

McCann-Erickson Worldwide

World Headquarters
New York, New York



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A crucial component of the design of the new headquarters for one of Madison Avenue's most venerable advertising agencies was its phased timetable. The company's move from an adjacent building into its new home at 750 Third Avenue occurred as space in the new site became available. Further challenges were provided by widely differing floor plates and the stipulation that there be no interruption in McCann's work schedule.

As the fourteen designated floors became available, they were built out for work stations with sheetrock walls and communications wiring. Embellishing doors, sidelights and millwork were fabricated off-site and then inserted within the gaps and reveals that had been left to facilitate rapid installation.

The McCann-Erickson aesthetic derives from a client brief mandating not only recognition of the agency's 90-year history and international status, but also a desire to translate the creativity and communication inherent in advertising into three-dimensional terms. Warmth, too, was a word that figured prominently in the solution sought.

Gwathmey Siegel, with the welcome collaboration of two top-level client executives, arrived at a multifaceted scheme that focuses on the agency's public places and pervades the fourteen floors as an iterative unifying device. Black and white marble flooring creates a strong visual element while alluding to its precedents throughout the history of architecture. Similarly, the use of mahogany for extensive millwork celebrates history and tradition. But if the mahogany wall grid expresses an articulated hierarchy of classical architectural elements, it nevertheless embodies an innovative solution for the deployment of artwork.

The grid pattern incorporates two-foot squares in the lobby areas which frame photographs of hanging signs from around the world. Originally book illustrations, the prints refer to the agency's international scope of operations. A related idea is the universal graphic of flags, a motif that lends itself to diverse interpretation for each floor. Artists were commissioned to create their own take on the concept, and the bold graphic covering each focal wall draws visitors down the long corridor from elevator to reception desk.

1 Entry-reception area

2 Elevator lobby

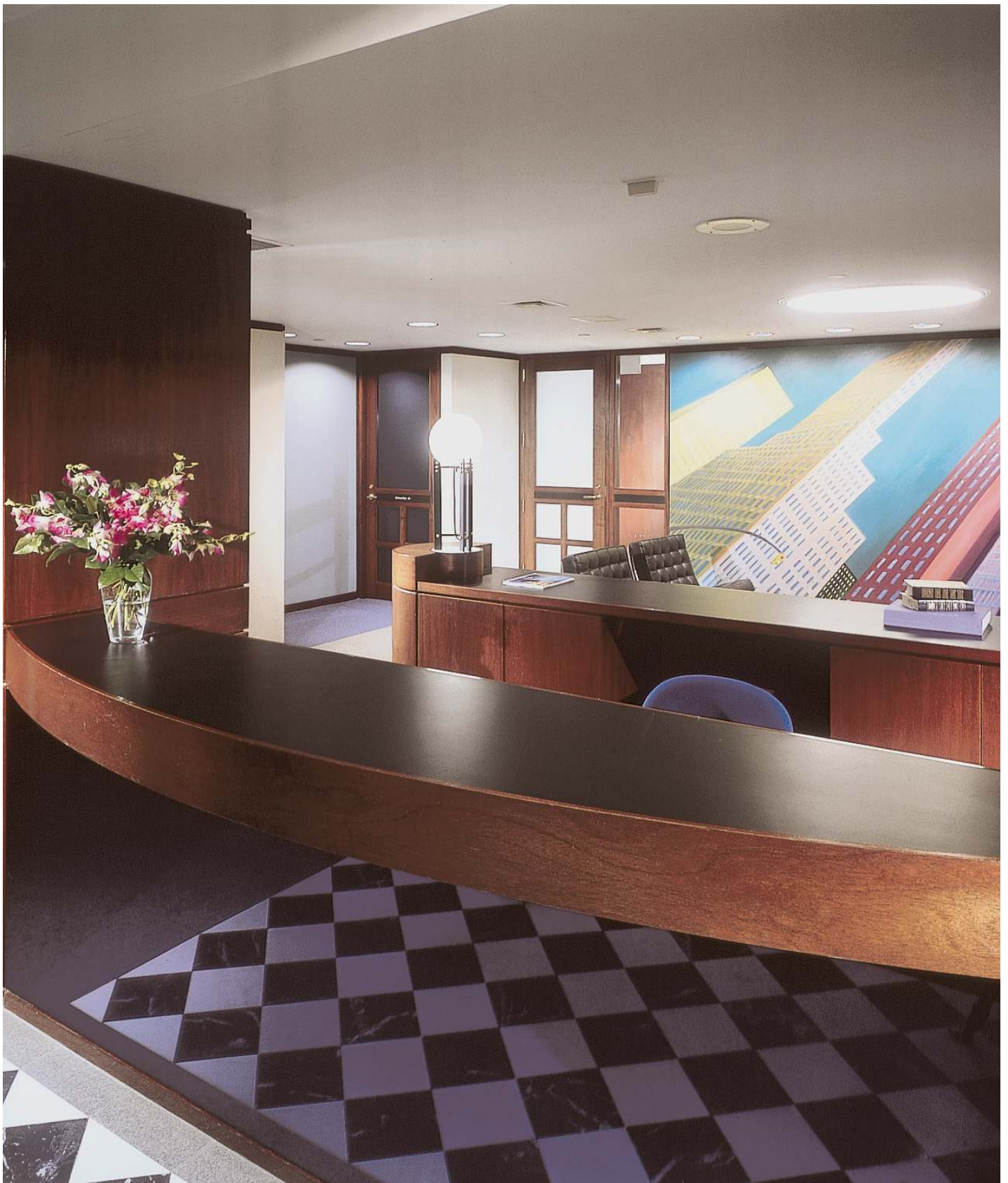
3 Conference room



Internal stairway connecting two executive floors

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Reception area

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Key Project Information

- phased timetable met client's request that there be no interruption in work schedule or occupancy
 - conference room featuring sophisticated audiovisual capabilities
 - black and white marble flooring creates a strong visual element while alluding to architectural history
 - reception spaces feature custom-designed mahogany furniture
 - emphasis on agency's public spaces
 - use of mahogany for millwork imparts sense of warmth
 - iterative design of the public spaces unifies the whole
 - integration of contemporary art
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- completed 1989
 - gsf 350,000

"The aesthetic recognizes the agency's 90-year history as well as the creativity inherent in advertising today. [...] Gwathmey Siegel proved itself to be eminently capable of completing large scale projects with no sacrifice to detail or to the architects' concern for creating environments to address each agency's persona and needs."

Interior Design, January 1993



Two executive floors joined by a connecting stair