

# BALALLY COTTAGES Architectural Conservation Area

## Character Appraisal and Recommendations



February 2011

# **Balally Terrace Architectural Conservation Area**

## **1.0 Introduction**

Many of the towns and villages of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown contain areas that exhibit a distinct character and intrinsic qualities, based on their historic built form and layout. This character is often derived from the cumulative impact of the area's buildings, their setting, landscape and other locally important features. These areas are an expression of our culture and our identity and contribute significantly to the quality of our lives. The Planning and Development Act, 2000 provides the legislative basis for the protection of such areas, known as Architectural Conservation Areas, or ACAs.

Under Part IV of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, 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, scientific, 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 centred on an individual building, or a terrace of houses; they may be rural or urban. ACA designation forms the basis for policies to preserve or enhance an area, and provides a basic 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 would have a material effect on the character of an ACA require planning permission.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council recognises that by making provision for the protection of these areas, in order to retain the special character of an area, in many cases, this protection is best achieved by controlling and guiding change on a wider scale than the individual structure. The objective of the designation is to guide the processes of change within an area and ensure that all future developments are carried out in a manner sympathetic to the special character of the area.

The aim of this document is to identify the special character of Balally Terrace, and to formulate specific conservation objectives and policies to protect this character, and to give guidance to owners/occupiers and developers on the type of work that would require planning permission. It is one of a series of documents set out to identify the special character of each individual ACA.

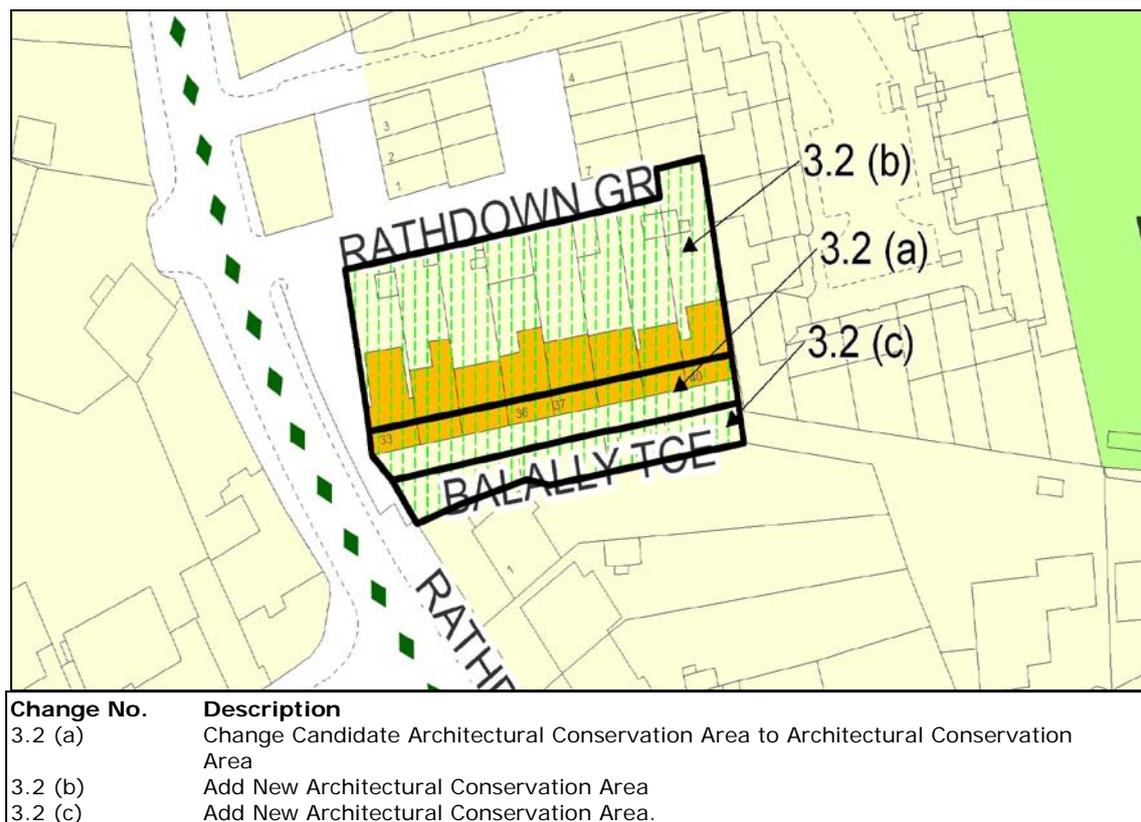
## **2.0 Location & Boundary of Architectural Conservation Area**

Balally Terrace is located within the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown administrative area. It is situated on the eastern side of Sandyford Road, north of the Kilgobbin-Leopardstown intersection.

