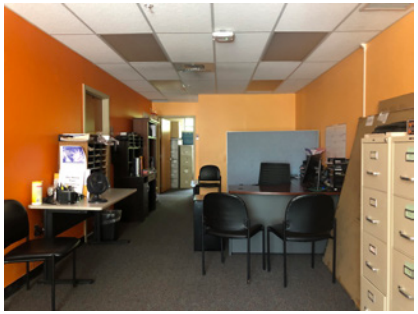
BON SECOURS COMMUNITY WORKS

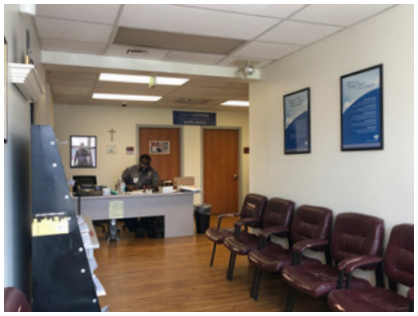
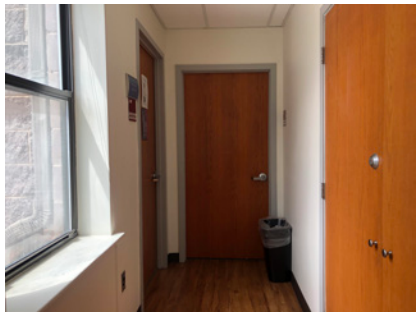
Location: Baltimore, Maryland
Category: Commercial / Industrial

Existing Context + Program:
This project is born out of a local non-profit's need for a new administrative home on the second floor of an existing 40+ year-old facility, situated within the community they serve in West Baltimore. The existing second floor's organization and 7,000 square foot interior included single occupant offices lining the perimeter, connected by a long tunnel-like corridor, inhibiting natural daylight from penetrating further into the building, and preventing views out to their neighborhood. Low ceilings and a lack of visibility further compound the compressed and maze-like condition.

Their new programmatic needs called for a more open and collaborative work environment while also creating distinct homes for their two divisions – Family and Children Services and Bon Secours Community Work Administration. The program consists of offices, open workspaces, and shared amenities such as breakout rooms, conference rooms and lounges.

Solution + Design Intent:
The design process began with locating existing cores to remain, designating a wing for each division of program, and strategically locating the shared lobby as an intermediary between the two. Shared open spaces are located along the original hallway spine to erode the hallway condition, creating a rhythm of open spaces with views to the community and allowing all users access to natural daylight. Increased visibility and a honed-in material pallet provides intuitive wayfinding, where neutral tones serve as a base and pops of yellow indicate more publicly oriented meeting spaces and terracotta tones indicate less public spaces. Floor to ceiling heights were increased where possible, including the opening up of the original attic space to reveal existing trusses, creating volume and airiness in the administrative wing. The configuration of solid and voids result in a project that cannot be described in a singular view but rather a series of vignettes and threshold conditions as one moves between and through volumes.



Existing Conditions
Single occupant offices lined the perimeter, connected by a long tunnel-like corridor, inhibiting natural daylight from penetrating further into the building, and preventing views out to their neighborhood. Low ceilings and a lack of visibility further compound the compressed and maze-like condition.

