

TYPE OF PROJECT: Higher Education
COMPLETION DATE: June 2022
LOCATION: Long Beach, California

Background and Historical Context: An educational institution in Long Beach finally raised funds for something it had always wanted, an Alumni Center where it could celebrate its former students' myriad achievements as well as involve them in the school's development, mentoring, and community-building activities. The "Soroptimist House" (very similar to an Eichler house), had partially served this function after a new student center had been built, but due to its small size and need for major seismic alterations, the University decided to replace it with a new 5,500 SF structure. Still, they asked for a design that would feel warm and intimate like the original building, and also pay homage to the many other high quality mid-20th Century buildings on campus, many of which were designed by the noted Case Study architect, Edward Killingsworth.

Site: Located on one of the main streets cutting through the campus, the site backs up to a private property containing a hospital, to which there is no access. At its sides, the site sits between a nursing school and a Family and Consumer Sciences school.

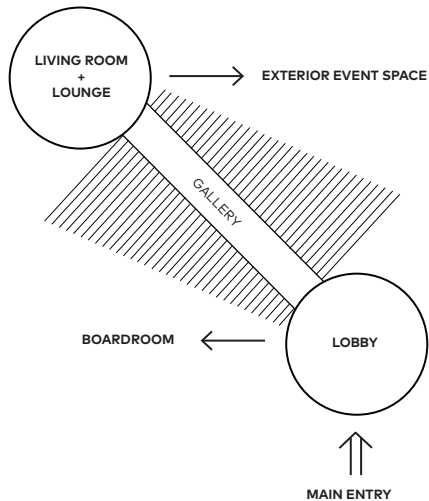
Program: The given program included the following:

- Lobby and 35-seat Boardroom available for use by the university;
- "Living Room" (with fireplace), small "Lounge," and Outdoor Patio to accommodate all kinds of social events and meetings, including large, catered parties and dinners;
- Gallery to display school memorabilia;
- Private Offices and Workspace, plus nearby Kitchen/Break area and Staff Meeting Room;
- Gender-neutral Restroom.

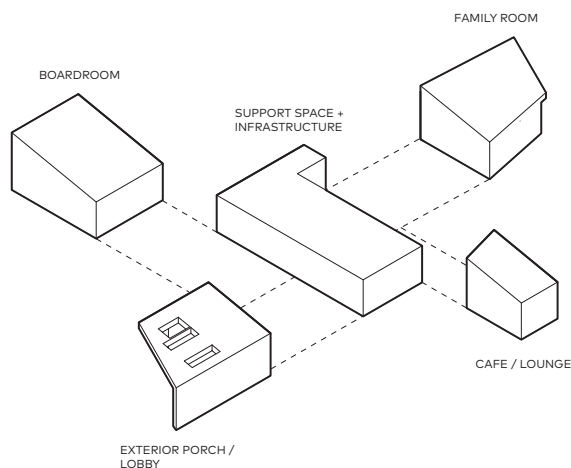
Solution: Image and Palette: The resulting design has much of the feel of a large house, though the scale and details also reflect its institutional context. Borrowing from the school's black and gold color palette, the exterior materials feature black standing seam metal walls and roofs as well as golden wood substitute siding (Ceraclad). White plaster, glass, and concrete round out the palette. The interior uses a similar palette of warm and cool materials, though exposed concrete floors and gray carpet take the place of black metal and veneered oak panels and grilles replace the Ceraclad. Numerous white gypsum board walls have been left unadorned so that, over time, the University can integrate alumni-created artwork.

Organization: The overall floor plan adopts a site specific, tripartite "barbell" organization, whereby the most public spaces – the Lobby and Boardroom – are placed near the front, the more intimate public functions of "Living Room," "Lounge," and Exterior Patio are at the rear, and connecting them is a comparatively narrow "Gallery" – a sequence of spatial expansion and compression in the spirit of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Form: The program is held together by a sculptural composition of sloped volumes and planes that is its own 21st Century take on the original "Soroptimist House" and other mid-20th Century buildings. Four unique sloped volumes – one at each corner – define both the interior and exterior of the four major public spaces in the building. The space between them incorporates a flat roof that simplifies drainage and provides an unobtrusive but easily accessible location for the building's mechanical equipment.



