



# DePauw University School of Business and Leadership

GREENCASTLE, INDIANA

CATEGORY:  
Preservation/Adaptive Reuse/  
Renovation

PROJECT AREA:  
16,000 SF renovation  
49,000 SF existing building

PROJECT TYPE:  
Higher Education / Adaptive Reuse

CONSTRUCTION COST:  
\$10M

COMPLETION DATE:  
August 2023

DELIVERY METHOD:  
CMAR

ADDRESS:  
Harrison Hall  
7 E. Larabee St.,  
Greencastle, IN

*An historic hall reimaged as a spatial framework for a progressive academic vision.*

The DePauw University School of Business and Leadership is the first program of its kind at a liberal arts college in the Midwest and one of only four nationwide. It introduces a bold new model of business education—one rooted in ethics, inclusion, and interdisciplinary inquiry, and grounded in the liberal arts tradition. University President Dr. Lori White envisioned a place where these values could be made tangible: a building that supports openness, fosters connection, and signals a new chapter of leadership and purpose.



Now home to DePauw's School of Business and Leadership, Harrison Hall was originally constructed in 1939 as part of the university's formal collegiate quad. Its neoclassical exterior and red-brick symmetry remain a beloved part of campus life—but behind the facade, the interior had long outlived its purpose. As DePauw prepared to launch a bold new school grounded in ethics, collaboration, and inclusive leadership, it became clear that Harrison Hall needed more than modernization. It needed a spatial inversion. The challenge was to honor the building's architectural legacy while radically transforming its interior—to turn opacity into transparency, isolation into connection, and a static structure into a dynamic academic home.



### **Design Approach:**

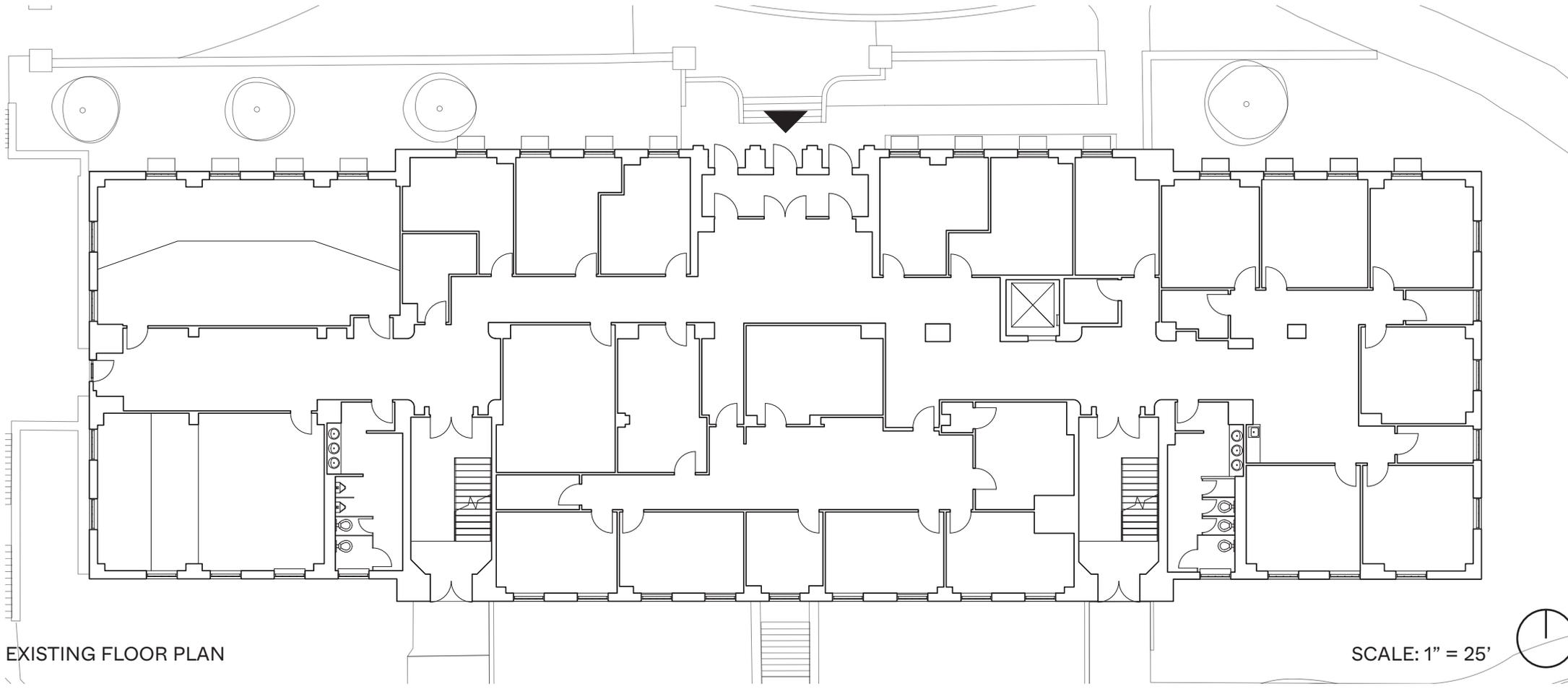
The transformation of Harrison Hall was not a preservation effort—it was a reimagining. While the building’s durable brick exterior and presence within the collegiate quad were retained, its interior was completely restructured to reflect DePauw’s values of stewardship, innovation, and inclusive community.

