



COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT CASE STUDY

The First National Center Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Owner

NE Development, Cornerstone Development Partners

Management/Development Company

NE Development, Cornerstone Development Partners

Type of Project

Historic, Urban Redevelopment, Mixed-Use, Hotel/
Hospitality

Size

1.1 million square feet

Architects

Architects Design Group, FlickMars, ADG Blatt, and
EverGreene Architectural Arts

Major Tenants

146 guest room Marriott Autograph Hotel, Lucchese
Bootmaker, Drybar, Plenty Mercantile, Stock and Bond
Steakhouse, The Gilded Acorn, Tellers Wood-Fired Italian
Grill, The Great Hall, Library of Distilled Spirits, Paint Nail
Bar, King Ranch Saddle Shop and The Barbershop

Demographic

The population within the 4.4-square-mile downtown
is approximately 11,000 residents and 1.4M in Metro
Oklahoma City.

Public Sector Support

Tax Increment Financing (retail TIF), state and national
historic tax credits, New Markets Tax Credits

Challenges

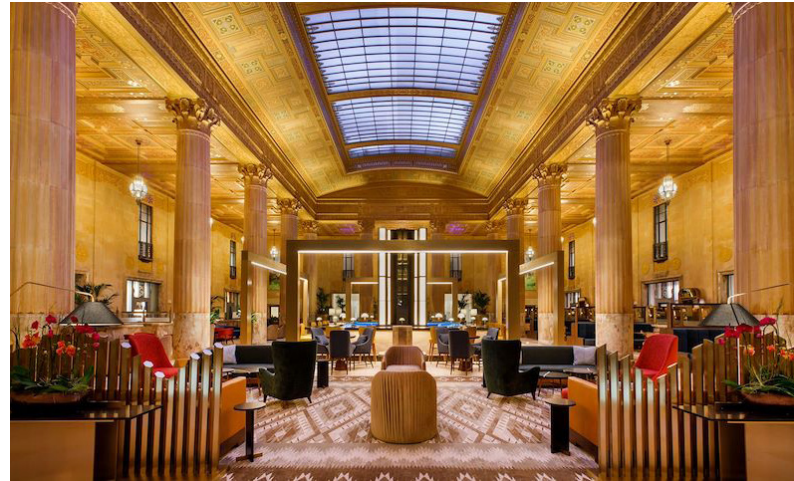
Preservation of original architecture

From the perspective of city leaders, The National Center is not just a redevelopment project; it is a beacon of urban renewal and a cultural revival for Oklahoma City. The project sits strategically at 120 N. Robinson Avenue, a prime location that taps into the bustling downtown traffic and the historic charm of the area. Originally developed in the mid-20th century, this landmark building had fallen into disrepair but held the potential to anchor the revitalization of the city's core. By 2020, The National had become a crucial part of downtown Oklahoma City, contributing significantly to its economic and social revitalization.

New Market and New Vision

The renovation of The National reflects the changing dynamics of Oklahoma City's downtown, which was adapting to the shifting demands for retail real estate that

combines residential, commercial and cultural spaces. The project highlights the city's commitment, which started with the Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) initiative in 1993, to transform and invigorate Oklahoma City's urban landscape. Without the collaborative effort between city planners and developers like NE Development and Cornerstone Development Partners, projects of this scale and impact would not have been feasible.



As The National stood in the early 2000s, its future was uncertain. It competed with more modern developments and suffered from years of neglect. However, the vision shared by Gary Brooks and his late partner, Charlie Nicholas, was to transform this historic site into a thriving mixed-use complex. The project was set to include luxury residential units, high-end retail spaces and premier dining venues; all while preserving the building's original architectural features.

Innovative Development and Community Partnership

This transformative project involved converting the old bank building into a dynamic space that now includes a 146-room Marriott Autograph Hotel, upscale eateries like Stock and Bond Steakhouse, and various high-end retailers such as Lucchese Bootmaker and The Gilded Acorn. Each tenant was carefully chosen to align with the luxury, historic aesthetic of the development and the target demographic of both tourists and affluent locals.

A partnership with Oklahoma City was crucial for the realization of The National. The city facilitated the project by managing the extensive remediation required to deal with environmental hazards like asbestos and lead-based paint. A significant public finance initiative included a \$1.8 million low-interest loan for these efforts, demonstrating the mutual benefits of public-private partnerships in urban redevelopment.



Sustainable Growth and Community Engagement

Following the project's revival of this historic structure, The National has spurred further development in the surrounding area and has become a central gathering place for Oklahoma City's downtown community. Its success reflects broader trends in urban redevelopment where mixed-use projects serve as catalysts for economic growth and community building.

The National stands as a landmark project for Oklahoma City, symbolizing the successful fusion of historic preservation with modern urban planning. This project has not only enhanced the architectural landscape of Oklahoma City, but it also revitalized its downtown area, creating a vibrant hub for business and leisure. Its development during a period of economic uncertainty showcases the enduring value of good real estate coupled with visionary planning and strong community partnerships.