

CLUBS HOTELS CULTURAL AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS

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INTERNATIONAL

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INTERIORS

WORKSPACES OFFICES & STUDIOS SHOPS RESTAURANTS BARS

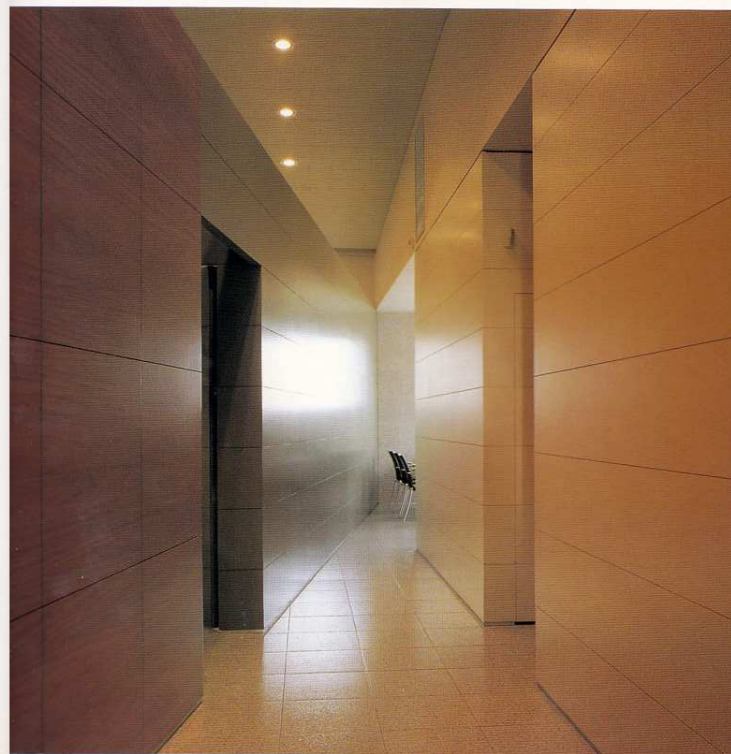




Above: Plate glass allows a view into an upper-floor conference room.
Opposite, top: The open staircase to the upper floor is a focal architectural feature, which accentuates the sense of spaciousness.
Opposite, below: Silestone flooring and cedarwood panels bring warmth to a rational approach to space planning.



“CONCERN ABOUT COMMUNICATION WAS DECISIVE WHEN WE SET OUT ON THE PROJECT PLAN. AN URBANIST RATHER THAN DECORATIVE SOLUTION WAS DECIDED ON. WE QUICKLY CAME UPON THE TRADITIONAL LAYOUT OF THE VILLAGE SQUARE, THE BASIC CORE WHERE EVERYTHING CONVERGES.”
FERNANDO SALAS



FERNANDO
SALAS STUDIO

SILVER SANZ

BARCELONA,
SPAIN

Communication is the electric current of the functioning office. When it is cut off, the organization cannot spark. Spanish designer Fernando Salas was swift to see the spatial problems when appointed to design the offices of Silver Sanz, a distributor of batteries and electronic components. The existing plan had unnecessarily long corridors leading to a series of small rooms, which caused communication problems and resulted in alienation.

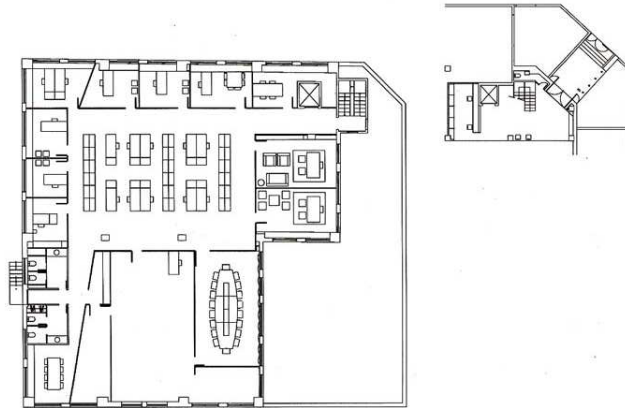
The Salas Studio concept was to create space and improve communications by abolishing partitions wherever possible and using plate glass to allow vistas throughout the building. The main entrance hall passes through a patio within the building line. A block of stainless steel, seemingly suspended in space, forms the reception desk situated on the ground floor. White silestone flooring exaggerates the feeling of spaciousness, and is continued up a totally open stairway without rails – a major and dramatic architectural feature. The upper floor was planned according to relationships between the various departments of the company with administration, as the common denominator, taking the central position beneath exposed roof girders in open space. Space planning on this level also reflected the idea of the town square, through which everyone would pass; a key element was the total elimination of passageways, and the incorporation of all spaces into a unified scheme.

Offices along two of the outer walls make use of natural light; the other sides are taken up by the archive, a store room, and a meeting room. All use either plate glass or partial partitions with large geometric glazed apertures, or no partitions at all, to underline the flow of space. Services are located within a false ceiling, which gives way to full ceiling height in the central area. This is clad in wood, to accentuate the pitched roof shape above.

The building is subtly lit with directional halogen lighting, which increases the sense of space. All tables, storage and shelving, much of which is in cedarwood with steel frame or black silestone, were designed by Fernando Salas Studio. Chairs are by Antonio Citterio and Philippe Starck. Salas remarks: "When faced with a project I subordinate myself to the problem; I never attempt to project my own personality. From this approach, an aesthetic emerges,

though it is important not to accentuate this unnecessarily." This well-resolved interior results from Salas' belief that "the rationality of the planning process" should drive the scheme. Yet the fact that the Silver Sanz offices are not a sterile glass machine for working in, demonstrates that there is room for aestheticism as well as functionality in Salas' work.

THE CONCEPT OF THE TOWN SQUARE WAS APPLIED TO SPACE PLANNING IN THIS BEAUTIFULLY UNDERSTATED CATALAN OFFICE INTERIOR WHERE OPEN VISTAS HAVE REPLACED CLOSED CORRIDORS.



Above: Upper-floor offices are housed around a glazed central administrative space, which functions like a village square. The main purpose of the scheme was to improve internal communication.

Opposite, left: Upper-floor plan.

Opposite right: Reception floor plan.