

inhabitant

ISSUE 01

FILWOOD GREEN BUSINESS PARK,
KNOWLE WEST, SOUTH BRISTOL

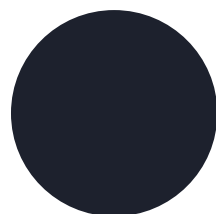


What is this and who are these people? This is issue one of Inhabitant; a magazine about the people who occupy the spaces and places that we create. The people who use them every day. These are the people who empty the bins. The people who teach our kids. Who pay² our wages. Who hire people. Who fire people. These are the people who build things. Who sell things. Who fix things. These are the people that make the coffee. That test the fire alarms. That take Amazon deliveries. These are the people that hold meetings about meetings that lead to more meetings.

These are the people hungover
from last nights' networking do.
That design the website. That
tweet. That don't tweet. These
are the people that came here
to learn. That came here to earn.
These are the people about to
retire. Who might never retire.
These are the people that tell
us whether a building is good
or not.

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These are the inhabitants.







inhabitant

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the architect



james horner

The business park was designed to provide employment for the residential area, so we always envisaged there being a strong community element to it. With that in mind, it all started with design charrettes, daylong events where you invite all of the interested parties to find out what they want; the clients, the consultants, the locals.

We knew that in order to get the European funding the project needed to focus on sustainability. Luckily, the community also wanted a very environmentally friendly development, with the idea that the businesses here would also have a 'green' focus.

‘I never thought too much about cross fertilising businesses’

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Just as we got planning permission George Ferguson became mayor for Bristol, and with Bristol Green Capital starting, helped push the project forward with real momentum. With the lack of businesses in this area of the city, the idea was for Filwood Green Business Park to help regenerate the area.

When an estate agent assessed the type of businesses that would be interested in the spaces, which was required as part of the funding process, they saw it as an extension of the business park next door, a very commercial entity.

What turned out was a very different, vibrant hub of activity. When designing it I had in mind little artist studios, little shops, that kind of thing, whereas the estate agents thought it would be garages and mechanics, or businesses that needed storage space, like window fitters and so on. I don't think they envisaged the local community using it.



In terms of the individual spaces, what we provided was quite neutral and stripped down so that people could customise them as they please. The size of the units was key, they needed to be suitable for different businesses as they progress through the stages of their lifecycle, and not too daunting; start with a little studio and grow into a larger manufacturing space. So there are lots of scenarios and combinations we designed for.

A key part of the brief was also to facilitate chance encounters between the users. To achieve that there are some slightly unusual design features that give it individuality. The kitchens and toilets are outside of the units, and with the external staircase off the central courtyard, people have to move around the site so they end up bumping into each other.

The impact of all these things has been fantastic. Lots of bustling, personalised spaces for the businesses to feel at home, where they all trade with one-another, and hopefully continue to flourish.

TALK FROM THE TENANTS

ISSUE 01 | FILWOOD GREEN BUSINESS PARK,
KNOWLE WEST, SOUTH BRISTOL

Described as 'a pioneering BREEAM Outstanding office and workshop space', Filwood Green Business Park was designed as the landmark building to celebrate Bristol's year as Green Capital of Europe in 2015. Whether or not that year was a success for the city causes much debate, however, it did spark the investment needed for greener buildings. In particular, one designed to regenerate a whole area and help smaller businesses come to life. Designed in collaboration with the local community and Bristol City Council, Filwood Green Business Park provides a mixture of office and workshop spaces, with a central collaboration hub for people to meet, eat, work and chill. It's a professional work environment for home-based entrepreneurs.

During the European funding process, the business park was required to meet a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating of over 70%. It achieved 93%. This put it well into the 'Outstanding' category, with the park saving an estimated 46 tonnes of carbon annually; the equivalent of 276 double decker buses. It has a green roof, uses high performance materials and sustainability is its core ethos, from how it is managed to the principles of its tenants. Furniture was produced by Knowle West Media Centre's Bristol Maker Lab, a community scheme that you will meet later in the magazine. They give the public access to workshop space and sustainable materials, designed to address a city-wide need for new skills and sustainable employment.

So, three years after completion, this is the tale of the tenants.



