MCM.

In parallel.

The synergies between successful communities and workplaces.

How we live. How we work. How we interact. How we develop. What we expect. Where we spend our time. All of this looks very different to 20 years ago. Our work and personal lives are integrating, our communities are evolving, and our lifestyles are changing.

Executive summary.

> **"** As we design workplaces for the future, there are lessons we can learn from the world's most successful urban scale communities.

The four main characteristics that make a great workplace are the same as those that make a great community, only at different scales.

Lifestyles are changing.

All the characteristics that make a great community or workplace are related to our behaviour. We behave in similar patterns – and have similar preferences and needs – in large scale urban or community contexts as we do in intimate workplace scale environments. However, our life and work are now blending more than ever, and the needs of our communities and our workplaces shifting. The office building is not necessarily where all work activities take place, nor is the building reserved for work only. The 9-to-5 in an office is neither the reality, or the future, for most individuals, as they either work longer or less hours, take work with them anywhere, work anytime.

This paper outlines the parallels and similarities of key design elements that contribute to and make great communities and workplaces.

In-between spaces

These are the spaces away from the desk or office that support alternative ways of working. Not only are they often the most memorable spaces, they also define and reflect the culture, aesthetic and management style. In some organisations these can take up to 70% of the space. The key to their success is in activating them and in teaching people how they can be used.

Adaptability

When the only constant is change, you need to ensure what you create now can adapt to your future needs with ease, low investment and minimal disruption.

Destinations

Spaces, amenities and functions are destinations within a space or in a building that encourage people to move about, interact and have chance encounters with colleagues. As a space planning strategy, they drive a more collaborative culture. Journeys created to and from destinations can be an expression of your brand or your values, for employees and clients alike.

Blurred boundaries

Managing families, further education, personal admin, health and fitness can't be compartmentalised into just life outside of work. This interplay of work and personal life both within office spaces and hours, and outside of them, is a dynamic that should be discovered and supported through policies, initiatives, design and services.

Successfully integrating these characteristics into the workplace takes a considered approach. There are many lessons to garner from what makes thriving communities work and exploring them in a workplace. The parallels will continue to be relevant as they respond to how we as people are behaving, and to the lifestyles we are creating for ourselves. Putting people at the heart of workplace strategies and design reaps benefits for organisations, individuals, the communities we build within the workplace, and those outside of it.

If you would like to discuss any of the concepts highlighted in this publication, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

To discuss further please contact

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In-between spaces.

Democratic, open, accessible.

King's Cross. Photograph: Ron Ellis / Shutterstock.com

In the community.

A tapestry of spaces and places outside our homes and workplaces that stitch a community together, the in-between spaces are where people gather, interact or even spend time alone. They are democratic, open and accessible.

From parks, piazzas and town squares, to cafés, high streets, leisure facilities and pubs, these in-between spaces define the culture, image and the profile of a community.

They also play a pivotal role as a barometer of civic and social well-being. In his book The Great Good Place (1991), Ray Oldenburg, an urban sociologist best known for his work on the importance of informal gathering places, promotes the concept that 'Third places' are at "the heart of local democracy and community vitality".

Flourishing communities recognise that in-between spaces are as important as the buildings, and the spaces within. It's not just about the space, it's about the right impression and the right mix of in-between spaces, all carefully curated and managed.

Environments that the community experiences encapsulate built elements such as pavements, public seating, landscape architecture, wayfinding, experiences and installations. Some areas become destinations in themselves because they leverage strategic urban planning and strong design, attracting people to them who don't live, learn or work in the immediate community.

King's Cross, London

Successful urban communities such as King's Cross in London have purposefully crafted the masterplan around consideration of the public realm, in-between spaces and the tenant mix, keeping the ground floor of buildings permeable and spaces between buildings activated. Equally critical to its success is how Argent, the developer, is continuously managing, activating and curating the space to attract and enthuse visitors, workforce and residents.

King's Cross Railway Station. Photograph: cowardlion / Shutterstock.com

Spaces to immerse in the brand @ Estée Lauder Companies #designedbymcm

In the workplace.

In-between spaces within the workplace are all those areas away from our desks, or individual offices; coffee points, breakout areas, cascading stairs, cafés, meeting rooms, quiet booths, stand up meeting spaces, touchdown working points, to name a few.

Much as within the community, in-between spaces play a crucial role to define the culture and aesthetic of an organisation. They also reflect the management style of the organisation; their format often being a catalyst for supporting new styles of working. Often the most memorable parts of the office, when designed well, the in-between spaces can have a great influence on staff recruitment and satisfaction, and can provide a standout client experience.

As organisations blend business, real estate and talent strategies, the movement to activity-based working (often referred to as 'agile' or 'smart') has seen increased integration of alternative work settings which fall into the category of in-between spaces. It's where the magic happens.

