

University of Iowa

Levitt Center for University Advancement
Iowa City, Iowa



Visible from many parts of the city—particularly at night—the Levitt Center for University Advancement is an asymmetrical assemblage of geometric forms. The building is clad in Indiana limestone and articulates a hierarchical sequence of public gathering spaces and private work areas. The design solution responds to the client's request that the building's public assembly spaces be situated on the top floor, with views of the river and surrounding campus.

The five-story rotunda, whose exterior marks a visual and literal edge to the University of Iowa's Performing Arts Campus, anchors the complex and acts as its main public meeting and circulation space. This primary reception lobby integrates numerous works of art by faculty, students and local artists. It is circled by a ceremonial stair and cantilevered bridges that create a promenade, leading visitors to the public assembly spaces located at the top of the building—typically a site for executive offices.

A double-height, circular boardroom with a terrace "sits" on the rotunda. This flexible

space, capped by an inverted dome, is finished in cherry and features concentric, custom-designed conference tables. Divisible by acoustic panels into three separate spaces, the boardroom can be linked to the adjacent entertainment room, which implements sophisticated audiovisual systems.

The top floor of the building's bar element contains three major assembly halls, two roof terraces and a staff dining hall. The sculptural forms of these rooms distinguish their public functions from the three floors of administrative offices below and define a "cornice" to the arts campus.

Named for two of the university's most generous benefactors, the Levitt Center for University Advancement houses the University's Foundation, Alumni Association, and Division of Alumni Records and Services. It provides a central focus for all of the University's advancement-related activities: fund raising, alumni communications and outreach, student recruitment, public relations, economic development and legislative liaison.



Rotunda entry

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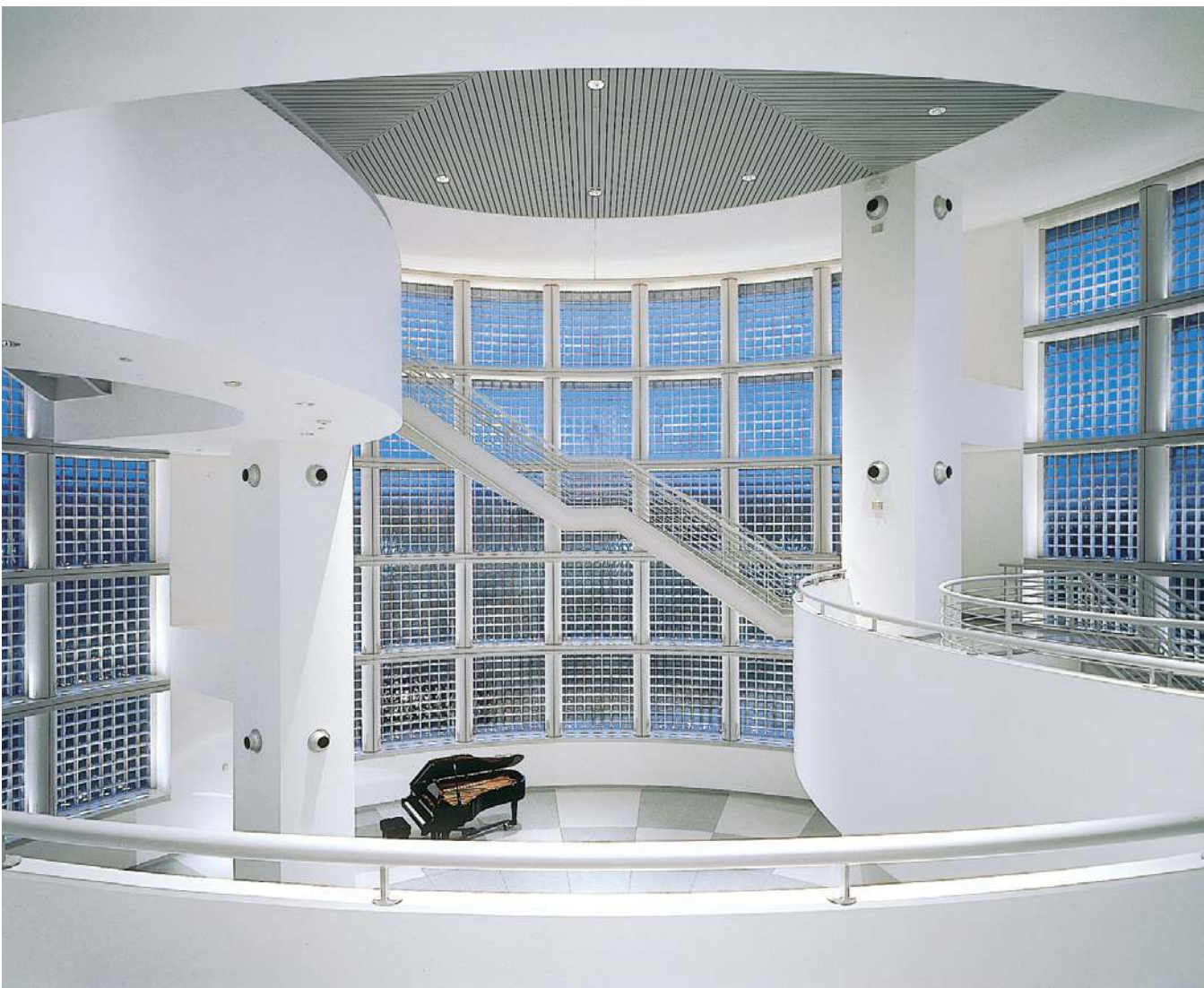
Levitt Center for University Advancement



