

THE BRADBURY BUILDING'S FAMED SKYLIT ATRIUM.

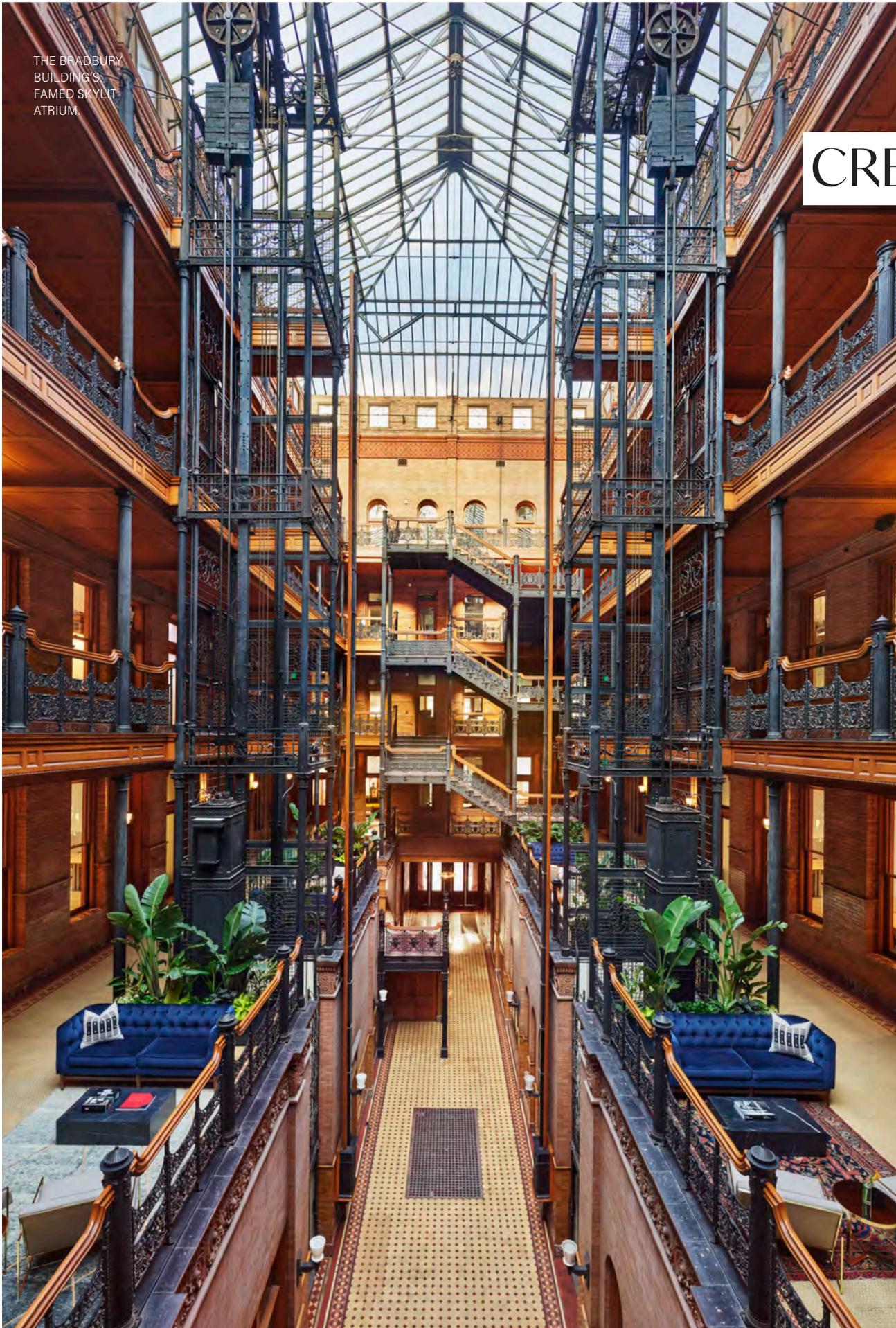
CREATIVE REFUGE

For NeueHouse Bradbury, a vibrant co-working space for the creative class, DesignAgency crafted a refined and sophisticated environment inside an L.A. landmark.

WRITTEN BY JENN THORNTON

ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

Still splendid after all these years, the **Bradbury Building**—a strapping architectural sentinel in Downtown Los Angeles—was clearly built to last. Constructed by draftsman George Wyman in 1893 from the original design by architect Sumner Hunt, the landmarked structure has seen eras and all manner of stylistic changes come and go in its long march to the current moment.





