Program Summary:

500 Canal merges two late 19th-century buildings into a unified complex and breathes new life into the long-abandoned structures.

Program Statement:

500 Canal, located on the edge of the French Quarter, is an immersive visitor destination experience that showcases the client's legacy brands while redeveloping an important intersection in downtown New Orleans. The project merges two late 19th-century buildings, bringing the buildings out of a 30-year vacancy.

Essentially three projects in one—interactive exhibits, micro-distillery, and office space—the buildings were renovated from top to bottom utilizing Historic Tax Credits. The resulting six story, 51,987-square-foot complex houses three floors of visitor-focused venues (retail, exhibits, and demonstration distillery areas), a fourth-floor event space, plus fifth and sixth floor offices for the the client. Employing an archaeological approach to design, the project includes a mix of restoration, re-purposed salvaged elements, and complementary new interventions. Interior design carefully avoids historicism, engaging overtly contemporary methods and materials yet evoking 1880s architecture that integrates the brands' history into the building itself.

The project enables the client to return to its roots while celebrating the continued importance of New Orleans through this symbiotic development. Breathing new life into downtown, 500 Canal revitalizes previously forgotten buildings, and serves as a pioneering model for future investment and construction of mutual advantage for both the investor and the City of New Orleans.

RR-135.01

Building Area: (sf)
51,987 SF

Cost per Square Foot:
$962/SF

Construction Cost
$50M

Date of Completion:
September 2019

Photo Courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection

Pre-Renovation (2016)

RR-135.02

HISTORIC URBAN CONTEXT

Located at the corner of Canal and Magazine Streets, these two circa 1860 Italianate structures are only a few hundred yards from the client's original 1850's site.

Previous uses of the 500 building (left) have been a dry goods company, a hats and trunks retailer, and most recently a department store.

Abandoned for over three decades, the buildings were renovated from top to bottom, which included structural repairs, removing deleterious additions, and returning the buildings to a period-appropriate visual appearance while adding critical infrastructure upgrades to reduce stormwater load on city systems.

RR-135.03

PROJECT BACKGROUND: INTERIOR CONDITIONS

Despite 30 years of neglect, the buildings maintained a significant amount of their historic character, contributing to their designation of Landmarked status by the National Parks Service before construction.

Notable elements included a historic stair, elevator hoisting equipment, and sliding fire doors, all of which have been restored and remain as relics throughout.

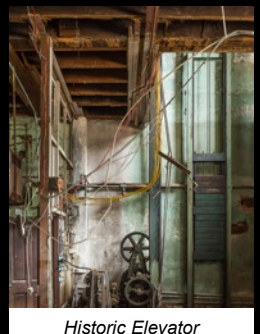
The buildings were renovated from top to bottom, including stabilizing and reworking structural systems. Wood framing was restructured, and the masonry walls were tuck-pointed and restored with grout injection for stabilization. The buildings were completely refinished with plaster, bead board ceilings, exposed beams, cast iron columns, and tile or stained concrete floors.

1st Floor Before (2016)

Historic Stair (2016)

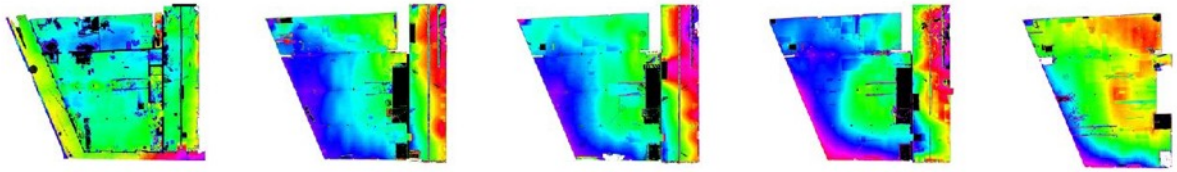
Column Top (2016)

Window (2016)



Historic Elevator Hoisting Equipment (2016)

Historic Sliding Fire Door (2016)



TOPOGRAPHIC HEAT MAPPING (PRE-RENOVATION)

RR-135.04

RETROFIT APPROACH

Existing conditions were documented meticulously with advanced 3D scanning for a near exact knowledge of the building's existing conditions, which allowed precise engineering of new complex systems.

Topographic heat mapping was utilized to analyze and reconcile disparate floor levels not within an acceptable tolerance. The scanning process revealed that the floors were up to eight inches out of level in some locations.

