

Coffee is the centre for social cohesion in new Royal Institute of British Architects head office building



Scanomat's founder set out to develop a revolutionary new coffee machine concept which would complement architecture and design. The TopBrewer was subsequently born, and now two units have been installed into the Royal Institute of British Architects' (RIBA) new Central London office at 76 Portland Place, London.

The refurbished office space at Portland Place opened to RIBA staff in March 2015, combining three staff offices into one. The Royal Institute of British Architects work tirelessly to champion better buildings in the UK, so it is no surprise that their latest head office building epitomises modern architecture. It is evident that every small detail of the project has been carefully thought out by RIBA's House Architect, Martin Pascoe and architectural firm, Theis & Khan Architects.

Beyond the reception area there is a large open plan social area and cafe called *'The Forum'*, designed to be a destination where staff can meet, collaborate and be inspired. A mix of raw materials have been specified to create a subtle, minimalistic design. The open plan central area offers a mix of seating options including soft seating, high stools and wooden furniture, all encased within an impressive curved wooden structure. Along one wall of the space there are also a number of private booths to accommodate more private conversations.

Scanomat originally approached RIBA in 2014 about becoming approved CPD providers with a new seminar titled "Coffee as the Centre for Social Cohesion". Following a successful pre-assessment meeting with RIBA Architect, Anthony Clerici, he was inspired to recommend the TopBrewer for the Portland Place project. "The timing of the RIBA CPD assessment enabled me to contribute to the RIBA's new 'forum' by recommending the design team look at *TopBrewer*. The rest is history!" said Anthony.



RIBA designed 'The Forum' as a destination where staff can meet, collaborate and be inspired.



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*Martin Pascoe,
House Architect,
RIBA*



The remit of the design was to change the work culture at RIBA. The aim of *The Forum* in particular was to create a social space which would act as an informal meeting area and networking space for staff to collaborate.

“We wanted to create focal points within the social space for staff and members to meet and collaborate,” explained Martin Pascoe, Head of Projects & Building Strategy/House Architect at the RIBA, “The introduction of the TopBrewer allowed us to re-think the whole refreshment experience and integrate coffee as part of the overall design. We were instantly drawn to the stylish design of the TopBrewer but we were also very impressed with the quality of the coffee and the chocolate. The communal aspect of the TopBrewer was an important feature as it allowed us to put coffee ‘in the round’ and create zones where staff can gather around the coffee machine.”

Following a pre-installation meeting, Scanomat recommended two TopBrewer’s for the social space to create a relaxed atmosphere without queues. The TopBrewer is an app-controlled coffee machine, meaning that RIBA staff can control the TopBrewer via the TopBrewer app on their smartphone, allowing



them to individually customise drinks to their preferences and save them to enjoy again and again. ISM Design Ltd were commissioned to design and build two beautiful bespoke island units to house each TopBrewer, creating two separate refreshment zones at each end of the space.

Simon Bracken, Managing Director & Co-Founder of Scanomat UK, commented: “For the first time the coffee machine can enhance the social space rather than being an object that needs to be masked from view. The minimalistic design lends itself perfectly to be positioned as part of a central island in the workplace to create an anchor point. The swan neck itself can swivel 360 degrees whilst the under-counter brew unit is discreet and super silent, making it the ideal refreshment solution for meeting areas.” He added, “It has been an honour to work with the team at the Royal Institute of British Architects on this ground-breaking project and it is extremely rewarding that the Architectural community understands the value the TopBrewer can bring to the future workspace.”



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***“Coffee as the
Centre for Social
Cohesion”***

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Scanomat’s RIBA
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