
UNITED STATES CONSULATE GENERAL HERMOSILLO, MEXICO

US STATE DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF OVERSEAS BUILDINGS OPERATIONS



INTRODUCTION

The new American Consulate for Hermosillo, achieves expresses American ideals of dignity, strength and good will, while also meeting the rigorous security and technical standards required. Integrated whole-building performance incorporates functionality, security, cultural sensitivity, sustainability and accessibility, for each aspect of the project.



HERMOSILLO, MEXICO

Hermosillo is the capital of the Mexican state of Sonora. This growing medium-sized city is situated within the Sonoran Desert region spanning between Mexico and The U.S. Temperatures reach more than 120° in summer and rainfall is less than 16" per year, making it one of the county's hottest and driest cities.

The fabric of the city is primarily single-story buildings, with walled courtyards and simple gated entries into private courtyards and semipublic spaces. Within neighborhoods small pocket parks and public squares are surrounded by quiet streets.

The horizontality of the city is punctuated by both the natural inclusions of stone hills and monumental civic architecture. The new consulate will continue this massing strategy. There is a direct tie between the simple forms of the vernacular architecture and its contemporary modernist counterpart in the new consulate.

PROJECT STATUS

Utilizing a design-build delivery method. Construction documents are complete, and permits received. Early demolition and site work began in April of 2019.



SITE

The irregular shaped parcel was the site of a high-rise residential development halted in the economic downturn. While its size and location within the city was ideal for the consulate, careful attention had to be paid to its scale within the surrounding residential and commercial context. Security setbacks required a very integrated site approach to accommodate a large complex on a small and irregular site.



