Randy Brown

The architect recycles a building in the nation’s heartland for plant specialist Livingreen.

Corporate quarters for Livingreen Interiors in Omaha, NB, are an example par excellence not only of building recycling, but also the recycling of building parts. For the 1912-dated brick structure, whose history has seen incarnations as a parts store and an auto repair shop, has been rehabilitated by 37-year-old architect Randy Brown into a sensitive yet stylish setting accommodating varied needs for the plantscape concern. An advocate of environmental correctness, Brown found his client to be equally concerned. In fact, he says, the recycling issues posed by this project were directed by client and budget.

The solution’s fundamental premise lay in returning the construction to its solid bone structure. By removing layers of walls, ceiling, carpet and asphal tile, Brown exposed the strong brick elevations, terrazzo flooring and curved steel bowstring trusses establishing the interior boundaries. Within this now-empty shell, he planned three zones. A central, freestanding block of new construction houses offices while the front of the existing space functions as a showroom and the rear as a warehouse.

About the recycled aspects, Brown lists the following: Original tin ceiling panels were relocated to the private office sector; existing hollow metal frames were salvaged and distressed with an orbital sander; doors and windows were re-fit into the new spatial configuration; walls were created from lumber reclaimed from demolition. Even the steel component of the birch and metal reception desk represents reclaimed goods from a junkyard. The desk is one of four elements marking zones within the showroom. The others are a perforated metal...

Leif: The blue wall of the president’s office is a portion of a diagonal plane running through the new construction.

Below: Livingreen interpreted as an abstract painting by Brown.
screen indicating the transition to the office block, a curved birch partition establishing a backdrop for the front display window plus a waterfall.

The 13,150-sq.-ft. project (encompassing 2,370 sq. ft. of offices) was completed for about $200,000. Kim Overton, Kim Marble and Cynthia Delzell share credit.

Above and left: Overall view and detail of birch wall with metal shelves.

**Millwork:** Mica Meces  **Steel work:** Waldinger  **Glass work:** Ed-dan Glass  **Carpet:** Interface  **Lighting:** Halo, Littmanin  **Reception chair:** Steelcase  **Office furniture:** Knoll  **Photography:** Assassi Productions