



# alma-nac

**PRESS ENQUIRIES**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

## THE AXIS ON ORMSIDE SOUTH BERMONDSEY, LONDON

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alma-nac has repurposed a light industrial warehouse in Southwark into a complex of state-of-the-art professional music studios for The Axis, a new enterprise specialising in the provision of writing and production spaces for music professionals.

The Axis on Ormside is the first facility created by The Axis, a London-based enterprise with ambitions to create a national network of facilities. It plugs a gap in London's world-leading music industry by providing acoustically-designed songwriting and production studios and client-facing facilities in a city suffering a rapid loss of creative production spaces.

South Bermondsey is a prime location for the new venture: its post-industrial landscape has attracted a community of creatives drawn to its lower rents and open-plan loft spaces. Music production house Atomic Studios, which has recording facilities, is within walking distance on Ilderton Road.

Providing the options of long-term tenancy and flexible, day-rate membership, the 24/7 hub will be a space where users settle in and create in comfort anytime, day or night. The studios are being marketed to musicians who have earned a reputation in the industry and need a more professional space to work from and collaborate with others. Residents will benefit from being part of a wider community of notable creatives.

The Axis on Ormside occupies a two-storey brick warehouse on a former industrial estate, which has been vacant for some time. The warehouse has been converted into a complex of ten soundproofed studios arranged along an internal street. The smaller first floor comprises a green room – an open-plan communal space for client-facing meetings, networking, socialising and relaxing – and a space to accommodate music management personnel joining songwriting sessions. A small reception desk is located on the ground floor for managing daily access; longer term tenants will have keyless access using a mobile app.

Reflecting a craft aesthetic inspired by Enzo Mari's Autoprogettazione low-tech approach, the studios are formed from utilitarian, low-cost materials simply crafted to create an inspiring and unique environment. The 'street-facing' side of the studios is fabricated from CNC-routed plywood cut in such a way that there is zero waste. The green room is furnished with reclaimed and upscaled furniture.

New transparent panels in the roof bring daylight into the internal street, and the roof trusses are lit at night to create an atmosphere of a street inside. Gillieron Scott Acoustic Design has ensured the studios are structurally isolated to maximise sound insulation between spaces and control the break-in of external noise. As a result, internal noise levels will always be suitably low for songwriting, regardless of others working concurrently. The internal finishes of each studio have been designed to control reverberation to industry standards, delivering a high-quality listening environment and creating a sense of privacy

and enclosure, and the impression of being removed from the outside world.

The colour scheme of bright contrasting hues applied in tessellating patterns is informed by the company's branding, which was developed by Joana Pereira. A dark teal datum is applied internally along the street, with electric orange trusses in the roof. The teal is also applied to the front elevation, which provides wayfinding and announces The Axis to the wider neighbourhood.

Chris Kiely, Director, The Axis, said:

*"It's been a challenge launching a business during a global pandemic, and managing the build through repeated lockdowns, but the team worked hard to get there – we would not be where we are now without some heroic efforts from our contractors going above and beyond on a weekly basis.*

*alma-nac's vision has really transformed the building, turning what is essentially ten acoustically isolated boxes in a warehouse into something that feels homely and professional at the same time. The aesthetics coupled with studio soundproofing by Gillieron Scott Acoustic Design really sets the space apart from anything else in the market right now.*

*While it has undeniably been a struggle to get to this point, the service that The Axis is offering is more crucial now than ever: supporting freelance music professionals, a subsector of the creative industries which has been so badly hit by the pandemic, launching at a time when local music facilities (including DIY Space and Terminal Studios) have been forced to closed. Prospective tenants are blown away by the new facilities. We've already enlisted a band signed to Universal Music and market-leading music production company Wisebuddah as long-term tenants."*

Chris Bryant, Director, alma-nac, said:

