

# DESTINATION WORKPLACE

WHERE WILL YOUR WORKPLACE JOURNEY TAKE YOU?



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**We invite you** to explore these seven major types of Destination Workplaces and to discover more detail in this Ebook.

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## INTRODUCTION

Destination Workplace

*Compelling workplaces don't try to be all things to all companies – or to all workers within a company. Your unique workforce and mission call for equally unique design solutions that are long-lasting and give your high-performance teams a setting where they can thrive. Companies and building owners can deliver efficient workspace solutions by listening carefully to the needs of their people.*

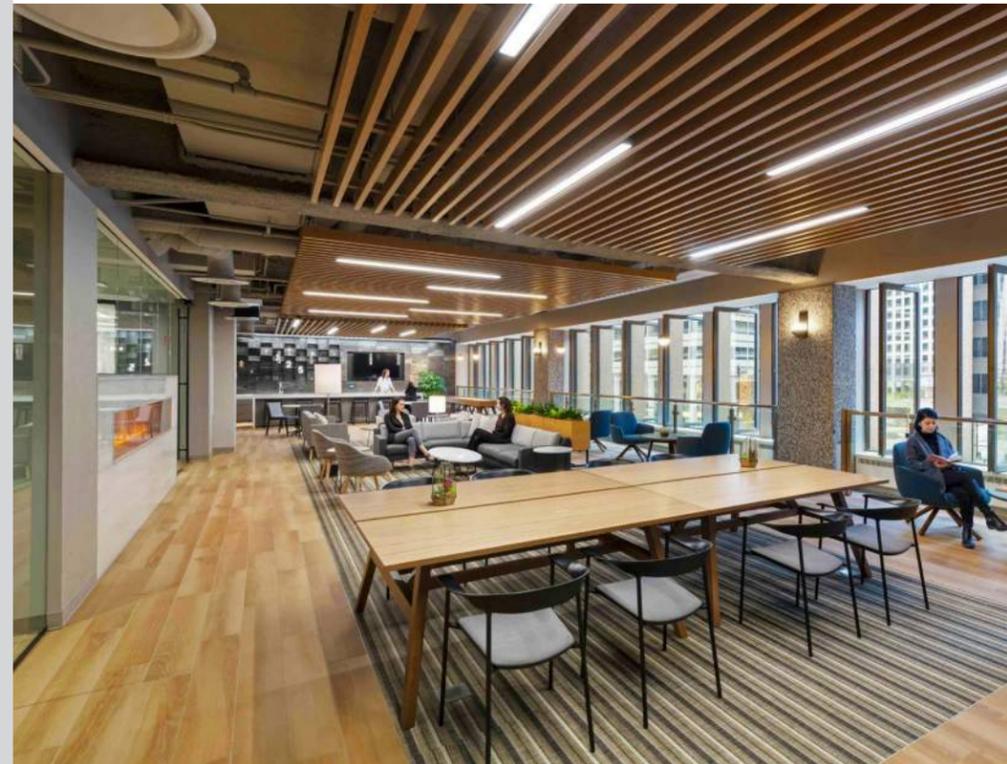
*There is no longer a workplace status quo. The events of 2020 have fundamentally changed how we view the nature of work, calling for more attention to wellness, support for remote work and equitable settings for all workers regardless of job title, abilities or background. Beyond offering the right amenities and technologies in the right locations, future-focused offices need to offer something workers can't replicate at home.*

*In this eBook you'll discover ideas drawn from our experience and expertise in Architecture, Corporate Interiors, Repositioning, Build-to-Suit, Life Sciences, Workplace Strategy, Master Planning, Programming and Branding. Through each of these services, we help clients achieve a common goal of designing meaningful, socially activated workplaces that enhance organizational performance.*

*Our greatest pride is in the value we bring to our longstanding client relationships. We are ready to listen to your company's challenges and opportunities so we can offer value-enhancing design solutions.*

Warmly,  
Steve Wright  
Roger Heerema

*Stephen Wright*     *Roger Heerema*



## CHAPTER 1

### Urban Destination Workplaces

123 N WACKER  
LASALLE INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

## More than an office building: A professional's work-play destination

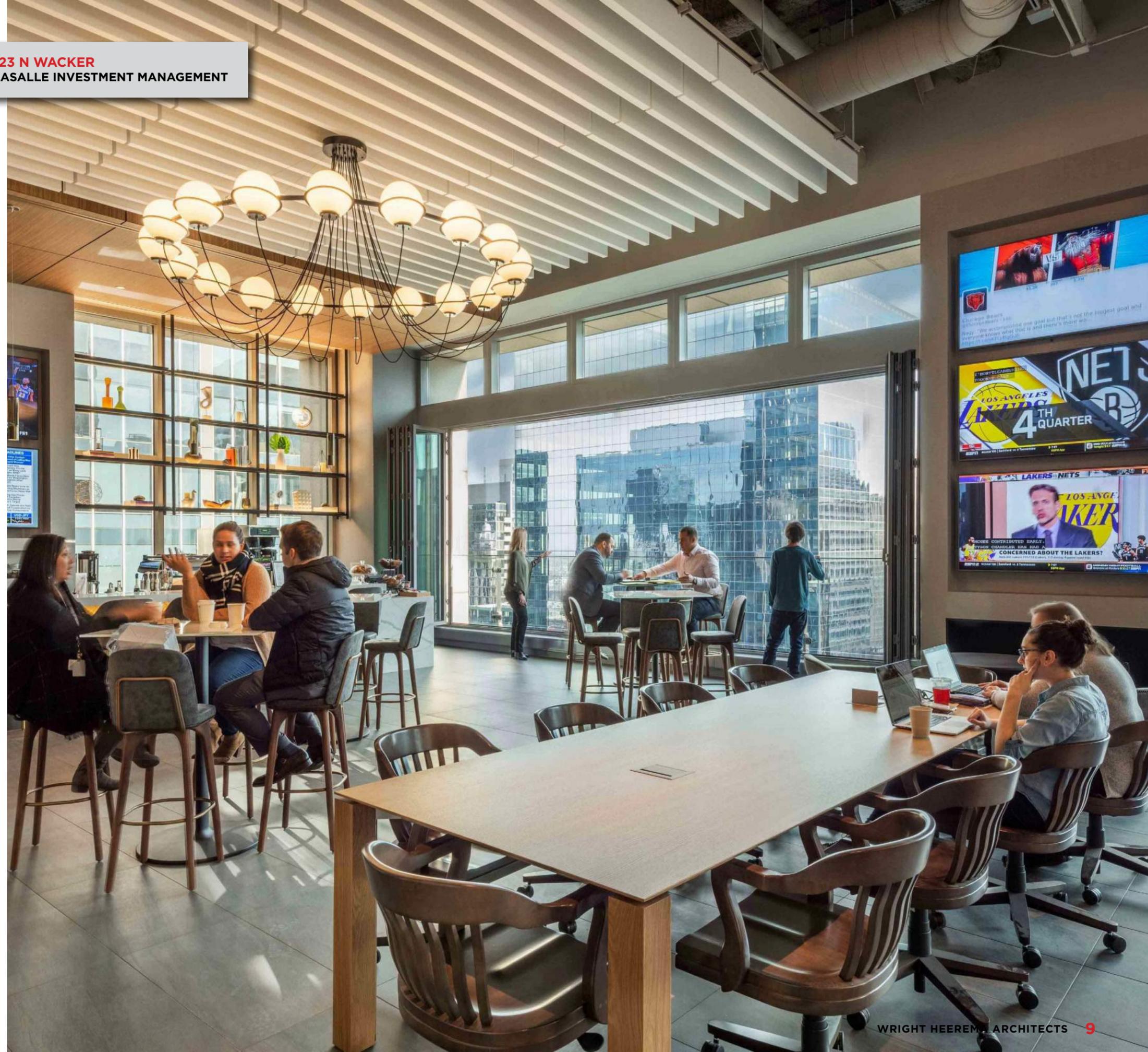
As workers return to urban office towers, they're expecting much more than a desk. They are expecting a workplace destination, an exceptional experience that delivers more than their home office could ever offer. While in the short-term, building owners are addressing immediate safety issues and protocols, the longer-term is looming. As desks and offices have become luxuries rather than necessities, the need has risen to likewise deliver more than places to perform tasks. The workplace must now deliver productive individual spaces; third places that support innovation and collaboration; and of course, a first impression that will serve as a rallying cry for community building and shared purpose.

