

QUARTER

A publication by SOLUS



DESIGN
WITH
DEBRIS

32

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Quarter 32 is here, and it's filled with passion for the world of design.

Quarter is our love letter to the world, a space where we explore and express our concerns for our community. Within these pages, we offer a glimpse of who we are and who we strive to be.

In this edition, you'll find an account of Narinder Sagoo MBE's inspiring talk, 'The Power of the Pen', where he explores the profound impact drawing has had on his life and career. While I've done my best to capture the essence of his words, I encourage you to follow the embedded links to experience the talk for yourself.

This edition boasts a cracking Products section, featuring Spolia, a new customisable terrazzo; Pantelleria, inspired by a volcanic island; and Windy, a collection from Oki Sato's nendo. We also delve into Finsbury Dials, a Stiff + Trevillion/Greycoat project that uses Spolia, with a fascinating video by Superbeam about 'The Building that Built a Building'.

In Projects, we cover One Centenary Way in Birmingham, a remarkable Howells and Weedon project spanning an active road tunnel. We also explore Grainhouse by Barr Gazetas, SUSHISAMBA Edinburgh by Jestico + Whiles, and Hoar Cross hall by BHB.

Our long read is the second piece in our Under the Table series. I spent a few hours with Ian Simpson and Rachel Haugh, learning about their journey from a competition practice run in their spare time to the globally significant practice SimpsonHaugh is today.

We hope you enjoy this edition as much as we enjoyed making it.

Conleth Buckley, Editor

conlethbuckley@solusceramics.com



Hi, I'm Jo. I manage and produce events at Solus. I've always been passionate about hospitality and events as an art form that welcomes, celebrates, and creates community.

Community *is* culture. We support our community by providing spaces for cultural collaboration. Our Clerkenwell and Manchester showrooms, our regional pop-up events, and the Quarter magazine are all spaces where we bring people together.

We've had some amazing events this year. Some highlights for me include Daniel Avery's set on the last night of Clerkenwell Design Week; collaborating with Kvadrat, Ege, and the Modest Merchant on a wine-tasting walk; and hosting the fabulous Chirpse Hurts podcast.

In the coming months, we have an ambitious sequence of events with a major partner that will keep you fired up through the long dark. I'm lucky to work with a team of creative, ambitious, technically skilled, and open-minded people who work hard to create these moments.

Follow our socials for upcoming events and I hope to see you all at the next one!

Jo Sinclair, Events and Library Manager

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NARINDER
SAGOO MBE

On the transformative
potential of drawing.

The power



of the pen

A deeply personal journey through his life and career,
punctuated by the pens and pencils of his trade.

The Solus Clerkenwell showroom was buzzing with creative energy during Clerkenwell Design Week as Narinder Sagoo MBE, Senior Partner and Art Director at Foster + Partners, took to the stage to deliver his talk, ‘The Power of the Pen’.

A renowned architect and artist, Sagoo captivated the audience with his profound and personal journey through the world of drawing, illustrating how this simple act has shaped his life and career.

In a wonderfully creative flourish, the talk was punctuated by the giving out of pens and pencils which held particular importance for Narinder. These were accompanied by a slide showing a hand drawn QR code which linked to a playlist matching the mood and tempo of the pen in question. Guests were given sketchbooks at the start of the talk and were encouraged to draw during and after the event.

From an early age, Narinder found solace and escape in drawing, using it to navigate childhood difficulties and explore his imagination. He recalled lying in the park, finding shapes and faces in the clouds, a technique he still employs today to reveal patterns within the apparently random. His grandmother was an early supporter, telling him to “draw more.” The continuity of his sketching practice has helped him reflect upon his life and more deeply understand his experiences.

Narinder’s passion for drawing led him to pursue architecture, a profession where he could blend his love for drawing, design, and creation. He shared anecdotes from his student days, including a memorable incident in Rome where his refusal to remove his turban led to a missed opportunity but resulted in a sketch that later secured him a job at Foster + Partners.

Throughout his 28-year tenure at Foster + Partners, Narinder has honed his drawing and storytelling skills under the mentorship of Norman Foster himself and other celebrated draftsmen, Birkin Howard and Helmut Jacoby. While working on 30 St Mary Axe, aka ‘the Gherkin’, he was struck by Norman Foster’s ability to draw quickly during meetings with clients to capture conversations and explore ideas. This process of making the imagined real and changing people’s lives still fascinates him.

He emphasised the importance of creating an environment that fosters learning and encourages the incubation and growth of talent. Sagoo’s own team has flourished under this philosophy, expanding to nearly 40 individuals who contribute their diverse skills to the practice’s storytelling through various media, both digital and analogue.

Narinder spoke about his collaboration with Apple on an app called Procreate. A versatile digital art app, it offers a range of tools including Narinder’s personalised pencil. The app allows collaboration and is compatible with the Apple Pencil. He is currently working on Procreate Dreams which can create musically scored animations.

Narinder highlighted the power of drawing as a tool for leadership and communication. He believes that sketching can engage people’s imaginations and inspire them to contribute their own ideas, leading to outcomes far exceeding his initial

vision. He showed us examples of collaborative projects where his sketches served as a springboard for his team’s creativity, resulting in breathtaking visualisations and animations.

Beyond its professional applications, Narinder underscored the therapeutic and connective power of drawing. He shared his experiences using drawing as a universal language during a recent trip to Nepal with the charity LP4Y (Life Project 4 Youth), which Solus was lucky enough to sponsor. Through workshops and dream diaries, Sagoo witnessed the transformative impact of drawing on young women from excluded backgrounds, empowering them to communicate, visualise their dreams, and change their lives.

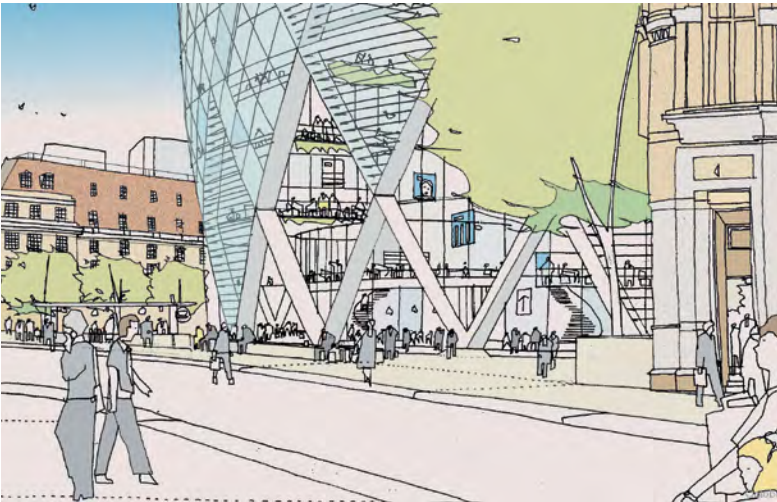
Narinder’s talk was a celebration of drawing and the enduring power of the pen. As both a therapeutic means of reflection and a valued professional skill, drawing has been a consistent line running through Sagoo’s life. His message resonated deeply with the audience many of whom lingered after the talk to share their deep relationships with drawing with Narinder.

Follow the link below to a recording of the talk.

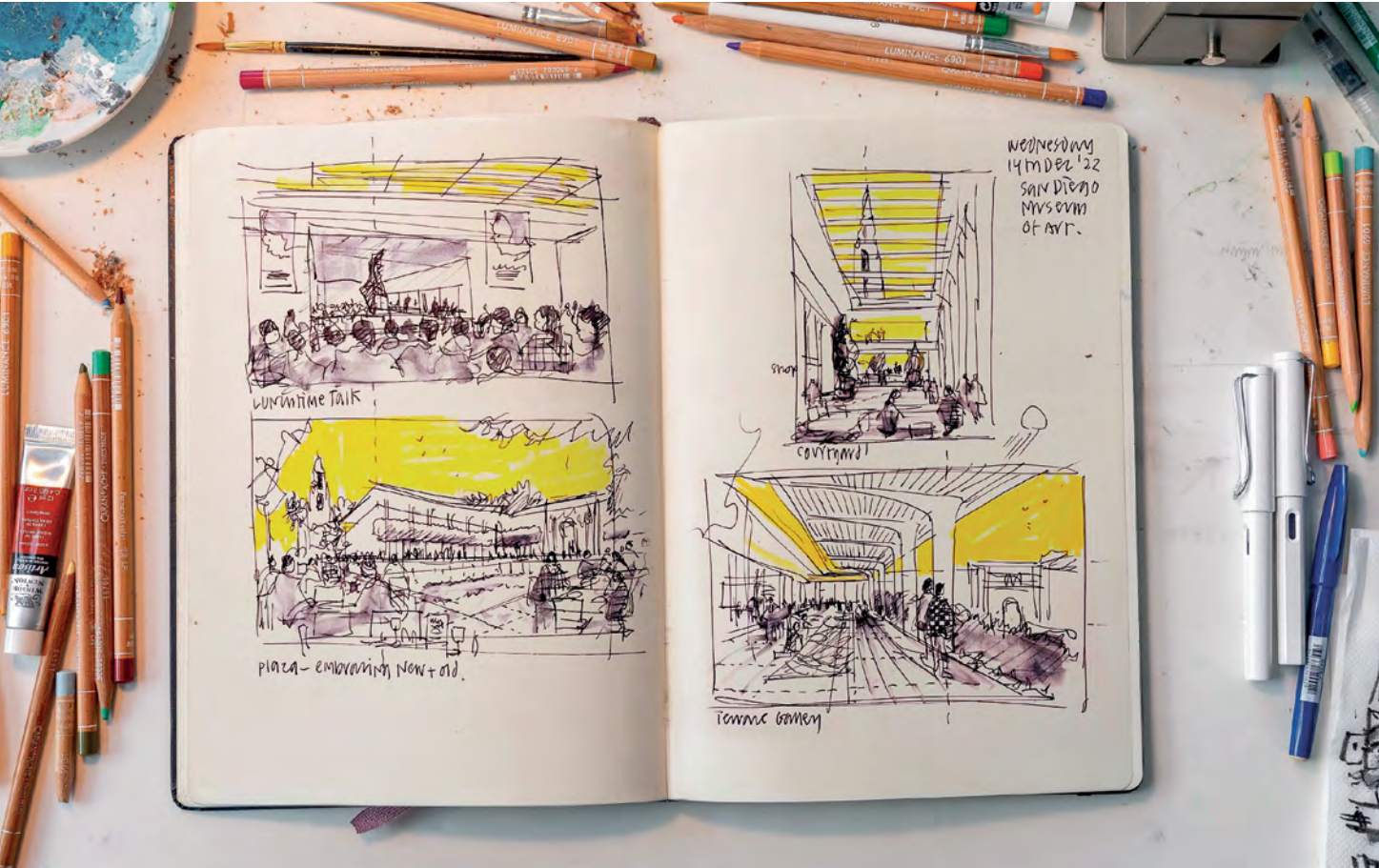


LP4Y programmes supports young women in Nepal into Construction.

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Foster + Partners



Narinder’s sketchbooks are filled with people and places, many of which have become realities.



THE BUILDING THAT BUILT



Spolia is a term to describe the repurposing of pieces of a demolished building into the fabric of a newer one. Solus has adopted this idea to present an intriguing opportunity to the construction sector.

Debris from demolition finds a new purpose.

We talk a lot about repurposing, as if it were an innovation, when in fact it is our modern wastefulness that is new. Look at any historic town in England and you will find that the older architecture is a kind of palimpsest – a page reused and overwritten. You'll find medieval arches in Victorian cellars, statuary decapitated by Reformist zeal shouldering the foundations of caffeinated start-ups, and roof timbers in Georgian terraces that were felled when Chaucer was sinking pints at the Tabard.

The practice of taking materials from older buildings and reusing them in new ones is not uncommon, and whilst it is sometimes Cumbrian shepherds making paddocks from the emperor's wall, it can be done with a bit more panache, as is the case with Finsbury Dials, the building that built itself.

Stiff + Trevillion were asked to retrofit this 1980s office block by Greycoat. "Retrofit is not new, but the focus on sustainability to this extent is. This is the first time that Greycoat has really embarked on a refurbishment project where sustainability has been the key driver." Dan Higginson, Director at Greycoat, told us.

The critical aspect of the build has been the reuse of demolition materials salvaged from the building itself, and the creation of a new product by Solus called 'Spolia'.

Creative Director of Solus Sam Frith has a strong working relationship with Stiff + Trevillion. When he was invited to visit the site, he saw the opportunity to do something special.

"There were acres of this gorgeous pink granite cladding the interior and exterior of the lobby area. It is a tragedy and fairly morally repugnant that so much waste exists in construction. That granite was destined for hardcore. I thought, 'Why don't we make a terrazzo with it?'" Sam Frith.

A BUILDING

Finsbury Dials and
the rise of Spolia



Retrofit is not new, but the focus on sustainability to this extent is."

Dan Higginson,
Director, Greycoat Real Estate LLP



The image above shows the bespoke terrazzo created for the Finsbury Dials project. The pink and black chips are made from repurposed granite salvaged from the demolition.



We can now see history of the building in the fabric of the building; a sort of architectural geology."

Sam Frith,
Creative Director, Solus



This project was predicated on sustainability and reuse, which was exciting for us. That would not have been the case 10 years ago."

Serena Frisby,
Architect and Project Lead, Stiff + Trevillion

Sam has deep roots in the UK tile scene and his first ever job connected him to a British terrazzo manufacturer. Now the last surviving manufacturer of terrazzo at a commercial scale in the UK, Sam reached out and began the process of research and development with the approval of Stiff + Trevillion.

Serena Frisby of Stiff + Trevillion explained, "We as architects realise that design can have a big impact. Our choices of how we develop, how we redevelop, how we make the best use of the materials, structures and buildings that we currently have is hugely important. Having such strong relationships with our suppliers, like Sam and Ian, means we can collaborate, innovate, and achieve better outcomes of which Finsbury Dials is an excellent example."

The pink granite was duly pulverised into aggregate chips, dropped into a low-carbon cement, pressed, cured, ground, polished and returned to the building from whence it came. Ian Hamilton, the Commercial Director of Solus, pointed out that "It's taking the old and making it new again."

