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Queens Theatre-in-the-Park



QUEENS THEATRE IN THE PARK

New York, New York

2009

A place of reconnections. Additions that build upon the playful circular geometries of the original Philip Johnson World's Fair complex. A transparent viewing pavilion from which to appreciate the park's dreams of futures past, the Unisphere and the Johnson observatory towers and pavilions still in search of rescue. A party room for the Borough, whose rich materials and sunset colors are understood as festive by a wide cross-section of the 109 ethnic cultures that are the glory of Queens.

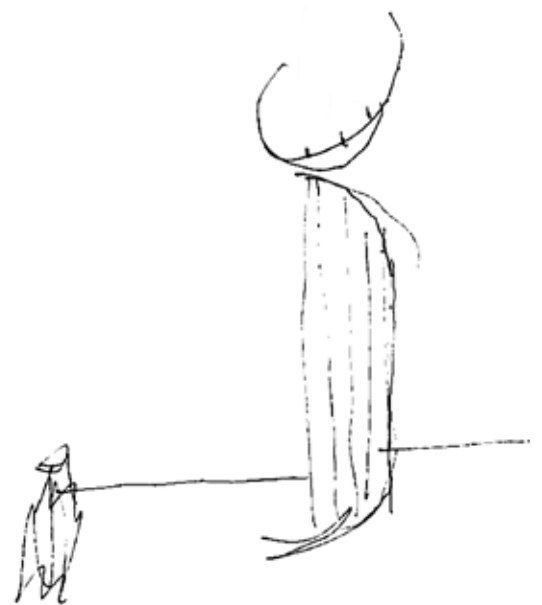
The design is driven by considerations of perception.

The building is a new transparent curved wall pavilion, a major addition to the iconic 1964 World's Fair complex by Philip Johnson. The new structure is a 600-person reception room for the Borough, standing on axis with the giant oval of Johnson's New York State Pavilion. The construction needed to be sufficiently budget-constrained and readily buildable to fit within the constraints of the publicly funded City bid/build process.

The challenge was to create the impression of round spiraling forms with large flat glazed units.

Using the principles of Gestalt psychology and the art of perspective, we designed a structurally glazed wall with metal fins projecting at each vertical joint. The effect of the fins is to drive the mind's eye to focus on the vanishing perspective that results from seeing them vanish around the curve. The spiraling slope of the 'horizontal' mullions further intensifies this perception of curved movement in space.

The design of the curtain wall utilizes a broad array of contemporary technologies including low emulsion coatings to reduce solar heat gain, silicone sealant joints in lieu of metal mullion caps, gas-filled insulating units to reduce heating costs, laminated glass outer lights to increase unit size and provide vandal resistance, and unitized construction to promote ease of construction and greater quality control. Digital design and fabrication techniques enabled fabrication of over 5000 separate and unique glass panels that work in concert to create the illusion of perfect roundness.



