

CATEGORY: 8 - Best Building Project – General Contractor (Under \$10 Million)

PROJECT: Amick Building Restoration & Hyder Office TI | GC: Hyder Construction

Construction cranes populate the Denver skyline, sentinels testifying to the booming construction environment. New projects are being erected left and right, but in this storied city, it isn't just about the new. On Santa Fe Drive, one of the main arteries into Downtown, is the historic Amick building, which once housed Amick Moving and Storage. Hyder Construction converted this structure, which dates back to 1900, into their new office. Now this once dilapidated and mostly vacant building is a vibrant office and retail space.

The \$5 million project consists of two components: the renovation of the core/shell of the Amick Building and the tenant finish of the third and second floors for Hyder to occupy. It was important to Hyder to keep this piece of history in the Santa Fe Art District. We preserved the façade during the structure's renovation, which is actually three separate buildings merged into one. Construction also included carving out a portion of the structure to enlarge the adjacent parking lot. The resulting structure is about 30,000 square feet across three floors.

The tenant finish of the office space occupied by Hyder features a natural color palette of greys and tans with accents of red and slate blue. It is a blend of offices and open cubicles, but most office and conference room walls are glass to create a feeling of openness and collaboration throughout. Office amenities include the best in office technology (such as a media wall, occupant-sensor lighting, TVs in every conference room, and adjustable standing desks), and plenty of spaces designed for collaboration. There are also fun amenities, including a large outdoor dining and grilling patio; an open kitchen and breakroom with music and cable TV, a fully stocked beer fridge, and fruit and other healthy snacks; and foosball and cornhole areas. The space also includes a state-of-the-art fitness center equipped with free weights, various cardio equipment, and men's and women's showers and lockers. The project perfectly balances Hyder's growing needs while paying tribute to this vibrant Denver neighborhood, which Hyder has called home for over twenty years.

It might have been less expensive to demo the Amick building and start from scratch, but that isn't the space Hyder envisioned. In preserving the 1900s building, the structure essentially

became a brick façade, reinforced with steel beams throughout. Walking off the elevator into Hyder's lobby treats visitors to prints of historic Santa Fe and the project in various stages of construction. The project was a chance to showcase a huge variety of preservation and modern construction techniques, from meticulous tuck-pointing, to the extensive north curtain wall, to the raised roof.

This project is a study on how to take a dilapidated building with historical roots and make work as a modern office environment without losing its historical identity. Keeping the brick façade meant we had to reinforce almost the entire building with structural steel columns and bracing. A lot of the existing building is out of square; we worked with the steel fabricator to ensure steel was installed to hide any imperfections. This required a lot of measuring, lasers, plumb lines, hand surveying, and constant communication to avoid repeat work. There was no way to have 100% accurate as-builts. The construction team developed a strong relationship with the architect, which enabled them to make necessary on-the-fly decisions.

To work as a functioning office space and mitigate low 6' ceilings, the roof height needed to be raised on the building's alley side. Although the proposed height was well below the neighboring buildings, unknown new restrictions prevented this change (to avoid an alley tunnel effect). Getting necessary permission took an unexpected two months. The team overcame this surprise by resequencing the schedule and proactively acquiring surveys/details the City needed so they were available when requested. The variance was granted and the overall schedule was not affected.

Scheduling deliveries was logistically challenging. There was little room on site and trucks had to pull in/out of busy Santa Fe Drive without disrupting traffic. To overcome this, we assigned traffic control employees, scheduled deliveries during low traffic times, trained drivers on quick/safe maneuvering, and constantly communicated with the entire team to ensure people understood the necessity of keeping lanes open.

This project was a true collaboration between design and construction to create a space that supports Hyder's culture, celebrates their craft, and preserves the unique sense of place that comes with working in a historic building.

Although the team worked more than 55,000 man hours on this project, there were no lost time accidents or recordable incidents. This project had a strong safety culture honed through site-specific safety orientation, subcontractor-lead safety meetings, daily safety monitoring and communication, praise for those excelling at safety including a mid-job safety lunch, constantly maintaining site cleanliness, and a zero tolerance policy. In addition, the team utilized our in-house safety expert to visit the jobsite for specialized training including fall protection, silica, etc. Our top-down safety approach promoted subcontractor buy-in and encouraged the entire jobsite to look out for one another.

In addition, when we were demolishing the back portion of the north building, we anticipated a simple process. However, in case this didn't go as planned, we took precautions to protect workers, the public, and the building by closing off alleys, cordoning off the area with plywood walls and barriers, walking the site, and constantly communicating with the jobsite team. During demolition, the building did come down much faster than anticipated due to a surprise domino effect. No injuries or unintended damage occurred, however, thanks to the team's proactive safety measures.

We also had to install new water lines to the building right in the middle of busy Santa Fe, which included trenching in the middle of three lanes of traffic and working our way in toward the building. To avoid too much traffic slow-down and keep construction crews safe, we always kept two lanes of traffic open, clearly signing and coning closed lanes well in advance to keep the area clear and minimize traffic speeds, communicating with residents about any parking section closures, cordoning off sidewalks to keep pedestrians safe, constantly communicating with crews for status updates, and assigning traffic spotters to watch out for crew safety.

The project superintendent created a culture of quality by clearly communicating his standards to all those onsite, so not much had to be redone, therefore keeping the project on schedule. He enforced fixes on anything installed incorrectly or poorly.

One of the biggest demonstrations of quality on this project was the masonry restoration, which included replacing deteriorated brick, cleaning up the Amick ghost sign on the exterior, and tuck-pointing the entire building. The refreshed brick exterior kept the history of the building present while brightening up the area. The restoration was especially challenging on the Santa Fe side, requiring lifts, closing parking lanes and sidewalks, coordinating shut downs with the City, and having spotters watch for wayward pedestrians so no one walked under the ongoing work.

This project did come in on-budget due to the estimating team acquiring realistic pricing throughout the course of the project. Subcontractors were also held to their agreed-upon scopes so there were no surprise change orders later. Because the condition of the existing sand brick and mortar was worse than expected, the masonry restoration came in at a higher price than anticipated; however, this was such a critical component to the historical preservation of the façade that it was agreed by all it was well worth the expense.

This project came in slightly over schedule. The power company didn't provide power when they said they would, which ended up delaying when the elevator could be installed, which delayed inspections. The power company later admitted fault, gave us money back, and apologized for any miscommunication.

Hyder outgrew their original Santa Fe Art District space but wanted to stay in the neighborhood. Their new space, the Amick building, was not promising at first glance. Low ceilings, maze-like corridors, top-heavy columns and dark stairwells evoked the feeling of being trapped. However, the resulting space with its expansive curtain wall and glass offices creates a dynamic work environment for its employees by utilizing the benefits of natural daylight throughout the office space, and by encouraging employee collaboration through transparency and office amenities.

This 3-minute video explains the unusual construction techniques and how the space has positively affected Hyder's culture: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRZ_kLRieoI

This is a space that truly benefits the employees of Hyder. Juliana Rini, the architect for the interiors portion, said, “From the beginning, Hyder expressed that they wanted to create a place where people are comfortable and happy to come to work. Providing amenities such as a gym, indoor/outdoor breakroom and ample natural light, speaks volumes about how much they value their team.”











