

Program Summary:

A 15,300 SF WELL Platinum office renovation creates a high-performance studio that prioritizes daylight, comfort, and material reuse while supporting collaboration, fabrication, and evolving needs.

Program Statement:

After more than 25 years in a previous workspace, this design practice relocated to a new 15,300 SF studio in the heart of a downtown business district. The renovation marks a deliberate shift toward a workplace designed around human comfort, environmental performance, and evolving modes of practice.

The studio prioritizes collaboration and adaptability through an open layout that encourages interaction while supporting focus and privacy. Workstations are positioned along the building perimeter to maximize access to daylight and views, while a range of meeting spaces, phone booths, and a central commons support both in-person and hybrid work. Social spaces introduce a hospitality-driven atmosphere, reinforcing the studio as a place of connection as much as production.

Material strategies emphasize reuse and craft. Elements from the previous office were salvaged and reimaged into new architectural features, extending the life of existing materials while reinforcing continuity between past and present. Expanded fabrication spaces support both traditional model-making and digital production, including 3D printing.

The design highlights the building's industrial character, with exposed brick, steel, and natural wood creating a warm, tactile backdrop. Muted, understated workspaces allow the architecture to take center stage, while social areas feature more layered, inviting finishes.

The project achieved WELL Platinum Certification—the first in Louisiana—reflecting a commitment to measurable performance in air quality, daylight, acoustics, and thermal comfort. The result is a workplace that operates as both studio and test case, demonstrating how design can align sustainability, wellness, and daily experience.

IA-285.01

Building Area: (sf)
15,300 SF

Cost per Square Foot:
\$173 / SF

Construction Cost
\$2.4M

Date of Completion:
2025



IA-285.02

A New Chapter

Designed through the same lens applied to client work, the studio takes a holistic approach to workplace design, prioritizing comfort, flexibility, and connection.

The environment supports a range of work styles, encourages collaboration, and highlights the craft of design, representing an investment in both people and the creative energy that drives the practice forward.



IA-285.03

The Space Transformed

Located on a lower floor within an existing commercial building, the new studio began as a collection of small, enclosed tenant suites. Partitioned layouts blocked natural light, and dated finishes limited the space's potential.

Beneath these constraints, however, were strong architectural qualities like generous windows, high ceilings, and exposed structural elements. The design approach focused on uncovering and enhancing these features.





IA-285.04

Engaging Studio Members

Programming and stakeholder engagement informed every design decision. The process began with surveys to understand what worked (and what didn't) in the previous workspace.

Key priorities emerged: improved ergonomics, access to daylight, flexible meeting areas, quiet zones, and a more equitable distribution of space. These insights directly shaped the strategies that define the new studio environment, resulting in a workplace designed with and for its users.



IA-285.05

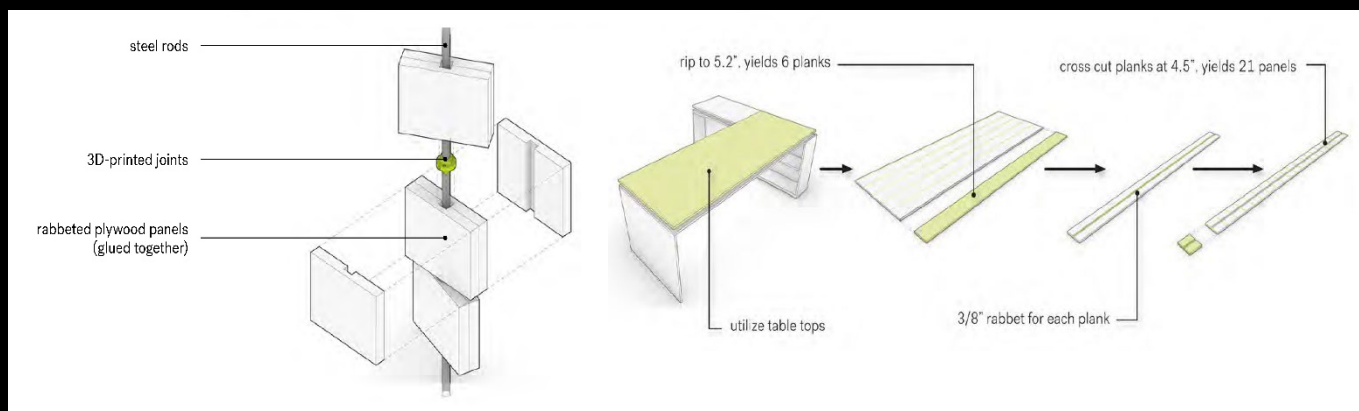
Screen Wall & Reuse of Materials

Forming a threshold between public and private zones, the entry screen wall is built from reclaimed wood salvaged from the desks at the previous office, giving new life to existing materials.

