

METROPOLIS

ARCHITECTURE AND
DESIGN AT ALL SCALES
July/August 2020

Game Changers

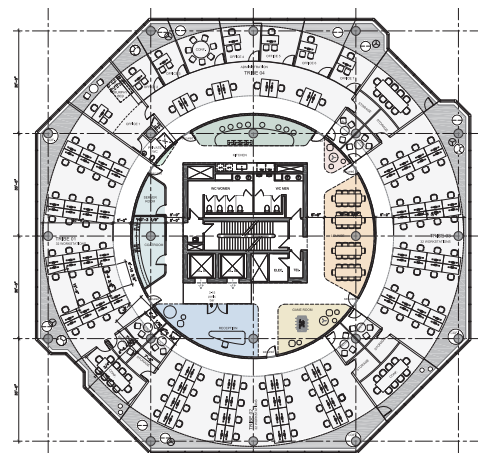
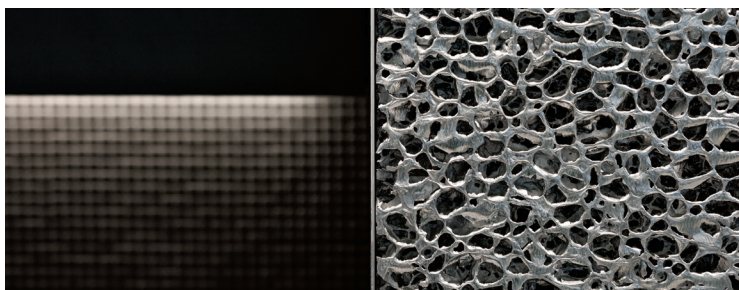
Transformative Ideas in Health,
Social Justice, Technology,
and Urbanism

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WORKPLACE

Office in Space

Travel agency FlightHub's Montreal location could have been an unremarkable office in a nondescript neighborhood near the airport, were it not for a clever intervention by ACDF Architecture. To contend with the building's unusual octagonal floor plan, the architects created a central hub of activity surrounded by a ring of desk and meeting areas, forming a circular workplace.

Staffers work in four insular departments, or "tribes," which all require their own spaces. The appearance of so many internal walls in an octagonal space could have been inelegant, but ACDF proposed the creation of a round core surrounded by radial workspaces. "It is the shape of the earth," explains architect Joan Renaud, partner at the Montreal-based firm. "The client was interested in this idea of an interactive core, with different islands of color and function."

The central area is wrapped in aluminum foam, an eco-friendly, sound-buffering, and locally manufactured product whose lightweight quality nods to the vibrant Montreal aerospace industry. These futuristic silver and glass touches are complemented and softened by the color scheme. "The colors are inspired by the Kármán line," says Renaud, referring to the boundary between Earth's atmosphere and outer space.

Renaud believes FlightHub is well suited to adapt to new norms, citing the circular paths and emphasizing that workstations are already adequately spread out. So while the future of the office—not to mention air travel—is still in question amid the fast-changing requirements of a socially distanced world, this office seems primed for a safe return. —*Rita Lobo*

At the outer space-inspired office of travel agency FlightHub in Montreal, each of four staff units is assigned to a different color-coded quadrant and has its own meeting room, kitchenette, and other areas. ACDF Architecture placed gathering spaces closest to the center and workstations along the perimeter, with two circulation paths circumnavigating the floor.