



2023 **DIRECTORY**

COMMERCIAL-INTERIORSUK.COM



**COMMERCIAL
INTERIORS UK**



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OPINION

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NIGEL TRESISE

DIRECTOR: **ALIGN**

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LET'S BE AMENABLE TO AMENITY DESIGN!



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AMENITY DESIGNS NEED TO BE SPACES FOR ALL. SPACES TO LINGER AND LOUNGE, SEE AND BE SEEN, PARTICIPATE AND WORK, MEET AND SOCIALISE, EAT AND DRINK, BE ENTERTAINED OR INFORMED.

Sometimes it seems the wider world hasn't quite woken up to the potential of the most exciting area of commercial design right now. What is it? Well, for once, it's not retail, hospitality or the workplace per se – but amenity design, a fusion of all these and more. It may not yet have its own dedicated media titles or awards categories, but landlords and developers are happily embracing the opportunity to do something more innovative and community-focused with their ground floor spaces – and across many sectors too, from student accommodation, BTR and multi-unit residential spaces to Cat A office developments and even the public areas of hotels.

The trend has many roots, from the boom in rentable accommodation to the faltering fortunes of retail and, of course, the pandemic, which led to commercial bosses having to work harder to lure office staff back through the provision of attractive amenities. Tenanted developments, meanwhile, need to incorporate a good level of amenity design just to compete.

For designers, the challenges are inspiring. We've talked so long about fusions – domestic and hospitality

or workplace and hospitality, for example, whilst the contract sector has responded well with products that fulfill the durability demands of one sector and the seductive textures and colours of another. We're now seeing the arrival of spaces that fuse and flex even further. Adaptability is the key when space-planning for the potential inclusion of co-working zones, lounge and relaxation areas, cafes and restaurants, private dining, gyms and wellness areas and hireable event spaces. In some cases, these amenity floors are opening up to the public too, with branded franchises coming in to run the hospitality arm and offer day-to-night transitions. We see the potential for further exciting future fusions too – exhibition and art gallery takeovers, for example, as well as pop-up retail by localised indie operators or brand launches by more established players.

What are the demands on design? Space-planning needs to incorporate zones for different and distinct purposes, but with adaptable borders – planting and screens are particularly useful here. Furniture needs to be loose and flexible enough for re-configurations, from adjustable table heights to a real variety of seating typologies, whilst lighting needs to work from day to night, from task

lighting through to moody evening 'cocktail hour' settings.

Amenity designs need to be spaces for all. Spaces to linger and lounge, see and be seen, participate and work, meet and socialise, eat and drink, be entertained or informed.

Bring it on! ■

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NIGEL TRESISE ALIGN

Nigel Tresize is the Director/ Owner of multi-disciplinary practice align, working across hospitality, workplace, mixed-use and residential schemes. He writes and speaks regularly on design, workplace and sustainability and is a Member of WOD's Sustainable Design Collective.