



PROJECT SHOWCASE 2023

Spotlighting the best in design and MAS projects

**LinkedIn's Newest
Dining Space**



A New Business Dining Platform

Workplace foodservice was reimaged during the renovation of LinkedIn's flagship building, which now showcases an all-electric, food hall-style servery.

By Dana Tanyeri | Photos by Tony Chung

LinkedIn, a leading social networking platform for professionals, began planning a major expansion of its Middlefield Campus headquarters in Mountain View, Calif., in early 2017. Completed at the end of 2021, the 29-acre campus ties together existing and new office buildings, as well as two new parking structures, with creative architecture and landscape design. The LEED Platinum-certified complex maximizes access to natural light, views and the outdoors, incorporating terraces, roof decks, courtyards and large open spaces. Walking and bike paths connect all corners of the campus, which in addition to being a model of sustainability also reflect pandemic-driven workplace dynamics that emerged over the span of its development.

Office areas and technology applications were redesigned, for example, to accommodate hybrid teams. Work areas now allow for easy social distancing as well as for comfortable collaboration,

thanks to a variety of seating configurations. And the foodservice program offered in B1, the campus' new flagship building, was completely reimaged.

For starters, LinkedIn and parent company Microsoft pledged to be carbon negative by 2030, which prompted the decision that all newly constructed facilities would run exclusively on electricity. And the pandemic, of course, sparked its own set of pivots. With the new building, LinkedIn recognized an opportunity to move away from its traditional buffet-style cafe model and introduce a new food hall concept that better meets post-pandemic realities and unknowns.

Pivots to Plan B

"We started planning in early fall 2018 and had a full design, including MEPs [mechanical, electrical and plumbing], completed when the request to go all-electric was made in 2019. The initial version of the servery featured a dual-sided salad bar and

mostly self-service concepts powered by both gas and electric equipment," says Nahum Goldberg, FCSI, principal at NGAssociates, a San Francisco Bay-area-based consultancy with seven regional offices in North America. "These were significant pivots to make, particularly as the floors were already poured on the main level; floor sinks and utilities were in place. But LinkedIn didn't hesitate to make the necessary directional changes and to lead in terms of both sustainability and operating style. Led by Lily Gin and Luke Elkos on our team, we were able to change the footprints of the various stations, replace specified gas equipment with electric, and create partitioned kiosks instead of one continuous line, placing each concept in the best location based on utilities already installed."

The resulting food hall, opened in January 2022, has roughly 6,700 square feet of production and servery space on two of B1's six floors — 4,900 square feet on

the first floor, which includes the NGAssociates-designed Aurora Coffee Bar in the adjacent lobby.

Within the food hall proper, a diverse array of concepts offers both order-and-pickup and grab-and-go menus that change weekly.

"We change menus weekly rather than daily, as we do in our other cafes, in part because we just didn't know how many people would be coming back into the office," notes Anna Bohbot, global food program manager at LinkedIn. "It allows for more efficient production and reduced food waste. By running menus weekly, we also avoid 'fear of missing out' scenarios, where lines at the Latin station would be out the door on Taco Tuesdays, for example. This way, people have all week to enjoy that special taco."

In the first-floor space, kiosks include Daily Deli (sandwiches), Spice Alley (Indian), Farm Box (salads/soups), El Camino (Latin) and Bun Shack (grill). A kiosk, dubbed Local Shop, is dedicated to sampling and

**B1 FOOD HALL
LINKEDIN
MIDDLEFIELD CAMPUS**

promoting foods produced by local artisans and farmers.

In addition to utilizing, as much as possible, infrastructure that was already in place when shifting to electric and individual kiosks, NGAssociates evaluated the specific needs of each concept to ensure efficient, ergonomic and cost-minimizing design. On the first floor, for instance, El Camino and Bun Shack share a cookline behind separate branded facades, each with its own digital menu board, order and pickup windows.