RESIDENTIAL SURROUNDINGS

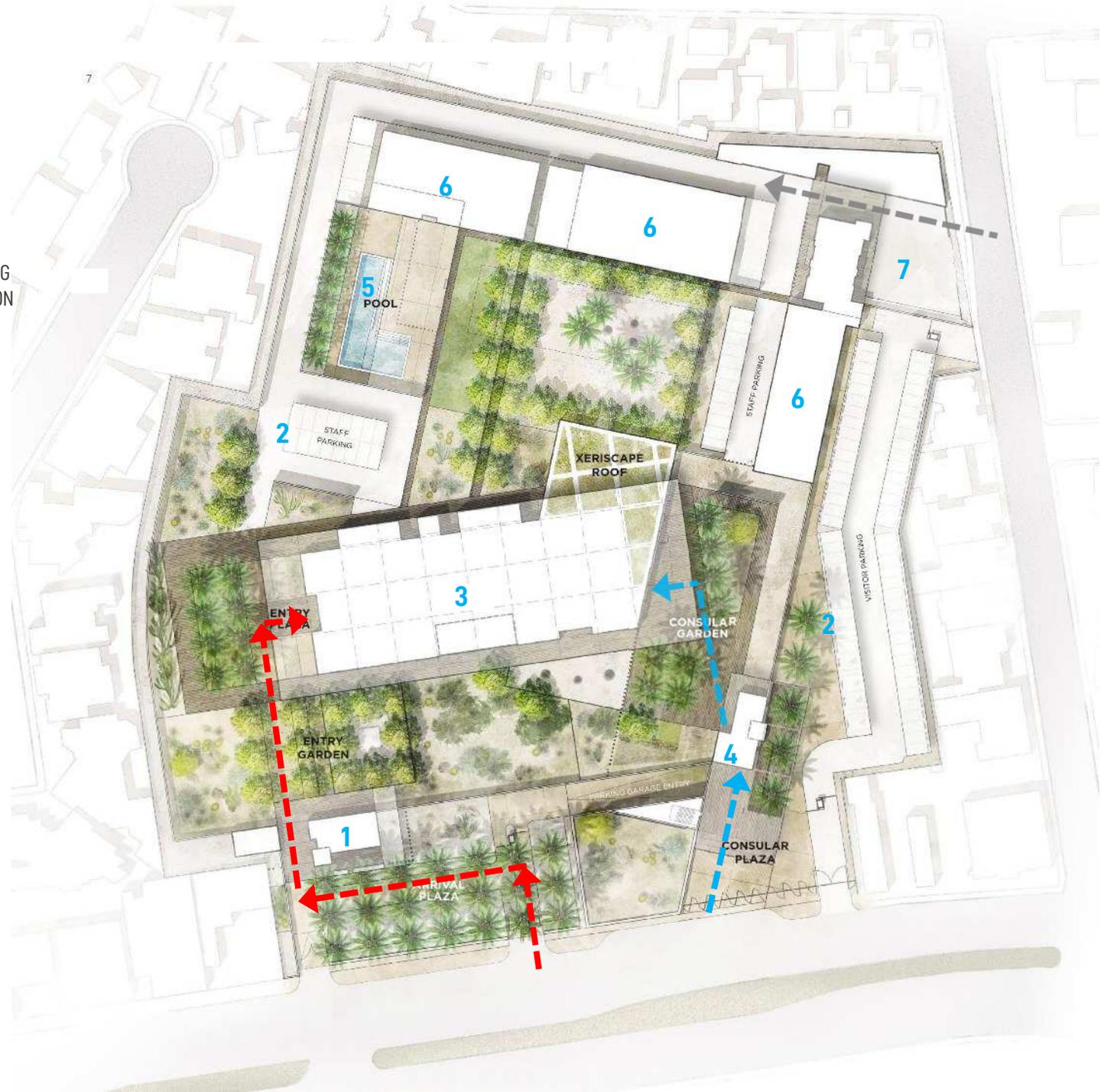
SITE

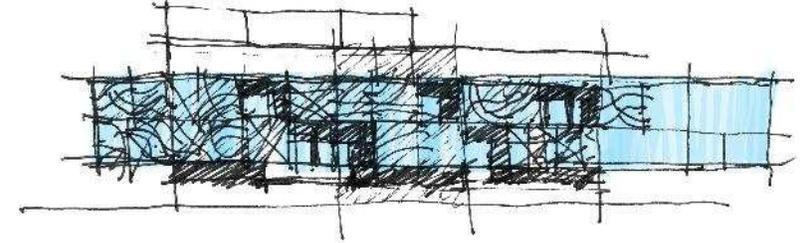
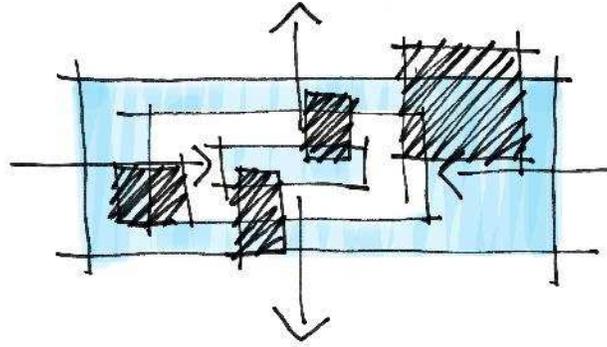
Utilizing the tradition of the walled landscaped courtyard, the site is developed into a series of garden court groves, each specific to its function. The palm canopy of the main diplomatic arrival plaza leads to the main entrance to the west. Creating a clear hierarchy, the consular entrance is a more pedestrian scaled entrance to the east, with visitor parking and consular garden.

The xeriscape gardens utilize a local plant pallet to minimize water demand. The site and buildings collect rainwater which is directed to underground storage tanks for reuse throughout the year.

Service/support functions are organized along the northern edge of the site, serving as a backdrop to staff recreational and garden spaces. Due to access control, these are important for post staff, who will benefit from opportunities to walk outside, exercise and restore themselves in the context of a controlled campus setting.

1. MAIN ENTRY PAVILION
 2. PARKING
 3. NEW CONSULATE BUILDING
 4. CONSULAR ENTRY PAVILION
 5. RECREATIONAL AREA
 6. SUPPORT BUILDING
 7. SERVICE ENTRY
- ▶ Dotted red arrow: DIPLOMAT ACCESS
▶ Dotted blue arrow: VISITOR ACCESS
▶ Dotted grey arrow: SERVICE ACCES





Inspiration was derived from traditional public buildings throughout Mexico; simply massed buildings featuring openings celebrated with an additive balcony, accompanying railing, and shade canopy as simple embellishment, often showcasing local artistry in the form of decorative ironwork.



The traditional building typology contains internal courtyards or atria, simple massing rendered in white stucco, stone, iron and glass. Accents of color and iconic frescos found throughout the city are reinterpreted in the new consulate.



