

Estate Renewal Technical Report 1

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Photo: Greg Dunn



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1.0 Introduction

This report provides an overview of work carried out by the City Architects Division on the review of upgrading and the regeneration of the existing Dublin City Council Flat complexes in order to improve the quality of homes, improve the local settings of these complexes and increase the number of homes to get the most efficient use of land.

This report follows a City Wide Audit which was carried out in 2010/2011 to prioritize the complexes that were in most need of refurbishment under three main headings: design, condition, and social situation.

This report will give an update on assessments and feasibility studies carried out on some of these complexes, initiation of proposals, policies and finally what options are available for consideration for future works. The report highlights cost implications as there are challenges securing funding approval for deep retrofit. The costs for retrofit can be as high as the cost of demolition and rebuilding and this option can also provide more housing. The report lists the schemes currently being developed as capital projects under the Capital Works Management Framework.

Under the strategic framework of The National Development Plan, the National Planning Framework, and the City Development Plan, DCC must continue to review its own active land management and coordinated planning in addressing the housing shortage. There is a large array of factors the Council must look at to find the best solution for each complex. Options for future state funding may be challenging and the Council may therefore need to consider creative ways of sourcing the finance for this continued programme.

2.0 Objectives

In order to prepare proposals for renewal of estates, the technical work undertaken is informed by a series of broad objectives. These are set out as follows:

- **Improving homes**
Providing new and renovated homes that address housing need and local and national housing policies. Providing a layout that functions well in terms of access, servicing and security and creates easy connections to local amenities for residents.
- **Improving neighbourhoods**
Contributing to the quality of the surrounding streets by e.g. providing greening and visual amenity. Improving the perception of the estates as safe and positive places. Contributing to the local context and public spaces. Exploiting any other opportunities to contribute to the local economy, for example by including spaces for small enterprises.
Contributing to a neighbourhood that meets the needs of existing and future residents, is integrated and socially diverse, is sensitive to its environment, contributes to a high quality of life, is well designed, planned, built, and managed.
- **Improving inclusion**
Providing upgraded homes that meet up to date standards of accessibility and provide for a range of needs across ability and time of life in line with the Council's Disability Strategy, Age Friendly City policies and Child Friendly City Policies.
- **Reducing anti-social behaviour**
Providing a reinvented site that is enjoyable and safe for residents and with quality that is self-sustaining and avoiding features that facilitate anti-social behaviour.
- **Efficient use of land**
Providing additional homes through increased densities and more efficient site layouts.
- **Climate change**
Providing highly energy efficient homes and buildings that contribute to carbon reduction. Contributing also to all the other actions of the Climate Change Action Plan: Transport, Flood Resilience, Working with Nature, and Resources.
- **Practicality**
Proposing works that are efficient and practical in terms of sequencing and phasing
- **Robust**
All retrofitted housing on the sites will be intended to be used for sixty years, meeting all standards that new housing would meet in relation to floor areas, accessibility, fire safety, energy performance, indoor air quality and so on.
- **Deep retrofit**
It should be noted that it will be difficult to revisit blocks to carry out deeper retrofits once a shallower upgrade has been completed. It would be expected that no further work on the housing areas would be carried out for 30 years, that is, before 2050. All work should therefore take into account policies and targets for all years up to 2050.

3.0 Project proposal

3.1 The project programme

The work currently being undertaken on the regeneration of flat complexes falls into the following areas:

- Updated assessment of the priority list of complexes to inform decisions on the appropriate approach for each site.
- Technical feasibility studies for energy retrofits
- Initiation of proposals for individual sites as capital works projects.

3.2 Updated assessment of the priority list to inform appropriate approach

A city-wide audit was carried out in 2011 to prioritise the complexes that were in most need of refurbishment under three main headings: design, condition and social situation. 30 complexes, comprising 60 apartment blocks built from 1939 to 1970, were selected for assessment with respect to regeneration options.

Since the list was drawn up, a number of the locations listed have undergone refurbishment works or have been transferred to Approved Housing Bodies for upgrade and management.

Following on from the initial assessment City Architects have been carrying out 'desktop' feasibility studies (i.e. studies based on existing site layout information and in advance of carrying out site surveys or investigations) to identify the potential of each site to improve the layout, improve the quality of the homes (e.g. by amalgamating homes to provide larger units) or to deliver additional housing units. To date desktop feasibility studies have been carried out, to various levels of detail, for the following complexes:

- St Finbarr's Court
- Dorset Street - Mary's Place
- Constitution Hill
- Lissadell Road/Rafter's Lane
- Gardiner Street
- Matt Talbot Court
- Dunne Street/ North Clarence Street
- Tyrone Place
- Bernard Curtis House

Further information on this work is set out in **Section 6** below.

3.3 Technical feasibility studies for energy retrofits

Energy efficiency upgrade of flat blocks was first considered in 2009, when the Department of Environment asked Dublin City Council to carry out a pilot to investigate externally insulating an existing block, with the aim of achieving an average BER of B3.

Glovers Court, a five storey maisonette block near St Stephens Green, was chosen as the subject of the pilot. The study found that adding external insulation had implications which it was not possible to deal with in a simple manner. It was found preferable to undertake a more comprehensive improvement of all aspects of the block, addressing its shortcomings in terms of space standards, access and fire escape as well as energy efficiency. The intended pilot project involving energy upgrade only did not proceed.

In 2011, City Architects co-operated with post-graduate students and staff of DIT School of Architecture in four studies of a similar five storey block. The brief to the students was to propose ways to bring the blocks up to all the standards that a new building would meet, and the students presented their results to the management of the Housing Department.

