

03

PROGRAMME AND USERS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to invest in and reclaim the inherent potential of the Meat Board building as discussed in Chapter 2, the gap between the current interior condition and the contemporary workplace environment needs to be diminished. The nature of the contemporary workplace is significantly different from the static and isolated working environment of the Meat Board building. Chapter 3 firstly aims to create a broad understanding of the influencing factors and the functioning of the contemporary collaborative workplace. Secondly, this chapter explores the operation of a service office facility in a collaborative working environment as programme in which the Meat Board building can be reused. The nature of the collaborative environment essentially consists of an informal group-working environment with integrated technology. This new way of working is investigated in a literature study. A programmatic investigation of the serviced office typology is conducted with the aim to clarify how these facilities work and to determine the design problems that are dealt with. Lastly, the analogy of a hotel is introduced as concept to guide the operation and aesthetics of the facility.

3.2 THE EVOLUTION OF THE OFFICE TYPOLOGY

Previously, offices were designed and furnished according to the specific task conducted or according to the organizational structure. Today the office is not necessarily the main place where work is conducted. The focus has shifted towards the creation of space to facilitate collaboration and interaction between workers. The development of the office typology from the pre-industrial era where the office was accommodated in other building types to the contemporary phenomena of the virtual office, is presented graphically on Poster 7, point 3.2.

3.3 THE EMERGING WORKPLACE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a new role of the office in a world where technology has made it possible to work from anywhere and to collaborate virtually with anyone, anywhere in the world. As Laing (2014: 11) states, the relationship between work and place is in a state of flux and this directly challenges the 'office typology' as we know it. Duffy (2008:16) states that the boundaries of the workplace has "spilled out" to a wider spatial and temporal territory.

3.3.1 THE KNOWLEDGE WORKPLACE

The advancement of technology and global economic situations demands adaption of the office environment (Green & Meyerson 2011:19). In the 1980's workers went to the office where they have a personal computer (PC) and at the workplace only, they had access

to a database (Laing 2013:4). The typical Taylorist model of the twentieth century office where large groups of people do specialized work, organized in a strong hierarchy is not relevant anymore in the current realm of the workplace.

Global changes contributed to the change in the type of work that is conducted today. Today many manual, time-consuming organizational jobs are atomized by technology or outsourced to countries that offer workers for a cheaper labour cost. The contemporary character of work, described as 'knowledge work' involves innovation, collaboration and initiative. Subsequently, the character of knowledge work demands for a more flexible approach to workplace design (Greene & Myerson 2011: 19).

3.3.2 VIRTUAL WORKING AND THE URBAN WORKPLACE

With major technological advancements and the revolution of the office as we know it, one may wonder what role the location of the physical office plays in the ever-growing virtual environment. Laing (2014) highlights the correlation between the urban and the virtual environment when he states that 'place' is not substituted by technology, but technology rather enhances the value of physical place (2013:6).

The scale of the emerging workplace is no longer considered in terms of the office, but rather in terms of the city. Laing (2014) states that the changes in how work is conducted and technology change the way familiar spaces are occupied. Remote working and virtual collaboration is now possible with wireless technology and this changes the supply and demand economy of office real estate (Laing 2014:11). Technological and operational changes in businesses also change the demand for architecture and urbanism to consist of a mixed-used, connected and permeable character (Laing 2014:11). Duffy (2008) proposes a new typology referred to as 'The Networked Office', which summarizes the concept of the urban workplace where the office building as entity is no longer the only place that accommodates working, but rather the city as a whole (Duffy 2008: 18). By paring work with other functions, it changes the character of the environment to be more urban and additionally it makes the financing and development processes easier (The US Workplace Survey 2013: 6].

Flexible working holds many advantages for both the employer and employee. Research conducted by AECOM in 2013 reflects the desire of employees in Australia to work from home one or two days a week (Laing & Wittenoom 2013: 2). Furthermore, research suggests that the implementation of such a hybrid model of working promises rewarding outcomes such as an improved work-life balance, increased productivity for employees and the reduction of travelling which has a great environmental benefit (Laing & Wittenoom 2013: 2). By accommodating virtual working styles in a business, employers are often able to reduce expensive real estate costs (Helms &

Raiszadeh 2002: 240).

Although virtual working is encouraged by many firms, the physical office remains a key asset. Leading international office design company, Steelcase is of opinion that investing in a high-end office space can create a competitive advantage for companies. A high-end office environment will enhance employee performance and innovation that will highly benefit the organization (Steelcase 2012: 14). Although it may come at a high price, Conroy Ross Partners believe that the design and location of the office is an anchor by which employees are attracted and retained in the long term (Conroy Ross Partners 2014: 1).

3.3.3 THE OFFICE AS COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT

The spatial organization in the contemporary workplace is in essence different from the formal, hierarchal office configuration with user specific desk space. The spatial configuration of the contemporary workplace is predominantly more flexible: shared work and meeting spaces are common and collaborative spaces of different kinds are beneficial to the organizational culture (Laing & Wittenoom 2013: 2).

The nature of collaborative working spaces too, is changing. Formal, static boardrooms and meeting spaces that cater for large groups of people are no longer sufficient. According to a Knoll Research paper, employees desire to have social interaction while collaborating with fellow workers (Knoll 2013:1). From the employer's perspective, innovative collaborative spaces can help to fuel creative decision-making in organizations (Knoll 2013:1).

3.3.4 PUBLIC SPACE IN THE COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Collaborative working environments essentially consist of groups of people that work together towards a goal. Knoll (2013:4) is of the opinion that there is a shift in the spatial design in collaborative environments to facilitate unplanned meetings in small, informal meeting spaces. The conventional character of spaces are challenged in the collaborative environment and according to the Knoll (2013:4), spaces formerly known purely as of a social nature are now also considered as valid places to work. This dissertation will focus on the design of public space in the collaborative environment.