### **Three design imperatives shaped the intervention:**

- Reorganize circulation to enhance daylight, access, and spatial clarity
- Create a central gathering space to support a collaborative academic culture
- Integrate sustainable systems and universal accessibility throughout

At the heart of the redesign is the Hub Space—a double-height atrium carved from the center of the building. It serves as both a literal point of arrival and a conceptual anchor, linking floors, programs, and people. Clad in white oak panels that wrap upward into the ceiling, the space forms a warm and recognizable “hearth” around which campus life naturally gathers.

With its open circulation, abundant daylight, and visual transparency, the Hub embodies the school’s ethos: a learning environment grounded in openness, inclusion, and shared purpose.



EXISTING FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 25'



Harrison Hall's original layout prioritized perimeter faculty offices, relegating shared spaces to narrow, dimly lit interior corridors. This spatial hierarchy limited access to daylight and discouraged interaction—conditions at odds with the transparency and inclusivity central to modern pedagogy.



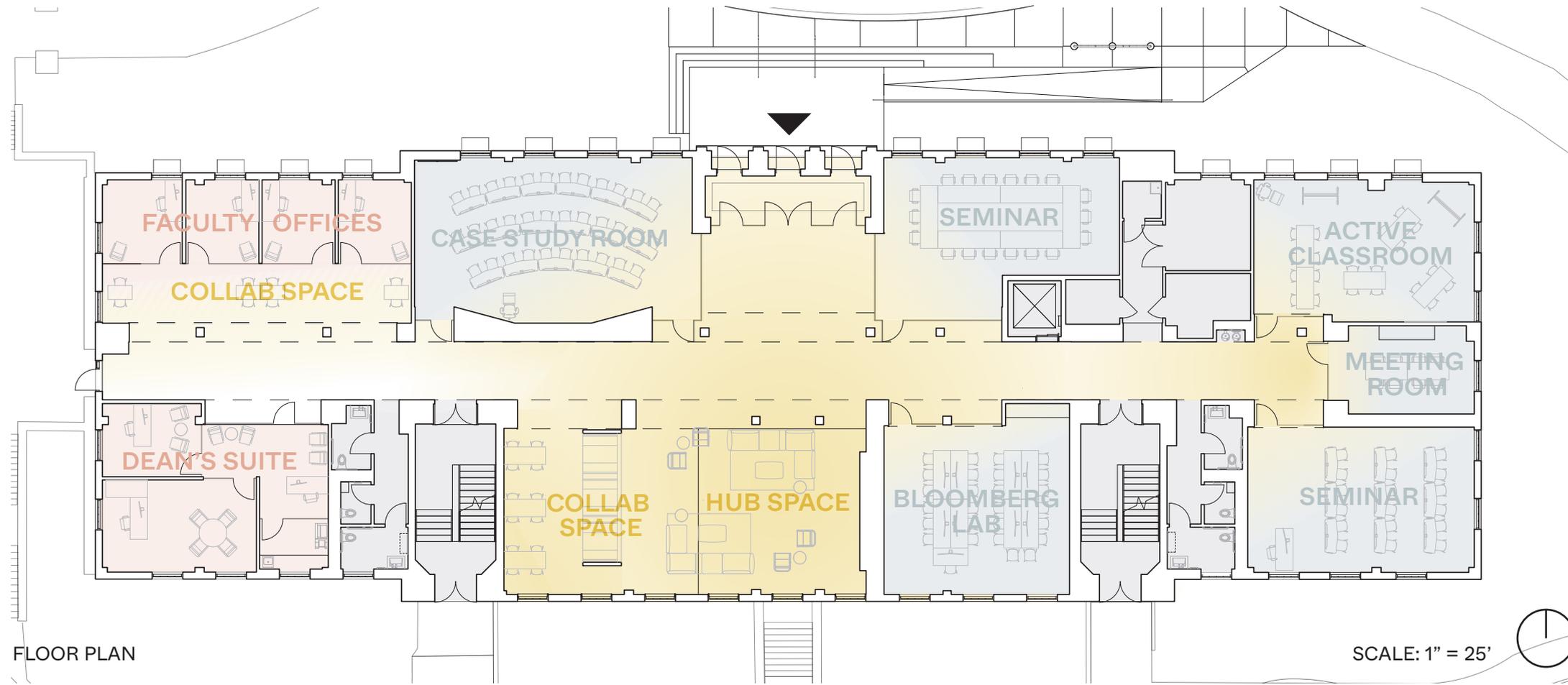
EXISTING BATHROOM



EXISTING HALL



EXISTING SEMINAR ROOM



FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 25'



The redesign restructured the floor plate to introduce a central circulation spine that links classrooms, offices, and informal gathering areas. Programmatic zones were reorganized to align with contemporary teaching priorities, emphasizing flexibility, visibility, and equitable access to light.

This strategic transformation reshaped Harrison Hall into an open, daylit academic hub—one that fosters both focused learning and spontaneous connection.



