



Fashion Incubators as Economic Infrastructure

Case Study Analysis

April 2017

Prepared for:

Civicplan was retained by the City of Hamilton Planning and Economic Development Department to undertake a case study analysis of existing fashion incubators to provide a better understanding of how these economic development organizations operate.

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Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction.....	6
2.0 Fashion Accelerator – Brisbane, Australia.....	7
2.1 Overview.....	7
2.2 Location and Physical Footprint.....	8
2.2.1 Location.....	8
2.2.2 Physical Space.....	9
2.3 Programming.....	11
2.3.1 Fashion Accelerator Program.....	11
2.3.2 Members and Associate Members.....	11
2.3.3 Education.....	11
2.3.4 Mentoring.....	12
2.3.5 Sales/event space.....	12
2.3.6 Research.....	12
2.3.7 Networking, Promotion, and Marketing.....	12
2.4 Partners.....	13
2.5 Business Model.....	14
2.5.1 Organizational Structure.....	14
2.5.2 Funding Model.....	14
3.0 Fashion Incubator San Francisco – San Francisco, United States.....	15
3.1 Overview.....	15
3.2 Location and Physical Footprint.....	16
3.2.1 Location.....	16
3.2.2 Physical Footprint.....	17
3.3 Programming.....	18
3.3.1 Emerging Designer Program.....	18
3.3.2 Education.....	18
3.3.3 Mentoring.....	18
3.3.4 Networking, Promotion, and Marketing.....	19
3.4 Partners.....	19
3.5 Business Model.....	19
3.5.1 Organizational Structure.....	19
3.5.2 Funding Model.....	20
4.0 The Toronto Fashion Incubator – Toronto, Canada.....	21

4.1 Overview..... 21

4.2 Location and Physical Footprint..... 22

 4.2.1 Location 22

 4.2.2 Physical Footprint..... 23

4.3 Programming..... 24

 4.3.1 Resident and Outreach Designers 24

 4.3.2 Education..... 24

 4.3.3 Mentoring..... 24

 4.3.4 Awards 25

 4.3.5 Networking, Promotion, and Marketing..... 25

4.4 Partners..... 25

4.5 Business Model 26

 4.5.1 Organizational Structure..... 26

 4.5.2 Funding Model..... 26

5.0 Fashion Foundry – Glasgow, Scotland..... 27

5.1 Overview..... 27

5.2 Location and Physical Footprint..... 28

 5.2.1 Location 28

 5.2.2 Physical Space..... 29

5.3 Programming..... 31

 5.3.1 Emerging Designers program..... 31

 5.3.2 Changing Gear program..... 31

 5.3.3 Education..... 31

 5.3.4 Mentoring..... 31

 5.3.5 Sales/event space 31

 5.3.6 Networking, Promotion, and Marketing..... 32

5.4 Partners..... 32

5.5 Business Model 32

 5.5.1 Organizational Structure..... 32

 5.5.2 Funding Model..... 32

6.0 Analysis and Observations..... 33

7.0 Conclusion 35

8.0 Endnotes..... 36

Table of Figures

Figure 1: QUT Fashion Accelerator Location in Brisbane Map.....	8
Figure 2: QUT Creative Industries Precinct Map.....	9
Figure 3: QUT Fashion Accelerator Floor Plan.....	10
Figure 4: FiSF Location in San Francisco Map.....	16
Figure 5: TFI Location in Toronto Map.....	22
Figure 6: TFI Floor Plan.....	23
Figure 7: Fashion Foundry Location in Glasgow Map.....	28
Figure 8: Fashion Foundry Floor Plan.....	29

1.0 Introduction

The impact of the fashion industry on local economies is becoming more widely understood. Many fashion firms are small and medium-sized businesses that employ people directly in the community. They consist of creative workers who design clothing and textiles, manufacturers who produce the garments, and retailers who sell them. A robust local fashion industry can drive job growth and create employment for a variety of skillsets.

In order to encourage entrepreneurship in the fashion industry and promote sector growth, a number of cities around the world have started fashion incubators. While there are a variety of incubator models, they usually function to help start-up businesses with training, mentorship, access to equipment, and other services. This report is part of a broader effort to investigate the feasibility of creating an incubator in Hamilton to promote the fashion industry. It builds on the City of Hamilton's Economic Development Strategy, which includes the fashion sector as part of the Creative Cultural Industries cluster.

To help better understand the various approaches to fashion incubators and the types of services they offer, this report was commissioned to perform a case study analysis of select incubators from around the world. In designing the case study analysis, the aim was to examine several distinct models to provide a range of possible incubator models. Models of incubators in cities from around the world were reviewed, and four incubators that each represented a distinct approach were selected for further analysis.

The incubators studied here are: Brisbane's QUT Fashion Accelerator, Fashion Incubator San Francisco, The Toronto Fashion Incubator, and Glasgow's Fashion Foundry. While each has distinct characteristics, they also demonstrate certain consistencies in programming, use of space, types of clients, and funding models.

The analysis of each incubator breaks down as follows:

- An overview of the incubator, providing details on its purpose and general operations;
- An analysis of the incubator's physical footprint and location;
- A look at the types of programming offered by the incubator;
- A list of its industry partners and the fashion industry mentors associated with it;
- A general breakdown of the business model with a look at funding sources and paid programming offered.

The incubator analysis finishes with a comparison of the incubators and a list of general observations to consider. While there are differences among the incubators, there are also a number of consistent factors that should be taken into account, as these exist in all iterations of the incubator models examined here.

2.0 Fashion Accelerator – Brisbane, Australia



Image Credit: Queensland University of Technology

“QUT Creative Enterprise Australia, the nation's only company dedicated to fostering the creative industries by helping start-ups and entrepreneurs start, grow, scale and connect their creative businesses.”¹

2.1 Overview

Brisbane’s Fashion Accelerator is part of the Queensland University of Technology’s (QUT) Creative Enterprise Australia (CEA) accelerator. CEA helps creative industry start-ups build their business.

The Fashion Accelerator works specifically with fashion businesses, providing work space, industry contacts and mentoring, as well as fashion and business courses to its members. While it is an independent company, the Accelerator maintains close connections with the University and member companies take part in a six month formal program. At the end of the program, members have the opportunity to showcase their line and pitch their business to established members of the fashion industry.²

2.2 Location and Physical Footprint

2.2.1 Location

The Fashion Accelerator is located in the Creative Industries Precinct of the QUT's Kelvin Grove campus in Brisbane. It is approximately three kilometers from downtown Brisbane. The city has a population of 2.1 million, with a metro population of 2.3 million. It is an important cultural centre in Australia and has a significant fashion industry footprint.

