

Society of Environmentally Responsible Facilities

CASE STUDY

March 2011

Project: DOWNTOWN YMCA BUILDING

Location: 119 N. WASHINGTON SQUARE, LANSING, MI 48933

Developer: KEN STOCKWELL



the adaptive reuse of a structure for an entirely new purpose.

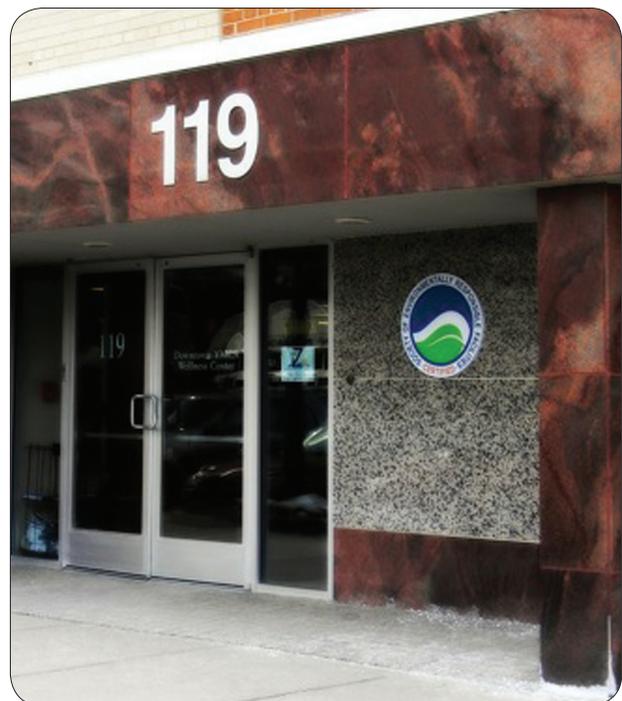
It is possible for a building to go through multiple adaptive reuse cycles, each one meeting the needs of the day, while the essential character and integrity of the structure is maintained. The downtown Lansing, Michigan YMCA building illustrates how a depreciating structure can be transformed into a modern, state-of-the-art and environmentally friendly facility.

The property that currently houses the Downtown Lansing YMCA is owned by Ken Stockwell and his investment partners. Stockwell had two choices: either demolish the existing building in favor of a new ten-story structure, or keep and adapt it to suit new uses. Ultimately, they decided to retain and renovate the existing structure.

Originally built in 1930, the building was home to Grant's department store. It was then sold to the city, and the first two floors were converted into office space. The top two floors were used for storage, and a small space in the basement was

used for a local print shop. When the building was purchased by Stockwell, the remnants of the now defunct office building remained intact, though it had been vacant for years.

Stockwell's team was faced with the task of adapting the vacant building into a usable, efficient facility. The first order of business was to completely gut the building. It was filled with worn materials from the years during which it served as the office annex to Lansing City Hall. The upper floors housed an HVAC system that was very old and inefficient. An escalator ran through the middle of the building,



The front of the Downtown Lansing YMCA building



The main workout area on first floor of the YMCA

and there was another problem: the building had very few windows.

The process of adapting the site was time-consuming and costly. But today, the building is a completely remodeled, redesigned and efficient structure. With the assistance of a team of architects, the former department store was transformed into a facility that has since become home to the Downtown Lansing YMCA, the Lansing Art Gallery and two floors available for office space and storage.

A noticeable change is in the north and east-facing walls, each of which now feature dozens of large windows that were cut into the building. These windows let in natural light and greatly open up the interior space. Even the YMCA corporate offices, which are located in the basement of the building, have windows in the individual offices.

The few single pane windows that did exist in the building on the first floor have been replaced with much more efficient windows. Additionally, the

outdated HVAC system has been replaced with a highly efficient one. The building now meters all of its electricity use, and incandescent bulbs have been replaced with compact fluorescent lighting (CFLs). There is also an entirely new fire protection sprinkler system.

Ken Stockwell takes great pride in a feature which cannot be seen: the internal wiring. One of the most state-of-the-art systems available, the wiring inside the Downtown YMCA building can now support all of their electrical needs.



Lansing Art Gallery sculpture exhibit



Staircase leading to the YMCA basement/art gallery

One major aspect of the adaptive reuse of the building was the removal of the escalator that ran through all four floors of the building. Removal of the escalator was a costly undertaking, but it ultimately made economic sense as an additional 800 square feet of usable floor space was made available. A staircase now connects the first and second floors, which house the YMCA gym and exercise rooms.

The basement of the building originally housed the Lansing Print Shop and is now home to the YMCA corporate offices. Before the building's remodeling, the print shop was not served by any HVAC system; the walls and floors were so insulated that the temperature was naturally maintained. However, Stockwell and his team connected the print shop to HVAC as part of the renovation.

While the building's systems are new and state-of-the-art, some original architectural elements remain. One of the highlights of the building is the staircase leading to the basement. It is a beautiful example of the Art Deco style, and was part of the original construction.

This renovated space became home to the Lansing Art Gallery in January 2011. With plenty of open space, exposed ceilings and new renovations,

it is a charming area that displays exhibitions of local artists.

The third and fourth floors can be renovated to house a wide variety of offices, retail or even restaurant space. The structure also allows for potential upward expansion. Stockwell estimates that the building's existing 45,000 square feet can be expanded vertically by a third.

The renovation of the Downtown YMCA building is an excellent example of how to make an older, inefficient (and practically windowless) building into a modern and up-to-date facility. By retaining the original facility, it was not necessary to use new construction materials. Additionally, the adaptive reuse saved the existing building material from being discarded as waste.

These factors, as well as the many efficient systems in the building, demonstrate the facility's commitment to SERF's mission of **Practical Environmental Stewardship™**.

For additional information, please contact Ken Stockwell at (517) 349-1900, or email Ken at ken@stockwellproperties.com.



Corporate offices of the YMCA

PRACTICAL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

SERF is a coalition of property owners and professionals certifying and promoting environmentally responsible homes and buildings.

SERF affirms that with private property rights come *responsibilities* — not least of which is the responsibility to construct, rehabilitate and operate our homes and facilities to enhance our communities and minimize environmental impact.

SERF recognizes that protection of our environment is the duty of every steward of the land, and that such stewards who act accordingly should be recognized and encouraged.

SERF holds that honest cost-benefit analysis should be applied to building improvements and systems intended to help the environment. To endure, sustainability must be affordable.

SERF is an inclusive organization which provides live and online forums for members to share methods to cost-effectively meet our goals.

SERF builds future generations of environmentally responsible property owners. Our examples and support teach and endow future generations to live in harmony with our planet and to conserve its precious resources.

SERF: *Catch the wave — get certified!*

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