BATHROOM



HUB SPACE



SEMINAR ROOM



The design of the new School of Business and Leadership focused on creating inclusive, student-centered spaces that promote vibrancy, interaction, and transparency. Classrooms were designed for maximum flexibility, featuring writable surfaces, adaptable layouts, and materials that balance professionalism with comfort. These spaces accommodate a wide range of teaching methods and learning styles—supporting in-person instruction and hybrid formats without privileging one over the other. A consistent strategy of visual openness and borrowed light defines the interior experience. Glazed partitions between rooms and corridors extend daylight deep into the floor plate, breaking down barriers between private offices, classrooms, and circulation zones.



**Materiality and Regional Identity:**

White oak—a native hardwood that reflects Indiana’s rich woodworking tradition. Used for wall paneling, entry portals, and the signature hearth, it lends warmth, tactility, and a deep sense of place.

Powder-coated steel elements and contemporary lighting add precision and resilience to the interiors. Custom furnishings were designed and fabricated by Purposeful Design, a local social enterprise that trains and employs individuals overcoming incarceration or homelessness. Their work reinforces the project’s commitment to social equity and local partnerships, embedding those values directly into the built environment.

In every detail, the material strategy elevates daily experience while grounding the school in its cultural and regional context—an interior that feels both enduring and distinctly of its place.



### Technical Execution:

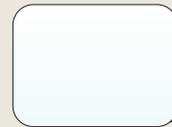
The renovation retained Harrison Hall's original structural frame and masonry envelope, avoiding carbon-intensive demolition and allowing the focus to shift inward—where a high-performance infrastructure was seamlessly integrated into the building's historic fabric.

At the heart of the system upgrade is a high-efficiency air-handling unit, discreetly concealed behind the Hub's oak-paneled feature wall. Each classroom includes a suspended "tech cloud"—a streamlined ceiling element that houses LED lighting, ducted fan coil units, and occupancy sensors. These systems are precise, quiet, and responsive—delivering comfort and adaptability without visual disruption.

This approach exemplifies the project's broader philosophy: adaptive reuse not merely as preservation, but as regeneration. Harrison Hall is not a restored artifact—it is a reactivated learning environment, engineered to perform with efficiency and elegance for the century ahead.



