

## Metalworking workshop in Gradignan





*Their exterior walls completely glazed, the offices are equipped with apertured shutters that can be adjusted to optimise interior comfort in terms of brightness and sunlight.*

Rare are those craftspeople who build their own workshops, with the intention that the building itself should express their skills. A metalworking company, boasting 50 employees, based in Gradignan, France, has built itself a new workshop in exactly this spirit. In so doing, it has made part of the project a remarkable showcase for its expertise in industrial and decorative metalworking.

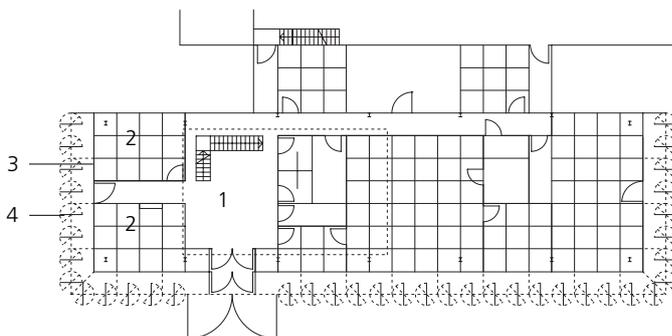
This is particularly the case for the small,

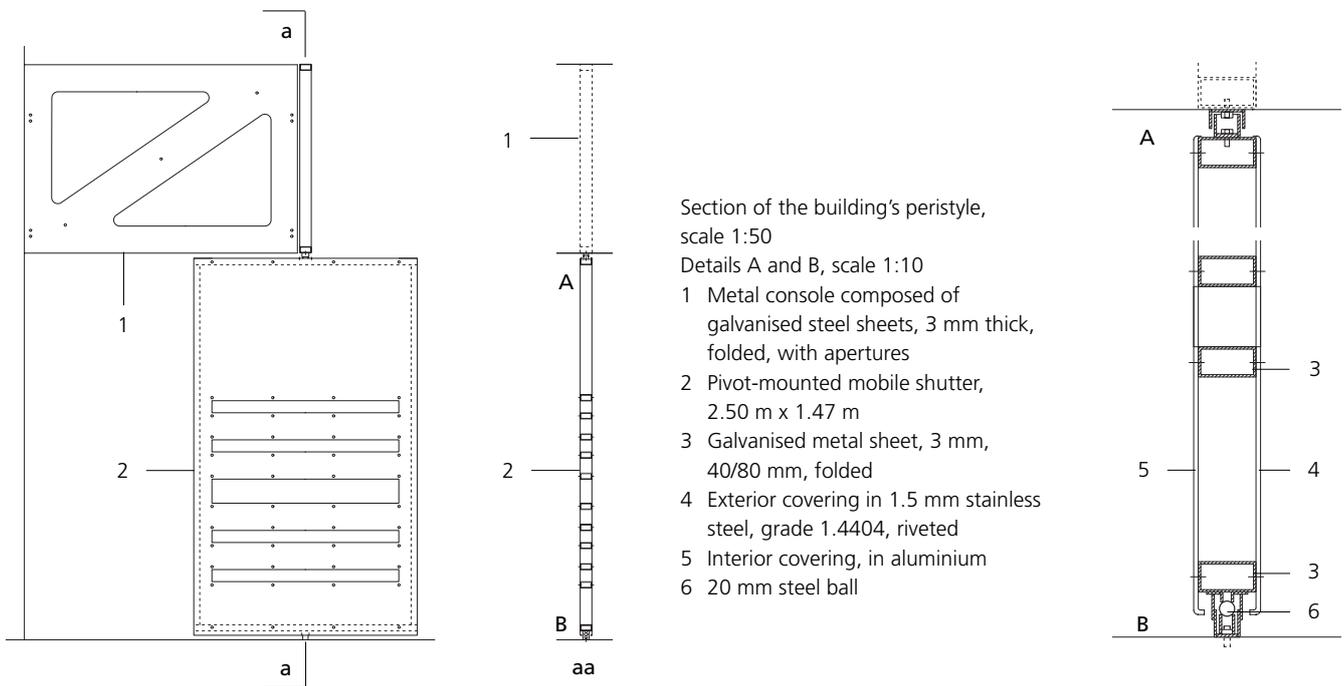
500 m<sup>2</sup> office building, grafted onto the front of the production unit. On three sides, the building has a mobile envelope, consisting of large, swivelling, stainless steel shutters aligned in front of a glass façade. These panels are pierced by apertures, to filter daylight. This creates increased play of light on the shining metal. The company envisages ultimately automating the opening of these screens. But there's no urgency – staff are happy to manually adjust them, to optimise comfort in terms of brightness and sunlight.

In partially open position, the envelope creates a gallery performing a distinct climatic-protection role, reducing the cost of air-conditioning in summer and heating in winter. In closed position, it makes an effective security girdle around the premises. For in this double envelope, the glass walls are assembled with glued edges and held by rails above and below, to constitute a continuous plane of glass, punctuated by horizontally opening window frames.

Plan of the ground floor  
Scale 1:500

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Office
- 3 Glazed skin
- 4 Pivoting skin





Fabricated on site by the company itself, the double-sided shutters consist of a profile framework, 80 mm thick, and two 1.5 mm sheets of crude stainless steel. The “factory” finish chosen for the latter gives the panels a smooth appearance. The company chose this material because it offers several advantages. “It’s very stable, doesn’t retain deposits and has the advantage of being easy to wash, which reduces the maintenance requirement.” The shutters, each weighing some 120 kg, are mounted on a central pivot, the head of which is supported by large trusses. The distinctive profile of these high, galvanised steel purlins also consists of folded metal sheet with decorative apertures.

*This steel girdle outside the glazed façade creates a surrounding gallery, that performs the triple role of providing climatic, sunlight and security protection.*





This louvred style is also echoed upstairs. In the centre of a large flat roof, a meeting room has been given a decorative light metal covering, painted brick-colour. Here, the aim has been to enliven the interior space with delicate chiaroscuro light effects. To create this, the metal sheet is cut with triangles, to an irregular pattern. Another aim was to make the building visible from a distance, as required by the sponsor. The result resembles a flagship, on whose deck the company's staff can relax, on sunny days.

*A set of large pivoting, grooved shutters, to play with the light.*

Euro Inox  
Diamant Building, Bd. A. Reyers 80,  
1030 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel. +32 2 706 82 67  
Fax +32 2 706 82 69  
E-mail info@euro-inox.org  
Internet www.euro-inox.org

Project owner: Ets Roynet, Gradignan, France  
Architects: Luc Arsène-Henry Jr and Alain Triaud;  
Gilles Fortabat (Project Manager), Bordeaux, France  
Text: Frédéric Mialet, Paris, France  
Layout: circa drei, Munich, Germany  
Photos: Vincent Monthiers, Bordeaux, France