



# Wayfinding **PRIMER**

AN INTRODUCTION

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h+k

## Introduction

A **good** navigator may ask:

- How can anyone not know which way is **North**?
- Why can't people intuitively **find** the elevators?
- Why do people get **lost**?

Wayfinding is an innate part of our lives. It allows us to explore and try new things. It reassures and connects us. And if we are able to find our way easily, we are more likely to come back.

The Wayfinding Primer shows readers the art and science of wayfinding—how it can express identities and create a sense of place. While wayfinding and signage are often used interchangeably, graphic design is just one factor in crafting an enjoyable experience.

The intended audience is anyone with a curiosity in wayfinding, other design and AEC professionals, facility managers and those who want to understand wayfinding as part of their capital improvement project.

From color and fonts to naming strategies and best practices, audiences will get a glimpse into what it might be like to create a new system, and afterwards, may start seeing wayfinding differently in their own lives.



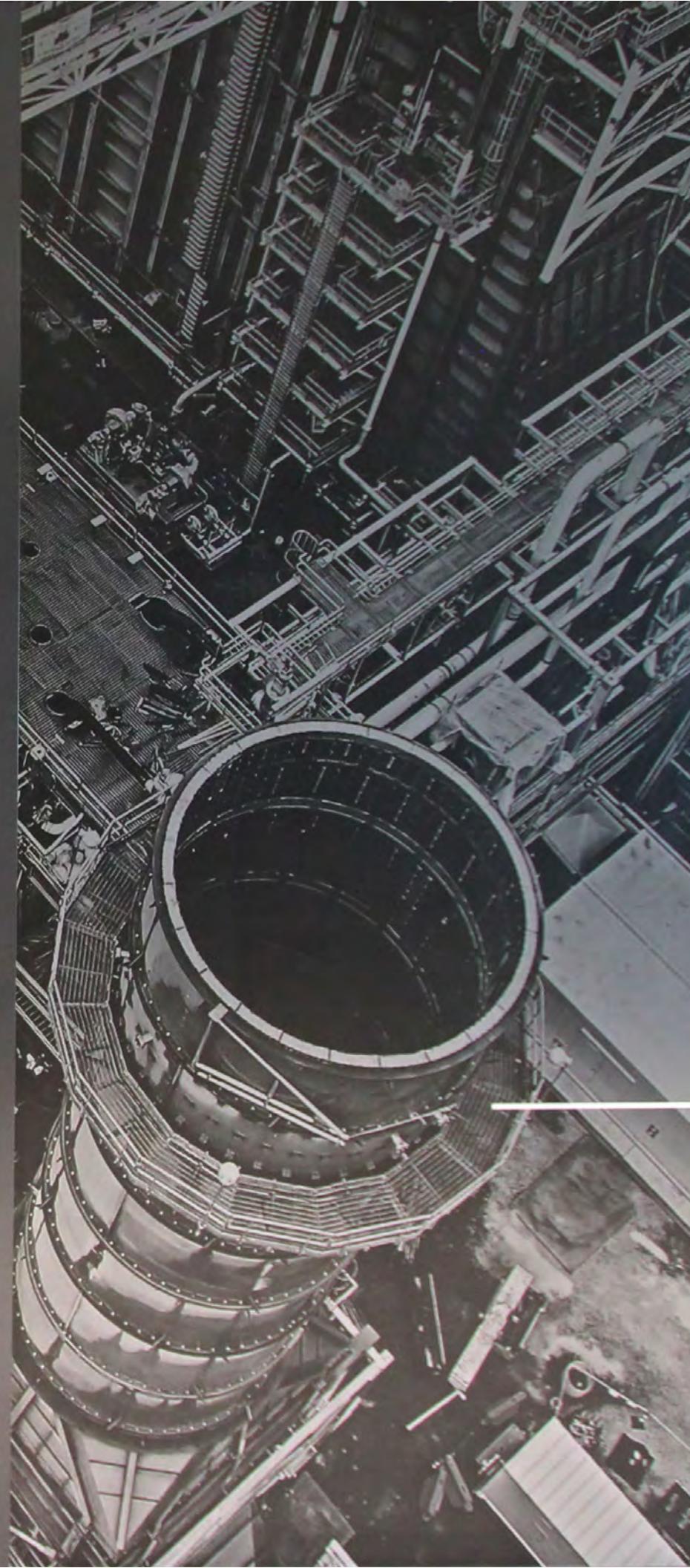
Wayfinding Primer by  
Experience Design.

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**EXD**

# 1

- ➡ Conference Center
- ⬆ Training Rooms  
Presentation Room
- ⬅ Conference 2.1.A.101



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*What is*  
**WAYFINDING?**



## What is Wayfinding?

Wayfinding is more closely tied to your organizational identity than you might realize. The ease in which people find their way to your website, your office, your facility, is necessary to consider at almost every business decision. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, naming and identifiers become shorthand jargon people communicate and eventually associate with themselves. From the name of a conference room or sports arena—people will build their identity on the language and experience of place.

For managers and owners, it's important to understand wayfinding's role in the smooth and safe operation of your facility. Beyond compliance with life safety regulations, wayfinding systems can create more inclusive environments.

Wayfinding designers can help to ensure messages are understood for a range of ages, languages and abilities, and wayfinding can assist with the everyday use of the space.

While wayfinding is often thought of as just signage, the truth is, graphic design is just one component to a successful wayfinding system. As a system, individual elements share certain characteristics and it's up to the wayfinding designer to design, synchronize and standardize defining features. The wayfinding designer works with a cross section of disciplines, such as interiors, lighting, consulting and planning, to ensure signage, markers, landmarks and other experiential elements become integrated pieces of the built environment.



## What is Wayfinding?

### The Non-Verbal Wayfinding Process

“

Wayfinding is a consistent use and organization of definite sensory cues from the external environment.

– Kevin Lynch,  
Urban Planner and Author

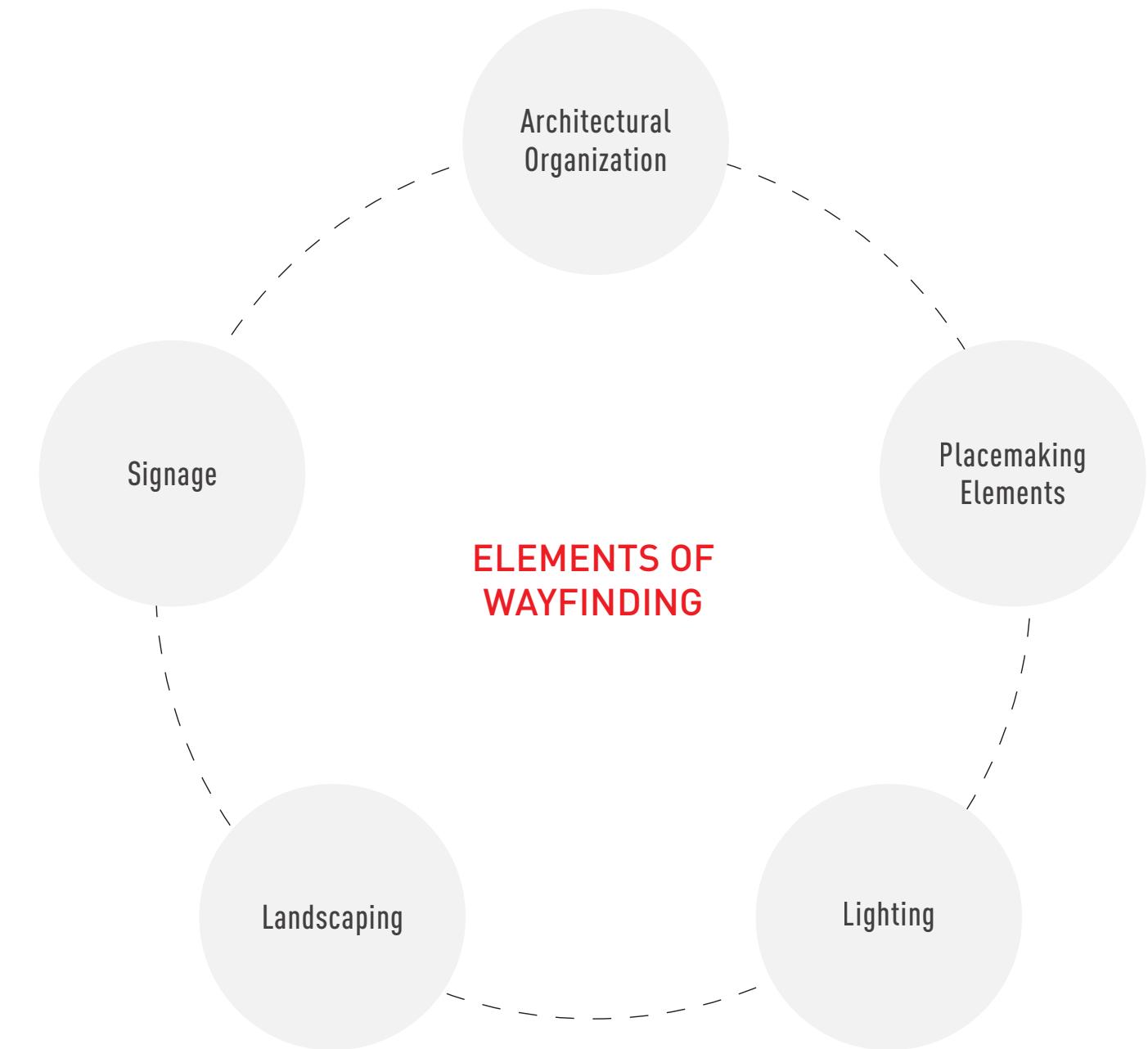
The “non-verbal” wayfinding elements, such as architectural organization, placemaking elements, lighting, signage and landscaping interpret information about the environment without necessarily the need for verbal communication.

These unique elements that can help a person find their way around easily when executed well. Individuals begin to create a mental map utilizing those visual cues to maintain their point-of-reference and provide an important sense of emotional security. Their mental map of the urban environment is needed to counter the always looming fear of disorientation.

Users feel comfortable in a well-designed environment as they shape their map. Designs of non-verbal cues can therefore

provide experiences that seem intuitive to some users but not to others. Here is where the wayfinding designer’s detailed knowledge of the target audience along the journey path comes into play. Understanding the target audiences’ culture, background, demographic, etc., a designer can deliver a wayfinding system providing a clear way that users can take to without having to hesitate and wonder how they can execute an action.

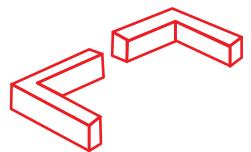
Kevin Lynch developed the first theories on wayfinding and mental mapping. His work gives us an understanding of how people build the perceptual form of an environment.



## Kevin Lynch Model:

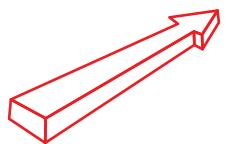
# THE IMAGE OF THE CITY

Kevin Lynch developed the first theories on wayfinding and mental mapping. His work gives us an understanding of how people build the perceptual form of an environment.



## EDGES

Edges create places by making divisions between various paths of the project as well as its outer perimeter.



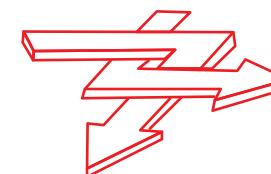
## PATHS

The user's first experience centers on these channels of movement. We break them down into vehicular and pedestrian pathways.



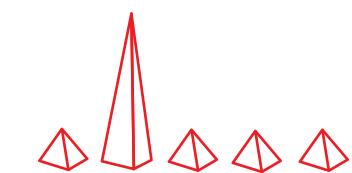
## DISTRICTS

Districts are places with an identifiable character, visible both as one approaches and once one has entered inside of them.



## NODES

Nodes are points of intersection where paths cross and the essence of place will concentrate. They are important decision making points.



## LANDMARKS

Landmarks create bold first impressions and are increasingly relied upon for orientation and wayfinding with continued use.



## What is Successful Wayfinding?

When wayfinding and navigation are not taken into consideration until late in the project development, wayfinding (signs) feel “tacked on” to architectural and interior designs. Signage is added to meet code requirements and where ‘needed’ for functionality. Or, worse, signage is asked to solve a navigational challenge and winds up as a bandage solution to a problem.

Effective wayfinding signage builds a system of language and graphic elements that is legible, consistent and concise—even empathetic and flexible. Consistency in look and language reinforces to users what to cue in on.

When designers integrate wayfinding into early stages of the project design, the result is a cohesive design where signage and architectural elements work together. Design elements in the space lend a hand to make navigating more intuitive. Clear, concise signage complements the space.

What is Successful Wayfinding as Part of the Experiential Graphic Design?



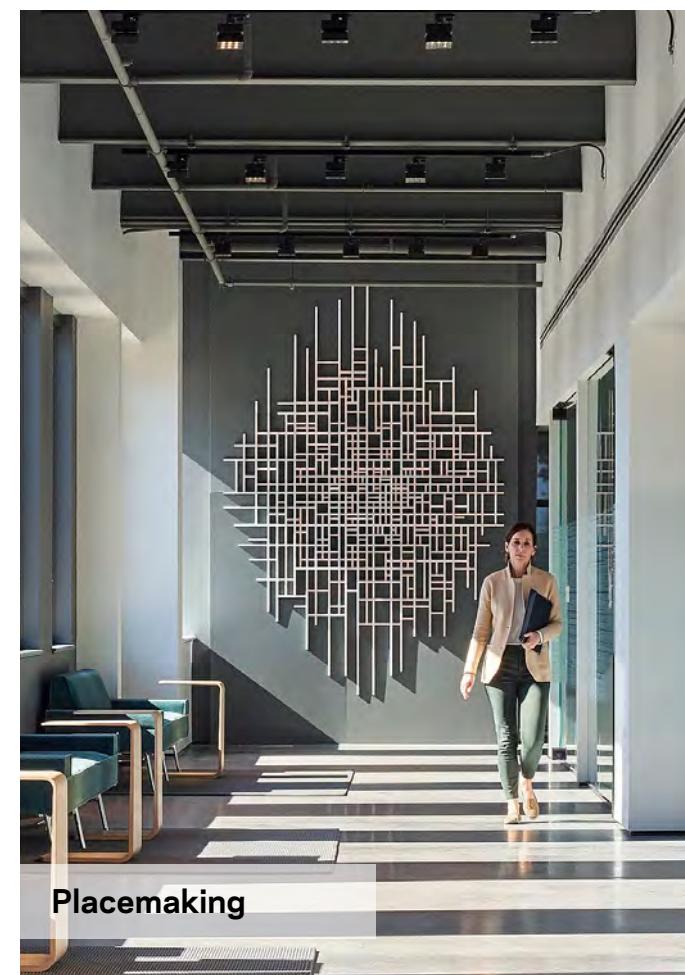
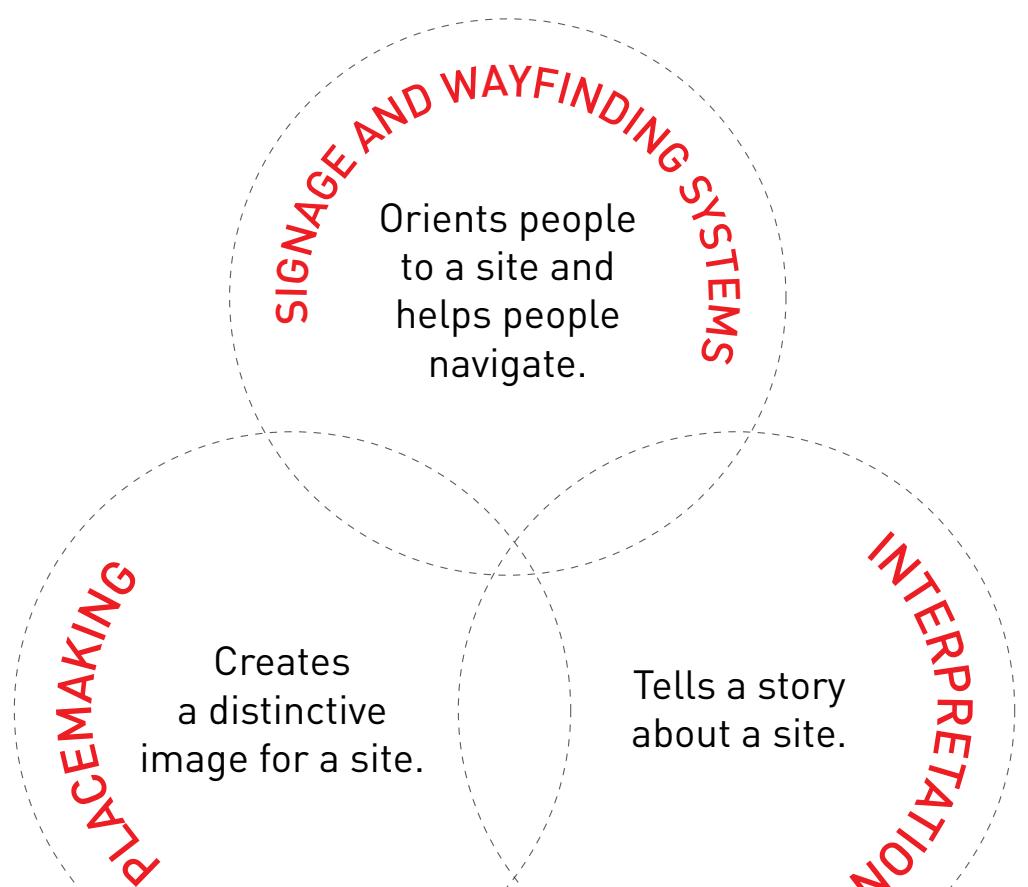
## How experiential graphic design (EGD) can build brands, create identities and establish a sense of place.

Experiential graphic design involves the orchestration of typography, color, imagery, form, technology and content to create environments that communicate.

What you want to communicate, and how, become powerful tools to build your brand. Through a person's movement through space, and thus time, you have a chance to incorporate storytelling and placemaking into spaces to create meaningful connections between people and the environment.

An experiential graphic design system can be designed for a single site or hundreds of locations across a company's portfolio. It can cross markets and platforms, and ideally would be connected to each touchpoint a person may have with your organization.

## What is Successful Wayfinding as Part of the Experiential Graphic Design?

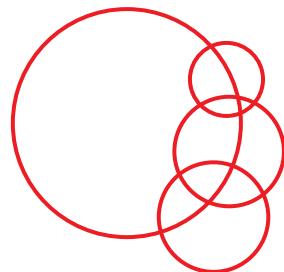




# *Designing the* **EXPERIENCE**

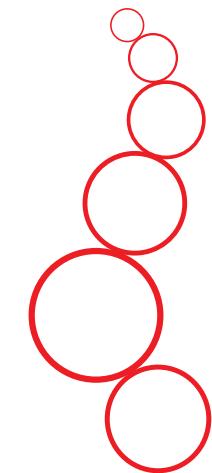
# THE 3 C'S:

To develop a wayfinding strategy, the following principles should be considered:



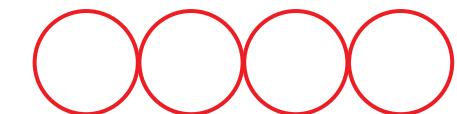
## CONNECTIVITY

Does the wayfinding system deliver the right message at the right location at the right time?



## CONTINUITY

Does the wayfinding system provide continuity in a diverse architectural environment as people navigate from one space to another?



## CONSISTENCY

Does the wayfinding system communicate information in a consistent manner throughout the journey?

