

POST Houston

Houston, Texas, USA



Project

Transformation of former post office warehouse facility

Site

16-acre site in downtown Houston

Program

Mixed-Use

Interior

Office	130,000 SF
Hotel	70,000 SF
Retail	60,000 SF
Market Hall	45,000 SF
Cultural	45,000 SF
Public Space	50,000 SF
Concert Venue	100,000 SF

Total Interior 500,000 SF

Exterior

Skylawn	120,000 SF
Rooftop Farm	50,000 SF

Total Exterior 170,000 SF

TOTAL AREA 670,000 SF



Preexisting condition



2022

POST Houston transforms one of Houston’s civic landmarks, the historic Barbara Jordan Post Office, into to a cultural anchor and public destination for downtown Houston.

Returning the former civic building back to the public, POST serves as a public platform designed to evolve together with a city constantly reinventing itself.

Located in the country’s most culturally diverse and rapidly changing city, POST Houston aims to reinvigorate Houston’s downtown neighborhoods with a mixed-use environment combining arts, entertainment, creative workspaces, dining and retail.

The 500,000-square-foot, warehouse and office building’s solidity and scale are preserved while strategic, surgical interventions break its fortress-like relationship to its context without dismantling the building.

The warehouse is punctured vertically with skylights and atriums and raked horizontally with new passages that establish distinct programmatic thoroughfares. Three atriums excavated from the existing structural grid intersect a commercial ground-plate, a second-floor creative workspace, and a rooftop park, while bringing light into the depth of the building.

Each atrium is covered with an ETFE roof and defined by distinct, monumental staircases. The stairs lead visitors through the building’s layers up to the roof-scape. Engaging the city at multiple levels—from the streetscape to the warehouse to the roof—POST Houston integrates a new gathering place into downtown.

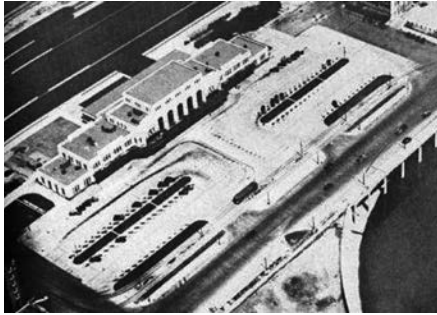
The orchestration of necessary interventions and the preservation of the building’s clear span and openness, establish highly-connected and mutable spaces that accommodate changes in use over time. The stairs serve as programmable platforms themselves, encouraging unexpected encounters or events.

A “Texas-sized” rooftop park supports an urban farm, additional zones for events, shaded gardens, recreation areas, and two restaurant pavilions adds 170,000 square feet of new public realm for downtown and the city’s “Green Loop.” The building is a gateway with view out over the city’s juxtapositions—of infrastructure, business ambition, and natural vitality.

History and Existing Condition

The 500,000-square-foot concrete warehouse and office building once served as Houston's main center for the United States Postal Service (USPS).

POST Houston preserves the building's past without fetishizing its industrial character, breaks its fortress-like relationship to its context without dismantling the building, and maintains the ambition to serve the downtown and greater Houston community.



Houston's Grand Central Station previously occupied the site



The downtown Post Office under construction (1959)



The mail sorting warehouse with open spans for mail sorting activities



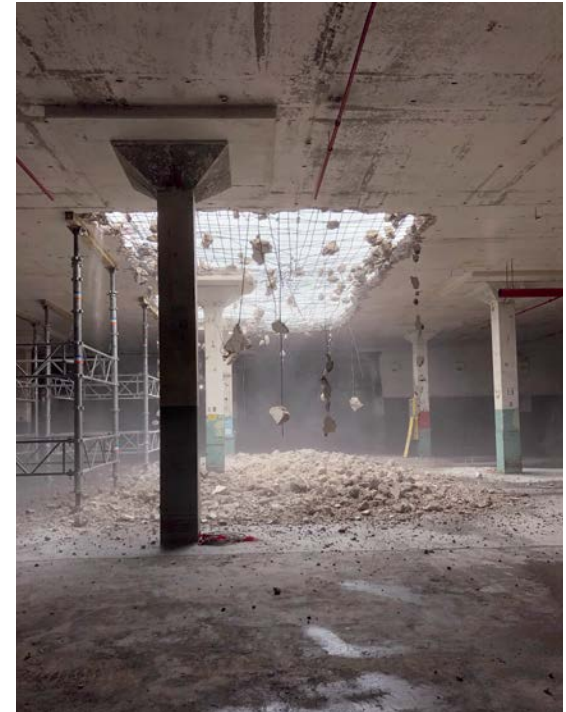
Postcard (1960s): a civic landmark



Existing site condition, with the Bayou to its North.