WHITE OAK  
SLATS



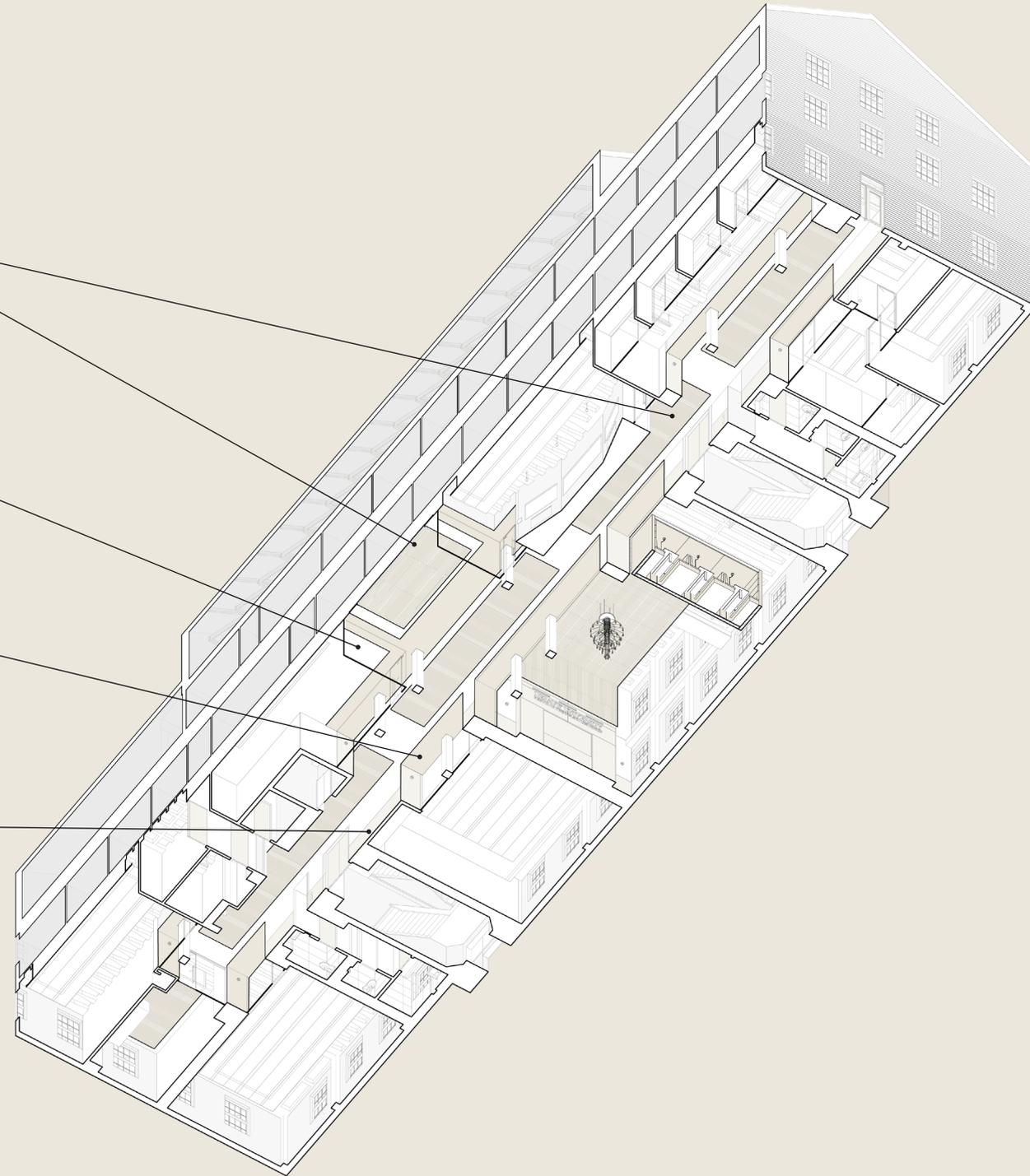
GLAZING



WHITE OAK  
PORTAL

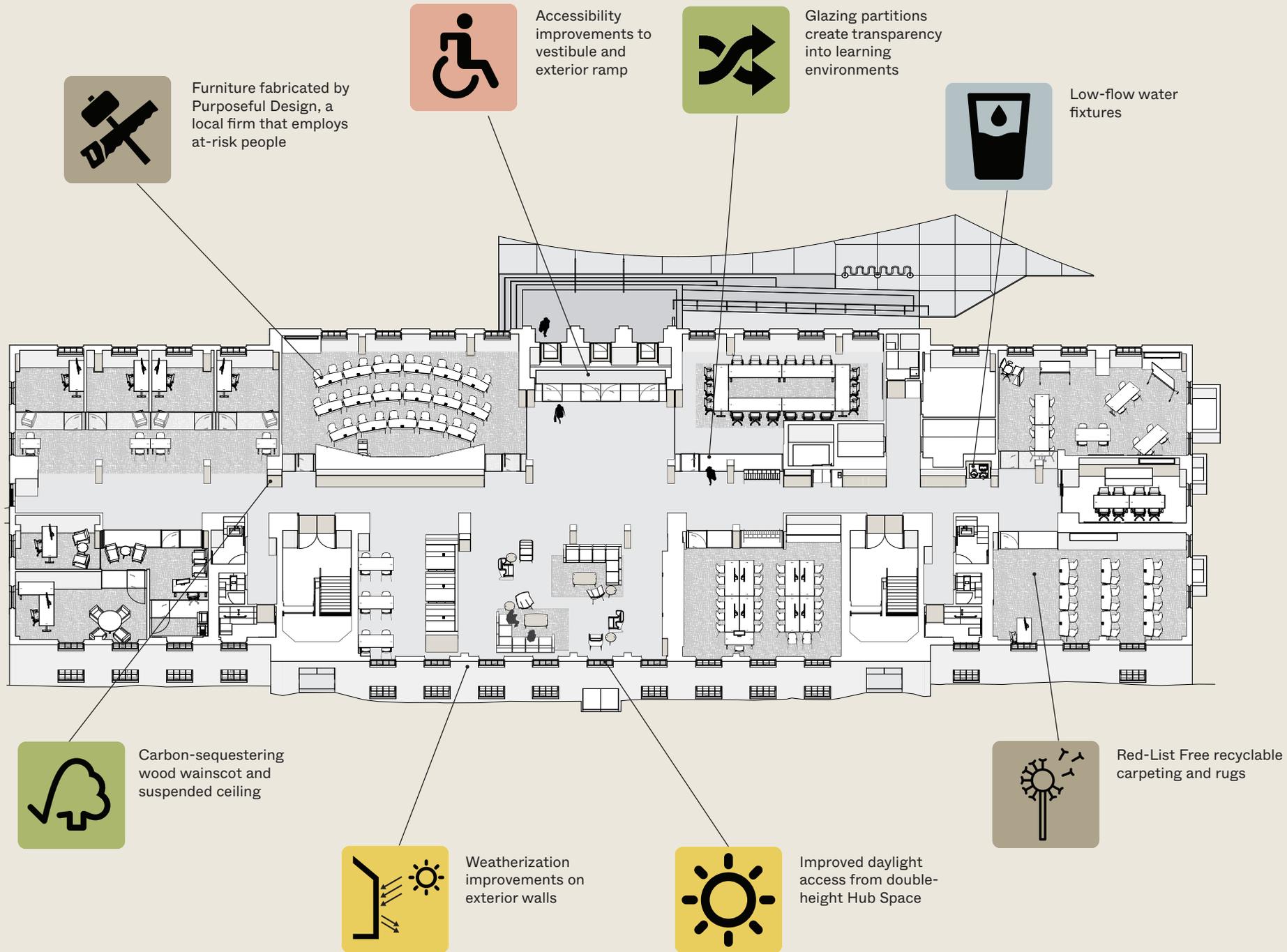


WHITE OAK  
WAINSCOT



WORM'S EYE MATERIAL  
WAYFINDING DIAGRAM





AIA FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE FEATURES

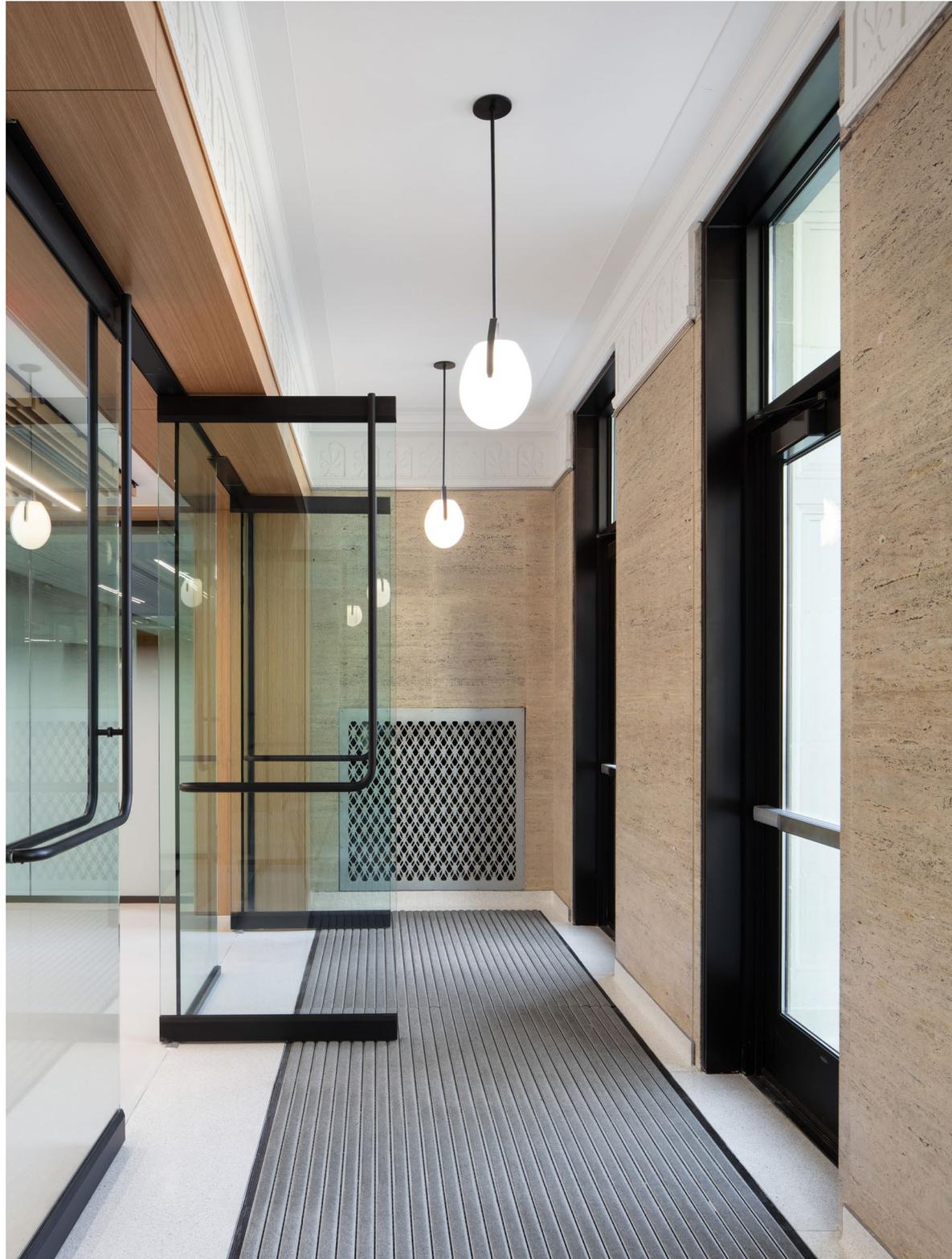
### Sustainable and Environmental Design:

Harrison Hall's transformation reflects a pragmatic, layered approach to sustainability—carefully calibrated to align with DePauw University's institutional values and operational goals. From the earliest design phases, a tiered strategy was developed to help stakeholders evaluate interventions at multiple budget levels, enabling informed, cost-effective decisions.

The project prioritized passive strategies first: preserving the original structure—foundations, walls, and floors—dramatically reduced demolition waste and embodied carbon. Thermal performance was improved through targeted insulation upgrades, south-facing glazing, and the strategic placement of operable windows to promote natural ventilation and daylighting.

Active systems were introduced with equal restraint and precision. Efficient, quiet mechanical systems and rethought glazing and lighting design contribute to a low-carbon, high-comfort environment.

Together, these strategies demonstrate that adaptive reuse is not just about conserving what exists—it's about elevating performance for the future. Harrison Hall is now a resilient, resource-efficient building designed to endure and adapt over time.



