

# Press release 2016



## What next for offices...?

My View, by Tim Richardson, FHP Property Consultants.

I have seen some pretty awful office buildings in my time and whilst many thankfully have new lives as housing, we still come across businesses operating from space which is incredibly uninspiring and inefficient.

The purpose of my article today is to look at trends in office premises, where we are now and where next.

Wind the clock back 40 years or so and new build offices such as St Peter's House and Heritage Gate came along with big open floors, fluorescent lights, metal framed windows, industrial scale central heating boilers, solid floors and lifts. The first thing occupiers did having moved out of cellular period office buildings was erect partitioning so "management" could separate themselves from "staff".

Forward 20 years and in the 1990's we see the birth of Pride Park and the campus style office buildings that you see there today which have evolved over the subsequent two decades with improvements to heat/cooling, lighting, energy efficiency, open plan working environment and to keep up with advances in IT, raised access floors for data and power cabling.

Nowadays, use of space continues to evolve with the advent of remote working, hot desking and the paperless office with the result that far more people can be accommodated per square metre and a good example of this is Derby's refurbished Council House. PKF Cooper Parry at East Midlands Airport have gone a step further and taken the 'breakout' area to another level with idea pods and games rooms. Far from being an indulgent gimmick, the reality is that a pleasant, fun working environment leads to inspiration, cross-selling, staff retention and increased productivity.

---

This 'increased productivity' is where company owners start to take note. This doesn't come about as a result of fitting a new kitchen, TV and colourful sofas. It is part of a wider more progressive culture within the business and the property it occupies will be a vital element of this.

We see three particular aspects affecting future office occupation, being technology, "wellness" and design.

Technology in connection with the building can range from tailoring heating and lighting to specific levels in different areas of the building, even down to individual desks, to the building services, checking people's calendars, reserving desks and lockers, booking meeting rooms and checking stock levels. It also embraces all important connectivity. Broadband connection speed is now one of the first questions prospective occupiers will ask us when looking at new buildings.

Wellness will relate directly to the quality of the surroundings and in itself will lead to increased productivity. On a practical level it will include air quality, thermal comfort, natural light, green spaces, and noise especially in an open plan environment (where consideration can be given to layout, noise reducing materials and quiet spaces). Occupiers wish to promote increased activity by avoiding long periods of sitting and promoting movement whether it is by use of stairs, standing work stations or provision of sport and gym facilities. Secure cycle parking and showers are now becoming a must in relocations. Equally important is proximity to cafes, restaurants, green space, bus and cycle routes.

Design in this instance mainly relates to building layout which can encompass a range of elements such as flexibility to allow for change in the future. Buildings will incorporate the culture of a business in their design, for example the need for more collaboration between teams. A successful work place will improve morale and motivation. The work place should be a positive experience. If the formula is right absenteeism will be down and productivity up.

New designs can incorporate initiatives such as sensor level lighting, even changing tones to counter the effect of melatonin in the body. Shock absorbing flooring can reduce noise and vibration and electromagnetic field shielding can be put around electrical equipment. Antimicrobial treated surfaces can reduce the spread of germs, and higher ceilings provide a better sense of space. A building will also house a wide age group from teenagers to those in their seventies and hence a wide spectrum of expectations and requirements.

But the key objective though running through all of this is better productivity, with capital investment correlating to growth in the business. Like a cog in a machine, the office is a factor of production, and an important one.

For further information, please contact Tim Richardson from FHP Property Consultants on 01332 343222 or email [timr@fhp.co.uk](mailto:timr@fhp.co.uk) .

End. June 2016

---

## Notes to Editors

- FHP is a Midlands based commercial property consultancy with offices in Nottingham and Derby. Its 80 strong team offers a full range of professional and commercial property solutions for clients in the retail, leisure, office, industrial, residential land and investment markets.
- The Company also provides businesses with a full property consultancy service including valuations, rates appeals, compulsory purchase advice with the Company having a strong Property Management Department which manages properties for individuals, corporate and institutions.
- FHP has been involved in some of the largest commercial property deals and developments within the region and works with national operators including Intu Properties Plc, Clowes Developments (UK) Limited, Peel Property Holdings.
- FHP is also able to call upon the expertise of its sister residential property Company FHP Living Limited which handles the sales of select properties across Nottinghamshire from boutique offices in the Nottingham City Centre and West Bridgford.