
Barozzi Veiga unveils first UK project in Design District

A home for Ravensbourne University's Institute for Creativity and Technology



Ravensbourne's brand new Institute for Creativity and Technology is the first building to open at landmark London project Design District, which launches later this year. Photograph by Taran Wilkhu

Spanish-Italian architects Barozzi Veiga has a track record of working on high-profile, large-scale and award-winning projects across Europe and the wider world. In 17 years of practice, however, the firm has never completed a building in the UK – until now.

Barozzi Veiga is one of eight world-leading architecture firms tasked with shaping Design District on Greenwich Peninsula – London's new centre for the creative industries. Of the 16 buildings in the plan, Barozzi Veiga took on the design of buildings A1 and D4. Offering a home to Ravensbourne University's new Institute for Creativity & Technology, A1 has just become the first official opening of the Design District, as well as Barozzi Veiga's UK debut.

Situated at the northwestern corner of Design District, close to North Greenwich Tube station, building A1 is a rectangular four-storey structure with towering ceilings, an asymmetric arrangement of large, grid-like windows, punctuating a reflective aluminium facade. This striking and geometric modern structure is now the epicentre for post-graduate education for Ravensbourne University, putting its students in the heart of a dynamic ecosystem of enterprises, studios and freelancers, across every creative discipline.

The next generation of creativity

Based on Greenwich Peninsula since 2010, Ravensbourne University London is the UK's leading provider of vocational education in the creative industries, with one of the highest graduate employment rates in the country, as well as the top position when it comes to graduate salaries in the creative sector. To consolidate this position, and further energise the UK's creative economy, Ravensbourne has chosen a Barozzi Veiga building at Design District to house its new centre for post-graduate study: the Institute for Creativity & Technology.

The Institute's four floors will house the university's graduate school, a start-up incubator, a research lab and a workshop, all of which will benefit from the lofty ceiling heights and plentiful natural light from the floor-to-ceiling windows. The new facility means that GradSchool, Ravensbourne's postgraduate department, can add four new master's courses to its progressive roster: MA Design Communication and Technology; MA Fashion Design, Management and Innovation; MA Illustration for Communication; and MDes Service Design, Social Innovation and Design Leadership.



Inside the Institute for Creativity & Technology. Photograph courtesy of Brinkworth

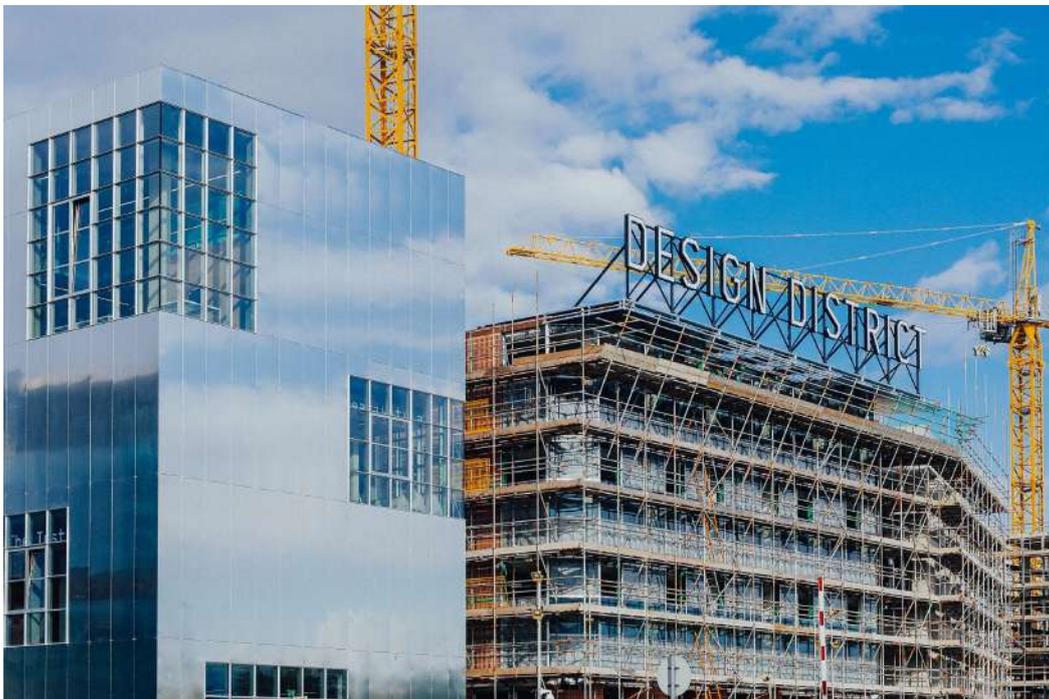
Up to 200 students and staff are likely to be in the building at any one time, taking advantage of state-of-the-art facilities including the Workshop, equipped with prototyping resources, a VR/AR lab and a print bureau, as well as offices hotdesking space, meeting areas and an exhibition space that will be used for both university and public events. The Institute's top facilities will also be available to tenants across Design District. The university's sector-leading creative researchers will have their own dedicated workspace in the form of ResearchRave; students can gain real-world professional experience at in-house agency CreativeLab; and budding entrepreneurs can build up their fledgling businesses in Incubation+, the Institute's hothouse for start-ups. And, with hundreds of creative professionals and businesses working on the Institute's doorstep, students will have unlimited opportunity to connect with the people, ideas, and opportunities that will kickstart and enrich their careers.

