Hotels at The Wharf – Canopy by Hilton & Hyatt House

Washington, DC
Commercial Architecture

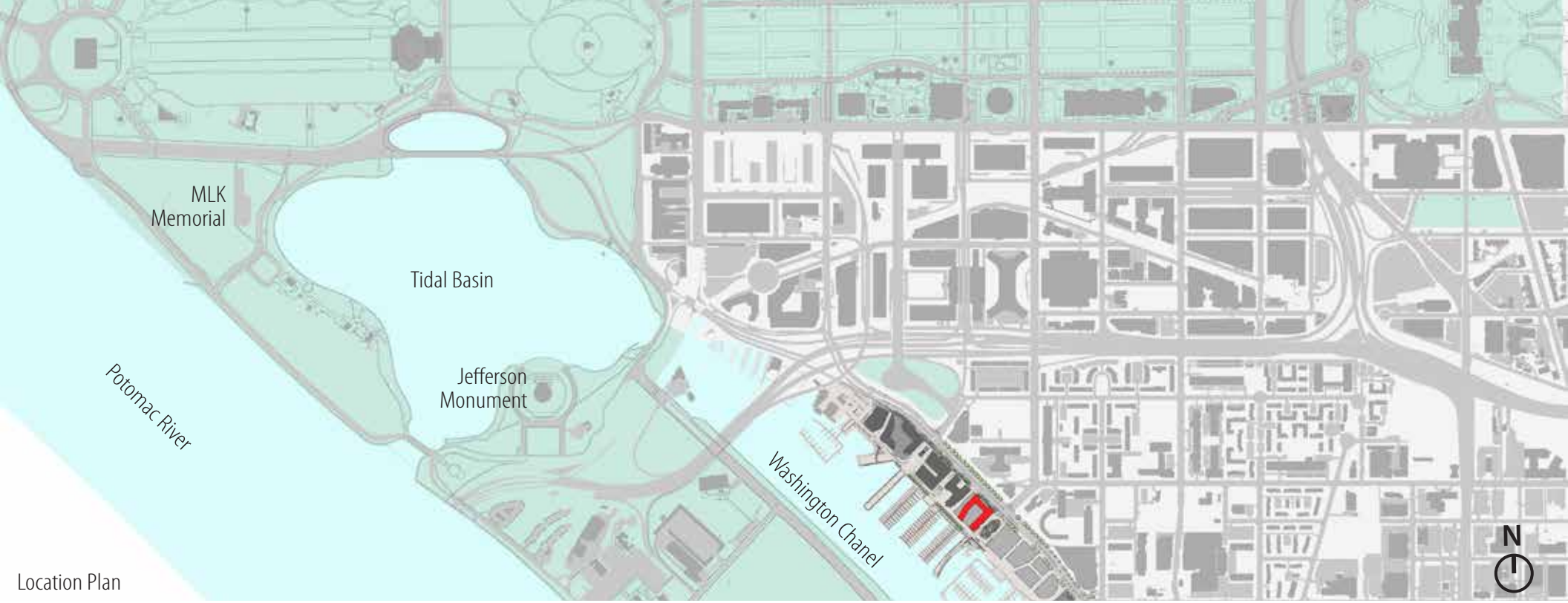
SITE: The Dual-branded Hotel at The Wharf is an integral part of a two-phase, 24-acre development on Washington DC's Washington Channel, a long-neglected stretch of waterfront just off the Potomac River. The first five parcels of Phase-1 of this $2.5 billion mixed-use development opened October 12, 2017 and includes the design for **two hotel companies** sharing **one dynamic building**. Located at the intersection of Maine Ave. SW & 7th Street SW, the hotels are the southern bookend to the first phase of development and will act as transition to the second phase of development due to begin construction next year.

PROGRAM: Seeking to fill a void in hotel services in southwest DC, the program included space for two hotels, while maximizing leasable ground floor retail and restaurant spaces, and providing public open space accessible to the adjacent neighborhood as requested by the neighborhood ANC. Planning for parking, and multiple modes of transportation within and throughout the development required extensive design and coordination meetings with all parcels at The Wharf.

