

IA INTERIOR ARCHITECTS

Toronto, ON
Office Relocation

Size

4,000 square feet

Project Highlights

Designed for wellness and creativity, enhanced by the principles of feng shui and sense of place

Building's 1914 history honored throughout with featured cast iron columns and mosaic floor

A variety of interior rooms and open areas, including library and communal kitchen, offer choice

Features and details reflect staff's creative and lively culture

Services Provided

Workplace strategy; Building evaluation; Full service interior architecture and design; Experiential graphic design: branding and signage; LEED/ Sustainability services; Furniture specification; Lighting design

Select Awards & Honors

ARIDO Workplace Award of Merit, 2019

CoreNet Canada REmmy Workplace Under 5,000 square feet Award, 2019





IA's new office in Toronto goes above and beyond day-to-day functionality. Designed for wellness, flexibility, and inclusion, the central location near Union Station (walkable to clients) works for both urban and suburban staff. The collaborative approach to the design was important to the firm's culture, and Feng Shui principles were employed to achieve the optimum balance and flow of energy. This Chinese art and science is arguably the oldest systematic approach to evidence-based design. Through the use of colour, shape, and materials, Feng Shui complements current studies on biophilia and evidence-based design, as well as WELL Building Standard and Fitwel correlations between occupants and the physical environment.

The new space occupies a suite in the original headquarters of the Royal Bank of Canada, built in the early 1900s and located on King Street, even then a major commercial thoroughfare. Original cast iron columns and part of a mosaic floor are preserved and incorporated to highlight and honour the historic nature of the space. In the boardroom, where windows face a newer building that blocked sunlight and views, the design team installed a clever solution: a translucent graphic of what King Street looked like in the early 1900s.

With no formal reception area, visitors are greeted by a curio-wall of totems provided by everyone who joins the Toronto office,

as well as IA offices and teams from around the world. These totems are icebreakers that spark conversation and visually demonstrate the OnelA spirit of interconnectivity, inclusion, and knowledge sharing.

A variety of features and details reflect staff's creative and lively culture. Five IA-designed clocks, each two-and-a-half-feet in diameter, are named for different time zones where IA offices are located. Conference rooms are named after cocktails popular in the Toronto office and cannabis, now legal in Canada.

With climbing lease rates in Toronto, and in order to address a limited design budget, the space had to function efficiently and effectively. Every square foot of the office is used as a tool for IA's practice. The flexibility and multi-purpose aspects of the office enable spaces for both heads-down/teaming space and events, saving money on having to rent an event venue.

Even the walls become tools with a human-size graphic of a cutting mat, used as a tool for visualizing measurements. A map of Toronto printed on felt panels for acoustics is also used to locate current project sites and major developments in Toronto and acts as a visual backdrop for teleconferencing. The office now supports mobility as well as out-of-town colleagues who collaborate with the Toronto office on a regular basis.