*"The Axis is our latest project in a line of enquiry exploring the reuse of light industrial buildings. There is something innately satisfying about taking a simple obsolete structure and turning it into something very specialised. The existing building provided a weatherproof enclosure and the freedom to create a series of carefully controlled local environments, and to position them as if each studio were a house in a street. This arrangement allows the occupants to meet and work independently, while retaining the expanse of the original structure. The pattern of the facades is inspired by kinetic artist Carlos Cruz-Diez's *Physichromie* series (1959) investigating how colour and pattern change as perspective changes, in this case as you move down the street.*

*We were lucky to work with an ambitious client, and together we pursued a zero-waste strategy, including aligning the size of the studios to standard material dimensions and using every part of the CNC routed plywood sheets. It has been an immensely difficult time to build, but the whole team has stuck to the original aspirations of the project and created a unique offer for musicians."*

**Press enquiries:**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

<b>Name of project</b>	The Axis on Ormside
<b>Address:</b>	114 Ormside Street, Southwark, London SE15 1TF
<b>Footprint</b>	260m <sup>2</sup>
<b>GIA</b>	322.5m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Construction phase</b>	March - November 2020
<b>Completion</b>	November 2020
<b>Client</b>	The Axis
<b>Architect</b>	alma-nac
<b>Acousticians</b>	Gillieron Scott Acoustic Design
<b>Building Contractor</b>	The Axis
<b>Joinery</b>	Jamie Teasdale
<b>Quantity Surveyor</b>	n/a
<b>Services Engineer</b>	n/a
<b>Photography</b>	© Jack Hobhouse

**alma-nac** is a London-based studio founded in 2010 by Chris Bryant, Caspar Rodgers and Tristan Wigfall. The practice believes in designing with first principles, creating designs which have wit and bring joy as well as harnessing the input of end users through participatory design processes. The three directors have a shared interest in exploring how design can take an unlikely starting point – such as an awkward site or unusually small space – and turn it into something worthwhile.

In the retrofit sector, Paxton House, the transformation of a concrete office block in Croydon into a 43-unit housing scheme for Joseph Homes, won Best Housing Project under £5m in the AJ Retrofit Awards 2018 and a First Time Buyers Award 2019. The Photography Workshop, a 600m<sup>2</sup> workspace retrofit, was a finalist in the AJ Small Projects Awards 2019.

House-within-a-House is the practice's repurposing of a 1950s London house, extending and recladding the property, incorporating existing building materials which would have otherwise ended up in landfill. alma-nac is currently organising workshops with school pupils local to Dulwich to repurpose the Dulwich Pavilion Colour Palace into planters for their school playgrounds. The practice is also currently engaged in the redevelopment of Dulwich College Junior and Lower Schools.

In 2018 the practice guest-edited the internationally published Architectural Design magazine. The issue, New Modes: Redefining Practice, explored new modes of practice emerging in the architectural profession, challenging conventional notions of the architect.

**alman-nac.com**



**The Axis** is a new central London destination for the music creation industry, founded in 2019 by Chris Kiely, Larry Hibbitt and Charlie Dorman, all of whom have established careers in the music industry. The founders are on a mission to provide places for their peers to prosper. Charlie, Larry and Chris have worked together on numerous music industry projects over the last 25 years. In this time, they've seen the industry change and grow, and the needs of music creators evolve, particularly in their requirement for workspace. At the same time, property in London has been swallowed up by developers and corporates – leaving less and less space for creators, especially in the city centre. So they decided to take some of it back – partnering with the best in acoustic and architectural design to transform an empty space in Bermondsey into a music creation destination; one to enhance the music creation experience of its valued residents by supplying the right mix of craft, community and comfort.

**[theaxis.uk](http://theaxis.uk)**

**Gillieron Scott Acoustic Design** was established in 1984 and is one of the UK's leading acoustic consultancies. Our team of expert consultants provides a full range of acoustic services and strategic advice to meet clients' aspirations across a wide range of sectors. We are commissioned to work on projects throughout the UK and overseas, and have won many awards designing buildings of the highest technical calibre. We are responsible for all aspects of acoustic design to ensure acoustic criteria are met in the finished building, including discussions with clients and architects, environmental measurements, noise and vibration surveys, long term monitoring, and advanced modelling, soundscapes and auralisation.

**[gsacoustics.org](http://gsacoustics.org)**



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