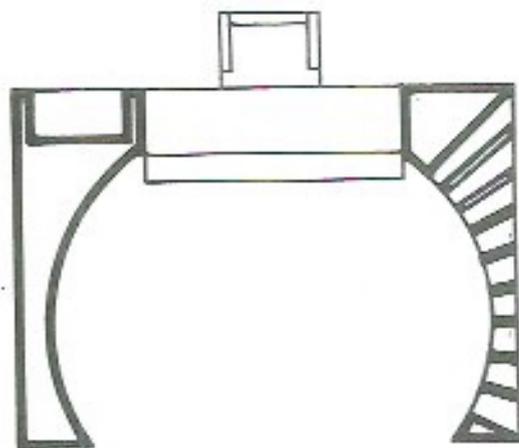


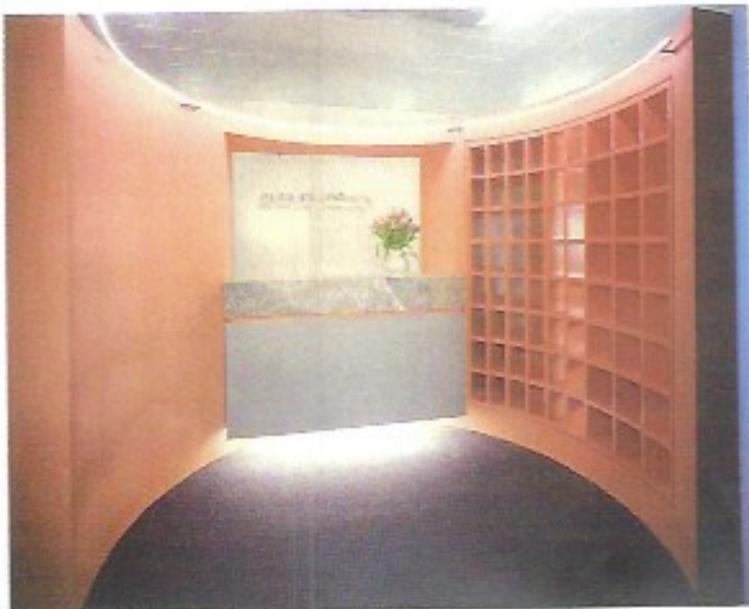
## OFFICE DESIGN

*Auburn Brace headquarters  
act as a showcase for both client and architect.*



# First Time Around

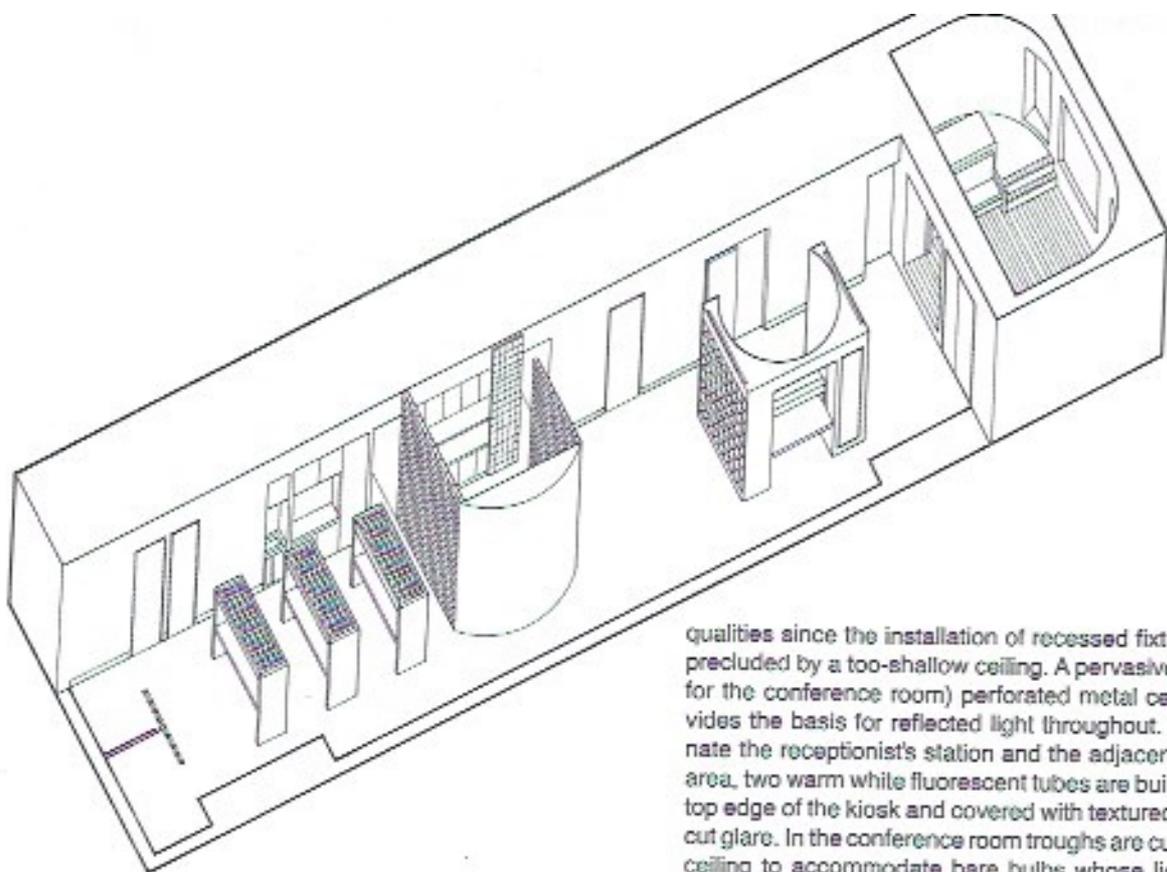
PHOTOGRAPHY: NORMAN McGRATH



**T**hat headquarters facilities are meant to be image-promoting for both client and designer is generally a tacit given. It is especially true for first-time business ventures. Such was the case with the newly established firm Auburn Brace, which had leased 1,600 sq. ft. in midtown Manhattan and gave architect Eric Schlamowitz, AIA, his first independent commission. As seen here, the visual means to that end are readily apparent—in such freestanding components as a receptionist's kiosk and central conference room, in a grid element that pervades as a leitmotif and in a color scheme in which neutrals are enlivened by a bright peach accent hue.

Confronting the site, Schlamowitz found a floor plan of long narrow configuration with sources of natural illumination limited to the ends. This dearth of daylight plus the awkward dimensions of the space itself presented the young architect with his major challenges. In an effort to counteract these detriments, Schlamowitz devised a plan emphasizing open areas. He aligned the receptionist's kiosk, conference room and a series of work stations down the center of the aisle-like space, while locating those enclosed offices deemed necessary by programming at the perimeter and, in the case of the partners' office, at the front end. As to lighting problems, Schlamowitz concentrated his solution on using ambient sources and materials with reflective

*A freestanding kiosk defines the receptionist's station (left) and adjacent waiting area (opposite). Illumination for both areas is provided by reflected light coming from fluorescent tubes incorporated into the top edge of the unit. Lighting below the marble-topped desk gives it a floating quality.*



