

Teeple Architects and Superkül Inc | Architect

St Joseph Media

Toronto, Canada

Photographs:
Tom Arban

The challenge to the architects in this project was to bring together under one roof nearly 300 employees of twelve different publications, hitherto located in separate offices scattered around Toronto, Canada's largest city. The merger of two companies Multi-Vision Publishing and Key Media resulted in St Joseph Media, the largest privately owned consumer magazine publisher in Canada, responsible for popular, well-established magazines like Toronto Life, Fashion Magazine, Gardening Life and Where Canada. The brief was to bring these satellite companies into one space, make them feel part of the same company while retaining their individuality.

The given space was 3250 sqm (35 000 sqft) comprising two floors in a nineteenth century industrial building which had fallen into disrepair before being converted into the Queen Richmond Centre. Originally a complex of small buildings sharing brick party walls, in a major refurbishment they had been interconnected into a single complex.

The pockets formed by these thick masonry walls were an obvious element to use to create separate homes for each magazine. Floors were misaligned, ceiling heights inconsistent and in addition the windows were mostly on the exterior walls of the original building, so the inner areas were short of light. The architects resolved this by breaking through the floor plate and linking the two floors beneath a new, full-length skylight, creating a long corridor, almost like an internal main street. In this way the individual magazines have kept their own identity but have been united, connected by corridor and skylight. Staff can be focused on their own projects while feeling part of a large, supportive company with all the extra resources and stimulation that it entails, to say nothing of the natural light that floods into their offices.

The reception area is a strategic point in the corridor and large stairways at each end connect the floors, striking visual features in steel and acrylic. This space is wrapped with patterned glass, and felt is used to absorb sound and for magazine logos and signs. These new interventions form a sleek counterpoint to the raw materials of the original warehouse, though respect for the 19th century elements has been shown. The interior brick has been sand blasted, wooden floors sanded and sealed and some of the timber structures retained to give a sense of industrial loft space.

This luminous, striking design, by Teeple Architects in association with Superkül Inc | Architect not only met the client's pragmatic objectives but won Best of Canada Design Award in 2005 from Canadian Interiors magazine as well as a Design Exchange Award. Teeple Architects and Superkül Inc | Architect are known for their exceptional material and spatial quality as illustrated in this particular project.

Architects:

Teeple Architects and
Superkül Inc | Architect

Completion:

September 2004

Surface:

3250 sqm (35 000 sqft)