

Baltimore Unity Hall

1505 EUTAW PLACE BALTIMORE MD 21217



BALTIMORE
UNITY HALL
COMMUNITY ARTS | EDUCATION | TRAINING

2023 ULI WaveMaker Awards



BALTIMORE UNITY HALL

COMMUNITY ARTS | EDUCATION | TRAINING



APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

SOMERSET DEVELOPMENT

JAKE STERN
JSTERN@SOMERSETDEV.COM
202.363.2090
5101 WISCONSIN AVENUE SUITE 410
WASHINGTON, DC 20016

ZIGER|SNEAD ARCHITECTS

KATELIN ETOH
KETOH@ZIGERSNEAD.COM
410.576.9131
1006 MORTON STREET
BALTIMORE, MD 21201

PROJECT TEAM

MAC and Somerset Development - Developer

Ziger|Snead Architects - Architect

Southway Builders - Construction Manager

Engenium Group - MEP Engineer

Morabito Consultants - Structural Engineer

Morris & Ritchie Associates, Inc. - Civil Engineer

Spexsys, LLC - Telecom/AV/IT and Security

Fresh Foodservice Design - Food Service Consultant

Acoustical Design Collaborative, Ltd - Acoustical Consultant

PROJECT FACTS

30,000 SF | \$6 Million Cost 2/2023 Completion

PROJECT OVERVIEW



A former union hall left vacant in Baltimore's historic Bolton Hill neighborhood is repositioned to serve as a center for community arts, education, workforce development, and non-profit hub. The renovation creates a new community asset and provides resources to the surrounding neighborhoods, a venue for creativity, and an anchor on a major axis in Baltimore City.

The approximately 30,000 square foot building is divided into three levels. The first level provides office and program space for nonprofits, community-based organizations, a theater and prefunction gallery space for community and cultural events. The second level accommodates artist studios, co-working space, and non-profit office spaces with shared amenities, including a breakroom, lounge, conference room, and wellness rooms for tenants. The lower level features large event training spaces with an adjacent commercial kitchen for job training and workforce development.

The building is located in the historic neighborhood of Bolton Hill and the renovation of the project meets the standards and requirements of the Baltimore Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation

Baltimore Unity Hall was redeveloped in a partnership between MAC and Somerset Development Company. Project lenders include The Reinvestment Fund, a local non-profit, community development financial institution; and Premier Bank, a regional bank based in Youngstown, OH.

Additional funding for the Project was provided by The France-Merrick Foundation, The State of Maryland, The T. Rowe Price Foundation, and Somerset Development Company.

COMPLETENESS



LEASING AND PROGRAMMING

Baltimore Unity Hall is 100% leased. Achieving this was a crucial benchmark for the project and indicates both the high the demand for affordable office spaces in Central West Baltimore and the building's desirability within the market. Rental income from the Unity Hall's office spaces, artist studios and co-working spaces, as well its event spaces all contribute to the mission of the non-profit master tenant, Baltimore Unity Hall Inc. The BUH board recently completed its first strategic plan. This plan identifies several core areas of focus, including ongoing fundraising and community feedback as being crucial to Unity Hall's continued success. The board will be working to implement the systems noted in its strategic plan over the next 6 months

Baltimore Unity Hall was specifically designed to provide space for community based non-profit organizations, exhibition space for local artists, and meeting spaces for local organizations. The pre-function/gallery spaces on the lower level and first level are continuously programmed with exhibitions and events open to the public. Since opening, there have already been five exhibits. The theater, training rooms, and meeting rooms and also continuously programmed with community, arts, and education events.



COMPLETENESS

Tenants activate the building and provide community arts, education, and training. The Unity Hall provides a place for local musical performances, art exhibits, catered events and similar community-oriented activities, and hosts community organizations which provide employment training, referrals, and health and wellness services. The building currently includes the following non-profit and community based organizations as tenants:

BALTIMORE UNITY HALL INC. is a non-profit organization created to operate the building and provide programming for the shared spaces, and is the master tenant.

NO BOUNDARIES COALITION is a resident-led advocacy organization building a unified and empowered Central West Baltimore across the boundaries of race, class, and neighborhood.

