

Program Summary:

A workplace renovation for a private insurance organization transformed an outdated and under-loved building into a model for worker health and wellness.

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A workplace renovation for a private insurance organization transformed an outdated and under-loved building into a model for worker health and wellness. The existing facility, constructed in 1984, comprised of 8 isolated floors of private offices and high-wall cubicles (many with no view), experienced frequent complaints. The design team brought peer-reviewed research showing that higher air quality, better thermal comfort, access to views of nature, and design promoting physical activity and access to healthy food options all contribute to worker health and productivity.

The reimagined facility inserts a succession of double-height, daylight-filled social spaces with inviting stairs that draw employees up and through the building. Instead of locating private offices at the windows, where they block the view for workstations at the interior, a 'flipped' design moves private offices with glass walls to the center—ensuring everyone can have a view. The building's existing heating and cooling system is married with a high-performance system, providing more than twice the level of fresh air of standard practice, while a high level of individual temperature control is afforded by a Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) space conditioning system.

The big takeaway of the project? Strategies that help make the building better for the health and productivity of occupants are the same ones that result in substantial energy savings. Better for people, better for the planet.

IA-20.01

Building Area: (sf)
130,467 sf

Cost per Square Foot:
Confidential

Construction Cost
Confidential

Date of Completion:
June 2021

IA-20.02

Vision

This project is a workplace renovation for a private insurance organization, based out of Baton Rouge. The existing facility, constructed in 1984, comprised of 8 isolated floors of private offices and high-wall cubicles (many with no view), experienced frequent complaints.

The reimagined facility inserts a succession of double-height, daylight-filled social spaces with inviting stairs that draw employees up and through the building.

As soon as construction began and communicating spaces between floors were opened, it was almost a complete vision of the final design (prior to furniture and interior touches). In terms of visual wayfinding, it became eminently clear the effect the architectural interventions would have.





IA-20.03

Existing Offices

Across eight floors, the building held a variety of windowless cubicles buried deep within the large existing floor plates.

Private offices on the perimeter, installed with solid partitions and doors, prevented any natural light from filtering through to the interior of the space.

Workers expressed an overall sense of thermal discomfort in the space, as well as dissatisfaction at the conditions of light.

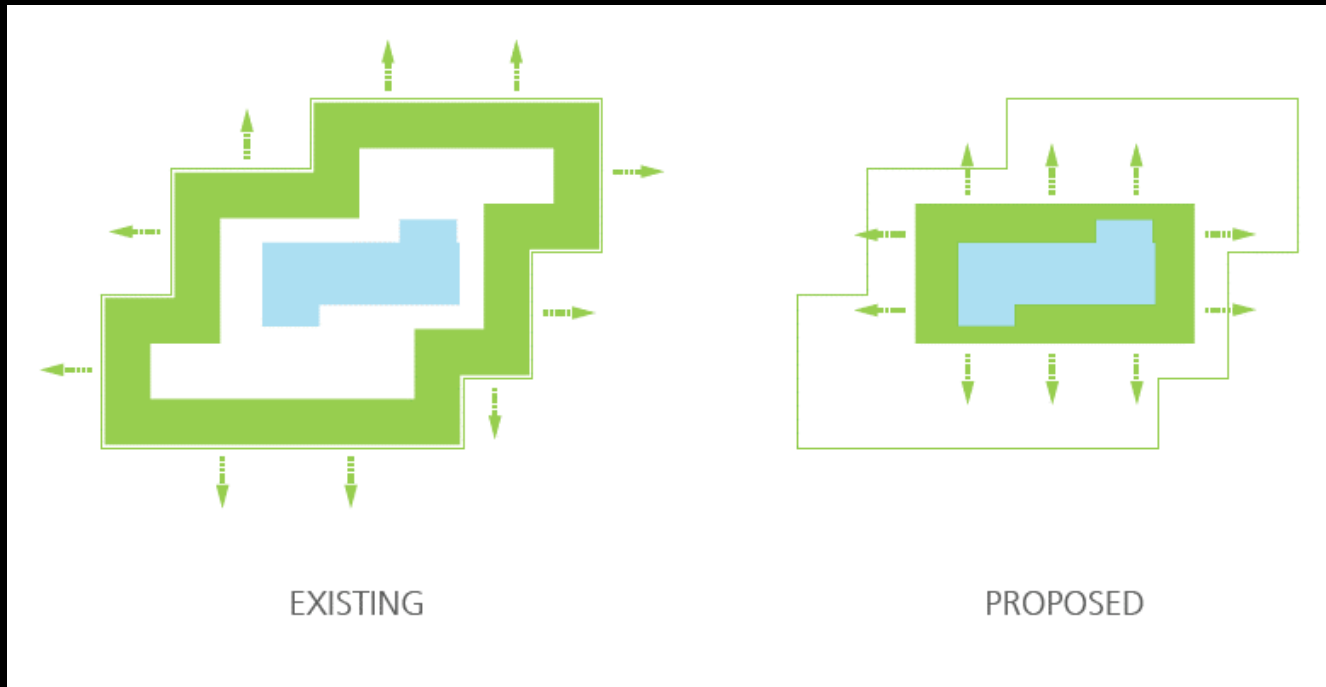
The building was similarly subdivided by a byzantine web of circulation space, via narrow, windowless hallways and other confusing throughfares.