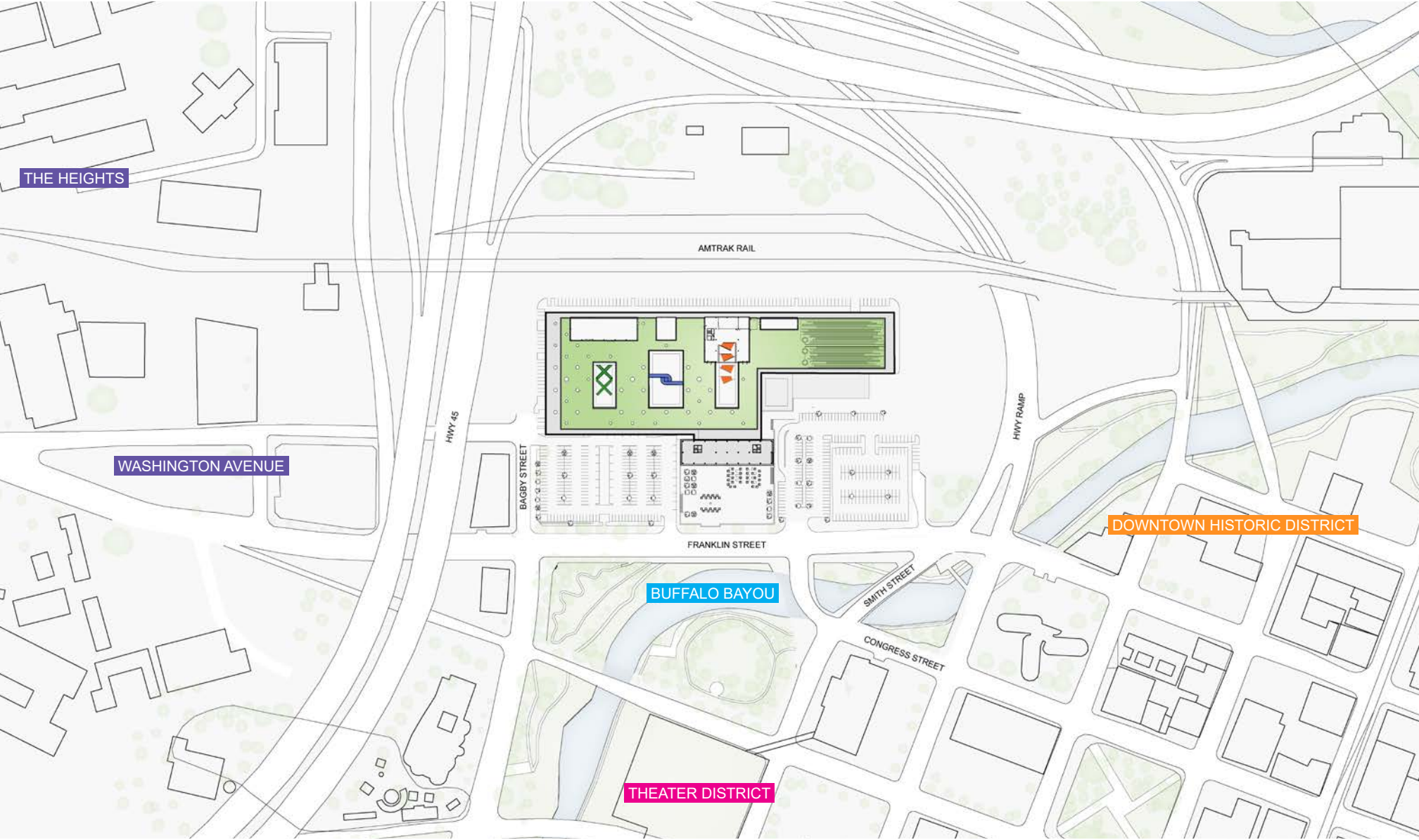
Existing condition of the warehouse interior with a field of columns



