

AIA INDIANA 2024

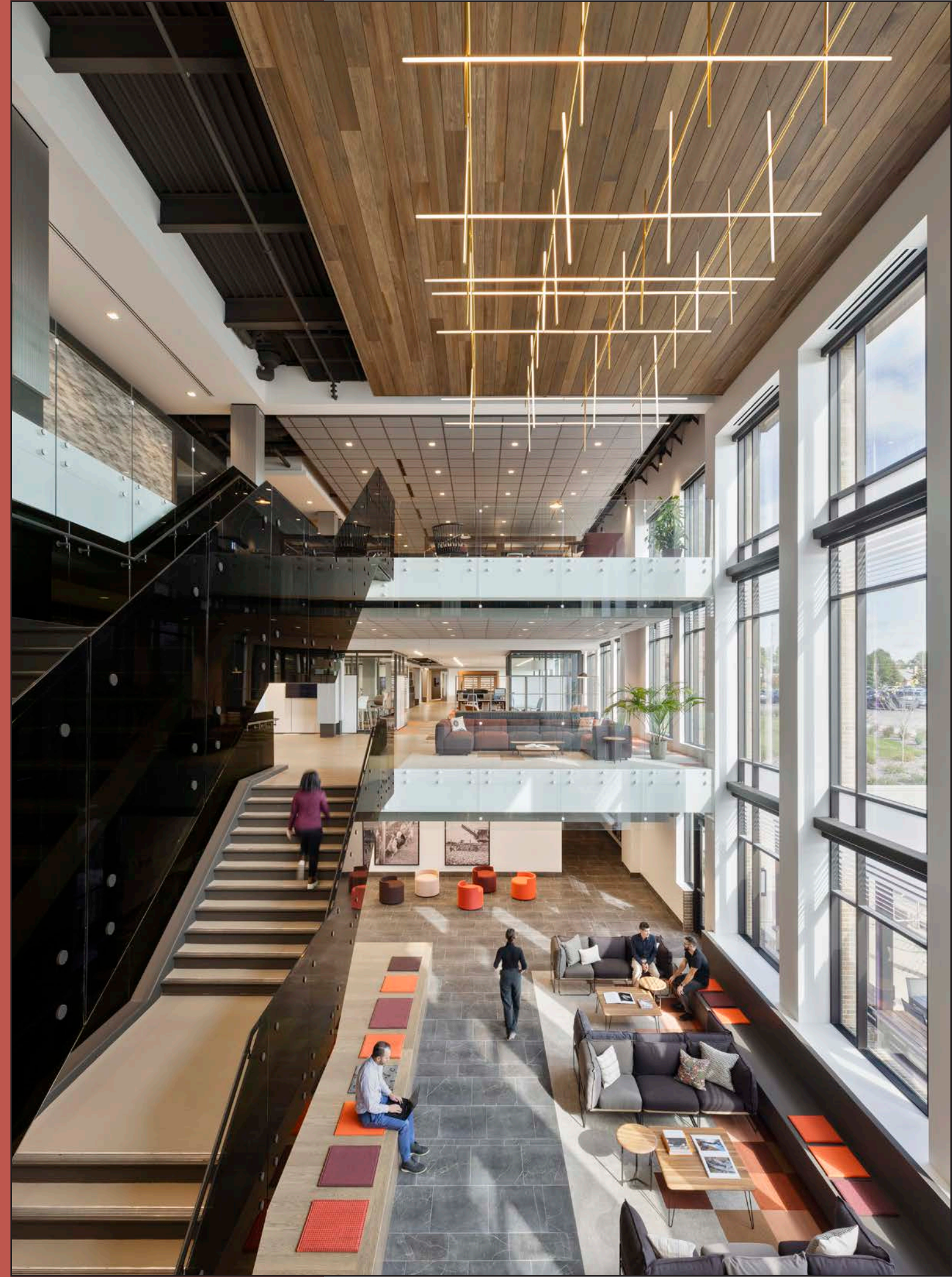
MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU

Submission Category
Preservation/ Adapted Reuse/ Renovation

Project Type
Corporate Office

Project Address
7373 W Saginaw Hwy, Lansing, MI 48917

Date of Substantial Completion
July, 2023



ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT

The redesign of the Michigan Farm Bureau office posed unique challenges and offered opportunities to transform a traditional workspace into a modern, efficient environment. Initially, the office layout consisted of perimeter offices surrounding a central area cluttered with uninspiring, beige workstations. This outdated design inhibited collaboration and failed to meet the dynamic needs of today's workforce, lagging behind the modernized office spaces of competing insurance companies in the region.

