

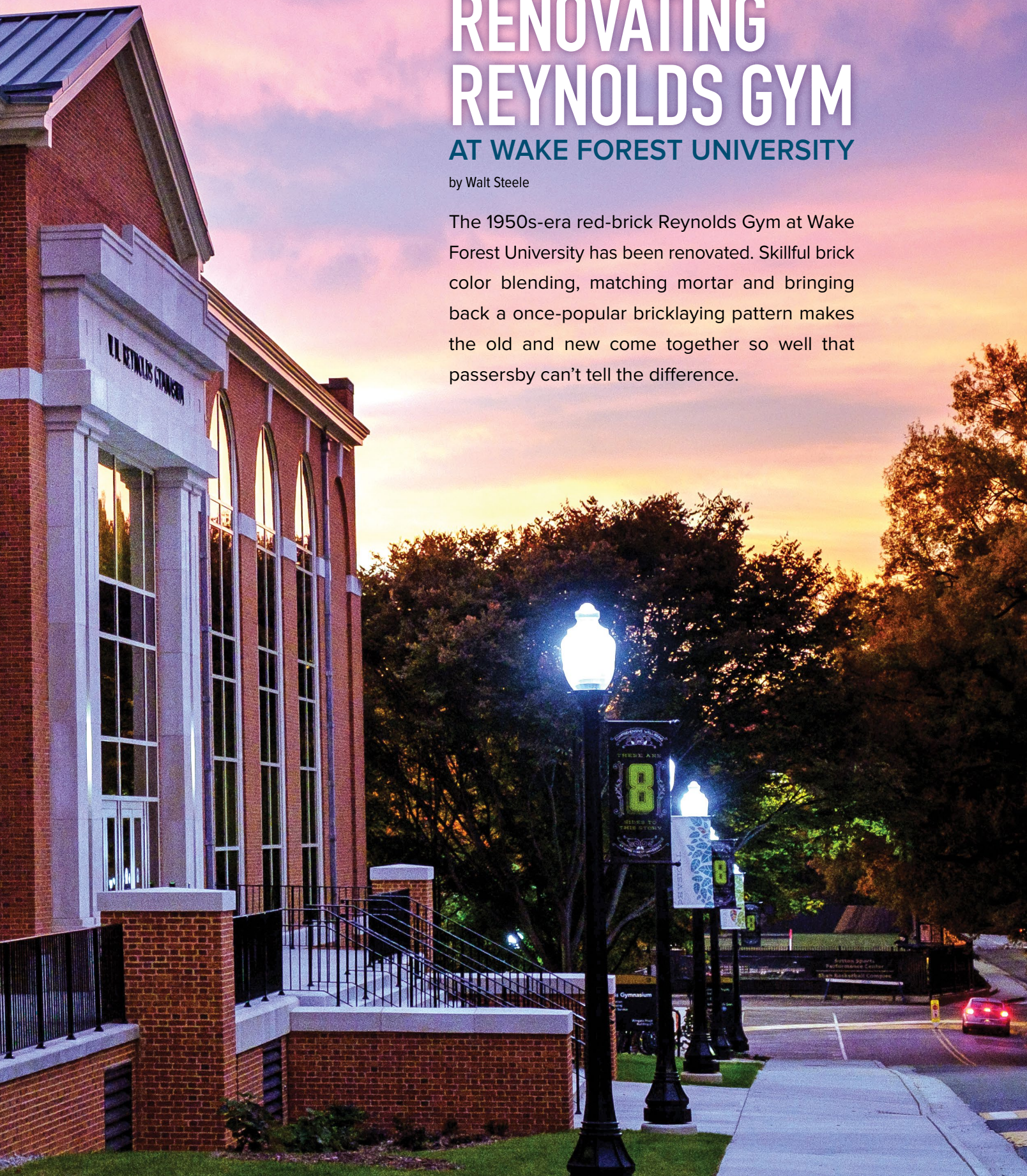


RENOVATING REYNOLDS GYM

AT WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

by Walt Steele

The 1950s-era red-brick Reynolds Gym at Wake Forest University has been renovated. Skillful brick color blending, matching mortar and bringing back a once-popular bricklaying pattern makes the old and new come together so well that passersby can't tell the difference.





