



Fingal County Council

Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall



St. Nessian's Terrace, St. Peter's Terrace, Seaview Terrace & The Haggard, Howth

Architectural Conservation Area

Statement of Character



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Permission has been granted by the Map Library, Trinity College Library, Dublin for the reproduction of Figures 2, 3 and 4 which are extracts from early Ordnance Survey Maps.

A copy of the early 20th century postcard of Howth (Figure 5) was obtained from the collection held by the Fingal County Archives of Fingal County Council.

Introduction

Many of the towns and villages of Fingal contain areas of architectural, historical, and/or cultural interest, which have a particular distinctive character considered worthy of retention and enhancement. Planning legislation allows a planning authority to include objectives in the County Development Plan to preserve the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscapes, 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.

The title given to these areas or places is *Architectural Conservation Areas*, or ACAs for short. Currently, there are 28 ACAs designated in Fingal.

An ACA could encompass, for example, a terrace of houses, a whole streetscape, town centre, or a small cluster of structures associated with a specific building such as a mill or country house. Most structures in an ACA are important in how they positively contribute to the streetscape or character of an area. Therefore, in ACAs the protection relates to the external appearance of such areas or structures. **Any works that would have a *material effect* (i.e. impact) on the character of an ACA require planning permission**, even works that are outlined in the Planning Regulations as not normally needing planning permission, and known as Exempted Development. This does not prevent alterations, extensions or new build within ACA's but the designation seeks to ensure that any new development respects or enhances the special character of the area and is carried out in consultation with the Planning Department and Conservation Officer, usually through a planning application.

This document is one in a series that set out to identify the special character of each individual ACA and give guidance to homeowners, developers and planning professionals on the type of works that would require planning permission in that specific area.

Location and Boundary of the Conservation Area

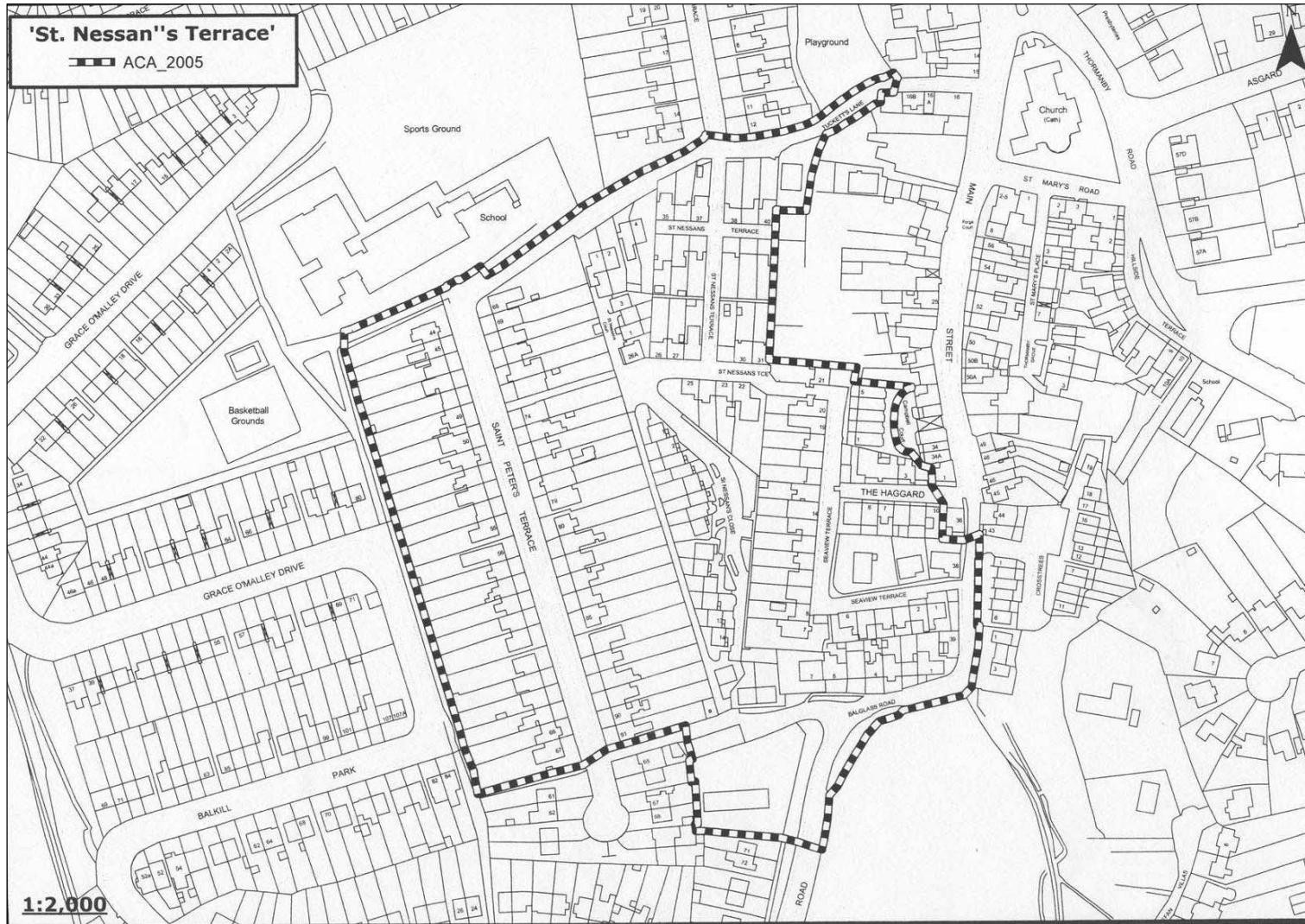
Howth village is located on a peninsula extending out from the north-eastern shore of Dublin Bay. The peninsula is dominated by the Hill of Howth, which rises to 560 ft at its highest point, and is one of the most prominent features of North County Dublin. Howth is about nine miles from Dublin City Centre, and is considered today to be a coastal suburb of Dublin City. Within Fingal it forms part of the southern boundary with Dublin City Council's area.