In 2012, the Council was asked to propose capital projects that might attract loans and funding from EU, from the European Investment Bank and from the European Regional Development Fund. City Architects prepared a proposal to undertake a programme of deep retrofits, as proposed at Glovers Court and by the DIT studies, of 30 five storey maisonette blocks, comprising 1500 flats and costing in the region of €200 Million.

This proposal was accepted, and included in the South East Region Assembly Operational Plan 2014 -2020. An essential element of this plan was that the programme was to be carried out by voluntary housing bodies rather than being directly funded by the Irish state.

Dublin City Council however got approval from Department of the Environment to carry out the first of these projects as a pilot to test not only the design and construction but also of the management systems that would be involved in the voluntary housing bodies running the programme.

St Marys Place, part of the housing complex at Dorset Street, was chosen as the site for this pilot because this complex was at the top of Housing Department's priority list for improvement or regeneration.

A further series of detailed technical assessments has been carried out on a number of other complexes to develop proposals for 'deep retrofit' works to improve energy efficiency and to improve the quality of the homes. Deep retrofit works means basically stripping a building back to its primary structure (e.g. columns and floor slabs) and rebuilding it so that it meets modern standards of floor area, accessibility, fire safety and energy efficiency.

The findings from these pilot studies were as follows:

- It is neither possible nor desirable to carry out energy efficiency works alone. Issues of space standards, accessibility, fire escape and open space design all need to be addressed at the same time.
- In certain cases complexes have other issues besides energy efficiency (e.g. such as a poor or inefficient layout) which would not be addressed by retrofit works and which would still remain as problems after the expenditure on retrofits. For example, in the case of Dorset Street the existing site layout provides a relatively low density of housing which could yield a greater number of homes if re-planned. Preliminary studies of other complexes such as Lissadell Road and St. Finbarr's Court also indicate that retrofit might not deliver value for money in terms of estate regeneration. In these cases demolition would provide a greater improvement in quality and numbers of homes.
- In other cases where the existing site layout already delivers desirable density e.g. Constitution Hill, or where complexes have a desirable heritage value e.g. Gardiner Street, the preferred option could be retrofit and additional infill. In particular, the four storey deck access blocks, such as Pearse House and Markievicz House, which help to form good streets and enclose good internal courtyards, should not be demolished and studies will be needed to determine how these can best be brought to a desirable standard and retained in use for a further sixty years.

- In general the cost of retrofitting complexes can be as high as the cost of demolition and rebuilding. In the case of Dorset Street, a ‘deep retrofit’ proposal would incur a high capital cost relative to the amount and quality of accommodation that would be returned to use.
- Currently there are significant challenges in securing funding approval for deep retrofit projects. This is because the level of work required is so invasive that very significant other works are required that are not energy efficiency related (e.g. changing internal layouts). Existing funding streams related to energy efficiency do not cover such works.
- On many sites, there is often an opportunity to build a new block without having to demolish any existing building. This then allows residents to move permanently to the new apartments, vacating an existing block for retrofitting. Once the retrofitting is completed in this block, residents from another block can move in permanently. Phasing a combined new build and retrofitting project in this way can significantly reduce disruption of the community, and significantly ease the management of “decanting” residents, eliminating the need to find accommodation outside the immediate housing area.

Following the conclusion of the deep retrofit studies for St. Mary’s Place, an overall urban design strategy was commissioned to examine the different alternative options available for the St. Mary’s Place, Dorset Street and Constitution Hill complexes. The options considered included:

- Ongoing maintenance and repair (as a baseline comparison)
- Energy retrofit works
- Energy retrofit with new additional infill blocks.
- Demolition and rebuild.
- A combination of retrofit and rebuilding.

The outcome of this study was the recommendation in the case of Dorset Street that demolition and reconstruction would deliver the most benefit in terms of quality and number of homes. In the case of Constitution Hill the preferable option would be deep retrofit of the existing blocks with additional infill blocks.

3.4 Initiation of proposals for individual sites as capital works projects.

The following schemes are currently being developed as capital projects under the Capital Works Management Framework:

- St. Finbarr’s (Stage 1 submitted and approved)
- Dorset Street (Stage 1 submitted, awaiting approval)
- Constitution Hill (Stage 1 submission being prepared)
- Lissadell Road / Rafter’s lane (Stage 1 submission being prepared)
- Gardiner Street (Stage 1 submission being prepared)
- Matt Talbot (Stage 1 submission being prepared)
- Dunne Street / North Clarence St. (Stage 1 submission to be prepared)
- Tyrone Place (Stage 1 submission to be prepared)
- Bernard Curtis House (Stage 1 submission to be prepared)

Some of these are described briefly below:

St. Finbarr's Court

A Stage 1 approval has been approved for the demolition and rebuilding of this scheme to provide 46 senior citizen's dwellings in place of the 28 existing obsolete one-room flats. The tender for the design team to deliver the development is currently in preparation.

Dorset St / St. Mary's Place

Following the options appraisal of the Dorset Street complex, it was decided to proceed with preparing a scheme for the demolition and redevelopment of the complex. A Stage 1 application for funding for the redevelopment was submitted to the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government (DHPLG) in December 2017.