“A big consideration was ventilation because those two concepts require a lot of active in-station cooking,” Goldberg notes. “We could place concepts like the Farm Box and Daily Deli in areas of the servery that have more open ceilings above, and Spice Alley, given the

nature of the cuisine, is largely plate-and-serve so ventilation wasn’t an issue. Equipment there could be ventless. But we put El Camino and Bun Shack together against the core of the building. That enabled us to stack the ventilation, which also aligns with the pizza kiosk on the third floor, and share ducts and shafts.”

That pizza kiosk, dubbed The Slice, anchors the third-floor section of the food hall. It offers individual pizza slices and other baked entrees prepared in an electric deck oven. The oven, according to Goldberg, offers comparable performance to gas-fired pizza ovens at significant energy savings — just without an open-flame aesthetic. Single-serve salads are available at The Slice, as well. The station (like most within the food hall) is



Nahum Goldberg, FCSI
Principal
NGAssociates

“The LinkedIn and Bon Appétit teams worked closely with us at every step and were very forward thinking.”

AT A GLANCE

Project overview:

A new-construction, two-level, all-electric corporate food hall

Scope of work: Full design services from programming through construction administration and ongoing support

Design consultants:

NGAssociates, Richmond, Calif.:

- Nahum Goldberg, FCSI, principal
- Luke Elkos, project manager, design consultant
- Lily Gin, project coordinator and estimator

Architects: STUDIOS (core/shell), NBBJ (tenant improvements)

Engineers: PAE (MEP), Forell Elsesser (structural), BKF Engineers (civil)

Sustainability consultant: Brightworks Sustainability

AV/IT: BJJ Technology Consultants

Acoustical consultant:

Charles M. Salter

Environmental graphics:

Gensler, Acrylicize, Antlre

General contractor:

Devcon Construction

Owner’s representative:

D.R. Young Associates

Dealer/foodservice equipment contractor:

Duray/JF Duncan Industries Inc.

Foodservice operator:

Bon Appétit Management Company



Menus change weekly versus daily at food hall concepts, which allows for more efficient production to accommodate for a variable number of on-site employees each day.

Main Production Kitchen

KEY EQUIPMENT

MAIN PRODUCTION KITCHEN

Utensil and pot-washing areas

- 3-compartment soak sink with scrapping unit
- Clean table and clean utensil shelving
- Conveyor dish machine with integral dryer
- Dish accumulator and scrapping system
- Front-loading pot washer

General Storage

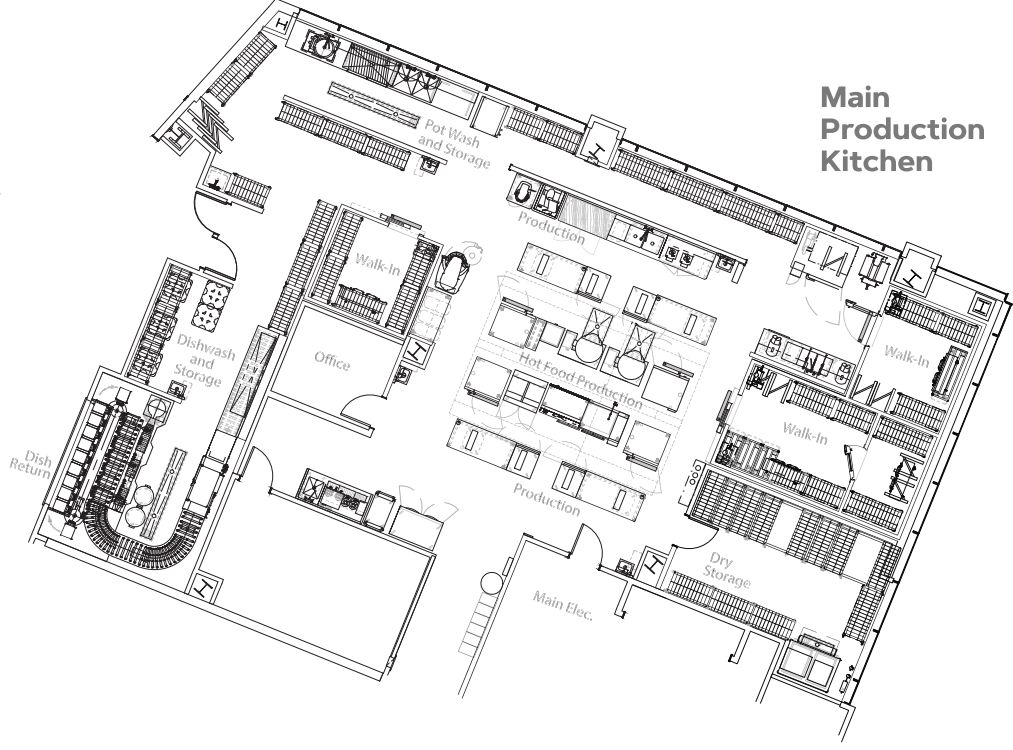
- Dry storage with high-density storage system
- Walk-in coolers with remote compressor system
- Walk-in freezer with remote compressor system

