



THE WASHINGTON  
FISH MARKET



THE PROJECT'S 5 NEW STRUCTURES AND RENOVATED BUILDINGS FROM THE 1916 MUNICIPAL MARKET LINK WITH EXISTING BARGES AND THE WATERFRONT



**MARKET SQUARE MEETS THE WATER AT THE LOBSTERMAN STATUE, A GIFT FROM MAINE TO THE CITY OF WASHINGTON. A SMOKESTACK SUBTLY DEFINES THE NEW PRECINCT**

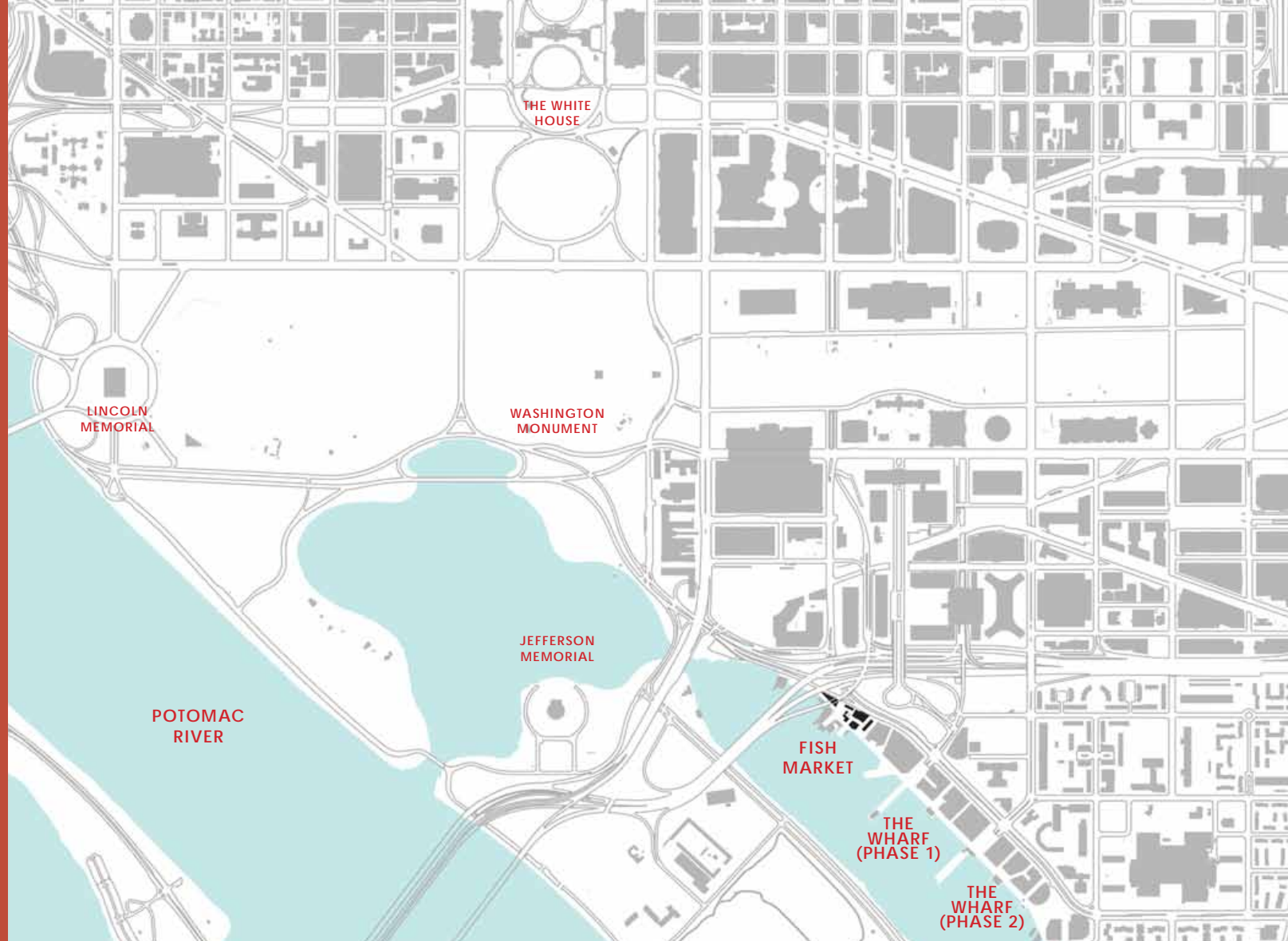


**THE NEW MARKET SHED FRAMES A VIEW ACROSS MARKET SQUARE AND TOWARDS THE RENOVATED 1916 STRUCTURES**

# WATERFRONT REBIRTH

Following years of neglect and ambitious but unrealized improvement plans, the District of Columbia has started to see the rebirth of its South West waterfront into an active and contemporary neighborhood called "The Wharf". Phase 1, completed in fall of 2017 to critical acclaim, made great strides to rectify mistakes of urban renewal and poor city planning. Scheduled to follow on the heels of Phase 1's approval and construction start, the smaller scale Fish Market, which links The Wharf and the National Mall, was developed to create a proper gateway from the north to this improved waterfront neighborhood.

While The Wharf provides 130 feet tall structures on 24 acres adjacent to the site, the 2 acre Fish Market project was specifically crafted to address the change in scale from the federal city to these new structures, as well as to existing fish sellers on barges and 2 historic structures from the 1916 Municipal Fish Market. Envisioned as a new retail precinct to support but not compete with the barge vendors, the design is focused around food and brings the funky character of the barges back to Maine Ave through its use of colorful murals and graphics.



AERIAL RENDERING OF THE WHARF AND FISH MARKET  
PROJECTED COMPLETION 2021



THE WHARF, PHASE 1  
COMPLETED 2017

# JOLLY FISH PACKERS ON THE POTOMAC RIVER WHARVES

Interesting Scenes When "The Big Catch" is Brought From "Down Below" and Prepared for the City Markets—Cutters Who Are Distinguished for Their Rapid Work.



