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# The Liberties Transformed: The Emergence of New Commercial and Residential Spaces in Inner Dublin

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## Introduction

Over the past twenty years, Dublin's inner city has been transformed socially, economically and physically. Recent shifts include the emergence of new industrial and financial spaces, the large-scale construction of private apartments targeted at middle- and upper-income groups, the rapid escalation of land and house prices, the displacement of indigenous residents and locally-relevant employment together with the disappearance of much of the city's traditional industrial fabric. The pace of change in inner Dublin has been remarkable and its initiation set against a backdrop of widespread inner-city decay and dereliction, high levels of unemployment and poverty and a prolonged period of depopulation and disinvestment.

The case of urban transformation in Dublin can thus be situated within broader processes of capital accumulation, whereby in seeking to capture ever greater and faster returns, capital moves in a very uneven temporal and spatial pattern. The state, mainly through its urban policy and planning functions, can be a major factor in channelling investment flows through the built environment. In the 1970s and 1980s, many inner-city areas in Dublin experienced prolonged processes of devalorisation and during this period, the state was actively involved in pursuing a policy of decentralisation of jobs and population to the suburbs, notably to the new town of Tallaght. A major effect of this policy was to relocate much of the population of the inner city to more peripheral areas and to channel public and private capital investment away from the inner city and into the expanding suburbs. Then in the mid-1980s, the state signalled a commitment to the physical renewal of the largely devalorised inner core of Dublin, through the establishment of area-based fiscal incentives to encourage property-led regeneration and later through the transformation of the operational activities of the local planning authority towards a more entrepreneurially-driven institution facilitative of the development process (see M<sup>c</sup>Guirk and MacLaran, 2001). The actions of the state, combined with a more general economic boom from the mid-1990s onwards and an associated growth in demand for built space of all types, notably from office establishments and residential occupiers, ushered in a period of unprecedented change and the widespread revalorisation of inner-city sites. To use the words of Smith (1996, p6) in summarising the tendency for inner-city areas to become targets for new rounds of investment and experience pressure for land-use upgrading, "the terrain of the inner city is suddenly valuable again, perversely profitable".

This paper examines the impacts of the recent influx of capital on the functions and land uses of inner Dublin, highlighting in particular the emergence of new office and residential functions. While considerable attention is given to overall trends in the Inner-40 wards (that area of the city broadly within the canal ring), this paper includes more detailed references to trends in the Liberties or the South West Inner City quadrant (hereafter referred to as the SWIC). In relation to residential-development data, a number of sources and methods were employed. The unpublished *CURS Inner-City Residential Database 1989-1996*, provided details of every private-sector residential development undertaken in the inner city between 1989 and March 1996. This information on residential development in inner Dublin was updated to cover the period from April 1996 to November 2003 by undertaking a full search of the planning applications database of Dublin City Council (DCC) Planning Department, supplemented by site checks at 358 inner-city locations to establish the status of the development process. To ascertain the scale of new office developments in the SWIC, the unpublished *Savills-Hamilton Osborne King/CURS offices database 1989-2004* was consulted. This source provided data on the number and location of new office development and on the amount of new office space created in the SWIC.

Furthermore, this paper contextualises the extent of functional change through examining previous land uses, functions and economic life that persisted in the SWIC prior to the recent period of transformation and revalorisation. Focus-groups held with residents of the Liberties and follow-up interviews provided information on the main employers and industries in the Liberties in previous decades and also allowed more qualitative information to be gathered on the underlying economy and community life in the area. This material was supplemented with a number of quantitative sources, including the Thom's Directory for the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, data from DCC's planning files on previous uses of sites and a DCC Planning Department land-use map for 2000 of the SWIC.

### **Cycles of Investment and Local Communities in the Liberties**

In order to understand the recent large-scale redevelopment of Dublin's south-west inner quadrant, attention must be drawn to previous rounds of capital investment and capital withdrawal. As mentioned earlier, the active state policy of decentralisation of population, employment and investment to suburban areas in the 1970s and 1980s instigated a flow of capital out of inner-city areas resulting, in many cases, in their physical degradation and blight (Martin & Rowthorne, 1986; MacLaran, 1993). This process of decline and deterioration resulted in this inner-city area being largely unprofitable for capital at that conjuncture. However, the continued process of capital devalorisation was important in preparing the ground for later rounds of capital *re-valorisation*, because it, in part, produced the opportunity for profitable re-investment and significant land-use upgrading (Smith, 1996). Focusing on how the uneven ebbing and flowing of capital affected the working-class community of the Liberties area, this section provides an experiential analysis of the changing economic, physical and social functions of this inner-city area since the 1970s.

#### ***Traditional functions of the Liberties***

The Liberties area in south-west inner Dublin is renowned for its rich historical, architectural and archaeological heritage. The area has a strong tradition of arts and

crafts, some originating in the late seventeenth century with the arrival of English and French Huguenot immigrants and, later, Dutch and Flemish immigrants. Traditional local industries include textiles (woollen and silk), iron works, brewing, distilling, printing, baking, shoe making and furniture making and restoring. A great variety of manufacturing companies occupied extensive land areas in the Liberties, and until the 1960s, the area was a labour-intensive industrial locale with closely-knit neighbourhoods serving as a cheap and reliable workforce for manufacturing (Aalen, 1992; MacLaran, 1993; Brudell, 1999).

The dominance of industrial functions in the area up to the late 1970s is renowned as is the strong retail function of the area. In addition, the Liberties area has had a significant residential function, initially accommodating the families of low-paid workers of local industries and later housing those workers and their families that had become redundant as a result of economic restructuring, rationalisation of local industry or relocation of local industry to peripheral areas. Until the 1970s, there had been a diverse range and size of manufacturing industries, many of which were concentrated on Cork Street, The Coombe, Blackpitts, James's Street and Back Lane, though manufacturing functions were not limited to these localities. Table 1 provides an indication of the variety and heterogeneity of economic functions in the SWIC area up to the mid-1980s. By the end of the century, although many of the former industrial and distribution/wholesale sites had become disused and were categorised as 'vacant/misc.', the area still retained a considerable mix of economic functions (Land-Use Map, Dublin Corporation, 2000).

Furthermore, there was a considerable range in the size of economic functions, with some firms employing hundreds, while there existed a plethora of small firms employing only a few.

*"We lived on Cook St. and the main employer in that area was Jacobs. Jacobs employed hundreds of people and a good few from my family worked there."*  
(Focus Group 2, 01)

The influence of some of the bigger companies locally was significant. As one local resident explained, "I don't think there was a family in the area that didn't have someone in Jacobs" (Liberties Interview 10). The Guinness Brewery was also a major employer in the Liberties area and required a wide range of workers including engineers, mechanics, brewers, labourers, managers, foremen, distributors, transport workers, stable workers, coopers and administrators. A former employee of Guinness who had worked with the company for more than forty years described how a job in the Guinness Brewery would be regarded as "the most sought after in the city and people came from the four corners of Ireland to work there" (Liberties Interview 16).

As Table 1 suggests, there was a wide range and large number of smaller-sized firms and these included bakeries, laundries, butchers, chemists, shops, abattoirs and small manufacturing companies.

**Table 1. Traditional Land Uses in the South West Inner City**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Land Uses/Functions</i>	
Francis St., Back Lane, La Rochelle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bakeries</li> <li>• Brush factory</li> <li>• Butchers</li> <li>• Chemist</li> <li>• Cinema</li> <li>• Curtain shop</li> <li>• Drapery shops</li> <li>• Groceries</li> <li>• Ice-cream shop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Junk shop</li> <li>• Metal works</li> <li>• Pubs</li> <li>• Saw sharpeners</li> <li>• Sewing factories</li> <li>• Shoe-making factory</li> <li>• Tea, wine and spirit merchant</li> </ul>
Patrick St., Clanbrassil St., New St., Blackpitts, Kevin St., Golden Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bakeries</li> <li>• Biscuit factory</li> <li>• Box-making factory</li> <li>• Chemical factory</li> <li>• Clothes factories</li> <li>• Clothes wholesalers</li> <li>• Coal merchant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knacker's yard</li> <li>• Knitwear factory</li> <li>• Slaughter houses</li> <li>• Tailoring factory</li> <li>• Timberyard and construction equipment wholesalers</li> </ul>
Meath St., Thomas St., Cornmarket, Bridge St., Catherine St., James St.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural produce and equipment wholesalers</li> <li>• Barbers</li> <li>• Brewery</li> <li>• Butcher shops</li> <li>• Cake and bakery shop</li> <li>• Cinemas</li> <li>• Chicken shop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clothes shops</li> <li>• Clothing wholesalers</li> <li>• Construction equipment wholesalers</li> <li>• Distillery</li> <li>• Fruit and vegetable shops</li> <li>• Mill</li> <li>• Skin yard</li> </ul>
Cork St., Ardee St., The Coombe, Newmarket, Dunore Ave., Marrowbone Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abbatoirs</li> <li>• Bakeries</li> <li>• Biscuit wholesalers</li> <li>• Brewery</li> <li>• Buttery</li> <li>• Cigarette factory</li> <li>• Clothes factories</li> <li>• Coalyard</li> <li>• Distillery</li> <li>• Dog-biscuit factory</li> <li>• Engineering shops</li> <li>• Farmyards</li> <li>• Felt factory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fish factory</li> <li>• Furniture factory</li> <li>• Hardware wholesalers</li> <li>• Knacker's yard</li> <li>• Laundries</li> <li>• Meat-curing factories</li> <li>• Nylon factory</li> <li>• Sausage-skin-making factory</li> <li>• Shoe-making factory</li> <li>• Tailoring factory</li> <li>• Wholesalers</li> </ul>

