

Blackrock Local Area Plan



2. Heritage & Conservation

2.1 Built Heritage

POLICY BK01

The Council recognises the distinct character and intrinsic heritage qualities of the Blackrock area. Understanding and appreciating the history and culture of Blackrock is an important part to the planning of its future. It is Council Policy to ensure the protection of this historical character and ensure that any future development / redevelopment is carried out in a manner sympathetic to its special character.

2.1.1 Historical Background



Figure 2.1: Historical Map of Blackrock

The historical village of Blackrock developed as a seaside resort in the 18th Century. The name Blackrock is derived from an outcrop of limestone that occurs on the strand near the Blackrock Baths. The stone turns black when wet, hence the name 'Blackrock'.

Most development that occurred in Blackrock during the 18th and early 19th centuries comprised predominantly of detached houses. Few buildings dating from the 18th Century survive in the original village of Blackrock, with the exception of two properties on Main Street the former Garda Station and the adjacent old house which accommodates part of the Blackrock Market.

In the second half of the 18th Century, a number of larger houses began to appear around the village centre, such as Rockfield House (Cluain Mhuire), Blackrock House and Neptune House, all which still exist and have Protected Structure status.



Photo 7: Historical Photo of Blackrock Townhall (c.1900)

Blackrock saw its most dramatic growth in the early 19th Century, by which time there was a well-developed town structure. The Dublin-to-Kingstown railway line opened in 1834. The introduction of the railway line had both advantages and disadvantages for Blackrock. While it improved Blackrock's accessibility to and from the wider metropolitan area, it also obstructed coastal views and 'separated' the village from the sea. The construction of Idrone Terrace in the 1850's, an attractive terrace of two-storey houses that look out over Dublin Bay, further impeded views of the sea from Blackrock Main Street. This set the precedent for the construction of further buildings along the northern side of Main Street including the Methodist Church in 1861, the Town Hall in 1866, the Library and Technical School in 1905 and the original Post Office building in 1909.



Photo 8: St John the Baptist Church



Photo 9: The Library and Blackrock Further Education Institute (former Technical School)

Prior to the construction of the railway, the shoreline was located much further inland. The introduction of the railway line landlocked part of the original shoreline and subsequently created a wetland. In 1873 it was decided to infill this wetland area and create a public park which is now known as Blackrock Park.

In 1839 the railway company provided a public bathing area known as Blackrock Baths. In 1887, the Baths were rebuilt in concrete. The Baths comprised of a sea-pool, multi-height diving board and public seating. The Urban District Council acquired the Baths in 1928 and they operated until the late 1980's.

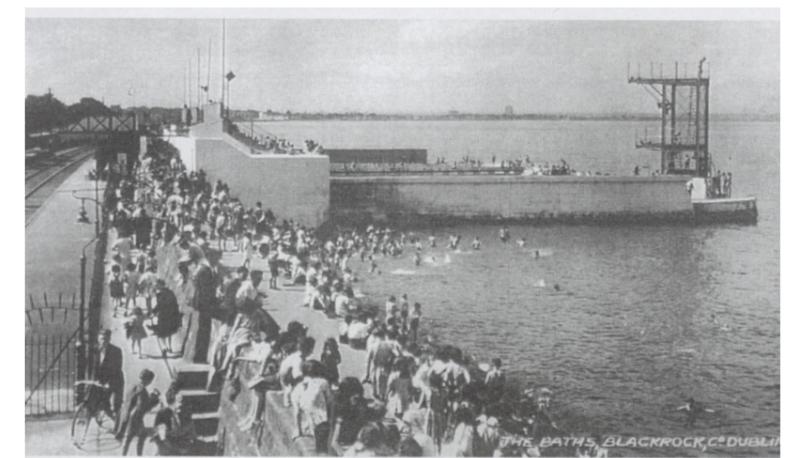


Photo 10: Blackrock Baths (c.1930)

During the late 1890s, a regular tram service ran between Blackrock and Dublin. There is very little evidence of the trams remaining. The former tram depot was located on Newtown Avenue.

A number of Blackrock's large period dwelling houses were demolished in the second half of the twentieth century - including Frascati House, Maretimo House, Laural Hill, Fitzwilliam Lodge and Elm Cliff. These historic houses were demolished to facilitate new development such as the shopping centres and the Blackrock Bypass (Frascati Road).

2.1.2 Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas

The Blackrock area remains, however, rich in architectural heritage. There are 94 no. Protected Structures within the Plan area primarily focused on the Main Street, Newtown Avenue, Carysfort Avenue and at the Seafront on Idrone Terrace (Appendix D).