Its layered composition filters light and creates a shifting texture that invites curiosity while carrying forward a sense of continuity.

More than a partition, it reflects a resourceful approach to design, transforming what was once familiar into something newly expressive.

A parametric model developed in Rhino and Grasshopper was used to coordinate the geometry and assembly of the wall's modular components.





IA-285.06

Balancing Focus & Collaboration

A mix of collaboration-focused areas, such as meeting tables and pin-up walls, exists alongside quieter zones for individual concentration. This variety gives team members agency over how and where they work. Access to natural light plays a vital role, enhancing alertness, mood, and overall wellness throughout the workday.

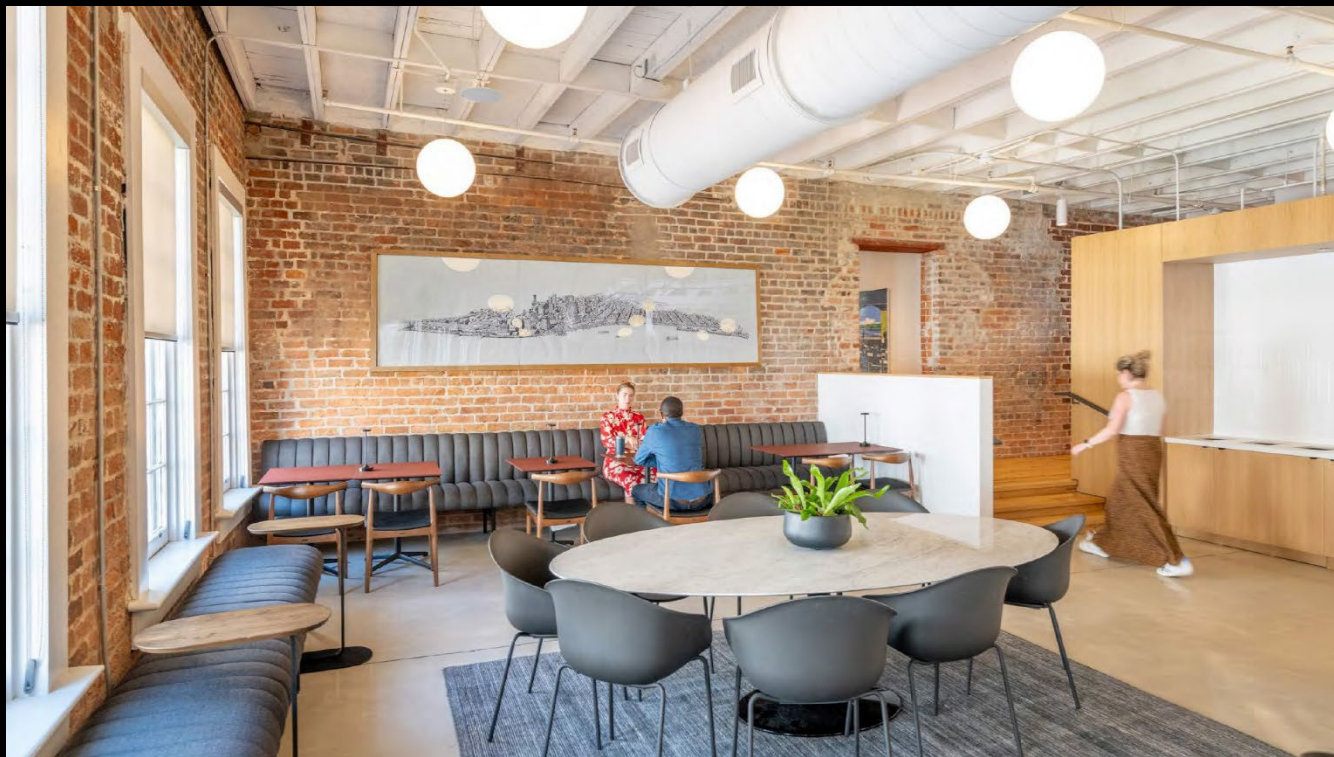


IA-285.07

Workstations for Focus

Each workstation is designed to support both comfort and adaptability. Operable standing desks, multiple monitors, and task chairs with customizable settings allow each person to tailor their setup for optimal performance. Personal storage, task lighting, and pin-up boards encourage organization and self-expression.

