

HOME CHEF TEST KITCHEN

CHICAGO, IL



Home Chef, an ever-growing meal-kit business was in need of a larger test kitchen. After scouting for the perfect spot to house their endeavors, they settled on something quite iconic—a decommissioned Chicago Post Office straddling the Eisenhower Expressway. Redevelopment turned this abandoned building from 1996 into office space with its stunning Art Deco lobby restored as well as a food hall on the ground level.

The goal was to create a multi-functional kitchen, enabling staff to share workspace, cooking space and sampling opportunities. In addition, this culinary facility would serve as the hub for connecting administration activities including conference rooms, offices and also double as an ideal location for food photography stills or videos.

The construction project demanded quick coordination and rapid revisions, so the design team met regularly as the plans evolved. The design work began in fall of 2018, construction documents were issued in April 2019 and in October 2019 the project wrapped up with a final punchlist issued.

Details

Opening Date: Fall 2019

Equipment Cost: \$499,000

Kitchen Size: 3,048 SF

Offices/Workspaces/Conference

Room/Photo Studio: 7,417 SF

Scope

Full foodservice design for a new test kitchen

Challenges during design centered on budget and Chicago city code compliance. With resource constraints in place, a smart and cost-effective approach was implemented to ensure the project stayed within budget – work counters shifted from stainless steel materials usually used for foodservice applications to millwork construction found typically in architectural constructions.

To ensure compliance with Chicago city codes, a project goal of avoiding the installation of an additional make-up-air unit was achieved by reorganizing cooking workstations to share low volume exhaust hoods. This creative solution enabled them to maximize their exhaust capacity while staying within the 10k cfm limit.

