



Changes 2026

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AHEAD SLEEPER



WHAT IS CHANGING?

HIX Europe – Why?

- HIX at the BDC has sold out for the past five years, with long waiting lists of companies we have been unable to accommodate. Each year, major brands want to exhibit, but only on the main floor, which we cannot offer.
- HIX has outgrown the BDC. We cannot offer the stand space many exhibitors want, build-up and breakdown are increasingly difficult, and the pressure on the venue grows every year.
- HIX has grown its audience year on year, reaching 4,800 in 2025, but attendance remains overwhelmingly UK-based, with few international visitors.
- We receive registrations from international buyers every year, but the conversion to attendance is low. Although HIX is Europe's only dedicated hospitality design exhibition and attracts exhibitors from across the continent, we have not yet succeeded in drawing a strong international audience.
- The feedback is clear: HIX is currently seen as too small to justify an international trip and stay in London, which explains its largely domestic audience.
- To keep improving HIX year after year, we believe it is essential to build an event that attracts international visitors as well as UK attendees—something our exhibitors consistently tell us they want.
- Each year, the AHEAD Europe Awards take place on the evening of HIX's second day. AHEAD attracts 1,500 designers and operators and has a highly international attendee base, with all shortlisted entrants attending. However, because the awards were held in Battersea while HIX was in Islington, few visitors coming to London for AHEAD also visited HIX.
- The AHEAD Awards will move with HIX and take place next door, helping ensure that attendees also visit HIX.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

ExCeL

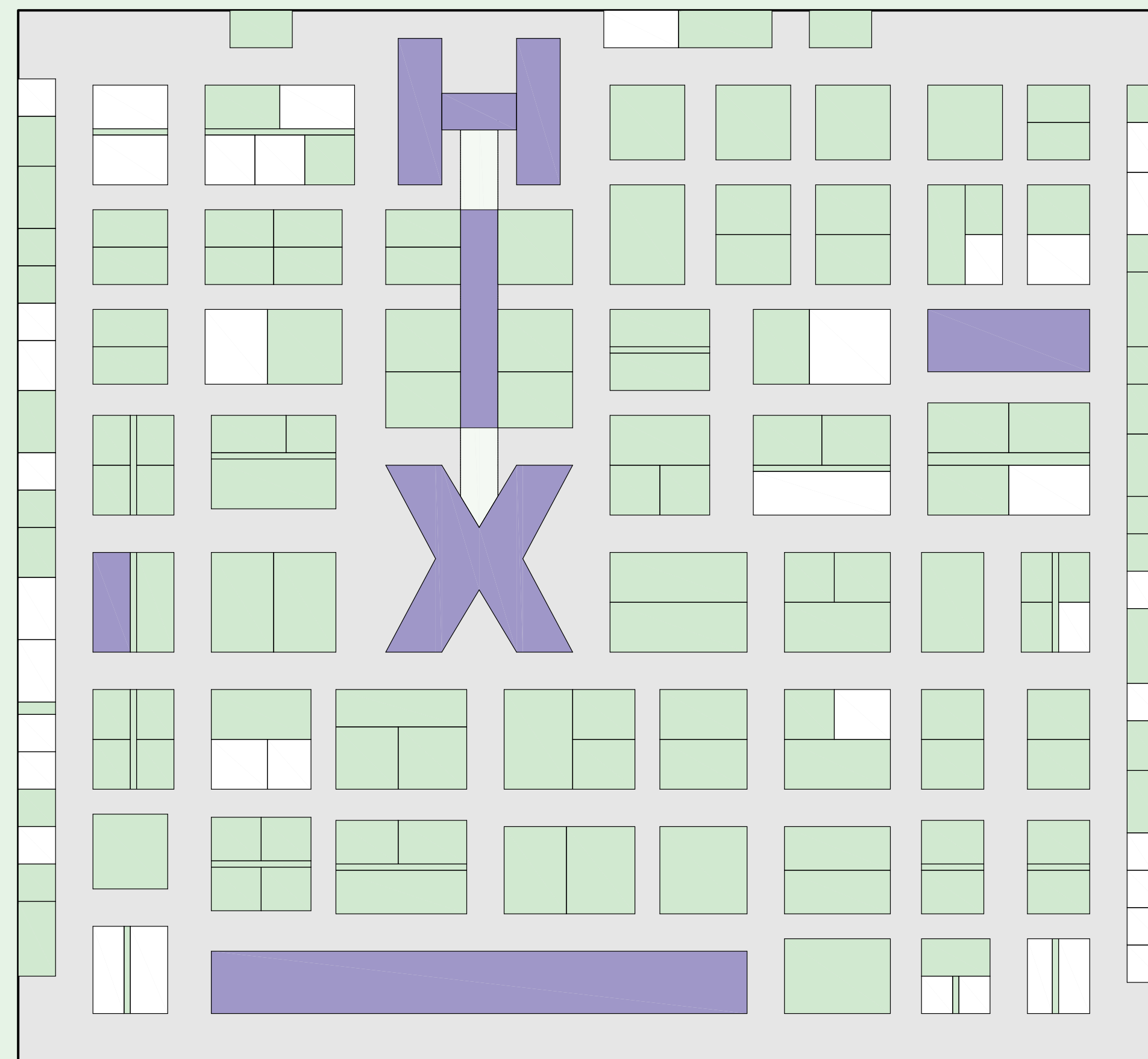
- The Elizabeth line has transformed ExCeL as a venue and made it the natural home for HIX. It is just 11 minutes from Farringdon (the core hub of our visitor community) 18 minutes from Bond Street, and 40 minutes from Heathrow
- London City Airport sits next to ExCeL and offers direct flights from almost every major European city.
- Parking is available for 20,000 cars.
- Recent investment in restaurants, bars, and hotels has significantly improved the visitor experience.
- There is direct cable car access to The O2, where the AHEAD Awards will now be held
- ExCeL offer us a blank canvass. Every stand is on the same level and with curation of installations and features we can ensure every stand location is equal
- We will create a true design experience; including a feature entrance, experiential boulevard, standout Talks Theatre, and a HIX Bar



