

Tucker Awards 2023  
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue

# 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue

Marble melds nature, architecture, and sculpture together, elevating placemaking to its highest levels at 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, a LEED Gold, mixed-use development on the northeast corner of George Washington University (GWU) campus.

The design embraces the site's challenging geometry, carefully establishing uplifting public space within encircling v-plan floor plates. The inviting 3-story entrance lobby rises into a grand 10-story atrium – a “forest” of daylit wood and stone, animating the prominent corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 21st Street – visible over a mile away. The playful and signature undulations of the building – emulating the iconic streamlined Flatiron Building and Barcelona's Casa Mila – culminate in the public interior, where a sweeping marble stair carries the rich pattern of varied stone textures from the street level lobby up 12 feet into the atrium amenities level.

Considering the need for a beautiful and durable material in all high traffic areas, the team chose natural stone. Stone procurement for 2100 Penn Ave started with exploring an array of medium to dark-colored stones to complement the brighter white oak and etched glass walls, with deeper tones and colors emulating a riverbed. For the exterior storefronts and entry paving, the team selected flamed Zimbabwe Black granite. Following the design architect's visit to marble quarries in central Turkey, the team selected Turkish Dark Olive marble for the balance and majority of stone areas: the public lobby, grand stair, atrium, all public bathrooms, elevator cabs and lobbies.

After the quarry visit, the architect made a preliminary review of blocks and associated slabs at the fabrication plant in Bilecik, Turkey to confirm the acceptable ranges of needed material. Within a few months, representatives of the project team, including the owner, architect, installer, and GC convened at the Bilecik fabrication plant, reviewing, and approving the balance of blocks, slabs, paving finish strategy, future dry-lay review process (which eventually totaled 5 visits – 2 while under strict COVID restrictions), packing sequence and shipping.

Unprecedented levels of fabrication continued through a thorough, 100% dry-lay review process, including all dimensional stones, curving slabs, and the grand stair. The architects refined the design multiple times to optimize the blending process. The paving design included four different sized pieces to optimize the highest yield per slab. By incorporating a regular high-honed accent, the stone paving had regular breaks that afforded better blending tolerances for the entire project. Special wood scaffolding was employed to facilitate the complete dry-lay of all walls, stairs, ramp, and paving stones together.

The 100% dry-lay reviews helped assure a smooth installation, but there were still issues of unavoidable cupping. The most challenging parts to finish were the ramp and grand stairs walls. In select areas, the installer had to grind and refinish the leather surface to match throughout. This proceeded after a careful review of additional mockups and input from the installers, architects, and owners.

In sum, 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue showcases how to conceive and implement natural stone to the highest levels of craft today, elevating architecture to new levels of uplifting placemaking.






The inviting 3-story entrance lobby rises into a grand 10-story atrium – a “forest” of daylit wood and stone.





The stone paving has regular breaks that play off of the city grid and building site's triangulating geometry.



The image captures a vast, multi-level atrium. The most striking feature is the curved, ribbed glass and steel roof that allows natural light to filter in. The walls are clad in vertical wooden slats, which are illuminated from within, creating a warm, golden glow. A grand, curved marble staircase with a glass railing leads up from the ground floor. Several people are visible: two on the upper balcony, and others on the ground floor near the base of the stairs. The floor is made of large, dark stone tiles. The overall design is modern and elegant, with a focus on natural materials and light.


The grand marble stair reaches out, welcoming visitors to stroll up into the atrium.





The grand marble stair complement the white oak and etched glass walls, with deep cool tones and colors emulating a riverbed.





The inviting 3-story entrance lobby rises into a grand 10-story atrium - a "forest" of daylight wood and stone.





The paving is a marble carpet that flows continuously across the lobby the marble concierge desk and up the grand marble stair





The undulating walls of the building facade and interiors culminate in the sculptural form of the grand marble stair.





The bold sculptural sweeps of the grand marble stair are softened with rounded corners and the layered accents of the continuing paving, like a grand riverbed honed by water over time.





Playful and signature undulations of the building culminate in the sweeping grand marble stair.





Marble melds nature, architecture, and sculpture together.





Natural stone veining plays with curves and angles together in three dimensions with varying forms and textures.





Rich fabrics of geometry and variations of texture are celebrated in natural stone throughout the building and at all scales.





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Unprecedented levels of fabrication continued through a thorough, 100% dry-lay review process.





The 100% dry-lay reviews helped assure a smooth installation.





Unprecedented levels of fabrication followed a thorough, 100% dry-lay review process, including all dimensional stones, curving slabs, and the grand stair dry-set in relative position.





The architects and installer attended all five separate dry-lay reviews (collectively around 20 days) in Bilecik, Turkey, over the span of two years, including two trips during COVID, to confirm 100% of all the stone blending.





