

ENVIRONMENT & INVOLVEMENT: A THREE-PART DISCUSSION ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY
IOWA STATE CAPITOL DOME RESTORED, PRESERVED IN WITH THE OLD AND THE NEW:
INSIDE SEVEN EFFORTS TO RESTORE AND REVITALIZE HISTORIC BUILDINGS ACROSS THE STATE
SPRING 2020

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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF AIA IOWA

Next Chapter

Transitions and Transformations





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Editor's letter



Justin Burnham, Assoc. AIA

Editor, Iowa Architect

Welcome!

Next Chapter, the theme of this issue, has dual meaning embracing history as well as new pursuits. Carl Elefante, FAIA, past American Institute of Architects president, has a saying: "The greenest building is the one that already exists." In that vein, the Environmental Protection Agency promotes reuse of existing building stock, as a more energy-efficient new building will not overcome the energy exerted during its construction, known as embodied carbon, for approximately 65 years. Our industry is tasked with a response to climate change that is increasingly urgent. Against this backdrop, we consider how to thoughtfully transform existing structures.

Personally, I have a soft spot for efforts of this type. There is something romantic about the act of leaving the office behind, often with a tape measure in hand, to interact with a building in need of rehabilitation. Some elements are more worn than others. Designers are tasked with translating the essential history – peaks, valleys, twists of fate – of such places for all to appreciate. We need the soulfulness of these buildings, and these buildings need our stewardship.

This kind of storytelling presents the designer and client with a host of questions. What should be kept? How much can be added? How does the project articulate these differences and why?

Transformation can happen at many scales, ranging from minute details within a building to its neighborhood impact. This spring, we feature seven projects that elevate the opportunity for rehabilitation into an artful narrative. We hope you enjoy these spaces – across a range of preservation, restoration, renovation, and adaptive reuse – that document transitions into a next chapter of life.

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Iowa Center for Architecture
400 Locust Street, Suite 100
Des Moines, IA 50309
515-244-7502
www.AIAIowa.org / www.IowaArchitecture.org

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Advertising

Tonya Vitzthum
Associations Inc.
515-669-3010
tvitzthum@associationsinc.us

Publisher

Tom Smull
Associations Inc.
515-201-3133
tsmull@associationsinc.us

Managing Editor Abby Gilman

Copy Editor Andrea Kline

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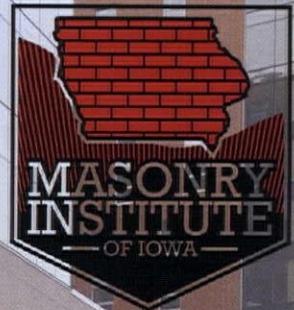
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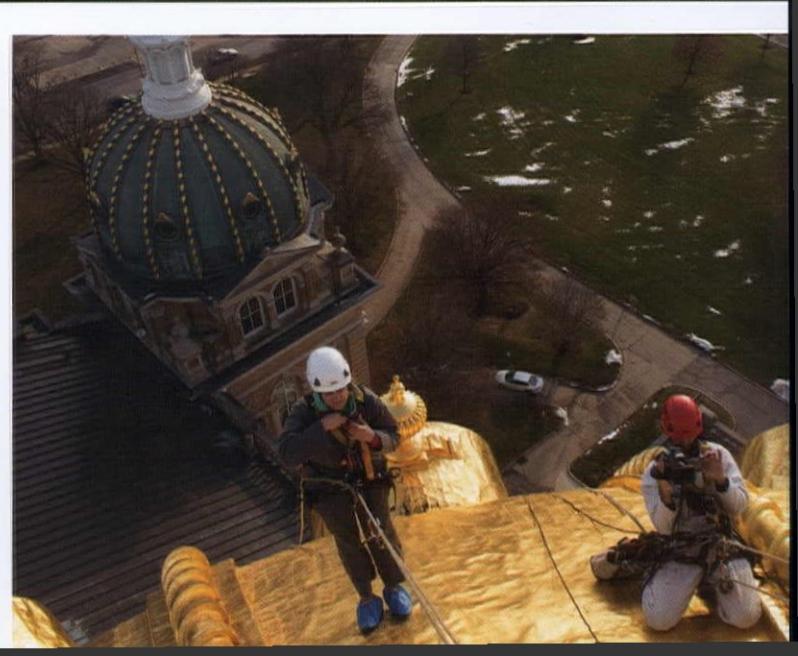
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collected

People,
Products,
Inspiration



The Test of Time

Future-Proofing the Iowa State Capitol Dome

WORDS : CHELSEA EVERS IMAGES : OPN ARCHITECTS ARCHITECT : OPN ARCHITECTS

Originally constructed in 1886, the main dome of the Iowa State Capitol has seen its fair share of weathering. But by 2015, the deterioration of the dome had quickened, and local firm OPN Architects was called on to conduct a study of the conditions – from 270 feet below.

“It was a big challenge,” says James Peters, Assoc. AIA, with OPN Architects. “We had nothing to scaffold or build upon inside the dome, so it was super hard to get to those surfaces.” To allow close-up inspection of the dome, the team hired a rope access company. Armed with GoPro cameras, infrared scanners, and two vehicles full of access equipment, the crew climbed a 100-foot spiral staircase and rappelled from the dome’s lantern to assess the damage.

While difficult, the logistics of the inspection were just the beginning. The footage and scans showed a significant amount of moisture damage at the dome’s compression ring: A large portion of the brick at the mouth of the ring was soaked through and softened. “There was a real concern about the amount of brick loss and at what point it would start causing issues in the future,” says Scott Allen, AIA, associate at OPN Architects.

Thus began a plan to immediately repair deterioration and to prevent future damage as well. First, the team designed a more resilient set of catch pans to collect rain and snowmelt before it came into contact with the brick, diverting water back outside. Next, a more unique problem was addressed: moisture from human activity below. “We realized warm air from people breathing below was rising up and creating condensation,” says

Opposite top: To access the capitol dome, which lies 270 feet above the floor, OPN Architects hired a ropes team to spend two days examining the exterior of the structure. **Opposite bottom right:** The ropes crew used infrared scanners and GoPro cameras to transmit their findings to the OPN Architects team inside. **Opposite bottom left:** In order to restore brickwork inside the dome, the team had to get creative. With a dumpster on a crane outside the dome, they transferred bricks in five-gallon buckets passed through small windows. **Above:** A model cross-section of the dome shows how the permanent monitoring platform will assist in future maintenance and renovation of the attic.



Peters. To combat this, the team upgraded the glass around the lantern to a double-pane insulated glass unit. They also installed what they call an “attic separator,” a sheet metal barrier that extends outward to divide the dome’s microclimate from the crowd below.

Perhaps the most innovative part of the restoration project was the team’s decision to install a permanent monitoring platform, instead of temporary scaffolding, to complete brickwork in the attic. Spanning the full width of the dome, the platform required quite the creativity to construct. “We hung it using this really lightweight system,” says Peters. “We used aluminum I-beams – you don’t often get to use those – and a floor system made from grated fiberglass.” Because the system is permanent, Allen says, it will make improvements down the line much simpler. “It’s all behind the scenes, but for the betterment of the building in the future,” he says. “We were thinking of maintenance that will likely occur many years from now.”

The OPN Architects team was thrilled by the industry reaction to the platform installation. “With temporary measures, OSHA sees people getting hurt all the time,” says Allen, who recently gave a presentation on the project at an American Institute of Architects event. “This was the first building they’d ever seen that looks forward to future maintenance and safety. I never imagined I’d be as proud of the monitoring platform as we are, but it’s an ideal solution.”

Archispeak

Rehabilitation

Definition : The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

As defined by the National Park Service.

I collected

Celebrating Advocacy in Architecture

AIA Iowa recognizes our members who advocate for the profession through community leadership and advocacy

WORDS : KATHRIN HEALY IMAGES : AIA IOWA

The American Institute of Architects (AIA), Iowa Chapter recognizes the many contributions of our members to affect positive change in the state of Iowa and the architecture profession overall. The AIA Iowa Citizen Architect Program is an annual program that recognizes AIA Iowa members who represent AIA's values in their communities through public service. This program is a recognition bestowed upon all AIA Iowa members who meet

the qualification criteria and is intended to encourage all AIA Iowa members to actively engage in their communities and share in the AIA mission.

The Citizen Architect Program is divided into two tracks: Community and Advocacy. Participants in the Community Track are AIA Iowa members who serve as appointed or elected members of governing bodies or serve as volunteer leaders for non-profit organizations that

benefit a community in need. Participants on the Advocacy Track promote AIA Iowa's core principles of quality design, sustainability, and livable communities in public policy. AIA Iowa members participating in the Advocacy Track are engaged with their state and local leaders and advocate for the profession.

Thank you to all 2020 AIA Iowa Citizen Architect Program participants.



Top left: As Chair of Iowa Women in Architecture, Eli Goll, Assoc. AIA, manages the organization and acts as the voice for the Board of Directors and overall membership, representing the group to outside entities.

Right: Bruce Hamous, AIA, serves as an executive board member for Boy Scouts of America. As a 20-year member of the Council Executive Board, Hamous provides oversight of the youth programs for the Hawkeye Area Council, which includes both fiduciary and governance responsibilities.

The council serves nearly 4,000 youth across a seven-county area of east central Iowa. **Bottom left:** Joe Wallace, AIA, serves as House Captain for Rebuilding Together DSM, an organization that rehabilitates the homes of veterans, older adults, people with disabilities, and families with dependent children in the Greater Des Moines Area. In this position, he is the technical expert at the job site responsible for planning a quality renovation project and seeing all details through to the end.

Advocacy Track Participants

David Abler, AIA
Sherwood Adams, AIA
Marzieh Akhgari, Student Affiliate
Alaa Aldoss, Assoc. AIA
Jacob Allen, AIA
Scott Allen, AIA*
Terry Allers, FAIA
Jasmine Au, Assoc. AIA*
Mindy Aust, AIA
Eric Badding, AIA
Anna Bednarko, Assoc. AIA*
Vitus Bering, AIA
Russell Bitterman, AIA
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David Brost Jr., AIA
Jesse Bulman, AIA
Timothy Bungert, AIA*
Justin Burnham, Assoc. AIA
Holly Butler, AIA
Cameron Campbell, AIA
Todd Campbell, AIA
Karl Chambers, AIA
Paloma Chapman, Student Affiliate
Vyankatesh Chinchalkar, Student Affiliate
Tom Clause, FAIA
Cassandra Coffin, Assoc. AIA
Matthew Cole, AIA
Nathaniel Compton, AIA
Brian Crichton, AIA
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Andrew Dasso, AIA
Sean Davies, Assoc. AIA
Bradley Davison-Rippey, AIA
Mike Dean, Assoc. AIA
Bill Dikis, FAIA
Shelby Doyle, AIA
Dan Drendel, AIA
Kierstyn Feldlavy, Assoc. AIA
Joe Feldmann, AIA*
Pete Franks, AIA
Samantha Frantik, Student Affiliate
William Futrell, AIA
John Gardner, AIA
Matthew Gaul, AIA
Naura Heiman Godar, AIA
John Paul Goedken, AIA
Corinne Goode, AIA
Steven Gray, AIA
Nathan Griffith, AIA
Calise Gritters, Student Affiliate
Abbigail Harding, AIA
Anna Harmon, AIA*
Brad Hartman, AIA
Scott Hatfield, AIA
Aaron Hauptmann, Student Affiliate
Danielle Hermann, AIA
Elisabeth Hocamp, Student Affiliate
Philip Hodgkin, AIA*
Tonia Householder, AIA*
Nicholas Hulstrom, AIA
Linh Huynh, Student Affiliate
Ariana Irizarry, Student Affiliate
Tyler Jessen, AIA
David Johanson, AIA
Lyndley Kent, AIA
Paul Kepler, AIA
John Keress, AIA
Khalid Khan, Assoc. AIA
Cyle King, Student Affiliate
Steven King, AIA
Jessica Kramer, AIA
Jason Kruse, AIA*
William Lawrence, AIA
Michael LeClere, AIA*
Bradly Leeper, AIA
Michael Lewis, AIA
Nicholas Lindsley, AIA
Thad Long, AIA
William Ludwig, AIA
John Mahon, AIA*
Kim McDonald, AIA
Shannon McGee, AIA*
Dale McKinney, FAIA
Henry Melendrez, Student Affiliate
Steven Miller, AIA
Elizabeth Modra, Student Affiliate
Mark Moeckl, Assoc. AIA
Ahmed Mohamed, Student Affiliate
Elham Mohammadrezaei, Student Affiliate
Chad Moklestad, Student Affiliate