It comprises a small single terrace of eight one-and-a-half storey, three-bay rough rendered houses. Each house has a flat-roofed projecting entrance porch, twin dormer windows to the roof and a rear garden with its own access. The terrace is numbered from 33 to 40, ascending from west to east. The terrace is south facing and built perpendicular to the main road. Access is gained to the

north of the terrace, close to the northern rear boundaries of the properties. Access is shared with a modern housing development that was built on the original allotment plots of Balally Terrace. The indirect approach into the terrace gives it a feeling of being tucked away from the main road and offers the occupants a more tranquil environment than if it were approached straight from the busy road.

The boundary for Balally Terrace ACA encompasses the entire footprint of the buildings and extends from the front sites to the rear plots with the east and west boundary defined by the end gables of No's 33 and 40 running the full length of the site.



**Map 1:** Architectural Conservation Area Boundary and Protected Structures.

### 3.0 Historical Development

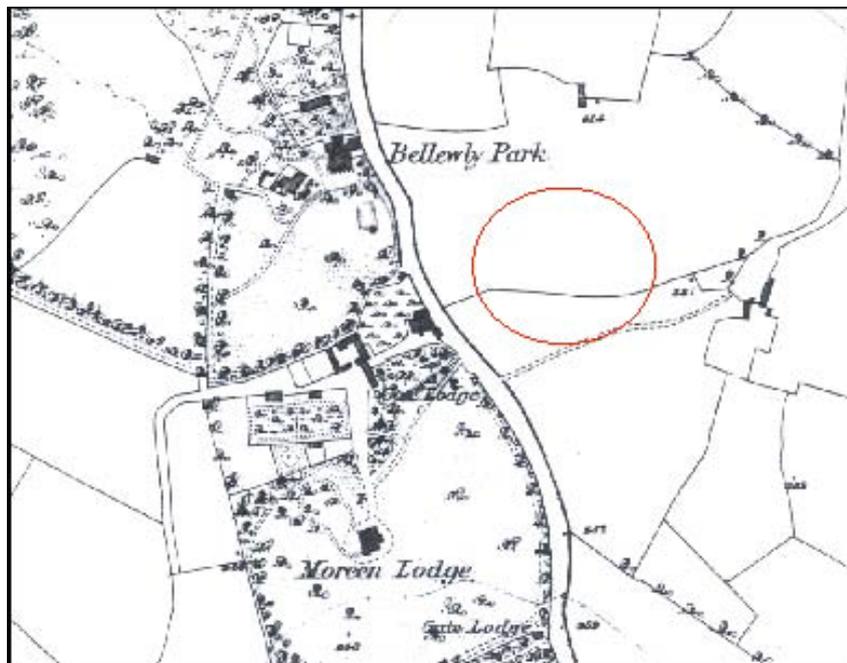
The first village beyond Dundrum, when travelling to Enniskerry, is Sandyford. The road divides before entering the village, the eastern branch, the old road leading into the village and the new road, the western branch, laid out in 1821, leads onto the Enniskerry Road. Just before the divide in the road is the townland of Balally, formerly written Bellewley then Ballawley. The first recorded building here was in 1280 when John de Walhope was granted seven oak trees from the Royal Forest in Glenree to build a house on land he had received at Ballawley. According to the Civil Survey of 1654 there was a thatched castle here and the walls of an old chapel. The castle was then owned by the Walshes but they sold the property in 1656 to Mr. Christian Borr for £700. No record of the castle now survives and even the exact location of it is unknown.