NEUTRAL FURNISHINGS, TASK LIGHTING AND NATURAL LIGHT ARE DEFINING FEATURES OF WORKSPACES THAT VIEW THE 70-FOOT VICTOR CLOTHING MURAL "THE POPE OF BROADWAY," PAINTED BY ELOY TORREZ IN 1985.

Commissioned by industrialist Lewis Bradbury, the glorious Romanesque building is best-known these days for its heavily Instagrammed atrium, a skylit stunner highlighting an extravagance of wrought-iron railings and birdcage elevators. Yet, even inside such a clear and obvious jewel, NeueHouse Bradbury manages to shine—and in supremely elegant fashion.

All credit goes to the partnership between NeueHouse, a private membership club for creators and collaborators, and L.A.- and Toronto-based DesignAgency. For an award-winning practice that draws heavily on narrative to create unique spaces with a distinct visual identity, DesignAgency could not have scripted it better. Here was a building with deep ties to Hollywood—the Bradbury has appeared

in a number of films, from *Chinatown* to *Blade Runner*—and an obvious sense of cinema. With its elegant red oak paneling and Italian marble accents, it has the feel of a set piece. DesignAgency proved a worthy auteur for what turned out to be particularly fabulous production, resulting in a modern and elegant workspace for today's creative professional.

"Light and airy, the space encourages members to seek refuge—creative and otherwise—from bustling Downtown L.A.," explains Anwar Mekhayech, founding partner of DesignAgency. Refuge is right. The array of amenities at NeueHouse Bradbury is far from conventional watercooler fare. There is a dawn-to-dusk café/bar, for starters, along with a communal gallery and atelier workspace, a wellness room,

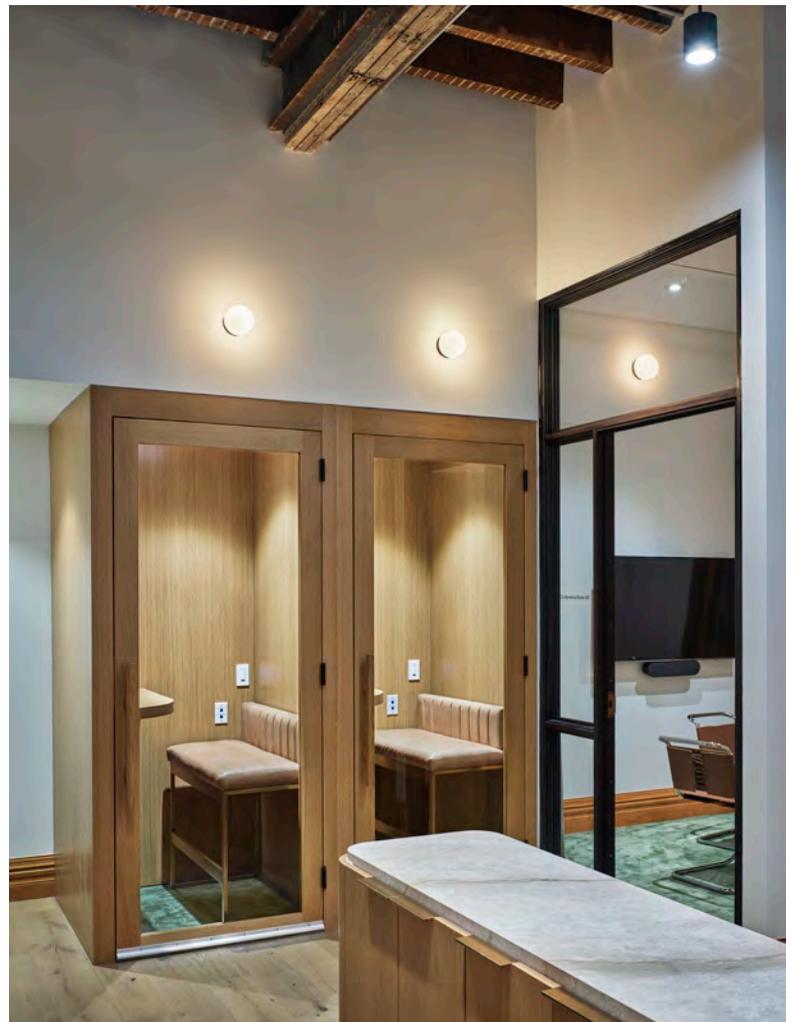
NeueHouse Bradbury is exemplar of the idea that some things never go out of style. They can, however, on occasion and with a few thoughtful design decisions, be styled up.