#### **Design for Energy:**

Energy performance was enhanced through a carefully layered combination of passive and active strategies. The new south-facing, double-height Hub Space functions as a luminous solar register.

To extend daylight deeper into the floor plate, translucent glass partitions were introduced between classrooms, offices, and corridors. This passive illumination strategy reduces dependence on artificial lighting while fostering visual connection and openness.

Classrooms feature integrated “tech clouds” that consolidate LED lighting, occupancy sensors, and ducted fan coil units into a single, unobtrusive element. These systems are supported by a high-efficiency air-handling unit discreetly tucked behind the Hub’s oak-paneled hearth.



### Design for Equitable Communities:

Equity and accessibility shaped every aspect of the Harrison Hall transformation. The original tiered-floor classrooms and narrow entry sequence posed barriers to movement and dignity. In response, all classrooms were redesigned with flat floors—improving mobility while maintaining clear sightlines and acoustic performance. The main vestibule was expanded, and the stair and ramp were seamlessly combined into a unified, universally accessible path—ensuring a dignified arrival experience that honors the building’s historic character. Gendered restrooms were replaced with single-occupancy, all-gender facilities. Shared study zones and lounges offer a range of social atmospheres—from quiet retreat to active engagement. Lighting and acoustic strategies were selected to support neurodiverse learners, creating a more inclusive, welcoming learning environment for all.



