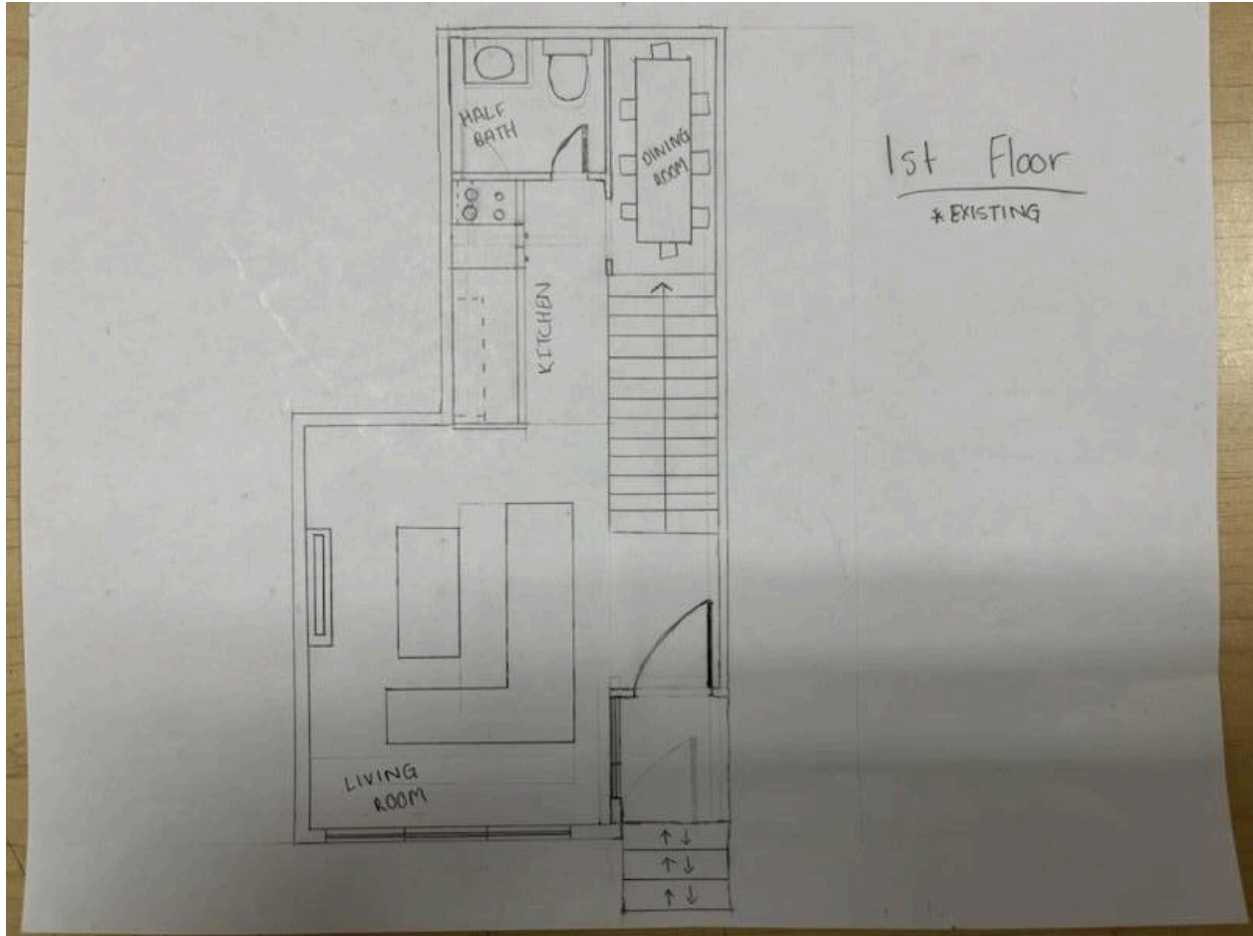


“Refining to Designing” by Joel Kissoon

“Life is the sum of all your choices” is what my father would always tell me ever since I can remember things. Though as I got older this quote started to have a serious meaning because time was coming close to deciding where I want to be in life, what do I want to make of myself. My father is a blue collar worker, he’s a general contractor and carpenter. Like the normal father and son bonding time at a lake catching fish, my bonding time with my father was being his handyman at work, which meant helping dispose of garbage and fetch material, the boring stuff. Though every time I was at the jobsite I took the opportunity to explore and investigate, the one thing that caught my attention was that ANSI D paper standing on a special pedestal. You must be thinking what in the world is ANSI D, well it translates to 22 x 34 inches. That paper I was so interested in were blueprints to the house that was being built. Every new location I went to had a different looking blueprint, my curiosity struck more. My dad would always let me take these sets of drawings home with me after the shift so he and I could study them, though it became more than studying. I started to create my own using my extra graph notebook that I should have used for 7th grade math, but didn’t care.



