

CAPLESJEFFERSON**ARCHITECTS**PC

Heritage Health and Housing Headquarters



HERITAGE HEALTH AND HOUSING HEADQUARTERS

New York, New York

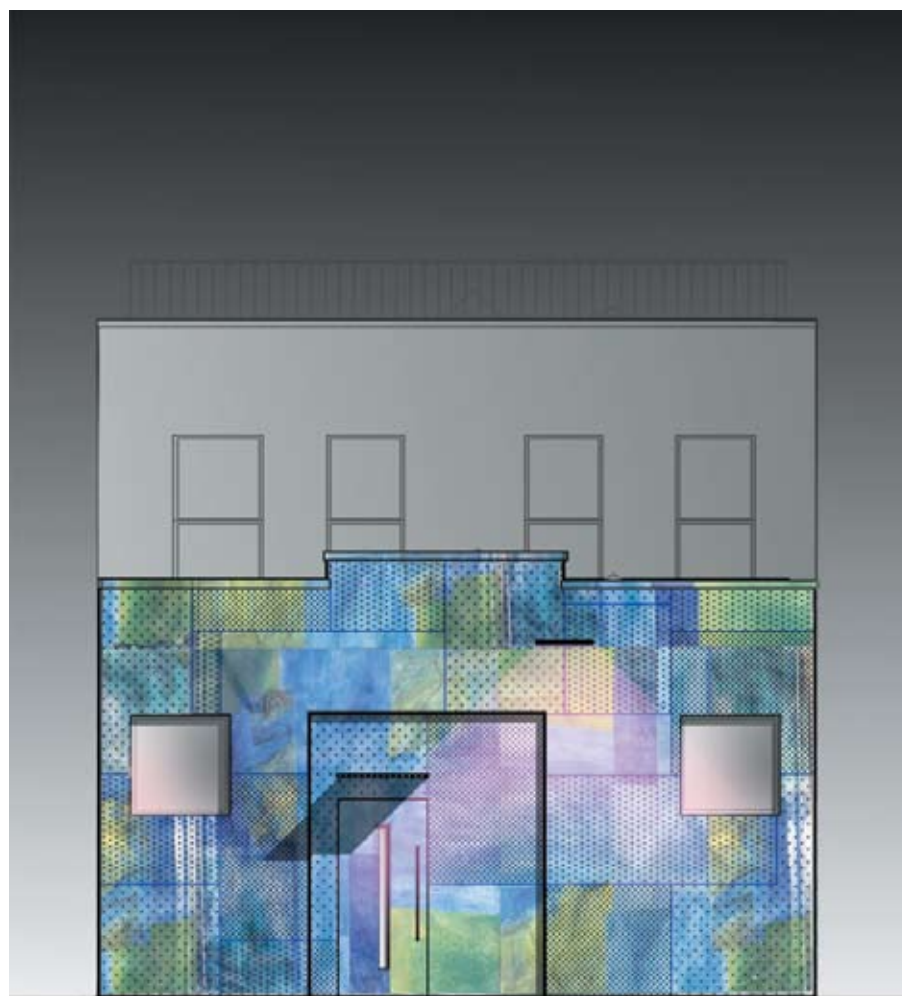
2002

For the sainted people who do the work of this agency—housing and social services for ex-convicts with a witches’ brew of addiction and mental health challenges. We wanted to create an environment that is inviting externally and soothing inside. The exterior (an old garage) is a patchwork installation by artist Nathan Joseph, proclaiming its joyous repurposing to the neighborhood. The landlocked interior is pierced by four light shafts that bring focused light to all corners and levels of the building. The small apertures of the skylights allow light to track around, revealing the time of the day, the weather, the miracle of that moment of time in the day’s light.

The client wanted an environment that ‘looks like us’ and that offers the workers some moments of order and hope. Patchwork on the outside, serene on the inside. Accepts as a given the crude construction characteristic of low-end New York projects. Much of the construction had to be field- directed, as the contractor could not read drawings.

The dark interior of the narrow block-thru building is pierced by 4 light shafts. Light comes in ‘spots’ not in ‘floods’, through carefully placed small skylights, so that its passage is seen and changes in light quality are quickly perceived. The entire building is an abstract sundial as the progression of the sun across the sky registers through the light wells. Our clients have gotten into the habit of stopping work everyday at a given hour to watch the light changing as the sun sets.

