



Newtown Villas
Architectural Conservation
Area

Character Appraisal

Preface

"The assessment of the special character of the Newtown Villas Architectural Conservation Area was commissioned by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and was carried out in 2011 *by Lotts Architecture and Urbanism.*

The Character Appraisal, which includes an edited version of the special character report, was prepared by the Conservation Division and Planning Department of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council."

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1.0 Introduction

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown contains a number of areas, which exhibit a distinct character and unique qualities based on their historic built form and layout. This character is often derived from the cumulative impact of an area's buildings, their setting, landscape and other locally important features developed gradually over time. These areas are an expression of our heritage and our identity and contribute significantly to the quality of our lives. These areas will continue to develop and change but their special character is of great value and worthy of protection.

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, provides the legislative basis for the protection of such areas by facilitating their designation as Architectural Conservation Areas, or ACAs.

Under Part IV of this Act, an ACA is defined as a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that:

- *is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, social or technical interest or value, or,*
- *contributes to the appreciation of Protected Structures.*

A wide variety of areas can be considered for designation as an ACA. For example, an ACA could be centered on an individual building, or a terrace of houses and it may be rural or urban.

ACA designation forms the basis for policies to preserve or enhance an area and provides an element of control over the external appearance of buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Planning controls are more extensive with exempted development limited. Any works that in the opinion of the Planning Authority would have a material effect on the character of an ACA require planning permission.

Retaining the special character of an area is best achieved by managing and guiding change on a wider scale than the individual structure. Hence, the objective of the ACA designation is to guide change within an area and ensure future development is carried out in a manner sympathetic to its special character.

It should be noted that ACA designation is distinct from designation as a protected structure, although Protected Structures may be located within an ACA area. Protected Structures are subject to separate procedures and requirements under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

1.1 Aim of study

A number of Conservation Areas were identified in the previous Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan. These have now been assigned 'Candidate Architectural Conservation Areas' status under the 2010 - 2016 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan. Section 11.3.13. Policy AR10: Candidate Architectural Conservation Areas states that:

“A number of Conservation Areas were identified in the previous County Development Plan. The Council is committed to assessing these areas to determine if they meet the requirements and criteria for re-designation as Architectural Conservation Areas as set out in the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government’s “Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities”.

Newtown Villas lies to the east of Blackrock Village in a suburban area. To the east of the candidate ACA stands a former tram depot with a large open ground facing Newtown Avenue. Two-storey suburban houses are located to the south and west of the ACA and have no direct relationship to it. The ACA is surrounded for the most part by a high stone wall with a gated opening to Newtown Avenue. The houses in the ACA align a short cul-de-sac from the gated entrance off Newtown Avenue in an introspective manner. The topography is almost flat as is the surrounding area save for along the coast. The slope in the ground runs downwards from south to north (towards Newtown Avenue). This is evident in the stepped roof profile.

The natural topography and built features combine to form a coherent area of special architectural heritage interest.

The primary aim of this study is to:

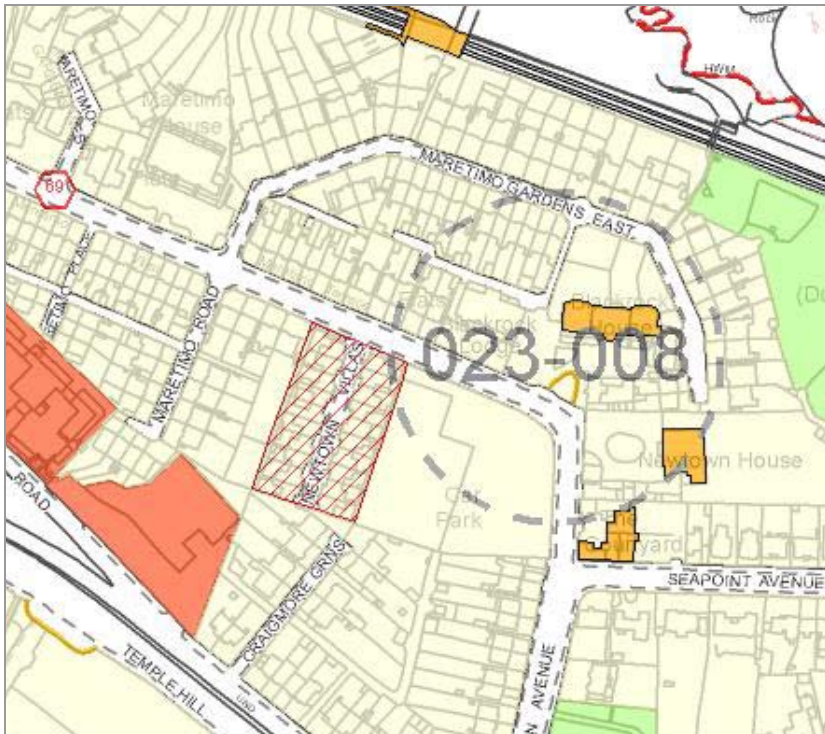
- *identify the special character of the proposed Newtown Villas ACA.*
- *to set out conservation and planning policies which protect its special character and which will guide future development,*
- *to inform owners/occupiers and developers of the type of work that would require planning permission.*

1.2 Existing candidate ACA

Newtown Villas stands to the east of Blackrock Village and today forms an architectural group which is quite distinct from its urban surroundings. It is essentially a group of houses, modest scale in and set in an enclosed space that derives from an earlier large suburban house layout. The core characteristics which determine the significance of the street as a heritage site are architectural, historical, artistic, cultural, social and technical interest. These attributes, discussed later in the document.

