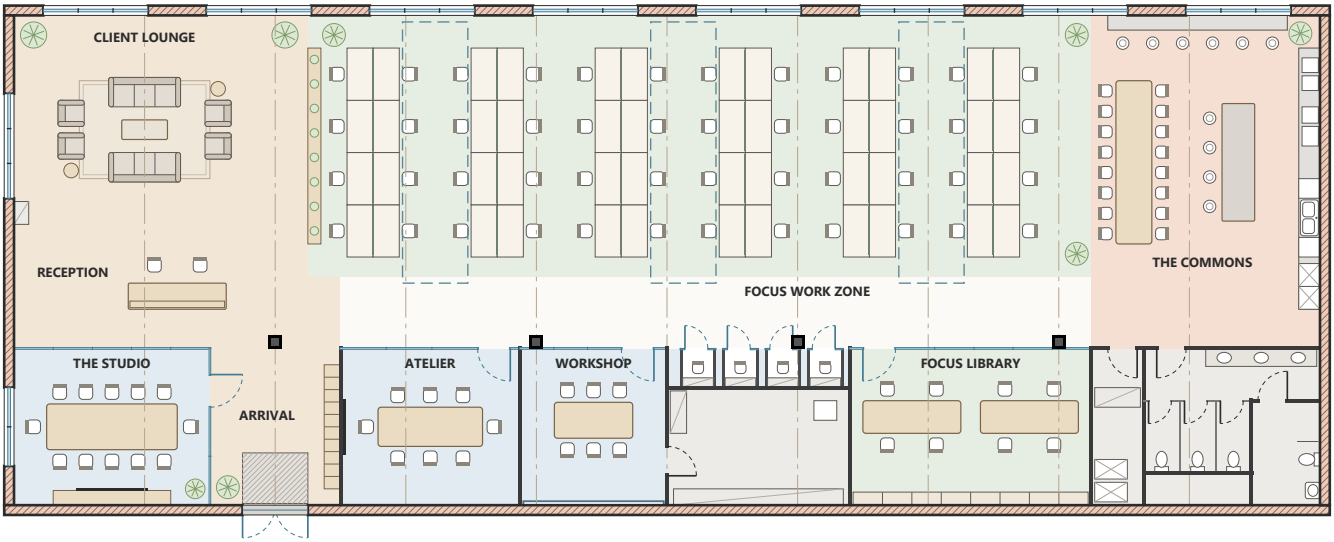
One street, three tempos

How 50 people, their clients and their best ideas fit into 600 m² of brick, steel and north light.



Ground floor plan, interior 40.0 × 15.0 m, north up. Full dimensioned plan: drawing NVS-A-100 (1:75 @ A1).

600 m² net internal area

50 workpoints, 1 desk each

124 seats in 5 settings

12.0 m² per person

30 meeting seats

26 seats in the kitchen

THE BRIEF

Northvale Studio is moving 50 people into an empty 600 m² industrial loft. They asked for four things: places to concentrate, rooms to meet in, a kitchen everyone loves, and somewhere they are proud to bring clients. The loft gives back exposed brick, a 5 m high steel roof and generous north light — and asks for respect: one entrance, one line of columns, wet services on one wall only.

THE SHELL WE KEPT

Interior 40.0 × 15.0 m, clear height 5.0 m. Trusses at 4.0 m span north–south onto the brick and a single line of 400 × 400 steel columns 5.0 m from the south wall. Eight steel-framed windows face north, two face west, three 2 × 8 m skylights light the middle. The south wall is a windowless party wall with the only entrance; the east wall carries every drain and riser. We changed none of it.

THE IDEA

The column line already draws a street. We made it official: a 1.8 m clear 'Main Street' runs the full 40 m and every part of the office opens off it. Along it the office changes tempo from west to east.

Welcome — the arrival and the client spaces take the light from two façades, close to the door, so visitors never walk through the team.

Focus — 48 desks in six benches at right angles to the north windows, under the skylights, between the quiet rooms and the lounge.

Gather — The Commons sits at the far east end on the plumbing wall, so everyone walks the street at least twice a day — that is where people meet.

All enclosed rooms line the windowless south wall. Nothing that needs a door takes a window from someone at work.

BRINGING CLIENTS IN

Through the double glass doors, past the oak coat-and-locker wall (50 lockers), to a 3 m reception desk. The Client Lounge (63 m^2) is the brightest corner of the loft: north and west windows, a 4 × 3 m wool rug, two three-seat sofas and four armchairs (10 seats), screened from the desks by a low planted bookshelf. The boardroom, The Studio, seats 12 at a 4 m oak table behind glass, with a media wall — one step from the door.

FOCUS, AND THE RIGHT ROOM FOR EVERY MEETING

Six benches of eight 1600 × 800 height-adjustable desks with felt screens, 3.8 m apart so chairs never meet. Side light from the north, top light from the skylights, no one faces a window or sits with their back to the street. When a desk is not enough, there is a scale of rooms:

- **Focus Library** 8 quiet seats, phones off, 35.5 m^2
- **Phone booths** 4 acoustic pods, 1 person each
- **Workshop** 6 seats, writable whiteboard wall
- **Atelier** 8 seats, 75" display
- **The Studio** 12 seats, boardroom

That is 30 meeting seats for 50 people (0.6 per person) plus 8 library seats.

A KITCHEN EVERYONE LOVES

The Commons (71.4 m^2) is the largest shared space after the desks, and it is placed on purpose: on the only wall with plumbing, at the end of the street, under two north windows. It offers three ways to sit — 26 seats:

16 at a 5 m oak communal table for lunch together
4 at the island, where the coffee is made
6 at the window bar, looking out

An 8 m terrazzo counter holds a double sink with boiling and chilled water, two dishwashers (no one waits for a clean mug), two tall fridges, a plumbed bean-to-cup machine, an espresso station and two microwaves. The WCs share the same wall: 3 WCs and an accessible WC, plus the IT and utility room.

LIGHT, SOUND, MATERIAL

We kept the loft's materials and added only warm ones: cleaned brick, polished concrete, blackened steel frames, white oak, wool felt and terrazzo. A 5 m concrete-and-brick volume is loud, so felt baffles hang between the trusses, desks get felt screens, rooms have acoustic partitions with laminated glass and the booths are rated 30 dB.

IN NUMBERS

SEATS BY TYPE	SEATS
Workstations (desks + reception)	50
Meeting seats (rooms + booths)	30
Focus Library (quiet seats)	8
Client Lounge	10
Kitchen & café	26
Total seats	**124**

AREA BY USE	m^2	SHARE
Meet & collaborate	83.5	14%
Client & arrival	113.2	19%
Support & services	53.8	9%
Focus	227.5	38%
Circulation	50.6	8%
Social / kitchen	71.4	12%
Total	**600.0**	**100%**

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Measured survey to confirm the shell; fire engineer to confirm the escape strategy for a single-entrance floor; M&E design for drainage runs from the east-wall stacks, kitchen extract and floor boxes; acoustic consultant to confirm the partition and baffle specification; cost plan and furniture selection against the schedule (NVS-A-100 and Northvale_Furniture_Schedule.xlsx).