AZ AWARDS 2017

CATEGORY

INTERIORS: COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL

ENTRY

#1143 ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES GROUP CENTER

DESCRIPTION

The Advanced Technologies Group Center (ATGC) in Pittsburgh began in 2015 to research and develop solutions for mapping, vehicle safety, and autonomous transportation. Pittsburgh's long history of cutting-edge production technology and manufacturing the most essential machines of its age matched our client's desire to launch and build its first self-driving vehicle. This idea of marrying the past and future became the design inspiration behind ATGC.

In a renovated 80,000 sf warehouse space, engineers will be envisioning, designing and building a city for the future. Every wire, part, and idea forged within these walls will be an artifact of that future. The client envisioned this space as a cathedral to the values of industry—hard work, dedication, creativity. At the head of the plan's central nave is the showroom which acts as a kind of altar to the autonomous car. Everything here is white - stark white, from the bleached pine stadium seating canted slightly, looking out a curtain wall at the Allegheny River, to the granite fireplace, warming the space on snowy, winter days.

Drawing inspiration from the "City of Steel" (now a "City of the Future"), the designers wanted to both contrast and complement the bright white of a showroom by warming the space with colors and materials associated with the industrial era. The worn cor-ten steel frames, glass walkways, and natural grain of local hardwoods all echo the city's former glory.

Unlike a typical technology office, this space is for builders. With ample desk room and a table between every pack of workstations, each person can work 360 degrees. Every work area has room for toolboxes, carts, and, of course, prototypes. There are studio spaces, designed for teams of six to brainstorm and hash out specific projects over a set period of time. Each space has an informal area, two small conference rooms, and six workstations.

Housed beyond the rows of workstations and studios is a fully-functional machine shop. Autonomous cars are engineered, built, and tested. After receiving final, finishing touches, they are driven across white tiles into the main central nave. Merging the machine shop with the showroom is a testament that designing with function in mind first can still take an elevated, stunning form.

From the "Tunnel of the Future", lined with an evolving series of prototypes, serving as a reminder that success is a process of iteration, to the cor-ten laser cut panels, framed in smoked glass, depicting a map of San Francisco and Pittsburgh, the "City of the Future" may be a place where the vehicles of both design and function may be a thing of the past.

PROJECT SPECS

The space was a former Sam's Club and most recently a restaurant supply warehouse. The team added a mezzanine to increase the overall square footage. In addition, a glass curtain wall, windows, and skylights were added to open up the space. New concrete slab was poured and new MEP infrastructure was designed.

For the custom furniture, we partnered with Urban Tree, a Pittsburgh local custom furniture maker. They used salvaged hardwoods from the surrounding Pittsburgh area and created the majority of the custom tables including the glass turbine table. The remaining furnishings are meant to demonstrate comfort, craft, and authenticity by using woods, steel, and natural fabrics, likes wools and cottons.

Pittsburgh is known as the "City of Bridges" and has over 440 of them, many of them steel trussed similar to our design of the blackened steel and smoked glass walkway.

Steel is featured prevalently in the space - from the main reception area wall panels to the custom reception desk, from the cor-ten panels showings maps of Pittsburgh and SF, the fireplace shrouds, and the detailing on many of the custom furniture pieces.

For the Tunnel of the Future, LED light sheets were recessed into the concrete slab and textured glass place on top while the walls and ceiling used frosted glass.