



Focus on Convention Centers

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Cover Photo: Overhead detail of ground floor at Riddell Advertising and Design Office, Jackson, Wyo., designed by William P. Bruder Architect Ltd. Photography by Bill Timmerman.

That Thing You Designed!

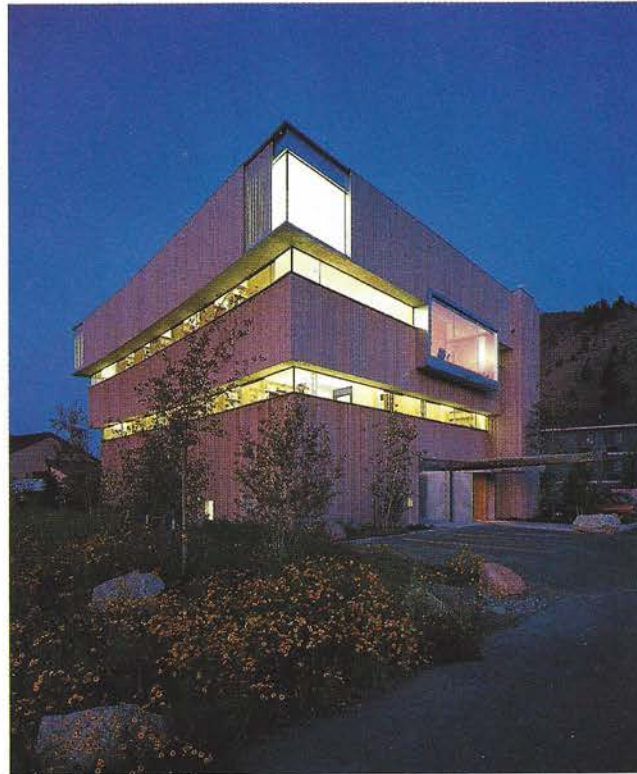
Riddell Advertising and Design Office, Jackson, Wyo., invited William P. Bruder Architect to design its new home—and wound up challenging the way this Western town sees itself

By Roger Yee

More horses are tethered now in the Town Square of Jackson, Wyo., than in the days of the wild West—a lot more. But the steeds lie hidden beneath the hoods of Mercedes-Benzes, Lexuses, Jaguars and the like. The resettling of rural America in the 1990s is bringing new kinds of pioneers, particularly middle-aged baby boomers and affluent retirees drawn to its lower costs for taxes, utility bills, living and doing business. In fact, some 1.6 million people have moved to rural communities since 1990, reversing a net outflow of 1.4 million people in the 1980s. You can see the result of this influx on the streets of Jackson, a town of some 10,000 residents ringed by Bridger-Teton National Forest, National Elk Refuge, Targhee National Forest and Jedediah Smith Wilderness Area, where new construction is vying with old to redefine the West. Though many of the freshly minted houses, condominiums and retail stores are adopting what some locals call “the fake log cabin look,” the new home of Riddell Advertising and Design Office, designed by William P. Bruder Architect, is delighting its occupants—and startling its neighbors—with a contemporary attitude that is actually close to Jackson’s historic roots.

Disturbing the skyline of Jackson was probably far from the minds of Ed and Lee Riddell, husband and wife as well as owners of the Riddell agency, when they began planning the three-story, 7,750-sq. ft. structure on the West flank of town. “Our former office occupied an old space in the tourist district off Town Square, where we had no room to expand,” Ed Riddell observes. “Since the land was becoming too valuable for anything but retail use, we decided to sublet our office and find a new space.”

