

# The post Covid world: architecture, internal spaces, public spaces and streetscapes

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Submitted : August 2020, Accepted August 2020, Published September 2020

Citation: Lesley Pocock, Reza Shams . The post Covid world: architecture, internal spaces, public spaces and streetscapes. Middle East Journal of Business. 2020; 14(3): 20-25 . DOI: 10.5742MEJB.2020.93871

## Abstract

This short review looks at the architectural needs of the post Covid-19 world; new design requirements and how they will affect the way we work, the way we live and how we participate in recreational activities.

**Key words:** Covid-19, architecture, design, internal spaces, public spaces, streetscapes.

## Background

The Covid pandemic has seen lockdowns around the world in an attempt to stop the spread of contagion. It has also found our health infrastructure severely lacking in terms of accommodating the huge volume of patients. Thus we have seen the use of hospital ships, tents and the commandeering of large public buildings to house the sick.

In many countries it has also become a matter of public policy to even out the spread of contagion to allow current medical infrastructure and equipment to meet the needs of patients over the long term.

Without a huge change in human thinking to ensure this never happens again, (which will take a huge variety of political and social reforms, proper care of our planet and others species and standards we have never met) then the functioning authorities are going to have to plan for our 21st century plagues as never before.

Even if the world develops the intellect, enlightenment and commitment to end these man-made plagues they will come about more often in the current unsanitary condition of an over populated planet and it will take a long time to restore health to both human habitats and natural habitats.

This will have an immediate effect on architecture, internal spaces and public spaces.

Currently the open spaces which were designed for free movement have already become places of social separation with their restrictions and dotted lines and methods to keep people apart rather than bring them together. Indoor gathering spaces have mostly been closed and places such as mosques and churches that were designed to bring people together have also closed.

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We may see, from a design perspective, architecture that can be readily made to fit multiple purposes and multiple situations as required. We may for example, see, from the design perspective, an ability to make a normal hospital patient room more flexible to increase capacity or be easily converted into an ICU.

### Inner spaces and public places

During the Covid-19 pandemic access to the wider world has become restricted and confinement to the inner world and inner space is now de rigueur and often mandated.

The push to overcome the sickness of crowded cities has been to move people outside the city and its buildings and workplaces and inside their domestic dwellings. Being kept inside the home may become a regular feature of domestic life and working life of people living in the post pandemic world. In many ways however the pandemic was caused by the city and city life and the needs of the city and its crowded malls and market places which were once the places to escape to.

The pandemic will require architects and city planners to reevaluate their life's work, and what it might mean to design for a world when it comes to how we gather in and use large public spaces, like airports, hotels, hospitals, shopping centres, and offices.

In the past, drainage, sewage and closed sanitation systems were the response to earlier communicable disease such as cholera and the bubonic plague as was the piping of fresh clean water into cities and homes.

New building or the pre-existing buildings will require a new healthy living approach. We may even go back to enclosed work spaces and away from the general open plan aspects of work spaces that have been introduced over the past decades. Of course separate spaces are less maneuverable and will take up a larger footprint.

Factors such as air conditioning and air flow, people flow, sanitary surfaces and door handles, will play their part as may the staggering of work hours to keep office inhabitation down to as few workers at a particular time, as possible.

More automation will be incorporated into architectural design such as auto-opening doors, voice-activated elevators, phone or hands free swipe card room entry, and automated light switches and temperature controls. We may even have inbuilt health security features such as temperature screening of people entering or even some form of UV disinfecting and automated facilities in washrooms and toilets. Architects and designers will increasingly call on antibacterial fabrics and finishes, including those that already exist and many other options will now be developed.

We have the technological/ICT capacity to allow people to work from home but more will be required to allow the move to working from home to meet all aspects of an office space, including meetings and to facilitate the human interactions that lead to intellectual discussion and innovation in the pre Covid office situation.

Working from home saves pollution, city congestion and traveling costs and time. This may see a transition in the cities to allow in more nature and open spaces. Of course the risk is that both cities and suburbs become a homogenous, large, low level commercial and light industrial space.

This is also true of public spaces whose sole aim to date have been to bring people together in an attractive and welcoming atmosphere, In the time of pandemics this is the antithesis to societal needs. Certainly parks and gardens and beaches will exist but Covid-19 has seen these become an infection source as everyone wants to visit en masse. New design of public spaces and gardens may include more walking paths to keep people moving and less space to sit and stay.

With people confined at home, the domestic architecture also comes into play and we need to look at the future uses and needs of the domestic environment other than the 'dormitory suburbs' which are the feature of most cities currently.

### Conclusion

The future requirements on all abodes; domestic, medical, working spaces and industrial places need, to be healthy with fresh air and natural light, but also an environment that creates mental and psychological relief. They will thus need to have good design, architectural merit as well as meet the principals of hygiene and sanitation.

Covid-19 will bring about many unforeseen changes to our lives but it also provides the opportunity to make our homes, our workplaces, our cities and our recreation areas more adaptable and more effective in providing the new ways we will need to live our lives.

## Streetscapes before and after the Covid-19 pandemics

The Haj - Mecca in Saudi Arabia - Pre Covid-19



Post Covid-19



Turkey

Streetscape Pre Covid-19



Post Covid-19



## Around the Middle East - Covid-19 Pandemic

Tehran



## Around the Middle East - Covid-19 Pandemic

Dubai

