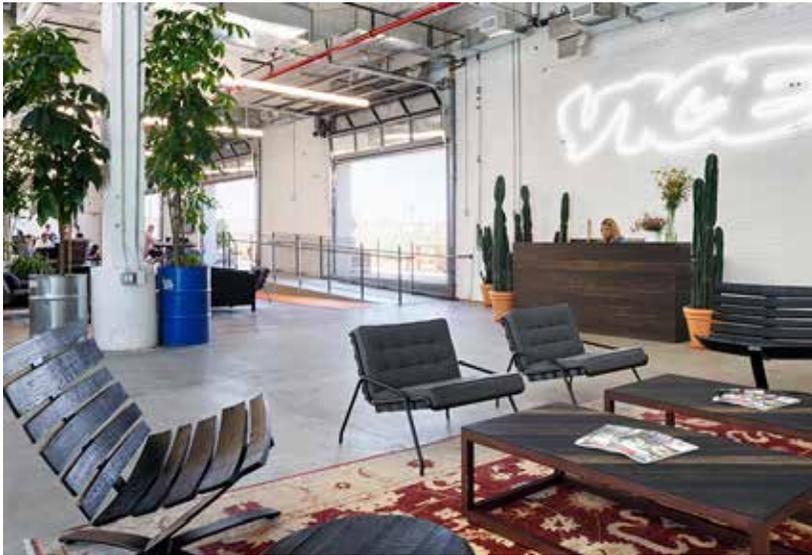


Bold, Unvarnished and Original **The Switzer Group Creates New HQ for Vice Media**

New York, September 18, 2015—Global youth news and entertainment powerhouse Vice Media has taken over 65,000 usable sq. ft. of space in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, for its edgy new corporate headquarters and film studio. For the fast-track, multiphase adaptive reuse project, lead interior architects The Switzer Group, with project team members Lilker Associates Consulting Engineers, Bar Construction and Vice Media’s in-house architecture and design group, created a striking media compound with an intentionally raw, exposed vibe that mirrors the company’s intrepid image.



The complex design-build project links two adjacent early 20th century brick, steel, wood and concrete buildings: a three-story, 21,000 sq. ft. former Domino Sugar warehouse at 49 South 2nd Street and a two-story 44,000-plus sq. ft. facility—an erstwhile theater, recording studio and restaurant—at 289 Kent Avenue. The South 2nd Street building and portions of the Kent building, which has a new penthouse addition, are currently occupied. Full project completion is anticipated this fall.

Maintaining its industrial quality and proportions, the Switzer Group converted the Kent building’s former garage to a light-filled entrance lobby and reception that anchors the complex and fans out to a main café bar, lounges and access to the South 2nd Street’s collaborative office space, conference rooms and executive offices. Through a series of bay doors, the entire lobby level opens to an outdoor “living room” deck and green roof garden, challenging the boundaries between interior and exterior space. Vice’s Kitchen Filming Studio, a working professional kitchen, and two conference rooms, are currently in construction and will provide additional access to daylight on the lobby level.

“Converting the garage to a wide open, spacious lobby reception area and making it fluid with the surrounding neighborhood set the tone for the space,” says Switzer Principal Stewart Fishbein, RA. “Double height ceilings, exposed pipes, comfortable distressed furnishings placed sparingly and a restored antique bar, relocated from Vice’s former location, add a rugged aesthetic.”

Partially completed and operational, the lower level of the Kent building is undergoing transformation to a full-service production center that will house 90 edit suites, workstations, studios, control rooms, sound edit rooms, color correction rooms, a screening room, new ADA-compliant restrooms, showers and bicycle racks.

Providing structural and interior design and build-out, The Switzer Group conducted zoning studies, designed new infrastructure including elevators, and modified the building envelope and egress. Ongoing collaboration with Mimi Madigan, Design Architect for Vice, ensured program goals were achieved and the company’s unorthodox identity conveyed throughout.

“To preserve an authentic Williamsburg quality, we repurposed much of the original materials—concrete floors; brick walls, which were stripped and exposed; and roughly finished steel beams and supports,” says Jason Foster, Project Coordinator for The Switzer Group. A combination of glass and steel frames the space, with new steel fabricated onsite that blends in with the building’s existing material context. “Unique features of the Kent building, including arched ceilings and Y-shaped columns, were maintained and enhanced,” adds Foster.



Everything about the project was bold, from the audacious 12 month timetable to the super structure of the existing buildings, with 14 to 17 ft. floor-to-ceiling heights. So too, were the engineering challenges facing Lilker’s MEP, HVAC and fire protection team, according to Lilker Senior Associate John Siciliano.

“The two buildings required upgraded gas and water systems, separate air-cooled rooftop building units to heat and cool the buildings, and additional electrical capacity to handle the very large electronics systems and population load,” says Siciliano.

A 1,000 sq. ft. IDF data center, which sits atop the film studio on Kent Avenue, was fitted with redundant HVAC and a pre-action sprinkler system with compressed air instead of water to protect the center’s sensitive components. On the interior, large expanses of exposed duct work necessitated careful planning to meet aesthetic, as well as functionality, objectives.

Energy efficiency was achieved with the help of new windows, a carbon monoxide detection system that regulates the volume of air needed from the outside depending on occupancy, and LED lighting and specialty controls throughout.

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Founded in 1975, The Switzer Group (www.theswitzergroup.com) is a nationally ranked, award-winning interior architecture firm headquartered in Manhattan. A strategic space planning and design organization, The Switzer Group specializes in creating interiors that promote and achieve higher business performance.
