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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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None of the above bears any responsibility for the inadequacies of this research; the blame rests squarely with the author.

January 2012
SUMMARY

This research is concerned with Irish urban planning; in particular, it investigates how the neoliberal consensus was adopted on the political agenda in the 1980s by infusing economic policy at the central state (national government) level. Moreover, by establishing the local government context for planning, this research explores the manner in which the neoliberal agenda has been thrust on local authorities and explores how urban planning has become a component of the entrepreneurial city, and how this new approach has challenged traditional planning in the common good. The role of An Bord Pleanála as an independent body will also be assessed and examined. The research problem is operationalised through the specifics of a case study; however, the study is limited to the four local authorities of Dublin.

Chapter one outlines how the decline of heavy manufacturing and port-related activities by the 1970s prompted the restructuring of local governments away from welfare and service provision towards encouraging and fostering local economic growth and economic development. It also examines how urban planning has become a component of the entrepreneurial city and how this new approach has challenged traditional planning in the common good.

Chapter two examines the emergence and promotion of a neoliberal consensus in Ireland since 1987 and examines the manner in which Fianna Fáil had been sharply pulled to the right through economic policies of low taxation, light regulation and privatisation of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs).

Chapter three establishes the context within which it is possible to understand the operation, role and functioning of urban planning in Ireland by establishing the local government context for planning and exploring the factors which led to planning being propelled towards entrepreneurialism.

Chapter four examines how the neoliberal agenda was adopted on the political agenda in the 1980s by infusing economic policy at the central state (national government) level and how this has been thrust on local authorities at a time when planners were marginalised from planning, and consequently how there is a 'necessary' reorientation of local-authority planning to enable local-authority planners to regain relevance by becoming more facilitative of property
capital and more entrepreneurial, and finally, how those who don’t conform to the new tenets get personally marginalised.

Chapter five outlines the aims of the research and the overall methodological approach for the research. This is followed by discussion of the methodological strategy adopted in order to achieve the aims of the research, including sources and data-collection procedures and a discussion of the analytical approach to the gathered data as well as the methodological and analytical obstacles involved during the research process.

Chapter six to nine construct a narrative from interview data gathered by examining public perceptions of the urban planning system generally as well as participation in the planning process. They explore the broad ideological background of Irish politics and investigate the neoliberal transformation at Central Government level and how this has been reflected in planning. In addition, they examine changes in the theoretical approach to planning generally and investigate whether two discordant ideologies exist in the operation of local-authority planning. The role of ABP in the planning process is also examined.

Chapter ten consists of the research conclusions. It provides an overview, and empirical and theoretical conclusions of the research programme. The final chapter also discusses some implications for further research.
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AAP – Action Area Plan
ABP (or the Bord) – An Bord Pleanála
BLG – Better Local Government
CCD – Convention Centre Dublin
CHDDA – Custom House Docks Development Authority
CIE – Córas Iompair Éireann
CIF – Construction Industry Federation
DCC – Dublin City Council
DDDA – Dublin Docklands Development Authority
DIT – Dublin Institute of Technology
DLR – Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
DoE/DoEHLG – Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government*
*(Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government as of 2011)
DRA – Dublin Regional Authority
EEC – European Economic Community
FCC – Fingal County Council
FF – Fianna Fáil
FG – Fine Gael
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
GNP – Gross National Product
IAP – Integrated Area Plan
ICDT – Inner City Development Team
IDA – Industrial Development Authority
IFSC – International Financial Services Centre
Ind. – Independent
IPI – Irish Planning Institute
LA – Local Authority
Lab. – Labour
LAP – Local Area Plan
LDDC – London Docklands Development Corporation
NDP – National Development Plan
NESC – National Economic & Social Council
NIMBY – Not In My Back Yard (opposition to development)
NSS – National Spatial Strategy
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PD – Progressive Democrats
PFI – Private Finance Initiative
PNR – Programme for National Recovery
PPP – Public-Private Partnership
RPG – Regional Planning Guidelines
SCC – Sydney City Council
SDCC – South Dublin County Council
SDZ – Strategic Development Zone
SF – Sinn Féin
SOE – State Owned Enterprise
SPDA – Special Purpose Development Agency
TCD – Trinity College Dublin
TD – Teachta Dála
TPRA – Third Party Rights of Appeal
UCC – University College Cork
UCD – University College Dublin
UDC – Urban Development Corporation (UK)
"THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE IS INQUIRY"

Book of Leinster, 12th Century
PART I: ORIENTATION
PART I: ORIENTATION

Introduction

This thesis examines the impact of neo-liberalism on the theorisation of Irish urban planning and the extent to which this is reflected in the operation of planning in Dublin from the late 1980s to the present.

Urban planning can be viewed as a tool to control the production and use of urban space through a system of planning refusals or permissions, however, it must also be regarded as an instrument of the state dedicated on the one hand to humanistic reform, but charged on the other with management of urban land and services according to a particular mode of production. In that regard, some commentators have stated planners cannot be considered politically-neutral problem-solvers acting in the public interest. Moreover, given the plurality of interests in the planning system, planners can often be the object of blame and hostility and adversarial relationships often exist between planners and those with a vested interest in the built environment who tend to view the planning process a costly and unnecessary obstacle to be overcome in their pursuit of profit making.

Similarly, cities under capitalism are designed and (re)shaped according to capitalist criteria for private profit making; the decline and shutting down of heavy manufacturing and port-related activities from the 1960s, resulted in industrial cities being characterised by landscapes scarred by swathes of dereliction. In an attempt to contain the demise of the city, policy makers adopted new institutional structures of urban governance to create a new environment capable of competing internationally for economic growth. The emergence of the 'New Right' in the 1980s advocated tight central government restrictions on the powers and resources of local government which were steered away from a concern with welfare-related issues and state provision to more outward orientated entrepreneurial policies designed to foster and encourage local growth and economic development as new relationships were forged with the private sector. The objectives of entrepreneurial policies are inherently growth oriented attracting new forms of investment, boosting the local tax base and creating employment. Moreover, the shift towards entrepreneurialism has led some academic writers to herald the emergence of
the entrepreneurial city characterised by the supersession of urban government by urban governance, thus management of public services and provision of welfare services is largely abandoned for the promotion of economic competitiveness and place marketing to attract international investment. Entrepreneurialism has been a feature of many US cities since the 1970s, but it did not take root in the UK until the 1980s after the election of the New Right Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher. Discourses of entrepreneurialism argue that urban governments pursue specific strategies designed to secure and promote the competitive advantage of the city relative to other cities. Cities are therefore, entrepreneurial competitors competing for inward investment and employment by offering increasingly attractive financial packages of low corporate taxation and promising low workers' wages, as well as presenting the city as a dynamic place to live. The target of the entrepreneurial strategy is typically the inner city, especially de-industrialised, derelict and decayed sites, in an attempt to reverse the economic fortunes of an area by promoting regeneration and levering private-sector investment in the area. Urban regions therefore, assume commodity form designed with consumers in mind to buy and sell in a market place, thus the city is a product to be repackaged as an attractive and progressive business location, boasting a high quality of life and a progressive, entrepreneurial attitude. Place promotion and marketing lie at the heart of urban governance and manifest a new relationship between the public and private sectors. Public Private Partnerships are considered a manifestation of the neoliberal transformation of the role of the state as PPPs give greater priority to economic development than to traditional service-providing and regulating functions of the local state. Moreover, the establishment of Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) in the 1980s, which effectively marginalised the role of local-authority planning and alienated local-authority planners, impelled local governments to adopt more entrepreneurial practices, facilitative of private capital.

When global recession struck in the 1970s in the wake of the oil crises of 1973 and 1977, Ireland, like many other countries, was particularly affected. The 1980s, described variously as one of the toughest decades of the twentieth century for Ireland, saw Ireland teeter on the brink of bankruptcy. By 1986 unemployment also stood at 17 per cent and emigration was reaching 45,000 persons per year. Successive Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael-Labour governments tried unsuccessfully to deal with Ireland's serious economic crisis in the years 1981-1986. In 1987, Fianna Fáil returned to government. The Taoiseach,
Charles Haughey, recognised and accepted that Keynesian economic ideas had declined and intensified the austerity measures begun under the previous coalition government. Although disputes broke out between the unions and employers over Fianna Fáil’s stringent policy of fiscal rectitude, the party, in an effort to secure industrial quiescence, forged a tripartite alliance with employers and the unions through the Programme for National Recovery (PNR) in which all parties agreed to a series of measures to control government spending and rescue the economy, including wages restraint, public spending cuts and public sector redundancies, and a reduction in taxes, the three core principles of neoliberalism. PNR marked a radical change in government policy and pointed to the emergence of a neoliberal consensus on future economic policy, which would ultimately be infused into the urban planning system.

Dublin in the 1980s was characterised by a façade of inner city dereliction: the inner city population was decreasing as many families were moving out to the new towns at the edge of Dublin, traditional heavy manufacturing operations were closing down or relocating to industrial estates provided at the periphery, and unemployment was endemic among the working class population who relied on heavy manufacturing and port-related activities for employment. There was also a growing awareness that the fabric of the historic core of the city was deteriorating. Acutely aware of the problems besetting the inner city, the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government introduced a package of incentives through the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 and Finance Act, 1986 to encourage renewal in designated areas of the city. When Fianna Fáil took office in 1987, it considered local-authority planning to be too bureaucratic and inflexible to be able to tackle the scale of Dublin’s inner city problems preferring instead to impose a special development vehicle – Special Purpose Development Authority (SPDA) – to redevelop the Custom House Docks. Drawing upon the experience of the Urban Development Corporations (UDC) in Britain, most notably in London Docklands, Custom House Docks was also selected as the site of a new International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) where there were to be no restrictions on foreign currency transactions nor any capital gains tax on trading income generated within the centre. The Custom House Docks Development Authority (CHDDA) was set-up and vested with planning powers to by-pass seeking permission from Dublin City Council. The establishment of CHDDA and IFSC can be viewed as the moment when the government took on the institutional dimension of the entrepreneurial city. IFSC has been criticised for being monofunctional and lacking trickle-down benefits.
Seeking renewed relevance in the planning system, planners at Dublin City Council recognised the need for a major reorientation of planning towards an entrepreneurial approach facilitative of private capital and not necessarily the common good. Indeed, Central Government encouraged local authorities to respond to the development opportunities being created and Dublin City Council duly obliged by adopting a new business-oriented manager ethos through the establishment of an Inner City Development Team which was very much pro-development and used the sale of corporation-owned sites in the inner city to broker development deals with private-sector developers, indicating Dublin City Council's alignment with the prevailing neoliberal ideology.

It is well-documented that planning has become increasingly entrepreneurial in nature over the last three decades, however, much of the academic literature describes and wider populist debate relates to the extent to which the planning system has become increasingly facilitative toward private capital in practice. There exist lacunae linking the impact of neo-liberalism to formal legislative change in Irish urban planning and the extent to which such entrepreneurial shifts in the legal framework of planning and development are reflected in the operation of planning in the four planning authorities of Dublin. This research will attempt to bridge that gap.

The research aims therefore, examine the degree to which the neoliberal agenda has infused Irish urban planning — operating within a specific framework of policy and legislation enshrined in planning code through the Planning and Development Acts and planning guidelines — and to determine to what extent the operation of Irish urban planning is a reflection of an ideological shift in the theorisation of planning’s role since 1986 and how the demands of the private sector are being overtly facilitated over the 'common good'. In order to achieve the stated aims of this research, a number of interrelated objectives, consistent with the research aims, were formulated.

- The research will explore the broad ideological background to Irish politics and investigate the implications of government-led changes in the role of the State since 1986
- The research will examine the operation of Irish urban planning in Dublin’s inner city from the 1980s to 2000 and specifically
explore the rationale behind the imposition of a Special Purpose Development Agency to redevelop Dublin's docklands

- The research will broaden its scope and examine the operation of planning since 2000 in the wake of the building boom and explore the degree to which there is a marked discontinuity in urban planning to determine the extent to which planning in Dublin is developer-led and developer-driven
- The research will examine An Bord Pleanála to determine whether the ideology guiding the Bord is shaped by appointments to the adjudicating board so as to ascertain to what extent ABP can be considered an unbiased arbiter in the planning process making objective decisions for the ‘common good’

Theoretically, the thesis is situated in the extensive literature on neoliberal urban policy and practice and adds to it with its examination of Dublin. The choice of Dublin as a case study was considered appropriate for a number of other reasons: first, the Tribunal of Inquiry was the focus of great attention; it created frenzy in the media and left the public with a sense of disillusionment as to which master planning served. Second, as the capital city, Dublin is the engine for economic growth and capital investment in the state. Third, during the boom Dublin experienced and underwent the greatest physical change of any town or city in Ireland. Fourth, prior to 1994, Dublin had two councils – the City Council and the County Council. Urban planners for both the city and county operated out of one building, however, following the Local Government (Dublin) Act, 1993 the county was divided into three administrative counties, plus the extant City Council, each with their own planning department to regulate and control development in their own administrative area. This provides an opportunity to broadly examine the experiences of the four Dublin authorities to planning under a neoliberal agenda.

The thesis is organised in four parts – Orientations; Methodological Procedures; Main Findings; and Conclusions – consisting of 10 chapters; chapters 1 to 5 set out the theoretical foundations, the local context and the research methodology. Chapters 6 to 9, based on similar analytical themes discuss the empirical results by examining the role of planners, politicians, property developer and other vested interests in the planning system. Finally, chapter 10 draws key conclusions to the research.
Part One: Orientations

Part one reviews the international literature of relevance to this study to explore the changing role of Irish urban planning under a neoliberal agenda. Chapter 1 sets out the theoretical argument and explores how the decline of heavy manufacturing and port-related activities by the 1970s prompted the restructuring of local governments away from welfare and service provision towards encouraging and fostering local economic growth and economic development. It also examines how urban planning has become a component of the entrepreneurial city and how this new approach has challenged traditional planning in the common good. Chapter 2 traces the emergence of neo-liberal politics and policies in Ireland since the late 1980s and examines the manner in which Fianna Fáil had been sharply pulled to the right through economic policies of low taxation, light regulation, privatisation of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and adoption of Public Private Partnerships. Chapters 3 and 4, respectively, set out the local government context for planning in Ireland and the development of planning in Ireland since the 1980s. At the level of local government, it establishes the context within which it is possible to understand the operation, role and functioning of urban planning in Ireland by establishing the local government context for planning and exploring the factors which led to planning being propelled towards entrepreneurialism. Finally, it examines how the neoliberal agenda was adopted on the political agenda in the 1980s by infusing economic policy at the central state (national government) level and how this has been thrust on local authorities at a time when planners were marginalised from planning, and consequently how there is a 'necessary' reorientation of Irish planning to enable planners to regain relevance by becoming more facilitative of property capital and more entrepreneurialism, illustrating at the same time how those who don’t conform to the new tenets get sidelined from planning.

Part Two: Methodological Procedures

Part two (chapter 5) of the thesis sets out the aims of the research and provides a discussion of the methodological approach for the empirical research. Methodologically, the research is based on extensive qualitative research through interviews with key stakeholders in the urban planning process thus the methodological strategy adopted, including sources and data-collection procedures is set out. There is also a discussion the analytical
approach involved including identification of the analytical obstacles and methodological limitations encountered.

*Part Three: Main Findings*

Part three covers the main results. Chapters 6 to 9 construct a narrative from interview data gathered in the field and documentary material including various Acts of the Oireachtas, principally Planning and Development Acts, and other government publications as well as local-authority development plans. The main results chapters examine public perceptions of the urban planning system generally as well as participation in the planning process. They explore the broad ideological background of Irish politics and investigate the neoliberal transformation at Central Government level and how this has been reflected in planning. In addition, they examine changes in the theoretical approach to planning generally and investigate whether two discordant ideologies exist in the operation of local-authority planning. The role of ABP in the planning process is also examined.

*Part Four: Conclusions*

The final part of the thesis consists of the research conclusions. It provides an overview, and empirical and theoretical conclusions of the research programme. The final chapter also discusses some implications for further research.
Chapter 1

The Emergence of the 'Entrepreneurial City'

1.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the emergence of the 'entrepreneurial city' during the 1980s. First, the chapter considers planning as establishing the framework within which all development takes place through controlling the production and use of urban space. Moreover, it examines planning from a Marxist political economy in the context of neoliberalism, which has formed the conditions under which planners must now work. Second, the chapter explores how the city under capitalism assumes a commodity form for profit making. Third, prompted by global economic crises and the subsequent and gradual decline of heavy manufacturing and port-related activities, the chapter explores the restructuring of local governments, informed by the rise of the New Right of Thatcher and Reagan, as Keynesian-welfarism gave way to more flexible modes of accumulation by the late 1970s. The chapter also explores the concurrent shift from local government to local governance, and thus from managerialism to entrepreneurialism, as local authorities were steered away from welfare and service provision towards encouraging and fostering local economic growth and economic development. Fourth, the chapter explores the growth in place promotion and city marketing activities and the efforts undertaken by formerly industrial city regions to displace negative images of dereliction and obsolescence as they strive to recreate a new image of a vibrant and dynamic city to live, work, invest in, and visit. Two international examples of place promotion and city marketing – Pittsburgh (USA) and Birmingham (UK) – are also given. Fifth, the chapter examines the degree to which local governments have become entrepreneurial competitors for investment and employment opportunities as cities strive to reposition themselves on the global stage. Moreover, the role of developers (as entrepreneurs with a stake in the built environment) and the role of local authorities encouraging private-sector development (through the provision of development incentives) in a public-private alliance are examined. Finally, the chapter examines the extent to which urban planning has become a component of the entrepreneurial city and the extent to which this new approach has challenged traditional planning in the common good. International examples of the imposition of an Urban Development Corporation (UDC) – London Docklands Development
Corporation – in the redevelopment of London Docklands and attempts by Sydney City Council to secure its position in the global spatial economy are also given.

1.2 The Role of Urban Planning

'For centuries the town had functioned so well as an almost unchanging, easily comprehensible fabric of relationships that its laws had become invisible. Then with the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century it turned almost overnight into a Moloch. The flight from the land brought an urban explosion. The problems arising from this could not be removed by technology or architecture alone. So a new discipline was born; town planning, which looked at the city as a whole for the first time' (Tietz, 1999, 40).

Urban planning is a 'comprehensive process, involving the interplay of many needs, purposes, and functions' (Mumford, 1961, 424). It establishes the framework within which all development takes place through the 'strategic regulation of development as a means of controlling the production and use of urban space' (MacLaran & McGuirk, 2003, 63). The instruments of planning include permissory elements embodied in legislation, guidelines, and regulations including development controls – plot ratios, building heights, zoning of permitted land uses – which ensure that only development of an approved type can take place (MacLaran & McGuirk, 2003).

Sandercock (1998) has identified 'Five Pillars of Modernity' that have been foundational in the development of urban planning practice:

1. **Rationality** – with an emphasis on verifiable facts, rationality is viewed as a superior means of public decision-making as political prejudice and ideological taint are removed from the decision-making process
2. **Comprehensiveness** – the belief that the city can be comprehensively planned according to logically-derived statutes governing urban planning to produce an orderly and spatially integrated city
3. **Scientific Objectivity** – planners, by virtue of their politically-neutral views and values, keep a critical distance from the conflicting interests of capital, labour and the state
4. **State Action as a Route to Progress** – planning is seen as a vehicle for progress when the state is viewed as separate from, and without vested interest in the economic sphere
5. *The Public Interest* – the assumption that social groups are united by shared interests, thus planners, assumed to be capable of identifying those shared interests as the public interest, operate as apolitical mediators in conflicts of interests in the name of the common good.

In addition, Knox (1982) identifies five important components of traditional urban planning practice which can be found in many aspects of Irish planning:

1. *Environmental Determinism* – the idea that it is possible to improve the physical, moral and social welfare of people by upgrading their physical environment led to planners’ concern for prescribing standards in order to achieve building quality of high standards and a vibrant place to live.

2. *Aesthetics* – the creation of visual order, harmony, and scale in the built environment evident in such controls as building height, massing and alignment.

3. *Spatial Determinism* – the separation of urban functions through the practice of zoning, in order to eliminate incompatible land uses, derives from the assumption that spatial order brings social and economic benefits.

4. *Systems Approaches* – while appearing a wholly technical process through the monitoring and modelling of the urban environment, planning goals ultimately depend on objectives which are inherently political.

5. *Futurism* – planners’ vision of the ‘ideal’, based on a particular culture from which the planning profession draws its functionaries, is a vision that assumes middle-class lifestyles are aspired to and attainable by all and that the achievement of such would benefit everyone.

The objective of planning is to achieve ‘a balance between the aspirations of individuals and the needs of the community’ (Grist, 2003, 223), however, the authority of planning and the degree of power with which it is endowed varies from one political state to another according to broader economic, ideological, and political contexts. Urban planning has made important contributions to improving urban life, but, as Kaplan (1973, 22) points out, ‘to be satisfied with past accomplishments is not enough’ since planning is ‘quite capable of making mistakes for which other people suffer’ (Davies, 1972, 215). Urban planning’s historic role, as defined by Sandercock (1998, 16), has
been 'to control the production and use of space' with the planner, an integral component of this system, serving to 'protect the unprotected' (Bannon & Bradley, 2007, 57). Planners are taught to 'appreciate how everything relates to everything in an urban system' (Harvey, 1985b, 176) and to 'think in terms of costs and benefits' (Ibid.).

In occupying a niche within the instrumentalities of the state apparatus, writers from a Marxist political economy perspective regard both planning as an agent of capitalist hegemony and planners as state agents who serve capital interests rather than any notion of the 'common good' (Fox-Rogers et al., 2011,). Knox and Cullen (1981, 184) therefore contend that urban planning is a 'hybrid creature dedicated on the one hand to humanistic reform but charged on the other with the management of urban land and services according to the imperatives of a particular mode of production'. Moreover, Ambrose (1986), Harvey (1985) and Kirk (1980) state urban planning has always played a role that has been supportive of the imperatives of capitalism. The concept of neo-liberalism is useful to planning theory because it is an essential descriptor of the political trends forming the conditions under which planners work. Sager (2011, 149) therefore, contends that neo-liberalism 'mobilises urban space as an arena for market-oriented economic growth and elite consumption practices, and in so doing it transforms the politico-economic setting in which public plans and projects are implemented'. Moreover, Baker et al., (2006) state the neo-liberal attitude to planning is negative owing to planning's intervention in markets, its inflexibility, and perceived bureaucratic ineptitude. Looked at from this perspective, Jackson (2009) suggests that (development) plans are simply political documents representing the views of the political party in power. In that regard, one can assume planners' actions are implicitly political, inherently favouring some interests over others thus planners cannot be considered politically-neutral problem-solvers acting in the public interest (MacLaran, 1993; MacLaran & McGuirk, 2003). Given the plurality of interests within society, Davidoff (1965) suggests planners become value-conscious instead of value-neutral, openly declaring their interests and values and making themselves available to 'clients' who wish to pursue similar values. In responding to a wide diversity of groups, urban planning has become a conflictive process and the figure of the planner is both an object of blame and hostility as planners are attacked at different times and by different interest groups for either permitting development or for stopping it outright (Castells, 1983; Healey, 1997). Adversarial relationships can arise between those individuals with a vested
interest in the built environment and planners. In regarding themselves as representing the common good, Healey (1997) has shown planners to be suspicious of developers' profit motivation, believing them to care little for community needs and possessing little interest in producing long-term equitable urban outcomes. Similarly, MacLaran (2003) argues property developers typically regard the urban planning system as a costly and unnecessary bureaucratic hurdle that has to be overcome in what they view as their entirely legitimate pursuit of development profits. As the 'whipping boy' (Bannon & Bradley, 2007, 221) for vested interests, private-sector development interests also view planners as 'unwilling to understand the highly risky business of creating the built environment' (MacLaran & McGuirk, 2003, 88) asserting that undue planning delays can be 'critical in determining whether a scheme generates a profit or results in loss' (Ibid.), however, as MacLaran (1993) also points out, urban planning in many capitalist systems, can only operate if development proposals are forthcoming from the private-sector. Consequently, this dependency on capitalist development interests means that development plans must be drawn up in a way which complements market processes.

1.3 The City under Capitalism

The city, as it appears, is not just a palimpsest of landscapes comprising offices, shops, hospitals, churches, schools, dwellings, factories, etc. It reflects a socio-spatial dialect, which its inhabitants modify and adjust, from time to time, to suit their needs, despite conditions imposed by both the physical environment and by other inhabitants of the city for whom they must take cognisance and make accommodations (Knox & Pinch, 2006). The city is hence a human creation and as such, it draws its character from the people that inhabit it (Feagin, 1983; Harvey, 1999; Knox & Pinch, 2006).

The city under capitalism, however, assumes a commodity form and is thus designed and shaped according to distinctively capitalist criteria for private profit making (Castells, 1983; Feagin, 1983; Harvey, 1999, 2001; Philo & Kearns, 1993). It is this view of the city that lies at the heart of the urban power struggle between those who shape the city and those who live in it. For the latter, the city endows meaning: it is their place of birth, it is where they grew up, and it is where their networks of kinship lie. The city is a place to which they have deep attachment as it has helped to shape who they are. In contrast, the former look upon the city as just a space to be recast and recreated and
consider its residents nothing more than the commodity labour-power necessary to the capitalist mode of production:

'A city is built by labour employed within a temporal process of circulation of capital spatially organised through land-use competition, modified by 'rational' state planning, populated by individuals who earn money incomes from the circulation of capital (wages and profits) and whose revenues circulate into various other channels of distribution (rents, interest, taxes, payment for services), and nourished out of the metabolism of capitalist production for exchange on the world market' (Harvey, 1985a, 38-39).

Looking at the city from this perspective raises a number of pertinent questions: 'who decides that our cities should be developed the way they are?' (Feagin, 1983, 3) and 'for whom, and by whom, is...a city produced?' (Castells, 1983, 336). As Harvey (2000, 154) cogitates, 'do we, the people, have no right to choose what kind of city we shall inhabit?'

1.4 Neoliberalism and 'Actually Existing' Neoliberalism

'Neoliberalism refers...to a set of doctrines regarding the appropriate framework for economic regulation. The term has been appropriated by scholars and activists to describe the organisational, political and ideological reorganisation of capitalism that has been imposed through the attempted institutionalisation of...“free market” doctrines' (Brenner & Theodore, 2005, 103).

Described by Jessop (2002, 452) as a 'project for radical system transformation from state socialism to market capitalism', neoliberalism refers to the 'repudiation of Keynesian welfare state economics and the ascendance of market liberalisation' (Sager, 2011, 148). Neoliberal ideology therefore rests on the belief that deregulation, privatisation, private property, lower taxes, and an open, competitive, unregulated market liberated from state interference not only produce the most efficient allocation of resources, they also represent the optimal mechanism to stimulate innovation and economic growth (Jackson, 2009; Peck et al., 2009a; Purcell, 2009; Raju, 2008; Tuna Taşan-Kok, 2008).

Jessop (2002) and Jackson (2009) chart the rise of neoliberalism with the failure of the Keynesian compromise in the 1970s and with the concurrent regime shifts in Britain and the US as market-interventionist and welfare state governments were voted out of office. While this indeed is true, Peck et al. (2009a) trace neoliberalism – as intellectual theory – back as far as the 1920s and the work of Friedrich von Hayek – 'the father of neo-liberal ideas' (Jackson,
2009, 341) - and later to Milton Friedman and adherents of the Mont Pelerin Society and the Chicago School of Economics:

‘Friedrich von Hayek...and John Maynard Keynes...responded very differently to the rise of fascism across Europe with its threat to liberal democracies and their citizens’ hard-won rights and freedoms. Von Hayek argued such freedoms were best protected in a free market economy, one unencumbered by the state...Keynes argued that the state should have regulatory and financial powers to reduce market instability. It should also be the main provider of social services: the resultant Welfare State, he argued, would promote equality of opportunity’ (Jackson, 2009, 341-342).

In the post World War II era, Keynesianism became the dominant ideological common sense until the 1970s. For Rogerson & Boyle (2000, 137), this period also ‘happens to have been one time frame within which state regulation of the economy succeeded in promoting sustained economic growth’. The main features of the local state under the Keynesian mode of regulation included, as identified by Purcell (2009) and Rogerson & Boyle (2000):

- Pre-eminence of locally elected councils in the centralised delivery of services
- Promotion of social democratic and wealth redistributive goals
- Adherence to technocratic and managerialist structures
- Strong union power
- Underwriting the mass consumption norm required to sustain Fordist growth which provided key aspects of the social wage and of the services which could not profitably be provided by the private sector

Throughout the period of Keynesianism, however, von Hayek and Friedman were ‘rebuilding an argument for...a neoliberal ethic in which the state would play a minimal role in the economy and the invisible hand of market decisions would determine economic outcomes’ (Purcell, 2009, 143). By the 1970s, Keynesianism had begun to fray as stagflation and economic recession during this decade resulted in the free-market alternatives of von Hayek and Friedman seeming a much more desirable alternative. Mudge (2008, 709) therefore argues that neoliberalism’s ‘transformation from a marginalized set of intellectual convictions into a full-blown hegemonic force’ grew out of macroeconomic economic crisis. Brenner et al. (2010a, 219) also share this point:
'Regulatory failure and various forms of crisis have been essential elements of neoliberalisation processes since their initial appearance on the landscape of global capitalism in the mid-1970s'.

During the 1980s, neoliberalism was increasingly extended beyond the Keynesian heartlands of North America and Western Europe into parts of Latin America, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa (Brenner et al. 2010a) and from the beginning of the 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet bloc, to zones that had not ever experienced a comprehensive Keynesianisation of regulatory arrangements and institutional forms for example, post-communist Central and Eastern Europe (Jessop, 2002; Sager, 2011):

'Neoliberalism is apparently not only 'out there', but practically everywhere, seeping into every pore of urban political life' (Theodore & Peck, 2011, 20).

Peck et al. (2009a, 111) cite Latin America as the 'laboratory for neoliberal experiments par excellence'; Chile represented the first example of neoliberal 'shock treatment' (Peck et al., 2009a, 50) under the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. It wasn't until the elections of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and US President Ronald Reagan in 1981, however, that von Hayek's and Friedman's neoliberalism was aggressively transformed from abstract intellectualism to operationalised state-authored restructuring projects (Brenner et al., 2010a; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Peck et al., 2009a; Purcell, 2009):

During the 1980s, a new frontier of neoliberalisation was opened as a repertoire of neoliberal policy templates began to circulate transnationally and to acquire the status of all-purpose, 'silver bullet' solutions to diverse regulatory problems and crisis tendencies (Brenner et al., 2010a, 347).

Brenner et al. (2010a), Jessop (2002) and Peck et al. (2009a) contend that the crisis-tendencies of post-IMF bailout Britain and Reagan's deindustrialising crisis-stricken USA required a strategic political response to the declining profitability of mass production industries and the crises of Keynesian-welfarism (Peck et al., 2009a, 50). As neoliberalism gained prominence during the 1980s other developed economies across the capitalist world, namely Canada, Australia and New Zealand, followed suit in an attempt to 'attract footloose transnational capital investment through various forms of regulatory arbitrage' (Brenner et al., 2010a, 347):
Neoliberalism is no longer a dream of Chicago economists or a nightmare in the imaginations of leftist conspiracy theorists; it has become a commonsense of the times (Peck and Tickell, 2002, 381).

Peck et al. (2009a) and Taşan-Kok (2008) describe the Thatcherite and Reaganite neoliberalism of the 1980s as 'roll-back neoliberalism', meaning municipal governments were impelled to introduce various cost-cutting measures in order to lower the costs of administration within their jurisdictions and to promote external capital investment. It was not until the 1990s, however, that a 'genuinely post-Keynesian, neoliberalised global rule-regime was consolidated' (Brenner et al., 2010a, 348). During the 1990s, the neoliberalism of Thatcher and Reagan encountered their institutional and political limits. The neoliberal project was therefore adjusted and reconstituted from an aggressive, anti-statist 'rolled-back' phase to a more subtle 'roll-out' phase associated with third-way thinking epitomised by the administrations of US President Bill Clinton, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (Giddens, 2000; Jackson, 2009; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Peck et al., 2009a). Peck and Tickell (2002) draw a distinction between the neoliberalism of Thatcher and Reagan to that of Clinton and Blair; roll-back neoliberalism was preoccupied with the destruction and discreditation of Keynesian-welfarist and social collectivist institutions, arising from crisis conditions external to the project. Roll-out neoliberalism, on the other hand, triggered by internal contradictions and tensions in the project, finds state intervention and public spending acceptable, so long as it addresses the broader governance and regulatory aims of macroeconomic management. This, however, represents the contradictory nature of neoliberalism as the state assists capital by both retreating (laissez-faire) and intervening (aidez-faire) in the market to facilitate the accumulation of capital despite the neoliberal doctrine advocating a minimal role for the state (Purcell, 2009), however, as Jessop (2002, 455) asserts:

‘Neoliberals claim this is temporary and legitimate, for, after a brief transitional period, the state can retreat to its proper, minimal role, acting only to secure the conditions for the continued expansion of the liberal market economy and a self-organizing civil society’.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and variants thereof, 'set up to build toll roads or undertake urban regeneration projects are cited as examples of central governments' retreat' (Jackson, 2009, 343), became a prominent feature of neoliberalism from the 1990s.
The neoliberal doctrine is 'premised upon a one-size-fits-all model of policy implementation which assumes that identical results will follow the imposition of market-oriented reforms' (Peck et al., 2009a, 53), however, as Jessop (2002, 458) points out, 'this impression was seriously misleading' as it failed to distinguish the different forms and degrees of neoliberalism. This view is shared by Brenner et al. (2010a, 328) who contend the 'widespread use of the concepts of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation has been accompanied by considerable imprecision, confusion and controversy' since neoliberalism assumes place-specific forms. Indeed, Barnett (2010), Brenner (2005), Brenner and Theodore (2005), Brenner et al. (2010a; 2010b), Lamer (2003), Mittelman (2000), Peck and Tickell (2002), Peck et al. (2009a; 2009b), Purcell (2009) and Sager (2011) recognise extraordinary variations as neoliberalism is imposed within contextually specific institutional landscapes and policy environments thereby producing geo-institutional differentiation across places, territories, and scales. Peck et al. (2009a, 51) therefore differentiate orthodox neoliberal theory from what they consider the complex, contested and uneven geographies of 'actually existing neoliberalism' in practice:

'Manifold disjunctures that have accompanied the transnational extension of neoliberalism — between ideology and practice; doctrine and reality; vision and consequence — are not merely accidental side-effects of this disciplinary project; rather, they are among its most diagnostically and politically salient features'.

Although neoliberal ideology aspires to create a utopia of free markets liberated from all forms of state interference, 'geographical discourse has...shown that no country - not even the US or the UK - has implemented a prototype of neo-liberalism featuring all its theoretical characteristics in pure form' (Sager, 2011, 149). This, Brenner and Theodore (2005, 104) argue, is because 'neoliberalism does not exist in a single, "pure" form, but is always articulated through historically and geographically specific strategies of institutional transformation and ideological re-articulation'. This view is also shared by McGuirk (2005) and Peck et al. (2009b).

For Lamer (2005), McGuirk (2005), Peck (2010), Peck and Tickell (2002) and Peck et al. (2009a), neoliberalism in practice actually exists in multiple configurations alongside other state and social formations - neo-conservatism, authoritarianism, social democracy, etc. Neoliberalism is therefore embedded in 'local' programs of neoliberal restructuring and must be
viewed as not following only one conjunctural trajectory. Peck et al. (2009a, 55) also contend that ‘localised neoliberalisations have each been rooted in distinctive crises of, and reactions to, their respective extant institutional orders’. Indeed, Brenner et al. (2010b) implicate neoliberalism in a number of global economic crises including but not exclusive of the debt crisis in Latin America in the 1980s and the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. Looked at from this perspective, neoliberalism can be considered as being ‘sustained by repeated regulatory failure’ (Peck et al., 2009b, 106).

1.5 From Managerialism to Urban Entrepreneurialism

In the 1960s, increases in state expenditures on social investment and collective consumption were made possible by the Fordist-Keynesian-welfarist demand-side buoyancy that prevailed during that decade. Managerial forms of governance facilitated the idea of municipal collectivism, which Griffiths (1998) has defined according to three characteristics:

1. Emphasis on the allocation of state surpluses
2. Bureaucratic, organisational forms in the delivery of services
3. Social-welfarist ideology

Changes in the global economy in the wake of the oil crisis of 1973, the energy crisis of 1979 as well as the slow decline and gradual shutting down of heavy industry and port-related activities led many North American and West European cities to slip into economic morass (Sager, 2011). Characterised by inner city landscapes scarred by swathes of dereliction and blight, the economic crises and subsequent recessions of the mid- and late 1970s, led public expenditure programmes to be cut back to ease the severe constraints already placed on public finance. Accordingly, many urban regions and local governments dealt with a more hostile fiscal environment in which to ‘create the conditions within which local economies could flourish rather than decline’ (Healey, 1997, 22). Consequently, managerialism underwent a radical transformation. Described by Smyth (1994, 263) as a ‘shift from the military model of management...to an orchestral model, where the conductor is meaningless without the players’, this transformation was informed by the philosophy of the emerging New Right which was advocating tight central-government restrictions on the powers and resources of local government. This new form of urban governance, now ‘virtually ubiquitous among western cities’
is presented as a theorised shift away from a Fordist and Keynesian mode of accumulation to a neoliberal, post-Fordist and post-Keynesian regime of flexible accumulation. Urban scholars (see Ashworth & Voogd, 1994; Harvey, 1989a, 1989b; Hubbard, 1998; Hubbard and Hall, 1998; Jessop, 1997; Leitner & Sheppard, 1998; Loftman and Nevin, 1998; Sager, 2011; Theodore & Peck, 2011) have extensively documented the shift from the managerial urban policies of the Keynesian era towards a range of market-oriented and entrepreneurial approaches.

Under pressure to contain the demise of the city, urban policy makers adopted new institutional structures of urban governance and promoted more entrepreneurial strategies in an attempt to reposition the city in the emerging post-Fordist era (Harvey, 1989a, 1989b; Leitner & Sheppard, 1998; Wilkinson, 1992). The overall objective of urban entrepreneurialism was to promote economic progress by breaking the spiral of economic decline, thus, by 'invoking images of cities as analogous to firms' (Leitner & Sheppard, 1998, 286), policy makers set in motion the conditions necessary for improving internal and external perceptions of the city:

'Entrepreneurialism was...a consequence of neo-liberal policies at the global and national levels...answering to its central recommendation that public agencies should behave more like private companies' (Sager, 2011, 155).

Managerialism, Harvey (1989) contends, was appropriate for the Fordist economy of the time; the shift, however, towards advanced capitalism necessitated the introduction of more flexible modes of accumulation enabling the creation of a new environment that could compete internationally for private capital investment and job creation. This new urban politics has led to a number of important conceptual and policy shifts in the role of local governments, as identified by Ashworth & Voogd (1994), Harvey (1989a, 1989b), Hubbard (1998), Hubbard and Hall (1998), Loftman and Nevin (1998), and Oatley (1998). For example, private finance has replaced public expenditure as demand-side politics that prevailed during the 1960s gave way to supply-side politics. Consequently, local authorities have been steered away from a concern with welfare-related issues and service provision to more outward-orientated, entrepreneurial policies designed to foster and encourage local growth and economic development. Moreover, new relationships have been forged with the private sector, which has assumed the responsibility of leading actor in roles...
previously occupied by local authorities (Brenner et al., 2010). This point is also shared by Sager (2011, 153) who contends that cities can only convince private business that their managers demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit by ‘getting projects and ventures approved and implemented and securing revenue rather than playing the role of controlling bureaucrats’. McGuirk and MacLaran (2001), however, report how entrepreneurial practices and increased endowment of power in market-oriented renewal agencies can either sideline traditional planning bureaucracies completely or force them to change their modus operandi.

The concept of urban entrepreneurialism currently enjoys wide currency among academics, especially in urban geography. Stoker and Young (1993) indicate that the word entrepreneurial can be used in two senses: first, entrepreneurial can be regarded as a change in philosophy whereby local policy makers think like entrepreneurs and possess not only an understanding of business but also have an ability to see a gap in the market, seizing opportunities as they arise. Second, entrepreneurial can also connote the actions of local policy-makers who assume the role of entrepreneur by taking risks with sites, before private-sector investment is committed, so as to ensure development takes place. The major objectives of entrepreneurial policies are inherently growth-oriented attracting new forms of investment, boosting the local tax base and creating employment. These objectives are achievable by unfettering business from the burdens imposed upon it by the bureaucratic management of the economy and the regulatory environment of the welfare state (Brenner et al., 2010). Viewed from this perspective, this shift towards entrepreneurialism has led many urban theorists and researchers to herald the emergence of the entrepreneurial city. During the 1980s and 1990s, entrepreneurialism became the leitmotif of urban action in declining western, industrial cities (Hubbard & Hall, 1998).

Painter (1998) provides a list of some of the range of meanings that the entrepreneurial city might connote:

- The entrepreneurial city as a location for investment and risk-taking activities for private business
- The entrepreneurial city which boasts entrepreneurialism among urban residents through small- and medium-sized businesses
• The entrepreneurial city in which an increasing amount of urban economic activity is undertaken by the private sector
• The entrepreneurial city where urban life comes to be associated with cultures understood to be entrepreneurial, for example, the 'yuppie' during the 1980s
• The entrepreneurial city where urban government is superseded by urban governance, thus management of public services and provision of welfare services is largely abandoned for promotion of economic competitiveness and place marketing to attract inward investment.

Urban entrepreneurialism has been a major feature of urban systems in the US since the 1970s (Harvey, 2001; Leitner & Sheppard, 1998), however, the transition to urban entrepreneurialism in the UK did not take root until the 1980s following election of the New Right Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher (Loftman & Nevin, 1998; Oatley, 1998). The adoption of pro-growth policies in British cities, such as London, Liverpool and Glasgow, which aimed at creating entrepreneurial cities with the capacity to compete both nationally and internationally for private investment and job creation, was heavily influenced by the success of regeneration efforts in 'archetypal entrepreneurial cities' (Hubbard & Hall, 1998, 5) such as New York, Pittsburgh and Detroit. McGuirk (1994) states that planning in the entrepreneurial city, where governance is recast to replace regulatory with facilitative approaches, is generally unconcerned with matters of distributional or spatial outcomes which were, instead, to be managed through the allocative mechanisms of the market.

This turn to entrepreneurialism has 'underpinned an increasing neoliberalisation of urban politics' (Brenner, 2005, 198). New economic strategies, focused on the supply-side of the economy, and priorities of local economic growth and place competitiveness have 'become increasingly naturalised as the unquestioned parameters for local policy experimentation' (Ibid.) as local governments withdraw from their social-democratic welfarist concerns and abandon responsibility for the provision of local services (Griffiths, 1998). The target of urban entrepreneurialism therefore was typically the inner city, especially de-industrialised, derelict, and decayed sites. For policy-makers, 'the long term result of a site being vacant was to infect the surrounding area' (Stoker & Young, 1993, 38), thus there was an impetus to reverse the economic fortunes of such sites by promoting economic regeneration and leveraging private-sector investment into the area. The transformation of the economic geography
of the inner city subsequent to development relied heavily on prestigious property development projects. Office complexes, high-value shopping centres, conference and exhibition centres, sports stadia were used as 'symbols of renewed dynamism and confidence' (Tavsanoglu & Healey, 1992, 120) in the inner city so as to attract inward investment, boost the local tax base, create new employment, draw large numbers of tourists, and appeal to middle-class, professional residents. Moreover, there was a conviction that the benefits of private-sector investment would ultimately 'trickle down' to indigenous inner city communities, as suggested by neoliberal doctrine (Cox, 1989; Hall, 1998; Hubbard & Hall, 1998; Stoker & Young, 1993).

The emergence of urban entrepreneurialism remains 'a persistent and recurrent theme in the period since the early 1970s' (Harvey, 2001, 348). With state action redirected away from its traditional roots of welfare support and service provision towards local economic growth, Griffiths (1998) states entrepreneurialism is responsible for reinforcing uneven development and social inequalities between and within cities. Questions centred on the beneficiaries of urban entrepreneurialism remain. Citing examples of how economic regeneration has transformed the physical appearance of blighted areas, attracted investment and created new employment, proponents of entrepreneurialism, however, claim the real winners are 'cities taking an entrepreneurial stance to economic development' (Harvey, 2001, 347). The consensus among urban researchers, however, is that 'the private-sector was the main beneficiary of this approach' (Stoker & Young, 1993, 59). The argument shows no sign of abating:

'Do you plan on the basis of what the private sector can be induced to deliver, letting it largely determine patterns of land use, or do you analyse local social conditions and plan on the basis of tackling local needs, like access to low-cost housing? The first approach aims at economic regeneration, while the second tried to focus more explicitly on social regeneration' (Stoker & Young, 1993, 59).

1.6 Place Promotion and Marketing

'The recent interest in the market context of places...stems from shifts in the character of cities and regions, together with changes in the attitudes of governments to these changes, at national as well as local level (Ashworth & Voogd, 1994, 40).
The growth in place promotional and marketing activities, as applied to urban regions, goes back to the mid-1970s as urban governments attempted to displace negative images dereliction, obsolescence, and decay left behind as heavy industrial and manufacturing economies declined in inner city areas. Adopting a range of techniques drawn from marketing, urban governments constructed a new image of the city as a vibrant, dynamic place to live, work, visit, and invest (Ashworth & Voogd, 1994; Fretter, 1993; Griffiths, 1998; Hall, 1998; Harvey, 1989a; Healey, 1997; Holcomb, 1993, 1994; Leitner & Sheppard, 1998):

'Marketing cities...has become a process synonymous with, and fundamental to the urban geography of entrepreneurial cities' (Hall, 1998, 29).

One of the defining features of entrepreneurial modes of urban governance has been the relentless pursuit of inward investment to designated areas, through image-improvement and place-marketing initiatives, as cities began restructuring their economies following the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979 (Griffiths, 1998; Hall, 1998; Tavsanoglu & Healey, 1992). While the promotional repertoires of low corporate taxes, low workers' wages, and central location were still essential in attracting potential investors and other financial interests to an urban region, quality of life indices were also becoming increasingly important. The city therefore had to be a vibrant and exciting place to live as well as to work by middle-class professionals (Tavsanoglu & Healey, 1992):

'A city's ability to attract global investments ultimately determines its rank in the order of world cities' (Friedmann, 1995, 23).

Business leaders and property developers buy and sell the city as a desirable place in which to do business, promote economic growth through 'aggressive' advertising and marketing of cities with politicians playing a crucial support role (Feagin, 1983; Hambleton, 1998). In that regard, marketing, as it applies to places, implies that urban regions are comparable to commodities designed with consumers in mind to buy and sell in a market place (Griffiths, 1998). Ashworth and Voogd (1994) agree with the idea of an urban region being a 'marketable product', while Smyth (1994) and Painter (1998) argue there is nothing natural about entrepreneurialism or the entrepreneur.

It is important to note and understand the distinction between the processes of 'selling' and 'marketing' when applied to place promotion in the

- **Selling**, defined as trying to persuade the customer that they want or need the product being sold, involves a deliberate collaboration between the public- and private-sectors, who 'sell' a positive image of the city to make it attractive enough to encourage economic enterprises to locate themselves in the city, to secure investment, to create jobs, and to entice tourists to visit in large numbers.

- **Marketing** differs in that while selling focuses on the needs of the seller, marketing focuses on the needs of the buyer. Marketing, defined as trying to have what the consumer wants, seeks to distinguish itself from selling through the creation of strategies, namely advertising, to promote a city for certain activities, i.e., as economic, consumer or cultural centres 'demanded' by the consumer.

Place promotion and marketing is a 'multi-billion dollar industry' (Holcomb, 1993, 133). Local governments allocate increasingly high budgets on publicity and advertising campaigns by consultants and public relations firms to promote their city as a very favourable environment in which to do business and live (Griffiths, 1998; Holcomb, 1993):

> 'Almost every city now has its requisite series of promotional pamphlets, posters and other cultural products communicating selective images of the city as an attractive, hospitable and vibrant international city in which to live and work' (Hubbard & Hall, 1998, 6).

Considering its long history in economic development and urban regeneration strategies in the United States (Holcomb, 1993; Ward, 1998; Wilkinson, 1992; Fretter, 1993) place marketing must also be viewed as a fundamental part of planning guiding the development of places in a desired fashion. Starting with New York’s ‘I ♥ NY’ campaign shortly after its near fiscal collapse in 1975, a number of other high profile US cities have undergone economic recovery through place promotion and marketing, including Minneapolis ‘We Like It Here’, Pittsburgh’s ‘Liveable City’ and Detroit as the ‘Renaissance City.’ One of the earliest attempts at rebranding cities in the UK was Glasgow’s 1983 ‘Miles Better’ campaign. Other examples of city rebranding include Edinburgh’s ‘Count Me In’ campaign and Birmingham’s ‘Big Heart of England’ (Duffy, 1995; Holcomb, 1993; Loftman & Nevin, 1998; Wilkinson,
The city has now become a product 'to be repackaged as an attractive and progressive business location, boasting a high quality of life and a progressive, entrepreneurial attitude' (Wilkinson, 1992, 210).

In re-imaging the city to 'erase the negative iconography of dereliction and decline...associated with the industrial city' (Hubbard & Hall, 1998, 6-7), a number of commentators have noted how generic and repetitive the promotional repertoires of many cities tend to be. Feagin (1983), Holcomb (1994), and Tavsanoglu and Healey (1992) address the 'standard claims' which are to be found to a greater or lesser extent in all cities, for example government receptiveness to business; favourable corporate taxation; low wages of the workforce; low cost of living; lifestyle opportunities; and a 'can-do' culture. Griffiths (1998), on the other hand, focuses on the generic theme of locational advantages that a city can offer business, for example, slogans that proclaim the city to be the 'gateway' to important regional economies and the degree to which it is 'well connected' to vital elements of the physical communications infrastructure. Leitner and Sheppard (1998) and Oatley (1998) refer to the promotion of a new image of certain parts of the city by renaming particular areas. Blackwall Basin in London's Docklands was renamed Jamestown Harbour following its redevelopment in the 1980s (Brownill, 1994), and Coal Hill in Pittsburgh was given the more grandiose title Mount Washington (Griffiths, 1998), in efforts to recast the city, push up land values and boost confidence in these areas. Harvey (2001), Loftman and Nevin (1998), and Smyth (1994) believe the development of high-profile, prestige property projects such as sports stadia, convention centres and shopping malls, enhance the economic position of the city and contribute to the broader marketing of the city by making it appear an innovative and exciting place to visit, work, live, and consume.

Place promotion and marketing, however, have also been labelled by Harvey (1989, 35) as the 'carnival mask of late capitalist urbanisation'. While place-promotional images of the city and expensive marketing campaigns do project the city as an exciting, dynamic and vibrant place in which to live and work, underlying problems are often neglected. Harvey (1989) also uses a 'bread and circuses' analogy to suggest that by giving the disaffected a taste of bread and a day of fun, people will believe in the beneficence of what is happening in their city. This is also shared by Philo and Kearns (1993, 5) who state people, 'whose everyday lives...are monotonous and unRewarding', can
be convinced that that all manner of 'good things are really being done on their behalf' (Ibid.).

1.6.1 Pittsburgh – 'The Liveable City'

Following a visit to Pittsburgh in the 1920s, journalist Henry Louis Mencken wrote as follows:

'Here was the very heart of industrial America, the centre of its most lucrative and characteristic activity, the boast, and pride of the richest and grandest nation ever seen on earth. And here was a scene so hideous, so intolerably bleak and forlorn that it reduced the whole aspiration of man to a macabre and depressing joke' (quoted in Holcomb, 1993, 135)

Things had not improved much by the 1940s when architect Frank Lloyd Wright replied, "Abandon it" when asked by the city's leadership how the city could be improved. In the period between 1979 and 1987, approximately 130,000 jobs were lost in the steel and heavy manufacturing industries in Pittsburgh, as the domestic steel industry lost competitiveness with overseas sources and companies gradually began to close, one after another (Holcomb, 1993). A public-private partnership of the Allegheny Conference, consisting of local business leaders and organisations, such as the Greater Pittsburgh Office of Promotions; the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh; the Neighbourhoods for Living Centre; and Penn's Southwest Association, convened a commission in 1982 to develop a strategy to move from a reliance on heavy industry toward a more diversified economic base. As part of their bid to reinvent Pittsburgh as a post-industrial city of tourism, education and high technology medicine, this assemblage of business leaders and organisations launched a series of aggressive marketing campaigns, producing brochures, information packages and videos depicting the assets of the city for business:

'The strategy was successful by several measures. A marketing agency was established to attract foreign and out-of-state companies; venture capital for the establishment of new enterprises was raised, a programme to assist local businesses in procuring federal contracts was launched, and various funding and support programmes to attract R&D and high technology enterprises was instituted' (Holcomb, 1993, 136).
Plate 1.1 Detroit: Renaissance City

Source: http://therenaissancecity.tumblr.com/

Plate 1.2 One of the few remaining examples of Glasgow’s successful city rebranding campaign

Source: http://www.hiddenglasgow.com/misc/index.htm
By 1988, only 22,000 still found employment in Pittsburgh's steel industry. The period up to 1987, however, saw the creation of over 100,000 new jobs, mostly in education, health care, and research. High-tech quickly became Pittsburgh's fastest growing industry (Holcomb, 1993). It was also decided in the rebranding of Pittsburgh, that Coal Hill, a mineral-bearing ridge to the immediate south of the renovated downtown 'Golden Triangle' district, would no longer be an appropriate name; instead, it was to be referred to as Mount Washington, however, Griffiths (1998, 47), contends that this was 'concealing an important aspect of the city's past'. Moreover, behind Pittsburgh's successful entrepreneurial strategy, an entire section of the population had been left behind. Blacks, who form a quarter of Pittsburgh's population, benefitted little from the revitalisation of the city; black infant mortality rates in Pittsburgh in 1982 were the highest of any American city and nearly two and a half times greater than white infant mortality rates in 1984. Pittsburgh also ranked second of the ten metropolitan areas with the highest black unemployment, with the Pittsburgh metropolitan area having a 26.8 per cent black unemployment rate compared to 7.6 per cent for white unemployment (Holcomb, 1993).

1.6.2 Birmingham – 'The Big Heart of England'

Described by Loftman and Nevin (1998, 130) as a 'text-book example of the way in which traditional urban geographies are being rapidly restructured and repackaged in an attempt to rejuvenate the local economy', the city of Birmingham adopted a pro-growth local economic development strategy following a steep decline in manufacturing jobs in the early 1980s.

Up to the 1970s, the local economy of Birmingham depended on a relatively small number of manufacturing industries, including vehicle manufacturing and engineering. Structural changes in the global economy by the late 1970s exposed Birmingham's overdependence on manufacturing, and between 1971 and 1987, Birmingham lost 191,000 jobs (29 per cent of total unemployment). Birmingham's manufacturing base was particularly hard hit, losing 149,000 jobs over the same period. This represented a loss of 46 per cent of total manufacturing employment (Loftman & Nevin, 1998, 133). It is within this context that a political consensus emerged. Birmingham City Council urgently needed to broaden the city's economic base by promoting a new and dynamic, national and international, image of Birmingham via aggressive city boosterism initiatives.
Birmingham city centre was ‘considered to be the major asset upon which to base Birmingham’s economic future’ (Loftman & Nevin, 1998, 137) and was thus the focus of the initiative in projecting Birmingham as ‘an international centre for business tourism, leisure, and culture’ (Ibid.). Drawing heavily on the experience of many U.S cities, Birmingham embarked on a programme of prestige project urban development (Duffy, 1995; Hall, 1998; Loftman & Nevin, 1998):

‘Birmingham can be regarded as typical of many British former manufacturing cities in that the coincidence of deindustrialisation and the attack on the power, autonomy and finances of local government are typically credited with forcing these urban governments to adopt entrepreneurial ‘pro-growth’ responses to their problems’ (Hall, 1998, 104).

Birmingham predicated investment in prestige projects on three basic assumptions (Loftman & Nevin, 1998):

1. Prestige projects will produce substantial economic benefits to the city
2. All residents will benefit from the developments
3. Public-sector costs will be minimised by the economic benefits to the city as a whole

In addition to prestige project development, Birmingham City Council engaged in a number of other high-profile civic boosterism initiatives including:

- Marketing campaign portraying Birmingham as ‘The Big Heart of England’ and ‘One of the World’s Great Meeting Places’
- Acquisition from London of the Sadler’s Wells Royal Ballet Company and the D’Oyly Carte Opera Company
- Running the (now defunct) Birmingham Super Prix F2 motor race within the city centre area
- Two bids to host the 1992 and 1996 Olympic Games (awarded to Barcelona and Atlanta respectively)

This entrepreneurial approach transformed the city’s image from that of grimy, industrial city to dynamic, international business centre. Other benefits include the physical transformation of the city centre, the attraction of much needed private-sector investment and the creation of a significant number of
new jobs (Duffy, 1995; Loftman & Nevin, 1998) so much so that Birmingham calls itself the 'second city in Britain' (Duffy, 1995, 6).

This pro-growth strategy, however, has not been without its critics. As Loftman and Nevin (1998) point out, many of the jobs created were low skilled, temporary, part-time and low-paid. The promised economic benefits of the pro-growth strategy failed to 'trickle down' to the most disadvantaged areas and residents of the city. Improvement of city theatres to house the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet Company, and the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company cost the council £2.5 million. Moreover, the running of the Birmingham Super Prix F2 motor race generated a financial loss of £2.5 million over a five-year period, and the two unsuccessful bids to host the 1992 and 1996 Olympic Games cost another £2.5 million. The implementation of urban entrepreneurial initiatives therefore, entailed considerable city council expenditure, redirecting it away from the provision of basic services such as education, housing, and social services:

'Over the period 1986/87 - 1991/92 the city council spent £123 million less on housing than the average performance of local authorities in England. This spending profile occurred despite an outstanding repairs bill for council housing of £1.3 billion and the existence of 81,251 homes in the city, which were unfit for human habitation. A similar pattern also emerged in relation to the city's education service, with the council's capital spending falling by 60 per cent during the construction of the prestige projects' (Loftman & Nevin, 1998, 143-144).

1.7 Urban Governance and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

As the economic base of cities has shifted away from heavy industrial and manufacturing economies, to accommodating services and high-tech industries, there has been a concurrent transformation in the practices of urban governments toward the prioritisation of pro-growth local economic development. This transformation coincides with the emergence of the entrepreneurial city over the last number of decades and has been described by Oatley (1998, 17) as 'a shift from local government to local governance.' Hall (1998), Harvey (2001), and Painter (1998) draw a distinction between urban government and urban governance: the former comprises the formal institutions of governing by a democratically-elected government, which effect social and economic changes through political decisions. The latter then, is a form of rule constituted around the narratives of entrepreneurialism, involving a powerful coalition of interests working with the public sector in a Public-Private
Partnership (PPP), oriented to speculative construction and the provision of a good business climate to attract international investment and to promote local economic growth as the dominant response to urban problems. Healey (1997) identifies four models which are widely employed in describing existing governance systems:

1. **Representative democracy** is an idealised model of a democratic state where governments act for, and serve the people, and where politicians articulate the public interest. Governance therefore rests on the institutions of formal government to achieve this. A central problem, however, with this model is that practice is not like theory because politicians are subject to all kinds of influences.

2. **Pluralist democracy** recognises interest diversity where different groups with different interests compete to define the agenda for the actions of governments. Consequently, politicians feel their task is to arbitrate between the various interest groups rather than to articulate the public interest.

3. **Corporatism** vests power among a few, powerful interest groups for determining and managing economic and social policy. Accordingly, the interests and needs of business take precedence over the public interest. Marx considers this form of governance as maintaining the conditions for healthy capital accumulation by managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie.

4. **Clientelism** involves a system of reciprocal relations of obligation whereby politicians distribute resources to 'clients' in hidden ways, not open to democratic scrutiny, in return for votes and other favours. Such governance forms are inimical to planning processes as they depend on a personal patron-client relation rather than achieving general policy objectives.

Place promotion and marketing initiatives, which recast and rebrand a city following years of dereliction, blight and neglect lie at the heart of urban governance and manifest a new relationship between the public- and private-sectors. The establishment of private agencies, for example Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) and other such agencies, to by-pass local authority planning in redevelopment and regeneration initiatives in cities, for example London Docklands and Dublin Docklands, effectively marginalised the role of local authority planning and alienated local authority planners. Left with
little choice, local governments dispensed with their traditional role as regulator and policy-maker and adopted more entrepreneurial practices by actively engaging in the public policy arena of economic development in order to attract inward investment (Harvey, 2001; Oatley, 1998; O'Toole & Usher, 1992; Stoker & Young, 1993; Tavsanoglu & Healey, 1992; Ward, 1998; Wilkinson, 1992):

'The conversion of local governments to a pro-active role in local economic development has been widespread' (Healey, 1997, 154).

Figure 1.1 Urban power struggle

Given the vast range of different types of people with different motivations and objectives claiming to have a stake in the city, Healey (1997, 92) defines the urban region as 'a terrain of multi-dimensional power struggle'. Healey indentifies the range and types of different actors in the urban struggle as illustrated in figure 1.1.