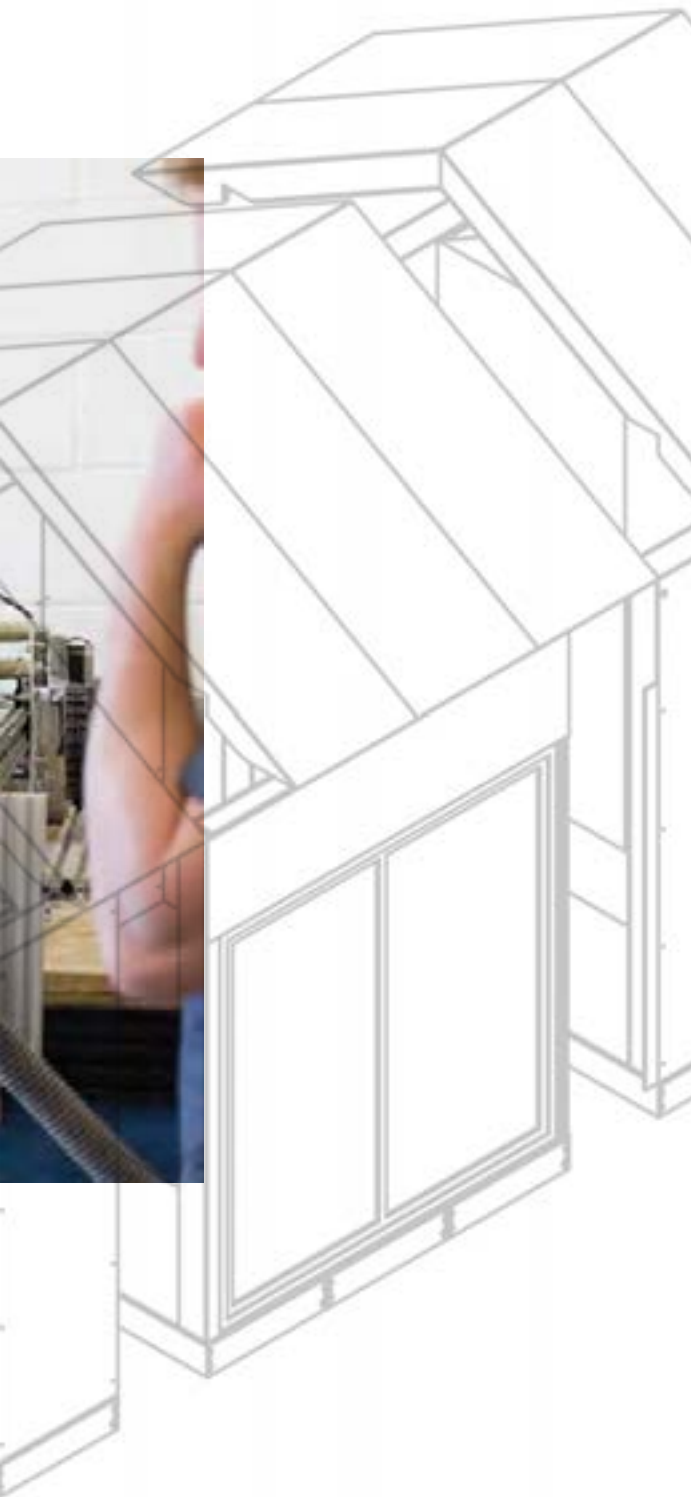






MATTHEW

Huxlo is a design and build studio set up by Matthew Mew. They create self-assembly timber buildings, designed online using 3D software, cut by Matt's self-made CNC machine and then shipped to the customer, who assembles it like flat-pack furniture.



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Whilst developing this product we found that we're very good at design and build of plenty of other things, so we have taken on interior fit outs and developed a few home products too!

Matt, tell us a bit more about yourself

So, I studied Engineering Design at University of Bristol and have always been interested in product design. During my final year I came up with the concept for creating flat-pack, modular, timber buildings for the general market. I went through some entrepreneur competitions and won a bit of grant money, which gave me the confidence to take the leap and start Huxlo.

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I was still a student when I was looking for premises, then spoke to Filwood and they liked the sustainable aspect to my business. They reserved me a space and here I am.

Using the grant money I built and coded the CNC machine myself, so now, with my background in product design and having the workshop space, I can design and manufacture prototypes right here.

A

B

C

18



D Tell us a bit more about what you're working on?

There are two sides to Huxlo. It started with just modular buildings, but I've now expanded into furniture as it seemed like a natural progression with the skills and resources I've got.

2440

My first big commission was in summer 2016 when the University of Bristol wanted desks and chairs for a new department. I spent about a month building the CNC machine, then created the CAD models, prototyped, and then another month building 70 chairs and 22 tables ready for delivery in September

before the students came back. It almost killed me, I never anticipated making an entire department's furniture for my first gig. I'm launching the HuxHouse Pod range soon, which is an office pod that can go in your house or garden. As part of that, I'm working on an app for people to design a structure, so you can customise things like the windows and doors, and then the app will translate that design into the required list of parts, which the CNC machine then cuts.

That's the beauty of modular structures, you can customise them, but without a way for people to realise or visualise those changes, it's pointless. That's the purpose of the app.



I guess with that machine, you can make pretty much anything?

Well my USP is creating functional, high quality products, and being able to design and test them right here. With that, another project I'm working on is manufacturing bike racks. I actually cut some out as I was waiting for you guys to arrive. A great link through Filwood is that I was able to develop those with Temple Cycles. I knew Matt a bit as he was at Uni a couple of years before me and also cycled, so it was a bit of luck that he was at Filwood too.

I created the prototype, took it over the courtyard to Temple, and they helped me develop it into a better product. It took a bit of refining, but it's now for sale on Amazon. And there's one on their wall!

So, just being around other businesses at Filwood has helped then?

Yep. The people in the other units are great fun and they will help you if you need it, it's good to be able to use their skills. People passing through will often provide some business too. I've built a tool station for somebody's workshop and used to have friends in an office unit upstairs. They used to come down and use my workshop, and I would use their office. I also used the communal space for when I had interns last year, it's easy to get set up in there for quick admin stuff.

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Where does the name Huxlo come from?

It kind of came from Sir Aldous Huxley, the Brave New World author, who talks about a dystopian future of people being like robots. With modular, it's a bit like a robotic system. Also, UX is central to the business, so that works nicely.

www.huxlo.com



Huxlo designs and makes a hassle-free construction system. A bit like a giant 'Meccano' set for adults. We currently offer outbuilding kits for use as office pods, playrooms and studios.

Whilst developing this product we found that we're very good at design and build of plenty of other things, so we have taken on interior fit outs and developed a few home products too!





JODY

DIGITAL

FIRE

Jody is an Art Director and Graffiti artist. He started painting at the Barton Hill Youth Club alongside Inkie, Cheo & Banksy in the late 1980s and now exhibits around the world with See No Evil Gallery and the Affordable Art Fair. His commissions have taken him across all sectors, from motor racing and corporate finance to interior design and fashion.



**Nice to meet you Jody,
tell us how you ended up
at Filwood.**


I came here, coming up to three years ago, when it first opened. I live nearby and was always driving past it, then someone told me the place had woarkshops.