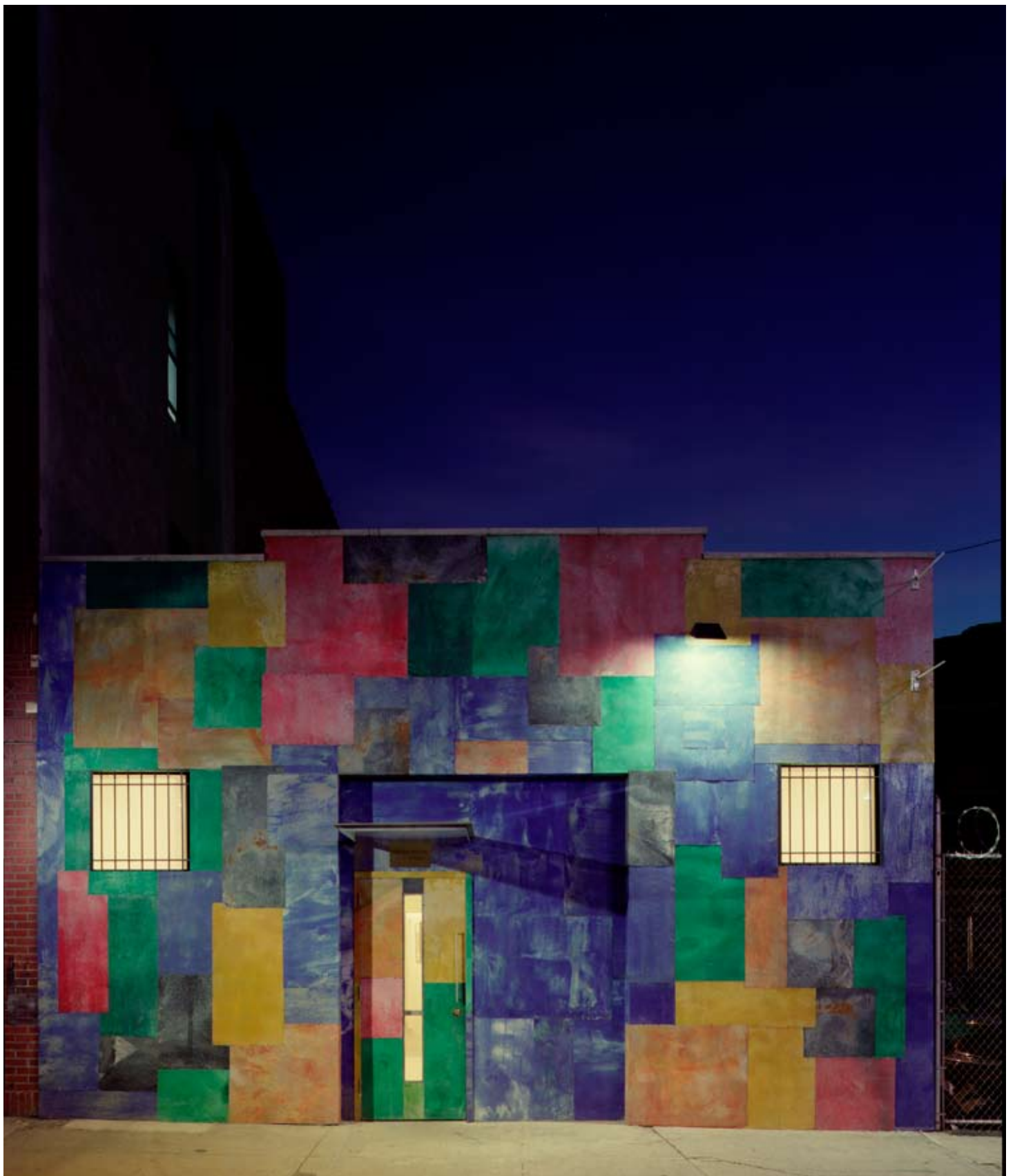
The tranquil all-white headquarters’ interior was meant to counterpose the agitated state of the Heritage’s clients, individuals who are struggling to become contributing members of the community. However, when the facade of the building was discussed, the organization felt that their mission would best be served by a bold design. In collaboration with artist Nathan Slate Joseph, we designed and constructed a colorful collage-like skin and canopy that was applied to the building’s facade on 127th street. The colorful facade reflects the culture of the organization - Heritage’s bold and active optimism.



