PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES: RENEWING / REVITALIZING: CREATING LIVABLE CITIES
DUBLIN SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, DIT, IRELAND.

O’DEVANEY GARDENS, DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL HOUSING REGENERATION
Comparing proposed housing regeneration proposals
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INTRODUCTION

The O’Deveney Gardens Local Authority flat complex was constructed in the 1950’s consisted of 278 flats over 13 four storey blocks. The site is located approximately 1km west of the city centre and is bounded to the north by the North Circular Road, to the south by Montpelier Park, to the east by St. Bricin’s Military Hospital and to the west by Montpelier Gardens.

There are three vehicular entrances into the area, one off the Infirmary Road, the second off the North Circular Road and the third Thor Place from the Stoneybatter direction. The immediate area is currently predominantly residential in use with some office and small retail. The site has the benefit of the city’s largest amenity “The Phoenix Park” located only yards away. The site currently consists of the Local Authority Flat Complex’s a large portion of which have been detenanted plus a portion of land acquired by the City Council from the Department of Defence as part of the Affordable Housing Initiative.

The entire site has an area of approximately 14 acres, including the St Bricin’s site which has an area of approximately c. 1.5 acres. The Department of Defence donated the site known as “St. Bricin’s” adjacent to O’Devaney Gardens to Dublin City Council for the provision of affordable housing. The entire site is zoned objective Z13 in the Dublin City Development Plan that is “To seek the social, economic and physical rejuvenation of an area.”
POOR INTEGRATION WITH SURROUNDING HOUSING AREA

DEFENSIVE BOUNDARIES

UNDERUSED MEWS LANE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

VACANT SHOP UNITS POOR VISUAL IMPRESSION

HIDDEN ACCESS LACK OF INCENTIVE TO ENTER ESTATE

POTENTIAL FOR AMENITY AND RECREATION AS A FOCAL POINT UNDERUSED

LACK OF SIGNIFICANT LOCAL SHOPPING FACILITIES - WIDER AREA

LACK OF INCENTIVE TO ENTER ESTATE FROM SOUTH

LACK OF INTERACTION WITH INFIRMARY ROAD SITE

LACK OF INTERACTION WITH ST. BRICIN'S LANDS
OPEN THE SITE- FULL INTEGRATION WITH THE LOCAL AREA

MIXED USES ON SITE TO BENEFIT THE WIDER NEIGHBOURHOOD

NEW RECREATION AND AMENITY TO BENEFIT THE WIDER NEIGHBOURHOOD

RESPECTFUL INTEGRATION WITH ESTABLISHED CHARACTER

PROMOTE WALKING ROUTES AND CONNECTIONS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

COURTS COMPLEX- SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYMENT AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES CLOSE TO SITE

INFIRMARY ROAD SITE- OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUTUAL BENEFITS WITH BOTH RE-DEVELOPMENTS

ST.BRICIN’S- SIGNIFICANT CHARACTER- POSSIBLE FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND INTEGRATION WITH WIDER AREA

VISUAL LINKS TO PHOENIX PARK- IMPORTANT FOR CHARACTER AND HIGHLIGHT CLOSE PROXIMITY

SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL TOURIST AND HISTORICAL LOCATIONS CLOSE TO SITE

IMPROVE ENTRANCE POINTS TO THE ESTATE TO ENCOURAGE MOVEMENT THROUGH THE AREA
1. PRIVATE DEVELOPER PROPOSED SCHEME
This Proposal was received in August 2008 to examine the options available for the successful regeneration of the Dublin City Council Housing Estates at O’Devaney Gardens. A Multi-disciplinary team was formed comprising members from the City Housing Department, City Architects, the Planning Department, and Valuers Section. The work of this team involved re-examining the commitments contained within the Request for Proposal’s (RFP) and community charters, and examining ways in which to deliver the main agreed principles in each case.

The proposals do maintain the original objectives for the site in seeking to promote the creation of balanced sustainable communities, with a mix of commercial and community uses, social, affordable and private housing and establishing appropriately scaled public open spaces. The proposal differs fundamentally from the original Public Private Partnership process in that the projects are not developer led. The proposals were put before the Council and if agreed will form an integral part of the City Council’s Housing Action Plan. However, shortly after the proposal was received and delivered, the development and regeneration programme for this site, ceased.

In this proposal, a new focus is given to the community spaces of the project which should reinforce community ideals for the local community. This is accompanied by an eclectic mix of retail and social arrangements are being explored for the scheme, which should act as a catalyst for redevelopment.

