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**Front Cover &
Inside Front Cover**
80 Charlotte Street W1

SPACE

It's with great pleasure that we are able to write: welcome to the 2021 edition of Space. Last year, the unwelcome arrival of Covid-19 paused our annual publication. However, the extra time has enabled us to secure more in-depth articles and, most importantly, some perspective.

In the spirit of enquiry, this edition reflects on ideas of sustainability, community, wellbeing in the workplace, progressive working practices and, as ever; outstanding engineering, design and architecture.

We hope you enjoy the read.

Summer 2021



Looking Ahead



Soho Place
W1

Architect: AHMM
285,000 sq ft (pre-let or pre-sold 249,200 sq ft)
Completion: H1 2022
derwentlondon.com



Network Building
W1

Architect: Piercy&Company
130,000 sq ft
Completion 2025
derwentlondon.com



The Featherstone Building
EC1

Architect: Morris+Company
125,000 sq ft
Completion: H1 2022
thefeatherstonebuilding.london



19-35 Baker Street
W1

Architect: Hopkins
297,000 sq ft
Completion 2025
derwentlondon.com



80 Charlotte Street Fitzrovia

**Completed during the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic,
80 Charlotte Street is Derwent London's first net zero carbon building,
it's also a beautiful place to be.**

At street level in London, it's often difficult to fully understand how one building relates to another. One tends to get lost in the façades around you, the street furniture to navigate, the play of light and colour, and, of course, the people, usually in swathes. This last year has been so different, with moments when the West End fell silent. Yet, as both the sun and people start to come out with much more regularity, we can all begin to look forward to a new kind of working London. It's going to be more flexible, joined-up and invigorating than ever before. A visit to 80 Charlotte Street with Derwent London's Tom French, shows how.

Below:
Reception entrance

Right: Communal roof
terrace

This decade-long project in Fitzrovia, the largest ever undertaken by Derwent London, and its first net zero carbon development, was formerly the spiritual home of Saatchi & Saatchi, which they occupied for over 40 years. The site was first developed for the Post Office in the late 1950s into a doughnut shaped office block, with a car park at its centre and a slightly monolithic façade. After a complicated planning story and many years of work, it's now occupied by a beautiful and practical 377,000 sq ft mixed-use development, designed by leading architects Make, who worked alongside engineers Arup.

The sheer level of complexity and nuance to 80 Charlotte Street is astonishing. Firstly, there is the sustainability story at its core. Derwent aims to achieve a net zero carbon portfolio by 2030, and this building is the flag bearer for that goal. Tom gives some context to the thinking: "The building is all electric, heated and cooled by efficient air source heat pumps, benefiting from the decarbonising grid, and with all electricity procured through renewable tariffs."



"...we are excited to design the new office in line with our broader strategy to lower our carbon footprint, while bringing together our various business units in a dynamic and inspiring environment that maximises collaboration between our people and our clients."

— Andy Veitch, Managing Director & Partner at Boston Consulting Group

Throughout construction, the embodied carbon impact has been monitored and is estimated to be 28% lower than the RICS Carbon Database average for office buildings. The building achieved BREEAM Excellent at design stage and features 860 sq ft of solar thermal panels that heat the building's water and 20,000 sq ft of roof terrace for occupiers to enjoy sweeping views of London on all sides. Any emissions from the building will be offset using certified schemes.

By strolling around the entire site, you really get to see the sensitivity of the design by Make architects. "Make were a relatively small practice when first commissioned on the development a decade ago" explains Tom. "Working alongside Arup they have travelled on a long journey to create something both timeless and lasting." Make have utilised varying façade treatments, setbacks and terraces, to give the development real character and have fundamentally changed the atmosphere at street level. The addition of a pocket park on Chitty Street has also created a tranquil new public space for everyone to enjoy. It was inspired by Paley Park in New York and features a new sculpture by Hugo Dalton.

Adjacent to The Poets' Park, on the south-eastern corner of the site is the residential part of the



Reception

“The 80 Charlotte Street office reflects our commitment to sustainable integrated design fit to inspire staff and visitors. The new offices provide access to open space and greenery and reflect our aspirations for low operational carbon and to be part of the team to build one of the UK’s first all-electric commercial buildings.”

— Geoff Hunt, Chief Operating Officer, UKIMEA at Arup

development, the Charlotte Apartments. They are situated within one of the retained sections of the original building that has a particularly elegant brick façade. These apartments have had a somewhat unusual start to life. Robert Bexson, Head of Property Management at the University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, explains: “During the pandemic Derwent London made 16 fully furnished new flats available for our front line staff close to University College Hospital campus. This kindness was greatly appreciated by the staff fortunate enough to occupy the apartments and on behalf of UCLH I would like to express our gratitude for this generosity.” During a period when everyone in society had a timely