Within the townland of Ballawley, Moreen Lodge is located, later known as Clonard. Legend has it that a broad bank of soil planted with trees, which runs through the property, was part of the Pale ditch. It is 240 yards long nearly 4'high and up to 12'wide on top. It resembles in appearance the better preserved parts of the Pale ditch near Clane, Co. Kildare except that the deep drains which would have existed both inside and outside have been filled in.

### 3.1 Cartographic History

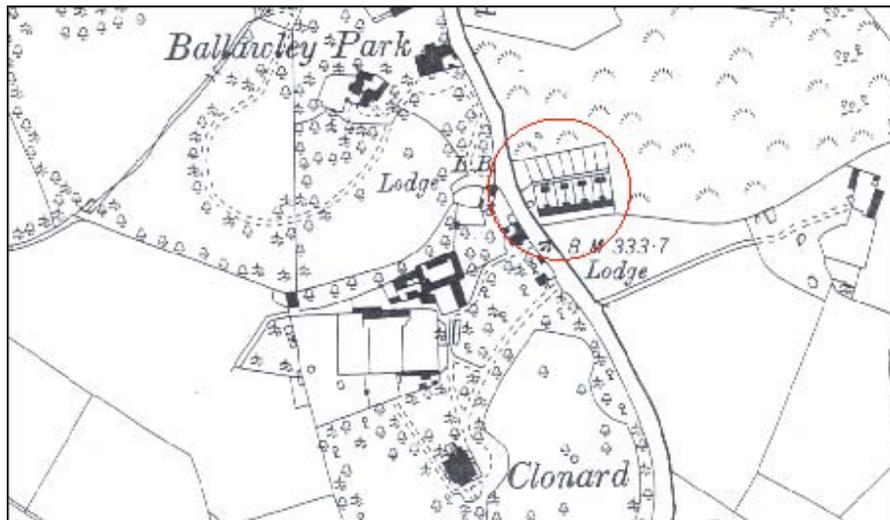
The 1843 Ordnance Survey map shows no structures existing at the location of present-day Balally Terrace. The map depicts open fields extending east from Sandyford Road with little woodland or scrubland indicated. The line that depicts the present day border with Rathdown Terrace is lineated running from Sandyford Road, east. There are a number of properties shown to the western side of the road including Bellawley Park and Moreen Lodge however the area as a whole is relatively undeveloped. (The gate lodge belonging to Moreen Lodge can still be seen today fronting onto the main road from Balally Terrace).

The 1907 eight cottages appear laid out symmetrically, each having a return built back to back with its neighbour. Plots are divided to the rear and ancillary



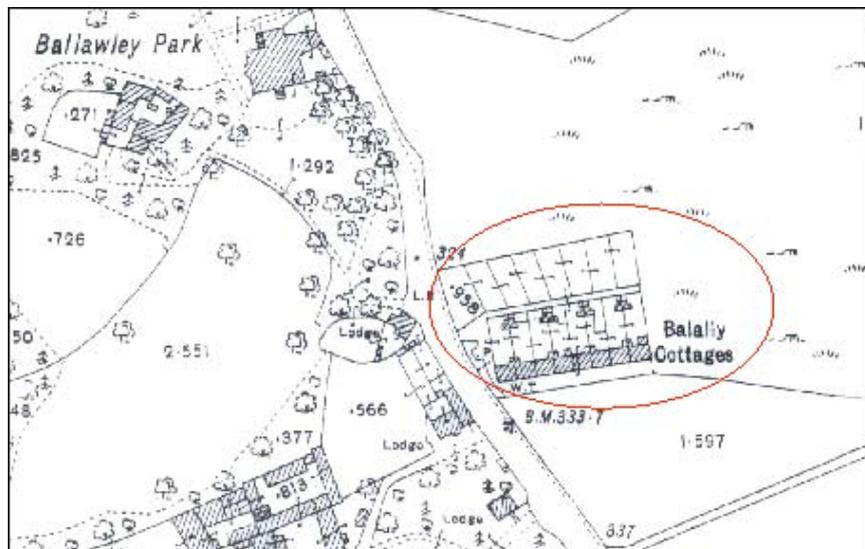
**Map 2:** 1843 OS Map depicting the lands where Balally Terrace now stand.