The main settlement of Howth village is located on the northern side of Howth Hill, with views to the north extending out over its 19th century harbour of Ireland's Eye, the northern coastline of County Dublin, and the Irish Sea.

The boundary of the ACA extends from St. Nessian's Terrace to all of Seaview Terrace and No. 2 to 10 The Haggard (No. 1 is within the boundary of the Howth Historic Core ACA). It also includes Nos. 1 to 7 Balglass Road and the former school building on Balglass Road, as well as most of St. Peter's Terrace (apart from the 2-storey houses in the horse-shoe cul-de-sac at the southern end). These streets slope uphill and are located on a very elevated site, overlooking the village core, with views of the harbour, Ireland's Eye, Lambay, and the coastline of North County Dublin, apart from The Haggard, which is located slightly below the other streets, and appears to have been constructed first. This area of single-storey terraced cottages is accessed off Main Street or St. Lawrence Road.

The numbering of these structures appears to confirm the impression that most of these houses were constructed as a group, as the numbering starts at No. 1 at the junction of Seaview Terrace and Main Street, continues along St. Nessian's Terrace to its junction with Tuckett's Lane, and carries on into St. Peter's Terrace up to No. 91. Only The Haggard, as well as the group of cottages on Balglass Road and the more modern infill on Tuckett's Lane and St. Nessian's Court and Close break with this numbering system.

Fig. 1 Boundary of St. Nessian's Terrace, St. Peter's Terrace, Seaview Terrace & The Haggard ACA



Historical Development of the Area

The earliest record of Howth is from the 2nd century on a map compiled by Ptolmey. Traces of the earliest settlers remain in the form of portal tombs and Iron Age promontory forts. During the 9th century Howth was one of the chief Viking settlements in Dublin. However, it was during the 19th century that Howth took the form that is recognisable today as a popular seaside destination, with the construction of the harbour and many of the large houses within the village itself and the surrounding environs.



