

## **Project Description/Narrative**

Rochester NY is the birthplace of a proud list of the finest corporations in the world - including Kodak, Xerox, and Bausch and Lomb. Therefore, it was significant news when this global corporation, which owns some of the finest adult beverage products in the world, would relocate its headquarters to Rochester. Further, it was decided that this corporation would give life to a 154-year-old, 182,000 sq ft building complex known as the “Aqueduct building”. This complex, listed on the national historic register, is located at the edge of a beautiful Erie Canal aqueduct, as it crosses the Genesee River. This project included the complete restoration of six buildings dating back to 1870 – all work designed in compliance with NYS Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service. But the project was not to be a museum, rather it is a progressively designed, strongly collaborative integration of office, workspace, meeting space, and brand pride. The primary design intent was creation of a “magnet” to encourage employees to return to work, and to collaborate in person within this exciting destination. Key elements of the design include an entry experience that blends the historic building with this corporation, to create an immersive experience. As well as a meeting / collaboration center designed to feature outstanding space planning, product display, and AV communication tools for a cutting-edge world-wide communication and team experience. In addition, each floor has a meeting “hub”, vertically connected by a showpiece “corkscrew” stairway, blurring the lines between working, meeting, collaboration and socialization – overlaid with brand pride to create an exciting, welcoming, “hospitality” based experience for staff and guests. Other features include a rooftop collaboration center with outstanding city views, as well as historically inspired skyline signage to promote the brand to the Rochester community, in the tradition of its preceding corporate giants.

## **AIA's Framework for Design Excellence**

Design for Integration

Design for Equitable Communities

Design for Discovery

The newly completed corporate headquarters, situated within the historic Aqueduct Building in Rochester, NY, is a transformative project that redefines adaptive reuse and sets a new standard for corporate environments. This ambitious renovation involved the meticulous restoration and repurposing of six buildings listed on the National Historic Register, preserving 180,000 square feet of Rochester's irreplaceable industrial fabric while repurposing it into a state-of-the-art corporate headquarters for one of the world's most innovative and rapidly growing companies in the adult beverage industry. The project's core objective was to blend the rich industrial history of these buildings with the needs of a 21st-century global corporation, ensuring the historic structures were preserved while being modernized to support the companies progressive, creative, and collaborative work culture.

At the heart of this design was the goal to preserve and adapt the original buildings in a manner that respected their historical significance. Every aspect of the renovation adhered to stringent state and federal preservation guidelines, ensuring the integrity of key architectural features such as exposed brick, large windows, and timber beams. Simultaneously, creative design concepts were introduced to meet the contemporary needs of the company. Open-concept workspaces, collaborative zones, and cutting-edge amenities were seamlessly integrated into the fabric of the existing buildings, providing a modern, flexible workspace that fosters innovation while celebrating the buildings historical charm. This not only preserved Rochester's industrial legacy but also contributed to the sustainable reuse of these buildings, ensuring they will serve future generations as vibrant centers of industry and creativity.

The design also focused on creating a walkable, human-scaled environment within the six-building campus. The project included the restoration of roadways, walking bridges, and street-level access, reconnecting the campus with the surrounding urban landscape, and strengthening the connection between interior spaces. The result is a unified, pedestrian-friendly campus situated at the intersection of the Erie Canal and the Genesee River at the heart of Rochester's historic waterfront. The campus was designed to encourage interaction and collaboration, with spaces that blend seamlessly with the surrounding city and create a vibrant sense of community for employees and visitors alike.

Another key element of the design was to create an environment that would attract employees back to the office while also becoming a powerful tool for recruiting top talent. Recognizing that the employees are its greatest asset, the design emphasized the integration of hospitality-inspired features within the office. These features include comfortable lounges, social spaces, and collaborative areas that encourage creativity and foster a sense of belonging. The goal was to create a work environment that not only inspires employees but also makes the office more appealing than working from home, setting the stage for future growth and innovation. The success of this approach has since influenced the design of other corporate offices, making them attractive destinations for talent and cultivating positive, long-term organizational growth.

Through the restoration and innovative redesign of the Aqueduct Building, the corporate headquarters stands as a testament to the power of adaptive reuse, blending history with forward-thinking design to create a unique, inspiring space that reflects the company's values and aspirations.

