

Conference
Center

Hotel

Restaurant

Office Building



Architectural Woodwork Institute

design solutions

Summer 2021 | \$6.25



Sweeping arches, stained-glass windows and beautiful patinaed wood give elegance to the Purdue Memorial Union, the heart of student life at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. The Union Club Hotel recently reopened after a \$35 million renovation, with all 182 guest rooms as well as public spaces refreshed.



Gateway Hotel.

Modern Aesthetic in Historical
University Student Union Hotel.





at a glance

AWI MANUFACTURING
MEMBER:

**D&L Wood Products,
Inc.**

LOCATION:

Crown Point, Indiana

ESTABLISHED:

1992

**Licensed
QCP Manufacturer**



Originally built in 1929 as an addition to Purdue Memorial Union, the hotel expanded several times over the years and was last renovated in the 1980s. The newest renovations highlight academic-inspired designs and colors in art, upholstery and carpet. The hotel will be used as a learning lab for students in Purdue's School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Design of the hotel was commissioned to Simone Deary Design Group, Chicago, while the architectural woodwork was fabricated and installed by D&L Wood Products, an AWI member firm from Crown Point, Indiana.

Design Objectives

"The Union Hotel is physically a part of the Student Union. Within the Union there is existing woodwork that speaks to the history and legacy of the university," explains Pete Reardon of hotel owner White Lodging. "It was important to us that the Union Hotel felt cohesive with the rest of the Union and the level of finish was consistent. However, this wasn't a restorative project. We wanted to make sure that the hotel was modern in its aesthetic as well. As this hotel is also the gateway that many people experience the university, we wanted the spirit of the university to be expressed visually."

The development needed to feel seamless from space to space, provide sight lines from the union and within the hotel that pulled guests deeper into the heart of the hotel, celebrate the legacy of Purdue, and embrace where the university is going next, adds Carrie Tolman of Deary Design.

"We created a roadmap of six pillars that dictated everything from the interior architecture vernacular to the style of trim on the decorative throw pillows," she explains. "Those six pillars were to reinvent the Union Hotel by capturing the history of the university and people that comprise it; preserve the existing architecture and highlight historical details by keeping the finishes simple yet poignant; create a timeless experience that resonates and inspires the diverse group of people who will experience the hotel; choreograph an environment that provides improvised as well as formulated experiences, bridge the gap between the multiple additions to the hotel over the years by making a cohesive interior vernacular; celebrate and capture the six pillars of Purdue through visual content; and craft a layered yet timeless solution for the furniture as well as the art that is heavily rooted in the University's history."

Adds Adam Ligda, executive vice president of D&L Wood Products, “we collaborated with the design team and general contractor on a weekly basis throughout the course of the project to discuss submittal approvals, design changes, woodwork details, and field conditions. These weekly calls provided the necessary direction to keep the fabrication on schedule and the installation moving efficiently. When the final products were delivered to the site, virtually all the unexpected field conditions and final installation details had been addressed and coordinated together as a team, allowing for a truly quality driven result.”

Woodwork Details

The restaurant ceiling consists of several curved, intersecting beams with brass finished brackets, reports Ligda. The Whiskey Lounge includes 102 individually lit and lockable liquor display cabinets. Behind the front desk are floating bookshelves engineered to support over 4,000 pounds of books. Custom metal cabinet doors and trims adorn the back of the main bar and the bar curio cabinets.



OAK



“We specialize in the fabrication and installation of custom architectural millwork, metals, glass, fabrics and stone across the country.”

