

# BEYOND COVID-19

Supporting the Hospitality Industry  
by Reimagining Architectural Design

by Giovanni Medina, OBMI Associate Lead Designer  
gmedina@obmi.com



## LOOKING THROUGH A NEW LENS

**Recent months have caused a global disruption, forcing businesses to restructure their approach and adapt their offerings. This worldwide pause has left us wondering:**

*What if hotels became a haven of calm, cleanliness and safety?*

*What if they were the place one turned to in the wake of disruption—in a period of complete unknown—because you knew that they had taken specific measures to ensure your wellbeing.*

OBMI has felt inspired to view the presence of COVID-19 as a challenge to entirely reframe the hospitality industry. We are curious to explore the possibility of redefining hotels as a harbor of safety—a place that one seeks out for their assured safety and contentment in the most challenging times.



## LESSONS FROM THE PAST

History has shown how architecture has played a pertinent role in supporting communities through plagues and periods of contamination. The creation of sanatoriums during the time of tuberculosis saw deliberate design choices, which were intended to contribute not only to disease prevention but the act of healing as well. These choices were the dawn of the modernist movement, which completely revolutionized architectural design.

*Aesthetic and structural choices were devised as preventative measures against spreading the disease, while also providing spaces of safety that were centered around wellness and healing—thus making architecture a part of the remedy.*

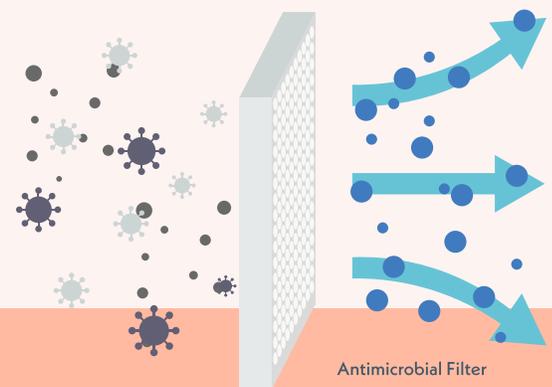
In 1921, the arrival of a vaccine for tuberculosis did not dissuade the modern design trajectory as it had already shed light on an innovative way of existing in and experiencing space, which is still prevalent in design today.

With this in mind, OBMI seeks to adapt their practices and design offerings to prioritize the wellness and comfort of their valued guests, delivering the assurance of safety and protection without compromising standards of luxury. The following pages outline new concepts that may help to innovate architectural design beyond COVID-19.

## A NEW WAY FORWARD; INDOOR AIR QUALITY

The first and most crucial step to establishing hotels as a safe haven is to prioritize the quality of indoor air through increasing ventilation. The average person breathes more than 11,000 litres of air every day, which is over five thousand times more than the amount of water consumed; with this in mind, it is critical to apply the same standards of water filtration and purification to the air that we breathe. Currently, systems used to cool indoor spaces recycle air, which means that people are breathing aerosol pollutants, bacteria and viruses that are floating amidst the shared and reused air. In order to fully reopen hotels and establish them as harbours of safety and refuge, it will be pertinent to **increase air exchange** in order to introduce more fresh air into shared indoor spaces. One fundamental change will be replacing **HVAC filters with antimicrobial filters**, which will significantly help to purify indoor air and reduce transmission of harmful viruses and bacteria. Through upgrading to antimicrobial and highly

efficient particle filtration in centralized HVAC systems, **the risk of airborne infections will be significantly reduced.** These important changes bare in mind that the transport of harmful aerosols from one space to another can lead to infecting people, despite social distancing or design measures. Quality of indoor air is critical to address as it has a direct impact on the health of guests and staff alike. As such, an additional safety measure would be portable air purifiers with the same highly efficient, antimicrobial filters will be necessary to further ensure superior indoor air quality, specifically in high traffic areas.