## **AIA Rochester Community Impact Award**

The positive community impact of this project cannot be overstated. When a major corporation chose to move its headquarters to the City of Rochester, it returned over 300 high-skilled, high-paying jobs to the city, infusing the local economy with a much-needed boost. Furthermore, it preserved and revitalized 180,000 square feet within six historic buildings, some as much as 150 years old, saving this priceless landmark from an uncertain future. This transformative move breathed new life into the city's core and sent a powerful message about Rochester's ongoing potential as a thriving hub for global business.

Strategically situated at the intersection of the Erie Canal and the Genesee River, the new headquarters has revitalized a once-deteriorating city center, establishing a bold and lasting presence in the heart of Rochester. It has become a new landmark for the city, complete with distinctive skyline signage that honors its historic legacy while projecting a forward-looking identity. This headquarters not only serves as a symbol of corporate success but also represents a renewed sense of pride for the community, tying the city's rich industrial history to its dynamic future.

Designed and completed under the strict guidelines of the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Parks Service, the restoration of these buildings is nothing short of immaculate. The project successfully balances the delicate needs of historic preservation with the demands of modern corporate design. Every effort was made to maintain the original architecture, materials, and character of the buildings, allowing the past to remain on full display, while seamlessly integrating new elements to support the headquarters of a 21st-century corporation. The result is a beautiful and immersive blend of old and new, where the historical elements provide a foundation of authenticity, and the modern improvements bring efficiency and contemporary functional appeal to a progressive workspace.

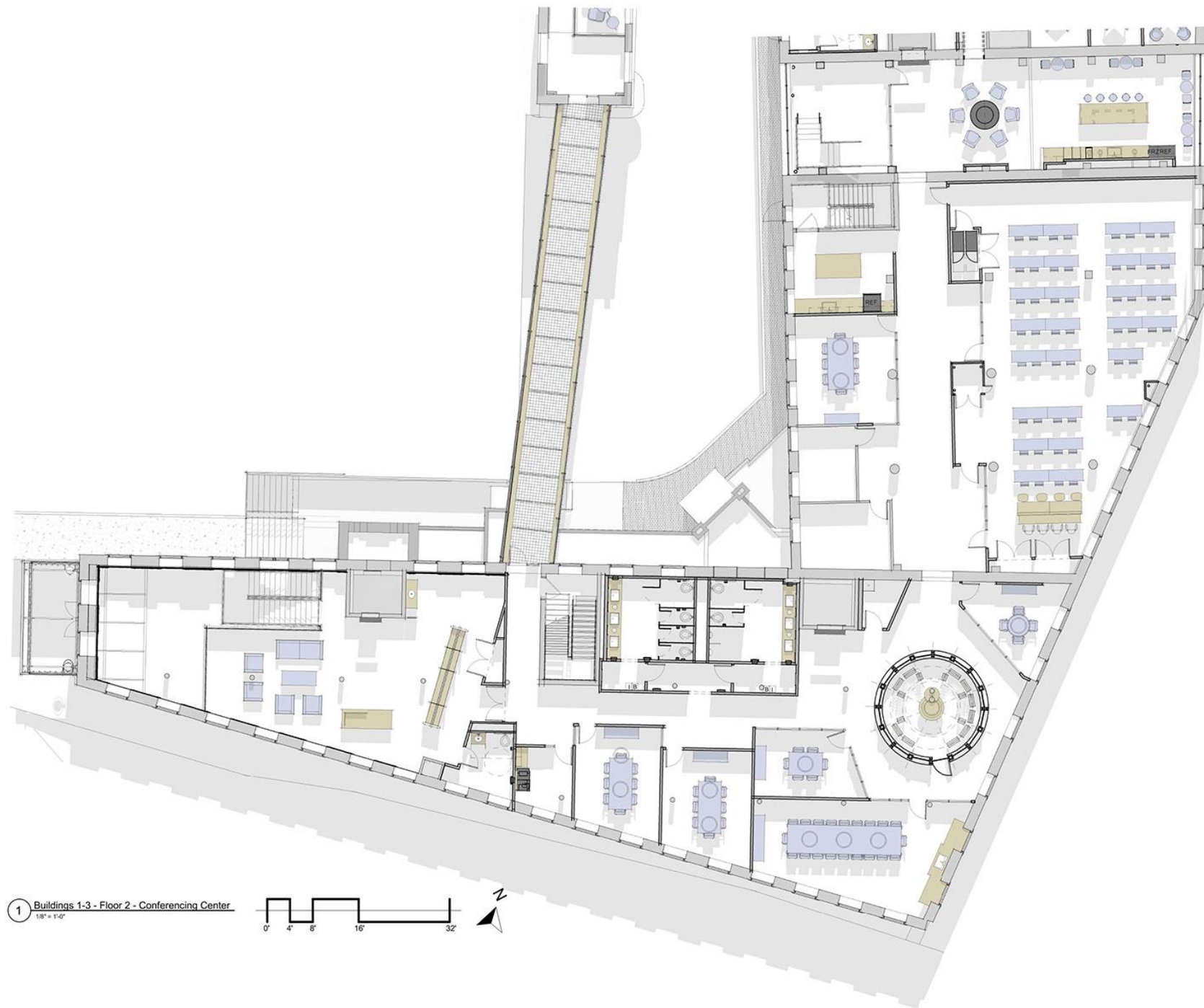
Motivated by this corporation's investment in the city, the City of Rochester also secured funding to restore the surrounding aqueduct streets, creating a cohesive environment that enhances the historic appeal of this corporate campus. The streets and pathways between the buildings have been thoughtfully restored to evoke the spirit of 19th-century industrial Rochester, allowing visitors and employees alike to experience the rich history that shaped the city's development. Walking through this revived industrial campus, one is transported back to the 1870s, with the surrounding restoration capturing the essence of the city's vibrant industrial past.

This project has successfully preserved an important piece of Rochester's unique heritage while providing a contemporary and welcoming environment for a global corporation to thrive. It represents a rare and valuable intersection of economic revitalization, historic preservation, and forward-thinking design. We are incredibly proud to have been part of this effort, helping to ensure that a significant part of Rochester's history not only lives, on but flourishes in the modern age.

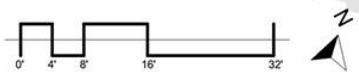








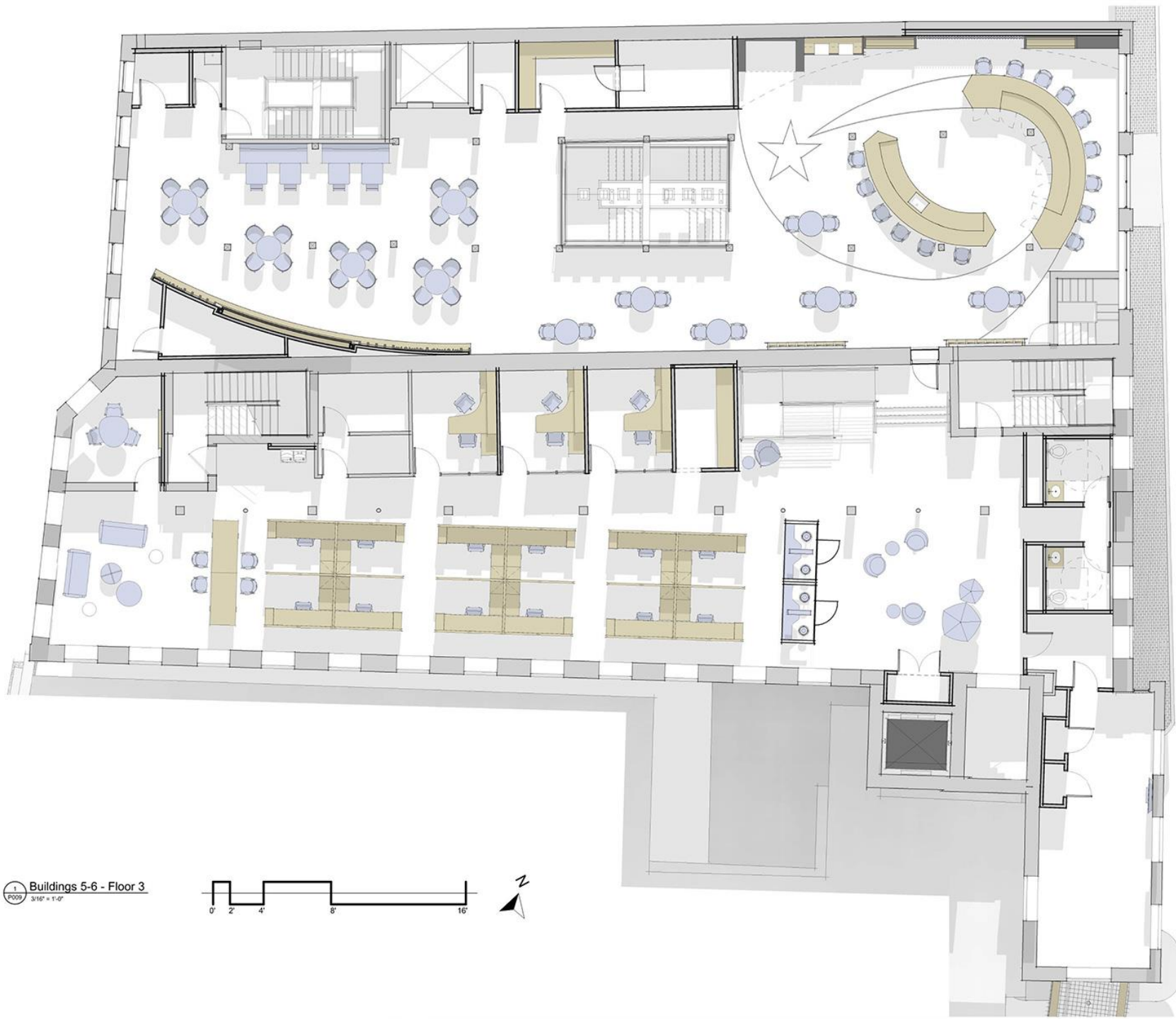
1 Buildings 1-3 - Floor 2 - Conferencing Center  
1/8" = 1'-0"



