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# remodeling

YOUR TOOLBOX FOR SUCCESS

## Design Awards

Find inspiration from the best remodeling projects of the year in our annual competition



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2011

# remodeling design awards

While the quality of this year's 218 entries was high, the judges felt that the commercial projects showed "the most energy, had more character, and were more innovative in terms of adaptive reuse and use of reclaimed materials and renewable energy strategies." No surprise then that the Best of the Year winner came from the commercial remodeling category.

Craftsmanship, budget, sustainability, design objectives, and aesthetics were considered for each project. Whole-house (52), kitchen (47), and bath (24) remodels dominated the entries. Though there were strong entries in each category, the judges saw many "stereotypical" projects – "the same kitchen in every house in the neighborhood" – and entries with unprofessional photography that detracted from the work. What they found appealing were projects that "used dollars effectively," improved livability, and had increased light and space.

## The Judges

**JOE EISNER** Eisner Design,  
New York

**AMY GARDNER** Gardner  
Mohr Architects, Chevy  
Chase, Md.

**ALAN KANNER** Added  
Dimensions Custom  
Construction, Takoma  
Park, Md.

**HANS KUHN** Studio27  
Architecture, Washington,  
D.C.

**ROB MORRIS** Morris-Day  
Designers and Builders,  
McLean Va.

**JUDY MOZEN** Handcrafted  
Homes, Roswell, Ga.

## The Awards

Awards entries are organized into 10 categories, with an additional 31 sub-categories based on price.

Judges are not required to award a winner in each category, and they have leeway in determining which projects show the highest degree of design expertise and craftsmanship.

In the end, our judges selected 19 projects for distinction: one Best of the Year, four Grand Awards, and 14 Merit Awards.

## Screen Saver

IT MAY SEEM ODD for a residential remodeling publication to award its Best of the Year designation to a commercial project, but **this year's judges felt that this project "touched on almost all the categories in the competition"** — masterful handling of interior and exterior spaces, inclusion of sustainable elements, and connection to the landscape all combine to create "interesting spaces [that] make a run-down building into a jewel." The project also had a knockout binder with "great elevations and floor plans and large, well-labeled photographs."

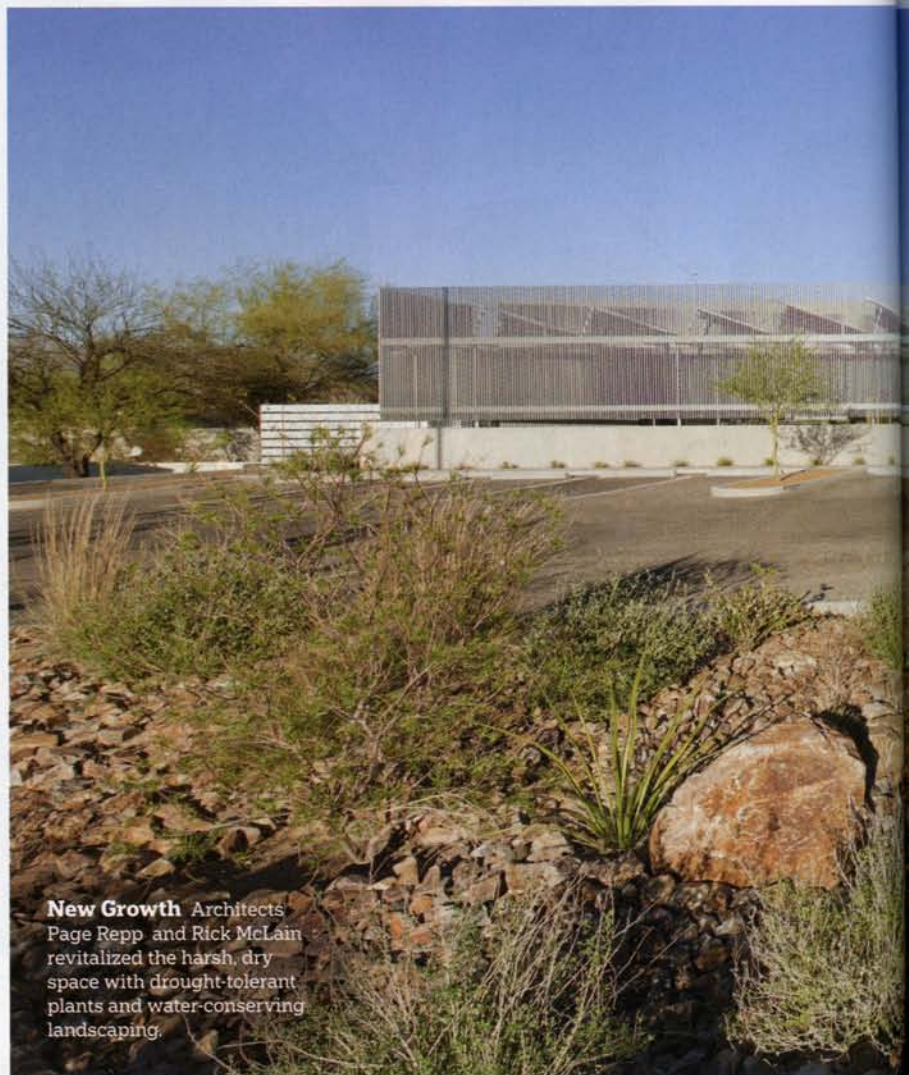
With minimal intervention, architects Page Repp Jr. and Rick McLain radically transformed a 1980s former Kinney Shoe store on a busy intersection in central Tucson, Ariz., into a new office for their growing design/build business.