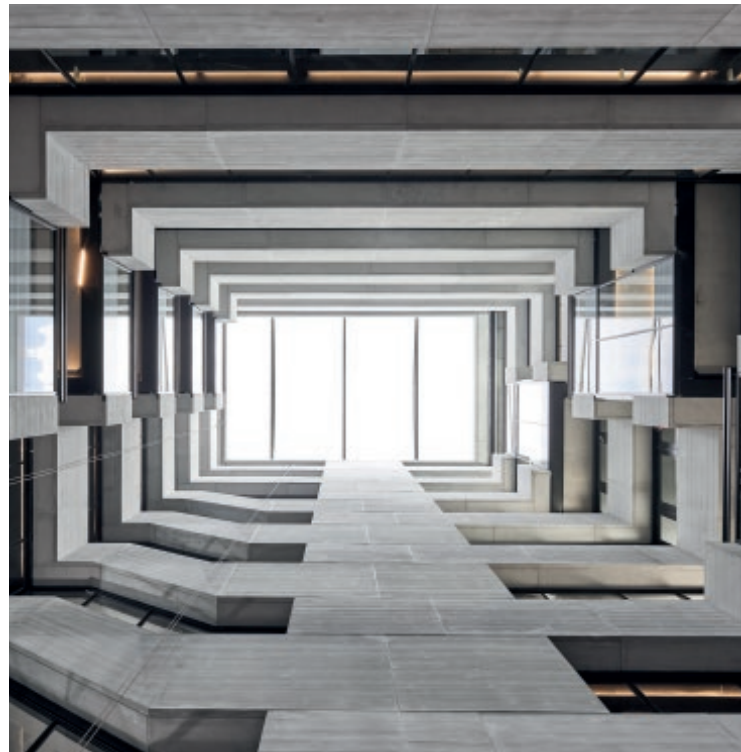
reminder of the true value of the NHS, it seemed the least that Derwent London could do.

On Charlotte Street, the main entrance features a Donald Judd inspired weathered steel box, which is brought to life by a clever lighting arrangement installed in the double-height entrance way behind it, which is visible from across the street. This section of the building is wrapped with shuttered concrete cladding and exposed structural steel, with new grey and black brick elevations completing the rest. Original brick façades have been retained on the Whitfield Street side of the site and on the residences located in the east corner of the main block, with ground floor retail below. On the northern side of the

development, tenants can access facilities for over 300 bicycles directly down a ramp from Howland Street, which has a dedicated TfL cycle lane running from east to west.

The final part of the connectivity jigsaw in 80 Charlotte Street is DL/78. Soon open to the entire Derwent London community, DL/78 is a new hybrid space for connection and collaboration; beautifully arranged over two floors with a welcoming open double-height space at its centre. As to be expected in 80 Charlotte Street, it has been designed and finished to an exceptionally high standard, and will add to the vibrancy of the building. Flexible enough for events of all types, it is the type of space that will engender the spontaneous meetings of people and ideas we've all missed so much over the last year.

"The new tenants are Lee & Thompson on lower ground and ground, Arup on lower ground to third floor and Boston Consulting Group taking floors four to eight. They can expect a little moment of magic when they first walk in." says Tom. Greeted initially by an elegantly lit double-height space that brings the material palette of the building from the outside in. They are then led down a gently sloping black polished concrete floor, past original artworks by Noémie Goudal, to the first and largest of three central atria. These impressive atria, which are integral to the heating and cooling system, really bring the building to life. It is here, bathed in light from the roof, with the sounds of people talking on the internal balconies above, or perhaps enjoying a break at the café in the second atria, that a new type of working day will begin. A working day that Derwent hopes will value both the wellbeing and productivity of the people and organisations engaged in it, but also of the buildings that they occupy.



Above: Atrium
Opposite: The Poets' Park



As Derwent London and Make architects celebrate the completion of 80 Charlotte Street in Fitzrovia, we look at the adjacent Asta House, a residential-led scheme and integral part of the overall development, which is situated across the road on the corner of Whitfield and Chitty Streets. We talk to Rebecca Lesser, Art and Interiors Manager at Derwent, to get some perspective on the design thinking behind the project.

Asta House

Asta House, a 1950s light industrial building more recently used as offices, has undergone a total transformation by architects Make. The building, which sits within the Charlotte Street conservation area, now houses 36 new residences and 11,000 sq ft of new workplace. Make are former residents of the building and their intimate understanding of the site has shone through in its design. By balancing both the sensitivities of the conservation area with the need for the building to be taller, they have created something exceptionally refined. Rebecca explains Make's approach: "To help preserve the distinctive character of the neighbourhood, Make retained a substantial amount of the structure and brick façade, painting it black. They added two new upper levels—one floor fully extended, the other set-back—and extended the rear, providing 25% more area while maintaining the local scale."

Keeping the carbon footprint to the lowest practical level throughout construction and into the future life of the building has been an important driver at Asta House. The apartments have been designed



“The modern, yet intimate scale and design of this project aims to appeal to those who want a character-rich home in this bohemian area.”

— Kunwook Kang, Project Architect at Make

Below: Reception (© Make Architects)
Opposite: Show flat

to meet the Ecohomes “Excellent” standard. The building now has solar hot water panels to preheat domestic hot water for the whole building, while triple glazing, additional insulation and openable windows are all new. In terms of the interiors themselves, Rebecca gives us further insight into what residents can expect: “The industrial-inspired interiors feature a monochrome palette, Crittall-style windows and fire screens, smoked oak veneer entrance doors, band-sawn timber flooring and grooved timber panelling. The concept has been applied throughout, from the main entrance lobby to each apartment interior.”

