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THE WORKPLACE OF THE FUTURE

A new address and approach for Perkins Eastman's Pittsburgh studio



Photo Courtesy Perkins Eastman

Perkins Eastman
Architects DPC

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Pittsburgh, PA (August 3, 2020) Global architecture and design firm [Perkins Eastman](#) has signed a lease to relocate its Pittsburgh studio of more than 70 people to the 25th floor of the iconic mid-century modern tower, 525 William Penn Place, in downtown Pittsburgh.

Perkins Eastman, founded in 1981 and headquartered in New York City, established the Pittsburgh studio as its first branch office in 1994. The Pittsburgh studio has occupied space on the ground floor of the historic Pennsylvanian building for more than 25 years, steadily growing in size to become the region's largest architecture firm.

Perkins Eastman was in the early stages of designing its new space when the coronavirus reached the United States in March. Pivoting quickly, the Pittsburgh studio's workplace design team modified pre-COVID-19 planning to better accommodate new, flexible, and adaptable work-from-anywhere modes, while maintaining the schedule of a spring 2021 relocation. The new space, guided by research and findings gathered through client roundtables and staff surveys throughout the spring and early summer, reflects the very latest in workplace design thinking. "We're reimagining what the ideal workplace should be during these uncertain times," said Jeff Young, AIA, Co-Managing Principal of the Pittsburgh studio. "We sent out an internal survey, and learned that even when conditions return to normal, two-thirds of our staff said they'd like to continue to work from home one or more days a week. We believe we will need more

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collaborative and communal spaces and fewer individual workstations in our studio to accommodate this evolving work dynamic,” Young said. Because fewer staff will be in the office at any given time, seating will be free-address and all employees will keep belongings in a personal locker.

Perkins Eastman is one of many companies adapting offices to new working environments, and Young believes that the Pittsburgh studio can serve as a testing ground to inform future designs. The new office will be designed for connection, adaptability, and resilience, and its spaces will accommodate the need for organizations to provide a hub, a resource, and a showroom for employees, clients, and collaborators. “People can work from anywhere, but there will always be times when you need to be together to collaborate such as when you have a design review pin-up, ideate at a white board, huddle around material selections in the library, or just sit down side-by-side and talk,” said Young. Access to daylight and the impressive views of Pittsburgh are celebrated through careful planning to situate seating and casual gathering areas via windows along the office perimeter. Young added, “The new office will become a reimagined hub, supporting collaboration, mentorship, and culture-building that cannot be realized from the comfort of home.”

The decision to move Perkins Eastman’s studio to 525 William Penn Place was strategic. Completed in 1951 for Mellon National Bank and US Steel, the 900,000 square foot, 41-story tower is a beautiful example of the iconic mid-century architecture that heralded Pittsburgh’s second renaissance. When the building owners, an affiliate of Pearson Partners, Inc. of New York, purchased the property in 2016, they selected Perkins Eastman for its strong portfolio of contextually rebranded spaces and building repositioning. Perkins Eastman worked with Pearson Partners and owner representative CBRE to modernize the public spaces, creating a striking, daylight-filled lobby, which features a new glass façade, a tenant lounge, and new fitness center. The firm continues to work with the building owner on tenant fit-out projects and other improvements within the building.

“We are proud of our collaboration with Perkins Eastman on the reimaging of 525 William Penn Place into one of the preeminent office addresses in downtown Pittsburgh,” said David Pearson, managing principal of Pearson Partners. “Perkins Eastman did an impressive job of designing an entirely new, forward-looking ground floor lobby and lounge experience, while respecting the heritage of our 1950s era modern tower. We’re thrilled to welcome them to their new home.”

Perkins Eastman is the premier architecture firm in Pittsburgh for commercial office and workplace design. Its portfolio of building repositioning and adaptive reuse projects includes Pittsburgh Gateway Center – another iconic mid-century high-rise development in downtown Pittsburgh; Three Crossings, Phase 2.0 in the Strip District/Robotics Row; 27 51st Street – the redevelopment of the Sears Outlet Building in Lawrenceville; One Oxford Centre; and Nova Place – the former Allegheny Center mall in the North Side. Recent workplace projects include new offices for Google, Philips, Smith+Nephew, SAP, and Crown Castle.

PERKINS — EASTMAN

Dan Adamski and Andrew Millberg of JLL represented Perkins Eastman in the transaction. Pearson Partners was represented by Patrick Greene and Carmine DiLucente of CBRE.

ABOUT PERKINS EASTMAN

Perkins Eastman is a global design firm founded on the belief that design can have a direct and positive impact on people's lives. The firm's award-winning practice draws on its 1,000 professionals networked across 17 offices worldwide. By keeping the user's needs foremost in the design process, the firm enhances the human experience across the spectrum of the built environment. For more information visit www.perkinseastman.com.

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Pearson Partners, Inc. is a real estate investment and advisory firm founded in 1992 and headquartered in Rockefeller Center in New York City. Through its affiliate, Fifth Avenue Capital, LLC, it has acquired over \$900 million in assets across the United States. Current holdings in the Pittsburgh area include 525 William Penn Place, Park Place Corporate Center One & Two, Great Southern Shopping Center, Southland Shopping Center, Mount Nebo Shopping Center and Northern Lights Shopping Center.

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