

Project Name: **White House Visitor Center Rehabilitation**  
Project Location: **1450 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20004**  
Project Category: **Institutional Architecture**

The White House Visitor Center, operated by the National Park Service in conjunction with the White House Historical Association, is located in historic Baldrige Hall within the 1932 U.S. Department of Commerce building. The design team's goal for the renovation was to create opportunities for children and families to connect to the history of the White House as a home, office, museum, and stage for ceremony. Improvements to the visitor center include new interactive interpretive exhibits, a theater with an introductory film, a permanent museum gallery, a temporary exhibit area, a retail shop, and visitor information facilities.

The strong character of Baldrige Hall required that any interventions in the space respect and remain independent from the historic fabric. To this end, the architecture and exhibits became interwoven, utilizing freestanding casework and theater walls that supported exhibit and retail activity. This seamless integration of architecture and exhibits within the distinct character of the room creates a dialog between old and new, a respect and sympathy for the past while embracing the present.

The design team sought to preserve the strength and natural beauty inherent in the room by maintaining the natural light coming from both sides of the main axis. The lightness of the new, white materials contrasts with the classicism of the room while making reference to the White House itself. The glass and steel entry vestibule serves to protect the interior conditioning necessary to maintain the historic fabric while minimizing visual impact on the historic space.





View from entrance ramp



Baldrige Hall in the 1930s



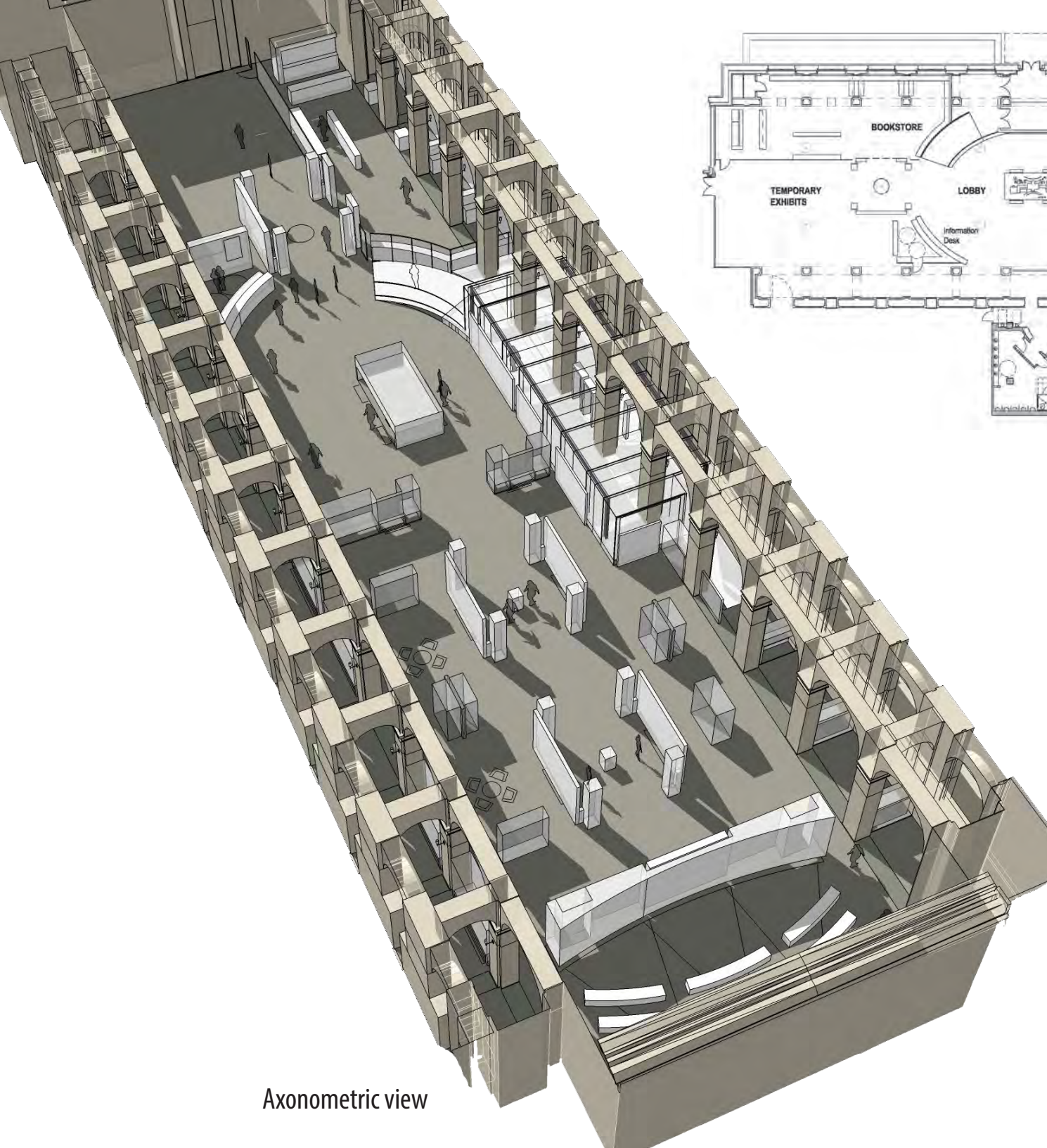
View of U.S. Department of Commerce Building from the Washington Monument