Havas, one of the world's largest global advertising and communications groups, and an MCM client, chose King's Cross as its new home. The idea behind #HKX was to unite their 24 brands and agencies under one roof to create an innovative, dynamic 'London Village'. While the space has been designed to stimulate movement and create a community within #HKX, the facilities management team has actively managed the spaces all over the building so that they are used in different ways to generate interest.
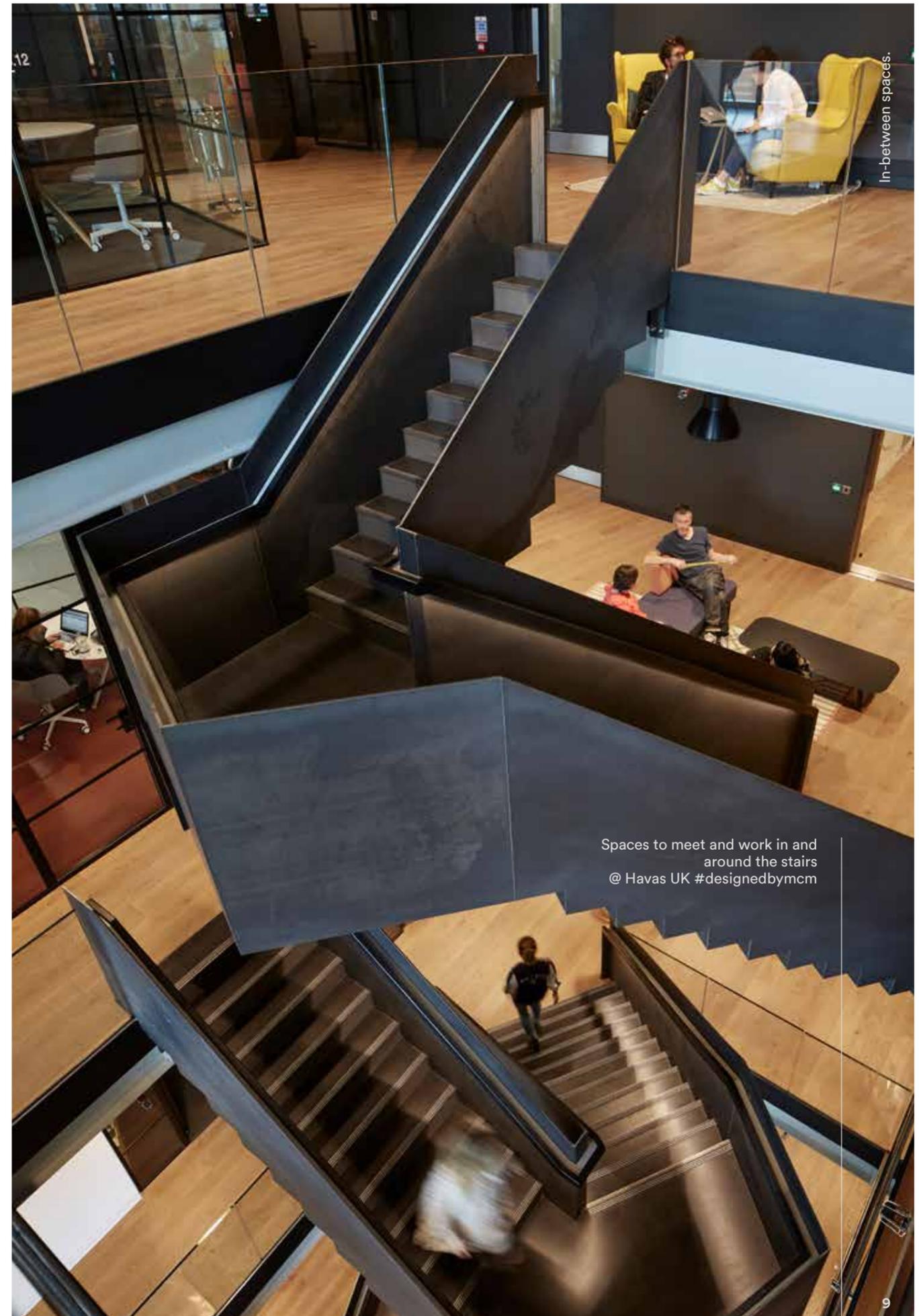
In-between spaces.

Spaces to meet and work in and around the stairs @ Havas UK #designedbymcm

Think beyond the desk.

Whether your organisation follows a traditional model (one-to-one desk) or a fully 'agile' way of working, in-between spaces create alternate environments for your employees to work effectively and behave differently. These spaces encourage different types of behaviour; from talking, collaborating or innovating, to concentrating, or just refreshing.

