

Architect: Hughes McMichael, Belfast, Ireland; Branding designer: I-AM, London
Photographer: Dirk Vogel, Dortmund
Project location: Belfast, Ireland

Danske Bank, Belfast branch

Opened in a Belfast shopping complex, the latest branch of Danske Bank presents itself with a fresh and inviting look that positively encourages people to step inside. Design agency I-AM from London had previously set about carefully revising the architectural concept of the bank, which until recently had traded under the name Northern Bank: The dominant dark blue tone of the walls was replaced by a fair amount of white and a more vivid blue, large monitors provide customers with information. Divided into different service sections after the relaunch, the branch now has a brighter, more open feel, with rounded corners on furniture and architectural elements adding to a cosy ambience.

A contributing factor to this brighter, more appealing look is the new lighting concept. Whereas many bank branches today use concepts based purely on horizontal lighting from downlights, the differentiated lighting in the new branch responds to varying customer requirements in a manner similar to the diversified lighting concept found in retail. Vertical illuminance produced by the Quintessence wallwashers sets the tone with general lighting and ensures efficient visual comfort. The different zones including self-

service section, counters, consulting and waiting areas, in contrast, are set apart individually using the brilliant accent light of ERCO Quintessence directional luminaires. As the light facilitates orientation for the customer, the precise LED beams additionally create a private, undisturbed atmosphere despite the limited size of the room. With perfectly aligned directional luminaires, the change in bright and darker areas is perceived not as a lack of light, but as a supplementary means to create awareness by using the lighting tools to focus and direct customer attention.

