

Ireland: The grab for public land continues

By [Global Research](#)

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The privatisation of public land continues apace. It takes many forms, including the exchange of valuable city-centre land banks for privately

owned lands on the outskirts of the same cities. The city-centre land is then used for building expensive private apartments or office space, while the land on the outskirts of the city is used for public housing, with little or no infrastructure, such as roads, public transport, or other public services.

For several years the neo-liberalist Minister for Health, Mary Harney, has been pushing for a greater role for private medicine in the provision of health care. One brainchild of hers was “co-location,” where private hospitals would be built on public land alongside existing public hospitals.

It recently emerged that public land in the grounds of Beaumont Hospital in Dublin that was earmarked for the building of a surgical unit to facilitate patients from St Ita’s Psychiatric Hospital in Portrane, Co. Dublin, has come under the chop. Plans had been drawn up and displayed in Beaumont Hospital for some time, and all staff members in both hospitals had been informed.

At the end of January the management of Beaumont Hospital removed the plans and informed the staff that the plan to build the new unit had been scrapped and that the land earmarked had been handed over to the private Beacon Clinic for building private facilities. At the same time lands surrounding St Ita’s Hospital itself have been handed over for the building of a boating marina for the wealthy.

Councils abandoning their social responsibility

Dublin City Council is trying to get rid of the ownership of flats in St Brigid’s Park in Oxmantown, whose tenants are mostly elderly or infirm citizens, and to hand them over to a private firm, Circle Housing.

This is an unknown quantity as far as the tenants are concerned, and the proposal has caused considerable fear and uncertainty among the tenants as well as those in houses in the surrounding area.

The tenants are not against the proposed renovation of the area but do not want Circle Housing as their landlord. The spokesperson for the company left a very sour taste after his presentations.

Tenants would have some statutory rights by remaining tenants of the city council, as regards rent, maintenance, etc., but these would almost certainly be lost eventually if Circle

Housing took over.

This is apparently the plan for the future. Councils all over Ireland have been trying to get rid of their obligations and their social responsibility to care for their citizens, especially the old and infirm.

This is not just about St Bricin's Park but is a warning to local authority tenants everywhere.

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For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca