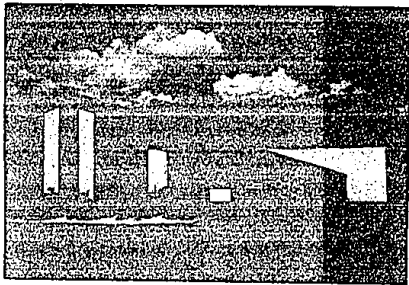
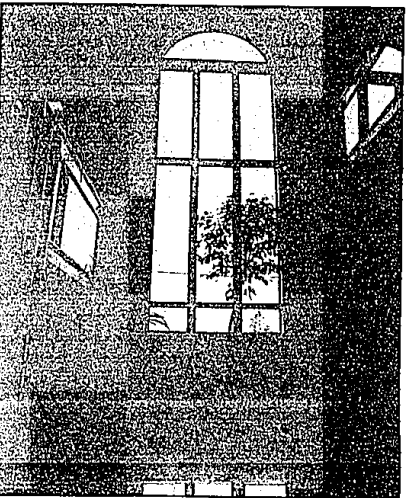


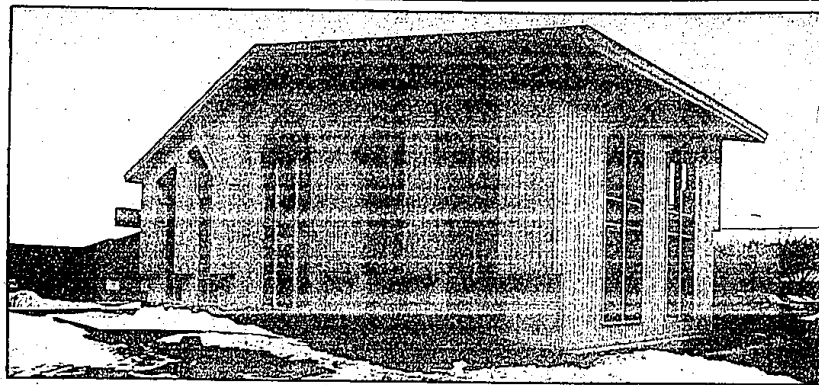
A change of face . . .



Before the renovation, the building looked like this.



A dramatic view showing the various levels of the building.



After the renovation, a five-level building with an atrium.

. . . brings added space

By Mimi Mayer
special writer

TWO FARMINGTON Hills realtors recently created their own Age of Reconstruction. Jerry Edwards and Mark Zehnder preserved the old when building a new home for their Century 21 M.J.L. Corporate Transferee Service, Inc. offices. It is located on Orchard Lake Road two blocks north of 13 Mile Road in Farmington Hills.

Literally built on old foundations, the building was reconstructed from a once condemned two-bedroom house. Zehnder purchased the property in the late 1970s and renovated the interior as office space for Norwood Real Estate.

In 1981, Zehnder and Edwards became partners in a Century 21 real estate franchise. They worked to make their business thrive.

IT DID. AS Detroit's northwest suburbs burst with development during the 1980s, the realtors outgrew their home-cum-office. Instead of relocating, Zehnder and

Edwards chose to rebuild. They moved their business into mobile offices and watched as their original building was razed.

"We saved only the footings and a few floors and walls. Everything else was demolished," Zehnder said.

Designed by Farmington architect Carl Gaiser, the new 6,200-square-foot structure contains five levels of office space set in tiers around a central atrium. Its shape — a block capped by a peaked roof — is similar to a house, albeit a massive one.

YET GAISER avoided a bulky appearance with dramatic use of glass and vertical lines throughout the building. On its front and rear facades are five cathedral windows that stretch from the lowest level almost to the roof. Honey-colored brick and pale wood trim also diminish the structure's mass.

The glass also gives the interior, "an open feeling — of not being locked in," Edwards said. "I think you can see the outside from every workstation." Additional light enters through 15 skylights.

Natural light from cathedral windows also floods the atrium which divides the offices into two halves. The atrium gives access to the lower tiers containing conference rooms, a small lunch-

room, a library and workspace. From all the upper tiers, staff can peek down upon clients waiting in the atrium. At the top is "heaven," as the staff refers to the area snuggled beneath the roof.

Cream walls brightened with brass accents and oak interplay well with the natural light. Outside of a handful of private offices or conference rooms, work areas are open. Low-slung workstations of chocolate velvet and cream formica trimmed in brass enhance the uncluttered design.

ALTHOUGH THE realtors have occupied the office since fall, there is still work to be done.

Phone lines must be installed and 40 people are working while there is work space for seven more.

Yet Zehnder and Edwards are proud of their accomplishment. Edwards says that with its distinctive appearance, the building is on its way to becoming a landmark on the Orchard Lake strip.

It's just like anything else," Zehnder adds. "We tried to set ourselves apart from other realtors."

"It's a rarity when you do something that exceeds your expectations. We feel that we got our money's worth with the furniture and the building. That satisfied feeling is a rarity."



This is a view from the third level showing work stations on left and stairs leading to fourth level on the right.



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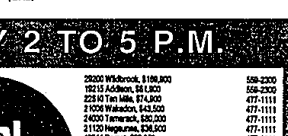
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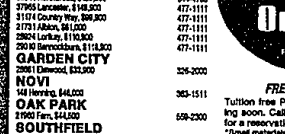
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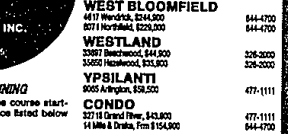
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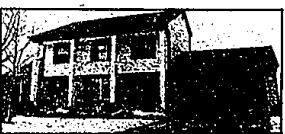
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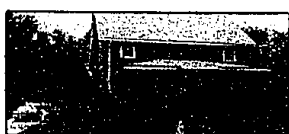
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