Evolving City, Evolving Design

The world’s great cities evolved naturally over centuries, their town squares, streets and public marketplaces serving as commercial and social centers. The organizations and forms of early cities organically grew out of natural pedestrian paths people used to move into and through them, and these patterns informed the cities’ distinct characters and mix of uses. Creation of communal pedestrian experiences will allow people to shape and transform its environment into community that belongs to them. Shopping centers are slowly transforming and seamlessly integrating into the community.

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Retail development have become an integral part of city development over time. Context and time matter more today in the process of planning and delivering projects. A solution in China two years ago, for instance, is vastly different to today, where a volatile economy, reductions in funding and projects, and an oversupply of copycat projects have created market inertia and doubt about what comes next. Whereas scale and speed were primary to decision-making previously in consumption market ready to devour any center halfway decent, we are today in much more of a world of extremes - the personality of a center has to be distinctive, utterly unique, and most importantly, accept the greater responsibility to replicate the role that a traditional piazza or town square plays, with modern format, offerings and technology.

From a conceptual perspective, providing adaptive ways that cities and neighborhoods evolve to faster and more personalized needs of the people we aim to attract are more significant than an aesthetic solution. Social sustainability is the foundation of planning, and translating this into economic performance for the long haul. The principles are not complicated - businesses seek to drive a clear path through complex financial and city needs - while we seek deeply about what people want, and consider that what they might desire that isn’t currently available to them. The fun part is the myriad of tools that are available to make the form, in beautiful ways, around a much more attuned series of functions and desires. One aspect which our industry still does a poor job of considering, is blurring the edges of shopping centers to truly engage the neighborhood and retain the urban patterns and movement systems that have existed for centuries. All in all, it comes down to the re-emergence of Placemaking as a key predictor of a successful retail anchored project.

Value of Retail Space

In today’s market, a retail space cannot be designed
only for trading purposes. Apple is the premiere example of changing lives where they have no visible competition but their own universal view of how much they want to reach. Outside that stratosphere, we advise our clients to integrate between increasingly unique physical world, with online immersion, to create the ultimate O2O ecosystem. The real world never goes away, but in cities such as Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, the final battleground of traditional concepts of retail malls is being played out. Gaysorn Village, located in the heart of Bangkok, adopted an integrative design focusing on people-friendly gathering spaces within the shopping centre while providing a platform to encourage communication and interaction. Size and predictable brands no longer the govern the rear-view mirror of success. What matters now are adaptable formats that recall thousands of offers that are compressed into today's time and space, and constantly moving. The idea of seasonality, for instance, has gone the way of fast design, simplicity, production closer to home and limited offer that enhance the value of scarcity over sameness.

For most of developers and investors interests will be the factor of the "Death of the Mall". To be clear, this is not the Death of Retail, but the end of the durable model invented in North Point Seattle or by Victor Gruen in the 1950s - a model that has evolved to the 21st century of shopping centers now acting again as main streets and town centers of almost every existing and emerging market city around the world. Our industry needs to respect the evolution of cities; that while leasing strategy never goes away, there will be far greater attention paid user experience and technology, merging with the fifty-year-old ideas of social villages espoused enduringly by Jane Jacobs in the 1960s. Retail rentals are also adapting to the trends of people’s behaviors where footfall may be considered as a potential measure of rental since in-store sales will be much harder to gauge to the rising of e-commerce and the reliance on online sales.

**Retail Trends and the Rising of E-Commerce**

Traditional big-box developments and departments
stores are in the decline. People are shopping differently and the younger generations are seeking for experience. Eating out, booking holidays, and discovering new experiences are all driving spending growth. In the Korean development context, large traditional retail operators such as Shinsegae, Hyundai and Lotte have emerged into mixed-use developments over the past couple years to formalize shopping centers and retail as anchors. D-Cube City was designed to offer a unique shopping experience with the flexibility to operate interchangeably into department store in adapting the different growing retail trends. D-Cube City also included a food & beverage district, adopting the local culture of embracing food and nightlife, offering an extended hours experience to the neighborhood.