Beginning of atrium construction

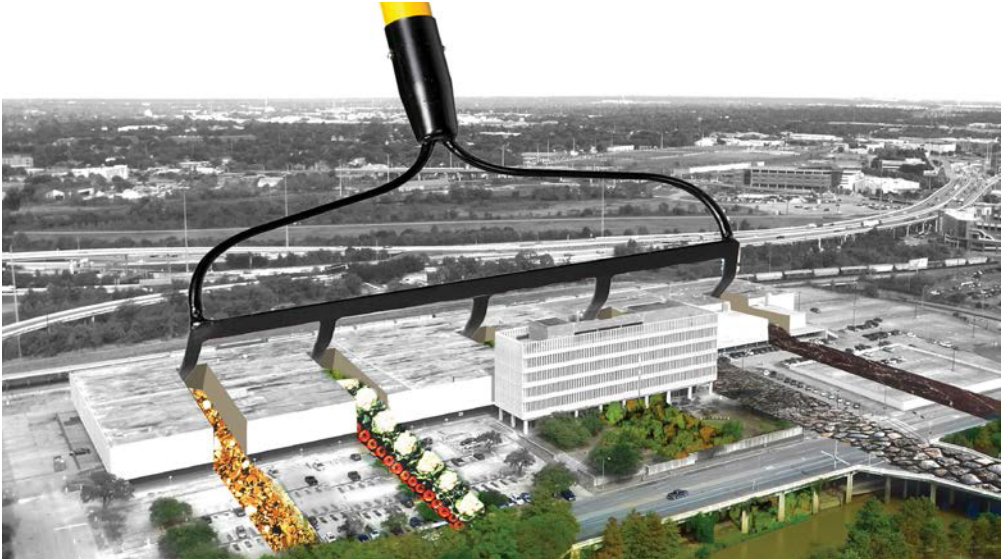
Site Plan

Located within the city's north downtown neighborhoods, POST's mixed-use programming reinvigorates the Houston's diverse community and engages the city at multiple levels, from the Bayou and streetscape to the building and its roof.

