


A black and white photograph of a person in a meditative pose inside a tunnel of concentric circles. The person is silhouetted against a bright light at the end of the tunnel, with their arms extended in a yoga-like pose. The tunnel is formed by many concentric, slightly irregular circles that create a strong sense of depth and perspective. The lighting is dramatic, with the bright light at the end of the tunnel and the dark silhouettes of the person and the tunnel walls.

GREYMATTERS



A high-contrast, black and white photograph of two hands reaching upwards from the bottom corners of the frame. The hands are positioned as if they are about to clasp or are reaching towards the text in the center. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the skin and the shape of the fingers against a solid black background.

The Paradigm Shift

HOSPITALITY DESIGN

The impact of COVID 19 is not necessarily permanent, but the influence of it will be.

We've suddenly found ourselves inextricably woven into the most complex and potentially disruptive event in the history of hospitality – the advent of COVID 19. This is not an economic blip or a regional downturn, it's a call – and, some would say, an opportunity – for all of us, whether owning, managing or influencing the design of leisure or corporate spaces, to confront this monumental paradigm shift head on.

To rethink the way we plan our spaces.

This outline touches on some key elements of design and how we, as greymatters Hospitality Consultants, can influence, provide, and contribute to easing the effects of a changing landscape and changing guest expectations. We want to help ensure hotels remain enticing, stimulating, functional – and, most critically – relevant entities in the months and years to come.



PLANNING
MATERIALS
TECHNOLOGY
ENTRANCE & LOBBY
FOOD & BEVERAGE
MEETINGS & EVENTS

RECREATION
LANDSCAPE
GUESTROOMS
THE 'HOTEL OFFICE'

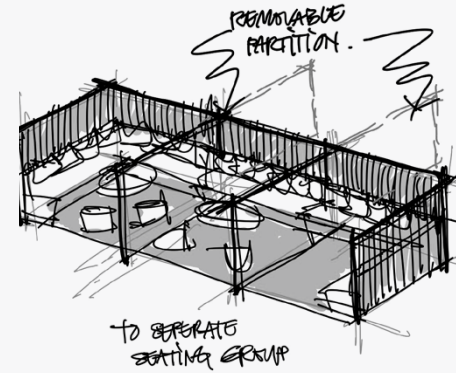
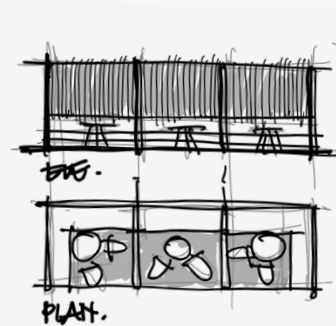


CLEANING, STORAGE & MAINTENANCE
FLEXIBILITY & ADAPTATION
THE FUTURE

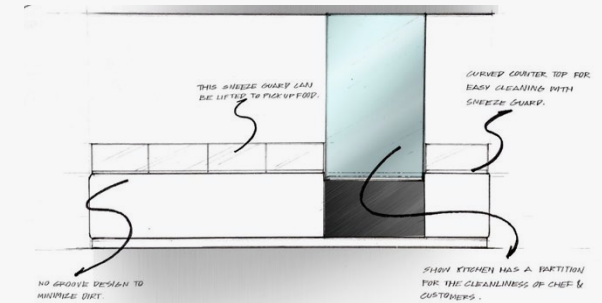
PLANNING

At **greymatters**, we appreciate the focus of any hospitality investment is likely to migrate in the short-to-medium term to renovation, refurbishment and adaptation of existing assets. In this respect, it's critical we plan smart, and plan safe.

In addition to this, attention needs to be given to segregating meeting spaces for smaller multi-use events, and ensuring areas like gyms are able to be flexible in their equipment set-up to increase social distancing. All guest contact surfaces need to be cleanable, accessible and durable, whilst staying true to a strong design philosophy.



Over and above the shorter-term distancing and hygiene overlays already in place, designers need to consider longer term impacts; to imagine a strategic and pinpointed re-planning of F&B spaces to adapt to variable food demands and usage.

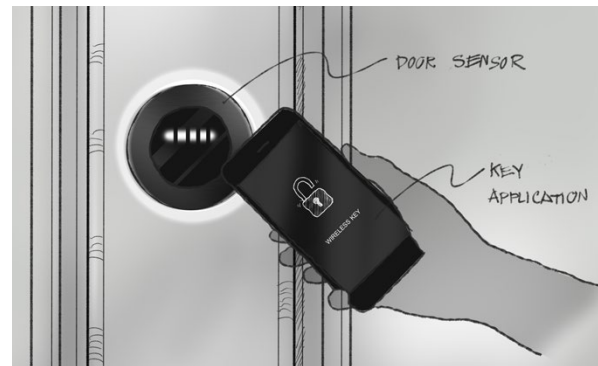


MATERIALS



Fundamental to successful design and operational efficiency is the selection of impactful and sustainable materials and finishes. More than ever, designers need to consider how materials and equipment can be cleaned, how they can be maintained, and whether its in direct reach of guests on a regular basis. A prime example is heavy-use items like handrails and TV remote controls – how serviceable and cleanable are they? Certain polished metal surfaces hold bacteria longer than others – addressing these considerations is now a reality. The selection of lift buttons, for example, will need deeper thought going forward.

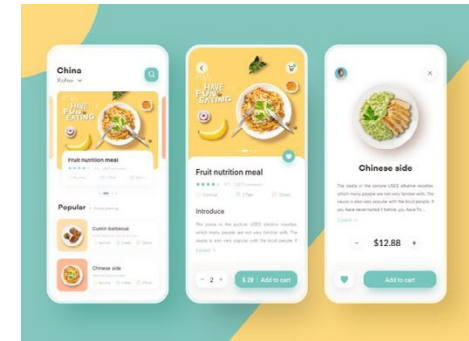
As we progress through this crisis, and beyond, there will be an inevitable migration to sustainable-use materials throughout the design vocabulary in most buildings. Now is the perfect opportunity to transition to more ethical, sustainable and long-term solutions.



TECHNOLOGY

Now is the ideal time to address these issues on a collaborative global scale, and technology companies need to rise to the challenge.

For many years now the hospitality industry has embraced the idea of utilising various iterations of 'virtual' connectivity and convenience to facilitate guests and staff. These have largely been driven by individual company efforts, but were often hampered on a larger scale by more localised complications. Issues such as telecom provider integration, passport scanning, personal security, and user familiarity and adaptability all needed to be taken into consideration.



