

In 2006 the new owners of this small commercial property were faced with a difficult decision: either raze the run down, mold-ridden, asbestos laden building and start with a fresh new look; or remodel the existing structure to respect and enhance the aesthetic of the neighborhood business node where it has stood since 1912. Their decision to remodel and revitalize the buiding generated excitement among the neighboring home and business owners and kick-started more widespread improvements throughout the increasingly vital business node. The human scale of the area was preserved with no impact to the views from, or light access to, the immediate neighbors. The decision ultimately created a sustainable business that draws customers from all over the Twin Cities, employs multiple Southwest residents and will be a focal point of the neighborhood for decades to come.

The curb appeal of the property is highlighted by the classic SW Minneapolis brick façade that has been restored to perfection and complimented by Portland cement stucco, large welcoming sidewalk windows and galvanized steel signage and awnings. The limited landscape area available at the front facade was planted with shrubs and native prairie grass both visually pleasing and hearty in an environment with potentially extreme sun exposure.

New landscaping and cedar fencing at the side and rear of the property help maintain an appropriate level of privacy to the neighboring homes. Landscaping was selected from indigenous varieties appropriate to the soil types for ease of long term maintenance. A native-species perennial garden separates the building from the parking and enhances the rear entrance.

The public front half of the interior features high ceilings with the original wood joists exposed, eco friendly materials such as low VOC paints, Forbo Marmoleum and recycled rubber flooring. The reception desk is constructed with a Shetka Stone top and FSC-certified wood paneling. The rear half of the interior is enjoyed by the employees for its smartly laid out design, free flowing traffic circulation, multiple work stations and large glass block windows, which allow privacy but plenty of natural light.

The design and construction team embraced working creatively within the confines of zoning regulations and building codes as the owner worked to respect both the residential and commercial neighbors' interests. In that light, this rejuvenated commercial property, long considered an eyesore, succeeds in every way: meeting the needs of the owners, fitting in perfectly with its mixed surroundings and providing a great place to work for its employees.