Concept Sketch

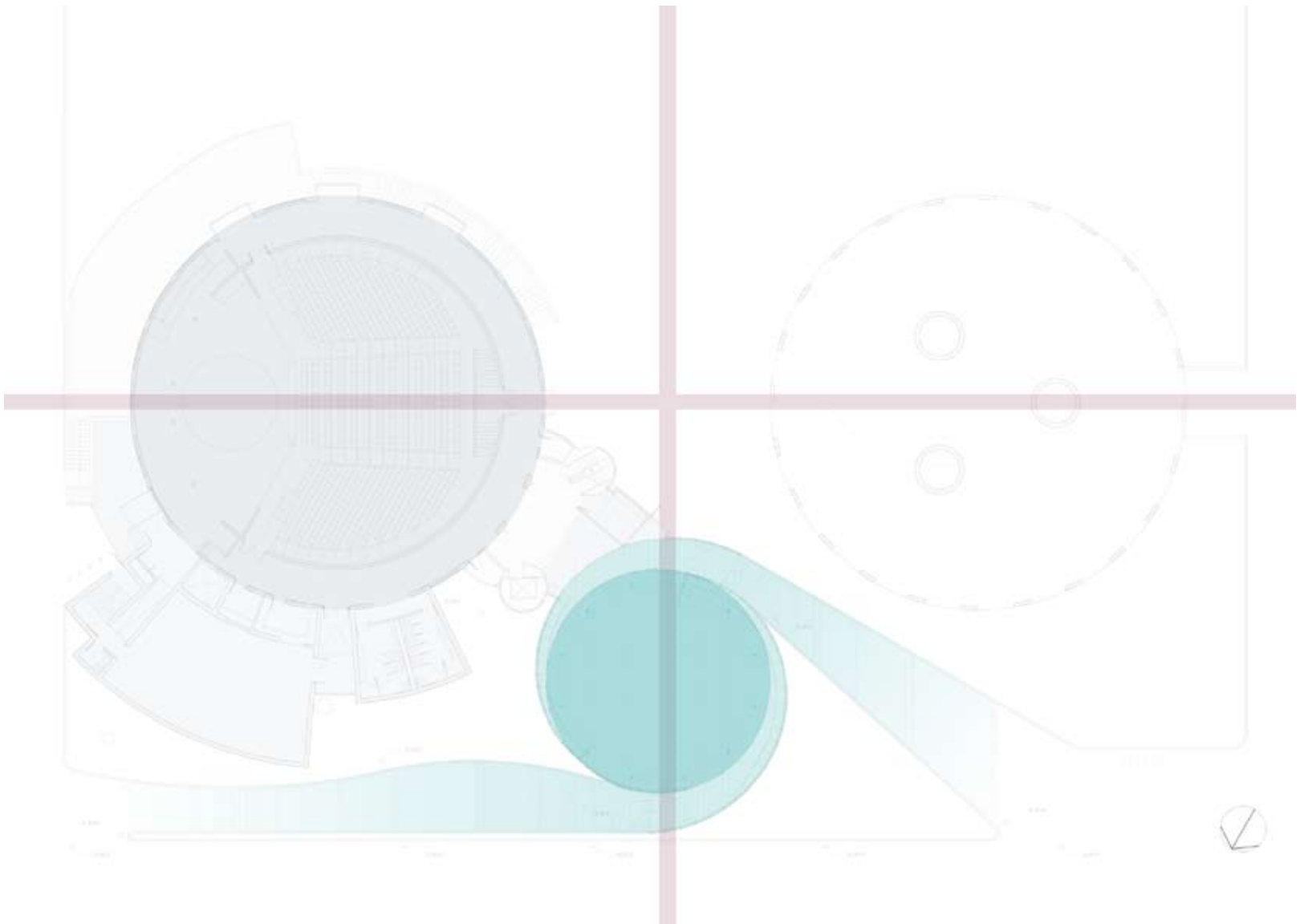


Figure Ground Study

