

### Program Summary:

A blighted historic corner store is renovated into a vibrant architecture office utilizing thoughtful preservation and forward-thinking design.

### Program Statement:

The corner store was built in the 1890s and has served the community as a commercial establishment for much of its life. The tenant and designer of the building is a local architecture firm that loves both historic preservation and modern aesthetics. The goal of the project was to showcase the firm's capacity for both historic preservation and forward thinking design.

The building was a natural fit for this goal as it was built in two time periods in two different typologies. The original building, a historic Creole cottage structure, served as a corner store, bakery, and a chapel over the years. At some point in time a low slope shed roof structure with steel trusses was added. This shed roof structure is distinct from the historic structure and brutalist in nature.

The Creole cottage had historic doors, windows, casework, beautiful wood ceilings, and unique wainscott, while the shed roof structure was little more than concrete floors, steel superstructure, and plywood roofing and walls. Celebrating and juxtaposing the Creole cottage framework and the raw nature of the rear shed roof structure allowed the building to become a canvas for the architects to showcase the dynamicism of the firm.

# A95.01

Building Area: (sf)  
**2,221 sqft**

Cost per Square Foot:  
**\$257/sqft**

Construction Cost  
**\$571,019**

Date of Completion:  
**5/23/2024**



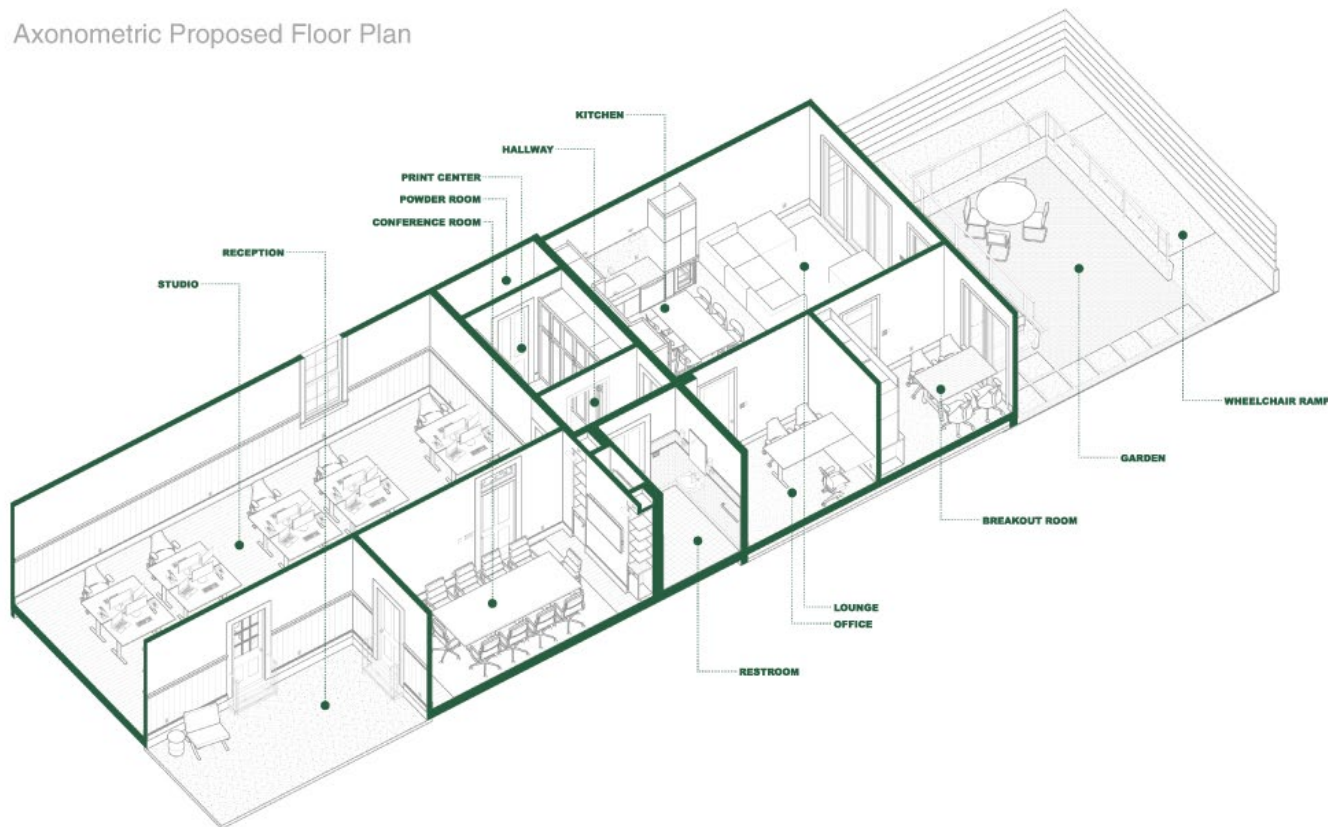
# A95.02

## Visioning

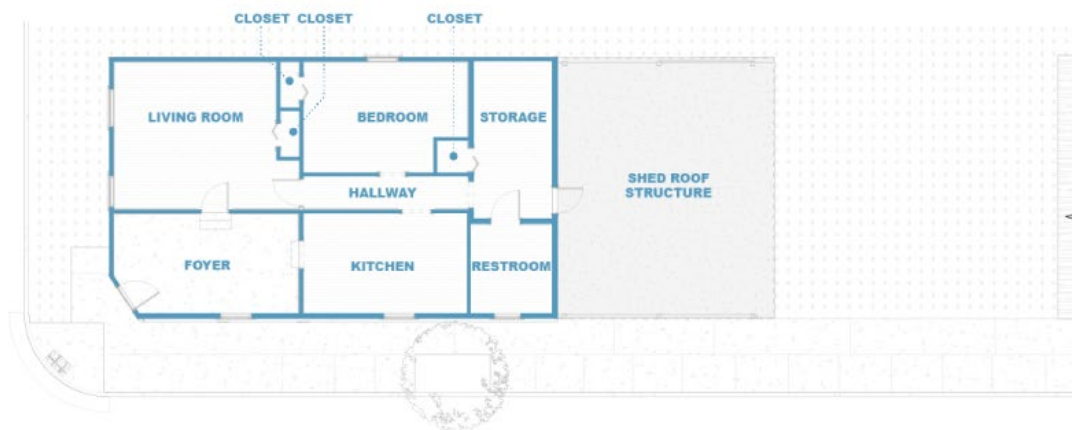
The firm's original office was in a rectory of a church. While beautiful, it was not functional for the needs of the firm. In the Fall of 2021, Hurricane Ida tore the roof off the rented office, and the firm moved to a coworking space for three months. This was the catalyst that began the search for a new space. The goal was to blend the best aspects of a traditional office and coworking environment to create a dynamic workspace that fosters both collaboration and community. Upon acquisition of the property, all of the staff participated in a design charette resulting in several unique schematic designs. The selected design was chosen because it best responded to the design goals.



Axonometric Proposed Floor Plan



Existing Floor Plan



# A95.03

## Plan and Program

The overarching concept of the design centers on the idea that an architecture studio should support both focused work and collaboration. This includes dedicated studio space, multiple informal areas for calls and meetings, formal spaces for staff and client gatherings, and a lounge designed as a true retreat—with amenities that encourage rest, even naps. Prioritizing comfort and views, the lounge and kitchen were placed to overlook the garden, while the studio anchors the front of the historic structure. This insight serendipitously allowed the program to follow the historic layout of the structure, creating a reception area at the original entrance, connecting it to both the studio and main conference room. The demising walls were maintained throughout the historic structure, and support spaces like restrooms and a print center provide a seamless transition to the contemporary rear addition.

