

FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS SPACE ARCHITECTURE

T.K. Uzakbayev* , L.T.Nurkusheva 

International Educational Corporation, 050043, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Abstract. *The article is dedicated to studying the evolution of business spaces, from their origins in prehistoric times to the modern stage, where business centers have become an integral part of urban infrastructure. It analyzes the process of formation and development of multifunctional business spaces, which are a crucial element of public buildings. The article examines various typological features of business centers, including their functional zoning, planning, and compositional solutions. In a historical context, the transformation of business activity locations is traced: from chaotically organized markets and trade exchange points in ancient times to the antique agoras and Roman forums, where organized spaces for negotiations and product demonstrations already existed. The medieval period is characterized by the dominant role of monasteries and temples as centers of economic and banking activities. During the Renaissance, the first specialized buildings for conducting business appeared, such as the gallery in Florence, which became a prototype for modern office spaces. Particular attention is given to changes in workplace organization in the 19th–20th centuries: from compact offices to the concepts of “Bureau-landscape” and “Action office”, as well as the emergence of cubicle systems. In the 21st century, business spaces have become flexible, adapting to digital technologies and new working methods, including coworking. An important focus of the study is the balance between individual and collective work, the impact of spatial organization on employee productivity, and issues of privacy and workplace comfort. The role of business spaces in creating an environment for communication, meetings, seminars, training sessions, and informal interactions is examined, as these aspects contribute to effective collaboration between employees and clients.*

Keywords: *business center, office building, banking, business space, multifunctional building, spatial organization.*

***Corresponding author**

Turar Uzakbayev, e-mail: turaruzak@mail.ru

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БИЗНЕС-КЕҢІСТІКТЕР СӘУЛЕТІНІҢ ҚАЛЫПТАСУЫ МЕН ДАМУЫ

Т.К. Узакбаев* , Л.Т.Нуркушева 

Халықаралық білім беру корпорациясы, Алматы, 050043, Қазақстан

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада бизнес кеңістігінің эволюциясы қарастырылады, оның пайда болуынан бастап қазіргі кезеңге дейін, онда бизнес орталықтары қалалық инфрақұрылымның ажырамас бөлігіне айналды. Көпфункционалды іскерлік кеңістіктердің қалыптасу және даму үдерісі талданып, олардың қоғамдық ғимараттардың маңызды элементі ретіндегі рөлі зерттеледі. Мақалада бизнес орталықтарының түрлі типологиялық ерекшеліктері, оның ішінде функционалды аймақтарға бөлу, жоспарлау және композициялық шешімдер қарастырылады. Тарихи контексте іскерлік белсенділік орындарының трансформациясы қарастырылады: ежелгі замандағы ретсіз ұйымдастырылған базарлар мен сауда алмасу нүктелерінен бастап, келіссөздер жүргізуге және өнім үлгілерін көрсетуге арналған ұйымдасқан алаңдары бар антикалық ағорлар мен рим форумдарына дейін. Орта ғасырларда монастырьлар мен ғибадатханалар экономикалық және банктік қызметтің орталықтары ретінде басым рөл атқарды. Қайта өрлеу дәуірінде бизнес жүргізуге арналған алғашқы арнайы ғимараттар пайда болды, мысалы, Флоренциядағы галерея, ол қазіргі кеңсе кеңістіктерінің прототипіне айналды. ХІХ–ХХ ғасырларда жұмыс орындарын ұйымдастырудағы өзгерістерге ерекше назар аударылады: шағын кеңселерден бастап «кеңсе ландшафты» және «әрекет кеңсесі» тұжырымдамаларына дейін, сондай-ақ кабиналық жүйелердің (кубикл) пайда болуы. ХХІ ғасырда бизнес кеңістіктер икемді болып, цифрлық технологиялар мен жаңа жұмыс тәсілдеріне, соның ішінде коворкингке бейімделе бастады. Зерттеудің маңызды бағыты – жеке және ұжымдық жұмыстың теңгерімі, кеңістікті ұйымдастырудың қызметкерлердің өнімділігіне әсері, құпиялылық пен жұмыс орнының жайлылығы мәселелері. Бизнес кеңістігінің коммуникация, кездесулер, семинарлар, тренингтер және бейресми қарым-қатынас алаңын қалыптастырудағы рөлі қарастырылады, бұл қызметкерлер мен клиенттердің тиімді өзара әрекеттесуіне ықпал етеді.

