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Creating Place for a Placeless Generation

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creating place for the placeless generation

a study of community building for millennials

an exploration by laura e. wilson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
a degree of Master of Fine Arts, Design at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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May, 2015

To those who listened
To those who helped me see

Thank you. This project is as much yours as mine.

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he had the vague sense of standing on a threshold,
the crossing of which would change everything.

kate morton
the forgotten garden

come in

Transformation begins with a **choice.**

Each day when we wake up, we each make a choice - to exercise; to be involved in our communities; to set goals and meet them. We make the choice to make ourselves a better person than who we were the day before.

It evolves into something greater;
it becomes something new.

The choice becomes a ritual. The ritual becomes the motivation. The motivation drives us on and urges us to keep on toward the end goal.

And at once, the end is a new beginning.

When we arrive at our destination - the addition of a park in the neighborhood, the completion of a half marathon, the discovery of new friends - we do not stop. We recalibrate the barometer for success and begin again.

Transformation begins by crossing a **threshold.**

Each day when we wake up, we each make a choice. We commit to this choice by crossing a threshold, literal or abstract. We cross the threshold to make ourselves a better person than who we were the day before.

taken alone, tradition stagnates and modernity vaporizes;
taken together modernity breathes life into tradition
and tradition responds by providing depth and gravity.

octavio paz

manifesto

07

I believe

in tradition.

Not the kind that shackles us to perspectives that restrain and limit our potential
But the kind that asks us to honor those before us, who in traversing, fighting, learning, creating, discovering, allow us now to do the same.

in design.

It is the marriage of the power of economy and the grace of art. With it we wield a tool mighty enough to preserve our past and sustain our social, economical and environmental future.

in reuse.

By investing in cities, buildings, trash or community, we give each new life and new possibilities.

in community.

Alone we only have one mind to imagine and one pair of hands to create.
Together with others the possibility of imagination and creation multiply infinitely.

a good question is better than the most brilliant answer.

louis kahn

abstract

11

abstract
creating place for the placeless generation

Making up one quarter of the current United States population, some 80 million Generation Y-ers are changing the ways in which we live, work and play. Dubbed "Millennials" this population is comprised of those individuals born between 1980 and 2000. This generation is the first to have been raised with cell phones, the internet, and reality television. The "Selfie" or "Me Generation" is snubbed for narcissism and an instant gratification attitude. Yet on the whole Millennials have progressive values, are well educated, are conscious of their health and are optimistic about the future despite coming of age during the Great Recession.[1]

Millennials are also the most diverse, most informed and most well connected generation the United States has ever seen.[2] They are supporters of the locavore movement and conscious of the environment. Their habits and tastes - constant Facebook status updates and Instagram posts - are much more communal in nature than narcissistic, the highest value of which is not "self-promotion, but it's opposite, empathy -- an open-minded and hearted connection to others."[3] In this way Millennials are using social media and technology to build community in a new way - virtually.

Before there was Facebook or Instagram, people found community in "third places" - social places independent of work or home in which to fraternize and build relationships. In his book, *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg examines the difference between the sociological functions of first place (the home), second place (the workplace) and third place. Third place can be described as the social place, a place independent of the home and workplace in which to fraternize and build community. Oldenburg argued that these places are in general decline, and more recent articles have noted that those brick and mortar third places are now being "hollowed out" by "cyber nomads", those people in coffee shops and bookstores listening to headphones, typing away on a computer or talking on the phone.[4] James Katz of Rutgers argues that these "physically inhabited by psychologically evacuated" places leave people feeling "more isolated than they would if the cafe were empty."[5]

How do designers create spaces that support Millennials empathetic desire connection, that encourage interaction and that overcome the obstacle of becoming "psychologically evacuated" places?

This project will explore the Millennial generation further and create a "third place" for Millennial Richmonders through the design of a fitness focused community center in Shockoe Bottom. Shifting the scope from a generational focus to a community focus, this project will work with the goal of supporting the urban landscape which has been revitalized in Shockoe Bottom over the last twenty years. The neighborhood currently has a dearth of fitness facilities to support the active lifestyles of the young professionals moving into the swell of new housing development in the area. The proposed center will sustain local businesses, supplement the absence of wellness businesses and support the growing population of young city dwellers in Shockoe Bottom.

This project argues that the Millennial generation will drive this revitalization movement, honoring the past while supporting economic, social and environmental sustainability for the future. This exploration will include a review books and articles focused on Millennials and "third place" including Ray Oldenburg's *The Great Good Place* and the more recent product of the Pew Research Institute, *The Next America: Boomers, Millennials and the Looming Generational Showdown*. It will also include a study consumer research on Millennials and market research on exercise trends in America.

From a design perspective, five case studies to serve as models in three categories: fitness and wellness centers, Millennial community building hubs and spaces that carve out "third places" within them. This list includes:

The High Line, New York, NY
James Corner Field Operations

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA
Rick Mather

Ray and Maria Stata Centre, Cambridge, MA
Frank Gehry

Barnard College Diana Center, New York, NY
Weiss/Manfredi

Charym Integral Spa, Litchfield, CT
Champalimaud Design

With these questions and strategies in mind, the goal of the project is to build a greater understanding of the Millennial generation, community building and how a well designed space can bridge the two.

anything that is in the world when you are born is normal and ordinary and is just part of the way the world works.

anything that is invented between when you are 15 and 35 is new and exciting and revolutionary and you can probably get a career in it.

anything invented after you're 35 is against the natural order of things.

douglas adams
the hitchhikers guide to the galaxy

context

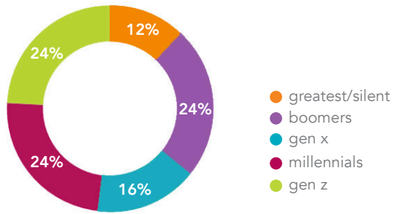
generation z
the adolescent generation following Millennials[1]

millennial generation
the demographic cohort born between 1980 and 2000[2]

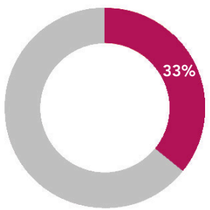
generation x
the generation born after Baby Boomers between the early 1960s and early 1980s[3]

baby boomers
the generation born post World War II between 1946 and 1964[4]

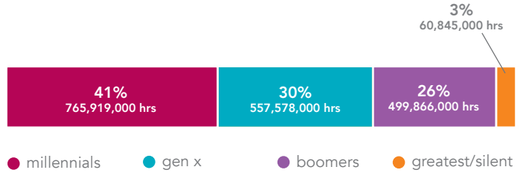
greatest/silent generation
the generation of those born during the Great Depression and World War II[5]



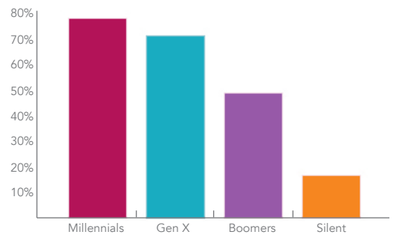
US population by generation[6]



millennial % of Richmond population[7]



time spent, in hours, using smart phones during a typical week and share of total[12]



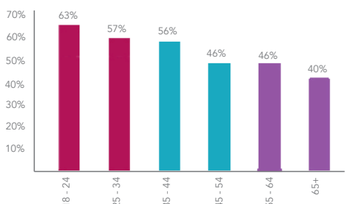
percent of US adults who own a smartphone[11]

digital natives
Digital natives have always had technology. Digital technologies mediate major parts of their lives and daily activities such as social interactions and hobbies.[8]

digital settlers
Digital settlers grew up in an analog world, but have quickly adapted to digital technology and have helped shape its development. They continue to rely on some analog forms of interaction.[9]

digital immigrants
Digital immigrants grew up before the widespread adoption of digital technology. Interaction with technology is limited because it is foreign and may make them feel insecure.[1]

1 out of every 2 Americans exercises regularly[13]



% to participate in a regular exercise program by age, July 2014[14]

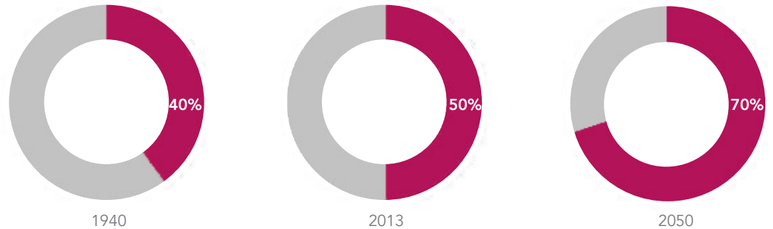
exercise particpation rates, July 2014[15]

40%
I exercise about the same as last year

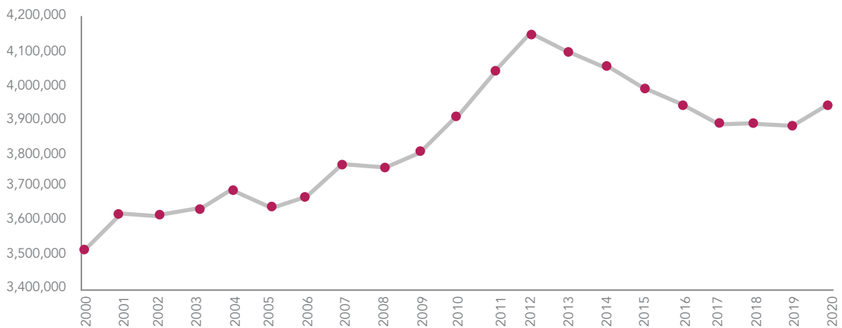
34%
I exercise more than I did a year ago

15%
I exercise less than I did a year ago

11%
I do not exercise at all



percent of world population living in cities[16]



number of 22 year olds living in an urban core[17]

the details are not the details. they make the design.

charles eames

program

preliminary program
primary space considerations

preliminary program considerations:

The main programmatic drivers for this space are the six classrooms and the café. However, there are several other spaces that supplement these main components and contribute to the center serving as a third place.

Several areas of the space, including the classrooms, locker rooms and administrative offices require special considerations for visual and acoustic privacy.