Scanning and virtual reality also benefited coordination between master distillers, architects, and engineers as they resolved MEP issues surrounding the integration of working stills into the project.

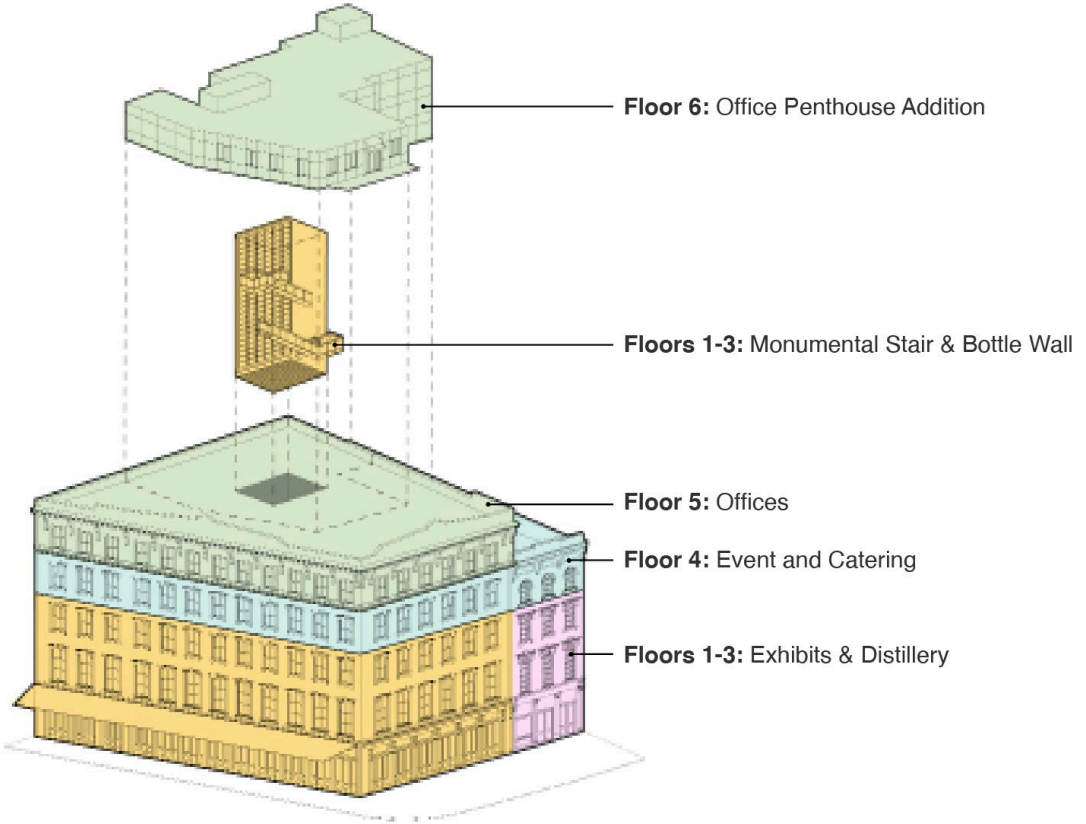
RR-135.05

SCOPE & PROGRAM FIT

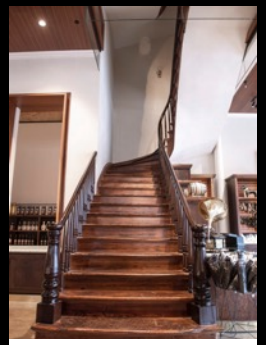
One of the most notable design challenges was the multi-faceted nature of the scope and program. The historic buildings had to effectively work as a museum, micro-distillery, and a corporate headquarters.

Outside, the building facades required substantial reworking. The wood storefronts were completely rebuilt and the facade of the smaller building, 510 Canal, was restored to match the original historic conditions.

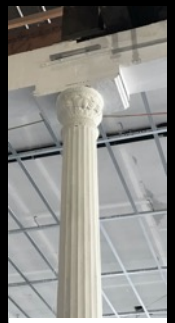
The resulting complex houses three floors of visitor-focused venues, a fourth-floor event and catering space, plus 5th floor offices for the client and a 6th floor rooftop addition.