Thoughtful details like cord management, accessible power, and sound-absorbing materials create meaningful daily comfort and reduce distractions. Smaller environmental considerations, including dividing the office into multiple HVAC zones, offer more precise temperature control and enhance overall comfort throughout the day.



IA-285.08

The Neutral Ground

Named after the term used locally for the grassy median dividing city streets, the Neutral Ground embodies a sense of shared space and community connection. At the heart of the studio, it serves as a flexible hub for everyday life, where people gather for lunch, meet over coffee, or take a quiet break with a book.





Before

IA-285.09

Everyday Gathering Space

Blending hospitality and workplace design, the Neutral Ground balances warmth and utility. Large operable windows fill the room with natural light, while roller shades allow for comfort and control throughout the day. A fully equipped galley kitchen with dual dishwashers, refrigerators, and generous storage supports daily use, alongside a dedicated coffee station and sustainable waste systems for recycling and composting.

Designed for both in-person and hybrid collaboration, the space is equipped with integrated A/V and sound systems for seamless meetings and events, supporting connection across locations and with remote participants. Open, adaptable, and inviting, it brings together the rhythms of daily use, serving as a shared space for connection, comfort, and gathering.



IA-285.10

Materials Lab

Integral to the success of each project, the Materials Lab is embedded within the studio environment—enhancing visibility, accessibility, and reinforcing the importance of thoughtful material selection. A structured system supports the storage, organization, and retrieval of nearly 20,000 samples across architecture and interiors.

Each material is evaluated using a Healthy Materials Toolkit developed through prior research, ensuring that health, performance, and responsibility remain central to the design process.



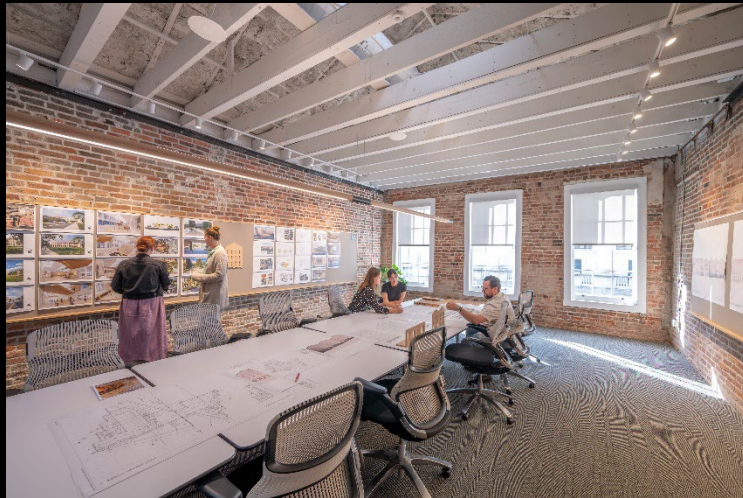


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Meeting Spaces

Designed to support both in-person and hybrid collaboration, the meeting spaces are equipped with integrated technology and amenities that make communication effortless. Even in the largest gathering area, which accommodates nearly fifty people, participants can be clearly seen and heard from anywhere in the room.

Comfort and environmental quality were equally prioritized. Operable shades and individual thermostats give users control over light and temperature, while ergonomic seating and views of planting enhance well-being and create meeting environments that are both pleasant and productive.