One group that do openly stake their claim in an urban region are property developers. At the local level, Stoker and Young (1993) contend that politicians forge alliances with developers to promote speculative development and redevelopment projects in their administrative areas. The 'entrepreneur developer' (Healey, 1997) has a powerful vested interest in the built environment owing to the potential profits that can be accrued by engaging in speculative development and redevelopment projects. Strongly incentivised by this, property developers have come to coalesce as a powerful lobby in, what
Molotch (1976) terms 'growth machine' politics exerting strong economic and political pressure on governments at both the national and local level (Harvey, 1985; Knox & Pinch, 2006). So powerful are property developers that MacLaran (2003, 12) regards them as 'the impresarios of the built environment' while Cox (1989, 82) states 'without developers, there would be no city'. This is a view also shared by Sandercock (1992, 3):

'It is developers, not planners, or architects, who are primarily responsible for the shape and appearance of today's cities. Large-scale speculative developments - offices, shopping centres, hotels, and luxury housing - shape the fabric of the city. Developers...choose the architect and set the budget. Architecture becomes little more than cosmetic, and public planners are under instruction from beleaguered city governments to 'facilitate' development'

Driven by a desire to make a profit, developers may be, at times, unwilling to invest in areas where risks are high and where there are costs and uncertainties attached to projects. Local authorities, however, often assume the risks of development by providing financial incentives and tax breaks to offset costs against the value of development, and by pump-priming infrastructural investment in an attempt to encourage private-sector development in an area (Harvey, 2000, 2001; O'Toole & Usher, 1992; Tavsanoglu & Healey, 1992).

This new entrepreneurial urban regime has involved more than the public sector simply behaving in a more efficient business-like manner. It encompasses the concept of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) as a manifestation of the neoliberal transformation of the role of the state, with the private sector presented as a key actor between the state and the market to solve long-standing urban problems (Healey et al., 1992; Knox & Pinch, 2006; O'Toole & Usher, 1992):

'The task allotted to the private-sector at the beginning of the 1980s was to deliver a centrally prescribed entrepreneurial shot in the arm to the rather slow-moving and cumbersome bureaucratic practices that were perceived to be the vice of the public-sector' (O'Toole & Usher, 1992, 218)

The speculative character of Public-Private Partnerships gives 'much greater priority to economic development than to the traditional service-providing and regulating functions of the local state' (Knox & Pinch, 2006, 96). Knox and Pinch (2006), and Leitner and Sheppard (1998) declare that, under PPPs, emphasis is placed on the development of high-profile prestige property
projects such as science and technology parks and up-market office complexes to attract investment in leading manufacturing and service sectors. Moreover, PPPs aim to create a landscape of consumption for tourists and residents through the development of shopping centres, museums, conference and exhibition centres as well as sports stadia, which not only generate retail turnover and employment growth locally, but also have the greatest capacity to enhance property values in the city. This contrasts with, and differentiates itself significantly from the Irish experience of PPPs. Strongly influenced by the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) model in use in the UK the Irish model of PPPs has involved mainly waste collection services, wastewater treatment plants, motorway toll roads, LUAS, and social-housing regeneration projects. PPP activity is entrepreneurial precisely because it is characterised by the speculative construction of place focusing on investment and economic development as an immediate political and economic goal, not by rationally planned and coordinated development, which takes a wider view of an area's needs (Stoker & Young, 1993). The competitiveness and ultimate success of the urban region, however, is very much dependent on how the alliances between the public- and private-sectors promote the urban region to attract investment and create new forms of employment. PPPs have not been without their critics; Davoudi and Healey (1992), Harvey (1989, 2001), Smyth (1994), and Tavsanoglu and Healey (1992) argue that PPPs raise important questions regarding the degree to which urban areas are pitted against one another as they compete for investment. Moreover, PPPs also call into question the nature of governance and levels of accountability in the political system as well as challenge the relationship between the state and the market in urban re-development.

1.8 Inter-urban Competition

As the 'old industrial city transmogrifies into the post-industrial city of consumption and service production' (Holcomb, 1994, 129), discourses of entrepreneurialism argue that urban governments must pursue specific strategies designed to secure and promote the competitive advantage of the city relative to other cities. The rise of the entrepreneurial city has subsequently meant increased inter-urban competition (Harvey, 1989; Holcomb, 1994;

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1 See Heame, R., 2006, Neoliberalism, Public Services and PPPs in Ireland, Progress in Irish Urban Studies, 2, 1-14
As local governments are increasingly acting as entrepreneurial competitors:

'Cities are treated as rational, self-interested actors whose success or failure is determined by their entrepreneurial skill' (Leitner & Sheppard, 1998, 300).

'Competitive angst is built into world city politics' (Friedmann, 1995, 23) as cities are now very much 'part of an increasingly competitive world' (Oatley, 1998, 5). Cities compete with one another for inward investment and employment by offering increasingly attractive financial packages of low corporate taxation and promising low workers' wages as well as presenting the city as a dynamic place to live (Harvey, 1989; Healey et al., 1992; Philo & Kearns, 1993; Wilkinson, 1992). Place promotion is a contributory cause of inter-urban competition associated with global economic forces in combination with central government entrepreneurial policy (Griffiths, 1998; Hall, 1998). Duffy (1995) considers place promotion and marketing integral parts of the economic development and urban regeneration strategies of many cities as they attempt to reposition themselves on the global stage as either world cities such as New York, London, and Tokyo, or second tier world cities, for example Chicago, Frankfurt, Paris, Milan, and Nagoya.

With cities competing with one another for what Philo and Kearns (1993; 18) describe as 'a share of the capital investment cake', Harvey (1989b) points out that this intense inter-urban competition for inward investment inevitably creates winners and losers. In addition, Harvey rubbishes Leitner and Sheppard's (1998, 299) suggestion that 'urban entrepreneurialism increases the efficiency and competitiveness of an urban economy to the benefit of all'. This submission is also dismissed by Feagin (1983), Hubbard and Hall (1998), and Smyth (1994). Neoliberal economics, incorporating the idea that the free-market is as efficient and as equitable as state intervention in delivering goods and services to citizens, lies at the heart of the entrepreneurial city. Hubbard and Hall (1998) recognise cities have increasingly adopted features of entrepreneurial policy as they compete against one another in the open market in an effort to promote and enhance their status in the global economy. For Philo and Kearns (1993, 18), the emergence of the entrepreneurial city is 'couched in the prevailing languages of New Right capitalism' as cities are no longer cast as foci of attachment and concern but rather are promoted and sold as packages of economic opportunity. Proponents of the entrepreneurial city argue
that 'declining cities, unwilling to adopt entrepreneurial policies focused on encouraging economic growth, are contributing to their own economic demise' (Loftman & Nevin, 1998, 129). Competition, between and within cities, compels urban regions to undertake ambitious redevelopment and regeneration projects while place promotional and marketing campaigns rebrand and re-image the city in such a way as to attract investment and create employment:

'The image of prosperity...masks the underlying difficulties and projects an imagery of success that spreads internationally' (Harvey, 2001, 364).

Harvey (2001), however, states that the promotional repertoires and high-profile prestige property projects of many cities designed to make particular cities more attractive as cultural and consumer centres have been imitated many times and in many cities, thereby rendering any competitive advantage within a system of cities ephemeral. This argument is supported also by Feagin (1983), Griffiths (1998), Hubbard and Hall (1998), and Logan and Molotch (1987) who argue that local coalitions, playing to the rules of capital accumulation, only go where the profits are, not necessarily where the human or societal needs lie. In this way, entrepreneurial policies do not distribute benefits evenly as entrepreneurial strategies inherently favour development and growth, and not the redistribution of wealth and opportunity. The failure of urban entrepreneurialism to properly tackle issues of neglect and social equity in favour of the prosperity of certain elite groups, has been argued by Hubbard and Hall (1998, 19) to have 'exacerbated social and territorial disparities in the city'.

1.9 Urban Planning and the Entrepreneurial City

Urban planning systems have become a component of the entrepreneurial city. Since the 1970s, planning has been gradually steered away from its traditional roots of utopian visions and aesthetic ideals towards a form of policy focused on engaging pro-actively in diverse economic development projects (Bremner, 2005; Healey, 1997):

'The transformation of traditional manufacturing cities...into post-industrial service centres has necessitated a remaking of the built environment and a re-imaging of the city' (Holcomb, 1994, 115).
The central component of this new entrepreneurial approach has been the use of the built environment as a marker of distinction for attracting investment and tourism (Murphy, 2003). Stoker and Young (1993) identify what they see as the five stages of entrepreneurial planning by local authorities:

1. **Securing the site** through purchasing the lease or freehold from the owner(s) thereby removing any factors blocking development
2. **Land renewal** involving the clearing of industrial remains, environmental improvement work as well as the laying of drains and roads, services, and other infrastructures
3. **Public-sector investment projects** through capital schemes initiated and carried out by the public-sector to demonstrate an area's potential to encourage private-sector investment
4. **Initiating private-sector investment** by putting together a design brief showing the kinds of development the planning authority hopes to see on specific sites
5. **Implementing private-sector schemes** which involves preparing the developments at stage four through on-site works

This new entrepreneurial approach, however, represents a challenge to traditional urban planning, which tended in the past, to assume a passive and responsible role to urban development in cities. In order for entrepreneurial planning to be successful, Healey (1997), Hubbard and Hall (1998), Painter (1998), and Stoker and Young (1993) state that planners have had to learn to be entrepreneurial by learning a wide range of new 'knowledges' including:

- Acquisition of specific skills, such as those associated with place promotion and negotiation with private-sector institutions
- Development of new self-understandings involving, for example, the subordination of the role of local government from 'welfare provider' to that of 'business supporter'
- Acquiescence in the face of centrally-imposed requirements to shift to more entrepreneurial practices of governance
- Acceptance of change and of 'challenges' as inevitable or even desirable
1.9.1 London

Since the 1980s, two strategies have principally informed British urban planning: Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) and Public Finance Initiatives (PFIs), however McGuirk (1994) considers the establishment of UDCs, as well as Enterprise Zones (EZs) and Simplified Planning Zones (SPZs) and the reliance on PFIs as reducing the real powers of planning. Feagin (1990) and Harvey (1985) also contend that simplified, fast-track planning schemes such as UDCs are particularly welcomed by developers and investors and consolidates the considerable advantages that urban planning offers to the private sector. In that regard, and informed by the political philosophy of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, such strategies reflected a shift in British policy towards one in which the engine of enterprise became 'the driving force of inner city policies' (Deakin and Edwards, 1993, 1). The emphasis with UDCs was on transferring political control from the local state to public-private partnerships whereby market criteria dominated the decision-making process creating the conditions for private-sector investment. Public Finance Initiatives (PFIs) quickly become a central component of urban policy under successive British governments including the Labour Party under Tony Blair (Friedmann, 1995; Healey, 1992; Usher and Davoudi, 1992):

'The regeneration of London Docklands was...a model of Thatcherite urban planning policies. It was fundamentally promotional in style, dependent on encouraging private investment and new residents in the former dereliction of redundant wharves and quays' (Ward, 1994, 13).

Described by Brownill (1994) and Friedmann (1995) as the largest redevelopment site in Europe, London Docklands had been at the core of the local economy since the early 1800s through the docklands themselves and through a whole complex of port-related industrial activity. Docklands had been in steady decline however, since the 1960s. With the progressive closure of the docks and subsequent decline in related manufacturing industry, employment in the area dropped from 23,000 in 1967 to 7,000 in 1979, to just a few hundred in the mid-1980s (Goodwin, 1993). Accordingly, this process of decline and closure left swathes of derelict land and dilapidation not very far from the City of London. Amid growing concern at the demise of Docklands and related unemployment, the five London boroughs established a Docklands Joint Committee (DJC) in 1974. Its remit was to draw up and implement a Docklands-wide regeneration strategy within which the five boroughs could situate their
own local plans. By 1976, a draft for a London Docklands Strategic Plan (LDSP) was proposed. The major components of this strategy, as pointed out by Goodwin (1993) included a large public sector housing programme, additional manufacturing industry and improved transport infrastructure to develop links with the rest of London. Office and service employment were secondary to continued industrial growth thus there was to be a matching of employment and housing to the needs and skills of the local population. In 1977 however, the Conservative Party gained control of the Greater London Council in 1977 and, having defeated James Callaghan’s Labour Party at the polls in 1979, returned to Westminster as the ruling party. As Goodwin (1993, 157) states, ‘political, as well as economic factors...began to conspire’ and within six months of taking power, the new Conservative government stripped local authorities of their planning and development powers by announcing their intention to impose a UDC in Docklands:

‘Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) now internalise the idea that the interests of a place are best served by lifting the ‘dead hand’ of regulation and by opening it to the sway of market forces’ (Philo & Kearns, 1993, 19).

This new UDC – London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) – was part of a restructuring of planning aimed at facilitating the market, not intervening in it (Brindley et al., 1989; Brownill, 1994; Healey, 1992; Usher and Davoudi, 1992). LDDC was endowed executive powers to buy, sell, and vest land. McGuirk (1994) considers the establishment of LDDC as a privatisation of planning legitimating a more active role for intervention in a manner that explicitly favours the interests of private-sector capital. Moreover, having a Chairman and Chief Executive and a non-elected board (appointed by the British Secretary of State) held accountable only to Parliament, to oversee the operations of LDDC was described by Brownill (1994, 136) thus:

‘The very fact that the LDDC was called a corporation and not an authority, that it was run by a board of directors with a Chairman and Chief Executive indicates the attempt to leave the town Hall behind’.

Successive Conservative governments have heralded the transformation of Docklands as a ‘policy triumph’ (Brownill, 1994, 135). Redevelopment, however, was a source of anger and antagonism for local indigenous residents as it was felt LDDC was paying little attention to their needs. Despite assurances given at a House of Lords’ inquiry, LDDC asserted
its housing intentions for Docklands were for a tenure mix of 50 per cent owner-occupation; 25 per cent rented; and 25 per cent shared ownership. Locals though, believed that LDDC wanted to replace the existing community with one that was more in keeping with the new image in docklands: lacking skills, having a history of militancy, and being housed mainly in Council housing, Brownill (1994) and Philo and Kearns (1993) state that the existing population did not fit with the new Docklands. By 1989, housing starts in the area were 85 per cent owner-occupation, 12 per cent rented, and 3 per cent shared ownership.

One of the surest ways of hyping up land values is to promote an upmarket image of an area. Goodwin (1993) estimates that £21 million was spent on place promotion by LDDC from 1981 to 1989. LDDC also promoted and exploited the physical location of the Docklands; next door to the City of London, selected areas and landmarks in docklands were renamed in this remodelling of space: Blackwall Basin became Jamestown Harbour, Surrey Docks became Surrey Quays and the British Rail Station at Silvertown was renamed London City Airport Station (Brownill, 1994).

1.9.2 Sydney

'Sydney is the nation’s economic powerhouse and the gateway to Australia...Sydney’s economic growth underpins growth elsewhere in the state...Sydney is now competing on a global stage for investment, trade, and talented workers. In many ways, Sydney has been Australia’s success story...' (Property Council of Australia, quoted in McGuirk, 2004; 1031).

Since its first (real-estate) boom of 1968-74 downtown Sydney has been transformed almost beyond recognition. Urban planning has been instrumental in Sydney’s physical transformation having been exploited by an array agencies that have aimed to control and guide the direction of property development to secure Sydney’s position from provincial post-colonial commercial centre to global city in the newly emergent global spatial economy (McGuirk and Dowling, 2009; O’Neill and McGuirk, 2002). McGuirk (2003) attributes a number of interrelated factors with Sydney’s early boom: first, the lifting of a ban prohibiting buildings of more than twelve storeys in 1957 marked Sydney out as a lucrative property market. Second, by appointing a planning commission in 1967 to act as consent authority approving AUD$300 million of development applications, the largely pro-development Liberal Party state government of Robert Askin ensured that the initial phases of the property boom had passed before Sydney
City Council (SCC) had adopted a planning scheme to control this boom. Third, in 1969, a coalition of established business interests – the Civic Reform Association – gained control of Sydney City Council by winning the local elections. The pro-development emphasis was prolonged under the Civic Reform Association and planning efforts during the following years were 'largely focused on dealing with the demands generated by the commercial property boom' (McGuirk, 2003, 128).

As property speculation became rampant, the city's traditional Central Business District (CBD) morphed from a general-purpose city centre to a specialist financial and business services centre (O'Neill and McGuirk, 2002). This physical transformation was mirrored by a shift towards a 'new national economic orthodoxy' (Gleeson and Low, 2000, 123) from the early 1970s. By the 1980s, the increasingly neoliberal flavour of the political climate had reduced the domain of planning and recast, and redirected it away from the pursuit of strategic metropolitan planning towards the coordination of private-sector investment to secure Sydney's repositioning as a competitive city on the world stage (Forster, 2006; McGuirk, 2004, 2005; McGuirk and Dowling, 2009; McGuirk and O'Neill, 2002; O'Neill and McGuirk 2002):

'The raison d'être of planning as a tool for correcting and avoiding market failure is brushed aside in favour of a new minimalist form of spatial regulation whose chief purpose is to facilitate development' (Gleeson and Low, 2000, 135).

Successive state governments have helped shape development outcomes in Sydney by supporting the market 'in the project of Sydney's economic development and global integration' (McGuirk, 2003, 143). The facilitative nature of urban planning in Sydney has produced conflict and angst among the public who have only limited participation in decision-making determining the future course of Sydney's development:

'The challenges to any systematic approach to planning have been intensified by Sydney's changing role in the global economy and the related demands to ensure the supply of high-quality real estate, infrastructure, cultural and tourism facilities, and the 'amenity, image and environment' expected of a 'global city'. These demands underlie the increasingly entrepreneurial nature of the relationship between the planning and development processes, and the increasingly political nature of urban planning (McGuirk, 2003: 118)
McGuirk (1994) also recognises the changing relationship between capital and the state in the Irish context following the establishment of CHDDA (see chapter 4.4.1) which resulted in the reorientation of planning to become more directly facilitative of the demands of capital mediated through direct central state intervention into its operation:

'The central state can mould the planning system to suit the demands of changing economic conditions and social relations' (McGuirk, 1994, 296).

McGuirk (1994) therefore, considers the effect of this intervention as the (re)creation of planners' role to that of facilitating and attracting private-sector investment and profit maximisation. In that regard, Irish urban planning must be also be regarded as 'explicitly political in its practice and its outcomes' (McGuirk, 1994, 290), given that the extent of central state control over planning whereby the balance of power, overtly skewed in favour of capital, has shifted away from the local authority to levels of central government:

'A range of political interventions into the planning process exists at a number of different levels, from the mediation of the Department of the Environment (DOE) on policy direction, to that of individual politicians in specific planning decisions' (McGuirk, 1994, 293)

The usurpation of local authority planning functions, especially those of Dublin City Council following the establishment of CHDDA, has resulted in what Harvey (1985) has termed an ideology shift from a position of advocacy to one of business rationality. Research carried out by McGuirk (1994, 297) suggests that the 'process of ideological alignment with the rationality of capital interests appears to have occurred among Dublin planners'. Indeed, central government-imposed priorities on planning support the argument that the 'local state operates as an instrument of central government and must carry out the policies of central government' (McGuirk, 1994, 300).

1.10 Conclusion

Urban planning establishes the framework through which all development takes place by controlling the production and use of urban space through permissive elements embodied in legislation and guidelines. Writers from a Marxist politico-economy perspective contend that planning is in fact, an agent of capitalist hegemony, thus Knox and Cullen (1981, 184) describe
planning as a 'hybrid creature dedicated on the one hand to humanistic reform but charged on the other with the management of urban land and services according to the imperatives of a particular mode of production'. Planning systems therefore vary from one political state to another, however. The neoliberal orthodoxy has transformed the politico-economic setting in which plans and projects are implemented; Jackson (2009) therefore states that development plans are political documents representing the views of the party in power.

Cities under capitalism are designed and (re)shaped according to capitalist criteria for private profit making. The decline and shutting down of heavy manufacturing and port-related activities from the 1960s, resulted in industrial cities being characterised by landscapes scarred by swathes of dereliction. In an attempt therefore, to contain the demise of the city, policy makers adopted new institutional structures of urban governance to create a new environment capable of competing internationally for economic growth. The emergence of the 'New Right' neoliberalism in the 1980s advocated tight central government restrictions on the powers and resources of local government which were steered away from a concern with welfare-related issues and state provision to more outward orientated entrepreneurial policies designed to foster and encourage local growth and economic development. Neoliberalism, however, assumes place specific forms and Sager (2011) identifies extraordinary variations as neoliberalism is imposed within specific institutional landscapes and policy environments. Indeed, a distinction can be drawn between the 'roll-back' neoliberalism of Thatcher and Reagan during the 1980s and the 'roll-out' actually existing neoliberalism of Blair and Clinton during the 1990s characterising the contradictory nature of the state in assisting capital by retreating (laissez-faire) and intervening (aidez-faire) in the market when called upon.

The objectives of entrepreneurial policies are inherently growth oriented attracting new forms of investment, boosting the local tax base and creating employment. Moreover, the shift towards entrepreneurialism has led some academic writers to herald the emergence of the entrepreneurial city characterised by the supersession of urban government by urban governance, thus management of public services and provision of welfare services is largely abandoned for the promotion of economic competitiveness and place marketing to attract international investment. Entrepreneurialism has been a feature of
many US cities since the 1970s, but it did not take root in the UK until the 1980s after the election of the New Right Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher. Discourses of entrepreneurialism argue that urban governments pursue specific strategies designed to secure and promote the competitive advantage of the city relative to other cities. Cities are therefore, entrepreneurial competitors competing for inward investment and employment by offering increasingly attractive financial packages of low corporate taxation and promising low workers wages, as well as presenting the city as a dynamic place to live. The target of the entrepreneurial strategy is typically the inner city, especially de-industrialised, derelict, and decayed sites, in an attempt to reverse the economic fortunes of an area by promoting regeneration and levering private-sector investment in the area. Urban regions therefore, assume commodity form designed with consumers in mind to buy and sell in a market place, thus the city is a product to be repackaged as an attractive and progressive business location, boasting a high quality of life and a progressive, entrepreneurial attitude.

Place promotion and marketing lie at the heart of urban governance and manifest a new relationship between the public and private sectors. Public Private Partnerships are therefore, considered a manifestation of the neoliberal transformation of the role of the state, as PPPs give greater priority to economic development than to traditional service-providing and regulating functions of the local state. Moreover, the establishment of Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) in the 1980s, which effectively marginalised the role of local-authority planning and alienated local-authority planners, impelled local governments to adopt more entrepreneurial practices, facilitative of private capital.
Chapter 2

The Neoliberal Agenda in Ireland

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the adoption of the neoliberal agenda since 1987 by successive Fianna Fáil governments. First, the chapter charts the course of Ireland’s major fiscal crisis throughout the 1980s by exploring Fianna Fáil’s massive programme of public spending following the election of 1977 which led the country to national indebtedness by the turn of the decade. Second, it explores the sequence of short-lived governments in the early 1980s and the various measures each employed to tackle the economic crisis. Third, it examines the emergence of a neoliberal consensus through the tripartite alliance between the government, employers and the unions in Fianna Fáil’s Programme for National Recovery (PNR) in 1987. Fourth, it explores the manner in which Fianna Fáil had been pulled sharply to the right through their economic policies of low taxation, light regulation and privatisation of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) which reflect the three core principles of the neoliberal argument. Fifth, it examines the ‘positive’ consequences of embracing the doctrines of free-market globalisation through the Celtic Tiger which ushered in a period of extended economic growth and saw unemployment drop significantly and emigration being replaced by immigration for the first time. Finally, the chapter explores the social impacts of neoliberalism in Ireland, which prioritised the private over the public, by revealing the illusory figures of economic wealth which failed to take account of the sociological perspectives of poverty and long-term unemployment in the country.

2.2 The 1980s – ‘lean and hungry’

Throughout most of the twentieth century Ireland had been consistently ‘among the weaker countries of the western world’ (Andrews, 2001, 1) and was regarded as nothing more than a ‘small, poor, peripheral country of low international importance’ (Laffan & O’Donnell, 1998, 157). Entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973 only meant that Ireland was eligible for (and heavily dependent on) significant amounts of European Community aid, as among the original twelve members states, Ireland was just ‘poor relation’ (O’Hearn, 1998; 64). When the ‘storm of world recession hit’
(Nolan et al., 2000, 43) in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, like most developed economies, Ireland experienced economic turmoil. But to lay the blame for Ireland’s dire economic performance and associated problems during this time on the global fiscal crisis would be misleading, as Lee (1986, 154-155) states:

‘The oil crisis exacerbated our problems; but it did not create them. Both our unemployment and inflation rates were well above the European average before the crisis struck. And much of the artificial growth of the late 1970s was bought at the direct expense of the depression of the 1980s’.

Literature on Irish development is dominated by accounts that identify the state as being culpable for Ireland’s poor economic performance up until the 1990s; for example, Jack Lynch’s Fianna Fáil election programme in 1977 is considered by Sweeney (1998, 39) as ‘one of the great mistakes of Irish economic policy in the twentieth century’. A virtual spending spree to win the election, Fianna Fáil promised to eliminate rates on domestic dwellings and car tax; and then when in office, engaged in a massive and irresponsible programme of public spending by borrowing excessively from abroad in order to meet day-to-day expenditure. The initial economic growth following the election was short-lived, and before long, it was becoming apparent that cutting taxes and increasing spending concurrently was leading Ireland toward spiralling national indebtedness and a major fiscal crisis – from which the country would take a generation to emerge (Lee, 1989; Sweeney, 1998, 1999):

‘Serious policy mistakes of the 1970s laid up problems that dogged the economy in the 1980s’ (Nolan et al., 2000, 41).

Consequently, the 1980s was probably one of the toughest decades of the twentieth century for Ireland. Described by Sweeney (1998; 1999) as ‘lean and hungry’, economic growth performance was below the E.U average, the economy was badly mismanaged and the country was teetering on the edge bankruptcy. Ireland was in crisis thus ‘a gloomy assessment of Ireland’s economic prospects seemed warranted’ (O’Gráda, 1997, 32-33). Ireland’s ‘deep recession and unemployment boom’ (O’Hearn, 1998, 152) during the 1980s gave it the dubious distinction of not only having one of the highest rate of unemployment in Europe but also having an unemployment level more than double the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average, increasing from 10 per cent in 1981 to 17 per cent by 1986 (Allen,
Debt repayments on borrowing also constituted a huge burden (Allen, 2000; Bannon & Bradley, 2007; Kirby, 2002). By 1987, the national debt reached an extraordinarily high 125 per cent of Ireland’s GNP (Sweeney, 1999). Vast amounts of money were required just to service the interest payments and it is also claimed that for a number of years during the 1980s, ‘the equivalent of all income tax was going to repay the national debt’ (Sweeney, 1999; 92). This was nothing short of regressive and had huge repercussions for the Irish people throughout the whole decade. As the decade wore on, there was little indication of light at the end of the tunnel; the prospects for growth did not look likely as the economy’s performance deteriorated still further: stagflation was rampant and the urgent need to reduce exchequer borrowing was eventually conceded (Duffy et al., 2000; Kitchin & Bartley, 2007; McAleese, 1986; O’Gráda, 1997).

2.3 Political Instability

The sequence of governments in the Republic during the 1980s saw Garrett FitzGerald lead a Fine Gael-Labour coalition (1981-82), Charles Haughey head a Fianna Fáil administration (1982), FitzGerald return to power with a Fine Gael-Labour government (1982-87), and then Haughey lead first a Fianna Fáil team (1987-89) and then a coalition with the Progressive Democrats (1989-92)’ (English, 2001, 315).

The 1980s was also a time of political turmoil and a period of severe fiscal retrenchment lasting for almost ten years. Politics was therefore ‘dominated by the economy and the state of the finances during this period’ (Collins, 2007, 174) and successive governments tried to deal with a problem that was affecting every facet of Irish life (Clinch et al., 2002; Kitchin and Bartley, 2007; McDonald, 2000, 2005; Nolan et al., 2000; Sweeney, 1998; Ross & Webb, 2010), however voter dissatisfaction led to a series of short-lived, collapsing governments:

‘Governments during the 1980s rarely served out their full term, and at one stage three general elections were held within a period of just 18 months’ (De Boer-Ashworth, 2004, 6).
When Charles Haughey succeeded Jack Lynch as Taoiseach and leader of Fianna Fáil the world was engulfed by an economic crisis. Hoping that this crisis would quickly pass, Haughey continued with Fianna Fáil’s giveaway concessions that had won Lynch the 1977 General Election by borrowing funds from abroad to maintain extraordinarily high levels of public expenditure. The global economic crisis was not short-lived, however, and Ireland’s external indebtedness continued to increase rapidly.

Haughey, however, did recognise the nature of the problem and one of his first actions as Taoiseach was to make a television address, on 9th January 1980, warning that the government spending would have to be adjusted to reflect the global economic crisis:

‘The figures, which are just now becoming available to us, show one thing very clearly: as a community we are living way beyond our means...we are living at a rate which is simply not justified by the amount of goods and services we are producing. To make up the difference we are borrowing enormous amounts of money, borrowing at a rate which just cannot continue...we have got to cut down government spending. We will just have to re-organise government spending so that we undertake only the things that we can afford’ (quoted in Lee, 1989, 501).

Having identified the problem, however, Haughey proceeded to do precisely the opposite. Things got worse in 1981; unemployment was rising uncontrollably and emigration was draining Ireland of its young, educated and talented. There were ‘unsettling echoes of the 1950s’ (Collins, 2007, 173) but Haughey refused to implement tough economic measures as he faced a general election in 1981. Fianna Fáil lost the election and a Fine Gael-Labour coalition assumed office with a mandate to lead the country out of economic misery. Haughey’s profligacy during his time as Taoiseach obliged the new Minister for Finance, John Bruton, to ‘introduce an emergency budget in July 1981, to prevent the country careering into bankruptcy’ (Collins, 2007, 166). Things did not improve much under the Fine Gael-Labour coalition:

‘By the end of 1981 the total public-sector foreign debt reached IRL£4.8 billion, of almost half the Gross National Product’ (Whyte, 2001, 303).

In January 1982, the coalition government introduced a second severe budget. Its provisions, which included a series of cutbacks in services together with tax increases to cover public finance deficits, ‘went too far’ (Whyte, 2001,
for two Independent TDs, who voted against it and the Bill was defeated by a single vote. Seven months after coming to power, Taoiseach Garrett FitzGerald was left with no choice but to seek the dissolution of the Dáil and a general election was called for February (Collins, 2007; Kitchin & Bartley, 2007; Whyte, 2001). Fianna Fáil won the subsequent election and Haughey returned as Taoiseach ‘by the skin of his teeth’ as Collins (2007, 166) describes it. Haughey appointed Ray MacSharry as Minister for Finance and according to Collins (2007, 168), this move was ‘the first sign that he was finally taking the economic crisis seriously’.

MacSharry quickly grasped the state of the public finances and began work on devising a comprehensive plan to deal with the problem, proclaiming that he would replace ‘gloom and doom with boom and bloom’ (Collins, 2007, 168). The solution emerged in ‘The Way Forward’, which spelled out a series of tough measures, including substantial cuts in public spending and further increases in taxes, to get the economy back on track:

‘The Way Forward, designed to adjust, at long last, economic policy, if not quite to the underlying realities, at least in their general direction, rather than pretending that the realities could be ignored indefinitely and the country live as if tomorrow would never come. It seemed that Haughey was finally determined to treat the disease he had diagnosed in January 1980, but whose spread he had since been instrumental in assisting’ (Lee, 1989, 508-509).

The Way Forward was neither popular nor acceptable among some TDs. Fine Gael capitalised on the government’s difficulty by tabling a motion of no confidence in the government; a vote was taken on 4th November and Fianna Fáil was defeated by 82 votes to 80. Haughey was constitutionally obliged to resign as Taoiseach thereby dissolving the government. Another general election was fixed for 24th November - the third in eighteen months (Collins, 2007; De Boer-Ashworth, 2004; English, 2001; Ross & Webb, 2010; Whyte, 2001). The November election returned the Fine Gael-Labour coalition to office with a clear majority (Collins, 2007; Whyte, 2001):

’With Fine Gael’s 70 seats and Labour’s 16, the government had 86 seats out of 166. The country could anticipate its first period of stable government for some years.

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2 See Bunreacht na hÉireann Article 28.10 which states under what circumstances the Taoiseach shall resign from office.
3 See Bunreacht na hÉireann Article 28.11.1 which states what happens to the government upon the resignation of the Taoiseach.
FitzGerald seemed to have got what both he and Haughey had hitherto been denied; a safe majority. It remained to be seen what he would make of it (Lee, 1989, 510).

With a second spell in office, the Fine Gael-Labour coalition finally tried to get to grips with the economy. The 'necessary deflationary medicine was first applied by Fine Gael Finance Minister, Alan Dukes, in early 1983' (O’Gráda, 1997, 31). Fine Gael had committed itself to public spending cuts as the way out of the economic morass however, the scale of Fine Gael’s cut-backs was fiercely and publicly opposed by Labour, with Tánaiste, Dick Spring, in particular challenging the budgetary strategy of the new Minister for Finance. This affront led to a stalemate that paralysed government economic policy for the next four years.

2.4 The Programme for National Recovery (PNR)

'Charles Haughey got his third chance at power in 1987 and finally showed what he was capable of' (Collins, 2007, 176).

Two hugely significant factors allowed Charles Haughey a third chance as Taoiseach in the general election of 1987; first, the schism that emerged during the Fine Gael-Labour coalition left Labour with no choice but to go it alone during the election campaign and, second, taking advantage of the unpopularity of Fine Gael’s series of cut-backs in public spending, Fianna Fáil ran an anti-Fine Gael campaign denouncing public sector cut-backs. According to Allen (2000, 13), during the election campaign, ‘Fianna Fáil billboards appeared all over the country with the slogan ‘Health Cuts Hurt the Old, the Sick and the Handicapped’. With a mandate secured, Haughey once again led Fianna Fáil to government.

In the global milieu, the 1980s were a time of ‘major restructuring of national economies under the impact of a more liberalised and globalised international economy’ (Kirby, 2002, 2). By 1987, Ireland was ‘not far from bankruptcy’ (Ross & Webb, 2010; 139). Following repeated calls by several economic commentators4, who had been urging drastic cutbacks in public-spending, and the publication of a report by the National Economic and Social

4 The so-called ‘Doheny & Nesbitt’s School of Economics’, which had its origins in criticisms of rising government spending and debt, and whose name came from the pub of the same name on Merrion Row, Dublin (O’Gráda, 1997)
Council\(^5\), which insisted on the need for public spending cuts, the first challenge facing Haughey and Minister for Finance, Ray MacSharry, was tackling Ireland's critical fiscal problems and reviving an economy that had all but flat-lined. Recognising that the 'dominance of Keynesian economic ideas had declined' (Walsh, 1986, 68), within six months of taking power, Fianna Fáil reneged on its election pledges and intensified the austerity measures first applied by the 1982-1987 coalition government by cancelling a planned pay rise for senior civil servants and introducing a cuts package of IRL£485 million which included dramatically reduced public spending, closing hospital wards and making more than 20,000 public servants redundant (Allen, 2000; Collins, 2007; De Boer-Ashworth, 2004; Haughton, 1998; O'Gráda, 1997; Sweeney, 1998, 1999).

A series of major disputes between employers and the unions followed Fianna Fáil's stringent policy of fiscal rectitude. Counting not just the economic cost but also the political cost of this industrial unrest, Haughey recognised that Ireland needed industrial quiescence if there was to be an economic recovery. In an effort to curb industrial unrest and win support for Fianna Fáil's austerity measures, Haughey needed to keep the unions on his side.

Claiming the unions 'were more fearful of an onslaught from the 'New Right'' (Allen, 2000, 13), Haughey forged a tripartite alliance between the state, employers and the unions through the *Programme for National Recovery (PNR)*, which was negotiated with the unions by 'Haughey's cabinet favourite, the Minister for Labour, Bertie Ahern' (Collins, 2007, 179) and put in place by October 1987 (Allen, 2000; Collins, 2007; Kitchin & Bartley, 2007; Laffan & O'Donnell, 1998; Ross & Webb, 2010):

> 'The trade unions were now players in the game of government' (Ross & Webb, 2010, 139).

Described by Haughey as 'a pearl of very great price' (Collins, 2007, 179), the Programme for National Recovery (PNR) reflected the three core principles of the neo-liberal argument by urging the social partners to follow a policy of wage restraint, massive public spending cuts and large-scale public-sector redundancies, and a reduction in taxes to encourage enterprise by multinational corporations (Allen, 2000; Collins, 2007):

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'By making the social partners part of the political process, rather than being in opposition to it, negotiated settlement was achieved, thus providing labour stability and removing the threat of strikes' (Kitchin & Bartley, 2007, 4-5).

Plate 2.1 Fianna Fáil election campaign billboard, 1987

The Programme for National Recovery was the first social-partnership deal. Social partnership between employers, unions and the State was extended into the 1990s with the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP), 1991-1993, the Programme for Competitiveness and Work (PCW), 1994-1997, and Partnership 2000 (P2K) agreed in early 1997 (Nolan et al., 2000; Sweeney, 1998):

'Social partnership has become an important technique of rule within the neoliberal order' (Allen, 2005, 20).

2.5 Neoliberal Approaches

Social partnership has become 'an important technique of rule within the neo-liberal order' (Allen, 2005, 20) and 'marked a radical change in government policy' (Sweeney, 1998, 1999). Among academics, opinions are divided; Nolan et al. (2000, 280) claim PNR had 'more in common with some social democratic governments than with neo-liberal regimes' and that PNR actually fitted perfectly with Fianna Fáil's 'belief in national cohesion and consensus rather
than confrontation between competing interests' (Ibid.) while still providing ‘opportunities for state involvement, important for a party not welded ideologically to neo-liberalism' (Ibid.), however De Boer-Ashworth (2004, 6) critically states that that the policy adopted by the Haughey administration in 1987 pointed to the ‘emergence of some kind of neoliberal consensus on future economic policy’ while Allen (2005, 21) states social partnership has in fact demobilised poorer sections of society by creating ‘opportunities for the state and the employers to incorporate the leaders of their movements into the ‘competitive agenda' (Ibid.).

From 1987 Irish economic growth slowly began to exceed both European and OECD averages (Laffan & O'Donnell, 1998). Official data showed Irish GDP to have risen by 36.6 per cent and GNP by 33.1 per cent (giving an average yearly rate of growth of 6.2 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively) between 1987 and 1993. This was almost treble that achieved in the previous ten years. It also compares with an increase of 13.3 per cent (or 2.6 per cent on average annually) in the European Union as a whole over the same period (Allen, 2000; Sweeney, 1998, 1999).

For those protagonists most committed to the dominant free-market ideology of neo-liberalism Ireland's economic growth could be attributed to its strict adherence to the prescriptions of the neo-classical economists who argue that state interference creates distortions which hamper markets working efficiently (Kirby, 2002). Nolan et al. (2000; 1) argue, however, that Ireland’s economic miracle is ‘not a tale of the forced withdrawal of the state and the promotion of neo-liberalism’ because Ireland did not follow the economic doctrines espoused by Thatcher in the UK. Moreover, Palcic and Reeves (2004, 6) state PNR actually ‘enunciated policies that aimed to expand rather than privatise the SOE sector’ as Charles Haughey promised the unions that Fianna Fail would not sell off any commercial SOEs (Allen, 2000). Despite this promise, the first privatisation of a public enterprise, that of Cómhlucht Síúicre Éireann (Greencore), occurred under the first Fianna Fáil-PD coalition in 1991 (see Table 2.1).

Following the local elections of 2004, Fianna Fáil’s Dermot Ahern stated that Fianna Fáil opposed neo-liberal economics and rejected policies which place all the emphasis on equality of opportunity, whilst providing only a modicum of social protection (Allen, 2005, 17). This declaration was followed,
in an Irish Times interview (13.11.2004), by Bertie Ahern insisting that he was 'one of the few socialists left in Irish politics' and a by further assertion just five days later of his socialist politics and the denunciation of Joe Higgins, TD as a 'commie' (Irish Times, 18.11.2004). This then beggars the question, what brand of socialism does Bertie Ahern subscribe? Allen (2005, 20) clarifies this by labelling it 'Bertie-socialism' since Fianna Fáil colleague Willie O'Dea outlined the nature of Fianna Fáil's 'social democracy' as supportive of the model of social partnership while 'developing a robust and competitive framework that allows market forces to work properly (Allen, 2005, 19). It is not just Ahern who has espoused left-leaning tendencies. This left rhetoric has served Fianna Fáil well throughout most of the twentieth century; Fianna Fáil, though, must be considered a right-wing party. It is, however, unusual in European right wing politics in that it counts among its electorate large working class support. Allen (2005) chronicles this support to Fianna Fáil adding an economic dimension to its political opposition to British rule in Ireland. For example, while Cumman na Gaedheal Minister, P.J. McGilligan asserted that it was not the function of the Dáil to provide work for Irish people, Fianna Fáil's Eamon de Valera countered this claim by insisting that it was in fact the 'primary duty [of the Dáil] to ensure that every man who is able and willing to work will have work, so that he may earn his daily bread' (quoted in Allen, 2005, 22). In that regard, Allen (2005) contends that Fianna Fáil is more comparable to populist parties in Latin America than the classic right wing parties of Europe. Indeed, even during the moribund 1980s Charles Haughey regularly denounced the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government for pursuing monetarist policies claiming them to be an 'imported product' (Allen, 2005, 23). On becoming Taoiseach in 1987, however, Haughey used his left-leaning sympathies to great avail when he forged a tripartite alliance with employers and the unions in the first social partnership agreement (Programme for National Recovery):

'Historical and contemporary record shows that Fianna Fail is the most determined and organised exponent of business interests and everything else are merely rhetorical flourishes' (Allen, 2005, 23).

When Fianna Fáil formed a coalition government with the Progressive Democrats it had been pulled (more) sharply to the right since the PDs openly 'advocated the rationalisation and reform of the State apparatus, together with the limiting of the economic role of the State' (English, 2001; 317). Indeed, the Fianna Fáil-PD coalition was characterised by the lowering of income tax,
corporation tax and capital gains tax, and multinational corporations were also feverishly sought out and enticed to Ireland with massive tax incentives and the promise of light regulation (Leahy, 2009; O’Toole, 2009):

‘The power of free-market globalisation was unleashed’ (O’Toole, 2009; 15).

Fianna Fáil Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy, also shared the PD belief that lower taxes were a vital component of a vibrant economy (Collins, 2007; Leahy, 2009; O’Toole, 2009). Moreover, Allen (2009) asserts Fianna Fáil’s links with the construction industry run deep. Indeed, this relationship can be considered symbiotic; in government, Fianna Fáil introduced a host of measures which benefitted the construction industry including, but not limited to:

- Abolition of the residential property tax in 1997
- Reduction of the Capital Gains Tax from 40 per cent to 20 per cent
- Section 23 tax breaks which provided tax relief on construction or refurbishment of apartments

Aside from tax relief, Fianna Fáil also cut back on public spending for local-authority housing. Allen (2009) states that between 1991 and 2002, the number of local-authority houses fell from 10 per cent of the housing completions to 6 per cent forcing more people into the private-rented sector. Despite this, Fianna Fáil did not implement any form of rent control, deeming it to be ‘an interference in the market’ (Allen, 2009, 52). In return, Fianna Fáil not only gained votes but also received substantial funds from the biggest builders who attended the Fianna Fáil tent – at €4000 a table – during the annual Galway races festival:

‘Most of the big builders such as Seán Mulryan, Bernard McNamara, Michael Bailey, Padraig Rhatigan, Seán Dunne, Johnny Ronan and Pascal Taggart have all attended the tent’ (Allen, 2009, 50).

Another characterisation of the Fianna Fáil-PD coalition was privatisation. According to Walsh (1986, 69), examples of deregulation and privatisation in other developed countries were used to ‘illustrate that there are alternatives’ to the economic model Ireland had espoused since the post-
Second World War period, however, although Kirby (2002) and Sweeney (1998) assert Ireland had rejected the ruthless rationalisation and privatisation that had been pursued in Britain in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, employment in this sector has fallen from 88,000 in 1980 to 67,000 in 1990, to 46,000 in 2002, a drop of 48 per cent in twelve years (Sweeney, 2004). While the state sector is shrinking as public assets are sold, new forms of state intervention have also occurred with the establishment of regulators and new state bodies.

Palcic and Reeves (2004, 7) identify those SOEs that have undergone commercialisation over a ten year period between 1991 and 2001 under successive Fianna Fáil administrations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comhluacht Siúirce Éireann</td>
<td>April 1991</td>
<td>Sugar/food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Life</td>
<td>July 1991</td>
<td>Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B&amp;I</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Shipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Steel</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eircom</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC Bank</td>
<td>January 2001</td>
<td>Banking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSB Bank</td>
<td>April 2001</td>
<td>Banking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INPC</td>
<td>May 2001</td>
<td>Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC Bank</td>
<td>December 2001</td>
<td>Banking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.1** Privatisation of Irish State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), 1991-2002

Land values can also be directly affected by political factors; before the second boom, building land represented 10 per cent to 15 per cent of Irish house prices, however, by 2003, this figure had risen to 42.5 per cent (of house prices) nationwide and 50 per cent of prices in Dublin (Allen, 2009). Although the Kenny Report in 1973 and the Bacon Report in 1998 advocated that local authorities should have the power to acquire building land at use value prices plus a 25 per cent premium (Kenny Report) and recommended a special Capital Gains Tax of 50 per cent on development land (Bacon Report) respectively, the Fianna Fáil-PD coalition government refused to implement these measures stating that they could (also) be construed as 'interference with market forces' (Allen, 2009,
47). However, for state-owned land, Fianna Fáil encouraged the wholesale sell-off of this land to private developers; for example, the former Eastern Regional Health Authority sold-off four of its sites in Dublin for €106 million even though internal documents from the agency reported that the sites were actually valued at €576 million. CIE was also instructed to sell-off valuable land when its rail freight division was systematically closed down to make way for road haulage. Property developers were the chief beneficiaries of the sale of state land and proceeded to undertake large office projects or apartment complexes on these sites (Allen, 2009).

Although there has been very little critical analytical research of PPP development in Ireland, in contrast to the international experience, the emergence of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) marked the ‘manifestation of the neo-liberal transformation of the role of the state’ (Hearne, 2006, 1) as the government concentrated on enabling and promoting the private sector. The introduction of PPPs in Ireland copied the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) espoused by the New Labour Government in the UK as a ‘less overt form of privatisation in response to public opposition to earlier privatisation programmes implemented during the Thatcher era’ (Hearne, 2006, 2). The Fianna Fail-PD coalition government commissioned a first report in 1998 on PPPs in Ireland; The [Farrell Grant Sparks] report examined the potential use of PPPs in Ireland in the provision of public services and one year later, in line with recommendations from the report, a number of pilot PPP projects were approved ranging from waste collection services and wastewater treatment plants to motorways and schools (Hearne, 2006; 2012). In the intervening years however, the programme of PPPs in the delivery of public infrastructure and services has expanded well beyond the schemes initially piloted. Hearne (2006) considers this development as part of a deepening neo-liberalisation of government in Ireland. Indeed, the extent to which Ireland embraced and adopted the model of Public Private Partnerships was highlighted in a report by Price Waterhouse Coopers (2005) which estimated that if PPP activity is considered as a percentage of GDP, Portugal, the UK and Ireland would have the greatest involvement with PPPs relative to GDP at 1.3 per cent, 0.6 per cent and 0.4 per cent respectively.

Public Private Partnership contracts in Ireland entail private sector involvement in public governance for a significant duration – usually thirty years – in the construction and design and/or financing and/or operation of public
services and infrastructure, though the state still retains some regulatory role. 
Hearne (2006, 2) identifies the different types (and examples) of PPPs in use in 
Ireland thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PPP type</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Arrangement</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design, Build and Finance</td>
<td>(DBF)</td>
<td>Private sector receives public subsidy through unitary payments or other arrangement e.g. land transfer</td>
<td>Regeneration of Fatima Mansions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, Build and Operate</td>
<td>(DBO)</td>
<td>Private sector receives unitary payments</td>
<td>Dublin Bay Drainage scheme &amp; sewage plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, Build and Operate and Finance</td>
<td>(DBOF)</td>
<td>The private sector contractor recovers its costs solely out of payments from the public sector</td>
<td>Grouped Schools Pilot Partnership Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concession contracts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Private sector contractor recovers its costs either through direct user charges or through a mixture of user charging and public subvention</td>
<td>Tolled Motorways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outsourcing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Private sector receives contract for operation of service</td>
<td>Waste collection services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 Different PPP types in Ireland

To date, PPPs have been completed in the transport sector, education, regeneration of social-housing estates and waste management and Brudell et al., (2004), Drudy & Punch (2005), Hearne (2006), Kelly & MacLaran (2004) and McGuirk & MacLaran (2001) identify Dublin City Council as an enthusiastic follower of the PPP model. Indeed, Dublin City Council, more than any other local authority, has promoted the use of PPPs in local-authority housing regeneration, for example the Fatima Mansions Fiat regeneration scheme, and is thus indicative of DCC's deepening realignment towards more neo-liberal planning:
'Fatima PPP is a pioneering flagship project for the housing sector...From the start I believed that the PPP option had the potential to deliver the regeneration in a more timely manner than would normally be the case using the traditional procurement methods. And this is why I supported the City Council on choosing this approach for Fatima' (Bertie Ahem, 2005 quoted in Hearne, 2006, 6-7).

Despite proponents of Public Private Partnerships claiming that PPPs offer value for money and economic efficiency, a considerable level of opposition has grown, particularly among local communities, against PPPs with counter claims that the private sector will only adopt projects involving public services and infrastructure that augment shareholders returns rather than engaging in projects that meet the long-term needs of society (Hearne, 2006; 2012). Moreover, in so far as trade unions are concerned, Hearne (2006) points out that the last two Social Partnership Agreements, which the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) signed up to included an agreement to further develop and use PPPs.

2.6 ‘Positive’ Consequences of Neoliberalism

By forging a consensus with the social partners on tackling Ireland’s critical fiscal problems, Charles Haughey created a platform that was not only conducive to economic growth and stability in the short-term but ultimately paved the way for the success of the economy in what came to be known as the ‘Celtic Tiger’ from the mid-1990s (Allen, 2000; Collins, 2007; Kitchin & Bartley, 2007):

‘Since 1987, social partnership has emerged as a constitutive feature of the Celtic Tiger through which economic and social policy is coordinated among the social partners’ (Kirby, 2002, 135).

By the early 1990s, Ireland had entered an extended period of economic growth (Kirby, 1997; Kirby, 2002; Sweeney, 1998). In a Euroletter published about the performance of the Irish economy, an economist enquired whether Ireland could be considered a Celtic Tiger? Drawing reference to the four East Asian tiger economies of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, the term ‘Celtic Tiger’ was merited on the grounds of Ireland’s low inflation, growth of exports and rates of economic growth which had been sustained at levels close to those consistently achieved by the Asian Tigers (Kirby, 1997; Laffan & O’Donnell. 1998; O’Hearn, 1998; Sweeney, 1998, 1999). Ireland was officially
recognised as a 'tiger economy' on 31st August 1994 (Allen, 2000; O'Hearn, 1998), however, there was a muted reaction among Irish people to this news as the IRA had just declared an immediate cessation to its guerrilla war in Northern Ireland and this had taken precedence over all other news items that day.

By 1995, the boom was beginning to be recognised: unemployment levels had been falling steadily and there were more people at work. Most people felt their levels of living rise and were experiencing higher disposable incomes for the first time. The 'pall of failure that had hung over the Irish state for most of its independent existence' (O'Toole, 2009, 14) and perennial sense 'gloom and doom' that had pervaded during the 1980s seemed to have been banished and there was at long last an air of excitement in the country; skylines were dotted with cranes and construction levels rose as Ireland was being 'transformed from the poor, peripheral nation of the 1980s to a largely prosperous, confident, multicultural, globally embedded nation' (Kitchin & Bartley, 2007, 4) in the 1990s. As O'Gráda (1997, 33) suggests, 'Ireland's 'golden age' had simply arrived late'. It was not, however, until 1997 that the economic boom finally became widely recognised:

'In an editorial in the Irish Times on 3rd October 1997, the Fianna Fáil-PD coalition government announced that it had taken in IRL€500 million more in taxes than it had expected for the first three quarter of 1997' (Sweeney, 1999; 49).

The economy was witnessing year-on-year unprecedented and sensational economic growth rates (Collins, 2007; Leahy, 2009; Nolan et al., 2000; Sweeney, 1999) and the forecast for economic growth for 1997 was revised upwards 'in excess of any of the predictions of economists and social and political commentators of the day' (Kitchin & Bartley, 2007, 25). This trend continued throughout 1998 and 1999 and into the new millennium:

'A record exchequer surplus of over IRL £1 billion was recorded on 6th April 1999, as sections of Irish society enjoyed levels of unprecedented affluence' (Keogh, 2001, 323-324).

Economic growth continued to astound economic analysts and accelerated in the six years from 1994 to 1999. GDP grew by an average 8.8 per cent annually and GNP by an average 8 per cent annually, a remarkable achievement considering that a growth rate of three per cent is regarded as good for most economies (Byrne, 2003; Brawn, 2009; De Boer-Ashworth, 2004;
In this same period, Ireland joined the ranks of some of the richest nations by breaking into the ‘top twenty-five richest countries in the world’ (Allen, 2000, 21):

‘Between 1993 and 2001 the annual real growth rate of the Irish economy has been more than double the average recorded over the previous three decades – eight per cent compared with 3.5 per cent’ (Clinch et al., 2002, 25).

Accompanying the economic boom was a decline in Ireland’s long-standing problem of unemployment which fell from a peak of 17 per cent in the 1980s to 15.6 per cent in 1993. By the late 1990s this figure had been cut to 7.4 per cent, before stabilising at a historically low of just under 4 per cent from 2000 to 2004 (Clinch et al., 2002; Kitchin & Bartley, 2007; O’Toole, 2009). Moreover, in the decade 1986-1996, total employment in Ireland had grown by 1.8 per cent per year, compared to an OECD average of 1 per cent and an E.U average of 0.3 per cent (Laffan & O’Donnell, 1998), and between 1994 and 2000 new job creation was averaging more than 1,100 a week each year representing an increase of over 45 per cent (or an annual average of over 3 per cent a year) between 1986 and 2000 (Clinch et al., 2002; De Boer-Ashworth, 2004; Kitchin & Bartley, 2007; Sweeney, 1999).

The competitive advantages of Ireland as a location - the gateway to Europe (O’Hearn, 1998) – were exploited by the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) as multinational subsidiaries were invited to relocate regional head quarters and factories to Ireland. Among some of the major multinationals to locate in Ireland were major names in the fastest growing sectors of electronics, for example IBM, Dell, Hewlett Packard, in pharmaceuticals there was Pfizer and in finance, Citibank and Deutsche Bank (Sweeney, 1999). During the 1990s over half of the $750 billion of U.S. investment went to Europe, and of this sum, a significant proportion was invested in Ireland (O’Toole, 2009):

‘Twelve of Fortune magazine’s top 20 American electronics corporations – and each of its top 10 pharmaceutical companies – have at least one plant in Ireland’ (O’Hearn, 1998, 156)

Foreign corporations were attracted to Ireland by a number of factors: first, a well-educated, highly skilled and English-speaking labour force with restrained wages and no threat of militant trade unionism; second, a free enterprise-oriented state with minimum interference in the market; third, a range
of highly subsidised and very generous grants and low corporation tax rates which essentially qualified Ireland as a tax haven (McAleese, 1986; O'Hearn, 1998; Sweeney, 1998). A low corporate tax rate has been cited by Clinch et al. (2002, 38) as being 'among Ireland's most important attractions as a location for foreign investment'. The rate of company tax in Ireland currently stands at 12.5 per cent and this significantly undercuts other regimes in Europe which typically have a tax rate of 25-30 per cent, thus multinational corporations have chosen Ireland on the basis of its tax breaks which are clearly 'more beneficial than anywhere else in the E.U' (O'Hearn, 1998, 165):

'Ireland has staunchly resisted tax harmonisation in the E.U fearing that it would undermine the tax incentives it offers to inward investors and thus its competitive edge over the other countries in competing for...investment' (Kirby, 2002, 141).

The other traditional spectre of forced mass-emigration, with all of 'its debilitating economic, social and psychological effects' (O'Toole, 2009; 13) was virtually eliminated during the Celtic Tiger and replaced by large-scale immigration; Ireland had the highest net immigration rate in the E.U attracting multi-ethnic refugees and economic migrants from more disadvantaged areas in Central and Eastern Europe and Africa (Allen, 2000; Clinch et al., 2002; De Boer-Ashworth, 2004; Keogh, 2001; Leahy, 2009; O'Hearn, 1998; O'Toole, 2009):

'Ireland has gone from being a country to get out of to a country to get in to' (Clinch et al., 2002; 24).

The success of the Irish economy over the period 1994-2001 had been unsurpassed. For proponents of neo-liberalism, by embracing the doctrine of free-market globalisation from the late 1980s, Ireland presented itself as having one of the most open economies in the world and offered a model of successful adaptation to globalisation that other countries were encouraged to follow (De Boer-Ashworth, 2004; Haughton, 1998; Kirby, 1997, 2002; Kitchin & Bartley, 2007; Nolan et al., 2000; Sweeney, 1999). The result of this re-orientation was sustained and very high levels of economic growth for almost a decade. In that regard, perceptions of Ireland as a poor nation characterised by a stagnant economy, crippling levels of unemployment and chronic emigration were dispelled as the country became the envy of the western world with its booming economy (Kirby, 1997; Kitchin & Bartley, 2007; O'Hearn, 1998; Sweeney, 1998, 1999):
'For most of the twentieth century, Ireland had struggled to be like other countries. But between the late 1990s and 2008, other countries were told they must struggle to be like Ireland' (O'Toole, 2009; 10).

2.7 Social Impact

'It was a good story, and like most good stories, it was mostly untrue. The reality is that far from being a model that could be applied 'irrespective of time and place' the 'Celtic Tiger' was the product of a very specific place at a very particular time. A lot of things came together in Ireland in the mid-1990s, and not many of them had much to do with application of free-market orthodoxy' (O'Toole, 2009; 15).

Academics and critics of the political economy widely acknowledge that the Celtic Tiger only lasted for approximately seven years, from 1994 until 2001, however, Allen (2009, 44) claims 'the real acceleration occurred after 2002' as an improvident Fianna Fáil viewed the Celtic Tiger as an 'unstoppable locomotive of wealth' (Brawn, 2009, 47) and believed that the good times would last forever (Keogh, 2001) with Bertie Ahern even proclaiming that 'the boom times are getting even more boomier' (quoted in O'Toole, 2009, 43). Such imprudence may in part be excused as some commentators also shared the belief that Ireland's boom showed 'no sign of overheating' and that the boom 'is likely to continue' (Sweeney, 1998, 14).

Described by O'Toole (2009, 24) as a 'machine for the gaining and holding of power', Leahy (2009, 301) contends that Fianna Fáil, under the leadership of Bertie Ahern, 'had been more focused on fighting elections than on governing' thus recognising a slowdown in the rate of economic expansion by 2002, Fianna Fáil engineered a second boom, where one kind of growth was replaced by another, thus argues O'Toole (2009) being prosperous would be replaced by feeling rich, consumption would replace production, and building would replace manufacturing as the engine of growth leading some commentators to hail the return of the Celtic Tiger:

'The government decided that it would stay prosperous by going for what the National Competitive Council would later call 'growth derived from asset price inflation, fuelled by a combination of low interest rates, reckless lending and speculation' (O'Toole, 2009, 22).
Consequently, the private-sector construction industry had become the second-largest employer in the country, after the public-sector, employing some 282,000 persons, or 13.5 per cent of the workforce, at the height of the building boom (Allen, 2009; Brawn, 2009). Indeed, much of the economic miracle of the last decade was 'due to the boom in construction' (Ibid.) which was driven by a 'tight alliance between Fianna Fáil and the big builders' (Allen, 2009, 48). Having bought into the fallacy that Ireland had discovered a model of development that would work anytime, anywhere, Fianna Fáil fostered, alongside the real economy in which people created goods and sold them, a false economy of façades and fictions' (O'Toole, 2009, 19-20), thus when the crash occurred in 2007, 'the construction boom exposed the fallacy of neoliberal economics on a spectacular scale' (Allen, 2009, 45).

A great part of Ireland's economic growth was in fact illusory 'being derived from the accountant's pen rather than the effort of Irish workers' (Murphy, quoted in Kirby, 1997, 128). Far from being a true 'Tiger' economy in the mould of the four Asian Tigers whose success was nurtured by the state in developing indigenous high-tech industries capable of competing successfully internationally, Allen (2005) and Kirby (1997) consider that Ireland is in fact closer to the profile of a Third World Country and therefore might properly be thought of 'as a high-income developing country, rather than a low-income industrialised country' (Kirby, 1997, 133):

'The Celtic Tiger...arose from a fortuitous set of circumstances when US corporations sought a home inside EU tariff barriers. Ireland pulled off a great stroke of transforming itself into a tax haven, becoming one of the main recipients of that investment. The trick worked for a comparatively short period and allowed the political elite to inculcate a version of neoliberalism which was summed up in the phrase 'jobs at any price'' (Allen, 2009, 55).