Figure 1: QUT Fashion Accelerator Location in Brisbane Map

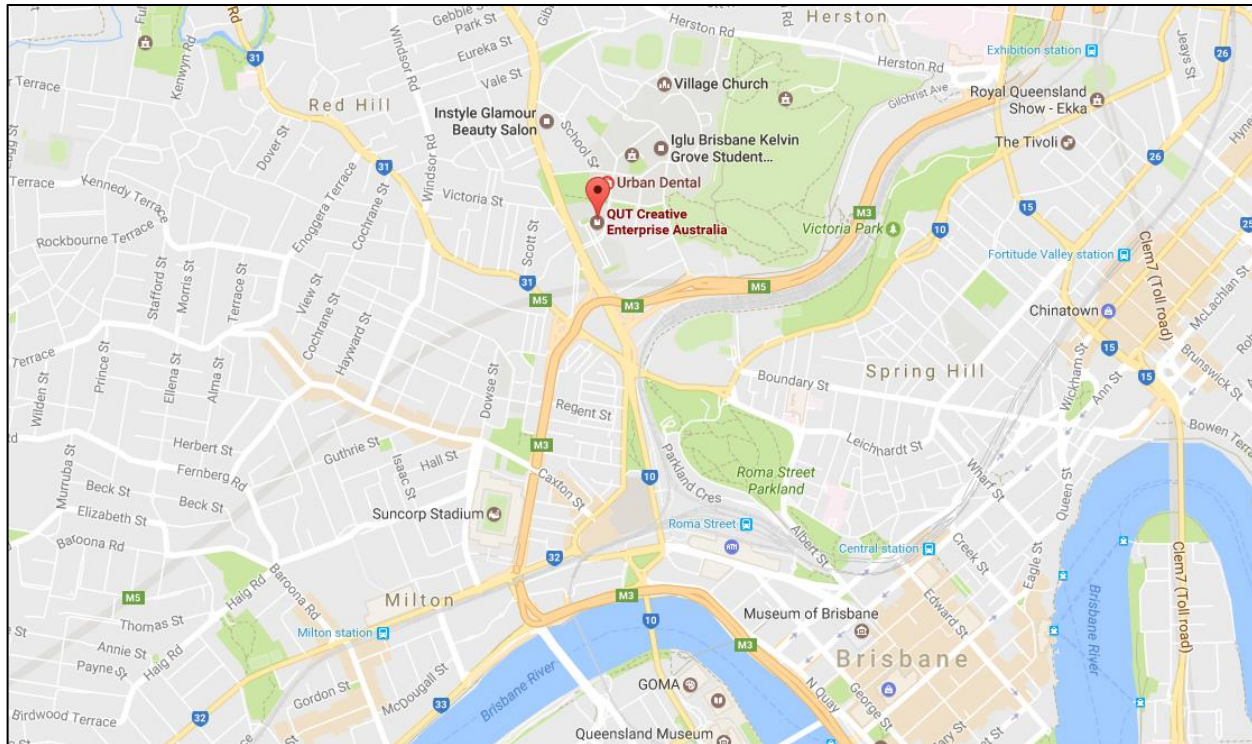


Image Credit: Google Maps

2.2.2 Physical Space

The Accelerator is in the Z1 building with other CEA facilities and is part of the QUT's Creative Industries Precinct, which includes a variety of amenities and services. Among these amenities is The Block, a venue capable of hosting fashion shows and other events.

Figure 2: QUT Creative Industries Precinct Map

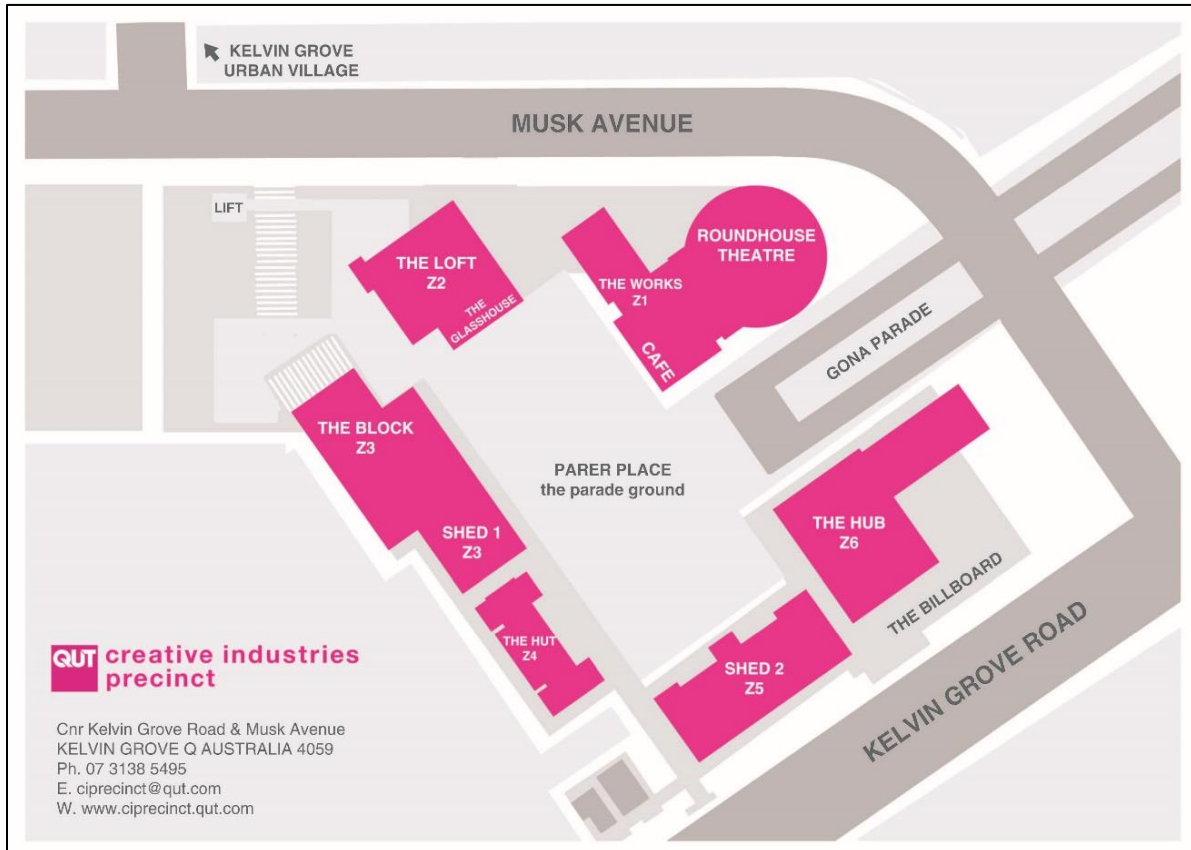


Image Credit: QUT Facilities Management



The Block venue set up for a fashion show.

Image Credit: QUT Facilities Management

The Fashion Accelerator is approximately 2800 sq. ft. in size. The dotted red line in Figure 3 indicates the area occupied by the Fashion Accelerator on the third floor of the CIP's Z1 building. It houses a variety of physical functions, including:

- private desks and storage areas for six designers each year;
- a shared work area with specialized apparel and production equipment;
- a showroom;
- small run production services;
- meeting room;
- a lounge, kitchen, and washrooms.³