The reinterpretation of the balcony into a scalar shading element provides for the articulation of shade and shadow. The openings and screens within the armature provide protection from the sun, provide shade for the ground plane and both screen adjacent residences and block unwanted views from the building.

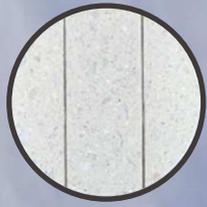
ENTRY PLAZA

The entry experience for staff and visitors is softened with xeriscape planting and using local stone for site walls, while meeting security design standards. The predominantly glass entry pavilion is a transition in scale from the surrounding context and creates a visual connection to the entry desert garden.



MATERIALITY

The armature shade structure is extended over the main diplomatic entry to the west, providing a triple height entrance canopy. The regionally sourced white pre-cast cladding creates durable and simple canvas to receive shadow play and contrast of the structure and panels of the armature. The pattern of the panels is the deconstructed five-point star and bars of the American flag.



PRECAST



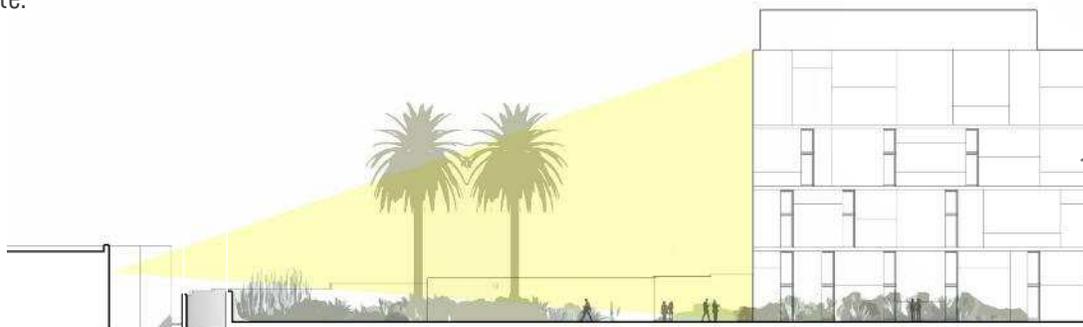
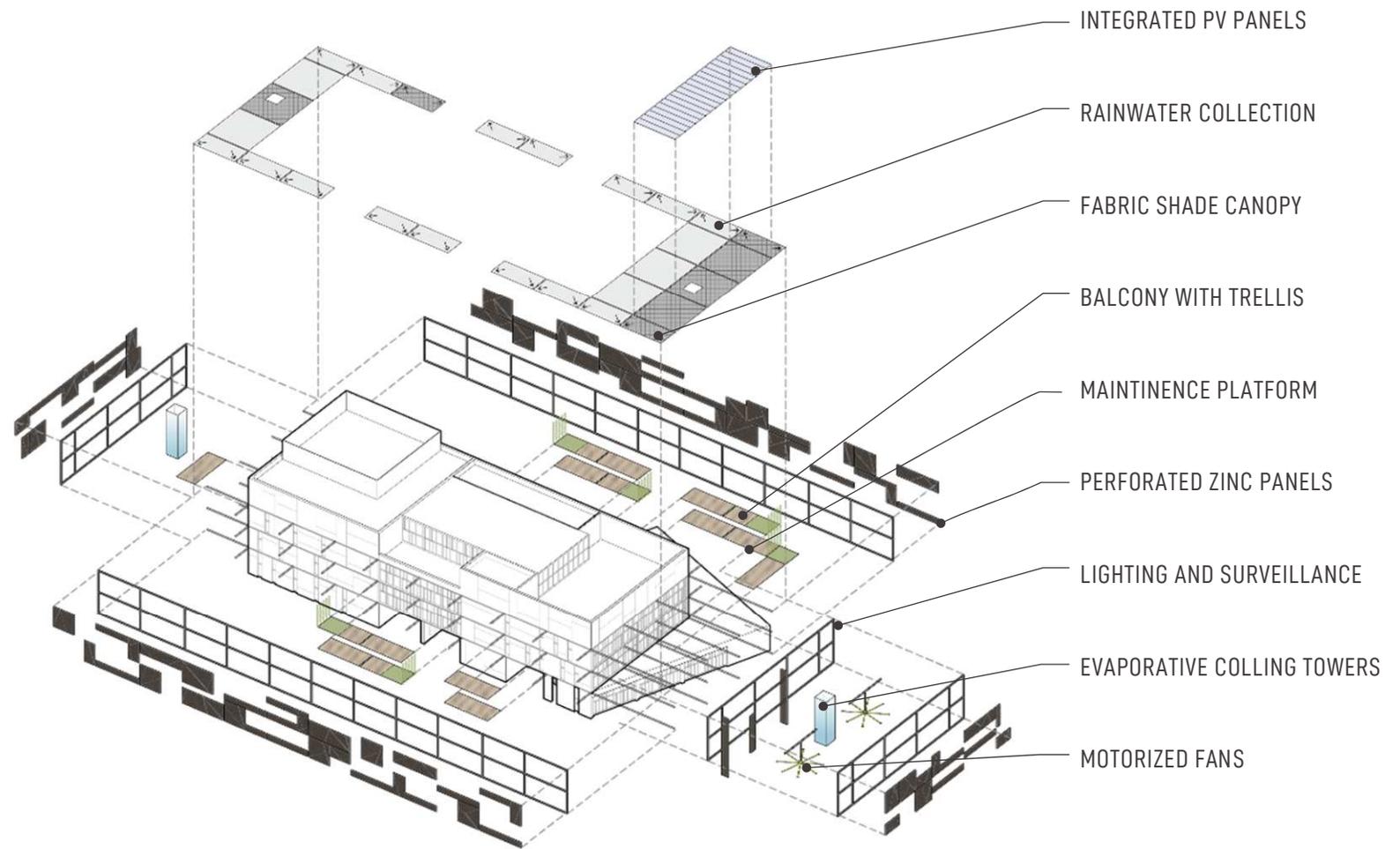
CAST ZINC



