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Architects to remodel Hong Kong into a future-ready city

Highly integrated design and infrastructure that will further link Hong Kong into the Greater Bay Area are expected in the next year.

Sustainability drives have long emerged in an attempt to mitigate the worsening climate crisis, a lesson learned in the hard way. In light of this, Hong Kong architects expect that the city will be remodeled to have a greener design.

On top of this, Hong Kongers will likely see infrastructure projects that will further integrate the city into the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area development.

“On the whole, the industry is going to lean towards sustainability, net carbon zero, biophilic architecture, wellbeing and urban resilience,” LWK + PARTNERS told Hong Kong Business.

“Therefore, we expect architectural design to be increasingly integrated with public infrastructure and urban programmes, with emphasis on reconnecting with nature.”

The Hong Kong government will be working towards achieving carbon neutrality before 2050, which Chief Executive Carrie Lam said in her 2020 policy address following Chinese President Xi Jinping’s announcement to achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. The

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government will also be exploring ways to reduce carbon emissions, promote green transportation, and boost investments through green finance plans.

LWK + PARTNERS, for its part, promotes designing zero energy buildings, which are structures that utilise renewable sources to generate the same amount of power it consumes. In a study, conducted by Stephen Lau, LWK + PARTNERS Design Research Director, he noted that architecture is key in constructing zero energy buildings.

For one, the structures could feature outdoor terraces and hanging gardens as well as staircases instead of lift systems. The roofs may also be designed to provide more shading, and in effect, reduce energy demand. Solar panels may also be installed to capture solar power.

Moreover, according to LWK + PARTNERS, the industry will likely utilize building information modeling (BIM) to plan, design, and construct projects. BIM allows architects, engineers and developers amongst others to collaborate by creating digital models.

“BIM-based project management will continue to gain traction as a global trend with wider adoption across the industry.”

Remodelling commercial properties

Aedas, meanwhile, expects commercial properties to be remodelled to adapt to the growing e-commerce trend and the reliance on both online and offline channels. The firm also expects that Hong Kong will see infrastructure that will further integrate it into the Greater Bay Area.

“With traditional retail developers adapting to the new norms of online-offline and experiential retail trade, and more companies embracing the work-from-home or flexi-hour practice, we see more work coming from remodelling and adapting of retail, office and leisure spaces,” Aedas Chairman Keith Griffiths said.

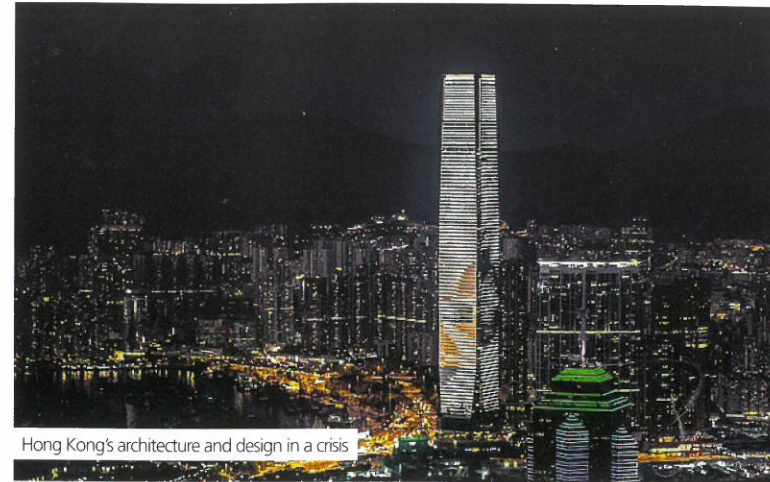
Griffiths noted challenges Aedas faced emerged from the live-work balance and the “blurring boundaries” in retailing, which has led to changes in how the industry designs residential, retail and office spaces. He added architects and designers should be “acutely aware of” these trends, which they must be prepared to respond to actively.

“The e-commerce boom will bring in new opportunities in logistics sector as well. We expect some major infrastructure, civic and public sector works from the government and developments that would facilitate Hong Kong’s integration with the mainland under the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area Initiative.”

The Greater Bay Area development opens opportunities for Hong Kong to strengthen its position as an international aviation hub and maritime centre and regional logistics hub.

In 2018, Aedas designed the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station that served as the “gateway” to the city and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, which is another entry point to Hong Kong.

The construction industry is amongst the sectors hit the hardest by the crisis that limited mobility



Hong Kong’s architecture and design in a crisis

of nearly everyone. Data from the Census and Statistics Department showed the construction output in the first quarter of 2020 dropped by 6.5% in nominal terms to \$52.3b.

Architecture and design in a crisis

“The building industry was used to relying on physical, in-person engagements with clients and partners. Border restrictions therefore pose as significant challenge to the building cycle,” LWK + PARTNERS said.

“Site inspection has become difficult for monitoring progress, not to mention the supply chain disruptions and quarantine-induced manpower shortages which could often lead to delays in actual construction work.”

Hong Kong has close to 500,000 registered workers in the sector. This number dropped by 10% in April 2020.

In the last years, LWK + PARTNERS operated using an increasingly agile model that allowed it to integrate vertically and horizontally.

Vertically, the firm’s experts in planning, design as well as operations, together with a Design Research Unit, were consulted on sustainable design, net zero and technology; whilst horizontally, LWK + PARTNERS have a multidisciplinary team and inter-office collaborations across 12 studios in China, Southeast Asia, and Middle East and North Africa.

“Our global studio network ensures that local representatives are physically available for clients and projects, and helps balance the risk of lockdown across different regions

to maintain smooth operations,” the firm said.

