



COOKFOX designs WELL Platinum-Certified office for International WELL Building Institute

September 22, 2020 - Design / Build

Manhattan, NY Last year the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI) moved into new offices in the Flatiron neighborhood, selecting space on the corner of Fifth Ave. and 26th St. in a landmarked, historic building dating to 1912. As an organization committed to employee wellness—indeed, with a mission to find and evaluate the latest research and evidence on the relationship between the environment and human health—it would be an enormous achievement to create a space to not just meet their own standards for wellness in an existing building, but to exceed expectations, was recently awarded Platinum Certification.

IWBI hired COOKFOX, an architectural practice whose own studio achieved WELL Gold certification in 2017. Together, client and designers developed strategies to emphasize that architecture be equitable, global, evidence-based, technically robust, customer focused and resilient. They maximized the air and light of their corner location; chose recycled or low-impact materials; engineered high-filtration air systems; provided healthy food in the kitchen; encouraged active work styles; landscaped the interior with plantings and found many additional ways to earn WELL Certification at the platinum level, strategies that transform spaces in ways that help people thrive.

Developing these techniques in their own office allows IWBI staff to provide individual testimony to the research in which they are immersed.

IWBI has found that having a formal certification program with specific criteria is useful for designers and owners as they craft healthy interior spaces. WELL Certification guidelines are being used in 60 countries; over 4,100 buildings are now certified or pursuing certification. Launched in May of 2018, WELL v2 consolidates the latest knowledge, leading research, new technology and advanced building practices to extend the benefits of WELL. By pursuing WELL Certification for its headquarters in an existing, older building, IWBI sought to demonstrate WELL's applicability for all project types.

Their satisfaction in earning a Platinum level rating for the office is evident. "With access to natural light, dynamic workstations and a has combination of both design and policy elements that support mental resilience, the IWBI team truly felt a sense of ownership and pride in our office space," said Rick Fedrizzi, CEO and chairman of IWBI. "By creating a space that mirrors our values, our journey to certification has been an especially meaningful and enlightening experience for us, and one that

we intend to share with our community. The space is more than just a headquarters for our staff; it is an extension of our values and a showcase of what WELL stands for. We invite our community to visit, work and learn with us when we can.”

Like offices across the globe, over the past few weeks IWBI has transitioned to a work-from-home model. As people begin to return to work, IWBI has already verified several features of their space that can directly contribute to preventing the spread of viruses through its certification. This includes improved air quality through better ventilation and filtration, hand washing facilities to support hygiene and reduce pathogen transmission, cleaning product protocols and food and water safety.

In addition to COOKFOX, IWBI sought out team members whose leadership in health and well-being allowed them to uncover innovative solutions and forge new pathways forward, including Stellar Management, Paladino, FluidStance, Kaiterra, LogiSon, Mohawk, Nano-lit and Teknion.

Rick Cook, founding principal of COOKFOX Architects, notes: “Transforming existing buildings with front-end technology and health-centered design thinking is a way to create healthier, safer and more equitable built environments. We designed this space to be a replicable model for a biophilic, future-resilient workplace.”

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540