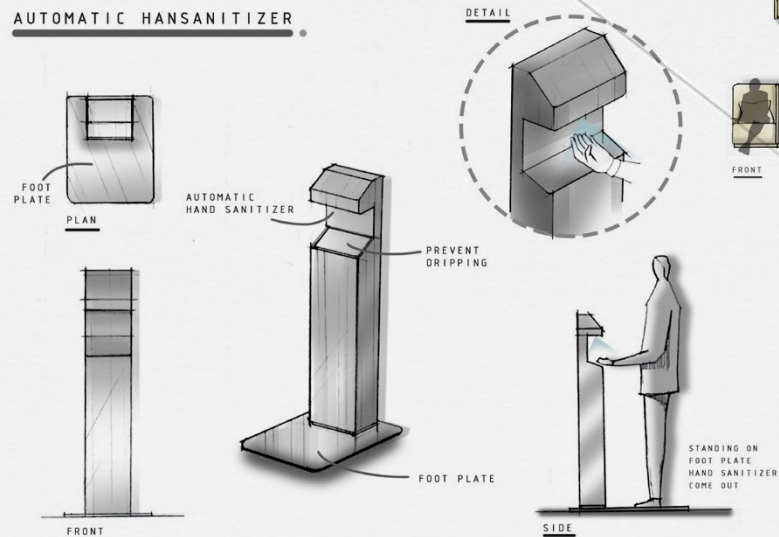
COVID 19 has raised the awareness that casual physical contact can actually be largely eliminated, should your mobile device have the facility to control everything from your check in/out procedure, to lift floor selection, breakfast menu and seat choice, and beyond. In fact, everything in the guestroom, from the TV to the AC, the shower flow and temperature, to curtains and lights – should be able to be controlled from a familiar App, instilling a sense of calm control in the guest. Now is the time to take steps to address this user experience.

ENTRANCE & LOBBY

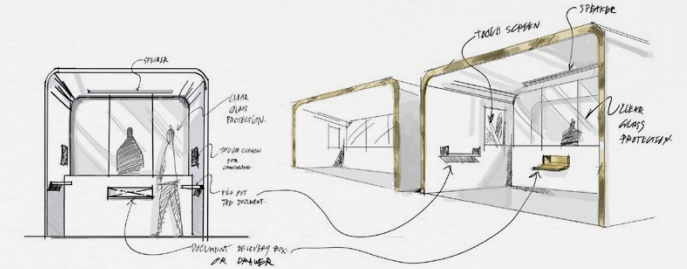
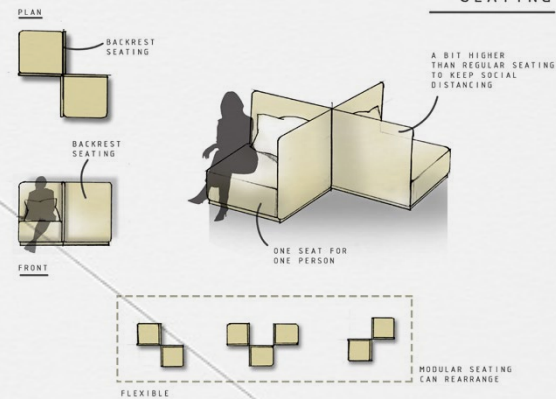
The Guests' first connection with a property will influence both consciously, and subliminally, their overall impression of its preparedness.

Designers need to recognise that today's focussed emphasis on segregation, hand care, PPE's, social distancing, etc. will likely diminish, but this COVID 19 event, and its effects will not disappear - venues need to recognise this fact.