My studio at the time was in a 17th century barn up in Chew Valley on my friend's farm. It was lovely, wonderful in the summer but absolutely freezing in the winter. I would get there and I had to traipse though his orchard and it could be muddy. I converted the barn so I had place to do my artwork and I converted my loft at home for somewhere to do my office work.

I knew I had to move so was looking for somewhere that did both, away from home, but not too far. I drove into Filwood and it still had that new smell to it. I had a look around and then Sarah on

reception opened up this workshop for me. She said it was £312 per month, three month's rent up front, no contract, free wifi, free tea and coffee, free use of the facilities, free parking,





showers and kitchens. I immediately thought I would be stupid not to do it.

The environment was fantastic too. Air conditioning! I said; "look, I am an artist, I am going to be painting in here" and she told me it shouldn't be a problem, but I had to state my case though because they wanted B1 / B2 business and you had to have a sort of an eco-leaning.

My main client at the time was, and still is, Westonbirt Arboretum which obviously carries a lot of 'green' weigh. I moved in, I love the environment.

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**'TOM CAME IN YESTERDAY
FROM NORTH WEST AND
HE SAID 'COULD YOU JUST
PAINT THIS TO SEE HOW IT
WOULD COME OUT'. THERE IS
DEFINITELY A COMMUNITY OF
SORTS HERE'**



What's it like socially, do you see much of the other tenants?

Yeah, I have had so many people come in. A guy two doors down came and asked me if I was the artist and then gave me his number and said "I want two portraits of my daughters". I get a certain amount of exposure just from being here.

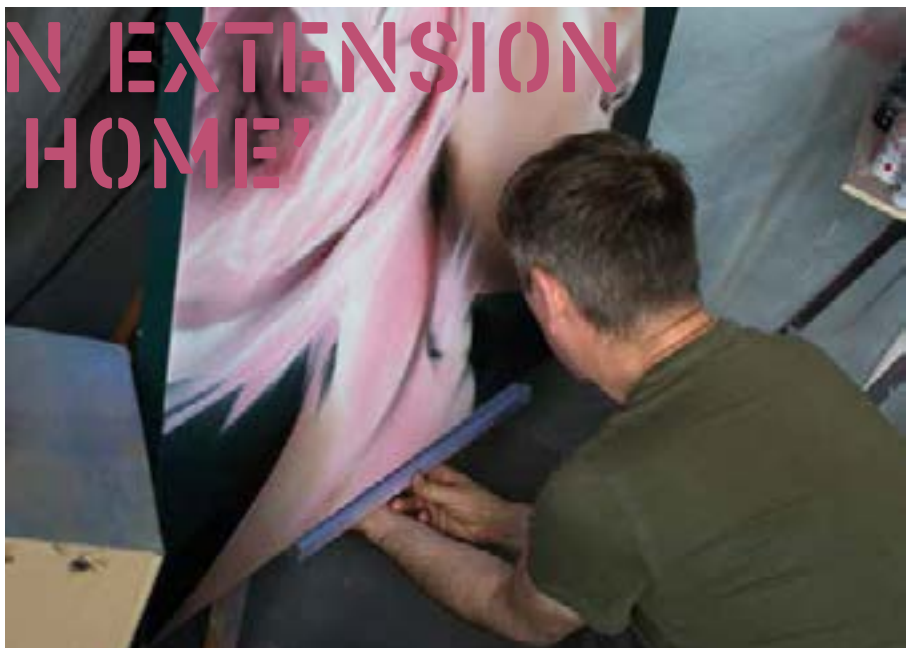
The big benefit is also that it feels like an extension of my home. I can bring my kids here, there's a projector so I can watch films with them, and after 5 o'clock all the gates are locked so they can go out and play in the carpark, it's very safe.

North West Media Centre is over the courtyard, so if I have something really intricate like a stencil to cut then they'll do it for me. Actually, Tom from North West came in here yesterday and said "could you just paint this to see how it would come out?"

I've had all my bikes serviced by Temple Cycles, and all my graphics done by Think Image. I'm going to commission the guys up there who do the 3D printing too. I want a massive head carved out of polystyrene.

So yeah, there is definitely a community here.

