



Beaumont Hospital: A priority for Haughey when he became Minister for Health in 1977

When Charlie Haughey became Minister for Health in 1977, he was keenly aware of the need for a new acute general hospital in Dublin and took action to make this a reality. This new hospital would replace Richmond Surgical Hospital and the Jervis Street Hospital.

The “Richmond”, in Dublin City centre, was the collection of historic buildings of the Richmond, Whitworth and Hardwicke that became St Laurence’s Hospital in the 1940s. There was a consensus that these buildings were no longer fit for purpose, but decades passed without action to build a new hospital in the Capital. This changed when Charlie Haughey became Minister for Health in 1977.

A site for this hospital had already been identified and the land was acquired from the Mercy Sisters

in Beaumont. Haughey established the Beaumont Hospital Board in 1977, to build and equip an acute general hospital in his constituency. Rather than engage more architects to design a new hospital, which would involve a considerable amount of time and expense, Mr. Haughey decided to utilise the existing plans used for the construction of the Cork University Hospital (Wilton) in the early 70's. This inspired decision ensured that the hospital was built without any undue delay at a cost of €52.7 million.

The hospital was built in 1983 but remained closed for a number of years because of a dispute between the Labour Minister for Health, Barry Desmond T.D., and the hospital consultants. In 1987 Fianna Fáil returned to power and in November of that year, Haughey as Taoiseach and the new Minister for Health, Dr. Rory O'Hanlon, formally welcomed the first patients to the hospital following the closure and transfer to Beaumont of the two city centre hospitals.

Beaumont Hospital is one of the largest acute general hospitals in Ireland, providing 820 beds and employing approximately 3,000 staff.