**Sources:** Thom's Directory (various years), DCC Land-Use Maps, 1973, 2000; Focus Groups & follow-up Interviews.

*“Another place that gave a good bit of employment was Catherine Corcoran up on Stephen’s Green, they gave a lot there and another place on Kevin Street, Gunnings, they did all the Church furniture, the brass, candle holders, chalices, they did all that. They gave a lot of work there.” (Focus Group 2, 02)*

*“So, you had Guinness, you had the railway, you had the shoe factories, you had the timberyards, you had crafts, all the different crafts...you had laundries, all those type of small scale manufacturing and servicing jobs. They would have employed substantial numbers of people overall.” (Liberties Interview 22)*

The Liberties/Coombe area was also renowned for its lively retailing and markets areas and streets, notably Meath Street, Francis Street (and the Iveagh Market), Thomas Street and Patrick Street. In addition, Cornmarket and Newmarket frequently hosted a number of farmers’ markets. A local resident and former bakery employee described Francis Street in the 1960s as being

*“full of life...the multitude of small shops, factories, trades at ground level which were open all day and the family life teeming from the tenements above... And the shoppers were all local people from the Liberties... A little like Meath St. today but better and cheaper” (Focus Group 1, 01)*

That economic base provided for a thriving community and the Liberties area (or SWIC) was also associated with a strong sense of community where social-support networks were of considerable importance. As the work of Eagleton (2003) has argued, the working class lacks mobility, largely due to the constraints imposed by having low incomes, but locality is of significant importance due to the close proximity to services, low transport costs and the social-support infrastructure that develops. In these social-support networks, relatives, neighbours and friends play important economic and social roles. In Kevin Kearns (2000) collection of oral histories in the Liberties, many interviewees make reference to the importance of local relationships, with one interviewee paying considerable tribute to the essential role played by the “Grannies of the Liberties”. After school, many children stayed with their ‘grannies’ (or other relatives) for dinner while the parents were at work. Important functions that were facilitated included child minding, social outings, the borrowing of food or utensils, running errands and moral support offered in difficult times.

*“There was a family in every house, no-one was left on their own and if a person was sick, neighbours, family and friends would help out.” (Focus Group 3, 01).*

*“I suppose there was a lot of activities in the community then. We had a committee which organised activities – we had a community crèche, sports days for the kids and marathons for adults. Then we had the monthly socials. There was a lot that people could do compared to nowadays where what you have is television and computers.” (Liberties Interview 17)*

Frequent references were made by local residents participating in the focus groups and subsequent interviews to the important relationships between neighbours and friends and to the wide range of activities that was organised by various communities. One resident explained that the existence of such close relationships

resulted in a caring community which “never had a child in trouble” (Focus Group 1, 04).

### ***The Impacts of Urban Restructuring on the Liberties***

Economic restructuring, new manufacturing techniques and an active policy of decentralisation of industry to the periphery in the 1960s and 1970s, resulted in the significant erosion of Dublin’s manufacturing base with employment in this sector falling dramatically in Dublin from 122,000 in 1971 to 84,000 in 1987 with severe losses recorded for the traditional textiles and food, drink and tobacco industries (MacLaran, 1993). In the Liberties area, many of the labour-intensive industries disappeared within a short period of time resulting in widespread unemployment and as the work of Punch (2000, 2002) illustrated, working-class communities that had previously enjoyed close to full employment and the “certainty” of a job in one of the local industries were faced with a stark new reality.

*“With the arrival of free trade with Britain around 1966, you had the almost immediate collapse of the shoe manufacturers. They couldn’t really compete because their scale was too small. They could supply the local market but that was it. So, when the markets opened up and then eventually after 1972, the last of them went then when the Common Market opened. You could get Italian shoes and Spanish and other things like that being produced, and even further afield in places like Turkey you could get stuff and they couldn’t compete on price levels and they certainly couldn’t compete with the Italians on style. There were a lot that were well established like Windstanleys where Mother Redcaps pub is, that was the old Windstanley’s shoe factory. You had another one on Donore Avenue, an English guy called Wiltshire. You had one on Basin Street and there were some over towards Camden Street. These were all very small scale and, as I said, it was a very local market...They all cleared out and the clothing manufacturing then went as well, so they all cleared out. The laundries began to go as well then. People could have their own washing machines and could do their own dry cleaning. There’s only one or two laundries left.” (Liberties Interview 22)*

*“I worked in Mulcahy’s. There’s now huge big apartments where the factory used to be. It was knitwear and nylon stockings...hundreds worked there, men and women...it became Sunbeam later, having changed names...but the factory closed in the late 1960s.” (Liberties Interview 15)*

The local textile companies were particularly adversely affected in the 1960s with many of them closing completely. However, some of the bigger firms relocated to the suburbs. Jacob’s Bakery was the first company to move from the inner city and into one of the purpose-built industrial estates in Tallaght.

*“When Jacob’s moved, naturally the people of the Liberties followed the employment and of course their children also went to Tallaght” (Focus Group 3, 05)*

The deliberate decentralisation of employment and residents to the ‘New Towns’ on Dublin’s periphery contributed to serious fracturing of remaining inner-city communities which were becoming increasingly marginalised and welfare dependent. While some manufacturing relocated rather than close completely, it was clear that there was a significant shortfall of jobs.

*“There was no replacement for any of that and that’s what the problem was. There was no replacement of any substantial industry of any kind. Guinness, as they modernised their technology, were shedding labour all the time. I remember every couple of years they’d announce less and less workers in Guinness. The railways were doing the same thing. There was a huge number of people working in the railways, seven or eight thousand and in the 60s and 70s that went down to about two thousand. So there was a huge loss there. Guinness had several thousand workers maybe ten thousand workers and that went down to only two or three thousand workers and even less today, I don’t think there’s more than fifteen hundred working there. And there has actually been nothing to replace that so people had to go to work further out. For a while you had car assembly on the outskirts, down along the Naas Road but that disappeared. The rest of it was more or less distribution, imports being brought in and held here in storage and distributed. Obviously that didn’t need as much labour as manufacturing did. You had the same thing happening down on the docklands. Modernisation brought in containers that were lifted by a crane. You had hundreds of workers replaced by one crane.” (Liberties Interview 22)*

Processes of capital withdrawal and devalorisation rendered many of the sites in this area derelict and unused, associated with a broad pattern of land-use downgrading and a contraction of manufacturing. The economic and social consequences of investment cycles were exacerbated by a number of policy measures. Several questionable housing policies (for example, the surrender grant scheme<sup>1</sup> of the mid 1980s (Threshold, 1987)), were pursued during the 1960s and 1970s, the consequences of which still resonate in housing estates in the Liberties, most pertinently in the increasing levels of deprivation that have since characterised the public-housing stock. Furthermore, cutbacks in public expenditure and a withdrawal of private-sector investment exacerbated the economic, social and physical crises of the Liberties area.

*“The place was denuded so most of the younger people had to emigrate and go further afield...so, there was no investment coming in and things were beginning to fall. Services were beginning to suffer. Schools were beginning to suffer because of the population moving out to the outer suburbs, so the schools were deteriorating. So you had this constant malaise going on all the time and going towards the negative all the time, things being lost, no investment coming in. The boom in the 60s didn’t have that much effect here apart from, towards the town*

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<sup>1</sup> The Surrender Grant Scheme (1984-87) had a particularly bad effect on social housing in Dublin’s inner city. Its primary aim was to allow local-authority tenants enter into the private housing market and the scheme provided them with a £5,000 grant. By implementing the scheme it was hoped that the availability of existing social-housing units would increase without the local authority having to build additional units. Some 7,700 households took up the grant amounting to 6.5 per cent of all local authority tenants (Threshold, 1987). The scheme resulted in the exodus of many of the most well-off families from the most disadvantaged local-authority housing estates. Those that availed of the grant were often those tenants most involved in the community and those who replaced the original local-authority tenants represented a very marginal and deprived sector of society. The scheme was abolished by 1987 but the capacity of housing-estate communities had been seriously undermined with detrimental social consequences – the way had been paved for serious drugs crises and problems of anti-social behaviour to take hold (Fahey, 1999).

