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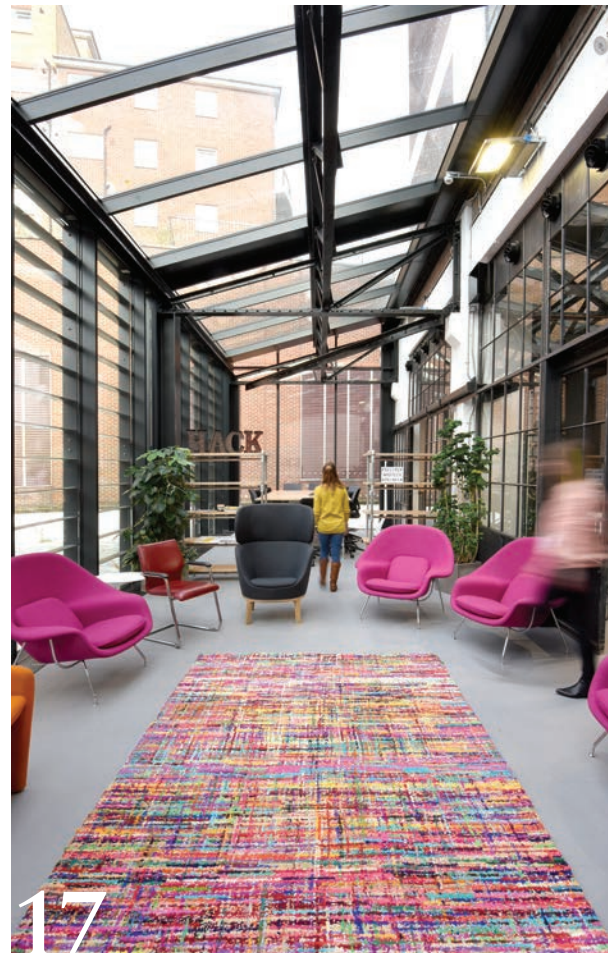
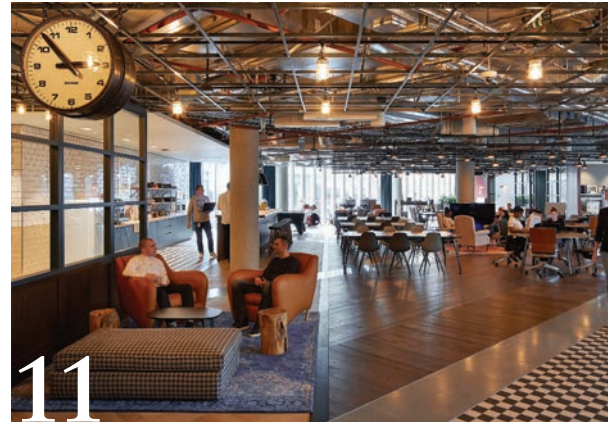
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FROM THE EDITOR



The design of workplaces has been going through something of a renaissance over the past few years. Alongside the work instinctively done by architects and interior designers to create healthier, more productive settings for us to look at screens but also gather and meet effectively at work, there have also been an array of studies on the benefits of better design.

Backed by such evidence, emergence of the WELL Standard has been a key force in this move to make offices places which actually support rather than undermine wellness. Now working in close partnership with BREEAM, WELL is helping design teams and their clients to promote and drive the creation of better workplaces across the world.

Of course offering good air quality, ample natural light, and the right acoustics, as well as space to congregate, socialise and have meetings are not the only goals for modern workplaces. In order for clients to attract the right staff in increasingly competitive marketplaces, they want to make these places attractive and even 'cool,' reinforcing employees' perceptions of the company and making them somewhere they want to spend a significant portion of their time.

Paradoxically, although we spend more and more of our time working flexibly, including increased home working, and we are not always rooted to the same desk and chair, there is more and more design focus placed on looking holistically at the office as the locus of that activity. Employers are using workplace design to express their values more fundamentally, and our project case studies in this special supplement contain some good examples.

Staff are also putting in more work than ever before, as companies tighten their belts but also work smarter across a wider range of platforms including exponentially increasing online offerings, so the power of environments to minimise stress for staff needs to be at the top of the agenda. With published studies showing how much flaws in design can affect staff wellbeing, and conversely how good design benefits productivity, there is a compelling need for clients to invest in good design.

James Parker Editor

**ON THE COVER...**

184 Shepherd's Bush Road is a workplace project with a difference – adding a new glazed storey to the UK's first concrete framed building. For the full report on this project, go to page 16.

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RESEARCH

Storage first for a healthy workplace

Recent wellbeing research commissioned by storage specialist Bisley shows that people are “desperate for their own space in the workplace”

An independent study of 1000 UK office-based office workers and 50 facilities management experts, has identified a “clear and consistent” link between personal space and wellness at work.

The study commissioned by Bisley found that colleagues encroaching on personal space is the second biggest distraction in the workplace (after the office being too warm), with 34 per cent of respondents saying they were struggling with the issue. Furthermore, storage issues featured five times in the top 15 disruptors, with messy desks, smelly sports kit and food and stationery hunting all featuring.

Many of these issues can be overcome by the appropriate/intelligent use of storage; something which is often forgotten or not considered in the drive towards flexible spaces and accommodating the diversity of working styles.

The storage supplier believes there are four key areas that need to be considered by facilities managers, architects and designers when looking at personal space and storage in the workplace.

The first of these is ‘Creating a sense of control’; with communal workspaces and nomadic working becoming the norm, having somewhere for people to keep personal things is increasingly important because it gives them a space to control and own, and therefore peace of mind.

It’s not easy to create a flexible working environment that works for everyone, but making people feel quickly at home through clearly identified and individual stowage spaces helps keep employees connected and feeling part of the team. Surprisingly, however, only just over half of the respondents felt they have adequate control over their conditions.

Second is ‘Creating a sense of belonging’; employees still desire their own desk, but agile working practices mean this is far from guaranteed. It is becoming increasingly important, therefore, for companies to create a ‘sense of belonging’ in the workplace, to help employees feel at home



as well as being part of something. For example, postal slots and moveable internal fittings are common customisable additions to lockers and employees can be given the freedom to personalise their locker with an identifying photo and accessories. Using a mixture of colours and materials on locker doors is a simple and cost-effective way to reflect team zones, company culture or brand.

Regarding ‘Creating a sense of personal security,’ employees are taking more and more expensive items to work with them, such as gym kit, cycling gear and tech, so it’s unsurprising that people want to keep their belongings close-by throughout the day.

With such items in addition to the contents of bags and handbags representing considerable value, a safe place to stow personal belongings is essential. Local banks of secure lockers can help organisations achieve safe, easily accessible storage.

The last factor is ‘Reducing disruptive factors’; as well as providing lockers for personal use and units for team storage, office and facilities managers can use

storage as way to delineate open plan spaces, and by adding acoustic dampening features to doors, noise travel can be reduced which can help create quieter break out zones. For added flexibility, counter tops and power units can be installed on top of standing-height units for additional ‘touchdown’ or meeting areas.

Richard Blackwell, CEO at Bisley commented: “In light of these survey results, we believe that personal storage needs to be moved further up the workplace design agenda. Storage is a critical element of every workplace and without adequate provision, businesses simply can’t function effectively and efficiently.” He concluded: “When considering wellbeing in the workplace, why not start with storage? Reconfigure it, make it multi-functional, use it to inject some colour into the office or reassign it. Never underestimate the peace of mind and sense of control employees can get from having somewhere to keep their personal items.”

*To read the full report please visit:
www.bisley.com/wellbeing/*



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SMART OFFICES

'Office 3.0' premieres at Foundation's renovated Turin HQ

International design and innovation office Carlo Ratti Associati has completed the transformation of the Agnelli Foundation's landmark 20th century building in Turin into an 'Office 3.0' – an app-controlled environment that offers a glimpse of the workplace of the future.

By leveraging Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, the renovated headquarters of the foundation (named after Fiat founder Giovanni Agnelli) has become a building that is able to adapt in real time to its users' needs. The century-old edifice is equipped with hundreds of sensors that monitor different sets of data, including the location of the building's occupants, temperature, CO₂ concentration, and the availability of meeting rooms. By interacting with the building management system (BMS) via a smartphone app, each person can customise his or her workspace experience in a streamlined fashion.

Among its multiple features, the app



might put an end to the so-called 'thermostat wars' in the workplace. Once an occupant sets his or her preferred temperature and illumination settings, the BMS responds accordingly, adjusting the



levels of lighting, heating, and air-conditioning. The system can follow occupants as they move around the building, creating a personalised "environmental bubble."

PERSONALISATION

Gensler "redefines corporate workplace"

Gensler has designed a "highly flexible and authentic" environment spanning 869 m² for Hyundai Capital's UK headquarters in Reigate, Surrey. The office has not only been created to match Hyundai Capital's (HC) progressive office design around the globe, but one that will meet the evolving needs of HC as it transitions from financial services to the latest 'fintech' model.

The architects were asked to create an environment that would attract talent while delivering an office that meets the needs of existing clients and employees.

For HC to achieve a successful transition to a digital and innovation-led company, Gensler "understood the importance of accommodating the diverse working styles of its current and future employee base with a lean and agile environment." In response to this brief, the architecture firm has designed a "highly practical, flexible and collaborative office that strongly

encourages employees to personalise their working environment and to create a workplace that truly feels their own."

The office plan is split into six key areas, several of which are directly inspired by features of the traditional 'home': the living room, the kitchen, the game room, the meeting rooms, the open workspace and the office lockers. With social integration a key priority, the new office eliminates the traditional reception area in favour of an open plan social hub said to "enable visitors to mix with employees as soon as they arrive, and gain immediate insight into the philosophy of HC."

The design features a "functional, yet sophisticated industrial aesthetic." In addition to the kitchen, lounge and games rooms, other features such as optimised views, plenty of natural light and biophilic finishes, give the space a "calming and restorative atmosphere" to which employ-

ees are encouraged to bring in plants, vinyl records and books, enabling them to "co-opt and hack the space to truly make it their own."

The individual table system allows staff to adjust the height of their desk for standing, sitting and lounge options. Folding walls, pull down power cords and writable walls within different spaces allow for employees to further adapt their space.

