

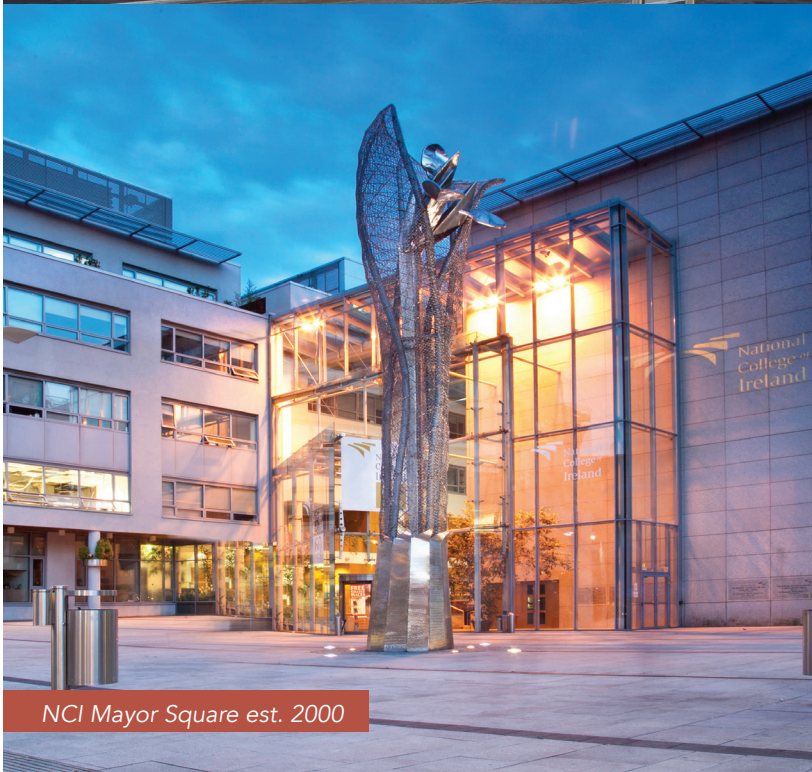
National College of Ireland is a non-profit Higher Education Institute funded by the HEA, delivering full-time and part-time programmes from undergraduate to doctoral level to over 6,000 students. Located in the heart of the IFSC, NCI has strong relationships with the North East Inner City community, most especially through the Early Learning Initiative, to which it is home, and also with the many companies and businesses that surround it.



NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND EDUCATION AWARDS 2025 **BEST INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE**



NCI Spencer Dock est. 2023



NCI Mayor Square est. 2000

STRATEGY AND ADVANCE PLANNING

Student numbers at National College of Ireland continue to grow steadily. Nearly a decade ago, it was anticipated that the College would need to expand campus space to meet the needs of its students. The potential for expansion on the Mayor Square site is limited. A Strategic Development Zone, the area around NCI is highly competitive for space. The quest continued for almost 10 years, with many properties and sites assessed for suitability.

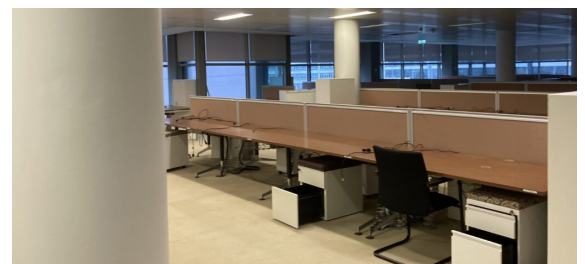
The ideal scenario was to find a site or building within a 15-minute walk of the Mayor Square Campus.

In December 2021, NCI viewed an office building in Spencer Dock, owned and occupied by the Central Bank; it was about to be brought to the market. Apart from it being a fantastic building, it is just 300 metres, a 5-minute walk from the Mayor Square campus.

Henry J Lyons Architects were commissioned as part of a feasibility study to investigate whether the proposed building would accommodate the National College of Ireland requirements. Once suitability was confirmed, NCI moved ahead.

PROJECT OUTLINE

In September 2022, NCI purchased Spencer Block West Block R, an 80,000 sq ft office building. Immediately a design team was appointed to make the building fit-for-purpose. Planning Permission was required for Change of Use and NCI planned to retain and repurpose many high-end fit-out details.

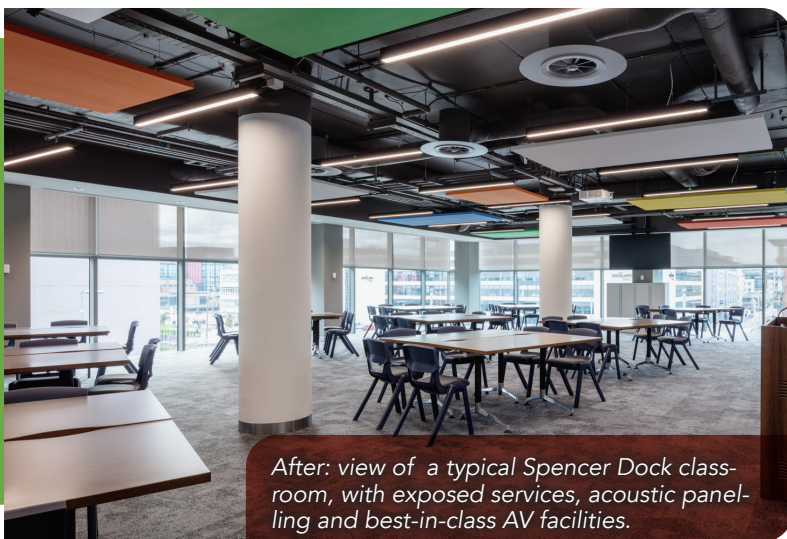


Before: the challenge was to reuse as much as possible, while converting offices to a vibrant, fit-for-purpose campus