*end, whatever office blocks were built in the 60s. But then again they didn't really apply here because they didn't employ factory workers or the numbers that the factories employed."* (Liberties Interview 22)

With widespread poverty and unemployment and a decline in public-sector and private-sector investment locally, a drugs crisis came to characterise much of the Liberties in the late 1980s and early 1990s, thus serving further to erode the social fabric of the area.

*"Unemployment hit the area really badly in the 1980s. I mean in the fifties and sixties, there was a great spirit in the area and people had jobs and a reasonable income and you had a roof over your head. But the 80s were really bad. The worst effects were the drugs and robbery. Things like that had never happened before, handbags being snatched, things like that."* (Focus Group 3, 02)

*"You could leave the key in the hall door and head into town. But things have changed since the 1980s when the drugs came to town."* (Focus Group 3, 03)

*"Over in Weaver Square, there was a big bonfire held every night and then the protest moved to City Hall and there were sandwiches every night. But the government never did anything and the only time they did anything was after Veronica Guerin...then they started to arrest people because it happened to one of their own. When it came to their own door, they finally started to do something about it."* (Focus Group 3, 05)

By the mid-1990s, the economic base of the Liberties had been transformed with many of the traditional manufacturing functions having disappeared completely. However, the area maintained a strong residential function, and a relatively strong low-grade retail and service function.

*"It's a miracle really what has survived here – the likes of Meath Street and Thomas Street, the atmosphere there, the stall holders, the small shops. They survived mostly out of loyalty of the residents there. But they were all hit then by the modern supermarket, so even they were getting hit where previously they would have suffered all right because people were losing their jobs. But that was a great threat to their trade and that's still happening. I would say that they are fairly competitive there in Meath Street and Thomas Street and they are still holding out."* (Liberties Interview 22)

The markets provided a valuable economic function in the Liberties, where household goods and groceries were often sold for lower prices than in supermarkets located in more peripheral areas. Thomas St. and Meath St. still accommodate many stalls and traders; businesses which had often been handed down from generation to generation, catering for not only the local population but also for that generation which had moved residence to more peripheral areas but maintained strong social and community links with the remaining inner-city community. On Saturday afternoons, one could observe buses to Tallaght, Ballyfermot and Walkinstown dotted with bags containing the weekly provisions of meat, fruit and vegetables making their way back to the homes of a generation that once lived in the Liberties. Other cultural ties to the area still existed for many people, one resident explaining how "if someone died now, they nearly always

come back to be buried from Francis Street church...and that's when you get to see all your old neighbours" (Focus Group 1, 01).

## **State-Led Urban Renewal**

The functions of inner Dublin have changed dramatically since the 1990. A key factor in this transformation has been the Irish economic boom of the 1990s and 2000s and the associated generation of significant amounts of capital, some of which have been channelled into inner-Dublin's built environment in the form of new office developments, new retail spaces and an influx of large-scale private residential apartment complexes. The expansion of the economy also fuelled demand for all types of built space and escalated influxes of investment and population to central Dublin, with the general increase in incomes driving overall demand for residential property in particular. However, it is important to recognise that the state, at various levels, has played a crucial role in shaping the type and pace of renewal that has occurred in former industrial locales of the inner city. Through area-based approaches to urban regeneration, spearheaded by fiscal incentives and, more recently, through the adoption of micro-area planning approaches to urban regeneration, the state signalled a long-term commitment to the physical redevelopment of the inner city, thus reducing significantly the level of risk posed to property development.

As has been well-documented elsewhere, the central-government initiated Urban Renewal Act and Finance Act of 1986, provided significant fiscal incentives for commercial and residential development in large tracts of Dublin's inner area (MacLaran, 1993; Prunty, 1995; MacLaran and Williams, 1996, 2003; M<sup>c</sup>Guirk and MacLaran, 2001). In order to entice property capital back into decayed areas, the Acts provided a package of tax incentives, including capital allowances, rates remission and rent allowances, for development, refurbishment and occupation in Designated Areas. In central Dublin, the Designated Areas included the docklands, and from 1989 onwards, much of the Liberties, the north-west inner city, O'Connell Street, the Liffey's Quays and some of Dublin 2 in the south-east inner city. The tax incentives acted as a catalyst for inward investment to inner-city areas, previously deemed unattractive to capital. Another catalyst in the revalorisation of inner Dublin was the increasingly developer-friendly ethos being adopted by the local state in the mid-1990s. As traced by M<sup>c</sup>Guirk and MacLaran (2001), the creation of an Inner-City Development Team (ICDT) in Dublin Corporation's Development Department in the mid-1990s created a facilitative space in which the local state could liaise and negotiate with private-sector interests in order to realise the physical renewal of tax-incentive sites, with, in many cases, the sale of Corporation-owned sites being used to broker deals.

Another important factor has been the more recent adoption by the local state of micro-area planning approaches to urban regeneration. The Integrated Area Plans (IAPs) initiated in 1998 represented collaborative or integrated approaches to urban regeneration which had the potential to act as "localised planning mechanisms which aim to embrace the complexity of contemporary urban systems, though developing a holistic approach towards the achievement of social, economic and environmental goals while encouraging the necessary inter-sectoral co-ordination to achieve such aims" M<sup>c</sup>Guirk and MacLaran (2001, p450). Under the IAPs, tax

incentives have been more strategically targeted and form only one part of wider urban regeneration strategies. As part of the plans, more detailed *Urban Design Frameworks* were devised at street and neighbourhood level setting out (among other things) land-use zonings and development scales for individual sites. As part of the procedures for implementation, multi-disciplinary Project Teams from Dublin Corporation were established for each IAP area (as well as a Project Manager and Monitoring Committee). A key element of the Project Team's implementation strategy has been the development of a strong marketing strategy to promote its IAP area and essentially, to compete with other area-based urban regeneration projects for investment capital. Considering the collaborative nature of the micro-area planning approach, many aspects of the IAPs were dependent on leveraging private-sector funding and on close co-operation with developers for implementation. This collaborative relationship has served to sustain the pace of physical renewal in inner city areas, a process initiated in the early 1990s under the original urban renewal schemes of the mid-1980s. In 1998, an IAP was devised for part of the SWIC area (the Liberties/Coombe IAP). In this case, the Project Team of the IAP was pro-active in promoting the development of tax-designated sites by identifying sites "ripe for redevelopment" and by contacting owners directly to encourage them to develop their vacant or derelict sites and properties (Liberties/Coombe IAP Annual Report, 2001, p6).

### **Land-Use Change: From Industrial to Commercial and Residential**

Much of the SWIC has been directly impacted by successive state-led urban renewal schemes which acted as catalysts for investment influxes to the area from 1990 onwards. A major outcome of capital influxes has been widespread land-use upgrading where former industrial sites of the Liberties suddenly became high-demand sites for the construction of private apartment developments and office space. This paper later examines the extent of residential development that has occurred in the SWIC since 1989. However, it is to the office function that this paper first turns.

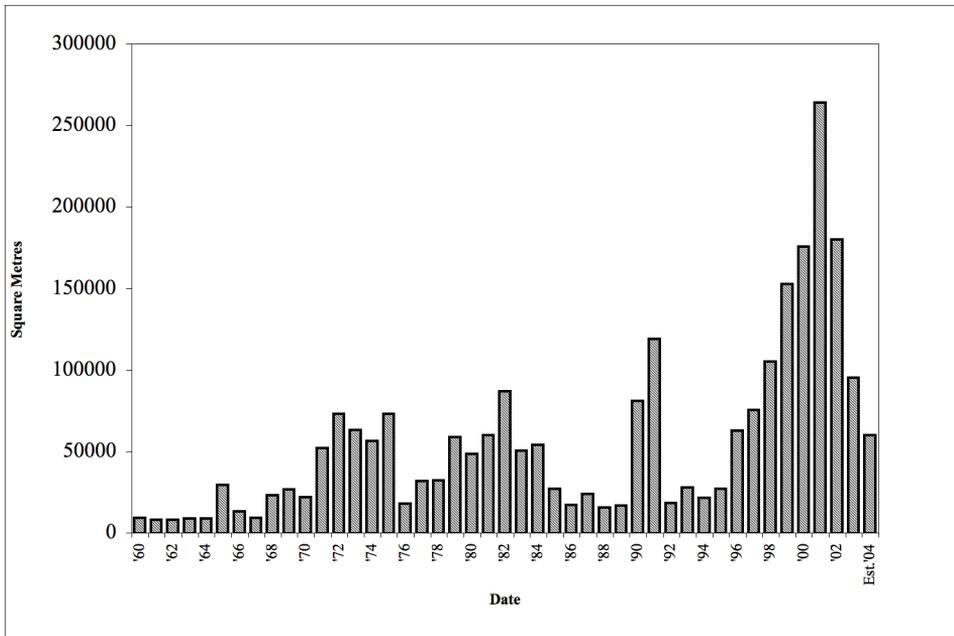
#### ***The Geography of Office Development in Inner Dublin***

Between 1960 and the end of 2003, a total of 2,362,079 sq. m. of modern office space was developed in Dublin (MacLaran and O'Connell, 2003). Figure 2 illustrates the cyclical nature of this development, characterised by four phases of intense construction activity, separated by periods of relative quiescence. It clearly shows the enormous scale of the most recent development boom, associated with rapid economic growth and a strong demand for office accommodation.