The boom therefore, had a tendency to exaggerate just how rich Irish people really were. Much of the praise that was heaped on Ireland's economy from the 1990s came from those viewing Ireland's economic fortunes in isolation to the more sociological perspectives of poverty and long-term unemployment. Kirby (2002, 105) contends that the 'Tiger' economy that emerged in the early 1990s 'prioritised the economy over society, the private over public, the economic over the political' while Keogh (2001) states that during the boom, a gulf had been steadily widening between an enriched small élite and an increasing number of relatively less well-off who were being deliberately left
behind. This view is shared by De Boer-Ashworth (2004, 10) who claims ‘Ireland’s economic growth was leaving behind an entire section of Irish society’. Moreover, during the boom the number of long-term unemployed actually increased creating not only an ever-widening gap among the classes but also an increasingly marginalised underclass on the fringe of Irish society (Allen, 2000; De Boer-Ashworth, 2004; Sweeney, 1998, 1999). By the turn of the new millennium, ‘after nearly a decade as Europe’s leading growth economy’ (O’Hearn, 1998, 160), Ireland still had one of the Europe’s highest unemployment rates and its worst long-term unemployment problem in the OECD:

‘The creation of decent public services and of an equal and inclusive society should not have been mere afterthoughts to the creation of wealth’ (O’Toole, 2009; 21).

Economic measures, for example GDP per capita, an annual index of wealth production, ranked Ireland as one of the wealthiest nations in world, but GDP did not give an accurate reflection of factors such as quality of life. Moreover, GDP severely distorted the true figures of economic growth in Ireland as it was based on exaggerated growth figures having been ‘significantly inflated by the financial juggling of transnational corporations with an interest in boosting profits in low-tax Ireland’ (O’Toole, 2009, 91). This practice, known as transfer pricing, by multinational corporations with regional head quarters in Ireland was widespread. As Allen (2000) explains, multinational corporations sought out ways of minimising their tax bills by manipulating prices in such a way that profits, which had actually been made elsewhere, appeared to be generated in Ireland. With a corporation tax (CT) rate of 12.5 per cent (slashed from 50 per cent in 1987), MNCs took full advantage of Ireland’s benign tax regime as Ireland effectively became an Atlantic tax haven on the edge of Europe where wealth is treated with extreme deference (Allen, 2005; Haughton, 1998; Kirby, 1997; O’Grada, 1997). O’Hearn (1998) therefore, argues that GNP is a much better measure of the degree to which economic growth benefits a country as GNP does not include profits, dividends and interest that are removed from a country through transfer pricing and profit repatriation and is thus a more reliable measure of real national income:

‘There is now a fusion of political and economic elites as business employs a variety of strategies to buy influence in government in order to reduce their tax obligations and to increase the amount of corporate welfare. And there is never a let up. Once nation states embark on a policy of cutting taxes, they help to create a race to the bottom, where firms
pit rival governments against each other to ratchet down the rate of taxation and leverage up the benefits accruing to them’ (Allen, 2005, 21).

Today the wreckage of Ireland’s economic ‘miracle’ is strewn everywhere and yet, despite this, a thorough examination of a (failed) economic philosophy which was promoted for over twenty years does not appear to be forthcoming.

2.8 Conclusion

When global recession struck in the 1970s in the wake of the oil crises of 1973 and 1977, Ireland, like many other countries, was particularly affected. The 1980s, described variously as one of the toughest decades of the twentieth century for Ireland, saw Ireland teeter on the brink of bankruptcy. By 1986 unemployment also stood at 17 per cent and emigration was reaching 45,000 persons per year. Successive governments tried unsuccessfully to deal with Ireland’s serious economic crisis in the years 1981 -1986. In 1987, Fianna Fáil returned to government. The Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, recognised and accepted that Keynesian economic ideas had declined and intensified the austerity measures begun under the previous government. Although disputes broke out between the unions and employers over Fianna Fáil’s stringent policy of fiscal rectitude, the party, in an effort to secure industrial quiescence, forged a tripartite alliance with employers and the unions through the Programme for National Recovery (PNR) in which all parties agreed to a series of measures to control government spending and rescue the economy, including wages restraint, public spending cuts and public sector redundancies, and a reduction in taxes, the three core principles of neoliberalism. PNR marked a radical change in government policy as pointed to the emergence of a neoliberal consensus on future economic policy, as in 1991, the first privatisation of an SOE took place. Fianna Fáil had been in a coalition government throughout most of the 1990s and into the new millennium with the PDs and their time in government was characterised by the lowering of taxes, light regulation and privatisation.
Chapter 3

Planning as a Function of Local Government

3.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the context within which it is possible to understand the operation, role and functioning of urban planning in Ireland. First, the chapter briefly explores the origins of the local government system in Ireland and the local government areas in the State. Second, it examines the adoption of the council-manager system of local government and the reserved and executive functions of the manager and the elected representatives. Third, it examines the differing roles that local government fulfils. Also, by comparing the Irish system of local government to that in operation in many European countries, the chapter explores the remit and functions of Irish local government. In particular, the chapter examines urban planning as a function of local government. It briefly examines the process in making a development plan and the role local authorities play in controlling development in their respective administrative areas through the system of permissions and refusals, an executive function of the local authority. Fourth, it explores attempts by Central Government at reforming local government in the 1990s. Finally, the chapter examines the financial provisions of local government and sources of revenue.

3.2 Local Government in Ireland

Roche (1982, 1) defines local government as a ‘system of administration in political sub-divisions of a state, by elected bodies having substantial control of local affairs’. The elected bodies are local authorities which usually operate within a restricted but defined geographical area with political representatives being elected locally every number of years. It is the level of government closest to the citizen and has a role in giving expression to local identity, representing the concerns and views of the locality and making decisions and setting priorities based upon the needs of local communities (Callanan, 2003; Collins, 1987; Stoker, 1991).

Local government in Ireland was British in origin having been established through the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898 (Callanan, 2004; Knox & Haslem, 1994; McDonald, 1986; Roche, 1982). Although some
variations have been introduced since the foundation of An Saorstát Éireann in 1922, the basic structure of local government in Ireland remained largely intact until ‘Better Local Government’ in the late 1990s which, having reviewed the local government system, issued recommendations for change. Up until this point, the only notable changes, as Keogan (2003) points out, was the widespread introduction of the management system in the 1940s and the abolition of domestic and agricultural rates in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The operation of the local government system in the Republic of Ireland is overseen by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in terms of structures, functions, financing and human resources. The present system of local government consists of a number of local and regional authorities at three levels:

- City and County Councils form part of the upper tier of local government in Ireland. At the city/county level there are five City Councils comprising Cork, Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. County Councils have equal standing with the city councils and a similar range of functions. The 29 county councils in the twenty-six county Irish Republic can be explained thus:
  - County Tipperary has two separate councils – one county council for the north of the county and another for the south
  - Following local government reorganisation in 1994, Dublin County Council was divided into three administrative counties – Fingal, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and South Dublin
Town Councils and Borough Councils form part of a lower tier of local government having more limited functions which are subsidiary to those of the their relevant county council. There are currently five borough councils – Clonmel, Drogheda, Kilkenny, Sligo and Wexford – and seventy-five town councils in Ireland.

- At a regional level, eight Regional Authorities – Border Regional Authority; Dublin Regional Authority; Mid Eastern Regional Authority; Midland Regional Authority; Mid West Regional Authority; South East Regional Authority; South West Regional Authority; West Regional Authority – co-ordinate some of the city/county and sub-county activities and play a monitoring role in relation to the use of EU structural funds.

http://www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/LocalGovernmentAdministration/
http://www.environ.ie/en/Links/LocalAuthorities/RegionalAuthorities/
• Two Regional assemblies – Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly and Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly – were established in July 1999 under new structures for regionalisation. The Regional Assemblies promote co-ordination of the provision of public services in their areas, manage new regional operational programmes in the next Community Support Framework (CSF) and monitor the general impact of all EU programmes of assistance under the CSF.

3.3 Managers and Elected Representatives

As legally defined entities enshrined in Bunreacht na hÉireann, local authorities comprise two arms: the elected members (councillors) and the executive (manager) and their range of functions are allocated by a single legislative code, the Local Government Act (Callanan, 2004; Collins, 1987; Collins & Cradden, 2001; Dooney & O'Toole, 2004). The distinctive council-manager system of local government in Ireland 'owes its origins to the United States of America' (Dooney & O'Toole, 2004, 173) where 'the idea of running municipal affairs in the same manner as business affairs took hold' (Ibid.). The management system found its first expression with the appointment of a manager to Cork Corporation following reconstitution in 1929. The management system eventually extended to all county and city authorities following the adoption of the City and County Management Act, 1940.

Managers are appointed on the recommendations of the Public Appointments Service, a body consisting of the Ceann Comhairle of the Dáil and the Secretaries General to the Government and the Department of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Managers have a standard contracted term of office of seven years, however, in some cases this can be extended to ten years (Barrington, 1991; Callanan, 2004; Dooney & O'Toole, 2004; Roche, 1982). The manager runs the local authority along with the elected members of the council and is directly answerable to the council. Legislation provides the manager a statutory position and statutory powers (Chubb, 1982) to act as Chief Executive for the efficient discharge of day-to-day business, however, Dooney and O'Toole (2004, 176) claim the manager often 'refers to the assistance of the individual councillors in helping the council to arrive at decisions'. There is a clear division between the powers of the manager and the

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8 http://www.environ.ie/en/Links/LocalAuthorities/RegionalAssemblies/
9 See Bunreacht na hÉireann Article 28A.1 which recognises the role of local government.
elected members. The law regulating the management system recognises two
categories of function: reserved functions discharged by the elected members
of the council and executive functions performed by the manager (Callanan,
2004; Collins & Quinlivan, 2010; Dooney & O’Toole, 2004; Sheehy, 2003):

- **Reserved functions**, which must be adopted by resolution of the
  members of the council, generally tend to be in the policy domain and
  set the policy framework within which the manager and other local-
  authority officials must work

- **Executive functions**, concerned with the day-to-day administration of the
  local authority, include advising council members in the exercise of their
  functions; estimating and fixing the council budget; controlling
  expenditure; and giving or withholding planning permissions. In practice,
  many day-to-day executive functions are actually devolved to Directors
  of Services.

In order that responsibility may be clearly defined, the law provides for
an exact division between the reserved functions of the elected members of the
council and the executive functions of the manager. Reserved and executive
functions in practice, however, are complimentary; managers and councillors
work, not independently of each other, but in close co-operation: The elected
members of the council appreciate that the manager is the expert in
administration, having normally spent his whole life in local government, while
the manager attends council meetings as if he were an elected member,
although the manager cannot vote on council business (Dooney & O’Toole,
2004).

Knox and Haslem (1994, 60) claim the role of the manager has
established an ‘efficient modus operandi which successfully balances the needs
of local democracy and administrative efficiency’. Sheehy (2003, 141), on the
other hand, argues that it has in fact ‘resulted in a democratic deficit where many
decisions and policies are initiated and implemented by a non-elected
manager’. Barrington (1991, 168) also criticises the system for ‘separating real
responsibility from election’ believing the development of local democracy would
be better and best served through the election of a chairman or mayor instead
of the present ‘bureaucratic mechanisms’ (ibid.) while Collins (1987, 163) views
the manager as a political actor in the context of the state apparatus ‘which
includes the central bureaucracy, the national legislature, ministers, government and state-sponsored bodies as well as local authorities'.

The role of elected representatives has also been criticised; Barrington (1991, 168), states elected representatives to local government 'are always straining at the leash to get involved in the detailed problems of their constituents' since a councillor who neglects his constituents will 'find himself replaced by a new, more active councillor' (Ibid.) hence both incumbents and contenders engage in near-continuous door-to-door campaigning, incessant leaflet dropping, and the operation of full-time local constituency offices. This view is shared by Collins (1987) and McDonald (1986) who acknowledge the great emphasis which councillors place on the expression of individual or neighbourhood citizens' problems. This concern with patronage, special interests and preferential consideration for certain individuals can sometimes manifest itself in the council chambers when councillors, wishing to be seen as championing the interests of those who elected them, require the manager to carry out a specific function, known as Section 4 (in reference to the City and County Management (Amendment) Act, 1955 later repealed and replaced by Section 140 of the Local Government Act, 2001) (Callanan, 2004; Dooney & O'Toole, 2004):

'For generations, Irish people saw that to get the benefits that public authorities bestow, the help of a man with connections and influence was necessary. All that democracy has meant is that such a person has been laid on officially, as it were, and is now no longer a master but a servant (Chubb, 1982, 228-229).

3.4 Roles and Functions

Callanan (2003) identifies local government, generally, as fulfilling a number of different roles. Examined in an Irish context these roles include:

- **Local government as an instrument of local democracy** affording people the right to have a say in the determination of local affairs and decision making through public participation
- **Local government as a local regulator**, manifest in its planning and development responsibilities, where development plans for the local area are adopted, and decisions whether to grant or refuse planning permission are taken
• **Local government as an agent of central control** where local authorities are used by Central Government as a resource, and are financed so as to engage in particular activities as directed by Central Government

• **Local government as a provider of services** which includes the provision of housing, the maintenance of local roads and drainage schemes, refuse collection and the provision of parks, libraries and other community facilities.

Local government in Ireland has a more immediate effect on the day-to-day lives of people than most other sectors of public administration because of the role local authorities play, the range of matters for which they are responsible and their closeness to local communities (Callanan, 2004; Collins & Quinlivan, 2010). Apart from Dáil Éireann and the Presidency, local government it is the only other institution whose members are directly elected by the people. In that regard, Irish local government has both a representational and an operational role with responsibility for a range of services. In comparison to other EU states, however, Ireland actually has a weak system of local government. Barrington (1991) and Collins and Quinlivan (2010) claim Irish local government is an agent of strict central control. Similarly, Chubb (1982; 288) suggests local government in Ireland is nothing more than 'subordinate government' while Roche (1982) considers it 'local representative government' since all local government functions and powers are derived from the Oireachtas. Moreover, McDonald (1986) identifies an *in loco parentis* relationship between central government and local authorities and asserts local authorities have no inherent authority at all. Collins and Quinlivan (2010) offer a possible reason as to why local government is so heavily centralised: when An Saorstát Éireann was set up in 1922 the country had been ravaged by the War of Independence (1919-1921) and then by the Civil War (1922-1923). Seeking authority and respect over a deeply divided country, the new government of Cumann na nGaedheal needed to keep a tight rein on things. Strict centralised control was deemed the most appropriate course of action. In time, centralisation took firmer shape and local government became increasingly irrelevant:

> 'Because of the way we have allowed government in this country to be so centralised, the whole focus of political debate is on the Dáil rather than the local unit, even on local issues. What one finds is that instead of people going to their local authority with this or that problem, they go to one of the clinics set up by local TDs' (McDonald, 1986, 51).
Callanan (2003), Collins and Cradden (2001), Collins and Quinlivan (2010), and Knox and Haslem (1994) list the functions and competencies of local authorities according to eight programme groups:

1. Housing and Building
2. Road Transport and Safety
3. Water Supply and Sewerage
4. Development Incentives and Control (Planning)
5. Environmental Protection
6. Recreation and Amenity
7. Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare
8. Miscellaneous Services (Financial Management, Elections, Consumer Protection, etc.).

While this list 'seems to represent a reasonable devolution of functions to local government' (Callanan, 2003, 8), the prescribed remit of local authorities is actually very narrow and quite restricted if consideration is given to, and comparisons made with other European states where it is common place to find local authorities engaged in such vital services as health, education, public transport, education (at both primary and second-level), social welfare and policing. In Ireland, local control of education, for example, has largely been passed to Vocational Education Committees (VECs), while the health remit of local governments has passed to Health Boards (replaced by the Health Service Executive (HSE) in 2005) following the Health Act, 1970. Moreover, the establishment of An Bord Pleanála (see chapter 4) following the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976 was seen as another inroad into local government responsibilities and since the 1990s the National Roads Authority (NRA) has taken overall authority for national roads projects while waste management has been largely given over to PPPs (Collins & Cradden, 2001; Collins & Quinlivan, 2010; Knox & Haslem, 1994). Moreover, the imposition of a manager has effectively removed decision-making from elected councillors. Although the manager is answerable to the Dáil as well as the local council, there is nevertheless a suggestion among some academics namely that local policy decisions may be heavily influenced by TDs and hence be dictated by national politics rather than local needs (Callanan, 2004; Dooney & O'Toole, 2004). As a consequence, and as Keogan and Callanan (2003) point out, Irish people feel they have a reduced stake in local government. This, therefore, manifests itself in a lack of public interest in local government as the
public look to central government rather than local government to address their concerns. This presents a significant challenge for local authorities; if the perceived relevance of local government to people's daily lives is that of 'an invisible layer of government' (Keogan & Callanan, 2003, 503) how then can it hope to achieve 'satisfactory autonomy in providing for the substantive needs of its citizens?' (Ibid.).

A resolution of the Council of Europe in 1969 set out a series of desiderata which included the constitutional embodiment of the principle of autonomy for a local authority as well as the right to manage, under its own responsibility, its own affairs with a freely elected assembly (Roche, 1982) and Article 3 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, signed by the Irish Government in 1997, states:

'Local self-government denotes the right and ability of local authorities, within the limit of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population' (Council of Europe, 1985).

For too long, local government in Ireland has been 'exposed to a continuous process of quiet decline in respect of its status, its role in service delivery, and local political control' (Stoker, 1991, 19). Until such a time as central government redresses its high degree of central control on local authorities, local government in Ireland cannot hope to achieve a position at the heart of the civic state (Keogan & Callanan, 2003; Knox & Haslem, 1994).

3.5 Urban Planning

Of the functions and competencies of local authorities set out in the eight programme groups, Programme Group Four - Development Incentives and Control (Planning) - is arguably the most controversial (Callanan, 2004).

Following the enactment of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963, emphasis was placed on turning local authorities into 'agents of dispersed national development' (Barrington, 1991, 158). Statutory recognition was therefore given to the development role of local authorities and each council was constituted as the sole planning authority for the area within its own jurisdiction (Collins & Cradden, 2001; Dooney & O'Toole, 1998; Roche, 1982). The Act also stipulated that each planning authority was legally obliged
to prepare a ‘Development Plan’ showing the proposed pattern of land use for the area within its own jurisdiction, and the plan had to be reviewed every four years (Bannon, 2004; Collins & Cradden, 2001; Dooney & O’Toole, 1998).

A development plan is the blueprint within which development, both public and private, takes place. It consists of a statement of development objectives setting out the overall planning policies of a local authority and is supported by maps which divide a city or county into zones of land for different uses including residential, agricultural, industrial or other activities, for example the development of roads and public utilities such as water and sewerage, the preservation and extension of amenities, and urban renewal (Dooney & O’Toole, 1998). Making, varying or adopting a development plan is a reserved function of the elected council by resolution passed at a meeting of a local authority; before adoption, however, the development plan must be prepared in draft form. Notice of a local authority’s intention to review the previous development plan must be published in national newspapers, then the draft form of the development plan is put on public display for at least ten weeks during which time the general public is invited to, and given the opportunity to make observations, submissions and suggestions about what the local authority is proposing. All submissions must be considered – but not necessarily accepted – by the local authority. A final stage involves consulting and seeking specialist advice and observations from various statutory agencies, voluntary and community organisations in the area under consideration, for example An Taisce, before the final plan is formally adopted by resolution of the elected members (Dooney & O’Toole, 1998; Roche, 1982).

Control of development on the other hand is a function of professional (local-authority or An Bord Pleanála) planners and is operated through a system of planning permissions and refusals (Collins & Cradden, 2001). Planning applications are measured against the development plan and development(s) may only proceed with express permission from the local authority (or from An Bord Pleanála on appeal). Granting or refusing planning permissions is an executive function of the manager, but the council may intervene in very restrictive circumstances to alter the manager’s decisions. If development is not undertaken after a period of five years, the planning permission lapses (Dooney & O’Toole, 1998; Roche, 1982).
Commenting on the provisions in the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963, Meghen (1973, 12) states the provisions of this Act ‘transformed the role of local authorities, which may now be regarded as development corporations’. As development corporations, planning authorities at local government level could ‘provide sites and services for all sorts of public and private development and may themselves undertake virtually any kind of development (including industrial and commercial development) and engage in promotional activities’ (Ibid.). However, Barrington (1991, 158) claims that for the provisions of this Act to have had any bearing on the planning system and the role of local authorities, Central Government control would have to be ceded and the issue of local government funding dealt with.

3.6 Reform

Following the Fianna Fáil government’s 1971 White Paper on local government reorganisation which proposed the ‘creation of a single tier of local government along the lines of the European model of municipality or district councils’ (Callanan, 2004, 58) reform of local government seemed to be on its way. However, a change of government after the 1973 General Election meant that the proposals in the White Paper were not followed through and local government reform remained largely aspirational until the 1990s when various reform efforts were put forward.

3.6.1 Barrington Report, 1990

In 1990, an Advisory Expert Committee on Local Government Reorganisation and Reform, chaired by Tom Barrington, was appointed to examine the role, functions and structures of Irish local government. The Barrington Report, reporting in 1991, identified a number of problem areas for local government which included the very narrow range of functions afforded to local government (Collins & Quinlivan, 2010). Extensive reforms did follow with subsequent legislation, namely the Local Government Acts of 1991, 1993 and 1994, generally giving effect to a number of the recommendations contained in the Barrington Report which included:

- The prohibition of TDs who become Ministers or Ministers of State from a ‘dual mandate’, i.e. retaining membership of, or seeking election to councils while in government (Section 13, Local Government Act, 1991)
• The introduction of a power of 'general competence' previously denied through the doctrine of *ultra vires* prohibiting local authorities from engaging in any activities they were not specifically authorised to undertake thereby restricting action to areas only where local authorities could adduce legal authority (Section 6, Local Government Act, 1991)

• The division of Dublin County Council into three administrative counties – Fingal, South Dublin, and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (Section 9, Local Government (Dublin) Act, 1993)

• The banning of all Oireachtas members from holding the chair or mayorality on local authorities (Section 6, Local Government Act, 1994).


Better Local Government: A Programme for Change became the blueprint for local government reform in 1996 by re-asserting the link between local government and local democracy:

'2.1 - Local authorities are the only bodies outside of the Dáil whose members are democratically elected by all of the people. This gives local government a status which distinguishes it from all other agencies – public, private or voluntary. In contrast to functionally organised government departments and other public agencies...it is locally based, has a broad range of functions and has a concern and identification with its area. This concern goes beyond the particular services delivered by local government to encompass the general welfare and overall development of the local area and its community' (DoE, 1996, 11).

Under BLG reforms, the role of local authorities was being steered towards a more consensual approach to planning through wider co-operation with local community groups, partnerships and other such organisations (Byrne, 2003). Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) were introduced by county and city councils to give effect to many of the proposals contained in BLG and were designed not only to enhance the role of councillors in policy making but to foster a higher degree of local participation and community input into the delivery of local-authority policies, functions and services since local communities were seen as a potential major resource available to councillors in carrying out their functions (Doyle, 2003). Callanan (2004) and Keogan (2003) outline the provisions for SPCs:
The chairperson of each SPC must be an elected member of the council; two-thirds of the membership of SPCs will be made up of council members, with the remainder consisting of sectoral interests.

To promote local participation organised groups will be involved in relevant committees; not less than one third of the members of SPCs will be drawn from bodies relevant to the committee's work including social, business, trade union, development and environmental ones.

As well as the establishment of SPCs, BLG also proposed a series of changes to local government founded upon a number of core principles namely, enhancing local democracy and providing proper resources for local authorities. In acknowledging that local authorities are inadequately funded, BLG called for a locally available, independent and buoyant source of finance for local authorities if they are to maintain services at acceptable levels (Keogan, 2003). Among the criticisms levelled at the proposals in BLG is that concerning enhancing the role of elected councillors. Since its publication in 1996, there has been no change in the balance between reserved and executive functions within local authorities with some commentators, Keogan (2003, 90) in particular, arguing that the establishment of Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) actually 'detracts from the direct involvement or influence of directly elected people as representatives in the deliberative process, and transfers some of this power and influence to others whose accountability to the public is at best ambiguous and at worst absent', while Collins and Quinlivan (2010, 366) claim BLG actually resulted in 'minimal impact on the overall structure or operations of the local government system':

'For local government to be genuinely reformed...there needs to be a genuine commitment to Better Local Government by the principal actors, especially...central government' (Keogan, 2003, 96).

3.6.3 Constitutional Recognition of Local Government, 1999

Until 1999 there was no recognition of local government in Bunreacht na hÉireann. A Constitution Review Group was set up and recommended that a form of 'recognition in principle of local government' (Collins & Cradden, 2001, 66) should be inserted in the Constitution, so as to be in accordance with the European Charter for Local Self-Government. Taoiseach Bertie Ahern gave a political commitment that there would be a constitutional amendment
recognising local government: following a referendum (Twentieth Amendment) in June 1999, the Local Government (Amendment) to the Constitution was passed by the people and enshrined by Article 28A, however, unlike the constitutional instruments of some other European countries, there is no guarantee of functions or power, although the principle contribution of this amendment is that it prevents the deferral of local elections as happened in the past. The Local Government (Amendment) to the Constitution does however, set out a maximum of five years between local elections by virtue of the insertion of Article 28A.3\textsuperscript{10} (Collins & Cradden, 2001). As Callanan (2004) points out, local-authority elections ought to take place every five years but during the 1980s and 1990s it was commonplace for governments to exercise their legal power to postpone them, leading in some cases to intervals of six or seven years. The constitution amendment now stipulates that local elections must take place every five years.

3.7 Financial Constraints

Irish local government has been subject to considerable change over recent years. However, as Keogan (2003, 95) states, ‘for change to be regarded as reform, it must result in something better than before’ and Irish local government still has a number of issues to address including the problem of local authority finance which seriously undermines the independence of local government.

In terms of spending, until the late 1970s local authorities were responsible for approximately a third of the total expenditure of public authorities, the objects of this considerable expenditure lying in the first three of the programme groups: Housing and Building; Road Transport and Safety; Water Supply and Sewerage (Chubb, 1982). In the run-up to the General Election of 1977, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael became ‘embroiled in a disgraceful auction’ (Barrington, 1991, 160) which included, among many things, the abolition of rates on domestic dwellings. Fianna Fáil won the election and, as promised, the rating taxation system as it applied to domestic properties was abolished in 1978 (Barrington, 1991; Callanan, 2004; Keogan, 2003; McDonald, 1986):

\textsuperscript{10} See Bunreacht na hÉireann Article 28A.3 which sets a maximum of five years between local government elections.
'Local authorities were devastated by the decision to abolish rates on domestic properties, the main source of income for most authorities' (Bannon & Bradley, 2007, 92).

In abolishing domestic rates, the government made assured promises to local authorities that the loss of funding provided by domestic rates would be covered by an equivalent central government allocation from the exchequer. However, the Fianna Fáil government was facing an increasing deficit as it engaged in a massive programme of public spending by borrowing excessively in order to meet day-to-day expenditure. McCarron (1986, 13) states Fianna Fáil's abolition of rates on domestic dwellings had 'a major impact' on the operational activities of local government and has left local government 'operating in a straightjacket' (O'Reilly, 1986, 68) ever since. In addition, the system of agricultural rating was declared to be unconstitutional by the courts in 1982 and this too was abolished (Barrington, 1991; Callanan, 2004). Successive governments failed to address the resulting shortfalls and, as a consequence, local government has been 'living financially from hand-to-mouth' (Barrington, 1991, 161):

'Local government, as an independent, adequately resourced and innovative part of the nation's life, has been on the decline since the 1970s' (Collins & Cradden, 2001, 69).

In 1997, the decision to abolish domestic water charges was taken by the Rainbow coalition. Callanan (2004, 72) describes this as 'a further blow to the independence of local authorities'. To replace the revenues generated from charges for domestic water, local authorities were to derive their revenue from four sources stipulated in the Local Government Act, 1998 (Callanan, 2004; Collins & Cradden, 2001; Keogan, 2003):

- **Rates on commercial properties** which are determined each year by the local authority as part of its annual budgetary process. Although local authorities set the level of the rate on commercial properties, Central Government lays down maximum permissible increases in rates and this significantly limits the ability of local authorities to significantly increase their revenues
- **Central government grants**, established in the Local Government Act, 1998. Allocations are made to local authorities from an exchequer contribution; money local authorities receive can be spent on any matter within their own discretion, but there are times when Central-
Government grants are allocated to specific projects, for example higher education grants or waste water treatment installations, and this money must be used for these purposes

- **Motor taxation receipts** became a dedicated local government revenue source, however, the basic rates were set nationally
- **Charges levied for the provision of certain services** including rents on local authority housing, commercial water charges, planning application fees, development levies, refuse and landfill charges.

Although rates were resented by people, they did give them 'a real stake in their community... so they had a vested interest in what the local authority was doing with their money' (McDonald, 1986; 51). The loss of rates revenue as an independent source of finance has affected the operation of local authorities presently:

>'Many of the crucial weaknesses of local government... is its lack of a significant element of local taxation' (Collins & Cradden, 2001, 66).

In 2006, Indecon International Economic Consultants (IIIEC) carried out a review of local government finance. Among its findings and conclusions, the report called for 'considerable change in the system of local government financing, with a move towards more locally based sources of funding' (IIIEC, quoted in Collins & Quinlivan, 2010, 366) to enable local authorities simply to maintain service provision. This was not the first time that such calls had been made. Keogan (2003, 96) asserts that 'local government finance is the litmus test for central government's commitment to local government', while Knox and Haslem (1994, 69), in their concluding remarks on Irish Local Government, contend that 'until the problem of local authority finance is tackled successfully, the independence of local government must be seriously called into question'.

**3.8 Conclusion**

The system of local government in Ireland owes its origins in large part to the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898 established under British rule. With the notable exception of the introduction of the council-manager system of management, introduced under the City and County Management Act, 1940 and the abolition of domestic rates taxation in 1978, local government in Ireland remained largely unchanged until a series of changes were introduced in the
1990s by Central Government; the the Local Government Acts, 1991, 1993 and 1994 respectively prohibited ‘dual mandate’ membership of councils for TDs, granted power of ‘general competence’ to local authorities previously denied through the doctrine of ultra vires, divided Dublin County Council into three administrative councils (Fingal, South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown), and banned members of the Oireachtas from holding the chair or mayorality on local authorities. In 1996, Better Local Government introduced Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) to enhance the role of councillors in policy and to foster a higher degree of local participation and community input into the delivery of local-authority policies, functions and services, however, critics of BLG state that SPCs are driving a neoliberal agenda as SPCs actually detract from the direct involvement or influence of directly elected people as representatives in the deliberative process and transfers this power and influence to others whose accountability to the public is ambiguous. The constitutional reform of local government in 1999 guaranteed that elections are to be held every five years, but there is no constitutional guarantee of the role or powers of local government which remains subordinate government. The council manager is appointed by a three-person body consisting of the Ceann Comhairle of the Dáil, and the Secretaries General of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Health and Children and his/her powers are defined through legislation. Managers perform the executive functions which concern the day-to-day administration of the local authority. Critics of the management system claim that there is no democratic input into the selection of a manager and there is a suggestion that the manager is a political servant to Central Government. Elected representatives are ascribed reserved functions within the council and these are in the policy domain. There is also criticism of the role of elected members with some suggesting that the parochial nature of Irish politics engenders clientelism and political favours in an attempt to secure re-election. Such patronage has been manifested through the abuse of Section 4 rezoning in County Dublin during the 1970s and 1980s. The functions of Irish local government are defined according to eight programme groups, of which urban planning is one, however, when compared with the range of functions given to many European local governments, which include vital services as health, education, public transport, education (at both primary and second-level), social welfare and policing, the prescribed remit in Ireland is very limited with commentators considering it subordinate to the centre which has an in loco parentis relationship with local authorities. As well as a limited range of functions, financial constraints also undermine the independence of
local government; in 1978 Fianna Fáil abolished the domestic rates taxation, in 1982, agricultural taxation was deemed unconstitutional and thus it was also abolished, and then in 1997, the Rainbow coalition government abolished water charges. Local government finance is presently derived from rates on commercial properties, Central Government grants (established through the Local Government Act, 1998), motor taxation receipts and charges for the provision of certain services such as refuse collection, however successive governments have failed adequately to address the shortfalls in local government finance.
Chapter 4

Irish Urban Planning

4.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly explores the evolution of Irish urban planning from the turn of the twentieth century and examines, specifically, how the neoliberal agenda was promoted by Central Government by the late 1980s and how this has manifested itself in planning at the local level. First, the chapter briefly outlines the evolution of, and legislative foundations of Irish planning from the early twentieth century to the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 (the genesis of modern Irish planning) and the establishment of An Bord Pleanála following the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976. Second, the chapter examines the package of incentives in the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 and Finance Acts, 1986 and 1987 in the context of the dilapidated state of Dublin’s inner city in the 1980s. In particular, examination is given to the rationale and implications of the imposition of an SPDA in Irish planning and the establishment of Custom House Docks Development Agency as a private development body with planning powers to expedite and oversee regeneration of Dublin’s docklands. The chapter also examines the promotion of a ‘can-do’ entrepreneurial culture from Central Government and the manner in which local authorities were both encouraged and forced to respond to the new development opportunities in the city. Finally, the chapter explores how the neoliberal agenda gradually manifested itself into the ethos of local authority planning by examining Irish urban planning at the turn of the new millennium through the Planning and Development Act, 2000, the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002, the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006 and the degree to which this has been reflected in planning practice in the four local authorities of Dublin.

4.2 Legislative Foundations

At the turn of the twentieth century, Dublin was characterised by large numbers of unfit and overcrowded tenement dwellings. As Dublin continued to fester and grow in an unplanned manner, a new science – urban planning, urging the necessity of the proper ordering of the urban environment – was being embraced in the UK as a tool to bring order to the chaos and squalor of
cities. Despite the enthusiasm and belief for urban planning by a few individuals, urban planning was mainly viewed with indifference by representatives of the old Irish parliament and local government and, by the general public. In an effort, however, to alleviate the problems of uncontrolled slums and overcrowding in Dublin’s inner city, the *Civics Institute of Ireland* promoted a competition seeking suggestions for the development Dublin. The winning design, *Dublin of the Future* (1914) by Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly and Arthur Kelly, was not published until 1922 but by that time, Dublin had been ravaged by the Easter Rising, the War of Independence and Civil War. Ireland’s first *Town Planning Bill* was introduced to Dáil Éireann in 1929, however, hopes for a strong and informed planning approach by the Free State Government proved to be unfounded:

‘Any government, beset by the ravages of poverty, unemployment and emigration, while also involved in an economic war with its major trading partner, was unlikely to look favourably on the seductive occupation of planning’ (Bannon, 2004, 1).

Another *Town and Regional Planning Bill* was introduced in 1933. Local authorities were invited to make comments on the Bill, however, none actually did:

‘As a newly emerged post-colonial nation whose independence was rooted in the land question, proposals relating to the common good or to the regulation of the use of land in the public interest, were unlikely to generate public enthusiasm or strong political commitment (Bannon, 2004, 3).

The *Town and Regional Planning Act of An Saorstat Éireann, 1934* stipulated, for the first time, that any person wishing to initiate development of any sort must first seek and obtain planning permission from the relevant authorities. The Act also led Abercrombie, Kelly and Robertson to produce a second comprehensive plan for Dublin in the *Sketch Development Plan* which proposed controlling the spread of Dublin’s growth by way of the imposition of a ‘green belt’, thereby restricting further development of Dublin to four ‘new towns’ at Tallaght, Blanchardstown, Lucan and Clondalkin. Planning officials, however, viewed the curtailment of population growth or movement unconstitutional and instead favoured and opted for the development of contiguous tracts within the city boundary. For Bannon (1989, 70) Irish planning in the early part of the twentieth century was ‘sadly a story of what might have been achieved’.
4.2.1 Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963

The decrepit state of many Irish towns and cities by the 1960s brought a stark realisation that Ireland urgently required a proper urban planning system (Bannon, 2004; Bannon and Bradley, 2007; MacLaran and Williams, 2003):

'80,000 people...lived in accommodation consisting of only a single room, including 25,000 in rooms shared by six or more people. Nearly 2,000 insanitary basement dwellings were occupied as well as a large number of condemned habitations' (Homer, 1985, 48).

In an effort to establish a planning system, the government requested the assistance of Professor Charles Abrams to advise them in relation to planning, housing, urban renewal and related matters (Bannon, 2004; Turpin, 1967). A report submitted by Professor Abrams' to the Minister for Local Government, Neil T. Blaney gave a 'critical appraisal of the planning position in Dublin with special reference to urban renewal' (O'Brien, 1967, 71). Abrams' report contained 24 recommendations covering planning legislation and the objectives thereof, the establishment of a planning appeals tribunal, the preparation of an urban renewal programme, the amendment of compulsory purchase legislation, the review of housing programmes and policies, the commissioning of a study on industrial location and the preparation of a scheme for land acquisition for industrial estates (Bannon, 2004).

Recognising the urgency of action required if towns were to be saved from decay Minister Blaney introduced the Local Government (Planning and Development) Bill to the Oireachtas on 12th July 1962 (Bannon, 2004). The Bill passed into legislation and the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 (which came into effect in October 1964) established a modern planning system in Ireland (Baker, 1994; Bannon, 2004; Bannon & Bradley, 2007; Curtin, 1967; Grist, 1999; MacLaran & Williams, 2003; McCarron, 1987; O'Brien, 1967; Stringer, 1967; Turpin, 1967). Although Ireland was cautioned against slavishly following the English town-planning model, the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963, drew heavily upon the Town and Country Planning Act for England and Wales, 1962 which was, one year later, under review by a Planning Advisory Group (PAG), set up to make major reforms to the English planning system and its legislation. In 1965, the
PAG Report contained radical proposals which led to new planning legislation and to major structural changes in the planning systems of England and Wales, as the existing system was considered too local to be economically relevant and, at the same time, too large-scale to be socially meaningful (Bannon, 2004; Bannon & Bradley, 2007):

‘Having adopted the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 it was to be almost forty years before this primary legislation was radically reviewed or replaced (Bannon & Bradley, 2007, 13).

Under the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963, planning became a function of local authorities which were given powers to tackle urban problems, whereas under the earlier Town and Regional Planning Acts, 1934 and 1939, this function had been discretionary (Stringer, 1967). In this way, the Act imposed ‘an obligation on local authorities to prepare development plans, setting out land use objectives for areas under their control’ (Curtin, 1967, 47):

In theory, this Act was supposed to herald the dawn of a new era for Irish urban planning by envisaging a ‘more active involvement of local authorities in development activities’ (MacLaran & Williams, 2003, 153). The reality, however, was quite different. MacLaran and Williams (2003) and Bannon and Bradley (2007) point to inadequate financing by central government and weak local government structures, which had few of the functions complementary to the wider economic, social and structural aims of planning, as key factors in making the delivery of planning objectives difficult, and in some cases, impossible to achieve. A second criticism levelled at the 1963 Planning and Development Act concerns the constitutional enshrinement of the right to private property in Bunreacht na hÉireann. As a result of this Constitutional guarantee, Irish urban planning practice bore ‘little resemblance to the theories of planning then in vogue internationally, or even to planning as practiced in many of the more developed countries’ (Bannon & Bradley, 2007, 13-14) as the Act created an urban planning system that was a ‘development-led’ planning process rather than the ‘plan-led’ system. Essentially what this meant was that the role of the planner was limited to approving or refusing development applications:

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11 See Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 Section 19 which empowered local authorities to make a plan indicating development objectives for their area.
12 See Bunreacht na hÉireann Articles 43.1.1 and 43.1.2.
At times of development boom planners tended to become overwhelmed with the number of applications lodged. However, at times of development inactivity when few applications were forthcoming, the power of planning was highly limited (MacLaran & Williams, 2003, 153).

The Abrams report encouraged universities to add planning courses to their architectural curriculum, however, many local authorities had no planning department and in cases where planning departments did exist, ‘planning posts were frequently filled by engineering staff with little or no training in planning’ (Bannon & Bradley, 2007, 53). In the absence of a planning department within a local authority, graduate planners were ‘sandwiched into the narrow confines of the engineering sections of local authorities’ (Bannon, 2004, 6) where ‘there was little opportunity for planning to demonstrate or to develop its balanced approach in terms of its economic, social and aesthetic aims’ (Ibid.).

4.2.2 Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976

A major feature of the Irish planning system is it grants the right of appeal to third parties to place on record their concerns regarding particular development schemes by appealing against a local authority’s decision to grant permission for development, irrespective of whether or not they possessed a direct interest in a development proposal (MacLaran, 1993; Bannon, 2004; Bannon & Bradley, 2007):

‘Ireland is unique among European countries in that it has an independent, third party planning appeals system which is operated by An Bord Pleanála. The appeals board provides an arbitration forum in which any decision made by a planning authority on a planning application can be reviewed at the request of the applicant or another interested party (Bartley, 2007, 31).

The Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 made provision for third-party appeals against planning decisions, decided by a local authority, to be taken directly to the Minister for Local Government13, however, there developed ‘the suspicion that some development permissions were granted on spurious grounds McDonald’ (1985, 198), thus, in an attempt to ‘avoid charges of corruption or bias towards friends and party contributors’

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13 See Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 Section 30 (3) which permitted third party appeals against development to be made to the Minister for the Environment.
the power to decide planning appeals was subsequently rescinded and transferred to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) following the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976 (MacLaran, 1993; Bannon & Bradley, 2007). This ‘extraordinarily democratic provision’ (MacLaran, 1993, 92) in planning legislation, however, has been a source of constant complaint by individuals and organisations concerned with broader physical and social issues such as An Taisce, considering ABP to generally favour private-sector development interests; however, private-sector developers have also been critical of ABP, demanding the abolition of the right of third-party appeal, stating it occasions considerable delays in development and is open to abuse ‘by unscrupulous individuals for the purpose of extorting money’ (McDonald, 2000, 327).

4.3 Inner-City Renewal

‘In the 1980s Dublin was so down in the dumps that one former Lord Mayor – Jim Mitchell, TD – said it had about as much character as a second-rate knacker’s yard’ (McDonald, 2000, 10).

During the 1980s Dublin city centre was characterised by a landscape with over 600 cleared sites and derelict buildings totalling 65 hectares, presenting a façade of inner-city dereliction (McGuirk & MacLaran, 2001; MacLaran & Williams, 2003). In a letter to the Irish Times in 1991, an architect from the Finnish Ministry for the Environment, following a visit to the city, wrote:

‘During my spare hours I tried to find all the streets I had only seen in the books. I walked, among other places, along its quays and Dame Street. It is difficult to express my disappointment and sad feelings as I saw the horrifying state of buildings and the streetscape. I have been travelling around a lot, but I don’t think I have anywhere else seen so many beautiful buildings – and right in the centre – left empty, left in the hands of vandals and the weather. It looked like the historic core was left to rot.’ (Santaholma, quoted in MacLaran, 1993, 101).

The reorganising of inner-city functions resulted in a steady decline in population as Dublin Corporation’s housing programmes progressively eliminated the insanitary and densely-occupied slums of the city, reducing occupancy rates and dispersing the population towards the ‘new towns’ (Kelly & MacLaran, 2004), heavy manufacturing and warehousing, which the unskilled

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and poorly-educated inner-city population had depended for employment, had either closed or relocated from the congested inner city to the suburbs where industrial estates had been provided (MacLaran, 1993; MacLaran & Williams, 2003), and for those who did not, or were unable to leave for the suburbs, unemployment was endemic and there was an over-reliance on the social welfare system. A growing awareness of the problems associated with depopulation of the inner-city coupled with the urgent need to address the issue of urban dereliction and dilapidation generated a series of initiatives aimed at restoring the physical fabric of the city. One such initiative was the Dublin Crisis Conference in 1986:

'We were not there because some of us had a professional interest in the minutiae of planning but because as Dubliners, we had seen the city we love melt away before our eyes at an alarming rate over the last twenty years' (Norris, 1986, 6).

The Dublin Crisis Conference focused minds and raised awareness of a city in crisis. Consequently, the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government brought forward legislation in the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 and Finance Acts 1986 which created a significant package of incentives aimed at encouraging renewal to deal with the dereliction and decay in the inner city (Bannon & Bradley, 2007; Drudy & MacLaran, 1994; MacLaran, 1993; McDonald, 2008):

'Urban regeneration as an idea encapsulates both the perception of city decline (in local economies, in the use of land and buildings, in the quality of the environment and social life) and the hope of renewal, reversing trends in order to find a new basis for economic growth and social well-being: rebuilding the city, clearing away obsolete buildings and vacant sites, and producing new building forms and designs, symbolised the renewal in action' (Healey et al., 1992, 3).

The inner city became the focus for urban renewal; the Urban Renewal Act empowered the Minister for the Environment to designate certain areas of the city as being in need of renewal, while the Finance Act, 1986 and in particular the Finance Act, 1987 encouraged the private-sector to invest and engage in the renewal of the inner city by providing special tax reliefs to apply in the designated areas (Bannon & Bradley, 2007; Bartley & Treadwell-Shine, 2003; Bissett, 2008; Drudy & MacLaran, 1994; MacLaran, 1993, 1999; MacLaran & Williams, 2003). Drudy and MacLaran (1994) outline some of the available incentives to stimulate private sector interest in the Designated Areas:
1. Full remission of rates for ten years on new buildings and on the increased value of reconstructed premises
2. Capital allowances for commercial development amounting to fifty per cent of the capital involved, whether the building is owner-occupied or leased
3. For tenants of new or refurbished premises, a rent allowance against tax amounting to the annual rent for a period of ten years
4. Owner-occupiers of private dwellings erected or reconstructed during the operation of the scheme are entitled to an allowance of five per cent of the net construction/reconstruction cost for each of the first ten years
5. Capital allowances for business premises in Custom House Docks amounting to one hundred per cent (54 per cent in the first year and four per cent thereafter).

Bannon (1999, 5) considers the financial incentives to have 'yielded good results in terms of physical construction, the removal of dereliction and an increase...in population of the inner city'. Moreover, the financial incentives provided a major stimulus to property development and 'propelled the property development sector into rising levels of activity' (MacLaran & Kelly, 2007, 73), however Brudell et al. (2004) criticise this new approach to redevelopment claiming central government has fostered a closer co-operation with the private-sector thereby ushering in a new era of urban politics where local growth and economic development take precedence over the welfare and service needs of people:

'Cities under capitalism are structured and built to maximise the profits of real estate capitalist and industrial corporations, not necessarily to provide decent and liveable environments for all urban residents' (Feagin, 1983, 3)

4.4 Neoliberalism and the Emergence of 'Can-do' Entrepreneurial Planning

It was considered by the Fianna Fáil government in 1987 that local-authority planning was 'too bureaucratic and too inflexible' (Bissett, 2008, 16) and therefore incapable of tackling the scale of the city's problems. Consequently, local-authority planning became increasingly marginalised following the vesting of planning powers in a Special Purpose Development Agency (SPDA) in the docklands which was 'endowed with planning powers to streamline planning controls and possess the operational and financial powers
to undertake infrastructural developments, acquire land, reclaim it and dispose of it at a subsidised cost to private-sector developers' (MacLaran, 2003, 10). It was therefore, within this period that central government 'took on the institutional dimensions of the entrepreneurial city' (Bissett, 2008, 12), as the neoliberal agenda which permeated government had effectively marginalised local-authority planning thereby engendering feelings of alienation and disillusionment among local authority planners (McGuirk & MacLaran, 2001). The desire among local-authority planners for renewed relevance in the urban planning system therefore 'necessitated a major reorientation of planning towards an entrepreneurial approach facilitative of property capital rather than some nebulous concept of defending the public interest or common good' (MacLaran & Williams, 2003, 168) as central government-led initiatives demanded that local authorities adopt a 'can-do' entrepreneurial culture and seek to promote a more 'pro-active' agenda in which urban planning would increasingly become overtly facilitative of private-sector property development (MacLaran & Williams, 2003):

'The conception of urban planning as an obstructive hurdle to development has become largely displaced...as it adopted increasingly entrepreneurial approaches that provided selective inducements to tempt developers towards certain courses of action rather than others. Increasingly, the carrot has tended to replace the stick' (MacLaran, 2003, 4).

Such a reorientation of Irish urban planning put local authorities under increasing pressure to respond in a pro-active manner to development opportunities. Dublin City Council, in particular, became overtly facilitative by the early 1990s as reflected in its 'new business-oriented management ethos' (Bartley & Treadwell Shine, 2003, 145) and the establishment of an Inner City Development Team (McGuirk & MacLaran, 2001). The ICDT was expressly pro-development and thus acted as a catalyst for renewal by using the sale of inner city corporation-owned sites, for which exchequer funding for development was unlikely to be forthcoming, to broker development deals and engender renewal (Kelly & MacLaran, 2004; McGuirk & MacLaran, 2001). Designated Areas were therefore specifically marked out by Dublin City Council as suitable locations for profitable development and to provide a facilitative channel through which prospective private-sector developers could be directed. This new configuration of governance 'provided the context for the urban planning system to be aligned with the prevailing ideology' (MacLaran & Williams, 2003, 160):
Concerned with promoting and selling the city in order to attract international investment, Dublin has become a place to be sold for entrepreneurial activity (McDonald, 2000, 361).

4.4.1 Custom House Docks Development Authority (CHDDA)

This shift toward the ideology of the entrepreneurial city was copper-fastened following the establishment of Custom House Docks Development Authority (CHDDA), a quasi-governmental and quasi-non-government organisation statutorily charged with mediating urban planning for the regeneration and redevelopment of Dublin’s docklands. CHDDA operates entirely outside the jurisdiction of Dublin Corporation Planning Department.

The Urban Renewal Act, 1986 provided for the establishment of a Special Purpose Development Agency in a derelict part of the docklands - the Port and Docks Board’s 11 hectare Customs House Docks site - in the northeast inner city. Modelled on, and drawing upon the experience of the Urban Development Corporations in Britain, most notably in London Docklands, CHDDA marked the ‘new face of urban planning’ (McGuirk, 1994, 296) in Ireland as local-authority planners (at Dublin City Council) saw their powers completely rescinded. CHDDA was the first (Mark I) model of urban regeneration in Dublin, as identified by Bartley & Treadwell-Shine (2003). Laying the foundation stone, Taoiseach Charles Haughey stated that "we are determined that this project will succeed and we will take whatever action is necessary at government and administrative level to ensure that no obstacle or difficulties will be permitted to prevent its full success" (quoted in McGuirk, 1994, 292):

‘Docklands redevelopment became de rigueur and a political 'cause célèbre' particularly championed by the Taoiseach, Charles J. Haughey’ (Bannon & Bradley, 2007, 131).

CHDDA was vested with planning powers enabling it to ‘make its own master plans and grant certificates to developers, allowing them to skip the step of seeking planning permission from Dublin City Council’ (Ross & Webb, 2010, 228) to spearhead the redevelopment of the Custom House Docks site (Bannon, 1989; Bannon & Bradley, 2007) and private-sector development permission was ‘granted en masse to a single all-embracing plan covering the redevelopment’ (McGuirk, 1994, 292) of this area of the city. McGuirk (1994) believes represents an example of explicit support of private-sector initiatives in
(re)development in Dublin. CHDDA was later extended to 20 hectares to accommodate the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) (Bannon, 1989; Bartley, 2007; Bartley & Treadwell-Shine, 2003; Drudy & MacLaran, 1994) where there were to be 'no restrictions on foreign currency transactions nor any capital gains tax on trading income generated within the centre' (MacLaran, 1993, 218). There was also to be a reduced corporation tax rate (ten per cent) for companies approved by the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) as being engaged in off-shore activities.

Many scholars of the urban environment view CHDDA as the 'catalyst for emerging entrepreneurial practices in Dublin' (Bartley & Treadwell-Shine, 2003, 163), thus for Bannon (1989), CHDDA raises important questions as to the nature of the approach to planning, the relationship to the surrounding local authority, and the relationship to adjacent communities and their participation in, or benefit from an SPDA. This sentiment has been echoed by MacLaran (1993, 107):

'The vesting of planning powers in a pro-development body...runs the risk of challenging the legitimacy of the urban planning system itself by exposing it as a tool for legitimating the unequal distributional outcomes of the development process'.

CHDDA was replaced by the Dublin Docklands Development Authority (DDDA) under legislation in 1997 to encompass redevelopment and regeneration of a larger area (526 hectares) of Dublin's docklands (Bannon & Bradley, 2007; Bissett, 2008). Hailed a major economic success by commentators, Docklands SPDA prompted phenomenal demand for office space in the IFSC in internationally-traded financial services, including banking, asset financing, investment management, and specialised insurance operations, creating significant employment in the area. Moreover, the state accrued significant tax returns from the multinational corporations that located in the IFSC:

'The Authority has provided a range of incentive measures to entice investment in a project planned and packaged as an international financial services centre. It comes complete with the requisite marina, conferencing facilities, luxury hotel and residential development, drawing on packaging the 'product' around the cultural traditions of the location' (McGuirk, 1994, 292).

Indeed, Bartley and Treadwell-Shine (2003, 151) claim 'the UDP has...extended and relocated the centre of gravity of the Central Business
District (CBD) in Dublin', however, despite the physical and economic success of the docklands, the results have not been without criticism as this transformation has not been in accordance with the original plan for the area which had proposed an integrated development comprising a wide range of business, residential and recreational functions. The focus on establishing the IFSC at the site led to a predominance of office activities and a limited amount of residual development. The resulting mono-functional landscape has been 'lacking in trickle-down benefits for the local indigenous communities' (Bartley & Treadwell-Shine, 2003, 151) given that, as McGuirk (1994) points out, consideration of social criteria had been down-graded in this new form of privatised planning.

4.4.2 Temple Bar

The second urban regeneration model (Mark II) identified by Bartley & Treadwell-Shine (2003) is exemplified by the Temple Bar regeneration project. The Temple Bar area had originally been earmarked as part of the southern component of a central bus station situated either side of the river Liffey operated by the state-owned Córas Iompair Éireann (CIE) which had been acquiring parcels of land in the area over a long period of time. In the interim, CIE had been letting these parcels of land out on short-term leases and at favourable rents, thereby engendering a Parisian-style 'Rive Gauche' atmosphere of mixed-use functions:

'Nowhere else in the city was there to be found such a degree of mixing of functions and it became increasingly apparent that this unique mixture was worthy of protection' (MacLaran, 1993, 221)

An Taisce felt so strongly about this unique area of the city, which could be traced back to the seventeenth century and which boasted the best remaining row of early Georgian houses in Dublin, that it called for the immediate abandonment of insensitive redevelopment, urging instead conservation. Dublin Corporation rejected CIE’s plans for the area and Dublin Corporation subsequently drew up an Action Plan for Temple Bar, 1990. Regeneration of Temple Bar began in 1991. Under provisions in the Temple Bar Area Renewal and Development Act, 1991\(^15\) and of the Finance Act, 1991\(^16\) a

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\(^{15}\) See Temple Bar Area Renewal and Development Act, 1991 Section 9 which established Temple Bar Properties.

\(^{16}\) See Finance Act, 1991, Chapter VII - Urban Renewal: Temple Bar and Other Areas, 54 - 58
new UDC was established to oversee the rehabilitation of the whole Temple Bar area; Temple Bar Properties Ltd., was set up to manage the project and private sector businesses were invited to participate in the regeneration process. Another subsidiary company, Temple Bar Renewal Ltd., was also established as the authority to act as development company for the area (Bissett, 2008; McGuirk & MacLaran, 2001; MacLaran, 1993). The Temple Bar regeneration project had a 'qualitatively different focus than the Customs House Docks' (Bissett, 2008, 14-15) as heritage-related tourism projects, centred upon the themes of culture, heritage and tourism in order to bolster the local economy, became de rigueur by the 1990s in urban regeneration for competitive cities (Bartley, 2007; Bartley & Treadwell-Shine, 2003). Florida (2002, 301), cites the Temple Bar regeneration project an example of how cities can successfully turn into 'lifestyle centres for dynamic, creative people' in his Creative Cities thesis. In contrast to the redevelopment of Custom House Docks, however, powers of planning over the regeneration of Temple Bar remained with the local authority:

'The local authority was back in the picture as a key player, albeit, not in the leading role' (Bartley & Treadwell-Shine, 2003, 156).

Local authority planners' role in the regeneration of Temple Bar was to work in conjunction with Temple Bar Properties Ltd. to develop a framework plan for the site, however MacLaran and Williams (2003, 164) tell an altogether different story of the local authority's actual involvement in the project:

'This initiative paid little heed to the city planners' existing detailed 'action plan' for the area and the role of the corporation planners was effectively marginalised'.

4.4.3 Historic Area Rejuvenation Project (HARP)

'The search for a more holistic form of urban regeneration underpinned by more democratic forms of governance began with the Historic Area Rejuvenation Project (HARP) in the Markets/Smithfield area in Dublin's northwest inner city' (Bissett, 2008, 17).

Having been marginalised from planning by being accorded only a passive planning role in the regeneration of Temple Bar and excluded entirely from the Custom House Docks/IFSC site, Dublin City Council had no choice but 'adapt organisationally in order to find a niche for itself within a rapidly changing city' (Bissett, 2008, 15). In contrast to, and in the context of growing public
concerns about the democratic deficits and exclusionary features of CHDDA, however, Dublin City Council planners had been influenced by community-based initiatives and the drawing up of local plans relevant to the requirements of inner-city neighbourhoods. This alternative approach, grounded in micro-area planning, was pivotal role in the regeneration of the Smithfield ‘HARP’ project, the third (Mark III) urban regeneration model for Dublin in 1994 (Bartley & Treadwell-Shine, 2003). In this alternative model of urban regeneration, new urban governance arrangements emerged from within Dublin City Council as the local authority took the lead in choosing the designated area for the HARP regeneration project while at the same time retaining full planning control over the designated site. Moreover, HARP offered the possibility of accommodating a diverse range of interests across a variety of sectors, including potential public-private sector partnerships, while allowing for considerable involvement by local community representatives and others interested in the development of the area (Bartley & Treadwell-Shine, 2003; Bartley, 2007). HARP was the forerunner to the introduction of Integrated Area Plans, however, as Bissett (2008, 17) states; only superficially has HARP ‘encapsulated a pluralistic participative methodology’.

4.4.4 The Liberties IAP

The Urban Renewal Act, 1998, introduced the fourth (Mark IV) model of urban regeneration, a holistic and integrative approach to urban planning. The Integrated Area Plan (IAP) was introduced in the Urban Renewal Act, 1998 following a study, carried out in 1996 at the behest of the Department of the Environment, on the impact and effectiveness of urban renewal schemes:

‘The consultants recognised that urban renewal in Ireland had become inextricably linked to tax incentives and identified two principle difficulties with the schemes to date: Firstly, the existing statutory development plans were prepared on too large a scale to provide the type of framework necessary for targeted urban renewal to be achieved and, secondly, the process for selection for designation had lacked sufficient rigor and focus (Grist, 2003, 249).

IAPs aimed to ‘embrace the complexity of contemporary urban systems through developing a holistic approach towards the achievement of social, economic and environmental goals, while encouraging the necessary inter-

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sectoral co-ordination to achieve such aims' (MacLaran & Williams, 2003, 168-169). In addition, they provided a 'much closer linkage between urban renewal and the planning system' (Grist, 2003, 249) as they involved the local authority 'developing its own distinct models of urban regeneration' (Bartley & Treadwell-Shine, 2003, 149), proclaiming itself in the process to be ‘a competitive, competent and democratically accountable agency capable of achieving successful entrepreneurial regeneration in the city' (Ibid.).

The local area approach, embodied in the idea of IAPs, would ‘create mechanisms and frameworks to ensure that the social dimension of urban renewal extends tangible benefits to local residents' (Bissett, 2008, 18). IAPs were embraced by ‘active entrepreneurial agents' (Bartley, 2007, 40) within local authority planning departments and became a key component of development plans by 1999 (Bissett, 2008).

The Liberties, one of the oldest and most distinctive quarters of Dublin city which had become physically, economically and socially devastated over the years, was designated for urban renewal by Dublin City Council under the Liberties/Coombe Integrated Area Plan, 1998, a plan which actually incorporated much of the content of the Liberties Community Vision and Framework Plan, 1997 (Brudell et al., 2004). The designation of the Liberties for IAP regeneration represented ‘the return of central and local government’s physical attention to an area which had been awaiting political attention...for almost half a century' (Brudell, et al., 2004, 75):

‘The Liberties IAP would address not only issues of physical development but also cover wider issues of physical development but also cover wider issues of local socio-economic benefit, social housing, affordable housing and community projects including training and education' (Dublin City Council, 'Liberties/Coombe Integrated Area Plan 1998', quoted in Brudell et al., 2004, 73).

While Bartley and Treadwell-Shine (2003, 164) claim that selecting areas for regeneration is a 'potentially exclusionary approach' with the 'losers' running the risk of 'becoming completely excluded from, and invisible within, the regenerated patchwork urban landscape' (Ibid.), Grist (2003, 249) claims that IAPs address 'not only physical development...but also the wider issues of local socio-economic benefits and environmental regeneration' in certain parts of the city. Brudell et al. (2004) disagree and believe Grist has failed adequately to take into consideration the reality of an IAP. Using the Liberties/Coombe IAP as
an example, Brudell et al. (2004, 74) demonstrate that the implementation of the IAP was economically driven, 'its impetus deriving from the private-sector - a sector whose interests would always differ dramatically from those of an inner-city community'.