Exterior collage in collaboration with artist Nathan Slate Joseph

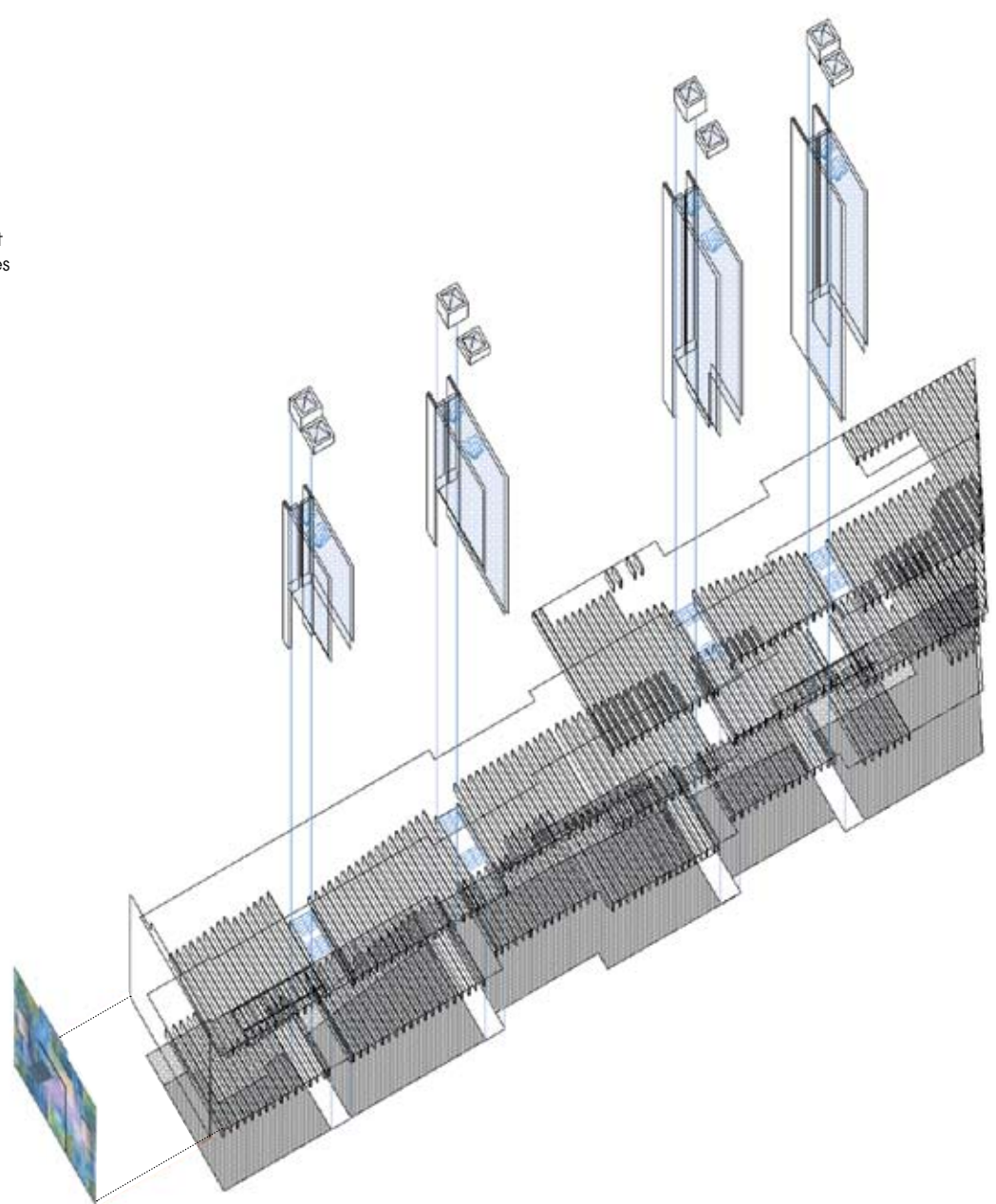


Right: Back in the garage days
Below: Repurposed facade

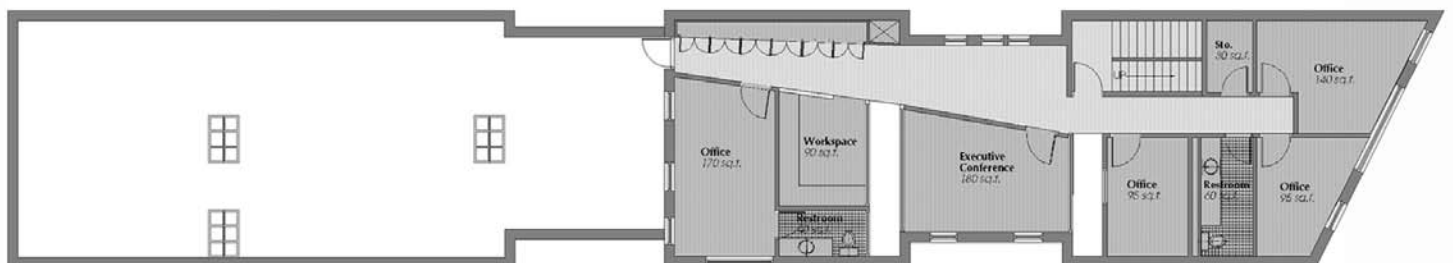


Opposite (clockwise from top left)

View up light shaft; Office interior; Office workspace at light shafts; Office interior light activity; Natural light between office volumes



Axonometric: Disposition of Light Shafts



Second Floor



First Floor



Basement





Top: Interior slot;
Bottom: Lunch room with light shafts;
Opposite: Lunchroom at twilight