In-between spaces also spur on more efficient ways of working. Providing your people with a choice of spaces empowers them to find the right space for their needs. If someone is analysing data and needs focus, a 'cocoon' elsewhere in the office could make a difference to how quickly and accurately they can work through it. Or if a team needs to work through a project challenge unexpectedly, they can quickly find a space in one of the breakout areas. No need to book a room or delay the progress.

Intensify in-between spaces.

With the positive impact of in-between spaces on both performance and culture (even if they take up more space), prioritise a variety of these in your space budget.

Working with MCM clients, we've seen intensified use of in-between spaces over the last decade; it is not uncommon for in-between spaces to account for over 50% of the total space occupied, and in some cases up to 70%.

In-between spaces should be a considered part of the brief, design and implementation to ensure the overall workplace is effective and inspirational.

Educate and enable.

A philosophy of 'build it and they shall come' won't be enough. The power in the in-between spaces is when people know how to use them, how they can help them and what they are there for. So, while a plethora of new spaces is exciting, you'll need to manage them, establishing some clear protocols for their use and teaching your people how best to make use of them.

In-between spaces.
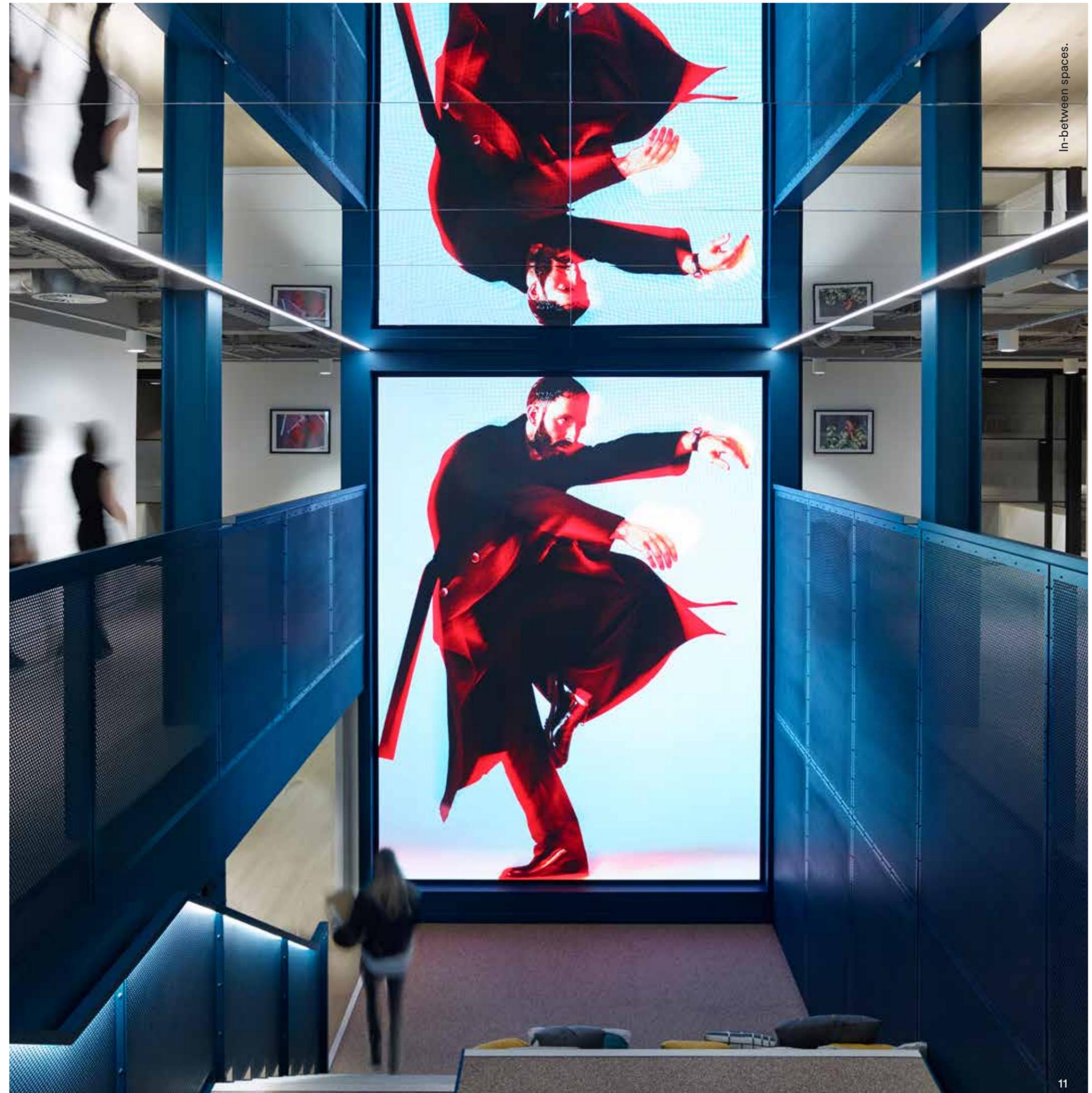
Adaptability.