BOND: BUILDING OUR NATIONS DAUGHTERS is a non-profit organization with a mission to engage, mentor and develop Black single mothers to cultivate positive mother-daughter relationships, strengthen Black single-mother families, and increase their economic mobility two generations at a time. Every single mother and daughter across the nation will have the skills and resources needed to uplift herself, her family, and her community to a place of economic, educational, and socio-emotional health and success.

COMMUNITY SOUND SPACE is a recording studio and musical instrument/equipment lending library that serves to cultivate creativity in Baltimore City by expanding access to the tools for making music. They aim to provide affordable workshops, classes, and studio time, as well as performances within Unity Hall, in an effort to establish the community center as a place for artistic activities.

THE COMMUNITY BUILDERS is a leading nonprofit real estate developer that owns or manages more than 11,000 quality apartments. Their business, infrastructure and community program investments help make neighborhoods work for people of all incomes.

CHARM: VOICES OF BALTIMORE YOUTH is a literary arts organization founded on the belief that kids' voices matter. Their mission is to help young people develop as writers and amplify their own voices. The heart of CHARM is the student editorial board, consisting of twenty middle and high school students who lead CHARM publications and partnerships.

ARTS EVERY DAY serves as a strategic partner to the school district in advancing equitable access to the arts and implementing the 2018 Fine Arts Strategic Plan. The organization provides teacher professional development, arts integration technical assistance, and funding for student arts experiences, school-based public art projects, arts equipment, and supplies. The success of the work relies on the vibrant partnerships with district leaders, schools, educators, parents, students, artists, community and cultural organizations.

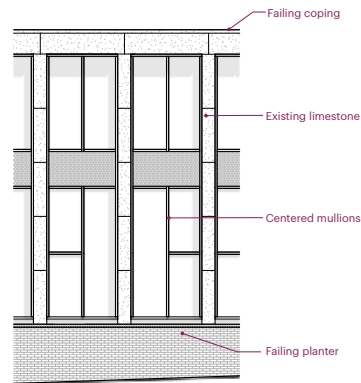
FLIGHT CATERING is operating the catering kitchen and related event spaces and provides culinary training and job opportunities, as well as discounted rental and catering rates for tenants of the building.

THE LIVING WELL RESIDENCY Baltimore Unity Hall is partnering with The Living Well to offer programming over the next 14 months. This residency will provide the Baltimore community at large with opportunities to interweave social health data, storytelling, healing, and mind-body expression together to be used as tools for healing the impact of societal racism. BUH and TLW will work together to curate space for community exchange, soulful expression through the arts, and social well-being. The strategic goal of this partnership is to support the development of new ideas, and to curate immersive experiences co-created by a team of artists, healers, disruptors, and social impact innovators. This residency will kick off with a series of free half-day workshops focusing on race, equity, diversity and inclusion (REDI).

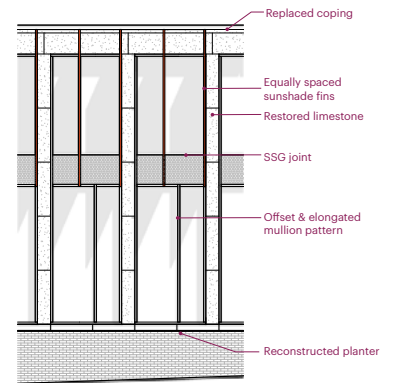
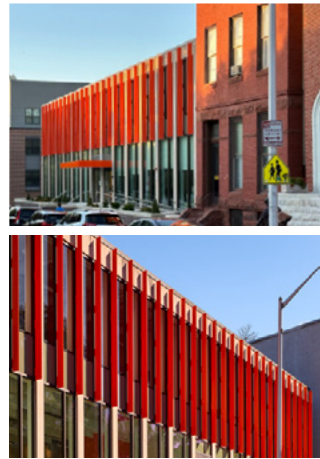


A SENSE OF PLACE & QUALITY

The design approach reinvigorates the 1960s building with a new curtainwall and architectural fins that create a movement of light and shadow across the front of the building and reflect the warmth of the adjacent brownstones. New window openings and skylights are strategically placed to provide generous natural light within the interior spaces and clarify the circulation within the building's internal reorganization. New building systems, improvements to the envelope, and infrastructure for solar PVs contribute to a sustainable, energy-efficient facility with reduced cost of operations.



