

A photograph of a modern office interior. The space features exposed silver ductwork and wooden structural beams. In the foreground, a long wooden table is surrounded by grey upholstered chairs. In the background, there are glass-walled meeting rooms and a staircase. The overall atmosphere is bright and industrial.

KWENCH creates a new work &
culture club designed to foster
HAPPINESS.

November 2019

KWENCH has
created a new full-
service work and
culture club in
Victoria, Canada for
creative, ambitious
thinkers and doers
who want more than
co-working.

THE IDEA

Founder and Director Tessa McLoughlin formed the idea of [KWENCH](#) in 2013 with a desire to create a new kind of space in Victoria.

As a newly single mom in an unfamiliar city she saw an opportunity to build a place that would support and engage not only people's work and careers but their health and happiness.

The goal was to create a multi-functional culture club, designed to promote a balance of 6 things: Knowledge, Wellness, Experiences, Novelty, Curiosity, and Connection, to create Healthy and Happy people.

Now, following 2 years of construction and building a community of members in a temporary location, her and her all-female team have expanded to a space 5 times the size of their original location.

The launch of KWENCH in the Old Town district of Victoria evolves and expands the traditional notion of co-working into a club based on health and connectivity.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

The 25,000 square-foot full-service work and social club brings new life to a derelict attic space in one of Victoria's forgotten heritage buildings. Merging two roofs together with a striking glass atrium, the new club offers members private offices from 1-28 people, shared workspaces, generous fitness facilities and classes, workshops, private and public events, lectures, art installations, meditation, a library, a bar, food and drink - all in one place.

Female-founded, funded and operated, KWENCH is a bit different from the traditional co-working spaces, by offering a unique and welcoming place in the city for social interaction and valuable connections that are important to the culture of the city.

Members enjoy a thoughtfully designed space that considers the health of the individual by providing services and opportunities that consider their mental and physical health, and their place in the wider community. KWENCH is also host to a range of public and private events that give voice to the Victoria creative industries as well as a forum for local government and stakeholders to discuss and shape the future of the city.

The image shows a spacious, modern interior, likely a lounge or common area in a contemporary building. The most striking feature is the large, multi-paned glass roof that allows abundant natural light to fill the space. The ceiling structure is made of exposed concrete beams, and silver-colored ductwork is visible along the sides. In the center, a lush green tree stands in a tall, black cylindrical planter. Two large, bright yellow curved sofas are positioned on either side of the tree, facing each other. The floor is made of dark wood. In the background, there are glass-walled rooms and other architectural details, suggesting a multi-level or open-plan environment. The overall atmosphere is bright, airy, and modern.

WELCOME.

“ I wanted to create a space where members had access to all the resources they need to live a full and balanced lifestyle. ”

- Tessa McLoughlin, KWENCH founder

PROJECT TEAM

Client: KWENCH

Interior Designer: Hansenbuilt Design

Architect: MJM Architecture

Contractor: Bluewater Developments

Structural Engineer: Sorenson Trilogy

Photography: James Jones (unless otherwise noted)

ARTISTS, FABRICATORS & SUPPLIERS

Allied Glass

Ames Tiles

Andrew Sheret

Article

Bespoke Design Ltd

Blue Wave Electric

Botanic Creative

Broadwell Metal

Draught Wise

Garside Signs

Island Blue

Kurva Design

Latitude Security Solution

Liesch Interiors Ltd.

Lydia Beauregard

Mcgregor & Thompson Hardware Ltd.

McLaren Lighting

Monks

Phaulet

Rich's Electrical

Slegg Lumber

Victoria Granite

Victoria Specialty Hardware

We Are Becoming

Yellow Jacket Upholstery

THE DESIGN

The goal was to design a place that inspired happiness.

Tessa worked closely with local Interior Designer Sarah Donald of Hansenbuilt Design on an interior space that would celebrate the history of the project and embrace the vibrant culture and community of the club.

