

Find out more about this carbon neutral collection

ShawContract®

# onOffice

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN AT WORK

Architecture Interiors Design Opinion Latest Issue About



27 Jan 2022



## Squire & Partners launches new local workspace The Department Store Studios in Brixton

Words by Dominic Lutyens

Category: [Architecture](#) [Interiors](#)

[architecture](#), [London](#), [office interiors](#), [squire & partners](#), [sustainability](#)

Created as a natural addition to The Department Store, The Studios is a highly sustainable development that will support local businesses

When London architects [Squire & Partners](#) took over a former department store in Brixton in 2017 as its office, the idea was to avoid occupying a dehumanising, cookie-cutter workspace at all costs.

Certainly, The Department Store, as it's called – an Edwardian building – is the antithesis of what partner Michael Squire decries as “a wave of office building in London” unleashed in the wake of the Big Bang of 1986.



### Editor's picks



Combo provides an evergreen fix to seamless work and travel

INTERIORS



Squire & Partners launches new local workspace The Department Store Studios in Brixton

ARCHITECTURE



Trifle\* adds unexpected pops of colour to interiors of new coworking spaces

INTERIORS

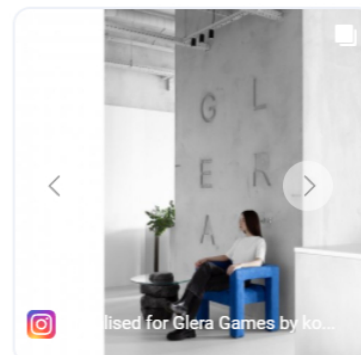


LABS shares 5 workplace trends to watch in 2022

OPINION



### Instagram



Sign up for the OnOffice newsletter



Email [Sign up](#)

“These corporate workspaces became increasingly stereotypical, focusing on large floor plates, high occupancy and serried ranks of desks,” he recalls.

Since then alternatives to these sterile spaces have sprung up, as he acknowledges, with tech companies offering workplaces that are “more fun, stimulating and attractive”.

The Department Store can’t help but be an antidote to ‘corporate workspaces’. Squire & Partners lovingly restored the dilapidated building, and preserved its original mahogany flooring and tiled staircase. But what the practice couldn’t have anticipated is that it begged the question of whether a new office could ever be as atmospheric.



Screening Room, Business Lounge, Reading Room & Games Room

[Find out more](#)

**Berkeley**  
Designed for life



“Clients would come to our office and admire it but say, ‘You couldn’t achieve this in a new building’. This set us a challenge for our latest development – The Department Store Studios.”

Squire & Partners is the owner and developer – and client – of this five-storey new build, also referred to as The Studios. This houses co-working spaces – flexible workspaces and private studios – and current occupants include interior designers, a branding agency and a TV producer.

The new development nurtures links with the local community. Its ground-floor bar/restaurant called **Bellefields** and screening room in the basement are open to the public. The Studios also hosts a residency programme – a chance for two young Lambeth entrepreneurs to have a free workspace there for 12 months as well as mentoring.



But how could Squire & Partners convincingly emulate the atmosphere of The Department Store in the new-build? Undeterred, Squire believed that “The Studios could aim to achieve the same level of warmth, craft and quality as The Department Store through its use of raw materials.”

The most obvious manifestation of this is The Studio’s red brick façade, inspired by the brickwork of The Department Store, while its metal window frames nod to The Department Store’s Crittall windows. A palette of industrial and functional materials in The Studios’ interiors correspond with the raw quality of The Department Store.



The Studios has a cross-laminated timber frame, visible in its interior, which introduces a warm tone to the space, as does exposed brick and undecorated plaster. Another link between The Department and The Studios is the choice of furnishings. Both buildings boast homely furniture by Ercol, Fermob Bistro chairs, terracotta pendant lights by Pott and dhurries by Laguna.

All these elements help to create a sense of continuity between the two buildings but there is no denying that they’re very different. The Studios’ interiors look undeniably contemporary.



But whatever the differences, the new-build fulfils Squires ambition of avoiding a ‘conventional office’ – the legacy of 1980s offices which he compares to “battery chicken farming”.

“The Studios,” he believes, “is a lovable place, where people can work ‘free range’ in a generous space and feel part of a community that supports them to do more than just their jobs.

*Images by Jack Hobhouse*

**Enjoyed this article? Read more: [Trifle\\* adds unexpected pops of colour to interiors of new coworking space in East London](#)**

## More stories



Combo provides an evergreen fix to seamless work and travel



Squire & Partners launches new local workspace The Department Store Studios in Brixton



Trifle\* adds unexpected pops of colour to interiors of new coworking space in East London



Kvadrat opens new flagship showroom and workspace designed by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec in Los Angeles



London-based brand Matere honours simplicity and functionality in stationery



ISSADESIGN and A+ present airy research and development centre in Montreal

Welcome to our inspiration board –  
Beam and Braid: new carpet tile styles that  
join the Suited Collection.

ShawContract®

**onOffice**  
ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN AT WORK



Home  
Architecture  
Interiors  
Design  
Promotional

Newsletter  
About

Privacy Policy  
Terms and Conditions  
Careers at Media 10

© Copyright 2022 | Designed by Media 10 Ltd

Contact us