Philippe Paré, design director and principal at Gensler, commented: "Designing Hyundai Capital's new headquarters challenged our team to think critically about employee habits, instincts, and most importantly, the environment which harnesses those behaviours to the best of each employee's ability." Paré went on to say that "this new environment is about empowerment, expression, authenticity and the flexibility for employees to adapt their working styles to the task at hand."

COMMENT

Retail parks need to shape up

Fighting a losing battle with the internet to attract shoppers, the design of retail parks must evolve to offer consumers a compelling case to visit. Gary Johnson and Paul Starbuck from retail, sport and leisure specialist architects LK2 describe why mixed use developments including sports, leisure and healthcare are the way forward

Before retailers and developers are able to future-proof retail parks, they must first understand why the common layout, which has remained unchanged for many years, now needs to evolve. The current format is, in part, the reason that many of these developments are missing the mark for consumers, and in turn for owners and staff.

Typically, the layout of most UK-based retail parks is simple: a number of large 'bulky goods' units, occupied by big-name retailers, fronting a large car park. While this may be architecturally uninspiring, this formula has met the needs of consumers for many years. However, changes in shopping trends and consumer habits – including the rise of internet shopping and click and collect services – alongside busier lifestyles, have resulted in many of the large units becoming less desirable, leading to an increase in vacant space within retail parks.

These issues are all part and parcel of a general apathy in retail towards the change needed to meet the demands of the modern consumer. By failing to meet their needs, the 'ripple effect' is passed on to unit owners and staff. Vacant units mean job losses and business closures, and limited footfall and dwell time from customers impacts business turnover and job satisfaction.

LK2's StreetLab and SportsLab initiatives are exploring opportunities to incorporate additional mixed uses into retail parks and build over existing units to exploit "air rights." Retail parks with vacant land adjacent are particularly attractive in terms of creating opportunities to introduce community and commercial sports and leisure uses to create a true community destination.

Some retail parks are already working to address this, with larger retail parks introducing leisure and entertainment facilities such as multiplex cinemas, food and beverage units, and discount retail stores to fill vacant space and reflect the changes we have seen on the high street in cities and towns. More and more convenience stores and upmarket food operators are choosing to open stores within retail parks, which is a relatively new trend and a positive change.

In fact, this current trend has seen retail parks slowly increase footfall and decrease the number of vacant units, highlighting how the traditional model for retail parks can be easily modernised and evolved. With land for development becoming increasingly hard to find, retail parks offer a number of exciting opportunities, especially for more mixed-use schemes incorporating residential, student accommodation and office space. Retail parks can also be the ideal location for finance and business units, community and medical care facilities.



CHANGING HABITS

Changes in shoppers' lifestyles have resulted in many of the larger units becoming less desirable, leading to an increase in vacant space

The offering of an over-arching 'destination' enhances retail appeal and in turn reaps dividends for staff and business owners. For example, the introduction of leisure, sport and entertainment facilities would improve the working environment for staff, boosting job satisfaction. Providing staff with a choice of after work activities would allow them to take part in sporting activities and improve fitness or socialise outside of work. The creation of new businesses through added facilities would also create new jobs and allow staff to choose to work closer to home rather than travelling into the nearest town or city centre.

'Super surgeries' are also a rising trend, with more and more doctors, dentists, opticians and physios opting to share space and work collaboratively. Locating surgeries close to a sport, leisure and recreation site can only be beneficial, with retail parks the obvious next step and one which we are starting to see already. Having these facilities easily accessible to staff would also help reduce sick leave or time off to attend medical appointments, and would relieve the pressure on staff to book medical appointments around work hours.

The creation of these sustainable 'communities' around retail parks would also benefit unit owners, as having a wider choice of activities for customers would lead to increased footfall, dwell time and ultimately spend. Extending the operating hours of a retail park would also reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.



HEALTHY LOCATION

Locating GP surgeries on retail parks is an obvious next step, and one that is already beginning to be seen

When looking at existing retail parks, our team of retail and leisure experts begin by conducting research, investigating how they could be transformed and regenerated to better suit the needs of retailers and consumers, providing a cohesive offering to their catchment area. As part of this research, we investigate current retail and leisure offerings, the opportunities which could be incorporated into them and the space that's currently available.

We also consider how initiatives from organisations such as Sport England can support the developments in bringing retail, leisure and sport together. Sport England is currently leading the

way when it comes to introducing 'break-out' sports areas into car parks and general public realm spaces. Developers working with Sport England to support its 'Towards an Active Nation' strategy, will see the benefits of a holistic approach that may even align to financial support. We work closely with our clients and developers to encourage and to engage in conversations with organisations, like Sport England, which are looking to revolutionise sport and leisure in the UK.

Often, out-of-town retail developments come up against a tirade of objections during planning, as they are seen as having a negative impact upon nearby town centres. However, by incorporating a strong sport and leisure offering, developers are able to overcome these challenges and in doing so, support organisations like Sport England in tackling dropping participation rates and addressing the in-activity of the nation in general. This is a key target in reducing the reliance and cost on the NHS; it's a long-term objective, but certainly one that can be supported through this innovative way of creating sustainable destinations.

As the face of retail changes, developers and retailers should consider the impacts on not only consumers, but staff and business owners. Developers need to consider how sport and leisure can support retail within parks, helping to create more of a community destination, boosting staff morale and making them an attractive move for business owners.

With this in mind, there is huge potential for the wholesale repositioning of retail parks via the creation of a new model – which we called StreetLab and SportsLab, which will increase values, footfall and dwell time, thereby extending the life and viability for retail park owners and developers.

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COMMENT

Workspace at your service

Offering flexibility for tenants, serviced offices are instrumental in supporting the success and growth of businesses, argues Simon Eastlake of Office Space in Town

A growing demand for modern, flexible office space with 'future-facing' tech capability is prompting small and established businesses alike to turn to serviced offices, which can also support their business models and enhance workers' office environment.

Freedom to expand

Serviced offices can provide HQ facilities and on-site services without the long-term financial commitment attached to standard offices leases. By avoiding tying companies down to restrictive contracts and fixed letting agreements, serviced offices can support start-ups as well as established companies by allowing them to focus their resources on expanding, and improving competitiveness.

Serviced offices are designed to reflect an increasing demand for flexibility from tenants, with adaptable office spaces able to shrink and expand to meet businesses' needs. They can be designed to respond to different business sizes, preferred location and operational requirements, and in doing so, allow companies to focus on growing their business.

Serviced offices provide the potential to allow businesses to

gain a global footprint quickly and affordably. Organisations looking to expand abroad can take advantage of the flexibility provided by serviced offices. They help to cater for such expansion by allowing firms to take up as little office space as necessary, while using it effectively.

Boosting productivity

The challenge for providers however is to offer unique designs and high-spec facilities as well as flexible space. Embedding new technology is one way to win tenants over, and equipping serviced offices with the latest technological innovations is key to improving the productivity of businesses. Offering turnkey virtual office solutions and tailored office support, such as personalised call answering, message management, mail forwarding and administration, are important features which can enable businesses to run highly productive offices at a lower cost, while maintaining a strong local and international presence.

Diversity of design is particularly important, as adding quirky interiors can boost employees' creativity. Recent examples of serviced offices we have delivered range from 1920s 'Great Gatsby' themed decorations to Lewis Carroll-inspired 'Alice in Wonderland' spaces. In addition, clients have been provided with access to rooftop terrace cafes, cycle storage, beauty treatment rooms, and even serviced bedrooms.

Getting tenant satisfaction

We are all spending more time in our offices than virtually anywhere else, which is leading to a greater convergence between our work life and our private life. This has led to a demand for workspaces to offer more facilities and services to reflect employees' varied needs. People working longer hours, for example, may require that their offices provide more amenities, breakout spaces, and proximity to restaurants and bars. Occupiers are also demanding better customer service and expect better amenities, technology and on-site customer service.

This is why serviced office providers are increasingly investing in training and equipping staff with the right skill set to allow them to respond quickly and effectively to the varying needs of their office tenant clients. Ensuring that staff has bespoke tech knowledge can allow them to respond quickly to any tenant queries and concerns promptly.

Ultimately, in providing a wider range of amenities and customer service, serviced offices can contribute to an enjoyable and inspiring work culture that improves tenant satisfaction, and in turn, the performance of their businesses.



DESIGN DIVERSITY

Diversity of design is paramount to creating a serviced office that fulfils a client's goals, as quirky interiors can boost employees' creativity

Simon Eastlake is developments manager at Office Space in Town

MICROSOFT HUB
WEST LONDON

Upgrading to a new version

Jess Unwin visits Microsoft's new base in Paddington to see how transparent and flexible workspaces encourage collaboration, reflecting a 'sea change' in the IT giant's approach

Anyone who has worked in an open plan office has given in to the temptation to email a colleague who is just a few paces away across the floor.

Undoubtedly convenient but also somehow disconnected on a human level, this 'digital dialogue' – as studio head at Microsoft's Lift London studio Lee Schuneman described it – was something he was looking to discourage in phase two of the firm's relocation to a new home.

Part of his vision for floors seven and eight at 2 Kingdom Street, Paddington was staff benefiting from a more 'analogue' relationship. Surprising language given Microsoft is a tech giant – but getting people up from their desks to talk face to face is part of the company's strategy to create shared, transparent and flexible workspaces that encourage collaboration.

Architects Gensler were asked to deliver those workspaces when they took on the project in November 2015. The two-floor refit started just as phase one of the relocation (on floors four and five) was being completed. The overarching plan for phase two was to bring further Microsoft business groups – including the Lift London and SwiftKey engineering teams, but also Bing, Xbox and HoloLens – under one roof, reflecting the company's aim to establish an integrated London base.

Gensler were already working on Microsoft's European HQ in Dublin when they got the call to take on Paddington. Stuart Templeton, lead interior designer and associate at Gensler, soon understood the two biggest challenges ahead.

Winning over end users

Firstly, a modest budget for the combined accommodation of 4,830 m² would mean imaginative and creative design solutions.

Secondly, the designs would need to win over some of the people who were to use the office spaces. In particular, the Lift London and SwiftKey teams, who were moving from very different environments at offices in Soho and Southwark respectively.

