

### Program Summary:

A new workplace in a lakeside high-rise for a national accounting firm's local offices, designed to accommodate (3) separate practice groups and facilitate collaboration.

### Program Statement:

Carr, Riggs & Ingram's New Orleans branch, located on the 14th floor of Lakeway Tower II in Metairie, Louisiana, spans approximately 13,000 square feet and accommodates over (60) current team members while providing built-in flexibility for future growth. The unique triangular floor plate presented both a design challenge and a remarkable opportunity. Rather than obstructing the panoramic views of Lake Pontchartrain and the city with enclosed offices, the space was meticulously arranged to maximize these vistas from almost every vantage point. This strategic layout also ensures natural light permeates the entire floor. Notably, the triangular apex—a location typically reserved for executive offices or large conference rooms in other parts of the building—has been thoughtfully dedicated to a spacious team lounge. The Team Lounge's location, layout, and generous footprint also serves to facilitate collaboration and intercommunication between the firm's (3) respective practice areas and reinforce a unified corporate culture, which was the primary weakness of CRI's previous space.

## IA-20.01

Building Area: (sf)  
**13,200 SF**

Cost per Square Foot:  
**\$139 SF**

Construction Cost  
**\$1,840,000.00**

Date of Completion:  
**April 2024**

# IA-20.02

## Optimized Floor Plan for Collaboration and Views

The floor plan for the new headquarters is thoughtfully designed to optimize both functionality and the unique architectural features of the space. Open workspaces, strategically positioned along two legs of the triangular floor plate, are bordered by private offices. All these areas converge at a central, shared team lounge. This efficient design maximizes usable space within the tenant's footprint, ensuring every square foot is leveraged effectively. This layout not only promotes a collaborative atmosphere in the open areas but also provides focused environments in the private offices, all while drawing occupants toward the impressive panoramic views.



NORTH / LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN

### LEGEND:

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| SHARED SPACE: CONFERENCE / RECEPTION / COMMUNAL AREAS / OFFICE MANAGER | CONFERENCE / BREAK OUT ROOMS |
| CONSULTING DEPARTMENT: 27 DESKS  | COFFEE BAR                   |
| TAX DEPARTMENT: 22 DESKS, 1 BREAK OUT ROOM                             | PRINTING / COPY ROOMS        |
| AUDIT DEPARTMENT: 35 DESKS, 1 BREAK OUT ROOM                           | PHONE BOOTHS                 |
| VACANT TENANT SUITE  | PRIVACY / NURSING BOOTH      |

# IA-20.03











## Thoughtful Ceiling Design Enhances Workspace

The ceiling plays a crucial role in defining the new office environment. Pop-ups in the ceiling strategically delineate work areas from circulation paths. These architectural elements not only provide visual separation but also increase the perceived ceiling height within the workspaces, contributing to a more open and airy feel. A key consideration during design and installation was the precise coordination of these pop-ups around existing building systems, ensuring seamless integration and optimal functionality. Each pop-up element is also color coded to delineate between the respective practice areas and identify shared, collaborative spaces.



NORTH / LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN

### LEGEND:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
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|  <b>AUDIT DEPARTMENT:</b> 35 DESKS, 1 BREAK OUT ROOM                           |  <b>PHONE BOOTHS</b>                 |
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# IA-20.04

## Intentional Design Through Color

The design team employed color as a tool to not only generate aesthetic interest & vibrancy, but to functionally aid the user & visitor in navigating the high rise environment, which can often be disorienting. It serves as an intuitive wayfinding system for visitors and clearly distinguishes individual departments within the accounting firm. Shared spaces, such as the central lounge and common areas, are unified by shades of blue. In contrast, each of the primary practice areas is assigned its own distinct color, allowing for easy identification and a cohesive, yet segmented, environment.



# IA-20.05

## Overcoming Existing Limitations

The pre-construction phase highlighted two significant challenges that ultimately became the driving forces behind the design. Firstly, despite the existing space boasting expansive views and large bands of windows, its greatest inherent strength, these remarkable features were not being fully utilized. The original layout failed to capitalize on the panoramic vistas of Lake Pontchartrain and the city. Secondly, the client expressed considerable concern with the consistently low ceiling heights throughout the space. These two critical issues served as the fundamental starting points in the design process, guiding the strategic decisions that transformed the space into a luminous and open office.