General

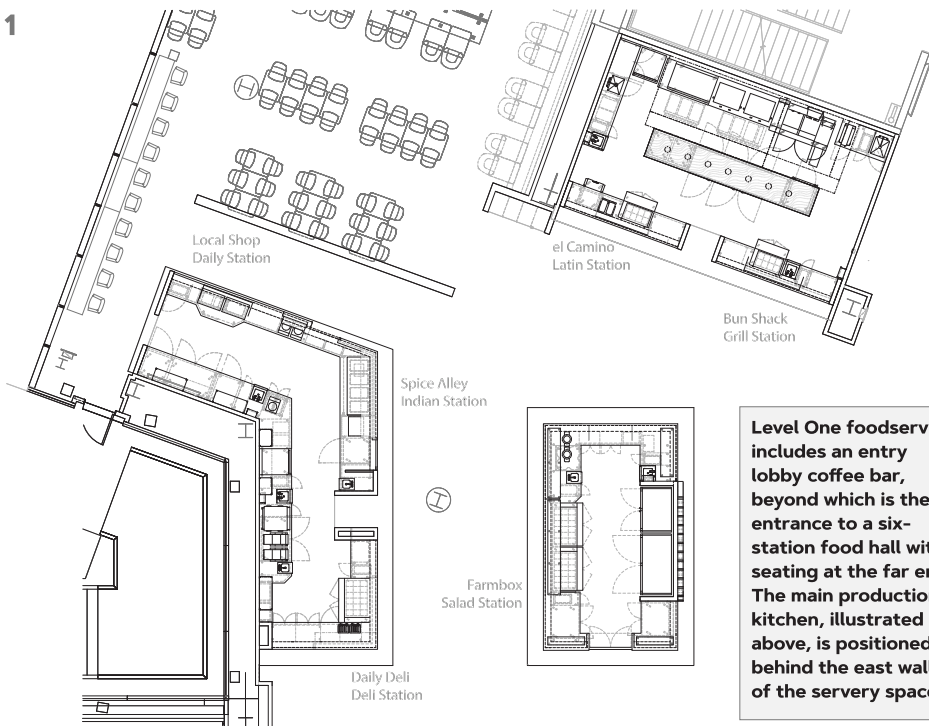
- Roll-in blast chiller
- Slicer
- Food processor
- Mobile tables
- Ice cuber and flaker with split bin, transport system

