17.1 EXISTING TWO STOREY HOMES
Within the boundary areas of the Masterplan, apart from the 2,830 high rise flats and 1,867 two-storey family houses as and 120 senior citizens dwellings comprising:

A Timber Clad Houses
Shangan Gardens
COUNTRY GARDENS
Shangan Gardens
Timber Clad Gardens
Sandhill Gardens
Balkurra Gardens
C Yard Houses
Poppintree
Crannog
D Terraced/Semi-Detached Houses
Belclare
Croomogue
Coultry Gardens

17.2 TIMBER CLAD HOUSES
Layout
The layout of the 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 rear garden. Some residents have built garages across the width of rear gardens with cut-off points, providing access 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 strip-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 In many areas this cladding has been replaced by house owners with either a brickwork skin or some other form of replacement cladding.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 Corporate Ownership have been either re-clad 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 wherewithall 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 Miyian 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 in the area. Thus these houses were rationalised with roads situated to the fronts of the houses. The consequences to householders of this change would be an enlarged front gardens allowing ‘on-cuttage’ car parking. Laneways could be closed off and closed road areas either included in existing rear gardens or liberated to provide development sites for new houses, back to back with existing.

17.3 EXISTING FLAT HOUSING

17.3.1 Strategy

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.

17.3.2 Houses

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

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, in many cases, have been enclosed by tenants with varying results.

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 Clondalkin and as has been approved for Clontarf, Blanchardstown.

That is, to reverse the houses, turn 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 general quality, performance and lifecycle of the housing stock and bring it up to the standard of the houses 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 BELCLORE, COUNTRY, 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 sub-stations and water pumping stations - which can be identified as local flashpoints of anti-social activity. As part of the regeneration process, a new compact regardng estate management is produced, these estates must be rendered more manageable. Whether the main building blocks of private gardens, unmanageable open space be given over to infill housing or sub-stations 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

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 the design changes are 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.

17.5 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/Mortgagability
  - The cost of refurbishment (new lifts, over-lading, 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, SIlrouge 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 bedsits 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, new three storey flats, existing open spaces, schools, churches, shopping centre

Total no. of dwellings, houses and flats = 4,801
Total no. of bedsits = 20,959
Density is c. 115 bedsits per hectare or 26 dwellings per hectare

For comparison

Oldtown/Shanoen
Pinewood/Willow
Wadeall 88
Letavoe Farm Rd
Iona/Lindsay Road
Innissal Parade

28
19
20
25
21
19

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 bedsits per hectare or 29 dwellings per hectare.