

Program Summary:

An adaptive reuse commercial conglomerate where historically single-occupant warehouses were each renovated to support multiple tenants, all supported by an open-air addition.

Program Statement:

The project is located in New Orleans on the outer edge of the Lower Garden District on a site overlooked by the Pontchartrain Expressway as it moves towards the Crescent City Connection. Two connected warehouses were purchased by the same owner with the intention of creating a new core of commercial activity between downtown and the thriving sections of Magazine Street extending from the Lower Garden District to Uptown New Orleans. The existing architectural character of the warehouses was embraced and celebrated during the design process. High ceilings and large, open floor plans echo the buildings' industrial roots, further highlighted in the exposed brick, concrete floors, and visible structural and mechanical systems. These buildings are now occupied by a combination of established local businesses and new New Orleans favorites, including a furniture consignment shop, photography studio, wine shop, pizza parlor and various complimentary retail shops. A small, orangerie-inspired addition provides additional retail space and increases connection between the street and the tenant spaces, making use of an open wedge-shaped lot left behind when the interstate and bridge modified the historic rectilinear street grid.

RR-175.01

Building Area: (sf)
15,700

Cost per Square Foot:
\$144

Construction Cost
\$2,260,800

Date of Completion:
June 2023



RR-175.02

PRE-RENOVATION

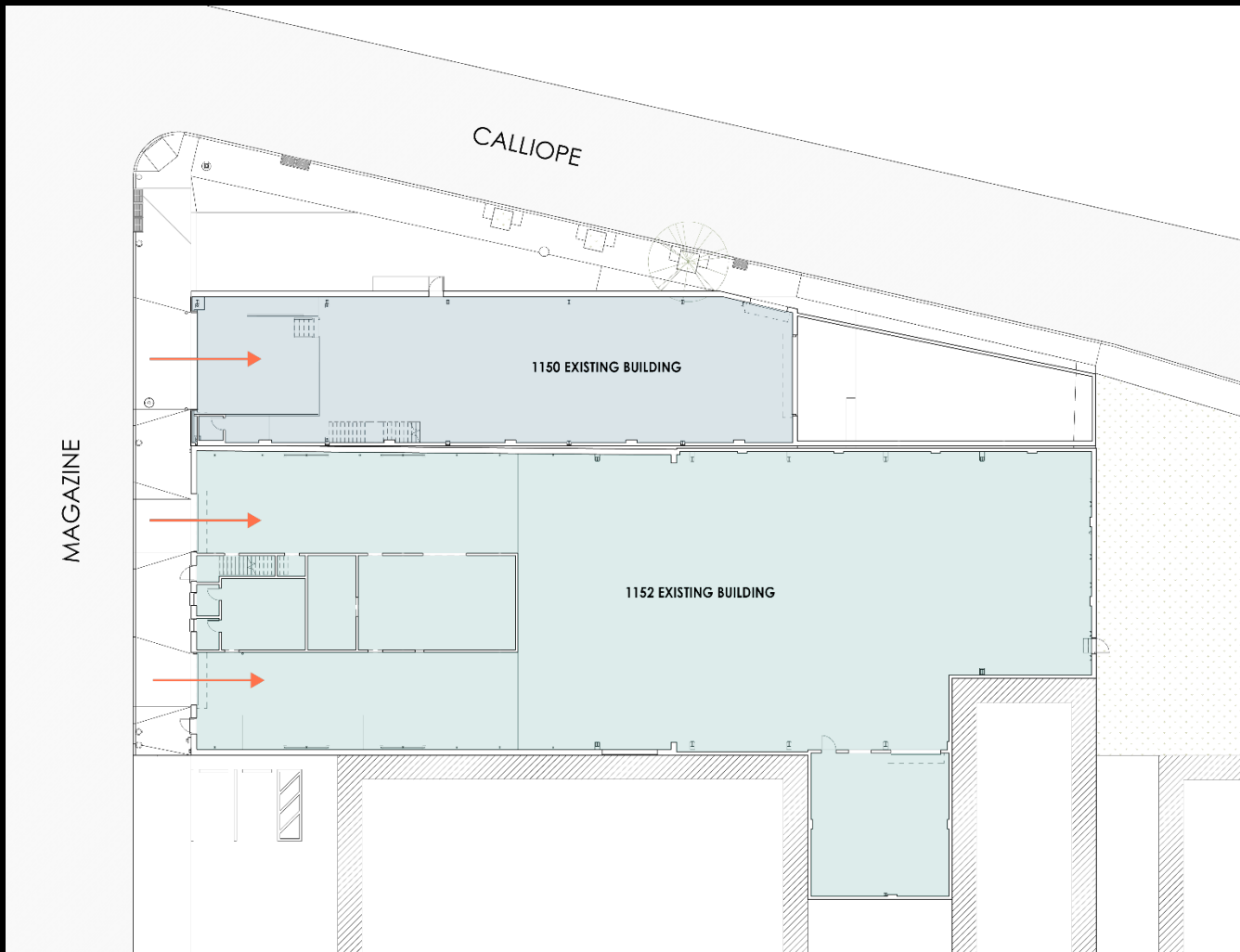
Magazine Street in New Orleans is a historic six-mile thoroughfare running parallel to the Mississippi River, stretching from the Central Business District through the Lower Garden District and Uptown to Audubon Park. Prior to the renovation, there was a pronounced divide between the CBD and the more vibrant, pedestrian-oriented shopping and dining corridor further Uptown, as evidenced by the photograph of the property at the time of purchase. As one moved closer to the CBD, the street environment became notably less walkable, characterized by fewer active storefronts, diminished foot traffic, and a more fragmented streetscape.

