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DBVW Architects transforms WaterFire Arts Center in Providence

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Providence, RI A historic building once used to unload locomotive trains is now home to WaterFire Providence. Working closely with WaterFire and TRAC Builders, DBVW Architects transformed a structure that had been completely bricked up into a multi-use space. An addition to the emerging Valley St. cultural district, the newly restored industrial building consolidates once scattered WaterFire operations and serves as an exhibit and event venue, benefiting the larger arts community in the city, celebrating the best Rhode Island has to offer in visual and performing arts.

This transformative project, which has earned a GrowSmart RI award and a Rhody Award for Historic Preservation, utilized a light-handed design which is respectful of the building's original industrial architecture. A large overhead crane system in the center of the building was retained and a new stair and mezzanine were designed to add visual interest and functionality. There is also the addition of a rooftop terrace that offers views of the historic American Locomotive Works buildings that have also been adaptively re-used and that complete this industrial complex to the south.

In its first few months, the space has already welcomed its new permanent tenants, as well as been host to an assortment of cultural events, including Providence Fringe Fest, Design Week's Video Launch, Design Hall of Fame, and the Preserve Rhode Island's Rhody Awards.

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