Fig. 2 Extract of Main Street and The Haggard from Ordnance Survey Map 1870

The Haggard was built first, as the 2nd edition of the Ordnance Survey Maps (1870) show an east-west terrace of opposing houses. Seaview Terrace, St. Nesson's Terrace, and the houses on the Balglass Road seem to have been constructed as one entity in the very early years of the 20th century. These streets appear on the 1907 edition of the Ordnance Survey, while Thom's Directory of Dublin for the year 1906 lists 23 inhabitants for St. Nesson's Cottages and 20 inhabitants for Seaview Terrace. There are no mention of the terraces in the 1902 edition of Thom's so they

appear to have been constructed sometime between 1902 and 1906. The Post Office Directory of Dublin for the year 1910 notes that some additional houses have been constructed and that rent for these properties ranges from £2 10s to £3 each. Cartographic and written sources indicated that St. Peter's Terrace was built sometime between 1910 and 1929. Thom's Directory of 1929 refers to the street and the amount of rent paid while the layout is first shown on the 1936 Ordnance Survey Map.

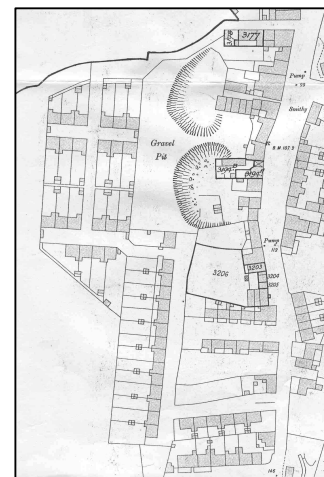


Fig. 3 St. Nesson's Terrace and Seaview Terrace from Ordnance Survey Map 1907

The lands inbetween Seaview Terrace and St. Peter's Terrace were infilled in the late 20th century with St. Nesson's Court and Close.

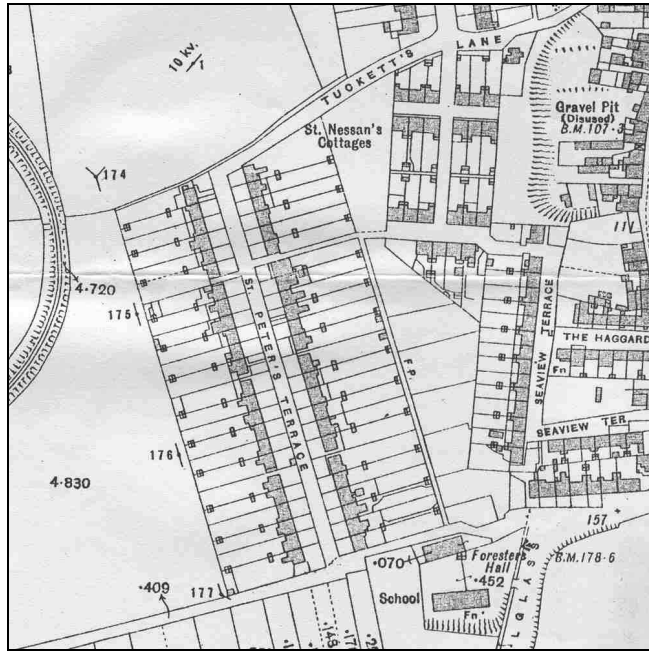


Fig. 4 Extract of area from 1936 edition of Ordnance Survey Map

The former national school building on Balglass Road appears from cartographic evidence to be late 19th century or early 20th century in date, as it is shown on the 25 inch maps from the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, which were surveyed between 1897 and 1913. It no longer functions as a national school but appears now to be only used occasionally for different community purposes.



Fig. 5 Early 20th century postcard of Howth with St. Nessian's Terrace visible on the ridgeline

Schedule of Protected Structures & Recorded Monuments

There are no Protected Structures within the boundaries of this Architectural Conservation Area.

There are also no known archaeological sites, features, artefacts, etc., listed as Recorded Monuments on the Record of Monuments and Places, within the boundaries of the ACA.

Development Plan Zoning & Objectives

In the Fingal Development Plan 2005 -2011 the land is zoned Objective RS - *To provide for residential development and to protect and improve residential amenity.*

Description of Existing Built Environment

- **Street pattern & materials**

The streets within the boundary of the ACA vary in orientation. St. Peters Terrace is a long linear north to south road sloping uphill, with opposing groups of terraces along the eastern and western sides of the road. The houses on this street are grouped into four terraces of six houses on each side of the road, with each house stepping uphill slightly from its neighbour. Seaview Terrace is L-shaped, with houses located on only one side of the street. The long section of this terrace is orientated eastwards, while the short section has houses facing northwards and slopes downhill towards Main Street. The houses on Seaview Terrace tend to step up the changing gradient in pairs of two. The Haggard has two opposing north-south terraces of five houses, and is on a lower level than the other streets within the ACA. St. Nessian's Terrace consists of two back-to-back rows of opposing terraces running east to west, which are split in half by an uphill north-south road. There are three houses in each terrace group, apart from the most southerly row, which consists of four houses.

