



Steeplepoint Instructional Support Center Houston, TX

Building Owner: Cypress-Fairbanks
Independent School District
Architect: PBK Architects, Inc.
General Contractor: Reid and Gary
Strickland Co.
Facility Manager: Van Franks,
Director of Facilities Planning
Size of Installation: 6,000 lineal feet
Product: ULTRAWALL® Partition System



Administrators of a school district now make more trips to the local strip shopping center and buy less while they're there. That's because more than half of the 122,000-sq. ft. center has been converted from retail stores to high-quality office space, now known as the Steeplepoint Instructional Support Center. Cypress-Fairbanks found the space it needed to accommodate current needs in the school district, plus enough to handle additional growth, in a conveniently located shopping center that was available for purchase. The new facility houses a number of school district departments, plus the professional library for the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District in Houston, Texas.

A "smart wall" from USG Interiors, Inc., helped the school district convert retail space into functional office and conference space quickly, attractively and cost effectively. ULTRAWALL partition systems provided a way to get the flexibility for productive design the school district needed, plus rapid installation. ULTRAWALL partition systems are progressively erected, movable wall systems that come with kerfed, predecorated 3/4-in. gypsum panels in 36 vinyl and 22 fabric finishes. Glazing components, interchangeable T- or H-studs, door frames and a variety of trims, corners and terminations complete the system. Installed with steel framing components, the basic system achieves a 1-hr. fire rating and STC of 42 with no special details.

"Our first experience with the ULTRAWALL system was for one of our elementary schools," Van Franks, director of facilities planning for the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District said. "The success we had with it there encouraged us to use it in 12 other elementary or intermediate schools since then. The Steeplepoint application was a natural one, because there is more potential for revising the floor plan here than for any of our schools," Franks continued.

Relocatability of the wall system is touted as a feature that provides an economic advantage to drywall construction over time, but Franks sees the economics differently. "The alternative for us would be drywall construction on site with field-applied vinyl," Franks said. "Because of the labor time commitment required for that kind of construction and last-minute adjustments, we think we're coming out about even by the time we're finished with the basic installation of the walls."

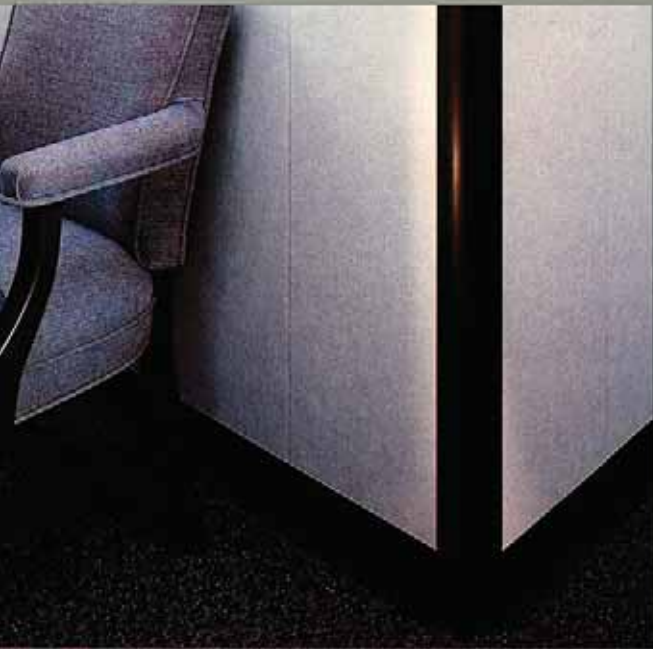
PROJECT PROFILES

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“Also, with the speed of installation and available options of this movable partition system, we’ve been able to meet move-in deadlines and adjust decorating schemes that we never could have handled with conventional drywall,” Franks said.

Certain features of the ULTRAWALL partition system had special benefits for the Steeplepoint Instructional Support Center. For instance, radial corner trim on ULTRAWALL partition system provides added resistance to abuse and performs a safety function as well for corridors. A matching curved trim piece was also used on door frames. With glazing panels, the trim served to add elegance to the system’s versatility. “The radius corner trim offered by this system not only adds an attractive feature, but we’ve been able to use it successfully in a lot of places, especially corridor junctions and other high-traffic areas where corners are particularly subject to abuse,” commented Franks. “And the matching radial trim on the door frames adds integrity to the entire system,” he said.

Work on the Steeplepoint conversion began in March 1993 with several departments planning to move into their offices in early July. “We began erecting walls on March 28 and had enough completed for the school district’s Technical Department to run a conference in the facility beginning on the fourth of July,” recalled Franks. “That’s something we couldn’t do with other systems. We’ve come to expect it from ULTRAWALL.”