THE BRIEF

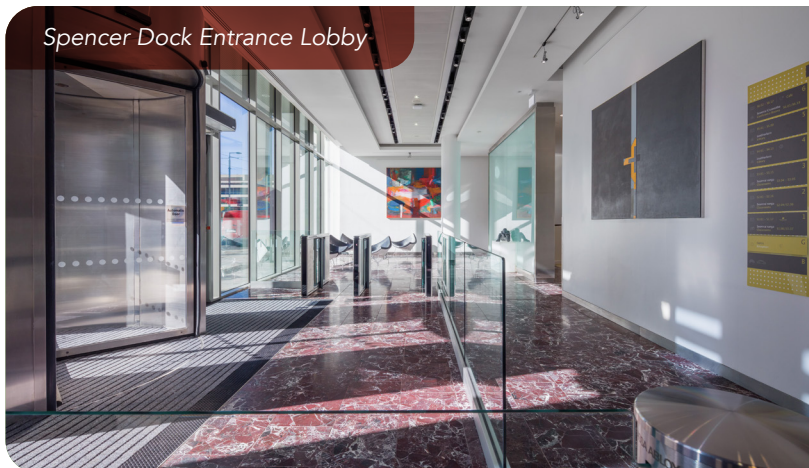
Outline of Requirements

- 6 Classrooms accommodating 60-80 persons in cabaret style.
- The library and study space of 15,000 – 20,000 sq ft, including group study facilities.
- Café and social space
- Improve the energy efficiency of the building.
- A sustainable approach by repurposing as much as much of the fit-out as possible.



After: view of a typical Spencer Dock classroom, with exposed services, acoustic paneling and best-in-class AV facilities.

Spencer Dock Entrance Lobby



PROJECT CONTRACT VALUE

The overall budget to repurpose the building, excluding purchase costs, was approximately €7 million, as many items were extracted from the contract and supplied directly by NCI. NCI purchased all the furniture from the Central Bank, repurposed it, and acquired furniture and fittings from other companies that matched their sustainability agendas. The final cost of construction and fit-out is approximately €7.3 million.

PROJECT TEAM - NCI

The Spencer Dock Steering Group reported to the Executive Group and Governing Body. NCI would like to thank the Governing Body for their faith in the Executive Group to commit to proceed with the purchase and conversion of the building.

- Professor Gina Quin, President of the National College of Ireland
- Dr Donnchadh Ó Madagáin, Finance Director
- Dr Jimmy Hill, Vice President
- Professor Karen Jones, Registrar
- Bertie Kelly, Commercial Manager

Project Management meeting in Spencer Dock, in an area that is now part of the student café (L-R): Professor Jimmy Hill, Geraldine Minogue (Director of ITC Services NCI), Professor Gina Quin, John Bright, Karen Jones, Mary Buckley (Librarian NCI), Bertie Kelly and Donnchadh Ó Madagáin.



NCI Spencer Dock Café is currently home to Bakehouse Dublin, offering high quality food and beverages at subsidised prices.



PROJECT DESIGN TEAM AND CONSULTANTS

Bright Project Management John Bright
Bertie Kelly NCI
Owen Delaney NCI
Henry J Lyons Architects Conor Galligan
Interiors by SISK Aidan Berry
O'Connor Sutton Cronin M&E Engineers Declan Barry
Linesight – Quantity Surveyors Tony Madden
KPMG Future Analytics Planning Consultants
Maurice Johnson & Partners Fire Consultants
Ashview Safety Consultants
ORS Assigned Certifiers
iAcoustics Consultants

“This project proved to be a great challenge to the three corner stones of project management, i.e. cost, time & quality. It could not have been possible without the collaboration of all involved, and especially the clear directives from the college, client flexibility, good communication, practical design from the Architects and Engineers, cost control from the Quantity Surveyor, and oversight by both the fire engineers and safety consultants.”

Here, also, must be acknowledged the co-operation of Dublin City Council Planning Department, Dublin Fire Brigade, and the good counsel afforded by our planning consultants.”

- **JOHN BRIGHT**
Bright Project Management

NCI Spencer Dock offers more break out and collaboration spaces to our students



COLLABORATION ACROSS THE BOARD

NCI was very clear in the original brief and did not deviate. It was important to us to keep the budget tight and to repurpose as much as possible to keep with our sustainability agenda: spending the money where it would assist in reducing emissions and delivering comfort to students was prioritised.