AUTOMATIC HANDSANITIZER

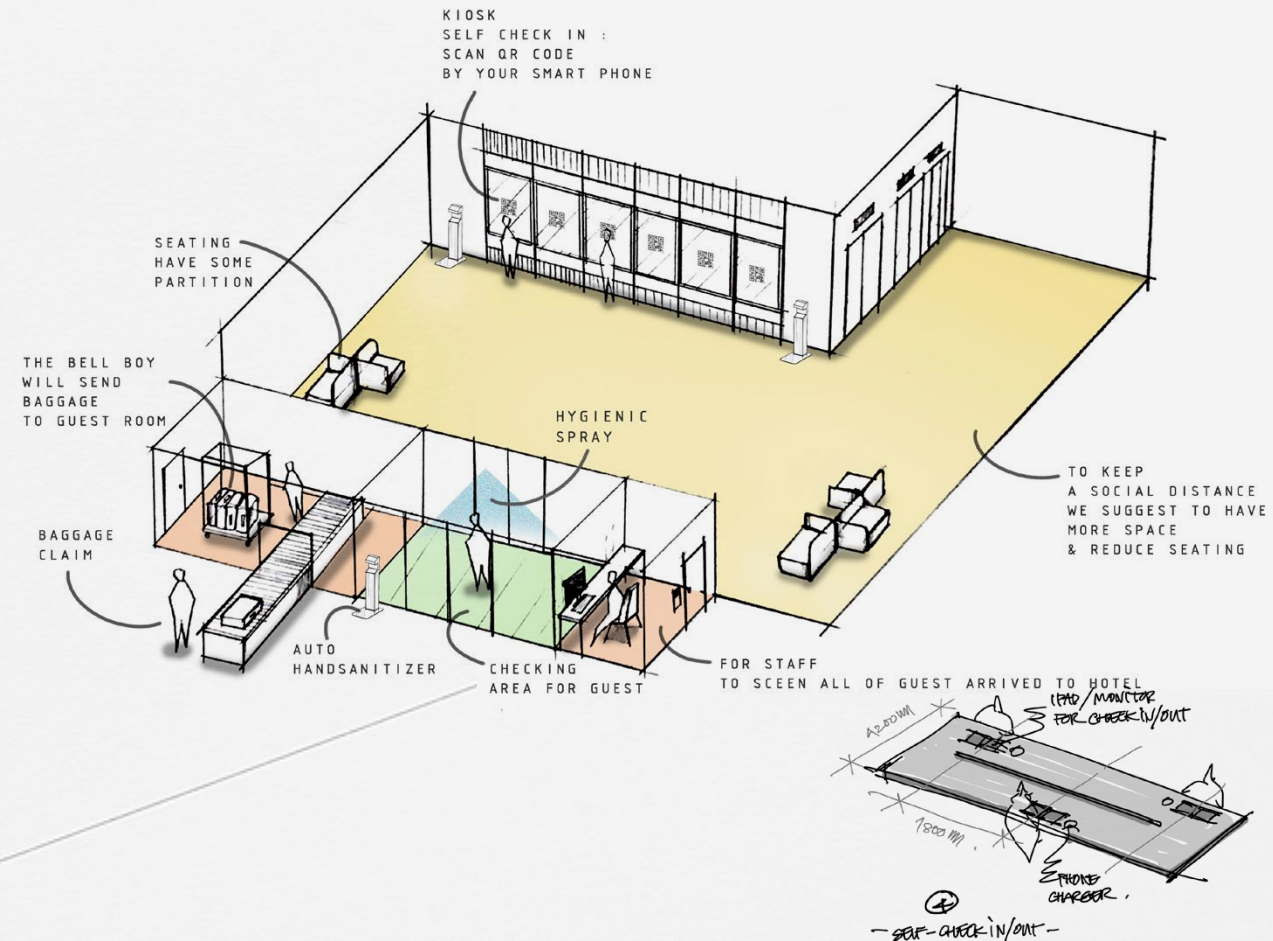


SEATING

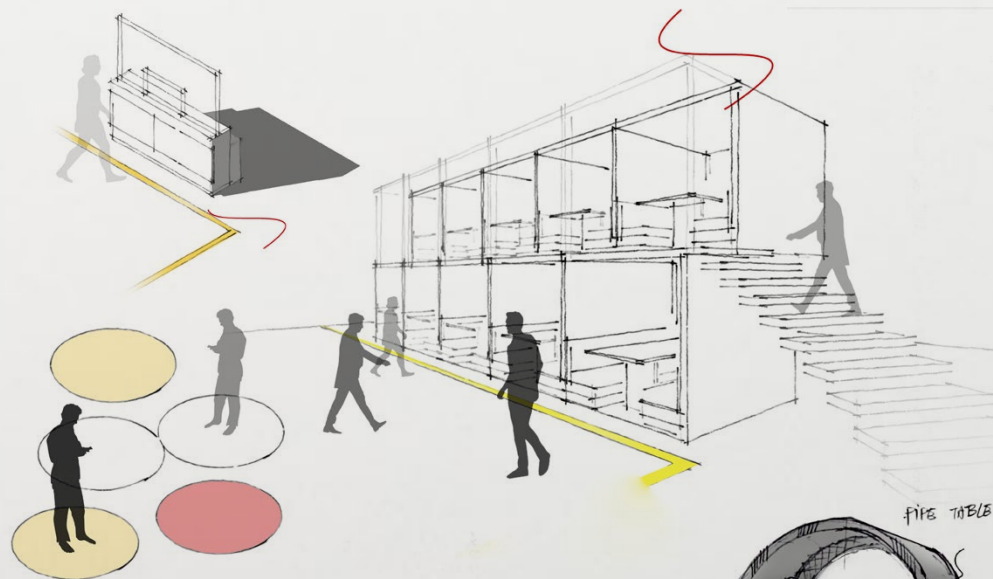


Necessary design decisions through entrance and seating layouts, check-in functions, lift protocols, luggage movement and the like, will need to be scrutinised in the initial planning stages.

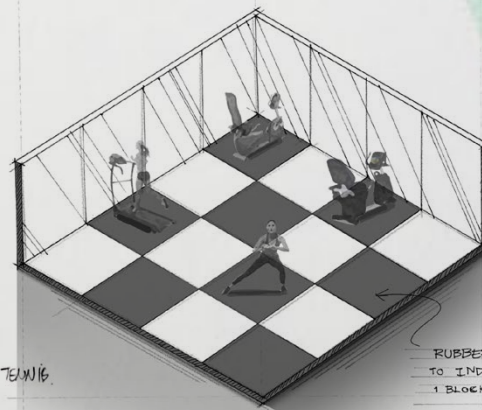
Entrances and lobbies promote movement and interaction - this needs to be deliberately managed and controlled with thoughtfully considered design and planning solutions .



Social Distancing

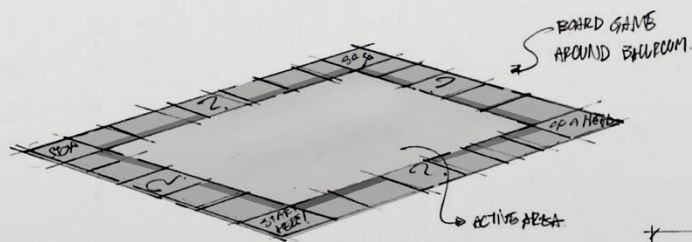


GYM

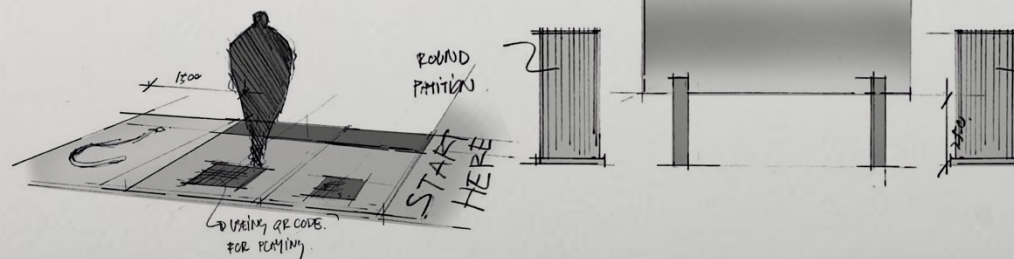
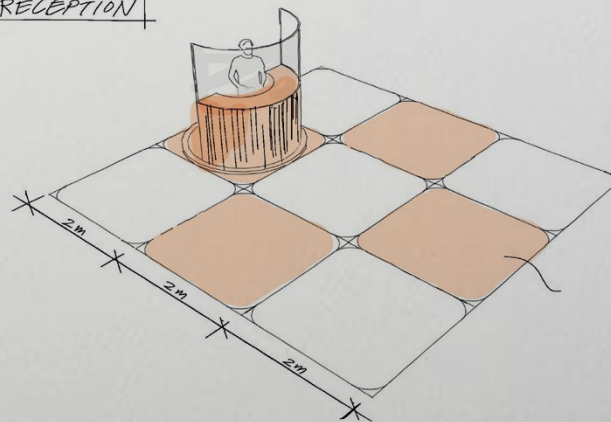


RUBBER FLOOR
TO INDICATE SPACE
1 BLOCK PER 1 PERSON

FIVE TABLE TENNIS



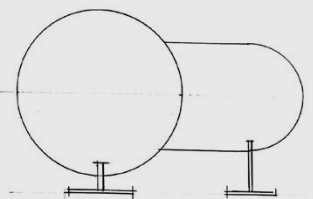
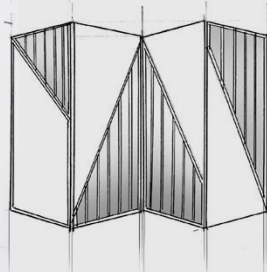
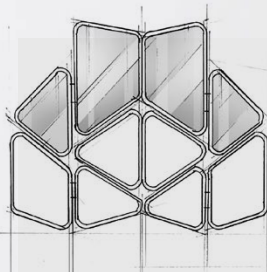
RECEPTION



FOOD & BEVERAGE



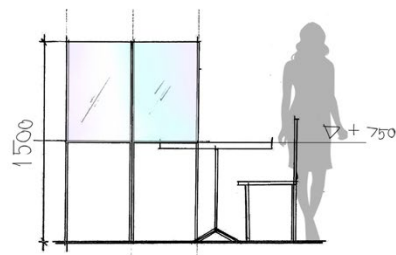
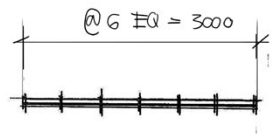
F&B PARTITION DIVIDER



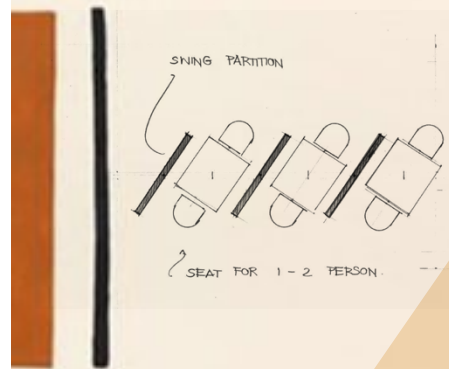
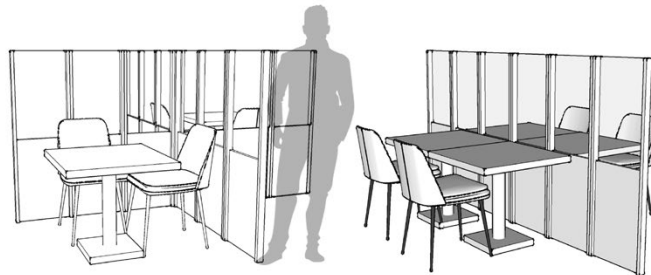
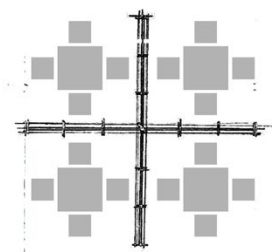
Designs will need to recognise increased variations in guest occupancy and usage - partitions, movable screens and large doors will enable operators to maximise flexibility whilst ensuring the ambience of a space is maintained.