In addition there is one Architectural Conservation Area in the Plan area at Newtown Villas and there are 2 no. Candidate Architectural Conservation Areas (CACAs) in the Plan area at Idrone Terrace and the Quaker Burial Ground and Meeting House located at Temple Hill (Map 4).



Photo 11: Newtown Villas, Blackrock

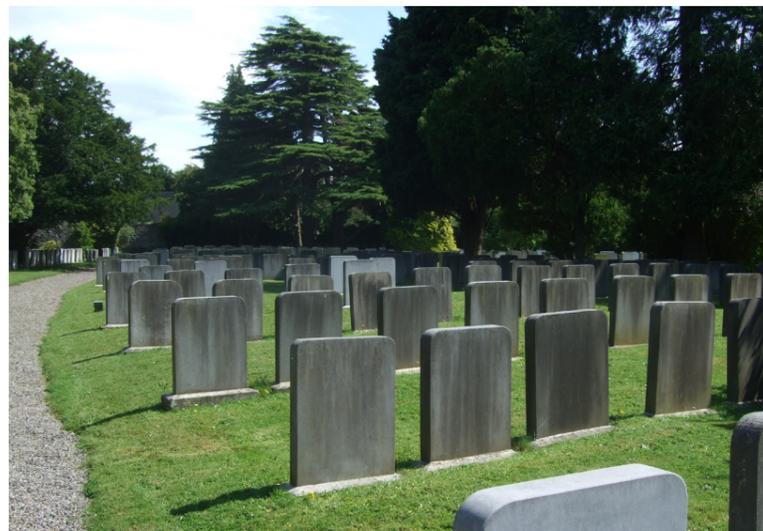
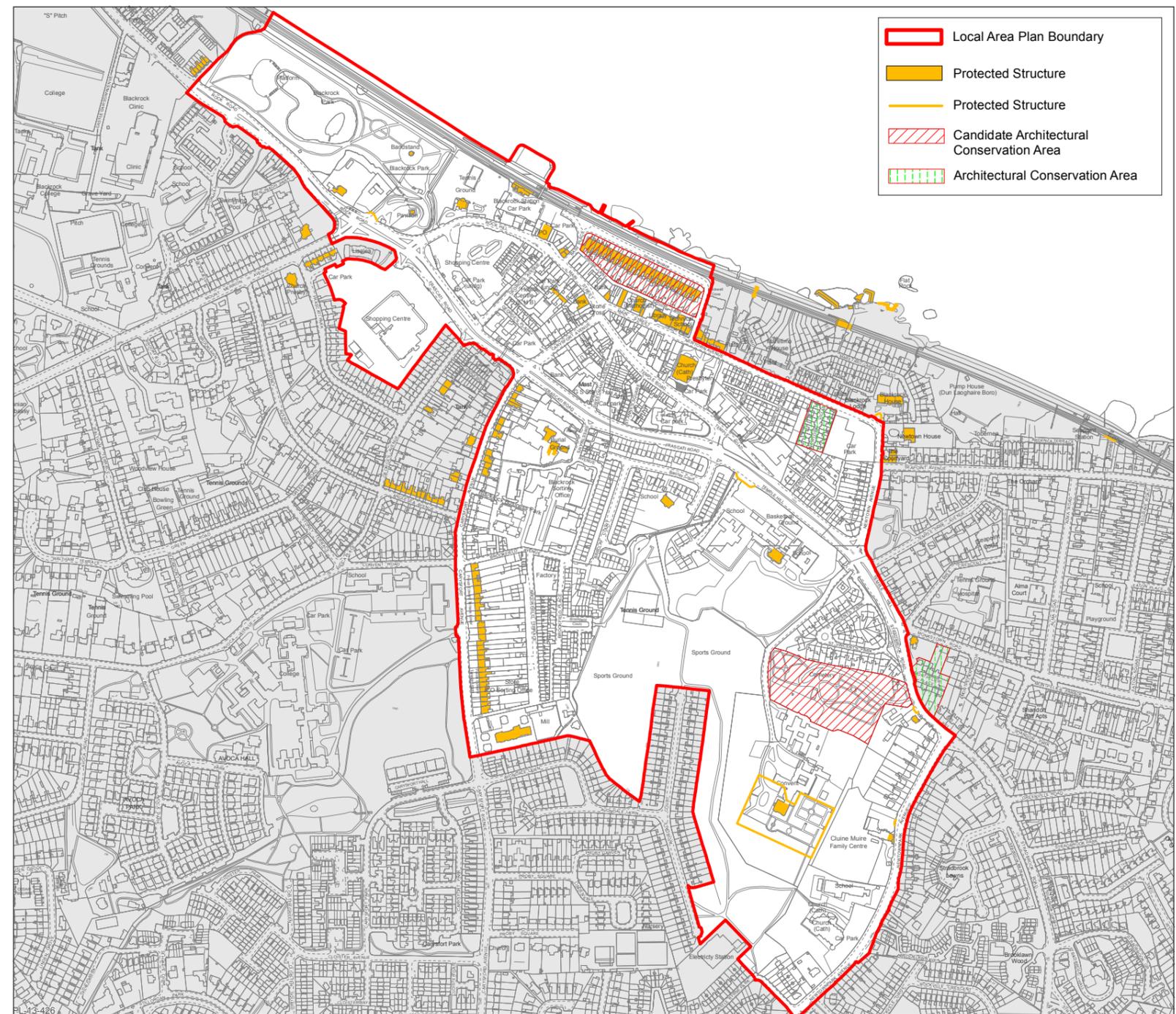