Historically Newtown Villas was built to provide housing services for workers in the neighbouring tram depot. This functional relationship is still evident in the buildings and layout despite the demise of the tram service. The tram network played an important role in the development of Dublin’s suburbs. This

ensemble is a good example of a typology repeated elsewhere in the city and in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.



Extract from the 2010-2016 Development Plan map of the area showing the location of nearby protected structures (orange)

1.3 Extent of Proposed ACA

Having made the study of the candidate ACA, it is not proposed to amend the proposed boundary. The existing boundary is considered physically and architecturally coherent.

1.4 Protected Structures & Land Use Zoning Objectives within the Proposed ACA.

None of the dwellings within the Newtown Villas Architectural Conservation Area are included in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Record of Protected Structures.

There are also no archaeological sites, features or artefacts listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) within the Newtown Villas ACA. However, the subject site abuts the boundary of and area of archaeological potential located on Newtown Avenue. The subject monument is listed as ref: 023-008 'Castle –Unclassified', in the 2010-2016 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan.

In terms of the 2010-2016 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan, the proposed Newtown Villas ACA is contained within Land Use Zoning Objective 'A', which has a stated objective "to protect and improve residential amenity".

It should also be noted that the subject site is located within the boundary of the proposed Blackrock Local Area Plan.

2.0 Historical Development of the Area

2.1 Medieval period to the seventeenth century

Blackrock and Newtown were controlled by The Cistercians of St Mary's Abbey who owned large tracts of land on the outskirts of Dublin in medieval times. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Newtown-on-the-Strand was a small village between Blackrock and Seapoint and on the dissolution of the Abbey in 1539, the lands of Newtown contained a small castle-house, and several other buildings held by a tenant called John Moran. From the mid 16th century, the land surrounding Newtown was often held in common with Monkstown and changed ownership several times, granted by the Crown to Sir John Travers, Viscount Baltinglas, Sir Gerald Aylmer, the Cheevers family, and Edmund Ludlow, with the Crown retaining the tithes formerly paid to the abbey.

The 1659 Census, conducted as part of the Down Survey records the castle at Newtown as being slated and in good repair, and the population was "two English and twelve Irish, of whom six were house-holders". Shortly after this in 1678, ownership changed again to the Byrne family and Newtown was

known as Newtown Castle Byrne. A medieval cross, originally belonging to the Byrne family formerly delineated the southern boundary of Dublin city and is now located on the Main Street of Blackrock.

2.2 Eighteenth and nineteenth century



Enlarged extract from Rocque's map of Co Dublin, 1760

The landscape of Newtown and Blackrock changed little between the medieval period and the eighteenth century. By this time, the two major estates in the locality were Mount Merrion and Stillorgan belonging to the Fitzwilliam and Allen families

respectively. The eighteenth century saw the beginning of the transition of the Newtown and Blackrock area outside of the villages from an agricultural to a residential locality. At this time, there were few buildings between Dunleary (Dún Laoghaire) and Blackrock with the exception of some large houses within small estates near the village of Newtown.

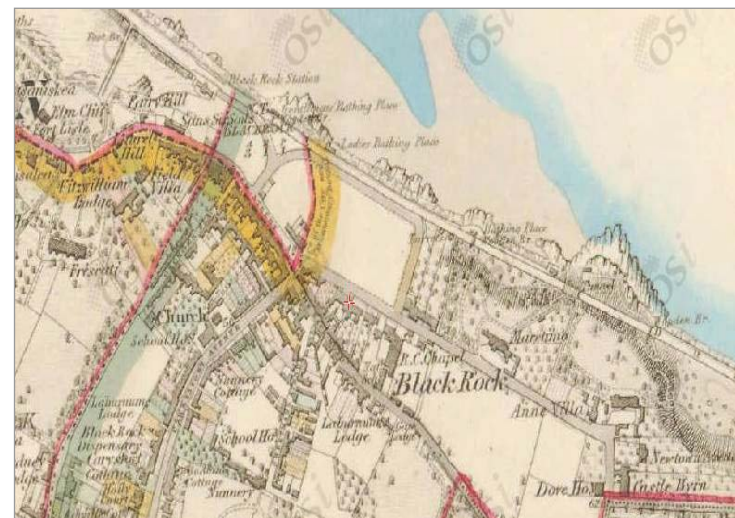
In the eighteenth century, Blackrock developed as a fashionable holiday, bathing and health resort and many of the gentry and wealthy Dublin citizens built elegant seaside villas within small well planted estates. Blackrock was ideally positioned as one of the closest coastal locations to Dublin whereby wealthy citizens could embrace clean sea air away from the polluted, overcrowded and unhealthy living conditions of Dublin city.

Rocque's map of 1760 shows Newtown Avenue as a straight avenue extending between Blackrock Town and New Town with several buildings on either side of the road.

By the early nineteenth century, the village of Newtown was encompassed within the expanding Blackrock village. Leigh in 1835 generously praises the villas surrounding Blackrock "*the extraordinary beauty of the country residences, and of the sea-shore*" and Lewis in 1837 expresses a similar sentiment describing the town as being "embellished with numerous detached villas surrounded with pleasure grounds disposed with much taste". The workers and poorer classes lived

predominantly in Blackrock village of which Lewis gives a less complimentary description of containing 308 houses and possessing "few pleasing features".

