

Chapter 10

Accommodation and Facilities

A recurring problem throughout the history of the DIT and its predecessor colleges has been the shortage of space to accommodate the demand for student places. The colleges always attempted to serve as much as possible of the demand for places on their courses, even when this entailed a degree of overcrowding and heavy use of facilities.

The individual colleges and their satellite buildings are all located on very restricted inner city sites. The combined floor area of all the buildings owned or leased by the Institute is about 100,000 square metres, all on around four hectares of ground. Given the size of the student population, estimated to be over 12,000 equivalent full-time students, the Institute's facilities are still very deficient, despite a significant capital investment during the last fifteen years.

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, KEVIN STREET

In the immediate post World War II period, neighbouring sites extending back from Kevin Street to Camden Row were acquired in order to relieve the overcrowding in the Kevin Street college. In 1953 the Department of Education agreed to a major building programme. An extensive planning exercise was carried out to design a new building to cater for the numbers of students projected and to fulfil the educational aims of the college and its specific disciplines. In this planning process it was established, for instance, that theory classes would not be held in workshops or laboratories. Laboratories and workshops should not be used for more than 80 per cent of a nine-hour working day to allow maintenance and preparation work to be done in them. Laboratories should be designed as specialist rather than as multi-purpose laboratories. In this planning process, which included the preparation of sketches and working drawings and the specifications of furnishings, finishes, furniture and capital equipment, the senior teaching staff played a major role with the consulting engineers and architects.

The construction of the new college building was completed in 1968.

It provided about 14,000 square metres of accommodation including some 6,500 square metres of highly specialised laboratories for the engineering and science disciplines in the Kevin Street college.

An extension of close to 7,000 square metres was built during the 1980s. It opened in 1987 and provided a restaurant, library, staff office and further classroom accommodation. By 1993 the college had a total floor area of just over 22,000 square metres. During the 1990s, a site of over 0.4 hectare on Pleasants Street adjoining the college was acquired by the CDVEC to erect a research building. In spring 2000, the transfer of this property to the DIT is in progress. The funding allocated in 1999 in the Higher Education Authority programme for research in third level institutions (1999–2001) will finance the construction of a 2,500 square metres research building on this site, to be completed in 2001, to house the facility for optical characterisation and spectroscopy.

COLLEGE OF MUSIC, CHATHAM ROW AND ADELAIDE ROAD

The Adelaide Road premises were leased in the academic year 1986/1987 to supplement the Chatham Row building and cater for the music and drama disciplines. The combined floor area of the two buildings is about 2,500 square metres, one third being the leased space. Because of the special requirements of these disciplines, the facilities are very unsuitable and inadequate to cater for its small full-time student population of less than 100 and its part-time student and junior school enrolments of about 2,000. Since 1997 some speech, drama and music courses are also provided in Rathmines.

COLLEGE OF COMMERCE, RATHMINES AND AUNGIER STREET

An extension to the original Rathmines Technical Institute was built in 1944 which facilitated the enrolment of additional student numbers in the immediate post World War II period.

In 1983 Rathmines House, near the original college building, was leased to supplement the accommodation in the college.

The former Jacob's factory site on Bishop Street/Aungier Street was acquired by the CDVEC in the early 1980s for a major new building complex which would accommodate the requirements of both the College of Commerce in Rathmines and the College of Marketing and Design in Mountjoy Square. A contract to construct Phase I of this development was placed eventually in 1992 and the building was completed in 1994.

This building enabled the College of Commerce sector of the DIT to transfer from Rathmines to the new facilities in Aungier Street in the academic year 1995/1996. This new building has a floor area a little over 10,000 square metres. Phase II of this development is scheduled to begin construction in 2000 to accommodate the Marketing, and Retail and Services Management-related courses from DIT Mountjoy Square. It is envisaged that Phase II will offer an additional 15,000 square metres of floor area.

COLLEGE OF MARKETING AND DESIGN, MOUNTJOY SQUARE

In an effort to solve the accommodation problems in the school of commerce and retail distribution (then the College of Marketing and Design), which was at number 18 Parnell Square, the next door building was purchased in 1977 to accommodate the other two schools, marketing and design.