Property values in the center of town were rising at an annual rate of 20% last year, the result of a real estate boom aggravated by a lack of available land—vast federal and state land holdings consume much of the Teton Valley that surrounds Jackson—so the Riddells were fortunate to own their second-floor commercial space as a condominium. The couple also considered themselves lucky in an unexpected way when they hired the



Is this the new West? Riddell Advertising and Design Office (left) fits on a tight site in Jackson, Wyo., with a composite wood and steel structure that cantilevers from a calm, majestic internal atrium (opposite) toward a busy thoroughfare in a developing commercial district. The bands of windows set into the western red cedar siding let in light and views of the distant mountains while screening off the commercial clutter nearby.

architect for their new office. As a member of the building committee for the Teton County Library Board, Lee Riddell offered to save the County the cost of room and board by inviting Will Bruder, the Phoenix, Ariz.-based architect chosen to design the County’s new public library, to stay at the Riddell home during his visits to Jackson. The Riddells had not thought Bruder, whose star is rising rapidly in the architectural firmament, would be interested in a modest assignment such as theirs, sheltering an agency of 20 employees serving such clients as Mongoose bicycles, Yakima ski and bicycle racks, Sun Mountain Sports golf bags and the state of Wyoming’s tourism campaign.

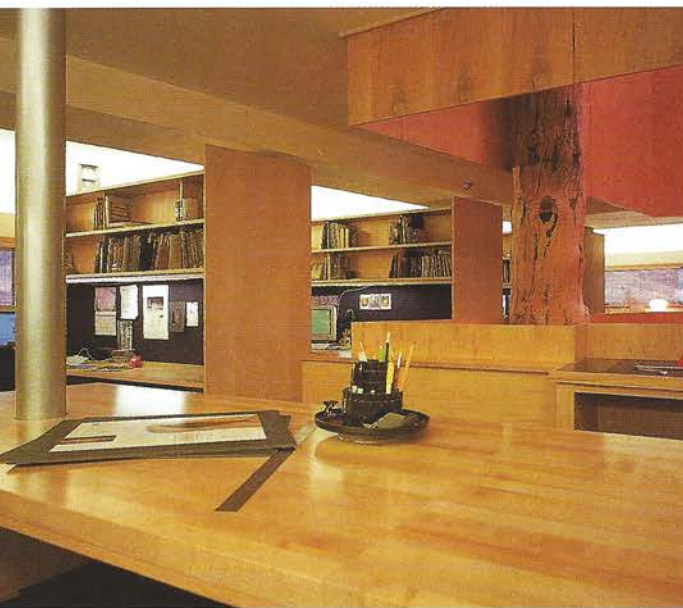
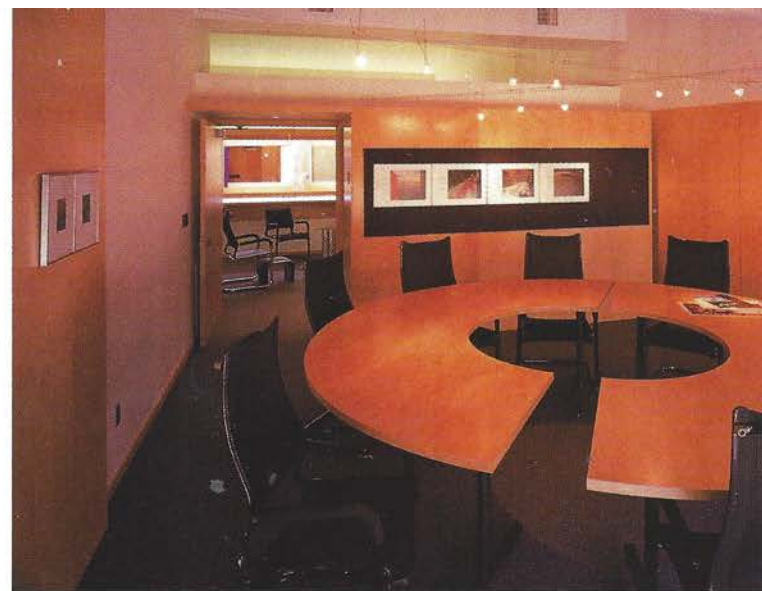
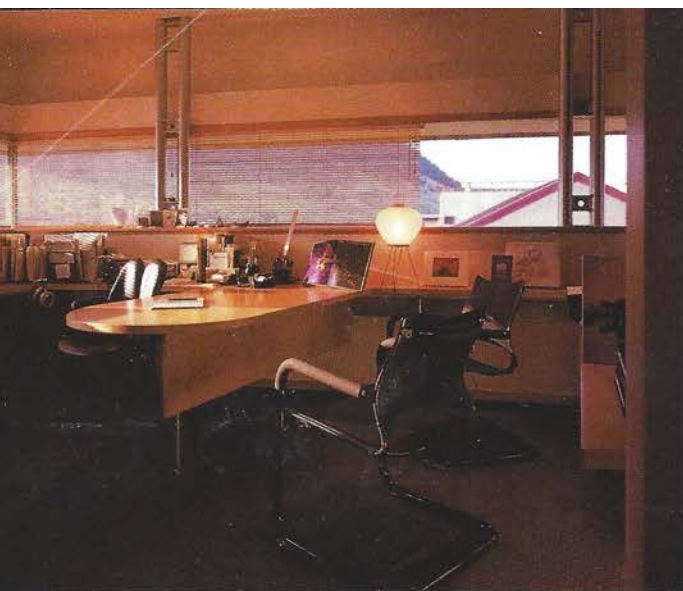
“We had been enjoying long conversations in the evenings about art, architecture, photography and design,” Bruder recalls. “When the Riddells asked me to design their new office, my main concern was, ‘will having a