### All this from an office building?

Absolutely. Here are a few ways downtown office buildings are reinventing themselves as urban workplace destinations.

### Contribute to the Neighborhood

The urban environment is dense and rich; a socially activated building will provide offerings that fill in gaps in existing nearby amenities, bringing together the fabric of the neighborhood. Identifying the right spaces in the building for community amenities is a huge success factor when transforming an under performing building - and also a significant factor as you look to optimize the renovation budget.



## CHAPTER 1

### Urban Destination Workplaces

#### Make the first impression count

The building exterior, entrances and lobbies have always formed the trifecta of a building's first impression. However, the goal of first impressions has evolved over time and your building may (or may not) have kept up with changing expectations. In past decades the goal of an urban office building's first impression was to impress with scale and finishes; today the goal is to humanize and connect. On building tours, leaders must be able to imagine themselves and their workforce in the space on a daily basis.

Activating the lobby is essential and cafés and professional lounge spaces play an important role in that process. At an in-progress project at **200 S. Wacker**, we listened to the needs of the building owner and were able to balance ambitious first-floor plans with their desired budget. The design complements the lobby, which is already very active, with additional seating and updated finishes to encourage even more social activity.

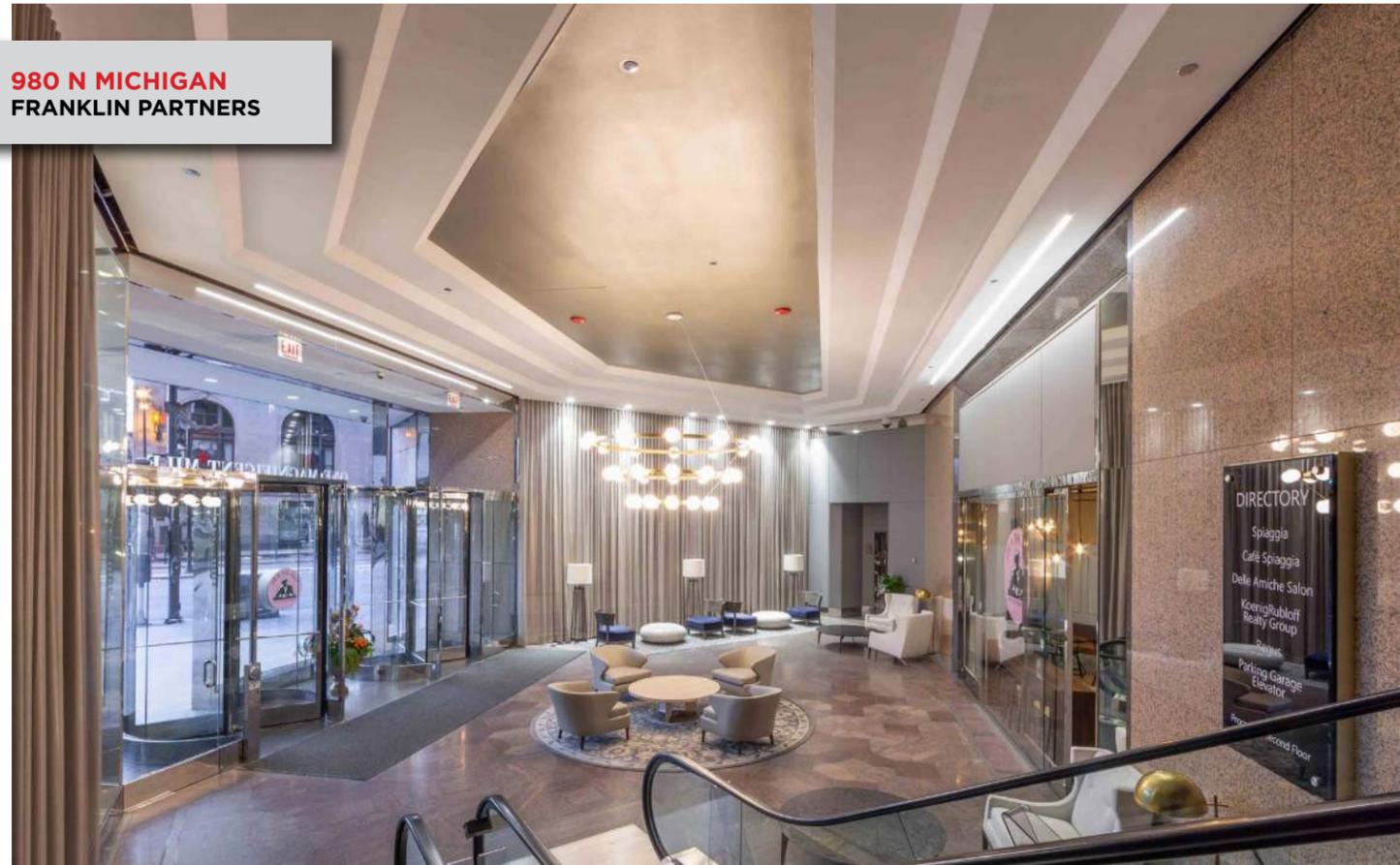
#### The third place can - and should be - inside the office building

Landlords are now not just responsible for the "second place" (the office), but also for creating the "third place" that is neither home nor office. Creating an intentional community within the building makes an office building not just someplace to go to work, but to belong. Like a front porch, shared lounges serve as a transition between public and private spaces.

The lounge at **123 N. Wacker** for example, employs lounge furniture suited for comfortable yet functional working positions and sophisticated layering of patterns and texture that invite professionals to relax and unwind together. The building owners also installed a full-time barista, supporting spontaneous collaboration.

Designing shared amenities with an eye to the buildings' tenants can further curate the building

980 N MICHIGAN  
FRANKLIN PARTNERS



200 S WACKER  
MANULIFE INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT



experience. With a mix of wealth managers and other services for high net worth individuals at **980 N. Michigan**, we ensured the lobby, lounge and other shared spaces had luxury finishes responsive to those tenants' expectations.

#### Create value by optimizing every space - even those that can't be leased for market rents

To create value for a building, owners should carefully consider where to build out shared amenities such as the lounge, café, fitness center and conference center. Some floors that might not command top rents as office space can be creatively re-imagined for a shared amenity; our designs respond to the need to offer amenities and pleasant surroundings, with the financial priorities of building owners. For example, at **123 N. Wacker**, the investors budgeted for a roof deck. However, it rapidly became clear that a roof deck wasn't the best logistical or financial option. Instead, we worked with the owners to problem-solve and identify their goals. Today, a 30th-floor lounge with an operable wall of windows offers tenants an outdoor experience - without the expense of building out the roof.

#### Not all urban office buildings are the same, but they are facing similar challenges.

Building owners should take great care to shape a building environment as a destination for returning workers.

*Designing shared amenities with an eye to the buildings' tenants can further curate the building experience.*

## CHAPTER 2

### Destination Interiors

#### Spaces within spaces: Interiors designed to amplify corporate culture

A sense of belonging is more important to companies and their teams than ever before. It's time to not only take stock of short-term needs, but also to step back to conduct a deeper reflection on what a company really needs from their office locations.

Consider: How could the design of your office space rise to better support your objectives for culture, connectedness, cost-savings and productivity? Future-focused, creative and responsive design solutions can help drive shifts in office culture as well as support financial goals.

#### Effective design principles for now, and later

First things first: Adapt to the health and wellness needs of 2020. There's an urgent need to consider spacing out desks, installing plastic dividers, reconfiguring furniture, designating outdoor gathering places and other similar strategies to help alleviate employee anxiety about returning to the office.

Longer-term, 2020 presents an exciting opportunity to improve how your office elevates your company as a whole. Firms currently planning build-outs to address short-term needs may be able to create value by rolling in more enduring solutions as well.