Templeton says: "Both these groups are staffed by younger people with a strong start-up mentality and there was some nervousness about relocating to a more corporate setting."

Happily, the project coincided with a sea change in thought at Microsoft that has helped Gensler recreate the start-up energy, creativity and general ambience that the Lift London and SwiftKey teams wanted.

Templeton explains: "It's an interesting time to work with Microsoft. Previously they've had an office design manual for architects which was pretty prescriptive: you know, put a table here that's this height, a screen here of this height. But, of course, that was producing a commonality that they've decided to get away from."

"Now, there's a new design language for their offices that gives architects and designers much more flexibility in how space can be laid out to be more suited to the end user."

Spaces to suit all needs

Although the two floors were treated as two separate projects, both had the same objective: a working environment for Microsoft engineers and designers consisting of myriad spaces where they can discover different locations to suit their needs, whether that be formal, informal, quiet, or lively.

And, in recognition of the ever-changing nature of tech work, the spaces had to be sufficiently fluid and flexible so that they could be tweaked and rearranged as the



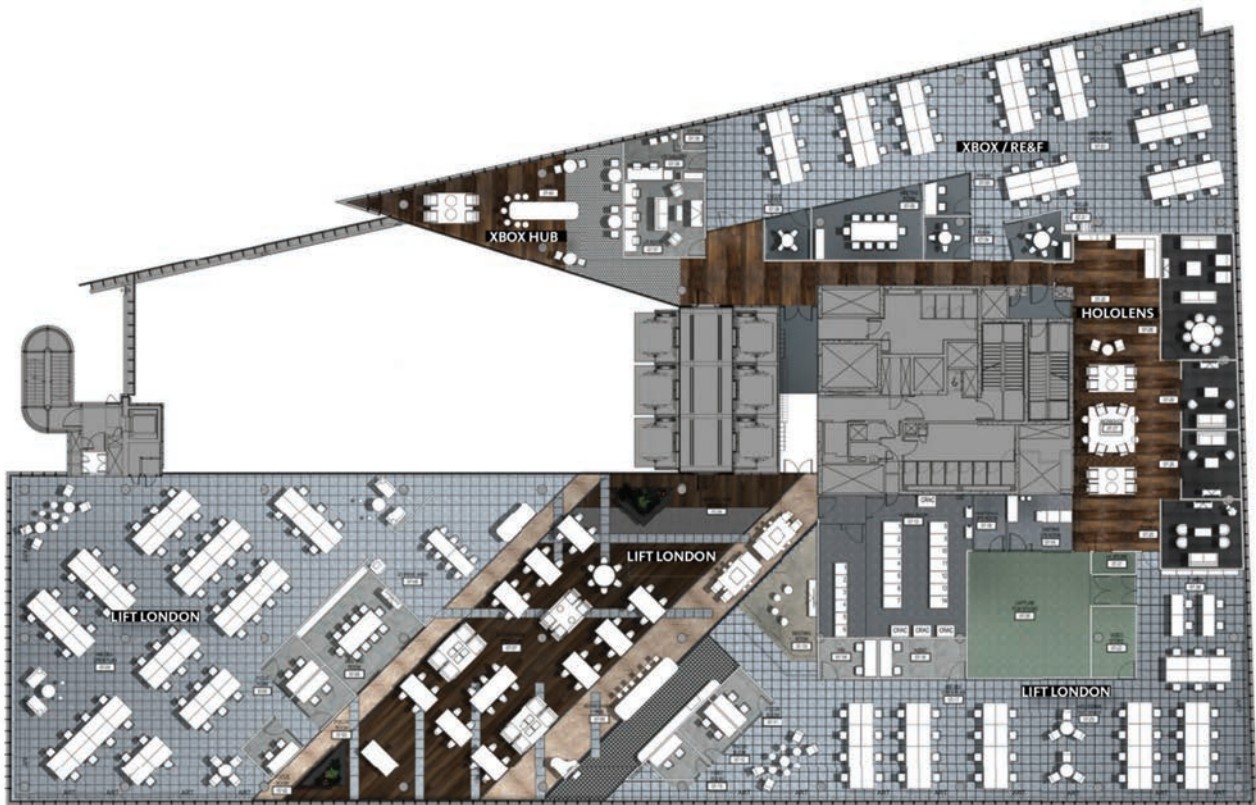
The new design language for their offices gives architects and designers much more flexibility

Stuart Templeton, lead interior designer & associate, Gensler



LOUNGE MUSIC

Lounge areas feature comfortable furniture and rugs, and even musical equipment for staff to use



teams' needs changed.

The work was completed earlier this year. Beginning with floor seven, visitors find at its centre the Refresh Hub – a dynamic, open space that's slightly hard to define. One part feels a little like a university campus canteen and/or common room as a result of its kitchen and functional tables and chairs. Yet nearby are lounge areas with stylish armchairs, coffee tables and carpets. There's even room for a drum kit and guitar amps for staff with musical talents. Much of this area features the relative luxury of timber flooring, while overhead there's a stripped-back aesthetic with ceiling tiles removed to reveal services. The result of this mix is a vibrancy that is relaxing and inviting – exactly what Microsoft wanted.

Templeton says: "The space on floor seven is mostly occupied by Lift London, who were used to having the energy of Soho on their doorstep at their old home. They were also familiar with Soho House [a private members club popular with creatives], which they liked because of the intimate, textured ambience, and because it had a certain exclusivity. Putting those themes together with Paddington's history around the railway station, we thought

Although much of the previous tenant's layout was retained, doing away with several meeting rooms allowed for a much more open-plan setting

there was an interior design dialogue we could tap into – Soho meets Paddington."

Despite the absence of very many physical barriers, the neighbouring HoloLens 'client' space is quiet, providing a library-like environment of focus and peace.

Small changes, big impact

The floor also features plenty of more 'traditional' working areas – but subtle steps have been taken to encourage staff not to be too tied to their desks. Templeton says: "Small things have had quite an impact. Things like removing storage pedestals under desks, everyone using laptops rather than desktop PCs to encourage flexible working and sit/stand desks for staff that wanted them."

FLEXIBILITY

Spaces needed to be fluid and flexible to support the ever-changing of nature of tech work

PROJECT FACTFILE: MICROSOFT HUB

Main contractor: Overbury

Architect: Gensler

Lighting consultant/

M&E contractor: Hoare Lea

Joinery: Brown & Carroll

Flooring: Timber – Hawwoods;
Ceramics tiles – Domus

Furniture: Knoll desk systems;
Conran; SCP; Very Good & Proper;
Retrouvius (reclaimed table tops)

Lighting: Trainspotters; Skinflint
Design

Curtains: Vescom

Writable Paint: Idea Paint

Fabric Panels: Kvadrat



The reduced number of meeting rooms is another key aspect of the interior design ethos. Templeton says: “There are fewer meeting rooms here than I think I’ve ever planned for an office. Again, the idea is to get people to collaborate in more flexible, transparent spaces.”

In the same vein, Templeton says the engineers’ tech requirements have been set up to be ‘super flexible’. He explains further: “The tech isn’t embedded in partition walls, and there aren’t screens set up around fixed furniture in a meeting room. Staff wanted to be able to set up whatever they want, wherever they want it. In fact, anytime I’ve been at the office, spaces are being used in a slightly different way.”

On floor eight, occupied by SwiftKey, the aim was again to create shared, flexible workspaces for a young, creative team who wanted to retain the informal environment of a start-up.

Although much of the previous tenant’s layout was retained, doing away with several meeting rooms allowed for a much more open-plan setting. Sunken lounge areas were also created as collaboration zones.

As with floor seven, the existing SAS plank metal ceiling system was partially stripped out, exposing services and giving additional height up to the slab. Pendant lighting was also installed to create more areas of ambient lighting.

But the signature touch here is specialist joinery, which is used to help divide spaces. Templeton says: “On this floor our idea was to create an aesthetic that would be canal warehouse – again tapping into Paddington’s history – meets London markets. The timber partitions we created give the impression of what you might find in an old warehouse, while using the influence of London markets by installing artwork collections to animate spaces.”

It wasn’t something Gensler had control of, but it would be remiss not to mention the floor-to-ceiling glazing of this impressive office building: it offers eye-catching exterior views of London’s skyline, and equally dramatic interior views of the full-building-height central atrium.

Sticking to budget with sustainable solutions

Getting maximum design impact within the available budget was certainly the project’s biggest challenge, says Templeton. “I think we did just that, and we enjoyed coming up with solutions that we might not otherwise have considered. More money might have



meant an uplift in finishes but the design concept would still have been the same – and there should be a way to achieve that whether you’ve got £100 or £1,000 to spend. We worked closely with the contractor on sourcing materials, which fostered a very positive collaborative process.”

A major contribution to both affordability and sustainability was the relocation/reuse of existing Microsoft furniture and kitchen equipment. Templeton says: “Much of the furniture was about functionality rather than brand names – in line with the stripped-back, start-up ‘vibe’ the end users were comfortable with. The company had plenty of furniture across their campuses, some of it under stairs and in stock rooms. Around 60 per cent of furniture at Paddington has been relocated there – a saving that allowed us to spend on the new timber flooring on floor seven, which was a nod to the luxury of Soho House.”