Түйін сөздер: бизнес-орталық, кеңсе ғимараты, банк мекемесі, бизнес-кеңістігі, көпфункционалды ғимарат, кеңістіктік ұйымдастыру.

*Автор-корреспондент

Турар Узакбаев, e-mail: turaruzak@mail.ru

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ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ И РАЗВИТИЕ АРХИТЕКТУРЫ БИЗНЕС-ПРОСТРАНСТВ

Т.К. Узакбаев* , Л.Т.Нуркушева 

Международная образовательная корпорация, Алматы, 050043, Казахстан

Аннотация. *Статья посвящена изучению эволюции бизнес-пространств, начиная с их зарождения в первобытные времена и до современного этапа, когда бизнес-центры стали неотъемлемой частью городской инфраструктуры. Приводится анализ процесса формирования и развития многофункциональных деловых пространств, которые являются важнейшим элементом общественных зданий. В статье рассматриваются различные типологические особенности бизнес-центров, включая их функциональное зонирование, планировочные и композиционные решения. В историческом контексте прослеживается трансформация мест деловой активности: от хаотично организованных рынков и точек обмена товаров в древности к античным агорам и римским форумам, где уже существовали организованные площадки для переговоров и демонстрации образцов продукции. Средневековый период характеризуется доминирующей ролью монастырей и храмов как центров экономической и банковской деятельности. В эпоху Возрождения появляются первые специализированные здания для ведения бизнеса, такие как галерея во Флоренции, которая стала прототипом современных офисных пространств. Особое внимание уделяется изменениям в организации рабочих мест в XIX–XX веках: от компактных офисов до концепций «бюро-ландшафта» и «офиса действий», а также появлению кабинетных систем «кубикл». В XXI веке бизнес-пространства становятся гибкими, приспосабливаясь к цифровым технологиям и новым методам работы, включая коворкинг. Важной темой исследования является баланс между индивидуальной и коллективной работой, влияние пространственной организации на продуктивность сотрудников, вопросы конфиденциальности и комфорта рабочих мест. Рассматривается роль бизнес-пространств в формировании среды для коммуникации, проведения встреч, семинаров, тренингов, а также неформального общения, которая способствует эффективному взаимодействию сотрудников и клиентов.*

Ключевые слова: *бизнес-центр, офисное здание, банковское учреждение, бизнес-пространство, многофункциональное здание, пространственная организация.*

*Автор-корреспондент

Турар Узакбаев, e-mail: turaruzak@mail.ru

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest.

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Зерттеу жеке қаржыландыру көздерін пайдалана отырып жүргізілді.

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Исследование проводилось с использованием частных источников финансирования.

КОНФЛИКТ ИНТЕРЕСОВ

Авторы заявляют, что конфликта интересов нет.

1 INTRODUCTION

Business spaces have several characteristics that have been interpreted in different ways over the course of evolution.

Let us trace the process of forming a multifunctional building using the example of a business center as the most popular type of public building at the present time. The business center has a wide range of typological features: a varied set of functions, planning and compositional schemes. This is explained by the socio-cultural dynamics of business relations, which led to the complex evolution of the building on the basis of diverse historical prototypes ([Gelfond, 2006](#)).

Initially, business spaces appeared and sometimes were partially arranged in a somewhat chaotic manner. These were the meeting places for the exchange of the results of hunting, gathering, spoils of war and primitive production.

