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CASE STUDY SERIES



# 400 ATLANTIC STREET

How Maxxit Ceilings Systems Helped to Transform a Post-War Architectural Icon from Brutalist to Brilliance

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## ELEVATING EXPECTATIONS

When one of the world's most renowned architectural firms embarked on the redesign of 400 Atlantic Street, the goal was more than just modernizing a building.

This 15-story specimen of post-war modern commercial design began as the Stamford, CT, headquarters of the paper company Champion International in 1980. It was originally designed by Ulrich Franzen, the famed designer of Brutalist-style structures.





Fast-forward 40-plus years and today's architectural design juggernaut, Gensler, sought to transform Franzen's creation into a cutting-edge, hospitality-inspired workspace that would better serve today's demands and attract a new kind of tenant. The building's transformation highlights amenities and design elements that redefined the traditional office environment into an inspiring destination.

A cornerstone of this reimagination was the ceiling design for two critical areas: the third-floor marketplace and the conference center. Maxxit ceiling solutions were specified to help strike a refined balance between visual impact and functionality.

## A LANDMARK REDEFINED

Located at the intersection of Atlantic Street and Tresser Boulevard near the Stamford Transportation Center and busy I-95 corridor, 400 Atlantic Street is a Class-A, 530,000-square-foot office building steeped in architectural significance. However, in a competitive real estate market, it required a significant upgrade to meet modern tenant expectations.

The large-scale repositioning project, managed by A.P. Construction and designed by Gensler, included the complete overhaul of several amenities: the grand lobby entrance featuring a bar and café with outdoor seating; a state-of-

the-art fitness and wellness center; and a marketplace and conference center offering high-end dining and meeting environments.

For the marketplace and conference center—which span approximately 10,000 square feet—Gensler's design emphasized warm, inviting spaces that can adapt to various tenant needs. As part of their approach, the firm incorporated natural materials, jewel-toned accents, and a refined industrial aesthetic. A crucial aspect of achieving this vision was using innovative ceiling systems to complement the interior design while addressing functional requirements like acoustics, lighting, and mechanical integration.

## NAVIGATING COMPLEXITIES

Retrofit projects present unique design and construction challenges, and 400 Atlantic Street was no exception. Gensler's vision for the marketplace and conference room required the ceiling to function as a central design feature. It needed to harmonize with the warm, natural tones and modern finishes throughout the space while addressing several key challenges:

- 1. Visual Impact:** The ceiling had to serve as a showpiece, drawing attention and elevating the overall aesthetic of the space.
- 2. Functional Integration:** The design needed to incorporate lighting, sprinklers, and other mechanical systems seamlessly.
- 3. Acoustic Performance:** Given the high-traffic nature of the marketplace and the multi-use functionality of the conference center, sound absorption was a top priority.
- 4. Efficient Installation:** The project timeline was tight, requiring a ceiling solution that could be installed with minimal complication.

These requirements made it clear that a standard ceiling system wouldn't suffice. A custom solution was needed—one that would meet the architectural vision while delivering exceptional performance.

