

4747 BETHESDA AVENUE

BETHESDA, MD

CATEGORY

Commercial Architecture

SUMMARY

4747 Bethesda Avenue stimulates the public realm and creates an iconic image for a national development firm's headquarters. Located along a zoning fault line in a district undergoing dramatic change, the project mediates its dramatic context while demonstrating how design can establish a sense of place.

The design responds to three challenges: (1) to mass in response to neighborhood scale and height transitions; (2) adaptively reuse a vacant existing market building; and (3) employ materials on a commercial building that resonate in a neighborhood of varied materials and brick sidewalks.

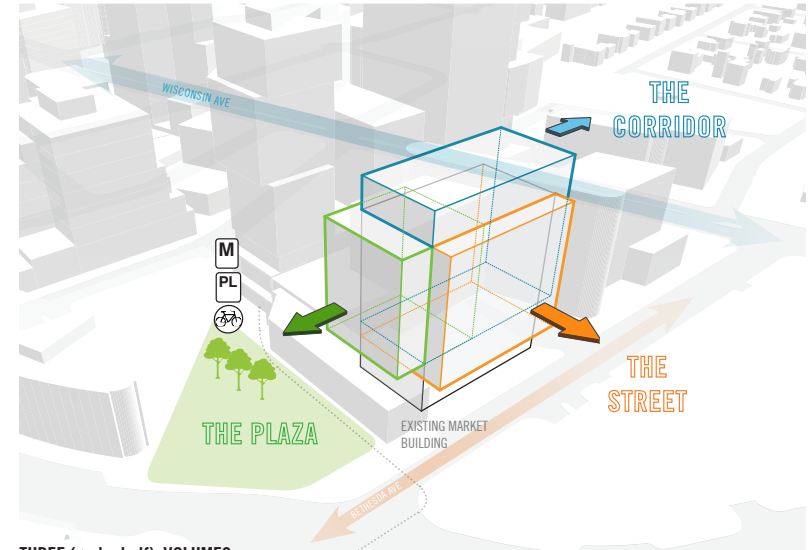
Three interlocking volumes step down and scale the building toward a plaza. Embracing the stepped composition led to accessible outdoor spaces directly related to interior workspaces and visible from surrounding buildings and the central plaza. The design reaches beyond the glass box with a façade design focused on texture, shadows and highlights.





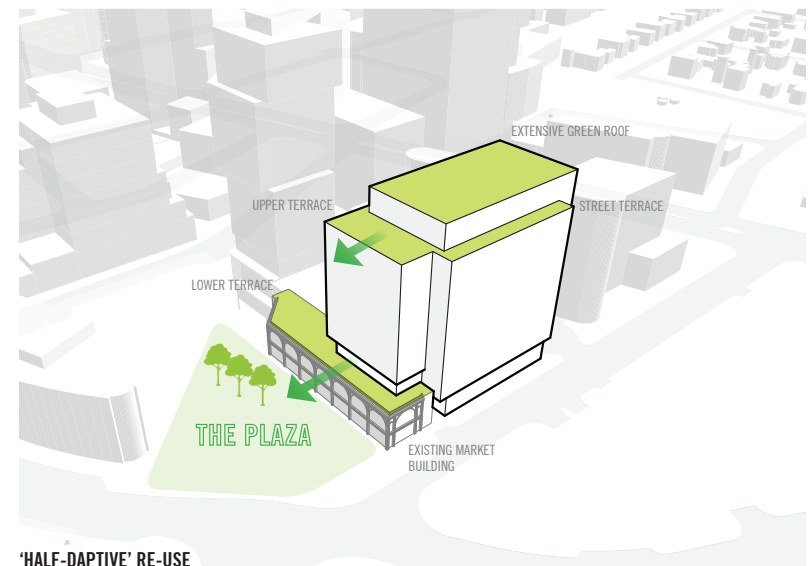
MEDIATING THE CONTEXT

Located along a zoning fault line in a district undergoing dramatic change, this project was designed to mediate its dramatic context while demonstrating the ability of design to establish a sense of place. The architects responded to three challenges: to mass in response to neighborhood scale and height transitions, to adaptively reuse a vacant existing building and to employ materials on a commercial building that resonate in an established residential neighborhood of varied materials and brick sidewalks.