The designers wanted not only to increase their ability to do fabrication and store materials and vehicles on site, they also wanted to create a space indicative of the type of work the firm does and that has a commanding street presence, which, Repp says, "will be our marketing budget and advertising for the next 10 years."

**"The primary focus," McLain says, "was to create a naturally well-lit space using simple, restrained materials to allow for the creative process and to create a great space to work [in] each day."**

The most dramatic part of the design is the exterior. "The building had great bones, but it also had a 56-by-10-foot-high glass wall facing directly west," McLain says. "That's the harshest solar exposure you can have." The design team needed to mitigate that exposure as well as decrease the noise from the daily barrage of 20,000 cars that travel the adjacent roads.

The solution: 585 steel tubes. The closely spaced lengths of 2-inch-by-1-inch tubular steel painted light silver create a screen that cuts the harsh light, *continued on page 56*



**New Growth** Architects Page Repp and Rick McLain revitalized the harsh, dry space with drought-tolerant plants and water-conserving landscaping.



**BEFORE**



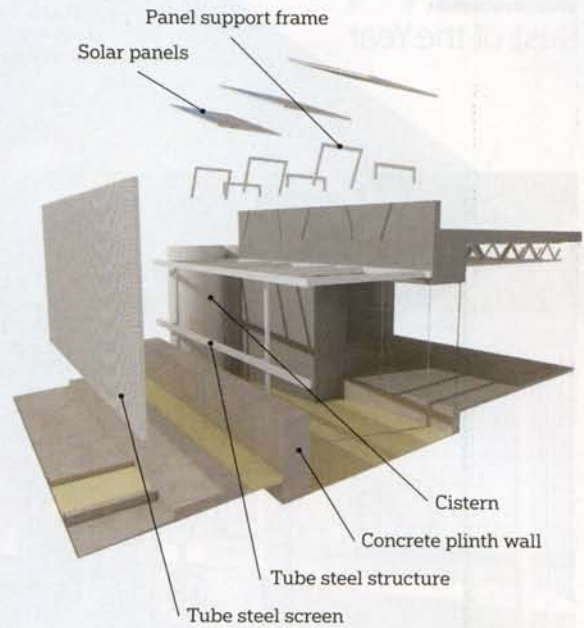
See slide shows of the 2011 RDA winners at <http://go.hw.net/RDA>

### Ugly Duckling

Architect Rick McLain says that the team chose this former Kinney Shoe store on a main road "because it was a sturdy, solid masonry building, and it was ugly. The ugliness gave us the best potential to do something cool with it." Locals hope it inspires other remodelers to do the same.



### Key Elements



**Shady Chic** On the western side of the building, the screen creates a cool, shaded courtyard that provides an important transition space that's enjoyed by people inside and outside the building. The flooring is of the same tube steel as the screen, left unpainted and allowed to rust.

"Our challenge was this: block out the western sun while maintaining light and transparency for the space inside — 585 steel tubes ought to do the trick."

—PAGE REPP JR., ARCHITECT





remodeling  
Design Awards

Best of the Year

2011

**ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR**

Page W. Repp Jr., Rick McLain,  
Repp Design + Construction,  
Tucson, Ariz.

**OTHER TEAM MEMBERS**

Jenni Van Brocklin and  
Stacy Burnett



**Bright Hit**

McLain and Repp wanted a playful color to accompany the building's otherwise muted palette. "Since we design and build, we gravitate toward 'construction yellow,'" McLain says. (The company name, actually on this sign, was removed from the photo for the awards competition.)



**Featured Subtraction**

Repp and McLain sought to create a simple, functional interior. They removed the linoleum floor and acoustic ceiling tile, incorporating the existing wood trusses into the design. At night the screen almost disappears, revealing the facade.

**Best of the Year, continued**

lowers the temperature, and keeps down noise. **The screen defines and shades the courtyard**, an important transitional space.

Above the courtyard, **solar panels are used as a shading element**. "We spaced them and angled them to allow the maximum light to hit them, and on the space in between we used a polycarbonate panel to filter the light, which creates a nice, naturally day-lit space," McLain says. The judges remarked on the "great design, which satisfies both function and form."

**The project's other big nod to sustainable design is the landscaping.** Tucson gets just 12 inches of rain each year, so every drop is precious. The landscaped area is depressed by 2 feet to passively trap excess water, and there is a 7,000-gallon rainwater harvesting system for irrigation.

Inside the building, the designers re-

moved the existing linoleum floor and honed the underlying concrete to give it a durable, polished finish. They built the desks and furniture from raw steel and MDF. **"We feel like we strengthened the building in most cases simply by subtracting things** — like the linoleum, exposing insulation, a tile grid ceiling, and associated ductwork — and saving what was good, like the concrete floor and the simple, natural wood trusses above the grid ceiling," Repp says.

The transformation "is nicely detailed and has a nice connection to the flat, scrubby landscape," the judges said. "Overall, it's a very uplifting building."

Repp and McLain report that employee morale has never been higher and that their contemporaries and colleagues in Tucson now feel that they should keep raising the bar. Repp and McLain have set a standard, inspiring others to invest in the area.



Use your smartphone to scan the 2-D tag, which will take you to a video about this project.