

Grand Hotel:




Preserving History and Preparing for the Future



A case study prepared by:



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Grand Hotel: Preserving History and Preparing for the Future

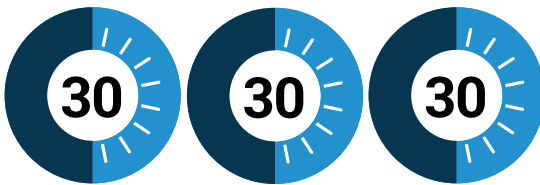
Located on a small island on the Straits of Mackinac, Grand Hotel has been a beloved summer destination since 1887. The hotel boasts 388 rooms, each designed in their own unique style. Mackinac Island is a summer town, with only 600 year-round residents maintaining the island. On top of the harsh winters, the island has outlawed cars – preserving their old-world charm but adding complications to any construction needs.

Case & Associates was tasked with updating the bathrooms, 100-year-old Esther Williams Swimming Pool, and their vast retail spaces. Location, weather, and more added to the complications of this project. However, with experience, collaboration, and a pinch of luck, we were able to complete this project on time and on budget.

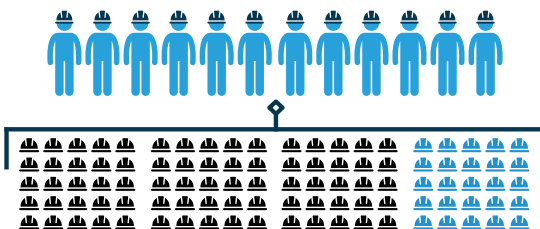
Key Facts and Figures:



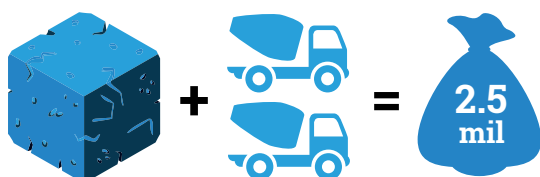
Project was completed on time and on budget – in under **5 months**



Grand Hotel was originally built in just **90 days**

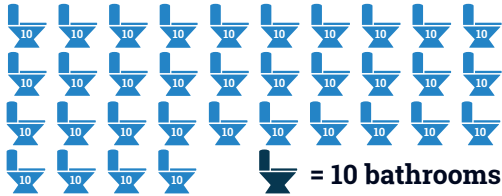


Case & Associates managed **12** subcontractors and **75-100** workers

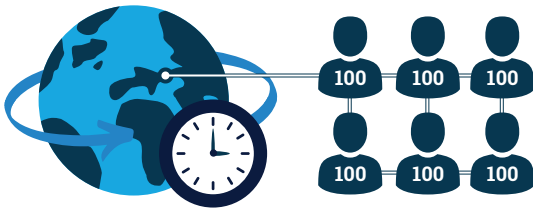


\$2,500,000 of concrete needed to complete the project (complete with **2 concrete trucks** ferried over)

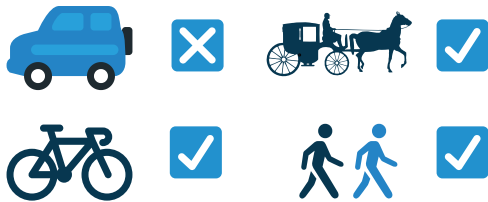
Key Facts and Figures [cont.]:



We renovated **340** unique bathrooms



<**600** residents live on the island year-round



Vehicles are NOT permitted on the island – primary transportation is bike, buggy, or walking



Project was completed during COVID, which added new challenges



Introducing: Grand Hotel

Located on the beautiful Mackinac Island in Michigan, Grand Hotel is a luxurious retreat heralded as the World's Largest Summer Hotel. Crowned as America's Summer Place, this historic landmark first opened its doors in 1887, back when vacationers had to take a train and arrive by boat to reach this destination. Today, the hotel boasts old-world hospitality and charm, poised to serve generations to come.

About the Hotel

"Experience the tradition of Afternoon Tea in the Parlor, dressing up for dinner, nightly dancing to the sounds of the Grand Hotel Orchestra, and sitting in a rocking chair on the world's longest porch with views of the Straits of Mackinac."

