MAISIN CENTER 2002 - 2004

Construction of an office building rue du Commerce in Brussels.



Site
Rue du Commerce, 70-72 1040 Brussels

Client
Centre InterdiocÃ©sain asbl

Structural engineer
Setesco

Services engineer
F.T.I.

Contractor
AMART sa

Budget
3 160 000 EUR htva

Artist
Jean GLIBERT

Copyrights
Marc Detiffe

The Maisin Centre is established on a narrow allotment, only 15 meters wide, in the heart of the quartier LÃ©opold in Brussels. Its conception is, in essence, a re-interpretation of the traditional patrician's lay-out commonplace in this neighborhood, with its characteristic passageway entrance open to pedestrians.

Client specifications called for ten-odd meeting rooms, and offices. These are nestled between two existing independent party walls, and organized around a private inner courtyard. Natural light thus abounds within all volumes, in the common areas and the personnel's cafeteria, in offices, all the way down to basement level. The top four levels house duplex workspaces in a stacked and open-plan manner. The necessary amenities such as stairwell, services and lift shaft hug tightly together against one party wall in order to liberate uncluttered space along the other.

Transparency of floor-to-ceiling faÃ§ades accentuates the simple openness of the form. The palette of materials used is deliberately limited so as to better highlight translucency: reinforced bare concrete, round mushroom columns, steel girders and galvanized steel ventilation tubes are all visible, all shimmery. The perforated steel sheeting enveloping the elevator and stairwell emits a constant colored halo of fluorescent light through its tiny piercings. The ceilings and exterior porches are treated in similar fashion, conveying the artist Jean Glibert's immense sensitivity.

In this serene haze of light and color, the ethereal and material worlds are re-united, as are mind and body, emphasizing the strong contemporary identity of the Maisin Centre.