



**Project Oversight Group for the refurbishment, restoration and refitting of 8 and 9  
Merchants Quay Dublin 8.  
Draft Terms of Reference. January 2024**

**Introduction.**

Through the Artists Workspace Subcommittee of the Strategic Policy Committee on Culture and the Arts, Dublin City Council is attempting to address the deficit in Artists Workspaces in Dublin. It is estimated from the Census that approximately 3,000 Artists live in the Administrative Area and, from further research undertaken to inform the City Development Plan, that up to 50% of these are seeking workspace. Due to the economic challenges involved for Artists this research also indicates that they could afford to pay approximately €200 per Artist in the case of individual studio rental.

Dublin City Council have recently acquired 7/8 Merchants Quay and already own number 9 Merchants Quay. These buildings were the subject of a multidisciplinary Feasibility Study funded under the Urban Regional Development Fund that concluded in 2022. This study sets out Dublin City Council's ambition to establish a Creative Campus utilising Nos. 8 and 9 Merchants Quay that also includes a new building for Arts and Community use on Bridgefoot Street. Consequently Dublin City Council have identified the buildings on Merchants Quay as

Phase 1 of the Creative Campus and will develop these buildings first with construction and refurbishment expected to begin, after a Public procurement process, in early 2024.

The approach to the Design process adopted in the Feasibility Study is a key component of the construction and refurbishment of these buildings for Artists and Community use. This can be summarised by the following statement from the Feasibility Study ***'Learning from models of European best practice for culture-led regeneration substantial consideration has been given to the current and future use of Artists as well as the Dublin 8 communities surrounding the identified sites. This Co-design and Open design architectural approach will be continued to produce a facility that has Artist support as well as local and Public support'***.

In Phase 1 refurbishment of 8 and 9 Merchants Quay the following objectives are set out:

1. The creation of 21 individual Artists Workspaces that are suitable for individual use and some for shared use. These spaces will be Art Form sensitive mainly assigned to Artists working in the Visual Arts, Music and Literature.
2. The creation of 8-10 shared workspaces for Artists and Arts administrative support staff.
3. The restoration of the old St. Anthony's theatre to become a working professional theatre capable of receiving and producing small scale professional work and acting

as a multi-use community resource concert hall, conference room etc. at least 100 seated capacity.

4. The maximisation of the outdoor potential of the site for public performance and public use.
5. The achievement of the refurbishment must take account and fully preserve the unique Heritage and Archaeological features of both buildings but particularly at Number 9 Merchant's Quay a fully restored 18th Century townhouse that houses in its basement an intact Viking era slipway.
6. The whole design and construction of this project will be end user focused and informed both in conceptual and in technical realisation.

On Dec 15 2023 Dublin City Council issued a Tender for a Project Manager led Integrated Design Team to begin the works. This Team is intended to be in place in March 2024 and led by a contracted Project Manager reporting to the DCC Project Manager Ray Yeates.

Dublin City Council want to form a Project Oversight Group providing guidance and support to the Project Manager, monitoring project progress and ensuring adherence to project goals and objectives.

**Membership:** This Committee is formed by the Executive of Dublin City Council and as part of the Executive function. The funders of the Project include a private donor, DCC Capital Programme and the Department of Tourism, Gaeltacht, Sports Arts and the Media. Axis, Ballymun an Arts and Community Resource Centre is providing key advice to the project in the area of design and sustainable operation of the Arts in Community Development.

The Committee will be comprised of up to two nominees from DCC, up to two nominees from the donor, two from the Department and one from Axis. It will include the Project Manager appointed externally through procurement and the internal DCC Project Manager with an Architect from the City Architects Office. An Elected Member (Councillor) from the Arts SPC or the local Area Committee that includes Merchants Quay will be invited to become a member. The Committee can on an ad hoc basis invite any staff from DCC to attend its meetings that can assist its purpose such as staff of the QS Department, Finance, Public Domain etc.

**Scope:** The Project Oversight Group will support the internal Project Manager DCC and the External Procured Project Manager in creating an institution of best practice for the Arts, the local area and the City.

**Meetings and Communication:** The Group will meet for the first time when the External Integrated Design Team is appointed (expected in March 2024) or as soon as possible thereafter. The Group will after agreeing its Purpose and Terms of Reference meet monthly in person, online or in hybrid mode as they so decide. Communication of meetings and the draft Agenda, notice of Meeting and Minute taking, document provision and all other administrative matters pertaining will be the responsibility of the City Arts Office supported by the External Project Manager and the Integrated Design Team appointed. The Group will elect a member to Chair its meeting or rotate the Chair as it sees fit. Any member may seek an extra meeting at any time but all members must agree to it. The meetings will be called by DCC and members will agree core items for each Agenda and additional items by agreement.

**Decision-Making Process:** The approach of the Project Oversight Group as set out above is advisory, supportive and collaborative. The Group will work by consensus. In the event of being unable to reach agreement it can if required refer any issue to the Assistant Chief Executive CRES DCC whose direction will be sought.

**Roles and Responsibilities:** The roles and responsibilities of the Project Oversight Group are reviewing project plans and progress reports, monitoring resource allocation through budgets and projections presented, providing guidance and advice to the project team, ensuring compliance with project objectives and standards, and approving major project milestones or changes. Individual expertise of any member is subordinate to the overall purpose of the group; to support the Project Managers DCC and the External Project Manager appointed.

**Reporting and Documentation:** The Group will issue a report every quarter from June 2024 to the Dublin City Council Executive who will make it available to the SPC and Area Committee.

**Duration and Review:** The Group will exist until Project Completion but will review its Terms of Reference at the end of 2024 again and in June 2025.