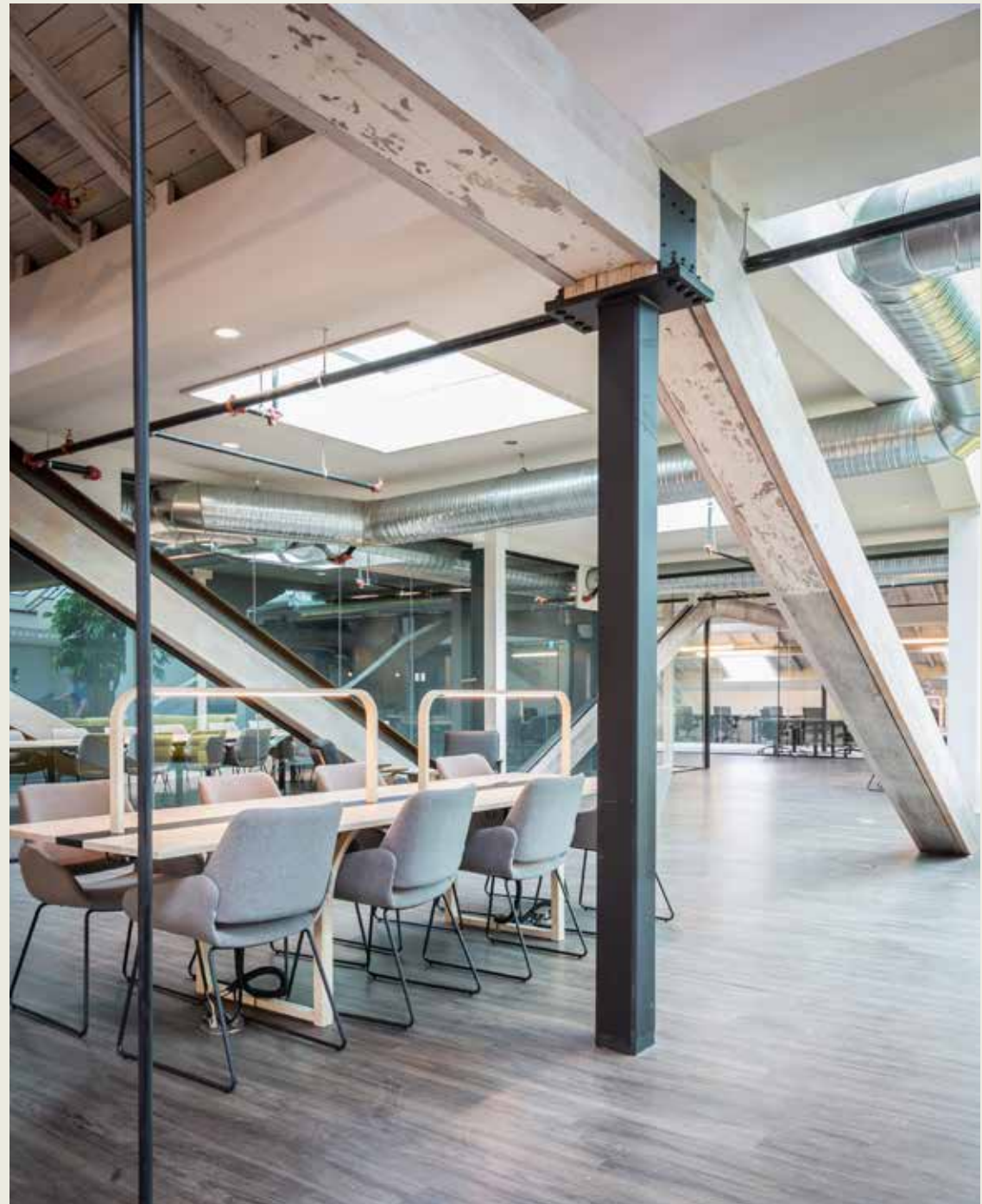
The heritage building was originally designed by infamous British architect Francis Rattenbury to house Victoria's streetcars, which were established in 1889 by The National Electric. The space the club now occupies is the top floor of that building and had lain derelict for decades before Tessa asked the building owner if she could pop her head through the attic hatch to have a look.

That dark attic space has now been transformed into a 25,000 sqf work and culture club for members and guests. Two separate roofs were joined together by a striking glass atrium, which is now the reception and the heart of the space.

