



New rooms for Food Technology

Clare Whitehurst Klick Technology Ltd

With the intention to have compulsory Key Stage 3 food technology for all students by 2011, some schools are looking to build new facilities and many schools are already upgrading their facilities. The design and layout of teaching areas for design and technology is an important factor in students' success in this curriculum area, as well as a factor in efficient running of a department. Students are likely to respond far more positively to a structured and well-ordered environment that is designed with their learning needs in mind. The Ofsted D&T report 2003/04 states that the provision and quality of resources vary between schools and that there is an unacceptable gap between the best and worst departments. Students and teachers alike are influenced by the environment in which they work. It is important to develop strategies that create areas, which are orderly and enable successful learning and teaching to flourish.

Where to start?

The designing of a new food technology room can be a daunting task. We have received many enquiries from schools this year looking for a reliable company to help guide them through the process. One recent enquiry read, "I have no idea where to start, please help me!"

Klick Technology has been supplying educational furniture since 1981 during which time we have accumulated a wealth of experience in dealing with the many technical issues faced when designing food technology rooms.

The first part of the process is to carry out an initial site survey. The designer discusses the project with the teaching staff to establish their preferences in teaching style and aesthetics. It is important to consider the number of students to be accommodated, the school's budget limitations and any practicalities regarding the electrical, water and gas supplies.



At this stage options for room layout can be discussed, making sure there is enough space for safe working distances around cookers and sinks. The option of different surfaces is also considered. Modern materials such as Corian, Velstone, Trespa or Stainless Steel provide an excellent surface in food technology rooms where maintenance of hygiene and ease of cleaning are a major consideration.

Storage space is also key in a food technology room, space must be allocated for the storage of student's ingredients and prepared food, which may need to be kept in fridges. Provision must also be made for storage areas for coats and bags away from the practical area.

Inclusive design

There may be an opportunity to review the courses on offer and include a commercial catering area within a traditional room. In this case, commercial ovens can count towards the recommended total number needed, which is one cooker per two students. The needs of students with disabilities must also be taken into account.

When designing a room it is essential to provide sufficient air conditioning and heat extraction. New windows may be needed to improve natural light and walls might need to be moved to create the required space.

The designers will consider all the available options but it may be that an existing room simply is not big enough to accommodate everything on your wish list. If so, there is the option of building a new room from scratch and carrying out a full feasibility study to assess the most cost effective location, bearing in mind the existing structure and services.

Working to safety guidelines and DCSF recommendations, the design team can advise on the best solution for your specific requirements. Initial proposals are prepared including 2D plan drawings, 3D visualisations and a fully itemised quotation.

The following case studies were prepared by two schools that have recently re-fitted food rooms and describe the experiences that they had with the hope that some of their comments may help others when embarking on projects of their own.

Case studies

Jill Thomas – Head of Food Technology Darrick Wood School – Orpington, Kent

Darrick Wood School is an 11-18 comprehensive school in Bromley. Food Technology is taught at Key Stage 3. This incorporates the Licence to Cook initiative as part of the curriculum. At Key Stage 4 we offer GCSE Catering, Hospitality and Catering double award and Food Technology. The Food rooms are also used for clubs, cross-curricular activities and practical aspects of the A-Level Health and Social Care course.

We were given funding for the development of, in the first instance, one room and then a second room a year later. As we have large rooms that incorporate a traditional classroom and a kitchen area, I wanted to keep this so that no written work was done at food workstations and no eating in the classroom area. We have a large uptake at GCSE so we had to have workstations for at least twenty-four students. As the room was already set up as a traditional Home Economics room, there were fewer issues with gas, electricity and water supply and no building work was required.



We had to have three quotations for governors' approval. We gave basic suggestions to the three companies and allowed them to come up with their own design ideas. We selected Klick plans as they kept the two-room areas and also came within budget, £85,000 for the first room and £95,000 for the second.

In the first room we did not include the air conditioning option due to budget restraints, however the room got very hot, so in the second refurbishment, air conditioning was considered essential and it was subsequently fitted to the first room. The second room was also outfitted with a disabled unit which can be raised or lowered and allows a wheelchair to fit underneath.

Bags and coats are left in the teaching area so we do not trip over them in the practical area. We have large industrial fridges for food storage in each room and blast chillers as we were concerned that food produced earlier in the day would not chill sufficiently if left out all day.

Our work surfaces are stainless steel, as are all the cookers and we have four large industrial electric cookers and six domestic gas cookers in each room. Our students are really enthusiastic as the rooms look like professional kitchens. The workstations are open and students cannot 'hide' dirty equipment behind cupboard doors!



The large sinks were too big so we have removed the catering style plugs and put in smaller washing up bowls. We do not have much draining space so I would recommend smaller sinks with draining boards.

Initially, the food teachers organised the quotes and designs, this took about 3 months, and when the design was approved by the governors, the bursar looked after the financial issues and the caretaker looked at the practicalities of the designs. Each room was completed in five weeks, over the summer holiday. In all it took about 6 months from start to finish. I liked the professionalism of the Klick staff and contact with the actual site manager.

Tips – get air conditioning and lots of workspace and cupboards.



The new room is modern, bright, has good use of space and up to date equipment. Worktop surfaces are Trespa and therefore easily cleaned. Students with special needs are catered for with an adjustable height sink, hob and work desks and the room is situated on the ground floor. We can now accommodate twenty-four students in the room and have the facilities to deliver GCSE in food technology and NVQ in catering.

The planning of the room started early in the financial year and work began in the summer holiday. The original schedule was slightly delayed as the fitting of the atrium roof light was a late addition, but with hindsight we are very pleased that this was added as it has made a huge difference to the room. The project was completed in full by October half term.



**Nicola Chester –
School Business Manager
Christ the King Catholic Maths And
Computing College, Preston**

We were successful in securing an LCVAP grant to enable us to move and replace our outdated food technology facilities. This enabled the technology department to be in the same area of school. The room was previously split in two with a concertina door and delivered textiles in one half and ICT in the other half. We worked with our architects, Cassidy and Ashton, on the planning and tendering stage and Klick Technology were successful in securing the work. The Head teacher, school manager and technology staff were consulted by Klick throughout the planning and design stage. Although some of the work was done in term time, disruption was kept to a minimum. The proposed new food room had no external windows and therefore one major problem to resolve was issues with cooling, ventilation and provision of natural light. It was decided to place an external door at the back of room. We also took the decision to contribute some school Devolved Formula Capital to fit a large atrium domed panel in the roof which floods the whole room with natural light. Air conditioning was also installed in the room, meaning the food technology teacher can control the temperature in the room independently of the school's main system.

Christ the King Catholic Maths and Computing College have worked closely with Klick Technology over the past two years on a multi phased project to improve school facilities. They have provided two new build Science labs, two refurbished Science labs, a prep room and a new food technology room, which was transformed by installing an atrium roof.

Nicola Chester – School Business Manager
Christ the King Catholic Maths and Computing College – Preston

For more information on the design and fitting of new food rooms visit: www.klicktechnology.co.uk



“We are very pleased with our new stainless steel GCSE catering facility. Klick Technology were resourceful in finding solutions to the various design and site issues that arose. Their service was extremely good and I am looking forward to working with them on a second room to be installed next year.”

Jill Thomas – Head of Food Technology
Darrick Wood School – Orpington Kent