



La Porte Exchange

Connecting People and Ideas

Submission Category: Preservation/Adaptive Reuse/Renovation

Project Type: Library/Makerspace

Project Address: 904 Indiana Ave., La Porte, IN 46350

Date of Substantial Completion: August 2021

INTRODUCTION

ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT

The La Porte County Public Library had a vision to make a creative community space for education and hands-on experience.

The goal for this project was outlined as a need to explore the feasibility of redeveloping the open spaces offered by the building into a multistory STEAM lab with makerspaces, a large classroom, and learning lounge spaces.

The former telephone exchange building was generously donated to the La Porte County Public Library (LPCPL) to serve as a space to expand in 2015. The historical importance and central location of the building were assets in generating community interest and momentum as the project progressed.

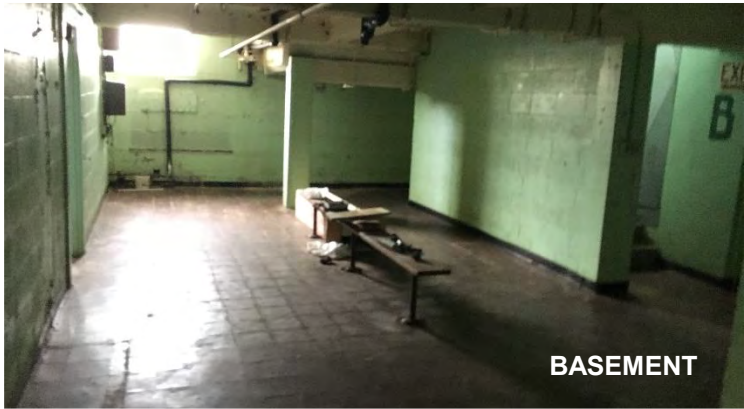
Strategic and creative decisions were made while working with a limited budget to ensure all project needs were accomplished. This project was a truly collaborative effort between the owner, design team, and consultants to transform this dream for the community into a reality.



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



BASEMENT



FRONT FAÇADE

INTRODUCTION

Design elements and preserved historical details nod to the building's history as a telephone exchange as well as its use as a makerspace.

The wall display behind the reception desk spans the room and emulates a switchboard with the connections and switches, which light up. Industrial finishes, such as concrete flooring and exposed ductwork are featured throughout the building.

Additional details which remind us of the building's original function can be found in the millwork, signage, and stairways. Though the building's purpose has changed, the aspect of human connection continues to resonate.



EXTERIOR DESIGN CONCEPT



SECOND FLOOR DESIGN CONCEPT



FIRST FLOOR DESIGN CONCEPT

INTRODUCTION

SITE PLAN



Upper Level:

- 1. Entrance
- 2. Coffee bar/lounge
- 3. Makerspace
- 4. Program space
- 5. Kitchen

Main Level:

- 6. Lounge
- 7. Meeting Room
- 8. Video and recording studios
- 9. Storage
- 10. Collaboration space

Lower Level:

- 11. Staff Office
- 12. Break Room
- 13. Staff Offices

EXTERIOR AND STREETScape

SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN STATEMENT

Adaptive reuse of the former telephone exchange building reactivated a 14,500 square foot space that was previously vacant in the heart of La Porte.

lpcpl Exchange

The façade's brickwork was given a facelift to restore the existing features, maintaining the original structure's appearance.