The Act of Union in 1801, followed by the departure of many aristocratic families from Dublin city and the construction of the Dublin - Kingstown Railway in 1834 which destroyed the Blackrock coastline and provided easy access to Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire) and later Bray caused a decline in the prospect of Blackrock. Many of the aristocratic families left and were replaced by wealthy merchant families. Dalton in 1838 described Blackrock as "one of the most ruinous suburbs of the metropolis".

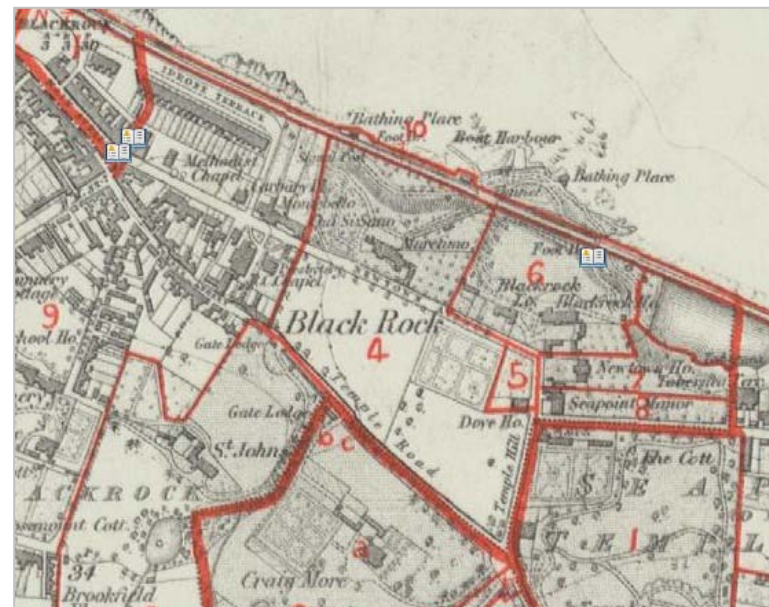


Extract from first edition Ordnance Survey map, surveyed 1837

The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1837 shows the development of Blackrock village and Newtown Avenue to the east with several large houses including Maretimo, Anne Villa and Blackrock House with grounds extending down to the seafront.

Maretimo was one of the principle eighteenth century seaside villas in Blackrock that was built by Nicholas Lawless, Lord Cloncurry in c.1770. Lewis in 1837 described the location of Maretimo as “beautifully situated”. The house was within a small demesne which extended along Newtown Avenue on both sides of the road and down to the sea. The gardens on either side of the road were connected by a tunnel with a walled garden on the south side of Newtown Avenue, the site on which Newtown Villa are now located.

The construction of the Dublin - Kingstown railway line in 1834, separated the gardens from the coastline and Lord Cloncurry was generously compensated with £2000 and the construction of a small private harbour, bathing temple and footbridge designed by JS Mulvany that composed of two cut granite towers, giving access to the seashore.



Griffith's Valuation's map of 1852 (with Maretimo denoted as 4) shows the extent of the Maretimo estate.

2.3 Late nineteenth and early twentieth century – Tram Cottages

The late nineteenth century saw the beginning of the transition of Newtown Avenue from an avenue of large impressive houses to a middle class suburb. In 1890, Harrison observes that the formerly extensive grounds of Maretimo House “are now built upon or let for other uses.” The first tram depot on the Newtown Avenue was built within the former walled garden of Maretimo House in c.1885.

The first horse tram service in Dublin started in February 1872 and the Nelson's Pillar – Merrion Square - Blackrock - Dún Laoghaire – Dalkey line was built in a number of stages with the final linking section between Blackrock and Dún Laoghaire completed by the Blackrock and Kingstown Company in 1885 along with a depot/horse shed on Newtown Avenue.

The entire line was rebuilt from Haddington Road to Dalkey by the Dublin Southern Districts Tramways Company (DSDTC) as the first electric tramway in 1896 and purchased later that year by the Dublin United Tramways Company (DUTC). Around 1908, a 30 car depot was built beside the former depot to accommodate the new bogie trams on the Dalkey line. The original depot is set back from the road with a yard to the front and the early 20th century depot was constructed adjoining this building to the east with the front elevation closer to the road. The Newtown depot was one of several other tram depots in Dublin including Ballsbridge, Cabra, Clonskeagh, Clontarf, Dalkey, Dartry, Donnybrook, Heuston (formerly Kingsbridge), Inishcore, Phibsboro, Sandymount and Terenure. The depots in Blackrock and Dartry have a similar design.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1908 shows the tram depot but the tram cottages are not depicted. The cottages were constructed in c.1909 and an Irish Times article dated October 1909 refers to *"the new tramway cottages"*. The Tram Cottages are first