Baking

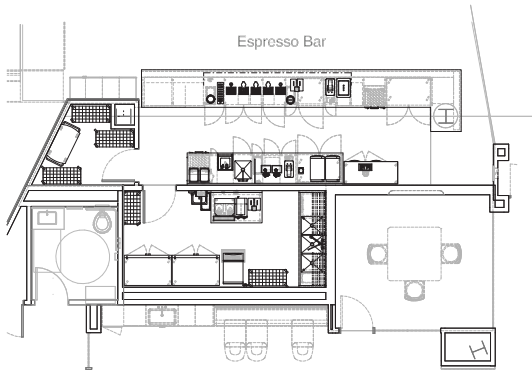
- 80-qt. mixer
- 20-qt. mixer
- Dough sheeter
- Baking table with ingredient bins



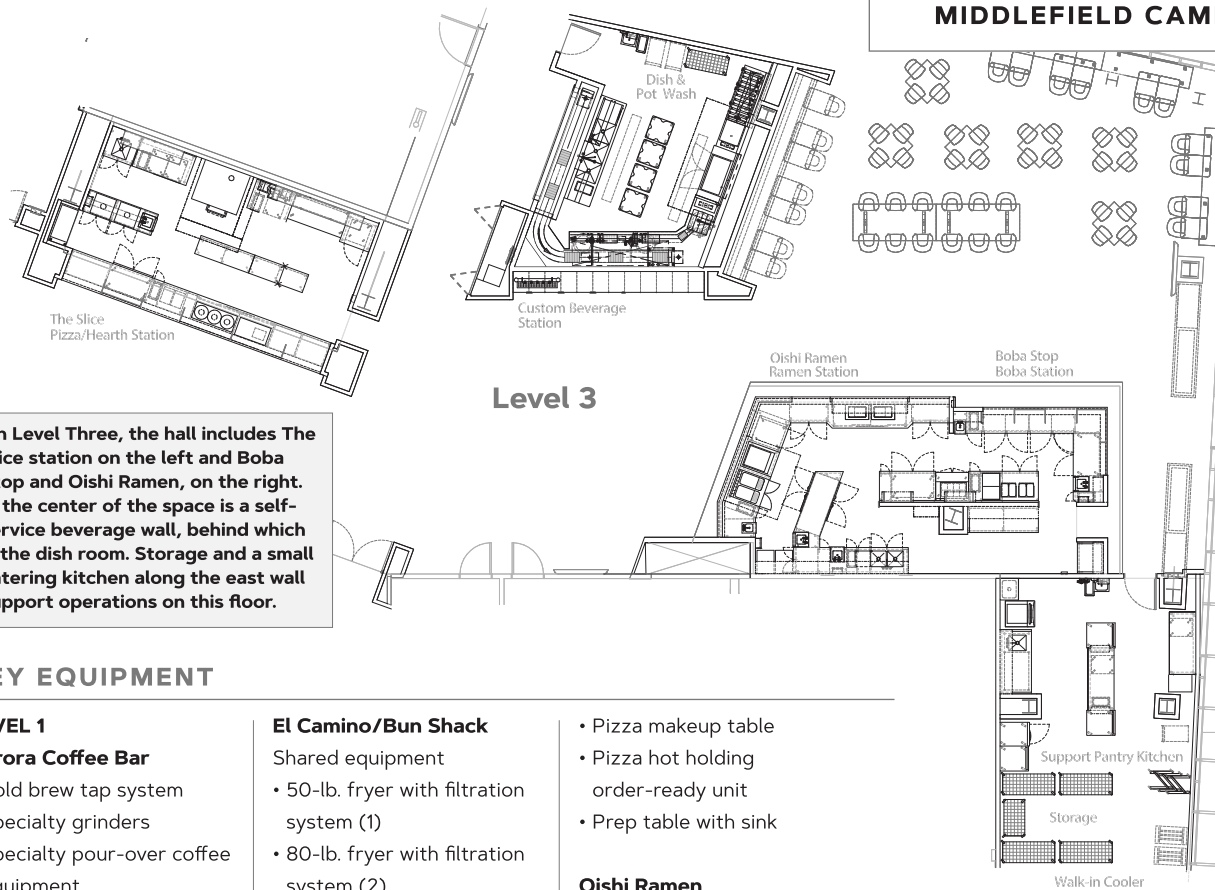
Level 1



Level One foodservice includes an entry lobby coffee bar, beyond which is the entrance to a six-station food hall with seating at the far end. The main production kitchen, illustrated above, is positioned behind the east wall of the servery space.