Having Henry J Lyons involved from the start was a huge advantage: the quality of their work has been recognised by multiple awards from both the design and construction industries, and they are known for their collaborative approach. They embraced our vision and created a high-impact building with great design features.

NCI employed John Bright as an independent project manager to ensure there was no slippage in time and, for a project of this size, it was terrific to deliver it only a few weeks behind schedule.

SISK Interiors worked 6 days per week with extended hours to keep the project on schedule and NCI put a system in place to ensure decisions and responses were on track to meet the work programme.

At NCI Spencer Dock, students can easily book rooms for group project work



COLLABORATION WITHIN NCI

NCI's Facilities Team (since recognised with a President's Award), did Trojan work in 2023, effectively running Mayor Square while preparing Spencer Dock.

NCI's ICT Team ensured that Spencer Dock was networked and ready so that the two buildings function as a single campus from a connectivity viewpoint, again without ever interrupting their daily care for NCI staff and students.

Spencer Dock delivers a new space, triple the original footprint, for NCI's Norma Smurfit Library, which meant throughout the latter half of 2023, our Library Team maintained all lending and academic helpdesk services while packing up Mayor Square and moving into Spencer Dock.

COMMENCEMENT AND COMPLETION DATES

NCI purchased the building on 30 September 2022 and immediately started work on a planning application for 'change of use'. In January 2023, the Planning application was made to DCC, and the design team was appointed pending the planning outcome. Planning permission was granted in April 2023 and work commenced on tender documents to select a contractor and SISKs were appointed as the main contractor.

Work commenced in April 2023 with a 25-week project timeframe. The project was slightly delayed due to some additional requirements to satisfy the fire safety certificate and the building was handed back to the client on 10 October 2023. NCI worked alongside the contractors and opened the building to students on 16 October 2023. 2024 saw the buildings first full year in operation, including opening its doors to the public in September for Culture Night.

PROJECT EXCELLENCE



NCI and the design team have delivered a state-of-the-art campus for all students, including:

- a new library of almost 23,000 sq foot (three times the size of the previous library!) housing an academic support centre, group study suites, silent study, recording studio, maker space and collaboration space;
- increased accessibility including extensive availability of a hearing loop in teaching spaces;
- flexible learning spaces, with high acoustic performance, integrated AV/IT, including folding walls that can increase or decrease classroom size – with no compromise on acoustics when used as two smaller rooms;
- a new home base for our Early Learning Initiative;
- a student café on the top floor with fantastic views back over the IFSC;
- 7 staff kitchenettes, stocked with tea, coffee, fruit, biscuits.
- 7 staff meeting rooms and a board room.

all within a 5-minute walk of Mayor Square.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability was integrated into this project from the start, working with the existing building and re-using/repurposing where possible: this was a challenge for the Design Team, but one they rose to meet.

The building has had significant upgrades to plant and machinery, with all lighting replaced with LED, more efficient pumps, and air conditioning that increase its efficiency rating, from BER B3 to B2.

Through our supplier, Pinergy, NCI sources all its electricity from Lacken Wind Farm in Sligo.

Lacken Wind Farm



HEALTH AND SAFETY

The H&S regime of SISK, the main contractor, was exemplary and strict from day one. All contractors were inducted by SISK H&S; they had to wear full PPE throughout the project and permissions for NCI project leads were granted only after training and on-site registration.

NCI contracted our own H&S consultants who carried out site inspections and attended all site meetings to ensure compliance; however, SISK must be complimented on their stringent approach to H&S.



“

Delivery of additional, high quality campus space just a short walk from our Mayor Square building directly serves NCI's mission to 'change lives through education'. Tailoring this building to be greener and more accessible, while bringing it in on time and on budget, is a positive reflection of the cross-departmental collaboration at NCI and the strong relationships with Henry J Lyons and Interiors by Sisk. The College's greatly increased footprint in the IFSC and NEIC is a physical manifestation of the importance of higher education to international businesses in finance and technology and to the residents of the North Inner City.”

- PROFESSOR GINA QUIN,

President of National College of Ireland

“

The new library space is a huge improvement – the quiet study space is really actually quiet. I also like that there are more casual spaces where I can just chat with friends, as well as meeting rooms for the more serious group projects. And you may not think a view will change your outlook on things, but it does: the building feels naturally bright even on grey days and being able to see so much of the city is really inspiring”

- KAITLIN MOORE,

3rd Year BSc (Hons) in Computing

“

While it is generally a benefit to have so much additional space, which we very much needed, I would particularly note the value of separate work and communication spaces for students/staff. Students can study in differing learning zones from silent to collaborative, in open spaces or in fully equipped study rooms.”

- MARY BUCKLEY

Librarian

“

'Updating and repurposing an existing build from commercial to educational use was not without complexity and creative challenge! We made upgrades to meet current regulations and to ensure we designed NCI Spencer Dock to be as inclusive as possible. Great efforts were made by ourselves, the acoustician, and the contractor to meet the latest acoustic standards so that students and lecturers alike now enjoy a modern, colourful and comfortable learning environment. It was a pleasure to work closely with the College and their dedicated team on this repurposing project.'”

- CONOR GALLIGAN

Henry J Lyons Architects