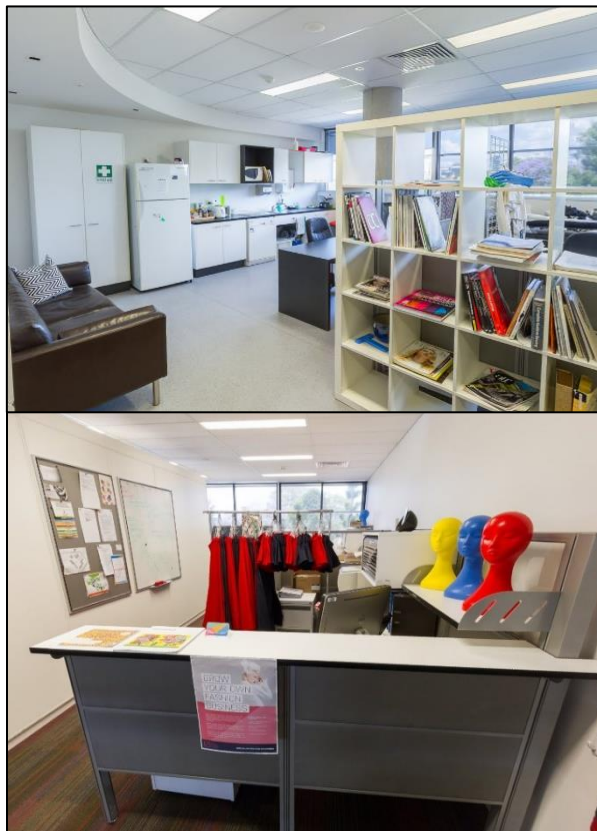


Image Credit: Google Maps Walkthrough

Figure 3: QUT Fashion Accelerator Floor Plan

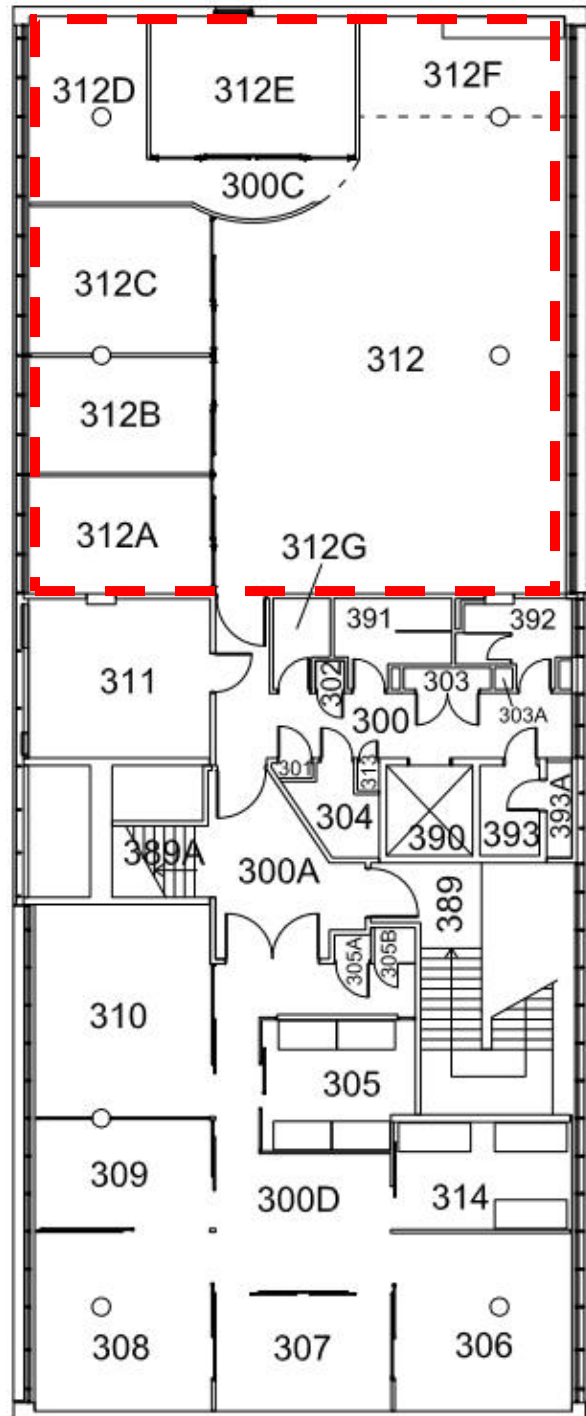


Image Credit: QUT Facilities Management

2.3 Programming

The Fashion Accelerator offers a variety of programming options for in-house and other associated designers.

2.3.1 Fashion Accelerator Program

The Fashion Accelerator Program is offered for a six-month period each year. Start-up businesses can join the program, receiving a combination of education, mentoring, networking, and access to physical workspace. It is an intensive program in which designers create a product line and business pitch over the period, with the program culminating in a fashion show and opportunity to pitch their line and business to leaders in the Australian fashion industry.

2.3.2 Members and Associate Members

Member and Associate Member companies have access to mentoring, business development services, networking opportunities, and educational programming, but do not have the programming structure of those in the Accelerator Program. Member companies have their own desk, storage, and access to facilities and equipment.

2.3.3 Education

Workshops and masterclasses are offered on business advice, finances, fashion forecasting, range planning, digital strategies, production, costing, pricing, sales analysis, marketing and more. These educational opportunities are offered on a weekly basis and are part of the six month Fashion Accelerator program.



Image Credit: Google Maps Walkthrough

2.3.4 Mentoring

Members receive one on one mentoring from various representatives of the fashion industry, including successful fashion designers, fashion chamber and council members, and industry leaders.

2.3.5 Sales/event space

Each year the Fashion Accelerator hosts the QUT Fashion Graduate Show at The Block event space in the Creative Industries Precinct.

2.3.6 Research

Members have access to the latest research and resources from the QUT's Creative Industry Faculty.

2.3.7 Networking, Promotion, and Marketing

At the end of the Accelerator program, designers have an opportunity to pitch their fashion line to a panel of industry leaders in a Dragon's Den type event. Also, their line is featured in a fashion show held in the Creative Industries Precinct. There are ongoing opportunities for networking and connecting with other members of the fashion industry.

Members also have access to the parent organization, Creative Enterprise Australia's, co-working space and the associated community of designers, film makers, and other creative industry startup companies.



Image Credit: QUT CEA

2.4 Partners

The CEA Fashion Accelerator is supported both by partner organizations and the mentoring of various industry partners. These include government agencies, education institutions, and industry associations.

CEA Partners:

- Arts Queensland (Government of Queensland)
- Brisbane City Council
- Brisbane Marketing
- Pitcher Partners
- Screen Queensland
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Sunshine Coast Creative Alliance
- Queensland Futures Institute



Fashion Accelerator Panel featuring Vogue Australia's Editor-in-Chief Edwina McCann; David Giles-Kaye: Executive Director of the Council of Textile & Fashion Industries of Australia (TFIA); Courtney Miller: General Manager of the Australian Fashion Chamber; Lydia Pearson: Co-founder of Easton Pearson; and Michel Abeysekera: Chairman – LM Group, Expert Advisor at AusIndustry and Strategic Advisor at TFIA/Australian Fashion Council. Image Credit: QUT

2.5 Business Model

2.5.1 Organizational Structure

CEA is a commercial company owned by the QUT with an independent Board of Directors.

2.5.2 Funding Model

The CEA's Fashion Accelerator receives funding from a variety of sources, including public and private sponsors, and membership fees.

Income Sources:

- The Fashion Accelerator's financial reporting is tied into the overall costs of the Creative Industries Precinct. The overall cost of the CIP in 2015 was approximately AU\$1.9 million, with nearly AU\$600,000 in revenue. In the same year, the Fashion Accelerator had AU\$153,000 in revenue and AU\$55,000 in expenses, although this cost likely does not include employee salaries or rent;⁴
- In 2016 there was an AU\$80 million expansion of the QUT Creative Industries Precinct, which includes the Fashion Accelerator;⁵
- Fashion Accelerator Program participants pay AU\$550/month for the six month program;
- Member companies pay AU\$220 per month for access to a desk, storage and mentoring;
- Associate Members pay an annual fee of AU\$110 for access to mentoring and development support;
- Financially supported by various partner organizations, including Arts Queensland, Government of Queensland, Brisbane City Council, Brisbane Marketing, Pitched Partners, Screen Queensland;
- Event ticket sales.

