

ISF/DEMAND Workshop on Office (Work) Futures

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Organisation and Space in the Context
of Office Work Futures

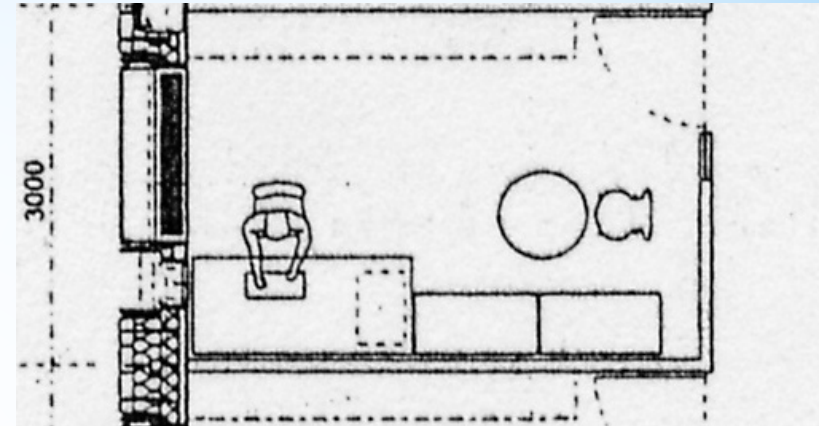
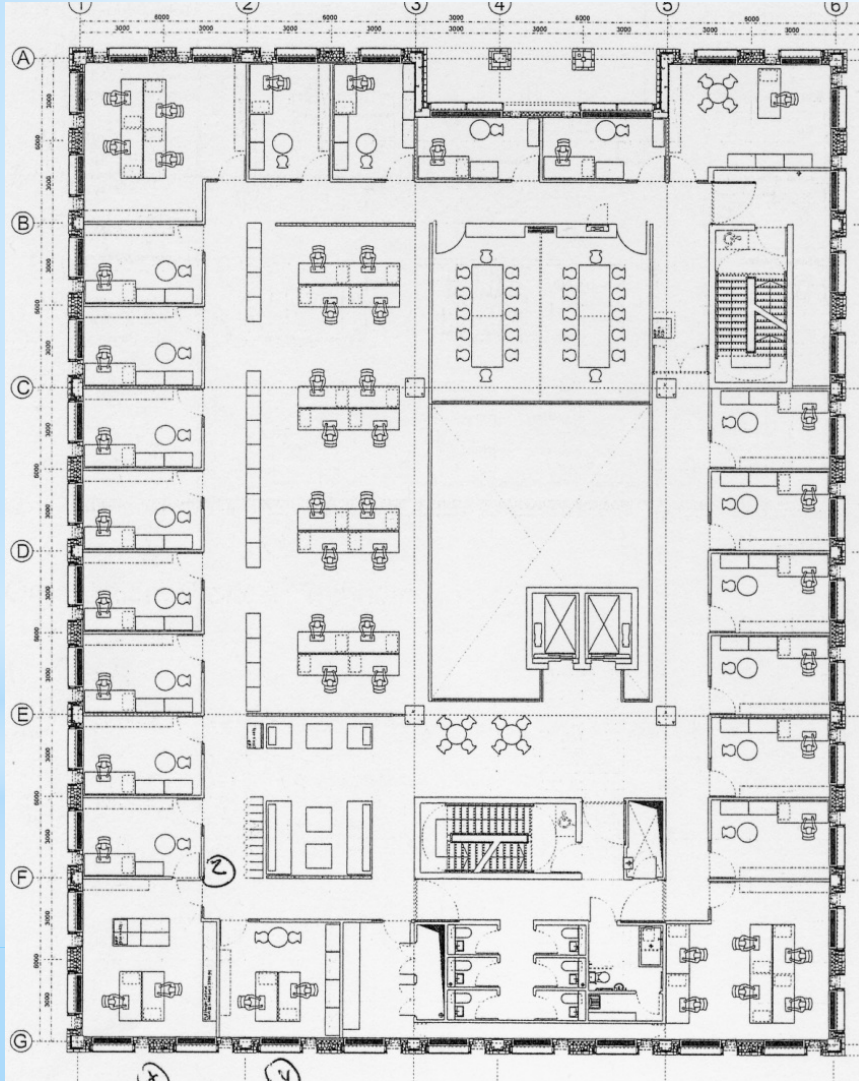
- Space as lived (cf. to conceived/planned/managed)
- Space as intimately connected with power and the changing relations of power in organisations and the economy
- Spaces as multiple and contradictory
- Resistance and refusal of (organised) space

A Politics of Space as Embodied and Lived

“the whole of (social) space proceeds from the body, even though it so meta-morphoses the body that it may forget it altogether” (Lefebvre 1991: 405).

