

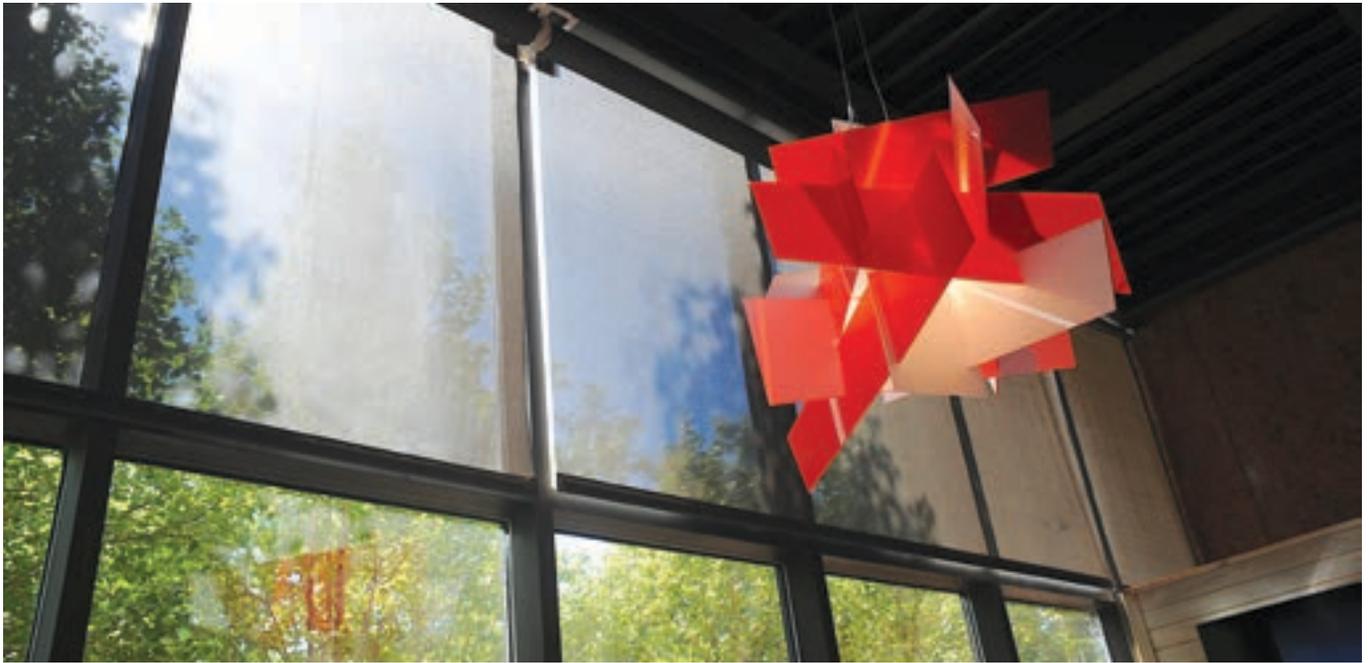
# A Place to Call Home

AIA Colorado Members Work Together to Design the Organization's Home for the Next 10 Years

by Sarah Goldblatt, AIA, and Alaina Gonzales



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When the economy is at its worst, the ideal strategy is to plan for the future. The Colorado Component of The American Institute of Architects (AIA Colorado) did just that. Three years ago, with its downtown office lease set to expire and rates scheduled to increase by more than 30 percent, AIA Colorado convened a long-range planning task force — comprised of association members and staff members — to identify a new location that would meet the organization's long-term goals and reduce expenses in the process.

To guide the effort, a survey was sent to all AIA Colorado members to gauge their vision and preferences for a new