Additionally, circulation plays more than a supporting role in the overall design of this space in that special thought will be given to creating designed moments for interactions between the highly programmed areas of the building.

net square footage per floor:

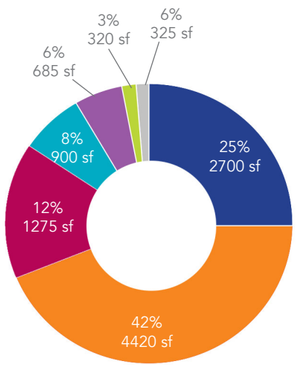
ground floor	2,700 sf
first floor	7,600 sf
roof terrace	325 sf
total	10,625 sf

	immediate adjacencies	public access	daylight and/or view	privacy	plumbing	special equipment	special considerations
(1) main entrance	3, 9	●	●	○	○	○	need to address street accessibility
(2) secondary entrance	7	●	○	○	○	○	accessible desk, iPads for check in
(3) reception	1, 8, 9	●	●	○	○	●	
(4) fitness classrooms	5	◐	●	◐	○	●	visual/acoustic privacy, sound and light systems
(5) community flex room	4, 6	◐	●	◐	●	●	visual and acoustic privacy, sound and light systems, flexibility
(6) café	6, 9	◐	◐	○	●	●	space for limited food prep and preservation, iPad for check out
(7) locker rooms	2	◐	○	●	●	●	visual and acoustic privacy, importance of materiality
(8) administrative space	3, 10	○	○	●	○	●	visual/acoustic privacy, sound and light systems, flexibility
(9) pop up space	3, 6	●	◐	○	○	●	flexibility
(10) housekeeping	8	○	○	○	●	○	

● adjacent
◐ nearby
○ not adjacent
not related

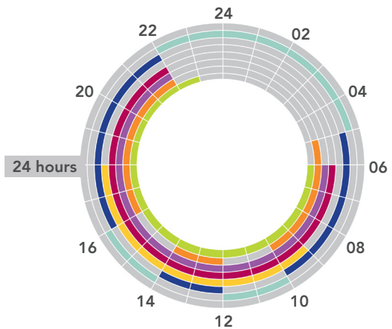
● high
◐ medium
○ low

● yes
◐ important but not required
○ no/none



program area % of total square footage

- reception/entry
- locker rooms
- classrooms
- administration
- cafe
- pop up space
- roof

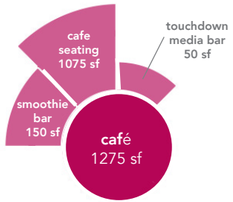


space usage by hour

- reception/entry
- locker rooms
- classrooms
- administration
- cafe
- pop up space
- houskeeping

Reception is the gate through which all users of the space will pass. It will include a class check in area, local event and business postings and a a waiting area.

With a total of six classrooms, each will be unique in its use or size. All will be accompanied by storage, water stations and waiting areas.



The café will be the social hub of the center. Stocked by different area vendors each week, the café can host meetings with friends, working sessions or recreational reading.

The locker rooms will offer the ultimate luxury. Spacious and inviting, each will include spa treatment rooms, a sauna and ample space for getting ready after a workout.

The administration suite will include two private offices and a small conference room. An accompanying lounge will provide storage for staff as well as a place for instructors to wait before teaching a class.

On Monday the pop up shop is a display of yoga pants. On Friday it is a blow out bar. This space will offer a variety of merchandise and beauty experiences each week to keep up with trends.

program
users

The yogi is a fitness class participant. From spinning to hot yoga to barre classes, he has a preference for early morning, mid-day or evening class times.

The consultant, the student or the poet, this individual uses the café as her working hub for the day, week or month. She is thrilled to have an outlet and cup of joe.

The socialite knows everyone at the center. She joins friends for a smoothie or a spa treatment. Her visits range from the morning coffee rush to an evening visit to the pop up shop.

The staff member is part of the team that keeps the business running. This user can answer questions while on duty but likely attends a favorite fitness class each day as well.

the best design recalibrates what we think and how we feel about what surrounds us.

frank chimero

precedents

precedents
categories

Categories of examination:

third places for millennials
these spaces are successful in serving as hubs for millennial community building

spaces within spaces
these projects include designed in between spaces that engender informal interactions

wellness center
this space shares programmatic considerations with the project

third places for millennials

the high line
james corner field operations; diller scofidio + renfro

virginia museum of fine arts
rick mather architects

spaces within spaces

ray and maria stata center
frank gehry architects

barnard college diana center
weiss/manfredi

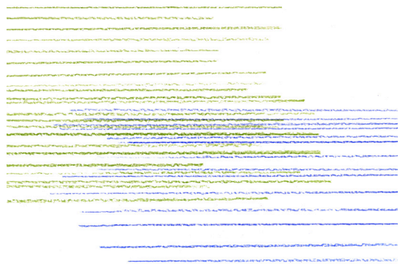
wellness center

charym integral spa
champalimaud design

thresholds for encounters:

The moments in which we encounters strangers and friends in public places create a kind of social threshold. These encounters could be planned, happenstance or a hybrid of the two. Design can support all three of these categories,

These types of social encounters offer a way to examine each paradigm and the ways in which each supports a community space.

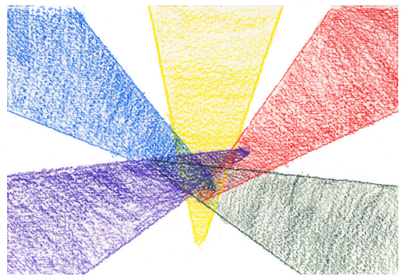


unplanned brief encounters

A wave in a hallway or a short chat about the weather.

Unplanned brief encounters occur in circulation paths, doorways or at a water cooler.

These short conversations are supported by opportunities in a space to cross paths and pause.

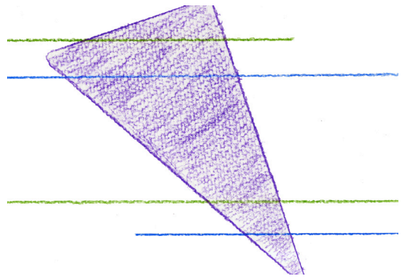


planned extended encounters

A coffee date or a long run with a friend.

Planned extended encounters are arranged in advance and participants agree on a meeting place.

These longer engagements thrive in places to linger like coffee shops or open trails.



hybrid encounters

A wave in a hallway turns into a coffee date.

Hybrid encounters occur when an unexpected conversation turns into an opportunity to spend extended time with a companion.

These encounters work best in flexible spaces that offer privacy in a public thoroughfare.

project: the high line
designer: james corner field operations
diller scofidio + renfro
location: new york, new york
year completed: 2009 (phase I), 2011 (phase II), 2014, (phase III)

Born from the ashes of an abandoned train trestle, the High Line is a public landscape that spans a 1.45 mile stretch through Manhattan. It meanders from the Meatpacking District to Hudson Yards winding west to the bank of the Hudson River with the completion of its third and final piece in September 2014.

The paths of the first two phases ramble and fork, the landscape purposefully obscuring the views ahead to coax users through. The third section, however, opens up "suddenly and arrestingly wide".[1]

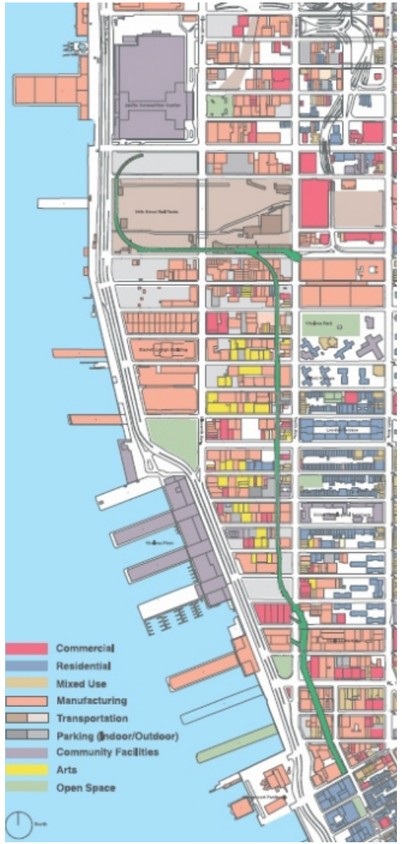
The landscaped walking paths are not manicured. James Corner Field Operations used self-seeding native species that were chosen for their "hardiness, sustainability, and textural and color variation".[2] Similar to Central Park, the organic landscape provides a welcome reprieve the to concrete jungle that is Manhattan.

Throughout, slender cantilevered wooden benches rise from concrete planks, suggesting that users pause for a moment to sit. This modular planking system also allows for the alternation of planks and plants in dynamic installations throughout the park.[3]

Countering the modern design of the park are remnants from the original train tracks - restored art deco railings, railroad ties and steel beams.[4] The High Line is a look at New York's past and future.

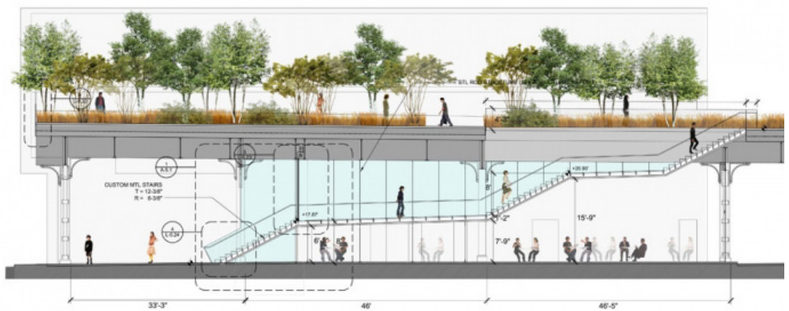
The High Line is vast, it is accessible, it is free and it is constantly changing. It attracts all ages, native New Yorkers and tourists. Its design asks that users explore and discover it, returning often to comfortable places or enjoying new aspects of it on each visit.

A view of the High Line's southern terminus.



