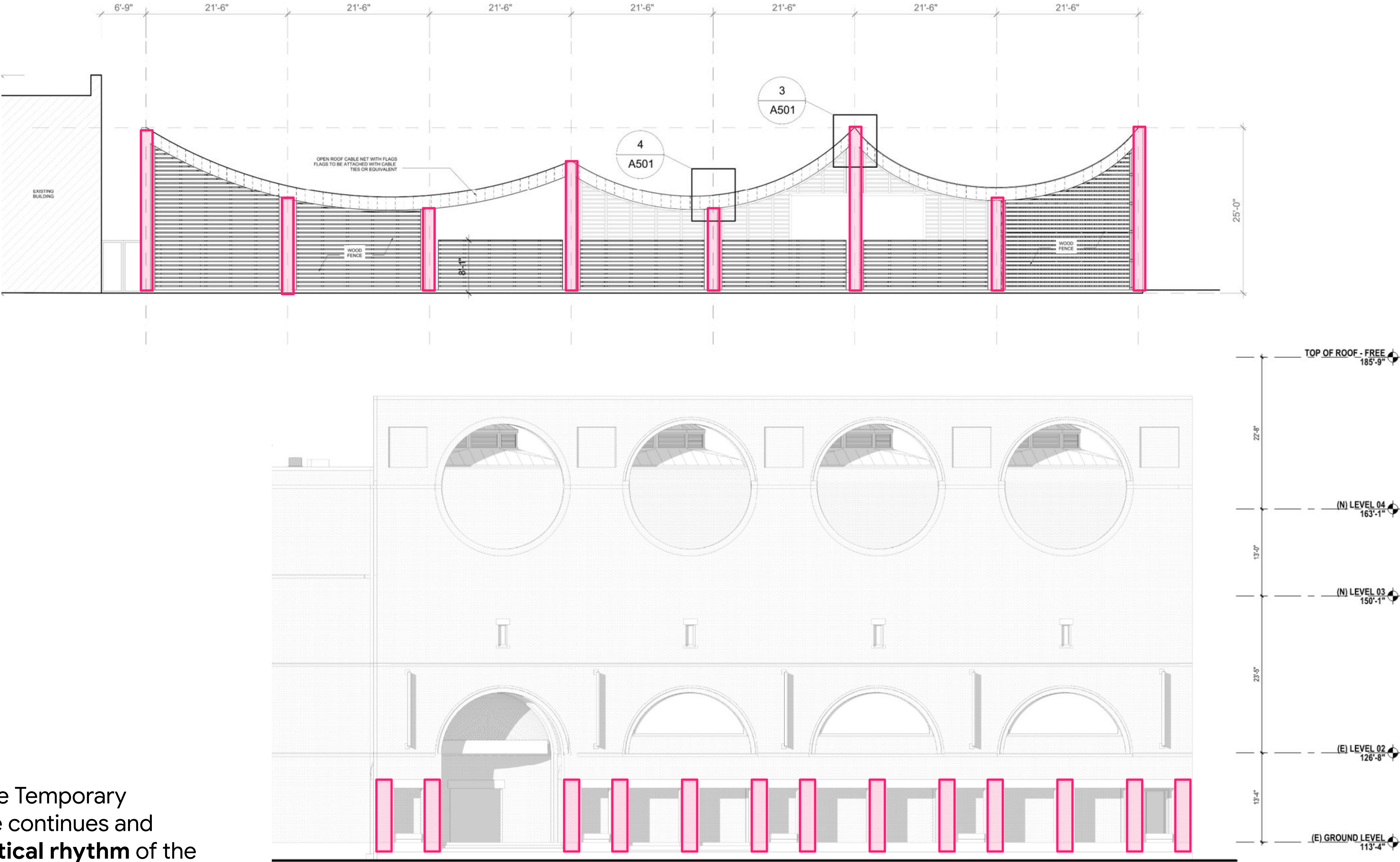
The roof geometry of the Temporary Community Space is intentionally distinct from the Payson Building's stepped roof profile.

Composition of Principal Facades



The **grid dimensions** of the Temporary Community Space correspond to the width of the arches on the Payson Building's façade.

Composition of Principal Facades



The columns of the Temporary Community Space continues and reinforces the **vertical rhythm** of the colonnade on the existing building facade.

