

Before there was e-mail ...

**Smithsonian Institution
National Postal Museum:
William H. Gross Stamp Gallery Expansion**
2 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC
Cultural-Institutional Category

The Smithsonian's National Postal Museum, located on the lower level of the historic 1914 City Post Office Building, expanded to a new gallery to feature its multi-million dollar stamp collection and at the same time gain a much needed public presence at street level.

The addition to the museum comprises 12,000 sf of exhibit, classroom, restrooms and support space.

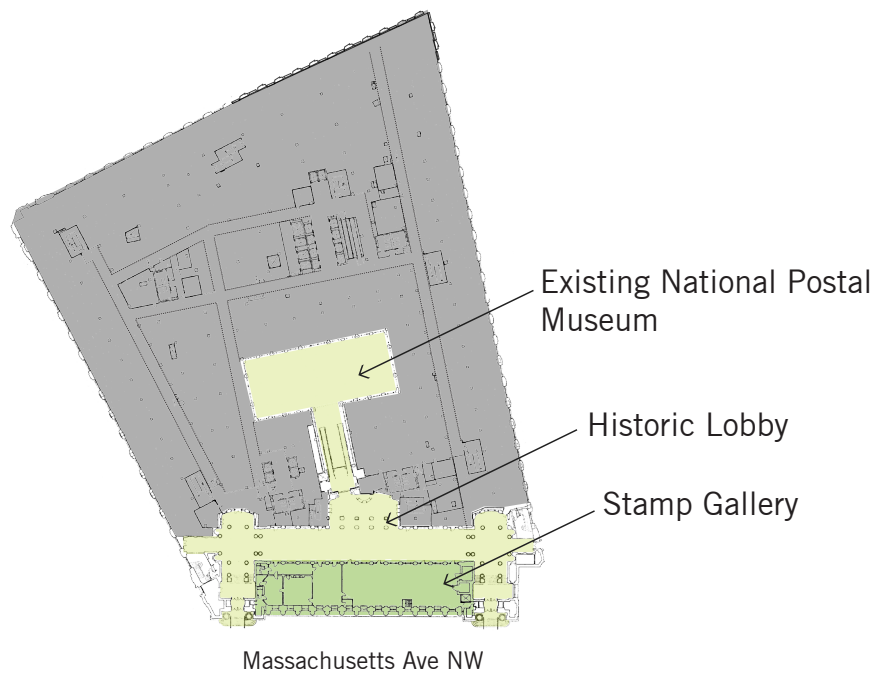
The design of this addition balances the needs of a modern museum with the historic character of the building. The architectural detailing is understated allowing greater focus on the gallery content, while preserving and incorporating the historic setting. The project is expected to receive LEED Silver Certification.

The new **"Wall of Stamps"** provides climate, daylight control and a new identity for the museum.

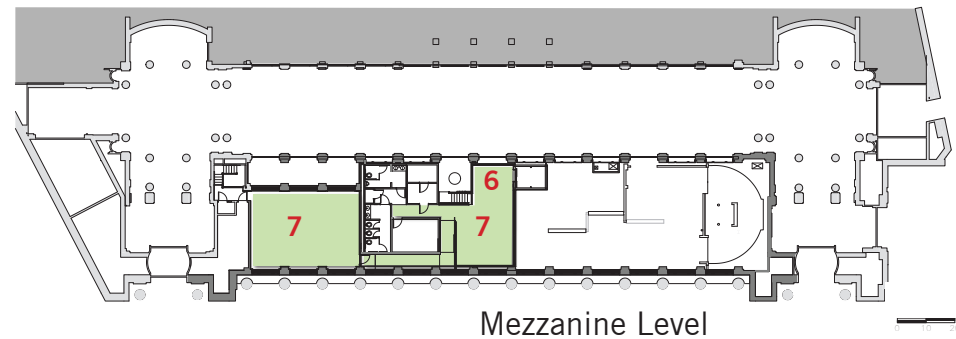




The City Post Office Building was designed by Daniel Burnham and is located west of Union Station.