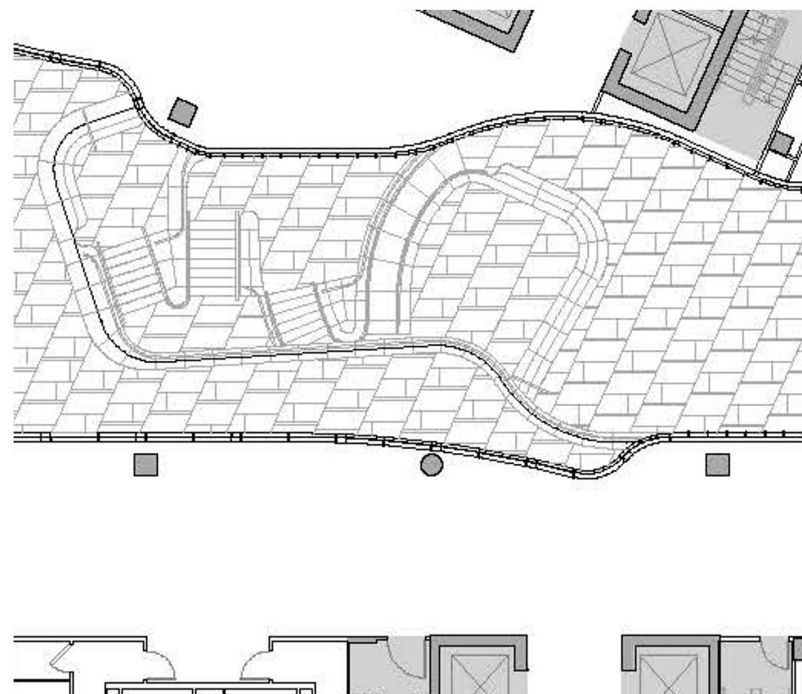
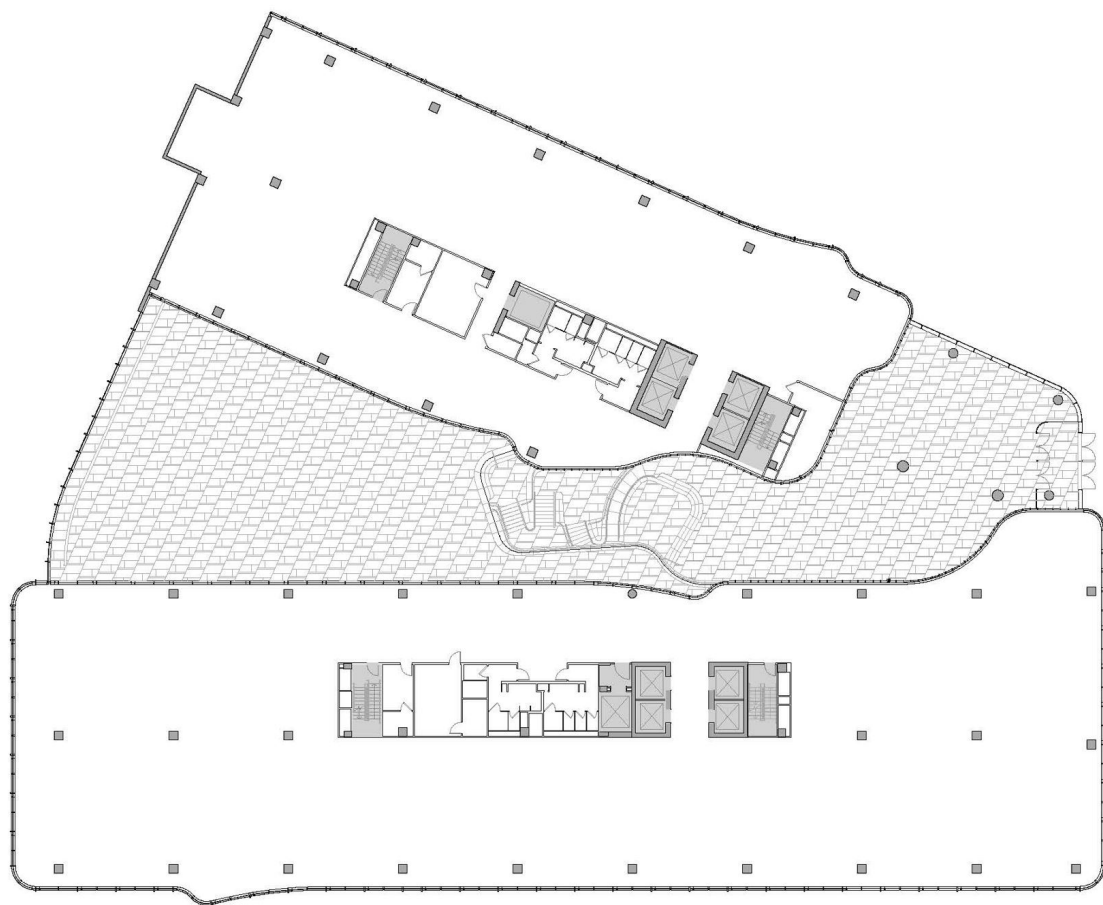
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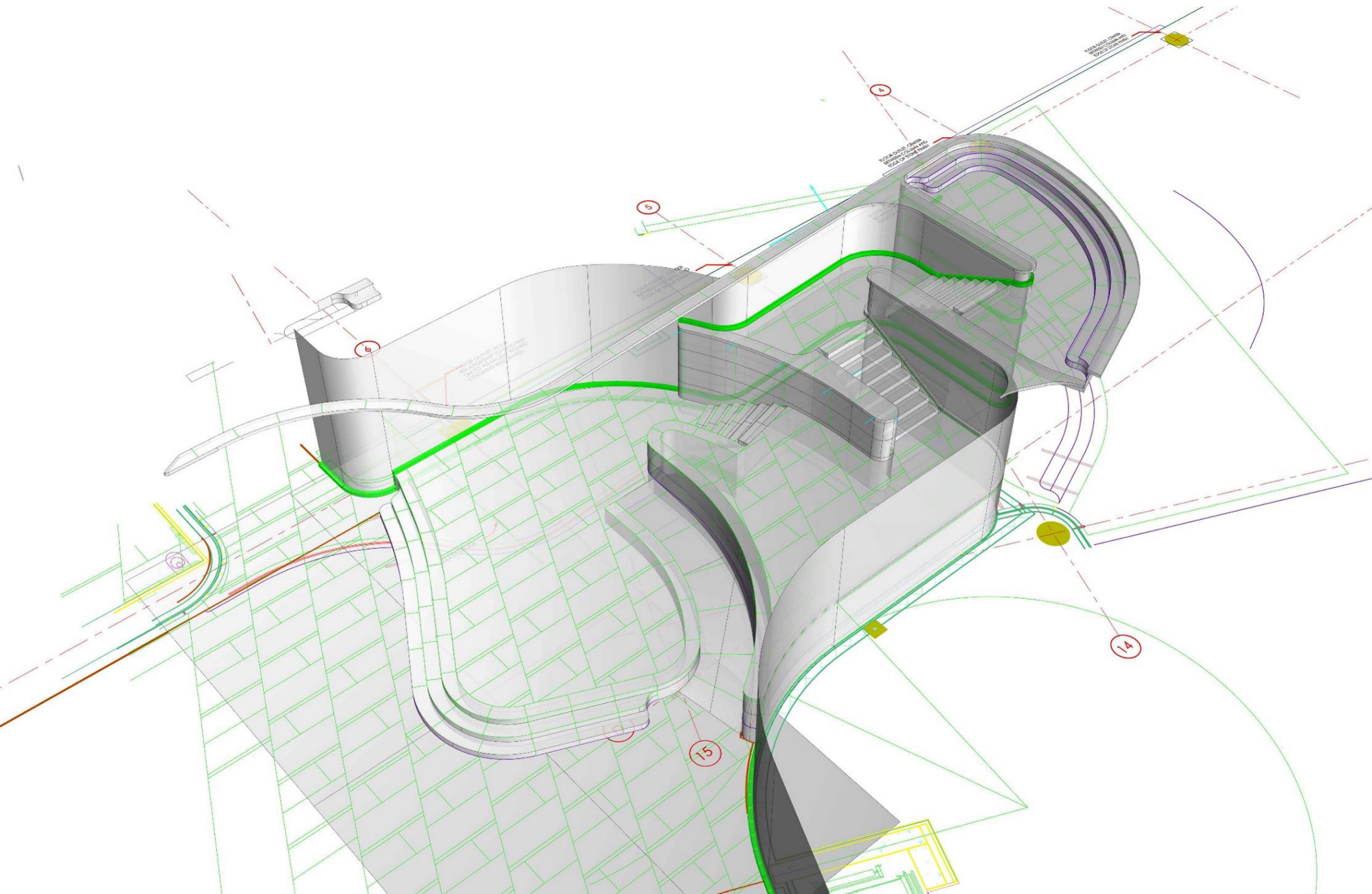
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The design embraces the site's challenging geometry, carefully establishing uplifting public space within encircling v-plan floor plates.





The grand stair includes massive sweeping curves complemented with an articulated paving that flows continuously over each cascading level.