Constitution Hill

Following the options study for Constitution Hill, it was considered that the existing site layout provides a relatively high density of housing which can be maximised and can yield a greater number of homes with the strategic redevelopment of the existing land available for building. Therefore a feasibility study has been prepared for a scheme for the amalgamation and retrofit of the existing apartments and the construction of an additional storey which will address space standards, accessibility, condensation, dampness, energy efficiency and fire safety to the existing accommodation, and achieve additional units within the existing footprint. The proposal also includes new apartment blocks in the available land to optimise density. A Stage 1 application for funding for the redevelopment is to be submitted to the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government (DHPLG) in March 2018.

Lissadell Road / Rafter's Lane

A Stage 1 submission is being prepared for a proposal to redevelop this complex. Feasibilities were carried out on the existing maisonettes and different options examined for their renewal which includes extensions and infill. The proposal includes new apartment blocks in the available land to optimise density. A Stage 1 application for funding for the redevelopment is to be submitted to the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government (DHPLG) in April 2018.

Gardiner Street

A Stage 1 submission is being prepared for a proposal to carry out amalgamations of units to provide larger homes in the existing block. As this will reduce the number of existing units the proposal also includes for a new infill building to provide new homes to maintain numbers and to more fully develop this city centre site.

Matt Talbot Court / Dunne Street- North Clarence Street / Tyrone Place / Bernard Curtis House

The options being considered for these four complexes are:

- Total refurbishment with infill
- Partial demolition, infill and refurbishment (similar to Dolphin House Phase 1),
- Complete demolition/new build.

It is intended to prepare Stage 1 submissions to the Department of Housing and Planning in 2018 for these complexes.

3.5 Overall Programme and Costs

Programmes for estates are developed on a project by project basis, planned in line with the DPER CWMF work stages (Stages 1 to 5).

An overall project to deliver the regeneration of a significant number of estates, such as the first 9 schemes listed in the following table, is a long term programme which requires coordinated planning across a number of different areas of work. Key issues which require consideration and coordination when planning of the timing of the work stages above are:

- Phasing. Phasing of developments increases the costs of projects (through the added costs of multiple contracts and temporary abortive works that are required between phases) and also involves longer timeframes for delivery, which has a further cost effect in the form of inflation. Projects where an estate is available for works in a completely vacant situation would be more time and cost effective.
- Temporary relocation of residents. The timeframes required to vacate buildings either through tenants relocating to different homes or through providing temporary accommodation need consideration. This may also create constraints on the number of projects which can be under construction at a given time.
- Enabling works contracts. Carrying out site 'enabling works' contracts can reduce the risks of costs arising on projects at construction stage and also give greater certainty in terms of site conditions.
- Resources and capacity. The number of construction projects being managed simultaneously needs careful consideration both in terms of technical/management resources and in terms of construction inflation.

The overall programme for these nine sites is ten years, with approximately 700 new homes and will cost in the region of €2.5 billion.

4.0 Housing complexes already regenerated

Cromcastle Court- Phases 1 & 2

Built in 1971 Cromcastle Court is a development built with the French modular system 'Balency et Schuhl' using precast walls and in-situ concrete floors. It has 8 no. 4-storey blocks with a total of 128 flats.

Energy Upgrade works for Block 1 at Cromcastle Court were carried out in 2 phases and completed in October 2016. Phase 1, in 2015, consisted of installing air to water heat pumps with weather compensated controls with remote access. Windows were upgraded to high-performance double glazed upvc windows. Phase 2 consisted of the installation of external wall insulation. The average BER rating improved from an E1 to a B3 after Phase 1, and B1 after Phase 2.

The energy upgrades achieved were: 65.9% (Phase 1), and 77.5% (Phase 2). Funding for the installation of the windows at Phase 1 was from SEAI. The Upgrade of the heating systems was carried out through the ESCO / MESA. The External Wall Insulation (EWI) of Block 1 was carried out through a Better Energy Community (BEC) Scheme in 2016 with funding from SEAI and the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. A second block was externally insulated in 2017 through the Better Energy Community Scheme.

Dolphin House Regeneration (deep retrofit and demolish and new build)

Built during 1956/57, Dolphin House has 392 apartments in four-storey deck access blocks. The first phase of Dolphin House Regeneration project consists of the deep retrofitting of 2 of the existing housing blocks to provide 63 refurbished apartments, demolition of one smaller block and construction of 37 new apartments and houses – 100 units in total.

The apartments in the blocks that are retrofitted will meet the same standards of floor area, energy efficiency and accessibility as the new buildings, and will have a life expectancy of sixty years.

There is an overall plan for the entire housing area, suggesting that it will be possible to have about 600 apartments and houses on the site, approximately half of which will be in existing blocks that will be renovated and the other half will be new apartments and houses. This will represent an increase in density of more than 50% on the original 379 flats.

Ballymun Regeneration

Almost 2,800 flats in 8 and 16 storey system-built buildings that were built in 1960s had were demolished and replaced them with almost 1,900 houses and low-rise apartments over a period of twelve years. These new houses should have a useful life of at least 50 years, to 2070. In addition 1,400 private housing units were constructed, so that there was a net gain in housing numbers of about 18%. The new streets and open spaces are designed to support sustainable communities.

Herberton (formerly Fatima Mansions) (demolish and new build)

Fatima Mansions was a housing area in Rialto formed of a number of four storey deck access blocks containing a total of 364 flats, built in the 1940s. The entire area was redeveloped by means of a PPP as a mixed use development that is mainly residential but includes commercial/retail/enterprise space. There is a neighbourhood centre including a crèche and a café together with a fitness/sports facility including a swimming pool in the basement. The development is in six blocks varying from two to seven storeys high. There are nearly 600 dwellings; 110 houses for social rent and 480 flats of mixed tenure. This represents a significant increase of residential density, in addition to the other uses. The site

is approximately 5.6Ha, so that the residential density was increased from 65 dwellings per hectare to more than 100, an increase of 50%.

