

Program Summary:

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Program Statement:

This project is a new mixed-use project in the Downtown area of a small, but rapidly growing, northeastern city comprised of a new public plaza for the historic pedestrian mall and 215,000 sf of multi-use space, including a strategic combination of coworking, office space, shared amenities, and retail.

Within the building, a variety of spaces support a vibrant community of entrepreneurs, thinkers, inventors, and artists. Two floors of coworking starting on the ground floor provide the foundation of this idea with hot desks, bookable conference rooms, common areas, and an extensive amenity area with coffee, culinary, and entrepreneurial shops intended to provide small businesses the resources they need to grow and flourish.

Based on the results of peer-reviewed research, a palette of low-emissions materials was employed, and the building ventilation system provides more than twice the standard flow of fresh air—but with an energy use 1/3 that of a typical office building. Design choices were similarly informed by ongoing assessment of the carbon emissions associated with the materials used for construction, helping the team lower the carbon footprint of the project even before the building opened.

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Building Area: (sf)
215,000

Cost per Square Foot:
\$442

Construction Cost
\$95M

Date of Completion:
March 2022

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History

The developer behind this project, a successful local businessman, felt a sense of regret that home-grown entrepreneurs so frequently departed from their small city to places like New York City and San Francisco to elevate their careers.

At the same time, he understood the sentiment. The offerings of the country's large cities differed vastly from their small city. In town, a tech startup would likely be occupying a suburban office park, at a distant remove from any walkable community. In New York City—one would have a walkable, highly urban environment connected to an array of resources, but likely at a price premium.

He wondered if somehow the best of two worlds could be realized—a place right in the walkable center of town, where people could live nearby, that might generate jobs, opportunities, and connections.

The owner loved the vibrance and community his small town offered, and he knew what differentiated them from larger cities was its access to nature. In his view, the project needed to highlight and enhance both aspects.



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Completing the Downtown Mall

Today, the project sits at the end of the city's historic Main Street, and a beloved pedestrian Mall.

The project's siting reinforced a commitment to walkable city life, but presented an early challenge in integrating the requisite scale. From the start, the design team approached this conflict of context and scale by "stair-stepping" the massing of the building up. The building is lowest where it meets the Mall, then spirals up further to meet the scale of Water Street.

As one approaches the site, the project is only visible as a three-story structure of a similar width to the neighboring historic, party-wall buildings.

The building's mass is revealed upon turning the corner, but it is arraigned as a backdrop to a new public plaza.





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Massing

The building's floor plan is an irregular A-shape, drawn so that the office tower would be situated on the taller scale of Water Street, and the retail and coworking portions nestled around a triangular courtyard that opens onto the mall. This unique public plaza opposite the pre-existing Ting Pavilion, an open-air music venue, serves as a civic amenity and capstone to the mall, while also providing pedestrian thoroughfare to Water Street.

The client's commitment to narrow floor plates allowed for the creation of a generous plaza. The public is invited into the project's site, mixing with the building's occupants.

The inherent self shading created by the building's form allows the first two floors to be more transparent, furthering the connection between users and the public.