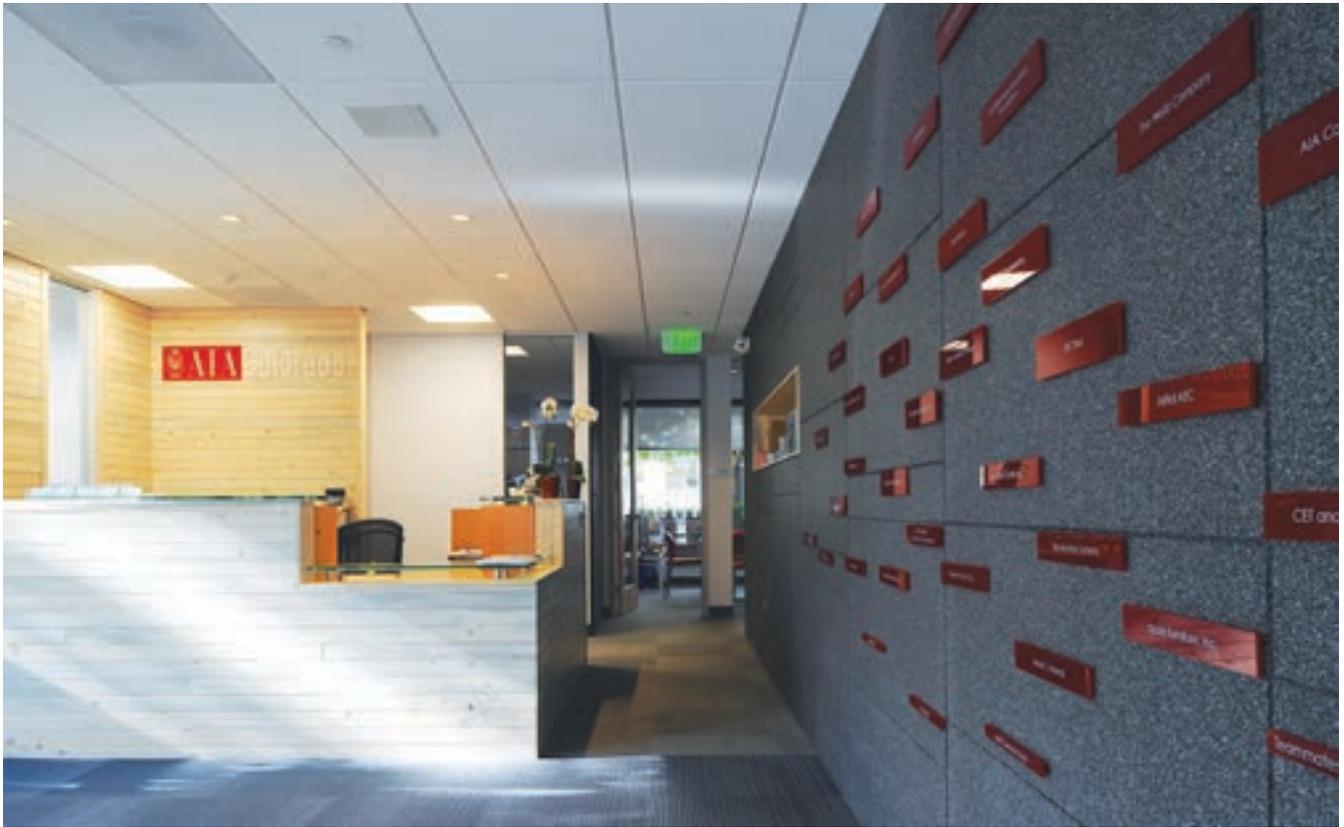
home base. Member priorities included close proximity to downtown, the State Capitol and the University of Colorado Denver College of Architecture and Planning, and easy access and parking. Ernest Joyner, AIA, AIA Colorado 2012 president, added, "We kept hearing members say that we want AIA to get architecture and architecture discussions in front of the general public. How can we act as an advocate for the value of architecture and design?"

While the idea of incorporating something akin to a "Center for Architecture" — which would invite the public in for programming and events — remained on the task force's

radar, it was ultimately deemed unfeasible, given the project's limited budget of \$150,000. Instead, the program focused on the organization's critical need for more office, meeting and event space. "Members wanted a central location where they could come for meetings in a space that would both reflect the profession and unify members," said Sonia Riggs, Hon. AIA, AIA Colorado executive director.

"After careful fiscal planning and a search for space," explained Hutton Architecture Studio, a member of Cuningham Group Architecture, Inc., Project Manager Margaret Pauls, Assoc. AIA, "the organization decided





on a location that would lower rent by 30 percent and be 150 percent larger." The ground-floor space, in a RNL-designed 1980s office building in Denver's Uptown neighborhood, effectively balanced member requests and programmatic requirements.

Utilizing a qualifications-based selection process — one based on skills, experience and capability and not solely on fee — AIA Colorado selected Aspen-based Studio B Architects for the firm's "ability to do exciting projects on lower budgets and using economical materials in creative ways," Joyner said. He added, "The selection committee really had to put personal design aesthetics

aside and identify an architect whose design would appeal to our broader membership." Scott Lindenau, FAIA, design principal of Studio B, teamed with Denver-based Hutton Architecture Studio, a member of Cuningham Group Architecture, Inc., for its expertise in sustainability as well as a number of past successful collaborations.