The road and footpath materials are modern, using concrete and tarmacadam. There is a jostle stone located on the corner of No. 29 St. Nessian's Terrace. Jostle stones were used to protect buildings from damage by carriages or carts passing close by at a narrow point in the road or as they turned corners. There are other examples of these in Howth on Church Street and Main Street.



Fig. 6 Jostle stone on St. Nessian's Tce

- **Form & arrangement of public open space**

The Haggard, Nos. 1 to 7 & Balglass Road, St. Nessian's Terrace, Seaview Terrace and St. Peter's Terrace are all private residential streets with no public open space areas. The properties on Seaview Terrace and St. Nessian's Terrace front directly onto the street, while the other terraces within the ACA have small private front gardens separating them from the road.

- **Socio-Economic Functions**

The houses are in private ownership, in residential use. The majority are occupied and in good condition. However, the area around the Former National School, Balglass Road is poorly maintained.

- **Built Fabric**

Although the houses within this ACA are modest terraced cottages, the overall uniformity of design gives the area its distinctive character. The houses are three-bay single –storey structures with pitched slate roofs and red-brick chimneys. On most of the streets the houses have a central entrance door with a window on either side. However, on Seaview Terrace, the three-bay configuration has the entrance door to one of the side bays, with a window in the centre bay and the other side bay. The houses were probably originally rendered with a roughcast render and with door and window surrounds detailed in brick. It would appear that the original windows were two-over-two up-and-down timber sash windows, and that the original doors were simple timber doors with a glazed section in or over the door.



Figs. 7 & 8 Seaview Terrace (streetscape and individual house)



Figs. 9 & 10 St. Nesson's Terrace (streetscape and individual house)



Figs. 11 & 12 St. Peter's Terrace (streetscape and individual house)



Fig. 13 The Haggard



Fig. 14 Balglass Road

However, over the decades a number of changes have occurred to individual properties, which include: the removal of the render, to either leave the rubble stonework exposed or to re-plaster/re-clad the exterior walls; the addition of small front porches; the replacement of the original windows and doors; the installation of roof lights; and the construction of rear extensions, some of which are visible from the road due to the variations in contour levels in the area,

Seaview Terrace and St. Nessan's Terrace front directly onto the street, with some houses having a small set of steps up to the front door due to the changing levels in gradient. St. Peter's Terrace, The Haggard and Balglass Road all have small front gardens with boundary walls and pedestrian gate separating them from the roadway. These boundary walls are of a simple design, generally with a central pedestrian gate, although a number on St. Peter's Terrace have been altered to accommodate off-street carparking. Also, the boundary walls along St. Peter's Terraces are stepped as the road changes gradient uphill.

Most of the streets are only able to facilitate on-street parking due to the houses fronting directly onto the street and no road or laneway access to the rear of the properties. However, St. Peter's Terrace does have adequate space in its front gardens, and access to the rear to allow off-street parking, and a number of properties have installed driveways.

The houses are generally in a good state of repair, although there are one or two properties in the area in poor condition. The former school on Balglass Road appears not to be in use and the area around it is unkempt.



Fig. 15 Former National School, Balglass Road

- **Views**

Due to the single-storey house heights, changing levels in gradient, and the elevated nature of the area, nearly all of the streets have views out over Howth Harbour of Irelands Eye and the eastern coastline of north County Dublin. Tucketts Lane also has views of the landmark structure of the Church of the Assumption on Main Street. These views contribute to the character of the area and it is important that new development in the area does not negatively impact on or obscure these views.