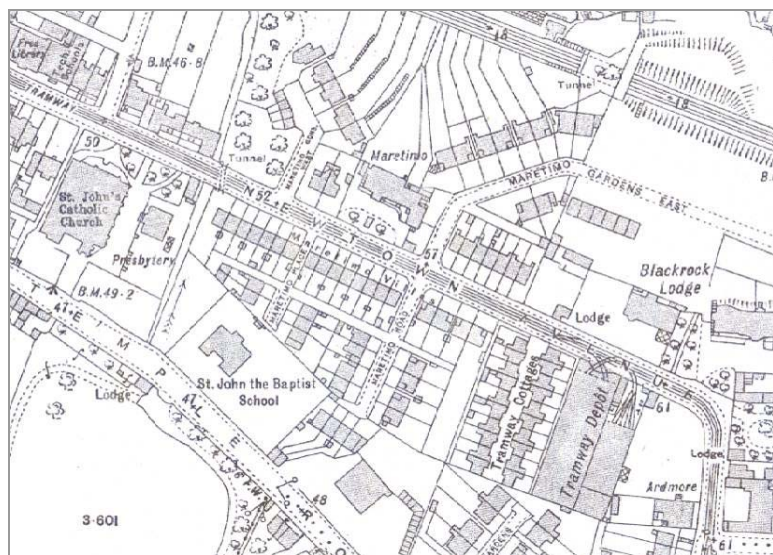
listed in Thom's Directory in 1910 and the 1911 census reveals that all the cottages were occupied by tram workers or their widows who often housed boarders who were also tram workers.



Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1936

The DUTC constructed worker's cottages between the 1870s and 1910s. At the DUTC annual general meeting on the 2nd of February 1872, the building of housing for tramway men at Terenure was praised and a similar scheme announced for Donnybrook. The DUTC workers endured difficult working conditions and the provision of housing was a small benefit of the job. The rows of tram cottages were usually located along

roads called Tramway Cottages as in the case of Newtown or Tramway Terrace. The tram workers were typically from the country due to DUTC policy which considered country men as more honourable, stronger and less likely to join a union and the cottages were built to accommodate tram workers on account of the housing shortage in Dublin at the time.



Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1908

Inadequate and unsanitary housing was a serious social problem in Dublin during the nineteenth and early twentieth century and the practice of providing housing for workers was undertaken by other large employers in the transport and brewing industries

such as Guinnesses and The Great Northern Railway Company. Local authorities and voluntary movements such as the Dublin Artisans' Dwelling Company also provided housing during this period.

The Newtown cottages look very similar to other tramway cottages built by the DUTC and were built to a standard plan at a cost of c.£150 per cottage. The tram cottages were typically red-brick with a central porch flanked by a window on either side. Most were single-storey with the exception of Clontarf where several of the houses are two-storey. The unusual feature of the roof profile extending over the central porch at the Newtown Cottage is repeated at Dartry and Terenure which appear to be built to the same plans. Plans and drawings of the cottages do not appear to survive and were likely destroyed when the DUTC headquarters was blown up during the Civil War in 1922.

The cottages are bordered along Newtown Avenue by a tall rubble stone wall which was originally the north wall of the walled garden of Maretimo house. The wall is lined internally with red-bricks, which was a common practice in walled garden as bricks retain heat better than stone and therefore encourage plant growth against the walls. The tall red brick piers are markedly similar to the depot piers as shown in Fig.11 and were likely built by the DUTC.



Terenure Depot and adjoining tramway housing showing similar layout; extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1907

2.4 Twentieth century

The Ordnance Survey map of 1936 depicts the tramway depot and adjoining Tramway Cottages. It also shows the two-storey and terraced houses constructed in the former gardens of Martimo House by the developer JP Colbert, following the sale of Martimo.

The tram service in Dublin gradually declined during the 1930s and 1940s until the closure of the last route to Dalkey in July 1949. This tram arrived in Newtown Depot with police protection

due to the large number of souvenir collectors. The DUTC was merged into Córas Iompair Éireann (CIE) in 1945 and the tram cottages were sold shortly later. The name appears to have been changed to Newtown Villas at this time, a practice that was repeated at the other tram cottages throughout Dublin.

In the 1960s, the tram depot was converted into a garage and extended into the adjoining premises on which Ardmore House formerly stood.

Martimo House was demolished in 1970 and apartments built on the site. The only surviving remains of the former estate are a block of granite with Martimo carved onto it (along Newtown Avenue), the footbridge over the railway and a section of the former walled garden bordering Newtown Villas along Newtown Avenue.

3.0 Description of Historic Built Environment

3.1 Defining Characteristics

The special character of the Newtown Villas ACA can be defined under the following distinctive attributes: Natural Features and Layout; Socio-economic functions; Building types and materials; Quality and treatment of open spaces.

3.1.1 Natural Features

The street space is characterised by a very slight rise in the topography from north to south. This is hardly perceptible and is evident only in steps in the roof between some of the houses.

3.1.2 Layout

Newtown Villas represents one example of a housing typology developed in association with Dublin's tram infrastructure. In the case of Terenure the houses are arranged as a simple row to the south side of the depot on one side of a cul-de-sac and the house types are very similar to those in Newtown Villas. Newtown Villas has the same arrangement of houses adjacent to the tram depot but it responds to its historic context by arranging the houses within the boundary constraints of an existing historic walled garden. The garden wall was retained to

three sides of the houses; the fourth (east side) was defined by the depot building. The layout is the result of given historic contextual restraints and this is an important factor defining the special character of the ACA.

The houses are single-storey and are arranged as two rows of equal length facing one another. No house is located to the end of the street space. The houses are seen obliquely rather than frontally and this reinforces their picturesque qualities. The picturesque street view from Newtown Avenue is framed by two large brick piers set into the stone perimeter wall. A common access lane exists to the rear of the houses and they address themselves mainly to the street. The access lane is reached on either side of the street by a gated entrance in a gap between the northernmost houses and the perimeter wall.

