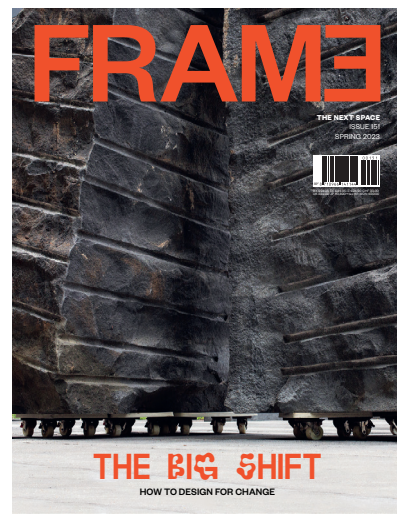
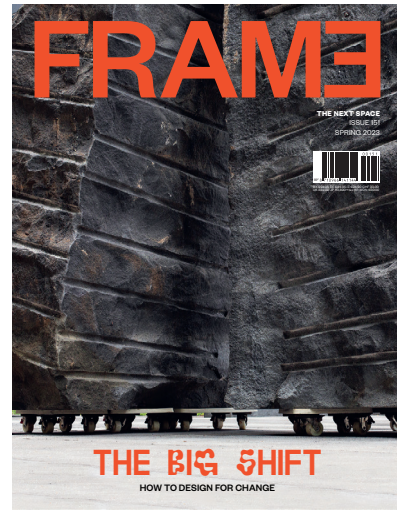


“Can hybrid hospitality future-proof ADAPTIVE REUSE?”
FRAME; APR 2023

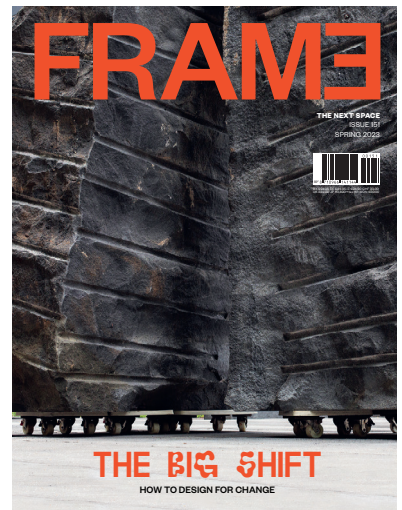


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Can hybrid hospitality future-proof **ADAPTIVE REUSE?**

As adaptive reuse projects become the norm, designers must reckon with the prospect of preparing a building for multiple generations of purpose. Can hybrid hospitality venues provide a suitable foundation?



Adaptive reuse projects are having a moment in the sun following a wave of prominent hospitality venues set in high-profile buildings, including former prisons, factories and government administration blocks. The practice has already seen a surge in the residential sector – a RentCafe report found adaptive reuse apartments to be 25 per cent more popular than new builds, for example – but hospitality remains the most publicly accessible platform for repurposed space.

As choice inner-city space becomes scarce, developers are eschewing blank canvases in favour of existing foundations that simultaneously improve sustainability credentials and instil a sense of heritage and narrative. With time and cost factors too – such projects reportedly cost 16 per cent less than ground-up construction and reduce construction timelines by 18 per cent – Deloitte predicts that some 90 per cent of future developments will fall under the adaptive reuse banner. How can designers ensure that such spaces can be adapted further, extending the lifespan of a building beyond a single renovation?

FLEXI-FUTURES

‘There are two big ideas embedded in the design of Hotel Marcel,’ says Bruce Becker, president of developer Becker + Becker, regarding the 165-key conversion of the brutalist Marcel Breuer-designed Pirelli office building in New Haven, Connecticut. ‘The first is to celebrate the building through the spirit of every detail of its creative reinvention as a boutique hotel. The second is to recycle the building – and many of its interior components – in a way that can serve as a model for sustainable hotel development.’

