



Florentine Fantasy

GIRALDI ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS (GAA) HAVE RELOCATED THEIR HEADQUARTERS TO THE ANTINORI Aldobrandini building in Florence, Italy, happily marrying the ornamentation of Baroque with the minimalism of contemporary workplaces, resulting in an eclectic space that is a hive of creativity

The palace of Antinori Aldobrandini is located in the Santo Spirito neighbourhood, amidst the ancient lanes populated with handicraft shops and antique merchants. The building was first built in 1400 for the celebrated Italian family of Antinori Aldobrandini. It was restructured in 1800 and the restoration

in 2013 maintained the essence of the restructuring. GAA was founded in 1997 by architect Fulvio Giraldi and has now grown to five partners and 22 associates. There is a palpable excitement in the air with the young and energetic workforce, relocating their headquarters to the building, with a total space of 600 square metres.



The GAA sign is the first feature that catches your eye as you enter the office. Its blue LED against a cement background makes a discordant note with the period detail that surrounds it, making a bold and individual statement

Giraldi Associates have always had the purpose to create a solid team able to share a quality work at the highest level, but also at the same time be able to have fun and relax inside the office. Hence, the structure of the new office has been subdivided into eleven areas, including project rooms, dedicated design studios, conference rooms, an elaborate reception and even a relaxation room. The exteriors have been maintained as they originally were and only the most essential changes have been made to the interiors. The art on the walls, the stuccos and the wallpaper are all original.

Fulvio works with many clients from the field of fashion and therefore creating a strong statement with their own offices is essential. This demands a workplace that is a veritable hive for creativity and ideas. In the new office, the coolness of the blue glow of the GAA signage at the entrance clashes with the warm tones of the light that bursts from the chandelier overhead.



The ceilings of both studios are covered in stucco and are awe-inspiring as one turns to look upwards



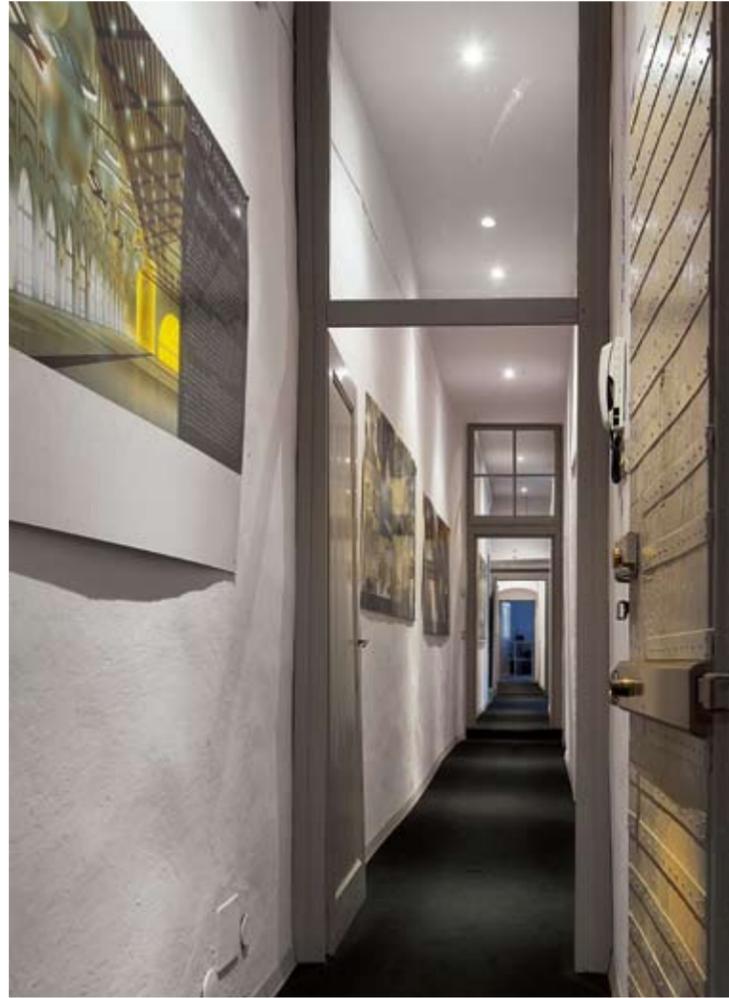
The space has been defined into functional rooms and corridors. The meeting room has a vaulted ceiling that has been painted with frescoes and in an attempt to create a raw aesthetic in the room, the long conference table is made of unfinished, untreated wood in its natural form. The marble fireplace in the room has been kept functional for the long Florentine winters.

The two design studios are the creative hub of the firm. One looks out onto the street while the other hosts great views of the internal courtyard with its garden. The flooring varies from warm wooden

parquet to luxurious green pile carpet. The studios have been designed to be flexible spaces that are ideal for testing and experimenting with new materials, a primary passion of the group.

The material room is a study in magniloquence with its enormous glass table full of samples and specimens. The grand marble fireplace and the extravagant stucco on the ceiling is contrasted with the easy familiarity of a bright red carpet in the room. The huge wooden doors in the space are encased within golden frames, keeping with the ornamental aesthetic the building

The original plaster frescoes meld seamlessly with the modern fittings that a contemporary workplace necessitates. White lacquer furniture does not jar with the period ornamentation in the rooms



was restructured with.

One of the challenges was to have a workplace that inspired new ideas and creativity within the design team it served. This necessitated a relaxation zone, punctuated with soft ottomans on a deep green pile carpet, meant to simulate the lush greenery of a grassland. It is planned to convert it into a nursery for the burgeoning population of toddlers in the studio! A community kitchen provides a space for informal mingling of colleagues at the firm while indulging their culinary leanings.

Several small offices populate one corner of the building, housing individual spaces for senior architects and designers, each with the personal touch of its owner. The first floor is flooded with natural light from the glass wall on one side which also provides a picturesque view of the internal garden. Furniture and artifacts from various design houses such as Poltronova, ASSO SpA, Rossano Scotini, and Reggiani Illuminazione are scattered over the premises, highlighting the refined tastes in the décor.

—Compiled by Dhriti Dhaundiya



Some of the smaller rooms overlook the central courtyard, flooding the rooms with sunlight during the day, along with a beautiful aerial view of the greenery

The property was chosen by GAA as it expresses through its architecture, the Italian and Florentine grandeur of the 19th century