Photo 12: Quaker Burial Ground



Map 4: Existing Built Heritage

The Record of Protected Structures and the ACA/cACA designation are the principal mechanisms for protecting and conserving the built heritage assets within the Blackrock LAP. In accordance with County Development Plan policy, where works are proposed to a Protected Structure, they will be subject to the Architectural Heritage Development Management Guidelines as set out in S.16.9. and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2004).



Photo 13: Prince Edward Terrace

This section outlines the general objectives for works to all Protected Structures within the Plan area. The guiding principle is to ensure that the architectural and landscape character of each site is protected during any development works, whilst at the same time facilitating high quality sustainable and compatible redevelopment.

Objectives: Works to Protected Structures and Associated Lands

PS1

The Planning Authority will seek to safeguard the character and setting of a Protected Structure through appropriate control of the design of new development in the vicinity.

PS2

The principal elevations of a Protected Structure should not be impacted upon or obscured by new development that may compromise its amenity.

PS3

Significant views of the Protected Structure and the historical context of its setting in the landscape or surrounding urban context, should not be compromised.

PS4

To encourage compatible new uses for Protected Structures, which will not detract from the architectural and historic character of the building/structure. Any works and/or extensions necessitated by the proposed new use(s) shall be appropriately scaled and shall 'read' architecturally as new, in line with County Development Plan Policies.

PS5

To require pre-application discussions with the Conservation Officer.

PS6

To require an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment by an architect or other professional with specialist knowledge of building conservation. The report should include an assessment of both works to the Protected Structure and the impact of new development on the character and appearance of the heritage asset.

PS7

To seek a holistic approach to any development of the overall site. Proposals for the Protected Structure must form part of any application to ensure that the Protected Structure retains prominence on the site.

PS8

To require a design statement with supporting illustrative material and description of proposed development demonstrating how it has been developed having regard to the built heritage, topography and landscape character of the site.

PS9

To require the use of high quality materials and external elevation design. It is possible to use traditional materials in conjunction with modern ones in order to create a building which is both contextual and modern and of high architectural quality.