When visiting the building, joined-up thinking is all around, it has the feel of somewhere totally settled, in both the communal areas and the apartments themselves. The central top-lit stairwell has also been retained and it somehow anchors the building, both to the idea of the past and to a simple



kind of elegance. The original terrazzo-finish stairs are retained from the 3rd floor down, beautiful to both the eye and underfoot. Residents also have access to a shared courtyard terrace while the penthouses enjoy expansive private terraces. Kunwook Kang, Project Architect from Make neatly summarised their approach: “The modern, yet intimate scale and design of this project aims to appeal to those who want a character-rich home in this bohemian area. Externally the project is completely respectful of its location, chiming with surrounding colours and massing. Internally our choice of materials was key. We’ve created smooth, consistent interiors that make the most of original features and crafted new ones to provide not only functional, efficient homes, but also spaces that delight.”

Below the residences there is a newly designed workplace on the ground and lower ground floors, which is now home to engineering firm Elliot Wood—in an open plan space that benefits from greater daylight, visual connections and air circulation. It now features larger windows, maximised floor-to-ceiling heights and newly created lightwells along Whitfield Street and the corner of Chitty Street. It is also unified with the rest of the building in terms of its simple industrial aesthetic, with exposed concrete and caged linear lighting.

What Make and Derwent have achieved at Asta House is a building that has totally retained its structural integrity, gained new character, while being vastly improved in terms of its materiality and sustainability standards. In doing so, they have set a benchmark for all future projects of this nature.

Net Zero Carbon – can the industry deliver?

We asked Sarah Ratcliffe, CEO of the Better Buildings Partnership, to give some perspective on the realities of net zero carbon for our industry.

In the run up to the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), governments, businesses and civil society are all setting ever more ambitious targets to reduce emissions and put their economies and businesses on a pathway to net zero. The real estate sector is no exception and the Better Buildings Partnership Climate Commitment has 26 signatories with over £350bn AUM covered by the commitment to deliver net zero carbon buildings by 2050. But what exactly do we mean by net zero?

There is currently much ambiguity surrounding the definition and scope of “net zero carbon” commitments in the real estate sector. At the Better Buildings Partnership (BBP), in our Net Zero Carbon Pathway Framework we describe this very simply, “net zero carbon is when the carbon emissions emitted as a result of all activities associated with the development, ownership and servicing of a building are zero or negative”. Put like this, it sounds very straightforward, but the devil is definitely in the detail. The industry is now beginning to grapple

with some of that detail, peeling back the layers of net zero and interpreting how it can be applied in relation to different ownership structures, leasing models and management control throughout a buildings’ life cycle.

The first principles of a net zero carbon building require a different mindset—firstly, the need to develop a new building should be questioned. The significant role that embodied carbon plays in a buildings’ carbon footprint means that retaining existing buildings and reusing and recycling materials is a critical first step in reducing the carbon emitted throughout the whole life cycle of a building. Reducing energy demand and improving efficiency come next. Modelling the impact of occupation on energy use and responding to this with the appropriate design and services can set the building up to achieve operational energy use intensity aligned with a net zero carbon trajectory and targets such as those published by UKGBC and LETI. And, once the design has minimised energy





Soho Place
Buildings A & B

“We were proud to commit to net zero carbon development in 2020, and to be a net zero carbon business by 2030. Our pathway, published last year, will ensure that the right processes and skill base is embedded across our business.”

— Paul Williams – CEO at Derwent London

use, one can look to ensure that any remaining energy demand is met through the delivery of clean energy (being careful to factor in the associated embodied carbon). Finally, the life-cycle of any building includes maintenance, re-use, demolition and disposal. It's essential to ensure that building design considers how the component parts may one day be disassembled and used again, aiming for true 'circularity' of resources.

However, it's often the 'net' of net zero that proves most problematic—absolute zero carbon buildings (buildings where there are no emissions arising from the embodied and operational energy utilised throughout their life cycle) are, at least in the short-term, likely to be few and far between. The reality is that buildings being designed now will require some form of energy to develop and deliver the services required by their occupiers, aligning the supply chain will take time. As a result, building owners, developers and operators are looking for ways that they can demonstrate their commitment to addressing climate change, even if the building cannot achieve absolute zero carbon. This is where the procurement of renewables and the use of carbon offsets come into play. The BBP is one of a number of different organisations seeking to develop clarity, support and guidance to ensure that these strategies are employed with integrity and not merely used to greenwash otherwise poorly performing buildings.

Whilst challenging, all of these interventions seem perfectly sensible and create a meaningful template for buildings to achieve a net zero outcome. But, of course, it's not that simple. This outcome can only be delivered if it is set within an enabling context. The delivery of net zero carbon buildings does not only require technical solutions, it requires the right policies, finance and people to support them. We have seen too many buildings set themselves ambitious targets only to fall short of expectations because these have not been embedded into the processes and skills base of financing, development, commissioning, leasing, management and occupation.

Buildings like Derwent London's 80 Charlotte Street development demonstrate what can be achieved when there is a sharp focus on reducing building emissions. It is, of course, important to reflect that this building was first designed over a decade ago, before the concept of net zero buildings was in common use. The timescales involved in the investment and development of commercial buildings mean that it is all the more urgent for owners to specify net zero buildings now. And, with the government, investors and occupiers all racing towards net zero, the industry can't afford not to deliver them.



were determined to stay open, even if it was only for takeaways. Helen gives some context to the experience of many of the visitors: “I hadn’t realised until I volunteered there just how much people on the street move around. A lot of people spend much of their day moving from one soup kitchen or safe place to another. Doing a kind of rotation, often with everything they own with them in a bag. It’s exhausting. For the hours that the Soup Kitchen is open, people can come, put their bag down, have a meal and enjoy the space and relax. Alex has done a lot to get the feel of the space right, he has brought nutritionists in, musicians come and play sometimes, the space has many uses. It’s really versatile and provides a great base.”