Kevin Monson, AIA
Carey Nagle, AIA
Craig Nelson, AIA
Cally Niess, Assoc. AIA
Martha Norbeck, AIA*
Steven Oberbroeckling, Assoc. AIA
Paolo Orlando, Assoc. AIA
Matt Ostanik, AIA
Raymond Phillips, AIA*
Brian Phipps, Assoc. AIA
Sushmitha Rayasam, Student Affiliate
Terry Ritchie, Student Affiliate
Linda Schemmel, AIA
Brent Schipper, AIA
Madeline Schmidt, Assoc. AIA
Brian Schwartz, AIA*
Mark Seabold, AIA
Richard Seely, AIA
Edward Shannon, AIA
Tanya Sharma, Student Affiliate
Evan Shaw, AIA
Kaela Shoemaker, Assoc. AIA
Douglas Sires, AIA
Jonathan Sloan, AIA
Scott Smed, AIA*
Rob Smith, AIA
Annamarie Snider, AIA*
Edward Soenke, AIA
Nicholas Stenslie, Student Affiliate
Marilyn Stephanou, Student Affiliate
Rod Stevens, AIA
Jeffrey Stewart, AIA
Toi Sullivan, AIA
Michael Thole, AIA
Jay Tolefree, AIA
Hoang Tran, AIA
Sonia Trujillo, Assoc. AIA
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Russell Ver Ploeg, AIA*
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Owen Wagner, AIA
Joseph Wallace, AIA*
Christopher Wand, AIA*
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Eric Wessels, AIA*
Alan Wieskamp, AIA
Hunter Wille, Student Affiliate
Kenneth Wind, AIA
Thomas Wollan, AIA
Andrea Ytzen, AIA*
Jeremy Zehr, Assoc. AIA*

Community Track Participants

Janna Alampi, AIA
Azusa Allard, AIA
Monica Bailey, AIA
Matt Basye, AIA
Justin Bishop, AIA
Sarah Coleman, AIA
Curtis Ehler, AIA
Holly Ernst, Assoc. AIA
Scotney Fenton, AIA
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Stacey Hanley, AIA
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Mardy Holst, AIA
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Kyle Martin, AIA
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Nathan Stieler, AIA
Steve Stimmel, AIA
Aaron Twedt, AIA
Todd Wehr, AIA
Steve Wilke-Shapiro, AIA
Heidi Willis, Assoc. AIA

*Indicates participants of both tracks.

Join AIA Iowa, along with architects across the state, in a statewide celebration of the architecture, planning and design that help to bring our thriving communities to life.



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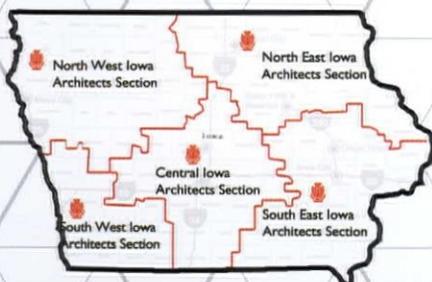
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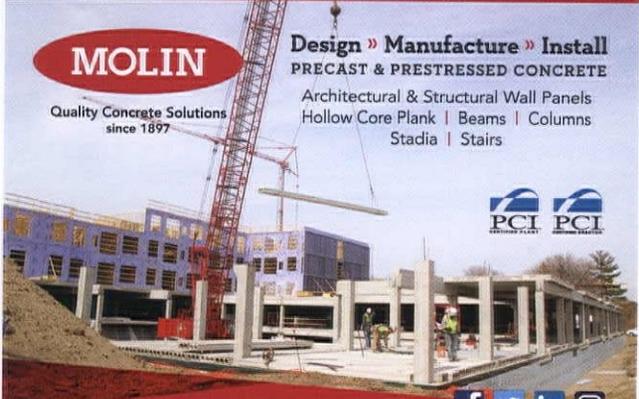
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ARTFUL REINVENTION

SERIES : ONE of THREE

ENVIRONMENT & INVOLVEMENT

Our Level of Concern

WORDS: JUSTIN BURNHAM, ASSOC. AIA & DANIELLE HERMANN, AIA

In October 1969, Iowa Architect highlighted ongoing warnings from nature with a cover story by Jim Wilkins titled ENVIRONMENT: INVOLVEMENT. Exactly 50 years later, in October 2019, teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg, Time magazine's 2019 Person of the Year, spoke at a rally in downtown Iowa City organized by local teenage activist Massimo Biggers. These teens are not alone. Last year featured numerous events that signal a tipping point in our understanding of the severity and urgency of climate change.

This article is the first installment in a three-part series. Wilkins' article posed three questions that we are re-asking today: What is the level of concern? What really is the state of the environment? How can we be most effective?

What is the level of concern — who is speaking out and what is being said?

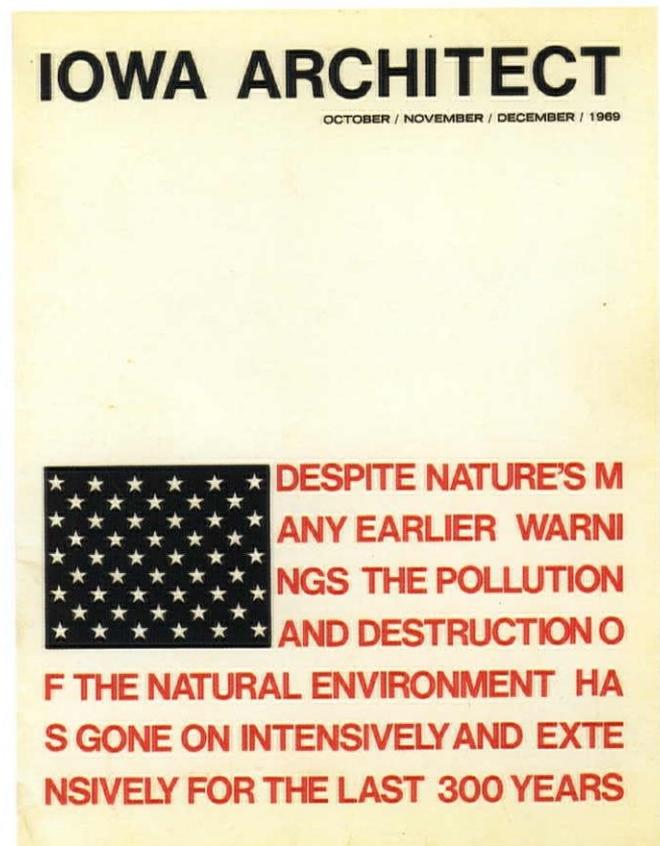
For this publication, the most appropriate place to begin seems to be the American Institute of Architects' (AIA) level of concern.

In 2018, the AIA Board of Directors updated the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct to include new language in Canon VI: Obligations to the Environment. What were previously three points have become five more targeted points: Energy Conservation, Water Use, Building Materials, Ecosystems, and Climate Change. Specifically, the ethical standards prompt members to set goals with clients for greenhouse gas emission reductions. The mandatory rule 6.501 states "members shall consider with their clients the environmental effects of their project decisions."

Ethics, sustainability, and Las Vegas don't always go together, but in this case they do. At the 2019 AIA National Conference in Las Vegas, the Resolution for Urgent and Sustained Climate Action passed overwhelmingly, by a vote of 4,860 yes, 312 no, and 28 abstain. According to the resolution, members are to "support urgent climate action as a health, safety, and welfare issue" and

"to exponentially accelerate the 'decarbonization' of buildings."

The AIA's declared goal is to achieve net-zero emissions in the building sector by 2050. To support this, the AIA encourages member firms to participate in the Architecture 2030 Commitment, which requires firms to report building performance



The cover of Iowa Architect's 1969 fall issue, which took a deep dive into humanity's — and the industry's — environmental impact.



Swedish teen climate activist Greta Thunberg rallies with local activists in downtown Iowa City on Friday, Oct. 4, 2019. The student-led movement has resulted in the Iowa City school board and the City of Iowa City each passing a climate resolution. Republished with permission © 2020 The Gazette, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

data to measure progress in energy and emissions reductions.

Currently, eight of the AIA Iowa's 78 member firms participate in the 2030 Commitment. Those firms are BNIM, DLR Group, INVISION, Neumann Monson Architects, OPN Architects, RDG Planning & Design, Shive-Hattery, and Substance. With an increased national spotlight on 2030, such as Architect magazine's "The Carbon Issue," the number of participants is likely to grow. Involvement in the program, which includes in-depth reporting on building performance, is a big investment of time and money for firms. Is participation in the 2030 Commitment a fair demonstration of concern? If so, what steps are needed to grow firm participation and consistency of reporting?

"We could be so much further if the economics were different," says Tate Walker, AIA, director of sustainability at OPN Architects. Much of what was true in 1969 still parallels today. "The business-industrial community is woefully unaware of the problem and noticeably reluctant to lead in the efforts necessary to plan for the future," Wilkins wrote. Today, while the level of concern is high among many, the government and private sectors have yet to come to an agreement on how to act together.

Globally, cooperation among governments is demonstrated by the 2016 Paris Climate Agreement, with 187 of the 197 signatories ratified. Yet, the 10th Emissions Gap Report issued by the United Nations Environment Programme is bleak, with the gap widening rather than shrinking. This same report has the United States as the top emitter on a per-capita basis. However, despite these global reports, the U.S. is set to leave the Paris Climate Agreement in November 2020. Why is the U.S.'s lack of concern such an outlier?

In 1969, NASA landed astronauts on the moon, solidifying the U.S. as a global leader. Today, NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issue dire climate reports to little actionable response. Why such a difference?

Economically, renewable energy sources are increasingly cost competitive. There are a range of policy proposals that could further catalyze this ongoing market shift. For example, British Petroleum announced its commitment to reaching net-zero in its operations and production by 2050, as well as its intent to advocate for policies that include carbon pricing. Last year, William Bates, FAIA, while serving as AIA president, issued a press release that "applauded the framework" of the Green New Deal, which seeks to update the electrical grid and transit infrastructure and retrofit to decarbonize buildings. These examples signal a private sector poised to do its part and a willingness within our profession to assert our relevance and voice on policy matters that impact development, return on investment, and carbon emissions.

The level of concern is, and should be, critical. On climate change, we need more open dialogue and nonpartisan action. To face climate change is both a test of our collective will and an opportunity to lead.

Next, join us as we explore the state of the environment and how we can be most effective. If not us, who? If not now, when?

A link to the 1969 ENVIRONMENT: INVOLVEMENT article can be found at bit.ly/3dubOp6.

RE-FORMED

A century-old shell offers a chance to rethink how to design and build out a project for an engineering firm

WORDS : KELLY ROBERSON IMAGES : JEFF WAGNER, AIA, IDEAA & CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA, INTEGRATED STUDIO ARCHITECT : STUDIO MELEE



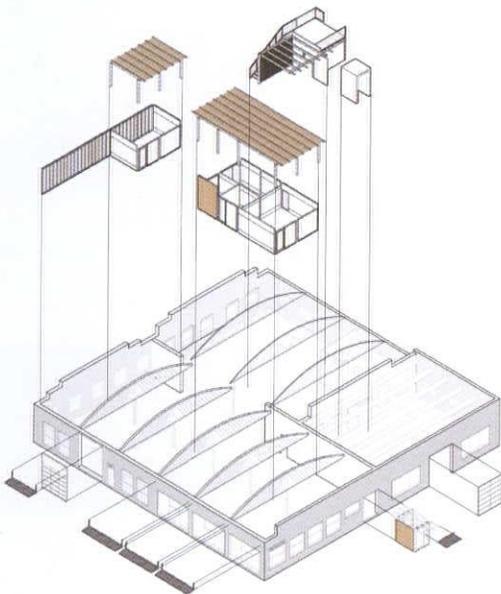
What do you do with a project when you get to do almost anything? That was the question Studio MELEE asked themselves when tasked with the renovation of a historic building in the Valley Junction neighborhood of West Des Moines.

