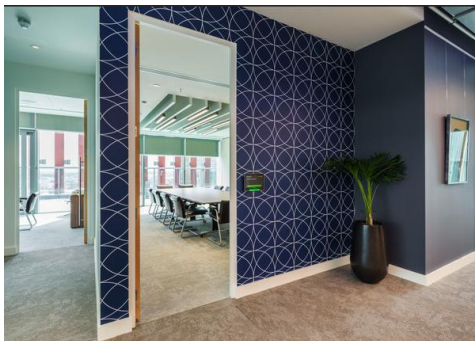


Overbury Womble Bond Dickinson case study



Two become one amazing place to work

Womble Bond Dickson (WBD) came to Overbury with two tired, old offices; their teams had become siloed and distant. The aim of a new workspace was to draw people together – and Newcastle’s iconic ‘Spark’ was just the place to do it.



The company’s curvy logo is reflected everywhere, from wallpaper to frosted glass

Work that space

WBD took over four floors of new office, three of which shared much the same floor plan: everyday working space for staff.

The fourth floor was dedicated to client meetings and events, and versatility was key. The lobby doubled up as a guest lounge, the desk moonlit as a drinks bar and the entrance area adjoined meeting suites that opened out to allow mingling. Not an inch of waste.

To help make this happen were our design partners WK Space, project managers Seven Partnerships and quantity surveyors 3 Sphere.



We installed wooden slats by hand to get the curve precisely right

Ahead of the curve

WBD's curvy logo featured throughout: walls, lights, seats, you name it. While designing this was one thing, executing it was something else. We boiled it back to construction basics – a seven-point circle, a length of string, a piece of plywood – because the simplest solutions can reap the best results. We then measured and plotted the curves countless times to get the placement just right. Alignment had to be perfect.



Soft partitions work to separate different spaces and design elements

Visual interest at every turn

Curved walls work threefold – to form breakout areas, to serve as screens and to encourage people to turn in different directions and avoid clustering in any one space.

The idea is you can walk the entire floor with a mug of coffee in your hand (no doors to negotiate) without being able to see all the way through. Instead, there's visual interest, privacy and flexibility. It feels open, but broken up. Not like a gaping call centre.

Around the tea point, we installed faceted glass so that, no matter where you sit, you can look across and see a space that feels different. We want people to connect with and use all the assorted spaces.



Colours and curves make meeting rooms more inviting

Precise meeting points

When it came to fitting meeting rooms, coordination was critical, as ceiling services such as AV and lighting had to work with every possible table-seating plan below. We drafted five or six layouts – boardroom, workshop, interview, training and so on – to cover all permutations.



No tiles were harmed in the making of these showers

Exercise in discretion

Although the building had showers by the bike racks in the basement, WBD wanted locker rooms of their own. We installed these near the entrance, well away from client spaces, so that staff could discreetly come and go wearing their cycling Lycra or sweaty joggers. Pipework was a challenge, as access tends to be untidy, so we rerouted it altogether to keep the wall tiles intact.

While working on WBD's refit, we supported their chosen charity by offering up our time. Every week, we'd take two or three tradesmen off site to work at The People's Kitchen – a local foodbank that we helped with plastering, plumbing, whatever they needed. Everyone got behind this and felt double the reward.