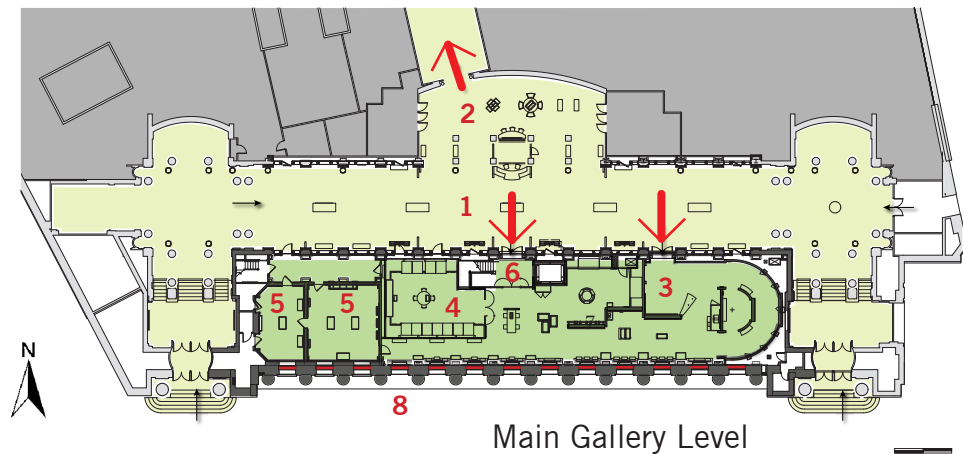


Post Office Building



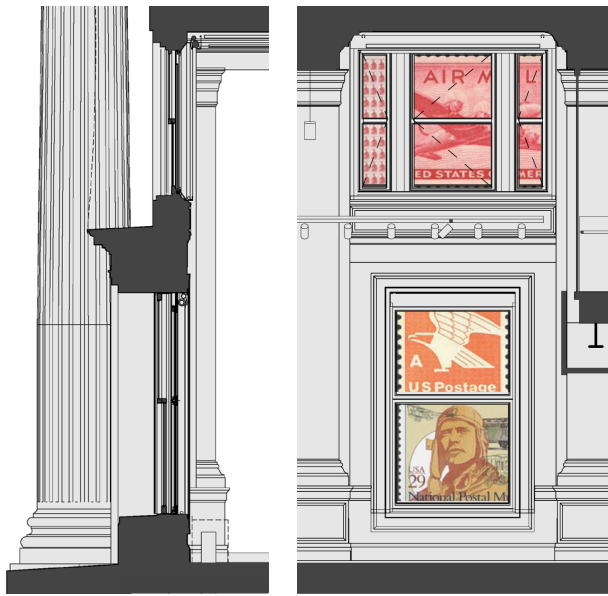
KEY

- 1- Historic Lobby
- 2- Entry to the Existing Postal Museum
- 3- Stamp Exhibit Galleries
- 4- National Stamp Collection
- 5- Postmaster Suite (Changing Exhibits)
- 6- Stair/Elevator
- 7- Educational Spaces
- 8- Wall of Stamps





