

# Work&Place

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# Work&Place

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# Comment

We launched in 2012 at Cornell University, during the inaugural IFMA Foundation Workplace Strategy Summit. Almost two years on, we are grateful to the Foundation and its sponsors (opposite) for giving us the opportunity to present this issue to the UK Summit.

As well as this journal's obvious relevance to the creators and managers of places, we were also keen to find subjects which are equally relevant to managers of the "work" process. Far from being a problem, we received so much great content for this issue, that we will be delivering another very soon after the event! So, thank you all for your support.

**Work&Place** seeks in-depth articles, which challenge our multi-disciplinary thinking, and this issue has some of the best. **Professor Frank Becker** questions why so many of the largest companies in the world invest millions in buildings and workplaces, but "never bother to measure results". Frank describes how hospitals have turned to "evidence-based design" (EBD) in search of data and how academic and practical research complement each other.

**Dr Andrew Laing** turns our gaze to the city. He introduces an "urbanism imbued with digital information and connectivity: a powerful combination of the physical and digital". Andrew sees not only new kinds of spaces but also new ways of procuring, obtaining and using them. The city is a theme that runs through this issue, and is picked up by **Simon Allford**. A hybrid urban infrastructure, mixed use, connected and permeable, Simon's vision is of a return to the pre-industrial bespoke world, each building a unique response to its context. An office building is "as much about place as space.... 'vanilla' specification is 'done for', even when embellished with a ripple!" Simon's work for Google is "very much about studying the highly tailored option". Simon reminds us that the office of the future is here now, and has been since the Renaissance; coffee house, meeting place, art gallery and office.

**Chris Kane and Caroline Waters** provide case studies from the BBC and BT respectively. They argue that "unless the workplace strategy sector embraces change and builds bridges between the 'people' side of the business and the 'place' side with other workplace specialists, the industry will become 'as dead as a dodo'. It has to change its mind-set". **Kate Lister** interviews **Melissa Marsh**, and explores what we can learn from co-working, described as a "petri-dish-view of the future of work". They discuss research with Rutgers University.

**Ian Ellison** supports Chris and Caroline, and the need for more collaboration. Ian asks whether the 2014 IFMA Workplace Strategy Summit will be remembered as a critical moment in this endeavour: "It feels like things are falling into alignment, and people are starting to look up enquiringly beyond the confines of our insular industry." While **Ziona Strelitz** argues that cultural and work modalities present a number of challenges and opportunities and that the quality of physical space will continue to matter to people who will choose between different types of place.

You can now join the discussion, with the **Work&Place** contributors, and many others. We hope that you will take up this opportunity, to ask questions, challenge the writers, or to make a related point. The link is: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/WORK-PLACE-Occupiers-Journal-4460089>

We look forward to hearing from you!

**Paul Carder**  
Publisher  
@WorkAndPlace

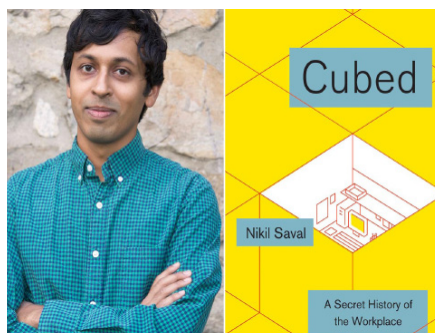
## Book review

Colin Watson reviews  
**Cubed: A Secret History of the Workplace** by Nikil Saval

**N**ikil Saval's book *Cubed: A Secret History of the Workplace* pulls off that rare feat for a business book of being intelligent and informed (which many are) as well as fascinating, entertaining and realistic, which is rather less commonplace. He pulls this off with zippy prose and plenty of references to pop culture including television series such as *Will and Grace*, films such as *Office Space* and *The Apartment* and, inevitably, the *Dilbert* cartoons.

There is also a great deal of enjoyment to be had in the slightly jaded tone of his writing and evisceration of the likes of Tom Peters who is singled out for special criticism. So too, his take on the idea of the 'Office of the Future' with its slides, basketball courts, pool tables and vivid colours.

The fascination of his tale of work and workplaces over a number of centuries



**Cubed: A Secret History of the Workplace**  
Publisher: Doubleday & Co Inc.  
ISBN-10: 0385536577  
ISBN-13: 978-0385536578  
Also available in a digital format

derives primarily from his framing of developments within the wider context of working culture, management thinking, social norms, economic trends, sexual politics and, of course, technological innovation

There is of course no other way but to view the design and management of the workplace and the things with which we fill it than in those terms. The design of a chair tells you a great deal about the person sitting in it, what they do, the tools they use, the organisation that bought it for them and the world outside.

In the case of *Cubed*, the later chapters are defined by one particular piece of office furniture that over the past 20 or 30 years has come to symbolise all that individuals associate with and hate about office life, especially in North America. Many commentators in the media have claimed the cubicle is 50 years old this year because it is most commonly associated with the launch of Herman Miller's Action Office in 1964. It is also the touchstone for a generalised loathing of office life, seen as dehumanising and both capable of both isolating people and robbing them of their privacy and peace.

This makes perfect sense from a North American point of view and some

other places, but robs the book of the perspective of what happens elsewhere in many parts of the world. Western (and westernised) societies have faced many of the same challenges but have responded to them in ways that reflect local culture and traditions, legislation, the commercial property market and the types of organisations involved. In the UK, for example, open plan never really meant cubicles. It meant clusters of workstations separated by low screens, before this evolved into the now ubiquitous bench – rows of workstations which are often shared.

Such design paradigms and products evolved for the same reasons as the North American cubicle and in response to the same stimuli, and they are often disliked for the same reasons. But it is intriguing to note how cause and effect vary from place to place.

One other related point that the book omits is that many of the workplace design idioms we now see



**The shape of things to come,**  
Relay by Herman Miller

as mainstream arose twenty years ago in Europe in response to the changing world of work in the early to mid 1990s. The principles of freestanding furniture elements, shared space, a greater emphasis on teamworking, third space and so on were espoused in designs launched in this time.

Indeed, while 1994 is most commonly associated with the launch of the Aeron Chair, which the author rightly highlights as a base year for office



Ahead of its time. Vitra Ad Hoc





seating design, it was also the year which saw the launch of Antonio Citterio's Ad Hoc for Vitra and Kyo by President Office Furniture amongst others. Both introduced a new way of talking about workplace design and were, arguably, ahead of their time in anticipating the office just around the corner. These ranges followed earlier manifestations of related thinking, including yet another Herman Miller range, Relay, designed by Geoff Hollington.

These may all be things for another time and another book, however, given the breadth of knowledge and wit on display in Cubed. Recommended for anybody who is not only interested in the way offices are designed and managed but also why things happen as they do. **W&P**

*Colin Watson is managing director of the British Contract Furnishing Association and Director General of FEMB (the European Federation of Office Furniture Trade Associations). [www.thebcfa.com](http://www.thebcfa.com)*

## Comment

### Sara Bean on the meeting of minds between HR and FM

**A**lthough they are the disciplines which have the most symbiotic relationship in workplace management – for far too long, HR and facilities management have worked in parallel, rather than in tandem in the workplace.

In a major global research report recently published by RICS, Raising the Bar: City Roundtables Report, some

of the most notable comments made regarding the relationship between HR and FM were that 'alignment problems can occur between HR and FM', and significantly, 'that HR, unlike FM, talks in concepts rather than operational practicalities'.

The fallout of this gap in communication was that FM was failing to articulate effectively the link between good workplaces and staff recruitment and retention – and also wasn't communicating effectively enough with HR on growing trends such as desk sharing and flexible working.

This effectively caused both disciplines, as Chris Kane points out in the article, beginning on page 19, to work in silos rather than together, which up to now, while not being desirable, has at least been feasible.

However, as outlined in many of the articles in this publication, the way in which in the workplace is changing, means that the need and increasingly the will by both sectors to break out of these silos is greater than ever. As a result, the tide has started to turn, with a mutual acknowledgement that HR and FM must start to collaborate on a deeper level.

These views are now being recognised and formalised by both HR and the FM sector with the recent announcement that the BIFM and the CIPD are to work together on a number of research and insight projects. Over the coming months, these will investigate how both communities of professionals, HR and FM are evolving and adapting to the changing workplace.

"The very nature of work is changing. The unprecedented scale and pace of change in the economy and the world of work means there is a critical need to ensure the ways we work, our workforces and workplace cultures are fit for today, and drive performance and growth for the future"; said Peter Cheese, the

chief executive of the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development).

"Workforces are more diverse, with greater flexibility demanded on the part of both employers and employees, bringing new challenges and opportunities in workforce planning

He added: "The physical workplace is one of many factors in modern management and work that needs to adapt, with business leaders needing to continually innovate and challenge conventional wisdom about what drives performance and engagement.

That's why we're pleased to be working with our colleagues in the facilities management industry to explore the issues, and to find solutions to the challenges they bring."

Chris Kane, who has been accredited with playing a significant role in promoting a more collaborative partnership between the BIFM and the CIPD, said at the recent BIFM conference that the two disciplines need to have a big conversation about how they can address the opportunities that arise in the 21st century and move forward with 'mutual respect and real and tangible actions.'

What kind of initiatives will emerge from these discussions are yet to be seen. But there are many changes that both disciplines need to tackle, which include the government's pushing ahead its new rights for staff to request flexible working; to a predicted rise in recruitment, as the economy recovers from the recession.

We'll have to wait to see what emerges, but it's to be hoped that as the Raising the Bar report recommends, FM should be talking to HR regularly regarding everything from space layout to staffing needs; and in this way both disciplines can meet their shared goals. **W&P**

*Sara Bean is a freelance writer specialising in HR and FM*



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**Organisations almost invariably measure the outcomes of their major investments. Yet the workplace is not always subject to the same testing. Why is that, what are the consequences and what can be done?**

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Franklin Becker PhD

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# When assessing workplace strategy: test, don't guess

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**Would an investor plow millions of dollars into a stock and never bother to track how the investment does?** Of course not. Nor would they confuse the expected return on investment (ROI) with the actual results. We don't guess about financial investments. We don't base investment decisions on what some stranger does or how they say they've done.

So why then, do many of the largest companies in the world invest millions of dollars in buildings or renovating their workplaces and never even bother to measure results?

Why are they so willing to copy the unproven strategies of others? Why are they satisfied with projected results, rather than measuring how their investments actually perform? Many generate data about real estate performance—metrics such as amount of space saved, cost per square foot, or total energy costs—but those all miss the point. We don't—or shouldn't—spend tens of millions of dollars to build or renovate buildings because we want to save energy costs or reduce space. Those should be secondary to the real benefit of the building—helping the organization meet its fundamental business objectives.

For me, the context of healthcare really illustrates the point. Think of the CEO of a hospital telling the family of a patient who has died because of a medical error or infection that they are terribly sorry, but the family should remember that the new hospital is fifteen percent more energy efficient than the old one. That would be seen, rightly, as ridiculous. In the corporate workplace, like hospitals, we should be designing buildings that promote the health, well-being, and performance of those using the facility; and in the process, help companies strengthen their competitive position in the marketplace. To do that we need data, not guess work.

Hospitals have turned to what's been called "evidence-based design" (EBD) in search of data to inform facility decisions. The motivation is straightforward. Somewhere between 50,000 and 98,000 patients die in the US each year from medical errors. Between twenty and fifty percent of surgeries are unnecessary. And every year 7,000 people die from medication errors alone.

These are dismal statistics. As is true of any ecological system comprised of a dense web of interdependent factors, one can break into the system and intervene at any point in an attempt to shift its direction, disrupt its current trajectory, and improve its performance. For policy wonks and financial analysts, using

design as the entry point into this complex system may seem like trying to extinguish a forest fire with a glass of water. But we are investing \$20-30 billion dollars a year in new hospital design and major renovations. That's not pocket change. Nor are the millions of dollars firms spend each year on new corporate offices and major renovations. Think of Amazon, Apple, Twitter, and Google. Yet far less value is paid in the corporate sector than in healthcare to using research to inform facility decisions; and more importantly, to assess whether the facility investment achieved the anticipated benefits.

Is that because the corporate workplace is a healthy and productive environment? Using stress as just one indicator of health, statistics suggest otherwise. The total cost of stress to U.S. organizations, resulting in absenteeism, reduced productivity, compensation claims, health insurance, and direct medical expenses, has been estimated at more than \$150 billion annually. There is no reason to assume employee

**“...seven in ten American workers are “not engaged” or “actively disengaged” in their work. In effect, these disengaged workers are checked out.”**

stress has decreased over the past twenty-five years. The Gallup Organization reports that seven in ten American workers are “not engaged” or “actively disengaged” in their work. In effect, these disengaged workers are “checked out.” They are present physically but “sleepwalking” through their workday, a phenomenon labeled “presenteeism.” Gallup estimates that this disengagement costs the U.S. several hundred billion dollars a year (Creighton, 2014.)

Is the physical design of the environment the major source of stress; or put another way, what contributes most to a sense of health and well-being at work? In a review of the literature on health and well-being in the workplace, Cristina Banks (2014) reported that frontline staff identified thirteen characteristics of a healthy workplace. Only three were related directly to the physical environment: personal privacy, natural ventilation and natural light. The top two healthy workplace



characteristics were organizational cultures that valued self-respect and respect for others; and ones that valued inclusiveness and employee voice. Does that mean the physical environment is not really important? No. But it does mean that if we want to invest in design that makes a difference to health and performance we need to understand the social and organizational context in which different design characteristics contribute to a healthy organizational culture. We need to understand what works and what doesn't for different types of workers doing different jobs.

We need to understand how socio-economic, cultural and demographic factors play a role in this. And we also need to understand why some designs work while others fail across a wide variety of contexts. All that requires evidence of some sort. Not guesses. Not a few anecdotes. It requires research. But of what sort?

### Better design is built on great research

The fundamental premise of evidence-based-design is straightforward: better designed solutions, ones that are more likely to support valued outcomes, will result from using the evidence generated by high quality, formalized and rigorous research processes.