3.0 Fashion Incubator San Francisco – San Francisco, United States

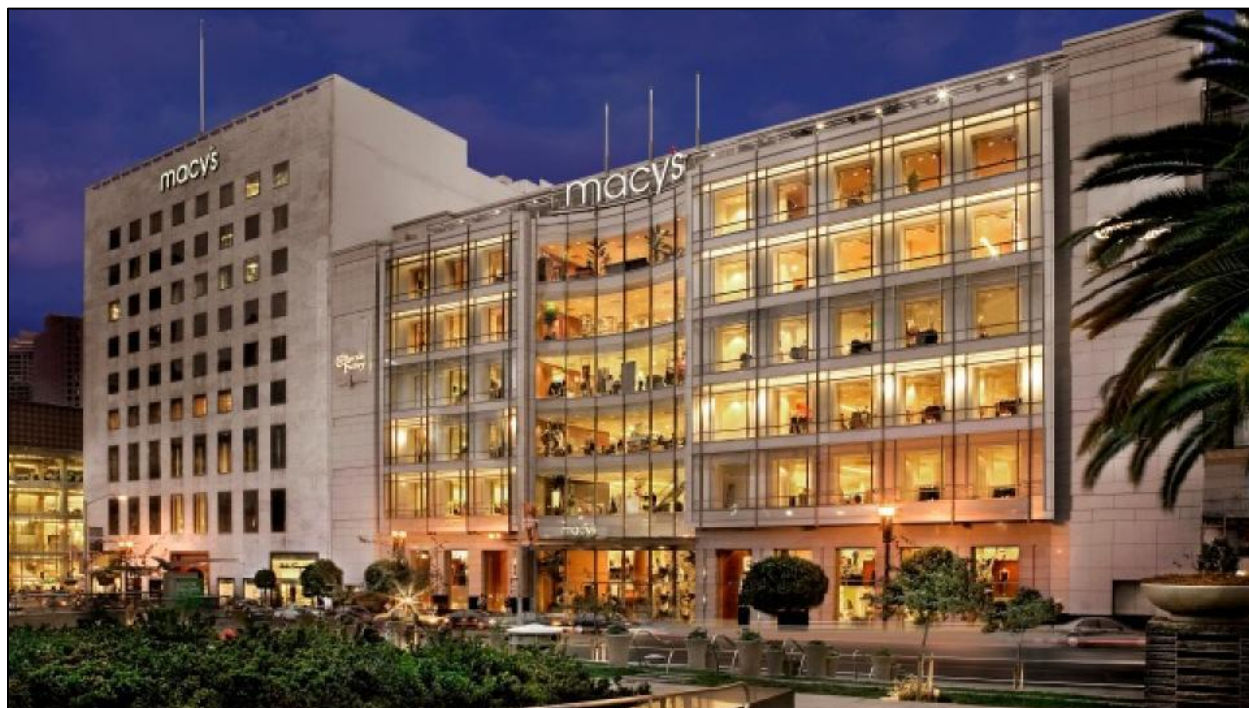


Image Credit: Macy's Union Square

“The mission of Fashion Incubator San Francisco is to accelerate emerging apparel and accessories design businesses while supporting fashion industry economic growth and job creation in the San Francisco Bay Area.”⁶

3.1 Overview

Fashion Incubator San Francisco (FiSF) was created as part of an effort to reinvigorate the San Francisco fashion industry. In the early 1990s, fashion apparel was the second largest industry in San Francisco, surpassed only by tourism. The economic footprint of the industry declined during the 1990s and 2000s. As a response to this decline, Macy's and the Mayor's Office came together in 2011 to form the FiSF. The Incubator's purpose is to help nurture new fashion businesses in the Bay area.

3.2 Location and Physical Footprint

3.2.1 Location

The FiSF is located in the Macy's Building in Union Square, which is the shopping, theatre, and hotel centre of San Francisco. The city has a population of 837,442, with a metro population of 4.656 million. It is a major cultural centre in the western United States, with a large existing fashion industry.

The FiSF is located in one of the west coast's leading fashion districts. Aside from Macy's, Union Square is home to other high-end fashion design companies, such as Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Tiffany & Co., and many other fashion retailers.

Figure 4: FiSF Location in San Francisco Map

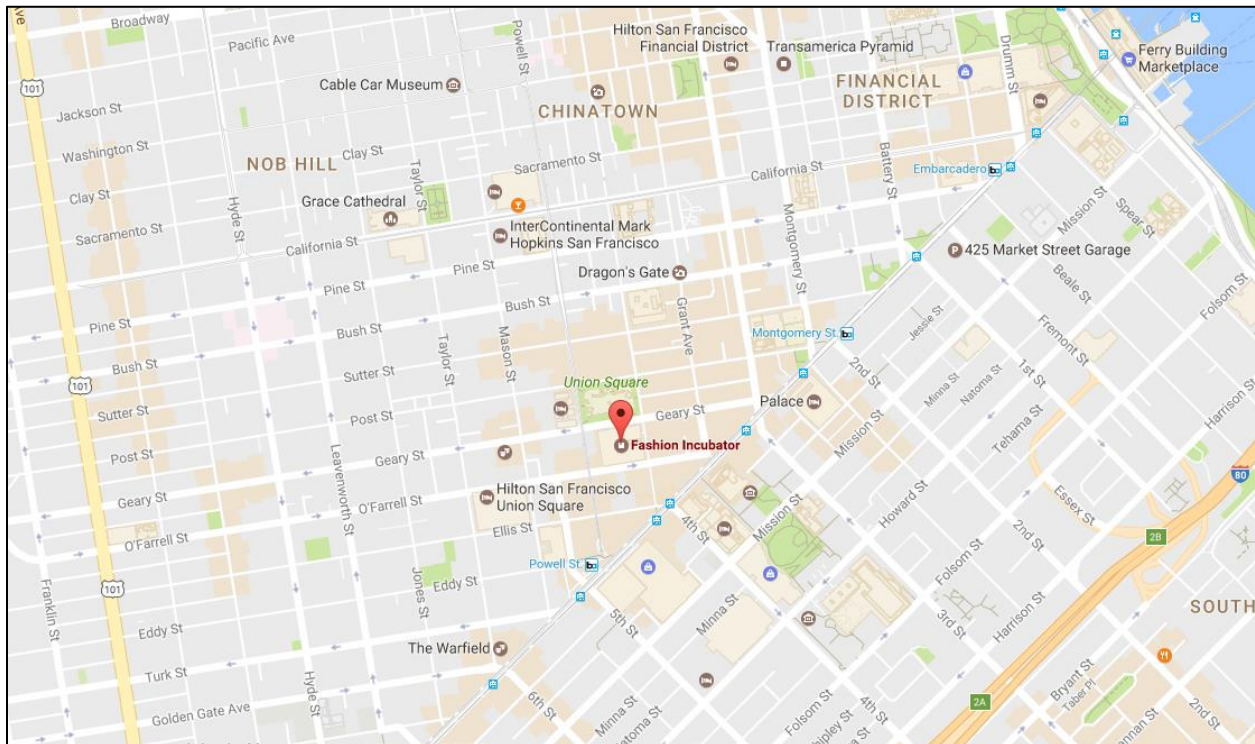


Image Credit: Google Maps

3.2.2 Physical Footprint

The FiSF is located in a 3,500 sq. ft. facility housing a variety of physical functions, including:

- private studios;
- a shared work area with specialized apparel and production equipment, such as sewing machines and fabric cutters;
- kitchen and washrooms.

As part of the Macy's building, designers also have access to a variety of other services, including space to showcase product lines in the department store and event space for fashion shows and events.



Image Credit: DIR's at Fashion Incubator SF at Macy's Union Square, YouTube

3.3 Programming

The FiSF offers a variety of programming for its Emerging Designers.

3.3.1 Emerging Designer Program

Each year, the FiSF hosts six Emerging Designers who have their own private studio space with access to co-working space with equipment, including sewing machines, fabric cutting equipment, and supplies.⁷ Members receive 6-12 months of training in business and production from local industry and fashion experts; this training includes a variety of courses on business and fashion, as well as periodic evaluation of their performance. Membership includes access to offices, a show room, classroom for business training courses, and connections to the regional design community.⁸



Image Credit: SFGATE

Emerging Designers pay a below market rate rent (see section 3.5.2) during the 6-12 month residency. For an additional fee (undisclosed), residents can rent an office and worktable.

