Synopsis

The thesis aims to investigate the impact of changing trends in the workplace upon the spatial concepts, facilities and location profiles of contemporary offices. Particularly, the rising trend of knowledge work is characterised by more highly trained innovative individuals, involving horizontal integration of multi-disciplinary task teams in flatter organisational structures.

The vehicle chosen is an office for 3M company. 3M is an innovation company chosen for its unique way of working, reflecting the characteristics of this rising trend of knowledge working. Its corporate culture of promoting “innovation through team work and individual initiative” forms an essential basis for its organisation of autonomous business units. These business units are product-oriented groups comprising of a collection of individuals of various designations. They function autonomously focussing on their respective product yet under the corporate environment of competition.

Located in the research and development hub of Science Park 2, the proposed office reflects the collection of various business units. Planned in a decentralised manner, the project is conceived as a system of office modules connected by a series of spines. The spines serve as common facility spaces for the modules.

Each module houses a business unit of a size ranging from 10 to 20 personnel. These modules emphasis on allowing individual team discretion and adaptation within a perimeter of control. Independent modules facilitate such control of the environment in terms of lighting, temperature, acoustics and wiring without affecting other teams. These modules are planned next to a series of common amenities, reinforcing company identity and the sense of corporate community within the landscape setting of Science Park 2.