THREE (and a half) VOLUMES

Three interlocking volumes step down and scale the building toward a neighborhood plaza. The tallest volume addresses the commercial corridor, providing visibility for the headquarters of a national development firm. The second volume floats above the sidewalk to reveal and engage the existing market building (the 'half'), addressing the street. A third volume is scaled to a neighborhood plaza that serves as gathering place and transit access.



'HALF-DAPTIVE' RE-USE

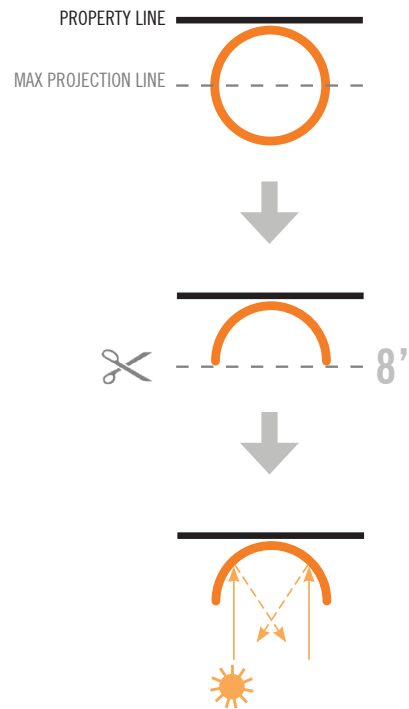
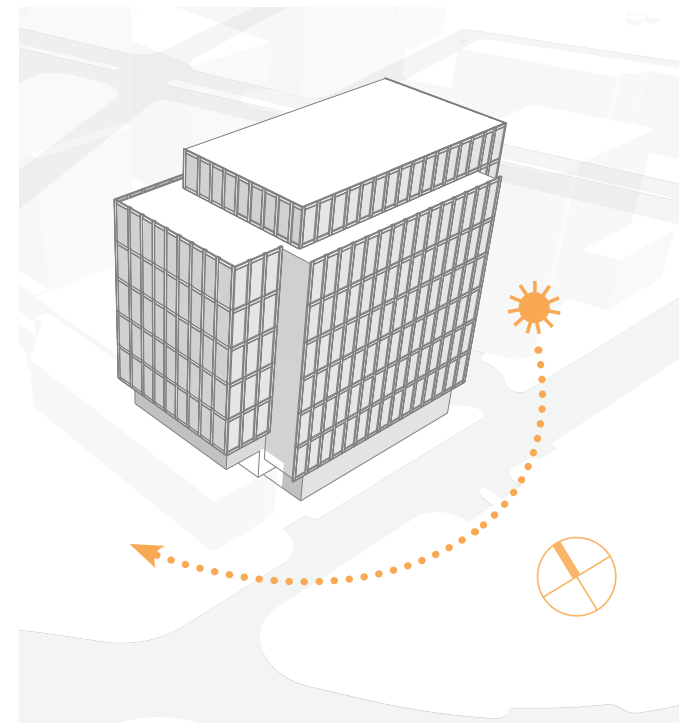
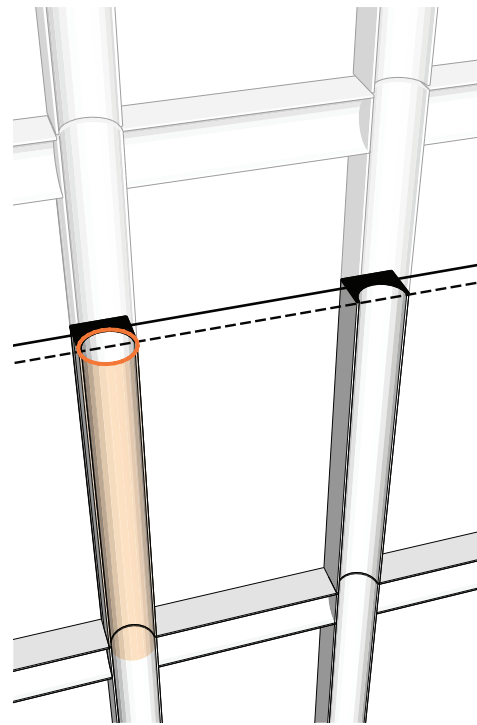
The architects embraced the stepped composition and created outdoor spaces directly related to the interior workspace. The existing building's roof is reinforced to support plantings and hardscape connected to the new building's atrium. Two upper level terraces along the main neighborhood street overlook the plaza. Accessible to all the tenants, these areas are also visible from surrounding buildings and the central plaza.



