

**The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg Center  
Design Fact Sheet  
Rockwell Group**

**Project Type:** Education

**Opening:** Fall 2023 Semester

**Client:** Johns Hopkins University

**Location:** 555 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C.

**Size:** 435,000 SF

**Project Team:** Rockwell Group, Interior Architect  
Ennead Architects, Exterior Architect  
Architect of Record, SmithGroup

**Background:** The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg Center is a state-of-the-art facility for new research, education, and public engagement that creates a stronger presence in D.C. for all of Johns Hopkins University's academic departments. The building will allow the university to merge multiple graduate schools, anchored by its School of Advanced International Studies, and provides long-term flexibility to support innovative teaching methods, research, and future programs. Housed in a former purpose-built museum (the Newseum), the building's proximity to Capitol Hill will increase the university's ability to bring its research and expertise to national and global conversations and debates, offering convening space for topic experts, policymakers, and academic leaders.

**Design Concept:** To support numerous University initiatives, Rockwell Group's design emphasizes flexibility, allowing for responsiveness to the needs of multiple programs and emerging pedagogies. This is achieved through the building's interior programming which provides a range of typologies and convening spaces. Rockwell Group was inspired by Adolf Loos's 1920s "Raumplan" concept, which was developed as an alternative to traditional stacked floor levels. Loos proposed dividing a house's interior into interconnected multi-level spaces arranged on the basis of their importance. A suspended, transparent treehouse-like series of glass rooms hang in the soaring daylit atrium, which offer classrooms and lounges, and the cascading "Room Stair." Elements we've called "The Room Stair," "Room Bridge," and "The Beach" connect open flexible spaces meant for socializing, study and

communication with enclosed, purpose driven spaces, like a 375-seat theater and multiple classrooms and conference rooms.

The focus of the building is the seven-story atrium, formed by removing significant portions of the existing building's central floor slabs, unblocking existing skylights, and tying together mismatched floorplates. As with many of Rockwell Group's projects, the space creates a palpable sense of drama, deriving energy from its occupants, just as theater draws vitality from its audience. Instead of creating a central space to look at, we created a true commons, occupied and animated by actively moving and learning students, faculty, and visitors.

**Design Details:**

In the atrium, Rockwell Group designed two key insertions: the "Room Stair," which winds around a stacked assemblage of glass rooms and terraced lounge spaces; and the "Room Bridge," balancing suspension and compression, houses classrooms and flexible lounge spaces and bridges both sides of the building. Standing atop either space provides a dynamic view of the community in motion. The glazed stacked classrooms place learning on display, while offering a sound-proof environment with micro-perforated wood paneling.

At the base of the atrium is "The Beach," an informal, stepped gathering space, with comfortable furniture dotting the stepping platform and nodding to a beloved grassy space on JHU's Homewood campus in Baltimore.

Visible via a strategic opening is the 375-seat theater, a luminous, acoustically impeccable space designed with Ennead Architects, that will host the facility's major events and performances. An adjacent lounge area can transform into a pre-function event space for guests to mingle.

Edging Pennsylvania Avenue, we added open study and gathering spaces, including a library, café, and computer lab. Transparent connections and large landscaped terraces provide panoramic views of the Capitol and Washington D.C.

For the 38 high-tech classrooms, library, café, numerous study lounges, conference center, meeting rooms, faculty lounges, and landscaped roof terraces, Rockwell Group took a detail-oriented approach to our application of a warm and varied material palette. Wood walls and panels, terrazzo tile floors, cocoon-like chairs, richly textured area rugs, indirect and accent lighting, moveable partitions, clear visual connections, and layered, often intimate spaces help

balance the buoyant vibrancy of the atrium with peaceful, comforting environments. Brick floor tile recalls the Homewood campus's red brick walkways and buildings, and JHU school colors are strategically added to the mix, on, for instance, upholstery and tile.