Located at 300 4th Street and bound on a second side by Walnut Street, the 10,000-square-foot structure, built in 1918, had originally been an auto dealer and repair shop. During its last four decades, the space – added onto three times – had served as retail and storage space for a popular West Des Moines store. “It had really been chopped up on the inside, with drywall and lots of layers,” says Jamie Malloy, AIA, architect at Studio MELEE.

However, there was potential, says Malloy: Each part was different, but interesting, especially the roof structure. The original half was a barrel-vaulted roof; an addition was arched steel roof trusses; and the front corner was a flat steel roof.

KCL Engineering, a mechanical and electrical engineering firm, bought the structure and hired Studio MELEE for the renovation. The program requirements were loose and fluid. “They’re a pretty progressive company,” says Malloy. “They wanted a big enough space that they could grow their firm, and employees could come and go and feel at home.”

The first order of business was to strip the building down to its



Opposite: Street-side, the revamped building gives off a revitalized public face with canopies that recall interior details and open windows supplying a view into the bustling work space. **Top:** The remodeled building includes social-oriented spaces toward the back and dedicated work spaces in the front. The canopy detail repeats above the entry door. **Right:** Modular elements, dropped into the building, demonstrated how the design was executed — almost like a plug-and-work option. **Bottom left:** The modular options, prefabricated off site, include meeting rooms that can easily be removed or changed. **Middle left:** An axon diagram demonstrates the plug-in-place construction.

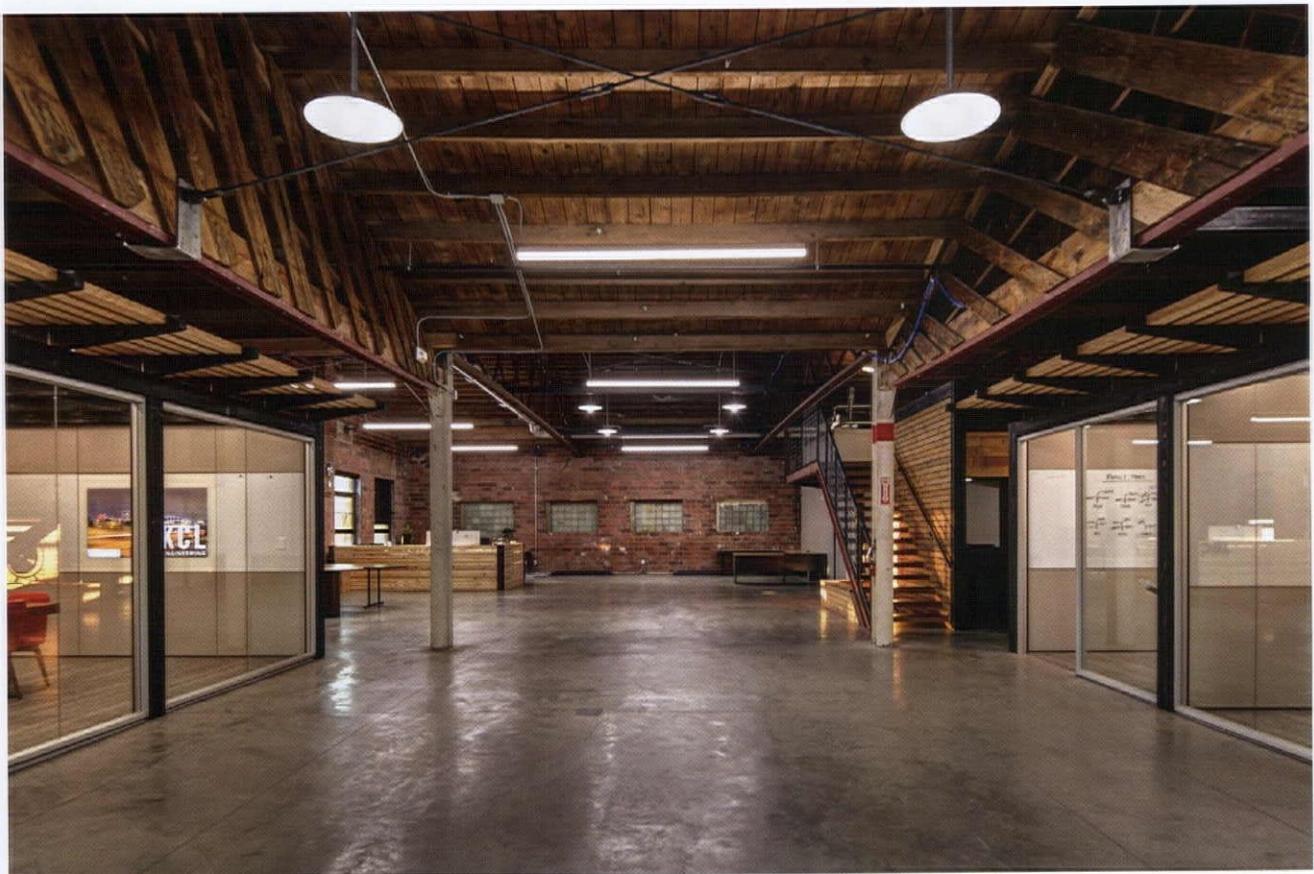
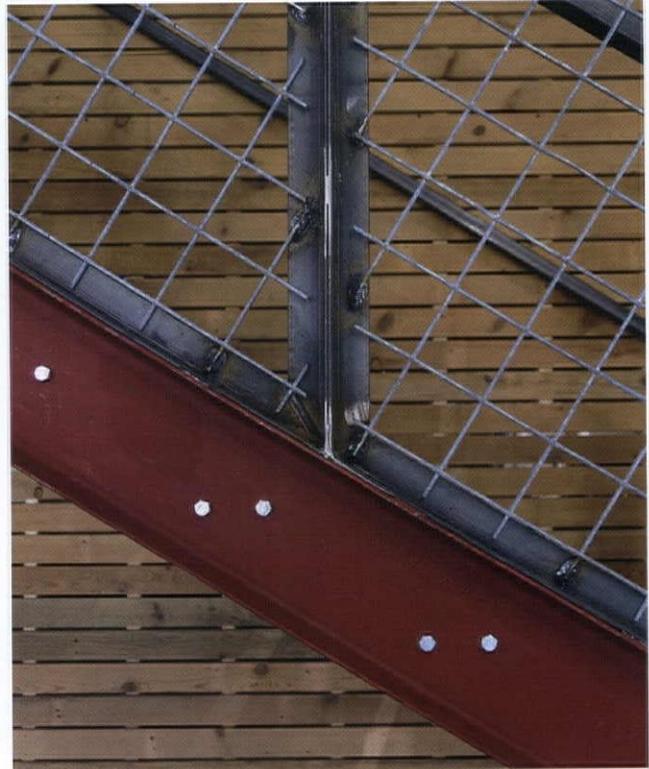
original bones and materials. Gone were the old windows and the plaster from the ceiling and drywall, exposing the original bones. “We knew there was a cool roof structure – you could peek up and see it in the attic,” says Malloy. Studio MELEE then roughed out a plan with public spaces, work spaces, and common spaces – mostly a big, open room. The structurally unsound west wall was reconstructed and windows were replaced, in some cases with operable sections. The only things that interrupt the interior are two load-bearing masonry walls and a few uniquely constructed interventions, says Malloy.

Studio MELEE conceived several prefabricated structures – posts, beams, wall panels, and glass doors – that were constructed off site and installed inside the space. “It was similar to a kit of parts,” says Malloy. “It can all be taken down if they want it to.”

Details and materials repeat throughout. Exterior canopies mimic a similar aesthetic inside, with reclaimed barnwood for textural contrast against the original terrazzo and new concrete floors. The historic steel roof is referenced in steel details on a stair leading to a lofted breakout space. Ultimately, it's a comfortable execution of a space that's as much live as it is work. There's a pinball machine and a pool table, showers and a party room. “They want people to be comfortable staying late,” says Malloy.

A blank slate can be a design challenge all its own – and a good one at that. “For us,” says Malloy, “coming to a project like this, with no idea what it's going to look like or what it's going to be, and [through] the process of uncovering [goals] and figuring out how to blend their ideas was something that's interesting and works – it was great.”

Top: Details and materials repeat throughout the design; the steel of the stair mirrors that of the historic roof. **Bottom:** Canopy details repeat in the interior, too, while the reveal of the roof structure helps provide a peek into the building's history.



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An Homage to the Past

PRESERVING HISTORY IN WEST DES MOINES' FIRST MIXED-USE INDUSTRIAL SPACE

WORDS : CHELSEA EVERS

IMAGES : CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA, INTEGRATED STUDIO

ARCHITECT : INVISION

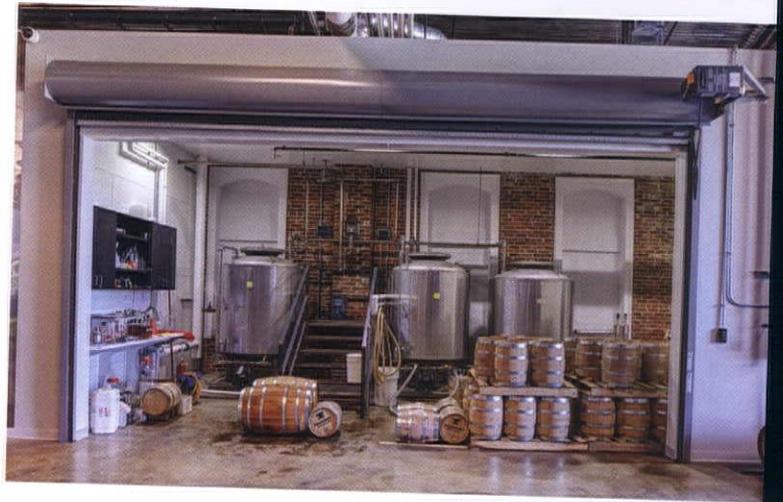
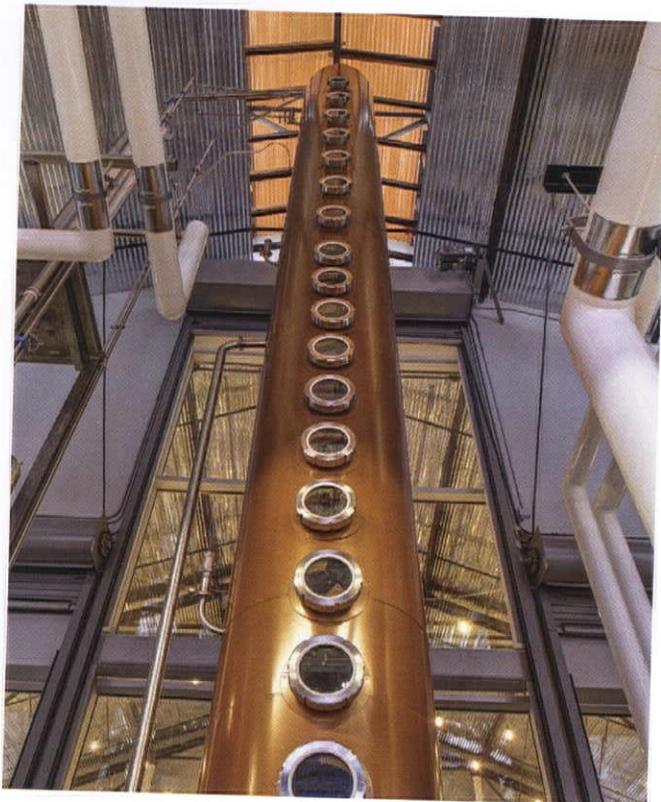
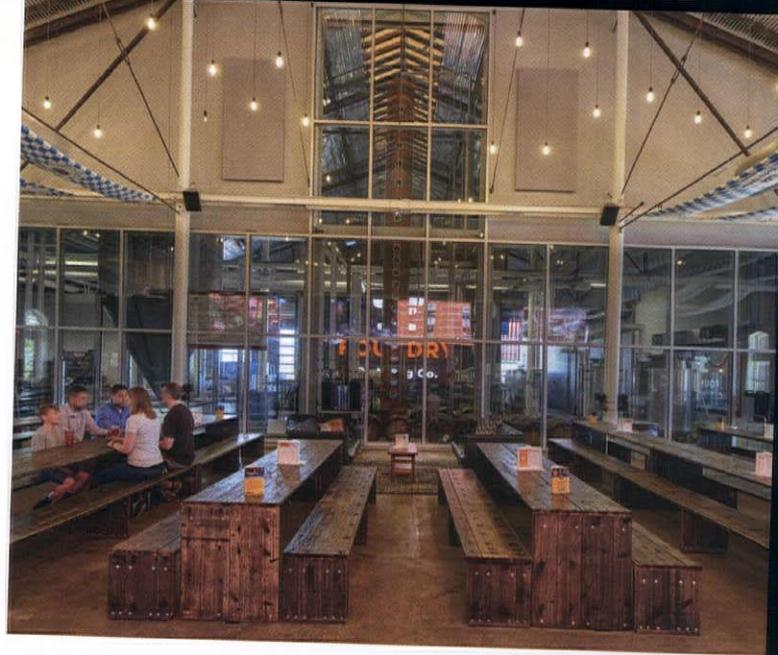


Located in a former Rock Island Railroad railcar barn, the building that houses The Foundry isn't just a point of pride for the town of Valley Junction – it's the reason it exists in the first place. "The boxcar maintenance building was built in 1899, and five rail lines ran through the building," says INVISION architect Evan Shaw, AIA. "It caused that whole side of the city to start to grow."

