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CATERING FACILITIES

Introduction

The problem of catering is very topical nowadays. In the last decade lifestyle in our society has rapidly changed. Due to modern technologies we live faster than ten years ago and we also work and spend our spare time in a different way as we used to.

Eating in households was more common in the past. Now restaurants play more important role. They aren't just place where people can eat they have become place of meetings and entertainment.

These aspects influence not just interior design and materials used in dining area but also technological equipment of kitchen and back of house.

The aim of my PhD. thesis is to find an optimal category of catering facility suitable for the center of Bratislava town focusing on new buildings as well as on conversions.

Then I would like to choose one specific type and analyse it. In this analysis I want to mention aspects of used materials, colours, lightening and their influence on interior design of dining area.

Another group of problems is preparation area – kitchen and back of house, where first of all hygiene rules have to be kept. Also new technologies have been invented and they have been introduced into kitchens – which means reducing of kitchen and storage area and enlarging of dining area.

In my PhD. work I want to focus on four main themes, that are connected with successful design of a restaurant:

The layout and interior design of dining area

Materials, colours, lightning, acoustic affect the customer. It is possible to shape the space of dining area with these elements. Combination of these factors mentioned above can create less or more pleasant atmosphere in a restaurant, that influences customer's feelings and satisfaction.

The layout is also very important. The properly designed restaurant should have several zones; a zone for intimate seating, a so called zone to see and to be seen, and also zones for smokers and nonsmokers.

An integration of different types of catering facilities is also possible. So it can happen that a classical restaurant contains a cafe, wine cellar or beer cellar.

New technologies in gastronomy

The second half of the last century is characterized with the growth of new technologies.

They have been also introduced into catering industry. New technologies and technological operations replaced the obsolete ones. This means less hard work for cooks and chefs. But on the other hand there are higher claims for staff qualification.

Kitchen and back of house

When designing restaurant kitchen it is necessary to wisely think about the used technological equipment, food stuff and sort of served meals. These factors strongly influence space arrangement and size of the kitchen and storages. A remarkable space reduction can be achieved on the kitchen and back of house side, and the space of dining area can be enlarged.

New concepts of kitchen design appeared about ten years ago, where kitchen was integrated into dining area – so called displayed kitchen.

New hygiene rules

In my work I want to compare Slovak hygiene rules with EU's hygiene rules and bring to attention the differences.

The problem of catering facilities is very wide so my PhD thesis work concentrates on one chosen type – café restaurant. In generally it has to be said, that every restaurant is very specific and every restaurant needs an original access and original concept.

The material I have studied is closely connected with my PhD. thesis. It describes new trends in designing of restaurants, new solutions and new concepts in restaurant consultancy.

NEW TRENDS IN DESIGNING OF RESTAURANTS

Restaurant consultancy

Trends worldwide

Space requirements

Approximate space breakdown

Cost data

Design, location, marketing strategy, cultural aspects, people's demand, change in lifestyle are usually the main elements which affect restaurant's environment all around the world.

People visit restaurants for two main reasons: they want to eat fresh food in simple relaxed surroundings and they want to be entertained.

These trends affected the design of restaurants in the late 1990s.

Restaurant consultancy

Some designers think that theme restaurant is trite, condescending in tone and passe. The others think that theming is essential. In the USA were established several interior consultancy firms, which develop everything from the original concept to the menu design. An architecture firm is just a component of that. The architect is incredibly valuable but he can't offer the complete turn key service.

"In designing restaurants there are some taboos:

- to be patronising to the clientele.
- to design anything manipulatively uncomfortable and for profit.
- designing for oneself, not the projected market.

Restaurant consultants are a new phenomena that analyse the problems, the demographics, discover the market, develop criteria for a solution, create the conceptual context, write a programme and then work with the designer to produce a functional operating plan.

One of the developments anticipated by consultants was prompted by the elevation of chefs to star status. Now there is more attention being paid to kitchens. Increasingly,

kitchens are designed to be either included in the dining area or visible to diners in order to demonstrate cooking skills or as a measure of confidence in hygiene and the fresh ingredients." [1]

Trends worldwide

Designing of a restaurant have its own rules in different countries. Some owners of restaurants consider restaurant consultants useful whereas the others not. Some of them prefer simple designs the others prefer theming. Anti-themist should not be confused with reacting against the extravagance of the 1980s. Now there is a trend towards a more simple formulas. The below article shows the main influences on designing restaurants worldwide.

Japan

Some owners of restaurants in Japan believe that most restaurants are the result of a consultant combining the wishes of a client with an appropriate architect. The other are convinced that financial success of restaurant depends on its location. The successful restaurants are usually situated in densely populated areas. "When restaurant is located in a suburb it makes less money as if it was in the centre of the town. Although restaurants are numerous there is not a move towards bigger restaurants like those in the UK and USA, because the space is so much more expensive." [1]

Europe versus America

"Because of their location, most restaurants are conversions of existing buildings. Commissions vary according to the restrictions on new building so that in Europe's historic city centers, many restaurants are conversions whereas in America and Asia, where there is often a more relaxed attitude to the existing urban fabric, they make space for newly build projects.

Many of the regional restaurants are fast food chains where there is a reaction against the uniformity of the last decade.

America has developed international themes like Planet Hollywood and the All Star Café that have opened across the world. These chains have a version of authenticity, actual celebrity owners and real emotional connection that people can find in the place.