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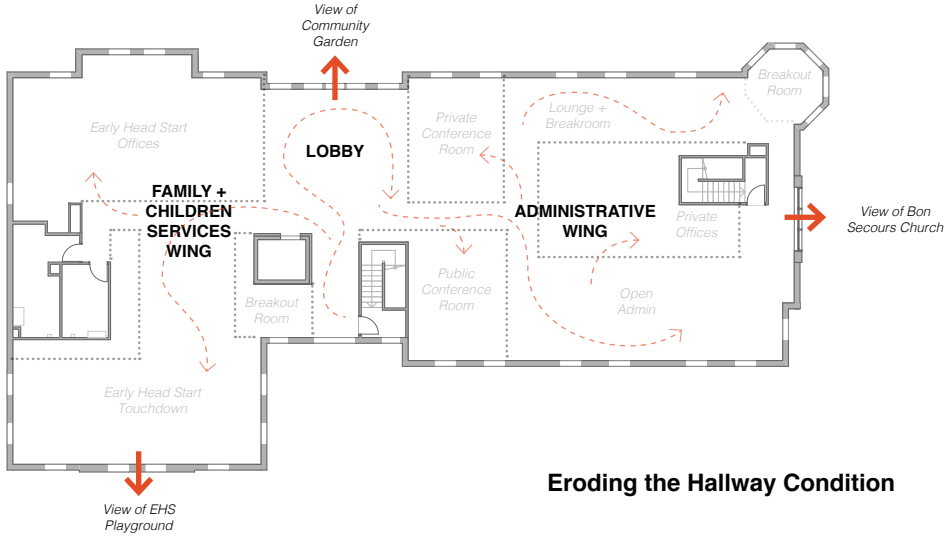
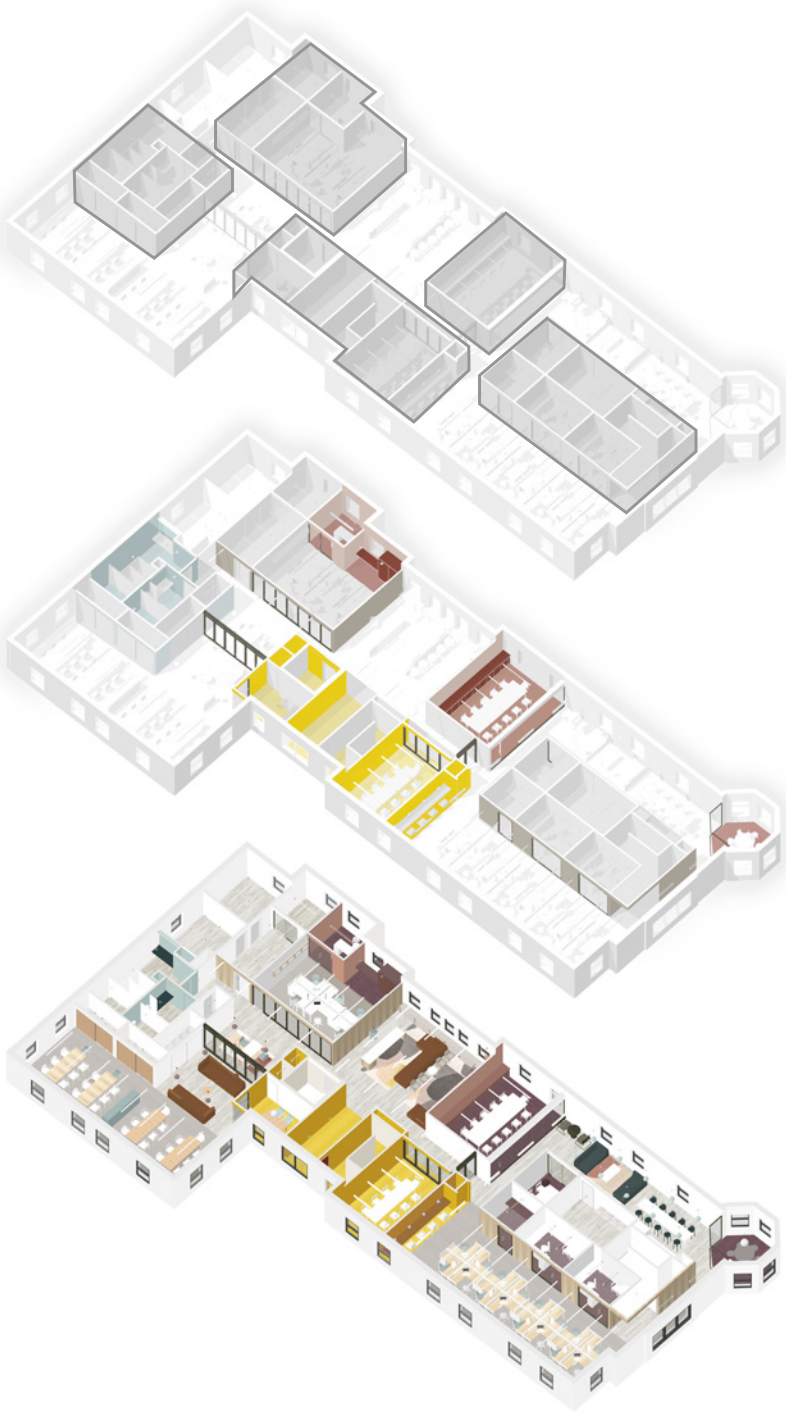


Eroding the Hallway Condition

New Construction



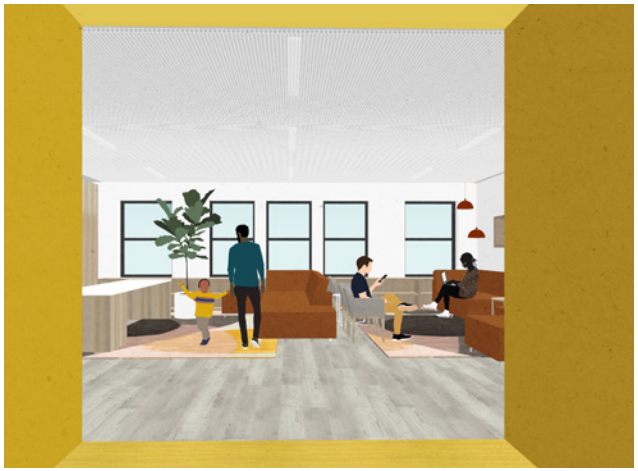
Eroding the Hallway Condition
Shared open spaces are located along the original hallway spine to erode the hallway condition, creating a rhythm of open spaces with views to the community and allowing all users access to natural daylight.

