

HOTEL GUEST
EXPERIENCE REPORT
2021



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When did you last stay in a hotel? For most of us the answer will be, 'before the pandemic hit.' Hotels have been hugely affected by Covid-19, with business travel virtually stopping and international tourism ceasing, before rising again to a mere trickle.

In April 2020, property specialist Knight Frank looked at the speed with which hotel markets recovered from previous downturns in 2001 and 2009. It concluded that 'the potential for the London market to rebound strongly once Covid-19 is contained and travel restrictions eased is positive, albeit the recovery up the curve will take time. Assuming, the hotel market reopens by the end of Q2-2020, we would anticipate a full market recovery within 18-months, by the end of 2021 and with further market specific growth thereafter.'

This is already outdated, since lockdown lasted longer than anticipated. Doubtless there will be some recovery, but we can also expect long-term changes. Business travel is unlikely to bounce back entirely as we have learnt how much faster, cheaper and more convenient meetings can be on Zoom or Teams. Leisure will suffer from our reduced mobility and from the economic downturn.

But hotels will survive in some form, and it will be interesting to see what that form will be. There has already been a blurring between business and leisure travel (termed 'bleisure'), so we can assume that most travellers will have similar desires. Those desires can roughly be defined as comfort, security and the feeling of inhabiting a home from home.

What has changed, however, is the way that we define those terms. 'Security' previously meant little more than having a decent lock on the door and perhaps also believing that the cleaning regime was pretty thorough. Now we are much more concerned about protection from the current virus and from others that may follow.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF>



The Chedi Hotel, Andermatt, Switzerland



Geberit AquaClean Mera shower toilet

This means much more than having a room that has been cleaned well before we arrived. We want to know that the room is capable of being cleaned, and that means getting rid of unnecessary fripperies. Rooms are likely to be much more stark – books and soft furnishings are potential homes for infection. And there may no longer be cleaning of rooms during your stay. Countrywide Hotels, for example, states in its cleaning policy that staff will not enter occupied guest rooms unless asked to do so.

This new approach will affect design as much as operation. Touch-free controls will become increasingly desirable, for example in bathrooms, as well as automated and touchless check in and lift operation. Just as the rapid switch in the way that we work was made possible because the technology for online meetings was already present, albeit under-adopted, so hotels will be able to move to seamless and largely staff-free billing and servicing by using technology that is already available.

Dexter Moren, writing in this report about the new guest experience, outlines just how this may work. He looks at everything from the design of washrooms and restaurants to a return to individual heating and cooling in rooms.

With all these innovations, it is essential that hotels do not become cold and impersonal. The uncluttered hotel room will only seem attractive if it is designed well; the touchless bathroom needs quality sanitary-ware and top-rate finishes if it is still to convey a sense of luxury and comfort.

Oliver Heath, in his piece here on designing for the senses, describes ways in which hotels can enhance our experience by allowing us to adjust lighting to suit our mood or to help us overcome jetlag (once we can all travel again). And he reminds us that it is not just the way that the hotel

looks that matters. It may appear great on the website, but it still will not work if the acoustics are wrong or the finishes don't feel right to the touch. Few things are more irritating than finding yourself clattering on the wrong kind of flooring or listening to other guests flushing the toilet in the middle of the night.

Heath reminds us that, while we may not be receiving as much personal service in the future, we can instead personalise our own spaces – if they are designed in a way that allows us to do so. Increasingly, though, we don't just think about our own experiences, but want to be reassured that the places where we stay are sustainable. Juliet Kinsman describes in her piece some of the pioneering projects that help to minimise the impact of our hotel stays, while still making them enjoyable – and it involves much more than just hanging up the towels for re-use.

Another change is that lines between building types are blurring. As our homes increasingly become our offices, designers of co-living spaces are drawing on many of the tropes of hotel design to make their developments hospitable. So, it is not surprising that hotels are frequently forming part of mixed-use developments. Tanya Griffiths of Kay Elliott Architects discusses the particular challenges, as well as the opportunities presented by these schemes.

In short, hotels will have to change. The unimaginative operator may slosh around some sanitiser and encase a few things in plastic. But those who succeed will do so through intelligent analysis, creative design, clever specification and a real understanding of what tomorrow's customer needs and wants.

Let's pack our bags and find out just how good a hotel experience can be.



LIFTING THE LID ON HYGIENE

Maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene has always been a priority for hotels. However, it has never needed to be a unique selling point for guests. Until now. In a changing world, the onus is on manufacturers, hotels and architects to work together to find not only hygienically-optimised products, but solutions and designs that also reinforce the perception of a clean space. In this chapter, architect Dexter Moren explores the legacy of Covid-19 for the hotel sector. From the safe haven of the bedroom to the sanctuary of the bathroom, what hygienic designs and technology will enhance the guest experience?



DEXTER MOREN
PARTNER AT DEXTER MOREN ASSOCIATES

Dexter is recognised as an industry leader in the hospitality sector. He founded architecture and interior design practice Dexter Moren Associates in London in 1992. A graduate of the University of Witwatersrand in his home city of Johannesburg, New York's Columbia University and the Architectural Association, London, his first hotel commission was the Marine Parade Holiday Inn on Durban's North Beach at the age of 28.

Dexter Moren Associates is now listed in 67th place in the AJ top 100 UK practices.

