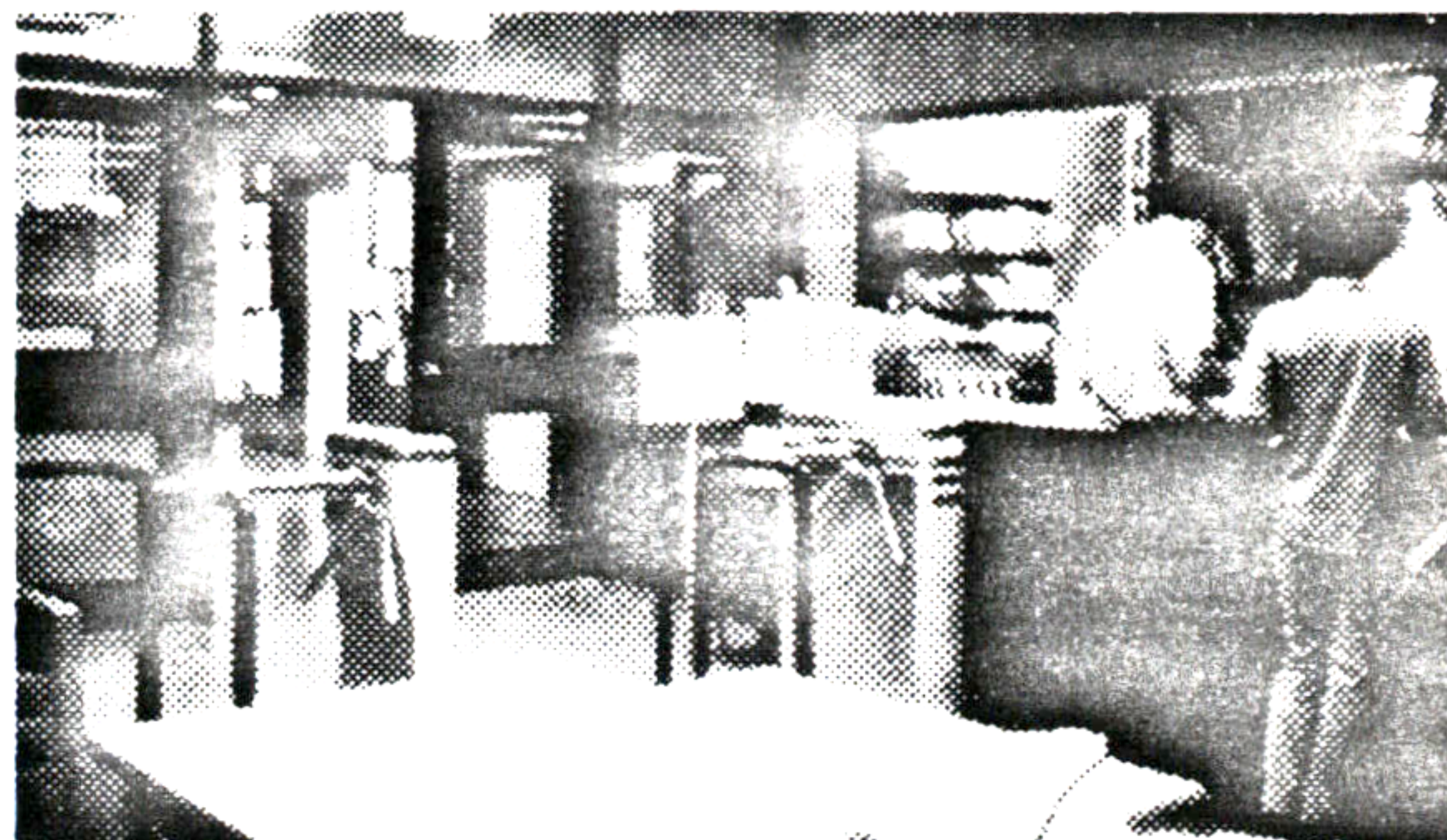


Reception Welcomes You

Have you ever walked into a public building and been processed by the receptionist as if you were a package?



To make a person feel at ease, you must do the same for him as you would do to welcome him to your home; go towards him, greet him, offer him a chair, offer him some food and drink and take his coat.

