

# Foundry (Cullinan Studio HQ)

**Location:** London Borough of Islington, UK

**Client:** Cullinan Studio

**Completed:** 2012

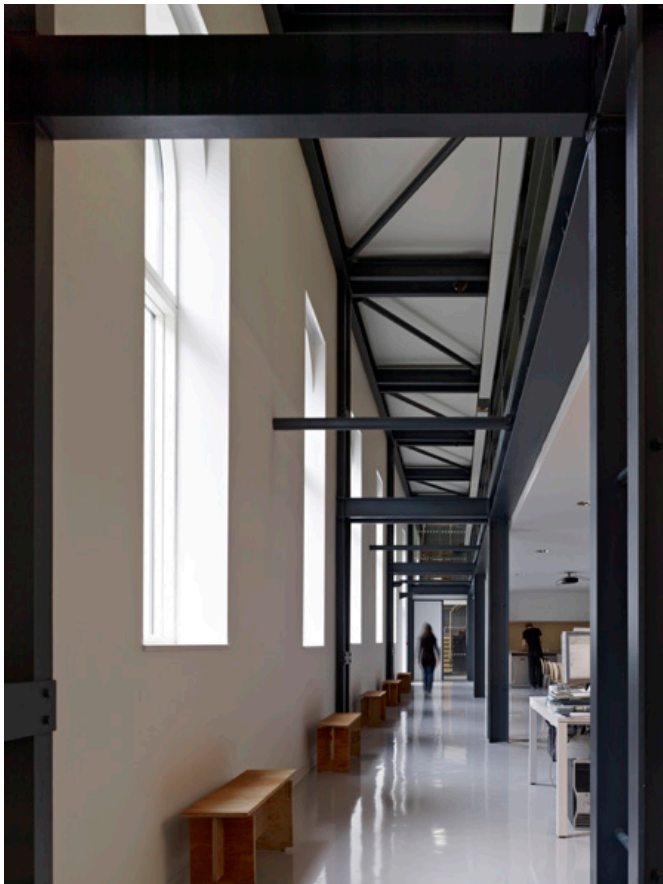
**Size:** 785 sqm

**Contract Value:** £1.35M

**BREEAM:** Excellent

**Awards:**

- AJ Retrofit Award for Offices Under £5M
- RICS London Award for Design Through Innovation



## Imagine working in a building that is good for your health and the health of the planet.

By reusing and repurposing existing structures where we can, we have the opportunity to reduce the overall embodied carbon of buildings. Current measuring shows that buildings are responsible for 39% of global energy related carbon emissions. 11% of this is from the materials and processes used to construct new buildings.

Converting a building from one use to another, and ensuring low emissions once occupied, comes with challenges. This was no different for our own retrofit project to transform a dilapidated canal-side warehouse into our new studio in 2012.

Now named the Foundry in a nod to its Victorian life as an iron works, the warehouse was in poor condition and required radical change to become our new workspace.

Our solution retained almost 80% of the existing building fabric whilst providing us with a naturally ventilated, healthy workplace, and helping us to reduce our energy use by 50% compared to our previous office.

We designed a steel structure that prevents the building from continuing to fall towards the canal, and retains and celebrates the locally-listed timber roof trusses that provide a stunning canopy over the first floor office space. A new void between canal-level and street-level floors unifies the studio and reveals the scale of the canal elevation's double-height windows, allowing generous views of the peaceful canal basin and maximising daylight.

The dual aspect office has opening windows on both sides to enable natural ventilation. Floors, walls and roof are super-insulated using recycled newspaper, an air-source heat pump housed in the overrun of the old lift shaft provides hot water and underfloor heating, and photovoltaic panels on the roof provide electricity.

We monitor our energy use to understand what effects our day-to-day office activities have on our carbon footprint, and have made adjustments in response. But equally crucial to us is our wellbeing. In 2018 we undertook a more comprehensive survey of our working habits and how our environment affected our wellbeing. We realised a need for more flexibility within our open plan space. Simple measures such as foldable screens and new (second-hand) furniture to create a variety of new workspaces, more plants to provide a healthy connection with nature, and the reorganisation of office and personal storage spaces to free desks of clutter, has gone a long way to maintaining and improving happiness, and thereby the productivity of our team. We are taking this first-hand knowledge of retrofitting, measuring and improving the workplace to our clients, with our bespoke consultation methods.

**Right and below:** Since moving into the Foundry we have been gradually turning the small strip of dirt next to adjacent our building on the Regents Canal into a garden for the community to enjoy. We reused the worktops from our previous office to make benches. Our 'guerrilla' towpath garden received an Islington in Bloom Silver Gilt Award for 'Best Forgotten Corner' in 2017 and 2018.





- 1. Existing Fabric Retained
- 2. Recycled Newspaper
- 3. Natural Ventilation
- 4. Air Source Heat Pump
- 5. 22m² PV Panels
- 6. Heat Recovery
- 7. Underfloor Heating

