

Sony Entertainment Headquarters

New York, New York



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When SONY acquired the celebrated AT&T building in 1993, it commissioned Gwathmey Siegel to transform the structure into the world headquarters of its music entertainment division and motion picture group. Certain modifications were inevitable: to begin with, the 1,000,000-square-foot, 35-story building, which had accommodated just 600 people when it was occupied by AT&T, would now have to house 1,600.

Other changes were more unexpected. Gwathmey Siegel redefined the SONY Atrium and Public Plaza as an accessible enclave of activity with a strong presence on Madison Avenue. Enclosing the soaring, 60-foot-high arcades flanking the north and south sides of the original building with aluminum-framed bay windows recast the previously open spaces as two entertainment retail stores. The special interior features of the retail spaces incorporate superscale images and exhibition, media, and display systems, as well as banners, flags, neon, and music.

The former annex building contains a series of new spaces, including a newsstand, commissary, ticket booth and the SONY Wonder Museum. Organized around theatrical motifs, the museum

is an interactive, state-of-the-art attraction featuring electronic display signs and graphics meant to enhance visitors' understanding of communication through technology.

In the ground-floor lobby, sheets of dramatic black glass have been inserted into arched recesses to offset the original granite walls and Lutyens-patterned inlaid marble floor. Black glass paired with anegre veneer recurs at significant points throughout the 35 floors. Color-coded elevator lobbies clearly express each SONY division. The original perforated metal panel ceiling detail installed by Philip Johnson and the basic core organization were retained. What is new is a rigorous architectural approach to layering the space, as well as the custom-designed workstations and reception desks.

The design also includes a 75-seat private screening room with anegre paneling and deco-style leather club chairs. Executive dining facilities are located in the 35th-floor SONY Club. A gourmet restaurateur and his staff now serve the Club's several distinctive locations: a formal 60-person dining room embellished with custom Tiffany tableware, a popular pizzeria done in black leather and stainless steel, a piano bar, and three private dining rooms.

1 View from Lexington Avenue

2 Public plaza

3 75-seat private screening room, 7th floor



Atrium/public plaza

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Second floor sky lobby

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Key Project Information

- redefined, accessible public plaza
 - 75-seat private screening room
 - interactive, multimedia museum at plaza level
 - two retail stores
 - sophisticated multimedia display and exhibition systems
 - visitor information area
 - ticket office
 - executive dining facilities
 - formal dining room for 60 people
 - three private dining rooms
 - piano bar
 - full-service kitchen
 - respectful modification of important Philip Johnson/John Burgee design
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- completed 1994
 - gsf 1,000,000

"A spectacular renovation that includes a most dramatic change at street level"

Interiors Magazine, September 1993



Executive dining room



President's private conference room



Waiting area with executive secretary workstation