SOLUTION: The resulting 300,000 square-foot, 9-story building creatively intertwines street level retail and restaurant spaces, second level public courtyards, and two hotels offering guests of each brand two distinctly different interior environments and tailored experiences. This two-flag hotel features a **237-room Hyatt House** extended stay hotel and debuts the new **175-room Canopy by Hilton**. In April, 2018, the LEED Gold certified hotels were the first parcel at The Wharf to receive Certification by the USGBC/GBCI.

Brand identity and guest experience is of paramount importance to these two hotel companies, and even though the two hotels are operated by a single operator, and share back-of-house spaces, **from a guest perspective, they are two separate hotels**. To provide separation of the hotel brands, the building was designed with separate arrival experiences, lobbies, and circulation within each hotel's tower. The connecting hyphen between the two lobbies house shared amenities; meeting spaces and fitness center in a 'brand neutral' zone accessed by passing through a threshold marking the transition from one hotel to another.

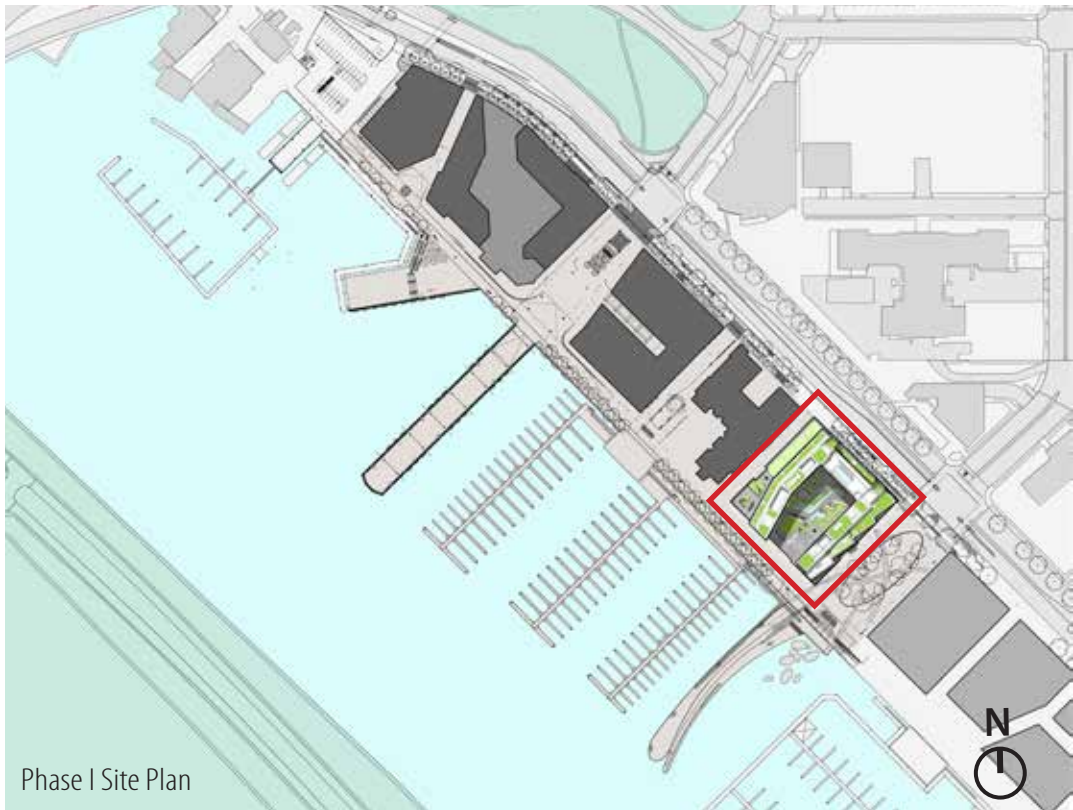
The hotels are not completely isolated from one another however. A variety of public and private spaces are available for guests to explore and discover. The **central courtyard**, a public plaza shared by both hotels with **exceptional views** of the marina and piers, contains a variety of seating areas, terraces, fire pits, a water feature, and event space.