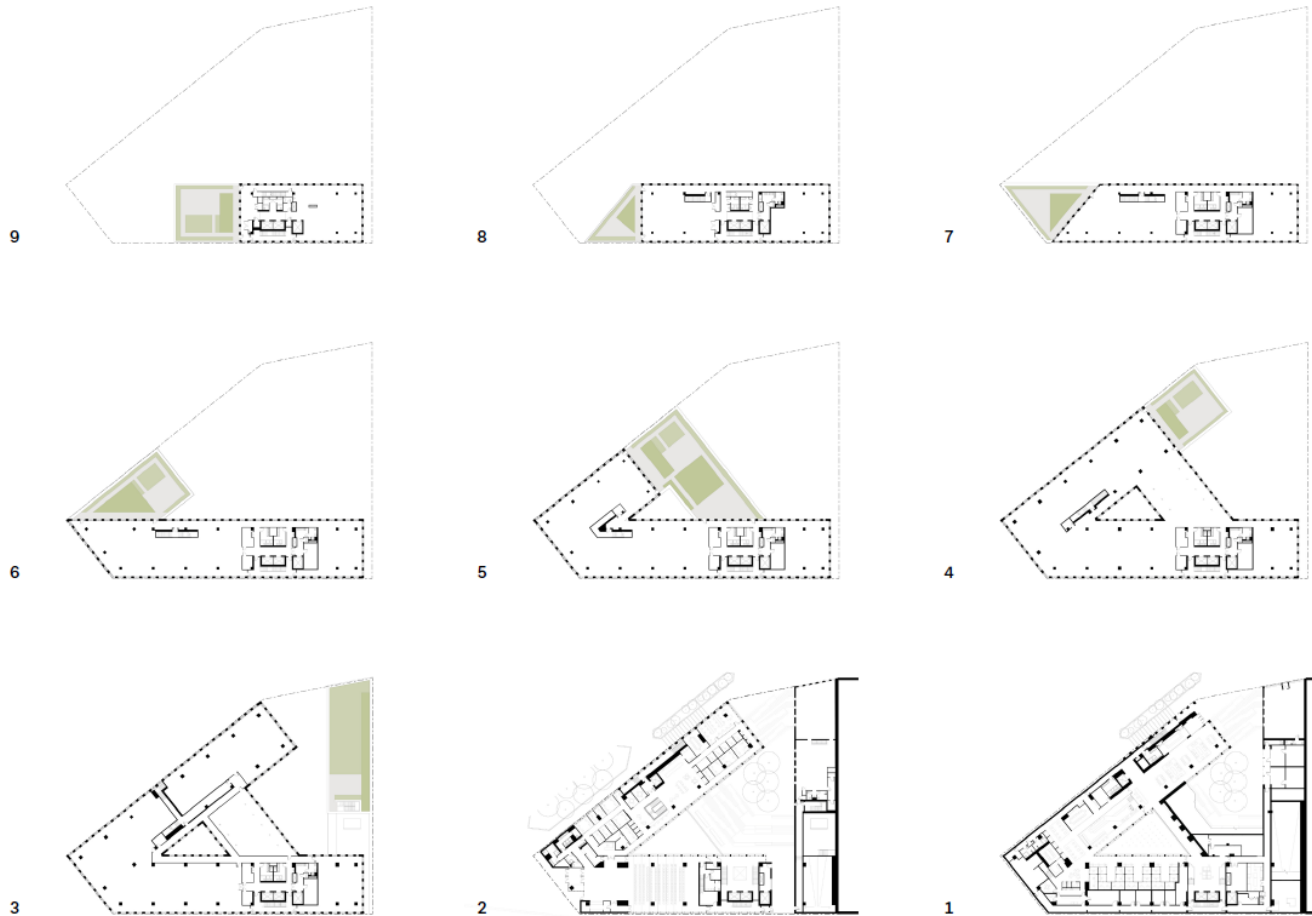
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Floor Plans

Plans for the nine floors within the building were delineated to provide a diversity of spaces, while simultaneously standardizing certain core elements.

Coworking and retail occupy the first two floors of the project, serving as the public window to the activity within the building.

Above the second floor, the stepped massing pattern provided the opportunity for green roofs, creating a shared amenity across each floor of private offices.



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Circulation

The building was envisioned as a new public forum and collision space—a new version of Charlottesville—where individuals across demographics might meet in pursuit of a better future.

Early on, the layout and circulation were planned to intentionally create crosses between the public, the coworking tenants, and the private office users, facilitating conversation and connection between different users and working to balance the vibrance and vitality of a coworking space with the formality and professionalism of world-class office and auditorium space.





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A Diversity of Program

The project's program features a diversity of assets intended to provide small businesses, artists, startups with all the resources they need to grow.

The result is a comprehensive, dynamic set of spaces aimed at stimulating entrepreneurial growth.

The program within features coworking, auditorium, retail, private office, and community spaces intent on providing opportunities for chance interaction, socialization, and collaboration.

Beyond coworking desks and private offices, there are meeting rooms, a coffee shop, kitchen, showers, and a podcast studio. Two restaurant spaces open to the courtyard.