O'Devaney Gardens (demolish and new build)

The O'Devaney Gardens site is a c. 5.6ha site situated in Strategic Development and Regeneration Area (SDRA) 11 as set out in the City Development Plan 2016-2022. The site was the subject of a Masterplan dating from 2010. This masterplan seeks to create a new, high quality mixed use quarter comprising a new residential neighbourhood supported by a mix of commercial uses, recreation facilities and enhanced transport infrastructures.

Central to the Masterplan design philosophy was the endeavour to eliminate the segregated, "backlands" nature of the pre-existing residential flat complexes and their wider site. This is to be achieved by increasing the permeability of the wider site through additional connections to the adjacent streetscapes thus creating increased connectivity to the Stoneybatter/Manor Street Area. A new, primary route through the site is proposed. This route operates on a north/south axis, connecting the North Circular Road to the north with Montpelier Gardens to the south. Secondary routes, extensions of existing streets which adjoin the site, intersect with the primary route at various points. The resultant residential blocks and public amenity space are defined by the geometry of this new streetscape.

The pre-existing O Devaney Gardens public housing complex was constructed in 1954 and consisted of 278 Residential Units set out in 13, four storey blocks. 2 of the 1950s residential blocks are extant. The process of re-locating residents from these remaining blocks is in train and the remaining blocks are programmed for demolition in 2018 in anticipation of the site wide re-development works which will see the construction of a minimum of 500 residential Units on the site.

The first phase of the re-development of the O Devaney Gardens site will consist of the construction of 56 Units comprising a mix of 2/3 storey houses and apartments (the subject of a planning permission granted in 2011). These Units are of brick faced cavity wall construction and will achieve an A3 Building Energy Rating.. The design of a number of these Units was tailored to the specific requirements of residents of the pre-existing housing on site and thus, some of the Unit typologies are quite generous relative to current space standard provisions.

Construction of this phase of development is scheduled to commence in Q2 2018.

Croke Villas (demolish and new build)

The Croke Villas site is situated in Strategic Development and Regeneration Area (SDRA) 14 as set out in the City Development Plan 2016-2022. The Croke Villas public housing complex was constructed in 1961 and consisted of 79 Residential Units set out 4 four and five storey "Gull Wing" type blocks. The proposed re-development of the Croke Villas Site will see the construction of 61 apartments and 11 houses with a basement level car-park providing 36 car spaces with provision for 54 bicycles. 3 of the four residential blocks have been demolished, with the final block scheduled for demolition following the completion of an adjacent development on Ballybough (which will accommodate the residents of the current remaining block). 6 derelict cottages (the site of the proposed new terraced houses) on Sackville Avenue have also been demolished .

The Croke Villas site is in a state of advanced architectural degradation and consequently has become an attractor of anti-social behaviour. The new residential development will achieve an A3 Building Energy Rating and espouses best design practice with regard to access, provision of daylighting and communal amenity.

Separate to the provision of new housing, the GAA and Croke Park are developing a new National Handball Exhibition Centre on part of the lands of the pre-existing residential

complex. This project will contain facilities for use by the local community.

Central to the development of the sites as a whole, will be the creation of a high quality “boulevard” which will serve to unify the various strands of the development.

Construction works for the residential development are scheduled to commence in Q1 2019.

Older People’s Flats - 2 into 1s

The Bedsit Amalgamation Programme focuses particularly on elderly residents, addressing a lack of space and comfort in the bedsits normally let to older people. The scheme enables residents to remain in their neighbourhood but in more appropriate accommodation. The works consist of combining existing bedsit units to form one-bed apartments. The alterations provide improved space standards, which is important to residents who can spend a lot of time indoors.

Re-using unsuitable bedsit units improves the efficiency and extends the life of the flat blocks they are located in. The programme’s holistic approach which takes in energy efficiency, sustainable use of housing stock, the residents’ place within their communities and quality of interior design to make enjoyable homes makes these projects an example of best practice.

From 2015 to the end of 2017 approximately 282 bedsit units will have been amalgamated. The uplift on the BERs is from an average of E to an average high Cs, Bs, up to A2.

Currently, a block of Senior Citizen’s Apartments at St Bricin’s Park is being retrofitted to Passive House standard. The project takes on board all the principles of Passive House design, namely:

- Super insulation levels
- High standard of air tightness
- High performance external windows and doors
- Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery
- Elimination/minimization of thermal bridges

The intended outcomes are:

- Enhanced energy efficiency of the existing block.
- Remediation of existing deficiencies in existing block such as space standards and access provision.
- Improved site planning and landscaping providing better access and a higher standard of amenity.
- Improved interface with surrounding areas, contributing to local regeneration.