As West Des Moines' first mixed-use industrial development, The Foundry houses three tenants: The Hall, a large open beer hall; The Distillery, where Foundry Distilling Co. operates; and The Kitchen, a non-profit food truck kitchen. "The developer was keen on doing something different with this project," says Shaw. "A mixed-use development checked every single box – it made economic sense, and we had tenants already lined up. So it was a home run in that aspect."

But the project wasn't without challenges. First, because the site was zoned for industrial use only, the team had to convince the city to allow restaurant and bar tenants. Next, a more unique challenge presented itself: Because a distillery is a high-hazard space, traditional regulations didn't allow placement next to a restaurant. "We had to go through several code hurdles to be able to occupy the space," says Shaw. "We analyzed every piece of equipment and determined the volume in each piece of pipe so we could isolate the highest-risk areas." To meet building code, the proofing tanks are contained in a separate fire-rated room.

With zoning issues resolved, construction could begin. In the process, several relics of the past were unearthed and incorporated into the design. Shaw says this is a main tenet of the project ethos. "If it was broken, we fixed it – otherwise we



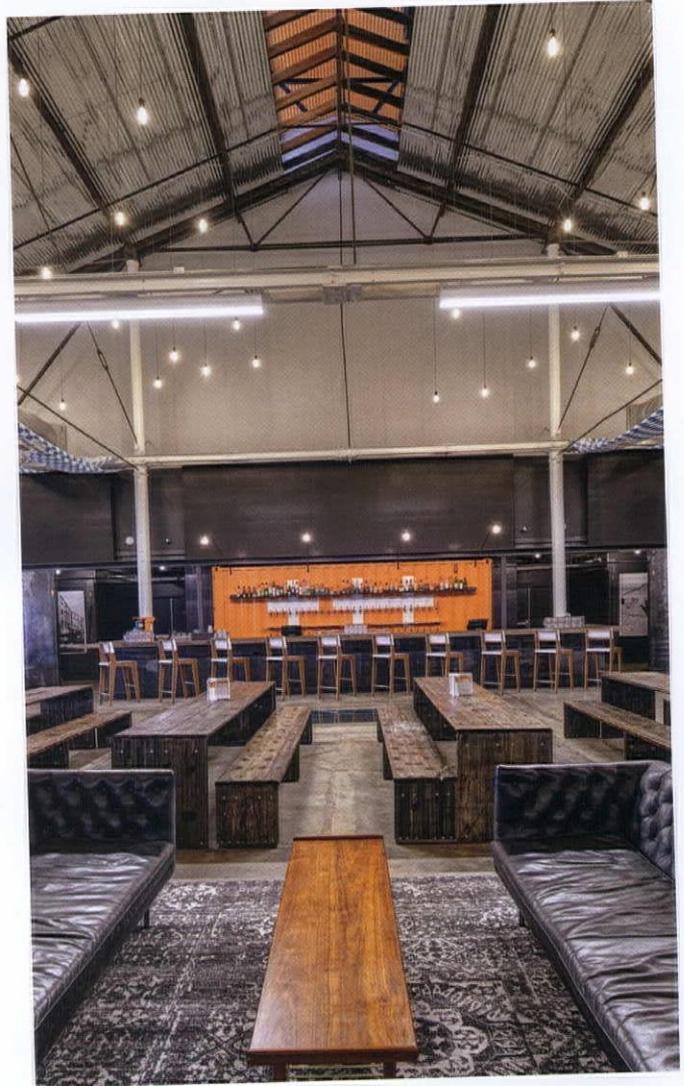
Opposite: Built at the turn of the 20th century, The Foundry was once a railcar maintenance barn for the Rock Island Railroad. **Top left:** Inside the distillery, an elevated office encased in glass offers a clear view of operations below. **Top right:** Tables fashioned from floorboards of old boxcars line the beer hall. A floor-to-ceiling glass wall lends a view into the adjacent distillery. **Middle right:** A shaded patio off the beer hall offers guests an alfresco dining experience during the spring and summer months. **Bottom right:** A special challenge for the INVISION team came in the form of high-hazard building codes, limiting how they could lay out plans for the distillery. To meet regulations, the team sealed the proofing room, shown here, in a fire-enclosed space. **Bottom left:** At 29 feet tall, the distillery's column still is one of the largest in the United States.



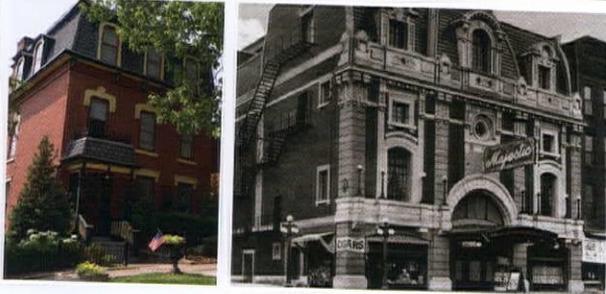
didn't change anything that would take away from the building's history," he says. Floorboards from old boxcars became tabletops in the beer hall, and an old shipping container was transformed into the back wall of the bar. When the team discovered the building's original brick floor and railroad tracks during the excavation process, they dug a pit and installed a glass floor in front of the bar, allowing hall patrons to stand on a piece of history when they order a beer.

While the building design nods to its physical past, its operations look to the future. The kitchen provides a workspace for local food truck operators, who in turn hire homeless and underprivileged young adults as part of a job training program. Currently, the kitchen can support up to eight trucks and will eventually support the operations of a dozen businesses.

Shaw says it's features like these — which bring history, industry, and social good together — that make The Foundry such a unique project. "We've got three different tenants running their own separate businesses, but they work together holistically to create a singular experience," he says. "It's a dynamic space that doesn't exist anywhere else."



Top: Five glass panels on the exterior of the distillery show off the full production process, from distilling and aging to shipping and serving in the tasting room. **Bottom right:** Behind the bar, a bright orange repurposed shipping container houses dozens of taps serving local beer. **Bottom left:** Exposed rafters and a clerestory enhance the hall's rustic industrial charm.



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SOUTH SIDE STRIDES

How a neglected historic site sparked a revitalization on Des Moines' South Side

WORDS: ABBY GILMAN

IMAGES: CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA, INTEGRATED STUDIO

ARCHITECT: NEUMANN MONSON ARCHITECTS



On an overlooked patch on the South Side of Des Moines stand 10 unassuming brick buildings. They don't scream their history at passersby, but if they did, they'd have a lot to say. Established as a U.S. Army cavalry base in 1901, Fort Des Moines has twice been a first in U.S. military history: During World War I, the base served as the first training site in the nation for African-American officers and medical personnel; later, during World War II, it housed the first Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, through which more than 72,000 women completed training to assist in wartime efforts.

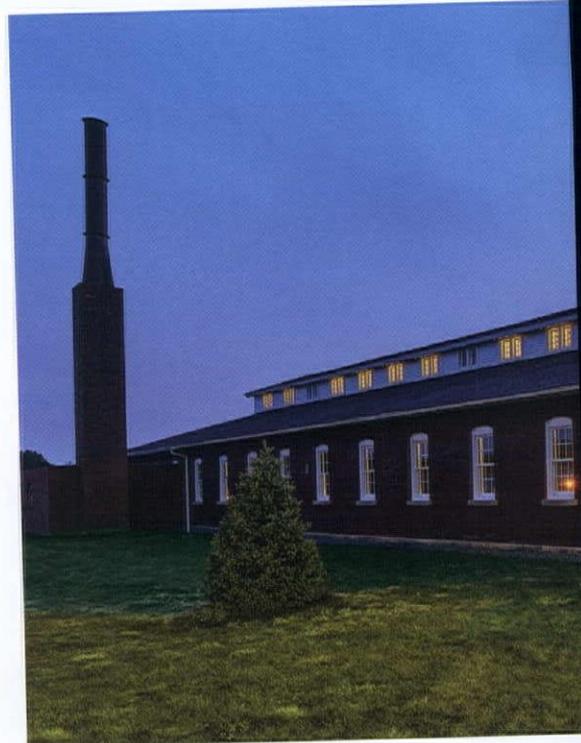
Post-wars, Fort Des Moines housed veterans and was partially used as a U.S. Army Reserve training center. The buildings were filled with life and vigor, and eventually listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1974.

