

TAKE TWO

Adaptive reuse of an existing warehouse has created light, open offices for a major independent film production company



Below Now a futuristic picture of gleaming metal and glass, the Santa Monica Production Studio has been raised phoenix-like from a tired brick warehouse. New crossbar support frames have been left exposed to accentuate the raw aesthetic.



Parking can be hell – not only for drivers, but also for architects. Obligations to create a certain number of parking spaces for a new build can have a prohibitive impact on design budgets. Reuse of an existing structure, on the other hand, comes with more relaxed requirements – an affordable way forward, and one that benefits the planet as well.

Consideration of parking as well as people was one reason an independent Santa Monica film production company opted to reinvent a 1960s masonry warehouse for its light, bright production studios, says senior associate at Barton Myers, Thomas Schneider.

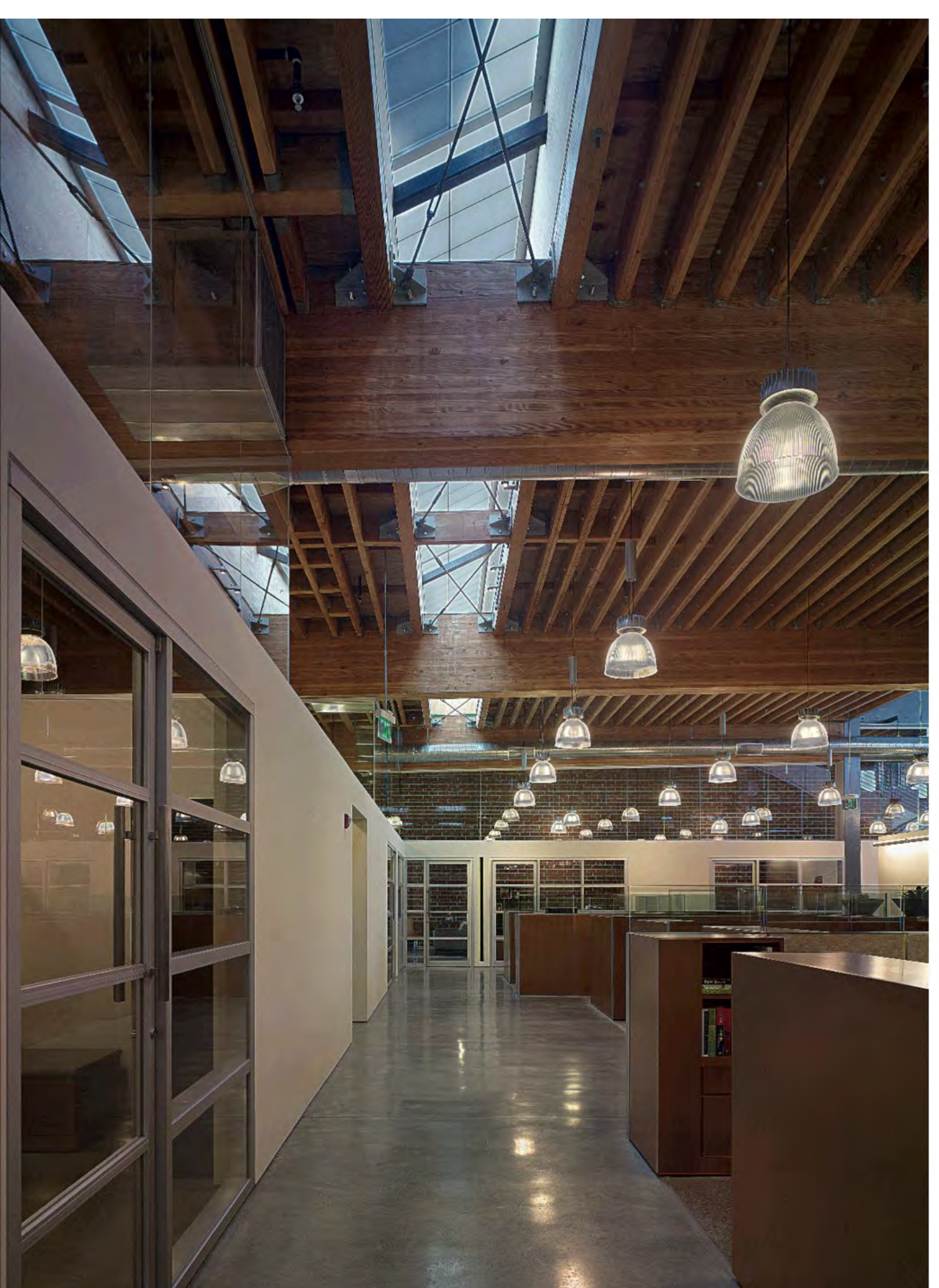
“Situated on Santa Monica’s industrial corridor, the brick and glass offices serve as a model for adaptive re-use. The 50-year-old warehouse, with a cramped mezzanine floor, has been structurally retrofitted to meet current seismic codes and provide strength for a raised roof, creating a roomy upper level and a large rooftop deck.”

