

# BENCHMARK

## Benchmark at Clerkenwell Design Week 2024

### Making for Change

Thinking about the second life whilst designing and making for the first

A typical office space undergoes around 10 interior fit-outs during its operational lifespan of 60 years, resulting in a higher carbon impact than the construction and use of the building. This year at Clerkenwell Design Week, we will share stories of how, through collaboration, we are providing furniture and loose-fit joinery solutions for reducing whole life impact, including the introduction of furniture that will adapt to changing needs so that it can last the lifetime of the building.



### Reimagine and reuse

The launch of **ILE, a modular system of furniture for workspaces**, designed by Foster + Partners Industrial Design, responds to the need for spaces to be easily shaped, divided, and reimaged.

Designed as an evolving range of interchangeable elements that can be easily reconfigured, ILE includes benches, tables, shelves, storage, lockers and planters, all made in solid timber, that can be connected back-to-back or alongside one another to facilitate different ways of working. Integral to the system's flexibility is an innovative timber fixing strip that allows users to lock together and separate each element with ease. A characteristic 'shadow gap' runs the length of the whole system enabling power displays, lighting rail, and a range of accessories including shelves and book ends, to be placed in any position along the worktop.



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Launched with a Lifetime Warranty and Repair Promise, ILE is made from solid timber and finished with natural oils for ease of refurbishment further enabling multiple lives.



## Working with Nature

ILE is presented in solid American red oak and British ash – two sustainable, practical, affordable and beautiful wood species. American red oak (*Quercus rubra*) constitutes approximately 18% of North America's hardwood forests, yet it remains significantly underutilised. Opting for red oak over more conventional hardwoods not only enhances biodiversity but also reinforces the resilience of natural forests. British ash, another underutilised timber, will soon be lost from our countryside due to ash die-back. Rather than seeing this timber left to rot or used for firewood, we are promoting its use for furniture so that the carbon can be locked up for longer, utilising the whole of the tree and celebrating its natural variation in colour.

## Visualise the Impact

Over the last 5 years, we have been leading the industry with measurement and declaration of the environmental and health impact of our furniture. Third party certifications include Environmental Product Declarations and Red List Free Declare labelling. At Clerkenwell Design Week we introduce BIM models with embedded impacts for our core collections. Architects and designers will be able to incorporate these



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models into their building models, helping them to visualise the impact of their decisions at the earliest stages of design.

## A lifetime commitment

We commit to keeping our furniture and joinery in use for the longest time possible. We design and make for longevity with materials that can be easily refurbished. We promise a lifetime of care with Repair & Refurbish and Take Back schemes. Making systemic change needs all of us – developers, architects, specifiers, and manufacturers. We will share case studies of how we are collaborating to make a difference and by doing so, hope to inspire and encourage new ways of thinking.

ENDS

### Notes for editors

For more information about Benchmark's new collection or ways of working, or to request high-res images, please contact [press@benchmarkfurniture.com](mailto:press@benchmarkfurniture.com)

View the ILE collection at:

The British Collection  
St James' Crypt  
Clerkenwell Green  
London EC1R 0EA

### Opening times

21 May: 10am – 6pm  
22 May: 10am – 9pm  
23 May: 10am – 5pm

### Benchmark

A powerhouse of craft, Benchmark is one of the UK's leading furniture-makers. Founded by Terence Conran and Sean Sutcliffe in 1984, the company has a mission to minimise impact creating furniture and joinery with longevity, that contributes to human health and wellbeing, using natural, sustainable and non-toxic materials.

With workshops in Berkshire and Dorset, Benchmark works with many of the world's leading architects and designers on commercial and residential projects. Recently awarded the Kings' Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development, Benchmark is positioned as a leader in sustainable enterprise. Its approach marries forward-thinking design with the highest levels of craftsmanship and creativity, producing furniture with natural warmth and soul.

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