

Concepts & Projects

KONSEPT PROJELER®

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post pandemic





TIM GLEDSTONE

The pandemic has generated a hyper-acceleration of the already booming online retail sphere as well as e-commerce logistics, however there will be a craving for people to interact with stores physically. The future store typology will be a fully-interactive, experiential version of everything that you cannot do online.

The pandemic and changing store typology

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Kings Walk, Chelsea, London

Super spacious changing will allow customers to find their perfect size and a new box-fresh version will be delivered directly to their home. Hospitality, relaxation facilities and extra comfortable guest bathrooms will act like clubhouse facilities for retail; loyal customers will look forward to visiting and interacting with friendly staff. High degrees of human interaction

may be built in with service staff for doors, lifts and cleaning, creating a hyper-human experience.

Personal shopping will become more prevalent, with information on a customer's previous store purchases and favoured products on hand. Shops will actively promote dwell time, with F&B offerings incorporated regardless of the store type. People choose to go shopping as an activity as much as out of necessity, and this will increase as stores offer an elevated, experiential journey.



Kings Walk, Chelsea, London

Changing design scenarios

There will be a greater emphasis on personal space within communal space. More space will be given over to changing facilities as stockroom sizes are reduced, as a result of home and gift delivery services dispatching stock directly from warehouses. As shopping becomes more of a social experience, rooms for shopping parties may be incorporated into designs.

Retailers will also want to have outside space, and may look to include cycling provision for their customers.

Food shops will offer more tasting and sampling as part of their store experience, and move towards the old style of food halls or Japanese food courts - where everything is available to try. Delicatessens will provide tasting, takeaway, delivery and gifting services.

Once a retail destination has been developed with designed-in dwell time, then deeper and greater experiences can be offered; an emporium of experiences and journeys will create an adventure for consumers that is far beyond the what-you-see-is-what-you-get window display. Displays, collections and rare items will change frequently with shows, talks and events too.

Prominent criteria

Human interaction; extra personal service and social shopping rather than a practical focus.

Additionally, the timeline that stores operate on will shift and become more important, with coffee-to-cocktail shopping on offer.

This started with Thursday late night shopping in the UK, but will extend throughout the week, taking cues from Japanese shopping which continues throughout the evening, recognising the need to be open during after-work periods.

Elements to be implemented in new projects

In hotel projects we are layering retail and workspace with the hotel uses, and with workspace projects the spaces double up as clubhouses and event spaces.

We are utilising office buildings so that they are used up to 250% more, through a mix of uses and the length of time that will be spent in them.



The Department Store Studios, Brixton, London
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At The Department Store Studios, a new flexible

workspace building Squire & Partners has developed in Brixton, London, we have blurred the lines between retail and office by designing the ground floor bar / restaurant and upper floor workspaces together.

Members choose the level of dwell time that suits them, from light lounge to unlimited lounge memberships, day passes and private studios. We are currently developing this idea further with major landlords on future projects.



The Department Store Studios, Brixton, London
© Jack Hobhouse

We are also working on Kings Walk in Chelsea, where designs will replace an outdated 1960s shopping centre with a blend of uses including workspace, leisure and retail to extend the cultural and lifestyle offer of the area.



The Department Store Studios, Brixton, London
© Jack Hobhouse

Adopting a 'mixed-maximum-use' principal seeks to get the most out of a building over a 24-hour period. A greater overlap of uses in retail spaces could see them host morning talks or evening events outside of shopping hours.

Medium and long-term views on the post-pandemic world

The structure of working, leisure and shopping in our lives has been mixed up and will stay this way.



The Department Store Studios, Brixton, London
© Jack Hobhouse

There has been an immediate effect on non-essential retail businesses who were not nimble enough to embrace online, and shops will move fast to make their digital and physical experiences improved. There will be continual growth of the loyal essential shops that stayed open and became unexpected clubhouses for their communities.

In the long term, businesses will get even better at delivery and logistics, and build on their desirability as places.



Albany Marina, The Squire, New Providence Island, Bahamas

Working during the pandemic challenges & advantages

By celebrating the extremities of both remote working and keeping our essential hub open, we have supported efforts to tackle the pandemic whilst providing a haven for the communication, drive and focus of our projects, as well as for samples, materials and clients, and have continued to support the people who work in and away from our building.

We went to extraordinary efforts to ease the difficulties of online working, cycled to critical site meetings, met suppliers to review samples in the

backs of cars and created COVID-safe reviewing areas in our event spaces.

Relationships with overseas clients were able to grow stronger through this time, as we were communicating on a level par with local offices. We celebrated time differences when staff were scattered around the world, working across three time zones on our Albany Marina residential project in the Bahamas, where questions on site were answered over a 24-hour period.

Restrictions on face-to-face interaction with our teams and clients.

The benefits of good design over bad design became much more apparent worldwide. People realised the importance of the simple but joyful basics of light, space and fresh air, and that these had become compromised in their environments. Long queues, poor air quality and cramped spaces in retail; overly dense workspaces with limited access to light and poor air conditioning in offices; and limited space, accessibility to parks and quality of neighbourhood shopping in our homes. This gave people a hunger and need for good design, and has seen everyone seek to improve everything we do in all areas: better retail, better workspace, better homes - a better designed life.