Location Plan

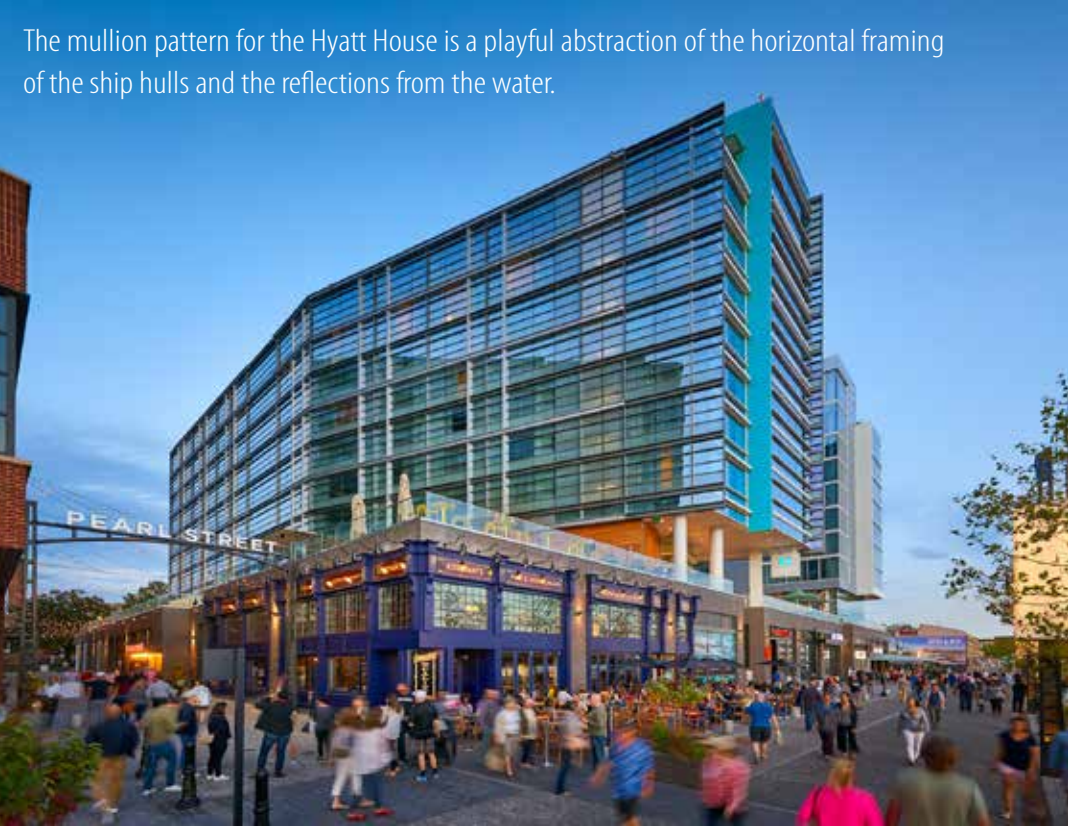
Site & History

The project looks to the history of the site, drawing references from both the nautical architecture of the structures and ships along the water's edge and the masonry warehouses that defined the once industrial area. Opened in 1805, The Maine Avenue Fish Market is the oldest continuously operating open-air fish market in the United States – it remains a key participant at The Wharf. Gone, are the warehouses and other markets from the turn of the century that once drove commerce in this area. While modern, the hotel's exterior design references the site's maritime history and includes teak decking, stainless steel rigging, and the use of water, sunlight, and reflection as design elements. Floating above a solid masonry plinth of ironspot brick, the hotel's modern design is accented by a sawtooth façade on the primary elevation; an abstraction of sails from the schooners and tall ships which once served this site. This serrated façade isn't only a bold gesture, it redefines the traditional hotel corridor and guestroom experience on the interior.