Dublin City Council first proposed a cross-sectoral Steering Group, which would have a key role in steering the implementation of the Liberties/Coombe IAP, and a multidisciplinary Project Implementation Team, which would report to the Steering Group, for the IAP, however, as Brudell et al. (2004) claim, the Steering Group was later replaced by a Monitoring Committee, resulting in the agenda-setting, decision-making role of the community being inexplicably taken away from the community. Moreover, the community experienced serious difficulties with the IAP as what authority the Monitoring Committee actually had was undefined and questions were raised over how each of the key social, economic and physical objectives were being met as Dublin City Council was 'granting permission after permission to developments on tax designated sites in breach of the design specifications outlined within its own Urban Design Framework Plan and Integrated Area Plan' (Brudell et al., 2004, 83). The effect of this was the development of the Liberties in a manner that was contrary to that outlined in the Liberties/Coombe IAP.

4.5 Planning in a New Millennium

'Changes in planning legislation can be interpreted within a broader agenda of entrepreneurial planning within the Irish State' (Fox-Rogers et al., 2011, 639).

With the notable exception of Fox-Rogers et al. (2011) and Grist (2008), few studies have attempted to document turn-of-the-century shifts in planning theory and practice, towards an entrepreneurial modus operandi, through a thorough examination of changes in planning legislation as well as examination of the myriad planning guidelines produced by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in recent years ostensibly designed 'to help planning authorities, An Bord Pleanála, developers and the general public'.

4.5.1 Planning and Development Act, 2000

Although modern Irish urban planning is recognised to date from the commencement of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 the Act has since been amended by eight other acts between 1976 and 1999 – Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976, Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1982, Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1990, Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1991, Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1992, Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1993, Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1998, Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1999 – but as Fox-Rogers et al. (2011, 649) point out, these amending Acts only served to remedy 'various deficiencies that had become evident in the course of operating the system' such as the need for a non-political, independent appeals body – An Bord Pleanála – set up in 1976 (see 4.2.2).

The introduction and purpose of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 however, was to, ostensibly, consolidate and amend the previous planning Acts. Fox-Rogers et al. (2011, 650) however, contend that this Act, in practice, 'reflects an overall desire to streamline and expedite the planning process in response to pressures from the construction industry'. Indeed, Fox-Rogers et al. (2011) point to new procedures, namely the establishment and designation of Strategic Development Zones (SDZs) and Part V social and affordable housing provision, which are viewed as supporting the interests of development capital.

4.5.2 Strategic Development Zones (SDZs)

Strategic Development Zones (SDZs) are an adaptation of the UK's Simplified Planning Zones (SPZs), which were introduced in the 1980s during Thatcher's tenure as British Prime Minister. Under Part IX of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 the Government is empowered to designate a site for the establishment of an SDZ:

'The power to designate SDZs is an example of the Government's desire to retain the power to intervene in the planning process in the interests of national development' (Fox-Rogers et al., 2011, 655).
Following designation, the relevant local planning authority has two years to prepare a draft planning scheme – which is adopted by the elected representatives by resolution – consisting of a written statement and a plan indicating the manner in which it intends the designated site be developed. Appeals to ABP concerning the decision to adopt an SDZ can be made within four weeks of the date of submission; however, this is limited to only those individuals/groups that made submissions thereby raising serious concerns regarding the rights of third party appellants. Moreover, once ABP grant permission for the SDZ, the relevant planning authority is obliged to grant planning permission for applications that are in accordance with it and there is no right of appeal against the planning authority's decision (Fox-Rogers et al., 2011). Another feature of the establishment and designation of SDZs under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 is the prevalence of pre-planning application discussions between developers, local-authority planners and senior management officials. Developers have always sought direct access to planners in order to advance their chances of securing planning permission; legislation through the Planning and Development Act, 2000 finally ceded to the developers demands. As observed by Grist (2008, 3):

'...provisional agreements can be reached unconsciously in pre-application discussions on projects, even by careful and highly ethical officials who have no intention of prejudicing the subsequent decision-making process. These are very real issues, which...arise in the context of pre-planning consultations held at local level under s.247 of the 2000 Planning and Development Act'.

It is suggested by Fox-Rogers et al. (2011) and Grist (2008) that SDZs demonstrate the facilitation by the state's legal apparatus of the desire of private interests to secure local economic investment and property development, by creating what can only be described as an inherently pro-development planning environment.

4.5.3 Part V

A provision to address the chronic shortage of housing supply in the State during the Celtic Tiger was contained in the Planning and Development Act, 2000 under Part V. The purpose of Part V was to provide affordable and 19 See Planning and Development Act, 2000 Section 247 which permitted pre-planning meetings between local-authority officials and developers.
social housing in an integrated manner. Implementation of Part V was to be achieved through the development control system whereby local authorities impose a condition to the granting of planning permission demanding a developer to provide up to 20 per cent of a housing development site for social and affordable housing at existing use rather than market value (Conroy, 2007; Fox-Rogers et al., 2011). As expected, Part V of the Act was highly contested by the development industry. Fox-Rogers et al. (2011) assert that developers opposed Part V in highly sought after areas where residential property prices were at a premium believing that the social and affordable element of Part V would discourage prospective buyers from investing in property, thus, there was intense lobbying from the development industry to retain the full 100% of the scheme so as to maximise residential housing and apartment sales.

4.5.4 Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002

Since the publication of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 urban planning legislation has been amended three times under the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002, Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006 and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 'in order to facilitate entrepreneurial or developer-led planning' (Fox-Rogers et al., 2011, 654).

Following intense lobbying from the development industry, the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002 amended developers' requirement to provide up to 20 per cent of a development site for social and affordable housing. The amended Part V still allowed developers to comply with their social and affordable accommodation obligations albeit by two additional options (Conroy, 2007):

- Provision of land/sites/units at a different location within the functional area of the planning authority
- Payment of a specified sum of money, which would be used by the local authority for social and affordable housing purposes

Fox-Rogers et al. (2011) consider such provisions as running counter to the logic of Part V, as the amended legislature has actually facilitated developers in such a way that they may avoid providing social and affordable housing in locations where it is actually needed. Moreover, the secondary
objective of Part V related to the avoidance of undue segregation in the provision of social housing has been completely negated by the amended Part V provisions.

4.5.5 Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006

The Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006 principally saw the role of ABP ‘shift from a decision-maker of proposed developments, to a facilitator of strategic infrastructure development’ (Grist, 2008, 7) which is promoted mostly by the private sector. By inserting a Seventh Schedule to the Act of 2000, the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006 set out 28 classes of development that potentially can constitute strategic infrastructure and application for permission for strategic infrastructure (SI) is grouped under three headings relating to energy, transport and environmental infrastructure (Fox-Rogers et al., 2011; Grist, 2011). Given that ‘almost all major planning applications were being decided on appeal by An Bord Pleanála’ (Fox-Rogers et al., 2011 652) at the turn of the new millennium, the 2006 Act introduced a procedure allowing planning applications to be bypassed from local-authority planning level adjudication by gifting ABP a significant range of new powers to hold meetings and discussions with the promoters of major projects before an application is submitted whereby advice is given to the applicant regarding the procedures involved and the considerations which may have a bearing on the Board’s decision, thereby ensuring that development interests ‘are in-built in the decision making process’ (McGuirk, 1995, 69), as well as during the course of consideration of the application to determine whether the proposed development satisfies one of three defining criteria (Fox-Rogers et al. 2011; Grist, 2008):

- Is the proposed development of strategic economic or social importance to the State or region
- Will the proposed development contribute substantially to the objectives of the National Spatial Strategy or the relevant Regional Planning Guidelines
- Will the proposed development have a significant effect on more than one planning authority
Grist (2008) also points out that through the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006 the statutory rights of third party appellants were not on an equal footing to those of first party private-sector development interests. This was a marked departure from previous legislation which protected ABP from direct contact with both first and third party appellants so as to ensure that decisions on planning appeals had always been granted on merit and adherence to the development plan rather than through private-sector pressure and coercion:

‘Under all previous legislation, contact with the Board was by written submission only, except where the Board exercised its discretion to have an oral hearing, at which all parties had equal right of audience’ (Fox-Rogers et al., 2011, 652).

The Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006 also replaced the term 'common good' with the 'national interest' to, according to Fox-Rogers et al. (2011, 656-657), ‘provide broader scope and justification for granting permission for an application that materially contravenes the development plan’ thereby illustrating the inherent bias of recent changes in Irish urban planning towards favouring private capital.

4.6 Conclusion

The decrepit state of many Irish towns and cities by the middle of the twentieth century prompted the urgent need for a proper planning system and code. The Local Government (Planning and Development) Bill was brought forward in 1962 and passed by the Oireachtas, thereby establishing a modern planning system. The Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 made provision for the right to (third party) appeal and this was dealt with by the Minister for the Environment, however, there had been suspicions that some appeals were being granted on spurious grounds, thus power was transferred to An Bord Pleanála in the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976. Although ABP is an independent body in the adjudication of planning appeals, it is often the source of complaints with some declaring ABP favours private-sector development interests, while others opine that the right to appeal occasions considerable delays to developments and is open to abuse by vexatious individuals.
Dublin in the 1980s was characterised by a façade of inner city dereliction: the inner city population was decreasing as many families were moving out to the new towns at the edge of Dublin, traditional heavy manufacturing operations were closing down or relocating to industrial estates provided at the periphery, and unemployment was endemic among the working class population who relied on heavy manufacturing and port-related activities for employment. There was also a growing awareness that the fabric of the historic core of the city was deteriorating and there was a growing headwind of reports and conferences during this time. One such conference was the Dublin Crisis Conference in 1986 which focused minds and raised awareness of the problems in the inner city. Consequently, the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government introduced a package of incentives through the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 and Finance Act, 1986 to encourage renewal in designated areas of the city; however, some commentators have noted that this ushered in a new era of urban politics and marked the beginning of a closer cooperation with the private sector. Central Government encouraged local authorities to respond to the development opportunities being created and Dublin City Council duly obliged by adopting a new business-oriented manager ethos through the establishment of an Inner City Development Team which was very much pro-development and used the sale of corporation-owned sites in the inner city to broker development deals with private-sector developers. Some academics have argued that this was evidence of Dublin City Council beginning to align itself with the prevailing neoliberal ideology. When Fianna Fáil took office in 1987, it considered local authority planning to be too bureaucratic and inflexible to be able to tackle the scale of Dublin’s inner problems and thus favoured the imposition of a Special Purpose Development Authority (SPDA) at a designated site in the Custom House Docks. Drawing upon the experience of the Urban Development Corporations (UDC) in Britain, most notably in London Docklands, this SPDA was also selected as the site of a new International Financial Services Centre where there were to be no restrictions on foreign currency transactions nor any capital gains tax on trading income generated within the centre. The Custom House Docks Development Authority (CHDDA) was set-up and vested with planning powers to by-pass seeking permission from Dublin City Council. In that regard, the establishment of CHDDA and IFSC can be viewed as the moment when the government took on the institutional dimension of the entrepreneurial city. IFSC has been criticised for being monofunctional and lacking trickle-down benefits for inner city communities while criticism levelled at CHDDA included the manner in which local authority planning had
been marginalised from planning. Seeking renewed relevance in the planning system, planners at the City Council recognised the need for a major reorientation of planning towards an entrepreneurial approach facilitative of private capital and not necessarily the common good.

The Temple Bar area Renewal and Development Act, 1991 offered the local authority the chance to work in partnership with Temple Bar Properties Ltd, the company set up to manage renewal in Temple Bar. In contrast with CHDDA, planning was not vested in a special development agency and remained with the local authority, however, the establishment of Temple Bar Properties Ltd resulted in little attention being paid to Dublin City Council’s Action Plan for the area as Temple Bar Renewal Ltd, a second company set up to act as development agency in the area, proceeded to marginalise local authority planners from the system once again. Dublin City Council next turned to micro-area planning, a fore-runner for IAPs. Dublin City Council took the lead in choosing Smithfield as the designated area for the HARP project. Full planning control remained with the council, who worked with public-private partnerships, local community representatives and others with a vested interest in the regeneration of the area, however, only superficially did HARP encapsulate a pluralistic participative methodology as some have pointed out. The Urban Renewal Act, 1998 introduced IAPs to planning, however, IAPs were only embraced by active entrepreneurial agents. For example, in 1998 the Liberties was designated for IAP renewal, however, the impetus driving renewal for the Liberties was coming from the private sector and Dublin City Council assumed the role of facilitator to private-sector development as it granted permissions for developments in breach of their own IAP.

At the turn of the new millennium four new Planning and Development Acts had been introduced to Irish planning. The first of these Acts was the Planning and Development Act, 2000 which effectively consolidated and amended the previous Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts from 1963. In addition, the Planning and Development Act, 2000 introduced Strategic Development Zones (SDZs) and Part V to the planning code, however, Fox-Rogers et al. (2011) consider these additions as supporting the interests of development capital. Part IX of the 2000 Act empowered Central Government to designate sites for SDZs. Local authorities were obliged to then prepare a draft development scheme for the SDZ. Moreover, SDZs also facilitated pre-planning discussions between developers, local-authority planners and senior
management, and once approved, SDZ planning schemes cannot be appealed to ABP. In essence, SDZs have effectively turned local authorities into development agencies and Grist (2008) considers SDZs as espousing a pro-development planning environment. Part V of the 2000 Act stipulated that developers must give 20 per cent of development land towards the provision of social and affordable housing in an attempt to deal with the chronic shortage of housing in the State. Part V (mixed-tenure accommodation) was contested by the development industry on the grounds that it would discourage prospective buyers from investing in property in premium sites. Following intense lobbying by the development industry – and given the historically close links between the development industry and Fianna Fáil – Part V was amended in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002 which permitted developers to either provide an alternative site for social and affordable housing or give a payment to the local authority in lieu which can then provide social and affordable housing. In 2006, the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act shifted the role of ABP from a ‘decision-maker of proposed development to a facilitator of strategic infrastructure development’ (Grist, 2008, 7). The Act also set out 28 classes of development which may be considered Strategic Infrastructure under the headings of energy, transport, and environmental infrastructure. Moreover, the 2006 Act permitted planning applications (considered to be of strategic importance to the State) to by-pass local-authority planning level adjudication. The notion of planning for the ‘common good’ was also replaced by that of the ill-defined planning in the ‘national interest’ thereby illustrating an inherent bias of recent change in planning towards favouring private capital as the statutory right of third-party appellants was not given an equal footing to those of first-party private-sector development interests.
PART II: METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES
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Chapter 5

Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the aims of the research and the methodological procedures. First the chapter presents the background to the research. Second, the project aims and objectives are outlined. The overall methodological approach for the research is then set out. This is followed by discussion of the methodological strategy adopted in order to achieve the aims of the research, including sources and data-collection procedures. Finally, the chapter discusses the analytical approach to the gathered data as well as the analytical obstacles and methodological limitations involved during the research process.

5.2 Background to the Research

This research is concerned with Irish urban planning; in particular, it concerns the changing role of urban planning under a neoliberal agenda. The research explores Central Government policies and legislation that have impacted upon the theorisation of the role and the operation of planning since 1986. The research problem is operationalised through the specifics of a case study, Dublin.

This research grew out of conclusions from a previous study, undertaken for an undergraduate thesis in 2004 of urban planning in Donabate, in the jurisdiction of Fingal County Council, focusing specifically on the response to population growth by the urban planning system through the provision of services and general infrastructure.

Interest in the built environment and with urban planning in particular, developed through undergraduate courses generally and in particular from a report of the National Economic and Social Council which explored the provision of basic facilities such as shops, schools, recreational facilities and public transportation in suburban locations. This report concluded that ‘the absence of such amenities affects the way people live, the way an area develops, and the
degree of contentment and satisfaction people have with their area’ (NESC, 1981, 233). Almost 25 years later, the study in Donabate found Donabate to be lacking many essential services, such as shops, banks, a secondary school and there was overcrowding in the primary school, while general infrastructure, such as the provision of public transport, narrow country road in to and out of Donabate, inadequacy of the ESB substation and the water supply (which is often turned off), were not sufficient to cater for the existing population, which stood at 4,320 in 2002, never mind the future projected population of between 11,000 and 14,000 people by 2015 (McCrory, 2004). This then raised the question: is Irish planning plan-led or developer-led?

The findings of the study revealed a need for further comprehensive in-depth study of the urban planning system; while the previous study focused on the response to population growth by the urban planning system through the provision of services and general infrastructure, the current research reflects a broader and more in-depth perspective. The research explores change in urban planning philosophy over a 25 year period through examination of the planning code through legislation produced by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, and how such change(s) is interpreted and reflected in the operation of planning.

5.3 Aims and Objectives

The aims of this research is to examine the degree to which the neoliberal agenda has infused Irish urban planning - operating within a specific framework of policy and legislation enshrined in planning code through the Planning and Development Acts and planning guidelines - and to determine to what extent the operation of Irish urban planning is a reflection of an ideological shift in the theorisation of planning’s role since 1986 and how the demands of the private sector are being overtly facilitated over the ‘common good’.

In order to achieve the stated aims of this research, a number of interrelated objectives, consistent with the research aims, were formulated:

First, the research aims will explore the broad ideological background to Irish politics and investigate the implications of government-led changes in the role of the State since 1986.
Second, the research will examine the operation of Irish urban planning in Dublin’s inner city from the 1980s to 2000 and specifically explore the rationale behind the imposition of a Special Purpose Development Agency to redevelop Dublin’s docklands.

Third, the research will broaden its scope and examine the operation of planning since 2000 in the wake of the building boom and explore the degree to which there is a marked discontinuity in urban planning to determine the extent to which planning in Dublin is developer-led and developer-driven.

Fourth, the research will examine to determine whether the ideology guiding the Bord is shaped by appointments to the adjudicating board of An Bord Pleanála so as to ascertain ABP can be considered an unbiased arbiter in the planning process making objective decisions for the ‘common good’.

5.4 Justification of Dublin for Case Study

This research broadly explores ideological shifts in the theorisation of planning’s role since 1986 through examination of Planning and Development Acts and planning guidelines and the extent to which the operation of Irish urban planning is a reflection of such shifts. This research is a continuation of a long-standing personal interest in urban planning, physical development and change in Dublin. The choice of Dublin as a case study was considered appropriate for a number of other reasons: first, the Tribunal of Inquiry was the focus of great attention; it created frenzy in the media and left the public with a sense of disillusionment as to which master planning served. Second, as the capital city, Dublin is the engine for economic growth and capital investment in the state. Third, during the boom Dublin experienced and underwent the greatest physical change of any town or city in Ireland. Fourth, prior to 1994, Dublin had two councils – the City Council and the County Council. Urban planners for both the city and county operated out of one building, however, following the Local Government (Dublin) Act, 1993 the county was divided into three administrative counties, plus the extant City Council, each with their own planning department to regulate and control development in their own administrative area. This provides an opportunity to broadly examine and compare the experiences of the four Dublin authorities to planning under a neoliberal agenda:
'Dublin remains the benchmark by which Ireland’s ability to plan, develop and administer its urban environment will ultimately be judged' (Bannon, 1989, 173).

5.5 Methodological Approach

The methodology for this research was developed to respond to the challenges posed by the research aims and objectives. The research process, thus, is described below in the manner that it proceeded from initial questions through to the construction of an early conceptual framework of enquiry into actions undertaken in the field.

The methodological approach is based on the use of qualitative methods. By allowing for a more thorough examination of the respondents’ perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings of an empirical situation, qualitative research offers advantages that cannot be attained through quantitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996; Glaser & Strauss, 2008; Hakim, 1987; Kitchin & Tate, 2000; Quinn, 2002). Moreover, qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus and an increasing number of researchers are adopting multi-method approaches to secure not only a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation but also to achieve broader results which, in turn, allow researchers more confidently to assume that their findings and interpretations will be found credible (Bailey, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flick, 2006; Fontana & Frey, 2005; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). This multi-method approach is referred to as triangulation. Denzin (1978: 304) commends triangulation as ‘the most refined goal any investigation can achieve’ and has systematised potential triangulations into four types:

1. **Data triangulation** involving the use of a variety of data sources in a study
2. **Investigator triangulation** employing several different researchers in a study
3. **Theory triangulation** examining multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data
4. **Methodological triangulation** using multiple methods to study a single problem

Triangulation ‘adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 5) and employs different data collection
methods. This research involves the use of several methods: literature studies, document studies, in-depth interviews and photography and may thus be considered as data triangulation providing corroborating evidence to validate research findings (Bailey, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

Research must be built upon a conceptual framework (Bailey, 2007; Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss, 1989). The placing of one's work into the wider context of academic literature adds a 'significant addition to knowledge' (Hakim, 1987: 155) and provides a socio-temporal contextualisation. A thorough and in-depth literature study of a rich corpus of national and international material that mirror specific areas reflecting the research aims, was conducted in order to achieve the stated aims of the research. The collection of research literature was flexible throughout so that new and relevant material could always be added thereby enhancing the research process as it developed.

The research also comprises interview studies. The interviews are based on thematic interview schedules with questions deriving from the literature. The use of interviews was considered a useful instrument in exploring perceptions and opinions of the changing role of Irish urban planning under a neoliberal agenda among a purposive sample of informants with different types of knowledge and experience of planning thereby generating a multi-perspective outlook to the subject.

Data are also retrieved from document studies of selected Acts of the Oireachtas and other Government publications, for example Better Local Government: A Programme for Change and Development Management: Guidelines for Local Authorities as well as local authority development plans and other reports. The analysis of these documents comprises focused examination of data with relevance to the various sub-themes of the research.

The use of photographic evidence, undertaken by the researcher during the field-work, also provides a further opportunity to illustrate the findings of the research visually.

Qualitative researchers typically adopt a process known as analytic induction. Induction 'refers to the actions that lead to discovery of a hypothesis'
(Strauss, 1989: 5) from data in an attempt to develop theory. Theory developed from induction is called *grounded theory* because it 'arises out of and is directly relevant to the particular setting under study' (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996: 294). Developed by Glaser and Strauss in the early 1960s, grounded theory 'takes the researcher into and close to the real world so that research results and findings are grounded in the empirical world' (Quinn, 2002; 125) generating theory that is drawn from the researcher's gathered data (Dey, 1993; Glaser, 1978; Minichiello et al., 1990). This thesis should be considered grounded qualitative research from which important findings can be traced and further elaborated upon.

The risk of bias and the role of the researcher must be considered in the process of data gathering and analysis. In order to avoid bias, the researcher should enter the research setting with as few pre-determined ideas as possible so that data are not 'forced or selected to fit pre-conceived or pre-existent categories or discarded in favour of keeping an extant theory intact' (Glaser, 1978: 2-3). Glaser (1978) and Glaser and Strauss (2008) suggest researchers approach the field with an open mind and remain sensitive to the gathered data, by not filtering it through pre-existing hypotheses and biases, as only then can research be more objective and less theoretically biased.

### 5.6 Methodological Strategy: Sources and Data Collection

To achieve the stated aims and objectives of this research project, data collection was based on several techniques of obtaining secondary and primary data including collection of documents and literature, in-depth, semi-structured interviews and photography. Attendance at conferences and seminars with specific relevance for the research also contributed to the data collection.

The data was collected throughout the research period. Pilot interviews were carried out in 2008, while the principle interviews were conducted over a twelve month period between February 2009 and February 2010.

In order to achieve the research goals, data were collected from secondary sources such as published and unpublished documentary sources. The document studies were based on data comprising a purposive selection of various types of published documents including selected statutory Acts of the Oireachtas and other central-government publications, local-authority
development plans and reports, printed media clippings and unpublished interviews, reports and field notes. To make sense of, and extract meanings from such documents, 'hermeneutics, from the Greek word 'hermeneuein' meaning to understand or interpret' (Quinn, 2002: 114), provided a theoretical framework for interpretive understanding, or meaning, and special attention was paid to context and original purpose. The following outlines the sources used for this research:

5.6.1 Sources

Central Government

'Official documents from political authorities...produce a knowledge that lends itself to their inherently administrative purposes' (Hamel et al., 1993, 45).

Article 25.1 of Bunreacht Na hÉireann states that when a Bill, presented before the Oireachtas, has been, first, passed by Dáil Éireann and then Seanad Éireann and, second, signed by Án Uachtarán, that Bill becomes an Act of the Oireachtas and is therefore promulgated as a law in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of Ireland, thus as part of the objective to explore the effects of central government policy and legislation on the operation of the Irish urban planning system and how this has been reflected in the theorisation of planning and in planning practice, various Acts of the Oireachtas were examined:

Acts of the Oireachtas

City and County Management (Amendment) Act, 1955 (No. 12 of 1955)
Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 (No. 28 of 1963)
Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976 (No. 20 of 1976)
Planning and Development Act, 2000 (No. 30 of 2000)
Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002 (No. 32 of 2002)
Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006 (No. 27 of 2006)
Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 (No. 30 of 2010)

Finance Act, 1986 (No. 13 of 1986)

Finance Act, 1987 (No. 10 of 1987)

Urban Renewal Act, 1986 (No. 19 of 1986)

Urban Renewal Act, 1998 (No. 27 of 1998)

Dublin Docklands Development Authority Act, 1997 (No. 7 of 1997)

Local Government (Dublin) Act, 1993 (No. 31 of 1993)

Local Government Act, 1998 (No. 16 of 1998)

Local Government Act, 2001 (No. 37 of 2001)

Table 5.1 List of Acts investigated as part of the objective to explore Central Government policy and legislation reflected in the operation of the Irish urban planning system

Using the Local Government (Planning & Development) Act, 1963 as the benchmark, since it provided the legislative framework for the proper planning and development of cities and towns and other areas in Ireland and is therefore widely regarded to have "established the modern planning system in Ireland" (MacLaran, 2003, 150), an examination of selected Planning and Development Acts was undertaken to establish the degree to which planning has evolved under a neoliberal agenda. The Local Government (Planning & Development) Act, 1976 was consulted as it provided for the establishment of An Bord Pleanála. The Act of 1992 obliged ABP to ensure that appeals are disposed of as expeditiously as possible. The Planning and Development Act, 2000 revised and consolidated all planning Acts from 1963 to 1999. Among the other provisions in this Act included: legislative foundation for Local Area Plans for local authorities, provision of Part 5 affordable and social housing as well as a statutory obligation for ABP to dispose of appeals within 18 weeks. The Act of 2002 rescinded Part 5 while the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006 saw the remit of An Bord Pleanála enlarged as local-authorities were by-passed in the planning process on large-scale strategic infrastructural projects deemed to be in the 'national interest' and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 ensured that local-authority development objectives are consistent with the national and regional
development objectives of the National Development Plan and Regional Planning Guidelines.

The Finance Act, 1986 introduced financial incentives in Designated Areas to support the objectives of urban renewal and encourage investment by the private sector while the Finance Act, 1987 established a special 10 per cent corporation tax rate for certified companies setting up in the IFSC.

The Urban Renewal Acts, 1986 and 1998 were examined given the provisions for the establishment of Custom House Docks Development Authority (1986) and the institution of Integrated Area Plans (1998) in planning.

Local Government Acts - which provide local authorities with the powers, duties and functions necessary to represent the interests and respond to the needs of communities - were also examined. Local Government (Dublin) Act, 1993 divided Dublin County Council into three administrative counties, while the Local Government Acts, 1998 and 2001 established the Local Government Fund and repealed Section 4 of the City and County Management (Amendment) Act, 1955 and reconstituted it as Section 140 respectively. One can trace government-led changes in the role of the State in terms of redefining the role and functions of local government as well as the allocation of, and sources of funding, made available to local authorities. Taken together, these Acts carry significant implications for local authorities both financially and practically.

Dublin Docklands Development Authority Act, 1997 enlarged the remit of CHDDA to include dockland, not just Custom House Docks, and provided for the establishment of DDDA in place CHDDA.

Other government publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Publications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Renewal Financial Incentives, 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Local Government: A Programme for Change, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report on Urban Renewal, 1996 (KPMG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Development Regulations, 2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Urban Renewal Financial Incentives scheme was introduced in 1985 in an effort to alleviate the increasing problem of dereliction and dilapidation which had affected large parts on the inner areas of towns and cities nation-wide. The core objectives of the scheme were to promote urban renewal and redevelopment by promoting investment and reconstruction of buildings in designated areas.

Better Local Government - A Programme for Change charts an ambitious course for the reform of local government by requiring a new focus providing for new structures to deliver services more efficiently and effectively.

KPMG's Report on Urban Renewal assesses the impact, effectiveness and cost of urban renewal.

The 1998 Urban Renewal Guidelines set out criteria to assist local authorities in the selection and prioritisation of areas for IAPs.

The Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 consolidate all previous Regulations made under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and replaces the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 1994-2000. Of particular interest is Article 28 which sets out the range of development contexts for which Local Authorities are obliged to refer applications to An Taisce and other prescribed bodies for review and comment.

Achieving Liveable Sustainable New Apartment Homes for Dublin City, Draft Guidelines lay down more stringent minimum apartment size requirements than guidelines issue by the Department of the Environment; however, it is suspected that developers sought some form of recompense, such as increased building heights in the city.

Development Management: Guidelines for Local Authorities, issued by the Department of the Environment deals with the planning application process from pre-application consultation through validating a planning application, processing a planning application, to deciding a planning application,
formulating planning conditions, and enforcing planning decisions for local authorities.

*Local-authority development plans*

Local-authority development plans are the blueprint for localised planning and development. Development plans, consisting of written statements and maps, set out the overall planning policies and objectives of the local authority for a six-year period. Development plans for each of the local authorities under investigation were investigated to illustrate changing objectives for development in each of the local authorities.

**Local authority development plans**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Plan</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County</td>
<td>1998-2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fingal Council Development Plan</td>
<td>1999-2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin City Council Development Plan</td>
<td>1999-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County</td>
<td>2004-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dublin County Council Development Plan</td>
<td>2004-2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.3** List of local authority development plans reviewed in order to fulfil the objective of exploring local planning policy in Dublin City and County

**Other Documentary Sources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documentary Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Crisis Conference: Report, 1986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Golden Pages Classified Directory of Ireland (print and online)

**Table 5.4** List of other documentary sources consulted in examining the reorientation of Irish urban planning

Dublin Crisis Conference: Report, 1986 addressed the alarming degradation of, and neglect for the built fabric of Dublin City. The report called for immediate action to halt the destruction of the inner city.

The Golden Pages print and online were consulted in order to create a database of private planning practices in Dublin. The Golden Pages print organises businesses by category, rather than alphabetically by business name.
and the online version returns results based on a geographic area which is different from standard search engines which return results based on relevancy to the search term.

The use of documentary research could not provide answers to all the research questions and thus, was not considered sufficient in order to fulfil the research objectives. In that regard, primary research was conducted through in-depth interviews based on purposive sampling. The following discusses the interviews carried out in this research:

5.6.2 Data Collection

'There is no single best way of collecting data: the method chosen depends on the nature of the research questions posed and the specific questions you want to ask respondents. The aim of all methods is to obtain valid and reliable data: true answers, not distorted by the methods of collection or prone to chance fluctuation' (Wilson & Sapsford, 2006, 97).

Interviews

The face-to-face interview, defined by Kitchin and Tate (2000: 215) as 'a complex social interaction' where the researcher is 'trying to learn about a person's experiences or thoughts on a specific topic' (Ibid.), is probably the most commonly used qualitative technique. As part of the primary data gathering for this research, an interview survey was carried out. The informants were not drawn from the whole population but purposively from 'very specific groups of people' (Kitchin and Tate, 2000, 217), known as key informants, who possess specific knowledge related to the inquiry setting. Their insights can prove particularly useful in helping the researcher explore and understand certain types of a given phenomenon (Minichiello et al., 1990; Quinn, 2002). Given that the research explicitly seeks emergent categories through a process of constant comparison to clarify the research analysis and allow for the possibility of theory building, the researcher collected data from 'respondents who...are likely to have divergent views' (Bailey, 2007: 77). The interview schedule for this research was designed in a semi-structured fashion. The attraction of the semi-structured interview is that every interview can be tailored to particular individuals while at the same time providing opportunities to informants to fully develop their answers in their full complexity outside a structured format which is common of more structured interviews (Burgess, 1984). The interview focuses on a particular subject that has been pre-determined by an interview
schedule which is developed around a list of topics to be explored in the course of the interview so as to ensure the same lines of inquiry are pursued with each interviewee. The structure of the interview schedule was both temporal and thematic, thus, if informants lacked knowledge about the specifics in any given area or period of time within the ambit of the study, this could be identified and more time could therefore be spent on focused topics with which the interview was more knowledgeable. The interviews were also in-depth. This, as Bouma and Ling (2004, 177) point out, provides the best opportunity to get 'a window on reality from the point of view of a participant and to allow them to tell their story as they wish, identifying the issues that are important to them'. The interviews were audio recorded. Bouma and Ling (2004), Burgess (1984), Hakim (1987), Kitchin and Tate (2000), Minichiello et al. (1990), Quinn (2002), Robinson (1998), and Silverman (2000) strongly advocate the recording of interviews as the recorded interview provides more accurate data as both questions and answers are recorded serving as a public record available to the academic community. Failure to record an interview adequately would mean the loss of much important data, thereby weakening the validity of the study. Only one respondent requested that the interview not be recorded – stating uneasiness with the digital Dictaphone as the reason – thus extensive notes were written instead. The average interview lasted one hour and thirteen minutes. The longest interview, with a former Planning Officer, was six hours and ten minutes and the shortest, with a property developer, lasted just twenty-nine minutes. Four interviewees required, or asked for, a second interview and one respondent required three meetings.

Bailey (2007) and Christians (2005) stress the importance of adhering to a code of ethics, involving informed consent and the right to privacy, in field research. Research subjects have 'the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of experiments in which they are involved' (Christians, 2005, 144). The informants in this research were informed that the research was anonymous, and was thus conducted confidentially. In that regard, the identity of the respondents was protected against unwanted exposure by changing the names of respondents using pseudonyms (Quinn, 2002).

Bailey (2007) asserts that some interviewees feel more at ease, and consequently are more responsive to questioning, in their place of work, while others may prefer the comfort of their own homes. Consequently the interviewer must be sensitive and obedient to this. Interview locations (and times) for this
research were therefore dictated by the interviewees; some took place in the Geography Department at Trinity College, others in the respondent's home or in the local café or pub. Most, however, were conducted in the interviewee's place of work, this being as diverse as the Department of the Taoiseach and Dáil Eireann; Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government at Custom House; Dublin City Hall; and University College Cork. Minichiello et al. (1990, 108-109) state that 'most people, when approached to participate in a research project, are willing if not flattered, and they will agree to be an informant if they 'can fit you into their schedules'', however, Wilson and Sapsford (2006, 96) disagree believing instead that requests to take part in academic research can at times be quite difficult.

5.6.3 Research Strategy

The aim of the interviews was twofold; to offer a temporal analysis of government-led changes in the role of the State from the late 1980s; and, using Dublin as a case study, to get a multi-dimensional overview from key stakeholders in the planning system of the ideological shift in the theorisation of planning reflected in the operation of planning from 1986-2000 in inner city regeneration projects and from 2000-present during the building boom.

The interview schedule consisted of five parts; the first part consisted of a series of questions dealing with the transformation of the physical appearance of Dublin since the early 1990s, addressing issues such as the philosophy guiding planning and operation of planning at the local level; the existence of discordant ideologies among and between planners; and the arbitrating role of ABP in planning. The second part dealt with shortcomings in the operation of local authority planning as it existed in the 1980s. The third part looked at the extent to which political ideological issues have infused and shaped urban planning. The fourth part examined the role of the private-property development sector, and the fifth part consisted of questions related to public perceptions of the planning system as it currently exists. Questions were open-ended. Open-ended questions of how, when or what, which focus on opinions, judgements and values, shed light on some experience or issue applicable to the respondent elicit richer responses than the unanswerable 'why' which concentrates on respondents' actions and behaviours. Moreover, open-ended questions do not to impose any expectations, prejudices or misconceptions, or close-off any further avenues of inquiry.

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95 people had been contacted with a view to participation in the research; 51 respondents were actually interviewed giving a 54 per cent response rate. Amongst the selected informants were key stakeholders in the planning system including public- and private-sector planners; academic planners at the three planning schools in the State; former local authority Chief Planning Officers; local authority managers; local-authority councillors representing each of the major political parties; former Ministers for the Environment; private-sector property developers; members of An Taisce and the Georgian Society. Contact was made principally through emails except in four cases – An Taisce Planning Sub-Committee member and three former Chief Planning Officers – where letters were posted as the respondents did not have an email address. For the latter, postal addresses were obtained for the An Taisce Planning Sub-Committee member from the Heritage Officer at An Taisce and for the three former Chief Planning Officers, from contacts with the Geography Department at Trinity College. For the former, email addresses were solicited from various websites associated with the place of work for each respondent; local authority managers and councillors were contacted following a search of the websites for each of Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and South Dublin County Council. While the managers at Fingal County Council and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown agreed to participate in the interview, at Dublin City Council and South Dublin, the manager nominated a spokesperson to speak on his behalf. Moreover, of the 20 local councillors approached, 16 participated; Sinn Féin had no representation in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, while for the Greens this was the only council in which they had representation at the local level. In South Dublin, Sinn Fein and in Fingal, Fianna Fáil and an Independent did not reply to any of the (many) emails sent. Access to local-authority planners proved incredibly difficult. Had it not been for inside contacts and contacts made through a previous study of planning (see McCrory, 2004), this task would have been impossible. Finally, one senior planner from each of the four local authorities agreed to the research. One planner at An Bord Pleanála was contacted directly via her personal email address which had been given from a relative. In turn, this ABP planner contacted her colleague urging his participation in the research which was secured after contact had been made. Private-sector planners were contacted after an exhaustive search of private planning consultancies in Dublin through the Golden Pages online service. Having interviewed one Senior Planner from each of the local authorities, it was
imperative to get at least four planners from the private sector. The private-sector, it seemed, were unwilling to participate in the research and it was only after 24 emails were sent to various private planning consultancies in Dublin City and County that three private-sector planners were secured. Course Directors at each of the planning schools in the State (UCD, DIT and UCC) were contacted following a search of staff members for each of the three academic institutions. An Taisce and the Georgian Society were also contacted following a search of their respective websites. 12 of Dublin's largest property developers were also contacted, however, only five agreed to participate in the research. The remainder did not reply to any of the emails sent and one email (sent to Liam Carroll's Zoë Developments) bounced back as the company had gone into liquidation. There have been ten Minister of the Environment since 1986; two former Ministers – John J. Boland and John Wilson – died in 2000 and 2007 respectively. Noel Dempsey, Martin Cullen and John Gormley refused to participate in the research on account of their hectic schedules (they still had Ministerial portfolios). Five others did not respond to requests to be interviewed, however, two, both Fianna Fáil, did accept the invitation. The final two interviewees, a community planner and a planning critic, access was sought via email from contacts already ascertained in the field. The informants provided a rich tapestry of views and opinions as well as practical experience, both past and present, of the Irish urban planning system over the last twenty-five years.

For the 16 local councillors who did participate in the research, the nature of the information sought concerned their limited reserved functions in planning; the executive functions of the manager; and the degree to which the public may be sceptical of councillors' involvement in following the revelations of corruption and abuse of Section 4 rezoning at the Tribunal.

Local Councillors

Fianna Fáil – Dublin City Council
Fine Gael – Dublin City Council
Labour – Dublin City Council
Sinn Féin – Dublin City Council
Independent – Dublin City Council
Table 5.5 List of each of main political parties, plus Independents, per local authority, which participated in the research

As the full-time chief executive of local government whose roles and (executive) functions are enshrined in legislation, four local authority managers were approached vis-à-vis participating in this research, however, only the managers of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and Fingal County Council agreed to an interview. The managers at Dublin City Council and South Dublin County Council appointed two planners to speak on their behalf. The information required from the managers, and appointed spokespersons thereof, concerned the degree of competition prevalent among the four local authorities, Central Government subventions; the reliance upon development contributions; and the degree to which local authorities adhere to the provisions of their own development plans.
Interviews were also carried out with three former Planning Officers at Dublin Corporation (now Dublin City Council). Each of these former planners had at least thirty years practical experience, and possessed a broad overall knowledge of the Irish urban planning system from a temporal perspective. The nature of the information sought from the former Planning Officers related to their opinions vis-à-vis the abolition of Planning Officer in Better Local Government and its replacement by Director of Services; opinions on the imposition of SPDAs in planning and the effect this has had on local authority operations; and how the manager has effectively become Chief Executive, running local authorities along the same lines as a business.

A Community Planner based in Dublin's inner city and a renowned architectural, planning and environmental journalist, who has published extensively on Dublin's built environment since the 1980s, were also purposively targeted to assist in the research, so as to get an outsiders perspective on the nature of change in the planning system; to assess
achievements in planning since the boom; to gauge the degree to which local community groups and individuals in the inner city have a voice in the planning system; and to determine whether an agenda is being pursued in planning by looking at the role of developers in the planning system.

**Miscellaneous**

| Community Planner, Dublin Inner City |
| Planning Critic |

**Table 5.9** List of other key actors who contributed to the research

The Irish Georgian Society, which has dealings with local-authority planning in its endeavour to protect Ireland's architectural heritage, was also selected for an interview. The specific nature of the information sought from the President of the Georgian Society included the Georgian Society's assessment of how authorities regard the historic built environment; and whether there is a belief that local authorities are facilitating a pro-development, private sector-led agenda.

**Georgian Society**

| Georgian Society, President |

**Table 5.10** Representative of the Georgian Society interviewed as part of the research

An Taisce was represented by its Heritage Officer, Planning Sub-Committee member and Chairperson of its Dublin City branch. Six representatives were approached including the President, and Chairpersons of the Fingal, South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown branches however, there was no response to requests for assistance from these individuals. The nature of the information sought from An Taisce centred on disregard for the provisions of development plans; the role of ABP; composition of the board members; and political interference despite ABP being an independent body.

**An Taisce**

| An Taisce 1, Planning Sub-Committee member |
| An Taisce 2, Chairperson, Dublin City Branch |
There have been 10 Ministers for the Environment since 1986. Of that, seven have been Fianna Fáil, one has been affiliated with Labour, one with Fine Gael, and Minister Gormley was the only Green to have served as Minister for the Environment. With the exception of two former Ministers of the Environment who are deceased, eight were approached to participate in this research. It was important to get as many former Ministers for the Environment participating in this research as these personages are responsible for planning policy and legislation, however, only two (both Fianna Fáil) agreed to assist in the research. The nature of the information sought from the former Ministers for the Environment included how Central Government policy on planning is reflected in planning practice at the local level in the delivery of the common good; and the relationship Fianna Fáil historically have with the building industry.

### Former Ministers of the Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Former Minister, DoEHLG 1</th>
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<td>Former Minister, DoEHLG 2</td>
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Of the four Dublin authorities, only two senior local-authority planners participated in the research. Contacts within ABP enabled two planning inspectors to be approached, and subsequently to contribute to the research. A search of Golden Pages Classified Directory listed 31 private-sector planning consultancies in Dublin. All listed consultancies were contacted vis-à-vis participating in the research, however, only three consultancies responded to requests for assistance, and so only three private-sector planners participated in the research. Moreover, four senior planning advisers at the Department of the Environment made themselves available to interview as did one planner at the Regional Planning Authority. Since this research is concerned with Irish urban planning, it was necessary to get the perspectives of current practicing planners to ascertain whether there are two discordant ideologies at work in the operation of Irish planning; to gauge planners' own personal philosophy of what planning is and who it should serve; to explore opinions of the role of the manager in planning; and to record planners' impressions of ABP as an
appellate body in the planning system. Three senior academic planners from each of the planning schools (UCD, DIT and UCC) in the state also lent their assistance to this research. The nature of the information solicited from academic planners concerned the teaching and training of student planners; the degree to which there is a discontinuity in content and emphasis in the curriculum at each of the planning schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LA Planner 1, Dublin City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA Planner 2, Fingal County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABP Planning Inspector 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABP Planning Inspector 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRA Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Adviser, DoEHLG 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Adviser, DoEHLG 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Adviser, DoEHLG 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Adviser, DoEHLG 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private-Sector Planner 1, RPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private-Sector Planner 2, Brady, Shipman &amp; Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private-Sector Planner 3, Farrell Associates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Planner 1, UCD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Planner 2, DIT</td>
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<td>Academic Planner 3, UCC</td>
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Table 5.13 List of public- and private-sector planners, and academic planners interviewed as part of the research

Out of twelve approached, five of Dublin most prominent and active property developers consented to be interviewed for the purpose of this research. It was considered important to give this often much maligned group a voice in this research too. The nature of the information required from
developers centred on whether developers considered planning a hindrance in the development process; if developers had experience of either planners or managers who were overtly facilitative to development; and the role of TRPA in the planning system.

**Property Developers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Developer 1</th>
<th>Davy Hickey Properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Developer 2</td>
<td>Chartered Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Developer 3</td>
<td>Treasury Holdings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Developer 4</td>
<td>Ballymore Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Developer 5</td>
<td>Shelbourne Developments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.14** List of developers who agreed to take part in the research

The interviews were conducted in two phases over a period of twelve months, from 2009 to 2010. In the first phase (February 2009 – June 2009), 29 interviews were conducted: 16 incumbent local-authority councillors were interviewed as a priority as there was a local-government election in May and it was prudent to interview these individuals before electioneering commitments they got tied to their own election campaign. Others interviewed during this phase included three representatives of An Taisce, one from the Irish Georgian Society as well as three retired Chief Planning Officers, an Irish Times Architectural, Planning and Environment journalist who has published extensively on Dublin’s built environment since the 1980s, a community planner, as well as local authority managers for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and Fingal and two appointed spokespersons representing the local authority managers at Dublin City and South Dublin respectively.

Phase two (August 2009 until February 2010), comprised the remaining 22 interviews. Included in phase two were three academic planners, four senior planners at the Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government, one public-sector planner from Fingal County Council and Dublin City Council, one planner from the Dublin Regional Authority, as well as two planning inspectors at An Bord Pleanála and three private-sector planners. Two Fianna Fáil former Ministers for the Department of the Environment, Heritage,
and Local Government and five property developers comprised the last two groups to be interviewed in this phase.

5.7 Analytical Approach

The analysis of the research data is qualitative. The transformation of raw data into empirical assertions supported by evidence from the interviews 'constitutes an end goal of qualitative research design' (Janesick, 2000: 388). The first analytical step involved transcribing all the interviews verbatim. The verbatim transcription provides the principal means to 'interpret observations against the backcloth of theory that underlies the investigation' (Robinson, 1998: 428).

In contrast to the published work on methodological procedures during and before the 1980s, Kitchin and Tate (2000), Mason (1994) and Robinson (1998) endorse the use of computer packages to assist and hasten the process of data classification. By managing and manipulating data, and reassigning it within given index categories, the researcher can better make connections and explore relationships between categories. While extolling the benefits that computer packages have brought to qualitative data analysis, Bryman and Burgess (1994), Mason (1994) and Quinn (2002) also sound a cautionary note as they equally recognise their limitations: computers cannot perform the creative and intellectual task of devising categories without the input of a competent researcher, nor can they alone decide which categories or types of data are relevant to research project:

'The qualitative analyst doing content analysis must still decide what things go together to form a pattern, what constitutes a theme, what to name it, and what meanings to extract from case studies. The human being, not the software, must decide how to frame a case study, how much and what to include, and how to tell the story' (Quinn, 2002, 442).

The second analytical step therefore, involved coding the transcripts by categories and sub-categories:

'Data start as a seamless sequence from which we ourselves must first of all cut out all the bits of the puzzle. We must cut them out in ways which correspond to the separate facets of the social reality we are investigating, but which also allows us to put them together again to produce an overall picture' (Dey, 1993, 40).
Bryman and Burgess (1994) and Miles and Huberman (1984) observe that coding represents the 'building blocks' for the generation of emergent concepts rather than pre-specified concepts. As such, the coding proceeded in two stages, as suggested by Bryman and Burgess (1994) and Strauss (1987): first, the data was broken-down, carefully examined, compared, conceptualised, and initially categorised. This is known as open-coding. Second, in order to gain an overview of the richness, depth and diversity of this data the analyst must 'search the data set for themes, to develop analytical categories and to index the data accordingly' (Mason, 1994: 91) as only this 'can help the analyst uncover reasons for particular actions or how individuals see their role in stated situations' (Robinson, 1998: 427). This is referred to as axial coding. The analysis tried to achieve these aims by coding the transcripts to highlight broad ideological background of Irish politics, theorisation of planning, planning practice at the local level as a reflection of civic leadership and the role of private-sector development interests. Experiences and understanding of the role of planning, as well as perceptions, participation, and interest generally were also coded. The third analytical step involved constructing a typological summary founded on the coded transcripts. The typology was organised thematically and kept in the same order to build up a more cogent picture of the changing role of Irish urban planning under a neoliberal agenda.

5.8 Methodological Limitations and Analytical Obstacles

The main methodological limitations and analytical obstacles are outlined in the order in which they presented themselves to the researcher.

The pilot survey for the interview was a long drawn-out process as many variables had to be checked circumspectly with questions being omitted or requiring re-phrasing. Robinson (1998) and Wilson and Sapsford (2006) identify a number of key points on which improvements were based and changes had been made to initial drafts:

1. Were questions understood as initially phrased without the need for repetition or misinterpretation?
2. Were respondents able to think of the whole range of possible responses to any particular question or did they need prompting?
3. What was the best order for the questions?
4. Did any of the questions seem to make the respondents uncomfortable?
5. Which questions were the most difficult or awkward to read?
6. Were there certain questions that could be omitted?
7. Did respondents show signs of impatience or loss of interest during the interview?

The interview was repeatedly trialled before the researcher could confidently enter the field, but the diversity of respondents, with their vast range of experiences and perspectives of the planning system did endow this research with an invaluable store of information. During some interviews, interviewees had a tendency to focus on one particular aspect of the research over others; for example, local authority managers may have preferred talking about the role of local councillors in the planning system and Section 4 rezoning, while planners may have dwelled on legislation, and developers on the role of An Bord Pleanála and the existence of TPRA. In that regard, interviews were not always comparable across all points, however, at times one in-depth answer proved to be of greater import to the research than many undeveloped and vague responses from some informants.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim; the large volume of material that came out of the interviews, though, was a grossly under-estimated and time-consuming task. Although a 'cut and paste' approach was employed in sorting and categorising the transcribed material, categorisation did prove difficult at times but the thematic structure of the interview schedule did make categorisation a little easier. Care also had to be taken to ensure that points raised by each interviewee were not taken out of context; while all transcripts were carefully coded and meticulously analysed, though, it is possible that some details of note have not been captured in this project.

It is hoped that material that was only of marginal relevance to this research may find significance in future research. While acknowledging that the interview material was gathered in an appropriate way and the choice of interviews, as a method for data collection, resulted in an extensive amount of interesting interview material producing much of interest in the results chapters as the views of planners, politicians, developer and others are compared, one must also reflect upon the research design and give consideration to the limitations presented by the choice of research design. Consideration was given to the use of a questionnaire survey for the collection of data as questionnaires, generally, take up less of the respondents time thereby, potentially, leading to a
greater response rate. However, it must also be recognised that quantitative questionnaire surveys cannot elicit the same level of information – pauses, reflections, facial expressions and other such nuances, not to mention the depth of information that an interview will yield – as the more qualitative interview survey. That said, interviews are not without ‘flaws’, however, this is more a reflection of the survey design which the author takes full responsibility for. In this case, a number of limitations were identified in hindsight:

- Interviews take up a considerable amount of a respondent’s time. Although some interviewees are willing to set aside whatever time is required for the successful completion of the interview, others will not or cannot. The average interview lasted one hour and thirteen minutes however, many interviews exceeded this (and in some cases, exceeded it considerably). In that regard, the interviewer found, in certain cases, questions and answers were being rushed in an effort to get as many answers from the respondent who showed signs of impatience or who had stimulated that they could only dedicate a certain amount of time to the interview.

- In some cases, interviewees had sparse knowledge of certain parts of the interview, for example the temporal perspective of Irish planning. To compensate therefore, some respondents preferred dwelling on areas of planning that they knew well so results were not always comparable against all interviewees.

- Gaining access to certain respondents was incredibly difficult. In the case of local-authority planners, access was almost impossible had it not been for contacts with local-authorities and personal contacts made from a previous study of Irish urban planning. Moreover, there were quite a few (44 of the 95 individuals contacted) who did not wish to participate in the research – this being eluded from the non-reply to emails sent. Prominent among this group were former Ministers of the Environment, developers and private-sector planners. This may be a result of the controversial nature of the research and the controversial position planning has assumed in Irish society following revelations of the Tribunal.
5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has built on the theoretical and empirical chapters based on the literature. It presented the background to the research and justification for the case study. It also outlined the research aims. This was followed by setting out the methodological approach adopted to respond to the challenges posed by the research aims. The research process was described in the manner that it proceeded from initial questions through to the construction of an early conceptual framework of enquiry into actions undertaken in the field. This was described so as to encapsulate in some way the theoretically informed approach to empirical fieldwork. As the primary data are qualitative, the methodological strategy, including sources and data collection, was given considerable attention. This was followed by a description of the analytical approach in exploring and dissecting the interview transcripts. Finally, the chapter notes some of the methodological and analytical obstacles encountered during the period of research. The steps described in this chapter reflect features of the grounded method, which elicits results grounded in the empirical world, with the aim of generating theory drawn from the gathered data and referring it back to a broader set of issues and processes within a theoretical framework of understanding.

Parts one and two of the thesis provide the necessary underlying framework for the analysis of the changing role of Irish urban planning under a neoliberal agenda which follows
PART III: MAIN FINDINGS
6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the reorientation of Irish urban planning under a neoliberal agenda as recognised by practicing private-sector planners and public-sector planners at the four Dublin local authorities, former Chief Planning Officers at Dublin City Council, local authority managers and appointed spokespersons thereof, planning inspectors at An Bord Pleanála, senior planning advisers at the Department of the Environment and at the Dublin Regional Authority, academic planners at the three planning schools in the State and a community planner working in Dublin’s inner city. First, the chapter examines planners’ impressions of how the Irish public generally view the planning system as well as looking at public participation and interest in planning. Second, it explores planners’ awareness of how political ideologies have helped shape urban planning over the last 25 years by exploring the broad ideological background of Irish politics. Third, it investigates planners’ recognition of a neoliberal transformation at Central Government level since the late 1980s, manifested in policy and legislation, and how this has been reflected in planning. Fourth, it examines changes in the theoretical approach to planning generally and identifies the local authorities which espouse a ‘can-do’ philosophy specifically. Moreover, it investigates whether two discordant ideologies exist in the operation of local-authority planning and considers An Bord Pleanála’s approach to planning over the same time period. Fifth, it explores the impact of a changed philosophy on planning practice: by looking at the four local authorities in terms of the ‘entrepreneurial city’ it examines the degree to which local authorities are in competition with one another and how this has been reflected by a shift towards more facilitative modes of operation. In addition, it examines the role of ABP as an unbiased arbiter in the planning process. Sixth, the chapter looks at the degree to which local-authority planners are subject to pressure to recommend the granting of approval for certain developments by key actors in the planning system including management at the local authority, elected representatives and developers. Finally, the chapter
considers the extent to which a changed planning philosophy and shift in planning practice have been realised in terms of specific initiatives such as local area planning by local authorities; PPPs in social-housing regeneration projects; reliance on Part 5 for the provision of social and affordable housing; and the emergence of SDZ as a model for development. It also explores the consequences for urban planning generally with ABP contracting freelance planning inspectors and private-planning consultants at the height of the boom.

6.2 Public Perceptions of Irish Urban Planning

Several public-sector planners acknowledged that it is easy to criticise planning for its failures, however, planners also pointed out that lessons had been learned from past mistakes. There was an assertion that planning in the 1980s was not so much a disaster but an evolution to its present state. In that regard, all planners felt a certain sense of pride in what planning has achieved over recent decades and believe that the planning system will continue along its trajectory of evolution in the future:

'It's definitely moved away from the engineering 'can two fire brigade engines pass each other at 40 miles an hour on this road?' approach' (DRA Planner).

In so far as the public perceptions of urban planning are concerned, only one (private-sector) planner believed that the public held a positive view of planners and the urban planning system but acknowledged that this perception was limited to areas that had undergone urban renewal. Despite one planner's assertion that 'planning is about what didn't go ahead as much as it is about what did' (DRA Planner) it was acknowledged that the public takes the planning system for granted and is quick to criticise the planning system based on personal grievances thus, there was broad agreement that the public generally has a very poor perception of urban planning and therefore 'probably don't think there's any need for it' (ABP Planning Inspector 2). Local authority managers, and appointed spokespersons thereof, believed this view of planning was unfairly negative:

'You frequently hear about good engineering; you hear about good architecture; you only ever hear about bad planning' (L.A Manager's spokesman 1).

'If you were to walk into a pub and start talking about planning, I think the first thing people would talk about is corruption' (L.A Manager's spokesman 2).
It was suggested that perceptions of planning have 'been coloured by the zoning scandals back in the '80s' (DoEHLG 1) which were revealed by the Tribunal of Inquiry (into Certain Planning Matters and Payments) and by the subsequent 'media spin by some papers' (RPA Planner) which exposed how the powers of certain politicians had been abused. Former Chief Planning Officers, however, believed the public distrust the planning system because it 'deals with change and most people don't like change' (Former Chief Planning Officer 3). In that regard, an 'element of me féin' (Former Chief Planning Officer 1), manifested through NIMBY opposition, was accepted in planning:

'People tend to look at it very individually. What has been the individual impact? Why did somebody get permission? Why did somebody get refused? Why was I refused? I get the perception that people's preconception of planning is that it should be some kind of very black and white tightly controlled system, but only when it affects them. They want it much more flexible when it affects somebody else, so they do look at it with fairly selfish lens' (Academic Planner 1).

Many public-sector planners felt aggrieved by public perceptions of planning claiming such scepticism was unjustified as the Tribunal found no evidence of planners having been involved in corruption or malpractice:

'Obviously, there are some horror stories going back to certain characters that everybody's aware of and that definitely clouds judgement and planners, in some ways, are the negative recipients of that' (LA Planner 1).

Given the poor perception of planning by the public, academic planners therefore felt that planners have become the 'whipping boy' (Academic Planner 1) for some individuals and vested interests and expressed sympathy for their plight. This view was also supported by the former Chief Planning Officers who stated that planners often get 'blamed for what goes wrong and don't get the credit for what goes right' (Former Chief Planning Officer 2):

'Planners were being blamed for particularly bad rezoning decisions, which probably would have been opposed by the planners in particular places, but passed nevertheless' (Former Chief Planning Officer 3).

Public-sector planners also suggested a lack of public involvement in the planning process might also be considered as reason for this negative perception of planning. It was suggested the public have 'a confused idea of
what planning actually does’ (LA Planner 1) and a limited understanding of the planning system therefore don’t really engage with planning issues:

‘There’s a big challenge for local authorities and the profession to communicate with the public as to what the role of the planner is and what the role and responsibilities for the citizen are in relation to engaging with the planning process’ (DoEHLG 3).

For some private-sector planners, however, this was considered a ‘failure of the planning system’ (Private-Sector Planner 1) in not properly promoting itself. Other private-sector planners recognised that public-sector planners are trying to engage with the public, but believed that they are ‘not really going about it the right way’ (Private-Sector Planner 2). This viewpoint, nevertheless, was refuted by planners within the Department:

‘The planning authorities have been trying that over the last few years with information evenings and people attending offices and so on late into the night to facilitate engagement with the local communities’ (DoEHLG 3).

In so far as development plans are concerned, it was also felt that the public do not engage at the development plan consultation stage where they can actually have an impact on planning and change things. Private-sector planners pointed to the scale, lay-out and presentation of development plans as problematic believing them to be incomprehensible to the general public which in turn presents difficulties in stimulating meaningful consultation between planners and the public. Private-sector planners attributed this as another reason for a lack of public participation in the planning process:

‘I think they’re about 200 pages too long. A partner at our firm says the development plan should be five pages long with a 400 page appendix. Who can blame anybody for losing interest in the first couple of pages?’ (Private-Sector Planner 2).

By way of trying to defend their position, however, public-sector planners claimed individuals’ engagement with the planning system ‘could only be once in their life when they want something or possibly if they’re a third party objector’ (DoEHLG 1):

‘They only really come across [planning] when they are individually affected, whether they are building their own house, or there’s an abattoir going up next to them or whatever. Then they become very interested and for maybe a short time span, they are totally immersed in it’ (ABP Planning Inspector 1).
While planners are obliged to address issues from a broad urban-wide basis of concern, public-sector planners felt that a certain section of the public fail to see the broader perspective or understand the bigger picture for which planning is responsible. In that regard, planners identified the 'not in my back yard' (NIMBY) element in the planning system. NIMBYism constitutes people who are concerned with matters that are important to them, but what sets this group apart from most others is that this group tends to be middle-class and well informed, well organised with access to resources and has a good understanding of the planning system. Planners have accepted NIMBYism as part of the Irish planning system and agreed that parochialism is very much a part of the Irish psyche hence the distant relationship with planning since Irish people 'don't even care about anything outside their patch' (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

6.3 Broad Ideological Background of Irish Politics

With the exception of the Rainbow Coalition (Fine Gael, Labour, and Democratic Left) which held power from 1994 to 1997, Fianna Fáil had an almost unbroken quarter-century term (1987 to 2011) in government; in so far as political ideological issues have shaped the approach to urban planning in Ireland over the last 25 years, 'it's inevitable in terms of the planning system that we have, that political ideologies will shape the system' (ABP Planning Inspector 2). However, while one planner at the Department suggested that political ideologies are a reflection of the wishes of the electorate that put the government in power, another (public-sector) planner believed that Irish urban planning 'reflects the culture of the State we have' (DRA Planner).