During the academic year 1983/1984 the College of Marketing and Design was transferred to temporary leased premises on Parnell Square and then in 1987/1988 to more extensive leased accommodation of about 6,500 square metres on Mountjoy Square. While this space was more extensive than that available in Parnell Square, it was not ideal in that it had been constructed as basic office accommodation. The college also relied on other satellite accommodation, also leased, to constitute a total floor area of about 9,500 square metres.

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, BOLTON STREET

The original purpose-built Bolton Street college building had about 4,500 square metres of floor area including classrooms, workshops and laboratories. Between 1926 and 1931 an extension providing an additional 1,500 square metres of workshop and classroom accommodation was added.

In the 1950s a second extension, a four storey building along King's Inn Street, was added. This provided 3,000 square metres of floor area giving additional workshop, laboratory, drawing office and classroom space.

In 1962 the Linen Hall building close to the Bolton Street college, formerly a linen mill destroyed by fire during the war of independence and rebuilt as a warehouse, was acquired by the CDVEC. The building was reconstructed and refurbished to accommodate courses in the con-

struction trades. The School of Trades in the Linen Hall, of some 10,500 square metres floor area, was opened in 1963.

In 1981 a site which had previously been the Williams and Woods factory at the rear of the college was acquired by the CDVEC.¹ It was not until 1985 that work on a 7,900 square metres extension on this site commenced and a large part of it was first occupied in 1987. The main building on Bolton Street was considerably refurbished in 1981 and, with the extension completed in 1988, resulted in a floor area in the building of some 24,000 square metres. The original building was matched to the new extension and rendered compliant with the fire safety regulations. Student social areas were provided. New laboratories for computing, communications, advanced manufacturing and printing were installed and the administration areas refurbished. The newly extended main college, coupled with the Linen Hall building and some satellite buildings, had a floor area over 37,000 square metres.

COLLEGE OF CATERING, CATHAL BRUGHA STREET

A major element of the CDVEC's 1936 strategic plan was implemented when a new college, St Mary's College of Domestic Science, was opened on Cathal Brugha Street in 1941.²

A major extension to the college, providing new kitchens and larders, staff and student dining room facilities, a reception area and a student common room, was completed in January 1966.

At the time of the fifty years' celebration of the college in 1991, property had been acquired and plans begun for an extension to the college on Marlborough Street. By 1997 this extension of 3,750 square metres was opened and had increased the accommodation in the college to about 14,000 square metres. The social studies school, now part of the faculty of applied arts, was re-housed in 1995 in Rathmines House, part of the leased premises previously occupied by the College of Commerce in Rathmines.

GENERAL ISSUES ABOUT FACILITIES

The Ballymun Project proposals, with roots in the CDVEC thinking in the

1. O'Dwyer, D and M O'Donnell, *A Short Historical Profile, Souvenir Booklet to Commemorate the Official Opening of the Extension to the College of Technology, Bolton Street* (Dublin: City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee), 1989
2. O'Connor, N (ed.), *op. cit.*

1930s, emerged from the most extensive and ambitious planning process ever undertaken by the Dublin colleges. As well as orienting the colleges towards a unitary multi-level higher education institution, these proposals very clearly attempted to solve the accommodation needs definitively.

Despite the major extension to the Bolton Street college, with the acquisition of the Linen Hall premises for a School of Trades and the new college in Kevin Street, all the Dublin colleges were greatly restricted in their development during the 1970s by shortage of accommodation. Their centre-city locations offered limited scope for the expansion needed to allow more student numbers and more courses.

The constraints and limitations of accommodation and other resources continued into the 1980s. Nevertheless, this decade was a period of considerable progress for the DIT colleges as they responded to the large and relatively unsatisfied demand from both school leavers seeking full-time courses and apprentices already in employment who wished to enrol on a part-time basis. A number of options were explored, including leasing office type accommodation and industrial factory buildings adjacent to the colleges, and some such measures were taken to provide short-term solutions. Pre-fabricated buildings located close to the main buildings were also used at a number of colleges to accommodate students on a temporary basis.

