



CARLA MADISON RECREATION CENTER

2401 E Colfax Ave, Denver, CO

First Urban Regional Community Rec Center in Denver

It is our belief that indoor recreation facilities for future generations in the United States will be an urban model and one in which reflecting what it means to come together as a community is just as important as what we do inside the building.

How did we come to believe this is the future of indoor recreation in the U.S.? Cities are densifying.

We are moving into an era in which we are analyzing more carefully the cost and complexity resulting from sprawl and as a result how we prioritize use of available funds as well as open space.

As a result of this densification, demand for improved urban services is increasing – improved transportation, schools and parks and recreation. And municipalities are seeing the need to rethink the design of recreation centers for our urban core areas.





Denver Art Museum: Most buildings are solely about the architecture.

Red Rocks: There is another tradition in Denver for the architecture to be a lens or portal for an experience.

Denver Botanical Gardens

Confluence Park

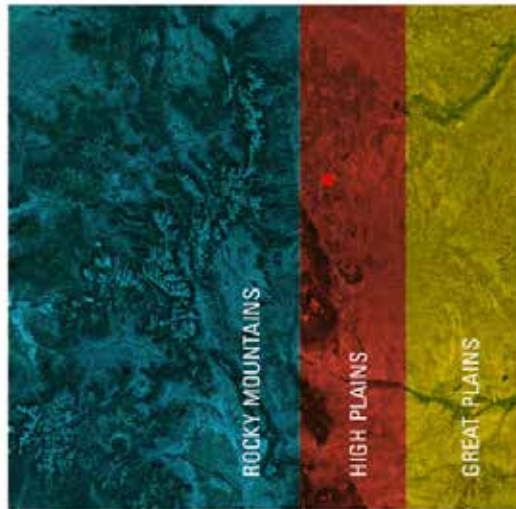
Sullivan Gateway, built in 1917, acts as a portal connecting the south entry of City Park Esplanade with Colfax Ave.

Colfax Ave, the longest continuous street in the country, connects the urban core with the neighborhood along it.

Design as a Portal

The idea of a building which is a connector or gateway for an experience resonated with this client and a comprehensive public engagement process revealed the Center must create and strengthen the physical and visual connections to its immediate site and urban context to be successful.

Important contextual physical and visual influences were identified during engagement with the City Council and neighbors. This included several historic city icons. East High School is one of four original large historic high schools in the city; the historic Sullivan Gate is an iconic entrance linking the city and Colfax Avenue through the historic Esplanade to Denver’s main City Park.



REGIONAL CONTEXT

The facility is adjacent to multiple historic residential neighborhoods and sits on the line between two political districts. This area is a node which includes some of the most socio-economically diverse parts of the city as well as diversity in terms of neighborhood identities.



COMMUNITY CONTEXT



NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Design Concept

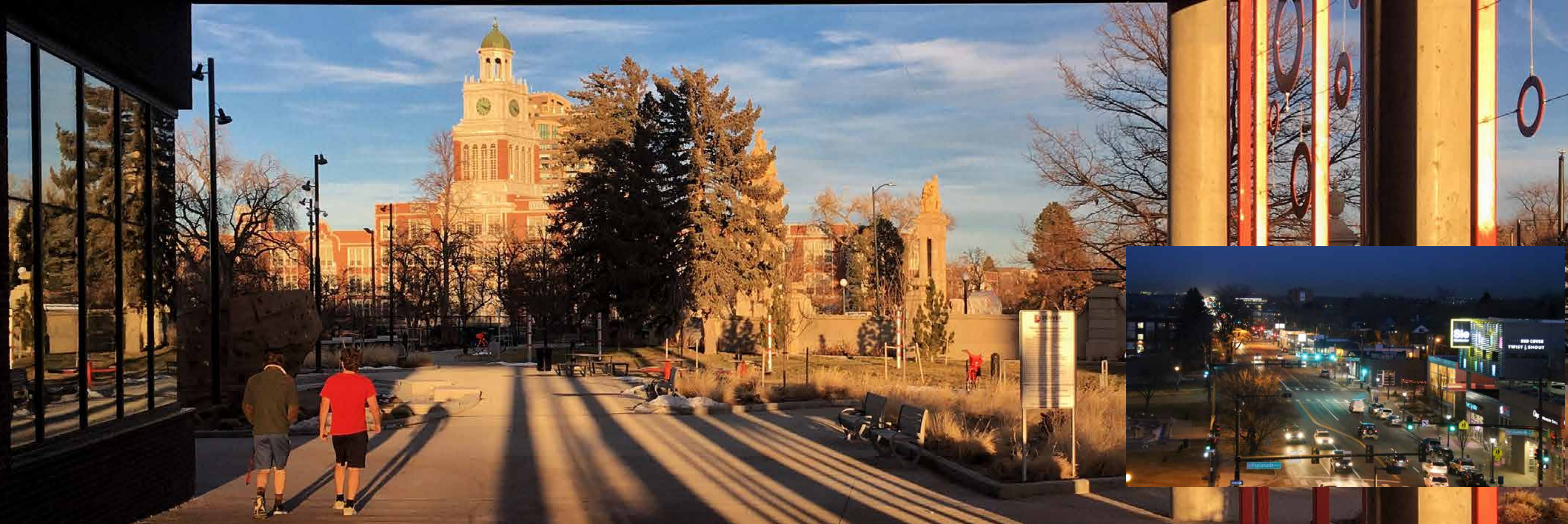
The desire for the recreation center to respect and connect to these city icons drove a multi-level approach for the building and its massing was designed to reflect and enhance a pedestrian's experience within this context.