Complex	Units Extg	Units Proposed	Year Built	Area	No. of Blks	No. of Flrs	Est Cost (Ex VAT)	Phases	Start Construction*	Com-plete**	Remarks
Dorset St. / Mary's Place	107+ 6 bedsits	104 Apts / 11 houses + 3no. Commercial Units + Creche	1966/ 1965	Central	5	5	35m	2	2019	2023	Stage 1 Process CBA required
Constitution Hill 90 Units	60+ 28 Bedsits+ 1 creche	100 + 1 Commercial Unit + Creche	1968	Central	3	5	30+	3	2019	2023	Stage 1 Process CBA required Retrofit + New Build
Matt Talbot Court	48+ 24 bedsits	86	1971	Central	3	5	28m	2	2019	2022	CA Feasibility- New Build CBA required
Gardiner Street 38 Units (Existing)	36+ 2 bedsits	37/ 43	1960	Central	1	5	12.2m / 14.1m	2	2019	2020	CA Feasibility- Retrofit + New build
Bernard Curtis House	120 Units	150	1958	South Central	5	4	45m	5	2020	2028	CA Feasibility- Retrofit + New Build CBA required
Dunne St./ Nth Clarence St.	63	75	1963	Central	3	5	23m	2	2021	2024	CA Feasibility- CBA required
Tyrone Place 97 Units (Existing)	97	116	1960	South Central	3	5	38m	3	2021	2024	CA Feasibility New Build CBA required
St Finbarrs Court SCD	1 Unit + 28 bedsits	46	1970	North Central	2	2	12m	1	2019	2021	Stage 1 New Build
Lissadell Rd/ Rafter's Ln	50 Maisonettes	100	1952	South Central	6	2	30m	3	2020	2023	Stage 1 Process New Build CBA required
Total	582 + 86 Bedsits	679			31		250m		*Assuming vacant possession	**Assuming no break in phases	

There are approximately 11,200 homes in 690 apartment blocks (family and senior citizens blocks built before 2000). The 31 blocks listed above constitute 4.5% of the total number of existing blocks

The programme for the remaining housing stock over 60 years old would be in the region of 30 years and the renewal of these estates will cost in the region of €25 billion.

5.0 Context and policies

This proposal is for a programme of 9 projects that will run until from 2018 to 2028.

It would be expected that no further work on the 9 housing areas would be carried out for the subsequent 30 years, that is, before 2050. The work should therefore take into account policies and targets for all years up to 2050. As an example of such targets, European Union targets for energy efficiency and decarbonisation of energy for 2050 envisage all buildings, both existing and new, being Nearly Zero Energy buildings well within that timeframe.

It should be noted that it will be difficult to revisit blocks to carry out deeper retrofits once a shallower upgrade has been completed.

5.1 Housing policies

National Policy

Rebuilding Ireland:

The Government's Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness, Rebuilding Ireland (2016), sets out five key pillars supporting a range of actions to address current housing undersupply and to ensure the accelerated delivery of housing.

A Key objective of the plan, *Pillar 5 - Utilise Existing Housing*, requires that existing housing stock be used to the maximum degree possible with a call for focus on measures to use vacant stock to renew urban and rural areas.

Occupancy of existing housing stock is to be optimised and key actions under this objective include the better management of social housing through rapid re-letting of vacant units (Voids), Vacant housing Repair and Leasing initiative and Urban Regeneration including Living City Initiative.

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015:

In accordance with the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, it is a key pillar of the Dublin City Council development plan to promote the development and renewal of areas that are in need of regeneration, in order to prevent: (i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land, (ii) urban blight and decay (iii) anti-social behaviour or (iv) a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.

Local Policy

The Dublin City Council Development Plan includes a Housing Strategy which emphasises sustainable communities and balanced development, recognising that in some cases housing regeneration may warrant demolition of existing dwellings.

QH5: To promote residential development addressing any shortfall in housing provision through active land management and a coordinated planned approach to developing appropriately zoned lands at key locations including regeneration areas, vacant sites and under-utilised sites.

QH6: To encourage and foster the creation of attractive mixed-use sustainable neighbourhoods which contain a variety of housing types and tenures with supporting community facilities, public realm and residential amenities, and which are socially mixed in order to achieve a socially inclusive city.

QH8: To promote the sustainable development of vacant or under-utilised infill sites and to favourably consider higher density proposals which respect the design of the surrounding development and the character of the area.

QH19: To promote the optimum quality and supply of apartments for a range of needs and aspirations, including households with children, in attractive, sustainable mixed income, mixed-use neighbourhoods supported by appropriate social and other infrastructure.

QH20 To ensure that apartment developments on City Council sites are models of best practice and deliver the highest quality energy efficient apartments with all the necessary infrastructure where a need is identified to include community hubs, sports and recreational green open spaces and public parks and suitable shops contributing to the creation of attractive, sustainable, mixed-use and mixed income neighbourhoods.

QH21 To ensure that new houses provide for the needs of family accommodation with a satisfactory level of residential amenity, in accordance with the standards for residential accommodation.

QH23: To discourage the demolition of habitable housing unless streetscape, environmental and amenity considerations are satisfied, and a net increase in the number of dwelling units is provided in order to promote sustainable development by making efficient use of scarce urban land.

QH26 To promote the transformation of the key regeneration areas into successful socially integrated neighbourhoods including those on the Main Inner City Regeneration Areas Map and promote area regeneration in parts of the city which require physical improvement and enhancement in terms of quality of life, housing and employment opportunities, including the Docklands. It is recognised that the nature of some housing regeneration initiatives may warrant the demolition of existing dwellings before proposals for new or replacement dwellings are agreed.

