



Urszula Hofman



Mateusz Stachewicz

Mixed-use projects buck the former trend to build monocultures in which we can either live, work or relax. Today, we can come across a growing number of projects which combine all these functions in one location or even serve as local centres in which residents can satisfy all their everyday needs

According to Wikipedia, mixed-use development may mean “a type of urban development that blends residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or entertainment uses into one space, where those functions are to some degree physically and functionally integrated”. In the next part of the entry, we can find examples of projects from cities such as Toronto, Portland and Amsterdam. It is telling that this entry is not available in Polish, but it would also be impossible not to notice that in recent years projects which combine residential, working and leisure functions conquer the space around us more often, more boldly and quite successfully. Many experts foresee that the reality of the pandemic will increase the popularity of multi-functional projects in the next years. It is not surprising. New circumstances, which have been our reality for over a year, discouraged us to long-distance travelling, even within the same city, in order to look for entertainment or relaxation. Many employees, especially those who work in offices, do not plan to go back to their workplaces in the near future, whereas school-aged children no longer stop to meet their friends on their way back from school. It seems natural that people will welcome or even prefer construction projects that lead to the

creation of local centres in which all our needs can be satisfied during a casual walk, rather than monocultural bedroom suburbs or business hubs with multiple office buildings.

Even though the very idea of mixed-use development does not exclude its existence in smaller towns, in recent years a large proportion of such projects have been carried out in larger cities, usually not in the centre, but rather in areas that are well connected with it. Mixed-use buildings may also replace office monocultures, a large proportion of which had been vacant even before the pandemic hit. Many companies give up physical offices and prefer remote work or coworking. We should not longingly wait for the world to go back to pre-pandemic reality, but rather make preparations and adapt to new circumstances and surroundings. According to *Offices in the New Normal*, a report prepared by ThinkCo, 43% of respondents say that they are more productive outside the office and 41% do not see a difference. Moreover, 82.5% of respondents say that working conditions at home enable them to work effectively.

Apart from the change in the office property market, it is worth noting a significant increase in another sector, i.e. self-storage services and e-commerce. Undoubtedly, the industry which is

currently on the rise includes forwarding services, courier services, parcel lockers, refrigerated lockers, etc. Many shops have made a shift to online sales. To do that, you just need a desk in a coworking space, some warehouse space and a modern e-commerce system. Poland is currently the undeniable leader of the e-commerce industry.

Data from research on the attitude of managers from all over Europe, presented by PwC and Urban Land Institute in their 2021 report *Emerging Trends in Real Estate. Climate of Change*, shows that when the functions of existing buildings are transformed, 54% of new projects are multi-functional. It is similar in the Polish market - JLL data from the end of 2019 for 10 previous years shows that the supply of commercial area in mixed-use buildings in Poland increased almost six-fold.

A perfect example of following new trends and the demand on the market is Studio Bystra, a multi-functional mixed-use building. It will be located in Zacisze, at the intersection of Radzymińska and Bystra streets. This project of Grupa Inwest combines three functions which are currently on the rise: microapartments, non-residential premises (offices and coworking space) and self-storage, which is the perfect alternative to e-commerce and last mile delivery.

New office buildings may no longer be needed on a large scale and the places where we live may become the centres of our life activity instead of large areas between our homes and offices. First of all, we may expect large monocultures to be transformed one day, but it is also possible that over time multi-functional and flexible spaces will become the standard. In the future, they will only require renovations or changes in their functions.

Article written in cooperation with Grupa Inwest and PZFD