07 The Office typology

3.4 THE EVOLUTION OF THE OFFICE TYPOLOGY

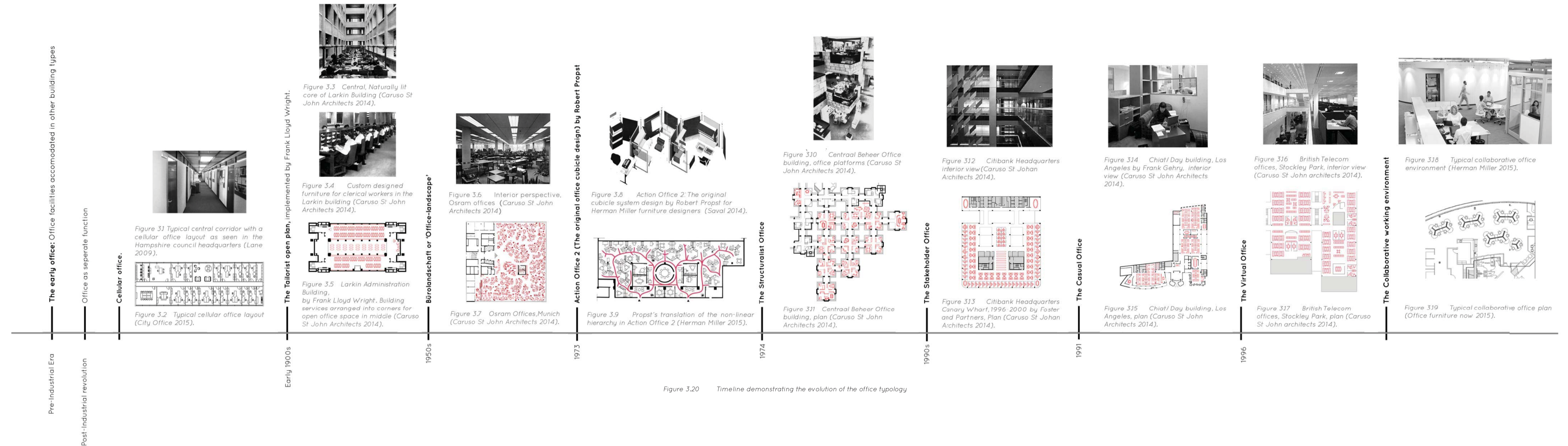


Figure 3.20 Timeline demonstrating the evolution of the office typology

3.5 THE SERVICED OFFICE TYPOLOGY

New ways of working require a fresh approach to office space design and real estate management. Harris (2015: 425) mentions two key attributes of organizations that keep up with technological and economical challenges. Firstly, there is a need for agility in organizations to be more resilient to market fluctuations. Connectivity between employees, clients and industrial processes, is also key to for organizations to function optimally (Harris 2015: 425).

Traditionally, corporate property investments are considered a core asset to a business, but today many companies in the knowledge industry validate assets differently. Instead of trading with a static property investment, organizations of knowledge workers trade with innovation and the skills of their employees (Harris 2015: 429). Gibson (2001: 38) is of the opinion that real estate assets should be considered on a wider range of requirements: either as physical, functional or financial assets. Although real estate assets fundamentally are static, in this way they can become more flexible (Gibson 2001: 38). This new approach shifts the focus from "managing buildings" to "managing people" (Harris 2015: 430) and the workplace subsequently becomes a dynamic framework to cater for flexible and virtual working routines. The serviced office typology supports the concept of shifting the focus from the importance of real estate to people- it is more flexible than static real estate.

The property market, in reaction to the changes in the working environment, responds with a flourishing market of flexible workspace of which the serviced office sector is the largest (Harris 2015: 430).

3.5.1 BACKGROUND

The origins of the serviced office date back to the UK commercial property market during the 1990's. During an economic recession, technological advancements and globalization have put significant pressure on businesses. The consequence of a tough business environment was that organizations began downsizing by outsourcing non-core functions and real estate managers required more flexible, short-term real estate options (McAllister 2001: 413). The development of the serviced office typology makes it possible to obtain office space with a short-term lease. The operation of serviced offices is particularly attractive to start-up companies, virtual companies and businesses expanding into new regions (Reed & Stewart 2003: 3).

The global serviced office giant Regus was established by Mark Dixon in the late 1980's. The idea was born when Dixon struggled to find an office facility in other countries while travelling. The first business centre was opened in Belgium, but the head office was later moved to the UK where he opened numerous other business centres. The concept of a short-term office rental facility was unique at the time when commercial property leases were commonly offered on a period of ten to twenty years. Regus was the first company in the UK to offer lease terms on a three-month basis with the opportunity to get occupation within a period of 2 days (Reed & Stewart 2003: 5).

3.5.2 DEFINING THE TYPOLOGY

The concept of a serviced office refers to an office environment that is furnished, interconnected and fit for immediate occupation. Serviced offices normally allow adaptability in office sizes to allow for individual or group working according to need. A common situation in the serviced office environment is also to rent out a number of primary offices that can be expanded into an office section when it is adjoined with adjacent offices (Reed & Stewart 2003: 3).

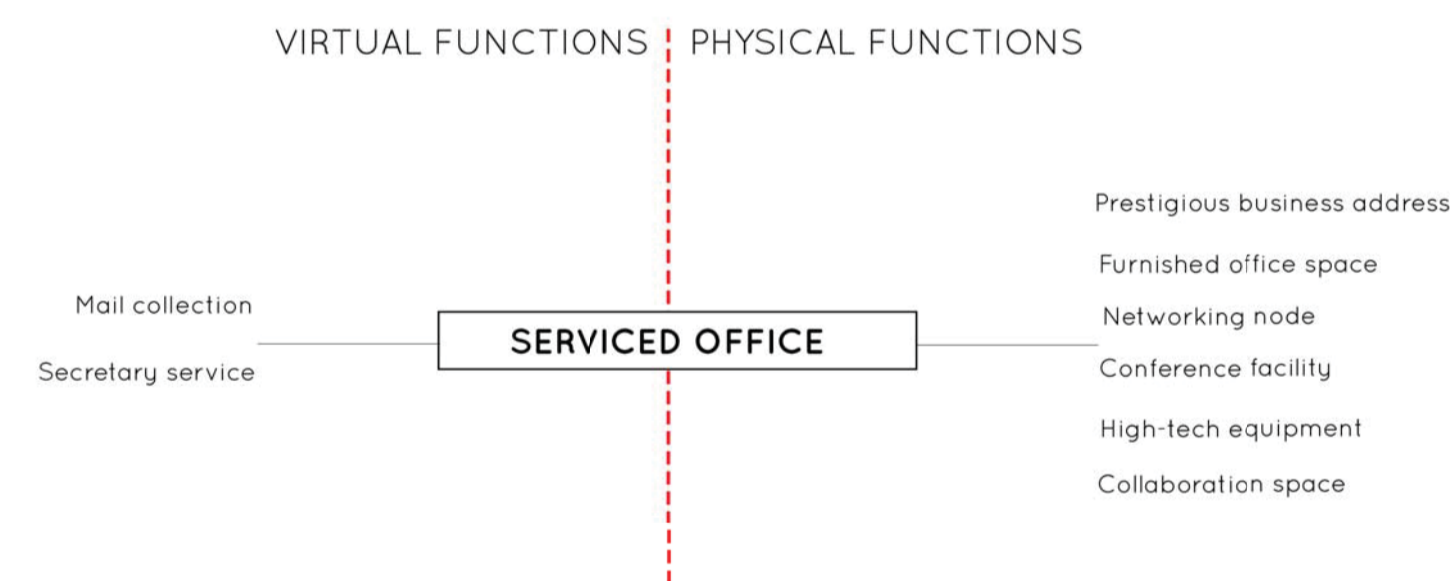


Figure 3.21 Diagram demonstrating the virtual and physical functions of the serviced office

