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RETAILdesign

INTERNATIONAL



KEEPERS

Austin, TX



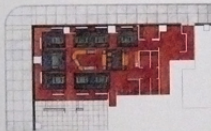
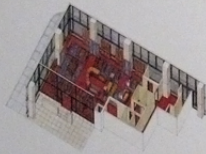
DESIGN: The Michael Malone Studio at WKMC Architects, Dallas, TX
 PRINCIPAL IN CHARGE OF DESIGN: Michael Malone, AIA
 PROJECT ARCHITECT: Bruce Williams, Assoc., AIA
 PROJECT TEAM: Richard Smith, AIA, Audrey Maxwell, Assoc., AIA
 OWNERS/CLIENTS: Chuck Haidel, Mike Reynolds
 PHOTOGRAPHER: Judd Haggard, Houston, TX



The space selected for Keepers, a men's clothing store, was a neglected former banking hall located on a corner in Austin's busy, resurging downtown. The store has three glass walls that allow the street life outside to "act as the backdrop for the upscale menswear merchandise." Thus, creating "a store in a fish bowl" became the challenge for the Michael Malone Studio at WKMC Architects of Dallas.

According to Michael Malone, principal and designer, "The store's plan is organized around views to neighboring buildings and the Texas State Capitol." Eight foot tall wood units were placed around the perimeter

of the store to act as both backdrops for displays facing the street and as flexible walls for merchandise presentation inside the store. The panels are equipped with puck system accessories so that the units are flexible and changeable and can convert from folded to hanging merchandise—from hang rods to shelves—or any combination of the two. In the open central space, multi-tiered floor units are used. They have storage space in their cabinet bases and layered presentations of folded garments can be set out on the glass tops. "This strategy of keeping the lower fixtures in the center of the store enhances the sense of openness in the modest 2500



sq. ft. space. The abundance of natural light allowed for the use of darker fixtures and flooring which also help to minimize glare." The large stone-topped island cash/wrap is the central organizing feature in the plan and it also serves to display and store jewelry and small accessories. The focal backdrop of the shop is the hospitality bar with the flanking torchers that also doubles as a shoe display when not in use for trunk shows or special in-store events. A small conference space, off the main floor, serves as a "made-to-measure" room/ fitting area. Sliding wood doors with frosted glass inserts close off this area.

In keeping with ecology and green minded Austin, the existing glass walls and interior storefront were reused

and the windows were tinted with ceramic films to minimize heat gains and UV damage to clothing displayed in the windows. The two story high travertine columns of the original banking hall were polished and retained in place. For the millwork and fixtures, the designers specified clear sealed eucalyptus plywood—"a by product of the 'trash tree' that when sealed turns a rich amber color." The existing concrete floor was stained and remnant carpet pieces were serged and their edges turned into area rugs. "The result is a low maintenance, visually strong store that is easy to merchandise and operate."