Fig. 16 View of sea from St. Peter's Terrace



Fig. 17 View from Seaview Terrace



Fig. 18 View from St. Nessian's Terrace



Fig. 19 View of sea from Balglass Road

Summary of Special Character

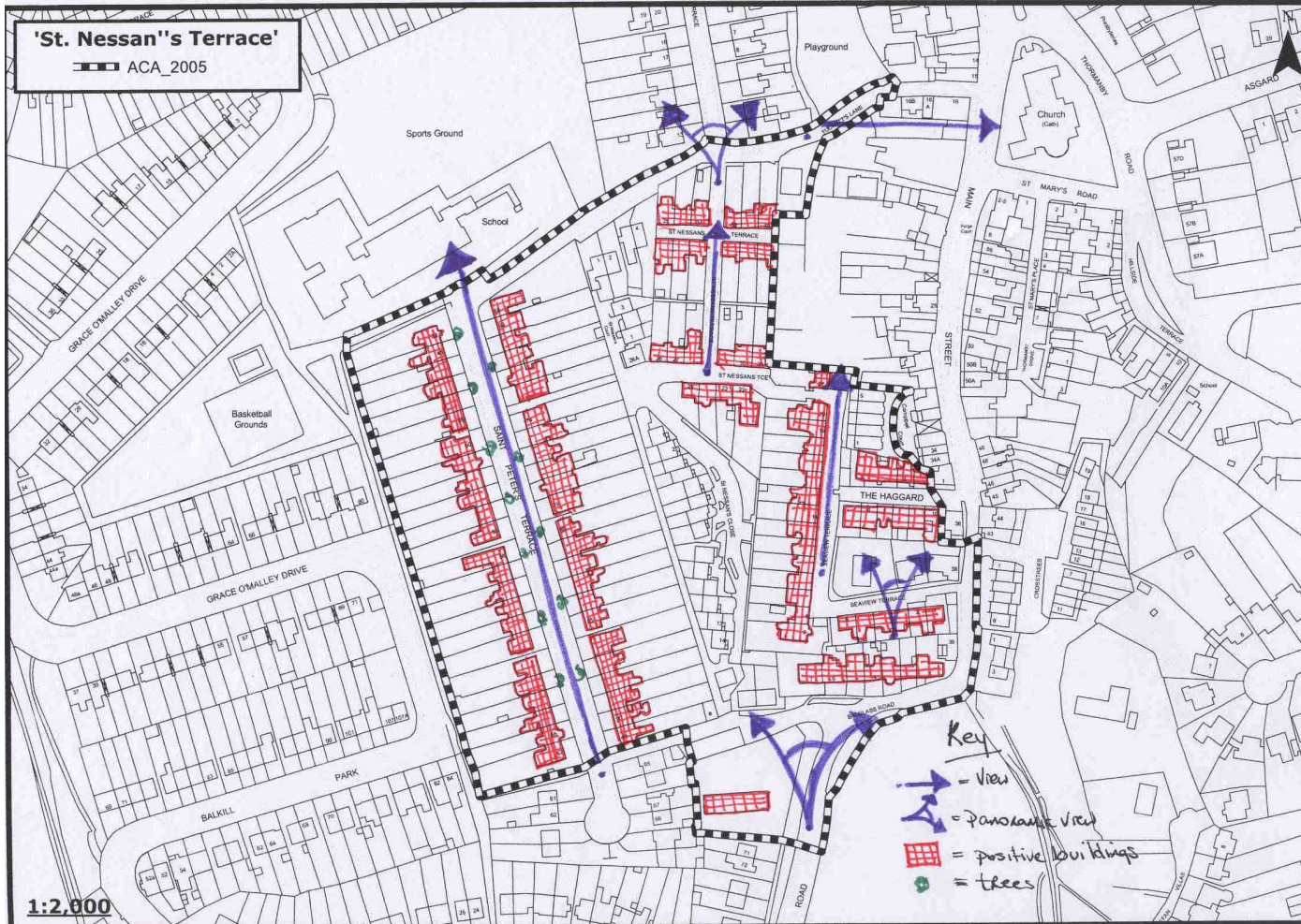
The special character of this ACA is primarily associated with the early 20th century terraced cottages along St. Peter's Terrace, St. Nesson's Terrace, Seaview Terrace, The Haggard, and part of Balglass Road. Although some alterations have occurred to the external appearance of the terraces and their boundary treatments, overall the low-rise, small-scale terraced nature of this area has remained fundamentally unaltered since the construction of these streets.

The modest nature of these early 20th century terraces, along with the overall uniformity of the simple design of the houses, has resulted in a distinctive homogenous vernacular character that sets this area apart from the rest of Howth village.



