Eero Saarinen’s 1962 Jet Age architectural masterpiece at JFK Airport, the TWA Flight Center, was transformed and expanded into a hotel and event center. Adherence to a mid-century-modern aesthetic drove the renovation and repurposing of the concrete-and-glass, landmarked structure. Cooley Monato was responsible for all new areas and the 1962 Ballroom in the Flight Center.

Twin, 250-room buildings are connected by a 50,000 sqft subterranean event center built directly below the historic flight center. With limited recess depths, the mainly indirect, LEED-compliant lighting solution evokes 1960s geometry with 2700K LED technology, dimmable to 1% to mimic period incandescent sources. At 40 ft below grade with no access to daylight, the Constellation Ballroom hosts 6 ft–diameter pendants, assisted by cylindrical downlights and a backlit “clerestory.” The 1962 ballroom hosts smaller versions of the same pendant.

More than 6 miles of 1.5 W/ft LED tape light is concealed throughout the public areas of the event center, the hotel circulation areas, and guestrooms. Full-scale mock-ups proved the overall indirect lighting concept. Higher-power linear products integrate into architectural details in areas with higher ceilings or areas requiring greater illumination levels, combining with focused sources and period decorative elements, such as sconces and laylights.