The Finsbury Dials project demonstrates that sustainability and aesthetics can go hand in hand. By embracing the repurposing of demolition waste the project team has created a building that is both beautiful and environmentally responsible. It's a powerful reminder that the most sustainable building materials may be the ones we already have.

Serena Frisby told us, "This project was predicated on sustainability and reuse, which was exciting for us. That would not have been the case 10 years ago. The building would have been razed and rebuilt. It's really setting a new precedent for a central London office refurbishment."

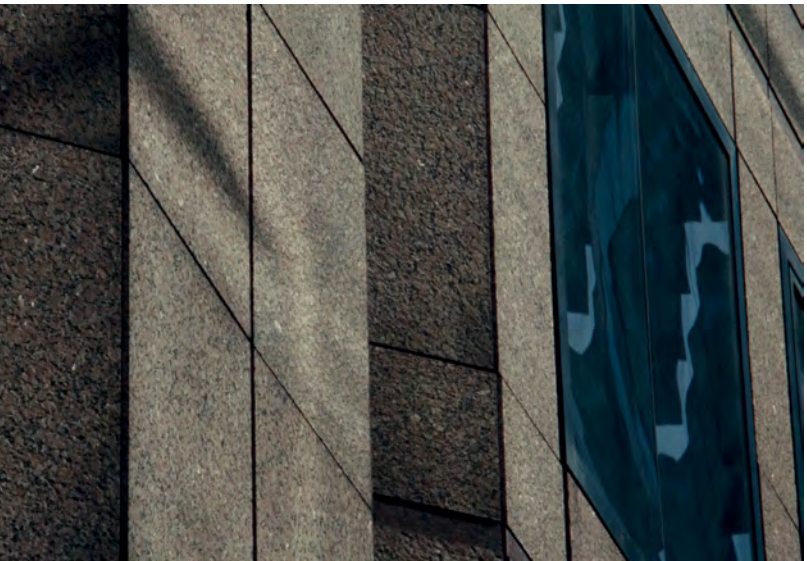
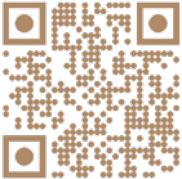
Finsbury Dials shows, in a small way, that ethical choices can and should be made. It shows that by rethinking our relationship to materials we can make spaces that are aesthetically and narratively compelling, as well as functional, safe, sustainable, and respectful of the resources of our planet.

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Tian Khoo Siong and Superbeam

VIDEOGRAPHY:
Superbeam

Solus Directors, Sam Frith and Ian Hamilton worked closely with the research and development team to create Spolia for Finsbury Dials.

Watch the short film via the link below.



Spolia

DESIGN WITH DEBRIS

21 COLOURS
3 FINISHES
2 SIZES



Terrazzo is an ancient art but quite a simple process. To make a tile, chips of marble and other stones are mixed with cement, poured into a mould, cured for several days, ground and polished, and finally installed and sealed.

Spolia differs from traditional terrazzo by offering the designer choice over the content of the tiles: choose your own aggregate chips, colour the cement, or use demolition waste like brick or metal as aggregate.

This customisability is demonstrated in the picture opposite. A lamp maker created a customised countertop using brick and ceramic from their old premises into which were pressed various parts of broken lamps: ceramic stands, brass collars, iron screws.

The cement used in Spolia is a low-carbon cement. This means high-carbon ingredients in the cement have been partially replaced with lower carbon materials such as slag and fly ash. The producers also use technologies which improve kiln efficiency and waste heat as well as alternative fuel sources, carbon capture storage and utilisation.

Spolia begins an interesting conversation about circularity and the legacy of a space.



This countertop was made for J. Adams & Co, a lighting designer, and incorporates brick from the fabric of their previous premises as well as ceramic and brass from old light fittings.

Spolia: transforming waste into beauty



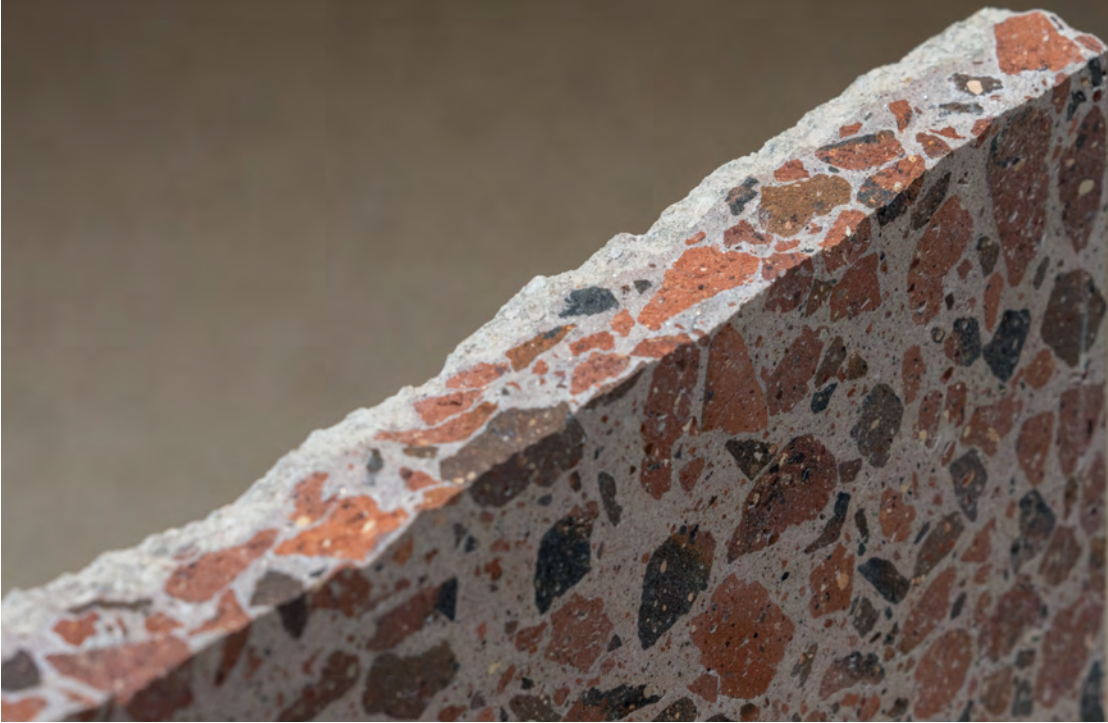
Demolition waste is collected, sorted and pulverised into aggregate chips for inclusion into new terrazzo products at our partner’s facility in Manchester.

Spolia offers an opportunity to the construction industry to rethink its relationship with waste. This groundbreaking terrazzo range can incorporate diverse upcycled aggregates sourced from demolition sites across the UK, transforming discarded materials into stunning, durable, and low-carbon surfacing solutions.

The bespoke offer is accompanied by a standard range of colours that will complement your design aesthetic.

Each fully customisable tile tells a story of reuse and revitalisation, showcasing the inherent beauty and diversity of repurposed materials.





Spolia

(Latin, meaning “spoils”)

Refers to the reuse of building materials or decorative elements from older structures in new construction. It is a practice that dates back to antiquity and was common throughout history due to the cost and effort involved in quarrying and shaping new stone.

Sustainability at its core



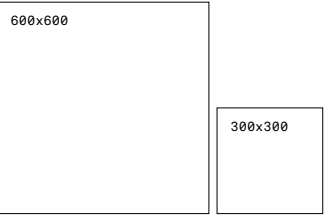
Sustainability is the driving force behind Spolia. Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) are in process, and carbon footprint data for each tile is readily available through the One Click LCA system.

Terrazzo is a composite product formed by placing aggregate chips into a cementitious binder then pressing out excess moisture, curing until set, and finally polishing to the desired finish. By utilising demolition waste as aggregates and low-carbon cement as a binder, Spolia significantly reduces the environmental impact of terrazzo production.

Solus’ commitment to sustainability extends beyond materials. Spolia is manufactured in the UK, minimising transportation emissions and supporting local communities. Terrazzo’s exceptional durability and repairability ensure a long lifespan, further reducing its environmental footprint.

Manufactured in the UK, Spolia is scalable and sustainable.

Standard colours and sizes



As well as fully customisable tiles and fabricated pieces, Spolia comes in a standard range of 21 colours using UK and European aggregates, in 300x300x25mm, 600x600x22mm, with 22mm thickness exclusive to Solus. The range offers a variety of finishes suitable for indoor and outdoor use, including options for wet areas.

For the bespoke and standard tiles there is a minimum order of 50sqm. For fabricated pieces there is no minimum order.

Spolia is competitively priced with Italian terrazzo, but with shorter lead times due to local production and a mechanised tile pressing system. As the production process is mechanised, terrazzo can be produced at scale and quickly.

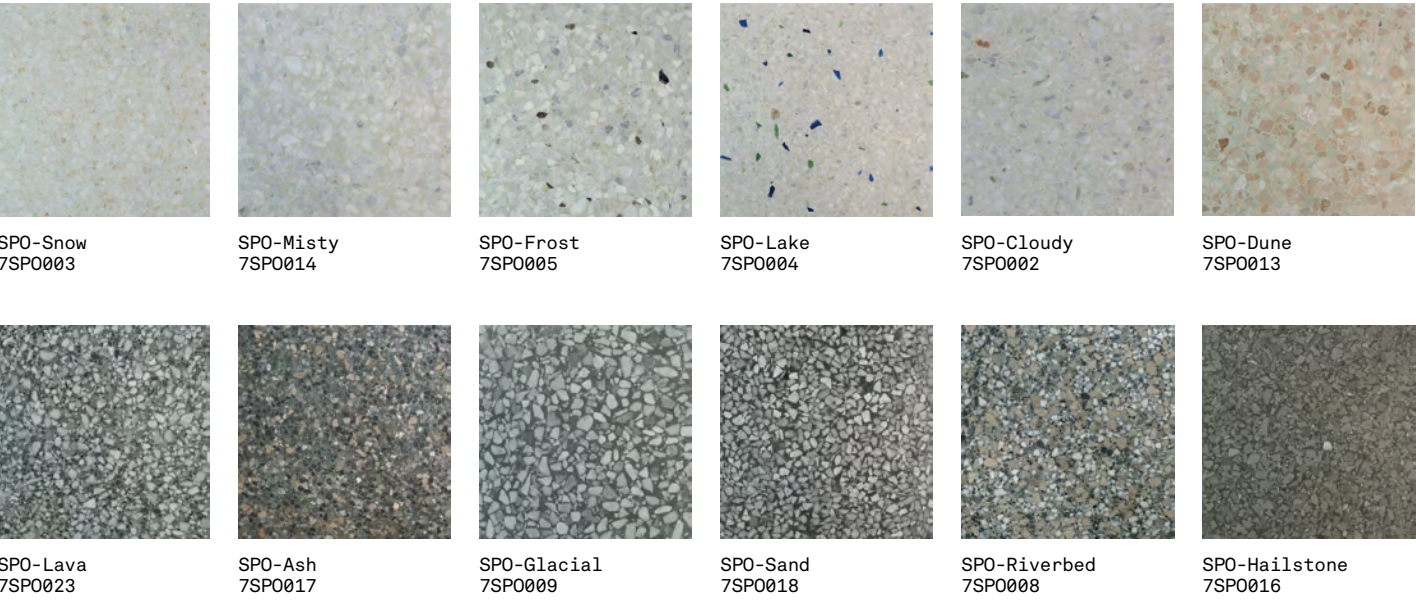
FINISHES:
Honed, Polished, Textured

APPEARANCE:
Terrazzo

MATERIAL:
Terrazzo

USAGE:
Floors and walls

All sizes are in mm. PTV results available on request. EPD available on request. Search for Spolia at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.





British terrazzo: an artisanal heritage

Terrazzo is a material with a rich history dating back to ancient Egypt and has been cherished for centuries for its beauty and durability. Spolia, proudly produced in the UK by Quiligotti, the nation's last remaining terrazzo manufacturer at commercial scale, builds upon this tradition with a modern, sustainable twist.

A family-owned business with roots in Italy, Quiligotti has been crafting exceptional terrazzo in Britain since 1935, using locally sourced materials and aggregates from Europe. Their expertise and ability to experiment with diverse materials, from metals and brick to mother-of-pearl, and now demolition waste, ensure that each Spolia tile is unique and meticulously crafted to the highest standards.

Quiligotti is a company with a rich history of employing local communities and multiple generations work alongside each other at their state-of-the-art facility in Manchester. By partnering with this manufacturer, Solus continues this legacy while championing a circular economy, British industry, and sustainable design.

Please contact us for the full technical document which includes details on the ordering process.



Bespoke fabricated pieces



Extend the story your terrazzo tells beyond tiles. Solus' customisation service includes the creation of matching fabricated pieces, such as countertops, step treads, and wall panels, all crafted using the same waste materials as your bespoke tiles. This permits a seamless, cohesive design narrative.

Picture a custom countertop featuring the same repurposed copper wiring and brick as your lobby floor, or a striking step tread echoing the colourful mosaic of your backsplash. Imagine a coworking space in an old bottle factory with polished glass and bottle tops embedded in the fabric of the building.

With Solus, your design vision can extend to every detail, creating a truly unique and sustainable space.



Tiles designed with debris create a narrative of revitalisation

Solus is excited to be able to offer a bespoke service allowing architects and designers to incorporate waste materials from their project sites into one-of-a-kind terrazzo tile creations.

Imagine a lobby floor resplendent with repurposed marble fragments and colourful ceramic shards, or a vibrant backsplash featuring salvaged glass and metal pieces. Spolia not only facilitates a tangible connection to a place's history but also transforms discarded materials into stunning, functional works of art.

"Spolia is an incredible product that I feel privileged to be able to bring to market. Working with Quiligotti to develop the offer has been tremendous and we are delighted to be supporting British industry to develop sustainable solutions."

Justin Jennings,
Product Manager, Solus

Discover the island of Pantelleria and the range it has inspired. From Opificio Ceramico and MADREMATERIA.

Pantelleria

The Black Pearl of the Mediterranean

10 COLOURS
2 FINISHES
3 SIZES



NEW RANGE

Wall:
2PTA108



Floor:
2PTA105
Wall:
2PTA110



36 miles east of Tunisia and 65 miles southwest of Sicily, the tip of a vast underwater volcano forms an island. The island, Pantelleria, has had many names throughout its history.