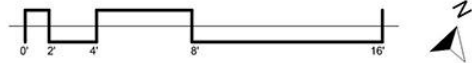


1 Buildings 5-6 - Floor 2  
P008 3/16" = 1'-0"

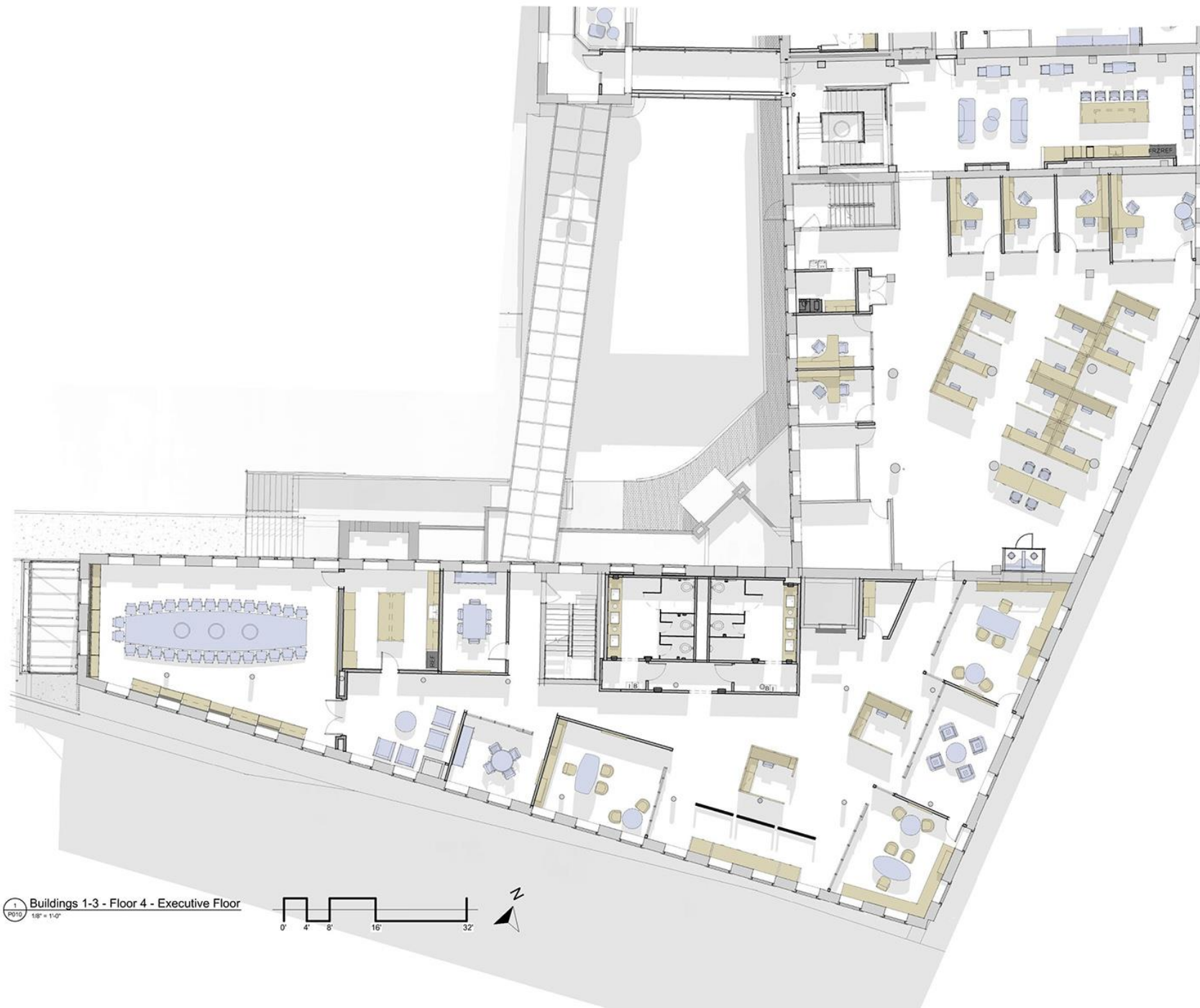




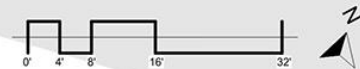
1 Buildings 5-6 - Floor 3  
P009 3/16" = 1'-0"







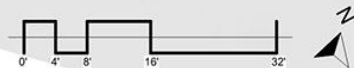
1 Buildings 1-3 - Floor 4 - Executive Floor  
P010 1/8" = 1'-0"

