

PIER 56 MITHUN OFFICES



FLOOR SPACE: 27,340 ft²
BUDGET: \$1.5 million (\$55/ft²)
BUILDING POPULATION: 150
CONSTRUCTION DATES: 1999-2000

OWNER/DEVELOPER: Martin Smith Inc.
ARCHITECT: Mithun Architects + Designers + Planners
CONTRACTOR: Edifice Construction
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Coughlin Porter Lundeen
MECHANICAL ENGINEER: Holaday Parks
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER: Cross Engineers
HVAC CONSULTANT: Keen Engineering Co., Ltd.
ACOUSTIC CONSULTANT: Michael Yantis

PROJECT NOTES

SITE AND WATER

- **Renovation:** Revitalized existing historic structure rather than building anew.
- **Transportation:** Close proximity to ferry terminal, trolley stop and major regional transit hub offers employees several transportation options. Showers and lockers provided for commuters who bike and jog to work.
- **Water consumption:** Low-flow toilets, water-efficient dishwashers and waterless urinals in the men's room installed.

ENERGY AND ATMOSPHERE

- **Windows:** Double-glazed insulated windows minimize thermal bridging.
- **HVAC:** Waterfront location and high, open ceilings make passive cooling possible instead of mechanical air-conditioning. The use of natural ventilation modeling in the design phase proved that reasonable temperatures were achievable with the passive approach, giving the tenant the confidence to move ahead without mechanical ventilation.
- **Heating:** High-efficiency boiler and fan coil unit system conserves energy.
- **Lighting:** North-facing windows arranged to maximize natural lighting. Programmable low-voltage control system automatically controls light fixtures in all areas.
- **Insulation:** Roof upgraded from R21 to R30 insulation.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- **Flooring:** 100% natural sisal used in conference rooms; 98% recycled content carpet tiles in work areas; oriented strand board made of post-production waste materials for public-area floors; ceramic tile and stone samples from the firm's old product library were reused in a mosaic floor in the kitchen.
- **Lumber:** Workstations were built from strawboard panels—2-by-3 lumber that was sub-grade and had been pulled at the mill; formaldehyde-free pre-finished plywood for shelving units; mezzanines installed for future growth were constructed of parallel strand beams made from post-production waste material.
- **Reclaiming:** Salvaged timbers were used as structural decking at the new entry stairwell.
- **Finishing:** Materials left unfinished and exposed to reduce costs and contribute to open atmosphere.

INDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

- **Ventilation:** Operable windows and open arrangement provide fresh air and cool water breezes for entire office.
- **Day-lighting:** Design provides for very high levels of daylight to all staff year round.
- **Finishing:** Low-VOC paints and sealers used on walls and desktops and low-toxicity glues used to adhere the flooring materials.

For over a decade, Mithun Architects + Designers + Planners of Seattle has earned a reputation as one of the leading designers of sustainable buildings in the Pacific Northwest. Some of their latest high-profile green projects include the innovative REI Flagship Stores in Seattle and Denver, the Puget Sound Environmental Learning Center and the Pacific Northwest Aquarium with Terry Ferrell & Partners. But perhaps the most important project of all, in terms of proving their commitment to environmentally friendly building, was the renovation of Pier 56 on the Seattle waterfront, which would become Mithun's new office.



To ensure that their new offices met the needs of everyone involved, the firm's stakeholders held a series of strategy meetings. The team determined that the new office space needed to be open, non-cellular, flexible, egalitarian, energy efficient and an example of sustainable design practices. Most importantly, the new space needed to promote collaboration and an open design process, making the occupants comfortable, and thereby more productive.

OPENING UP

Of the several new space options that were available, inhabiting a vacant pier warehouse emerged as the best choice by far. The fact that the space was not yet improved allowed the design team to recommend to the building owners proposed redevelopment plans that would make the project more energy efficient and better suited to office use.

Once they had a space to work with, the design team started looking for ways to meet the challenges of the project. One of the major themes of the planning sessions was the need for open space, which would facilitate the design goals of flexibility and egalitarianism. As the first step in this direction, all the interior walls that did not enclose mechanical or electrical rooms were removed. The roof was insulated on the exterior allowing the rafters to remain exposed. Then the original timber structure was sandblasted to bring back the aura of the early 1900s.

MAKING HAPPY WORKERS

Impressively, the open space has all the benefits of increased views and breathing room without the usual negative side effects of a noisy workspace. An acoustic consultant worked with the design team to minimize noise. This is also helped by the natural ventilation system that supplies the office with fresh air. The mechanical consultant provided an occupant's guidebook of principles to follow for the different seasonal demands on the space. These measures have made the office not only a cutting-edge green building, but also one of the most enviably comfortable work places in Seattle.

AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2002 WHAT MAKES IT GREEN, SEATTLE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
- 2002 BUSINESSES FOR AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW (BEST) AWARDS, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY RESOURCE VENTURE
- 2001 JANUARY PROJECT OF THE MONTH, AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
- 2001 TEN SHADES OF GREEN, CASCADIA REGION, PORTLAND AIA AND OFFICE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- 2000 NIGHT OF THE STARS FINALIST, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES

CASE STUDY SPONSORED BY:

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		Interface Engineering	
		Glumac International	