**B1 FOOD HALL
LINKEDIN
MIDDLEFIELD CAMPUS**



On Level Three, the hall includes The Slice station on the left and Boba Stop and Oishi Ramen, on the right. In the center of the space is a self-service beverage wall, behind which is the dish room. Storage and a small catering kitchen along the east wall support operations on this floor.

KEY EQUIPMENT

LEVEL 1

Aurora Coffee Bar

- Cold brew tap system
- Specialty grinders
- Specialty pour-over coffee equipment
- Specialty coffee brewer extractor
- Specialty undercounter espresso system
- Ventless ovens

Daily Deli

- Pop-up toaster
- Sandwich makeup table
- Ventless panini presses
- Ventless oven

Spice Alley

- Hot/cold/freeze switchable wells
- Induction chai tea warmers

Local Shop

- Freezer
- Hot/cold/freeze switchable wells
- Hot holding unit
- Refrigerator

Farm Box

- Countertop soup tureen
- Refrigerated makeup tables

El Camino/Bun Shack

- Shared equipment
- 50-lb. fryer with filtration system (1)
- 80-lb. fryer with filtration system (2)
- Expediting table with refrigeration
- Griddle with refrigerated base
- Hot holding unit
- Overhead heat lamps
- Plancha with freezer base
- Prep table with sink
- Refrigerated makeup and finishing stations

Cooking

- Utility cabinet wall
- High-efficiency hoods
- Combi ovens
- Tilt kettle
- Induction stock pot range
- Dual fryer battery with filtration system
- Griddle
- 6-burner induction range
- Refrigerated base

LEVEL 3

The Slice

- 3-deck professional baking oven
- Butcher-block landing tables with overhead heat lamps

- Pizza makeup table
- Pizza hot holding order-ready unit
- Prep table with sink

Oishi Ramen

- 4-burner induction range
- Dual pasta cooker
- Hot/cold/freeze switchable serving wells
- Makeup tables
- Pasta cart
- Prep table with sinks

Boba Stop

- Cold beverage dispenser
- Insulated ice bin
- Refrigerated makeup table

Support Kitchen

- Freezer
- Hot holding cabinets
- Ice machine
- Prep table with sink
- Walk-in cooler

Self-Serve Beverage Wall

- Glycol system
- Keg cooler
- Specialty tap system



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The new dining space includes plenty of open areas for LinkedIn employees to feel comfortable social distancing while enjoying the many different dining concepts.

the dish rooms for a more comfortable working environment.”

Bohbot adds that the overall goal for the food hall’s design was to feel welcoming and to put the foodservice workers at the forefront of the experience. To that end, glass panels were used at the stations to provide transparency into the food and preparation. “We focus a lot on hospitality and building relationships,” she says. “And we wanted the flow of this new dining experience for LinkedIn employees to be intuitive and comfortable, from where to get in line, to the digital menu boards — which are now a requirement for us — to pickup points and dish drop-off. It’s all seamless, with no cross traffic.”

All-In on All-Electric

All front-of-house stations in the new food hall are fully equipped for finishing plates to order, and, in the case of El Camino, Bun Shack and The Slice, for cooking to order. And, per LinkedIn’s sustainability requirement, all of that equipment runs only on electricity. The same is true of the operation’s 3,200-square-foot main production kitchen, which supports all of the kiosks and LinkedIn’s robust catering program. Located

equipped with flexible equipment for both hot and cold food holding.

