

meet the moment

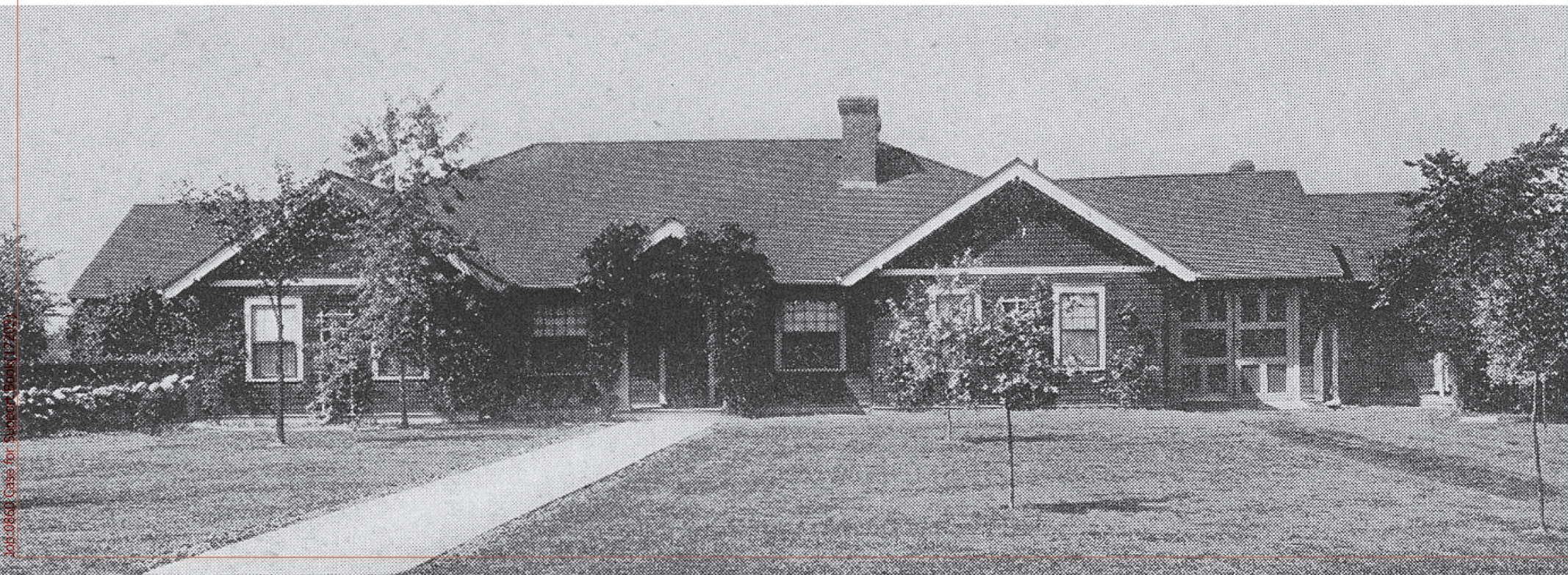
RUFFING DESIGN HOUSE

A NEW LEARNING MODEL FOR DESIGN + DISCOVERY



“ The main tenet of **design thinking** is empathy for the people you’re trying to design for. Leadership is exactly the same thing – building empathy for the people you are entrusted to help. ”

- David M. Kelley, Co-Founder of IDEO, Professor at Stanford University, School of Design Thinking



Imagine a bold new model for design and discovery...

The campaign for Ruffing Design House is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for our community. We will proudly build on our momentum of positive change, growth, and resilience with a bold expansion of our campus. Inspired by “design thinking,” a human-centered and collaborative approach to problem solving, we will use a growth mindset to creatively solve complex problems in a rapidly shifting landscape. Ruffing Design House will usher in a new era for Montessori education, blending design and discovery for every Ruffing student and family – for today, tomorrow, and generations to come.



Meeting the moment together...

Our campus expansion is a groundbreaking initiative that will be the catalyst for the next generation of Ruffing students who will work and live in a future beyond our imagination. Ruffing Design House will amplify our Montessori curriculum, culture, and campus, delivering an immersive, sustainable, age-appropriate, educational experience.