Groups of Cutters at Work.



Picking Roe From the Refuse.

THE post-Lenten season seems a most propitious time for reviewing the fish industry, inasmuch as this season of the year brings this particular trade more forcibly into one's view. There will be, no doubt, that sense of humanity who, for obvious reasons, will not care to hear about fish for many days to come. But the individual whose tendency is to probe into things and widen the sphere of his information, will be interested to know the method of bringing the sea food to this city and its distribution.

When one hears of river landings—that is, in Washington—one has visions of the attractive steamers that carry crowds of pleasure seekers down the Potomac summer evenings, where a ride on the merry-go-round or a dash down the chute affords keen enjoyment and takes one's mind from the cares and worries of existence. So far does the knowledge and interest of the ordinary person carry him. However, from the decks of these same steamers as they back out into the stream over inward the fact, there can be seen toward the westward a line of masts shooting up into the sky and giving the river front the appearance of commercialism, rarely applied to the Capital of the United States.

This mass of shafts means the center of local fish trade. It is here that the fish are brought from the Potomac River and from here shipped through Maryland, Virginia and the surrounding country.

### A Visit to the Fish Wharf.

A visit to the fish wharf is not only productive of interest, but of much valuable information as well. One walks through long sheds onto the wharf surrounded by numerous vessels of different sizes and pattern. These are the boats used in hauling.

The scene about the wharf is one of picturesque interest. People from Washington travel South and go into ecstasies over the cotton fields and the scores of dairy pickers. Log cabins, tobacco curing, and other features of Southern life are of absorbing moment to them, yet

On one of them especially there are 200 men employed. From these one might select a variety of types sufficient to supply the characters for a sequel to "Uncle Tom's Cabin." There is the old colored fellow with long white beard, white hair, a real "Uncle Tom" stoop and heavy "Good morning, sah!" for all who come his way. Covered to a coat of yellow oilcloth, he presents a picture of a real fisherman—the kind one sees in plays. Then there is the young man who hustles for the old "mule" and strives by dint of hurry and push to get ahead of his fellow-workers to whatever work he is assigned. White and colored alike mingle there, chat with each other and find that life in the fish industry is not so bad after all.

Seven boats are employed by this particular firm, and are piloted down the river every other morning. Some of the nets are put out each day, and others are standing continually. One large seine is the principal source of industry and requires nine hours to haul. This seine is seven miles long and takes in thousands of fish. As many are



An Independent Cutter.

sorted and given over to the army of cleaners employed on the wharf. Strange as it may seem, a prodigious cleaner stands a far better chance of getting rich than does the average Government clerk. The quickest of these is enabled to earn \$10 and \$12 a day, according to the rapidity with which they work. Two good cleaners can easily prepare 5,000 fish in two hours. It requires and at the same time facilitates one to watch the manipulation of the fish knife. In the twinkling of an eye the head of the fish is cut off, the body slit and cleaned, and another one in the man's hand. When a basket is filled with the cleaned fish they are dumped into a large tub, a hose turned on them, and a man with a mop rinses them thoroughly. They are then sent into the shed set apart for salting and packing, and in less than no time are ready for shipment.

### A Scene of Activity.

The scene about the wharf is one of continual activity. From early in the morning until the day's work is done everything is bustle and bustle. Every man is assigned to a specific duty and there are several overseers to see that no one neglects his work. It is a happy crowd, and one hears salutes of all kinds tossed along the line and through the crowd. The cleaners sit about on the floor of the wharf, and while their hands work with marvelous rapidity their tongues keep pace and it is a constant chatter.

Two Men in Two Hours Will Sometimes Clean as Many as Five Thousand Fish—Herring and Shad Form the Greater Portion of the Daily Cargoes of This Season.

"Dat's all right; guess I'm de biggest man 'roun' 'bout 'cent de best—so 'bout you move yourself."

From morning until night this sort of conversation may be heard. There is no vestige of ill-feeling. Everybody seems to be imbued with the spirit of jolly good-fellowship that has long been a characteristic of the colored race when it has plenty to eat and folks to talk to. Like the Jolly Cotton Pickers.

It is in this picture that contrasts so favorably to the eye with that of the cotton pickers of the South. It recalls to many who have not seen them the levees presented so realistically in many plays. Big staps are not missing, and the greater part of the noon hour, in fact, is taken up with this sort of entertainment. Little time during the day is given to such forms of amusement, but as long as the workers' privilege of chatting is not taken away they are content to leave the dancing for other times. Sometimes someone starts a song and the whole force will join in with vigor. The pity of it is that only the desolate fate across the water bear the song.

There are many visitors to the fish wharf. Men and women alike go down and make small purchases, probably to better advantage than can be had at the retail establishments. This, however, is a side and minor issue with the merchants who handle large investments only.

Many people have the idea that Washington is but slightly imbued with the spirit of business, but certainly a peep out on the wharves around the foot of Eleventh Street will do much to dissipate this impression. There is no more active center to be found for many miles than this little colony of fish merchants, and their trade offers a striking example of the industry of the country as it thrives under the dome of the stately Capitol.

### Shakespeare "On the Road."

Members of a traveling theatrical company have been arrested out in lines charged with breaking the Sabbath by performing "Shame and Juliet" on that day. Very likely the charge will hold. The average traveling company which presents the works of William

## CHECKERED PAST

The Washington Fish Market started with development of Washington's Southwest quadrant as a commercial and transportation hub. The oldest continuously operating fish market in the U.S. started when fishermen sailed upriver from the Chesapeake Bay to sell their catch.