"Our new Institute will strengthen our drive to foster the leadership capabilities of the creative changemakers of the future. I envisage a rich exchange of ideas between our postgraduate community, Design District, and the wider business and creative community."

– Paul Sternberg, postgraduate director, Ravensbourne University London

The elegance of industry

Known for producing monolithic forms, angular geometries and industrial scales with a touch of Mediterranean flair, Barozzi Veiga has created a bold and futuristic, block-like structure in metal and glass that catches the eye without dominating the landscape. Contrasting engagingly with the different architectural approaches in the district, it is a building in conversation with the others around it.



Barozzi Veiga's first building in the UK is the first to launch at Design District. Here we see it next to a David Kohn building due to open this summer. Photograph by Taran Wilkhu

"The opportunity to build something in London has always attracted us and our involvement in Design District gave us the possibility to do it in one of the most interesting development areas of the city. We are particularly glad that our first built project in London is also the first building to open at the Design District. We think this is a very nice coincidence and we hope it marks a great beginning both for our practice in the UK and for the new creative district."

– Alberto Veiga, founder, Barozzi Veiga

Barozzi Veiga's industrial palette and clean-lined geometry is echoed in the Institute's interiors, which have been created by the celebrated East London studio Brinkworth. Hard-wearing materials such as birch ply, powder-coated steel and linoleum create an honest, function-focused aesthetic, which is reflected in the Institute's pixel-inspired graphic identity, created by Studio Makgill. From the macro level of the Institute's structure to the micro world of brand identity, the overall impression is therefore of an industrious maker-space – somewhere that creative ideas can be forged into reality.

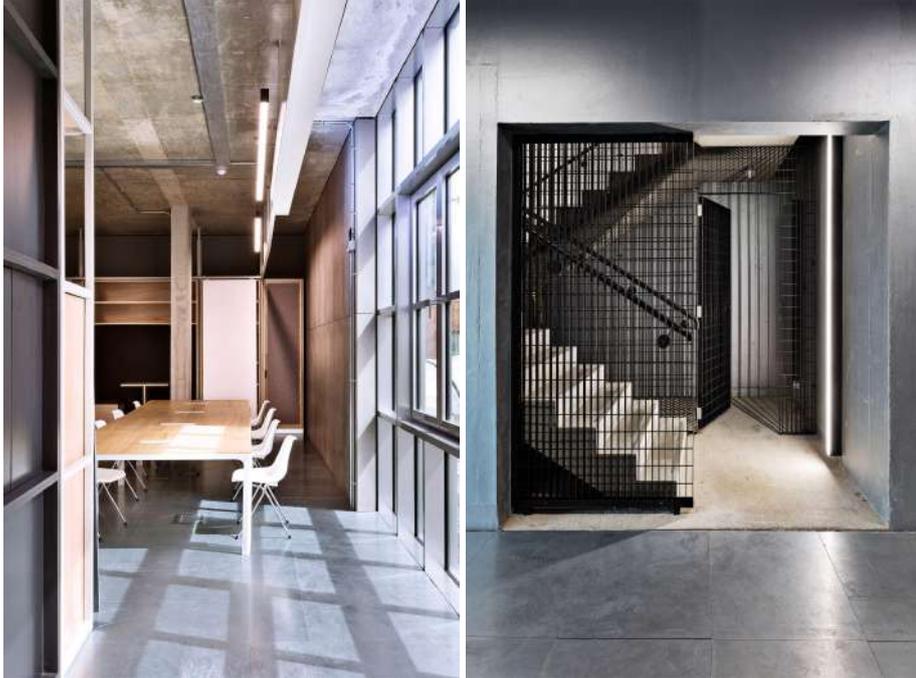
“When developing this project, we had the goal of making spaces for creative activities of various kinds, including art, photography, technology, and communication. For this reason, we could not think of a more appropriate tenant than Ravensbourne University, whose courses and activities are deeply characterized by creativity.”