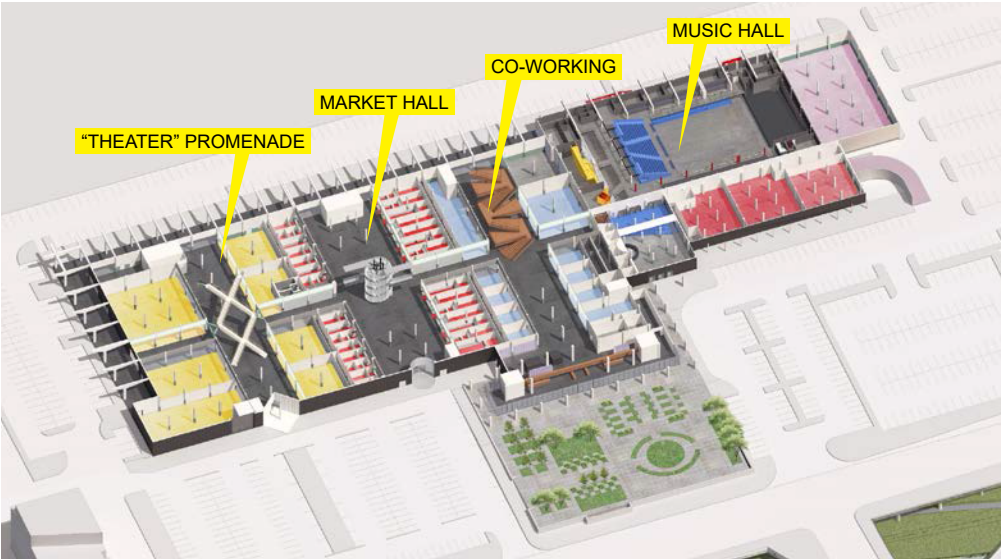


Concept: Raking the Building

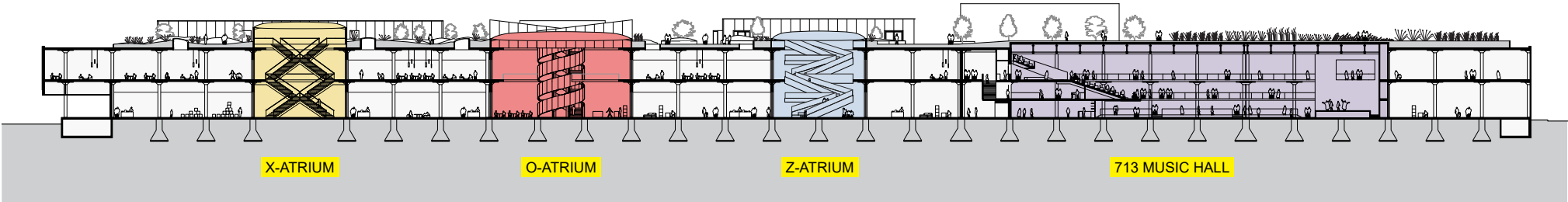
The approach balances preservation with surgical interventions to integrate the 16-acre site into the fabric of downtown. Four cuts bring light into the deep floorplates and intersect three levels while creating three programmatic bands: cultural and retail, food market, and collaborative workspace.



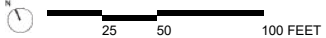
A series of horizontal thoroughfares into and through the building