WHAT IS CHANGING?

Progress so far:

- The response has been exceptional. We have been overwhelmed by the support from existing long-term customers who have embraced the vision and moved with us.
- We have also seen record numbers of first-time exhibitors booking stands for HIX Europe, backing the vision for a larger, more international event.
- With six months still to go, more than 80% of the available space has been sold, already exceeding the space sold at any previous HIX event.
- We have made significant investments in European data and built partnerships with key media and associations to help deliver international buyers alongside the strong domestic audience on which HIX is built.



 **INSTALLATIONS**  **SOLD**  **AVAILABLE**

WHAT IS CHANGING?

FAQs

Q: When Sleep moved to Olympia it failed after a couple of years. Why will HIX at ExCeL be different?

A: Olympia is difficult to access from Clerkenwell, has no tube station or parking making it much harder for the core audience to attend. It also shared the BDC's problem of split-level exhibition space. ExCeL, by contrast, is just 11 minutes from Clerkenwell—quicker and easier to reach than the BDC—and offers an airport, on-site hotels, and parking. Crucially, it lets us create a single-level event with equal stand quality.

Q: ExCeL is a characterless exhibition venue. Won't it lose what made HIX at the BDC special?

A: ExCeL is very different from the BDC, but we are not trying to recreate the same experience—we believe we can make it better. The extra space lets us deliver a more immersive design event with installations, features, and collaborations. Our aim is to surprise visitors when they arrive in November.

Q: HIX will become more expensive now it's moved to ExCeL

A: The opposite is true. The move has enabled us to freeze exhibitor rates again for 2026 and 2027. The larger event creates benefits for all HIX stakeholders while still allowing us to make investments in the visitor experience



Visitor Numbers

759

hotel consultants,
business development
& brand specialists

76

studios and
practices

178

hotel operators
& owners

1,729⁺

interior designers &
architects

51%

c-suite, directors
and partners

27%

design leaders
and associates

22%

next-gen
designers



A new
home for
the next
chapter...



HI X
EUROPE

