

A Model for Resilient Retail

October 2020



Mason Studio's new retail models:

- Leverage design and architecture to optimize a retail business's ability to be flexible and adapt to any number of circumstances in a physical environment,
- Provide several service options that cater to shopper preferences to allow retailers to be adaptable to shifting consumer needs,
- Offer a more convenient, safe, and enjoyable customer experience than some of the current pandemic quick fixes (like plexiglass and tape markers).

As the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has shifted consumer behaviour and retail operations, Mason Studio created a series of explorations that reimagines how retail spaces can be designed to facilitate a more resilient customer service model.

Each exercise redefines the business model to provide an alternative product delivery system and customer experience. The resulting approach is an example of how the physical space can be designed to facilitate a new retail experience, modernize outmoded aspects of some service models, and demonstrate how interior design considers physical spaces and the human interaction within them.

Brick-and-mortar retail concept: grocery shop

Mason Studio's retail design concept creates a more resilient brick-and-mortar retail environment that provides both social and safe spaces for customers and staff, while maintaining strong aesthetic and brand value.

Conceived as a corner shop in an urban community, the shop comprises an exterior, semi-outdoor contactless corridor with shoppable window displays and infrastructure to purchase and order goods. Shoppers can see through the windows to an interior workshop space where staff fulfill orders and stock the window displays.

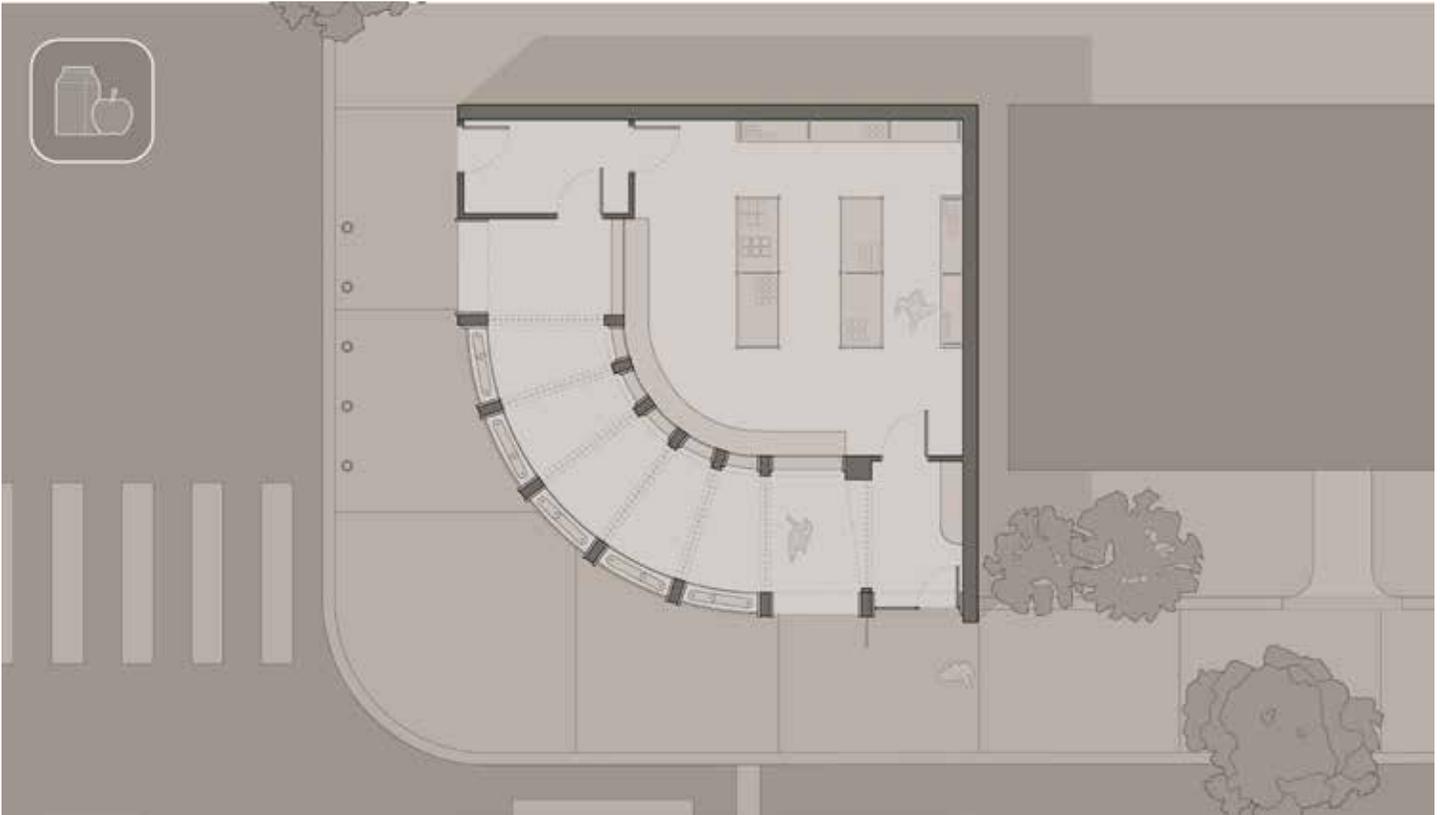
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Shoppers have four options to purchase goods:

- In-store: a customer shops the window display, selecting items to purchase. Selected items are then gathered from the separate fulfillment area and placed in the on-site lockers by the staff for the customer to access immediately.
- In-store, home delivery: a customer can experience the goods in the store environment and have the items delivered to their home
- Online, in-store pick-up: purchases are ordered online, and then the customer goes to the shop to pick up their goods through the locker system
- Online, home delivery: those that can't get out or do not wish to do so, purchases are made online and delivered directly to the customer

Each window has a collection of goods curated by the shop for specific purchasers in mind. This could be based on different lifestyles, seasonality, or price points. The idea is to give businesses flexibility to curate their offerings with a design that allows them to easily shift and adapt.

Design features like the intricate mosaic floor motif of local flora and fauna provide a traditional element intended to feel more intimate. The pattern also incorporates subtle physical separation guides for a more integrated design approach.

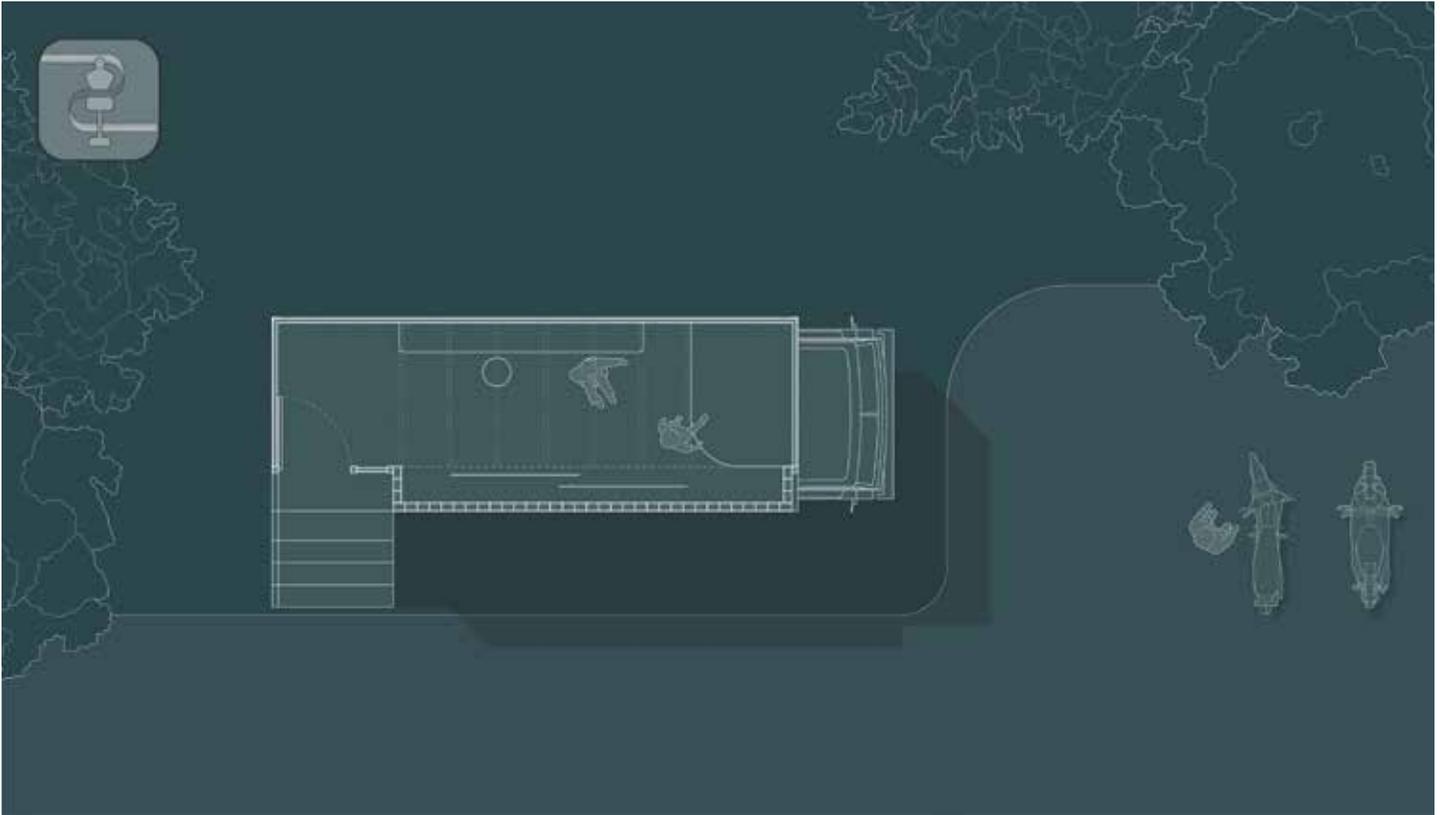
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Mobile service concept: Envisioned for a barber & tailor shop