George Minardos of construction company Minardos Group says the project involved propping up the three main brick walls, one at a time, while steel support beams were threaded into the design.

“In this approach, the exposed structure is part of the architecture. With no formwork or moulding to help reconcile abutting elements, all tolerances had to be accurate down to the millimetre.”

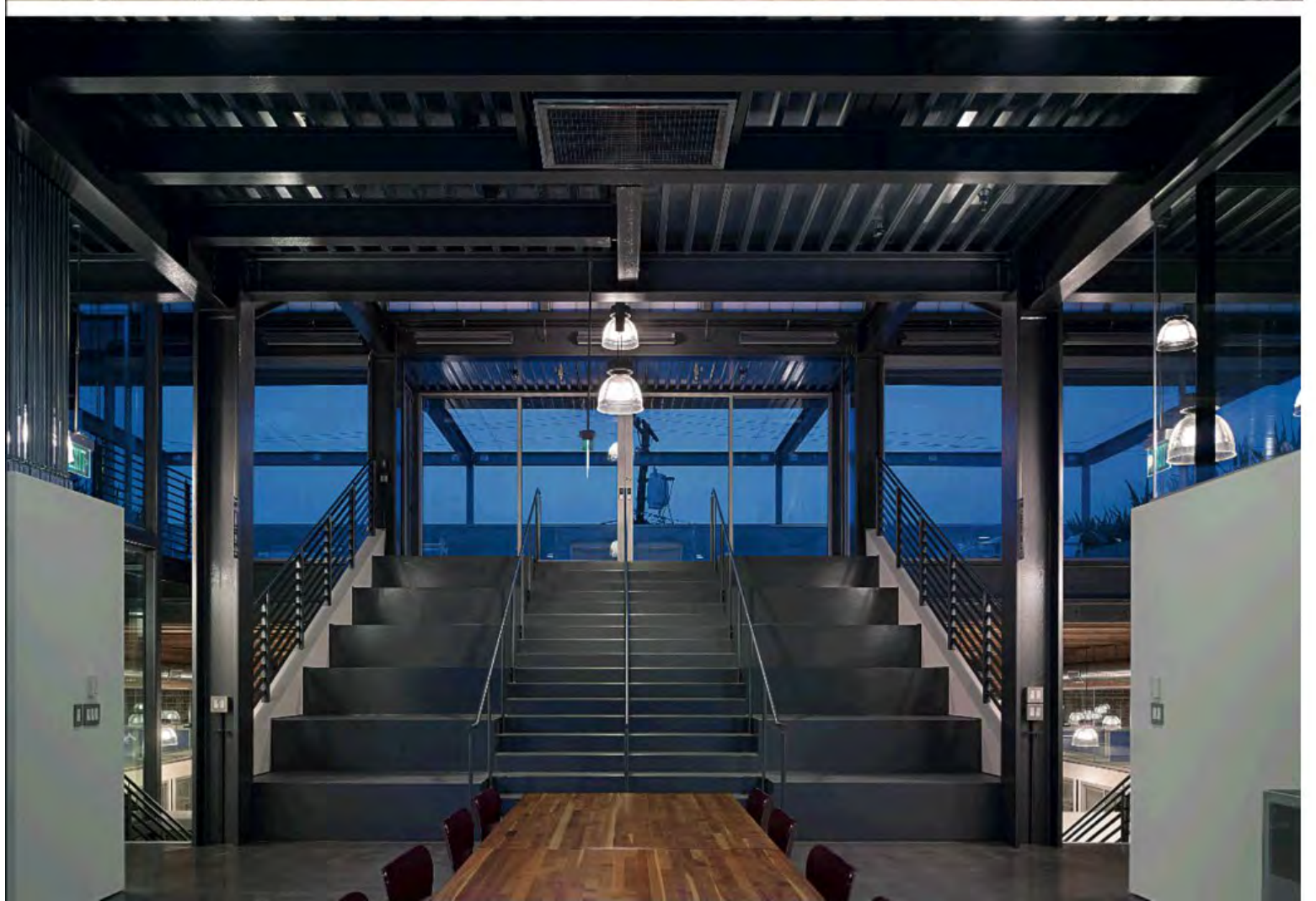
Schneider says the exposed bolts and other hardware have become the jewellery of the design, appropriate to the wider industrial setting.