Our design intervention began with a strategic spatial reorganization. By optimizing the layout, we were able to free up 6,000 square feet of space, subsequently leased, thus directly benefiting the client's business objectives. One of the project's signature elements was the creation of a "hole" connecting all three levels of the office. This architectural feature significantly enhanced visual connectivity and improved vertical circulation, fostering a more integrated and interactive workspace.

The project's timing coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a temporary pause and re-evaluation of workspace needs in a changing corporate landscape. This pause allowed for the development of a "pilot space," a 6,000 square-foot area designed to test new concepts including a mix of private offices, meeting rooms, open work areas, and a social hub. This prototype space provided invaluable feedback from the staff on functionality and design preferences, directly informing the final design.

Type of Construction, Materials, and Technical Information

The construction utilized contemporary materials and techniques to reflect a modern aesthetic and ensure durability. The design features glass partitions to enhance natural lighting and foster an open atmosphere, complemented by acoustic panels to maintain auditory privacy. The mechanical and electrical systems were upgraded to include energy-efficient HVAC systems and LED lighting, significantly reducing the building's energy consumption and operational costs.

Special Considerations in Design

Accessibility and sustainable design were at the forefront of the project. We used universal design standards with accessible workstations, restrooms, and pathways. Sustainable elements include the use of low-VOC materials and furnishings, as well as energy-efficient windows that reduce thermal gain and enhance the building's overall energy performance. The original exterior glazing system was a non-thermally broken aluminum and steel curtainwall with single-pane glazing. The design team proposed a complete replacement of the exterior glazing system including expanding vision portions of the glazing by over 500%. The upgraded glazing system along with significant improvements to the exterior thermal envelope allowed for a reduced HVAC load, even with the expanded windows areas.

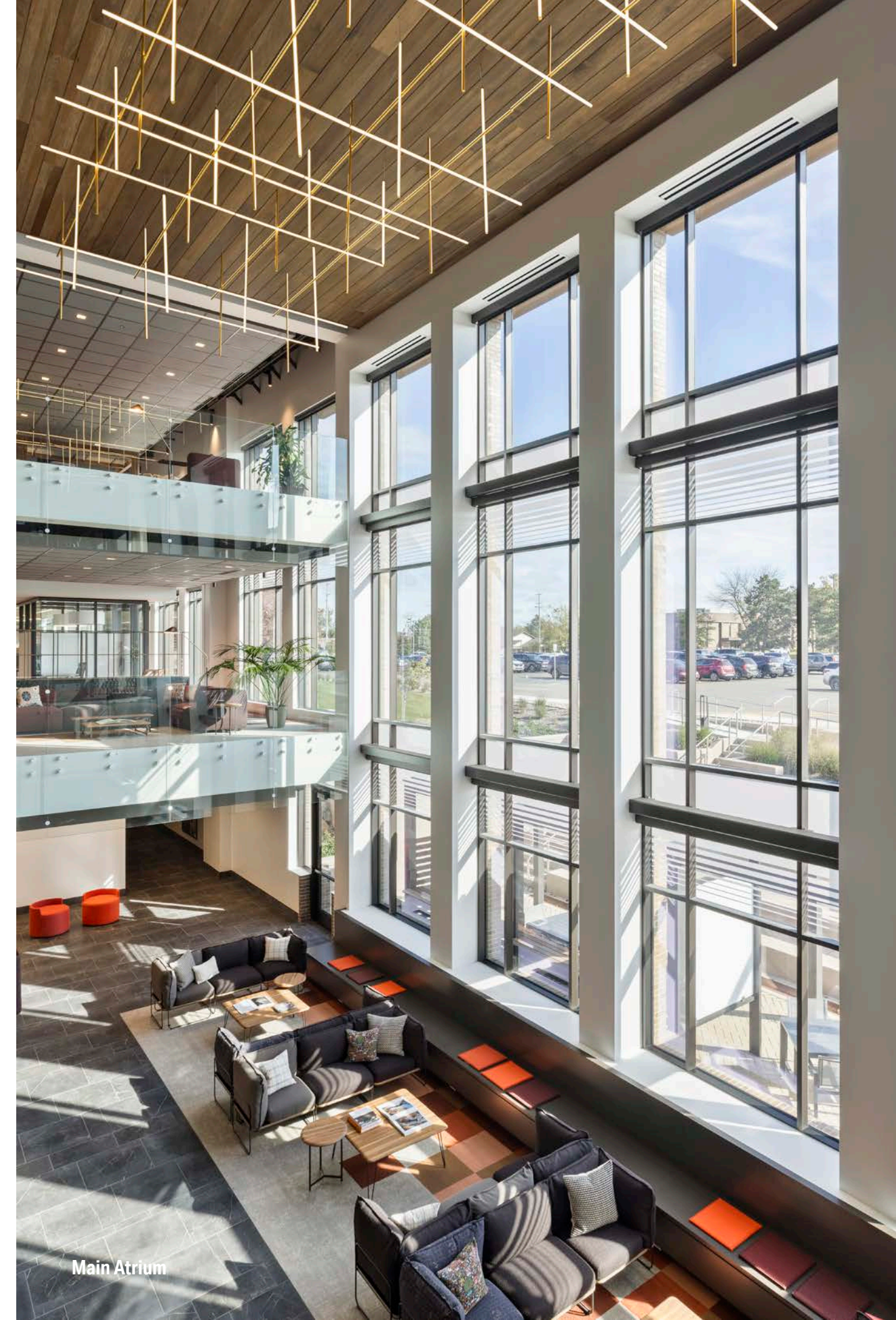
The inclusion of a variety of workspaces—from focus areas to social hubs—addresses diverse work styles and promotes wellness and productivity among employees. The layout encourages movement and interaction, which are crucial for a healthy workplace environment.