3.5.3 CASE STUDY: THE BUSINESS EXCHANGE, SANDTON

The business exchange serviced office is a good local example of a serviced office. When arriving, one is welcomed with professional services in a contemporary environment. Ideally located on the Gautrain bus route in Rivonia, this is a hub for the short-term office rental market. The interior of the building reminds of a corporate office environment with generic furniture and art. While visiting the building, construction was underway in one of the ground floor offices and it caused major disturbance in the building. The logistics of the serviced office typology is something to be carefully considered in the design. Furthermore, a lack of room for customization of space in offices was identified as an area that can be given additional attention in the design.

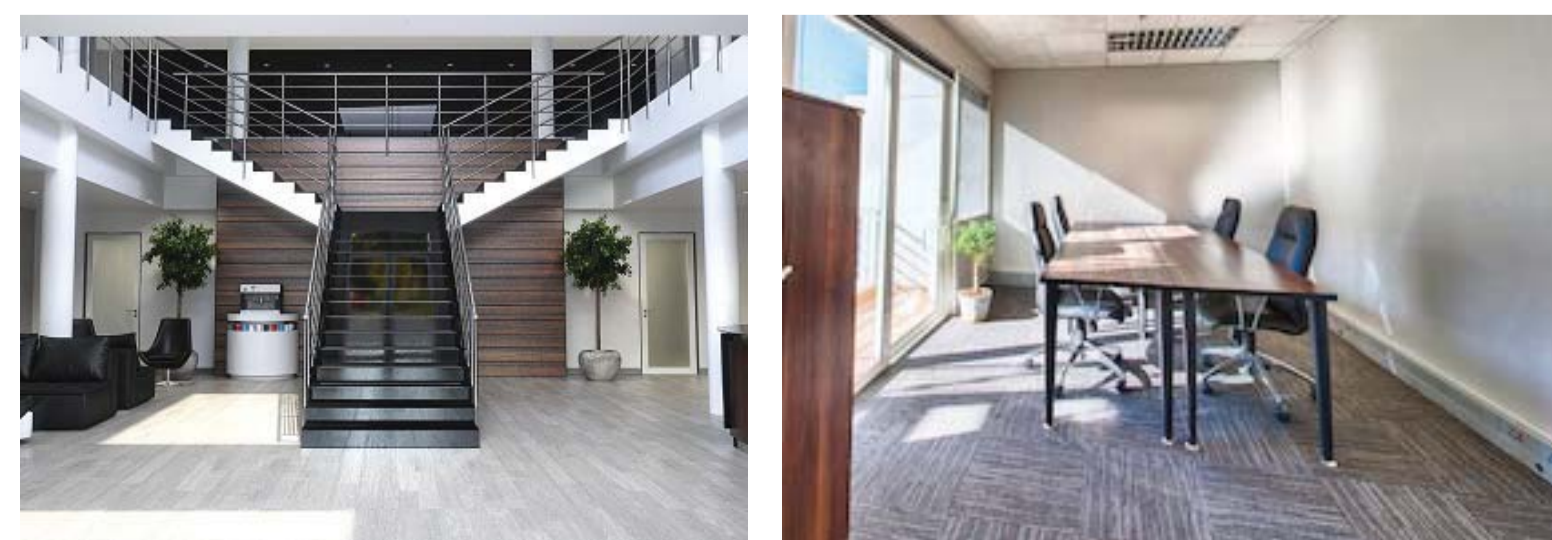


Figure 3.22 Entrance foyer of The Business Exchange (eProperty News 2014). Figure 3.23 Office interior of The Business Exchange (eProperty News 2014).