Alex and his team also realised that to help enable people to get off the street they would also need access to the proper support and services: “One of the things that really stood out to me when I took over as Director in 2017 was the staggering number of our homeless friends struggling with their mental health” explains Alex. “Indeed, according to many studies, as many as 80% of rough sleepers suffer from some form of mental health illness. When you understand that it becomes easier to see why it’s so difficult for many people who have become homeless to return to a more ‘normal’ living situation. With that in mind, we aimed to address some of the core issues of sleeping rough and give the people that we help the ability and the confidence to change their circumstances by offering comprehensive mental health support.”

In an already crowded environment, the question was where? This is where Rebecca Lesser and Dupe Odunsi from Derwent London came in. They visited the space with Helen and soon put in motion a project that would result in the creation of a new private counselling room in an existing space under the entrance to the Soup Kitchen. Designed by architects AHMM and built by The Thornton Partnership, it’s a beautifully neat concept; a calm and quiet room made in birch plywood, with accent colours, a porthole-style window and comfortable furniture.

Helen explains: “It was a collaborative effort. The Soup Kitchen wanted a comfortable space that was private and also very practical. AHMM have created something ideal. I don’t think we can underestimate the value of a well-designed and furnished space for people to relax and talk. For Derwent London, a company that prides itself on the space that we create for people, to be able to do something to help the Soup Kitchen and their friends is a great thing.”


To find out more about the work of the Soup Kitchen, or about volunteering there, visit: soupkitchenlondon.org

First launched in 2013, Derwent London’s Fitzrovia Community Fund supports projects that bring benefits to the local community. There is a particular focus on health, wellbeing, public space improvements, arts, culture and educational projects. In 2016, the fund began working with the Soup Kitchen that is run out of a space in the American International Church on Tottenham Court Road. It’s been a critical time for the Soup Kitchen and for all those they support.

When the pandemic arrived last year, a number of London’s soup kitchens were forced to close, but Alex and his team of dedicated volunteers at The Whitefield Charity SK Corporation, who run the Soup Kitchen at the American International Church,

Fitzrovia Soup Kitchen

We spoke to Alex Brown, the Soup Kitchen’s Director and Helen Joscelyne, Derwent London’s Sustainability Manager, about a new drop-in mental health clinic there, that shows how good design and a little patience can help change people’s lives for the better.



Reception artwork –
Marcin Dudek
Mass, 2018–2021

Soho Place Development Update

As completion nears for Soho Place, Space talked to Project Managers Rosie Scott and Jo Benson, and Development Associate Benjamin Lesser about an engineering marvel that is a case study in close collaboration.

Situated on the south-western corner of St. Giles Circus, at the crossroads where Oxford Street and Charing Cross Road meet, directly opposite Centre Point, Soho Place is a 285,000 sq ft mixed-use scheme comprising offices, retail, new public realm and a new 40,000 sq ft theatre. The development spans over two separate buildings, 1 Soho Place (Building A), where 100% of the offices are pre-let, and 2 & 4 Soho Place (Building B), where the theatre is pre-let to NIMAX and the offices pre-sold. Situated directly above the new Tottenham Court Road Crossrail station, the scheme is the result of nearly two decades of collaboration between Derwent London, Transport for London, Crossrail, Arup and AHMM. It's opening will mark a new phase of life for this particular part of London, which was formerly a slightly unloved transport hub, where people would pass through, but rarely stay.

“It's going to be a whole new part of town.” explains Benjamin. “With the new Crossrail station,

“It will provide a link between Soho Square and the east side of Charing Cross Road, which connects with all the development that has occurred around Centre Point and Earnshaw Street.”

— Rosie Scott



Above: Building A floor
Opposite: Building A external

our new buildings, of which the office building is a real corner piece, and a new theatre, which is the first new-build theatre in the West End for 50 years.” Importantly, there is also new public space. “It will provide a link between Soho Square and the east side of Charing Cross Road, which connects with all the development that has occurred around Centre Point and Earnshaw Street” adds Rosie. “Soho used to finish at Soho Square, now there will be an extension eastwards of public realm space.” Jo also makes the point that the mostly subterranean Crossrail project is having a major influence at ground level. “A by-product of these huge public infrastructure projects is that they catalyse all sorts of things. What we’ve done is just one aspect of it. That whole area would probably not have had such a fundamental change in such a short space of time without the Crossrail station.”

