

CREATIVE INSPIRATION IAC world headquarters in New York is an architectural tribute to the company's forward-thinking vision

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When IAC/InterActiveCorp was building its world headquarters in New York City, some concerned passersby thought the building was falling down. In actuality, the building's unique design was coming along perfectly.

"Someone driving by the building before [we put up] our curtain wall thought the building was falling down because the columns are on these very steep angles," explained Christian Bryan, director of administration for IAC.

Utilizing cutting-edge building technology, the property features a sloped and angled concrete superstructure and the world's first glass curtain wall to be cold-warped, with the glass panels bent on-site.

A leading Internet company managing more than 60 brands, including *Match.com*, *Citysearch.com*, *Ask.com* and *Evite.com*, IAC decided to bring seven of its New York office locations and 400 employees together under one roof. Chairman and CEO Barry Diller envisioned a world headquarters that would both reflect the company's inventiveness and inspire continued creativity.



Enter famed architect Frank Gehry. Best known for the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, Gehry is an architectural icon with celebrity status. Known for sinuous metal facades, a sculptural approach to architecture, and structures designed with cutting-edge technology, Gehry's innovative style and global reputation complemented IAC's dynamic vision.

But this building went beyond Gehry's trademark steel structures. In fact, it is his first building of this type, constructed entirely of custom-engineered glass.

"We wanted to showcase the interactivity of the company as well as do something that no one else had taken on or tried to do before," said Bryan. "This building still has the nice flowing elements to it, but it is definitely a departure from his normal stainless steel designs."

Set alongside the Hudson River, the 10-story, 130,000-square-foot building's gracefully curved edges and tilted columns create the appearance of a billowing sail. As Gehry's first freestanding building in New York, it stands out among the city's historic architectural gems.

"The typical New York architecture is pre-war; it is brick with windows," said Bryan. "But this is a building that couldn't have been built five years ago because the technology to create its angles and shapes was not around."

The collaboration between Gehry and IAC has garnered plenty of praise and attention since the building's completion in March 2007. The building received a 2008 Architecture Award from *Business Week/Architectural Record*, which recognizes architecture for both its form and beauty and its contribution to business.

The building has also helped to revitalize the

surrounding Chelsea neighborhood into what Bryan describes as a “designer building neighborhood.”

FULL GLASS GLORY

Rather than a stiff traditional glass building, Gehry’s design is a modern, yet relaxed and elegant property. Diller had wanted a white building, but also a glass building. To bring this vision to life, Gehry created custom-designed glass with ceramic white dots screen-printed onto the glass. Depending on the weather and the time of day, the pattern on the glass makes the building glow in different lights. On a foggy day, the building will appear milky white; whereas on a bright, sunny day, the building appears striped. At night, IAC turns on its interior lights, making the dots completely disappear so the building becomes transparent.

Gehry’s modern influence permeates throughout the building’s interior as well. With museum-grade finishes, much of the interior requires specialized maintenance and care. For instance, the floors have Douglas fir end-grain wood, tiger wood veneer walls and custom cabinetry. But the true wow factor is in the massive lobby, which features the world’s largest video wall installation. The projection screen is comprised of two layers of three quarters-inch glass with a movie screen pressed between it.

An open-plan design on all of the office floors establishes the company’s sense of community and collaboration. While there are still some traditional offices, about 90 percent of the workstations are open plan exterior views overlooking the Hudson River.

“We have senior vice presidents and presidents of some of our businesses who have chosen to work in a workstation—(1) to collaborate with the team, and (2) because the views are honestly better from any of the workstations than from the offices,” said Bryan.

As the different IAC businesses have settled into the company’s new world headquarters, the building has evolved. For instance, the company painted many of the building’s interior walls in



chalkboard paint, creating unique spaces for brainstorming on a whim.

“The businesses have the ability to have an idea and brainstorm on something without having to find a conference room or wipe board; they can just scribble it on a wall,” said Bryan. “You can see some complex business plans start to grow and evolve from a quote or some idea that now covers a 17-foot section of the wall... We encourage people to go by the wall; when they see it and read it, we encourage them to add their own take on it.”

With this type of collaboration and creative energy pulsating throughout the entire building, IAC and Gehry’s vision has become a reality. The building’s blend of innovative design and cutting-edge technology represents both modern elegance and technical prowess. ■

INSIDE THE IAC BUILDING IS A MASSIVE LOBBY, FEATURING MUSEUM-GRADE FINISHES AND CUSTOM CABINETRY.

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