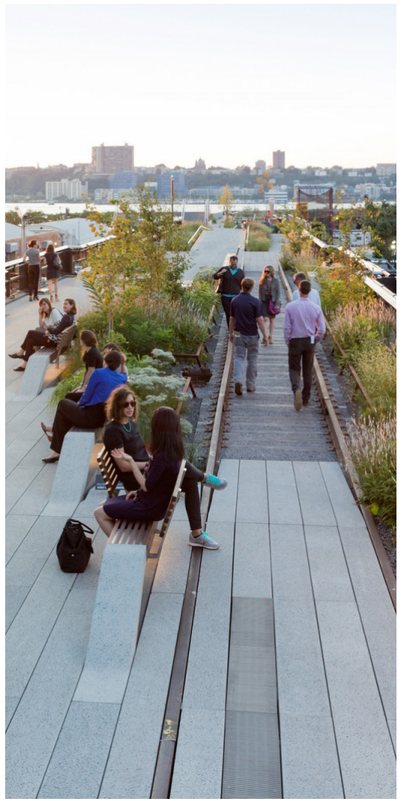
A map of the neighborhoods the High Line crosses and their main industries.

precedents
the high line

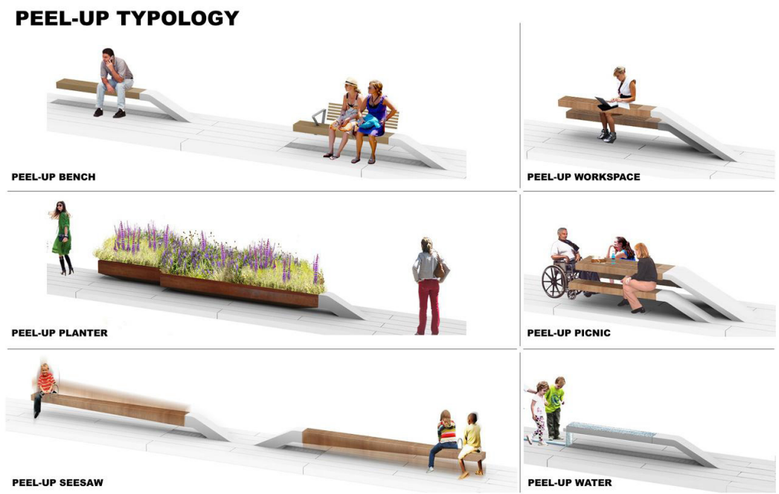


One of the park's major access points and gathering spaces is at Gransevoort Street and Washington Street, the park's southern terminus.

Visitors take in views from the High Line's south terminus



Visitors make use of "peel up" benches in the third section of the High Line



The modular planking system used is designed to "peel up" creating opportunities for seating, planters and play areas

project: virginia museum of fine arts
designer: rick mather architects
location: richmond, virginia
year completed: 2010

"It's your art." This is the tag line for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. This encompasses the museum's goal to create an art museum that is welcoming and supportive of the Richmond community.

Several additions have expanded the original 1919 structure, but it is its latest renovation, completed in 2010, that supports these ideas of community. The renovation included the addition of a large sculpture garden, new galleries, classrooms, a restaurant, a café, offices, a library and a parking structure.[1] Throughout the addition, users have constant access to natural light and exterior views.

In addition to housing an extensive art collection, the VMFA acts as a community center in the heart of Richmond. The museum offers varied programs such as jazz nights, happy hours, lectures, art classes and outdoor yoga. The recent addition carved out and designed spaces to support these activities, in turn supporting the museum's role as a third place in the community.

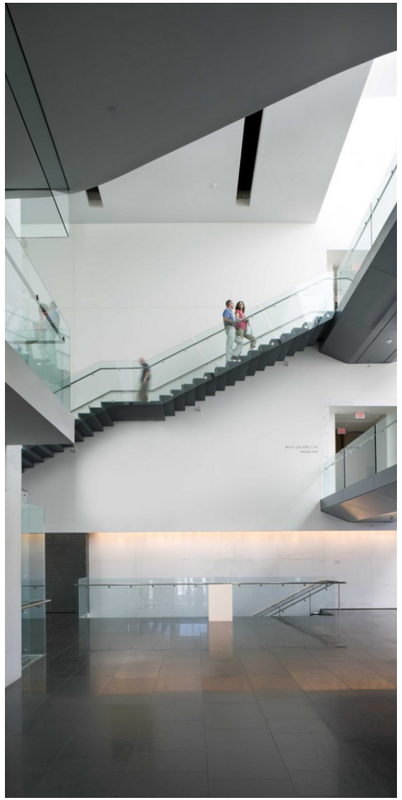
Like any good third place, the majority of the activites the museum offers are free to the public. In support of this, the new addition added large, open expanses that provide seemingly limitless space to users. In doing so, participants in the VMFA programs can always find a place to lay a yoga mat, grab a drink or listen to a little jazz.

Within the larger spaces are moments that break up the expansiveness and encourage more intimate group sizes and conversations. Mather acheived this by using the architecture to suggest spaces within spaces.

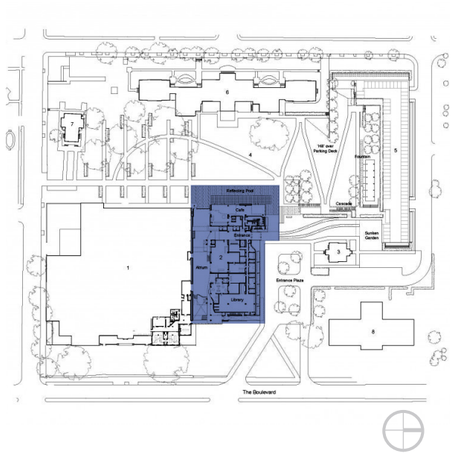
The café is one example. It is divided into sitting and standing areas with suggestions of varying degrees of intimacy based on adjacency to the entry, ceiling height and lighting.

Circulation in the space further articulates this goal. Mather designed circulation not just to be a necessity, but a design element. Open stairways and glass bridges break up the overall expansiveness, create visual interest and connect visitors within the space.

52.1: Exterior, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

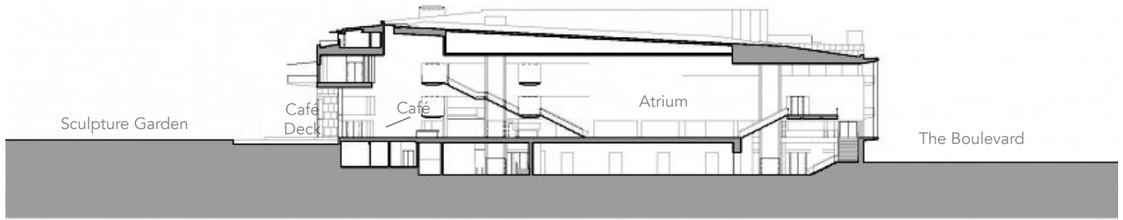


Exposed stairs exhibit a designed ciruclation element



Site plan of Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Addition highlighted in blue.

Plan of 2010 addition



East West Section of VMFA addition

The interior spaces that support the VMFA's role as a third place most significantly are the atrium, café and café deck, highlighted in plan at left. It is within these spaces that the museum offers much of its free programming to the public.

The above section illustrates the integration of circulation into the overall design of the space. Stairwells are exposed within the landscape of the Atrium, which is the feature of the overall addition.

The drawings also show the lack of barriers to natural light throughout the museum. This connects to the natural world and the urban community surrounding the museum, allowing for the constant contextual connection to the fabric of Richmond.

56.1: Exterior, Ray and Maria Stata Center

project: stata center
designer: gehry architects
location: cambridge, massachusetts
year completed: 2004

The Stata Center on the MIT campus houses a series of auditoriums, science labs and classrooms and faculty offices. But its most interesting element is not found behind closed doors. Stata was designed to be a "mixing chamber" to encourage connections, collaboration community building among the members of the seven departments using the building.[1]

Collections of faculty offices are anchored by shared spaces, dubbed the "town green" by inhabitants. The shared space spans two stories creating connections vertically and horizontally.[2]

The "Student Street" is a wide main passage that runs the length of the ground floor on the building. The street is open to the public 24 hours per day. It twists

and winds throughout the complex and is dotted with nooks and crannies. It offers
free Wi-Fi everywhere. Cafés are sprinkled throughout as well as work desks and white boards.

Much like its exterior, the interior is more fractal than linear. No two places are the same, animating the space as a whole.[3] During a promenade through the Student Street, the scale of the space may be at one moment grandiose and the next quite intimate. The street provides opportunities for large and small gatherings, formal or informal study sessions, planned or accidental encounters.

> Writes Robert Campbell: "It's endlessly varied. Sometimes it's narrow, sometimes wide, sometimes high, sometimes low. Sunlight falls from high windows. Walls angle in and out, often in bright colors."[4]

The lack of rhythm keeps users constantly curious to explore in turn increasing the possibilities of running into an old colleague or potential study mate.

Exterior, Ray and Maria Stata Center

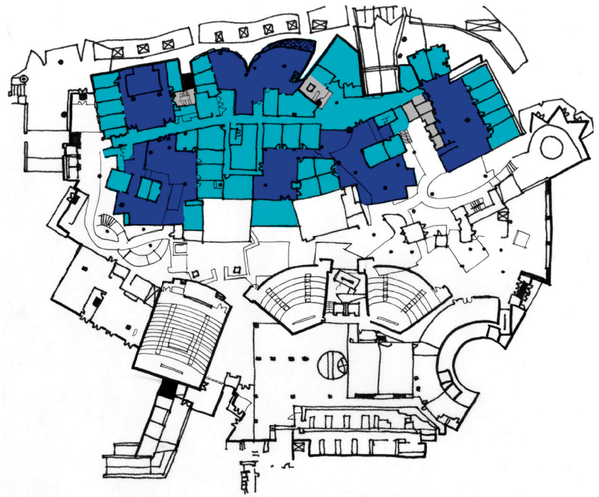
A view of the Student Street winding through the 1st Floor

Students studied in some of the designated study nooks along the Student Street

the student street

The "Student Street" is one of the mainstays of the Stata Center's program. A long boulevard winds through the ground floor. Along its edges, soffits and built in benches and desking create designated nooks and crannies for individual or group work or socialization.

Soft seating creates an opportunity for study or gathering near classrooms



Stata Center 1st & 2nd Floors.

- 2nd Floor
- Office "Town Greens"

Stata Center 1st and 2nd Floors.