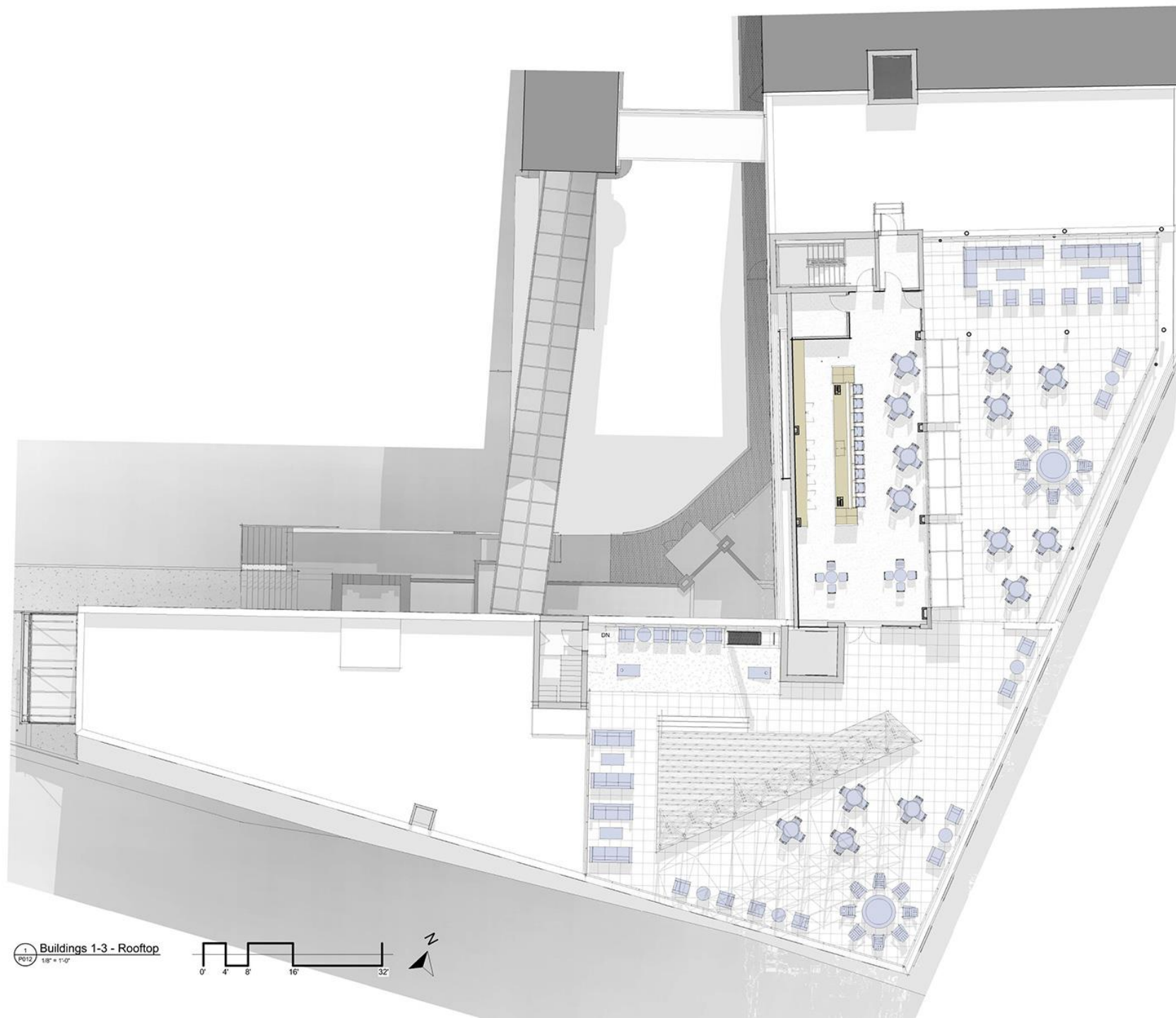






1 Buildings 1-3 - Floor 5 - Typical Office Floor  
P011 1/8" = 1'-0"





1 Buildings 1-3 - Rooftop  
P012 1/8" = 1'-0"







Photo: Don Cochran





Photo: Don Cochran



Rendering



Before

Photo: Dave Crowe



Photo: Don Cochran





Photo: Don Cochran