As the socio-cultural development progresses, business contacts become more frequent, and trade turnover grows. Places of commercial activity become more or less permanent geographically and in a concomitant manner are equipped with stationary or temporary open or semi-open pavilions of various sizes with places for placing goods and relatively convenient location of the participants in the transaction. At the same time, the sphere of related services (catering, sanitary services, entertainment, temporary accommodation and storage of goods) begins to develop nearby. As the direct commodity exchange is replaced by the “goods-money-goods” system, the need arises for the formation of points of exchange of volutes. Here, in a natural way, an organized space for the administration system appears. With the formation of cities, these spaces become part of the settlement.

The expansion of wholesale trade and intermediary activities has become in many ways the basis for the emergence of proper business spaces. Commercial activity has formed its own typology of markets and shops. When the possibilities of guaranteeing the results of the transaction developed, it became possible to negotiate a transaction outside the area where the entire mass of goods is located, using in some cases only its samples. As a result, the characteristic features of the spatial organization of the deal began to crystallize: a place for making a decision or conducting business communication, a place for registering a deal.

The development of economic, social, and technological activities in society directly influences the formation and evolution of business spaces. From the open market squares of ancient agoras and Roman forums of the 2nd century BC to modern office centers and flexible work zones, each historical change reflects the transformation of business methods, interactions, and management.

Over the centuries, business spaces have adapted to the changing demands of trade, finance, and governance. In the Middle Ages, monasteries and churches performed certain functions of banks and administrative centers, while the first exchanges and specialized trade spaces laid the foundation for the formation of modern office spaces. In subsequent eras, the strong development of the banking system, stock exchanges, and government administrative structures led to the emergence of specialized buildings as office spaces aimed at improving the efficiency of work processes.

Demonstrating new approaches to organizing business spaces, certain established concepts in the architectural and planning structure of modern office spaces have appeared, such as “Bureau-landscape”, “Action Office” and “Hot Desking”. The first concept is based on mobility and flexibility of space, created for the comfort of employees. Research into these trends and their historical origins not only allows us to define the principles of office environment development and their typological features but also to foresee future transformations of architectural spaces for business activities.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The results of the analysis and study of current trends in the development of the architecture of business centers in major cities of Kazakhstan are reflected in the works of Ignatyeva N.V. The main directions of the research include: analysis of the evolution of architectural solutions for business centers in major Kazakhstani cities; identification of modern trends in the design and construction of

business centers, taking into account international experience and local characteristics; investigation of the impact of economic, social, and cultural factors on the formation of the architectural appearance of business centers; development of recommendations for integrating business centers into the existing urban environment in accordance with the principles of sustainable development ([Ignatieva, 2010](#)).

The topic is also thoroughly presented in the work of Gelfond A.L., who considers the business center as a modern form of organizing public space, responding to new demands in economics, technology, and urban planning. The research focuses on: defining architectural and planning features of business centers; analyzing functional zoning; studying the transformation of public buildings; identifying the role of business centers in shaping the cityscape and public life; and developing architectural solutions that contribute to sustainable development and a comfortable urban environment ([Gelfond, 2002](#)).

A separate study by T.K. Uzakbayev ([Uzakbayev, 2023](#)) is devoted to identifying the evolution of the architecture of business centers — from early office buildings to modern multifunctional complexes — and integration trends related to changes in lifestyle, work formats, and user needs.

As for the detailing of specific aspects, general issues of urban placement are comprehensively addressed in the works of researchers such as Costa A.A., Lazareva M.V., and Korshunova N.N.

The parametric characteristics of this type of buildings are regulated by construction norms ([Online.zakon.kz, 2023](#)). Historical aspects of the issue and representative examples are presented in a number of encyclopedic and reference publications.

3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

A comprehensive methodological approach was applied in writing this scientific article, including theoretical and empirical methods of analysis. The main methods used in this research are as follows:

Historical-chronological method – This method allowed for the study of the stages of formation and evolution of business space architecture from the end of the II century BC to the present, helping to identify patterns influencing the formation of architectural business spaces.

