

# schiaavello

## CASE STUDY



### **GHD's Sydney Home**

Sydney, Australia

**GHD is committed to solving the world's biggest challenges in the areas of water, energy and urbanisation. It is a global professional services company that leads through engineering, construction and architectural expertise.**

In 2020, GHDWoodhead undertook a six-month redesign of its parent company GHD's Sydney office. The project proved the perfect opportunity to demonstrate the power of an integrated interior architecture and engineering team, transforming three levels into a contemporary productivity hub that responds to the diverse needs and expectations of its leading technical experts.

"We had always intended to redesign our office fitout. As an architecture and engineering firm, we believe that our space is a reflection of the team's diverse skill sets," says Nuri Shin, interior designer at GHDWoodhead. "The Sydney office project was an opportunity to showcase our technical excellence and aptitude for community connection; what we can provide to our clients and potential clients."

Beginning in late 2019, works spanning three separate floors were strategically divided into stages by the project management team, to minimise disruption to other tenants occupying the building, and enable staff to continue working onsite during the refurbishment.

Adding complexity to the design, the building is defined by an irregular floor plate: wide to the north and south, yet narrow to its west and east. The design team found opportunity in these unique characteristics, working with Schiavello to identify furniture solutions to fit each purpose.



"What really draws us to working with GHDWoodhead is their creative flair," says Natasha Kolesnikov, client relationship manager at Schiavello Sydney. "It can sometimes be difficult to find inspiration in a commercial design, but their teams have such a clear vision for highly engaging, beautiful workplaces."

## **Creating Diverse Spaces with Neo + Krossi Workstations**

Interestingly, while GHDWoodhead's portfolio exemplifies agile working and adaptable practice, multiple focus groups and workshops conducted in preparation for the GHD Sydney workplace redesign revealed an overall employee preference for more traditional work modes.



Neo workstation and World chair

"Our research showed us that while we valued choice in our work environments, people also needed space for static desk-based working," says Nuri. "We catered to those needs by designating zones for solo and group work within our floorplan. So while there's no ownership of a single desk, each person can find their own place to base themselves comfortably, based on their workload and how they need to focus that day."

The building's angular floor plan determined the strategic positioning of three distinct work zones. In the open central area, seated Neo workstations make up the more conventional shared work space, while narrow sections to the east and west form natural quiet zones for focused working. Collaboration points at the perimeter feature standing height Krossi workstations, which encourage a more dynamic exchange.

“There’s a lot of research and psychology that shows when you stand, you are able to think and brainstorm more creatively,” says Natasha.



Neo workstation & World chair

## Home Away From Home with Custom Focus Booths

Turning away from typically monochromatic corporate schemes, soft furnishings in a curated array of accent colours create vibrance and warmth against crisp white walls and neutral carpet.

Schiavello’s endlessly customisable Focus Booths extend this comfort and tactility throughout the workplace. These insular workstations feature a wrap around privacy screen, with variable screen heights and adjustable desk sizes. The upholstered screens became a blank canvas to experiment with materials, bringing in patterns, colours and an element of creativity to the space, in place of plain white workstations.

“Workstations can often be overlooked as quite an uninspiring, rudimentary element in a commercial setting,” says Natasha. “But GHD really made the Focus Booths their own, and they turned into a real feature of the space.”

“Being able to customise the Schiavello pieces with fabrics really helped in honing that home-like feel,” says Nuri.

The upholstery at GHD’s Sydney office also serves an additional purpose, with each level or zone defined by its own designated colour. In this way, the furniture also functions as a wayfinding piece, imparting a sense of place within the building.



Focus booth & World chair

## Wired For Success: Aire Meeting Tables

The smart tech integration at GHD’s new office needed to support and reflect the expertise of their internationally connected, future-focused team. Schiavello worked closely with GHD’s internal AV consultant to achieve a thoroughly considered solution.

“GHD were quite specific about their tech requirements, which was great for us,” says Natasha.

“Furniture selection can be quite crucial in video conference rooms, where making the right allowances and providing easy access points can help prevent or anticipate technical issues going forward.”

The seamless integration of complex requirements is perhaps best exemplified in the conference rooms, where teams congregate on Schiavello’s Aire Meeting Tables, discreetly fitted with soft wiring. Aside from standard power and data points, Schiavello also included AV and HDMI ports, accommodating a separate power box for video conferencing.

“Especially in this past year, when online presentations and video calls have become such a huge part of our work life - it was important that we did everything we could to get that right,” says Natasha.

## Long Relationship, Shorthand Design Language

“We’ve worked with GHDWoodhead for many years, and have great relationships internally with their design teams and leaders,” says Natasha. “They know our product regularly specify us. So there’s a real trust in Schiavello, and confidence in us delivering a solution for their own offices.”

Schiavello has collaborated with GHDWoodhead on construction. The project proved the perfect opportunity to demonstrate the power of an integrated interior architecture and engineering team, transforming three levels into a contemporary productivity hub that responds to the diverse needs and expectations of its

leading technical experts on construction, design and specification of various corporate and government projects, including the Roads and Maritime Services offices in Parramatta, the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency in Canberra, and Fujitsu’s Docklands headquarters. In comparison to the more stringent commercial briefs they had worked on together previously, GHD’s Sydney offices presented a broader scope to experiment with more creative ideas, and Schiavello jumped right on board.

“We selected Schiavello because they have a deep understanding of our design process, so we can push for really interesting outcomes,” says Nuri. “Whatever the creative vision, they work with us to deliver on aesthetics, flexibility and cost-effective solutions.”



Neo workstation and World chair

Interior design by GHDWoodhead  
Photography by Murray Harris