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squire and partners turn an edwardian department store into a new office

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UK-based architects squire and partners purchased a dilapidated edwardian department store in brixton, london, and entirely reimagined the space allowing the existing fabric and layers of history to inform the new design. collaborating with craftspeople and furniture makers, the restored building provides an exciting array of spaces for the various design disciplines within the practice.

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stripping the building back to its raw state revealed a decayed grandeur and an extraordinary commitment to craft

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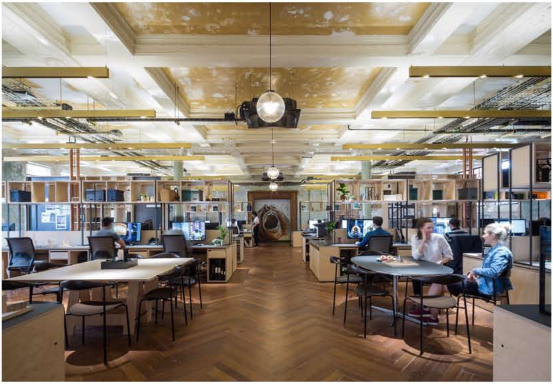
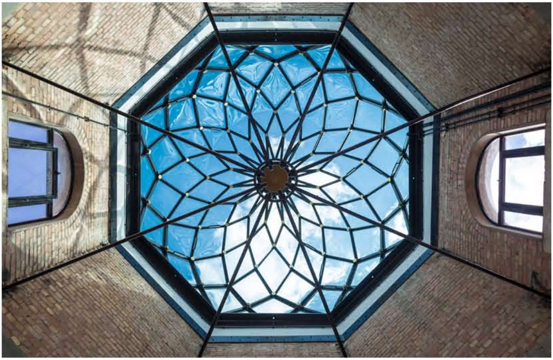
and detail by the original artisans. squire and partners sought to reveal and highlight these elements — in their found state — as well as exposing remnants left by more recent inhabitants, while adding a series of sensitive contemporary interventions in order to repurpose the building as an inspiring modern workspace. on the exterior, design solutions focused on reversing years of neglect to reactivate the street level through animation and display. incrementally added shopfronts and layers of paint were removed to reveal original brickwork, stone, marble and terracotta



typical open plan working space with break out areas

a new rooftop level was also added comprising a series of oak framed pavilions with copper shingle roofs, and a crafted glass dome to replace a dilapidated existing cupola. at ground level a striking reception area and active modelshop animate the street, while a triple-height void and central landscaped courtyard provide breathing space. generous social and event spaces are at lower ground and the fourth floor, with workspaces on first to third floors supported by a series of meeting and breakout areas.



a new glass dome provides a marker for the building

the existing fabric of the interior was assessed in the early stages of the project, ensuring that elements such as original 111 year old mahogany and teak parquet flooring, a grand tiled central staircase, a series of cast iron

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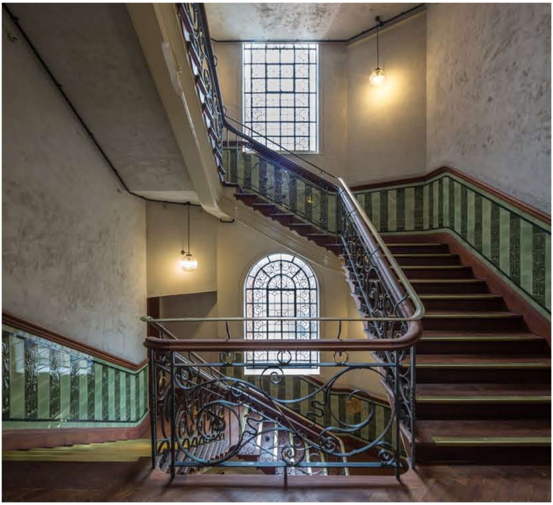
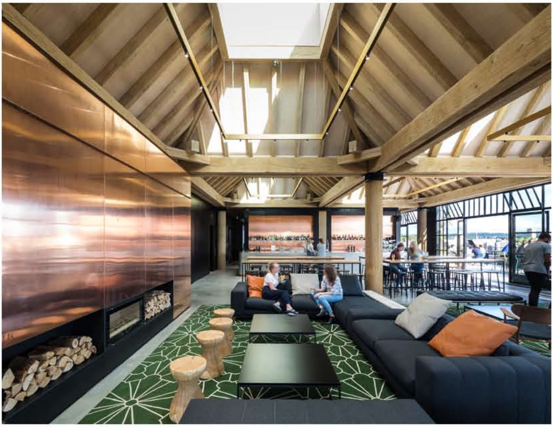
radiators, and a remarkable patina of colors which document the building's history could be preserved. a series of voids were cut through the building to create dramatic volumes, and provide vistas between levels.



