



THESE WALLS

Old meets new | THE PACKARD BUILDING

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The Packard Building's historic and contemporary styles peacefully coexist. PHOTOS BY MAIKE SABOLICH

OKLAHOMA CITY – It seems like a brick-and-mortar manifestation of a perfect marriage between historic and contemporary. The Packard Building, an 87-year-old car dealer showroom in downtown Oklahoma City's Automobile Alley, stands as a tribute to the past and a testament to the future.

Just last month, the most recent incarnation of the building began its new life as the offices of Accel Financial Staffing. The ultra-modern interior, completed by HSE Architects of Oklahoma City, stands in stark contrast with the 1920s-era exterior – a brick landmark that still sports its “Packard Oklahoma Motor Company” sign. But it is a juxtaposition that is tastefully executed.

“I had a lot of ideas of what I wanted the space to look like,” said Meg Salyer, president of Accel Financial Staffing and Oklahoma City Ward 6 councilwoman. “It has always been my dream to have this kind of minimalist, bright white and clear space.”

When planning the space, Salyer worked with HSE's Shelby Smith to get the feel exactly right.

“When you connect with someone who has a similar eye as you do,” Salyer said of working with Smith, “you think they do great work.”

“The existing brick walls on the south of the building are a key feature,” said Smith of building a modern office in a historic building. “These give the space some character that could not be achieved in a newly constructed space.”

She added that they were able to leave some clues to the building's previous life. For example, in the break room there is scarring in the concrete floor from what used to be an old rotary display for cars.

“We stripped the space and really used essential pieces such as the large blue wall in the reception to create a feature and draw the eye in and to relay to the public that your interior space is what you make of it,” Smith said. “It should be a place of expression and artistry.”

Salyer and her husband, Chris, bought the Packard Building just nine months ago and replaced the former tenant, AIO Gallery, which moved to Film Row. Chris and Meg have been investors in real estate along Broadway since 1984, and are, in fact, some of the prime movers of the post-bombing renovation of Automobile Alley.

“We have seen an incredible transformation in what we now affectionately call Automobile Alley,” she said. “We were early supporters and early board members of that organization (Automobile Alley Main Street Program).”

To settle into this current space in particular, she said, is a great joy. Having a street-level office that looks out onto what has become a young, hip part of town is gratifying.

“I hope it says a lot about who we are,” she said. “Being a part of the resurgence of downtown has been important to us from the day we opened our doors in the Magnolia Building 15 years ago.”



The building is the new home of Accel Financial Staffing.

