

Gibson Dunn London Could Reach 500 Lawyers in 5 Years Amid Major Build Out

By Molly G Smith

December 2, 2025

Gibson Dunn & Crutcher is plotting a major scaling up of its London office to up to 500 lawyers in the next five years.

According to sources with knowledge of the strategy, this could see the office more than double in size from its current headcount of around 215 fee earners, including those who straddle London and other offices. One person with knowledge of the firm said the aim was to bring its London headcount closer to that of its New York office.

Insiders said the firm's plans for a new London office are designed to meet the expansion effort.

In September, Law.com reported that the firm has agreed to take around 140,000 sq ft at 1 Exchange Square in Central London, according to sources—significantly larger than its current Temple area offices.

The firm has continued to build out its London bench this year with a series of strategic hires, several of whom arrived with additional lawyers in tow.

In March, Chris Howard and Presley Warner joined from Sullivan & Cromwell, strengthening the firm's business restructuring and



Photo: Ryland West/ALM

Gibson Dunn Office in Manhattan, New York.

reorganisation practice. They arrived with one counsel and one senior associate. That same month, James O'Donnell joined after 11 years at DLA Piper—where he served as global co-chair of investment funds—bringing with him an of counsel.

In May, James Cameron joined the London office from Milbank as a partner in the finance practice and as co-chair of the transportation and space practice. Also in May, real estate partner Hayden Cameron arrived from A&O Shearman. The firm further expanded its transactional capabilities in October with the hire of M&A partner Simon Tysoe from Latham & Watkins.

In 2024, private equity partner Will Summers joined from White & Case,

alongside former Jones Day lifer and M&A partner Will McDonald.

Commenting on London, chair and managing partner of Gibson Dunn, Barbara Becker said: “Our London growth has been transformative. The strength and depth of our London offering now mirrors the exceptional platform we have built globally.

“We have strategically expanded our transactional capabilities—particularly in private equity, M&A, infrastructure, finance, bankruptcy and restructuring, and real estate—while leveraging our established disputes practice to attract and promote top-tier talent. Crucially, this growth reflects not just lateral recruitment but our investment in elevating homegrown talent.”

The strategy reflects strong confidence in London’s high-end transactional and disputes markets, where U.S. firms continue to exert

significant influence. It also comes amid intensifying transatlantic competition. Law.com data shows that U.S. firms have doubled the volume of London office space they’ve transacted over in the past five years, while U.K.-founded firms have expanded far more cautiously.

Since 2020, 18 Am Law 200 firms have committed to new London offices, compared with just eight among the U.K. top 50—during a period in which U.S. firms increased square footage by 50%, while U.K. firms collectively contracted by nearly 30%.

For U.S. firms, London is increasingly viewed as both a crucial counterweight to domestic operations and a fiercely contested battleground for top talent. Gibson Dunn’s trajectory suggests it intends not only to compete in that arena, but potentially to redefine the scale of what a U.S. firm’s London presence can be.