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First look at Bureau Inside the new workspace and members' club for London's creative industries

As debate intensifies about what the post-Covid working landscape might look like, new members' club Bureau offers a compelling vision of the future of workspace for the creative industries.

Opening in September 2021 in Design District on Greenwich Peninsula, Bureau is designed to offer freelancers, start-ups and independent creatives flexible workspace to develop and run their businesses, and allows larger organisations to offer their employees an alternative to the conventional office.

With almost every survey and study suggesting that more of us are hoping to enshrine flexibility in our working lives, Bureau represents an inviting solution to the return-to-work dilemma: a 'third space' that offers the social benefits of the office, without the formality, and the freedom of working from home, with better facilities and fewer distractions.



At the heart of Design District's dynamic creative community, Bureau offers flexible memberships with access to event and meeting spaces.

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After 18 months of uncertainty that saw many in the creative industries having to rethink their way of working, Bureau aims to give freelancers and entrepreneurs from all creative disciplines and walks of life a place where they can work, exchange ideas and collaborate across disciplinary boundaries.

Starting at £80 pcm, Bureau membership gives access to workspaces ranging from tables in communal lounges, hotdesking options and fixed desks for individual creatives to private full- and part-time serviced -studios for teams of up to 10 people.



Bureau members can choose a workspace that works for them, scaling up or down between lounge, hot desk, fixed desk or serviced studio.

Having developed the Bureau concept over the course of the pandemic, the Design District team have not only been able to ensure Covid-safety protocols and precautions will be in place from the beginning, they've also been able to address some of the issues that the rise of working from home made apparent.

To ensure the site is never overcrowded, special operational software ensures a limit on the number of members permitted in Bureau each day, and which informs members of how busy the site is at any given time, so they can decide if and when to attend. And in response to the new working behaviours that emerged from lockdown, interior designer Roz Barr has ensured there are flexible spaces for

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different types of work, as well as plenty of dedicated areas for video conferencing and private Zooms calls.

As well as plenty of space to work, members have access to everything they need to grow their businesses. The ample selection of meeting rooms includes acoustically adapted suites for video conferencing, accessed through a simple-to-use online booking system and at exclusive member rates. Breakout spaces include four distinctive lounge areas, as well as outdoor terraces and patios. The Salon can be transformed into a cinema for film screenings, and a dedicated event space is available for professional and social occasions at every scale.

Alongside state-of-the-art office facilities including 6th-generation WiFi and free printing, specialist professional facilities include photographic studios, post-production suites and a sound studio.

A dedicated programme for Bureau members offers both professional guidance and wellbeing support, while a wide-ranging calendar of events, talks and workshops curated by Bureau alongside industry leaders provides ongoing opportunities for professional development, networking, and creative stimulation. Helmed by a chef, the Bureau restaurant is the social heart of the space, offering members a wide range of exceptional food and drink options, and is available to hire for special events.

Prioritising connection and creativity

With lockdowns ending and restrictions lifting, many in the creative industries are looking forward to a return to a shared workplace in some form. The limitations of working from home have become apparent to many people – especially those in the creative industries, for whom the opportunity to interact with others, throw ideas around and make unexpected connections is especially important.

With the 9–5 office model seeming increasingly redundant, but the isolation of permanent homeworking threatening, Bureau holds best-of-both-worlds appeal.

Although the fact that the creative industries have been decimated by Covid, it is frequently and easily assumed that those in the creative sector are among the best positioned to work from home, so – despite the economic hit to the sector – creatives are often marginalised in discussions on the impact of lockdowns. The reality of creative work, however, is that the ability to connect with others in a shared physical space – for ideas to collide and interpollinate – is critical to innovation. The creative sector is a complex, multidisciplinary family of industries that deserves a dedicated space consciously tailored to its particular needs. Bureau provides it.

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Everything from the layout of the spaces and the events programme to the weekly communal no-tech lunches is geared to encourage members to – safely – make connections across disciplines, allowing for those inspiring moments of serendipity and happenstance that can only occur in shared spaces – a key creative driver that is almost impossible to replicate when working from home (and the coffee’s probably better, too).

As part of Bureau, members are placed in the midst of a creative ecosystem: the wider Design District community. A one-of-a-kind crucible of ideas and innovation, the entire district has, like Bureau, been designed to nurture inter-disciplinary connection and collaboration, and members will be in the heart of a dynamic and inspiring environment.

“We want Bureau to be Design District in microcosm – somewhere that nurtures a diverse and dynamic creative community, giving freelancers a space to grow their businesses, connect across disciplines, build networks and advance their careers.”

– Helen Arvanitakis, director of Design District

Bureau is consciously structured to provide a pathway for professional growth: members can use Bureau to grow their practice, ascending membership tiers from hotdesk to serviced studio as they evolve, then move out to take tenancy of a Design District workspace when their business is fully fledged.