A La Carte service is likely to be a preference for many and this will likely influence kitchen, circulation and service station designs. The Buffet phenomenon will not go away, but is likely to become more sparse, with separation of food stations, queuing zones for egg stations, etc. all needing to be taken into consideration- this will be the expectation of the guest.



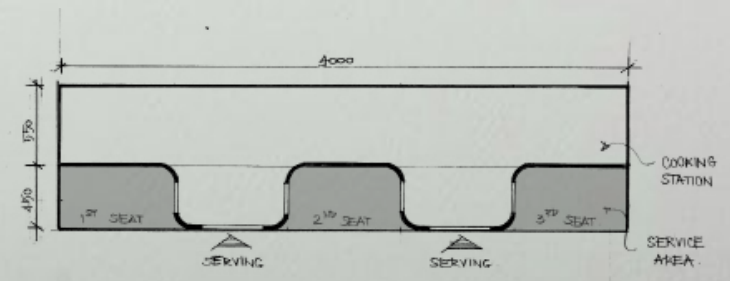
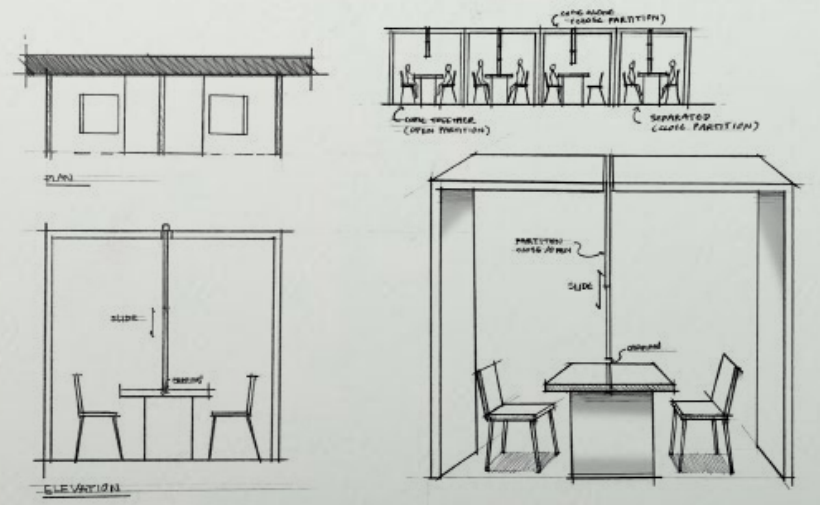
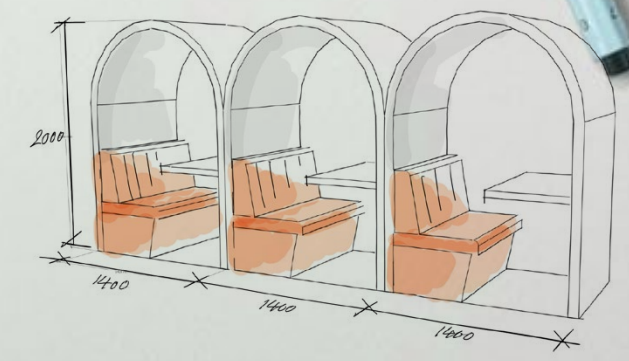
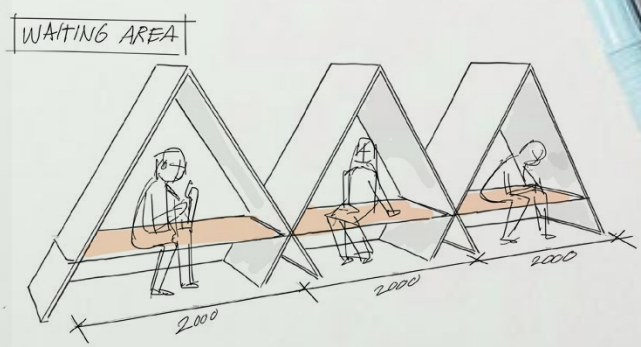
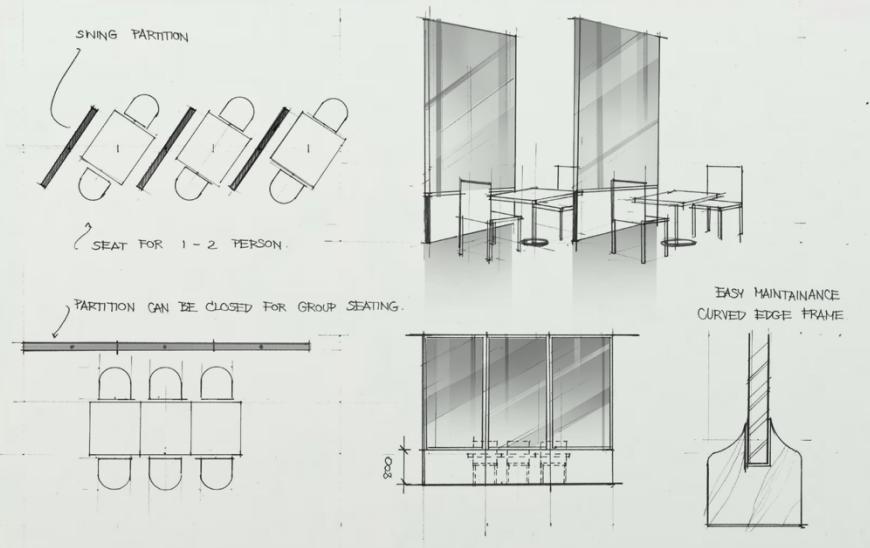
PARTITION CAN BE FOLD
TO CREATE DIFFERENCE SPACE



Companies must also prepare for a period where many hotels will be catering to a more local guest base, as a return to international, affordable travel, which has been the norm for the past ten years or so, will take time to recover.