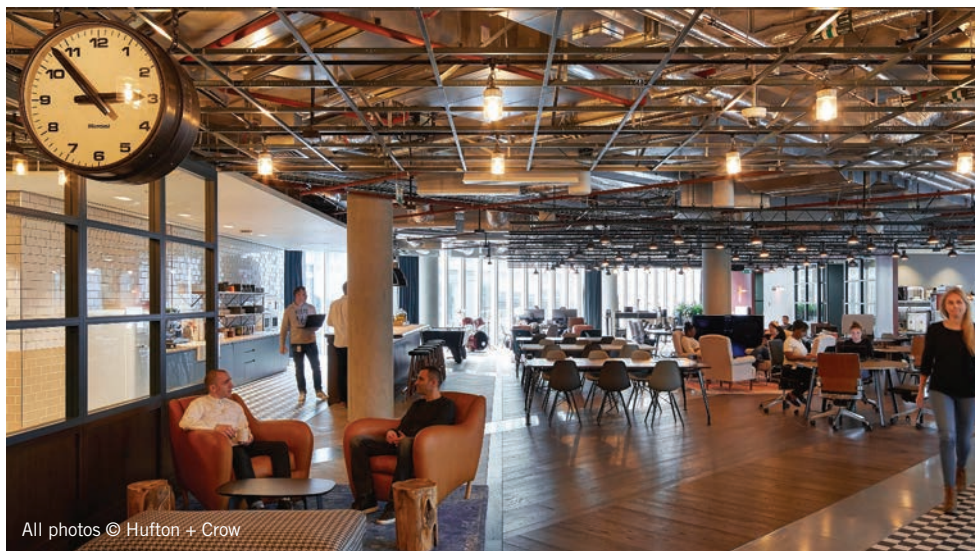
A design rethink of that timber flooring prevented the need to buy new electrical busbars, while, in other areas carpets were removed to reveal the existing raised floor tiles. Templeton explains: “Microsoft design guidelines talk about elevating the ordinary and this is an example – we polished the tiles and added vinyl graphics to turn the ordinary into something more.” Elsewhere, reclaimed timber crowbars, once used to lift railway tracks in the area, have been repurposed to create tailor-made space division.

Transparency & collaboration

Lift London and SwiftKey staff have been making use of their new Paddington home for some months now. Lift London’s Lee Schuneman says: “We set out to rethink the way we work together as a team, with a new environment designed around the principles of transparency and collaboration.”

Talking about how the new spaces have gone down with the firm’s staff, he adds: “The space has been enthusiastically received and people are using it in a way that suits them best – which was one of our main goals. The feel of the place has always been really important to us, and employees comment on how positive it is. It’s an environment where they can do their best work.”

Gensler’s Templeton happily agrees that Microsoft staff’s initial apprehension around the project has melted away. He says: “Of course it really helps to be able to engage with end users like Lee – that always creates for much better design.” ■



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**BUILDING
PROJECTS**

**184 SHEPHERD'S BUSH ROAD
HAMMERSMITH, LONDON**

A pioneer reaches new heights

With its original height having been restricted during the First World War, the UK's first concrete framed building has finally reached its original potential thanks to a glazed addition that provides a thoroughly modern workplace. Mark Smulian reports



Anyone crossing Brook Green, a park in Hammersmith, west London, will be in close proximity to a radically refurbished listed building, but they may miss both the building and its key design feature unless they look closely.

If they do notice the building, they may wonder why 184 Shepherd's Bush Road looks rather squat – surely a building with such a large footprint should be taller?

Look again. Although it is hidden from Brook Green by large trees, 184 Shepherd's Bush Road has had a vast domed glass roof fitted, transforming what was a three storey building into a six storey one.

184 Shepherd's Bush Road was built in 1915-16 as a garage and showroom for the Ford Motor Company in the early days of car traffic.

It had been designed as a five-storey building but shortages of raw materials during the First World War meant it ended up with only three, providing 117,000 ft².

The building was later used by Citroën as its UK distribution and sales centre and then by lighting firm Osram – which has left a small but significant legacy at the site – and most recently, as a self-storage facility.

Westerland Real Estate, which owned it, wanted the building to have a more promi-



STEELS

Rather than the 1915 concept of continuing the concrete frame, the new domed extension is in lighter steel frame to allow three storeys

nent use and asked architectural practice Collado Collins to initially make suggestions as to what this might be.

Hotel and residential uses were considered but discarded and eventually refurbishment as an office was chosen.

The building had been built using the then-revolutionary concrete frame technique, but by the time Collado Collins became involved almost 100 years later this frame was showing wear and tear.

Other than the structural elements, only a few original features – including mosaic floors and wood panelling – remained on parts of the former ground floor showroom area and a small space thought to have originally been a customer reception area.

Collado Collins' chosen design was for an open plan office space, as having been built as a car showroom, the building has high ceilings and was ideal for conversion into offices.

While the work needed to refurbish the interior would be comparatively straightforward, the problem was how to create enough space to make it attractive to a potential occupier?

Being listed as Grade II major alterations were out of the question, and the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

The problem was how to create enough space to make it attractive to a potential occupier

planning authority was concerned about maintaining views and the building's relationship to its surroundings.

Collado Collins lead architect Sanja Tiedemann explains how the solution lay in the roof: "The roof was flat as in the original design, but in 1915-16 the building was designed to be five floors high, and even though only three were built the structure could take five floors and two cores popped out above roof surface which would have been for these floors."

She continues: "We put in a 1.5 metre transfer zone. On top we placed the new domed glazed roof, which utilises the existing structure."

The 1915 version would have continued the concrete frame upwards but the new dome is a steel frame with glass to reduce weight, which meant three floors could be fitted on the original roof beneath the glazed dome.

"We wanted to achieve height without it being seen from the street, with low intrusion on the neighbourhood," she says.

One option was simply to build upwards but, the architect confirms, "the council said that was a non-starter as it did not look proportionately right".

Another factor to be considered was that the building next door – now used by retailer Tesco and a housing association – was once part of Osram's operation, and a striking cupola remains from this. Planners wanted to retain visibility of this from the road from central Hammersmith and simply building upwards would have obscured it.

Tiedemann says: "In conversations with planning officers they initially assumed we could only add a single floor, but we opted for a curved roof that slants back, so the closer you get, the less you see of it. Because of the geometric proportion of the roof we accommodated three floors in there."

The roof is a tubular steel structure with steel nodes and the glazing is a mix of transparent and opaque panels to control solar gain.

"We retained the parapet and built the transfer zone so the only connection between the roof and new floors is on the fourth floor and at the top". Facade contractor Seele prefabricated all parts of the roof and transferred them to the site.

The 50,000 ft² roof extension is a diagrid glass roof, which presented several challenges such as predicting how comfortable it would be to situate a working environment under a large area of glass.

Engineering consultancy Hilson Moran undertook extensive modelling of internal conditions and air distribution to establish the correct volume of shading needed.

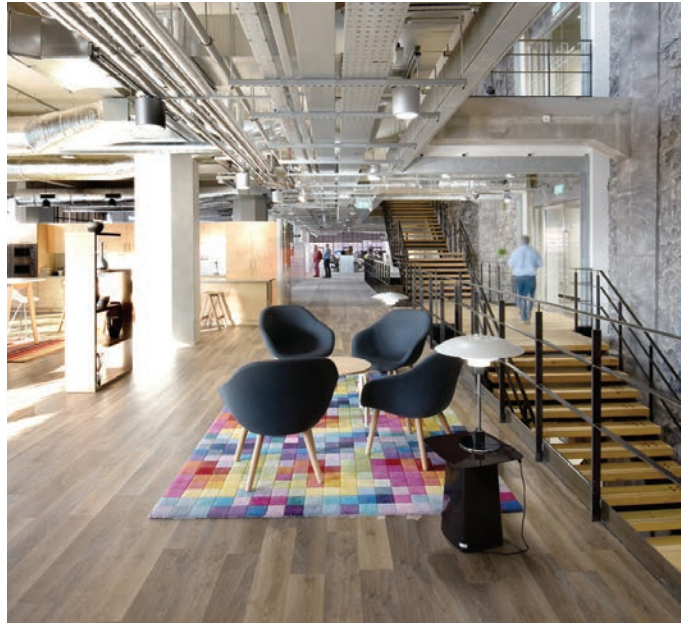
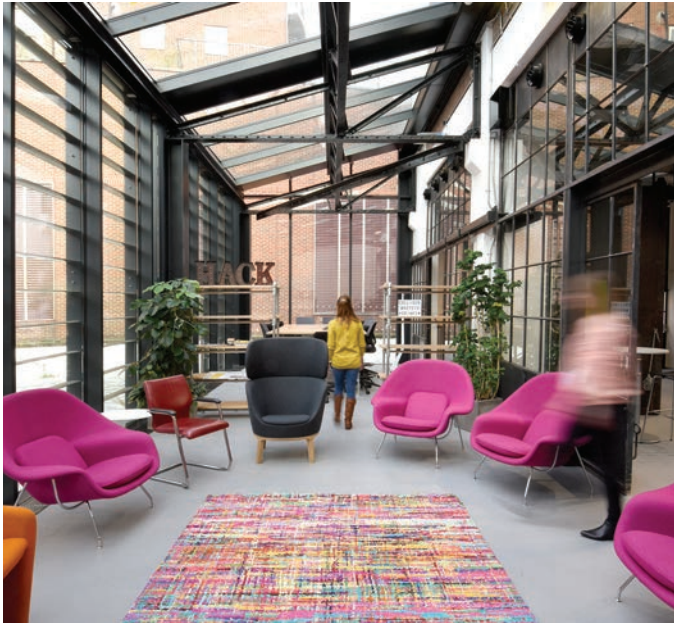
The roof's curve left limited space for plant, which is accommodated in a well at its centre.

Hilson Moran director Martin Murphy says: "Complex redevelopment schemes such as this require modelling and analysis to ensure the right building services systems and solutions are in place to create an optimum workspace, in this case both in the new extension and in the historic listed building."

Below the roof, Collado Collins had to devise a way to use the existing building. Aside from it being listed, the new occupant – retail customer information provider Dunnhumby – came on board early and wanted to keep the large open spaces to facilitate its style of working.

Tiedemann says: "Once we got full access





All images © Eugene Codjoe

PROJECT FACTFILE

Client: Westerland Real Estate

Architect: Collado Collins

Structural engineer:

Campbell Reith

M&E/ sustainability engineer:

Hilson Moran

Planning consultant: Jon Dingle

Consulting employer's agent:

RISE Management Consulting

Cost consultant: Alinea

Main contractor:

McLaren Construction

Roofing contractor: Seele Heritage

Windows: Crittal

M&E support systems: Fixmart

Raised flooring: Floorplan Systems

Gas infrastructure: Squire Energy

Stainless steel street planters: IOTA

Interior design:

Franklin Design Associates

Screeding works:

Floor Screeding Company

Planning authority:

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

we started looking at structure and load and slabs, which are the first of their kind in terms of concrete framework, which is the reason for its listing.

"This technique had not previously been used in the UK and we found a lot of honeycombing had occurred along the edges of columns and had to re-inject them and do some work to the slabs," she adds.

