

# LEED RENOVATION OF A 1762 STRUCTURE

by  
Jerry Heinberg, AIA, Architect

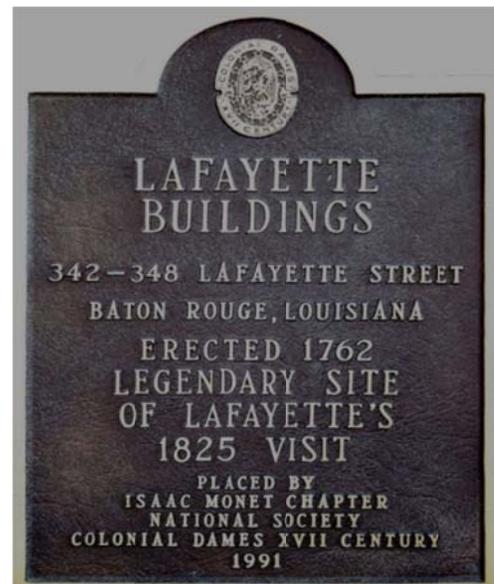
Photo 1



Photo 2

This unique building on Lafayette Street was constructed about a hundred years before the Civil War. It is amazing that it is still standing, has seen so much history, and even more amazing, that a local architect-turned-developer with LEED credentials and a goal to put them to use has extended the long life of the Tessier Building by making an adaptive reuse of the structure and has applied for LEED gold status for the finished work.

LEED, which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a program administered by the U.S. Green Building Council which provides an independent, third-party verification that a building, home or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at achieving high performance in key areas of human and environmental health. New developments bring new



opportunities to live it up downtown.

Downtown is quickly becoming a desirable place to live in Baton Rouge. With quality schools, new green spaces like the North Boulevard Town Square, exciting entertainment options and unparalleled cultural amenities all within walking distance. Baton Rouge native and new Downtown resident Erin Miletello says, "There are so many new restaurants, shops and bars, it definitely doesn't feel like I'm in the same Baton Rouge anymore." Miletello, a recent law school graduate, is one of the new residents moving into the newly renovated Tessier Building, located near the corner of Lafayette and Laurel Streets in Downtown Baton Rouge.

Photo 3



Recognized as one of the oldest buildings in Baton Rouge, these townhouse style buildings feature Spanish-Colonial architecture, high ceilings, wood floors, a full range of appliances, large expanses of glass, huge balconies nearly 10 feet deep, and the building's original cast-iron gallery fencing. Over the course of its 200-year history, the Tessier Building has been home to many prominent Baton Rouge residents, including Judge Charles Tessier, the first probate judge of East Baton Rouge Parish, and Frances and Jules Landry, preservationists who purchased the building in the 1950's to prevent this historic landmark from being torn down.

Like so many of Downtown's most unique assets, it fell into a state of disrepair over the years and remained uninhabited until someone came along with the desire and the means to restore it to its former glory. Those people were Dyke Nelson and David Weinstein at the DNA Workshop.