However, certain areas of the scheme appear as though they may become neglected, or become used for areas of anti-social behaviour. This has been an issue in the original development of O’Devaney, as certain zones within the site had little or no circulation in and around them. Also, as there is only one main infrastructure route through this design proposal, this may harness redevelopment and occupation of other areas of the scheme. The main buildings which surround the main route of the scheme appear strong and out of scale from what exists in the local community. The local ‘grain’ and architecture of the surrounding context appears to be ignored in this new master plan. There is no consideration for the architecture of the dwellings which exist in Oxmantown, and the North Circular Road, and that of St Bricins Military Hospital which adjoins the site boundary. There is also a clear disconnect to the scale of the adjoining cottages at Ashford Place, and Ashford Cottages.

This proposed scheme does allow for local people from the surroundings areas to come into the zone to use the developed amenities and facilities, which would in return, progress development of the scheme. Local residents may use the retail units which have been created in order begin enterprises or businesses.
This proposal was prepared by ‘Reddy Architecture + Urbanism’, for Dublin City Council. The firm is a combination of architects and design professionals providing a comprehensive range of design services to design great buildings and places that enhance the lives of those who use them.

For the site of O’Deveney Gardens, the idea was to create a new community and social hub, a new residential quarter, with two- and three -storey duplex units which are arranged around the edge of the site to respect the scale of the surrounding artisan housing. A mix of typologies, including live-work, duplex and one-, two- and three-bed units aim to foster a social balance within the project. The core of the site is formed by seven- to ten-storey residential blocks above retail units which frame the public open space. A new public square adjacent to the community centre connects the public amenities and new residential and retail elements. A realignment of the existing through road network permitted the introduction of a new community zone as a counterpoint to a retail boulevard.

In this proposed plan of regeneration, this master plan provides for 400 private units, 240 affordable units, community centre, retail, new Public Square, rooftop playing pitch and sports hall and a new road network. The proposal also bears a strong connection back to the existing ‘grain’ of the surrounding community and lands of the site. A new focus is given to the community spaces of the project which should reinforce community ideals, and an eclectic mix of housing arrangements are being explored for the scheme.

Areas of the scheme appear as though they may be neglected, as they are grounded away from the main social centre of the project. There may be an over-reliance of the primary infrastructure routes in the scheme. This may lead users to pass by areas or zones which they may enjoy or explore for themselves. The strong connections to the local areas may allow for local people to use these new amenities and facilities. Local residents, and those from surrounding areas may use the retail units, and new community spaces and facilities.
3. DIT STUDENT PROPOSED SCHEME

In order to begin a study of how to orchestrate a new masterplan for the site of O’Devaney Gardens, we set to explore 5 points on Urbanism which would serve as the drivers for our fundamental ideas about planning scheme development. These points were used, along with our insights into what how schemes had been successful and unsuccessful in the past. The five points we used are; Materials, Connectivity, Scale, Infrastructure, and Landscape.

Our housing typologies developed around a number of ‘social resources’, or amenities which we developed for the site. These were fabrication labs and office units, a wellness and sports centre, and a design school, with workshops and exhibition spaces. All three were also accompanied by an array of community facilities, such as shops, cafés, community centre, community library, cinema, and specific retail units such as butchers, bookshops, hairdressers, pharmacy, and so on.

For our masterplan for the Urban regeneration of the adjacent O’Devaney Garden area, we wish to take inspiration from this surrounding local context. The local communities neighbouring O’Devaney Garden’s contain a very rich history and well-established family base which we aim to preserve and include as we revive the community. We felt that the construction of the existing apartment blocks on our site were not of the aim to socially, historically or visually include the surrounds which is in sharp contrast in our desire to Nurture rather than alienate. Our Pallet of materials for our project will be small, concise and the same as the already established in striving to keep the importance of character and allow our three schemes to become one whole. Materials may also be used to distinguish certain building types within the scheme which will allow to us further enforce certain aspects and areas, whether they be public spaces or more private spaces creating intimacy of place.

The Life of a person is the primary focus when considering scale within our proposal. The site is designed around the individual and their navigation through the each of the sites on a daily basis. The idea of a small scaled town will strengthen the area which is currently lacking in amenities and identity. The public spaces will be small enough to encourage the public to congregate in social areas, feeling secure in their position while also feeling part of the wider context. To stitch in the surrounding context in areas that meets the site boundaries. By Utilising the contours of the sites, it both gives opportunity for separating private and public spaces and it allows for people to have a view, this can occur with the stepping down of buildings towards the southern end for views of the mountains.

In all, we see our proposal as one which will promote a strong community ethos, whilst also providing a facility and space for all ages to enjoy and spend time in. we have worked up and altered many different scenarios for which the users and occupiers of the scheme may come across. We have also placed a strong emphasis on the needs of the local community, and the existing fabric in which they currently reside.

We see our proposal as a desirable and successful place to live in, and our vision for here is one of a fluid development of this place, in an existing urban fabric.