



Brock Carmichael successfully expands into China and Hong Kong

Fast facts

Company: Brock Carmichael Architects

Industry: Architecture & Master Planning

Target Markets: China & Hong Kong

UKTI Services: Advice & Guidance; Market
Visit Support; Overseas
Market Introduction Service

www.brockcarmichael.co.uk



UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) helped Brock Carmichael to prepare for the Shanghai World Expo 2010. Since then it has continued to support the company as it builds a presence in the Far East and wins new business worth close to £500,000.

Modern architecture has the opportunity to consider long-term concerns such as sustainability and the environment. Established in Liverpool in 1974, Brock Carmichael offers architecture and master planning services that blend artistic style with a sustainable outlook. The company is certified as a Chartered Practice by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). As well as creating innovative new designs, it also specialises in the re-use, conversion and extension of existing buildings. It works with private and public sector clients on projects throughout the North West of England and its portfolio of designs in the UK includes the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA), the

Merseyside Maritime Museum and buildings in the shopping, residential and leisure complex Liverpool One.

“Sustainable development is a very important part of our approach to master planning, conservation and urban design,” says Michael Cosser, Equity Partner at Brock Carmichael. “We regularly compete with much larger international firms, but our clients choose us because of our 40 years of UK experience, the RIBA certifications we hold and our focus on seamless integration of sustainability and design.”

Demand for services

Over the years, Brock Carmichael has grown to five partners and more than 12 support staff in the UK. In 2010, the City of Liverpool invited the company to join a delegation of public bodies and private companies to that year’s World Expo in Shanghai, China. UKTI provided advice and guidance about how to make the most of the event, as part of its Market Visit Support programme.

To really capitalise on its visit to China, Brock Carmichael commissioned an Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) report from UKTI to identify opportunities that it could explore and to set up meetings in Shanghai and Chengdu. As a result of the meetings during this visit, the company was invited to submit bids for major projects in China. UKTI advised Brock Carmichael to consider who in the local market it could connect with from its own existing networks that may have on-the-ground knowledge and experience.

The obvious choice was Alfred Yeung, a former associate who had relocated to Hong Kong on leaving Brock Carmichael and gained experience working for public and private development companies in delivering large scale mass transit projects and leisure schemes in the region.

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Michael Cosser, Equity Partner at Brock Carmichael

Alfred became Brock Carmichael’s sixth equity partner and introduced the company to Oval Partnership, a Chinese firm with offices in Shanghai, Chengdu, Hong Kong and London. The two companies have since joined forces to bid for new work together.

“UKTI showed us that export was not reserved solely for manufacturers and big business,” says Michael. “As a small company, we initially assumed that for us the value of joining the Liverpool delegation to the World Expo would rather be to network with UK companies and organisations. UKTI opened our eyes to the potential in China and Hong Kong for us as a RIBA certified architecture practice focused on sustainability. The OMIS was a great way to prepare for entering the market. By prompting us to re-connect with existing contacts in the market, UKTI helped us to realise that we had an excellent resource in Alfred. Oval Partnership is similar to us in size and approach and has certainly enhanced our offering as we bid for the projects identified by UKTI for us through OMIS.”

New business

Working together, Brock Carmichael and Oval Partnership secured a project for a new development on reclaimed land in the coastal city of Tianjin, Northeast China. In July 2011, Brock Carmichael Asia Ltd was established in Hong Kong to work more closely with Oval Partnership and to manage the Tianjin project. The following year, the companies set up Octagon Partnership, a joint venture of equal ownership.

Meanwhile, UKTI invited Brock Carmichael to speak to audiences at seminars back in the UK, sharing its experiences of setting up a new business in China. In recognition of its overseas success, UKTI has also nominated the company for various awards including the New Exporter of the Year Award at the Insider 2012 North West International Trade Awards.

As a result of UKTI’s support, Brock Carmichael has established an export

presence worth £470,000 in the Far East. This currently represents 20 per cent of its overall business. With UKTI’s help, the company is now looking to explore opportunities in Singapore as well as across the Middle East.

“UKTI’s guidance and support has been influential in our success in China and Hong Kong,” says Michael. “UKTI welcomed us into the spotlight in the UK and helped us to become an award-winning UK company. They have also included us on two high-profile visits to China, one with the President of RIBA and a second with Prime Minister David Cameron and a delegation of 130 UK businesses as part of the GREAT campaign. It’s been wonderful to experience first-hand how the UK Government is promoting British architecture in particular and UK products and services in general. We look forward to continuing our relationship with UKTI as we explore new overseas markets.”

The UK and China

The Chinese economy has grown at almost 10 per cent a year for the last 30 years, effectively doubling in size every eight years

In 2013 the UK’s goods exports to China increased by 17.1 per cent to £11.6 billion, making this the UK’s largest goods export market outside the US and EU. Imports from China to the UK also grew by 5.2 per cent to £31.5 billion. Total bilateral trade in goods and services in 2012 was £46.5 billion (US\$73.8 billion), and the two countries have agreed a target to increase this to US\$100 billion by 2015.

The China-Britain Business Council (CBBC), UKTI’s official trade service delivery partner for mainland China, provides advice and UKTI services to UK businesses via its network of offices across the UK and China.

For more information visit www.cbcc.org or www.gov.uk/ukti

Helping you access international markets

Doing business in another country can be a challenge, so it’s good to know that UK Trade & Investment is there to help you succeed.

Through a range of unique services, including participation at selected trade fairs, overseas missions and providing bespoke market intelligence, UK Trade & Investment can help you crack foreign markets and quickly get to grips with regulations and business practices overseas.

UK Trade & Investment’s Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) is a flexible business tool, letting you use the services of our trade teams, located in our embassies, high commissions and consulates across the world, to benefit your business.

A service package could include:

- Market, sector advice
- Analysis of market entry strategies
- Support during overseas visits
- Identification of possible business partners

UKTI was delighted to support Brock Carmichael Architects in its business overseas.



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