The atrium expands out to a variety of shared social and work spaces at the centre of the club, including a full kitchen, dining areas, lounges, shared workspaces and a bar. This design was intended to promote connections, socializing, and cross-pollination of knowledge and ideas. Surrounding this shared space are the private offices, the Art Room, The Studio, Meditation & Library, boardrooms and changerooms.

The original structural elements were exposed and featured whenever possible, creating unique rooms and spaces, and new skylights were installed throughout to bring in natural daylight.

Engaging colours and playful designs bring life to the interiors, and are tempered with a calming, natural palette of wood, tile and fabrics.



Tessa McLoughlin

KWENCH Founder & Director

Born and raised in Australia, Tessa's first career began as a professional performer, working as a singer, dancer, actress and musician. After years of travelling, she made the move to Canada where she's now lived for over 20 years.

Upon moving to the Sea to Sky Corridor, Tessa immersed herself in the community, helping to conceive and expand several local initiatives including L.U.N.A, an entertainment event program, and Whistler Welcome Week.

Relocating to Vancouver Island with her two little munchkins in 2012, she continued to be involved in the local creative scene, by pitching and producing Thinklandia, a creative idea-sharing festival in Victoria that ran in conjunction with the Island's iconic music festival, Rifflandia. In early 2015, Tessa was asked to redesign and launch a coworking space for Fantan Group called The Watershed.

Through these experiences, Tessa realized a desire for a new kind of club - a space that would remove the disjointed and hectic busyness we all experience and support all things that sustain a happy life.

In 2017, Tessa launched the first KWENCH club, bringing together a community of creative, connected members, with ambitions to grow. Now Tessa and her team have just opened a new 25,000 sqf club in Victoria's growing Old Town district, with plans to expand into additional cities.



The KWENCH team, from left: Margo, Eva, Tessa, Sarah and Karlie.

Portrait by Julia Loglisci

KWENCH



“ Our mission is to to elevate
individual happiness and thus
strengthen the health, safety,
and innovation of the world. ”

- Tessa McLoughlin,
KWENCH founder



Sarah Donald Interior Designer, [Hansenbuilt Design](#)

Sarah Donald is a designer, musician, actor and co-founder of Hansenbuilt Design. Since she was a little girl she has always wanted to make people feel at home.

She remembers playing wedding with her sisters, choosing the role of usher every time. She wanted to greet everyone and find out what they needed to feel comfortable.

As a designer, she and her team enjoy getting to know their clients and creating spaces for them that capture and elevate their daily lives.



FEATURES

- KWENCH is fully female founded, funded and operated.
- The designated heritage building was originally designed by controversial British architect Francis Rattenbury to house street cars. Rattenbury also designed local landmarks including the BC Parliament Buildings, The Empress Hotel, Crystal Pool and Vancouver Art Gallery.
- The Old Town location is an historic commercial district with a collection of heritage buildings and warehouses constructed in the late 1800s, as well as Canada's oldest surviving Chinatown.
- KWENCH is the largest work club on Vancouver Island, with plans to build a network of locations in Canada, the US and Australia.

Long-term tenants include:



MODO - North America's first car-sharing co-op.



The Narwhal - award winning investigative journalism exploring stories about the natural world.



Kasian Architecture - one of the top 100 Architecture, Interior Design and Planning firms in the world.



Appreciation Engine - A customer identity & access management solution focussed on data privacy & personalized experiences.



Becoming Design Office - a strategy-driven design studio creating visual identities and brands.



Avalon - cloudbased chartered accounting & bookkeeping for small businesses across Canada.

KWENCH

LOCAL DESIGNERS & ARTISTS

KWENCH and Hansenbuilt Design strove to work with local designers and artists on this project to create a space that reflects the style of the local creative community and environment.

Kurva Design www.kurvadesign.ca

Local lighting and furniture designer Kurva Design was commissioned to create handmade light and power integrated work desks. The owner, British born Mike Randall, has a west coast minimalist style and creates unique pieces that are influenced by his love of clean lines and curved forms.