## Designing the Experience

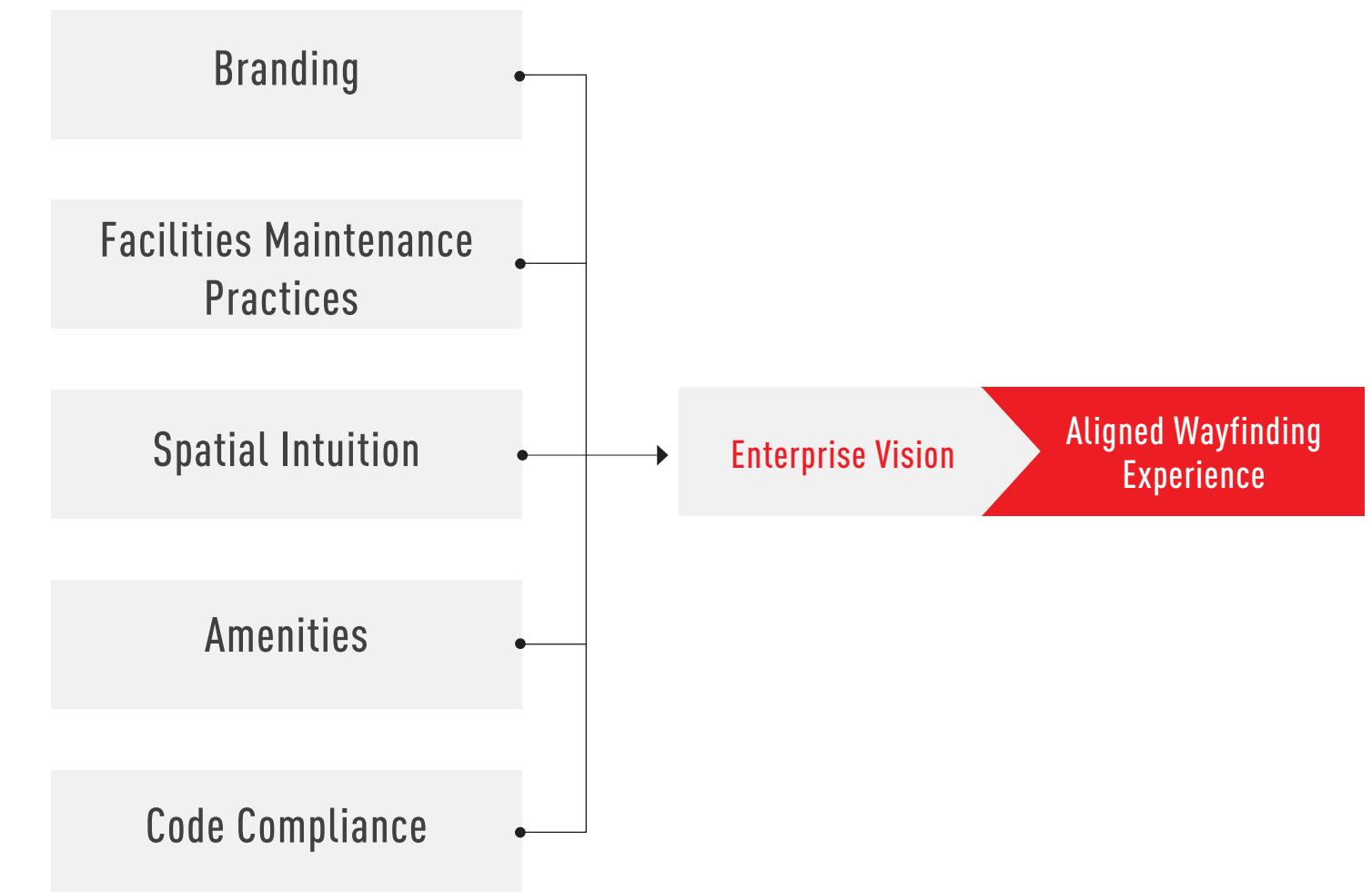
### Design Philosophy and Approach



## Designing the Experience

### Wayfinding Drivers

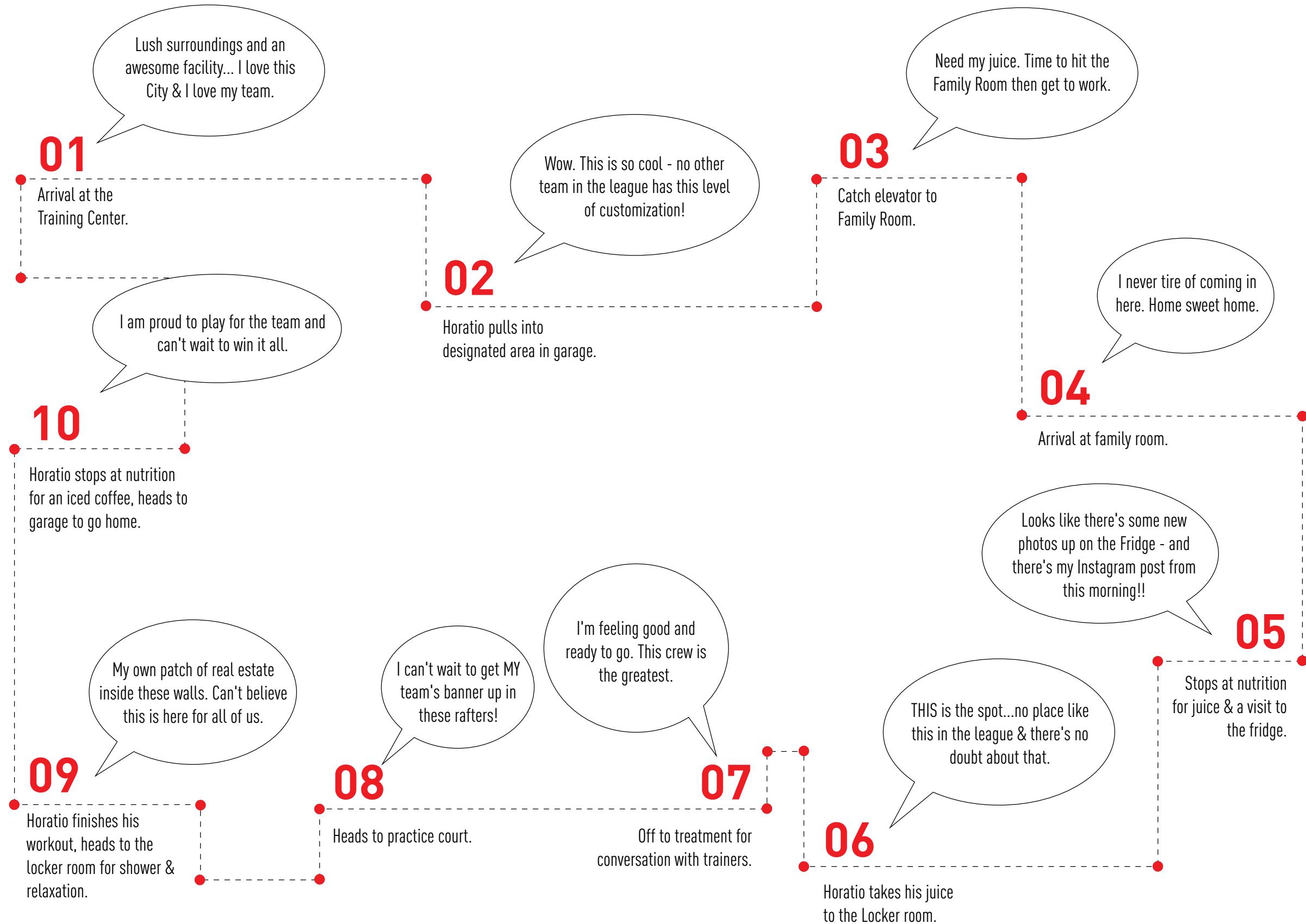
**WHAT ARE THE KEY DRIVERS FOR AN ALIGNED WAYFINDING EXPERIENCE?**



## Designing the Experience

### Wayfinding Drivers

We use journey mapping to analyze a typical experience on a given project. It helps identify opportunities and gaps in the experience. In this example, Horatio is a professional athlete going through his day at his team's training facility.

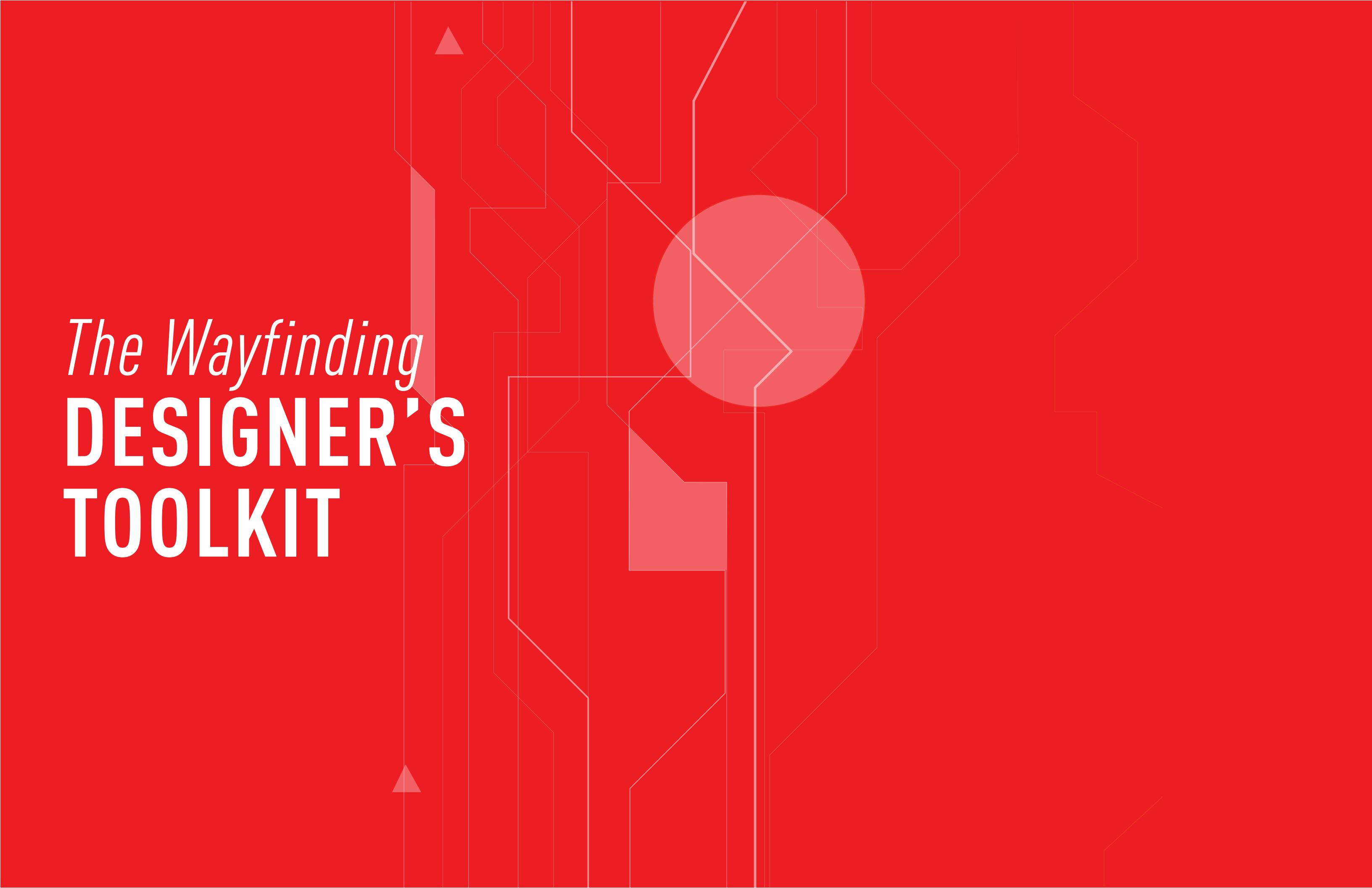


# Designing the Experience

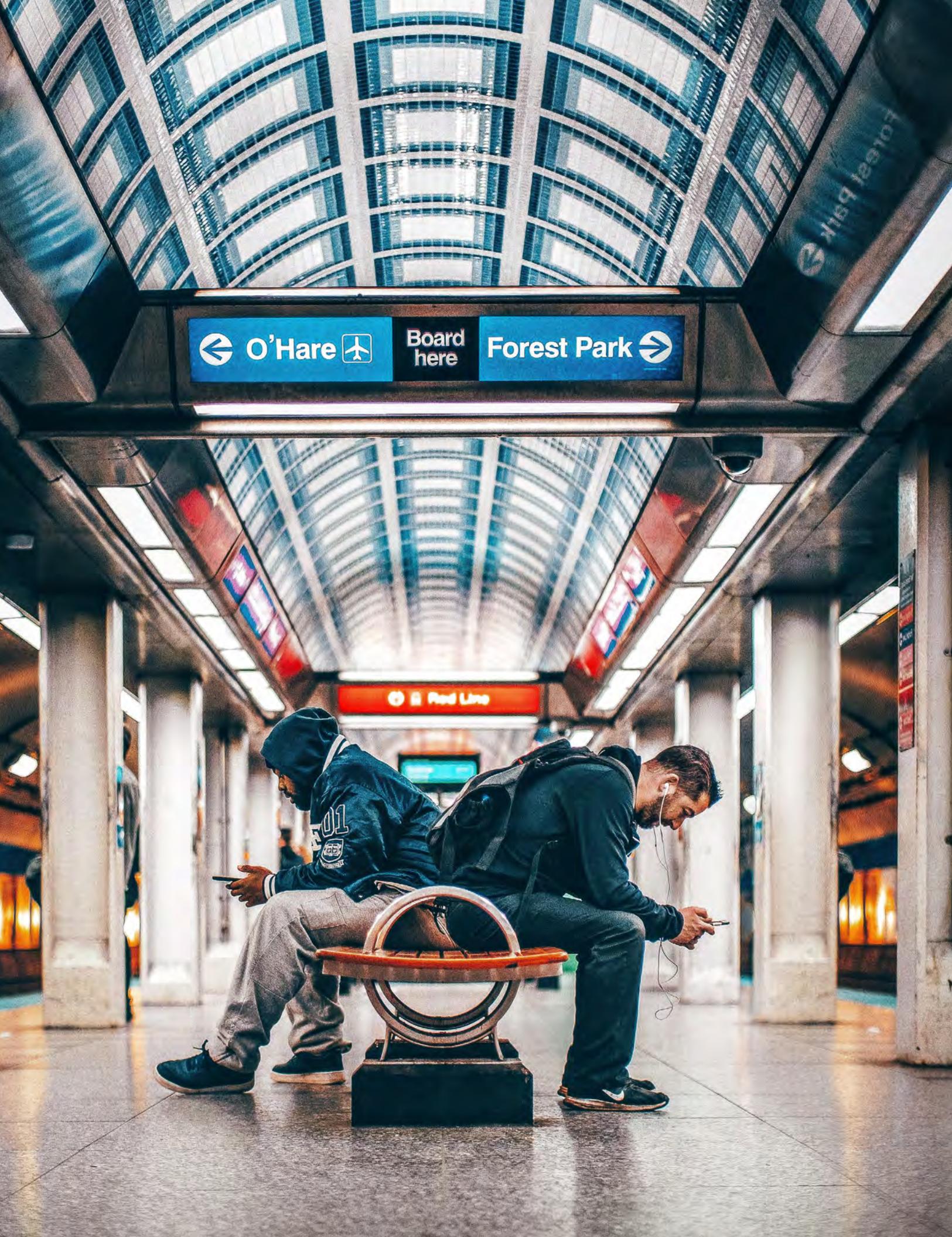
## Message Master Planning

Message master plans map communication across a person's experience and provide a framework for different authors and content creators to work collaboratively. They help to define and synchronize the information people need to know. And they categorize each element by type, author, platform and budget.





# *The Wayfinding* **DESIGNER'S TOOLKIT**



## The Wayfinding Designer's Toolkit

### Design Factors

#### VISIBILITY

Consistent sign placement is important, as is lighting. Check the lighting in both day and night conditions. Can the sign be seen from the location people are most likely to look for it? Avoid exceeding a 10-degree angle from the natural line of sight, particularly in spaces with high ceilings or transition areas that involve changing levels. Check location for clashes with other elements and disciplines.

#### HIERARCHY

Hierarchy prioritizes information at a given point in time. The goal is to avoid information overload. A common wayfinding myth is that the best way to solve a wayfinding problem is to list every possible destination, but in reality, this is rarely the case. The more complex the wayfinding problem, the simpler the solution needs to be.

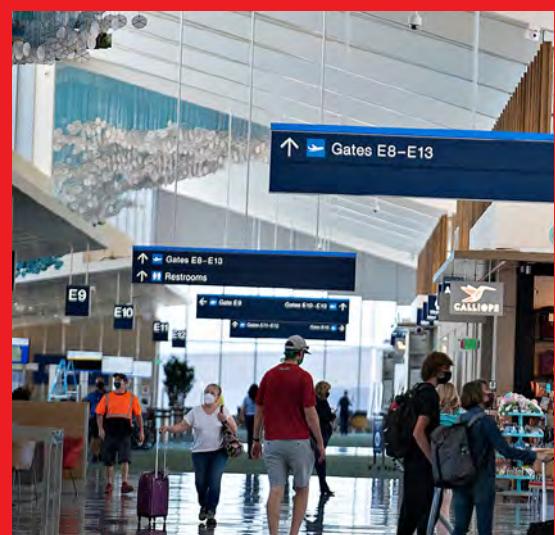
#### PLACEMENT

The wayfinding signs must be consistently located in the right place with the right message. It is important to think about where and what information people are most likely to look for and to consider decision points. In addition, it must be remembered that placement affects many things, including visibility, legibility and directionals, but ultimately it affects people making the correct decision with confidence.

## PDX SIGNAGE MASTER PLAN Case Study

As the design of several large capital projects is underway, Portland International Airport (PDX) needed a comprehensive signage master plan that would define standards for high quality wayfinding both during construction and for a unified system upon completion.

HOK worked closely with the Port of Portland and various stakeholders to develop the 13-chapter, 900-page document, which includes guidance on content to be displayed and on which platform. The master plan ensures that future terminal signage is updated and maintained consistently, and provides standards that are flexible, ease to use and cost-effective. The standards offer the right mix of technologies that impact the passenger experience and leave a lasting impression of the City of Portland and its region.



# The Wayfinding Designer's Toolkit

## The Toolkit 1

### SYMBOLS AND MAPS

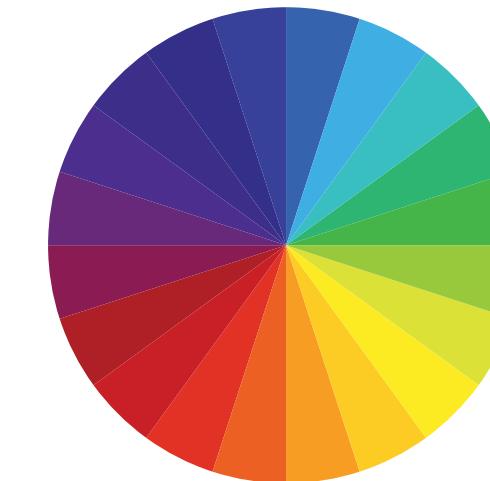


Symbols are essential to quickly identify services in complex environments such as airports, shopping centers, hospitals and districts. Even without supporting text, most symbols are nearly universal and particularly useful for multi-lingual audiences.