As the work of MacLaran (1993, 2003) has documented, Dublin's traditional office core is located in an area extending from Dame Street and College Green, southwards towards the Grand Canal at Ranelagh and eastwards over the Grand Canal into Ballsbridge. This wedge-shaped prime office zone, encompassing parts of Dublin 2 and Dublin 4, is bordered by a secondary area of overspill which has attracted office development periodically, notably during times of greater activity in the boom-slump cycle. These overspill areas comprise those parts of Dublin 1, 7 and 8 which border the office core, together with parts of the western fringe of Dublin 2 and its docklands areas (*ibid*). As outlined by MacLaran (1999), modern (post-1960) office schemes undertaken in such secondary areas have resulted from

a number of stimuli. First, schemes have been initiated because of the desire by owner-occupying businesses to develop, expand or redevelop sites to accommodate their own office functions, sometimes additional to their main industrial operations. Secondly, at times of boom in the office development cycle when profitability calculations were more favourable or when site assembly difficulties hampered development in the office core itself, developers increasingly turned their attention to locations which were more marginal, both geographically and in terms of their potential profitability. Thirdly, from the mid-late 1980s, the establishment of fiscal incentives for property-based regeneration of certain Designated Areas in inner Dublin favourably altered the profitability of redevelopment in such areas.

**Figure 1. The Office Development Cycle in Dublin.**



Source: MacLaran and O’Connell, 2003

The Urban Renewal Act of 1986 and subsequent Designated Areas marked an important turning point in the city’s development. The tax incentives initiated a period of intensive private-sector property development, initially in the form of office buildings and subsequently as apartment schemes, in areas of the inner city which had experienced little or no private-sector development during the twentieth century. The provisions therefore mark the inception of a significant ‘return’ of private capital to the formerly-industrial or secondary areas of the central city.

As can clearly be seen in Figure 1, the availability of tax incentives acted as a considerable stimulus for investment in office space, where in 1990 and 1991, a significant increase in office completions was recorded. During a period of just two years, the stock of modern office space in Dublin expanded by some 18 per cent (MacLaran, 1993). However, such a sharp increase in the scale of development

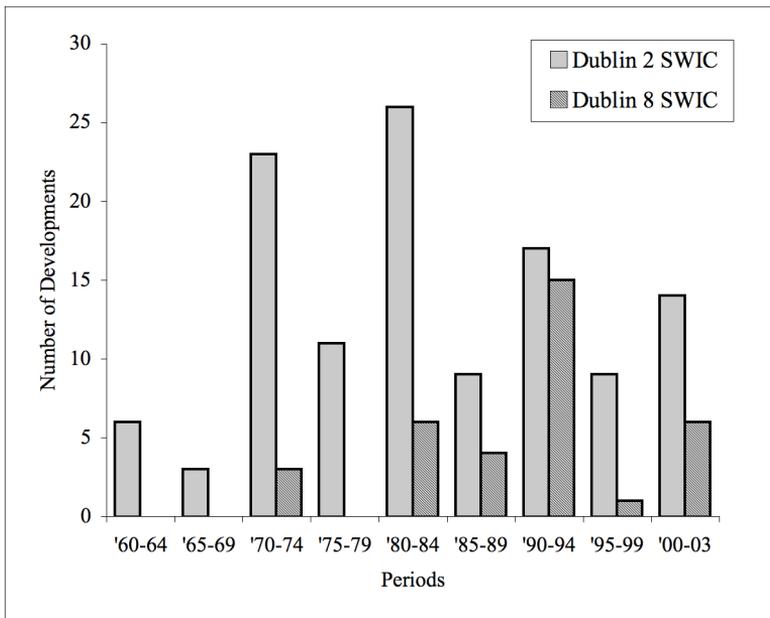


**Secondary areas**

The SWIC area also includes a geographically more extensive secondary office zone comprising the western portion of Dublin 2 and several locations within Dublin 8.

Figures 3 and 4 depict the scale of office development activity in the Dublin 2 and Dublin 8 components of the SWIC area. Within the Dublin 2 SWIC zone, until the mid-1990s, the intensity of office development was quite closely related to the contemporary conditions in the development cycle (see Figure 3). However, from the mid-1990s, the paucity of available development sites in Dublin 2 obliged developers to consider a wider range of development locations, both in suburbia and in the inner fringe to the office core. These difficulties resulted in a significant restriction on the scale of development activity being undertaken in Dublin 2.

**Figure 3. Number of Office Developments in the SWIC Area.**

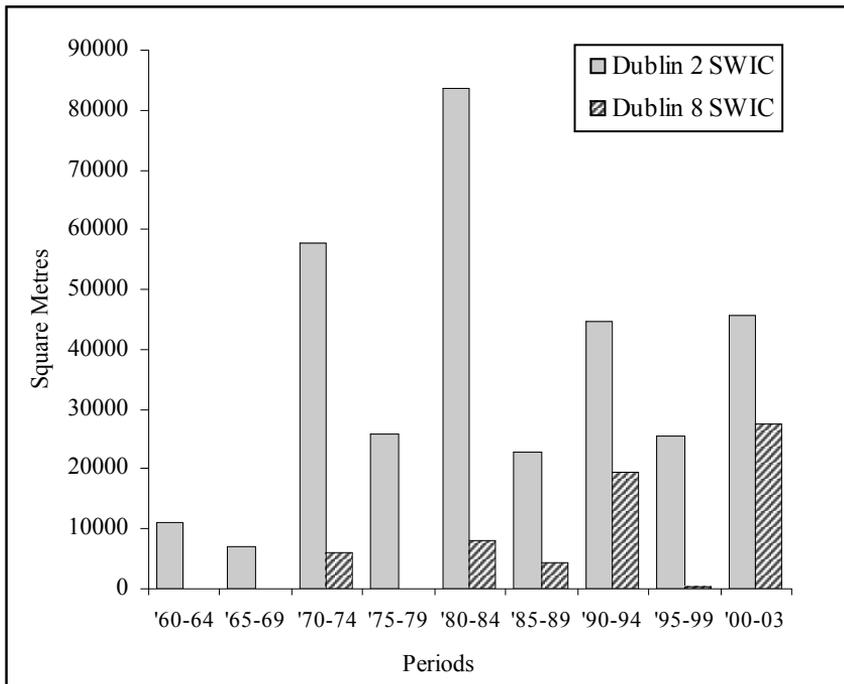


Prior to the mid-late 1980s, only half a dozen small-scale office developments had been undertaken in the Dublin 8 area of SWIC. Figure 4 illustrates the dramatic impact of the fiscal incentives available in the Designated Areas upon the scale of office development activity in Dublin 8.

At the end of the 1980s, three developments availing of the fiscal incentives were completed at High Street, totalling 3,788 sq. m.. Over the following five years (1990-1994) a further fourteen developments comprising 17,627 sq. m. of space reached completion. However, weak levels of take-up became reflected in high rates of office vacancy within these newly-completed developments. Developers swiftly responded by reducing the scale of their activity there. During the following five years, just one small scheme, amounting to 322 sq. m, reached completion.

However, in the early years of the twenty-first century, user demand derived from buoyant economic growth gradually absorbed the vacant stock and, as the shortage of office space in Dublin 2 intensified, developers again commenced operations in Dublin 8. Four developments accounting for 20,992 sq. m. of floorspace were completed, of which *Bishops Square* in Kevin Street was by far the largest at 14,399 sq. m.. Thus, although Figure 3 depicts a considerable reduction in the number of office development schemes compared to the 1990-1994 period, the sizeable increase in the average scale of development actually resulted in an increased amount of office space reaching completion during the period 2000-2003. By the end of 2003, of the 44,799 sq. m. of office space which had been developed in Dublin 8, more than half (21,725 sq. m.) had availed of Designated-Area fiscal incentives.

**Figure 4 . Office Floorspace Developed in the SWIC Area.**



### ***The Geography of Residential Development in Inner Dublin***

The residential landscape of the inner city has been dramatically transformed since the early 1990s. The existence of significant quantities of derelict and disused land coupled with high take-up rates of fiscal incentives for property development attracted a huge influx in capital to the area, mainly in the form of large-scale apartment developments. The scale and pace of development has been particularly striking considering that very limited private-sector residential development had taken place in the inner city during the previous century. Although complete figures for the breakdown between tax-designated and non tax-designated developments were not available, of the 8,700 new residential units developed in central Dublin by 1997, 6,000 had been built in the tax-designated areas, notably in

the Custom House Docks, the Liberties and the north-east inner city (McGuirk & MacLaran, 2001). This trend is likely to have continued until at least 1999 when tax-designation no longer covered large tracts of the inner city but became limited to specific sites designated through Integrated Area Plans.

