

Client: 1K Fulton / A&D Firm: Sterling Bay / Glazier: Glass Solutions

Project Challenge: 1K Fulton is a former cold storage facility in Chicago’s West Loop. Originally built in 1920, the structure was transformed by Chicago based developer Sterling Bay and Hartshorne Plunkard Architects into a cutting edge LEED Gold certified building offering 550,000 square feet of office and retail space.

Historically at the intersection of three railroads in Chicago’s legendary meatpacking district, the location now provides a home for Google’s Chicago headquarters in one of the city’s most popular neighborhoods.

Sterling Bay was searching for a partner to produce an ambitious glass feature wall for the lobby. They needed a collaborator that could provide the type of brilliant color that would do justice to their project, an important homage to the building’s incredible backstory. As Regina Stilp, Principal and Director of Design at Sterling Bay describes, “The vibrancy of the color photography is spectacular and we wanted to make sure it was portrayed properly. It’s important that people can see the image and understand what it is.”



1K Fulton by Sterling Bay / Photographer: Scott Shigley

Skyline's Solution:

Recently presented developer of the year from the Chicago Commercial Real Estate Awards, Sterling Bay has put a lot of hard work into reinventing Chicago's neighborhoods. The collaboration with Hartshorne Plunkard Architects on 1K Fulton became an instant success, immediately gaining tech titan Google as an early tenant.

In their search for a Chicago home, Google desired the sort of authenticity they found in New York City in what was formerly New York's Gansevoort market. The inviting contrast of high quality, historic architecture and cutting edge technology at 1K Fulton is a perfect match. Although almost a century of extreme temperature fluctuations required the brick envelope of the building to be discarded, the reinforced concrete skeleton underneath remains robust, in what could be seen as an analogy for the neighborhood as a whole. Despite major renovations, the predominant strength of the neighborhood—its location—remains vital to this day.

Upon purchasing the building, Sterling Bay discovered that the antiquated refrigeration system had miraculously continued running for nearly 100 years, creating a spectacular ice-covered interior landscape. Serendipitously, Gary Roberts, who was working as night watchmen at 1K Fulton prior to construction, is an amateur photographer with an interest in ice photography. While on the job, he photographed the frozen formations and captured an integral part of the building's history. "It was very fortunate," says Regina Stilp of Sterling Bay. "We definitely wanted to preserve it and honor the ice in a prominent position in the lobby."

The clarity and translucency of ice made glass the ideal material choice to properly convey the beauty of the original composition. Skyline Design was chosen for the unique ability to apply vivid, lifelike color to glass, using an environmentally friendly combination of etching and printing that ensures dynamic, quality graphic and photographic reproduction. The resulting design employed the AST I/Etch, four color printing process to apply the custom photography of the ice to 22 glass panels, each 36" wide by 72 ¼ " high, mounted with standoffs on the wall. The translucency achieved through the AST I technique allowed the panels to be backlit with high efficiency LED lighting. As Suzanne DeBauge, the Skyline Design sales lead expressed, "Because we are directly applying the image onto the glass, we are able to achieve very intense color. When you are backlighting something, you really want that color to pop."



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Result:

As Chicago's west loop continues to evolve, 1K Fulton has set an exceptional example of integrating contemporary technology into a historically important structure. Rather than replace the past, it is honored—a sentiment best illustrated in the collaboration with Skyline Design. The floor-to-ceiling glass panels in the lobby display a history that not only captures and preserves the past, but is also contemporary for the people who will continue to pass by the lobby everyday.



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