

Hockey HQ

Ballpark

Restaurant

Health Clinic



Architectural Woodwork Institute

design solutions

Winter 2013 | \$6.25



Team Scores Big

Hockey Team At Home in Cool New Locker Rooms.



The massive, circular locker room features a perforated metal ceiling and an individual space for each player's uniform.



First Niagara Center, a premier sports and entertainment facility located in downtown Buffalo, New York, is best known as the home of the Buffalo Sabres. The Sabres, a National Hockey League team founded in 1970, stands third in the Northeast Division and ninth in the Eastern Conference. When Terrence Pegula bought the team in 2011, the Sabres were gaining a new owner who brought in a new vision of the arena's appearance.

Pegula's first act of business as new owner was to completely renovate the entire team area, including locker room, the visiting team's locker space, training and medical facilities, the player's lounge and the locker rooms for the Buffalo Bandits lacrosse and Canisius College hockey teams. The \$8 million locker room renovation for the 30,000 square foot space is the largest construction project in the facility since its inception in 1996.

Cannon Design, Grand Island, New York, was the architectural firm chosen for the project. Conley Caseworks, an AWI member firm located in Elma, New York, was selected as the lead woodworking firm in charge of the assignment. However, due to the wide scope and tight deadline of the project, three additional AWI member woodworking firms were brought in by Conley to assist with the fabrication. Installation was done by Conley's parent company, Gypsum Systems.

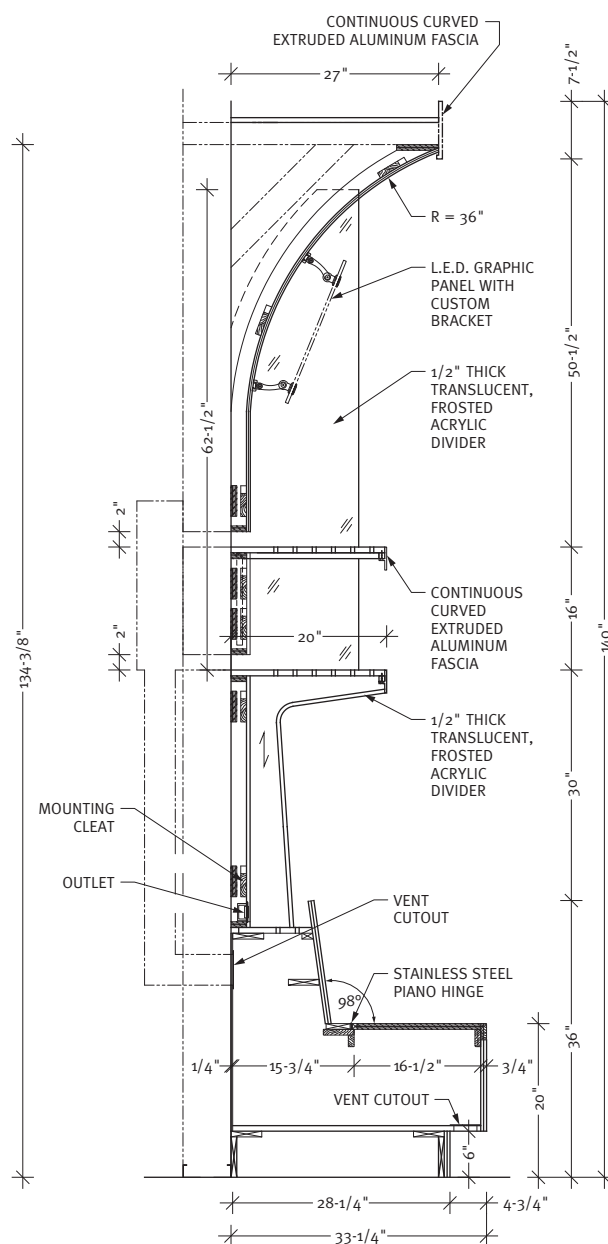
Thanks to the AWI Best Practices Groups, the woodworking firms were previously acquainted before collaborating on the project. The other firms included Leininger Cabinet & Woodworking, Lexington, Kentucky; Fremont Interiors, Carmel, Indiana; and Riverside Construction Services, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Cannon completed the project design during the course of seven months, while the woodworking team completed the renovation within four months onsite. Given such a strict timeline, the architects and woodworkers both had to act quickly to solve problems. David Lock of Conley Caseworks and



“Conley brings a culture of forward thinking which provides cost control, effective scheduling, and increased profitability. Our most consistent client feedback point commends how all business is undertaken with the highest levels of professionalism.”

– David Lock,
President, Conley Caseworks



SECTION
@ Typical Locker "A"



ENNIS 63

GERBE 42

VANEK 26



at a glance

AWI MANUFACTURING MEMBER:

Conley Caseworks

LOCATION:

Elma, New York

ESTABLISHED:

1992

SCOPE OF WORK:

Architectural Millwork, Cabinets, Countertops, Finish Carpentry and a variety of interior design elements

AWI MANUFACTURING MEMBER:

Leininger Cabinet & Woodworking, Inc.