Before

Photo: Dave Crowe



Photo: Don Cochran





Photo: Don Cochran



Photo: Dave Crowe

Before



Photo: Don Cochran





Rendering



Before

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Before

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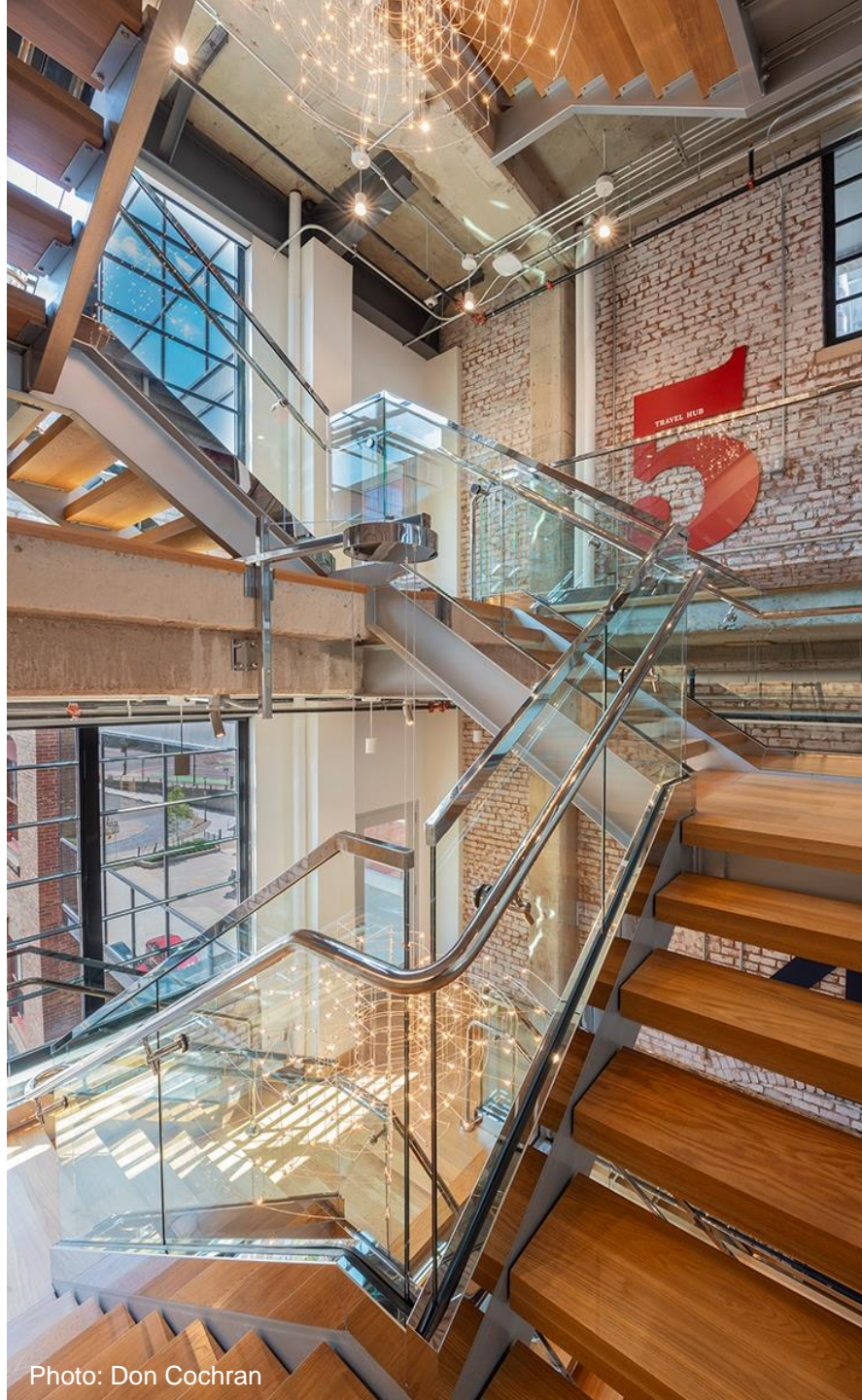