– Adam Ligda, Executive Vice President, D&L Wood Products

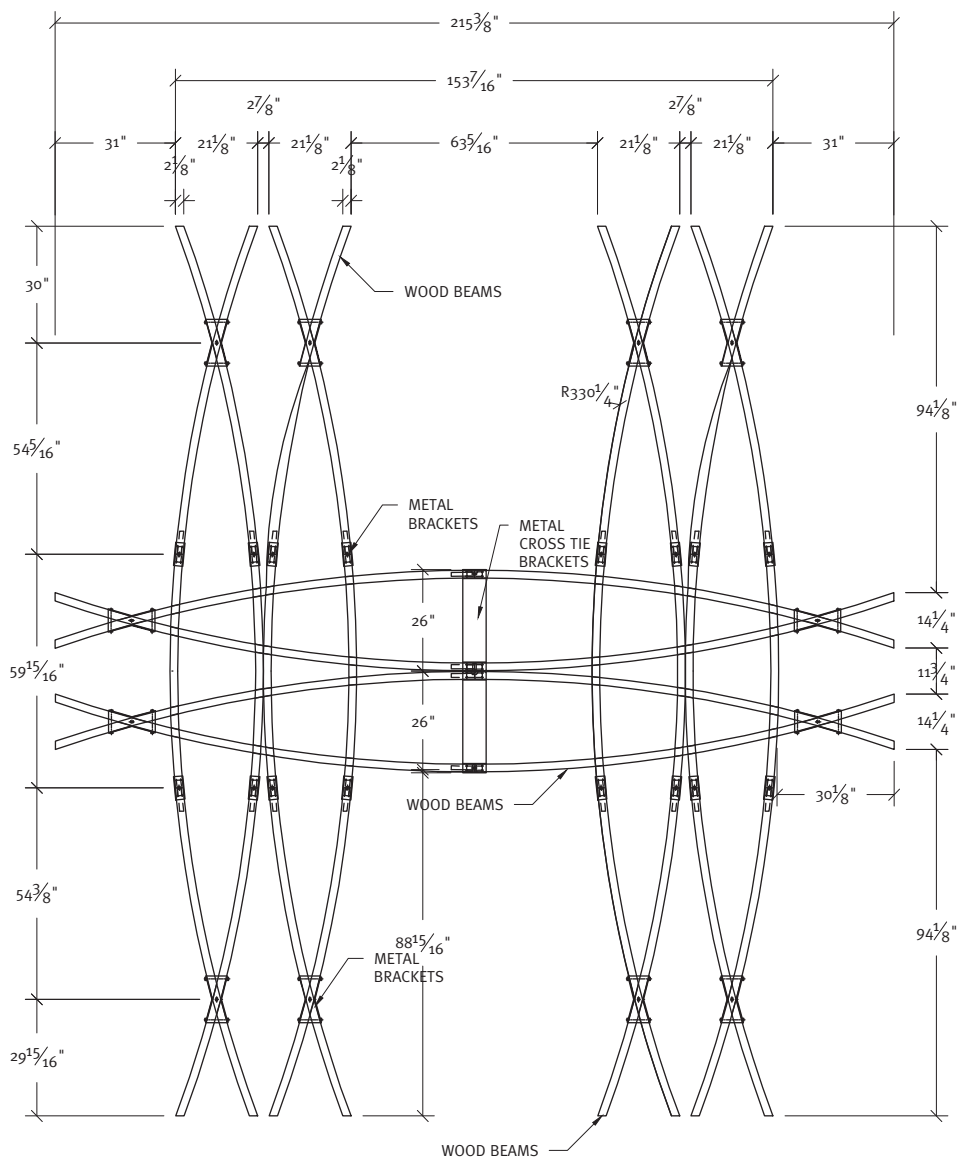




Woodwork products are a mix of plain sliced Red Oak and plain sliced, quartered or rift White Oak. An ebonized stain was used in the Whiskey Lounge, while a custom stain was used to match existing areas of the restaurant that were 50 years old.

Of particular note, continues Ligda, is the custom bookshelf behind the reception desk which is a completely floating feature supported only by in wall brackets. "This required extensive engineering and coordination with the contractor to ensure the weight of the bookshelves and the books were properly supported. In the restaurant, the curved ceiling beams created challenges due to the intersecting nature of the design. These beams were assembled on the ground into four large quadrants and hoisted into the position supported by custom brass plated brackets. The Whiskey Room created challenges due to coordination of the individual up lighting in each whiskey locker. Electrical chases had to be incorporated into the design and fabrication of each locker and metal inlays were mortised into the cabinets that chased around the room."