The Grand Hotel is complete with 388 rooms – each uniquely decorated by one of America's first and finest design firms. Every room has a specific theme with colorful décor and distinct furnishings. Preserving the integrity of this design was essential for our team while renovations were underway.



(photo courtesy of Grand Hotel)

Amenities and Activities:

Along with the unique rooms, Grand Hotel also boasts a host of amenities and activities:



The World's Longest Porch



Bocce, Croquet, Miniature Golf, Pickleball, Bike Rentals/BMX Course, Activity Sports Courts, & Golf



Live Music Every Evening



Stables and Nature Center



Salon and Spa



Afternoon Tea

Amenities and Activities [cont.]:



Hotel
Shopping



Fitness
(pictured bottom-left)



The Esther
Williams Pool

Grand Hotel has been the filming location for many iconic films including **This Time for Keeps**, starring Esther Williams. The pool was named in her honor and was a part of the renovations that Case & Associates was honored to take part of. The renovations included expanded outdoor space, luxurious cabanas, a zero-depth beach entry, a heated whirlpool, and more!



Renovated
Fitness Center

About Mackinac Island

Mackinac Island became a favorite summertime destination during the Victorian era. Visitors came to the island via boat and indulged in all the idyllic activities of days gone by. To increase tourism and travel, various boat and railroad companies financed the initial building of Grand Hotel.

The beautiful and historic town has one unique aspect that both charms and brings visitors back to the hotel's first days – there are no cars allowed. Foot, bike, and horse-drawn carriages are the only modes of transportation. While this no doubt adds to the charm of the island, it also provides some unique challenges for contractors providing much-needed renovation.

Who is Case & Associates?

Case & Associates General Contractors provides a full range of hotel and hospitality construction services. Over the past 30 years, we have developed a team spirit that facilitates the demands of our clients. We work with major hotel chains and boutique hotels across the country providing quality results to our clients. Though our projects range from simple to complex—big to small—Case & Associates prides itself on delivering the same quality of professionalism and care to each project.



We have extensive experience building and renovating projects in Hawaii, which helped prepare our team for this challenging project. Even though Mackinac Island is a part of the lower 48 states, its remote location and commitment to low-tech transportation provided similar challenges that a project on the islands would present.



**Q&C Hotel Bar
New Orleans**



**Courtyard Marriott
Kauai**



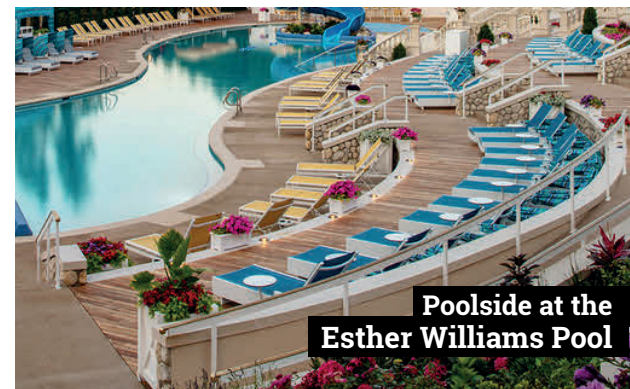
**Magnolia Hotel
Houston**

The Task at Hand

The renovations of Grand Hotel included the total renovation of all guest bathrooms, updates to the pool and pool house, and improvements to the retail and public spaces.

Because of the age of the hotel, the plumbing was different from room to room. This meant that every bathroom had to be modified on the fly. We were prepared for this, and the challenges associated, but there was only so much preparation that could be done until our team got in and made the necessary updates.

Grand Hotel celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Esther Williams Swimming Pool during the 2021 season. Our renovations ushered in more excitement and room for relaxing.



Poolside at the
Esther Williams Pool

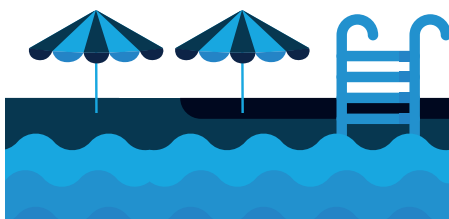
Pool Update Inclusions:



A family-friendly pool area with a zero-depth beach entry, water jet play area, and a water slide



15 poolside cabanas serviced by the Esther Williams Pool Bar



Expansion and improvements of the outdoor space surrounding the pool

Pool Update Inclusions [cont.]:



Pool house upgrades, complete with a fitness center, bathhouse, changing rooms, and more



A meeting space on the second floor of the pool house with amazing views of the Straits of Mackinac (pictured below)



And so much more!