ARMATURE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The armature not only reduces the visual mass of the building but also plays a significant role in the sustainable response of the project by:

- Reducing peak solar gains and maximize daylighting in Chancery through shading from the armature
- Improving outdoor thermal experience under armature through providing shade as well as tempered air and mist
- Utilizing solar thermal heat for heating of domestic hot water
- Minimizes direct solar radiation in the high circulation areas around the Chancery and the green roof area, reducing the effective temperature in the outdoor areas.
- Is a key element in the collection and direction of rainwater for storage and reuse on the site.



BUILDING HEIGHT AND SCALE



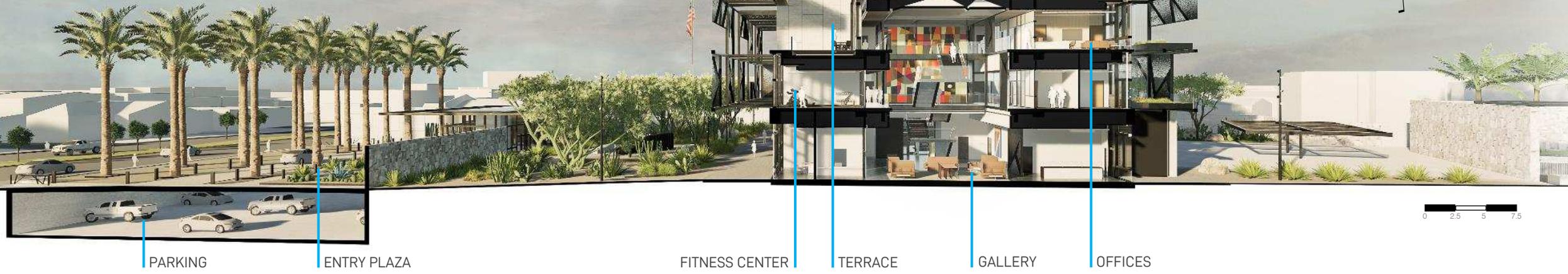
ARMATURE RE-SCALES BUILDING FAÇADE.

APPROACH

As a welcoming eco-diplomacy gesture, the consular garden features seating for large groups within a microclimate environment created for visitor comfort. The armature extends out over the consular garden space, providing shade in the waiting area as well as a second-floor terrace for office users. Extensive shade, solar powered air movers and misting systems using reclaimed water are integrated within the overhead structure.