Before



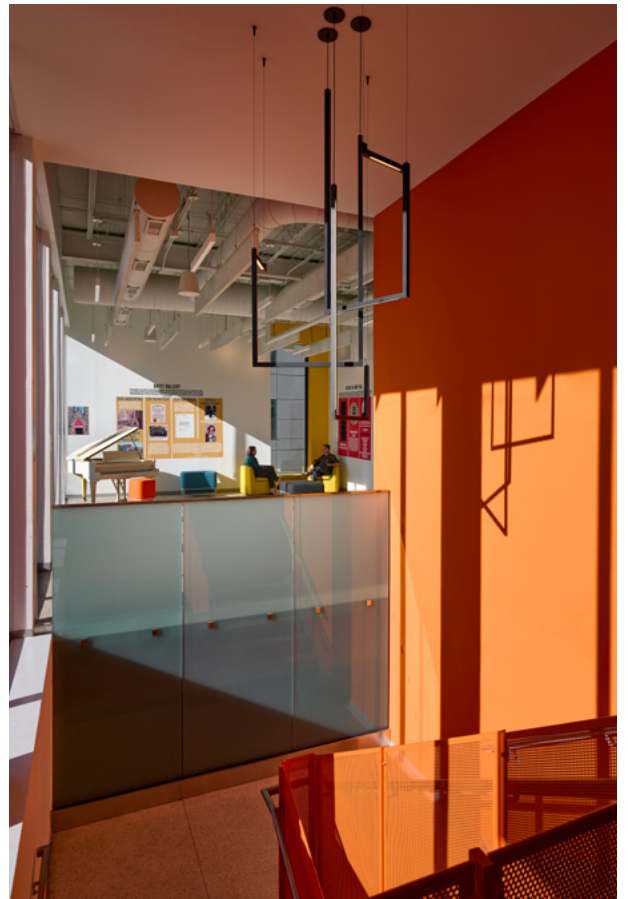
After



A SENSE OF PLACE & QUALITY

EDUCATION SPACES

The design approach reinvigorates the building with new window openings and skylights strategically placed to provide generous natural light to the interior spaces. A new commercial kitchen and training and presentation rooms supports job training for catering and events operation and provides a gathering space for the community. Through partnerships and programming, the Unity Hall is a place for the community to come together for arts and education.