*As you plan, it's also important to be sure your workplace strategy consultants are not incented to recommend larger spaces, to ensure the advice you receive will be optimal for your financial and operational needs.*





Here are some strategies that can elevate your space for the long-term:

• **Help knowledge workers flourish with collaborative, safe spaces.** Despite broader acceptance of remote work, knowledge workers still function best when

they solve problems together. A recent **survey** found that a mere 19% of employees in North America would prefer to work from home full-time, confirming that most people prefer a mix of at-home and in-office work settings.

On a practical basis, this may mean more unassigned and collaborative spaces in the office to support the reality of some employees' need to collaborate with others elsewhere than their desks. With the right safety measures in place now, you can create a high-quality anchor workplace that supports the new flexible location paradigm.

• **Determine optimal square footage with an unbiased workplace designer.** More people will work from home in the future, which could mean less space will do. On the other hand, keeping the office size as-is or even growing it could allow more social distancing and collaborative spaces. For example, while video conferencing rooms may have been a luxury in the past, they have become a productivity must-have for many companies. Focusing on what you need to support business objectives, as opposed to old conventions of space utilization, is key to creating the destination workplace your employees will leverage for optimal productivity. As you plan, it's also important to be sure your workplace strategy consultants are not incented to recommend larger spaces, to ensure the advice you receive will be optimal for your financial and operational needs.

• **Put access and equity first as you design.** Amidst the uncertainty and stress of a global pandemic, it's even more valuable for businesses to show all employees they're valued. For example, WHA helped **Meade** create more equitable spaces and experiences for its employees by opening up the perimeter to let in natural light for everyone. On a practical level, review your build-out to make sure it's ADA compliant, and that comfort and amenities are considered equally for team members of all backgrounds, genders and job grade levels.

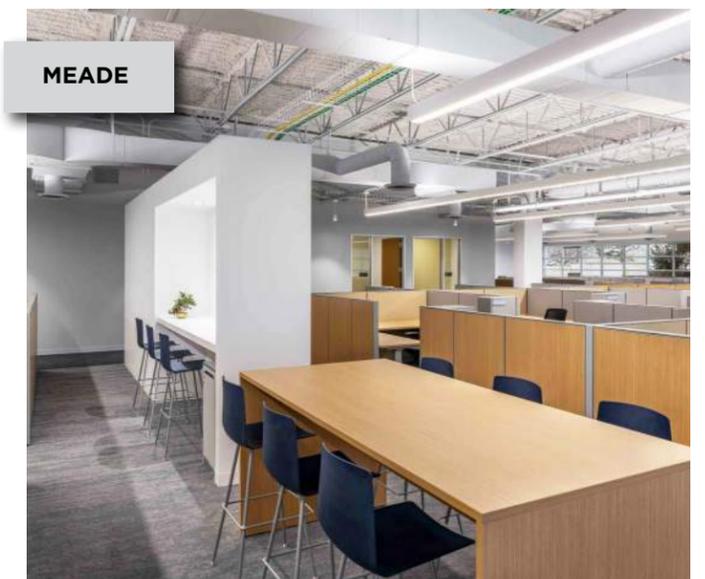
• **Align your budget with your values.** Even on a constrained budget, there are always creative solutions available to help improve the employee experience. The key is to work with partners who understand your brand culture and values, and can offer resourceful ways to bring them to life in your workplace.

For instance, when the **Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning** needed to downsize but maintain robust conference space for public meetings, WHA helped meet those requirements with a build-out in Chicago's Old Post Office. As a government entity, the space needed to look nice while also being and appearing fiscally responsible. We accomplished both by elevating standard materials and extending the impact of a smaller budget.

• **Consciously shape third spaces.** With months of work-from-home mandates under our collective belt, it's safe to say employees will be more than eager to get back to a more dynamic workplace. The idea of having other spaces to go, whether it's a lobby café, expansive conference room or informal terrace, will be even more compelling.

**Aesthetics are only the beginning**

Destination workplace design is more than just decorating. Workplace strategists and designers understand how the space will function, flow and ultimately serve as the foundation of the company. As responsive design advisors, we can help your organization offer corporate spaces that are both safe and engaging destinations.

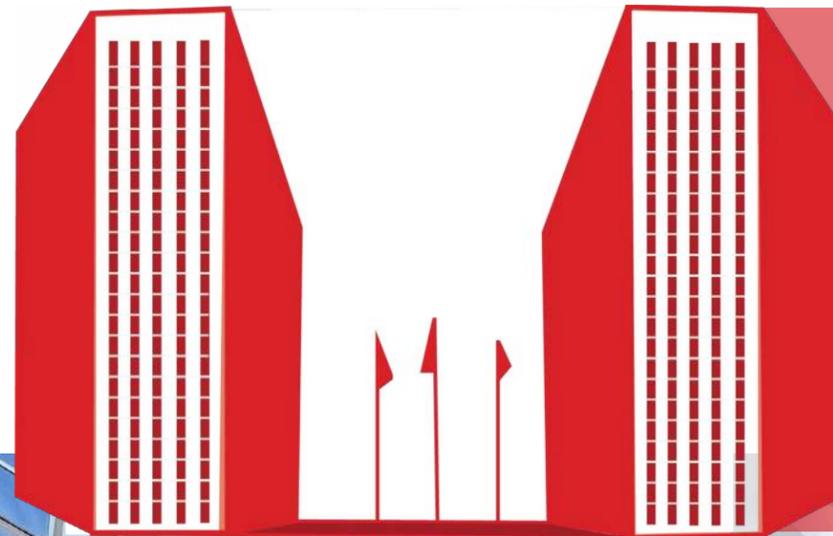


## CHAPTER 3 Suburban Destination Workplaces

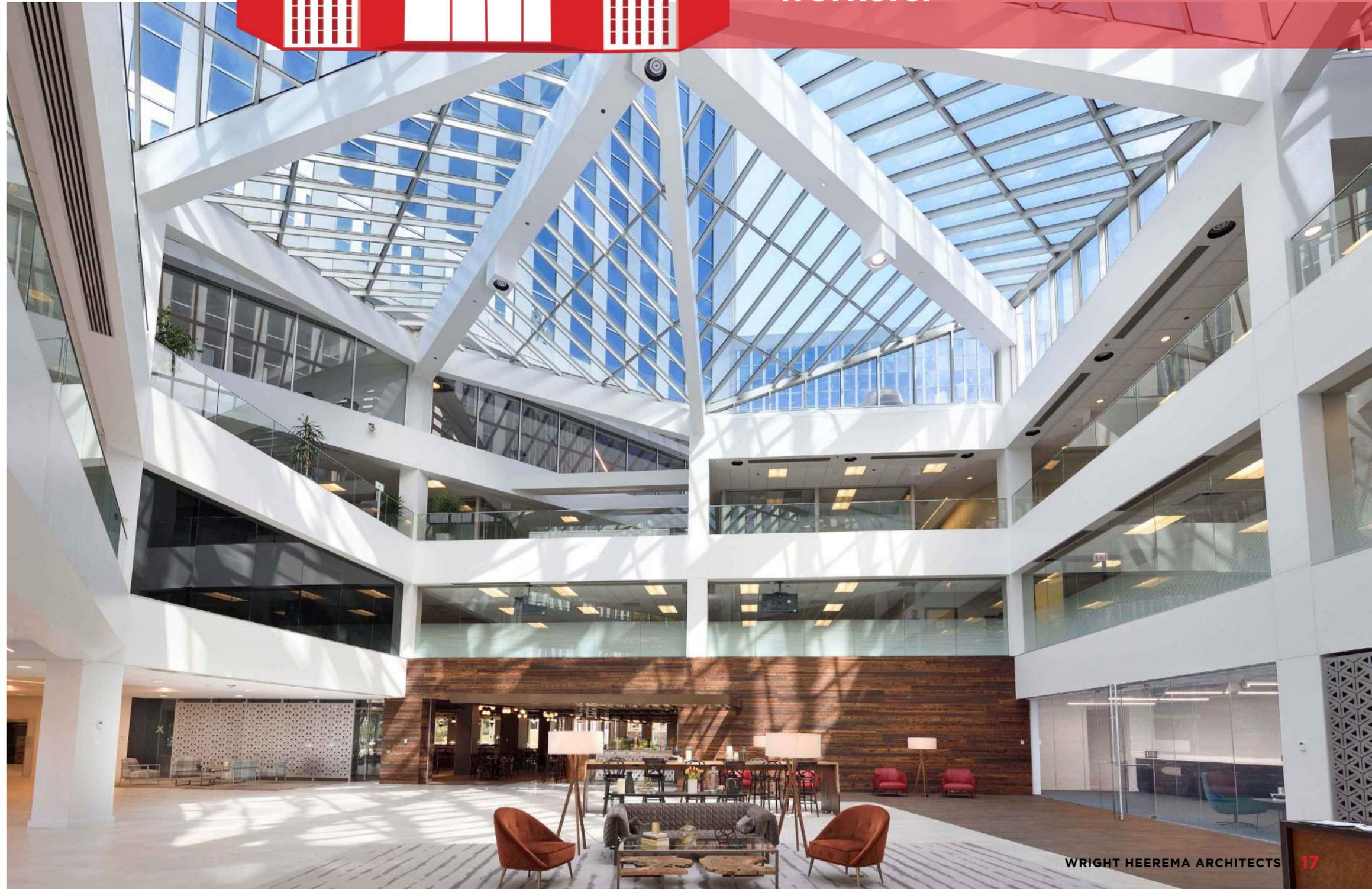
### **Socially activated, poised for the future: Bringing new life to suburban office buildings**