The houses project into the street with recessed spaces between the entrances of each house, they are paired and handed. The projecting bays cause the roof plane to reach low into the street space. The roof plane is punctuated by rows of squat brick chimneys. Together these features reduce the scale of the buildings and give them and the street space an intimate character. The sense of intimacy is further reinforced by the surrounding high perimeter wall which has a single opening to Newtown Villas. This reaches almost as high as the ridge line of

the houses and practically conceals them from the outside world.

3.1.3 Socio-economic Functions

Newtown Villas fulfil a residential function with no commercial or office use. Their character remains one of small single storey dwellings. The immediate surrounding area is suburban in character and is composed predominately of recent type two-storey detached houses. A group of large historic houses and gardens are located to the east and north east end of Newtown Avenue. The former tram depot and grounds is now in use as a car dealership.

3.1.4 Building Types

The quality of the historic building stock in the ACA reflects it's historic, architectural and social heritage significance and consolidates its character, despite decay of some buildings and despite some recent developments with less sympathetic treatment of the historic details to the facades, roofs, windows and doors and outdoor space. All the historic buildings are of cottage house type and character and are single storey with pitched roofs. This type is repeated for example in the former Tramway Terrace (Cormac Terrace) that was located beside the tram depot in Terenure.

3.1.5 Materials and Architectural Details

Roofs

The roofs of the houses are either natural Welsh slate or modern equivalents. The roofs are arranged with slopes to either side of a common ridge line. This is capped by rows of red clay ridge tiles that match the brick colour. The slope continues uninterrupted over the projecting bays located at the entrances. The low elevation of the roofs at these points are emphasised by large barge boards that project into the street space. The yellow brick chimneys have bands of red brick with the uppermost of these projecting. The chimneys have simple yellow clay pots.



Roof with original natural slates

Elevations

The brick used in the elevations is a mixture of red and yellow types. Two large piers of red brick mark the entrance to Newtown Avenue and are located in the stone faced wall of the former walled garden. The elevation walls are constructed of yellow brick. The window openings are flanked by red brick arranged as quoins that project slightly with flat brick voussoir arches above. The window sills are of cast concrete. The door opening also has a flat brick voussoir arch above.



Elevation to No. 1

Windows and Doors:

The doors and windows are constructed of timber with painted finish. The windows in the recessed area are simple sashes in two-over-two divisions in vertical format. The windows in the projecting part of the elevations are arranged as double sashes in one opening with a large central timber division. These windows are one-over-one sashes, the sash openings are vertical format and the overall opening is horizontal format. It is not clear if any of the original doors have survived.



Original sash windows

3.1.6 Open Space and Boundaries

Boundary Treatment

The perimeter stone wall is little evident within Newtown Villas except to the end of the street. On Newtown Avenue it has a strong presence and contributes significantly to its character which is defined by a mix of historic large suburban villa-type houses and their boundary walls and more recent suburban house types. The brick piers to the opening to Newtown Avenue are capped by precast concrete pyramidal projecting copings. The piers themselves have chamfered edge bricks to the corners, a projecting brick roll to the upper part of the pier and a wider base with a transition of chamfered brick layers to the main body of the pier. The historic inner brick lining of the perimeter wall can be seen beside where the piers adjoin the wall.



Stone wall of former garden with the brick piers on Newtown Avenue



Stone wall of former garden at the south end of Newtown Villas

3.1.7 Street Features and Materials

Paving and Drainage

The street space retains no historic paving materials and has a tar macadam road surface with patched concrete footpaths. Some historic metal drainage channels with metal covers that traverse the footpaths remain.

Signage

Historic enamel name plates are attached to both of the brick entrance piers.



Enamel name plate.



Lane access gate (beside No. 1) with a view of the brick inner lining of the former garden wall.

Gardens

There are no gardens or trees in the street space and none appear to have been provided in the original layout. Aerial pictures show open spaces to the rear of the houses that are partially in use as gardens. These are accessed by narrow lanes that run behind the rear gardens and have gated entrances to the north end of the street between the end houses and the surrounding perimeter wall.



Aerial view, 2011 Microsoft Corporation Bing Maps

3.1.8 Views

The most significant views in the ACA are:

View 1: into Newtown Villas from Newtown Avenue looking from north to south. The view from the main road is framed by two large brick piers in the opening of the stone former garden wall. This end of the view is closed by the same stone wall. The view includes the road and paths, oblique views of the house elevations, the roof surface and brick chimneys that punctuate the skyline. Small steps in some of the house gables indicate the difference in level caused by the fall in level of the topography.



View 1 looking south from Newtown Avenue into Newtown Villas

View 2: from Newtown Villas north towards Newtown Avenue. This affords an intimate or 'from within' view of the street space. The houses have the same elevations that are paired and handed with repeated arrangement of doors, windows, roofs etc presented to the viewer on arrival. The north end of the street is framed by the brick piers marking the exit to Newtown Avenue and is closed by suburban-type houses.



View 2 looking north from Newtown Villas towards Newtown Avenue

4.0 Significance of the Proposed ACA

Urban Design Significance

- Newtown Villas is a fine example of a housing typology created to serve tram workers that was part of the development of the tram system in Dublin in the nineteenth and twentieth century.
- The housing is strongly associated with the adjacent tram depot building, whose large scale hall-like structures also mark their presence in the streetscape and corner turning in Newtown Avenue. The depot looms above the houses on the east side and completes the sense of boundary enclosure defined by the boundary wall.
- The layout of the housing is strongly influenced by the restraints of the earlier walled garden into which it was inserted. This wall retains a strong presence on Newtown Avenue and relates to similar boundary walls of large villa-like houses from the same period located nearby.

