

INSIGHT

When you are your client.

JSA's new office...designed with WELLness in mind

By Sandra Hodge, IIDA

When JSA's architects and designers began to plan a move to a new office space, we became both designer and client simultaneously. The planning process was fun, but oh my, such a challenge! Every employee had their own vision of how the space should look and feel. It should be innovative, cutting edge, an architectural masterpiece. It should be a space that promotes a healthy, collaborative, and inspiring office environment. It should allow everyone to work efficiently. It should be universally designed with sustainable, WELL building standards at the forefront. A formidable list, but an exciting design challenge! At JSA, we want to walk the talk and be our own best client!

Design has evolved

Corporate office design has evolved with the times. In the 1980s, private office walls came down and cubicles became the standard. Today, cubicles have gone away, panels have been lowered, and in some offices, panels have disappeared entirely. JSA opted for low panels to provide some acoustic and seated privacy as well as personal pin-up space. The panels include channels that distribute electric and data in an organized fashion. Motor-

ized adjustable height workstations give us the option to sit or stand throughout the day. Our goal was to keep employees happy, healthy and more productive!

Cheers for daylight!

Daylight pours through the wide windows in our new south-facing corner space. Conference and support spaces are in the core, with perimeter window views and daylight for employee workstations. Low panels around the perimeter work spaces preserve outdoor sightlines to a serene pond and a wetland area surrounded by tall, leafy green trees. JSA

incorporates biophilic design wherever possible in senior living and healthcare projects, and we wanted nature in our own work space as well. Biophilic design inserts nature into the built environment and connects people to the outdoors. Natural light, vegetation and nature views all help to provide a positive work environment. We selected indoor plants to aid in keeping the air clean, providing year-round greenery on the interior.



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Hello? What did you say?

Acoustics were a big concern in this open space. In response, we incorporated carpet and low fabric panels to provide acoustic insulation on and near the floor, a perimeter band of acoustic ceiling tile above the workstations and floating acoustic clouds below the center open ceiling. With increased visibility in the open office space, employees have become more aware of their voice level and subconsciously lower their voices. We also provided a telephone room for personal phone calls.

We talk and talk and talk...

Collaboration is essential in our business. A collaborative gathering space runs through the spine of our office and features a sculptural, perforated metal pin-up wall adjacent to soft seating and a multi-height community table. The gathering place provides staff with a comfortable, open space to escape their desks for quick informal meetings or just

some relaxing down time. It has become a popular spot for pin-up design reviews, office meetings and happy hour!

Make it green

Our JSA sustainability committee provided oversight on the entire process. Recycling bins are prevalent throughout the office. In the kitchen, we use a compost container for coffee grounds and food scraps, which is emptied into the JSA compost bin located on the edge of the woods behind the office.

WELL and sustainability standards were a requirement for us when selecting interior finish materials. We selected flooring materials, both carpet and hard surface, with high recycled content and low VOC adhesives. We chose “no VOC” paints for the walls and hard ceilings. Quality LED lighting with dimming capabilities and occupancy sensors reduce our overall energy consumption throughout the office.



Keep it healthy

After moving into our new office filled with WELL and sustainable components, we are now working to maintain and use it in a “WELL” way. This includes a regular cleaning protocol with non-toxic cleaning products, filtered hot and cold drinking water, fresh fruit for snacking and opportunities for exercise and stretching throughout the work day. We encourage staff suggestions for incorporating wellness into the workday. One suggestion for the summer months is to provide bicycles for employees to ride at lunch or to local meetings. As we occupy our new space, the way we will use it will evolve too. Our ultimate goal is to have an office that positively impacts and inspires us in our daily work and makes coming to work an enjoyable experience!

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Sandra Hodge, IIDA

Sandra Hodge, IIDA is a principal at JSA Inc. and leads the Interior Design department in Portsmouth NH. Sandra knows how to transform institutional settings into efficient and inspiring workplaces. Her teams expertise in efficient planning, lighting, and finish selections result in designs that stand the test of time while remaining mindful of the target budgets.

We would love to work with you!

Questions? Get in touch:
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