A suburban renaissance is upon us. Buildings and campuses that just yesterday were dismissed as less attractive than their urban counterparts are the new darlings of corporate site selectors. With their generous parking and outdoor spaces, suburban office locations are particularly poised to present a major opportunity for building owners. But make no mistake: the buildings that will win the war for tenants are the ones who are curating more than office space—they are creating socially-activated communities.

Today's successful suburban office buildings are vibrant ecosystems that can be repositioned to provide the setting for a community of workers. They deliver a "wow factor" and promise an exceptional experience the minute someone walks into the lobby.



*Today's successful suburban office buildings are vibrant ecosystems that can be repositioned to provide the setting for a community of workers.*



**PRESIDENT'S PLAZA  
GLENSTAR**

## CHAPTER 3

### Suburban Destination Workplaces

#### Create a suburban destination workplace with social activation

Further departing from its urban counterpart, where the city and surrounding environment have historically provided the vibe that tenants look for, the suburban office building is the vibe.

By creating an ecosystem within the building to cater to tenants' daily needs, building owners can socially activate suburban office buildings to cultivate a community. There's typically enough space and flexibility to carve out a social space that hosts a 'third place' for employees to enjoy one another, and a location that isn't "home" or "desk."

Creating a socially activated office building in the suburbs is all about promoting interaction. Successful suburban office communities will create a consistent, welcoming and unique experience with dynamic first impressions and communal amenities. Here are some of the spaces that can building owners can implement to curate this experience:

- **Clean, vibrant exterior.** Curb appeal isn't just for residential real estate – office workers want to work in a space that looks as great outside as it feels inside. Especially with some outdated facades calling the suburbs their home, updating – and cleaning – the

building's exterior as well as taking advantage of the green space available with lush landscaping can make a big first impression.

- **Dynamic, welcoming lobby.** The dark, closed-off lobby meant to impress tenants and visitors is a thing of the past. Today, lobbies should be bright, inviting and alive. Ways to accomplish this type of lobby include comfortable seating to encourage tenants to take meetings or sit with a cup of coffee, dynamic lighting installations to orient tenants in the space – like the lobby lighting at The Shuman in Naperville – and updated finishes.

- **Lively, comfortable lounge.** Providing a space for tenants to unwind, work or socialize can quickly become one of the most-used spaces in the building, so long as building owners provide some service to attract activity, such as a café with a barista, or bar for after-work happy hour. For example, at President's Plaza in Rosemont, the lounge's coffee bar serves adult beverages in the evening, with its hours extended well past 5 p.m. due to its popularity with tenants.

- **Cafeteria with variety.** To cater to all of tenants' needs, an onsite cafeteria with a variety of options



MID AMERICA PLAZA  
EQUUS CAPITAL PARTNERS



SCHAUMBURG CORPORATE CENTER  
GLENSTAR



THE SHUMAN  
FRANKLIN PARTNERS

can help keep tenants in the building during the workday. Cafeteria seating can also provide another spot for tenants to take lunch meetings.

- **Efficient fitness center.** Tenants looking to stay active and streamline their schedule can tackle both goals with an in-building fitness center. Some building owners are hiring third-party firms to manage the fitness center, like at The Shuman, providing an even more elevated experience for tenants.

- **Exciting game room.** To inject more fun and creativity – with a dose of tech office – into the building, a game room can bring tenants together to relax or take a break to stimulate their minds.

#### Why more companies are choosing the Suburbs as their destination

While it takes some extra elbow grease to create a community in an office building, those in the suburbs do have some advantages suited to this particular moment:

- **Abundant outdoor space.** As the outdoors has been deemed safer than most settings, suburban buildings have an immediate advantage over urban locations with their wealth of green space. Owners

are beginning to assess their green space and make it more accessible to tenants.

- **Lower rents than downtown.** For companies considering decreasing density, leasing more square footage could be a solution to bring more employees back to the office at once – and with cheaper rents than downtown, suburban space could be more attractive.

- **Fewer stories = less reliance on elevators.** With fewer stories, tenants in suburban office buildings don't rely as much on elevators – a new concern as small, enclosed spaces – and the stairs are less daunting than in a high-rise.

With much uncertainty about what the future holds for the workplace, employees will certainly want to return to the office eventually, necessitating the creation of true workplace destinations. WHA's repositioning design strategy is responsive to the needs of companies and their employees looking to locate or already located in the suburbs, finding innovative approaches to create value and bring new life – and new tenants – to old buildings.

## CHAPTER 4

### Destination Workplaces for Life Sciences

#### Inspiring life sciences innovators, meet inspired workplaces

Some life sciences workplaces serve as a backdrop to innovation; others inspire it. With creative workplace design solutions, pharmaceutical leaders are bringing inspiration and new momentum to their labs and offices. Life sciences is a growing industry despite the 2020 economy. Companies continue their race for the brightest and best talent, and global demand is skyrocketing for vaccines and much-needed medications.

Likewise, significant advances are reshaping workplace design in this dynamic industry. From continuing to invest in collaborative space and health and well-being, to embracing new trends like enhanced outdoor space, life sciences leaders are creating destination workplaces designed to spark ingenuity.

#### **Wanted: Modern, healthy space for collaboration and flexibility**

Prior to COVID-19, activity-based workplaces (ABW) had already been gaining traction within life sciences offices. ABW calls for unassigned desks for most – and in some cases, all – workers. Its popularity is due in part because this approach allows teams the flexibility and opportunity to collaborate in dynamic spaces. Although some more traditional firms have been slower to embrace the trend, a “free address” approach is gaining more industry traction every day.



