



The view across a five-street intersection shows two historic flatiron buildings in dialog.



A view from the 1911 Heierding Building across a five-street intersection to the 1924 Como Hotel building.

**Client:** PLICO  
**Completion:** November 2015  
**Scope:** Renovation of a 1924 flatiron building with approximately 20,000 SF of new and renovated space.  
**Cost:** Not for Publication  
**Awards:** 2017 Interior Design “Best of Year” Winner in Office Restoration/Renovation category

## Description:

Built in 1924 by C.F. Meadors and originally the Como Hotel, this historic blond brick flatiron stood vacant and boarded up for 27 years. We have been waiting for 20 years for the opportunity to bring this corner to its full potential. We believe this corner should be the site of an enduring building, a lantern at the east gateway to downtown Oklahoma City.

The project includes the renovation of the two-level flatiron building and the construction of a modern, yet complimentary rooftop addition.

## Flatiron History:

The “flatiron” term originated around 1740, describing a cast-iron clothes iron, forerunner to the electric iron. Most were triangular, making it easier to iron around buttons. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the term had been ascribed to wedge-shaped sites and buildings.

The 1902 Flatiron Building in Manhattan (the original Fuller Building) at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Broadway made the shape famous. Found in cities around the U.S., iconic flatiron architecture is sought-after and illustrates purity, stability and strength.

## OKC Flatiron History:

The area’s historic triangular buildings were built soon after OKC’s electric streetcar routes were drawn a century ago. The Harrison-NE 8 Route cut a diagonal path from NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of Broadway to NE 8<sup>th</sup> at Stiles Park, west of Lincoln. The four surviving historic triangular blocks form the core of the city’s emerging Flatiron district. Streetcar tracks are still clearly visible under the adjacent railroad overpass.

## 1924 Flatiron:

The renovation of the existing two-level and the addition of a third for a 1924 flatiron building into an office for PLICO, an insurance company serving physicians and other professional groups.



The classic flatiron view including the new 3rd floor addition and enhanced main entry door canopy.



South elevation illustrating the 3rd floor glass addition and the protected outdoor deck. Triangular shaped down spouts show consistent detailing.

## **Rooftop Addition:**

The third floor will be used for company functions including a boardroom, conference room, rooftop terrace, a kitchen and space for future growth of the company. The design approach is to make the new third floor addition a modern feature and a respectful, complimentary addition to the existing building. The third floor is differentiated from the existing brick building through materials and setbacks, and relates to the Flatiron building in shape, scale, color and detailing. Spectacular views of the Downtown skyline are rare.

## **Architectural Concept Points:**

- Create a gateway project into Downtown.
- Create compatible scale and proportion.
- Provide light-filled space.
- Compliment and match compatible historic details and 21<sup>st</sup> century needs.
- Create a sense of celebration about our community.
- Create a signature project.

## **Details:**

- Clean brick.
- New historically accurate windows
- Sidewalk planters and landscaping.
- Adjacent parking on the street for 20 and additional parking available nearby.
- We envision street lighting, accent building lighting and glow from the building interior to create a “lantern” on a very important corner of Downtown.
- Remove a portion of the sidewalk at the corner for an in-ground planter. A triangular lighted pedestal sign shall be placed at the “sharp” corner of the site.
- The rooftop deck has a 50% open glass screen to mitigate sun and wind.

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As one leaves downtown the PLICO building acts as a lantern to the city energy.



North elevation. At early dusk the building begins to glow.



South elevation. At early dusk the building begins to glow.



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A view looking west towards the five-street intersection.



Main entry canopy.



South elevation showing the renovated 1924 building and the new gold glass addition. Note the triangular downspouts.



South elevation showing the historic building and new 3rd floor addition coming together. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor outdoor deck has 50% open space and provides sun and wind protection for guests.



The east elevation illustrates the historic “back” of the building. Previously filled-in windows are reopened and the common red brick was cleaned. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor addition sets back away from the parapet in respect.

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Original incinerator access was filled-in in the 1960s. The existing form remains with the original exposed steel door pull.



The flatiron entry door faces the intersection. All of the existing masonry was left as is with multiple layers of paint and repair.



View from the flatiron entry towards the reception desk. The blue polycarbonate office core defines new vs. historic. The original exposed metal lath and concrete deck above remains. Floors are polished concrete.



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The stair is lighted with a single “light column.”



Mechanical units are disguised with polycarbonate panels.



Polycarbonate panels provide acoustical and visual privacy and give exposed structure a ghostly quality.



The existing clay tile firewall at the historic stair remains in place.

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The ADA ramp is placed along the south elevation.



The client requested a light-filled space. A cross over corridor ties north and south windows together.



A typical open office space created by clear polycarbonate panels. The perimeter blue panels provide a softened blue hue.



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A typical office space with new structure exposed.



An office placed next to the original hotel access stair exposes historic paint and stair outline.



The ladies room is also home to the fire protection valves.



The ceremonial stair shows folding steel plate, risers and treads, and 1" square solid stock pickets.



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Ceremonial stair light column.



Ceremonial stair light column.



Folding steel plate stair detail.



Stair handrail detail.

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2<sup>nd</sup> floor overlook at ceremonial stair.



A journey using the ceremonial stair shows exposed historic flat steel structural joists



Originally intended as growth space the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor's north east corner has become a multi-purpose room. It has become a yoga space or a dining room for thanksgiving lunch.



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The east fire stair celebrates exposed vertical piping with a folded steel plate stair and large 3<sup>rd</sup> floor glass.



A new structural detail is exposed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.



The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor multi-purpose room becomes an artistic volume with the late afternoon sun. The awning windows pushed open reflect the rooftop river rocks.

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The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor boardroom enjoys the western exposure and access to the protected outdoor deck.



The boardroom curtainwall separates inside and deck side.



Boardroom curtainwall detail.



The remains of the original incinerator provide a surprising architectural installation.