

BUILDING[®] BRIEFS

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FALL, 2010

Artistic Adaptive Reuse

The practice of saving significant buildings from impending demolition in the United States may have unofficially started in 1850 when a group saved George Washington's Mount Vernon homestead from destruction. The term adaptive reuse has been widely used in the architectural world for half a century. The industrial revolutions from the late 1700s through about 1860 created many buildings originally used as mills, warehouses and estates. These buildings, many still standing and in relatively good shape except for some neglect, begged to be saved.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation was established in 1949. However, it wasn't until the late 1970s, with the advent of historic commissions, that activism in building preservation began to soar. All of this great building stock was being saved, but did each building truly have a purpose? The typical preservation project was the historic mill being converted to residential units. Before that, many main streets were negatively impacted by the demolition of significant buildings, never to be enjoyed again.

On the campus of Fairfield University stands a majestic Tudor mansion built in 1920 on, what was known as, the Lashar Estate and originally called Hearthstone Hall. The estate was acquired in 1942 to become the original building for the



newly created Fairfield University. Although never considered for demolition, the building took on a new life in the mansion's first adaptive reuse as Hearthstone Hall became Bellarmine Hall, named in honor of the Italian Saint Robert Bellarmine who is the patron saint of Fairfield University.

Petra Construction Corporation was awarded the challenge of transforming the dark and dusty lower level into world-class museum space. Upstairs, the building is still being used to house the University's administration. Downstairs, the changes have been nothing short of miraculous. Working

with David W. Frassinelli, Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and the designers from Centerbrook Architects, the Petra Team has crafted a space worthy of the University's art collection. Much of the collection was donated; as a matter of fact, a large donation in 2003 necessitated the search for, and eventual construction of, this new museum space. The good news continues, as recently the Metropolitan Museum of Art notified the University of their decision to convert the status of eight beautiful plaster casts from "loans" to "gifts."

One of the most rewarding aspects of adaptive reuse projects is the fact that you're recycling a building and reusing it for another purpose, while keeping it as part of the nation's historic fabric. The adaptation is one of the most challenging tasks. In the case of Bellarmine Hall, the mansion's lower level, originally meant for storage and mechanical systems, was converted to exceptional public museum display

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Make The Right First Impression

Your customer forms an initial impression of your company based in large part on your reception area. It's important that this environment project a style that reflects your company's attitude and values.

Along with image, function of the receiving area is key to the design. For example, is a receptionist seated in this area? If so, what is the role of this person – to simply answer the phone and direct people, or to perform additional tasks involving office equipment? The equipment question is key here because that often determines the design of the receptionist's desk.

It's important also to evaluate who will use this area. How many visitors might be in the room at any given time? This will determine the quantity and styling of seating.

Reception areas are usually designed around the receptionist's desk. Since the person sitting behind this desk may wear a variety of hats, this furniture needs to be designed with flexibility in mind. Modular furniture systems offer just the type of versatility needed. Systems can include everything from high profile walls and adjustable computer keyboard pads to built-in electrical circuitry that can accommodate varying power and communication needs.

To conceal equipment and paperwork, these modular stations are available in a range of heights, with the 42-inch counter height being most popular. This hides the backs of computers and telephone wiring,

but is still comfortable for a visitor to approach.

These modular systems also allow for creativity in defining and projecting the right image. Standard fabric panels can be modified to incorporate wood, glass or a mixture of materials.

Custom-built desks are also popular. While these pieces can be costly, the use of laminates and veneers can keep the price down without compromising the visual statement.

The style and layout of seating used in the lobby depends on the intended use of the area. For quantity seating applications, do not use sofas. When two people are seated on a couch, a third person usually will not choose to sit there, wasting valuable space.

Carpet tiles are popular for reception areas. Individual squares are easy to replace once they become worn. Corporate colors and logos can be part of the carpeting motif.

For high-end looks, marble, ceramic, slate or granite tiling may be selected. Be sure to use only slip-resistant tile. Hardwood flooring, accented with an area rug, creates a rich look that can endure heavy traffic.

Intermixing flooring materials can be used to guide visitors. For instance, a strip of different color carpeting can lead people through open office designs.

Final touches such as accessories, artwork, plants and lighting give the reception area its distinctive personality. Such items are so important, in fact, that they should be separate line items in the budget.

What does your reception area say about your company? If it's time to update or build a new one, we can help.

