

## Corporate Culture and Space Design

BY JOHN R. PATELSKI, PE, LEED AP  
 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, GHAFARI ASSOCIATES, LLC  
 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS USA

**In early 2012, a fascinating story of transformation, collaboration, and creativity began to unfold in Ft. Collins, Colorado, where Woodward, Inc. was headquartered.**

This energy and aerospace company engaged Wayne Timura of ITRA Global / Commercial Real Estate, LLC and Next Level Development in Colorado Springs to assist with the selection of an architectural / engineering firm to transform six large, vintage manufacturing facilities into 21st century operations along with an innovative office environment and a new headquarters building.

After a careful evaluation and interview process, Woodward and Next Level Development selected Dearborn, Michigan-based Ghafari Associates LLC to upgrade their corporate headquarters in Ft. Collins, Colorado, create a new Build- To - Suit facility in Loves Park, Illinois, and transform their vintage facilities in Niles, Illinois; Windsor, Colorado; Loveland, Colorado; and Tianjin, China. This article highlights two of those projects.

Woodward, guided by a clear set of values and principles dating back to its founding in 1870, understands that in order to achieve distinction in their field, it is essential to foster a

culture of continuous improvement. With this in mind, design elements are important to see that the workplace is a catalyst for improvement in aesthetics and employee behavior. The classic



cubicle could be consigned to history because today is all about collaboration and spontaneity. It's about finding new ways of working that put the occupants of offices center stage.

Today's workplace celebrates shared knowledge that is fostered in an environment that responds to an employee's needs at a human level. Space is now recognized as one of the most powerful vehicles for communicating a brand—and by

extension—building a business. The workplace of the future should reflect Woodward's brand and its core values, creating spaces in which staff members have a sense of shared vision.

### Colorado Headquarters

Ghafari provided master planning, architecture, and engineering services for a 100-acre campus that will serve as Woodward's new corporate headquarters. The overall campus will include industrial, testing, and research facilities as well as integrated office facilities and a corporate headquarters building.

Ghafari assembled a proficient team comprised of individuals with a wide variety of technical expertise in specific disciplines.

Then Ghafari created a Basis of Design that contained key pillars for Woodward to consider. The design seeks to facilitate ideation and creative development, knowledge transfer, social networking, and problem solving. The layout of the office interiors include open team meeting areas, enclosed team

meeting areas, shared amenities, and individual work spaces.

As the company reviewed the recommendations and envisioned its future, they settled on design principles that create a flexible workplace, provide a place for knowledge transfer, foster innovation, establish collaboration and connectivity, and amplify the company brand.

Those principles are now reflected in specific design solutions that include quiet zones, team zones, neighborhoods, touchdown spaces and desks, collaboration areas, war rooms, circulation space and “collision” points, the right furniture, coffee bars, café, and central organizing Main Street that brings together the office space and manufacturing space with open staircases and abundant natural light.

The manufacturing facility design and construction in Ft. Collins will be carried out in four phases, with Phase I consisting of approximately 260,000 square feet of building space. This phase includes manufacturing space, office areas, a cafeteria, and a physical support building that will service the mechanical needs of the entire campus. Additional phases will add 610,000 square feet to the campus gross total and will be constructed over the course of five to ten years.

For the new Woodward corporate headquarters building, Ghafari designed a 60,000 square foot facility that will feature executive office spaces, conferencing facilities, collaboration zones, boardroom facilities, and a multi-level lobby / exhibit atrium. This building will serve as a welcoming center for the larger campus.

All support space will incorporate sustainable elements with an emphasis on daylighting and views of the mountains to the west. The building envelopes are designed to exceed the energy code in Ft. Collins, one of the more stringent building codes in the nation.

### **Different Challenge**

At Woodward’s Niles, Illinois-based airframe systems manufacturing site, Ghafari designed a new manufacturing facility within an existing Grainger Distribution facility that Woodward had acquired. It then designed the tenant space of a new office building that had recently been constructed adjacent to the existing distribution center. This suburban Chicago project streamlines the group’s operations by relocating 590 Woodward members who were located in five buildings across Skokie and Niles, Illinois. The project involves the conversion of an existing one-story, 234,000 square foot former Grainger warehouse building into a manufacturing / assembly plant and the addition of a new two-story,

100,000 square foot office building. The primary intent of the project is the creation of a design solution that promotes collaboration.

The manufacturing area is divided into two business units (Aviation Component Systems and Motion Control + Sensing Solutions) with common-use facilities such as the paint shop, powder coat, and sand blast shops located between them.

Situated between the office and manufacturing areas will be “Main Street,” a 20-foot-wide space that will serve as an informal meeting area to unite office and manufacturing employees. This Main Street design feature is common to all of the newest Woodward projects. A cafeteria is located at the west end to enliven the Main Street atmosphere.

### **Conclusion**

Woodward has taken the opportunity at a strategic point in the company’s history to transform the workplace and production environment with multiple locations simultaneously in a truly unique and consistent way. The long term benefits of these solutions are just beginning to be realized and will continue well into the future as all manufacturing facility projects are completed.

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