As we cultivate community and spark innovation, Ruffing Design House will feature:

- ✦ 5,300 square foot campus expansion
- ✦ State-of-the-art design labs for science, technology, engineering, arts, and math
- ✦ Ruffing Design House Program Manager
- ✦ Community space for indoor gatherings of up to 70 people
- ✦ Innovation lab with 3D printers, laser cutters, robotics, videography, digital recording, and coding capabilities
- ✦ Fabrication lab with sewing machines, looms, and computers for digital pattern making
- ✦ Zero waste workshop with power and hand tools for bike repair, woodworking, and restoration
- ✦ Collaborative learning spaces for academic and hands-on courses, seminars, and sessions
- ✦ Writer's den for inspiration, collaboration, and expanded points of view

- 1959** Cleveland Montessori Association founded
- 1965** Cleveland Heights location purchased
- 1971** Cleveland Montessori Association became Ruffing Montessori School
- 1972** Elementary classrooms constructed and opened
- 1982** Middle School and Summer Ruffing It! launched
- 1986** Gymnasium and arts addition completed
- 2006** Toddler Community opened and ISACS Accreditation achieved
- 2007** Campus redevelopment project completed
- 2010** LEED certification achieved (first in NE Ohio)
- 2013** Stormwater Learning Lab constructed
- 2016** Middle School renovated and Toddler Community expanded
- 2017** Ruffing Design House and its acreage purchased
- 2021** Outdoor Learning Environment opened
- 2022** New Toddler Community classrooms completed



Innovative, sustainable restoration

In keeping with our commitment to green practices, Ruffing Design House will feature:

- + Airtight AeroBarrier biodegradable powder insulation (first in NE Ohio)
- + Sixty Douglas fir trees from the original house framing (new lumber would take forty to sixty years to grow)
- + Recycled and reused building materials, exterior pavers, and flooring materials
- + Careful, sustainable demolition and donated doors and radiators
- + Fossil free HVAC and hot water systems
- + Solar energy and photovoltaics electrical
- + LED lighting and low-flow plumbing fixtures
- + Low VOC (volatile organic compounds) paints and flooring

Building reuse offers greater environmental savings than demolition and new construction. It can take up to 80 years for a new energy efficient building to overcome, through efficient operations, the climate change impact created by its construction.

- Preservation Green Lab, National Trust for Historic Preservation



“In essence, Ruffing Design House will be exponentially more than the sum of its parts, and the process of getting there will be an invaluable shared experience that will live on through all who are touched by it. Life is a constant interplay between vision and reality. Ruffing Design House is the result of the school having a vision and making it a reality.”

– Michelle Kolbe, evoDOMUS, COO, Architectural Design, Co-Founder





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“ Dr. Montessori recommended that an area of the Elementary school classroom have ‘technology of the times’ so that children would learn to use it. This suggests that if she were to set up an Elementary classroom today, she would put a sample computer or two in the Elementary.

At issue here, as I see it, is not what she would do, but to what extent and under what circumstances computers can help children toward leading meaningful lives as useful, contributing members to society. These should be the criteria in making educational decisions. ”

- Angeline Stoll Lillard, *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*



“ When you’re at school, you’re building the architecture of your mind. ”

- Solange Denervaud, Neuroscientist,
Centre Hospitalier Universitaire
Vaudois, Switzerland, Former
Montessori Teacher

Students as creators, inventors, innovators, repairers, and makers for life

When thinking about concepts learned through hands-on experience, children's brain scans indicate increased activity in motor-related and sensory parts of the brain.

Ruffing Design House will propel our students forward in new and dynamic ways, combining tried-and-true Montessori methods with future-ready design thinking. As a visionary innovator who dared to reimagine how students learn and teachers guide, Dr. Maria Montessori could not have predicted the advancements of the last 116 years and likely would have continued to create new learning opportunities to enhance outcomes. In a modern, fast-paced world, children and adolescents need time and space to create and learn through intentional hands-on work. As we blend the best of Montessori practices with design thinking and self-expression, Ruffing Design House will help students build real-world exploration skills that they will use in their future homes and learning environments.



“The Montessori philosophy emphasizes independence and experiential learning. Having a space dedicated towards hands-on, personalized, and self-directed pursuits with the flexibility to create and lead the projects that interest and challenge me as an individual would enrich my learning journey so much.”

- Anya Ustin, Ruffing Class of 2023



Intentional space for curious, self-guided learners to explore and engage in dynamic design thinking

According to a Gallup research report, students who study in a creative and technology-based environment are more successful at solving problems, thinking critically, and succeeding at standardized tests.