- 1st Floor Student Street
- Spaces for study and collaboration"town greens"

project: the diana center
designer: weiss/manfredi
location: new york, new york
year completed: 2010

The Diana Center is a multi-use arts building located at the center of the Barnard campus.

The large building has a variety of programmatic elements including art and architecture studios, performance studios, a theater, café and exhibition space.

The design of the space creates "visual juxtapositions that invite collaboration between disciplines."[1] Its central atrium carves a diagonal void throughout the building, creating a series of unique views into the programmed spaces and connecting the building vertically.

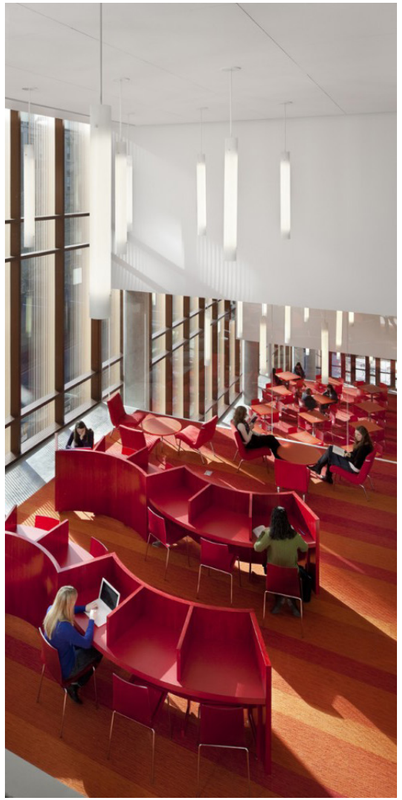
The overall shell is in keeping with the masonry of other campus buildings, but a multi-level stairwell housed behind a glass curtain wall distinguishes the Diana Center
and creates a connection between the building and the campus community.

The wall includes over 1100 panels of varying sizes, colors and transparencies, allowing for views into the public spaces and creating privacy where necessary.[2]

The atrium is designed to be a "vertical campus quad"[3], a place for unplanned encounters or scheduled meetings. It is a wide boulevard with seating for an individual or large groups. Suspended light fixtures and desk carrolls designate more intimate moments.

In this way the building is a hybrid academic building, a campus quad and a student center integrated into a dynamic and energetic singular space by the multi-story atrium.

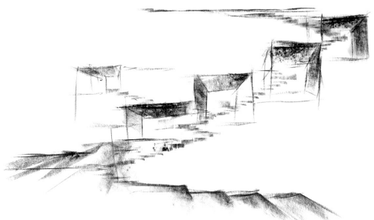
Exterior, Diana Center at Barnard College



View of the Multi-Story Atrium

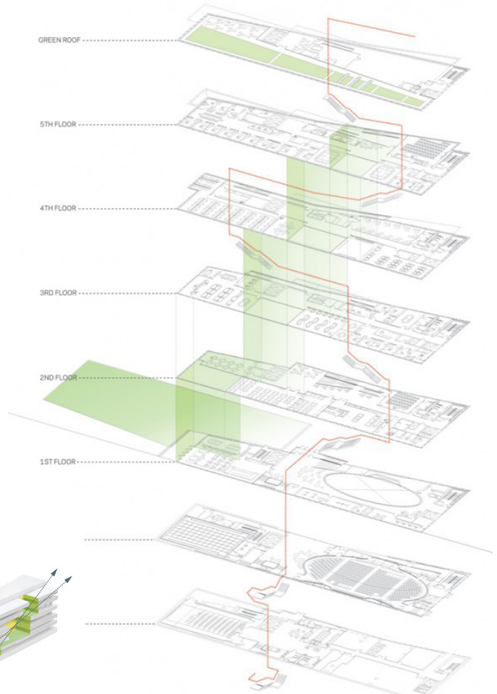
atrium

The multi-story atrium is the key element of the building's design. It was strategically cut out of the building design's shell, creating vertical connections visually from ground to top floor. The exterior masonry connects the building to the traditional fabric of the campus landscape.

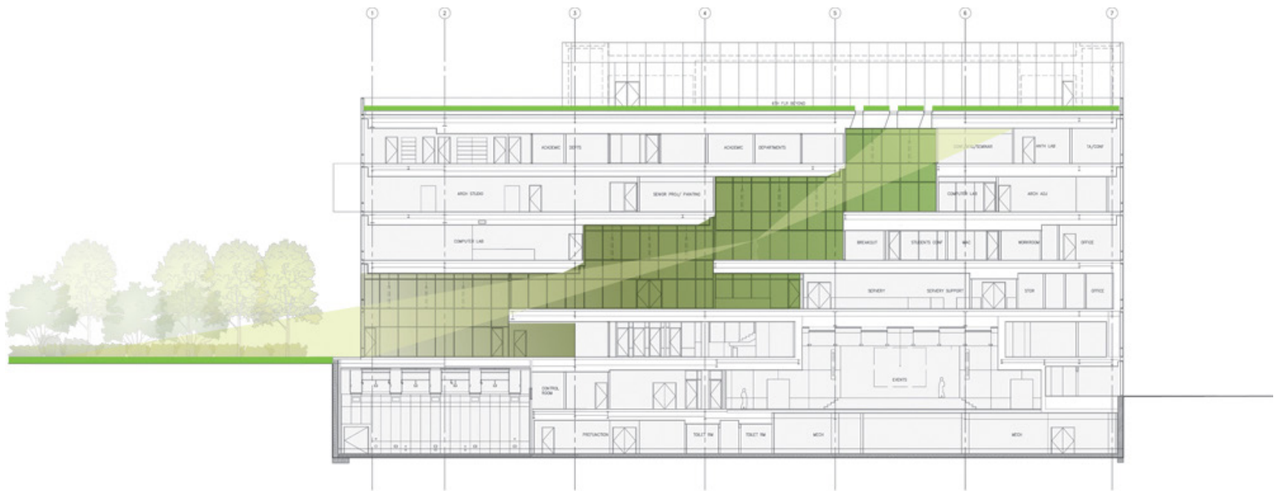


Concept Drawing of Atrium's Form

Diagram showing the excavated portion of the building to become the multi-level terrace



Axonometric diagram



Section of the building

46.1: Exterior, Charym Integral Spa

project: charym integral spa
designer: champalimaud design
location: litchfield, connecticut
year completed: 2009

Created from a 19th century lumberyard, Charym Integral Spa is the award winning work of Champalimaud Design, whose spaces give new life to adaptive reuse projects.[1] Champalimaud pursues the enhancement over transformation of spaces in their projects.

A large yoga studio is the heart of the property with outdoor hiking, biking and kayaking opportunities nearby.[2] The complex also includes a spa and tea room. Within the larger spaces of the center are small nooks creating opportunities for individual or small group mediation.

Charym, the Butanese word for "beauty", blends the original structure's shiplock siding, exposed timber rafters and barn doors typical of New England with the colors and decorative "folkloric-style floral pattern" motifs of Bhutan. This East meets West dynamic continues throughout the interior.[3]
The light maple wood used throughout the renovation evokes the same East-West dynamism - it is distinct from the existing pine but remains in keeping with the New England feel of the existing structure. The incorporation of light and mirrors create a sense of peace and calm in the bright and minimalist studio.

A yoga studio showing the original structure and new materials.

Meditation nook nestled at the back of the yoga studio.

Meditation nook nestled at the back of the yoga studio.

Entry to Charym Integral Spa.

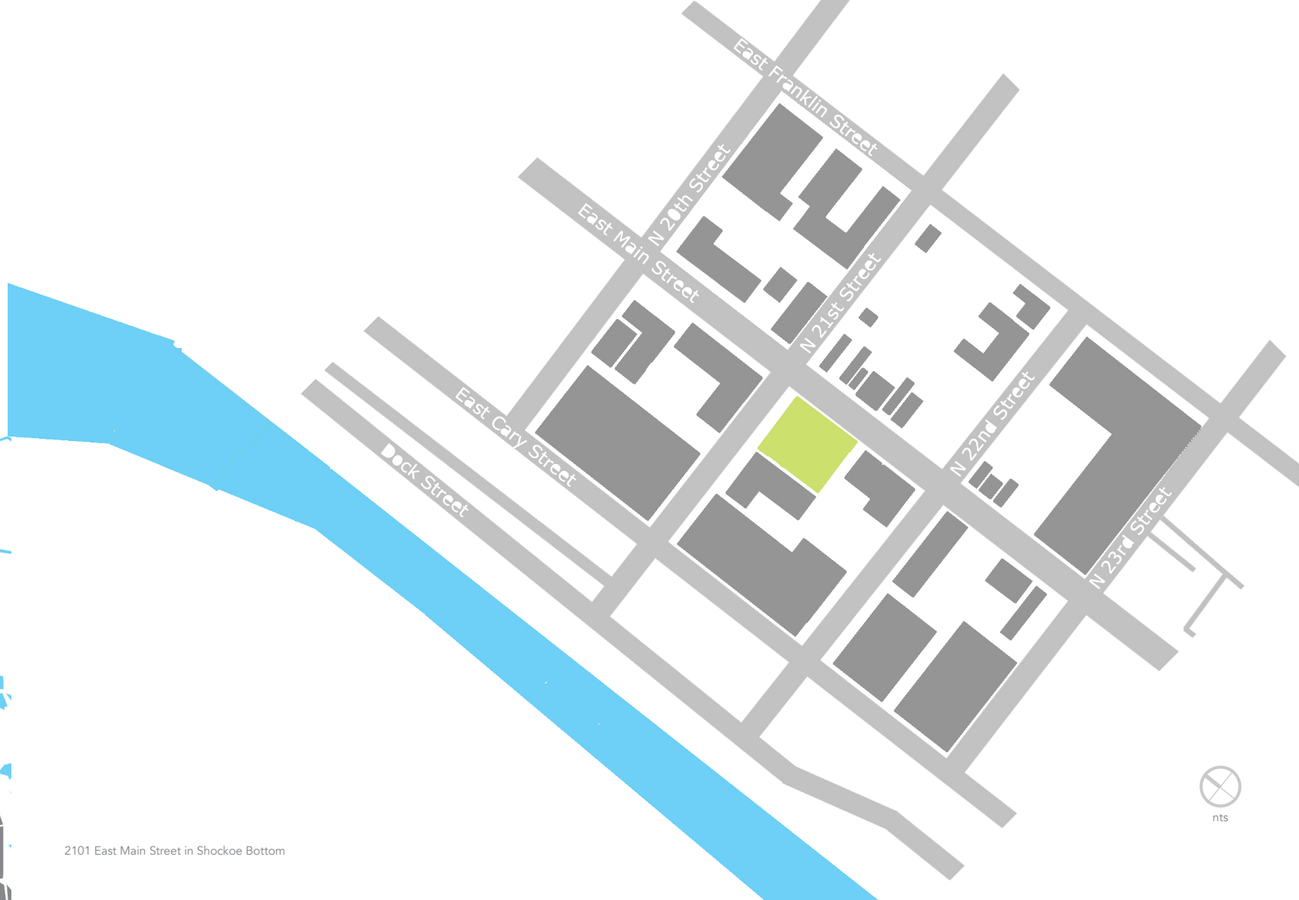
site

buildings, like people, must first be sincere, must be true and then withal as gracious and lovable may be.