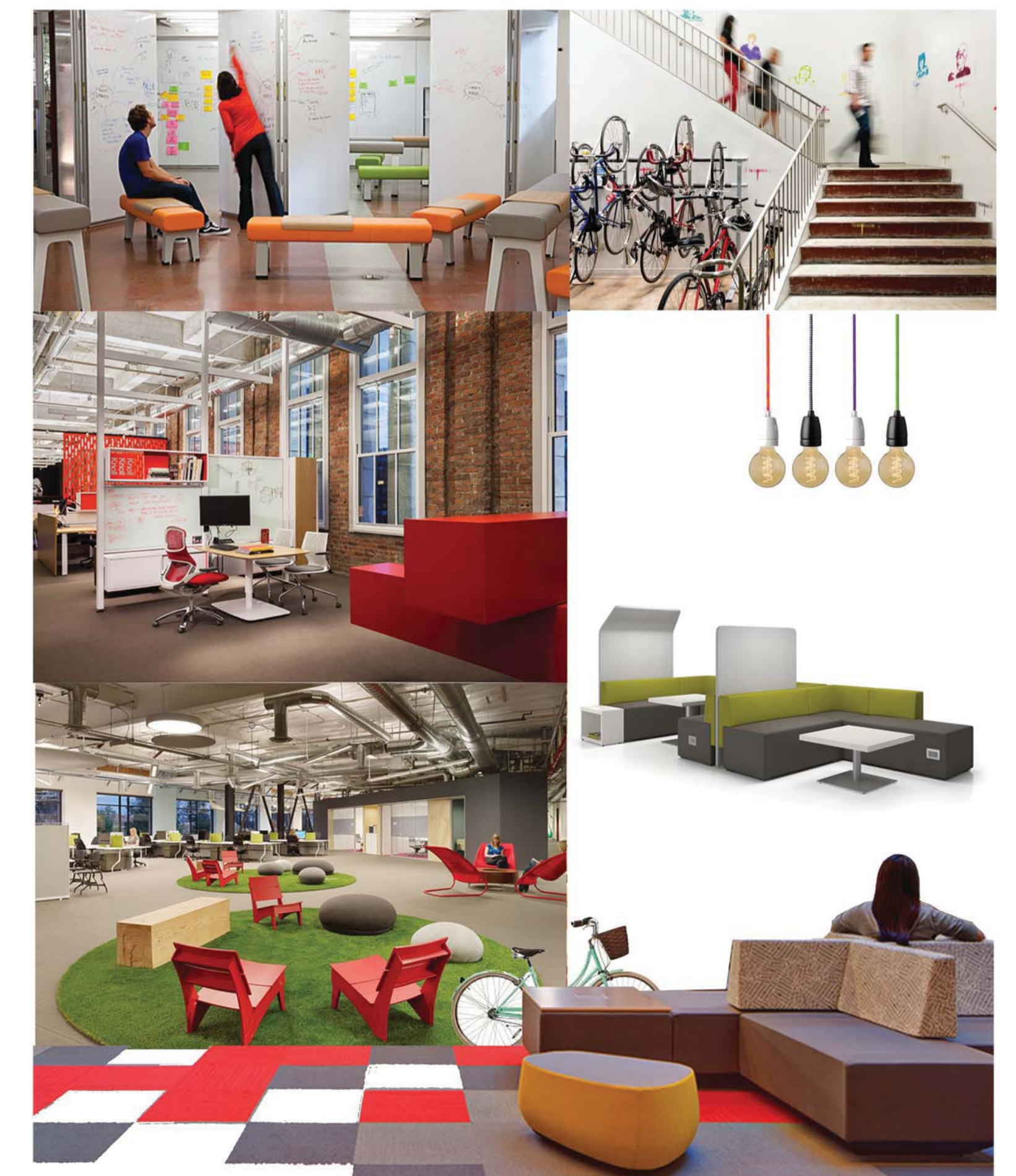


Figure 3.24 Mood board demonstrating the aesthetic and design opportunities of the collaborative office environment

3.5 CASE STUDIES: LOCAL COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENTS

3.5.1 30 BAKER STREET (STANDARD BANK, ROSEBANK)

Situated opposite the Rosebank Gautrain station, the building serves as a new landmark in the city. The building was designed by Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates. The north end of the site is a public piazza of a hectare in size that leads to the main entrance. The morphology of the building consists of 2 large masses of 9 storeys and 11 storeys. The two main cubes are connected with generous glass facades that contribute toward a remarkable foyer space. The building covers 65 000m² and provides workspace to 5000 employees (Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates 2013: 60).

The architect's vision for the building was to create a progressive and comfortable working environment. The architects followed an all-inclusive approach on the sustainability of the project starting with the choice of site, a green construction process all the way to the choice of luminaires and the end user. Subsequently, the building has been rewarded with a 5-Star GBCSA Greenstar design rating (Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates 2013: 63).

A comfortable interior environment has been created by the large glass facades in the atrium space that allow generous natural light into the building. These glass facades are closely monitored by a German designed louvre system that automatically compensate to avoid glare and control heat gain in the building. For an efficient lighting system, a DALI system (digitally addressable lighting system for the atomised switching and dimming of lights) has been specified and this makes it possible to programme groups of lighting according to the occupancy and user requirements (Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates 2013: 65).

The spatial planning in the building consists of a total open office configuration except for the office of the bank chairman that is enclosed (Den Hartigh 2014). An innovative concept laboratory has been designed in the building- named 'Playroom'. This space is used to test new banking concepts to better cater for clients' needs with the idea to involve clients in the development stages of new systems. The colour palette of the playroom resembles that of a play park: Colourful furniture with green turf in some spaces, creating an environment that stimulates collaboration and creativity. The office interior is composed of carpet floors in shades of grey with white ceilings with neutral white, black, aluminium and timber furniture to create an elegant and light working environment. Splashes of colour such as red and ochre accentuate informal meeting spaces adjacent to the atrium space and extend an element of playfulness throughout the building. The atrium space interior emulates the piazza/ exterior park with benches, trees and canopies that mimic trees. The lavish foyer space is complemented by a 45m high suspended artwork 'Seed' by Marco Cianfanelli that is made of 229 laser-cut plywood panels (Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates 2013: 67).



Figure 3.25 Atrium space in the Standard bank building (dsgn [S.a.]).

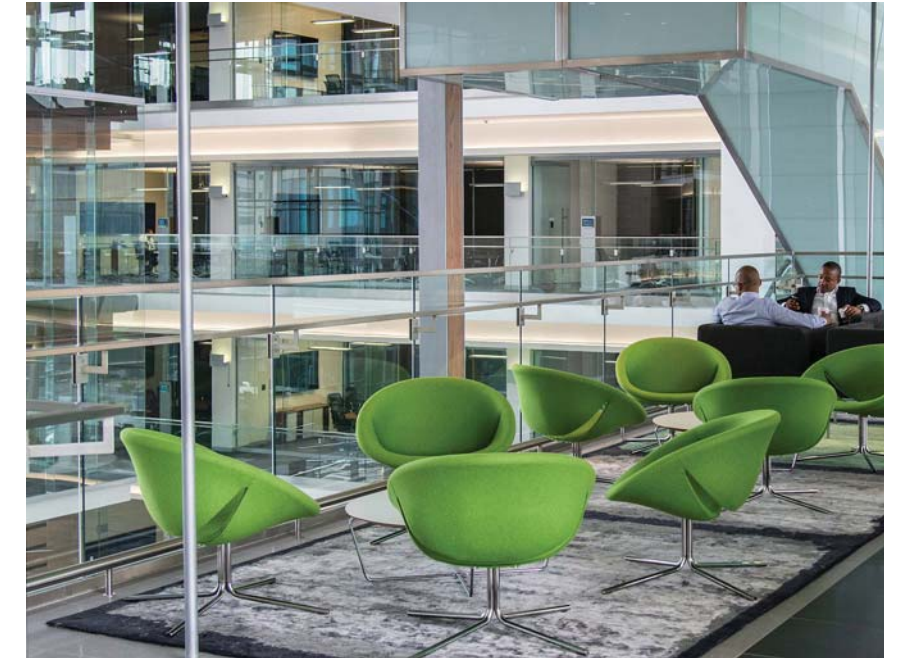


Figure 3.26 Meeting area in the Standard bank building (dsgn [S.a.]).



Figure 3.27 Atrium eating area in Standard bank building (dsgn [S.a.]).