Benjamin calls the buildings themselves “icebergs”, due to the fact there are five or six stories of construction and development underground. “Building A is an office from floor 1 up to floor 10, the basement, ground and part of the first floor being retail. Building B has a theatre with 3 floors of offices on top. It’s an incredible feat of structural engineering, but also an acoustic engineering feat. To create a theatre above a station like this—it’s a complete structurally and acoustically isolated theatre box sitting within the theatre building.” That a brand new theatre is at the heart of this project is very important for everyone involved. The West End’s theatre land, a place of truly world class performances, is going to need all the support it can in the years ahead. The buildings themselves are also world-class—net zero carbon, with outstanding sustainability and building standards. “We’ve been working with AHMM and Arup on this for many years, with a process of refining and refining the design, with all sorts of influences, like Mies van der Rohe, and others, especially in Building A. The aim is to create an aesthetic where we are expressing the materiality, the concrete and steel, while exposing the lift and stair shafts to bring in more light. The idea being to enhance the whole travel experience of reaching your floor from the reception. The office floor plates are very large, with openable windows, so we can have mixed mode natural ventilation. There is beautiful Roman Travertine stone on the outside and in the reception, while there are both private and communal roof terraces, with a special meeting room and wonderful views out across Soho and beyond.”

Soho Place is a long-term project that has required big ambition, foresight and plenty of patience. Jo contemplates it finally coming to an end. “This project shows why construction is exciting. Every single building we do is more complicated than the last, either because it performs better from



“The sustainability, the functionality and the performance are all the things that are now just so intrinsic in what we do.”

— Jo Benson

a sustainability perspective, or it has more features—like smart-enabled features. The sustainability, the functionality and the performance are all the things that are now just so intrinsic in what we do. These buildings are wonderful pieces of architecture that everyone will be rightly proud of and they are a result of not just decades of involvement, but also of the passion that a lot of the people bring to working on them. What we have concentrated on is producing something that everybody at Derwent London, and at the companies we work with, can be incredibly proud of.”

Collective Space

Models for adapting what we have to get what we need

We asked Josh Fenton, a graduate of the New Architecture Writers programme, to give some thought to collective space in a post-pandemic world.

As a general principle, the more you observe a thing, the more you become aware of its details; the experience of confinement in 2020 was an emphatic reminder of this. Shuffling between bedroom and bathroom, via the kitchen we've had an excess of time to get acquainted with our homes and their foibles.

Details have become familiar, even down to the particular gurgle the tap makes when twisted a quarter turn too far. While our homes and neighbourhoods were always an important part of life, the Covid-19 pandemic made them the locus for every activity; socialising, working, and exercising were added into the mix of sleeping, cooking and loafing about. With all of these activities taking place, we are collectively looking around questioning how to adapt what we have so that it fits our needs.

Ideas surrounding how to create homes that can be easily adjusted to suit the lives of its owners have been proposed and tested before, with built examples including Walter Segal's Lewisham housing project. Similarly, the importance of community bonds has long been appreciated, though perhaps pushed aside by the pace of modern life. Today there are a clutch of innovative young practices that are working on ideas

of how to create communities where homes are a good fit for our digital lifestyles and sit within communities that create the basis for strong social ties.

NOOMA Studio is a London based, interdisciplinary collective—aware of the need to pool knowledge, they integrate skills and resources that go beyond architecture alone. With a mission statement to “problem solve and create joyful spaces that support human thriving and wellbeing”, their portfolio of projects suggests an openness to investigating every aspect of urban development.

Their 'Big Playground' project defines alternatives to the standard typologies that mostly suit an outdated nuclear family concept. Their spatial investigations suggest that thinking volumetrically instead of in terms of area is one path to better communities with a better balance between people, their needs and the environment as a whole. The modular volumes on which their concept is based means that homes become a supersized kit of parts. Inhabitants can add on or remove elements as needed, for example if an elderly relative needs later life care, but still wants a level of privacy and agency. As these modules proliferate, roofs become an integral part of the community, creating space for roof gardens to grow fresh fruits and veg, or even a pop-up co-working space.

The Clement James Centre based in North Kensington is also centred around new models for improving community cohesion. By carefully examining a much-loved community garden, Freehaus have found a way to add in a new learning annexe and simultaneously enhance the lushly planted green space. In London, space is always going to be at a premium, but the sensitive design for a cloistered low-rise building shows that infill schemes can deliver dramatic benefits for the community without any perceptible loss in amenity. In fact, through their improvements, a winter garden will occupy a previously underutilised area of the site, adjacent to the Grade II Listed Church of St Clements.

Through their efforts new education opportunities will be created for children and young people and the community will have a dedicated space for coming together, with outdoor events, educational workshops and a chance to enjoy the garden setting, all year round.

The patterns of life will revert in most ways, but we don't have to give up on the awareness we gained while the parameters of our world were scaled down. It is clear that our homes should be more adaptable, and that there is a strong case for reviving the local living model, especially in larger cities like London. When everything around us is unstable, homes and communities should offer grounding solace; Freehaus and NOOMA Studio offer reassurance that the next generation of designers will set this as a priority.



Thinking about the idea of flexibility, Space tabled a digital discussion between Joni Steiner, co-founder of workspace furniture innovators Opendesk, and Tim Hyman, Derwent London's Group Architect. They talk about the future of the workplace and how progressive design thinking, on an organisational level, will help define the next generation of spaces we occupy.

Furnished + Flexible

Workplace Futures

Derwent London began offering Furnished + Flexible spaces back in 2018, first at Morelands on Old Street. Now there are a range of spaces of this type within the Derwent London portfolio, including those at One Oliver's Yard on City Road, 19 Fitzroy Street in Fitzrovia and the latest iteration at Three Rathbone Place.