frank lloyd wright

site

Map of the Shockoe Bottom Neighborhood in Richmond, VA



2101 East Main Street in Shockoe Bottom

The Canal Walk in Shockoe Bottom

Shockoe Bottom is one of the Richmond's oldest neighborhoods and has played a significant role in its history. Named after Shockoe Creek that bordered Richmond to the West,[1] it is characterized as "the bottom" due to the topography of the surrounding Church Hill and Capitol Hill areas whose hills rise around this low-lying area.[2]

Shockoe Bottom is a "historic, urban neighborhood built upon two centuries of public infrastructure supporting the movement of people and goods."[3] Richmond became a "regional marketplace" in the latter part of the 18th century.[4] Shockoe Bottom was the center of the city's commerce due to its proximity to the port on the James River where ships would unload and then the goods would be warehoused and traded throughout Shockoe Valley. During the 19th century Richmond became a leading commercial city in the South and a center for tobacco processing.[5]

Much of the area was burned during the Civil War, and the majority of remaining building were erected during the Reconstruction period through the 1920s. The buildings represent a "variety of historic themes" including commercial, manufacturing, transportation trade, government and literature,[6] though many of the buildings housed large tobacco warehouses and processing facilities. It is and has always been a varied community in terms of zoning and industry. Shockoe Bottom saw a decline that coincided with the decline of of the tobacco industry during the 1970s and 80s. Over the last 20 years, the area has undergone a resugence and is now a hub for nightlife, dining and entertainment. There has also been a swell of development of commercial, office and residential space in the converted tobacco warehouses. This resurgence was due, in large part, to the work of Bill Abeloff, a Richmond native, whose dream in the 1980s was to create "an urban village along the James River."[7]

site
shockoe bottom

shockoe bottom demographics

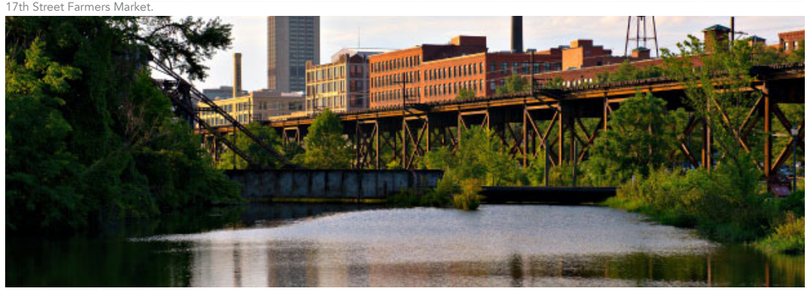
Shockoe Bottom has benefited from urban revitalization efforts in recent years. Its population has grown by more than 5% since 2000.

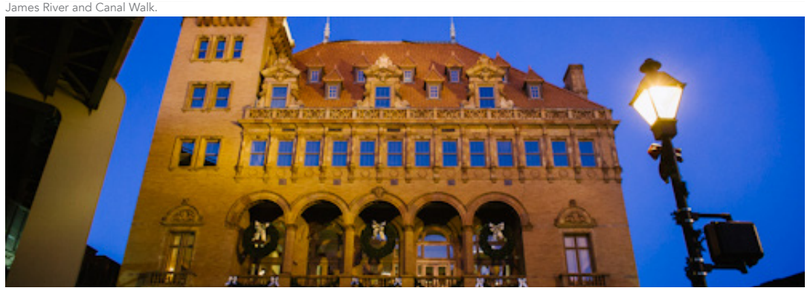
zip code 23223

population: 49,697
% of population 18-34: 28.8%
median age: 34
% with travel time to work <15 min.: 20%[8]

- 2101 east main street
- residential properties
- fitness centers

17th Street Farmers Market.


James River and Canal Walk.


Historic Main Street Train Station.

area attractions

Given its rich history, Shockoe Bottom offers some interesting attractions. The oldest farmers market in the US is located on 17th Street and the historic Main Street Train Station welcomes vistors to Virginia's capital. The James River offers a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities.

a brief history of 2101 east main street

1737
Col. William Mayo lays out the original town grid for Richmond, VA at the request of William Byrd II. Much of the original land in this plan is in modern day neighborhood Shockoe Bottom.

18th century
Shockoe Bottom becomes the second largest slave trading center in the country, driving the economy in Richmond.

1865
Confederate forces set fire to the tobacco warehouses in Shockoe Bottom on the eve of the fall of Richmond to the Union Army. Much of the area is destroyed.

Late 1860s
Civil War ends and Reconstruction begins. Many buildings in Shockoe Bottom are erected during this period.

1877
Tobacco company Larus & Brothers Co. opens its doors in Richmond, Virginia

1889
2101 East Main Street is constructed as a part of the Edgeworth Tobacco Factory. It serves as a cigar warehouse.

1925
Larus Brothers starts WRVA, a local radio station, from the roof of the Edgeworth Factory. They later expanded to broadcast media in the 1950s.

1974
Edgeworth is sold to a Canadian company and leaves Richmond, VA.

1990s
James River Flood Wall and Canal Walk are constructed, stimulating development of residential and retail spaces in former tobacco warehouses.

2005
Local developer Haxall View LLP acquires 2101 East Main Street and renovates it to be a Type B Mixed Use building.

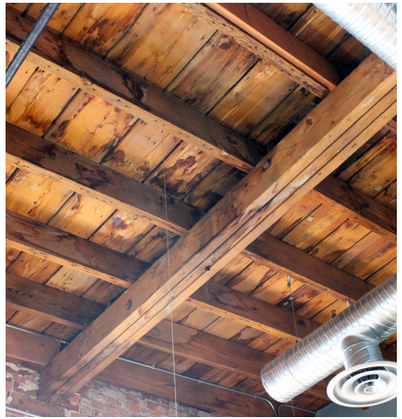
2006
Architecture firm Baskervill renovates the Edgeworth factory, converting it to a mixed use residential and commercial space.

2008
Architecture firm Glavé & Holmes occupies 2101 East Main Street.

site
2101 east main street

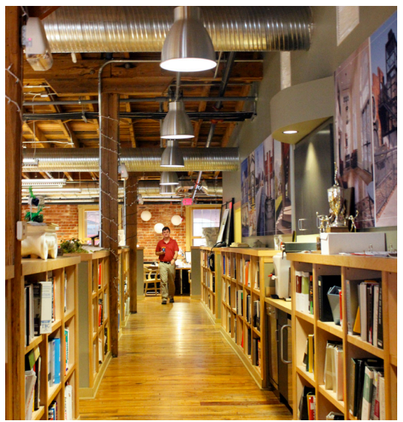
building information:

building type: III-B
zoning: b-5 - business (central business)
levels: 3 - ground, first (with entry on main), roof addition with terrace
year built: 1889



The Glave & Holmes Architecture building was built in 1889 as a part of the Edgeworth Cigar Factory Complex.[8]

Edgeworth was owned by Larus Brothers & Co. which opened in 1877 and remained in Richmond until 1974. Larus Brothers was one of the most successful small tobacco firms in the country. They expanded into media, starting Richmond's WRVA radio station from the roof of the Edgeworth Building, and later launched the broadcast television network, also named WRVA.[9]



The factory building was renovated into a mixed use commercial and residential building by Baskervill in 2006.

The two buidings at 2101 East Main Street served as the cigar warehouse and cafeteria. These buildings were bought in 2005 by a local developer, Haxall View LLC, and converted into an apartment complex and a mixed use commercial building.[10]

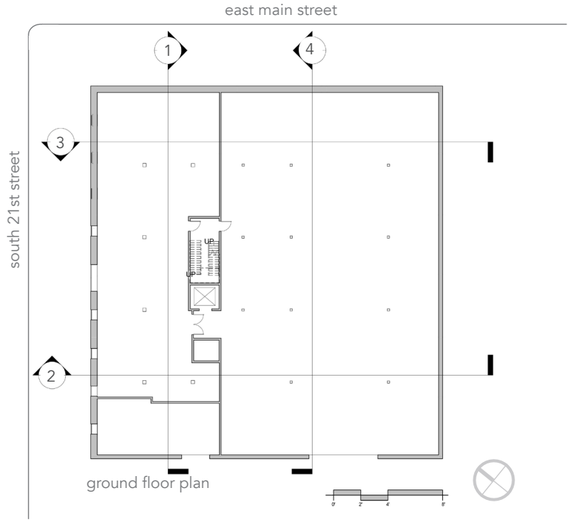
With proximity to Richmond's central business district, the Medical College of Virginia, the State Capitol and the James River, the location was an ideal choice for both a commercial and residential renovation project.

site
2101 east main street

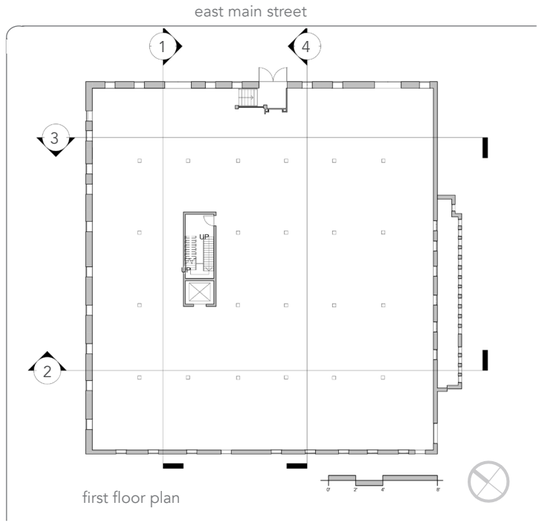
gross square footage:

ground floor: 4,217 sf
first floor: 11,705 sf
roof addition: 500 sf
total gross sf: 16,422 sft