buildings are also shown built back to back with their neighbouring structure, to the north end of the gardens. In addition to the main terrace and rear garden plots, eight separate plots are depicted laid out further north, separated from the rear boundary wall by a small lane. These additional plots are thought to be allotments allocated to each dwelling for vegetable growing. The field surrounding the terrace is represented as lying fallow. One of the few other developments on this side of the road is entered into from the adjacent field to the south. It comprises a long avenue leading up to two structures and enclosed yard, possibly



**Map 3:** 1907-09 OS Map showing Ballaly Terrace to east of main road.

an agricultural or industrial site. On the far side of Sandyford Road the northern structure previously shown as Moreen Lodge has been changed to Clonard. However the southern Moreen structure retains the same name as before. To the west of these estates along the present day Ballinteer Road a number of other large estates can be seen including Delbrook Park, Ludford Park and Gortmore. The large number of estate houses present on this 1907 Ordnance Survey is indicative of a certain quality in this area of Sandyford at that time.

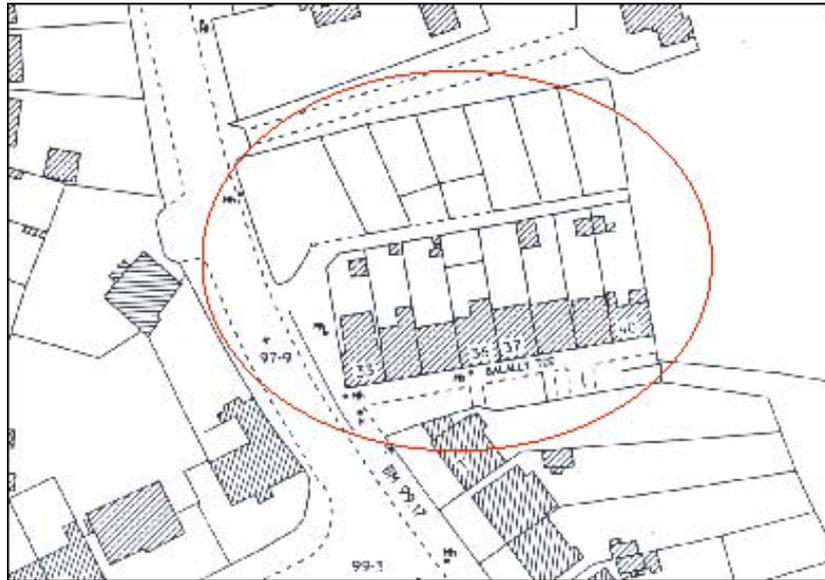


**Map 4:** 1937 OS Map showing Balally Terrace

In the 1937 Ordnance Survey map the terrace appears as before, with abutting returns, ancillary structures to the rear sites and allotments further north separated by a small lane. The surrounding field is still shown as a meadow and undeveloped apart from the industrial site mentioned before to the south which has grown substantially and is now shown to include a pump, a wind pump and a tank.

By 1988 the Ordnance Survey map shows the development to be named Balally Terrace and be numbered 33 to 40. There has been a substantial change in the surrounding area as development has sprung up to all sides. The type of

development depicted on this map is quite different to development seen on previous maps. The large estate house and individual farm building has been replaced with modern housing estates. Cul-de-sacs of houses accessed by minor roads or laneways are shown divided by boundary walls. Balally Terrace has changed little compared to the surrounding landscape but a number of houses have replaced their returns with more substantial rear extensions and ancillary buildings to rear sites have become less symmetrical.



**Map 5:** 1988 OS Map showing Balally Terrace as still having relatively little development to the north and east.

Walking around the site today the most noticeable change is that the allotments to north of the terrace which are still shown on the 1988 Ordnance Survey map have also been replaced with modern housing estate.

#### **4.0 Schedule of Protected Structures & Recorded Monuments**

A protected structure is a structure or part of a structure that a planning authority considers to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is contained in Schedule 1 of the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2010-2016.

