

Right and far right:
The double-height
lightwall along one
wall of the stairwell.
Below: The
reception



OFFICE DIGITAL ANIMATIONS GROUP

At last, three years after Mackintosh's *Glasgow Herald* building was converted into The Lighthouse, the ground floor units are fully occupied. And perhaps it's been worth the wait. Digital Animations Group (DAG), whose cutting edge international profile includes such work as the design of the virtual presenter Maddy for the BBC's *Tomorrow's World*, has moved into offices on the ground and basement floors on Mitchell Street. It seems appropriate that these spaces, originally designed to hold large, noisy and dirty printing presses for a turn-of-the-20th-century newspaper should now be home to the clean, flashy, digitised technology of a new information age.

The interior was converted by haa design, which, while coping with the usual



restrictions imposed on a protected building, also had to reconcile two contradictory requirements: a desire for an open, light and welcoming atmosphere conducive to creativity, countered by a concern for security and confidentiality.

A large open reception area with a full-height window and an oak-decked spiral staircase leading down to the lower floor certainly has a welcoming feel. The

double-height light wall to the stairwell glows with alternating patterns of colour from fibre optics behind a perspex screen, and gives a feeling of colour, light and dynamism; while at the same time the glass doors leading off from this reception area can be accessed only by security pass.

On the main floor a large studio space has an almost factory-like feel. Long curving continuous work surfaces create multiple possibilities for organisation: for working solo with many screens; for group projects; for private or collective space. The services on the ceiling are exposed, as is the bare red sandstone arcading of Mackintosh's ground floor facade.

The keynote, says haa principal Hugh Anderson, is flexibility, not only in terms



of working practice, but of structural elements too. Mackintosh's original has already been adapted many times, and it will be again: an openness to this future has been incorporated in the design.

In the basement, there is a more communal, trendy, and creative feel. A small "amphitheatre" with a large curved screen wall, and movable soft furniture on a raked wooden platform creates a comfortable, easy space for presentations and workshoping. There is also a soft furnished chill-out area and a café.

Of Mackintosh's original interiors, probably the hexagonal chapel-like space of the meeting room at the base of the NW tower is the least changed – but on the whole CRM would no doubt still recognise a dedication to information. ■