The concept is spot on. The reality is that the amount of research available is limited. In her review of the literature on the impact of different kinds of intervention to improve workers' health and well-being, Banks (2014) concluded that "the impact of these interventions is either unimpressive or unknown."

Most of the workplace literature, particularly on the effects of design factors on performance, is equally limited. Most of it is based on self-report measures of satisfaction and environmental preferences, or perceived connections between design factors and performance and innovation.

There are extremely few studies like the one carried out by Jason Owen-Smith and others at the University of Michigan, not least in using a rigorous comparative research design and sophisticated data analytics to examine the "socio-spatial

significance in innovation." Yet this is an unpublished study, not easily available to the public.

Even with the most rigorous peer reviewed academic research, the problem remains for the practitioner. The study was conducted in a specific social and organizational context, in a particular job sector, and with a defined workforce

demographic that is likely to be different than the one in which they are seeking insight.

What can practitioners, and companies trying to make more informed decisions about how to invest scarce resources into their own facilities do?

To achieve desired outcomes

in the face of published evidence that always needs to be interpreted and filtered and adopted for implementation in their own specific facility, work group, project de jour? Is the answer to throw up one's hands in despair? Or to just go with one's "gut feelings?" Much better, I think, is supplementing the published research that provides general insight by conducting their own small, fast studies that provide perspectives grounded in empirical data relevant to their own specific context and organization. I call this form of inquiry "practice-based" research.

### Academic and Practice-Based Research

Rigorous "academic-based" research that appears in peer-reviewed academic journals takes from 3-4 years from inception to publication. Practitioners cannot wait that long for just one study that may or may not be directly relevant to their own organization and specific project. Practice-based research typically takes a few months and is organization specific. It lacks the scope and rigor and long time frame reflected in academic-based research's larger sample sizes and more sophisticated research designs and statistical analysis. But it makes up for these limitations in speed and organizational relevance. Academic and practice-based research is complementary.

Practice-based research takes many forms. Using an example from my recent work in healthcare settings, one of the world's most complex work settings, the neonatologist in our local

**“...What can practitioners, and companies trying to make informed decisions about how to invest scarce resources into their own facilities, do to achieve desired outcomes?”**





hospital conducted a study over a six-month period. This identified design and technological factors in his hospital that dangerously increased the time from when a baby with a serious health problem was born until she underwent surgical treatment.

The US national standard for safe care for these conditions was 30 minutes from “inception to incision.” After carefully tracking actual time (not guessing or estimating), it turned out this process was taking, in some cases, 38 minutes. By doing a “lean process” study in which every step of the journey and process was thoroughly mapped and timed, and the roadblocks along the way identified and removed, the time was cut to 18 minutes. Babies’ lives were saved. This study’s sample size would not warrant publication in a peer-reviewed journal. But it made all the difference for a specific hospital; and it was based on evidence, not guestimates or personal experience or preference. The results were then fed forward into the design of a new neonatal facility currently under design.

### Paradigm-Busting

Much of the workplace research, either academic or practice-based, is intended to generate what Clayton Christensen in the “Innovator’s Dilemma” calls sustainable innovation; that is, innovation intended to produce refinements that extend the life of an existing product. Think of the regular software updates that eliminate glitches and plug security holes. Definite improvements but not what Christensen calls “disruptive innovation.” The shift from a slide rule to an HP electronic calculator or from the IBM’s PC to Apple’s Mac are disruptive innovations—paradigm-busting game changers. You cannot systematically evaluate what doesn’t exist. But you can still collect relevant evidence, not for peer-reviewed publications, but to generate insight grounded in more than

best guesses. Here, the role of evidence is not to justify a decision but to stimulate the imagination. For example, when Detroit-based Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital wanted to fundamentally change the nature of patient care, they brought Gerhard Grinsveld in as CEO. Though Grinsveld had no hospital experience, the former Ritz Carlton hotel chain executive knew a great deal about customer care.

Grinsveld started by collecting his own “evidence.” He realized he knew almost nothing about the African-American, Iranian, and Jewish populations the hospital served. His staff suggested doing focus groups. Instead, he called people in the neighborhoods surrounding the hospital and asked

**“...Evidence, by itself, cannot drive innovation. That takes people with imagination to interpret and apply evidence available in ways that fix problems and invent new realities”**

if he could make dinner and bring it to their house and talk. He knew he would develop a much deeper understanding—better evidence—from personal visits. With insights gained, he paid attention to making the hospital environment more welcoming and the rooms more home-like and comfortable. Of course, many hospitals are doing that.

But what they are not doing is engaging the local community. They are not inviting them to dine at the hospital—not just when they are sick or visiting a patient—but regularly because the food is so good, it’s affordable, and the environment is so inviting. Grinsveld did this and more. Recognizing that the surrounding neighborhoods were filled



with obese children for whom fast food diets are the norm, Grinsveld built greenhouses and test kitchens and invited busloads of children and their parents to visit. He wanted them to see where vegetables are grown and to learn how to prepare food that is both tasty and healthy. In doing all of this Grinsveld shifted the paradigm from 'hospital as a place you go when you are sick' to 'hospital as a community resource for staying well.'

These interventions were not based on a coolness factor or design fashion. Evidence about obesity, health, and nutrition, as well as anthropology and sociology were critical. Henry Ford is a hospital, but it operates in a fiercely competitive environment. To not just survive, but also thrive, it needs to be as innovative, in its own way, as Google or Amazon are in their markets. Findings from formal evidence-based design studies together with their own internal research and projects fueled imagination and shaped the vision of the larger role the hospital could play in the community. **W&P**

## **i Franklin Becker**

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## **Zappos Downtown Project transforms Las Vegas**

Tony Hsieh, the founder of Zappos, is doing something in Las Vegas akin to what Grinsveld did at the Henry Ford West Bloomfield. He has created the Downtown Project (pictured throughout this feature) and invested over \$350 million dollars of his own money in urban development and co-working strategies.

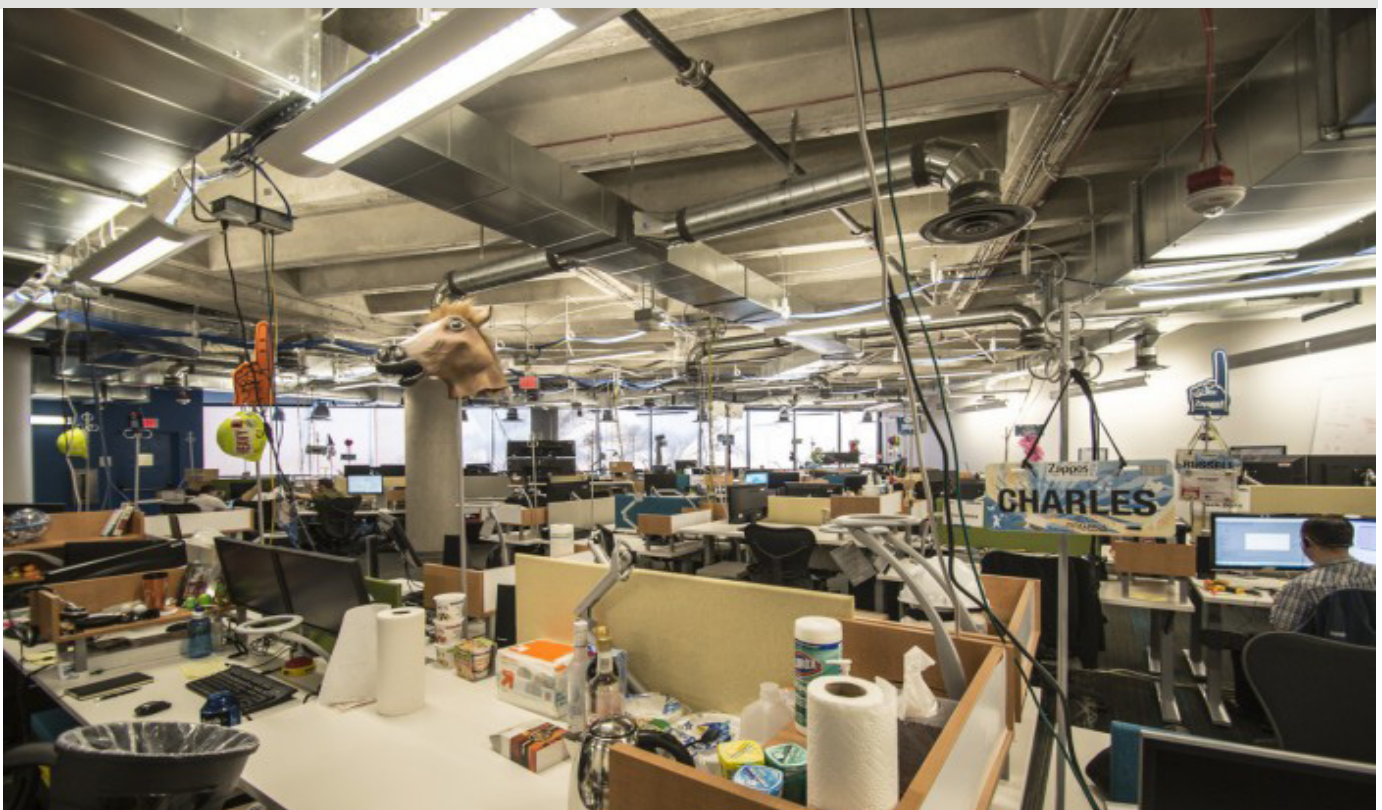
The plan is to transform Las Vegas from a gambling and entertainment mecca into a workplace destination and a great place to live. He is absolutely committed to making Zappos prosper. But he has realized that he can do that more effectively by engaging and collaborating with the community. His business boundaries don't stop where the building's parking lot ends. Las Vegas benefits; so does Zappos.

Evidence, by itself, cannot drive game-changing innovation. That takes people with imagination to interpret and apply

every form of evidence available in ways that fix small problems and invent new realities.

But once those paradigm-busting projects are online, we need to critically evaluate them. It is not enough to build an Apple, Twitter, Amazon, or Google campus and then simply declare victory based on initial, often untested, assumptions and current fashion.

If companies actually care about performance and innovation, and are prepared to spend millions of dollars on facilities intended to help achieve that, they need to do with their facility investments what they do with their other financial investments: track and systematically monitor them, rather than just hoping the expected benefits were achieved. In its own way, that would be as much of an innovation for the corporate workplace as a new facility paradigm itself.



# TOOLS FOR MANAGING THE DYNAMIC WORKPLACE

Rapidly changing workplaces are requiring facilities teams to plan, optimize and manage their portfolios in new ways.

Modern organizations are adopting new approaches to workplace planning and operations that have been enabled by mobile technologies and a highly dynamic workforce. These new approaches include flexible workspace, support for cross functional teams, ad-hoc and collaborative areas, and flexible workspaces that break away from the practice of assigning one workstation per employee.



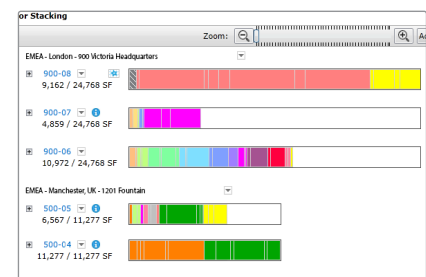
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The changing relationship between work and place challenges our inherited ideas about offices and, now, a combination of the physical and digital is transforming the urban landscape too

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Andrew Laing PhD

WORKPLACE DESIGN • TECHNOLOGY • URBANISATION

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# The emerging workplace is urban

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**As we explore the future of work and place, we are** beginning to see a shift towards an urban scale in how we frame the workplace problem. Our starting point is perhaps no longer the office but the city at large. And what we mean by the city may not be the bricks and mortar urbanism of the twentieth century, but a bricks and mortar urbanism imbued with digital information and connectivity: a powerful combination of the physical and digital.

This concept of what some have called a ‘sentient’ city provides us with a new perspective for the workplace (Shepard, 2010). It suggests new kinds of units and scales of analysis for how we understand work and place, and how we might program and plan workplaces in the future. We can begin to identify a new typology of workplaces. These urban kinds of workplaces are characterized not only by new kinds of spaces but also by new ways of procuring, obtaining, and using space. New patterns of working and using technology result in new ways space can be obtained and consumed that use online tools in markets that challenge the traditional supply and demand economy of office real estate.

Changes in work, technology, and space use are driving the demand for an architecture and urbanism (physical and virtual) that is more hybrid, mixed use, connected and permeable. This urban architecture is likely to be almost the opposite of the twentieth century’s Modern Movement’s segregation of functions and activities into purpose built, single use, zoned buildings and districts (Duffy, 1998).

I began to think more about this change of scale and perspective when I wrote a paper that explored the accommodation needs of the fast growing technology sector in New York City last year (Laing, 2013). What interests me most is that in creating new products, this sector pioneers many new ways of using space and technology. What was also interesting was the fact that the applications being developed are often designed to improve how we live and work in dense urban environments (for example, better ways of ordering food, buying clothes, meeting people, finding doctors etc.).

The technology workplace has become a harbinger of wider trends and innovations in how we design, use, and obtain space. This takes many different forms: from the use of a wide variety of co-working spaces, to the urban “meet-up culture,” and the ways in which technology enables space to be found and

consumed in new ways. Yet the tech industry in New York also highlights the importance of the dense networked physical fabric of environments (the bricks and mortar) for working and living in the city, even in an increasingly virtualized world.

Two big shifts stand out which have more general implications for work and place: the shift towards collaborative and urban “workscape” that are more heterogeneous, mixed-use and multi-scaled; and a related shift to the collaborative consumption of workspace and workspace-as-service.

Looking at the technology sector also highlights the apparently never-ending impact of innovation on how we use technology to work and live. It is information technology that has enabled what is now a mature yet continuing 25-year old revolution that constantly re-shapes the relationships between the individual worker and work spaces; breaking apart what Duffy called the Taylorist industrial model of work time and work space (Duffy 1998), in particular the fixed allocation of individuals to dedicated individual workspaces.