RR-175.03

EXISTING SITE / GROUND FLOOR PLAN

One of the biggest challenges with warehouse renovations is scale: most prospective tenants need smaller spaces, yet subdividing a large warehouse often means some suites lose valuable street frontage, which is problematic on a high-demand corridor like Magazine Street.

In this case, the building owners were also tenants, operating a well-loved consignment shop. Their broader vision extended beyond their own business; they aimed to create a vibrant hub of complementary enterprises. This meant fostering a level of density that could support shared infrastructure, not only in terms of building systems but also as a community of like-minded businesses, offering visitors a convenient, one-stop destination for diverse needs.





RR-175.04

POST-RENOVATION

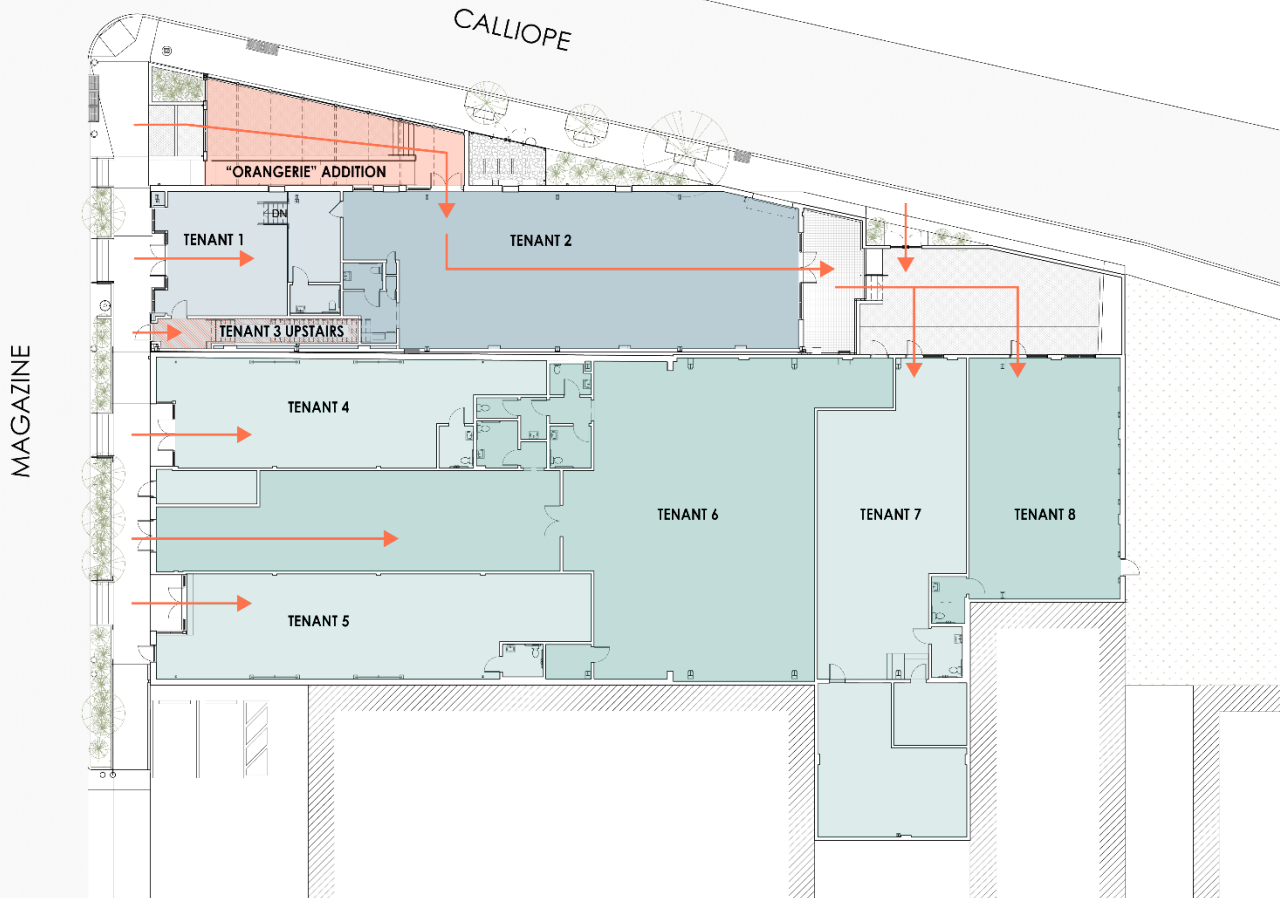
This project activates the terminus of Magazine Street, creating a stronger connection between the Uptown and Lower Garden District's shopping and dining district and the downtown area. Sidewalk improvements and added landscaping emphasize the pedestrian experience, supporting greater foot traffic along what was previously a quieter block. Overall, this project highlights the potential for rehabilitating vacant warehouses within an urban context.