Seven of the previous ten Ministers for the Environment have been affiliated with Fianna Fáil; academic planners believed Fianna Fáil was being led by, and promoting, a right-wing 'neo-liberal agenda' (Academic Planner 3) which has infused planning by empowering the private sector. With Fianna Fáil running the country, some local-authority managers recognised Fianna Fáil as having 'very much a free enterprise orientation' (L.A Manager 1) reflected in a pro-development approach to planning. It was also suggested that there is 'a very close relationship between politics and the building industry' (L.A Manager

thus the building industry was regarded as 'a powerful influence on government, particularly Fianna Fáil-led governments' (L.A Manager 2). This point was also shared by local-authority planners who stated that a very 'unhealthy relationship between our political masters and the building industry' (LA Planner 2) has developed over the course of the last twenty five years.

Ministers of the Environment were regarded as influential figures and were considered, by public-sector planners, as being generally 'very pro-development and development at any cost' (ABP Planning Inspector 1). Only one Minister, however, was identified by some public-sector planners as not having promoted or followed a pro-development agenda as his predecessors did:

'The present Minister is a little bit different; the changes to the development plan stopping the wholesale rezoning\(^{21}\), you could say that's from their [Green] agenda' (ABP Planning Inspector 1).

'We now have a Green Minister and that is actually driving the Green agenda, so I suppose in that sense, the changed administration has changed focus a little' (DoEHLG 1).

Private-sector planners also recognised the shift in emphasis during Minister Gormley's term in office simultaneously voicing their dissatisfaction:

'Other Ministers would have had different agendas. Gormley should be progressive and sympathetic to development interests' (Private-Sector Planner 3).

For other public-sector planners though, there was a belief that urban planning is more a reflection of the Minister of the Environment as an individual and therefore, was in no way connected to political affiliation and party politics. In that regard, former Minister of the Environment, Noel Dempsey, was also singled out by some planners for his contribution to the planning system:

'I think personalities have been a huge factor. Some Ministers have had a much more favourable reception by the planning profession than others. Noel Dempsey was one. He's an interesting thinker, an independent thinker. I wouldn't get hung up on ideologies; personalities are important' (LA Planner 1).

\(^{21}\) See Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 Section 10 (13) which amends the issue of zoning in the Principal (2000) Act.
‘A great deal depends on the personality of the Minister. I would have to pay huge tribute in this regard to Noel Dempsey. If you look at the 2000 Act, it was a really radical piece of legislation; you’ve things like Part 5 affordable housing, Strategic Development Zones’ (DoEHLG 2).

‘I would put Dempsey nearly in the same category as Gormley. Even though he was Fianna Fáil and very much a part of that, he was a very reforming Minister, so sometimes it’s not so much the colour of the party, it’s the individual’ (DRA Planner).

Some public-sector planners also recognised how the composition of the council chamber can have a bearing on planning:

‘The more traditional type of council chamber, where it’s dominated by Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, is phenomenally pro-development. When it’s dominated by Labour it changes in a more NIMBY way. So, it’s not like when it changes you get a better approach, you just get another conservative approach but anti-development rather than pro-development’ (DRA Planner).

In so far as local-authority councillors have a democratic input into planning, one former Chief Planning Officer suspected councillors of not understanding policy. This same former local-authority planner suspected councillors of seeing their role in local politics and planning as facilitating constituents, supporters, and ‘clients’:

‘When I was doing the county plan, I said “most of these won’t have a clue about the county plan so I’ll invite them in [to the council] and I’ll talk to them about what’s in a county plan”. About four of them turned up, but the place was full when they were rezoning’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 3).

In that regard, another public-sector planner felt that the objectives of planning are often stymied because of the clientelist nature of Irish politics and the role of the local councillor as a political favour peddler:

‘The Irish planning system...is so rooted in local politics and votes and getting things done irrespective of what the long-term consequences are. During the last 10, 15, maybe 20 years, the Department certainly have tried to put in place a bit of guidance and tried to impose those on the local authorities, but a lot of planning is done on an ad hoc basis and subject very much to local politics without really a broader overview’ (ABP Planning Inspector 1).

While acknowledging that the existence of clientelism has really ‘beleaguered planning’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 3) all interviewees were,
nonetheless, averse to the idea of removing elected representatives from the planning system:

'I'd be very reluctant to do that. There's little enough democratic input in these things. Councillors are easy enough to slag off, but certainly wouldn't be happy going to a situation where there's no democratic input' (Academic Planner 1)

'I'd be very reluctant to take the elected member out of the process. You might curse and swear and argue, you might disagree, but it's the democratic process' (L.A Manager's spokesman 1)

6.4 Transformation in Irish Policy at Central Government Level

A number of interrelated factors were identified as bringing about the physical and social transformation of Dublin in the 1990s. In the first place, there was a sharp rise in population which stimulated demand for accommodation of every type, and in the second, an upswing in the economy created mass employment and generated demand for more commercial space in the city. This is in stark contrast to the image of Dublin during the 1980s as two planners recalled:

'My own personal experience of growing up in Dublin in the '80s was absolute mass dereliction' (Private-Sector Planner 2).

'Twenty years ago nobody really gave a damn about derelict sites around the city. There was no profit in redeveloping them and there wasn't a market' (Private-Sector Planner 3).

So decrepit was Dublin's inner city during the 1980s that the City Council estimated, in the inner city alone, 'there was of the order of say 150 hectares, of underutilised, derelict, vacant land' (L.A Manager's spokesman 1). Characteristic features of Dublin city at that time were large swathes of land that were open to temporary surface car parks, gaping holes in the streetscape, and huge dereliction. One former Planning Officer described the city as seedy and acknowledged that 'the quays were gently mouldering' (Former Chief Planning Officer 1):

'Nobody gave a shit about the inner city at that time; it was falling down around us' (Former Chief Planning Officer 3).
The urgent need to address the issue of inner-city dereliction had generated a series of initiatives aimed at restoring the physical fabric of the city. One such initiative was the Dublin Crisis Conference in February 1986 which ‘pushed an understanding and appreciation of the city’ (Private-Sector Planner 2) which hitherto had been neglected. One local authority manager's spokesperson declared that the Dublin Crisis Conference brought about a realisation that only financial incentives could save, thus emerged the Urban Renewal Act, 1986:

‘Although called Urban Renewal Act, it was a Department of Finance measure not a Department of the Environment measure’ (L.A Manager's spokesman 1).

By May and June respectively that same year, the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government brought forward and enacted a series of property-based regeneration initiatives in the Finance Act, 1986 and the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 which created a significant package of incentives aimed at encouraging development in designated areas of central Dublin:

‘The unemployment at the start of the '80s was construction and the thing that mopped it up was the construction industry and rapid physical development in the country’ (LA Planner 2).

The Urban Renewal Act, 1986 and associated tax incentives were seen as having been instrumental in the redevelopment and regeneration of much of Dublin's inner city. It was also generally believed by both public- and private-sector planners that this Act was the catalyst for the wholesale (re)development of the city throughout the 1990s:

‘I personally think the Urban Renewal Act was instrumental in seeing the inner city of Dublin grow. It took that level of stimulus to get something moving in the centre of the city and I think that's one of the primary things that pushed it’ (Private-Sector Planner 2).

‘The tax incentives that came in from the State were obviously a big factor in driving development in the late '80s and early '90s' (LA Planner 1).

One former Chief Planning Officer, however, was critical of the manner in which boundaries were delineated and how parts of the city were chosen as

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Designated Areas since the Planning Officer in charge at that time was not consulted:

'I remember the Planning Officer at the time, Gay McCarron, had asked to be consulted on where these boundaries were to be drawn and he was told 'It's not your business, we'll decide that.' He got brushed to one side. The managers stuck their nose in, so that was the beginning of something. The people in the Custom House, the top dogs down there, were colluding with managers to draw the boundaries and there was obviously a political influence' (Former Chief Planning Officer 1).

A Special Purpose Development Agency (SPDA) – Custom House Docks Development Authority (CHDDA) and later enlarged by statute under the Dublin Docklands Development Authority Act, 1997\(^2\) to incorporate the regeneration of the entire Docklands Area — was established under Section 8 of the Urban Renewal Act, 1986\(^2\). Prior to the establishment of CHDDA, Dublin Corporation had intended to deliver quite a limited renewal scheme in the Customs House Docks Development Area with a docklands community focus:

'The City Council at the time had a very docklands-community focus. There were flats in Sheriff Street so they were going to clean them up, provide more social housing, and look to provide some level of social facilities' (Private-Sector Planner 2).

Central Government, however, had an alternative vision of docklands as a new quarter for the city with the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) as the centrepiece. By creating the CHDDA, one planner noted that Ireland was copying the Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) model which had been widely used in the UK, most notably in London Docklands, as a tool of urban regeneration:

'It was copying something that was happening in the UK at the time. It was kind of a regeneration fast-track thing they were doing in the UK. It copied the template of skipping through the planning process' (RPA Planner).

The establishment of CHDDA marked a new approach to Irish urban planning as acknowledged by several public-sector planners:

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\(^2\) See Dublin Docklands Development Authority Act, 1997 Section 14 (1) established Údarás Forbartha Dugthailte Bhaile Átha Cliath (Dublin Docklands Development Authority).

\(^2\) See Urban Renewal Act, 1986 Section 8 (1) which established the Custom House Docks Development Authority.
'[Special Purpose Development Agencies] were put in to expedite development and to give a little bit more certainty to developers' (ABP Planning Inspector 1).

'It was a government-driven project which wasn't initially seen as urban redevelopment, it was more the creation of this thing called the IFSC which was more financial' (DoEHLG 2).

Following the establishment of CHDDA, it was acknowledged by one former Chief Planning Officer that 'flexible' began to enter planning jargon:

'Flexibility became the key word. The development plan, instead of being prescriptive, or almost prescriptive, became indicative and indicative became flexible and flexible became facilitative' (Former Chief Planning Officer 1).

At the time of its inception, there was a perception among some leading Fianna Fáil figures that Dublin Corporation bureaucracy and uncertainties over planning applications getting approval would have been detrimental to their vision of Dublin's new docklands quarter. One interviewee considered the management set-up at Dublin Corporation at that time, with Frank Feely as manager, as lacking vision:

'Had John FitzGerald been manager at that time, you may not have needed those development agencies as FitzGerald had a very strong vision for the city' (L.A Manager's spokesman 2).

The rationale behind the establishment of CHDDA, therefore, was to take planning out of the hands of the local authorities (although Dublin City Council retained planning control outside the Section 25 Special Development Areas following the enlargement of DDDA) and to vest it in a new development authority in order to fast-track and guarantee development, however, academic planners recognised that Fianna Fáil had directly borrowed from the Thatcherite idea of private development agencies by applying the UDC model that had been used in London Docklands and other areas to Dublin.

All of the interviewees agreed that the role of traditional local-authority urban planning had been limited by the establishment of SPDAs, however, and with the notable exception of local-authority planners, there was recognition of

25 See Dublin Docklands Development Authority Act, 1997 Section 25 (1) which provided immunity from Third Party Rights of Appeal and An Bord Pleanála for the Custom House Docks Area and any other area specified for that purpose by order of the Minister for the Environment.
the need for the establishment of an SPDA for the redevelopment of docklands. The belief among all non-local-authority planners was that 'Dublin City Council wouldn't act quickly enough or efficiently enough' (Private-Sector Planner 3) and would therefore be unable to deliver the regeneration of this area of the city:

"When push came to shove and national legislation had to be steered through, government had to make a decision. So from government's point of view, there is an attraction to the Special Purpose vehicle, because in effect, it's a 'get in to it, get the job done, get out of it' approach over a defined period of time' (DoEHLG 3).

'The government has a job to do, and where it sees opportunities, and it has a decision it has to make and should make in relation to what is the best delivery architecture to deploy, to drive, to deliver on its wishes' (DoEHLG 1).

'Docklands is down there. It's a very different. It's a complete redevelopment of Brownfield and a whole new quarter, so I would defend what has been done in Docklands' (DoEHLG 2).

'Having an area like that which required such specific regeneration, the only way to actually make it happen in any realistic format was probably to do what they did' (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

Overall, local-authority managers, private-sector planners and some planners at the Department of the Environment felt that SPDAs were a good thing for planning since SPDAs create an 'organisation that isn't bound by the shackles of an earlier time and an outdated vision' (L.A Manager's spokesman 2). Some public-sector planners, however, voiced their disapproval of SPDAs believing that 'it wasn't the right thing to do' (ABP Planning Inspector 2). Focusing on the removal of the democratic input into planning by the establishment of these special agency QUANGOs, the three former Chief Planning Officers expressed perplexity as to why 'there wasn't a bigger [public] outcry at the time' (Former Chief Planning Officer 3). For academic planners, SPDAs raise deeper questions about the freeing up of planning powers and designated areas:

'There is a whole series of dialogues and discussions about whether these are the right ways to go. There are questions about democracy, there are questions about the common good and also the neo-liberal agenda' (Academic Planner 3).

Concerning the operation of local-authority planning then, local authorities saw how CHDDA was operating and, in order not to get sidelined
any further in planning, forced them to look at their own *modus operandi* and change accordingly:

'Docklands certainly upped Dublin City Council's game and certainly pushed Dublin City into being far more entrepreneurial, more development focused, at the time of the foundation of the Dublin Docklands Development Authority' (Private-Sector Planner 2).

'Dublin Docklands, by virtue of the fact that it has a single focus on a limited area, it has been able to achieve a great deal. I think the sheer focus and intensity of resources that Dublin Docklands was able to bring brought out an excellence in terms of their plans some of which have been able to feed into the work that Dublin City Council is doing' (DoEHLG 1).

One local-authority manager's spokesperson also admitted 'local authorities had to become a lot more pro-active' (L.A Manager's spokesman 2) in facilitating development:

'Local authorities do what their told because at the end of the day we work within the system. The relationship between us and Central Government is, they set the broad parameters for development and we just go and implement them. We're a local government system but we're very much subservient to the centre' (L.A Manager 1).

Consequently Dublin City Council 'put together an Urban Renewal section' (L.A Manager's spokesman 1) and began promoting Dublin City among young people as being a nice place to live. While the tax incentives were 'encouraging development of a commercial nature' (Academic Planner 2), by 1989 there was a surplus of office space in the city thus developers, to utilise the benefit of the designations, switched to residential. Following international trends about return to the city, there was a realisation that Dublin's inner city could actually be a place to live and not just a place to work which it had been. Bringing people back in to the city, however, was criticised by the community planner on the grounds that the city wasn't necessarily being improved for indigenous inner city residents but rather, was considered by some as a wealth generator in the absence of a proper regulatory planning system:

'There was no planning policy; there was a financial area-based tax scheme that facilitated development that had to go through a planning process' (Community Planner).

Liam Carroll's Zoë Developments was identified as being the biggest user of tax incentives in the inner city renewal of Dublin, however, only one interviewee defended Liam Carroll, blaming instead planning – both at the local
level and from within the Department – for allowing Carroll to get away with some of his developments:

‘He’s been accused of creating shoeboxes. I talked to him about this; I said “You’re getting this bad press”, and he said “I read the development plan, it says that’s what’s required, that’s the standard. But there’s also the Department of Finance; if you build more than a certain floor area you won’t get your tax incentive. You change your standards and I’ll build whatever according to what the standards are” (Former Chief Planning Officer 1).

At about this same time, An Foras Forbartha, The National Institute of Physical Planning and Construction Research, was abolished by Haughey. Academic planners recognised this as being both politically motivated and devastating for planning. One academic planner described the abolition of An Foras as a ‘dismantling of belief in planning’ (Academic Planner 2). A number of reasons were proffered by academic planners for the abolition of An Foras; principle among them was Haughey’s Fianna Fáil government was contemplating decentralisation. It was proposed that An Foras Forbartha’s headquarters be moved to Cork as a cost-cutting measure, however, staff were reluctant to move, and so, in an act of defiance, Haughey banished An Foras. This idea was also supported by a former Chief Planning Officer. Another academic planner suggested that An Foras was abolished because, as an independent body, it was publishing ‘guidance on what proper planning should be’ (Academic Planner 1), thus, in certain political circles An Foras was considered a troublesome agency:

‘It did research the Department didn’t like and the Minister didn’t like and there were research reports that were not allowed to be published. Of course when An Foras Forbartha was abolished it was reconstituted as the Environmental Research Unit and that was in the Department so then they could rein them in’ (Academic Planner 2).

Only one other respondent agreed with this theory:

‘They were saying what they thought rather than what the government wanted to hear necessarily. There is a mentality in the Civil Service that doesn’t like loose cannons and wants to keep everything firmly within the ambit of the administrative machinery in the Civil Service’ (L.A Manager 2).

A third theory was that An Foras Forbartha was viewed by the Department of the Environment as a threat:
It was the voice of scientific and detached appraisal of what was going on in planning, but there was an anti-intellectual, anti-scientific, anti-research or evidence-based culture in Irish political circles. [An Foras Forbartha] runs contrary to the form of local, political deal-making that characterises Irish politics' (Academic Planner 3).

### 6.5 Theorising the Role of Planning

In so far as the theorisation of planning's role is concerned, one former Chief Planning Officer stated that, at one time, planning philosophy would have been considered left-of-centre and proceeded to describe this philosophy:

Our philosophy was simple: One, we were, as a group, interested in public service; second, we were interested in the notion of proper planning and development, however imprecise that is; third, we were never going for Nirvana, we were trying to make things better. It was a technical job to make things better; you looked at what you had, you looked at how got you there, and you said "Is that good, bad or indifferent, and what can we change to make it better?" We had no compunction about interfering in what they called the free market because we reckoned the free market was probably the most imperfect market of all time' (Former Chief Planning Officer 3).

The philosophy at the Department of the Environment though was 'build or be damned' (Former Chief Planning Officer 1). While local authority managers as well as two academic planners (at DIT and UCC) believed that there has not been a significant amount of change in the philosophy of planning in the last 25 years, the other academic planner (UCD) and the community planner recognised 'a total shift in [planning] practice' (Community Planner) since the late 1980s. Interestingly, local-authority manager's spokespersons also recognised that 'the Department of the Environment has changed radically in the last fifteen years' (L.A Manager's spokesman 2). Of course, any change at the Department is subsequently mirrored at the local level as acknowledged thus:

'I think we have changed from being reactive to being pro-active. My experience is planning has gone from being wait for somebody to come in and react to it to, now we go out and see if we can make it happen. That is very much the philosophy of the city; we have very much a pro-active approach' (L.A Manager's spokesman 1).

This idea was also supported by one academic planner who, while stating that planning has also become more regulated by Department of the Environment-issued guidelines, suggested that local authority planning is espousing a 'more pro-active, more dynamic type of regime' (Academic Planner 152).
2). This transformation was recognised by several respondents, and at Dublin City Council in particular, former manager John FitzGerald was credited for propagating this new ethos:

‘In my early days at the Corporation there was a separate development department and then there was the planning department. The two merged over the years; it became the Planning and Development Department under FitzGerald and then it became Planning and Economic Development. I suppose planning became an agent for development really in the context of Fianna Fáil and the way development was regarded as being big business’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 1).

The choice for local-authority planners then was simple; ‘you either get with the programme or you don’t’ (Community Planner), however, if you did not shift with the methodology you were sidelined from planning as one former Chief Planning Officer discovered:

‘My opinions on what good planning should be and how the thing should be administered and who should be responsible to who were not gladly accepted by management and they did their damnedest to dislodge me over the years. They persecuted me in every possible way...I used to think they can’t take the development plan off me and they did. They got clerical guys and some of my junior staff to do the plan, leaving me on the margins’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 1).

This same respondent opined that planners should never let the ideology of the system they’re working in govern what they really stand for, and admitted to still having quite a lot of angst and anger over his treatment by management following retirement in 2005 after 35 years service public service:

‘One shouldn’t have to risk one’s career by doing the right thing’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 1).

The establishment of CHDDA, was widely acknowledged to have indicated the change in philosophy that planning was to undergo. Moreover, all respondents agreed that tension subsequently developed between the planners employed at CHDDA and local-authority planners, who, acutely aware that ‘the real cutting edge development was happening outside their control’ (L.A Manager 2), were furious that their area had been hived off to a development agency. Only one respondent – former Chief Planning Officer – downplayed the tension between both planning bodies that many of the interviewees spoke of:
‘There was feck all you could do, so you just got on with your job’ (Former Planning Officer 3).

The environment in which planning operates had changed following the introduction of the SPDA to Irish urban planning and the community planner stated that some local-authority planners ‘could see the cracking of the planning system as an entity’ (Community Planner). Although the public-sector planners asserted that planners still ‘have the common good and the public interest at heart’ (ABP Planning Inspector 1), the private-sector planners believed the introduction of the SPDA to Irish planning ‘led to a change in philosophy’ (Private-Sector Planner 2). For the remaining interviewees who acknowledged this change, there was a marked contrast in how public- and private-sector planners viewed this new approach to planning. Private-sector planners believed the espousal of a neoliberal agenda by Central Government foisted a changed philosophy upon the profession, and Dublin City Council, in particular, was identified as having transmogrified accordingly:

‘Dublin City Council was entrenched with a particular political viewpoint which would have been a lot more socially orientated and a lot more public-sector-delivery focused, however, a decision was taken by Central Government that this was going to be done differently’ (Private-Sector Planner 2).

For some public-sector planners the belief was that the growth of the private sector — and in particular, of private-sector planning consultancies — was instrumental in bringing about this new approach to planning:

‘You have now a private planning profession which was tiny, miniscule fifteen years ago, and possibly even fifteen years ago would have had the common good as their central goal and would have been quite moralistic. But now that you have a larger and a more influential private sector the philosophy of planning has changed because that’s business and it’s influenced by business. So, while the common good might be central to yourself, your job is on the line if you can’t bring business in’ (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

For other public-sector planners, there was a belief that a changed planning philosophy had been ‘driven by the EU’ (LA Planner 1) which promoted a green agenda highlighting climate-related environmental issues and sustainability which were reflected in the Planning and Development Act, 2000:

\[\text{See Planning and Development Act, 2000 (Long Title).}\]
"A lot of the planning reform has been driven by E.U. directives, which I don't think would have been done by this State if they hadn't been dragged kicking and screaming into a modern way of managing our environment" (DRA Planner).

Planners at the Department of the Environment, however, cited the issuing of the Development Management Guidelines as indicative of the changes in the planning environment that have taken place in Ireland over the past 25 years with a shift in emphasis from Development Control to a more proactive focus on Development Management:

"We deliberately use the phrase 'Development Management' rather than 'Development Control' because it precisely embodies that philosophy. Development Control was the old name and was there for 25 years or more and it really meant planners sitting at their desks waiting for developers to come in; it was essentially a passive response. Development Management is much more pro-active. Certainly I think Dick Gleeson and city council would be very much of that mind" (DoEHLG 2).

An Bord Pleanála was established following the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976 out of necessity not necessarily out of design as, prior to the Bord's existence, planning appeals were dealt with directly by the Minister of the Environment and there was the suspicion that some planning appeal decisions were taken on grounds not connected with proper planning:

"The Ministerial thing had fallen into disrepute; they had to take it off the Minister as it was too overtly political" (Private-Sector Planner 3).

In so far as ABP has a role in planning, one former Chief Planning Officer disapproved of the Bord's modus operandi:

"They're a peculiar organisation. They're cocooned. They're quasi-judicial. It's behind closed doors, the actual board members are discouraged from going to a site independently; they're office bound. It's like a judge in a court. The member of the board is handed a file and goes through the whole thing from beginning to end, along with the inspector's report, and decides whether to agree or disagree with the inspector's report. I would never sign a report on anything to do with land or acquisition or development control unless I had visited the site and knew what it was about" (Former Chief Planning Officer 1).

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27 See Development Management: Guidelines for Local Authorities, 2007, pp.1
28 See Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976 Section 3 (1) which established An Bord Pleanála.
Moreover, having had dealings with the Bord, this same respondent raised doubts about the Bord’s independence claiming that ABP is open to political influences:

‘The Appeals Board is heavily politicised. It’s also a branch of the Civil Service. The guy who is running it, that man O’Connor; he was Assistant Secretary at the Department of the Environment. Who was the head of the Appeals Board before that? The former Assistant Secretary, O’Duffy. It’s controlled by the Department of the Environment’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 1).

Some planners though, believed that ABP’s approach to planning and its underlying philosophy has changed viewing the composition of the board members, and the appointment of the Chairman, to be largely responsible for dictating the philosophy guiding inspectors working at ABP:

‘I think it’s constantly changing. It would have been considered very pro-development in the mid-’90s when [it] granted Liffey Valley and all that stuff and then I suppose it’s gotten quite conservative. I think the Bord changes a lot reflecting the individuals that have been appointed on it; it used to be very business-view and very political and it’s kinda swung quite far the other way now’ (DRA Planner).

Planners at ABP, however, were defensive of the Bord claiming its ability to arrive at decisions have always been taken in the context of proper planning and sustainable development:

‘I think the fundamentals of the Bord are still the same. I don’t necessarily think the Bord as an institution has evolved in a philosophical sense’ (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

Although planning legislation is couched in terms of the common good some respondents opined that there is in fact a schism among planners as to what the common good is, and how it can be best served:

‘There are planners who, not alone do they not see themselves as being guardians of the public good or the development plan, but as being people promoting development and see it as a good thing, and there are people who feel very aggrieved that what happened at Ballsbridge didn’t get the nod’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 1)

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29 See Planning and Development Act, 2000 Section 106 (1) which states how the Minister shall appoint the seven ordinary members of the Board at An Bord Pleanála.

30 See Planning and Development Act, 2000 Section 105 (1) which states how the chairperson shall be appointed.
'We certainly have experience of certain planning authorities, and certain planners within planning authorities, where there'd be a very procedural 1960s-type of approach. Other planning authorities would be the other extreme where there would be a very strong emphasis on consultation with the developer' (Private-Sector Planner 2).

'I think if you had pre-planning meetings with five different planners about the same project you'd probably come away with five different viewpoints' (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

Plate 6.1 Liffey Valley Shopping Centre

One local authority manager recognised the growth of private-sector planning consultants over the last twenty years for this ideological divide among planners and believed private-sector planners do not necessarily advance the common good, but instead, in providing services to the private-sector, take on an advocacy role for their developer clients. This view was also shared by a planner at ABP:

'The public sector's perspective is that the private sector is all about money and they're being paid to say this, they're being paid to put this forward. Sure they are and that's the reality of it' (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

Others however claimed that this paradigm crisis stems from there being no agreed understanding of what proper planning is about:
‘I think it’s quite interesting where you can have a system where some planners feel this is the purpose, and other planners feel that is the purpose, and everybody works in the same system’ (Academic Planner 2).

‘It’s very judgemental. Planners are going to exercise different judgements faced with the same set of circumstances. Different planners will have different perspectives’ (L.A Manager’s spokesman 2).

There was a perception among some public-sector planners that oftentimes it is advisable for local-authority planners to agree with planning decisions taken by management so as not to be sidelined from the planning process, even though such decisions may clash with one’s own ideology:

‘You have to be aware of what your masters want. I’ve heard of many instances where planners in local authorities have been sidelined because of their principles, so if you want to stay involved in what’s going on, you have to be a little bit pragmatic’ (ABP Planning Inspector 1).

‘You get sidelined in the council if you don’t move with the organisation’ (DRA Planner).

‘When I retired I was tired. I wasn’t tired fighting developers, I was tired fighting with my own people; you never knew where they were coming from, you didn’t know what agenda they had and they would never admit to an agenda’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 3).

Planners at the Department of the Environment were of the opinion that two discordant ideologies should not exist in the operation of planning since planning should ‘ultimately be for the common good’ (DoEHLG 1), and although all planners consider that they are working for the common good, ‘planners have different ideas as to what the common good is or the best way to deliver the common good’ (Private-Sector Planner 2). This remark is best illustrated by the remarks of two public-sector planners who acknowledge the role the private-sector plays in planning and development:

‘I would be of the view that the common good is served by working with developers to ensure development. You can talk all you want, but the private-sector is going to deliver development. I would be viewed internally here as possibly too sympathetic to developers’ (LA Planner 1).

‘You can be very much pro-development but very much seeking it in the public interest. That would certainly be my view’ (DoEHLG 2).
One academic planner stated that there is very much a pro-development culture infusing the ethos among many planners at Dublin City Council:

'I know a lot of planners who are very much pro-development and you hear anecdotally that there are some who are not so compliant. I don't know enough internally about the debates with local authorities to know whether there's a significant number on the common good side, but I certainly hear occasional stories of it. If you look at Dublin City Council, the City Council is definitely controlled by the private-development planners' (Academic Planner 1).

Another respondent believed that the existence of two discordant ideologies in planning was generational:

'Planners who would have been educated in the '60s and '70s and practiced during that time are quite horrified at the facilitation of this; planners in their thirties and forties are very much with the programme; and the younger planners who are trying to find their feet, have also been pretty horrified by what has gone through but they don't necessarily see another way' (Community Planner).

Not all respondents agreed with this idea though:

'I don't think it's generational, I think there are a lot of young planners who would not want to work in a private-sector, would want to work in the public-sector and are quite happy with the idea that planning is to protect the 'common good' (Academic Planner 2).

Given the existence of two discordant ideologies in the operation of Irish urban planning, there was a difference of opinion among the public- and the private-sector planners as to how the existence of these discordant ideologies actually affects the operation of planning:

'If developers are big enough or the development is large enough, it'll go straight in often to the manager's office on day one. That will be the pre-planning. From pre-planning a policy will be adopted and handed back down and the planning unit will then have the function of sifting through everything, but they're ticking boxes; the policy has been set' (Private-Sector Planner 3).

'At the end of the day, everybody has to work within the system, so it doesn't really matter what the private-sector planners want to do, they still have to deal with the system and equally the same with the public-sector' (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

With regard to the teaching of planning at accredited third level institutions, one planning course was viewed as too conservative by the Irish
Planning Institute (IPI) and it was recommended that it be more open to development. This came as a surprise to one academic planner who stated that students 'are not getting any hard Left or Marxist messages in toto; they're getting a lot of different things' (Academic Planner 1). This raised questions over the IPI's interpretation and protection of the common good. By contrast, the principle upon which another (IPI accredited) planning course was established was to ostensibly develop a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach to planning and to not model itself on the planning educational approaches of other schools in the State. The philosophy guiding teaching at this institution was, therefore, to instil students with a critical understanding of what's going on presently in planning and what makes good places and a critical understanding of how things should be, thus the 'teaching is aware of current ideologies and of trends and fashions' (Academic Planner 3).

Two of the academic planners recognised a marked discontinuity among the three planning schools in the State. For one, differences in the teaching of planning are a reflection of the personnel teaching the programmes. Citing UCD as an example, the emphasis is on teaching good planning theory. Oftentimes, however, UCD is typecast as an academic course because of the make-up of the staff — academic planners who engage in research — but there was an assertion that 'there is a huge amount of practical input' (Academic Planner 1) at UCD too. DIT was considered as having a different view because not all the teaching staff is academic; some are practicing planners thus it was surmised that there may be anti-research ethos among some staff at DIT. The establishment of the planning course at UCC was considered, by one academic planner, a response to the need for more planners to deal with development applications during the boom however, for another, it was established in response to the 'need for a different approach and a new orthodoxy' (Academic Planner 3). It was suggested the planning ethos at the UCC planning course is 'development and development control' (Academic Planner 1). Moreover, it was also suggested that there is 'a disdain for theory' (Academic Planner 1) at UCC given that there are no geography academics on the core staff, just professional planners with professional planning experience and 'a very strong real world emphasis' (Academic Planner 3). This assessment was rejected, however, on the grounds that 'a strong core of values and ethics, a strong sense of the common good' (Academic Planner 3) permeates the teaching of planning at UCC. Whatever message students are receiving from each of the planning schools though, 'the practice of planning is very different from what is being
taught' (Academic Planner 1) as there is a 'culture of giving permission' (Academic Planner 1) in the real world.

6.6 Impact on Local Authority Planning

Just as it was acknowledged that the philosophy guiding Irish planning had undergone change by the late 1980s, so too was it recognised that the operation of urban planning system underwent change too. Despite the genesis of modern Irish planning though the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 and subsequent planning Acts\(^\text{31}\), there was a belief that planning as a discipline was not being taken seriously or viewed as a serious profession at central even as late as the 1980s. Consequently, local authority planning departments were run by engineers; citing Tallaght as the archetypal example of the engineering approach to urban planning in which engineers were driven purely by engineering considerations:

'Engineers were trying to interpret a holistic situation. [Planning] was being done in an engineering context and in a non-planning way. Tallaght is the ultimate example. The engineers' response was let's build lots of roads but they forgot the town centre or forgot the neighbourhood shop or how these things can actually integrate. They were driven by 'how wide is your road?' as opposed to 'what is it going to be like living here?'' (Private-Sector Planner 1).

Private-sector planners also felt that the planning system lacked vision as local authority planning departments were woefully under-resourced and understaffed. Moreover, there wasn't sufficient emphasis placed on forward planning or the importance of development plans. Consequently, local authorities adopted an ad hoc approach to planning:

'There was no real planning in any substantive sense. Dublin City, the growth of Dublin County, the zoning of lands, the way they were zoned, there were no controls. The focus was on wait and see what a developer wants to bring in and deal with it then' (Private-Sector Planner 2).

'In the '80s it wasn't plan-led; nobody had a vision of what planning was supposed to do. Planners sat in their office waiting for somebody to come in with a big idea. Tallaght, Blanchardstown, Clondalkin were developed without planners' (Community Planner).

\(^{31}\) http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/
A number of public-sector planners asserted that recent changes in the operation of urban planning had been 'led by shifts' (LA Planner 1) in thinking at Central Government. Given that Ireland has only ever known broadly right-wing governments therefore, academic planners believed that the Central Government-adopted neo-liberal orthodoxy imbued planning with a new *modus operandi* which was reflected in development plans. Critical of the development plan then, one former Chief Planning Officer stated that it has 'morphed into the manager's plan' (Former Planning Officer 1). In that regard, several respondents considered the development plan a much looser document, in the sense that it is deliberately open to interpretation, than it had been hitherto. This, though, contradicts the views of local authority managers:

'Up to 2000, the development plan system was much looser, now it's more structured. The 2000 Act laid down very rigid structures for the preparation of development plans\(^{32}\). The structure for making plans is much more centrally determined. The amount of guidance coming from the Department of the Environment has increased. The importance of the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Guidelines, which up until now we have had to 'have regard to', which is a vague sort of an undefined phrase, whereas now we will have to demonstrate that we're 'consistent with'\(^{33}\) the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines' (L.A Manager 2).

It was considered among many respondents that there is now an emphasis on developing and promoting high-quality living environments to attract, hold, and accommodate a high-skilled workforce, viewed as critical to Ireland's emerging service-based, dynamic economy. At the local level this was specifically reflected in a new civic leadership at Dublin City Council; following the retirement of Frank Feely in 1996 after 17 years as City Manager, it was felt by some that 'the organisation was tired' (DoEHLG 2). The appointment of John FitzGerald as City Manager, however, fostered a pro-development, facilitative mentality:

'I know that word transformation has been over-used but John FitzGerald really energised the city council when he became city manager and he introduced an entrepreneurial, very pro-development mentality in the city council' (DoEHLG 2).

'The appointment of John FitzGerald to Dublin City Council started a whole change in attitude of local authorities, brought in a new culture and a new way of doing stuff and stepped away from a very conservative approach' (DRA Planner).

\(^{32}\) See Planning and Development Act, 2000, Chapter I - *Development Plans*, Sections 9 – 17.

\(^{33}\) See Planning and Development Act, 2000 Section 7 which states the development objectives in the development plan are consistent with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines.
Some planners also recognised that changes to Irish planning were related to broader political interests and emulated developments in the UK:

‘There was a more socialist outlook in the country in the ‘60s but the timing of the Custom House Docks in the ‘80s tied very closely with the Thatcherite Development Corporations in the UK. We imposed a model that was quite similar to that in some ways and it reflected broader political interests and beliefs’ (LA Planner 2).

Private-sector planners, however, considered this shift in planning practice as instrumental in the emergence of a ‘more professional’ (Private-Sector Planner 3) corps of planners. All the interviewees were aware of Dublin’s standing in the hierarchy of world cities understanding and appreciating that, in many ways, Dublin must become an entrepreneurial city and offer ‘a dynamic business environment where there is a can-do creative culture and where all the various different systems and processes are lined up to facilitate that’ (DoEHLG 3):

‘Dublin is trying to compete with Amsterdam, Prague, Helsinki, and Barcelona. There’s a trendy city every couple of years that we’re trying to be more like’ (Private-Sector Planner 2).

As international cities compete with each other for international finance and investment, all of the academic planners agreed that Irish planning is following, and has reflected, international trends. This view was also supported by a local authority manager’s spokesperson:

‘We are becoming more conscious of the fact that, as a city, we’re not competing with Galway or Cork, we’re competing with Europe. We’re not a New York, we’re not a Tokyo, we’re not a Sydney, we’re not those huge mega cities, but there is a middle tier of cities, European cities, which we are conscious of. We’ve done an awful lot of work, as an organisation, as a city authority, in looking at this whole issue of international benchmarking, of looking at criteria by which to benchmark ourselves against’ (LA Manager’s spokesman 1).

Given that ‘the manager is corporate soul’ (Private-Sector Planner 3) of the local authority, it was suggested by one planner at the Department of the Environment that there is ‘a unity of purpose facilitating a business-like, can-do attitude’ (DoEHLG 3) among local authorities to promote Dublin’s role in a European and global context. One private-sector planner, however, believed Dublin ‘got this idea that it was so much more important than anyone else’
(Private-Sector Planner 1) during the Celtic Tiger and therefore there was a push to deliver a city to match this impression. In that regard, it was acknowledged that certain local authorities became very accommodating of an iconic architectural landscape:

'Iconic architecture became very trendy and we had to have it. Ballsbridge is a case in point, and I know it was refused, but that was all about the icon, and creating this icon for Dublin 4 even though nobody appeared to support it' (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

'RPS was the consultants for Seán Dunne's scheme at Ballsbridge. Its whole approach was you need a thirty-seven storey tower at the edge of the city centre in order to be a world city and the councillors loved it, they loved this idea of world vision' (Private-Sector Planner 1).

Dublin City Council has a department called Research and International Relations that's 'heavily into pushing the branding of the city' (Academic Planner 1) thus DCC was viewed by some respondents as the archetypal entrepreneurial city:

'We're not the big metropolis like New York or Tokyo, but we are a global city' (L.A Manager's spokesman 1).

DCC, though, is not alone in promoting the entrepreneurial agenda:

'We've a massive programme of investment in culture, the arts, and festivals. That's the way we compete because we want to make this a very attractive place to live, work and do business in' (L.A Manager 1).

While there was recognition of the key role that urban planning plays in promoting and projecting Dublin as a global city, one public-sector planner admitted that planning has still not fully embraced an entrepreneurial mentality:

'I would maybe a minority in that I think planning hasn't fully engaged its responsibility in terms of economic development. To some degree, the boom masked that because there was so much development taking place, so much pressure for development. I would be of the view that planning today is too restrictive in how it makes its decisions' (LA Planner 1).

This vision of a world city, however, is not shared by all of the Dublin local authorities, as pointed out by another public-sector planner:
Plate 6.2 Dublin's redeveloped docklands

Plate 6.3 New apartments and a marina in docklands
I don't know about Dublin, but I know Fingal and that's not our philosophy. Our philosophy is very much meeting the demands of the current and proposed population. We don't think of ourselves as a brand. We're trying to promote the common good and we're trying to deliver a product which will meet the needs of our residents (LA Planner 2).

A former Chief Planning Officer stated that local government reorganisation in 1994 was 'an absolute bloody disaster' (Former Planning Officer 3) for creating competition between four Dublin authorities as four different planning departments were created out of the division of Dublin County Council into the county councils of Fingal, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and South Dublin as well as the extant Dublin City Council.

The existence of intra-urban competition among the four local authorities for international investment and development levies was therefore acknowledged among many respondents:

'There is definitely competition. One can see it in terms of Swords versus Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and other sides of County Dublin. That's why we were very much supporting Metro North. The intention was that we would act as a magnet for development north of Swords' (LA Planner 2).

'If IBM comes to us with a proposal for a big development, we don't start thinking maybe that would be better in South Dublin. You're not supposed to mention rates in a planning context, but if something is going to be a big rate generator, you can't say no' (LA Manager 2).

The idea of having the four local authorities in competition with one another did not find favour with public-sector planners though:

'We should be working for Dublin. If it's important that Dún Laoghaire put in certain types of development, sure, but if it's better to put it in Fingal or somewhere else, do it. It's one fairly small city and it shouldn't be competitive, it should be done on a more thought out plan basis' (ABP Planning Inspector 1).

It was thereby, and retrospectively, suggested that one planning commission for the four local authorities be established where public-sector planners would receive all planning applications, assess them and deliver a recommendation to the relevant authorities as it was believed this would lead to a stronger, more coherent and unified planning system for all of Dublin since planning as it currently exists has lost its purpose as it has been 'so
transmogrified by this whole entrepreneurial approach' (Former Planning Officer 1).

Local authority managers though denied that the four local authorities are in competition with each other and cited the Economic Development Action Plan as a collaborative effort between the four Dublin authorities to create a vibrant Dublin (city and county) that's both good to live in and good to do business in. This was considered by some academic planners though as being too symptomatic of the imposition of a particular vision of how the city should look, as well as who it should be for. Indeed, one academic planner attributed this to 'a neo-liberal script about competitive cities' (Academic Planner 1) and cited Richard Florida's Creative Cities as being particularly attractive to a local authority:

'At a local level, [Creative Cities] is very attractive; let's improve places, let's make them more attractive for capital, let's make them more attractive for elite workers. It seems something that a local authority can do, and so they really hook on to it' (Academic Planner 1).

Plate 6.4 Iconic architecture: Ulster Bank headquarters, Georges Quay

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34 See Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region, 2009
Intra-urban competition ultimately leads to 'a big difference in opinion' (ABP Planning Inspector 1) in the way local planning authorities interpret their own development plans and the way An Bord Pleanála interprets planning policy:

'We're looking at the competitive city, we're looking at globalisation of cities, we're looking to ensure the city maintains its dynamic and competitive edge and in that regard sometimes you have to break a few eggs. I think the Board just look at it purely in isolation. They look at the actual thing in total isolation; they're not looking at the bigger picture' (L.A Manager's spokesman 1).

One public-sector planner even claimed 'there is real tension' (LA Planner 1) as to the way the Bord interprets Dublin City Council policy and Dublin City Council interpreting its own policy as Dublin City Council was identified as being the biggest culprit in ignoring the provisions of its own development plan:

'There are differences between the four councils. Dublin City Council has had a very clear facilitative policy, entrepreneurial policy. Talking to planners privately, some of the key planners I know are very, very facilitative of development. They do see their key role as facilitating development, they're quite explicit on that and they get quite annoyed with any notion of opposition' (Academic Planner 1).

One respondent, however, refuted any suggestions that Dublin City Council is ignoring the provisions of its own development plan so as to facilitate developers and was highly critical of ABP:

'Whatever we do is going to be the subject of attention. The other authorities can get away with murder. Every time we sneeze, we are the focus of attention. We are the planning authority. The remit of the Board is not to actually determine policy, it is to interpret. We make the policy and we're quite comfortable that we have the right policy made but unfortunately we don't seem to be able to get that message across. We're criticised because we seem to be facilitating developers; we're not facilitating developers, what we're doing is facilitating the city' (L.A Manager's spokesman 1).

In so far as the suburban local authorities are concerned, though, it was stated by one local authority manager that some authorities are influenced by trends in the Bord's decisions and subsequently try to adjust their own decisions on certain development to these trends. While one academic planner opined that, providing it is 'done rationally and justified by reasoning' (Academic Planner 2) local-authority planners generally are not bothered when ABP
overturns their recommendation on an application, this sentiment was not shared by one local authority managers who claimed planners feel 'pissed off' (L.A Manager's spokesman 1) on learning that their decision has been overturned by ABP:

'We're obviously very pleased when the board back up our decisions, we think they're very wise about it. When they overturn it, we obviously don't particularly like that' (L.A Manager 2).

Given that development plans are devised, written and passed by local authorities, ABP planners believed that local authorities often felt constrained by them as they cannot contravene it, however, private-sector planners, citing Ballsbridge as an example, opined that 'city councils and county councils can be quite willing to bend what their plan says' (Private-Sector Planner 2). Moreover, only the private-sector planners recognised ABP as having a 'record of being a lot more consistent in terms of how they implement things than the councils themselves' (Private-Sector Planner 2):

'The Board are extremely cognisant of what the guidelines are and what Ministerial policy is. I think they have become more competent at recognising what policies apply where, often where the planning authorities have clearly missed it, either by design because they wish to ignore it if they want the development, or because they simply did really miss it' (Private-Sector Planner 3).

At times, ABP was often viewed as a developer's Bord, and the Department of the Environment was seen to be favouring the entrepreneurial agenda. Interestingly then, only the private sector and planners at the DoE hailed ABP as 'the only consistent voice of reason in the planning system' (Private-Sector Planner 2):

'I think the Board still provides that bedrock of very thorough, very impartial, independent, quasi-judicial appellate function and it has continued to discharge that function with distinction for many, many years; it is the last line of assessment on pure planning matters and I think it handles its role with aplomb' (DoEHLG 3).

'The Board has become, more or less, the defender of the development plan' (Private-Sector Planner 3).

'Since its foundation in the mid-'70s, it actually is one of the only bodies independent of a government department that remains in force. The Bord has remained independent as
a result of its absolute facelessness and its absolute transparency and its absolute principle of natural justice’ (Private-Sector Planner 1).

6.7 Consequences for Local Authority Planning

It was acknowledged that planners often find themselves under pressure to give approval for development; while one former Senior Planning Officer criticised planners for allowing themselves to be subjected to undue pressures claiming, somewhat radically that they ‘should be really bludgeoned around the place for allowing that to happen’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 1), some planners stated that local councillors, acting in behalf of constituents and political donors, are the biggest group in applying such pressure and with two claiming to have first-hand experience of undue pressure being applied on them:

‘A lot of the times it will be councillors, they turn up with the client, or worse, depending which council it is, they turn up at your desk. I think that happens in quite a lot of councils. It’s happened to me. You go to the loo, come back and there’s a councillor sitting at your desk reading your files’ (DRA Planner).

For other planner, the belief was that individuals with a vested interest in a planning decision often bring their influence to bear through pre-planning meetings with management who, courted by the prospect of a rates base, leave planners helpless in defending their position and professional opinion when it is adjudged not to give a grant of permission for a particular development:

‘The County Manager could be as gung-ho about delivering a shopping centre or a major factory or whatever it is. That happens. That happens everywhere’ (Private-Sector Planner 2).

Concerned only with their own administrative area, management manage for the economic good of their area. Consequently, considerations of economics and the entrepreneurial agenda dictate the daily operations of local authorities at the expense of community interests, thus, according to the three former Chief Planning Officers, Irish urban planning is under the ‘regime of a very powerful managerial class’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 1) who made it absolutely clear to their administrative staff and planners that they were in charge and that they were there to promote development as ‘development promotion was what prosperity and what the Celtic Tiger was about’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 1). The three former Chief Planning Officers also argued
that managers, motivated by the rates base secured against a major retail
development for example, were also putting pressure on planners and pushing
planning in a different direction:

'I like the idea of working for the public; you weren't compromised, you were a free agent,
and you had security of tenure. Now it's changed, now you're really working for the
manager, and the manager is working for the development sector, and the development
sector is part of the political system. Planners are gone as a force and it's been proved
by what's going on around the country' (Former Planning Officer 1).

In that regard, the manager was described by one interviewee as 'the
direct local feudal lord of the Department of the Environment who reports
directly to the Secretary of the Department' (Former Chief Planning Officer 1):

'I think it's a reasonable thing to say that a manager, who has a holistic view of the whole
city and has the authority, is capable of saying "You called it wrong there, you're not
seeing the big picture and we're overturning it", it's entirely reasonable' (LA Planner 1).

For planners at the Department of the Environment, however, the view
was that local authorities must not distort their policy objectives 'in the pursuit
of the economic objective' (DoEHLG 3). Proper planning and sustainable
development must therefore find a balance between the social, economic and
environmental dimensions of development.

Although the Celtic Tiger ushered in a period of sustained economic
growth for Ireland, the abolition of rates on domestic dwellings in 1978 and the
decision, in 1997, to abolish domestic water charges imposed fiscal constraints
on local authorities. By way of ensuring local authorities adhere to the neoliberal
agenda, 'funding is a good way of making bodies change' (L.A Manager's
spokesman 2):

'We, as a local authority, do not have any taxation powers. We're a rates authority, but
rates are not a tax, it's a service charge. We don't have any ability to raise funds' (L.A
Manager's spokesman 1).

'They didn't have great budgets; the system was really geared for development
contributions and they had no local income so there wasn't much choice' (Academic
Planner 2).
Plate 6.5 Jurys Hotel, Ballsbridge

Plate 6.6 Architect's drawing for Seán Dunne's proposed development for the Jurys Hotel site at Ballsbridge
Central government grants, as established through the Local Government Act, 1998\textsuperscript{36}, whereby allocations are made to local authorities from an exchequer contribution, resulted in a reliance on private-sector on development levies:

'If you want anything to happen, it's going to have to be done by the developers. If you want a playground built in the local park, you're going have to try and get somebody to build something so that you can collect some levies to pay for the new playground or to repair the existing one' (DRA Planner).

In terms of the provision of housing, then, while it was suggested by one planner that, and citing the boarded-up houses at Darndale as an example, local authority housing had become 'stigmatised and associated with social problems' (ABP Planning Inspector 2), another planner suggested the decision by local authorities to no longer provide social housing units had political undercurrents as the power of public spending was reduced so the real power to provide housing fell on the private-sector:

'Local authorities got out of building local-authority houses years ago. At one time every local authority built houses and then they stopped doing that. Very rarely do you come across a local authority housing scheme. It was a political move not to build local authority houses anymore' (ABP Planning Inspector 1).

Dublin Corporation had huge tracts of land in the 1960s which they owned and where they provided services such as sewerage and drainage and roads. This had been a major factor for the manner which the county grew, and where it grew, but land at the periphery of Dublin was in the 'ownership of a small number of property developers' (Academic Planner 2) as a small number of developers had been accumulating and assembling and land banks in the intervening decades which they wanted to exploit and develop to the maximum profit. This was supported by a former Chief Planning Officer who stated 'the whole north fringe was bought up by Gannon Homes' (Former Chief Planning Officer 1). By releasing the land very slowly, these land speculators were able to manage supply and demand side factors in the market and this land gave the developer-speculator great control over development and the development of Dublin's periphery:

\textsuperscript{36} See Local Government Act, 1998 Section 3 (1) which established the Local Government Fund.
In many cases, the developer has a bit of land and he wants to exploit the land. Tyrrelstown was something that was very much developer-led and does not go in the interest of the county as a whole, or the common good (LA Planner 2).

Another important factor for developers' elevated status was huge amounts of taxes the development sector would have been generating at the height of the boom, thus one local authority manager claimed 'government would have been heavily dependent on the construction industry for finance' (L.A Manager 2). Academic planners, however, recognised that, historically, there has always been a close relationship between the building industry and Fianna Fáil thus in terms of developers driving the agenda, one local authority manager's spokesperson admitted that this 'would appear to have happened' (L.A Manager's spokesman 2). Planning was therefore considered a 'servant to the entrepreneur' (Former Chief Planning Officer 1) as local authorities increasingly came to rely on development contributions for day-to-day running costs and developers became ever more powerful figures in Irish planning:

'[Seán] Dunne was an extremely powerful political figure with Bertie Ahern. He went to the House of Congress and he also was in the distinguished visitors' gallery when he addressed the Houses of Parliament in London. I find that very curious; you're blind if you don't see some connection between these things' (Former Chief Planning Officer 1).

While it was acknowledged by several public-sector planners that the planning system increasingly became 'development-led and developer-led' (DRA Planner) from the 1990s, private-sector planners recognised that planning has, therefore, been 'trying to keep up with the developers rather than being a step ahead of what's happening' (Private-Sector Planner 2).

Given that local authorities engage most visibly and most markedly with the proposals of individual private developers, private-sector planners understood why some people might perceive planning as being more facilitative of the private sector, but denied that this was indeed the case:

'They were meeting the demand that the government was telling them was needed, so their role in delivering that made them very important. They were delivering the offices that would be giving the jobs, the houses for people to live in, facilities for everyone to be able to live their lives in, everything' (Private-Sector Planner 2).
Only one local-authority planner defended the actions of private-sector developers suggesting instead that developers were responding to the demands of the public:

"People want to live in a nice four-bed roomed house somewhere, so in that sense, that's people power deciding that 'we want to live there, we don't want to live in a shoe-box in the city centre', so I don't think that's development driven, I think that's just what people want (LA Planner 1).

6.8 Realisation for planning

The critique of docklands was always that there was no community interest and planning wasn't integrated thus IAPs came in to being about ten years after the establishment of the SPDAs. One interviewee stated that for local-authority planners, 'it was a fairly complex transition' (Academic Planner 1) from despising development agencies such as CHDDA/DDDA to actually employing a variant thereof at the local level. IAPs were therefore seen as an opportunity for local authorities, notably Dublin City Council, to leave their own mark on the city and show that they could efficiently and effectively redevelop parts of the city on an area-based basis just as CHDDA had been doing since its establishment. In that regard, it was acknowledged IAPs gave planners 'some kind of renewed relevance' (Academic Planner 1) in planning.

Generally, planners at the Department of the Environment believed that IAPs had been a major success as they 'made planning a lot more close to the people' (DoEHLG 3). In that regard, it was suggested that the public is more 'willing to engage with local area planning' (ABP Planning Inspector 2) because it will affect existing communities in an area with which people identify and the benefits of redevelopment typically accrue to the community:

"It was very hard to get the kind of social returns back to the local communities and so on but I think HARP and to a lesser extent the Liberties did achieve that' (DoEHLG 2).

Not all public-sector planners lauded the introduction of IAPs into the planning system though. Indeed, it was noted by some planners that the influence of local politicians can be demoralising for planners and can adversely affect what planners are hoping to achieve in an area:

"The IAPs were politically driven. You start off with this great objective and great enthusiasm for it, but by the time you get to the end of it you just want to get rid of it.
Everything you set out to achieve has been turned on its head by the councillors' (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

Moreover, while acknowledging that local authority planners engage and consult communities about how best to shape their locale, there was a degree of cynicism expressed among private-sector planners who regarded the true nature and value of integrated area planning as a nothing more than a 'way of local authorities focusing getting their hands on money' (Private-Sector Planner 2).

Prior to Better Local Government in 1996, many planners felt obliged to leave the public-sector in order to pursue enhanced promotional opportunities in the private-sector. Under BLG, higher grades were created\footnote{See Better Local Government, 1996 Section 6.17 which provided greater opportunities for graduate entry to local authorities on the lines of the administrative officer grade.} 'vastly increasing the number of planners working the planning system' (LA Planner 2) bringing planners in at a time when they were desperately needed, thus for some public-sector planners the publication of Better Local Government was welcomed, however, for other respondents Better Local Government was cited for having facilitated an entrepreneurial ethos in local authority planning. One of the most alarming features of BLG was the removal of the County Planning Officer and the imposition of a Director of Services. Unlike other head functions under BLG, the Director of Services for planning did not necessarily have to be a planner:

'Every head of function under Better Local Government is held by a professional in that function, so the person in charge of computer services is a computer specialist, the person in charge of water services is an engineering specialist, the person in charge of personnel is a personnel specialist and in every functional area, the head is experienced and more likely than not, qualified in the area, so the head of architecture and building would be an architect, and the head of librarianship would be a librarian and it works in every single function case except for planning (Academic Planner 3).

Alarmed by this development, one former Chief Planning Officer recalled a conversation held with the Assistant Secretary at the Department of the Environment about the abolition of Planning Officer and the rationale behind creating a new position of Director of Services to oversee planning:

'I said "Where do we stand, there seems to be no place for us in this thing" and he said "You’re right, there isn’t a place. I don’t want to be insulting or anything but the way things
are going to work, and I'm not decrying your profession, but your planning standards may not correspond with management, and if you want to be part of this new team, I'm afraid you just got to leave your ideas outside the door’ (Former Chief Planning Officer).

One academic planner felt that, prior to the Planning and Development Act, 2000, one after the other, Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts 1963 – 1999 had been to a greater or lesser degree following the principle Act and therefore offering nothing new to planning. Consolidating the Acts in 2000 was therefore considered a useful thing to have done by one academic Planner:

‘I have great admiration for Minister Dempsey’s Planning and Development Act of 2000. I think that was introducing a lot of new instruments that were very challenging and ambitious. I think Ireland has a mature planning system now’ (Academic Planner 2).

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 was also lauded as 'a revolution in itself' (ABP Planning Inspector 2) for introducing a much more plan-led system and by providing statutory provision for Local Area Plans38, which had been non-statutory previously. In addition, the publication of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) were hailed as a way of eliminating the ad hoc manner in which urban planning had previously operated:

‘The National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines are basically trying to marry development with transport, and with servicing, so that for once you’re actually going to get an integrated approach to development, whereas previously you had each happening in its own stream’ (DoEHLG 1).

‘There is a recognition now that things like schools are part of the planning system, water services are being pulled more into a regional framework, design is more focused on the environment. These are all things that could have been there for the last thirty years but weren’t’ (DoEHLG 2).

Planners at the DoE were very positive of two provisions, in particular, of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. The first was the Part V39 model of social and affordable housing, which, it was claimed attracted ‘teams from the

38 See Planning and Development Act, 2000 Section 18 (1) which permits a local authority to prepare a local area plan.
39 See Planning and Development Act, 2000 Section 94 (4) which states 20 per cent of land zoned for residential use shall be reserved for the provision of social and affordable housing.
UK Treasury to look at our affordable housing model’ (DoEHLG 2). The other was the concept of the Strategic Development Zones (SDZs)^40.

Local authorities were no longer providing social housing units and consequently became dependent on the provisions of Part V; developers though, were not happy with the Part V provisions claiming that mixed tenure developments, where social and affordable units are nestled among private accommodation, were affecting the sale and sale price of private units. It was therefore suspected by some interviewees that developers lobbied to have Part V changed and applied pressure on the ruling Fianna Fáil government:

‘Mr. Dempsey, who as Minister for the Environment, was at a planning conference in Kilkenny and he said, over his dead body would he allow the requirement of twenty per cent to be changed into any other sort of agreement. About six months later, that was changed’ (Former Planning Officer 1).

The function of LAPs was also recognised in the 2000 Act which provided them a statutory basis. Action Area Plans (AAPs) had been in existence since the emergence of modern planning in 1963 but had only ever been used sporadically and with various degrees of success. AAPs had no statutory basis so LAPs represented a significant change for local-authority planning. One academic planner however, noted that LAPs have been picked up in different ways by different planning authorities; in some local authorities, LAPs are simply another version of the development plan but in others they introduce more of a master plan framework in planning.

SDZs propose to contain developments of economic or social importance to the State. Designation of a site as an SDZ is, therefore, a decision of the Government following a proposal by the Minister for the Environment. SDZs follow a master planning concept, however they have a number of important features that make them distinct from normal planning processes but bear some similarities to an SPDA such as DDDA. Under an SDZ the planning authority at local government level effectively becomes a Development Agency and it can use any powers available to it for the purposes of providing, securing or facilitating the provision of the SDZ. Moreover, there is no appeal opportunity to An Bord Pleanála on an individual planning application for development. In

^40 See Planning and Development Act, 2000 Section 166 (1) which permits the Minister for the Environment to designate sites for the establishment of a Strategic Development Zone.
July 2001, Adamstown in South Dublin became the first designated SDZ in the country:

'I was genuinely excited by Adamstown because you had a mixture of houses and apartments so people had a genuine market choice. The apartments were reasonably generously sized, they weren't little shoe boxes. It was very, very carefully planned that people could be within walking distance of the train and bus into Dublin. We worked very hard with the Department of Education to ensure schools would be delivered at the same time. I think it was a terrific model' (DoEHLG 2).

'It's a pity we couldn't have done more of the kind of Adamstown development at an earlier stage' (Academic Planner 2).