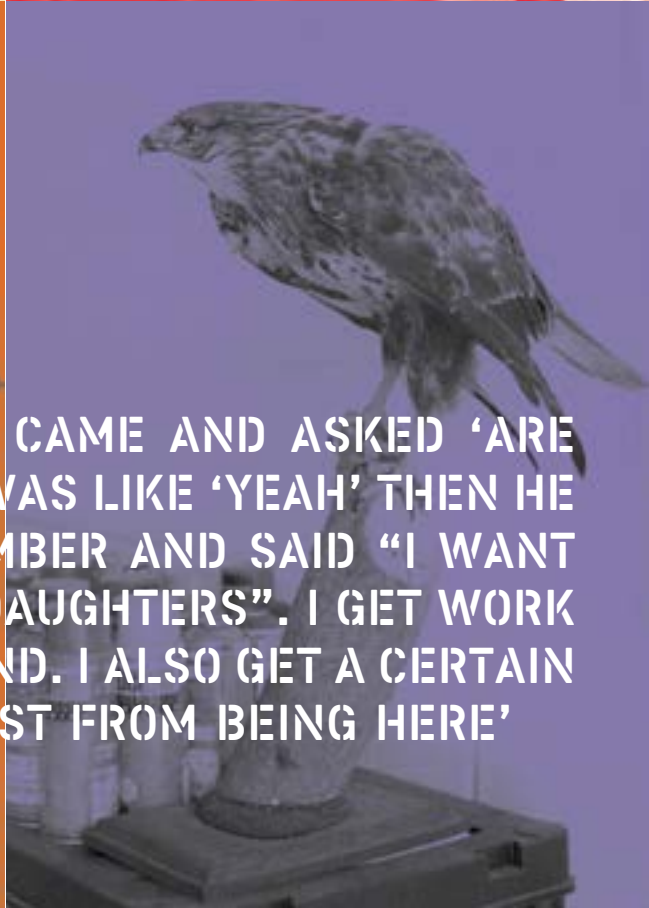
**'THE BIG BENEFIT IS
ALSO THAT IT FEELS
LIKE AN EXTENSION
OF MY HOME'**





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'A GUY 2 DOORS DOWN CAME AND ASKED 'ARE YOU AN ARTIST?' AND I WAS LIKE 'YEAH' THEN HE HAVE GAVE ME HIS NUMBER AND SAID "I WANT TWO PORTRAITS OF MY DAUGHTERS". I GET WORK FROM JUST BEING AROUND. I ALSO GET A CERTAIN ABOUT OF EXPOSURE JUST FROM BEING HERE'

THINK IMAGE



THINK IMAGE ARE SPECIALISTS IN THE
DESIGN, PRINT AND MANUFACTURE OF
SIGNAGE AND GRAPHICS. THEY DO
EVERYTHING FROM INTERIORS, TO PRINT,
TO VEHICLE WRAPPING (AS SEEN ON THEIR
BOLDLY BRANDED RENAULT TWIZY PARKED
IN THE COURTYARD).





Ask your energy supplier
about getting a
smart meter.
Ask your energy supplier
about getting a
smart meter.
Ask your energy supplier
about getting a
smart meter.



When did you move in?

May 2016, a year or so after it opened.

And why did you come to Filwood?

The space was the right size and there was no tied in contract so it gave me plenty of flexibility to expand or reduce size without the solicitor's fees.





I was looking at a larger unit prior to this place and the amount of money I needed to spend just to get the agreement with the solicitors just wasn't feasible. On the day I was about to sign they changed the rental agreeable which would of tied me in for 10 years, which was too long.

I spoke to Filwood and they said come over and take a look. I also saw Jody from Digital Fire across the road, I didn't know he was here. He sang the place praises so I signed up. Two pieces of paper, rolling contract, perfect.

The space is good. Neat, tidy, nice flower bed. It doesn't look like an industrial estate with the cedar wood and solar panels and I really like that. There's no steel metal doors or that sort of thing. The timber makes it a softer environment. There is no industrial clutter, bins are stored out the way.

Socially it's really good, when you go out you always end up having a chat with someone which is great for business.

It is slightly more expensive but it doesn't tie you in which can be a fear for a lot of small businesses. Being tied in for such a long period, being made responsible for the structure of the building, stuff that is out of your control really, whereas this (the contact at Filwood) doesn't do any of that.

It attracts bigger and better clients because everyone has commented on it how good it looks. My other place was a bit of ramshackle really. This place has been nice for the clients to drive into, easy for them to find, easy access and the green element is great.



*'THE SPACE IS GOOD, TIDY, NEAT,
FLOWER BED, IT DOESN'T LOOK
LIKE AN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE WITH
THE CEDAR WOOD AND SOLAR
PANELS, NOR DOES IT FEEL LIKE ONE,
ESPECIALLY WITH THE COMMUNITY'*







Artisan Dental Studio

PETE

Artisan Dental Studio

Artisan Dental Studio is a boutique dental laboratory. They work with clinicians and patients to create individual teeth, whether it be for aesthetic, cosmetic or functional purposes.

'The best thing about Filwood for me is when people come here for a consultation or a meeting or other reps come here. Immediately it's a nice place. It's clean and new, whereas most dental labs are quite often in sheds or back gardens... Un-professional really'





When did you guys move in?

December 2015. It seemed like a really great opportunity to work locally in nice premises. The place has a nice feel to it, it seemed like a collaborative environment. I didn't know anything about the eco side of things before then.


How has your business benefited from Filwood?

It was a really good size for us to grow into. At the time I was renting this tiny little space, in a loft if you like. It got a discounted rate on a rolling contract which gave me the confidence to go for it. Whereas before I was like "I am going to be tied into this massive contract, it's a big leap."

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Do you work with the other businesses much?

There's always a nice atmosphere, everyone wants to say hello and chat. There's also the tea and coffee thing on a Thursday afternoon. That's how I met an IT guy who is working out of the offices here and he supplied us with an extra computer and stuff like that. It was nice having that immediate connection. All the stickers we have up on the windows was done by Think Image. It's a good opportunity to get things done locally, cheaply, plus if are working opposite them they want to do a good job.



How are you enjoying life at Filwood, Ngaio?



Woof!
Woof!
Woof!

The best thing about Filwood for me is when people come here for a consultation or a meeting it's a nice place. It's clean and new, whereas most dental labs are quite often in sheds or back gardens... Unprofessional really.

The business is more associated with craft rather than actual dentistry so the relaxed and informal environment really works well with the clients. When they come here we always talk about it being a new building, European in the way it looks and funded, and the whole green side too. That was an added bonus for us – our power bills are really low which is fantastic. We are currently looking to be put in for a green award in the industry.