Bethesda

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8 INCHES

Having already spent their 'sculpting allowance' on the volumetric setbacks of the building, the architects confronted the challenge of articulating the glass box. Working within a restrictive building code that provided 8" for 'pilasters, belt courses, and window sills' they developed an inventive exterior articulation that made the most of that space.

A reinterpretation of a classic pilaster façade, common on commercial and industrial buildings historically, uses the concave surface formed as an echo of the traditional pilaster, while conforming to building code:

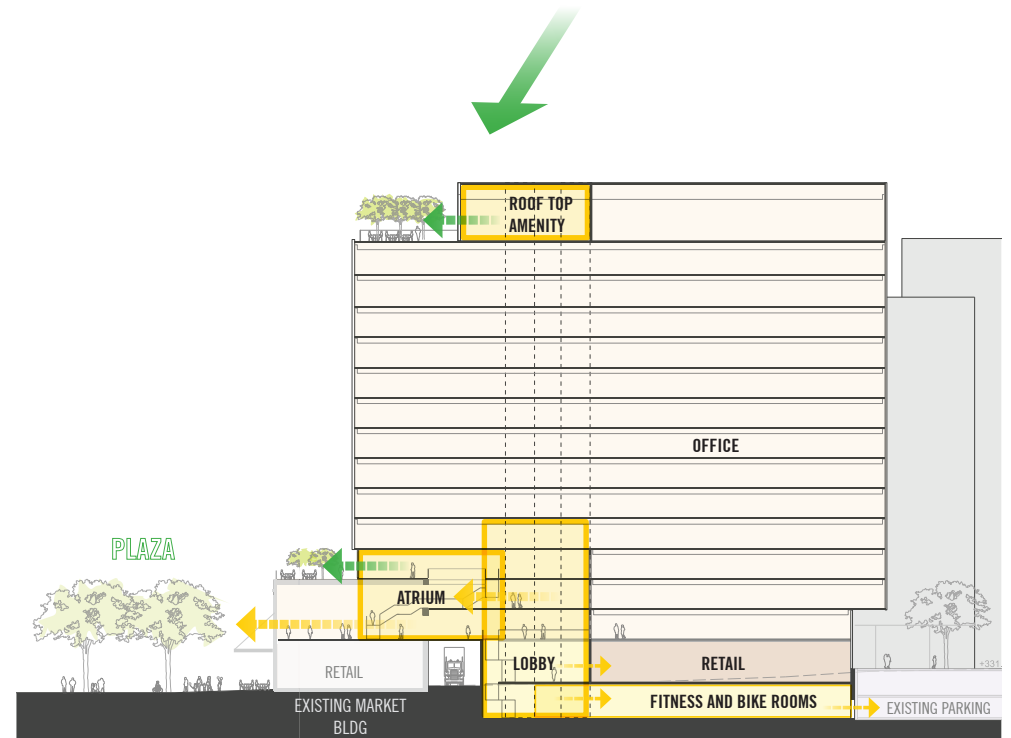
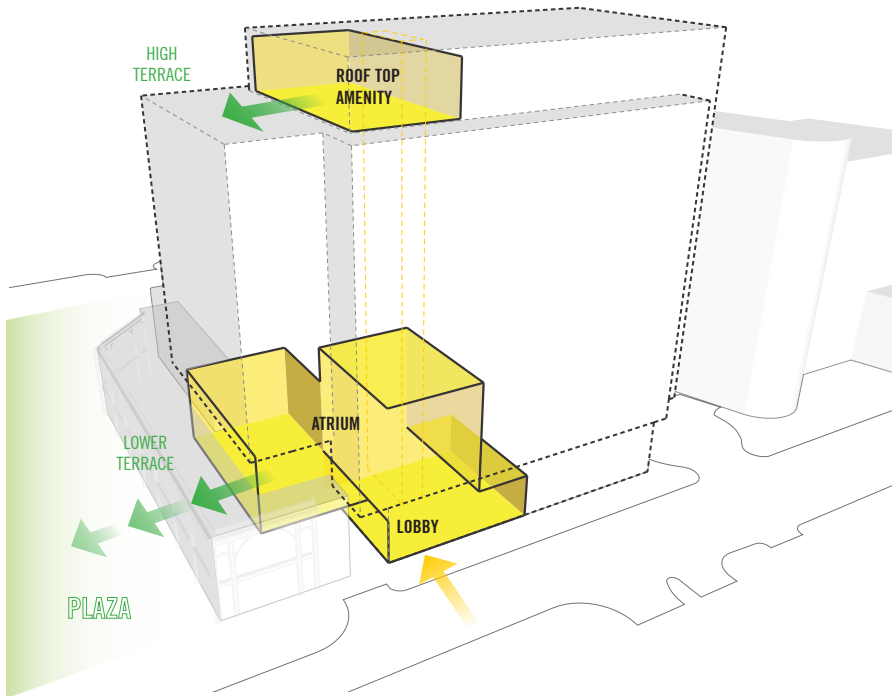
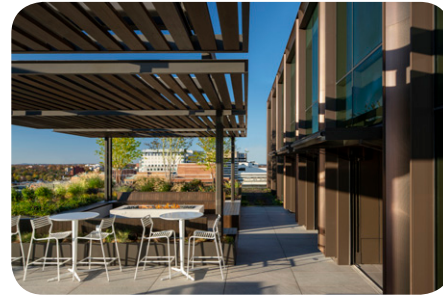
Beginning with a columnar profile, the shape is 'sliced' to reduce the depth to the permitted 8", revealing an interior concave surface.