The 1980s saw some enhancement of the facilities and accommodation in the DIT colleges in Kevin Street and Bolton Street, admittedly always too little and too late to match the demand.

Since the DIT was statutorily established in 1993, the pressing demand to relieve the desperate shortage of physical accommodation has continued. Some 15 per cent of its accommodation is now leased. The space per student is very low by comparison with higher education norms. DIT lacks a central library facility, a major central computing facility and any special students' buildings or student residential accommodation. The Institute has extremely limited sports facilities.

The Institute used accommodation in houses in Herbert Street and Upper Mount Street and also some rented accommodation for its industry linked development centres. In general these facilities were not very suitable for this type of activity and also, because they were scattered and some distance from the colleges, they did not generate the desirable synergy with teaching and research in the schools that might otherwise have enhanced their impact.

All of the DIT facilities were owned or leased by the CDVEC until the DIT Act was implemented on 1 January 1993, when under the provisions of this legislation, they transferred to the DIT, subject to the agreement of

the CDVEC. This agreement has since been confirmed in relation to the major college buildings but the outcome still remains to be resolved in relation to some ancillary buildings and sports facilities.

In the latter context there is a 4.8 hectare sports ground in Terenure, of which the DIT continues to have a shared use. The DIT is of the view that these grounds should be transferred to it to ensure an equitable distribution of CDVEC facilities. There is also the site of over 0.4 hectare on Pleasants Street adjacent to the Kevin Street college, which was acquired to provide for a research building for the DIT and which is only being transferred to the DIT in 2000. Under the terms of the DIT Act, the Minister for Education and Science is to adjudicate on such disputed transfers.

The DIT central office has been located in rented accommodation in Upper Pembroke Street since 1993. This building currently houses over seventy staff, including those attached to the offices of the president and the secretary, the finance office, student services, admissions, academic affairs, external affairs and other central service areas. The Institute's campuses are linked together, since 1995, through an integrated telephone network with voicemail facilities as well as a computer network using leased data lines. The hub of both networks is based in the new Aungier Street building.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In the light of the physical limitations of the current centres of the Institute, particularly in the context of its mission and aims, the Institute appointed a leading firm of architects and planners in 1995 to prepare a Physical Development Plan for the development of the Institute in its urban context until 2010.

In the preparation of this plan, the City Architect, city and traffic planners, the Eastern Health Board, Coras Iompair Éireann and the Office of Public Works were consulted. The Higher Education Authority space norms and the corresponding norms established by the University Grants Committee in Britain were used to quantify the inadequacy of the current accommodation and to provide estimates of the accommodation required in the different faculty areas. Without taking account of the need for outdoor sports accommodation, and based on the 1995 enrolments, the accommodation estimated to be required was some 90 per cent more than is currently available.

An extensive hospital site at Grangegorman in the North inner city,

which had become available, was identified as providing a suitable solution to the Institute's needs over the next twenty-five years. It has a total area of over twenty-seven hectares and about half of it is currently in use as playing pitches and designated as open space in the Dublin City Development Plan. Some of the buildings could be adapted for educational purposes and would also provide suitable permanent central offices for the Institute.

The Physical Development Plan provided a detailed inventory of the present facilities including the age and floor areas of its different buildings. Overall the Institute has some 120 well equipped laboratories and eighty specialised workshops to service the diverse needs of its large student population. This range is probably wider than that available in most other Irish higher education institutions but they are mainly focussed on the undergraduate and craft and apprenticeship areas.

As part of the plan a building atlas has been prepared for all of the accommodation, as an instrument for assessing the efficiency of current usage and to assist in planning modifications for the different sites and locations.

SUMMARY

Accommodation has been limited throughout the history of the Dublin colleges. Improvements have generally been too little and have come too late to provide appreciable relief. The Physical Development Plan prepared in 1995 is designed to provide the basis for comprehensively solving the accommodation problem over the coming decade.