LOCATION:

Lexington, Kentucky

ESTABLISHED:

1950

FACILITY:

40,000 square feet

AWI MANUFACTURING MEMBER:

Fremont Interiors

LOCATION:

Carmel, Indiana

ESTABLISHED:

60+ years

AWI MANUFACTURING MEMBER:

Riverside Construction Services

LOCATION:

Cincinnati, Ohio

ESTABLISHED:

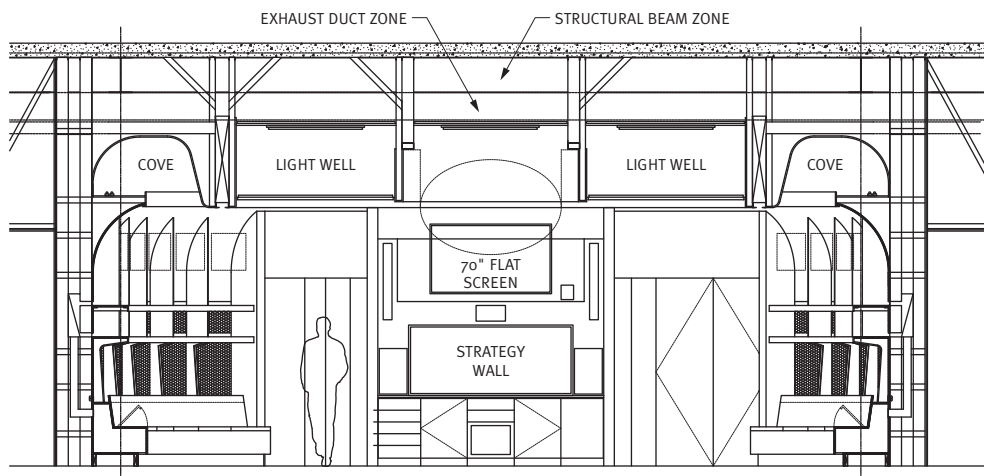
1993

FACILITY:

21,000 square feet

EMPLOYEES:

30



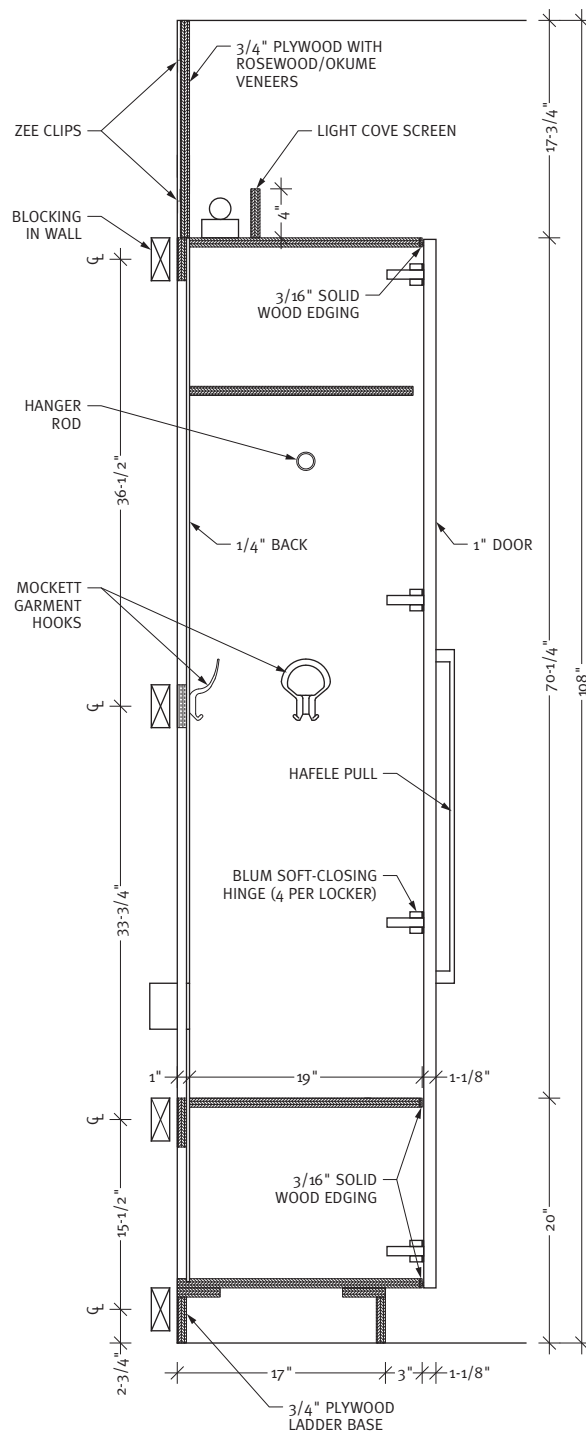
CROSS SECTION
@ Team Locker Room



Visiting teams assemble in a locker room elegantly clad in the warmth of Rosewood.

