



STRUCTURA, Inc.

General Contractors

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Structura Inc., General Contractors for the Mellow Johnny's bike shop project in downtown Austin, announce project completion.

April 29, 2008—Austin, Texas— Leah Payne, a petite, thirty-something project manager for Structura, Inc., has a civil engineering degree and generally works on hospital build outs for Structura, Inc., a fledgling, one year old contracting firm owned by Rusty Morgan and Kevin Jones. She was assigned the Mellow Johnny's project, and as a LEED certified builder, Payne has been busy taking care to preserve the old building's authentic spirit. "This was a welcome change," she explained on a tour through the most recently completed Structura venture. "Though hospitals are definitely my specialty, and what I am known to do best, working on this project was a welcome challenge - just in different ways."

A retail bike shop, Mellow Johnny's celebrated its Grand Opening to the public on May 10th. The building at 400 Nueces Street, between 4th and 5th Streets and across the street from the still under construction, august Austin 360 Condominium, has a colorful history; one that Structura and Payne took great pains to maintain.

Most recently a homeless shelter that has since been moved to East Austin, Mellow Johnny's 18,000 square foot facility has also housed paint and beer distributorships, to name a few, and boasts a huge basement – uncommon to the Texas area.

On the main floor, a dumb waiter sits in the near-front area, left over from what the owners assume were the beer distributor's day, used probably to carry kegs of beer from the basement, up, and then probably again was put to use for the paint factory. Today, Mellow Johnny's will undoubtedly put it to good use.

"The antique windows throughout," which are striking, multi-paned, and frosted white and blue with metal trim work, "were in relatively good condition when we came in here, so it was really important to us to use them. We only had to replace a few pieces, and we were careful to maintain authenticity when finding recycled parts." The exposed rafters throughout the main floor make an impressive show for the high ceilings, and again, are the original building materials. Old brick walls are also original, and any that had to be taken down for structural changes were reused in other areas, including in the making of planters for the exterior of the site. "Any of the old materials in the building that we couldn't reuse on site went back to the owner of the property. Waste was not an option in this project."

"The basement," she went on, "is a wide open space where the options for use will be many." The basement walls and support columns are roughly hewn, battered white and, again, their original state has been preserved. "The bike shop will include a pedestrian coffee shop, and men's and women's dressing areas for commuters. There are heavy rolling garage doors used throughout so that bikers can easily carry their bikes in and out of the building," Payne points out.

Someday, Mellow Johnny's plans to teach training courses to bikers on how to best become a full-time bicycle commuter and forgo parking and gasoline consumption for trips downtown. There is also talk of a rooftop sports bar, one that Structura has already planned for by adding footing and shoring to build out a second floor. "There will be an added glass panel placed here one day," Payne points to where a seemingly misplaced panel of wood lays and intact in the middle of an otherwise even floor. "So that way, the basement can borrow some of the light from upstairs, and everyone down there won't feel so shut in!"

There had been many offers in the past to turn the old yellow brick building into a restaurant, but the owner didn't want to see it chopped up and changed so much. "Though this place," Payne explained, "is dramatically different from three months ago when we at Structura were given the job, it still looks much the same structurally."

Clearly, the Structura team, along with Michael Hsu, the Principal Designer for the Mellow Johnny's store, and an Associate with the American Institute of Architects, thought a great deal about detail when they won the bid for this project, a short deadline only serving as inspiration.

For more information about Structura, Inc. and to set up interviews, please contact Christine Cox, Public Relations.

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