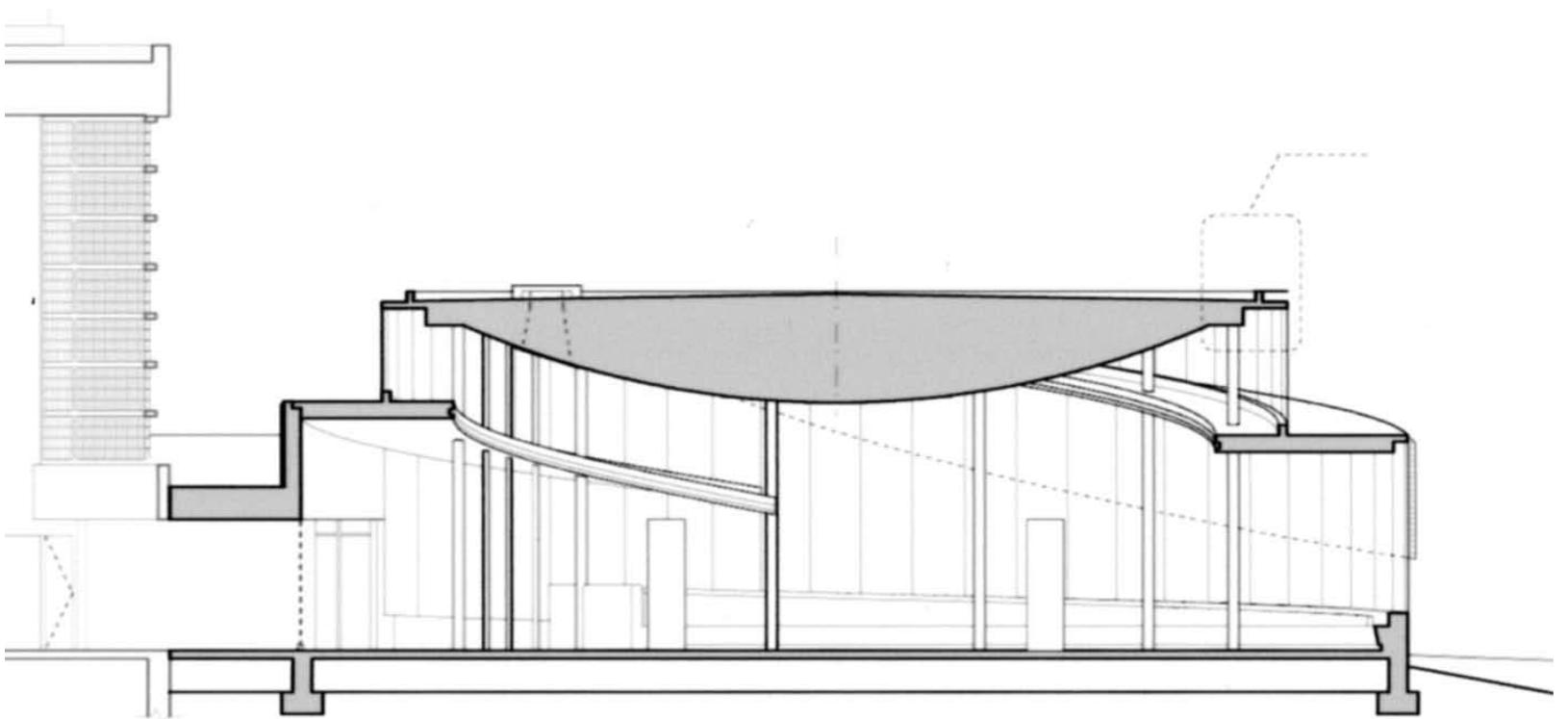
Below: Context Unisphere, New York State Pavilion, Winter sunset

