

**17.0 HOUSING STANDARDS**

**17.1 EXISTING TWO STOREY HOMES**

Within the boundary areas of the Masterplan, apart from the **2,820** high rise flats are **1,867** two-storey family houses and **120** senior citizens dwellings comprising:-

**A Timber Clad Houses**

Shangan Gardens	80		
Coultry Gardens	49		
Coultry S.C.D.s	16		
Sillogue Gardens	120		
Sandyhill Gardens	107		
Balcurris Gardens	45	<b>Total</b>	<b>417</b>

**B Courtyard Houses**

Poppintree	484		
S.C.D.s in Poppintree	40	<b>Total</b>	<b>524</b>

**C Terraced/Semi-Detached Houses**

Belclare	384		
Coultry	293		
Shangan	127		
Ard Na Meala (incl. S.C.D.s)	60		
Sandyhill S.C.D.s	52		
Poppintree	20		
Crannogue	110	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,046</b>

The three types of property have different attributes and these are discussed below:

**17.2 TIMBER CLAD HOUSES**

**17.2.1 Layout**

The layout of these schemes was based on a principle of distinct separation of pedestrian and vehicular access to houses. Roads are located to the rear of dwellings with the result that most houses have two front doors and no private rear garden. Some residents have built garages across the width of rear gardens with curtilage parking located on an ad hoc basis. This style of layout leaves most properties exposed, with a decided lack of security.

There are large numbers of through laneways connecting front pedestrian paths with rear access roads and parking bays, contributing further to the lack of security.

Access roads and footpaths have been poorly designed and maintained. Ponding occurs in many locations and paving slabs have settled unevenly throughout the estate.

**17.2.2 Houses**

The outer walls of these houses are clad with horizontal timber ship-lap sheeting. In many areas this cladding has been replaced by house owners with either a brickwork skin or some other form of replacement cladding. The houses in Corporation ownership have had their cladding repaired or replaced by the Dublin Corporation Housing Maintenance Department.

Large numbers of the houses, particularly some of those in private ownership, are in need of repair. The owners being former tenants of Dublin Corporation, acquired tenure partly through length of tenancy rather than having the wherewithal to acquire and maintain property. Thus it is, ironically, those properties in private ownership rather than public that are, in some cases, in a greater state of dilapidation.

**17.2.3 Services**

In 1996 a survey was carried out on behalf of Dublin Corporation by John Moylan and Associates, Engineers. It highlighted the extent of the defects and deficiencies in the roads and services in these estates. The elements identified in the report as requiring attention were road construction and specification, inadequate pipe layout and sizing, missing or inadequate manholes, displacement and blockings of pipes and missing watermain fittings.

**17.2.4 Recommendation**

It would greatly facilitate the development of reasonably manageable housing layouts if the access to these houses were rationalised with roads situated to the fronts of the houses. The consequences to householders of this change would be enlarged front gardens allowing 'on-curtilage' car parking. Laneways could be closed off and rear access roads either included in existing rear gardens or liberated to provide development sites for new houses, back to back with existing.

This would provide greater security for both existing occupiers and new tenants, ensure the upgrading of roads and footpaths and allow for the replacement of all services. However, this proposal would require the agreement and support of all the homeowners and tenants in each of the schemes for successful development.

In order to bring the houses up to current standards of construction and insulation an upgrading programme needs to be researched and costed. The possibility of installation of gas central heating should also be assessed.

These measures, whilst increasing the lifecycle and sustainability of the estates, would also improve the visual appearance of the houses.

**17.2.5** To promote the upgrading of the building fabric a combination of grants, mortgage relief and tax incentives in packaged schemes, promoted by BRL, might bring improvements within the range of homeowners on lower incomes. At the same time, BRL would be advocating a capital allocation from Government for such an improvement programme to these houses in local authority ownership.

**17.3 POPPINTREE COURTYARDS**

**17.3.1 Layout**

These courtyard houses, similar to the timber clad schemes, were designed with the separate pedestrian and vehicular access.

There are 484 no. houses in 40 courtyards. Courtyards are linked by pedestrian routes, in many cases under bridge bedrooms. A number of these laneways have been closed off on an ad hoc basis for security reasons.

Generally, rear gardens and rear boundary walls are exposed to view along principal vehicular access routes. The result is poorly supervised approaches and environmental neglect. In many cases, house extensions, garages, sheds and pigeon lofts only serve to compound this problem.

Front gardens within courtyards which were originally open plan have, in many cases, been enclosed by tenants with varying results.

**17.3.2 Houses**

The houses, built in the mid-1970s are of sound construction but generally would require an upgrading of insulation standards. Some will require window, door, soffit and fascia replacement. As in the timber clad housing schemes the maintenance and upkeep of houses in Corporation ownership would generally have been undertaken on a programmed basis.

