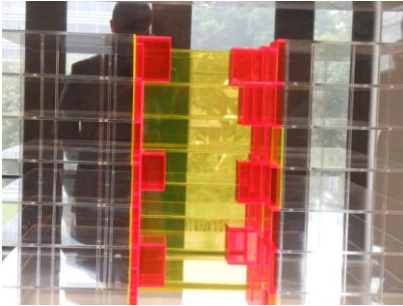


Middle of the Edge?

Wednesday 25 September 2013 Alphabeta, Finsbury Square, London EC2



The continuing popularity of London as a destination both for tourists and businesses leads to constant pressure on existing space and a demand for more. So, is there such a thing as a 'Fringe' location nowadays? The boundaries and perceptions of businesses locating in Trendy Shoreditch or Traditional Square Mile are blurring. Can the two tribes really co-exist?

We met at the landmark Triton Court on the north side of Finsbury Square, now renamed the Alphabeta Building and undergoing complete renovation, to hear how new space is changing the way we look at the workplace.

Nick Winter, chairman of the CoreNet UK Chapter Programmes Committee welcomed us and introduced us to the assembled team. **Jacob Loftus**, of Resolution Property, the developer of Alphabeta explained the Discussions: six topics selected by the panel covering co-working, the evolution of the workplace, the experiential office and location perspectives.



Creative director of CBRE, **Giuseppe Boscherini**, provided a perceptive view of co-working corporates and the changing ways in which people work, illustrated with a series of his own cartoons. Co-working he explained can play a strategic role while silos can provide obstacles to innovation ('other than processing stuff') which requires a collaborative approach. More working on the move means making more connections and encourages lateral thinking. People he says prefer to be assessed on their work, not time spent in an office, so leveraging HR can achieve greater dynamism.



The architect in charge of the major works at Alphabeta, **Richard Hywel Evans**, of Studio RHE, explained how he has been influenced by his work on luxury hotels: creating social environments (including the tea lady), and the importance of the interaction of art placed in buildings. Triton Court is the meeting point of two tribes - boho and the City - and will provide space for both creatives and business. Starting with cycle racks in the basement ('what a great way to begin your day') and leading up to the atrium which is intended to be the 'battery' feeding the building. A huge roof terrace will provide more intriguing space, opening up even more ways of working.

Max Holliday of WPP described how locational drivers from the TMT perspective are influenced by strategy (lease variations and business needs), infrastructure (local transport and amenities), availability (type of space needed), affordability (tomorrow and today), the culture of the organisation, convention and intangibles. WPP occupies a multitude of buildings in London with a strong clustering round Clerkenwell and is constantly looking for new space and new ways of occupying that space.



Finally **George Roberts** of Cushman and Wakefield discussed locations from the corporate perspective - fad or trend? There has been he noted, within London, a shift from west to east, from Covent Garden to Angel but also a shift from outer to inner (Canary Wharf to the Southbank). And non-traditional occupiers look for non-traditional space - talent looks for unusual buildings.

The subsequent general discussion covered the question of the next 'hot' area, clusters, the dangers of digital corridors, rising rents pushing out creatives and the move from out of town business parks back into the city.



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