

# Reception Alcoves

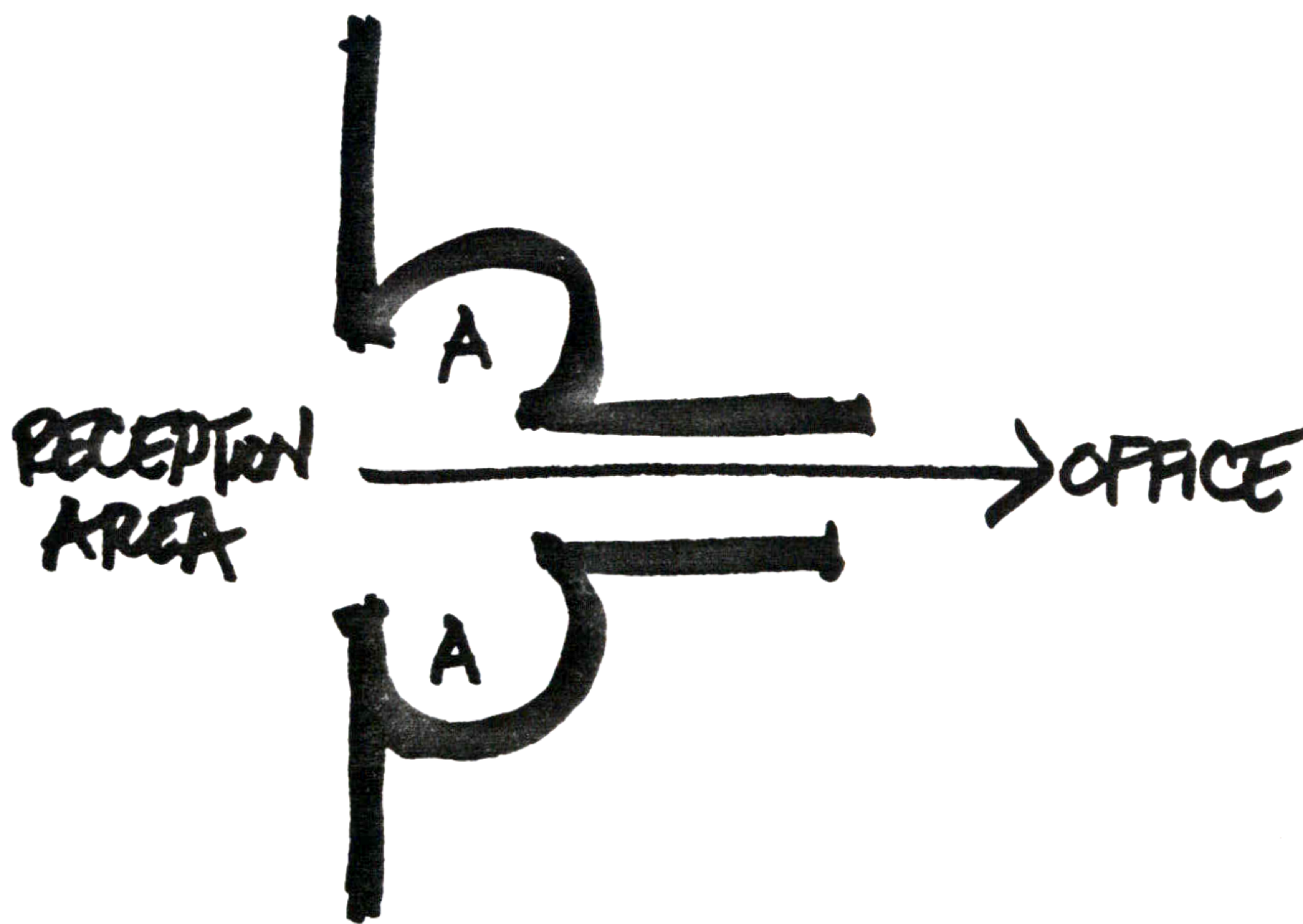
*It is unpleasant to have business meetings in the reception area. But if every visitor must be brought into the office, then the pace of work is bound to be interrupted.*

Normal office routine includes many interactions with outside people which take only a few minutes (a salesman calls—someone delivers and explains documents—a representative needs direction, etc.). It is uncomfortable, and often inappropriate to be forced to hold all of these exchanges in the reception lobby. Other people may be waiting nearby, and the noise of coming and going is likely to be disturbing. On the other hand, if the staff mem-

ber must bring his guest into the office area, he may disrupt his own work as well as that of others around him. Further, it is often more difficult to terminate one of these short meetings if the visitor is brought into the office territory.

It seems that a common, but separate, meeting ground must be created at the interface between the reception and the office area.

(continued over)



*Therefore: Create reception alcoves opening off the junction between the reception area and the main office circulation paths. In some cases a small table and a couple of chairs will be adequate—in others, a small room is ideal.*

NOTE—The number of reception alcoves will depend on the size of the office and the frequency of these short-term interactions. We believe there should be at least two in all but the very smallest offices.

# *Reception Alcoves*

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## **Problem (continued)**

As staff members are called from the reception area, they will arrive from the direction of their work station. Since the visitors are now more involved in the facility, the location of the alcoves should draw them away from the reception area and towards the work area from which the staff member has just come.

The seating areas should therefore be at the junction of the circulation paths which enter the reception area, yet oriented towards the reception area so that they do not become isolated.

The areas should be partly enclosed, so that there is a feeling of privacy, and a sense that a special place has been provided for this need, yet not so enclosed that the alcove seems isolated.

There should be accommodation provided to allow for at least two groups to form at each junction.

## **Context**

This pattern applies to any organization where outside people are likely to come in for short meetings with staff members.

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*June 1969, revised 1970*

*This pattern is tentative. If you have any evidence to support or refute its current formulation, please send it to the Center for Environmental Structure, P.O. Box 5156, Berkeley, California 94705; we will add your comments to the next edition.*