Architectural-artistic analysis – Used to study the volumetric and spatial characteristics of business spaces.

Functional and typological analysis – Applied to classify types of business centers: traditional offices, coworking spaces, open spaces, and mixed-use formats.

Field survey and photo fixation – Conducted to collect visual material from real objects in the city of Almaty, including the external appearance and internal organization of modern spaces.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Antiquity, on agoras in Greece and later on forums in Rome, there were open spaces in the squares and in the surrounding galleries for communication between the parties to the transaction and the demonstration of samples of goods. From here originates and it is recorded from the end of the II century BC its activity. Small semi-open or closed rooms for consultation and decision-making were relatively visually isolated. They were often located in temples.

In the early stages of the culture of the Western European Middle Ages, monasteries and temples were powerful business and banking centers. They acted as economic and financial “dictators”, performing managerial, clerical and banking functions ([Gelfond, 2006](#)).

Medieval European monasteries had areas dedicated to writing and copying manuscripts, called scriptoria, which were the medieval prototype of the modern study. Separate alcoves, closed off by curtains, were used to increase concentration and productivity while working. An example of a painting “St. Augustine in His Study”, depicts St. Augustine working in a secluded room by Italian artist Sandro Botticelli, circa 1490-1494 ([Figure 1](#)).

Isolated rooms with limited access were places for storing documentation for the administration of commercial activities. Subsequently, as both commercial and regulatory documentation accumulated, they separated into a separate typological group, from which, being supplemented by works of a scientific, cognitive and cultural and educational nature, libraries and archives were formed.

The Central and Northern European Middle Ages provide examples of the already clear differentiation of certain types of business spaces. At the same time, markets with small-piece trade remain on the squares. Important for the spatial organization was the massive appearance on the market since the 12th century of bills, which made it possible to receive goods not directly, but at a later date convenient for settlements were carried out mainly by promissory notes, which were exchanged for money at the end of trading. It also influenced the specifics of the organization of the business space.

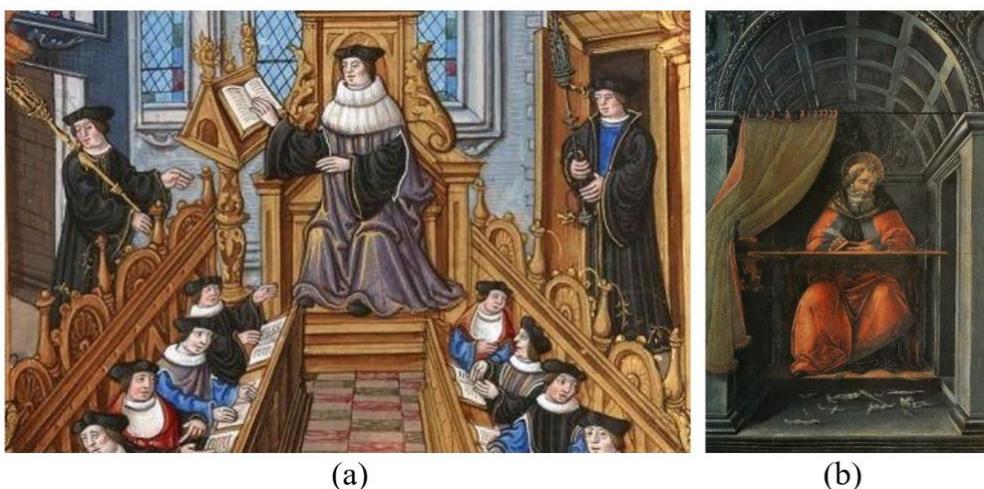


Figure 1 – Medieval prototype of business space: a) Group business space in a multifunctional room of the European Middle Ages ([History-Thema, n.d.](#)); b) Individual business space in a multifunctional room of the European Middle Ages ([Botticelli, ca.1495](#)).