In the USA restaurants are seldom one offs: they require an enormous investment and an aggressive marketing strategy. An example is Einstein Brothers Bagels. On Monday nobody has heard of them and on Tuesday morning they opened 15 restaurants simultaneously in sites adjacent to their competitors. Einstein's uses old gas stations sites because of great parking, original roller shutter doors – they just introduce air –conditioning.

Dining away from home was traditionally limited to hotels, clubs, corporate canteens and restaurants but now people demand food while shopping, watching film, driving...

Commissions for restaurant designs are often tacked on to whatever building type is booming in a particular country." [1]

South America

New restaurant projects in South America are predominantly connected to malls. In Brazil 230 malls have been built in the last 30 years. Brazil also provides an example of fact that the design of restaurants follows demographics.

India, Thailand

The current rise in five star hotel commissions in India means that the hotel architects get the restaurant contract which represents 8 to 12 percent of the final figure.

In Thailand there are very few restaurants designed by foreign architects, but those that are, have an above average level of finishing. In general, they are still at the stage where everything is over designed, however, a clean, subdued even restrained tendency is filtering down to chains like S&P.

Australia

In Australia, there is no shortage of space, but people aren't particularly good at eating out.

New restaurants have more outdoor or semi-outdoor space with extensive use of glazing to blur the boundaries. Another trend is to attach wineries with restaurants.

Lebanon

Beirut is known as the gourmet center of the Middle East due to the combination of its French colonial and native Arabic culinary heritage. Restaurants in Beirut vary from the distinctly uncanny white marble and gold 1000 seater Arabi to the old ones where the

restaurant has been carefully restored to preserve the charm of its rough hewn walls and coffered ceilings.

Slovakia

In Slovakia people were not used to eat out. They preferred eating at home to restaurant. Situation has changed with changing lifestyle in the last decade. Now many people eat at least one meal a day in a restaurant. To reflect people's demands restaurants started to change, too. New sorts of restaurants have been introduced serving pizza or national food. Also internet cafes are very popular. You can surf the internet and have a drink there.

More attention is being paid to interior design. Many restaurants are designed as a theme, but there are also some simple designs. There are even restaurants which miss any designing concept.

In most restaurants people usually smoke, so it is necessary to protect non smoking customers. Dining area is divided into smoking and non smoking part and also an efficient airconditioning is needed.

Optical connection between dining area and kitchen is more common abroad than in Slovakia. But some examples already exist. In some pizza restaurants cooks prepare meal in front of the eye of a customer. These restaurants are not just place where customers can eat but they can also be entertained watching the whole cooking process and they are confident about the hygiene and the freshness of food. It should be added, that these solutions require higher investment particularly into technical equipment of the kitchen part.

When designing a restaurant we have to think about space requirements. Each type of catering facility has its specific needs for space. The chart below shows some examples:

Space requirements

Fine dining: 24 – 28 sq feet per chair

Dinner house: 18 – 22 sq feet per chair

Café: 15 sq feet per chair

Approximate space breakdown

Dining area 50 – 65 %

Kitchen 25 – 50 %

Back of house 5 – 10 %

Cost data

"In approaching the costing of restaurants, it is always wise to remember their uniqueness

and generally small scale. To make them unique, designers often experiment with new products and designs which are invariably expensive. The unique costs should apply to most large scale urban centres with little variation. The unique costs exclude design and management fees, special items furnished by owners and extensive remodeling of existing spaces. It is not unusual for odd or unique spaces or conditions to double the costs quoted." [2]

Restaurants cost considerations and trends

"Dining trends are driving the following design issues which in turn influence design costs.

- Kitchens are being increasingly exposed to emphasis the sense of theatre, cleanliness and food preparation.
- This leads to the introduction of dining counters and the need to spend more money on the kitchen equipment that is displayed. The added costs for displayed kitchen are often balanced by reduced decor costs in dining rooms which are becoming simpler as emphasis is placed on kitchens and food preparation. Also displayed kitchens take up less space.
- Chefs are no longer second class citizens and they will not settle for any old kitchen. The emphasis on quality and freshness is driving kitchen storage and refrigeration of wine rooms. Similarly cigar smoking is back.
- More wine is being consumed rather than spirits, leading to the introduction of wine rooms.
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Entertainment is making a comeback to support bar sales, requiring simple stage equipment. Marketing concept are being expanded requiring supporting retail operations." [2]

Factors driving restaurants costs

- Market / clientele focus
- Age bracket focus
- Menu type and pricing
- Density of seating
- Extent of bar and lounge service
- Theme and decor
- Finish and ambiance

- Lighting
- Special equipment requirements such as sound, video, light, special effects
- Acoustic concept

Conclusion

I want my PhD. thesis to be a complex work, where several aspects of designing of restaurants will be mentioned. To design a restaurant successfully means to have good knowledge of restaurant typology, hygiene rules, technological equipment on the one hand, and on the other hand it is necessary to know the market, the psychology of designing and needs of the clientele.

I hope that my work will contribute to broadness of knowledge in the field of architectural design of catering facilities and will be a useful guide not only for professionals but also for restaurateurs.

NOTES

1. Collective of authors: To theme or not to theme – is that the question?, Special report – Restaurants, World Architecture, Issue number 60, October 1997, ISSN 0956 – 9758, pp 134 - 139

2. Collective of authors: Rules of Thumb – provided by Hanscomb Associates, Special report – Restaurants, World Architecture, Issue number 60, October 1997, ISSN 0956 – 9758, pp 139

3. Regina S. Baraban, Joseph F. Durocher, PhD.: Successful Restaurant Design, New York 1992, ISBN 0 – 442 – 01152 – 0