Figure 3.28 Pause area in the Standard bank building (dsgn [S.a.]).

3.5.2 MICROSOFT WORKPLACE ADVANTAGE PROGRAM (WPA)

The Microsoft Workplace Advantage Program began in 2004 with an internal research program to understand the working styles, demographics of their employees and their relation with the physical workplace. Today the programme is a powerful tool and guideline for innovative workplace design applied to Microsoft offices globally without becoming a cookie cutter solution. In addition, the programme is an asset to motivate employees, increase productivity and attract aspiring new talent (Microsoft 2012).

The core of the Workplace Advantage Program is based on research on how the future office is conceptualized. Research conducted by Microsoft in 2009 made it possible to create a benchmark of five working styles for Microsoft employees. Three out of the five working styles are mobile workers that work from home and in the office in varying degrees. Typical human resources or admin support personnel work at a desk in an office 50% of the time. Lastly, the typical profile of an employee in a management position is that they mostly work mobile, but with regular private contact sessions. The result of the research brought a change in occupancy in the Microsoft office by minimizing individual space and increasing collaborative workspace. The real estate advantage of this change is that space per person minimized from 16 to 11 square meters (Microsoft 2012).

MICROSOFT HEADQUARTERS, SCHIPHOL, AMSTERDAM BY SEVIL PEACH

New ways of working according the Workplace Advantage Program as researched by Microsoft inspired the interior of the Dutch Microsoft headquarters by the implementation of activity-based working. Activity-based working is the design of an office layout that caters for different tasks conducted in the office rather than catering for individual space (Government of Western Australia, [S.a.]). An activity-based office will most likely consist of unassigned workstations throughout that employees can use as they desire (Government of Western Australia, [S.a.]).

This office environment challenges the traditional expectations of the workplace with having receptionists (not at desks) walking around and escorting clients to a communal office (the traditional waiting room) where they can meet with an employee. Floors are assigned to employees who share certain activity-based space and on each floor, there is a variation of workspaces. Spatial configurations include individual and group workspace and informal meeting environments that are easily expandable. The first floor is the heart of this office with the restaurant serving the best coffee in the building. This floor serves as both social space and informal working area (Ross 2012).



Figure 3.29 Informal working area in Microsoft office. Schiphol (Sevil Peach [S.a.]).



Figure 3.30 Counter seating space at informal working area in Microsoft office. Schiphol (Sevil Peach [S.a.]).

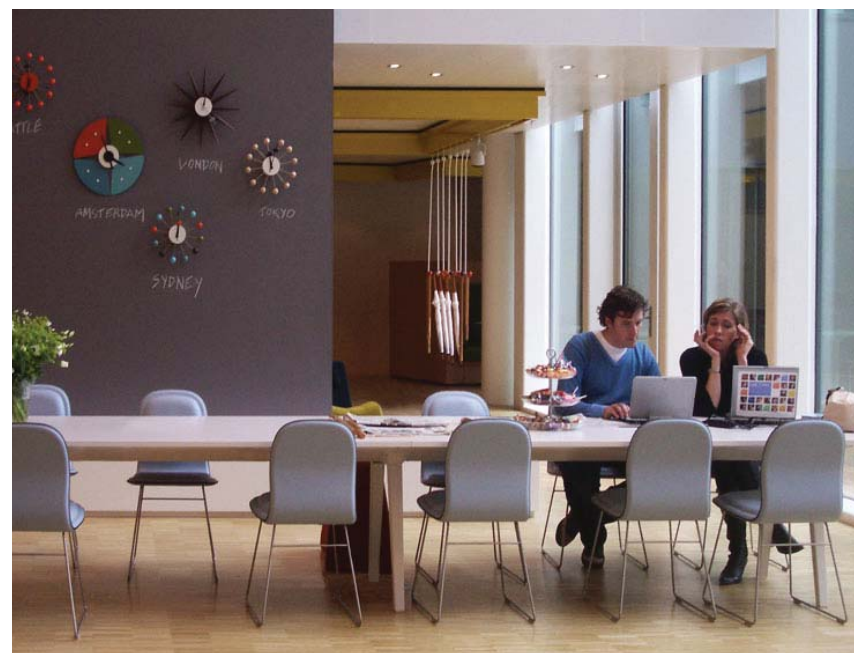


Figure 3.31 Secluded informal working area next to kitchen in Microsoft office. Schiphol (Sevil Peach [S.a.]).



Figure 3.32 Exterior dining area (Sevil Peach [S.a.]).

MICROSOFT HEAD OFFICE, SOUTH AFRICA BY GLH INTERIORS

The South African Microsoft Head Office is located in Bryanston and the building was previously designed by Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates architects. The brief included the total renovation of the first and second floors in order to align with the principles of the Microsoft Workplace Advantage Program. Furthermore, the brief included the application of the Microsoft workplace advantage but with a local flavour (Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates 2015: 78).

A key decision of the renovation process was the design of a coherent visual language that reflects the brand values and that can be extended throughout the design. Different ways of working are accentuated by the use of varying finishes, colours, furniture and graphic elements. The user is offered a choice in the space: Either working collaboratively or as an individual in a bigger system of cooperation. Flexible elements are designed to adapt easily and with the aim to foster collaborative working (Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates 2015: 79).

A major workstyle as set out by the WPA is 'hot desking'. This working style offers users the choice of sitting at one desk today and at another desk tomorrow. Storage lockers are located at communal printing stations where personal items can be stored overnight or for the day. Hot desking additionally helps to declutter the open plan office. In terms of furniture, there are assigned and unassigned elements. Assigned furniture in the space mostly consists of standard desk working space, while the unassigned workspace was differentiated by an American walnut top finish. The overall aim of the Microsoft office refurbishment is to offer the user 'variety, option and flexibility' (Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates 2015: 80).



Figure 3.33 Informal work environment in the local Microsoft Head Office showing a use of colour and soft furnishings (Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates 2015).



Figure 3.34 Informal work environment and formal working desks in the background (Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates 2015).



Figure 3.35 Booth working space (Grosskopff Lombart Huyberechts & Associates 2015).

