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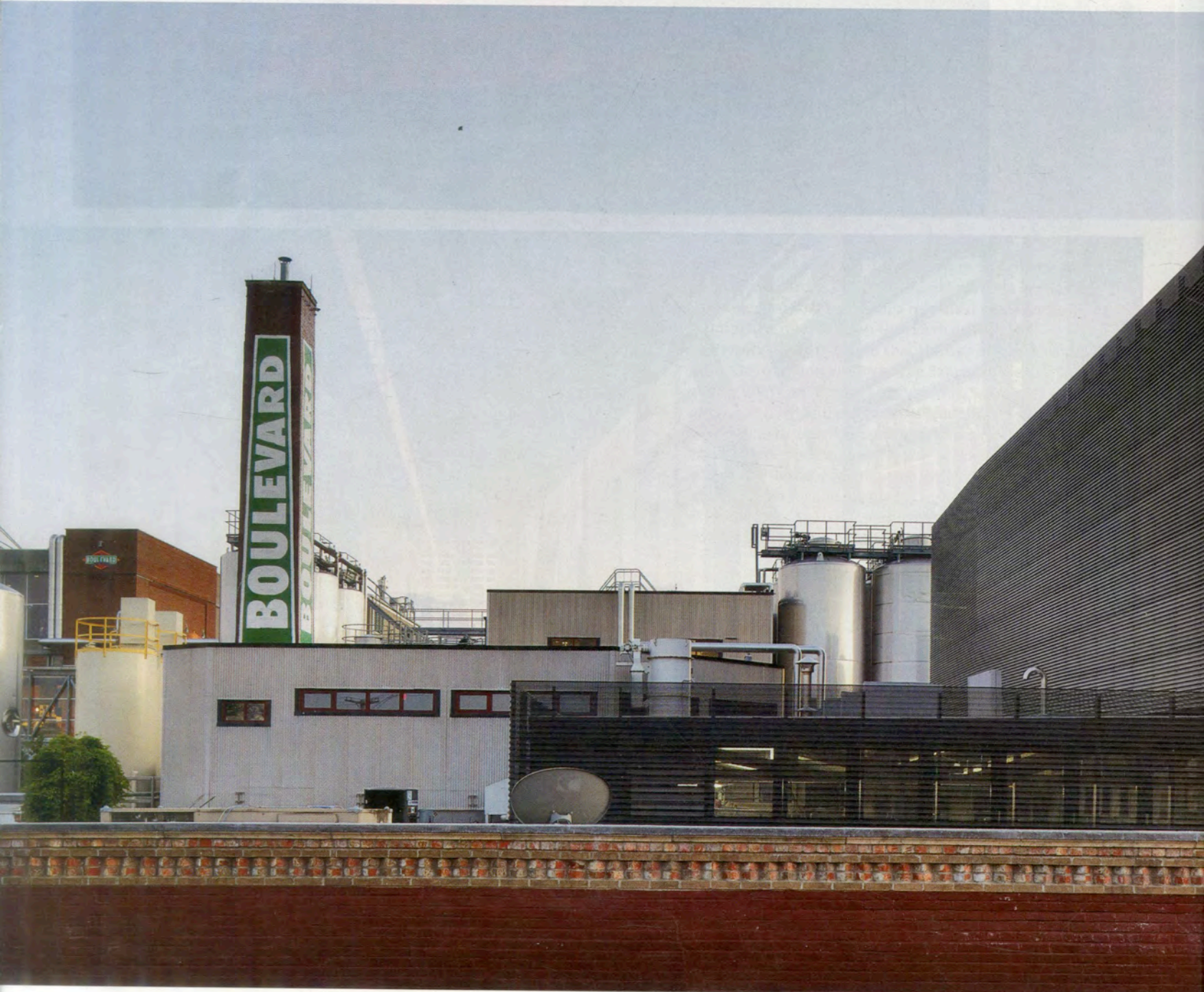
DARTMOUTH
LJUBLJANA
SHANGHAI
BAD MÜNSTER
NEW YORK
WINNIPEG
KANSAS CITY
NEW HAVEN

RENOVATION
ADDITION
ADAPTATION

Boulevard Brewing Company Cellar 1 Expansion | Kansas City, Missouri | El Dorado

TOP OF THE HOPS

A Kansas City design-build team creates a sensitively crafted display case for new high-capacity tanks at a hometown brewery. **BY ASAD SYRKETT**



ON VIEW From the roads beyond the factory, drivers get a view of fermentation tanks through a perforated-aluminum screen that ranges in transparency from 23 to 40 percent (right and below).