## PERCEPTION OF CLEANLINESS AND HANDS-FREE SOLUTIONS

As discovered in the time of tuberculosis, evidence of cleanliness informed overall design choice. During this time, bare white walls, clean, uncluttered floors, and sterile metal fixtures were all surfaces that helped to demonstrate cleanliness, creating a sense of ease and safety. Aware that fear of contamination dictates the kind of spaces we seek to inhabit, OBMI will ensure that **perception of cleanliness** informs design choices when considering materials and overall flow of space. In doing so, the places we create may appear differently than current luxury hotel experiences; however, this sense of newness will work to emphasize to guests that real changes have been made—that things are not as they used to be. Introducing **antimicrobial materials and fabrics**,

which help to repel microbes and promote cleanliness in private guest rooms and public areas will be a priority. Further, innovating existing systems to ensure that there are solutions for **hands-free alternatives** to commonly touched surfaces—**QR code scanners** to replace elevator buttons, personalized **virtual check-in** to avoid crowded lobbies and shared surfaces. Additionally, there will be other **technology-driven alternatives** to further ensure that guests have access to hands-free systems and activities—such as light switches, doorknobs, dining, and leisure enjoyment.



Hands-Free Solutions

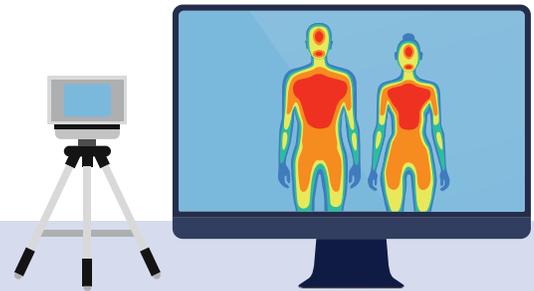
## INNOVATIVE METHODS OF DISINFECTING

OBMI has been researching the best disinfecting methods on the market, some of which have already been implemented in China since they are ahead of the curve. One is **UV-C Light, which kills up to 99.97% of bacteria and viruses**, will help to assure guests of room cleanliness. Since the current approach is harmful to humans—relies on robots and other types of automation to sanitize and complete the job—this new method of sterilization can be done through mobile units. Additional sterilization processes are **electrostatic vapor**, which is now commonly used by major airlines; this method is EPA-registered and highly effective against infectious diseases.



UVC-C Disinfecting Light

**Far UV-C Light** is another promising approach and could be implemented as a “cleanse portal” that people walk through before entering a new space, which could be present at each entrance to our hotels. If these innovative disinfecting treatments were paired with new equipment that could **scan guests temperatures through infrared cameras** the probability of spreading viruses would significantly be reduced as the chance of the virus entering the hotel would be eliminated. These details further enhance the safety of guests who may turn to our facilities as a haven of wellness.



Infrared Scanning

## REDEFINING HOTEL DESIGN FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING

Curating **modular spaces** for dining, socializing, exercising and relaxing will be necessary in order to adhere to **social distancing practices**. This will be an exciting opportunity to redefine familiar spaces with the potential of creating avant-garde design solutions that will continue to inform architectural practices beyond COVID-19. One main consideration that our team is concentrating on will be **designing flexible spaces—rooms that morph and expand** to meet the distinct needs of our guests on any given day. The second advantage to building these flexible spaces is that guests will have the opportunity to adjust their surroundings so that rooms feel less static, and will be more appealing for long periods of isolation (if necessary).

This adaptability will be present in outdoor spaces as well—both private and public—as guests will benefit from having **easy access to fresh air and sunlight** while ensuring their safety outside their rooms. Moveable plant walls, indoor gardens, expandable cabanas, personalized plunge pools and private wellness pods are features that will further communicate how hotels can be a retreat of assured wellness.