08 Programme and Concept

3.6 DETAILED PROGRAMME

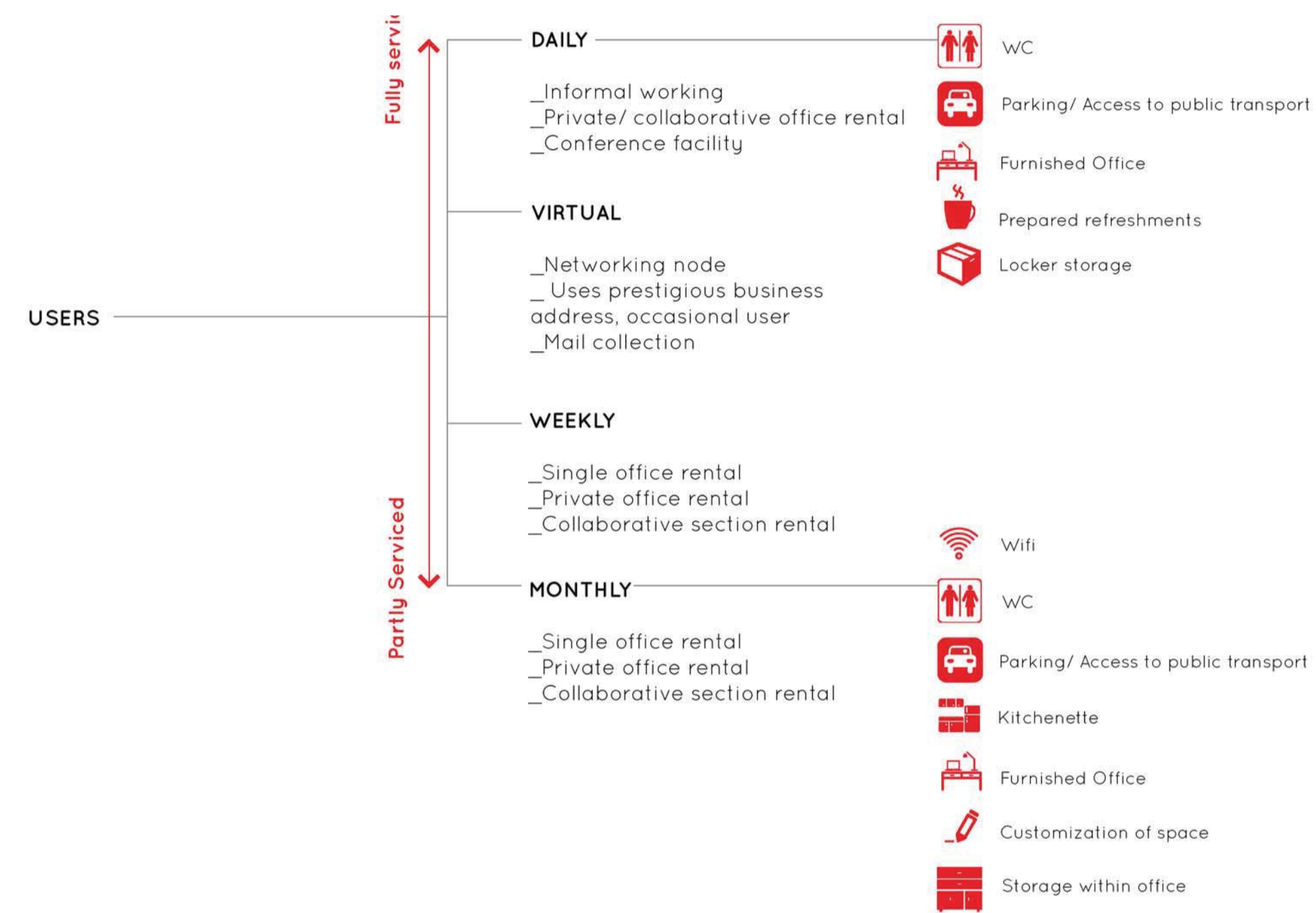


Figure 3.36 Diagram showing the detailed programme of the collaborative serviced office facility.