We believe everyone has the capacity to be imaginative and innovative. Through Ruffing Design House, we reimagine the classroom of meaningful work using the tools of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Ruffing needs dedicated, immersive spaces to teach future-ready skills and to help learners of all ages take risks, spark new ideas, and collaboratively seek solutions. Through the development of both hard engineering skills (electronics, 3D modeling, 3D printing, robotics) and soft engineering skills (creativity, prototyping, research, analytical skills), Ruffing Design House empowers our students to be changemakers. Through independent and collaborative projects, they will have the knowledge and agency to develop systems and solutions that will meaningfully impact our planet.



“The new Ruffing Design House is going to be special. I cannot wait for my girls to see what we’ve all built and imagined for them and to get in there and use ALL of it. Nothing pleases my girls more than creating, crafting, or fixing something around our own house. I’m constantly amazed at just how much they’re capable of doing – and Ruffing Design House will unleash so much more! Just being trusted with something new is so empowering for children. That Ruffing Design House will boost Montessori, design-based learning, and design thinking to new heights? Well, I’m a bit giddy.”

– Seth Engstrom, Trustee, Current Ruffing Parent



Design thinking, tinkering, and fabricating deepen science, technology, engineering, art, and math skills

- + 70% of technology lab students earn higher grades and have better attendance
- + STEAM-infused learning with digital fabrication helps students learn faster
- + 76% of fabrication lab students feel more confident solving STEAM problems

As we navigate social, technological, and global shifts, we need new methods and models to explore innovation for complex challenges. Solutions to the challenges our students will face are not contained in a single lesson. The future will belong to those with the ability to think and collaborate in real time. Our state-of-the-art Montessori-inspired learning labs will foster adaptive and formative growth. Ruffing Design House will provide a foundation for our students to understand and apply physics, math, spatial reasoning, and human-centered design concepts which will help them change the world.



“Children and adolescents will learn how to sew and build their own kites in the Innovation and Fab Labs to bring geometry to life. When we’re graphing lines on a coordinate plane and studying triangles, we can take our kites outside and fly them, estimating how high the kite is in the air by using our knowledge of triangles and how to calculate the length of a hypotenuse. I love the idea that our kids will have the opportunity to answer the ever-present ‘When am I going to use this?’ question that occurs in math.”

- Annie Ericson, Math Specialist

- + Statistics from ScienceDirect Hackerspace



An inspiring learning environment curated by a diverse group of community partners

Community service is linked with personal, social, academic, and cognitive development that builds action and empathy

Community service increases GPA scores, homework time, and student-teacher interaction by 50%

In collaboration with community partners, Ruffing Design House paves the way as the hub for creative thought leaders. Real-world ideas are brought to life through Experts in Residence, alumni, and community members. Students develop original, entrepreneurial thinking to better prepare them for the future. By learning how to conduct research and solve problems in a larger social cultural context, we reimagine what it means for our students to be prepared for their future, making a meaningful impact in their communities for generations to come.

“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”

- Margaret J. Wheatley, Writer, Teacher, Speaker, and Management Consultant

+ Statistics from National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) and Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers



“ Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. ”

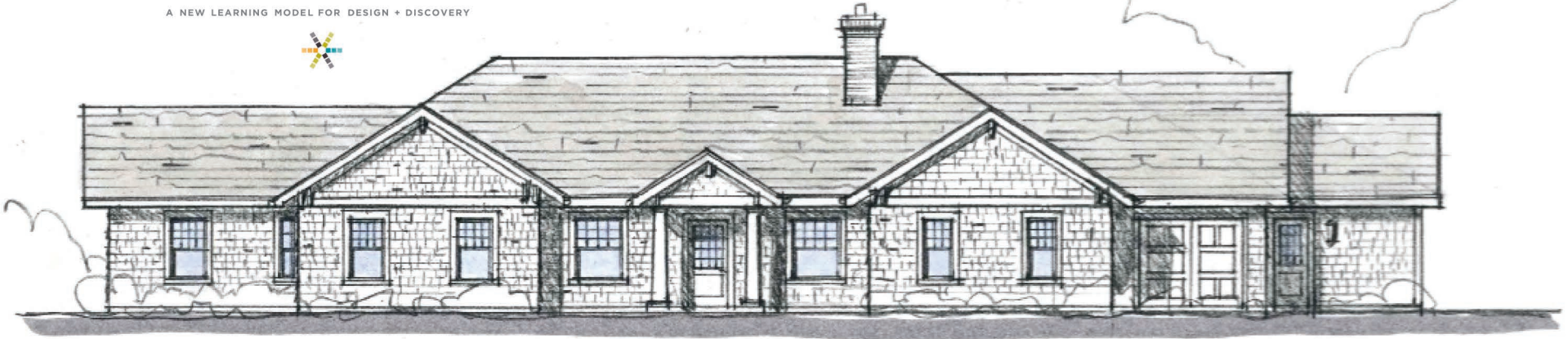
- Margaret Mead, Cultural Anthropologist



