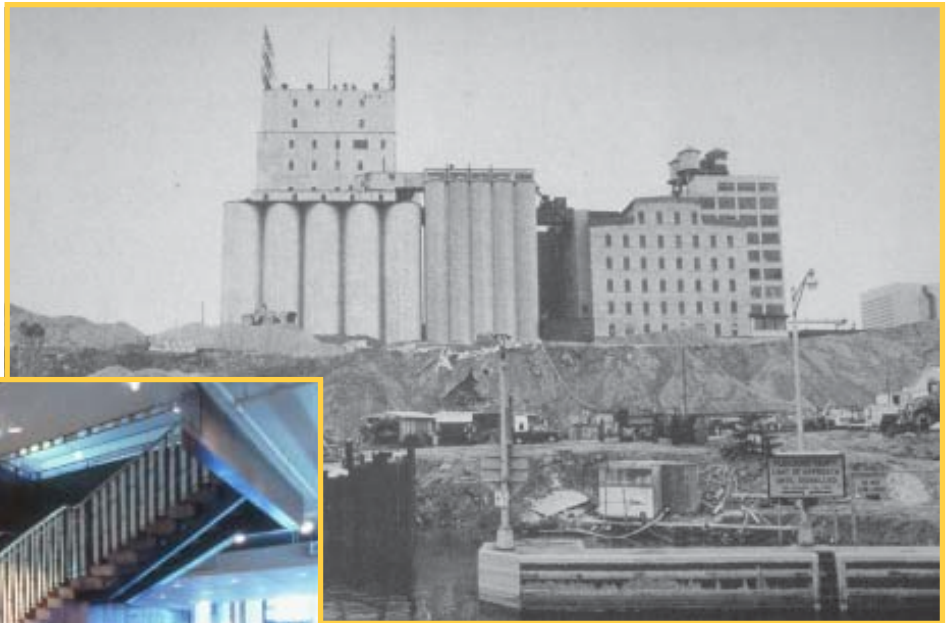


Building on a Solid Foundation

*Keewaydin Helps
The McKnight Foundation
Create a New Home
Centered Around its
Culture and Values*



Above: The Washburn A Mill. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

At left: The central staircase is made of reclaimed barn timbers and Corten steel. The sculptures at the base of the stair, by local artist Aldo Moroni, depict local and international historic buildings. Photo courtesy of Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd.

To most, home represents more than a roof overhead or a place to store possessions. Ideally, everything from the location to the very bricks and mortar should reflect the spirit, ideals and lifestyle of those who reside within it.

"This space truly represents a successful effort in translating our mission into a physical form...and Keewaydin is a partner in that success."

reflected their mission and values was possible with the help of Keewaydin Real Estate Advisors. Keewaydin guided McKnight through the process from start to finish, beginning with a crafty search for unique space and ending with the completion of a successful relocation.

McKnight's new headquarters space is in the heart of a developing area of Minneapolis, in a place connected to the history and future of Minneapolis, as well

For The McKnight Foundation of Minneapolis, creating a new home that

Rick Scott
VP - Finance & Administration
The McKnight Foundation

as to the mission and values of The McKnight Foundation.

A Diamond-in-the-Rough

In the spring of 2000, The McKnight Foundation, one of the nation’s largest private philanthropic organizations, realized that it had outgrown its headquarters office in downtown Minneapolis. The board members and staff decided to look for fresh alternatives that would better reflect the organization’s culture, mission and programs. Though they needed an office that projected a professional image, they also wanted a space that was casual and fun. McKnight asked Keewaydin for help finding such a space.

After analyzing McKnight’s needs, Keewaydin went to work to identify unique, out-of-the-ordinary spaces. “Simply sifting through a database of available standard office space in the Twin Cities was not an option,” said Michael Sedley, vice president for

“Keewaydin helped us visualize what this space could be and guided our understanding of this incredible opportunity.”

Keewaydin Real Estate Advisors. “We needed to look beyond the obvious and find unconventional options that weren’t generally available in the marketplace.”

An extensive search yielded six key potential sites, all within the urban core and all connected to the history of downtown Minneapolis. Among those identified was a new project planned for the burned-out ruins of the historic Washburn A Mill on the Mississippi River.

When McKnight’s board and staff first saw the ruins, they were skeptical but intrigued about the potential of locating a new office there. The building was devastated by fire in 1991 and the resulting ruins were strewn with debris. “It was a complete wreck,” said Rick Scott, vice president for finance and administration for The McKnight Foundation, “but Keewaydin helped us visualize what the space could be and guided our understanding of this incredible opportunity.”

Since many of McKnight’s programs focus on the river’s history and ecology, the Washburn A Mill seemed like a natural fit for the new headquarters. A National Historic Landmark, the site itself dates back to the 1870s when it was the largest mill in the world. The building project on the mill site was to include the new Mill City Museum and headquarters for the Minnesota Historical Society, one of McKnight’s grantees.