Joni Steiner: **As we emerge from Covid, the preconceptions of what a workspace is and can be have been turned upside down for a lot of people. What effect might this have on the whole idea of co-working?**

Tim Hyman: I think the Furnished + Flexible offering will be of interest to companies who want something flexible as they take stock of the world,

and don't want to be tied down. They don't want the time or expense of fitting somewhere out, they may not want to take on a large co-working space. They do, however, want their own front door, their own identity, and they are aligned with Derwent in terms of aesthetics.

JS: **It's interesting to think that people have unwittingly become part of a "home working" experiment over the last year. You can imagine a lot of people will return to the workplace with greater expectations of what they can do there. They have got used to the flexibility, they have got used to being able to open the window when they want to, or to pop outside and get a coffee if they choose. It will be interesting to see how that changes things.**



Above: Three Rathbone Place W1
Opposite: One Oliver's Yard EC1

“We should not underestimate the social side of the office, or the pride that people have in working for the companies that they work for. We need to think that work can be done anywhere”

— Tim Hyman

TH: The idea that your “desk” is the only place you work is gone. The pandemic has been a complete circuit breaker, people have had to work in totally new ways. We have all instantly up-skilled in digital spaces, but this conversation, for instance, would still be much better over a coffee. You can’t replace eye contact. However, a mixture of the two, remote working and in person, is absolutely the future.

JS: **It seems the role of design here is almost above the physical space or the environmental quality, but instead at an organisational level. How are we designing our future organisations? How permissive are they and how much are they going to trust their employees and teams?**

TH: We should not underestimate the social side of the office, or the pride that people have in working for the companies that they work for. We need to think that work can be done anywhere—you just pick the right place for the task you are doing. We need to design spaces to accommodate this, flexibility and amenity are key. There needs to be a variety of offers

and trust that people are able to choose the right space for the particular task they are doing.

JS: **What physical changes might we see in the workplace?**

TH: People want spaces to represent themselves and their aspirations, I feel there will be a flight to quality. It’s not clear whether people will be comfortable with hot desking. Will we go back to one desk a person? There will be far more collaborative spaces in workplaces and more diversity of occupancy. The working day might be longer, it may go from 6am to 9pm—with people coming into the workplace for part of that time. Again flexibility and adaptability will be key.

JS: **It might just come down to individual organisations and communication around these subjects. Some of the key concerns are obviously around health and safety, but also around things like belonging, wanting to be part of a team. There will likely be more focus on making environments right for productivity. What kind of comfort and control are people going to want? Will they want the workplace to be a bit more domestic in its nature?**

TH: More comfortable, less austere maybe, certainly connected digitally and controllable locally in real time. Some people are going to want to have that collaborative time, and some are going to want quiet time for work. This has always been the case—but getting the mixture right is going to be key to success. We might see the advent of a 50/50 split between collaborative spaces and desks. It’s not going to be radical, but perhaps better balanced for a hybrid way of working. The real change will be one of attitude in looking at the place we work. Covid-19 has accelerated a direction of travel and a journey we were already on towards flexible, connected and sustainable spaces.



A portrait of Emily Prideaux, a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a dark top. She is smiling slightly and has her arms crossed. She is wearing a watch on her left wrist and several rings on her fingers. The background is a light-colored wood paneling.

Emily Prideaux

Hugh Pearman profiles newest Derwent London Director,
Emily Prideaux.

When Derwent London co-founder and design lead Simon Silver retired back in March, that left a vacancy on the Board of Directors. So step forward, Emily Prideaux who, as she hastens to point out, is absolutely not filling his shoes—though she certainly has a keen interest in design and is involved in shaping the next generation of developments. For many years she has worked with the company’s customers, new and existing, on the leasing side of the business.

That’s the thing about Derwent London: it is often referred to as a developer and is, but it also holds on to the majority of its properties, and so is a very significant investor. The flow of rental income, for a public listed company, provides buoyancy, dividends for shareholders, reduces borrowings and covers costs. The relationship with occupiers, often very long-term, is close: organisations can grow from start-up to market-leader, need to expand their premises, change location, re-organise their structures and need a helping hand on occasion. Being a landlord is the best possible source of knowledge on how people work and what the market wants, so Emily is working from a position of considerable understanding when it comes to new developments.

She led the Leasing team for the big new developments at 80 Charlotte Street and Soho Place W1 but before those there was something else: the previous buildings at 80 Charlotte Street had long been occupied by advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi, now part of the Publicis Groupe. Long before their lease was up and redevelopment began, Emily was working with them on plans to move the very different parts of their business into two new brand-new buildings: Turnmill EC1 in Clerkenwell designed by Piercy&Company, and 40 Chancery Lane WC2 in Holborn by Bennetts Associates. “It was a very good example of how we like to do things,” she says. “We had a strong relationship with Publicis and worked with them to put together their strategy.” That way the process could be seamless: the tenants got state-of-the-art new buildings and because everything was within the Derwent London stable, they needed to move only when they and the buildings were ready.

