

## Bloomingdale's SoHo



### *A Famed Façade Housing the Finest in Fashion and Design*

Offering a cast-iron and limestone facade on Broadway and a warehouse brick Crosby Street entrance, Bloomingdale's, SoHo attracts New York City shoppers seeking the latest styles. An edited version of Bloomingdale's 59th Street flagship store, the SoHo location eschews furniture and housewares for contemporary fashion.

Opened in April 2004, the store combined three 1860s buildings in a three-year, \$40 million renovation. The 90,000 square feet of retail space retains many of the buildings' original architectural features. "We wanted the space to be young and hip while still respecting the architectural elements that made it interesting," says Lisa Contreras, former senior vice president of creative resources at Tucci, Segrete & Rosen, the design firm that oversaw the renovation. Following the death of Dominick Segrete last May, TSR principals formed a new retail group for corporate design firm Mancini Duffy; Contreras specializes in finishes and products as its resource director.

"We reacted to the environment," says Contreras of the decision to combine the sleek look of Bloomingdale's iconic black and white with the rougher textures of brick and wood. "We gave the individual spaces their own identity but kept the strong Bloomingdale's statement."

## Valuable Venue



The buildings' historical appeal derives from their large windows, cast-iron columns, metal pan ceilings, wood floors and exposed brick. "You discover wonderful architectural surprises as you move through the building," says Shan DiNapoli, Bloomingdale's vice president of store design.

Over the past 35 years, SoHo's mid-19th century landmarked warehouses have transitioned from artists' lofts to a "charming area of retail spaces and some of the best restaurants in town," says DiNapoli.

Federated Department Stores, Bloomingdale's parent company, had long wanted a SoHo presence. The SoHo store is one-sixth the size of Bloomingdale's flagship location. "Our approach here was different," says DiNapoli. "We're targeting younger, more affluent shoppers.

"We have the greatest, the hippest, the best. Our thinking was 'what can we offer the customer that's different?'"

## Restoring and Renovating



Workers encountered unexpected pipes and beams as they tore down the old buildings' walls and ceilings. They discovered the street had been raised above the original entrance when the subway was constructed, accounting for the high ceilings on the lower level, which now houses the men's department. Some areas retain the original wood floors.

A major change was removing the entrance escalators that only went up to the third floor, leaving a dramatic, light-filled three-story opening. Relocating escalators to the center area between the original buildings

offers customers a glimpse of different departments through the former exterior windows as they move between floors.

### Painting Challenges



“The whole thing was like a puzzle,” says Frederick Gartner, president of MB/USA Painting, the project’s painting contractor. “Every floor had a different situation.” Bloomingdale’s, SoHo was the first project for the newly merged Murrell Brown Painting and USA Painting companies.

“We worked with some existing conditions that were in bad shape,” says Tom Brennan, MB/USA Painting’s head estimator. He lists working around the other trades and on-site changes as additional challenges.

MB/USA Painting’s assignments included cleaning the brick as well as painting walls and trim, mechanical equipment and the metal pan ceiling that had deteriorated in places. Each of the store’s nearly 200 cast-iron columns received a coat of Benjamin Moore® paint in Super White over intumescent fireproofing applied by another company.

“We also used 400 gallons just on the staircases,” says Gartner, recalling the long stairs that traversed the high-ceilinged six floors.

### Fashion’s Finest



At Bloomingdale’s, SoHo, the cutting-edge styles provide bursts of color against the historic setting and black-and-white motifs.

“The challenge in retail,” says Contreras, “is to pick up the coloration used in fashion to accentuate the merchandise but balance that with the merchandise changing frequently. We traditionally work in neutrals.”

Contreras cites her use of pink in the cosmetics department as one area where she responded to current fashion. “The pink is young and hip, but I don’t think it’s going to be outdated in five years. It is a fresh color.”

Freshness is an attribute that DiNapoli associates with the Benjamin Moore® colors she uses at home and in many Bloomingdale’s stores. Contreras and Brennan also praise the high quality of Benjamin Moore® paint and its suitability for both the historic and contemporary architectural elements.

The hands-on experience of working with a Civil War-era building was one that comes around only a few times in your life, says DiNapoli. Gartner agrees.

“I’m a New Yorker and started as a union painter,” says Gartner. “To actually put together a store down in SoHo was a job of a lifetime. I’ll never forget it.”

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-*Bloomingdale’s SoHo* appeared in the Spring 2005 issue of Ensemble® magazine.