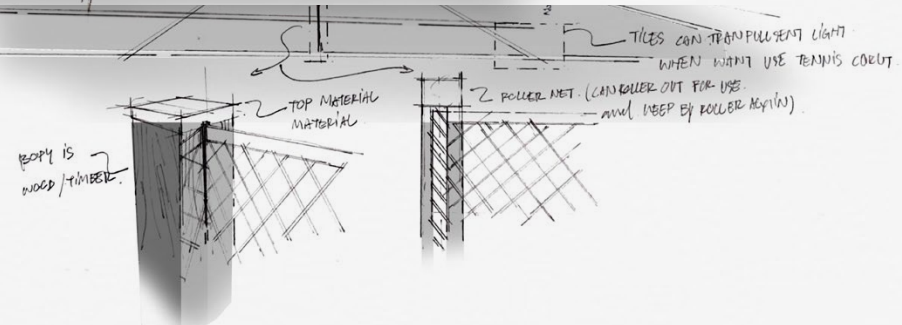
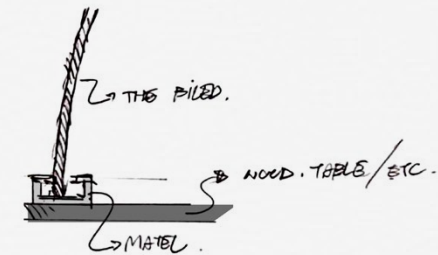
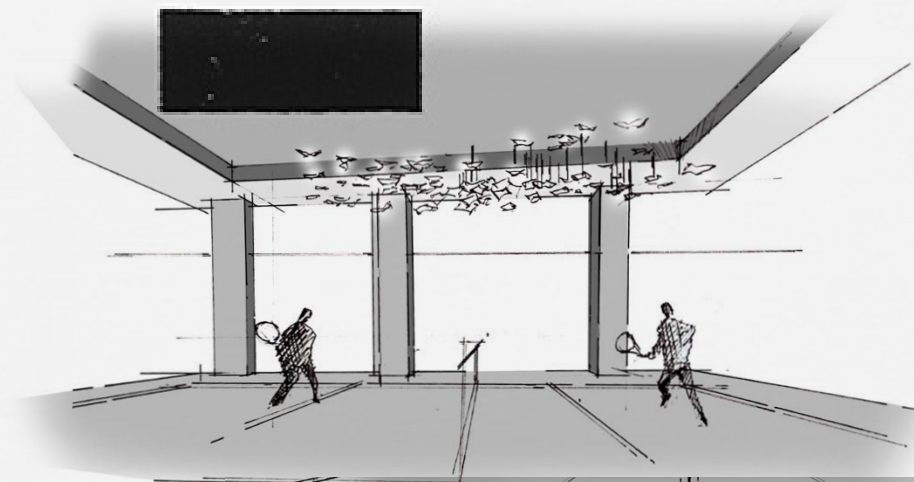
FF&E needs to be carefully chosen to provide durable, readily-cleanable and flexible applications. Chairs and tables will need to be moved and reconfigured, and fixed-group banquet zones, for example, will need judicious placement in future planning.

Seating



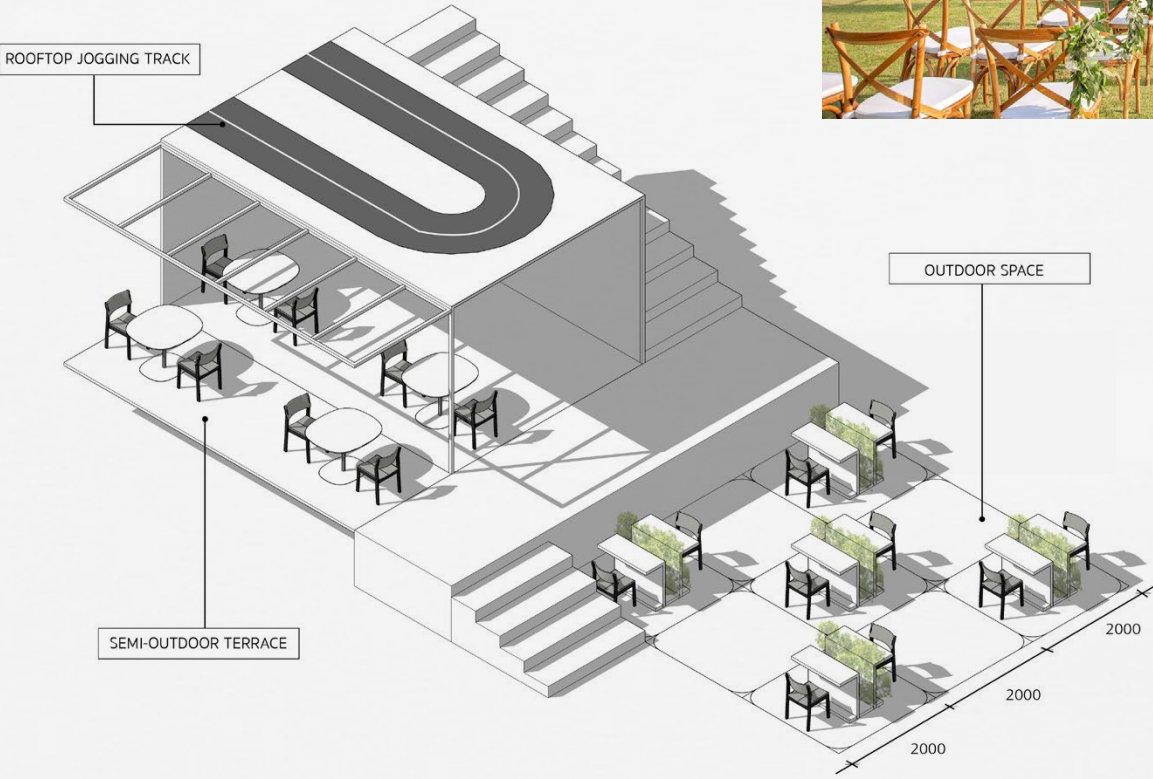
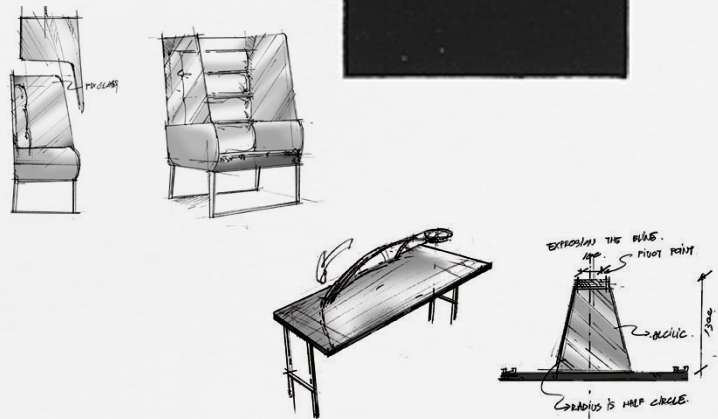
MEETINGS + EVENTS

The growth and healthy revenue streams associated with a multitude of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) options in hotels and resorts has been a mainstay of many destinations for some time. Longer term, this norm may be recovered, but in the next few years we'll have to consider how best to utilise large, vacant hotel spaces.

