

Repurposing Retail



ARUP

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With declining footfall in town centres and retail parks, we need to consider ways existing buildings can be repurposed to revitalise our shopping centres and deliver a commercial return for owners and tenants.

Social and economic regeneration of retail parks and town-centre shopping districts usually requires a rethink of the built environment. Options vary from small scale repurposing within existing buildings – such as introducing co-workspaces or leisure facilities – to more significant interventions, including partial or complete demolition of unsuitable buildings to consolidate retail space and free up areas for redevelopment.

Arup has a broad, cross-sector knowledge base to draw from and is able to create a repurposed retail destination that will sit in harmony with public realm, living accommodation, the workplace, and the night-time economy. We bring together a diverse range of skills including:

- Economics
- [Future thinking](#)
- Place making and strategic planning
- Transport planning
- Total engineering design
- Sustainable design
- [Building retrofit](#)
- Project Management.

We can help you to identify funding sources, such as the Towns Fund, High Streets Fund or Stronger Town Fund, that can contribute towards the costs of design, infrastructure development and site delivery of repurposed retail projects.

We help our clients to think more creatively about the long-term future, to manage risk and uncertainty and explore opportunities. We can support you throughout the process of shopping centre redevelopment, to create flexible and sustainable developments that can adapt to future change and evolving customer priorities.



Repurposed existing buildings: 1960s reinforced concrete frame re-purposed into a modern, effective, large-scale department store

Identifying trends

The retail sector is fast-moving and continues to experience significant change. Arup's Foresight, Research and Innovation think tank has produced the [Future of Retail](#) report to help our clients to understand the forces shaping the retail and town centre environment of the future.

In our current work we are seeing several distinct trends in the evolution of town centres:

- We expect retail to continue to be a critical component of town centres, but retail space may reduce by up to 50% as retailers find that continued increases in online sales mean they need less physical space
- More mixed-use offerings, with schemes varying from conversion of upper floors of centres to co-working and leisure, to consolidation of the retail part of sites to free up development sites
- An increased emphasis on placemaking, with health and wellbeing prioritised through good quality public realm and an increase in leisure and relaxation areas within centres
- Use of public/private partnerships to drive investment and promote community engagement.
- An increased focus on the path to net-zero carbon, requiring an assessment of the relative environmental impacts of repurposing and improving energy-inefficient buildings versus demolition and replacement with high-performance new build.
- An increasing prevalence of phased masterplans in response to large scale improvements, which can become economically challenging to deliver
- A town centre evolution, from dominant retail masses to a more varied combination of leisure, work and living destinations sharing space.



An enhanced street scene: Traditional, small-plan, town-centre units sit comfortably alongside improved public realm and new- build retail space with residential units above

Creating, Revitalising and Enhancing Retail Destinations

Designing new retail destinations

Arup has a long history of working with retailers and shopping centre developers. We understand the need to provide experiential-based environments, centres that are ‘destinations’ and vibrant places to visit. Our experts are innovative and imaginative, and understand the need to deliver accurately, on time and to a budget. Arup’s retail business is centred on financial viability and we continuously look to deliver better value for money.

Revitalising existing city centres

Many city centres include retail spaces that are in urgent need of redevelopment in order to meet modern shopper expectations, to revitalise footfall and increase income. We draw upon our global retail and engineering experience to create new, attractive, cost-effective and flexible environments. We recognise the need to build in a degree of adaptability to easily allow modifications at regular intervals throughout the centre’s life. This sustainable approach to urban planning is in line with the objectives of our local communities.

Enhancing thriving retail environments

Even successful retail centres need to evolve and adapt. We utilise our wide range of skills to create efficient solutions to existing problems, generating the optimum conditions required to maximise retail income. With our clients and collaborators we look to test the status quo and seek out value-enhancing solutions to increase commercial returns.

Developing sustainable retail

The Arup building retrofit team has a unique set of skills and a wealth of project experience in transforming poorly performing existing buildings into energy-efficient, high-performing spaces. Retail premises, location, transport modes and delivery models need to keep pace with retailers and consumers, whose requirements are evolving to embrace a surge in consumer demand for more sustainable and ethical products.



Mixed use: One New Change, London, combines retail, office space and a rooftop viewing gallery

In transforming existing buildings, the unexpected often happens.

Whatever challenges our clients face, be it social, political or economic, we have the skills and services to help. We bring together strategic, technical, environmental and operational design experts to create the best environments for today's needs and generations to come.



About Arup

Arup is the creative force at the heart of many of the world's most prominent projects in the built environment and across industry. We offer a broad range of professional services that combine to make a real difference to our clients and the communities in which we work.

From 88 offices in 33 countries our 14,000 planners, designers, engineers and consultants deliver innovative projects across the world with creativity and passion.

Founded in 1946 with an enduring set of values, our unique trust ownership fosters a distinctive culture and an intellectual independence that encourages collaborative working. This is reflected in everything we do, allowing us to develop meaningful ideas, help shape agendas and deliver results that frequently surpass the expectations of our clients.

The people at Arup are driven to find a better way and to deliver better solutions for our clients.

We shape a better world.

For further information, contact:

Ben Tricklebank

UKIMEA Retail Leader

Arup

4 Pierhead St Cardiff, CF10 4QP

e: ben.Tricklebank@arup.com

t +44 (0)29 2026 6535

www.arup.com

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