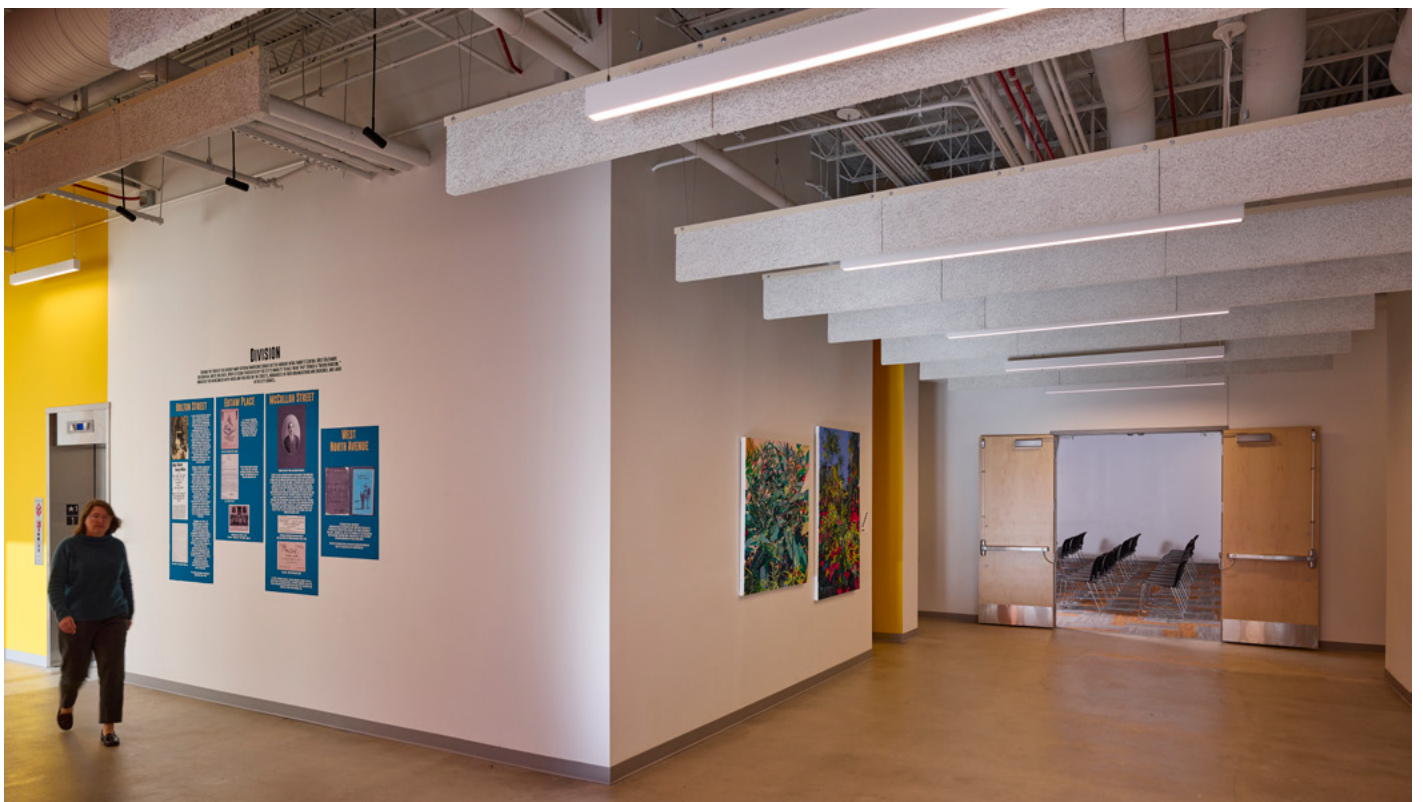




A SENSE OF PLACE & QUALITY

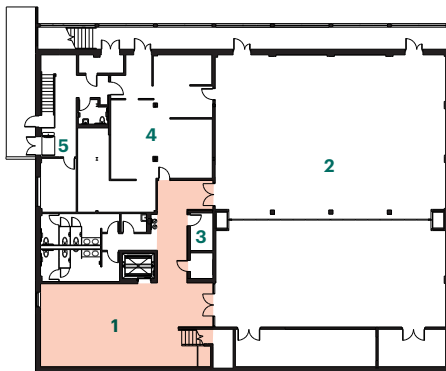
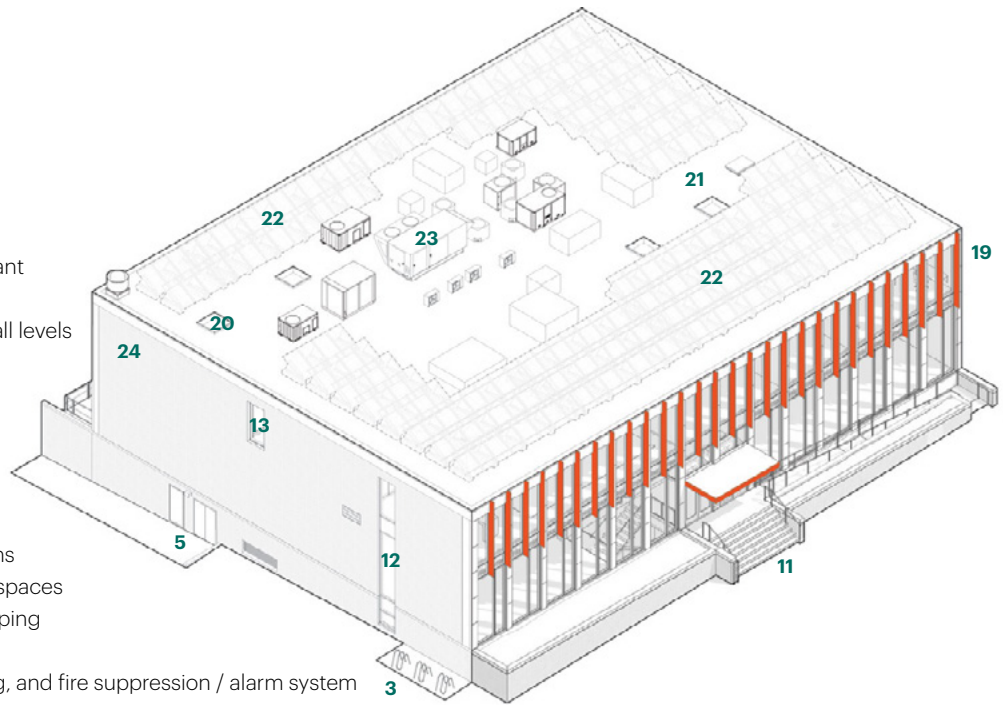
GATHERING SPACES