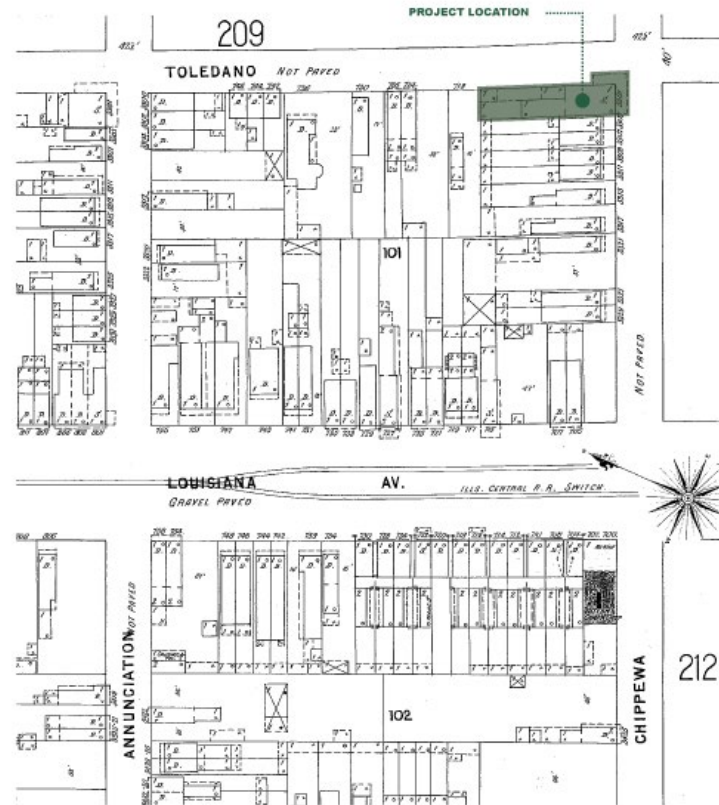




Existing Entrance, 1



New Entrance, 1



1896 Sanborn Map

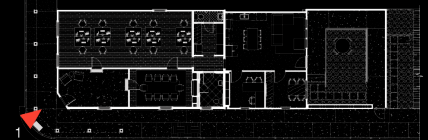


Proposed Floor Plan

# A95.04

## Preservation

Research showed that the historic structure originally had a large awning. This awning was replicated in the new design to create a place of shelter for pedestrians and clients from the harsh rains of New Orleans. Care was taken to repoint and preserve the foundation and rebuild the entrance. The original door was rebuilt and restored with a glass lite that brings light into the reception area. Historic windows and doors were revealed. The reception floors are original, however the original wood floors were too damaged to be preserved.





# A95.05

## Transformation

The original shed roofed section of the building offered an opportunity for a true transformation. A new raised polished concrete floor was built to match the floor level of the existing historic structure. Large glass windows allow light into the kitchen, lounge, and breakout room. An ADA ramp was designed to frame a courtyard that is also used as an informal gathering space. Multiple cladding systems were proposed and rejected by the National Park Service. Ultimately, a new Hardie profile system was installed as cladding, with a different profile used at the rear of the building to distinguish the two structures.







# A95.06

## Reception and Conference Room

The building is designed to be a showcase of the firm's skills. The goal was to create a serene waiting area with a seamless transition to a conference room that could accommodate large groups. The conference room was also designed to ensure every team member would have a chair in all office meetings. Custom millwork holds books and awards around an inset TV for presentations. A custom 1'-0" Scale was painted at the corner of the room and around the ceiling to allow clients to quickly visualize the size of spaces.





# A95.07

## Studio Space

The studio is a place to both collaborate and to work independently. A custom felt wall installation was designed to mimic the meandering of the Mississippi river to absorb sound. Care was taken to restore the wood wainscott and the wood ceiling. Modern lighting was applied to make the space more functional. Care was made in all paint selections to create a cohesive palette that reflected the wood ceiling's patina.







# A95.08

## Kitchen And Lounge Area and Breakout Conference Room

The kitchen and break room functions as the social center of the building. It allows staff to have lunch together and to have informal meetings at the couches, or private meetings or calls in the break out room. The kitchen and lounge celebrate the existing structure with exposed metal trusses and new polished concrete floors. This room is always bathed in northerly light from the garden.



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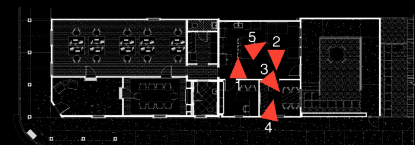
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# A95.09

## Rear Garden, Wall and ADA Ramp

An important part of the program was to make the building fully accessible to clients while maintaining the historicity of the Creole cottage. The ramp was designed to frame the garden and be integral to the design of the outdoor space. The original concrete floor of the shed roof structure was demolished, and a new polished concrete floor was built so that the ramp could be used to access the Creole cottage. There is only one downspout that captures 75% of the rain on the site and diverts it to the gravel and paving stones allowing the building to retain water on site. Jasmine creates a natural barrier on a custom planter and metal fence, and a wood fence with a custom gate emulates typical fence typology in New Orleans.



# A95.10

## Transitions

The vision and program did create one issue: how to transition between new and old? By placing the core of the building (bathrooms and print rooms) at this threshold, it creates sense of compression at the transition and relief as one passes back into the high ceilings of the historic structure or the light filled room in the addition. This transition also has dropped ceilings to accommodate the HVAC, which subtly enhances this feeling. A simple metal strip acts as the only true threshold at the floor, allowing the polished concrete and wood to butt joint together. All casings in the building are flat stock, the casings at this opening are simple on both sides and only change in their width which creates a continuity throughout the structure.

