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Milestone completes renovations to four-story Odd Fellows Building

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Milestone Engineering & Construction, Inc. has completed the renovations to the building at 434 Lake Ave., commonly referred to as the "Odd Fellows Building." The building was constructed between the years of 1908 and 1909 by the Oak Hill Lodge #97 of the I.O.O.F. The project was designed by CMK Architects P.A. of Manchester.

The building is a four-story brick structure originally constructed to include three retail businesses operating on the first floor, and offices and a public hall on the second floor. The fourth floor contained the Odd Fellows meeting hall. Over the course of history, the building had several owners. The Odd Fellows retained ownership until 1964. H&S Inc. owned it until 1988, and operated the second floor as a function hall. Until recently, the building housed a small church.

The building was acquired by the City of Manchester in June 2010, with the intention of creating office and classroom space for use by several human service agencies serving the low-income and special needs population of Manchester. The principle tenant is the Manchester Community Resource Center (MCRC). Other agencies that work along-side MCRC will also be housed here. The building was financed with funding from the Community Development Finance Authority, or (CDFA).

The principle challenges in renovating this property were the structural and spatial changes that were necessary to bring the building to compliance with current building, life safety and handicap accessibility codes. To that end, two fully compliant egress stairs were constructed; one within the building and one in a new addition at the rear of the building. A five stop elevator was added for accessibility. A new fire suppression system was installed, along with a new code compliant fire alarm system.

The City of Manchester has shown a commitment to the preservation of this building, and recognizes it as a means to anchor this neighborhood now, and for the future.

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