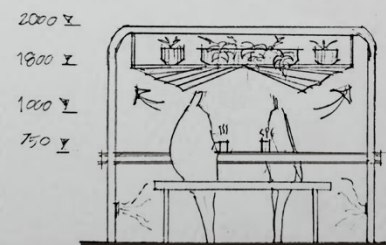
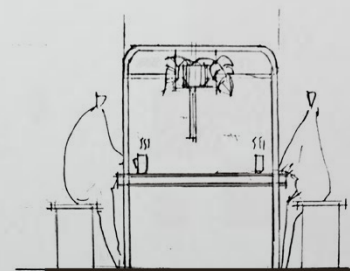
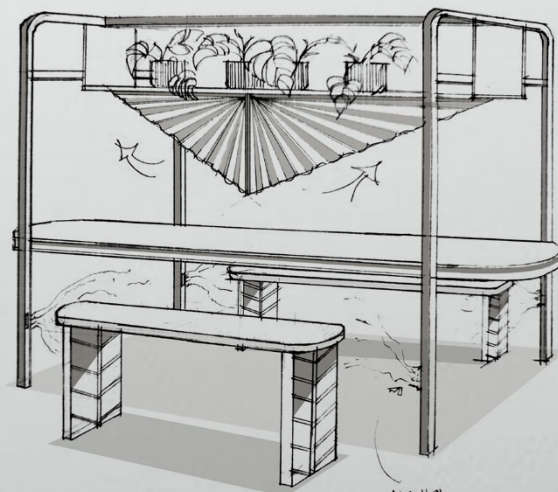
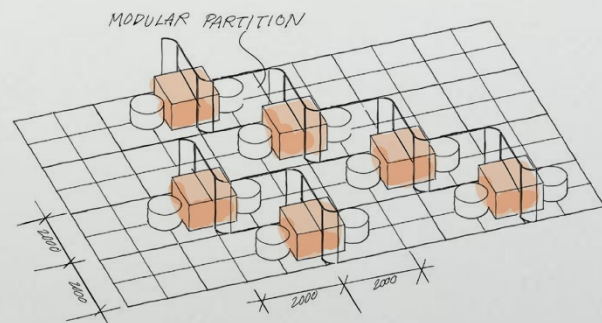
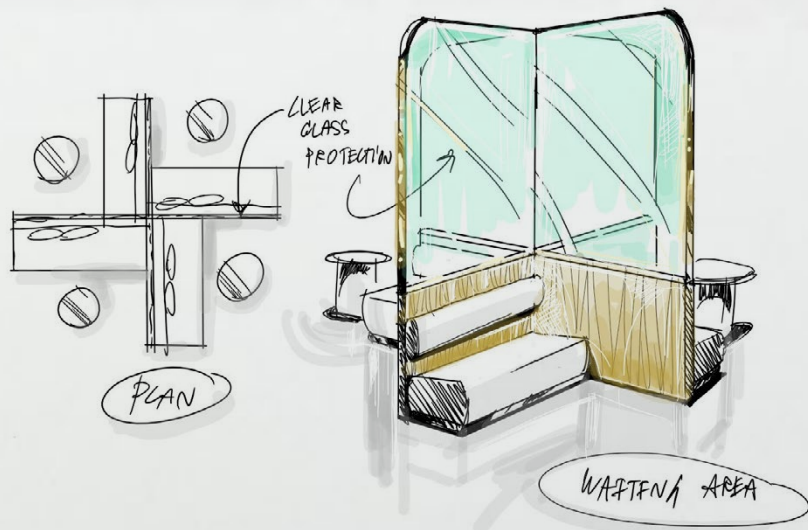


The obvious focus on smaller events, controlled gatherings, boutique weddings, etc., means we as designers will need to ensure flexibility and adaptability is again the key to successful planning and design.

To be competitive, we need to focus more on experiential events, perhaps bringing such elements as landscape or meeting pods into the design conversation.



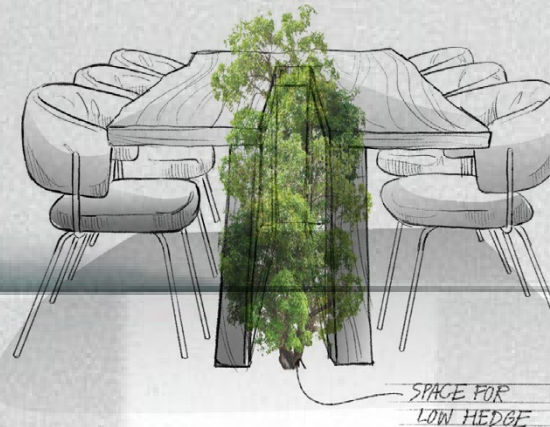
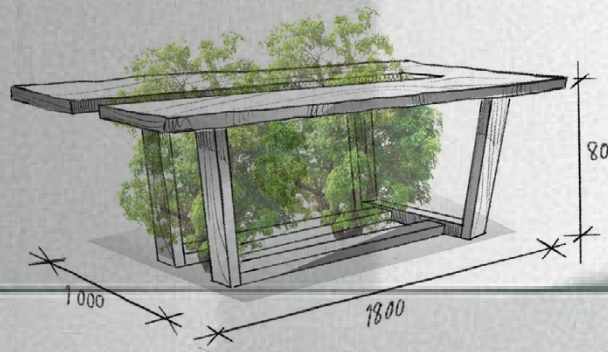
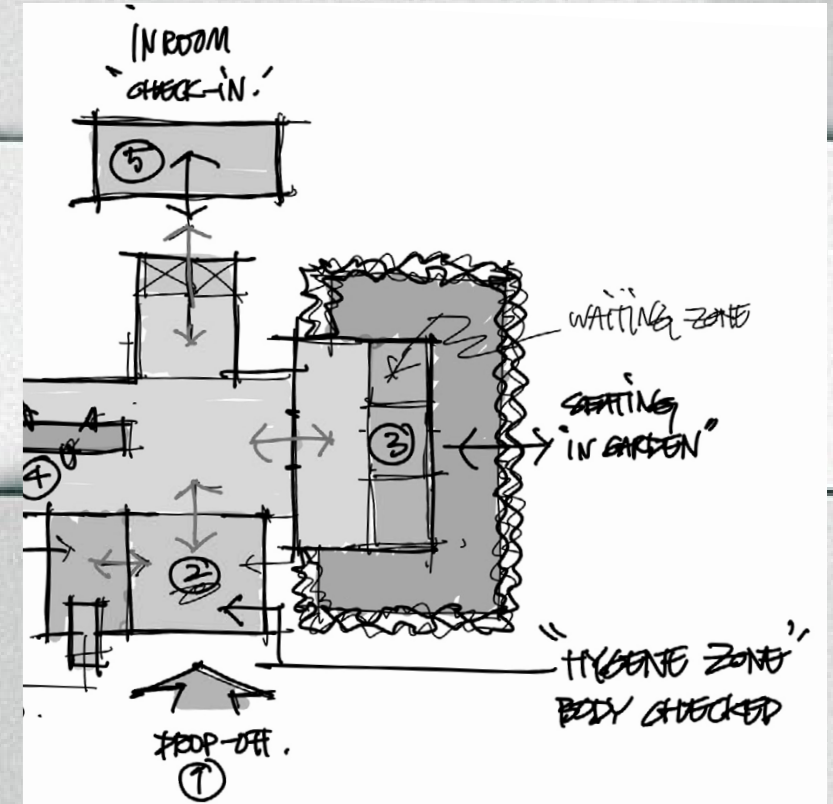
Partitions





LANDSCAPE

As the world settles into a new normal, its likely hotel guests will embrace more opportunities for enjoying personal spaces, with some increased connection to nature. The use of indoor/outdoor glazed pavilions, winter gardens, conservatories, etc. in the design overlay of F&B and public spaces will enable such experiences and enhance choice for individuals.



