





class and a half

When it comes to ‘new ways of working’, we’re where the concept started. Bournville, the Cadbury Brothers’ model ‘Factory in a Garden’, was effectively the place where the modern working environment was born.

Groundbreaking social reformers, the Victorian Cadburys wrote the blueprint that today’s workplace is built on. Playing fields, swimming pools, pensions, the 5½-day week, staff changing rooms...the list of innovations is almost endless. That’s not even mentioning Bournville Village, a model community of good quality housing in a garden setting. Social and health reformers, workplace pioneers – the Cadbury legacy cannot be underestimated.

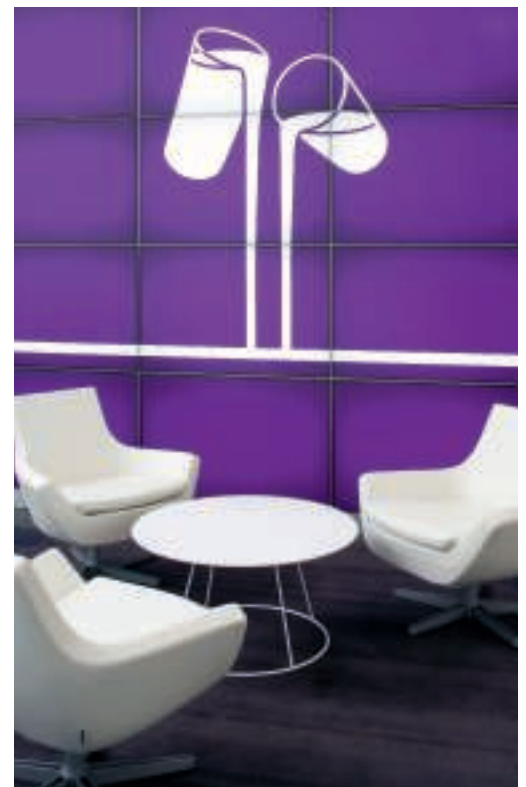
So it’s agreeably appropriate for us to visit the impressive Bournville Place – perhaps just the latest in a long history of Cadbury’s investment in its staff and its business. And it’s▶▶▶▶▶

case study

►►► even more agreeable that the splendid new offices we've come to see are housed in what was originally in the 1920's a revolutionary, socially aware Cadbury introduction – the staff dining block.

'Interaction is deliverable,' says Karen Mills, who project managed Cadbury's move into Bournville Place. 'When you see people smile, that's the measure of success of a building like this. From the beginning there was a big emphasis on communication. We wanted to make sure that technology wasn't killing conversation. Encouraging communication depends on open access – a social chat that evolves into a business conversation...it's something that you can't measure, but it's a vital part of a successful business. For Cadbury it was particularly important because Bournville Place was, in part, addressing some cultural issues. Most of the staff working here had previously been housed in two separate buildings – Bournville Place created a new culture and brought people together. The Cadbury culture is a culture of excellence, with a number of strong undercurrents such as family, heritage, pride and brand all interwoven together. The new office is a physical embodiment of these strands.'

'The new offices occupy what was once the dining block, originally built in the 1920's, with the façade retained. The shell and core was completed in 2006, with my job being to deliver both the look and feel of the building. In essence that meant balancing the design with what the



Cadbury business stands for. There's so much history to the Cadbury name – it's one big massive family: many of the staff's mothers and fathers worked for the company. So, in many ways, the strategy was based both on good contemporary practice in terms of providing an excellent working environment, but also to create a spiritual home for Cadbury.

'It's about visibility and connectivity. The main design concept is that the space should be as united as possible,' explains Jennifer Wood of architects and designers MoreySmith. 'These are big floorplates, so it would have been easy to divide it up – but we wanted unity. All the floors are shaped around the two atria, which not only provide daylight, but also are a visual and physical link for everyone.'

'We looked at various ideas to explore how we could make best use of the main atrium's triple height space, and how to define the reception and café areas. In the end we designed a central spine which forms reception desk and branding on one side with the café counter and servery on the other. They're designed to work together – it's not a fortress but has appropriately light touch security. The reception area is designed to be spacious – it gives visitors time to take in and absorb where they are; and allows enough space for strong branding without it being 'in your face'. The use of rugs and colourful soft seating softens the space, and promotes a welcoming feel. It's also worth noting that>>>>





▶▶▶▶ because the main meeting rooms are located on the lower ground floor up to 130 people could be here waiting for various events – so there’s plenty of room for milling around!’

As for the working environment, Jennifer is keen to point out that the office embodies a new work culture for the company. ‘The new work style at Bournville Place has been a progressive move for Cadbury. It’s a highly flexible layout designed to support change – as teams form, merge or develop the workplace can adapt quickly and smoothly. Everyone’s together in their teams, it’s very democratic, there are no cellular offices.’

‘It’s totally egalitarian,’ confirms Karen. ‘We spent a lot of time and effort making sure the workstations were right to support the new way of working. The aim was to have a clear desk policy, yet simultaneously being sensitive to commercial realities. At the same time we wanted to allow staff to have somewhere to put their personal items – the 5 o’clock sweep and stash, if you like!’

‘It was a lengthy tender process before we specified Vitra’s Ad One workstations,’ agrees Jennifer. ‘We carried out lots of testing involving substantial mock-ups. There was a good deal of development; for example in the special screens and the cable management, and also the locking desktop box to support the clear desk policy. The box works well – it’s accessible storage and it maximises workspace space. For team

storage we used KI’s 700 Series, providing three rows of A4 filing, but with some extra detailing such as the precise height match with the desk screens, and a drawer pull that matches Vitra’s pedestal. As for the task chairs, after extensive testing and on site trials, it was clear that everybody loved the Haworth Zody chair. What we wanted from all the suppliers was a high specification and really good value, and we tested and researched to ensure Cadbury got very high levels of quality. The InterfaceFLOR carpet was chosen, for example, after an extreme testing process that involved six pots of coffee being poured on the tiles which were then left in the sun! It was also critical that top up and subsequent orders would be regarded by the suppliers as standard, not special products. This is an office of the future in every way.’

‘The building is themed by floor. The lower ground floor, which houses the meeting rooms and dining facilities is all about heritage – with many marketing images from the past showing where we come from and what Cadbury represents. The ground floor has a milk theme, complete with ‘glass and a half’ manifestations and milk drop graphics. The first floor has a cocoa theme, with cocoa bean manifestations, oranges and browns in the colour scheme, images from Ghana and so on. Finally, the second floor is about Cadbury as a business, showing images of chocolate manufacturing processes. Meeting

rooms here have names like ‘The Kibbling Room’ – after a chocolate making process.’

This is an impressive project on every level. With a strong focus on collaborative workstyles, Bournville Place provides fresh impetus to the Cadbury brand and culture. Designed for efficiency and effectiveness, the sleek contemporary styling adds value, underpinning the modern ethos of a company that’s at ease with its heritage while being focused on its ambitions. Simultaneously both the spiritual home and the future of the workplace, perhaps? ●

essential ingredients

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| Client: | • Cadbury |
| Interior Design: | • MoreySmith 020 7089 1470 |
| Systems Furniture: | • Vitra 020 7608 6200 |
| Storage: | • KI 020 7404 7441 |
| Task Seating: | • Haworth 020 7324 1360 |
| Carpet: | • InterfaceFLOR 01274 690690 |
| Loose Furniture: | • Coexistence, Inform, Vitra, SCP, Kusch |
| Lighting: | • Artemide, Modular Lighting, Iberian Lighting |