## Cities remain valued creative centres

It is also somewhat surprising to find that it is technology that is augmenting, re-defining and accentuating the advantages of central places and dense urban environments as preferred locations of work. While technology has enabled mobility and the ability to work in many different kinds of places, urban centres appear more than ever the privileged location. Technology means that the conventional, narrowly prescriptive, architectural programming of different kinds of spaces is becoming less relevant as knowledge workers behave more like ‘cyborg foragers’ and appropriate spaces as they need them (Mitchell, 2003). Yet cities are ever more valued as centres of networking and creativity.

There was a period in the 1970s when thinkers about work and place believed that networked computers would mean a decline in the importance of central locations in favour of an ability to work from ‘telecottages’ or to telecommute (Graham, 2004). Quite the contrary appears to be happening. Even as we appear to need fewer highly specialised or tailored work spaces, the design of space and the particularities of location are by no means irrelevant.

New hierarchies of value for places and spaces are emerging: the most valuable being those that are well connected



## The emerging typography of the workplace

### Co-working

The phenomenon of co-working has been expanding rapidly. It involves shared environments in which individuals and small groups gather together to work in a community, usually paid for on a membership basis and invoiced either monthly or daily. These spaces provide a community workspace with shared services that let individuals and small groups share ideas and mutually support each other's work. Corporate organizations are encouraging their own employees to work in co-working spaces as an alternative to their regular workspace, not to save on costs primarily, but to facilitate their interaction and knowledge sharing with others and to inspire creativity.

### Open House

Aside from the different kinds of co-working spaces, there is a related trend for organizations to open up their own workspace to a wider community and to invite others in to share it. Accenture's recent office project in Paris refocused the whole office environment on collaborative activities for staff—assuming that much individual work can be completed outside of the office—and opened up the office for clients and others in the city to use. The BBC has, for many years, created workplaces

that are designed around the assumption that its collaborators in creating television programmes should be invited to work together in shared environments. Microsoft's sales offices have been designed to also accommodate customers, and enable them to experience its technology and services. The open, flexible workplace that Microsoft created at Schiphol in the Netherlands has been widely referenced as an example of this Open-House approach to the workplace.

### Working Commons

In the same way that university campuses have moved away from libraries exclusively designated as places for reflective study, to spaces in which informal and ad-hoc collaboration happens in a 'learning commons', the 'working commons' emerges as a kind of semi-public shared space. The typical environments provide places to meet, study, make connections and exchange ideas. Food and drink are welcomed, furniture and equipment are mobile or re-configurable, and access may be at all hours. Settings change by the hour, day and week. There is an emerging role for city governments to host these kinds of working commons.

### Co-habiting

There is a further type of workspace in which, rather than the individual organization opening up to others or to the wider community, several organizations together share a work environment with the purpose of gaining from each other's knowledge and experience. We have defined this kind of environment as Co-habiting. Google in London is supporting a co-working space called 'Campus' in which Google will occupy one floor and two others will be available for co-working. Steelcase is participating in a Co-habiting space called At GRid70 in Grand Rapids MI, Steelcase shares space with a multi-level marketer, a footwear manufacturer, and a test kitchen. These disparate residents are said to have also shared trade secrets, trend forecasts, and even recipes (Lindsay, 2013).

## Working Styles



**Co-work**



**Open House**



**Working Commons**



**Co-habit**

to public transport and that integrate, superimpose, and connect multiple kinds of virtual and social networks (Duffy, 1998). These are the places that make a difference: they are meaningful, beautiful, interesting or significant in ways that other places are not. Information technology adds value to such places and changes how we use them, enriching the value of the city as the ultimate network of networks.

In contrast to the industrial model of work and workplaces in which workers would be collocated in the office (or factory) to work on supervised tasks during a fixed working day, the much more plural and social nature of knowledge work depends on a wider-scale network of physical and virtual relationships. In this sense, an urban scale of proximity is of great value to organizations.

It is within cities that a nomadic way of working can be most successful, supporting individual users with a choice of places and settings in which interactive and solo work can happen. Many theorists (Glaeser, 2011) argue that the role of cities as the most effective environments in which to exchange knowledge has actually increased in significance even as technology allows so many forms of communication to be virtual. In fact, virtual interactions and face-to-face interactions reinforce each other. Information technology creates a more relationship-intensive world and reinforces the fundamental purpose and logic of the city as a dynamo of intellectual growth.

Cities also concentrate talent and much of the value of dense urban work environments comes from unplanned as well as planned meetings. The urban logic of the value of serendipitous encounters has almost become a cult in workplace planning with workplaces being planned to function like mini-cities in which hallway and cafeteria discussions are engineered into the design of the building. The focus on the benefits of these kinds of urban-like encounters in the workplace has led to some reaction against full time remote working and other forms of distributed working. For most knowledge workers, however, the best work solutions are not simply either 'working in the office' or 'working out of the office'. For many, working virtually is already happening whether they happen to be working from home, in the office, in third places, or in transit. Yet, the places where people can work together, face-to-face, remain fundamental to many critical aspects of work performance and creativity. Technology has not replaced place, rather it is augmenting the value of physical places as the most valuable hubs of physical and virtual networks.

Given the ways in which technology augments how we experience and use space in the city, with the place of work no longer simply the office but a larger network of urban environments; what are some of the emerging types of workplaces that perform well as work environments in an urban context?

### Workspace at an urban scale

If we begin to think of the technologically enabled urban environment as the domain of work, rather than the

conventional office building or office floor, we can re-imagine urban living and working as a kind of blended experience. When we no longer think of workplaces as places dedicated only to working, we can plan cities and buildings to be more multifunctional and mixed in use. Technology is enabling us to rethink how we work and live across all kinds of spaces. It is enabling us to repurpose single-user, under-occupied office buildings into dense intensively used hubs of social connectivity and interaction. It is enabling us to repurpose our homes as workspaces for part of the day or the week, whenever it suits our work process and our personal lives.

This mixing of activities over time and space in the city works for many different scale of organization. Larger firms want to increase their opportunities for networking knowledge and ideas in their own physical workplaces (mimicking the richness of communications found in smaller more informal organizations), while the contingent peripheral workforce and smaller scale organizations also seek workplaces in which they can connect and collaborate. There is therefore a mutual interdependency between the interests of the larger firms and the periphery of smaller firms and individual contributors. Both are seeking combinations of virtual and physical spaces in which to network.

This logic can apply at scales larger than any one organization's workspace, to whole buildings and urban areas. It points to thinking of urban workspace as a resource to be shared and used over time by multiple organizations and individuals. In the same way that office buildings are now used in a dynamic 'desk sharing' model that increases utilization,

occupancy levels (and decreases carbon footprint), we can begin to think of urban areas and districts as shared workspace resources that can be intensively shared and dynamically occupied, increasing their levels of activity and usage over 24 hours. It suggests that buildings can be used

by a greater variety of functions and activities that are less homogeneous. It also suggests that as work spills out of conventional office space, the spaces in-between buildings become part of the programmable area of urban 'workspaces'.

This kind of landscape of work, or what others have called a 'workspace' (Harrison et al, DEGW, 2004), is evidenced in an array of new types of workplaces that operate in an urban way at an urban scale. What we mean by 'urban' in this sense is a pattern of use that depends on a wide scale networking of multiple organizations and individuals, who pool resources and socialize their use of space over time in a dynamic way.

I have identified four such types of emergent urban workplaces: *Co-working*, *Open House*, *Working Commons*, and *Co-habiting* (see box left). (I am indebted to my colleague Sue Wittenoom for suggesting the workplace type of 'Working Commons'). These workplace types share characteristics that are neither entirely public nor exclusively private. Rather, they all operate as 'privileged' environments with filtered and managed degrees of access, and varying degrees of individual user, corporate or governmental control and management. They often support models of collaborative consumption of space

**“...It is within cities that a nomadic way of working can be most successful, supporting individual users with a choice of places and settings in which interactive and solo work can happen”**

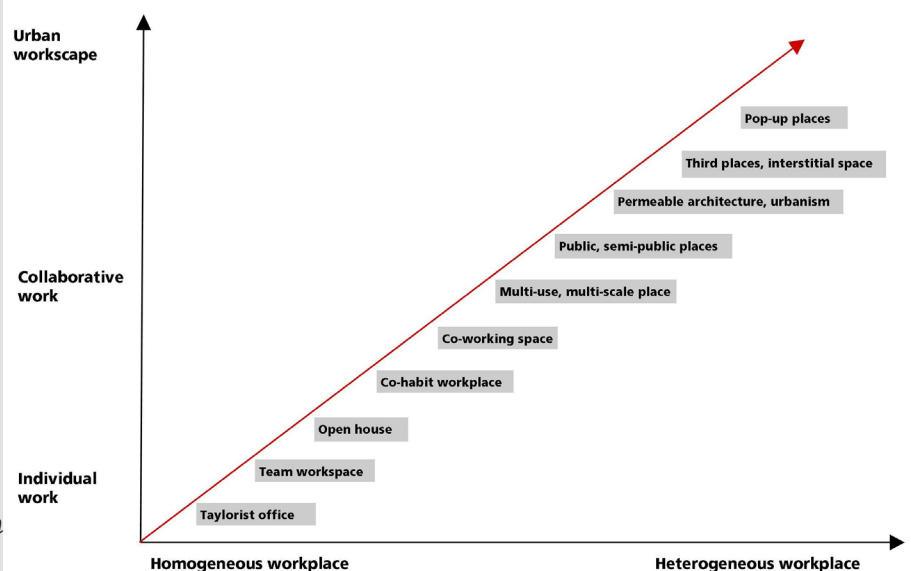
## Collaborative consumption and workspace as a service

The economy of collaborative consumption, enabled by new applications and geo-location services, is beginning to also revolutionize the ways that firms and individuals procure and obtain workspaces, challenging the supply-side driven economy of landlords, developers and the real estate industry. IT enables more virtual and mobile ways of working as well as revolutionizing the modes of obtaining and supplying space. The collaborative consumption model provides users with much greater choice and control to obtain their work environments on an as-needed basis by the hour or day in any location or type of work environment they want. This shift to an individualistic and consumerist model of workspace means that space can be consumed collaboratively in the same way that in the sharing economy we can rent cars or films.

Services such as LiquidSpace not only open up many choices for end users of workspace, they also enable tenants and landlords to better utilise their own under-occupied space. The ability to obtain workspace in a more flexible as-needed way is being further enhanced by emphasising the provision of workspace as a service. New kinds of workplace providers are entering this marketplace. Examples include the collaboration between Steelcase and Marriott to offer a service called 'Workspring', which provides workspace services within hotel environments. Similarly, Westin hotels offer a workspace service called

Tangent. These co-working and workspace-as-a-service models are responsive to user demands and stand in contrast to the limited services associated with the real estate conventions of leasing or buying office space.

The diagram suggests the directions of change identified here: towards increasingly heterogeneous workplaces that are increasingly collaborative and urban in nature. These shifts towards the urban workplace are also associated with a move away from owning or leasing spaces to various forms of shared and collaboratively consumed and serviced spaces, often used and provided in a more temporary or transient form. These trends suggest that in thinking about 'the urban' as the new workplace, we will need to re-think how we program, design, use and manage workspace. Instead of merely programming and planning offices, we are programming and planning cities.



and the provision of workspace as a service. They suggest some new roles and responsibilities for developers, landlords and city governments as they actively curate and manage a changing semi-public platform of work, social and cultural events. **W&P**

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# A simple question of choice: 2CV or BMW

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**The title of my talk at the IFMA Workplace Strategy Summit 2014** was my answer to the question ‘is back to basics the office of the future?’ But underscoring my throwaway response is my conviction that there is no single future for the office. Just as there is no ideal structural material, building or city of the future; there is no standard way of working, or standard worker. So there should always be choice of location, of lease, of scale, of volume, of specification, of community, even of character. Without choice, the ideal becomes dogmatic.

So, one thing I can say for certain is that the offices of the future will each be very different. One of the key advantages offered by the technological revolution that is shaping our post-industrial world is that we can return to the pre-industrial world of the bespoke: a world where buildings are built in response to people and places. A world where the environment is tailored to the individual's changing needs and preferences.

Both the BMW and 2CV will comfortably get you from A to B (admittedly with markedly different levels of comfort!) so the choice you make between them is as much for reasons of taste and aesthetics (and what it says about you as an individual), as it is for reasons of price and engineering. And what a building says about an organisation is ever more important; even more important than what a car says about an individual!

There is a distinction between a building, an office and a workplace. I am an architect, and I design and help construct all kinds of very different buildings for very different clients. We have built our practice upon the idea that each building is a unique response to context: being the particular people and politics, the physical place, and the moment in time in which we all come together to make something. So yes, there are iterations across a series of projects and shared strategies and architectural tactics, but in essence each building is still particular to place, people and its time.

I have, however, had something of a damascene discovery (I cannot say moment as it has emerged over a good few projects and years). While I would still propose that each building is

individual, I am very clear that they all share similar essential characteristics: the need for light, volume, air, delight and promenade. This is regardless of typology; be they schools, offices, apartments, leisure or health care facilities; for public or private use and regardless of whether they are small or large, new, old or a combination. While the building is bespoke to its context it is not tailored to its typology. This is why we are so easily able to convert buildings for uses that were not anticipated at their inception.

I made this case for the Universal Building at the BCO conference in Madrid last year, 2013, in an accompanying article for the Architect's Journal:

*In the window of the Vitra Showroom, in yet another old rag trade factory with apartments above, I recently spotted the slogan that ‘Work is a thing you do, not a place you go’, which cleverly conjured up familiar images of working anywhere but the office. My proposition, however, is fundamentally different: ‘work’ is a place you go to do things. A place where you can live, work and play.*

*Long-term value is not to be found in creating an office, or indeed most other typologically defined single-use buildings. The future resides in architecture that is responsive to change, that can accommodate different programmes in similar spaces, both simultaneously and over*

*time - spaces that have recognisable shared qualities, but that are still particular to their context and arranged around a memorable promenade.*

*So forget the particularities of the office and think of The Universal Use Class Order of the City Sandwich, a rich mix of stacked uses. This is a typology worth pursuing; even if (in respect of statute, finance and current mind-set) we are obliged to present it as ‘office’.*

### ‘The future ain’t what it used to be’

As I firmly believe this is the case, I inevitably fully concur with Mark Twain's observation that ‘the future ain't what it used to be’. And, in the case of office design, it never has been. Especially as the much discussed office of the future (if only I had a pound for every time I have heard that title) is very much

“...One of the key advantages offered by the technological revolution that is shaping our post-industrial world is that we can return to the pre-industrial world of the bespoke”



Angel, London. © AHMM

like the coffee house and club of the past. It is a building that Pepys would recognise.