IA-20.04

The Big Move

From the beginning, the company had expressed a desire to create more collaborative work environments, which in tandem with revamped culture management, expressed itself in a reduction of private offices and a migration to communal workstations.

A simultaneous program redistribution strategy of flipping the location of private offices with workstations quickly revealed inherent opportunities. Previously, locating private offices at the windows blocked external views for open plan desks at the interior. The 'flipped' design, pulling private offices with glass walls to the center means everyone can have a view.



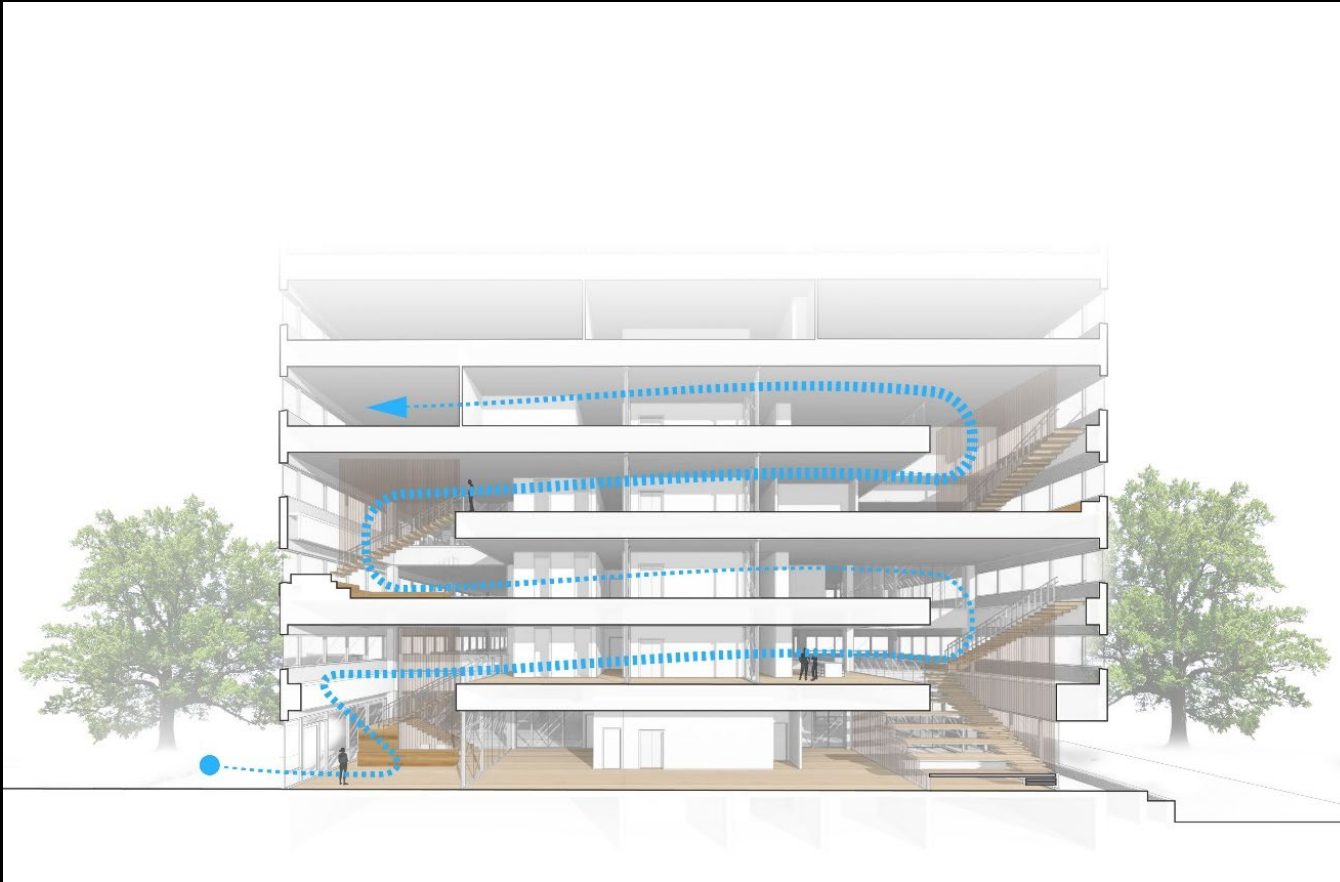
- Private Offices
- Workstations
- Circulation Space

