



THE POWER OF VOICE

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Metropolitan Group crafts strategic and creative services to amplify the power of voice of change agents in building a just and sustainable world.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC WILL BUILDING

The Public Will Building is the headquarters of Metropolitan Group. It also includes a full floor of convening and collaboration space to host strategy, community engagement, programming and events for social change organizations. We also have room for a mission-aligned neighbor.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Reclaimed Modern—finding and exposing the historic and structural character of the 1913 national historic landmark building while adding new spaces that are clean and modern in juxtaposition to the historic features

Longevity—using high quality, durable materials and investing in craft of construction so the building and finishes are lasting (tile, steel, hardwood, etc.)

Sustainability—reusing existing features, systems and equipment that could be retrofitted for efficiency, sourcing and retrofitting existing furnishings and furniture where possible, sourcing sustainably produced and as-local-as-possible materials to reduce carbon footprint, establishing recycle and reuse for demolition disposal—maintaining and improving upon LEED Silver status

Natural Light and Connectivity—adding almost exclusively glass walls to ensure natural light through the building and view corridors to the outside; connecting people throughout the space

Flexibility of Use—focusing on convening and collaboration spaces, with the ability to reconfigure for various event, training and workshop uses

Healthy—sourcing no-toxin or low-toxin products from paint and floor finishes to shades and carpets; increasing natural light; and making beyond code investments in radon removal, ventilation, fire and life safety systems, etc.

Accessibility—creating an inclusive environment that goes beyond ADA requirements

Safety—selecting a steel-reinforced concrete building (constructed in 1913 to a standard unheard of at the time). The building had a full seismic upgrade in 2003, new and state-of-the-art fire and life safety systems, radon venting system, security and access systems, as well as additional steel beams

The Power of Voice—serving as a home for change agents, The Public Will Building includes a social movements poster collection, commissioned art inspired by the MG manifesto and a powerful land acknowledgment. The design of the entire commons floor as a convening and collaboration space will provide community-based organizations with spaces for programming, strategy development, stakeholder engagement and fundraising to advance missions and their power of voice.



Metropolitan Group

the power of voice

DETAILS –

Reclaimed

- Uncovered and restored original concrete, terrazzo, and marble floors
- Stripped paint from columns to expose original raw concrete
- Sourced, restored, and furnished with vintage furniture (for any mid-century design buffs we found amazing pieces by Widdicomb, Heywood-Wakefield and Thonet)
- Maintained all original woodwork
- Recreated the missing wall of historic oak wainscoting.

What are the blue and pink stains on some floors?: Well, the building was a print shop from 1970 – 1990s and when we ground the glue and coating off of the floors we found stains from spills of printers ink. We chose NOT to cover them up but rather to celebrate this patina of previous function and use.

Flexible workspaces

There are diverse workspaces that all staff and visitors can utilize that include:

- The Commons with everything from couches and armchairs, a large “library” table, smaller table and chair sets, standing bistro tables and stools around the Bistro island
- The full kitchen provides the opportunity for people to connect through the joy of sharing food and cooking together
- The main welcome area includes couch and chair space and a table for collaborative work
- Numerous conference rooms that can also be reserved for team sessions (from small meeting rooms for two, to large conference rooms for 40)
- At some point in the future (post-COVID, when it is safe to host larger gatherings and convenings), we can host major work sessions and planning retreats and events for groups/organizations, speakers series, symposia, readings and seminars. Using the full Commons and convening floor, including conference rooms, there is seating for over 100 people. Standing receptions and events can accommodate about 200 people and individual conference rooms of different sizes accommodate from 4-40 people

Sustainability

We have sourced as much local and U.S. made materials, equipment and furnishings as possible to reduce carbon from shipping and to support local economies.

- The Public Will Building is LEED Silver and our recent renovation increased efficiency and sustainability
- Virtually every appliance is U.S. made
- To reduce shipping, casework, doors, shades, etc., were sourced from west coast manufacturers
- Steel beams were U.S. sourced to reduce the shipping carbon footprint
- All new wood in the building is sustainably harvested Oregon White Oak
- Reused significant elements already in the building re-lamping and upgrading (rather than replacing lights in many places)
- Added a 2nd high efficiency water heater (less energy use/heat loss from distribution)
- Installed all new low-flow dual flush toilets to significantly reduce water use compared to the existing fixtures
- Repairing rather than replacing roll down shades on most of the main floor



- Used a recycle and reuse protocol during demolition (donating to re-building centers where possible, recycling where not) to reduce waste
- In as many places as possible, furnished the building by refurbished vintage furniture purchased from and restored by local vendors
- Commissioned local furniture makers to create the large conference tables using local, sustainably produced and reclaimed materials (including 19th century cast iron factory machine legs for the 2 huge conference tables)
- Selecting locally headquartered, B-Corp and sustainably certified materials manufacture Fully for our desking system

Access

- Changed out all door handles to ADA levers or pulls
- Made all bathrooms ADA compliant
- Added 2 ADA compliant showers
- Added/replaced all existing fixtures (sinks, appliances, etc.) to be ADA compliant
- Added automatic electric door opener on the front door
- Installed overhead and task lighting throughout
- Invested to have all desks be electronic up/down adjustable sitting to standing and to have individualized programmable presets
- Installed a state-of-the art fob access system for staff safety and increased accessibility
- Designed all passageways and passing spaces to be 3 ft or more
- Invested in A/B lighting (ability to have half on/half off or dimming lights throughout the building) to adjust for light sensitivity
- Added sound systems to the large conference rooms to ensure better inclusion for hearing impaired participants
- Invested in all of the interior full-height glass and steel-sash doors adding opener hardware. While not electric automatic open, it does make opening a 200lbs - 400lbs glass door feel as light as opening a normal door

