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Firm sets new trends, while keeping the old

by: ROBERT EVATT World Staff Writer
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Many law firms go for a classical look when it comes to their offices — columns, traditional furniture, hardwood floors and the like.

But not Smolen & Smolen. The Tulsa firm has renovated the former Ridgeway's Ltd. building at 701 S. Cincinnati Ave. into a prime example of modern architectural design while still remaining true to the original structure, said Donald Smolen, a partner with Smolen & Smolen.

"We didn't want to look like a law firm," he said.

As a result, the brick building has received light stone accents, open areas that expose the ductwork and original stone, and new banks of two-story-high windows lining the north side.

But the most distinctive feature of the building — constructed by Ridgeway's in 1947 — has remained, said Oleg Roytman, another partner with the firm.

"We wanted to keep the sloped windows on the front," he said.

Smolen said the firm had outgrown its space at 302 S. Boston Ave. — it now employs 17 people — but still wanted to stay downtown.

Darin Garner, vice president of operations at Ridgeway's, said the building had become outdated by the time the company moved three years ago to 111 S. Detroit Ave. When the Smolen firm acquired the property it needed a lot of work to become a modern law office. "We knew it was going to be a project, but we didn't know it would take us three years," Smolen said.

The entire project cost \$2 million, and the 8,000-square-foot building is still receiving finishing touches. Kinslow Keith & Todd Inc. did the architectural plans.

The firm used as many materials from the original building as it could in the redesign, including keeping the original Ridgeway's logo on the floor at the entrance.

Crews also were able to keep the interior brickwork safe by spraying it with a new kind of ceiling foam.

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Associated Images:



The main entrance of the law firm of Smolen and Smolen shows interesting details in the renovated Ridgeway Building at Seventh Street and Cincinnati Avenue. MICHAEL WYKE/Tulsa World



Oleg Roytman (left) and Donald Smolen II of the law firm of Smolen and Smolen stand in the lobby of the renovated Ridgeway Building at Seventh Street and Cincinnati Avenue. MICHAEL WYKE/Tulsa World

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