Purpose, function, use, size and aesthetics can, and will, change.

Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation. Photograph: Imagen Subliminal

In the community.

The concept of adaptability in the community is often focused on adaptive reuse of spaces and places; reimagining buildings and changing their use. Nothing stays in its built form forever – it's continually improved, or the space used to build again.

The way our communities look, and function, constantly evolves to reflect social or economic drivers. Whether better infrastructure, more housing, better schools or less crime, the onus is on government and private organisations to work together to solve social challenges. They navigate the solutions through urban regeneration, urban planning, legislation, policy, public/private ownership, funding and social and civic considerations.

One example of this is the popularity of converting office buildings to residential to help fill the need to provide more housing for a growing population. The UK government has via the General Permitted Development Order of 2013 allowed these conversions as permitted development up until May 2019.

Our high streets are another prime example of evolution and adaptability. Retailers are responding to online shopping by having fewer physical shops, leaving the high street challenged to find new uses and functions. The dramatic impact of digital shopping on the high street has only just begun.

Online shopping still only accounts for three percent of all shopping in the Western World according to the 2019 AXA IM Insights Report. Retailers are already suffering; when the uptake reaches 10% or 20%, there will be a further dramatic shift in the traditional retail environment.

The large buildings retailers occupy in prime locations open up opportunities for imaginative solutions. Catering to new lifestyles and needs of the population, they could be anything from co-work/ live, retail on-line distribution centres, buy-to-rent residential conversions, student housing, cinemas, alternative entertainment places, or even green technology energy centres.

Successful communities embrace and encourage adaptability. They recognise that it needs to happen, explores how to make it easier and less disruptive and accounts for affordability within an economic framework that is realistic.

Escaravox, Madrid

Created by Madrid-based Andrés Jaque Arquitectos, the Escaravox brought new life to the courtyards of the the Matadero Cultural Centre. Adapted from local Almeria farm irrigation equipment, but retaining their original purpose for shading, water spraying and shelter, the mobile structures are wheeled into the empty spaces to create event or performance areas. They now also have sound amplifying systems, stage lighting and audiovisual projection systems, so that, in combination with sliding stands, they act as auxiliary structures for any public performance held in the space.

Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation. Photograph: Imagen Subliminal
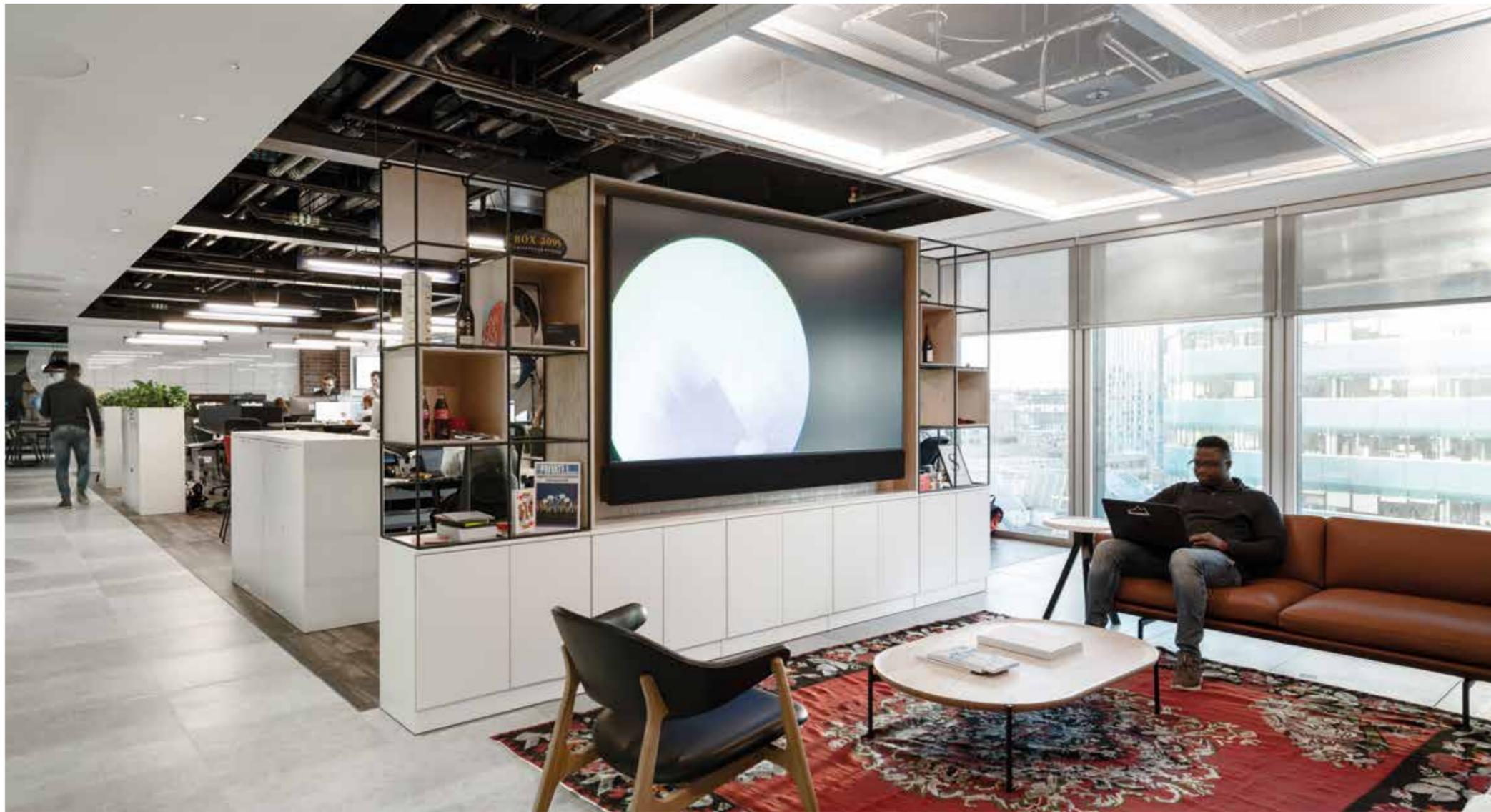
From focused work to meetings @ Hyperion Group
#designedbymcm