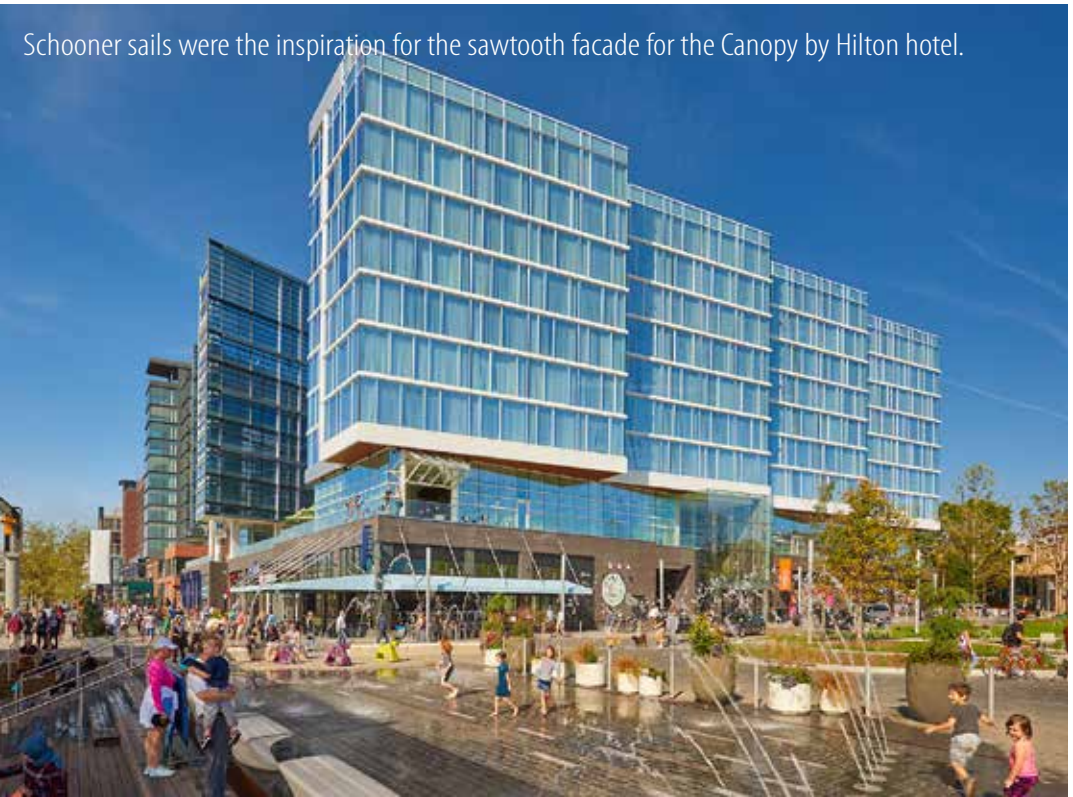


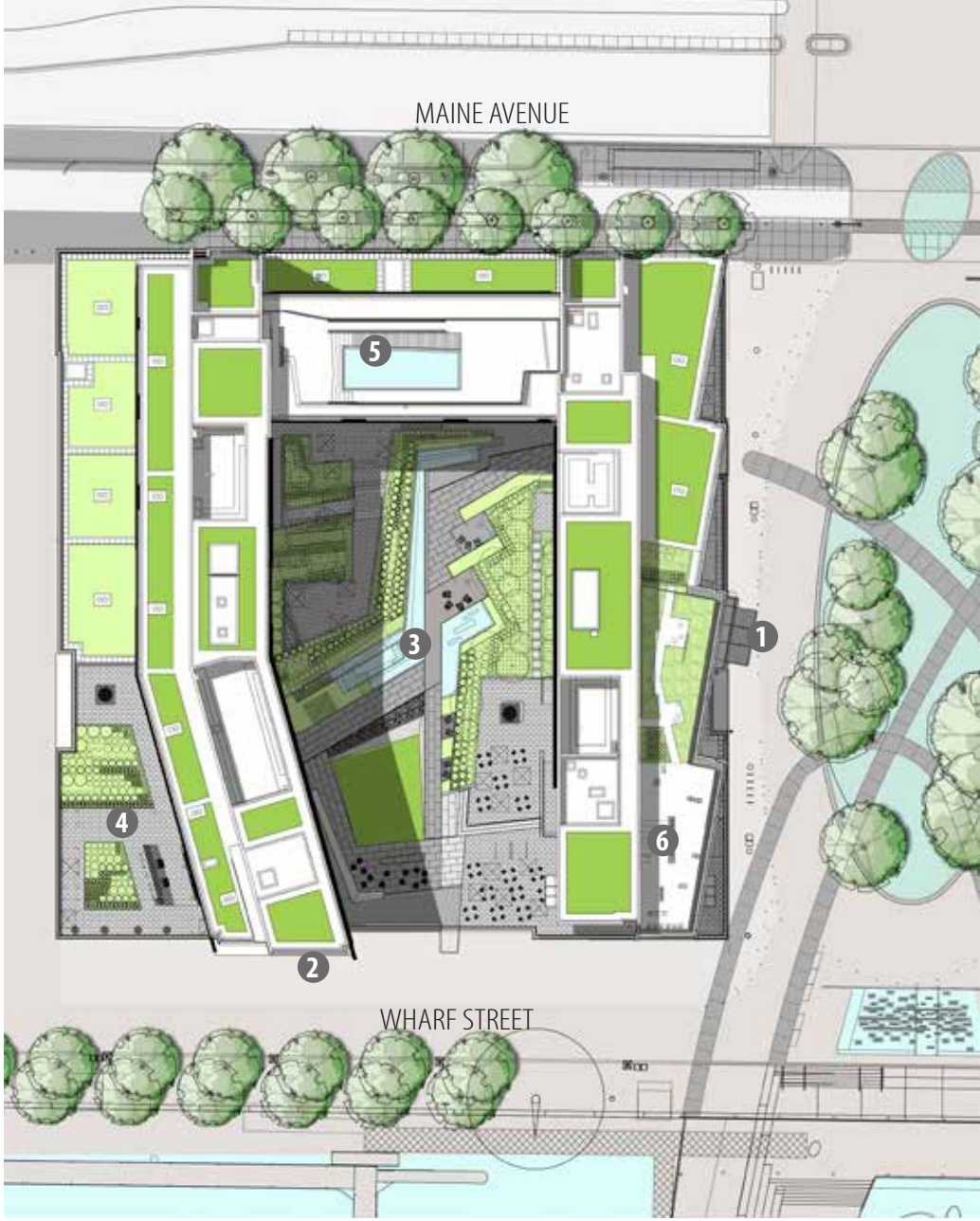
Phase I Site Plan

The mullion pattern for the Hyatt House is a playful abstraction of the horizontal framing of the ship hulls and the reflections from the water.



Schooner sails were the inspiration for the sawtooth facade for the Canopy by Hilton hotel.