The end of 8th grade was on the horizon, which meant High School was next. During my process of researching for potential contenders, the same question popped up again in my head: what do I want to make of myself? Drawing blueprints was something I was still doing frequently, so I thought to myself, how can I make this into a future career? I am always thinking ahead and planning my future early. I continued my search for schools until my Dad told me about a High school/trade school located in Ozone Park that had an Architecture program. This school was my potential gateway to making my plans a reality. On that same night I did the most intensive research on that school, from teachers to requirements, and alumni. This institution was meant for me to achieve my goals, The High School for Construction Trades, Engineering and Architecture was meant for me. The time came for applying, and oh boy I was ready. My grades

were perfect and I had all the necessary requirements needed. Openhouse to the trade school was also going on, so I booked a ticket and just like that I was taking a tour of the building where I was going to be spending the next 4 years of my life creating the best memories. The 4 years that I spent there were the best 4 years of my life. I had the opportunity to learn and refine my dream trade, meet incredible mentors and great friends. Though trade school wasn't the only way I started my career; during trade school I worked at a small Architecture firm in Richmond hill as an intern but it wasn't the best experience due to poor leadership skills.



Though, my time there wasn't wasted as I developed a portfolio and learned about the stress factors that came with being an Architect. In a blink of an eye, High School was now coming to an end, and college was next. And like every time a new chapter begins for me, the question of

what do I want to make of myself comes flowing in my head. Though this time I had a definitive answer: I wanted to be an Architect. After trade school I started interning at a new Architectural firm called Skidmore Owings and Merrill, located in NY at 7th world trade center. My task there was to work on scaled models and blueprints, though my most beloved task was to write about the structures being created. My writing pieces on architectural design can be found on the firm's website and instagram page, if you want to take a peek. Each project that I wrote about addresses the motive for designing modern infrastructures and I give a brief rundown on the specs of the project and the heritage that each project contains. The restoration and renovation of the Waldorf Astoria hotel located on park avenue was my greatest accomplishment as it was my first assigned project with SOM. The press release paper was developed by colleagues and I using past documents from the mid 1900s to remark on the intense restoration that went down for the past 5 years. The news letter addresses each location that was transformed creating a captivating and informative writing piece.

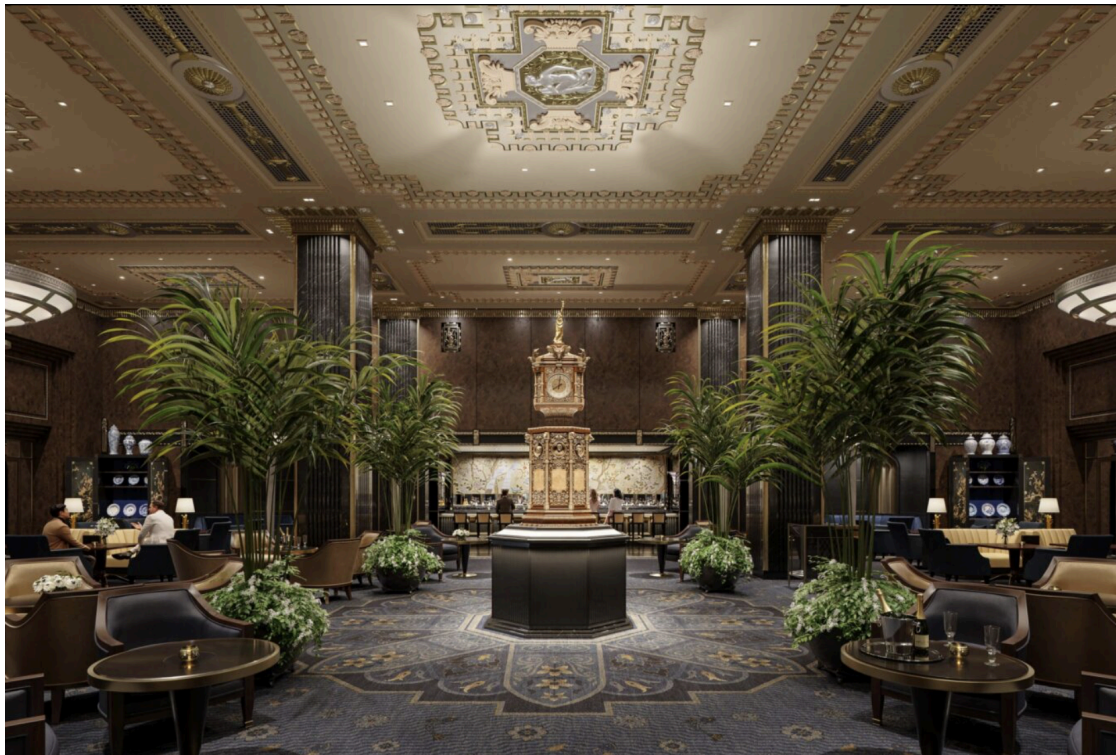


Photo Via: SOM.COM

“Life is the sum of all your choices”, remember that? The choices that I have made since drawing blueprints on my not so cared about graph notebook to trade school and now present day have opened a new question: what more can I do to set my future? The answer to that question is unknown, but it won't be for long as I have always been planning ahead since ground zero to reach the apex. The learning experiences that I have gained throughout the years have gifted me confidence to reach all new heights.