TRANSVERSE SECTION



LONGITUDINAL SECTION



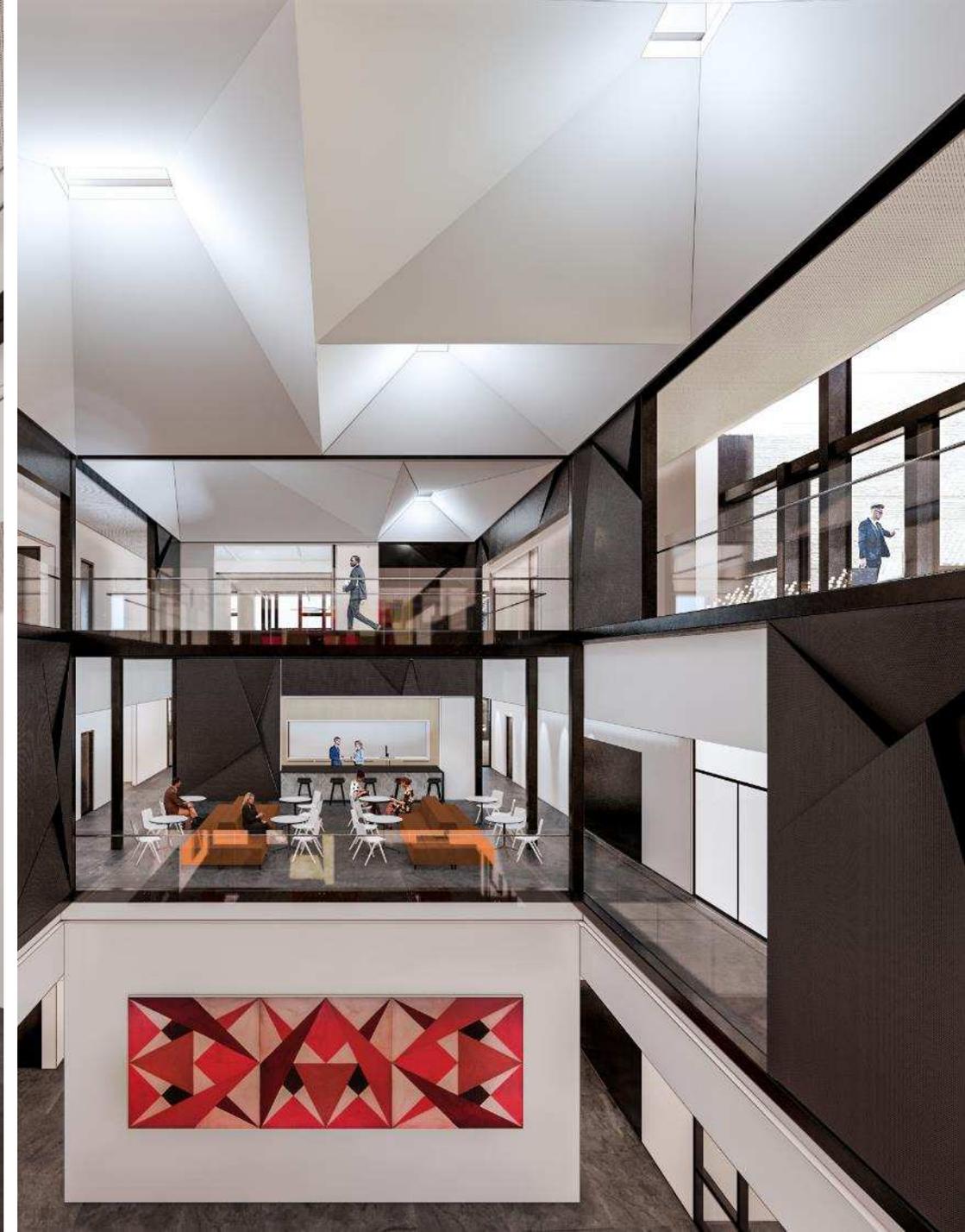
INTERIORS

The continuity of materials continues into the interior, integrating the rigorous security requirements into a welcoming, hospitality experience.



COMMUNITY AND DAYLIGHT

A large open feature stair at the west end of the gallery space provides easy access to each floor and promotes interaction within the building. The shared community functions of the program are grouped in the central zone of the building between the utility cores. Using the shallower floorplate in this zone, coordinated interior and exterior glazing brings borrowed daylight and visual connection to the exterior into the experience of the center gallery space.