"Some columns were replaced like for like, but it was in pretty good condition and did not need any new columns to support the roof."

Collado Collins reinstated the floor and retained the ceilings and timber panelling. The smaller core was removed and what had been a loading bay at the rear of the building was partially incorporated into the structure, retaining some of the original features but now serving as both a conservatory that is an extension of the office space and an outdoor gym.

"Dunnhumby got involved very early on and we managed to incorporate a lot of their variations, such as a new atrium space at the back, as they wanted to retain the very industrial character," she says, adding that "their philosophy is that staff 'hot desk' and can work anywhere – I think everybody has their favourite corner of the building".

One staircase connects all floors, and there are four lifts and toilet facilities within the core.

The building being listed also meant that little could be changed on the building's exterior. The brickwork was simply cleaned but otherwise left undisturbed.

The windows were still the original ones which had been supplied by manufacturer Crittal. The frames had been painted white but proved to have originally been Buckingham green.

"We contacted Crittal to see what we could do and they said it would make more sense with sustainability issues and the building becoming an office space to replace them, so we got Crittal windows which were an exact match for the originals," says Tiedemann.

"The council was happy to discuss colours and we went for a more industrial feel with dark grey," she adds.

There is clearly a limit as to how much the sustainability features expected in a new building can be incorporated into a century-old listed one, although Tiedemann says there are elements of water retention with an attenuation tank, and there are measures to limit energy consumption – for example lights will turn off if no-one is present.

184 Shepherd's Bush Road has won the Hammersmith Society's environment award and has been highly commended by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. It has also been shortlisted for awards from the Royal Institute of British Architects and the British Council of Offices.

A century after wartime stringency deprived the building of its intended top, 184 Shepherd's Bush Road has finally reached its full height – even if the original designers might not recognise it. ■



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**BUILDING
PROJECTS**

HUCKLETREE WEST LONDON

A different way of co-working

Today's co-working spaces need to be vibrant and engaging if they are to attract dynamic young businesses, and in that context the newly opened Huckletree West doesn't disappoint, reports Ray Philpott

OPPORTUNITY

Huckletree is a young company providing flexible and idiosyncratic co-working spaces, and saw a golden opportunity in White City

White City, the former heart of the BBC's empire in the capital, is being transformed into a vibrant new residential and commercial quarter in west London.

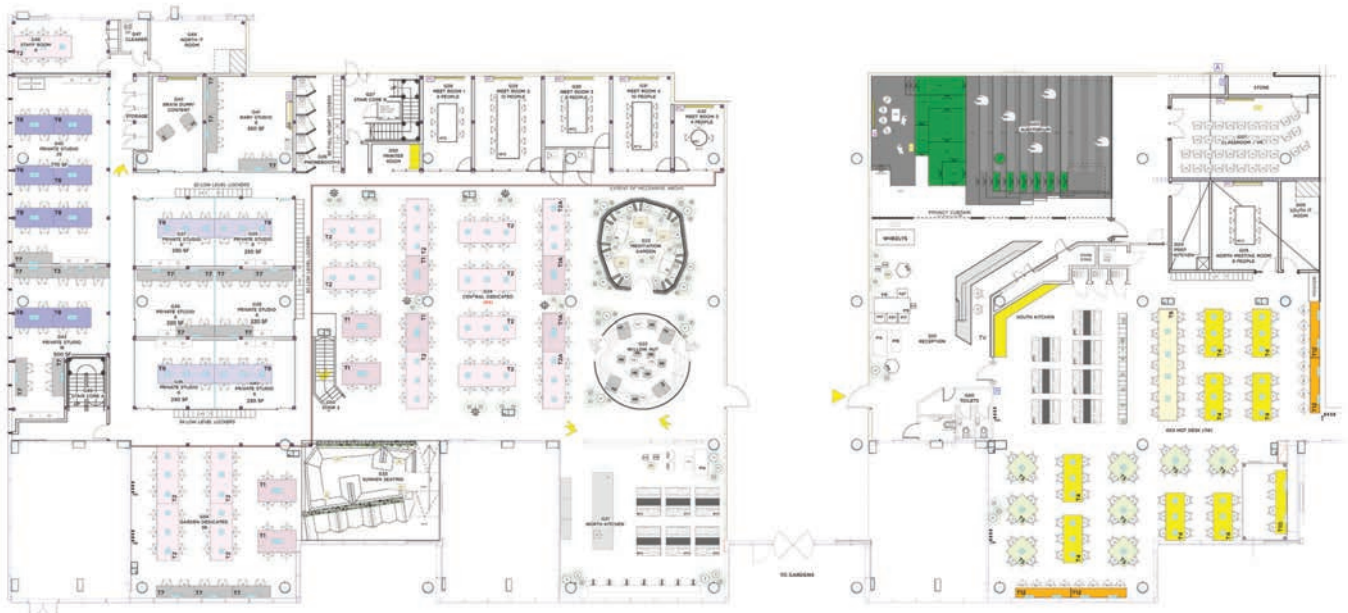
At the centre of this rebirth is the new White City Place business district, consisting of six repurposed buildings located on the national broadcaster's former 17 acre Media Village.

As part of a wider redevelopment of former BBC properties in West London it

is being marketed by the developers Stanhope to attract start-ups and entrepreneurs in the tech, media and creative sectors to create a dynamic new business hub.

Huckletree, a young and pioneering company providing flexible, idiosyncratic and affordable shared co-working spaces for exactly those kind of businesses, saw a golden opportunity in White City Place.

It opened Huckletree West, its third co-working space to date, on



the ground floor of the refurbished six-storey BBC Media Centre originally completed in 2004. Now renamed MediaWorks, it's one of three buildings in White City Place, which have been designated for extensive redevelopment.

The internal architecture and interior design is the work of Studio RHE, commissioned to create a distinctive, striking, and 'open' co-working layout.

The building overlooks attractive, accessible terraced gardens to its rear, and adjoins a series of street level retail outlets located to the front and one side of the building.

Challenges

Studio RHE was keen to build on the successful work it had carried out on the HuckleTree's earlier centres at Shoreditch and Finsbury Square in London. However at White City, the architects faced an altogether different challenge to successfully capture the distinctive HuckleTree customer experience.

The earlier projects were contained within older, established buildings, benefitting from an existing language and fabric that can be interacted with. By contrast, HuckleTree West sits inside a Category A core and shell refurbishment executed by the building's original architects, Allies and Morrison.

So, how do you turn a capacious, double-height, ground floor 'box' with

zero identity into a series of highly original, inspirational, clearly defined yet interconnected work spaces for a 'community' of more than 500 people?

An additional constraint is that HuckleTree's space is effectively bisected by a central atrium, lit by roof glazing six floors up and housing the building's main entrance, reception and lobby.

Dynamism

Richard Hywel Evans, director and founder of Shoreditch-based Studio RHE says: "Primarily we wanted to capture the dynamism and vibrant atmosphere of HuckleTree's first two locations, having spent three years developing the concept with them.

"We have a fantastic working relationship with HuckleTree based on continual feedback and open dialogue. So we're able to share our thoughts as we go and be flexible, which is useful when we adapt spaces to meet unforeseen or changing needs.

"Together, we've drawn on a mix of intuitive 'gut feel' about what worked well at the earlier sites, combined with solid analytics to see which elements were actually the most used or occupied."

In White City though, they inherited a blank canvas – a vast space with a glazing curtain wall more than five metres high around most of the perimeter sitting at the bottom of a concrete framed build-

GROUND FLOOR

Studio RHE was commissioned to create a distinctive, striking and open layout for co-working



ing. The only structural feature they added was a mezzanine in the larger of the two co-working spaces, increasing floor space by a third.

Idiosyncratic

As Hywel Evans explains, “The big question we asked ourselves at the start was how do we give this huge space an identity, how do we create an idiosyncratic place that’s interesting to work in and characterful without looking mannered or over- designed.

He continues: “We needed to meet the key Huckletree criteria of creating a vibrant community through visual transparency and connectivity across different areas. The core working areas are in the centre, with lots of breakout areas to engender interaction and spaces where Huckletree members can get privacy if they want. This meant creating insertions of different, distinctive areas, each telling a different story.”

One striking example of such an insertion is the meditation garden, an internal circular structure made from recycled shipping rope containing circular seating where tech devices like phones are

banned, and the recreation room with walls made from natural, woven willow walls.

Another intriguing element is what Hywel Evans calls the “Hutte”. It is a large house-shaped building of birch-faced timber resembling a Swedish cottage, containing meeting rooms and the centre’s Virtual Reality (VR) Laboratory, where members can learn and explore uses of immersive technologies.

In one corner there is the auditorium, a 150-seat plywood terrace with stage lighting looking down on a space for internal or external events, presentations or larger meetings. “It’s open to the general space surrounding it,” says Evans, “but huge green curtains with a moss-like texture can be pulled across to close it off for privacy if required and we’ve used the space in the undercroft of the seating as an alternative meeting place.”

The green theme continues with The Slope, an angular yet comfortable area for relaxation and casual meetings, again finished in a moss-like green fabric, internal planting features and a lovely view over the gardens.

Other interesting features designed for

PROJECT FACTFILE

Design work begins:

December 2016

Workspace opened:

September 2017

Total floor space: 30,500 ft²
(40 per cent ‘breakout’ space)

Number of occupants: 500+

Number of desks: 250 desks
(including 100 ‘hot desks’)

Extra facilities: 30 private ‘studios’
holding four-30 co-workers, 150-seat auditorium



the maximum benefit of co-workers include sealed booths for one-to-one phone or internet-based conversations along with larger teleconferencing spaces – both offering privacy for participants and protecting other co-workers from noise.

Towards the centre of the space is the core working area where hot desks and desks dedicated to a particular company or individual are located. On the periphery are variously-sized, glass-fronted private offices or ‘studios’ along with bookable meeting rooms with their own individual colour and design.

“The enclosed areas serve to delineate the space along with the walkways that have been finished in a range of different finishes and colours,” says Hywel Evans.

Transparency

Project architect Thidaa Roberts explains the benefits of a mezzanine level in such a building, saying it “has proven a highly popular area with users”.