Wider Housing/other policies (not exhaustive)

- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009 (see [here](#)) and Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide 2009 (see [here](#))
- Construction 2020 Strategy, 2014 (see [here](#))
- Social Housing Strategy 2020: Support, Supply and Reform, 2014 (see [here](#))
- Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010–2022
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (forthcoming)
- The Public Realm Strategy (see [here](#)) and local area realm plans eg Luas Cross City public realm works (see [here](#))
- The Parnell Square Cultural Quarter (see [here](#))
- The Dublin Line (part of the Civic Spine strategic network) [here](#)
- Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, 2016-2035 (see [here](#))

5.2 Planning policies and local plans

The Dublin City Development Plan 2016 – 2023 sets out the vision for Dublin City, and also sets restraints on development. The overarching vision for the city is that *“Within the next 25 to 30 years, Dublin will have an established international reputation as one of the most sustainable, dynamic and resourceful city regions in Europe... It will be a socially inclusive city of urban neighbourhoods...”*

Local planning policies include:

- The DCC Public Realm Strategy and City Centre Public Realm Masterplan
- Strategic Development Zones: Grangegorman, Docklands, Poolbeg.
- Local Area Plans: The Liberties LAP.
- Proposed Area Plans including Stoneybatter, Manor Street and O'Devaney Gardens

5.3 Other Council Initiatives and programmes

There are a large number of plans and programmes being actively promoted by DCC at present. These involve collaboration across stakeholders and development agencies with financing through a number of programmes and sources including the EIB, the DECLG Regeneration programme, the National Tourism Development Authority, DCC internal revenue and philanthropic funding.

These projects include:

- The Housing Land Initiative
- The work of the North East Inner City Task Force
- Luas Cross City public realm works
- Integration of the Grangegorman DIT campus development
- The Parnell Square Cultural Quarter
- The Dublin (part of the Civic Spine strategic network)
- The Grafton Street Quarter

These interventions will lead to intensification of activity and environmental improvements in their vicinity. Collectively, they contribute to significant economic renewal. Many of the five storey flat blocks identified in this proposal are adjacent to or within the sphere of these major developments. The work proposed here will be of significant economic and social regeneration benefit in its own terms. The programme will provide dwellings that are highly energy efficient, and will support the retention and improvement of urban communities in well established mixed use areas. When set within the wider strategic context and associated projects, this programme will further enhance the collective positive economic impact.

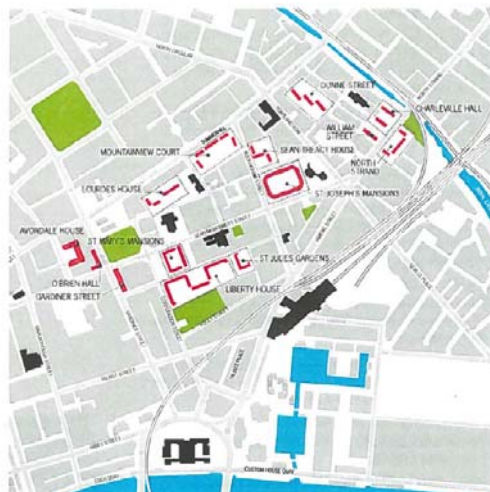
2.4.6 Other Housing in the Plan Area

A number of other housing blocks are located in the Study Area which will require varying degrees of refurbishment.

This list includes:

- **St Mary's Mansions** on Sean MacDermott Street, which has recently been refurbished but is experiencing social problems;
- **O'Brien Hall** on Gardiner Street, a new housing complex;
- **Gardiner Street** complex comprising 38 flats and built in 1960;
- **Avondale House** on Cumberland Street comprising 63 flats and built in 1963;
- **Charleville Hall and North Strand** complexes, comprising 73 flats in total and built in 1964;
- **Dunne Street/North Clarence Street** complex which was built in 1965 and requires improved services;
- **St Agatha's Senior Citizens** complex on North William Street built in 1975, and
- **James Larkin House**, comprising 34 flats and built in 1954.

Not included is the Corporation housing at Portland Close, Beaver Street, Champion's Avenue, Summerhill and Gloucester Place which has been built in the past 15 years and is of the highest standard.



PLAN 4
Housing Blocks

5.4 Environmental policies

The following are some of the EU, national and City Council environmental policies that will impact on the proposed regeneration programme.

EU

- Energy Roadmap 2050
- Energy Performance of Buildings Directive – updated 2018.

Ireland

- National Energy Efficiency Action Plan v3 2014
- National Biodiversity Action Plan
- Rebuilding Ireland
- The National Planning Framework
- Project Ireland 2040

DCC

- Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022
- Dublin City Sustainable Energy Action Plan 2010-2020
- Covenant of Mayors
- Dublin City Council Draft Climate Change Action Plan 2018 – 2023

The main objectives of some of these policies that should inform the regeneration of flat complexes are described below.

Energy Roadmap 2050

On 15 December 2011, the European Commission adopted the communication "[Energy Roadmap 2050](#)". The EU is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 80-95% below 1990 levels by 2050. The Energy Roadmap 2050 is the basis for developing a long-term European framework.

Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2018

The 2010 [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive](#) and the 2012 [Energy Efficiency Directive](#) are the EU's main legislation covering the reduction of the energy consumption of buildings.

In December 2017 the European Commission announced a proposed update to the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive aimed at accelerating the cost-effective renovation of existing buildings. The revised EPBD will create a clear path towards a nearly zero emission building stock in the EU by 2050, with interim milestones for 2030 and 2040. Renovation of all existing buildings will be required in order to meet ambitious emissions targets.

Individual states will have to set milestone targets for 2030 and 2040 to show measurable progress towards the 2050 target.

EPBD, and EU policy in general, envisages the public sector leading by example. Dublin City Council should aim to exceed mandatory minimum targets, and to demonstrate best practice in the field of retrofitting buildings, in energy efficiency, in greenhouse gas emissions and also in other aspects.