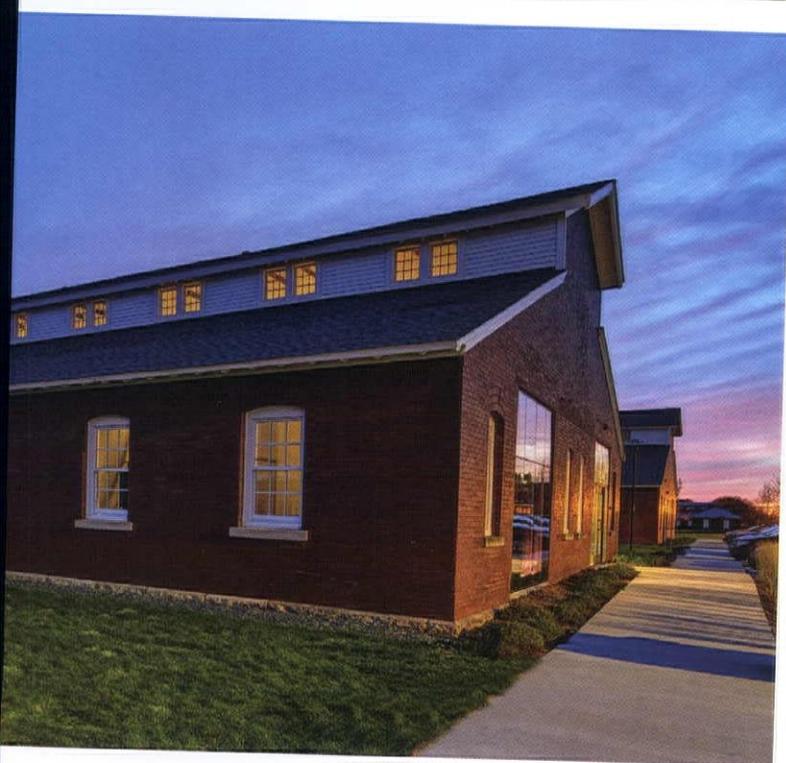
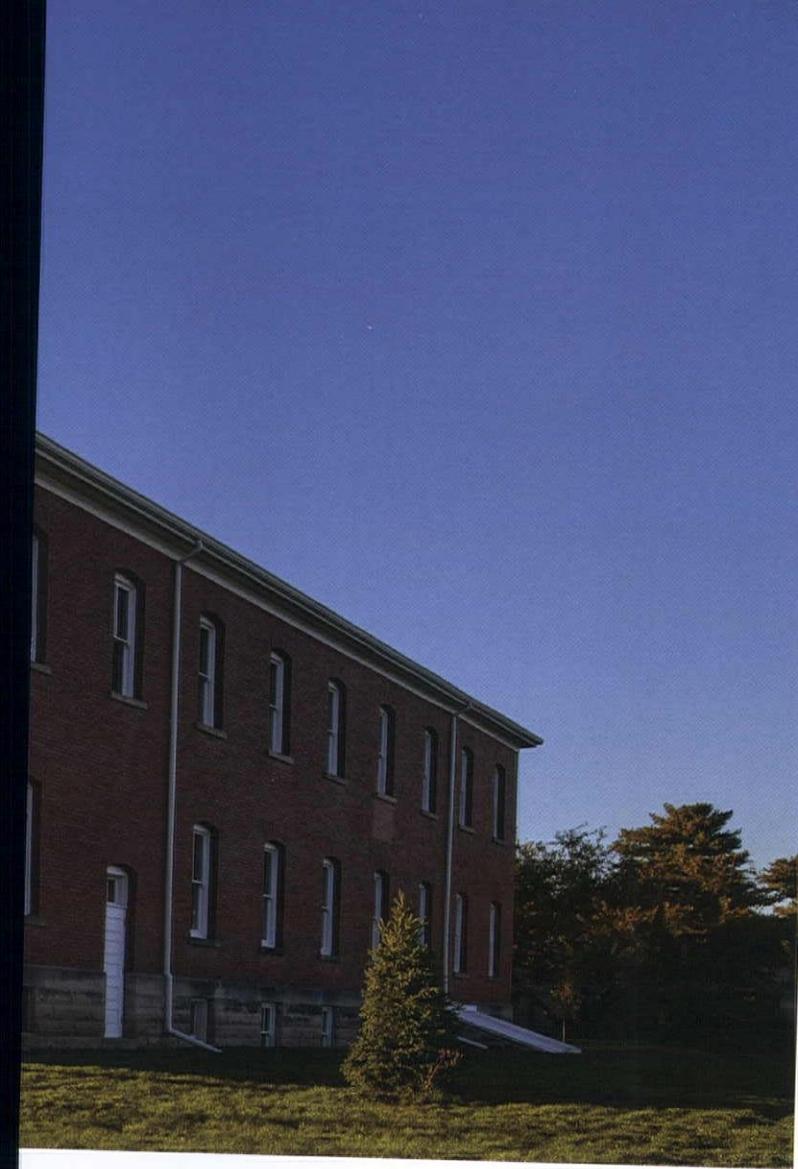
Somewhere in the ensuing 40-plus years, while the city experienced a boom in population, economic growth, and building development, the site was forgotten. The once-stately brick facades of Fort Des Moines became marked by broken windows and partially covered by unruly grass.

Enter Blackbird Investments and Neumann Monson Architects. Their goal: restore the historic structures, provide affordable housing, and catalyze the revitalization of the South Side, all in one fell swoop.

"It's not just housing, it's a neighborhood, and we wanted to see that happen," Hugh O'Hagan, partner at Blackbird, says in a promotional video. "The city at this point had done the Western Gateway, had done the East Village, and now it was the South Side's turn."

Mending the gap in affordable housing on the South Side was a huge driver for the project, and the fact that the team had these historically significant – and structurally beautiful – buildings to work with helped them skirt the stigma.





Top left: Previously spotted with broken glass and covered in overgrown grass, the facades of the barracks are now restored to their historic appearances. **Top right:** Historic details, such as rolled iron columns, create rhythm throughout the buildings. **Bottom right:** The rehabilitation project transformed the dilapidated barracks into 142 affordable housing units across 10 buildings. **Bottom left:** To meet housing demands during WWII, horse stables were converted to barracks. Today, these hold apartment units.



"It's really how you take not only a historic property but a national landmark, integrate social housing into that history, that fabric, and do it in a way that infuses those residences with a sense of history and really make that part of a community," says Channing Swanson, AIA, principal at Neumann Monson Architects.

The design team worked closely with an architectural historian to identify the historically significant details to preserve. Once they knew what to preserve, they knew what they could modify. Brick walls, concrete or wood floors, and rolled iron columns feature throughout the 142 housing units. Newly constructed elements remain simple, clean, and quiet. The existing rhythm of the interiors dictate the layout wherever possible.

"It's great to be able to utilize these old structures with a new function and knowing the historic structure is being preserved and details are being showcased," says Cheung Chan, AIA, project manager at Neumann Monson Architects. "That people can actually see [the history] and experience it and touch it, and it's not being buried in a wall somewhere."

The team had to balance the budget with often conflicting criteria of historic and affordable housing tax credits. Including sustainable aspects — such as geothermal heating and cooling and bioswale plants for stormwater management — allowed them to make site improvements now that would save money in the long run.

Fort Des Moines is once again a bright spot on the South Side. It's a vibrant community, one that's sure to spur growth around it. And the Blackbird-Neumann Monson Architects team is here to see it through.

"To be able to see that potential in that property, it takes some courage," Chan says. "It's not a gamble, per say, but not a lot of people see it. For Blackbird to step in and say, hey, we can do better than this, and then to actually make it into a viable development, I think that's quite impressive."

"It's great to be able to utilize these old structures with a new function and knowing the historic structure is being preserved and details are being showcased!"

— CHEUNG CHAN, AIA



Top: The team introduced environmentally friendly and sustainable aspects, such as bioswale landscaping for stormwater management, into the design. **Right:** The team worked within the historic bones of the buildings — such as the timber columns shown here — to divide the buildings into multiple housing units.



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INSIDE OUT

Inverting a classic
1970s Brutalist design
on the University of
Iowa's campus

WORDS : HALEY SMITH

IMAGES : NICK MERRICK, HALL + MERRICK

ARCHITECT : BNIM

Atop a limestone bluff overlooking the Iowa River prominently perches the University of Iowa (UI) College of Nursing. The Brutalist exterior's panoramic windows yield to the site's lush surroundings. The structure is a testament to the timeless design by Charles Herbert and Associates. The 1970s interior, however, no longer supported the needs of its occupants, so BNIM was enlisted to transform the space.

When principal architect Rod Kruse, FAIA, was presented the opportunity to lead the remodel of one of the most powerful architectural statements on the UI campus, he jumped at it. For Kruse, it was a passion project.

"What excited me the most about this project," says Kruse, "was the opportunity to work on a really strong building designed by one of my partners and a mentor, Charles Herbert." Kruse and Herbert worked side by side when Charles Herbert and Associates became Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck in 1987. "[Herbert] allowed me to grow by working at HLKB," says Kruse.

The BNIM team felt it was best to preserve the basic qualities of the building while enhancing the interior with new approaches to design, architecture, and teaching methods.

Opposite: Communal spaces lined by floor-to-ceiling windows allow students and faculty to collaborate while looking out to the natural landscaping. **Top:** Light floods through the exterior windows, illuminating common areas and glass-walled classrooms. **Bottom:** The new open workspaces create a light, inviting atmosphere.



The College of Nursing's original design was interior-oriented. A long corridor stretched around the perimeter, resulting in the majority of the space lacking direct access to daylight or nature views.

"The core became a defining element," says Kruse. "We inverted the original grid, making it much more of an external building with many spaces having direct access to daylight and views through the exterior windows." These changes allowed for a 54 percent increase in student activity areas.

Kruse states that one of the biggest challenges in the building was the limited space for students to gather, denying opportunities to collaborate with peers and teachers.

During the early stages of the remodel, BNIM held open forums with architect Tom Feldmann, AIA, reported comments from students feeling unwelcome in the current space. "After this renovation with all the student-oriented spaces, this is now where students go when they have free time," says Feldmann.

BNIM has a portfolio of buildings on UI's campus that feature similar student collaboration areas. When asked where they go to study during an open forum, several nursing students remarked on "some really cool spaces in the engineering building." Feldmann recalled a student even asking if he had been to the engineering building, not knowing that BNIM had designed the space, which gave him a slight chuckle.

"Users at higher education facilities are continuously changing more so than in other types of buildings, whether that's the leadership, students, or faculty," says Kruse. "We have to think about the following generations and ways that the building can be adapted in the future."



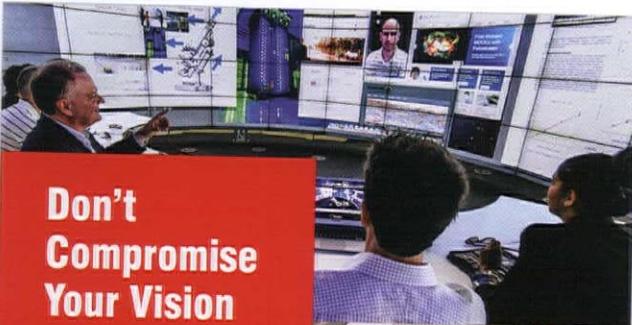
Top left: Once cut off from daylight, the core of the building is now open to the perimeter, pulling light and views in. **Bottom right & left:** Fundamentals of the building's original design, such as exposed concrete walls and pillars, were preserved throughout the renovation. Skylights allow students to work in smaller, private rooms without cutting off natural light from the surrounding corridor.



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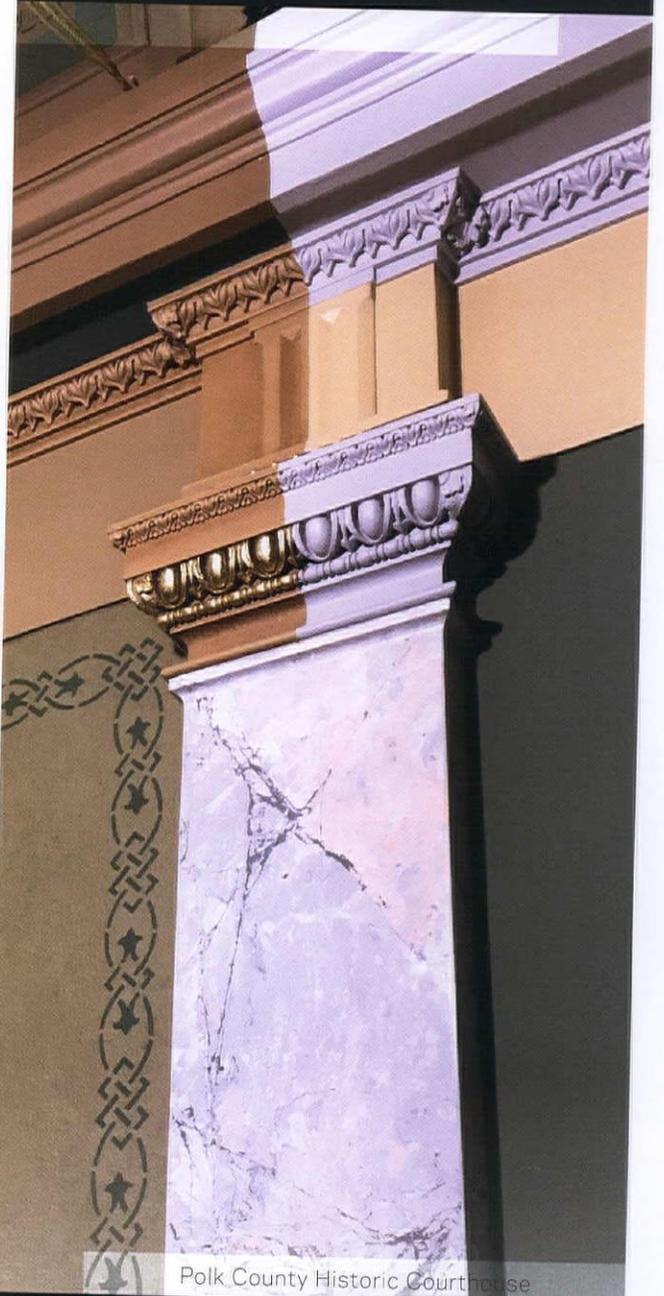


