

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS RETROFIT PROGRAM

Case Study

Historica Developments

Historica Developments is a prominent property development and management company in Saint John. For the past 10 years, the company has helped transform uptown Saint John, specializing in restoring high-end historical properties in the city's core. Their goal is to make these buildings viable in the long term, while preserving their historic character for future generations.

The company, a customer of Saint John Energy, now owns 12 historic buildings in Saint John, including the former Aberdeen Hotel on Princess Street, Parrtown Place on King Street, and 99 Germain Street, home to Italian By Night restaurant, Rogue Coffee, Tuck Studio, Five and Dime and a number of rental apartments on the upper levels of the building.

Keith Brideau, president and CEO of Historica, says that when they purchased the 99 Germain Street building and began planning renovations it was a "no brainer" to start with an energy audit to determine the most cost effective ways to reduce energy consumption in the building and participate in the Commercial Building Retrofit Program.

Keith emphasizes that in their approach to restoring a historic building, it's important to strike a balance between making the building as efficient as possible, without losing the character that makes it so special. The building on Germain Street is home to beautiful heavy timber ceilings, as well as exposed brick that helps make the property so attractive. It was important to find

ways to improve the energy efficiency of the building in order to improve comfort, lower energy bills and help retain tenants.

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Through NB Power's Commercial Building Retrofit Program, Historica received \$2,000 for the energy audit of the building, helping the developer evaluate which upgrades aligned with their priorities and would realise the best payback. Their goal was to create an attractive environment for tenants, while also passing on the savings of lower energy bills.

The retrofit involved upgrading the roof insulation from R-4 to R-38, as well as replacing the single-pane windows with double-pane, low-e argon thermopane windows. By tightening up the envelope of the building, Keith says they ensure long-term savings for their tenants.

Replacing windows can be an expensive upgrade, but the original wood windows were significantly weathered and would regularly require maintenance time to re-paint – which factored into the decision-making in choosing to upgrade

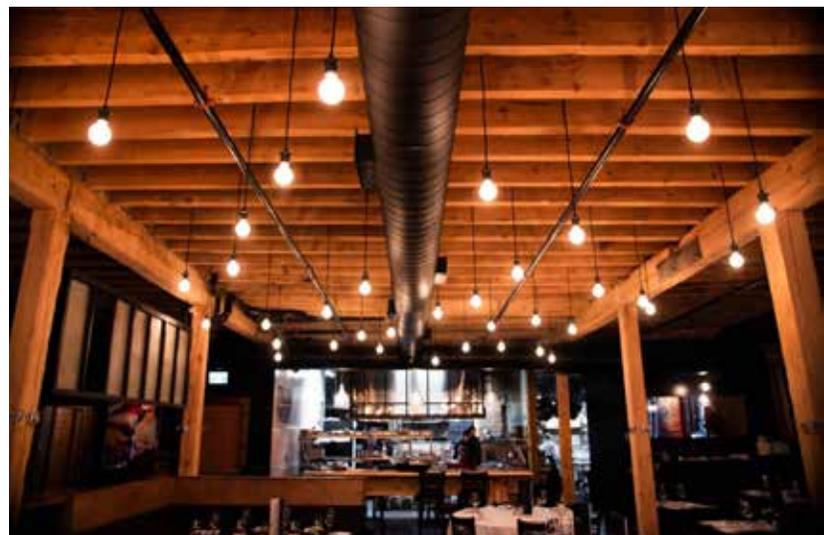
to more energy efficient windows. The building's new low-e argon, factory-painted aluminum windows will last for decades, says Keith, while creating a more comfortable and less drafty environment for tenants.

Historica also chose to upgrade the building's boilers to high efficiency heat pumps throughout the building. The upgrade provides peace of mind, says Keith, as the heat pumps are safer, more environmentally friendly, and provide more control as well as air-conditioning for their tenants.

Finally, the building underwent a general lighting retrofit, replacing the original light bulbs with LED lights. Although LED bulbs cost more in the short term, they use less energy and last much longer, reducing maintenance time and cost. The lighting retrofit also included installing motion sensors in common areas, also helping to conserve energy.

Through the Commercial Building Retrofit Program, Historica received a financial incentive of \$37,470 for this project, with projected annual savings of \$32,159. The building was able to retain much of its historic character, while improving retention by providing tenants with lower power bills.

"People move to our buildings because we keep energy costs down, and we provide modern creature comforts without sacrificing character," said Keith. "I truly believe that efficiency upgrades are a key to sustainability in the real estate business long term."



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