"Barbell" Organization Diagram



Massing Diagram



main, north-facing façade with building entrance

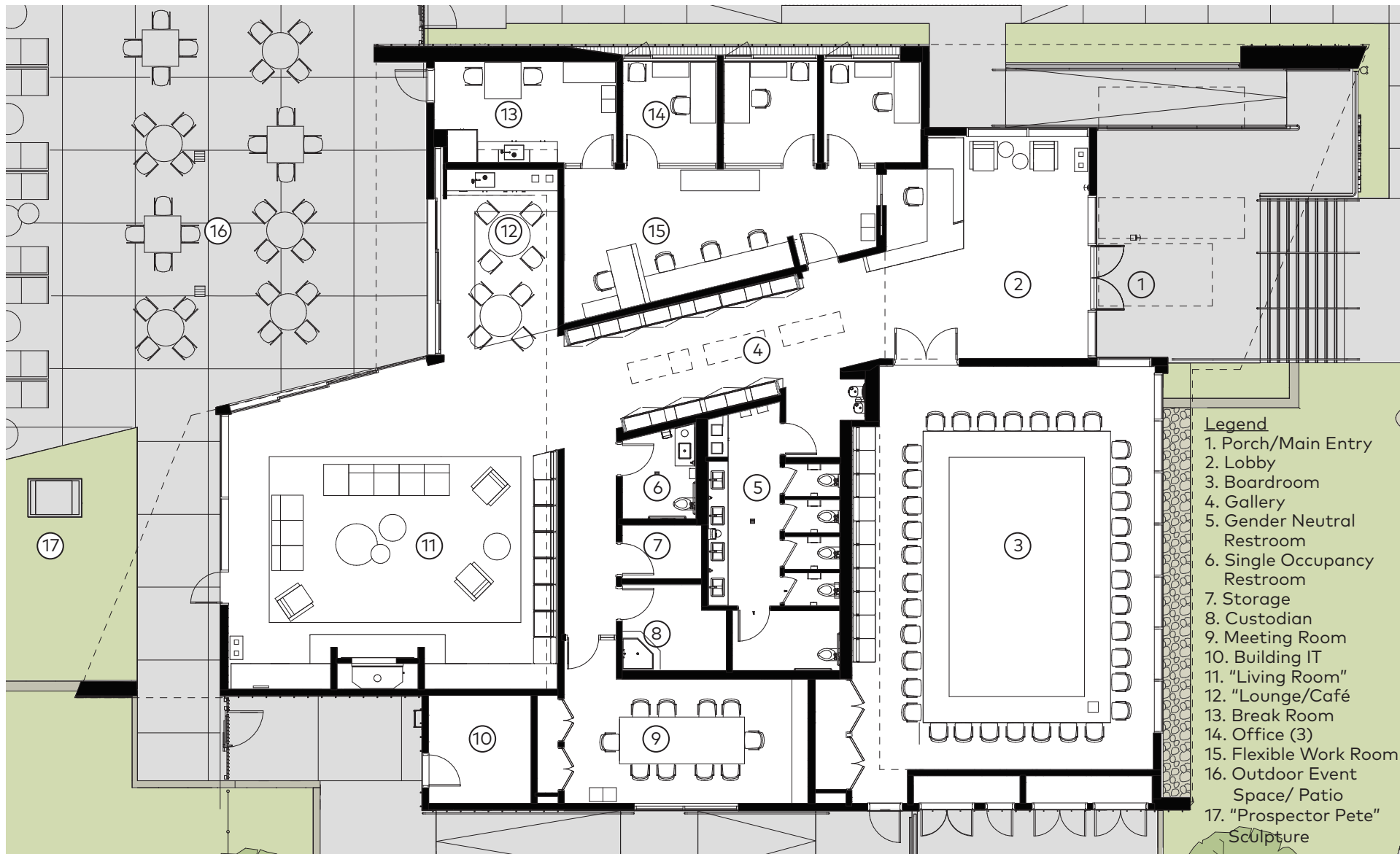


- Legend
- 16. Outdoor Event Space/Patio
 - 17. "Prospector Pete" Sculpture
 - 18. Parking
 - 19. Trash