## CEILING INNOVATION IN ACTION

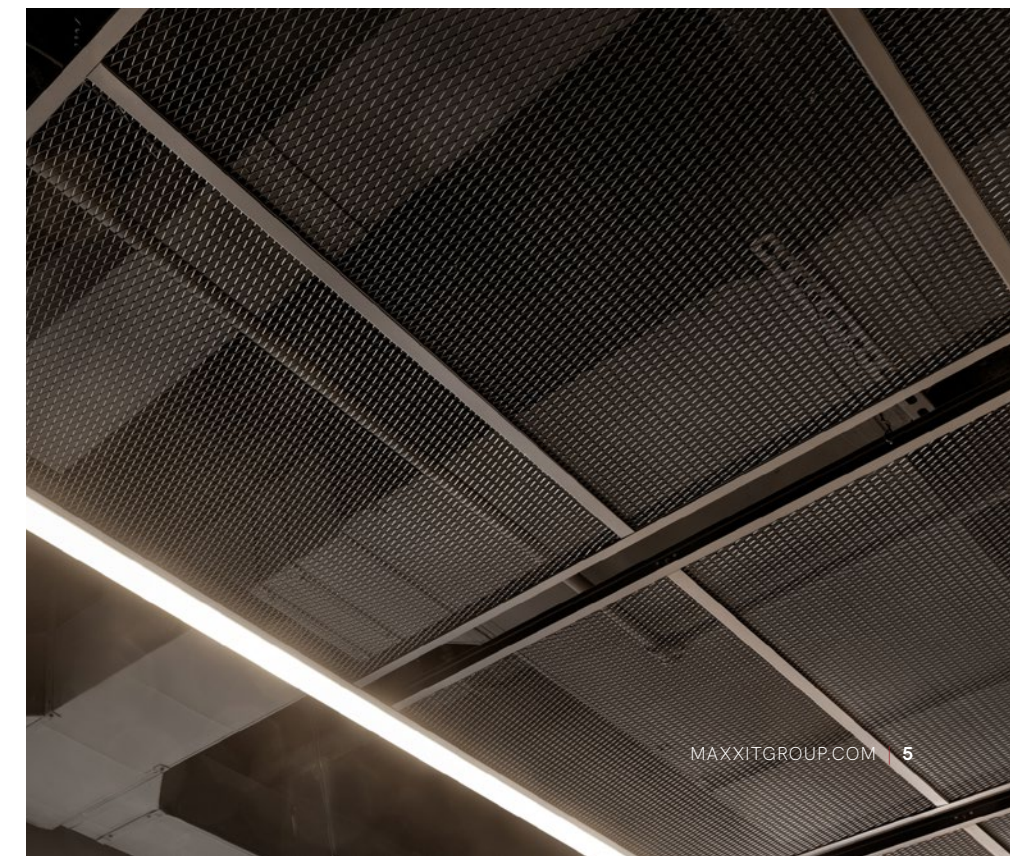
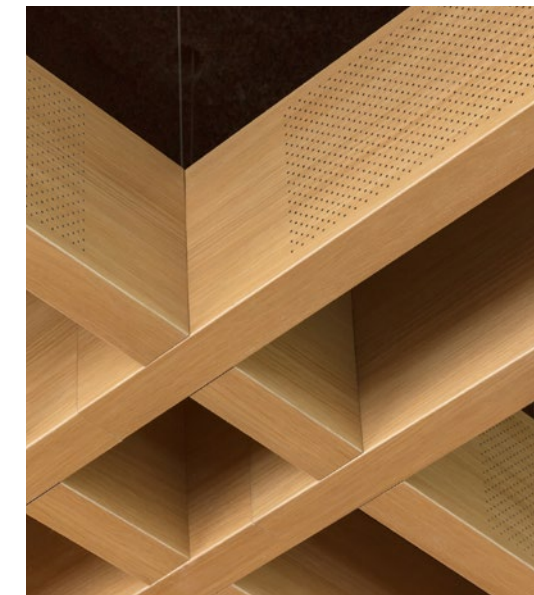
The design team selected two Maxxit open ceiling solutions. These product lines are known for their sleek aesthetics and superior functionality.

Gensler included **AERO:Form Parallel Open Cell** to create distinctive parallel beam designs with integrated functional panels. They also chose **PANEL:Form Mesh Ceiling Panels** which offer a sleek industrial aesthetic with enhanced airflow, light transmission, and easy access to the plenum.

Additionally, the project includes **LINE:Form Partitions**, an extruded

metal system. These ceilings offer a fast, economical, and aesthetically pleasing solution that improves space utilization and occupant comfort.

From an engineering perspective, the partitions installation offered Maxxit an opportunity to innovate a new solution that met the unique suspension demands of this application.



**PROJECT DETAILS**

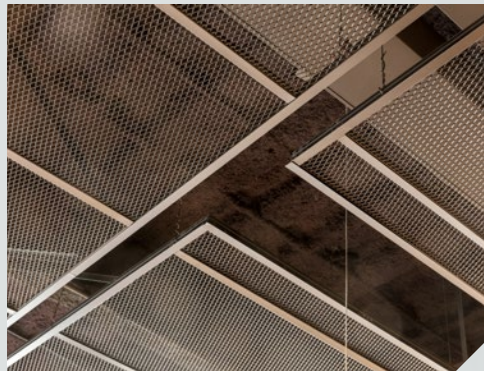
400 Atlantic Street

**Location**  
Stamford, CT**Design Architect**  
Gensler**Installer**  
A.P. Construction**Maxxit Products**

AERO:Form Parallel Open Cell

LINE:Form Partitions

PANEL:Form Mesh Ceiling Panel



**“This was a cable-mounted suspension using a very thin cable so that the baffles appear to float,” explains Maxxit project manager Ted Werle. “When you’re mounting something with cables, there’s always a challenge. We developed a new mounting plate insert system to ensure the baffles are properly balanced. This project allowed us to develop an innovative new solution tailor-made for this type of installation that will ensure a flawless installation for future projects like this one.”**

Together, these ceiling systems deliver on several key features.

First is their striking aesthetic. The clean lines and contemporary finishes of both systems enhance the visual appeal of both the marketplace and the conference room, creating cohesive, high-impact spaces.