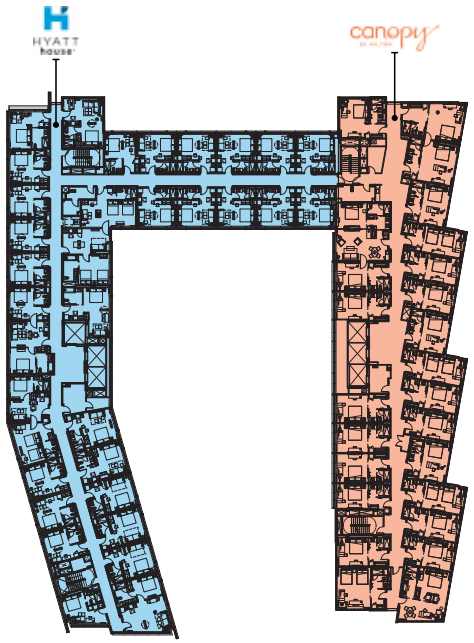


2 Hotels, 1 Building

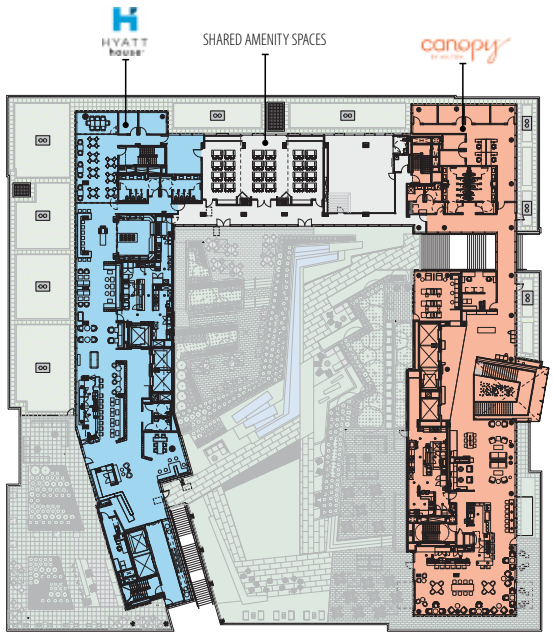
1 Entrance - Canopy by Hilton
2 Entrance - Hyatt House
3 Central Courtyard
4 Hyatt House Social Deck
5 Rooftop Pool
6 Whiskey Charlie Rooftop Bar

Building Organization

Hyatt House — Canopy



Typical Guestroom Level Floor Plan



Level 2 - Lobby Level

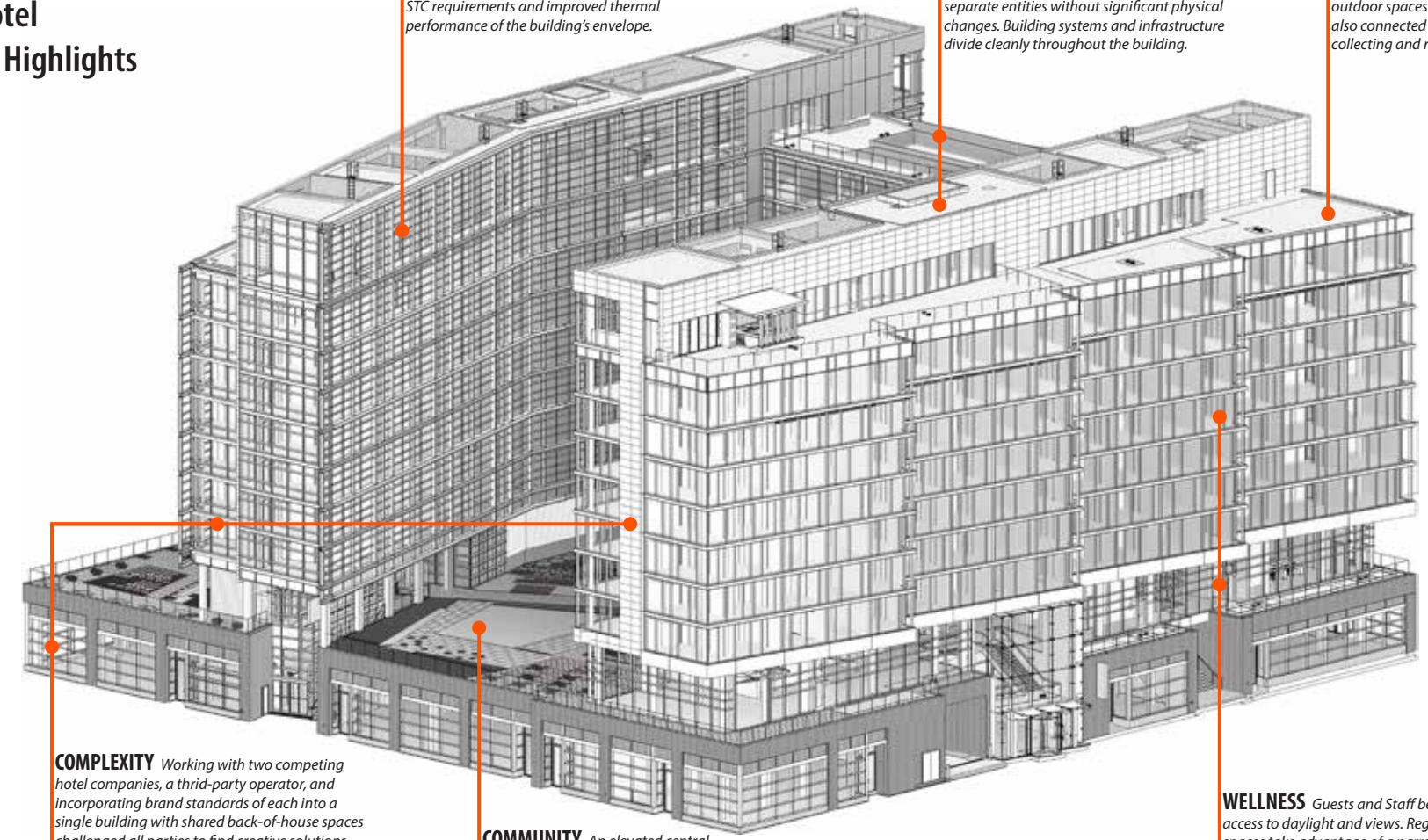
The publicly accessible central courtyard provides guests and neighbors with a variety of spaces to relax, connect, and enjoy the views.