PHOTOGRAPHY: © MIKE SINCLAIR

“BEER,” BENJAMIN Franklin supposedly said, “is constant proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy.” In fact, Franklin wrote those words about wine, not ale and lager. But a deep reverence for beer and the brewing process is evident in a finely tuned addition at the Boulevard Brewing Company in Kansas City, Missouri. Led by architects at El Dorado, which also acted as the general contractor, the brewery’s Cellar 1 went from a utilitarian 1920s-era storage facility to a sleek, modern vitrine for vats of the increasingly popular Boulevard brand of brew. “When I started 15 years ago, we had 20 employees and made about 20,000 barrels of beer a year,” says Mike Utz, a plant engineer at Boulevard. “This year we’ll do about 175,000 barrels with 100 people. The company has grown like crazy.” Today the company’s beer is distributed in 25 states.

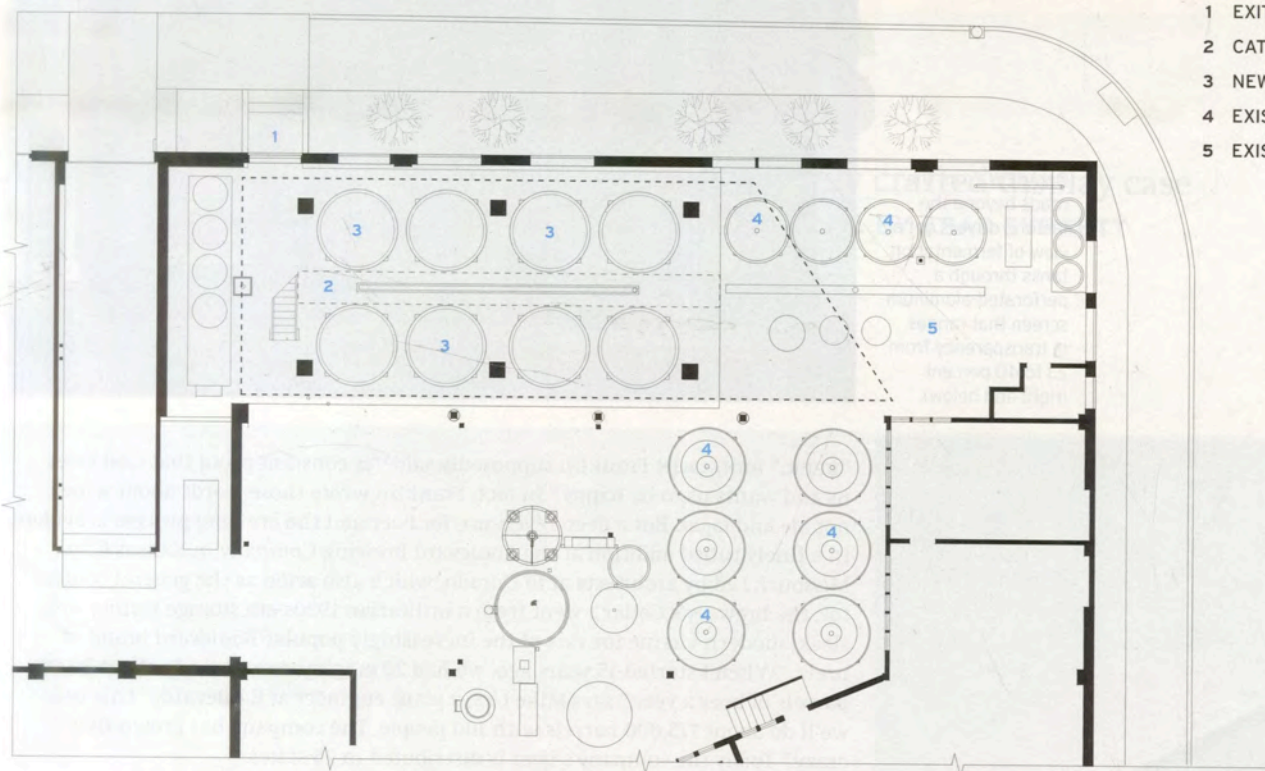
Boulevard hired El Dorado—which worked in close collaboration with a team of the client’s own engineers—to add 28 feet of height to the existing 17-foot-tall “cellar.” The goal was to accommodate a production increase and provide access to new, much taller fermentation tanks, which employees access via hatchlike openings at the top of each one. The original masonry building housed tanks with a capacity less than half that of the new tanks, which, at 40 feet tall, hold up to 300 barrels of beer.