Architectural Significance

- The houses are of a type that was developed for use in different locations as part of a city wide scheme.

- The houses represent good examples of workers housing of their time with new standards of space provision and facilities. They belong to the development of house types that attempted to serve the needs of workers in different areas of Dublin.
- The houses represent an Arts and Crafts approach to building design. This is represented by a break-down of the building volume into a smaller scale and more intimate arrangements, picturesque views, importance given to the roof as an architectural element and use of different window types in elevation compositions to avoid overbearing repetition.
- The roof also has strong emphasis in detail with the use of projecting timber barge boards near the house entrances, a characteristic of the Arts and Crafts approach to building details.
- The houses have externally not been altered to an extent that their homogeneity has been disturbed.
- The survival of original features and the repetitive use of simple materials and details are characteristic of the ACA.
- The remaining walls of the former walled garden of Maretimo house are of architectural significance. Firstly the walled garden unusually addresses the street space (Newtown

Avenue) and they are lined with brick to the inside; an important technical aspect used to support the growth of plants.

Historical Significance

- Newtown Villas and the adjacent former tram depot are remnants of the former tram system that was so important to the expansion and development of Dublin in the nineteenth and twentieth century.
- The boundary walls are among the few remnants of Maretimo house and grounds which no longer exists. Maretimo house was one of a number of large villa-like houses that played an important part of the development of Blackrock.

Social Heritage Significance

- The intact nature of the fabric of the structures in the ACA and the continuity of use of the houses for domestic purposes provide continuity to the social history of the area.

Technical Significance

- The use of materials and detailing in the construction of the buildings is of importance as representative of structures from the nineteenth century. The use of brick to embellish elevations and chimneys is important to defining their character.
- The projecting barge boards attempt to introduce a hand-made quality to the houses typical of detailing of houses from the Arts and Crafts movement.
- The underlying gently sloping topography is reflected in the stepping of the roofs at intervals with small portions of brick gables revealed at these points.

5.0 Implications for Planning and Development

In general terms there is a requirement under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, to obtain planning permission for all development works, which do not constitute exempted development. The regulations governing exempted development are set out in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. These regulations set out the classes of development, which constitute exempted development together with relevant conditions and limitations.

Section 4 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, lists developments, which constitute exempted development, for the purposes of the Act. Section 4(1)(h) is of particular relevance. It states that the following shall be exempted development for the purposes of the Act:

“Development consisting of the carrying out of works for the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any structure, being works which affect only the interior of the structure or which do not materially affect the external appearance of the structure so as to render the appearance inconsistent with the character of the structure or of neighbouring structures”

Where a question arises as to what in a particular case is or is not exempted development, any person may, under Section

5(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, on payment of the prescribed fee, request in writing from the Planning Authority, a declaration on that question.

5.1 Implications of ACA designation

The objective of the ACA is to protect the special character of an area through the careful control and positive management of change of the built environment. Section 82(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) indicates that;

“Notwithstanding section 4(1)(h), the carrying out of works to the exterior of a structure located in an Architectural Conservation Area shall be exempted development only if those works would not materially affect the character of the area”

Owners, occupiers or developers proposing to carry out works within the ACA should be aware that the normal exemptions from seeking planning permission, as outlined above, will no longer apply where the Planning Authority considers that they will materially affect the character of the Architectural Conservation Area.

Therefore, in its assessment of whether or not works constitute exempted development, the Planning Authority must have regard to not only the impact on the character of the structure itself and adjacent structures, as required under Section 4(1)(h), but must now also have regard to the impact on the overall character of the area, as required under Section 82(1) and (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as

amended.

The designation of ACA status therefore results in restrictions on certain works to the exteriors of structures, their settings and plot boundaries. For example, the construction of a small house extension or a boundary wall within an ACA may require planning permission, whereas such works may be exempted development elsewhere.

The purpose of this Section of the ACA document is to give detailed direction and guidance on the type of works that do, and do not impact on the character of the ACA and therefore will, or will not require planning permission. The following is not a definitive list of all works, in all circumstances, that require planning permission, but identifies those works, which would impact on the character of the ACA. It should also be noted that some of the following works already constitute development regardless of ACA designation and would require planning permission.

5.2 Works requiring Planning Permission

Owners and occupiers of a property located within the Architectural Conservation Area should be aware that works which, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, would materially affect the character of the ACA will require planning permission under Section 82 (1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Such works are likely to include the following:

- *Extensions and new building works that impact on street-facing elevations of buildings or which would be visible from the public realm.*
- *The demolition of any structure or part thereof.*
- *Re-pointing in a style or manner other than existing.*
- *Removal or alteration of original architectural features on the main façades of non-Protected Structures including:*
 - a. *The painting of previously unpainted surfaces.*
 - b. *The rendering of the façade.*
- *The removal of the original roofing materials such as natural slate and their replacement with modern materials such as fibre cement tiles.*
- *The removal of existing chimney-stacks and early terracotta or clay pots or other features of the roofscape.*
- *The removal of timber bargeboards and/or their replacement in an inappropriate material/detailing other than the existing.*
- *The installation of solar panels and roof-lights on visible slopes.*
- *The erection of communications antennae or support structures for same.*

The above list is not definitive. Owners/occupiers are advised to consult with the Planning Authority prior to undertaking any development including any physical works or change of use. Where there is uncertainty as to a particular case the Planning Authority would advise that a Section 5 declaration should be sought. Maintenance and repairs, which are of a similar type and material, will generally be exempted development.