Dual Brand Hotel
Sustainability Highlights

SYNERGIES *A custom insulated glass unit was developed to address both strict STC requirements and improved thermal performance of the building's envelope.*

FLEXIBILITY *The two hotels are designed so that in the future they could be split into two separate entities without significant physical changes. Building systems and infrastructure divide cleanly throughout the building.*

SYNERGIES *Extensive vegetated roofs reduce urban heat island effects, provide outdoor spaces for guests to enjoy, and are also connected to a site-wide cistern for collecting and reusing rainwater.*

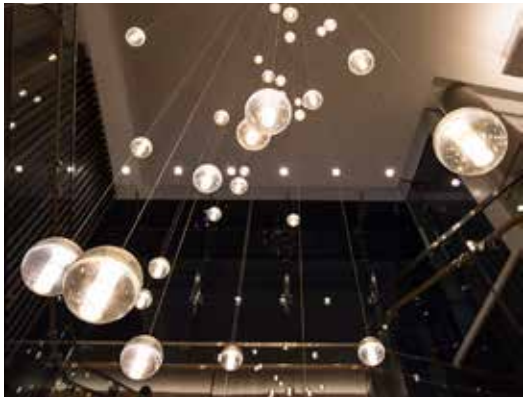


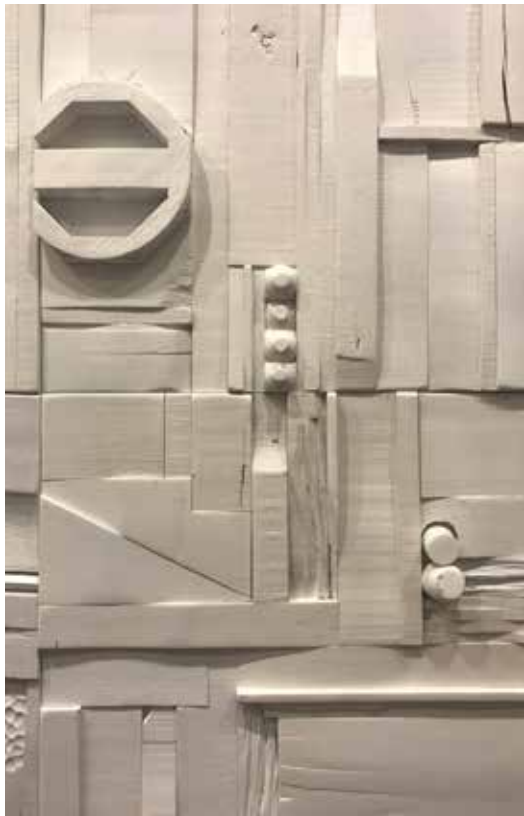
COMPLEXITY *Working with two competing hotel companies, a thrid-party operator, and incorporating brand standards of each into a single building with shared back-of-house spaces challenged all parties to find creative solutions in order to achieve sustainability goals while delivering enhanced guest experiences.*

COMMUNITY *An elevated central courtyard is dedicated public space for use and enjoyment by all.*

WELLNESS *Guests and Staff benefit from access to daylight and views. Regularly occupied spaces take advantage of a narrow footprint and expansive areas of glazing to always have a connection with the outdoor environment.*

Building Interior





Whiskey Charlie, Canopy's rooftop bar, provides a sunset cocktail experience with views up and down the Potomac River.

The reflectivity of the building's materials allows the hotels to dissolve into the water and sky.