

# THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW



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## WORK STUDY

Alberto Campo Baeza's  
Majorcan patio

Jourda & Perraudin's  
German greenhouse

Eric Owen Moss

regenerates Culver City



## BILLBOARD BUILDING

**Carved into an old warehouse, these offices for a fashionable Los Angeles advertising agency use industrial materials and customized furniture to boldly striking effect.**

From the nondescript, suburban street, there is little to identify Ground Zero's office – save for a banner, stretched across the facade of an otherwise anonymous, industrial building, posing the cryptic question: 'Is this a sign?'

From the car park to the rear of the converted 2300sqm former film production warehouse, you enter by ascending a long external ramp, leading to a lobby from which the entire open-plan volume of Ground Zero's operation can be

second ramp, running diagonally above clusters of customized workstations. The ramp penetrates a series of translucent projection screens displaying the firm's ever-changing output of imagery.

Ground Zero were determined that their premises should reflect the philosophy which has allowed them to eclipse Chiat Day's reputation for innovation in advertising. Whereas Chiat Day's nearby Venice headquarters (AR May 1992), designed by Frank Gehry

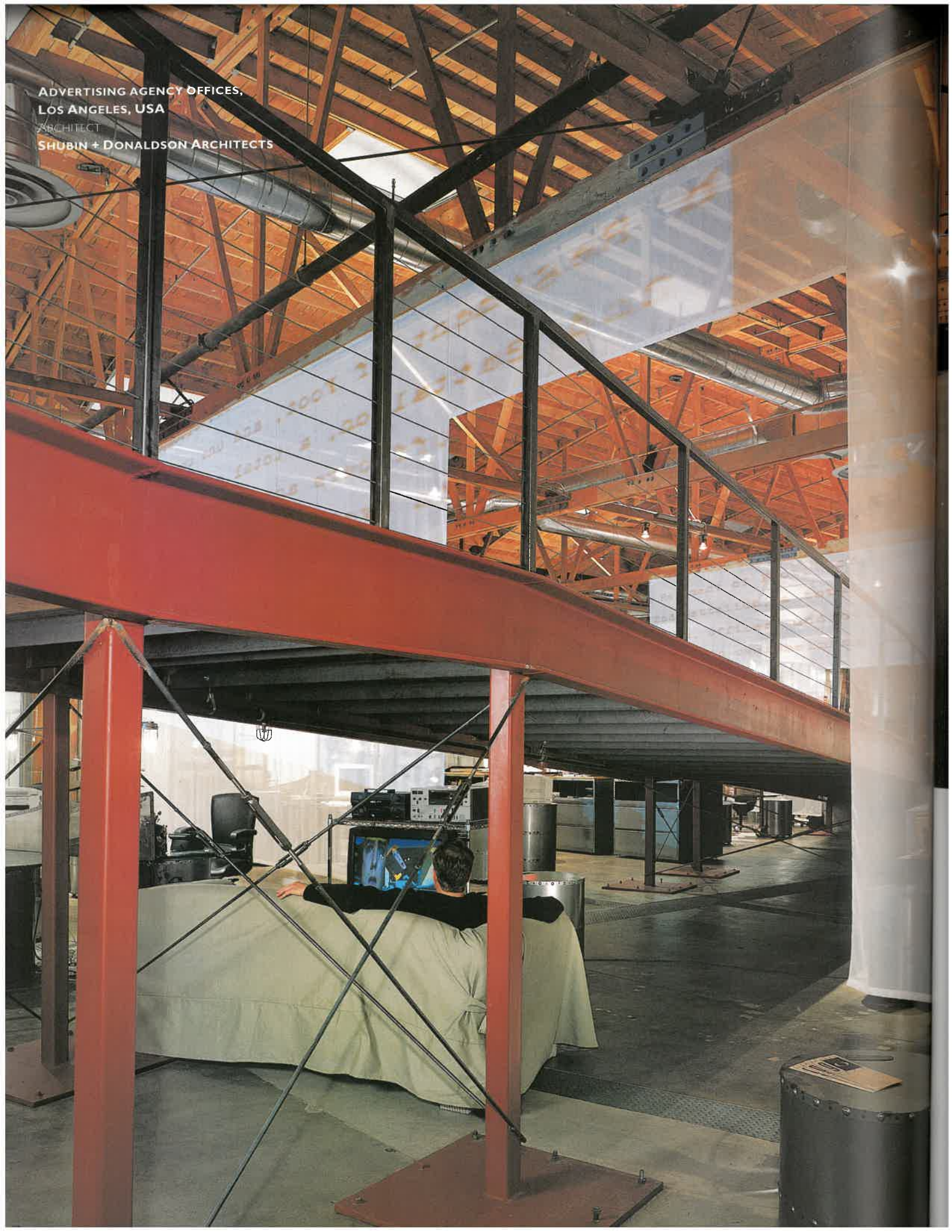
an exercise in pop art applied to a conventional, territorially hierarchical office building, Shubin + Donaldson's design keeps nothing hidden, separating only the main conference room and a series of 'war rooms' for collective brainstorming sessions.

