

the client: Partnership for Strong Communities
At The Lyceum
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The Partnership for Strong Communities

was created in 1998 with a grant from The Melville Charitable Trust. The Partnership promotes the development of affordable housing as a way to prevent homelessness and improve the lives of low and middle-income people who are modifying their lifestyles in order to afford modest housing. It serves developers, housing experts, community officials and funding sources, who produce supportive housing units throughout Connecticut.



challenge:

bkm's Role

bkm:solution

The Overall Challenge

"Typically you will find this sort of initiative lodged in a university setting rather than in a neighborhood. We wanted to marry modern concepts into the original architectural features of a historic building," said Bob Hohler, Executive Director, The Melville Charitable Trust.



The Designer

H2Z Design, LLC386
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For over 18 years H2Z Design, LLC has offered complete space planning and interior design solutions for commercial, institutional, and healthcare spaces.

H2Z Design, LLC selected and specified work surfaces, demountable partitions and furnishings to match the elegance and natural structure of the refreshed historic building. H2Z Design recruited bkm to cost effectively coordinate these elements, which included custom millwork with integrated glass to provide an open and visually natural look. "Because their system is so flexible, bkm enabled us to balance schedule, cost and quality, which are the keys to success for this fast track design/build project," said George Catrambone, construction manager. "We needed to focus our efforts on continually improving the facility and not worrying about integrating partitions and furnishings. What bkm promised to deliver over a weekend would have taken us another month to complete."

Northeast Quick Wall, a bkm subsidiary, designed and built the structural metal partition systems at its own location. John Gallagher, bkm vice-president said, "By developing these systems in parallel to the work being managed by George Catrambone's team, we added our most significant value. Once the systems were ready to be installed, we worked 18 hour days and over weekends during a five day period, enabling his project team to minimize the number of sub-contractors involved, quality risks and time delays." The two story archways provided a unique source of natural light in private offices. bkm's system includes fabric based acoustical sound panels with glazed glass to enhance interior lighting. It blended Steelcase metal furniture with custom work. Desks, bookcases and lighting were seamlessly integrated as part of the partition systems. bkm cost effectively coordinated its work surfaces and furniture to match architectural lockable maple doors, which it hung on behalf of the construction management effort. bkm also provided conference room furniture.

project details:

Involves Architect, Designer, General Contractor, Construction Manager, bkm and Client

Since the 4th Century B.C., when Aristotle taught in a Greek school known as the Lyceum, a lyceum has been a public gathering place for learning and community.

In 1896 the Cathedral Lyceum was opened to further the moral, intellectual and physical development for an organized fraternity of Catholic young men. It housed a large library, a well-furnished reading room, auditorium and gymnasium. Classes were given in drafting, drawing and vocal music. John Dwyer, a prominent contemporary Hartford architect, conceived the building by using ancient Greek and Roman styles.

The Lyceum has a colorful history. In 1920 the building was sold to the Hartford Box Co. In 1940 it became the home of a Lithuanian-American Club. In later years, it was the home of a punk rock dance club, a roller skating business, a hot air balloon maker, an advertising agency, the Connecticut Commission on the Arts and Hartford Area Rally Together (HART).

In 2002, the Melville Charitable Trust – a foundation dedicated to finding and fighting the causes of homelessness – purchased the building, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Trust needed to renovate The Lyceum to provide a common ground for policymakers, teachers, researchers and other scholars as they devise and implement their strategies for raising public awareness and advancing solutions to end chronic homelessness, to create affordable housing and build healthy and economically vital communities.

“We needed a relationship with a local architect. After a trusted referral, we hired Jim Vance, who is known for non-profit work in the Hartford area,” stated Bob Hohler, Executive Director, The Melville Charitable Trust. After three months of analysis, Vance determined that the Lyceum property was a perfect fit for Melville’s novel concept.

Next, The Trust needed assistance in developing design plans for the interior space. In 1989 Vance had successfully partnered with Maria Zawadzki, IIDA on the design for a school for autistic children. Vance recommended Zawadzki’s firm, H2Z Design, LLC to Hohler.



General contractor, DeMarco, Miles and Murphy, Inc. hired George Catrambone, a Hartford area developer, to provide construction management services. According to Zawadzki, “George was instrumental in making the project real.”

Zawadzki said, “Over the course of eighteen years in business we have teamed with bkm on numerous projects, involving them in the implementation of furnishings, floor covering, and move services. bkm’s wide range of offerings gives our firm the ability to select the best products and services related to budget, schedule and aesthetics for each unique project. The bkm woodshop and H2Z Design have a long-standing relationship, giving our firm the ability to offer custom furniture solutions, integrating architecture with furniture for one-of-a-kind spaces at reasonable cost. bkm always comes through with a solution and is a valuable resource for my clients and my firm.”

Results

The building’s classic restoration distinguishes The Lyceum as an educational resource and conference center and is now the home of The Partnership for Strong Communities, Betty Gallo & Co., and the Local Initiatives Support Collaborative (LISC). When you open the door, its welcoming arm says “Let’s do something together.”

“A quiet design including an elegant monochromatic scheme highlights arched windows and paneled balconies. You know it’s an old building, but it has a fresh new look.”

Maria Zawadzki
Interior Designer, H2Z Design, LLC

“The Trust has invested in extensive renovations to upgrade and modernize the Lyceum while preserving its century-old grandeur and elegance. bkm’s infrastructure recommendations and placements work splendidly in this setting. It takes advantage of the light and height of the room. Our long term horizon will realize measurable results of policy, new units initiated and buildings created because of this investment.”

Bob Hohler
Executive Director
The Melville Charitable Trust

Catrambone stated, “I had hired bkm to develop the office space for my company. I needed a showcase to create a positive first impression with my customers. I knew they would create the same effect with this project.”

The tenants were concerned about privacy. This is a non-traditional environment for people who typically prefer private, conservative space. The environment created by bkm’s partition systems enabled first floor tenants located in the rear of the building to take advantage of open space lighting and extreme architecture, which included two story archways. “Our first and second floor tenants feel self-contained and private, fully functioning and busy,” Hohler stated. “Betty Gallo loves the new space,” said Zawadzki.

Through all of its uses, the building’s pair of two-story indoor spaces has survived. The Lyceum is now a 16,000-square-foot, restored neo-Classical Revivalist structure. It features a state-of-the-art conference center, conference and meeting rooms and tenant offices. The original first floor gymnasium ceiling is supported by an exposed 60-foot truss system. The third floor auditorium is now the Lyceum Resource and Conference Center, which includes the original stage, seating for 150 people and two balconies, each with meeting space for 10-15 people. It features gathering spaces and comfortable reading areas. It provides up-to-date research studies, historical data, and searchable databases. The Lyceum provides wired and wireless Internet access, teleconferencing and multimedia presentation capability.

“We are proud to play a key role in this community initiative,” stated Dan Sabia, bkm’s President. “We are delighted to be a member of a very talented team of people that enabled The Trust to achieve its vision.”



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