*After all, there's nothing like a stay-at-home order to fuel a desire for in-person engagement, together with freedom to find the right location for the right task.*



## CHAPTER 4

### Destination Workplaces for Life Sciences

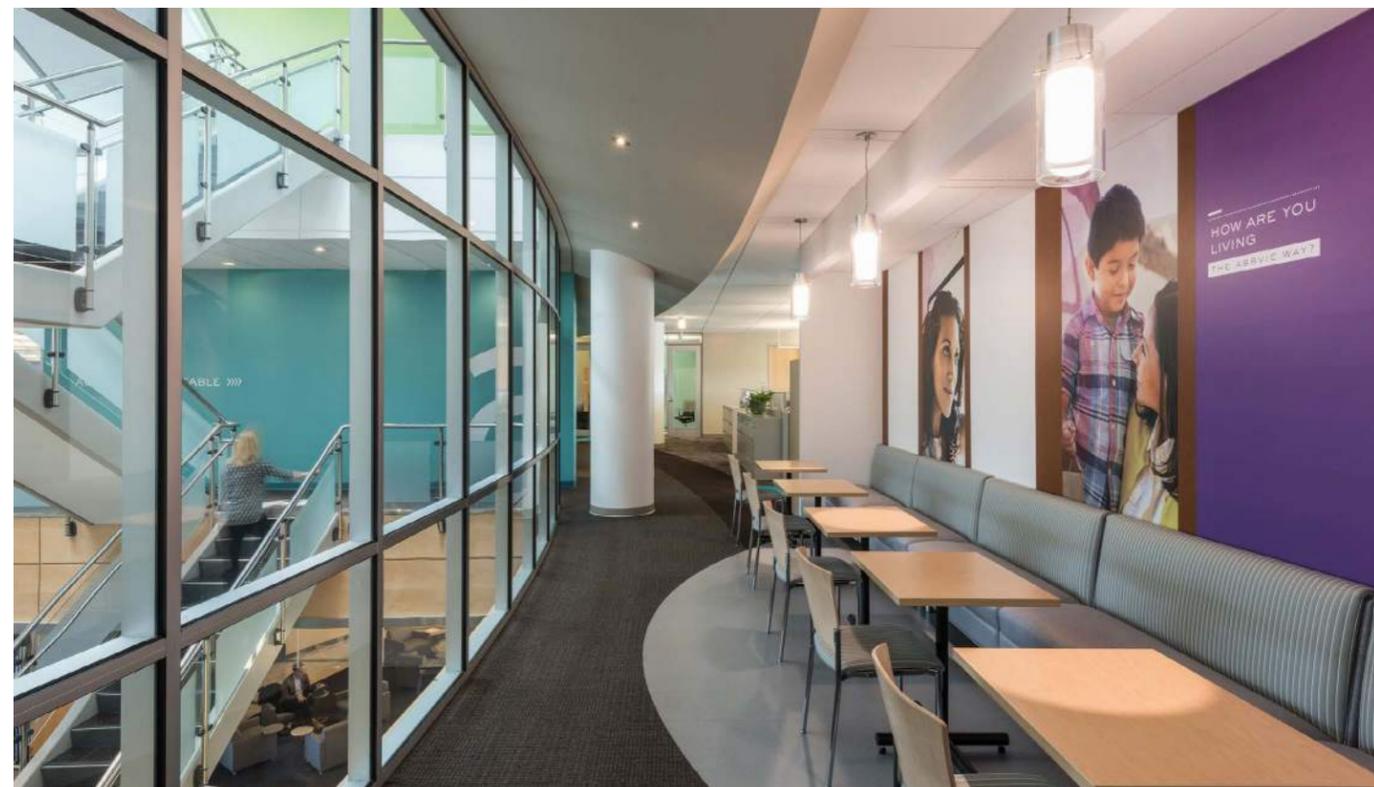
Like in other industries, many pharmaceutical workers (outside of laboratory personnel) have experienced remote working in 2020; we expect this experience to help ABW gain traction. After all, there's nothing like a stay-at-home order to fuel a desire for in-person engagement, together with freedom to find the right location for the right task.

Flexibility is being chosen over territory. In one case, a bio-pharmaceutical company's stakeholders had been seeking more collaborative space. After evaluating how different groups worked, leadership learned that most work took place not at a desk, but in meeting and casual conversation spaces. By looking at how people truly functioned, they discovered the value of a mix of engagement spaces and activity-based workstations. Similarly at **Vyair Medical's** new corporate headquarters, we worked closely with their leaders to design a professional, branded environment that encourages team building and camaraderie with maximum flexibility across four floors.

#### Safe spaces for breakthroughs, through a global pandemic

Life sciences facilities have a leg-up on other industries when it comes to maintaining wellness practices designed to control the pandemic. A culture of wellness is already in place, and many locations offer meditation spaces, multi-faith rooms and fitness centers - standard fare for recruiting and retaining top talent. Additionally, workers in this industry are likely to have clinical and laboratory experience with face masks and a high degree of hand washing, and pharmaceutical companies have historically offered some of the least dense workspaces out there. Low density from the C-suite through to the lab will likely continue and match general office trends to promote social distancing.

Furthermore, in lab facilities, there's actually very little change. Antimicrobial materials and personal protective equipment are all part of a typical day's work, for staff scientists at least.



#### New momentum, new workplace possibility

To meet ever-growing demand for life sciences innovation, it's wise to infuse innovation in workplace design, too. Consider the following emerging trends in life science campus design - all of which we expect to accelerate over the next year or two:

**1. More usable outdoor space.** Think walking trails around or between buildings, and/or an extension of food service spaces. Life sciences talent, whether they work in HR, PR or research, appreciate the mental and physical health benefits of accessible outdoor space. Plus, a more vibrant exterior can help enhance community perception of your brand.

**2. Heightened security around the perimeter and lobby.** It may be that greater uncertainty in the world is heightening the need, but we also know that feeling safe at work increases innovation. Some firms are seeing that ramping up security around campus doesn't just reduce the need of potential disruption and support cybersecurity initiatives, it also supports employee productivity.

**3. Tech-enabled conference rooms for more seamless collaboration.** With more personnel working remotely, updated video-conferencing technology makes it easier for in-person teams to work "alongside" off-site colleagues. Media rooms are quickly becoming hubs for productivity and community, as forward-looking pharma companies increasingly invest in these spaces.

From traditional Big Pharma firms to hotshot startups, any life sciences facility has the potential to become a destination workplace. To fulfill that potential, we help organizational leaders translate their unique culture and branding into the workplace. As a trusted advisor and extension of your team, we create the meaningful relationships it takes to bring new value

## CHAPTER 5

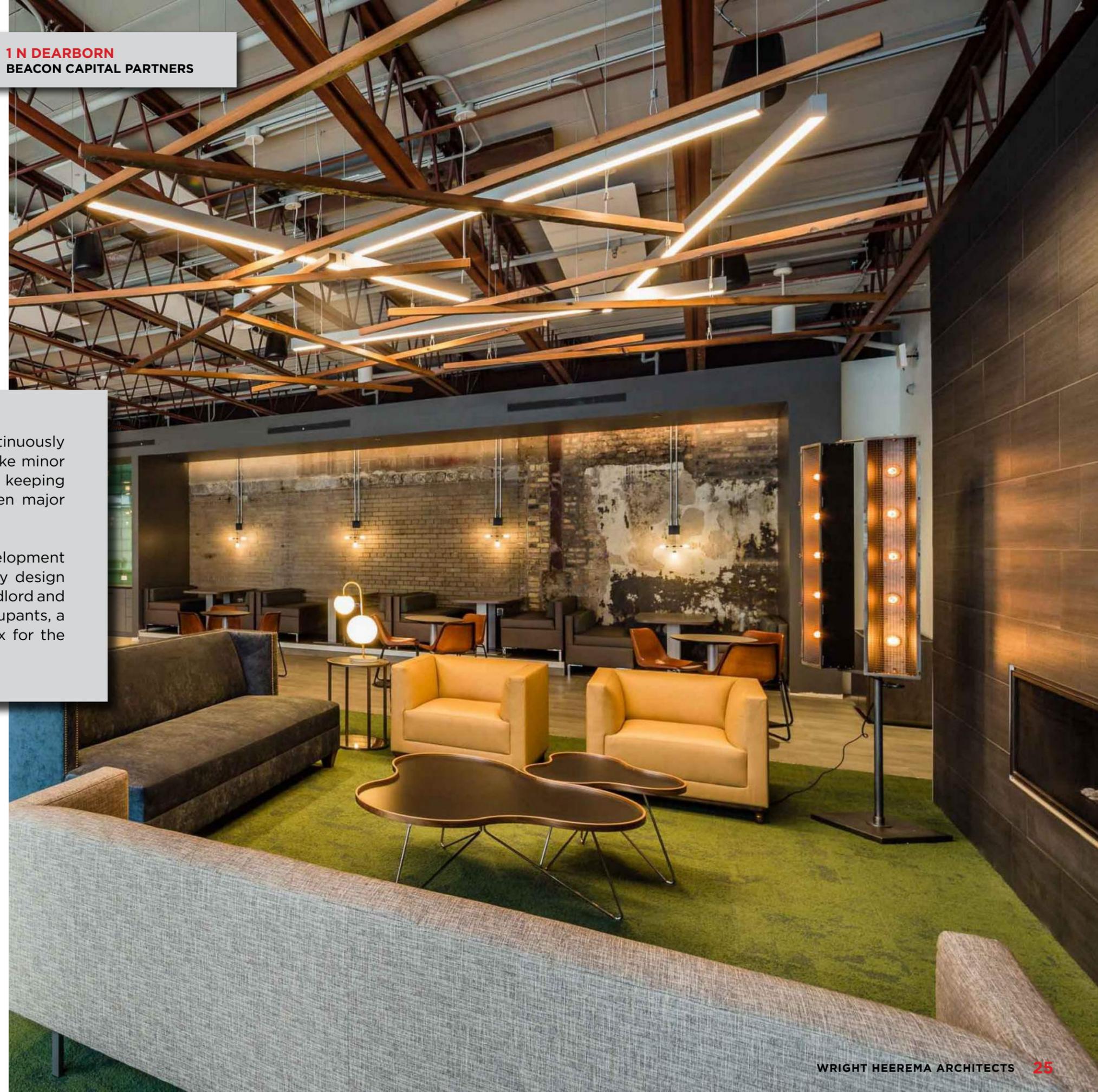
### Owner Curated Destination Workplaces