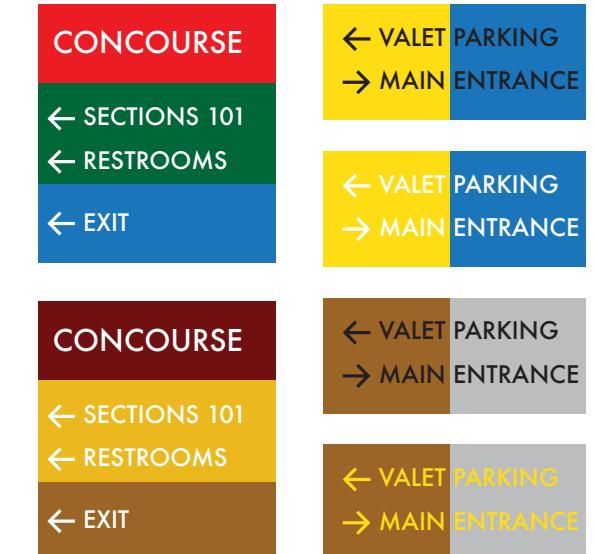
While symbols deliver information more immediately, maps simplify complex information into digestible formats.

They give visitors an overview of an area and help orient and direct them by using symbols, colors, graphics and features that are recognizable as they continue in their journey, such as the color of a sign or the representation of a landmark. In this way, maps can also tell a story about a site and reveal hidden relationships or reference past events.

### COLOR



Color Hue/Spectrum



Color Value

Color Contrast

# The Wayfinding Designer's Toolkit

## The Toolkit 2

### TYPOGRAPHY AND LAYOUT

All typefaces have a specific personality and association. Bebo seems traditional; meta appears crisp and modern; ziggurat is playful. When selecting a typeface, the designer must consider the application, scale and materiality of the messages, including how it might display digitally.

An experienced designer experiments with typefaces and selects a font that is appropriate, legible and communicative. The versatility of a typeface family is also

crucial. This variation in slant, weight and width is essential when messages often appear in different settings and scales.

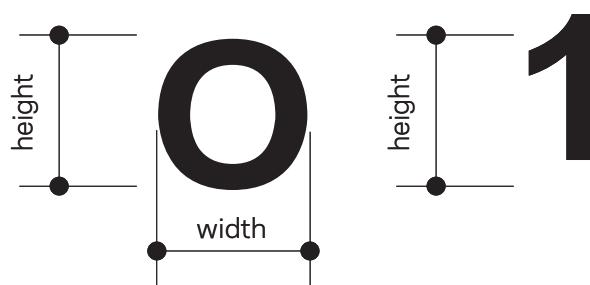
The Americans with Disabilities Act also defines parameters for selecting typefaces to ensure that they are readable for people with visual impairments. The ADA regulations also include requirements for width-to-height ratios for typefaces.

High x-height  
Dax

Low x-height  
Futura

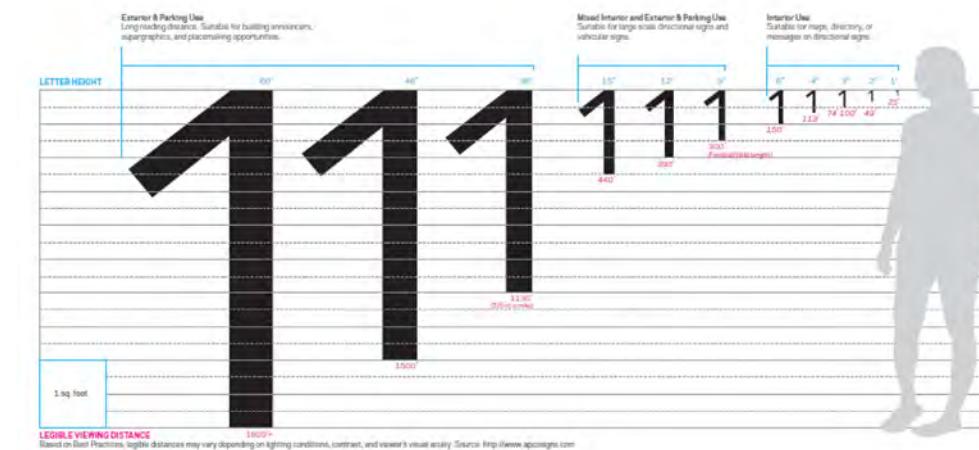
Open counter space  
Akzidenz

Tight Counter Space  
Interstate Light Condensed



### LEGIBILITY

Legibility comes into play as designers consider the distance between the reader and the message. In the wayfinder's toolkit are formulas that help calculate text heights for both pedestrian and vehicular signage. Based on Best Practices, legible distances may vary depending on lighting conditions, contrast and viewer's visual acuity.



### MATERIAL TYPES

Materials can make all the difference in the information and mood you are trying to convey, and how well signage is integrated into the built environment. The choice of material in both the message and platform are integral to ensure messages are delivered effectively.

Beyond aesthetics, signs must meet functional requirements of fabrication, durability and its ability to be updated. The quantity of signs and

Wayfinding elements should be placed within the field of vision and should establish a continuous visual feed of wayfinding information by placing signs in consistent locations.

diversity of types inform this too as you consider costs and consistency across the system--from an interior sign that hangs from the ceiling to exterior monument placed by a roadway. The choice of material offers an extensive range of freedom yet requires careful consideration of the wayfinding designer to satisfy all requirements, while being thoughtful to the surrounding environment.

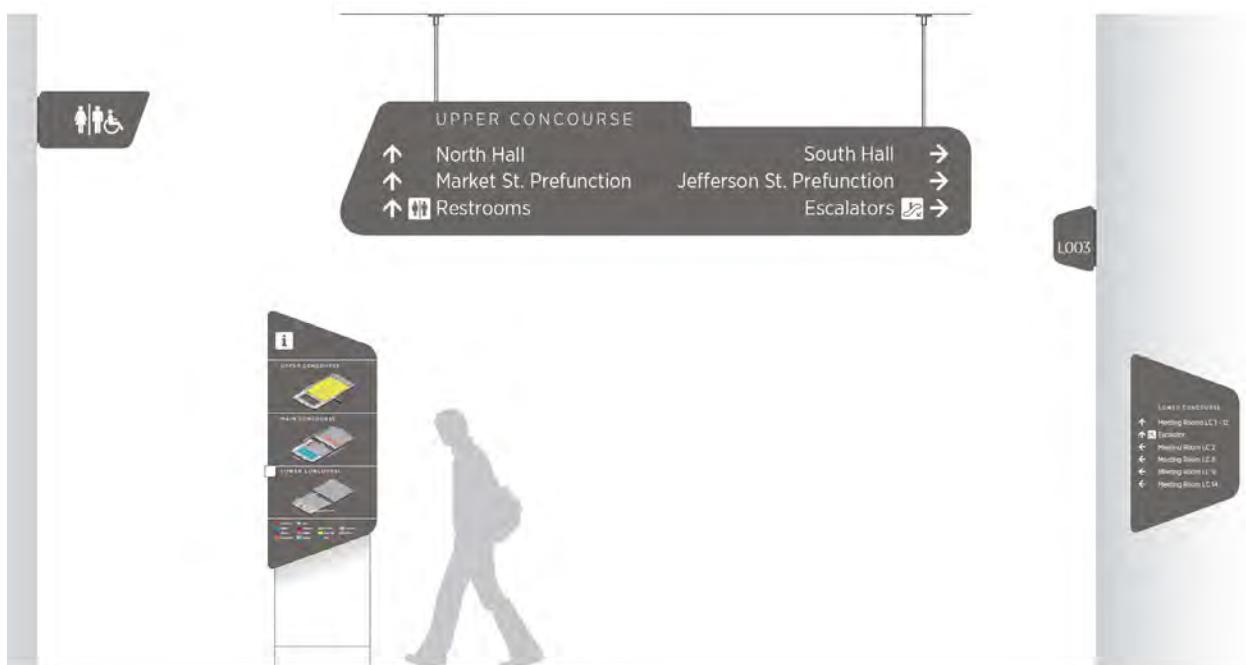
# The Wayfinding Designer's Toolkit

## The Toolkit 3

### SIGN TYPES AND SIGN FAMILIES

Most wayfinding systems consist of several categories of signs: identification, directional, informational and regulatory. As standalone signs, they serve a specific role; as part of the overall wayfinding system, they inform each other. This relationship and the collections of signs that make up an entire system is called the sign family.

Similarly, signs may have a separate voice depending on their function and thus display a specific kind of content called a message. Messages might include nonverbal graphic symbols, images and words. The message is part of the journey and the voice of the place or organization. Messaging reveals the pathways and destinations of the building or space and how to use and navigate through the environment.



#### Exterior Sign Family

- Property Entrance Signs (Monuments)
- Metaphor Art Sculpture
- Ground Mounted Signage
- Building Signage, Landmark
- Building Signage, Entry
- Building and Donor ID
- Vehicular Wayfinding

#### Structured Parking

- Entrance Identifiers - Wall Mounted, Overhead and Freestanding Units.
- Wayfinding Pylon
- Reserve/Eco Car Parking Indicators

#### Surface Parking

- Markings and Indicators
- Regulation / MUTCD
- Secure Access
- Vehicular Directionals

#### Interior Circulation

- Room Name and Number
- Vision Screen Art (Distraction and Privacy Films) can serve both Decorative and Wayfinding Purposes

#### Interior Signage

- Room ID/Restroom ID
- Stairwell ID (Interior and Exterior of Secure Stairwell)
- Department ID
- Artwork Displays
- Dedication Plaques
- Workstation Name Plates
- Staff Offices
- Placemaking Elements

#### Interior Wayfinding

- Room Announcers
- Digital vs. Static Kiosks
- Digital Displays
- Directories
- Wayfinding Directionals
- Flag Mounted Wayfinding

#### Security/Rules Regulations

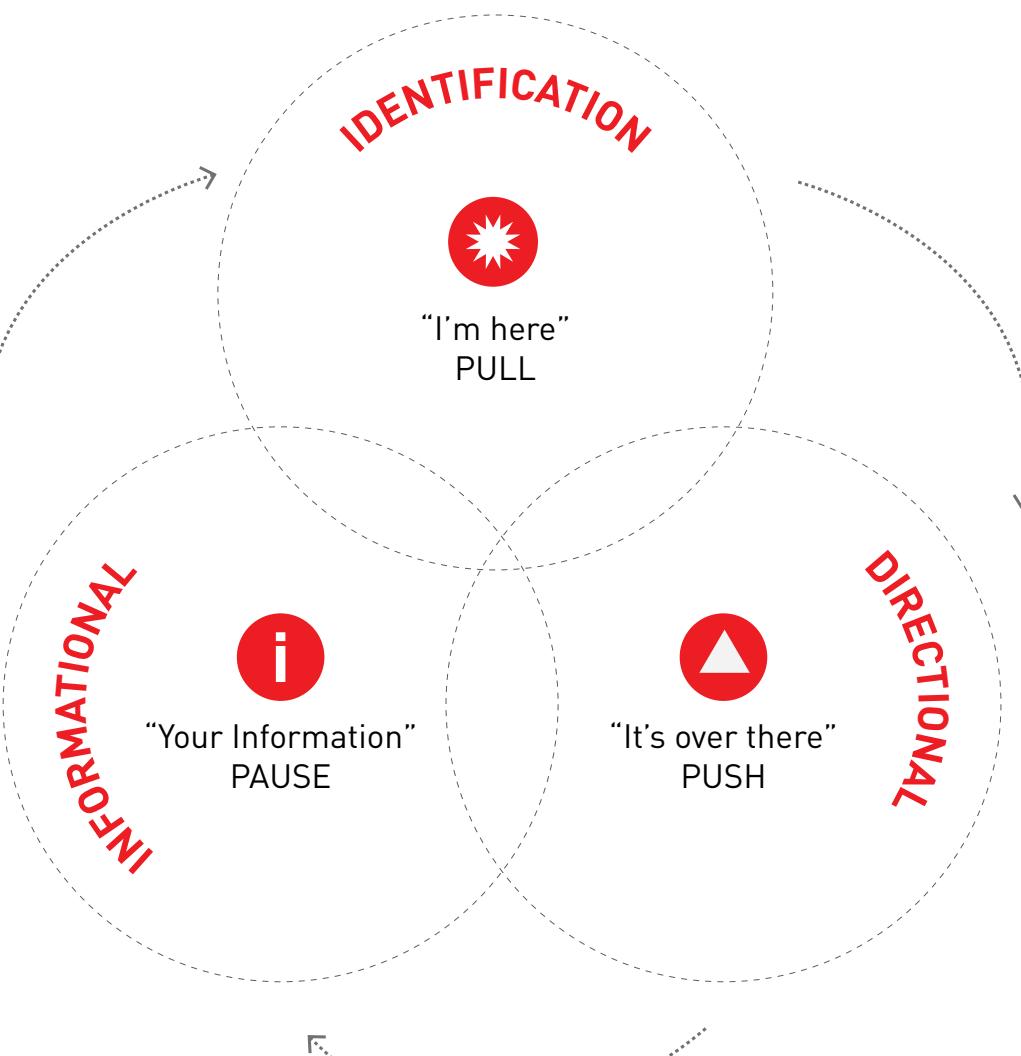
- Secure Access (Vehicular at Loading Docks, Entry Gates)
- Rules and Regulations
- Secure Signage (Mainly Painted)

#### Life/Safety

- Area of Refuge (Accessible v Non-Accessible)
- Evac Maps, Elevator Lobbies (In Secure Areas Sans Map)
- Two-Way Communication Devices
- Maximum Occupancy

# The Wayfinding Designer's Toolkit

## Wayfinding Attributes



Attributes to consider when allocating wayfinding types.

Reading Distance

**> 80 feet**  
Identification  
Sense of Place

Sense of Place  
Direction



**'Pull' beacons**  
Building  
Identification sign  
Monument sign

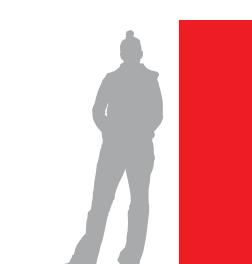


**> 30 feet**  
Directional  
Identification

Assurance  
Direction  
Confidence  
Sense of Place



**'Pull' signs**  
Orientation  
Vicinities  
Beacons  
Thresholds

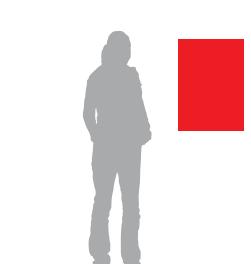


**> 15 feet**  
Directional  
Identification

Orientation  
Reassurance  
Planning



**'Push' signs**  
Route Directions  
Place Names  
Retailers  
Amenities



**3+ feet**  
Informational

Orientation  
Reassurance  
Planning



**'Orient' and 'Push'**  
Journey Information  
Digital Information  
Journey Time Planner  
Security Information  
Tenant Information