Botanic Creative www.botaniccreative.ca

Plants and greenspace at the club was designed by Sarah of Botanic Creative, who believes that the natural world enriches our own urban human-centred world. By blurring the lines of inside and outside, we can improve the spaces we inhabit by focusing on our innate connection to nature.



Phaulet www.phaulet.com

The striking tiles in the kitchen and bar are bespoke murals by Vancouver-based graphic artist and designer Paula Gonzales of Phaulet. Her signature style brings together colour and beauty by mixing a variety of techniques, including collage and hand-drawing, with modern digital tools.



Lydia Beauregard www.lydiabeauregard.com

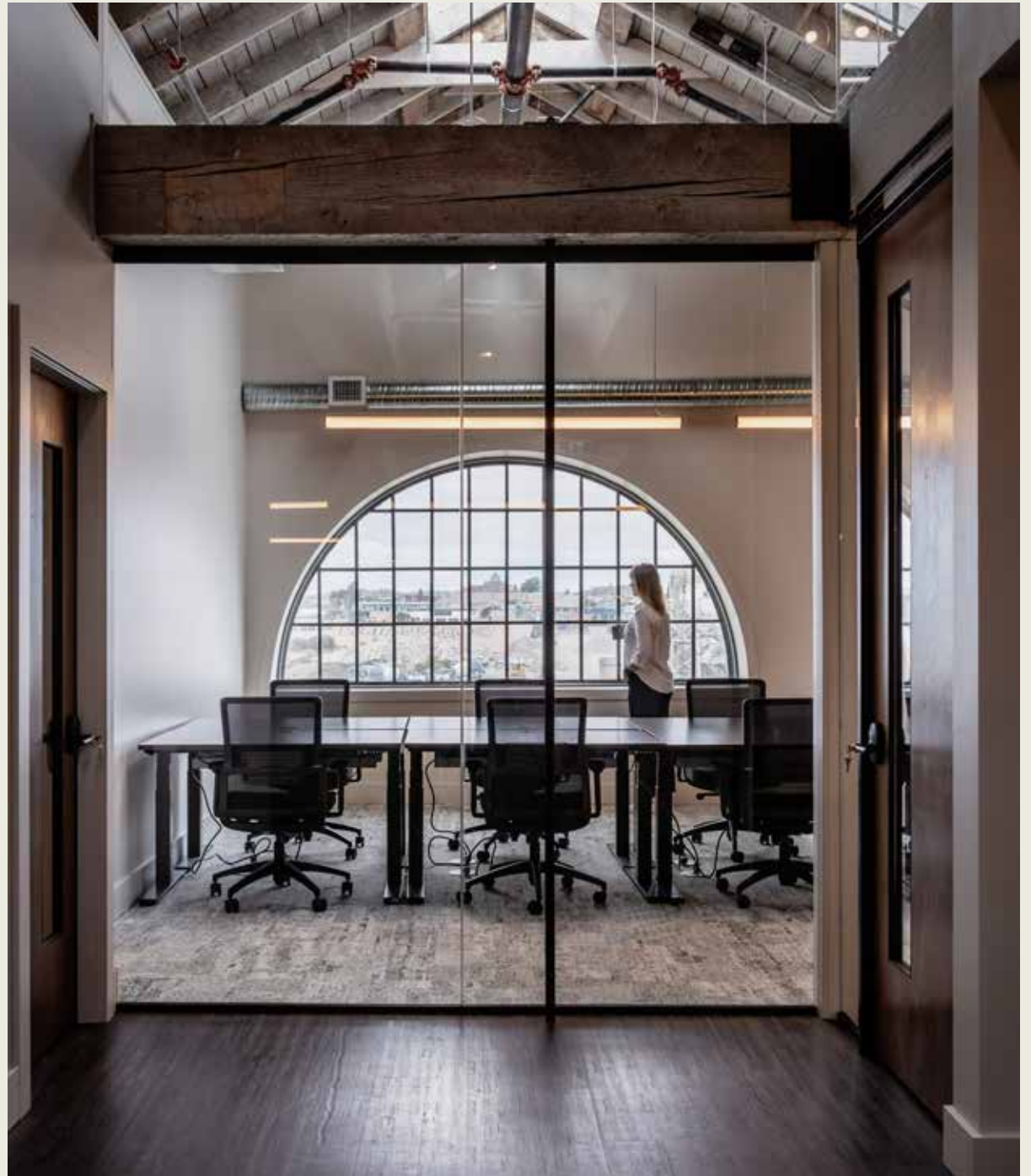
The large-scale mural in the entrance was created by Lydia Beauregard, a Victoria-based Illustrator and Designer who designed this modern piece inspired by the flourishing arts community in Victoria.



