



a cunning plan



▶▶▶▶resulting in a loss of the character of a space which had high ceilings and fantastic tall windows.

The brief was to create flexible, stylish, offices with large client facing areas. DP9 provides planning consultancy services for a

huge range of clients, from high end developers and institutions to small scale end users. The consultancy also works with high profile professionals, and architects, therefore the space needed to feel designed but not overly so – it needed to quietly

impress without appearing lavish or unnecessarily expensive.

DP9 engaged de Metz Forbes Knight Architects to create a concept design for the space which would unlock its potential and to design all the client facing areas. The Interiors Group was engaged on a negotiated basis as part Design & Build contractors responsible for working with dMFK on the design and construction of the overall scheme

Hugh Morgan, Partner of DP9 Planning Consultant reveals more. ‘The critical issue for us was getting into Pall Mall in an extremely tight time scale, without making a major impact on our business. The Interiors Group were recommended to us by our commercial agents and had a good track record. We felt we were able to trust them as the scheme developed over time and we had a really good working relationship. They planned fantastic space for the offices which has had a positive effect on the staff. Interiors Group were given very limited time and we did make changes but it all worked very well.’

The Interiors Group created a generous and impressive reception area utilised for functions as well as daily use. The space is ▶▶▶▶▶▶



case study



►►now transformed into a lively, well lit modern office and the oppressive feeling created by the mezzanine has been removed – the existing mezzanine had a ceiling height of 2.1m in some areas. This was achieved by removing sections of the mezzanine that were located adjacent to windows and under a rooflight which had previously been concealed, to create an impressive double-height space. This has also created balconies, a sense of scale and a variety of areas – some high, some low – which have been adapted for a wide range of uses.

As a refurbishment, the design is a careful combination of the needs of the client with the constraints of the base building. It combines established and new technologies with materials in innovative ways, acknowledging the 1930's feel of the building whilst still feeling fresh and contemporary. This has largely been achieved by combining modern finishes and construction methods with established traditional ones. For example, the reception area nods to 1930's modernism in its use of unfilled travertine slab on the floors, but this is contrasted with a new Armourcast resin based concrete effect to the stair wall, while marble chips bound in epoxy resin in the meeting rooms create a unique floor finish. We also spot an Avonite reception desk, a sprayed vermiculite ceiling, and felt panel detailing with additional felt artwork, by Sophie Smallhorn, fixed to the resin concrete effect wall.

The internal office spaces are largely a combination of open plan double and single height, with three private offices provided for partners requiring a more conventional office environment. Daylight is brought into the centre of the plan through the rooflights. Single height spaces house storage, library, breakout spaces and WCs. Strong visual connections are created between balconies and lower level offices, with all 55 core staff being located on the lower level in one continuous space in order to encourage communication and cohesion. Also, expansion areas are provided on the mezzanine.

Once The Interiors Group had completed the designs and received landlord approval, it left only 12 weeks to complete the 14,000 sq ft fit-out, including the mechanical removal of the 50 year old concrete mezzanine whilst retaining the remaining 3,500 sq ft. The building was occupied on all upper floors and with the RAC Club next door and local residencies, it meant that this potentially noisy and ►►►►►►►►





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The removal of the area of concrete was carried out in a controlled environment using diamond saws and Kubota concrete crusher whilst debris was removed in the early hours of each morning. To ensure no mistakes or accidents The Interiors Group had the Structural Engineer and their Health & Safety consultants visiting up to three times a week. Furthermore, we are told that there were no record drawings for the slab and column details.

Materials were chosen for their durability and quality throughout the Pall Mall scheme. The main floor of the reception utilises unfilled travertine slab, which will age well and develop patina over time. The dark fissures in the material define its character and as they are continually cleaned will become darker and more pronounced. As a contemporary interpretation of this idea, the bound marble chip flooring behaves in a similar fashion.

Pall Mall is dominated by private members clubs and, as such, the interface with the street is consciously underplayed. The offices continue in this way, respecting the original windows of the Listed Building.

As we touched upon a little earlier, the Interiors Group worked with artist Sophie Smallhorn, who was responsible for creating the art on the resin concrete wall. The designers have created an uplifting 5m high reception area overlooked by three of the four meeting rooms. Each member of staff passes through this reception as they arrive and leave the building. Its generosity and height establish a sense of pride in the organisation. From a visitor's perspective, this space certainly suggests an organisation of confidence, strength and success.

The Interiors Group has created a workplace which has the uplifting, stylish, lively feel of a traditional banking hall, but one used by planning consultants. 'We moved in on a Monday and were able to begin work as we were on Friday,' Hugh continues. 'All looked good, our people were happy and our clients did not see any break in continuity of work. The project was completed in time and on budget.'

The Interiors Group has clearly accurately addressed the brief here, creating a stunning unique client area and clean, modern office facilities. As a small office fit-out, issues of multi-occupancy are not applicable except that the design achieved an independent entrance within this multi-

occupancy building, thus improving the sense of autonomy and independence for DP9. It enables them to define their own character rather than assuming the character of the building's common parts. And has most definitely brought this building back to life ●

essential ingredients

Client:	• DP9
Interior Design:	• The Interiors Group 020 7392 5257
Architect:	• de Metz Forbes Knight 020 7435 1144
Main Contractor/ Project Manager:	• The Interiors Group 020 7392 5257
Structural Engineer:	• Wareham & Associates 01276 451868
Systems Furniture:	• Bene 020 7689 1234
Meeting Tables:	• Vitra 020 7608 6200
Breakout Seating:	• Connection 020 7253 9877 Allermuir 01254 682421