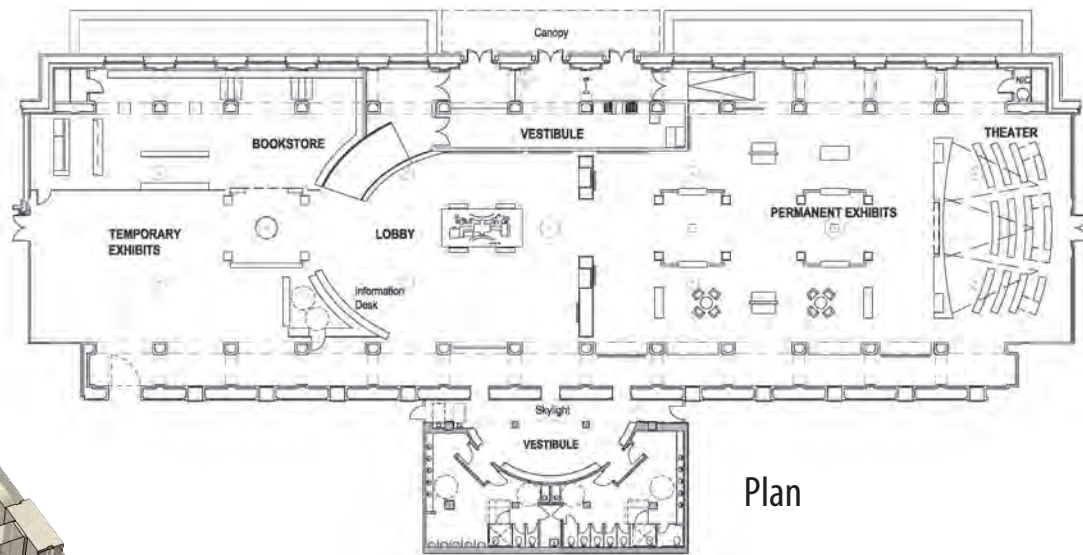
Design team's existing conditions photograph, 2009



Baldrige Hall today



Axonometric view



Plan



Visitors can once again admire the hall's coffered ceiling, which was previously obscured by overly-bright chandeliers







The unobtrusive gift shop preserves the focus on the visitor center's educational mission



WELCOME  
TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM CENTER

HOME	CLUB
RESTAURANT	SHOP

Architectural model of a building complex with several interconnected structures. The model is placed on a large, white, rectangular table. The table is surrounded by several informational panels and digital displays. The panels contain text, images, and diagrams related to the building's design and history.