



Considerations for Repurposing Existing Buildings

By Caitlyn Angelini, PE

Are you considering repurposing a building or multiple buildings on your campus? The existing conditions of a building often shape future programming opportunities. Understanding the limitations and possibilities of the existing conditions will help to minimize expensive code and infrastructure upgrades. Here are 5 items to consider for your next renovation project:

1. **Construction type** – What materials were used during original construction? Building codes and local regulations dictate the uses allowed in a building based on the construction materials and building size. Upgrading the construction type of a building can be a costly and unexpected add to a project.
2. **Egress** – The existing egress system is comprised of exit stairs, corridors, and both interior and exterior doors. Understanding the capacity of the existing egress components plays a critical part in understanding future program flexibility. Adding convenience stairs, horizontal exits, and/or upgrading the fire alarm system can provide benefits to the existing egress system.
3. **Fire Protection** – An automatic fire suppression system is the most common approach to increasing life safety and eliminating the potential for catastrophic property damage. Installing an automatic sprinkler system provides greater adaptability and potential cost savings in other areas of design.
4. **Accessibility** – Providing accessible features throughout a building provides greater inclusivity for all. Codes and standards require the removal of barriers in existing buildings and accessibility improvements based on the scope of work being completed.
5. **Infrastructure** – A review of the existing MEP equipment allows an understanding of the remaining life expectancy of the equipment. Further, many occupancies have differing requirements when it comes to lighting, ventilation, and plumbing fixtures. Does the existing infrastructure support the intended program or will major renovations be required?

Many aspects of an existing building must be reviewed to determine the feasibility of a new or altered program. AKF's well-rounded team can address the code implications and infrastructure upgrades needed for your next project. Don't hesitate to reach out to learn more about how AKF is powering human potential in the spaces where we live, work, heal, and grow.