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News

ASM headquarters renovated (with video)

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Those just passing by the huge, geodesic dome on Kinsman Road in Russell Township might not realize the structure has been designated as a historical landmark and recently undergone a \$6 million renovation.

The company said "ASM is preparing for the next hundred years, looking to ASM's roots in the American Society for Steel Treating, and to the future as the provider of materials information to the world and beyond."

The Cleveland-based Chesler Group, which specializes in restoring historic buildings, was chosen as the general contractor for the project and drafted the application for historic designation.



"When most people think of historic buildings they picture a brick and masonry building built in the 1800s," said Michael Chesler, president of Chesler Group. "ASM hadn't considered that the 1959 building would be eligible for historic designation, seeing as how it was built in the modernist period."

Renovations included replacing the building's mechanical systems, cleaning and refurbishing sun screens, installing new gaskets and seals for the plate-glass windows, adding better insulation and repairing corrosion.

The garden level of the building has a "green" roof with soil and grass over the reinforced and newly water-proofed concrete.

Many original elements were restored, reupholstered or refinished, including 32 original Steelcase chairs, brass metal screens, a conference room table with stainless steel ASM medallion inlays and door handles and hinges. None of the original light fixtures needed any work, according to ASM.

Considered a true find are seven panels of brushed-aluminum murals by metals artist Bel-Jon. The works of art were stored in an inconspicuous area and were a surprise to many when they were rediscovered. The "History of Iron" series of panels was commissioned in 1953 and has been rehung throughout the building.

Semi-circular in structure, the building has 50,000 square feet of office space and features stainless steel floating staircases supported by stainless rods running from the ground floor to the second floor, brass handrails, copper doors, large panels of clear glass windows and walls and stainless steel sunscreens on the outside of large glass panels.

Although the building was not expanded, some extra laboratories were built. The headquarters offers several training and educational courses, some of which focus on younger individuals.

"It's an absolutely fabulous program," said Diana Essock, a member of the ASM Board of Trustees. "ASM has a huge effort in trying to promote the sciences and interest young people in taking up the sciences as their career."

A major goal of the renovation included returning to open, bright interior spaces, the concept of one of the building's original designer, John Terence Kelly.

Kelly, a Cleveland architect, designed the building and concept for the geodesic dome and brought in architect, mathematician and futurist R. Buckminster Fuller. The dome, designed by Fuller, is a symbolic gesture of what humankind can create from raw minerals and materials by transforming them into useful and reliable products and services, according to ASM.

"What was important to Kelly then is still important now," said Analia Nanni Dimit of the Lakewood-based firm Dimit Architects. "The views, the lighting, a sense of balance ... the unique feeling you have in each space. We've stayed true to his vision but in a way that works for ASM today."

Stanley Theobald, ASM's managing director, is pleased with Dimit's work.

"She really hit a home run," he said.

The majority of the renovation's cost was spent on the facility's interior. Reducing the cost of the project by a third was \$2 million in federal and state tax credits, Theobald said.



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