

CREATIVE SPACE

Windows and modular design transform three humdrum warehouses into artistic, styled office complexes.

By Devorah Garland

What started out as a jumble of worn-out, uninspired warehouses is now a professional office complex designed for the artistic community of Toronto.

The allure of individual addresses, easy parking and creative spaces with ample light is combined in Jefferson Square—featuring modular designs that can be expanded to support a small business through its many stages of growth.

The owners, McKenn Development Corp., utilized a European-style approach in restructuring the west-down-town property. Three buildings, grouped in a 'C' format around a parking lot/courtyard, have been tastefully restored to accommodate small commercial entrepreneurs in flexible modules.

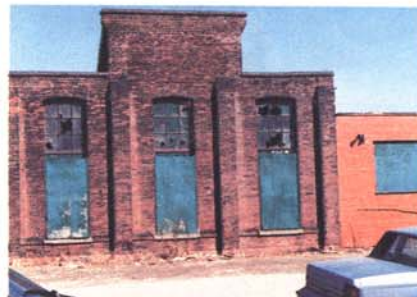
McKenn's \$5 million purchase was originally a property strewn with many dilapidated buildings. "The first step was eliminating the sheds that were not going to advance the overall concept," says Julian Jacobs, architect for the project. Only those buildings with street frontages were restored—three very different buildings of varying heights, ages and architectural styles.

His company, Julian Jacobs Architect Ltd., planned the exterior design elements to "articulate the three buildings, not have a hodge-podge of elements." The same detail materials and colors were used throughout, adding uniform touches like painted steel door canopies and exterior light fixtures.

The long, high warehouses were divided into modular offices. Prospective tenants can plan their offices in multiples of approximately 1,100 sq ft—using connecting doors or openings through dividing walls when extra space is required.

Block A, on the north side (see diagram), required the most work. Its challenges included a second storey built throughout the entire warehouse and extra doors to accommodate fire code regulations.

Block B, on the west side, was divided with a long spine wall down the middle, creating units on each side of the building. Light was brought into the units with "three walls of fenestra-



BLOCK A'S FACADE WAS CLEANED, REPOINTED, AND ENLIVENED WITH CAREFUL DETAILING FOR A DRAMATIC CHANGE.

tions and individual entrances," says Jacobs.

The third building, Block C, required little extra work. Fire staircases for each unit were cut through the single storey into the basement, near the entrances. Windows and doors were added, and the exterior was given a face-lift.

Structural

There were three major structural tasks to be accomplished: installing a second floor in the north building, creating walls of windows and doors in the west building and physically separating each structure to both define the

INSIDE, WAREHOUSE DETAILS ARE COMPLEMENTED WITH MODERN FURNISHINGS.



three buildings and create a pedestrian throughway.

So that tenants occupying street-front units can get to the parking lot, Building B was cut back 9 ft from the northern building, creating a mews-like walkway.

Building A's 78 x 283 ft dimensions were doubled by adding a second floor inside the 30-ft-high structure. J.K.S. Contracting (Toronto) installed 40 steel columns to support the new floor.

As planned, upper and lower floors are separated by doors, allowing a tenant to lease half the space to another company until it is required for expansion.

Street entrances to each two-storey unit were recessed, but McKenn's construction manager, Tom Deutsch, says the planned 3-ft set-back wasn't enough. "We have two exits, a pair of doors, that we had to put in because of the city's interpretation of the fire code. This increased the expense and we had to push the whole entrance back further, to 7 ft, and put it behind the (support) pillar to accommodate the extra door."

Building B was the most challenging structurally because virtually all the solid exterior walls were replaced—with windows. J.K.S. Contracting extensively reinforced the structure to accommodate this. "We were taking the masonry wall out that was holding up the roof structure," says company president K. Smith. "So we put up 22 new columns for support. As we took the walls out, the building started to shake, so we also put up 1/2 in wire rope cross bracing." Three concrete block cross walls were also constructed to add structural rigidity throughout the building.

Steel channels were welded on both sides of some existing columns to reinforce steel that had become twisted. And steel was used above the window and door frames to support a stucco-covered parapet wall that extends around the building along the top.

Mechanical

Services for all three buildings were installed in trenches dug down the middle—and on the roof. "The trenches for plumbing averaged 3 to 12 ft, depending on the slope," Deutsch said. Backfill was used between sewage, water and electrical conduits—the last being sealed in concrete as the trench was filled in.

Heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems were installed on the building roofs to save space. Mike Bornemann, of Bornemann Mechanical (Downsview), says spiral ductwork was installed, and left exposed, "to add interest."



INTEREST WAS CREATED IN THE BLAND EXTERIORS BY SETTING BACK ENTRANCES, WHICH ALSO ALLOWED FOR THE THIRD (FIRE) DOOR.



INSIDE, OFFICES ON BLOCK A'S NEW SECOND STOREY HAVE LOTS OF ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST.

The units have individual thermostats and the ducts have built-in dampers to control air volume separately.

Roofing and Carpentry

Extensive carpentry was required to "create a flat, continuous roof segment, for the HVAC systems, along the back pitch of building C," architect Jacobs says. "We re-roofed a new section with a BUR system, using 4-ply membrane over 2 in. rigid insulation."

A steel profiled cornice was installed to replace wood that had rotted and, on the street side of Building A, existing windows were dropped down a foot to bring proportions into better perspec-

tive (a wood insert filled in the gap).

Since most brick walls are 8 to 12 in. thick, insulation (R-12) was needed mainly where there was wood construction. Natural wood ceiling areas were insulated on the outside to preserve their beauty.

At \$150 per sq ft, McKenn Development Corporation could have built a new complex. But Joseph Salamon, VP Development, says, "people like to be in space with a bit more character to it. It will hold its value, the quality is as new construction or better." And Philip Heller, president of McKenn, adds, "there's one other good reason for renovating: 'It's basically more challenging. Your end product is more rewarding and it's more creative.'"