3.3.2 Education

The FiSF offers a range of educational courses and seminars for both its Emerging Designers and the public to help start-up fashion designers build their businesses. These educational opportunities include:

- production skills;
- business planning;
- brand marketing, including social media;
- image creation, line costing and design critiques.

3.3.3 Mentoring

Residents receive four one-hour mentoring sessions from fashion industry experts and business development professionals each month. The website currently lists 17 mentors with a range of fashion and business expertise. These mentors include industry consultants, business process experts, and fashion company owners.⁹



Image Credit: FiSF, Facebook

3.3.4 Networking, Promotion, and Marketing

FiSF members have access to a variety of events, such as fashion shows, social events, and panel discussions. Other promotional activities, like participation in pop-up fashion boutiques, provide them with the opportunity to promote and market their business and clothing lines.

FiSF also provides access to instruction and training on handling media interactions.

3.4 Partners

The FiSF is supported both by sponsors and the mentoring of various industry partners. These partners include government, the private sector, an educational institution, and industry associations. The following list details partners, including:

- San Francisco Mayor's Office
- Macy's
- San Francisco Chronicle
- First Bank
- San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development
- Union Square
- Cooper, White & Cooper
- Fleishman Hillard
- Bank of America
- Jake
- Moss Adams LLP
- California College of the Arts

3.5 Business Model

3.5.1 Organizational Structure

The FiSF is a non-profit corporation. It is led by an Executive Director, with support from a Volunteer Board of Directors, and an Advisory Committee. The leadership of FiSF include professionals with expertise in the fashion industry and business.



Image Credit: SFGATE

3.5.2 Funding Model

The FiSF receives funding from a variety of sources, including public and private sponsors, resident fees, residents' rental fees, and fundraising activities.

Income Sources:

- Sponsored by Macy's and Mayor Ed Lee's office,¹⁰ as well as a variety of other private and public organizations;¹¹
- Six Emerging Designers each pay below market rate (\$600/month) to rent space in the Macy's building for 6-12 month periods. Designers can pay extra for access to office space and other workspace. In 2014, retail rental space in Union Square averaged \$650 per sq. ft. per year, meaning the 3,500 sq. ft. FiSF has a retail rental value of \$2,275,000, while the rental income from the Emerging Designers is a maximum (six designers x 12 months) of \$43,200;¹²
- Active fundraising efforts.



Image Credit: FiSF, Twitter

4.0 The Toronto Fashion Incubator – Toronto, Canada



Image Credit: Google Maps

“TFI plays an essential role in the growth and promotion of the Canadian fashion community by helping creative entrepreneurs to develop the business and professional skills they need to thrive and survive.”¹³

4.1 Overview

The Toronto Fashion Incubator (TFI) is, in a number of respects, similar to a co-working space. Resident members are not part of a program with a set time limit and specific deliverables. There is no limit on the length of time resident members can stay in the TFI. Members operate out of the TFI, making use of the private studios, shared production space, and various additional benefits.

The TFI first opened its doors in 1987 as part of an effort by the City of Toronto to invigorate the city’s fashion industry through promoting entrepreneurship and small business development. At the time, textile production was the second largest industrial activity in the city.¹⁴ As of 2012, 550 companies operated in Toronto’s apparel manufacturing sector, accounting for \$1.4 billion in annual wholesale shipments.¹⁵

4.2 Location and Physical Footprint

4.2.1 Location

The TFI is located in the south-west end of Toronto. The city has a population of 2.615 million, with a metro population of 5.583 million. It is a major cultural centre in Canada, with a large existing fashion industry.

Located on the grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE), the TFI is near a number of cultural and event venues, including Ontario Place and Liberty Village.

Figure 5: TFI Location in Toronto Map

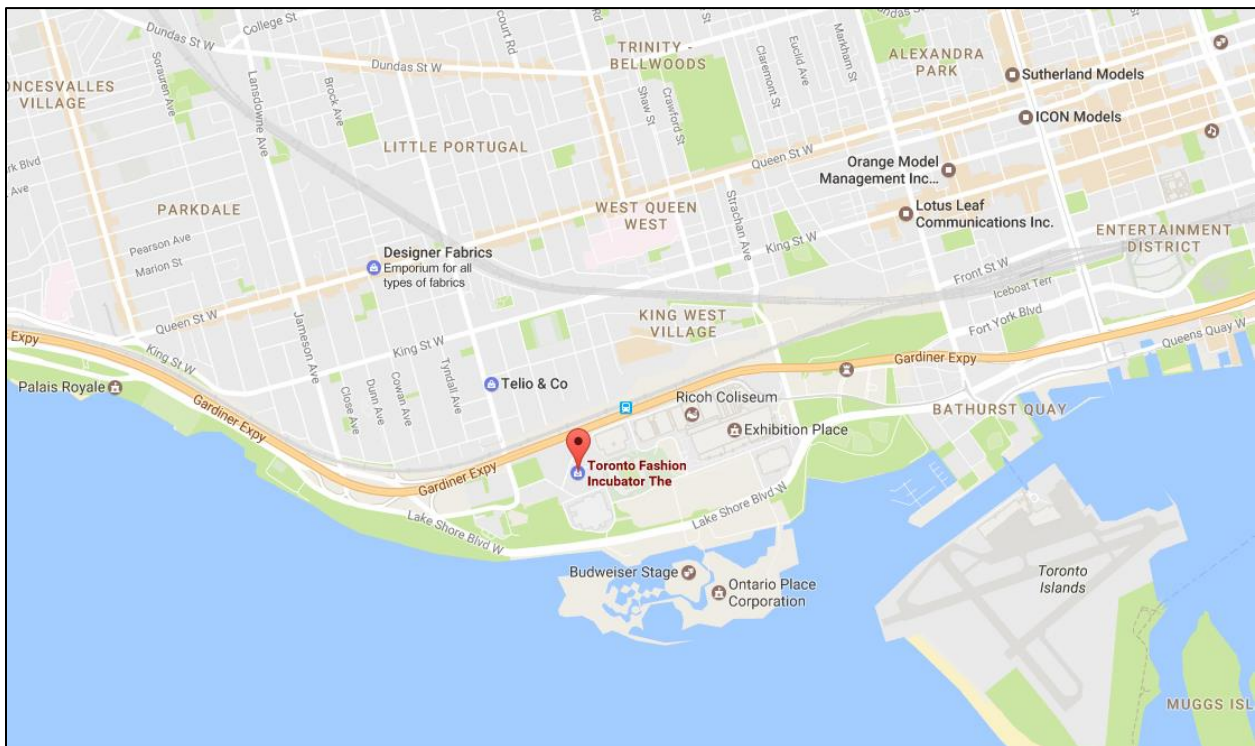


Image Credit: Google Maps

4.2.2 Physical Footprint

The TFI is an 8,000 sq. ft. facility housing a variety of physical functions, including:

- 10 private studios, each estimated at 95 sq. ft.
- a shared work area with specialized apparel and production equipment
- a resource centre
- an office
- meeting/seminar rooms
- a lounge, kitchen and washrooms.¹⁶

The building is also close to a number of other venues, which are sometimes used for events like fashion shows and networking parties.