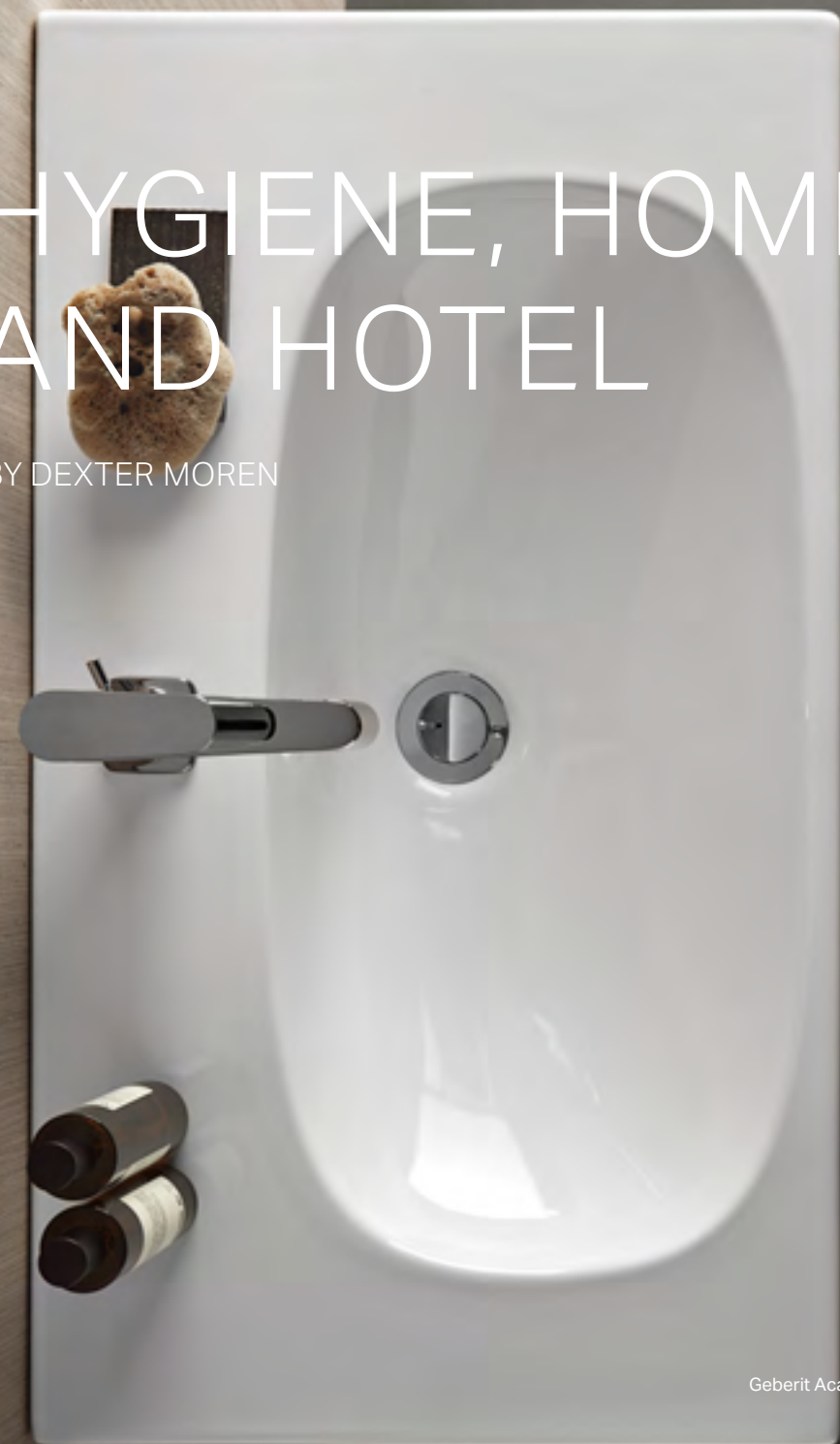
With over 30 years' experience, Dexter has worked with the majority of leading brands in the UK, Europe, Russia, Africa, Middle East and Asia. Current and recent projects include a new co-working brand in Kenya, initiatives to transform hotel lobbies to mix use active space and hotel projects such as Vintry & Mercer and the UK's first Westin Hotel & Resort, both in the City of London.

He is driven by the principles of design excellence and sustainability whilst maintaining the joy of a creative working experience for his team, consultants and clients.

www.dextermoren.com

HYGIENE, HOME AND HOTEL

BY DEXTER MOREN



Geberit Acanto washbasin



Hotel Spa Dr Irena Eris, Krynica, Poland

WHAT WILL THE GUEST EXPERIENCE LOOK LIKE POST COVID-19?

We have all come to terms with two fundamentals following the Covid-19 pandemic: Hygiene and Home, both of which will have lasting consequences on future Hotel design.

From the Hygiene perspective, social distancing and avoidance of touch have changed the natural inclination of everyone on the planet, perhaps forever, because it is through such contact that the virus and, in fact, all viruses are spread.

From the Home perspective we have discovered how effective the various digital interfaces such as Teams and Zoom have made Home a highly effective private office that harks back to a world before open plan offices.


