

Creating Safe Spaces for Women Through Architecture and Interior Design

Expressed Through the Design of a Queer Women’s Bar

Introduction

Safe Spaces are so important to marginalized communities. These spaces have been severely lacking for queer women. There are currently around 1,000 bars for cisgender gay men and 15 for queer women across the entirety of the United States of America. This research explores the design of a Queer Women’s Bar and how it can become a safe space.

There is currently a movement called the Lesbian Bar Project that seeks to increase these safe spaces and keep them in place. A big problem they have is getting people to keep coming back. This research explores that and how a bar could be designed to make it safe, inviting, and fun.

Methods

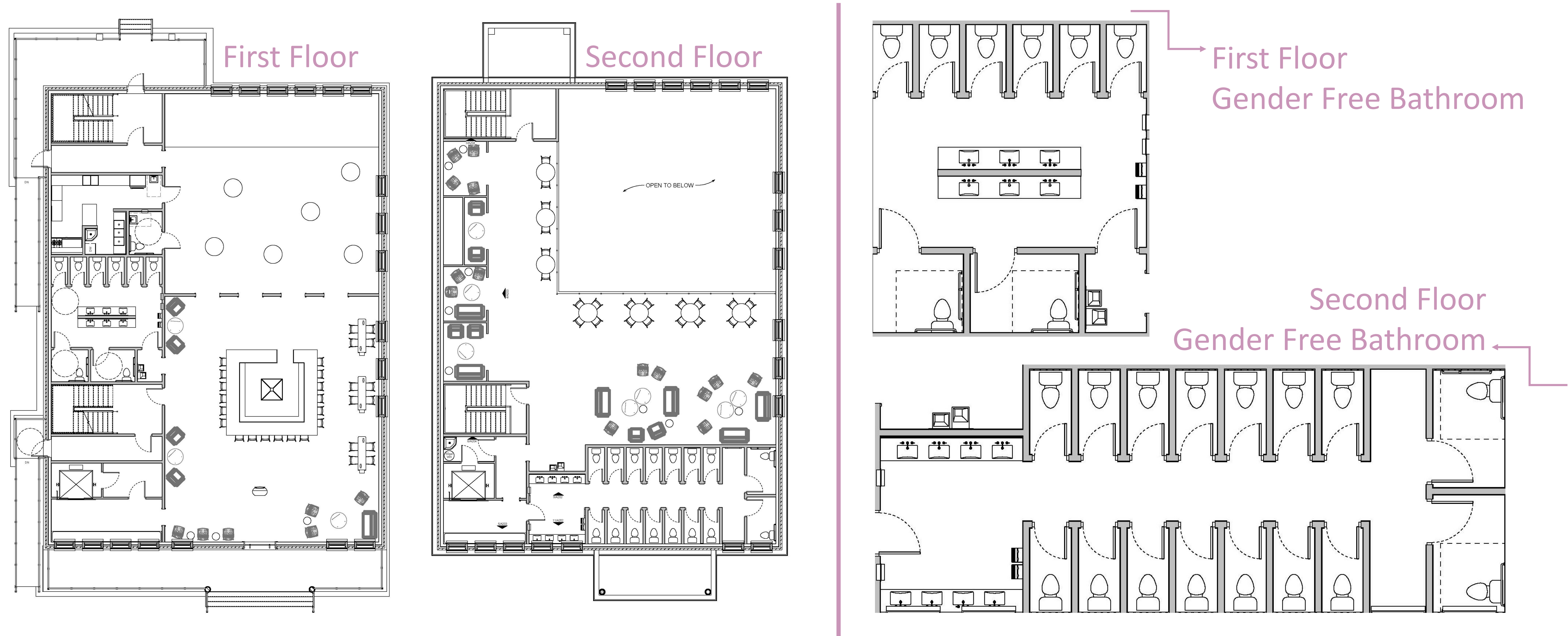
To start I researched current gay, lesbian, and queer bars and what made them successful and what did not.

- I determined there was a need for:
- Proper gender-neutral/gender free bathrooms
 - An inviting exterior and atmosphere
 - An element that brings people into the bar

I designed two gender free bathroom spaces that feature enclosed stalls with a central sink area. Each door has a vacancy latch to allow for ease of use. They both have 2 ADA accessible stalls and ADA accessible sinks.

The exterior was designed with the history of queer bars in mind and reflects the traditional and unsuspecting architecture. It is paired with a large neon sign that invites people in and gives information on what it is.

The interior includes a stage that could be used to host weekly events, concerts, drag shows, and open mic nights.



Space Planning

Space Planning is crucial in creating safe spaces. I wanted to really focus on how people interact with this bar. The front entry opens to the main bar area that features a 360-degree bar and has a straight view to the dance floor and elevator lounge. This gives someone entering the opportunity to scope out the important parts of the venue immediately, allowing them to feel as if they know what to expect and can encourage excitement towards this safe space. These areas can also be seen from the lounge seating on the second floor.

The other main part of the space plan is the gender free bathrooms. Many queer women feel out of place in binary spaces and creating these gender free bathrooms helps gets rid of any unnecessary discomfort that may be present in the average bar spaces. As mentioned in the method section, these restrooms consist of many fully enclosed and separated stalls. This allows for complete privacy within this gender free space. This is also a luxury that makes people feel safer and more secure in any environment. Each door has a vacancy latch as well for easier use.

Conclusion

There is a drastic difference in the number of safe spaces for men and women. These spaces must be designed with the female experience in mind, and in the case of this bar, the queer woman experience. It is important that these safe spaces are also designed to succeed as a business in order to be able to maintain their existence. The stage and aesthetic exterior and interior paired with the inclusive areas and open floorplan create the ideal safe space, but there is much work to be done in terms of the amount of people willing to invest their time and money into making these spaces a reality.



UtahStateUniversity

Student Name | Riley Robbins
Faculty Mentor | Susie Tibbitts