IA-20.05

A Communicating Whole

The other big architectural move involved surgical interventions via selective demolition to create a continuous connection between floors. This approach extended the space planning idea previously developed within floors to horizontally connect certain departments requiring adjacency and broadened it to include vertical connections as well.

In theory, by tying certain programs together vertically, a user can reach a separate department one floor above or below by easily and quickly traversing a set of internal stairs surrounding the periphery of every floor. The intervention has a simultaneous benefit of encouraging exercise—integrating a separate key goal of health and wellness to the project redesign.



IA-20.06

Redefined Entry

Today visitors to the project access the building through a new entrance that puts the company's branding front and center, via a large board-formed concrete display, which doubles as the structural element for an accessibility ramp.





IA-20.07

A Rebranded Space and Mission

Within, a main lobby, developed from a ground floor exterior space filled in and connected to the second floor, greets visitors upon entry. Company branding is again immediately visible, a visual reinforcement of identity.

IA-20.08

Space for Gathering

An executive board room on the first floor immediately adjacent to the lobby provides easily accessible space for meetings with outside visitors.





IA-20.09

Workstation Areas

In support of the company's mission to reconnect employees throughout the building, the design team inserted central communicating spaces around all workstation areas.



Space for Socialization

These informal collaboration spaces were especially important to the client—a place where an entire department might come together to touch base at the beginning of each week.

Furnishings were intended to be comfortable and durable, inviting even for short conversations or one-off meetings.

IA-20.10

Workstations

Individual workstations (customized by the employees themselves), feature either a direct view to the outdoors or access to natural light.



IA-20.11

Phone Booths

Several acoustically-treated, insulated phone booths on each floor, strategically located near workstations provide private space for telephone calls and other needs.