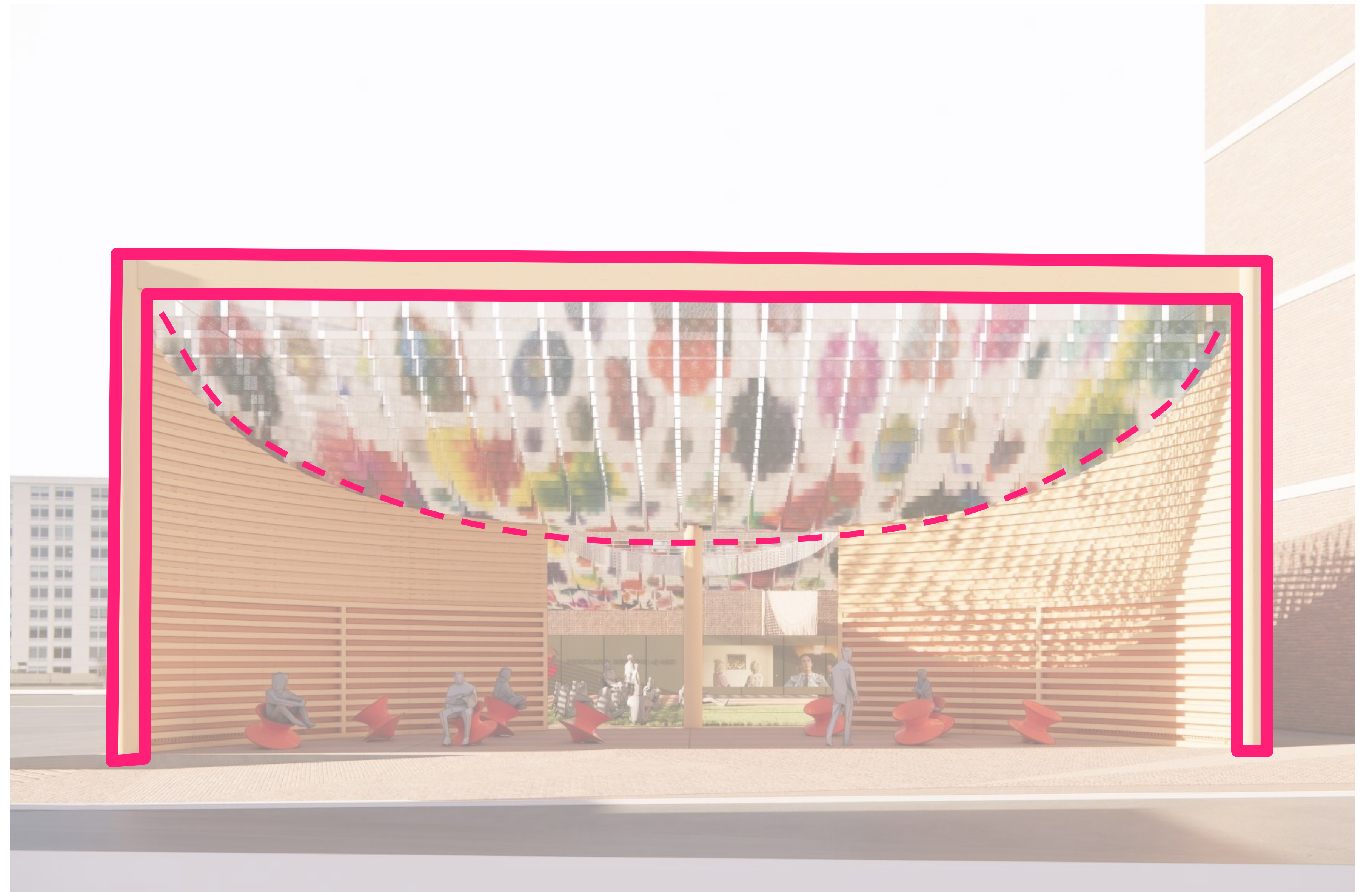
Composition of Principal Facades



The Temporary Community Space projects the rhythm of the existing façade toward the street, continuing the building's **presence along the street**.

Composition of Principal Facades

The timber frame marking the **entrance** of the Temporary Community Space parallels the Payson Building's entrance, both functioning as threshold elements that emphasize entry through a strong rectilinear outline set against larger curved or open forms.



Relationship to Street

A street facing portico provides directionality to the structure. Similar to the Payson Building the Temporary Community Space maintains the street wall while providing a transitional public space.



Relationship to Street



Free Street is a collection of buildings with varying heights and a number of parking lots that break up the street wall. The proposed Temporary Community Space will remain consistent with this character and acknowledge the condition presented by the adjacent parking by introducing a wall and roof profile as seen in building next door.



Relationship to Street

When seen from the intersection of Congress and Free Streets the proposed Temporary Community Space will remain consistent with the existing character of a variable street wall while aligning with a datum set by the Payson Building.



Relationship to Street

The character of Free Street varies considerably along its length with many different architectural expressions and materials. The proposed Temporary Community Space is consistent with the street's character but as a structure maintains a single material for its walls and structure and second material for its roof.



Thank you



PORTLAND MUSEUM *of* ART

LEVER

LEVER

Date: 8 October 2025

Project: Portland Museum of Art Interim Community Space / Project ID: HP-00038-2025

Re: 142 Free Street – Materials Narrative

Primary Structure

- **Columns** – Maine sourced lathed round timber columns
 - Species: spruce pine fir
 - Color: natural finish
 - Texture: smooth
- **Beams** - Maine sourced
 - Species: spruce pine fir
 - Color: natural finish
 - Texture: smooth

Fence Panels

- **Open fence panels** -
 - Species: cedar planks, hemlock posts
 - Color: Natural finish
 - Texture: smooth
- **Curved solid panels**
 - Species: cedar planks, hemlock posts
 - Color: natural finish
 - Texture: smooth
- **Solid fences**
 - Species: plywood
 - Color: painted black
 - Texture: board and batten.

Flooring

- **Cedar Decking**
 - Species: Cedar
 - Color: Natural finish
 - Texture: Smooth
- **Synthetic Turf (inside structure)**
 - Color: Various
 - Texture: Turf like

Gates

- Entry gate
 - Material: painted wood with metal substructure
 - Color: Various
 - Texture: Smooth
- Security gate
 - Material: wood with metal substructure
 - Color: Natural finish
 - Texture: Smooth

Canopy

- Material: steel cables, nylon rope, nylon flags
- Color: Various