CONSULAR EXPERIENCE

The consular spaces are created with a focus on connection to the exterior and nature. Providing a hospitable environment for a typically high stress process on the consular visitors. Large groups, often arrive en masse, requiring the use of the extensive shaded garden spaces for waiting.



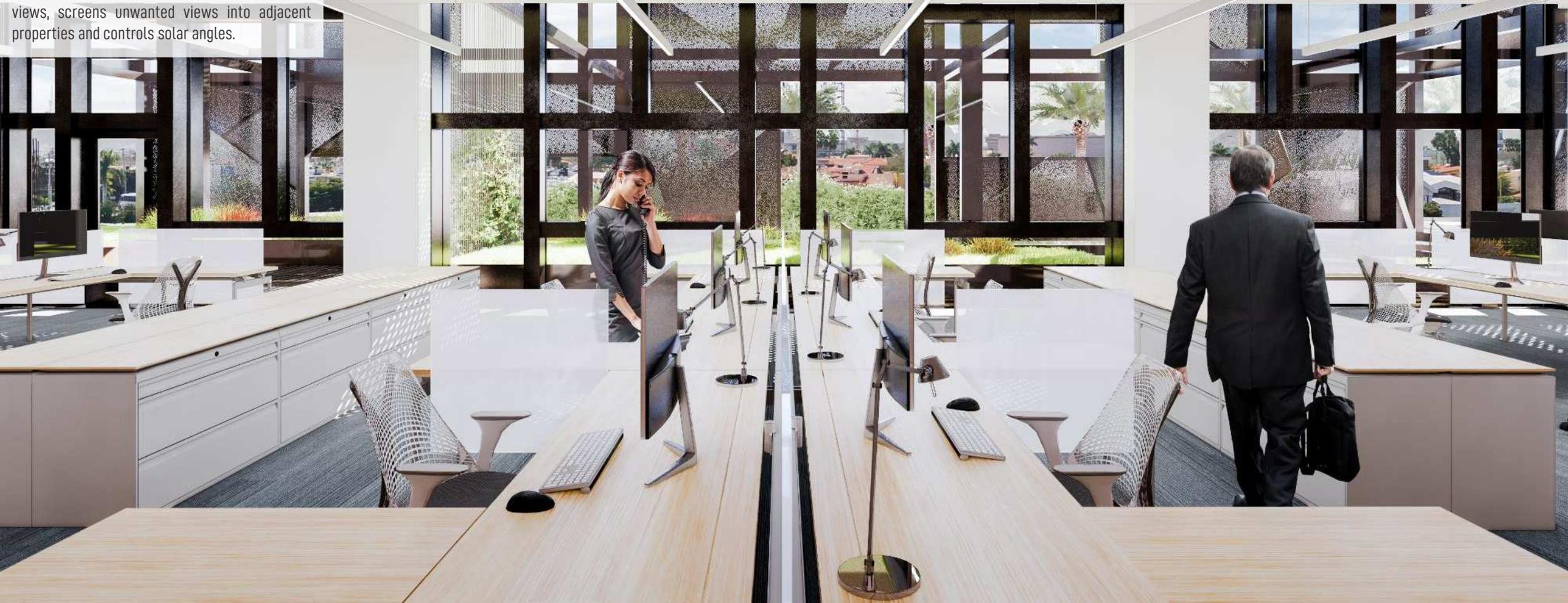
STAFF LOUNGE

The armature continue to the interior as an organizing element for the public spaces. It provides for stair and interconnecting bridges. In lieu of the exterior zinc panels perforated acoustical wood is used as well as acoustical plaster ceiling coffers. A commissioned fresco occupies a focal wall at the end of the gallery and experienced by the main stair.



OPEN OFFICE SPACE

Flexible office spaces and the ends of the building allow for discrete organization of departments within the building, providing abundant natural light and view. Selective placement of the armature screens frames long views, screens unwanted views into adjacent properties and controls solar angles.



REPRESENTATION

The project strikes the right balance of civic presence, respect for the culture and context, environmental and sustainable responses in a powerful and artful way while meeting rigorous security needs.

