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Time and Time Again

In adaptive reuse, architecture expresses its era—on today's terms.

BY DAVID SOKOL

WORKING WITHIN THE HISTORIC FABRIC does not have to limit architects' ingenuity. By inserting new programs in old structures and layering contemporary design on vintage elements, adaptive-reuse projects can energize and lend spark to historic places while affording architects a unique exercise in creative license. These recent projects show how three firms approached their building's particular challenges.

THE BIG REVEAL

When Overland Partners outgrew its 9,000-square-foot headquarters on the outskirts of San Antonio, the architecture firm decided that its new, larger space should be embedded in the downtown community. The 1917 Hughes Plumbing Warehouse more than doubled



Overland's previous square footage, and locating it within the up-and-coming River North district meant the move would also have meaningful neighborhood impact.

The conditions of the former light industrial facility—cavernous and derelict—suited the architects. "A blank slate allowed us to create the type of office we needed," recalls project architect Patrick Winn. "We didn't want to build brand-new or have a space that was too prescribed. So the warehouse provided a balance."

The interventions Overland made blended respect and reinvention. Its boldest move entailed removing 1,200 square feet of roof immediately behind the warehouse's brick facade and inserting a courtyard into the entry sequence. The firm designed—and fabricated in its own workshop—perforated steel screens for installation

in the facade's former loading docks. The new courtyard elevations are clearly delineated from the old exterior, with load-bearing curtain walls of Triple-S steel and Sharp Glass windows made locally by Tower Steel. Since opening, the courtyard has become a nexus for the entire community, as it offers neighbors a quiet spot for reflection.

Inside the lofty office, custom glass-and-steel assemblies form freestanding conference rooms accented with teak finishes from Terramai. Other newly added interior touches beyond the meeting pods include Dirtt modular wall systems and Herman Miller furniture.

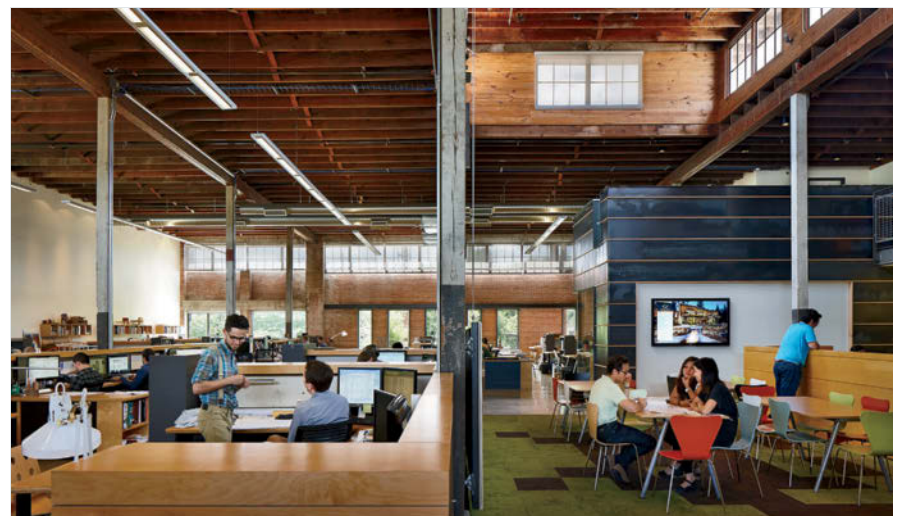
INSIDE JOB

The Architectural Team (TAT) found the 1931 Mattapan branch of the Boston Public Library in better condition than Overland had found its warehouse. Although the library branch had been replaced in 2009, the City of Boston continued to maintain the 7,200-square-foot building until transferring it in early 2014 to the Boys & Girls Club.

The nonprofit worked with TAT to convert the community resource into a center dedicated to at-risk neighborhood teens. While the project team did not pursue landmark designation, says TAT senior project manager Mark Rosenshein, "the building is an excellent example of that era's architecture and construction." He



PHOTOGRAPHY: DROR BALDINGER, AIA



OPENING THE ENVELOPE

Overland Partners transformed a San Antonio warehouse into a 21st-century workplace by removing roofing immediately behind the facade and creating an inviting courtyard (left and far left). Inside, office elements are laid lightly over the historic interior (above).



