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WORKPLACE & OFFICE + RENOVATIONS A London Department Store Is Reborn as a Creative Workspace

By Kelly Dawson - January 30, 2019

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the South London district of Brixton.

team decided to move into an address that's stood since 1906 in

Squire & Partners renovate a 66,000-square-

foot building by embracing its storied

history and modernizing its spaces in

In a place like London, history is easy to come by. The city's

centuries-long rise along the Thames has created innumerable

stories of well-known people and important landmarks, as well

as countless reiterations of interesting facts and prized tidbits.

constant facet of modern life—and that sentiment wasn't lost

on Tim Gledstone, a partner at Squire & Partners, when his

History isn't so much an occasional thought here as it is a

moderation.

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THE DEPARTMENT STORE

multitude of independent retail and food outlets on the high street," Gledstone

"The Edwardian building was largely derelict and dilapidated,

having had many different lives previously, including 50 years

World War II, before being sold and converted into offices in

shopfronts to the exterior. In 2012, it became vacant and was

taken over by squatters, who added their own legacy of street-

incrementally chopped up the internal spaces and added

as a retail destination and a brief stint as a bomb shelter during

1955," he says. "The building was used by various occupants who

says. The Department Store's ground level is open to independent retailers.

danamusung

"The Brixton area has a welcoming and generous community spirit, along with a

Photo Categories: exterior, flat roofline, brick siding material

inspired artwork to the building."

Photo by James Jones .

modern design.

Photo by James Jones

Photo Categories: office, concrete floors

The downstairs event space is open to the community, and features a more

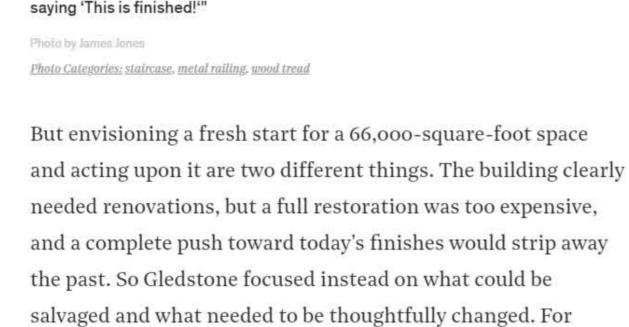
Gledstone and his team were drawn to the story of this

Bon Marché department store could be reimagined for the

property, and felt that its first chapter as an annex to the famed

firm's overlapping departments in architecture, interior design, illustration, CGI, and model making. "It gave a lovely sense of the building coming full circle," Gledstone continues. "We also loved the notion of the space being used for display again, as in showing and retelling the story of our projects."

"It was a challenge during the restoration process to communicate the overall



aspects of the building for today's needs.

Pattern and print designers Eley Kishimoto were commissioned by Squire & Partners to create 20 bespoke rugs for the building. By working with local designers, Gledstone says that the company hoped to build a relationship with the community.

Even the newest aspect of the building—a fourth-floor

from green oak, which is sustainably grown in Forêt de

original Bon Marché stores in Paris and London," he says.

"Green oak was used in place of steel due to its sustainable

characteristics, but also because its natural quality

complemented the age and character of the building."

Knoll Barcelona

Design Within Reach

The reception area of the building features a timber-framed desk and LED strip

As much as the look and feel of the building was done with

respect to its history and its surroundings, Gledstone says that

Squire & Partners also wanted to ensure that their neighbors

Couch

\$10,467

extension that features a bar and balcony—is influenced by the

Villandry in central France, creating a further link between the

past. "The new timber frame of the extension is constructed

instance, the open floor plates and ornate staircases were still

design. This compromise, Gledstone adds, was a way to

"embrace its decayed decadence," while also repurposing

in good condition, and could be used in a modern open-concept

lighting.

Photo by James Jones

Photo by James Jones

the third level.

Photo by James Jones

felt that reverence, too.

Photo by James Jones

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Photo Categories: office, medium hardwood floors, chair

Photo Categories: office, chair, storage, desk, lamps, shelves, medium hardwood floors

back into their hands following years of neglect."

The company opened its ground-level storefronts to an

independent coffee roaster, record shop, cafe, and post office. It

also showcases local art in its windows, and hosts community

from an impermeable and hostile frontage into a friendly and

open part of the community," he says. "It brings the building

events throughout the year. "This has transformed the building

Photo Categories: office, chair, desk, lamps, shelves, medium hardwood floors

The bar at The Department Store's apex is in the spirit of Café de Floris in Paris, which supported the original Bon Marché, Gledstone says. The architects

incorporated leftover green oak from the top level's new frame into the flooring on

Photo Categories: dining room, ceiling lighting, porcelain tile floors, stools, bench, bar, recessed lighting

says.

Architects **Project Details:**

Photo Categories: outdoor, rooftop, flowers, shrubs

idea of a workspace.

Photo by James Jones

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aesthetic we wanted to achieve with the build team," Gledstone says. "It was a non-standard finish and often a process of trial and error. So, during the construction process it was harder to see when surfaces were at their desired level of finish—we had a strong presence on-site and would stick signs to walls

The Citizenry Sepon Terrazzo Desk Set The Citizenry \$85





Now that The Department Store is once again in full operation, where 250 people come and go from work every day, it has become what Gledstone and his colleagues imagined when they first came across its past and saw potential for its future. "Our journey was guided by a constant search for the layers of history within the building, and a desire to reveal them," he

The open patio on the fourth level of the building lends itself well to the modern

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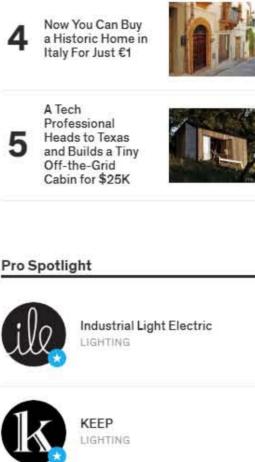
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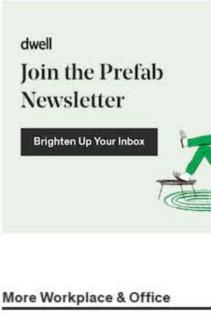
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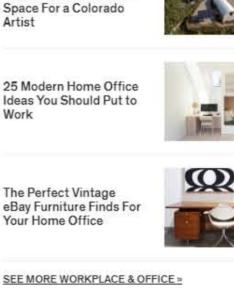
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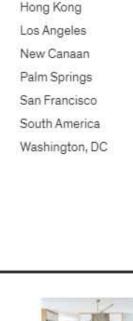
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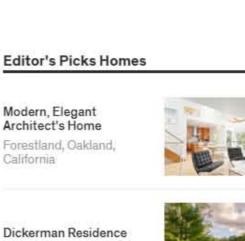
















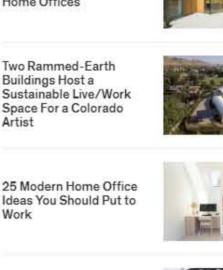




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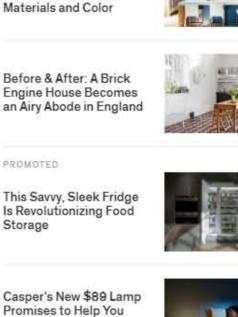
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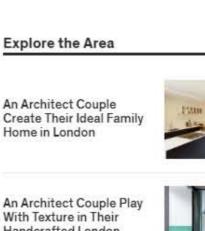
















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