

AT & T CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

New York, New York

This is a high-wire act, and as usual Philip Johnson is a star performer. His instinct, a familiar one, is *épater le bourgeois*: he balances calculated shock value with superlative quality. He designs with brilliance, if you equate that condition with extreme intellectual vivacity and curiosity, sophisticated historical recall and impeccable esthetic response.

Ada Louise Huxtable, *The New York Times*, April 6, 1978.

PHILIP JOHNSON • ALAN RITCHIE
A R C H I T E C T S



When American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) decided to construct a New York headquarters corporate towers were exclusively built on the model of the sleek glass and steel boxes of modernism. But the company wanted a strong visual identity - a monument and they chose the right architects to do that. The AT&T Building was a breakthrough design -- a large-scale office project that relied on the historic precedent of great 1920s skyscrapers and ancient architecture and was built in granite -in a word it was "post modern"-and as a result the building has become a landmark recognized worldwide. It possesses a highly identifiable top, a broken pediment that Philip Johnson states comes from his appreciation of ancient architecture, not from Chippendale furniture.

The tower makes a substantial contribution to the civic floor space of the city. There is a 20,000 square feet covered plaza that is open to the public at grade, which has retail stores, kiosks, and a cafe-terrace. The tower, 90' x 200' in plan, rises 648 feet flush to the street to maintain Madison Avenue's street line.

The reception "skylobby", in effect the corporate entrance, is linked by four elevator shuttles seventy-seven feet above the ground. This ingenious system of double entry splits security and reception, from the "representational" aspect of the building: its notable façade and monumental street level lobby with its cross-vaulted and gilded ceiling and monumental statute representing the Spirit of Electricity.



Client: AT&T Corporation
Completion Date: 1984
Area: 850,000 square feet
Associate Architects: Simmons Architects