NO TOUCH? ALL THE WAY

If we track the experience of a guest visiting a hotel, "no touch" implies all doors will open automatically. With reception as the first interface, smartphones and the internet have been eroding the traditional reception for some time and Covid-19 has exacerbated the transformation to a no contact experience where, akin to your air or train ticket, you will be able to check in, summon the lift to your level and enter your room without human interface. Checkout will be equally simple via remote credit card transaction.

Your room will have a seal across the door and/or a declaration from your housekeeper that the room has been immaculately cleaned to the "standards" underwritten by each and every brand. Your smartphone will both unlock and activate the door opening. The corridor entrance to your room may even be designated by a CleansePoint feature light/door number/sanitary gel dispenser designed in collaboration between DMA and Imagin lighting.



TOUCH FREE
FLUSH CONTROLS



RIMFREE®
WALL-HUNG TOILET



TOUCH FREE TAPS



KERATECT® GLAZE



Hotel Il Sereno, Torno, Italy

YOUR ROOM, YOUR WAY

Once inside, your room will be your safe haven and you will have the choice to avoid any potential contamination by opting out of the traditional daily clean and bed make-up for the duration of your short-term stay. Unnecessary bric-a-brac and books that underpinned the personality of boutique-styled rooms will have been removed and the resulting aesthetic a more modern 'clean' design facilitating the new intense 'super-hygiene' housekeeping function. So too the bathroom will be clean and purposeful but, given its personalised use, 'touch-free' will be less critical than public washrooms. Sadly, however, there will likely be a return to single use plastic bottles of shampoo and so on, as no-one will want anything that a previous guest has handled.

Dependent on brand level you will be offered app-accessed in-room dining for all meals

(brought like an Amazon delivery & left outside your door) and basic exercise equipment that will interface to programmes on your TV. All marketing collateral, guides and information will also be accessed digitally on the room TV.

The hotel bedroom of the future will likely not be connected to centralised air-conditioning with a return to a technically-advanced development of what used to be disparaging referred to as a 'window-shaker'. The re-emergence of individual room heating and cooling units will be heralded as a further way of social distancing by ensuring each room is its own individual environment with the added benefit, combined with openable windows, of total guest control over heat/cool or just fresh air. Green credentials will be boosted and planners will welcome the reduction in unsightly rooftop plant.



Geberit iCon WC and Variform washbasin



Geberit Smyle Square washbasin

Guests venturing out to the hotel F+B would discover that the ubiquitous buffet has been permanently furloughed, its space repurposed within a more generously spaced seating layout with full height screens. These could lean towards biophilic design by way of internal planting or use of materials such as paper, as traditional in Japan. Or, if metal, using copper - according to the New England Journal of Medicine, these two materials have the shortest viral surface retention time (3 to 4 hours rather than 3 to 4 days for stainless steel, plastic and glass).

If not bagged 'food to go', your meal or drink will be personally ordered and served by a gloved and potentially masked waiter with cutlery delivered or laid in sealed bags.



HANDS-FREE HYGIENE

A visit to the washroom will be strictly hands-free. Both entrance and cubicle doors will open automatically, or by foot or elbow activation. With hygiene as a core principal, paper dispensing will be automated individual sheets at both the toilet and sink, with a preference for no touch combined wash/dry taps to avoid paper wastage altogether. Flushing will similarly be automated or via movement detection.

Further CleansePoint or equivalent high-design dispensers will provide no touch hand gel to avoid further single use plastic bottle proliferation.

Given that the world has embraced the technologies of meeting digitally, the demand for meeting space may be reduced with these spaces possibly

repurposed with private screened digital booths for those who have given up their corporate premises but need city centre workspace on an ad hoc basis.

Equally the next generation of hotel bedrooms might flexibly provide daily private workspace with a bed that folds away to gain daytime or night-time revenue as well as double shift work opportunities for the housekeepers mandated to implement the 'super-clean' changeover early morning and late afternoon.

In conclusion we are all going to be super sensitive about hygiene with touch and close personal proximity protocols changed forever – will we ever shake hands again?





THINK GREEN

Rewind twenty years ago and sustainable hotels and ecotourism was typically considered to be all about nature lovers visiting lodging properties. Now, as the environmental demands of the modern-day traveller evolve, the hotel industry is changing. From large hotel chains to boutique properties alike, great strides are being made to improve environmental performance through the adoption of sustainability strategies that help reduce energy, conserve water and minimise waste. In this chapter, journalist and founding editor of Mr & Mrs Smith, Juliet Kinsman looks at shifting consumer attitudes and explains why sustainability can - and should - play a key role in a hotel's story. Especially since it enriches the guest experience.



JULIET KINSMAN
SUSTAINABLE LUXURY TRAVEL WRITER AND
BROADCASTER, FOUNDER OF BOUTECO.CO

Juliet Kinsman has spent two and a half decades as a journalist talking about the world's most special places in which to spend time. She's the first ever Sustainability Editor of Condé Nast Traveller, her book 'The Green Edit: Travel, Easy Tips for the Eco-Friendly Traveller' is published by Ebury, she's also on BBC Radio London once a month and there's nothing she loves more than sharing enlightening stories of how our travels can be a stronger force for good and so she spent a lot of lockdown talking about how we will travel less, but hopefully we'll travel better. Founding editor of Mr & Mrs Smith and an author of Louis Vuitton City Guides, today luxury to her means sustainable design-led hotels which she celebrates on her platform BOUTECO (a portmanteau of boutique and eco) bouteco.co. As a sustainability consultant, she works with award-winning luxury brands on 'languaging' their environmental and social impact and helps them stand for something and stand out for it.