*Below, left: In the conference room the steel grid support of the marble table top duplicates the pattern of the glass block walls.*

*Below, right: Open offices are formed by work stations located in the rear area of the space. Ambient lighting from the furniture system provides overall illumination; supplementary lighting comes from task fixtures.*

*Opposite: View from the conference room through the reception area to the up-front partners' office focuses on the pervasive use of the grid motif.*

**General contractor:** Auburn Brass • **Ceiling:** Simplex • **Carpet:** GFI • **Dry wall:** Card Contracting • **Woodwork:** WWS Woodworking • **Stone work:** Pearl Marble • **Steel work:** Burgess Steel • **Glass block:** PPG • **Wood flooring:** Hinkley Floors • **Furniture and fabrics:** Knoll • **Neon tube:** Atrcraft Strauss

qualities since the installation of recessed fixtures was precluded by a too-shallow ceiling. A pervasive (except for the conference room) perforated metal ceiling provides the basis for reflected light throughout. To illuminate the receptionist's station and the adjacent waiting area, two warm white fluorescent tubes are built into the top edge of the kiosk and covered with textured glass to cut glare. In the conference room troughs are cut into the ceiling to accommodate bare bulbs whose light is refracted through the room's glass block walls. And, in the rear work area, ambient light comes from fluorescent sources incorporated into the work stations, which also have task fixtures.

Although the offices are devoid of true decorative effects, the afore-cited grid detail provides for pleasant aesthetics. As explained by Schlamowitz, "all planes perpendicular to the long walls are either grids of glass block, textured glass sliding doors, a sandblasted glass door or open wood grids. Steel grids are also used to support the ends of the marble table tops in the conference room and executive offices." Of four months' duration, the project was completed for \$350,000.

EDIE LEE COHEN