In familiar Southern California style, industrial materials and robust details predominate. The receptionist's polished concrete desk is an integral part of the internal ramp. The existing building's shell was sandblasted and concrete surfaces sealed,

1 A long ramp winds theatrically through the converted warehouse. Large translucent screens are animated by the advertising agency's changing imagery.

2 The ramp and screens break up the large open volume of the warehouse. Industrial materials and finishes predominate.

ADVERTISING AGENCY OFFICES,  
LOS ANGELES, USA  
ARCHITECT  
SHUBIN + DONALDSON ARCHITECTS

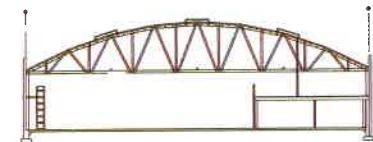


**ADVERTISING AGENCY OFFICES,  
LOS ANGELES, USA**

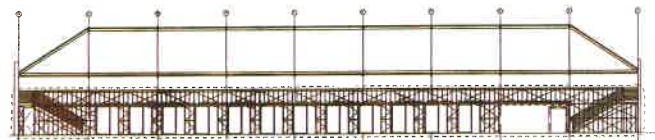
ARCHITECT

**SHUBIN + DONALDSON ARCHITECTS**

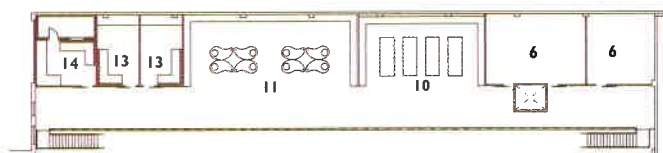
- 1 exterior ramp
- 2 entrance hall
- 3 interior ramp
- 4 reception
- 5 kitchen
- 6 conference room
- 7 war rooms
- 8 storage
- 9 video archive
- 10 library
- 11 workstations
- 12 wcs
- 13 video editing
- 14 sound studio
- 15 projection screen



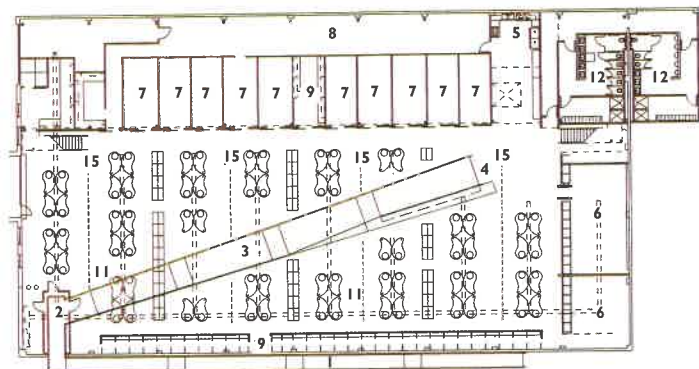
cross section



longitudinal section



mezzanine plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:500)

Elegant timber bow-string roof trusses – are exposed throughout, as are all air-conditioning ducts and industrial light fittings. Partitions are constructed of translucent polycarbonate, clipped directly to cold-rolled steel channel sections. Unsurprisingly, the hard surfaces have produced an acoustically reverberant volume, but neither acoustic nor visual privacy were felt to be significant concerns in Ground Zero's design brief.

Large, open-plan offices can easily become either regimented if standard furniture is arranged in regular rows, or haphazardly picturesque if more organic configurations are adopted. Here, Ground Zero

kidney-shaped glass worktops, with perforated metal screens, mounted on steel drums, and equipped with caged lightbulbs for task lighting. Although the workstations are arranged orthogonally, the overall impression is of fluid informality.

Ground Zero's recently completed office unquestionably reflects their current culture and aspirations, but in the Los Angeles advertising business, little stays fixed for long. Chiat Day recently vacated their eight-year old building, which is being refurbished for other occupiers.

PETER WISLOCKI

Architect

Shubin + Donaldson Architects, Los Angeles



3, 5  
Custom designed furniture is used to create fluid, organic clusters of workstations.

4  
The ramp forms a dramatic element in the cavernous space.

6  
Partitions of polycarbonate sheeting separate the communal space from meeting rooms.