The area developed over time but lost prominence as a commercial hub, becoming a point of departure for the Union Army during the Civil War. Eventually the waterfront fell into disrepair, dotted by ramshackle wooden structures and known for its high crime. A late 19th century beautification effort gained enough momentum that by the early 1900's the U.S. Congress got involved.

In 1908 the U.S. Senate recommended improvement of the harbor front, deeming it "an unsightly menace" in constant danger of fire. By 1912 improvement plans were approved, and in 1916 a "model Municipal Fish Wharf and Market" was delivered.



UNION QUARTERMASTER OFFICE 1865



WOOD FRAMED STRUCTURES 1908



WOOD FRAMED STRUCTURES 1908



WATER STREET 1913

# CONTINUOUS OPERATIONS

The 1916 market included small structures along the water to support operations. One of these, known as the Lunch Room, served workers and merchants of the Market and Wharf, and while a large Market Hall contained restaurants for visitors, only the Lunch Room allowed workers to eat together. Adjacent to it was the open air Oyster Shucking Shed.

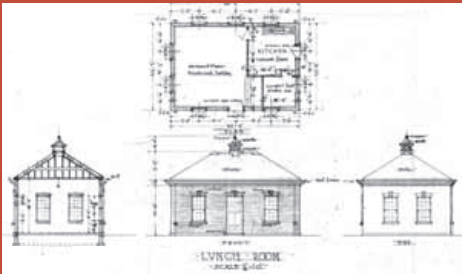
The site remained functional as the Municipal Fish Market until the early 1960's, when the Federal Highway Act required removal of most of the 1916 structures, with the exception of the Lunch Room and the Oyster Shed, which by then had been enclosed.

Removal of the Market necessitated relocation of vendors who elected to remain onto "temporary" barges which define the Fish Market of recent memory. These barges remained opened for the duration of the project's construction.



PRE-DEVELOPMENT SETTING OF HISTORIC LUNCH ROOM AND OYSTER SHED (SHOWN IN COLOR) WITH WHARF CONSTRUCTION IN THE BACKGROUND

2014



MUNICIPAL FISH MARKET  
1931



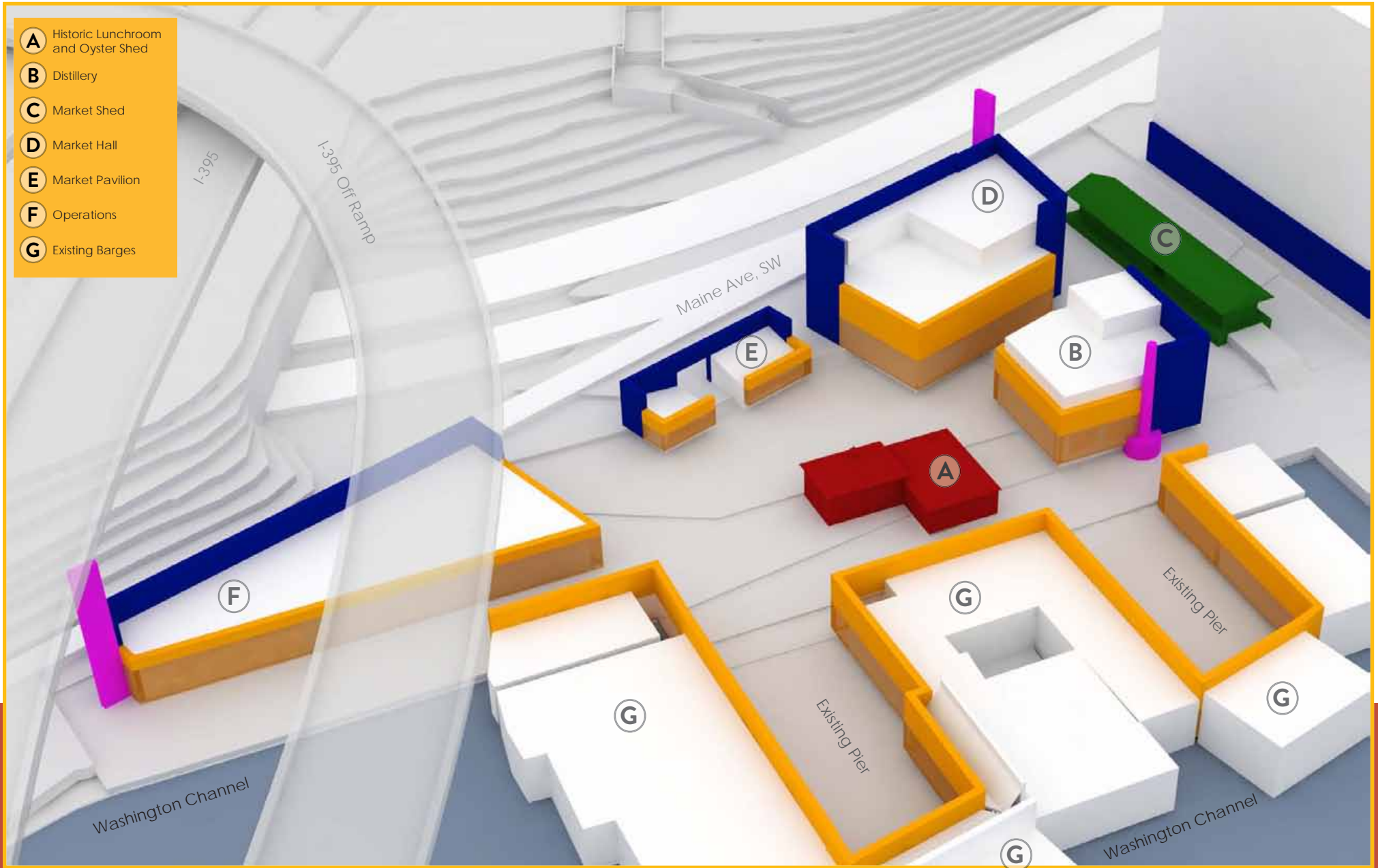
LUNCH ROOM FROM MARKET HALL  
RESTAURANT BALCONY  
1931



HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION NEAR LUNCH ROOM,  
SHED AND UNDOCUMENTED SMOKESTACK  
1961



"TEMPORARY" BARGES  
1982



- A** Historic Lunchroom and Oyster Shed
- B** Distillery
- C** Market Shed
- D** Market Hall
- E** Market Pavilion
- F** Operations
- G** Existing Barges

- HISTORIC LUNCHROOM
- RETAIL FRONTAGE
- MARKET SQUARE RETAIL
- MONUMENTAL EDGES
- PRECINCT MARKERS

## FOCUS ON THE SITE'S LONG HISTORY

The design integrates frontage of the “temporary” barges with the 5 new structures, defined by large window openings, rooftop terraces and balconies that focus on a restored Lunch Room and Oyster Shed, making them a focal point for the re-imagined Fish Market. To differentiate the area from the adjacent Wharf development, 3 precinct markers were provided, including a large smokestack, sign board and painted murals to playfully tie back to the neon signs of the barges. Consistent landscape elements of linear benches, paving and lighting link the Fish Market site to the Wharf development immediately to the south.

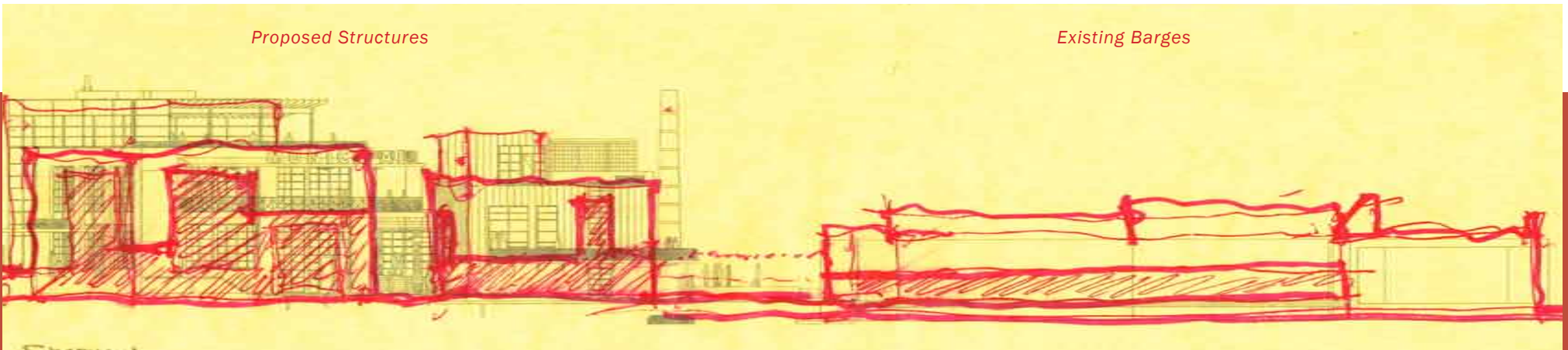


THE HISTORIC OYSTER SHED TO THE LEFT AND THE DISTILLERY TO THE RIGHT FRAME VIEWS TO THE MARKET HALL AND MAINE AVENUE



*Proposed Structures*

*Existing Barges*



## EMBRACING THE CARNIVAL-LIKE CHARACTER

With their large awnings, open display of fish on ice and brightly lit-marquees, the barges present a carnival-like feel that was embraced during the design of the site and structures. The client's program asked to provide 5 new "land-side" structures as well as the restoration of the Lunch Room and Oyster Shed. The new restaurant precinct creates a variety of new businesses without competing with the adjacent fish sellers. Architecturally the open bases of the barges with their horizontal awnings organize the architecture of the new structures.