6.0 De-Exempted Development within the ACA

In summary the de-exempt development classes for Newtown Villas ACA (with reference to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) are;

Schedule 2, Part 1- Exempted Development – General, including the following classes;

CLASS 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 31d, 50b.

- Extensions (Class 1) – It is Council policy to ensure that planning permission is required for domestic extensions within ACA.
- Garages/sheds etc (Class 3) - It is Council Policy to ensure that planning permission is required for domestic garages, glasshouses, sheds etc. within ACA.

- Signage and pillars (Class 5) – It is Council policy that planning permission is required for alterations to boundary treatments to residential plot boundaries, including entrance gates and pillars and associated signage, on public and private roads within the ACA.
- Landscaping works (including hard surface areas), to domestic plots (Class 6) - It is Council Policy to ensure that planning permission is required for such works.
- Domestic porches (Class 7) - It is Council policy that planning permission be required for the addition of porches outside any external door of a dwelling house (also including canopies and awnings).

6.1 Guidance for New Development Works

New development should contribute to the visual enhancement and vibrancy of the area whilst respecting its existing physical character. Below are guidelines for the carrying out of works within the Architectural Conservation Area boundary:

6.1.2 External Walls

Brickwork: The houses in Newtown Villas ACA have fine brick *façades* characteristic of many dwellings that were purpose built to accommodate workers during the time of industrial growth in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The loss of brickwork in these houses would damage the authentic character of the ACA.

No paint, render or other cladding materials should be added to the brickwork. This also applies to the brickwork on the inside of the perimeter wall.

Pointing: Renewal of pointing of brickwork can substantially alter the appearance of a building. Such work must retain intact historic pointing mortar, and care must be taken to use the correct material and detail. New pointing should be slightly recessed to leave the brick arrises exposed.

Painting: These structures were originally constructed with exposed brick and were not intended to be painted and later removal of such paint can damage the external surface of the material. The use of modern chemical based paints can have a detrimental effect on historic buildings by trapping moisture in the building causing dampness and decay.

Repair: Repair to worn or damaged brickwork should be kept to a minimum. Bricks that have spalled should be repaired and not replaced, no bricks should be replaced with modern types. Bricks can be repaired with specialist brick repair mortar.

Cleaning: Abrasive cleaning methods such as sandblasting can damage the external surface of brickwork materials. They often remove the protective fired surface from bricks, leading to porosity and harmful water ingress. Generally sandblasting of external walls is not advised on historic buildings. Other non-abrasive cleaning methods may be appropriate, but these must

be non-destructive and must preserve the aged appearance of historic buildings.

External Cladding: The houses were intended to have exposed brick elevations and no cladding material of any kind will be acceptable as they will conceal the brickwork, disrupt the unity of the terrace and can cause damage to the brick when later removed.



Brick reveals to windows arranged as quoins with flat arch above



Render applied to a brick elevation



Replacement of ventilation bricks with plastic grill

6.1.3 Roofs

Roofing Materials: The removal of the original roofing material, ridge tiles, chimneys, bargeboards, eaves details, cast-iron gutters and downpipes, and their replacement with modern materials can seriously damage the character of the ACA. Original coverings and elements can generally be repaired and reused and should always be retained as they are essential to the character of the area. Where original roofing materials have been lost, replacement with historically correct materials will be encouraged. Materials used in repairs should also be historically correct to prevent incremental erosion of the character of the ACA.

Roof Lights: The installation of roof lights or solar panels can fundamentally alter the visual character of the architectural setting. Preferably the installation of roof lights should be placed on hidden roof pitches. Consideration will be given to small conservation style rooflights. They should also be arranged in the roof relative to the windows and elevations below. In the case of Newtown Villas the roof plane almost has the same presence as the elevations in the street space. Roof lights should be located so as not to appear scattered and arbitrary in their placement.



left: electricity cables trailing over roofs from chimneys

right: large squat rooflight disrupts the roofscape

Dormer Windows: There is no tradition of dormer windows within the Newtown Villas ACA. Dormer windows would fundamentally change the special character of the ACA and would not be considered appropriate.

Projecting vents, cowls etc: As the roofscape is an important part of the visual experience of the ACA, care should be taken not to significantly disrupt the roof. Where necessary these elements should be of a type that are discreet and do not project beyond the roof plane. Systems that integrate vents within existing ridge tiles and slates would be acceptable.



Barge board detail with moulded profiles

Eaves Fascias, Soffits and Bargeboards: The historic projecting barge boards are an important feature and should always be retained. UPVC fascias or bargeboards are considered inappropriate.

Roof pitch: The alteration of the roof profile affects the character of the building and changes to the angle, ridge height, eaves level or span of roofs and would therefore adversely affect the character of the ACA.

Satellite antenna, TV aerials and other communications devices:

The addition of such installations to the front elevations or roofs of structures within the ACA would have a negative impact on the character of the area. Satellite dishes should not be visible on the front elevation of buildings.