Protected Structures within the ACA are indicated in solid orange on the County Development Plan Maps 2010-2016; however, this does not define the full extent of the protected site. By definition, a protected structure includes the land lying within the curtilage of the protected structure and other structures within that curtilage and their interiors. The notion of curtilage is not defined by legislation, but is understood to be the parcel of land immediately associated with that structure and which is (or was) in use for the purposes of the structure.

All eight cottages are listed in Schedule 1 The Record of Protected Structures and shown on Map 5 of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's Development Plan 2010-2016. This affords all eight houses protection under Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

In addition, the area in which Balally Terrace lies is contained within Zone Objective A: To protect and improve residential amenity.

## 5.0 Character Appraisal

### 5.1 Architectural Character Appraisal

#### a) Building Type

This terrace is comparable to estate houses built at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The houses may have been built for the Ballawley Park estate workers. They comprise three-bay, one-and-a-half storey rough rendered residential houses. Each house has a projecting flat roofed entrance porch originally flanked by six-over-six timber sash windows with brick dressing to surround. Tripartite dormer windows sit within the roof structure.

Most of the eight houses have been changed in some form or another since their original construction date. The main changes have been made to windows and doors, which have been replaced with uPVC or timber alternatives. However the symmetry of the terrace has not been diminished due to these alterations. Two houses have retained earlier timber doors with oval window sitting above three vertical panels, four houses have retained their tripartite timber dormer windows and three houses still have the original timber six-over-six sash windows. A number of the houses have replaced the original timber windows with replica copies which are in keeping with the terrace while other have chosen uPVC, which are out of keeping with the architectural style and material of the terrace.



**Photo 1:** Typical façade

The condition of the houses is good overall. There are a number of issues that need addressing such as cleaning and maintenance of rainwater goods, especially gutters to the eastern end of the terrace which are overgrown with leaves from the Virginia Creeper and have vegetation growth sprouting up in the gutters. Vents have been blocked up the base of the walls, which can cause damp. Windows in some cases require maintenance in the form of piecemeal repairs and repainting. However these conditions noted are non-structural and can be reversed with routine repair and maintenance practices. No major structural damage was noted to any of the houses during the visual exterior survey.

## b) Prominent Material and Detailing

**Stone:** Granite is evident in sills and rubble stone walls.

**Slate:** All eight roofs in the proposed ACA comprise pitched slate roofs having chimneystacks constructed out of red brick.

**Cast-iron:** Rainwater goods including downpipes, hoppers and guttering were traditionally cast-iron, however many metal elements have been replaced by uPVC rainwater goods in more recent times

**Render:** A number of houses retain their early roughcast lime rendered walls however these properties have heavy ivy growth to the front façade hiding the pleasing colour and grain of the traditional render. Other houses have been pebble-dashed or rough-dashed with cement render. All eight houses retain the smooth rendered upper section which frames the head of the window and doors.



**Photo 2:** Typical chimneystack to roof.

**Timber:** The original ground-floor windows of the terrace comprise six-over-six timber sash windows set into a square-headed opening flanking the centrally located front entrance. There are now a variety of timber and upvc windows inserted into the terrace. All ground-floor windows have brick surrounds. Dormer windows have tripartite fixed casement timber windows with guttering to head and foot. The original entrance comprises a projecting entrance porch with flat roof and square-headed entrance. Timber panelled doors have been replaced in many circumstances since the construction date. It is thought that two early doors have been retained to Nos. 37 and 38, which comprise timber panelled doors with an oval light over three vertical panels.



**Photos 3-5:** The different type of timber windows contained within the terrace.

### c) Key Buildings

Each individual structure in the terrace is included on Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's Record of Protected Structures, which is contained in the Development Plan 20010-2016. It is recommended that once Balally Terrace is designated as an ACA, the inclusion of each structure separately on the RPS be reconsidered. The ACA designation is considered to be an adequate means of protecting the architectural integrity of the terrace, as their interest lies solely on their external character and form. Internally the buildings have been heavily modified and retain little features of architectural merit. In this instance, the adoption of an ACA and their exclusion from the Record of Protected Structures is deemed to be an appropriate and justified planning measure. The ACA designation will continue to protect their external features such as roof, walls, windows, boundary treatment etc.