The unique environment and history of Pantelleria is expressed through this remarkable collection.

Abundant deposits of volcanic glass, or obsidian, drew Neolithic settlers here 10,000 years ago. They knapped the obsidian into cutting tools which were traded across the Mediterranean to Sicily, Sardinia, the Levant, Anatolia, and as far away as Armenia. They left behind domed tombs made from volcanic rock called *sesi*, which remain today.

Around 750 BCE the Punic people brought vines and built underground cisterns to capture the winter rains, sustaining them through the hot, dry summers. Agriculture spread through the deep valleys, adapting to the demands of the climate, and the island, now called Yrnm, enjoyed prosperity and autonomy under the mandate of Carthage.

The conquering Romans renamed the island Cossyra, and built a sanctuary dedicated to Venus beside the Specchio di Venere (the Mirror of Venus), a lake fed by thermal springs. Archaeologists have found three older structures beneath the Roman ruins. One is dedicated to Tanit, the Carthaginian goddess of fertility, motherhood, and the moon. The earliest dates to the Bronze Age, the time of heroes; could Pantelleria be the fabled island of Ogygia where the goddess Calypso held Odysseus captive for seven years?

Pantelleria, now slowly sinking as the magma below the volcanic edifice cools and degasses, is dotted with fumaroles and hot springs. Modern worshippers of the divine feminine can still bathe in the waters of Venus like their Bronze Age forebears and anoint themselves in mineral-rich pink mud.



Approaching the island, the bluest of skies looks down upon wine dark sea crashing against a beachless shore. In these wind-swept areas, a low scrub of rock rose, mastic, and myrtle gives way to *gariga*, consisting of lavender, rosemary, thyme, and other drought-resistant and aromatic plants. Arboreal shrub vegetation of pine accedes to forests of holme oak at higher altitudes. Bee-eaters, hoopoes, golden orioles, and kestrels cut the air while green tortoises, geckos, and the obsidian coluber hug the earth.

Wind defines the island. The plants grow low and slow, pressed by the sirocco from the south and the *maestrale* from the northwest. Tall, thick, drystone walls enclose lemon, orange, and tangerine orchards which adjoin the traditional dwellings, *dammusi*. The *Zibibbo* vines, a variety with roots in ancient Egypt, are grown in hollows and pruned to hug the ground.

Zibibbo gives a gloriously golden wine, intense and aromatic, with hints of orange blossom, apricot and almond, and is also known as *Moscato di Alessandria*. It is a good eating grape; the name derives from *zabib*, ‘raisin’ in Arabic. The fertile volcanic soil yields the best capers in the world, preserved in salt, and traditionally planted using blowpipes to fire seeds into the crevices of the protective walls.

The *dammusi* are an example of a vernacular architecture in harmony with its environment. Refined from existing structures during the three-hundred-year occupation of the island by the Aghlabid Emirate, the *dammusi* are low, vaulted buildings constructed using local lava stone. They typically have a square floor plan and are topped with a dome-shaped roof.

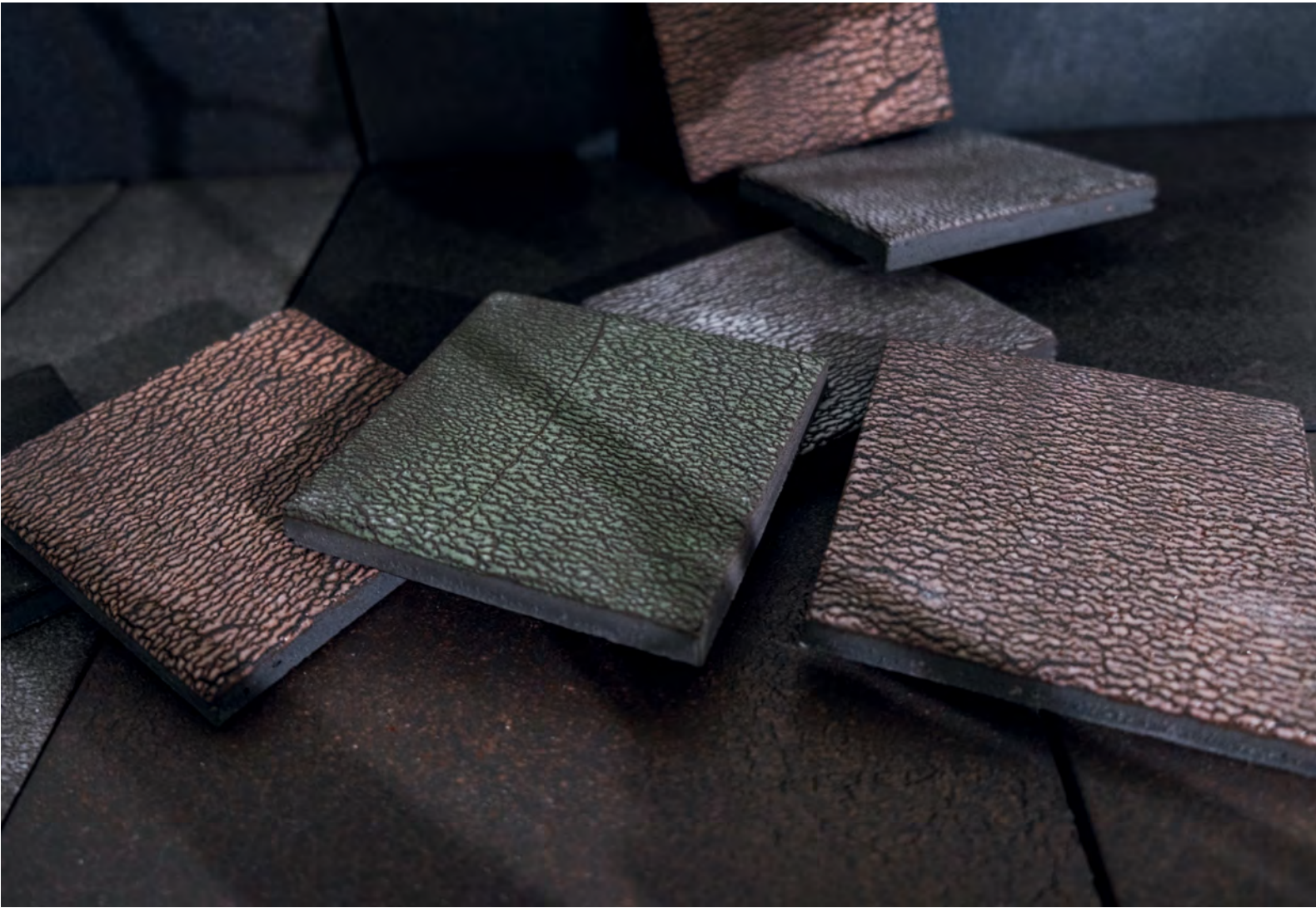
A *dammuso* is assembled without mortar and features a double layer of roughly cut stones creating thick, windowless walls. The thick walls, which retain heat in the winter, keep it out in the summer. The roof vault, or *dammus* in Arabic, helps ventilation. These roofs are coated with white lime and serve the purpose of collecting rainwater, which is then channelled into cisterns.

The quadrangular shape allows for easy extension. Internally, there are no doors, only *passiaturi*, open corridors which connect rooms and help with temperature regulation. *Passiature* also refers to the open-air social space covered by arches or trellises to which inhabitants retire in the evenings. A low wall for sitting on called a *ducchena* can be found here.

Architect and designer, Elena Pancaldi, has worked for years with the *dammusi* of Pantelleria. The use of thermal mass, natural ventilation, solar shading, rainwater harvesting, local materials, and a profoundly contextual and sustainable design are a source of inspiration for the team at her experimental workshop, MADREMATERIA.

Elena has drawn upon her long association with the island and her site-specific work enhancing *dammusi* to create a collection of ceramic tiles with Opificio Ceramico. The range, called ‘Pantelleria’, is an attempt to capture, in material form, the spirit of the island.

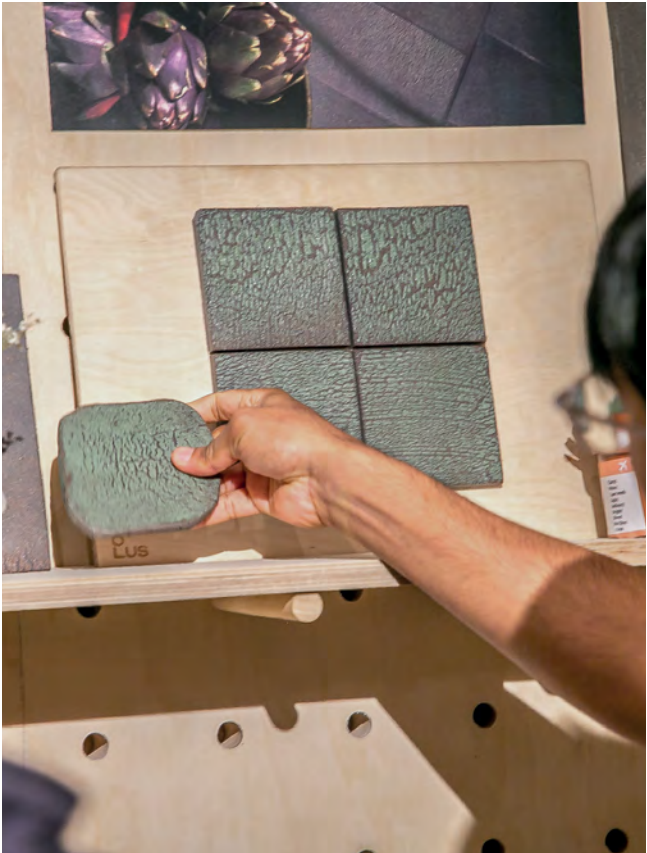
A new ceramic material, created from clays used in vitrified stoneware, is enriched with minerals and other natural components. For ‘Pantelleria’, the base is a black clay mixed



The domed roofs of traditional dwellings collect rainwater and dew in underground cisterns which irrigate a variety of crops.



ISLAND PHOTOGRAPHY:
Elena Pancaldi



with refractory stone elements, referencing the volcanic environment of the island. When the extruded clay pieces are fired, their internal compositions create unique, organic patterns on the surface of the tile which have the appearance of cooled lava. The highly distinctive features of each tile, including the colours, are retained through the body.

The colours of the range are similarly inspired by the island: lime whites, obsidian, the ultramarine of the sea, caper green, and a pink as soft as the Venusian mud. When the colour absorbs into the clay before firing, subtle variations in texture and tone occur due to the natural characteristics of the clay material and create a complex patterned matt finish. A glossy finish, created when the colour oxidises before absorbing into the clay, expresses the shining volcanic glass that brought people to the island in the first place.

As the sun sets over the *ducchena*, the orchard, the vines, the *gariga*, the shore and the sea, the winds slow and settle. Peace descends on this remarkable island Pantelleria, or as it is named in Arabic, *Bint al-Riyāh*, the Daughter of the Winds.

Solus is delighted to bring this spectacular range to market on behalf of our partners, Opificio Ceramico. We hope the story of the island deepens your appreciation of the collection.

FINISHES:
Natural R10, Textured R10

APPEARANCE:
Stone

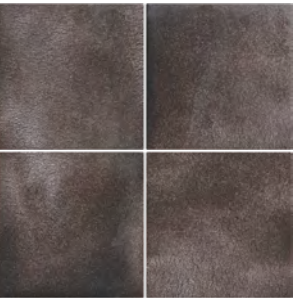
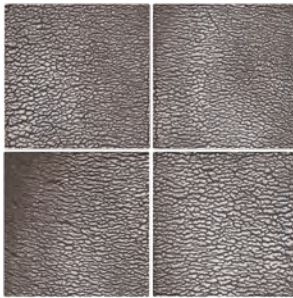
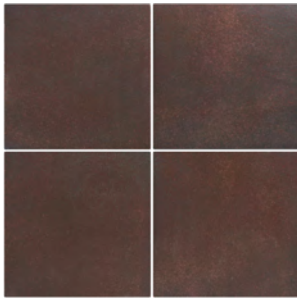
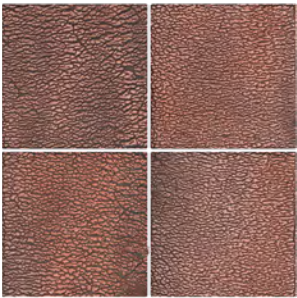
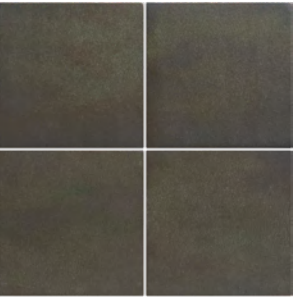
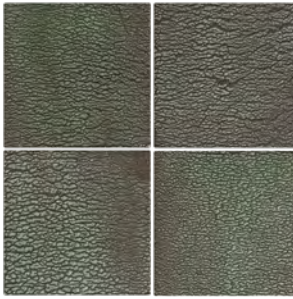
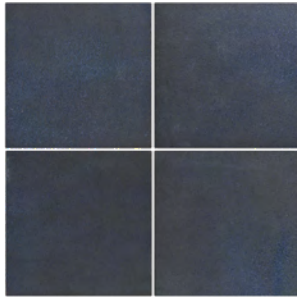
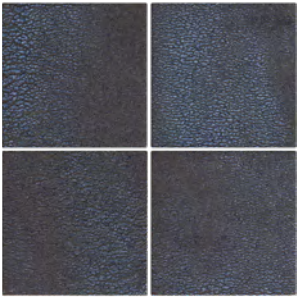

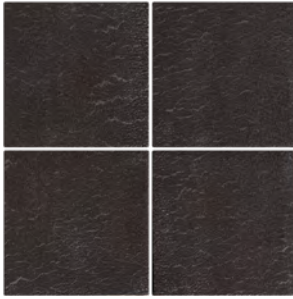
MATERIAL:
Stone

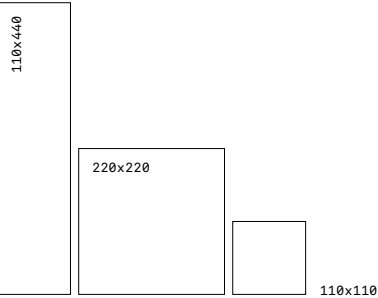
USAGE:
Floors and walls

SHADE VARIATION:
V3 - Moderate

“Pantelleria is a stunning range that tells a fascinating story about a place, an environment, and a culture. Opificio Ceramico and Elena Pancaldi have created something immensely special with this collection.”

