



Towering

The Ballymun Regeneration initiative has earmarked a fashion revival as part of its efforts to breathe some life into a long-neglected area

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The dilapidated structure of the Ballymun flats tower block complex stands lonely, almost derelict. Most of its tenants have long since left. Yet life reverberates from one of the abandoned units: not that of lowly squatters, but a group with aspirations to high fashion. The doorway in the graffitied stairwell opens into a world of colour, fabric, whirring sewing machines and activity.

Welcome to the home of Rediscover Fashion, a project which began in 2008 in tandem with the Ballymun Regeneration initiative and subsequently carried on through the work of the Rediscovery Centre. Over the last decade, the centre has worked to change the physical, social and economic outlook of the area.

"One of the focuses of the plan for regeneration was to ensure environmental sustainability," says Sarah Miller, manager of the Rediscovery Centre and environmental projects manager of Ballymun Regeneration. "We began by utilising projects on the ground that would change mindsets in the area,

with an emphasis on sustainable living. As ideas grew, we realised that we could raise the bar a little, not just for here, but as a centre of excellence for the rest of the country. We wanted to do more than just recycle – we wanted to make waste a viable resource."

The Rediscover Fashion studio is a fashionista's treasure trove. Rails of clothing and brightly coloured fabrics line the walls, magazines are stacked high, patterns and sketches are pinned to the walls and the focal point is a "mood board" of eye-popping images, fabric scraps, shapes and shades circumnavigating the word "Candy".

The project's head designer, Carrie Ann Moran, from Finglas, says that from the theme of Candy, the designers have extrapolated "pastels and brights, stripes and polka, ruffles and structured pieces – but fundamentally fun".

Moran, alongside Miller and her core team of Tiina Muru (a qualified pattern technician who studied at the College of Facile in Tallinn in Estonia) and trainee fashion assistant Jenny Conroy, are pulling out all the stops in preparation for their second major fashion event which