Surroundings Creating Purpose

What comes to mind when you think of a college campus? Stately, red-brick buildings laid out around quadrangles shaded by oak trees, crisscrossed with paths of red clay pavers, some inscribed with the name of donors to long-ago capital campaigns.

For decades, colleges across the United States invested heavily to get exactly that look and for good reason: It ages well and the surroundings lend themselves to an importance of purpose.

These were places where young people are introduced to the importance of learning, which is the first step in success for them and progress for a society.

Less philosophically, these buildings are no less immune from the passage of time than are the students that pass through them. They may still fit in well with the college's particular architectural style, but be outdated, especially with increasing student populations, new technology, and changing needs for students, faculty and staff.

Smooth Transformations

The solution might be to build new, but open spaces on campus are often at a premium. Additions onto an existing building might work well, but the options

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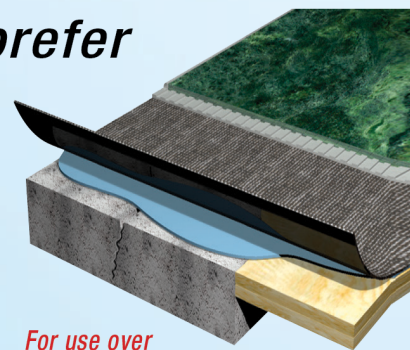
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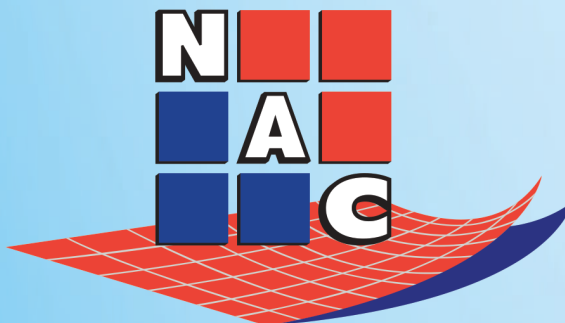
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might be limited, because brick laid decades ago might not be available any longer. Adding a vastly different color wouldn't work, because the visual effect would be jarring.

The only solution might be to find a similarly sized brick and then paint the whole building, which would both make the building inconsistent in appearance with its neighbors and cause higher maintenance costs in the future.

Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC, came up with an answer that involved converting the 1950s-era Reynolds Gym into a center for health and wellbeing, which set aside space for fitness, social interaction and studying.

Through careful planning and construction, they were able to meet the needs of today's

students and faculty, while keeping the exterior design consistent with surrounding buildings and the aesthetics of the campus.

The new gym used a blend of old brick taken down, cleaned and set aside; new similar brick made specifically for Wake Forest; and consistent mortar colors installed in old patterns, to make the 2018 version of a 60-year-old building look as though it had always been there.

Transforming Reynolds Gym

The last phase of the new Reynolds Gym and the Sutton Center, a two-story addition separated from the gym by a floor-to-ceiling glass atrium, opened in Spring 2018. Students and faculty were greeted by a state-of-the-art facility that

combined space for study and socializing with conventional cardio, weightlifting, a climbing wall, full-sized gyms and a pool.

It was exactly what students wanted—and was meant to happen that way. During the 2012-2013 academic year, a group of students met regularly with administrators—and gathered information from their classmates—to outline what they wanted to see in the new facility.

They wanted natural light, places for conversations and more exercise options, for starters. But more than that, they wanted a space on their own terms, because an existing fitness center was seen as too small; the student center was seen as a place for meetings and meals; the library was viewed as a place for study.

A Facility to Relax and Recharge

The students asked for a facility that would physically combine everything into one space that would be a place where they could go to relax and recharge—a place where social space would be a priority.

Brad Rodenburg, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, of Des Moines, Iowa-based RDG Planning &



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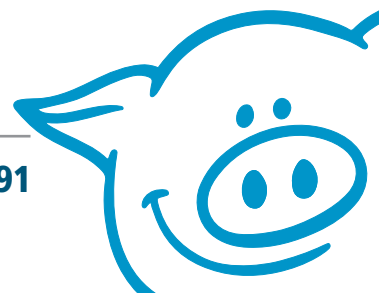
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Design, which oversaw the design of Reynolds Gym, said that taking a gym that was built in the 1950s style of bi-level and tri-level construction and converting it into a space more appropriate for today, with more open space and natural light, presented both design and construction challenges.