Of course, there is and has been change: but in global design terms these are but nuances. The successful office building is now likely to include a shop, a bar, a restaurant, some retail; people might even be living close by or in floors in between. Indeed in that sense it is just a building inhabited by people, some of whom work. If it is 'good' it is now deemed so because it is an enjoyable space to be, where chance encounters and escape from intrusion are facilitated.

In that sense it is a microcosm of the city, in that its social and cultural importance is increasingly recognised. It is as much about place as space. And the space that it does offer will have personality and volume: 'vanilla' specification space is 'done for', even when embellished with a ripple! The best offices are a product measured in terms of value, not of cost.

We work too long generally: at home, in the taxicab, on the plane and train and of course, in the office. This is why the spaces in between are as important as your desk. I use the word 'your' decisively as I do not believe the trend to lose your personal base and its vital social connections will aid anyone's efficiency (and incidentally, nor do Google, who provide a desk for all their ever increasing numbers of staff).

But it is all still about the efficiency of space and time. The office of the future is here now, and it is called working everywhere you are and on the journeys in between. As a result, it is both hard and too demanding. And no, we don't and won't all work from an attic or a barn. We come to work to meet people and resolve challenges face-to-face, not by email or twittering or utilising the other useless paraphernalia of social media.

Just as in the 19th century, paternalistic employers created ideal worlds (think Port Sunlight, Bournville, Saltaire) now they curate ideal workspace with places that we want to inhabit; with recreation, crèches and storage for your Amazon/Ocado delivery as well as the essential bars and restaurants.

Technology is working hard, but ever less evident; and I believe building services will, depending on location and value, head in two different but equally important and appropriate directions. In one highly tailored option, light, air, water and that other element data, will be supplied only when and where needed. In the other ready-made option, there will be acceptance of a more average condition and a more robust

model. Both are highly flexible and are distinguished by both cost and, importantly, an attitude to building services technology. So beware over-specification; beware trends.

Our work for Google is very much about studying the highly tailored option. They are a technological company focused on imagining new futures and bringing them forward into the present. They make their own driverless cars, but for the sake of this article, for their image as much as their operation, they require the building equivalent of the BMW. They require a highly engineered building that is at the forefront of technology. A building, like the BMW, that requires intensive management and user engagement (but hopefully with a more user-friendly interface, as that is what Google's success is built upon).

The ready-made option, which we are building now, is the 2CV. It is our White Collar Factory design for Derwent London (the name itself was coined in answer to another throwaway question at, I must confess, my wedding!). It is ready-made in that it is being built speculatively and will be occupied by tenants we do not yet know. But it is in fact the result of a twenty-year collaboration and a five year research project involving client, architect, and engineers (AKT2 and ARUP). The shared aim to make a low energy, robust and generous building that will adapt to very different user needs, foster a sense of place and community, and be responsive to individual preference.

It is very much the epitome of the maxim 'long life, loose fit, low energy'.

It is being driven by five ideas.

1. **Tall ceilings** offering volume, daylight penetration, improved thermal comfort (heat –and in event of fire, smoke rise to a ceiling reservoir) and better and more even light distribution.
2. **Smart Servicing** is about minimal moving parts, no excess kit and maximising passive daylight and ventilation, bolstered by a radiant concrete slab (with cold water pipes cast in offering active thermal mass). All with upgradable tenant add-ons including extra cold water to create instant chilled radiant panels.
3. **Simple passive façade** is about glazing located in the right place to light space; in the right quantity in response to solar load and the need for insulation (this is not a glass building!); and with 'shading' fixed and built-

in by way of a perforate façade with opening windows behind.

4. **Flexible floor plates** are about a good wall to floor ratio, depth and scale providing best opportunity for market share with soft spots allowing for voids, to allow easy access between floors.
5. **Thermal mass/structure** is about exposed concrete, night time cooling, minimising carbon footprint and eliminating finishes that will only ever deteriorate.

So the office of the future, be it a White Collar Factory or Google HQ or some hybrid in between is actually very similar to the office of the past. And even as it drifts off into 'the cloud' it will still affect how we work and indeed how we build. But the enduring fact is that the office of the future, like that of the past, is about, people, places and buildings. Human needs

“...So, the office of the future, be it a white collar factory or Google headquarters or some hybrid in between is actually very similar to the office of the past”

for comfort and protection and expression have changed little since being elegantly summarised by Laugier's concept of the Primitive Hut.

The role of the office of the future, like the 2CV and the BMW, is to allow us to get where we want to go at (relative) speed. And to encourage us to believe, when we get there, that it is better to travel hopefully: that way we will continue to embark on new journeys that constitute progress.

As the long term for offices is something of a constant the real interest is in the nuances that affect minor change. Over the next ten years we will see changes in the curators attitude to their clients (currently known as landlords and tenants respectively). Soon leases will become flexible, more easily tradable and occupier needs to shrink, grow or adjust will be more appropriately catered for.

For this to happen, new models of investment will be required, which is, of course, a much more difficult proposition. Sadly the most difficult of all is the necessary abolition of the

absurd regulation of space by use: in the UK being called the planning Use Class Orders!

### Four ideas for the 'office of the future'

Of course we still reflect the future, as it will always be elusive and fascinating. Therefore the four ideas that drive our research and thinking on the construction of the office of the future project are Movement, Transparency, Gravity and Resource.

**Movement** refers to offering choice and creating a diverse movement network. This includes open and visible stairs throughout enabled by innovative and intelligent smoke and fire control (fire curtains, coffers and horizontal escape). This allows arrival deeper into the building - cyclists can cycle into the building even closer to their desk, occupants and visitors are taken up the building through alternative means (escalators, ramps, travelators) reducing reliance on lifts. Alternative transport for inter-floor movement and use of innovative technologies such as 'fluppers' (self-propelled vertical movement), vacuum lifts, and shweeps. This also allows an increase in connectivity across floors - split floors are visually and physically connected and they should be able to move.

**Transparency** is about maximising views (into and out of the building); maximising daylight; optimised comfort; and use of technology to facilitate an ever changing building. Utilising supersize glass and/or innovative glass like gorilla glass to maximise the size of glass panes whilst minimising weight. Glass can be shaped to minimise reflections, this shaping also offers integral structural properties and hence reduces the supporting frame. Innovations such as light directing glass, light dispersing glass, fibre optic collectors, transparent photovoltaics can help direct light deeper into the building and also harvest daylight to be used in deep areas (fiber optics) or as energy (photovoltaics). Comfort and the impact of solar load can be addressed by Aerogels and phase change material that can be used to make the façade more thermally massive whilst still letting some light through. Solar shading can be embedded into the glass in the form of electrochromic films that can change the appearance of the building throughout the day and the seasons. Mechanical shading will be increasingly responsive; think thermo-activated shades or even robotic shading devices that track



the sun. The image of architecture can then be manipulated through LEDs that can be embedded to create a media façade. And of course, the structural properties of glass can be exploited to maximise views and increase the sense of being outdoors for example at roof level.

**Gravity:** The structural frame can be optimised to increase views and minimise material use. Structure can also be adaptable and able to accommodate changing needs. Innovative systems - such as steel plate sandwich panel system (SPS) can reduce the overall weight of the structure and increase floor to ceiling height (approx. 50mm thick plate is equivalent to 150mm composite metal deck. Innovative materials and fabrication - 3D printing can be exploited in combination with nano materials such as graphene to produce complex 3D geometric structures that can span longer with less material. And of course Moving floors - Taking a cue from other industries, hoistable decks from the shipping industry or climbing jacks used to build oil rigs will be used to move floors and change spatial configurations in the building.

**Resource:** With the focus on ensuring resource is consumed as efficiently as possible; we will move to an all-electric building and focus on peak and annual demand (instead of carbon) as electrical energy becomes cleaner (this is particular to the UK context of wind power). Energy storage on site will enable stored energy that can be used at peak times, with batteries charged at non-peak times. In all cases the effect is to reduce overall demand on the grid and reduce cost. Servicing of interiors will look at a more granular level (think zones of say 3000 sq ft). They will become tailored, dynamic and responsive (e.g. fresh air will only be supplied to occupied spaces, AC power will get rid of transformers and consequent energy loss) saving energy overall. Floor tiles and furniture will have integrated induction charging to increase flexibility. Robotic technology will be used to reduce waste and improve recycling, for example robotic waste sorting and

robot bins. An open building operating system (OBOS) with full interoperability of systems will offer greater control, flexibility and communication. All this requires multiple sensors at the granular level and links to a building positioning system. Building 'apps' will be created for navigation, to allow individuals to control their environment, and to plan meetings based on real time data.

So the office of the future is universal, flexible, memorable, housed with a mix of other programmes. It is a city within a city defined by the quality of its volume, light, serviceability and attitude to technology. Of course the future is exciting and full of potential, but the office of the future is here now and has been in its current form for quite a while; in fact since the Renaissance. The office of the future is the Uffizzi: an art gallery and an office; a memorable space, place, building and piece of city. **W&P**

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### **i Simon Allford**

Simon Allford is Director of London based architects AHMM Allford Hall Monaghan Morris; a studio that works in the UK and internationally. Recent projects include Stratford residential master plan, The Angel, Tea and Yellow Buildings as well as Adelaide Wharf, the Saatchi Gallery and Chobham Academy. He is currently working on the new Google HQ at King's Cross, The White Collar Factory at City Road, a new tower 240 Blackfriars, three mixed use projects on Regent Street for the Crown Estate, an academic building for the University of Amsterdam as well as large urban scale projects in London and America. Simon is Chairman of the Architecture Foundation, a trustee of the Architecture Association Foundation, a visiting professor at The Bartlett and GSD Harvard. He was recently Vice President for Education at the RIBA and a Chair of Design Review at CABE.

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**Editor's footnote:  
What is always interesting  
about 'the office of the  
future' is how often it  
is described in terms of  
observable and current  
trends. Simon is clearly all too  
aware of this and makes clear  
distinctions.**

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There are a host of benefits to be gained when the workplace strategy sector builds bridges between 'people' and 'place'

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Chris Kane and Caroline Waters

PROPERTY • WORKPLACE STRATEGY • DESIGN THINKING

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# Workplace dodos can survive and prosper

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The world of work is changing rapidly and profoundly in a way that we haven't seen since the industrial revolution. Yet even as we stand at a momentous, game-changing inflexion point, the 21st century workplace strategy sector is still dithering about whether to join in the revolution. They are like the industrial mill owners of 19th century England who adopted a 'make do and mend' approach to business and failed to invest in new technology only to be forced out of business by foreign competitors who had invested in radical new, state of the art technology.

Today the technological game changer is digital technology rather than weaving technology, but the affect is the same. Unless the workplace strategy sector embraces change and builds bridges between the 'people' side of the business and the 'place' side with other workplace specialists, their industry will become as dead as a dodo.

Workplace strategy needs to become more than just a tool to improve efficiency and thereby reduce property costs. It has to change its mind-set and embrace the notion that they exist not to manage cost centres, but to drive value for the whole business by creating a physical workplace that enables the next generation workforce to work in an agile, productive way.

People and place are a company's most valuable assets and only by developing them both in tandem will you unlock their true value and discover that the integrated whole is more

**“... Consumers could have a real voice in how space is provided, specified, and we can engage in a much deeper discussion about life-cycle costs and the sustainability agenda.”**

than the sum of its discrete parts. Or to put it another way, creating communities of common interest will do more to generate value than building showpiece warehouses to house departmental silos.

It's no longer about servicing buildings or people contracts it's about enabling people to deliver greater agility, creativity

and innovation. This is an approach that is guaranteed to get the attention of the C suite.

I believe that we are truly at a crossroads, facing a future in which “change” is the one, common thread; a shift in focus from delivering building-centric to people-centric solutions. We have an opportunity to redefine the industry to improve our contribution to our enterprises. In doing so, we will make better use of the built environment. As stewards of these valuable assets, we have a responsibility to the generations that follow us, to leave a richer legacy for them to enjoy. But let me be clear – unless the workplace strategy sector embraces this opportunity, their jobs won't exist in a few years time. They will have disappeared like the dodo.

There has been a lot of healthy debate on how to deliver smart workplaces and it has been going on for decades. This is backed up by the likes of Frank Duffy who bemoans the fact that we have been grappling with lots of issues about making the best use of the workspace for years. Frank's key question remains unanswered: how do we justify “place” in an increasingly virtual world. I believe it's all about enabling work.

## A volatile, uncertain, workplace revolution

The digital revolution is creating a tidal wave of change where the old definitions of 'the workplace' no longer apply. Most organisations are trying to craft a meaningful response to this tidal wave of change; they are all searching for new and better ways of making a margin and driving productivity. They're trying hard to become lean and agile. However, they are hampered by the volatile and uncertain nature of the world and of the workforce, as talented people become harder to find and to retain. For those of us in the business of enabling and supporting work, we will need to grasp these fundamental principles of change, as the implications are significant. We need to adjust from a purely building-centric focus to a wider one which centres on people and enabling them to work anywhere and anytime. I think the key word for the future will be “productivity” and the way to increase that will be by building bridges with workplace disciplines.

Some commentators viewed 2013 as a tipping point when things digital really gained critical mass. For example;

- Financial Times digital subscribers outnumbered print subscribers.

**“...Overall, the industry is not really aware of how to create value outside of property value – adding business value is an alien concept when it should be a core element of business thinking.”**

- The BBC iPlayer saw more downloads to mobile devices than to the desktop.
- Christmas 2013 has been widely recognised as the tipping point for online shopping in the UK: the moment that history will look back on, when UK consumer habits changed forever from traditional to digital shopping. Bricks and mortar became ‘clicks and bricks.’

The long-awaited arrival of reliable, enabling technology has really started to make a difference to how we think about space utilisation. In a nutshell, most organisations will be using less space. If the experience of the BBC is anything to go by, where the Corporation was able to take out 30% of its entire property portfolio, then the entire demand/supply equation could alter significantly. This means that consumers could have a real voice in how space is provided, specified, and we can engage in a much deeper discussion about life-cycle costs and the sustainability agenda. Maybe, in the case of the UK market, we can revisit the medieval landlord and tenant relationship whilst we are at it? Surely there is now a case for the development of a new range of post-feudal solutions?

In short, we now live in an always-connected world where the rules of the game have changed, before our eyes, over a very short period of time. This, we believe, is changing the very nature of work. If you compound these elements with the huge cloud of uncertainty of the global economy and the seismic shifts taking place in how we think about the world and its markets – it’s clearly evident that this is a highly challenging time for business.

### **Isolated orbit around planet workspace**

For those of us concerned with the physical aspects of the workplace, we need to adjust from a purely building centric focus to a wider one focused on people that enables them to work anywhere and anytime. We need to evolve from a narrow disjointed focus which is based on the three tribes of the asset/ transaction management, facility management and design construction management, to a more holistic approach. We need to reinvent ourselves as value deliverers rather than cost controllers. And to do that we need to build bridges with other players before it is too late.

It’s time to move beyond cost control and efficiency and nail responsibility for effectiveness. This, for many, may be outside our comfort zone; but as Frank Duffy said: “we live in

an increasingly virtual world and we need to justify the role of “place” in the overall jigsaw.” I contend that the virtual world is approaching far faster than most of us realise and the time for debate and introspection is over.

This institutional sluggishness is compounded by the inward looking nature of the industry and legacy mind-set that demonstrates reluctance to change. Overall, the industry is not really aware of how to create value outside of property value – adding business value is an alien concept when it should be a core element of business thinking. A workplace should no longer be regarded as a high cost liability but as an asset from which hidden value can be unlocked. It is no longer a cost centre but a profit centre. Work is no longer a place you go to – it’s a state of mind.

### **Bridges of understanding between people and place**

Caroline Waters, former director of People and Property at BT and I have been collaborating for many years on various projects. We came together from different silos of workplace strategy: she came from a senior HR position at BT and initially from a CRE perspective as head of commercial real estate at the BBC.

Over time we concluded that we are actually all travelling on exactly the same road – towards supporting the business. For me, this has been an important consideration: something which has encouraged me to start thinking outside the traditional mind-set of a building professional. Over time, I formed the view that, the key to adding value is to learn how to collaborate cross-functionally with the wider business world, including HR and technology (amongst others). Indeed, this is why my title became ‘Head of Workplace’ to reflect this new approach.

A recurring theme in our discussions about how we could support the business to deliver value was how to build ‘Agility’ by harnessing the physical workplace to get the best from the next generation workforce.

Coming from the worlds of Human Resources and Corporate Real Estate/ Facilities, where performing within silos remains the order of the day, we discussed our experiences of what it takes to create a truly flexible and agile working environment. We identified that we face many common challenges today such as; trying to stay ahead of the business, learning how





Above and below, plans for the redevelopment of BBC Television Centre. © AHMM

## The BBC Story – from analogue to digital

My role, on joining the BBC as Head of Corporate Real Estate in 2004, was to take responsibility for the development, financing and implementation of the BBC property strategy. The baseline strategy emerged in the late 1990s as a response to decades of under-investment in the estate, coupled with the need to address lease expirations on some key holdings. The aim was to consolidate and upgrade the BBC estate and to create better working environments for employees and more open, 'audience-friendly' buildings.

In 1999, the vast majority of the estate was not fit for purpose and modern buildings accounted for only 2 per cent of the total stock; there had been no capital investment in the estate for 30 years.

2004 saw the arrival of a new Director General and a new Chairman for the BBC Trust. These appointments, along with the need to prepare for the re-negotiation of the BBC Charter in 2007, heralded a new era for the BBC and enabled me to suggest a fresh approach to the property portfolio. Given the BBC was already committed to new buildings, why not harness these moves to enable organisational transformation?

The first step was to restructure the property function delivery capability in order to support the BBC's commitment to place the public interest at the heart of all its operations. Starting in 2004, we totally revamped the BBC's approach to its property portfolio in order to meet the challenge of turning the portfolio into a strategic business asset. Accordingly, the property department was re-structured in 2005 and re-branded as BBC Workplace. The team's mission was to provide the right workplace for the most creative organisation in the world, while delivering the highest level of public value.

Managing a corporate real estate portfolio always involves coping with complexity, controlling expenses and empowering teams to take calculated risks. At the BBC, these responsibilities are compounded because every aspect of portfolio management is conducted in the spotlight of public scrutiny. Each building on the estate belongs to UK licence payers and the public has a vested interest in expecting the BBC to deliver a world-leading broadcast service from these iconic buildings.

Now the BBC's real estate portfolio comprises about 207 properties and 571,000m<sup>2</sup> of space across the UK. The Property/Workplace teams have delivered over 20 projects which together account for £2bn of project investment. The teams have moved over 11,000 people and are well placed to meet their objectives of a 40% reduction in real estate footprint by 2017, £47m annual savings in property expenditure by 2016-17, and 60% of the estate refreshed.

However the real contribution came in terms of enabling the BBC to achieve its strategic aim of opening itself up to UK audiences. Historically, the BBC produced 80% of its content in London, this is now shifting to 50:50 in and out of the capital. The new broadcasting facilities for the digital age in Media City in Salford and at Roath Lock in Cardiff are the centrepieces of this, and there are many more smaller regional schemes in Liverpool, Coventry, Leeds, Hull, Cambridge, Southampton and Birmingham.

Today, work has begun on the final piece of the jigsaw: the rationalisation of the BBC West London campus. After over 50 years of use, the BBC, in partnership with Stanhope, have started the refurbishment of office and entertainment space at the iconic Television Centre. Having sold this site to Stanhope, the two parties are participating in a Smart Value relationship which delivers the BBC aims of maximising value, reducing risk and protecting legacy.

The last decade has provided lots of learning opportunities in a long journey to develop an intelligent workplace strategy. The legacy is available for everyone to see, with all major BBC buildings now being open to its audiences.



**“...I contend that the virtual world is approaching far faster than most of us realise and the time for debate and introspection is over.”**

to manage wider business changes, and how to cope with the relentless pace of change brought about by the Digital Revolution.

Furthermore, we share the view that it is now essential for the HR and CRE/Facilities functions to join forces and apply a more integrated approach to supporting the business. In shaping a new path and looking towards the future, we need to consider three focus areas:

- Align with the business
- Leave bricks & mortar, policies and procedures behind
- Breakdown the boundaries to collaborate as high performing teams

In our discussions, Caroline and I came to realise that greater collaboration across boundaries is increasingly important. It's no longer about cost-reduction; it's about bringing a fresh mindset towards creating value for the whole business. The realisation that it's not just not about the building – the bricks and mortar – enabled me to get a better grasp of how we can not only drive efficiency but also contribute to the effectiveness agenda. In this way, we will add real value to our organisations by enabling them to capture greater collaboration, creativity, engagement, functionality, innovation, morale and most of all productivity.

In order to create a truly flexible and agile working environment with a particular focus on the cultural aspects; it is now essential that People/HR and Property build a more integrated approach to the business as a whole.

### **A new volatile uncertainty**

If we are to emerge from the darkness of our caves of professional self-interest, the first area of focus is to align with and understand the nature of the business we are supporting. As a first step we need to understand the big picture of business in the 21st Century – I think this can be summarised in one word – change. Today we're caught up in a tidal wave of change that is unprecedented and un-relenting. Take for example the recent crop of innovation technologies which have changed the meaning of time and place.

Most professionals are introspective by nature in that they are trained to be high performing subject matter experts and whilst this is not at issue, one has to consider the changing nature of the business environment in which we operate. Many of the goalposts are shifting and most organisations are

trying to cope in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) business environment where the role of those responsible for enabling business must be reinvented. Experts need to look beyond their silos.

As organisations of all types try to make sense of this rapidly changing world, the key focus is on people. The collision of multiple generations for the first time in the workplace is driving many leaders to accept that we need to re-think the concept of work as no longer a place you visit, but something you do.

Organisation collaboration will be key and will drive the formation of new 21st century business models with little bearing on the Taylorist inspired models that are fast running out of steam. These are driven by the need of Boards and CEO's to harness the value enablers of creativity, knowledge management and ability to cope with ambiguity. They must move to a business model where engagement, flexibility, authenticity and sustainability are evident. Without making this transition, they will fail to attract and retain the 21st Century worker (most of whom will be Digital natives). Therefore this potential new business model binds together those whose primary focus is that of the Workplace regardless of how it is defined/interpreted.

The recent shift to mobility (which empowers 21st century workers to work anywhere, any time) has raised a whole new agenda for those of us interested in driving change. During my tenure at the BBC my principal concern was to turn property into a strategic asset. Over this transformational journey, we sought to understand how broadcasting was changing in order to anticipate the needs of the BBC in the digital age. The BBC's move from analogue to digital taught us how to see the bigger picture: we started to look beyond rent per square foot or building specifications to grasp the wider, positive impacts which a relocation could make on enabling organisational evolution. With this in mind, whenever a new facility is required it should never be seen as just a “property move” but rather a valuable business opportunity to drive change and align with strategic goals.

### **Creating a value mind-set**

In the pre-digital age, for those interested in bricks and mortar, the core principle was ‘location, location, location.’ The arrival of the agile or mobile worker and the death of distance

“...we will add real value to our organisations by enabling them to capture greater collaboration, creativity, engagement, functionality, innovation, morale and most of all productivity.”

is now challenging this perception. Locked in its 20th century mindset, the majority of the commercial property industry clings to the anachronistic belief that an organisation's most valuable assets are bricks and mortar rather than people. We need to move to a much wider frame of thinking that of the 'Ecosystem' not just of the physical but embracing all aspects of the 'world of work'

For too long, CRE/FM and HR professionals have honed their skills on producing high specification commercial work spaces or state of the art HR tools and systems. Historically, this work has been completed in isolation, without taking into account that we are just small cogs in a much larger system – that of enabling a business, a public body or a social enterprise. So how do you change that mind-set in workplace strategists? You could start by asking the following questions:

- How does an organisation's working environment, people and technology influence performance, risk, reputation and brand?
- What insights do HR, IT and FM have for the future of workplace?
- What is the scope of the overlap between the worlds of FM and HR? To what extent are they distinct professions or simply cohabiting elements of workplace enablement?
- How are the professions currently integrated and what opportunities are there for greater collaboration? What needs to be done to make this happen?

As a first step, for all those who remain comfortable in our own silos, it's time to lift our heads above the parapet and capture what's going on in the outside world. Then we need to place adequate emphasis on business outcomes and benefits as opposed to just thinking about outputs. We need to stop focusing solely on efficiency and make "effectiveness" a key priority.

Fundamentally, there is a need to redefine our value proposition from simply a support function to become strategic enablers of productivity, where we apply strategic insight to empower organisations to achieve real competitive advantage. In a nutshell, it's

no longer about building or system performance but about business performance.

So what? Many may point out that we have been talking about this for ages. By breaking out of our silos we have a chance to try for a better approach to how we think about all aspects of how work is enabled. In our session at the IFMA conference we talk about going on a new journey not as self-centred professionals with but as part of a crusade based on a very different if not disruptive approach to how we look at Workplace issues. The industry cannot keep burying its head in the sand; the time for action has come and the debate can no longer be ignored. Stay tuned for more information. **W&P**

#### **i** Chris Kane

Chris Kane joined the BBC in January 2004 as Head of Corporate Real Estate. Under his leadership the Property Department was restructured and relaunched as BBC Workplace. In November 2012 he transferred to BBC Commercial Projects. He is currently working part time as CEO for BBC Commercial Projects on phase 2 of the Smart Value sale of Television Centre London. He also serves as a non-Executive Director of NHS Property Services Ltd and as an independent board member of Network Housing Group (Social Housing provider).

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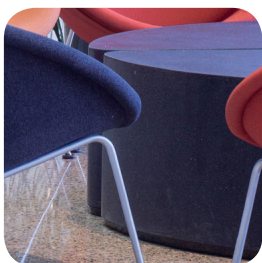
**Editor's footnote:**  
In this article, Chris Kane referred to 'more information' and as we reveal in the Scope section he has been involved in establishing the first formal collaborative programme between BIFM and the CIPD. His experiences with HR have been the inspiration for this historic move.



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# What can we learn from co-working?

**“Co-working offers a petri-dish-view of the future of work,”** says Melissa Marsh, Founder of Plastarc, an expert in Workplace Strategy and a leader in Change Management services.

“It’s a unique microcosm that can tell us a lot about what happens when individuals are left to decide where and how they work.”

She describes co-working as: “both a spatial and an organizational business model where individuals or teams come together in ad-hoc or purpose-built spaces rather than - or sometimes in addition to - working in traditional offices, in home offices, or in third places such as coffee shops, libraries, and the like.”

Marsh and Ingrid Erickson, PhD (Assistant Professor, Rutgers University), are conducting research [1] to discover:

- Why entrepreneurs, freelancers, and corporate employees choose co-working over traditional offices.

- The impact “4th places”, as they are sometimes called, have on organizational identity, culture and work practices.

- The role that tenure, proximity, motivations and organizational-type plays on collaboration and cooperation.

- What co-working portends about the future of the traditional workplace.

## The Why of co-working

While Marsh and Erikson’s preliminary research suggests that small companies look to co-working as a way to leverage precious resources, obtain work, and scale growth; large companies are looking to inspire innovation, foster creativity and increase agility.

Their analysis of survey data indicates that co-working spaces are attractive because they:

- Fulfill social needs, foster learning and provide social context for members.
- Provide freelance income opportunities for struggling entrepreneurs.
- Provide respectability, brand expression, and meeting

place options that enhance client interactions.

- Provide an economical solution to social, technological, administrative and physical infrastructure needs.
- Allow individuals and teams to connect in a variety of ways: face to face, with digital tools and even through games.
- Offer access to a diverse groups of people, new networks, and potentially new ideas
- Offer a sense of community, something that, for many, is far more important than the physical space.