Indeed, great effort has gone into supercharging the hotel’s green credentials; Passive House design certification, power-over-ethernet control systems and over 1,000 photovoltaic roof panels all contribute to an immediate high sustainability standard. But what happens if the project shutters, and the next owner decides to turn it into something other than a hotel? No operator wants to admit that their project might not be around forever, but if the majority of future developments are set to occupy previously converted spaces, then an ability to flexibly adapt down the line – and perhaps become something else entirely once again – will be the major challenge for designers tasked with renewing old buildings.

It’s Hotel Marcel’s forward-thinking internal compositions – blurring the lines between hotel, office and F&B functions – that are set to best address this multi-generational issue. ‘There’s a renewed focus on creating agile and flexible designs that morph to suit [guest] needs, whether that’s in the context of business or leisure, relaxation or play,’ said Larry Traxler, senior vice president of Hilton Hotels and Resorts’ global design services, in FRAME 150 (see p. 41).

‘The evolution will be more agility and flexibility, and it will bleed into every aspect of the built environment in a way that creates better human usage.’

MULTI-GENERATION MILEAGE

Often, when a historical building adopts the stringent and specific layouts, equipment and flow states required by hotels, restaurants and bars, it can be difficult for these buildings to then become anything else. But when a hybrid strategy is adopted, and spaces are designed to transform among multiple functionalities, the transmission between guest usage and the next adaptation can be easier.

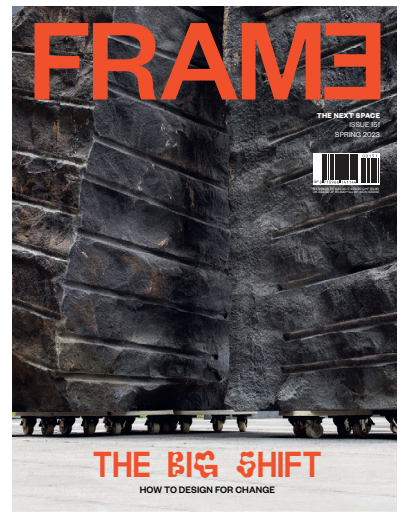
Adaptive reuse projects rarely offer a consistent set of design challenges beyond demands to honour the past while serving the present. They can range from massive, wholesale transformations like the 743,000-m² neighbourhood that now sits within Battersea Power Station in London, to more intimate and considered adaptations like those found within the Slow portfolio.

Where shopping-and-leisure destination Battersea Power Station is unlikely to ever be short on like-for-like retail, office or hospitality replacements to fill any vacant lots, niche boutique adaptations like Slow’s forthcoming Flussbad – a transformation of the Weimar-era Lichtenberg Municipal River Baths – may not find it so easy to draft something in without disrupting the project’s wider coherence. In terms of design, however, the fluid, campus-esque approach of multiple functions spread across Flussbad may ultimately prove key in unlocking future generations of the complex.

WHAT ABOUT TECH?

Looking further ahead, technology is likely to play a more significant role in these hybrid foundations, despite the focus on the historical elements of adaptive reuse. Envisioned as part of the Gettys Group’s Hotel of Tomorrow think-tank, OBM’s ultra-modern transformable guestroom concept might not seem like the most appropriate presence in a sensitive regeneration project, but the set of ideals it channels – fluid, retractable and revealable features in a fixed space that easily shift between functions – will give adaptive reuse projects longer lifespans.

With adaptive reuse built on the value of change, it follows that the most effective and responsible adaptations will champion significant updates, be that across entire sites or within specific spaces. In this new landscape, hybrid hospitality design can provide a valuable blueprint. **KT**



SITE-SPECIFIC INSERTION

For Blue Bottle Coffee in Zhang Yuan, a recently refurbished historical garden in Shanghai, Neri&Hu took a twofold approach to site-specificity. Due to the preservation guidelines of the listed *shikumen* building, the existing brick walls, doors and windows are left untouched. To counterbalance the aesthetic heaviness of the building’s bones – and in reference to the informal constructions the Shanghainese once used to extend their private *shikumen* spaces into the adjacent alleyways – Neri&Hu erected a roofed structure of brushed stainless steel, finishing its surface with perforated and bent steel.