



Now a sleek, minimalist headquarters of women's fashion company Shubette, which markets garments under the Gina Bacconi label, it has come a long way from its beginnings as a dilapidated industrial unit from the Eighties.

Barbara Weiss Architects undertook the design and supervised the fit-out of what has become design studios, showrooms, sample making facilities, offices and a warehouse.

The building presented the usual challenges: the exterior was unwelcoming, and inside the space was split between a ground floor and a modified mezzanine; rooms had limited natural light and air circulation was poor.

The architects stripped the old facade to create a simple, elegant finish, and the entrance and reception exude a sense of quality that continues through the understated interior. The reception area is now welcoming, spacious, light and airy, and houses a bespoke desk in zebirano designed by Barbara Weiss Architects. A lighting feature of fluorescent tubes resembling icicles hangs above the reception desk and a stylish new staircase with glass balustrades takes visitors up to the main workspace.

When it came to designing the first floor, Barbara Weiss Architects considered Shubette's working practices, concluding that a large, open-plan workspace would optimise workflow while also providing the most pleasant working environment. To retain the natural light, the space is now top-lit and cellular offices have glass partitions: even from the centre of the space, it's still possible to see outside.

Weiss believes in taking a holistic approach to designing buildings, so areas such as the kitchenette and washrooms have the same attention as the main space. 'It is a democratic workspace where every member of staff enjoys the same quality environment,' say the architects. 'By keeping things simple we have achieved a design that is clean, elegant and conveys the right image while being an efficient and functional building that is the working heart of the company,' adds Weiss. **Jamie Mitchell**

MAIN SUPPLIERS:

Joinery:

- M2 – www.m2group.net
- Baumstark – www.balticnordic.com

Glass Partitioning:

- Intercity Services – www.inter-city.co.uk

Lighting:

- iGuzzini – www.iguzzini.com
- Original BTC – www.originalbtc.com
- SKK – www.skk.net

Stone flooring:

- Stonell – www.stonell.com

Timber flooring:

- Waxed floors – www.waxedfloors.com

#1 The corridor between showrooms doubles as a display space for the latest season's collection

#2 The reception area features a bespoke desk in zebirano and a lighting feature created from fluorescent tubes
#3 Partitions made from glass maximise the effect of natural light



House of style



FASHION MANUFACTURER SHUBETTE WANTED AN HQ THAT REFLECTED THE QUALITY AND STYLE OF ITS BRAND, AND ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE BARBARA WEISS ARCHITECTS CAME UP WITH A SIMPLE AND ELEGANT DESIGN THAT LETS IN THE LIGHT

DETAILS

PROJECT: Shubette
DESIGN: Barbara Weiss Architects
SIZE: 4,645 sq m
COMPLETION TIME: Eight months