**17.3.3 Services**

Services problems in Poppintree are not as acute as those in the older estates, however there are localised difficulties with surface water flooding and foul drainage in certain courtyards.

**17.3.4 Recommendation**

Whilst the solution of reversing the vehicular access to the houses is not really feasible without demolishing a number of houses, it would be possible to do as was done in Darndale and as has been approved for Corduff, Blanchardstown. That is, to reverse the houses, turning rear gardens into front gardens and locating the rear gardens in the courtyards. Layout changes coupled with a refurbishment of the houses would greatly improve the visual amenity and the general quality, performance and lifecycle of the housing stock and bring it up to the standard of that currently being proposed by Ballymun Regeneration Limited.

The refurbishment would involve window replacement, provision of front porches/lobbies, enlarged living room window openings and external painting, increasing insulation standards, provision of central heating and improvement of service installations,

**17.3.5 To promote the upgrading of the building fabric ...see 17.2.5 above.**

**17.4 TERRACED/SEMI DETACHED HOUSES AT BELCLARE, COULTRY, SHANGAN**

**17.4.1 Layout**

These schemes, being constructed later, and to higher standards than the courtyard or timber clad schemes, would have fewer intrinsic problems to be dealt with. However, there are some aspects of their layouts - through access lanes and rear laneways, small areas of open space and backlands, location of substations and water pumping stations - which can be identified as local flashpoints of anti-social activity. If, as part of the regeneration process, a new compact regarding estate management is produced, these estates must be rendered more manageable. Whether this means that laneways be closed off and integrated into private gardens, unmanageable open space be given over to infill housing or substations and other utilities be relocated or given new boundary treatment, is something which must be explored in detail with the Neighbourhood Forums.

**17.4.2 Houses**

Whilst there would appear to be no intrinsic constructional problems with the schemes, insulation and energy standards would not be equal to the standards which are being proposed for the new schemes.

**17.4.3 Services**

There would appear to be no problems with the services to these newer properties.

**17.4.4** It is recommended that an 'Energy Audit' be commissioned to assess the degree to which additional insulation and other strategies might be desirable.

**17.4.5** To promote the upgrading of the building fabric...see 17.2.5 above.

**17.5 EXISTING FOUR STOREY FLATS**

BRL, its consultants and residents, recommend the four storey flats be demolished for the following reasons:

- Sustainability  
The flats are all family sized dwellings and only the upper ground floor level has potential access to private outdoor space so, even if refurbished, the housing stock is not desirable in the long term.
- Cost/Value/Mortgageability  
The cost of refurbishment (new lifts, overcladding, insulation, upgraded interiors etc) is 90% of the comparable new build cost. Refurbishments are considered to have a 30 year life cycle whereas new build is assumed to be a 60 year cycle. Even if refurbished, the flats may be difficult to mortgage. The concentration of such housing stock and its likely tenure counts against the project's ambition to achieve a built environment and a social mix where different tenures are visually undetectable.
- Housing layout and massing  
Retention of the four storey flats amongst the new 2/3 storey terraced housing in Shangan, Sillogue and Sandyhill will compromise the new housing layouts (by overlooking, over concentration of flats, inappropriately located open spaces, etc). Removal of the flats will liberate large tracts of land that are essential for new homes. The site area of these flats is 6% of the available land and the masterplan proposal shows 13% of the new homes on this land, hence the significance of the land.
- Image  
If retained, the buildings will be an enduring vestige of the old Ballymun estate. The flats would continue to blight the neighbourhoods and adjoining properties. In the consultations conducted with the residents, it has been their assumption that the four storey flats must be demolished.

**17.6 HOUSING DENSITIES**

**17.6.1 Existing Context**

The DoE brief is to rehouse the existing residents in the flats within the estate, so the gross density, in bedspaces per hectare, will remain unchanged. The density of Ballymun appears high because of the visual impact of the towers and spine blocks but in fact is not untypical of surrounding areas.

Ballymun Site Area including existing houses developable land and open space, excluding schools, churches, shopping centre = c.183 hectares

Total no. of dwellings, houses and flats = 4,801

Total no. of bedspaces = 20,959

Density is c. 115 bedspaces per hectare or 26 dwellings per hectare

For comparison

	bedspaces	dwellings per hectare
Oldtown/Shanowen	130	28
Pinewood/Willow	110	19
Wadelai 88		18
Home Farm Rd	103	22
Iona/Lindsay Road	148	25
Innisfallen Parade	234	49

Should the Main Street develop with residential uses (private apartments or student accommodation) instead of town centre uses then there might be an additional 500 dwellings. In this event the density might be: 120 bedspaces per hectare or 29 dwellings per hectare.