*Tax incentives for urban renewal*

As mentioned previously, in order to account for the upsurge in inner-city apartment development, attention must be paid to the role of tax incentives in inducing capital back to the central area of the city. The Designated Areas established in 1986, combined with Section 23 and Section 27 tax relief<sup>2</sup>, provided financial incentives for inner-city residential development. These initiatives aimed to encourage the construction of units for private renting and, in so doing, increased the profitability of inner-city residential apartment development. More specifically, the provisions allowed the costs of properties, net of site value, or the costs of converting buildings into flats to be deducted from landlords' rental income from all sources until the tax allowance was used up, considerably reducing the real purchase price of such investment properties. Qualifying properties had to fall within specified size ranges, amounting to 30-90 sq.m. (323-968 sq. ft.) in the case of apartments and 35 -125 sq.m. (377-1,345 sq. ft.) for houses. These had to be rented out for a minimum of ten years.

Initially, take-up of tax incentives for residential development in the inner city was largely confined to the inner suburbs of Rathmines and Ranelagh. It was not until the emergence of high vacancy rates in office developments in the inner city outside of traditional office cores that developers increasingly turned their attention to apartment developments (MacLaran and Williams, 1996).

***Residential development in the inner-city quadrants***

Information on the residential development of the inner city based on the *CURS Inner-City Residential Database 1989-1996* and the updated *Inner-40 Wards Residential Development Database, 1996-2003* compiled by the author. It is largely presented in this chapter in two time-periods; 1989 to March 1996 and April 1996 to November 2003. In order to examine the geographical location of residential development in the inner city, the data is analysed on the basis of the four inner-city quadrants; the south-west inner city (SWIC), the north-west inner city (NWIC), the south-east inner city (SEIC) and the north-east inner city (NEIC).

The redevelopment of the Custom House Docks represented the first major programme of inner-city apartment development. Under the CHDDA, this mixed-use project was well under way by the early 1990s with the construction of the IFSC office development and surrounding high-grade residential apartments for owner occupiers and investors. By March 1996, 2,138 residential units had been built in the NEIC, many of which were concentrated in the extended Custom House Docks area. With the establishment of a second special-purpose development authority, the Dublin Docklands Development Authority (DDDA) in 1997, to regenerate a

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<sup>2</sup> During the 1980s the introduction of tax relief under Section 23 of the Finance Act, 1981, renewed in the Act of 1988 under Section 27, provided a special tax allowance to encourage the construction of apartments and, in the later Act, small houses for rent. These tax reliefs became restricted to the Designated Areas after 1991.

further 526 hectares of dockland, the pace of residential development increased substantially thereafter. Between April 1996 and November 2003, a further 3,145 units had been built or were currently under construction in the north east of the city. Residential development in the remaining Designated Areas was initially slow to take off but, after 1992, private apartment complexes appeared in areas that had not witnessed any investment for decades.

**Figure 5. Development Activity in the Inner-40 Wards, 1989-2003.**

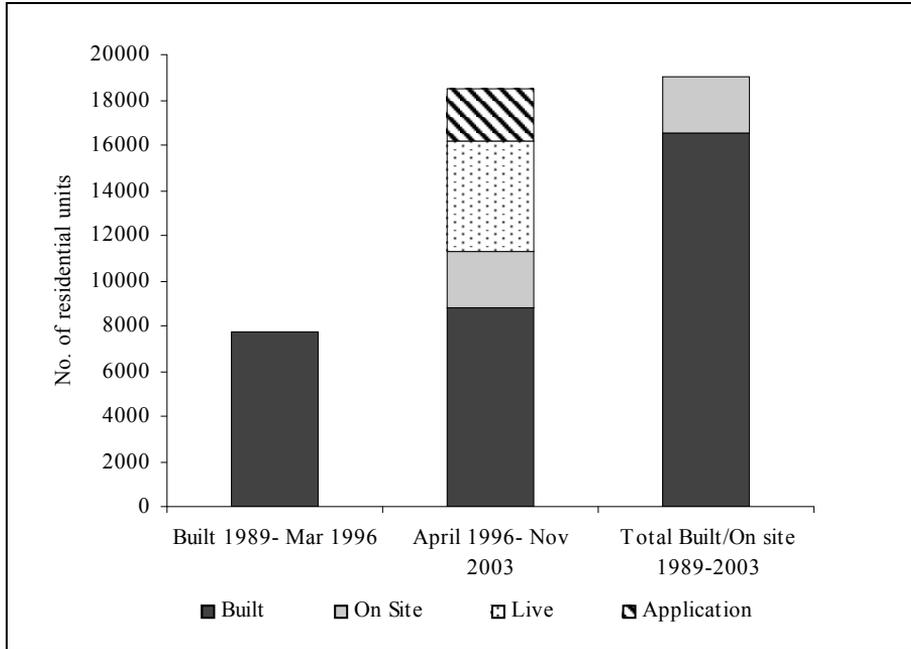


Figure 5 shows the scale of development over the two time periods. From 1989 to March 1996, over 7,700 units in 135 separate developments had been constructed in inner Dublin. Planning permission for an additional 3,360 units had been granted in 79 developments and applications for 45 projects involving 1,161 units had been submitted to Dublin Corporation and awaited determination. The scale of residential development during this short period is remarkable considering that it was not until 1992 that residential construction became the focus for developers.

Since then, residential development activity in the inner city has increased and between 1996 and 2003 a further 8,992 residential units were constructed in 202 separate developments. Overall, between 1989 and 2003, 16,722 new residential units in 337 separate developments were constructed in central Dublin. Figure 5 also indicates that residential development in the inner city was at that time also likely to continue apace as there were a further 2,713 units at that time being constructed and live planning permission existed for the construction of 5,083 residential units. Furthermore, recently submitted planning applications involved the proposed development of 2,603 units at the time when data collection ceased in November 2003.

*Location of developments*

Figure 6 shows the number of residential developments in each of the inner-city quadrants from 1989-1996 and from 1996-2003. Initially, development activity was strong in the SWIC and NEIC of the city, where 37.1 per cent and 27.7 per cent respectively of new residential apartments were constructed between 1989 and March 1996. The development of Temple Bar, Cornmarket, Patrick's Street, Clanbrassil Street, Portobello and Kilmainham account for a large proportion of residential development in the SWIC during this period, while the development of the Custom House Docks largely explains the high level of construction in the NEIC.

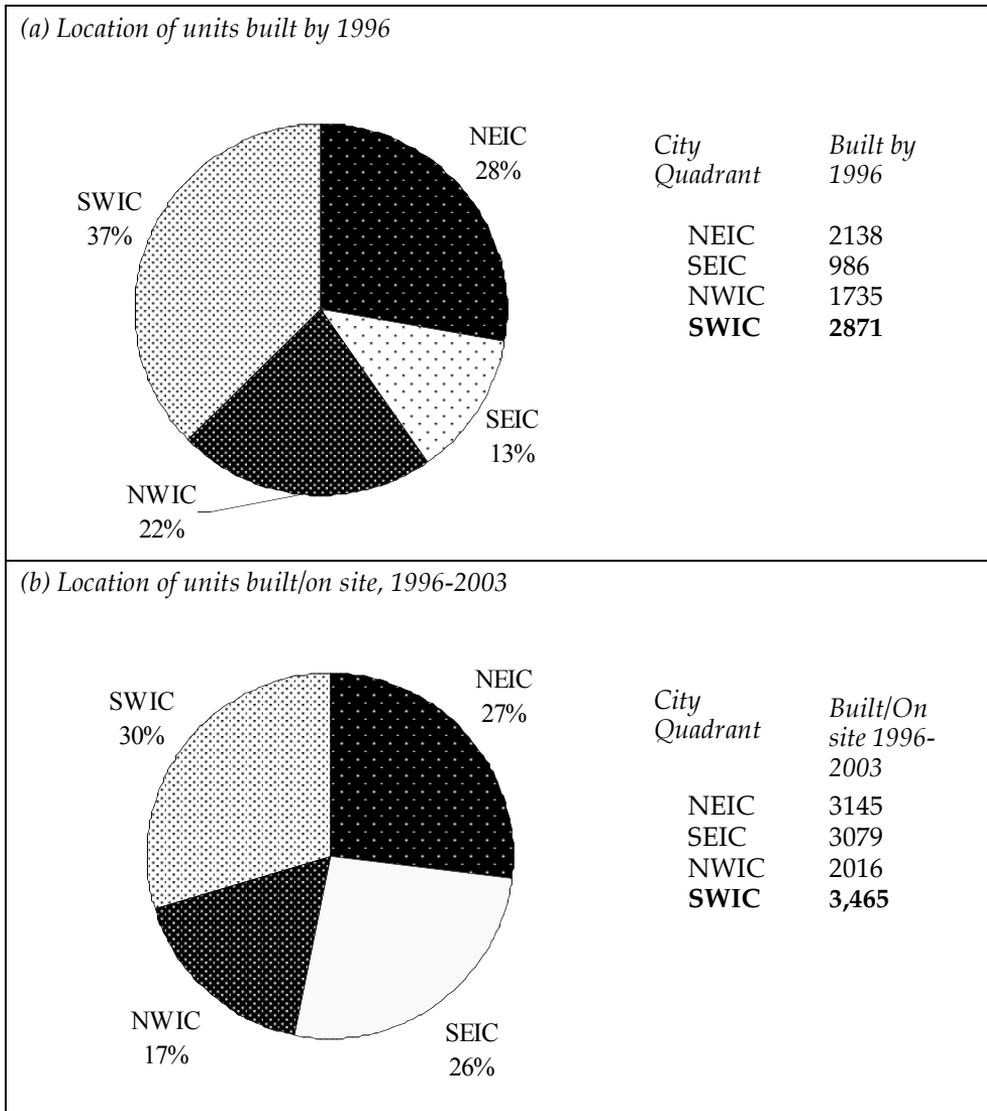
The scale of residential developments tended to be much larger in the docklands, as would perhaps be expected from the type of planning system employed there, namely the creation of a special-purpose authority and the development of a Master Plan for the site and because of the large size of industrial sites that were to be redeveloped. As Table 2 illustrates, of the 27 residential developments constructed in the NEIC from 1989 to March 1996, the average number of residential units per development was 79.2, while the median number of residential units was 60. One development alone in the north docks, *Custom House Harbour*, included more than 330 apartments. Meanwhile, in the SWIC, of the 63 separate developments, the average number of residential units per development was only 45.6 and the median was 25.5. The largest single development in the SWIC for the same period (1989-1996) was *The Maltings* development on Watling Street having 202 apartments.