Impact and Client Engagement

The transformation was received with enthusiasm as employees returned to a completely renovated building that mirrored the innovation and forward-thinking characteristic of the company's ethos. The success of the pilot space demonstrated the effectiveness of involving end-users in the design process, ensuring that the final product not only met but exceeded expectations.

Throughout the project, we maintained a close collaboration with DBI for furniture selection, and we took a hands-on approach in choosing all artwork and accessories, enhancing the aesthetic and functional qualities of the workspace. The transformation is well-documented through a series of photos available on social media, showcasing the dramatic evolution from the original to the renovated space, highlighting our commitment to transparency and client involvement in every step of the process.

This project not only revitalized a workspace but also set a new standard for office design in the region, demonstrating our firm's capacity to adapt, innovate, and lead in architectural design.

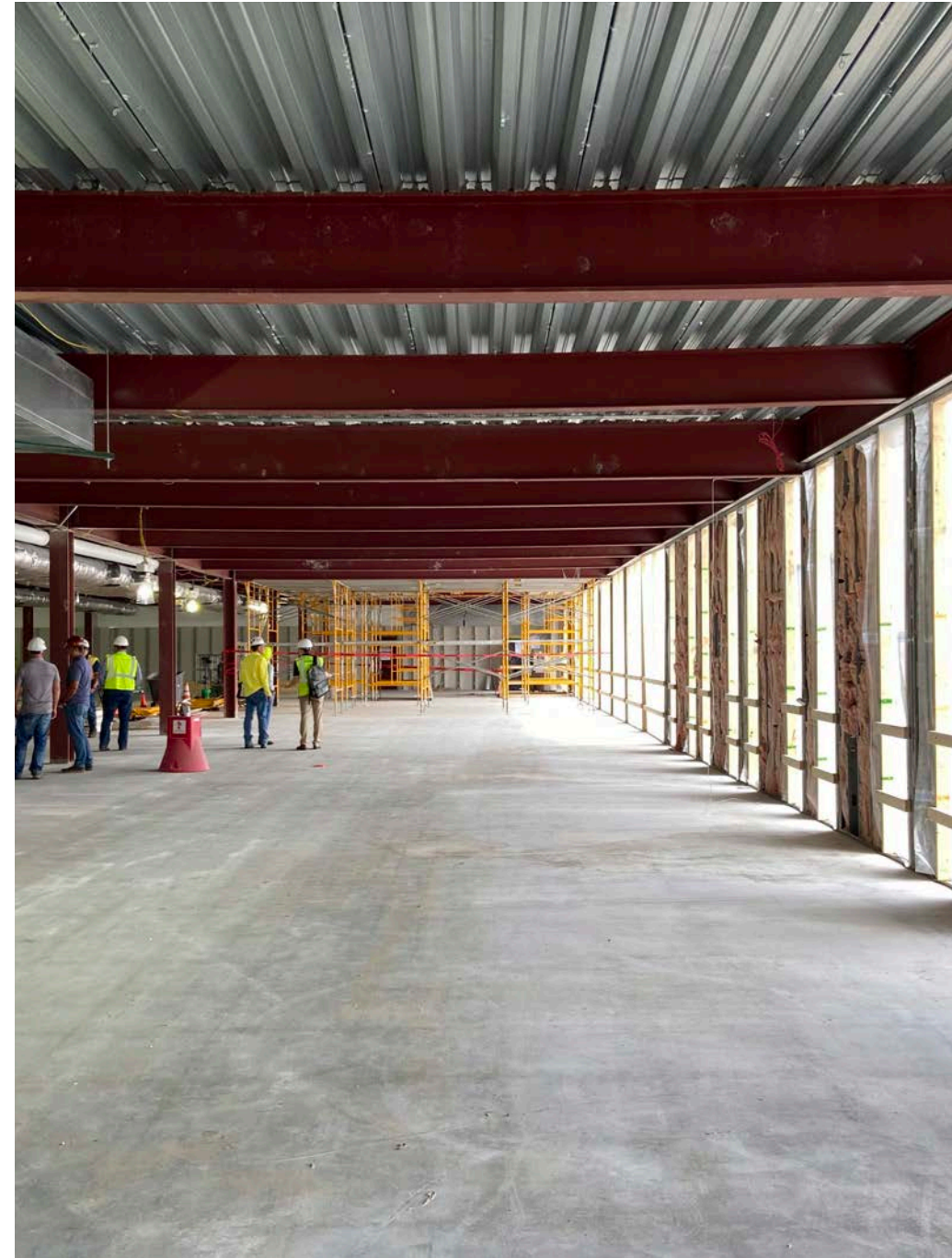


Main Atrium



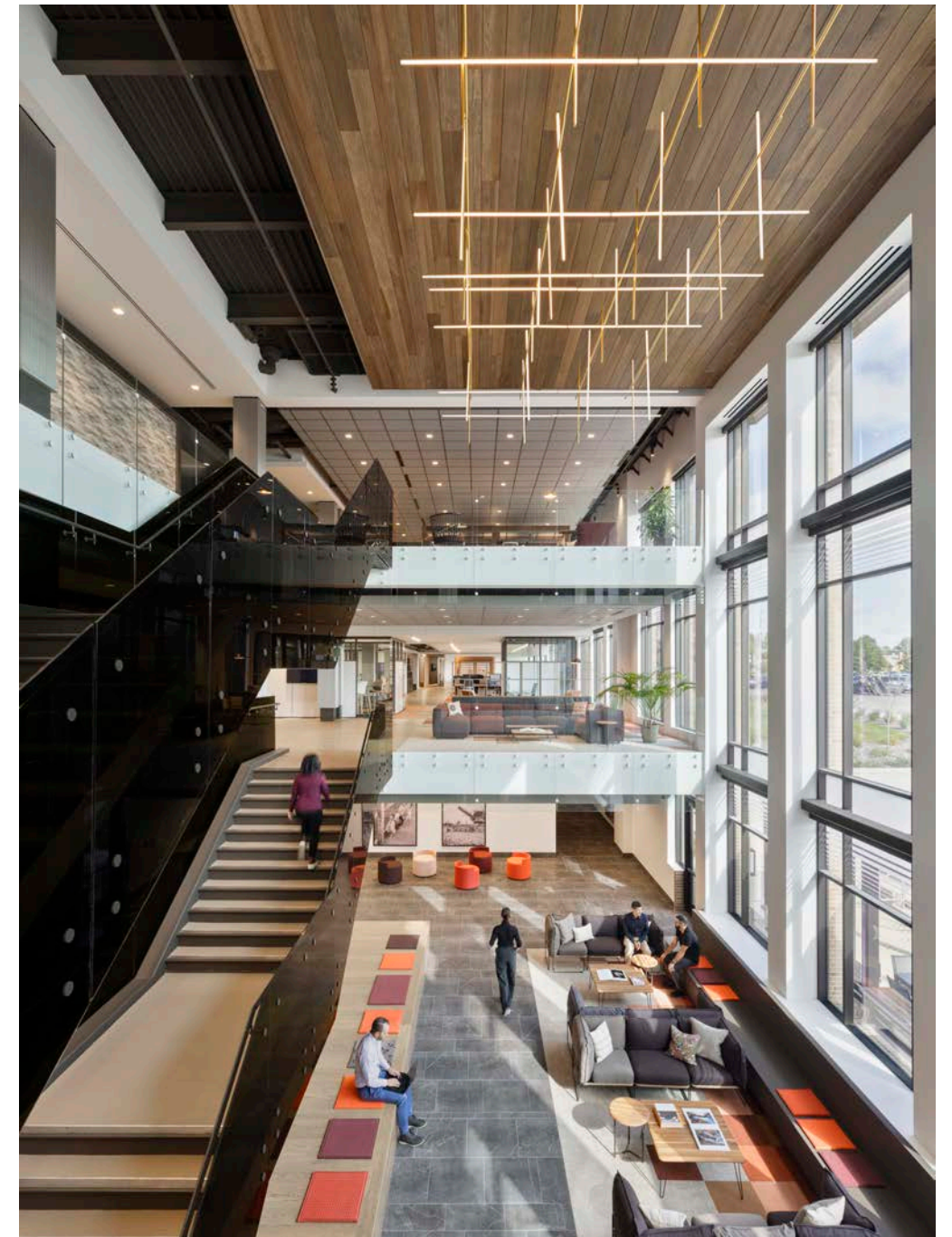
BEFORE

The office was made up of high-walled cubicles monotone colors and fluorescent lighting. Natural light is scarce. There is little color or personal expression visible, making the workplace feel cold and uninviting. Employees are separated from one another, fostering a sense of isolation rather than collaboration.