EXTERIOR AND STREETScape



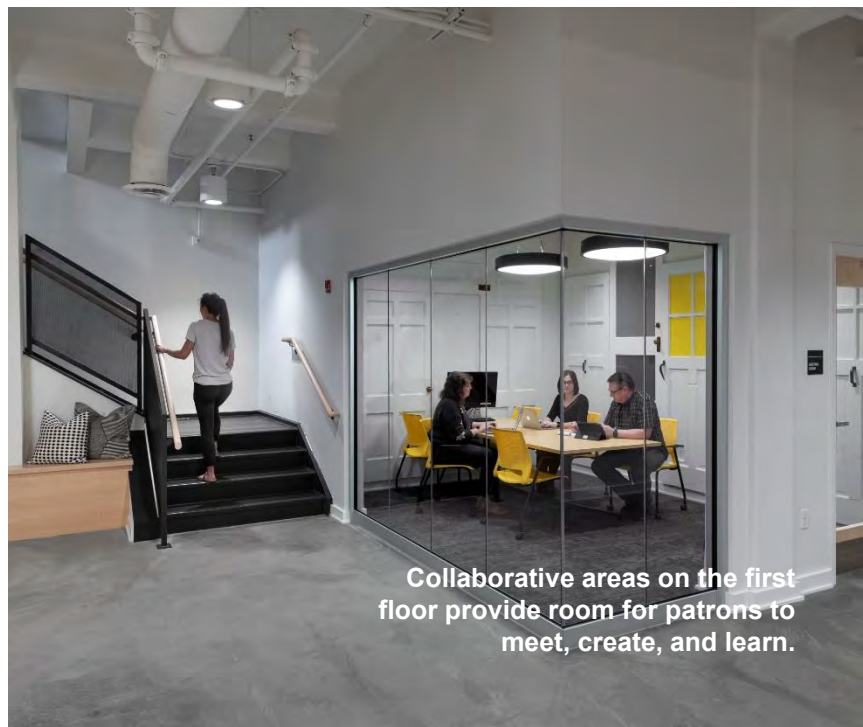
The wording detail on the curved lintel above the front entrance was preserved to highlight this historical feature. The original entry steps were carefully removed to provide an ADA compliant entrance to the new elevator located in the lobby.

FIRST FLOOR



Patrons are welcomed by a playful reception area featuring an installation emulating a switchboard. This is representative of the connectivity the LPCPL Exchange creates.

FIRST FLOOR



Collaborative areas on the first floor provide room for patrons to meet, create, and learn.

FIRST FLOOR



ADA concerns were addressed through a reconfigured public entrance as well as the addition of a multi-level elevator.