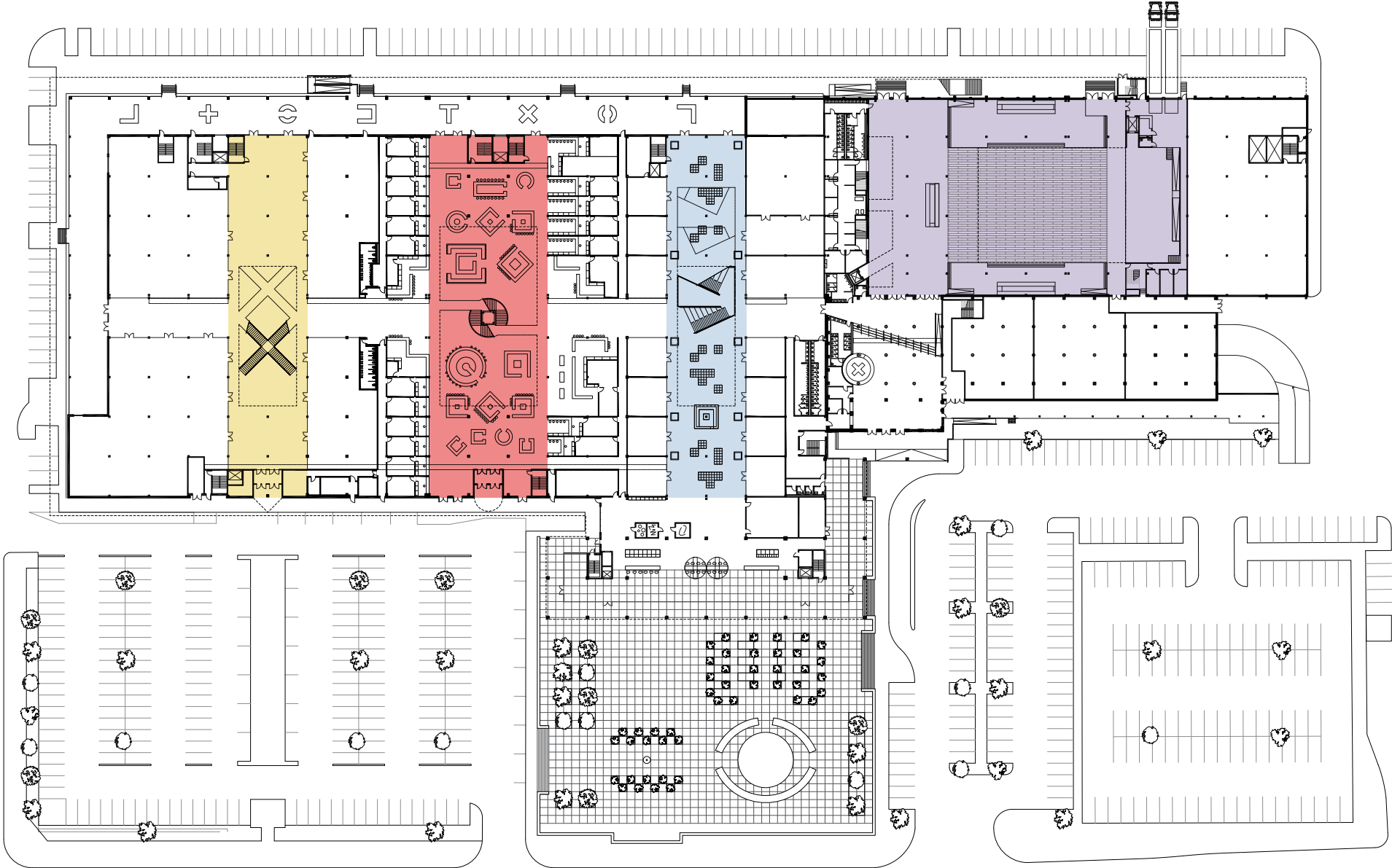
Axon: programmatic thoroughfares



E-W Section: within each band are three atriums, each of which contains a monumental staircase that leads visitors up to the rooftop Skylawn



Ground Floorplan





X-Atrium: “Theater”

The theater atrium combines retail, art, and performance. The X-stair enlivens the visitor’s path by bringing people together in chance encounters, while providing an unexpected stage for spectacles.



A zigzagging stair is reflected to create adouble “X” with two floating intersections.



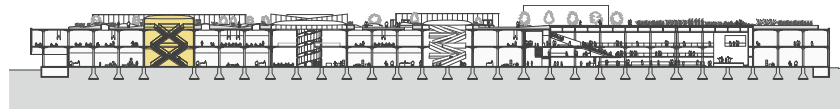
Stair as stage: Houston Contemporary dance performance



Atrium as venue: DJ set and late night dance party



The X-stair connects the commercial ground floor to the roof, converging twice to offer chance encounters whilst connecting the co-working floor. Its color-palette reference the historic columns and industrial equipment that once navigated the warehouse.



O-Atrium: Market Hall

Anchoring the Market Hall is a compact, double-helix stair with two intertwining paths that diverge twice to connect to the office level and the Skylawn.



A matrix of kiosks of various scale, shape, and configuration generates a dynamic flow through the Market Hall. Small kiosks line the north and south entries, with larger kiosks located at the center of the hall.



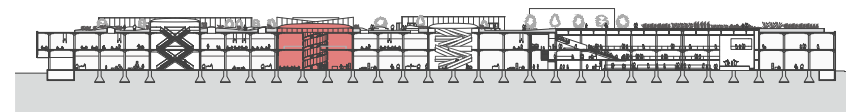
During the day, the porosity of the stair and kiosks maximize daylighting filtering through the ETFE skylight.



In the evening, layers of reflective metal and neon generate the aura and energy of night markets.



Kiosks provide multiple potential social configurations.



Z-Atrium: Co-working

In the co-working atrium, a series of enlarged platforms are lifted to create places to sit, work, and meet: a “social stair” large enough for collaboration and a flexible zone for non-workspace programs.



View from co-working tenant space into the atrium



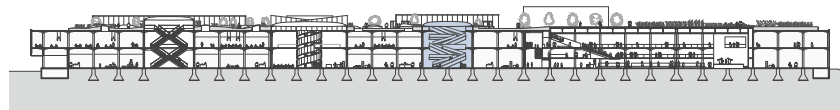
Juxtaposition of performance and circulation



At the top of the stair, visitors are reoriented toward the downtown skyline.



