

## Resilient Cities

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In the 21<sup>st</sup> century we are confronted by a number of unpredictable challenges, both physical and logical, that test the resilience of our cities. As these cities increasingly become the epicentre of cultural requirements, further accelerating the speed of human development, our “wants and needs” now require greater resilience in order to protect and preserve national and international interests. Resilience should therefore be seen locally and regionally, internally and externally, extending to a wide range of known threats that if not dealt with could weaken the fabric of a building or an entire city, potentially impacting on the structure of our societal safety & security.

Known threats become more critical when space is a premium within large cities thus placing more pressure on local resources and services. The need for existing within a limited space should not therefore compromise the ability of any building to protect individuals against internal and external disabling events.

Resilience then becomes extremely important when considering the building design and construction, as well as its ability to continue supporting critical functions against a range of physical and logical threats. This resilience should take into account the local and regional infrastructure, identifying water and power supplies that are critical in maintaining the working environment.

However, the pressure on budgets and continual review of costs is highly likely to reduce the level of resilience within communities and organisations. This can often be found in building infrastructure, where through a lack of attention to detail, either during the planning, installation and maintenance phases, services fail.

External resilience is just as important as internal resilience; when looking at these macro issues that people generally take for granted, it is easy to overlook simple challenges such as a burst water main in a street local to the building. This could mean a disruption to the water supply thus causing a problem with the system used to cool the building; on a hot day this could disrupt staff productivity and even cause a stoppage to business. This disruption will negatively affect the business economically and any loss of profits is a blow to businesses in tough economic times.

On the basis that buildings can be made resilient by proportionate planning, accepting that “if it can fail, it will”, we must put in place specific contingencies for major incidents. This will require monies spent and a greater attention to detail, calling upon support from government agencies and suppliers. A topical area today is that with wider access to external public networks, we would seem to have compromised security against productivity, thereby allowing sensitive and critical data to “leak” out of our control.

In summary, individuals and organisations much consider a “vulnerability assessment” against the level of “realistic” threats that currently exist, physical & logical, and a proportionate response should be put in place.

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