



A backlit glass accent wall beyond the reception desk welcomes guests while subtly introducing the firm's brand. A custom light fixture by Lush Décor adds a touch of glamour, giving the ground floor conference center a hospitality feel.

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Photography by  
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# Paul Hastings Atlanta

## Rottet Studio avoids corporate clichés in its design for an international law firm's office

Though it was established more than 60 years ago, international law firm Paul Hastings has a young, entrepreneurial bent, evident in its recent implementation of modern interior design as a branding device. Since 2002, Rottet Studio has transformed 14 of the firm's offices, starting with the Los Angeles headquarters. "That first project set the strategy to use the architectural qualities of each space to manifest the client values in a way that is tangible and expressive," recalls Charles Lee, associate principal at Rottet.

The firm's Atlanta location, initially built out in the mid-1990s with a traditional mahogany-trimmed interior, was at odds with the firm's branding strategy. Its location high in a skyscraper on the edge of downtown didn't help. "We wanted a presence on the ground that was welcoming, impressive, and that would broadcast the Paul Hastings brand," says Phil Marzetti, a partner in the firm who was office chair during the project. The firm found an opportunity in a 50,000-square-foot space in the Proscenium Building, centrally located on busy Peachtree Street.

### Less square footage reflects law industry changes

Rottet Studio's design brief called for an impressive ground floor conference center and two floors of workspace to accommodate as many lawyers as the previous location had in three-and-a-half floors. The minimized square footage reflects changes in the law industry, including technological advances that allow digital reference collections to replace the traditional library, heightened cost-consciousness, and a turn toward collaboration rather than hierarchy.

The Atlanta staff's wish list also included pragmatic requests, such as variously sized conference rooms equipped with state-of-the-art audio-visual technology to connect with global clients and colleagues. The array of conference rooms includes one furnished with lounge seating for more casual attorney-client conversations. "Above all," Marzetti says, "we wanted the office to not be stuffy."

The designers drew inspiration from their experience in the hospitality typology to create a bright, open environment. "A hospitality feel is a very important quality in our work with Paul Hastings," Lee says. "We try to minimize the corporate character by elevating the arrival experience for clients and guests."

For example, the reception desk has no transaction counter, and any tech clutter is kept out of sight. Concealed architectural lighting is balanced with dramatic custom chandeliers, and the walls in the visitors' restroom feature an elegant gold-leaf surface treatment by Maya Romanoff.

### Sculptural wall as a focal point

Natural materials also alleviate any sense of a corporate appearance. Darker elements, such as Makassar ebony doors, provide contrast and soften the starkness of the lighter marble flooring and soffits. A shimmering, crenellated 15-foot-high bronze glass wall snakes through the center of the floor, unifying the visitor's experience. The wall resolves the irregular shape of the space, allowing Rottet Studio to situate half of the conference rooms along the building perimeter and the other half toward the interior. The sculptural glass also reflects light, from the chandeliers' sparkle to daylight filtering through the ample windows.

Upstairs in the practice area, the attorneys' office floors incorporate the latest technology and a material palette that is harmonious with the more public ground floor.

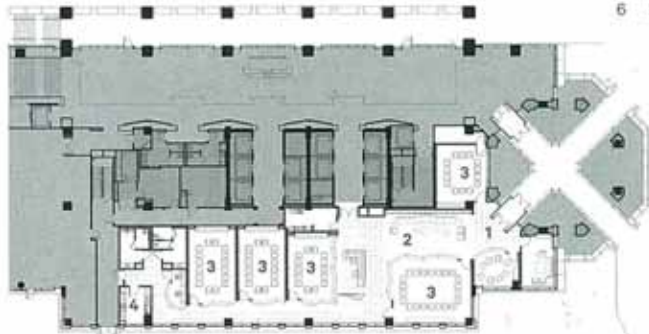
Since it opened, Paul Hastings' Atlanta office has succeeded in attracting attention. According to Marzetti, passersby are always peeking in and asking to look around. To Lee, the most successful aspect of the project is the conference center and its modern, minimal-yet-welcoming interiors. "It was very evolutionary and has such a reductive palette," he says, "but with a few simple moves and key materials, it turned out to be quite stunning." ■





20th Floor Plan

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Reception
- 3 Conference room
- 4 Pantry
- 5 Office services
- 6 Library



Ground Floor Plan



An applied vinyl film gives the sculptural glass wall its sleek and smoky look. On the facing wall, a wood screen adds texture. Makassar ebony doors (opposite) contrast with the light marble floors.





Conference rooms feature custom light fixtures (below) and range in size to accommodate a variety of meeting types. Though the rooms are outfitted with state-of-the-art conferencing technologies, such as video screens that retract (right), these elements are artfully concealed.

#### Key Design Highlights

The ground floor conference center offers a setting for clients and guests that is akin to a hospitality interior.

A sculptural glass wall folds between conference rooms, reception, and circulation areas.

Beautiful materials, such as Makassar ebony doors, and a variety of textures add richness to spaces with a decidedly neutral color palette.

Lounge seating options coupled with ambient and natural light sources create a relaxed setting for hosting attorney-client meetings.







The employee break room (above) is designed to feel like a restaurant, with both table and lounge seating options. A small conference room (left) takes advantage of natural light that streams through the large windows.

**Paul Hastings Atlanta**

Designer **Rottet Studio**

Client **Paul Hastings**

Where **Atlanta, Georgia**

What **6,810-square-foot conference center on ground floor and 21,690-square-feet on two office floors**

Cost/ft **Withheld at client's request**

For a full project source list, see page 152 or visit [contractdesign.com](http://contractdesign.com).