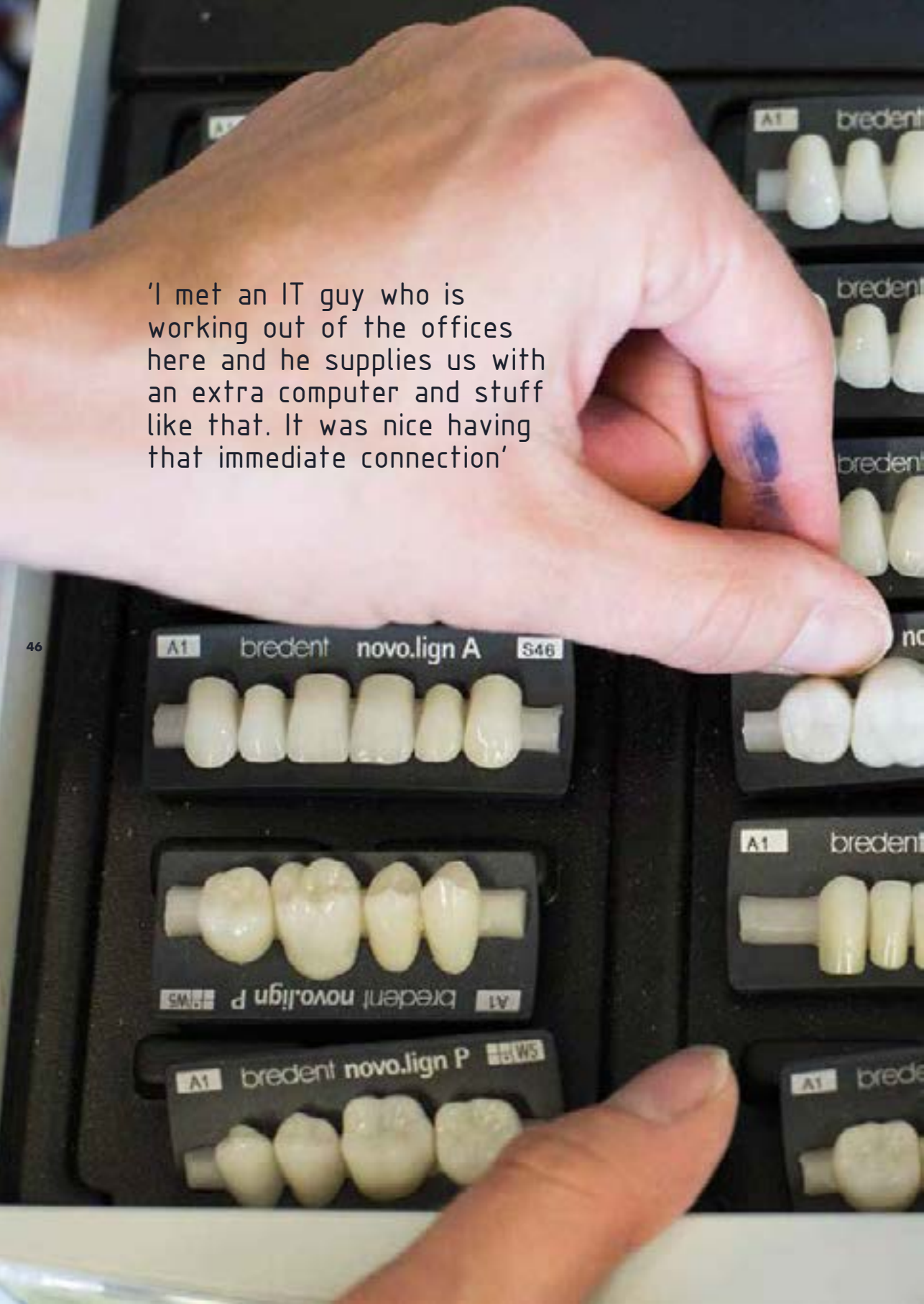


Because of my contract my overheads are lower and it has given me that financial security to invest and grow more rapidly. As soon as I moved in I bought a scanner which enabled me to take more business on. If the contract had tied me in, for say 5 years, I don't think I would have taken that risk and wouldn't be doing so well now.

When I first started I had to borrow all of this kit and I couldn't foresee how I was going to grow very easily without incurring massive overheads. Some of the prices for the units (in other locations) that have water was huge, around 3x the amount as here, and some of them were really grotty and not really nice. I wouldn't want to show them off, they didn't have any parking nor were they particularly accessible. Here is much easier to get to.



'I met an IT guy who is working out of the offices here and he supplies us with an extra computer and stuff like that. It was nice having that immediate connection'



novo.lign A M48



novo.lign A L27



novo.lign A D49



novo.lign P W5



novo.lign A R35



ent novo.lign P W5



A1 bredent novo.lign A R21



A1 bredent novo.lign P L2



A1 bredent novo.lign P L2



A1 bredent novo.lign P L3



A1 bredent novo.lign P L3







WARRANTY SpectraMax
SpectraMax microplate readers have been used for this
purpose and are covered against fracture for five years.
The warranty is void if the original product

ce Fax
6 9874

June 17
10/10/10

'Because of my contract my overheads are lower and it has given me that financial security to invest and grow more rapidly'

ALL RECORDS

QEH SCHOOL
BERKELY PLACE
107010
BRSMG: 2014/93

Andy King

ST MATTHIAS CAMPUS,
FISH PONDS
107200
BRSMG: 2016/94
ALL RECORDS



Established in 1979 Wessex Archaeology offers above ground, below ground and underwater archaeology services of all periods. They employ over 200 staff and work out of six regional offices. Wessex Archaeology West was established in Bristol in 2014 and moved to Filwood Green Business Park just after it opened.

Wessex Archaeology





⁵² ‘The space we have o
is self-contained, it ha
water so we can use
rather than just a stor

over in the workshop⁵³
s its own internet and
it for a range of work
rage facility'





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Andy, tell us what you do here

We are one of the biggest archaeology contractual units in the country, covering the length and breadth of the UK as well as work abroad, not just on terrestrial projects but on marine sites too. Here at Filwood Green we have a costal marine contingent, so in this particular office we do fieldwork, geophysics, buildings and research and coastal & marine. We cover the west of England but we also supply staff to our other satellite offices.

We have been here since January 2016, averaging about 20 odd staff. It's an enjoyable place to work, the facilities are just right at the moment for the size we are.

Why did you choose Filwood?