# The Wayfinding Designer's Toolkit

## Wayfinding Types and Distribution

### ARRIVAL WELCOME POINTS

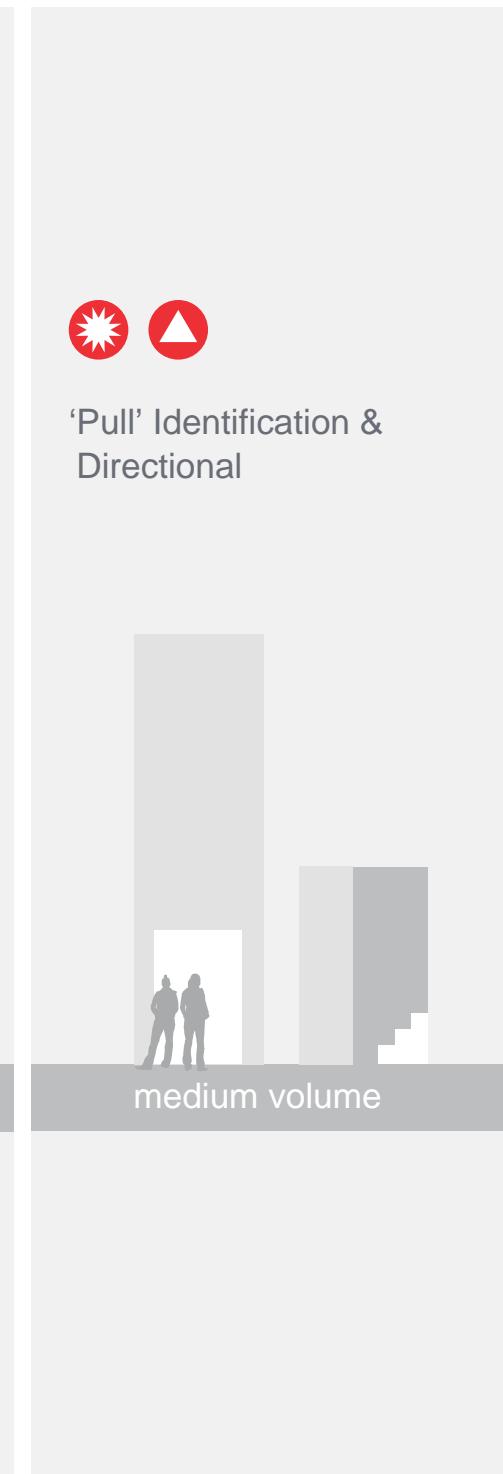
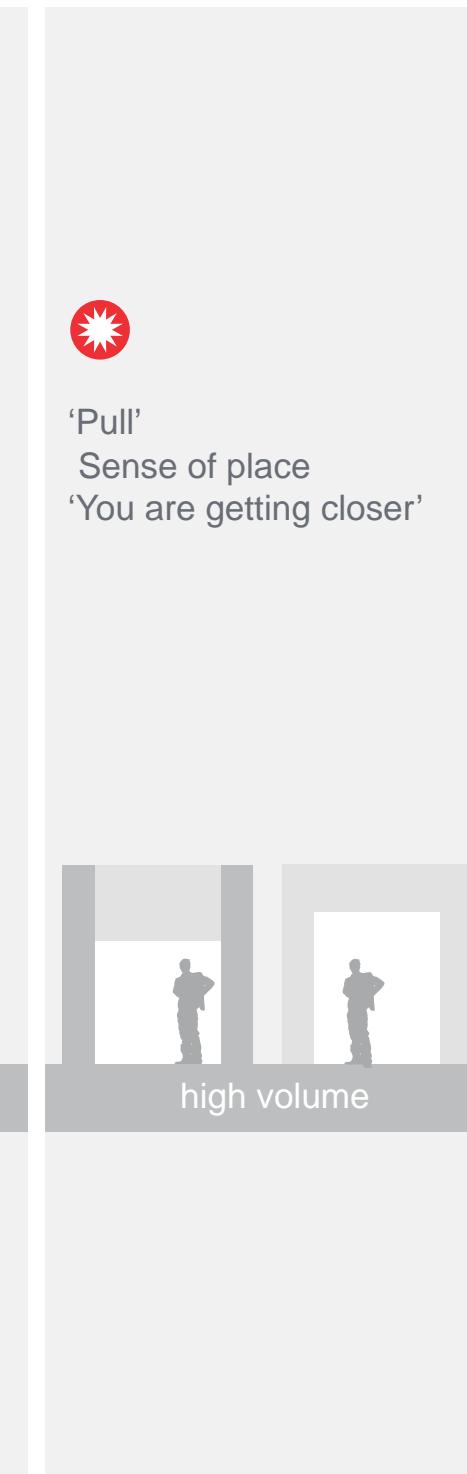
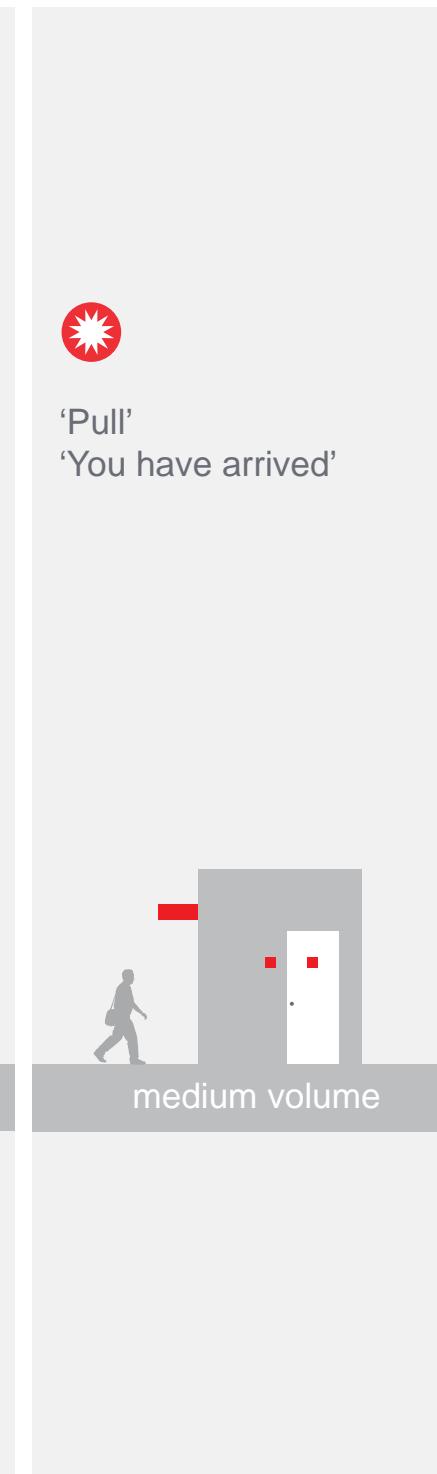
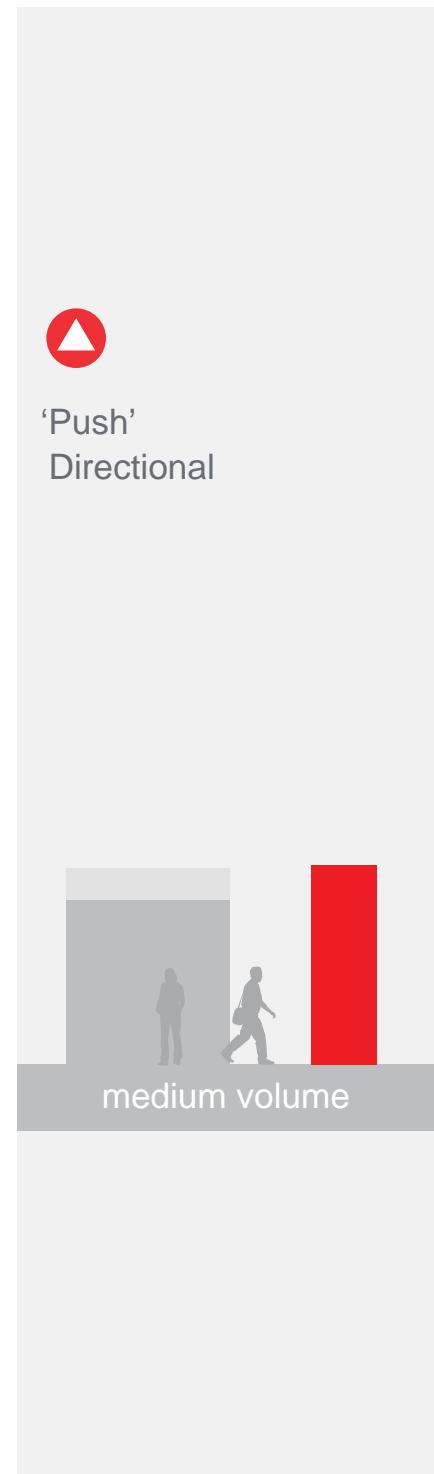
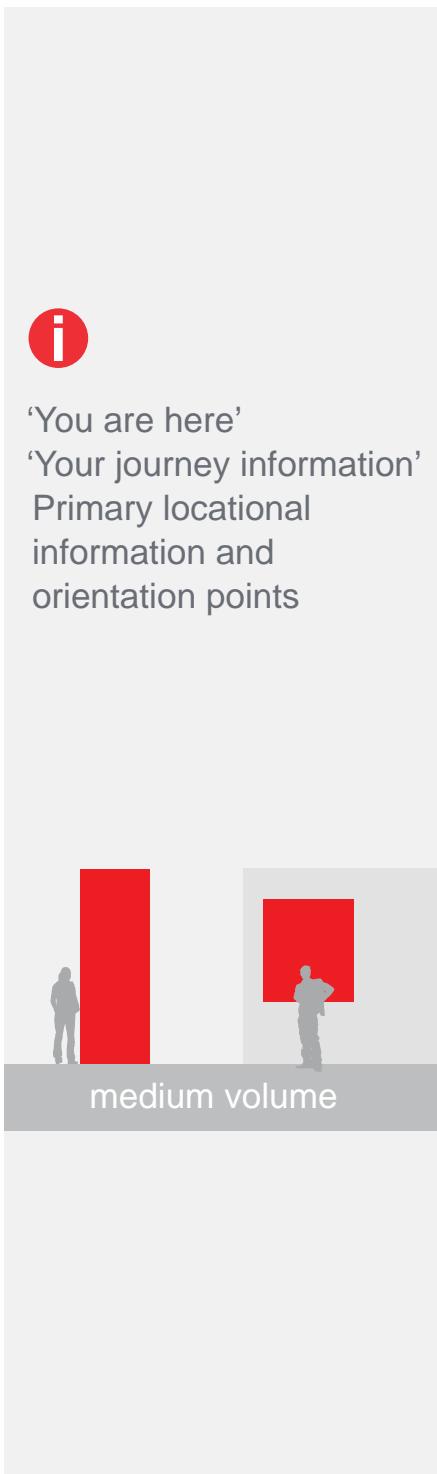
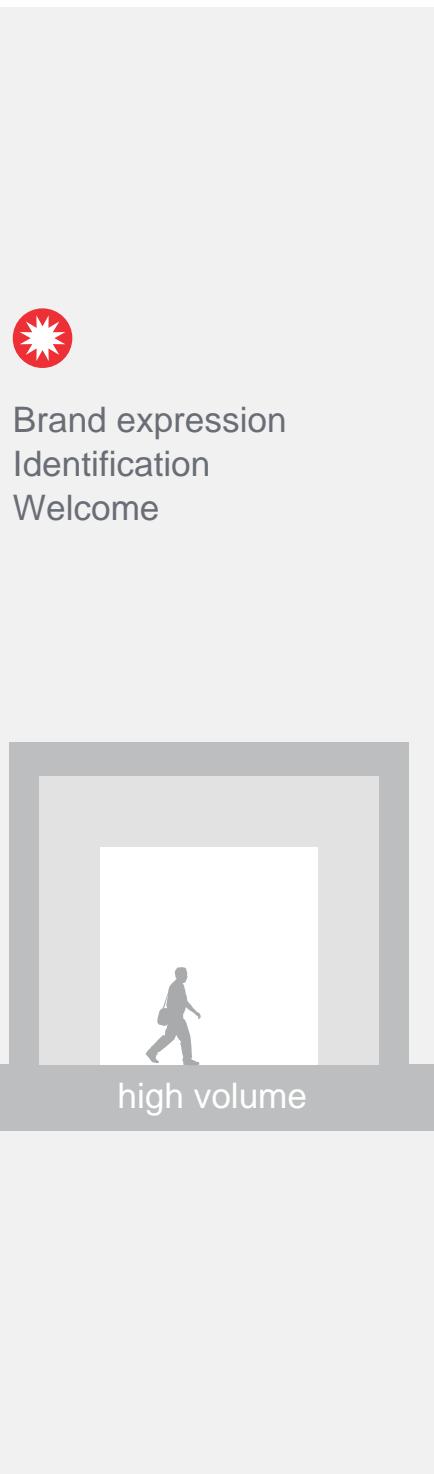
### INFORMATION SIGNS

### DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

### IDENTIFICATION SIGNS

### THRESHOLD SIGNS

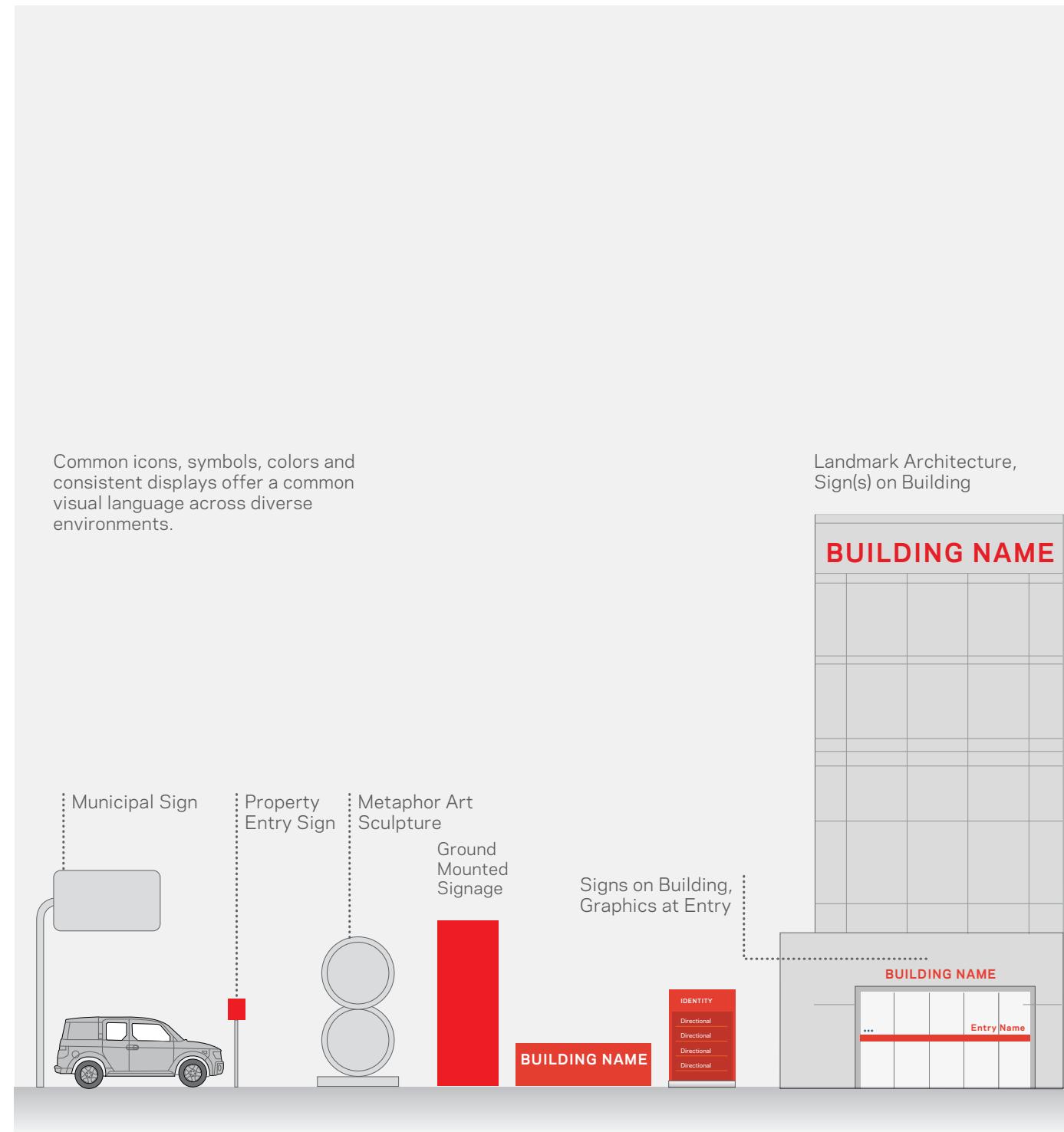
### VERTICAL CIRCULATION



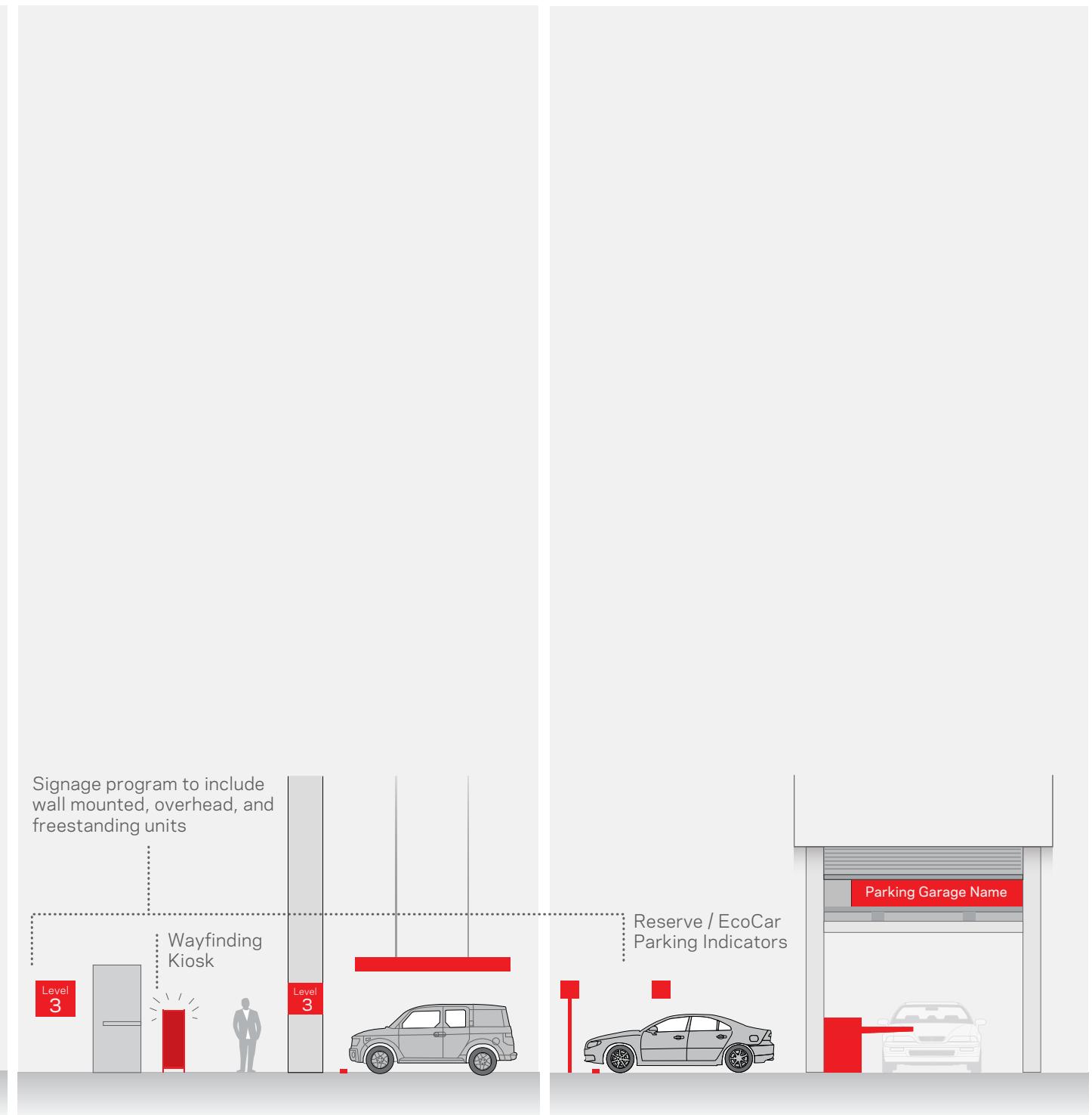
# The Wayfinding Designer's Toolkit

## Wayfinding Types and Distribution

### EXTERIOR ARRIVAL



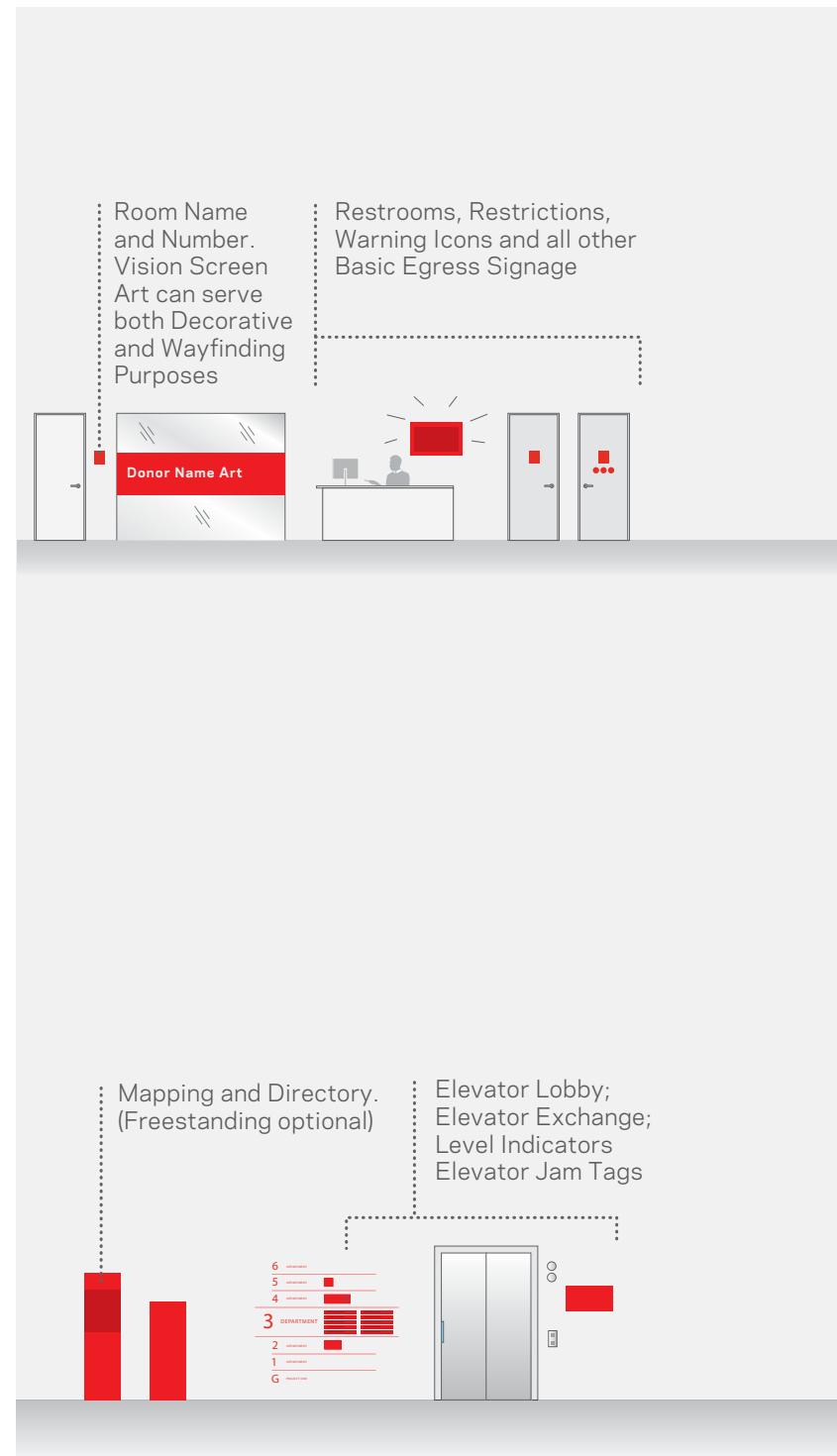
### PARKING



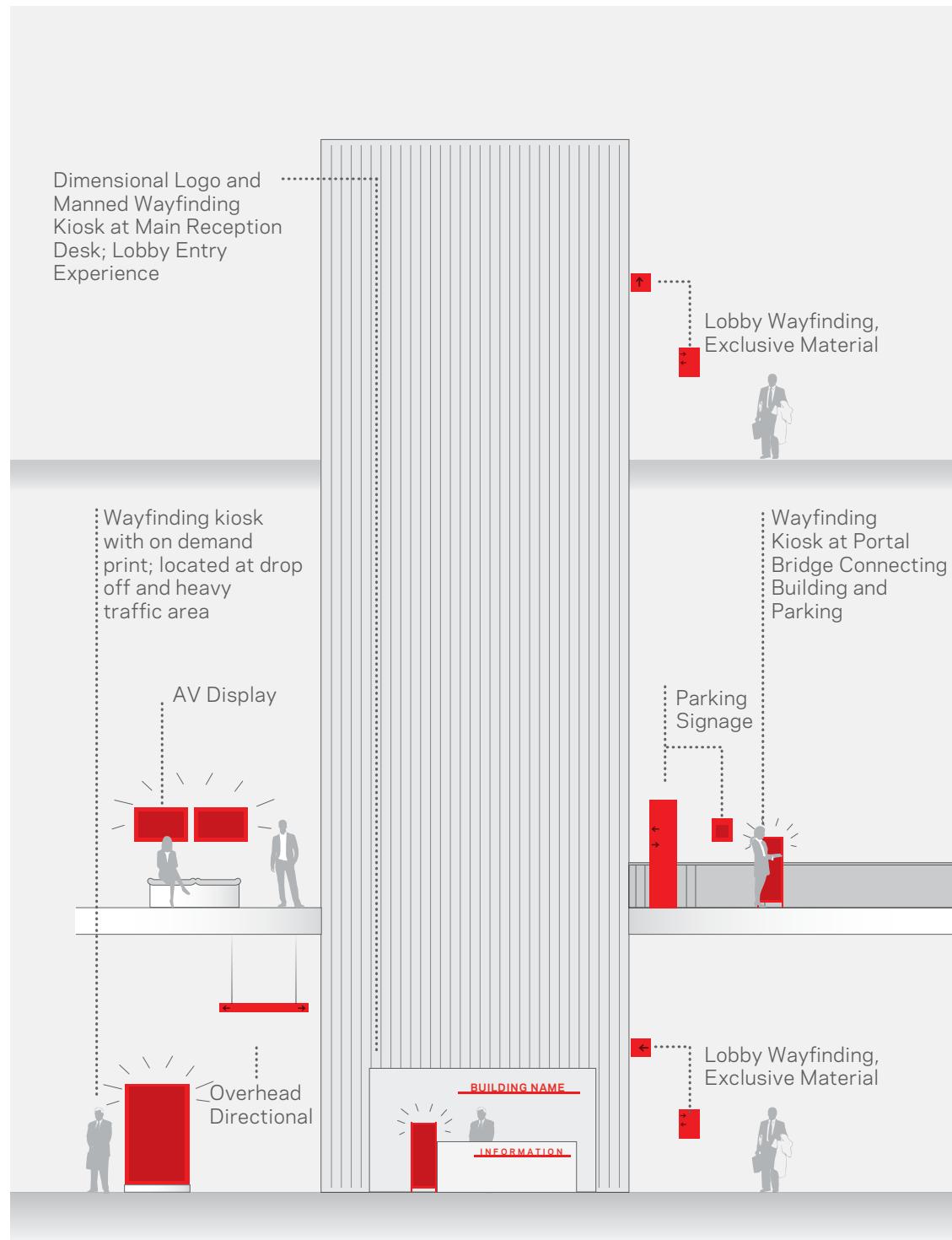
# The Wayfinding Designer's Toolkit

## Wayfinding Types and Distribution

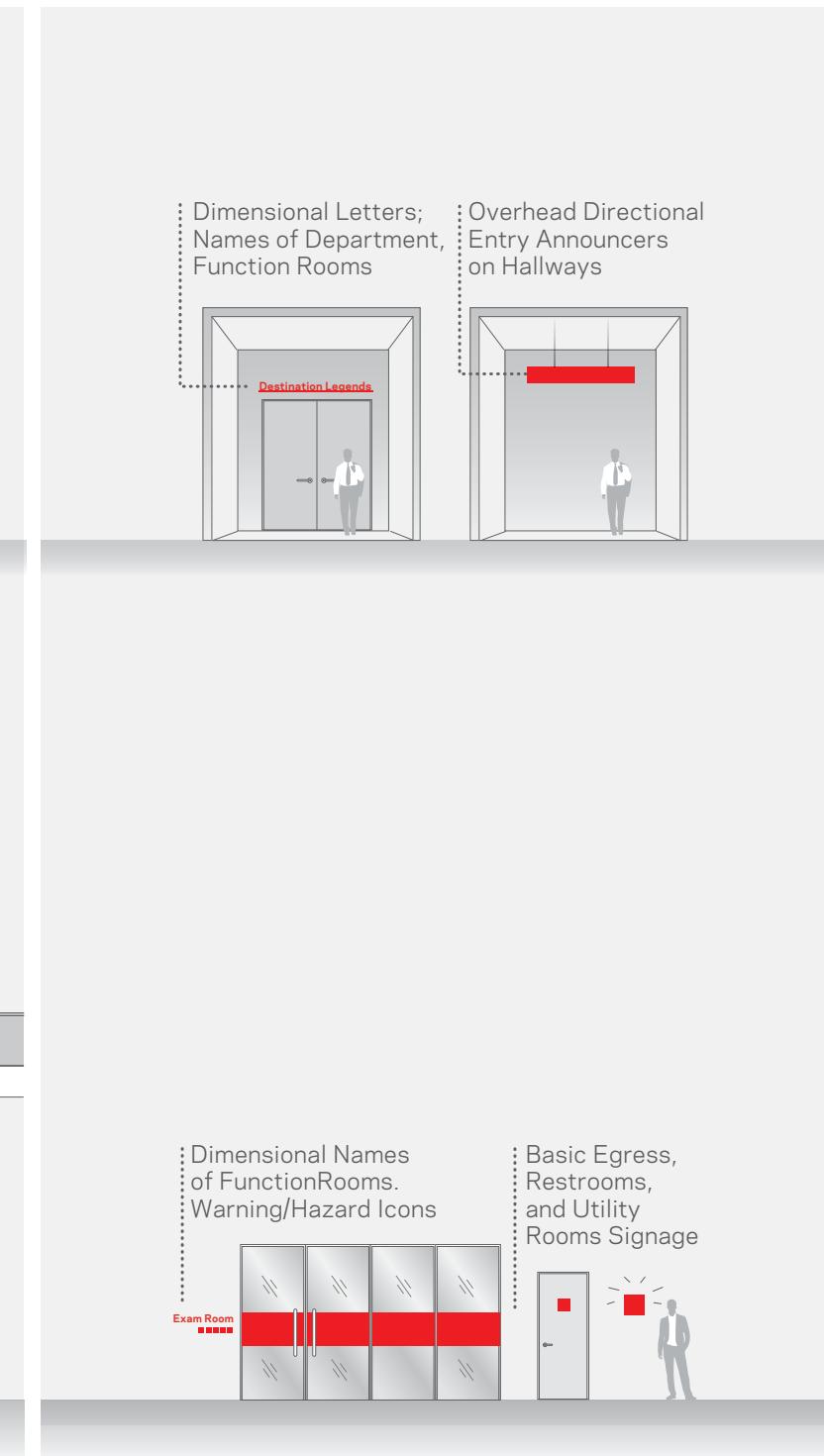
### INTERIOR CIRCULATION



### FLOOR ARRIVAL DEPARTMENTS AND ROOMS



### RESTRICTED AREAS





*Case*  
**STUDIES**

# THE FRANCIS CRICK INSTITUTE



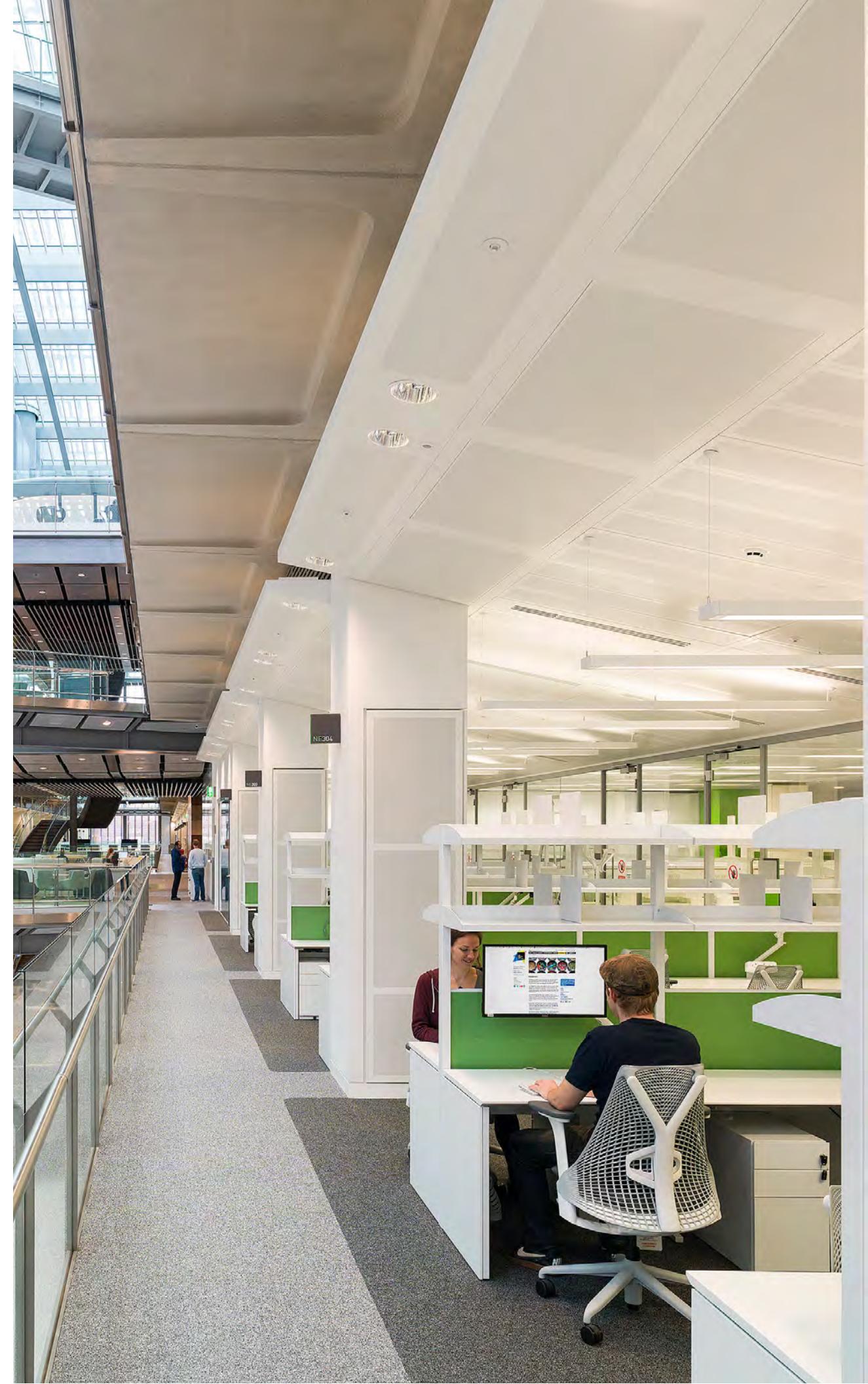
## The Francis Crick Institute

As one of Europe's largest biomedical and translational research centers, the Crick brings together 1,500 of Europe's brightest minds from six different organizations to solve the world's most vexing scientific problems. With no departments or physical barriers dividing the 120 labs, the Crick allows scientists to work together in meaningful ways.

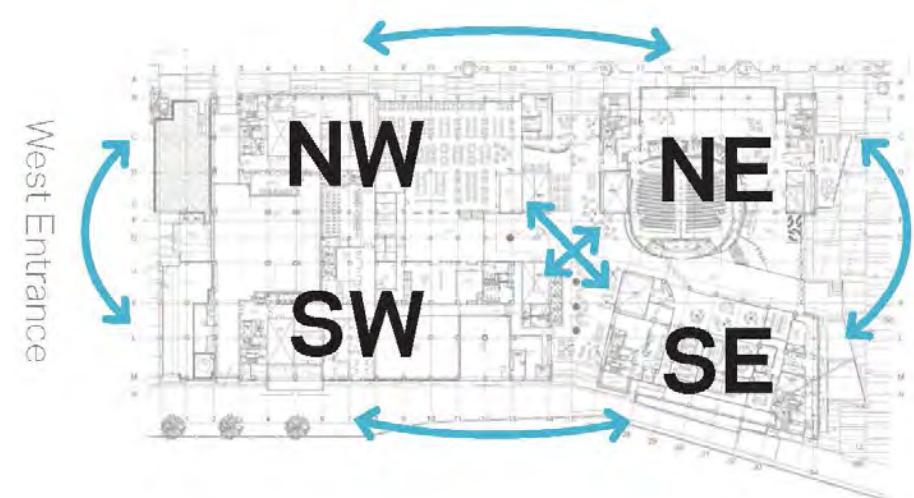
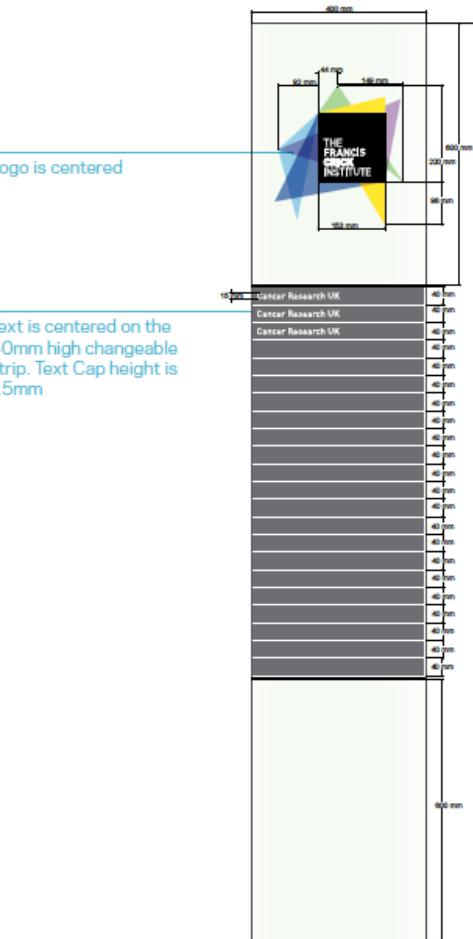
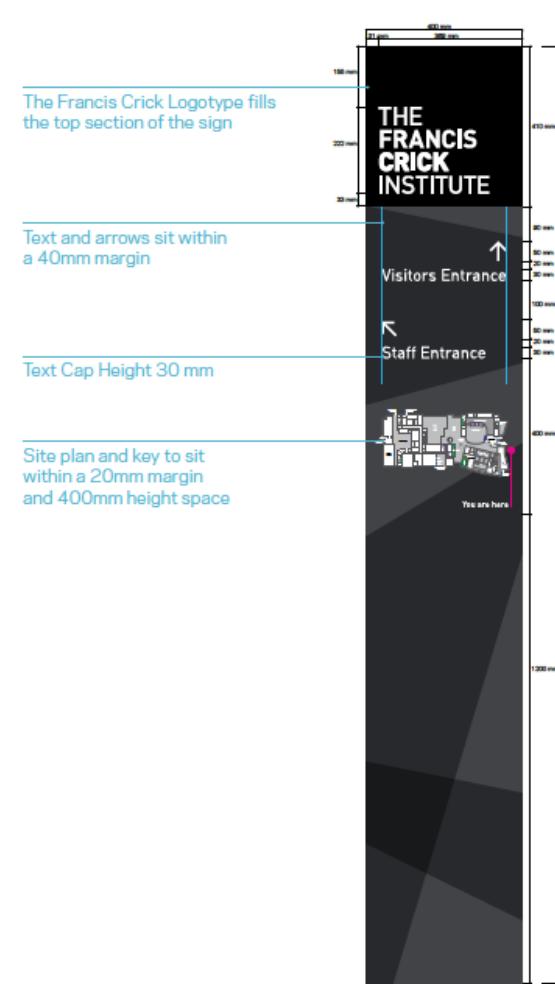
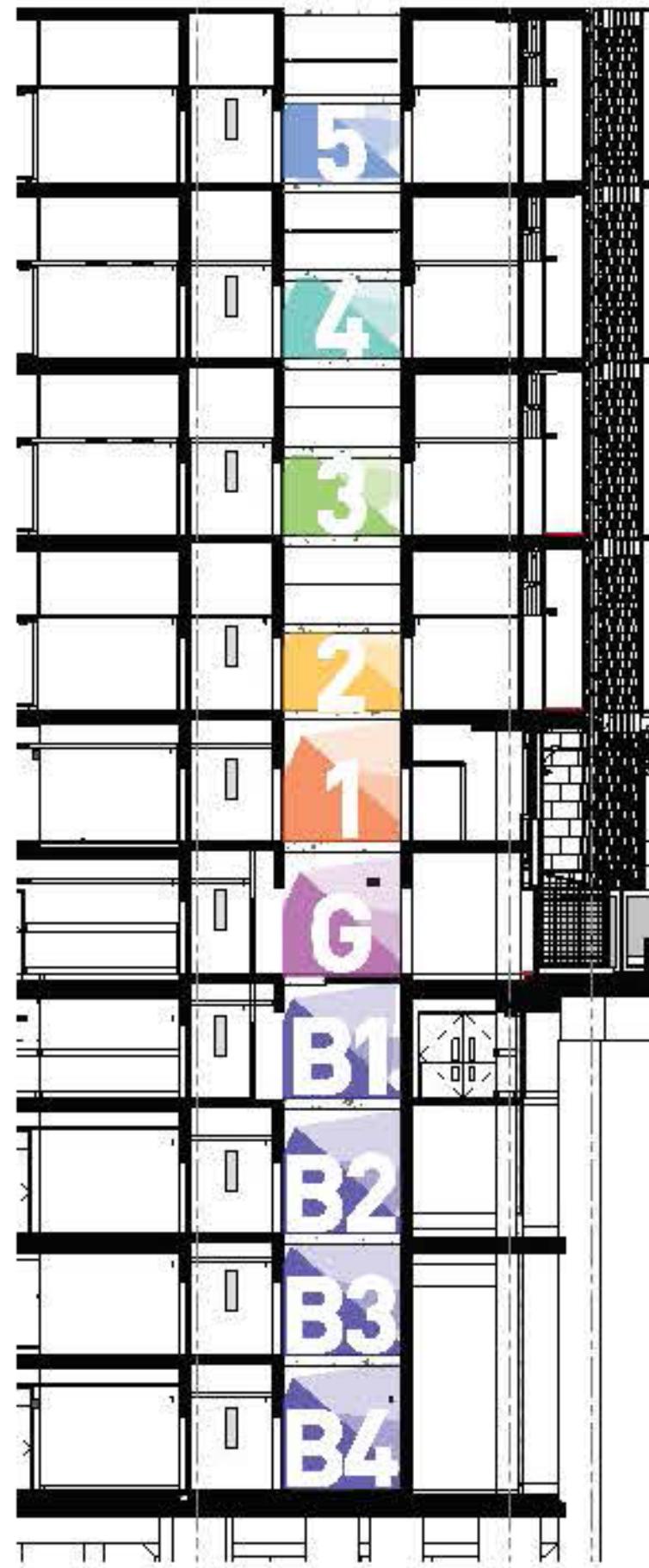


## The Francis Crick Institute

The Crick is composed of four “lab neighborhoods” within 12 levels. The wayfinding responds to the unique layout with different compass coordinates that emulate London’s postal code system. Each floor is coupled with its own color that helps orient visitors. Layouts like this speak to the Kevin Lynch’s model of districts and nodes.



