

5 Ways to Build Office Space for Today's Dynamic Way of Working

When complete, Franklin Partners' new seven-story office development at 100 Ottawa will cut a very different silhouette in the Grand Rapids skyline.

As proposed, the 90,000-square-foot project will come wrapped in a gleaming glass facade—a major break from the predominant aesthetics of the many historic renovation projects in the city's downtown landscape.

Part of the much-talked-about \$140-million Studio Park development south of Van Andel Arena, 100 Ottawa won't just be a striking new addition to the city. The project also signals the beginning of a new generation of urban infrastructure for Grand Rapids—with a design, location, branding and tenant experience that will raise the bar very high.



100 Ottawa SW | Grand Rapids, MI

Developer: Franklin Partners

Architect: Wright Heerema Architects

Building Data: 90,000-square-foot Class A office space in the core of downtown Grand Rapids, the 7th-fastest growing economy in the country. Features flexible floor plan, elevated amenity package, outdoor deck, covered parking, access to major thoroughfares, spectacular signage/branding opportunities visible to 100,000 cars daily. For info: franklinpartners.net

As previously noted in *MiBiz*, Franklin Partners principal Don Shoemaker said the firm is targeting corporate tenants that would occupy 30,000 square feet or more of the amenity-heavy space.

To that end, Franklin Partners hired Chicago-based **Wright Heerema Architects**, a 22-year-old architecture and design firm that works extensively with large corporate tenants and brings a deep understanding of where workspace utilization is heading. Working in close partnership, the firms identified a handful of guiding principles that will set a benchmark for the quality and function of new work environments in the West Michigan market.

Bringing the Outside In: Given that the 100 Ottawa site has virtually no contiguous outdoor space at street level, one of the early directives was to get creative in designing ample outdoor access. The benefits of green space and natural light to productivity and workplace satisfaction are well documented, so the building's entire design reflects a vibrant feeling, utilizing massive glass panels for the shell and featuring an expansive rooftop patio that will be accessible to all tenants. The days of office buildings that are "antiseptic, sealed-up boxes that don't emit a lot of natural daylight," are coming to an end, architect Roger Heerema said. Instead, companies want buildings like 100 Ottawa that are "more open, literally transparent and allow easy access to the outdoors."

Designing for "Multiple Postures": According to Scott Delano, design director for Wright Heerema Architects, open-office concepts popularized over the last decade in opposition to closed-office formats were often a result of smaller design budgets. Open concepts have merit, but when you take away an office, you need to make sure you're giving back appropriate spaces for other types of work that would have happened in the office.

"So, we're looking at richer workspaces that have the ability to work in what we call multiple postures," Delano said. "So a place to stand to work, to sit to work, [as well as] lounge-type settings for working with one, two or ten other people. Creating spaces that easily flow."

Me Space vs. We Space: In general, the square footage



allotted to each employee in an office has shrunk. Large companies like LinkedIn and Google typically set their plans based on a 200-square-foot per employee rule. Not everyone gets a 200-square-foot office, of course, so the challenge becomes breaking up space based on how individuals, teams and the organization operates. There is usually a sweet spot between 120 and 200 square feet for companies, Delano said. Get below 120 and normal activities like small-group collaborations become disruptive.

Delano said the firm often starts the design process with series of "day in the life" conversations with companies about what their employee work flow is like. How often are they in group meetings? How often do they do independent work? How often do they need interaction? How often do they need focus? It's these questions that really determine what's appropriate to the culture and the function of the office and the participants in it, he said.

The Tour Starts at the Curb: Attraction and retention are buzz words the business community has universally internalized as problems. More than ever, the office and its amenities have assumed a pivotal position on the attraction and retention fronts.

"We talk a lot about when we design [buildings] about the tour as you're trying to lease a building, what is that experience? How will people walk through the building, what do they say, what do they see first? How does that whole experience end?" Heerema said. "And so, having a fitness center on the first floor and a roof deck on the top floor, those become very important tour touch points, other than just

walking in and saying, 'Oh, this is a nice lobby.'"

Taking Cues from Hospitality & Place: Playing on the feeling one might derive from an experience staying at a design-centric hotel, the materials for the build-out leverage a lot of the richness found in hospitality environments while also being mindful that this is Grand Rapids, not Las Vegas. Hospitality design often drives hard to create a certain atmosphere—what Millennials might call a "vibe." By applying the same level of considered detail, but with workplace satisfaction and productivity as a framework, the firm is focusing on how each material will come together to create an attractive environment.

"We're really concentrating on that," Delano said. "We're very excited about those things and what that means to your experience."

Leasing info: Colliers International
Kristen D. Moore, Associate
Kristen.Moore@colliers.com | 616-242-5160
Duke Suwyn, SIOR, CCIM
CEO Investment Brokerage
duke.suwyn@colliers.com | 616-988-5815

Owned and Managed By: Franklin Partners
Julie Maue, Marketing Director
jmaue@franklinpartners.net | 616-915-8910