In the NWIC, the tax incentives offered in the Designated Areas led to large-scale residential developments in Bolton Street, Brunswick Street, Arran Quay, Ellis Quay and Smithfield, with this quadrant accounting for 22.4 per cent of new residential units between 1989 and 1996. A total of 26 separate developments were constructed in the NWIC for this period, with the largest development consisting of 286 apartments on Arran Quay.

Residential developments in the SEIC totalled 986 units in 19 separate developments on Mount Street, Lombard Street, Ringsend Road and Grand Canal Street, accounting for only 12.8 per cent of total units constructed between 1989 and 1996. This relatively low level of construction may be due to the focus on office rather than residential development and the competition from office development for available sites. A large amount of office space was constructed in this quadrant during the late 1980s and 1990s indicating that the SEIC was a functionally different quadrant to the other three.

Figure 6 indicates that an eastward shift in the geographical location of residential units occurred between 1996 and 2003. From an examination of residential development in the west of the city between 1996 and 2003, it is clear that the proportion of units constructed or under construction at the time of data collection in the SWIC had fallen to 29.6 per cent, while development had slowed to 17.2 per cent in the NWIC.

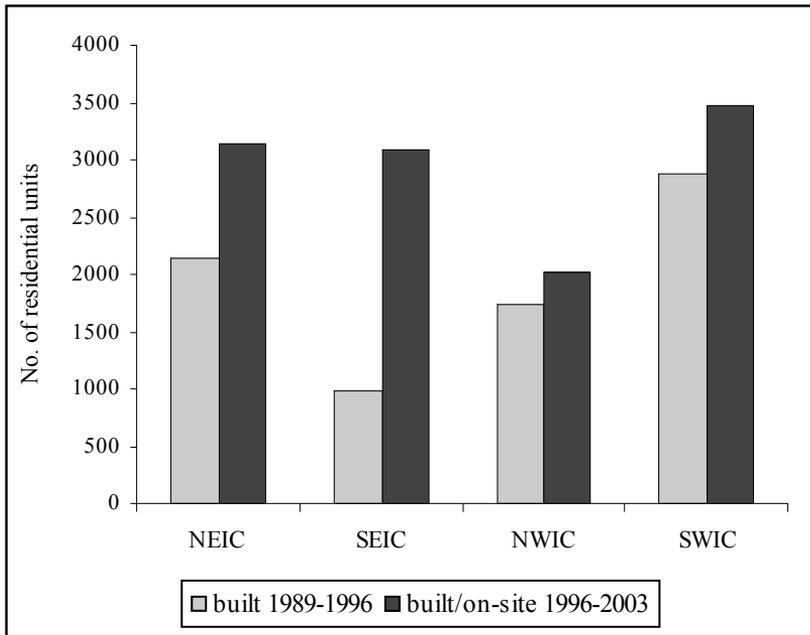
**Figure 6. Location of Residential Units by Quadrants, 1989-2003.**



**Table 2. Number of Residential Units per Development, 1989-2003**

	<u>1989 – Mar 1996</u>		<u>Apr 1996 – Nov 2003</u>	
	<i>Ave.</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ave.</i>	<i>Median</i>
NEIC	79.2	60	39.4	22
SEIC	51.9	30	80.2	59
NWIC	66.7	44	50.2	26
SWIC	45.6	25.5	34.6	21
<b>Inner 40</b>	<b>57.3</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>25.5</b>

**Figure 7. Number of Residential Units by Quadrant, 1989-2003**



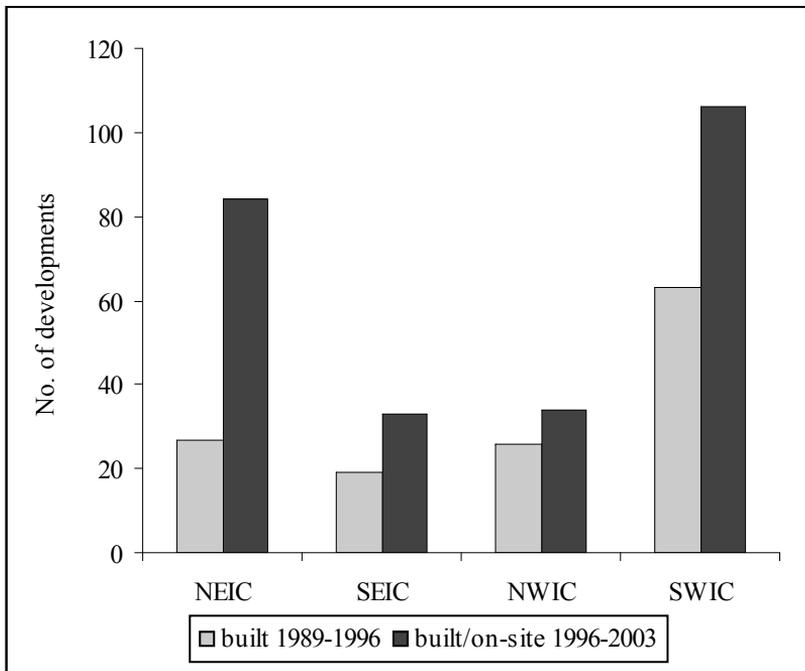
The establishment of the DDDA in 1997 and the subsequent production of a Master Plan for 526 hectares (1,300 acres) of dockland can largely explain the shift in development activity towards eastern parts of the inner city. Development activity remained strong in the NEIC as 3,145 residential units were built or under construction in 84 separate developments between 1996 and 2003, representing 26.9 per cent of the total number of apartments and having experienced only a slight decrease from the first time-period (27.7 per cent). The proportion of residential units built/under construction in the SEIC increased substantially to 26.3 per cent of the total, increasing in absolute terms from 986 units constructed between 1989-1996 to 3,079 units constructed/under construction between April 1996 and November 2003. This increase is largely explained by the development of the south docks, under the auspices of the DDDA and includes developments on the Gasworks site on Grand Canal Quay, City Quay, Sir John Rogerson’s Quay, Townsend St and Ringsend. Five of the developments constructed between 1996 and 2003, each comprised more than 200 apartments. Large-scale residential developments were also undergoing construction outside, but on the periphery of, the DDDA area including the Gasworks site on Barrow Street, consisting of 630 apartments, and another site on South Lotts Street comprising 101 apartments in a mixed-use scheme. There has thus been a notable increase in the scale of developments being undertaken in the SEIC between 1996 and 2003, with the average number of residential units per development being 80.2, while the median number was also high at 59 residential units. As illustrated by Figure 7 and Table 3, the absolute increase in the number of residential units constructed in this quadrant was substantial but as Figure 8 illustrates, the absolute increase in the number of residential developments initiated was not so striking with 33 separate developments built or under construction between 1996-2003.

**Table 3. Development Activity by Inner-City Quadrant, 1989-2003**

Quadrant	Built 1996		Built/On site 2003		Live PP		Applications	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
NEIC	2138	27.7	3145	26.9	1813	35.7	916	35.2
SEIC	986	12.8	3079	26.3	1793	35.3	368	14.1
NWIC	1735	22.4	2016	17.2	206	4.0	189	7.3
<b>SWIC</b>	<b>2871</b>	<b>37.1</b>	<b>3465</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>1271</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1130</b>	<b>43.4</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7730</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11705</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5083</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2603</b>	<b>100</b>

While the NWIC and SWIC inner-city quadrants have experienced a fall in the proportion of overall new residential developments, Table 3 shows that the absolute number of residential units constructed or under construction has increased. In the NWIC, residential units built/under construction amounted to 2,016 for the period 1996 to 2003, representing an increase of 281 units over the previous time period, 1989-1996. Overall, this quadrant has experienced a low growth rate in development activity over the two time periods with 26 separate developments being constructed in the first time period and 27 in the more recent period. Geographically, residential development activity has been highly concentrated in the NWIC between 1996-2003, with development having been generally confined to the Smithfield area.