The building footprint encourages pedestrian flow from the adjacent neighborhoods and East High school. The first floor is pulled back to support existing student walking paths throughout the day.

The street level of the building was purposefully angled away from Colfax to preserve a view to the historic East High School from the intersection of Josephine and Colfax.



Colfax Avenue is the longest main street in America. It supports an incredibly diverse set of users and reflects the history of Denver and where we've been. Colfax is about art and historic neon signs; pedestrians, bicycles and buses; it is a busy "living street" at all times and therefore the experience of Colfax at the Carla Madison Center was important. The solution is a facility which respects and reinforces the strong street character and built fabric along Colfax. The building has a direct connection with Colfax whereas a suburban solution would have been set back with a sea of parking leaving a hole in the streetscape. Windows along Colfax activate the sidewalk with views into the various engaging activities within the Center.

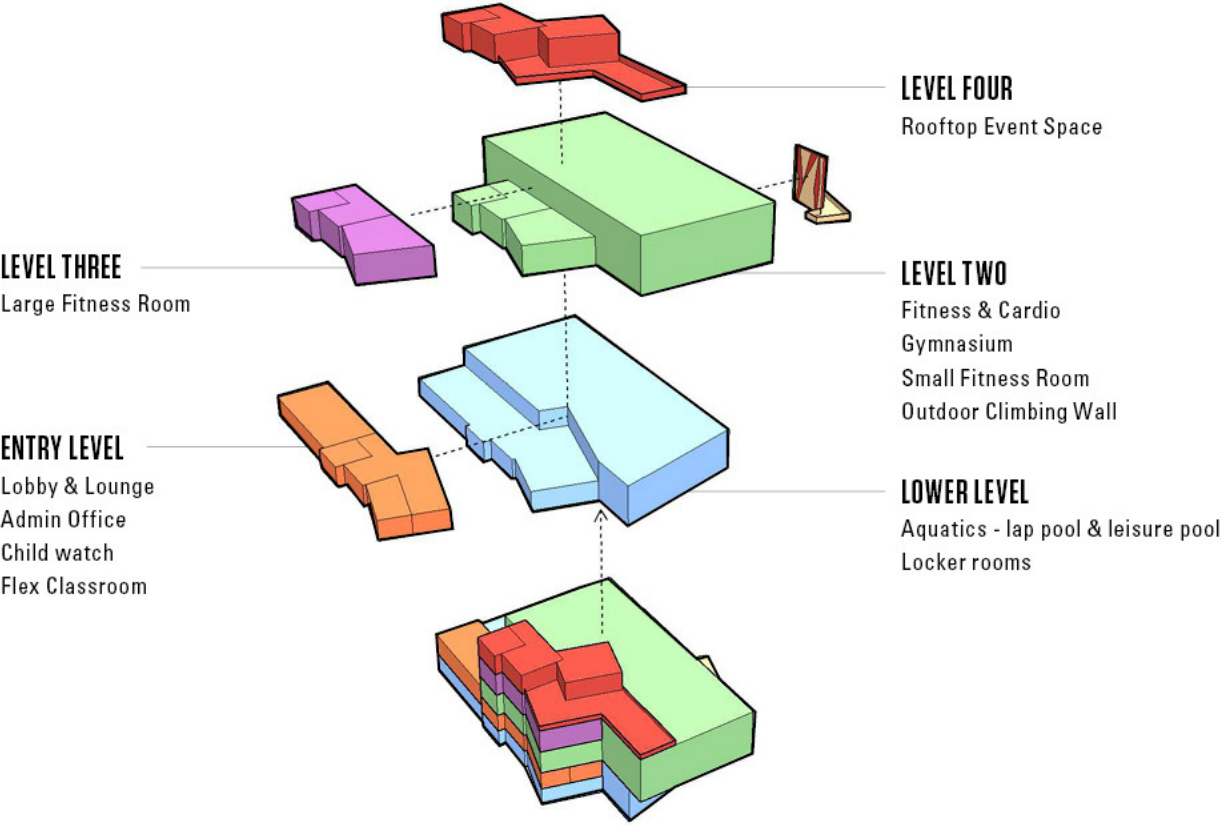
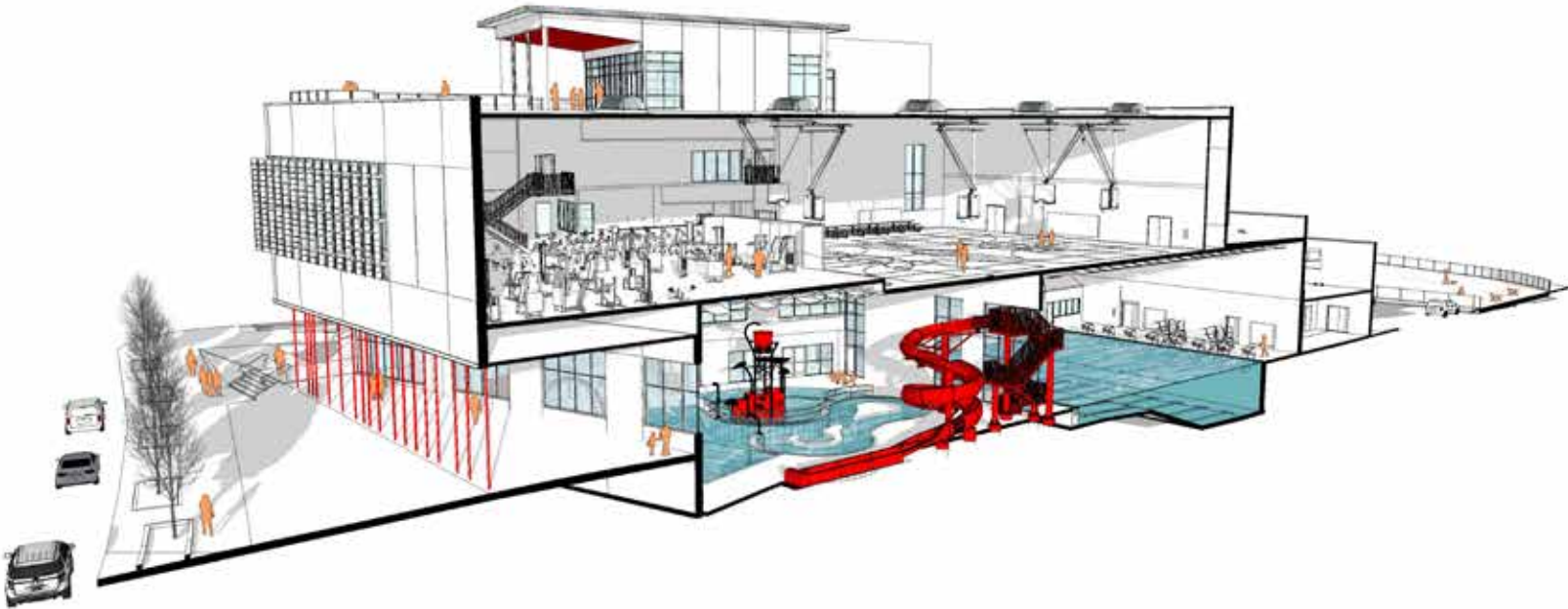


Five Floors

The building rises five levels and sits on a seemingly postage-stamp sized lot of just less than three acres, whereas a typical suburban site for a recreation center in the U.S. of the same size is 8 to 10 acres.

The site is adjacent to one of the City’s busiest bus stop/transfer locations and has less parking to take advantage of various modes of public transportation.

The building has a smaller footprint than a typical suburban recreation center and was designed to manage tall volume spaces in a vertical setting. It goes against all of Denver’s suburban norms





Green is for Girls!