3.7 CONCEPTUAL APPROACH: THE HOTEL ANALOGY

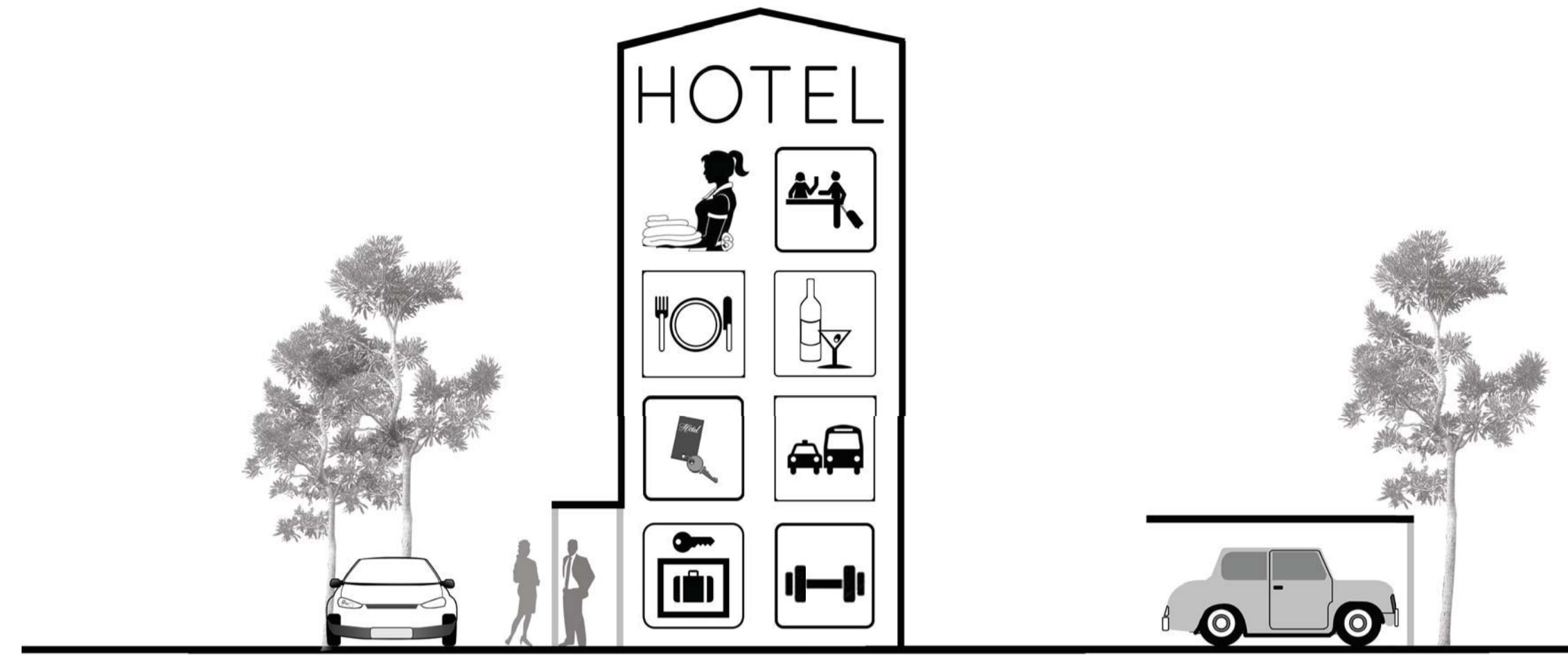
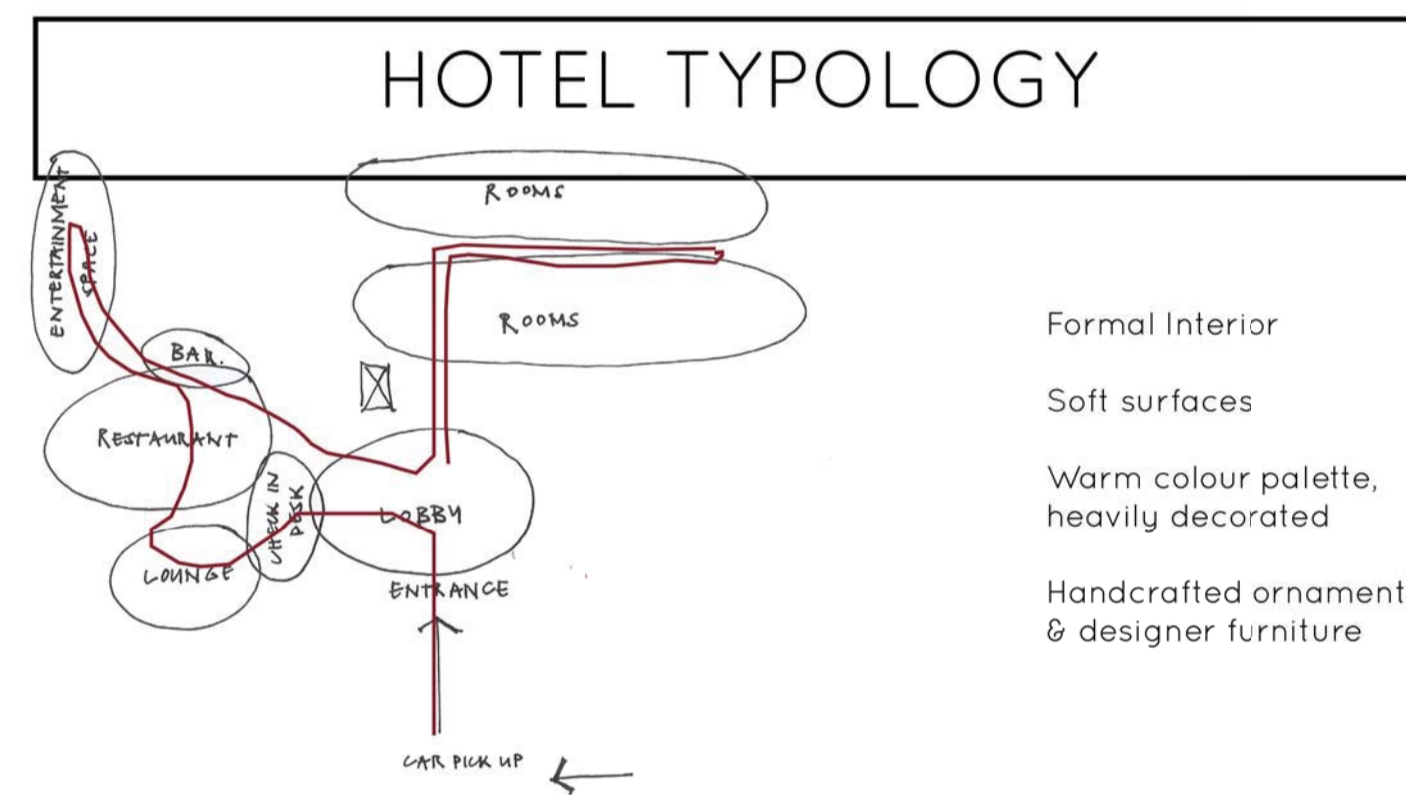
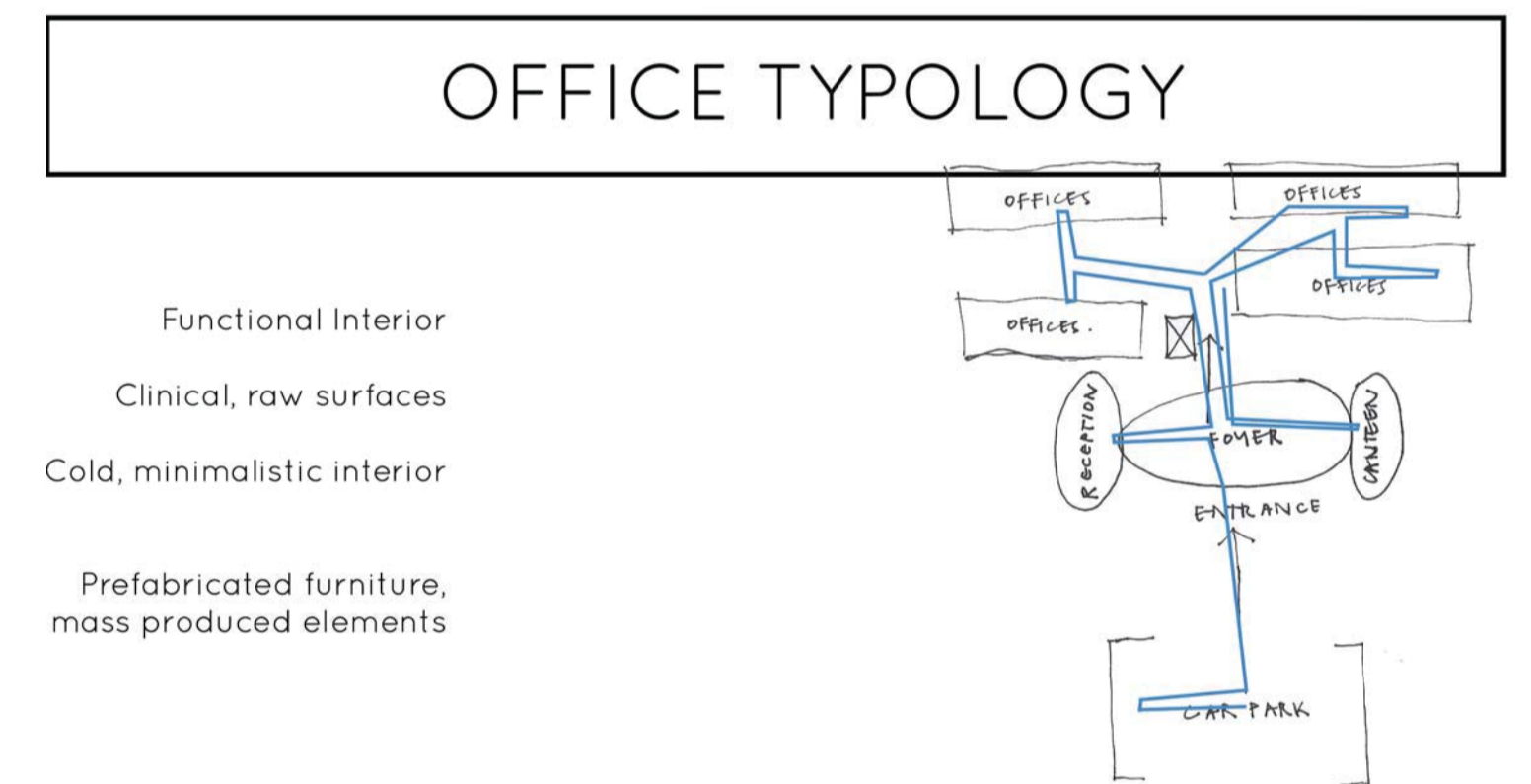