Next, they employed an embossed and pre-patinated stainless steel panel on the interior surface that provides quiet, subtle highlights and shadows from every angle due to its geometry.

The concave 'scoop' shape augments the surface area by 50%, maximizing the amount of accent material and its visual impact within such tight design constraints.





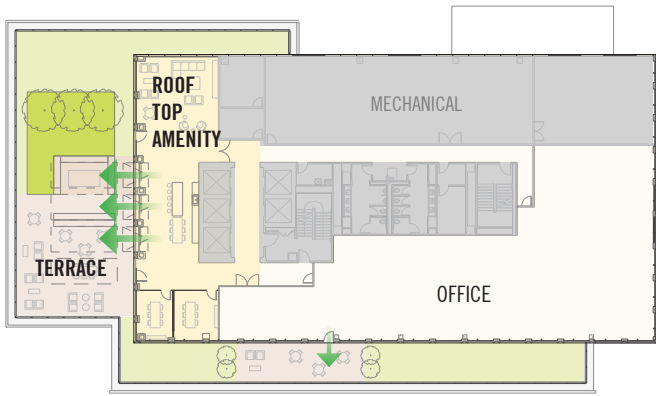


INTER-ATRIA

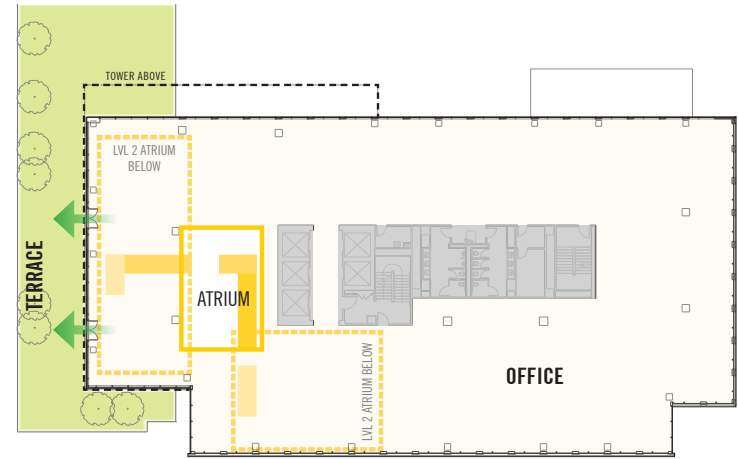
The existing market building serves as the catalyst for a multi-level internal space that connects the lower 6 levels of the building and serves as the location of the owner's national headquarters. This space links the main lobby, lower level amenity spaces and the exterior terrace garden above the market building to the interior work space, providing both views and access to landscaped gardens and outdoor work spaces. The building embraces biophilic design principles through direct contact and views of nature, while the atrium itself offers unique spatial conditions of both mystery and awe, refuge and connection.