FOOTING NOTES

Worker productivity can be significantly improved through proper organization of work stations based on worker interaction, as well as through proper lighting and aesthetics.

Wainscot is a type of paneling on the lower portion of a wall, often constructed from a different material than the wall above.

Professionals do their job well even when they don't feel like it.

Natural stone or painted metal architectural wall panels that come in a large variety of colors and textures, can be used with pre-engineered systems to create an unusually attractive and distinctive appearance.

Keeping the exterior of your building clean and well-maintained makes a big difference in the image your company projects. Everything from clean doors to trash-free lawns says something to your customers.

Indoor air quality problems can often be traced to such sources as HVAC systems and interior components, including ceiling tiles, furniture, carpet and insulation, among other things.

Noise Reduction Coefficient (NRC) is the measure of sound absorbed by a material.

Reflectorized light bulbs have a reflective coating inside the bulb to direct light forward. They emit about twice the amount of light as a general bulb of the same wattage.

A Model For Remodeling

The renovation of an existing building should be planned and managed in the same manner as a new construction project. The key to success is making sure that everyone involved in the project works together as a team.

The process starts with a planning session. The designer and construction specialist must thoroughly examine your remodeling program and understand exactly what your needs are.

An initial budget is assigned and preliminary sketches are drawn. At this point, you will usually see perspective drawings that outline structural form but lack detail. The budget ballpark all costs.

At your go-ahead, the builder fills in the details and develops a full set of plans. These may include a site plan; side elevations; foundation plan; floor plan; framing layout; roof lines; interior elevations; specification schedules for all hardware, equipment, appliances, and fixtures; room finishing specifications; and schedules.

You will also receive a formal construction contract that outlines the scope and cost of all work to be completed. It's important that anything you discuss with the builder be put in

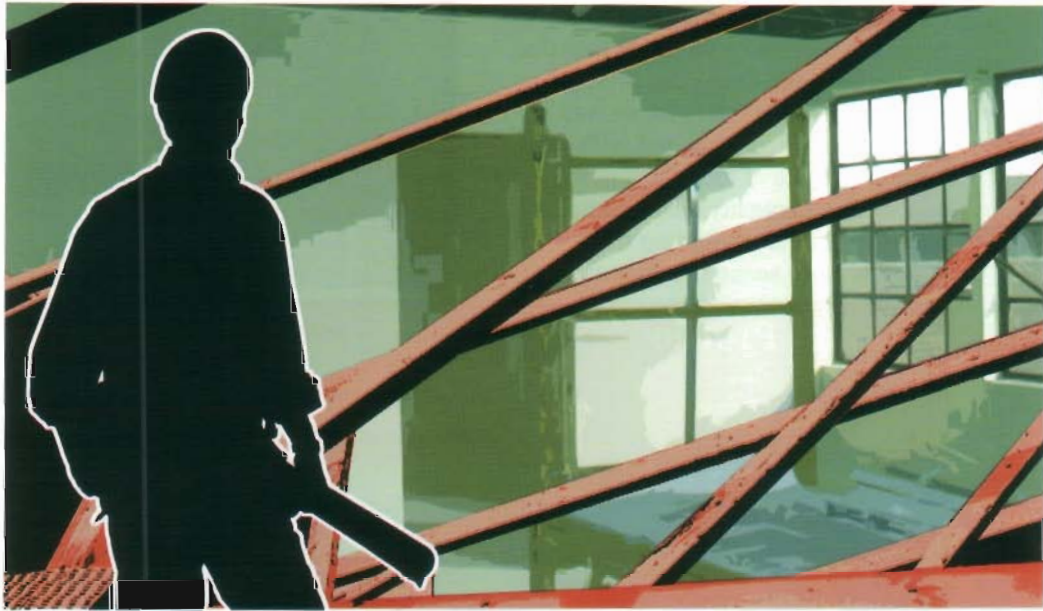
writing and included in the construction contract. This protects you both.

At this point you will know everything that's involved in the renovation, what it will cost, and when it will be completed. If the terms meet your approval, you will sign the contract and agree to start the project.

Once the contract is signed, your builder will need time to organize the project, compile materials lists, initiate and finalize subcontractor agreements, and schedule the work.

Before the actual work begins, you will meet with the builder to iron out the final details. This preconstruction conference offers the opportunity to coordinate schedules and discuss how to minimize work flow interruption during the renovation. Once construction begins, your builder is in charge of overseeing the work and keeping you posted on progress.