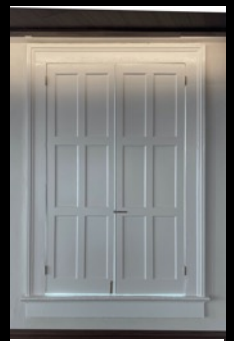
Level 1 *Level 2* *Level 3* *Level 4* *Level 5*



Restored Historic Stair

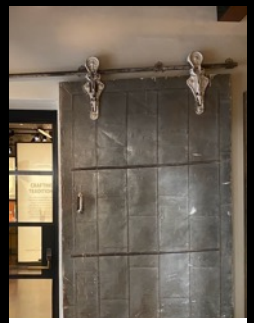


Restored Column Top



Restored Windows

Elevator Housing Equipment



Historic Sliding Fire Door

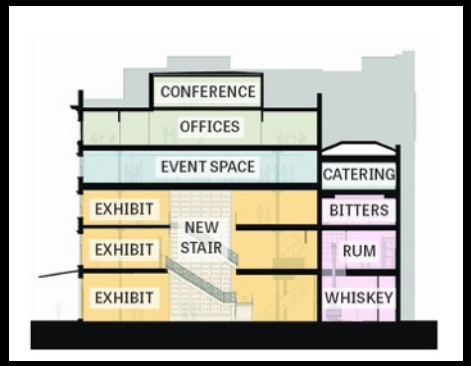
RR-135.06

INTERIOR RENOVATIONS

Interior architectural elements were restored, and new interventions were sensitively integrated, but differentiated where needed from the historic fabric.

The original cypress staircase was restored utilizing using a combination of laser scanning along with traditional wood working methods. New mahogany balusters were hand turned, and damaged pieces milled from salvaged wood from the project.

Beadboard ceiling was installed throughout the project to reflect the historic condition but also provide acoustical treatment. Microperforated wood veneered planks were custom fabricated with groves to look like beadboard. The microperforations resolve at a distance and give the appearance of the wood ceiling that existed originally.



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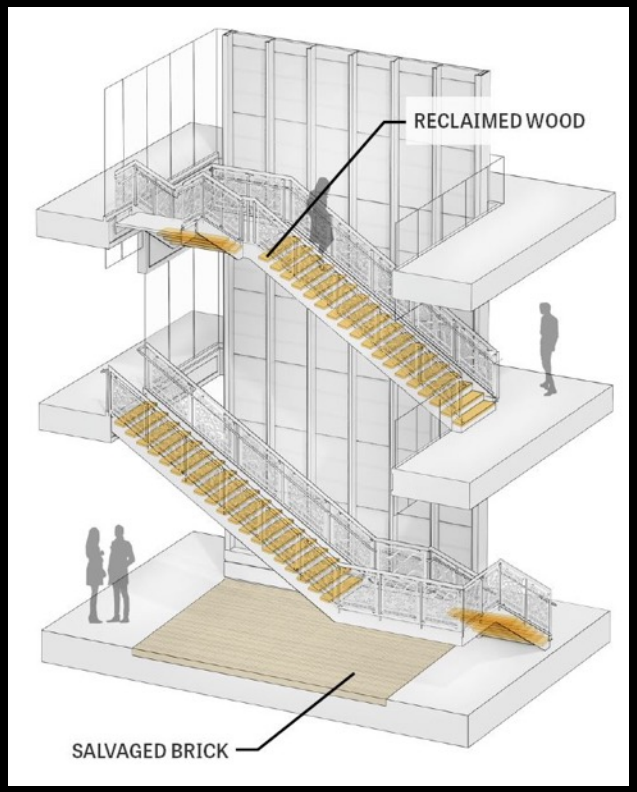
MONUMENTAL STAIR

A new monumental staircase serves as a physical and experiential link within the building, orienting visitors to the venue. Three-stories tall, the staircase sits within a newly opened volume in the heart of the building, which was created by removing portions of three floors. A highlight of the stairs is a back-lit, glass-encased display wall featuring 2,000 liquor bottles. Guests begin their journey on the 3rd floor and descend through a variety of interactive installations and themes that trace the brand's spirited history.

The historical gravity of the 19th century building is also highlighted by the atrium; restored columns and beams frame the opening at each level, and existing building materials are re-imagined as new stair components.