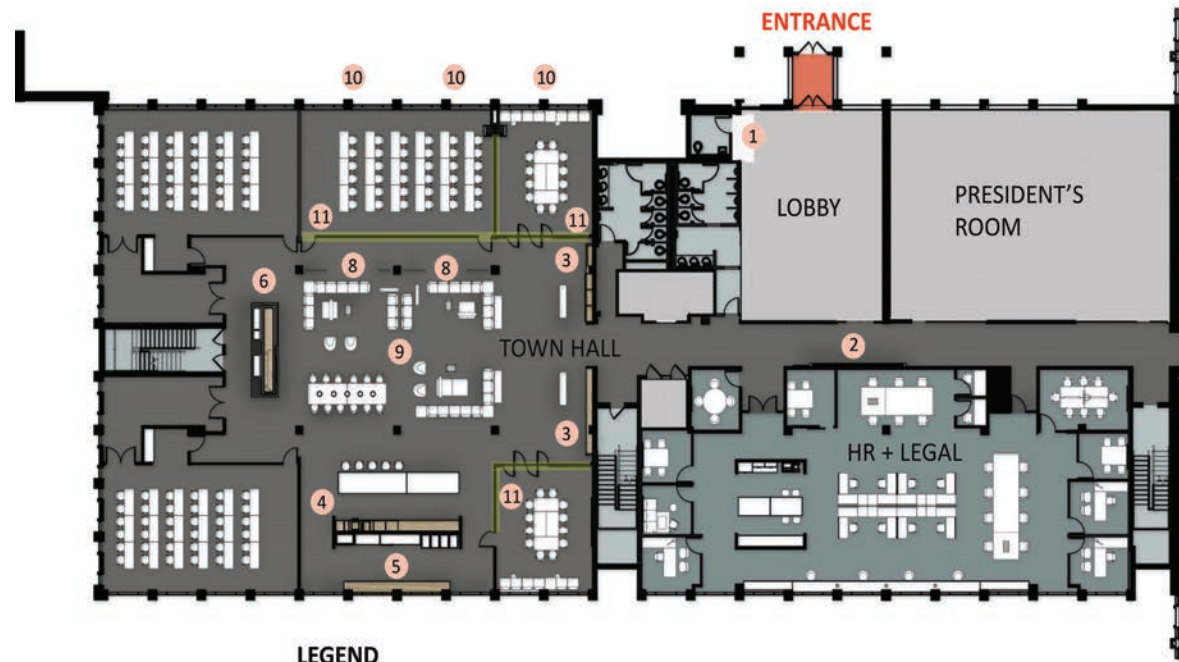
CONSTRUCTION

The small existing windows have been expanded significantly, allowing maximum natural light to flood the space. The ceiling has been removed, revealing a tall, open expanse that breathes new life into the room. The once confining walls were taken down to create an open, collaborative environment. The space is evolving into a bright, airy, and inviting workplace.



AFTER