Partly for necessity at the beginning. We were based in the centre Bristol but parking and the logistics involving vehicles that we use was just getting ridiculous on a daily basis really. But here there is ample space, it's been a good move.



How has Filwood benefitted you as a business?

The amount of a space and facilities has allowed us to expand in what we do and we are still expanding. It is also a healthier place to be, instead of car fumes you get bird songs and clean air. It's not difficult to find, it's easy to get to and public transport is getting better.

It's nice when we are all flat out and using the space to the best effect. We have grown considerably in the size

and range of the services we offer, and we are already running out of space again so may need a new unit on this premise.

The space we have over in workshop is self-contained, it has its own internet and water so we can use it for a range of work rather than just a storage facility.






‘It is also a
healthier place
to be, instead
of car fumes
you get bird
songs, cleaner
air’

FTNCm 2016/83

SK10105

Left Arm



It's an enjoyable
place to work, the
facilities are just
right...for the size
we are.



BLOQ
is a property block
management company.
They started out 5 years ago
with and now work with range
of clients from new developments,
to house conversions to existing
office blocks. We spoke to Paula White,
a former Stride Treglown'er (she used to
work in our accounts department), and now
Finance and Operations Manager for Bloq.

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So Paula, great to see you again! Can you tell us more about why you chose Filwood?

So we moved in in October 2016. We were looking for somewhere that represented us. It's practical, simple and not too fussy. We looked at offices in central Bristol but they didn't suit who we are, and we like the sustainability here, it works with the personality of our business. Some business centres seem to attract one type of business but here there is a real range, they are small but quite diverse. We use the stationery suppliers, we use the printers. It's nice to be able to use the other businesses in here.

You said the sustainability focus was a positive, was that key?

In our business, the blocks we manage, it's important to try and get the residents to recycle, to work together as a community to get the buildings as eco-friendly as possible.

We also offer them alternative transport solutions so they aren't car reliant. So we wanted to be somewhere that fitted with that as well.

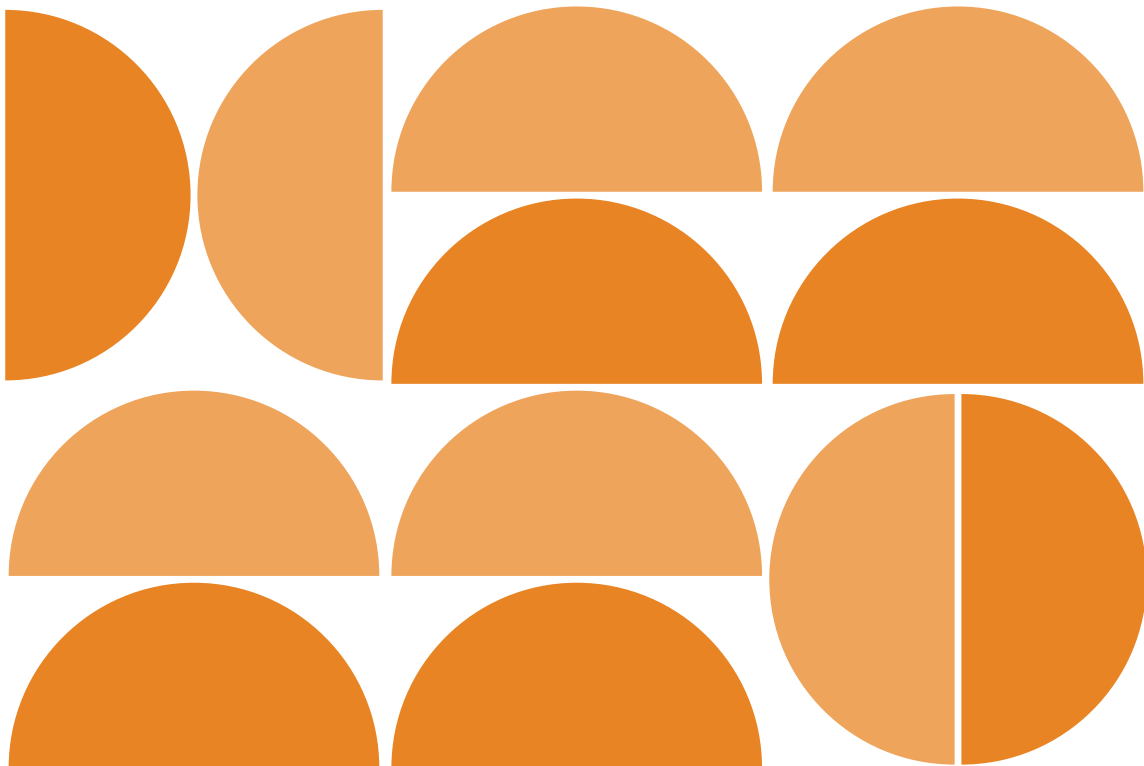
Do you see much of the other companies here?

We love the dynamic of other business here and its nice being part of that. There is the hub downstairs where anyone can go and work. Because there are five of us in the office it gets quite busy, if any of us have got a meeting or just want to work quietly on our own we can take our laptop down there.

They also run business support sessions and workshops which we have benefited from. We've met quite a lot of other business owners through those. We are encouraged to share what we do and help each other and we've been recommended to a new client from somebody (at Filwood) that we met through a networking workshop.

“WE ARE NOT BOUND BY OFFICE WALLS. THE BUILDING HAS GOT OPEN SPACES YOU CAN COME TO, THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT ATTRACTIVE. PEOPLE HAVE THEIR DOORS OPEN.







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What do you like about working at Filwood?

I like the fact that some people bring their dog in and I can bring my child in and there are other kids here. Some offices are sterile, so very formal that you would never think of doing that.

And you said its fine having children here?