Planners at ABP, however, did not share this enthusiasm for the Act claiming some of the provisions in were deliberately vague so as to 'facilitate whatever you want it to facilitate' (ABP Planning Inspector 2):

'One of the key things in the 2000 Act was the introduction of sustainable development into proper planning and sustainable development; planners who are more conscious of the sustainable elements can say “Well, this is sustainable” and those who are not can say “It's not sustainable”. Everybody can use something to suit their particular context in terms of what they feel is the most appropriate means of poaching something' (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

In so far as the discharge of appeals is concerned, despite the statutory objective under the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1992 to ensure that appeals were ‘disposed of as expeditiously as may be’ , the Bord was stretched to its limits thus the discharge of appeals was taking considerably longer, thus the Planning and Development Act, 2000 obliged ABP to discharge appeals within 18 weeks. As that last line of assessment on planning matters the Bord was acutely aware that the principles of efficacy and fairness, to which it is bound in the decision-making process, depended on their getting through appeals within this timeframe. Given this 'unique situation' (ABP Planning Inspector 2), the Bord contracted freelance inspectors and private planning consultancies to help respond to the growing number of planning appeals:

41 http://www.adamstown.ie/
42 See Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1992 Section 2 (1) which states An Bord Pleanála must dispose of appeals as expeditiously as may be.
43 See Planning and Development Act, 2000 Section 126 (2) which sets an objective of An Bord Pleanála to ensure that every appeal is determined within a period of 18 weeks.
'As soon as I retired I was asked would I be interested, and I thought yeah, sort of ease the way out of retirement. I was quite happy to do it' (Former Planning Officer 3).

Planners, however, did not consider the Bord to have succumbed to the neoliberal agenda nor did they see this as a potential precursor to the privatisation of urban planning in Ireland:

'I saw that as a very pragmatic response to an extremely difficult situation that the Board found itself in' (DoEHLG 3).

'The idea that planning would be privatised; I don't think enters planners' consciousness' (LA Planner 1).

One academic planner, who admitted to working for the Bord as a freelance inspector, did not seem to think privatisation would, in any way, be detrimental to planning or have a bearing on the recommendations of private-sector planners:

'Even if it were privatised, if the planning applications were processed by private planning firms, I don't think it would lead to clientelism because I think the planning consultants would view it as threatening their reputation. Planning consultancies wouldn't want to become involved in that' (Academic Planner 2).

For all other interviewees, however, the idea of privatising planning was considered 'a nasty thought' (Former Chief Planning Officer 2) thus it was generally accepted that it was a pragmatic approach to a unique situation. One interviewee, though, was aware that some local planning authorities had also been outsourcing planning applications to private consultants during the boom and was appalled by this development because, at the local authority level, there is no established panel of experts to adjudicate on a file, as is the case at ABP, and moreover, private consultants, working off a dual mandate, 'have no idea of the public interest' (Academic Planner 1).

For the planners at An Bord Pleanála, though, the use of freelance inspectors and private planning consultancies, to what was described as 'an exceptional tidal wave of activity' (DoEHLG 3) was lauded on a number of grounds; in the first place, it was felt the planning system as a whole benefitted:

'A lot of planners have become familiar with how the Board operates and now appreciate it. I think they're far better educated for it. That was a start to the mystery of the Board
being broken down and planners had an appreciation for the pressures we worked under' (ABP Planning Inspector 1).

Second, the Board always maintained control over its contracted planning inspectors and consultants so as to maintain a level of consistency over decisions on appeals:

'The control was always kept in the Board rather than the control being with the consultants. It was choreographed in a specific way that they were used as foot soldiers but never became more than that. They never had a representation in the inspectorate and they never had a representation in our monthly meetings' (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

Third, the Bord knew they'd only need staff for a short time, thus consultants were employed on short-term contracts, so that when the pressure eventually eased they could run their contracts down allowing the permanent in-house team at the Bord to deal with the cases during quieter times.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter appraises public- and private-sector planners' attitudes in respect to the reorientation of urban planning under a neoliberal agenda since 1986. It proceeded with an examination of public perceptions of planners and the planning system generally, exploring the factors influencing public opinions vis-à-vis planning and how these are reflected in participation in the planning system. It also addressed the manner in which planning is shaped by political ideologies generally, and specifically how a neoliberal transformation at Central Government in the late 1980s has been reflected in planning. This was achieved by exploring the underlying philosophy guiding planning. Moreover, this chapter explored whether two discordant ideologies exist within local authority planning departments. This was followed by an examination of planning practice and the extent to which some local authorities espouse a 'can-do' approach. Next, the chapter considered the pressure local-authority planners are subject to in the discharge of their duties as public servants. Finally, the chapter looked at how changes in planning had been reflected in specific initiatives by local authorities such as small area planning through IAPs and LAPs, PPPs in social-housing regeneration projects; reliance on Part 5 for the provision of social and affordable housing; and the emergence of SDZ as a model for development.
A number of themes emerged from the interviews with the public- and private-sector planners: first, the former Planning Officers considered planners to be a 'whipping boy' in the sense that planners frequently get blamed for everything that goes wrong but are rarely given credit for the things that they get right. In that regard, it was widely accepted that the general public have a poor perception of planners and the planning system. The Former Planning Officers considered that public perceptions of planning are conditioned by what planning does; effect change. They claimed Irish people generally do not like change and hence do not have much time for planning as a discipline and a profession. The systemic abuse of Section 4 rezoning in Dublin County in the 1980s by local councillors and the subsequent media attention surrounding the revelations at the Tribunal of Inquiry were primarily attributed to the negative perceptions of planning, although public-sector planners repeatedly pointed out that no planners had been indicted by the Tribunal for malpractice or corruption. Public-sector planners also asserted that the public have a limited understanding of planning; however, private-sector planners believed this was a reflection of incomprehensible development plans. Private-sector planners therefore considered this a failure of planning and were critical of the public-sector for not engaging properly with the public. Public-sector planners refuted this criticism and suggested instead that the public generally do not interest themselves in planning given that involvement may only be once in their lifetime when they apply for planning permission or appeal a decision to ABP. In that regard, it was acknowledged that this will prompt engagement; however, this will only be for a short-time. The existence of NIMBYism was also recognised as part of Irish planning, however, this was considered a reflection of the degree to which parochialism is part of the Irish psyche.

Second, it was widely accepted that political ideologies infuse and shape the planning system. Local-authority managers and public-sector planners recognised the close relationship Fianna Fáil has historically had with the development sector (who have subsequently exerted a powerful influence over successive Fianna Fáil governments). Academic planners also recognised that Fianna Fáil has promoted a neoliberal agenda which has infused planning by empowering the private sector. Moreover, given that seven of the previous ten Ministers for the Environment have been affiliated with Fianna Fáil, local-authority planners declared that this free enterprise pro-development ethos had been reflected during their tenure at Custom House. John Gormley, however, was considered different to his predecessors; planners at the DoE stated that
Gormley pushed the green during his term as Minister for the Environment, while private-sector planners criticised Gormley for not being sympathetic to developers. At the local level, the former Planning Officers believed that councillors do not understand planning policy considering their role as that of facilitator for their constituents, supporters and 'clients'. Public-sector planners also stated that the composition of the council chamber can also have a bearing on planning: when the chamber is dominated by Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael it is pro-development, however, when Labour are in the majority, there is a very conservative, anti-development approach to planning. Moreover, public-sector planners believed that the objectives of planning are being stymied as, given the clientelist nature of Irish politics, planning is subject to local politics. Despite this, all of the informants did not want to see the democratic input in planning taken away.

Third, private-sector planners believed transformation in Irish policy at Central Government was prompted by the urgent need to address inner city dereliction and decline in the 1980s. The Dublin Crisis Conference was cited as pushing an understanding and appreciation for Dublin City which hitherto had not been prevalent among policy makers. In that regard, all planners considered the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 and the Finance Act, 1986 as instrumental in the redevelopment and regeneration of Dublin’s inner city, however, with the introduction of Designated Areas in the inner city, former Planning Officers stated that the Chief Planning Officer at the time had not been consulted as to where the boundaries were to be drawn. Indeed, the Chief Planning Officer was informed by the Secretary at the Department of the Environment that this was not his business. This was recognised as the beginning of long relationship of collusion between the Department of the Environment and management at local government level. Concerning docklands, private-sector planners acknowledged that Dublin City Council had a community-focused plan for the regeneration of the area which included the provision of more social housing and social facilities, however, Central Government imposed an SPDA to oversee development of the area. Academic planners and former Planning Officers stated SPDAs raise important questions about democracy, the common good, and the neoliberal agenda and marked a new approach to urban planning in Ireland. Public-sector planners acknowledged that this SPDA at docklands was copying the UDC model in use at London Docklands and recognised that the imposition of an SPDA in Irish planning. For private-sector planners, the establishment of CHDDA came about as a result of local authority bureaucracy
which it was felt gave uncertainty to developers so the SPDA was established to expedite development and to give assurances to developers. Planners at the DoE spoke favourably of SPDAs and admitted that the SPDA was the only way to realise redevelopment and regeneration in docklands. The managers, private-sector planners and planners at the DoE considered that the SPDA at docklands forced local authorities to look at their own modus operandi and to change to embrace a more entrepreneurial, development focus. Local authority planners disagreed with this idea claiming that the imposition of an SPDA was not the right thing to do in docklands. In addition, public-sector planners criticised Designated Areas in planning believing that large parts of the city had been neglected as a result. In addition, the academic planners considered the abolition of An Foras Forbartha in 1987 as being politically motivated, soon after it had published guidance on what it considered good planning to be.

Fourth, the former Planning Officers stated that Irish urban planning at one time was considered left of centre, and although the managers and former Ministers for the Environment did not consider planning to have changed any in the last 25 years, the academic planners did recognise radical change. Private-sector planners recognised the imposition of an SPDA in planning precipitated a change in planning philosophy over the last 25 years and identified Dublin City Council as having shifted from a socially orientated and public-sector-delivery focus to embrace this new philosophy. The former Planning Officers recognised Dublin City Council manager, John FitzGerald, as championing this new programme whereby planning had become an agent for development. Public-sector planners, however, attributed the growth of private-planning consultancies as having embraced a new facilitative philosophy as private-sector planners view themselves in more of an advocacy role for developer clients. This view was also shared by the local-authority managers. In looking at ABP, public-sector planners considered the composition of board members at ABP crucial in determining whether or not the philosophy guiding planning at the Bord is pro- or anti-development. Planners from ABP of course refuted this suggestion believing that the common good has always been central to the Bord and that its philosophy has not evolved since its establishment by statute in 1976. All planners, nevertheless, recognised the existence of two discordant ideologies in local authority planning between those planners rooted to the idea of planning for the common good and others who espouse a more 'can-do' entrepreneurial spirit. While planners at the DoE stated that two discordant ideologies should not exist in planning, local authority planners also recognised
that, in order not to be marginalised in planning, oftentimes local-authority planners had to agree with decisions taken by management even though these may contradict their own personal beliefs vis-à-vis the role of planning and those planners who did not get with the programme were sidelined from planning, as happened to one former Planning Officer. Former Ministers for the Environment stated the three planning schools in the State had an important role in shaping student-planners' approach to planning and the delivery of the common good, however, the academic planners did recognise a discontinuity in teaching between each of the schools: UCD was considered academic with an emphasis on teaching good planning theory, and both DIT and UCC, with teaching staff mainly composed of practicing planners and limited academic staff, were considered to be emphasise development and development control in their teaching. In addition, it was believed by one academic planner that the establishment of a planning school in UCC in 2006 was a reflection of the need for many more planners in the system to deal with the volume of planning applications.

Fifth, it was widely agreed that the practice of Irish planning has changed in line with a changing philosophy. Public-sector planners stated that this change has been 'led by shifts' in thinking by Central Government which imbued planning with a new *modus operandi* so that planning's preoccupation is now on developing and promoting a high-quality living environment to attract inward investment. Moreover, public-sector planners believed this shift was reflected by a change in civic leadership in the 1990s and pointed to the appointment of John FitzGerald at Dublin City Council, in particular, for promoting a new entrepreneurial, pro-development mentality in the city. The former Planning Officers considered planning to be run under 'a regime of a powerful managerial class' (Former Planning Officer 1) meeting the short-term interests of a few individuals thus development plans are the 'manager's plan' in that they are essentially loose documents open to interpretation. The managers disagreed with this of course but did acknowledge that the making of development plans is much more centrally determined. Private-sector developers believed changes to urban planning since the late 1980s has resulted in a more professional corps of planners. All of the planners were aware of Dublin's standing in the hierarchy of world cities and recognised that Dublin was competing with other international cities for investment and employment. Academic planners considered Irish planning to be following international trends and local authorities to be following a neoliberal script about competitive cities; hence some local authorities are
endorsing Richard Florida's ideas of the creative city. Moreover, planners at ABP recognised that during the boom, Dublin City 'required' a city to match its ambitions as a world city, thus iconic architecture was sought out. Although, planners at the DoE believed that there was a unity of purpose among all local authority managers to promote Dublin as a world city. All planners recognised the existence of intra-urban competition as local authorities compete for development levies. Such competition has therefore resulted in four different planning systems. In that regard, some respondents considered the manager to be managing for the economic good of the area and was thus embracing and promoting an entrepreneurial agenda. Private-sector planners and the planners at ABP acknowledged that such competition has resulted in local authorities contravening their own development plans. Dublin City Council was identified as the archetypal entrepreneurial city, however, it was not alone as another manager admitted that Dún Laoghaire was also being actively promoted as an attractive place to live, work and do business in, however, one local-authority planner at Fingal stated that Fingal's philosophy was not about promoting Dublin or engaging in place promotion but rather meeting the needs of the current and proposed population in the county and promoting the common good. As applications are appealed to the Bord, ABP planners, planners at the DoE and private-sector planners considered ABP the defender of the development plan and commended the Bord for carrying out its role as the last line of assessment on planning matters with aplomb. One former Planning Officer thereby suggested the establishment of one central planning body to oversee planning and development for the city and the three counties.

Sixth, all respondents acknowledged that local-authority planners are often subject to pressure to recommend the granting of permission for certain developments. An Taisce and the former Planning Officers believed that those with a direct vested interest in development opportunities were indirectly applying pressure on planners through the manager during pre-planning meetings. Driven thus by trying to secure a rates base, many local-authority managers were in turn directing planners in the exercise of their duties. The managers defended their position and stated that they do not work from purely planning aspects alone but are required to have a more holistic view of an area which involves taking other factors into consideration and claimed instead that planners were subject to pressure from local councillors acting on behalf of their constitutes. For the planners though, it was widely held that this pressure is coming from every quarter – the manager and Director of Services as well as
from local councillors – and it was nonetheless agreed that planning decisions are subsequently made which deliberately contravene the development plan. Planners at the DoE, however, stated that planning should not distort policy objectives in favour of supporting economic objectives as this did not constitute proper planning. Public-sector planners and academic planners also acknowledged that the issue of local authority funding has resulted in a reliance on development levies and private-sector delivery of services. Planning must therefore facilitate this and was considered ‘servant to the entrepreneur’ (Former Chief Planning Officer 1). In that regard, it was acknowledged by some public-sector planners, that urban planning from the 1990s became both developer-led and development-led. Private-sector planners, however, dismissed this suggestion believing instead that the private-sector was merely responding to a demand for office space and accommodation.

Finally, following the vesting of planning powers with CHDDA/DDDA following the imposition of an SPDA in Irish planning, academic planners believed that for local-authority planners, IAPs represented a complex transition from hating the SPDA to using a variant thereof, however, many local-authority planners believed small-scale area planning through IAPs gave planners a renewed sense of relevance in planning and that IAPs could be used as a way of showing that local-authority planners can just as efficiently and effectively redevelop parts of the city just as the development agencies had been doing in docklands for example. Planners at the DoE considered IAPs to be a great success and believed IAPs encouraged greater public participation in planning as small-scale planning directly affected people within the area of the IAP. ABP was less enthusiastic about IAPs claiming local councillor involvement can often distort the objectives of planning for an area. Local authority planners considered Better Local Government an important document for local-authority planners as it increased the numbers of planners working in local authorities at a time when planners were desperately needed. Moreover, by creating higher grades, there were enhanced promotional opportunities for planners thus more planners were staying in the public-sector. This sentiment was not shared by all respondents as the former Planning Officers were critical of BLG for facilitating an entrepreneurial ethos. In particular, the former Planning Officers expressed their anger at the abolition of the local-authority Planning Officer and its replacement by a Director of Services, a position which did not necessarily have to be filled by a planner. Planners at the DoE and ABP considered the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as having introduced a much more plan-led system
with joined-up thinking incorporating transport planning and the provision of services and infrastructure into development plans. In particular, SDZs were hailed as a new model for development and Part V was commended for the provision of social and affordable housing in the Irish market, though academic planners were critical of the changes to Part V in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002 claiming that the developers lobbied the government to have Part V changed. At the height of the boom, ABP contracted freelance inspectors and private planning consultancies to help deal with appeals within the statutory period of 18 weeks. All of the planners considered this a pragmatic response to a unique situation and therefore did not believe that this was a precursor to the privatisation of planning in Ireland and one respondent described this as a 'nasty thought' (Former Planning Officer 2). Moreover, ABP planners insisted that the Bord maintained control of all inspectors who were on short-term contracts.
Chapter 7

The Reorientation of Irish Urban Planning
(Part II – Political Actors)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter follows on from chapter 6 and explores the reorientation of urban planning as recognised by former Ministers for the Environment and local authority councillors representing each of the State’s main political parties (where representation was available) plus Independent councillors in the four Dublin authorities. First, the chapter examines impressions of the public’s perception of planning system and looks at public participation and interest generally in planning. Second, it explores the political ideologies that have helped shaped urban planning by investigating the broad ideological background of Irish politics. Third, it investigates councillors’ recognition of a neoliberal transformation at Central Government level since the 1980s, manifested in policy and legislation and how this has been reflected in planning. Fourth, it examines councillors’ awareness of changes in the theoretical approach to planning generally and specifically within councillors’ own local authority. In addition, it investigates whether two discordant ideologies exist in the operation of local-authority planning, and councillors’ perception of An Bord Pleanála’s approach to planning. Fifth, it examines planning practice for each local authority and determines the degree to which local authorities are in competition as reflected in more facilitative modes of operation. Moreover, it considers councillors’ impressions of ABP as an unbiased arbiter in the planning process. Sixth, the chapter addresses whether councillors believe local-authority planners are subject to undue pressure as well as determining the source of any such pressure. Finally, the chapter looks at planning in terms of specific initiatives such as LAP and IAP planning; PPPs for social-housing regeneration; Part V provision of social and affordable housing; and SDZ planning. It also explores councillors’ perceptions of ABP contracting freelance planning inspectors and private-planning consultants during the boom.

7.2 Public Perceptions of Irish Urban Planning

With the exception of just one respondent – former Minister for the Environment – who believed public perceptions of planning were positive, there
was unanimity among all the councillors that the public hold a very negative view of the planning system:

'I would say that the public perception is that it's shit, that planners haven't a fucking clue, that the councillors are gobshites, that [name] is an arrogant cunt, they have no regard for it' (FG, DLR).

'If you speak to the ordinary person on the street, they have no faith, no trust, no belief in the planning system, none whatsoever. They don't believe a word out of the mouth of planners and it has created huge, deep division and distrust. It's not healthy, I wish it wasn't like that but that's the truth' (SF, DCC).

The two former Ministers for the Environment and all of the councillors agreed that systemic corruption – abuse of Section 4 by elected members and the tendency towards broad brush zoning – exposed by the Tribunal of Inquiry (Into Certain Planning Matters and Payments), as contributory factor for the negative view, held by some, of planning:

'The public perception of planning has taken a battering in recent years and I think that's down to politics, politics has certainly let the side down' (FF, DLR).

Several interviewees, however, declared that no planners were implicated of any wrong-doing by the Tribunal. Nevertheless, they expected the public to continue suspecting planning of 'dirty deals until these wigs make their final decisions in Dublin Castle' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 1):

'Somebody will say "You're only doing that because it favours somebody over there and he's the same politics as you." People will make assumptions' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 1).

Moreover, insofar as it is assumed that malpractice and corruption in planning are a thing of the past as a result of the Tribunal, it was nevertheless suggested by a number of councillors in South Dublin that the Tribunal has in fact left the public with a greater degree of distrust:

'The Tribunal has given maybe an even worse name to the council. It has shown that even the manager and I'll mention the name, Mr. Redmond, can do it. If he could do it, it's all corrupt: That's the perception after the Tribunal' (FG, SDCC).

'The planning system seems, to a lot of people, to be not very transparent and seems to be somewhat unaccountable' (FF, SDCC).
Interestingly, a number of Fianna Fáil councillors also blamed 'too much development in County Dublin' (FF, DLR) as another reason as to why the public view of the planning system 'an absolute shambles' (FF, SDCC). With this admission, Labour and Independent councillors stated the public consider planning to be both developer-led and developer-driven thereby pandering to the expedient rather than what would be considered a more long-term benefit:

'A lot of the public would be very unhappy with the planning system, and certainly that would be my experience as a councillor. They don't necessarily think it is planners' giving their professional opinion because they think it is developer-driven, developer-led' (Lab., DLR).

Bearing this in mind, it was therefore acknowledged that 'it is extremely difficult to get the community involved' (Lab., SDCC) in planning:

'If there was a planning road show in town going from community to community today, you'd be lucky to get attendance of double figures' (SF, DCC).

Fianna Fáil councillors attributed a general disinterest among the public for difficulties encountered in public participation, however, for Labour, it was suggested that planners are not making an effort to engage the public. The Greens suggested that development plans are not understood by the majority of people and thereby proposed 'a programme of education' (Green, DLR) for the public. Labour, on the other hand, believed that local authorities, when placing planning notices in papers, preferentially target broadsheets over the tabloids and local-area papers, resulting in the exclusion of a certain demographic from the planning system. Only South Dublin County Council admitted to using local area papers as a community forum to inform citizens of changes in a planning context:

'There would be three local papers coming in to the Lucan area and the Clondalkin area: The Liffey Champion and The Echo. South Dublin would put all their stuff in there; then it would probably put it in the Times and the 'Indo' but probably not in the Star or the Mirror' (Lab., SDCC).

In addition to advertising in local papers, South Dublin County Council appears to be the only local authority which also puts informational leaflets through the doors of local residents so as to inform them of changes in planning
in their area. It was, however, also admitted that this can, at times, be a pointless exercise:

'South Dublin often put leaflets in people's doors, but because there's so much stuff coming in the door, it kind of goes straight in to the bin' (Lab., SDCC).

Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael councillors stated that the general public 'don't understand what councillors do' (FG, FCC) in the planning process. Consequently, the public 'feel a little bit disenfranchised' (FF, SDCC) as they feel they do not have a voice in planning:

'The public often think that we actually have decision-making powers on planning applications; we don't, and we tell them that. We can't make the decision but we can influence the decision, but it's very, very limited the extent to which we can influence things' (FF, SDCC).

The existence of NIMBYism was also recognised by former Ministers of the Environment and the local councillors; Fine Gael, in particular, believed that when the public do involve themselves in planning it is normally through a NIMBY agenda:

'The attitude is 'That's my green patch, I've never walked on it, I've never admired it, I've never tended to it, but if you fucking touch it I'll kill you!' (FG, DCC).

'People can always see the good of development outside their area and they always wonder why can't we have that in our area?', and then when it's visited upon them it's a disgrace' (FG, DLR).

Sinn Féin, though, took the view that that the public, whose belief is 'evidence-based on their own experiences' (SF, DCC), do not actively participate in the planning process because they perceive consultation by some local authorities, as a smokescreen for preordained planning decisions:

'Consultation is when you say to a community ‘Let's work together and identify your needs and how we can meet them.” For some, however, consultation is “This is what's happening in the community, what do you like and what do you think of it?” while for others consultation is “Listen, we're actually going ahead with this, what colour front door do you want?”' (SF, DCC).
7.3 Broad Ideological Background of Irish Politics

In so far as political ideologies infuse the philosophy shaping urban planning, it was admitted that every Minister for the Environment ‘would have their own ideas’ (Former Minister, DoEHLG 2), however, such an approach to Irish urban planning can lead to a discontinuity from one Minister to the next:

‘What one Minister might see as bad practice, another Minister might not’ (Former Minister, DoEHLG 2).

While it was recognised by just two respondents that John Gormley was different to his predecessors in that he brought ‘ten years of campaigning on green issues’ (Former Minister, DoEHLG 2) to the fore in urban planning, one former Minister for the Environment acknowledged that previous Ministers were sympathetic to the development industry:

‘There was a belief that if the building industry was booming, the economy was booming. Of course that’s not the relationship at all: if the economy is booming the development industry should be booming; it is not a causal relationship’ (Former Minister, DoEHLG 1).

All of the Labour councillors pointed to a ‘close and cosy relationship’ (Lab., FCC) Fianna Fáil has with the private property development sector which was reflected in planning:

‘I think that they [Fianna Fáil] were too close and I think that things were pushed to suit developers’ (Lab., DCC).

‘A Fianna Fáil-led government is hand-in-glove with developers’ (Lab., DLR).

For Fine Gael councillors too, Fianna Fáil’s long, almost uninterrupted stay in government was regarded as unfortunate as ‘the critical time for us was from the ‘90s on and we had Fianna Fáil’ (FG, DLR). Understandably, Fianna Fáil was more defensive of their relationship with the development industry:

‘We re-built Dublin from the slums. Are we now going to say that was a bad thing to do because I know no-one else wanted to do it at the time? Sometimes there are times in political organisations that you end up almost joined at the hip with certain industries. Fianna Fáil didn’t go and re-build Dublin because the developers were asking them to’ (FF, DLR).
At local authority level too, Fianna Fáil 'controlled a lot of councils' (Ind., DLR) and imbued them with a pro-development ethos:

They would have been pro-development; that ethos has always been there' (Ind., DLR).

Many councillors therefore believed that developers got huge amounts of support from within the political spectrum and were allowed to develop almost at will, when and where; one Fine Gael councillor, however, felt that developers, motivated and driven by considerations of capital gains, do not necessarily care where this support comes from:

'The private sector is totally hell-bent on making money and they really don't give a shite how they make that money; they will use and abuse any situation' (FG, DCC).

7.4 Transformation in Irish Policy at Central Government Level

One Labour councillor attributed a 'change of mindset' (Lab., DLR) at Central Government level in the role of the state to government-led initiatives, such as the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 and Finance Act, 1986. In terms of the recession and downturn that had plagued the 1980s, one former Minister for the Environment considered 1986 'the worst year' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 2) of that decade. In 1987 then, Fianna Fáil usurped the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government and the perennial issues of unemployment and emigration precipitated changes in government policy. With Charles Haughey as Taoiseach, the newly elected Fianna Fáil government decided to 'take the country by the scruff of the neck' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 2) by introducing the necessary austerity to deal with an economy that had effectively flat-lined:

'Loathe him or like him, he certainly had a vision for Dublin that wasn't seen at that time' (FF, DLR).

By the mid-1990s, the Irish economy witnessed a dramatic turn-around going from near bankruptcy in 1986 to Tiger economy by 1994:

'Every element of development is predicated on a driver and that driver has been the economy; everything else is incidental to that' (FG, DCC).
It was also recognised that there was a population boom in the same period which led to demand for new accommodation in both the city and the county. Seeing and seizing opportunities, some property developers began building new houses and apartments on tracts of land which they had been accumulating on the periphery. Together, these manifested themselves in the planning process as there was an unprecedented demand by the private-sector to develop parcels of land as they became available:

'We were inundated with people arriving with bundles of maps and plans and bundles of money saying they wanted to develop huge numbers of houses on huge tracts of land all over town' (Lab., FCC).

While all of the councillors acknowledged that there had been substantial rezoning of land in the Greater Dublin Area from agricultural designation to residential, it was suggested by some councillors in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown that rezoning was driven by land owners and developers realising that they stood to gain considerably:

'A lot of it is absolutely developer-driven and we need not fool ourselves that that wasn’t the situation' (Lab., DLR).

'A lot of the changes are developer driven. In Dún Laoghaire it has been developer driven and the balance was tipped in favour of development' (Ind., DLR).

The introduction of the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 as well as the related tax incentives in the Finance Act, 1986 ‘were motivated by a particular view’ (FF, SDCC) namely that of boosting the flagging construction sector and tackling mass unemployment in the country as well as attempting to redevelopment parts of Dublin’s crumbling inner city and attract inward foreign investment. While Fianna Fáil councillors enthused about such incentives, claiming that ‘without these pieces of legislation certain developments would not have happened’ (FF, SDCC), Labour were less enthusiastic believing they had in fact facilitated and enabled a small number of individuals to enrich themselves. Under the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 and Finance Act, 1986 obsolete and derelict sites in Dublin’s inner city were selected as Designated Areas and targeted for urban renewal. One former Minister also considered the suggestion by financier Dermot Desmond to Charles Haughey that Dublin needed a Financial Services Centre – which Haughey moved on very quickly by designating a site at Custom House Docks and granting it tax incentives –
and the capital gains tax reduction from 40 per cent to 20 per cent (making it more attractive for individuals to dabble in land which had an impact during the boom), as catalysts to the regeneration of Dublin's inner city. Copying the model of UDCs used in the regeneration of London's docklands, the Custom House Docks was subsequently redeveloped under the direction of CHDDA. There was unanimity among all the councillors that the role of local authority planning had been effectively limited following the establishment of CHDDA as SPDAs were not subject to the norms of local authority planning procedures. Surprisingly, both Sinn Féin and Labour generally viewed SPDAs as a good thing for Irish planning, believing areas of dilapidation and in dire need of regeneration, such as docklands, should be looked at holistically by a dedicated group:

'I think there is a role for exemption to by-laws and planning laws because sometimes you need to engender a bit of development to welcome in development. Since I've been living in the area, since '92, I've seen the area transformed, absolutely transformed' (SF, DCC).

'If there's an area that's an ambiance unto itself such as the Docklands, and there is a need to move forward from traditional industrial, I don't think it's a bad idea that it would be looked on in holistic terms, in terms of changing from traditional industry to a mixture of residential and commercial and maybe some modern industry: I don't see anything wrong with that being developed by a specific ad hoc group' (Lab., FCC).

The former Ministers for the Environment thought that Central Government's imposition of an SPDA in Irish planning was a good initiative:

'Every proposition [Haughey] made about physical development was right, so the agencies, I don't think they were a bad idea' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 1).

'If you look at the overall development of the dock area, it's done a marvellous job; it's completely and utterly transformed the area' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 1).

By contrast, both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael criticised the establishment of CHDDA, with Section 25 protection from appeals to An Bord Pleanála, a mechanism which could not be facilitated through the traditional planning system, believing 'there was a political desire to have them' (FG, FCC):

'If you look at Dublin Docklands Development Authority, what's the reason for separating that from Dublin City Council? It's a different planning structure down there. I don't
understand the logic behind divesting planning functions from Dublin City Council and putting it in to separate little agencies’ (FF, DCC).

‘I don’t think they should exist: Everything should be done through the prescribed agency, and the prescribed agency is the planning authority, which is the council’ (FG, FCC).

While Fine Gael was critical of SPDAs, there was, however, an acceptance of the necessity for the establishment of CHDDA as Fine Gael admitted that local-authority planning is enmeshed in too much bureaucracy:

‘The planning system is a good regulatory system as opposed to development system. The difficulty with the regulatory planning system for major developments is the type of input from all and sundry, which is part of a democracy, but it does mean that so much input can slow down the whole process’ (FG, DCC).

‘I could see the rationale. If you put it in to a local authority, it will be lost in the melee of other planning applications and just have the same merit, whereas [with an SPDA] it will be totally focused so there is merit in that’ (FG, SDCC).

The view among Labour and Independent councillors, however, was that SPDAs were established to expedite development by ‘cutting through a lot of the red tape’ (Lab., DLR). Although Sinn Féin viewed SPDAs as a good thing for Irish planning, it was critical of CHDDA. Sinn Féin believed CHDDA saw the indigenous community of docklands as part of the problem, thus rather than working with locals to identify their needs and working with them to redevelop the area, planners at CHDDA worked to, and imposed their own plan on the area, which involved relocating the indigenous community and rebranding this particular area of the city in the hope of attracting inward investment. Sinn Féin also held the government accountable for the transformation of docklands claiming Central Government shared CHDDA’s vision of how docklands should look but, this new vision of docklands clashed with what was already there. Based on knowledge of how central-government policy had affected communities, at a public lecture in Trinity College, Sinn Fein promoted the idea that docklands had been allowed to deteriorate in order to move people out and facilitate large-scale redevelopment:

‘I attended a presentation in Trinity and the lecture was based on how a series of policy decisions had affected communities and the use of drugs, particularly heroin, in Dublin. The picture painted was that wastelands were allowed to grow and develop, and they became a hotbed for heroin use, heroin dealing and all the social problems that go with
that. But the response was ‘let these areas become wastelands and worthless and then move all the people out’, which they did, to Coolock, Ballymun, Blanchardstown; break up whole families, break up very strong communities that had been there. Then certain tax exemptions were brought in for developers to develop those areas. They let local families fester in drug dealing, and then they moved them out. They allow the wasteland to remain, and then they ring their buddies in the development industry to redevelop really, really cheap. They get the land cheap, tax exemptions and then you have a working inner city again, but it’s for a different community’ (SF, DCC).

7.5 Theorising the Role of Planning

Fianna Fáil councillors were generally quite empathetic to the plight of local authority planners following the establishment of CHDDA believing that planners at Dublin City Council felt alienated and undermined. Fine Gael, on the other hand, held a variety of responses: for some Fine Gael councillors, the establishment of CHDDA ‘came as a slap in the face for public-sector planners’ (FG, DLR), while others, were less compassionate:

‘They may feel resentful, but we all can’t have everything in life’ (FG, DCC).

Despite the government’s decision to favour the establishment of an SPDA at docklands, only Fianna Fáil related the establishment of CHDDA to an ideological shift in policy direction:

‘There was an ideological shift; it was a Thatcherite shift that occurred in the early ‘90s’ (FF, DCC).

While Labour acknowledged that ‘planning is government-led ideology’ (Lab., DLR), Fine Gael held that it any changes to the underlying philosophy guiding planning resulted more from the realisation of past mistakes which prompted planners to look at planning in a new way:

‘I think there is a willingness to acknowledge that we got it wrong so I suppose [planners] have looked to see ‘how did we get it wrong?’ (FG, DLR).

This view was also shared by Fianna Fáil who admitted the approach to planning in the 1980s and early 1990s was very much a case of development for development’s sake:
Plate 7.1 Boarded-up housing in docklands with new gated-community apartments behind

Plate 7.2 Houses make way for offices and apartments in docklands redevelopment
‘We had a very bad reputation for planning, in fact, people would argue that we didn’t plan we just built’ (FF, DLR).

Sinn Féin was alerted to the degree to which planning was considered disastrous through a European newsletter – EU Observer – which reported on a conference about bad urban planning where Dublin had been ranked ‘the best example of bad planning in Europe’ (SF, DCC). Citing peripheral areas of Dublin such as Tallaght and parts of the north city, it was thereby illustrated the extent to which the philosophy of planning was more about building rather than proper planning:

‘If you look at places like Tallaght in the 1980s, areas in Dublin 17, Dublin 13, Ballymun, Northern Cross, areas like that where you’ve got high-density development but with nothing in it; there were no community facilities, no shops’ (FG, FCC).

‘In the ’80s, they just put social housing into one area. From a planning perspective, they didn’t seem to have any difficulty putting them in where there were no shops, where there were no buses, where there were no schools. If you’re trying to raise kids in that environment and I think no matter how good a parent you are, you’re just up against it from the word go and that is wrong’ (Lab., DLR).

Not all Fine Gael councillors, however, were as sympathetic to the plight of people stuck in such badly planned estates at the periphery though:

‘People wanted houses and they wanted back gardens. If you drive out to West Dublin you’ll see that it’s an unmitigated disaster. It’s a situation that arose because that’s what the people wanted, so the people got what the people wanted’ (FG, DLR).

Moreover, the post-modern high-rise ‘experiment’ at Ballymun was also cited as another example of bad planning. Ballymun was constructed as high-rise, low density, surrounded by vast tracts of virtually unusable open ‘prairie’ land. Services were scant and little cognisance was paid to families in the design of the flat complexes:

‘Balcurris was the worst block in Ballymun: there was a lot of anonymous space, there was no passive surveillance. The other thing about the way the towers were built was that there’s one entrance for thirty families, they called them life shafts, so you’d have a block and each block would have three life shafts so that’s the entrance in. You’ve also got these very narrow stairwells. I’ve walked up them myself. You literally touch people going past the stairs, so design is king, and when you get it wrong, you can really get it wrong’ (Lab., DCC).
The recognition of planning as a serious discipline and a profession as well as the separation of planning from engineering – from which section local authority planning was run – was recognised as a positive development. In terms of segregated residential developments one councillor acknowledged ‘there is now an acceptance that we’re not going down that road anymore and it is now time for us to have a much more mixed development’ (Ind., SDCC). This now has infused itself in the philosophy of planning. Moreover, architectural design, layout, use of open space, provision of infrastructure and services have crept into the philosophy of planning and an increasing volume of guidelines have been produced in recent years by the Department of the Environment to ensure that these criteria are met. The Greens believed that a new generation of planners had contributed to this change in planning philosophy as they tend to be better travelled and therefore have been exposed to new ideas and ‘realised that the American-style suburbia had actually been a disaster for Dublin’ (Green, DLR).

In so far as An Bord Pleanála has a role to play in the planning system, doubts were cast over its being an ‘independent body’ by one local councillor who described the Bord as an ‘interesting beast’ (Sinn Féin, Dublin City) since it ‘can’t overturn government policy’ (SF, DCC). This would therefore suggest

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44 [http://www.pleanala.ie/about/missionstatement.html](http://www.pleanala.ie/about/missionstatement.html)
that ABP is also subordinate to central government just as local authorities are. This view was also supported by Labour:

'I would always have my own private reservations on how independent An Bord Pleanála is because I think the government of the day can have an impact on it. We call it independent, but deep down you wonder how independent it is' (Lab., DLR).

Plate 7.4 Prairie-type open space in a Tallaght estate

Former Ministers for the Environment defended the independence of the Bord and denied that there are, or had been any interference in how ABP operates:

'I have no reason to believe that a decision has ever been influenced by any outside agency, they jealously guard their independence and take a poor view of anybody who tries to stand in the way of it' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 2).

'We're lucky in that we have good people in An Bord Pleanála. John O'Connor, who I appointed and re-appointed to An Bord Pleanála, I think he's a good man' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 1).

As the last bastion of planning, though, Fine Gael stated that it is essential that the independence of the Bord is 'ring-fenced' (FG, DCC), but not all councillors were au fait with ABP's role in the planning system:

'I don't know enough about the inside workings of An Bord Pleanála. I've been elected since 1991 and I think I know as much about it today as I did in 1991' (FG, SDCC).
In relation to its philosophy, only two councillors – one Fine Gael and one Fianna Fáil – were unsure as to whether the Bord’s approach to planning had changed in the 25 years since 1986. For one councillor, however, ABP has become ‘more neutral’ (Ind., SDCC). This would seem to suggest that, at one stage, the Bord may not always have been an unbiased arbiter in the planning system. This view was not held by all interviewees: Labour considered ABP pro-development overruling the decision of the local authority to pander to private-sector developers:

‘Fingal would give the go-ahead for a development to take place with maybe ten conditions to do with water, drainage, the environment, hedgerows, open space, timing in terms of one hundred houses followed by the local primary school, two hundred houses followed by shops, phased development. The developer appeals this planning decision to An Bord Pleanála because he wants more houses or whatever, so he gets a decision back saying ‘Yes, you can have ten more houses’ which is fine but then a lot of the conditions, they don’t go through all the conditions, they just come back without conditions in most cases’ (Lab., FCC).

Fine Gael, on the other hand, opined that An Bord Pleanála ‘was more conscious of taking into account public opinion than the [local authority] planners were’ (FG, DLR) suggesting that it is in fact the local authority which is pushing a pro-development agenda. This view was supported by a number of other councillors in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown who claimed that without ABP ‘planning in Dún Laoghaire and Stillorgan would have gone ahead without any curbs’ (Ind., DLR):

‘In this area, the planners were extremely lenient towards the end of the boom in granting some planning permissions, and An Bord Pleanála were knocking them down’ (FF, DLR).

While planning legislation is couched in terms of the common good some respondents believed that there is in fact a schism among planners as to what the common good is, and how it can be best served, however one former Minister for the Environment denied this was the case, believing instead that the planning curriculum at each of the three planning schools in the State has an important role to play in shaping planners’ whole approach to planning and the delivery of the common good:
'I wouldn’t see it that some would favour the private-sector over individuals. I think they’d be fairly consistent' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 1).

Fine Gael also disputed the existence of two discordant ideologies in planning between the more traditional view of planning being in the public interest or the common good, and a pro-active partnership between planning and the private-sector. Fine Gael suggested that planning can in fact work hand-in-hand with the private-sector for the common good:

‘That assumes there is a conflict between the private-sector and the common good: there doesn’t necessarily have to be’ (FG, DLR).

‘All the planners would think they were working towards the common good. None of them would set out to destroy the ‘common good’ (FG, SDCC).

Fianna Fáil, however, did recognise the existence of two discordant ideologies in the operation of Irish urban planning, claiming that this is a reflection of the ‘general political and social views people have’ (FF, DCC):

‘It’s very evident. There is the old school and then there are the eccentric and innovative planners who really want to make their mark’ (FF, DLR).

There was a view among some councillors that the existence of two discordant ideologies in Irish planning is generational, between younger planners and older, more established practitioners:

‘Some people would say the older planners were working hand-in-hand with the developers while the younger planners are more aloof’ (Green, DLR).

‘I think the younger planners would be very community orientated they want to see something that’s to the benefit of the community as opposed to the benefit of the land owner. Do I think the senior planners are inclined to develop in relation to the community? To be honest, no. I think those are the same senior planners who were making the decisions as junior planners 10, 15, 20 years ago that led to such problems in our communities’ (FG, FCC).

This dichotomy was explained by one councillor who stated that Ireland, beset by economic woes, was a very different place twenty years ago and as a consequence planners had to think solely in terms of getting development going regardless of its architectural merits or community gains:
'Twenty years ago there would have been very little public debate on planning, it was just 'isn't it great all these new houses are going there, there's a new factory down the road'. Nobody cared that it looked ugly and that it was horrible because it was providing X amount of jobs. There wasn't as much emphasis on proper planning whereas now there is more debate over it and we are talking about things like architectural merit and sustainability' (Lab., DLR).

Not all councillors held the belief that younger planners were necessarily better planners than older, more established practitioners. Referring to younger planners, one Independent councillor claimed there is 'huge inconsistency in relation to how they deal with the common good' (Ind., DLR). Councillors in South Dublin, though, admitted that planners, especially the more senior planners, are bedded-in with the private-sector and therefore do not have any issues working with the private-sector to facilitate development:

'In our context here, I think the general attitude would be let's try and facilitate this rather than we're going to do everything we can to block it' (Ind., SDCC).

'I think some planners are more comfortable with it than others. I think some would have an ideological view against it and then others, the senior officials, would be much more open to doing that because they would see it as assisting the council, of providing services, financing services etc.' (FF, SDCC).

There was also the suggestion that politicians are bedded-in with developers and consequently, planners are a 'push-over for the major developers' (Lab., FCC):

'I remember the time we called a halt to development in the '90s. Swords was being attacked piecemeal and I was involved in proposing that Swords would be taken out of the system and looked at as a whole. I think the planners should have been doing that years and years before that. I'm sure they were under a certain amount of pressure from the Minister of the Environment too, to allow housing to take place as there was a need for new dwellings, but the developers, aided and abetted by the politicians, just got what they wanted' (Lab., FCC).

But the very existence two discordant ideologies was regarded by some councillors in Dublin City as having a negative effect on the operation of urban planning as it was admitted that there appears to be an issue, among planners, as to what exactly constitutes the common good and how it can be best served:

'A lot of the money that was generated in this country and was used for public good was generated by the private-sector. I think most planners are interested in the public good
but what the public good is, is different to what you think it is and what I think it is' (FF, DCC).

7.6 Impact on Local Authority Planning

While some councillors acknowledged that their knowledge, experience and appreciation of the planning system was limited to their term(s) in office, two themes emerged from the other councillor informants, which were attributed to planning's failures during the 1980s: in the first place, it was felt there was a dearth of qualified planners and an unwillingness to seriously embrace planning as a profession. As it happened, local authority planning fell under the auspices of local authority engineers. A second theme to emerge was Ireland’s teetering on the point of bankruptcy throughout the 1980s, which one councillor claimed resulted in planning operating ‘in the context of a Third World country’ (SF, DCC) as there wasn’t much development happening. Rezoning was also very common and prevalent when talking about planning in the 1980s and individuals were ‘made millionaires by the stroke of a pen by just rezoning land’ (Lab., DLR). Fine Gael blamed this problem on shortcomings within the system which were exploited by opportunists:

‘Councillors were not held accountable. There was ignorance about the consequences about what people were doing’ (FG, DLR).

Labour and Sinn Féin, however, argued that certain political parties were overtly very pro-active in facilitating development:

‘The objectives of the land owners and the developers in trying to have their lands rezoned was very strongly supported by politicians, in particular, councillors of Fianna Fáil to a very strong degree and to an almost equally strong degree in my opinion, Fine Gael, and when they came on the scene, the Progressive Democrats’ (Lab., SDCC).

Suspicions of corruption began to arise in the public mind after Fianna Fáil controversially ‘voted through a rezoning of the lands of the late Liam Lawlor’ (Lab., SDCC) in Lucan, in what was then the old County Dublin. Consequently, both Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil recognised that the revelations of corruption from the Tribunal have led to a limiting of the role of councillors in planning:
'The practice has changed since I was elected first. The powers were taken from local councillors; we have no power now in planning. The authority has all the power in planning. I know why it was done. I know why it had to be done' (FG, SDCC).

'Fifteen years ago, councillors in Dublin would have had a significant involvement in the planning process. This led to all the planning corruption and now councillors have a very limited role in planning' (FF, DCC).

While elected representatives' role in planning may have changed, Fine Gael admitted that the mentality of developers to push for rezoning still exists. Councillors, however, are less brazen about putting proposals for rezoning before council if it's against the advice of the manager because they know they are being more closely watched:

'I have records of every meeting because obviously I'm cognisant of the fact that twenty years from now I might get a phone call from somebody saying "We want you to give evidence", and that's fine, I can understand that. I've always operated on an open, transparent policy. I had many a meeting in this very room with people sitting around for the very reason that I wanted it to be open and transparent, but the truth is, many people approach me and other councillors to rezone bits of land which were totally unsuitable for residential development. The only thing they saw was Euro signs. All they cared about was getting the zoning, getting planning permission and selling the land; that was their only interest' (FG, FCC).

'It is seen to be a bigger issue to go against the County Manager and the planners and it elicits debate both in the national media and the local media' (FG, DLR).

Both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael acknowledged that changes to planning over the last twenty-five years have been 'driven by government because under our system that's where power resides in terms of planning' (FF, SDCC). However, not all interviewees were in accord with the idea that planning has undergone a major shift in practice. Citing Better Local Government, some councillors, claimed BLG was 'nothing more than lip service' (Lab., FCC) and that certain 'political parties have a very strong vested interest in keeping certain things as they are and they don't want to see progress especially if they can't control it' (Ind., SDCC).

At the local level, it was acknowledged that the degree to which local authorities have undergone a change in planning practice 'varies from council to council' (Ind., DLR). There was unanimity among councillors at Dublin City Council, however, of a 'huge seismic shift in planning' (SF, DCC) since the late
1980s. It was generally felt that the development of the IFSC at Custom House Docks was the catalyst to this change in the operation of planning:

'In the '80s there was no money and no development happening. It was piecemeal. Now there's some sort of strategy. Some people would say Docklands injected development and strategic thinking into the city' (SF, DCC).

'If you look at some developments in the late '80s and early '90s there wasn't as much development. A site was developed and there was not much consideration given to everything that was around it or trying to develop a strategic plan for the area. I think the approach is more consistent in planning terms in recent times than it was previously in the '80s' (FF, DCC).

The Greens acknowledged this change too and testified how Dublin City Council, in particular, was 'open to new ideas' (Green, DLR) having seen great decline and dereliction within the city during the 1970s and the 1980s. Fianna Fáil acknowledged that urban planning became more concerned with facilitating private development reflecting the espousal of the neoliberal agenda that was fast becoming hegemonic in developed western economies:

'If you look at Ireland in the late 1980s and how we got out of that, part of the way we got out of it was trying to encourage in private investment, encourage entrepreneurs, lower tax rates for them, so I suppose a part of that whole process is make it easier for people to get planning for putting in businesses' (FF, DCC).

Fianna Fáil also believed that for Dublin to be considered an entrepreneurial city it must foster a more facilitative business environment and be able to attract inward investment through low taxation and charges:

'Private enterprise is important in getting people employed, we cannot, as a country, just have everyone employed in the public-sector' (FF, DCC).

However, this same councillor also felt that there was not 'a sufficient amount being done to identify certain parts of the city as being very useful for certain developments' (FF, DCC). Fine Gael, on the other hand, claimed that the term entrepreneurial city, as it may be applied to Dublin, was a misnomer believing developers to be 'speculators not entrepreneurs' (FG, SDCC), as everything was predicated on the building boom. This view was also shared by the Greens who pointed out Dublin's failings in trying to promote itself as an entrepreneurial city:
'Multinationals need more than just buildings: They need the city to work and our city doesn't work. Multinationals will look at Dublin and they will look at everything from public transport to quality of life. These are extra selling tools you can sell to incoming businesses to your city. You've got to improve your city, but all aspects of the city have to be improved, and I think we still have some way to go in Dublin on that' (Green, DLR).

Only the former Ministers for the Environment and some Fianna Fáil councillors recognised Dublin as a global city too believing it right that 'we should be moving in that direction' (FF, SDCC). This view, however, was not shared by all Fianna Fáil councillors:

'If you go to any capital city now they're all starting to look the same and it's freaking me out because not only are the shops the same, they're almost in the same place. Dublin City has fallen for it. There's conformity and I think that's a bad thing, it's almost like fashion. I think every city planner must have attended the same conference or there's a paper doing the rounds telling them this is the way your city needs to look and they're conforming' (FF, DLR).

Other councillors were less complimentary when talking about Dublin's status in the order of world cities:

'It's a city, it's a small, little poxy city. We have an inflated view of ourselves in Ireland. I think planning staff, particularly at management level, have an inflated view of their position in global development' (FG, DCC).

'What's 'global city' about Dublin? Temple Bar is a kip, O'Connell Street is a kip, Grafton Street is grand I suppose. Dún Laoghaire is a kip. I think because of the Celtic Tiger Dublin considers itself a global city' (Ind., DLR).

One former Minister of the Environment also admitted to playing a role in an effort to reposition Dublin on the global stage:

'When I was Minister for the Environment, I was very anxious that we should actually develop some really good buildings that would actually make a statement about modern Dublin. Wouldn't it have been really nice to have a Norman Foster building in Dublin?' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 1).

While Labour recognised Central and local government, especially Dublin City Council, for taking the lead in attempting to reposition Dublin as a global city, Fianna Fáil were of the opinion that there was in fact a conglomerate of interest groups working together to promote Dublin:
‘I think Dublin Tourism has done a fantastic job, but equally there have been other various groups, other interest groups that have gone out and promoted Dublin’ (FF, DLR).

Consequently, Fine Gael suggested that local authorities are in competition with each other in an attempt to attract investment and secure rates revenues:

‘Do I think it’s appropriate that the Lord Mayor for Dublin was in L.A touting for business to come to Dublin City when I, as the mayor of Fingal, was presiding over the fastest growing economy in Europe, the fastest growing local authority in Europe in terms of population, the fastest growing local authority in Ireland in terms of house building, the fastest growing employment generator in the country in terms of actual job generation? Do I think it’s appropriate that tax payers’ money was spent on my dear friend and colleague, Councillor Burke, going off to L.A? No, I don’t. Do I think that’s appropriate? No, it should have been a delegation from all the local authorities’ (FG, FCC).

Dublin County was split into three local authorities in 1994 following the Local Government (Dublin) Act, 1993 so as to make governing the city and county ‘more manageable’ (Lab., DCC) but the division has had ramifications for planning as one Labour councillor stated:

‘The land on which IKEA is being built was bought by Dublin City Council but it’s in the Fingal local authority area, so we’re relying on Fingal for planning permission to build IKEA. But there are other developments happening across the border close to IKEA, where it’s not our land, it is Fingal land, and they’re developing, not in parallel with our plans but in opposition to our plans. They’re trying to get a rate base there because it’s close to the airport. There’s conflict of ideas and plans’ (Lab., DCC).

Another Independent councillor recognised ‘four different councils, four different planning systems’ (Ind., DLR) in Dublin as it was suggested that there be established a central authority to oversee planning in the entire Dublin region:

‘Dublin is a very small area really and you cannot have four local authorities operating differently to different agendas. You do need to look at the city as a whole and not as individual local authorities or individual counties’ (Lab., DLR).

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45 See Local Government (Dublin) Act, 1993 Section 9 (2) which divides Dublin County Council into the three administrative counties of Áth Cliath Theas, Fine Gall and Dún Laoghaire-Ráth an Dún.
In so far as An Bord Pleanála has a role in planning, there was a very strong conviction among Fianna Fáil councillors that local authority planners and An Bord Pleanála differ in their interpretation of planning policy. While Labour councillors implied that the development plan is like the Bible whereby the local authority 'can take whatever interpretation it likes out of it' (Lab., DCC) hence each local authority will interpret it to their own ends:

'The public-sector is reactive to the private demands. The Seán Dunne proposal, which I was publicly opposed, contravened the City Development Plan: I have to uphold the City Development Plan' (SF, DCC).

Fine Gael conversely suggested that 'planners can come under severe pressure from managers' (FG, DCC), who dictate what does or does not happen in the local authority and so planners must do as instructed. Another councillor at Dublin City believed that ABP has an advantage over local authority planners in that they are 'sheltered from having to deal with people' (Ind., DCC) and so can more appropriately adjudicate on a planning appeal without either being distracted or courted by outside influences, whereas local authority planners must have pre-planning meetings with developers so they are 'soaking up the developers needs and urges, and try to facilitate them, as much as they can' (Ind., DCC).

Plate 7.5 IKea
The Greens, though, believed that ABP and the councils are normally of the same mind, and that 'it's in a minority of cases they may differ' (Green, DLR), however, it was also suggested that there may be instances, especially in more controversial planning applications, where the Bord is used as the scapegoat in planning by local authorities unwilling to make tough and unpopular decisions. This idea was also supported by another councillor in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown who had experience of this happen before:

'I think in lots of incidences where there are very contentious planning applications, this would be purely from my experience, the local authority will throw their hat at it and just say 'Let the Bord sort it out' and then they can throw their hand up and say 'That was An Bord Pleanála that granted it" (Lab., DLR).

Some councillors at Dublin City Council, though, suggested that ABP is perceived as anti-development and a nuisance in planning:

'I think An Bord Pleanála is almost seen as party poopers: "Oh God, here come An Bord Pleanála again"; "Ah Jaysus, we had a great plan; it would've been great only for An Bord Pleanála”' (SF, DCC).

7.7 Consequences for Local Authority Planning

The former Ministers for the Environment did not like the idea that planners could be subject to pressure, by both internal and external influences, to recommend a grant for permission and identified local councillors, acting on behalf of constituents and political donors, as the biggest group in applying pressure on planners:

'Lobbying is part and parcel of democracy. It's up to [planners] to resist any improper lobbying. If you go to any council in Ireland, I'll guarantee you a lot of councillor's names will be on the planning files making representations on behalf of X, or Y, or Z' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 1).

Responding to the idea that councillors are the biggest group pressuring planners, Fianna Fáil steadfastly believed the planning system is 'fairly resistant' (FF, SDCC) to undue pressures. Given the nature of planning though, where decisions taken by planners can enrich some individuals such as landowners and developers, Labour, Sinn Féin and the Independent councillors accorded with the idea that developers try to influence planners so as to ensure that their proposed development secures planning permission. It was also suggested
that, keen to see development in their area, Directors of Services and the manager may also exert pressure on planners. Provisions enshrined in the Local Government Act, 2001 gave absolute power to managers\(^46\), and consequently, it was felt that by making the manager all-powerful, others within the local authority were made less-powerful:

'More power was given to the executive and taken away from the public reps. That probably had an impact on how planning decisions were made and the nature of the planning that was allowed' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 2).

Referring to one particular development company, an Independent councillor noted the numerous meetings between the developer and the County Manager in relation to The Park Carrickmines development, in South Dublin. Another Independent suggested the existence of a cartel between some managers and developers to push through development:

'Derek Brady, when he retired, went to work with Noel Smyth. Brady would be the classic example of the County Manager who went working for a developer. Now the great conundrum is Owen Keegan, very controversially, has appointed Brady as a consultant over the Cherrywood project' (Ind., DLR).

On a more cynical note, Labour suggested that the reason why developers were so influential in the planning system was because they had used their wealth to buy the right people:

'Who's been supporting politicians over the years? You may say there's no favour received or no favour asked, but if somebody's handing you a cheque for a huge amount of money, it's a done deal. You might want the pay cheque coming at next election, so, you're going to go out on a limb' (Lab., DLR).

Labour and Sinn Féin also suggested 'unhealthily close ties exist' (SF, DCC) between the development sector and Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael who lobby on behalf of developer 'clients' applying political pressure on planners when necessary.

Only Fianna Fáil identified what one councillor described as 'negative pressure' (FF, DLR), that is, pressure being applied on planners from local

\(^{46}\) See Local Government Act, 2001 Section 149 (3) which sets out the executive responsibilities of the local-authority manager.
residents and residents’ associations in an effort to prevent the grant of permissions for development:

‘If there was a proposal to build three hundred houses in some area, and if it’s immediately beside existing housing where people have had no other development near them for years, those people will be unhappy and they will, through councillors, put pressure on planners to not to grant it’ (FF, DCC).

‘There’s pressure from local residents against virtually anything. It’s not always for the common good; it’s for their own good’ (FF, DLR).

Only Fianna Fáil believed that developers have not been influential in planning, arguing that they ‘just don’t see the impetus’ (FF, DLR) for developers. For all other interviewees, private-sector developers are major players in the planning system considering they ‘are the people with the land, the money and the ideas’ (FG, SDCC).

The issue of local authority funding has resulted in local authorities becoming ‘dependent on development levies’ (SF, DCC):

‘Our planners have got to be careful they’re not driving [the developer] across the border into another authority’ (Ind., SDCC).

‘With levies schemes, well that’s X amount of levies coming in to the local authority so that is at the back of their minds, and I presume they’re prompted by the County Manager’ (Lab., DLR).

‘With development levies tied to planning, if you don’t give development then you have no development levies coming in which can help repair or put in new infrastructure, provide more community facilities’ (Green, DLR).

Fianna Fáil spoke enthusiastically of development levies claiming local authorities were able to provide much better levels of services and provide the facilities people demand and expect only as a result of accruing extra income from the levies:

‘The budget of Dublin City Council, during the boom, increased considerably and it was able to do many fantastic things. In the constituency I’m involved in, Dublin South East, virtually all the flat complexes owned by Dublin City were redeveloped and much better housing facilities were put in. So, if you were a planner and an application comes in to

See Planning and Development Act, 2000 Section 48 (1) which sets out conditions for requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority.
you, you say "If we allow this development, we're going to get huge fees in. It'll give a
greater amount of money to the Dublin City Council budget and we can do more social
good that way" (FF, DCC).

Sinn Féin held developers accountable for the massive urban sprawl in
Dublin as this, in turn, has brought related problems including traffic chaos at
the periphery and soul-less communities in the centre. For the Greens,
however, planners are to blame:

'Planners are the geographers of the city, not the developers. [Planners] set the vision,
height, scale, type of development, and mix of development for the area. Developers will
get away with whatever they get away with, it's very simple. Anybody who pays a lot of
money for land within the city will always try and get the max put on that area: It's up to
the planners to make sure they remain strong in their overall vision for the city' (Green,
DLR).

Just as all but one councillor believed that local authority planners are
subject to pressure, so too did almost all of the interviewees agree with the idea
that TPRA has been a good thing for Irish planning:

'An Bord Pleanála plays an important function because if you look at the pressures
around Dublin City Council to grant permission to things like the Ballsbridge
development, which they shouldn't have granted permission to, but they did, An Bord
Pleanála plays a more objective part. They can look at an issue without being affected
too much by local interests. It adopts a broader view of what's good for planning not
simply in a specific area but throughout the city, so it has been an important
development. The fact that it has been completely de-politicised has helped it
considerably' (FF, DCC).

The former Ministers for the Environment, however, recognised that
TPRA is open to abuse by vexatious third-party appellants who base their
objections 'on a personal interest more than the common good interest' (Former
Minister, DoEHLG 2):

'One of the things I became aware of as Minister of the Environment was crude
blackmailing happening. Individuals would say to a developer "I'm going to make an
objection" and would look for monetary recompense. It's very hard to prove but I know it
has happened. There has been a lot of abuse of the Third Party system and it's the third
parties who have been the abusers' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 1).

While it was generally agreed that local-authority planners often 'curse
and swear, and bang the table' (SF, DCC) when ABP overturns their decision
on an application as ‘they feel that their knuckles have been rapped a bit’ (Lab., DLR), not all councillors felt the existence of ABP resulted in better or fairer decisions. For one Fine Gael councillor, the Bord’s independence has meant that its decisions are not subject to scrutiny. Moreover, this councillor also felt that the composition of the eight board members needed to be reviewed as the board members are not all planners and oftentimes make decisions ‘against the advice of inspectors’ (FG, FCC).