professional relationship affect our friendship?’ I’m happy to say we weathered all the crises and are better friends than ever.”

Both sides endeavored to make this happen, of course. While the Riddells brought a worldly, entrepreneurial and artistic spirit to the project, Ed being an accomplished amateur photographer and Lee being a professional graphic designer for their firm, Bruder impressed the couple and their employees with his open, enthusiastic and thorough approach. “Lee and I wanted our entire staff to be involved in the effort,” Riddell says. “Will started by asking everybody what he or she wanted in the workplace.”

Bruder takes facility programming seriously, so he has created his own distinctive techniques for drawing out the needs of his clients. “Knowledge gives the architect the power to create,” he believes. “It establishes a bond of trust between the architect and the





the upper levels. Level one, for example, contains such support functions as a photo studio and a mail room as well as a reception area which visitors reach through a tunnel-like entry/gallery that heightens the drama when they arrive in the atrium. Upstairs, level two has a high-tech production room along with a paste-up copy center and staff rest rooms. Level three, where clients are received, includes a kitchen and lunch room, a client reception/product display area at the atrium, a library/think tank and a presentation conference room. "Will's design frees us up," Riddell declares.

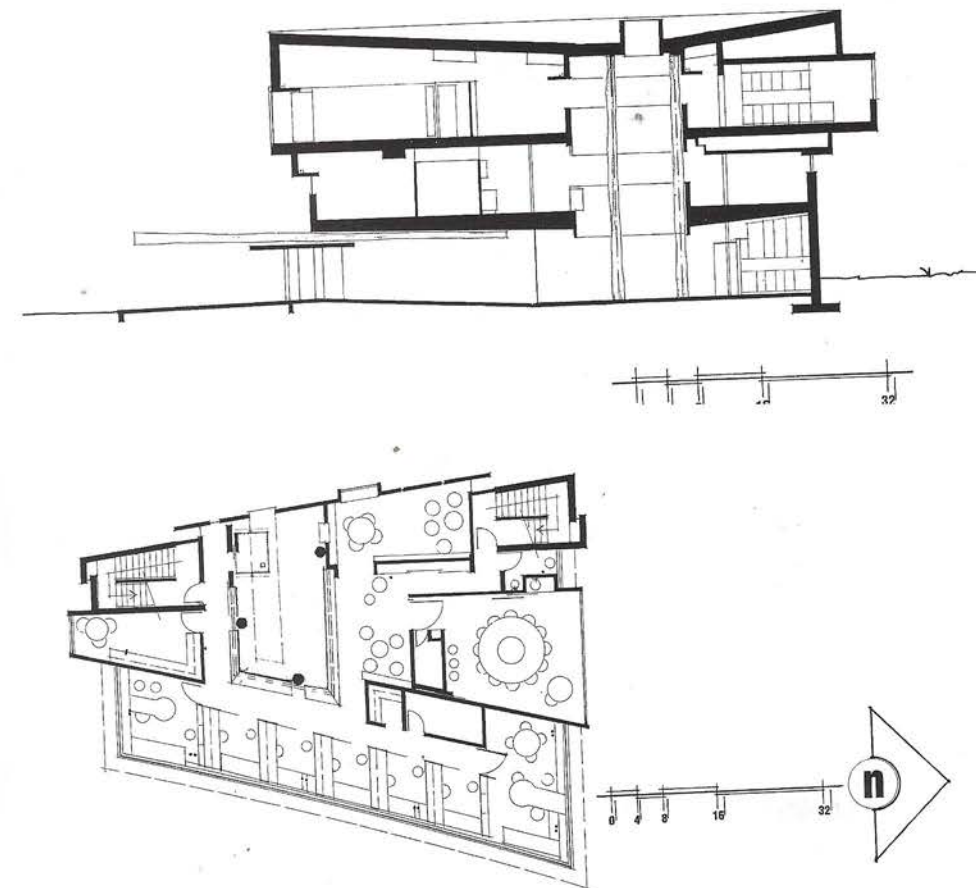
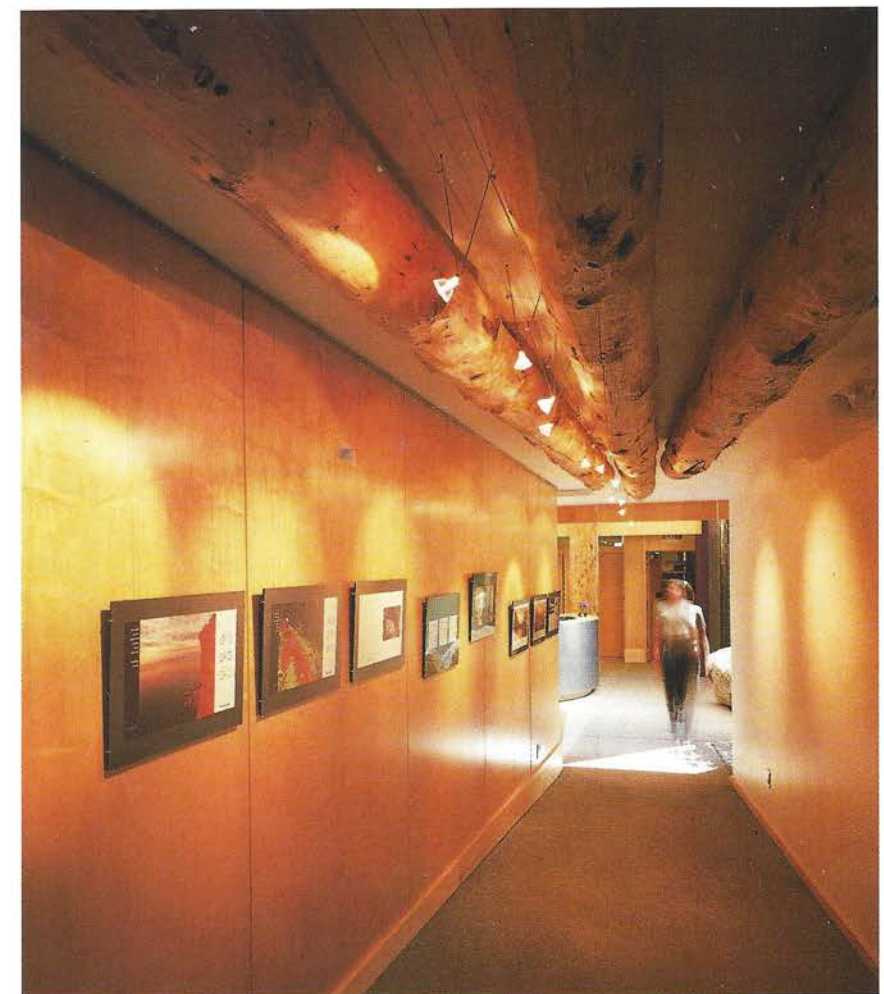
Now that the agency has successfully relocated, it's hard to see why the previous mayor of Jackson seized on Bruder's architecture as a scary vision of runaway development. The fact that the Riddell Building was developed as-of-right with a design that pays homage to such regional forms as muffin-shaped haystacks and cribs for cattle feed could not stem nearly a year of public debate on limiting growth in which even President Clinton praised "the new Jackson." Yet there is a happy ending to this tale: The public has come to like the Riddell Building.

