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design

Atypical of a law firm, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman's conference room has three walls of glass to maintain a sense of openness and connection. Flowing white curtains, lending a Zen-like aura, may be drawn when visual privacy is necessary.





light bright

Using a soothing palette of whites, light wood, and glass, Felderman Keatinge + Associates introduces an unusual law office design for Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman

By Danine Alati
Photography by Toshi Yoshimi

Contemporary and progressive rarely are the buzzwords associated with a law firm. However, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman sought to deviate from the stereotypical attorney's abode in its Century City, Calif., branch. "We wanted this office to be cutting edge without being bleeding edge," says Ruth Brazer, director of administration. In an effort to select designers whose sensibility reflects its business, client base, and southern California setting, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman commissioned locally based Felderman Keatinge + Associates.

design

"We saw work that Felderman Keatinge did for another law firm, and it was quite innovative," Brazer explains. "It was unique and contemporary, but at the same time classic and timeless—it's hard to accomplish both. We were most impressed with their creative use of space."

In this case, not only were they innovative in the way they utilized space, but the husband and wife design team also had to be flexible as a last minute change of locale for the office forced them to tweak their design scheme. Problems with the original building led the law firm to inhabit a landmark structure on Constellation Boulevard, which presented a new set of challenges. Quickly changing gears, Felderman Keatinge adapted its designs to accommodate the curved walls of the Constellation building.

"Our work is very site specific," says Nancy Keatinge, designer, president, and partner at Felderman Keatinge + Associates. "When we saw the new space, it was clear that it was important to create the

right sight lines. Our client didn't want the typical law office, and they stressed that they wanted a sense of openness with lots of light."

"The idea of transparency and translucency kept coming up," adds Stanley Felderman, partner and founder of the architecture firm. Perhaps the usual connotation of a law office dictates an aesthetic of mahogany casegoods and closed doors, but Felderman Keatinge presented the antithesis of that concept with glass-walled conference rooms and glass-fronted private offices. "Privacy is a choice," says Felderman. "Everything is open, and users can decide when to draw the shades or close doors." Herculite doors to the partners' perimeter offices allow natural light to penetrate the interiors. And views through the glass-fronted offices out the windows to the ocean anchor this office in its Southern California setting.

While Felderman says that his firm is known for its use of color, the palette of this space is very light and airy, using white and natural

What used to be the focal point of a law office, the library (below) is now more symbolic and acts as a lounge or computer docking station. The stacked felt and leather of Keilhauer's Felt chair appropriately reference the aesthetic of a book.





Glass-fronted private offices allow natural light to penetrate deep into the reception area (above left) and to the rest of the workstation spaces. Felderman Keatinge custom designed the reception desk and workstations (above right) with a combo of mixed materials and components spaced away from each other to maintain the open office feel.

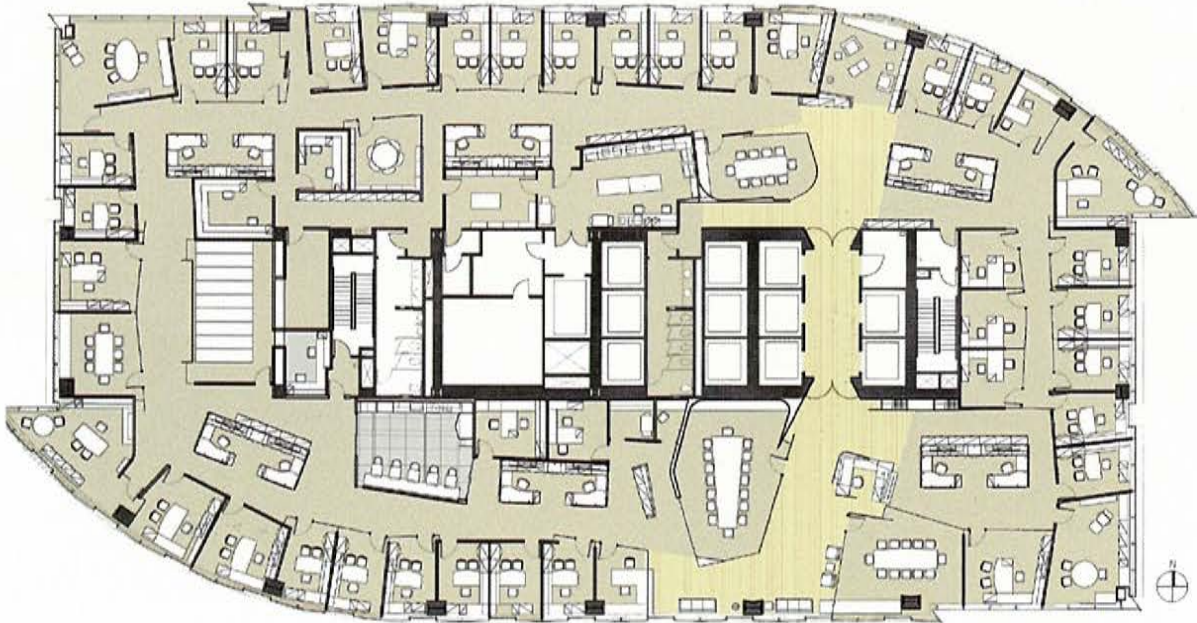
woods to achieve what he calls a Zen experience. Cove ceiling lighting reflects down to cast an ethereal glow, and white walls, light wood floors, and woven carpet exude a natural aesthetic. Flowing white drapery that encloses the conference rooms offers a tactile quality.