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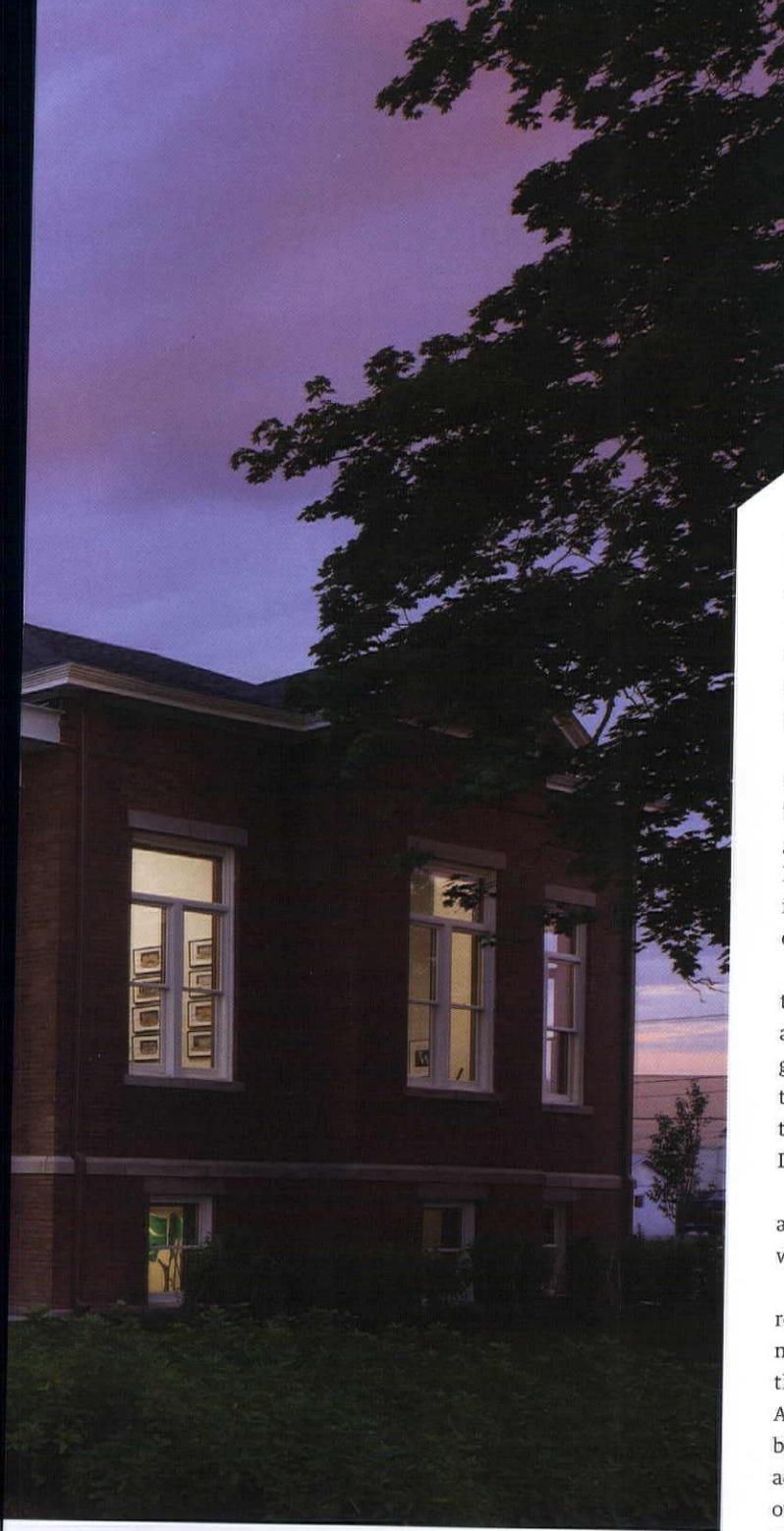
OPN Architects
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CAPTURING the Fine Arts

The Lauridsen Opera Center
workspace and gallery bridges
the past and the future

WORDS : LACY BRUNETTE
IMAGES : WAYNE JOHNSON, PROFESSIONAL
AFFILIATE OF AIA IOWA, MAIN STREET STUDIO
ARCHITECT : OPN ARCHITECTS





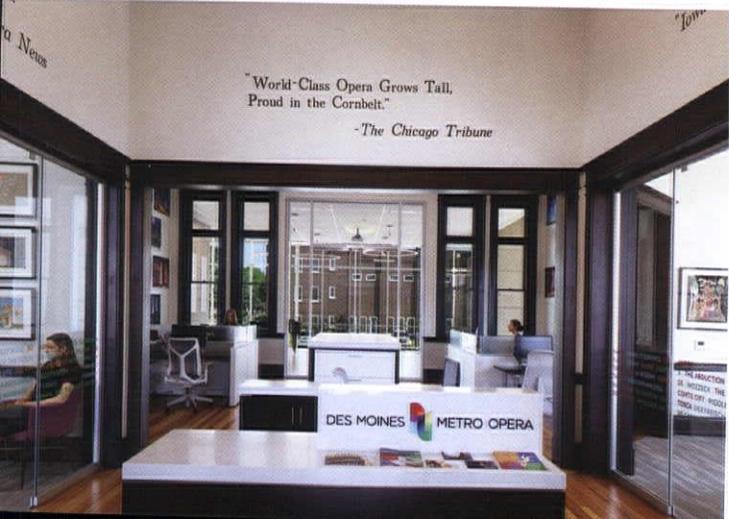
As the sun sets over Indianola, the historic Carnegie Library lights from within in like a lantern. A jewel box addition to the back glows, showcasing visual artifacts of the Des Moines Metro Opera's (DMMO) rich history. As the organization approaches its 50th year, this space serves as an experiential touchstone, weaving a narrative of the many people and productions that have been a part of the organization's growth and presence across central Iowa.

Since 1985, the DMMO has called the 1904 library home to its operational headquarters. What began as a simple project to enhance the environment for staff and artists quickly grew to include additional gallery and historical spaces. With the opera's performance center located six blocks away, the DMMO was able to focus this space on interacting with the community and artists through events and education programs.

"As we began to approach the 40th anniversary in 2012, we knew that the time had come where we had to ask some serious questions about our future occupancy of the building – what we needed to grow into the next generation of the company's life, and whether the Carnegie Library could help us achieve those goals through this transformation," says Michael Egel, general and artistic director for the DMMO. "I'm happy to say that the answer was yes, it could."

Supported by the community and donors, the DMMO undertook the ambitious \$3.5 million renovation, restoration, and expansion project with the direction of OPN Architects.

First up: assessing the existing structure and uncovering and restoring the original interior and exterior surfaces. The functional needs of the DMMO staff exceeded the smaller square footage of the library structure. Clad in all glass, the dynamic Robert L. Larsen Atrium adds another 1,800 square feet of usable space. The original building's exterior rhythm and window proportions helped define the addition's design. "The concept is that [the addition is] trying not to overwhelm the original building," says Scott Allen, AIA, associate at OPN Architects. "It is to be in the scale of the original building, and then just make a very delicate connection or touch that integrates the two buildings together."



Opposite top: The restored Carnegie Library and jewel-box addition are a welcoming beacon in the community. **Opposite bottom left:** The 1,800-square-foot all-glass contemporary addition adds much-needed space for small events and fundraising gatherings. **Opposite bottom right:** Constructed in 1904, the original library building features Carnegie Classic architecture style and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. **Left:** The interior of the Carnegie library was restored and renovated to honor the past while serving current needs.

The new design improves flow and productivity through modern workspaces and social areas – including a kitchen and practice space for visiting performers – while allowing ample room for storage, additional restrooms, ADA accessibility, and an elevator. Perhaps most importantly the DMMO now has space to support small events and large gatherings, welcoming in the community, opera family, and supporters.

OPN Architects incorporated photos, posters, plaques, and memorabilia from over the years to share the organization’s history. “These marvelous costumes that they have, and their display case on the north is an opportunity to show and to remind people who may not have attended an opera, that they still have a lot of that history as part of their collection,” says Allen.

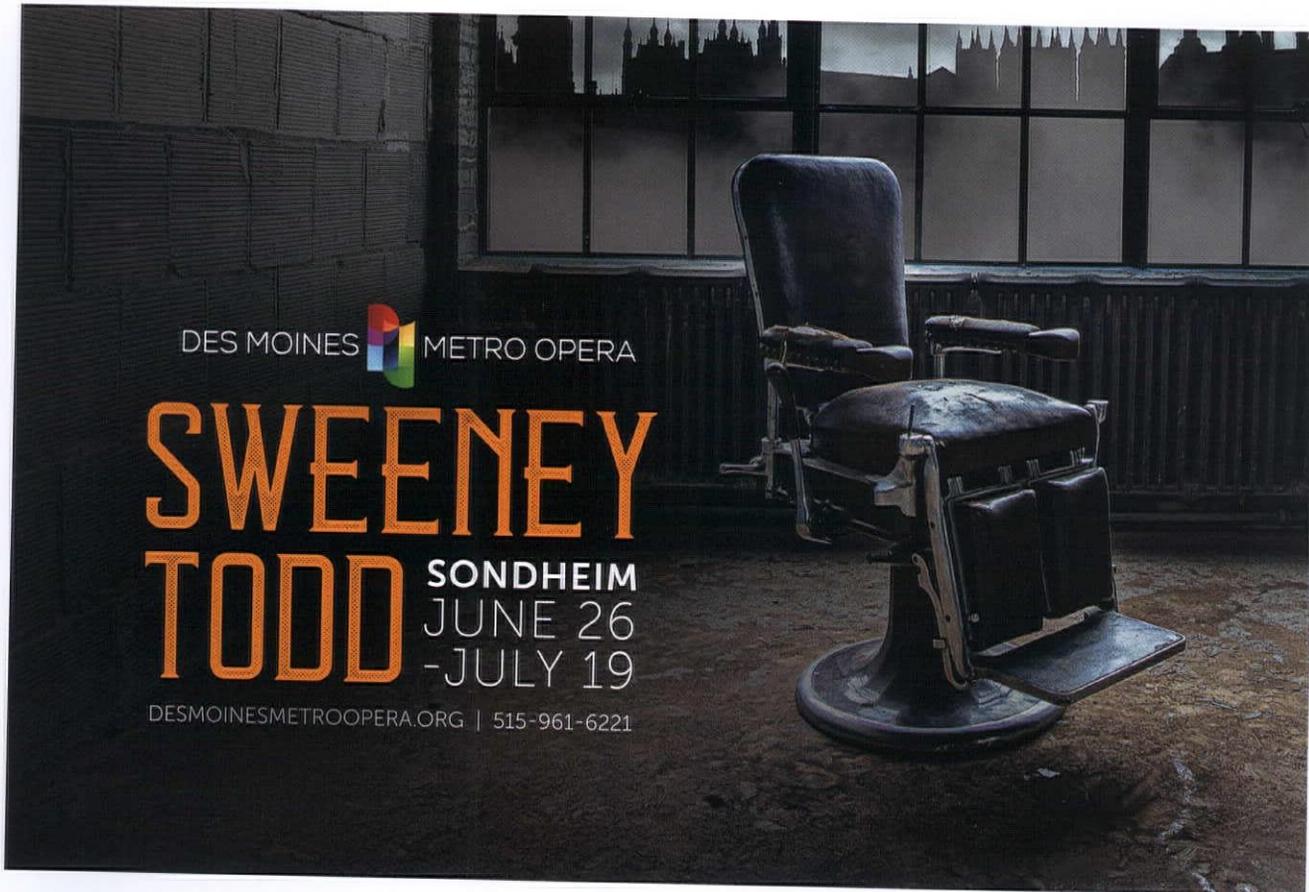
The surrounding community shares pride in the transformation. “The Des Moines Metro Opera and Indianola have a long-standing relationship, and the Company contributes so much to the quality of life present in Indianola and Central Iowa,” says Kelly B. Shaw, mayor of Indianola. “When Michael Egel approached the city with concept drawings of the planned transformation of their headquarters, I was immediately struck by their desire to upgrade the existing Carnegie Library while increasing space with a new, largely glass addition. The transition between the two buildings is seamless, and serves as a metaphor for the DMMO’s proud history and forward-looking vision.”