THE ART OF SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

BY JULIET KINSMAN

Cheetah Plains Lodge,
Sabi Sands Game Reserve, South Africa



Geberit Acanto bath

Thoughtful, intelligent hotel design is sustainability in action. The definition of design is finding aesthetically pleasing solutions to practical problems. Creating forward-thinking hotel design calls for the balancing of function with form – and conveying a positive legacy - at no cost to comfort. Ethical, eco-friendly spaces should follow the golden rules of 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle' while managing a creative interplay between hi-tech and lo-fi. By considering the longer-term benefits of each decision, the more responsible architects and project managers are moving from Fast fashion styled fixtures and fittings towards more purposeful investments. Bringing back-of-house into the overall story not only helps things run more efficiently, it enriches the storytelling.

Being sustainable isn't simply about ticking building-management-system boxes. It's about sharing inspiring stories that educate everyone on why and how a hotel operates in harmony with nature; and how the property promotes the wellbeing of place and people - today, and for tomorrow. Yes, being ecologically sound calls for a hospitality business to optimise performance, durability and efficiency, but it's important to pan out and scrutinise how the project is genuinely enhancing the lives of those in that location, with minimal negative impact to its surroundings – and its stakeholders.



Geberit Setaplano



Ayla Golf Club, Aqaba, Jordan



Our awareness of the need for more transparency around socio-economic impact is increasing too. Better global wealth distribution is one of the more positive effects of eco-tourism, with the potential to build more socially and economically sustainable systems for communities everywhere. Taking into consideration all stakeholders (individuals or groups that have an interest in or are affected by any tourism activity) in all decision-making is the Holy Grail.

When it comes to environmental sustainability, BMS metrics help us track utilities and every aspect of fuel consumption, allowing detailed carbon-footprint analytics. And to qualify as green, a popular measure is that of the volume of greenhouse gases released by a property. Since these greenhouse gases are creating a layer in the atmosphere that's causing the planet to warm up, what's needed is more drawdown.

'Net-zero carbon emissions' are what's declared when a business measures the amount of CO² it's responsible for. This is then balanced out through the purchase of carbon credits to the equivalent amount. However, people are beginning to wise up to the fact that it's best if a company curbs its carbon emissions in the first place.

Valsana was Europe's first Swiss luxury hotel to declare itself 'carbon neutral' thanks to its innovative stored-energy ice-battery. Consumers are increasingly curious about who's using renewables, and energy generated from solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, hydropower resources (directly or indirectly) can give a hotel a certain halo effect. Some properties even wear their limited power as a badge of honour. In Jordan, the 26-room Feynan Lodge in the Dana Biosphere Reserve is entirely solar-powered. Since the fridges essentially run on sunshine, cold storage is limited, and they've chosen to forgo serving meat. An honourable trade-off in these increasingly vegetarian-friendly times.

Asia-based designer and hotelier Bill Bensley recently published his studio's white paper, *Sensible Sustainable Suggestions*. It highlights the need for more responsible construction: "If we build our hotels with a bit more foresight, and we try and consider the communities in which we build, we really can change so many lives." As well as going on to report that the construction sector contributes 23% to air pollution and contributes half of what goes to landfill worldwide, he pushes for the use of recyclable building materials and insulation, and the phasing out of concrete; acknowledging that it is the second most widely used material in the world, with CO² emissions surpassed only by China and the USA.

Operating as closely as possible to 'how Mother Nature intended' is always a winner – which includes capping man-made chemicals in circulation. As many chemicals take decades to break down in our air, and soil and water systems, non-toxic and plant-based bathroom toiletries that are biodegradable are preferable for a brand with a greener manifesto. The hotels going to lengths to strike these otherwise-invisible toxic chemicals from supply chains - from the food they serve us, to the furniture we sleep in - will get into our good books.

Denmark's Herman K is in a converted transformer station in Copenhagen; this 'chemical-free hotel' treated bedrooms with an invisible, scent-free, self-disinfecting titanium dioxide coating. This CleanCoat technology means surfaces only need to be wiped down with electrolysed water. Benzene and formaldehyde are among the toxins found in traditional emulsions, so low-VOC paints (volatile organic compounds) are becoming more favourable. Those with a conscience can rest assured they are sleeping in a non-toxic room – and that those applying the paint have avoided exposure to carcinogenic chemicals. Ozone- and ultraviolet-cleansed pools (or a gentler saline solution) is another plus from a guest perspective. A choice that allows them to skip eye-stinging, allergy-triggering chlorine and enjoy a swim in saltwater at Austria's Naturhotel Forsthofgut.

Back in 1987, Harlem Bruntland's definition of sustainability set the benchmark: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Water is one of our most precious natural resources and the effect of a hotel on local utilities is key – especially in destinations where the water supply is limited. Holidaymakers splash about in more water than locals, with gallons pumped into resorts, pools and golf courses, particularly in the tropics.