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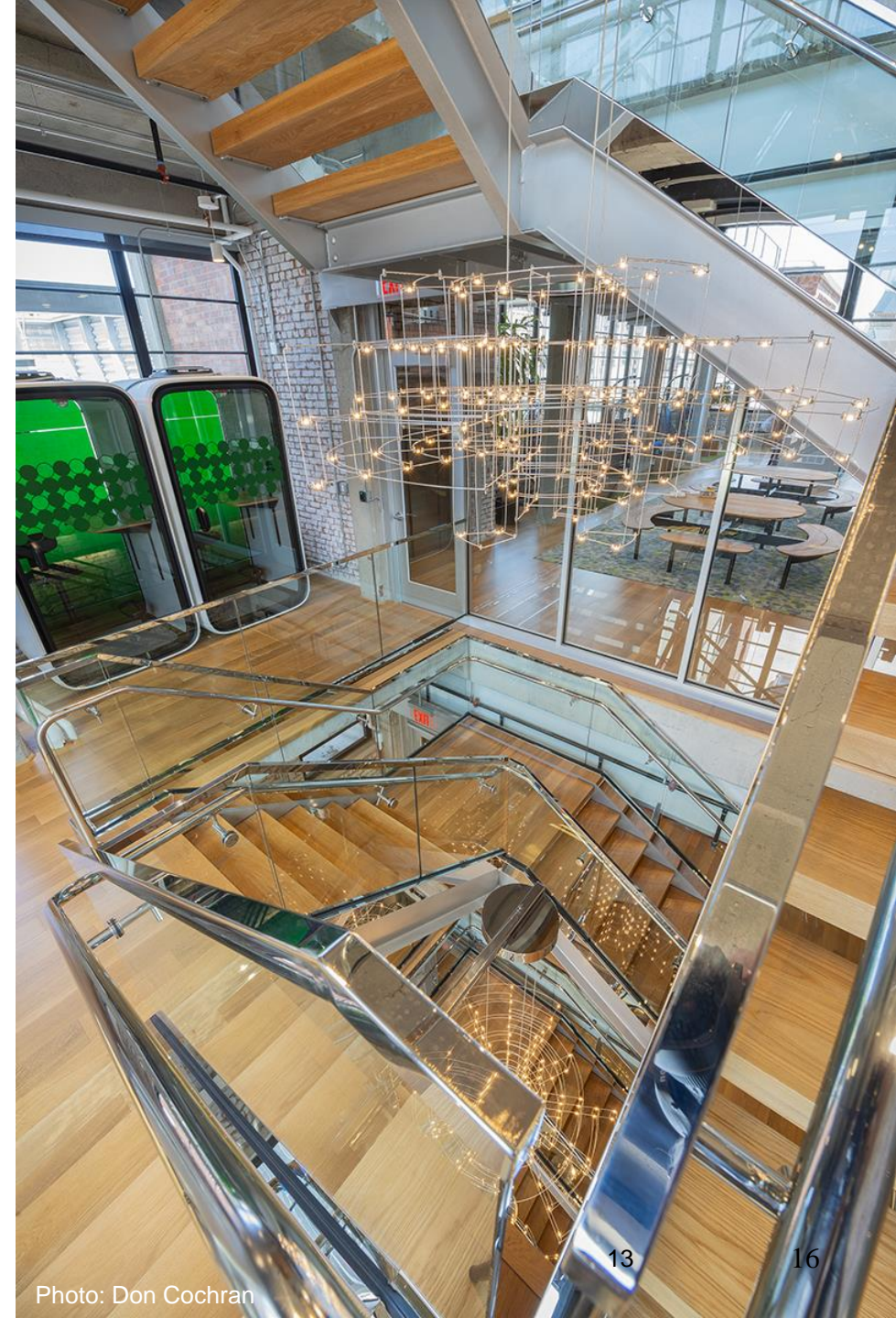