Gardens, courtyards, or converted roof spaces should be maximised as design opportunities, enabling guests to gain a sense of separation, whether in couples enjoying a personalised F&B experience or small groups gathering for a special event.

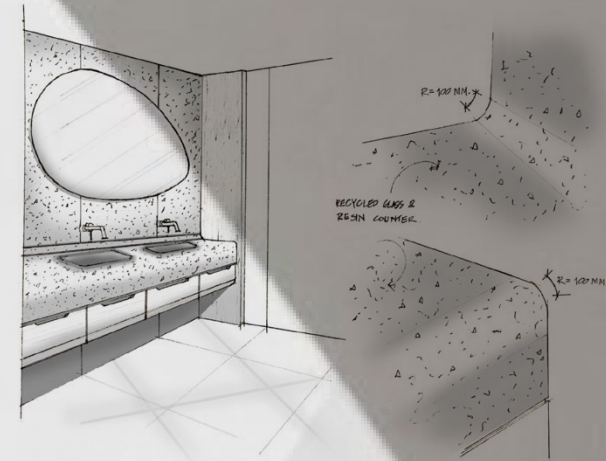
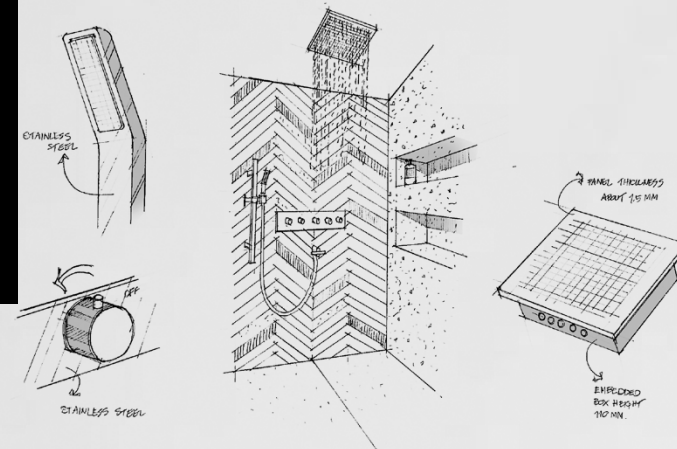
GUESTROOMS

Whilst the focus of this overview is on the public spaces in a hotel, many of the suggestions apply in general to guests' own personal domains – the guestrooms. Materials need to be selected to recognise maintenance, cleaning and durability, details carefully considered to limit opportunities for accumulation of dirt or bacteria.



Specifying a fissured, decorative door handle, for example, adds potential risk and particular cleaning needs. Bathrooms, an obvious zone of exposure, need to be designed to keep cleaning functions efficient with a minimization of discrete corners and hidden edges.

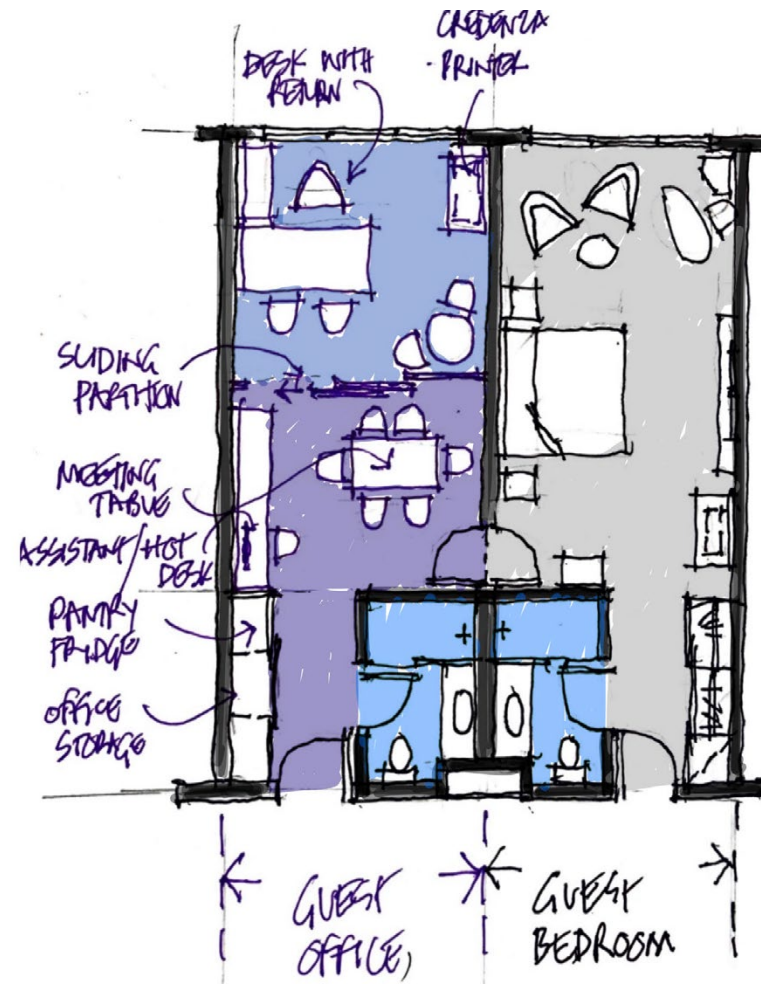
Technology via easily-controlled and familiar Apps and systems in the guestroom will make a significant difference in the future. They must, however, work seamlessly and be effective in improving guests' convenience, safety and information.



THE 'HOTEL OFFICE'

One of the inevitable impacts of the social correction we are experiencing is how and where we work. Hotels are often located in prime positions, but as companies reduce urban office spaces, more staff will be working remotely, and business travel will be diminishing. How can hotels capture business and corporate opportunities?

Traditional desks and work surfaces in the corner of the standard guestroom address short term needs, but are not conducive to business interactions or longer term tasks. Repurposing a two bay hotel suite with a bespoke living/office space in one bay can potentially alleviate the need for rented serviced offices or extensive corporate space in the city.