Geberit's range of pioneering water-saving products help reduce water consumption significantly. The Geberit Sigma concealed cistern takes a full flush down to a mere 4 litres (with 2.6 litres for a reduced flush). Presently, flushing accounts for a third of domestic water usage, so this is a significant saving when compared to the average 9-litre systems used in most bathrooms. It's innovation and technology such as this that are elemental to eco-design. Guests might not even realise what's at work in their en-suites, but they like to know it's there. So, it's up to hoteliers to eloquently communicate that they respectfully manage water as a shared public resource and operate best practice, rather than simply tap into natural resources with no regard for others, or the bigger picture.

Geberit AquaClean Tuma shower toilet with Variform washbasin and Option Mirror





Geberit Smyle Square WC and Sigma30 flush plate

So how do we identify the good guys? Well, accreditations from third-party assessments help. Certifications awarded for exemplary green building principles include BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method), LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and the WELL Building Standard. The Cradle-to-Cradle label celebrates products created accordingly following 'circular-economy principles', and EarthCheck is a leading system of scientific benchmarking.

Once upon a time, the term 'eco-tourism' might have sent shivers down the spines of those seeking an indulgent five-star vacation. For this reason, some locations chose to play down their green credentials – 'greenhushing' – so as not to risk putting off luxury-loving customers. But we've moved forward a considerable distance in recent years and 'environmentally-friendly' no longer suggests that somewhere is a little rough around the edges. Thank goodness we've all woken up to the fact that eco is not only chic. It's essential - for people, planet and profit.



Geberit Citterio WC and bidet



GEBERIT AQUACLEAN SELA A SUSTAINED EFFECT

A shower toilet requires an electric impulse and an additional quantity of water in order for the spray functionality to be triggered. Despite these additional water and energy requirements, Geberit AquaClean shower toilets have a favourable ecobalance. Taking into consideration the use of toilet paper, they perform identically to conventional toilets. The AquaClean Sela, for example, owes its good ecobalance to recent developments such as the WhirlSpray shower technology, the TurboFlush technology and the ability to operate the heating function only when it is required.

Find out more at [geberit.co.uk/sustainability](https://www.geberit.co.uk/sustainability)



REIMAGINING HOTEL DESIGN

As the trend for selling 'experiences' and creating an escapism for guests continues, so too does the value of creating a unique, positive guest experience – especially as it helps build stronger memories and ensure customers keep on coming back. However, with our modern lives consumed by technology and our 'always-on' mentality, what are the opportunities for creating the ultimate space for rest and recuperation – especially in the tranquil setting of the hotel bathroom? In this chapter, architectural interior designer, Oliver Heath explores the importance of sensory design and how well considered spaces could be the key to enhancing guest experiences.



OLIVER HEATH
ARCHITECTURAL/ INTERIOR DESIGNER AND
SPECIALIST IN BIOPHILIC DESIGN

Oliver Heath is an Architectural and Interior Designer and founder of Oliver Heath Design, who are recognised as global experts in Biophilic Design. His work is expressed in a number of mediums including the design for built environment, writing and the media; having worked for a number of television channels including BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and the National Geographic channel. He has acted as a spokesperson for the likes of the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC), the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP). Oliver spends much of his time lecturing architects and designers across Europe, the Middle and Far East on human centred design – communicating the many benefits and ways to create happy, healthy buildings.

www.oliverheathdesign.com

DESIGNING FOR THE SENSES

BY OLIVER HEATH



Geberit AquaClean Sela shower toilet

It goes without saying that modern travel is disorientating. As we are seamlessly whisked from one space to another, our bodies take longer to adjust to the new time zones, climates, physical, social and cultural changes around us. We believe there is an opportunity for designers to acknowledge this through human centered design; to create a guest experience that positively enhances this transition, putting them into a better physical and mental state of wellbeing, allowing them to make the most whatever activity their travel requires, be that business or social.

And why wouldn't a hotel want to make their guests feel as good as possible? As we will find out, it's good for people and also good for business.

Perhaps now more than ever we are seeing a shift in interior design – away from simply delivering an aesthetic approach expressing grandeur and extravagance, to one that contributes and connects more deeply towards an improved physical and emotional experience. This human-centred design approach is becoming an industry accepted aspiration, with building certification systems such as the WELL and Fitwel Building Standards turning their attention to hospitality spaces. These standards look at how to create built environments to be as healthy as possible, measuring qualities such as air, water and light quality, as well as acoustic and thermal comfort.

In addition to these physical attributes, we believe that in order to achieve healthy spaces, the human senses must be considered. We are constantly receiving and processing sensory stimuli, much of the time we become habituated to this, so it is subconsciously filtered out. But when we travel to new spaces and places, we become heightened to the unfamiliar sensory stimuli we receive, making us more open to their impact. So it makes sense that it should play a role in the design of those spaces to enhance and gently recuperate us. Especially as the hospitality industry reopens and we begin to go back to hotels, the 'guest experience' will have to be ever more considered to calm 'new normal' anxieties.



Geberit Xenos² washroom range with Cleanline shower drain

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Perhaps the deepest impact is in lighting; circadian rhythms are a hugely important consideration, particularly when travel is in the equation. This is our 24-hour sleep-wake cycle that can be thrown off by a change in time zones or too much artificial lighting at the unusual times of day. Often, when using any form of transport, we are not in control of the light levels and this can throw our body clocks out of sync.