If an ACA is designated to include all nine structures, the decision to remove the structures from the RPS will be considered. Where buildings are contained within an ACA and where their interiors are heavily altered and of little significant merit, the ACA designation will provide adequate protection to the external fabric and character of the buildings.

## 5.2 Townscape Character Appraisal

### a) Visual Character

Balally Terrace is located on the eastern side of Sandyford Road just north of Sandyford Village in County Dublin. The road that passes by Balally, Sandyford Road, is a three-lane busy road with commuting traffic travelling between Dublin City, Dundrum, the M50 and surrounding local residential areas such as Leopardstown, Stepaside and Sandyford. The road forms an intersection just south of the terrace where a road branches off into a cul-de-sac housing estate by way of Clonard Road. Although the area is suburban in feel with mature trees interspersed between open spaces in reality it is quite a busy intersection with relatively high volumes of traffic and noise.

Although located at the foot of the Dublin Mountains, which are visible to the west, the topography of the surrounding area is relatively flat.

The development along Sandyford Road dates from various different periods. The sites to the north and south of Balally Terrace were built in the latter half of the twentieth century and are completely different in style and character. Late twentieth century developments appear to have paid little attention to the existing character of the area and visibly appear out of context. This may be due to piecemeal development over the years with little design guidance for developer initiated projects.

The lack of regard for context has resulted in Sandyford Road and Clonard Road having an incongruent appearance. In addition the treatment of entrances and road boundaries are substantially



**Photo 6:** Balally Terrace

varied which does not lend harmony to the streetscape character. No strong local character is apparent beyond Clonard and Balally Terrace, which are rough rendered and similar in style.

#### **b) Plots and Boundaries**

The terrace sits perpendicular to Sandyford Road at a slightly elevated position and is separated by a modern concrete wall. The shared entrance into the modern housing estate and Balally Terrace comprises a wide entrance flanked to the south with a solid concrete wall which steps downwards to lower sections surmounted by metal railings and broken up with red brick piers. To the north of the entrance is a red brick wall. The rear site boundary walls and the sites directly facing the terrace comprise a mixture of early and modern brick, rubble stone, grass, timber fencing, metal rails and sheeting. The mixture between soft and hard edges, as well as a lack of quality and continuity, has reduced the sense of enclosure and sense of place. The treatment of front gardens where cars are parked varies from one site to the next, with the result that the terrace fronts onto an inconsistent area, which does not reflect the symmetry found in the terrace façade. The treatment of the rear boundary walls also varies in material and design. Shrubs have been planted along the base of the walls to soften the presentation, however this has resulted in little improvement.



**Photos 7-8:** Modern boundary treatment

#### **c) Density/Building Use**

The pressure on city suburbs such as Sandyford has increased in recent years with the growth in population. Up until the last thirty years, Sandyford's building stock largely comprised of 18th, 19th and 20th century estate houses, surrounded by extensive gardens with long avenues protected by a large entrance and often a gate lodge. This was the type of development represented on the historic maps of this area right up until the end of twentieth century. Then the surge in modern higher density, low rise development which started to spread into the city suburbs in the second half of the twentieth century saw Sandyford change dramatically. This trend has directly affected Balally Terrace, as the lands to the north which were originally laid out for use by the terrace have been developed on.

#### **d) Street Furniture/ Surfacing**

There is little street furniture beyond the boundaries dealt with in the Plots and Boundaries Section. Surfacing comprises a mix of concrete, stone, brick, tarmac,

earth and grass, laid out in what appears to be piecemeal application with no continuity between one treatment and other. No edges define or make distinction between one area and another.



**Photos 9-10:** Surfacing to boundary

**e) Vistas**

Views north and south on Sandyford Road are terminated by rubble stones walls curving along with the road with high deciduous trees growing behind. The terraced houses themselves looks directly onto the side elevation of No.1 Rathdown Terrace and west towards Clonard Lodge, which sits on the opposite side of the road.