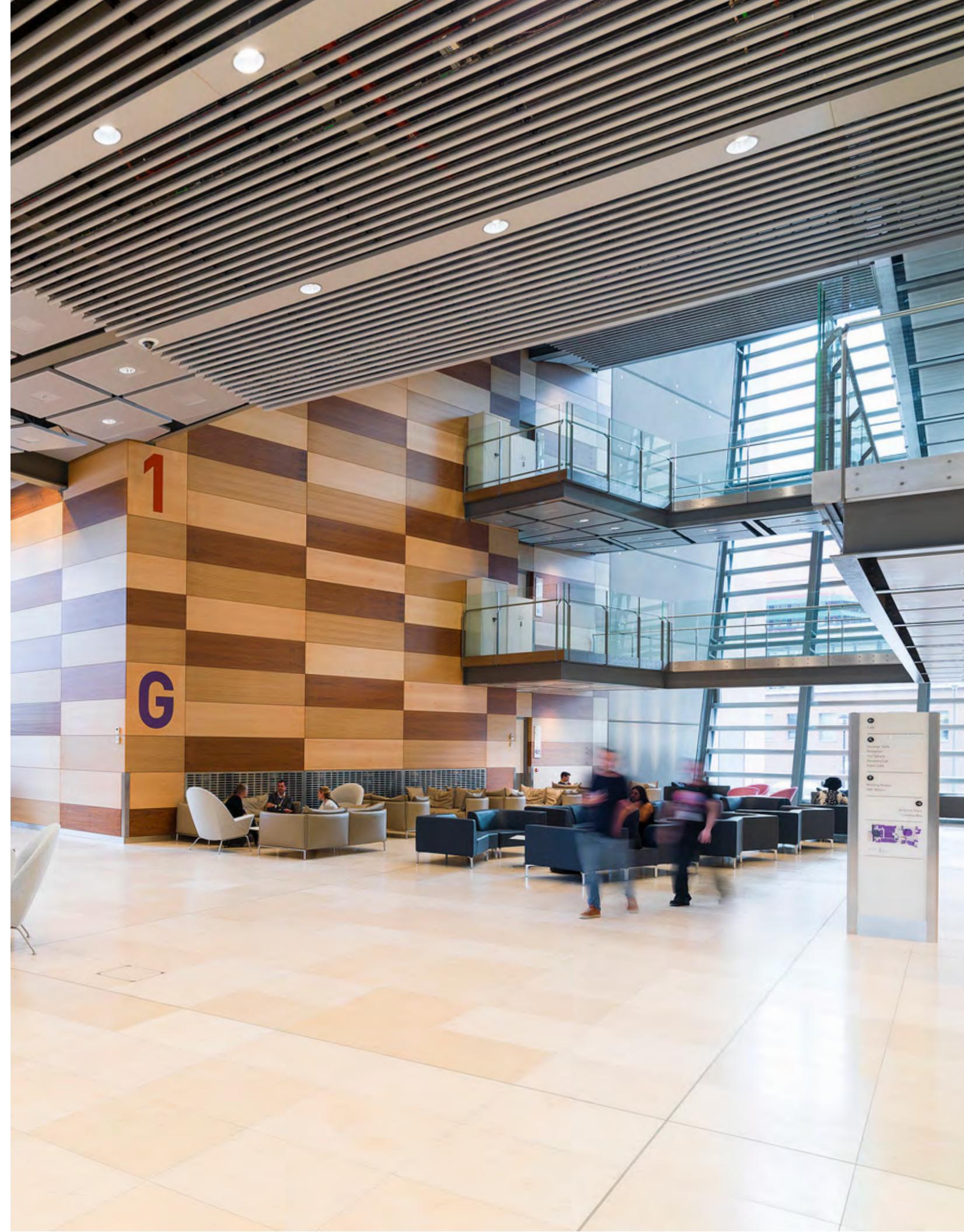




East Entrance

## The Francis Crick Institute

Located in the center of London's scientific community, the Crick has become a hub for both formal and spontaneous gatherings. Colorful breakout spaces on each floor facilitate chance meetings. Highly visible and transparent, this space stays open to the public even when there isn't a planned function.





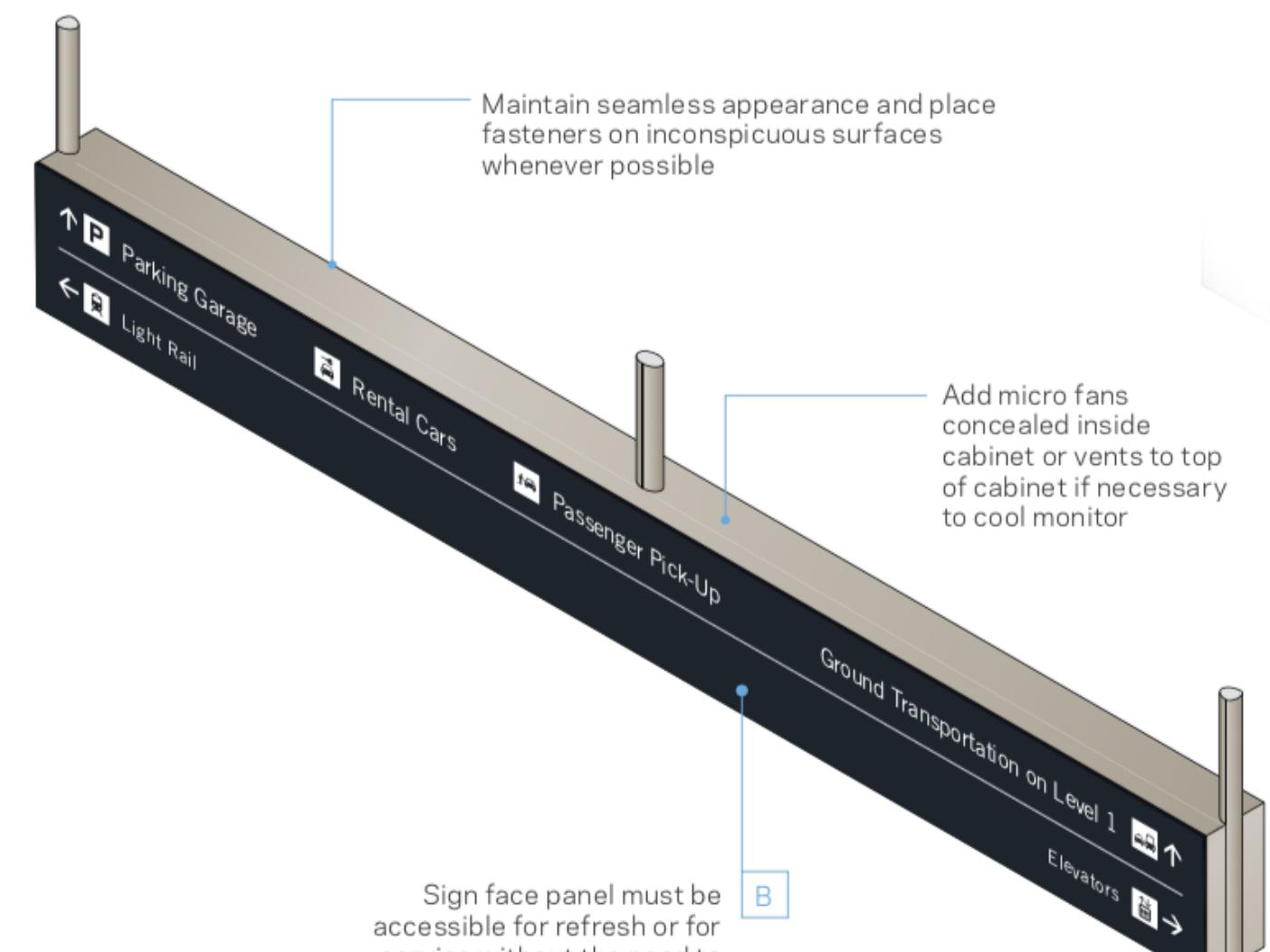
# SALT LAKE CITY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT





## Salt Lake City International Airport

HOK is working with Salt Lake City to create an entirely new airport in Utah's capital. The project is one of the nation's largest aviation developments in years and will be the first completely new airport built in the U.S. in the 21st century.



Maintain seamless appearance and place fasteners on inconspicuous surfaces whenever possible

Add micro fans concealed inside cabinet or vents to top of cabinet if necessary to cool monitor

Sign face panel must be accessible for refresh or for service without the need to entirely dismount sign body from ceiling; reference sign type CM-5 for more details



All Other Airlines

To All Gates

Security Check Point

Passenger Pick-Up

To All Gates

Passenger Pick-Up

Airline Ticketing

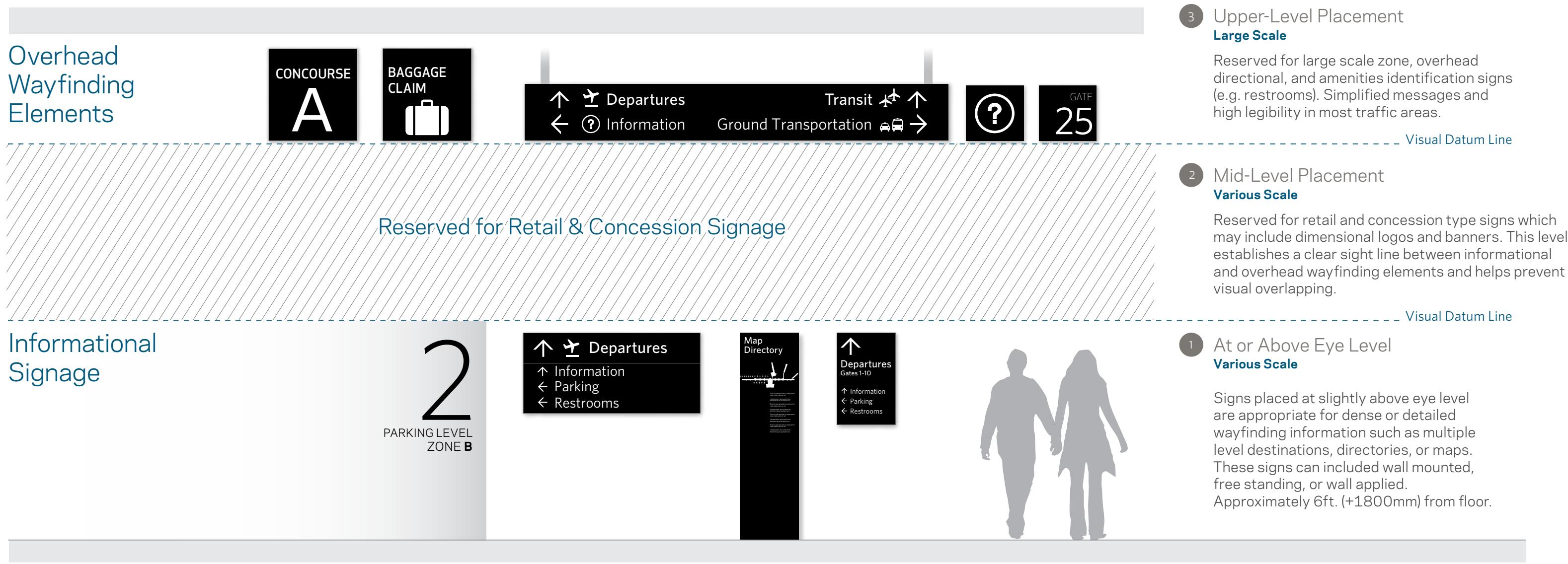
Passenger Pick-Up

## Salt Lake City International Airport

The holistic signage program is integrated with the new terminal's roadway approach, transit program, exterior architecture, interior space, advertising strategy and art program. The design for each type of wayfinding signage includes a definition of type styles, colors, size and materials. Design considerations included the project budget, maintenance, lighting, ability to easily accommodate future upgrades and cost effectiveness over time.



This diagram illustrates "Best Practices" on how height placement and scale is determined by informational hierarchy.





Gates A1-A25

←  Gates A1-A25

5:30 PM ↓ ALL CONCOURSE B GATES

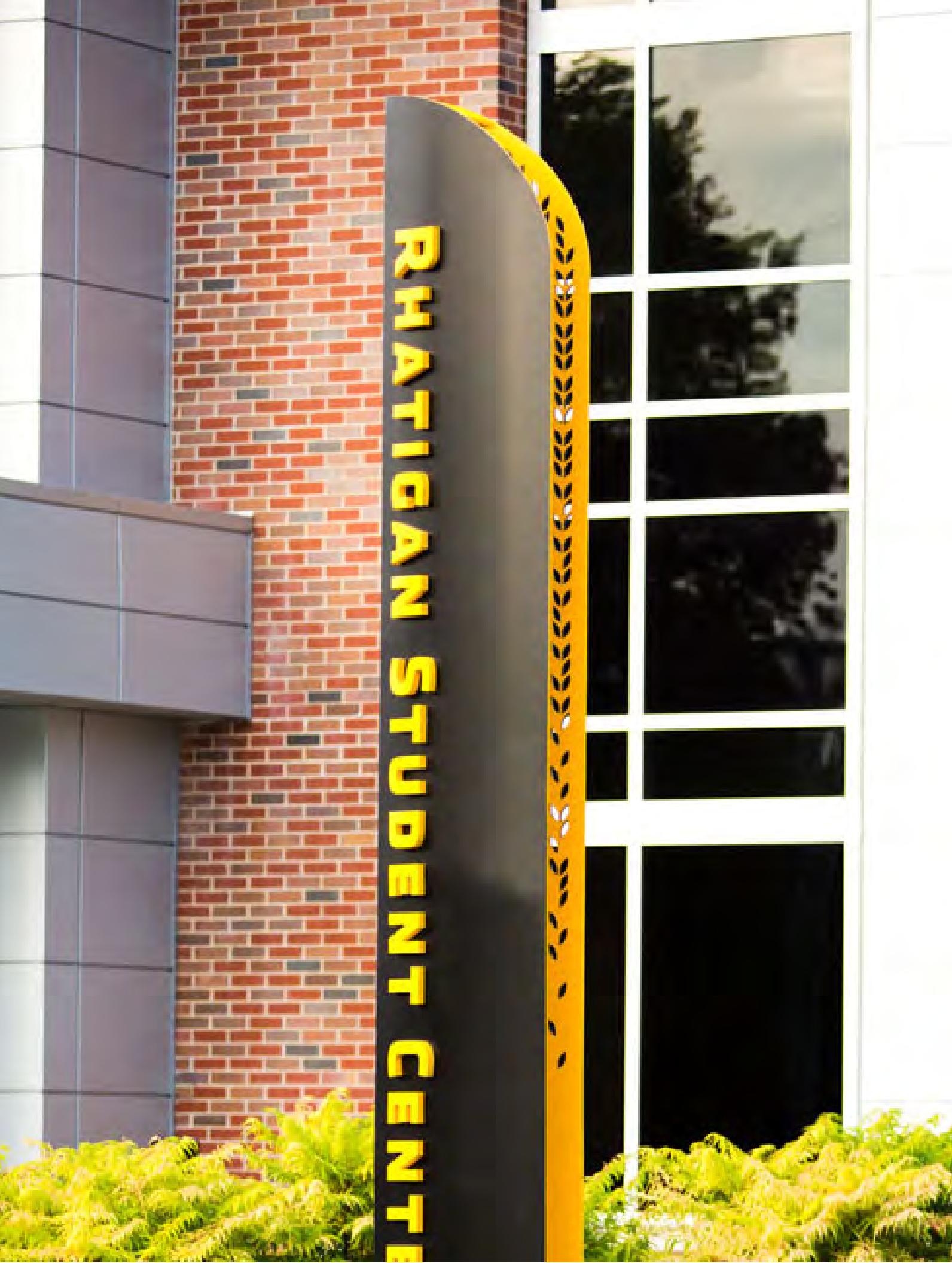
Gates A26-A41 →

Concourse B C D →

A person is walking away from the camera on a path. The path is lined with trees, some of which have red and orange leaves, suggesting autumn. The background is slightly out of focus, creating a sense of depth.

WICHITA  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY





## Wichita State University

As the university was going through a rebrand, they wanted to extend this identity into their campus wayfinding. They wanted the system to create cohesion and connection and be a modern design that would stand out among the existing, traditional architecture.



## Wichita State University

The design concept features elegant forms that echo the movement of a wheat stalk gently blowing in the wind. The wheat grain pattern is water-jet cut, allowing the yellow accent color of the grains to show through and glow at night when illuminated.



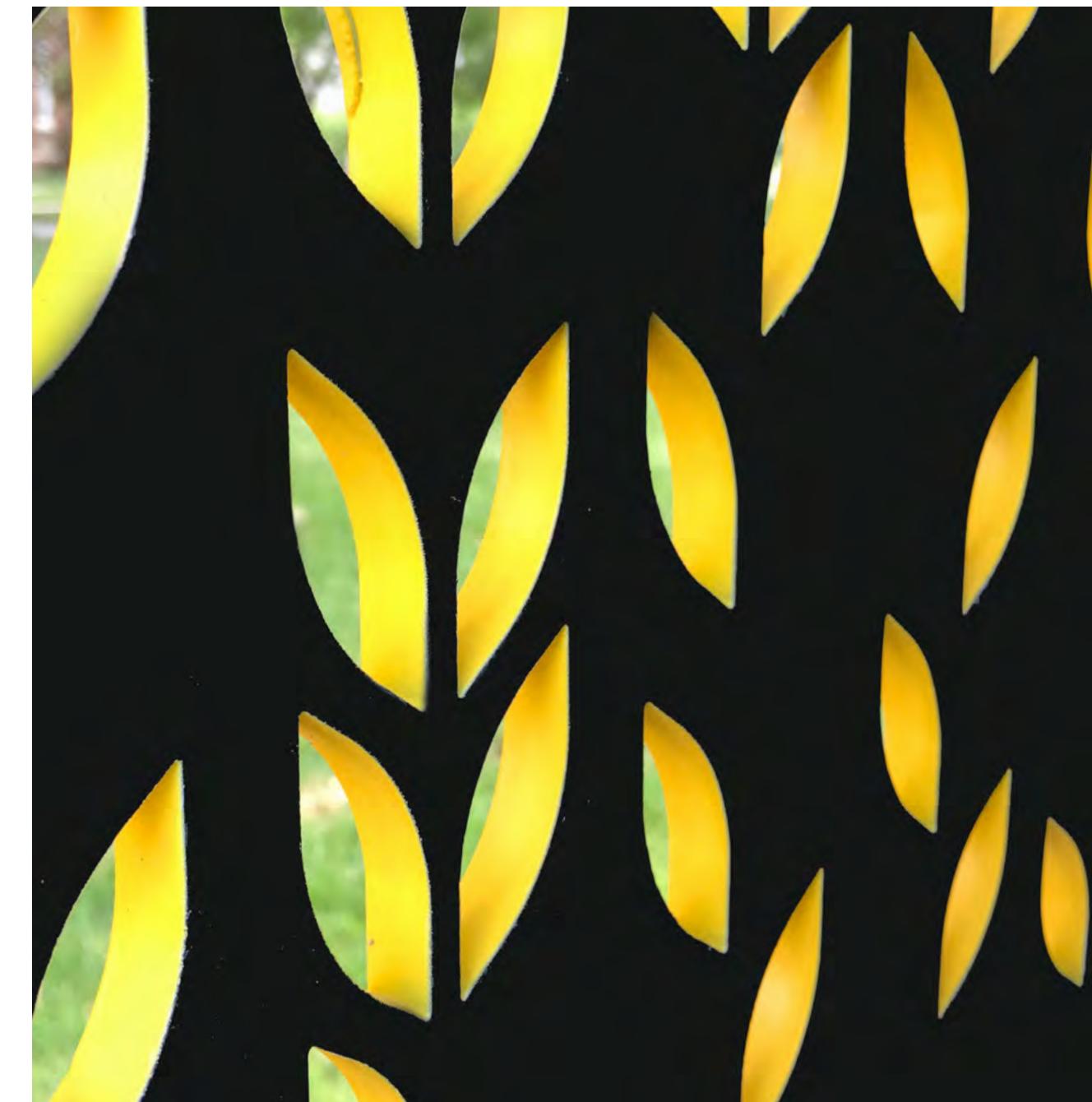


JABARA HALL



## Wichita State University

Designed as a flexible system that can be updated as the campus grows, wayfinding is strategically placed and oriented to highlight most frequently used routes by students, employees and other campus visitors. Sign types included: building identification markers, vehicular directional signs, pedestrian directional signs and map kiosks.