Feeling groggy on your first day of a trip isn't ideal. When waking up in the morning, being able to flood your hotel room with natural light can help to get circadian rhythms back on track. To maximize on opportunities for this, bathrooms and bedrooms are being combined to allow light in from all available windows. This can be done by having no walls, glass walls, or flexible screening between the bedroom and bathroom in place of hard walls. Opening the room up in this way can also allow for a sense of prospect. Research into visual preference and spatial habitat response shows that unimpeded views across a space can reduce fatigue, as well as stress, boredom, irritation and perceived vulnerability, and also improve comfort.



Geberit Xeno² washroom range

Further, whilst jet lag gets most of the blame for a bad night's sleep after a long journey, something that many don't consider is that lighting can lend a helping hand if we get it right. Adaptability means it can fulfill any purpose, be that unpacking and settling in, getting ready for the day ahead, or relaxing and winding down before going to bed. This includes dimming features and low-level lighting to guide occupants

through an unfamiliar space, especially at night, rather than simple on/off switches. Orientation lighting in the bathroom is now commonplace as it not only helps preserve the sanctuary of sleep, but also helps create the perfect sensory ambiance. As such it is an integral and harmonious design feature in products such as Geberit's AquaClean Mera shower toilet, the Geberit ONE mirror and the Sigma50 flush plate.



Artificial circadian lighting systems can also help. LED lights that subtly alter their colour to match external light conditions – brighter and bluer in the middle of the day, warmer and more orange by night – which mimics the sunset and sunrise. These can be integrated into the architecture of a space or included in room features such as 'bodyclocks'.

These are alarm clocks with lights that fade into darkness through a 'sunset' to aid sleep and bring in morning 'sunrise' to wake us up in a more natural way. These often come with optional nature sounds, such as birdsong, for a multi-sensory experience, which could even use local sounds to aid placemaking.





Geberit Variform lay on washbasin and iCon WC



On that note, creating a positive acoustic environment is another aspect that greatly impacts guest experience as a hotel room will never sound like our own bedroom, no matter its price. There are lifts, noisy guests, bars and restaurants, perhaps a leaky gutter, and unfamiliar traffic noises outside. Effective noise insulation should mean that guests don't have to rely on a stash of earplugs to keep sounds out, and also ensure any noises in the room such as from an electric light switch or drainage piping are kept to a minimum.

Our haptic connection to spaces will also be heightened and this is an opportunity to add a more mindful quality, literally connecting the guest to that time and space. Research shows that tactile stimulation can be used to reduce stress, to energise or to relax, and that certain parts of the brain respond specifically to pleasant textures. Sensory material contrasts are key, delivering changes in temperature, texture, and solidity. So mindful hospitality spaces are considering the guest journey as they transition between travel and relaxation, be that with a warm shower, soft towels, cool porcelain bathroom fittings, textured flooring, soft carpets or cool cotton sheets. Incorporating natural materials can also appeal to our sense of touch, such as the Geberit Sigma21/50 flush plates, which are available in real slate. And, as research shows again and again, the use of timber is also fundamental to user experience, helping to relax and restore. It's a material that is used frequently by Geberit in its bathroom furniture, including the new Geberit ONE range, which is available in walnut, real wood veneer. Timber even improves sleep; one study demonstrated that real pine timber beds reduce heart rates by 3500 beats per day (or should we say night).



Geberit Citterio furniture



Geberit ONE walnut washbasin and Geberit AquaClean Sela shower toilet



Hotel Il Sereno, Torno, Italy

FINALLY, FOCUSING ON NATURE AND USING ELEMENTS OF BIOPHILIC DESIGN CAN ENHANCE A MULTI-SENSORY DESIGN STRATEGY AT THE SAME TIME AS BRINGING IN LOCAL CHARACTER.

Staying away from home can confuse our senses, so using natural colours, imagery, materials and optional scenting that are reminiscent of the local surroundings can help to ground occupants and familiarise them in their new environment. This is an opportunity for each hotel to have variation in how they look and feel and, again, can aid placemaking by allowing guests to adjust to a consistent aesthetic according to the setting's character. This isn't just good for the occupant, it's good for business too, with one US study finding that hotel rooms with views onto natural features raised room rates by 12% and nature filled hotel lobbies can increase dwell rates by 36%.



Our new normal means that everything is under some state of change, so it might as well be for the better too. Carefully considering lighting, acoustics, textures and biophilia in hospitality environments to create positive sensory environments can improve both physical and mental health and wellbeing, something we could all do with a little bit more of right now.



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Geberit ONE washbasin and mirror with Geberit AquaClean Mera shower toilet



Sound

Consider the auditory sense, an extremely powerful sense and one that is constantly working to decipher information. Our ears work even when we're asleep, with the brain continuing to process the sounds it detects, albeit in a different way. However, we also need to escape from sound when we need to. There are several ways to manage the acoustics and contain noise within a space, both inside the room and behind the scenes. For example, installing acoustic innovations such as decoupled pre-walls and acoustically optimised pipework can make a significant contribution to the creation of a quieter, more relaxing environment.



Smell

Often overlooked, scent has a strong effect on our experiences because it's processed in the olfactory cortex of the brain's limbic system. Naturally, this can have a negative effect in the washroom. Lavatory odours are generally dealt with by masking the unpleasant smell with a scented spray. The latest thinking in odour extraction technology takes a more innovative approach, by filtering the air within the space to neutralise unwanted odours.