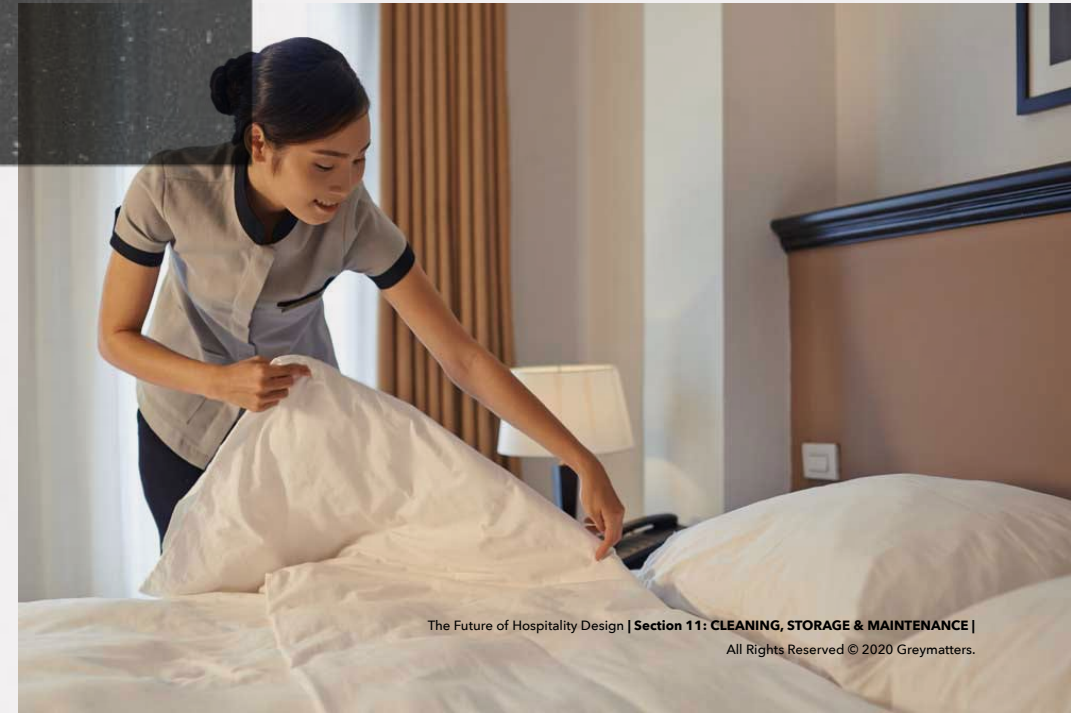


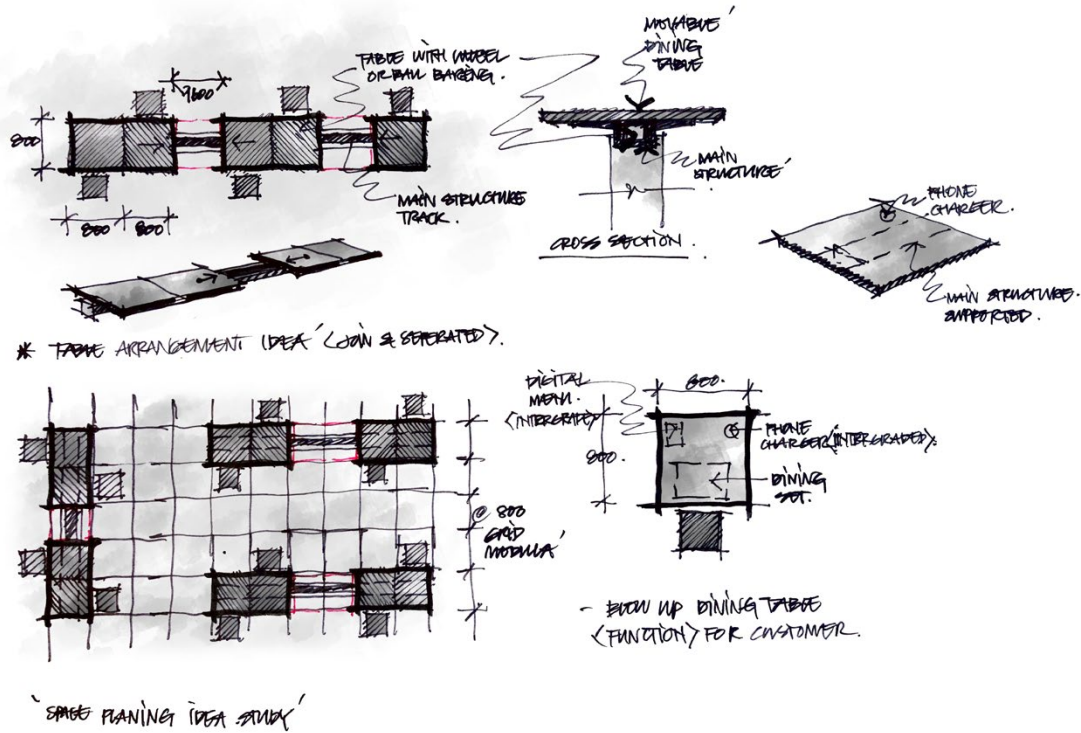
Allocating 'Business Stay' floors to address needs beyond a traditional Business Centre, could be an alternative choice in many locations.



CLEANING, STORAGE & MAINTENANCE

Understanding guests' short-term anxiety and the necessary adjustments that will have to be made is essential if we, as designers, are able to support hotel operations. The increase in cleaning frequency, scope and intensity places additional demands on Housekeeping and Maintenance teams. As such, where possible, designers should consider additional storage and janitor rooms to enable ease of access and convenience.





FLEXIBILITY & ADAPTATION

It's not practical, in most cases, to consider wholesale re-planning and structural modifications to currently operating properties. Most apparent changes to the hospitality experience will be operationally driven, additional training, cleanliness overlays, and FFE spacing will be the obvious precautions and adjustments.

As designers, however, we need to embrace the notion that change will be constant for many years to come, and, as such, the planning of spaces, whether they be large ADDs, integrated gyms, or a guestroom corridor, all need to be considered from a different dimension. Much of this will be dictated by the need to consider whether the primary function of that space is interchangeable or flexible – can an ADD restaurant become smaller specialist outlets? Can a ballroom serve as a recreational facility? Can a roof top space be utilised as an outdoor leisure or F&B retreat? These are all questions that will need to be asked.



THE FUTURE

Whilst we all struggle to adjust and understand the impact and effects of the current phenomena, we need to also think on a larger scale about design issues relating to how individuals and corporations choose to travel and work in the future.

Many COVID 19 hotspot hotels have become safe refuges, or temporary isolation centres. Designers need to keep this in mind, ensuring planning of guest and staff zones, and circulation, can be adapted to future critical isolation overlays.

Larger, integrated 'big box' hotels and resorts are vulnerable. Sustainable short term MICE and Group-based mainstays are changed forever in some locations. An emphasis on mixed building usage – residential and hospitality for example, provide some consideration – is important, as well as the need to consider how a large property can be effectively and economically partially 'mothballed' if necessary, perhaps literally closing whole floors of guestrooms or large meeting facilities if required.

The effects of, and the way the guests choose and use Hospitality spaces, will change. We as designers need to embrace and adjust to creating much more dynamic and adaptable environments.

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LET'S DO SOMETHING AMAZING

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A black and white photograph of a person in a meditative pose inside a tunnel of concentric circles. The person is silhouetted against a bright light at the end of the tunnel, with their arms extended outwards. The tunnel is formed by many concentric, slightly irregular circles that create a strong sense of depth and perspective. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

GREYMATTERS