She continues: “We elected not to stretch the mezzanine right across the office space as we thought it would

damage the aesthetics and create a loss of connection in the working environment.

“It is actually a steel platform structure, such as that which you might see in a logistics warehouse, with structural bolts and rivets on display providing a certain level of ‘industrial chic’ while keeping to the budget. Metal guard and stair rails combine with fine mesh balustrades to provide transparency of view.”

Transparency also plays a critical role in addressing the challenge of having the two main work spaces situated on either side of the atrium/lobby. As Roberts points out: “Thanks to the double-height glass, people in both elements can see directly into the other space, retaining the strong sense of visual connection inherent to the brand.

“In fact,” continues the architect, “we really celebrate the glazed curtain wall throughout, exploiting the natural light on both levels and placing communal places near the glass so people can enjoy the gardens and views outside.”

Striking features

Elsewhere, the building’s original circular support columns, complete with attractive

TELECONFERENCING

There are larger teleconferencing spaces designed to protect co-workers from noise



PROJECT FACTFILE: HUCKLETREE WEST

Interior architecture & design:

Studio RHE

Shell & core design:

Allies & Morrison

Client: Huckletree

Main contractor: OD Interiors

Virtual reality specialist:

Realities Centre

Internal planting: Marcus Foster

Original artwork: Golden Wolf

Lighting products: Atrium

Structural engineer: AKT II

Services engineer: Sweco

exposed concrete and finished with black and white stripes subtly added at the top, are a strong feature.

And to bring interest to what is an otherwise uniform perforated metal-clad ceiling, the architects have peeled the tiles away in certain areas to expose strips of bare concrete, which have been painted black to reflect Huckletree's signature diagonal stripe branding.

The diagonal lines are also deployed on various wall spaces along with original mood-generating artwork by animation production company Golden Wolf, both visual styles projecting the Huckletree identity.

Floor surfaces include vinyl and carpet in a range of colours for high traffic areas along with polished concrete of the original floor, and again are used to demarcate areas and create interest.

Different styles of lighting have been exploited to differentiate areas. Long, tubular metal-capped lights resembling giant electrical fuses are suspended vertically, horizontally or even across each other to seemingly tumble through the air, while long rectangular downlights feature heavily elsewhere.

Lighting also adds drama to a striking acoustic sculpture in the shape of a huge cloud hovering above the main desk area. Made from many fluffy hand-made pom-poms hung from the ceiling at various heights, it is uplit by diagonal lights suspended beneath giving it an attractive glowing appearance.

Surprisingly, the services are not on display, as is the case with so many modern buildings, and are largely accommodated in the large void underneath the ground floor.

Testimonials

Latest reports show the building is proving popular with co-workers, and Studio RHE itself has voted with its feet, renting a four person office to serve as a base for a special modular housing concept it's developing.

Summing up the project, Hywel Evans says: "Businesses want to be in here and we love being in here. That's a real testament to the trust between our client and ourselves that enabled us to develop this space together, ultimately creating a visually rich, stimulating environment to work in." ■

The value of wellbeing

Oliver Ronald of Boss Design looks at why employee wellbeing is heavily influencing workplace design and office furniture specification

Many of us spend a large proportion of our lives in the office – up to 40 hours per week or more – and this can have a major impact on our work/life balance and wellbeing. There is now greater awareness that a better work/life balance starts in the workplace.

But how exactly do we define wellbeing in the workplace? As important as ‘wellness’ is, wellbeing actually goes way beyond this. It’s a complex combination of the physical and psychological, as well as social and relationship aspects of our working lives. It includes factors such as our working environment, processes and even how we get on with our managers and colleagues.

One thing that’s for sure is that given the rising statistics for absenteeism due to anxiety or depression, workplace wellbeing is a serious issue, and the cost to a company due to poor employee wellbeing can be significant. In addition to lost productivity, there are also added recruitment and training costs associated with a high turnover of staff.

Put simply, when we’re happy and healthy, we work better. However, while architects are not responsible for the overall culture of the organisation and how employees are treated, when designing a workplace they can help create an environment that employees can engage with, and feel comfortable in. Ideally, this needs to be an environment that fosters creativity, collaboration, innovation, and even thoughtfulness.

The workplace is no longer a ‘one size fits all’ environment. The new workplace comprises a series of environments or ‘habitats’ that enable us to easily switch our mode of focus – be it concentrating, learning, socialising, or collaborating. By furnishing these habitats with appropriate furniture to support our various activities during the course of a day, not only will it enhance our wellbeing, it will lead to a more streamlined and connected workplace in which we all stay fulfilled



and productive for longer periods.

Typically, workplace habitats comprise a ‘welcome’ space that can double up as a reception or business lounge, a ‘home’ habitat where we perform our work, and a ‘collaboration’ habitat that helps drive communication and collaboration. In addition, a ‘flow’ habitat offers primary paths through the workplace that provide plenty of opportunities for planned and unplanned exchanges, together with formal meeting habitats. ‘Work-cafe’ habitats are also key environments for working and socialising and refuelling.

Office furniture has had to adapt significantly to accommodate new and modern methods of working. Instead of fixed desks that are ‘owned’ by individuals in the ‘home’ habitat, we now have ‘touchdown’ or ‘breakout’ facilities where we can access the

PICTURED

A work hub offers intimacy and privacy for individuals working in solitude



A modular unit with a contoured back for enhanced privacy helps create an informal touchdown area



High tables and stools help assist with collaborative tasks and teamwork

Office furniture has had to adapt significantly to accommodate new and modern methods of working

relevant tools and technology to perform our tasks. Such furniture provides an ergonomically sound alternative to sitting at a desk or a table, and can be either stand-alone or grouped together to create flexible spaces for a modern workplace. This is also ideal for nomadic workers armed with laptops, tablets and mobile phones, enabling them to work anywhere, anytime.

High backed meeting booths and stand-alone personal high-back seating solutions are hugely popular and ideal for breaking up large, open plan spaces (see images). While their primary purpose is to serve heads-down focus work, they also support one-on-one collaboration. There's also a growing trend towards freestanding glass-fronted meeting pods that help continue the flow of nomadic working patterns and teamwork. Some even feature a 'human-

centric lighting system that changes the colour and intensity of white light in the pod in accordance with people's natural circadian rhythms over the course of the day, further promoting wellbeing.

While workplaces are trending towards open and flexible environments, it's also important to remember the need for quiet, private spaces. Telephone pods provide a much-needed place to concentrate and make private calls, encouraging creative and individual working – both vital for a more productive working environment, and for wellbeing.

Good workplace design is no longer just about specifying furniture for the space available. By tearing down walls and introducing habitats, architects have significant freedom in designing an environment that can foster greater wellbeing for all. By specifying furniture that enables the collaborative sharing of new ideas and innovative thinking, as well as greater social interaction with our colleagues, our wellbeing and engagement will flourish, while the company's bottom line will prosper.

Oliver Ronald is sales & marketing director at Boss Design



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Smooth operators

Martin Cummins of Bostik looks at why smoothing compounds are advisable for workplace floors, and the key specification considerations to achieve the right result

The stage preceding the application of a floorcovering is an often overlooked but critical part of the process of creating a finished floor. When it comes to getting the substrate ready to receive the floorcovering, specific knowledge of the subfloor becomes much more important.

In addition to mechanical preparation to remove problematic materials and mitigation of moisture that can result in floor failures, smoothing compounds are applied to enable a smooth floor to be installed. But what are the key issues for installing such compounds in different settings?

To enable adhesives to dry into the substrate, and therefore to bond, it is necessary to provide a 3 mm absorptive medium. This is particularly important on non-porous substrates such as DPMs, power floated concrete and terrazzo. Generally, priming is required but most smoothing compounds are suitable for this.

An isolation layer is often required for office refurbishment projects where a floor has been uplifted and there are old adhesives and even previous smoothing compounds that are neither smooth enough nor absorbent enough for adhesives to be applied. The smoothing compound needs to have excellent adhesion and generally lower strength. The reason for choosing a lower strength product is to minimise tension on the unknown layers below.

Although the industry uses the term 'flexible smoothing compound,' this is pretty much a misnomer. It is very hard to get a cement or calcium sulphate product to be flexible. What we can do however is fibre-reinforce the compound to help minimise crack formation under extreme conditions. Such conditions would include when the smoothing compound is being used over underfloor heating mats, or screed boards where the subfloor is not stable.

In terms of finish, in some settings the smoothing compound being applied also has to act as the finished wear surface. Manufacturers can advise on these specialist products, which need to be both strong and also capable of resisting abrasion from



whatever is occurring above. They may need to be sealed or painted.

Often on projects there may be areas where the subfloor needs to be raised a significant amount – 'deep section' applications. This can include where floor levels vary, partitions have been removed or mat wells need filling. Many smoothing compounds may achieve this but often the drying and curing rates are slow. In this instance, rapid drying products are recommended, curing in days rather than weeks when applied at thicknesses of up to 50 mm.

Some substrates are not suitable to directly receive standard smoothing compounds due to chemical interaction or surface effects. In these cases, a suitable barrier primer or a non-standard smoothing compound may be the answer. Again, check with manufacturers if you have any unknown or atypical substrates as there usually is a solution.

Smoothing compounds are the key to ensuring the designed and specified floor stays firmly fixed, but it's important to be aware they do not all do the same thing. Some have niche uses, whereas others are generally high performing workhorses to cover an array of situations.

Martin Cummins is UK technical support manager at Bostik

An isolation layer is often required for office refurbishment projects where a floor has been uplifted and there are old adhesives present

Efficiency expectations

Maria Holton of Luceco explains how the importance of lighting comfort in the workplace has grown in importance, alongside the focus on efficiency



The minimum requirement of an office space should be to enable professionals to be able to work efficiently and comfortably. Good quality lighting also optimises the working environment, boosting employee productivity. End-users are exploring new ways to enhance employee wellbeing, whilst maintaining a focus on energy savings, and improved efficiency.

Recognising continued growth in many sectors and in particular the commercial office market, lighting manufacturers are endeavouring to play a huge part in providing high quality lighting design specialism for clients. Combining cutting edge design with the latest LED technology results in the very best lighting solutions for the workplace environment.

