

## New leases on life

### Face-lifts attract tenants to '80s towers

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Uptown's One McKinney Plaza office building opened its doors in 1983 — but not the doors you'll enter today.

Owners of the 15-story McKinney Avenue tower rebuilt the entrance and ground floor to give the building better drive-up appeal and additional retail space.

One McKinney Plaza's \$6 million makeover is just one of several redos in which owners of older office towers are spending big bucks to make over their properties.

"Everybody that goes down McKinney Avenue says, 'Wow, what a change,'" said C. Anthony Reynolds, design and construction manager with One McKinney Plaza's owner, Gaedeke Group. "This is a core asset for the owners, and they have put a lot of effort into this building."

It shows.

From the third floor up, the office tower pretty much looks the way it did the day they cut the grand opening ribbon.

But if you're walking along McKinney Avenue, it's a totally different project.

A new two-story metal and glass retail structure juts out to the corner at Hall Street. And much of the former plaza area out front has been enclosed with a 30-foot wall of glass as a lobby.

Up on the second floor, where a health club had its pool deck, work crews are busy creating an outdoor garden and lounge area for the tower's office tenants.

"The view of the downtown skyline from here is amazing," Reynolds said.

The flashy fix-ups at the tower have already paid off.

The office space is more than 90 percent leased. An Internet education firm, Archipelago Learning, rented the two-story vacant spa space before the renovations were even finished.

Two large restaurants have rented most of the added storefronts.

"The most office space I could put together in the building is about 9,500 square feet," said Belinda Dabliz, Gaedeke's vice president of leasing. "When you have a building from the 1980s, you have to keep it up to compete in the market."

The owners of the Spectrum Center office complex in Addison just completed their own \$6 million redo of the two 12-story buildings.

Granite Properties bought the 600,000-square-foot center three years ago. Major tenants in the project — which is more than 80 percent leased — include Wells Fargo and Concentra.

"It was built in 1986 and really hadn't been updated much since then," Granite chief operating officer Greg Fuller said. "This renovation was the whole intent when we bought the buildings."

Spectrum Center's huge landscaped plaza out front was reconstructed to make the office towers more user-friendly.

"The whole area was originally landscaping and a fountain feature," Fuller said. "But there was no surface parking to speak of or drop-off points for visitors — something you need in this building."

Granite built a covered entry for the office towers and created visitor parking out front.

"We also did a rehab of the inside of the building," Fuller said. "Back in the 1980s, everyone used nice stone in the lobby, but it was dated and had a darker feel."

Spectrum Center's mechanical systems — especially the elevators — also got upgrades.

"We've seen a lot more leasing interest since we renovated the buildings," Fuller said.

He said keeping office projects up to date is a necessity in competitive markets such as the Dallas area.

"At our Granite Park One tower in Plano, we just redid the lobby," Fuller said, "and that building is only 11 years old."



Squire Haskins Photography/

**The remodeled lobby** area of Spectrum Center in Addison boasts clean lines and plenty of natural light.