“ At some point, KWENCH will make the leap over to Australia. I was born and raised just south of Perth, but I’ve been living in Canada for over twenty years. It would be really special for me to come full-circle.

”

- Tessa McLoughlin,
KWENCH founder



THE SPACE



A huge circular sofa was designed and fabricated for the new Atrium.





¹⁴ The reception within the Atrium with a floral installation by Botanic Creative.

A huge communal kitchen is centred on a bespoke tile mural by Phaullet, with floral and animal motifs that reflect the owner's Australian roots.





24 unique private offices for 1-28 members feature the preserved and exposed heritage timber structure and original windows with new high-performance rooflights.



The communal spaces allow for a variety of working methods, from individual focussed work in the booths or a networking gathering in the lounge. Natural light everywhere gives members a boost of vitamin D.



The Library provides a quiet place to rest, read, meditate or nap. No computers allowed!





Breakout spaces throughout the club create a welcome change from desk-life.

KWENCH





8 cosy phone booths provide a private place to talk, e-conference and work.





A range of boardrooms accommodate from 5-20 people and can be booked by members and the public for meetings, workshops, talks and events.







The Studio hosts a range of weekly fitness classes included in memberships, as well as workshops, pop-ups and private events.



Generous showers, changerooms and lockers allow members to cycle to the club and fully enjoy the fitness classes and facilities.



The dedicated bar, featuring colourful bespoke tiles and hand-tooled joinery.

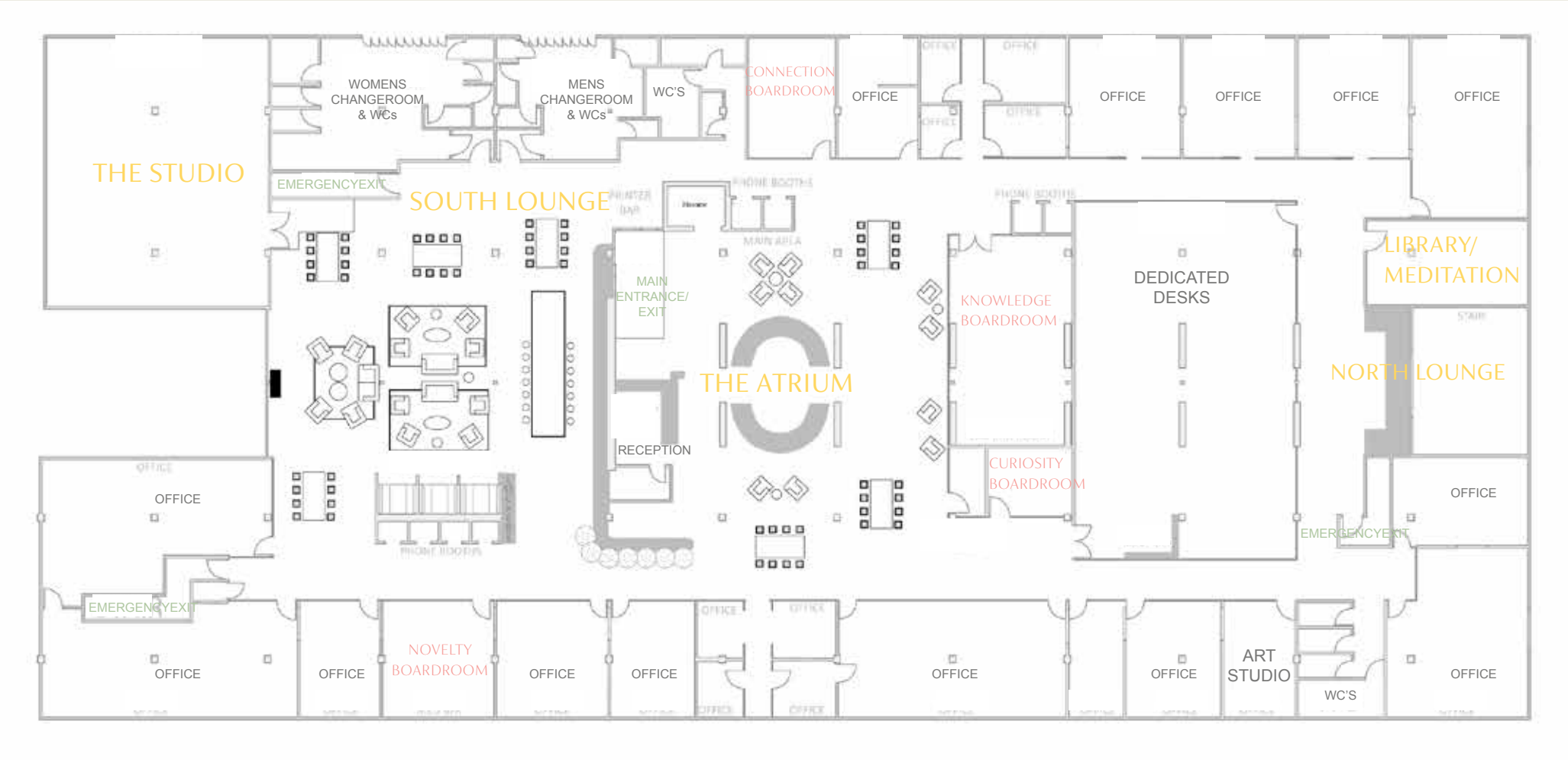
The taps feature kombucha from Victoria-based [Cultured Kombucha](#) along with local beers and prosecco for events and socials.