So Emily’s work is intimately associated with the pipeline of new developments, and pre-lets of those are nearly always key to their success. There is plenty to be excited about, she explains. In the near future is the 125,000 sq ft The Featherstone Building, designed by Morris+Company, now rapidly emerging beside White Collar Factory EC1 in Old Street. Further ahead will come Network Building W1 in Fitzrovia—up to a 130,000 sq ft redevelopment by Piercy&Company—and 19–35 Baker Street by Hopkins, a nearly 300,000 sq ft mixed-use development. The late 2020s are likely to see a big expansion of The White Chapel Building E1 and the redevelopment of Blue Star House in Brixton to double its floor area.

The latter is Derwent London’s largest scale venture south of the river and the architects of the redesign are Carmody Groarke.

This was a world she’d always wanted to get into, she says—having shared an interest in property and architecture with her father. After studying languages at university, she went on to take a Masters in European Real Estate, and in 2004 joined property consultant Knight Frank—which was where she first encountered Derwent London as a client. Following two years in Vancouver (she and her husband are keen skiers) with CB Richard Ellis, she returned to London in the autumn of 2010 to join Derwent London and stayed. What’s the attraction?

“It’s the ownership. We are long-term holders of real estate. There’s an authenticity to what we do. The passion for architecture, the care for regeneration, making London a better place. In my customer-facing side of the business, it’s the pride in what we deliver, which is some of the best workspace in London. Meeting people and building long-term relationships has always appealed to me.”

The property world always used to be a bastion of maleness and to a considerable extent still is, but that’s changing, says Emily, and is signalled in various ways. “When I started in this business I had to wear one of those women’s suits,” she says with an almost audible shudder. It’s not just the dress code that’s relaxed, it’s also the way people work and live more generally. The corporate world is gradually coming round to the acceptance of men taking a real part in childcare, she says, that being pivotal for long-term equality.

The pandemic has accelerated certain aspects of social change and this feeds back into her work. “Now is a really interesting time. What’s next, what’s the future? What are people going to want from their real estate but also from us as people? It’s exciting and that’s what I enjoy engaging with.”



Greencoat Place

Victoria

With the refurbishment of 6–8 Greencoat Place by Squire & Partners completed, Space talked to Senior Project Manager, John Turner, and Tim Hyman, Derwent London’s Group Architect, about a case study in reviving a complicated and characterful Victorian classic.

Derwent’s estate off Victoria Street is one of the very few remaining Victorian industrial warehouse buildings in the area. John gives an overview of the site. “It’s equidistant between Victoria Station and Westminster Abbey and was first built in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Part of it was used to serve the Army & Navy department store on the other side of the road—there’s actually an interconnecting tunnel.” The site comprises a quadrant of four buildings: Greencoat House, Francis House, Gordon House and Greencoat Place. Part of Derwent’s portfolio since the late 1990s, with Francis House acquired in 2012, it has been a slow story of gradually improving and refurbishing the site piece-by-piece. “Although they are four individual buildings, they do interweave with each other,” explains Tim. “The other buildings in the quadrant are very much warehouses, so we have kept that industrial aesthetic in them. For 6–8 Greencoat Place, it is slightly different. In the lower ground floor and ground floor, we have what

were the old meat and fish halls from the early 20th Century, because this actually used to be the retail part of the development”.

With gentle refinements, Squire & Partners have given the lower floors a classic retail “front of house” feel. With terrazzo floors rather than polished concrete, areas with additional timber work, original cast iron columns, and a reception desk in the style of a classic department store wooden counter. “We have been very efficient and minimal on the floors above, which were rebuilt in the 1950s. We have stripped it back where we can to reveal some quite nice concrete structure. The windows have been replaced, the building has all new services. It’s become a really characterful and dynamic space.”

The interventions have greatly improved the sustainability credentials of the building, with new double-glazed windows, an all electric heating and cooling system, an LED proximity controlled lighting system, and enhanced sub-metering to enable occupiers to monitor their electricity and water consumption. Renewable electricity tariffs will be used to power the building. It also has new expanded bike space provision and improved shower facilities, for tenants who come to work on their own steam. “The location is absolutely fantastic and the locale itself is changing. We have a lot of residential areas around us. You can walk to the river, or walk into Mayfair in 15 minutes” explains John. “With a little time and space, what we’ve been able to do at 6–8 Greencoat Place is simply celebrate the good. It’s been a nice boutique study with Squire & Partners, who have worked with us on this estate for 25 years now, from the early inceptions in Greencoat House to this one, and they will continue to work with us on Francis House, which is the next one on the starting blocks.” Once that is complete, Victoria will once again have a working network of buildings, Victorian in style and conception, but truly fit for purpose in the 21st Century.



“With a little time and space, what we've been able to do at 6–8 Greencoat Place is simply celebrate the good.”

— John Turner



White Collar Factory
rooftop café

Simon & Simon

Hugh Pearman talks to Derwent London's Simon Silver and architect Simon Allford of AHMM, about what they have learned working together for the last three decades.

We meet in the rooftop café of White Collar Factory on the Old Street roundabout. The place has a particular significance: as Simon Silver, joint founder and previously Design Director of Derwent London, steps back somewhat (he happily remains a consultant). This place is the product of a particular line of enquiry that he and Simon Allford of architects AHMM carried out: the adaptable, low-energy, sociable, workplace of the future. “The relationship between Derwent London and AHMM is key,” says Silver.

We're here to discuss not only how this particularly fruitful client-architect relationship came to be and evolved, but also what the future shape of office working—and the buildings that contain and shape that—will be.