original staircase restored and refurbished

the office floors offered the opportunity to reveal the many facets of design undertaken by the practice and expose the process of craft and making. project areas are designed to act as evolving 'concessions' — showcases to the process of design and development. models, prototypes and explorations document and celebrate the project's journey from concept to realization. multiple areas for presentation can be found throughout the office with display cases, shelving, libraries for materials and books, models and explorative studies.



a new timber framed top floor is a public restaurant, bar and staff canteen

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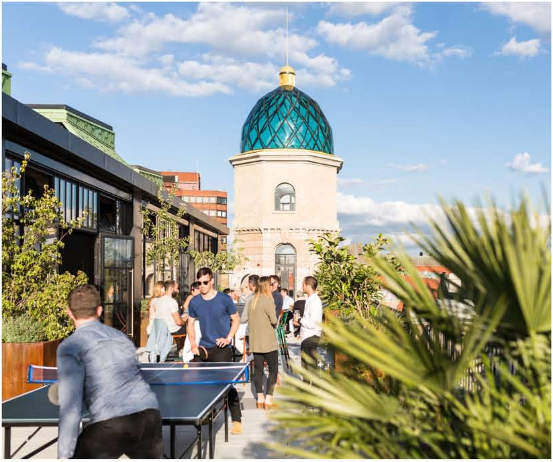

a rooftop terrace for socializing and dining

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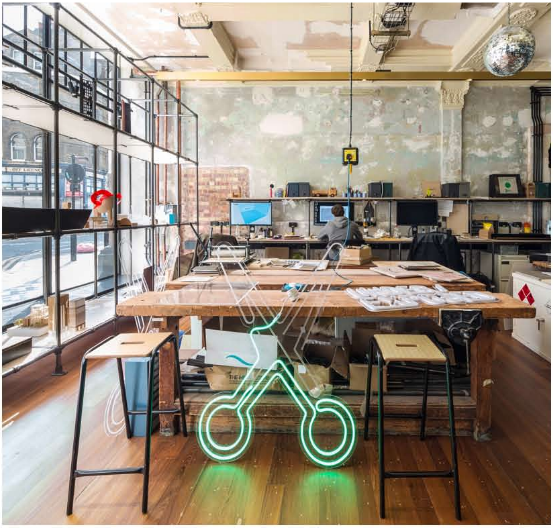
restored floors and windows are accented by bespoke lighting, upcycled furniture and antique pieces

original crittall doors and bespoke shelving with found graffiti left in place



a dedicated modelshop can be seen from the street

the downstairs space hosts a range of private, public and community events

the full development seen from the street including volcano coffee, pure vinyl, and kaboola cafe

THE DEPARTMENT STORE

refurbished exterior with reception and the modelshop seen from the street

designboom has received this project from our 'DIY submissions' feature, where we welcome our readers to submit their own work for publication. see more project submissions from our readers here.

edited by: maria erman | designboom

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from reports of mexico's earthquake to a school in cambodia, we highlight our TOP 10 reader submissions of 2017 social impact.

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the building's shape was informed by the large stones used for the foundation of the neighboring breakwater.

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the design team carefully selected a sequence of materials and geometries highlight the building's storied history.

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the masterplan's individual buildings are arranged as a checkerboard of different functions, which appear as a latticed roofscape from above.

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