Pushing the boundaries of what lighting can achieve and focusing on providing energy savings are the key elements for lighting office space. LEDs have improved hugely in a very short period of time, and alongside good colour rendering is excellent life expectancy, plus lumen outputs are up, and wattages are down. There is no longer a sacrifice in quality for efficiency – both are now achievable without blowing the budget.

End-users are exploring new ways to enhance employee wellbeing

Understanding and anticipating the end-user's requirements requires lighting designers to create bespoke lighting solutions to address the need of the office environment. As well as continuing to consider the importance of good glare control, they are placing significance on 'lighting the task' and enabling the client to save money on areas that were previous under or over lit.

A quick solution would be to simply offer a one-for-one replacement. Energy saving can be achieved, by some, using this principle, however, it's invaluable to also encourage reduction in luminaire quantities

where and when it is possible. Delivering good lighting means taking into consideration where and what the task is and recognising that not all employees require the same solution. It is also the role of the lighting designer to create an environment for good communication and enabling employees to focus.

The office should ideally inspire staff, and because we spend most of our time behind our desks, this is where lighting can play a big role. This means good lighting levels, so that the office worker can perform their task effectively, uniform lighting so that their eyes are not trying to frequently adapt, and a minimum of shadows, because these will distract attention. In larger, open plan areas with so many different activities and individuals in one place, it also helps to have good quality lighting to provide a pleasant and motivating workspace.

Various buildings within the Hertfordshire County Council Estate (HCC) have recently been refurbished with cost-effective LED lighting solutions to improve energy efficiencies and reduce maintenance, including a major office lighting upgrade at HCC's Farnham and Robertson House Buildings in Stevenage.

The extensive open plan office facilities were originally lit with 55 W PL compact fluorescent luminaires. To meet their objectives, Hertfordshire County Council required a lighting refurbishment where significant cost savings and return on investment could be demonstrated, energy efficiencies made to lower CO₂ emissions and a massive reduction in maintenance. HCC also recognised the benefits of good lighting and providing ambient surroundings that stimulates a feeling of wellbeing and motivation in the workplace.

LED luminaires offer excellent efficacy and these qualities allow for a sizeable reduction in the number of luminaires helping to provide additional return on investment for a lighting refurbishment.

Maria Holton is senior lighting design engineer at Luceco

First impressions

Franz Lorenschitz of Allgood explores the power of ironmongery to offer the right first impression to users across a range of settings

Door handles are often the visitor's first physical contact with a building, and consequently provide an instant first impression of the environment. As such, ironmongery can subconsciously create a positive and lasting impact.

For a corporate business environment, it's important to have a long lasting, low maintenance ironmongery solution that continues to look in pristine condition after consistent high-use. It should therefore be certified to BS EN 1906 grade 4 category of use. A high quality, stainless steel solution is therefore often specified, providing a timeless and user-friendly design.

Providing the highest level of corrosion resistance and tolerance for busy commercial environments, ranges using marine grade 316 solid stainless steel can be supplied with up to a 25-year warranty. Available with standard satin or polished finishes, they can seamlessly integrate with surrounding stainless steel fixings.

Ironmongery specialists can also offer bespoke satin or polished finishes to stainless steel products. Physical Vapour Deposition (PVD) can provide long-lasting brass, bronze, black or gold decorative coatings, as examples, for a distinctive finish.

To create a more bespoke offering and provide design flexibility for architects, a 'mix and match' solution can be provided. Allowing each component of the handle to be chosen from various designs, a central node unites each of the components. This allows specifiers to choose rounded, bullet or drum tips and pair it with a crescent, straight or propeller grip. Creating a lever handle that can integrate with the building's feel and design, such ranges offer increased flexibility and creativity for commercial applications.

Incorporating texture as well as colour, forward-thinking ironmongery manufacturers offer the option of a fabric grip for lever and pull handles, increasing the options for architects further. Perfect for creating a unique environment for specific floors or departments, incorporating colour and texture into ironmongery can help visitors, particularly those who are visually impaired,

find their way around a building.

A bespoke solution that can be chosen from hundreds of design options, a colourful and textured lever handle can help create a lasting positive first impression of a building or organisation.

To complement hygiene and infection protocols, healthcare and hospital environments can specify copper alloy antimicrobial ironmongery. Providing added value to an installation, copper alloy ironmongery offers the visible 'sterile' appearance of stainless steel combined with the antimicrobial properties of copper. This allows the antimicrobial range to seamlessly integrate with surrounding stainless steel door hardware and modern interiors.

Ranges certified by the Copper Development Association and showing the Cu+ mark authenticate the ironmongery's ability to consistently eradicate harmful bacteria and microbes, such as influenza and Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).

Eliminating high touch frequency points such as door handles or push plates as infection transfer points, such solutions can reduce the risk of healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs) and therefore provide a tangible return on investment for hospitals and care home environments.

Alternatively, healthcare and environmentally focused buildings can benefit from timber-based ironmongery solutions. Warm to the touch, oak ironmongery ranges with a super circular shape provide the most comfortable grip for patients, especially those suffering from arthritis or neuropathy.

First impressions are vital for creating a comfortable and inviting space for new employees, clients and guests. With ironmongery experts offering comprehensive ranges developed for specific applications, an ironmongery solution can meet both the practical and aesthetic needs of a building to create the right first impression.

Franz Lorenschitz is marketing manager at Allgood

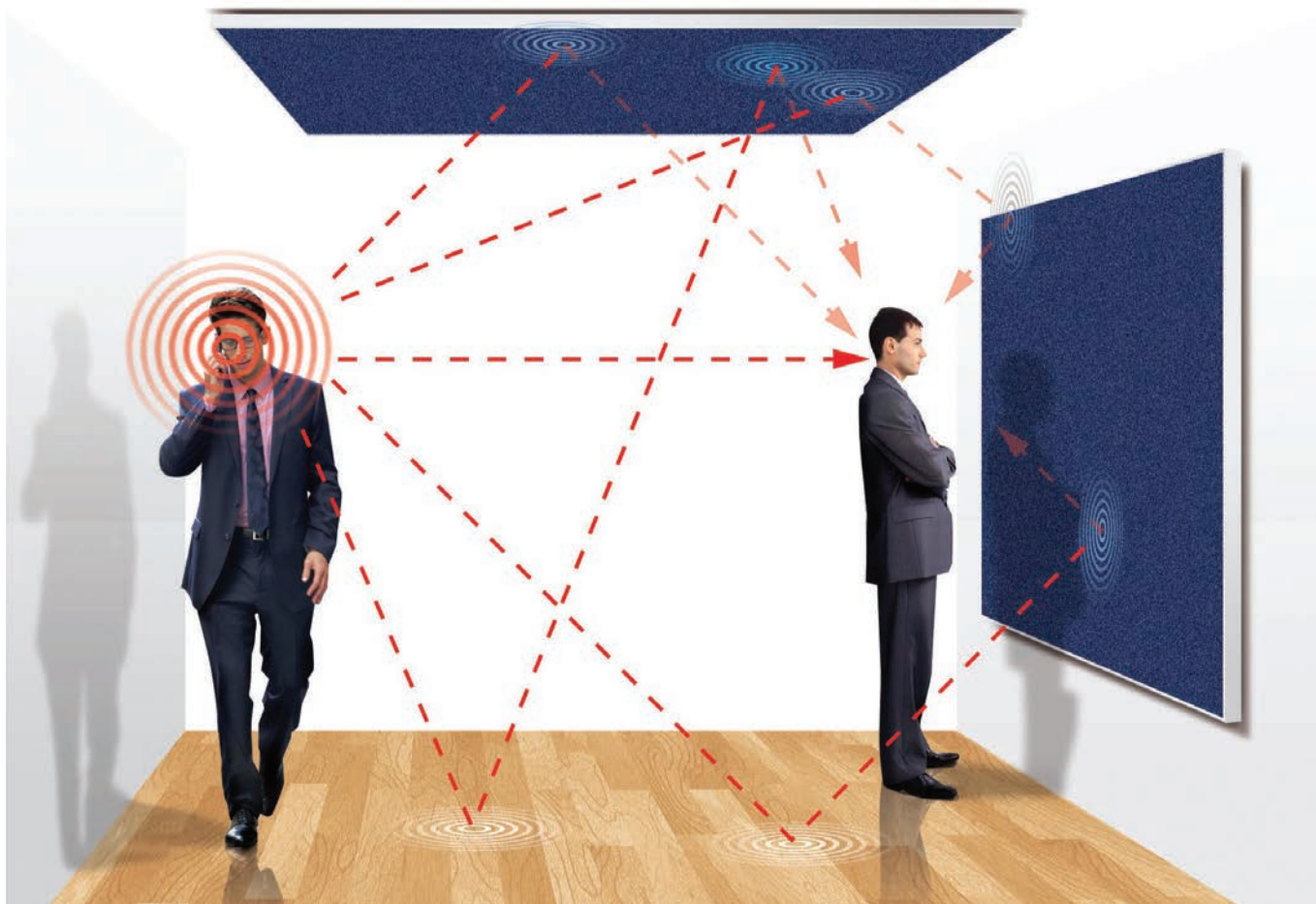


FIRST CONTACT

Door handles are often the visitor's first physical contact with a building, providing an instantaneous first impression of the environment

Successful soundproofing

Designing the ideal workplace acoustics is a complex challenge, but getting the right balance of aesthetics and effective soundproofing is crucial for business success, as Hush Acoustics' Robert Crampton explains



As noise levels increase, so do levels of discontent, distraction and stress

Soundproofing is often overlooked when it comes to designing the workplace. Poor acoustics leads to increased noise levels and distractions, resulting in an unhappy, stressed workforce.

Aesthetics and functionality are the primary focus when designing office space, particularly in modern city offices where minimalist interiors and exposed brickwork are the norm. This style looks great and brings a certain level of chic and prestige to a brand, but when employees move in and team numbers grow, so too do the noise levels. As noise levels increase, so do levels of discontent, distraction, unrest and stress.

Design just for the eyes?

The Center for the Built Environment at the University of Berkeley in California conducted a survey of people who work in an office environment, and found that around 50 per cent of workers in open plan office environments think acoustics interfere with their productivity levels and their ability to get their work done.