"Thanks to us," notes Riddell with a chuckle, "local architects say they can be more adventurous. The phrase they use is 'not as radical as Riddell.'" You don't have to be an advertising executive to know the value of that word-of-mouth. ☺

Project Summary: Riddell Advertising and Design Office

Location: Jackson, WY. **Total floor area:** 7,750 sq. ft. **No. of floors:** 3. **Average floor size:** 2,616 sq. ft. **Total staff size:** 20. **Work stations:** custom by Mizzico. **Work station seating:** Grahl Industries. **Lounge seating:** ADD Specialized Seating Technology. **Other seating:** Office Specialty. **Architectural woodworking and cabinetmaking:** Office Specialty. **Client:** Ed and Lee Riddell. **Architect:** William P. Bruder Architect Ltd. **Structural engineer:** Brickey Rudow & Berry. **Mechanical and electrical engineer:** A.V. Schwan & Assoc. **General contractor:** Capstone Construction. **Landscape architect:** The Planning Center. **Photographer:** Bill Timmerman.

Playfulness and creativity at work: The interiors of the Riddell agency are a study in wood, glass and sweeping vistas inside and out that work in much the same way Japanese interiors exploit "borrowed views" to create a larger sense of space. This can be seen in a private office (opposite, upper left), the conference room (opposite, upper right), a general office area (opposite, lower left) of custom-designed work stations that adapt easily to different users, the client lounge (opposite, lower right) and the entry/gallery (above), a tunnel leading to the reception area.



client. Without it, the function and aesthetic of the design simply don't work."

No one knew what to expect of Bruder when he invited the staff to a morning work session. Seated before tables with blank sheets of paper, the Riddells and their employees heard the architect speak about why an architect establishes a dialogue with a client, how occupants determine the form and ownership of space, and what design

and facilities. The Riddells asked for a playful and stimulating yet practical and economical building, with an interior that didn't stratify people by job function—the eternal agency question about creative and account management personnel.

Fair enough. But the site, in a developing part of town, introduced its own inevitable wrinkles. First, because of high land costs, the Riddells could not place the staff on one

outwardly cantilevered upper levels of single-loaded corridors and open plan work stations around a full-height atrium under a roof supported by three 30-ft. tall log columns. The scheme brings light and views to the peripheral spaces through horizontal window bands set at 4 ft. above the finished floor at the sill and 6 ft.-2 1/2 in. at the head (letting sitters ignore the commercial squalor in the foreground to focus on the distant mountains),

What's one stupid thing you want to warn the architect not to do?

concepts could do to satisfy functional and behavioral needs. Then everyone was asked to respond in writing to such questions as: What's most important about the things you do? What's best and worst about where you work today? What's one stupid thing you want to warn the architect not to do? Afterwards, Bruder asked individuals to read their answers aloud, which led to a highly animated discussion.

So what did people want? The staff's wish list held no surprises: natural light, work space and storage and access to equipment

floor and satisfy local parking requirements at the same time, obliging Bruder to create a multi-story structure. In addition, the road lopped off the east end of the site in a wide arc. And the local scenery was already overwhelmed by such neighbors as Denny's, Days Inn and Wal-Mart.

In response to Jackson's tradition of wood construction and Teton Valley's magnificent landscape, Bruder created a cedar-sheathed building of steel columns, steel-braced wood framing and shearwalls, glu-lam and steel beams and wood-truss joists that wraps two

and floods the interior "canyon" of maple-veneered, MDF-clad parapets and interior walls with light from an east-west skylight that wraps over and down the west elevation. The trapezoidal floors (they curve with the road) are connected by stair towers at the northwest and southwest corners and an elevator facing the southwest stairs.

How does the facility avoid isolating its occupants? Working closely with the Riddells, Bruder has devised a stacking plan so each floor has functions everyone uses plus a mix of creative and account management staff on