Over half the working population of the UK will be over 50 by 2020.

UK Office for National Statistics

GEN Z (b.1995-2002) are arguably the first true digital natives in the workplace. But that doesn't mean they only want to interact with screens.

The Voice of Generation Z: What Post-Millennials are Saying About Work /RainmakerThinking, Inc

Co-working tenants made up the single largest sector for take up of office space in London over the past two years and is over 20% of all take up.

Coworking 2018 - The flexible workplace evolves / Cushman & Wakefield

In the workplace.

Change is a constant challenge in a workplace environment. So, the spaces and places we create to support our work and our lifestyle today need to be able to adapt and be reimagined over time. And all preferably with minimal disruption and capital outlay.

Catalysts for change are plenty, knowing how to navigate these in respect of your space and people is key.

Organisational strategy and drivers

Real estate strategies and spaces need to accommodate growth, expansion, contraction, mergers, acquisitions, investments and lease breaks. It becomes critical that your workplace flexes to current, and new requirements.

People

Each new generation of people in the workforce seem to bring fresh expectations as to what inspires them to perform at their best. Gen Z are often characterised as more entrepreneurial and see employment as a series of stepping stones. However, most organisations have a workforce at opposite ends of the age spectrum, all with diverse needs and interests, effecting comfort, ergonomics, aesthetics, location and working styles.

Technology

A robust technology platform enables people to be disconnected from the desk, and work in a plethora of different settings seamlessly. It enables every individual to see their workplace in a different way, giving them the flexibility to work in their own work style. Technology also permeates an entire building and the systems for managing it. Building new or refurbishing, smart / intelligent buildings can address energy-efficiency, environmental impact and wellness.

Flexi market

The rise in popularity of co-working spaces, such as We Work, is a direct result of organisations' needs for having ultimate adaptability. Whether a total solution or a temporary one to meet immediate real estate needs, co-working provides scalability, flexible lease times, adaptability, integrated technology and a choice of alternate work settings. However not always the quality, working style and brand expression an organisation might be looking for their people.

> " You can use the city as your office, keeping your real estate costs down and your people invigorated.

From a café and for events to a project work space or training zone, this is flexible hub space @ Condé Nast International #designedbymcm

An adaptable approach.

The physical workplace envelope or container, the internal elements and systems that support people and space, such as IT and M&E (Mechanical and Electrical), all need to be designed with the view that over time the function, use, size, and image can, and will, change. But how do you design now for change?

Understand your needs.

How does workplace strategy support your business goals?

How do your people work now and how might they work in the future?

When and where do your people do their best work?

What perceptions or behaviours, internal and external, do you want to amplify or change?

What does a space and time utilisation study reveal about how your spaces are used?

What kind of client / visitor experience do you want to deliver?

What is the purpose and need of your onsite catering and restaurants?

Refine your real estate strategy.

Consider creating a flexible strategy, incorporating 'just in time' space. One approach is to structure your portfolio into thirds, with a third on long-term leases, a third on short-term leases and a third for 'just in time' – such as leasing co-working space or serviced offices, or creating flexible working policies for your people to use home offices and 3rd-party spaces like cafés, hotels and airports.

Knowing your needs will make it easier to identify the kind of building/s that will work best for your organisation, and in what size and shape. If your organisation is 'agile', your people will be using their spaces or buildings in different ways, again informing the size and shape of the spaces / buildings you'll need.