RENOVATED LUNCH ROOM AND OYSTER SHED AS THE FOCUS OF THE NEW FISH MARKET



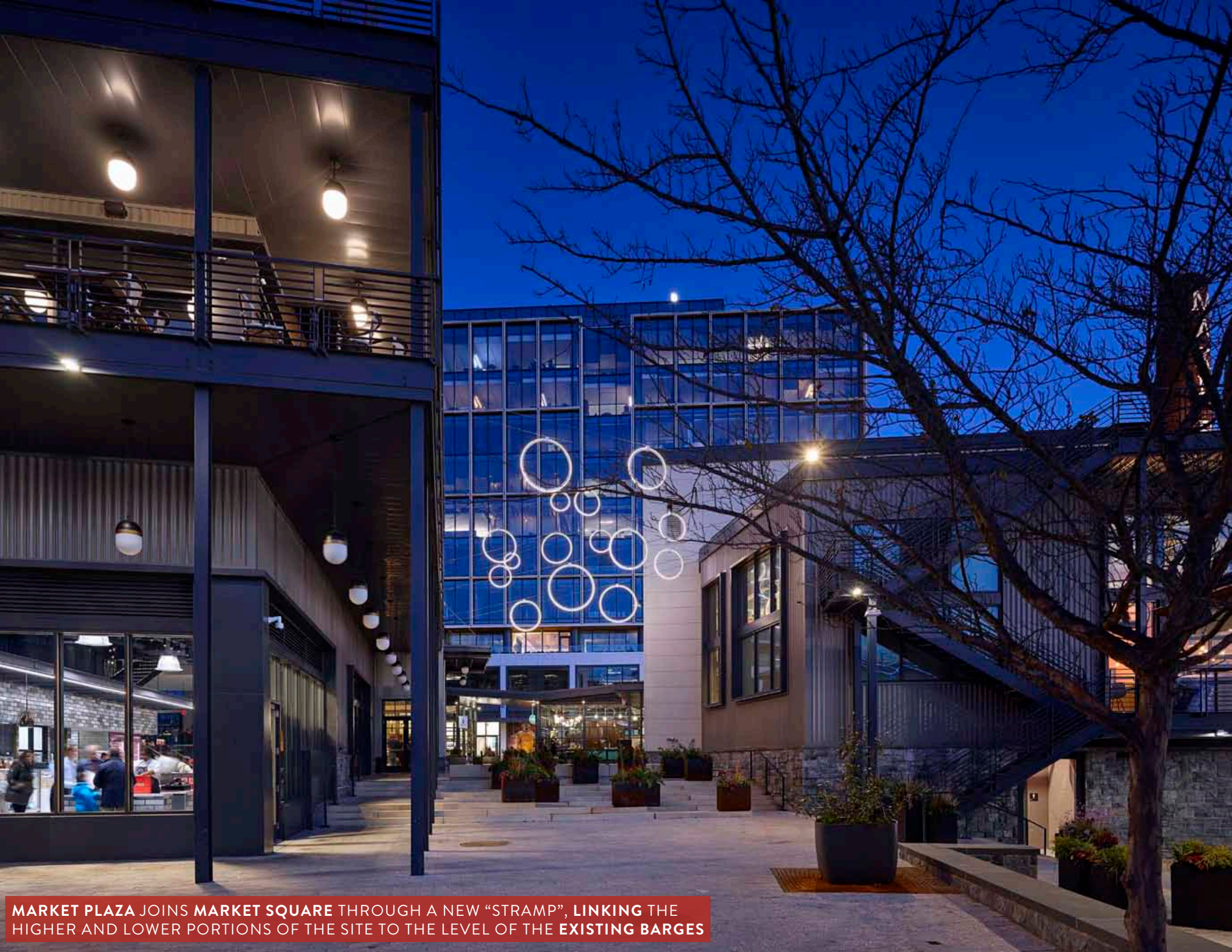
**RESTORATION OF BUILDINGS FROM THE 1916 FISH MARKET CREATE A CENTERPIECE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT**

- A** Historic Lunchroom and Oyster Shed
- B** Distillery
- C** Market Shed
- D** Market Hall
- E** Market Pavilion
- F** Operations
- G** Existing Barges

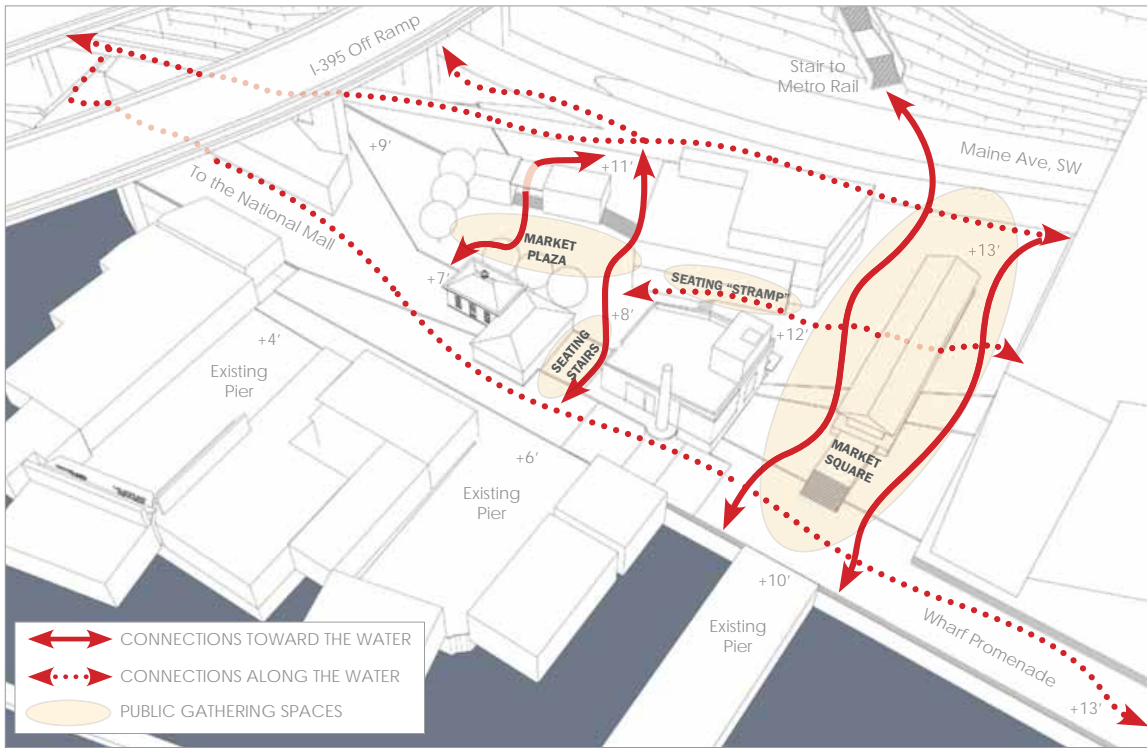


## A VARIETY OF LANDSCAPES FOR CASUAL INTERACTION

A variety of connected and tiered open spaces function as farmer's markets, small performance areas, gathering spaces, and outdoor seating areas. The variety of landscapes provides a place for residents and visitor to gather and enjoy the long neglected waterfront of the Washington Channel. Multi-level roof terraces, balconies and cascading site stairs work together to draw users toward the project's renovated historic structures, which have become the centerpiece of the rejuvenated site.



**MARKET PLAZA JOINS MARKET SQUARE THROUGH A NEW “STRAMP”, LINKING THE HIGHER AND LOWER PORTIONS OF THE SITE TO THE LEVEL OF THE EXISTING BARGES**



## WHERE THE CITY MEETS THE WATER

The design creates a variety of outdoor spaces which step down 8' from Maine Ave to the existing piers and barges, 1/4 mile behind the Jefferson Memorial, Tidal Basin, and National Mall. Selected views through the site accentuate the presence of the Washington Channel and the city's reinvigorated waterfront. The Market Shed, purposefully narrow with a butterfly roof to be seen from above, provides a direct link from the city to the water.