Justin Jennings,
Product Manager, Solus

			
PTA-CALCE 2PTA104	PTA-CALCE BAKED 2PTA109	PTA-VENUS 2PTA105	PTA-VENUS BAKED 2PTA110
			
PTA-CAPER 2PTA103	PTA-CAPER BAKED 2PTA108	PTA-ULTRAMARINE 2PTA102	PTA-ULTRAMARINE BAKED 2PTA107
			
PTA-OBSIDIAN 2PTA101	PTA-OBSIDIAN BAKED 2PTA106		



All sizes are in mm. PTV results available on request.
Search for Pantelleria at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.



Pantelleria was celebrated with an installation featuring test firings (above) and a launch event at our Clerkenwell showroom. Elena Pancaldi talked us through her design and the creative collaboration with Opificio Ceramico.

NEW RANGE



Floor:
2VER120
2VER101

A VICTORIAN TRIUMPH

23 COLOURS
1 FINISH
1 SIZE

VICTOR



Victorian-style, geometric patterned tiles with the durability of modern porcelain.

The Vector range of porcelain tiles combines the elegance of Victorian design with the exceptional technical performance of modern porcelain. The patterned, flat-colour tiles, available in a variety of geometric patterns, can be laid to mimic the shape of a rug, helping to tie the room together.

Victorian tiles were known for their intricate patterns and vibrant colours, gracing the floors and walls of grand homes and public buildings. They were prized for their beauty, ease of maintenance, and durability. Mosaic path tiles, hallway floor tiles, and glazed ceramic porch panels were a 'must have' for the aspirational middle classes of the industrial revolution.

The Vector range explores this historic aesthetic while offering the durability and practicality of porcelain, making them suitable for high-traffic areas, both indoors and outdoors. With a PEI 4 wear rating and resistance to frost, these tiles ensure lasting beauty and functionality, whether on a bustling kitchen floor or a sun-drenched patio.

Advice on laying patterns is available.





Floor:
2VER105
Wall:
2VER105

“The Vector range contains some stunning patterns that will appeal to fans of Victoriana. It’s a tough, versatile range too, for use in multiple contexts.”

Justin Jennings,
Product Manager, Solus



Floor:
2VER118
2VER112
Plinth:
2VER112

FINISH:
Matt R10 (A+B)

APPEARANCE:
Patterned

MATERIAL:
Porcelain

USAGE:
Floors and walls

SHADE VARIATION:
V2 - Light



Floor:
2VER120



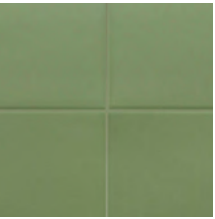
VER-White
2VER123



VER-Beige
2VER102



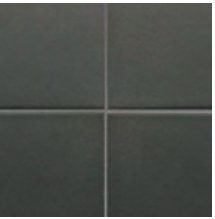
VER-Terra
2VER120



VER-Green
2VER112



VER-Blue
2VER117



VER-Black
2VER106



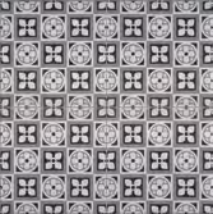
VER-Design A
2VER101



VER-Design B
2VER103



VER-Design C
2VER104



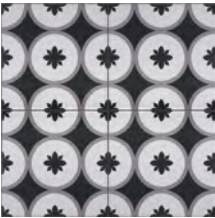
VER-Design D
2VER105



VER-Design E
2VER107



VER-Design F
2VER108



VER-Design G
2VER109



VER-Design H
2VER110



VER-Design J
2VER111



VER-Design K
2VER113



VER-Design L
2VER114



VER-Design M
2VER115



VER-Design N
2VER116



VER-Design P
2VER118



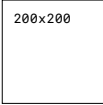
VER-Design Q
2VER119



VER-Design R
2VER121



VER-Design S
2VER122



200x200

All sizes are in mm. PTV results available on request. EPD available on request.
Search for Vector at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.

Windy

16 COLOURS
1 FINISH
1 SIZE



Decoratori Bassanesi X nendo

The shape of the wind – a new collection from nendo and Decoratori Bassanesi.

nendo, founded by Oki Sato, is a celebrated name in design. Humour and surprise are the hallmarks of this practice. The Cabbage Chair he designed for Issey Miyake is a great example of this. Sato took a roll of Miyake’s famous paper and cut it from the top end then peeled it back to reveal the chair within.

While working on the project, Miyake told Sato, “‘The difference between art and design is that with design you have to make people happy in the end. Art – you can do whatever you want, but with design you have to make people happy.’ It’s a very simple thing, but that was really inspiring for me.’

Windy, a collection designed by Sato, contains all the elements for which a nendo design is famous; minimalism, playfulness, and a dynamic aesthetic that pulls the eye. The collection is intended to express the movement of the wind as it ripples and swirls on water or across rice paddies and grasslands.

Sato explored the shape of the wind, which manifests through

the patterns it draws on surfaces in nature. Think of circles, lines, and waves when wind blows over bodies of water or rice paddies. It is redolent too of the raked sand gardens one finds in Japanese temples and shrines, another symbolic representation of flowing water.

Windy is an unglazed, full-body porcelain stoneware collection with four patterns that can be used on walls or floors. Dynamism is created by short grooves arranged in straight and curved linear patterns. Using chisels, drills, and bits in different shapes and sizes to create grooves, subtle differences in depth and cross-section change the perception of shadows.

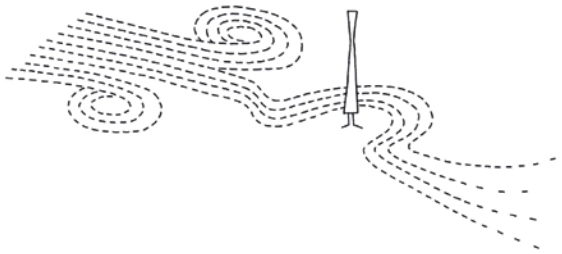
Extensive layout suggestions help to create a variety of patterns, and four subtle colours enhance design options. The product is developed without enamels and is protected by ‘salting’, an application that does not alter the appearance characteristics but protects against any intrusions of dirt into the micro-porosities, which are usually a natural feature of porcelain stoneware.



Dynamism is created by dash-like grooves.



The patterns are a stylised representation of the flow of wind.



FINISH:

Textured

APPEARANCE:

Textured

MATERIAL:




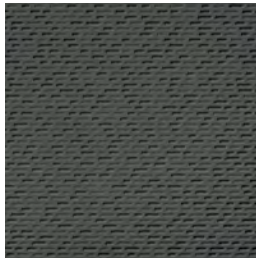

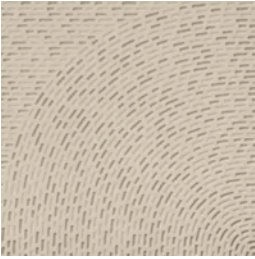
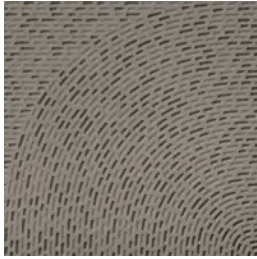
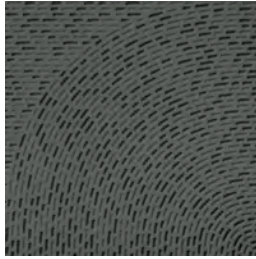


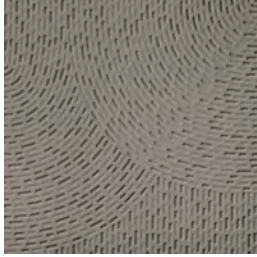
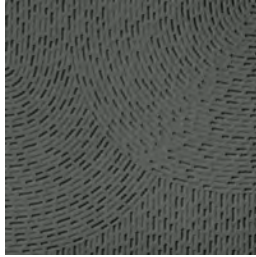


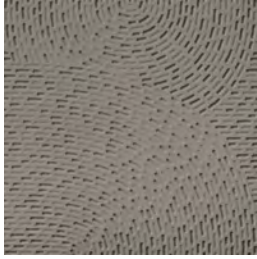
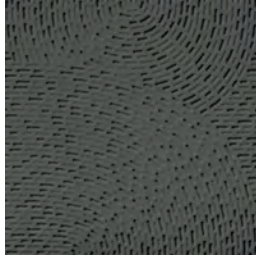
Porcelain

USAGE:

Floors and walls

SHADE VARIATION:

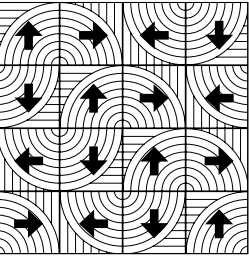
V2 - Light

			
WND-Ivory Design 1 2WND101	WND-Beige Design 1 2WND105	WND-Greige Design 1 2WND109	WND-Dark Design 1 2WND113
			
WND-Ivory Design 2 2WND102	WND-Beige Design 2 2WND106	WND-Greige Design 2 2WND110	WND-Dark Design 2 2WND114
			
WND-Ivory Design 3 2WND103	WND-Beige Design 3 2WND107	WND-Greige Design 3 2WND111	WND-Dark Design 3 2WND115
			
WND-Ivory Design 4 2WND104	WND-Beige Design 4 2WND108	WND-Greige Design 4 2WND112	WND-Dark Design 4 2WND116

185x185

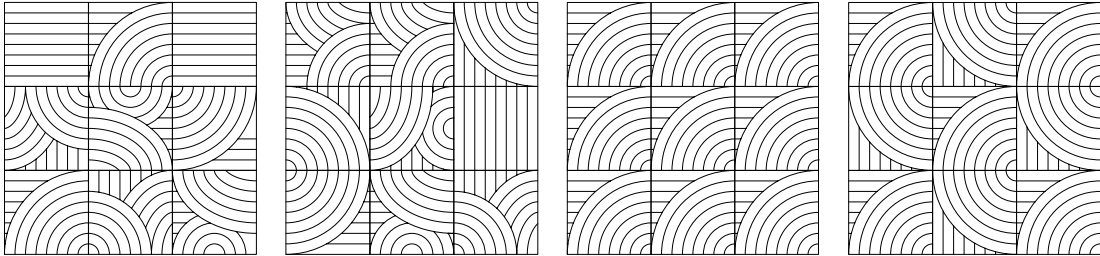
All sizes are in mm. PTV results available on request.
Full EPD available on request. Search for Windy at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.

DESIGN FLOW



An arrow can be found on the back of the tile that will indicate direction.

RANDOM MIXES AND LAYOUT SUGGESTIONS



These are just a few examples, other mixes are available.
Please refer to Windy brochure for more information.



“I am very excited to be able to present a range designed by Oki Sato. nendo is synonymous with good design and this collection embodies their playful, minimalist aesthetic perfectly.”

Justin Jennings,
Product Manager, Solus



OKI SATO -
nendo



Founded in 2002 by Oki Sato, nendo is a renowned design firm with offices in Tokyo and Milan. Their work, celebrated for its innovative simplicity, graces major museums like MoMA, the Pompidou Centre, and the V&A.

Beyond museum walls, nendo's influence extends to projects like the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Cauldron, France's new TGV high-speed train, and the Japanese Pavilion for the Osaka-Kansai Expo 2025.

Bottega d'Arte

A salute to Italian
ceramic history

39 COLOURS
4 FINISHES
2 SIZES
3 DECORS

Bottega D'Arte is a collection comprised of two series. Terre celebrates the simplicity of rural ceramic making and Città di Faenza the sophistication of the urban traditions.

Italy has a long history of ceramic manufacturing. A historical focal point for ceramics was Faenza in Emilia-Romagna which became famous for its majolica-ware glazed earthenware pottery.

NEW RANGE



Bottega d'Arte:

TERRE



Wall:
58TT131
58TT132
58TT122
58TT122D101



Tiles:
58TT127
58TT104

Embracing the warmth of the Earth.

The Terre series, reminiscent of the sun-baked earth of the Italian countryside, features a warm and inviting palette of 33 colours. These colours are available in three finishes - natural, gloss, and satin - providing options to suit various design preferences.

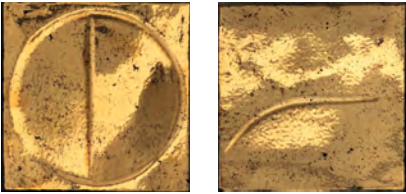
The series is offered in two sizes: the classic 150x150mm size, evoking the charm of traditional terracotta tiles, and a 75x150mm strip tile format, allowing for greater versatility in design applications.

Two simple decorative pieces are available in some of the colours from the palette, allowing designers to add character to their design.

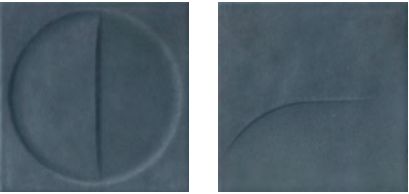
Artisanal aesthetics recall the traditional ceramic traditions of Italy.



Wall:
5BTT116
5BTT129
5BTT129D109



BTT-Gold Decor
5BTT122D101



BTT-Sky Decor
5BTT132D112



Tiles:
5BTT126
5BTT126D106
5BTT114

FINISHES:
Natural, Gloss, Satin

APPEARANCE:
Mono Colour

MATERIAL:
Ceramic

USAGE:
Walls only

SHADE VARIATION:
V2 - Light



BTT-Pearl
5BTT101



BTT-White
5BTT123



BTT-Beige
5BTT124



BTT-Mauve
5BTT106



BTT-Pale
5BTT114



BTT-Rose
5BTT115



BTT-Amaranth
5BTT125



BTT-Eggplant
5BTT117



BTT-Brown
5BTT116



BTT-Red
5BTT119



BTT-Orange
5BTT118



BTT-Coral
5BTT129



BTT-Terra
5BTT127



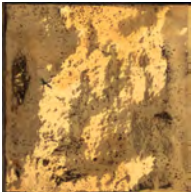
BTT-Cream
5BTT105



BTT-Mustard
5BTT128



BTT-Yellow
5BTT120



BTT-Gold
5BTT122



BTT-Ingot
5BTT133



BTT-Aqua
5BTT107



BTT-Lime
5BTT104



BTT-Turquoise
5BTT131



BTT-Moss
5BTT108



BTT-Marine
5BTT109



BTT-Green
5BTT121



BTT-Glacier
5BTT140



BTT-Arctic
5BTT103



BTT-Blue
5BTT111



BTT-Ocean
5BTT110



BTT-Sky
5BTT132



BTT-Dark
5BTT112



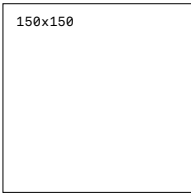
BTT-Coffee
5BTT126



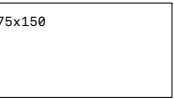
BTT-Night
5BTT130



BTT-Black
5BTT113



150x150



75x150

All sizes are in mm. EPD available on request. Search for Bottega d'Arte at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.