Lindquist Hall  
Ablah Library  
Heskett Center

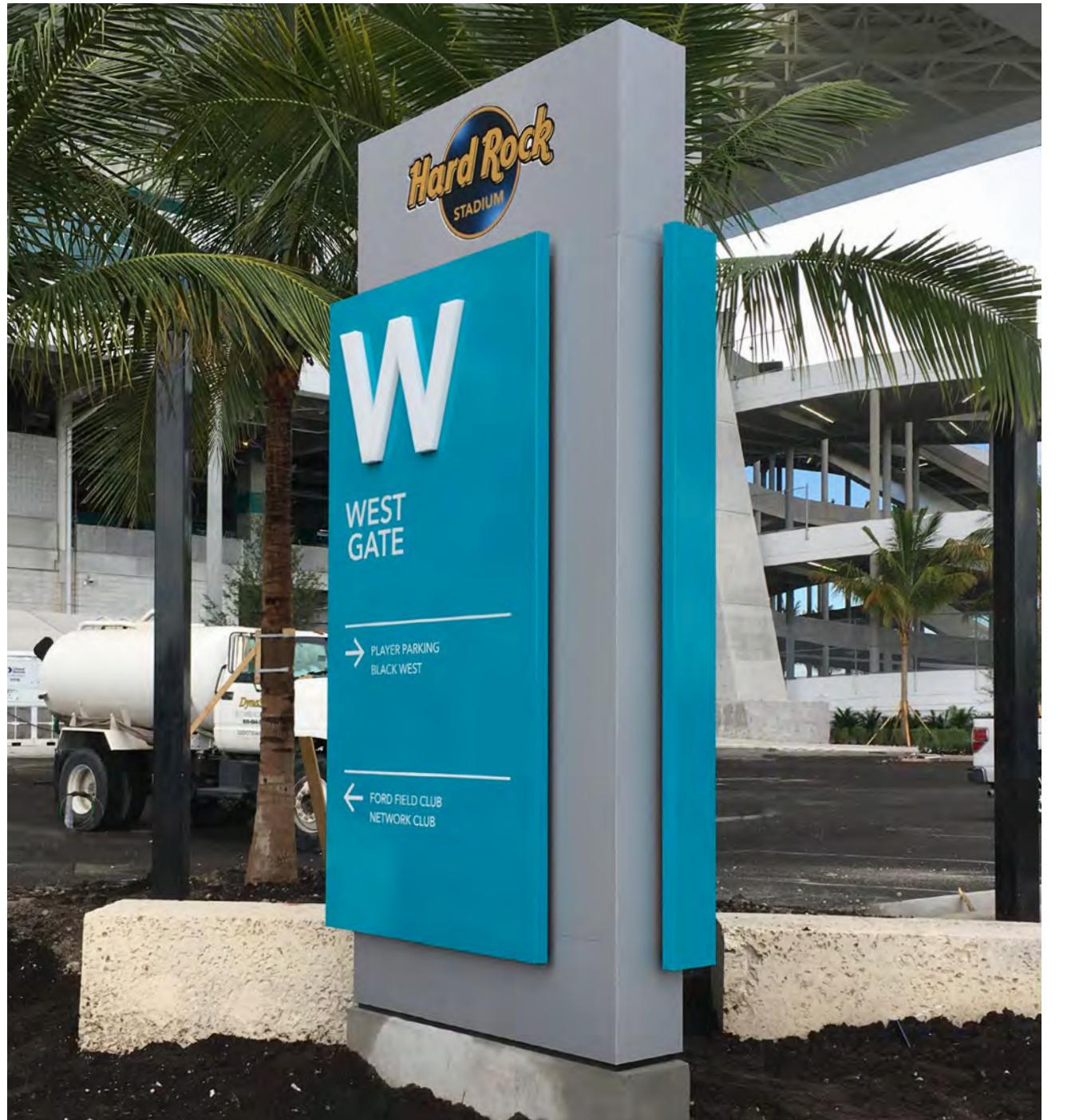


# HARD ROCK STADIUM MODERNIZATION



## Hard Rock Stadium Modernization

The modernization of the Miami Dolphins' Hard Rock Stadium has transformed the fan experience and created a world-class destination for marquee events. To make sure the NFL team wouldn't miss any home games, renovations were completed over three off-seasons and completed in time for the 2019 Super Bowl.





GROUND  
LEVEL

SW|100

200-300



## Hard Rock Stadium Modernization

Reinforcing Miami's culture and heritage are murals by local artists, a branded signage program and the use of local materials and colors. The designers collaborated with project stakeholders to develop a comprehensive wayfinding experience that exemplifies South Florida's identity. Each club, suite, gathering and dining space provides fans with a flavor of South Florida.



## Hard Rock Stadium Modernization

Wayfinding was developed for the entire stadium, including exterior parking, concourses, concessions and wayfinding within the seating bowl.





# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS





## U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs San Jose Outpatient Clinic

The Veteran patient population requires a complexity of care that ranges from minor healthcare needs to urgent care. This new community-based outpatient clinic offers primary, specialty, mental health, ancillary and diagnostic services distributed over three floors.



**AUDIOLOGY  
&  
SPEECH  
PATHOLOGY**

AUDIOLOGY  
&  
SPEECH  
PATHOLOGY

160

EXIT



## U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs San Jose Outpatient Clinic

The complete interior and exterior sign family included: ADA and life safety signage, room and lab signage, identity signage for each department, floor identifiers, elevator and lobby directory signage, registration signage, exterior monument signage and exterior building signage.



Patient Check-In  
↓

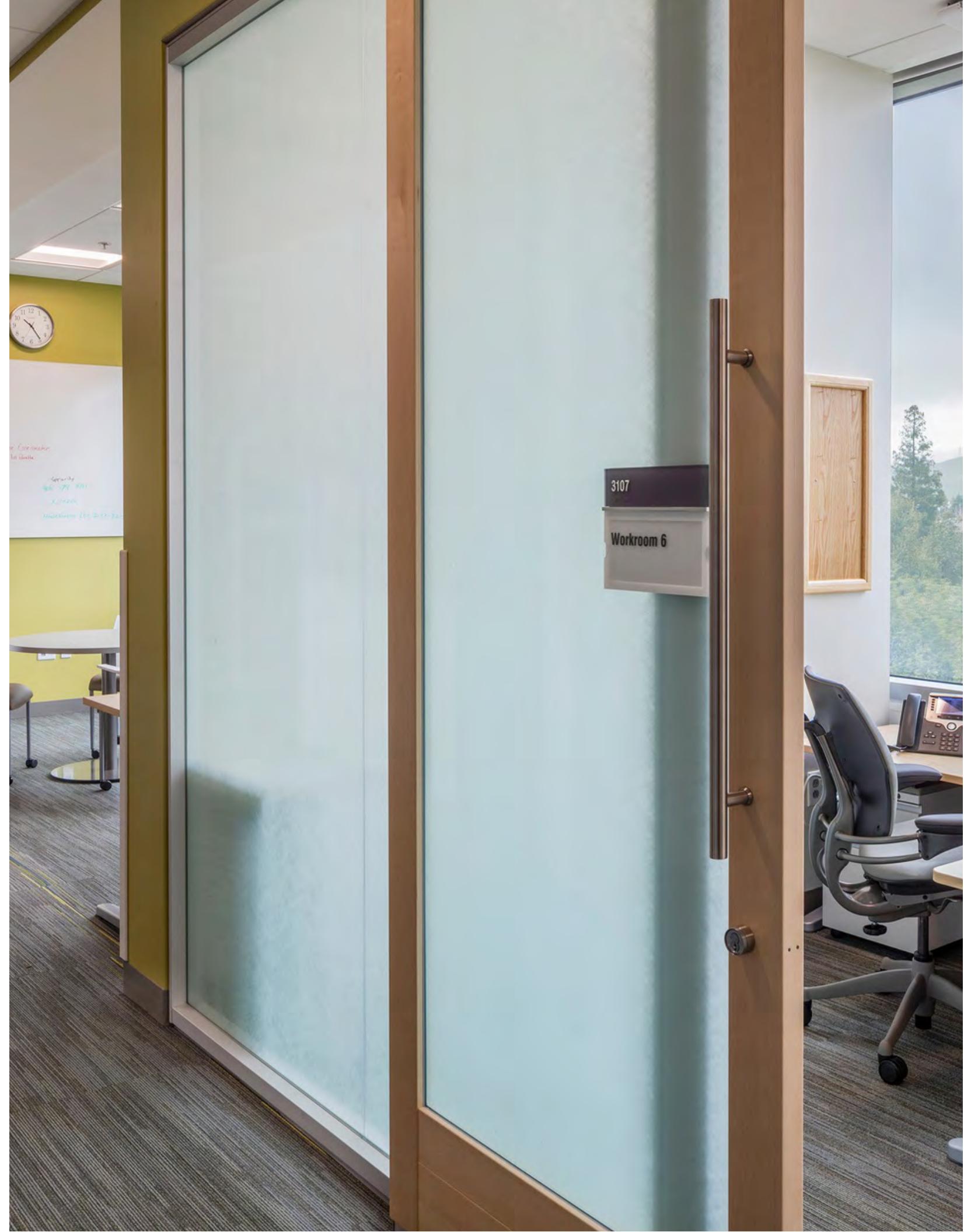
← Group Rooms 203 & 205  
Patient Care Services  
2A-2B

→ Group Rooms 204 - 206  
Patient Care Services  
2C-2E



## U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs San Jose Outpatient Clinic

ADA and life safety signage is designed to be easily updatable and complement the design palette.





5855

# KENTUCKY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER





## Kentucky International Convention Center

A newly-expanded convention center puts downtown Louisville on display and underscores the expansion's vision: to re-imagine the convention center as a community asset. The western half of the Kentucky International Convention Center (KICC) features a glass facade and new public circulation spaces that create an inviting front porch for the passerby.





UPPER CONCOURSE

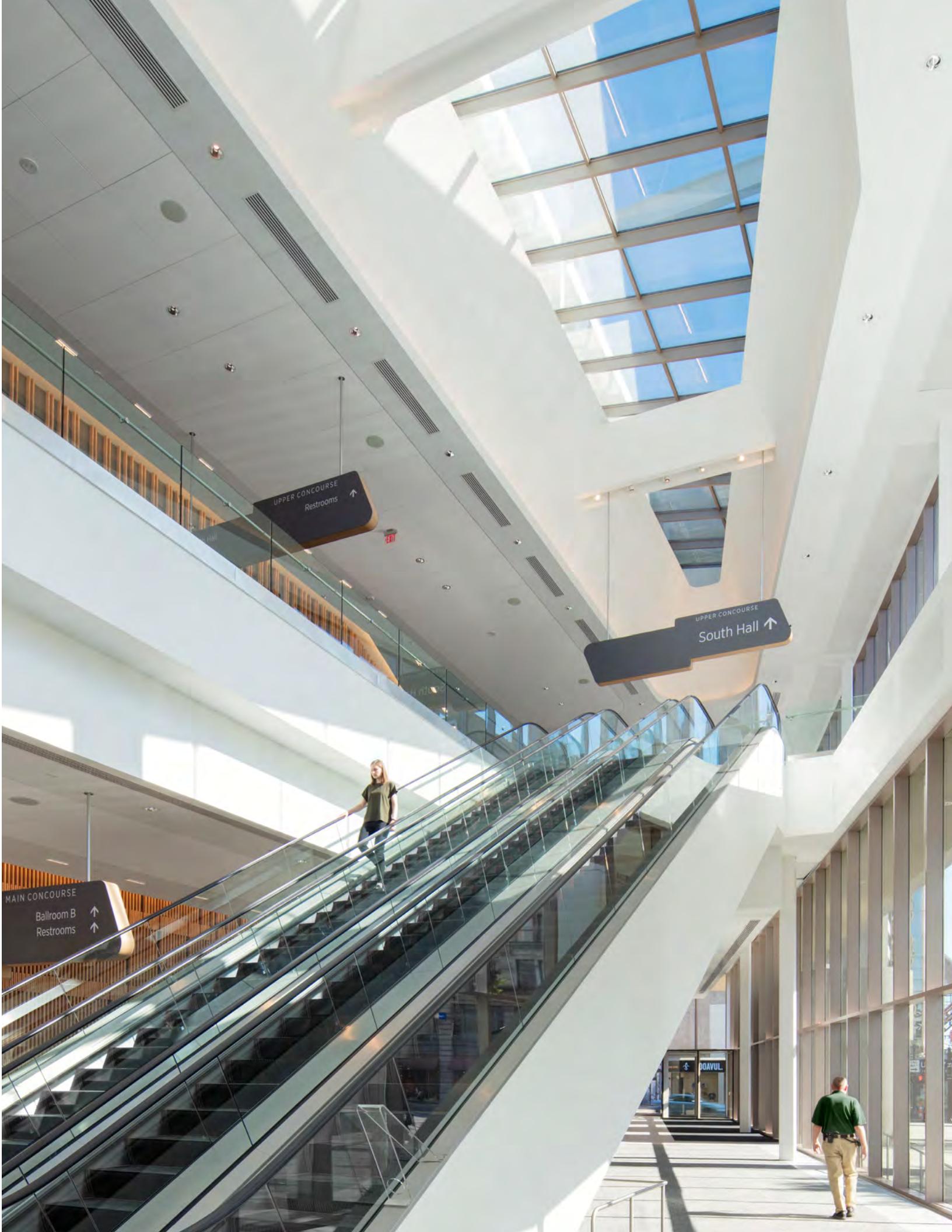
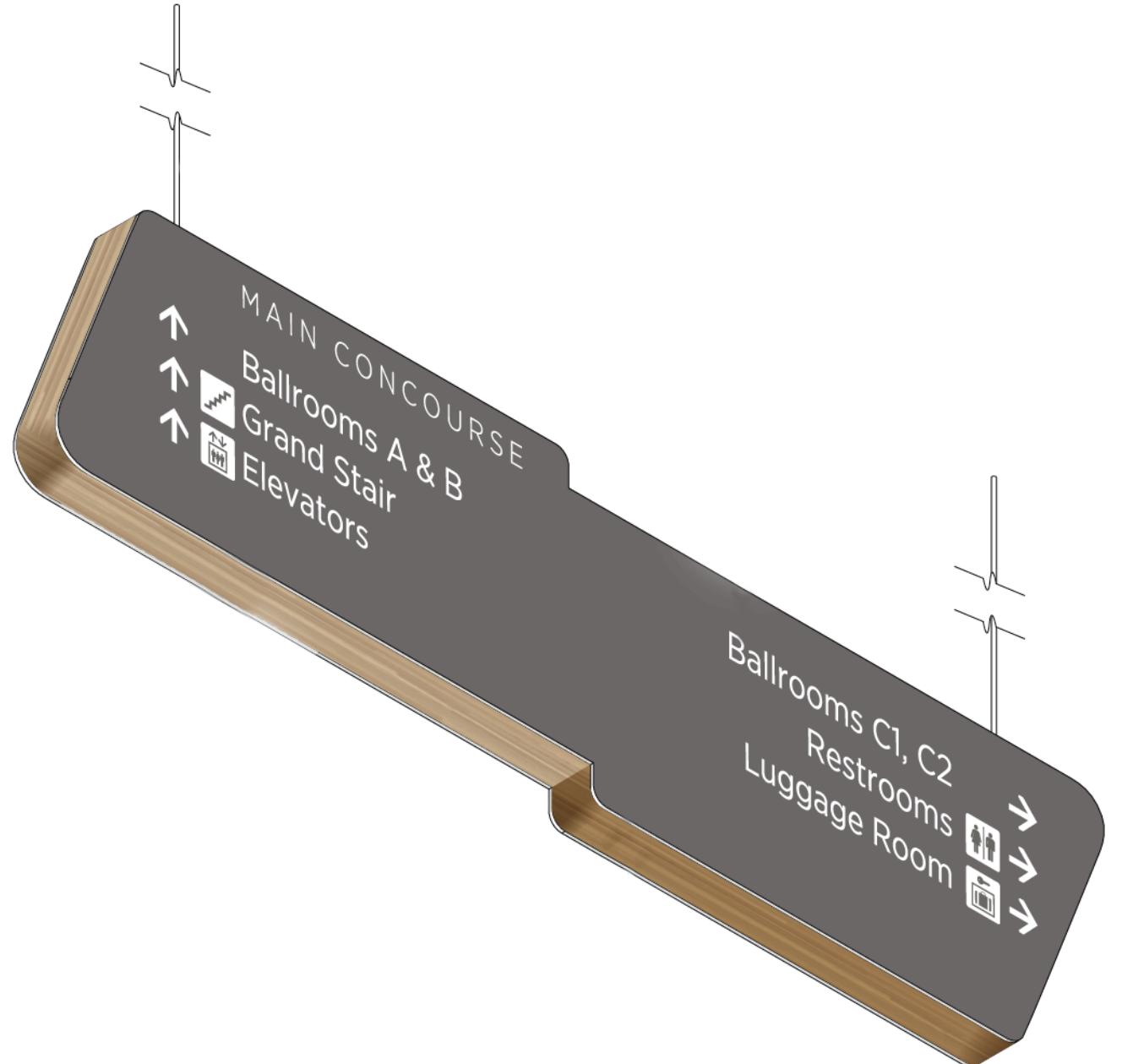
↑ South Hall  
↑ Coat Check

Box Office ↑  
Restrooms ↑

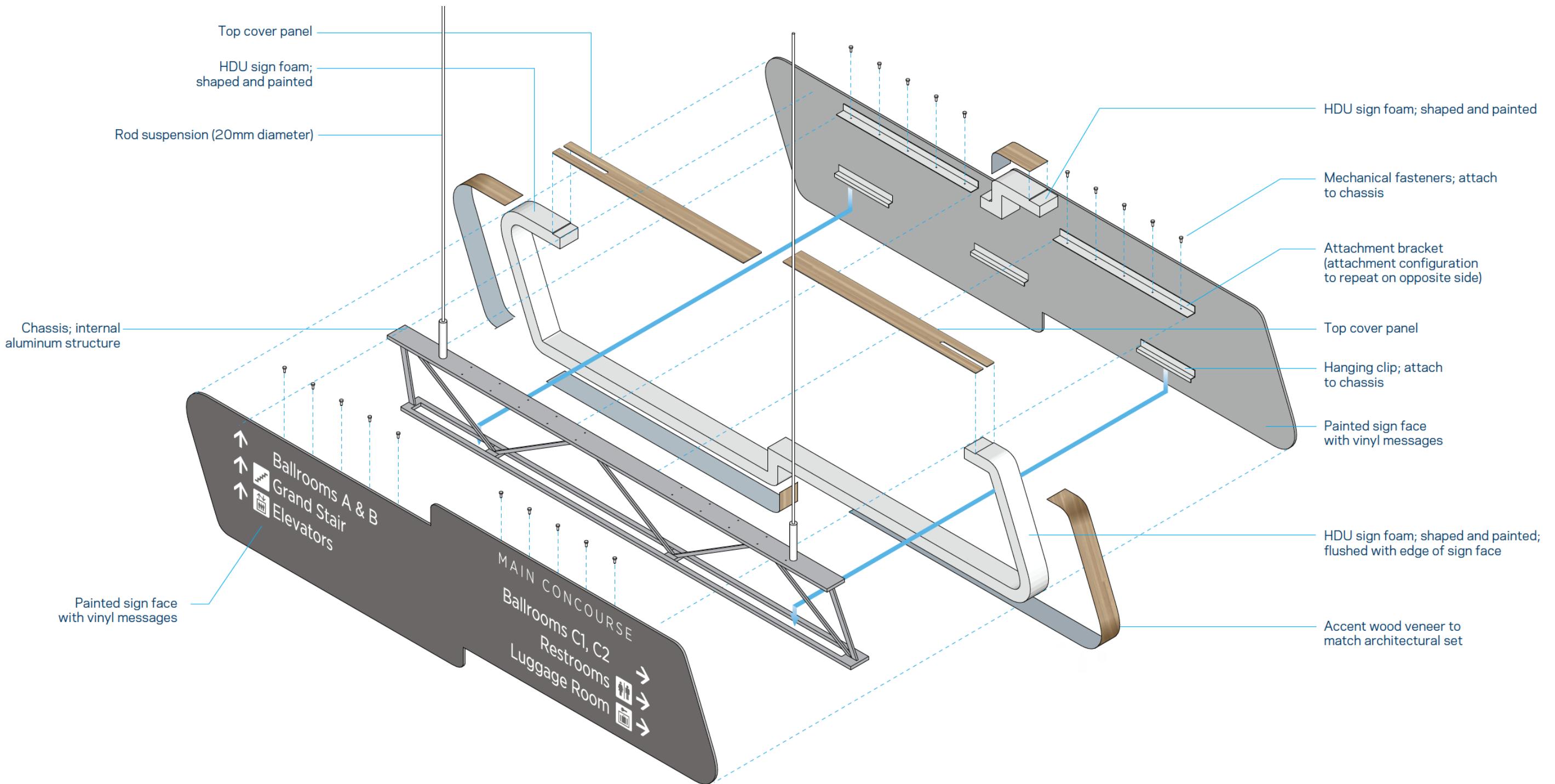
South Hall ↑

## Kentucky International Convention Center

Signage at KICC is purposefully organic and relates to the architecture and interior design. For example, the skylights, which are a big design feature, are referenced in a subtle but meaningful way.

