

PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is nearing completion of major refurbishment at its central London headquarters.

What sort of environment would an organisation like DCMS need?

Operations move at a fast pace here. Efficiency and flexibility are essential. But a focus on current requirements must be balanced with a view on long-term strategy. This is the government department responsible for the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games; it also looks after the National Lottery, maintains the list of 500,000 Listed Buildings in England and manages the Government Art Collection, amongst other things.

Efficiency, quality and creativity clearly must be central considerations in the Department's work environment.

Project drivers

This extensive rolling refurbishment got underway last year with the appointment of workplace specialists Cochrane McGregor & Associates, initially to carry out feasibility studies that would form the foundation for a new accommodation strategy.

For DCMS, there were several important drivers behind the project:

- The air conditioning system in the main building was approaching the end of



Original artwork, specially commissioned by the Government Art Collection in collaboration with CMA, brings a unique addition to each office floor at DCMS. The glass partitions on the top floor, part of a series by the artist Henna Nadeem entitled 'Heaven 'n Earth', were inspired by a starry London night sky. Complementary panels on the first floor feature green and brown earthtones.

- its useful life and a carefully specified new system would offer considerable savings in both energy and running cost, as well as an improved work environment
- More effective utilisation of the building would free up space to accommodate staff located elsewhere, enhancing communication and cutting overall costs

- Redesign of the workspace would enable a shift to open plan workstyles, supporting team working and further enhancing communication within the department.

Continued on page 2



In this issue

- DCMS prepares for the Olympic Gamespage 1*
- OGC offers an easy route to buying services.....page 2*
- Managing Director's Column: public sector takes the lead.....page 2*
- Green thinking underpins everything we dopage 3*
- Healthy living at UBSpage 4*

Continued from page 1

Preliminary studies highlighted what could be achieved in this large pre-War block, and CMA was then asked to develop detailed space planning and interior design schemes for a new work environment.

We were also appointed to project manage the implementation on a phased basis: DCMS would remain in occupation throughout the process, and it was critical that the department could carry on with 'business as usual' even while works were underway.

Meeting targets

In addition to careful planning and control of the stages of implementation, we also took an active role in the important task of establishing and maintaining effective communication with DCMS staff and other stakeholder groups.

The refurbishment project has included a thorough upgrade of mechanical and electrical services, as well as enhancements to existing IT infrastructure



to facilitate the integration of operational groups from other DCMS premises.

We are also optimising the utilisation of space by introducing open plan office layouts supported by a range of central and local meeting facilities, quiet rooms, breakout and informal meeting spaces.

Another important feature of this project is the introduction of new art, which brings a special dimension of interest to the work environment and also underlines the Department's role in supporting cultural and creative pursuits. We worked with DCMS to commission three young British artists to produce original works for key locations around the building.

Once complete, DCMS will enjoy a transformed work environment, one that is fully in line with current operational needs and effectively supports future strategy.



OGC MAKES BUYING EASIER

The broad spectrum of public sector organisations - from central government departments, executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies, through local authorities, NHS trusts, schools and colleges, to registered charities and utilities – all have the opportunity for easier buying of products and services, thanks to OGCbuying.solutions.

To achieve its purpose of maximising buying efficiency and value for money for public sector bodies, OGCbuying.solutions has put in place a series of framework agreements with a variety of carefully

selected consultants and service providers.

From the client's point of view, one great advantage of this initiative is that you can go straight to the recognised supplier who is best qualified to meet your needs.

Cochrane McGregor is a pre-qualified partner for workplace strategy, space planning, design and implementation services. This framework agreement provides access to specialist advice on development and implementation of workspace strategies, space utilisation and interior design for existing workspace or new accommodation.

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Traditional wisdom has always been that, when it comes to office accommodation, the private sector leads and the public sector follows... sometimes, quite a long way behind.



Andrew Harding

Times have changed. We are now finding a strong emphasis in many public sector organisations on the workplace as a critical factor in recruitment and retention of staff, in comfort and productivity, and consequently in organisational effectiveness.

... some public sector organisations are now outpacing their private sector counterparts ...

After all, the public sector is subject to the same drivers: the need for a strategic approach to decisions about space and space utilisation, emerging technologies, changing workforce demographics, pressure to deliver value for money. And, of course, their decisions are more likely to attract wide scrutiny than those made by a commercial organisation.

Government initiatives such as OGCbuying.solutions (see this page) have both 'pushed' this trend by establishing strict procedures for procurement and 'pulled' it through the supply of advice and support for project development and implementation.

At the same time, clients like DCMS (see page 1) serve as models of what can be achieved.

In our experience, some public sector organisations are now outpacing their private sector counterparts with their clear focus on what can be achieved in the workplace.

We may not see the traditional wisdom reversed, but we are certainly closing in on level pegging.

GREEN ENVIRONMENTS

At Cochrane McGregor, we take our responsibilities towards the environment very seriously. 'Green' thinking underpins everything we do.

Sustainability has become an issue on every organisation's agenda, driven forward by a series of interlocking pressures: growing concern for corporate social responsibility, increasing awareness of the need for environmental protection, ever more stringent legislation, and rapidly rising energy prices, to name a few

For ourselves and on our clients' behalf, we recognise that sound environmental policies must be an integral and fundamental part of corporate business strategy for any firm – like ours – that is in a position to influence how buildings are designed and operated.

