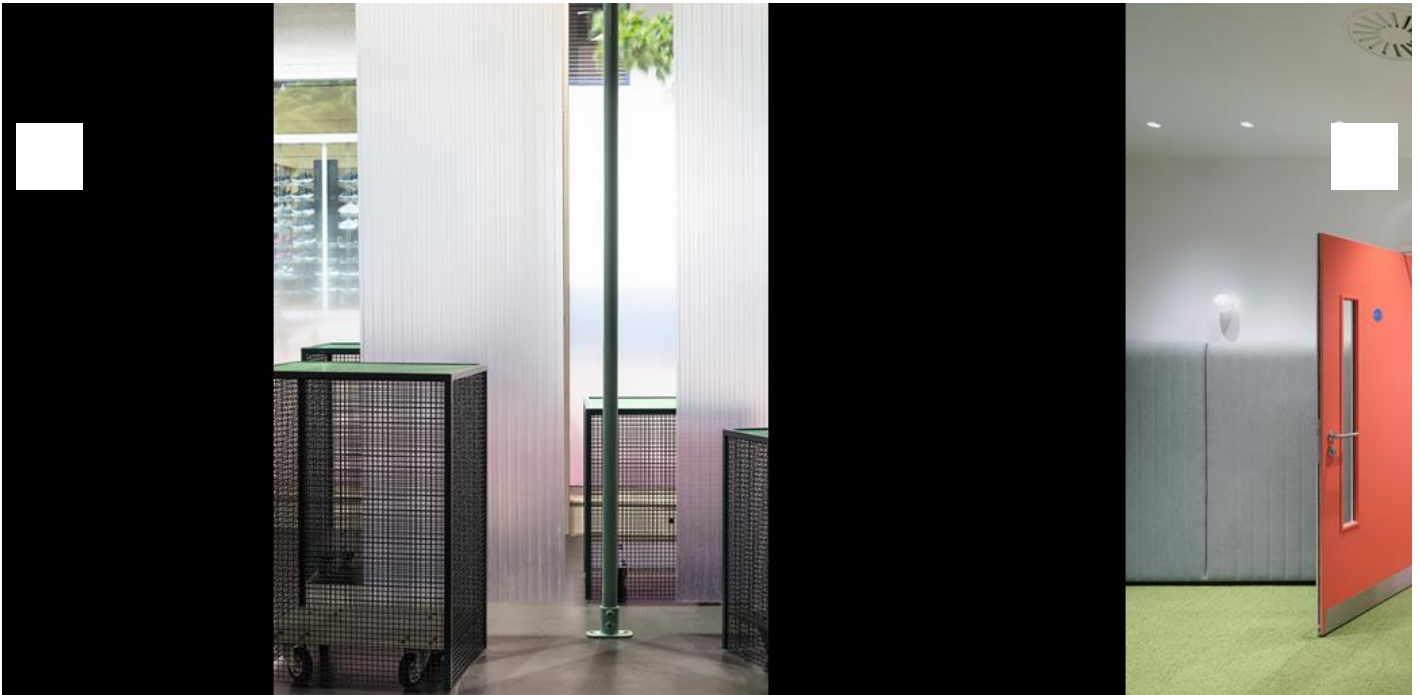


## In pictures: Freehaus designs Rising Green youth centre

By [Hollie Tye](#) | 10 March 2023

The project came with a clear remit from Haringey Council to codesign and deliver the youth hub alongside local young people



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A collaboration between Freehaus and JA Projects has resulted in the conversion of a vacant retail unit into a youth centre in Wood Green, north London.

Situated off Wood Green High Road, the site includes a single aspect vacant retail unit with floor to ceiling heights and a concrete waffle slab soffit, all of which was previously concealed by multiple suspended lay-in ceiling grids.

The adaptive reuse of the unit celebrates this hidden structural detail and provides uplifts to finishes and services in order to safeguard the future use of the site.

The project came with a clear remit from Haringey Council to codesign and deliver the youth hub, named Rising Green, alongside local young people. The team led a series of co-design exercises with a local group, known as the Wood Green Young Voices, to help embed their ambitions within the design.

Over the course of three months, the exercises aimed to capture lived experiences, define barriers, opportunities and explore the look and feel of the new centre.

Delivered during the pandemic restrictions in 2021, the online sessions resulted in a 'broadcast' where young people presented their ideas to other stakeholders, including regeneration officers and local councillors.

This directly influenced the architectural design with the creation of a flexible exhibition zone upon entry, providing an opportunity for the users of the hub to present to the high street.

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### *The adaptive reuse of the unit celebrates this hidden structural detail and provides uplifts to finishes and services*

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An entrance lounge offers space for play and quiet study, whilst a monochromatic café serves the space, directly supported by the adjacent Training Kitchen, which provides vocational training opportunities.

On the first floor the monochromatic approach continues, moving through distinct spaces which have been carefully zoned to identify activity and to provide a sense of lightness.

Provisions on this level include a games lounge, flexible teaching spaces, a quiet room, multimedia suite, music production suite and recording studio, clad in a green acoustic foam which envelopes the space.

The pared back aesthetic of the hub is influenced by contemporary youth culture and retail spaces for brands such as Nike and OffWhite.

The new name - Rising Green - was born out of the desire for young people in the area to take back control of the narrative associated with Wood Green and a desire to uplift the community.

The branding directly ties into the aesthetic of the hub, with a palette of sunset tones and neon gradients which were influenced by the 80s aesthetic of popular video games and music videos identified within the co-design sessions.

The project's central location challenges the traditional high-street model - predominantly dominated by retail - and recognises the need for diversification due to the changing patterns of use highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The Rising Green Youth Hub has been guided by the need for a clever retrofit of an existing high street retail unit and a design that embraces circular economy principles. Working to deliver this innovative design in time for the summer holidays, these principles have formed an integral part of the design brief, equally driven by the voice of the young people who have continually expressed concern for environmental principles and careful material application to safeguard longevity," said Jonathan Hagos, director at Freehaus.

### Project details

**Lead architect** Freehaus

**Partnering architect** JA Projects

**M&E engineer** OR Consulting

**Structural engineer** Tisserin Engineers

**Enabling works contractor** Sol Services

**Main contractor** Diamond Build

**Valchromat** Latham Timber

**Internal glazing systems** Optima

**Marmoleum** Forbo Flooring Systems

**Upholstery** Kvadrat

**Proprietary shelving systems** Slingsby

**Expanded aluminium screens** Amron Architectural

**Carpet tiles** Tarkett

**Feature lighting** XAL Ltd, Flos, Encapsulite, Illuma

**Ironmongery** Allgoods

**Brassware** Hansgrohe Sanitaryware

**External signage** A1deSIGNS

**Kitchen fabricator** Lee Projects

**Metalwork contractor** Metalfab Engineering Ltd

**Joinery** Interior Joinery Contracts Ltd

**Vinyl signage** Onward Display

**Café and welcome counter joinery** Comet Catering Equipment Ltd