“At the same time, we have made significant progress in digital transformation with building project designs and progresses well-documented on BIM-based project management platforms to facilitate cross-border communications and sharing of records.”

The firm noted through the BIM-based project management all parties are well-informed about real-time progress. This also goes hand-in-hand with its vast office network in giving clients and partners a high level of confidence.

Keeping the business running

Amongst LWK + PARTNERS’ projects in Hong Kong include the 19-storey luxury residential development 10 LaSalle, 22-storey “medi-hotel-like” Ventria Residence and luxury residential and hotel development Harbour Glory.

Aedas, which operates 12 offices in Asia, Europe and North America, likewise hurdled the challenge of keeping business running according to the local conditions in its respective branches.

“We have adapted our work methods to suit each country’s requirements, from mass quarantine to social distancing,” Aedas Chairman Griffiths said.

“It has brought challenges in maintaining continuous operation of our offices, communication with external parties, and also to keep each building project on the programme schedule.”

Architects continue to design and advocate highly connected, porous, resilient urban hubs that speaks to Hong Kong’s local communities



Digitalised work methods

In response to this, Aedas implemented a series of measures across its 12 offices, including the use of digitalised working methods and the Aedas Global Design Network. With these, the firm was able to provide unobstructed service to its clients.

He added that its global presence allowed Aedas closely observe how the internet revolution evolved and accelerated during the crisis. This opened an opportunity for the firm to adapt its designs and provide a more flexible arrangements for functional spaces and create the work-live-recreate dynamic for our future communities.

“We continue to design and advocate highly-connected, porous, resilient urban hubs that speaks to our local communities,” Griffiths also said.

“We believe these new urban forms are proven viable solutions for high-density cities and are particularly relevant for a post-pandemic world.”

Aedas was also behind the award-winning The Beacon hotel, the five-level concourse at the Hong Kong International Airport and the redevelopment of The Forum.

In addition, Griffiths noted the global economic recession served as a hurdle to the industry, but not as much in China, Aedas’ main market. This is evident in the decline in the commercial and hospitality sectors, particularly private sectors.



The future of Hong Kong is green



The Beacon Hotel (Photo by Thebeaconhotel.com.hk)

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香港建筑师打造面向未来的城市

(节录)

进一步促进香港与大湾区融合的高度一体化设计及基建预期明年实现。

长久以来，不断恶化的气候危机迫使社会正视可持续发展的必要性，这是我们从过去吸取的经验。有鉴于此，香港建筑师希望香港能趋向更环保的设计观念。

除此之外，预期香港会有更多基建项目与粤港澳大湾区的整体发展接轨。

LWK + PARTNERS 对《Hong Kong Business》表示：“总体来说，建筑行业将倾向于可持续性、净碳零排放、亲生物建筑、健康和城市韧性。”

“因此，我们预计建筑设计将越来越多的与公共基础设施和城市规划相结合，强调与自然的重新连接。”

香港特区行政长官林郑月娥在 2020 届施政报告中表示，香港将在 2050 之前实现碳中和，响应中国国家主席习近平宣布的中国将在 2060 之前实现碳中和的目标。政府还将鼓励减少碳排放、促进绿色交通、并通过绿色金融计划促进投资。

LWK + PARTNERS 提倡设计零能耗建筑，这些建筑利用可再生能源产生相等于其消耗量的电力。在 LWK + PARTNERS 设计研究总监刘少瑜教授进行的一项研究中，他指出，建筑是建造零能耗建筑的关键。

首先，这些建筑着重采用户外平台、空中花园，并尽量以楼梯代替电梯系统。屋顶的设计提供更多的遮阳效果，从而减少能源需求。还可以安装太阳能电池板以收集太阳能。

此外，LWK + PARTNERS 表示，建筑行业越来越趋向利用建筑资讯模型 (BIM) 来规划、设计和建设项目，让建筑师、工程师、发展商等各个单位通过数字模型进行协作。

“以 BIM 为基础的项目管理模式继续扩展到全球的建筑行业，在整个行业内得到更广泛的采用，这是未来的行业趋势。”

在危机中的建筑与设计

LWK + PARTNERS 表示：“建筑行业过去习惯依赖与客户和合作伙伴的实体接触。因此，边界限制对建筑周期构成了重大的挑战。”

“工地视察变得挺困难，影响监督进度，更不用说供应链中断和隔离导致的人力短缺，这往往会导致实际施工工作的延误。”

香港在该行业有近 500,000 名注册工人。这个数字在 2020 年 4 月下降了 10%。

在过去的几年里，LWK + PARTNERS 采用了一种越来越灵活的运营模式，加强企业运营上的垂直及横向一体化。

垂直方面，该公司从规划、设计到运营，加上设计研究组，都可以在可持续设计、净零和技术方面为项目提供专业顾问服务；以横向而言，LWK + PARTNERS 拥有专业的跨领域团队，位于中国、东南亚和中东及北非的 12 家工作室也经常进行跨地合作。

LWK + PARTNERS 表示：“我们的全球工作室网络确保当地代表能够为客户和项目提供实体服务，并有助平衡不同地区的封锁检疫风险，以保持平稳运营。”

“与此同时，我们在建筑项目设计的数字化转型方面取得了重大进展，利用 BIM 项目管理平台上做好设计方案及工作进度的记录工作，以促进跨地沟通和记录共享。”

该公司指出，BIM 项目管理平台可以让参与的各方了解实时进展。这也能支持公司庞大的国际团队网络有效沟通，给予客户和合作伙伴高度的信心。

LWK + PARTNERS 近期的香港项目包括 19 层高的豪华住宅项目瀚名、22 层高的“酒店式医疗”项目曦芸居以及奢华住宅及酒店综合体维港颂。