Pre-function event and gallery spaces on multiple floors invite community engagement and support local artists. A large community meeting room and theater provides a gathering place for the community to come together through music, art, and neighborhood meetings.

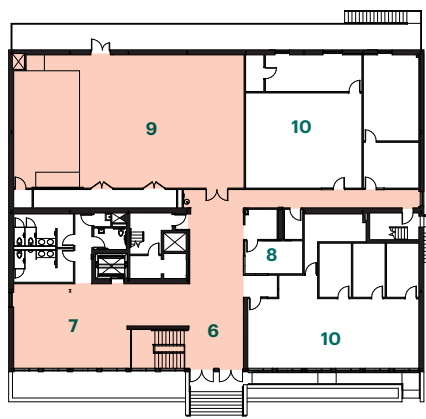


LEGEND ⓘ

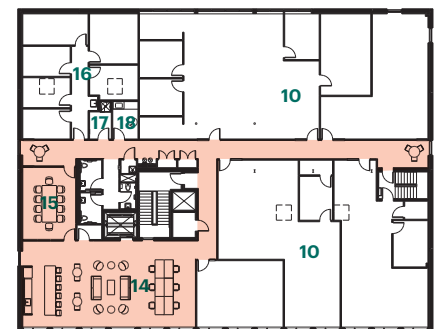
- 1 Pre-Function Space & Gallery
- 2 Job Training & Presentation Room
- 3 Bike Storage
- 4 Commercial Kitchen
- 5 Loading Area with VRC Lift
- 6 Main Entry
- 7 Pre-Function Space & Gallery
- 8 Reception Office
- 9 Community Meeting Room / Theater
- 10 Office Suite w/ fit-out for non-profit tenant
- 11 New stairs, planters, and a ADA ramp
- 12 New slot window providing daylight to all levels
- 13 New windows at ends of corridors
- 14 Co-working Space
- 15 Conference Room
- 16 Artist Studios
- 17 Shower & Changing Room
- 18 Wellness Room
- 19 New curtainwall with vertical shading fins
- 20 Skylights for daylight access to interior spaces
- 21 New roof insulation, membrane, and coping
- 22 Infrastructure for PV panels
- 23 New HVAC, electrical, lighting, plumbing, and fire suppression / alarm system
- 24 Limestone & brick masonry cleaning and restoration



Lower Level



First Level



Second Level

A SENSE OF PLACE & QUALITY



COLLABORATION SPACES

Concrete floors and steel structure are exposed, providing a simple background for bold, colorful accents that strengthen the identity for the building. Shared amenities for the non-profit and artist tenants include a breakroom, conference room, lounge, showers, wellness room, and meeting spaces.



