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Vision 3 Architects designs new United Way of RI offices at Calender Mills

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After 30 years on the East Side, United Way of Rhode Island recently moved their offices to the Calender Mills in the Olneyville neighborhood of the city. Designed by Vision 3 Architects, the new office involved the careful adaptive reuse and renovation of the historic mill building into a dynamic office facility for Rhode Island's leading non-profit organization.

Calender Mills, built in 1845, is the former home of the Providence Bleaching, Dyeing, and Calendering Company, which was established in 1814. Calender Mills was chosen strategically by United Way as part of a revitalization effort for the once thriving mill neighborhood.

The conversion of Calender Mills into contemporary office space required careful attention to the historic details of the building. A major challenge was to satisfy the practical needs of United Way, given the historical and aesthetic requirements of the building, and package design solutions that stayed within United Way's budget.

United Way requested a virtual walk-through of the new office to show employees. Vision 3 created an animation of the proposed design for approval before construction documents were finalized.

Vision 3 took several challenges posed by the historical building requirements and cleverly turned them into design features. An efficient layout embraces every available square foot of space, while incorporating every structural wall and column in the building. A series of open spaces and private offices creates a circular flow around the office with conferencing space lined up between reception and office.

As a resource and active member of the community, a portion of United Way's conferencing facilities is available for use by the community, with access from the reception area, and secured access to the remainder of United Way's office.

Building mechanical systems are exposed and openly screened with acoustic panels to become a signature design feature of the office.

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