



Project: Larrimor's - Pittsburgh, PA

Budget: \$1 million

The Challenge: Transforming a former PNC Bank (and vault) to a beautiful retail clothing store with on-site tailoring shop, within a tight timeline and budget.

The Result: Two family owned businesses - Larrimor's and PJ Dick - collaborate to create a stunning new "glass home" for Pittsburgh's premier clothier through value engineering, a shared commitment to excellence and personal attention at the highest level.

The Bottom Line: Experience. Whether your project is big or small, there's just no substitute for it.

In the spring of 2010, after almost 70 years in the Union Trust Building, one of Pittsburgh's premier, family-owned luxury clothiers was poised to move to One PNC Plaza. A beautiful new store had been designed, right in the heart of Pittsburgh's vibrant and redeveloped Fifth Avenue corridor. Now a contractor was needed to translate that exquisite vision into a bold reality.

Carl Slesinger, the 2nd generation co-owner of Larrimor's, was considering possible construction partners when PJ Dick CEO Cliff Rowe stopped by the store. When Rowe asked to bid on the job among an already competitive list of contractors, Slesinger was surprised. Pleasantly so. He was well aware of PJ Dick's strong work on major projects like CONSOL Energy Center and Children's Hospital, but unfamiliar with its ability to scale its diverse resources to respond to the needs of his own project.

As one of three family-owned companies, PJ Dick prides itself on its personal attention to every client, no matter the size of the job.

"We were anxious to deal with Cliff, because we knew he'd have his eyes on us throughout the project," noted Slesinger. "And he did."

The match provided to be ideal in several other important ways. Creating optimal value for the dollars spent was key to Larrimor's. PJ Dick responded with value engineering that reduced costs without sacrificing quality. "Larrimor's is synonymous with excellence," said PJ Dick Project Manager Noah Shaltes. "They wanted that reflected in their new home. Our quality control was very steep. And rightfully so."

The Result: a building design, initially outside the reach of Larrimor's \$1,000,000 budget, was re-engineered to exceed expectations. Strategic use of cost-effective alternatives including light-gauge framing (versus structural steel), modified lighting fixtures (within a complex yet all-important lighting plan) and reconfigured building structures (housing vibrant retail window displays) kept the original design within budget.

Added Slesinger, "PJ Dick looked at our drawings and immediately made suggestions on how we could effectively complete the job by changing some minor design elements. They helped us save money, yet realized the end product that we had ultimately envisioned."

All buildings have their unique challenges. On this particular project, the PJ Dick team had to transform a former bank building into an elegant and refined retail store. A particular challenge was the conversion of a lower-level bank vault into Larrimor's all-important tailoring operation. "The vault had three foot concrete ceilings and walls...and no walls that went from floor to ceiling," noted Shaltes. "The problem was how to get electrical power to those areas...with no walls to take the power through. Working closely with the client and subcontractors, we developed a plan that achieved the functional space they needed, while maintaining the historical look and feel of the bank vault."

Timeliness of project completion was absolutely critical to Larrimor's. The retailer had a narrow window of opportunity to vacate its current premises and move both people and clothing to the new location. Tailors, sales associates and administrative personnel required access to the new site as early as possible to ensure minimal disruption to a business and customer base that demanded quality and excellence. The latest designer fashions were en route for a grand opening. Special events and trunk shows were already planned and promoted. There was no room for delays in scheduling. And in the end, every major milestone was met. Right on schedule, or in advance.

"There's always surprises in construction. The few that we had were addressed professionally and with limited exposure to increased costs," said Slesinger. "In fact, we met every one of our scheduling milestones in the timeline...on target or early."

"They have my highest recommendation."

Slesinger remains supportive and appreciative of PJ Dick's ability to service projects of varying sizes. "With PJ Dick, you're not dealing with a corporation, but with individual owners and operators. They understood that market need and responded to it. We were extremely pleased and ended up with a beautiful store. They have my highest recommendation."