For small and medium-sized businesses, office work was done at home, with many store owners living above their stores and hiring clerks to help with bills, paperwork, and daily household chores.

Gradually, the main part of state and municipal administration of business activity merges with other governing bodies and, in order to optimize these services in space, office buildings are formed that have become an independent typological unit. A typical example is the Gallery of Offices, Florence (1581, architect G. Wazzari), intended for the Medici Bank and became a kind of prototype for corporate headquarters. Changes from the stores as the turnover increased and the need to fix each exchange operation appeared such a common typological unit as banks.

Typological development of buildings is directly related to the history of the development of banking. It is known that banks arose as a result of monetary and commodity relations in antiquity. Already in the ancient and feudal world, the bank acts as an intermediary in payments, performs the functions of exchanging money ([Gelfond, 2006](#)).

Trade in specially designated places on the streets or in catering establishments moved to adapted and later purpose-built buildings. For example, the Amsterdam Stock Exchange began operating in 1602, in a separate building. The growth of trade operations led to the need for a new building. It was here that the main implementation of goods was introduced. This made it possible not to demonstrate the goods themselves in the process of direct trade or resale, which influenced the organization of the business space. As a result, the premises for the actual trading were divided with the areas for negotiations and the premises for the administration of commercial activities.

Based on the above studies of the development of the business space, it is possible to determine the following individual parameters, which together determine the individual characteristics of each of them: degree of organization (organized, semi-organized, spontaneous); degree of commodity

specialization (specialized, mixed, non-specialized); degree of openness (open, semi-open, closed); degree of mobility (fixed, moving, non-fixed); degree of temporality (short-term, long-term, permanent); degree of transformability (transformable, partially transformable, non-transformable); degree of expandability (expanding, narrowing, pulsating); degree of individuality (individual, group, mass); degree of accessibility (public, limited, corporate); degree of manageability (externally administered, internally administered, externally and internally administered) (**Figure 2**).

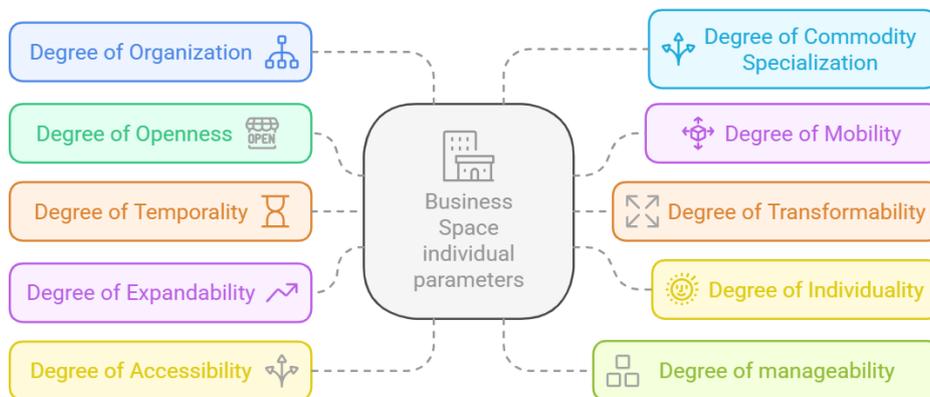


Figure 2 – Business spaces individual parameters (author’s material)

The developing system required a kind of organization of jobs. On the one hand, decision-makers need isolated spaces that exclude the possibility of their accidental distraction by other employees, which determined the appearance of individual offices. On the other hand, for the current work, technologically providing for direct contact and control over the performance of official duties, common premises are required, corresponding to the structure of the office. At the same time, employees performing control functions could be located in the same room, maintaining full visual contact with the controlled group. As the engineering systems for artificial lighting and ventilation improved, common office spaces became larger and larger.

The use of sound-absorbing ceiling and partition panels has become essential for the normal functioning of such premises. For the convenience of those working in adjoining rooms, there was a kitchen for warming up a semi-finished product or a small dining room. Called the Taylorism at the turn of the last century and before last, this system of organization existed with minor changes until the middle of the twentieth century.