– Alberto Veiga, founder, Barozzi Veiga

Good news for creativity

The opening of Ravensbourne's Institute is the first in Design District's programme of building launches taking place over the summer, culminating in the site's official grand opening in September.

As Design District is London's first dedicated, purpose-designed and permanent hub for the creative industries, offering businesses affordable rents and flexible workspace tenancies, its opening represents an injection of much-needed optimism for the UK creative economy after a year of setbacks and stagnation.



The new Institute at Design District promises to be one of the most architecturally interesting education buildings to launch this year. Photographs courtesy of Brinkworth

The arrival of the Institute of Creativity and Technology lays the foundations for the diverse, interdisciplinary creative community that Design District sets out to nurture. After Ravensbourne's Institute, Design District is preparing to open more of its architecturally progressive buildings, including work by 6a Architects, Adam Kahn Architects, David Kohn Architects, Architecture 00, Mole Architects, HNNA and Selgas Cano. Alongside the students and staff of the Institute, the district's pioneering cohort of early tenants comprises a dynamic medley of artists, performers, maverick designers and shapers of culture including:

- LGBTQ+ art space QUEERCIRCLE;
- Love Welcomes, the social enterprise using craft to help refugee women;
- sneaker-innovation platform Concept Kicks;
- independent music brand Brace Yourself;
- Bureau – London's new members' club for the creative industries;

...with many more to be announced in the next few months.

Notes to editors

For more information about this announcement, please contact Rupert Evans-Harding at designdistrict@zetteler.co.uk.

Design District's lifeline to London creatives: workspace for £5 per square foot rent for the first year

In the hope of relieving pressure on the sector and kick-starting the capital's creative recovery, Design District has announced a 12-month across-the-board rent reduction to just £5 per square foot rent for every creative business taking up tenancy in any space across its 16 buildings, which total 150,000 sqft.

By allowing creative businesses to focus their resources on restoration and growth rather than worrying about rent, Design District hopes its own incentive will play a role in getting London's economy back on track – fast.

Design District

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

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.

Rent a light-filled studio, a floor or an entire building for just £5 per sqft rent for the first year. With affordable spaces, comprehensive facilities and flexible leases, everything is designed to help creative Londoners thrive.

designdistrict.co.uk

Greenwich Peninsula

Greenwich Peninsula is fast becoming the capital's most boldly modern landscape, with 15,000 new homes, 13,000 new jobs and 48 acres of open public space emerging over the coming years. Here, a community of thousands of pioneers have the opportunity to live in new riverside homes, work in a cutting-edge Design

District (launching in 2021) and enjoy a new linear park, the Tide – all wrapped by the River Thames. This is new London: a destination for modern urban living.

greenwichpeninsula.co.uk

Knight Dragon

Knight Dragon is an entrepreneurial urban regenerator and property developer. They create places, build properties and invest in related projects that bring new ideas and set new standards for urban living. The team uses creativity and collaboration to innovate. Backed by Dr. Henry Cheng, Chairman of New World Development Company Ltd and Chow Tai Fook Jewellery Group Ltd, and led by entrepreneur Sammy Lee, KD has a solid foundation and a global outlook. Their flagship project is Greenwich Peninsula in London where the team is delivering a new district that encapsulates Knight Dragon's approach and expertise in creative placemaking.

knightdragon.com