



# BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Buildings of the future must be designed and customised with the needs of end-users in mind, taking into consideration the environment, health and wellness, as well as social equity

BY KEVIN SOO

**N**EW technology and digital tools are rapidly changing the way that buildings are designed and constructed. Increasingly, developers and building owners look to high-tech solutions to enhance their skyscrapers, making them ever more technologically-evolved to meet occupiers' progressive needs.

However, the bits and bytes alone are not enough. Buildings are meant to be occupied by people, and developers have to ensure that their new-builds are emotionally intelligent as well. This means that buildings of the future must be designed and customised with the needs of end-users in mind. It is a holistic approach that considers factors including the environment, health and wellness, as well as social equity. Colliers International highlights some attributes that will future-proof buildings, boost their "rentability" and unlock the human potential.

- **Technology-enabled**

Developers need to build for the future. Intelligent technology and the Internet of Things (IOT) will permeate the workplace, empowering people to work more collaboratively and efficiently. IOT enables massive amounts of data – tracking anything from space usage to energy consumption – to be collected, providing useful information for landlords to optimise operations and improve tenants' experience.

- **Sustainability**

There is a push towards greater use of sustainable materials, more greenery and ramping up renewable energy output so that the building produces enough naturally-sourced energy to run itself.

- **Accessibility**

Connectivity and accessibility issues will continue to evolve amid ongoing works to expand and upgrade the transport infrastructure. Being near key transport hubs is a plus, but good underground connectivity – such as a well-curated and amenity-rich subterranean mall – will also enhance the appeal of properties that are sited off central locations. As the government continues to promote alternative modes of transport, connectivity via dedicated tracks for personal transport devices – bicycles and e-scooters – are becoming more important.

- **End-of-trip (EOT) facilities**

End-of-trip facilities are designed to support people who do not use cars to commute. They include secure bicycle storage areas, shower facilities, lockers and changing rooms. Studies indicate that building owners and tenants can expect to reap benefits such as improved productivity and promoting a culture of active lifestyle.

- **Wellness and health care**

The built environment impacts our well-being and health. Biophilic design – which considers the human's innate attraction to nature and natural processes – should be incorporated to boost wellness. Features such as circadian lighting, high quality air monitoring

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system, greenery, quiet zone, nutritious food options, and workplace wellness programmes will help to advance health and boost productivity.

- **Transform indoor public areas into vibrant “third spaces”**

Turn voluminous and soulless reception lobbies into inviting communal spaces where visitors feel comfortable to mingle, meet and chat. Food and beverage and retail options, and greenery and nature can also be built into the lobby space design. Shared spaces allow occupiers to bump into each other, providing a chance to interact, ideate and create solutions.

- **Flexible workspace**

Flexible workspace solutions include coworking spaces offered by third-party providers or those managed by the landlord themselves. Having such spaces within the

development provides better offerings for tenants, and can potentially help to drive leasing and boost property values. Such spaces are quickly transitioning from being a “good-to-have” amenity in a building to a “must-have” feature.

- **Efficient floor plate**

There will be continued demand for efficient floor plate with non-intrusive or limited columns, given the focus on driving maximum efficiency in space planning and access to natural light. Large, column-free spaces enable agile space utilisation, presenting the opportunity to accommodate future changes as tenancy lines and office boundaries continue to blur.

- **Complementary occupier-mix**

As far as possible, the mix of occupiers within a building should be curated to offer a diverse selection across complementary industries. Ideally, the occupiers –

providing multi-discipline businesses – should feed off each other rather than compete with one another. This is an important factor in lease management.

- **Integrated development**

Mixed-use developments comprising any combination of residential, hotel, retail, office and serviced apartment offerings have been put forth as the proponents of the live-work-play concept. Integrated developments – usually deemed as a commercially attractive land-use – will remain popular, but the rise of coworking and co-living is expected to change how corporate and residential real estate are being designed.

These features should not be an after-thought for a landlord or developer. They must be considered at the start of any building development project – balancing cost, buildability and function with safety, sustainability and needs of the occupants. Designing with flexibility in mind is also crucial in an ever-changing world. Well-designed buildings are business enablers as they help to attract and retain talent, drive higher productivity and improve the well-being of users. ■

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