Sight

When lit up with glaring light, even the most beautifully designed interior spaces can have a negative effect on the human eye. Exposure to harsh light sources, especially in the middle of the night can shock us and stimulate our sense of alertness, disturbing natural sleeping patterns. In the dark, opt for automatic lights that cast soft light onto features such as smart shower toilets and cisterns featuring orientation lights, that guide user around the bathroom space.



Touch

A deep understanding of the importance of touch has allowed bathroom designers and manufacturers to adapt and embrace the ways in which we interact with our spaces and the technology within them. From heated toilet seats and remote controls to hygienic, presence-detecting flush mechanisms and no-touch taps, many bathroom features are becoming even more user-friendly and tactile.



MIXING IT UP

Mixed use properties can deliver many benefits for hotel guests. Thanks to the dynamic use of space, occupants have access to a wealth of distinct experiences at their finger tips from restaurants and shops, to gyms and cinemas. However, this 'one-stop-shop' approach can naturally present design challenges, not least the issue of noise from increased footfall and adjoining spaces. In this chapter, architect, Tanya Griffith, explores the solutions that can be introduced, especially when it comes to acoustics and preserving the hotel stay as a sanctuary away from busy life.



TANYA GRIFFITHS
CHARTERED ARCHITECT AT KAY ELLIOTT

Tanya is a director at Kay Elliott and a Chartered Architect with over 15 years of practice experience. She worked at Foster and Partners for 10 years working on major public buildings and private residences including for the Foster family in Europe. Before joining Kay Elliott in 2011 she was the founding director of the Architecture Centre for Devon and Cornwall. Her specialist areas of expertise in architecture include mixed use and hotel developments, leisure and cultural attractions including zoological design, commercial projects for digital media, primary and specialist healthcare facilities. She has a particular interest and a Masters in sustainable heritage management. Tanya is an advocate for multi-disciplinary design collaboration and is experienced in working from urban design through architecture to interior and product design.



HOTELS IN THE MIX

BY TANYA GRIFFITHS

Harbour Beach Hotel near Salcombe

A HOME FROM HOME

Today's hotel guests and visitors are increasingly looking for more unique and personalised experiences, from the moment they step into the lobby, to the restaurant, hotel room and bathroom. As architects specialising in hotels from boutique to budget with expertise in the experiential design of architecture, interiors and the public realm, we are finding that there is a strong trend towards diversification and mixed-use.

This is true of both urban settings, - in city and town centres, and in rural contexts - resorts and country hotels. We also see that theme parks, heritage and leisure attractions are exploring accommodation as an extension and diversification of their guest experience.



Geberit ONE washbasin



Geberit iCon wall-hung WC and VariForm washbasin

For designers this creates some very exciting challenges and opportunities to explore the interactions between uses and users, overlaid with the response to the particularities and opportunities of any given site and its context. Our responses are always rooted in the place, drawing on what is distinctive and will make the experience memorable.

Mixed-use development inherently generates tensions in the design brief. A primary design parameter for the sector is competition for space and views. For most developments this can have a very direct impact on values; the rate for a room,

serviced or self-catered apartment and the open market value of residential and other commercial uses.

From an operational and environmental perspective, good acoustics are also paramount, no guest wants to hear the hubbub of the bar below or the gurgle of another guest's bath. We have discussed with clients recent research from Geberit which revealed that overall 38% of respondents were more affected by noise inside a building, such as bathrooms and heating systems, than they were by traffic from outside. Almost a third who had stayed in a hotel in the last 12 months had been disturbed by bathroom noise at night.



To avoid compromising the guest experience we look to solutions for sound optimised drainage piping, such as Geberit's Silent-db20, which can help reduce noise transfer from flushing water, washbasins or showers. Likewise, wall-hung toilets with concealed cisterns and pre-wall frames, such as Geberit Duofix, decouple from the construction, preventing noise from transmitting through the structure into adjacent rooms.

Naturally, it's not just acoustics in the bathroom that requires consideration. In a more complex mixed-use development, the retail delivery should not provide an unwanted alarm call for a hotel guest, nor should the hotel's kitchen fumes impact on the neighbouring residential development. Understanding the importance of guest arrival - balancing transport, parking and servicing demands - is another important consideration when combining functions.





Geberit Smyle Square washbasin



Geberit Acanto floorstanding WC

MEMORABLE
FOR ALL THE RIGHT REASONS

In coastal and waterfront locations, which characterise much of our hotel work, the architectural response is heavily influenced by the premium on views and balancing these for different users and visual impacts on the townscape.

Abbey Sands replaced a derelict hotel on the sea front of Torquay's main promenade, accommodating three use types including 14 residential apartments, 13 holiday apartments and 4 restaurants. The self-catering provision has been designed to achieve Visit England's five star standard. The restaurant access and servicing is to the sea front side, the residential and holiday apartments all have sea views and have beach entrances to the front and parking access to the rear hidden into the cliff.

At the intersection of the uses and movement around the building is the integration of the public realm. The building has carved out additional external and elevated terrace space by modifying the road layout taking advantage of the proximity to the beach and the orientation capturing the spirit of a more Mediterranean climate which has also inspired the 'new Riviera' style of the architecture. The value of external space to these operators has come into focus during Covid-19 as businesses adapt to outdoor and socially distanced provision.



