



# new york's cosmos



We're on the 49th floor of Canary Wharf, home to The Bank of New York Mellon (BNY Mellon). Well, to be accurate, one of the numerous London homes of the bank. Despite the undoubted quality of the reception space here, we can't help but be transfixed by the astonishing views.

It's somewhat ironic that the many, many tourists this fine city attracts would pay a small fortune for such a view. Speaking of fortune, we get to see it for nothing. We love our job. We love meeting with fascinating, talented individuals, discovering incredible, clever strategic thinking, walking through progressive, smart design schemes and, possibly most of all, the variety of it all.

The Bank of New York and Mellon Financial Corporation announced that they would merge at the tail end of 2006, creating the world's largest securities servicing and asset management firm. The new company, called The Bank of New York Mellon Corporation, is the world's leading asset servicer by a considerable margin, with over



▶▶▶▶ \$19 trillion in assets under custody and administration, and services more than \$11 trillion in outstanding debt. It ranks among the top global asset managers with than \$881 billion in assets under management.

Heady stuff, we're sure you'd agree. Speaking of heady, having left the bustle of Canary Wharf's early morning commuter traffic well behind us (49 floors behind us, to be exact) we meet with Mixology judge, BDGworkfutures' Andi Theokle and the

bank's VP Manager of the Planning & Development team, Property & Facilities Management (international) Paul Etherington. Paul's title might not be one a journalist wants to repeat on a regular basis, but it does tell us a great deal about what we can learn from him with regards to not only the 49th floor, but also the wider BNY Mellon real estate and interiors picture.

We settle into one of the chic, polished meeting rooms beyond the bright open

reception area and, trying our hardest to ignore the view of planes (which are actually lower than us!) making their descent into City Airport, we ask about the relationship that has formed between the bank and BDG.

'We met in a shed!' Andi startles us.

'We did!' Paul suddenly recalls. 'We used to be located in an outer building in South Quay. I'd only been with the bank for a short while and we had a number of projects we were looking at, and I was keen to encourage▶▶▶▶



## case study

►►►us to test the market – to see what architectural firms there were around. We have a strong relationship with two or three firms now, and BDG was appointed when we did a strategic overview of the London campus.

‘We then went out and did a tender and we used BDG for the first phase at our Harbour Exchange site, which was to fit-out two floors – we currently occupy four floors at Harbour Exchange, in building 8/9 and one floor in building 6/7.

‘We really wanted to up the anti. The legacy bank space was grown through acquisition. The speed of growth meant the environment became slightly confused and dated. To improve the environment and also the supporting tools within the space, I felt it was essential that we brought someone on board to work with us.

‘We delivered what was a challenging problem there due to the fact that we were moving people out of One Canada Square as part of an accommodation strategy, into Harbour Exchange – which is literally only 10 minutes’ walk but feels like a lifetime away. It was a challenge, it was delivered and we moved the folks into there in good time, on budget and all those good things. The staff there are quite pleased with that environment.’

‘One of the main challenges we had was the fact that we had the legacy bank and Mellon bank and there wasn’t a real identity for BNY Mellon,’ Andi explains. ‘We were in limbo at that point as to what was going to happen with the two banks.’



‘Andi’s correct,’ Paul interjects. ‘When we moved on to this project we had a better understanding of company branding throughout the organisation – we had a small understanding throughout the HEX project, but it was certainly more defined by the time we turned our attention to this site. We were also able to get the right people and included them within the design team.’

‘We laid the foundations at HEX,’ Andi muses. ‘There were two different brands and two different interiors. The Bank of New York had a burgundy and blue look, and then you had Mellon which was green in terms of the brand. We had this lovely challenge where it couldn’t really be either, so it had to be something neutral. What we didn’t want was to have some segmented piecemeal look for

the bank, so we needed to lay some foundations for a palette we could work from so that it had a language which would follow through. The brand was really developed fully from the work here at level 49 – the logo had been developed, the colour palette, the signage, the imagery. We then had far more of a palette – and a complete idea – to incorporate into this scheme.’

We move on to talk about the 49th floor challenges. ‘There were different types of challenges here,’ Paul reveals. ‘Once we got the approval we engaged with key stakeholders within this location to ensure what we intended to do here was in keeping with the right image and feel for the bank. We held a number of workshops to present the ideas and the new palettes – and I guess



that took a little longer than we hoped. The project started, and we were immediately tight on time with regards to target dates because the very first board meeting of the ‘new bank’ was going to be held over two days in London at this location and also at our corporate headquarters in Queen Victoria Street (we did say the bank had numerous locations!). So the date was immovable. It was always going to be a pressurised project, but then our friendly district surveyor, building control, found some issues with the previous installation which meant we had to undertake some quite substantial changes above the ceiling.

‘Again the team had to react to that. It was works that had to be completed to meet new regulations and everyone involved in the

project team had to roll their sleeves up and work together. There were very few disagreements, and those we did have were easily resolved. Essentially we were able to move forward and get back on track. We finished construction work here about a week before the board meeting. The team responded and it was really good stuff.’

Paul and Andi’s work was far from done however, as they immediately turned their sights to a roll-on project at Harbour Exchange to fit-out the remaining two floors at building 8/9. As we continue to listen to this astonishing, on-going programme of design and development, we learn about a major project in Manchester, another in Dublin and the imminent calling of the European mainland.

Of course, BNY Mellon now has a strong corporate brand identity, incorporating gold, silver and bronze, and an equally strong corporate interior palette and style to follow. Not that Andi and Paul are resting on their laurels when it comes to continuing to moving things forward. ‘It’s been two and half years now we’ve been working with BDG,’ Paul tells us. ‘The results have been A1 from a user, client and a property point of view. All of the projects that we’ve worked on with BDG have really been the first step in each location towards creating a new company environment. To roll out that concept, that environment and that branding has been a real challenge, but one that we’ve all risen to every time.’

‘The whole idea from when we first sat down was that we don’t want this to just be a roll-out – this is your carpet, this is your space plan, here are your colours...’ Andi continues. ‘One of the missing links, even in the two legacy institutions, was that there didn’t appear to be a language that followed through. We wanted employees to go one from one environment to another and feel the bank’s personality, although it’s not a roll-out. For example, the quality level is consistent and we’ve used things such as the stone floor throughout reception. These are links, and we’ve used elements from previous projects in these new ones. There is definitely now a language that links the spaces.’

We’ll wager even Andi and BDG can’t link the views you get here on level 49. Or maybe we’ve just set the St John Street champions a whole new challenge! ●

## essential ingredients

<b>Client:</b>	• Bank of New York Mellon
<b>Interior Design:</b>	• BDGworkfutures 020 7559 7400
<b>Fit-Out:</b>	• BW Interiors
<b>Project Manager:</b>	• Burke Hunter Adams
<b>Systems Furniture:</b>	• Teknion 020 7490 2101
<b>Carpets:</b>	• InterfaceFLOR 08705 304030 Milliken 01942 826073
<b>Partitioning:</b>	• Komfort 01293 529500
<b>Meeting Rooms:</b>	• Bene 020 7689 1234 Howe 020 8673 9777
<b>Lighting:</b>	• Siteco 0161 406 0800