

Woods Bagot Expands its China Footprint

On Tuesday 24 November 2009 Woods Bagot will open its latest studio in Shanghai, China – yet another indication that the AJ100 International Practice of the Year is going from strength to strength within the Asian region.

Tomorrow international architecture and interior design powerhouse Woods Bagot will open the doors to its new studio in Shanghai, China's most cosmopolitan financial hub, led by Principal Mark Unger, and boasting a team of 35 talented architects, urban planners and interior designers. Having operated in Asia for the past 25 years and with key development projects across China, the opening of its Shanghai studio is a natural extension of Woods Bagot's growth strategy to expanding its business footprint in the market.

"It gives me great pleasure to be in Shanghai to officiate the opening of our latest addition to the Woods Bagot's network in China. I am confident that the breath of talents in our Shanghai studio, together with those in our studios in Beijing and Hong Kong, will continue to deliver some of the most extraordinary and award-winning architecture designs for our clients in the region," said Ross Donaldson, Global Executive Chairman and CEO, Woods Bagot. "More importantly, findings from research underpins our Design Intelligence across all studios and as a firm, we commit 2% of our revenue to funding our research programs globally. As such, Woods Bagot remains committed to bringing to the market our knowledge and expertise to further raise the overall Chinese architectural benchmark, in terms of design innovation and environmental sustainability."

With more than 140 years of history, Woods Bagot is today one of the most recognized architectural practices operating in the region. In July 2009, Woods Bagot was recognised as the 'International Practice of the Year' at the prestigious AJ100 Awards in London. The AJ100 Awards recognise the achievements of the largest 100 architectural practices in the United Kingdom, based on survey results, while the 'International Practice' award was presented at the jury's discretion. Woods Bagot was also the first Architectural firm to be recognised for its commitment to research and knowledge in the 2008 Asian Most Admired Knowledge Enterprise (MAKE) Award, for the second year in a row. Woods Bagot was judged number 1 against other companies for its developing new products services and solutions.

In China, Woods Bagot has been actively involved in shaping China's fast-developing cities, with more than 60 developmental projects across many Chinese cities, including Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Chongqing, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Changsha and Shijiazhuang. In Shanghai, Woods Bagot was the design architect for the recently-opened Plaza 353, which was a redeveloped Art Deco Mall built in 1932, located at the heart of Shanghai's famed Nanjing East Road. Designed to appeal to China's influential youth market, Plaza 353 adopts an inspired mix of 21st-century retail and lifestyle concepts along with high-tech creative platforms that connect with young consumers beyond just shopping. Woods Bagot was also appointed the design architect for the 45,000m² retail mall at Kerry Parkside, the gateway to the Shanghai New International Expo Center. Taking cues from the 19th Century French Les Halles, the design for the retail mall will bring to life random street patterns of "Old Shanghai" right next to one of the largest convention facilities the world has ever seen.

Woods Bagot operates on a 'One Global Studio' concept, which gives the firm its unique competitive edge, by allowing teams to be formed based solely on the strength of each individual's talents and expertise, no matter the geography. "Ultimately, it is all about providing our clients in China with the best expertise in response to their business objectives and requirements," added Ross Donaldson.

Woods Bagot's major upcoming architecture projects in China include Shengyang South China Landmark Mall, Yi Xing Residential Complex, Qingdao Yongxin International Plaza and Foshan New City. **END**

About Woods Bagot (Asia)

Woods Bagot Asia is the Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai-based component of a 140-year-old global studio specialising in architecture, design and consulting across three sectors – Education and Science, Lifestyle and Workplace. Since 1980, Woods Bagot Asia has vastly diversified their expertise in response to growing markets in the region. With highly skilled professionals working locally and internationally from their Asia studios, the Woods Bagot team comprises architects, urban planners and interior designers, who have emerged as a notable regional force in the provision of forefront design for hotels and resorts, retail development, high density mixed-use commercial and residential complexes, education projects, corporate and hospitality interiors.

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