Mason Studio has conceived a mobile service offering that will enable more flexibility than traditional fixed retail locations, allowing retailers to relocate wherever their greatest opportunity lies. The mobile retail space can bring necessary services and goods to serve those in remote communities, assisted living facilities or urban locations within loading docks or surface parking lots. It can also enable independent businesses, community organizations or associations to provide custom services in a unique location based on user needs.

The mobile retail concept design centres around prefabricated vehicles, enabling retailers to maintain a footprint small enough to be parked on a typical urban/suburban street, parking lot, or within a loading dock of a larger building, while reducing overhead costs - without sacrificing sales and branding.

Taking advantage of its mobile nature, the design of Mason Studio's concept considers best practices of retail design. By incorporating integrated product display, branding, and elements such as translucent façades and windows for natural lighting, the mobile service environment delivers an exceptional customer experience while meeting the business owners' needs.

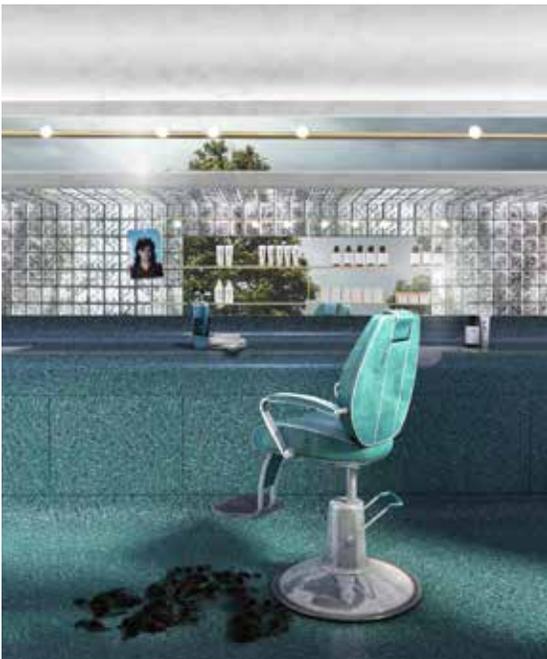
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Each vehicle can be custom designed and fitted-out to suit any unique independent service model. Businesses can maintain their unique aesthetics while on-the-go, enabling retailers to take their products and services into an aesthetically pleasing mobile offering to reach their customers better.

Accompanied by location/booking technology to connect with customers, this mobile concept aims to help retailers reach more customers and do so in a safer, more flexible environment.

Case Study: Barber or Hairdresser

With a translucent facade that provides ample natural lighting, visibility, and product display, this is not your average mobile fit-out. Clients enter into a linear, salon setting featuring highly durable finishes, like monolithic flooring, cabinetry, and countertops. A hint of brush brass metal accents adds a sense of occasion to standard salon lighting.

Expansive mirrors with forward-facing vanity lighting make for beautifully illuminated treatment areas with rotating chairs. Window merchandising displays provide product visibility to the exterior, while wall-to-wall cabinetry with integrated sinks and ample under-counter storage offers a functional yet

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Case Study: Tailor Shop

In this iteration, Mason's mobile concept has been envisioned as a boutique tailor shop, demonstrating how the prefabricated vehicle can be altered to suit a specific service, product and brand expression.

Suspended merchandise racks display garments, utilizing the modular glass façade. When stepping inside the tailor shop, customers are greeted with curved wood paneling with integrated lighting, creating rhythm and cohesion throughout the interior environment. The repetition of this finish creates a delineation of the functional spatial areas including an on-site sewing stations and a fitting area. Able to function with public and private spaces, the mobile tailor shop meets both the customer and the retailer's needs.

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Based in Toronto, with a practice that spans the world, we specialize in a wide array of work. From award-winning luxury hospitality, retail, and multi-unit residential design projects, to experimental exhibitions, with every project, we seek to broaden our insights to enrich the lives of everyone we touch.

Our founding partners Stanley Sun and Ashley Rumsey, bring international experience and a distinct perspective to the design process that combines art and science. No matter the project scale, or the location, our belief that design can create meaningful experiences remains steadfast.

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