PS10

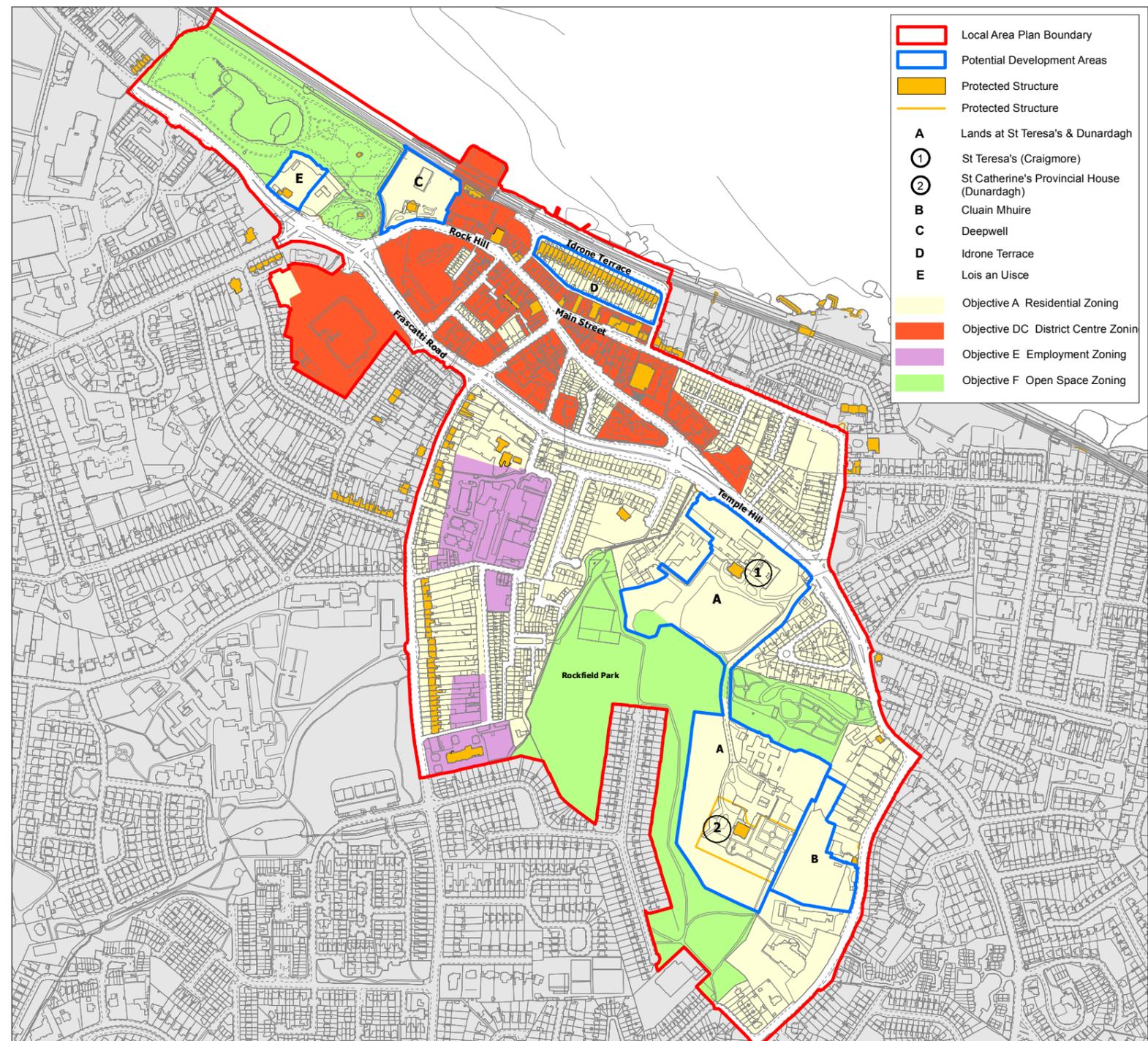
To require a comprehensive landscaping scheme for each site as part of any development proposal (where appropriate) to include details of trees to be retained, replacement planting where required and the use of soft boundaries to demarcate/define private open space. Replacement trees where required to be semi-mature native species.

2.1.3 Protected Structure Sites with Development Potential

A number of sites within the Plan area that incorporate Protected Structures may have development and redevelopment potential (Map 5). This section of the Local Area Plan assesses the characteristics of those sites and provides a series of objectives to help guide development in a way that ensures the protection of their historical character, heritage and setting. With regard to the conjoined sites of St Teresa's, Dunardagh and Cluain Mhuire,

a series of separate Character Areas have been identified which focus on characteristics specific to those areas. Any development proposals brought forward for these specific Character Areas will require to have due regard to the stated objectives.

Given the larger scale redevelopment opportunities available on the lands of St Teresa's, Dunardagh and Cluain Mhuire, a comprehensive Site Framework Strategy has also been prepared for these sites, this is fully set out in Section 3.5 of Chapter 3: Urban Structure and Character.



Map 5: Protected Structure Sites with Development Potential

2.1.3(i) Lands at St. Teresa's and Dunardagh

Historical background

The lands at St. Teresa's and Dunardagh have been in the ownership of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul since the 1930s. Two houses, Dunardagh, (now known as St Catherines Provincial House) and St Teresa's (formerly Craigmore), both Protected Structures, were built in the mid 19th century on lands that formerly belonged to the Rockfield Estate.



