

Guiding property managers along the path of true enlightenment, here are the beatitudes of corporate real estate, according to **James Woudhuysen**



**VIEW  
POINT**

# The asset testament

## **1 Blessed are they who develop asset portfolio scenarios, and measure them even unto death, errors excepted**

"Errors excepted" is what it says on my pension statements from Royal London; it is a wonderful principle. It means that each asset portfolio scenario that corporate real estate managers develop can be worth worshipping as much as the next one. Yet I say unto thee, thou shalt worship no other God but the balanced scorecard. Whomsoever develops a scenario, let him spreadsheet it till the Day of Judgement.

## **2 Blessed are the aligned, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven**

A whole multitude of professions – IT, HR, FM, thou may name it – wish to be strategic partners to the board, not hewers of wood and drawers of water. They have spent 40 years in the wilderness, and must now align themselves with corporate strategy. But Pilate saith unto them: "What is corporate strategy?" And there was then a great hush, such as open-plan offices never afford.

## **3 Blessed are the determinists, for they are pure and meek**

It is harder to pass through the eye of a needle than it is to convince me that workplace layouts have a demonstrable effect on productivity. Yea, but the effort involved in trying to prove and measure that effect is truly character forming.

## **4 Blessed is the office as Jerusalem: a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid**

Thou shalt make the walls porous, set up business improvement districts, build mixed-use high-density developments, and invite in the local community. Thou shalt make reception areas like departure lounges and issue a hymn to bicycle parking and work-life balance.

## **5 Blessed are the play areas, canteens, atria and stairwells, for they are where the children of innovation are born**

The prophet McLuhan hath said that knowledge needeth only to be communicated for riches to be stored up. I say unto thee, do not bother with the false idols of R&D, laboratories, and men in white coats. Do not design for reflection, but for the teamwork of Babel, where management-speak can always cover for lack of direction.

## **6 Blessed are windmills, solar panels, Prince Charles geothermal wells and combined heat and power furnaces**

You cannot serve God and oil-and-gas. Get thee behind me, Putin. Where two or more people are gathered together in the name of SustainaBabel, a local intermittent rubberband-operated generator shall be provided, made of local materials, but without a standby light. There shall be no talk of electronic sensors or IP. Instead, thou shalt prepare for the Great Flood.

## **7 Blessed are the homeworkers, for they shall equip their homes with our kind of Ikea, stay clear of iPods, be judged purely by results, and save a lot of space – but also our jobs**

On the sixth and seventh day, God created the Working Weekend At Home. In that Holy Place he hath no regard for process, or heathen concepts like 'division of labour'. Instead, he will inflict Hell and Damnation at those caught At Home with a virus in their hand, or avian flu in the bush. And in the remaining formal corporate office, there will be much rejoicing, for that is the Alpha and the Omega of the workplace, world without end.

## **8 Blessed are the panic-mongers about outsourcing, for they shall turn it into a complete temple of risk management**

All shalt perform a sale and leaseback. All shalt say that space is core to their business, but not that core. And all shalt be subject to service level agreements, and to an army of lawyers, who shall smite all thine enemies, and then some.

## **9 Blessed are regulators, and the voluntary-self regulators besides them, for they shall inherit the earth**

Do not pass by on the other side. Do not pass Go. Regulate thyself, forsake all, and derisk thy children and thy children's children: follow the British Council of Offices specification, the BIFM legal handbook and every guideline upon which thou can do the laying on of hands. For despite the Vatican's recent abolition of the category, eternal Limbo shall await all those who do not make FTSE4Good the Index of Just Reward for the creation of socially responsible investment products.

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