Innovation Award

Sponsored by MASON UK LTD Vibration Control Products & Acoustic Floor Systems

★ Joint Winner

Cundall - Tides

This project is joint winner for the Innovation Award in recognition of its exceptional technical ambition and the pioneering acoustic solutions developed to deliver a world class performance space within one of Hong Kong's most densely populated residential districts. Located inside the iconic boat shaped structure at Whampoa Garden, the venue sits only metres from surrounding homes, with more than 30,000 residents in the immediate vicinity. Judges noted that up to 2,000 people were directly at risk from potential noise impact, creating an acoustic challenge of rare severity and demanding a level of innovation far beyond standard venue design.

The project's constraints were extreme. The venue occupies a mixed use building, positioned beneath a busy restaurant, above retail units and adjacent to a radio broadcasting studio. Structural load capacity was severely limited, and spatial restrictions meant that conventional heavyweight box in box isolation systems were impossible. Judges highlighted this context as a catalyst for genuine innovation, requiring the team to rethink fundamental assumptions about how high performance isolation can be achieved in lightweight structures.

A key breakthrough was the development of a lightweight engineered acoustic ceiling system using suspended honeycomb aluminium sandwich panels. Judges singled out this system as a standout innovation, praising its stiffness to weight performance and its potential applicability to future projects. Integrated tuned membrane absorbers provided targeted low frequency control, while composite aluminium wall systems with damping layers delivered high levels of vibration isolation without imposing excessive structural load. Judges described the approach as a "*proof of concept*" for a new generation of lightweight acoustic assemblies capable of delivering performance levels traditionally associated with far more robust construction.

The judges were particularly impressed that the project achieved complete inaudibility outside the venue – an outcome they described as remarkable given the extreme proximity of residential receptors and that the work demonstrated clear potential to influence future acoustic design practice. The project's innovation lay fundamentally in its material systems, structural strategy and the reimagining of isolation techniques under unprecedented constraints. Overall, the judges concluded that Tides represents a genuinely innovative contribution to architectural acoustics, expanding the industry's technical knowledge and demonstrating how advanced lightweight systems can enable high energy venues to operate successfully in the most challenging urban environments.