John Leininger of Leininger Cabinet & Woodworking together produced a project budget. Kent Gilchrist of Fremont Interiors and Bob Krecji of Riverside Construction Services joined in to agree upon standard core selections, construction technique, and hardware selections.

"The key was that everyone possessed a comprehensive knowledge of the Architectural Woodwork Standards," Lock explains.



SECTION
@ Personal Lockers



Cool Palette

The main goal was to renovate the outdated facilities and to create spaces that improve the interaction and circulation of players, coaches and staff from the moment they enter the building to the moment they take to the ice. The Buffalo Sabres sought to create a new standard for player and team spaces in the NHL that would make players want to join the organization and fight to stay.

"We wanted to bring a sense of warmth into the design of our project," says Frank Cravotta, vice president of creative services for the Sabres. "In our research, we noticed that many other facilities were using lighter woodwork and made the decision early to let our design team find a darker, warmer wood that would balance the other cool features that were being developed into the space."

Cravotta said the team's main concern for wood was color, durability and quality. The architectural team chose Rosewood which achieved the goals of providing a sense of warmth and elegance to the locker room area. Rosewood veneer was incorporated in spaces the players, staff and coaches use on a daily basis. The wood was assimilated into almost every aspect of the project to create a unifying element in the players' spaces.

The woodworking team produced a prototype section of the most complex element of the main locker room, which allowed for the hockey team staff to adjust custom elements that were being fabricated. "Without that prototype, we would have been making adjustments well after the room was complete," explains Cravotta.



Rosewood veneer banding with brushed aluminum accents fill the Wall of Fame space where key players and historic team moments are recognized.

The dark, reddish wood was also used in the Wall of Fame section, where key players and moments in Sabres history are recognized. Installing Rosewood in that space accentuates the historical significance of the organization. A perforated metal ceiling was installed in the team room to accent the wood and further complete a look of sophistication.

The entire renovation integrates state-of-the-art audio/visual and broadcast upgrades, enhancing the team's ability to review "in-game" video, as well as allowing the team, coaches and staff to monitor fitness programs and nutrition plans. The architectural woodwork team fabricated wall paneling, casework, countertops, standing and running trim, benches,

decorative metals, and solid surfacing for the project.

Unique Challenges

"Given the non-stop nature of professional sports, the Sabres had a very small window for this project to undergo design and construction," says Ike Lowry, AIA, LEED AP. "The project team began work at the end of the team's 2010 campaign and

worked diligently to ensure the project completed before the start of the 2011 season."

According to Lowry, the planning effort involved the careful study and understanding of how an NHL team goes about its daily regimen at the arena – from the relationship between the team room and the ice surface, the strength and conditioning area and the player dining room, to the



The players dining room features striking wood paneling on the ceiling, a custom wood dining table and cozy built-in fireplace.

separation of visiting teams and the national media from the home team, to the location of support and treatment spaces.

“Early on, it became evident that our window to produce this millwork would be very narrow. That opening constricted even further as we worked through design details,” Lock said. “We leaned on digital geometry

on this project harder than ever before. In the end, everything fit exactly.”

The Team’s Team

Due to the personal relationships among team members, collaboration on this project was particularly friendly and cooperative.

“The entire design team immediately offered all of their mobile contact informa-

tion, and made themselves available seven days a week to work out the necessary details,” Lock recalls. “We have never experienced this level of cooperation with an architect/designer, and it truly helped make the project move at an incredible pace.”

Cravotta agrees that the working relationship on the project was great. “Like many of the vendors working on

this project, the woodworking firm was put under incredible pressure to complete a space that was extremely complex. We were lucky to have worked with them in previous projects and the communication was excellent.”

“We had a very strong relationship with Conley Caseworks that benefitted this project, Lowry adds. “Both parties felt they could

communicate with one another openly and honestly and their organization delivered every time we needed them. This renovation project is stronger thanks to the work of Conley Caseworks and the strong support and relation-

ship they provided.”

The Buffalo Sabres locker room area is now an impressive sports facility, and the owner is more than pleased with the outcome. “The main locker room is one of the finest in all of profes-

sional sports, compound curved features are covered in Rosewood, the execution was excellent and the seamless nature of the woodwork is quite amazing,” Cravotta concludes. 🌐

PROJECT:
Buffalo Sabres Locker Rooms
Buffalo, NY

PROJECT OWNER:
Buffalo Sabres Hockey Team
Buffalo, NY

WOODWORKERS:
Conley Caseworks
Elma, NY

Fremont Interiors
Carmel, IN

**Leininger Cabinet
& Woodworking**
Lexington, KY

**Riverside Construction
Services**
Cincinnati, OH

ARCHITECT:
Cannon Design
Grand Island, NY

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:
Gypsum Systems, Inc.
Elma, NY

PHOTOGRAPHER:
Tim Wilkes
Rochester, NY