The major problems proved to be ambient noise from co-workers talking on telephones, people overhearing private conversations, and the muffled sound of people talking in surrounding offices. How

many times have you thought to yourself: “I can’t hear myself think!” With current design trends for commercial interiors focusing on open plan offices and with an increasing need for collaboration between employees, it is clear there needs to be a careful balance of quiet and reasonably noisy spaces at work.

The Guardian also published a report which affirmed the findings of the Center for the Built Environment study. Acoustics expert and author of ‘Sound Business’ Julian Treasure explained that it’s just as important for a building to perform acoustically as it is visually. “We experience every space in five senses so it’s strange that architects design just for the eyes,” he said. “Sound in a space affects us profoundly. It changes our heart rate, breathing, hormone secretion, brain waves, it affects our emotions and our cognition.”

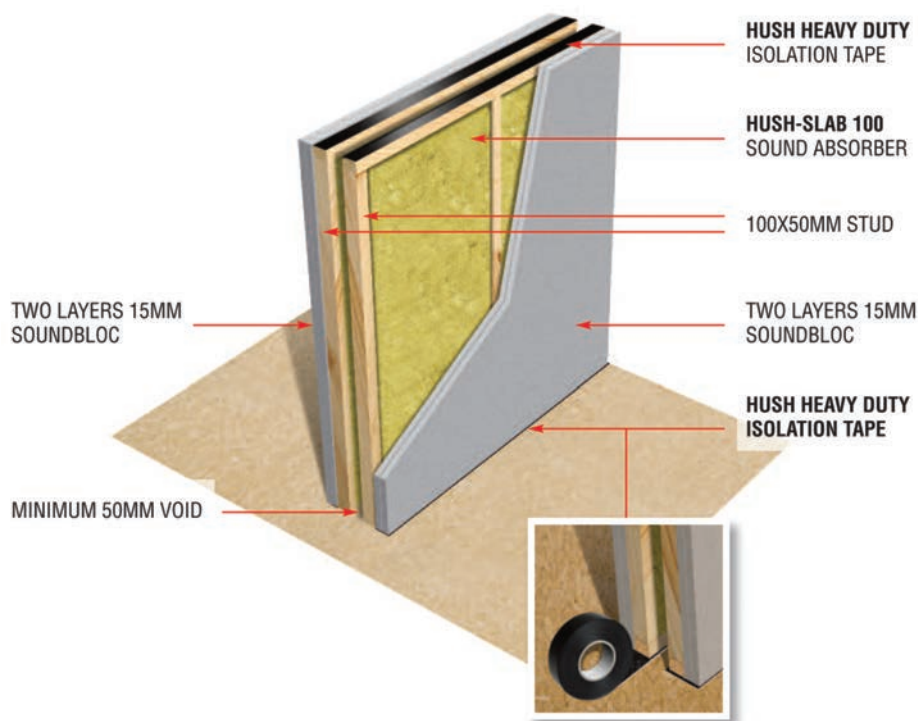
Studies have shown that once distracted, productivity drops, and it can take as long as 20 minutes for an employee to regain concentration on complex tasks. They have also revealed that an employee was much more likely to make a mistake in their work.

Improving productivity & concentration

Integrating better acoustical solutions into workplace environments should be more of a focus going forward, whether for a new build, refurbishment or change-of-use office development. It is essential that architects, developers and other professionals consider soundproofing in the early design stages of a project. This increases the effectiveness of the soundproofing and reduces any further costs down the line where remedial work is needed.

The most effective way to reduce reverberation, airborne and (to an extent) impact noise levels within the workplace is to use high quality acoustic products in the right application. It is a good idea to involve an acoustic technician to provide guidance here, as reverberation rates and times are not something the average employer will be familiar with. All soundproofing products used should comply with UK Building Regulations Approved Document E (England & Wales), Section 5 of the Scottish Building Standards (Scotland) and Approved Part G (Northern Ireland). These regulations set out important criteria for sound insulation performance for all types of commercial buildings.

There are acoustic products and systems out there that offer significant soundproofing capabilities for workplaces of all types.



For new build office developments, a double timber stud wall system is an effective way of reducing airborne noise sources. The stud frames in the wall are insulated using a sound absorber and then layered with Soundbloc plasterboard. This combination drastically reduces airborne noise levels between offices and other internal spaces within commercial buildings and complies with Building Regulations.

For office space that has already been designed in a style that meets an employer’s requirements a sound absorber is an effective way to reduce ambient noise and reverberation. These acoustic panels have a Class A absorption rating and require no building work to be carried out. A sound technician simply works out how many panels are needed and the best position for them, and they are then fitted to either the wall or ceiling in the workplace.

A well-designed workspace should offer stunning aesthetics but also fully take acoustics into consideration. Above all, it should be comfortable for employees to work in where collaboration is commonplace but isn’t distracting for other co-workers. Happy workforces make for constructive workforces, which ultimately benefits a company’s business.

Robert Crampton is managing director of Hush Acoustics

PICTURED
HD1054 double stud wall build-up

It is essential that architects consider soundproofing in the early design stages



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Boon Edam installed at 1 Fitzroy Place



Boon Edam, global entry experts, installed five of its Swinglane 900 security lanes to The Estee Lauder Companies headquarters located at 1 Fitzroy Place. A wide Swinglane was also installed for designated disabled access. Finished in a powder coating, the security lanes feature a stainless-steel card reader for access control and status indicator windows at either end for ease of use. They achieve a high flow rate of up to 30 people per minute in one direction. The Swinglane 900's design allows for bespoke customisations when a unique appearance is required.

www.boonedam.co.uk

Architects Datafile website



The Architects Datafile (ADF) website is an online provider of past and present products and news items for the architect or specifier. architectsdatafile.co.uk is a one-stop source for all the latest press releases providing any visitor with access to information about products and services that they may require. From the website, you can find links to digital alerts to keep you as informed as possible.

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Gerflor 'create' positive workplace



Seymour Distribution is part of the Frontline Group and is the largest distributor of UK magazines internationally. Their new offices above Smithfield Market in London mirrors their distinct approach to business ethos and diversity. In specifying the all-important floor-

ing aspect of the project Blue Jelly would select some 113m² of Creation 70 LVT flooring from international flooring specialists Gerflor. This amazing range won the 2017 CFJ/CFA Product of the year and their Creation 70 product scooped the coveted Red Dot Design award last year, which is akin to receiving a 'Design Oscar'.

01926 622600 www.gerflor.co.uk

Saracen completes work on heritage site

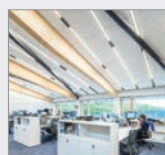


A leading workplace consultant, Saracen Interiors has completed a 6000sq ft fast-track, repair and refurbishment project for global educational charity, the English Speaking Union (ESU) at its prestigious headquarters, just off Berkeley

Square in Mayfair. Work was undertaken on the ground floor and in the basement library to make good the damage caused by a leak. Painstaking care and attention was taken by the team to ensure that all refurbishments met the high standards and quality of the current fitting of this high design, Grade 2 listed building.

www.saraceninteriors.com

Knauf provide world class acoustic design



The R&A worldwide golf governing body based at St Andrews, has a purpose-built equipment testing centre, Allan Robertson House. The new building utilises the latest technology, is energy efficient, maximises the use of natural daylight and uses sustainable materials. Heradesign® and Thermoacoustic® ceilings from Knauf AMF are fitted

throughout to provide essential sound attenuation, add aesthetic appeal and meet environmental requirements. Heradesign® is ideal for the test centre because it offers outstanding sound absorption, excellent impact resistance and a high fire safety rating.

0191 5188600 www.amfceilings.co.uk

Bloc flooring makes a statement



Polyflor commercial vinyl flooring from the Bloc collection was recently chosen to add a splash of colour to Rivington Street Studio architectural practice in London. The Soft Moss shade from the Bloc range adds earthiness and warmth to the otherwise minimalistic

interior. Bloc PUR allows customers to create a tonal, complementary or harmonious interior design scheme through the availability of 16 enticing colours. Featuring a single solid colour with a textured matt emboss, Bloc has a 0.7mm fully pigmented homogenous PVC wear layer of pure colour and a polyurethane reinforcement.

0161 767 1111 www.polyflor.com

Luceco lights Kendal Rugby Union Football Club – Mintbridge



Luceco has recently supplied LED luminaires for an £11M sports facility, the new home for Kendal Rugby Union Football Club (KRUFCL). The brand-new facility benefits from two large hospitality areas and a viewing balcony overseeing two pitches, one grass and one all-weather surface, a restaurant, physio practice and a Community Gymnasium, Esteem. LED 600 x 600 square LuxPanels were installed in offices and consulting rooms with IP65 rated Circular LuxPanels used in changing rooms, shower facilities and WCs. LuxPanel requires no maintenance over its lifetime with over 50,000 hours of operational life as does the IP65 Climate LED luminaire used in kitchens and servery, cellar and various storage areas. Platinum downlighters were installed in the main entrance area, lounge bar, corridors throughout the clubhouse, gymnasium, and shop. Platinum features easy fit positive locating swing out tabs and running cost savings of up to 80 per cent when compared to traditional luminaires. Versatile IP65 rated LED Atlas luminaires were used on stairwells also with over 50,000 hours of maintenance free operation. For more information contact Luceco.

info@luceco.com

The silence of international design



Setter Architects have designed stunning new offices for several international companies, including Palo Alto Networks. The link between these projects is the way their interiors all benefit from high performance acoustic ceilings manufactured by Troldekt in Denmark. Palo Alto Networks is a company involved in developing cyber defence solutions. Located on the 24th floor of a complex of multi-storey office towers in a colourful and historical part of Tel Aviv, the design inspiration is the introduction of eclectic low-tech external elements to the interior. These include steel window profiles and garage doors, exposed bricks, old textured glass to divide public spaces and historic artefacts. Palo Alto benefits from stunning aesthetics and controlled environments which absorb the sounds and reverberations from hard surfaces and the natural echoes. The superior acoustic performance of the ceilings is combined with different forms of lighting, air-conditioning and amplifiers. Apart from high sound absorption, other benefits include durability and natural breathability coupled with low cost performance and sustainability as documented by Cradle to Cradle certification at silver level.

www.troldekt.co.uk

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