Bottega d'Arte:

Città di FAENZA



Inspired by the glazed majolica-ware of Faenza.

The Città di Faenza series draws inspiration from the historic city's tradition of glazed ceramics, which has been significant enough to coin an toponym, faience. Faience is a tin-glazed pottery also called majolica or delftware which became popular in Europe in the 16th century. Adding an oxide of tin to the slip of a lead glaze to create a surface suitable for decoration was a major advance in ceramics made by potters in 9th century Persia.

Città di Faenza offers a selection of colours, each featuring a distinctive gloss crackle finish that creates an artisanal and vintage aesthetic.

Like the Terre series, Città di Faenza is available in both 150x150mm and 75x150mm sizes, providing flexibility for different design schemes. The series also includes complex decorative tiles available with gold accents, that bring light into darker spaces.

The Città di Faenza series is a refined and sophisticated range which explores the tiles of previous eras.

The series is one of the first ever produced by the manufacturer, now revived for a new audience.



FINISH:
Gloss Crackle

APPEARANCE:
Mono Colour

MATERIAL:
Ceramic

USAGE:
Walls only

SHADE VARIATION:
V2 - Light



BTT-Ice
5BTT134

BTT-Golden
5BTT139

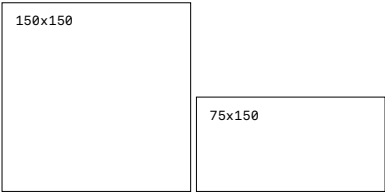
BTT-Sea
5BTT137



BTT-Fern
5BTT138

BTT-Rouge
5BTT135

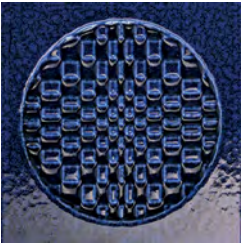
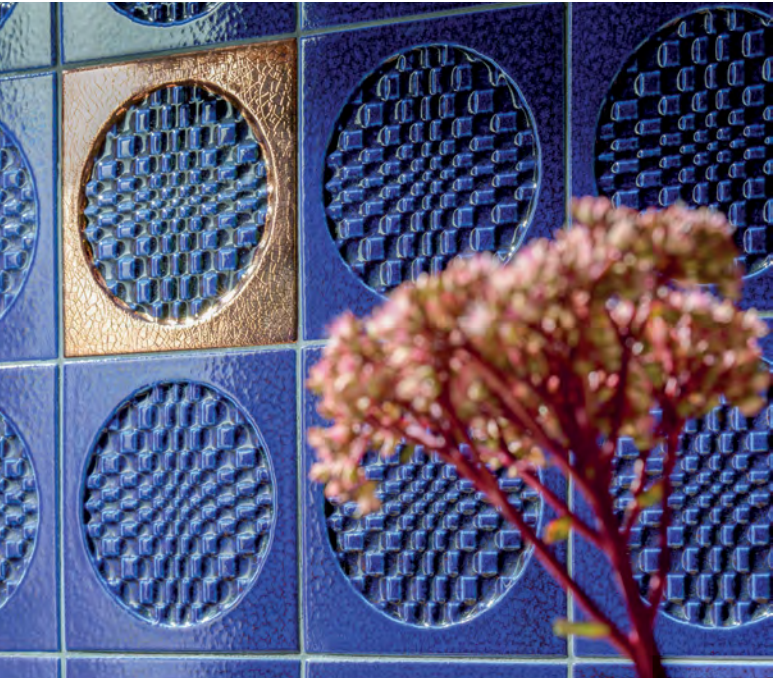
BTT-Navy
5BTT136



All sizes are in mm. EPD available on request. Search for Bottega d'Arte at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.

Décor designs are available in 150x150mm in a variety of colours and finishes.

Please refer to Bottega D'Arte brochure for more information.



Wall:
5BTT136D120
5BTT136D115



Wall:
5BTT117

Plinth:
5BTT135
5BTT135D114

"Bottega D'Arte is a culturally exciting collection that leans into the history of ceramic arts in Italy. The refined and decorative Città di Faenza series alongside the more rustic and artisanal Terre series make for a comprehensive offer."

Justin Jennings,
Product Manager, Solus

If 'truth to materials' is important to you, Impasto offers it. The intent of this manufacturer is to make ceramics that are not imitations of other materials.

Impasto

Impasto is an artisanal tile from a producer with a clearly defined design ethos. Available in 60x245x8mm and six captivating colours, Impasto has a unique gloss crackle finish reminiscent of plasterwork.

These porcelain tiles celebrate the essence of ceramic, steering clear of imitations of natural materials like wood or stone. The collection utilises traditional glaze techniques, ensuring each tile is a unique creation, free from any printed patterns. The rustic, handmade appearance of the tiles expresses warmth and character.

The deep colours of Impasto are achieved by traditional glazing processes. Brown, Soil and Green evoke the richness and depth of a lush woodland. Marine captures the intense blues of coastal waters while Navy explores the deep blue. Snow offers a soft, neutral backdrop while the crackle gloss finish adds an artisanal aesthetic with its fine network of delicate cracks.

The manufacturer of the Impasto is dedicated to exploring the fundamentals of ceramic. They believe in the inherent beauty and versatility of this material, and their production methods reflect this commitment. By forgoing imitations and embracing traditional techniques, they create tiles that are historic, culturally important and honest.

Alvaro Siza once designed a “watch that looks like a watch”. Impasto is ceramic which looks like ceramic.



The deep, irregular grooves are unique to each tile. Ideal for features within a larger tiling scheme, Impasto can elevate a design.



Wall:
5IMP105



Wall:
5IMP106



Tile:
5IMP106

FINISHES:
Gloss, Gloss Crackle

APPEARANCE:
Mono Colour

MATERIAL:
Porcelain

USAGE:
Walls only

SHADE VARIATION:
V2 - Light



Wall:
5IMP104

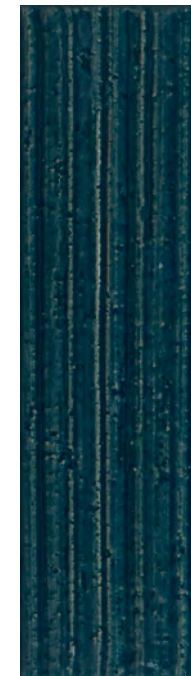
Dynamic artisanal finishes and powerful colours give Impasto its impact.



IMP-Snow
5IMP106



IMP-Brown
5IMP101



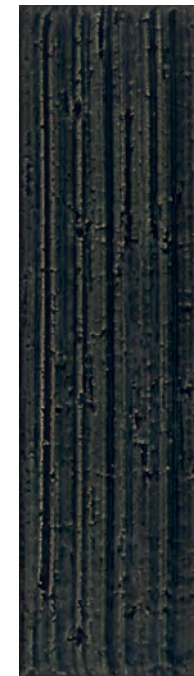
IMP-Marine
5IMP103



IMP-Navy
5IMP102



IMP-Green
5IMP104



IMP-Soil
5IMP105

“Impasto explores the possibilities inherent in ceramic materials. The producer has committed to aesthetic and technical restrictions, rather like the meter of a poem, to create ceramics that are true to themselves.”

Justin Jennings,
Product Manager, Solus



All sizes are in mm.
Search for Impasto at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.

ONE CENTENARY WAY

BIRMINGHAM

The Paradise development project is arguably the most significant piece of urban redevelopment in the UK so far this century. The 280,000 sqft One Centenary Way is one of ten buildings linked by three squares that reinvigorates a neglected part of central Birmingham.

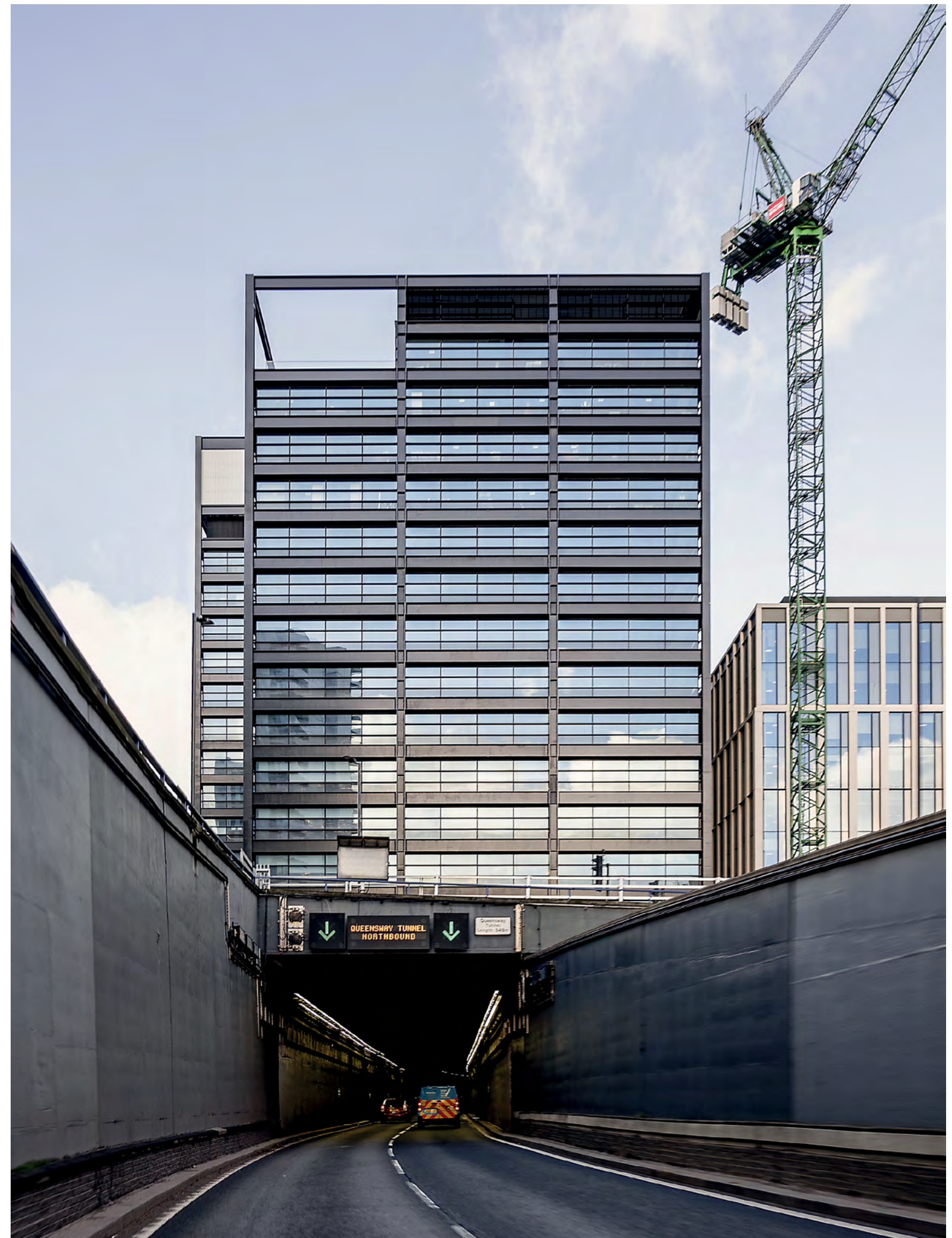
DESIGN ARCHITECTS:
Howells

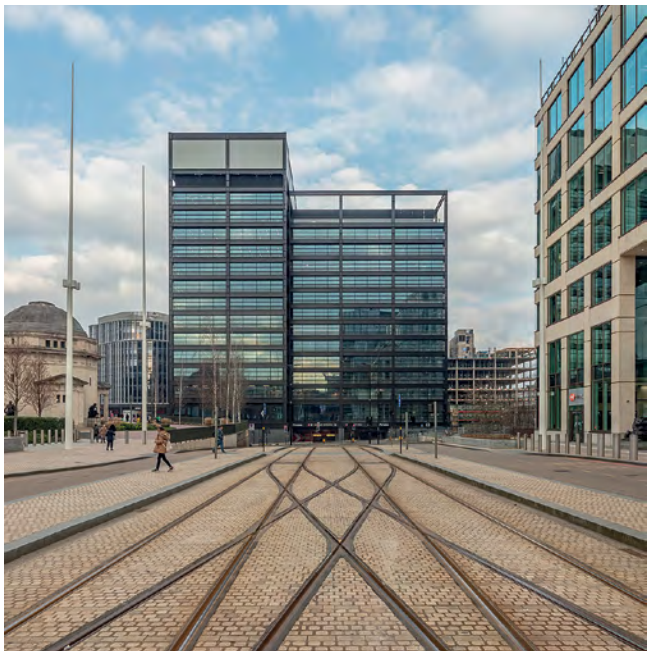
DELIVERY ARCHITECTS:
Weedon Architects

CONTRACTORS:
Sir Robert McAlpine
W. B. Simpson & Sons Ltd
Overbury

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Ben McPhee
Howells
Greg Holmes

RANGES USED IN THIS PROJECT:
Eloquent
Stoneblend





Solus supported Howells and Weedon Architects to deliver One Centenary Way as part of the masterplan for Birmingham’s most treasured civic space.

One Centenary Way in Birmingham straddles the A38 Queensway Tunnel like a bridge. It is a piece of design and a feat of engineering that demonstrates the brilliance of the team working on the Paradise development project.