**DROPPING 8' FROM MAINE AVE. TO THE EXISTING PIERS, THE SITE'S VARIETY OF OUTDOOR SPACES ARE CONNECTED BY RAMPS, STAIRS AND VIEWS**

**NEW AND RENOVATED STRUCTURES  
STEP DOWN TO EXISTING BARGES,  
DIFFERENTIATING THEM FROM TALLER  
STRUCTURES OF THE WHARF**

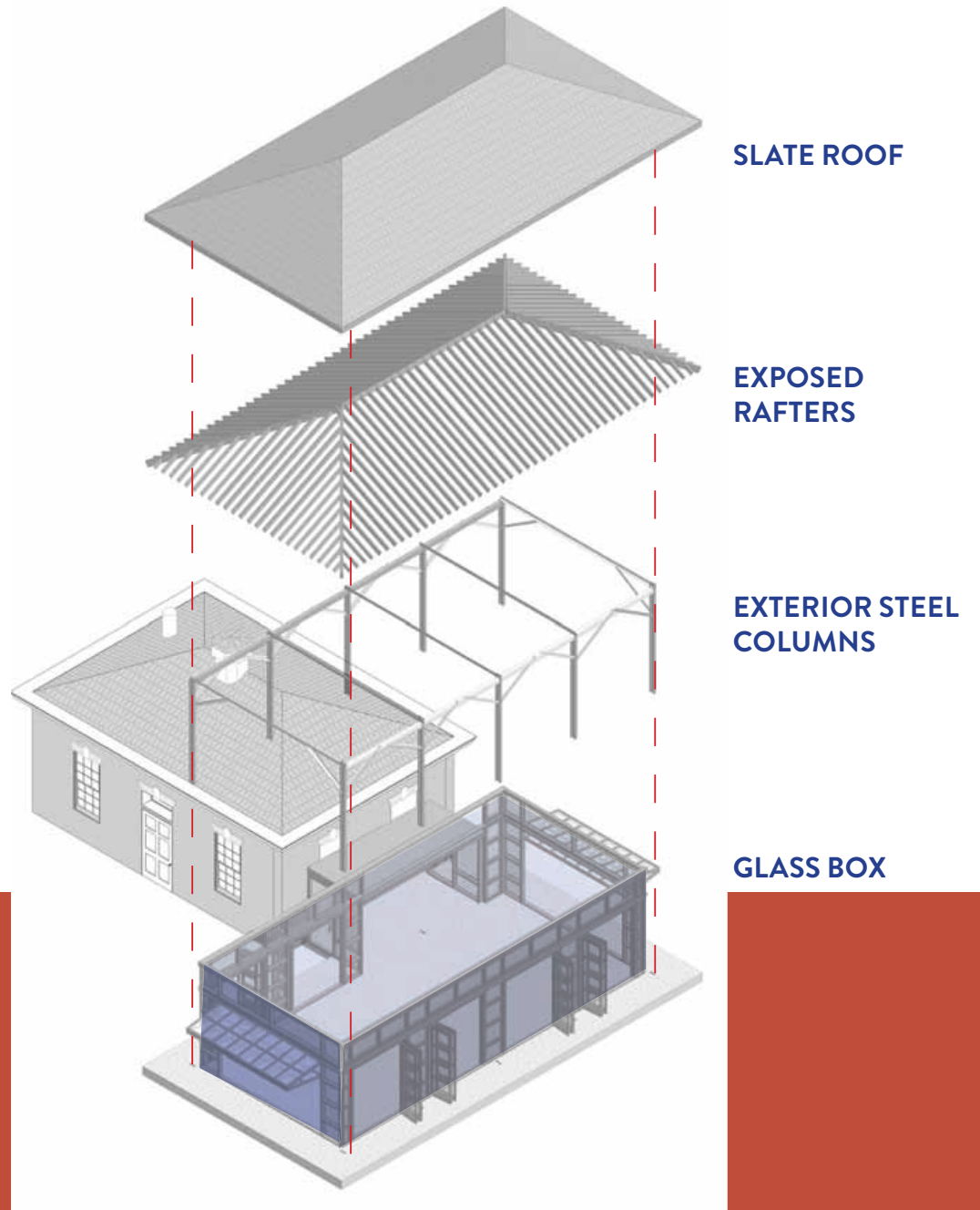




**BROAD OPENINGS** AT THE NEW STRUCTURES ARE REMINESCENT OF THE FISH STALLS OF THE BARGES



**WATER VIEWS FROM THE DISTILLERY ROOF TERRACE**  
FRAMED BY THE **NEW SMOKESTACK**, WITH THE  
**LOBSTERMAN STATUE** AT THE END OF **MARKET SQUARE**



## DEFINING AN ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE

Details of the historic Oyster Shed and 1916 Market Hall were thoroughly researched, with the Shed's original steel frame and roof structure being restored, exposed and highlighted. Existing elements of the open-air structure were tagged and removed, then meticulously restored off-site. Original wide-flange columns and angled bracing were reassembled in front of a new glass box insertion with doors on all sides. This "exo-skeleton" defined the architectural language that acts as a unifying element for the site, linking the new structures to the 1916 structures and the barges on the existing piers.



