

Feeney®, Inc. Case Study:

Kimpton® Sylvan Hotel, Atlanta, GA



PRODUCTS USED:

- DesignRail® Aluminum Railings
- Stainless Steel Mesh Panels

Re-Envisioning a Rooftop Deck

Adaptive Reuse Project in Buckhead Makes Its Mark

Originally built in the early 1950's as post-war affordable housing, The [Kimpton Sylvan Hotel](#) is an adaptive reuse project artfully re-imagined into a boutique urban retreat with a distinctive mid-century modern design. Located in Atlanta's elegant Buckhead area, the building was restored to its previous grandeur by the design team from [SSOE | Stevens & Wilkinson](#). The crown jewel of this multiple award-winning hotel is the rooftop lounge, St. Julep's.

The previous rooftop deck area was transformed by converting an abandoned mechanical storage area into a colorful, quirky bar with roll-up doors for indoor/outdoor enjoyment. Vivid interior design and a vibrant hand-painted mural that spans the length of the balcony provide an eye-catching contrast to the hotel's neutral exterior color scheme. Guests at the bar are invited to savor panoramic views of the Atlanta skyline.

When it came to bringing the deck back to life, choosing a railing that was durable and would complement the design theme was important. The former railing had started to fail, rusting badly at the post connections due to the use of dissimilar metals. So, it was crucial that the railing selected would be resistant to corrosion over time. In addition, the historic nature of the project required that the railings align with the mid-century modern aesthetic.

"This was a very unique, historical project, so we couldn't install railings with traditional steel tube, picket or glass infill," noted Laura Morton, senior architect from SSOE and lead on the project. "We were looking for a railing that resembled what had been installed in the past, but that was more distinctive and added a bit of character. That's why we ultimately opted to go with Feeney's [DesignRail®](#) in [Modern White](#) with stainless steel mesh infill." Safety was also a consideration.

While Feeney offers several top rail styles, Morton went with an elliptical top rail style to prevent bar patrons from setting their drinks on the railings.



“The combination of the pre-finished, powder coated aluminum and [stainless steel mesh infill](#) means the railings should maintain their performance and looks for quite a while,” added Morton.

Due to the antiquated nature of the building structure, the team encountered some unique technical challenges. SSOE wanted the railings to appear as if they were attached to the parapet wall lining the rooftop. However, the wall was constructed of unreinforced brick, making fascia mounting impossible from an engineering standpoint. The limited clearance above the concrete left no room for pavers or base mounted railings.

“The original deck was constructed of quarry tile on top of a concrete slab and also required insulation,” said Morton. “We were trying to open up access and make everything ADA-compliant, but we only had about five-and-a-half inches above the concrete level to work with.” The SSOE design team collaborated with a structural engineer and the Feeney commercial engineering team to develop a solution.

The new rooftop floor included a pedestal system with a floating deck to ensure proper drainage. The Feeney team helped to design and engineer a special 12” x 12” angled plate with welded studs that would attach to the concrete slab underneath and run parallel to the brick wall. This approach enabled Feeney’s fascia mount bracket to be bolted directly to the stud plates while creating the appearance that the railings are attached directly to the parapet.

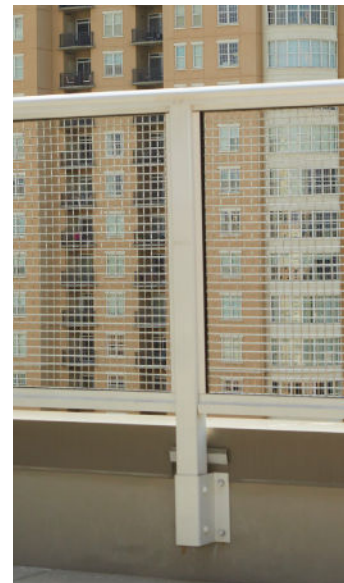
Feeney considers supporting the project team to be an integral part of the relationship when undertaking commercial projects, many of which involve complex engineering challenges and often require innovative solutions.

“Many things can happen between the design phase and completion of a project,” noted Scott Cathcart, VP of Commercial Sales for Feeney. “It’s important to align with all stakeholders from the outset, especially in the initial phases of the project, to help ensure that everything goes as expected while meeting code compliance.” Commented Morton, “It’s a unique experience to work so closely with a manufacturer. The fact that Feeney had a team that could do engineering that was outside the realm of our structural engineer really made a difference and was crucial to the project’s success. There was a lot of creative thinking involved and a hands-on approach, which we really appreciated.”

The hotel recently earned The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation's [2022 Preservation Award for Excellence in Rehabilitation](#), and was a finalist in the Adaptive Reuse/Repositioning category in the Urban Land institute Atlanta’s [26th Annual Awards for Excellence](#). “It was a wonderful experience to help bring a historic building back to life with a newfound glory,” said Morton. “The rooftop deck project was especially rewarding. Feeney was a great partner not only when it came to planning but also when we needed troubleshooting in the field. And that makes all the difference.”

About Feeney

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