“The office has an organic feel to it; with lots of glass and curves, it feels light and airy,” Brazen says. “Also, by bringing the outside into the office, it makes the ocean part of the space.” Felderman Keatinge custom designed workstations to seemingly float in space, with a mixed use of materials, planar surfaces spaced away from each other, and components not touching to further illustrate the feeling of openness.

“As we were developing the design, the sense of community kept coming up,” Brazen says. “Many times, we think of lawyers hiding behind a closed

office door, but we wanted to dispel that notion and create spaces for gathering.” Besides use of glass to maintain sight lines for visual connection, Felderman Keatinge delineated specific areas as gathering spaces. The lunchroom—strategically situated so that employees cross through it—takes on a café feel. And the library, which used to function as the heart of a law firm, now symbolically stands as a lounge equipped with computer docking stations.

This new office accommodates the evolving needs of 21st century attorneys, especially the requirements of this progressive legal company dealing with media, technology, and real estate clients in Los Angeles. “These designs make it safe for other law firms to experiment with creative solutions to space planning,” Felderman offers. “We spoke with the client in the beginning about how they wanted to ‘live’



design



The employees must cross through the centrally located lunch room (top); the space promotes gathering and interaction. A glass wall behind the banquette offers a visual link to the rest of the office. Irregular-shaped, glass-walled conference rooms (front cover) respond to the curving architecture of the landmark Constellation building. Extensive use of glass and a light materials palette maintain the airy feel.



Stanley Felderman and Nancy Keatinge (above).

in this building,” Keatinge recalls. “We realize that this is their home away from home, and we don’t take that lightly. We want it to have a long life span, and to create something unique without making it feel dated.”

According to Brazen, the best part of working with the design firm was their comprehension of the overall project. “Not only is Stanley an architect, but he is an artist,” she says. “You can really sense that in his creative vision that is much more than space planning.” And much more than another attorney office, this project has become a benchmark for a revolutionary law solution. ■

who

Client: Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman. *Interior design:* Felderman Keatinge + Associates. *General contractor:* Environmental Contractors. *Structural engineer:* WHL Consulting Engineers. *MEP:* Levine Seegel Associates. *Acoustician:* Martin Newson + Associates. *Lighting Designer:* Stanley Felderman, Alfred Scholze + Assoc. *Furniture dealer:* Associates Purchasing. *Signage:* Jon Richards Company. *Photographer:* Toshi Yoshimi.

what

Drywall: Martin Brothers. *Flooring:* Perlot. *Flooring installation:* Foster Flooring. *Carpet:* Masland, Interface. *Carpet fiber:* Antron. *Door hardware:* Custom Woodworks. *Glass:* Rountree Glass. *Drapery:* Phillips Draperies, MechoShade, Knoll Textiles. *Reception desk:* Design by Stanley Felderman, fabricated by FK Anderson. *Desk/workstation/lounge seating:* Vitra. *Conference seating:* Thema, Cappellini. *Task/side seating:* Knoll. *Executive seating:* Herman Miller. *Library lounge seating:* Keilhauer. *Side seating:* Brueton. *Reception table:* Nube. *Lighting:* Aqua Creations, Artemide, Fontana Arte. *Conference tables:* DTank. *Workstations:* Design by Stanley Felderman, fabricated by DTank. *Desks:* Knoll. *Library lounge seating:* Keilhauer. *Library side table:* Kneeder Fauchere. *Lunchroom table:* The Furniture Lab, Design Link. *Lunchroom seating:* Crassevig, Menzie International. *Water feature:* Orr Studio.

where

Location: Century City, CA. *No. of floors:* 1. *Total area:* 23,000 sq. ft. *Staff:* 59.

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