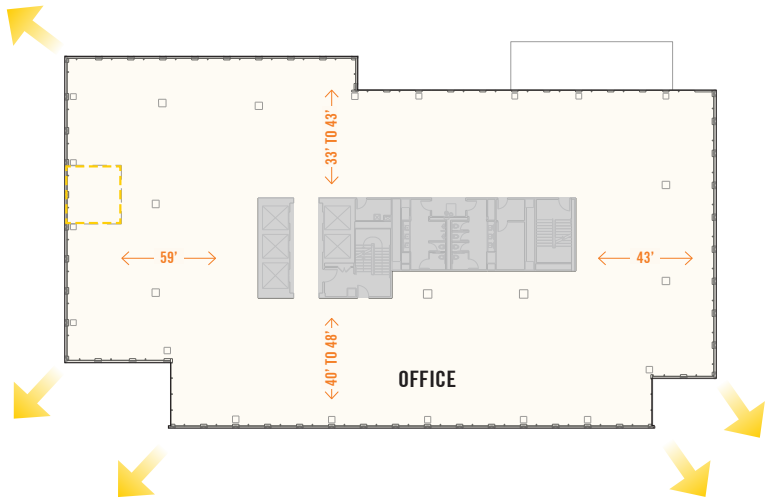
ROOF TOP TERRACE
The upper volume maintains the prime façade enclosure design, giving occupants an opportunity to get up-close to the rich bronze colored panels



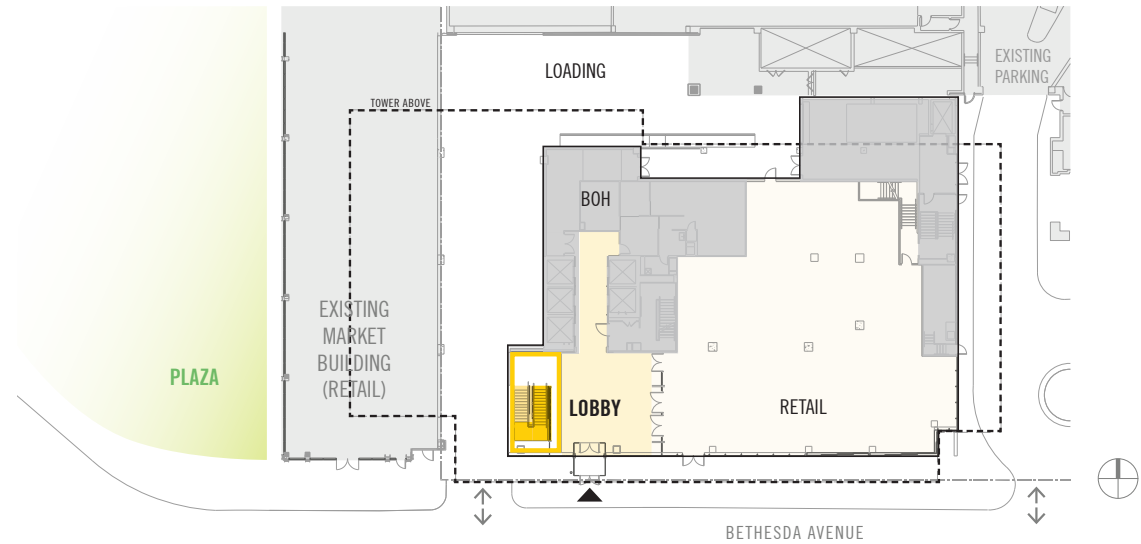
PENTHOUSE LEVEL PLAN



LEVEL 4 PLAN



TYPICAL LEVEL PLAN



GROUND LEVEL PLAN