Expert Negotiations

Expert negotiation requires an understanding of expectations and a dedication to finding a compromise. “Negotiation is not about making



The artwork in the waiting space is a collection of photographs McKnight commissioned from artists in its photography fellowship program. The photos document threatened open spaces in the Twin Cities. The rug is by St. Paul textile artist Kelley Marshall. Photo courtesy of Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd.

demands,” said Sedley. “Instead, it’s about satisfying the needs of both parties while coming to an acceptable agreement.” Keewaydin negotiated a lease favorable to both McKnight and the landlord, helping to cement the new relationship between them. Keewaydin’s skillful negotiation also helped McKnight obtain a one-year extension of its existing headquarters lease; an extension without which the new headquarters project could not have happened.

“They really are terrific negotiators,” said Scott. “Their ability to negotiate an appealing package for our new space, while getting us a fair lease extension for our old space, really made our move a reality.”

Managing The Process

Not only did Keewaydin handle the site selection and real estate negotiation, McKnight also asked them to help select an architect, manage the build-out of the new space, and coordinate the physical relocation. The McKnight Foundation fosters a culture where all have an equal voice within the organization. Therefore, it was important that all board members, executives and employees be engaged and informed throughout the project. A thoughtful and carefully-executed communication process was key to keeping everyone involved. Keewaydin managed that process to facilitate the free exchange of ideas and flow of information.

Working with such a diverse group of individuals can challenge the most disciplined decision-making process, but Michelle McGuire, Keewaydin’s senior project manager, was able to keep

The McKnight Foundation’s Space Design Tenets

River

Connection and commitment to the river; historical, environmental.

Flexibility

Space to be open, flexible and spacious.
Ability to go from public to private space.

Home

Sense of home and family.

Community

Involvement with and openness to community.
Friendly, welcoming to visitors.
Acknowledgment of neighbors.

Environment

Sensitivity and commitment to environment.

Foundation Origins

Foundation: family history, mission and partnerships.

Programs

Connection, representation of McKnight Foundation programs clearly illustrated in the space.

everyone on task. “Michelle had an incredible knack for helping us understand all of the issues involved in a project like this,” said Shawn Kinniry, operations manager for The McKnight Foundation. “It was amazing how Keewaydin just took care of everything for us,” he added. “Each day, they handled a dizzying array of detail and solved countless problems, all while encouraging us and making us feel at ease.”

Reflecting the Mission

As a grant-making organization, The McKnight Foundation is committed to funding projects and efforts that serve children, communities, the arts and the environment. To McKnight, it was important these areas of focus be reflected in the new space. Meyer, Scherer and Rockcastle of Minneapolis, the project architect, helped McKnight clarify needs and desires for the new space. MS&R was also involved during site selection process, evaluating design opportunities and costs for short-listed spaces.

Together McKnight and MS&R developed a set of tenets that translated McKnight’s mission into a list of design requirements (at left) for the new office. These requirements included the use of ecologically-friendly and sustainable materials, the incorporation of program space that could be used by grantees and community groups, and the display of artwork, primarily created by grantees, throughout the office.

MS&R masterfully wove the objectives throughout the space. Their design carefully balances the need for

individual privacy with the organization's desire for togetherness. The office configuration supports their commitment to creating a non-hierarchical space, with open workstations positioned next to windows and most of the private offices within the space's interior. Natural light is equitably distributed throughout. Galleries on both floors unify the space and provide opportunities for programming displays and grantee artwork exhibitions. To meet the need for community space, gathering areas can accommodate up to 300 people.

Echoing McKnight's commitment to the environment, MS&R included various natural features in the design as well as a broad range of ecologically-sustainable and environmentally-friendly materials, furniture and fixtures. Reclaimed wood products were used in everything from the conference room tables to stairway treads. A McKnight environmental program grantee, Aitken County Certified Forest supplied and milled the maple trim for the private offices and meeting rooms. Recycled rubber tires were used in flooring materials and recycled jeans were used for insulation in an

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acoustical ceiling panel. Several other elements, such as drywall, carpet, ceiling tiles, furniture, and textiles, include a significant percentage of reclaimed and recycled content.

Partners in Success

The McKnight staff settled into their new headquarters office in January, 2003. The light, airy space reflects McKnight's spirit, ideals and culture, welcoming visitors with natural materials and vibrant hues. Floor-to-ceiling windows showcase breathtaking views of the historic Mill Ruins Park and Mississippi River. Works by many of the McKnight-funded artists abound throughout this impressive work environment.

"This space truly represents a successful effort in translating our mission into a physical form that meets our organizational needs," said Scott, "and Keewaydin is a partner in that success."

For more information about Keewaydin and our services, visit our website at www.keewaydin.com. to learn more about The McKnight Foundation and to take a virtual Green Tour of their headquarters space, see their website at www.mcknight.org.



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