



O'DonnellBrown

PRESS ENQUIRIES
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PRESS RELEASE

US V THEM, 200 GALLOWGATE, GLASGOW

10/2020

O'DonnellBrown has completed new headquarters for Us V Them in Glasgow.

The building is located at 200 Gallowgate, a stone's throw away from the iconic Barrowland Ballroom and Barras open-air market in Glasgow's East End.

Us V Them: Engineering Coffee, is a Glasgow-based company founded in 2017 by local entrepreneur, engineer and coffee aficionado James Aitken. The new development allows James to combine his skills and passion, merging his workshop for repairing professional coffee equipment servicing Scotland's best independent cafes, bars and restaurants, with an espresso bar where he can share his love for coffee with others.

The refurbished 120m² interior offers the neighbourhood a new gathering space to serve the burgeoning creative community, a place where they can congregate and feel united by a shared love of great coffee. The espresso bar will serve a variety of blends, from local speciality roasters, such as Dear Green, to blends from Europe and Colombia.

Located in a single-storey building on an eclectic street in the East End, the site is within the Gallowgate Transformational Regeneration Area – an ambitious programme which has led to Many Studios gallery and studio space by Glasgow architects New Practice; the thriving Barras Art and Design (BAaD) venue; and a mix of pubs, shops and restaurants.

Working to a tight budget, O'DonnellBrown sought to unify the interior in a simple and legible way. They approached the tired-looking building, which had accumulated a mishmash of alterations over the years, by shedding the layers to return to the bare bones of the original sandstone tenement. Dark stained wood panelling clads the walls, wrapping the whole perimeter, creating a clean datum for the space. With high stools arranged around the perimeter to make a COVID-secure gathering space, the panelling functions as a ledge for patrons to perch on.

The industrial aesthetic is amplified by details such as exposed steel columns and exposed ceiling services, and copper pipes and a copper cage which permits views into the maintenance workshop.

O'DonnellBrown collaborated with ThreeFourFive Joinery, who fabricated the timber panels off-site using CNC machining techniques, resulting in an engineered and robust finish which aligns with the Us V Them brand, and gives the space its unique character and identity. The architects had previously worked with the joiners, using the same off-site CNC machining techniques to fabricate their own studio, The Greenhouse, in Pollokshields.



As the threat of recession brought on by the pandemic begins to impact high streets across the UK, the opening of Us V Them offers a ray of hope for independents. The summer lockdown afforded James the time and focus to get the project off the ground, and the lack of business servicing equipment allowed him time to tackle some of the strip-out and demolition himself. The name of the business alludes to the parable of David and Goliath, and the empowerment of the underdog – and in this volatile market, small and local has great potency.

James Aitken, Founder, Us V Them, said:

“Our café/workshop is minimalist and clean with the full focus on the engineering and craft of coffee making. So much goes into creating a consistently good cup of coffee, and we aim to highlight this within our space. If a café is run well it can be invigorated by public support and we are keen to make a space that brings people together under one common bond, great coffee.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Address:	200 Gallowgate, Glasgow
Gross internal area:	120m ²
Construction cost:	£38,000 + vat
Completion:	July 2020
Client:	James Aitken, Us V Them
Architect :	Jennifer O'Donnell, Sam Brown and Mairi Watson
Project architect:	Sam Brown
Contractor:	Turnaround Joiners & Builders Ltd. (Gordon Clelland)
Photography:	© Ross Campbell



O'DonnellBrown is a multiple award-winning Glasgow-based architecture practice with experience across a range of specialisms, and a keen interest in what it takes to make a positive contribution to our built environment. With work across the UK – currently concentrated in London and Glasgow – O'DonnellBrown is committed to bringing about confident change in the places they know and love.

Built works include: The Greenhouse, the studio's unique workspace in Pollokshields, and a new annexe building and outdoor learning space at Seven Mills Primary School in Tower Hamlets, London.

Other residential projects include The Foundry, a development of 206 homes on the site of a former foundry in Glasgow; and a Gap Homes development in the north of Glasgow for children's charity Barnardo's.

The practice is redeveloping Millport Town Hall on the Isle of Cumbrae, and is working on the feasibility for a new park pavilion community space and café in Pollokshields, Glasgow.

Self-initiated projects include: a prototype modular timber outdoor classroom, The Community Classroom, which is currently being manufactured by Space Oasis; and The Sitooterie, a flexible modular structure developed in consultation with local businesses in Glasgow to facilitate outdoor dining/trading spaces in a COVID-19 climate.

O'DonnellBrown was a finalist in The Architectural Review Emerging Architecture Awards 2019 and will feature in The Architecture Foundation's New Architects 4 (2021).

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Us V Them was founded in 2017 by James Aitken.

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