



squire and partners build community center adjacent to london's last working windmill

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architecture firm squire and partners has completed a new education and community center adjacent to brixton windmill, a grade II* listed heritage building in london. the practice was asked to take on this project by the friends of windmill gardens (FoWG), a charity focused on preserving and promoting the heritage of the old windmill, which is the last working one in the area. the new structure is designed to be flexible, serving the local community in a variety of ways, while also securing the old mill's use for future generations.



all images courtesy of squire & partners

squire & partners conceived the new building as a simple timber-framed structure, formed to serve a variety of uses and welcome a wide range of visitors. the center is open to school groups, adult education initiatives, community groups, and local residents. at the same time, it is designed to act as a platform for FoWG to showcase the historic mill and host open days and festivals. the main space and cafe are also able to be hired for events from birthday parties to weddings, adding to the revenue for FoWG. in addition, the building supports the expansion of the social enterprise, which mills flour using traditional techniques.



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Elena Salmistraro



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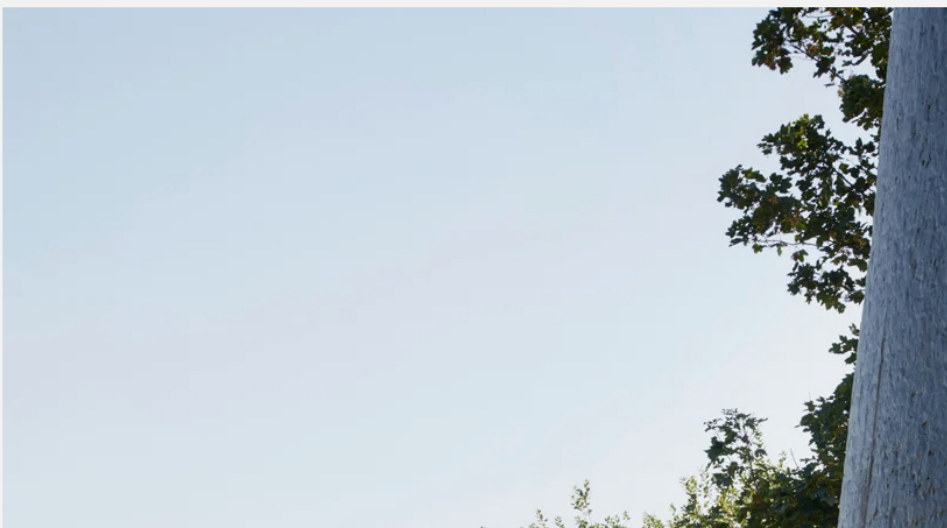




the design responds to the original miller's outbuildings with a contemporary crafted pitched roof structure, using a douglas fir frame with tapered columns, and cladding the exterior in a dark weatherboard. a series of full-height bi-fold glazed doors open onto a decked terrace overlooking the windmill gardens and the windmill itself. sliding panels with vertical slats let the sunlight in, and provide security when the building is unoccupied.



the structure is bookended by two gable walls in soot-washed staffordshire blue brick, referencing the black painted windmill tower. a dark grey roof is punctuated with skylights to flood the internal space with natural light. internally, the main space celebrates the exposed timber frame and creates a warm muted palette with an under heated pale grey screed/resin floor, ply-lined walls, and suspended pendant lights.



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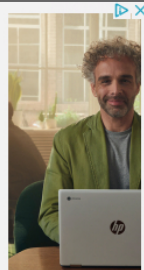
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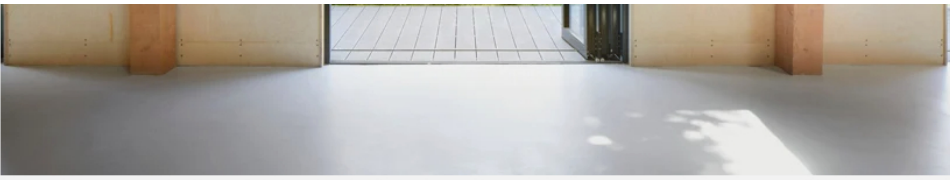




bespoke plywood joinery defines the café serving area and a pop-up shop with in-built display areas. low-level units were designed to be used in multiple ways – as tables, storage, museum/shop display or seating. behind the main space, a series of smaller rooms provide a grain store, kitchen, administration, cycle parking, and WCs.









project info:

name: brixton windmill education & community center

architects: squire & partners

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edited by: myrto katsikopoulou | designboom