

New HQ Makes Privacy a Priority

How Lord Abbett's new workplace reinforces corporate culture and employee engagement

For nearly a century, Lord Abbett has built its reputation as the premier private asset management firm, navigating the ebbs and flows of financial markets with a steadfast commitment to excellence. Now, in a move that underscores its dedication to innovation and corporate culture, the firm has unveiled a new headquarters that is as much a statement about its future as it is a reflection of its values.

Perched atop the Goldman Sachs tower in Jersey City and overlooking a spectacular view of the Hudson River, the new workplace spans five floors designed to foster collaboration, transparency and employee wellbeing. While some companies are scaling back their office footprints, Lord Abbett's investment in this space signals a resolute confidence in the power of in-person engagement.

"It was a very simple decision," says Filippo Soave, head of real estate and workplace services at Lord Abbett. "Our previous space was obsolete. It did not reflect who we are as a firm or how we work today. Our goal was to create an environment that enhances not just productivity but our culture and employee wellbeing."

Designing a complete in-office experience

Lord Abbett has doubled down on the importance of the in-office experience. "We wanted to ensure that employees had spaces that supported focus and teamwork," says Soave. "The combination of thoughtful layout planning and high-quality furnishings makes this an adaptable and comfortable space."

The space boasts a variety of workspaces tailored to different needs. There are private offices for executives to host clients and for those handling confidential material, open-plan workstations, quiet focus rooms, and numerous spaces for collaboration and social gatherings. "We wanted to create a variety of workspaces that support different workstyles and preferences," explains designer Melissa Strickland, a principal and managing director of HLW's New Jersey office. "The goal was to provide flexibility and choice, allowing employees to select the environment that best suits their tasks and work habits."

Every employee has a dedicated workstation in the office, eliminating the uncertainty of desk sharing. At the same time, the design prioritizes shared spaces—from open lounges to private bookable focus rooms—ensuring that employees have a variety of settings to support different work styles.

Steelcase worked with its dealer, Dancker, alongside HLW to create custom workstations tailored to the unique needs of its employees. "Some departments preferred the benching system for collaboration, while others found the 120-degree workstations better suited to their workflow," explains Strickland. "It wasn't a one-size-fits-all approach."

All workstations are designed with ergonomics and flexibility in mind. Desks are height-adjustable, allowing employees to switch between sitting and standing throughout the day. Integrated technology ensures seamless connectivity.

Lockers adjacent to workstations give people easy and quick access to their belongings.

"The executive offices were designed not only for leadership but as spaces where meaningful conversations and strategic decisions take place," says Strickland. Halcon's craftsmanship ensured that these offices maintain a timeless quality while integrating seamlessly into the broader workplace design.

Creating community

The space is thoughtfully designed to embody Lord Abbett's four core values: excellence, responsibility, transparency and collaboration. "Every design decision was made with the intention of strengthening Lord Abbett's culture and fostering a sense of belonging. From the glass-walled offices that maximize transparency to the sustainable materials used throughout, this workplace is a testament to what Lord Abbett stands for," says Strickland.

"Culture isn't just about how people work—it's about how they interact, how they feel supported."

MELISSA STRICKLAND | Managing Director + Design Principal, HLW

The firm has received LEED Platinum certification and is also pursuing WELL V2 Gold certification, demonstrating a commitment to environmental responsibility and employee wellbeing. The work environment is designed to help Lord Abbett achieve net-zero carbon emissions, incorporating energy-efficient lighting, water conservation measures, and an emphasis on natural materials.

One of the new headquarters' most striking features is The Exchange, a two-story open space designed for gatherings and collaboration. "It's a space for bringing the firm together, equipped with amenities like a barista and areas for social interaction," says Soave. A staircase connecting the top three floors allows easy movement and interaction among employees from all floors.

The space also balances collaboration with quiet reflection. Employees who prefer a respite from the hustle of the trading floor can retreat to alcoves or biophilia rooms with soft lighting and scenic views of the Hudson River. In addition, the wellness cafe promotes healthy eating. “We understand that wellbeing is crucial,” Soave emphasizes. “Being close to nature, having access to healthy food, and taking breaks in a calming environment all contribute to better performance.”

A home for culture

The new space honors Lord Abbett’s legacy. The Heritage Library, for example, immerses visitors and employees in the firm’s 95-year history, featuring archival materials, financial certificates and interactive digital displays. Art also plays a crucial role, with curated installations—including a woven piece from Mexican artist Caralarga and a custom-forged metal podium that symbolizes resilience—scattered throughout the space.

“We wanted to celebrate our history while creating a workplace that positions us for the next 20 years. This is not just an office; it’s a home for our culture.”

FILIPPO SOAVE | Lord Abbett, Real Estate + Workplace Services

The response to the new headquarters has been overwhelmingly positive. “We see almost 75 to 80% of our employees back in the office daily, which is amazing,” Soave says. The firm plans to conduct further studies to gauge employee sentiment and utilization of the new space, but early indicators suggest that the new headquarters is a resounding success.

Lord Abbett is optimistic about the firm’s future as it settles into its new headquarters. “We designed this space to lead us for the next 15 to 20 years,” Soave says. “It’s a place where we can grow, innovate, and continue to attract top talent. The best validation of this investment is that people want to be here. They’re engaged, they’re collaborating, and they’re making this space their own.”