The architects, working with a dedicated advisory team that included Gail Pelsue, AIA, AIA Colorado 2012 treasurer; Kitty Yuen, AIA, AIA Denver 2011 president; and Joyner, among others, applied the cost-efficiency model to the design as well by optimizing the inherent qualities and flexibility of the

space. As a result, visitors are welcomed with a light-infused lobby. Adjacent conference rooms are contiguous to the lobby and can expand or contract to accommodate varied group sizes. AIA Colorado North chapter members designed and assembled a striking beetle-kill-clad barn door, which allows the conference room to spill out into the lobby for even larger events. "It's not overdesigned," Lindenau explained. "It's neutral, but it functions very well. The natural light, the flexibility and the functionality of the space [are] the real accomplishment of the project."

A long feature wall, covered in a sound-absorbing rubber-bead mate-

rial, is the primary organizing element and clearly defines public and private spaces. It does double duty as a natural display surface and a donor wall. A generous reception area links to staff offices — both positioned at the far-end of the lobby to invite people to discover the space. Warm-toned, beetle-kill wood applied throughout tempers the cool black, gray and white palette and distinctly connects to the 2,200 statewide members.

Not only did the project successfully solve the organization's budget puzzle with innovative solutions, but it also served to galvanize the AIA Colorado members, including students and professional affiliates. Each AIA Colorado local chapter donated time and resources to the effort. Also remarkable was the more than \$310,000 in donated materials and labor, including Xsentials' (formerly ESC Thul) contributions to the space. The company, which specializes in the integration of architectural technology, believed the organization's audio-visual equipment should be in step with the technology used throughout the profession and should also simplify and enhance the



use of the space. Sleek Savant iPad control stations, plasma screens and video-conferencing equipment were among Xsentials' donations.

Recognizing the creative vision of the architectural team and the significant impact of the donations to the project, Yuen acknowledged, "We really got class-A office space on a class-C budget." Thanks to AIA Colorado's forward-thinking, the efforts of local AIA chapters and the support from the broader architectural community, AIA Colorado has a distinguished new location to call home. ●

#### BY THE NUMBERS

- **30 percent** – the amount per square foot AIA Colorado saved by moving offices
- **\$310,000-plus** – the total of donated materials and labor
- **\$150,000** – spent by AIA Colorado (averages \$15,000 per year over the 10-year lease)
- **\$57** – construction budget per square foot
- **4,012** – the square footage of the new office (compared to 2,800 in the old office)
- **Priceless** – not having to rent spaces for most meetings and small events

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Stewart Filmscreens  
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#### Members Who Helped with the New Office

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# Green Garage™

OZ Architecture Transforms a Brand Vision for an Earth-Conscious Auto Repair Shop into a Memorable Experience

*by Sarah Goldblatt, AIA*



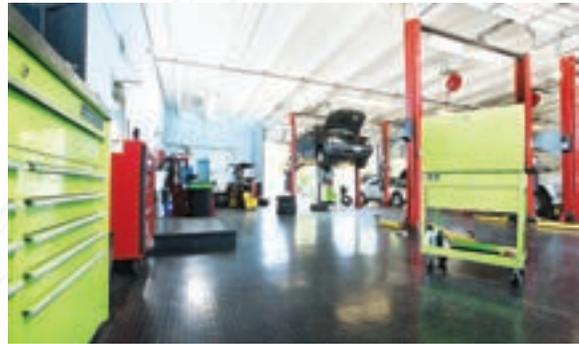
The market is flooded with healthier and more-sustainable options for food, housing, building and even parenting. Yet, outside of fuel efficiency and hybrids, environmentally responsible car ownership still remains challenging.

Eco-conscious drivers admit that automotive service and maintenance is a necessary evil with few opportunities for positive environmental impact. Rarely does a trip to the auto-repair shop hold the promise of reducing anything beyond the contents of your wallet. Is there hope for greener alternatives to the conventional automotive service offerings?

