



WALKthrough

firm: elkus manfredi architects site: chestnut hill, massachusetts

one-stop shopping

A maple slab tops a custom bar-height table in the employee café at WS Development. ➤

Clockwise from top left: The headquarters occupies space on the two upper levels of a 1970's shopping center. Nylon carpet tile flows through an office area. Cork composite covers a conference room's wall.

Opposite: A meeting room overlooks the walnut stairs.



A great dinner party is a perfect metaphor for a successful tenant mix in a retail environment: Everyone feels special, and no one wants to leave. So think of WS Development, a major landlord of shopping centers and the like, as a brilliant host.

That same lively, convivial spirit furthermore informs the company's headquarters. It's appropriately located in a WS Development property called the Street, a reinvigorated shopping center in the Boston suburb of Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. And Elkus Manfredi Architects principal Elizabeth Lowrey made sure that the 30,400-square-foot space, split between two levels above street-front retail, would be open and bright, a place where people like to gather.

Lowrey took her cues from nature. A forest-ringed pond, which abuts the site, inspired her use of various woods. Walnut, spalted maple, charred spruce, butternut, and rough-sawn hemlock sheathe walls in areas including a corner conference suite where each room is named for the species of tree that provided the paneling.

Walnut was also chosen for the vast reception desk. Behind it, a walnut staircase connects to the lower level. "We designed the stairs to be wide enough for two people to walk side by side—to get everyone working together," she explains. For the balustrades, she departed from the nature theme. They're painted steel perforated with a pattern based on a QR code.

Directly at the bottom of the stairs, the café reads more hip restaurant than employee canteen. A banquette hugs a long wall. On one side, a massive live-edge maple slab tops a ➤

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"Stair balustrades depart from the nature theme"



Clockwise from top: Powder-coated aluminum frames the glass fronts of executive offices. Windows in the café are draped in laser-cut wool felt. Stools by Studio Progettazioni Interno accompany the employee café's bar-table. The stair's painted steel balustrades were also laser-cut.



bar-height communal table. On the other, leather-upholstered club chairs gather.

"Your space is one of your key business tools," she continues, pointing out that the office "gives tenants confidence." And boosts employee morale. She recalls a recent Saturday morning, when she encountered a young staffer proudly giving a tour to visiting parents. —Regina Cole

FROM FRONT KNOLL: WORKSTATIONS, CHAIR (OFFICE AREA), TABLE (MEETING ROOM). **MODULUS:** CARPET TILE (OFFICE AREA, MEETING ROOM). **USG CEILINGS:** CEILING SYSTEM (OFFICE AREA, OFFICES). **SOFTLINE ALL KIT THROUGH BAUHAUS 2 YOUR HOUSE:** BACKLESS STOOLS (OFFICE AREA, CAFÉ). **WALLTALKERS:** WALL COVERING (CONFERENCE ROOM). **BLOOMSBURG CARPET INDUSTRIES:** CARPET. **TRANSWALL:** STOREFRONT SYSTEM (MEETING ROOM, OFFICES). **HERMAN MILLER:** CHAIRS (MEETING ROOM), TASK CHAIRS (OFFICES), SHELL CHAIRS (CAFÉ). **FLEXFORM:** GUEST CHAIRS (OFFICES). **HALCON:** TABLES. **RUCKSTUHL:** RUGS. **KONINKLIJKE PHILIPS:** LINEAR FIXTURES. **ARPER:** HIGH-BACK STOOLS (CAFÉ). **RESTORATION HARDWARE:** LOUNGE CHAIRS, COFFEE TABLES. **FOSCARINI:** PENDANT FIXTURES. **FILZFELT:** CURTAINS. **SUB-ZERO:** REFRIGERATOR. **GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY:** MICROWAVES. **ATLAS CARPET MILLS:** RUGS. **LUKAS LIGHTING:** CHANDELIER. **ANDREU WORLD:** CAFÉ TABLES. **THROUGHOUT** BINGHAM LUMBER: LUMBER SUPPLIER. **LAM PARTNERS:** LIGHTING CONSULTANT. **ACENTECH:** ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT. **MCMAMARA/SALVIA STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS:** STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. **WB ENGINEERS + CONSULTANTS:** MEP. **WALTER A. FURMAN CO.:** MASS CABINETS: WOODWORK. **ASHMONT IRON WORKS:** METALWORK. **CHAPMAN CONSTRUCTION/DESIGN:** GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

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