When you're considering the size and shape of the space you're looking to lease or buy, it's important to understand how you can physically adapt the space within the footprint.

Not all meetings need to be in meeting rooms, and not all organisations need to have their own restaurant, for example. You can use the city as your office, keeping your real estate costs down and your people invigorated.

Design for change.

Use the idea of 'loose fit' throughout the office design so that space can quickly, easily and cost-effectively be adapted, changed or taken away to repurpose the workplace. This includes integrating smart ways to minimise heavily engineered facilities, IT and M&E, offering leaner kitchen / tea points and not using fixed furniture solutions.

Destinations.

Destinations create the journey.

In the community.

The concept of destinations is not new at the urban or community scale.

Every shopping mall and most high street retailing is planned with anchor tenants, usually large department stores at the far ends, and all other smaller retail units lining the mall or street. As shoppers flock to the anchors at the ends, they pass by the other retail units, therefore increasing the value to all the retailers. With the demise of the traditional department stores, new types of anchor tenant are needed to create a positive impact on high streets, and particularly out of town shopping centres.

Another example of destination planning in communities is the use of Zoning Plans, Urban Development Plans or Local Plans. Local authority planning departments create these to ensure a balance of residential, retail, industrial, commercial, leisure and other uses across their area. Successful communities think about, and try to plan densities, movement of people and vehicular traffic, and for the impact of development on the economic, social, civic and economic good of the community.

Attracting people in large numbers to an area through major sporting venues or large retail or leisure attractions can have great benefits to a community. However, they also bring a stress to the infrastructure of the streets and to parking, sometimes creating more noise and pollution. Destinations in the workplace need to address the same considerations of noise, densities and pressure on the infrastructure of a building.

Luchtsingel, Rotterdam

Decades after their separation, a 400-meter-long pedestrian bridge and connecting walkways have reconnected three districts in the heart of Rotterdam. In response to the vast amount of derelict land and buildings with no immediate prospects of change, the Luchtsingel was initiated and designed by the Rotterdam-based architects ZUS. It was the world's first piece of public infrastructure to be accomplished mostly through crowdfunding. Together with the new public spaces, including roof top cultivated gardens, event spaces and the Hofplein Station Roof Park, a 'three-dimensional cityscape' has arisen, all bringing commercial and social vitality back.

Luchtsingel Trainbridge © Fred Ernst
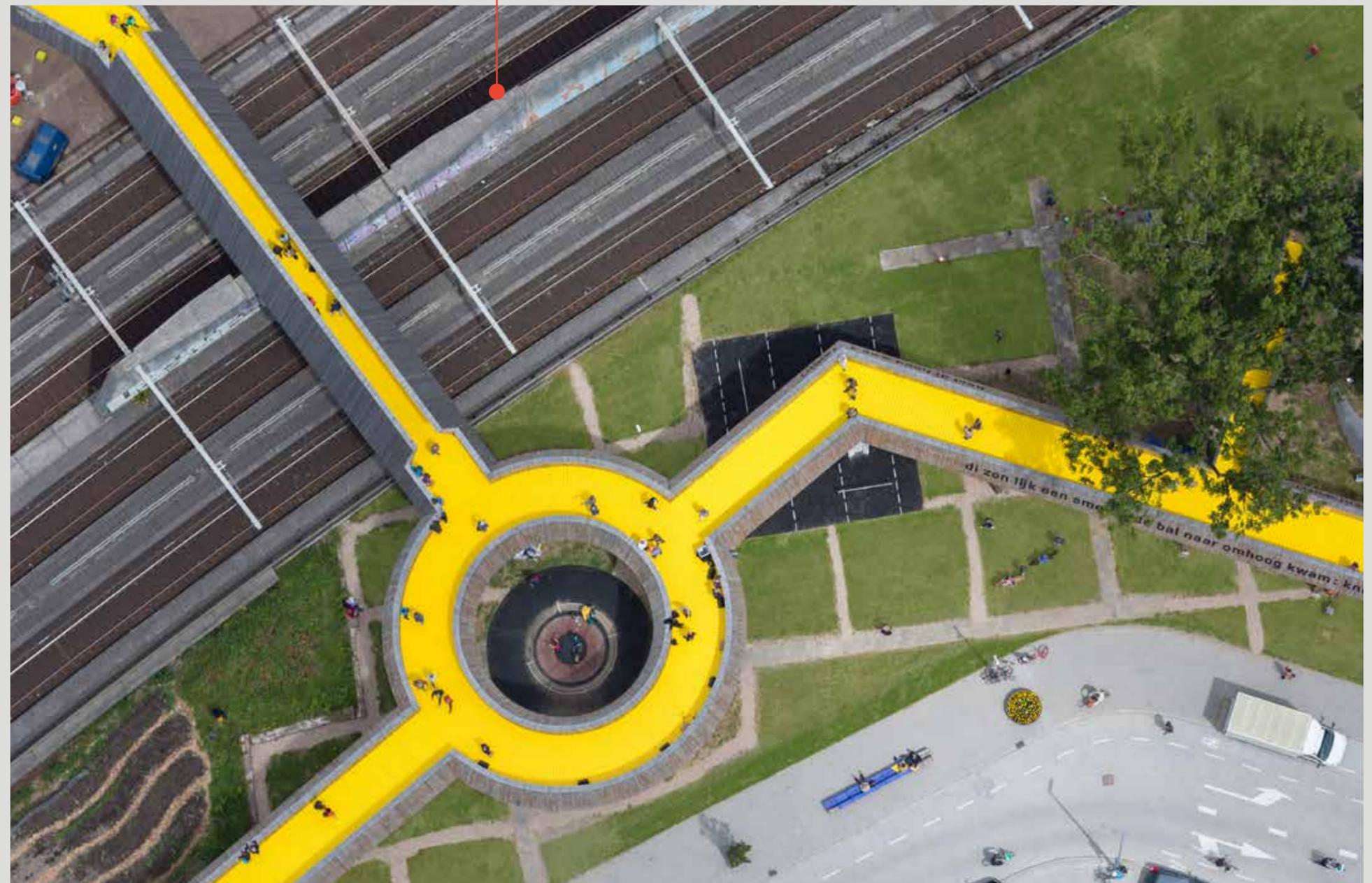
Luchtsingel Top Roundabout ZUS © Ossip van Duivenbode