Designed by Howells, delivered by Weedon, built by Sir Robert McAlpine, this 13-storey office building occupies a prominent location above a busy thoroughfare, connecting two of Birmingham’s most important public spaces, Chamberlain and Centenary Squares.

The presence of a busy traffic tunnel below, which remained open during the build, precluded the construction of a load-bearing core or extensive foundations.

Collaborating with Arup, Howells devised a design with sixteen, storey-height, Vierendeel trusses transferring the building's load to either side of the subterranean artery.

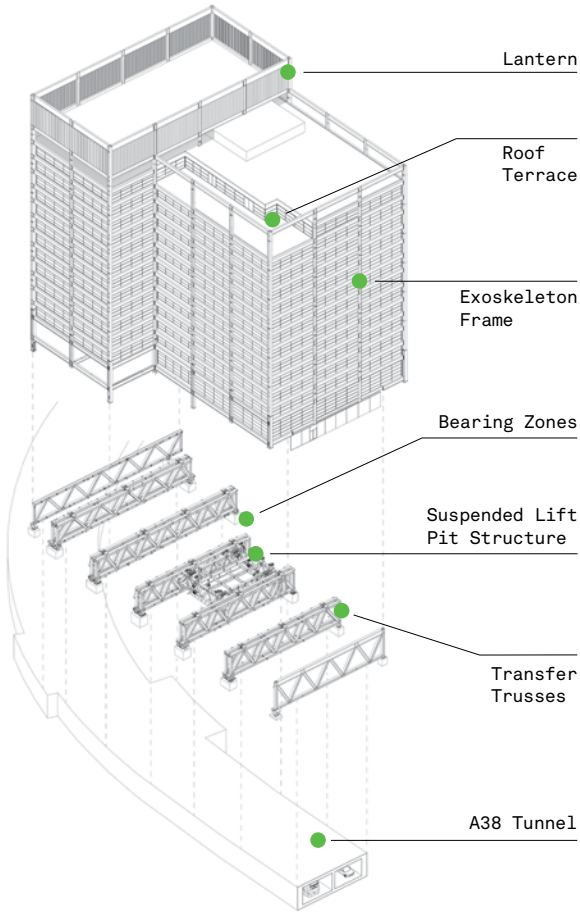
The steel exoskeleton resting on the substructure provides workspace for 3500 people, along with an outdoor terrace and street-level amenities. Crowning the building, an 8m high sky lantern, integrated within the structural grid of the façade, adds a 360-degree lightshow to the Birmingham skyline, visible for kilometres.

The building exemplifies the resurgence of this vibrant metropolis and best practice in the creation of sustainable spaces. It also marks the initial step in the second phase of Howells' ambitious Paradise Masterplan.

This transformative project envisions the creation of seven additional buildings, a 250-room hotel, and expanded office, leisure, and retail areas. With completion targeted for 2030, the masterplan aims to revitalise the city centre, fostering a more connected and vibrant atmosphere.



Exoskeleton axonometric



Credit: Howells

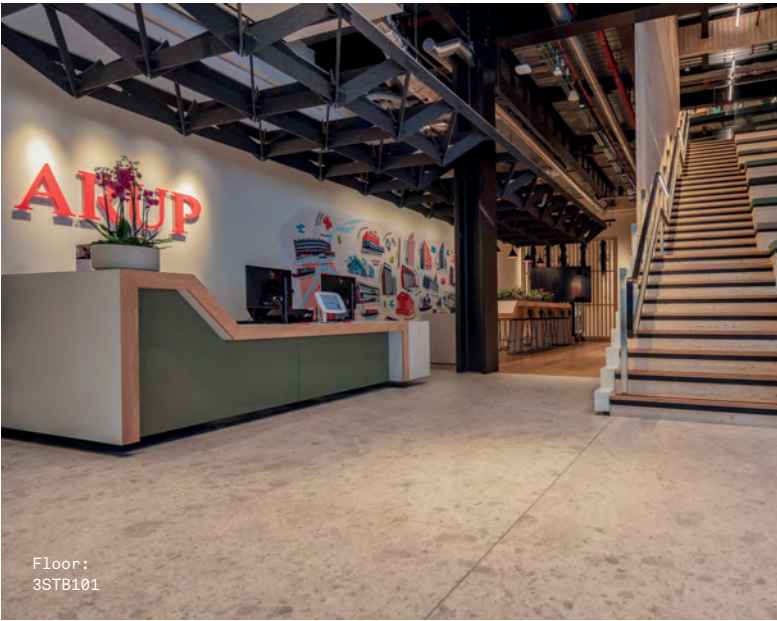


The interior layout utilises a 9x12m grid to minimise the need for columns, while the façade has a strong horizontal emphasis. Its interior spaces are highly configurable, while offering panoramic views of the city. Reflecting the external structure, the rooms feature exposed steel frames and a palette of natural materials with custom-made fittings.

One Centenary Way is also home to Birmingham’s first large-scale cycle hub, offering secure lock-up spaces for 500 bikes, and facilities such as showers, locker rooms, and bike repair and hire services.

Environmental sustainability and reducing carbon dioxide emissions were central to the project, which used recycled British steel to replace concrete foundations and superstructure, and harnessed wind and biomass energy. This fully electric building is equipped with intelligent management technology that collects real-time energy consumption data and, therefore, enables efficient resource use.

Optimising the production route from factory to construction site and the use of rolled steel sections made it possible to save 6000 metric tons of embodied CO2 and reduce the overall carbon footprint. The project aims to obtain BREEAM Excellent certification.



ARUP and Goldman Sachs have taken offices within One Centenary Way.



This was a holistic specification in which architects, builder, contractors, and supplier worked together to get the best result possible. We fulfilled specifications right through the building working closely with the designers to achieve their precise vision.

The work happening on the Paradise project is a great example to the industry of effective collaboration across the supply/project chain. Solus was asked to supply the project because of the way we work with people. As a Birmingham firm it is wonderful to be involved in the regeneration of our beloved city.”

Lee Simmonds, Area Sales Manager
leesimmonds@solusceramics.com





Floor:
3TUF104
Pool surroundings:
5PAS103
6ZLC283

HOAR CROSS HALL

ARCHITECTS:
BHB Architects

CLIENT:
Barons Eden

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Hoar Cross Hall

RANGES USED IN THIS PROJECT:
Tufa
Peninsula
Capital

Hoar Cross Hall is a world-class spa hotel occupying a nineteenth century interpretation of an Elizabethan country house on an estate dating back even further.

BHB have an excellent track record in conservation architecture and specified Solus to help with the revival of Hoar Cross Hall.



The Hoar Cross Estate was bought for 18 pence from Henry VI in 1450. Considerably more (one assumes) was paid by Barons Eden, the luxury hotel and spa collection formed by Steve Joynes MBE, to acquire the Hall and grounds in 1989. Solus recently supplied a refurbishment of Hoar Cross Hall led by BHB Architects under instruction from Barons Eden.

Joynes, who passed away in 2021 aged 85, was by all accounts a remarkable man. From humble beginnings he built a long and successful career in property development. His son explained, "He had an eye for spotting unlikely looking properties and regenerating them through careful redevelopment, shrewd judgement of the market and a natural propensity for looking after customers. It culminated in his greatest achievement, turning a near-derelect Hoar Cross Hall into one of the largest spas in Europe."

The current Hall was completed in 1871 by Henry Clutton, an expert in medieval French architecture. He built an Elizabethan-style house, incorporating elements of Jacobean architecture as evidenced by the gables, cupolas, numerous chimneys, and mullioned windows.

The refurbishment has been a work of conservation and modernisation. Contextual and historical sensitivity were as important as the technical performance required of a modern luxury spa. BHB have a well-deserved reputation for sympathetic restorations of historical buildings, including St Chad's Cathedral and Highclere Castle.



Floor:
3TUF104
Pool surroundings:
5PAS103
6ZLC283

State-of-the-art spa facilities occupy an external rooftop terrace.



Nathan Stubbs from BHB Architects shares, "For the rooftop spa at the historic Hoar Cross Hall, we needed something special. The Solus TUF-Gold floor tiles were the perfect choice—they echoed the warm, golden tones of the sandstone window details found throughout the Grade II listed buildings. The way these tiles complemented the natural palette and planting scheme curated by the interior designer was seamless. And thanks to our collaboration with Solus, we also ensured the tiles met the essential technical requirements, including slip resistance, to keep this high-traffic area both safe and stunning."

Steve Joynes' vision and the ongoing commitment of Barons Eden to maintain and improve Hoar Cross Hall means that the building will be enjoyed for generations. Solus is delighted to supply projects which blend architectural beauty and historical significance.



The bar café is a great place to relax after relaxing.



The Solus team always shine when given the chance to collaborate with our clients, so it was great to see such rewarding results from working closely with both BHB Architects and Barons Eden to find the best product for their new spa areas.

Due to the exterior areas being fixed on an external roof terrace using an open pedestal system, it was critical that we proposed a quality, 20mm-thick porcelain with the required slip resistance and loading strength. Our Tufa range was perfect for this, offering a soothing, natural travertine effect finish.

Working closely with one of our key partner manufacturers, Mirage, we were able to accommodate the challenging time and budget restraints for the project.

Some beautiful details add an extra special touch of luxury to the area, such as prefabricated stair nosing's with brass inserts, and our Capital porcelain mosaics alongside the Peninsular Cawsand tiles to surround the pool areas."

Lee Simmonds, Area Sales Manager
leesimmonds@solusceramics.com



HOSPITALITY PROJECT

SUSHISAMBA®

EDINBURGH

INTERIOR DESIGNER / ARCHITECT: Jestico + Whiles

TILING CONTRACTOR: Tilecraft

PHOTOGRAPHY: Ed Reeve and Marriott International Ltd

LOCATION: St. James Quarter, Edinburgh

RANGES USED IN THIS PROJECT: Bespoke mosaic



Floor:
Bespoke
mosaic

Eusebio's Waves: From Lisbon to Rio to Edinburgh.



The 'calçada' of Furtado and Marx arrives in Edinburgh.



Eusebio Pinheiro Furtado, a decorated veteran of the Portuguese Civil Wars, left a unique legacy beyond his military service. As Governor of the Castle of São Jorge in Lisbon, he designed the iconic cobblestone pavement, or calçada, of Rossio Square. This striking pattern, meant to evoke the meeting of the Tagus River and the Atlantic Ocean, became known as "Mar Largo" or "Wide Sea."

Furtado's calçada design would ripple far beyond Lisbon, most notably to Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro.

In 1905, Lisbon sent 36 calceteiros (cobblers) and a shipment of cobblestones to Brazil, aiding Mayor Pereira Passos' modernisation efforts. The resulting calçada along Avenida

Atlântica became a symbol of Rio, especially after landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx expanded and reimagined the pattern in the 1970s by lengthening the curves and changing the orientation of the wave design to make it parallel to the sea.

Centuries later, this Portuguese tradition found a new home in Edinburgh. Jestico + Whiles, designers of W Edinburgh's SUSHISAMBA restaurant, created a design directly inspired by the distinctive calçada, that was then expertly realised by Solus, in collaboration with Tilecraft.

Located in the St James Quarter, the W Edinburgh offers stunning views, an elegant speakeasy, and SUSHISAMBA Edinburgh - a restaurant which celebrates Nikkei cuisine.



“The W Edinburgh is a complicated set of three buildings including a listed terrace dating from 1776 and the signature Ribbon building. Space distribution is unusual and inverted. Public spaces are at the top of the Ribbon building with extraordinary views across the city and out to sea.

We are proud to have been both architect and interior designer, from inception to completion, for this unique hotel.”

James Dilley,
Director, Jestico + Whiles



In Peru for example, *Nikkei* cuisine uses yucca rather than rice for the preparation of mochi, leading to yuccamochi. Japanese Brazilians are the largest ethnic Japanese community outside of Japan and have given the world the *temakeria*, a fast-food sushi shop specialising in *temaki*.

Nikkei cuisine, arising from Japanese emigrants adapting their culinary traditions to new ingredients, is a perfect example of cultural fusion. In Edinburgh, the food is presented alongside a recreation of Burle Marx's wave pattern, transporting a part of Brazil's Carnival city to the heart of Scotland's Festival city.

“I love the idea that, especially during the many festivals, SUSHISAMBA can capture something of the spirit and energy of the Rio Carnival and bring it across the Atlantic to Edinburgh,” says James Dilley of Jestico + Whiles. “And while the weather might be different, both cities definitely know how to host a festival!”

SUSHISAMBA's presence in cities like Las Vegas, London, Dubai, and now Edinburgh, underscores its commitment to cultural exchange through food. The journey of the calçada - from Lisbon to Rio, and then back across the Atlantic to Edinburgh, accompanied by Japanese cuisine with a South American twist - is a delicious story of interconnectedness. It's a reminder that even the simplest patterns, like those in cobblestones, can carry rich histories and lead to unexpected culinary adventures.

“

Tilecraft approached us for assistance in creating this specific effect inspired by the Copacabana calçada. We were delighted to be able to help and created the wave pattern from 6x6 panels forming jigsaw pieces which were mesh mounted and assembled on site.

We used a marble tile and gave advice on design, how to create the pattern, technical details, setting out, using the mesh mounting and we liaised with the fabricator. It's such a stunning project and was a lovely technical challenge.”

Chris McGlennon, Sales Agent
chris@stratisuk.com





WORKPLACE PROJECT

GRAINHOUSE

COVENT GARDEN

ARCHITECT:

Barr Gazetas

CLIENT:

Hines

TILING CONTRACTOR:

Harper & Edwards Ltd

MAIN CONTRACTOR:

Knight Harwood

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Philip Vile

RANGES USED IN THIS PROJECT:

Rockmount

Solus was delighted to supply this groundbreaking project in London's historic Covent Garden.



The five retained façades conceal a unified and coherent workspace for Hines and Puig.

Grainhouse, in Covent Garden, is the conversion of five separate historic buildings into one integrated space. Barr Gazetas have led the transformation of a seed merchant's warehouse, a brass and iron foundry, and a non-conformist chapel into a new European headquarters for Hines, a global real estate investment firm.

