

## Shaping spaces for mobility and experience

*Editorial*

**Aliye Ahu GÜLÜMSER • Editor**

In an era marked by unprecedented urbanization, global mobility, and environmental challenges, the relationship between travel and the design demands deeper exploration, integration, and innovation. The intersection of (urban) design and travel represents a dynamic field where creativity meets pragmatism, and here spaces transcend their physicality to become experiences.

Architecture and urban design shapes the built environment and facilitate how people navigate and experience spaces. Therefore, these professions become the choreographers of movements in space.

The design of transportation hubs, cultural landmarks, and common facilities must consider not only functionality but also the aesthetic and emotional resonance. Iconic structures like airports and train stations serve as gateways to cities, offering first impressions that intertwine with the identity of the place. Thoughtful architecture ensures these spaces are not just transit points but destinations in themselves.

Innovative designs such as Zaha Hadid's fluid forms or Norman Foster's technologically advanced structures exemplify how architecture can celebrate mobility while embracing sustainability. By integrating natural light, green technologies, and local materials, architects create spaces that honour both environmental concerns and the human need for comfort and connection.

Architectural designs most of the time are point solutions for limited spaces with a great impact, that pivotal role of spatial planners starts here to shape the movement experience. Well-designed cities integrate architectural designs within an efficient transportation systems, pedestrian-friendly zones, and accessible public spaces to create a cohesive flow for residents and visitors alike.

In cities, the movers are in action. Moving is actually not only limited to physical activities but is also a sensory and intellectual engagement with space.

Narrated by architects, systematized by spatial planners, space becomes a reflection of history, culture and aspirations. These narratives are interpreted by movers, especially, by travellers through their unique experiences, enriching the dialogue between space and user.

Design and planning professionals must embrace this perspective, viewing travellers as co-creators of spaces. Whether designing wayfinding systems, curating public art, or enhancing the usability of urban spaces, a traveller-centred approach fosters inclusivity and accessibility. This ensures that spaces resonate with diverse cultural backgrounds, abilities, and expectations.

The synergy of design, planning, and travel has the power to transform how we inhabit, move through, and connect with spaces. By fostering collaboration among architects, planners, and stakeholders, we can create environments that are not only functional and beautiful but also reflective of the diverse and dynamic ways people engage with the world.

This convergence presents both opportunities and challenges. The climate crisis calls for a re-evaluation of practices, emphasizing energy efficiency, circular economy principles, and carbon neutrality in both design and planning. Meanwhile, digital technologies such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and artificial intelligence (AI) offer exciting possibilities for reimagining travel experiences and enhancing participatory planning processes.

The pandemic has further underscored the importance of resilience in design and planning. As mobility patterns evolve, professionals must adapt to new norms, such as remote work hubs, hybrid tourism models, and the resurgence of local travel. These trends offer a unique opportunity to redefine the relationship between architecture, planning, and travel, prioritizing health, equity, and sustainability.

Spatial planners must also address the dual pressures of overtourism and under-tourism. Iconic destinations like Venice struggle with the former, while rural and peripheral areas often grapple with the latter and nowadays with former.

Strategic interventions, such as pro-

moting sustainable tourism and enhancing connectivity to underexplored regions, can help balance these disparities, ensuring equitable development and preserving cultural and natural heritage.

As this field continues to evolve, the challenge lies in balancing innovation with tradition, sustainability with devel-

opment, and the global with the local. Through holistic and forward-thinking approaches, we can envision a future where architecture and planning harmonize with the journeys they shape, enriching lives and communities around the globe.

Seasonal greetings!