“Mechanical systems and a new glass-enclosed elevator build on this aesthetic, as do the oversized steel staircases that connect the levels.”



These pages Exposed wood laminate beams comprise the new ceiling for the first floor offices and open spaces. The height of the mezzanine could not be altered, only the roof above it. Industrial-style lights suit the industrial aesthetic. These often stay switched off due to the natural light that floods through the new clerestory windows – another advantage of raising the roofline.





Left Advanced tensioning systems ensure the commercial roller doors slide up with ease.

Lower left and right Two stairways to the left and right lead from first floor to second, while a single central flight takes staff and visitors up to the rooftop and expansive views.

"The stairs lead the eye up through the open volume and provide casual places for staff to meet and interact," says Schneider. "On the first level, there are offices, a conference and media rooms, flexible open space and a small kitchen. The second floor has a large, open kitchen, breakout area and bullpen deskings, while the third floor opens to a viewing deck with a retractable canopy."

Besides reusing an existing resource, the studio advocates green architecture in another way, too. Cooling is via cross ventilation – still an exception to the rule where commercial buildings usually opt for old-school, energy-draining air conditioning.

"On the revamped mezzanine floor are two giant

operable, glass doors that roll up out of sight to make the space at one with the outdoors. Windows on the other side of the building draw cooling breezes through this upper level," Schneider says.

Other elements that reduce environmental impact include a thermal envelope that exceeds current building codes, energy-efficient lighting, on-demand water heaters and a reflective cool roof.

Car parking also played a part here. Permeable parking spaces allow rainwater to drain away on-site, avoiding an additional burden on stormwater facilities. Another saving comes in petrol bills – the expansive entertainment spaces make the premises a convenient venue for business meetings.



Location Santa Monica Production Studios
(Santa Monica, CA)

Architect Barton Myers, FAIA, Thomas Schneider, AIA,
Associate-in-Charge, Barton Myers Associates

Interior designer Stephanie Baca, HLW International

Construction George Minardos, Minardos Group

Structural, mechanical and electrical engineer
Buro Happold

Landscaping Nancy Goslee Power and Associates

Cladding Brick masonry

Roof Sarnafil Sika

Glazed doors Arm-R-Lite Titan; Lawrence

Security Max Security

Signage Neiman and Company

Lift services Schindler

Partitioning systems Steelcase

Window and door joinery Fleetwood Windows

Blinds and drapes Architectural Window Shades

Tiling Daltile

Flooring Poured-in-place concrete

Ceiling Exposed wood joists

Paints Masterchem Hammerite

Lighting Bega, Hunza, Hess

Workstations Steelcase, Tangram

Office chairs Herman Miller

Furniture, kitchen equipment Custom by Seeley Bros

Story by Charles Moxham

Photography by Benny Chan