

Preservation Buffalo Niagara Honorees

Category: Rehabilitation/Adaptive Reuse

The North Jefferson Branch Library/Beverly A. Gray Business Services Incubator Project Young & Wright Architectural

Designed in 1929 by City Architect Howard L. Beck in Renaissance Revival style, the North Jefferson Branch Library on East Utica was a long-time neighborhood anchor. It became vacant in 2006 when the library was relocated to the new Frank Merriweather Building on Jefferson Avenue. The former library was converted into a state-of-the-art business incubator by the Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation with additional funding provided by the City of Buffalo and the federal government. The incubator has eight leasable office spaces and will be instrumental in the continued development of the area as a resource for new and emerging local businesses.



Working with the State Historic Preservation Office, the design team incorporated original historic features, such as the cast iron lamp posts outside the front entry, and the original highly decorative ceiling, terrazzo floor, and cast iron staircase inside the front lobby. Roof openings that once included large glass skylights were uncovered so that new skylights matching the originals could be installed. The redesign of the building also includes “green” elements in the roof material, solar panels, monitoring systems, environmentally friendly finishes, and storage for bikes. A priority in this project was to utilize local labor, product, and material whenever possible.

We applaud the City of Buffalo, BERC, the architects, and the contractors for the vision, high quality work, and the beautiful results for this historic neighborhood landmark, repurposed for the future.