# Enduring workplace destinations shaped by strong owner-architect partnerships

Enduring destination workplaces are well-managed and continuously improved. In the most iconic buildings, owners typically make minor refreshes on a regular basis to shared and public spaces, keeping the building appealing to potential new tenants in between major redesigns.

After all, a building doesn't typically need a major redevelopment to lease an available space. In most cases it's the everyday design solutions that matter. A thoughtful partnership between a landlord and their architect can deliver a productive environment for occupants, a pleasant experience for visitors and a profitable tenant mix for the owners.

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## CHAPTER 5

### Landlord Services for Destination Workplaces

#### Keeping building interiors fresh and consistent for an exceptional day-to-day experience

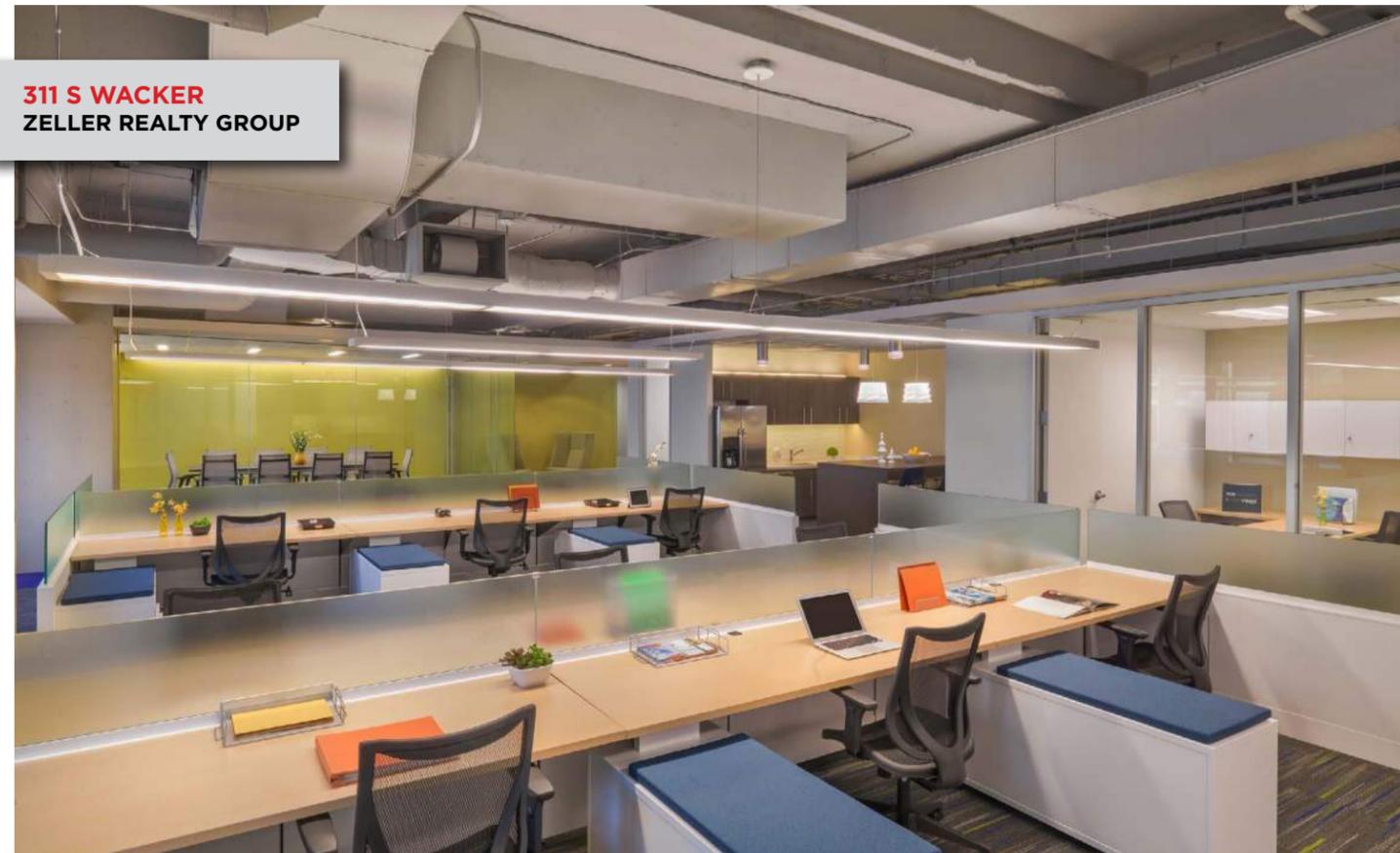
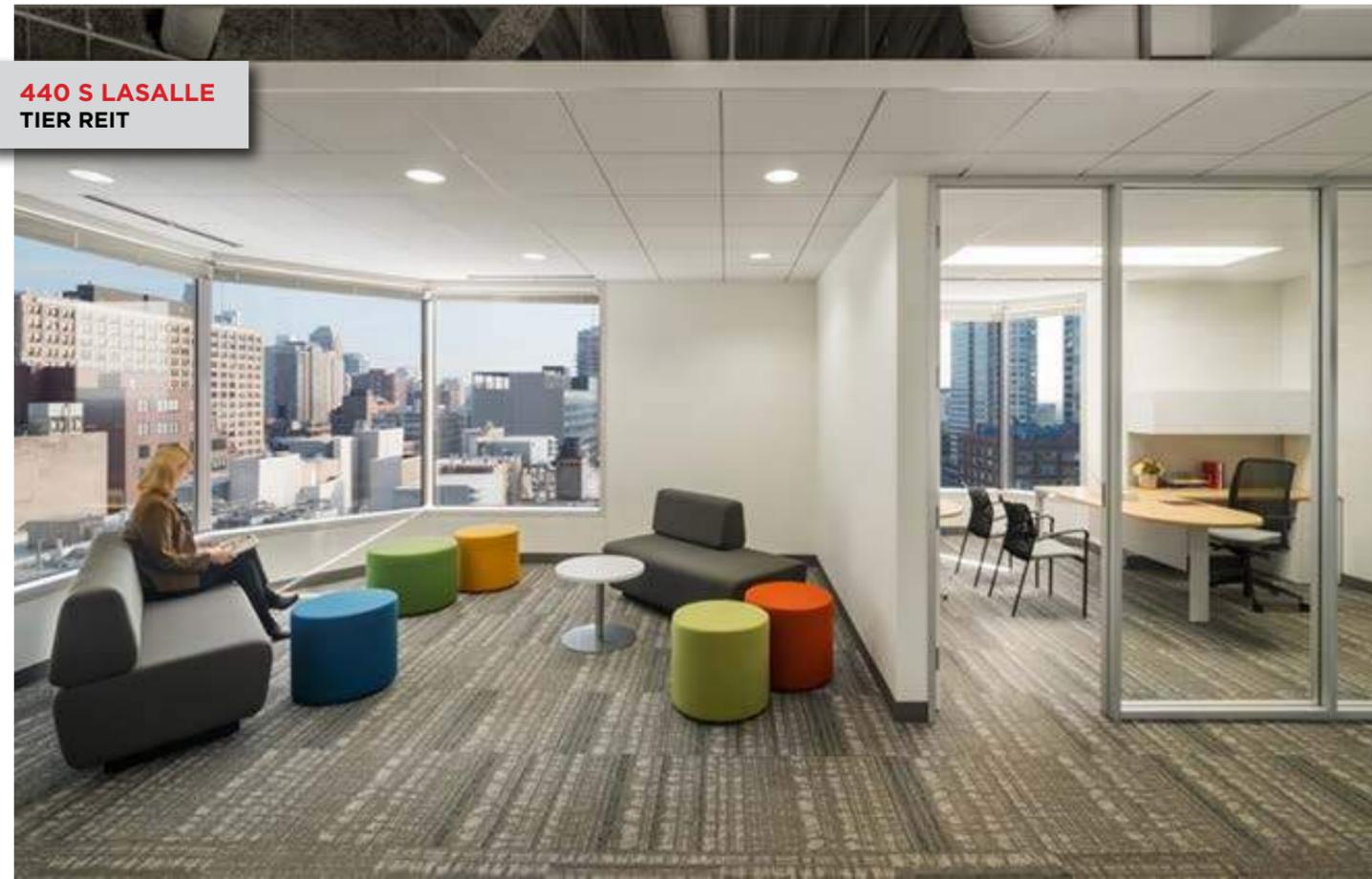
The owner-architect partnership can improve new leasing outcomes as well as keep existing tenants happy, retaining their revenue for the building. A strong partnership addresses design needs throughout the life cycle of a building: spaces that need to be leased, common elements that need to be refreshed, or spec suites that need better curb appeal. While a landlord could hire different architects for each need, there's a lot of ramp-up time involved for each project, cutting into time better spent improving the building.