There is a downstairs area where you can sit with them. It just feels like somewhere you can do that. Whereas in other offices I have worked at, if I wanted to bring my son in for a day there would have been nowhere to take him. Here other business do that, they bring their children, their dogs and bikes. It feels like a really informal environment where you can do that and that's great for people who don't want to fit that exact 9 to 5 office life.

“

I WAS HOT THE OTHER DAY
AND A MAN HAD HIS DOOR
OPEN AND HE WAS SAT
THERE WITH HIS FAN ON.
I SAID “CAN I COME IN
AND STAND IN FRONT OF
YOUR FAN” AND WE GOT
CHATTING. HE CAME IN THE
NEXT MORNING AND SAID
“I’M GOING OUT TODAY SO
DO YOU WANT MY FAN?”





Redland

Montpelier

Bishopston

Ashley Down

Cotham

Kingsdown

G14

PS

CC

SC

Upper Easton

BRISTOL

R9

Park

RB

SRP

Sian

Windmill Hill

Knowle

St Philip's Marsh

Knowle

“WE LOVE
THE DYNAMIC
OF OTHER
BUSINESSES
HERE AND ITS
NICE BEING
PART OF THAT.

67





MATT

Temple Cycles produce a range of modern bikes with a classic aesthetic for town, country, touring and road riding.

All their bikes are lightweight, durable and versatile, designed to bring the user enjoyment for years to come.

They are also an online custom bike specialist, and have a range of curated parts and accessories.

IT DIDN'T SEEM
LIKE YOUR STANDARD
INDUSTRIAL PARK
WAREHOUSE WITH ITS
CEDAR CLADDING AND



SOLAR PANELS, ITS MORE 'BRISTOL-EY' (COMPARED WITH OTHER BUSINESS PARKS)



Matt, how did Temple Cycles get started?

While studying for my Mechanical Engineering degree I was making some money on the side from restoring vintage road bikes. I kept saving that and realised I could start producing bikes properly, so applied for a loan and some start-up grants from the council and The Princes Trust. We've been growing organically since then.

When did they move in?

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April 2016

Why did you choose Filwood?

We choose Filwood for the natural light, the security, good pricing and for space to grow. When we were looking to move here the park was about half full and there were some interesting small business around, so we thought we would fit in.

We liked that it was customer fronting and people can come in and feel relaxed. It doesn't really feel like your standard industrial park warehouse because of the cedar cladding and solar panels, its more 'Bristol-ey' than other business parks. In our unit we have a nice mezzanine floor which we use as the office, so downstairs we have just for the workshop.



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How has Filwood benefited you as a business?

It provides a professional front to the business for publicity, especially when we are featured in magazines.

The fact that the location and the shop is very accessible by car has helped us. A lot of our customers visit us after work and want to be able to take the bike straight home which the facility allows.

The reception area is great, Sarah at the desk is very good at catering for us, she really does care for the tenants.



We get a lot of post, it's great that we have a facility that caters for that. There are communal areas too, however I don't use them too often but it's good to know they are there.

Do you benefit from cross business with the other tenants?

A little bit. We haven't sold a Temple to any of the businesses yet but by servicing their bikes helps get our name out there and is great for networking too.









green keratin®

NATURAL SKINCARE BRISTOL



Green Keratin produce small batches of organic skincare products. Every aspect of their production, from research and development to manufacturing and packaging, is performed by a member of their team in-house and has sustainability as its focus.

GLEN + ANDERSON



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Hi guys, tell us why you chose Filwood

So we've been here 9 months. We chose to move to Bristol as we wanted a different pace of life and were looking to expand.

We take an ethical approach in every aspect of the business and felt Filwood shares a similar ethos, so it's a natural fit. We wanted to grow within a community of like-minded businesses, and this community aspect is one of the things we love so much about life here. They really help you settle in, there's an

excellent small business support, and the newsletters keep you up-to-date with everything.

The design of the place in regards to our actual requirements as a business to function, like the electricity, lighting and space, suited us. The contract was also very good in regards to price and flexibility.



We made our decision on the basis on feeling. You know when you look at place and you know this is where I want to be.

The warehouse and its setup has made us more efficient, it's easier for us to practice being more green, recycling our waste. We have the factory downstairs and the admin space up top and things seem to be running smoothly.

There is a communal area in the reception where people meet on

Thursday mornings for tea and coffee. There we have met, and are now currently doing business with, our accountants, solicitors, recycling suppliers and graphics and signage folk (although we haven't confirmed the latter yet).

The communal areas are a great way to meet people and network. We are able to share contacts with them and information. This is important because if they don't know someone they might know someone who will.





The communal areas are a great way to meet people and network



*There we have met, and are
now currently doing business
with, our accountants,
solicitors, recycling suppliers*