Finally, the renovations to the retail spaces allow Grand Hotel to provide an all-inclusive experience for visitors. Whether guests need a cup of coffee or a new swimsuit to show off by the pool, visitors can feel confident they will have everything they need while staying on Mackinac Island. These updates allowed Grand Hotel to invest in more varied income streams while providing a great vacation experience.



Lake Terrace

Unique Challenges for a Unique Venue

To preserve the beauty and history of Grand Hotel, we were faced with a few very unique challenges, including:



(photo courtesy of Grand Hotel)

Time Limits

Grand Hotel was a large-scale project that had to be completed during a specific time. Mackinac Island is a tourist destination, popular during the summer. As a result, all renovations had to be completed during the off-season. Any projects that were not completed in time for the summer season would need to be finished the next winter – on our dime. Because of this, we were incredibly cognizant of the project schedule. **The locals thought we would never be able to pull this off. The inspector said we'd never get it done in time.** We are happy to share – that was not the case.

Winter in a Summer Town

There are only 600 year-round residents who live on Mackinac Island and only two restaurants open in the winter. On top of that, we were faced with the cold Michigan winters. If we didn't have enough rebar for a project, we couldn't drive down to the local hardware store – all equipment and raw materials had to be ferried in or flown in on an 8-seater plane when the lake was frozen over.

Hiring workers for a location during the off-season can be a challenge – especially during COVID. Our dedicated team was not able to grab a beer after work at the local bar because they were following social distancing requirements.

We also could not rely on sourcing any materials or equipment on the island. **This meant we had to ferry or fly in all raw materials and equipment – including 2 concrete trucks.**



(photo courtesy of Grand Hotel)

Below Freezing Temperatures

The daily average temperature while working on this project was below freezing. This provided some unique challenges for our team. We purchased 8 snowmobiles for our managers to move around the property more freely. We also provided a budget for our employees to buy warm weather clothes. Being headquartered in Texas, many people on our team were not prepared for weather like this.

For 6 weeks, the lake was frozen over, and we were not able to ferry over supplies. **We had to rely on a small 8-person plane to bring in any materials – including rebar. We then used a horse and buggy to bring supplies to the job site.**

Finally, we needed to figure out how to lay the concrete in below-freezing temperatures. When the weather is too cold, the concrete won't set. To avoid this, we kept the bags of concrete under a large heating pad, used the heating pad to warm up the ground, and then finally, used the **heating pad on top of the poured concrete to help it set.**



(photo courtesy of Grand Hotel)



(photo courtesy of Grand Hotel)

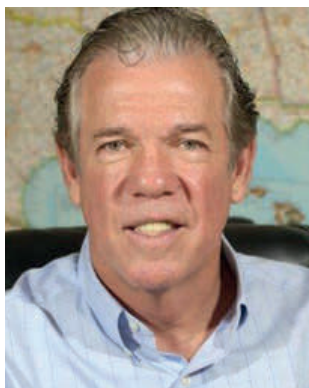


(photo courtesy of Grand Hotel)



Renovated Poolhouse Area

The Case & Associates Impact



"I firmly believe that no other hospitality contractor in the country could have completed this unique challenge."

– Allen Case, CEO Case & Associates

Experience, commitment, and a little bit of luck helped us be successful on this project. With 34 years in business, we have seen almost everything the hotel and hospitality renovation industry has to throw at you. Even with all of our experience, we still faced challenges we had never seen before.

One of the most important keys to our success was the relationship we fostered between Grand Hotel, the architect, and our team. **Communication and trust were invaluable to the process.**

Finally, we had to rely on a little bit of luck. Too much bad weather and our project would have been delayed. We were also very fortunate that there were minimal COVID infections during our time on the island. Strict protocols helped our team, and the locals, stay safe during such an unprecedented time.

Our Grandest Project

From presidential visits to movie locations, it's no secret Grand Hotel is an important landmark. We wanted to make sure we would be able to preserve the history of the building while supporting the venue for generations to come.



This was certainly not our most straightforward project, but it is one we are incredibly proud of. We are supremely grateful to have been able to be a part of the history and tradition of Grand Hotel.

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