In the workplace.

The concept of destinations in the workplace is a planning strategy that encourages people to move about, acting as a catalyst for collaboration and interaction with colleagues.

Why is this so important? The knowledge economy and knowledge-based organisations are driving the desire to encourage their people to interact in the workplace, and in society, in order to exchange ideas, promote innovation and build knowledge. With some sectors increasingly based on knowledge-intensive activities, there is a greater reliance on intellectual capital rather than physical inputs and outputs. Sectors such as technology, public service and business services should always look at how to use space to drive better collaboration.

But not all organisations need their people to collaborate. If large parts of an organisation don't need to collaborate, the spaces created need to be appropriate for both collaborative and focussed work depending on the individual or organisational needs. It's paramount to understand your organisation and the people, and what you are trying to achieve, before creating spaces that meet your needs.

Exchanging and acquiring knowledge in the workplace can be achieved by purposefully planning a destinations strategy. People need to move about and not be tied to their desk or normal place of work. Moving about will often generate chance encounters and discussions with colleagues. And the journey to get to a place can be designed to encourage lingering or stopping, to increase the likelihood of engagement.

The hubs are places to go, and en route to other destinations @ ITV UK #designedbymcm

Drop into the 'tech bar' for help @ Estée Lauder Companies #designedbymcm

The 'Well' is a destination, and a number of different spaces in one @ Condé Nast International #designedbymcm

Designing desired destinations.

Identify what could act as a destination for your organisation. And what purpose you need them to serve. Is it cafés or hub spaces? Or conference facilities, breakout spaces, meeting rooms, tea points, business lounges and VC rooms?

Create magnets to bring people together. Be strategic about where they are in the building. You can have your destinations all together, dotted around, or you can use spaces in and around staircases.

Take them on a journey. A route to get to the destinations creates valuable touch points that could be great for employee engagement or as a client experience as they move across or vertically through the spaces or building. How can you express the brand or values along the routes?

Get your people to move through your spaces or buildings in different ways, interact in different ways and use different places. Internal staircases are one way to do this.

Identify what actually makes people get off the desk and go to somewhere else. Could placing tea points and printers away from team zones encourage people to move and interact more?

Promote a wellness agenda. People moving and breaking a routine is great for both physical and mental health.

Ensure they are free, accessible, democratic and easy to get to.

Spaces to refresh, replenish and relax @ White & Case #designedbymcm

Blurred boundaries.

Greater the mix of spaces and services, the higher the performance.

In the community.

The whole community is now your 'office'. It is where we live, meet, discuss, do business, study, research, refresh and engage. We are blurring the boundaries of how we do things, and the community is the platform where it all happens.

Our work and private life are no longer compartmentalised. No longer do we do things sequentially – we do life in an iterative, continuous, multi-skilled, multi-tasking kind of way. And so, the myriad of community buildings and spaces are starting to reflect this. Relaxing town planning and zoning restrictions creates synergy and helps a community blend; it allows a critical mass to dictate what the functions and uses should be. One-dimensional spaces are becoming less viable.

Communities are no longer a collection of buildings with single uses anymore. Schools, offices, shops, cafés, homes and sports clubs are transforming to support a variety of experiences taking place. The school is where you now may go to learn yoga and the office a place to meet colleagues. The shop is where you research something to buy online and the café somewhere to get some focused work done. The sports club is where you hang out with friends and home is where we go to make those important phone calls.