**Photos 11-12:** Clonard Lodge and view north along Sandyford Road

### **5.3 Landscape Character Appraisal**

#### **a) Open Public & Private Spaces**

There is little public open space. The space around Balally Terrace, both perpendicular and in front of it could be better managed and laid out to create more pleasing and usable spaces. The front gardens which have been excavated to receive car parking are uneven and poorly presented.

#### **b) Natural Features**

Natural features comprises vegetation that has been planted to the front site along the boundary of Rathdown Terrace.

## **6.0 Threats and Opportunities**

### **Negative Elements**

Poor presentation of space and boundary treatment is evident to the west side of terrace (fronting onto Sandyford Road) and to the front and rear sites. No continuity of material or treatment exists, which renders the periphery of the site piecemeal and illegible.

Television aerials and satellite dishes attached to chimneystacks or gable ends appear disordered and untidy. They interrupt the intended roofscape of the terrace.

Virginia Creeper has dramatically grown all over the facades and into the gutters of the last three houses in the terrace on the eastern end, numbers 38, 39 and 40. The Virginia Creeper can appear to add character but when it overgrows to this extent it actually hides the architectural features of the terrace and can, if not trimmed back and maintained regularly, block gutters with growth and dead leaves.

Piecemeal replacement of doors and windows, in varying styles and materials different from the original design, reduces the architectural merit of the cottages in terms of diminished primary material. It can also have a negative impact on the intended visual composition and symmetry of the row of cottages.

### **Positive Elements**

The condition of the terrace appears good. No structural damage is obvious such as slumping or bowing of exterior walls. Roofs are intact, certain repairs are necessary to replace fallen and slipped slates and ridge tiles and maintenance is required on rainwater goods and chimneys. Generally, minor repair and standard maintenance is required.

Most of the houses have managed to retain a substantial amount of original fabric including brick quoins, granite window sills, original roofing material including slates, brick chimneystacks and cast-iron rainwater goods. Policies for the ACA should recommend retention as well as repair and maintenance of existing historic material over replacement.

No houses are derelict. All cottages appear lived in and maintained, at least, to a minimum level.

Although many piecemeal changes have been made to the houses, such as replacement of original windows and doors and painting over of brick and stone

detailing, most of the changes are incidental and reversible. This offers the Council the opportunity to develop objectives and give design guidance in relation to restoration of character. For example future replacement of failed existing windows and doors may be done with replicas of the original style and material.

## **7.0 Assessment of ACA in terms of Categories of Special Interest**

### **Architectural Interest**

Ballaly Terrace receives architectural merit as it is a good quality example of a building type typical of workers or estate cottages at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Architectural interest is also attributed for the positive contribution that the row of cottages has on its setting and streetscape. The symmetry of the eight cottages lends a harmonious and pleasing aspect to the character of this suburban area.

## **8.0 Implications for Planning and Development**

The aim of designating Balally Terrace an Architectural Conservation Area is to protect the special external expression of the buildings by managing change in a positive manner.

In general terms, there is a requirement under the Planning and Development Act 2000 that planning permission be sought for all development works except those considered exempted development. The regulations governing exempted development are set out in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

Section 4 (1)(h) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 also lists developments which constitute exempted development, it states:

*“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 uncertainty 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, on payment of the prescribed fee, request in writing from the Planning Authority, a Declaration in relation to the query.

### **Implications of ACA Designation**

Section 82(1) and (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 states:

- (1) 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.*
- (2) In considering an application for permission for development in relation to land situated in an ACA, a planning authority, or the Board on appeal, shall take into account the material effect (if any) that the proposed development would be likely to have on the character of the architectural conservation area.*

In effect, ACA designation assigns significant restrictions on works to the exteriors of structures within the boundary of the ACA.

Presently all buildings comprising Balally Terrace are Protected Structures. However, it is the intention of the Conservation Division to delist No's 33-40 Balally Terrace while designating an Architectural Conservation Area. The obligations of owners and occupiers of Balally Terrace will vary according to the status of the buildings, they are as follows:

### **Protected Structures**

If the buildings remain designated Protected Structures, owners and occupiers are advised that planning permission is required for all works, which would materially affect the character of a protected structure, or any element of the structure, including its curtilage and its interior, which contributes to its special interest. Owners and occupants proposing to carry out any works to a protected structure including essential repair and maintenance works, are advised to request a declaration from the Planning Authority under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. A declaration issued under this section sets out the type of works the Planning Authority considers would or would not materially affect the character of the structure or of any element of that structure, which contributes to its special interest.