### Design for Water:

All restrooms feature low-flow fixtures, and filtered bottle-filling stations provide access to drinking water while reducing single-use plastics.





### Design for Ecosystems:

Inside, the architecture invites nature in. Glazed partitions and open sightlines maintain visual access to the outdoors, allowing even interior spaces to remain connected to shifting light, seasonal patterns, and the movement of branches. These dynamic views animate the building and reinforce a sense of place grounded in its natural context. Materials were chosen with this relationship in mind. White oak, regionally sourced and carbon-sequestering, brings the warmth and resilience of Indiana's craft traditions into the interior. Its repeated use—on walls, portals, and furniture—serves as a tactile reminder of the surrounding forest systems, connecting daily academic life to the ecosystems just beyond the glass.



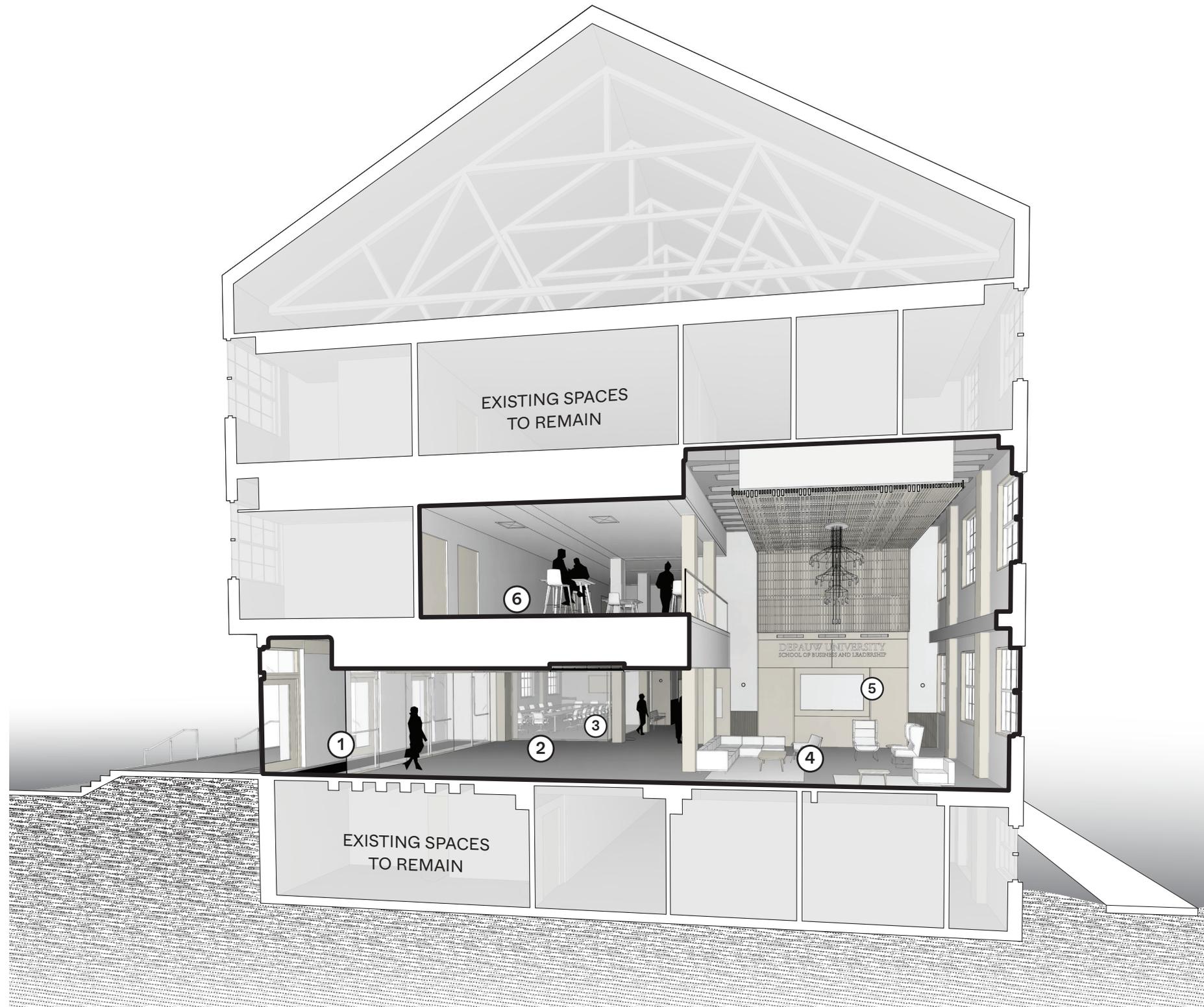


### Design for Economy:

Economy in the Harrison Hall project was never viewed as constraint, but as an opportunity for clarity and care. A tiered sustainability strategy—introduced early in design—gave stakeholders a framework for aligning environmental performance with available resources. This pragmatic approach ensured that the most meaningful interventions could be prioritized and scaled with intent.