Figure 6: TFI Floor Plan

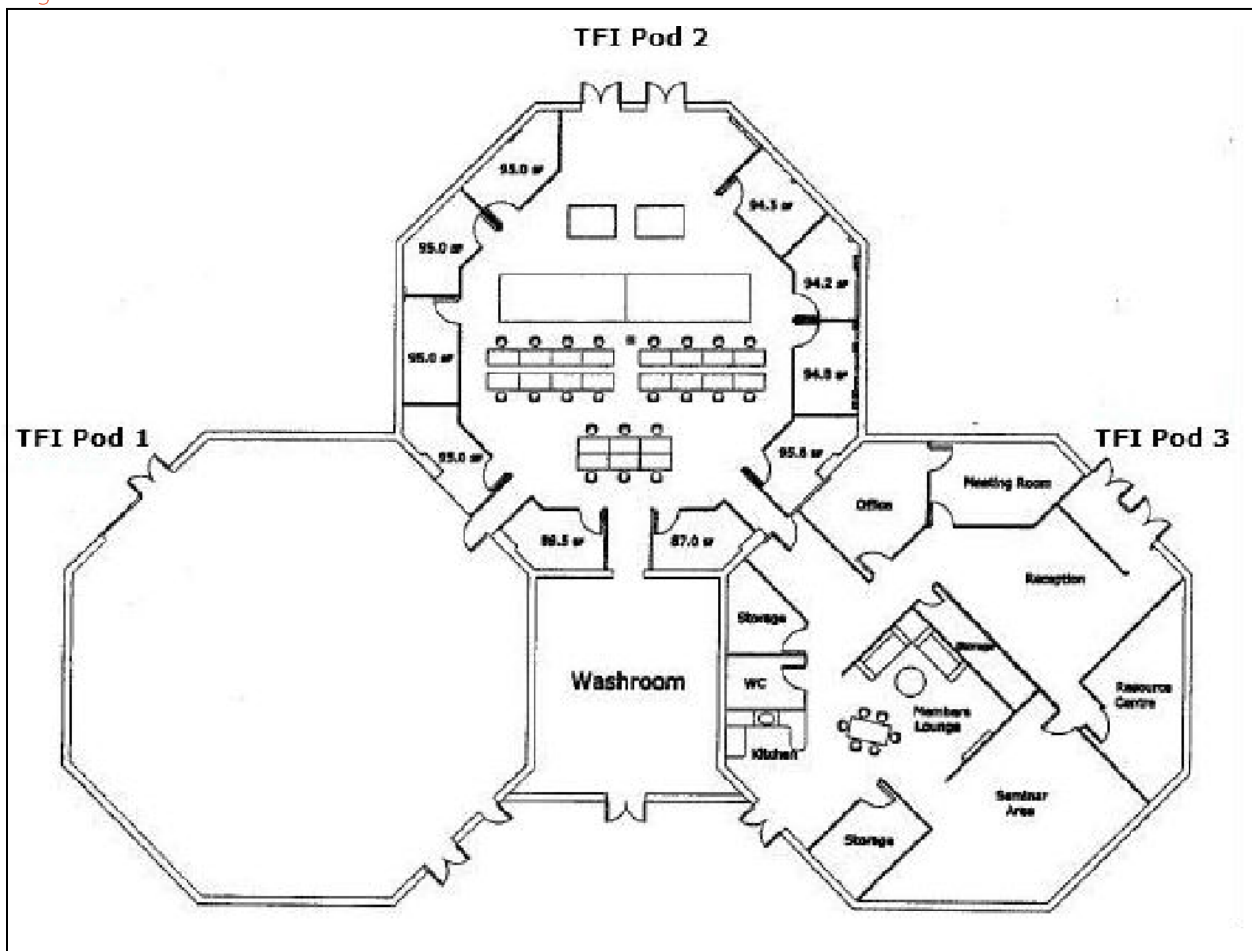


Image Credit: Lease with Exhibition Place, 2016

4.3 Programming

The TFI offers a variety of programming options for both in-house resident designers and associated “Outreach” designers.

4.3.1 Resident and Outreach Designers

There are up to 10 in-house resident designers at the TFI. Designers can rent space in the TFI in a co-working atmosphere. There does not appear to be a time limit on residency. As a resident designer, members have their own private studio space with 24/7 accessibility. They also have access to co-working space with equipment, including sewing machines and fabric cutting equipment, and fashion trend forecasting materials.

The TFI also has an Outreach Membership program. For a fee (see section 4.5.2), fashion designers gain access to a number of TFI services, including professional one-on-one mentoring, private members' networking events, and access to the TFI Resource Centre's fashion trend forecasting materials.

4.3.2 Education

The TFI offers a range of educational courses and seminars to help start-up fashion designers build their businesses. These educational opportunities include:

- Fashion design
- Business administration and planning
- Marketing, branding, promotion, and product pitching
- Industry insights
- Manufacturing and exporting
- Media relations
- Sales¹⁷

4.3.3 Mentoring

A one year membership includes two hours of one-on-one consultation with on-site and online mentors. TFI members have access to leading members of the Toronto fashion industry through the mentorship program. At the time of this report, there were 28 potential mentors listed on the TFI website. These individuals included industry consultants, business process experts, and fashion company owners.¹⁸



Image Credit: Toronto Fashion Incubator, Facebook

4.3.4 Awards

The TFI hosts the annual New Labels Fashion Design Competition. The 2017 prize for Most Promising Label is \$30,000, with other prizes for the runners up. The top finalists in the competition will have their line featured in the TFI New Labels runway show, which is held during the TFI's annual fundraiser. This is an important event for the Toronto fashion industry, with many industry leaders attending the event. The TFI also bills this competition as "a boot camp for new designers where you can gain valuable knowledge about how to create a newsworthy yet marketable line, how to edit your line and what's involved in planning a fashion show. For many, this is the MOST VALUABLE part of the competition."¹⁹

4.3.5 Networking, Promotion, and Marketing

TFI members have access to a variety of events, fashion shows, and other promotional activities to provide them with the opportunity to promote and market their business and clothing line.

4.4 Partners

The TFI is supported both by sponsors and the mentoring of various industry partners. These include government, the private sector, and industry associations.

Current sponsors²⁰ include:

- The City of Toronto
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Province of Ontario
- FLARE Magazine
- Marketwire
- Reliable Corporation
- The Drake Hotel



Image Credit: EDGE

4.5 Business Model

4.5.1 Organizational Structure

The TFI is a non-profit organization. It is led by an Executive Director, a Volunteer Board of Directors, and an Advisory Committee. The leadership of the TFI include professionals with expertise in the fashion industry and business.



Image Credit: The Globe and Mail, 2012.

4.5.2 Funding Model

The TFI receives funding from a variety of sources, including public and private sponsors, membership fees, residents' rental fees, sales to residents, event ticket sales, and fundraising activities.

Income Sources:

- The City of Toronto, the Province, and a number of private organizations sponsor the TFI. The City contributed 27 percent of 2016 funding through a grant from its Incubation program.²¹ As a reference, in 2011, the TFI's annual operating budget was "nearly \$700,000";²²
- Resident designers pay \$400-500 per month for studio space;
- Outreach members pay an annual fee \$140, with students receiving a discounted rate of \$75, for access to mentoring and other services;
- Provincial and federal grants focused on youth initiatives;²³
- Events, including sales of tickets and corporate sponsorships;
- TFI generates research and resources that it sells, including Contact Lists for contractors, media, retailers, etc.; and instructional books and guides;
- The TFI runs fundraising campaigns to raise money;
- TFI staff charge consulting fees, including to other cities looking to start their own fashion incubators, of \$500/hour.

5.0 Fashion Foundry – Glasgow, Scotland



Image Credit: Urban Realm

“Fashion Foundry is supporting Scottish fashion designers and associated creative businesses through a programme of practical workshops, advice, bespoke mentoring, and offers access to sampling and sewing facilities.”²⁴

5.1 Overview

Glasgow’s Fashion Foundry is a service of Scotland’s Cultural Enterprise Office (CEO). The CEO supports a wide range of individuals and micro-businesses operating in creative industries, such as design, the arts, computer games, and writing services. It offers advice, information, programmes, and events.

