

Case Study



Watson Goepel LLP

Watson Goepel LLP is an accomplished Canadian law firm with 30 lawyers practicing in all areas of law. Located in downtown Vancouver, the firm is situated in a building designed in 1965 by Canadian architect Arthur Erikson. It embodies the mid-century sentiment of this master of modern architecture. When it came to furnishing the space, the design team from Aliko Gladwin and Associates along with Watson Goepel's management team chose furniture that would highlight the texture and geometry of the space while maintaining a timeless, modern quality.

Products:

Flexible furniture for the entire office including open, closed and collaborative areas

The Challenge: Moving Forward While Respecting its Roots

Watson Goepel's success is founded on a client-centric approach that provides top class legal services to each of its clients regardless of size. When it came time to renew their lease, the firm decided to stay true to their roots and remain in the historic building they had already made home, with some significant adjustments. This iconic building, located in downtown Vancouver, Canada, was designed in 1965 by the Canadian architect and modern master, Arthur Erikson. An embodiment of Erickson's mid-century modern sentiment and style, it also sets the stage for an environment that inspires its occupants.

The Solution: Integrating Furniture into the Structure of a Space

Janine Kroser, Chief Operating Officer at Watson Goepel adds, "We have always been an accessible law firm, and we wanted to reflect that in the architecture and planning of the space." The team elected to enhance and express the existing coffered ceilings that are integral to the base ceiling design. LED lighting was installed along with a fresh



new white for the concrete beam structure. When it came to furnishing the space, the design and planning team chose furniture that highlighted its texture and geometry. Lori Billson, Senior Designer at Alik Gladwin and Associates, expands, “The clean, angular lines of the furniture with its attention to detail and European sensibility, complement the angles of the space.” A modern, yet classic palette of soft greys, light finishes, white washed hardwood flooring and mid-century modern textiles set the tone for comfort and simplicity in the space that will stand the test of time. Another significant change in Goepel’s new design was to allot more space to common areas to enhance collaboration and a variety of meeting spaces to support both confidential client meetings and internal work within teams. Specifically, the new office design features a significantly larger lunch room. A combination of bar-height seating, lounge seating and small lunch tables support a variety of activities beyond just eating. The varied selection of seating and surfaces supports socialization and collaboration. The lunch room now acts as a “third place” where people can meet, regroup, relax or refuel in an informal and comfortable way.

The Results: The Architecture of Happiness

Kroser is careful to point out where they chose not to veer too far away from their original layout. She explains, “We have kept our private offices, as privacy and heads-down focus work still needs to be supported. There were, however, some major difference in how that was articulated in our new space. We consciously moved away from the traditional mahogany-filled private spaces to a brighter, lighter, selection of neutral finishes.” Beyond the private offices, panel heights were lowered and glass panels added to the open plan workstations to allow light and air to circulate. Storage is varied and plentiful to support the significant paper management requirements. Height adjustable desks were provided to those who requested them, further supporting mobility and wellbeing in the office. Billson sums up, “Architecture and design shape how we behave... what we do and how we feel. It’s straightforward, beauty makes you feel good.” In the newly designed Watson Goepel office, feeling good is now designed into the space, to the benefit of both its employees and clients who experience it.



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Lori Billson, Senior Designer
Alik Gladwin and Associates

