

# Flexibility Adds Value

*M Moser Associates' award-winning interior design for the British Council in Hong Kong creates more use with less space*

Expanded from the highlight in GRID (May 2004), a supplement to *Estates Gazette*, the UK's "leading commercial property publication"





“The design emphasises flexible spaces and profitable functions.”

By aligning its space allocation strategy with cultural and business activities that command revenues, The British Council in Hong Kong, aided by interior architect M Moser Associates, is improving financial performance without sacrificing quality of service or image appeal.

Widely considered one of the most dynamic arms of the UK government, The British Council has become a champion of fiscal accountability. This evolution is a direct response to budget constraints and strong demand for better public amenities.

In fact, a competitive British Council is also a more successful one, if the public's response to the new facility is any indication. Two floors, comprising 7,850 square feet of the architecturally distinctive British Council building at the edge of Hong Kong's business district were transformed into a multi-dimensional platform for offices, exhibitions, training, education, collaborative meetings, social events, professional gatherings and a library collection.

The design approach is twofold. First, spaces for revenue-generating activities, e.g. classrooms for language courses, meeting space for business gatherings and galleries for sponsored exhibitions, receive more design emphasis and scale. Conversely, spaces for cost-intensive activities, e.g. offices for administrative and finance functions, are reduced by 33% through the elimination of physical boundaries and the implementation of new workplace technologies. The impact has been to minimize physical storage, encourage the sharing of resources and stimulate the collective performance of staff.

Second, the public areas are designed for flexible programming and overlapping uses. For instance, modular lighting, mobile furniture and strategically located data points and outlets enable the library at dawn to become a social venue by dusk. It's all about versatility - a greater variety of groups utilizing the facility for different purposes within an accelerated timeframe.

**The British Council project recently received a Merit Award for Interiors from the American Institute of Architects - Hong Kong Chapter.** With 4-metres high ceilings and unrivalled views of Victoria Harbour, the facility is a distinctly British setting that warms quite well to its local context.



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