And since dogs have been proven to reduce stress levels and make people happier, we welcome furry friends at KWENCH. This is Easton.

FLOORPLAN



EXISTING & CONSTRUCTION

Construction



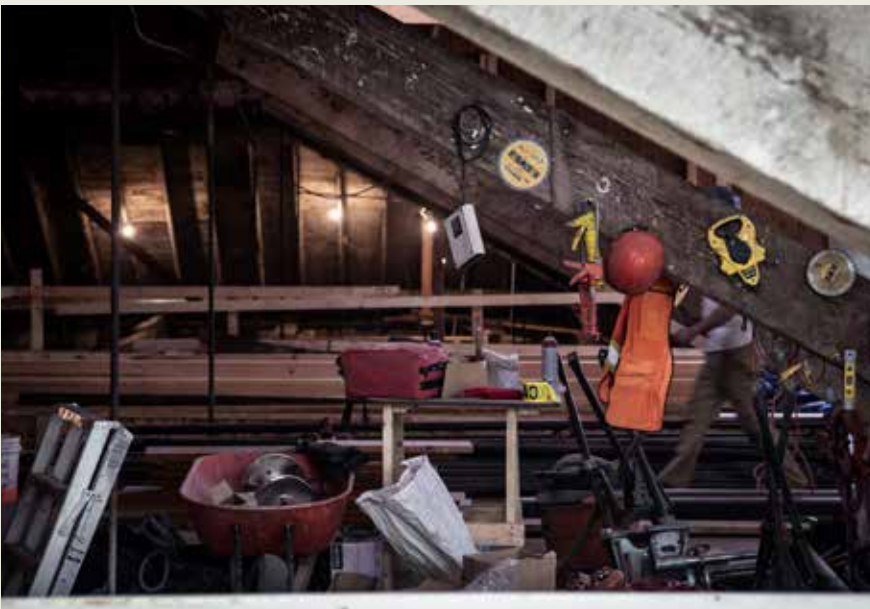
Completed



Construction



Completed





A close-up photograph of a green leather shoe heel resting on a white and grey patterned surface. The shoe is positioned diagonally, with the heel pointing towards the bottom right. The leather has a smooth texture and a slight sheen. The background is a repeating geometric pattern of small squares.

KWENCH

Seek more.

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