Another example of a mixed-use intervention within a coastal urban context is development At Harbourside for THAT Group. A former car park site with small high street shops fronting it, this 7 storey development features a 132-bed upper midscale hotel for Hilton, 4 units of restaurant/retail and 33,000 sqft of commercial office space. It reflects the transition away from predominantly retail to a much more mixed and experience economy-led development as a stimulus for regeneration.

With a complex urban form to maximise the development's footprint and views while mitigating impact, the acoustic separation of bedrooms but also between the different uses and the servicing and clear circulation has been a major consideration. There is significant value added by the development's new range of users and diverse, very visible activity and footfall to the high street.



A third example, situated in the Salcombe estuary, the new Harbour Beach Hotel (Tides Reach) incorporates a comprehensive remodelling of an existing former hotel, new build facilities and waterfront residential accommodation.

This hotel with 44 bedrooms, restaurant, bar and spa, and 10 new luxury waterfront apartments is set in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is conceived as two interlocking buildings running perpendicular to the water's edge. The design echoes the traditional boat building structures, sail lofts and boat houses seen along the estuary. This design approach takes advantage of the remarkable views across the estuary, whilst minimising the proposal's visual impact.

The scheme is further enhanced by an innovative landscaping proposal incorporating external dining terraces setting the hotel and its visitors around a unique natural pond. This reflects again the intention to create distinctive, desirable destinations with external social spaces defining the way in which the building responds to its context mediating between the hotel functions and other uses.



Harbour Beach Hotel near Salcombe



Abbey Sands Resort, Torquay



The Chedi Hotel, Andermatt, Switzerland

COMMON TO ALL THESE MIXED-USE DESIGNS IS THE WISH TO SEE A THRIVING DEVELOPMENT, WHERE THE INTEGRATION OF USES AND PUBLIC SPACE IS WELL PLANNED, BUT ALSO ONE THAT POSITIVELY IMPACTS THE WIDER CONTEXT, STIMULATING THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND THE SOCIAL INTERACTION THAT WE KNOW MAKE SUCCESSFUL PLACES.

Noisier than ever?

Our ears work even when we're asleep, with the brain continuing to process the sounds it detects, albeit in a different way. And when we are awake, we need to consider the impact that irritating sounds could have on our mental wellbeing – a dripping tap or flushing toilet, for example.

We surveyed more than 2,000 adults across the UK to get a greater insight on the impact of unwanted internal noise and, in particular, bathroom noise. As part of this research, we found that almost a third (30%) of respondents who had stayed in a hotel in the last 12 months had been disturbed by bathroom noise at night. What was clear, too, from our research was the impact of this; more than half (51%) of respondents cited unwanted internal noise as having a negative impact upon their wellbeing.

Noise is clearly an issue. So what solutions are available for architects and designers to meet these very obvious challenges?

From acoustically optimised pipework with noise reducing properties, to decoupled pre-walls for added noise insulation, manufacturers are constantly innovating sound-proofing solutions that help to mitigate the age-old issue of sound from flushing toilets and other unwanted bathroom noise. Acoustics is one of Geberit's ten core research areas and our unique building technology and acoustics laboratory enables our team of acousticians to research products and technologies.

Find out more at [geberit.co.uk/acoustics](https://www.geberit.co.uk/acoustics)



Acoustically-optimised pipework

Sound-optimised drainage piping can reduce noise transfer from flushing water, washbasins or showers. Geberit Silent db-20 is manufactured with mineral reinforced polyethylene for a denser materials and fittings to dissipate noise at impact zones.

Flush actuation

Rubber-tipped push rods embedded inside the flush mechanism reduces the impact sound of flushing the toilet in adjacent rooms.

Wall-hung WC with concealed cistern

Wall-hung toilets with concealed cisterns and pre-wall frames decoupled from the construction, for example, prevent noise from travelling down the wall and through the floor. Opting for a toilet mounted using a frame such as Geberit Duofix can almost halve the decibels produced by a traditional floor standing toilet.

Geberit iCon wall-hung WC and Sigma50 flush plate



GEBERIT **FLUSH PLATES**

Geberit flush plates are the defining luxury finishing touch for any bathroom. Combining visual elegance with innovative functions and a range of sumptuous finishes, they are an essential reflection of individual style.

THE GEBERIT ASPIRE COLLECTION

The Aspire Collection is the new name for our premium offering, formerly known as the Geberit Bathroom Collection. This exclusive collection includes well-known ranges such as Xeno², iCon and the Geberit AquaClean shower toilet.

Find out more at geberit.co.uk/aspire



THE GEBERIT SELECT COLLECTION

With 11 ranges, the new Select Collection embodies the very essence of Geberit. It benefits from a host of functional, affordable and on-trend design solutions for the mid-market.

Find out more at geberit.co.uk/select



ABOUT GEBERIT

The Geberit Group is the European market leader for sanitary products. A respected Swiss brand, it has a well-established reputation for delivering premium quality products, inspiration and innovation across every aspect of its business.

For years Geberit has maintained a very strong presence within Europe, offering unique added-value within both the sanitary technology and the bathroom ceramics sectors.

Sustainability has long been part of the Geberit identity, for example, in its pioneering work in water-saving products, new logistics solutions, energy-efficient production plants and its delivery of responsible training within the industry.

Find out how we can support your next project at [geberit.co.uk](https://www.geberit.co.uk)



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