

# INTERIOR DESIGN

The background image is a photograph of a modern office interior. On the left, a wide staircase with grey steps and glass railings with brass handrails leads up. In the center, a lounge area is visible through a glass partition, featuring a red textured wall, two yellow armchairs, and a small table. To the right, a hallway with glass walls and doors leads further into the office. The overall design is clean, minimalist, and professional.

\$5.95

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The Office Reconsidered  
NeoCon 97



Resolution: 4 Architecture constructs a studio for the creative division of McCann Erickson in Manhattan's Amster Yard.

## Advertising Age

THIS LITTLE CUL DE SAC, Amster Yard, has long been one of New York's best kept secrets. Once owned by James Amster, among the crème de la crème of Manhattan decorators after the war, later occupied by Glengarry Masonry, renovated more than a decade ago by Site in its then-characteristic erosion style of architecture, the property's brownstone now houses the 2,000-sq.-ft. studio for an off-site creative division of advertising giant McCann Erickson Worldwide. Designed by Resolution: 4 Architecture's partner-in-charge Joseph Tanney, with project architect Clayton Collier and team members Miguel Reinaldo Lopes Da Costa, Setu Shah and Jennifer Pereira, the new interior was more hard work than hard sell, with a great story of its own: "We had four

weeks and \$40,000 to do this project," said Tanney. Rewiring and redoing the lighting were not included in that budget figure. →

*Below: Materials were restricted to off-the-shelf elements. Everything was built on site. Panels of Durock face the elevation opposite entry.*

*Opposite: Storage elements were a considerable challenge, given the need to stockpile supplies, works on paper and works on disc.*

LIGHTING: LIGHTOLIER; LAMAR; LUXO LAMPS; SNAKELIGHT. PERFORATED METAL PANELS: LAUBECK. CUTTING SURFACES: SANTANA POLYMAR. METAL FRAMING: UNISTRUT METAL FRAMING. CLEAR POLYCARBONATE STRUCTURED PANELS: POLYGAL. CONCRETE PANEL WALL: DUROCK. DISPLAY SURFACE: HOMASOTE. PAINT: BENJAMIN MOORE. SEATING: HERMAN MILLER. FLATFILES: CHARRETTE CAMBRIDGE. PEDESTAL FILES: PREMIER. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: JORGENSEN BUILDERS GROUP INC.

PHOTOGRAPHY: EDUARD HUEBER







The agency's creative division had outgrown the space it had taken in the back area of Amster Yard. "When they came to us, they were thinking about getting desks from the Door Store. They needed an "emergency room" because work goes on there 24 hours a day. We had to accommodate six artists and their computers, a studio manager and create a supply and storage area. So there were lots of constraints in addition to those of time and budget," explained Tanney.

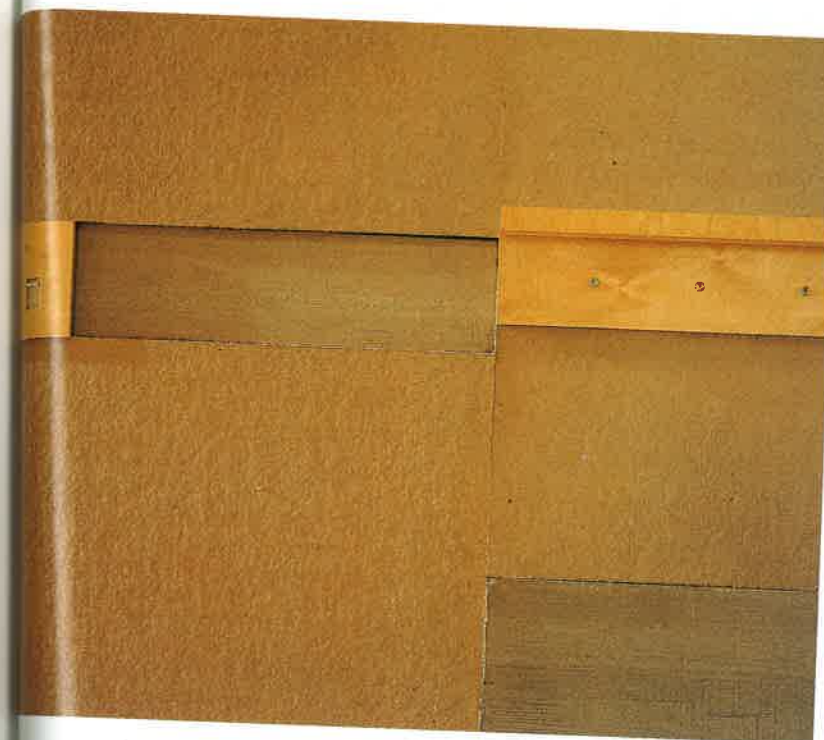
"We were left with an interesting architectural archaeology," Tanney continued. "When Site did the space ten years ago it had actually carved out part of the floor and left some of the original brickwork from the masonry shop that had been there before. There were issues of varying heights, and the terrazzo floor," he continued, enumerating the tangible residue of the brownstone's previous occupants.