As a full-service design firm, we've learned how to really get to know a building and its tenant mix – and to use our knowledge of tenant needs to help landlords create an environment that appeals to them. Owners can leverage a strong owner-architect partnership in a variety of ways throughout a building's life cycle:

- **Major leasing efforts** drive a series of time-sensitive needs, including urgent requests for customized test fits, spec suite design that will delight a particular set of potential tenants, and marketing-ready, accurate floor plans. Rapid response from an owner's architect matters deeply when possible rent-paying prospects are waiting to be delighted by your building.

- **Retaining existing building tenants** means making them feel like they matter. Even if their lease isn't up for years to come, delivering updated common areas like corridors, bathrooms and other spaces used daily can go a long way to keeping the rent flowing from loyal, long-term companies who call your building their professional home.

- **Increasing profitability** isn't just about squeezing your margins – it can also be driven by creative design solutions that find new rentable square feet you didn't know you had. At the historic **231 S. LaSalle** in Chicago's financial district, we were able to transform an area previously used for mechanical equipment storage into a light-drenched space. It was leased in full to a coworking provider before the actual renovation even began, in part based on our renderings showing the potential of the



*The owner-architect partnership can improve new leasing outcomes as well as keep existing tenants happy, retaining their revenue for the building.*

space never before counted in the building's rent rolls.

- **Beyond a major renovation or repositioning**, the building's narrative continues. Tenants will likely want to make changes that require a careful review of the building's floor plans and systems or call for new amenities that were not in the original repositioning budget. A strong partnership with an architect that knows the building inside and out can go a long way to avoiding mishaps – and yes, even discovering potential new revenue streams.

#### Curating destination-worthy buildings, together

Ultimately, it takes consistent ownership vision to continually deliver a destination-worthy tenant experience throughout the entire life cycle of a building. With our holistic approach to updating all aspects of a building – before, during and after a major repositioning – we help landlords and building owners steward their buildings more effectively and use design to create real value.



## CHAPTER 6

### The Build-to-Suit Destination Workplace

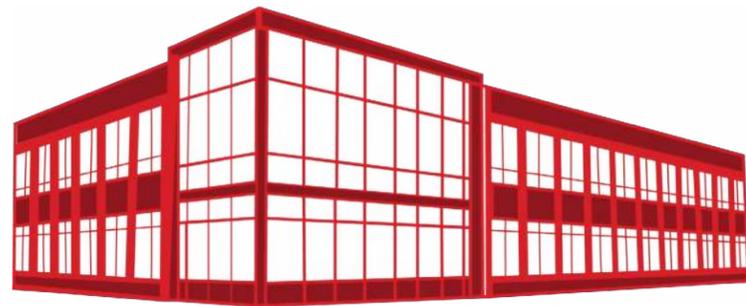
#### Bring workers back with an office designed for their unique needs

Some companies' real estate needs are simply not cookie cutter; creating a destination workplace can be a highly customized process when your firm has a set of unusual or highly specific needs. Even in a tenant-friendly office market, when there are plentiful options, the right configuration where and when you need it simply may not be available. One possible solution? The build-to-suit (or redeveloped-to-suit) workplace, customized to the requirements of a specific company and its employees.

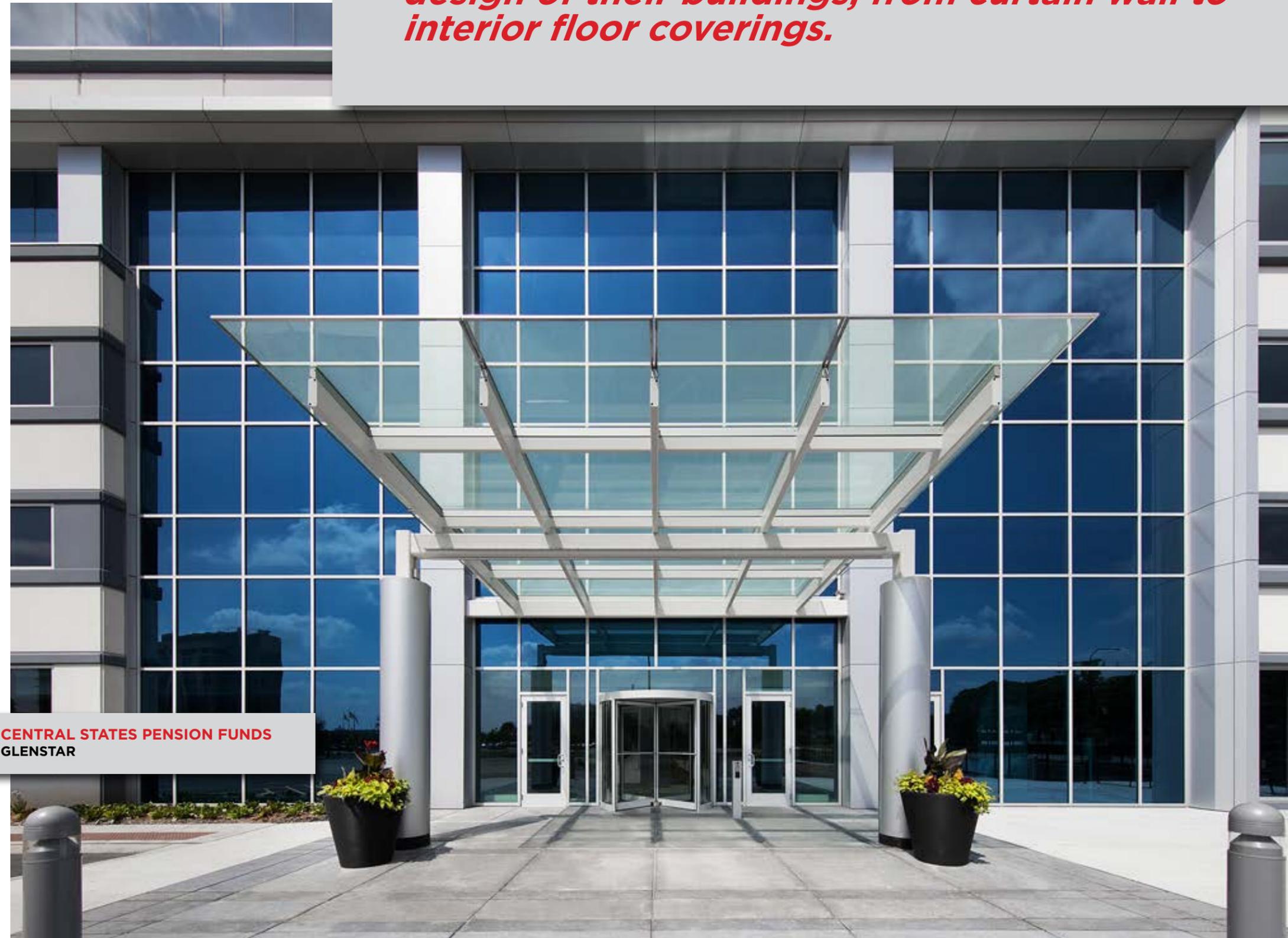
#### More than a building: A destination built for your needs

A traditional build-to-suit office building is built from the ground up, carefully adhering to the specifications needed by the company who will office there. Those specifications also keep an eye on the long-term: the investors who will likely buy the building down the road. While new buildings are still the typical build-to-suit project, some companies are discovering another way to create a custom work environment: the redevelopment-to-suit.

