

# NeoCon®

## THE MART UNVEILS TRANSFORMATIVE RENOVATIONS JUST IN TIME FOR NEOCON®

The Mart, Chicago  
JUNE 13-15, 2016

**(Chicago, IL – May 2016)** The Merchandise Mart (theMART) is an architectural icon that continues to evolve with time to meet the changing needs of the showrooms and offices that call it home all year round. Management at theMART have been working over the past three years on a \$40 million dollar renovation for its common areas that will be the most comprehensive upgrade to the public spaces in over 40 years. This transformation centers around The Grand Stair, a communal space connecting theMART's first and second floors, and includes a large multi-purpose space atop The Grand Stair on the second floor, a modernized, urban food hall and an expanded riverfront park with alfresco seating. Attendees at the upcoming NeoCon 2016 event (June 13-15, 2016) will be the first to experience the new 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor layout and amenities, including a specially curated lounge furnished with product from theMART showrooms.

TheMART's transformative renovation was designed to complement the creative energy and talent of its tenants and visitors, reflecting both the functionality and aesthetic of those who utilize theMART's space for offices, retail, showrooms and events. Dynamic elements of the renovation include:

- **The Grand Stair:** a monumental new portal of theMART, the 50-ft wide majestic staircase creates a connection between the first two floors, and also serves as a meeting or workspace with stadium seating, a large projection wall and free Wi-Fi.
- **The Lounge:** a multi-purpose space with spectacular views of the Chicago River and skyline, located atop The Grand Stair, will feature food-service and provide various areas to meet, work and socialize. During NeoCon, The Lounge will offer food service provided by Lettuce Entertain You restaurants and be a convenient meeting place for all participants. Comfortable seating and complimentary WiFi will offer a welcome respite from the busy showroom and exhibit hall floors. Lounge furnishings include casual and dining furniture by Allermuir, Bernhardt Design, Davis, HBF, Herman Miller and Stylex, and floor coverings by Masland Carpets.
- **The Food Hall:** a reconfigured, reinvigorated and dramatically designed seating area with more natural light will engage visitors beyond dining and offer additional space for lounging, socializing and working.
- **River Drive Park:** a 5,000 square-foot outdoor green space along the riverfront connects tenants, visitors and pedestrians to theMART's main entry, and includes seating and shaded areas with dramatic views of the river and Chicago skyline.

- **Reception/Information Desk:** a new greeting point for the building located at the base of The Grand Stair.

“TheMART’s stature as an architectural icon, and its influence as the epicenter of Chicago’s commerce and industry, is reflected in every aspect of the unique and functional design of The Grand Stair and theMART’s other new communal space elements,” said Myron Maurer, COO at theMART.

Vornado Realty Trust, the property’s owner, engaged innovative New York-based architecture, strategy and design firm A+I to lead the design process throughout the three-year capital improvements renovation project.

“Rather than creating a port of entrance and exit, the architectural features of theMART’s new lobby allow for a new kind of engagement by slowing down the pace of passage,” states Brad Zizmor, Principal and Co-Founder of A+I. “The Grand Stair and Reception Area create a spectacular architectural landscape conducive to reflection, thinking and socializing. In keeping with A+I’s reinvention of the lobby as a programmatic space to dwell in, as opposed to pass through, we designed a colossal stair with a physical structure that is 80% meant to be lingered on as opposed to being walked on.”

Other building upgrades NeoCon participants will find include:

- Enhanced WiFi service on the first and second floors
- A new bank of automated elevators on the far West side of the building serving all floors
- A completely renovated seventh floor Exhibit Hall featuring new floor coverings, wall system, lighting, wayfinding, and enhanced WiFi service

For product and show information, attendees can utilize the new “[My Planner](#)” feature on NeoCon’s site. It boasts an [online image and video gallery](#) with product descriptions and general company information. Those who complete their free profile can schedule appointments and contact each other via the system. My Planner can even suggest potential connections based on user interests.

Media can access the show’s online pressroom at [www.neocon.com](http://www.neocon.com) to download press releases and announcements. The site also features an image gallery and fast facts. For exhibitor news, images and real-time information, follow NeoCon on the following social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Vine](#).

High--res images of theMART’s new renovations are available to download: <http://bit.ly/theMART>

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About theMART: One of the largest commercial buildings in the world, the 4.2 million SF Merchandise Mart (theMART) is located in Chicago, IL along the Chicago River. Completed in 1930, the building continues to meet the changing needs of the office and showroom businesses it serves. As a Gold-EB

OEM LEED certified building, theMART is committed to creating and maintaining sustainable environments.

TheMART is owned by New York-based Vornado Realty Trust, a fully integrated, publicly traded, real estate investment trust (REIT) and one of the largest owners and managers of commercial real estate in the United States with a portfolio of over 45 million SF.

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