The project involved the refurbishment, remodelling, and extension of the site and Barr Gazetas approached the work with a deep respect for its context and history. The design retains all four frontages of the original buildings, preserving key features such as stonework, mouldings, and brickwork. The block features Mercers' Maidens, the symbol of the Mercers' Company, a medieval livery company.

The challenge lay in creating a cohesive space while respecting the individual identities of each building. Barr Gazetas achieved this by adding two-story extensions, each tailored to

the specific characteristics of the building it complements. This approach ensures that the buildings retain their distinct external identities while internally merging into a single, unified workspace.

The Grainhouse project is not just about preservation; it's also about progress. Slate mansard roofs and timber dormer windows evoke the past, while full-height curtain walling and zinc/aluminium cladding speak to the present and future.

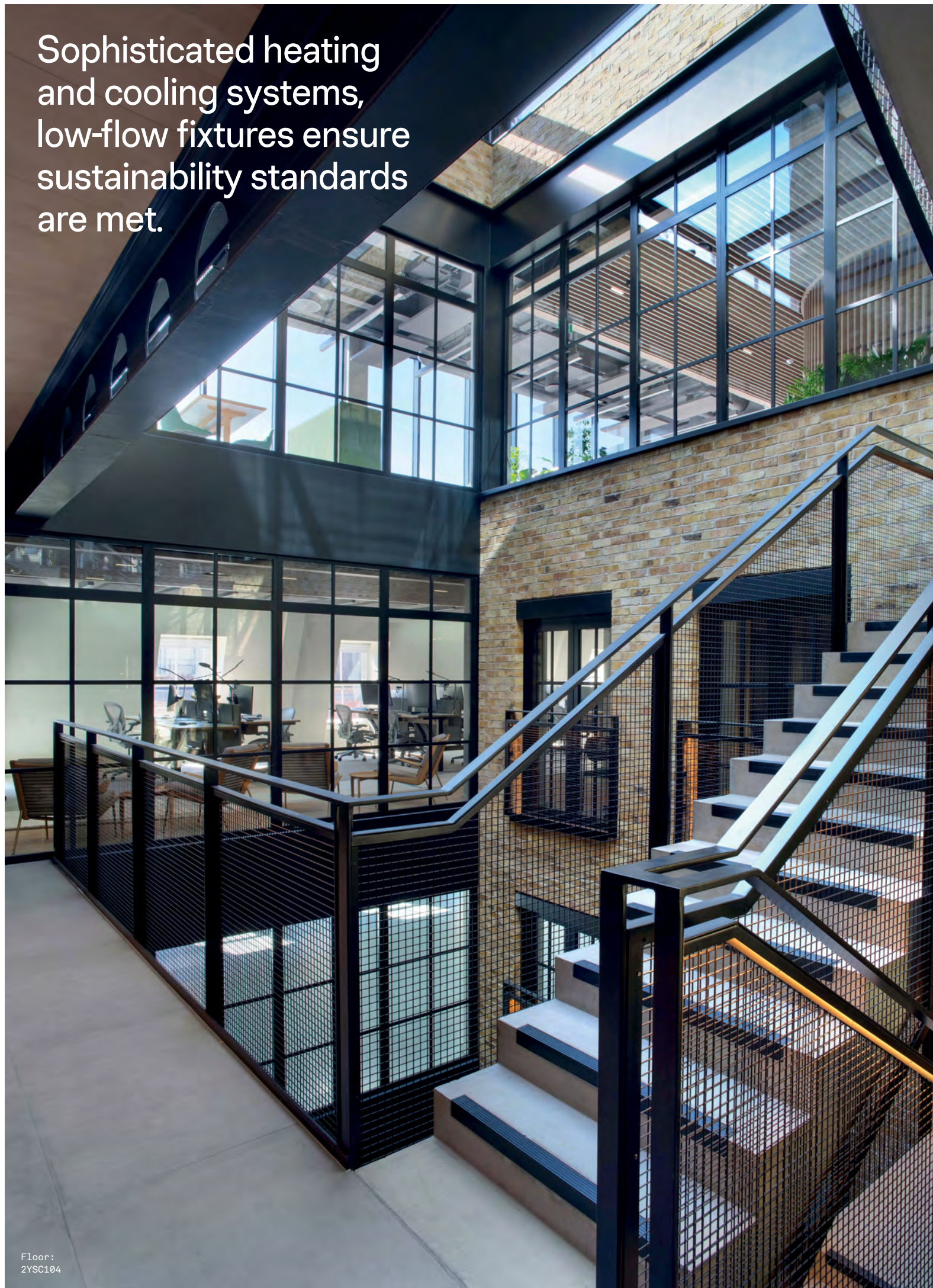
One of the most captivating additions is the structural glass windows atop the old chapel building. Extending above the roof line, these windows create a modern landmark that redefines this historic corner of Covent Garden.

Barr Gazetas has prioritised sustainability throughout the project. By retaining as much of the original structure and materials as possible, they have significantly reduced the project's embodied carbon footprint.

The mansard roofs support a terrace with enviable views of the capital.



Sophisticated heating and cooling systems, low-flow fixtures ensure sustainability standards are met.



Floor:
2YSC104



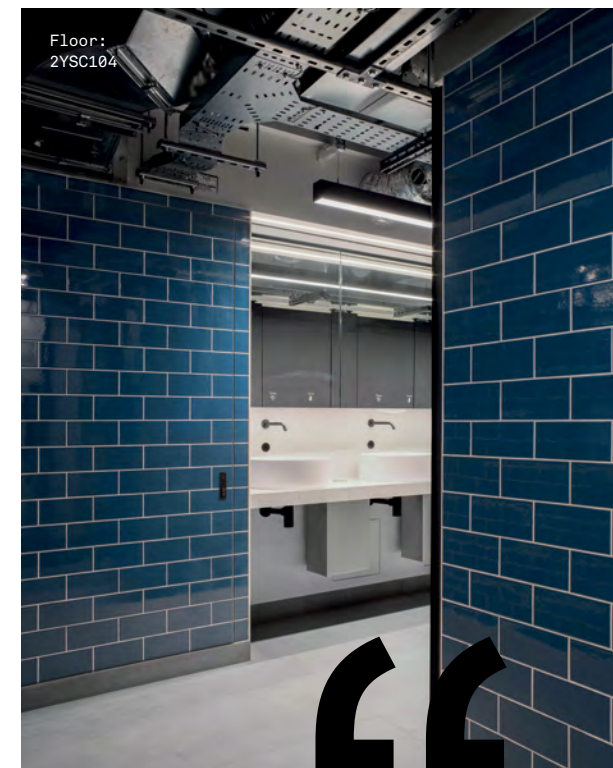
Floor:
2YSC104

Grainhouse is designed to achieve BREEAM Excellent and WELL Platinum certifications, thanks to features like state-of-the-art heating and cooling systems, low-flow fixtures, and a communal landscaped terrace.

Hines' new headquarters features a striking spiral staircase, extensive planting, and a calming colour palette. Huddle rooms, breakout spaces, and focus rooms cater to a variety of work styles and needs.

Grainhouse is not just home to Hines; it also houses the fashion and beauty company Puig, whose portfolio includes renowned brands like Paco Rabanne, Jean Paul Gaultier, Nina Ricci, Christian Louboutin, and Charlotte Tilbury. The ground floor welcomes the popular restaurant operator Caravan, adding a vibrant culinary dimension to this revitalised city block.

Solus Ceramics is proud to have been a part of the Grainhouse project, supplying high-quality tiles that complement the building's unique blend of history and modernity. Our tiles can be found throughout the building, adding a touch of elegance and sophistication to this exceptional workspace.



Floor:
2YSC104

Restrooms and changing rooms feature our Rockmount range.

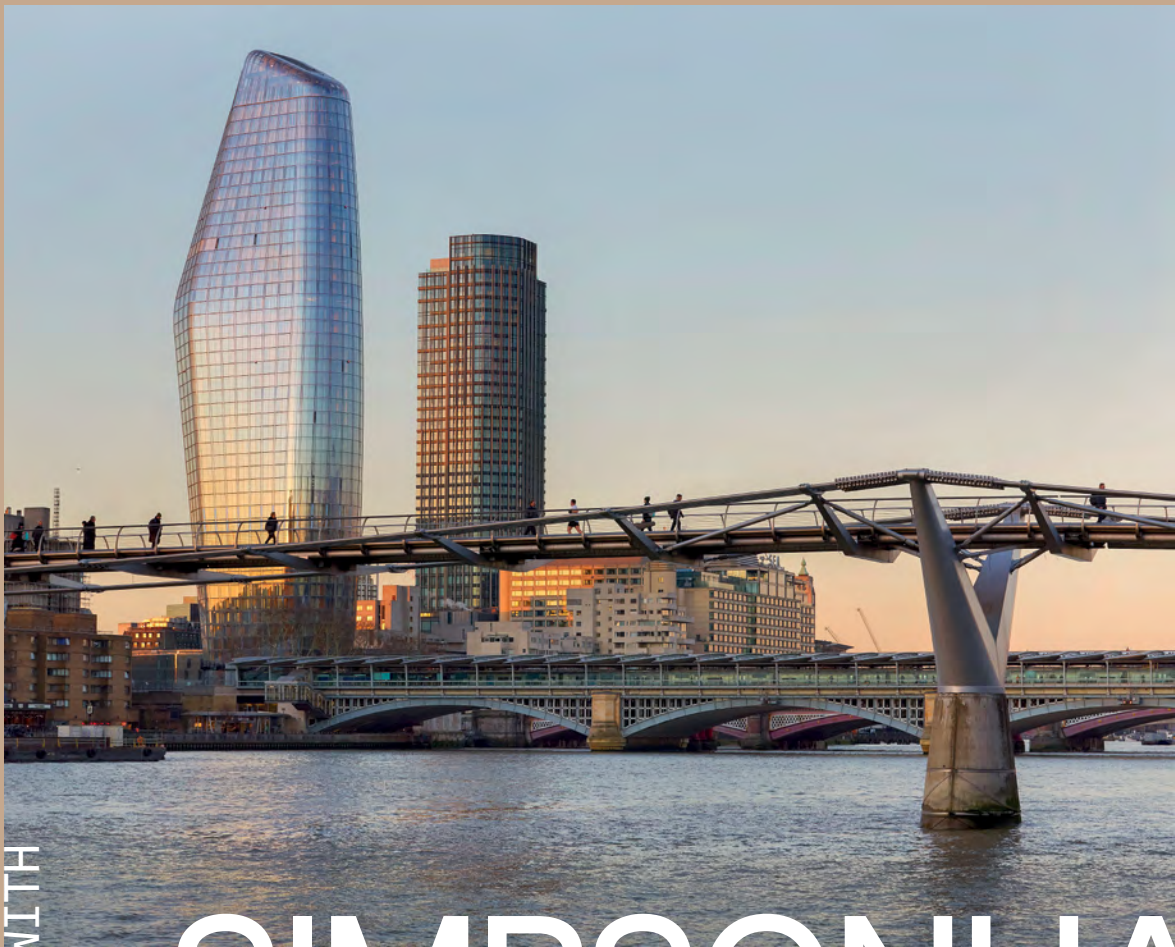
Grainhouse was an amazing project to be involved with. A challenging design across five distinct buildings in this historic corner of London.

We have a great relationship with Barr Gazetas and love working with them as they are always innovating and committed to quality products.

Thanks must also go to Harper & Edwards as the tiling contractor for the project. We worked closely to realise the design brief and to ensure all technical requirements of the material were achieved - the quality of the finish is of the highest level as the photos show."

Mark Ayliffe, Area Sales Manager
markayliffe@solusceramics.com





PHOTOGRAPHY:
Hufton + Crow
Jan Chlebik
Daniel Hopkinson
Simon Kennedy
Jesse Willems

SIMPSONHAUGH

Under the Table is an occasional series of interviews with prominent thinkers and practitioners in Architecture and Design conducted by our PR Manager and Editor, Conleth Buckley. The title comes from a story told by Alvar Aalto about his first apprehension of architecture, as a child, under the table in his family's kitchen. The series aims to explore the experiences that create an architect and how these experiences inform their practise.



Rachel and Ian have been working together since the late 80s.

SimpsonHaugh: From the city to the world

On a late September afternoon, I met Ian Simpson and Rachel Haugh at their studio in Clerkenwell at the heart of London's design district. Clerkenwell is the omphalos of UK design with most of the major practices maintaining premises within walking distance of each other. Proximity has created community and an almost collegiate feel to the neighbourhood.

Two of the most important design events in the world, Clerkenwell Design Week and the London Festival of Architecture, are hosted here. Solus is an active participant in both, as well as running our own series of events, providing spaces for exhibitions, talks, screenings, and celebrations.

Just around the corner from the Solus showroom, is SimpsonHaugh's London studio which they opened in the early 1990s. It is from this base that Ian and Rachel have overseen the design and delivery of iconic developments that have made a significant contribution to the London skyline such as One Blackfriars, Battersea Power Station Phase 1: Circus West Village, and Dollar Bay.

Ian and Rachel have been creating responsible, uplifting, and progressive architecture since their partnership began in Manchester in 1987. Their role in the masterplan for the rebuilding of the city centre helped kickstart the renaissance of the unofficial northern capital. SimpsonHaugh have earned a reputation for robust architecture that responds to local scale and context. Over the course of a couple of hours, we talked about their beginnings, their architectural approach, and their internationally successful practice.

Early influences and the path to architecture

Ian's initial encounters with architecture were unconventional. Growing up in a working-class background in North Manchester, his family's involvement in the demolition business exposed him to the destruction of old mills and warehouses. "It was my first real exposure to architecture, albeit in reverse," he reflected. This experience instilled in him a profound appreciation for the materiality and structure of buildings.

Rachel's early influences were quite different, shaped by international design magazines and original artwork which her father brought home after international business trips as part of his work in the textile industry. Her mother also influenced her. "As part of her teacher training, my mother took a unit in architecture. I was captivated by the books, and this sparked my interest in the possibilities of design and the transformative power of the built environment," she explained.

Despite facing discouragement from their school advisors, both Ian and Rachel were determined to pursue architecture. "We were drawn to architecture's ability to shape the world around us, to create spaces that inspire and uplift communities."