Opera performances are “very ephemeral,” says Egel, and the re-envisioned Lauridsen Opera Center encapsulates the experiences and memories in a physical form.

“One thing I’m particularly proud of [is] the result of this entire project; the way in which the building bridges so seamlessly the historical and the new,” says Egel. “It really underscores everything about the mission of our organization to demonstrate the power that opera has to speak to the modern world.”



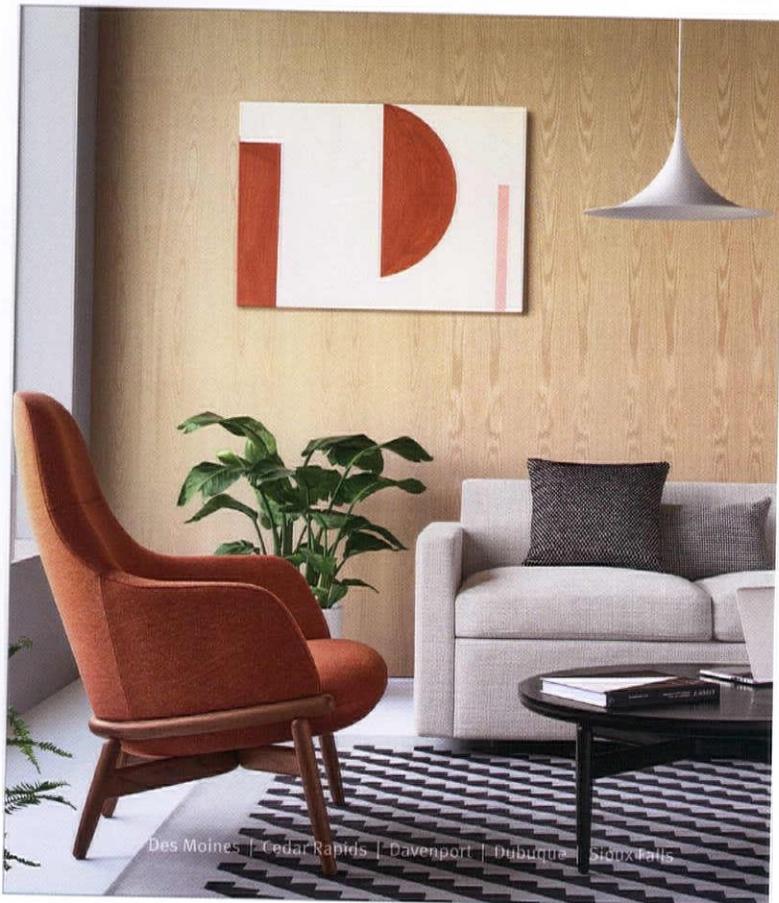
Top: The original building’s rhythm and windows helped define the scale of the addition. **Middle:** Information boards lining a hallway display the history of the Carnegie Library. **Bottom:** The original exterior wall and windows flow into the addition, connecting the old with the new.



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RETURN OF THE RANDOLPH

An ambitious restoration and reuse project revives one of Des Moines' most prominent — and historic — corners

WORDS : LEAH WALTERS IMAGES : PAUL CROSBY ARCHITECT : SUBSTANCE

In downtown Des Moines, on the northwest corner of 4th Street and Court Avenue, sits the Hotel Randolph, an elegant eight-story building dating back to the 1910s. Adjacent, the Youngerman block, a three-story wood-framed building from 1876, and the Earle & LeBosquet warehouse building.

The fabric in this sliver of the city hasn't changed much throughout history. The historic Polk County Courthouse still stands guard over the bustling streetscape. Businesses have come and gone, but the brick buildings they occupy endure. A century ago, the corridor welcomed travelers to Iowa's capital city. Today, it's the epicenter of Des Moines' entertainment district. The train depots have found new lives as office buildings and nightlife mainstays. Bars and restaurants flank the avenues at street level, and the apartments above have become some of the city's most sought-after real estate.

The Hotel Randolph fell into disrepair after the heyday of rail travel. A similar fate befell the buildings around it, until developers eyed the properties for a giant restoration and reuse endeavor.

Des Moines-based architecture firm Substance was tapped to lead the restoration and renovation project. It wasn't an easy task. The project came with multiple logistical and technical challenges. The biggest of these, according to Tim Hickman, AIA, principal at Substance, was uniting three existing buildings with different construction types, floor levels, and characters into a single functioning modern residential building.

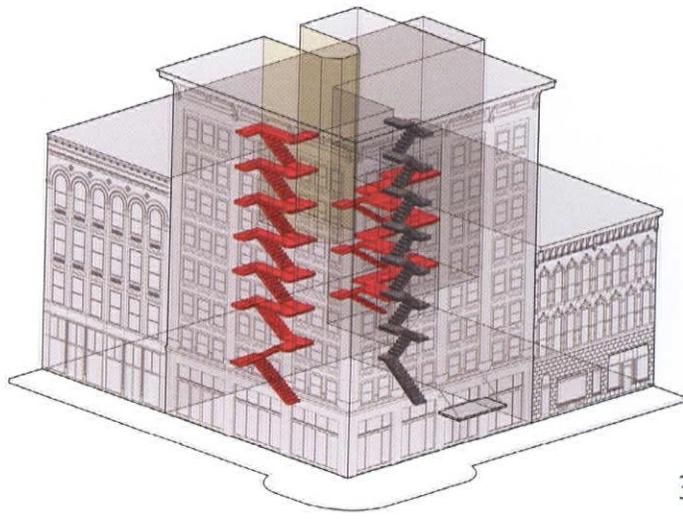
The project required an entirely new set of systems for the building. "[We put in] a new mechanical system and new exit stair, all while meeting the demanding requirements of the Department of the Interior related to the historic tax credits for the project," says Hickman.

The design team met the challenge with creative problem solving, which resulted in "a great diversity of unit types and spaces, but [the project] was fraught with complex code and construction issues," says Hickman.

The team pulled this off while preserving all of the original hotel hallways and room doors in the Randolph.



Top: Depicted as it appeared when it opened in 1912, the Hotel Randolph was Iowa's first tall and "absolutely fireproof" hotel — a claim bolstered by the building's concrete and steel construction. **Opposite top:** The Randolph perches above the intersection of Fourth and Court, which comes alive during the seasonal Des Moines Farmers Market. **Opposite bottom right:** The existing and newly configured exit stairs for all three buildings. **Opposite bottom left:** At street level, 16-foot ceilings and expansive use of glass connect the lobby and restaurant and retail spaces with passersby outside.





A major priority for all parties involved was to restore the historic architecture, which suffered through previous renovations that removed the cornice and infilled the first floor glazing.

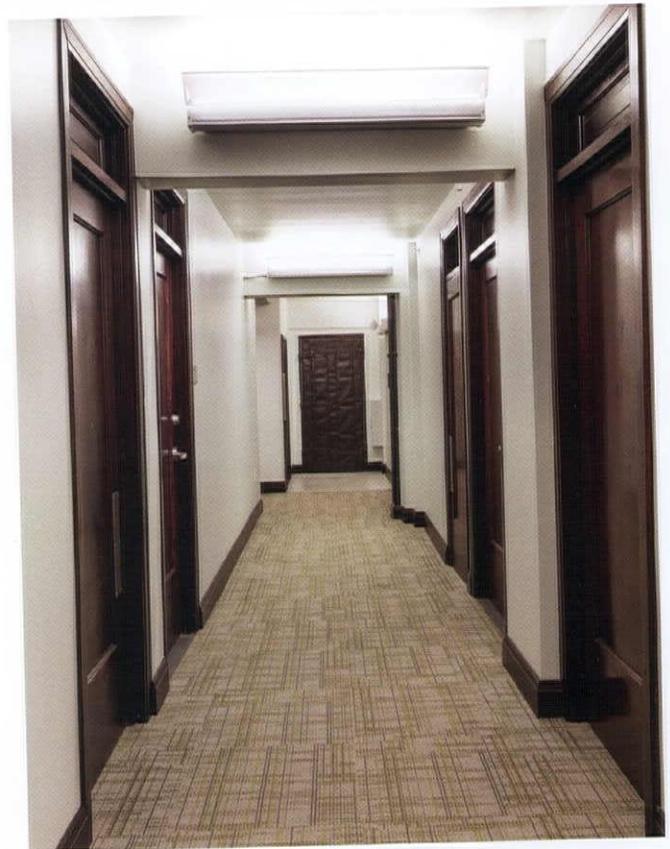
Hess Roise Historical Consultants lent expertise to the project and helped restore the lobby and cornice, details that reinforce the history of the Court Avenue district.

“I remember when the majority of the building was closed off at street level, which made the building feel ominous and forbidding,” says Hickman. Today, the corner is anything but; restaurants and retail activate the 16-foot-high spaces on the heavily trafficked street, a welcome change for the weekday lunch and Saturday farmers market crowds.

The complex houses 55 market-rate apartments. In designing floor plans, the team took care to accommodate a variety of spaces and layouts. A mix of efficiency, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom/two-bath units responds to the needs identified in the downtown housing market.

The Hotel Randolph project exemplifies mindful historic restoration and adaptive reuse. A marked success, it repurposes and re-energizes a piece of old Des Moines that might otherwise have been lost to time.

Top: Designed with distinctively Art Deco detail, the lobby feels like a hotel reception and serves tenants as a coffee bar and gathering space.
Right: The renovation was carefully planned to preserve original hallways and room doors in the Randolph building.



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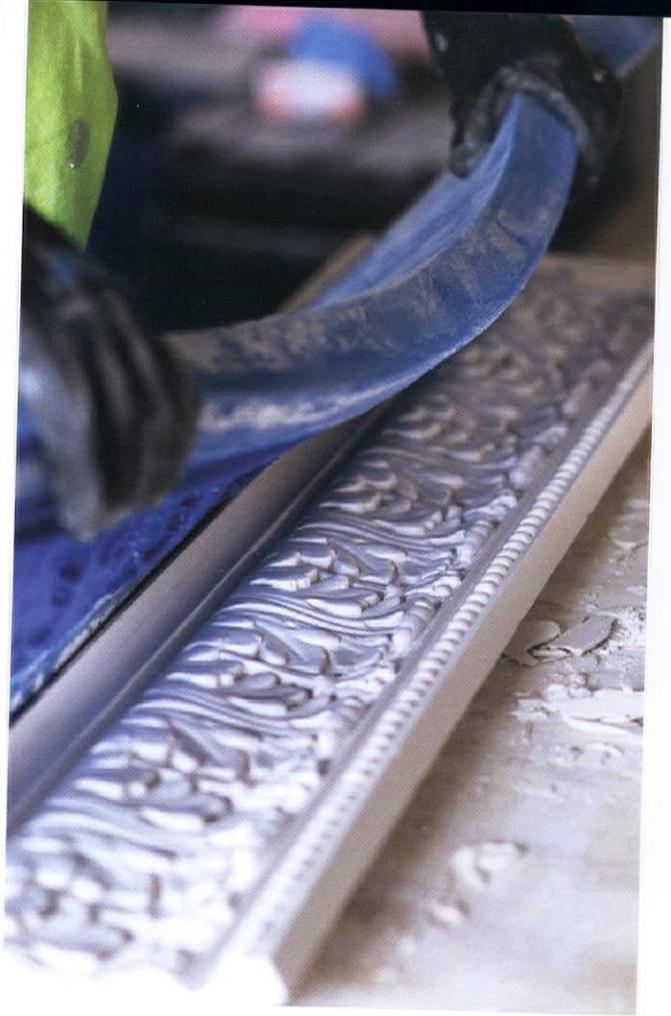
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DES MOINES IOWA

A RESTORATION GEM IN THE HEART OF DES MOINES

How one team leveraged historical design details to highlight a building's future