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Ecology of Place

The program of the project and its stepped façade simultaneously gave the building its form and created numerous connections to the environment.

Most emblematic of this eco-minded notion are the exterior courtyards located on each floor. A conscious decision was made to shrink indoor program to enable these terraces that pull double duty for both sustainability and occupant health and wellness.

The roofscape features native plants in regional soils, while simultaneously providing an inclusive, nearby sense of nature to what might otherwise have been a typical interior office experience. Even prior to the first tenants occupying the building, the project began hosting a different type of tenant: birds and bees began moving into the gardens soon after completion.



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Today, the project represents a microcosm of the surrounding environment, with native plantings and a variety of insects and small creatures. Office tenants are only a few steps away from accessing this vibrant outdoor environment.





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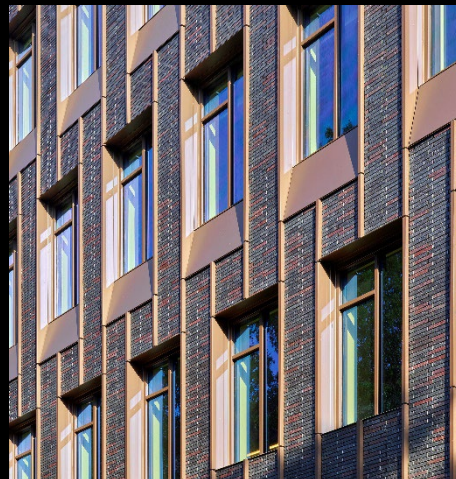
Performance

Rigorous analysis and simulation designed the envelope to meet the AIA's 2030 challenge for efficiency and thermal performance. The building is slated to consume 1/3 the amount of energy of a benchmark project of comparable size. High-efficiency HVAC systems (a combination of DOAS for efficiency and fresh air turnover and fan-coil units for flexibility) were implemented to enable user customization, with individual controls per area—affording tenants all the air they need but only when and where they need it.

The building simultaneously draws on passive strategies. Design analysis estimates that 40% of the year, the building should require neither heating nor cooling, via passive systems that can support occupant comfort. Improved envelope performance was achieved through continuous insulation.

The envelope was rigorously detailed to enable self-shading. The building orientation, along with 12" recessed windows allow glazing to remain shaded for more of the day and permit less heat to be transferred through them.

Operable windows and cross-ventilation in private offices empower workers to make fine-tuned adjustments as needed.



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Community Connections

By its very nature, this building is intended to drive change. Its program (a mix of coworking, Class-A workspace, community workshop, lecture hall, auditorium etc.) is fundamentally designed for it. Another idea fundamental to the building is not only change within the building, but change within the community. The project is open to everyone—a collision zone for ideas, inventions, art, and culture. The building is already a hub of activity and fully occupied (all private offices leased and over 200 coworking tenants).

On a recent Monday in the open-concept coworking component of the project, several tenants, some members of a tech startup dedicated to frozen yogurt, traded ideas over coffee.

The 200-seat theater hosts weekly events, open to the public. The plaza has also hosted large gathering.

Ultimately, the project is the realization of a client's aspirational vision. The design team strove to put the vision for the space first, allowing the architecture to respond to desires for social permeability, chance collision and innovation, cutting-edge water and energy conservation, and a unique connection to nature.



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Project Name:
The Center of Developing Entrepreneurs

Project Location:
Fill in Here

Owner/Client:
CSH Development

Architect(s) of Record:
(names and addresses)
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Landscape Architect:
Gregg Blead Landscape Architect

Consultants:
Engineer - MEP: 2RW
Engineer - Structural: Fox & Associates
Engineer - Civil: Timmons Group
Fountain: Dan Euser -
WATERARCHITECTURE, INC.
Soil Consultant: Pine & Swallow
Irrigation Consultant: Guy Boulahdou
Horticulture: Patric Cullina Horticultural
Design + Consulting
Lighting Design: David Tozer Lighting
Design (DKT Lighting)
AV/IT/Security: NV5

General Contractor:
Hourigan Group

Photographer(s):
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Alan Karchmer (All Slides)

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