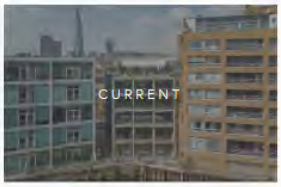

London's Conran Building gets a sharp, shiny overhaul

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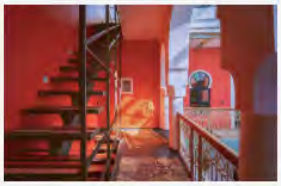

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ARCHITECTURE, PROPERTY | | BY ELLEN HIMELFARB

London's Conran Building gets a sharp, shiny overhaul

Ready for a new generation of creative minds

Photography: Andy Stagg

The real estate feel-good story of the week takes place on the Thames in London, where the Conran Building, built in 1991 at 22 Shad Thames, is reopening for a new generation of creative minds. The Grade II-listed mini-tower was originally commissioned by cutlery and metalworker David Mellor on a dark, postindustrial dip in the river. It was designed as Mellor's creative studio and home by the innovative team of Michael and Patty Hopkins with high-tech lead, granite, glass and recessed lighting, and enhanced by Mellor's handmade decor. In 1996, Terence Conran took it on, transforming it into the headquarters of his design and restaurant businesses. It was always a landmark for Londoners experiencing the slow transformation and gentrification of the riverfront, even if its condition had worsened.

Now, instead of being torn down, the building has been relaunched as a six-storey modern workspace with an overhauled look by Squire & Partners, a veteran practice with a portfolio running the length and breadth of London. With great attention paid to the cool late 20th-century look, they repaired the lead cladding, re-exposed the original concrete and refreshed the foyer as an intimate, welcoming communal space. Adding quality floor-to-ceiling glazing allows for natural ventilation and natural light, contributing to the building's environmental performance. Layouts have been modified with the

ability to shift and regroup. The meeting rooms, furnished with original Conran designs, benefit from new Crittall-style windows.

Photography: Andy Stagg

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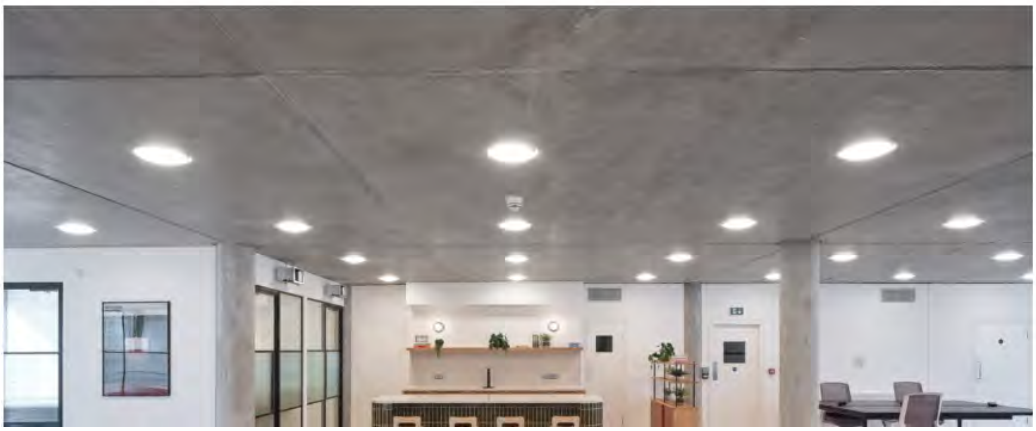
'The Conran Building is a design classic,' says Tim Gledstone, a partner at Squire & Partners. 'The revitalised building helps to preserve the heritage of Shad Thames, paying homage to its storied past, whilst now providing transformed high-quality contemporary workspace that sets the standard for future projects in the area.'

The top two floors, formerly zoned as residential for the original Mellor quarters, now integrate into the rest of the scheme. Architects from Squire added a glazed conservatory to the roof, and the light it brings in warms the entire structure.

The project has allowed the building to leapfrog over its neighbours in terms of style and functionality. People lucky enough to work there can now feel something akin to pride that they're contributing to its living history.



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