The Fashion Foundry has worked with Scottish fashion businesses since 2012. Its purpose is to encourage the growth and development of start-up companies in the fashion industry. It aims to help designers gain greater understanding of industry and business best practices, and to access new markets. The overarching goal of the CEO’s fashion program is to encourage growth in both the creative and textile manufacturing elements of the fashion industry.²⁵

5.2 Location and Physical Footprint

5.2.1 Location

The Fashion Foundry is located in the South Block building in the heart of Glasgow's Merchant City. This is a 50,000 sq. ft. space dedicated to creative spaces and studios. It contains a gallery, events space, and various other amenities for creative industry professionals.²⁶ It is located in the city centre of Glasgow, a city with a population of almost 600,000 and a metro population of 1.75 million.

Figure 7: Fashion Foundry Location in Glasgow Map

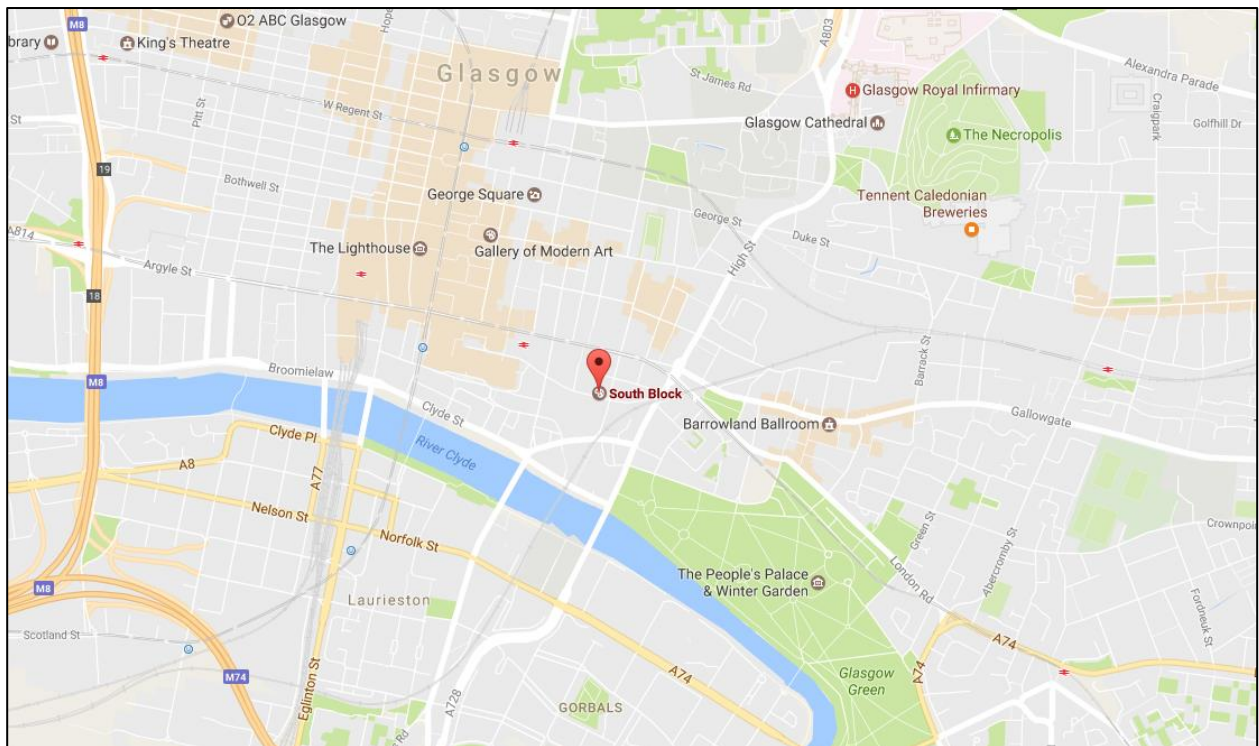


Image Credit: Google Maps

5.2.2 Physical Space

South Block is a building dedicated to the creative industry. This location provides opportunities for creative synergies and building connections with other creative businesses.

The Fashion Foundry is located in a 950 sq. ft. space. This space includes a 762 sq. ft. studio with desk space for 5 designers, storage, rail space, and a large pattern cutting table. An additional 187 sq. ft. studio provides space for sampling and small batch production. The studios are in rooms 235 and 236 in the South Block floor plan (see Figure).²⁷

Figure 8: Fashion Foundry Floor Plan

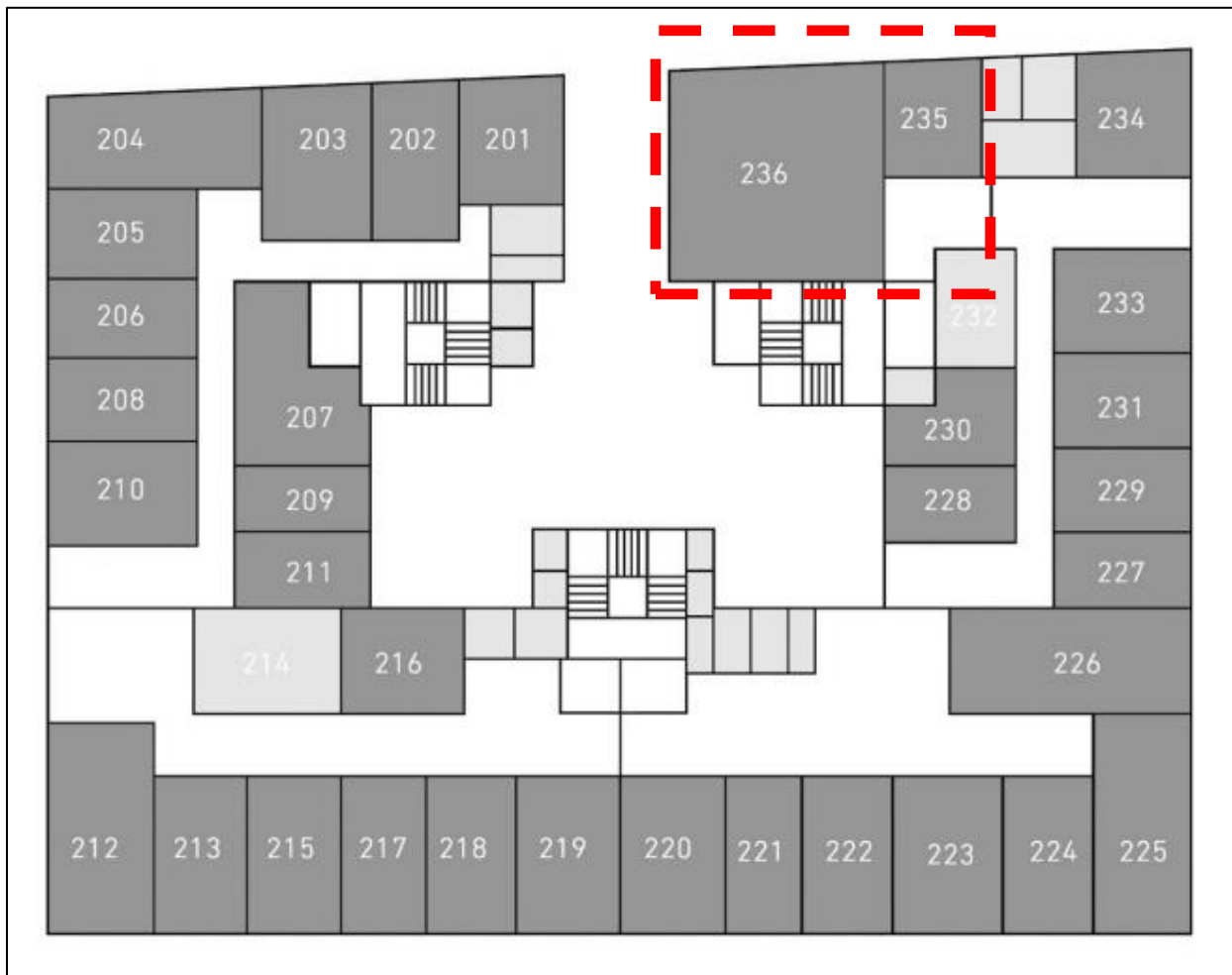


Image Credit: South Block

The physical space includes:²⁸

- Studio space for five businesses at a time;
- Four industrial sewing machines, an industrial overlocker, a pattern cutting table, and a steamer/ironing table;
- Photography space;
- Meeting space;
- Event space to the wider fashion community will also be offered.

