

Swanky

New Digs for Prestigious Law Firm

The law firm of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz originally moved into Place St. Charles with minimal changes to the 36th floor in Place St. Charles, office space that was previously occupied by another law firm. As this nationally acclaimed law firm grew, it expanded to part of the 38th floor. When the 35th floor became available in 2009, the firm took over the lease in order to consolidate their offices and increase efficiency. The full renovation was planned to organize their floor plan according to the work flow and to bring the firm together.

The interior build out consisted of a 48,000 SF renovation of the 35th and 36th floors in this downtown New Orleans high rise office building. Baker Donelson's goal was to integrate both of the floors into a unified working space.

PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS

In order to cause the least disruption to Baker Donelson's staff, the project was broken up into four phases, with each phase consisting of half of one floor. The phasing of this project presented challenges in that each floor above and below the construction site, as well as the opposite half of the floor, was occupied with workers. As is the case with high rise renovations, special care was exercised to ensure that construction activities presented minimal disruption to the building's tenants. Because of this, construction activities were scheduled and coordinated well in advance to ensure that any loud construction activities, such as installation of the convenience stair between the two floors, shooting supports for the above ceiling equipment and ceiling, cutting or drilling, etc. were performed either at night or before normal working hours.

Another challenge was the Owner's moves between phases. Meeting the completion dates for each phase was critical to ensure that Baker Donelson was able to accurately schedule movers to move employees and equipment into the newly finished space as planned. To guarantee this happened, weekly coordination meetings were held with the Owner, Architect, and McDonnell's construction team to review schedule, material lead times, proposed move



QUICK FACTS

Construction Cost: \$3,134,536

Square Footage: 48,000

Start Date: September 2010

Completion Date: May 2011

Total Man Hours: 5,716

- 48,000 SF interior build-out of two floors in a downtown New Orleans high-rise building
- Four phases of construction allowed the firm to stay in full operation with no interruptions throughout the project

In addition to over 30 offices and administrative areas on each floor, features include:

- 13 conference rooms each with state-of-the-art AV systems
- Catering kitchen with bar, wine cellar, and other restaurant-style accoutrements
- Break room with a television, Wii, Internet cafe, a variety of seating arrangements and flexible options
- Ergonomic Knoll work stations
- Environmentally-friendly and highly flexible DIRT™ (Do It Right This Time) modular wall system
- Private stairwell connecting the two floors

“When you walk in to Baker Donelson’s new offices, the design really speaks to the firm’s personality. Everything is clean, sleek, and contemporary. There’s a cohesive identity to both floors they didn’t previously have...”

VICKI CUSIMANO

Project Designer, Mathes Brierre Architects

Your project is our mission. Performance is our foundation.



“Baker Donelson hand selected the entire team including the Architect, Designer, furniture supplier, and The McDonnell Group. The construction directors for Baker Donelson - Anne Leche and Paul Peyronnin - were fun and exciting to say the least. Paul and Anne played a very active role in the daily activities of the project and I enjoyed working with them on a daily basis. As a team, we shared responsibilities in problem solving, unforeseen challenges, neighboring tenants’ issues, and coordination with the Property Manager. It was a great feeling to be hand selected to work on such a high-end and challenging project with a client that demanded results. It’s even better knowing that McDonnell exceeded their expectations.”

JOSEPH MONTALBANO
McDonnell Superintendent

dates, etc. McDonnell’s ability to accurately project the completion of construction activities assured that Baker Donelson’s moves occurred as scheduled.

The result of the renovation project provided the Baker Donelson with 9 additional fully networked conference rooms, additional employee workspaces, law library, a beautiful new company break room, and a catering kitchen for company gatherings and events. A convenience stairwell connecting the 35th and 36th floors allows staff members on both floors to have easy access to interact with each other and not have to rely on the building’s elevators which service the entire 52 story building and its thousands of tenants and visitors. Restructured floor layouts, specifically designed to accommodate Baker Donelson’s unique workflow, increase employee efficiency and productivity.

The large new Conferencing Center, located adjacent to the new reception area, has a state-of-the-art meeting space including the latest in technology and audio/visual equipment for teleconferencing and presentations. Two adjacent conference rooms can open up into one room for large meetings and receptions. The Break Room was sized to conduct meetings that will accommodate the entire firm. It has an internet café, an island for serving potluck lunches, a Wii, and large tables designed for group dining. This is a firm that not only works together but socializes together.

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OWNER**Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC**

Paul Peyronnin

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REFERENCE**Mathes Brierre Architects**

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TEAM**Architect:** Mathes Brierre Architects**Structural Engineer:** Morphy Makofsky, Inc.**MEP Engineer:** GVA Engineering, LLC**FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION**

With a goal of creating maximum flexibility in the space, Baker Donelson elected to use DIRT modular furniture walls, which are installed after the gypsum board partitions and ceilings are installed. These walls can be taken down and office layouts can be adjusted in the future with minimal patching for the gypsum board ceilings and walls. If alternative office layout adjustments in the open areas are required in the future, these DIRT walls will allow Baker Donelson to make adjustments without needing to replace floors and ceilings.

Baker Donelson also elected to use occupancy sensors and efficient light fixtures throughout the project. These products decrease energy costs for the tenant and ensure that power for lighting is only used when people are occupying the space.

Aesthetics for this project were very important. The project called for all new finishes, audio/visual technology, and mechanical and electrical equipment, all with the most flexibility options available. High-end materials such as the millwork, carpet, light fixtures, wall covering, etc. were all specified. McDonnell was diligent in ensuring that all of its subcontractors kept quality control in the forefront of their mind, and utilized running “punch lists” as the project progressed. Because deficient items were addressed as they arose, the final “punch list” was minimal.

TEAMWORK GETS IT DONE

All members of the project worked as a team, which helped make certain that the project was completed on time, within budget, and with

no accidents. Weekly subcontractor meetings were held to ensure everyone was aware of their completion dates. McDonnell also used these meetings to gain “buy in” from the subcontractors for the proposed activity durations, path of work throughout the phase, and to ensure that manpower and materials were on hand to allow for timely completion of the work.

The project created a unified two floor space for the prestigious Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell, & Berkowitz law firm. With the new renovation the firm was able to create a unique design that was no longer pieces and parts of another law firm’s design. The muted colors and clean lines of the design and millwork now give a new and appropriate image to an energized and growing law firm.

Joe Montalbano, McDonnell Superintendent on the project, stated “Baker Donelson hand selected the entire team including the Architect, Designer, furniture supplier, and The McDonnell Group. The construction directors for Baker Donelson, Anne Leche and Paul Peyronnin, were fun and exciting to say the least. Paul and Anne played a very active role in the daily activities of the project and I enjoyed working with them on a daily basis. As a team, we shared responsibilities in problem solving, unforeseen challenges, neighboring tenant’s issues, and coordinating with the Property Manager. It was a great feeling to be hand selected to work on such a high-end and challenging project with a client that demanded results. It’s even better knowing that The McDonnell Group exceeded their expectations.”