RR-175.05

NEW SITE / GROUND FLOOR PLAN

The project's central challenge and driving force became the careful subdivision of the large warehouse footprints into smaller, functional spaces while preserving as much street presence for each tenant as possible.

Where direct frontage couldn't be maintained, the solution relied on strong internal connections—linking the two buildings through a shared courtyard and outdoor areas. This approach created a cohesive, fluid environment, where movement between spaces feels natural and continuous, blending street-facing access with internal circulation to unify the development as a single, dynamic destination.





RR-175.06

URBAN ENVIRONMENT

The adjacent interstate added complexity to the project, prompting a focus on the transformation of previously ignored, derelict “dead space” on the site.

A small addition redefines the character and function of the existing two-story warehouse. Tucked into an atypical, wedge-shaped lot—an overlooked remnant created when the nearby interstate fractured the historic street grid—this compact space became the unlikely foundation for a design intervention that elevates the entire site.

The open-air addition acts as a storefront for the rear tenant, allowing the Magazine Street façade of the existing building to support an additional retail storefront and separate entry stair to access an upper-level art studio.



RR-175.07

THE ORANGERIE

An open-air structure offers inherent sustainability advantages by eliminating the need for mechanical cooling and reducing overall energy consumption, instead relying on natural ventilation, daylight, and passive environmental control.

The exterior screening secures the site without feeling cut off from the street. By embracing openness rather than enclosure, the design not only reduces operational demands but also fosters a more engaging and dynamic user experience.





RR-175.08

URBAN ENVIRONMENT

The rear courtyard provides a gathering space that can accommodate the various social events organized by the owners to draw patrons to the commercial hub. It connects the two existing buildings, providing access to the two rear tenants whose storefronts open into the courtyard.

Creative use of quarry tile creates a low-maintenance and cost-effective focal point on the raised landing and permeable pavers used elsewhere allow rainwater to pass through the gaps or porous surface into a layered base below, where it is absorbed, filtered, and slowly infiltrated into the ground instead of running off.





RR-175.09

EMBRACING THE WAREHOUSE IDENTITY

The project embraces the architectural characteristics of the warehouse as the interior design identity rather than adding additional finishes to try to create an alternative design style. Not only is this a more sustainable design approach, but it also yields a cohesive language throughout all the interior tenant spaces. Partial height partitions maintain the spatial openness while allowing for more tenant flexibility within the interior spaces.

