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News

Architectural firm lands award for ASM renovation (with videos)

Sunday, February 19, 2012

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The description of "modern historical" in reference to the **ASM International** headquarters facility in Russell Township could be interpreted as an oxymoron.

But in this case it isn't.

In fact, it's precisely the strategic blend of old and new that recently earned **The Chesler Group**, a Cleveland-based architectural firm, the **2012 Wallpaper* award** for best architectural renovation.

Wallpaper* is an international design and style magazine with headquarters in the United Kingdom.

Mike Chesler, president and founder of the The Chesler Group, recently termed the publication "'The Architectural Digest' of Europe."

"The key thing is we were the only Americans to win anything," Chesler said.

Worldwide awards were presented for several types of design, including fashion and housing.

Built in the late 1950s, the ASM facility crowned with the largest openwork dome in the world, gained inclusion in the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 2009.

The distinction was a first for such a young building, according to Wallpaper* and helped to earn federal and state tax credits lessening the burden of renovation costs.

"It's the first modern historic building of its kind to benefit from the government's tax credit programs, it's clear the program hit all the right notes," Chesler said.

He added the facility never received the recognition it deserved because of its location in the Cleveland area.

"The complex nature of the renovation ... that's what brought it to the forefront," he said.

It was Chesler's collaboration with ASM International Managing Director Stan Theobald that rescued the original site from being sold.

"The Chesler Group not only saved it from the uncertainty of a possible sale, but also breathed new life into a landmark building, highlighting the increasing need — and expanding market — for the preservation of modernist architecture," according to Wallpaper*.

Chesler, who considers the distinction the biggest feather in his company's hat, noted he's been receiving calls from other groups in cities throughout the U.S. seeking to renovate mid-century modern buildings and he's excited about the possibilities.

"We've wanted to move to a more national company and this is a great time to do it," he said.

"These buildings are the future of historic renovations in the USA."

Theobald also is pleased with the honor.

"The award is quite unique in that it is from Wallpaper* and a U.K. award," he said. "Wallpaper* is very well-known in Europe ... this award and the competition for the 'Best Renovation' is huge."

The Chesler Group worked with Dimit Design and Architects of Lakewood to make the transformation happen.

Among challenges faced by renovators were the walls, each of which was built with a curvature.

The original vegetative roof deck, which leaked the day after it was built, had to be completely restored.

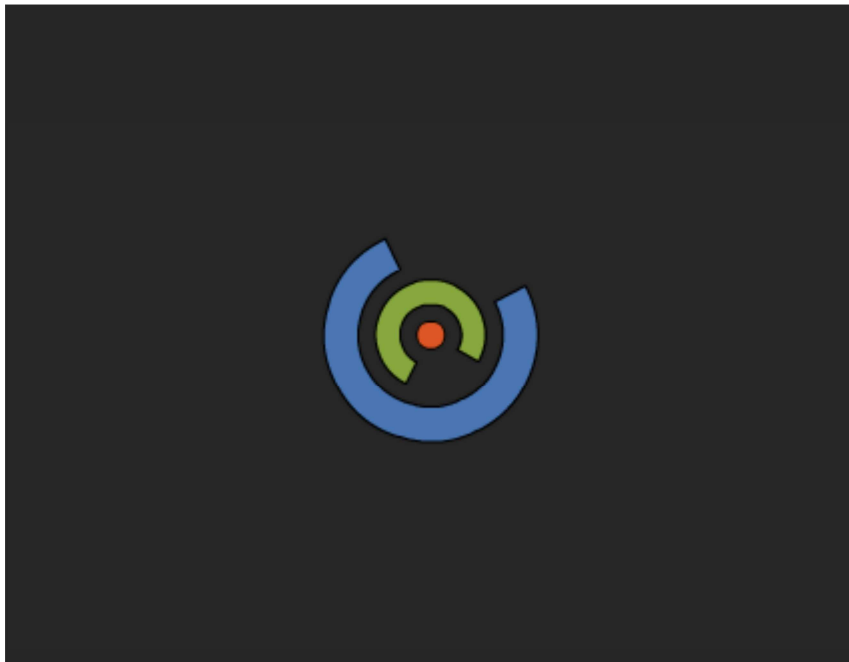
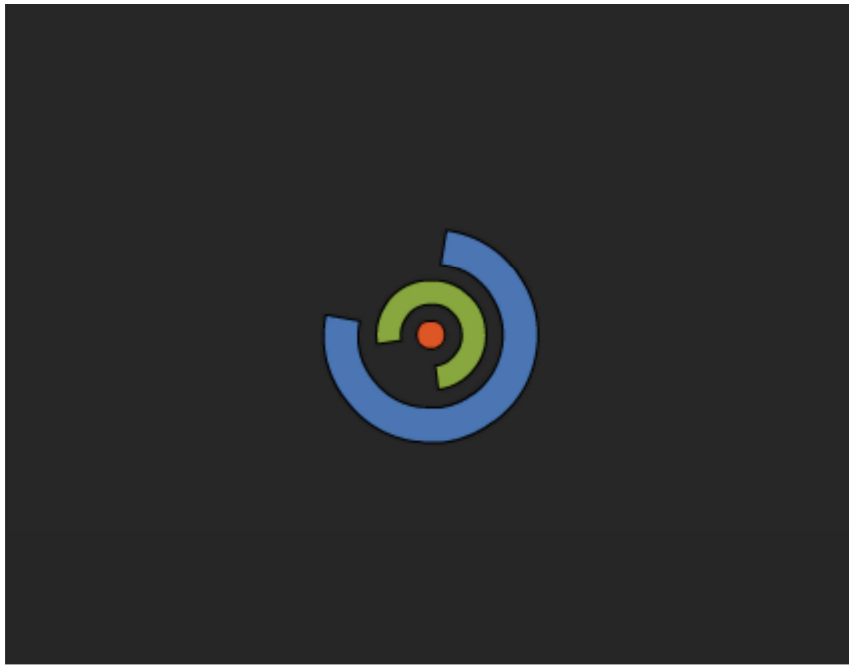
It prompted Chesler to learn forensic concrete analysis in order to understand why the concrete had failed.

"We weren't allowed to replace it so we had to marry the new concrete wall with the existing historic fabric," he said.

"On top of that we had to work during the night to blast off the coal tar pitch, as it was the only time it wasn't tacky."

Theobald said the renovation is drawing attention from many sectors and more awards "are just starting to come in."

Videos from Jean Bonchak's tour of the renovations last year:



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