7.8 Realisation for planning

Feeling marginalised and sidelined from planning following the set-up of SPDAs, many of the interviewees felt that IAPs and LAPs gave planners a renewed sense of relevance in the planning system, however, there was still a degree of scepticism expressed by some councillors as to the role of IAPs and LAPs in planning. One Fine Gael councillor felt that planners were using Local Area Plans as a way of by-passing the development plan and hence ‘council and public participation’ (FG, DCC) in planning.

As the blueprint for development, the development plan, is an essential document accenting the democratic input in planning by the elected members, the public at large, special interest groups and planners, however, with the establishment of CHDDA/DDDA, this democratic input was lost. Moreover, the docklands SPDA sidelined planners at Dublin City Council from planning and they remain very critical of SPDAs (see Chapter 6), however, a new type of planning scheme emerged by 2000 in the Dublin counties, particularly in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and South Dublin. This new master planning concept saw local authorities adopt the principles of SPDAs by establishing SDZs with the local authority acting as development agency:

‘We have an area within Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown called Cherrywood, and it’s going as an SDZ, which means that there’s a special company set-up to build that. The council has a role, has input in that as well. I think it’s very important that councils do have an input’ (Green, DLR).

‘The Strategic Development Zone approach is a good one, in that one has to go through a process to put the SDZ planning scheme in place, but once it’s in place, applications have to be made and are adjudicated on by the council. People can make objections from submissions, but once the decision is made it cannot be appealed to An Bord Pleanála and I think that’s a positive thing’ (Lab., SDCC).
There has been an attempt to produce simultaneously residential development, commercial development and infrastructure, the provision of facilities such as education facilities and recreation facilities simultaneously with demographic changes, so that you're not living in a housing estate for twenty years and the kids are all grown up before the local park is developed and that there's the possibility of getting a bus from somewhere near your home to your place of work' (Lab., FCC).

The introduction of the Adamstown SDZ in 2001 was lauded by former Ministers of the Environment as being the 'right approach towards planning' (Former Minister, DoEHLG 1) and local councillors generally have been very supportive of SDZs as they form part of the development plan and were considered a preferable way of planning by the councillors as their input is considered given it is they who decide whether or not to adopt the planning scheme:

'I think the way to go is SDZ zoning. That's the only way you can plan. The rest is not planning; the rest is just rezoning and granting planning permissions' (Lab., DLR).

Given the statutory objective of ABP to determine every referral or appeal within 18 weeks, at the height of the boom, ABP contracted freelance inspectors and private planning consultancies. This was recognised by the interviewees who saw it as a pragmatic approach to deal with 'a big rush of planning applications' (Ind., DLR).

'The Board were taking up to a year and a half to come to a decision because they were snowed-in with cases' (Ind., DLR).

Recognising the unique situation in which the Bord found itself, most councillors supported the Bord outsourcing appeals to freelance inspectors and private planning consultancies provided control remained with the Bord:

'I'm sure that there would be people who would have ideological problems with outsourcing. I wouldn't have any difficulty with it: my only concern would be that it would be correctly regulated' (FG, DLR).

Not all Fine Gael councillors, however, shared the confidence of their colleagues in seeing ABP employing freelance inspectors on short-term contracts and outsourcing private planning consultancies:
'One of the most upsetting and annoying operations of An Bord Pleanála is, they hire in these people on a contractual basis who are independent. My arse they’re independent!' (FG, FCC).

While only one (Labour) councillor concurred with the idea that outsourcing could be perceived as a step towards the privatisation of planning, for others, this is unthinkable and should therefore neither be considered nor accepted should this ever be the case:

'You would have up-roar in the country if there was privatisation of planning' (FG, SDCC).

Moreover, there was a belief among all the interviewees that with the bursting of the property bubble and the onset of recession we will see a retrenchment back to trying to do things in-house rather than trying to contract out inspectors and private consultants.

Another feature of Irish planning has been the emergence of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)' and it was agreed by the councillors at Dublin City Council (with the notable exception of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael) that Central Government favoured private investment in projects through PPPs forcing local authorities to follow suit:

'PPPs have crucified this city. When we raised it with Ciarán McNamara, who was a manager with responsibility for Housing and Community Services and under whose responsibility all PPPs fall, he said it was a decision forced on the City by Government' (SF, DCC).

'That's what we were instructed to do, those were the instructions coming from the government, that's the way more or less we were mandated to do it' (Lab., DCC).

'The Public Private Partnership approach just seemed to be a mantra that was coming down from on high' (Ind., DCC).

This view was also shared by other Labour councillors:

'The people running the country at the time thought it was a good idea for the entrepreneurial classes to provide the houses and make a profit out of it' (Lab., FCC).

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This approach to planning, though, hasn't always resulted in good development. Citing the example of a Public-Private Partnership in social-housing regeneration, one councillor pointed to the problems of partnership with the private sector:

'The biggest disservice that's happened to communities in my political lifetime in this city has happened to the communities of St. Michael's and O'Devaney Gardens. People have been absolutely abandoned to absolute wasteland and living in fear in their own communities because of ideological decisions made by Fianna Fáil' (SF, DCC).

O'Devaney Gardens was therefore likened to Beirut by Sinn Féin where people have been condemned to living in a slum:

'I went to see O'Devaney Gardens; there are riots on a nightly basis; women are forced to stay at home, they can't go out for fear of being attacked; empty flats are turned into pubs, I've seen it with my own eyes, ground floor flats are selling beer over the balcony to kids. It's absolute mayhem there and the only thing the cops can do is try and contain it' (SF, DCC).

There was also the suggestion by Sinn Féin that because of O'Devaney Gardens' close proximity to Phoenix Park, it is among the most sought after real estate in Dublin, thus the area is being deliberately run-down so that eventually Dublin City Council will vacate the area, just as they have at St. Michael's Estate, and sell the land to the private-sector.

Labour believed one could discern two periods in recent Irish planning history; 1990 to 2000 and 2000 to 2009. While admitting that planning in the 1990s was 'farcical' (Lab., FCC), Labour did offer a defence of planning in the new millennium believing that since 2000, 'things have visibly changed for the better' (Lab., FCC). The Planning and Development Act, 2000 was therefore lauded by Labour as a new way of thinking in planning by attempting to integrate different social groups together through the provisions of Part V:

'A turning point really came in the late '90s/2000s with the advent of Part V. It gave a more sort of community aspect to planning rather than just building acres upon acres of housing' (Green, DLR).
Plate 7.6 O’Devaney Gardens

Plate 7.7 St. Michael’s Estate
'It was going to get away from this enlarged ghettoisation of social housing so you had to have your ten per cent social and ten per cent affordable into a scheme so you had a better mix and that was to be the way forward' (Lab., DLR).

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter reviews local-authority councillors' perceptions of the reorientation of urban planning under a neoliberal agenda in the last 25 years. The chapter proceeded by examining councillors' impressions of how the general public view the planning system and how perceptions can affect participation in the planning system. It examined how political ideological issues have shaped planning over the last 25 years by exploring the broad political background of Irish politics. It also looked at how a neoliberal transformation at Central Government has been reflected in planning. Change in the theoretical approach to planning was examined generally and then specifically by each of the local authorities under investigation to determine which local authorities are embracing a new entrepreneurial philosophy. Moreover, the chapter explored local councillors' awareness of the existence of two discordant ideologies in operation in local-authority planning. It also examined ABP's role in planning and the underlying philosophy guiding planning at ABP. The chapter examined the extent to which planning practice has shifted to reflect a more facilitative, 'can-do' approach to private-sector development. It investigated the degree to which local-authority planners are subject to pressure to facilitate certain types of development and examines how this pressure is exerted and by what actors. Finally, the chapter looked at how changes in the philosophy and practice of planning are reflected in specific initiatives such as IAPs and LAPs, Public-Private Partnerships; Part V social and affordable housing; and SDZs as a new model for development.

The interviews with the former Minister for the Environment and the local councillors identified a number of themes: first, all of the local councillors agreed that the public have a negative view of the planning system, so much so that they have no faith or trust in it. This view was influenced by the systemic corruption that existed in planning in the 1980s and was revealed by the Tribunal of Inquiry. Moreover, the councillors opined that the Tribunal has actually given planning a much worse reputation from which it will take years to recover. Despite this, the former Ministers for the Environment did point out that no planners had been implicated of any wrong-doing by the Tribunal. Labour considered planning to be developer-led and developer-driven pandering to the
expedient rather than to more long-term benefits while all councillors agreed that public participation in the planning system is poor. Sinn Féin believed that the public view participation as a smokescreen for preordained planning decisions and that is was evidence-based on their own personal experiences. For Labour, the view was that planning authorities are not doing enough to engage the public in planning. Moreover, by placing planning notices in the broadsheets, Labour believed a certain demographic was being deliberately excluded from planning. Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, however, believed that the public do not understand the role of councillors in planning and consequently feel disenfranchised from the planning system. Both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael acknowledged that when the public do involve themselves in planning it is usually through NIMBY opposition to a development that impinges upon them.

Second, the former Ministers for the Environment stated that each Minister brings their own ideas to planning, however, they also admitted that this can often lead to a discontinuity in planning as different Ministers have different ideas as to what constitutes good and proper planning. For Fine Gael then, the 1990s were a critical time for Ireland economically and politically thus Fine Gael regretted the fact that Fianna Fáil had been in power during the economic boom. Labour shared this opinion and believed Fianna Fáil's close relationship with the development sector resulted in a push for development at Central Government. Fianna Fail, nevertheless, refuted such statements and declared that they did not engage in redevelopment and regeneration initiatives because developers were asking them too, but because the city was badly in need of it. Independents also pointed to the composition of local authority council chambers and acknowledged that during the boom the councils were controlled by Fianna Fáil who imbued a pro-development ethos, thus, both centrally and locally, developers had great political support.

Third, Labour recognised the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 and provision of the Finance Act, 1986 as an overt attempt to revive a flagging construction industry, deal with mass unemployment and redevelopment a neglected inner city. Labour also considered these statutory Acts as representative of a change of mindset by Central Government. Fianna Fáil was more defensive of both Acts claiming that without them, certain developments would not have happened in Dublin. It was also recognised that the establishment of CHDDA was based on the UDC model of redevelopment in use in London Docklands. Interestingly, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael were critical of CHDDA and expressed dissatisfaction
at planning powers being taken away from Dublin City Council, who they considered the right and proper planning body. All of the local councillors did, however, acknowledge that local authorities are enmeshed in too much bureaucracy thus the SPDA was a method of expediting development and giving assurances to developers and investors, however, while both Sinn Féin and Labour welcomed this new SPDA, Sinn Féin were critical of CHDDA for not working with the indigenous population of docklands. Sinn Féin claimed that CHDDA saw the local population as being part of the problem in docklands thus it imposed its own plan on the area which involved breaking up and relocating the local community to the periphery and rebranding docklands to attract investment and a new professional, middle-class population.

Fourth, the Former Ministers of the Environment credited Charles Haughey for instigating redevelopment in Dublin City following the designation of a site in Custom House Docks for the IFSC and the establishment of CHDDA. In that regard, the former Ministers considered the SPDA at dockland a welcomed addition to Irish planning considering how docklands has been completely transformed. Fianna Fáil councillors, however, stated many local authority planners felt alienated from planning following the establishment of CHDDA and attributed this to a Thatcherite ideological shift in planning philosophy. Fine Gael, on the other hand, considered any change in planning philosophy to be a realisation and correction of past mistakes. Citing high-density developments such as Ballymun and Tallaght which were developed without community facilities, Fianna Fáil also recognised that grave mistakes had been made by planning. There was a belief then that planning philosophy is now infused with the idea of mixed used developments and considerations of architectural design, layout, use of open space, and provision of infrastructure and services are now criteria that have to be met in planning. The Greens also held the belief that planners have finally realised that the American-style suburbia had been an economic and social disaster for Dublin. In so far as ABP have a role in urban planning, both Labour and Sinn Féin cast doubts over the true independence of the Bord, however, Fine Gael maintained that it is essential that ABP's independence is ring-fenced. While a number of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael councillors admitted to not knowing what exactly ABP do, Labour maintained that the Bord was pro-development. This was denounced by all the councillors in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown who stated that without ABP, development in Dún Laoghaire would have proceeded without any controls. Fine Gael did not recognise the existence of discordant ideologies in planning.
Moreover, Fine Gael questioned why the objectives of the common good cannot still be served by working in partnership with the private-sector. For those who did recognise that there is indeed two discordant ideologies driving planning, it was widely held that this was generational, with older, more established practitioners more willing to work alongside the private sector. While Labour suggested that some politicians are as bedded-in with developers as some planners appear to be, Fianna Fáil suggested that the existence of two discordant ideologies in planning resulted from uncertainty, among planners, as to what exactly is the common good.

Fifth, political corruption in planning was first suspected after Fianna Fáil rezoned Liam Lawlor's land in Lucan. When the Tribunal was established in 1997 and further revelation of systemic corruption in the planning system broke, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael considered this had an impact on the future role that planners would play in planning. Moreover, while it was admitted that councillors are more hesitant about suggesting a rezoning, it was also claimed by Fine Gael that the mentality of developers has not changed and they still push councillors to propose rezoning on their behalf. Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael also acknowledged that changes to planning practice have been driven by government, and although councillors in Dublin City Council recognised a seismic shift in planning practice, there was also recognition that planning practice does vary from one local authority to the next. The establishment of CHDDA was considered to be the catalyst that instigated change in local authority planning practice, and Dublin City Council was identified as being most open to new ideas and facilitating private development. While all of the councillors recognised the existence of intra-urban competition in the four Dublin authorities, there was also acknowledgement that four authorities has also meant four different planning systems. Only Labour suggested the establishment of a central planning authority to oversee planning in the city and three counties. Moreover, there was also recognition that there is often differences between local authorities and ABP in how they interpret planning policy as local authorities are more willing to contravene their own development plan so as to facilitate development that may bring in a rates base, however, Sinn Féin did admit that within Dublin City Council, ABP is perceived as being anti-development.

Sixth, it was widely acknowledged by the local councillors that planners are subject to pressure over certain types of development. The former Ministers
for the Environment refuted this suggestion and suggested instead that individuals (with an interest in development land) merely make very trenchant arguments in favour of development. Given the nature of planning then, where decisions taken by planners can enrich some individuals, Labour and Sinn Féin attributed this pressure to developers; however, Directors of Services and managers were also identified as trying to facilitate development by applying pressure to planners to recommend the granting of permission following pre­planning meetings with developers. Labour and Sinn Féin also suggested that some local-authority councillors can try to influence planning outcomes and pointed to links that Fianna Fáil and also Fine Gael have with the development sector as reason why some councillors espouse a pro-development ethos. Only Fianna Fáil identified 'negative pressure', that is pressure coming from residents and local residents' associations as a source of undue pressure on planners.

The issue of local government funding and dependence on development levies was also raised. With development levies tied to development, only Fianna Fáil considered development levies good for local authorities claiming that they are a mechanism by which local authorities can provide better levels of services and provide facilities that people demand and expect.

Finally, all of the informants agreed that IAPs and LAPs gave local authority planners a sense of renewed relevance in the planning system after the imposition of an SPDA in planning, however, Fine Gael was critical of IAPs and LAPs claiming that they are often used by local authority planning department as a way of by-passing the local-authority development plan. SDZs were widely considered a success by councillors as well. Councillors were in favour of the SDZ model of development for two principle reasons; as part of the development plan, councillor input is considered in the formulation of an SDZ, and councillors vote on whether or not to adopt the scheme. Labour favoured the holistic approach to SDZ planning whereby residential development is produced simultaneously with infrastructure and services such as education facilities and recreation facilities unlike some of the estates built on the periphery which did not provide the facilities needed for the population and thus festered into social ghettos. All of the councillors supported ABP's decision to outsource planning appeals to freelance inspectors and private planning consultants. All of the councillors recognised the need for ABP to dispose of planning appeals within the statutory period of 18 weeks, and given the volume of appeals during the boom, outsourcing was viewed as the only response. Only Fine Gael, however, questioned the true independence of the
contracted staff members and suggested that some freelance inspectors and consultants were not independent as they were working off a dual mandate. Despite this, all of the councillors agreed that this was not considered a precursor to the privatisation of planning. Sinn Féin considered Public-Private Partnership in social housing regeneration a disaster. Sinn Féin also claimed that PPPs were favoured by Central Government, thus, local authorities were encouraged to use PPPs as well. Citing the example of O’Devaney Gardens, Sinn Féin believed that some areas, because of their location in the city, were deliberately allowed to rot and fester so that the residents will be moved elsewhere (as is the case at St. Michael’s Estate) and the land eventually sold to the private-sector. Labour considered the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as a new way of thinking stating that Part V offered the very real chance of getting away from the ghettoisation of social housing, however, in considering that Part V had been rescinded in the Planning and Development Act, 2002, Labour claimed that intense lobbying and pressure from the construction industry on a Fianna Fáil government, resulted in the Part V provision being changed to suit the developers.
Chapter 8

The Reorientation of Irish Urban Planning
(Part III – Private-sector Property Developers)

8.1 Introduction

This chapter explores private-sector property developer's recognition of the reorientation of Irish urban planning in the last 25 years. First, the chapter examines developers' perceptions of how the general public view the planning system and explores public participation and interest in planning. Second, it explores the broad ideological background of Irish politics and the manner in which political ideologies have shaped urban planning. Third, it examines developers' awareness of a neoliberal transformation at Central Government level and how this transformation has been reflected in planning. Fourth, it examines developers' understanding of the theoretical approach to planning generally and explores the facilitative nature of those local authorities which espouse a 'can-do' philosophy. Moreover, it investigates developers' experience of planning with two discordant ideologies existing within certain local authorities, and examines the philosophy guiding planning at An Bord Pleanála. Fifth, by looking at the four local authorities in terms of the 'entrepreneurial city' it examines the shift towards more facilitative modes of operation. In addition, it investigates whether ABP can be considered an unbiased arbiter in the planning process. Sixth, it explores whether local-authority planners are subject to undue pressure to recommend the granting of approval for certain developments and from whom this pressure may be coming. Finally, the chapter examines developers' opinions of specific initiatives in operation in local authority planning such as small-scale LAP and IAP planning; PPPs; Part V social and affordable housing; and SDZs. It also considers the developers' perceptions of the consequences of ABP contracting freelance planning inspectors and private-planning consultants during the boom.

8.2 Public Perceptions of Irish Urban Planning

There was a shared view among developers that the public believes planners are 'in the pockets of developers' (Property Developer 4). Consequently, there was agreement among the developers that Irish people
generally have a 'very poor perception' (Property Developer 3B) of planning in Dublin:

'The public would tend to view us, the property developers, with a certain amount of distrust and hostility. The only category of party who they would view with greater distrust and hostility would be the planners' (Property Developer 3A).

Notwithstanding this perception of urban planning, all developers accorded with the belief that Irish people generally do not interest themselves in the planning system, except for when they are directly affected by a proposal for a new development close to them or when they lodge their own planning application. Only in such cases was it felt that people become, for a short time, 'completely absorbed in it' (Property Developer 5). Moreover, the developers also felt that when the public does involve itself in the planning process, this involvement usually manifests itself through NIMBY opposition as the respondents believed that Irish people generally tend to be anti-development:

'By and large the public would be against development; they don’t want change' (Property Developer 1)

'One of the worst problems in Irish planning is NIMBYism because everybody wants clean water but nobody wants a water treatment plant' (Property Developer 3B).

8.3 Broad Ideological Background of Irish Politics

At a time when the Keynesian model of capitalism was being undermined by the 'oil shock' of 1979, Fianna Fáil's massive programme of public spending contributed to the Irish economy slumping into recession in the 1980s. Urban planning did what little it could to respond to the growing problems in the city but it was acknowledged that planning departments during this time had been hugely under-resourced, thereby making the task of managing the city an impossible one as dereliction spread and the built fabric of the city crumbled as acknowledged by one developer:

'It was very under-resourced in every way and planners were being asked to do the impossible in terms of, on the one hand, formulate policy, while on the other hand, being deprived of resources all the time' (Property Developer 3A).

To compound the difficulties facing planning at that time, it was generally felt that planning as both a discipline and a profession was neither taken
seriously nor understood at Central Government level. Consequently, urban planning operated within the engineering section of local authorities and engineers applied engineering solutions to the problems besetting the built environment thus ‘there was very little planning as such in the wider sense of the term’ (Property Developer 4).

With the exception of John Gormley, there was also widespread belief that incumbent Ministers of the Environment had not seriously engaged with the planning system:

‘I haven’t seen a lot of serious engagement by the incumbent Minister of the day other than the current guy in planning’ (Property Developer 3A).

‘The current Minister has shown his willingness to get in and roll the sleeves up and sort things out’ (Property Developer 2).

One developer suggested that the planning system reflects the ‘political culture of the time’ (Property Developer 5) and pointed to the import attached to the ‘green agenda’ as promoted by a Green Party Minister during his term as Minister for the Environment. This belief was not shared by all as it was also acknowledged that the green agenda was ‘going in that direction anyway’ (Property Developer 4) by virtue of European legislation and directives and that it didn’t necessarily require a Green Party Minister to bring such issues to the fore.

All Developers were also aware that supporting politicians and political parties can be mutually beneficial given the quid pro quo nature of Irish politics:

‘Our political system is very much clientelism. Any developer will lobby the local councillors; they’ll be very involved with local councillors. Developers and politicians would work closely together’ (Property Developer 4).

Although the idea that Irish urban planning is led by a ‘regime’ blending political and business actors in a long-term, partnered relationship in order to promote economic development was refuted, there was, nevertheless, an acknowledgement that some political parties espouse ‘free-market, developer-led type development’ (Property Developer 4). In that regard, one developer suggested that Central Government ought to play a bigger role in steering the development and formation of local authority development plans:
'I think there's probably a strong argument for the government having much more power and having much more say in how development plans are formed and implemented and perhaps taking a bit of the control from the local authority in that regard' (Property Developer 2).

Moreover, and citing international examples, this same developer was adamant that city redevelopment and regeneration required private-sector engagement in the planning system to deliver the types of city that 'people' want:

'I would suggest that it's in the interests of all, community and city, to engage developers and to work with them to try and drive cities forward. There are lots of good examples of that, both in the UK and the US markets. I'm thinking in the US of Baltimore and in the UK, cities like Birmingham which worked very closely with developers to secure major city centre regeneration' (Property Developer 2).

Oftentimes though, personal political ambitions take precedence over party political ideologies as developers are aware politicians' 'primary objective is to get re-elected' (Property Developer 1) as one developer discovered:

'We'd a situation in O'Connell Street where we were assembling a site for a major retail development [Carlton site] where overnight, before a national election, the Minister for the Environment decided to make four buildings in Moore Street a national monument. It was clearly politically driven but that decision ultimately presented us with a big problem to deal with' (Property Developer 2).

By resolution of Section 140 of the Local Government Act, 200149 (Section 4 of the City and County Management (Amendment) Act, 1955 as it is still often referred), the clientelist nature of Irish politics often means that the demands of one individual take precedence of the needs of the community, as elected representatives do what they can to ensure re-election:

'Politicians naturally are in for a fairly short term, usually under five years. Inevitably, if you have an individual having more power than the community, then the politician will listen to the individual rather than the community. That's the nature of them. Because of the way the local authorities deal with planning matters, it is politicised and the result is you get planning officers who perhaps see the need to make hard decisions for the benefit of the community being thwarted by politicians who are intent on being re-elected and intent on pleasing their individual constituents' (Property Developer 2).

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49 See Local Government Act, 2001 Section 140 (2) which empowers an elected council to direct and require the manager to do or effect, to be done or effected, any particular act by resolution.
Consequently, relations between planners and elected representatives tend to be antagonistic at the local level as their respective views of planning tend to be diametrically opposed:

'I've found in my own experience that where local representatives are pushing a point that reflects on the planning system, planners will push against something that comes from the political classes' (Property Developer 5).

8.4 Transformation in Irish Policy at Central Government Level

The mid- to late 1980s witnessed a growing momentum of conferences, reports and protests aimed at raising awareness of the deteriorating fabric of Dublin and to prompt politicians to take measures to save the city; cumulatively, this orchestration of public outcry 'finally got politicians to acknowledge there was a big problem' (Property Developer 3A) which urgently needed to be addressed. Having both 'the drive and the ruthlessness' (Property Developer 3A) to ensure that the problems of urban dereliction and blight, unemployment and the faltering economy were properly dealt with, Charles Haughey, in particular, was credited as being the instigator to the redevelopment of Dublin at this time, by encouraging the private sector to engage in the redevelopment of the most depressed parts of Dublin's inner city:
‘One of the first things was a crystallisation of political will to get something going, i.e. the paraphernalia of the urban renewal tax reliefs, the creation within Dublin City Council of a specific division charged with the job of facilitating urban renewal, the establishment of what was then called the Custom House Docks Development Authority. So you had a whole range of governmental actions which cumulatively helped to kick start the market which had been seriously depressed and dysfunctional for decades before that’ (Property Developer 3A).

CHDDA, was established by statute to rejuvenate designated areas of Dublin City which were ‘desperately in need of redevelopment’ (Property Developer 2):

‘Docklands show that if you have a large area that needs regeneration and needs to be brought up in terms of urban development very quickly the appropriate way to deal with it is to designate a specific team and give it as much power as possible to do the job’ (Property Developer 2).

Developers were of the opinion that local-authority planning was too bureaucratic and parochial and planners at Dublin City Council ‘weren’t capable’ (Property Developer 1) of the task of city-wide redevelopment and rejuvenation, hence the need by Central Government to vest planning in an SPDA:

‘Government decided not to let the local authority do it. It decided to empower bodies that would get on with it and not be held up by local political constraints’ (Property Developer 2).

‘At that point in time the existing system was obviously an abject failure getting development going’ (Property Developer 3A).

Developers welcomed the introduction of an SPDA to the planning system claiming that it creates a new dynamic in parts of the city, has a long-term view for the redevelopment of a designated area and has proved, in hindsight, to be very successful in carrying out its mandate:

‘I think they are a good idea because they can actually get the expertise, have a vision, have a twenty-year view, and I think you do need to have a twenty year view. I think five-year views are fine to modify or modulate what you are doing but you do need to have a twenty-year view minimum, to try and achieve anything. I think they are very good provided their philosophy is right and provided they’re manned at the very top by the right people who will then recruit the right people’ (Property Developer 1).
I think it creates a new dynamic. If you look at them individually, they’ve been very successful; I don’t think anyone can say the Docklands has been anything other than a great success’ (Property Developer 2).

With the establishment of CHDDA, developers recognised that local authority planners had been effectively marginalised from planning in parts of its former territory. In addition, developers acknowledged that many local-authority planners felt deprived of professional reputational gains as Docklands, in particular, was seen as an exciting and innovating place in which to be working:

‘Planners, although they’re meant to be there for the generation of the common good, are professional people; they’re there to try and make reputations and there were reputational gains to be made by being the person who dealt with a planning permission for the Conference [Convention] Centre, and I do know that the senior people within Dublin City Council were really miffed about that’ (Property Developer 5).

Consequently, tensions developed between local-authority planners at Dublin City Council and those planners working at docklands with CHDDA/DDDA:

‘I know that they were pissed-off. I wasn’t around, I was in England at the time it was set-up but I know, with the individuals I know at a very senior level at DCC, that they remain pissed-off’ (Property Developer 5).

‘I’m aware of the fact that there would’ve been all sorts of tensions, even in Temple Bar, between the Temple Bar planning and development functions and the DCC planning authority’ (Property Developer 3A).

Only one developer expressed great satisfaction with the work that local-authority planners do as well as perplexity as to why it was decided that the rejuvenation of docklands required the setting up of a separate planning body:

‘I struggle to understand why the bloody hell they done it because, as a personal observation, I think the guys who’re in Dublin City Council, although they’re much belied at the moment, as a professional corps of people doing a job, they’re as good, in terms of planning and how they see it and how they relate to what they can get out of it, they’re as good as I’ve ever met’ (Property Developer 5).

Such empathy for local authority planners was not shared by all developers though. The general consensus was that if any local-authority planner felt so badly about being sidelined from large-scale development in the
city, he or she should leave the local authority and, instead, find employment with the SPDA:

'I'd say to any planner who felt aggrieved or a bit miffed, "Apply for a job in Docklands if you feel so badly about it, you should go where the interesting work is and you should go to jobs that fulfil you as an individual"' (Property Developer 2).

8.5 Theorising the Role of Planning

The combination of the financial incentives and tax breaks in the inner city and the institution of the SPDAs, which had taken their lead from a number of 'international examples where development agencies were clearly functioning' (Property Developer 3A), heralded the promotion of a new approach to planning, both in theory and practice. For one developer, however, the theorisation of local-authority planning in Ireland has only changed to embrace a much more holistic approach to urban development:

'Compared to twenty years ago the idea was you'd have mono-uses in areas, you'd have areas for housing, areas for industry, and all the rest, now it's all mixed-use and urban villages and all this kind of thing so that's all changed especially since twenty years ago' (Property Developer 4).

The green agenda was also identified as being a recent consideration in planning philosophy and was welcomed, only by one developer, on the grounds that development costs will be lower:

'I think a lot of the issues the Green Party, in particular, are seeking to deliver during their period in office are largely sensible and will stand the country in good stead if they're introduced. Certainly, as developers, we don't view them as the devil; far from it, I mean if we can come up with development that costs less in capital terms that's to our benefit' (Property Developer 2).

It was nonetheless felt that the green agenda was not yet being reflected in practice:

'The green agenda has been coming into planning policy for many years but the policy and the implementation are two very different things and in many cases we have found that, not only are they not matching, but in some cases they are actually going in opposite directions' (Property Developer 3A).
There was a belief that there is inertia, at Central Government, when it comes to changing the planning system as it is 'not seen to be sufficiently broke' (Property Developer 5) that enough political and financial muscle need to be put in to fix it. Developers, therefore, regarded the philosophy of planning as still heavily entrenched in the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 196350:

'We're still rooted in 1963. The planning system is guided generally by 1963 and we have these wonderful tweaks on various clauses with the 2000 Act which is wonderful, but you get my dad out, my dad was building buildings in Dublin in the '60s and my dad's view is the planning system is worse now than it was then. It may well be that everything's changed and nothing's changed' (Property Developer 5).

It was also felt that Ministers of the Department of the Environment are appointed with little knowledge of the Irish urban planning system and therefore not seriously engaging in the planning system by imparting a coherent philosophy:

'I suspect a lot of Ministers for the Environment don't have a planning philosophy and may know little enough about it until they take on that brief' (Property Developer 3A).

Several developers also felt that the quality of local-authority planners is not of a high enough standard as they do not have a great understanding of the planning system and its operations. They believed that planners lack an understanding of the property market, attributing this to the background from which they entered the profession:

'The quality in local-authority planners is exceedingly patchy. I think that most of them don't really understand how the development and the property market functions and what drives it' (Property Developer 3A).

'My experience is that they don't have a great understanding, the planners. I think the people in planning might come from engineering or geography. They really don't understand the essence of good planning' (Property Developer 1).

Consequently, these same developers opined that the planning system is 'hugely deficient and in many ways counterproductive' (Property Developer

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50 See Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 which makes provision, in the interests of the common good, for the proper planning and development of cities, towns and other areas.
as it tends to be 'very subjective to the individual planner' (Property Developer 1):

'Nobody can agree what's the right thing; you'll have a view and I'll have a view. I challenge anyone to get unanimity on a planning application' (Property Developer 5).

While acknowledging that ABP’s existence is the result of 'erratic planning decision-making' (Property Developer 5), for many developers, the philosophy guiding planning at ABP was considered anti-development. Accordingly, the Bord was described as 'a perpetual moan' (Property Developer 3A) to the property development sector on the grounds that it is 'too quick to overturn the decisions of the local-authority planners' (Property Developer 3A). It was, therefore, suggested that there exist ideological tensions between what the developer hopes to get out of a development and what some planners are willing to give. It was also suggested that some public-sector planners are opposed to the idea that 'the private sector is going to benefit financially from the decisions that they make' (Property Developer 1):

'I'm sure a lot of it relates to the fact that at the flick of a pen you can change the opening statement of the development plan but it takes a lot more than that to really drive through a whole different approach. I think you're dealing with people, many of whom are caught in a particular mindset or a culture which takes a lot longer to change than just lines on the paper' (Property Developer 3A).

A number of developers, therefore, recognised the existence of two discordant ideologies in Irish urban planning between those planners who are rooted to the traditional view of planning in the public interest or the common good and other planners seeking pro-actively to work in partnership with the private-sector:

'I think there remains a mindset among many planners that the private-sector is the enemy and it is the planners job to keep those greedy...in line and under control' (Property Developer 3B).

'Some of them are more ideological than others. I think what I suppose you might call a 'Frank McDonald agenda'; he's pretty much set the agenda for the past fifteen years. There is a conflict there between what the market is dictating and what the planners are dictating' (Property Developer 4).
Through personal experience, another developer claimed that this ideological divide is one of personal and professional ideology and identified a generational gulf between older, more flexible planners prepared to work alongside private-sector developers, and younger, planners who are more intransigent:

'I'm mid-forties; the guys who are my age or a little bit older, what I've found with them is, on a practical level, there's a realisation that they can link guys like us doing development and they can draw concessions out of us, whereas I have to say, I think the younger generation of planners, and what I mean by that is the people thirty-five and below, I've found the younger people in the planning community more intransigent and either don't want to see what is happening or are incapable of dealing with what's happening' (Property Developer 5).

The developers, however, shared the belief that, as a corps, they too can work for the common good just as they can also work to their own agendas:

'I would beg to differ with the proposition that there's a conflict between the common good and working with the private-sector; it may or may not be the case that these things are mutually exclusive but I would've thought there are many, many instances where the common good and the interests of the private sector are completely aligned' (Property Developer 3A).

8.6 Impact on Local-Authority Planning

As the Irish economy began to show signs of growth in the 1990s, developers recognised that the practice of urban planning was increasingly becoming more entrepreneurial as the built fabric of Dublin underwent radical change:

'Ireland went through the same level of development over a fifteen year period that many of the European countries went through in the post-war period; so in fifteen years Ireland achieved what many countries took 45-50 years to achieve' (Property Developer 1).

Although one developer claimed that thoughts and aspirations towards the entrepreneurial city are 'anathema in Ireland' (Property Developer 5), several other developers, nevertheless, acknowledged that some local-authority managers appeared to be seduced by the doctrines of Richard Florida's 'Creative City' and the hope that 'starchitects' of the calibre of

Plate 8.2 Grand Canal Square (Martha Schwartz)

Plate 8.3 National Convention Centre (Kevin Roche)
Santiago Calatrava Valls, Lord Norman Foster, and Irish architect Kevin Roche would leave their mark through trophy buildings, structural engineering projects and public sculptures:

'I know that Dublin City Council at the moment are promoting the Creative City and they now say the future of the city is being creative' (Property Developer 3B).

'I think Dick Gleeson in the City Council would be very conscious of the kind of global image and he's trying to push for these trophy buildings and getting the 'starchitects' in' (Property Developer 2).

Former Dublin City Council manager John FitzGerald and incumbent John Tierney were singled out, in particular, by one developer for their efforts in promoting development in the city:

'The City Managers, particularly in Dublin, have been very keen to drive the city forward. John FitzGerald and John Tierney have both displayed a very strong desire to drive the city forward in economic terms and to position the city as one of the major cities in Europe' (Property Developer 2).

In Dublin City in particular, there was acknowledgement of overt attempts to reposition and market the city as a 'global city'\(^52\). However, none of the developers considered Dublin, in any way, 'global'. While admitting that the potential was there, for the most part, there was acknowledgement by the developers that Dublin City remains a capital city of a small state and that any aspirations to global city status are a sure sign of Dublin 'punching above its weight' (Property Developer 2), a symptom of the extent to which Ireland had an inflated opinion of its standing in the order of world cities during the boom.

It was recognised that the new entrepreneurial approach to planning has resulted in the four local authorities 'competing for development levies' (Property Developer 1). This competitive culture was not viewed as a positive development by one developer who suggested that the four authorities should in fact be working together and working to their strengths rather than undermining one another:

'There are some things that best should take place in the city; I think you need a vibrant centre, but you need also your satellite towns outside so they're interrelated and interdependent. They should not be competing; they should be working in harmony.

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\(^{52}\) See Chapter 9, Dublin City Council Development Plan, 2011-2017
There are some things that will best go on near the airport in Fingal, and other things should best work down by Killiney, and there's other things that should best work down by Baldonnel, and there's other things that should best work down by the Liffey' (Property Developer 1).

Plate 8.4 Samuel Beckett Bridge (Santiago Calatrava Vals)

It was acknowledged that this competitive culture has frequently resulted in differences arising between some local planning authorities and ABP in terms of their respective interpretation of development plans thus there was a proposal, from one developer, to bring the four local authorities together under one the auspices of one regional authority so that Dublin as a whole could best work to its own strengths:

'I think having the four authorities does lead to competition between them and leaves them less powerful than they might otherwise be. Maybe that suits government, but I think there's a strong argument for Dublin, as a region, to have one very strong local authority and have a clear mandate from all the citizens to take the city forward in a certain direction' (Property Developer 2).

8.7 Consequences for Local-Authority Planning

The developers were unanimous in their belief that the 'private-sector more efficiently builds things' (Property Developer 4) than local authorities. Indeed, one developer considered Dublin's new built environment, with its
sports stadia, conference and exhibition centres, theatres and museums, to be among some of the best examples of urbanism in Europe:

‘People say we haven’t achieved anything. If you look at Croke Park and Lansdowne Road, they’re two of the greatest stadiums in Europe, and in terms of theatres, we’ve got the Conference [Convention] Centre, Grand Canal Square Theatre. They are key developments that have come forward that reflect our moving forward as a mature society’ (Property Developer 2).

This view was, nevertheless, disputed by another developer:

‘This is probably a bit philosophical from someone who’s a developer, but the planning system is meant to deliver good planning and good buildings, good architecture. When you look at the billions that have been pumped in, both privately and publicly, into the architecture of Dublin, there’s no one single piece of architecture that most of us can point to and be proud of and say “We produced that”. There’s been no push; there’s been no ambition to decent architecture. We sit in a Georgian city that we’re all tremendously proud of. The Georgian architecture that we inherited from two hundred years ago is the best part of Dublin. There’s no legacy that I see that we, as the generation that had the second building boom in Dublin, there’s no legacy that we’re going leave for even our kids, never mind a hundred years hence’ (Property Developer 5).

The changing structure of the household with traditional family sizes getting smaller and net in-migration of ‘Irish people, who had emigrated to other parts of the world to find employment, coming home’ (Property Developer 1) and immigrants, particularly from Eastern Europe, taking up employment, led to an increased demand for accommodation of all types in Dublin during the 1990s. With large-scale development of apartments in both the city and county some developers believed that Dublin has finally adopted and embraced a new type of city living which is more akin to what one might find in many European cities:

‘Apartment developments in the city centre have moved us very firmly into the European city type of living. There are lots of people who would think about not living in anything other than the heart of the city and an apartment convenient to everything and just view the prospect of having a front and a back garden as a nightmare, something else to look after; and the thought of having to travel in from the suburbs and back out at night is just something they think is mad’ (Property Developer 2).
Plate 8.5 Lansdowne Road football and rugby ground, now renamed the Aviva Stadium

Plate 8.6 The Point Theatre, now renamed the O2 in a redeveloped area of docklands called The Point Village
This thought, however, was not shared by all developers: although Dublin aspires to be like any other European city, development has been allowed to happen in such a way that it actually has more in common with many American cities with its 'car-based sprawling development' (Property Developer 3B) as developers bought up large tracts of land and developed vast estates of detached and semi-detached houses which 'mushroomed out into the countryside' (Property Developer 2).

With the removal of domestic rates by Fianna Fáil in 1978 and the subsequent issue of Central Government subventions for local government - and the declining real value thereof - local authorities became heavily dependent on the activities of the private sector, which had become highly important to the Irish economy during the boom, as they desperately sought development contributions:

'They needed the income, development levies. It was one of the great tragedies at the end of the '80s [70s] whenever the Fianna Fáil government removed domestic rates. They removed a large part of the income and the powerbase of local authorities and that caused a problem that we've never properly dealt with' (Property Developer 2).

Local authorities will only ever be in receipt of development levies when the construction industry is booming. With Ireland in an economic morass, local authorities can no longer rely on development levies as development has ground to a halt and Central Government subventions for local authorities have been reduced in an attempt to get the public finances in order. Indeed, one developer was highly critical of Central Government for 'allowing local authorities to be singularly funded by development levies' (Property Developer 5):

'They're screwed at the moment. They can't get revenue to come in and, unlike us, they're not allowed to go out and raise revenue in other areas. So what the hell do they do? It's actually, from my point of view, a dreadful scandal that Central Government let what happened happen. Our local government system, if they don't do something, it's going to be close to collapse in a few years time' (Property Developer 5).

Along with a reliance on development levies by the four Dublin local authorities, the ease of access to finance and the ready availability of capital, made developers major players in the property game in Ireland during the boom, thus, as a group of profit seekers, developers will 'always push the envelope of
what's reasonable' (Property Developer 5) to get more out of a development than is permitted in the development plans:

'What the developer is about is generating lots of square feet. That's the commercial return; getting loads, and loads, and loads of square feet' (Property Developer 5).

Some developers, however, asserted that they had never had the upper hand when it came to lodging a planning application with local-authority planners:

'I don't think I've ever been in a situation where I felt we had the upper hand necessarily. Local-authority employees get paid anyway whether the development happens or not, so there's no personal gain for them' (Property Developer 2).

At local-authority level, though, pressure was placed on planners to recommend planning permission following receipt of certain planning applications. While one developer claimed that this pressure was coming 'from individuals to see if they could make a fast buck' (Property Developer 5), another developer, using the Liffey Valley shopping centre development on the Quarryvale lands as an example, suggested that the pressure being exerted on planners had come from local-authority councillors:

'Liffey Valley wasn't where the local shopping centre was due to go, in West Dublin. It was meant to go down Balgaddy and they changed the zoning, but Balgaddy is still zoned for a big shopping centre. There was political pressure that came from political avenues that shaped the zoning of vast swathes of land in Dublin' (Property Developer 4).

Other developers, though, opined that the pressure exerted on planners was coming from within local authorities by management and, in particular, the manager, especially in Dublin City Council where it was suggested that considerations of finance and securing a commercial rates base were primary concerns in granting certain planning permissions:

'I think managers do take a keen interest in the decisions that their planners make. Your average County Manager is obviously interested in maintaining high planning standards but he's probably even more interested in economic development and rates' (Property Developer 3A).
However, one developer disputed the idea that planners are put under undue pressure by developers, local councillors and management to recommend the granting of permission for planning. It was suggested that once the economy began to boom, from the mid-1990s, the practice of pressuring planners ceased as planners no longer felt they had to recommend permission for development for development’s sake:

'I think there was pressure on the planners in the '80s and probably into the early '90s to grant permissions for anything that would bring inward investment. I think as the economy began to grow and it became clear we were in for a pretty sustained period of growth then planners certainly moved away from that' (Property Developer 2).

In cases where relationships between developers and planners stray on the side of impropriety, it was also suggested that checks are in place to ensure that this does not happen. Moreover, it was suggested that planners generally stick rigidly to the development plan so as to ensure that developers adhere strictly to their vision for the area:

'I'm sure decisions and relationships with particular developers perhaps stray too far on the side of impropriety, but I think if any local-authority officer has strayed too far in that regard they get called in pretty quickly. I've no experience of local-authority officers doing anything other than implementing the plan and ensuring that whatever we produce as a development is going to hit [tick] all the boxes in terms of what they want to achieve for their area' (Property Developer 2).

'I would interpret the people in the planning department as the watch-dog or police in what we do; I think that's the right way. We try to challenge the system, but they're the police of the system and they put us back in our box' (Property Developer 5).

In cases, however, where local authorities are being seen to deliberately contravene their own development plan, the role of ABP as an independent and impartial adjudicator in the planning system was recognised:

'[ABP] will force some decisions to appeal where obviously the developer and the local authority have reached agreement on an application and it's approved by the local authority' (Property Developer 2).

In making a ruling on a third-party appeal, ABP can quickly bring local authorities back to their development plan and demand that local authorities adhere to the provisions therein:
'Where they feel local authorities are ignoring the development plan, and Dublin City Council has found to its cost on a number of high-profile decisions that they have been wasting developers' time and misleading them, the Bord has very firmly brought them back to the development plan and the constraints that imposes' (Property Developer 2).

The Board's 'almost judicial-type role' (Property Developer 2), as an appellate body in the planning system, has resulted in it having to isolate itself from first- and third-party appellants, and although much derided by developers, ABP was regarded, by only one interviewee, as the 'only serious planning authority in the country to opine on your project' (Property Developer 3A):

'I personally would prefer not to have An Bord Pleanála in place but I have to say, you probably have to have it' (Property Developer 5).

The Third Party Rights of Appeal (TPRA) mechanism was also considered an 'inconvenience' (Property Developer 2) to developers as it frequently resulted in delays to development:

'A project can be delayed, having had a decision made on it, can thereafter be delayed for months and years and we are, first-hand, witnessing situations where decisions by the Bord have been delayed for years because of third-party appeals' (Property Developer 3A).

Additionally, a number of developers alleged that TPRA is open to abuse by opportunistic individuals, intent on using the system for their own financial gain:

'It's a well-known phenomenon that third parties will lodge an objection for commercial gain for themselves, no question about it. It is par for the course now in the Irish planning process and the system does facilitate that unfortunately' (Property Developer 3A).

'A lot of the times, they're just looking to get some money out of it. There's widespread abuse of the system where they can be bought off. They see a big developer putting an application in and they put an objection in waiting to be bought off' (Property Developer 4).

Of course, anxious to see their developments get planning permission, one developer, somewhat anecdotally, recalled that developers have paid-off third-party appellants to ensure that they drop their objection to ABP so as to avoid unnecessary delays to their proposed development:
'I certainly recall lots of stories about third parties vexatiously mounting third party appeals and then being paid-off to back off' (Property Developer 2).

8.8 Realisation for planning

There was a belief among developers that IAPs, given a statutory footing in the Urban Renewal Act, 1998, afforded renewed relevance for local-authority planners in the planning system, but some developers were also critical of local authorities' use of IAPs. In contrast to the manner in which SPDAs had dealt with development by employing dedicated teams, several developers claimed that IAPs had been unable to integrate the physical and social elements of urban planning:

'Planning in Ireland is about the buildings. We haven't really come to the sense of how the buildings integrate into how people live. I don't think the link between planning and social planning has quite yet come together' (Property Developer 3B).

'Where it falls down is they don't set up a team to deliver [IAPs] with clear objectives and a set time frame. It's all dealt with by the same planning group that's running the rest of the city. Planners are a scarce resource so they do get pulled across the city and I think that's the problem' (Property Developer 2).

Another developer was critical of the mistakes of ill-considered development plans and therefore regarded IAPs as existing for the purposes of 'band-aiding' (Property Developer 5), thus if planners dedicated more time, energy, and thought to drafting development plans there would be no need to turn to IAPs for remedial action a number of years following the publication of the development plan:

'Planners may hope to see a relevance for themselves in IAPs, but my unfortunate experience is, and I have actually been in conversations with planners where they talk about using IAPs as the fixer where they've gotten something wrong in the past. I'd like to see the relevance more in creating, putting more effort into the initial development plan than in trying to fix it later on by IAPs' (Property Developer 5).

Planning pressures at the height of the boom resulted in ABP contracting freelance inspectors and private planning consultancies to help respond to the growing number of planning appeals. This was an extraordinary response to an extraordinary situation and not a precursor to privatising planning in Ireland as agreed by all developers. Indeed, the very idea of urban planning in Ireland being privatised was described as a 'slightly worrying theory' (Property
Developer 3B) by one developer. While acknowledging that ABP had to respond to the growing workload, the employment of private consultants was criticised, however, by one developer, on the grounds that some private planning consultants were working from a dual mandate:

'I don’t think anybody ever thought it was a satisfactory situation where you have private consultants doing planning reports and then looking for clients as well. There was potential for conflicts of interest there. It’s just not a long-term solution' (Property Developer 4).

Moreover, using Seán Dunne’s proposed development at Ballsbridge as an example, it was suggested that there is a disconnection between what the public wants from the planning system and what is being provided:

'I’ve never seen a workshop by planners for the general community as to what the community wants out of the development plan. I know they put them up for consultation after they’re written, but the relevance of that, I mean if it’s written, human nature is you’re not gonna unwrite [sic] it' (Property Developer 5).

For the developers, this disconnection was the result of planners’ not liaising with the general public to gauge what exactly it would like to get from development in their locale. The developers believed that planners are deliberately not engaging with the public in order to avoid any suggestion of impropriety by allowing themselves to be guided in their judgement:

'It’s a self-enforced discipline. They feel it’s the only way to insulate themselves from the suggestion that maybe they’ve been guided in the way to make something happen, or to allow something to happen, and that they’ve been paid for that service. Their view is that they don’t really want to talk to people' (Property Developer 3).

Developers also considered the raft of new guidelines and regulations published by the Department of the Environment, together with statutory instruments, as responsible for increasing the costs of construction, costs which are subsequently passed on to purchasers:

'You’ve had increased costs of tightening building regulations, Part M, you’ve had increased costs because of health and safety, you’ve had increased costs because of Part V, and now you’ve got the Dublin City Council new apartment guidelines which

53 See Achieving Liveable Sustainable New Apartment Homes for Dublin City, Draft Guidelines, 2007
effectively increase floor area by ten per cent and they all increase costs’ (Property Developer 4).

Such publications led developers to believe that there is now a ‘clearer divide between the political system and the planning system’ (Property Developer 5). Nevertheless, developers were still critical of the manner in which they believed the planning system has become more regulatory:

‘The number of boxes that have to be ticked in terms of social inclusion, in terms of Part M\(^{54}\), in terms of noise requirements, health and safety, a lot of the environmental stuff. That just wasn't around in the 1980s. It's just become much broader now than it was before’ (Property Developer 4).

8.9 Conclusion

This chapter reviews private-sector property developer's recognition of the reorientation of Irish urban planning under a neoliberal agenda. The chapter proceeded by an examination of developers' perceptions of how the public view the urban planning system and explores public participation and interest in urban planning generally. It looked at the broad ideological background of planning and the manner in which political ideologies have shaped planning over the last 25 years. It explored the neoliberal transformation at Central Government and how this has been reflected in planning. It examined the theoretical approach to planning and the existence of two discordant ideologies in operation in local-authority planning. It also examined the philosophy guiding planning at ABP and whether this has undergone change since its establishment. The chapter also looked at whether there have been shifts towards more facilitative modes of operation in local-authority planning and whether ABP can be considered the unbiased arbiter in the planning system. It explored the extent to which planners are subject to pressure to recommend planning permission for certain types of developments and explored from where this pressure was coming. Finally, the chapter looked at planning in terms of specific initiatives such as small-scale LAP and IAP planning; PPPs; Part V social and affordable housing; and SDZs. It also considered developers' opinions vis-à-vis ABP contracting freelance planning inspectors and private-planning consultants during the boom.

\(^{54}\) See Building Regulations, 1997 and Building Regulations (Part M Amendment) Regulations, 2010
A number of themes emerged from the interviews with developers: first, the developers admitted the Irish public believe that planners are in the pockets of developers. Moreover, the developers acknowledged that the only group of people that the public dislike more than developers are planners. In that regard, it was accepted that the public have a very poor perception of planning. In addition, the developers felt that the public generally do not interest themselves in planning except for when a development will directly affect them. In that case, developers felt the public will completely immerse themselves in planning, although, only for a short time. In general, developers held that public involvement in planning usually manifests itself through NIMBY opposition believing Irish people to be anti-development.

Second, in so far as political ideologies infuse planning, developers considered that Ministers of the Environment do not seriously engage in planning. Moreover, and with the notable exception of John Gormley, developers also believed that Ministers of the Environment, as individuals, do not have a planning philosophy and therefore have nothing to impart planning. Looking at the bigger picture, developers therefore recognised that the planning system is a reflection of the political culture of the time, and acknowledged that some political parties in the State are espouse free-market, developer-led type development. At the local level, developers also recognised that politicians are opportunistic and will do whatever it takes to get re-elected. In that regard, developers admitted that supporting politicians, especially local politicians, can be mutually beneficial.

Third, for those developers who had not emigrated in the 1980s, there was a recognition of the many conferences and reports that addressed the deteriorating fabric of Dublin City during the 1980s. Moreover, many of the developers credited Charles Haughey for having both the ruthlessness and the drive to implement change by encouraging the private-sector to engage in redevelopment in the city through a combination of tax breaks and other incentives. Developers also considered local authority planning to be too bureaucratic and planners incapable of redeveloping the city and understood why there was a need to vest planning with the CHDDA to redevelop the Custom House Docks. Of course, developers welcomed the imposition of an SPDA into Irish planning, but also recognised that consequently, local-authority planners felt marginalised from planning and inevitably, tensions developed between local-authority planners and those planners working in docklands.
Fourth, the developers recognised that the financial incentives and tax breaks available in designated areas had taken their lead from a number of international examples where development agencies were functioning. While developers considered these to herald a new approach to Irish urban planning, in practice, developers felt that planning was still rooted in the provisions of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 and the considered planners to lack an understanding of the property market. Developers also considered planning to be subjective to the individual and therefore recognised the existence of two discordant ideologies in Irish planning claiming that some local-authority planners are opposed to the idea that developers will benefit from certain planning decisions, while other local-authority planners are happy to work with the private-sector. Moreover, developers recognised this to be a generational division and it is the older, more established practitioners who are more likely to work with the private-sector, but developers did state that they too can work for the common good. As for ABP, the developers considered the Bord to be anti-development and described it as a perpetual moan to developers believing that the board are too quick to overturn local-authority planning decisions.

Fifth, developers recognised that some local authorities have been seduced by the doctrines of Richard Florida and are driven by a desire to have ‘starchitects’ leave their mark in their area. In particular, Dublin City Council was recognised as being overtly facilitative and the developers acknowledged the role of managers John FitzGerald and John Tierney for their efforts in promoting the city and repositioning it as one of the major cities in Europe. The developers also acknowledged that the four Dublin authorities are competing with one another for investment and hence a rates base, employment, and development levies. Consequently, it was believed that this competitive culture has resulted in differences between some local authorities and ABP in the interpretation of planning policy. One developer therefore recognised four planning systems in the four local authorities and suggested instead that planning in Dublin be brought together under one planning body.

Sixth, while all the developers admitted that the private-sector is more efficient than the public-sector, some developers also recognised that, although Dublin aspires to be like any other European city, it actually has more in common with many American cities with its car-based sprawling developments.
Moreover, with local authorities so heavily dependent on development levies, the developers appreciated that local-authority planners can often be subject to pressure to recommend permission for certain developments. The developers therefore believed that much of this pressure is coming from local councillors and management, and while the developers considered planners to generally adhere to the provisions of their own development plan, they did consider ABP and the TPRA an inconvenience, claiming that it is open to abuse from vexatious third party appellants and anecdotally claiming to know of some developers paying-off appellants so as to ensure that certain developments are not appealed to the Bord.

Finally, the developers were critical of IAPs and LAPs for two reasons; developers did not believe IAPs and LAPs were successfully integrating physical and social elements of planning, moreover, developers considered IAPs a form of 'band aiding' ill-considered development plans. In so far as ABP contracted freelance planning inspectors and private-sector planning consultancies during the boom to deal with the volume of planning appeals, the developers considered that ABP had to respond to a growing workload and required extra planners. This was therefore not considered by the developers as a precursor to the privatisation of planning in Ireland, with one developer stating such an idea is 'a slightly worrying theory' (Property Developer 3B). Developers, however, were critical of some of the contracted freelance inspectors and private planning consultants whom they considered to be working off a dual mandate.
Chapter 9

The Reorientation of Irish Urban Planning
(Part IV – Other Vested Interests)

9.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the recognition of a reorientation of Irish urban planning under a neoliberal agenda by three members of An Taisce, the Georgian Society President and a renowned planning journalist, who has published extensively on Dublin's built environment. First, the chapter explores public perceptions of the planning system, participation and general interest in planning. Second, the chapter explores the broad ideological background of Irish politics and how political ideologies have infused planning. Third, it examines how the neoliberal transformation at Central Government has been reflected in planning. Fourth, it examines changes in the theoretical approach to planning and explores whether two discordant ideologies exist in the operation of local-authority planning, and it examines the underlying philosophy of planning guiding An Bord Pleanála. Fifth, the chapter examines shifts towards more facilitative modes of operation by local authorities and ABP's role as an unbiased arbiter in the planning process. In addition, the role of the three planning schools in shaping planners' approach to planning and the delivery of the common good is also examined. Sixth, it explores the pressure which local-authority planners are subject to recommend the granting of approval for certain developments. Finally, the chapter considers the effects of changed planning philosophy and shift in planning practice on planning in terms of specific initiatives such as LAP and IAP planning by local authorities; PPPs; reliance on Part V; and SDZs. It also examines the implications of ABP contracting freelance planning inspectors and private-planning consultants at the height of the boom.

9.2 Public Perceptions of Irish Urban Planning

The majority view among the three members of An Taisce, the Georgian Society President and a renowned planning journalist was that the planning system is looked upon with suspicion and scepticism by the Irish public. These respondents considered the revelations of corruption from the Tribunal as contributory in tainting the public's perception of planning:
‘Liffey Valley is the most disgraceful example of a local authority toadying up to a
development interest. It’s a motorway shopping centre, and Owen O’Callaghan got that
through on the basis of corruption’ (Planning Journalist).

This same respondent also suggested that corruption is still a feature of
planning and believed the view among some politicians is that the Tribunal’s
inquiry was historical and therefore was in no way concerned with what is
happening in the present:

‘I’m not saying that happens everywhere, and I’m not saying everyone is involved in it,
but there are some very strange decisions being made’ (Planning Journalist).

The three members of An Taisce regarded the public as completely
uninterested in planning related matters generally but will, however, involve
themselves as a reaction to something which development affects them directly
and impinges on their daily lives and therefore recognised the wide existence
of NIMBYism in Irish urban planning.

9.3 Broad Ideological Background of Irish Politics

In so far as political ideologies infuse the philosophy shaping urban
planning, An Taisce firmly believed Fianna Fáil and the construction industry
have a symbiotic relationship is symbiotic which espouses a ‘to hell with
planning’ (An Taisce 2) attitude towards the planning system. The Georgian
Society and the Planning Journalist also shared this view and considered
Fianna Fáil as ‘the developers’ party’ (Planning Journalist)

9.4 Transformation in Irish Policy at Central Government Level

A number of high profile conferences and public demonstrations
addressing the degree to which the city was allowed to crumble and decay took
place in Dublin during the 1980s. One such conference was the Dublin Crisis
Conference (1986), which was described by several interviewees as influential
for focusing minds and raising awareness of how the fabric of the inner city was
being worn down and in some cases, had fallen apart:

‘The Dublin Crisis Conference was a bottom-up political movement that transformed
Dublin. It had an effect in Dublin. It galvanised a campaigning political movement in
Dublin and it particularly empowered the communities in Dublin’ (An Taisce 3).
An Taisce and the Planning Journalist declared that the Dublin Crisis Conference brought about a realisation that only financial incentives could save the urban fabric of Dublin's inner city, thus the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 brought in to being tax incentives for developments in designated areas of the inner city. Tax designation addressed the issue of dereliction and urban blight and it was widely agreed by all interviewees that the 'tax reliefs were hailed as a welcome method of regeneration of historic cores' (Georgian Society) as the financial incentives were significant in filling what were enormous voids in the inner urban streetscape.

Plate 9.1 Redeveloped quays with pastiche Georgian buildings

All of the respondents considered Fianna Fáil's election victory over the Fine Gael-Labour coalition and Charles Haughey's subsequent re-election as Taoiseach (third term) in 1987 as critical for the role of the State and for future economic planning. From a planning point of view, however, the establishment of CHDDA with Section 25 protection from appeals to An Bord Pleanála, a mechanism which could not be facilitated through the traditional planning system, represented a new turn for urban planning in Ireland. None of the respondents considered the establishment of CHDDA as being a positive development for Irish planning. For example, the Planning Journalist and Georgian Society believed that Central Government took the decision to set up the SPDAs because of 'a failure in the belief in the capacity of Dublin
Corporation to realise renewal’ (Planning Critic) and deliver what the government envisaged for docklands and Temple Bar:

‘In the context of an area like the DDDA where the area was laid out for a specific reason, and that would have been to develop the Financial Services Sector and associated services, that if the responsibility for that were laid on the shoulders of Dublin City Council there would be another layer of bureaucracy within the local authority, so perhaps instead of getting it enmeshed in the bureaucracy of a local authority it was perhaps better to establish a separate entity’ (Georgian Society).

Plate 9.2 International Financial Services Centre (fronted by the Famine Memorial)

Large chunks of the city were taken away from Dublin City Council and vested in these government appointed special agencies. An Taisce believed that by introducing an SPDA in Irish planning, Fianna Fáil had directly borrowed from the Thatcherite idea of private development agencies by applying to Dublin the UDC model that had been used in the redevelopment of London Docklands during the 1980s. Moreover, there was also acknowledgement that Central
Government viewed docklands in the wider context of the 'internationalisation and liberalisation of the Irish economy' (Georgian Society).

