

# THE VIENNA MODEL

HOUSING FOR THE  
21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CITY

**Housing, Community  
and Environment**

12/04/2019

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# Home at Last?

## The Right to Home and Dublin's Rapid Build Housing Scheme

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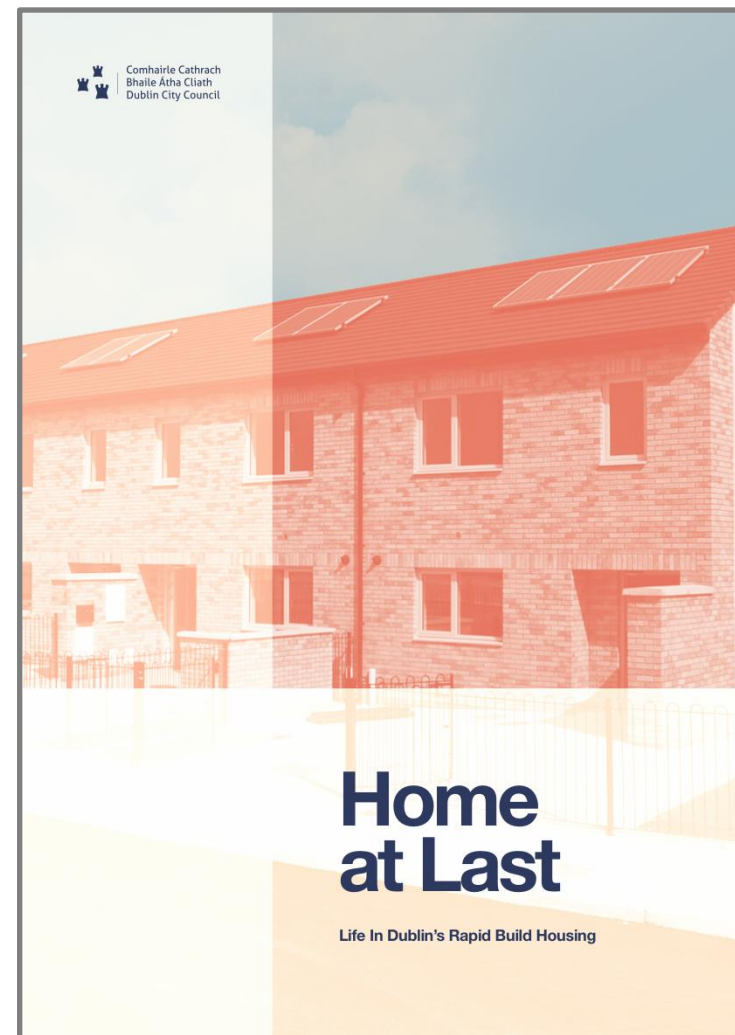
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*The Vienna Housing Model: Housing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

*Seminar, 'Housing for All: Housing, Community and Environment*

# Home at Last Research Project

- Research commissioned by DCC, conducted by Royal Holloway, University of London.
- 21 residents interviewed between October and December 2017; 8 Ballymun, 13 Finglas
- Key stakeholder meeting; interviews with Housing Area team member and two former special advisers to the government
- “User-led” approach: Report centres on resident stories and reflections
- “*Home at Last*” report launched in July 2018.

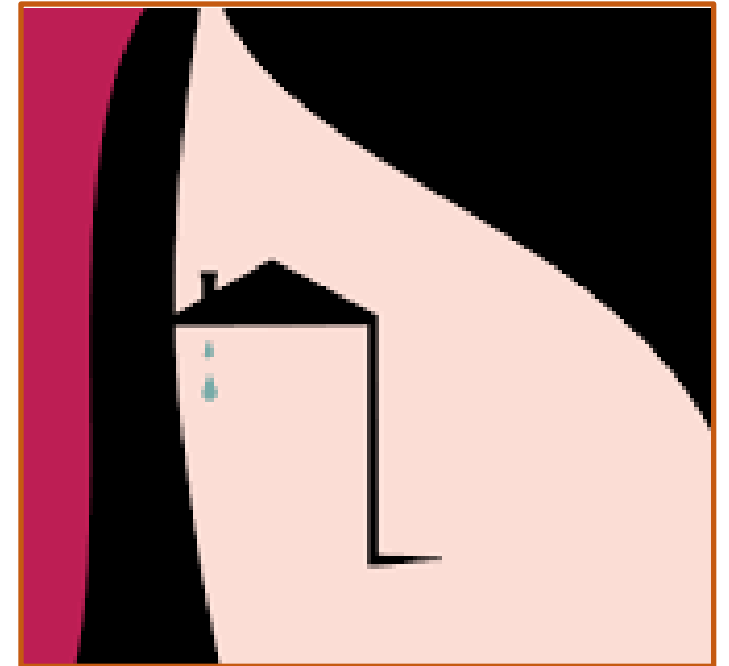






# Bringing “Home” into the Housing Crisis

- Central importance of feeling ‘at home’
- *Housing* refers to the material dwelling - housing studies traditionally concerned with the economics of housing markets.
- *Home* relates to a much more expansive, more emotive set of ideas- can refer to both the material house itself, or the feeling of security and familiarity that the house might bring.
- Increasing prevalence of home in academic study – e.g. “critical geographies of home”



