

CASE STUDY



CLIENT

Ruth Mott Foundation

LOCATION

Flint, Michigan

PROJECT COST

Upon Request

PROJECT SIZE

5,650 SF Downtown
4,500 SF at Applewood

COMPLETION DATE

Spring 2011

PROJECT DELIVERY

Design Build – Siwek Construction,
Flint, MI in Downtown

Design Build – Building Arts
and Conservation, Saline, MI
at Applewood

SNAPSHOT

A Foundation of FUNctional Design

The Ruth Mott Foundation, a private foundation located in downtown Flint, Michigan, commissioned a space planning study, and later full architectural services, for the Foundation's properties located in Downtown Flint at the Plaza One building. The Foundation also needed consultation and services for its Applewood Estate, the historic home of automobile entrepreneur Charles Stewart Mott, on 18 acres in the heart of the Flint Cultural Center campus. The Foundation came to FUNchitecture with hopes to gain a more efficient plan layout that better utilized their existing spaces in a way that would be conducive to the way their staff interacts on a daily basis. Priority was given to planning the space in a way that is synonymous with the Foundation's mission of cultivating community vitality. The space planning took into account the various "departments" of the Foundation including program staff, administrative staff, the Mott/Warsh Gallery, the horticultural staff, Applewood Program and Grounds staff, as well as

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C A S E S T U D Y

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spaces for the board, staff and grantees to convene and collaborate for meetings and workshops. The emphasis in space planning was on creating FUNctional spaces where not only departmental "teams" were in proximity to each other but where small, collaborative teams could gather and have a meeting over coffee in a relaxed environment without ever leaving the office. The planning process included focus group workshops with all staff at both locations, as well as several meetings with the executive management team to gather input and identify priorities for the space from a staff and visitor perspective.

The resulting floor plan and space design at the downtown headquarters is a FUNominal new modern feeling office where an integrated art gallery for the extensive private collection of the Foundation's board chair is displayed throughout the work environment. A flexible "board room"



that also functions as two smaller meeting spaces, or a continuation of the art gallery, can hold up to 30 people comfortably. Staff offices are vibrant and airy with sliding glass doors allowing natural light to filter throughout

the office space. Departments open onto "think pods" where 4-5 comfy lounge style seats with entablature arms allow for impromptu team meetings with staff or grantees for collaborative think sessions.

The work completed for the Foundation at their Applewood

Estate property is much more historic in nature to respect the home's original architecture while creating new modern work offices in space that used to be a chauffeur's apartment. A dank, dingy, claustrophobic and mouse-infested old storage loft, previously referred to as "the pit," was turned into a new, modern conference/meeting room for staff and Applewood volunteer staff alike to use on a daily basis. Cork flooring, a material existing in the original house, was installed for warmth and sound control, as well as skylights in the existing slate roof to allow natural light to create a cheerful new work environment. A new barrier free bathroom was created on the ground floor in an old tool room adjacent to the garage for better accessibility for visitors and staff. Historically appropriate fixtures were used at every possible opportunity.