Figure 3 – General business spaces of the XX-XXI centuries: a) “Bureau-landscape” 1950 ([Everprof, 2024](#)). b) “Action office” 1963 ([IB Group, 2022](#)).

In the 1950s, the German bureau-landscape system began to spread, with a less cramped, natural placement of employees. Workplaces in this system are located in groups of various sizes, and low

partitions between adjacent divisions are made of various indoor plants. An evolution of this system was the “Action office”, which introduced the concept of flexible, semi-enclosed workspaces that allowed office space to be personalized and often changed to suit the needs of the company and its employees. The rationale for this system was the understanding that workers needed large dedicated spaces for various types of work - space to record and make calls (**Figure 3**).

Over time, the concept of an “Office of action” evolved to such an extent that each of the employees had their own high, three-way vertical division that defined their individual space, and which they could autonomously personalize.

This concept, invented by R. Propst “Cubicle”, has been widespread since the 1980s. This is a massively cost-reduced and standardized version of the “Office of Action” concept, featuring cheap and uniform fixed partitions – visually resembling a box, with minimal space and maximum employee density. Businesses adopted this concept to save on rent and furnishings, and it became a symbol of corporate culture in the second half of the 20th century, especially in the United States. Even with such individualized spaces, the main drawbacks related to acoustic discomfort remained.

A proposed solution was a new concept called the “Cocoon”, invented by Finnish designer Eero Aarnio. The “Cocoon” concept is an approach to office space organization that places special emphasis on employee privacy, comfort, and psychological safety.

The concept allows for the creation of isolated zones within office spaces that resemble a cocoon in shape and feel, enabling users to focus on their work while reducing stress and distractions. The main features of the “Cocoon” concept include: tall enclosing elements that provide visual and acoustic isolation; soft textures and materials that enhance coziness; a human-centered design incorporating biophilic elements (plants, natural colors, organic forms); and flexible use—these zones are suitable for both individual work and informal communication. This approach has become especially relevant in the post-pandemic period, as the demand for comfortable and adaptable workspaces has increased (**Figure 4**).

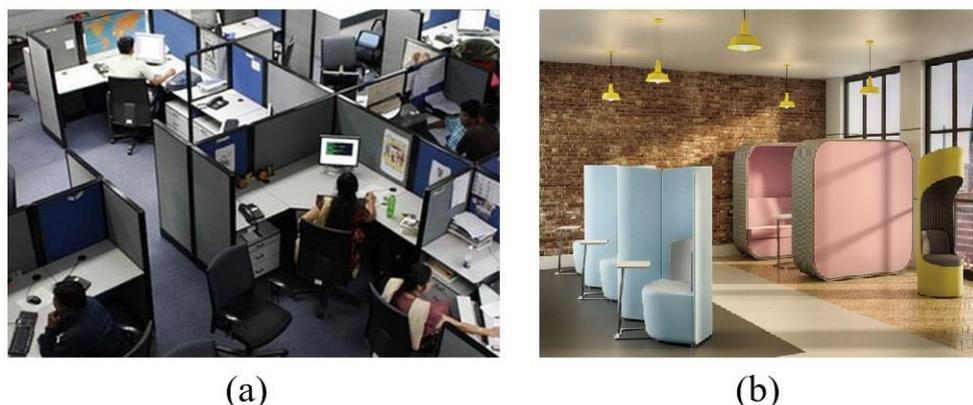


Figure 4 – General business spaces of the XX-XXI centuries: a) Paired “Cubicle” in the common space (**LAS, 2015**).
b) The Cocoon Concept (**Collaborative Office Interiors, 2025**).

As technology advances workers have become more mobile, they can work anywhere: it has become the norm to see people working in cafes, coffee shops and homes as companies have begun to adopt these new ways of working. As mobility became the norm, office design began to embrace the “Hot Desking” boom, with no space allocated to staff and employees choosing an empty space to work. This is due to the increase in the number of freelancers, the demand for part-time work, flexible office space and creative collaboration.