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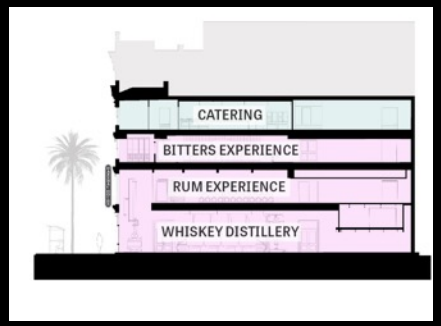
REUSE OF MATERIALS

Among the reused materials are the original bricks and wood joists. The stair treads are salvaged joists from the original structure and the paved bricks on the ground floor that anchor the monumental stair were discovered during selective demolition prior to construction.

The reuse of materials, however, is not limited to the new stair. In total, the combined embodied energy saved from reusing these materials adds up to 94,980 cubic feet of material and 2,556.7 metric tons of carbon.



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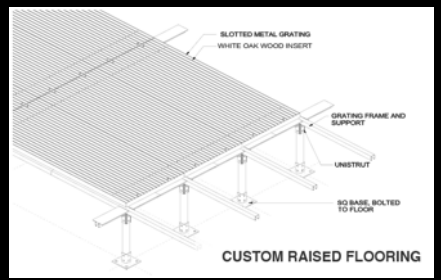
MECHANICAL COMPLEXITY

Historic structure renovations required code compliance upgrades and the inclusion of modern amenities standards. In order to allow assembly spaces to co-exist with the industrial operations, the design team developed unique solutions to incorporate MEP, fire protection, and life safety systems, all without sacrificing the essential architectural character. The use of 3D scanning, mapping, and virtual reality were integral to this coordination process.

The distillery was carefully calibrated to bring visitors as close to the still as safely possible; grant direct visual connection to the distilling process while ensuring safety - platform grants views into the vats; fire safety and detection systems guarantee visitor safety. A 2,200-gallon thermal energy tank makes 14,000 lbs of ice at night to cool and condition the distillery equipment during the day.



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ALCOHOL PRODUCTION

The complex mechanics needed to produce alcohol in a wood-framed 150-year-old building required meticulous coordination between architects, engineers, master distillers, and others.

There are three distinct distilling processes occurring within the 510 Canal building (Rye, Bitters, and custom blended rum), all requiring different equipment. A new 500-gallon copper still that is two stories tall was custom made in Kentucky for that specific space and was brought into the 510 building while the façade was being rebuilt.

In order to provide a level transition between the two buildings and to provide a path to route distillery piping, a custom raised flooring system was designed.

RR-135.11

HISTORIC RESTORATION:
510 CANAL FACADE

Exterior renovations required the correction or removal of modifications performed in the 1980s, when previous owners demolished large parts of the facade and rebuilt it without historical accuracy.

Cast iron hoods utilized an improperly waterproofed steel structure rather than original masonry, which caused significant water damage throughout the building. During restoration, they were removed, restored, and re-engineered.

Although the historic cornices were not salvaged, they were painstakingly rebuilt utilizing photographs found at The Historic New Orleans Collection and 3D scans of the lambstongues on the cast iron hoods. It was fabricated from a digital model and constructued of glass-fiber reinforced concrete.

Historic

After Renovation

Before Renovation

510 Cornice Pre-Restoration

Historic 510 Cornice (Photo Courtesy of The Historic New Orleans Collection)

RR-135.12

HISTORIC RESTORATION:
500 CANAL STOREFRONT

Storefronts on the 500 Canal building were largely rebuilt using templates created from the fragments of storefront that remained, historic imagery, as well as artifacts found throughout the building.

During construction, a single acanthus leaf was discovered at the capital of one of the cast iron pillars. The found leaf was used to produce a mold for cast iron replicas, and the original columns were restored and filled with grout for structural stability.

Project Name:
The Sazerac House

Project Location:
New Orleans, LA

Owner/Client:
The Sazerac Company

Architect(s) of Record:
(names and addresses)
Trapolin-Peer Architects
500 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70130

Project Team:
Peter Trapolin, FAIA
Shea Trahan, AIA
Margitta Rogers, AIA
Matthew Buyer, AIA
Cynthia Dubberley, AIA
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Landscape Architect:
N/A

Consultants:
Gallagher Associates, Exhibit Designer
Morphy Makofsky Inc., Structural/Civil Engineer
Moses Engineers, MEP Engineer
Rick Fifield, AIA, Historic Tax Credit Consultant
RML Acoustics, Acoustical Consultant

General Contractor:
Ryan Gootee General Contractors

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