

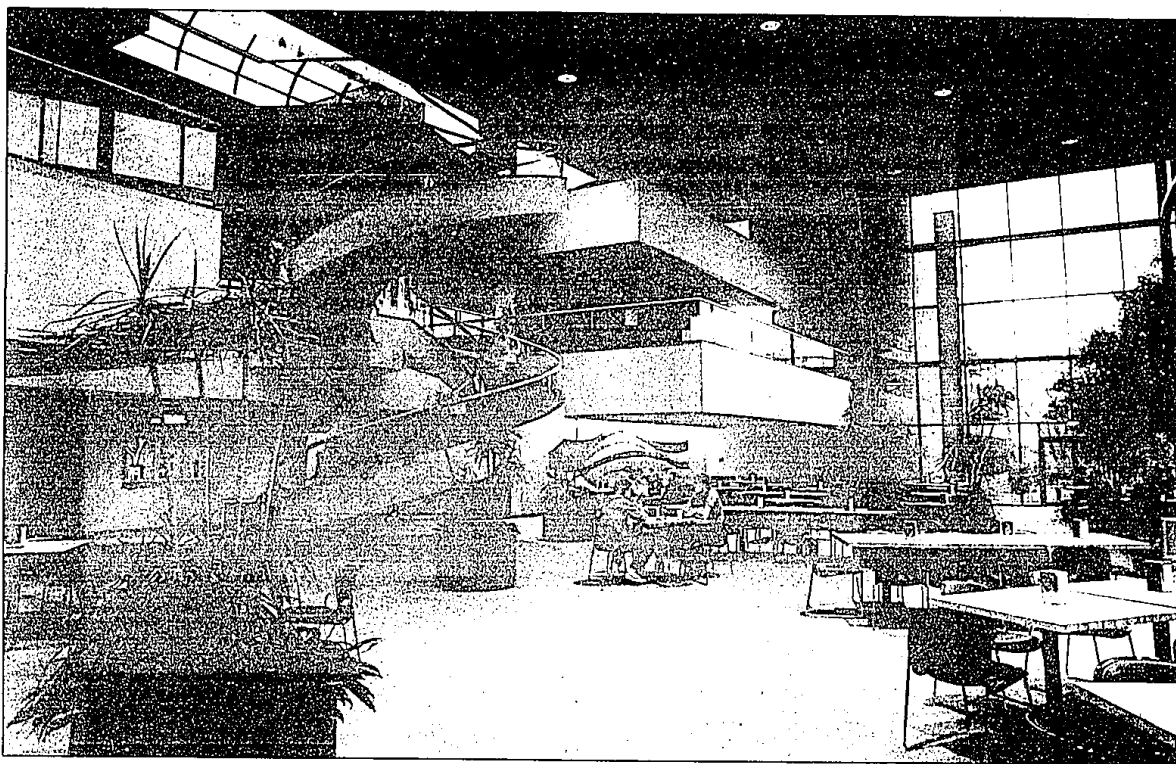
Creative Living

Co Abatt editor/591-2300



Thursday, January 1, 1987 O&E

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An impressive winding staircase with extra-wide stairs is the building's focal point. The elaborate staircase was designed to create verbal and visual interaction at different levels.

CBS/Fox design inspires communication

By Mario McGee
staff writer

CBS/Fox Video Operations Center in Livonia took a forward step by backing up to nature in the design of the company's new facilities.

And it was all done with a very special audience in mind — CBS/Fox employees.

Nothing about the exterior of the building prepares visitors for what awaits them beyond the glass doors of the huge complex off Seven Mile Road, on a grassy hillside west of I-75.

In this case, it's the rear of the building that is far more beautiful than the entrance lobby — traditionally the "showy" part of a building.

In a word, it's breathtaking.

A three-story atrium area, designed as the employee commons area, overlooks two ponds surrounded by dense woods on all three sides, but with a clear view of the sky at all times.

The building was designed to follow the natural contour of the site and takes full advantage of the spectacular year-round view. Jogging and walking paths ring the setting. Picnic areas are available for those times of the year when it's nicer to be outside than in, regardless of the view.

The commons area is accessible by an impressive, extra-wide staircase.

"That's to promote employee communications," explained Carl Roehling, of the Troy-based architectural firm of Giffels/Hoyem-Basso. Employees can meet

on the stairs without interrupting traffic, he added.

High up and off to the side, social meeting "pods" give employees additional opportunity to meet in a quieter, more intimate setting than the sprawling commons that serves as the cafeteria for the entire staff.

Roehling was part of a five-member design coordinating committee which also included colleague Matt Bohde, Birmingham interior designer Shirley Maddalena of S. J. Maddalena Inc., CBS/Fox director of facilities Harold Domke and an art consultant.

Soft shades of wheat, mauve and burgundy are predominant throughout the 290,000-square-foot building. Interior office colors were selected for their soothing and subtle business-like effect. A professional look was highly desired because of frequent use of the facility by outside technicians.

Roehling and Maddalena were careful to make the outdoors accessible to all levels of employees. As a result, work stations are placed in the best view of windows.

The building reflects CBS/Fox's concept of egalitarianism

wherein all employees receive the same treatment — regardless of their job status — in an effort to promote a spirit of teamwork, Roehling pointed out.

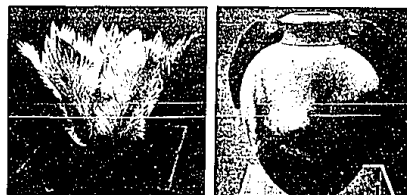
Inspiration for the employee-oriented design approach was credited to CBS/Fox senior vice president Fred Fehlauer. "He was a special force in inspiring our firm," said Roehling.

For Fehlauer, it was an obvious decision.

"We operate in 20 countries, but our name means nothing. It's the product we've reproduced that is known. Therefore, our 'audience' is really our employees and we 'play' to them," he said.

The building was the subject of a four-page pictorial spread in the November issue of Contract, the business magazine of commercial furnishings, interior design and architecture.

In commenting on the building, the Contract article noted that a higher productivity rate has been noticed by facility managers because of clear access to other departments and ease of interdepartmental communication has finally been realized for the company which heretofore operated between six buildings in various locations.

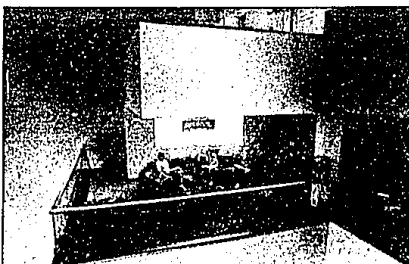


A substantial art collection highlights the building interior. Typical is a porcelain bowl (left) by artist Tom Benesh and a raku creation, entitled "Vessel with 2 Wings" by Ed Risk. Art consultant was Preston Tucker Galleries Inc.



The central employee level is located on the lower level overlooking a pond and a grassy hillside. Architect Carl Roehling designed the structure so one side of the building is physically built into the hillside.

Staff photos by Bill Bresler



Employee comforts extend to social "pods" — high above the general commons area — that offer a quieter meeting area but still maintain the exceptional view.



Birmingham interior designer Shirley Maddalena was in charge of the design of the corporate offices in the 290,000-square foot building. Each of the corporate offices reflect the basic preferences of the inhabitant but carry the professional stamp of expertise of the designer.