

Program Summary:

Octavia Books and Scrambled Café's expansion blends preservation with sustainability, featuring pivoting shelves to offer a flexible, unified space that enhances customer experience and connection.

Program Statement:

The expansion of Octavia Books + Scrambled Café required the unification of two distinct buildings: an iconic post-modern structure and a historic corner store.

Initially, separate expansions were planned for each business, but recognizing their shared clientele led to a decision to unite them.

Three pivoting bookcases now function as gateways between the two, creating a circular economy of movement and interaction.

A look into the original building plans revealed that the bookstore's angled design represented true North, a detail that was extended throughout the lower floor. Inspired by traditional bookbinding, a new acoustic wood ceiling stitches together the old and new spaces, while still allowing for future removability. Exposed masonry walls and wood ceilings are preserved, with new elements designed to be reversible.

Octavia's sales highlighted the need for more space in the children's section. The expanded area, now nearly double in size, creates a vibrant environment for young readers. The store also includes a built-in stage for author talks and community gatherings.

Sustainability features include 60 solar panels, energy-efficient systems, and a permeable paver driveway with geotextile filtration and rerouted drainage to mitigate flooding.

A-160.01

Building Area: (sf)
4400 SF

Cost per Square Foot:
\$681.81

Construction Cost
\$3,000,000

Date of Completion:
2024

A-160.02

A Refocused Entry

Capitalizing on the original entrance of the building, on the corner of Octavia and Laurel Streets, allows Octavia Books increased brand visibility.

Images

Before (Bottom Left); Former Primary Entrance (Bottom Right); After (Top)





A-160.03

Increased Visibility

The new primary entrance offers Octavia Books a chance to increase brand visibility. By adding the logo to the building and painting the doors their signature shade of blue, their location is hard to miss. Lighting underneath the awning lets Octavia shine.



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A Refocused Entry

A look at the new primary entrance from the interior.



A-160.05

A New View

Through the new primary entrance, visitors are greeted by an expansive book selection and check-out desk. Three moveable shelving walls—connecting Octavia Books with Scrambled Cafe—can be seen along the back wall in an almost-closed position.

Octavia's signature shade of blue is used as an accent color throughout, complementing the rich, warm tone of the wood ceiling and bookcases, which are framed by custom millwork and integrated lighting.

A-160.06

Cafe

Top: A peak inside the cafe space

Bottom: Previously, disconnected cafe space and cramped book aisles.





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Moving Shelves

Now, three moving shelves allow easy access to the cafe space beyond by creating a circular economy between the two businesses.



A-160.08

Clearly Connected

From its recessed entry to the layout of its bookshelves, the store used angles to define warm, inviting spaces. The design team refined and formalized that intuitive design language to continue those angles throughout the building's entire lower floor. As a result, the expansion feels like a natural progression of the bookstore space – distinctive but clearly connected to the original.





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Acoustic Wood Ceiling

A new acoustic wood ceiling, suspended from the original joists, highlights the circulation through the space. Inspired by traditional bookbinding techniques, its vertical wood fins stitch together the old spaces and new, folding to articulate special areas or points of interest.



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A Stage For Stories

Near the center of the store, a small stage gives the store much-needed space to host readings, signings, and the many events that have made Octavia Books an anchor in the literary community of New Orleans.

In addition to adding new shelving and displays, we created a variety of informal seating and expanded the area for children's books—a specialty of Octavia's and a rapidly growing market.



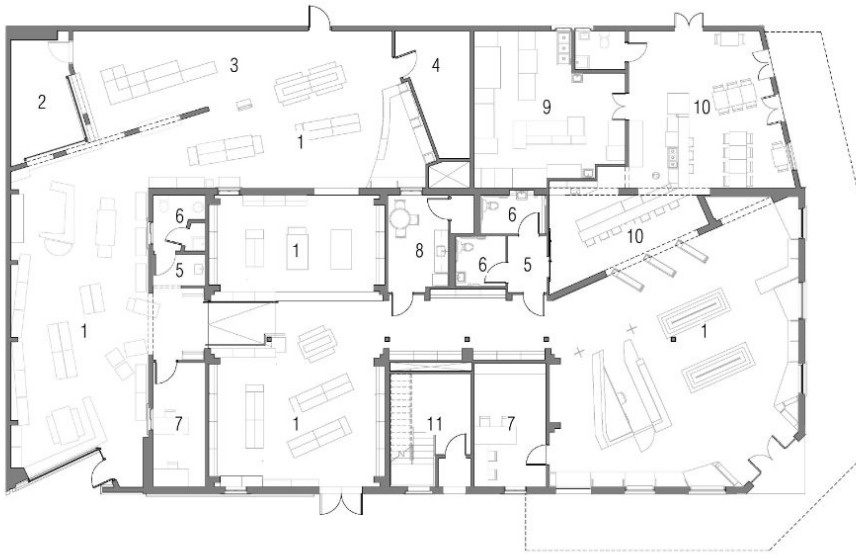
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Sustainability

Sustainability features include 60 solar panels, energy-efficient systems, and a permeable paver driveway with geotextile filtration and rerouted drainage to mitigate flooding.

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Top: Floor Plan Level 1
Bottom: Floor Plan Level 2



1. RETAIL AREA 2. COURTYARD 3. CHILDRENS AREA 4. RECEIVING 5. VESTIBULE 6. RESTROOM 7. OFFICE 8. BREAKROOM 9. KITCHEN 10. DINING 11. LOBBY



1. LOBBY 2. OFFICE 3. RESTROOM 4. BREAKROOM 5. STORAGE 6. PATIO 7. BALCONY

Project Name:
Octavia Books + Scrambled Cafe

Project Location:
513 Octavia St
New Orleans, LA 70119

Owner/Client:
Tom Lowenburg + Judith Lafitte

Architect(s) of Record:
(names and addresses)
NANO
2401 Bienville St
New Orleans LA 70119

Project Team:
Terri Dreyer
Kristine Kobila
Kelsey Chappuis

Landscape Architect:

Consultants:
Artisan Millshop
Huseman

General Contractor:
Gibbs Construction

Photographer(s):
(please list which specific slides get credited to each
photographer(s) listed).
All photographs by Michael Mantese

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