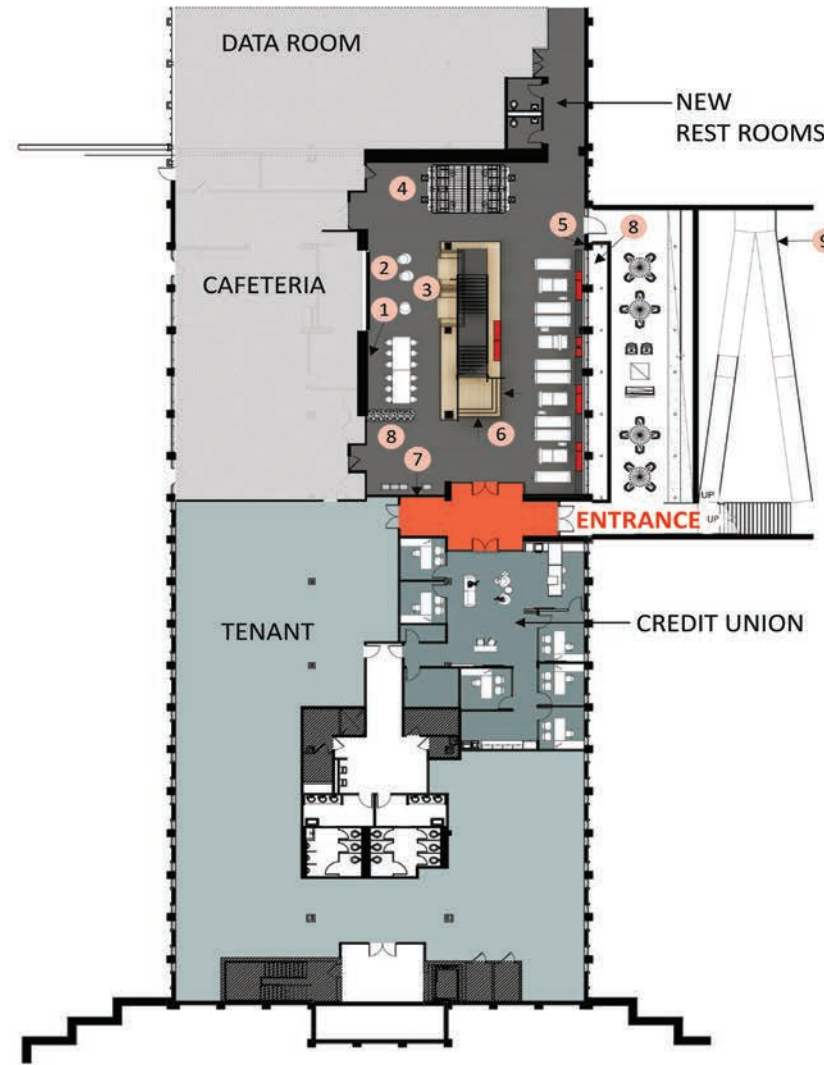
Vibrant colors, warm textures, and sculptural lighting fixtures and a variety of furniture create a lively, flexible and collaborative environment. A large open thoroughfare runs through the building, becoming the pulse of the office, with other floors visible and connected. The new design not only encourages creativity and teamwork but also fosters a sense of community and openness throughout the building.