"There are two areas that really stand out to me," says Tolman. "The first is the ceiling expression in the restaurant. This expression is made of stained wood panels that are roughly 12" to 15" tall that are curved and interlock with metal detailing that suspend from almost hidden metal support posts. The intricate pattern it creates was inspired by the aerial shots you see of fields where the tractor has created these shapes in the vegetation and celebrates Purdue's long history of agriculture studies. The execution of all the pieces that are flawlessly aligned ground the restaurant experience and become an art piece in the ceiling."



RCP
@ LOUNGE FEATURE



The second area, she continues, is the front lobby. “The execution of the wall panels, to the wall upholstery, and then finally the banquette is an intricate dance between materials, depths, and precision. When you first glance at it the composition appears simplistic because it is so beautifully executed but upon further inspection you truly see the complexity as well as the craftsmanship of the woodworker.”

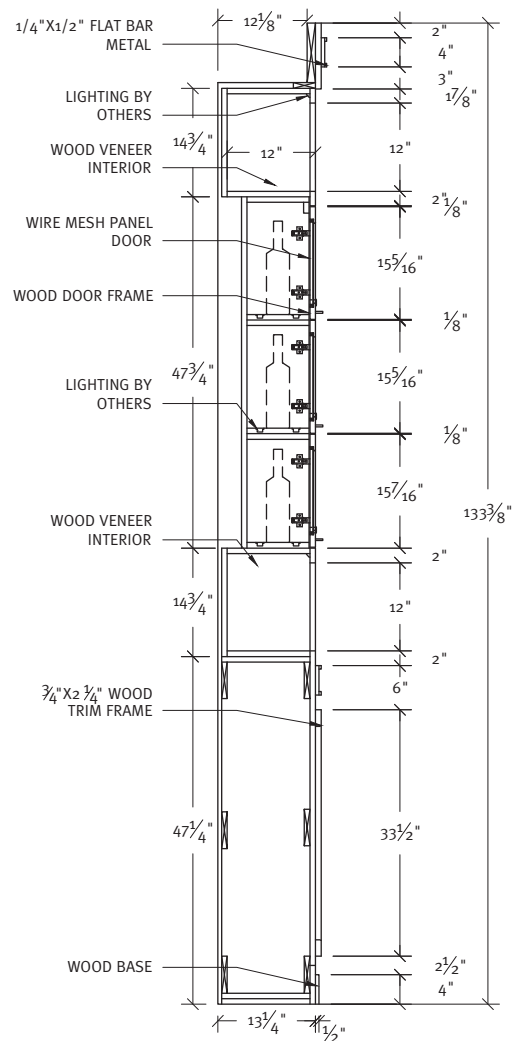
Challenges, Collaboration

Well, the obvious special problem was this project was completed at the height of the Covid 19 epidemic, says Tolman. “Everything from the supply chain to the employees executing the work on site were affected. It was by the ingenuity, flexibility, and pulling together as a community that truly made this project successful. Another challenge we had is that when you renovate an historic space and pull back the old finishes

you stumble upon things that you didn’t know were there that you can’t necessarily remove. Again, it was the creativity of our team that allowed solutions to be realized that didn’t take away from the spaces.”

White Lodging and D&L Wood Products have been collaborating on hotel projects across the country for the past 25 years, says Reardon. “They are a true asset to our company and aid in the feasibility of the project design providing an unmatched level of service and producing the highest quality architectural woodwork.”

“We have worked with Simone Deary on several projects over the years, including two 1,000-room hotels, and have a great working relationship. They share their vision for the designed spaces and their expectations of the final products, and we work with them on the feasibility, constructability, and pricing to ensure it becomes reality.”



SECTION
@ WHISKEY LOUNGE

PROJECT:
**Perdue Memorial
Union Club Hotel**
West Lafayette, IN

PROJECT OWNER:
White Lodging
Merrillville, IN

WOODWORKER:
**D&L Wood
Products, Inc.**
Crown Point, IN

DESIGNER:
**Simone Deary
Design Group**
Chicago, IL

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:
Shiel Sexton Company
Indianapolis, IN

PHOTOGRAPHER:
**Nathan Kirkman,
Camera Department, Inc.**
Chicago, IL