“we need to understand the economy as an always embodied practice”
(Wolf-Meyer, 2009:13)

Standardisation of the Body in Space - Assumes a Homogeneous 'User'





Disembodied Design Versus Embodied Residency

Residency: Negotiating Formal Tidiness and Lived Messiness



Emotions and Spaces

Its never just about the physical space!

Elements of emotions and spaces:

- Spaces for being human
- Spaces for community
- Spaces for gift exchange (caring)
- Spaces for a bit of a laugh
- Spaces for the maintenance and creation of identity (where I feel I can be myself)
- Spaces for resistance
- Spaces of violation

(adapted from Sharon Bolton, 2005, *Emotion Management in the Workplace*, Palgrave)

The Aestheticisation of Work and Organisations

“the colonisation of the idea of the beautiful as an instrument of corporate managerialism” (Hancock & Tyler 2000:109).



Googleplex



'This is a sacred place...' Jazzie B » BMW-Electric-Factory-6





<http://www.idesignarch.com/macquarie-group-revolutionary-workplace-design/>

Contemporary Organisations as Performance Spaces

Employees become living, breathing parts of a brand - and also become their own brand



Spatial Narratives

Managers and designers link spaces to wider 'stories' about the sorts of spaces they are to evoke certain connections and identities as people work and move through these spaces - these are frequently not the traditional picture of the employee, but draw upon other, more positive aspects of people's lives and identities, but they are also spaces constructed for employees to 'live through' - to express aspects of their identity and links with the organisation:

(1) At home at work: the domestication of workspaces

(2) The consuming self

(3) Community life

(4) "Holidaying at Work"* - Fun, Play and Aesthetics

Images of Modern Conceived Workplaces

1. At Home At Work: Domestic Spaces

- “The idea was to create a domestic feel, with living rooms, lounges & kitchens, instead of boardrooms, cubicles & canteens” Morgan Lovell of Stype office in London
- “homely furnishings” of Buckles Solicitors
- “staff are so proud of their new workplace that they have been bringing friends & family to look round at the weekend” of Rackspace

Red Lounge, BBC, DEGW



Hydrogen Energy, Morgan Lovell

2. The Consuming Self



JWT, DEGW

Ebay offices, London, Morgan Lovell

Design theme based on British icons, including the Mini Cooper, Ritz Hotel and William Shakespeare

See also: Dale, Karen. "The Employee as 'Dish of the Day': The Ethics of the Consuming/Consumed Self in Human Resource Management." *Journal of business ethics* 111.1 (2012): 13-24.

BP Restaurant London, DEGW

Much of the other space in the restaurant remains as flexible as possible and creates meeting and brainstorming areas that can be cleared of tables and used for events.

Far more than a design project, the restaurant is a critical element in BP's current process of cultural change and workplace framework.



Capital One, DEGW

Contextualising the Management of Space: The Contradictions of the 'Disappearing' Workplace

- economic rationality behind reshaping
- Work is actually less 'place-bound' – 'electronic envelope' (Felstead, Jewson and Waters, 2006, *Changing Spaces of Work*)
- psychic dismantling of the workplace, BUT organisations also need people to carry their organisational identities with them, since not in the same physical space
- disassembling the traditional associations & constructions of 'work' and 'employee'
- leaves the individual at the free-play of multiple identities
- the closer integration of the circuit of capital and the breakdown of the barriers between 'economy', 'polity' and 'civil society'
- rise of valorisation of 'liquidity' and 'fluidity'

Simultaneous Collusion and Resistance?

The Thick Of It BBC 4 2005

Uses the BBC's own new Media Village to satirise the reshaped workplace

The atrium becomes a setting for 'organisational suicide' and a new spectator-sport - 'bollock-vision'

"He'll love this place. Four ministers in one building. It's his wet-dream".

"I don't know what's worse, watching him slowly rumble towards you like prostate cancer or him appearing suddenly out of nowhere like a severe stroke"



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPmkWvpsHXo>