



# Where Angels Live

"Angel Investors," Sippl MacDonald Ventures' new office in Menlo Park, Calif., is not exactly heaven, but DES Architects + Engineers came close.

By Amy Milshtein

No one knows for sure what heaven looks like, but you can bet your celestial robe it doesn't have cubicles. Neither does the office of Sippl MacDonald Ventures, in Menlo Park, Calif. Instead, the "angel investor" venture capitalist firm works in a cool, comfortable, light-filled space, designed by DES Architects + Engineers, that is really quite down to earth.

Perched on the cutting edge of the business, Sippl MacDonald Ventures is a private venture capital partnership providing investment and management support to early stage and emerging software companies. About two years ago, the five-person team decided to ditch the hassle of a tight Northern California real estate market and buy a space to call home. Admittedly, the two-story building doesn't look like much from the outside, but "without exception people are impressed with the interior," according to Glenn C. Myers, CFO, Sippl MacDonald.

And why not? DES treated the 3,600-sq. ft. space like an elegant jewel box. More residential than corporate in feel, the office layers colors and textures with careful attention to detail. "The components aren't particularly precious," says Rick Salangsang, project designer, DES. "But like a musician given a set of notes, the performance depends on how you render and embellish the material."

Under Salangsang's hand, glass, aluminum, wood, and colored concrete form clean, contemporary lines. A center conference room anchors the space while offices line the perimeter. Walkways are designed for continuous pedestrian circulation throughout the space. Salangsang also exposed the ceiling to add height, but didn't accentuate the industrial feel. "This is a more grown up space," he says. Mature details include a storefront system glass wall that features two shades of aluminum and offset glazing for a sculptural effect.

*DES plays with the concept of public vs. private space with glass and a concrete ledge that escapes from Sippl Macdonald's conference room (top left and right). Set right into the storefront system glass wall, a whiteboard (bottom left) provides a place to jot down ideas. Glass walls exude a sense of openness throughout the office (bottom right).*



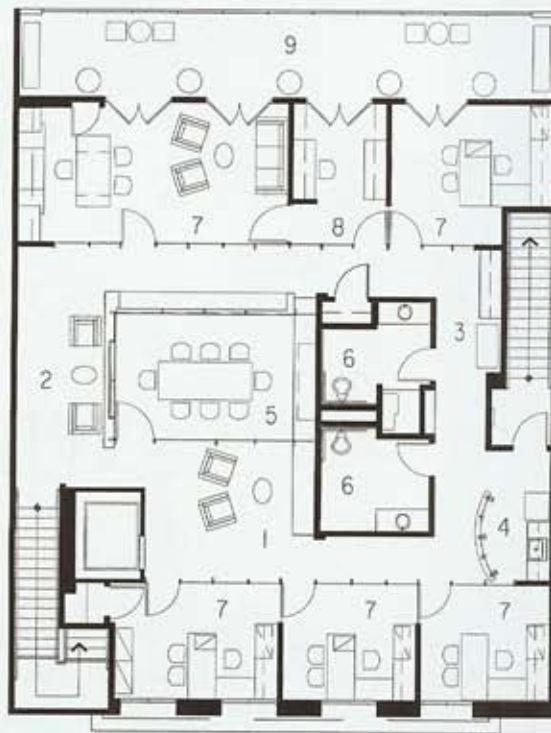
## Project Summary

A low, colored concrete ledge lines one end of the conference room and continues out to the lobby, blurring the line between public and private. Colored concrete is also used on the custom conference table. A chunky wood wall, banded in strips of alternating thickness, defines the other end of the conference room while anchoring a hallway sitting area on the other side. Inside, a skylight provides an ever-changing atmosphere that is sensed throughout the office.

While the light is shared, the sound is not. "My office faces the conference room, and yet it still feels private," says Myers. All of the offices are furnished with a standard of desks and chairs to avoid a "garage sale look," according to Salangsang, however they are not created equal.

Founding partner Roger Sippl's office is bigger than the others. The extra chunk of real estate holds a small meeting area and a lab. While there are no test tubes to be found, the lab does feature extra computers to demonstrate and test software, as well as an electric piano to blow off some creative steam.

Just don't blow off too much steam or, with all that glass, Sippl MacDonald might need a squeegee. ☐



*Inspired by an Italian church, DES banded the wood wall (below) with varying width strips to add interest.*



### Who

**Project, client:** Sippl MacDonald Ventures. **Interior architect:** DES Architects + Engineers; Susan M. Eschweiler, principal; Jana Gunsul, senior associate; Rick Salangsang, project designer/project manager. **Art consultant:** Casey & Associates; Jan Casey. **General contractor:** W.L. Butler. **Mechanical:** CAL-AIR. **Electrical:** Redwood City Electric. **Photographer:** Donna Kempner.

### What

**Wallcoverings:** Pallas. **Paint:** Benjamin Moore. **Laminate:** Pionite. **Dry wall:** USG. **Flooring:** Terra-Maple. **Carpet:** Masland, Larsen. **Carpet fiber:** Dupont Antron Legacy. **Ceiling:** Armstrong, Simplex. **Lighting:** Artemide, Zanzibar. **Door hardware:** Rixson, Forms + Surfaces, Schlage. **Glass:** Silicon Valley Glass. **Storefront frames:** Stylmark. **Window treatments:** Hunter Douglas. **Special finishes:** Armourcoat, Buddy Rhodes. **Marble counters:** Calcutta Oro. **Workstations:** Halcon. **Office seating:** Herman Miller, Keilhauer. **Lounge seating:** Dakota Jackson. **Other seating:** B&B Italia, Harry. **Upholstery:** Jhane Barnes, B&B Italia. **Conference chairs:** Gordon International. **Conference table:** Custom by Rick Salangsang. **Fabricator:** Concreteworks. **Files:** Harbor. **Planters, plants, accessories:** Living Green.

### Where

**Location:** Menlo Park, CA. **Total floor area:** 3,600 sq. ft. **No. of floors:** 1 floor (second level), parking at ground floor. **Total staff size:** 5.