Lighting the Governor’s Reception Room at the New York State Capitol

The Governor’s Reception Room is commonly known as the “War Room” for its prominent ceiling mural depicting New York State military history from early settlement to World War I.

The War Room was intended to be a rotunda with a 40-foot high-domed ceiling. The architect’s plan required removal of the second floor to create this open space. Artist William de Leftwich Dodge painted the murals anticipating that they would be viewed from the building’s first floor, but the top floor was never removed. For this reason, some visitors may find the paintings’ magnitude to be overwhelming, yet the space provides a rare opportunity to see a ceiling mural at close range.

The War Room is lighted by eight bronze torchieres whose design represents the water patterns of the Hudson River and the prows of packet ships upon the river. Their placement reinforces the octagonal pattern of the ceiling.

The LRC designed a lighting upgrade, using LED lighting technology to provide an 86% energy savings compared to the original design, higher overall illuminance in the space, enhanced color, and improved accent lighting for ceiling murals and portraits.

Using high CRI, 3000 K, 16-watt LEDs, the lighting design provided by the LRC illuminates the entirety of the mural and brings attention to previously underrepresented areas. The original lighting primarily lit the portions of the mural directly above the torchieres and neglected the bottom portions of the mural that slope into the wall. To address this issue, the LRC designed a special track configuration, holding three to four track heads each, that precisely fits into each of the eight bronze torchieres. Each track head can tilt 180°, allowing for a single torchiere to illuminate multiple parts of the mural at once.

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Existing torchieres were refit with a custom track to hold up to four LED heads that direct light onto the ceiling art.

Each track head was aimed at a specific part of the mural to highlight the depth of the painting.

Aiming Diagram