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# Millennium Partners and MIT Team up to Reimagine What It Means to Design With a Purpose

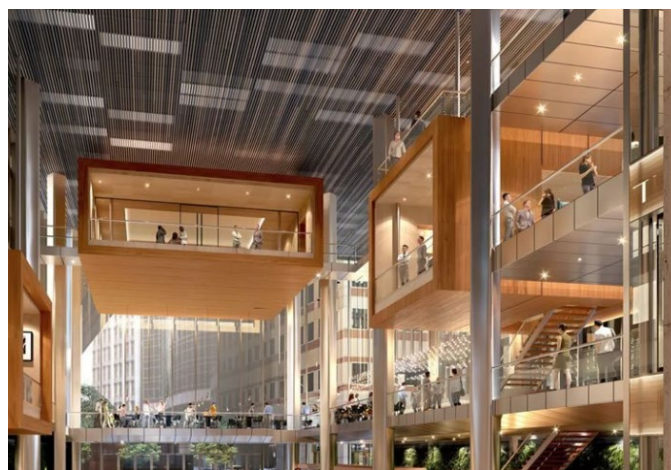
Keri Singer

The future of architectural design is understanding how to create a place that will adapt to the lifestyles and behaviors across different generations. As the IoT, blockchain, and smart cities become more prevalent, builders and property managers will be forced to rely on new forms of data and analysis to make conclusions regarding the functionality, optimization, and the future investment into a property. Today, developers and architects are giving much thought to designing with a purpose. They are enhancing the tenant experience with new construction and other efficiencies that adds value to a property with amenities and improves the longevity of a space.

In Boston, [Winthrop Center](#), a new real estate concept, is breaking new ground with hopes to change the entire community. Richard Baumert had success working on the [Millennium Tower](#) development in downtown Boston and John Fernandez, an MIT architecture professor, are excited to spearhead this new project. As Rich states, "We want to make Boston a better place. One must look at the role of buildings in cities and town, as well as the importance of social responsibility. We want to make sure our children and future generations are protected. Millennium Partners is lucky to collaborate with MIT and their research at the MediaLabs, as we expand this project further in hopes to enrich the lives of others. We are really excited to chronicle this journey together."

A team of developers and architects from **Millennium Partners** and **Handel Architects** have partnered with a dream to revolutionize the way we live, work, and come together in our neighborhoods. Today, people are not only seeking an aesthetically pleasing environment, but rather a place where one can feel safe to call home, be entertained, conduct business, and make a meaningful impact in society. **Winthrop Center**, a mixed-use property of commercial offices and residential homes, will offer open spaces with natural lighting, a focus on wellness and sustainability at its core. "The new office environments lead themselves to low energy designs to cut back on artificial lighting and bringing people closer together," said Fernandez. Additionally, John anticipates the building to provide publicly displayed updates on greenhouse gas emissions with the means of carbon sensors to track real-time data and monitor its performance to other buildings around the world. **The National Institute of Environmental Health Services** research also shared that elements of nature and "green" added to the design of an office environment will give professionals a better sense of well-being to improve productivity.

Winthrop Center will provide a state-of-the-art complex offering new technology integrating seamlessly into the structure, but it will also create a gathering place for people to feel more connected with their surroundings on an emotional, creative, and spiritual level. Last fall the \$1.5 billion project started construction with the goal to become a **Platinum LEED** establishment striving to meet the highest quality standards of energy efficiencies. Additionally, it hopes to become one of the first **Passive House** accredited buildings in the area which will save carbon emissions by 60 to 80 percent compared to others. Inspired by the architectural designs in Amsterdam, the unique construction of Winthrop Center will provide tenants and residents with essentially the ability to connect to the environment in more ways than one. A large civic space on the ground floor will be called "The Connector," located between Federal and Devonshire streets, creating an innovative area for weekly gatherings and a celebration of the arts.



Winthrop Center – Handel Architects

Recently, all eyes are watching the newly opened **Hudson Yards** \$18-million project in New York City and its projected success between another real estate developer and academic institution creating a “**Qualified Community**.” In 2014, the **Related Companies** and **NYU** collaborated seeking to build a new physical space combined with new technology and analytics capabilities. The first of its kind in urban engineering and design with hopes to create a new model for sustainability focused on a data-driven landscape. Technology is impacting our lives and the demand will continue for digitally-enhanced structures as the standard for everyday living and work. As the popularity of PropTech expands, new forms of intelligence will be necessary to remain competitive.

People are seeking new forms of amenities and services at home and at work to be entertained, stimulate their senses, and break up the monotony of their day. Whether one wants to control the temperature or lighting in the palm of their hand, learn more about a popular wellness event on the ground floor of the building, or make sure their favorite latte lands on their desk when they arrive. Companies such as **HqO** in Boston are enhancing tenant experience by offering conveniences to customers through the use of a mobile app. As Mark Rosenthal, VP of Marketing, Sales and Success at HqO explains, “The commercial office market is undergoing a fundamental shift in its value structure. Physical assets alone no longer drive value, but rather shifting consumer expectations have made experience the central driver. Owners and operators who fail to make the shift could find themselves left behind by tenants.” This shift requires a new set of expectations and requirements of landlords and property management firms. As part of HqO’s value proposition, they are measuring the customers’ level of engagement across their platform to provide useful insights to real estate professionals in order to make continuous quality improvements that satisfy their customers.

As we watch these new types of work-life projects unfold in Boston, New York, and around the world, it will be imperative for architects and developers to design with a purpose and bring to life unique experiences intertwined with new technologies. It’s a year away from Winthrop Center becoming a reality and transforming the way in which technology, sustainability, and the community comes together in Boston. In the meantime, we can all look forward to becoming more strategic and “smarter in the creation of smart cities” using new standards of analysis to measure and predict future real estate trends.