The establishment of CHDDA forced Dublin City Council to reconsider its own modus operandi as it had effectively been excluded from planning in the docklands area. While the Finance Act, 1986 and Urban Renewal Act, 1986 provided tax incentives to encourage development of a commercial nature in Dublin's inner city, by the early 1990s there was a surplus of office space in the city. Consequently private-sector property developers switched to residential developments as Dublin City Council put together an Urban Renewal section to promote Dublin City among young, upwardly mobile people as being a nice place to live.

Plate 9.3 Stencil graffiti in docklands proclaiming the physical transformation of the area

Liam Carroll's Zoë developments was identified by one respondent as 'the main of user urban renewal' (Planning Critic), however, this same respondent was also highly critical of the legacy Zoë has left behind:

'Liam Carroll, he bought a site, crapped all over it and sold his crap to the public, and then moved on to the next site and did the same again. I described it as being a form of 'serial incontinence' (Planning Critic).
9.5 Theorising the Role of Planning

The establishment of CHDDA, brought in its wake tension and animosity between the planners at docklands and those planners working at Dublin City Council. While some respondents expressed anger that this particular area of the city had been hived off to a development agency, An Taisce was less sympathetic to the plight of local authority planners claiming they have since ‘made up for their alienation by going berserk where they could get away with it’ (An Taisce 3).

Moreover, in so far as the theorisation of planning’s role is concerned, members of An Taisce recognised a change in emphasis towards facilitating a more pro-active development agenda at the Department of the Environment over the last fifteen years and this change has, ultimately, been mirrored in planning practice at the local level. As for An Bord Pleanála, An Taisce described ABP as ‘the one steady body in the [planning] process’ (An Taisce 2):

‘An Bord Pleanála cares more about local authority development plans than local authorities do themselves. When An Bord Pleanála overturns a local authority decision, it doesn’t do so because it has its own esoteric beliefs about planning, it does so because, in most cases, the local authority has ignored its own development plan’ (An Taisce 3).

It may not necessarily have always been this way, as suggested by another member of An Taisce whereby only in quite recent times has ABP begun to consider the common good before arriving at decisions:

‘We have found, in recent times, the common good is forming a very definite element in An Bord Pleanála’s decisions. I do think it has shifted its emphasis more towards the common good’ (An Taisce 1).

The Georgian Society also claimed that oftentimes there can be a lack of consistency in the decisions of the board however, this point was refuted by the Planning Journalist who steadfastly believed ABP was beyond political influence and defended its position as an independent body in the planning system by declaring ABP to have ‘the best clutch of planners in Ireland’ (Planning Journalist).
While there was broad recognition among the respondents of a schism among planners as to what the common good is, and how it can be best served, one member of An Taisce observed that discordant ideologies within and between local authorities can be more a reflection on the personnel in charge, at management level, of local authorities:

'The last manager in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown was very much pro the developer, pro the entrepreneur. Now, the present manager who has come in has changed the atmosphere very, very much and he has a much more balanced view particularly in the Sandyford area which is tending towards high rise' (An Taisce 1).

9.6 Impact on Local Authority Planning

It was unanimously agreed that local-authority planning departments in the 1980s were grossly under resourced and very little focus was placed on forward planning. In addition, because of the lack of development activity, planning was not plan-led and instead adopted an ad hoc approach:

'The shortcoming in the '80s was that we had a lack of strategic planning and that planning was effectively developer-led' (An Taisce 3).

In so far as the practice of Irish planning is concerned, only An Taisce were of the opinion that planning practice has not, in fact changed. An Taisce's viewpoint was that planning is a laissez faire, developer-led system, characterised by a deliberately planned model of American-type urban sprawl which accommodates land owners. For the remaining respondents, there has indeed been a very recognisable shift in planning practice over the last twenty-five years, pointing out that the Central Government adopted neo-liberal orthodoxy imbued planning with a new modus operandi.

As international cities compete with each other for international finance and investment, all of the respondents agreed that Irish planning is following, and has reflected, international trends, however, An Taisce was highly critical of the reorganisation of local government in 1994 claiming that, instead of resulting in each of the four Dublin authorities working together to promote Dublin (city and county), it has actually created entrepreneurial competition between the four authorities desperate to attract development that brought international capital, employment and a rates base as and this has only served to the detriment of the needs of the community. Indeed, it was pointed out by
the Planning Journalist that Dublin City Council has a department called Research and International Relations that's pushing the branding of Dublin city. In that regard, DCC can be viewed as the archetypal entrepreneurial city.

In terms of Dublin being considered a global city, An Taisce vehemently disagreed with this view of Dublin stating that there is just 'an ordinariness about Dublin that doesn't rank with the great cities' (An Taisce 1). Moreover, An Taisce also criticised successive Fianna Fáil governments for their economic development policies for being economically unsustainable in meeting only the short-term interests of individuals, land owners, and developers.

In so far as some local authorities and ABP vary (quite considerably) in their interpretation of development plans, An Taisce also held the view that Dublin City Council was the biggest culprit in ignoring the provisions of its own development plan so as to facilitate development at any cost:

'In Dublin City they differ dramatically. Dublin City is working to an agenda that is not in the public interest, not in the interest of good planning. There doesn't seem to be a willingness to abide by the plan whereas the Bord will, generally, have a better view on what is proper planning' (An Taisce 2).

9.7 Consequences for Local Authority Planning

All of the respondents stated their certainty that planners are subject to pressure to recommend a grant for permission. An Taisce argued that managers, motivated by the rates base secured against a major retail development for example, were putting pressure on planners and therefore responsible for steering planning in a more facilitative, entrepreneurial direction:

'If it's a big retail development where there's going to be rates revenue for the council, the manager will be in at meetings. There's enormous pressure then to grant major planning applications. Planners are absolutely in an unenviable position. Where the manager has met the developer, indicated that permission is to be granted, all the planner can do is try and just deal with service issues and traffic' (An Taisce 3).

By the same token however, An Taisce also criticised local-authority planners for being 'too tame' (An Taisce 3) in not speaking out against the pressures they are subject to.
Plate 9.4 Clarence Hotel, Temple Bar

Plate 9.5 Norman Foster's impression of the new Clarence Hotel

Despite provisions in the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 which conferred local authorities as development agencies, considerations of resources — namely a lack of staff and scarcity of finance — it was suggested that Central Government really ‘didn’t want local government to have any power; they want to be able to determine things centrally’ (Planning Journalist). In an effort, therefore, to ensure that local authorities adhere to the centrally-imposed neoliberal agenda, local authorities were drip-fed subventions from the Exchequer:

‘If the money came, as it used to, from [domestic] rates on all the properties then there would be far greater independence in local authority operations, but the inclination of government here has been, and still remains, centralisation’ (An Taisce 1).

Increasingly then, local authorities came to rely on development contributions for day-to-day running costs as developers became ever more powerful figures in Irish planning as the development sector was most directly involved in the boom being the second largest employer in the State after the public sector. An Taisce and the Georgian Society also recognised that without developers there would have been no investment in the built environment. Despite the developers’ elevated status in planning, TPRA was still recognised as an important component of the planning system. Indeed, citing the example of the Ballsbridge development, one respondent viewed it as the citizen’s only defence in cases where local authorities are ‘in league with a developer’ (Planning Journalist). This view was also shared by An Taisce:

‘Ballsbridge had nothing to do with good planning or proper planning. It was totally contrary to everything in the development plan’ (An Taisce 2).

TPRA, though, wasn’t appreciated by all respondents as one member of An Taisce downplayed the significance and import of TPRA in Irish planning:

‘We don’t really have a third party appeals system in Ireland. By going to An Bord Pleanála you are simply getting the level of adjudication on a planning application that you would get as a matter of routine in other progressive European jurisdictions. If you want to get your own local development plan seriously addressed in relation to a planning application you can forget about having any confidence in your local planning office, you can only rely on An Bord Pleanála to do that’ (An Taisce 3).

55 See Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 Section 77 (1) which sets out the conditions by which local authorities may act as development agencies.
9.8 Realisation for Planning

IAPs came in to being about ten years after the introduction of the SPDA at Docklands. Based on the principle of community participation and involvement, working with existing communities, strengthening the quality of an existing area, identifying development opportunities and coming up with sensible land use proposals, the Georgian Society claimed traditional planners use IAPs as a way of returning to a plan-led approach to development and although An Taisce admitted to initially being very supportive of the adoption of IAPs in established built-up areas, in more recent years this support has waned as the more development-led consensus planners are also using the local area approach to get what they want in:

'We now have a situation where the local area process has been hijacked by developers56 and we've had cases where the local area planning process is really being used as developer-led zoning so that has undermined the whole credibility of the whole local area planning process' (An Taisce 3).

The introduction of the Adamstown SDZ in 2001 was criticised by An Taisce was. This criticism was based on what An Taisce viewed as Adamstown's contribution to development which is that of car-based urban sprawl leaving 'a disastrous legacy for the next generation' (An Taisce 3).

Looking at the work of ABP, all of the respondents acknowledged that ABP had difficulties in getting planners at the height of the boom. Given the Bord was inundated by appeals and that there was a statutory requirement to decide appeals within 18 weeks, the Bord was forced to employ freelance planning inspectors and private planning consultancies, on short-term contracts, to help respond to the raft of appeals, however, and citing the work of Naomi Klein, one member of An Taisce viewed this development as a 'tentative measure towards the privatisation of planning in Ireland' (An Taisce 3). This view though was not shared by the Georgian Society or by the Planning Journalist who, instead, accepted that what ABP had done was a pragmatic approach to a unique situation and the only 'way of getting the job done' (Georgian Society).

9.9 Conclusion

This chapter reviews the recognition of a reorientation of Irish urban planning under a neoliberal agenda by three members of An Taisce, the Georgian Society President and a renowned planning journalist, who has published extensively on Dublin's built environment. First, it explored public perceptions, participation and interest generally in Irish urban planning. It also examined the broad ideological background of Irish politics and how political ideologies have infused the planning system. It explored how the neoliberal agenda has been reflected in Irish planning. It also examined the theoretical approach to planning and explored whether two discordant ideologies exist in local authority planning. It also examined the philosophy guiding planning at An Bord Pleanála. The chapter examined the shift towards more facilitative modes of operation and looked at ABP's role as an unbiased arbiter in the planning system. The chapter looked at pressure that planners are subjected to, and finally, it examined the effects of changes in planning in terms of LAP and IAP planning by local authorities and SDZs. It also examines the implications of ABP contracting freelance planning inspectors and private-planning consultants at the height of the boom.

A number of themes emerged from this chapter: first, all of the respondents agreed that the public look upon planning with suspicion and scepticism, believing the revelations from the Tribunal of Inquiry as having tainted public opinions vis-à-vis planning. Moreover, the Planning Journalist stated that despite such revelations, corruption is still endemic in Irish urban planning. Moreover, it was widely held that NIMBYism exists in Irish planning, thus when the public does involve itself with planning it is usually as a reaction to something that affects them directly or impinges on their daily life.

Second, all of the respondents shared in the belief that Fianna Fáil is the developers' party and as such have skewed planning policy in favour of private-sector development interests.

Third, An Taisce and the Planning Journalist recognised the Dublin Crisis Conference as being influential in focusing minds and raising awareness of the deteriorating fabric of Dublin City in the 1980s. Charles Haughey's re-election as Taoiseach in 1987 was viewed as critical in redefining the role of the State. From a planning point of view, the subsequent establishment of CHDDA,
a special development agency exempted from appeal to ABP by Section 25 protection, represented a new turn for urban planning in Ireland. For all of the respondents, CHDDA was established because of Central Government’s failure to believe in Dublin City Council to realise renewal in the Docklands area of Dublin’s inner city. Moreover, An Taisce saw the imposition of an SPDA in Irish planning as having been directly borrowed from the Thatcherite UDC model which was already in use in the redevelopment of London Docklands. For local authorities, CHDDA meant that they would have to change and become more facilitative of development otherwise more areas of the city would be vested in special development agencies.

Fourth, An Taisce recognised radical change in urban planning over the last 25 years where the local authority has become much more pro-active in facilitating development. Moreover, all of the respondents recognised the existence of two discordant ideologies in local-authority planning. An Taisce firmly believed that, depending on the manager’s approach to planning, he/she can be responsible for the discordant ideology in local authority planning espousing (or not) a pro-development agenda. The managerial change-over at Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council was given as an example of how different managers can bring a different ideology to local-authority planning. In so far as ABP is concerned however, the respondents considered the Bord to be the only steady body in the planning process with the ‘best clutch of planners’ (Planning Journalist) although An Taisce claimed it has only been in quite recent years that ABP has begun to consider the common good.

Fifth, although An Taisce did not consider that urban planning practice has changed in the last 25 years, considering it to be a laissez-faire, developer-led system characterised by a deliberately planned model of American-type urban sprawl, this was not shared by the Georgian Society or by the Planning Journalist who felt that planning practice is indeed a reflection of Central government’s adoption of a neoliberal orthodoxy. It was also widely acknowledged that the four Dublin authorities are competing; however, such competition has also resulted in four different planning systems. Each local authority is competing for a rates base, and it was considered that each manager is in fact embracing an entrepreneurial agenda. An Taisce stated that local authorities and ABP vary in the interpretation of development plans and identified Dublin City Council in particular for steering away from the provisions of its own plan.
Sixth, all of the respondents concurred that planners are subject to pressure. An Taisce believed that local-authority managers, driven by trying to secure a rates base, were culpable of putting pressure on planners to recommend the grant of permission for certain developments, and in so doing, were also responsible for steering planning in a more facilitative, entrepreneurial manner. Moreover, in so far as local authority funding goes, there was a view that Central Government do not want local authorities to have any powers, they want to be able to determine things centrally thus, it was considered that the planning system is geared towards development levies and private-sector delivery of services. Given the dearth of local-authority funding, planning must facilitate private-sector development as developers became ever more powerful figures in Irish planning.

Finally, although the Georgian Society claimed traditional planners use IAPs as a way of returning to a plan-led approach to development An Taisce was critical of IAPs claiming that they had been hijacked by developers and therefore amounted to nothing more than developer-led zonings. An Taisce was also critical of the SDZ model of development believing that it was contributing to car-based urban sprawl. With An Bord Pleanála having to contract freelance inspectors and private planning consultants during the boom, all of the respondents acknowledged this to be a pragmatic response towards dealing with the high volume of appeals. In so far as this could be construed as a precursor to the privatisation of planning in Ireland, the Georgian Society and the Planning Journalist scoffed at the idea believing it to be the only 'way of getting the job done' (Georgian Society), however, An Taisce did consider this a tentative measure toward privatising urban planning in Ireland and expressed anger at ABP for having to contract free lance inspectors.
PART IV: CONCLUSION
PART IV: CONCLUSION

Chapter 10

10.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to examine the impact of neo-liberalism on the theorisation of Irish urban planning and the extent to which this is reflected in the operation of planning in Dublin from the late 1980s to the present. The research programme was built upon a conceptual framework; a thorough and in-depth literature study of a rich corpus of national and international material that mirrored specific areas reflecting the research aims was conducted in order to achieve the stated aims (chapter 5) of the research. The methodological approach was based on the use of qualitative methods and comprised interview studies. The interviews were based on thematic interview schedules with questions deriving from the literature. The use of interviews was considered a useful instrument in exploring perceptions and opinions of the changing role of Irish urban planning under a neoliberal agenda among a purposive sample of key informants with different types of knowledge and experience of Irish urban planning thereby generating a multi-perspective outlook to the subject. The research programme also involved data analysis and discussion. This concluding chapter therefore, completes the research by offering a theoretical-empirical overview of all stages of the research. It is hoped this research will contribute to the understanding of the neoliberal infusion in Irish urban planning since 1986 and the extent to which the operation of Irish urban planning is a reflection of such an ideological shift and how the demands of the private sector are being overtly facilitated over the ‘common good’. The aim of this concluding chapter is not to summarise the content of the foregoing chapters but to review each stage of the research, from methodological orientations to an assessment of the theorisation of practice of urban planning in such a way as to marry the empirical findings to a reformulation of the critical theory.

10.2 Sources and Methods

The two-part research question – to what extent has the neoliberal agenda infused Irish urban planning through policy and formal legislation, and to what degree is the operation of Irish urban planning a reflection of an
ideological shift in the theorisation of planning's role since 1986 – contained a number of interrelated objectives consistent with the research aims, namely:

- To investigate the implications of government-led changes in the role of the State since the late 1980s
- To examine the operation of Irish urban planning in Dublin's inner city from the 1980s to 2000
- To examine the operation of planning since 2000 in the wake of the Fianna Fáil-engineered building boom
- To determine whether the ideology guiding An Bord Pleanála is shaped by executive appointments to the adjudicating board of ABP

The basic point of departure grew out of conclusions from a previous study, undertaken for an undergraduate thesis in 2004 of urban planning in Donabate which investigated the response to population growth (by Fingal County Council Planning Department) in the provision of services and general infrastructure for the locale. The study in Donabate found it to be lacking many essential services, such as shops, banks, there was overcrowding in the primary school and no secondary school, while general infrastructure such as the provision of public transport, inadequacy of the ESB substation and the water supply (which is often turned off) were not sufficient to cater for the existing population, which stood at 4,320 in 2002, never mind the future projected population of between 11,000 and 14,000 people by 2015. This then raised the question: is Irish planning plan-led or developer-led?

In order to develop greater insight into the operation of Irish urban planning, the findings of the Donabate study revealed a need for further comprehensive, in-depth research of the urban planning system. This research therefore, explores change in urban planning philosophy since 1986 through examination of the planning code enshrined through Planning and Development Acts and to what extent the operation of urban planning in Dublin is a reflection of an ideological shift in the theorisation of planning's role.

The research explored the relations between planning and capital in a global context through examining of the emergence of the 'entrepreneurial city' during the 1980s; by exploring how the 'city' under capitalism assumes a commodity form for profit making and placing western capitalist cities in the
context the global economic crises and the subsequent and gradual decline of heavy manufacturing and port-related activities of the late 1970s, the research charted the rise of the New Right neoliberalism of Thatcher and Reagan and the concurrent shift from local government to local governance whereby local authorities were steered away from welfare and service provision towards encouraging and fostering local economic growth and economic development. Through place promotion and city marketing activities cities became entrepreneurial competitors for investment and employment opportunities as they sought to reposition themselves on the global stage.

These concerns subsequently directed attention to the role of urban planning and the manner in which it has become a component of the entrepreneurial city challenging traditional planning working for the 'common good'. This then led to an examination of the adoption of the neoliberal agenda at the national level over recent decades by successive Fianna Fáil governments as processes of economic restructuring unfolded globally. It was equally important to attempt a simultaneous exploration of how political-economic ideologies were responded to at the local level by examining the operation of urban planning in Dublin (city and county). The choice of Dublin as a case study was considered appropriate for a number of other reasons:

- The Tribunal of Inquiry (into Certain Planning Matters & Payments) was the focus of great attention creating a frenzy in the media and leaving the public with a sense of disillusionment as to which master planning served
- As the capital city, Dublin is the engine for economic growth and capital investment in the state
- During the boom Dublin experienced and underwent the greatest physical change of any town or city in Ireland
- Prior to 1994, Dublin had two councils – the City Council and the County Council – however, following the Local Government (Dublin) Act, 1993 the county was divided into three administrative counties, plus the extant City Council, each with their own planning department to regulate and control development in their own administrative area.

It was in this context that the necessity to develop a theoretical-empirical analysis of Irish urban planning under a neoliberal agenda came into view. As the work progressed, the core methodological principles were elaborated and
applied. This involved the melding of theory with practical investigation and action in the field.

These steps reflect features of the grounded method, which elicits results grounded in the empirical world, with the aim of generating theory drawn from the gathered data and referring it back to a broader set of issues and processes within a theoretical framework of understanding.

10.3 Critical Theory

Chapter one introduced the theoretical framework and in so doing, introduced, in conceptual terms, the field of investigation. The decline and shutting down of heavy manufacturing and port-related activities resulted in western industrial (inner) cities being characterised by landscapes scarred by swathes of dereliction and dilapidation. Castells (1983), Feagin (1983), Harvey (1999; 2001) and Philo & Kearns (1993) argue that cities under capitalism are designed and shaped according to capitalist criteria for private profit making, so it is that spaces within cities are to be recast and recreated according to such capitalist imperatives. In an attempt, therefore, to contain the demise of their city, policy makers, adopted new institutional structures of urban governance to create a new urban environment capable of competing internationally for economic growth since.

Harvey (1989a) considers the emergence of the New Right neoliberalism, characterised by the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in the UK and Ronald Reagan as President in the USA, as representing the shift towards entrepreneurial advanced capitalism. Advocating tight central government restrictions on the powers and resources of local government, local authorities were steered away from their traditional (Keynesian) concern with welfare-related issues and state provision to more outward orientated entrepreneurial policies designed to foster and encourage local growth and economic development, and thus emerged the 'entrepreneurial city'. The target of this entrepreneurial strategy was typically the inner city, especially de-industrialised, derelict and decayed sites, in an attempt to reverse the economic fortunes of an area by promoting regeneration and leveraging private-sector investment in the area. Brenner (2005, 198) therefore considers entrepreneurialism as having 'underpinned the increasing neoliberalisation of urban politics' as urban regions become 'products' to be repackaged as
attractive and progressive business locations, boasting a high quality of life and a progressive, entrepreneurial attitude. Moreover, discourses of entrepreneurialism argue that urban governments must pursue specific strategies designed to secure and promote the competitive advantage of the city relative to other cities. In that regard, cities act as entrepreneurial competitors competing for inward investment and employment by offering increasingly attractive financial packages of low corporate taxation and promising low workers wages, as well as presenting the city as a dynamic place to live.

The entrepreneurial city is 'couched in the prevailing languages of New Right capitalism' (Philo and Kearns, 1993, 18); the city is a package of economic opportunity. Ashworth & Voogd (1994), Harvey (1989a, 1989b), Hubbard (1998), Hubbard and Hall (1998), Loftman and Nevin (1998) and Oatley (1998) contend that place promotion and marketing manifest new relationships between the public and private sectors. Urban planning has become a component of the entrepreneurial city as the built environment is being increasingly recast as a marker of distinction for attracting private investment and tourism. The establishment of Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) in the UK – which effectively marginalised the role of local-authority planning and alienated local-authority planners – left local governments with little choice but to adopt more entrepreneurial practices.

10.4 Government-led Changes in the Role of the State

The application of the broad theoretical framework and international academic literature is set in the Irish context in chapter two which offers an overview of the shifting political-economy in the Republic of Ireland by placing the politics governing country in the context of the changing global world order of the 1980s.

The 1980s have been described variously as one of the toughest decades of the twentieth century for Ireland; the country teetered on the edge of bankruptcy, unemployment stood at 17 per cent by 1986 and emigration was reaching 45,000 persons per year. Successive Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael-Labour coalition governments tried unsuccessfully to deal with Ireland's serious economic crisis. Fine Gael tried to deal with the crisis by committing itself to public spending cuts however the scale of Fine Gael's cut-backs cost them the
election in 1987. Fianna Fáil prevailed in the general election of 1987 and Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, recognising and accepting that Keynesian economic ideas had declined, intensified the austerity measures begun under the previous government. To secure industrial quiescence, Fianna Fáil forged a tripartite alliance between the government, employers and the unions (in the Programme for National Recovery) whereby all parties agreed to a series of measures to control government spending and rescue the economy, including wages restraint, public spending cuts and public sector redundancies, and a reduction in taxes, the three core principles of neoliberalism. The Programme for National Recovery also marked a radical change in government policy pointing to the emergence of a neoliberal consensus on future economic policy; for example, in 1991 the first privatisation of a State Owned Enterprise, Cómhlucht Síuicre Éireann (Greencore), took place.

Consensus with the social partners paved the way for a period of sustained economic growth – the Celtic Tiger – in the mid-1990s. Citing an English-speaking workforce, wage restraint and no threat of militant unionism, plus highly subsidised and generous grants, low corporate taxation rates and a free enterprise oriented government (meaning minimum interference in the market) as attractions to Ireland, multinational subsidiaries were invited to relocate regional head quarters and factories to Ireland by the Industrial Development Agency (IDA).

Fianna Fáil had been in a coalition government throughout most of the 1990s and into the new millennium with the Progressive Democrats (PDs), a party which English (2001, 317) states, ‘advocated the rationalisation and reform of the State apparatus, together with the limiting of the economic role of the State’. During this time, the Fianna Fáil-PD coalition was characterised by the lowering of taxes, light regulation and privatisation.

In so far as the theorisation of Irish urban planning is concerned, Knox and Cullen (1981, 184) consider planning an instrument of the state and therefore a ‘hybrid creature dedicated on the one hand to humanistic reform, but charged on the other with management of urban land and services according to a particular mode of production’. The Irish planning system is a reflection of the ‘political culture of the time’ (Property Developer 5) and Fianna Fáil – having been in almost continuous power since 1987 (with the exception of a three year hiatus when the ‘Rainbow Coalition’ of Fine Gael, Labour and
Democratic Left were in power) – espoused a free-market, developer-led type development and infused Irish urban planning with a neoliberal ethos by empowering the private sector. Indeed, Fianna Fáil has historically had a close relationship with the development sector and there exists a symbiotic relationship between both parties. Given that seven of the previous ten Ministers for the Environment have been affiliated to Fianna Fáil, the free enterprise, pro-development ethos of Fianna Fáil has been reflected in planning legislation particularly from the 1990s.

At the local level of Irish government, the composition of local-authority council chambers has also had a bearing on planning: when the chamber is dominated by Fianna Fáil (and Fine Gael) it is pro-development, however, when Labour are in the majority, there is a very conservative, anti-development approach to planning. During the boom however, Fianna Fáil typically dominated local politics, thus, at both central and local levels, private-sector property developers had great political support. Moreover, given the clientelist nature of Irish politics the objectives of proper and sustainable planning are often stymied by local political 'interference'.

10.5 Irish Urban Planning: 1980s to 2000

Transformation in Irish policy at Central Government was prompted by the urgent need to address Dublin’s inner during the 1980s which was characterised by a façade of inner city dereliction and inner city depopulation as traditional heavy manufacturing operations closed. For those (working-class) individuals and families who remained in the inner city however, unemployment was endemic and reliance on social security was widespread. During this time, there was a growing awareness that the fabric of the historic core of the city was deteriorating; the Dublin Crisis Conference in February 1986 focused minds and raised awareness of the problems in the inner city which hitherto had not been prevalent among policy makers. By May and June respectively, the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government introduced a package of incentives through the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 and Finance Act, 1986 to encourage renewal in designated areas of the city. Brudell et al. (2004), however, consider these Acts as marking the beginning of a closer cooperation with the private sector thereby ushering in a new era of urban politics.
Designated Areas (for regeneration and redevelopment) were introduced in the inner city through the Urban Renewal Act, 1986 however the Chief Planning Officer at Dublin Corporation had not been consulted as to where the boundaries were to be drawn. Indeed, the Chief Planning Officer was informed by the Secretary at the Department of the Environment that this was not his business. This response is illustrative of the manner in which the Department of the Environment and management at local government level have long colluded in all matters related to planning in the city:

'I remember the planning Officer at the time, Gay McCarron, had asked to be consulted on where these boundaries were to be drawn and he was told "It's not your business, we'll decide that." He got brushed to one side. The managers stuck their nose in, so that was the beginning of something. The people in the Custom House, the top dogs down there, were colluding with managers to draw the boundaries and there was obviously a political influence' (Former Planning Officer 1).

Local-authority managers are appointed by the Public Appointments Service, a body consisting of the Ceann Comhairle of the Dáil and the Secretaries General to the Government and the Department of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The appointment of the manager however, can be criticised on the grounds that there is no democratic input into the selection of a manager and that given the composition of the appointment body, the manager can viewed as a political servant to Central Government.

When Fianna Fáil regained power in 1987 it considered local-authority planning to be too bureaucratic and inflexible to be able to tackle the scale of Dublin's problem. Charles Haughey was critical in redefining the role of the State and he had both the ruthlessness and the drive to implement change by overseeing the introduction of a Special Purpose Development Authority (SPDA) – representative of a Thatcherite ideological shift in planning and subsequently a new turn for urban planning in Ireland – to Irish urban planning at a designated site in the Custom House Docks:

'The planning system is a good regulatory system as opposed to development system. The difficulty with the regulatory planning system for major developments is the type of input from all and sundry, which is part of a democracy, but it does mean that so much input can slow down the whole process' (FG, DCC).

Despite Dublin City Council having a community-focused plan for the regeneration of Custom House Docks which included the provision of more
social housing and social facilities, the Custom House Docks Development Authority (CHDDA) was set-up as a development agency and vested with planning powers. Drawing upon the experience of the Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) in Britain, most notably in London Docklands, CHDDA followed a master plan approach; CHDDA expedited development at docklands and gave assurances to developers and investors through by-passing Dublin City Council Planning Department for planning/development permission. Bissett (2008) recognises the establishment of CHDDA as the moment when the government took on the institutional dimension of the entrepreneurial city. Numerous criticisms have been levelled at CHDDA including the imposition of a plan on the area which involved breaking up and relocating the indigenous local community, who were viewed as part of the problem by CHDDA, to the periphery so as to enable docklands to be rebranded to attract investment and a new professional, middle-class population. Moreover, the establishment of CHDDA resulted in the marginalisation of local-authority planning and alienation of local-authority planners as the public sector had been excluded from (re)development in this part of the city. Inevitably tensions developed between local-authority planners and those planners working in docklands.

The imposition of an SPDA in Irish planning precipitated a change in planning philosophy. Accordingly, Dublin City Council shifted from a socially orientated and public-sector-delivery focus to embrace this new philosophy as City Manager, John FitzGerald, championed this new orthodoxy setting up a pro-development Inner City Development Team (ICDT) to (overtly) facilitate private development by using the sale of corporation-owned sites in the inner city to broker development deals with private-sector developers. For MacLaran and Williams (2003), this was evidence of Dublin City Council beginning to align itself with the prevailing neoliberal ideology:

‘Dublin City Council was entrenched with a particular political viewpoint which would have been a lot more socially orientated and a lot more public-sector-delivery focused, however, a decision was taken by Central Government that this was going to be done differently’ (Private-Sector Planner 2).

Healey (1997) has shown that adversarial relationships often exist between planners and those with a vested interest in the built environment; for example, traditionally planners have been viewed as being suspicious of developers’ profit motivations in recasting the built environment, however, in seeking renewed relevance in the planning system, planners at Dublin City
Council recognised the need for a major reorientation of planning towards an entrepreneurial approach facilitative of private capital, not necessarily the common good, otherwise more areas of the city would be vested in special development vehicles:

'I know that they were pissed-off. I wasn't around, I was in England at the time it was set-up but I know, with the individuals I know at a very senior level at DCC, that they remain pissed-off' (Property Developer 5).

The evolution of planning at Dublin City Council towards a more facilitative, entrepreneurial ethos embodying a neoliberal orthodoxy can be charted through the redevelopment of Temple Bar, Smithfield and the Liberties during the 1990s; Temple Bar Area Renewal and Development Act, 1991 offered Dublin City Council the opportunity to work in partnership with Temple Bar Properties Ltd, the company set up to manage renewal in Temple Bar. In contrast with the operation of planning at docklands, planning control remained with Dublin City Council. The establishment, however, of Temple Bar Properties Ltd, a second company set up to act as development agency in the area, resulted in little attention being paid to Dublin City Council's Action Plan for the Temple Bar as Temple Bar Renewal Ltd marginalised local authority planners from the system once again. By 1996, Dublin City Council turned its attentions to Smithfield for the Historic Area Rejuvenation Project (HARP). In contrast to Temple Bar, full planning control remained with the City Council however, in engaging public-private partnerships and other vested interests in the regeneration of Smithfield, Bissett (2008) contends that only superficially did HARP encapsulate a pluralistic participative methodology. Finally, the Liberties was designated for IAP renewal in 1998. Dublin City Council proposed a Steering Group which would direct implementation of the IAP in the area however, the Steering Group was later (inexplicably) replaced by a Monitoring Committee whose role and authority was undefined. Dublin City Council meanwhile assumed the role of facilitator to private-sector development granting permission after permission for developments in breach of the IAP for the area thus Bartley (2007, 40) states IAPs were only embraced by 'active entrepreneurial agents'.

Following attempts at local government reform in the 1990s, Better Local Government (1996) introduced Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) to enhance the role of councillors in policy and to foster a higher degree of local participation
and community input into the delivery of local-authority policies, functions and services, however, the balance of power between executive and reserved functions has not changed and SPCs are in fact driving a neoliberal agenda; SPCs actually detract from the direct involvement or influence of directly elected people as representatives in the deliberative process, and transfers this power and influence to others whose accountability to the public is ambiguous. Moreover, BLG has facilitated an entrepreneurial ethos in planning by abolishing the post of local-authority Planning Officer replacing it instead by a Director of Services, a position which does not necessarily have to be filled by a planner, unlike other head functions at local government:

‘Every head of function under Better Local Government is held by a professional in that function, so the person in charge of computer services is a computer specialist, the person in charge of water services is an engineering specialist, the person in charge of personnel is a personnel specialist and in every functional area, the head is experienced and more likely than not, qualified in the area, so the head of architecture and building would be an architect, and the head of librarianship would be a librarian and it works in every single function case except for planning (Academic Planner 3).

The introduction of Integrated Area Plans (IAPs) under the Urban Renewal Act, 1998 represented a complex transition for local-authority planners from hating SPDAs in the planning system to using a variant thereof through micro-area planning. It has been argued that IAPs give planners a renewed sense of relevance in the planning system and be used in such a way as to demonstrate that local-authority planners can just as efficiently and effectively redevelop parts of the city as those planners employed at DDDA, IAPs planning objectives have often been distorted by local councillor involvement. Moreover, it has been shown by Brudell et al. (2004) that IAPs have been hijacked by developers and therefore amount to nothing more than developer-led zonings:

‘We now have a situation where the local area process has been hijacked by developers and we’ve had cases where the local area planning process is really being used as developer-led zoning so that has undermined the whole credibility of the whole local area planning process’ (An Taisce 3).

10.6 Irish Urban Planning since 2000

Academics and critics of the political economy widely acknowledge that the Celtic Tiger only lasted for approximately seven years, from 1994 until 2001. Fianna Fáil however, viewed the Celtic Tiger as an 'unstoppable locomotive of
wealth' (Brawn, 2009, 47), thus under the leadership of Bertie Ahern, Fianna Fáil engineered a second boom, where one kind of growth was replaced by another:

'The government decided that it would stay prosperous by going for what the National Competitive Council would later call 'growth derived from asset price inflation, fuelled by a combination of low interest rates, reckless lending and speculation' (O'Toole, 2009, 22).

Indeed, much of the economic miracle of the last decade was due to the boom in construction which was driven by a 'tight alliance between Fianna Fáil and the big builders' (Allen, 2009, 48). The work of Pauline McGuirk is foundational in charting the shift in planning philosophy and practice during the 1990s however, to date few studies have documented shifts in planning theory and practice since the turn of the new millennium. Indeed, four new Planning and Development Acts have been introduced since 2000 beginning with the Planning and Development Act, 2000. The other Acts include the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002, the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006 and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010.

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 consolidated and amended all the previous Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts from 1963. In addition, it introduced Strategic Development Zones (SDZs) and Part V to the planning code. Fox-Rogers et al. (2011) however, consider these additions as supporting the interests of development capital; Part IX of the 2000 Act empowered Central Government to designate sites for SDZs. Upon designation, local authorities were obliged to prepare a draft development scheme for the SDZ thereby turning local authorities into development agencies. Moreover, SDZs also facilitated pre-planning discussions between developers, local-authority planners and senior management. Once approved by council, SDZ planning schemes cannot be appealed to ABP. Grist (2008) considers SDZs as espousing a pro-development planning environment.

Part V of the 2000 Act stipulated that developers must give 20 per cent of development land towards the provision of social and affordable housing in an attempt to deal with the chronic shortage of housing in the State as well as the ghettoisation of housing in Ireland:
'A turning point really came in the late '90s/2000s with the advent of Part V. It gave a more sort of community aspect to planning rather than just building acres upon acres of housing' (Green, DLR).

Part V though, was contested by the development industry on the grounds that it would discourage prospective buyers from investing in property in premium sites. Following intense lobbying by the development industry – and given the historically close links between the development industry and Fianna Fáil – Part V was amended in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2002 which permitted developers to either provide an alternative site for social and affordable housing or give a payment to the local authority in lieu which can then provide social and affordable housing:

'Mr. Dempsey, who as Minister for the Environment, was at a planning conference in Kilkenny and he said, over his dead body would he allow the requirement of twenty per cent to be changed into any other sort of agreement. About six months later, that was changed' (Former Planning Officer 1).

'We're dependent on Part V for public housing but Part V was always doomed to failure and I think now we're reaping a sorry harvest for it. It was diluted and changed, not from any public lobbying but from private lobbying by the developers' (SF, DCC).

In 2006, the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act shifted the role of ABP from a 'decision-maker of proposed development to a facilitator of strategic infrastructure development' (Grist, 2008, 7). The Act also set out 28 classes of development which may be considered Strategic Infrastructure under the headings of energy, transport, and environmental infrastructure. Moreover, the 2006 Act permitted planning applications (considered to be of strategic importance to the State) to by-pass local-authority planning level adjudication. The notion of planning for the 'common good' was also replaced by that of the ill-defined planning in the 'national interest' thereby illustrating an inherent bias of recent change in planning towards favouring private capital as the statutory right of third-party appellants was not given an equal footing to those of first-party private-sector development interests.

The emergence of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) at the turn of the century marked the 'manifestation of the neo-liberal transformation of the role of the state' (Hearne, 2006, 1) and have been completed principally in the transport sector, education, regeneration of social-housing estates and waste management. Brudell et al., (2004), Drudy & Punch (2005), Hearne (2006),
Kelly & MacLaran (2004) and McGuirk & MacLaran (2001) identify Dublin City Council as an enthusiastic follower of the PPP model. Indeed, Dublin City Council, more than any other local authority, has promoted the use of PPPs in local-authority housing regeneration, for example the Fatima Mansions Flat regeneration scheme. PPPs are indicative of DCC’s deepening realignment towards more neo-liberal planning. A considerable level of opposition has grown, particularly among local communities, against PPPs with claims that the private sector will only adopt projects involving public services and infrastructure that augment shareholders returns rather than engaging in projects that meet the long-term needs of society (Hearne, 2006; 2012). Moreover, it is widely regarded that some areas of the city were deliberately allowed to rot and fester enabling the relocation the residents elsewhere and facilitating the sale of public land to the private sector:

‘The biggest disservice that’s happened to communities in my political lifetime in this city has happened to the communities of St. Michael's and O'Devaney Gardens. People have been absolutely abandoned to absolute wasteland and living in fear in their own communities because of ideological decisions made by Fianna Fáil’ (SF, DCC).

10.7 ABP as an Unbiased Arbiter in the Planning Process

Although the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 made provision for the right to third-party appeal to the Minister for Local Government, An Bord Pleanála, the appeals board, was established amid concerns that appeals were being granted on spurious grounds through the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976. This ‘extraordinarily democratic provision’ (MacLaran, 1993, 92) in planning legislation, however, has been a constant source of constant complaint by individuals and organisations concerned with broader physical and social issues; An Taisce consider ABP to generally favour private-sector development interests. By the same token, developers consider TPRA to be open to abuse ‘by unscrupulous individuals for the purpose of extorting money’ (McDonald, 2000, 327) and have demanded its abolition arguing that it occasions considerable delays to development and is therefore, a costly and unnecessary obstacle to be overcome in their pursuit of profit making:

‘A project can be delayed, having had a decision made on it, can thereafter be delayed for months and years and we are, first-hand, witnessing situations where decisions by
the Board have been delayed for years because of third-party appeals' (Property Developer 3A).

An Bord Pleanála's mission statement reads as follows: "To play our part as an independent national body in an impartial, efficient and open manner, to ensure that physical development and major infrastructure projects in Ireland respect the principles of sustainable development, including the protection of the environment"\(^{57}\), however, doubts have been cast over the true independence of the Bord; the Planning and Development Act, 2000 provides for the appointment of a Chairperson and other members of the Board. The Chairperson (presently, Dr. Mary Kelly) is appointed by the Government from a list of candidates selected by an independent committee, chaired by the President of the High Court. Nine other members make up the board and are appointed by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government. This has therefore led to the suggestion that the composition of board is crucial in determining whether or not the philosophy guiding planning at the Bord is pro- or anti-development:

'I would always have my own private reservations on how independent An Bord Pleanála is because I think the government of the day can have an impact on it. We call it independent, but deep down you wonder how independent it is' (Lab., DLR).

'We have found, in recent times, the common good is forming a very definite element in An Bord Pleanála's decisions. I do think it has shifted its emphasis more towards the common good' (An Taisce 1).

At the height of the boom, ABP contracted freelance planning inspectors and private planning consultancies to help deal with the raft of appeals within the statutory period of 18 weeks. Instead of being construed as the Bord having succumbed to the neoliberal agenda through privatising in Ireland; rather contracting freelance inspectors and private planning consultancies was a pragmatic response to a unique situation:

'The Board were taking up to a year and a half to come to a decision because they were snowed-in with cases' (Ind., DLR).

Indeed, the very idea of urban planning in Ireland being privatised was described as a 'nasty thought' (Former Planning Officer 2). For its part ABP only

\(^{57}\) [http://www.leanala.ie/](http://www.leanala.ie/)
employed freelance inspectors and private planning consultancies on short-term contracts and maintained control of all inspectors for the duration of said contracts:

'The control was always kept in the Board rather than the control being with the consultants. It was choreographed in a specific way that they were used as foot soldiers but never became more than that. They never had a representation in the inspectorate and they never had a representation in our monthly meetings' (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

10.8 Further Considerations

The neoliberal turn in Ireland in recent decades has resulted in Dublin having to reposition itself on the global stage in an attempt to compete with other international cities for private investment and employment creation. From a planning perspective, urban planning has been following international trends and at the local level, some authorities have been overtly following a neoliberal script about competitive cities and have been seduced by the doctrines of Richard Florida's ideas of the creative city. During the boom, for example, Dublin City Council considered iconic architecture a necessary requisite in an effort to match its ambitions in being viewed as a World City, thus 'starchitects' of the calibre of Santiago Calatrava, Lord Norman Foster, Martha Schwartz and Kevin Roche were actively sought out to leave their mark on the city:

'Iconic architecture became very trendy and we had to have it. Ballsbridge is a case in point, and I know it was refused, but that was all about the icon, and creating this icon for Dublin 4 even though nobody appeared to support it' (ABP Planning Inspector 2).

The division of Dublin County into three new counties following the Local Government (Dublin) Act, 1993 as well as the extant Dublin City Council created four planning authorities in Dublin. As Dublin City strives to reposition itself on the world stage intra-urban competition has developed as each of the four Dublin authorities Dublin compete for investment, employment and a rates base. From a planning point of view, such a competitive culture has therefore resulted in planning practice varying from one local authority to the next with some local authorities deliberately contravening the provisions of their own development plans in order to facilitate private-sector development:
The public-sector is reactive to the private demands. The Seán Dunne proposal, which I was publicly opposed, contravened the City Development Plan: I have to uphold the City Development Plan' (SF, DCC).

'Ballsbridge had nothing to do with good planning or proper planning. It was totally contrary to everything in the development plan' (An Taisce 2).

Dublin City is the archetypal entrepreneurial city however it is not alone in pursuing an entrepreneurial agenda. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown has also embraced entrepreneurial planning:

'We've a massive programme of investment in culture, the arts, and festivals. That's the way we compete because we want to make this a very attractive place to live, work and do business in' (L.A Manager 1).

Irish local government however, is subordinate to the centre which has an in loco parentis relationship with local authorities and since the 1970s local government in Ireland has been 'exposed to a continuous process of quiet decline in respect of its own status, its role in service delivery and local political control' (Stoker, 1991,19). Financial constraints continue to undermine the independence of local government; in 1978, Fianna Fáil abolished the domestic rates taxation, in 1982 agricultural taxation was also abolished, and then in 1997, the Fianna Fáil-PD coalition government abolished water charges. Presently local government finance is derived from rates on commercial properties, Central Government grants (established through the Local Government Act, 1998), motor taxation receipts and charges for the provision of certain services such as refuse collection. Successive governments though haved failed adequately to address the shortfalls in local government finance and until control of local government is ceded by Central Government and the issue of funding addressed, local government in Ireland will continue to be subservient to the centre. Planning should not distort policy objectives in favour of supporting economic objectives however, considering the issue of a paucity of local government finance, local-authorities have become reliant on development levies in recent years. Consequently planners are often subject to pressure to recommend the granting of permission for certain types of development and planning decisions are given which deliberately contravene the development plan as some local-authority managers and Directors of Services direct planners in the exercise of their duties following pre-planning meetings with developers. Within local-authority planning departments therefore there two discordant ideologies exist; this tends to be generational however, and it is (oftentimes) the older, more established practitioners who are...
more au fait with working in partnership with the private-sector. In order not to be sidelined in local-authority planning though, those planners mindful of the common good feel obliged to acquiesce with decisions taken by management, even though these may contradict their own personal beliefs vis-à-vis the role of planning. The manager’s approach to planning therefore determines the extent to which local-authority planning espouses (or not) a pro-development agenda. Indeed, there exist great differences between each of the four planning authorities in Dublin as to how they approach planning. John FitzGerald and John Tierney, in particular, were singled out for their efforts in promoting Dublin City and repositioning it as one of the major cities in Europe, however, the managerial change-over at Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council was cited as an example of how different managers can bring a different ideology to local-authority planning:

‘The last manager in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown was very much pro the developer, pro the entrepreneur. Now, the present manager who has come in has changed the atmosphere very, very much and he has a much more balanced view particularly in the Sandyford area which is tending towards high rise’ (Án Taisce 1).

Two discordant ideologies also exist between the manner in which An Bord Pleanála and some local authorities interpret planning policy; ABP, that last line of assessment on planning matters, is considered to be the only steady body in the planning process with the ‘best clutch of planners’ (Planning Journalist), thus when local authorities deviate from the provisions of their own development plan, the Bord very quickly brings the local authority back to its own plan:

‘There are differences between the four councils. Dublin City Council has had a very clear facilitative policy, entrepreneurial policy. Talking to planners privately, some of the key planners I know are very, very facilitative of development. They do see their key role as facilitating development, they’re quite explicit on that and they get quite annoyed with any notion of opposition’ (Academic Planner 1).

10.9 Recommendations for Irish Urban Planning

This study makes a number of broad contributions to an understanding of the changing role of Irish urban planning under a neoliberal agenda. First, the theoretical exploration of the manner in which cities under capitalism are designed and shaped according to capitalist criteria for private profit making according to the New Right neoliberal orthodoxy of the 1980s involved the
construction of a conceptual framework of enquiry capable of providing a socio-temporal contextualisation of the theorisation of the role of urban planning in Ireland pursued through the shifting political-economy in the Republic of Ireland since 1986 and reflected in the operation of planning in Dublin. Second, the methodological approach was developed to respond to the challenges posed by the research aims and objectives while the analytical framework was devised to handle the full range and richness of detail in the resultant data. The qualitative approach adopted by this research allows for a more thorough examination of perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings of an empirical situation, and offers advantages that cannot be attained through quantitative research. In that regard, the third contribution is the recording of a data set which provides a record of the reality of the neoliberal infusion in the Irish urban planning system in recent decades.

In light of the research findings, the author contends that Irish urban planning must be subject a 14-point plan of (radical) change if it is to be considered truly equitable and not skewed in favour of private-sector development interests:

1. Planning 'in the interests of the common good'\(^{58}\) must remain the principal rationale for planning policy, however, a proper definition of 'common good' is required so that the term is not subject to multiple interpretations
2. Although controversial, reintroduce domestic rates; this will give people a greater sense of 'ownership' at the local authority level while significantly contributing to local authority finances enabling the provision of services and infrastructure that people expect thereby quashing reliance on private-sector development contributions as was the case during the boom
3. Local authorities are to be steered away from development control and become development corporations, as envisaged under the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 so there is less reliance on the private-sector for development
4. Each local authority should have a democratically elected mayor (Cathaoirleach) who would assume the responsibilities of the

\(^{58}\) Planning and Development Act, 1963
manager. This would give the people greater input into who runs their local authority and prevent any political appointees being made at local government level.

5. Planning in Dublin should be subsumed under one body – Dublin Planning Department (An Roinn Pleanála Átha Cliath) – a 12 person body made up of public- and private-sector planners, local politicians and other groups and organisations which would adjudicate planning applications for each of Dublin City, Fingal, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and South Dublin.

6. After local authority development plans have been approved by local authorities they will then be subject to approval by ABP so as to ensure that they are in accordance with Regional Planning Guidelines and the National Spatial Strategy. Councillors can appeal to ABP but within a specified timeframe.

7. Abolish the Department of Transport and establish a new Department of Economic, Environmental and Physical Planning (DEEPP) which will oversee and set policy for a more joined up planning system in Ireland.

8. As an independent body in the planning system, ABP must be given powers to appeal government policy in cases where it is considered the principles of sustainable development and the common good are skewed in favour of private sector interests.

9. Change appointment procedures at ABP for chairperson and board members taking out the involvement of the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government. Instead all board members are appointed by the 12 person body at the newly established Dublin Planning Department (An Roinn Pleanála Átha Cliath).

10. Simplify development plans so that they are more comprehensible to the wider public. Moreover, it is suggested that development plans be made over a 20 year period and reviewed (and amended if necessary) every five years.

11. Local-authority planners are to be ‘faceless’ in the same manner as planners at ABP thereby putting an end to pre-planning consultations and meetings with private-sector property developers so as to put the rights of first- and third-party interests on an equal footing.
12. Upon completion of third-level planning courses, recently qualified planners should serve a three year elective with the public- and private-sectors of planning as well as with ABP before professional accreditation is given by the IPI.

13. No political donations from private-sector may be given to political parties. Instead, all parties will be equally funded from central exchequer funding.

14. Local government in Ireland requires radical reform bringing it more in line with local government in Europe in terms of its remit and provision of services.

10.10 Scope for Further Research

A number of questions remain and much further work needs to be carried out; for example, the whole question of entrepreneurial planning outside Dublin (city and county) has not been given any consideration. The current research focused solely on examining the degree to which the neoliberal agenda has infused Irish urban planning in Dublin since 1986 so as to determine the extent to which the operation of planning is a reflection of an ideological shift whereby the demands of the private sector are being overtly facilitated over the 'common good'. In that regard, further questions must also be raised about variations across differing geographic locations namely, the city councils of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. In addition, just like in this study, comparative research ought to be conducted into the operation of urban planning between the city and county councils of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. It is only through drawing comparisons and noting differences in planning practice between each of the city and county councils that one can confidently determine whether entrepreneurial planning practices are symptomatic of the capital city and ascertain to what degree the neoliberal orthodoxy is hegemonic in the Republic of Ireland.

Comparative research between the operation of planning in Dublin and Belfast deserves investigation since the planning system, as it currently exists in Northern Ireland, is subject to the overall direction and control of the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland – a Minister of the Crown appointed by the British monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister who is accountable to Westminster – thus, on one island, there exists two planning systems. Comparative research of planning practice in both planning systems will reveal
the degree to which planning in Northern Ireland can also be considered entrepreneurial and facilitative of private capital.

A thorough investigation of An Bord Pleanála also needs careful attention, particularly with regard to the compositional make up of the (nine person) executive board at ABP. By statistically comparing first- and third-party planning appeals to one can ascertain to what extent the board may hence be considered pro-development or whether it really has the 'common good' at heart. It is only from a proper and thorough investigation of ABP reports that one can confidently conclude to what extent ABP can be properly regarded as an unbiased arbiter in the planning system and therefore expose the degree to which the philosophy guiding planning at ABP is in fact shaped by the board members.

Finally, the current study provided an in-depth exploration of the evolution of the theorisation of the role of the Irish urban planning system under a neoliberal agenda in recent decades and arrived at an assessment of its 'actual' operation in Dublin (city and county). The current study, however, is really a minor initial step towards understanding an enormously complicated field. That many issues suggest themselves for attention at the end of this work is to be expected, thus, this conclusion reveals itself to be nothing more than a starting point for further critical questioning and investigation.
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Irish Times, 2004, Taoiseach insists he is a socialist', Irish Times, 18th November.


Kenny, Justice J., 1974, Committee on the Price of Building Land, Report to the Minister for Local Government, Mr. Robert Molloy, Dublin.


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INTERNET SOURCES

Detroit: Renaissance City:
http://therenaissancecity.tumblr.com/

One of the few remaining examples of Glasgow's successful city rebranding campaign:
http://www.hiddenglasgow.com/misc/index.htm

Fianna Fáil election campaign billboard, 1987:

List of Former Ministers for the Environment:

Local Government Structure:
http://www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/LocalGovernmentAdministration

Regional Authorities in Ireland:
http://www.environ.ie/en/Links/LocalAuthorities/RegionalAuthorities/

Regional Assemblies in Ireland:
http://www.environ.ie/en/Links/LocalAuthorities/RegionalAssemblies/

Acts of the Oireachtas:
http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/

Seán Dunne's proposal for Jurys, Ballsbridge:

Adamstown SDZ:
http://www.adamstown.ie/

ABP Mission Statement:
http://www.pleanala.ie/about/missionstatement.html
Norman Foster's plan for Clarence Hotel:

Dear [Contact name],

I am a doctoral research student in the Department of Geography in Trinity College undertaking research for a Ph.D. This research involves an investigation into recent changes in Irish urban planning towards more pro-active entrepreneurial policies and practices.

I am contacting you in the hope that you might be willing to take part in a brief interview with me to discuss your perception and experience of such changes. Your co-operation would be of great value to this research as it is crucial for me to gain a comprehensive understanding of the views of those working in the profession and your participation would be valued enormously.

The work is being undertaken solely for academic purposes and I can assure you of total anonymity and confidentiality. No individuals will ever be identified and all information will be treated with the strictest of confidence.

Participation would involve a meeting at your convenience to discuss the objectives, activities, experiences and issues relevant to your organisation/profession. I will be contacting you shortly to ascertain whether you would be willing to participate. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address, email (mccroryn@tcd.ie) or telephone at 01-8962355 (direct line) if you have any queries about this project.

Yours sincerely,

Niall A. McCrory
This research addresses whether increasing entrepreneurialism has been associated with a transformation in the underlying philosophy and practice of Irish urban planning towards more facilitative modes of operation.

The (five-fold) purpose of this interview is to examine your impressions of how Irish urban planning has changed in the last twenty five years; why was there an apparent need for changes to the planning system; who is responsible for implementing such changes; in whose interest has it changed as well as examining what future direction Irish urban planning will take?

- How has Irish urban planning changed in the last twenty five years?
  The transformation of Dublin since the early 1990s has been dramatic with respect to both the built environment and its social structure
    o To what factors can you attribute such changes?

Does the Irish urban planning system differ any today as compared to twenty five years ago in respect to its underlying philosophy?
  o If yes, how?
  o If no, why not?

Do you believe Irish urban planning has undergone a major shift in practice in recent decades?
  o If yes, how has this manifested itself?
  o If no, why not?

To what extent has there been a schism in current Irish urban planning between those planners rooted in the traditional view of planning in the 'public interest' or the 'common good', and those planners seeking pro-actively to work in partnership with the private-sector?
  o How is this development affecting the operation of Irish urban planning given that there appears to be two discordant ideologies at work?
How do planners generally regard working in partnership with the private-sector?

Has the role of traditional local-authority urban planning been limited by the establishment of Special Purpose Development Agencies often largely exempted from local-authority planning control?

Do or did some planners feel alienated and marginalised by such developments?
  - If yes, how?
  - If no, why not?

What was the rationale in establishing Special Purpose Development Agencies?

Has Integrated Area Planning (IAPs) given planners renewed relevance in the Irish urban planning system?
  - If yes, how?
  - If no, why not?

Án Bord Pleanála was established as an independent body following the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1976

Has ÁBP’s approach to urban planning changed since its establishment?
  - If yes, how?
  - If no, why not?

In your experience, to what extent are there major differences between local planning authorities and Án Bord Pleanála in how they interpret planning policy?
  - Has it always been this way?

Does the Irish urban planning system make better or fairer decisions as a result of having the Third Party Rights of Appeal (TPRA) mechanism?
  - If yes, how?
  - If no, why not?

How do local authority planners feel when their decision has been overturned on appeal?
Án Bord Pleanála has 112 members of staff, twelve of which are board members. Until quite recently it has contracted ‘freelance’ inspectors and private planning consultancies to help respond to the growing number of planning appeals

Do you think this might be seen as a precursor to the privatisation of urban planning in Ireland

- If yes, do you view this as a good development?
  - If yes, why?
  - If no, why not?
- If no, why not?

Why was there an apparent need for change to the Irish urban planning system?

What were the shortcomings of the Irish urban planning system as it existed in the 1980s?

What effect, if any, did the 1986 Dublin Crisis Conference have on the Irish urban planning system?

- How have the 1986 property-based regeneration initiatives, for example the Finance Act and the Urban Renewal Act, been reflected by the Irish urban planning system?
- Following the Finance Act and Urban Renewal Act of 1986, what impact did the Local Government Act, 1991, have on Irish urban planning?
- What impact did the publication of Better Local Government in 1996 have on Irish urban planning?
- What is your assessment of the way the Irish urban planning system has responded to government led initiatives?

What is Irish urban planning achieving today that it failed to achieve in the 1980s?

Are recent changes in the Irish urban planning system in common with trends found elsewhere in the world?

- If yes, can this transformation be better understood as the attempted imposition of a particular vision of what the city landscape should be – and who it should be for?
  - If yes, why is this so?
What was the catalyst for change?

- Who is responsible for implementing changes to the Irish urban planning system?

Who or what is responsible for the shift in the underlying ethos of Irish urban planning?
- In your opinion, what should the underlying ethos of Irish urban planning be?

In what ways have political ideological issues shaped the approach to urban planning in Ireland in the last twenty-five years?
- How have these issues shaped Irish urban planning?

Is there pressure exerted on planners to grant planning permission for almost any development?
- If yes, who is exerting this pressure?
  - How is this reflected in development plans?
- If no, was it ever the case that pressure was exerted on planners to grant planning permission for development?

- In whose interests has the Irish urban planning system changed?

Do you agree with the idea that Irish urban planning is led by a regime that blends political and business actors in a long-term, partnered relationship in order to promote economic development?
- If yes, why is this so?
  - Is this a recent phenomenon?
- If no, why do you disagree with this statement?
  - How do you view the operation of the Irish urban planning system?

To what extent has Irish urban planning increasingly reflected the demands of the private-property development sector?
To what extents have property developers determined the ‘geography’ of Dublin since the early 1990s?
  o To whose advantage is the geography of Dublin being re-shaped?
  o How have these actors determined the geography of the city?
  o Why are these actors so influential?

Generally speaking, what is the public’s perception of planners and/or the planning system per se?

In your opinion, do Irish people genuinely interest themselves in the Irish urban planning system?

What is your understanding of the term ‘the entrepreneurial city’?

Why, at a time of budget surpluses, was there a heavy reliance among the four local authorities of Dublin on the activities of private-sector property developers for the implementation of planning goals?

Do you consider current urban planning in the four local authorities of Dublin a form of product enhancement, maximising amenity, environment and image in order to project Dublin’s ‘global city’ aspirations?
  o If yes, why is this so?
    ▪ How is this being pursued?
  o If no, do you consider Dublin a ‘global city’?
    ▪ If yes, how?
      ➢ Who is responsible for projecting Dublin in this way?
      ➢ Who is the greatest beneficiary in projecting Dublin as a global city?
    ▪ If no, why not?

Future direction of Irish urban planning?

Some commentators have noted that the Irish planning system will be judged on what it delivers
  o How do you think the public judges the planning system as it currently exists?
What are the long-term consequences for Irish urban planning if planners do not think more comprehensively about integrating physical planning with social planning?

What are the (urban) planning implications of the present economic downturn given that the Celtic Tiger years of unprecedented and spectacular economic growth are all but gone?

- What does the future hold for the Irish urban planning system regarding both its philosophy and practice?
Simplified Transcription Symbols


[ ] C2: quite a [ while
Mo: [ yea

= W: that I'm aware of =
C: =Yes. Would you
confirm that?

(0.4) Yes (0.2) yeah

.hhhh I feel that (0.2) .hhhh

( ) future risks and ( )
and life ( )

( word) Would you see (there)
anything positive

(( )) confirm that
((continues))

Left brackets indicate the point at
which a current speaker's talk is
overlapped by another's talk.

Equal signs, one at the end of a
line and one at the beginning,
indicate no gap between the two
lines.

Numbers in parentheses indicate
elapsed time in silence in tenths of
a second.

A row of h's prefixed by a dot
indicates an in-breath; without a
dot, an out-breath. The length of
the row of h's indicates the length
of the in-breath or out-breath.

Empty parentheses indicate the
transcriber's inability to hear what
was said.

Parenthesized words are possible
hearings.

Double parentheses contain
author's descriptions rather than
transcriptions.