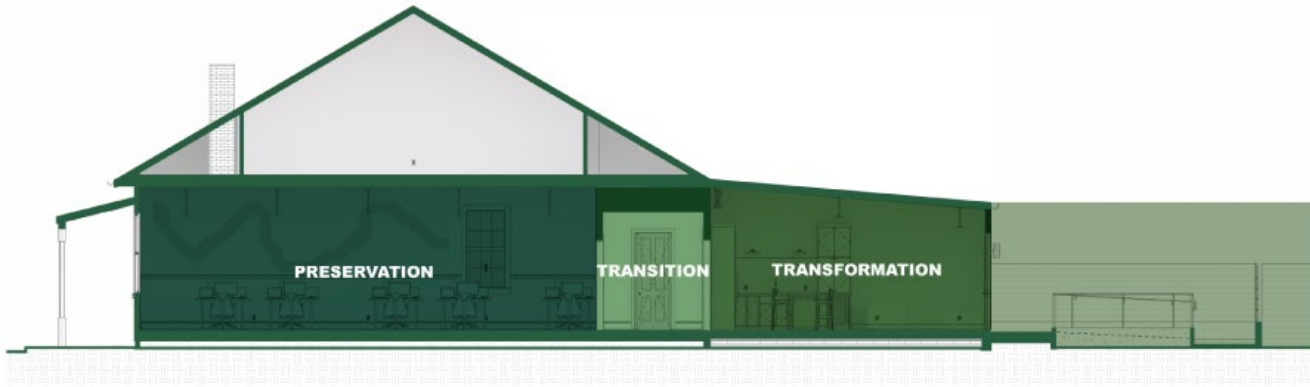
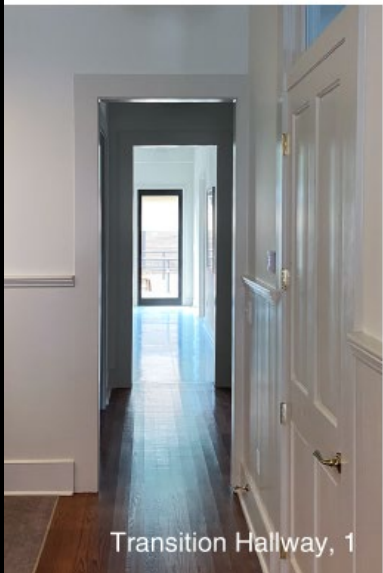
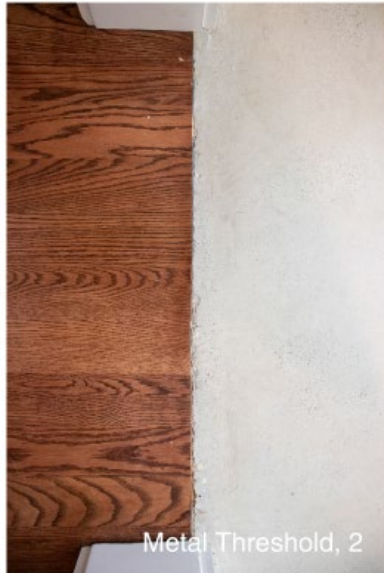


Diagram of Transition Zone Section



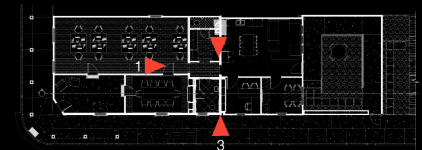
Transition Hallway, 1



Metal Threshold, 2



Historic Cladding to New Weatherboard, 3







1



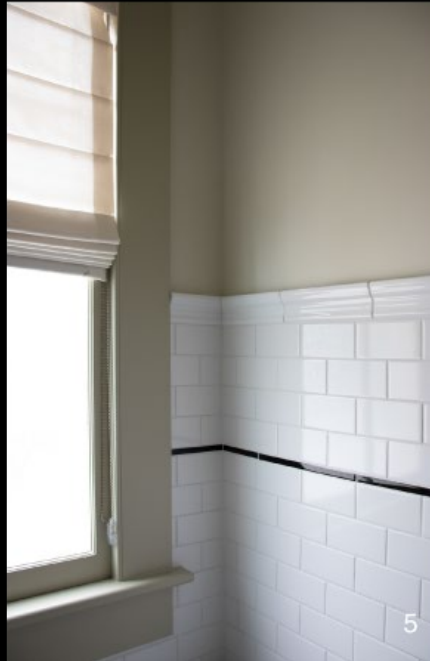
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# A95.11

## Traditional Finish Selection

Care was taken to use materials and finishes to define spaces and programs. More traditional finishes were used in the historic structure. We emulated timeless bathroom selections based on historic black and white tile patterns. We studied the layers of the ceiling paints to identify a color palette and define the public and private rooms with ceiling paints on wood ceilings. Historic profiles were used to create a custom ADA handrail. The public rooms (conference and waiting) have a more finished ceiling than the ceiling of the work room to give it more character. We used our knowledge of historic detailing and traditional details throughout the creole cottage.





# A95.12

## Juxtaposition with Modern Detailing

The vision was to juxtapose the old and the new in the building. In the more modern addition, we took care to create a more forward looking design, while retaining a warm palette so the spaces are still welcoming. Exposed metals and concrete in the addition are balanced with warm walnut and rich black granite. This striking materiality creates a welcome juxtaposition between new and old materials.







# A95.13

## A Place to Collaborate

The building is both a celebration of New Orleans' vernacular architecture and its built environment. It is designed to enhance collaboration, and showcase of the firm's skills and an homage to the city that it calls home. Every firm member can point to a part of this project and know that they had an idea that has been built that enhances the team's performance. It is a place of shared ideas that led to a workplace that is engaging, thoughtful and comfortable. Our conclusion is that the thoughtful design of our workspace creates a place where people can dream together.