Multi-use/flexible meeting and entertainment spaces



Boardroom



Rotunda

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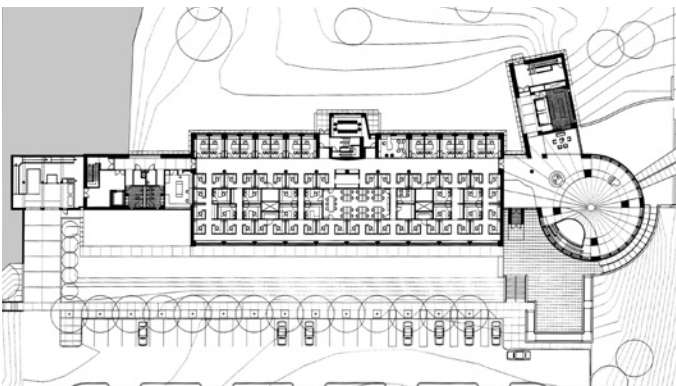
Key Project Information

- triple-height public reception and visitor information center in main rotunda
 - circular, double-height boardroom with inverted dome ceiling opening onto terrace
 - circulation gallery linking boardroom to entertainment center
 - flexible entertainment center divisible into three separate spaces by acoustical panels
 - sophisticated audiovisual systems
 - projection facilities
 - custom-built furniture
 - full-service catering kitchen
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- completion 1998
 - gsf 141,000

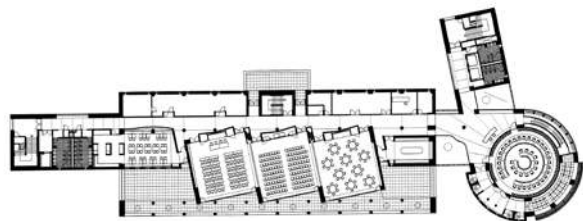
"Gwathmey Siegel designed and produced a building of brilliant design, highest quality, and remarkable utility for us. Above all, the building performs as well as excites. Charles Gwathmey and his colleagues were responsive to all of our original programmatic needs and to any concerns we expressed throughout the process. The architecture of the Levitt Center is extraordinarily client-responsive. It is a building that was team designed and team built."
Darrell D. Wyrick, President Emeritus



Detail of boardroom roof terrace



Second level plan



Fourth level plan