### **Non-Protected Structures**

If the buildings are removed from the Record of Protected Structures, owners and occupiers should be aware that works which, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, would materially affect the *external* character of the Balally Terrace ACA will require planning permission. Clearly this will depend on details of each proposal, but it is likely to include the following:

### **Works likely to affect the character of the ACA.**

#### **Roofs:**

- The removal of the original roofing materials and their replacements with modern material such as fibre cement tiles.
- The removal of existing chimneystacks and early terracotta or clay pots.
- The installation of solar panels, roof-lights or changes to the dormer windows on the front elevation.
- The erection of communications antennae or support structures for same to the front elevation.
- The removal of original rainwater goods such as the gutters and downpipes and their replacement with modern material such as uPvc to the front elevation.

#### **External Walls:**

- The removal of the external render, or the plastering over of exposed granite detailing to the surrounds and quoins.
- The external painting of previously unpainted surfaces to the front elevation

#### **Openings:**

- The removal, alteration or enlargement of original window openings and the replacement of original timber sash windows, including tri-partite windows to the dormers with inappropriate modern insertions. The installation of aluminium and uPvc windows are not considered appropriate, as too are casement windows to the front elevation only.

- The replacement of clear glass panes with reinforced glass or textures glass to the front elevation.
- Replacement of entrance doors in an inappropriate style, material or method of opening.

**Porch:-**

- Any changes to the projecting porch to render it inconsistent with the terrace

**Boundary Treatment:**

- Much of the original boundary treatment that historically demarked Balally Terrace has been sadly lost. The front site which is used for parking and private open space should be managed in a manner that retains a consistent finish with only high quality materials used, that are sensitive to the setting of the terrace. Any new physical boundaries to the front site that are not in keeping with the setting and character of Balally Terrace may require planning permission if considered inconsistent with the overall appearance of the ACA. Any future proposals for changes to the front of the site which currently serves as off street parking should incorporate soft landscaping as part of any overall design.

**New Extensions:**

- The majority of the buildings already have a rear extension. Further additions or new rear extensions are likely to have an impact on the character of the structure, especially as the rear site is visually prominent and space is limited. The aim should be to minimise the impact of the extension by considering the following; planning restrictions, sensitivity of the setting and the distinctive palette of materials. A contemporary high-quality design should be encouraged.
- The construction of entrance porches are not considered appropriate and would be inconsistent with the uniform character of the terrace.

**Amalgamation of properties:**

- Planning permission is required for the amalgamation of properties whether they are located within an ACA or not , under the terms of the Planning and Development Act 2000. If permission were to be granted for such works, the original proportions of the front elevation should be kept.

**Works not affecting the character of the ACA.**

**Maintenance & Repairs:**

- All original or early features/materials should be retained and repaired where possible, as these positively contribute to the character of the terrace and enhance the uniformity of the terrace where replacement is necessary, it should be on a like for like basis.

**Internal alterations:**

- It is the intention of the Conservation Division to delist No's 34-40 Balally Terrace from the Record of Protected Structures. As non-protected structures any internal alterations or re-arrangements would not require planning permission providing they do not impact on the external character of the building.

**Restoration of Character:**

- Where original features have been lost or replaced with inappropriate alternatives, the reinstatement of these features do not require planning permission.

**Openings:**

- Two early doors remain to No's 37 and 38, these should be retained and repaired where possible. Any replacement doors throughout the terrace should be in timber, and of appropriate style in keeping with the terrace. Other variety of entrance doors will require planning permission

**Services:**

- The positioning of security alarm boxes, electrical boxes, wires and cables should be placed in the most discreet locations in an effort to reduce any visual impact. Where there are any unused services such as these, they should be removed to enhance the overall appearance and character of the terrace. Electrical and telecommunication wires should utilise any vertical architectural lines i.e. channelling the wires along rainwater good and vertical mouldings.