WORDS : JULIA DELLITT IMAGES : JARED HEIDEMANN ARCHITECT : NEUMANN MONSON ARCHITECTS





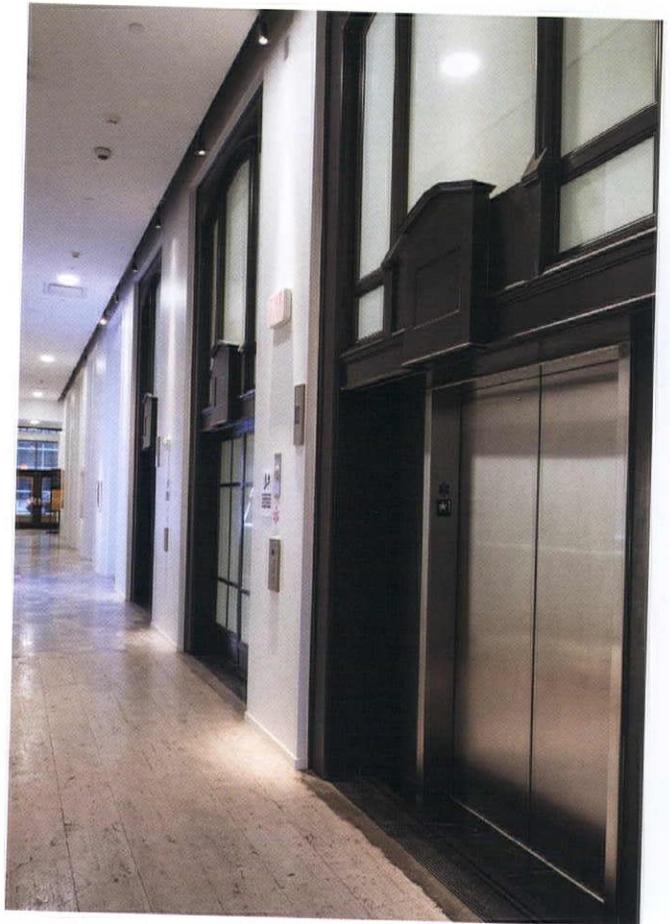
When the Walnut Street Wilkins Building caught fire in 2014, nobody knew exactly how long it would take to restore – just that it had to be done. Extensive heat, water, and smoke damage required significant investments in time and money, alongside lots of evaluation to figure out what was structurally sound for renovation and what was, well, not.

According to Jay Byers, CEO of Greater Des Moines Partnership, the City of Des Moines and Blackbird Development both saw immense value in the project and ultimately collaborated on a forward-thinking vision that Neumann Monson Architects helped bring to life. Lyndley Kent, AIA, architect, and Channing Swanson, AIA, principal, took pieces already in development – such as first-floor parking and several open floor plans for mixed rental housing – and devoted energy to preserving unique design details and recreating authentic building plans wherever possible.

For Kent, the most interesting aspect of restoration involved the building's infamous Tea Room and a two-sided process. "On-site, we focused on extensive documentation – we took molds of original plasterwork still in good condition to create new where it had been lost. We evaluated what was damaged and what was salvageable, delineating between what was historic and what was part of old remodeling. For off-site research, we gathered as many photos, drawings, stories, and more regarding what the room had been like. Between all the information, we were able to piece a lot of the history together," explains Kent.

But the path from conception to reality proved somewhat precarious, with hidden surprises and frustrations along the way.

Opposite: As a treasured part of Des Moines, the Wilkins Building shines on the corner of Walnut Street downtown. **Top left:** Interior elements were preserved as much as possible, both in form and function. **Top right:** Through a careful replication design process, the team created new artifacts in place of original ones. **Bottom right:** Historic elevator fronts conceal fire-rated barriers and code-compliant elevators.



For example, the team kept stumbling across a postcard depiction of the Tea Room Lounge that didn't seem to match the building – until they discovered the exact same striking green, blue, and black tile, three arch tops, and a fully intact wall medallion during initial demolitions. “That’s the fun of these projects, because you never know what you’re going to find,” says Kent.

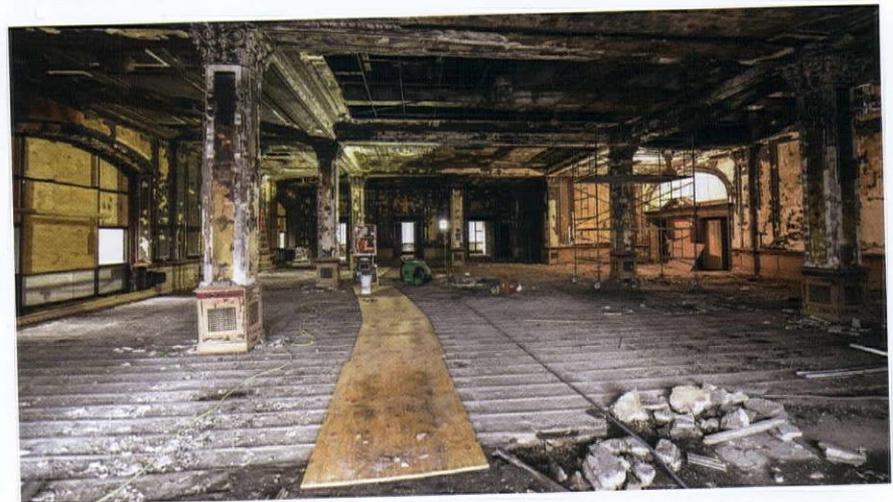
And on a mission to maintain elevator fronts, they discovered crumbling walls instead of anything remotely up to current fire codes – despite the building itself functioning as the city’s first cast-in-place concrete structure. The team decided to repurpose the doors as a threshold to pass through, instead, as part of their overall intent to safeguard legacy elements building-wide as well as align with State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service regulations. Inside, minimized ductwork allowed for volume of space and drop ceilings hid new mechanical systems. For the exterior, the team removed tinted and glazed storefronts from window openings and replaced with wood, Chicago-style windows based on old building plans.

“The exterior of the building looks so much more grand now that we have taken it back to close to what it was,” adds Kent. “The first floor is now light and bright, and you instantly notice this is a building of significance from the street level.”

Hence the next chapter for Wilkins: As an established architectural gem of the city, it leverages the past to make room for new generations of memories.

“During the restoration, we heard from so many people about their memories of coming to downtown Des Moines to shop and have a fancy lunch or dinner at the Tea Room,” notes Kent. “It was a big deal to come here, and now that can live on.”

Top: A vintage postcard showing the intricate detail of the historic Tea Room Lounge. **Middle right:** Several floors previously used for retail and warehouse storage shifted to modern rental apartments in support of increased downtown housing. **Middle left:** A closer look at the building’s facade showcases a return to Chicago-style windows and notable facades. **Bottom:** The building suffered extensive fire, smoke, and water damage due to a 2014 fire, which made restoration both difficult and costly.





Project:
Leapfrog Technologies

Contractor:
Build to Suit Incorporated

Architect:
ASK STUDIO

Photo:
Steve Sullivan (Sullivan Photography)



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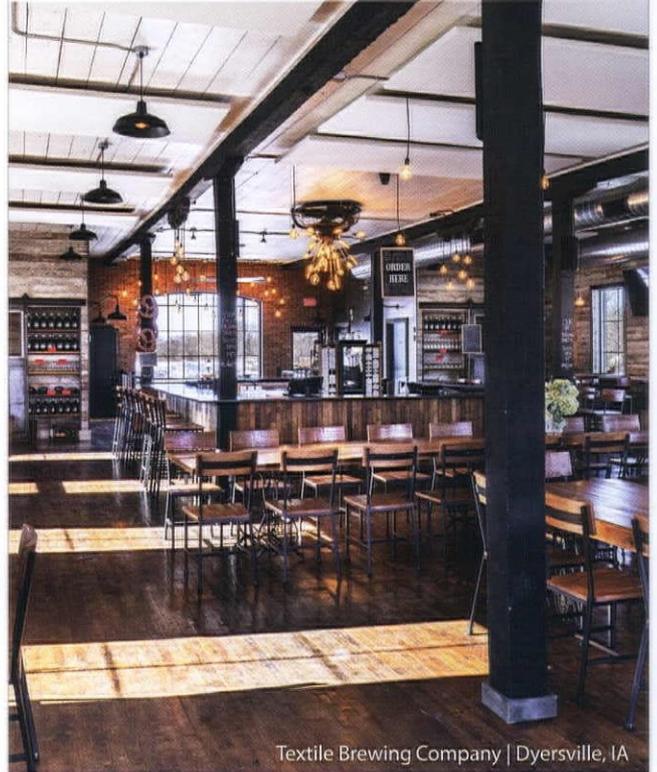
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project credits

Collected

The Test of Time | 06

Location: Des Moines, Iowa
Architect: OPN Architects
Contractor: Neumann Brothers
Electrical Engineer: Modus
Structural Engineer: Shuck-Britson, Inc.
Photographer: OPN Architects

Perspectives

Environment & Involvement | 12

Photographer: Liz Martin, The Gazette

Features

Re-Formed | 14

Location: West Des Moines, Iowa
Architect: Studio MELEE
Contractor: Landmark Construction Services
MEP Engineer: KCL Engineering
Structural Engineer: Tometich Engineering
Photographer: Jeff Wagner, AIA, IDEAA; Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio

An Homage to the Past | 18

Location: West Des Moines, Iowa
Architect: INVISION

Contractor: Munro Construction
Civil Engineer: Bishop Engineering
Electrical Engineer: Kline Electric
MEP Engineer: The Waldinger Corporation
Structural Engineer: Tometich Engineering
Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio

South Side Strides | 22

Location: Des Moines, Iowa
Architect: Neumann Monson Architects
Contractor: The Weitz Company
MEP Engineer: Modus
Structural Engineer: Raker Rhodes
Urban Planning: Reynolds Urban Design
Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio

Inside Out | 26

Location: Iowa City, Iowa
Architect: BNIM
AV: The Sextant Group
Contractor: Conlon Construction
Cost Planning: CPMI
MEP Engineer: Design Engineers
Structural Engineer: KPFF
Signage: Dan Van Woert Environmental Graphic Design
Photographer: Nick Merrick, Hall + Merrick

Capturing the Fine Arts | 30

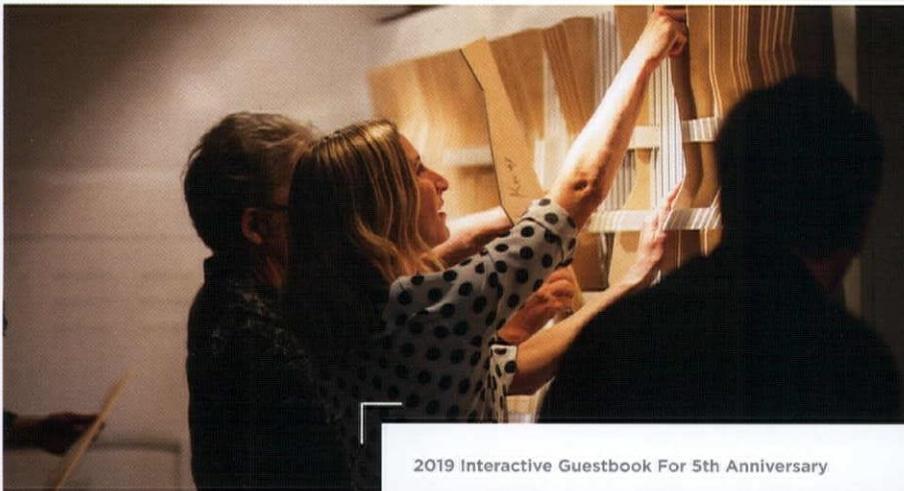
Location: Indianola, Iowa
Architect: OPN Architects
Photographer: Wayne Johnson, Professional Affiliate of AIA Iowa, Main Street Studio

Return of the Randolph | 34

Location: Des Moines, Iowa
Architect: Substance
General Contractor: Rau Construction
Historical Consultant: Hess Roise Historical Consultants
MEP Engineer: The Waldinger Corporation
Structural Engineer: Raker Rhodes Engineering
Photographer: Paul Crosby

A Restoration Gem in the Heart of Des Moines | 38

Location: Des Moines, Iowa
Architect: Neumann Monson Architects
Contractor: Weitz
Civil Engineer: Bishop Engineering
MEP Engineer: Modus
Structural Engineer: Raker Rhodes
Sculptural Plaster: EverGreene Architectural Arts
Photographer: Jared Heidemann



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