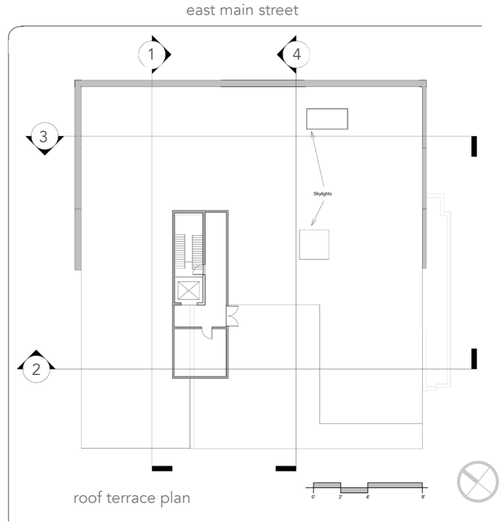
parking: 6800 sf on ground floor, 20 spaces



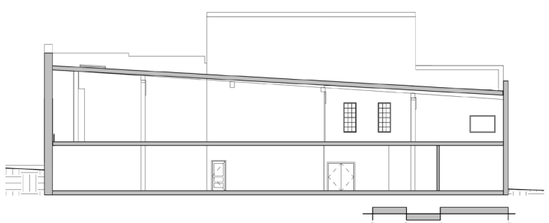
ground floor plan

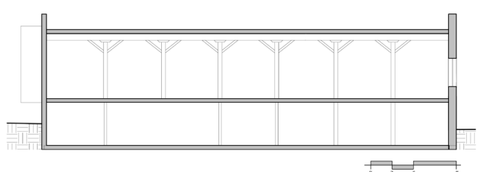


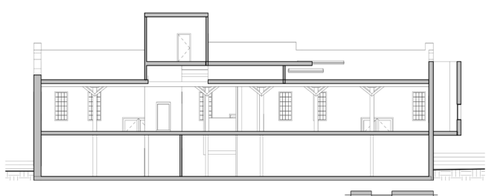
first floor plan

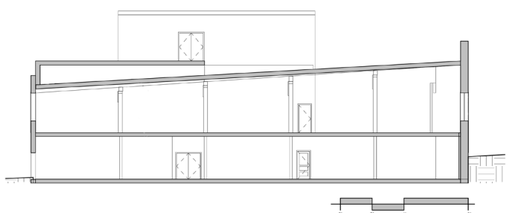


roof terrace plan

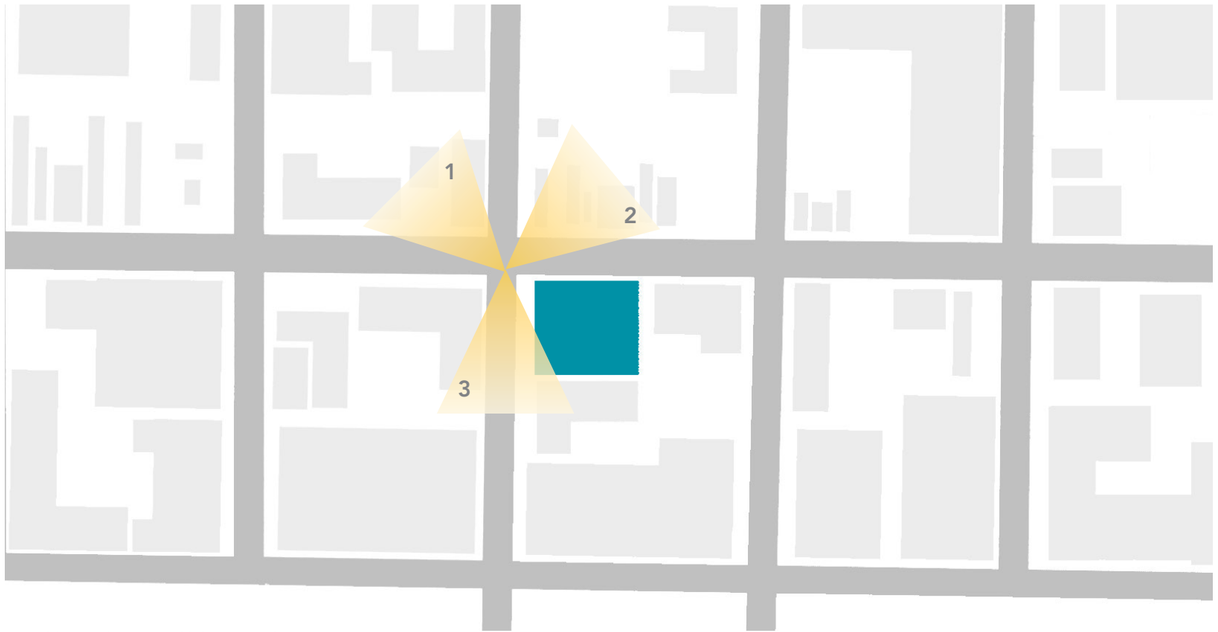

section 1


section 2


section 3


section 4

site
2101 east main street



Views of the immediate vicinity of 2101 East Main Street

31.1: Views Northwest of Building

Views North of Building

Views South of Building

no great thing is created suddenly.

epictetus

exploration
conceptual studies

transformation:
(n): complete change

The main programmatic drivers of this space are the fitness classrooms and café space. Each of these spaces seeks to transform in some fashion.

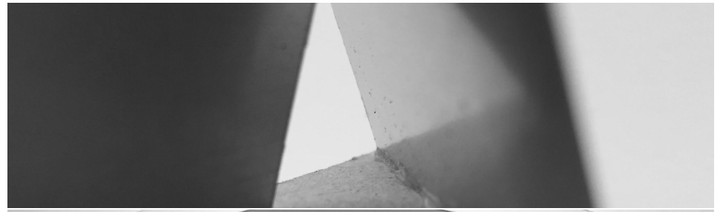
The building itself has already gone through a transformation. Previously a cigar warehouse, it has been adapted and reused as a commercial office space.

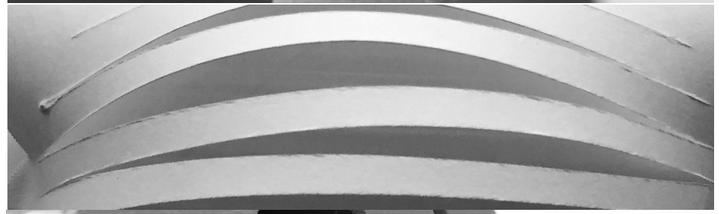
This project will further the transform the site shifting it from a space that produced an unhealthy product to one that can transform the human body and mind into a healthier vessel.

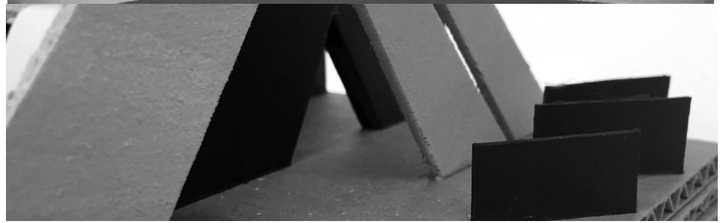
All users will come to this space to be transformed.

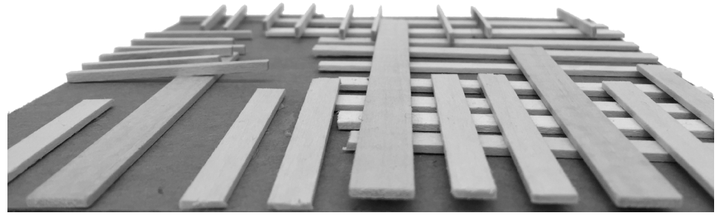
Transformation is always a design driver. This can take the form a spatial transformation or the transformation of a user's experience.

But in the end, to me designing is creating something that exceeds expectations and transcending the purported limits.



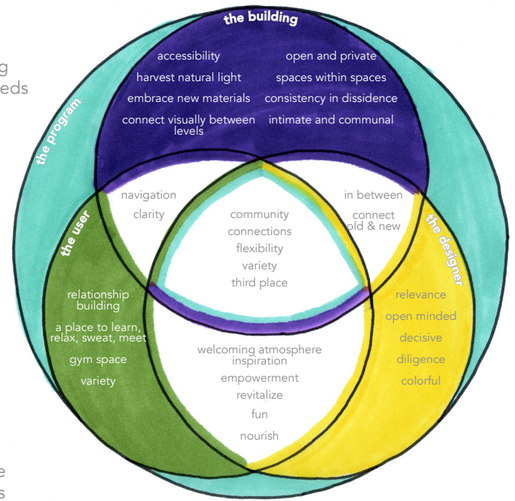






programmatic needs & desires:

incite feelings of energy & calm
spatially support a variety of activities
encourage connections between users
communicate effectively with the building
provide consistency despite dissident needs
revitalize
be relevant
attract a variety of user types
create a successful third place
be fun
nourish
create spaces within spaces
highlight the in between
support local business