Health/Wellbeing/Safety

- Original construction is steel reinforced concrete. The building had a full seismic upgrade in 2003 including new reinforced concrete shear walls through all three floors of the building, bracing to restrain parapets around the roof and helical anchors to restrain exterior stone veneer panels. To increase safety, the previous owner had the elevator mechanical redone and a new roof installed in 2018/19. As part of our renovation we installed a complete new and state-of-the-art fire and life safety systems, radon venting system, security and access systems, as well as additional steel beams.
- Low VOC, non-toxic materials used throughout the construction process and in furnishing the building.
- We had optional radon testing done and the building tested below actionable levels. However, as the test still detected some radon, we elected to put in a Radon venting system.
- We discovered some literature that non-venting gas fireplaces (while a common item on the market and originally proposed for the project) emit some gas and fumes that could impact folks who are sensitive—we invested extra resources to put in a venting run from the lower floor to the roof so we could instead install a venting fireplace.
- We opted to do a full-coverage fire and smoke detection system at the level required for much larger buildings. Our requirement was smoke detection in paths for exit and key areas + pull stations—we opted instead to do smoke detectors in every single room due to increased life safety benefits (if no one is on a floor of the building and smoke is detected it sets off the alarm and gets everyone out –vs. someone having to see it and pull an alarm).



Art at the Public Will Building

We have installed an amazing collection of social movement posters based upon the nominations from MG/ISMG staff. The Public Will Building also includes a few pieces of original artwork including new commissions and a vintage* commission. New Commissions include works by [Arvie Smith](#) and [Bobby Foucher](#) who were asked to create works based upon the prompt from our manifesto "the power of voice."

Bobby created a piece he felt spoke to the manifesto inspired by the singer and civil rights activist Nina Simone called *Nina's Moods*.

Arvie felt the commission needed to connect to what was happening in this moment following the murder by police of George Floyd, the protests and to the larger national context and the local Portland context. He describes *Justice Coming Home* as an allegory that does not isolate this moment but takes it back to historic origins and forward to a desired future and references *Delacroix: Liberty Leading the People*. Arvie was featured in Black Art in America both in [2020](#) and [2019](#) as part of two powerful exhibits/features.

We also worked with local arts leader [Cecily Quintana](#) on acquiring:

- *Rebellion of the Colonial World*, 1948 by Jesus Escobedo (1918-1956), Mexico. This is one of ten prints created by the [Taller de Gráfica Popular](#) for The Confederación de los Trabajadores de América Latina (C.T.A.L) portfolio in 1948. The C.T.A.L. was a continental trade union federation for Latin America in the mid 20th Century.

We were honored to commission Indigenous ecologist and educator Gabe Sheoships (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation) to craft a powerful *land acknowledgement*. Cast in bronze and placed in the main lobby, all who enter The Public Will Building will encounter and we hope will be inspired to think and to act.

The lobby features a mural of the *MG Manifesto* designed by our own [Corinne Nakamura-Rybak](#).

* *MG 2000 "vintage" commission: 20 years ago, when we moved into the Dekum Building we commissioned a local artist, Max Grover, to do a painting also inspired by the Power of Voice (he ended up doing a set of six small paintings that graced our reception area and are now at the entrance to The Commons (the conference and convening floor).*

Vendors

We have asked our locally headquartered property management company to focus on local vendors, BIPOC- and women-owned companies and firms that focus on sustainable practices and the use of sustainable and health-safe products. All of our building service and maintenance vendors are locally owned. The two vendors with whom we have the largest contracts (janitorial and maintenance) are both local, BIPOC and immigrant-owned. The largest janitorial contract is also women-owned as is our recycling, compost and waste removal company. All of the vendors utilize sustainable practices and have committed to using health-safe products.

History

The Public Will Building at the historic Balfour-Guthrie building is a [national historic landmark](#) on the National Park Service's register of historic places. It was designed as the Portland headquarters for the Balfour-Guthrie trading company. This shipping company from Scotland has a slight local claim to fame—it was their charter, the Peter Iredare, that is the well-known shipwreck still visible on the beach near Warrenton, Oregon. The building was designed by iconic Portland architect Morris Whitehouse (who



designed the Gus J. Solomon Courthouse, Temple Beth Israel, the Columbia Gorge Hotel, Civic Stadium and many other Portland gems). Since the Balfour-Guthrie Company's west coast headquarters in San Francisco was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake, Whitehouse was asked to design a building that could not fall down or burn. He designed one of Oregon's first steel reinforced concrete buildings. The building was also the print shop and home to the City Rubber Stamp Company. It then became the headquarters and was extensively renovated and modernized in 2003 by the leading architecture firm Thomas Hacker & Associates with complete upgrades including a significant seismic retrofit and all new building systems. In late 2019 and 2020, the building was extensively retrofitted to serve as Metropolitan Group's headquarters and as a convening and collaboration space for social change organizations. It was re-dedicated as The Public Will Building on September 30, 2020.

Room for the Right Neighbor

We are looking for a mission aligned organization to join us in The Public Will Building. We have 3,194 sq feet available of prime office space (dramatic steel-sash entrance door at tenant-branded landing, SW corner view, tons of natural light, skylight, access to secure underground parking next-door, etc.). The building is rated as a walker's, biker's and transit rider's "paradise", is located just steps away from Powell's Books and the gateway to the Pearl District to the west and the heart of downtown (literally across the street from the Benson Hotel) to the east. The beloved Alder Street food cart pod that was displaced with the construction of the Ritz Carlton will open surrounding a revitalized Ankeny Square (literally outside the back door of the building).

Please contact efishman@metgroup.com for more information .

