

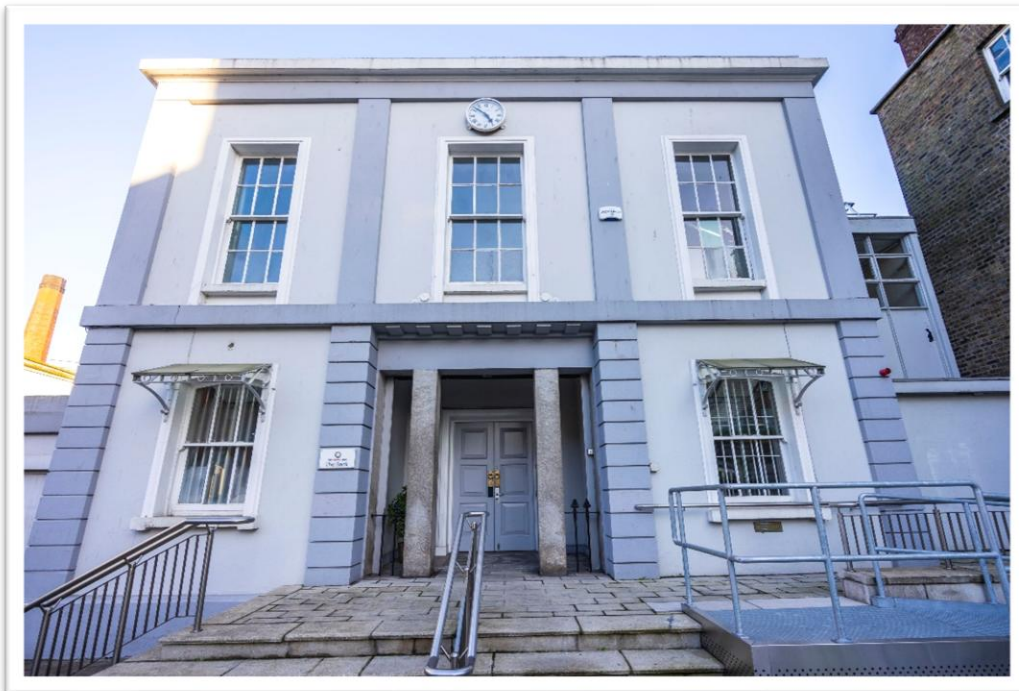


THE DIGITAL HUB

Introduction

The Digital Hub Development Agency (DHDA) seeks expressions of interest from suitably experienced individuals, organisations or consortia who may wish to apply, under a public tender process, to lease **The Bank at The Digital Hub** for uses that align with the vision, mission and objectives of The Digital Hub.

This document outlines the history and ownership of the building, its current use and the DHDA's public tender process for The Bank.



History of The Bank, 85 James Street, The Digital Hub, Dublin 8, D08 C2PR

The Bank building opened in 1853 as a branch of the Dublin Savings Bank also known as St James's Gate Bank, just opposite the iconic Guinness gate on James Street in the Liberties area of Dublin 8.

Guinness acquired a lease on the site in the 1890s and changed its use to a waiting room for visitors to the brewery, which is how it features in Ulysses when tea merchant Tom Kernan "turned and walked down the slope of Watling Street by the corner of Guinness's visitors' waiting room".

Later in the 20th century the building returned to banking use with Bank of Ireland leasing it in 1976. The building then came under the ownership of the Digital Hub Development Agency when The Digital Hub campus was being



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established in 2001. In 2022, on Bank of Ireland surrendering its lease, the building reverted fully to the Digital Hub Development Agency. Following work to remove internal partitions and false ceilings, the building was initiated as a gallery and event space in May 2023.

Over the last three years, **The Bank at The Digital Hub** has hosted thousands of visitors to art, design and photography exhibitions, music and theatrical performances, conferences, classes and workshops, in addition to business meetings and events, and rehearsals by Ireland's leading theatre companies. It has also become a venue for events during local festivals such as Culture Date with D8 in May, The Liberties Festival in July, as well as the Beta Festival of Art and Technology in November.



The most distinctive internal feature of the building is the original banking hall. Since 2023, this has been enhanced with panels to improve the acoustic properties of the space while the floor has been levelled and covered with a tough marmoleum finish. LED lighting has been installed as well as energy efficient space heaters.

The building has a regulated capacity of 50 persons at one time due to its single fire exit. Further work has taken place to improve the buildings accessibility with a new external ramp and an accessible toilet on the ground floor.

Full dimensions and layout of the building can be found online at: [DHDA - The Bank](#)

Further information can be found at The Digital Hub's website:

<https://thedigitalhub.com/explore/workspaces/#thebank>



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The Digital Hub Development Agency (DHDA)

Founded by an Act of the Oireachtas in 2003 as an Agency of the Government of Ireland, the DHDA has had a mandate to promote urban regeneration, economic development and social inclusion in Dublin 8 and beyond. Following a decision by Government to dissolve the Agency in April 2021, much of the DHDA's property portfolio is being transferred to the Land Development Agency as part of the Pear Tree Crossing project, which will deliver up to 550 units of social and affordable housing. However, ten operational buildings forming The Digital Hub's campus, including The Bank, plus the DHDA's staff and contractor base is due to transfer as a special unit to Dublin City Council (DCC). This new DCC entity, which will remain known as The Digital Hub for now, will continue business as usual, providing office accommodation to its 60 member companies and organisations as well as event spaces for a wide variety of community uses, plus educational and partnership programmes such as Smart D8. It will also expand its remit, assisting the Council in re-animating DCC property in central Dublin.