Green Garage™, a Colorado-based company, thinks so. In fact, it has set out to change these age-old stereotypes and overhaul car maintenance culture in the process. With a keen eye for environmental stewardship, Green Garage™ is committed to reusing and recycling everything possible while utilizing sustainable technologies to make vehicles more energy-efficient. A fresh and eco-friendly design strategy for its auto-repair shops also clearly communicates the company's forward-thinking attitude.

Boulderite Ryan Ferrero, an admitted "recovering auto dealer" and "tree-hugger" with a passion for cars and the planet, launched Green Garage™ in 2009. It was clear to Ferrero from his years in the business that the automotive industry does little to promote sustainable practices. To reverse the notion that love for your car and love for the environment are incompatible, Ferrero developed Green Garage™ to transform the status quo and educate the consumer on ways to literally tread more lightly.

To gain greater local traction and ultimately national visibility, Green Garage™ engaged Crispin Porter + Bogusky (CP+B) — a global agency with an office in



### **Green Garage™**

#### **Architect and Interior Designer:**

OZ Architecture

**Design Team:** Paul Tremontozzi, AIA, LEED AP, principal-in-charge; Megan Freckelton, interior designer; and Abbey Plonkey, brand designer

**Branding, Design and Marketing:** Crispin Porter + Bogusky

**Location:** Denver

**Size:** 7,000 square feet

**Purpose:** Auto-repair shop

**Owner:** Ryan Ferrero, Green Garage™

**Contractor:** Project Manager Derek Breier, Saunders Construction

**Mechanical Engineer:** Design-build, Saunders Construction; David DuVal, Innovative Mechanical

**Plumbing:** Design-build, Saunders Construction; Mike Zastrow, Zastrow Plumbing

**Industrial Designer:** Michael Barker, MBarker Designs

**Chalkboard Artist:** Matt Megyesi

**Photography:** Drake Busch



Boulder whose client list includes giants like Microsoft, Kraft and Domino's Pizza — to develop a brand vision. The company also hired OZ Architecture to help execute CP+B's brand vision for Green Garage™ into a memorable *and* sustainable experience.

Through a series of charrettes with project stakeholders, the OZ Architecture team — comprised of Paul Tremontozzi, AIA, LEED AP; Megan Freckelton; and Abbey Plonkey — developed design standards for current and future Green Garage™ locations. Once completed, the firm's first task was to apply the standards to a 1940s-era building in Denver's Highland neighborhood that had func-

tioned for years as a typical, non-environmentally friendly auto-repair shop. "Reusing existing structures is central to the company's development philosophy," Green Garage™ President Steve Kirchner explained.

The Green Garage's™ nondescript exterior provides few hints of the transformation that occurs within. Here, the OZ team inserted a clean, modern aesthetic that delivers the antithesis of what you might expect from a conventional auto repair shop. The team created a light-filled, engaging "front of the house" where customers can relax with drinks from the privately operated tea bar, Teatulia, connect their iPads and iPhones to local Wi-Fi and have direct interactions with sales and service personnel.

The wide-open entry and retail areas have a broad vista overlooking the automobile bays so customers can watch their cars being serviced from nearly any vantage point. They can also step into the service area to ask questions. Full-height walls are minimized to reinforce the company's belief in transparency and also to maximize natural light throughout the space. Transaction and waiting areas — typically cramped and dimly lit — give way to a variety of comfortable seating options that feel more like a hip, modern loft than a gritty repair shop.

To further the company's green initiative, all the furnishings and finishes were carefully selected for their low-VOC emissions, and recycled or rapidly renewable content.





Additionally, locally sourced and fabricated elements, along with descriptive signage, provide customers with abundant opportunities for discovery and a few surprises. A chandelier, crafted from reclaimed spark plugs, illuminates the main retail seating area. Caged mechanic's lights hover playfully over customer consultation café tables, and woven seatbelt partitions, akin to a modern shoji screen, are used for privacy in the designated quiet seating area. A lush, aspen-forested mural provides the calming backdrop for this zone, along with Adirondack chairs made from recycled milk jugs that complete the scene.

While the Green Garage™ design borders on luxurious by automotive shop standards, Freckelton stressed that the owners requested a creative use of low-budget materials. "It required thinking hard about each detail and about how to make it an engaging, creative space without spending a lot of money." Just as Green Garage's™ owners had hoped, OZ Architecture successfully crafted CP+B's brand vision into a memorable environment, embedded with sustainable features that will attract a community of repeat users who welcome the opportunity to take their vehicles to a more planet-friendly auto-repair shop. ●



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