



Small-Duct System Shines in 200-Year Old Former Candleworks

In the mid-nineteenth century, New Bedford, MA supplanted Nantucket as the whaling capital of the world - for a time becoming America's richest city due to the extensive use of whale oil. The seafaring community sits on a deep harbor off Buzzard's Bay and is soaked in history, with many buildings and features dating back to the Revolutionary War. One such building is home to the former Rodman Candleworks, built in 1815 for the production of candles from the ubiquitous whale oil. The Federalist-style brick building, listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, was

chosen as the new home for the downtown branch of the Bristol County Savings Bank in 2017.

Home to 188 national landmarks, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts demands strict adherence to era-appropriate styles and finishes when it comes to the restoration of historic structures. The Rodman Candleworks was no different, and its open, post-and-beam construction presented many challenges to the architectural and building teams. The bank chose noted local preservationist architects, Studio2Sustain, and A.P.



Unobtrusive Unico System outlets keep Bristol County Savings Bank's employees and customers comfortable.

Whitaker & Sons, led by experienced project manager, Paul Lacey, and his crew of dedicated craftsmen. The initial design specified the re-use of the existing forced-air HVAC system, but Paul correctly noted that the traditional system would not be a practical fit for the planned renovation, which would take its cues from New Bedford's storied history while simultaneously upgrading the mechanical systems to modern expectations.

So, the search was on for an indoor comfort system that could preserve the building's historic attributes while providing superior comfort.

Strategy

After consulting with Tim Dubuc, owner of Climate Concepts, the bank's HVAC contractor, the architectural team at Studio2Sustain specified The Unico System. Tim worked with Unico sales representative Evan Trethewey of RST Thermal for equipment, training and design assistance. While The Unico System was new to all involved with the project, Evan is a long-time pro with

the product due to Unico's decades-long association with *This Old House*, the home improvement program on which Evan's father, Richard, is the plumbing and HVAC expert. Richard and Evan have been instrumental in numerous projects adding The Unico System to historically significant structures.

With design help from Evan and the manufacturer, Tim determined that four separate Unico Systems would be best – two per floor. Both systems are equipped with hot water coils for heating and have the ability to provide make-up air ventilation. Says Paul, "The plan to re-use the original air handling equipment just wouldn't work – each was the size of a Buick." Additionally, conventional ducting simply wouldn't have been able to fit into the limited space afforded by the open, exposed ceiling design. "The small size of the Unico supply tubing allowed it to be snaked through PVC piping within hollowed-out pillars and beams," added Tim. "My crew really enjoyed the flexibility of the system and the fact that they didn't have to do any construction to build soffits and chases to hide ductwork."

The Results

“I just can’t say enough about the beautiful design by Studio2Sustain and the incredible craftsmanship and attention to detail by Paul and his crew,” says Tim. Paul scoured regional lumber yards to find wood to match the 200-year old timber ceiling joists. The nautical flourishes, with cleats and thick marine rope accents, harken back to the building’s past as a by-product of the whaling industry.

“Studio2Sustain’s design and our finish work would have been severely hampered by using a conventional HVAC system – it just wouldn’t have allowed us the freedom that The Unico System did,” Paul said. Paul and Tim added that they look forward to working with The Unico System again, and Paul is considering its inclusion in an upcoming project in Plymouth.

Bank personnel enjoy working in a space that both respects and reflects the local history while offering the very best in contemporary amenities thanks to Studio2Sustain’s planning and the hard work by Paul and his crew. They and their guests also enjoy comfort year-round thanks to Tim, the Climate Concepts team and The Unico System.

“Since we were dealing with a historic preservation site, we wanted to be sure we made every attempt to maintain the historic integrity of the building,” said Michele Roberts, executive VP for the bank. “We also had historic use easements to contend with and we didn’t want to settle for a conventionally ducted HVAC

system. In the end, Unico was the best solution to meet our needs and our project turned out amazing. In fact, we received a preservation award for the project from the Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE!)”

With The Unico System, historic preservation with superior indoor comfort is no longer the elusive white whale it once was.

Benefits

- Flexible design and installation – allows for freedom of design
- Quiet operation
- Even, draft-free temperatures
- Discreet supply outlets – outlets virtually disappear and preserve aesthetics
- Energy efficient
- The only HVAC system endorsed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Unico Sales Representative

Evan Trethewey
RST Thermal
rstthermal.com

General Contractor

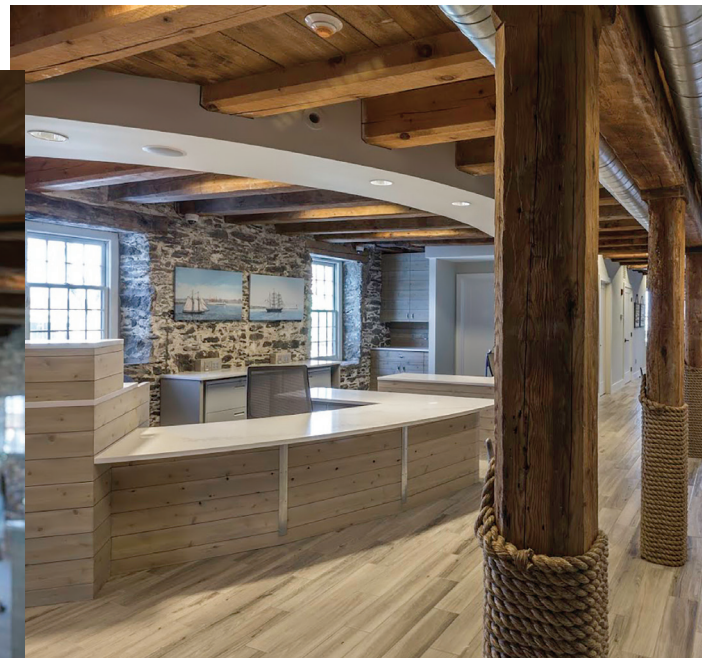
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Architect

Studio2Sustain
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Installer

Tim Dubuc, Owner
Climate Concepts, Inc.
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The nautical flourishes of Studio2Sustain’s design are a reminder of New Bedford’s former reign as the whaling capital of the world.

The Unico System preserves the historic stone and exposed wood of this 200-year old building.



The modular Unico air handling equipment is much smaller than the original forced air equipment, making for a much smaller and less obtrusive mechanical room.



A.P. Whitaker & Sons' project manager, Paul Lacey, put a lot of time and effort into finding wood that would match the original post-and-beam exposed woodwork.

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Unico, Inc. manufacturing plant and sub-assembly plant

Unico, Inc. is the leader in small duct heating and cooling systems and other high-end HVAC systems. The company manufactures all of its products in St. Louis, Missouri, with over 125,000 square feet of modern manufacturing space. The company is well known for extensive use in older, architecturally unique homes and buildings as well as elite, high-end custom homes. The company is family owned and operated and their products are available throughout the United States and Canada, and in over 28 countries around the world.



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