Photo 14: St. Teresa's (Craigmore)



Photo 15: St. Teresa's and Dunardagh gateway

Over time the extent of lands associated with the estate have been reduced. A section of land at Temple Hill was offered to the Borough Council for the construction of a small housing estate known as St Vincent's Park. In 1965 land was made available to the Diocese for the erection of the Guardian Angel's Church on Newtownpark Avenue and later for the Primary School built on the same site. Around this time the community also transferred some of the parkland to Dún Laoghaire Borough Council for use as a public park (Rockfield Park). A wall was built by the Council around the park delineating the land which the community wished to retain for their

private use. Double granite gateways which formed the original entrance were removed and re-erected to the northwest as part of the site boundary during construction of the Blackrock bypass in the 1980s. The remaining lands of St Teresa's and Dunardagh are subject to the Objective 'To protect and/or provide for Institutional Use in open lands'. It is Council policy as stated in Section 5.3.5: 'Institutional Lands' of the County Development Plan 2012-2016 that where parcels of land are in institutional use, any proposals for their redevelopment 'shall seek to retain the open character of these lands wherever possible'. Any future development of the St. Teresa's and Dunardagh lands shall take due cognisance of the requirements of this objective.

Character Areas of St Teresa's and Dunardagh

Any development or redevelopment of these lands will require to be informed by guiding objectives relating to the individual Character Areas as follows (Map 6):

1. The original mid-19th century Dunardagh House and Formal Gardens identified in the County Development Plan and delineated on Map 5 & Map 6 of the Local Area Plan.
2. Lands to the south and west of Dunardagh extending to the boundary with Rockfield Park.
3. Area to the northeast - including former walled garden - and extending to the boundary of the Quaker Burial Ground.
4. Later Convent, Chapel, Retreat House and the former Rickard House Nursing Home.
5. The original mid-19th century house of St Teresa's (Craigmore) and lands to the rear/north overlooking Temple Hill.
6. Lands to the south of St. Teresa's (Craigmore) extending to the boundary with Rockfield Park.

Character Area 1

This includes the original mid 19th century House and Formal Gardens which are integral to the setting of the Protected Structure. Historic maps show that the House was sited to give a view of 'the Rockies' outcrop, which now lies within Rockfield Park. This view should be protected in any future development.



Photo 16: View of The Rockies from Dunardagh

Objectives: Character Area 1

D1

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that no development in the immediate foreground of Dunardagh is permitted in order to protect the character and setting of the Protected Structure.

D2

It is an objective of the Council to encourage the restoration of the Formal Gardens of Dunardagh (RPS no.1897) as part of any redevelopment of the lands. This should be based on site analysis and research by an historic landscape consultant.

D3

It is an objective of the Council to retain a view from the south elevation of the Protected Structure, south towards Rockfield Park.

Character Area 2

This area encompasses a linear strip of land located to the south and west of Dunardagh adjacent to the boundary with Rockfield Park.

Development considerations in this area will be sensitive design, siting, location and orientation to enhance and protect the special character of Dunardagh and its curtilage. This area can accommodate appropriate compatible development provided that development proposals comply with the following objectives.

Objectives: Character Area 2

D4

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that new development within Character Area 2 of Dunardagh will be of a high standard of design, sympathetic to the Protected Structure and employ natural materials which reflect the historic character of the site.

D5

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that a high quality landscape design forms an integral part of any redevelopment within Character Area 2 to enhance and reinforce the existing landscape character.

D6

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that development within Character Area 2 shall be designed in such a manner so as not to compromise the views through this area - including views to and from the Protected Structure and Rockfield Park.

Character Area 3

This area, including a former walled garden, lies to the northeast and extends to the boundary of the Quaker Burial Ground. Historic maps show this walled garden originally formed part of the Rockfield Estate. The former walled garden and the main house were part of the 'grand' plan for the estate and were indispensable from each other. Today the former garden is enclosed by high granite rubble stone walls.



Photo 17: Walled Garden

Objectives: Character Area 3

D7

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any development of Character Area 3 shall be 'free standing' so as not to engage the walls of the former garden and shall be loose in nature in order to allow for areas of communal private open space incorporating plots for cultivation and the retention of the orchard or part thereof. Any development shall employ a contemporary and imaginative design and shall use materials chosen to compliment the existing palette of materials of rubble stone and timber.

Character Area 4

The area includes the later Convent, Chapel, Retreat House and the former Rickard House Nursing Home. In the event that these structures become obsolete/redundant, there may be the opportunity to create an improved setting for the Protected Structure in any redevelopment of this part of the overall site.

A Sensitive Development Area has been identified in this area, adjacent to the Protected Structure. Development in this area should be deferential to the Protected Structure.

