

State of Grace

We're walking through the City of London, making our way down towards the river. We pass impressive, grand new developments such as Heron Tower, and equally grand, listed buildings from another era.

a number of these buildings, at least on street level, are now being shared by our favourite high street retail brands – certainly as we reach the traditional boundaries of the City.

When we reach Gracechurch Street there is a real merging of the two, and we get the feeling that behind the bright Oasis and TK Maxx facades, the corporate wheels are still turning. Indeed, as we enter our final destination – the new home of AEGIS London – this feeling of ours is realised.


AEGIS London's roots lie in energy and a mutual insurance business in the US but today it covers much more than energy. In just over a decade, the company has

diversified successfully into a wide range of classes traditionally written in the Lloyd's market – and is recognised as a leader in many of the markets in which it now operates.

Its unique background has resulted in a different kind of insurer and a different relationship with clients. AEGIS believes in operating for the mutual benefit of all involved in its business, its intermediaries and its clients. The company conducts all its business – including the handling of claims – in a fair, open and transparent manner.

AEGIS London operates Syndicate 1225 at Lloyd's with a capacity of £310 million for 2011. The business offers specialist

knowledge, expertise and leadership to a broad client base across a range of insurance classes.

We head up to the new Gracechurch Street centre, high above the retail throng, where we're met by AEGIS London's Hayley Connell and Mansfield Monk's Ian Mansfield. Heading through the bright, open and welcoming reception space, we make our way into one of the smart meeting rooms where we begin by asking Hayley about AEGIS London's previous home and the journey to where we're at today. 'We're owned by a mutual company based in New Jersey, who are about 30 years old. They decided, about 10 years ago, 



Case Study



substantial and needed to be addressed whilst the already tightly programmed fit-out was undertaken.

‘The other challenge, on the design side, was that there was something of a leap of faith here,’ Ian continues. ‘Fortunately, Sarah and Hayley were completely on-board with us and are quite like-minded in what they wanted.’

‘Partly in the interests of time and partly in the interests of ‘you can never keep everybody happy’, rather than having a big consultation process, we decided we were going for this and that was it,’ Hayley admits. ‘I’m not sure what would have happened if people didn’t like it – but fortunately they did.’

‘It has been very well received, largely because it is so much better than what we had before.’

And why wouldn’t people like it? Those ‘buzz words’ we spoke about earlier are implemented in every part of the design. The reception space blends into a smart boutique-like client area, whilst the largely glazed meeting suite is smart, professional and offers a variety of configurations and advanced communications.

The main working floor is, as our hosts said, open, visible and has a great buzz to it. Particular attention has been paid to the kitchens and breakout spaces.

Ian tells us that desk space was a particular issue, with actual desk sizes reduced. ‘In the old office they did have larger desk formats – just to deal with the amount of paper they had. Another challenge was projected headcount – it was very tight to try to accommodate 130, with line of sight and still make it a pleasant space.

‘It’s quite rectilinear – because it had to be. People might have a slightly smaller footprint, but we ensured there is still plenty of space between desk clusters for people to move around in. That makes a huge difference to people’s perception of what they have here.’

Well, our perception is one of a professional, modern and open organisation – now housed in a space that reflects those qualities perfectly ●

▶▶▶▶ Manager John Harris and I – as the architect – had worked with Sarah Davies, who is the Operations Director here, in a previous existence,’ Ian explains. ‘Hayley had previously worked successfully with a Design and Build contractor called Interaction. The suggestion was that I would come in as the architect, John as the Project Manager and Interaction would be the contractor – so it was a negotiated team from the outset. It worked very well.

‘Speed was of the essence – so we did have to move very quickly, and it made sense to go forward on a negotiated basis.’

The team was put together in August, with completion, hand-over and full occupation achieved by November – in time for AEGIS London’s busy end-of-year period.

The biggest challenges here, however, were remedial works and commissioning of the base build services – which were fairly

essential ingredients |

Client • **AEGIS** | Interior Design • **Mansfield Monk** | Artwork • **Workplace Art** 020 7739 7500

Furniture • **Ahrend** 020 7566 7466
Allermuir 020 7251 8059
BLoose 020 7689 5306
Bene 020 7689 1234
Orangebox 020 7837 9922

Lighting • **Deltalight** 0870 757 7087
Zumtobel 020 8589 1800
Modular Lighting 020 7681 9933

Flooring • **Axia Tiles** 01698 792156
InterfaceFLOR 08705 304030