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'Management also took the decision to work within the teams here – and we are talking about CEO level here. The idea was to connect with their teams, to be very open, very visible. They have gone from having many manager's offices to having one – which is the global CEO's, who sits on the global board and therefore requires that privacy. And even that is glazed and partly open plan'

There are 'bus stops' on each floor, which not only act as utility points and informal meeting areas, they also have the ability to hub people together through communication with the global Synovate network thanks to interactive screens. Here we again see the use of bold colours, as we do in the high quality tea and coffee points which sit at either end of the central core.

Another particularly nice element to the environment is provided by the innovative formal meeting spaces provided throughout. Not only do we find raised building block squares as private meeting pods – complete with of-the-minute Paul Smith stripe decoration – positioned in the centre of the open plan floorplates, but also a different approach to meeting suites to each end of the building. 'We've added different types of meeting rooms, of different sizes,' Tim reveals. 'We came out with a whole graphic language throughout – some of which is

slightly tongue-in-cheek and very in your face.'

These graphics include simple yet effective typeface instructions as to the number of people each room holds – and works brilliantly. 'We've used a glass partitioning system for the suite, and it works really well, and have AV and video conferencing in place throughout,' Tim adds. 'We've maximised the number of meeting spaces to make up for the loss of cellular offices.'

Synovate doesn't have a boardroom per se at Minerva House, although the king of all meeting rooms sits to the far end of the second floor, and features a truly gigantic table, a matching plasma screen, some really nice domestic styling (suede wall, curtaining) and a breathtaking view across the river.

Although Three Wise Monkeys originally discovered a working space that had previously been home to a major bank, and found the overall standard of the fit-out to be reasonably good, they did also manage to provide more than at first meets the eye. 'We got up to 17% extra light by redesigning the column cladding in here when the old air conditioning system came out,' Tim reveals. 'That really has impacted on the space with all the windows in here. With the open sightlines here, despite the fact that it is quite high density in here, I don't think it really feels like it.'

The open plan format and stylisation of the second floor is replicated on the first floor, where we also find the Viewing Room – a fantastic research facility that features a two-way mirror and viewing gallery for Synovate to conduct focus groups. The hi-tech facility is even linked to Synovate's major offices in Chicago and Hong Kong.

Returning downstairs, we are taken through to a wonderful courtyard space, where Synovate can (and we're sure does) demonstrate its social skills and hosting abilities, and further open plan working space, which, due to the lack of natural light enjoyed on the higher floors and a low ceiling level, is smartly uplit to create an equally light and ambient working environment.

Moving further through the space we walk into yet another hidden gem in the shape of a large staff breakout area and canteen area, complete with a company timeline graphic wall feature and a chill out space that is more cool Clerkenwell nightclub than Borough office. This sums up Three Wise Monkeys approach, they use their wealth of design experiences in different markets so new ideas, style and ultimately ways of working are introduced. And that brings us full circle in more ways than one. The thing about this part of London is you should never really be surprised by what is around the next corner. Surprised, no. Impressed, most definitely ●

essential ingredients

Client:	• Synovate
Design & Planning:	• Three Wise Monkeys 020 7801 0605
Systems Furniture:	• Task Systems 020 7729 5088
Task Seating:	• Connection 020 7253 9877
Occasional Furniture:	• Orangebox 020 7837 9922 • Vitra 020 7608 6200 • Steelcase 020 7421 9000
Lighting:	• Light Years 01707 663360