LEGEND

- 1 New Unisex RR
- 2 Video Wall
- 3 Built-in bookcases for marketing display.
- 4 Beverage Bar
- 5 Catering
- 6 Fireplace
- 8 Drapery to pull for privacy
- 9 Flexible furniture with a community table and 'conversation pits'
- 10 Large projector screens for Town Halls
- 11 Highlighted walls are moveable

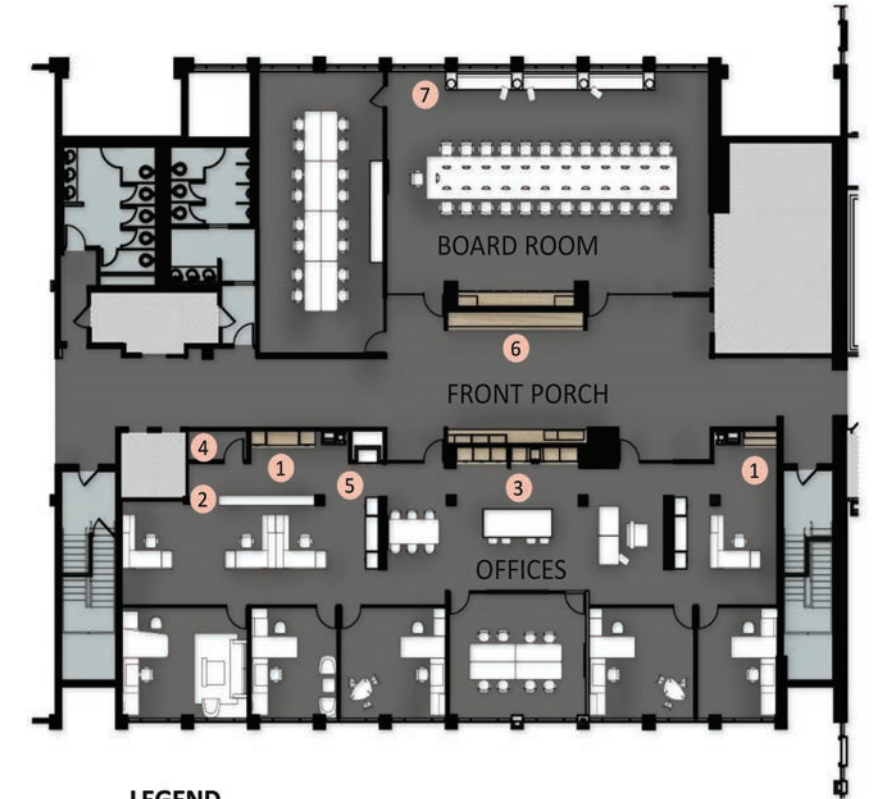
1 TOWN HALL



LEGEND

- 1 Living Wall
- 2 Video Wall
- 3 Built-In Seating Nooks
- 4 Meeting Enclaves
- 5 Built-In Bench/Table
- 6 Platform
- 7 'Mission' Wall
- 8 Planter
- 9 Ramp

2 SOCIAL ATRIUM



LEGEND

- 1 Resource/Copy Areas
- 2 Architectural Bookcase
- 3 Executive Lounge/Informal Meeting Area
- 4 Storage
- 5 Coat Closet
- 6 Catering Counter
- 7 Side Seating

3 EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM





Large windows were cut into the existing building, creating 500% more glass wall for each floor.



Floors are connected by a large opening and monumental stairs.



Open office collaborative areas for flexible work options.



The heart of the building connects floors and celebrates natural light and togetherness.



Floors are connected by a large opening and monumental stairs.



Conference Room looks over social atrium.



The Town Hall Space has training rooms along the perimeter and an open break out area in the middle of the space. Curtains and glass wall dividers can be used to create private rooms or transform the space into one open room for an all company meeting.



The Town Hall is a warm space that celebrates texture, natural light, warm wood tones and soft seating. All furniture is modular to create maximum flexibility for the space to transform into smaller or bigger meeting spaces.



There are Social Hubs on every floor. These spaces have comfortable furniture and flexible areas for working to promote collaboration and respite.





The Human Resources Department has low-paneled yet still private workstations and a counter-height worksurface against the windows for a variety of work space options. The bench is a thread that connects open office spaces and social spaces.



A large graphic mural celebrates the roots of Farm Bureau Insurance while providing a backdrop for an impromptu meeting area off of the elevator core.



Collaboration Area



Millwork outside of meeting room.



Executive Board Room