Rebuilding Ireland

“Rebuilding Ireland – an Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness” (Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, July 2016) is the Government policy on housing and homelessness. Pillar 5 of the plan concerns utilising existing housing. It commits to “regeneration of cities, towns and villages”, says that “the social housing regeneration programme targets the country’s most disadvantaged communities”, and states “regeneration is a priority from a social policy perspective, encompassing the provision of social housing, improvements to existing housing, as well as social/community and economic renewal”.

Project Ireland 2040

Two of the ten priorities of Project Ireland 2040 are particularly relevant to the regeneration of housing areas in Dublin – Compact Growth and Transition to Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society. A new Urban Regeneration and Development Fund will contribute to 40% of our future housing needs being met by building and renewing within our existing built-up areas. 45,000 homes per annum are to be upgraded to reduce carbon emissions.

Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022

The development plan sets out a new approach to meet the needs and aspirations of citizens of Dublin and the country, not only for the 6-year life of the plan, but for the long term. This approach is based on the principles of sustainability and resilience on the social, economic and environmental fronts.

The vision for the city is that within the next 25 to 30 years, Dublin will have an established international reputation as one of Europe’s most sustainable, dynamic and resourceful city regions. Dublin, through the shared vision of its citizens and civic leaders, will be a beautiful, compact city, with a distinct character, a vibrant culture and a diverse, smart, green, innovation-based economy. It will be a socially inclusive city of urban neighbourhoods, all connected by an exemplary public transport, cycling and walking system and interwoven with a quality bio-diverse green space network. In short, the vision is for a capital city where people will seek to live, work, experience, invest and socialise, as a matter of choice.

Dublin City Sustainable Energy Action Plan 2010-2020

Dublin City Council realises that the current trend of energy consumption within the city is unsustainable and a clear and ambitious plan is needed both to halt and to reverse this trend of rising energy consumption. Dublin City Sustainable Energy Action Plan 2010- 2020 reviews the potential for reducing Dublin City’s carbon footprint along with the associated capital costs of the measures and the resulting energy cost savings. It then sets out a schedule of concrete actions that have been carried out since the baseline year 2006, or are planned for implementation in the future period up to 2020.

Covenant of Mayors

Dublin is one of more than 6000 cities, towns and villages across the EU that has signed the Covenant of Mayors, being amongst the first to sign in 2009. Dublin in 2017 committed to a new integrated Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, adopting the EU 2030 objectives and an integrated approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation. This involves a pledge to reduce CO2 emissions by at least 40% by 2030 and to adopt an integrated approach to tackling mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The three pillars of the strengthened Covenant are mitigation, adaptation, and secure, sustainable and affordable energy.

Dublin City Council Climate Change Action Plan 2018 – 2030

The Climate Change Action Plan 2018 – 2030 is to be presented to councillors for adoption early in 2018. It proposes actions to mitigate and to adapt to climate change. It incorporates the provisions of the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan, and of Dublin City Council’s .

Actions likely to be required when regenerating the eight large complexes include energy efficiency, decarbonisation of energy, dealing with storm water within the site, complying with a Green Infrastructure Strategy, retaining and planting trees, installing green and brown roofs, providing opportunities for community and individual gardens, allowing for flood resilience, reducing and recycling waste (both in use and during construction process).

The Climate Change Action Plan emphasises the need to protect and enhance biodiversity as an adaptation to climate change. It points out the Dublin Bay Biosphere, a UNESCO site, is the first designated biosphere in the world to include a national capital city. This is an opportunity for Dublin to be a world leader in biodiversity management.

As part of necessary adaptation, resilience against flooding is necessary. In designing the regenerated complexes we will be required to consider at the outset means to minimise run-off of storm water into drains, means to reduce peaks in run-off, and means to ensure the run-off is clean.

6.0 The Stock

6.1 History and Typologies

“From the earliest nineteenth-century ‘improving’ housing schemes in the city architectural quality has been a priority in the work of the City Council ... Good design, quality materials and high standards of construction have always been recognised as fundamental components in all housing improvement strategies.” *“The Significance of Dublin’s Historic Housing”*

“In the inner city a new housing model was developed in the late 1960s in the design of the 5-storey maisonette blocks, developed to house larger families.... What is unfortunate is that the way these blocks are positioned on inner city sites generally bears no relationship to existing context, ignoring the urban design principles of O’Rourke and Simms in the 1930s.” *“The Significance of Dublin’s Historic Housing”*

Inner city flat blocks are of two basic types; the Four Storey Deck Access type, built before the mid 1960s, and the Five Storey Maisonette type built in general in the 1960s and 1970s.

There are also a number of two storey flat blocks for older people, built generally between 1970 and 1990.

Six of the nine priority complexes included in this plan are of the five storey maisonette type. Bernard Curtis House is of the four-storey deck access type. St Finbar’s Court is of the two-storey type for older people. Lissadell Road consists of two storey maisonettes, a type that is not very common.

It is important to note that a major factor influencing the need to regenerate housing areas is the way that the blocks create or fail to create good streets and shared areas. The five storey maisonette blocks in particular often tend to stand in isolation surrounded by badly designed open space. It is for this reason that feasibility studies have shown that in many cases no satisfactory regeneration can be designed that does not involve demolishing blocks that otherwise would be capable of being remodelled and reused.