Adding Open Spaces and Natural Light

Physically, steel infrastructure had to be added to create the open spaces, to bring the building up to current code and to provide support so that exterior brick walls could be converted from brick to glass, to allow natural light in.

Rodenburg said that the first phase of the construction centered on building the Sutton Center, which had 46,000 square feet of space for fitness programming and campus activities and opened in 2015.

Adding New Fitness Equipment & Climbing Wall

The next phase, which was the Reynolds Gym proper, opened in August 2017 with new fitness equipment, a 6,000-square foot living room, a bouldering and climbing wall and fitness space for weight training and other activities.

The final phase of the renovation and transformation project was completed in April 2018. That phase renovated and enlarged the original 1956 pool, added more than 50,000 square feet of enhanced fitness space, including group fitness studios, multi-purpose rooms for intramural and club sports and a varsity court for the volleyball team.



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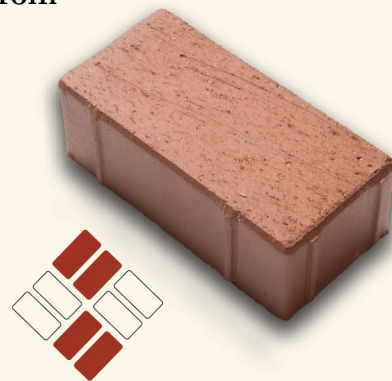
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The New Gym Emerges

Chris C. Poe, PE, who is assistant director of planning and construction for Wake Forest University and the project manager of the Reynolds Gym project, said that Reynolds Gym was one of the first buildings on campus and like all the others, was built of a darker red brick. The challenge was that the company that

made that brick went out of business, so replacements weren't available. Wake Forest University worked with Pine Hall Brick Company, which like Wake Forest is headquartered in Winston-Salem, to come up with a similar substitute for campus use called Deacon Blend Tumbled Modular Brick, which is manufactured to look old.

Still, seeing a wall with brick laid in the 1950s and then a wall with different brick laid in 2016 might well have been visually jarring. "The theme of the campus is a modified Georgian architecture with a dark brick," said Poe. "We have tried to pay respect to that and add modern touches, the glass openings to get light in there, without deviating too far from the original architecture."

Blending the Old and New

Poe said that the construction company carefully removed the original brick from the new window openings and used it elsewhere on the building in combination with the Deacon Blend. Another key to blending the old and the new was to reproduce an old brick laying pattern, popular in the 1950s, called Flemish Bond. That pattern alternates a full brick, then the end of a brick and then another full brick.

The combination of the pattern, a closely matched mortar and new clay bricks that were purposefully made in the same range of colors give the illusion that the wall has been there for decades.

"I know that it is there but a lot of people walk by and can't tell," said Poe. The biggest test for how well they did was for people who have spent four years—more if they were in Wake Forest's medical or law school or pursued a graduate degree—to take a second look after the improvements were completed. These alumni know Wake Forest, after all.

Building Up, Not Tearing Down

Poe said there are alumni who have toured the place and who have remarked about how pleased they are that the college kept the ornate brick archways that they remember from days gone by. Poe said those originals were torn down and reproduced exactly with new archways made out of new brick, right alongside the old.

"If you know anything about Wake Forest, you know that we are pretty committed to brick—brick buildings and brick walls," said Poe. "It is a big part of our campus and it's important to get it right. We did want to bring this building up to today and nobody wanted to tear it down. We wanted to have spaces that look like a modern fitness facility, and we did all we could to bring in natural light but still preserve the old building."



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Walt Steele is chief operating officer for Pine Hall Brick Company, America's largest manufacturer of genuine clay pavers. For more information, Steele can be reached at (800) 334-8689 and by email at walt-steele@pinehallbrick.com. For more information, please visit www.PineHallBrick.com

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