General to South Block Tenants²⁹

- Lounge area
- Furnished meeting rooms
- Ground floor retail/exhibition space
- Outdoor roof terrace
- Showers and kitchens
- Seated areas & internal gardens
- Cycle Racks



Image Credit: Fashion Foundry, Twitter

5.3 Programming

The Fashion Foundry offers a variety of programming options for both its Emerging Designers and its Changing Gear designers.

5.3.1 Emerging Designers program³⁰

There are five Emerging Designers who participate in a 12 month incubator program. These designers are in the start-up phase of their company and are based in the Fashion Foundry, have work space, are paired with a mentor, and have access to the Foundry's monthly workshops.

5.3.2 Changing Gear program³¹

There are three Changing Gear Designers associated with the Foundry at a time. These are designers who have established businesses but need help to continue growing their business. They receive four one on one mentoring sessions over a six month period.

The length of the programs and number of designers appears to fluctuate over time.

5.3.3 Education

The Foundry hosts monthly workshops on a variety of subjects, including fashion production, business development, marketing, and fashion design. These are available both to resident designers and the public.

The Foundry also has an online resource centre, which provides information for designers on a wide range of topics.³²

5.3.4 Mentoring

All business participants in the Fashion Foundry are paired with a mentor who has significant industry experience.

5.3.5 Sales/event space

The Fashion Foundry has limited event space, although there are other venues available nearby and a space within South Block.



Image Credit: Fashion Foundry, Twitter

5.3.6 Networking, Promotion, and Marketing

Participants in the Fashion Foundry have access to a variety of fashion and networking events. Past events include a member trip to Paris for a Trade Show mission and a fashion show for the designers as part of the Scotland Re:Designed Event.³³

5.4 Partners³⁴

The Fashion Foundry is a program of the Cultural Enterprise Office. It is supported both by government and various industry partners.

- Creative Scotland: Public entity that supports arts and creative industries
- Scotland Can Do: Government entrepreneurship and innovation promoter
- Film City Futures
- WildHearts
- Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
- Green Arts Initiative
- Dundee City Council³⁵
- The City of Edinburgh Council
- Glasgow City Council.



Image Credit: Fashion Foundry, Twitter

5.5 Business Model

5.5.1 Organizational Structure

The Fashion Foundry is a program of the Cultural Enterprise Office (CEO), which is a not-for-profit organization associated with a variety of Scottish government organizations. The primary funding source of the CEO is Creative Scotland, a public agency of the Scottish government. The CEO has a Board of Directors and the Fashion Foundry is led by a Director.

5.5.2 Funding Model

The exact funding model of the Fashion Foundry is unclear. It receives funding from the Cultural Enterprise Office (CEO), which is funded by Creative Scotland.

- In 2012, the Fashion Foundry received £150,000 of funding from Creative Scotland, Wasp Studios and Scottish Enterprise;³⁶
- Total CEO budget from Creative Scotland is £500,000 for the April 2016 to March 2017 period.³⁷

6.0 Analysis and Observations

This study offers a view of four potential models for a fashion incubator.

- The Brisbane model connects into a larger university creative arts precinct, leveraging resources from the school, government, and the national fashion industry to help jump start small businesses. While not a credited education program, it has a number of the characteristics of such a program, including a completion timeline (six months), a 'final project,' and weekly classes and workshops. Participants pay to be part of the program over a set period of time as part of a yearly cohort.
- The San Francisco model has a stronger connection to the local fashion industry, especially Macy's, and is driven by the municipal government's desire to encourage growth in the local fashion sector. Designers are part of a program, which includes classes, but it appears to be less structured than the Brisbane model and the designers have more independence as a business. Participants pay rent for access to their studio space.
- The Toronto model differs from the others in that it is more like a co-working space than a programme-driven incubator. Residents are not held to a specific timeline or program, but rent space in the incubator and receive a variety of fashion-related perks (like mentoring and the New Labels Competition) by being part of the incubator.
- The Glasgow model is most directly tied to government. It is a subset of the equivalent of a crown corporation and is part of an effort to promote the growth of a variety of cultural enterprises in Scotland. Residents are part of a program in which they receive free studio space and access to the Foundry's classes, mentors, and other facilities.

While each incubator had its distinct characteristics, there were several elements that they all have in common.

Private Workspaces

All of the incubators have individual workspaces. These range in size from a desk with storage to 1,000 sq. ft. private studios.

Shared Workspaces

All the incubators have shared workspaces. These include free or rentable industrial equipment, such as sewing machines and fabric cutters.

Location

The incubators are located in close proximity to businesses and venues that can support their operations or contribute to a broader creative community. This environment ranges from the Brisbane incubator, which is part of the university's a multi-million dollar creative enterprise precinct, to the San Francisco incubator, located in the heart of the city's downtown fashion district.

Physical Assets

There were a number of assets that each incubator either had on site or had access to in its immediate area. These included event spaces and related activities like photography studios.

Industry Context

All the incubators appeared to be connected into a larger industry context. This could mean as part of a larger 'creative complex,' as in the case of Brisbane or Glasgow, or an established industry, as in the case of Toronto and San Francisco.

Board of Directors/Advisory Committees

All the incubators have a Board of Directors and/or an Advisory Committee that helps in the overall guidance of the incubator. These groups often have representatives from the industry and relevant governmental agencies.

Government Funding

All the incubators have some form of government funding, whether that is at the city, regional or national level. Government agencies play a direct role in encouraging, directing, and financing the incubators.

Education

All the incubators provide education to members on a variety of topics, including the fashion industry, production, business skills, and marketing.

Mentoring

Connecting entrepreneurs and start-up businesses to established industry mentors is an important element of all the incubators. Mentoring is also an important vehicle for networking.

7.0 Conclusion

Fashion incubators can provide an important hub for the cultivation of start-up and small scale fashion businesses. As a source of equipment, expertise, and community, they can contribute to the growth of local businesses and the development of new entrepreneurial talent.

While there are a variety of different organizational models employed around the world, there are certain core characteristics that all have in common. Fashion incubators provide shared and private workspace; industrial quality equipment; mentoring; education in fashion and business processes; and a location that fosters connections to a broader fashion or creative community. These services appear to be essential to a successful incubation model.

The incubators studied here are investments in an industry. They are not themselves profitable enterprises, but rather provide a foundation for local entrepreneurs and small businesses to establish themselves. The incubator model is designed to encourage both renewal and long-term growth in the local industry. Further, the incubator models studied here make use of their existing fashion industry ecosystem, working with established fashion businesses, fashion media, and relevant government agencies.

8.0 Endnotes

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