Figure 3.37 Diagram showing the functions of a hotel.



Formal Interior
Soft surfaces
Warm colour palette, heavily decorated
Handcrafted ornaments & designer furniture

VS



Functional Interior
Clinical, raw surfaces
Cold, minimalistic interior
Prefabricated furniture, mass produced elements



Figure 3.38 Mood board interpretation of the Hotel aesthetic.

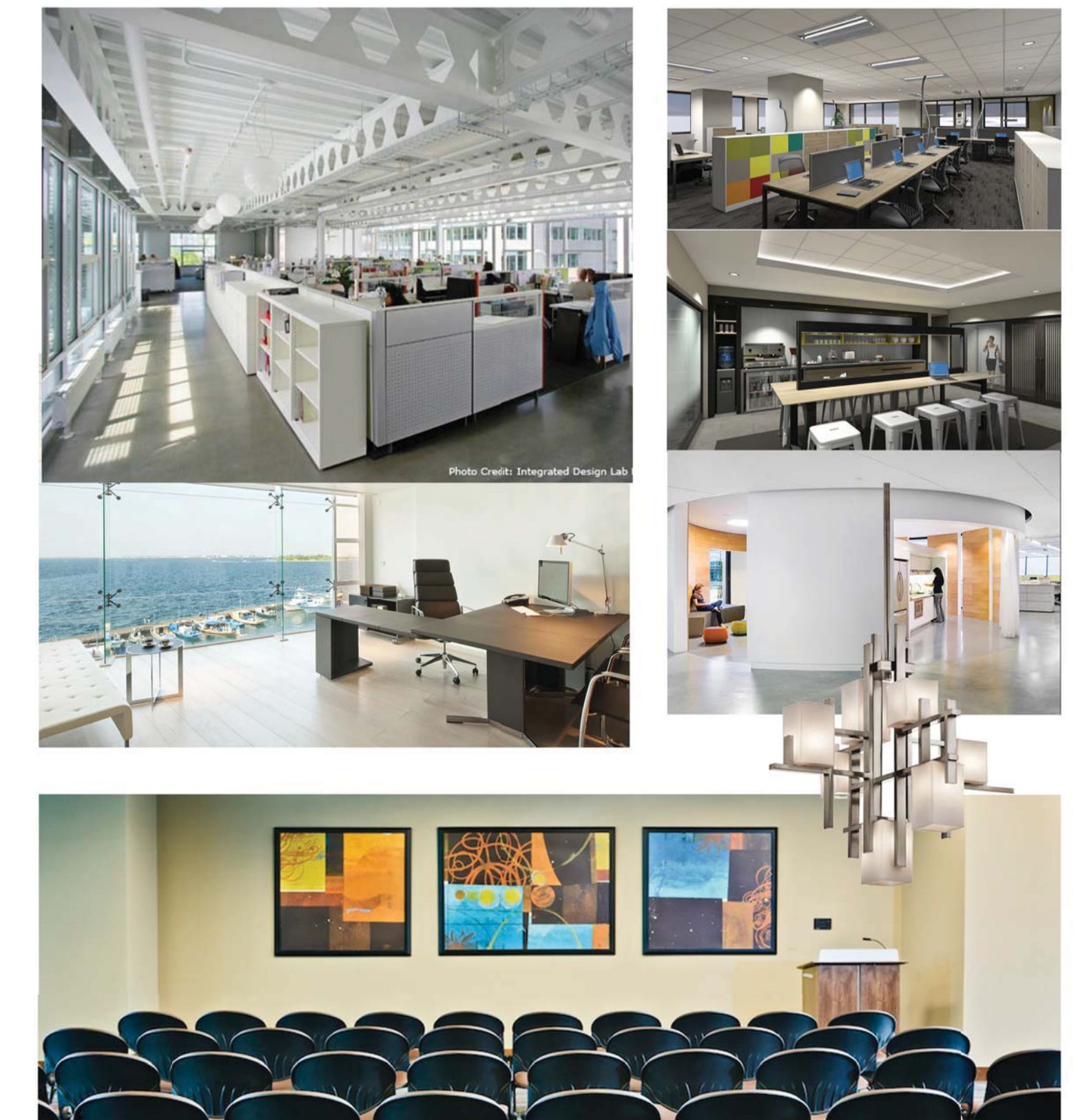


Figure 3.39 Mood board interpretation of the conventional office aesthetic.

3.8 CONCLUSION

A broad overview of the evolution of the workplace was given by the use of a timeline and a literature review. The collaborative workplace was analysed and explored and case studies have been conducted. The proposed serviced office typology was discussed and analysed. The chapter concluded with the detailed programme and the conceptual approach to the programme.