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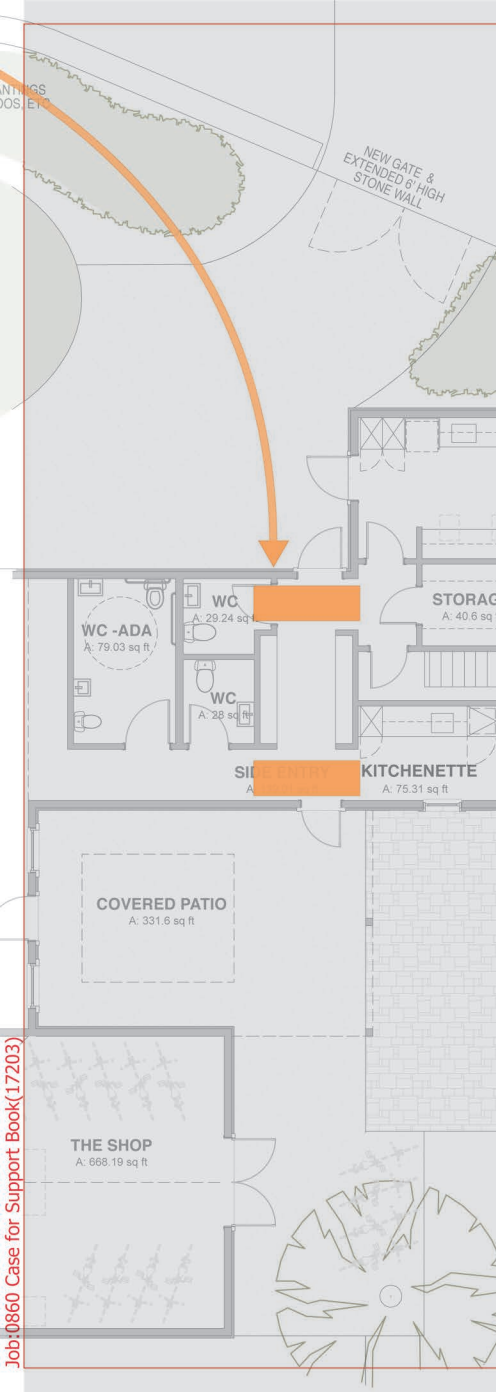
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“Since 1959, Ruffing Montessori has committed to leading Montessori education. We know that when young people – from toddlers to adolescents – are given a dynamic environment with old and new tools to be creators, innovators, inventors, designers, and change agents, they will do remarkable things. I can only begin to imagine what they’ll do in Ruffing Design House – a new-to-the-world Montessori creative space like no other that will spark imagination, design thinking, discovery, and inspire the joy of learning and leading in a modern, evolving world.”