Photo 4

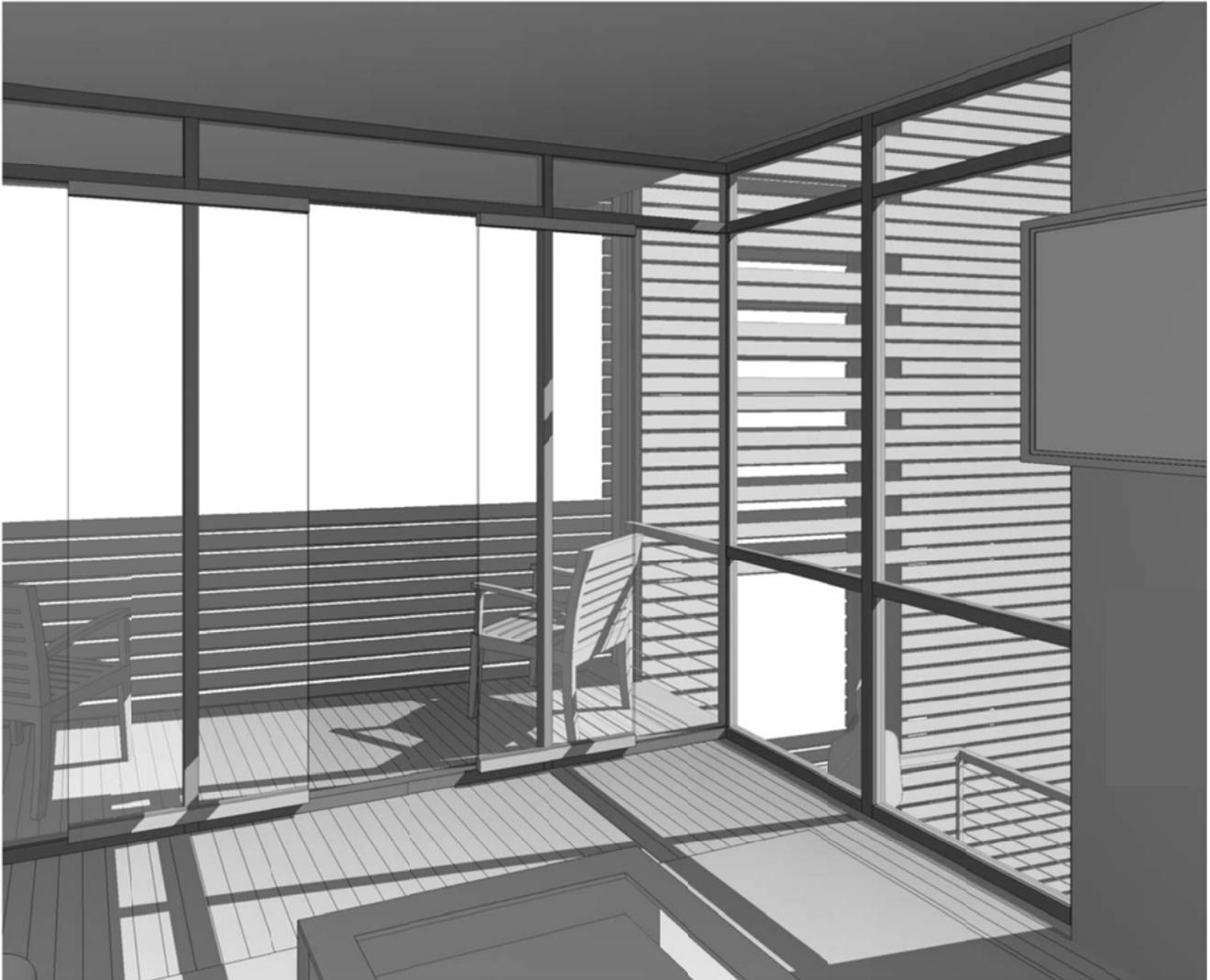


As the owners and developers of the Tessier Building, Nelson and Weinstein began the renovation last year with the goal of respecting the original architecture and restoring as much as possible, while also adding high tech amenities and sustainable features to make the building more attractive to modern day tenants. "I've always focused on sustainable architecture, and one of the most sustainable things you can do is renovate a building, rather than build a new one,"

Nelson said. "The Tessier renovation was indeed a Herculean task, but it's one that we gladly took on. We had one person working on this project whose entire job was simply to restore – not to rip out, but to restore," Weinstein said. "From the doors, to the windows, and the wood, we saved as much as we could. That's attractive to a lot of people, but it's also a part of our core beliefs.... "

"As owners, we felt it was important to develop this project consistent with LEED design standards – that means focusing on energy efficiency, proper disposal of waste from the site, and many other elements that contribute to a healthy environment," Nelson said.

Figure 1



"Now, we actually have a waiting list for the residential units, which shows there really is a tremendous demand for this kind of high quality, reasonably priced, property," Weinstein added. "The success of the project has really encouraged us to continue working to keep meeting the tremendous demand there is for sustainable development downtown."

Figure 2