## Who are the co-workers?

According to a global survey of co-working spaces, over half of co-workers are freelancers, 20% are entrepreneurs who employ others, and another 20% are salaried employees of larger firms (Foertsch, 2011 [2]). While still a minority, a number of big name firms are beginning to experiment with the co-working workplace model:

- Accenture and a growing list of medium and large enterprises have contracted with LiquidSpace [3] to support their workplace mobility both internally and externally;
- Zappos plans to build a community of spaces and turn Las Vegas into the co-working

capital of the world[4];

- When Plantronics eliminated 500 desks in its Northern California office, it offered employees the option of co-working rather than working from home or commuting to the company’s headquarters;
- AT&T is relocating dozens of developers, researchers, and technologists to co-working facilities around the US, even inviting value chain partners to join them.

## How will co-working influence the way we work?

Marsh asserts that just as the consumerization of IT ignited a firestorm of change in how organizations provision technology, co-working is, in a sense the consumerization of the workplace. In the context of the workplace, Marsh and her colleague

**“...According to a global survey of co-working spaces, over half of co-workers are freelancers, 20% are entrepreneurs who employ others, and another 20% are salaried employees of larger firms.”**

**“...The successful disrupters eventually gain exposure, then acceptance, and ultimately forever change market expectations.”**

see co-working as a “disruptive innovation”, a term coined by Harvard professor Clayton Christensen in his book “The Innovator’s Dilemma” (Christensen 1997 [5]).

Such innovations are often spawned by entrepreneurs who are willing to doggedly fight the uphill battle for market penetration and profitability. The successful disrupters eventually gain exposure, then acceptance, and ultimately forever change market expectations.

“Digital nomads have spoken with their actions,” says Marsh. “They choose to work in places that offer caffeine, music, anonymous companionship and daylight views. As a result, they now expect nothing less from their other working environments.”

Similarly, “the consumerization of IT” exponentially increased consumer expectations for the digital experience and, at the same time, decreased consumer tolerance for inferior solutions.

“If I can Facetime my grandparents in Florida using my iPhone,” says Marsh, “why should setting up a simple conference call be such a challenge at the office?”

The tipping point may be nearing. Venture-funded LiquidSpace has attracted mainstream partners including JLL, CBRE, Steelcase, Marriott, Hilton and Expedia with its mobile and web enterprise solutions and its large network of on-demand workspaces and meeting spaces. Though first launched as a public marketplace of pay-per-use space, it is now also being used to manage private workspace and meeting space operations.

CBRE’s new DTLA HQ is using LiquidSpace for internal meeting space booking by employees and guests. Recent launches in Australia and Canada are just the beginning of LiquidSpace’s international expansion plans.

Whether or not co-working will, in the end, disrupt the traditional workplace model remains to be seen. But one thing is clear. There is much that corporate real estate can learn from this emerging workplace trend. It’s time we start thinking outside the box. **W&P**

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### **i Melissa Marsh**

Melissa Marsh is an expert in Workplace Strategy and a leader in Change Management services. She has defined a career in workplace innovation by embedding the added value of real estate strategy within design, architecture and master planning projects around the world. Melissa began her career following the completion of her Masters of Architecture thesis entitled Design for Achieving Strategic Business Objectives. Working in both Europe and the U.S., Melissa has been on the forefront of delivering alternative workplace solutions, and has led virtual teams throughout her career. She has contributed to courses for CoreNet, Worktech, spearheaded international learning and technology initiatives, and lectured at UVA, Cornell and MIT’s Sloan School of Management.

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**Editor’s footnote:**  
When it comes to co-working there is not only a clear interchange of ideas with those related to conventional workplaces, but with those associated with a wide array of public spaces (and especially coffee shops).



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**“One can resist a military invasion, but it is impossible to resist the march of ideas” ...Victor Hugo, 1877**

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Ian Ellison

WORKPLACE DESIGN • PRODUCTIVITY • TEAMWORK

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# An idea whose time has come at last

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At 3pm on 18 November 2013, Oliver Burkeman, prolific Guardian columnist and former Foreign Press Association Young Journalist of the Year, published a blog entitled “Open-plan offices were devised by Satan in the deepest caverns of hell”[1].

The post, liberally peppered with cross-references to other damning evidence, was based on a Harvard Business Review report [2] summarising a new paper by Kim and de Dear (2013), two researchers from the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney, Australia. Their peer-reviewed paper, published in the Journal of Environmental Psychology, reanalysed post-occupancy evaluation data from the University of California, Berkeley, numbering almost 43,000 individual responses from over 300 buildings.

Kim and de Dear concluded that the claimed communication benefits of open-plan workspaces were compromised in a number of ways, a premise that has been evidenced time and again. By 3:05pm the first response to Burkeman’s blog was posted. By 1:33pm on 21 November, 257 comments had followed. The overwhelming majority were viscerally negative, condemning open-plan workspaces. Many said they spoke from personal experience.

**“...We have witnessed and debated this topic so many times it sometimes feels like Groundhog Day; ‘open-plan’ touches a raw nerve in a far broader debate.”**

Open-plan offices, in various forms, have been around since before the industrial revolution. Burkeman’s treatment probably doesn’t surprise any of us. We have witnessed and debated this topic so many times it sometimes feels like Groundhog Day; ‘open-plan’ touches a raw nerve in a far broader debate. For me, it has almost becoming an emotive distraction. But at the core of this issue lies the basis of what

we do. We all contribute to the facilities management (FM) and corporate real estate (CRE) industry and profession responsible for producing working environments on behalf of organisations and their users. We claim a wealth of expertise to address organisational workspace challenges.

Depending on organisational desire (and perhaps size of bank account), through workspace redesign we can variously address resource-focused economy and efficiency, outcome-focused effectiveness [3], expression [4] and even environmental contribution [5], whatever these may indeed contextually prove to be.

## Changing space and changing culture

For some, our calling card is ‘change your space, change your culture’. And yet, despite expansive empirical and theoretical consideration, workspace opinions remain divided. The efficacy of given workspace solutions remains moot, contested through a range of ambivalent academic, practical and media perspectives. What is fascinating is the pervasive reoccurrence of the same fundamental human concerns about the workspace.

These typically, but not exhaustively, include concerns about privacy and confidentiality versus interaction and communication, concentration versus distraction, open versus closed spatial arrangements, and the interrelationship between workspace and status, irrespective of specific profession (Price & Fortune, 2008). For any doubt regarding their perennial occurrence, Port (1995) documents remarkably similar issues, within context, in the mid-19th century British civil service of imperial London! [6]

Often it doesn’t seem to matter how much evidence or justification we have for the ‘right’ organisational solutions; they just don’t land well with the people they affect. Moreover, those commissioning new spatial solutions, whilst potentially even condemning their existing facilities, may still ‘resist’ our wisdom

Everyone’s an expert when it comes to workspace, right? Sound familiar? Well actually, maybe in one absolutely fundamental respect they are: because everyone is indeed a user, a consumer of the organisational environments provided

for them, and all that they afford during the lived, day-to-day experience, for better or for worse.

I regard this situation like Giddens, who back in 1979 observed, “no amount of accumulated data will determine which of two competing theories will be accepted or rejected” (Blaikie, 1993, p.70). Socially constructed, value-laden beliefs play a significant role in this perpetual irresolution. This suggests that as a profession, we need to be aware of far more than perhaps our currently favoured rational, utilitarian, cause-and-effect perspectives when it comes to workplace design. Paradoxically, do we have any awareness of just how much we don’t know?

If I am sure of anything, I am sure of this: our working environment matters. I have witnessed its importance to the mundane, everyday lived-experience, and when proposed changes challenge what people currently may have. It matters to us as users; it matters to the consultant industry that has developed to provide and manage it; it matters to organisations.

It even matters enough for growing mainstream media attention including Channel 4 documentaries and BBC Radio 4 and World Service documentaries. The UK launch of Nikil Saval’s book ‘Cubed: a secret history of the workplace’, a self-declared homage to C.Wright Mills’ iconoclastic 1951 critical sociological study ‘White Collar: The American Middle Classes’, coincides with the 2014 IFMA Workplace Strategy Summit and is reviewed in the Scope section of this issue. There is an interesting parallel to consider. Saval’s perspective, like other skeptics in and around our field, reminds us to step back and appreciate the broader, often historical influences which impact upon our current endeavours, whether we are aware of them or not:

*“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”  
(Santayana, 1905, The Life of Reason)*

### Form follows....what, exactly?

The deceptively pervasive architectural dictum concerning form and function has evolved over time. The necessity of pre-

industrial ‘function follows form’ became inevitably, ‘function follows precedent’.

The modernist architects of the early 19th century challenged precedent with ‘form follows function’, yet in a CRE capitalist ideology, ‘form follows finance’ became dominant (Saval, 2014). We are, arguably, now able to reach beyond all of these notions in a post-modern context where ‘form follows...’ well, what exactly – anything we like? Because here lies another paradox; we have the agency to change whatever we want... except perhaps everything we have constructed around ourselves that now limits us:

*“The structural properties of social systems are both the medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize” (Giddens, 1984, p.25)*

To wit: form, function, precedent and finance continue

to constrain and challenge our ongoing efforts to move our workplaces beyond their inherent mediocrity. If only we could not only recognise this fact, but also what we might do about it.

The FM industry is generally accepted to be in the region of 40 years old. There are some

enduring pioneers at the Summit, whose various books sit on many of our shelves. Becker, Duffy, Marmot, Laing, Pullen and so on should afford a veritable cornucopia of knowledge and experience. And yet, according to Elsbach and Pratt):

“In 1981, Franklin Becker ... noted, “The way the physical setting is created in organizations has barely been tapped as a tangible organizational resource”. Over 25 years later, almost the same statement could be made” (Elsbach & Pratt, 2007, p. 217)

So why, despite all this ‘expertise’, are we in this situation? Elsbach and Pratt have organisational behaviour and psychology interests in common with our industry, and their comprehensive analysis serves as a timely reminder that what workspace designs really affect aren’t simply collective organisational cultures, but specific, unique, particular people, with all the diversity, complexity and often chaos they bring.

In this context, how can any given design solution be anything other than a series of ‘trade-offs’ between

“...here lies the paradox; we have the agency to change whatever we want... except perhaps everything we have constructed around ourselves that now limits us.”

competing functional, symbolic and aesthetic preferences and requirements? Which, incidentally, is why open-plan is such a distraction!

The recent announcement from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM) that they will be working together to, in the words of BIFM's CEO Gareth Tancred "share their thinking and work together to bridge the gap between people and place as we aim to add to the next installment of the workplace's evolution" [7] might be welcome and exciting, but in some ways it inadvertently also challenges our collective efficacy to date. We can turn to one of FM's many definitions to spot our hallowed holy grail, the intersection of people, process and place. It's always been there. But maybe now though we are finally starting to recognize and mobilise our agency to actually do something about it:

"Ultimately, the practice of FM is concerned with the delivery of the enabling workplace environment – the optimum functional space that supports the business processes and human resources ... as an enabler in the first instance" (Then, 1999, p. 469)

It might be the facilities manager's role to manage space. But perhaps it is also our job to protect place too, and for the very customers, the users, we claim to serve: "undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value" (Tuan, 1977, p.6). To paraphrase Tuan, place is security, space is freedom (Price & Beard, 2013). I am concerned that what we think we know about workspace is dangerously incomplete. I am doubly concerned that those who claim to know are driving myopic solutions, because we focus on physical space per se, and not what it, nor we, symbolise – within, through and around it; not how we are emplaced within it and bring it to life.

*"Social beings are things as definitely as physical things are social"*  
(George Herbert Mead, 1934)

Organisational workspaces are both socio-spatial catalysts and reflections; they represent organisations symbolically.

As Cairns (2002, p.818) puts it: "the physical and social environments contain one another, frame one another and influence the development of one another – but they are not as one."

If we can embrace this notion, we might be in a more capable position to be able to reimagine not just our workspaces, but also our workplaces, with human value and choice at their core, ideologically, symbolically, and spatially. Of course this humane focus is not a new message:

Herman Miller claim "human-centered problem-solving" has been their hallmark since 1930 when Gilbert Rohde, their first design director, declared, "The most important thing in the room is not the furniture – it's the people." [8] So what continues to go wrong? Go and speak to anyone who knows

the history of Herman Miller and Robert Propst – ironically remembered as 'the father of the cubicle'. Given 'form follows finance' we can frustratingly begin to understand the scale of the challenge:

"The Action Office [of the 1960s] was supposed to be invisible and embellished with

identity and communication artifacts and whatever you needed to create individuation. We tried to escape the idea of being stylish, which is gone in five years. We wanted this to be the vehicle to carry other expressions of identity" (Propst, 1998) [9].

To conclude, I believe that we can create workplaces that celebrate diversity and choice, spaces that we will actively seek to be in when we need to, spaces that inspired, even envious others will desire to experience and share. But we will not just need to be bold, pragmatic, optimistic and imaginative if we are to challenge the way things have always been done. We will also need to be cunning and savvy about how we intend to strategise and manoeuvre within an institutionalized organizational system structured to resist our innovations.

## The world turns, and turns

The world has turned. If we care, as we so readily claim to do, about all facets of a sustainable future, we need to develop

**“...It might be the facilities manager's role to manage space. But perhaps it is also our job to protect place too, and for the very customers, the users, we claim to serve.”**



the agency to be able to do something about it. Our efforts need to become a collaborative ‘Gestalt’; more than the sum of our existing knowledge and experience. So will the 2014 IFMA Workplace Strategy Summit be remembered as a critical moment in this ongoing endeavour? I sincerely hope so. 2014 feels like a year of opportunity. It feels like things are falling into alignment, and people are starting to look up enquiringly beyond the confines of our insular industry. Let’s work hard to make the most of it. Ephemeral opportunities like this don’t happen often.