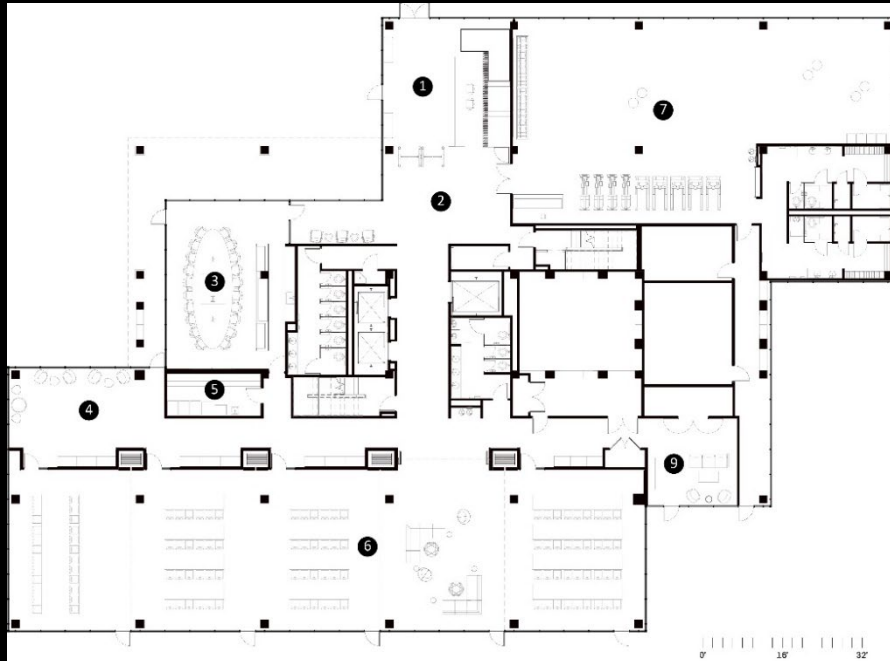


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Second Floor Cafe

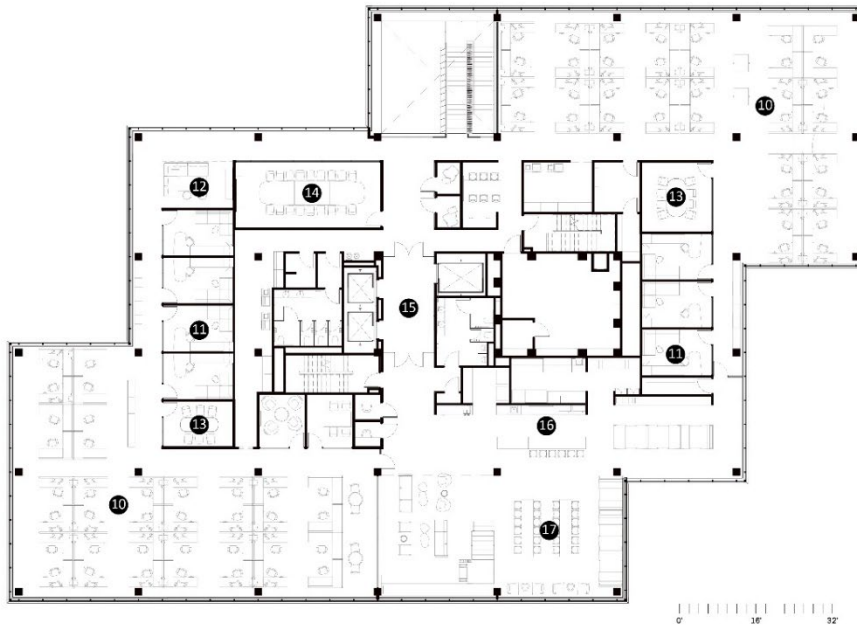
A second-floor café provides a lounge for employees to congregate and collaborate, while providing a variety of furniture and seating options for working or taking a break. This provides a space for employees from all floors to informally interact and cross paths.





- 1 ENTRY/RECEPTIONIST
- 2 MAIN LOBBY
- 3 BOARD ROOM
- 4 PRE-FUNCTION AREA
- 5 PANTRY
- 6 FLEXIBLE LEARNING SPACE
- 7 FITNESS CENTER
- 8 FITNESS CLASSROOM
- 9 LOUNGE
- 10 OPEN OFFICE
- 11 PRIVATE OFFICE
- 12 OPEN MEETING
- 13 PRIVATE MEETING
- 14 CONFERENCE
- 15 LARGE CONFERENCE
- 16 ELEVATOR LOBBY
- 17 CAFE
- 18 LOUNGE
- 19 EXECUTIVE OFFICE
- 20 INNOVATION ROOM
- 21 COFFEE BAR
- 22 WAITING AREA/LOBBY

FIRST FLOOR



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SECOND FLOOR