The four storey blocks tend to have a much more satisfactory and manageable relation to streets and enclosed private spaces. Partly for this reason, the housing areas that consist of four storey blocks tend not to be as high up the priority list for improvement as do the five storey blocks. This is despite the fact that the five storey blocks were built more recently. The four storey blocks lend themselves to reuse after upgrading more readily than the five storey blocks. Blocks of this type have been successfully upgraded and reused at Mary Aikenhead House, St Joseph’s Mansions and at Dolphin House.

6.2 The Building Types

Four Storey Deck Access Blocks

This type of building was built before 1967, when cavity wall construction became normal. These are normally one or two bedroom flats suitable for families of two to four people. Their floor area and room sizes are small by current standards, particularly the kitchens and bathrooms, they are four storeys high without lift access, and they do not always meet all standards that would apply to new buildings.

They always have individual heating systems, are never connected to common or district heating. They have no renewable energy measures. Most of these flats are in good city centre locations, they are often an important element of

the streets they are in, and a large number of them are protected structures because of their cultural significance.



Five storey Maisonette Blocks

These are five storey blocks with two-storey two-bedroom maisonettes accessed from decks on first and third floors, and one-person flats at ground level. Access to the upper decks is by stairs.

The blocks are solid, well located, and support stable communities in centre city locations. Many of them make a positive contribution to the urban form, but others tend to have unsatisfactory relationships with adjoining streets and open spaces.

The flats are small by current standards, particularly the kitchens and bathrooms, their energy efficiency is low, and they do not always meet all standards that would apply to new buildings. The floor area of the one person one-room flats in particular is considered inadequate.



Two Storey Older People's Blocks

These are one-room or two-room flats for older people built between 1970 and 1990. The one-room flats have a floor area of 25m², and are considered inadequate. The blocks are two storeys high, the lower level flats are accessed directly and independently from ground level, upper level ones are accessed by way of an external stairs and external deck.



7.0 Assessment of existing complexes

Since the early 1990s the Housing Maintenance commenced the upgrading of the flatted council's housing stock in a programmed way which included a cyclical maintenance regime. Under the Area Regeneration Programme four areas of accommodation upgrading were undertaken, namely: window replacement, central heating installation, roof replacement and upgrading and precinct improvements.

An audit of existing flat complexes was carried out in 2010/2011. In this audit schemes were ranked over a number of headings: Design, Condition, and Social situation. The audit was undertaken by the Area Housing Teams, City Architects and included input from the council's community, rents and allocations sections. The results show that there are schemes which are in various stages of their life cycle. Some need significant renewal which entails considerable capital investment.

Based on the priority ranking from that audit, the following actions have taken place:

- Refurbishment to complexes have taken place or are in the process of being refurbished by the Council or AHBs (Crampton Buildings, Hogan Court, St Mary's Mansion's, Jamestown Court)
- Complexes are programmed for capital works for either refurbishment and redevelopment or both (Dolphin House, O'Devaney Gardens, St Michael's Estate, Cornamona Court, Dominick St., North King Street, Ballybough Road, Croke Villas)
- Ongoing energy upgrade works, which include the energy efficiency upgrade programme, installation of energy efficient heating systems, window replacement, external wall insulation, and gas boiler replacement programme.
- Programmed maintenance works which include upgrading/refurbishing roofs, staircases, drainage and fire protection works.
- A rolling programme of remedial works through voids (Tyrone Place, Bernard Curtis House, Oliver Bond House, Ballybough House, St. Michans, etc.)

In 2017 A desktop review, has been carried out in City Architects of selected complexes . This review consisted in the assessment of each complex with respect to condition of the buildings, housing density, quality of the site layout and whether the buildings were protected structures or of heritage value.

That initial review included in some cases feasibility studies which have informed a way forward. Up to now over 20 complexes comprising 46 blocks and over 1,200 apartments have been reviewed up to sketch feasibility. The options considered for these blocks comprise a combination of:

- Amalgamation of existing blocks
- New build extensions to blocks
- Additional floor to the blocks
- New build blocks within the site to offset the loss of units by the amalgamation of the existing units.
- Phased demolition and re-build.
- Phased amalgamation.

List A

Complexes against criteria developed from pilot at Dorset St./ Mary's Place, and identification of appropriate redevelopment option.

Address	No. of Floors	Year Built	No. of Blocks	No. of Units	Area	CA Review	Recommendations
St Finbarr's Court	2	1970	2	29 Bedsits	North West	Stage 1 Approved	Demo. & New build
Dorset Street – St. Mary's Place	5	1966	5	107+ 6 bedsits	Central	Stage 1 Submitted	Demo. & New build 3 Phases
Constitution Hill	5	1968	3	60+ 28 Bedsits+ 1 creche	Central	Complete for Stage 1	Amal. + Retrofit + Densification + New Build 3 Phases
Lissadell Road/ Rafter's Lane	2	1952	6	50	South Central	Ready for for Stage 1	Demo. & New build 4 Phases
Gardiner Street	5	1960	1	36+ 2 bedsits	Central	Ready for Stage 1	Amal. + Retrofit + Densification + New Build
Matt Talbot Court	5	1971	3	48+ 24 bedsits	Central	CA Feasibility	Demo. & New build 3 Phases
Dunne Street / North Clarence Street	5	1963	1	11+ 3 Bedsits	North East	CA Feasibility	Demo. & New build Amal. + Retrofit + Densification
	5	1963	2	63	North East		
Tyrone Place	5	1960	3	97	South Central	CA Feasibility	Demo. & New build 3 Phases
Bernard Curtis House	4	1958	5	120	South Central	CA Feasibility	Amal. + Retrofit + Densification 5 Phases