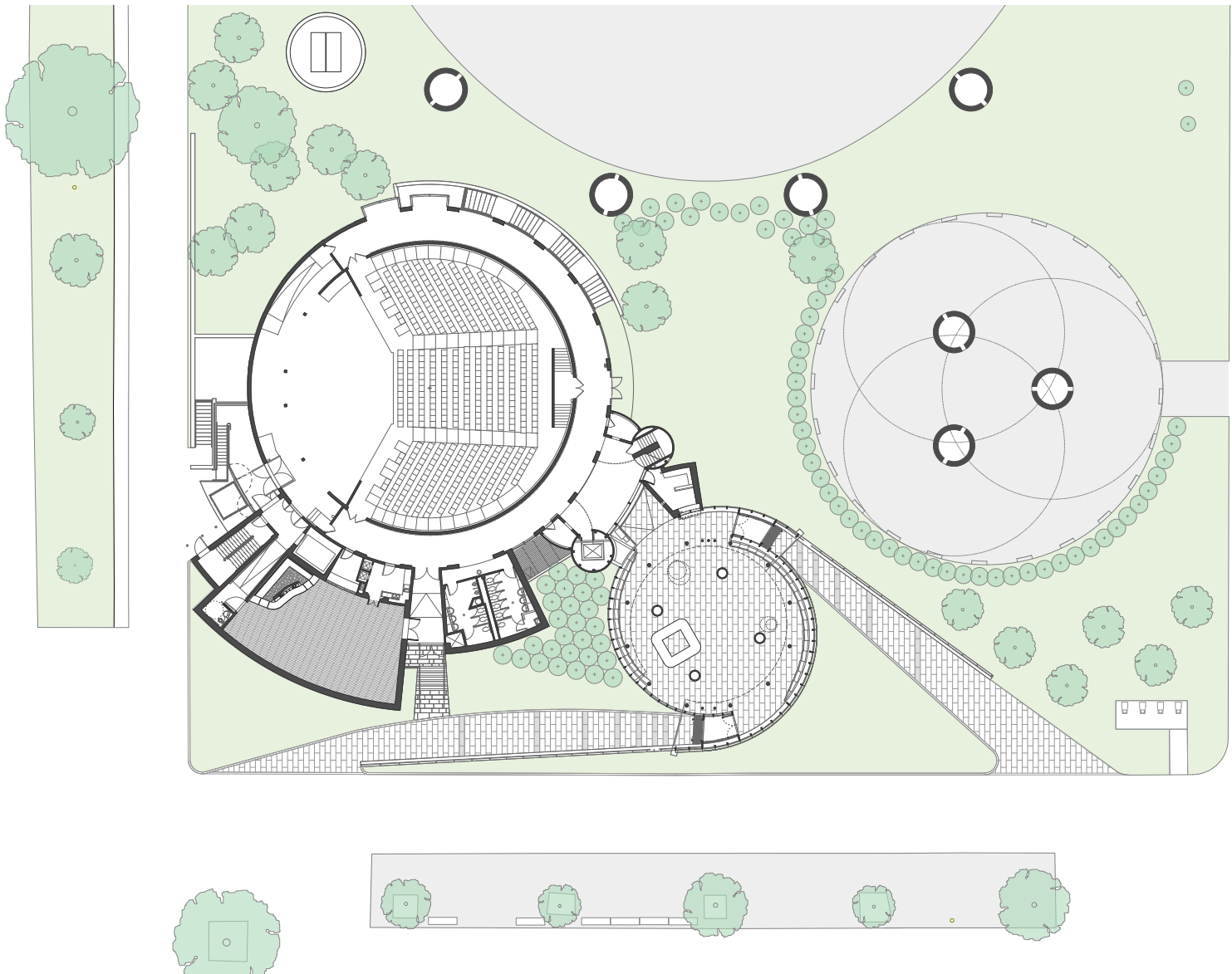


Above: Context model and Overhead View of Model

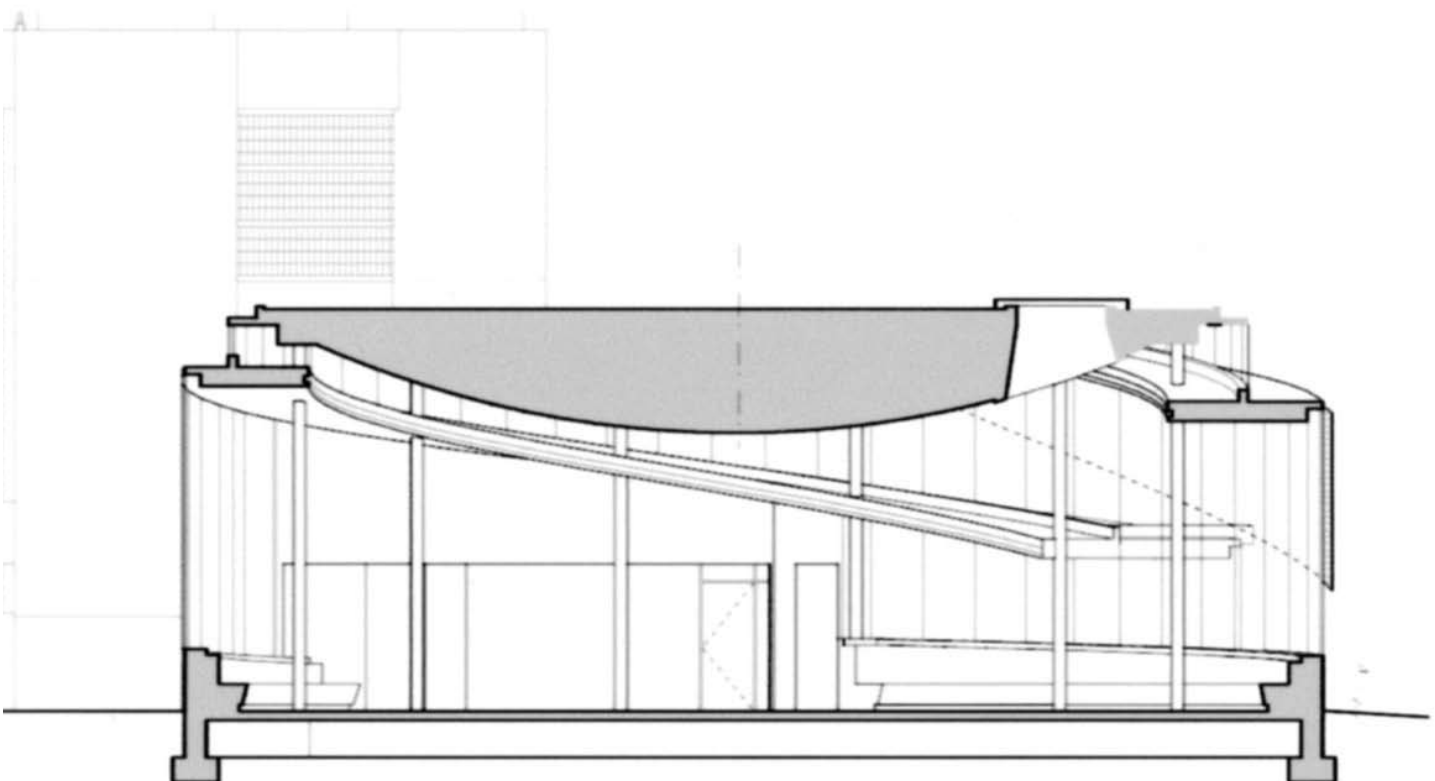


Above: Context plan
Below: Section connected to old building





Above: Site plan
Below: Section towards old lobby











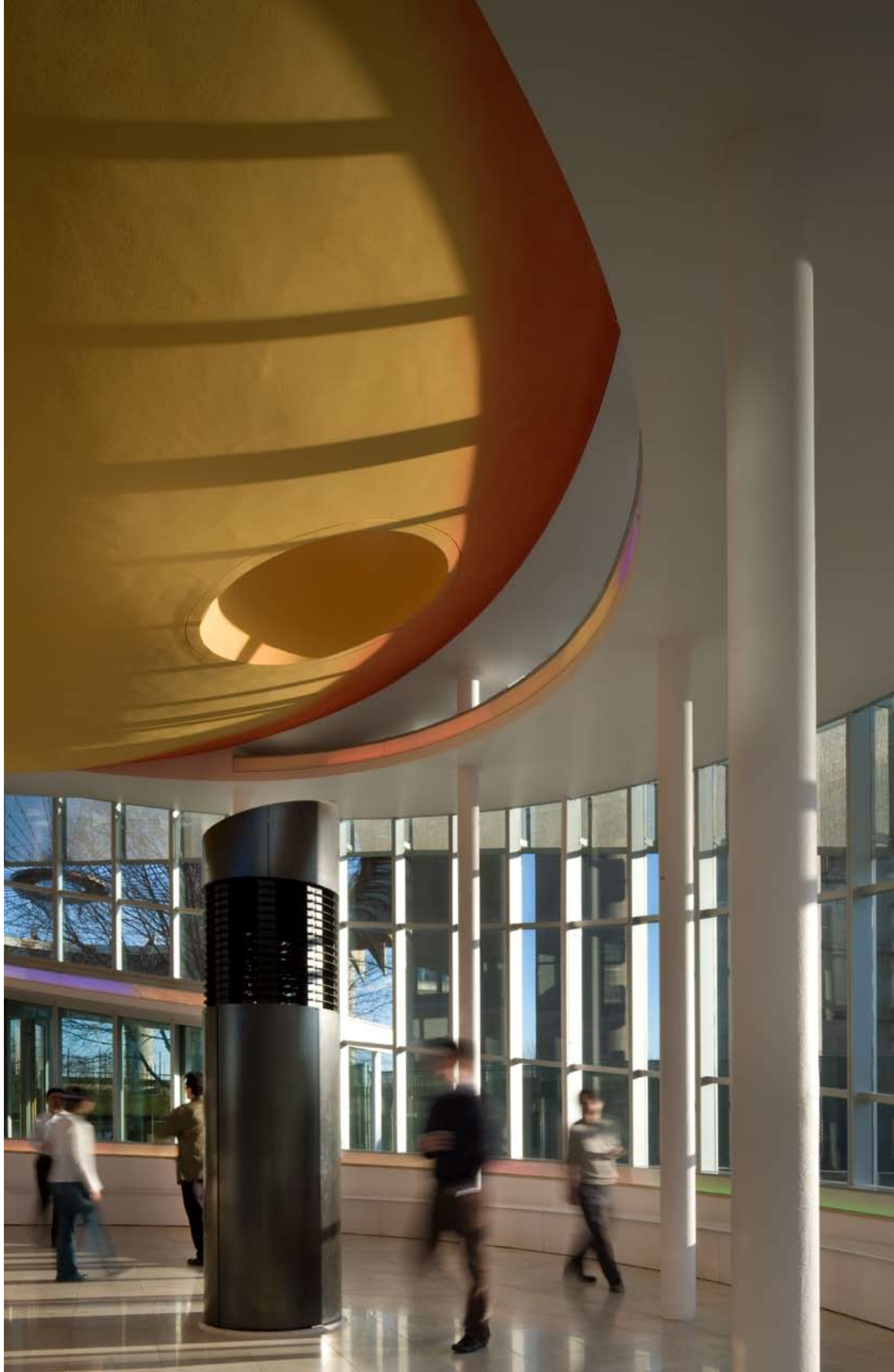
Opposite: Entrance from the East;
Above: Building in World's Fair context; Below: Window boxes on the South





Above: Building from Flushing Meadows Park
Below: Nebula interior; Opposite: Air tree and Oculus









Opposite: Building port hole to the ruins;
Above: Light on inverted dome; Below: Brass columns