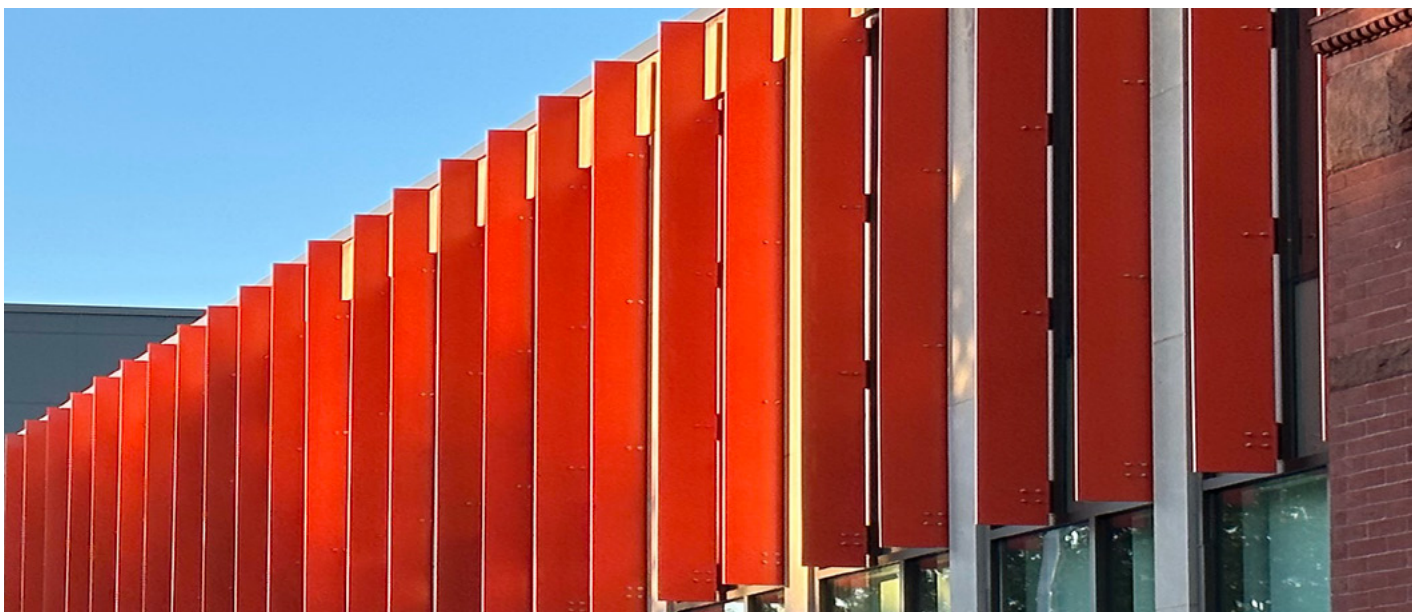
SUSTAINABILITY

Baltimore Unity Hall achieves significant sustainability objectives via an integrated design approach.

At the level of community sustainability, the primary goal of the development is to provide a community anchor that allows community participation and ownership, which will improve the building's longevity in the future.

At the level of sustainable design and construction, the renovation of the building and the tenant improvements were performed to meet the requirements of the International Green Construction Code (IgCC) 2018, as adopted by Baltimore City. Some of the aspects of the project that contributed to this level of certification include:

- The most sustainable building is one that already exists. **The project renovated the existing urban building** retaining the structure and shell, and provided upgraded and efficient finishes and systems to improve the long-term performance of the building.
- **The existing building envelope was significantly upgraded** for thermal performance with insulation added, as well as replacement of all windows and the roof.
- Located within an urban context, the project has a **walkability score of 71**. The design provided upgrades to the city bus stop at the corner.
- **Vertical sunshade fins** bring passive strategies to reduce solar heat gain on the west façade. The building envelope and new MEP systems are cost-effectively optimized for energy efficiency.
- **Support for alternative transportation**, including bicycle parking, showers, and changing areas for bike commuting, as well as priority parking spaces for HOVs.
- Interior plumbing fixtures were specified for high efficiency and low flow with automated controls.
- **Infrastructure for PV panels** was provided and a solar array was installed by the owner to offset the building's electrical usage
- **Low-emitting materials** and stringent construction practices were used to maximize Indoor Air Quality for the tenant spaces.
- The careful consideration of new skylight and window placement allowed for **75% of normally occupied spaces by visitors or tenants to have access to natural daylight and direct views outside**.
- The project utilized dramatic artificial LED lighting to supplement the natural daylight that comes through. Occupancy sensors are incorporated to reduce waste.
- **Acoustic panels and baffles** are used though the building on the wall and the ceiling to improve sound quality and occupant comfort. the building.