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) A CHIC ENCLAVE WITH AIRY LINEN DRAPERY, AN OVERHEAD PILOT LIGHT BY RICH BRILLIANT WILLING, WALNUT EAMES STOOL, CUSTOM FURNITURE BY ORIOR AND ONE OF 20 ORIGINAL BRICK FIREPLACES; THE BOARDROOM FEATURES A CIRCULAR STUDIOTWENTYSEVEN TABLE AND A TRIAD CHANDELIER BY APPARATUS STUDIO; CUSTOM-DESIGNED OAK PHONE BOOTHS PROVIDE MEMBERS WITH A PRIVATE SPACE FOR CALLS OR WORK.

meeting rooms and a series of plug-and-play studios for committed businesses. There are also four multi-purpose lounges, or congregation spaces, around the mezzanine that integrate it with the building's uber-famous foyer.

For the team at NeueHouse, the start was always the structure. "As a creative company and team, we have always been fascinated and motivated by historically significant and architecturally iconic buildings," says Josh Wyatt, CEO at NeueHouse. "I would argue that the Bradbury Building is the most architecturally significant building in Los Angeles and one of the few spaces that evokes an emotional response as soon as you enter its light-filled atrium." With the goal to create an ethereal, calming and socially welcoming oasis with muted colors and soft textures that is conducive to members' creative energy, DesignAgency embarked on a key reading of the room, so to speak, ultimately deciding to base its treatment on respecting the building's original materials rather than their re-creation, and working off the brick and architectural elements including non-operable fireplaces throughout.



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) AN L-SHAPED SECTIONAL BY ARCHITECT /DESIGNER PATRICIA URQUIOLA AND PALETTE COFFEE TABLE BY JAMIE HAYON ADORN THE LOUNGE; CHAIRS BY ORIOR PAIRED WITH MID-CENTURY-INSPIRED ARMCHAIRS IN THE “LIVING ROOM”; THE BAR FEATURES ARCHED OAK PANELING, AN ANTIQUED MIRROR BACKSPLASH, BRASS SHELVING AND FROSTED GLOBE PENDANTS BY LEE BROOM.



ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

Spanning 25,000 square feet, NeueHouse Bradbury occupies the entire second floor of the muscular structure. Choosing not to compete with the building itself—sensing, perhaps, the futility of such a feat when faced with a strong physical presence—DesignAgency elected to highlight the historic charms and character of the architecture with a design that, while modern and fresh, is quietly honorific of history. The heritage building meant the studio also dealt with a number of constraints while maintaining its vision. In particular, there were some requirements for ceiling bulkheads that had to be maintained around the perimeter window walls. “We had to leave five feet of space around the new bulkheads but wanted to leave the existing exposed beam ceilings as much as possible, so navigating that balance was a bit of a challenge, but all in all we are very pleased with the result,” says Mekhayech.

“After the initial ‘wow moment’ of the atrium,” as Mekhayech describes it (and certainly as one feels it), NeueHouse members are greeted by a relaxing lounge in a simple and clean color palette featuring curvilinear furniture and pastel-colored upholstery that do much to feminize the space, which, in its more robust bones, leans masculine. The design choices inside the private studios and social spaces offer an immediate counterpoint to the spectacle of the atrium. Throughout these areas is an elevated mix of elements, with curated artwork, a soft parquet floor, airy linen drapery, neutral furnishings,

and copper task lighting, along with curvilinear furniture and frosted globe lighting offering a feeling of softness. Furnishings are mainly custom, with a sprinkling of vintage pieces, as well as selected lighting from British designer Tom Dixon. The color-blocking is quite contemporary, with green and burgundy tones playing exquisitely off the brick. Copious natural light, meanwhile, further illuminates the brick and wood beam interior, which is so beautifully harmonized it all but sings.

NeueHouse Bradbury is exemplar of the idea that some things never go out of style. They can, however, on occasion and with a few thoughtful design decisions, be styled up. Five stories high, in fact—most marvelously on the second floor. designagency.ca