

Tramshed

by Waugh Thistleton

Opened in 1905 as an electrical substation, this Grade II listed single-space shed in Shoreditch has been converted into a 160-cover eatery by Waugh Thistleton Architects for restaurateur Mark Hix. Highlighting the menu are chicken and steak.

The idea, says Waugh Thistleton cofounder Andrew Waugh, was 'to touch the building lightly'. A mezzanine level has been added, along with a bar made of UK Douglas fir, which Waugh calls 'a big meaty wood'. The architect specified Emeco chairs for their robustness and simplicity.

The most obvious talking point is the presence of Damien Hirst, who was briefly involved in London's restaurant scene in the 1990s through Quo Vadis and The Pharmacy, and whose art dominates the space. *Cock and Bull* (2012), a chicken and a cow in a tank of formaldehyde, sits 4 m above diners' heads. Despite the installation's ascendancy, it's the original details – Edwardian glazed bricks and steel beams – and the sheer scale of the 480-m² space that make the interior so striking.

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Waugh Thistleton

Restaurants



The former venue of a major furniture exhibition held during the London Design Festival is now a restaurant bearing the same name: Tramshed.



Fast Facts

Materials Douglas fir, stainless steel, leather, polished concrete
Furniture manufacturer Emeco, whose 111 Navy chairs, made from recycled Coca-Cola bottles, were supplied by Josh Beach of Republic of Living
Lighting Designed (and largely fabricated) by Into
Flooring Puur
Walls (contractor) Tekne
Area 480 m²
Budget £1.5 million
Completed May 2012

Original details such as Edwardian glazed bricks pair well with the restaurant's rustic cuisine.

Does it work?

Jane Pinfold: Tramshed is a Shoreditch treasure and has been treated with the respect it deserves. My (unsubstantiated) hunch is that this is the result of one of these dynamic and agreeable client-designer relationships, so few are the moments of awkward design resolution. The palette offers warmth while in no way detracting from the rich materiality of the existing building. It's been 20 years since we saw our first Damien Hirst formaldehyde tank, but the well-sited, ironic centrepiece leaves a big impression.

Mourad Mazouz: This is the work of real professionals. It's extremely well arranged – altogether smart and efficient. The space has to be busy for the atmosphere to be cool, because it's a huge and impressive building. It probably cost a lot to renovate, but the turnover must be good, so I'm sure they'll make their money back quickly. The marketing around Hirst's art work is very clever. You can be sure everybody will be talking about it – even from abroad. Good business, business, business...

Kim Herforth Nielsen: The Damien Hirst sculpture is a good example of art being a great investment. It creates a lot of ambience, and you just know instantaneously what kind of place you are walking into. The room itself is also very interesting and a great place for a steak restaurant. The furniture is nothing special, but the overall impression is very positive.

Damian Hirst's specially commissioned art installation, *Cock and Bull* (2012), dominates the industrial interior.

Wang Thistleton