Ian's talents were nurtured by a visionary professor at Liverpool Polytechnic and after leaving, he joined Foster + Partners in London. Here he was able to see his designs become reality which struck him with a powerful sense of responsibility. He was named in a '40 under 40' list and returned to Manchester, "I felt the city was on a scale where I could make a difference."

Ian and Rachel first met while working together on a project at a practice in the northwest of England. They shared similar ambitions and started working together on competitions in their spare time. It was during this period that Ian began teaching at the School of Architecture at the University of Manchester, providing a source of income that would later allow them to set up practice together. Ian was awarded tenure at the university, but he and Rachel were already driven and determined to follow their aspirations in establishing their own practice. "We wanted to be more in control of what we represented architecturally," Rachel explained.

From the city: transforming Manchester

It is no exaggeration to say that Ian and Rachel have contributed to the resurgence of Manchester through their architectural vision. Ian and Rachel established their practice here and built a strong reputation. Like many post-industrial cities in the last century, Manchester experienced a decline in manufacturing. SimpsonHaugh have played a significant role in helping to reimagine and rebuild the city in such a way that Manchester now enjoys international inward investment on a large scale.

Their early projects in the city played a crucial role in shaping their practice and commitment to urban transformation. One project saw them working with a group who were buying a semi-derelict building in Knott Mill to refurbish. They were invited to join as partners and invest. Committing themselves financially meant they began to understand how to use money efficiently and where to place value.

"That building was a microcosm of our approach to the city. By allowing that building to have new life we could communicate more clearly what we were about," explained Rachel. They gained the interest of the Central Manchester Development Corporation, who could see they were committed to what they termed "environmental improvement". This culminated in grant funding being awarded for the regeneration of the area, with which they were able to help local owners and stakeholders upgrade their sites and buildings.

On the 15th of June 1996, in the heart of Manchester, the Provisional IRA exploded the largest bomb seen on the UK mainland since the Second World War. In current terms, the damage amounted to 1.4 billion pounds. Ian reflected, "The bombing was devastating but it was a catalyst for the reinvention of the city."

SimpsonHaugh played a vital role in working with Manchester City Council to rehabilitate the fractured city centre. They focused on reconnecting the north and south of the city centre, creating pedestrian-friendly spaces and reintroducing residential life, creating the dense, walkable city centre that exists today. "Prior to the bomb, there were about 400 people living in the city centre. It was a 9-5 city of shops, offices, and brownfield sites," Rachel observed.

Ian and Rachel are passionate urbanists who believe in density as an important part of the solution to social and environmental issues. "A city should have people living in it, but this is not always the case. Centres are often surrendered to commercial and retail development only," Ian told me. SimpsonHaugh fought for the inclusion of residential space in the masterplan against the prevailing consensus and were proven right when the landmark development they had designed, No.1 Deansgate, became a huge success.

A tall building in Manchester was a bold and visionary move at the time but more were to follow. Cultural spaces like Urbis, now home of the National Football Museum, and the Beetham Tower, redefined the city vertically. Commercial spaces such as Two St Peter's Square and No.1 Spinningfields used single sites to optimise the core. Reconstruction allowed the creation



ABOVE:
Beetham Hilton Tower,
Manchester

RIGHT:
No.1 Spinningfields,
Manchester



LEFT:
Two St Peter's Square, Manchester

BELOW:
No.1 Deansgate, Manchester



of connective space between the north and south of the city. Divided by the Irwell, Salford and Manchester were brought closer by the focussed development of New Cathedral Street, St Mary's Gate, and Deansgate.

"The radius of the inner ring road of Manchester can be walked in 15 - 20 minutes," Rachel explained, "the population of the city centre is now around 68,000 and we believe it should increase to at least 150,000. Density gives the city the critical mass that generates creativity and job creation. We need more people, jobs, schools, doctor's surgeries, green spaces and amenities – all the things that attract and service a growing community."

Manchester has benefitted from many years of political continuity, permitting its Labour-led council to develop fruitful relationships between the public and private sectors. The universities of Manchester have worked with the council to create a knowledge capital, something which external investors find attractive. By creating urban density in which creative encounters are more commonplace, SimpsonHaugh are fostering the same sort of collegiate atmosphere we find in Clerkenwell. Ian told me, "We can't go out and get the investment, but we can support the pitch. The skyline can help sell the Manchester brand."

Their influence on the life and identity of the city is not limited to skyline-changing buildings. A few steps away from their Knott Mill Studio, in the railway arches shouldering Deansgate station, was Atlas Autos. With friends, Ian and Rachel rented the premises in the late 80s / early 90s and opened one of Manchester's first café bars, Atlas Bar. As a place to meet on the way in and out of town, it soon became a favourite with Manchester scenesters and an informal cultural hub. And while I can't promise that you will bump into John Squire or DJ Paulette there these days, Atlas still stands – try the gin.

The partnership

Ian and Rachel's collaborative approach to design is a defining characteristic of their practice. Their individual strengths complement each other, creating a dynamic that fuels their success. Ian possesses an immediate, intuitive response to a brief. "If I don't have an idea within 12 seconds, I'm struggling," he admitted. This rapid ideation allows them to quickly identify a powerful design direction. Rachel brings a measured and rigorous approach. "Ian tends to lead and present various approaches, and I respond," she explained. Her detailed focus ensures that the initial vision is carried through to the final execution.

This complementary dynamic is exemplified in One Blackfriars, a complex project that spanned at least 15 years. Their collaborative approach ensured a consistent design vision throughout, with the final building embodying their original intent. "Being able to retain a vision through the detail is critical to delivering ambitious projects," Rachel told me.

Their commitment extends throughout. "We feel passionately about taking a project through all the contractual stages and working collaboratively with the contractor to successfully deliver the projects that we are designing," they emphasised. "We are committed to delivering our design proposals; the form, the shape, the materiality, all the way through from the external public spaces to the touch and detail of the internal environment."

For Simpson and Haugh, the perceived conflict between commercial and design interests is a misapprehension. "Architecture *is* the reconciliation of commercial and design interests," Ian stated. They view themselves as providers of a service, working closely with clients to achieve both aesthetic



Circus West Village, Battersea Power Station

and functional goals. “We’ve never aspired to be artists in a garret. We want to build the things we design, not have our designs shelved and forgotten about.” Ian declared.

“All buildings have to be viable, have to work to a cost and a set of parameters,” they acknowledged. Over the years they have reconciled competing demands through what might be called “architecture by stealth”, a term that describes how they have understood the clients’ and stakeholders’ pragmatic requirements whilst trying to deliver the best architectural and civic solution, thereby allowing everyone to take ownership. The journey is just as important to them as the design and the efficacy of their approach is proven by their many repeat clients.

Innovative architecture has the power to shape and transform cities and the destinies of those within them. Ian and Rachel both have a strong sense of the responsibility of the architect to the wider community. “A key parameter for us is our responsibility to society to create buildings which are beautiful and appropriate to their context. It’s a civic responsibility. A building is for the long term.” Rachel explains.

To the world: expanding horizons

SimpsonHaugh's influence is increasingly recognised on the international stage. “We’re proud of our Manchester roots and the global presence we have achieved over time through hard work and tenacity” Rachel stated, highlighting their reach beyond the UK.

The recently completed Queen Elisabeth Hall, home of the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, was an opportunity to demonstrate their contextual sensitivity. This rebuilding of a 1950s concert hall, embedded within a complex of important historic buildings, presented the opportunity to not only design an exemplary new symphonic concert hall but also to create a new public place for Antwerp.

Whilst bound by non-disclosure agreements, Ian revealed their current involvement in projects across the Middle East. “We’re

Overleaf is a timeline of the practice.

also exploring opportunities across the Asia Pacific region and North America,” he added, emphasising their commitment to global expansion.

Their urban design principles, tested and refined in Manchester, are adaptable to diverse international contexts. “In Manchester, we’ve tried to achieve a compact, walkable, city approach, and this ambition translates internationally,” Ian explained.

Reflecting on a recent conference in Chicago, Rachel drew parallels between Manchester and other post-industrial cities in the US which are undergoing similar transformations. “Industry has declined, and the question becomes what to do with the brownfield sites,” she observed. The importance of long-term governance and political stability in fostering strategic visions for the evolution of a city are key considerations for SimpsonHaugh.

When these conditions are in place, their ability to take the long view, to commit to a place, a client, and a community, is what differentiates SimpsonHaugh. Their deep engagement with a place, in its historical and future context, its materiality and its people, engenders an architecture that helps shape the future.

“We care passionately about adding value to the communities in which we operate, and we believe architects have a responsibility in shaping the built environment for future generations.” Ian said. “Good design transcends borders. It’s about understanding the unique challenges and opportunities of each context and creating solutions that are both innovative and sensitive to the local environment.” Rachel added.

At SimpsonHaugh, ‘evolving architecture’ is a core philosophy. Every project is driven by the shared aspirations of the client, all stakeholders, and the design team. Simpson and Haugh are deeply invested in the wellbeing of the communities they design for, striving to create buildings and spaces that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also functional, inspiring, and appropriate for their context.

This commitment extends beyond the drawing board. Both Ian and Rachel have demonstrated their dedication by personally investing in their projects. Ian owns a penthouse at the top of the Beetham Tower, while Rachel calls No.1 Deansgate home. This approach underscores their belief in the transformative power of architecture and their commitment to creating places and spaces where people thrive.



LEFT:
Queen Elisabeth Hall, Antwerp

BELOW:
Dollar Bay, South Dock



SimpsonHaugh Architects

Practice timeline

								
The practice is established in Manchester. Located in small studio(s), focussed on international / national competitions and “making things happen”.	Key competition win. Architecture Foundation: Birmingham ‘Foyer’.	In 1996, the IRA exploded its largest main land bomb in Manchester city centre. Though devastating, it provided a catalyst for the city to reinvent itself, a new awakening for a city that already had ambition and aspiration for the future.	Subsequently won another anonymous international competition from which Urbis, Manchester’s Millenium project, grew.	Moved the Manchester studio from Commercial Wharf to Riverside, still in Knott Mill, reimagining another building for the future.	Worked hard to find new opportunities during ‘the great recession’, and achieved key competition wins with: Manchester Town Hall Extension / Library Walk and the Queen Elisabeth Hall, a new world-class and acoustically exemplary concert hall in Antwerp.	Completion of One Blackfriars - third major London project to have contributed to the transformation of the capital’s skyline.	Currently placed 48th on the Architects’ Journal AJ100 list and operating internationally from a UK base, 100 people, located across 3 studios.	
1987	1992	1996	1998	2000	2009	2019	Present	
Mid-1980s	1987 - 1990s	Early 1990s	1996 / 1997	1998	2002 - 2006	2017	2023	
Ian Simpson & Rachel Haugh meet while working on the same project at the same architectural practice.	Established a base in Knott Mill, focussed on reuse / retrofit, developed masterplan, achieved support of Central Manchester Development Corporation. Worked long hours and, gradually, projects began to emerge.	Established a base in Clerkenwell, London.	Gathered together team that won the anonymous international competition for the masterplan of the reconstruction of Manchester city centre.	Achieved two further projects within masterplan: No.1 Deansgate and the Transport Interchange on Shudehill.	Achieved Beetham Hilton Tower in Manchester: Manchester’s tallest structure from completion in 2006 until 2018.	Completion of Circus West Village, the pioneering first phase of a brand new neighbourhood on the western side of Battersea Power Station, and Dollar Bay, Isle of Dogs.	Opening of new studio in Birmingham.	
	 			 		 		

We



are

Gold!

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Gold

Solus recently received an Investors in People Gold accreditation. We spoke to our Head of People, Holly Oag, about the award and what it means for our organisation.



Holly Oag,
Head of People, Solus

Congratulations on achieving the Investors in People Gold Award! Could you explain to our readers what this award signifies and why it's considered a prestigious recognition?
The Investors in People Gold Award is a remarkable achievement, attained by only 28% of assessed businesses. It's a testament to our collective efforts, as everyone at Solus participates in the transparent assessment process. The award signifies that our employees genuinely enjoy working here, and that we've fostered a positive and empowering work environment.

What were the key factors that contributed to Solus earning the Gold accreditation? Were there specific initiatives, practices, or cultural elements that stood out during the assessment process?

The IIP assessor highlighted several key factors that led to our Gold accreditation. Our community culture, which encourages and empowers individuals and teams, was particularly praised. The assessor also noted our positive team approach, the transparency and trust fostered by our leaders, and the spirit of teamwork and collaboration evident throughout Solus.

How does achieving the Investors in People Gold Award align with Solus' overall mission, values, and goals? What does it say about our commitment to our employees and their development?

The Gold Award reflects our dedication to creating a workplace where employees thrive. It underscores our commitment to learning and development, evident in initiatives like the Leapsome system. It also highlights our culture of appreciation, where rewards and recognition are used to celebrate both team and individual accomplishments.

In what tangible ways do you anticipate the Gold accreditation will benefit our employees? Are there new opportunities, programmes, or resources that they can look forward to as a result of this achievement?

We're excited to continue investing in our employees. We have several initiatives in the pipeline, including a new employee recognition scheme and the development of cross-team sharing and focus groups.

Looking ahead, how will we maintain this Gold standard and continue to foster a positive and empowering work environment? What are some of our ongoing or future plans to further enhance employee engagement and development?

We've shared the IIP feedback report with all employees and encouraged them to contribute ideas via Leapsome. We'll be creating action plans based on this feedback. Additionally, we're focusing on improving internal communication throughout the organisation.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readers about the significance of this award for our company or any personal reflections you have on this accomplishment?

I'm incredibly proud to work for Solus, and the IIP Gold Award reaffirms that sentiment for many of us. One employee's comment during the assessment particularly resonated with me: "Leaders are so different here, relaxed and supportive... We have people, product, and planet, with all three on the same level. They invest in us and put so much effort into retaining the staff and giving people opportunity." This award truly reflects our collective dedication to making Solus a great place to work.

“

We're exceptionally proud of the team we've put together at Solus. IIP Gold feels like a recognition of this achievement.”

Ryan Bennett,
Managing Director, Solus

Bottega D'Arte



Bottega D'Arte explores the rural and urban traditions of ceramic tiles in two series. Terre is simple and rustic whilst Città di Faenza sophisticated and urban.

S
O
LUS

BIRMINGHAM
Unit 1 Cole River Park
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