

The Foundry, a new makerspace in an old building, opens in Kendall Square

By [Joy Ashford](#) Globe Correspondent, Updated September 21, 2022, 5:15 p.m.



The Foundry's first floor features a community hall equipped with tables, chairs, and, starting the weekend of Oct. 8, a coffee shop for visitors to enjoy. TYLER MOTES/THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS NEWS MEDIA PHOTOGRAPHER

Cambridge creatives have a new hotspot for artistic learning and collaboration: the Foundry in Kendall Square's Innovation District.

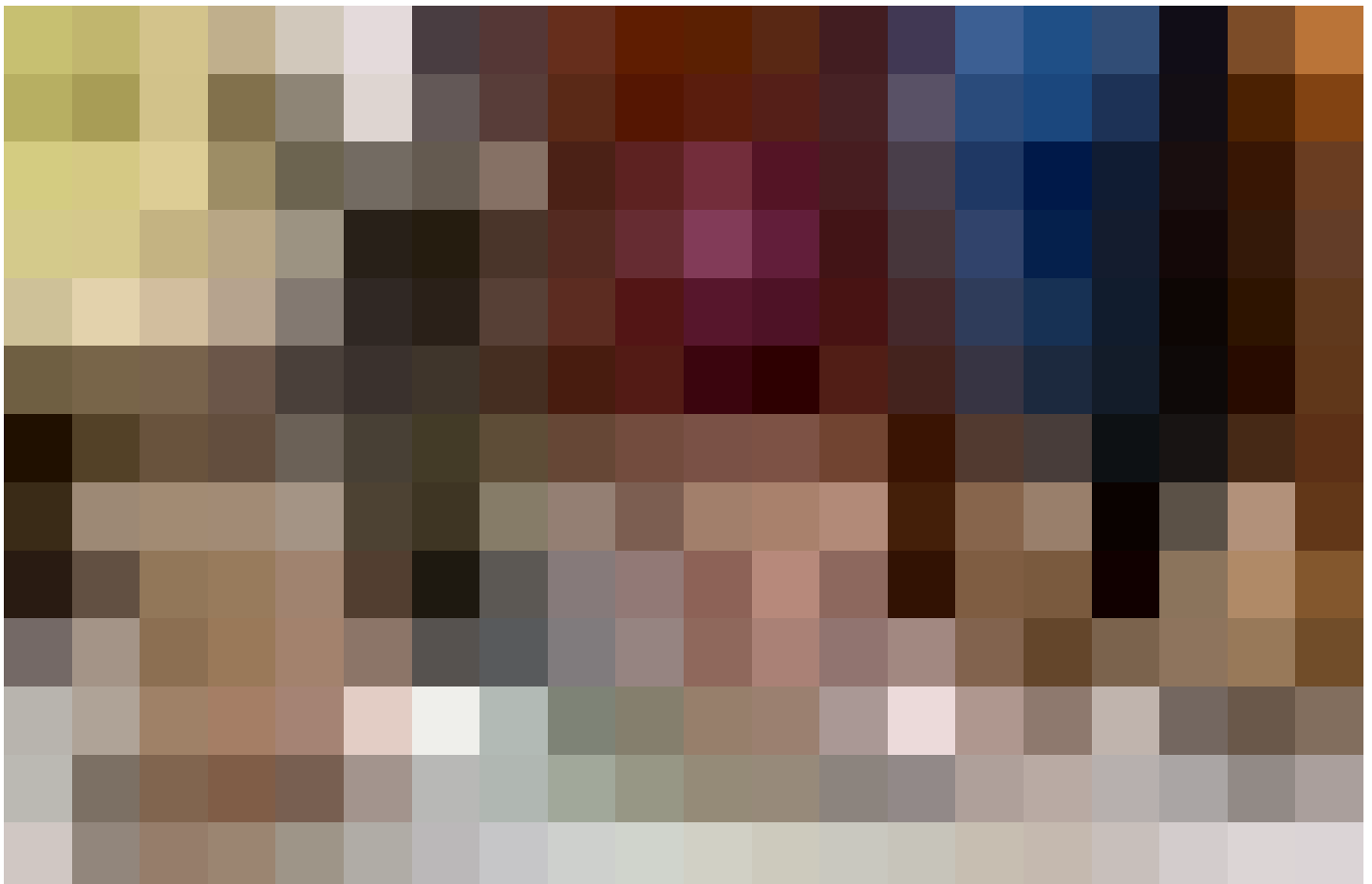
The 50,000 square-foot, \$46 million public space occupies a 132-year-old building that originally housed the Blake and Knowles Steam Pump Company, before being used as a taxi barn and then offices. It was re-designed by architecture group CambridgeSeven, with support from the city in partnership with the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority.

Operated by the nonprofit Foundry Consortium, the building features a community hall open to the public, along with rooms that can be reserved by community members and local businesses and nonprofits. These reservable spaces include a dance studio, community kitchen, four makerspaces, an art studio and art gallery, conference rooms, and a 115-seat black box theater with an attached greenroom.

Olivia Fone, the Foundry’s digital communications fellow, explained that the new building “addresses the problems of financial and spatial inequities affecting artists and other makers,” by offering makerspaces priced at a sliding-scale. A goal is to make specialty equipment accessible to artists.

A steam workshop, for example, holds tools like a razor cutter and 3-D printers, while a metal arts shop has equipment for making jewelry, electronics, and more. A fiber arts workshop has sewing and embroidery machines and more advanced equipment like sergers, and a wood workshop is equipped for beginner woodworking projects as well as larger endeavors like elaborate set construction for stage productions.

ADVERTISING



The fiber arts workshop at the Foundry OLIVIA FONE

For the Foundry’s Director of Finance and Operations Jenna Schlags, a key goal was “making sure the space is really geared towards not just experienced artists, but novices.”

“We want people who have never used this stuff before — maybe had on their to-do list during the pandemic, ‘oh if only I had learned how to sew’ — to have that community of other novices who are also learning this together,” said Schlags. Toward that end, the consortium team is planning beginner-level makerspace workshops during their official opening celebration, planned for Oct. 8-10.

By then the spacious main community hall, intended as a collaborative workspace for anyone who uses the Foundry, should have a working cafe. If you visit, stop by a public art installation called “Jukebox,” located just off the community hall, by Cambridge artist Elisa Hamilton. Instead of music, the vintage machine contains the voices of Cambridge residents that Hamilton recorded talking about their experiences living in the city.

For small businesses or experienced artists looking to make costumes, design custom jewelry, lead cooking classes, teach a dance workshop, and much more, the building’s online reservation system is currently live for space reservations.



The Foundry is now open to the public for visits and online reservations. OLIVIA FONE

The sliding-scale reservation fees are based on operating budget for businesses and nonprofits, or personal income for

individuals. Donations, in addition to rentals of the Foundry's second and third floors to businesses and non-profits for office space, help fund the discounted reservations, said Schlags.

After years of construction, planning, and pandemic delays, Schlags is most excited about the Foundry's potential to foster an artistic community. Schlags, a lifelong theater fan who met her wife at a college theater audition, said "one of the biggest losses that I felt during the pandemic was the loss of that theater community."

She points out that groups who reserve the building's black box theater for performances will be able to use their makerspaces for costume design and set-building, and the dance studio and multi-purpose rooms for rehearsal space — finding everything they need in one place.

The Foundry is located at 101 Rogers St., Cambridge. Find reservation info at cambridgefoundry.org.

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