Rounding out the third-floor options are Oishi Ramen for noodle bowls and Boba Stop for bubble teas finished to order, plus fresh juices at breakfast. Additional beverages are available along a wall where local kombucha and house-made flavored teas and sparkling waters are offered in self-serve taps.

“The ramen station has a front-facing hood, and it integrates separate pasta cookers for both regular and gluten-free noodles,” Goldberg says. “As you come in, you see steam rising and employees dunking the pasta. And when you sit in the adjacent dining space, with its large windows to the terrace, its nice design and lighting, you feel like you’re in an authentic local ramen or boba shop.”

As for the self-serve beverage taps, unlike regular beer taps behind a bar, where spacing is tight and just one or two employees need access, LinkedIn’s taps were custom designed to ensure easy public accessibility at a 34-inch counter height. “The tower is lower and the taps are more spread out, with around six inches between them,” notes NGA’s Elkos. “And they’re designed so that users just press their cup against the bottom portion to dispense drinks — nobody has to touch the tap handles. That’s been another COVID-driven pivot across the board, figuring out how many touch-free solutions we can integrate.”

The third floor also includes a separate dining room with seating for up to 20. That room has been a popular addition, according to Bohbot. “Teams can book it for a cooking class or have

meals catered there and dine together,” she says. “There’s AV, too, so they can stream in remote team members working from home.”

In the back of house on that level, dry and refrigerated storage areas accessed directly from the service elevator and a small prep kitchen support the kiosks and catered meeting service. For dish drop, a conveyor slot recessed into the wall takes soiled items through a sight and sound baffle into the dish room, where stations for three employees are set up to scrape and sort dishware before putting them into a conveyor dish machine. “One feature we now include as standard for LinkedIn are dryers integrated into the dish machines to ensure everything comes out dry,” Goldberg notes. “We also put hoods over the dish machines to help ventilate

in the first floor's northeast corner, between the food hall and loading dock, the kitchen is designed and equipped with sustainability, efficiency and staff comfort in mind.

Half walls help ensure unobstructed views and facilitate easy communication across the kitchen, and low shelving against large windows maximizes natural light. As on the third floor, the dish room includes dish machine hoods to keep temperatures comfortable. And that area is generously spaced to accommodate LinkedIn's food-waste tracking program, which involves scraping, weighing and documenting

post-consumer waste.

On one side, the kitchen flows from receiving through dry, refrigerated and frozen storage, including a roll-in blast chiller. In the center, a dual-sided cookline handles hot-food prep beneath energy-efficient, demand-control ventilation hoods.

Flexibility factors in as well. A large percentage of the equipment is on casters for easy reconfiguration. That goes for prep tables, too, most of which are mobile with retractable cord reels above should table space be needed for small appliances. Sink covers provide additional workspace when needed and

can be stored neatly below when not in use. Even the utility system is designed for maximum flexibility. It's contained in a stainless-steel wall system featuring cabinets with lift-off panels for easy access.

As for going all electric, Goldberg says it's unquestionably a viable solution as operators show increasing interest in reducing energy consumption. One key to success, he notes, is ensuring culinary teams get advance access to electric versions of equipment with which they may be less familiar — charbroilers, for instance, or induction units — to ensure ample opportunity to test and train. "The LinkedIn and

Bon Appétit teams worked closely with us at every step and were very forward thinking," he notes. "That hands-on involvement contributed greatly to the success of the project in terms of being able to deliver on both sustainability and culinary goals."

Ultimately, Bohbot says the food hall succeeds as a prime example of sustainable dining in a high-volume setting, one in which culinary excellence and customer experience are high. "It's always a risk when you roll out a new concept," she notes, "but built on sustainability and innovation, we like to call it an intelligent risk."

End to End

The end of every great project often leaves those involved inspired for the next business adventure. At the start and heart of each project featured in the pages before this one, an FCSI member set out on a mission to bring their unique solution set and expertise to the endeavor. And they are ready for the next one.

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