ADAPTIVE REUSE

OLD MEETS YOUTH

In converting the Boston Public Library's former Mattapan branch to a teen center, The Architectural Team distinguished new programming from historic building with vibrant color, as in the eMusic Clubhouse (right) and lobby lounge (below).



DISCREET UPDATES The Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center (above and top right) appears relatively unchanged from the original E. Stewart Williams design. Marmol Radziner made minimal alterations—installing recessed fluorescents from Prudential in the Armstrong ceiling, for instance—to accommodate museum uses.

help further animate the space. The layering of eras is an apt metaphor for the center's provision of social and education services, notes Rosenshein: "The building provides a solid foundation already imbedded in the community that teens can rely on and leave their creative mark on."

DELICATE TOUCHES

Not every alteration to a historic building needs to announce itself, asserts Leo Marmol, of Marmol Radziner. Citing his firm's transformation of the Santa Fe Federal Savings & Loan—an E. Stewart Williams design—into the Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center, Edwards Harris Pavilion, the managing principal explains, "We were accommodating current codes in a way that was invisible."

The updates to the 1961 glass-and-steel building were largely done for accessibility and life-safety purposes: Within the 13,000 square feet, Marmol Radziner expanded bathrooms imperceptibly, installed a glass handrail fabricated by Razmik Abedi behind the original banister, and seamlessly inserted an ADA-compliant Kone elevator.

The museum program required one notable change, Marmol says, namely adding interior shading devices for the daylight that had, in his words, "enlivened the bank facility." These Lutron motorized roller shades protect architecture drawings from ultraviolet rays, and Williams's original aluminum screens stretch across the west elevation like oversize punch cards. Fundraising for replica east-facing screens is ongoing. ■

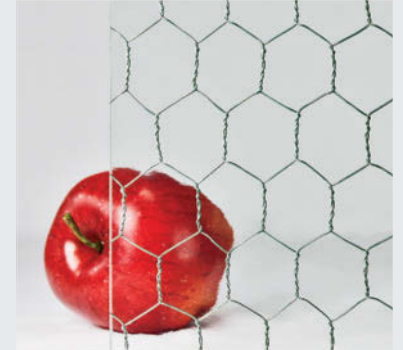
adds, "Because the building served as a library with strong communities, we felt it was important to preserve as much of the original structure and character as we could." The exterior was largely intact, so TAT refreshed plaster trim and replaced slate roof shingles selectively while entirely redoing glazing with historically sympathetic windows from Series 600, manufactured by Universal Window and Door.

Original interior surfaces—moldings framing the barrel-vaulted ceilings, pilasters surrounding Palladian-style windows, the cupola interior—were coated in a clean white. More vibrant hues, complementing Interface and Shaw flooring, were applied to define new program spaces, such as the eMusic Clubhouse, whose accent wall got a lift from Benjamin Moore paint in Lemon Shine.

A large Delray Cilindro II pendant creates a focal point above the reception desk, and crisscrossing Prime pendants from Axis Lighting

AGING GRACEFULLY

RECYCLED PRODUCTS AND HISTORIC REPLICAS EMBRACE THE LIVED-IN LOOK.



BENDHEIM

VintageWire decorative laminated glass features chicken wire laminated between two sheets of glass in sizes up to 48 by 85 inches. Suitable for interior walls, stair railings, and door inserts.

BENDHEIMARCHITECTURAL.COM



IRIDIAN

For its Granary collection, Viridian reclaimed Douglas fir and pine from the structural beams of namesake farm buildings and removed all nails. The wood was then milled into 5-inch-wide planks suitable for walls, flooring, and fixtures.

VIRIDIANWOOD.COM



NICHIHA

Vintage Brick consists of fiber-cement panels that convincingly mimic a decades-old wall. The 9-foot-square pieces come in saturated Alexandria Buff (top) and muted White Wash.

NICHIHA.COM