If your business plans call for a renovation, add-on or update, please keep us in mind.



Now's The Time To Build In Your Future Technology Needs

As technology continues to evolve, the most valuable features in an office are those that provide the "office of the future." When business owners plan for renovation, it's essential they consider future needs regarding technology and communication.

The virtual office is becoming increasingly popular as the cost of

audio-visual equipment is decreasing. New digital technology is making audio-visual communication more time- and cost-efficient than ever before. Extensive A/V teleconferencing has become the norm, and central files are easily accessible by laptops or smartphones to all who need them from wherever their virtual office happens to be at that moment. This allows businesses to be more responsive to their customers.

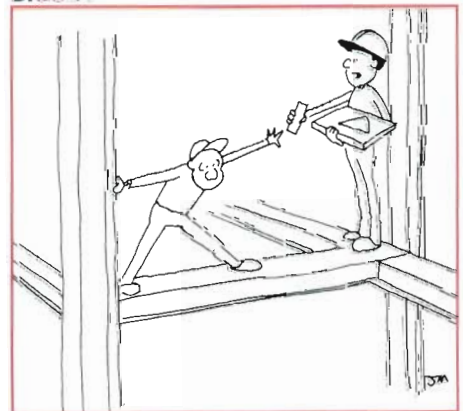
As companies expand their telecommunications capabilities, they require buildings properly equipped to handle the demand. Recognizing this need, business owners must be sure that any plans for building or renovation include an infrastructure suited to expanding technology. A well-conceived infrastructure can save money in both the long and short term.

The practical approach is to wire the spine of the building as aggressively as the budget will permit, and include connections for communications both in and out of the building. Your building professional can help gauge the amount of wire needed. The process is a matter of determining the capacity of the floor

and anticipating each seat requiring data, voice and audio transmission. To allow for anticipated expansion of use, increase the capacity by a minimum of 20 to 30 percent.

It is far more cost-effective to plan for future technology needs now than to remedy them after a building has been built or renovated. Work with a professional builder to take the appropriate steps now.

DIGSEY™



"Keep the change!"



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areas and educational space. As a museum, the mechanical requirements alone were substantial. "The biggest challenge on this project was to carefully coordinate all of the building systems so that they would occupy the smallest possible space," said Dave Hall, Petra's Senior Project Manager. Petra used their in-house Building Information Modeling (BIM) capabilities and constant field coordination to ensure that all the new HVAC systems would fit into the allowable space above the ceilings.

In the past, adaptive reuse was sometimes fashionable, but with the tighter budgets of today it is now becoming a necessity. Many companies and institutions are finding that it makes more sense to adapt and

renovate than to build new.

The well-lit space now stands complete, and humidification and temperature balancing are underway, as these factors are critical to art preservation. By working collaboratively, the team was able to deliver the project with no significant issues. Petra is proud to have been a member of this project team, contributing to the overall University ideal of a more holistic

approach to education. With a grand opening in October, soon the empty museum walls will be filled with color.

Adaptive reuse and historic restoration work can be a challenge. To learn more about how Petra Construction can provide assistance with your next project, call Guido Petra, President or Ron Goodin, Director of Business Development at 203-865-6043.



Project Profile

Owner:

Fairfield University
Fairfield, CT

Project:

Bellarmine Museum

Project Delivery System:

Construction Management

Project Team

Fairfield University

David W. Frassinelli, Associate Vice President for Facilities Management
Joseph M. Bouchard, Director, Environmental Health & Safety and Fire Marshall
Walter G. Stapleton, Project Manager, Campus Planning, Design & Construction
Jill Deupi, Director, Bellarmine Museum

Petra Construction Corporation

Barry Zorzanello, Project Executive
Dave Hall, Sr. Project Manager
Dennis DaRe, Paul D'Amico and Joe DeAngelis, Site Supervisory Team
Ken Woodward, Director of Estimating
Glenn Stevens, Architectural Millshop Manager

Design Team

Centerbrook Architects and Planners

Jim Childress, Partner
Stephen Holmes, Sr. Project Architect

Kohler-Ronan Engineers

Francisco Duraes, Mechanical Engineer
Peter Beltz, Mechanical & Electrical Engineer

Gibble Norden Champion Brown, Structural Engineers

Laura Champion, Structural Engineer

Special thanks to all of Petra's jobsite personnel, subcontractors and material suppliers

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