

Interior designer takes lead on Pearl project

BY RICH RIEGEL
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In the building industry, taking the lead role in a project is usually the job of an architect, engineer or construction contractor. Rarely is the lead project manager post handled by the interior designer.

But **Andrea Bainbridge of Portland's Bainbridge Design Inc.** did just that for a \$750,000 update to the Northwest Resource Federal Credit Union.

Bainbridge's interior design firm was retained in fall 2001 for a 22-month renovation project at 221 N.W. Second Ave. in Portland's Pearl District.

"Our tiny lobby and vast back office clearly did not reflect our member services values," said Pat Elliott, president and chief executive officer for Northwest Resource Federal Credit Union. "Although we are located on the street level, new members had difficulty finding us."

"We were still operating as if we were a single sponsor credit union tucked away in the company's corporate office, a business plan we long ago abandoned. We needed to change our street appearance, take advantage of our excellent location and reconfigure our square footage to increase the lobby, improve security and more efficiently use the back office."

Bainbridge's firm accomplished the task by creating a more visible street presence for the bank by making the retail lobby more visible through the exterior windows.

As a customer enters the bank, to his or her left, customer service representative offices feature a rhythmic, curved row of glass-fronted, semi-private spaces. On the right is a two-station teller row for transactions.



"The design centered on creating customer service offices, which would encourage members to drop in to discuss other business opportunities or products while completing daily banking," Bainbridge said.

The project budget was focused on the retail space, but the building team was able to create a fresh and professional administrative office while still reusing many existing materials in the final design. For instance, older office furniture gained a reinvigorated look when surrounded by new fabric and glass panels.

In addition to renovating the interior of the 6,700-square-foot space, the main entrance

was relocated from the mid-block of Northwest Second Avenue to the corner of Second Avenue and Everett Street.

Scott|Edwards Architecture, a Portland based firm, provided architectural services for the exterior entrance remodel, and design support for the interior architecture elements and construction document coordination.

"Once completed, the new corner entrance created a stronger arrival identity for credit union customers and also a significant enhancement to the pedestrian experience at the busy street corner," said Sid Scott, the Scott|Edwards principal who served as project architect.

General contractor B.J. Cummings Co. of Portland was brought on board before the final design documents were produced to review the renovation plans and proposed budget. Under the management of Don Nissen, the construction team worked for five months to construct the extensive renovation.

Northwest's Elliott gave the entire project team top marks.

"Together, they transformed our credit union from a frumpy mom-and-pop co-op into an attractive, street savvy services provider," Elliott said.