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If you do go back to office, it'll look different

Covid-19 is going to “seriously change how we look at buildings,” according to architect Gautam Bhatia, particularly if the pandemic lasts a year or even longer. And it wouldn't be the first time a public health crisis changes architecture and urban planning — London's infrastructure was revamped after the 1954 cholera outbreak and the clean aesthetic of modernism was in part a result of tuberculosis.

With the coronavirus making even big IT firms like TCS look at WFH (work from home) as a viable long-term option, there is bound to be an impact on commercial real estate as well as office design. Anuj Puri, chairman of ANAROCK Property Consultants, sees a drop in demand for office space. “Since it has been successfully tested, some com-



panies may prefer to continue the WFH trend to save costs per seat,” says Puri.

Sonali Rastogi, founding partner of architecture firm Morphogenesis, feels we may go back to “smaller offices with cabin-like structures.” All this will affect not only

how we design offices, but also homes. “Business centres in shared living complexes are definitely a possibility. More TVs in the home, as they will become video conferencing tools and what is a conference table during the day becomes a dining table at night,” says Rastogi.

Water cooler addas won't be the same!

It's not just how we live that has the potential of being radically reshaped, but also where we live. Rastogi says our current model of everyone wanting to live in two-three major cities in every country will likely change. “We will need to build a thousand smart cities instead of hundred. This means we can cluster around smaller towns, where offices have more space and education may already be largely virtual.”



— Ketaki Desai