

3 Workplaces with

WORKPLACE



These office designs demonstrate that avoiding carbon emissions goes hand in hand with cost savings, healthier spaces, and beautiful interiors.

By Will Speros

LEFT: COURTESY PAGE
RIGHT: COURTESY GARRETT ROWLAND

COURTESY MIKE VAN TASSELL

Light Carbon Footprints

The renovation of United Airlines' headquarters, completed by IA Interior Architects, reused over 1 million pounds of material and furniture (center); Page's Austin office achieved a 78 percent diversion of construction waste (left); and Lord Abbett's Jersey City office by HLW cut embodied carbon by 34 percent.



RECLAIMING THE VALUE OF MATERIALS

As the first airline committed to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 without carbon offsets, United Airlines needed the renovation of its Chicago headquarters to embody its values. Housing more than 3,000 employees across 650,000 square feet and 13 floors of the Willis Tower, the office was refreshed by IA Interior Architects with a new lease on circular economy.

"Our goals were to demonstrate United's commitment to pursuing environmentally conscious design, reducing utility consumption, and implementing resourceful construction practices," says IA senior

director of sustainability Brett Gardner.

"We employed circular economy strategies with an emphasis on reuse, recycling, and diverting materials from landfills to reduce the embodied carbon for the project by 3,333 metric tons of CO₂e."

Metal frames and fabric panels of 2,254 existing workstations were used to create new hybrid workstations, diverting more than 500,000 pounds of material from landfills in the process. Another 793,000 pounds of furniture was also diverted by recycling other existing elements like acoustic ceiling tiles. "Reusing existing architecture and

furniture is a challenge," Gardner says. "But it was worth the extra time, as it delivered dividends on both carbon and cost reductions."

United also looked to resolve its carbon footprint beyond the workplace by integrating out-of-service airplane parts. The most notable appearances include engine-inspired light fixtures, a turbine coffee table, and a winglet room divider. Playful artwork composed of seatbelts and runway batons brings character to a project distilled by Gardner in a succinct phrase: "Keeping materials simple optimizes future reuse."

COURTESY GARRETT ROWLAND



The designers returned more than 560,000 square feet of existing carpet tile using Shaw Contract's Re[TURN] program before specifying new, sustainable product from Shaw. This one strategy alone saved carbon emissions equivalent to 86 cars being driven for one year. The team also incorporated actual airplane parts in the office, including a winglet as a room divider (facing page) and an engine fan blade hub within a custom coffee table.