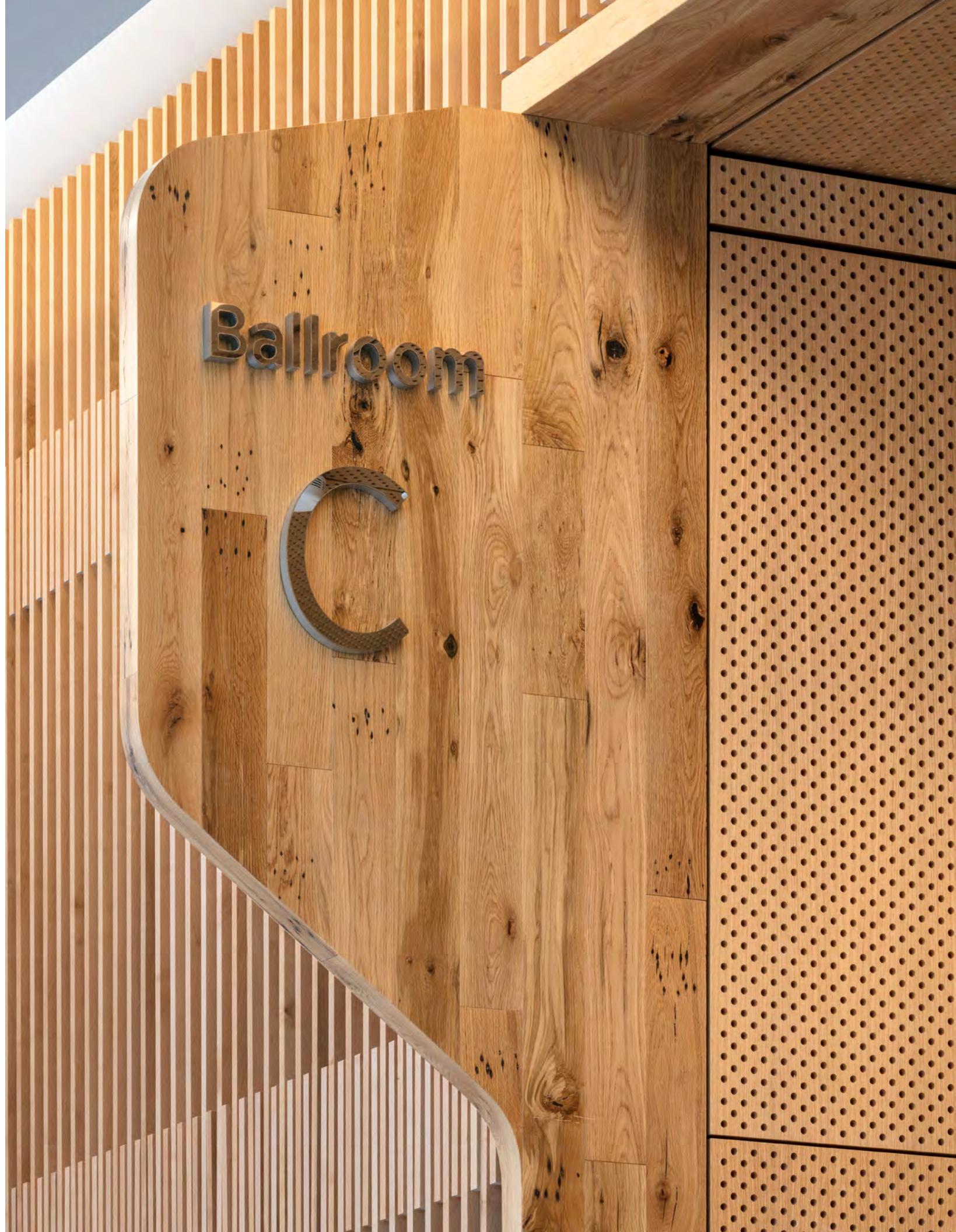


# Kentucky International Convention Center

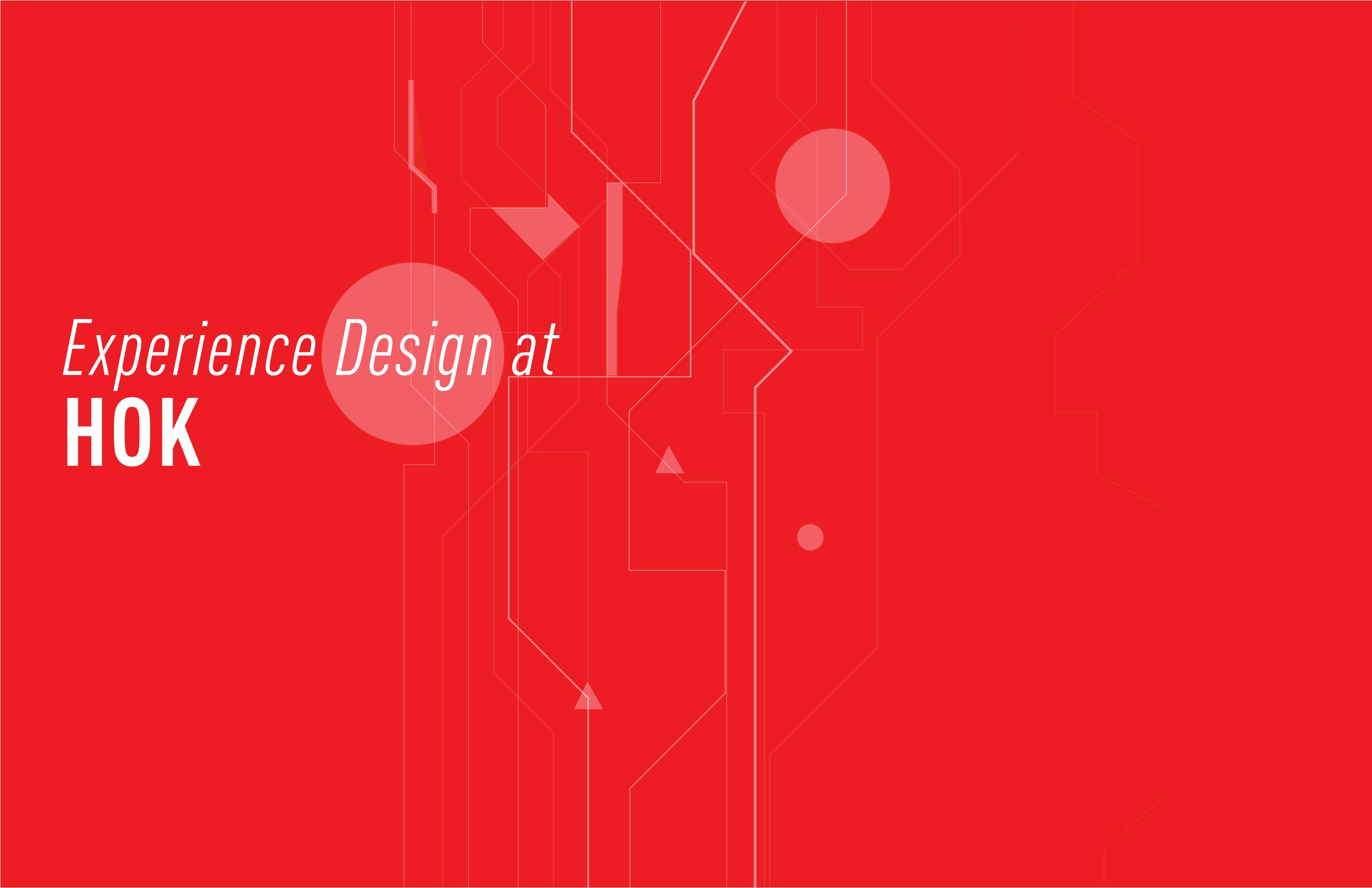


## Kentucky International Convention Center

The wayfinding designers were able to collaborate with architectural designers to include more integrated elements. At the ballroom entrance, the innermost interior slat of the wood flag detail pulls out from the doorway and is picked up as an architectural detail.

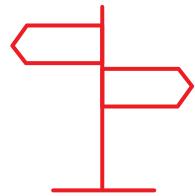






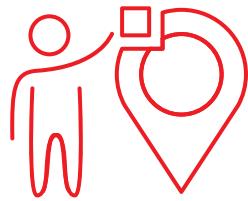
# *Experience Design at* **HOK**

# WHAT IS EXPERIENCE DESIGN?



## WAYFINDING

Sigange design and standards  
Assessments  
ADA and life safety  
Master plan strategies  
Naming and numbering



## PLACEMAKING

Experiential graphics  
Public art  
Digital experiences  
Storytelling displays  
Donor recognition  
Exhibits



## BRAND DESIGN

Identity and logo design  
Brand applications  
Media integration  
Change management campaigns  
New media



## *Where Story* MEETS SPACE

Experience Design integrates with the architectural process to create dynamic spaces that communicate messages and enhance experiences.

## *Create an* **EXPERIENCE**

We map out the journey and leverage brand positioning so everyone can visualize your unique personality. We work with you to create and curate content that inspires individuals and teams, and we look for creative ways to integrate graphics, art, custom installations, and digital media to embody your values and mission.



## Experience Design at HOK

By the numbers

**60** YEARS  
IN THE  
INDUSTRY

**24** OFFICES  
GLOBALLY

**5** MILLION  
WAYFINDING  
SQ. FT.

PROJECTS PER YEAR  
**3000**

**13**  
MARKET  
SECTORS

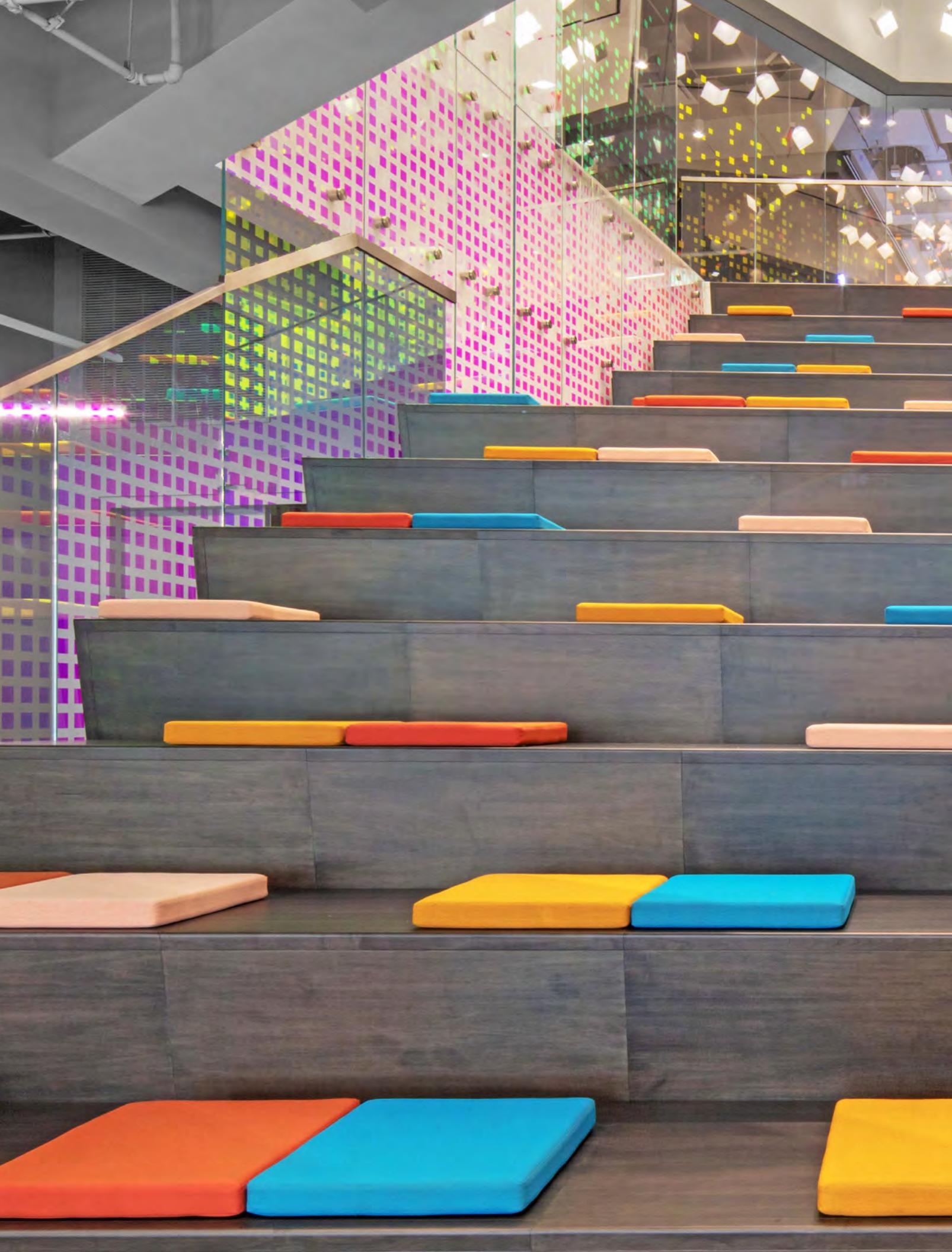
**#1** US ARCHITECTURAL /  
ENGINEERING FIRM  
ENGINEERING NEWS - RECORD TOP 500 DESIGN FIRMS

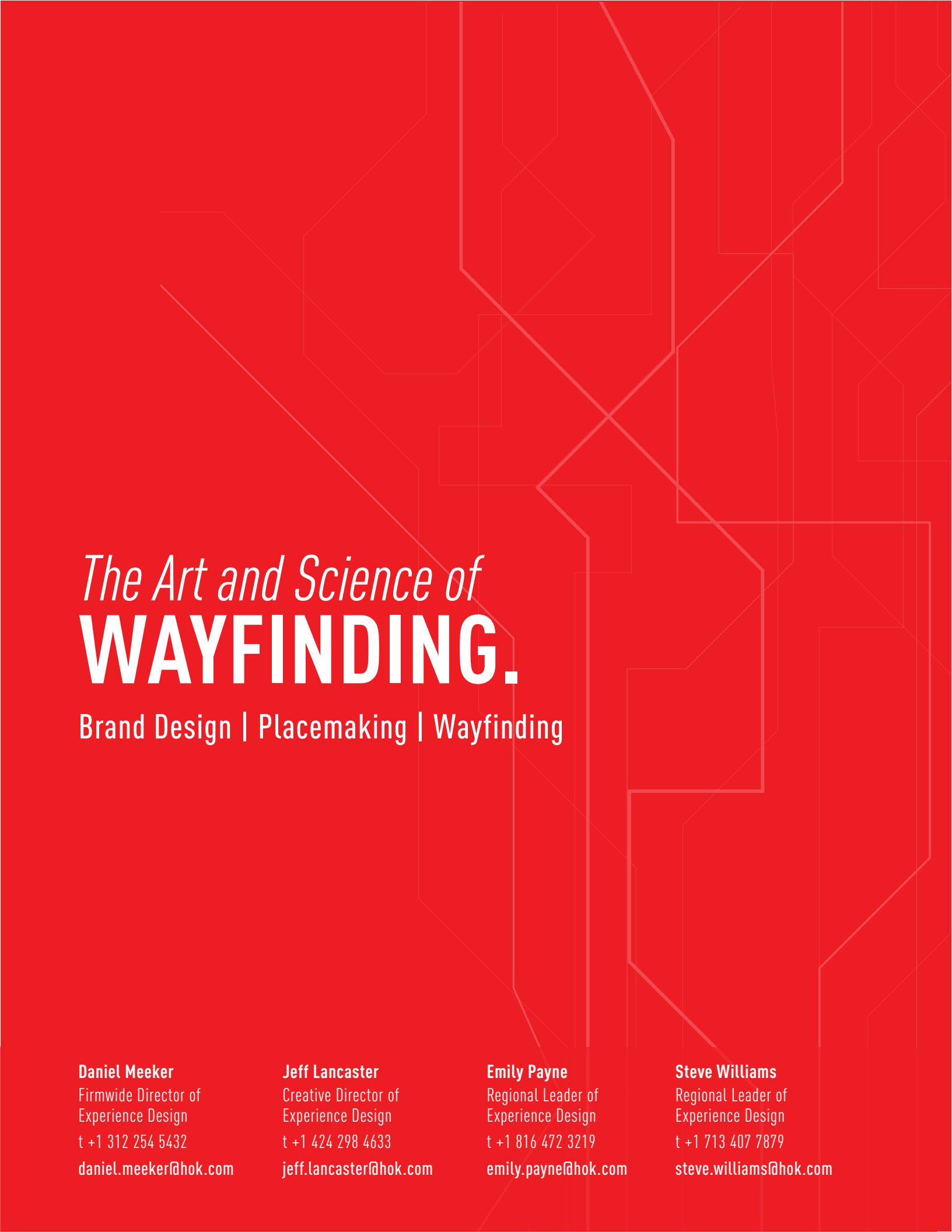
**24** EXD  
DESIGNERS

**25** DESIGNED  
CORPORATE  
HEADQUARTERS

EXPERIENCE DESIGN

FIRMWIDE





# *The Art and Science of* **WAYFINDING.**

Brand Design | Placemaking | Wayfinding

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