# The Right to Home

- Home as a key political site: is both affected by, and affects, wider politics.
- Home often used as a tool to narrativise the “deserving” versus “undeserving”, e.g.:
  - Homeownership long framed and understood as the most desirable typology of home – exacerbated by the Right to Buy;
  - The bedroom tax in the UK (excluding Scotland) - penalises social tenants deemed to have one or more spare bedroom
- But home and housing also can be used as a rallying point for change:
  - E.g. “Focus E15 movement in East London
  - Homes For All march in Dublin; Irish Housing Network



# Ontological Security:

‘the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments. A sense of reliability of persons and things [...] is basic to feelings of ontological security’

(Anthony Giddens)



# Stigma and Social Housing





# ‘Oh God, this isn’t going to be good’

‘It’s like the Nissen huts coming up from the 1920s, the pre-war things, you’re kind of going, “Oh God, this isn’t going to be good”...you know, cardboard homes’

*(Maggie, Rapid Build resident)*

‘Initially there was a lot of resistance because the word prefab was in the offing and we knew it was going to be a very politically problematic issue...the word prefab has connotations most people know from school, you know, poor quality, cold, drafty accommodation. I think it’ll always be seen as second rate’

*(Former government policy adviser)*



# The Stigma of Homelessness

Assumptions that people become homeless due to personal, rather than institutional, failings.

*“There is a stigma around it, a lot of people haven’t a clue and they think ‘Oh well, she must be a drug user, she must have been an alcoholic, she must have been this or she must have been that... Come here, I was the very same, a little man with a beard and a hat and a big coat and that was a homeless person to me, it wasn’t me certainly, do you know what I mean.’”*

Accusations of “cheating/gaming” the system. These are often gendered: directed at young single mothers

*“[What] annoys me is people talking about us... like ‘They’re doing this and they’re doing that just to get a house’. It’s not like that. Some of us have got real good personal reasons why we’re homeless.”*

*“I used to be mortified, I deleted my Facebook page when I was made homeless because I was just so ashamed and so, like I still haven’t gone back on Facebook, people don’t know me anymore, my friends, I don’t socialise with anybody anymore.”*

# From Housing Precarity to Housing Security: Moving in to Rapid Builds



Importance of home belongings in  
establishing ontological security

*“...It’s like when your stuff comes out of storage and looking at pictures, and I got really emotional because it just hit me, like ‘oh my God I had a life before this’. It’s not just me kind of telling people.”*

*“The day I moved in here [getting upset] was the best day of my life. I swear to God. The best day of my life, I swear... This is our first proper home, you know?”*

# The Role of Aesthetics in Combatting Stigma and Fostering a Sense of Belonging

“Blending in” to the neighbourhood important for residents – do not stand out as ‘housing for the homeless’.

*“The way they kind of put things like that together for social housing, it makes you feel that, ‘Oh well you’re not private, so we’re letting you know that you’re in social housing, these are not yours’... We have stigmas all through our lives anyway, so why put it on your house?”*

*“You know I don’t know how many times I’ve had that, where the architect designed social housing scheme is this Legoland colour-DIY scheme down at the end of the town that everybody knows about.”*

*“I think they don’t stand out as council housing... the brickwork on the front makes them compete with other purchased houses”*



# Blending in?

## Rapid Builds and the Wider Neighbourhood

Finglas residents felt they “blended” into the existing community more successfully than Ballymun residents.

Emphasis on mix of tenants in Finglas helped residents feel less stigmatised as “homeless”

“[Talking about future Rapid Build sites] *They need...to build a community, and it's not just plonked, you know. The one at Ballymun would have been just... plonked... whereas they moved on then to Finglas to be more of a kind of a residential area that was mature, you know, beside a church or beside a school, you know'*

# Rapid Build Moving Forward

- More than 1,200 more Rapid Build units planned in Dublin across 12 sites.
- Next scheme due for completion next month
- Rapid Builds not a silver bullet – however they provide an important intervention and source of secure housing the city is desperately in need of

# Some Conclusions

- The right to home is fundamental – secure, high-quality housing is one of the foundations of both individual wellbeing and belonging, and cohesive communities.
- Housing materiality and aesthetics are crucial in facilitating residents' sense of belonging, security and dignity: their ability to feel “at home”.
- Social housing needs to be planned and built with the context of the local area in mind. “Fitting in” and establishing a sense of belonging in their new neighbourhood is particularly crucial for people who have experienced the trauma and stigma of homelessness.
- Resident voices are paramount in better understanding how to provide high-quality, community-fostering social housing.



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# Home at Last

Life In Dublin's Rapid Build Housing

Thank you

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