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Bureau memberships can also serve larger international organisations that are exploring work-from-home alternatives for their teams, enabling staff to take advantage of a flexible, closer-to-home workspace, while requiring minimal company investment.

Designed by a world-leading architect team

Bureau spans two of the 16 buildings that make up the Design District. C3, designed by HNNA, has an undulating form with an irregular white exterior interspersed with large windows of different sizes and facing different directions. An inwardly falling roof on the top floor creates a pair of courtyards that serve as alfresco workspaces for members.

C3 houses the restaurant and main members' lounge, and – thanks to its position at the entrance to the Design District – its reception serves as the front desk for the whole neighbourhood. Next door, D1 by Architecture 00 has floor-to-ceiling windows throughout and open-air terraces for circulation. With an array of versatile workspaces, D1 is ideal for members seeking to undertake more focused work, and also includes the Bureau's events space

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The interiors by Roz Barr Architects accommodate all types and styles of creative work – from open, collaborative and energetic to quiet, calm and concentrated.

The interiors of both Bureau buildings are the work of Roz Barr Architects, which has consciously included a wide variety of workspaces to accommodate all types and styles of creative work – from open, collaborative and energetic to quiet, calm and concentrated.

Barr has taken pains to ensure that each workspace is laid out and equipped to meet members' needs – intelligent design with controllable task lighting, breakout areas for meetings, acoustically optimised Zoom meeting rooms, spaces for private phone conversations, and informal spots to grab a coffee and a catch-up with other members – a perk that those of us working from home have missed for much of the year.

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The interiors of both Bureau buildings are by Roz Barr Architects.

“Our design for Bureau recognises the fact that the way we work and how we use office space is changing. It’s not about rows of booths and cubicles any more – we need places where we can connect with each other, build ideas together, and enjoy the magic of chance and happenstance. Above all else, Bureau is somewhere people can meet, work, converse and engage, and every aspect of its design encourages these things to happen.”

– Roz Barr, founder, Roz Barr Architects

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The honest and utilitarian but sophisticated aesthetic of the Bureau is set by Roz Barr's approach to materials – many of which are unexpected in an interior setting. Exposed galvanised stud walls and fibrous cement board are juxtaposed with Marmoleum on the floors and walls, and digitally printed carpets and rugs.

Sustainability has steered the material selection. The Marmoleum by flooring specialist Forbo is made from 97% recycled materials and is carbon-neutral. Natural fabrics have been used throughout. Sheet materials from small Welsh business Smile Plastics have been used for the work surfaces, and recycled plastics also feature in the joinery.

Bureau's innovative furniture selection features pieces by some of the most respected designers in Britain and beyond, including work by the likes of Hay, Stuttgart-based Richard Lampert and British-Canadian Philippe Malouin. Desks are fitted with diecast aluminium legs from London manufacturer Very Good and Proper.

Naturally, consideration of Covid-19 has been factored into the design, and Roz Barr Architects have ensured that the internal spaces are adaptable, as well as paying attention to cross-ventilation throughout the spaces – effectively, everything is recycled but the air.

A unique offering: well located, accessibly priced

Set a few seconds' stroll from North Greenwich Tube station, Bureau will be the only creative-workspace membership of its kind in South East London – and one of the most financially accessible in the city. Whereas some clubs can typically charge their members £200 a month or more, Bureau delivers a comparable service for as little as £80 a month +VAT , including service charge.

Bureau is set to open in September 2021 and membership is available now – sign up at bureau.club

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Notes for editors

For more information about the Bureau and Design District, contact Rupert Evans-Harding via rupert@zetteler.co.uk

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Occupying two purpose-design buildings on Greenwich Peninsula, Bureau is a members' club and productive workspace for creatives, an affordable and dynamic space to collaborate, exchange ideas, socialise, and engage with the surrounding creative ecosystem of Design District. Bureau's innovative and versatile model of membership is designed to nurture and connect the community, leading to a stronger future for creativity in London and the UK.

bureau.club

Covid-safety software

The Bureau team have developed and designed the space to ensure the highest possible level of Covid-safety compliance, not only in terms of versatile workspace layouts that can easily accommodate social-distancing measures, but also in Bureau's operational technology. New membership software ensures that limits on the number of people inside Bureau buildings at any one time can be easily enforced, and individual members are automatically kept informed of how busy the site is, so they can make informed decisions about whether and when to use the space.

Design District

At the heart of Greenwich Peninsula, Design District is London's first permanent, purpose-built hub for the creative industries.

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Conceived and developed by Knight Dragon, and designed by eight leading architects, the Design District's collection of 16 unique buildings supports an ecosystem of 1,800 creatives, encompassing individual makers, ambitious start-ups, ground-breaking enterprises and industry leaders.

The closest Tube station is North Greenwich (30 metres). The Jubilee line (24-hour on Friday and Saturday), gets you to London Bridge in eight minutes and Waterloo in 11.

designdistrict.co.uk