Fig. 15 Aerial view of ACA area

Fig. 16 Annotated Map



Implications for Planning and Development

The objective of Architectural Conservation Area designation is to protect the special character of an area through the careful control and positive management of change of the built environment. Therefore, the assigning of ACA status on a streetscape, cluster of buildings, or a town/village core results in **restrictions on certain works to the exteriors of structures** within the boundary of the ACA. Owners, occupiers, or developers proposing to carry out works within an ACA should be aware that in general, planning permission will be required for any new build to the front of the structure and changes of original materials, such as windows, wall finishes, boundary walls, roof coverings etc. While new development and alterations to existing structures can still occur subject to planning, proposal should respect or enhance the area's special character.

More detailed direction is given overleaf on the type of works that do and do not impact on the character of this ACA and therefore will or will not require planning permission. As St. Nessian's Court, St. Nessian's Close, and the late 20th century houses on Tuckett's Lane between St. Nessian's Terrace and St. Peter's Terrace are modern infill, they are not subject to the above objectives, except where the works might block views. However, they must still adhere to the general provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2002 relating to works that do require planning permission

WORKS NOT AFFECTING THE CHARACTER OF THE ACA (DO NOT REQUIRE PLANNING PERMISSION)

- **MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS**

Planning permission is not required for regular maintenance works and genuine repairs within this ACA (such as roof, rainwater goods or window repairs) as long as original materials are retained where they exist, or where replacement is necessary that it is on a like-for-like basis.

- **INTERNAL ALTERATIONS**

ACA designation for this area does not prevent internal changes or re-arrangements, as none of the houses are Protected Structures, and as long as these changes do not impact on the exterior of the structure.

- **RESTORATION OF CHARACTER**

Where original materials have been removed and replaced with modern or inappropriate alternatives, the restoration or reinstatement of these features will not require planning permission where the method, materials and details for the works have been agreed with the Conservation Officer.

- **WORKS TO THE PUBLIC REALM**

In general, works to the public domain will be carried out by Fingal County Council or the major utility and service providers, and may be exempt from planning permission. However, consultation with the Conservation Staff of Fingal County Council will be required before any works commence to ensure that these works enhance and improve the character of the area and do not negatively impact on it, such as: traffic management & parking schemes; undergrounding of wiring and services; public lighting schemes; urban improvement schemes.

WORKS IMPACTING ON THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA (WORKS REQUIRING PLANNING PERMISSION)

- **EXTERNAL WALLS**

The removal of external render to expose rubble stone work or brickwork, as the render or plaster provides a water-resisting surface that protects the building from decay. The majority of structures in Howth are rendered. Often the rubble stonework or brickwork underneath this render is of poor quality, as it was never meant to be exposed to the elements. Therefore, the removal of this external finish is deemed unacceptable.

The cladding of external walls with different finishes, such as stone or timber cladding. The special character of residential streets within this ACA is associated with the uniformity of the design of the terraces. The original external appearance of these terraces was a rendered finish. Thus, any proposals to alter this finish by the addition of external cladding is considered to negatively impact on the character of the area.

- **ROOF**

The removal of the original slate roofing material or chimneys, and their replacement with modern materials, or the taking down of chimney stacks permanently. Original elements should be retained where possible as they can generally be repaired and reused and they contribute to the character of the area.

The installation of roof lights or dormer windows on the front elevations of the terraces. Roof lights should be placed on inner or hidden pitches of a roof and any planning applications for dormer windows should be to rear elevations.

Changes to the roof pitch angle, ridge height, span of roof. Many of the streetscapes with the ACA boundary consist of terraces of houses with similar roof pitches, heights, etc and so the alteration of the profile of just one structure could have an impact on a number of adjoining structures

Installation of satellite antenna, TV aerials and other communications devices. The addition of these to the front elevations or roofs of the terrace is considered to have a negative impact on the character of the area and should be avoided. Satellite dishes should not be visible on the front elevation of buildings. Where possible, less visible methods for getting TV reception, such as cable, should be used and where the existing aerials have become redundant they should be removed.