6.1.4 Windows & Doors

Alteration of Openings: Enlargement of window or door openings or the removal of stone sills or doorsteps can alter the prevailing proportions of the streetscape. This would result in incremental loss of historic materials on whose texture and authenticity the special character to the ACA relies.



left; sensitive replacement door in Arts and Crafts style

right; original timber windows

Replacement of Windows or External Doors: Original timber windows and doors are key features which enrich the character of the ACA. Examples of authentic historic fenestration and external doors are becoming relatively rare and their retention is, therefore, crucial to the preservation of the character of the ACA. Decayed timber windows can in most cases be repaired. Replacement of original windows and doors with modern artificial materials such as uPVC or aluminium has a particularly negative impact and are not appropriate. Where windows and doors have been altered or replaced prior to ACA designation, the reinstatement of windows of correct historic design will be encouraged. Any alteration to windows or doors within the ACA will require planning permission.

6.1.5 Extensions

Extensions to Front or Side: Additions to the front of buildings in the ACA in the form of porches or roof projections would be visually highly intrusive and will not be deemed acceptable.

Rear Extensions: Extensions should be designed to minimise their visibility from any public area in the ACA, they should be subsidiary to the main building and of an appropriate scale. A contemporary high-quality design will be encouraged over pastiche in order to maintain the authenticity of the fabric of the buildings.

6.1.6 Internal Alterations

The ACA designation does not prevent internal changes or re-arrangements, provided that these changes do not impact on the exterior of the structure.

6.1.7 Amalgamation of Properties or Sites

Amalgamation of Structures: Joining buildings together into one functional unit will require planning permission. Any proposals for the amalgamation of properties within the ACA will be considered to be detrimental to its character.

Amalgamation of Plots: The existing plot structure is to be retained to express the existing grain which is an important determining factor of the special character of the ACA. Amalgamation of plots will be deemed to be unacceptable.

6.1.8 Demolition

Demolition or partial demolition of any structure visible within the ACA will require planning permission. There will be a presumption in favour of retaining any structure that makes a positive contribution to the character of the ACA to avoid incremental loss or damage to its special character.

6.1.9 Boundary Treatments

Alteration or removal of the boundary walls and piers will materially affect the character of the ACA.



Worn and damaged bricks in the entrance piers, note also the brick inner lining to the former garden wall with failing joints and bricks

6.1.10 Works to the Public Realm

Unsympathetic works can have a detrimental impact upon the character of the ACA. In this instance, any planned works to the public realm should be respectful of the special character of the area, and enhance the appreciation and setting of the streetscape in line with Policy AR6 of the 2010-2016 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan.

Works to the public realm, such as footpaths, street furniture, parking provision etc, must have due regard to the special character of the ACA. While no historic paving remains any future alterations to paving should be in keeping with the visual appearance of the ACA, and any new elements should be chosen to be high quality and low-key.

There are few traffic signs in the street due to the quiet cul-de-sac nature. Parallel parking is provided along the roadside in the ACA with no spaces markings on the road surface. Some signs exist to inform of parking regulations. Nonetheless, design and provision of traffic control measures, including signage, ramps, renewed surfaces, etc, will be required to be carefully sited to cause the minimum impact to the character of the area.

External meter boxes and inspection panels should not be applied to elevations as they are very prominent and detrimental to the appearance of the elevations. Alarms should be positioned discretely.



L: obtrusive large surface mounted meter box

R: recess application damages brick elevation, box and feed pipes are prominent and damaging to the character of the façade.

Bins and recycling:

Rubbish and recycling containers are located in the recess areas between the house entrances and are very prominent and take from the appearance of the ACA. Solutions that involve discrete housing of these objects should be considered.

Overhead electricity supply and telephone cables and poles detract strongly from the character of the ACA. Any initiatives to place overhead services underground and the removal of redundant services from the facades of building would be encouraged within the historic ACA.



Bins and recycling containers located in recess areas.

Obtrusive poles and cables running along and traversing the street.



7.0 Policy Objectives

- The Council will ensure that development within the ACA will be managed in order to protect, safeguard and enhance the special character and environmental quality of the area.
- The Council will seek to preserve, protect and enhance the architectural heritage of the Architectural Conservation Area for future generations.
- The Council will actively encourage the retention and reinstatement of historically accurate architectural detailing on buildings of heritage value/interest in accordance with recognised conservation practice. However, the use of contemporary new-build extensions will be encouraged where appropriate and materials/finishes used should complement the character of the area.
- The Council will encourage the under-grounding of overhead services and the removal of redundant wiring / lighting cables etc., from building facades in line with Policy AR9 of the 2010-2016 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan.
- All proposals to extend properties within the ACA involving/affecting the roof of a property shall be carefully and sensitively considered.
- The Council will seek to encourage appropriately scaled extensions and alterations to properties within the ACA that are generally sensitive to the main structure
- The Council will seek to prohibit the demolition of structures that positively contribute to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area, except in very exceptional circumstances, in accordance with Policy AR12 of the 2010 – 2016 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan. Where the demolition of a building/structure/item is proposed within the Architectural Conservation Area, one of the key considerations that will be taken into account is the quality of any replacement structure and whether it enhances / contributes to the unique character of the area.

NOTE:

The guidance given above is not in itself a comprehensive list of all works, in all circumstances, that require planning permission, but identifies those works that would impact on the character of the ACA. Development works would still have to adhere to the general provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2010-2016 and Planning Regulations. The Area Planner and Conservation Officer of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council can be consulted if there is any doubt as to whether planning permission is required or not.

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