Expressions of Interest Sought

Having operated The Bank at The Digital Hub for three years in its current form, there is no doubt that this building, in a landmark location, offers a unique facility in this part of Dublin. Many other former bank buildings have been transformed into commercial venues, but The Digital Hub's preference is for the building to continue to be used as a community resource, hosting activities of benefit to the local community while enhancing Dublin 8 as a destination.

The DHDA now wishes to explore whether an organisation or individual aligned with these objectives would be interested in taking an initial three-year lease on the building. This organisation would be responsible for delivering a programme of public activities in the building. These could involve music, art, performance, technology, innovation, retail and more. The objective of the DHDA is to find a suitable specialised and experienced tenant for The Bank that will enhance the profile of the building and deliver a consistent output of activity that aligns with The Digital Hub's strategic objectives and brand.

Organisations and individuals that respond to this Expression of Interest may be invited to respond to a tender process expected to be conducted during Q3 of 2026, with a view to commencing operations in The Bank during 2027.



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Probable features of a lease arrangement

- The lease would initially be for up to three years with The Digital Hub subject to performance conditions related to the tenant's proposed use of the building.
- The tenant and its staff would become members of The Digital Hub just like our other tenants, enabling them to avail of other facilities and events offered on the campus.
- A security deposit, equivalent to two months' rent and service charges, will be required on commencement.
- The Digital Hub would charge a monthly fee comprising rent, service charges and building insurance plus VAT. The aggregate of these fees will be a minimum of €60,000 per annum.
- The tenant would be responsible for paying DCC rates or seeking an exemption.
- The tenant will also be responsible for the building's electricity bills.
- The service charges will cover full repair and maintenance of the building, cleaning, security (excluding public events), standard Wifi and other services provided to all Digital Hub members.
- The tenant would be permitted to make certain minor modifications to the building at their own expense by prior agreement with The Digital Hub.
- An option for The Digital Hub to buy back certain weeks to support activities around local festivals such as The Liberties Festival, Culture Date with Dublin 8 and the Beta festival of art and technology.

Probable profile of tenant for The Bank

(Please note when considering uses for The Bank, that it has a maximum capacity limit of 50 people at one time due to fire safety regulations since there is only one fire escape.)

- An existing cultural, educational, community or commercial organisation, *or a consortium of complementary organisations or individuals* that are collaborating around this project.
- A track record of at least five years in the provision of services and facilities related to the proposed use of The Bank.
- An intention and capability to provide *some or all* of the following:
 - Showcasing educational and training activities for members of the public.
 - Public events.
 - Support for Research, Development, innovation (RDI) and creativity.



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- Something new that is not available in Dublin at present, perhaps inspired by something similar elsewhere in Ireland or internationally.
- A mix of public service and commercial activities.
- Job opportunities for local citizens.

How to register your expression of interest

Step one: Please send an email entitled 'Intention to respond to The Bank EoI' to info@thedigitalhub.com including your name and your organisation by 6pm on Friday 5th June 2026. This will enable the DHDA to contact you to arrange a visit to The Bank in person in May or June.

Step two: Please prepare a PDF document of no more than 1500 words which provides the information requested below and email this to info@thedigitalhub.com by 6pm on Friday 28th June 2026.

- The name of your organisation or organisations and/or individuals which may form a consortium to bid for this opportunity.
- Describe the domain of your organisation – e.g. Art, Music, Technology, Health, Tourism, Retail, Education etc.
- Your vision for The Bank and how this would address an unmet need in Dublin.
- The experience your organisation or the consortium has in the provision of services and activities around this domain.
- The facilities and assets your organisation can bring to The Bank.
- Your organisation's or consortium's headcount to administer activities in The Bank.
- How your organisation is funded today.
- Your capacity in principle to pay a security deposit and at least the minimum of monthly fees as outlined above.
- Whether there would be scope for The Digital Hub to buy back weeks in the building for local festivals at a rate of €1500 per week, including a week for Culture Date with Dublin 8 in May, a week for The Liberties Festival in July and up to three weeks for Beta in November. This would be an ideal scenario for The Digital Hub, but it would not be mandatory. Certainly, for Culture Date with Dublin 8 and The Liberties Festival there could be scope to combine The Bank's new purpose with the programming for these festivals.



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Next Steps

The DHDA will acknowledge receipt of your initial email and arrange a time for you to visit The Bank in person during May and June.

On submission of a 1500-word proposal by 6pm on 28th June 2026, the DHDA will inform you of whether you are invited to tender for The Bank's lease no later than Friday 31st July 2026. Moving to the tender phase depends on the quality of the proposals received.

If the DHDA proceeds to invite organisations to tender, this process is expected to be completed and a winner selected by Friday 18th September 2026.