In order to establish uses that adapt efficiently to changing circumstances and demographic changes, the programming of must not be considered as a suburban mall, but cater to the habits and desires to dwell in urbanized culture, gastronomy, shopping and lingering which is key to an immediate community. Distinct areas for gastro-pubs, gourmet street food, casual dining which are open to the air makes sense for a vibrant town center gathering. Smaller shops with greater variety of youth-oriented trends that change out merchandise rapidly promotes the consumer trend of the Gen Y. The know-how in districting the smaller shops in anchored zones will be key component to younger consumers' purchasing behavior with the integration of e-commerce.

The future of retail has significant impact upon the built environment and society at large. The new generation of shoppers are seeking for seamless multi-channel customer experiences which brands can tailor the experience to the shoppers' preferences. Many of the physical stores are slowly evolving into experience-based destinations which will drive the brand loyalty and engage customers on another level - a level of personalized retailing experience that will encourage uniqueness and traffic to physical stores. Store serves as showrooms that drive customers online. Smartphones and associated technology applications are unlocking new customer behaviors creating opportunities for stores to serve as fulfillment points for pick-up and drop-off products purchased online. Physical stores also serve as marketing/advertisement for its brands. Amazon Books is one of the many retail operators offering the flexibility and adaptability to people's behaviors. Flexibility and adaptability will be keys to success that merges the physical retail and the digital environment together.

**Sustainability**

Minimal environmental impact of the development, eco-friendly technologies, respect for ecology and value of natural systems, energy efficiency are all key items to be considered in the commercial design. Shopping centers operate every day, nonstop. And sustainable design can yield tremendous amount of savings (and contribute to bottom line profit) over the long haul. In Namba Parks, the terracing greens, thousands of plants and trees and lush foliage provide natural insulation to significantly reduce heating (in winter) and cooling (in summer), providing a 35% thermal comfort benefit that increases dwell time that makes visits pleasant and adds

Picture 4. Namba Parks–create a green living room for the Osaka
a consistent and intensely loyal audience of people who adopt the place as their own.

The broader concept of sustainability includes social and economic values. Sustained success and the economics of our places is extraordinarily simple - it is built on repeat visits by people who love the place. They then connect others and deepen the social network exponentially, weaving their own new story about a place that is equally meaningful daily to that neighborhood, and draws inspiration from our globalized world. Thus, walkability is a big part of the project’s success. By promoting the a 20-mins walking distance and 10-mins cycling experience, it will allow the neighborhood becoming healthy and achieving a long-term goal of low-carbon emission neighborhood. With the idea that retail can replicate civic functions is a key to creating diversity of life, promote walkability and cycling culture while lessen the use of private cars, making it easier to dwell in the one neighborhood longer.

**Experience by Design**

In brief, people have aspirations, want to be inspired, and want lasting memories with the people they love most. How one designs the software of a place is a far more invigorating process than the formalism of shopping center design, although functionality, while changing, is equally important.

Shopping centers tended to offer to the fat middle of potential customers, That has changed, Personalization and inclusion is necessary to tie specific experiences to a physical center, and one which isn’t necessarily built on in-store sales. Even brands are struggling or redefining the function of their stores, to act as a brand ambassador, to create memories associated with what they sell, How goods get delivered is flexible at the control of the customer, Innovation is how those experiences and retain the relevance of a physical property merges together seamlessly. Places are shaped organically by the people who uses the space while timeless design will allow flexibility to adapt fast - changing trends.

 필자 소개
김필은 1988년 Jerde Partnerships에 합류하여 현재 아시아 매니징 디렉터를 맡고 있다. 미국 코넬대에서 건축을 전공하였으며, Progressive Architecture Award for Urban design 상을 수상하기도 하였다. 주로 도심복합시설개발 등과 관련한 주제로 국제 컨퍼런스에서 활동하고 있다. 설계작품으로는 몰 오브 아메리카, 유니버설스튜디오 오사카, 록본기 힐스, Macau City of Dream, Langham Place Hongkong 등 우리에게 많이 알려진 세계 최고의 상업시설 프로젝트 및 복합개발 프로젝트 설계를 하였다.