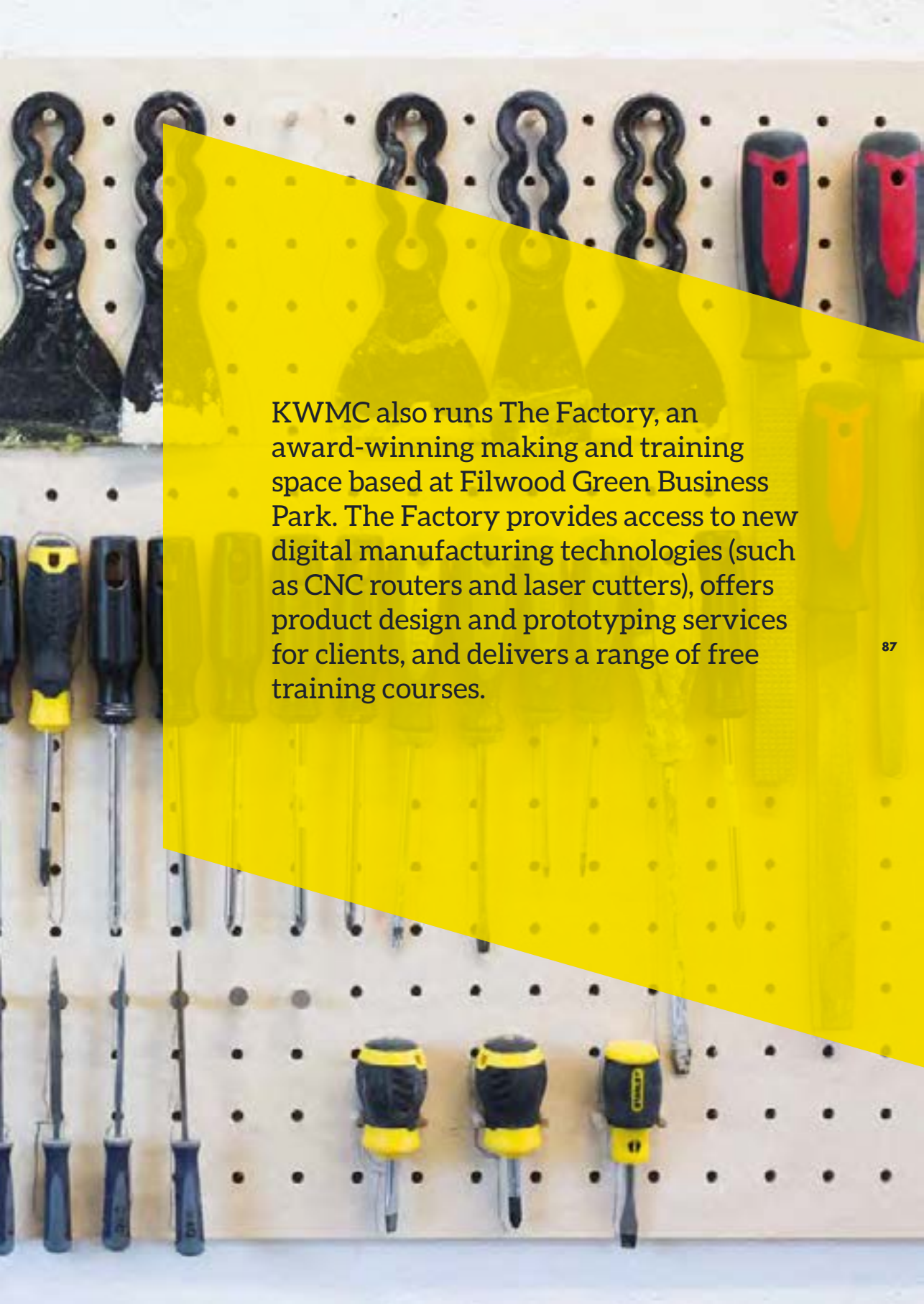
Tom





Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) supports people to make positive changes in their lives and communities, using technology and the arts to come up with creative solutions to problems and explore innovative ways of doing things. The arts organisation and charity has been based in South Bristol since 1996, where it began as a photography and health project. Its many current projects include skills training and employment opportunities for young people and creative programmes working with local people to explore issues ranging from health to housing.





KWMC also runs The Factory, an award-winning making and training space based at Filwood Green Business Park. The Factory provides access to new digital manufacturing technologies (such as CNC routers and laser cutters), offers product design and prototyping services for clients, and delivers a range of free training courses.

Tom, tell us the story of KWMC at Filwood so far

Our role here is varied, it's generally split between commercial work, charity support or running workshops.

When the Filwood project began, we made a lot of the furniture. It was essentially a pilot project because we are known as a digital arts charity. But, from that, Melissa (Head of Arts at KWMC) and I saw an opportunity to work with the council to expand their arts budget and support local people.

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We took on three locals as paid employees, two carpenters and a host of volunteers. We were working in partnership with a charity called Rework that supports young people, including those that volunteered with us. We couldn't have done it without them.

For us, that's what the project's all about. We can provide employment, skills and get people involved, rather than just seeing a business park on the edge of their neighbourhood and having no connection to it.

So once the furniture was finished, you decided to move in?

Yeah, in the summer of 2015 when Filwood was finished, it just made sense to keep the story here. Initially, we took one unit but have since expanded and got two. It's provided a proper workshop with space to grow. The amount of natural light is amazing and it's really well insulated. People come in and go 'wow this space is awesome' which is really nice. Going from what was once a temporary project to being somewhere that we can call home, it's fantastic.

It ticked all of the boxes in terms of the space we need, especially having a connection to it. We've now got a client list and quite a few projects that we can show in our portfolio. When we first arrived our showroom was the hub. It was a great place to be. It put people at ease who were like "you guys aren't makers, you're a digital arts charity", so it's given us a bit of credibility.

Do you see much of your neighbours?

Yeah, we've done work with quite a few of the tenants. People just come in and say "oh you guys are furniture guys, can you help us with this?" We've done stuff with Jody too, we made an exhibition for @ Bristol who wanted some lockers that looked old and distressed, but still worked. So we asked Jody to see what effect he can come up with and he made some really cool artwork.

It's those kind of conversations that happen a lot. When we needed a bin, went over to the Will and Green warehouse and I asked for one. He wanted some card cutting out for a prototype of a new product so he just used our laser. It's a friendly, help each other out atmosphere.

People will often walk in and look at the furniture too. We get a lot of work by people saying "oh yeah the KWMC factory, that's a new place, give them a shout". So yeah, we do rely quite a lot on working with the other tenants, but again, that's part of history.

Ideas

No more
than 1 tonne



Planters

Honey Comb - 3 Sizes

False bottoms

big
middle
small

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