Kathie Freer, Head of School, Ruffing Montessori School



CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP



Kathie Freer



Chris Haffke



Rebecca N. Holland



David H. Lavelle



John Newman '86



Katie Wozniak

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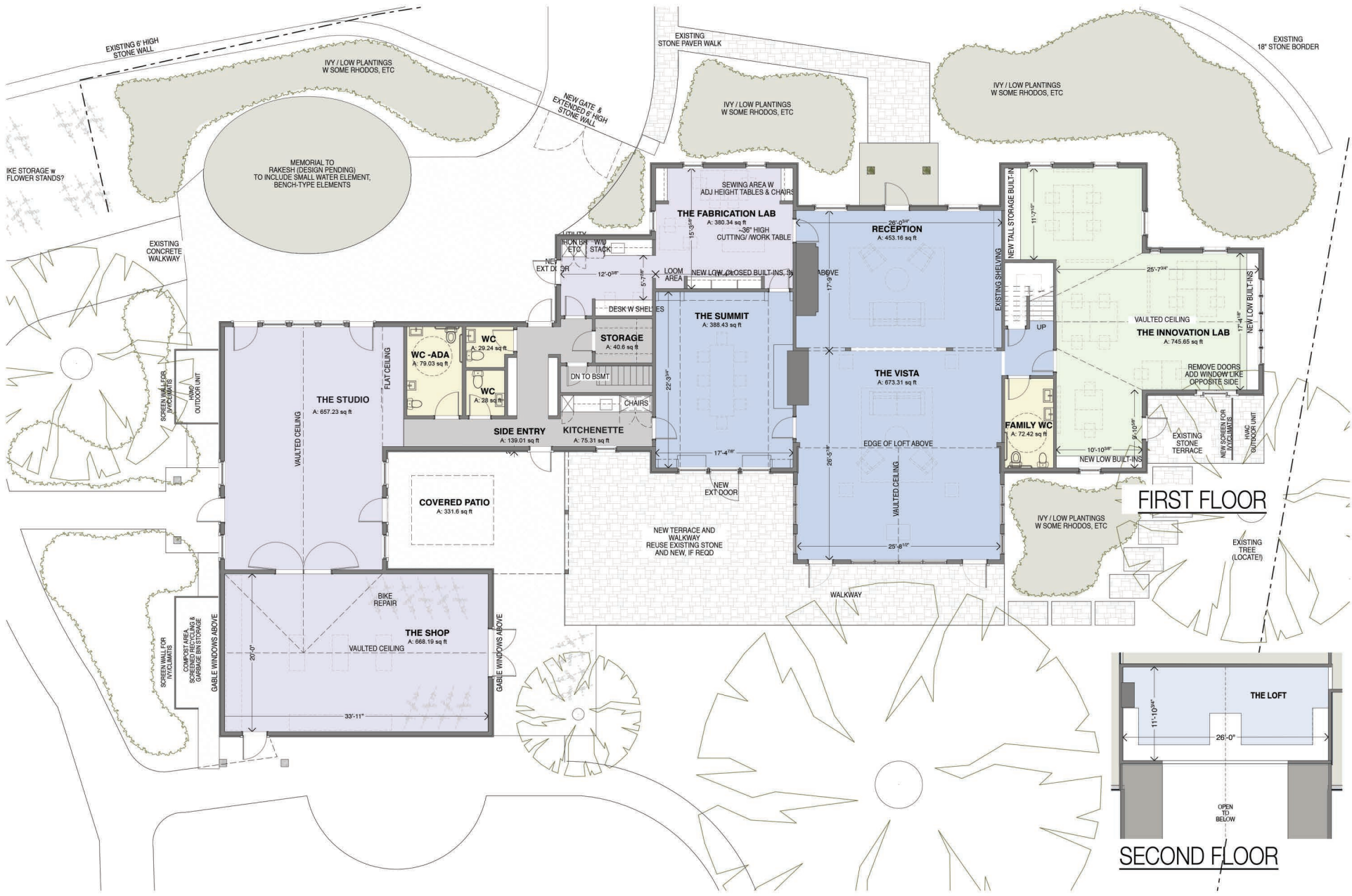
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Advisory Architect

Michelle Kolbe, evoDOMUS

Builder

Payne & Tompkins





Designing and discovering the future together with Ruffing Design House

With your help, Ruffing Design House will be the creative catalyst for generations of students, families, and partners who want to make a difference. Our Montessori-inspired creative space is designed to deliver an immersive educational experience like no other.

Your philanthropic investment in Ruffing Design House gives our students the opportunity to grow as visionary, future-ready learners and change agents. They will bring innovative ideas to life in an interconnected and rapidly changing world through their own designs and discoveries.

To get involved, contact Kathie Freer at kathief@ruffingmontessori.net or call 216.321.7571.



“The children of today will make all the discoveries of tomorrow...they will improve what has been done to make fresh discoveries. They must make all the improvements in houses, cities, communications, methods of production, etc. that are to be made. The future generations must know not only how to do what we can teach them, they must be able to go a step further.”

- Dr. Maria Montessori, Italian Physician and Educator

“ I wonder what would happen if instead of waking up every day going to school learning yet another formula or piece of information, kids would wake up every day to go to school to invent something new, every day a new invention, every day a new idea, every day something that can become a big idea – I wonder what would happen...”

- Paulo Blikstein, TEDx Manhattan Beach, FabLab@School, Stanford University



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