Where communities evolve organically, there isn't usually a point in time that there is a concerted effort to understand, and design for, how people will use and experience the community. It just happens.

Purpose built, planned communities, large urban mixed communities and new towns need to tap into the community they are aiming to create a home for – their needs, wishes and future ambitions. Not taking this fundamental step to value the end user creates disconnects within the new community built.

The London 2012 Olympic site and legacy site, Stratford Town, BrindleyPlace, More London, The Barbican, King's Cross, Canada Water, Milton Keynes and Bracknell. Some have not been as successful as initially planned. A clear separation of buildings, public realm, uses, functions and circulation has had a part to play, creating the opposite of blurred boundaries. Those that have been more successful at binding and invigorating their communities have interwoven all of the characteristics discussed in this publication.

Stratford City, Photograph: AC Manley / Shutterstock.com

> " Communities are no longer a collection of buildings with single uses anymore.

Stratford City, London

Stratford City is the urban community centred on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. In a short period of time, the former Olympic site has transformed from a sporting and retail destination to a complete community. Blurring the boundaries between life, work, learning, relaxing, refreshing, shopping and entertaining, Stratford City essentially meets all the needs of a community. The legacy planning is now coming to fruition, delivering what was envisaged by the team behind London's Olympic Games bid.

A quick manicure or blow wave are steps away
@ Estée Lauder Companies #designedbymcm

In the workplace.

The places that we work are no longer just office buildings and office buildings are not exclusively places where only work takes place.

Without enough time in the day or week to manage all our needs, we are taking part in activities during working hours that relate to our well-being - the mental, physical and social.

Within a working day, people conduct their personal lives, they engage in learning and they refresh, all within the same spaces. The behaviours in a work environment are also wide ranging; people concentrate, socialise, learn, laugh, talk, observe, eat, drink, rest, read and communicate. The idea of blurring boundaries means that a place of work supports all these functions, activities and behaviours.

Perception and acceptance of these behaviours within the workplace are changing. Employers who recognise that supporting lifestyles makes their people motivated will create more engaged and productive teams.

Progressive employers are going an extra step, by providing services and support to their employees with the important and mundane aspects of daily lives - from financial advisory, child care and car MOTs to gyms, dry cleaning, online shopping deliveries and hairdressers. Flexible working and 24-hour buildings are also coming to the fore as ways to support the blurring of the lines. Landlords are also incorporating some of these services as part of their tenant experience.

TED Talks, music concerts, presentations, the Forum does it all @ Havas UK #designedbymcm

Blurred boundaries.

Blur the boundaries.

A productive and satisfied workforce contributes to the bottom line; enable your employees to deal with their personal interests during work time. It is not interfering, or taking them away from productive time, it is keeping them happier and less stressed because they are getting things done, and able to properly refresh in private time.

Explore how different working styles and policies can be incorporated to support flexible and activity-based working. Part-time students, parents and primary caregivers are just some of the groups who it could benefit in making it easier to work more efficiently.

A culture of supporting your people through various schemes, workplace policies and services will contribute to your employer brand, aiding in both staff attraction and retention.

Understand what would resonate with your people. Identify the demographics and life stages, consider what's important to them, their external interests outside of work, and the factors that influence their work/life balance.

Think differently about the employee experience. Create services and facilities that help take some of the personal interruptions away, such as cafés, gyms, mailing, Amazon post and collect, groceries, dry cleaning, travel bookings, GPs and dental care, financial advisors, pension consultations and cycle repairs. Think differently how to deliver some of these services and incorporate them into the design of solutions for your workplace.

Healthy food is subsidised @ Estée Lauder Companies #designedbymcm

In summary.

Boki - social space, meeting space @ Hyperion Group
#designedbymcm

Designers, architects, workplace strategists, behavioural change consultants and property professionals that create workplaces for organisations and their people can learn lessons from the world's most successful urban scale communities.

This is not a unique observation; in the 1960s the German concept of Burolandschaft or 'office landscape' was focused on creating a variety of spaces, places and experiences within a largely open office environment within a democratic foundation of principles. We could say this was the beginning of activity-based working or the agile working movement 50 years ago.

This paper has picked out four of the most prominent common characteristics between great workplaces and great urban communities; in-between spaces, adaptability, destinations and blurred boundaries. However, there are potentially many more that may deserve equal billing including the governance/management of places, security, democracy, and let's not forget or underestimate the power of great design in both scales – community and workplace.

In a digital world where the physical workplace is evolving and the workplace becoming more virtual, we are confident that in the future it will be even more important to seek out the lessons from our urban communities to ensure we provide places that bring people together for a common purpose and their personal well-being.

Realising the power of design to inspire and transform; releasing the potential of people wherever they are.

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