Wayfinding with Color
Increased visibility and a honed-in material pallet provides intuitive wayfinding, where neutral tones serve as a base and pops of yellow indicate more publicly oriented meeting spaces and terracotta tones indicate less public spaces.

Creating Volume
Floor to ceiling heights were increased where possible, including the opening up of the original attic space to reveal existing trusses, creating volume and airiness in the administrative wing.

Eroding the Hallway Condition: Lobby

Below are early studies of how to erode the hallway condition upon arrival from the elevator and stair. The design was adapted to accommodate existing structural conditions, resulting in the addition of a wood screen that offers additional privacy in the lobby but still allows for light and visibility.



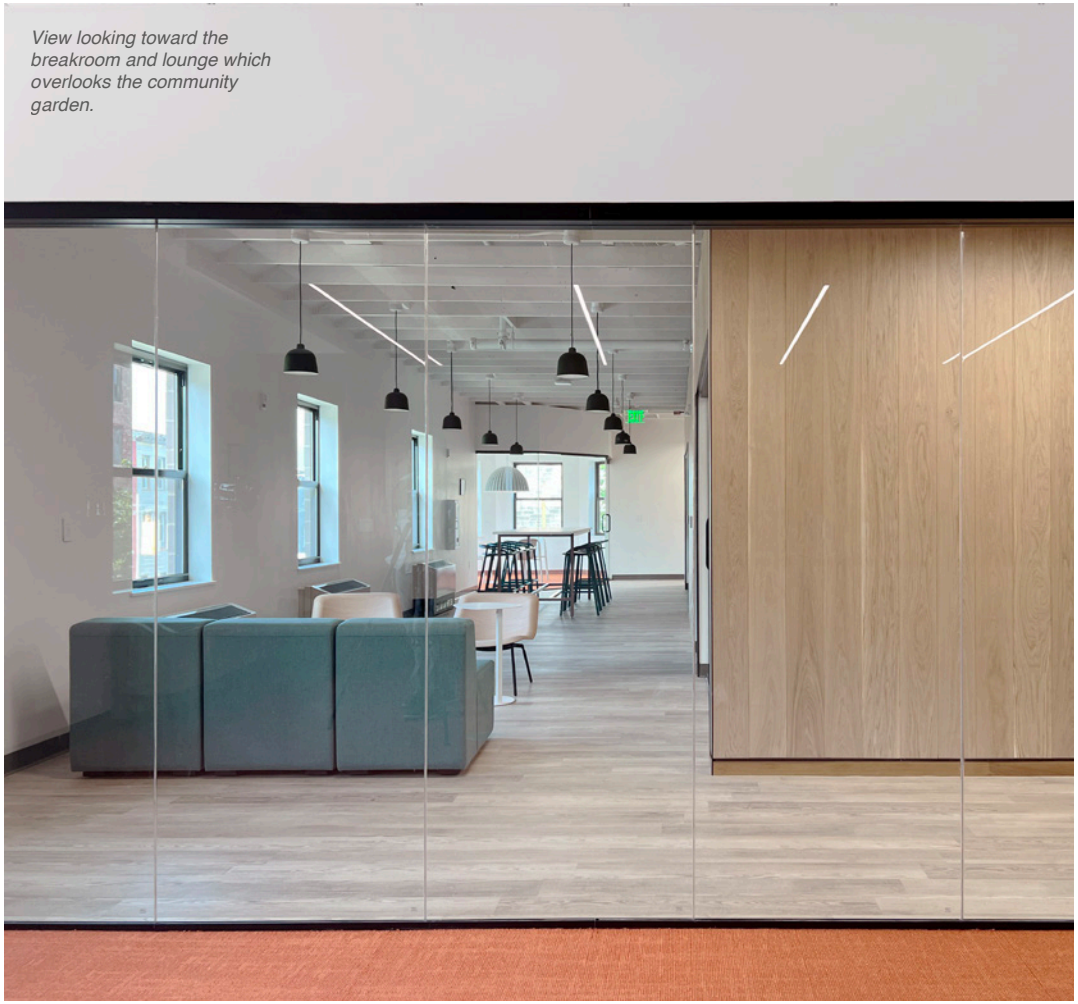
View looking toward the Admin wing with the entry to the right and lobby to the left.

View looking towards the EHS touchdown space

Eroding the Hallway Condition: Family + Children Services Wing

The EHS touchdown space is an open workspace for Early Head Start teachers located in the west wing along the corridor. Their space looks out onto the Early Head Start playground, creating a meaningful indoor-outdoor connection.

View from within the EHS touchdown space



View looking toward the breakroom and lounge which overlooks the community garden.