Material selections reflect this ethos. Durable, regionally sourced components like solid white oak and powder-coated steel were chosen for their longevity, cultural resonance, and low environmental impact. Wherever possible, the existing structure was preserved—reducing waste and maximizing the value of what was already built.





### Design for Change:

Adaptability is built into every layer of Harrison Hall's redesign. The new floor plan supports evolving pedagogies, emerging technologies, and future academic growth. Classrooms feature flat floors, writable surfaces, and movable furnishings—enabling formats that flex from seminar to lecture, studio to workshop.

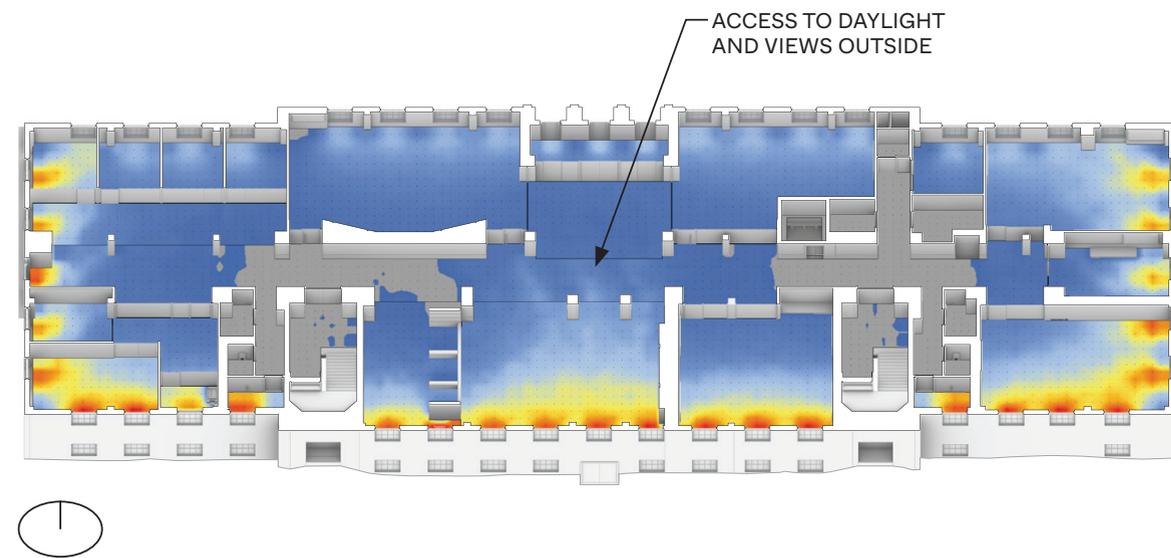
Informal zones—lounges, breakout nooks, study alcoves—are distributed throughout, encouraging fluid movement between individual focus and collaborative engagement. At the center, the double-height Hub anchors this ecosystem. Designed for versatility, it hosts everything from impromptu gatherings to structured events and remains open to future reprogramming.

More than a building for today's curriculum, Harrison Hall is structured to evolve. Its architecture doesn't forecast the future—it creates space for it.



## BEFORE

54% of floorplate had access to daylight



## AFTER

86% of floorplate has access to daylight

**+ 60% improvement**



### Design for Well-Being:

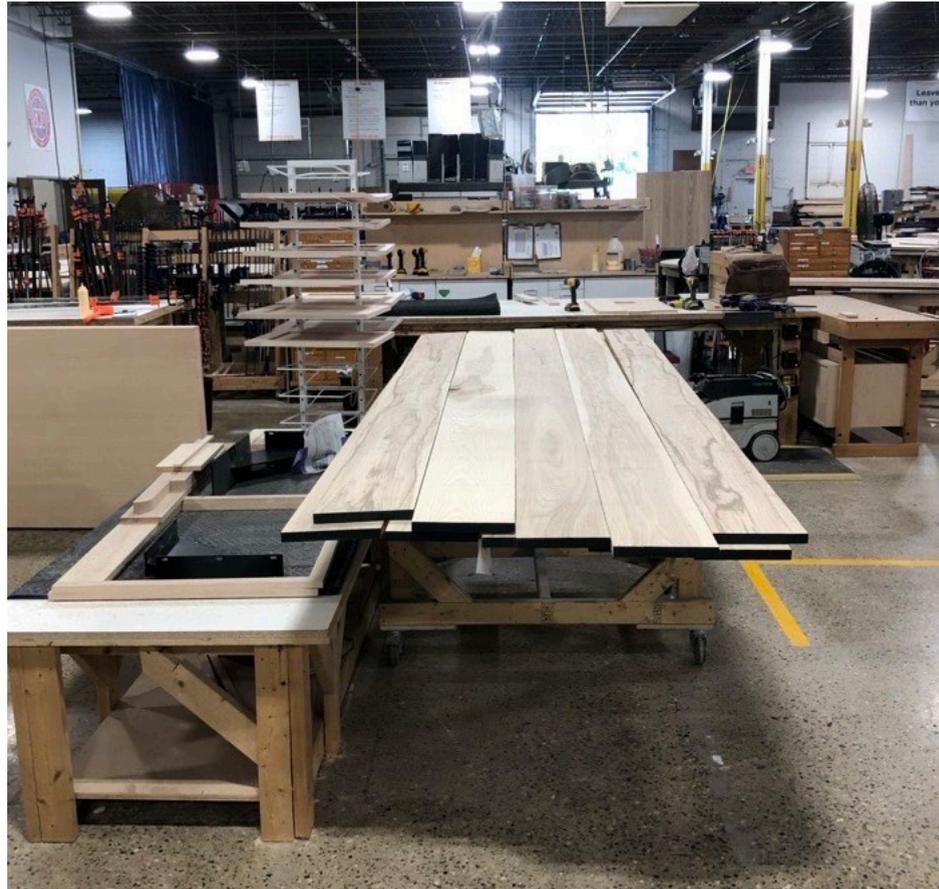
Natural daylighting reaches 86% of occupied spaces, with improved air quality, acoustics and visual transparency throughout. Passive strategies - like placing glazed partitions and optimizing south exposure - contribute to a healthier, more comfortable interior.