2014 (BEFORE)



2017 (DURING)



2018 (AFTER)

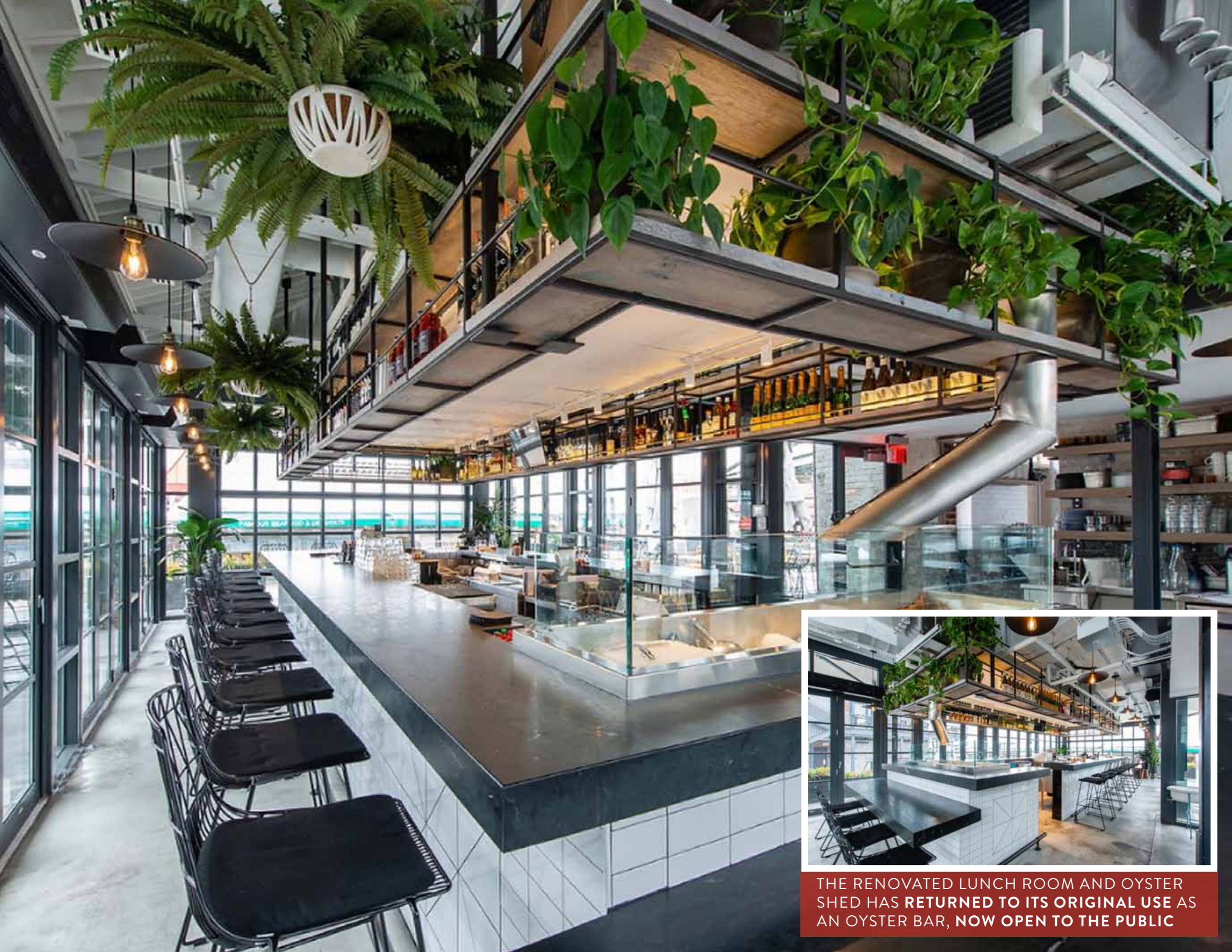




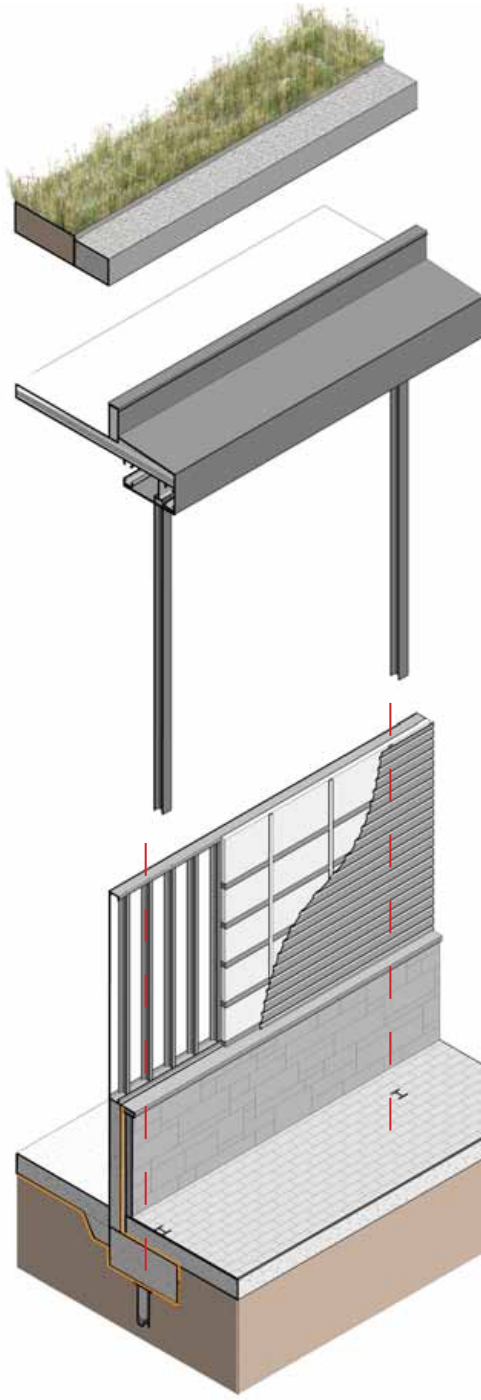
RAPPAHANNOCK OYSTER BAR

RAPPAHANNOCK OYSTER BAR

**THE RESTORED OYSTER SHED'S "EXO-SKELETON" SETS THE TONE FOR THE PROJECT'S NEW STRUCTURES**



**THE RENOVATED LUNCH ROOM AND OYSTER SHED HAS RETURNED TO ITS ORIGINAL USE AS AN OYSTER BAR, NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**