*“The first revolution is when you change your mind about how you look at things, and see there might be another way to look at it that you have not been shown. What you see later on is the results of that...”*

(Gil Scott-Heron, *‘The Revolution Will Not Be Televised’*, live performance, 1982) **W&P**

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## Footnotes

1. <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2013/nov/18/open-plan-offices-bad-harvard-business-review> (Last accessed: 18 May 2014).
2. <http://blogs.hbr.org/2013/11/research-cubicles-are-the-absolute-worst/> (Last accessed: 18 May 2014)
3. After Akhlaghi (1996); see bibliography.
4. After Duffy/DEGW via Marmot, MBA seminar, Sheffield Hallam University, 2012, unpublished.
5. After Marmot, MBA seminar, Sheffield Hallam University, 2012, unpublished
6. I am indebted to Alexi Marmot for making me aware of this fascinating historical piece of the jigsaw.
7. <http://www.fm-world.co.uk/news/fm-industry-news/bifm-and-cipd-to-work-together/> (Last accessed: 25 May 2014).
8. <http://www.metropolismag.com/June-2013/An-Idea-Whose-Time-Has-Come/> (Last accessed: 25 May 2014).
9. Quotation from a November 1998 Metropolis Magazine Feature ‘The man behind the cubicle’, now no longer available: [http://www.metropolismag.com/html/content\\_1198/no98man.htm](http://www.metropolismag.com/html/content_1198/no98man.htm) (Last accessed: 14 October 2012).

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## **i** Ian Ellison

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# The implications of cultural and work modalities

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## The way workplace is delivered is highly sectoral.

Developers build. Landlords own buildings. Architects design them. Agents / realtors lease the space inside. With a reach that is not always acknowledged, furniture manufacturers define the conceptual and physical modules that shape internal landscapes. Interior designers and / or contractors fit them out.

Change managers tell occupants how to use the space. Facilities managers operate it, providing building and corporate services. Typically, this constellation of supply chain activities arrays in a fairly linear sequence, first to last in the order cited, with reference to hard won FM perspectives at the concept and programming stages of new projects still too infrequent. IT, the other key input to users' actual performance, may be integrated, but is often obliquely positioned relative to this supply cluster.

The object to which all this activity pertains is essentially a bounded physical space – the building or office. It's matched to a headcount – static or dynamic. It starts with a budget and formally ends with a space and outturn cost. Its delivery is predicated on a set of assumptions about design, content and principles of use that are largely templated and reinforced by the supply chain in conversation with themselves.

## The role of representation

Central to the formulation of project propositions is a physical outcome that can be photographed, with the resultant images used as a shorthand of occupier identity, status and ethos. These visuals also serve as valuable currency for the suppliers involved to market their wares.

## Facilities and amenities: focus on 'goodies'

A notable strategy in delivering workplaces that capture industry attention is the inclusion of distinctive interior facilities. These involve both settings for work, and facilities

such as gyms to promote work-life balance. Indeed, the trend to activity-based working encompasses scope for a far wider range of treatments than desks and formal meeting rooms ever involved. Today's provision of settings conceived for breakout, project work, ideation, etc, play to design for visual impact.

The support facilities delivered may not always be as distinctive as climbing walls, brim pools or running tracks, but provisions are intended to be eye-catching and commentworthy. The related trend to workplace consolidation generates the critical mass on single sites to increase the range and quality of non-core business amenities, with the rationale for provision ascribed to their relevance in 'attracting,

retaining and motivating' employees.

Whilst the economic downturn over recent years has not been mirrored by a let-up in the war for talent, the evidential basis that such workplace infrastructure in fact confers competitive advantage in recruitment, employment and

productivity is lacking.

Indeed, ZZA's research identifies notable counter-trends that challenge this widely repeated supply chain mantra, pointing to new directions in real estate.

## Locationally distributed working

The most recognised counter-trend is agile work across a range of locations, instead of, or on a complementary basis to, working in a fixed office or workplace. The indication of this has been evident for many years in the low utilisation rates that many workplace transformation projects have been undertaken to mitigate.

More recent is the increase in alternate settings where people work. Whereas low utilisation in offices was initially attributed to 'normal' operational factors like illness and vacation, work at client and customer sites, conferences and business travel, plus a degree of telework in the form of

“...the trend to activity-based working encompasses scope for a far wider range of treatments than desks and formal meeting rooms ever involved.”



working from home, distributed working is now unarguably a work modality in its own right. This involves a shift in emphasis from ‘work where you are when you’re not in the office?’ to ‘work is wherever you are that works for you’. For some, ‘office’ remains part of the repertoire of places in which they work, even if infrequently. However, for increasing numbers of people, there is no default office as part of the mix of settings in which they work.

### Rise of third place workspace

The notable trend is how much locationally distributed work occurs in places other than in people’s homes. ZZA’s international study of third place working focuses on people working in library, coffee bar, business centre and business lounge settings. The meta questions framing this research are: why people work in these places, and why – when they are technologically equipped and culturally entitled to work where they wish, are they not working at home. The data underscores two important cultural drivers for third place working: the importance of a collective setting for its motivational influence on work, and a felt need to ring-fence home as a place for non-work. These factors account for the title of the report: Why Place Still Matters in the Digital Age [1].

Since this study reported, there has been a proliferation of third places that are marketed as work settings. The growth involves a menu of spaces varying in emphasis and business model, from the co-work settings like those of Seats2Meet [2] and The Impact Hub Network, [3] provider-owned ‘instant access’ office space like that of Regus, and bookable and / or pay-for-use space in venues like business centres, stations, and hotels. This evolution has heralded opportunities and catalysed new businesses, including companies like LiquidSpace [4] with its virtual technology platform to access space-for-use in other owners’ venues in hundreds of cities.

**“...despite the rise and expansion of footloose modalities, work at the same place on most working days persists as normative practice.”**

### Ascendant choice: from real estate to service

The growth in pay-for-use third-party workspace represents just some of the expanded spectrum of places in which people now work in cities and on the move – parks, coffee shops, restaurants, civic centres, galleries, transport nodes, trains and planes. With technology’s dissolution of the need to be in a fixed place to undertake many work activities – research, analysis, communication and collaboration – the workplace as we have conventionally known it has both shrunk and lost its boundedness. This means less workspace in formally designated corporate space, and an increase in other venues where people work.

With people’s election of where to work a force for venue success, anticipating and providing for user preferences rises in importance relative to narratives that speak to and for the supply chain. And recognition of (and response to) factors that

matter to users – efficient and dependable reservation systems, room settings prepared as ordered, good coffee and responsive service – evolves workplace supply from real estate to service business.

### Choice and no choice, workplaces endure

Work realities are diverse, and despite the rise and expansion of footloose modalities, work at the same place on most working days persists as normative practice. This is obvious to every commuter, although a datum that tends to dim for workplace specialists focused on the future. For many, many people, working somewhere else than at their assigned place of work still only occurs by agreed exception if at all – associated with a dentist appointment in their neighbourhood, a washing machine repair at home, a sick child. This applies not just to process work; ZZA’s research identifies this as a norm even in organisations like professional services for the significant proportion of employees whose work is not undertaken at client sites. The much cited Marissa Mayer call on time for home-working highlights the relevance of face-to-face co-presence for organisational glue.

And the enduring pull to the office is not just down to management dictat or expectation. Many knowledge-workers who are free to work at home choose to work in an office for a host of reasons associated with workplaces being social, structured environments, and a milieu distinct from home. A case in point on this scenario of choice is illustrated by someone I interviewed during a workplace change assignment for Cisco.

The employee came to Cisco’s Bedfont Lakes every day, always working at the same desk, despite having no team members in the building, nor even in the UK. Her direct colleagues were based on other continents, and she was equally equipped at home with the virtual collaboration tools

she used to communicate with them. But she liked the social context of work in the office and expressed this preference in her choice. The reality for many people, even if they have great, value-adding ideas whilst commuting, in the shower, watching movies, or in bed, is that work is still in the workplace.

### More than work

But – and this is a big but – life encompasses more than work. We all have other aspects of our days, interests and commitments – children, partners, sport, voluntary work, pets, shopping, personal admin, friends and parents. These take time and energy. So even people who are normally required to work in their workplace, as well as those who choose to work in a set physical place, need and want to be other places in waking hours. And if they live in large metropolitan areas or in the catchment of congested towns, journeys to and from work add to pressure on their time. ZZA’s research report, Liveable Lives [5], draws from research on our workplace strategy assignments

**“...even people who are normally required to work in their workplace, as well as those who choose to work in a set physical place, need and want to be other places in waking hours.”**

in knowledge-based corporate organisations across TMT and Professional Services, to identify factors that pull people to workplaces, and pull them away for other requirements.

### Provisions in work settings

A research focus on employees identifies a more granular and pluralistic picture of what people want by way of provisions at work. ZZA's workplace research shows that expanding the range of workplace settings often tips the balance between useful enhancement and redundant complexity. Users don't stop to self-assess where they are on the autonomy and interaction axes.

They operate intuitively, and excessive definition in the concept and design of work settings tends to be illegible, if not a source of irritation. People show a preference for simple, comfortable, classic settings over rocking chairs, cubes and cushions. The latter may be photogenic, but they speak to the providers' agenda more than to users'.

### Limited interest in amenity at work

ZZA's research also challenges the provider view of the compelling impact of support amenities in the workplace. Our studies show repeatedly that employees prioritise facilities in convenient locations. In part this is about pressures on time. As a respondent in a current study observes about her lack of engagement with the gym in her workplace building: "I'm a mom, I have to go home as soon as I finish work." Other data reflects people's desire for a change of scene. No matter how artisanal the sandwiches in the corporate café, that does not offer the variety of a High Street, a walk outside, or getting off the employer's turf. In ZZA's research in workplace buildings that are not in easy reach of rich external provision, people still value stepping away. An implication for real estate is the relevance of shared amenities in multi-let buildings – outside the employer's demise – a break because they're not defined as company terrain.

### Challenging big and rich

A recent suite of studies by ZZA demonstrates the disconnect between employee views and the supply chain view on the role of amenity in the workplace. A multi-site study of workplace transformation in large local public and private

sector organisations, evidenced dramatic savings through space reduction and selective building replacement. Given these big wins, the question researched was how less space could work operationally. The business leaderships' assessment of outcomes relative to aims was positive, consistent with their strategic involvement in driving the change agenda. In contrast, the employee base follows; their perspective is typically individual more so than corporate. The structured post-occupancy evaluations with staff were therefore especially instructive.

This research included a study with a building population who had been 'decanted' from a large, new, Grade A, award-winning office building, that had been fitted out with a range of bells and whistles, including not just the de rigueur restaurant and café, but also gym, music room and hairdresser. Seeking cost efficiencies, the occupier vacated the building, moving employees to a number of existing operational buildings where compression in technical equipment had generated available space. The 'receive' buildings are unarguably basic and prosaic, but were fitted out to meet functional requirements. They are also smaller, and the workspace element more compact. Significantly too, their locational spread enabled employees who had come to work at the previous building from a wide catchment area, to be allocated to buildings close to where they lived.

The verdict? Of course people recognised the differences between their previous and current workplaces. It is what they perceived and how they assessed the comparative differences that challenge established supply side thinking.

What drives these findings, and their relevance to future trends in workplace real estate, is users' value of smaller spatial scale, and its facilitation of workplace community. The team esprit associated with face-to-face contact is welcomed, compared to their experience in the large flagship building, where the social-spatial conditions were likened to 'rattling round in the Marie Celeste'. The smaller building is also preferred for its ease of entry and egress, avoiding a demanding process to come and go and get some outside air.

The implications are significant. If functionality is addressed and the workplace is fit for purpose, a big building is not necessarily best. This research endorses relative simplicity, challenging the view that highly imaged buildings of a scale

**“...Users prefer a workplace that supports community in practice, rather than big, anonymous spaces accommodating teams with little, if any, functional or social synergy.”**

that affords high-end amenities are essential to staff attraction, retention and productivity. Users prefer a workplace that supports community in practice, rather than big, anonymous spaces accommodating teams with little, if any, functional or social synergy.

### Realistic provision

With work realities indeed diverse, the preceding assertion requires a caveat as a ubiquitous steer to low provision. Many workplace buildings are not located in easy access of external amenities. On the contrary, with pressures on budget and to ‘give more with less’, operations are commonly being moved from urban locations to zones of lower land value, where retail infrastructure is lacking. Provision of social and support facilities in such workplaces is a necessary element of effective infrastructure, a requirement highlighted by ZZA’s series of user studies in new police stations, where workers’ scope for break and refreshment and to undertake personal errands can also be limited by long shifts on duty.

### Physical space: good design

Notwithstanding the advent of commodified workspace, the quality of physical space still matters and will continue to matter, both for those with more user choice and less. In parallel with a critical re-focus on factors like workplace scale, manifold basic elements continue to bear on people’s experience. Air, light, sound, external aspect, user control, legibility, vertical circulation, WCs, showers, etc, etc – this is the detailed substance that defines fitness for purpose. These aspects remain important, not least because of their life cycle impact.

That a high majority of these functional aspects are positively endorsed in some of ZZA post occupancy evaluations, as in the users’ highly positive assessment of the LSE’s new building at 32 Lincoln’s Inn Fields, shows the standards that are deliverable. With contemporary knowledge and capability, this standard of delivery should be a norm. Real estate may be evolving to service, but users still prefer good space. Delivering this requires care for the full repertoire of decisions inherent in workplace design, rather than disproportionate engagement with the more overt, expressive elements of workplace design that feed the visual image. **W&P**

### **i** Ziona Strelitz

Design Anthropologist, Researcher + Strategist, with roots in Social Anthropology, Town Planning and Design, Ziona’s works at the intersection of people, space and place, focusing on users’ experience of the built environment. Ziona’s projects encompass all spatial scales - interiors, buildings, campuses, urban settings, and also virtual space. In 1990 she founded ZZA Responsive User Environments, a Research + Strategy practice that links social, cultural, design + management perspectives to inform successful, appealing outcomes, based on sustainable strategies and effective use of built resources. Ziona works with leading clients, providing tailored research and advice, and drawing on ZZA’s rich empirical knowledge of locations, buildings, work modes and cultural trends to steer new value propositions. She is proud to have contributed to game-changing projects. Ziona works internationally, is Visiting Professor at University of Reading, serves on the Home Office Design Panel and English Heritage Urban Panel. She has extensive experience as a judge of building and town planning awards, and is a frequent presenter at international events.