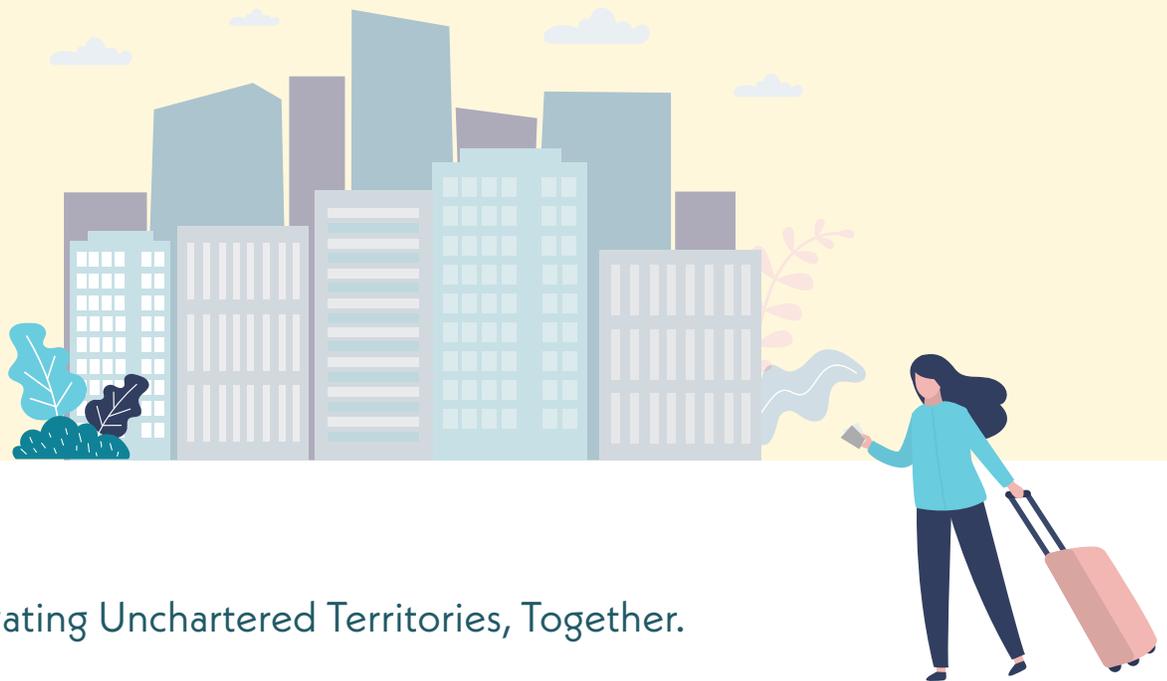
Flexible Spaces

## HOSPITALITY—A NEW PERSPECTIVE

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These few examples display how OBMI plans to innovate and adapt our design approach in order to prioritize the health and safety of our guests, demonstrating how architecture can be part of the solution. While the industry faces many challenges, we feel that this is an important time to revolutionize architectural design through imagining solutions that will serve as preventative measures towards fighting COVID-19, and other viruses. Our research fuels us as we journey to carve a path of solutions for safer spaces and peace of mind. Together, **we are striving towards a future where hotels are seen as sanctuaries of health and wellness**—spaces that insulate and provide refuge from the world outside.

OBMI has endured numerous obstacles throughout our history. Over the last eight decades, we have adapted our design work and strategic approach in order to overcome extreme weather conditions, natural disasters and economic crisis—always emerging with a sense of unity and persistence: an **unwavering commitment** to continue. Even still, the level of global disruption brought on by COVID-19 is **completely unprecedented**. As such, OBMI has dedicated a team to focus on recalibrating our resources, accelerating our innovation and investigating solutions in order to clarify how we can adapt to respond to COVID-19. Together, we are exploring answers and implementing strategies to ensure that the hospitality industry not only endures, but thrives.



### Navigating Uncharted Territories, Together.

As a global firm, we feel prepared to meet these challenging times with inventive solutions, relentless innovation and brave persistence, **reimagining spaces** and prioritizing the safety and wellness of our valued guests and clients—throughout this uncharted territory of COVID-19, and beyond.



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