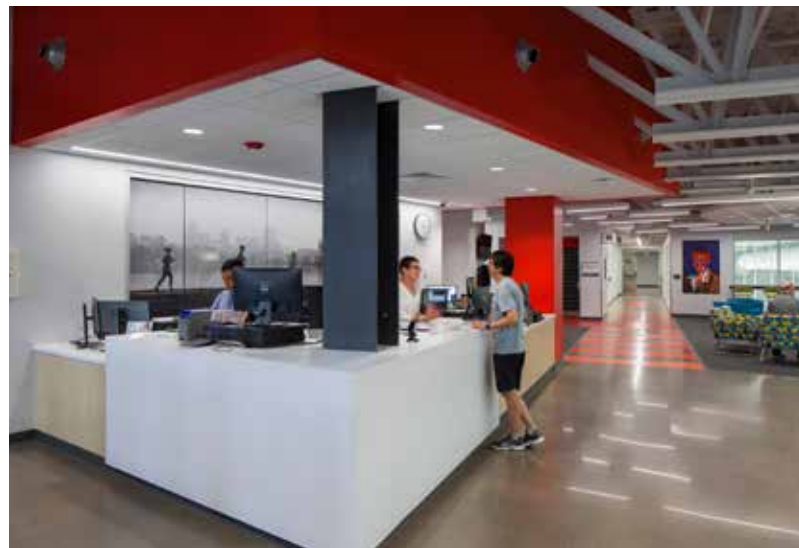


Turn the corner and the tiles change!



Lower Level

The Leisure Pool, the most dynamic space in the facility, was intentionally located along Colfax to maximize daylight into the space and have visual connectivity to and contribute to the dynamic and vibrant street life of Colfax.



Front Desk

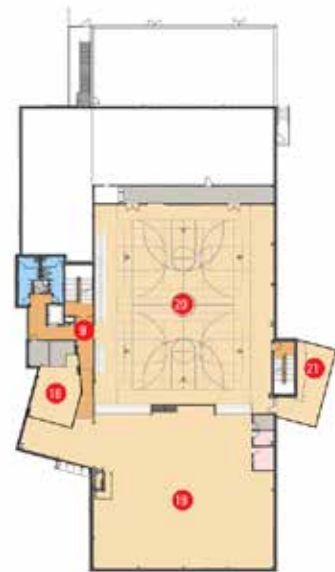
Entry Level

Front desk, social, watch areas, multiuse rooms
Talk about Carla Madison.



Child Watch





LEVEL 2



Spin Studio



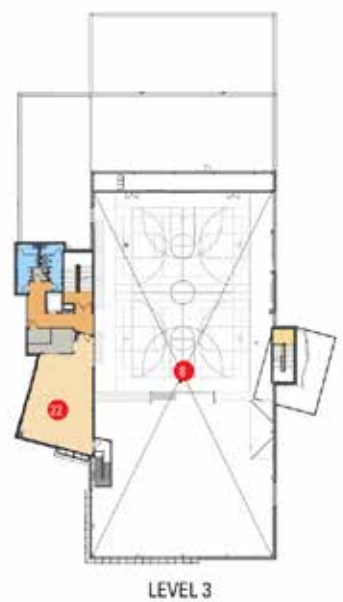
Visitors are encouraged to take the stairs.



Level 2

Another trend or fixture in community recreation is responding to the fact that people are now looking specifically for memorable experiences. And ideally, in our opinion, we are connecting these experiences to the outdoors. Spaces are no longer hermetically sealed as they were in the past. In appropriate climates, blurring the line between inside and outside can create memorable experiences and become a fixture as a result.

At the Carla Madison Center the group fitness rooms which are dynamic and busy spaces are located along Colfax on the third and fourth levels, enabling participants to connect with rooftop views of the city while also activating the street by providing spinning and Zumba activities essentially on the sidewalk.



Large Exercise Room



Level 3 & 4

The Rooftop Event Space, perched on the fifth level offers the broadest visual connection, reaching beyond the city to the Rocky Mountain range to the west, Pikes Peak to the south, and Long's Peak to the north. This space is rentable for broader community use and has also been used for outdoor silent disco spin classes and yoga classes.



Over One Million Visitors

A small footprint has left a large impact. After two years of serving the community, Denver reported that the facility had over one million visitors, making it one of the most popular city buildings. It was voted best Recreation Center in Denver three years in row by Westword. This unique center maximizes participation and has become a healthy hub of the city.





Carla Madison Recreation Center
Denver Park & Recreation

CONTRACTOR
AP Construction

PROJECT COMPLETION DATE
January 2018

INTERIOR ARCHITECT
Gallun Snow

ARCHITECT OF RECORD
Barker Rinker Seacat Architecture