The expansion, a glass-and-steel top hat on the original early-20th-century building, also provides a comfortable work environment for the employees, explains Dali Grabar, Boulevard’s engineering project manager. A corrugated, perforated-aluminum screen that hugs the structure’s northwestern and southwestern facades passively maintains a temperate interior climate, preventing spikes in indoor temperature by reducing solar heat gain. “This summer we had temperatures up to 106 degrees, and I don’t think we ever went above 82 degrees in the building,” says Grabar. “Considering how much glass and daylight we have, I think it’s amazing.”

The addition’s elegance gives no hint of a construction period full of technical and logistical acrobatics. “The brewery had to remain operational while we did this,” says El Dorado principal Josh Shelton, describing a process that involved excavating earth to make way for a new 3-foot-deep mat-slab. While El Dorado retained Cellar 1’s original floors and masonry walls, the team erected a steel moment frame inside the preexisting structure to support a steel-grate catwalk for access to the top of each tank. “And Boulevard was installing all this piping while the glaziers were out there installing glass,” Shelton adds. “Because we were working in an old space, our project manager, Chris Burk, had to really figure out the quirks of the existing building: all the slopes of the floors, what was parallel, what wasn’t. Chris was crawling around all the tanks and pipes before we even started.”

On a recent visit, any sign of the former tangle has been replaced by a general sense of order. Two neat rows of four stainless-steel tanks run the length of the building, and the low hum of machines at work fills the air. The new cellar’s high ceilings, columnlike tanks, and delicate light create a space that feels more like a Gothic cathedral than a factory. It’s all fitting for America’s favorite alcoholic beverage, Franklin-endorsed or not. ■

Missouri | El Dorado



- 1 EXIT
- 2 CATWALK
- 3 NEW TANK
- 4 EXISTING TANK
- 5 EXISTING STRUCTURE

GROUND FLOOR



credits

ARCHITECT: El Dorado – Josh Shelton, principal in charge; Chris Burk, project manager; Steve Salzer, envelope design

ENGINEERS: Genesis Structures (structural); PKMR (m/e/p)

CONSULTANTS: Derek Porter Studio (lighting); A2MG (glazing and aluminum skin)

CLIENT: Boulevard Brewing Company

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: El Dorado

SIZE: 2,000 square feet

COST: withheld

COMPLETION DATE: July 2012

SOURCES

GLASS CURTAIN WALL: EFCO

RAINSCREEN: Centria

MOISTURE BARRIER: Firestone

ROOFING: Firestone

DOORS: Mesker Door (metal doors)

HARDWARE: Ingersoll Rand (locks, exit devices); LCN (closers)

INTERIOR FINISHES: Sherwin-Williams (paints and stains); Firestone (stainless-steel paneling)

LIGHTING: Cooper Lighting (interior ambient lighting); WattStopper (dimming system)



ON TAP Workers can sample beer via spigots at the tapered base of each tank (left). Each 40-foot-tall tank has a 300-barrel capacity, and is accessed by way of a staircase on the southeast wall (right) that leads up to a steel-grate catwalk. Employees can then add anti-clouding agents and other ingredients to each vat.



TANK
300L

6
BBL

PLASTIC
R 1

REC
PER