In a redevelopment-to-suit, an existing building is transformed completely, many times taken down to its shell. At **GlenStar's Central States** building located just off the Kennedy expressway by O'Hare Airport, WHA was able to design the core and shell. The exterior of the building is just as important as the interior architecturally to draw tenants and guests in from near and far. Central States is easily accessible not only by car but also by the CTA Blue Line train.



*A build-to-suit office gives a corporate occupier control over the size, location and design of their buildings, from curtain wall to interior floor coverings.*



## CHAPTER 6

### The Build-to-Suit Destination Workplace

Build-to-suit (or redeveloped-to-suit) destinations offer the end-user companies, developers, and ultimately their investors benefits over simply leasing space in an existing building, including:

- **Greater control.** A build-to-suit office gives a corporate occupier control over the size, location and design of their buildings, from curtain wall to interior floor coverings. For WHA client Centene Corporation, for instance, security and privacy were paramount – and a 150,000-square-foot build-to-suit office building was the best solution.

- **Exceptional, responsive design.** A thoughtfully designed build-to-suit workplace addresses the company’s workflows, culture, brand and employee engagement goals. WHA helped Turano Baking Company, for example, create a corporate headquarters building that reflects the unique values of the family-owned and -operated business.

- **Investor value.** Through strategic design, the building can be designed for attractiveness to future investors, so the developer and/or owners know that not only is their space right for them – but it’s growing in value, too.

- **Energy savings.** A build-to-suit project can include state-of-the-art, energy-efficient building systems that reduce the company’s long-term operating and occupancy costs.

- **Advanced sustainability features.** Whether or not a company wants to pursue LEED, Green Globes or other certification, a build-to-suit can provide an opportunity for environmentally sustainable operations.

- **Health and wellness features.** The build-to-suit model enables a company to provide such features as touchless doors and elevators or advanced air filtration, which underscore concern for employee health and comfort.



#### The economics of build-to-suit

A build-to-suit tenant can be a valuable partner in funding property features that add to a property’s future marketability. When WHA client Central States Pension Funds specified a parking garage with an above-average number of spaces, for instance, the developer welcomed the opportunity to add more generous parking than it would have otherwise; that feature will be a future leasing differentiator.

Additionally, by working with an architect that understands the economics, a company can value-engineer its rental rate. In designing a 162,000-square-foot build-to-suit office for a global financial services company in Arlington Heights, WHA uncovered a way to add a mere 1.5 feet to the exterior column bay. The addition increases the potential occupancy by 25%, for only a 3% increase in rent.

#### Keys to creating a build-to-suit destination

For a successful build-to-suit project, it’s important to work with an architect that understands the perspective of the tenant, the developer and future investors. Because WHA works with both developers and corporate occupiers, the firm is able to create solutions that bring value for all parties.

At the heart of any build-to-suit is a holistic perspective of the building and its interior: how does it uniquely suit the needs of the company that will operate there? Working with an architectural firm that understands the goals and preferences of today’s office tenants – from sustainability and wellness to cost-effective design – goes a long way toward creating a build-to-suit destination workplace that will welcome employees back to the office.

*For a successful build-to-suit project, it’s important to work with an architect that understands the perspective of the tenant, the developer and future investors.*

## CHAPTER 7

### Mission-Based Destination Workplaces

#### Process makes perfect: A collaborative approach is key to nonprofit, not-for-profit and association workplace design

When profit isn't the motive, workplace culture becomes even more paramount. When employees and volunteers rally around a nonprofit or association mission, they become part of something bigger than themselves – together, their daily journey feeds into shared goals. And when that journey takes place in a setting that radiates organizational mission and values, it becomes a destination for shared inspiration.

Mission-based organizations come in as many different shapes and sizes as there are non-profits, not-for-profits and associations. As a result, there will be just as many unique workplaces. When considering a renovation, refresh or build-to-suit, it is important to work with design partners who understand the unique attributes and processes of mission-driven organizations, and who understand the unique challenges of each type of governance. The differences in these structures create differences in their processes and stakeholder groups, and ultimately, their real estate and workplace decision-making.

Yet most mission-based organizations do share one thing in common: Pride in their mission and values. When a board or committee decides to create a destination workplace for its employees, success will be defined by how well their unique goals, values and culture come to life within the space.



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## CHAPTER 7

### Mission-Based Destination Workplaces

#### Key signposts on the route to a mission-based destination workplace

An effective workplace design should bring value to a nonprofit or association's mission. To do so, the process is key for honoring the needs of all stakeholders. Following are musts for mission-driven workplace design:

- **It takes a village, and likely several committees, to get things right.** Exceptional design depends on complex, respectful coordination – especially when decisions are led by a committee, as opposed to a single C-suite executive. Thoughtful collaboration between designers, staff members and board members, all deeply invested in the outcome, can create lasting value for nonprofits, associations and not-for-profits alike. A responsive approach that prioritizes listening is essential throughout the project, from interviewing stakeholders and creating shared vision boards, to understanding and respecting the process for approvals and achieving buy-in.

- **Interpret goals and branding into the physical space.** Mission-based staff and volunteers work daily to bring their values to life – and their workplaces should too. The **W.K. Kellogg Foundation**, for example, supports vulnerable children and believes that those children deserve fun and play. Thus, its workspace reflects that mission with moments of surprise and creative fun that may remind employees of their own childhood wonder.

- **Cookie-cutter collaboration space won't cut it.** The staff at mission-based organizations tend to function in a meeting-heavy environment, so providing multiple practical meeting spaces – including formal conference rooms, smaller meeting rooms and informal collaboration space – is a must to match the needs of the organization. It's important to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to collaboration space; the location, size and variety of shared spaces should directly support your organization's workflow.

**The MacArthur Foundation**, for instance, sought a headquarters refresh that would ramp up its collaboration opportunities, including offering more informal, serendipitous places where casual conversation could occur.

- **Fiscal stewardship is a shared responsibility.** Since mission-driven organizations are fueled by donations, membership fees, taxpayer dollars and sources of funding directly tied to their mission, the design should strike a balance between looking great but not like it cost too much. WHA strikes this balance by elevating standard materials and finding other creative solutions that make the most of the capital investment.

For example, to support the vision of **The Salvation Army's** Hoffman Estates offices, WHA identified the pros and cons of different locations and plans. By evaluating cost-effective options alongside elements like parking capability and public transportation access, we were able to achieve organizational goals for value, while also creating a sense of community and energy.

#### A built-to-suit journey to your mission-based destination workplace

No pre-made map exists when it comes to shaping a mission-based workplace. Understanding your organization's unique culture, hierarchy and goals is a critical piece of laying out the course. The good news is, no one knows a nonprofit, not-for-profit or association's values as well as the people who live and breathe it each day. Our teams are eager listeners to those important voices in the design process.

As a respectful partner, we help mission-based organizations achieve their ideal destination workplaces – building the process around your schedules, priorities and cadences as we journey through the design process, together.

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