- **WINDOW & DOOR OPENINGS**

The alteration of window openings and external doors, namely the enlargement of openings or the removal of original windows, doors, sills and doorsteps, and/or the replacement of original features with materials such as PVC or aluminium. Original elements should be retained where possible as they can generally be repaired and reused and they contribute to the character of the area. Unfortunately, only a few structures within the ACA still have their original windows or doors. Where windows have already been altered prior to the ACA designation, owners will be encouraged to consider a more appropriate window material and glazing pattern (two-over-two up-and-down timber sash windows) if they intend to change their windows in the future.

- **PORCHES**

The addition of porches to the front façade of buildings requires planning permission. A number of houses within the ACA have had small porches added to the front elevation. However, there has been a variety in the style and materials used. Only certain streets within the ACA, such as St. Peter's Terrace and The Haggard, have the ability to facilitate porches as they do not directly front onto the street. While, the precedent has already been established on these streets regarding small front porches, planning permission will be required for the addition of any porches in the future and should adhere to a similar style, namely small central-bay porches with pitched slate roof, so as to try to re-establish the uniformity of building design along the streetscape.

- **EXTENSIONS**

Extensions in general should be to the rear of the property and should not extend above the existing ridge line. Their design should be subsidiary to the main building, of an appropriate scale, and use appropriate materials. Due to the elevated nature of the area some rear elevations are very visible from the road, such as those on St. Nessan's Terrace and Balglass Road. Many of these houses have already extended their properties and the variety and scale of these extensions do impact on the area. Any future proposals for rear extensions or alterations to existing rear extensions on these highly visible sites would require planning permission and should consult prior to the submission of the planning application with the Area Planner and Conservation Officer as there is the potential to negatively impact on the ACA.

- **NEW BUILD AND INFILL**

Designation as an ACA puts an onus on prospective developers to produce a very high standard of design, which respects or enhances the particular qualities of the area. New build does not need to directly imitate earlier styles, but should be designed with respect to its context, therefore sympathetic modern designs that are complimentary to the character of the ACA may be acceptable. New build on these elevated sites should respect the existing building lines and follow the pattern set historically of single-storey structures.

A certain amount of infill development has already occurred prior to ACA designation, such as St. Nessan's Court and Close. The rear gardens of St. Peter's Terrace could facilitate backland development but the scale, mass, and height should match the single-storey nature of St. Peter's. The Former National School on Balglass Road is one of the larger sites within the ACA. This structure is a positive contribution to the ACA and part of the social history of Howth and should be retained if any proposals are submitted to develop the site.

- **AMALGAMATION OF PROPERTIES**

The amalgamation of structures requires planning permission irrespective of whether located in an ACA or not, unless it involves reversing the subdivision of what had originally been a single dwelling. Any proposals to merge two or more properties together internally should retain the proportions of the openings of the original front elevations of the structures.

- **DEMOLITION**

Demolition of any building within the ACA. With regard to the terraces of houses, the demolition of any one house in this group would have a very significant detrimental affect on the area, and therefore it is highly unlikely that permission for demolition will be granted. Where permission is sought for demolition on the grounds of structural defects or failure, a report containing photographs and drawing(s) indicating locations of photographs will be required, produced by a suitably qualified and experienced professional regarding the existing condition. As part of the justification for any demolition within the ACA on structural grounds, details will be required of repairs/remedial works normally used in similar circumstances and details of why they are not suitable in that instance.

- **BOUNDARY TREATMENTS & CARPARKING**

There is a level of uniformity to the boundary treatments and therefore any proposals to change them should consult with the Area Planner and Conservation Officer. Planning permission will be required for the creation of a new driveway and the dishing of the footpath, this applies irrespective of the ACA designation.

- **VIEWS**

Preservation of views. The key seaviews of Howth Harbour, Ireland's Eye, and the eastern coastline of North County Dublin from the streets with the ACA should be preserved and development within the area and on the lower slopes of Howth should not adversely impact on the ACA or block these views.

NOTE:

Some of the works listed above require planning permission irrespective of whether the area is protected or not, but are included to highlight the need for careful consideration of the design of the proposed works to ensure that they do not impact negatively on the character of the area. The above list 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 2000-2002 and Planning Regulations. The Area Planner and Conservation Officer of Fingal County Council can be consulted if there is any doubt as to whether planning permission is required or not.