As the development progresses, the individual cabinet acquires some transformations. It offers both the opportunity for individual work and the opportunity to communicate with clients and colleagues. With a certain level of responsibility, meeting places are organized in or near the offices. The equipment, furnishings, saturation of the office with means of communication and information storage are changing. For the top level, lounges with bathrooms, mini-kitchens, canteens, wardrobes

are added to the office. An additional entrance and exit are organized, bypassing the areas for placing ordinary employees. However, the basic principles presented in the office - the emphasis on privacy, focus, and individuality in the workplace - is returning to the forefront and playing an increasingly important role as decisions critical to successful business are made in a comfortable environment (Uzakbayev, 2023).

Business spaces are also important for holding meetings of employees of various levels, individual or group communication with clients, seminars and trainings. To create an atmosphere of informal communication with clients, “coffee shops” appear (coffee + office), which allow discussing positions in the process of eating.

Remote work could lead to a decrease in the value of office real estate by 2030, according to analysts from the consulting firm McKinsey. Their data shows that only 37% of employees worldwide currently continue to work offline. As a result, the demand for office space has significantly declined. The study suggests that this trend is likely to persist in the coming years. Experts believe that this figure may have a negative impact on the global economy, potentially leading to a loss of investments, a drop in real estate values, and a reduction in jobs (24.kz, 2023).

This analysis suggests that we are currently undergoing a transitional period in the organization of work processes. Employees are gradually returning to office spaces, but not in full capacity. The pandemic period required a special approach to the use of workspaces.

The development of technology has provided humanity with the ability to work anytime and from anywhere. By the end of 2019, flexible approaches to workspace organization had become widespread and were increasingly applied in office design.

Thus, the concept of hybrid workspaces has gained popularity in recent years, especially as many companies began shifting employees to remote work.

Accordingly, such changes impact office spaces, prompting architects to adopt hybrid systems that can be adapted for various types of work and employee needs, combining elements of both individual work and collaborative activities. These zones are designed with flexibility in mind, allowing for easy modification of their functions based on tasks. The main features of hybrid zones are as follows: *Focus Zones*; *Collaboration Zones*; *Meeting Rooms*; *Lounge and Social Areas*; *Flexible Workstations*; *Ancillary Spaces* (Figure 5).



Figure 5 – The main features of hybrid zones (author’s material).

Considering the above-mentioned aspects, the implementation of the hybrid workspace concept is proposed using the example of the Capital Tower business center (Table 1) (Figure 6). The average values, based on popular recommendations for hybrid office spaces, may vary depending on the specific needs of different organizations and their requirements. However, in general, hybrid offices typically follow these proportions: Focus Zones – 20%; Collaboration Zones – 25%; Lounge and Social Areas – 17%; Meeting Rooms – 13%; Flexible Workstations – 15%; Ancillary Spaces – 10%.

Table 1
Spatial distribution for a 460 m² office [author’s material]

№	Zone	Area (m ²)	Function
1	Focus Zones	92	Individual work, concentration
2	Collaboration Zones	115	Team tasks, brainstorming
3	Meeting Rooms	60	Offline/online meetings, Zoom
4	Flexible Workstations	69	Universal workspaces
5	Lounge & Social Areas	78	Informal communication, relaxation, coffee breaks, sleep, mini-fitness, recovery
6	Ancillary Spaces	46	Kitchen, printing area, wardrobe, storage
Total:		460 m ²	

The layout of hybrid zones should be adaptive, multifunctional, and foster improved interaction between employees. It is crucial that the space maintains a balance between work areas, relaxation and creativity zones, while also offering flexibility to alter functions based on the needs of the company and its employees.

