



# opendesk

Greenpeace HQ – Islington, London







Designed Everywhere. Made Here.

We are a platform that connects makers and designers to great people and their organisations, all around the world. Our global community of makers allows designs to be made locally, completely on demand.

With Opendesk you are supporting young designers and local fabricators – resulting in a unique affinity to your workplace through a heightened connection to its design and making.



Greenpeace Headquarters  
Highbury & Islington, N1  
London

140 Employees









## The place

In a former animal testing lab in North London, Greenpeace have been busy building their home since 1990. Placing ecological, social and community values to the forefront of their thinking – together with a participatory design process – we collaborated on the next evolution of their workspace, fully aligned to those principles. Hacking a new version of our original desk with Retty, Andrew and Csaba, designing and making a prototype storage solution to incorporate planting, and showcasing our adjustable-height desks, the Opendesk for Greenpeace collaboration was a fruitful and engaging one that we very much enjoyed.



4  
Standing Desk  
Birch-faced plywood  
(740-1180) x 900 x 2400mm (h x w x l)  
6  
Bookshelf planter  
Birch-faced plywood  
730 x 580 x 1200mm (h x w x l)







Starting with many shared values including minimising environmental impact and maximising economic benefits to the local area, Greenpeace asked Opendesk to find a series of makers that would be ideally within a cycle ride from their Islington HQ. We connected Factory Settings in Leyton and Wooden Horse in Hackney Central and a series of workshop visits ensued, developing some of our core range of products and prototyping some new ones.

Overall Opendesk refitted an open-plan area of 10,000 sqf, showcasing a range of products including the variant of the lean desk, standing desk in two lengths and the new half-desk. Elsewhere our café and meeting tables were adapted to meet individual space requirements and a storage system of bookcases and lockers with integrated planting was introduced to divide open-plan areas. This created privacy and reduced background noise whilst maintaining the open, collaborative environment and refreshingly ‘corridor-free’ spatial arrangement.

Opendesk are continuing to work closely with Greenpeace and in late 2015 we plan to upgrade the next floor in the building...





**Opendesk meets Greenpeace’s Head of IT and Building Services, Andrew Hatton...**

**OD** You’re the Head of IT and Building Services, they seem like two very different positions?

**AH** I’m finding that the worlds of IT, the world of buildings and the office environment are overlapping more and more. Buildings are increasingly software controlled systems, whether it’s controlling heating, lighting or monitoring general energy use. IT systems are involved in all of these things.

What’s a more recent development is the way aspects of software development such as rapid prototyping are now finding their way into an area like furniture construction. For example, with our recent 2nd floor refit project, we worked closely with Opendesk to iterate, test and release a few different versions such as our desks. In the morning we could look at the design on our laptops, change the things that needed changing and in the afternoon the design would be printed at the makers. It’s a remarkable process.

**OD** How did you take to owning the office refit?

**AH** I’ve never been involved in furniture design before, but I like to dip into new things. I put myself forward for the project and luckily my boss agreed! Software / Furniture – there’s an overlap there.

**OD** The building has four floors and the first phase of the project was to complete the top floor. Did your IT background play a part in the decision to test just one floor?

**AH** Well we wanted to create a template for the whole office and decided it was safer to beta-test one floor first.



“I’ve never been involved with furniture design before, but I like to dip into new things. I put myself forward for the project and luckily my boss agreed!”

**ANDREW HATTON**

**AH** That way we could gauge people’s reactions and then change things as needed. Having done this now we want to take what has worked and now roll out across the building but, also importantly adjust what hasn’t work.

**OD** You mention not wanting to make too many changes initially, how did you approach this with the rest of the staff in the building?

**AH** We actually decided on a loose experiment to test out how new furniture would be received so overnight we positioned a four seater desk (our *Lean Desk*) in the canteen. Within a few hours chairs appeared, and not by me, then people were choosing to meet around the space for team catch-ups or just for lunch! It became massively popular.

I was a little nervous initially that our approach to the furniture might be seen as too radical, especially as the space had not really changed much for 20 years but, we had quite a lot of excitement and the experiment showed a real willingness to see the space transformed and refreshed. We even had some teams, for example our web mobilisation team, wanting to get involved and design their own desks.

**OD** As a not-for-profit organisation how did the budgeting effect the options?

**AH** It played an important consideration as we spend our money carefully. We found Opendesk through word-of-mouth and liked what we saw and we took it from there!

**OD** The product’s environmental credentials were pretty high on your list of ‘must haves’. Was the local making aspect a bit of a surprise?

**AH** Yes and a nice one! Something like furniture is often made in the Far East where labour is cheaper but, this obviously has a high environmental cost in terms of shipping. We do have purchasing guidelines that encourage locally produced items where possible but, like furniture, that has a large environmental footprint, we were glad in this case it was.

**OD** There are quite a few Greenpeace offices around the world. Was there any co-ordination or liaison between them?

**AH** This was a UK Office project but, we of course share learnings with other Greenpeace offices – as they do with us. I think at the moment we are the only office using Opendesk and who knows? The beauty of the model is that it’s as easy for the Greenpeace office in South Africa as it is for the UK to order these designs and have them made locally.

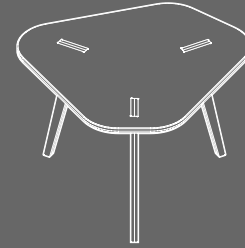
“Furniture is often made in the Far East where labour is cheaper but the environmental cost is huge in terms of shipping. Being able to have our office made locally was a real surprise.”







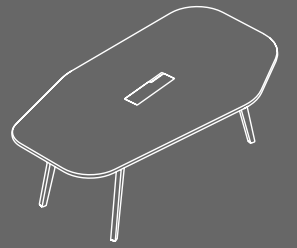
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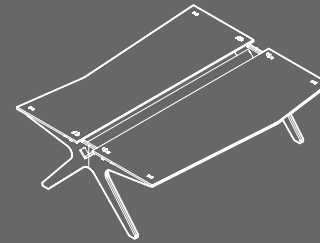
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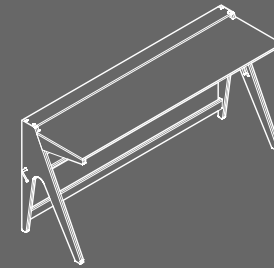
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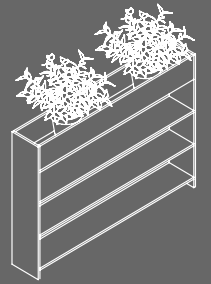
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4



5



6

1

#### Café Table

Birch-faced plywood, Wisa top  
730 × 1150 × 950mm (h × w × l)  
Made by I.J CNC in Harpenden

2

#### Lockers

Birch-faced plywood  
1122 × 400 × 1200mm (h × w × l)  
Made by I.J CNC in Harpenden

3

#### Meeting Table

Birch-faced plywood  
720 × 1180 × 2180mm (h × w × l)  
Made by Factory Settings in Leyton

4

#### Desk

Birch-faced plywood  
730 × 1500 × 2400mm (h × w × l)  
Made by Factory Settings in Leyton

5

#### Standing Desk

Birch-faced plywood  
(740-1180) × 900 × 2400mm (h × w × l)  
Made by Wooden Horse in  
Hackney Central

6

#### Bookshelf planter

Birch-faced plywood  
730 × 580 × 1200mm (h × w × l)  
Made by Wooden Horse in  
Hackney Central



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