

The Philanthropy Center

Building Information

The Philanthropy Center is located at 1020 W. Riverside Ave, Spokane, WA in the building previously known as the Civic Building. The Civic Building, built in 1930, was constructed to house the Spokane Chamber of Commerce. The land it sits on was donated for this use by the Worthy and Finch families of Spokane, and the funds to pay for the Construction of the building were generated through Fundraising efforts of the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber resided here until the early 1990's when they joined forces with the Spokane Visitors Bureau, thus creating Greater Spokane Incorporated (GSI). GSI is now housed in the Spokane Regional Business Center (SRBC) Building in downtown Spokane. Since the Chamber's departure, the building has been used intermittently as office space for local news publications and other entities or left empty. Empire Health Foundation purchased the building in 2013, and embarked on an extensive remodel of the property, with the intent of updating it for use as a modern collaboration and office space. After nearly two years of work, the Philanthropy Center opened its doors officially in March of 2015.

The Remodel of the building took nearly 2 years to complete and was very intensive. Starting with a space that had been sitting empty for many years and had not been updated since the 1980's, the crews were facing a daunting task. Great effort was made to preserve as much of the existing structure and decoration as possible while adding or replacing necessary items in a way that fit closely to the original design and concept and still looked forward to modern design. Preserving and updating the Skylight on the Main Floor was a tremendous undertaking and involved removing all the framework and original glass that had become unsafe and unreliable. The original framework was preserved and reinstalled, with larger single piece frosted glass mounted above the frames to provide a more secure and safer construction. The upper skylight in the roof had been previously painted over or "Blacked Out" during World War II and had not allowed natural light to pass through for over 70 years. It was removed and replaced with a new skylight structure made from modern materials and designed to last through even the heaviest snow accumulation. Nearly all the Building's Support Systems (Elec., Plumbing, HVAC) were replaced, including the addition of an Elevator that was not in the original design. The new systems are updated with the latest, most efficient technology including Wireless Lighting controls, and a Full Building Heat Pump System for heating and cooling.

Some interesting Architectural Facts:

The Main and Upper Mezzanine floors are not supported from the ground, rather, they are suspended from a Steel Super-structure in the ceiling by large Cables hidden by the Columns you see throughout the Main Floor.

All the Terrazzo Tiles in the Entrance Foyer and Main Stairs are original and were cleaned extensively of leftover Carpet Glue residue. As much of the original Terrazzo as possible, has been preserved throughout the building.

In the Lower Basement/Ballroom level, sections of the original Balconies were removed to create a more open feel to the room, while a floor platform and walls were added at the upper rear of the room to create more usable Office space.

The building was once a part of the City-wide Steam System, though it had been retrofitted with its own Boiler at one time, located in the upper Attic space. All the steam and original ventilation systems have been decommissioned and mostly removed, including the boiler, however some parts of the original Air Ventilation System remain underneath the building, including the large 5' Diameter Blower Unit, with its leather drive belt and motor still attached.

The Center houses the Main offices of Empire Health Foundation, and Family Impact Network (a subsidiary of EHF), as well as several meeting rooms. The meeting rooms vary in size and can accommodate from 4 to as many as 134 guests. The 3 mid-sized rooms (8, 12, and 14 occupancy) are all outfitted with wall mounted digital displays for electronic presentations, and conference phone stations for inclusion of offsite participants. The Flagship room, **The Convening Center** (formerly the Civic's Ballroom) is located in the second basement level of the building and plays host to many events throughout the year. Several groups and organizations - local, state and national - utilize the space for meetings, trainings, and social events. The Center has a state-of-the-art Audio-Visual system, that provides in-room presentation on a 20' diagonal Screen, as well as video and teleconferencing capabilities to support remote participation.

For more information on renting a conference room or the Convening Center, you may call or email:

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