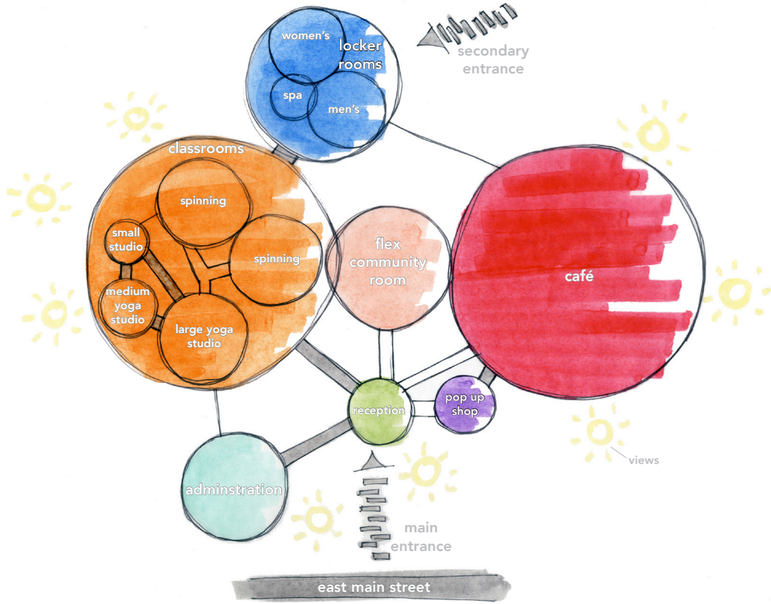
user needs & desires:
navigate the space easily
feel welcome
use the space for many needs
make friends
have ample & appropriate workout space
waiting spaces for a few minutes or hours
a place to learn
a place to relax
a meeting place
variety
clear information
be empowered and encouraged
be inspired

building needs & desires:

harvest natural light
restructure of entrance
highlight existing materials
embrace use of new materials
connect with neighborhood
connect visually between levels
maintain historic and modern characteristics
be open and private simultaneously
be easily navigable
provide intimate and communal spaces
offer flexibility
be a third place
be ADA accessible

designer needs & desires:

open minded
decisive
use color
create a space that builds community
have fun
honor space's history & give it new life
be relevant
work diligently



the program

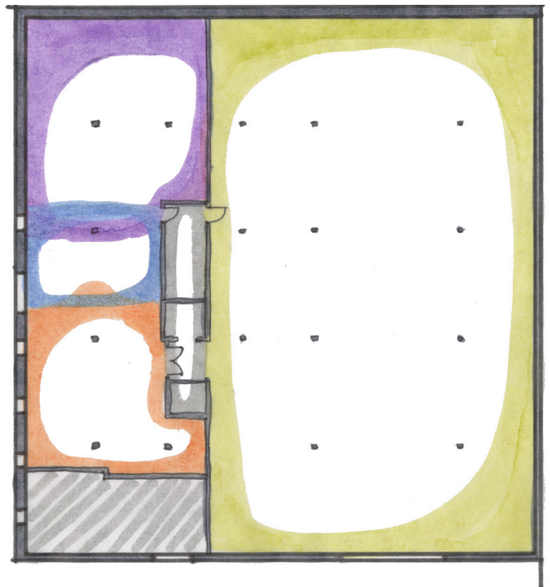
The main programmatic drivers for this space are the fitness classrooms and the café.

Other spaces supplement these main components and contribute to the center serving as a third place.

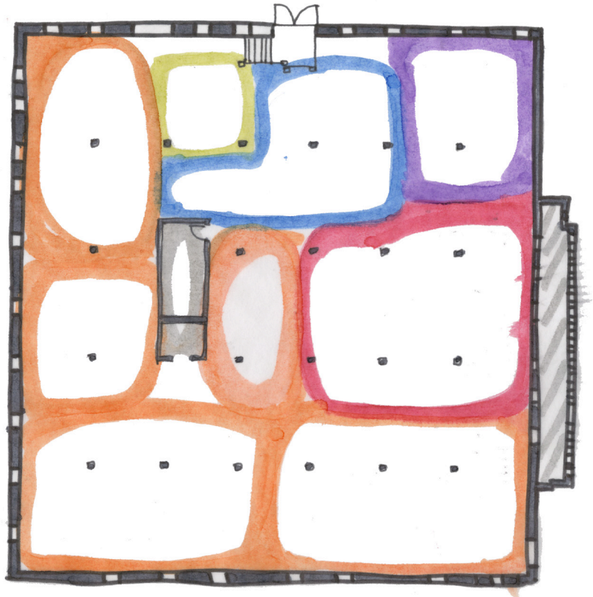
These spaces include Reception, Locker Rooms, a Community Flex Space, an Adminstrative Suite and a Pop Up Space.

Additionally, circulation plays more than a supporting role in the overall design of this space - special thought has been given to moments for interactions between the highly programmed areas of the building.

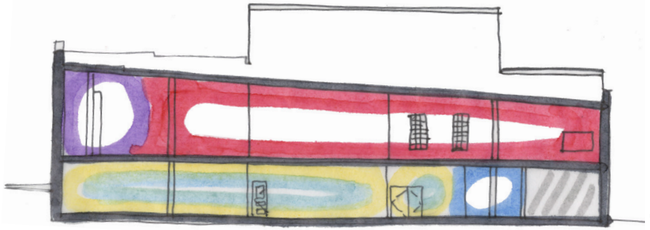
Community building is an important part of creating a successful third place. To this end, the program's primary and secondary drivers create opportunities to design spaces for engagement on a micro or macro scale to suite the various needs of its users with the goal of community growth as a by product of these interactions.



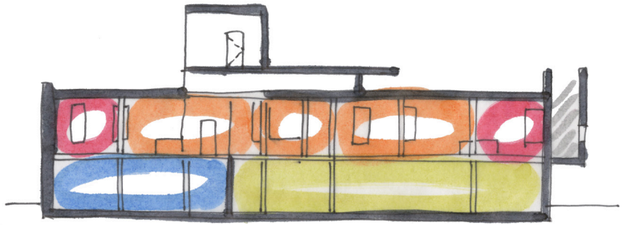
ground floor block plan



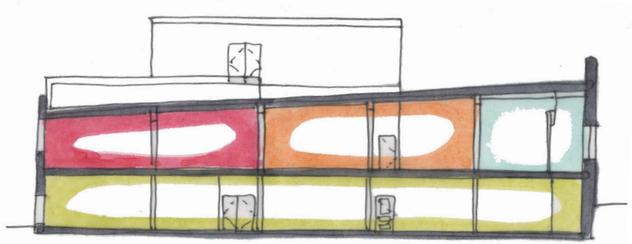
first floor block plan



north-south section block plan



east-west section block plan



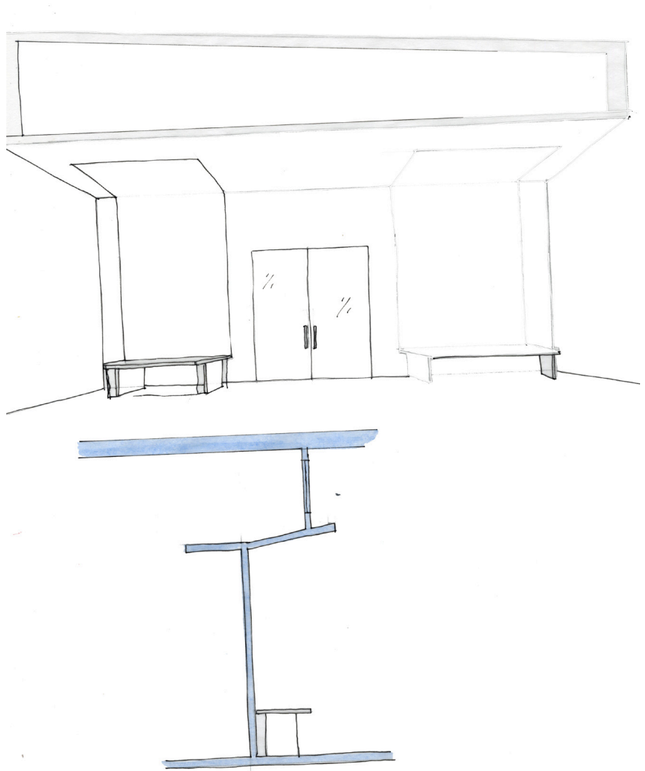
north-south section block plan

east-west section block plan

community seating

Lining the winding boulevard of the fitness hub, a series of built in bench systems create a place to wait for a fitness class, mingle with other patrons of the center or meet a friend before going to the Pop Up Shop.

The benches are nestled within the thresholds to serve as a collecting pool of conversations in in between moments. The color of each is connected with the type of energy expected from the experience inside, be it exciting or calming.



bench detail development

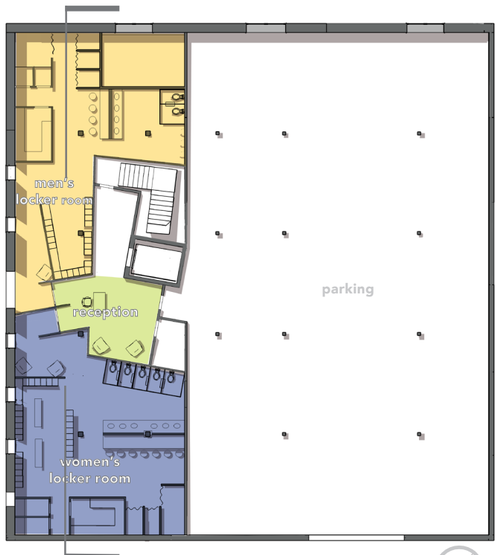
circulation perspective development

cafe perspective development

a designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.