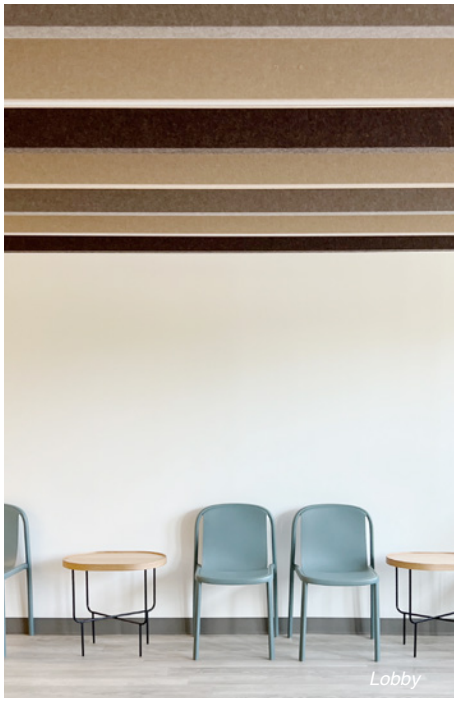
View from the admin entry threshold looking towards hoteling stations

Eroding the Hallway Condition: Admin Wing

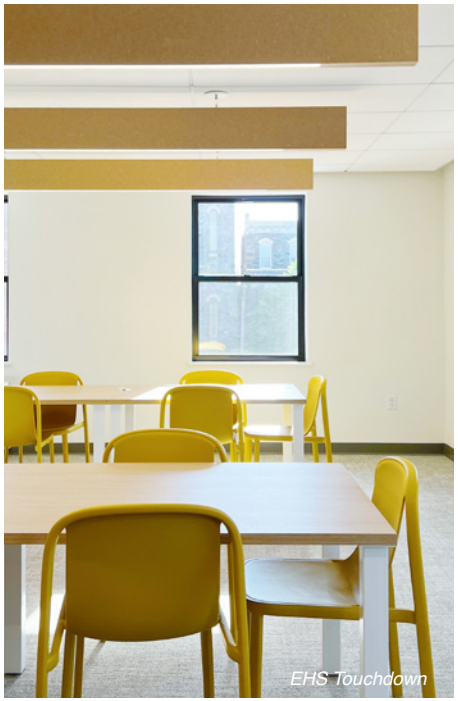
Private offices are consolidated with the existing stair core and kitchenette to create a singular volume with the shared breakroom and lounge on the north side and open admin workspace on the south side, allowing for all users to have access to natural daylight.

Wayfinding with Color

Neutral tones serve as a base and pops of yellow indicate more publicly oriented meeting spaces and terracotta tones indicate less public spaces. The neutral tones consist of warm grays, white oak, and bronze. The yellow pallet consists of shades of saffron, and warm whites, and the terracotta pallet consists of several shades of burnt oranges and earthy reds.

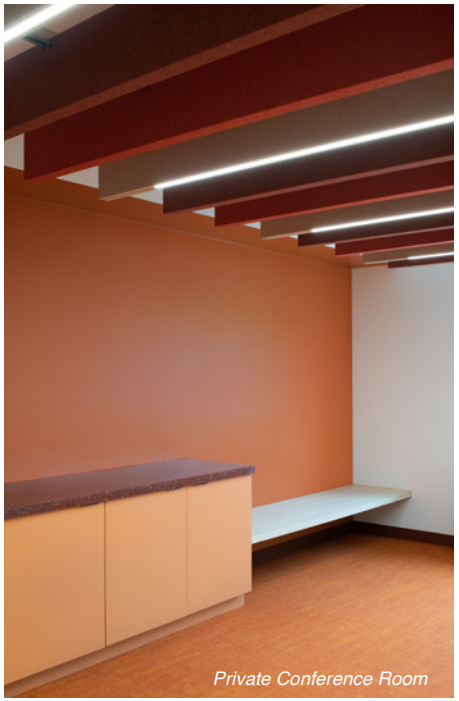


Lobby



EHS Touchdown

Public Breakout Room



Private Conference Room

View from the admin open workspace with private offices to the right.

Creating Volume

Floor to ceiling heights were increased where possible, including the opening up of the original attic space to reveal existing trusses, creating volume and airiness in the administrative wing where acoustic Baffles and lights are layered in.

View looking towards hoteling stations

View looking towards a breakout room.

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Solids and Voids

The configuration of solid and voids result in a project that cannot be described in a singular view but rather a series of vignettes and threshold conditions as one moves between and through volumes.

What was once a private office is now a breakout room where the building's users can meet while having views out into the neighborhood they serve.

Feeling at Home

As a post-pandemic workplace, the design sought to create a warm environment that was reminiscent of residential spaces and materials resulting in a workspace that feels more like home.