0 16 32 64 128 feet

site plan





floor plan





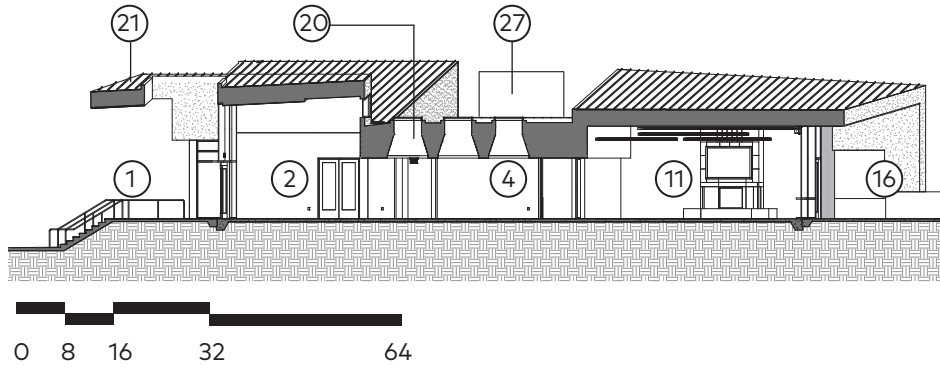
main façade and entrance with plaque describing original building on site



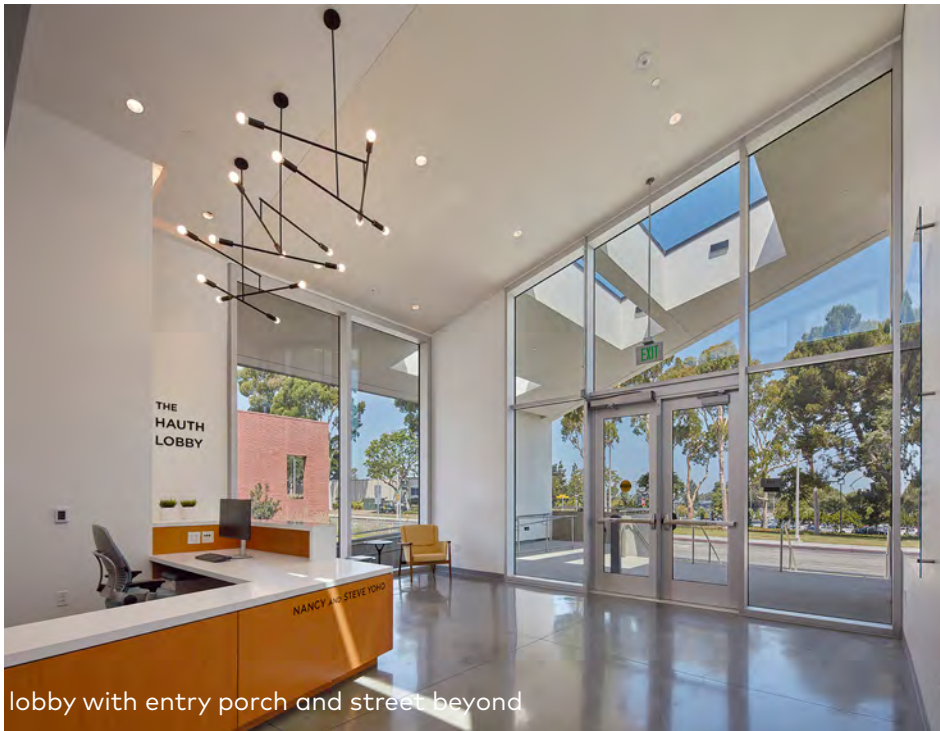
main entrance and west-facing façade

Legend

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Porch/Main Entry | 16. Outdoor Event Space/ Patio |
| 2. Lobby | 20. Skylights |
| 4. Gallery | 21. Black Standing Seam Metal |
| 11. "Living Room" | 27. Mechanical Beyond |



Section B-B



lobby with entry porch and street beyond



gallery



boardroom



living room with gallery, lounge, and exterior patio beyond



living room with exterior patio and Prospecter Pete beyond



exterior patio / event space