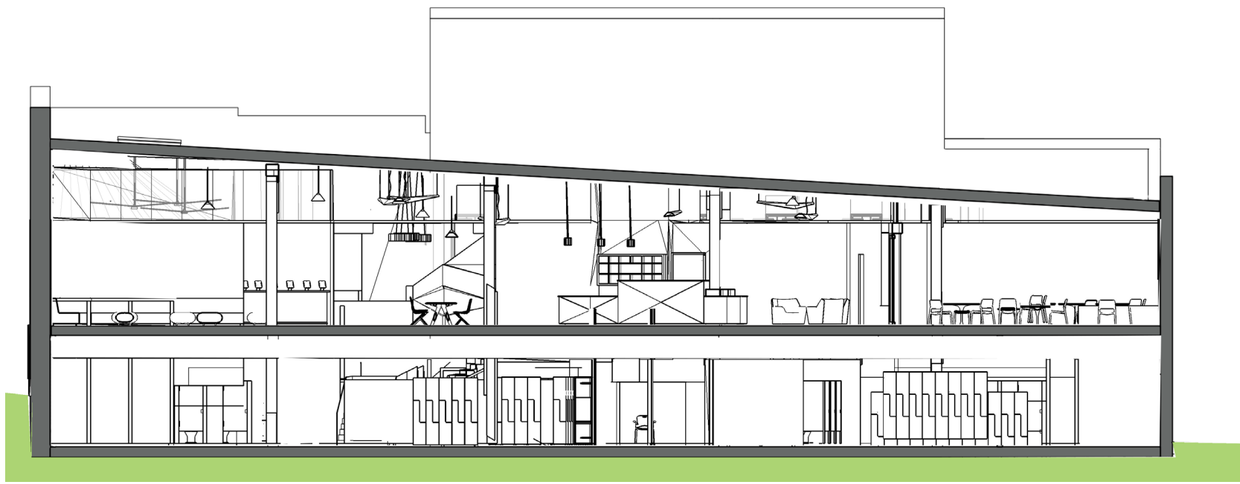
antoine de saint-exupery

discovery

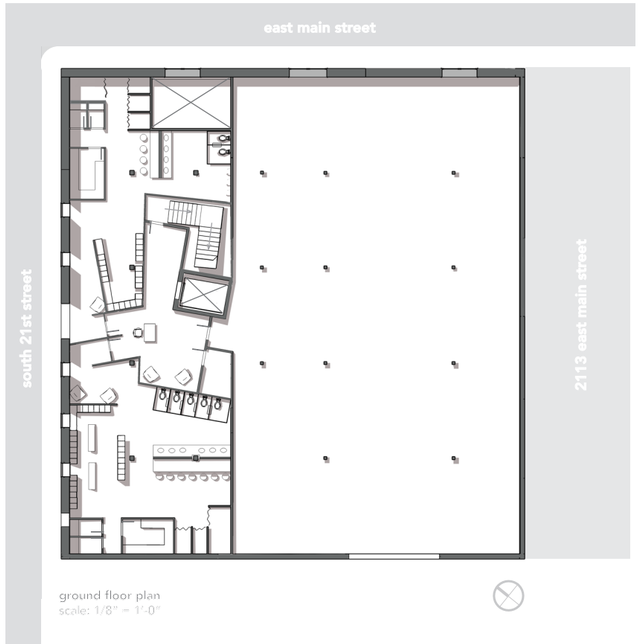


ground floor plan program spaces

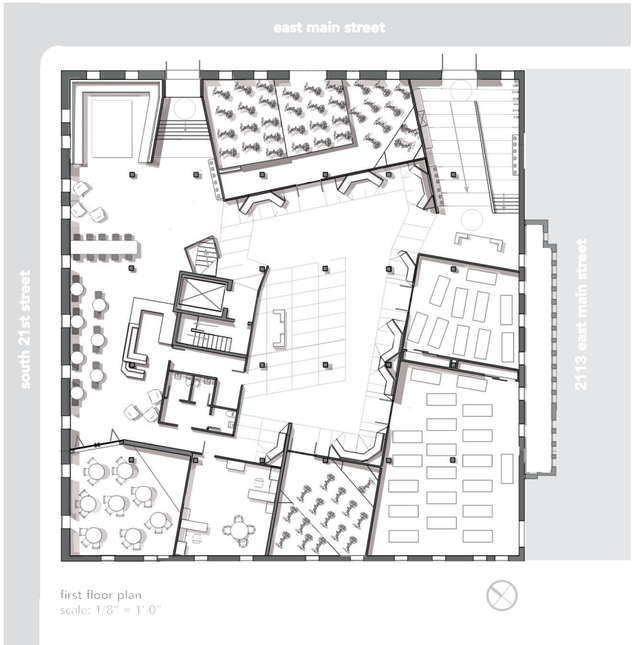
first floor plan program spaces



north - south building section
scale: 3/32" = 1'0"



ground floor plan
scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"

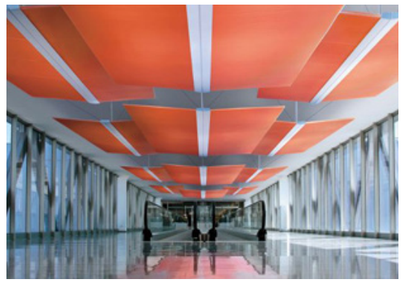


first floor plan
scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

skeleton chair
knoll

saarinen dining table 36" round
knoll

slab rectangular table & bench
tom dixon



acoustic wings
armstrong

fitness lockers
hollman lockers

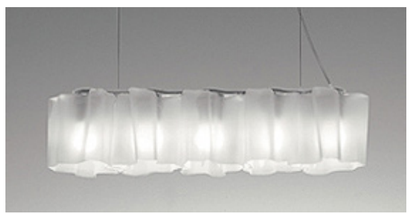
eSpinner bike
spinning

coalesse

pebble ottoman
allermuir

folding glass door
nana wall

logico pendant
artemide



mouette suspension
artemide inc.

the threshold

Significant thresholds play a part throughout the design of this space. A user can experience three types of thresholds here: explicit, implicit or hybrid.

Explicit thresholds are created by a significant ceiling change entering the fitness hub and each of the classrooms. Implicit thresholds are created in the implied edge and floor changes of the Pop Up Shop or the open feeling created in the Café. The main entrances to the space are a hybrid of the two, at once significant and yet not overly dramatic.

The thresholds foreshadows a taste of the space to come beyond and the interactions within.

seating outside spinning classroom
view 2

seating outside yoga studios
view 1

the café

The café is the social hub of the center.

The entry to this part of the building brings users right to a main thoroughfare of the space.

The seating supports different working styles and gatherings. A built in bench with cushioned ottoman chair hybrids and a large community table at the front offer a place for more social visitors. Tables and chairs and soft seating in the back offers more quiet and privacy.

The café is immediately adjacent to the community flex space and the fitness hub with accessibility to the lower level locker rooms and the administration suite.

café entrance
view 1

cafe entrance
view 2

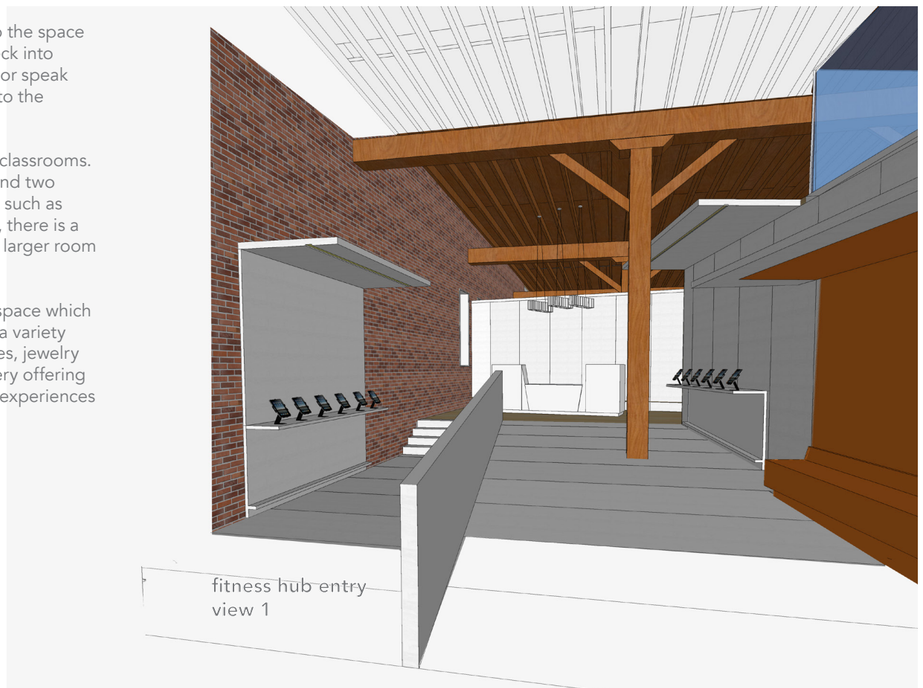
front of café with community table
view 2

the fitness hub

This entrance is the main entrance to the space for the general public. Users can check into classes, wait for a friend, park a bike or speak with the receptionist for guidance into the center.

A wide boulevard connects the four classrooms. There are two spinning classrooms and two classrooms supporting group fitness such as yoga, pilates or barre. For each type, there is a smaller room for 10-12 people and a larger room for 25-30 people.

In the center of the hub is a pop up space which offers a flexible merchant space for a variety of vendors such as apparel businesses, jewelry makers selling their wares or a brewery offering a tasting. This space offers different experiences each week to keep up with trends.



fitness hub entry
view 1

pop up space
view 2

spinning classroom
view 3

if you can dream it, you can do it.

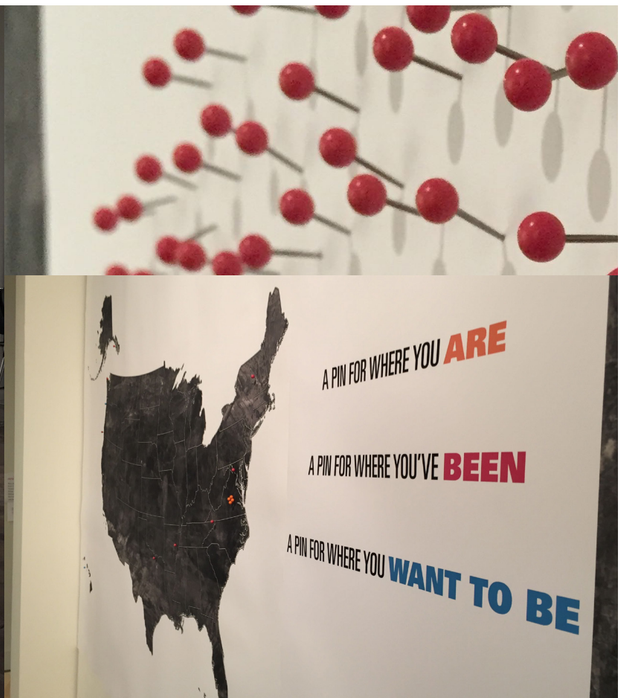
walt disney

realization

93

ides

FROM THERE
TO HERE
ides


A PIN FOR WHERE YOU ARE
A PIN FOR WHERE YOU'VE BEEN
A PIN FOR WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

realization
the show

atticus told me to delete the adjectives and I'd have the facts.

harper lee
to kill a mockingbird

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