**Figure 8. Number of Residential Developments by Quadrant, 1989-2003**



*Residential Development in the SWIC*

In relation to the SWIC, this quadrant became a prominent location for new apartment development after 1992 as the tax incentives on offer improved the profitability of ventures in the area and as developer interest switched from office to residential development in the Designated Areas outside the IFSC. The considerable supply of derelict industrial land and brownfield sites in the Liberties area ensured a sustained period of intense development from 1992 onwards and between 1989 and 1996, 2,871 residential units were constructed in the SWIC. Temple Bar, Patrick’s Street, Clanbrassil Street, Island Street, Usher’s Quay, Christchurch Place, Cornmarket and Newmarket were transformed in a relatively short amount of time from largely disused industrial spaces to large-scale private residential apartments.

Although, there has been a relative eastward shift in the location of new residential development in the inner city, construction in the Liberties continued apace. Between April 1996 and November 2003, a further 3,465 residential units had been built or were under construction in 106 separate developments. Indeed, the greatest number of residential developments constructed or under construction in an inner-city quadrant for the period 1996-2003, was in the SWIC. The size of development varied considerably in the SWIC, with the average number of residential units per development being 34.6 and with a median of 21. Indeed, of the 186 planning files for the SWIC area for which information was available on the quantity of residential units either built, under construction, with live planning permission, at application stage, or for which the status had not been determined, Table 4 illustrates the considerable range in the size of schemes.

**Table 4. The Size of Residential Developments in the SWIC, 1996-2003**

	<i>Developments</i>		<i>Dwelling Units</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1-10 units	59	31.7	353	5.7
11-25 units	53	28.5	888	14.3
26-50 units	32	17.2	1,273	20.6
51-100 units	33	18.3	2,297	37.1
Over 100 units	8	4.3	1,383	22.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>186</b>		<b>6,194</b>	

While most of the developments were small in scale, 60 per cent having between 1-25 residential units, these accounted for only 20 per cent of the total number of units. In contrast, large schemes which included more than 50 residential units, comprised fewer than a quarter of the developments but accounted for more than 60 per cent of the total number of residential units. Charlemont Place on Charlemont Street represents the largest residential scheme built between 1996 and 2003, with 192 apartments but represents a considerably smaller development than recent large-scale residential schemes undertaken in the other three quadrants.

The more recent residential developments cover a more extensive area of the SWIC compared to the geography of development for the period 1989-1996, with notable

developments at Mount Brown, Francis Street, James Street, Marrowbone Lane, Bond Street, Cork Street, Blackpitts, Newmarket Reuben Street, Aungier Street, Harcourt Street and Clanbrassil Street. Many of the new apartment blocks were constructed on former-industrial sites changing considerably the function and physical appearance of the SWIC.

Overall, between 1989 and 2003, a total of 5,742 new residential units were constructed in the SWIC amounting to 34.3 per cent of the total for the inner-40 wards. This quadrant accounts for the largest proportion of newly-built stock up to 2003, with the north-east quadrant accounting for the second largest proportion with 27.9 per cent.

#### *Future residential development*

Looking to the medium term after 2003, residential development in the inner city was likely to continue apace with 5,083 units having live planning permissions in November 2003 and with planning applications made for a further 2,603 (see Table 3). Development of the Docklands in both the NEIC and SEIC is likely to continue rapidly for the medium term with each accounting for 35.7 per cent and 35.3 per cent of units with live planning permissions respectively. The SWIC is likely to increase its proportion of residential units (see below for further discussion). Notably, the decrease in potential future supply in the NWIC is striking, with that quadrant accounting for only 4 per cent of residential units with live planning permissions by November 2003. One factor in the decline in development activity at that time was that developers were awaiting the publication of the *Urban Design Framework Plans* of the HARP IAP before submitting planning applications for development. However, since data collection, a number of planning applications were submitted for the NWIC and have not been captured in this database. The proposed redevelopment of Grangegorman for a new college campus with student accommodation and the regeneration of O'Devaney Gardens social-housing estate for a mixed-tenure, mixed-use scheme is also likely to increase the number of new residential units in the NWIC. It should therefore be noted that the reduced scale of residential development activity in the NWIC is unlikely to be as low as this data suggests.

The Liberties does appear set to experience further and more intense redevelopment in the near future as several major residential development schemes are proposed for the area. These include to the west, the Heuston Gateway mixed-use projects, two of which are on Military Road and cumulatively propose the construction of over 500 residential units, 75 per cent of which will be two-bedroomed apartments.

The *Urban Design Framework Plan* for Cork Street combined with tax incentives offered on many sites has resulted in an influx of planning applications for high-density, large-scale residential apartments. Cork Street, a former thriving industrial street suffered severe dereliction and blight following years of disinvestment that resulted from road-widening plans that were devised for the street over 30 years previously yet only implemented and completed in 2003. Cork Street was to receive special treatment as part of the Liberties/Coombe IAP (1998) with many former-industrial sites designated as tax-incentive sites. In a very short period of time, it is

envisaged that 2,000 residential units will be constructed on Cork Street (Liberties/Coombe IAP Annual Report, 2003) as part of its regeneration plan.

A third major residential scheme underway in the area is the redevelopment of the Fatima Mansions local-authority housing estate between Reuben Street and the Grand Canal. The 4.5 hectare site is being redeveloped under a Public-Private Partnership arrangement involving the demolition of 364 existing residential units and the construction of 601 high-density apartments in a mixed-use, mixed-tenure development.

The Digital Hub office and high-tech business development in the Thomas Street area initially proposed to incorporate a residential function in its plan amounting to 25 per cent of the 46,000 sq. m. development or about 260 apartments concentrated in the Windmill site<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, proposals have been put forward for a substantial redevelopment of the former industrial site of Player Mills at Donore Avenue.

These large-scale residential developments, combined with the large number of smaller-scale developments with planning permission and recently submitted planning applications, indicate that the residential transformation of the SWIC is likely to continue and at an accelerated pace. In November 2003, live planning permissions exist for 1,271 units while planning permission has been sought for an additional 1,130 units. At the time of data collection completion, the SWIC accounted for 43.4 per cent of planning applications for residential development. Although development in the Docklands is likely to remain strong in the immediate and medium term, the recent surge in planning applications in the SWIC indicates that it too will remain a focal area for inward investment in the form of apartment developments in the medium to longer term.

#### *Types of Residential Units*

A total of 398 planning files for the Inner-40 wards included references to residential development, either in single- or mixed-use schemes at various stages of development activity; built, under construction, with live planning permission or with a planning application submitted. Of the 19,391 residential units involved in these stages of development activity, 10,254 residential units (52.9 per cent) had details available on unit size and type. Table 5 shows that apartments with 3 or more bedrooms accounted for only 6.2 per cent of all units built, currently on-site or with live planning permissions between 1996 and 2003. Meanwhile, two-bedroomed apartments accounted for over half (54 per cent) of all residential units with one-bedroomed apartments comprising a further 36.5 per cent of the total. The

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<sup>3</sup> With the closure of the main digital enterprise company, Media Lab Europe, in 2005, it became clear that a more substantial residential element would be sought as part of the project. Subsequently, in June 2006, planning permission was sought for a 1.1 hectare site within the Digital Hub area for a mixed-use development of 11 blocks ranging in height from 9 to 49 storeys accommodating, amongst other things, over 38,398 sq m (413,312sq ft) of office space, a 360-bedroomed hotel plus 85 apartment-hotel units above and 125 apartments. The building heights of the streets involved traditionally range from 2 to 4 storeys and the Liberties already represents one of the most densely developed areas of the city. That September, Dublin City Council rejected planning permission for the application.

type of apartment development in the Inner-40 wards area has been characterised by small apartment size and mirrors closely a general decline in the average size of households.

**Table 5. Types of Residential Unit, 1996-Dec. 2003**

<i>Type of Unit</i>	<i>Built/On Site/</i>		<i>Applied For</i>	<i>Percent</i>
	<i>Live PP</i>	<i>Percent</i>		
Studio Apt	24	0.29	0	0.00
1-bed Apt	3018	36.47	611	30.87
2-bed Apt	4511	54.51	1207	60.99
3-bed Apt	457	5.52	134	6.77
4+bed Apt	54	0.65	0	0.00
1-bed live/work	43	0.52	0	0.00
2-bed live/work	29	0.35	17	0.86
1-bed Duplex	2	0.02	0	0.00
2-bed Duplex	56	0.68	4	0.20
3-bed Duplex	28	0.34	0	0.00
2-bed terraced	27	0.33	6	0.30
1-bed Penthouse	5	0.06	0	0.00
2-bed Penthouse	16	0.19	0	0.00
3-bed Penthouse	5	0.06	0	0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,275</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1,979</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Dublin City Council, Planning Applications

Table 5 also shows that currently-outstanding planning applications to Dublin City Council for residential units in the Inner 40 Wards confirm the continuity of these trends, with apartments of three bedrooms or more comprising only 6.77 per cent of the total. However, of the 1,979 units for which planning permission has been applied, there has been a reduction in the proportion of one-bedroomed units to almost 31 per cent and an increase to 61 per cent of those with two bedrooms.