It all began with an introduction made by David Rosen of property agents Pilcher London, advisor and friend to the company since the start. Things had moved on somewhat since what was then Derwent Valley Holdings set up in the mid 1980s. The firm was expanding, promising new architects were needed to work on the portfolio of light industrial buildings the company had acquired, nicely in time for a change in planning law (the “Use Class Order”), which allowed such buildings to be converted into workspace without the need for special planning permission. AHMM was a young, small ambitious practice at the time, while Derwent Valley was an almost equally young, small, ambitious developer and landlord. Both have grown tremendously together, the centrepiece to a steadily expanding roster of gifted architects.

The first building that Allford's firm took on remains in the portfolio to this day, much improved and expanded over time and still AHMM's main base: Morelands in Clerkenwell, a classic example of a high-ceilinged light industrial work-room building. Allford kept things basic and affordable, in tune with the area at that time, as he turned it into offices and studios. A string of others of that ilk followed, not least the mighty Tea Building in Shoreditch. Then, relates Silver, Allford approached him with a new idea and the two of them established a design think tank. The post financial crisis recession was under way: time to re-imagine the workplace.

“We had already been very enamoured with these industrial buildings with their volume and light,” says Silver, “and you, Simon, came to us and said, “why don't we build a new building, as offices, but on an industrial scale?” This led to an in-depth architectural and engineering theoretical study, dubbed White Collar Factory, which eventually led to the actual building we are sitting in: all-new, but with lofty ceilings, lots of daylight, natural ventilation when required, cooled otherwise by chilled beams rather than conventional aircon. A no-frills building with a tough industrial vibe, but with bolt-on extras if wanted. A complete working mock-up was built first at one side

of the site, to test the market reaction. Aimed at the creative industries, its unconventionality turned out to appeal very widely because everyone's expectations of the office were changing, and the capital cost of providing the extra space—fewer storeys for the height—balanced out with higher rents driven by the appeal of the place. “Suddenly the thing was singing,” says Silver.

And this, the pair have discovered, has turned out (with variations depending on locality) to be the kind of space that people are looking for, post-pandemic. Embedded in the workplace business as both are, they know that people are wanting to get back to a place of work that's not also their home—but not in the same way as before. Generosity of space, good ventilation, access to outdoor terraces and courtyards, industrial-sized lifts and stairs—all good. “The pandemic has accelerated the things that we've been trying to do for 20 years,” says Allford.

“We think that the working pattern will be more flexible at the beginning and end of weeks but that—rather than overall shift working—there will be a mid-week core period when people will need to get together. Teams and Zoom will continue to be important—we all work this way now—but people will still want that contact.”

There's a final twist. Derwent London made its name converting existing buildings. Today, there's a growing environmental mood against unnecessary demolition to make way for new buildings. Well, two people—client and architect, the two Simons, have already learnt a lot about the new techniques of ultra-low carbon construction. As we leave, Allford shows us the huge basement of the White Collar Factory. Now with a mezzanine gallery floor added, it has become the new second London studio for AHMM.

Unknown London

Stockwell Bus Garage

Hugh Pearman – Architecture critic and author

It's a characteristic of older London that great big buildings were slotted very tightly into the streetscape. Theatres, factories, even football stadia were built cheek-by-jowl with rows of terraced houses, half-hidden, little or no space around them. The same was true with tram and bus depots. By the time the mighty Stockwell Bus Garage was built at the start of the 1950s, this approach still held. The building with its rhythm of soaring concrete arches is enormous but despite the fact that up to 200 red double and single deckers are moving in and out all the time, along with all the service and rescue vehicles associated with such a large fleet, it's a good neighbour.

The building was designed by Adie Button and Partners and opened in 1952 as buses were taking over from trams. It was quite a departure for George Adie (1901–89) and Frederick Button (1901–69) who pre-war had been into Art Deco-ish apartment buildings and hotels including the Park Lane Hotel (now the Sheraton Grand) overlooking Green Park on Piccadilly. But the post-war world was very different. While they were designing the bus garage, overseen by London Transport's chief architect Thomas Bilbow, the Festival of Britain, a showpiece of adventurous architecture

with its Dome of Discovery, was under way. All those buses needed a very large, well-lit, column-free space. It had to be tall so the exhaust fumes could be vented out. It was essentially a large factory. Adie, Button and their engineering colleagues turned these prosaic requirements into something that caught the imagination of the time.

The best view is the long row of outward-leaning gables along Lansdowne Way, a sinusoidal ripple of concrete and glass. In all there are ten great arches supporting the barrel-vaulted, part-glazed roofs. Their street ends are relatively low but they soar upwards from there, peek inside (take care, it's a busy place) and the buses seem almost diminutive in this mighty space, 373 feet long. On the Binfield Road side you get well-mannered red-brick workshops, rest areas and offices. On the western end it's just sliced off so you see the edge of one complete arch, walled beneath in brick and high-level glazing.

It's part of the great design legacy of London Transport. It's looking a bit neglected today, but is listed Grade II*, a mark of its high importance. It deserves to be spruced up. This rapidly-improving South London area demands it.





“All my work begins with trying to capture the energy of a given situation: in this case it is the invisible lines of choreography in the mind of dancers as they rehearsed at the Royal Opera House.”

Hugo Dalton

Choreographic Form 2021

The Poets' Park