The stair provides a direct connection from the lobby entrance up into a rooftop restaurant, while its extended landings provide a workspace at F2 and two floating between the floorplates.

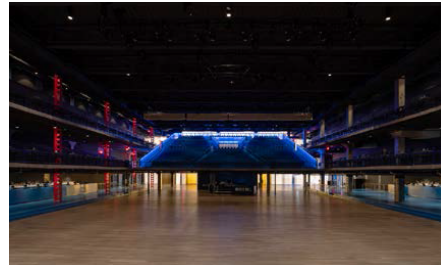


713 Music Hall

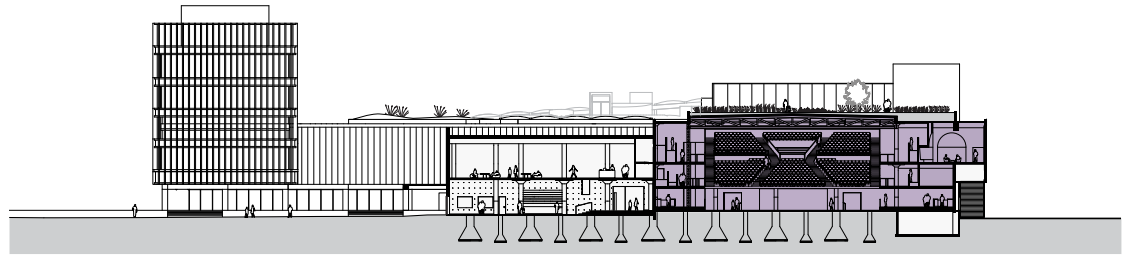
Occupying the eastern wing of POST Houston, 713 Music Hall is a music venue integrated into the former warehouse as its cultural anchor. A large, flat general assembly accommodates a diversity of performance types and events, while a series of intimate rooms and interstitial offers potential for additional layers of activities.



Stage view from the Tribune seating



General Assembly with Tribune seating above



On the eastern wing of POST Houston is a fourth void housing 713 Music Hall



The Lobby creates an entry zone from both the outside and the main building.



View toward stage through the Tribune opening



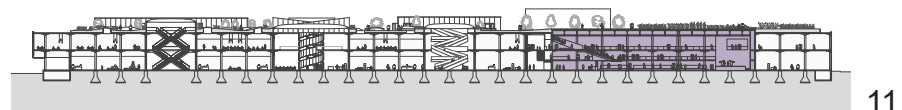
Beyond the lobby, a double-height polycarbonate wall forms a translucent threshold dividing the main space into two zones—a circulation band and the general assembly.



Balcony Lounge



VIP Lounge





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Skylawn: 170,000 sf of New Public Realm for Downtown

One of Houston's largest public spaces, the Skylawn is as much a gateway as a destination, connecting visitors to the city with dramatic views out onto its juxtapositions—of infrastructure, business ambition, and natural vitality.



Occupying the entire roof of the expansive warehouse, the Skylawn includes a “Texas-sized” urban farm, event pavilion, shaded gardens, recreation areas, and two restaurant pavilions.



Organic paths toward the west side of the Skylawn



View of the historic Post Office administration tower and the downtown Skyline



Yoga on the lawn

ETFE and Skylights: Bringing Light into the Warehouse



Each atrium is capped by a lightweight air-filled plastic pillow that lets abundant natural light into the offices, shops, and food stalls. A network of skylights across the Skylawn' bring light into the tenant zones and interstitial spaces.



Skylight as playspace



Circular skylights puncture the industrial interior with light throughout the warehouse



Skylawn activities visible from inside

Historic Elements: Preserving the Prosaic



North facade, before



North facade, After



The entrance to POST Houston is located in the former Post Office admin lobby



The fundamental character of the original facade is preserved by transforming existing vents into windows and interspersing existing openings with floor-to-ceiling windows of the same width.



Post Office Administration Lobby (1964), the only space open to the general public at the time.



Serving as the primary entry, the new lobby echoes the original post office service counter.



New apertures daylight the once dimly lit space while reinforcing the building's monolithic character.



Original columns are preserved



New and old seamlessly integrated



Materiality draws from existing palettes

Post Occupancy