### ***Land-Use Change***

This section focuses on the new residential space that has been created in the SWIC and examines the land uses which the new residential functions have replaced. It should be borne in mind here that while many of the sites previously functioned as industrial, many had become disused and derelict by the mid-1970s and the 1980s.

In the examination of DCC's planning files, a total of 187 files for the SWIC included references to residential development, either in single or mixed-use schemes. The majority (78 per cent) concerned sites located in Dublin 8 and over half of the schemes (56.7 per cent) were either built or being constructed by

November 2003. The status of these schemes in the planning and development process is set out in Table 6.

**Table 6. Development Status of Residential Schemes, SWIC 1989-2003**

	No. of Residential Developments:		
	Dublin 2	Dublin 8	Total
Built 1996-2003	23	60	83
On site	1	22	23
Live permission	5	40	45
Application stage	4	18	22
Status not determined	7	7	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>187</b>

Information was also gathered, where available, on site size and previous site use. Details concerning the precise size of the site had been included on the files for just 82 of the 187 planning applications (43.9 per cent) involving residential space. For these, the total area undergoing redevelopment amounted to 20.24 hectares (50 acres) with the average site area being 2,468 sq. m.

**Table 7. Site Area of Residential Space in the SWIC 1996-2003**

<i>Site Area</i>	<i>Number of Developments</i>	
<1,000 sq. m.	40	(48.8%)
1,000 – 5,000 sq. m.	35	(42.6%)
5,000 – 10,000 sq. m.	3	( 3.6%)
>10,000 sq. m.	4	( 4.9%)

Assuming that these 82 developments comprised a representative sample of the whole range of schemes, it could be surmised that an area of over 46 hectares was undergoing a process which involved the development of residential space, as represented by the full number (187) of redevelopment projects. However, it is evident from Tables 3 and 6 that although the largest site category seems to represent the profile of scheme sizes quite closely (large developments with over 100 units comprising 4.8 per cent of the schemes and 4.9 per cent of the largest site category), the site details for smaller schemes seem significantly over-represented and the second-largest category of schemes seems under-represented. Thus, if anything, the 46-hectare estimate for sites undergoing redevelopment might well be regarded as an under-estimate. Furthermore, this estimate is based on residential developments involved in the planning and development process from April 1996 to November 2003 and does not include site details for the 63 residential developments constructed between 1989 and March 1996. Moreover, it fails to reflect planning applications submitted subsequent to the issuing in 1999 of the *Residential Density Guidelines* (DoELG, 1999) which have encouraged greater intensity of inner-area redevelopment.

**Table 8. Previous Site-Use of Recent Residential Developments in the SWIC**

Convent yard
Denis motor-sales showroom
Derelict site and multiple residential units
Gym (1-storey)
Ice rink
Industrial - abattoir
Industrial - brush factory
Industrial - car dismantlers/salvage yard
Industrial - Eircom
Industrial - fuel storage yard
Industrial - grain store
Industrial - mill
Industrial - mill & warehouse
Industrial - O'Neills factory
Industrial - shed
Industrial - vacant malt house, vacant
Industrial - warehouse
Industrial - warehouse & offices
Industrial & Commercial - Swan laundries
Industrial & vacant - malt house
Industrial units - IDA
Industrial, transport, services (Maxol station, Hickeys fabrics, CIE bus depot)
Mixed - industrial factory, offices and yard
Office
Office / design studios
Offices
Residential - apartment block
Residential - apartment block
Residential & retail buildings
Residential (1-storey)
Residential (2-storey)
Residential unit
Residential unit
Retail (1-storey)
Shop
Shop
Social club
Theatre
Vacant over pub
Vacant over shop
Vacant site

*Previous use*

Only 44 planning files (23.5 per cent) included information on the functions to which sites subject to redevelopment had previously been put. These are set out below in Table 8. While the range of former functions was broad, it is immediately evident that the most common previous use had been some form of industrial function, including warehousing and storage, factories, mills, car breakers and an

abbatoir. It is also apparent that some residential buildings/sites were being included directly in the upgrading process. Thus, the process of gentrification in the Liberties area has included not only functional upgrading, in for example the change in function from industrial to residential, but has also involved the upgrading of the class of function and intensity of development scale. In this case, low-grade residential functions (terraced housing for the working class) have been upgraded to a higher class of function and a much larger scale of development aimed at attracting a higher class of end-user (apartment developments for the middle class).

**Table 9. Site Density of Residential Developments in the SWIC 1996-2003**

<i>Density (dwellings/ha)</i>	<i>No. of Schemes</i>	<i>Status</i>	
Over 600	1	Application	1
500-599	3	Application	1
		Live	2
400-499	8	Application	1
		Live	2
		On site	2
		Built	3
300-399	22	Application	2
		Live	12
		On site	2
		Built	6
200-299	25	Application	2
		Live	8
		On site	5
		Built	8
		Not determined	2
100-199	14	Application	3
		Live	3
		On site	4
		Built	4
Fewer than 100	9	Application	1
		Live	5
		On site	1
		Built	2

*Development densities*

What has also been discerned from the *Inner-40 Wards Residential Development Database, 1996-2003*, has been the tendency for development to become intensified in the SWIC and inner city more generally. Information on both the number of dwelling units and the site area was available for 82 developments (43.9 per cent) in the SWIC, covering a total of 3,587 dwelling units (Table 9). All but 7 sites were

located in the Dublin 8 area of the SWIC. The average density of development was 273.7 dwelling units per hectare. However, only 9 schemes involved densities of less than 100 units per hectare while 12 developments exceeded 400 units per hectare. One proposed development at application stage comprised 50 apartments at a density of over 640 units per hectare.

On brief inspection, there seems to be a trend towards a recent increase in levels of density. Of the 34 development projects with densities above 300 units per hectare, only 9 had been completed. The planning and development status of the remainder (being either on site, live or at application stage and under consideration), suggests that higher-density schemes are more recent. However, eleven of those 34 schemes with development densities greater than 300 units per hectare were granted planning permission prior to 2000. Clearly, further basic research would be required to verify this possible trend towards increasing densities, which might indeed be expected in light of encouragement by the higher residential density guidelines of 1999 (DoELG, 1999) and more recently, of the removal of residential-density thresholds in the 2004 guidelines (Dublin Regional Authority & Mid-East Regional Authority, 2004).

It should be considered that the development of Clarion Quay in 2002 in the north docks was developed at a density of 240 units per hectare which is at a considerably lower density than many residential schemes constructed and proposed in the SWIC.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has drawn attention to the impacts on land use of the movement of capital in and out of the built environment, in part influenced by the actions of the state through its urban policy and planning functions. In the most recent round of urban restructuring in Dublin, inner-city areas have become a major target for large-scale inward investment, generally embodied in new office and commercial spaces, in an influx of private residential apartment complexes and in a major land and house-price spiral (see Kelly and MacLaran, 2004 for greater discussion).

As discussed above, the SWIC quadrant has experienced exceptional functional transformation since the early 1990s, with state-led urban renewal initiatives and a development-friendly planning ethos being major contributory factors. Initially, functional change was manifested in the form of new office developments locating in the Dublin 2 section of the SWIC stretching from Westmoreland Street to Golden Lane and Harcourt Street. However, the greater functional change of the SWIC occurred in the residential sector where a development boom between 1992 and 2003 resulted in the construction of almost 6,000 dwellings, mainly in the form of private apartment complexes. Significant areas of the SWIC have been transformed in a relatively short space of time with a strong indication that development activity is likely to intensify in the medium term.

The revalorisation and physical and functional transformation of Dublin's inner areas has been closely connected with a concurrent social and demographic transformation, whereby former industrial and working-class residential areas have experienced an influx of a middle-income, professional population (see Kelly and MacLaran, 2004). In turn, the influx of this new population has contributed to

further land-use upgrading through demanding different retailing and service functions, which has had important implications for the traditional community. Recent processes of upgrading on Francis Street and the redevelopment of Thomas Street have contributed to the displacement and erosion of valuable locally-relevant retail functions, whereby low-grade retail functions are being replaced by cafés, restaurants and higher-grade retailing reflecting the consumer tastes of the new population. Of course, this also raises the political question of the degree to which urban policy will increasingly be framed towards satisfying the demands of this incoming, higher-income group with regard to the protection and enhancement of its property interests over those of the indigenous poorer population.

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