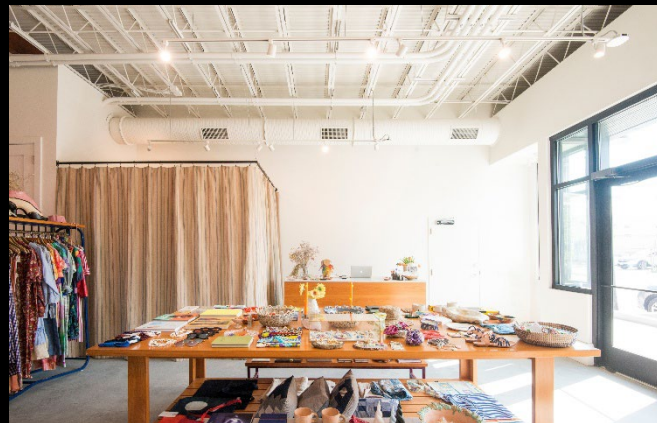


RR-175.10

A RETAIL HUB

The historically single occupant buildings were each renovated to support multiple tenants with a combination of established local businesses and spaces intended as launching pads for soon to be New Orleans favorites.

Within these tenant spaces, existing architectural features are highlighted with honest materials and visible systems. Exposed concrete floors, painted brick and CMU, and salvaged warehouse fixtures for additional lighting harken back to the buildings' industrial past. The organization of exposed ducts and lighting yields both order and openness.



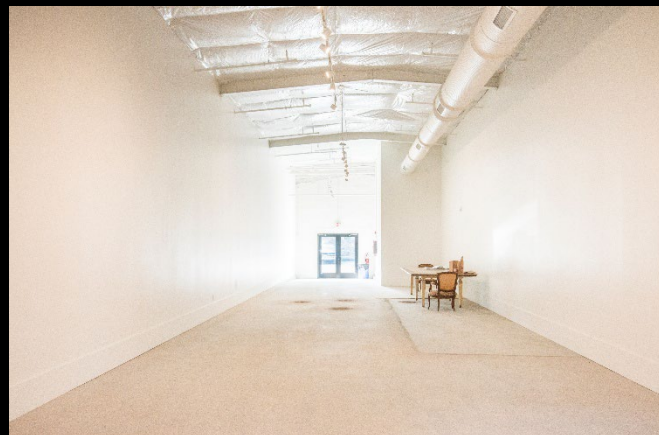
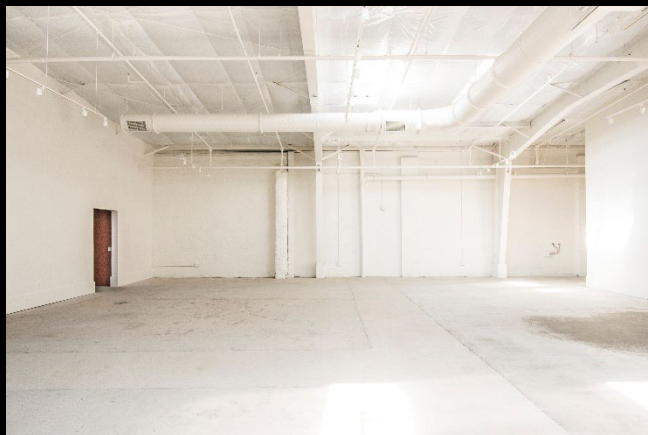


RR-175.11

FLEXIBLE EVENT SPACE

The project includes an event hall offering nearly 5,000 square feet of flexible space. The front hall (bottom right) is an ideal pre-function space, while the main hall is a dramatic and natural light-filled expanse. Added skylights reduce reliance on artificial lighting, reducing overall energy consumption.

Honest materiality is achieved through a monochromatic palette across all exposed finishes, yielding a blank canvas for a variety of users. Tailored for social commerce, the space can be serviced, styled, or hosted by the curated ecosystem of interconnected businesses surrounding it.





RR-175.12

CONCLUSION

The project transforms two historic warehouses in New Orleans into a multi-tenant commercial hub through adaptive reuse, preserving their industrial character while introducing modern functionality. By subdividing large spaces, adding an open-air courtyard connection, and incorporating a small orangerie-style addition, the design creates a cohesive, walkable destination for diverse local businesses. Sustainability is central, achieved through reuse of existing structures, energy-efficient upgrades, stormwater management systems, and permeable materials. The development fosters economic and social activity, enhances connectivity between neighborhoods, and turns underutilized urban space into a vibrant retail and community environment.

