



# Cook+Fox Architects New York, NY

Corporate | Residential | Education | Government | Hospitality | Transportation | Health Care | Cultural and Event Centers | Commercial Lighting

## First LEED Platinum office in NYC

In April 2008, two studies—one by the New Buildings Institute (NBI) and one by CoStar Group—validated what the green building community has always known: third party certified buildings outperform their conventional counterparts across a wide variety of metrics, including energy savings, occupancy rates, sale price and rental rates.

One committed member and guiding light of the green building community is Cook+Fox Architects; U.S. Green Building Council President, CEO and Founding Chairman Rick Fedrizzi even called partners Rick Cook and Bob Fox “two of the greenest architects on earth.”



Crestron Green Light™ products were installed, including nine keypads and one touchpanel, to control a total of 80 lighting circuits.

Cook+Fox developed the strategy for its new, 12,000-square-foot office space in 2006, and the firm enthusiastically set out to “walk the walk”. Over a four month period, a 12,000 square-foot space on the top floor of an eight-story building on Avenue of the Americas in New York was transformed into the first office in New York with a LEED\* Platinum rating. Lighting control from Crestron Electronics (and award-winning Cline Bettridge Bernstein Lighting Design) were an integral part of the process.



Under LEED for Commercial Interiors (CI), lighting and lighting controls are specified in both the “Energy & Atmosphere” and “Indoor Environmental Quality” categories. To that end, Crestron Green Light™ products were installed, including nine keypads and one touchpanel, to control a total of 80 lighting circuits. The Crestron system easily enables future expansion (such as shade control), as well as remote access.

The historical space chosen by Cook+Fox (the dining room of the nowdefunct Simpson Crawford department store) has 14-foot ceilings, and a curved wall of nine-foot high windows that faces east, of which the architects took full advantage. With an open architecture and low partitions, almost all of the desks have window views, and photocells throughout the studio measure the natural light. Based on feedback from these sensors, the Crestron system dims studio lights automatically, conserving energy while keeping light levels consistent throughout the day.

The easier systems are to use, the more efficient and effective they are in reducing energy usage. In terms of the Crestron dimming system, it works exactly as intended: “I think a lot of people don’t even notice it,” said Alice Hartley, Cook+Fox LEED Accredited Professional (AP). “The controls show the amount of dimming that occurs at any given time and the lights dim very subtly. If you ask someone here who isn’t particularly aware of what’s been installed, they might not even know there is

\* The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System™

a dimming system.” The associated benefits go beyond energy savings, which is also a goal of the LEED system—to have a positive impact on occupants. Since architects frequently work extremely long hours, it is important that their space be ergonomic.

Most of the time, people interact with the lighting control system only to turn it off on their way out the door at night. “I’m sure people appreciate that, because it’s so easy to turn off all the lights with button: ‘ALL OFF,’” added Hartley. The system has timers tied in to certain lights, to ensure those lights stay off unless someone turns them on, and includes an integral astronomical clock to automatically control lighting based on standard times of occupancy. Neither requires user input.

The design of the new office was seen by Cook+Fox as an opportunity to experience first-hand the processes required to reach Platinum, the highest level LEED standard. The architects found that some green building objectives were easy to achieve; others took longer or cost more than traditional materials or approaches. They knew the effort and expense would be more than worth it, however: a California Sustainable Task Force study estimated that upfront investment of about 2% in construction costs typically yields life cycle savings of over 10 times the initial investment.

According to Hartley, the establishment of the LEED rating system was pivotal to the recent, rapid growth of green building. “LEED is the most widespread and most widely accepted industry standard; it’s what we point to as the ‘bible’ for how these things get done... it’s so helpful to have this common ground where you can compare apples to apples in a way that you couldn’t if you were using competing standards.”

The Cook+Fox office serves as a great showcase for potential clients, and has educational areas where sample green materials are displayed, such as building insulation made out of recycled denim and bamboo (a highly renewable resource) that is used for shelving and woodwork. Concepts such as “dynamic lighting”—the use of changing natural light—are also featured.

Sustainability is smart business, and by employing the most advanced materials and technology (such as Crestron Green Light™ products) Cook+Fox Architects is making its mark in the journey towards a more sustainable future.