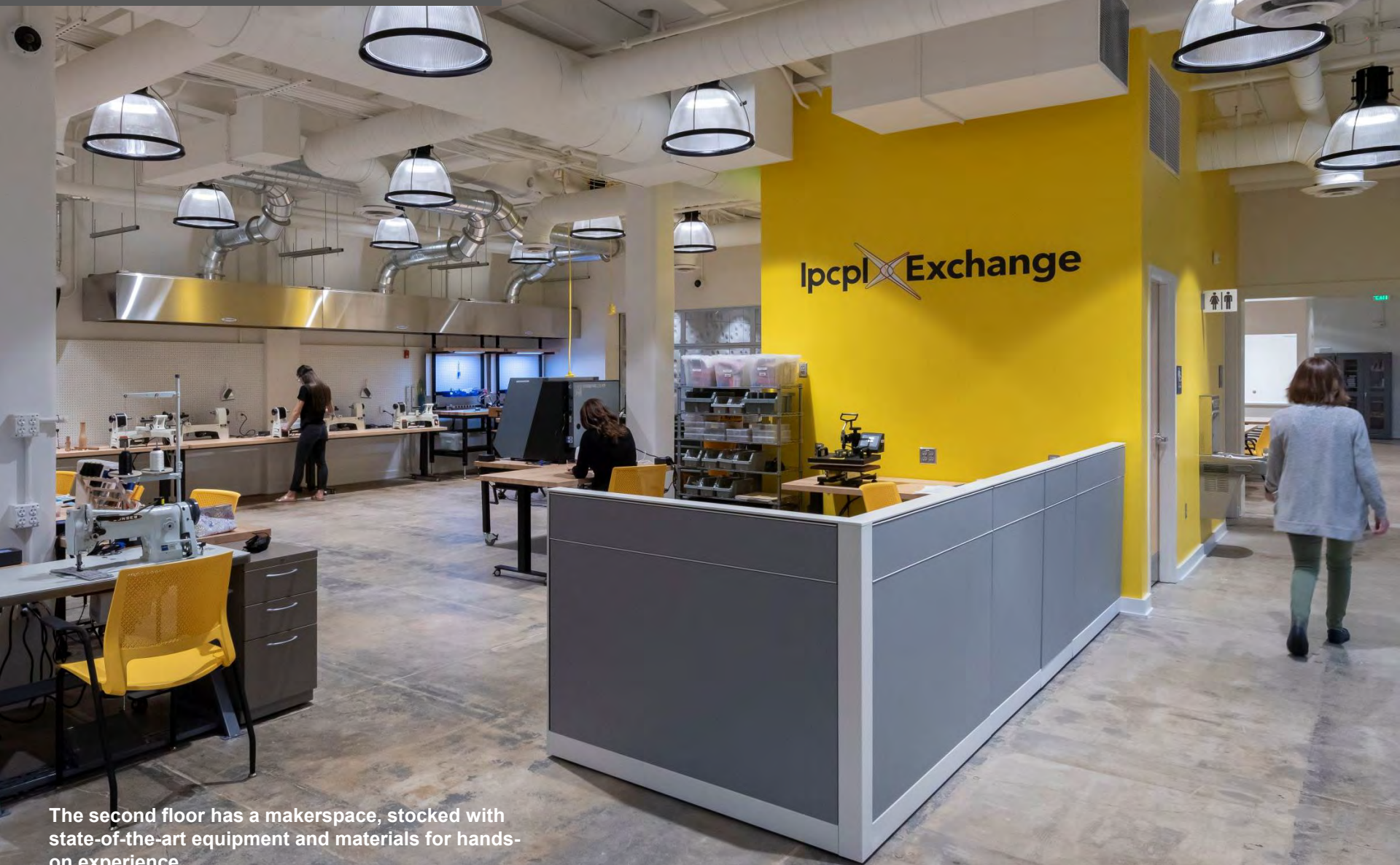
FIRST FLOOR



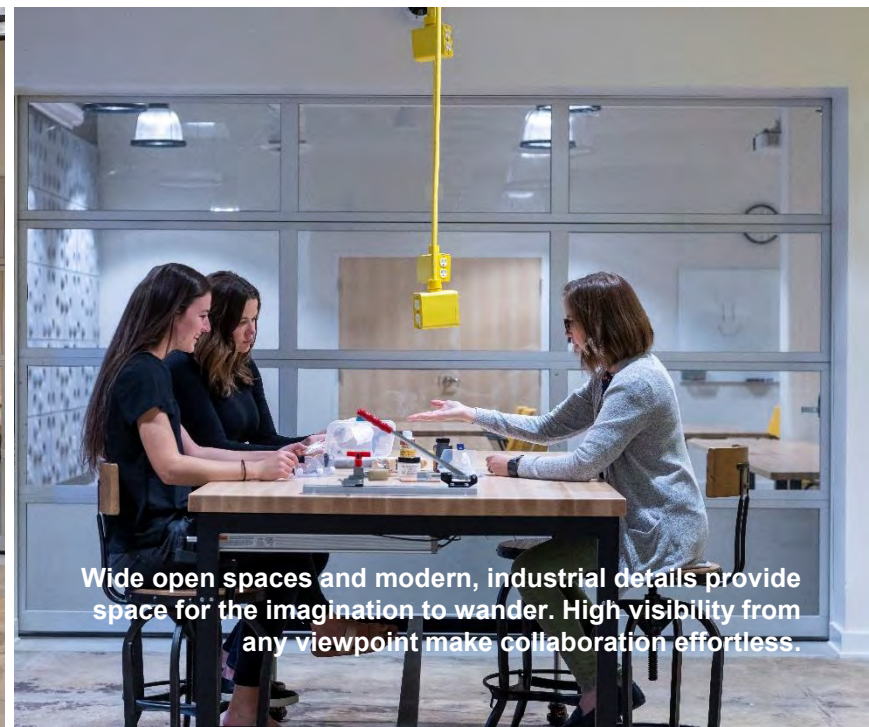
A greenscreen video studio and audio recording studio provide space for patrons of all skill levels to learn or master their talents.



SECOND FLOOR



The second floor has a makerspace, stocked with state-of-the-art equipment and materials for hands-on experience.



SECOND FLOOR



Dynamic program space was created for community engagement and demonstrations, allowing for flexibility depending on program type.