**GREEN ROOF**

**EXTERIOR STEEL COLUMNS**

**HIGH PERFORMING GLASS OR METAL BOX**



## A CONSISTENT AND SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE

The restored Oyster Shed’s “exo-skeleton” defined an architectural language that was carried to the new structures, linking them architecturally with the barges to reinforce the Lunch Room and Shed as the development’s centerpiece. Steel columns in front of high performing insulated metal panels, large storefronts and deep green roofs contribute to the site’s pursuit of a campus approach to LEED and Storm Water Management, with the 2 largest structures gaining LEED Silver certification.



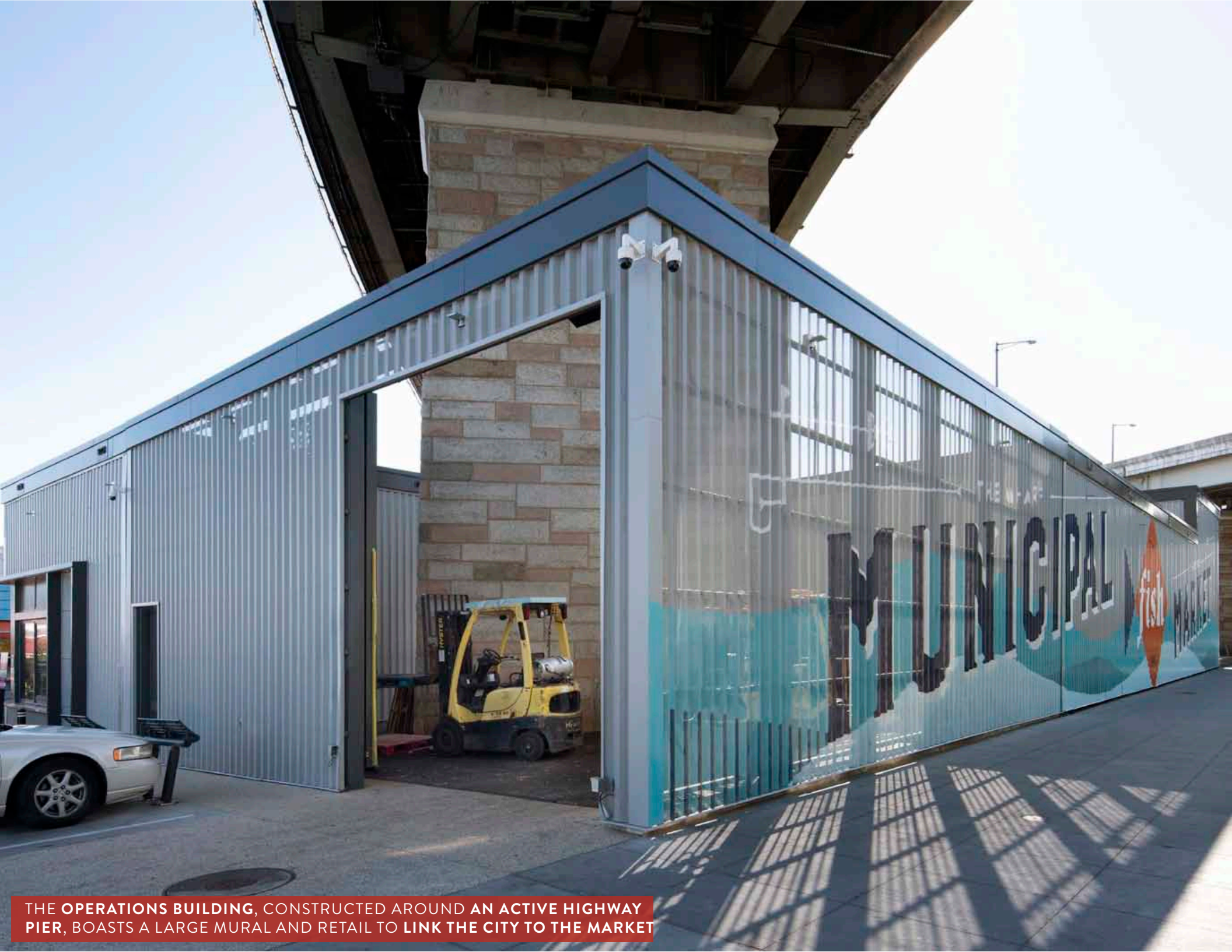
THE NEW MARKET HALL'S **BALCONIES AND ROOF TERRACES** LOOK DOWN ON A **LIVELY MARKET PLAZA** AND **GREEN ROOFS**



## A SUBTLE LINK BETWEEN NEW AND OLD

While the high performing insulated metal panels contribute to the pursuit of a campus approach to LEED Silver certification, they also provide an opportunity for playful murals and sign boards to link to the existing character of the barges. New tenants were encouraged to create their own murals and bold signage, while the large expanse of the Operations Building has been painted with a set of murals announcing the precinct to pedestrians and vehicles alike.





**THE OPERATIONS BUILDING, CONSTRUCTED AROUND AN ACTIVE HIGHWAY PIER, BOASTS A LARGE MURAL AND RETAIL TO LINK THE CITY TO THE MARKET**



**A NEW MURAL ON THE OPERATIONS BUILDING DEFINES THE PRECINCT BOUNDARY FROM THE NORTH, ECHOING THE CARNIVAL LIKE CHARACTER OF THE BARGES**



MAKE RUM NOT WTS

LEOPOLD'S CAFE

Jessie's COOKED SEA

NOT COOKED CLAMS