Storage, in particular, was a major issue: the clients needed both flat files for works on paper and small-scale units for Syquest discs. Tanney and his team developed a series of modules, deriving the component sizes from the 8-in.-by-8-in. disc size, the 30-in.-by-40-in. dimensions of flat files, and the 5-ft.-by-5-ft. standard for Baltic plywood sheets. "The dimensions of the shelves were governed by how many we could get from a single piece of plywood," noted Tanney.

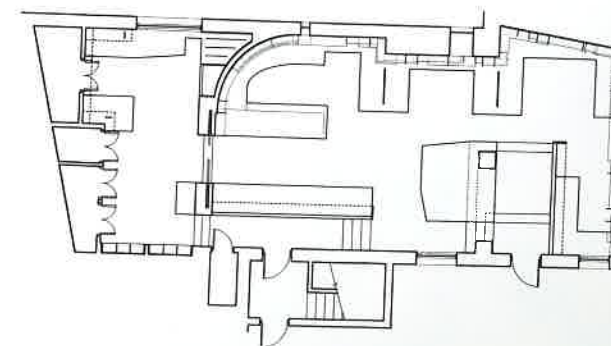
Given the ultra slim-fast budget, the designers opted for a materials palette of strictly off-the-shelf elements. Specifically, the materials are Baltic plywood, Durock concrete panels, Homasote, Unistrut metal framing, perforated metal panels, Polymar cutting surfaces and Polygal clear polycarbonate panels.

Because of the tremendously tight schedule, the project was essentially a design/build process, with construction drawings being done either at night for realization the next day on site, or actually being done on the job. "Many decisions were made on site during the construction process," Tanney explained. "The contractor, Jorgensen Builders, was very flexible and responsive, and did a great job," he elaborated.

When Resolution: 4 Architecture began this project, the firm had just completed two color-saturated interiors, one of which



was a series of bathrooms for this same client at its corporate headquarters (see *Interior Design*, March 1997). "The absence of color here," remarked Tanney, "was a response to our two previous projects. We've since been using the materials and construction techniques that we developed for the McCann Erickson creative division in other projects. And in fact, the client was so happy with this space that we've been reintroducing the Baltic plywood into the main agency's interiors." —Judith Nasatir



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*Opposite, above: Modules for shelving were derived from the unit sizes for discs, flat files and the standard panel size of Baltic plywood sheets.*

*Opposite: The 2,000-sq.-ft. studio houses six computer stations, each one fashioned from off-the-shelf elements, including the privacy screen of clear polycarbonate.*

*Above: The materials palette established the neutral color palette. The subtlety of surface textures and contrasts add visual interest.*

*Above, right: A constructivist aesthetic works its way through the interior elements. The birch plywood used extensively in this studio was so popular with the clients that the designers are using it in the redesign of the agency's headquarters.*