The grid pattern introduced in the marketplace extends into the conference room ceiling, creating a unified design language that ties the spaces together. This consistent aesthetic reinforces the building’s overall sense of sophistication and cohesion.

These systems also allow for seamless integration with lighting, sprinklers, and other mechanical components, maintaining the ceiling’s clean, polished look.

Looks are one part of the design challenge. Performance is the other. Sound-absorbing materials in the open cell system offer acoustic control that improve occupant comfort in both spaces, enhancing speech intelligibility and ensuring conversations and presentations can occur without unwanted ambient noise.



Finally, Maxxit ceilings are designed with installers in mind. Installation of both systems featured a straightforward assembly process that minimized delays and ensured a smooth experience.

“The installation contractor was invaluable in helping us ensure the suspension system worked perfectly in a retrofit project. We partnered closely to address challenges and get everything just right on site.”

### A SEAMLESS PARTNERSHIP

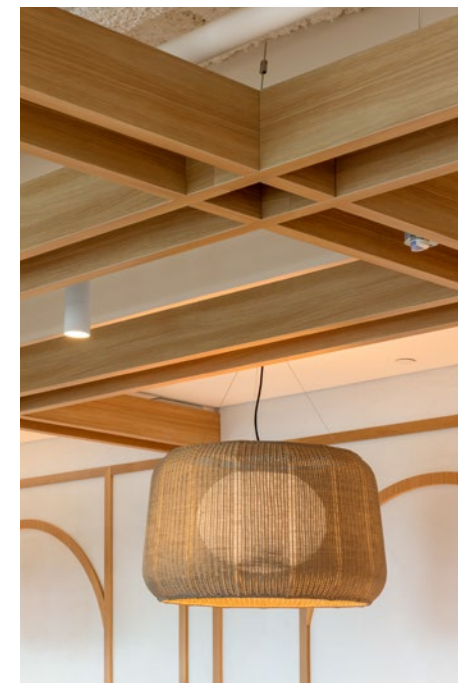
The construction team was led by Jason Blair, a seasoned project manager with A.P. Construction. Bringing decades of experience managing high-end construction projects across 37 states

and seven countries, Blair and his team brought the expertise needed to ensure the successful implementation of this project.

Although Blair had not worked with Maxxit products before, he found the experience positive.

“I was a carpenter for 25 years in the union and had never put my hands on a Maxxit system before, but I’m familiar with similar ceilings products,” he says. “The installation process was straightforward—it goes together like Legos.”

Maxxit’s team provided critical support throughout the installation process, working closely with A.P. Construction to release ceiling components in stages that aligned with the construction timeline.



“They worked with us on releasing sections in a specific order,” Blair says. “Their lead times were spot on. Everything showed up as needed, which kept the project moving smoothly.”

The collaborative effort between Maxxit and A.P. Construction ensured that the ceiling systems were installed efficiently and without issues, even under the tight project schedule.

“A.P. Construction was invaluable in helping us ensure the suspension system worked perfectly in this retrofit project,” says Werle. “We partnered closely with their team to address challenges and get everything just right on site.”

### A SPACE THAT INSPIRES AND PERFORMS

The final result is a resounding success. The marketplace and conference center at 400 Atlantic Street now stand as visually stunning and functional spaces that set a new standard for Class-A office amenities.

The marketplace offers a vibrant, inviting space for dining and socializing, while the conference center provides a flexible environment for meetings and events. Both spaces reflect the warm, hospitality-inspired design vision set forth by Genster.

And Mr. Blair described the reaction to the completed project as follows. “They loved it. The space looks amazing, and the ceiling is a standout feature. It’s 100% a feature—the first thing you notice when you walk through. Even when you’re looking straight, you see the ceiling. It looks really good.”

The Maxxit open ceiling systems became an integral part of the overall design, complementing the interior finishes and enhancing the spaces’ functionality. The result is a cohesive aesthetic that elevates the tenant experience and reinforces 400 Atlantic Street’s position as a premier office destination.

This project also demonstrates Maxxit’s ability to deliver ceiling solutions that meet the most demanding design and functional requirements. Through its working relationship with Gensler and A.P. Construction on this project, Maxxit contributed to the successful repositioning of 400 Atlantic Street, creating areas that inspire and delight. The spaces are aesthetically striking, the functional benefits include strong acoustic performance and seamless mechanical integration, the installation process supported tight project timelines.

The transformation of 400 Atlantic Street is a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation in design. By delivering ceiling systems that met both the aesthetic and functional demands of the project, Maxxit played a crucial role in creating spaces that go beyond the ordinary



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