### Design for Resources:

Resource conservation began with what already existed. Retaining Harrison Hall's original structure and masonry envelope minimized waste while preserving embedded energy. New materials were selected with care. White oak frames spatial thresholds, wall surfaces, and the signature hearth in the Hub Space.

The result is a transformation that honors both heritage and future — built with what matters, and built to last.





### **Design for Discovery:**

Stakeholders—from university leadership to first-year students—were actively engaged through charrettes, walkthroughs, and visualization workshops. These sessions used interactive tools to test ideas in real time, shaping everything from layout and furniture to lighting and material selection.

This was not a top-down process, but a shared authorship. Insights from faculty, staff, and students directly informed the building’s spatial logic and cultural tone—fostering a deep sense of investment and pride.

That spirit of collaboration lives on. Today, Harrison Hall is not only a place of learning, but a case study in it—demonstrating how inclusive design can yield lasting, meaningful change.



CUT EXISTING FLOOR SLAB FOR DOUBLE-HEIGHT HUB SPACE



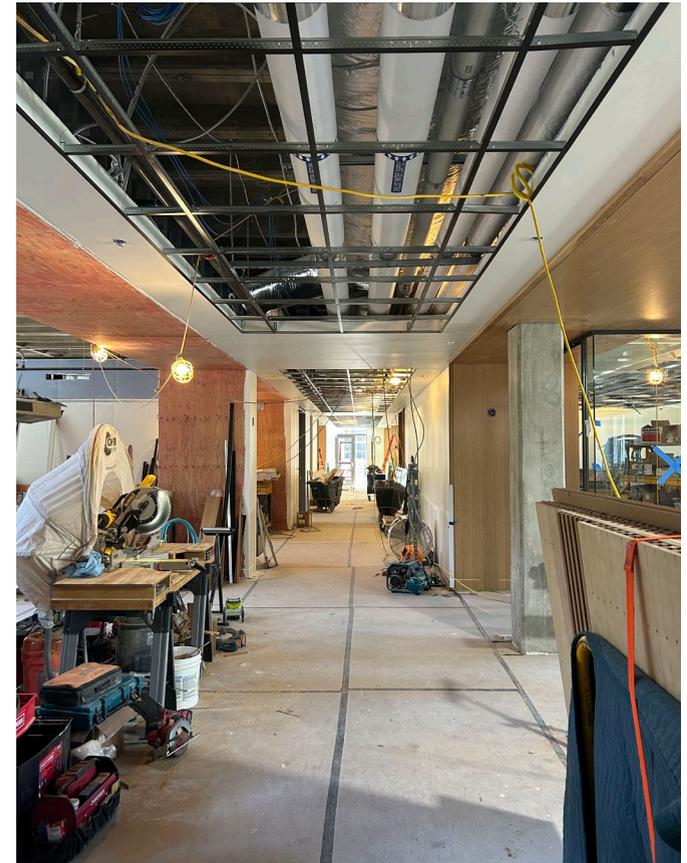
### Design for Integration:

The reimagined floor plan brings spatial, social, and environmental priorities into seamless alignment. The new design distributes light equitably—creating visual connections and encouraging moments of exchange throughout the building. These softened thresholds support informal interaction, mutual visibility, and a sense of shared purpose.

At the center, the double-height Hub Space anchors it all. More than a gathering zone, it acts as a spatial and symbolic artery—connecting programs, people, and ideas. Systems, materials, and circulation converge quietly and intentionally, reinforcing a holistic vision of education and place.



SKY POCKET TO MAXIMIZE DAYLIGHT



NEW MEPT SYSTEMS INTEGRATED INTO EXISTING

A photograph of a modern university interior. The space is a multi-level atrium with a central concrete pillar. The ceiling features a complex, multi-tiered chandelier with numerous small lights. Large windows are visible on multiple levels, providing natural light. The architecture is characterized by clean lines and a mix of materials, including wood, concrete, and glass. In the foreground, there are wooden tables and yellow chairs. A glass railing is visible on the right side, overlooking a lower level. The overall atmosphere is bright and open.

*“This work propels DePauw into an exciting era where we can honor our roots while we forge transformation at the university. Strengthening and centering the liberal arts while launching new programs and schools ensure that our students continue to be the leaders the world needs in a rapidly changing environment.”*

DR. LORI S. WHITE

PRESIDENT, DEPAUW UNIVERSITY