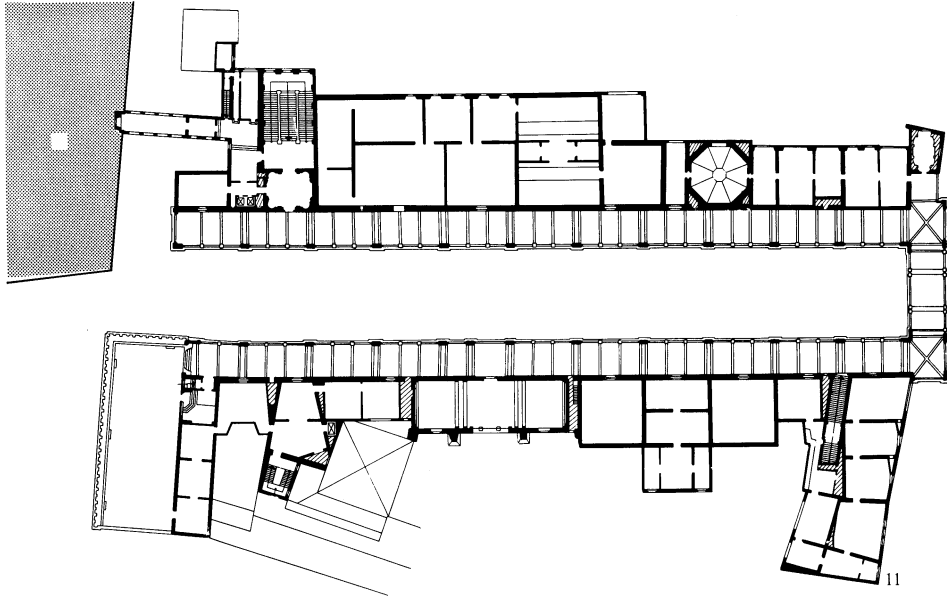


major conversion by Ignazio Gardella, Giovanni Michelucci, Carlo Scarpa and Guido Morozzi in 1956. What made the circulation system interesting was that it was arranged hierarchically: there was a primary route around the elongated courtyard from which the galleries could be reached. These were occasionally interconnected making groups. The U-shaped primary route had views of the courtyard and across the Arno to the Pitti Palace. It was a day lit, outward looking space that ensured contact with the town. The galleries, on the other hand, were inward looking spaces for the display of art. What was also significant was that galleries could be bypassed so that it was possible to see the early Tuscan and Florentine paintings on one day, for example, and the works of Michelangelo and Raphael on another without going through the same spaces twice. On any visit there was also always that relief and re-orientation which the glazed primary route provided.

The Getty adopts a very similar pattern. Its long central museum courtyard with its pool and fountains takes the place of Vasari's urban corridor. The primary route is, however, placed on the outside so that the views are not of the courtyard but of Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean. As in Florence, the end of the courtyard is bridged leaving an opening that frames a view of the building and the city beyond. Unlike the Uffizi, the route is at two levels. On the upper level the galleries are top lit and are for paintings, on the lower level the galleries for the decorative arts – primarily furniture – are artificially lit. Within the U-shaped layout, the arrangement on both floors is a clockwise historical sequence. Stairs in the pavilions make it possible to see the works on display either floor by floor or to see the decorative arts and paintings of a particular period by going from one floor to the next. The system has remarkable flexibility; the Uffizi was a highly apt model.

The role of precedent in the case of the external cladding of the Getty was quite different; exclusion played an important initial role as it does more frequently than we are willing to



Above
Uffizi (offices), Florence,
Giorgio Vasari 1570;
present arrangement by
Ignazio Gardella, Giovanni
Michelucci, Carlo Scarpa &
Guido Morozzi 1956; top
floor plan

acknowledge. Very often we reject or even refuse to consider solutions because they have unfavourable connotations.

White colour coated panels were ruled out because of the Trustees' wishes and the neighbouring Homeowners' Association's objections. Stone seemed the natural answer, not least because of its association with public buildings, with monuments. What was essential for Meier's architecture was, however, to find a light coloured stone which had the light reflective qualities of metal panels. Luminous surfaces reflecting the brilliant qualities of the Southern Californian light were the key to making spaces.

An extended search for a suitable stone involved viewing large samples. It eventually concluded that travertine was the most appropriate choice on the basis of colour, weight and cost.

Travertine in its polished form had, however, become associated with hotel lobbies and second rate Middle Eastern