**AGC ACE – Hotel Jerome**

Working with a historic property is always a challenge. There are the extra considerations of preserving the integrity of the past while ensuring the safety of the present and future. When you add to the mix moving that historic building, excavating a basement underneath it, and moving it back atop that basement . . . it doesn’t get much more challenging than that. That is exactly what was done at the most recent Hotel Jerome renovation and addition.

The latest renovation and addition at the historic Hotel Jerome encompassed several elements. The 13,500 SF new construction included back-of-house areas in the basement, meeting space on the first floor, and new hotel rooms (pic 01) on floors two and three (totaling six new rooms), as well as a pool and 7,000 SF courtyard (pic 02). The historic portion—the Aspen Times building which was salvaged (pic 03) and moved—was converted to a meeting space on the first floor, with a basement under it which is a speakeasy-style lounge (pic 04). The project is built up to the lot line of the neighboring two-story building, adding to the project’s difficulty.

This project possessed numerous extremely challenging aspects. These included logistics considerations, a zero lot line, unforeseen conditions, a tight schedule, and, of course, historical considerations. The Hotel Jerome is an iconic property located directly on Main Street in downtown Aspen. Because of its location and proximity to other businesses, there was essentially no laydown area and all deliveries had to come directly off of Main Street. In fact, during the steel delivery, it was literally picked directly off the delivery truck and installed! On the west side of the project, it was a true zero lot line and parts of the roof had to be tied together with the roof of neighbor Carl’s Pharmacy.

The unforeseen conditions were discovered early in the project. The Hotel closes for maintenance for a short period each year; this year it was April 2nd through May 25th. During this time we needed to replace the hardscape (sidewalks and snowmelt) on Main Street and Mill Street. There was no room for an extension on this schedule as these projects blocked entrance into the Hotel. When we demoed the existing hardscape, we found the foundations were not where they were purported to be. This meant we now had to redesign how the structural decking spanned over the existing window wells, and complete the construction of the portion of the project in the timeframe originally allotted solely for the construction. Though under incredible time constraints, our team completed the project on time and the Hotel opened on schedule.

The hardscaping (including brick and stone paving, snowmelt, and the pool deck) on this project presented another complicated facet. While the new portion of the project being constructed was surveyed and square, it was tying into the original building which was very old and imperfect. We collaborated closely with the landscape architect who was onsite nearly every day, making field modifications to ensure the layout between the old building and the new building worked. Additionally, the entire pool area hardscape is on 4ft of geofoam to avoid introducing lateral loads to the existing foundation.

The overall schedule for the project was very tight considering the complexity of work being done, and couldn’t have been achieved were it not for the extraordinary teamwork throughout the project. The original contract was 12 months, which was extended to 14 months due to design changes. In a short, 30-day window prior to the start of construction, all existing utilities for the Jerome were relocated. Lean (pull) scheduling on each and every aspect of this job was a large part of the project’s success. Because of the very tight areas, only one trade at a time could be in any given part of the job, and teams were sometimes scheduled down to the hour for deliveries and sequence. The trust that was established for everyone to be on time and stay on schedule was absolutely essential.

The historic portion of this project was the most challenging aspect. The Aspen Times Building (pic 05) was built in 1881 and hadn’t been substantially renovated in over 100 years. The first obstacle was disconnecting an old, 2-story metal building that was attached to the back of the historic structure without detriment to the main building. We then spent the next two weeks bracing the structure for the 100-foot, temporary move that would allow us to excavate for and build the basement.

Moving a 130+ year-old building without damaging it is not an easy feat. We hired a structural engineer specifically to establish a plan to brace for the move to the temporary locale (and back). The amount of microlam and 2x6s installed for bracing probably equaled more lumber than that contained in the entire structure! Once the bracing was in place, we jacked up the building, put it on rollers, and slid it 100 feet to its temporary home in the courtyard. We then dug a basement where the Times Building originally stood (pic 06)—the reason for moving the structure—put a deck over the top of the basement, and braced the slab on deck from below in order to support the Times Building when it was moved back into place. The historic Aspen Times Building was then rolled back onto the new basement foundation. The teamwork engaged during this move was phenomenal! Daily phone calls with the structural engineers to coordinate supporting the building, the move, and the shoring, were not uncommon.

Extraordinary care was taken throughout the process to preserve as much of the original building as possible. For example, we had to remove the historic siding, however it was all numbered and put back in the exact same place. While we were able to salvage 80% of the siding, for the places that were missing siding we had replicates made that match the profile precisely. We worked closely with the Aspen Historical Society during the entire project to ensure the historical integrity. They visited the project approximately once a month to discuss what could be preserved and had to give their final sign off for the project to receive its Certificate of Occupancy—not just on the historic portion, but for the entire project.

The meld of using the innovative technology of BIM on this historic building was invaluable. We set up lasers to obtain precise locations of the trusses in the Aspen Times Building, which allowed us to ensure all the mechanical units would fit in the attic space (pic 07). We also used BIM for all the MEP trades in the new build portion of the project.

With the safety of our clients and team members paramount, Haselden developed a rigorous and comprehensive safety policy that addressed safety on every level for this project. Before construction began, our superintendent worked in conjunction with the corporate safety department to build a site-specific safety policy crafted to capture the project’s unique characteristics. Detailed safety training for all subcontractors and team members occurred regularly.

Before any team member arrived on site, they received at least 10 hours of safety and health training to prepare them for proper hazard recognition. When they arrived on site, both Haselden team members and our subcontractors then received site-specific safety training including emergency action plans and owner policies. Weekly and monthly safety and health training meetings were conducted to address various topics and any concerns that arose. Ongoing training and certification for Haselden team members and subcontractors helped to promote the significance of a safety culture at the project. Additionally, newly-hired team members wore red hardhats so field managers could easily identify who to closely mentor.

Haselden logged a total of 24,280 hours on this job with zero lost time hours.

Preserving the historic Aspen Times Building and incorporating it into Hotel Jerome (pic 08) – a staple for the City of Aspen, was truly an honor. The Jerome is the oldest hotel in Aspen and host to many events for the community. Working with the Hotel to ensure it remained operational at a five-star level throughout the project was of the utmost importance. To achieve this, we took extra measures to ensure guest comfort such as abiding by strict noise/time constraints and keeping all the sidewalks open (except when working on the sidewalk itself when the Hotel was closed). John MacKinnon, Executive Advisor – Design & Construction, Auberge Resorts (Hotel Jerome owner), stated, “I have been working with Haselden Construction on the renovation of the Jerome Hotel in Aspen. We have also worked with Haselden on the previous renovation completed in 2010. We have found Haselden to be very proactive in ensuring the problems are identified early and they have been very good about working with the design team to find creative and cost-effective solutions. With respect to working with the consultants, I have found them to be very respectful of the team and the design intent.”