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**Why BIFM's recently announced collaboration with CIPD is more than forming opinions; it's about bringing together two communities.**

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James Sutton

WORKPLACE DESIGN • FACILITIES MANAGEMENT • HUMAN RESOURCES

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# Bringing together the workplace tribes

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**The world of work is always changing. We know it.** You know it. In fact, there are a whole host of people that know it, but depending on what side of the professional fence you sit on, you might approach it in different ways, looking through a different lens or with a specific focus. Or are you already bridging the professional gap?

Workplace change and the numerous ramifications of it are well documented. In a world that is changing, at frightening pace, it is strange to think that many of the ways in which we work are so entrenched in 20th century thinking. We need to break away from this and outline what the future is going to look like and how we should adapt.

Or do we already have the answers? This ground is well trodden. However, it could be time to reassess our thinking and the way we approach this challenge, ensuring it becomes the norm for organisations around the world.

We need to constantly reflect and challenge our thinking on the future of the workplace based on the changing environment and the generations set to be the workforce of the future.

As a professional body for FM, we knew that we had to place specific focus on this area. Our Futures Group, chaired by Chris Kane, CEO of Commercial Projects at the BBC (see pp19-23), was created to reassess the future of the facilities management professional in this evolving world. It will look at the blurring of lines between business functions and try to

understand how FM, along with other professions, can provide the organisations they support with a 'total capability' view that can help achieve organisational objectives.

The first of these functions that came into focus was another key dimension of productivity, other than 'place', that has to be managed in an organisation; 'people'.

At our Th!nkFM conference we announced a collaboration with CIPD, a professional body for HR and people development. We heard from their CEO, Peter Cheese, the first speaker on

the day, who was clear that the working environment is a reflection of the corporate culture which in turn will have a profound impact on the performance of an organisation. Throughout the day we continued to hear about how the workplace was intrinsic to business success.

Following the announcement we have received many positive messages but we were also reminded of a host of articles and reports that have, and are, exploring the very things we have set out to explore. So why bother?

Well, this isn't solely about two professional bodies working together to form an opinion. It's about two professions collaborating to collate, curate and funnel leading edge thinking

and disseminating it out to the two communities responsible for people and place.

So, many of the challenges that both parties are discussing are exactly the same, albeit with a slightly different lexicon, so it makes perfect sense to align and converge this thinking

**“** There have been numerous conversations about the evolution of the workplace but we wanted to make sure that the views of these two vital communities of professionals are brought together. We want them to share their thinking and work together to bridge the gap between people and place as we aim to add to the next instalment of the workplace's evolution. Working with CIPD forms part of our strategy of bringing the right people from outside of the FM profession to analyse, debate and challenge the latest thinking that impacts on the world of business, the economy and wider society. **”**

**...Gareth Tancred CEO, BIFM**



into a single pool of discussion and debate.

In terms of the work that will take place we are looking to bring together the leading thinkers, from both professions, and the workplace in general, and create the environment in which we can harness their ideas, thoughts and suggestions. We will then engage a broader community of practitioners and ensure that we can make the transition from thought leadership, through to good practice and finally common practice.

After all, whilst the conversations and discussions have been going on for some time, we still find ourselves in a position where examples of synergy between people and place are arguably the exception rather than the rule.

By engaging with two communities of professionals we are issuing a call to action. Let's have the discussion, celebrate and showcase the great examples already out there of good practice, outline how it looks going forward and then empower practitioners with the knowledge and tools to make it a reality in their organisation. It will not be overnight but we have outlined our ambition.

And, it doesn't stop there. We need to engage with the procurement professionals, IT professionals, finance, customer service and so on. The more the merrier, because it is only when we begin to get these tribes talking together, using common language, that we will begin to see the benefits. This is about systemic change.

In the coming months we have a number of activities planned which will have crowdsourcing methodologies at their

“ The very nature of work is changing. The unprecedented scale and pace of change in the economy and the world of work means there is a critical need to ensure the ways we work, our workforces and workplace cultures are fit for today, and drive performance and growth for the future. Workforces are more diverse, with greater flexibility demanded on the part of both employers and employees, bringing new challenges and opportunities in workforce planning. The physical workplace is one of many factors in modern management and work that needs to adapt, with business leaders needing to continually innovate and challenge conventional wisdom about what drives performance and engagement. That's why we're pleased to be working with our colleagues in the facilities management industry to explore the issues, and to find solutions to the challenges they bring.”

*...Peter Cheese, CEO, CIPD*

heart. Join us, contribute and be part of the future. Our role is to facilitate the debate, work with those at the heart of the challenge, to move the conversation along and help understand and shape the workplace of the future.

The ultimate aim is to make a difference, showcase the powerful impact those that manage the workplace can make through collaboration, building bridges and breaking down silos. **W&P**

#### **i James Sutton**

James Sutton is the Chief Operating Officer at the British Institute of Facilities Management.

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## The Mars City Project run by the IFMA Foundation in conjunction with NASA finds an imaginative way to engage the minds of young facilities managers

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Diane Coles

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT • CAREERS

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# The IFMA Foundation's Mars City Project

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**Right now only 8 percent of IFMA members are under 35.** The IFMA Foundation is working to change this. It's not just the IFMA membership that concerns us, it's also providing educated professionals to enter the FM workforce in the years ahead.

We are working to make FM a career of choice by connecting, educating, engaging and investing in:

- High schools
- Community colleges
- And undeclared college students

For a long time, the IFMA Foundation has been focused on the FM Accredited Degree Program. The students graduating through our accredited degree programs enjoy a nearly 100% graduation rate, excellent salaries and multiple job offers are typical. But now, we need to focus on younger constituents making FM a career of choice to fill the student seats in our accredited degree programs worldwide.

One of our exciting new projects is called the Global Workplace Workforce Initiative. This includes connecting and engaging with high school students, teachers, counselors and parents. To do this, we are part of a team (along with NASA, the National Institute for Building Science and Total Learning Institute) to bring an innovative, virtual FM program to secondary schools where students can manage a facility on the Planet Mars. Yes! Can you believe it? It's called the Mars City Project, which will bring gamification to schools to excite students about the field of FM.

Students will work closely together in teams, assume actual facility management positions, and manage the daily operations and projects in the Mars facility. They will face similar issues that most FMs handle on a regular basis except that the Mars facility will be inter-galactic. This makes learning fun and more relevant to real world FM experiences which will ultimately peak student interest in the profession. We will work with high schools that have STEM, STEAM,

ACE, P-Tech and other similar programs. You are probably wondering what these acronyms mean.

- STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering & Math
- STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math
- ACE – Architecture, Construction, Engineering
- P-Tech – Pathways in Technology Early College High School

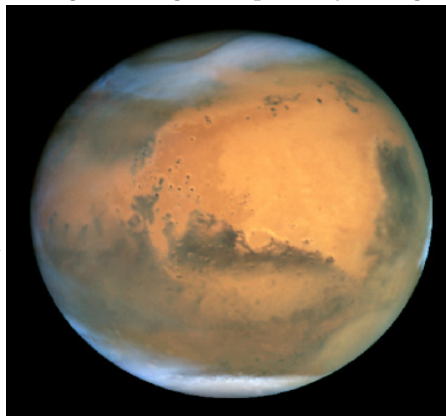
These schools are primed to feed the wide-ranging, diverse career pathways in our field, not to mention the FM accredited degree program pipeline. Because FM has so many career pathways, along with high numbers of jobs coming available in every business sector (jobs that cannot be offshored), it's time to be proactive, tell our story and develop our future FMs.

With this Global Workplace Workforce Initiative, we will act as a connector between business, government, high schools, colleges, universities, economic development, and IFMA chapters/councils to grow the future FM workforce and fill the sizeable gap in FM jobs coming available as the baby boomers retire.

Workforce development is the key to the future of our profession and the IFMA Foundation is working to provide

high quality work-based learning opportunities through internships, externships, mentorships, scholarships and job fairs. We will offer IFMA educational content to existing STEM-focused programs and train teachers and guidance counselors about FM.

These new initiatives will require more volunteers and financial resources. If you are interested in helping our youth get excited about FM, we ask that you join our 15-500 club. Help us connect, educate, engage and invest in our future. **W&P**



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**Learn more at [www.ifmafoundation.org](http://www.ifmafoundation.org) or email Diane Coles at [dcoles@scanhealthplan.com](mailto:dcoles@scanhealthplan.com)**

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## A range of projects and initiatives developed by the IFMA Foundation continue to reshape the world of facilities management

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Jeff Tafel

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT • CAREERS

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# The ongoing work of the IFMA Foundation

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As Diane Colese describes on the opposite page, the Foundation is currently embarking on a regional Workplace Workforce Initiative to develop comprehensive strategies for creating an FM 'pipeline' of the next generation of FM professionals. This Initiative is aimed at high schools and early college undeclared students to further the Foundation's goal of positioning FM as a career of choice. We're funding new programs right now to make this a reality and will be convening educational institutions, businesses, government agencies, FM vendors and economic development groups to determine specific actions to make FM a career of choice in key regions. Our ongoing programs continue:

### ACADEMICS

Our Accredited Degree Program Initiative has created degree opportunities for more than 2,000 FM students at 27 colleges and universities in eight countries, increasing more than 150% since 2008. The Foundation's FM Accreditation Commission standard for FM degrees ensures that colleagues and universities are equipping students to meet the demands of our rapidly evolving profession.

For the profession to reach the top-of-mind awareness necessary for FM to become a career of choice, it is essential to increase the number of college graduates with FM degrees. A strong accreditation program for degrees in Facility Management is key for the profession's future.

### FM STUDENT PROGRAMS

Over the past two years, the IFMA Foundation has awarded more than \$300,000 to 75 deserving undergraduate and graduate level FM students. Student awards include both a scholarship towards the pursuit of an FM degree and fully paid travel and attendance at IFMA's annual World Workplace conference. Since 1991, the Foundation has awarded more than \$1 million to hundreds of aspiring FM professionals. We have redesigned our FM e-Poster competition for 2014 to have greater reach worldwide and are currently accepting applications for the annual International Student of the Year competition.

### RESEARCH

Work on the Move: Driving Strategy and Change in Workplaces was released in 2011 to universal critical acclaim. Industry-wide interest led to the 2012 Workplace Strategy Summit at Cornell University, gathering FM thought leaders, academics, FM professionals and students to examine future workplace strategies and trends. The follow-up Summit in conjunction with the University College London is the subject of this issue of **Work&Place**.

The Foundation recently released Benchmarking for Facility Professionals, a free guide to making informed decisions on benchmarking. In addition, the Foundation is presently developing the methodology for a longitudinal study of the demographics of the FM profession and the anticipated FM workforce gap over the coming decade and beyond.

### SUPPORT

For more than two decades, hundreds of IFMA members, chapters, councils, corporate sponsors, private contributors and other people and organizations have generously supported the IFMA Foundation, a charitable organization, separate from IFMA, which is dedicated to the facility management (FM) profession and FM workforce development. Foundation donors view academics, FM workforce development and research as critical strategies in enhancing the FM profession – making FM a career of choice.

The IFMA Foundation relies entirely on private support to carry out its mission and receives no funding from IFMA membership dues. Through their generosity, IFMA donors demonstrate that they care about the future of the FM profession and, moreover, all who enter the facilities in their care. **W&P**

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*All those with an interest in the development of facilities management are invited to take part at [www.ifmafoundation.org](http://www.ifmafoundation.org)*

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**There should be no clear demarcation between workplace design and management. The two should be intertwined**

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Mark Eltringham

WORKPLACE DESIGN • FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

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# The ties that bind

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There is an ongoing feeling within the facilities management discipline that when it comes to the design of workplaces, the majority of facilities managers are not consulted early enough or well enough or consistently enough to ensure that the end result of the design process is a workplace that is as functional and as effective as it could be. The reason this feeling persists is that in many cases it is true. Or at least is true to a greater or lesser extent depending on how you view these things. And if that sounds woolly, then you have to remember we are talking about facilities management here, finding a definition for which has been like nailing jelly to a wall for many years.

In many cases the demarcation between workplace design and workplace management is based on the mistaken idea that the two have little correlation when in fact the relationship between them should be more akin to that between sex and parenthood. One is an act of creation and the other of care – with the latter a direct consequence of the former.

The ultimate aim of the process of workplace design should be the creation of something that is functional as well as aesthetically pleasing. To paraphrase Le Corbusier, an office is a machine for working in. It is not a machine to be looked at. I think sometimes architects and designers can see the design of a workplace as an isolated act of creation. They can forget that somebody has to work in it and, in the case of the facilities manager, care for it.

While acknowledging that in many cases FMs are not consulted well enough in many cases, there is a converse argument which is that some organisations can employ architects and designers either without a clear brief or with the wrong brief or not fully understanding the process of design. The most common failing in this regard is the

propensity to see design as something that is about surfaces, either figuratively as a way of glossing over the mundane and ugly, or literally as something about choosing materials and finishes.

But good design, like good facilities management, goes deeper than the surface. The essential is invisible to the eye, as a wise man once wrote. This is where the link between facilities management and design is at its most powerful, reliant on facilities managers who understand the complexities of design and management, who not only understand about the core elements of the office – the people, the building and technology – but also the detail relating to product life cycle issues, legislation, change management, the environment, maintenance and so on.

The best facilities managers and the best designers share an understanding of not only how each of these elements of the office functions in themselves but also how each of them relates to the others. The shame is that in many cases facilities managers are not engaged early enough in the design of the workplace to bring this knowledge and experience to bear on decisions. In ideal cases where this happens design becomes not only an important adjunct to the facilities management function, but one of general management too.

There is a clear onus on everybody involved in the design and management of workplaces to understand how the design process works and what their own contribution should be. The organisation itself should have a clear vision of itself and facilities managers must understand how to interpret that into a brief that allows designers to create a workplace that can serve the needs of everybody who uses the workplace and understand the design process to ensure the best possible results. **W&P**



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