Before

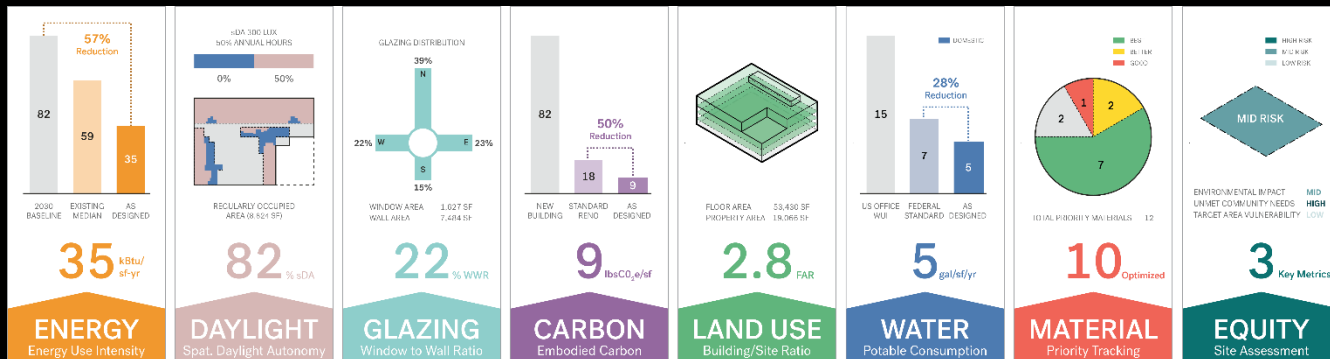


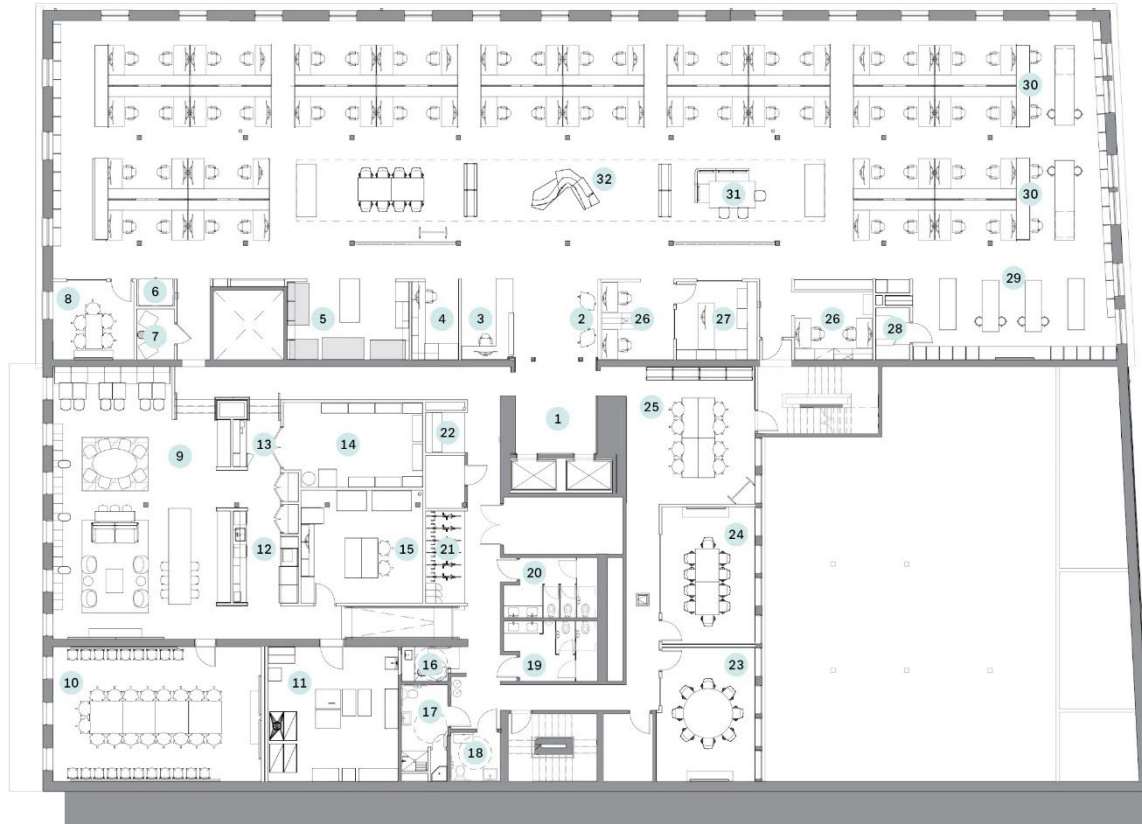
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Louisiana's First WELL Platinum Certified Project

Guided by the International WELL Building Institute framework, the project achieved WELL Platinum Certification, the first of its kind in Louisiana.

The certification serves as a tool for accountability, aligning design intent with verified performance and establishing a structure for ongoing monitoring and maintenance.





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|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Elevator Lobby | 9 Neutral Ground | 17 Private Restroom with Shower | 25 Co-Lab Conference Room |
| 2 Screen Wall & Sitting Area | 10 Oak Conference Room | 18 Private Restroom | 26 Administrative Desk |
| 3 Reception Desk | 11 Clean Shop | 19 Men's Restroom | 27 Director of Finance Office |
| 4 IT Support Desk | 12 Kitchen | 20 Women's Restroom | 28 River Phone Booth |
| 5 Printers & Supplies Storage | 13 Coffee & Tea Station | 21 Bicycle Storage Area | 29 Materials Lab |
| 6 Bayou Phone Booth | 14 Storage Room | 22 Mail Drop-Off & Pick-Up | 30 Hot Desk |
| 7 Lake Phone Booth | 15 Fabrication Shop | 23 Magnolia Conference Room | 31 Booth |
| 8 Lagniappe Conference Room | 16 Satsuma Wellness Room | 24 Cypress Conference Room | 32 Model of New Orleans |