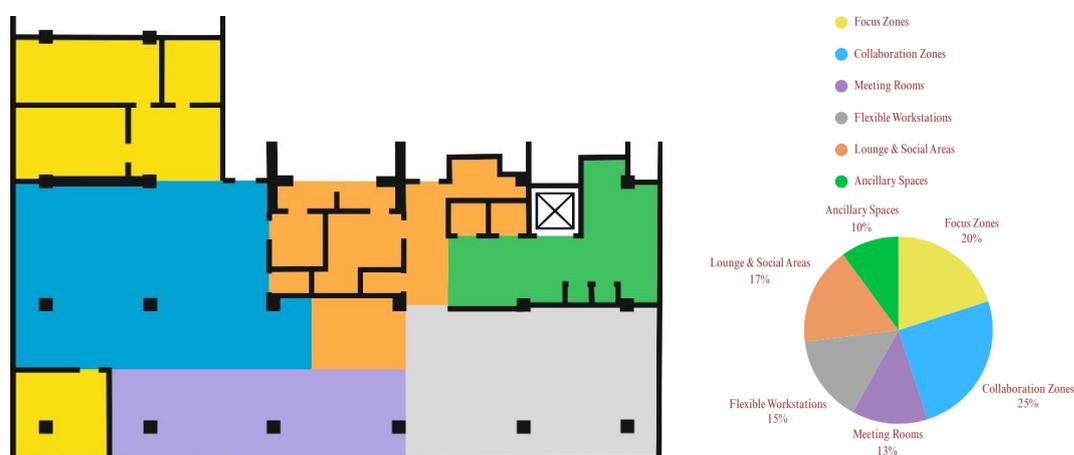


Figure 6 – The concept of hybrid workspaces is illustrated through the layout of Office No. 4 with an area of 460 m² in the Capital Tower business center, Almaty (author’s material).

This concept integrates all the elements of a traditional office environment while allowing employees to perform their duties both from the office and remotely. Such an approach is characterized by a high degree of flexibility and adaptability in work organization, enabling effective collaboration among employees regardless of their location.

5 CONCLUSIONS

1) Business spaces are modern multifunctional business centers that trace their origins back to antiquity, where agoras and forums served not only as places of trade but also as venues for negotiations, product demonstrations, and decision-making.

2) The lowest level of organization was characteristic of spontaneously emerging business spaces during the primitive communal era. Antiquity demonstrates a certain degree of order in business processes, while the Middle Ages saw the formation of a developed system of internal and external administration. During this period, the foundation was also laid for working not with entire batches of goods, but with samples—an innovation that changed the structure of business spaces.

3) Throughout these eras, various spaces such as temples, town halls, and establishments of public catering and trade were adapted for business activities.

4) Business spaces have the following individual parameters, which together determine the individual characteristics of each of them: degree of organization (organized, semi-organized, spontaneous); degree of commodity specialization (specialized, mixed, non-specialized); degree of

openness (open, semi-open, closed); degree of mobility (fixed, moving, non-fixed); degree of temporality (short-term, long-term, permanent); degree of transformability (transformable, partially transformable, non-transformable); degree of expandability (expanding, narrowing, pulsating); degree of individuality (individual, group, mass); degree of accessibility (public, limited, corporate); degree of manageability (externally administered, internally administered, externally and internally administered).

5) The set of parameters defining business spaces has been continuously refined throughout their development, accompanied by improvements in the conditions for conducting trade and intermediary activities in terms of cultural and everyday comfort, external and internal administration, informational and consultative support, legal and financial services, operational security, and accessibility.

6) The emergence of the concepts of the “Action Office”, “Cubicles”, and “Bureau-landscape” reflected an attempt to balance individuality, efficiency, and team collaboration among employees. Modern concepts, such as the “Cocoon” and “Hybrid offices”, focus on comfort, flexibility, and the psychological well-being of employees, taking into account the demands of the post-pandemic reality.

7) The future of office spaces lies in hybrid formats that combine remote and in-person work, becoming the dominant model of work organization. This requires architects and designers to create spaces that can quickly adapt to changing conditions.

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