



# FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

LAMMICO HOUSES  
NEW OFFICE

**F**orm and function can both be things of beauty. Following that theme, the design for the new headquarters of the Louisiana Medical Mutual Insurance Company (LAMMICO) in Metairie is simple, yet striking.

The LAMMICO structure emerged from the state-of-the-art renovation of an existing movie theater. The building provides ample space for the many lawyers, insurance representatives, and support staff that collaborate to provide professional liability products and services to physicians all over the state of Louisiana.

Spaces for office work, examining areas for evaluating claims, and areas for meeting and discussing are all part of the thoughtfully laid-out design at LAMMICO. Much as spokes on a wheel, halls lead from a common area, or rotunda-like foyer, to the various branches of the company.

The LAMMICO office is much more than functional space. It is also an aesthetically pleasing environment.

The project began with the one-time movie theater being gutted. Another contractor did the demolition portion of the job.

The McDonnell Group was the contractor for the build-out of the 40,000 square foot interior, which was reconstructed to meet the rapidly expanding requirements for LAMMICO employees. “It is a very professional yet comfortable space,” says David McDonnell, Project Manager for The McDonnell Group.

Not only did a true beauty result from the renovation, but it did so in a compressed time frame of just a few months. Allan McDonnell, President of The McDonnell Group, explains that his company bested a much larger contractor on the invited bid project by just \$1,000.

The McDonnell Group garnered a \$1.5-million contract for the interior work at the LAMMICO site. Mathes Briere Architects, New Orleans, served as architect and interior decorator for the entire project, which carried a price tag of approximately \$4 million including furniture, fixtures, and equipment.

“The timeframe was tight for the size of the work,” says David McDonnell. “But McDonnell completed the project within four months.”

## Ceilings Then and Now

Some of the work completed before The McDonnell Group arrived on site had to be modified. “The demolition was done by the building owner under a separate contract,” explains David McDonnell. “Once the demolition was complete, the building owner installed a ceiling grid system for LAMMICO prior to our construction contract.”

Indeed, the other contractor did build in a ceiling. “That didn’t help,” says McDonnell. “They installed a nine-foot ceiling, which was installed well below the 20-foot structure height of the next level.”

Because the owner wanted a tray system for electrical and cable feeds, The McDonnell Group would have had to remove the nine-foot ceiling that was



Employee lunchroom



Hallways capitalize on available ceiling height.

already in place. McDonnell provided the owner with a different type of tray system that could be worked through the already installed ceiling, saving tens of thousands of dollars for the owner, explains McDonnell.

Height became an asset for one main feature of the renovated building. All areas of the newly renovated space lead to a central rotunda. The 20-foot

ceiling proved to be just the thing the architects needed to make an elegant and inviting statement. A steel frame ceiling with illuminated translucent panels allows the rotunda to soar. Serving as a focal point for the eye and a hub for visitors, the rotunda illustrates the intimate link between form and function.

The boardroom also gets high marks from David McDonnell as an especially

inviting setting. “It’s just gorgeous,” he says, citing the millwork, marble, wood, and curved linear ceilings that complement and frame the high-tech audiovisual equipment used often by the LAMMICO executives.

McDonnell adds, “The architects made good use of the space and capitalized on the available ceiling height, something not typical for interior office renovations.” 



The LAMMICO boardroom