In most institutions the person arriving has to go towards the receptionist; the receptionist remains passive and offers nothing. To be welcoming the receptionist must initiate the action—come forward and greet the person, offer a chair, food, a seat by the fire, coffee. Since it is first impressions which count, this whole atmosphere should be the first

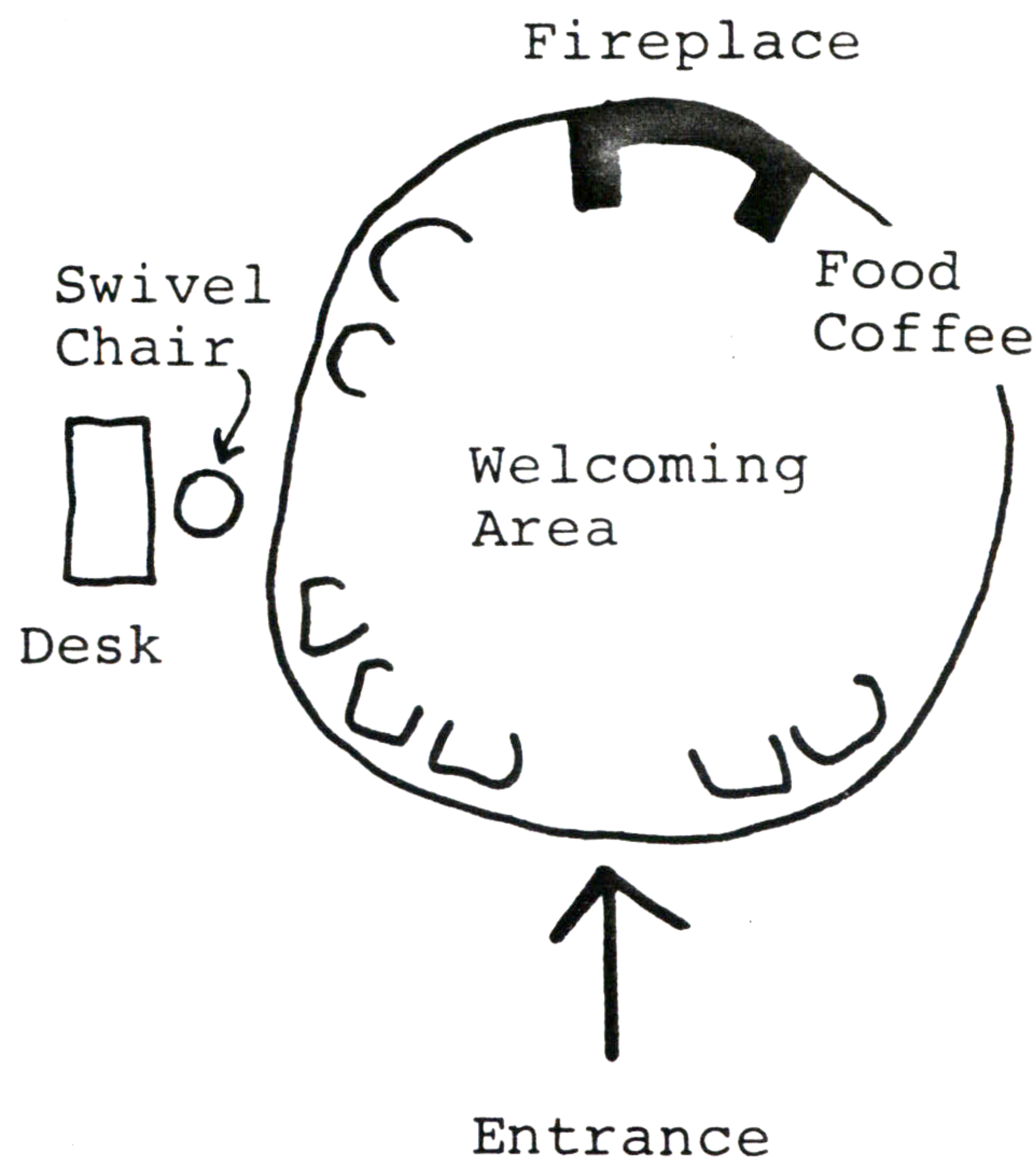
thing a person encounters, and should be immediately visible from inside the entrance.

In most cases, the receptionist also has other duties; typing, telephones, etc. The desk she works on very often forms a barrier between her and the visitors, and the desk and equipment together help to create an institutional atmosphere, quite at odds with the feeling of welcome.

Context

Developed originally for reception in a Community Mental Health Center; probably applies to many other types of receptionists.

Therefore: Immediately visible from the entrance, and directly in front of the person entering, place a collection of welcoming things: soft chairs, fire, food, coffee. To one side place the receptionist, with her desk placed so that it is not between her and the welcoming area, so that visitors can approach her directly, she can get up and approach them directly, and she can swivel her chair around to join them when they sit down.



Reception Welcomes You

By: Clyde Dorsett

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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.