At CMA, we aim to be innovators in the environment, finding new uses for materials and new techniques for design and implementation. It is our intention that the full benefits of this approach will be passed on to our clients.

These benefits may be direct in terms of cost savings. We look, for example, for ways to improve waste management and energy efficiency in planning and designing new work environments. Most organisations are more wasteful than they need be. Buildings account for over half the fuel consumed in the UK, yet a reasonable increase in the standards of insulation, heating, ventilation, lighting and control systems could bring significant rewards in the long run.

Some benefits may be less direct but no less worthwhile. We do not specify products or materials that contain banned or 'listed' substances, nor do we specify natural materials drawn from unsustainable sources. If existing materials are environmentally sound and meet project requirements, we seek to reuse them.

As an OGC-recognised company, we are familiar with government policies that place the focus firmly on 'green' procurement and estate manage-

ment, as well as initiatives such as Forest Stewardship and EU Directives on packaging and waste. These are consistent with our own policies, and we strive to see them implemented in our work for clients. (See, for example, the DCMS story on page 1.)

Commitment

We believe that everyone responsible for the planning and design of the workplace, and for the specification of products, should operate from a policy position that reflects the goals of sustainable development.

We strive for continuous improvement in the application of this principle in order to reduce any harmful impacts of our operations, increase our efficiency in the use of resources and prevent pollution. In practical terms, our focus is on:

- Conserving energy, water, wood, paper and other resources, particularly those which are scarce or non-renewable, while still providing a safe and comfortable work environment
- Reducing waste through re-use and recycling and by using refurbished and recycled products and materials where appropriate, economical and suitable
- Ensuring that any products used or derived from the natural world, such as timber and plants, are from sustainable sources and comply with relevant legislation and trading standards.

Any supplier or sub-contractor with whom we work is expected to have comparable policies in place.

Implementation

Policies are only as good as the effectiveness of their implementation, of course.

We typically apply a range of active monitoring processes on our assignments (eg site tours, spot checks, environmental audits, workplace inspections, etc) to ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities, site rules and other client requirements in respect of both directly delivered services and those activities performed by appointed suppliers or sub-contractors.



These and similar measures are also applied to determine the effectiveness of our own environmental management processes and to identify opportunities for further improvement of these.

Just as importantly, we communicate regularly with all staff and other stakeholders, emphasising education and motivation in support of environmental policies and programmes.

BANKERS GET STATE-OF-THE-ART HEALTH CENTRE

Leading City financial institution UBS has a commitment to providing its staff with easy access to health services. On the central London HQ campus, UBS employees have long been able to take advantage of GP, dental, occupational health and physiotherapy services.

With other accommodation changes underway in these buildings, the opportunity was identified in 2004 to bring all the services together in a purpose-built health centre positioned in a key location on the campus.

CMA was asked to carry out a feasibility study to determine the optimum use of approximately 270 sqm, providing all the necessary healthcare facilities, together with dedicated administration areas. Having demonstrated that a good solution was

available for creating an efficient, comfortable health centre, we were commissioned to plan, design and manage the implementation of the project.

Beginning with detailed interviews with each specialist consultant, we developed a thorough brief for the centre capturing all requirements, from space needs, through equipment, to environment.

Key considerations in project development and implementation were:

- Maximising the effectiveness of the space for each healthcare discipline
- Ensuring confidentiality for visitors throughout the centre

- Creating and maintaining the highest standards of hygiene in all areas.

We developed a floorplan that provided appropriate space for all needs – from carpeted reception and waiting areas with comfortable seating; through private consultation rooms, again with comfortable furniture and plenty of storage; to vinyl-floored changing and treatment areas.

Another major consideration, expressed by virtually all staff when we met with them to discuss their needs, was to maximise natural light.

We achieved this with a simple but carefully thought through design feature: high-level glazing ensures penetration of natural light but protects confidentiality. Even the dental surgery now benefits from natural light



Carefully detailed high level glazing throughout the health centre provides natural light and also ensures privacy

– satisfying the very first request dental staff made, as their room has an internal position.

Overall, the new UBS health centre delivers a state-of-the-art environment that meets all expectations for quality, comfort and efficiency – enhancing every aspect of the experience for both visitors and healthcare professionals.

CMA Launches New Website



How do business and facilities managers cope with the non-stop challenge of providing a comfortable and effective workplace at reasonable cost? Where do they turn when they need expert advice or support for routine churn, refurbishment or relocation?

Cochrane McGregor & Associates is the first stop for a long list of public and private sector clients. CMA has launched a comprehensively redesigned website setting out how we work with organisations to help them define their requirements, then develop creative, cost-effective solutions. In addition to information, background and news, www.cochrane-mcgregor.com provides visitors with access to the full content of *Workspace*.

DESIGN LEADER

Gregory King became an Associate Director of Cochrane McGregor last year. His career as a designer has always been focused on the workplace, and his vast experience is invaluable in meeting client needs. Greg joined CMA in 1991 and has taken the lead on many of our most important projects. As Associate Director, he will provide leadership for the design discipline at CMA.



Cochrane McGregor & Associates

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