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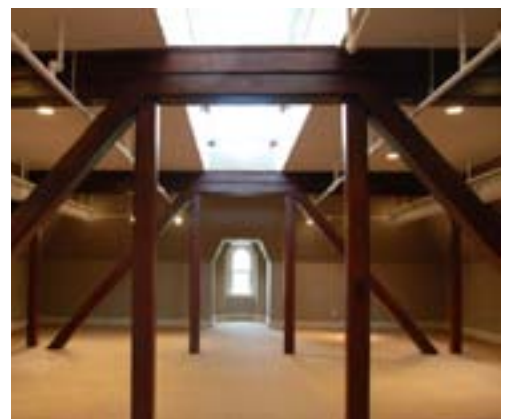
2011 AWARD WINNER

BEST COMMERCIAL REHAB

ANDREW JACKSON HOUSE
AKRON, OHIO

In an attempt to honor the people, places, and projects that exemplify growth through preservation and revitalization, Heritage Ohio granted the 2011 Annual Award of Best Commercial Rehabilitation to the Chesler Group, Inc. for its renovation of the Andrew Jackson House. Originally the residence of businessman Andrew Jackson, the building is now the location of the GAR Foundation's offices.

The Andrew Jackson House was once a symbol of Akron's industrial strength as the residence of lumber magnate Andrew Jackson. When the Chesler Group acquired the property in 2007, fourteen years of vacancy had taken its toll on the building's condition. Due to the previous owner's negligence, a state of disrepair caused the City of Akron to condemn the building and consider demolition. Recognizing the Andrew Jackson House's significance and potential, the Chesler Group completed rehabilitation and found an excellent tenant in the GAR Foundation. The successful commercial rehabilitation of the Andrew Jackson House has set an example for urban revival and economic growth utilizing historic properties.



CONTACT INFORMATION AND PROJECT DETAILS

ARCHITECT/BUILDER

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OWNER/DEVELOPER

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BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Historic Name: The Andrew Jackson House
Address: 277 East Mill Street, Akron, Ohio 44308
Size: 15,585 sq ft. rehabilitated
Architectural Style: Second Empire

HISTORIC/RENOVATION RECORD

Date of Construction: 1870
Previous Renovations/Additions: In 1918, the Odd Fellows converted the original seven bedrooms of the second floor into a large ballroom.

LOCATION

Position within Community: The Andrew Jackson House is located adjacent to the University of Akron campus and across the street from the historic Hower House. It has been restored to a position of prominence in the urban landscape of Downtown Akron.

COST

Total Cost: \$4,117,264
State Tax Credit Equity: \$433,000
Federal Tax Credit Equity: \$610,790
Other Financing: \$2,600,000 in bank loan and \$473,474 in equity

Due to the large size of the building and corresponding costs, "both the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credits and Federal Historic Tax Credits are critical necessities to insure the project's financial feasibility." - The Chesler Group

RENOVATION DESCRIPTION

State of House Prior to Renovation: The house was in poor condition due to 14 years of vacancy and neglect. Numerous code violations prompted the City to condemn the house and consider demolition if no one moved forward on a rehabilitation project. The building required a great deal of interior and exterior renovation.

Description of Renovation Process: The Chesler Group decided early in the process that the building must be used for offices or another institutional application to justify the necessary significant investments. The renovation followed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The interior of the building received all new finishes, interior partitions, mechanical, electrical, fire suppression, and plumbing systems and some new flooring. New water and sewer lines were also installed. Additionally, the renovation included a state-of-the-art Variable Refrigerant HVAC System. Exterior work involved window and masonry restoration, roof repair, landscaping, new ornate fencing, and a resurfaced parking area.

RENOVATION SUCCESSES

Basement: The house's original stone walls are preserved. The basement now holds the Akron-based staff of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

First Floor: The original, first-growth walnut doors of the front office have been retained. A steel and concrete octagonal staircase was added in the east end, leading to the ballroom above. The staircase is entirely self-supporting, secured on steel girders buried in the surrounding walls. The house's only remaining original fireplace was moved to the southeast office as required for the construction of the staircase. Most of the staff of the GAR Foundation works on the first floor.

Second Floor: The large 1918 ballroom, with its excellent wooden trussed ceiling, was maintained to be used by tenants and can also be rented as a community meeting space. The original crystal pendant light in the south bay of the ballroom was also preserved.

Disabilities Act compliance: New egress stairs, elevator, restrooms, and door openings made building ADA compliant.

Adaptation to commercial needs: Rooms of original social/residential uses were converted to offices. Spaces like the second floor ballroom are flexible in use, employable as both an office and a conference room. Newly-constructed staff kitchens and a catering kitchen also make this building a pleasant work and meeting space.

Other/unique renovation successes: Given that the house was originally built for the founder of a lumber firm, Andrew Jackson, the rehabilitation project fittingly sought to preserve and restore all existing woodwork, including many solid walnut doors and some original quarter-sawn oak floors.