# IA-20.06

## Collaborative Process: Designing for Efficiency and Budget

Our design process benefited significantly from early collaboration with the contractor. This proactive approach was instrumental in keeping the project on budget and ensuring the design remained within the contractor's capabilities. Initial estimates revealed that the originally specified gypsum ceilings would be costly. Working with the contractor we selected an ACT and grid system that was able to achieve the same aesthetic and functional goals for significantly less expense. The savings were then reallocated to enhance other aspects of the project, demonstrating how early collaboration fostered creative problem-solving and optimized resource allocation.



# IA-20.07

## Seamless Brand Integration and Design Philosophy

Brand integration is seamlessly woven into the design, particularly evident in the reception area. The feature wall, custom-designed to incorporate the CRI logo, is fabricated from multiple layers of CNC routed plywood. This distinctive element instantly marks the space as uniquely CRI's.

Overall, the design conveys a sense of highly organized practice, with finishes that create an exceptionally clean and bright atmosphere. The egalitarian approach to space planning, seen in the shared access to prime views, and the playful use of material and color are hallmarks of the design team's innovative approach to creating top-in-class workplaces. These design choices not only enhance CRI's brand identity but also foster an inspiring and efficient environment for both employees and clients.



## IA-20.08

### Dynamic Meeting Rooms for Collaboration

The meeting rooms within CRI's new offices echo the thoughtful design of the open workspaces, featuring the same ceiling pop-ups. These pop-ups are distinctly painted blue, clearly signifying their role as shared spaces accessible to all three of CRI's separate departments. The specific shape and size of each pop-up further delineates the work area within the room, a design choice mirrored by the flooring directly below.





## IA-20.09

### Bright and Open Workspaces

The open workspaces are thoughtfully designed to maximize natural light and foster a sense of spaciousness. Each departmental zone features ceiling pop-ups that not only playfully differentiate the three accounting departments but also visually enlarge the area. Crucially, glass partitions are utilized for all private offices and conference spaces. This design choice ensures maximum natural light penetration throughout the entire floor plate and provides daylight views for all employees, even those at interior desks. This commitment to transparency and access to natural light creates a more vibrant and connected work environment for everyone.



# IA-20.10

## Harmonious Color Palette in the Open Office

The open workspaces feature an overall neutral color palette, primarily utilizing white paint and light-colored LVT. This serene backdrop provides a striking contrast to the bright, distinct colors strategically applied in the ceiling pop-ups, desk backs, and private office walls.

The careful balance between restraint and playfulness exercised by the design team helped craft a sophisticated yet vibrant work environment that is conducive to both productivity and healthy social interaction.





## IA-20.11

### Egalitarian Lounge with Panoramic Views

Breaking from traditional office layouts, the triangular apex of the floor plate, a location typically reserved for executive offices or large conference rooms in other parts of the building, has been thoughtfully dedicated to a generous team lounge. This strategic placement ensures that every team member has equal access to the best panoramic vistas of Lake Pontchartrain and the surrounding city, fostering a more inclusive and inspiring work environment.

The team lounge also serves as the heart of CRI's workplace and the best embodiment of its cultural goals. It is large enough to accommodate the entire team for social events and also facilitate collaborative work sessions between multiple teams at once.



# IA-20.12

## A Blueprint for Modern Workplaces

CRI's new workplace on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain stands as a testament to the value that thoughtful spacemaking and creative design offers companies concerned with the wellbeing of their team members. By embracing the unique challenges of the triangular floor plate and low ceilings, the design team created a vibrant, efficient, and cohesive environment that accentuates the location's greatest asset, its panoramic views, to everyone's benefit. The strategic use of color, the egalitarian approach to amenity placement, and the seamless integration of brand identity collectively deliver a workspace that not only meets CRI's operational needs but also fosters collaboration, well-being, and a clear sense of purpose. This space is more than just an office; it's a future-focused environment designed for growth, productivity, and an elevated employee and client experience.