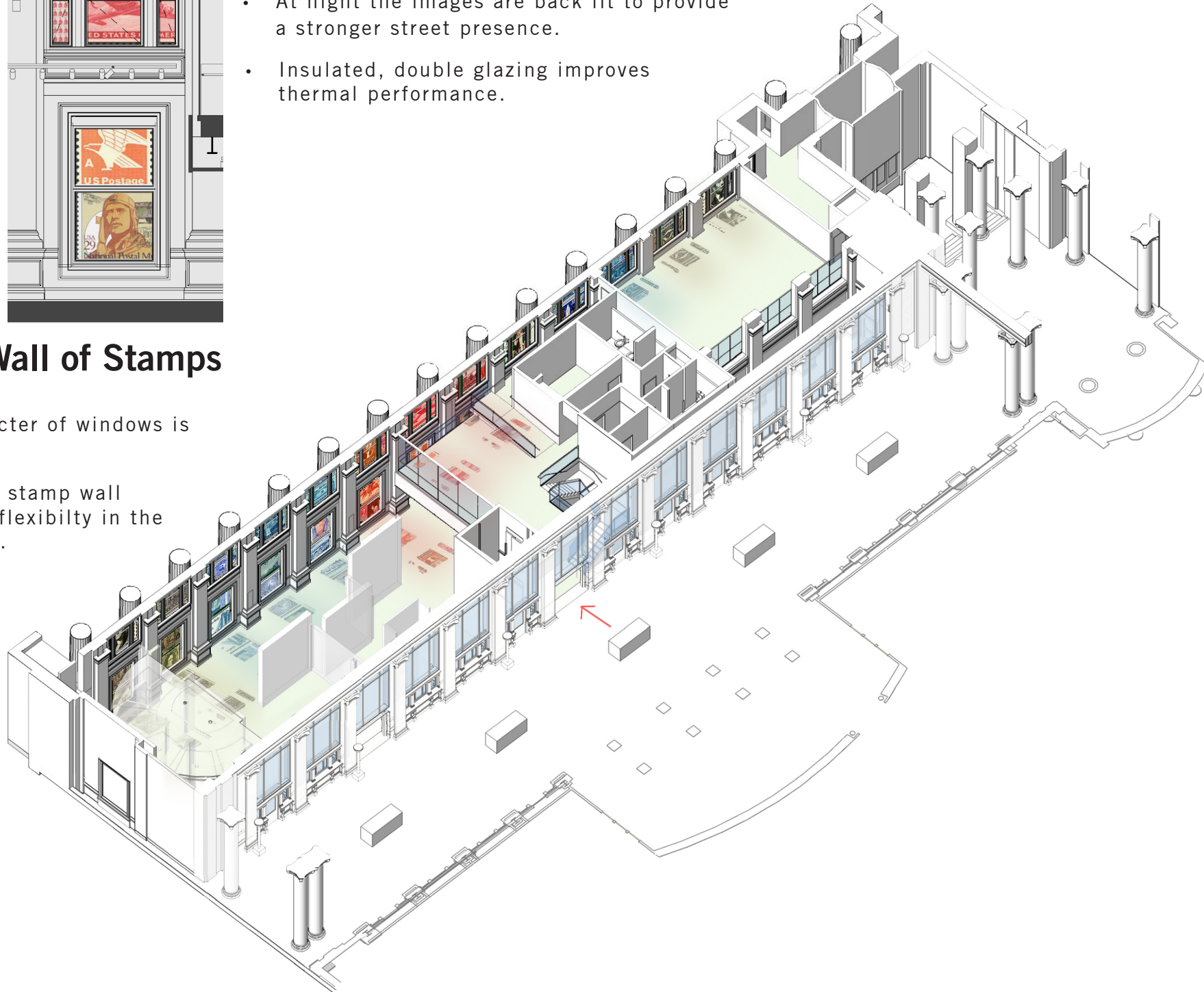
Historic Lobby with Gallery Entrance



- Stamp graphics in windows shield actual stamps from damaging UV light.
- At night the images are back lit to provide a stronger street presence.
- Insulated, double glazing improves thermal performance.

The Wall of Stamps

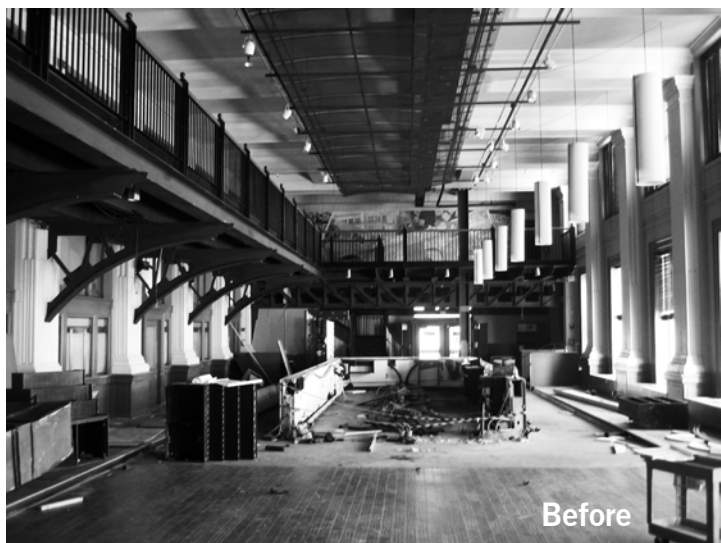
- Historic character of windows is preserved.
- The protective stamp wall allows design flexibility in the exhibit spaces.





Main Gallery Entry

Synergy Between Historic Architecture and Exhibit Requirements



Before



Main Gallery

Light Control

Exhibit walls were used to zone the museum for video displays and light-sensitive artifacts.



Access to Post Master Suite



Main Gallery

The chestnut paneled Postmaster's Office was restored and transformed into the changing exhibit space.

A subtle approach was taken with the architectural details as well as the required mechanical, security and fire protection systems so that they are integrated in a discrete manner into the existing fabric.



Postmaster's Suite