VISIONARY & EMULATION

Baltimore Unity Hall creates neighborhood transformation where partnerships are leveraged to improve the quality of life for all residents in historically under-sourced communities. Baltimore Unity Hall creates the following demonstrable impacts:

- **Community Arts:** The project provides six rentable artist studios as well as gallery exhibition spaces on the lower level and first level. Community arts programming is continuous by the non-profit tenants. The gathering spaces in the project allow the community to come together through music performances and art events.
- **Education:** The meeting and training spaces in the project provide educational classes, and venues for the community for neighborhood meetings and dialogue between police and community members.
- **Training:** The lower level job training presentation rooms and commercial kitchen provide workforce development training and programs. During construction, a local hiring program was developed by the owner with Southway Builders, the Advisory Committee, and other project stakeholders to assure that residents of Central West Baltimore were able to participate in new construction jobs created by the project.



EXHIBITS

The flagship exhibit chronicled Central West Baltimore history in an exhibit by Nanny Jack & Company, a local African American Heritage Consulting Firm.



PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are key to impact the community. Baltimore Unity Hall works with numerous organizations and individuals to fulfill the mission and vision. Resident partners share office spaces and administrative resources; anchor our programmatic work; deepen our reach into our communities; and enhance the economic development and impact for Central West Baltimore.



BRANDING AND SIGNAGE

The project utilized graphic wayfinding and new branding to create a cohesive and easily navigated interior environment and strong emblem for the building.

A NEED



CONTEXT

The project is sited on Eutaw Place facing Eutaw Place Median Park, an axis that has long served as a separation between Bolton Hill and Central West Baltimore. Baltimore Unity Hall is designed to break down barriers that have traditionally divided the community. The site was once a social club for the Baltimore Jewish Community, but was replaced by the current structure in 1964 as the Union Hall for Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union, and later the Empowerment Temple Church ran community programs out of the building until it fell vacant. The need for unity within Central West Baltimore comes from decades of segregation and disinvestment; the Unity Hall aims to stop this cycle and break down the real and perceived barriers along Eutaw Place.

A NEED

CONDITION BEFORE RENOVATION

The 30,000-sf building had declined due to deferred maintenance and vacancy, and was an underutilized site in the neighborhood. The scope included hazardous materials abatement and extensive interior and exterior renovations to realize the mission-driven project goals.



PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVATION

A Baltimore Unity Hall Advisory Committee meeting made up of representatives of MAC, key anchor tenants, community engagement organizers, and development team staff was formed. Community outreach continued with Unity Hall Advisory Committee members attending meetings with the Bolton Hill Community Association, Upton Planning Committee, and Madison Park Improvement Association. Listening sessions with neighborhood residents were conducted. A Community event at the Y at 1609 Druid Hill Avenue brought neighbors together to break bread, collaborate, and learn more about the Unity Hall. Project stakeholders collaborated throughout the decision-making process from project conception to completion. Extensive community engagement and stakeholder sessions informed the design for a building that can support community-focused organizations to unite the surrounding neighborhoods and provide job training opportunities, work spaces, community arts, and a gathering place for all.

The project included the fit-out of the interior office spaces for non-profit tenants. Partnerships with these non-profit organizations anchors the programmatic work, deepens the reach into the community, and enhances the economic development and impact for Central West Baltimore. Stakeholder groups have commented that the project is a success for the neighborhood in fulfilling a need for community arts, education, and workforce development spaces.

Major updates were made to the building for accessibility, including a new ADA entry ramp, new elevator, and assisted listening in meeting rooms. Single user gender neutral ADA restrooms were installed on every floor level, greatly exceeding the minimum required, to allow for inclusivity.



A NEED

FULFILLING THE MISSION

The mission of Baltimore Unity Hall is to provide opportunities, work spaces, community arts and education, and a gathering place for the surrounding neighborhoods. The intended purpose and impact of the project has been developed collaboratively with resident and stakeholder input to create a common vision and a commitment to this mission.

