

# Wilton Centre MCC-Lucite International

**Dr Neil Tindale**, Research Technology and Engineering (RT&E) General Manager at MCC-Lucite International (MCC-Lucite), explains the benefits of the Wilton Centre and why it has worked for the company for over 25 years.

**“Our company is the driving force behind some of the world’s best known acrylic products.”**

## First, can you tell us a little of your own background as well as MCC-Lucite?

I began working as a research scientist for ICI in 1987. After one or two jobs in ICI’s polyester business, I moved to MCC-Lucite in 1993, where I have since held a number of technical and production positions. I now have the role of RT&E General Manager, based at the Wilton Centre. MCC-Lucite designs and develops the processes for manufacture of methacrylate monomers (eg. MMA), and poly(methyl methacrylate) polymer products, and our company is the driving force behind some of the world’s best known acrylic products – components that make high quality, high tech products work, from TVs and mobile phones through advanced paint and coatings to contact lenses and bone cement.

## What does that product pipeline entail?

We make methacrylate monomers, then the next step is to polymerise these to form products in a very wide range of forms. Our main focus is to produce the monomers for both our own polymer businesses and for our customers, who use them to develop high tech plastic products.

## You mentioned renewable materials; plastic is very much in the news these days, is MCC-Lucite working on more environmentally sustainable innovations?

Absolutely, we think it is right that plastic recycling is such a hot topic at the moment. The media can sometimes portray a negative image of plastics and plastics manufacturers but, in terms of sustainable technology developments, we are pushing the boundaries all the time. The next 10 years will be about recycling or producing products from sustainable feedstocks, and the plastics industry is understandably very involved in this. We want to lead the way in improving the volume, and types, of plastics that are recycled, and this is where the complication lies; there are so many types of plastic – nylon, PVC, PET, PE, PMMA, etc. – and they each need to be treated differently to recycle them. MCC-Lucite has a sustainability department that is working alongside our scientists to develop PMMA from sustainable raw materials. The same monomers that we have produced from oil-based feedstocks since 1935 will in future be produced by fermentation, with the aim of reducing the dependence on oil.



## Which areas of the company are based at the Wilton Centre?

Several global departments of MCC-Lucite, including those for new business and technology development, have been based at the Wilton Centre for over 25 years. There are around 85 employees working here – from nine distinct working groups – with a wide range of professionals covering diverse functions from engineering and science to management of major global projects. Our team is made up of nationalities from all corners of the globe, which we think is a great advantage, giving us a broad perspective of the world.



## What are the main benefits of the space?

Over the last 15 years, we have designed and built several different plants around the world, deploying a range of technologies, for example, in China, Singapore, America and, most recently Saudi Arabia. During that time, the facilities at the Wilton Centre have allowed us to design and build pilot plants to test and analyse new technologies under realistic production conditions. The facilities in the Technology Development Area of the Wilton Centre are a real advantage for this sort of work because it's just 'plug-and-play'. We don't have to worry about installing utilities or services – it's all here – we just focus on designing and building our core technology. In terms of office space, we will often engage with external contractors, for example, in the front-end engineering design phase of a major project – a process which can take around nine months to complete – and this is when we need extra rooms at the Wilton Centre to accommodate the additional people involved. We can vary the number and size of the offices we occupy according to our needs at any particular time, giving the space back when, for example, a major project moves on from the front-end engineering design phase to procurement and construction, which is managed elsewhere. Overall, the Wilton Centre works very well for MCC-Lucite, so well that a temporary arrangement has turned into a 25-year tenancy!



**“The Wilton Centre works very well for MCC-Lucite, so well that a temporary arrangement has turned into a 25-year tenancy!”**

To learn more about MCC-Lucite International, visit [www.luciteinternational.com](http://www.luciteinternational.com).

To find out more about the facilities and opportunities at the Wilton Centre, visit [www.wiltoncentre.com](http://www.wiltoncentre.com).