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Rendering



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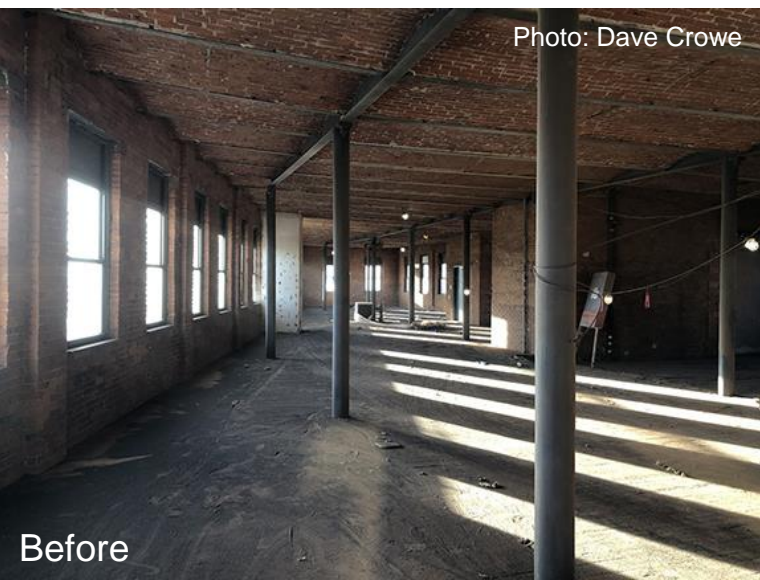


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Rendering



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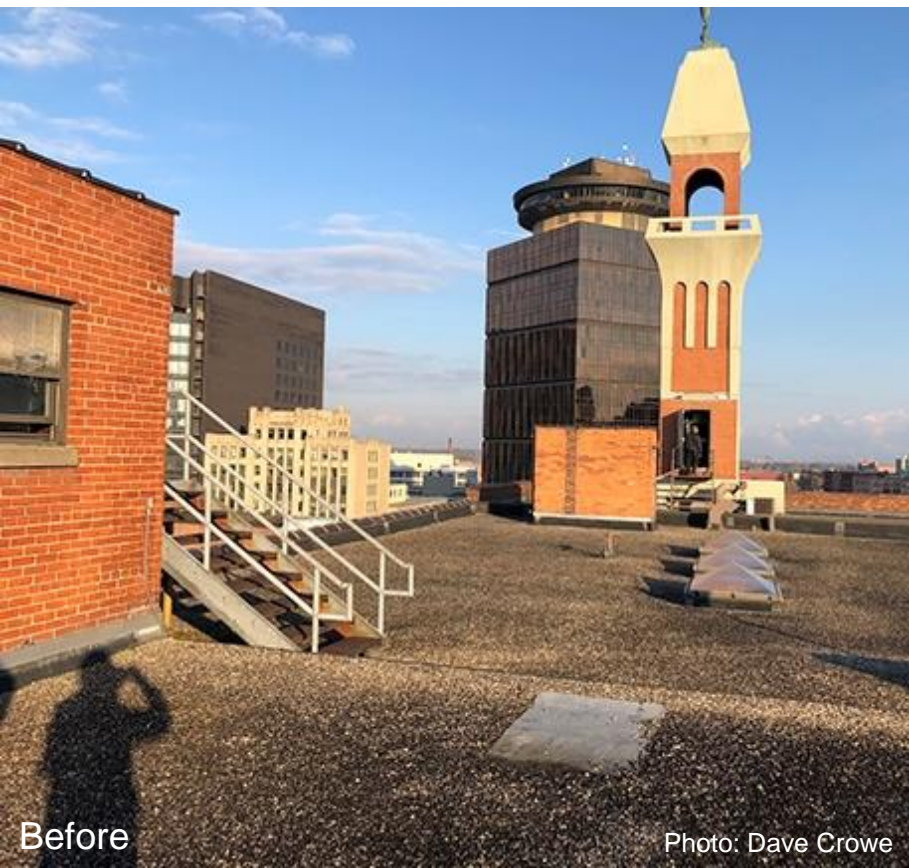
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Before

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