Objectives: Character Area 4

D8

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any development within Character Area 4 shall be sensitively designed so as not to detract from the character and setting of both the Protected Structure and the Quaker Burial Ground Candidate Architectural Conservation Area.

D9

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that development within Character Area 4, shall establish an improved setting for St Catherine's Provincial House - a Protected Structure.

D10

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the design, alignment and scale of any development within the Sensitive Development Area, as indicated on Map 6, shall relate to the existing Protected Structure and be set back from the façade of the Structure.

Character Area 5

This area includes the original mid 19th century house, St Teresa's, and lands to the rear/north overlooking Temple Hill. Historic maps indicate that the rear elevation was not designed to have a formal relationship with Temple Hill. Rather the main views were to the south towards the Dublin Mountains.

The later buildings adjoining the Protected Structure encroach on its setting and visual amenity. In the event that these structures become obsolete/redundant, there may be an opportunity to create an improved setting for the Protected Structure in any redevelopment of this part of the site. The lands to the rear/north of St. Teresa's, overlooking Temple Hill, have the potential to accommodate taller structures provided that development proposals comply with the following objectives.

Objectives: Character Area 5

D11

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that development within Character Area 5 shall include the creation of an improved setting for St Teresa's Protected Structure.

The Council will retain The Gate Lodge to St. Teresa's and necessitate any extensions to ensure its continued use and viability in accordance with polices and objectives set out in Chapter 2 of this Plan.

D12

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that new development within Character Area 5 will be concentrated to the rear of the part of the site overlooking Temple Hill, be of a high standard of design and be sympathetic to the Protected Structure in terms of its siting, design and materials used.

D13

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the relocation of the original entrance gates and piers to the proposed new entrance to Rockfield Park as part of any re-development of the lands in accordance with the Site Framework Strategy (Section 3.5) and Objective RP3 (Section 9.2).

Character Area 6

This encompasses lands to the south of St. Teresa's extending to the boundary with Rockfield Park. Historic maps show that this part of the site has never been developed. There is a County Development Plan objective to protect and preserve the Trees and Woodland on part of the site and where possible these shall be incorporated into any future development. It is important that any development at this location maintains the sense of open space the house has always enjoyed. The low lying topography renders this part of the site very sensitive to development. Any development proposals will be required to comply with the following objectives.

Objectives: Character Area 6

D14

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that development within Character Area 6 be appropriately sited having regard to views to and from the Protected Structure and retain the historic view to the south toward the Dublin Mountains.

D15

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any development proposals for Character Area 6 shall include photomontages to demonstrate the visual impact to and from the Protected Structure.

D16

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any development proposals for Character Area 6 shall provide additional screening consisting of native tree species in order to protect the setting and visual amenity of the Protected Structure.

D17

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any development within Character Area 6 shall be sited so as to protect and provide an appropriate setting for the folly to the southwest of St. Teresa's.



Photo 18: Formal Garden Dunardagh

2.1.3 (ii) Cluain Mhuire

Cluain Mhuire - originally known as Rockfield House - was built c. 1760 on the 200 acre Rockfield Estate. At this time there were three entrances to the estate, one at Temple Hill opposite Newtown Avenue, one off Stradbroke Road, and the third off Newtownpark Avenue, which remains its present entrance. This entrance Gateway from Newtownpark Avenue, together with the east façade of Cluain Mhuire are Protected Structures (see Appendix D). The former entrance on Stradbroke Road and the adjacent Gate Lodge, which dates to 1905, are also Protected Structures.



Photo 19: Cluain Mhuire Entrance

Character Area 1

This area includes the original mid 18th century house and the Gothic style entrance piers.

Objectives: Character Area 1

CM1

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that no development in Character Area 1 (the immediate foreground to the north of Cluain Mhuire) is permitted in order to protect the character and setting of the Protected Structure.

Character Area 2

This area encompasses the remainder of lands to the south and west of Cluain Mhuire. This area can accommodate some sensitive development provided that development proposals comply with the following objectives.

Objectives: Character Area 2

CM2

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any development within Character Area 2 be of a high standard of design and be sympathetic to the Protected Structure in terms of its siting, design and materials used.

CM3

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any development within Character Area 2 be complimented by high quality hard and soft landscaping.

2.1.3 (iii) Deepwell

Deepwell – a Protected Structure - is a large three-bay square-plan house set on an elevated position, overlooking the railway and Dublin Bay. The House is located adjacent to the village centre and is concealed from view behind a high boundary wall. It has extensive grounds extending down to the DART Line and harks back to the days, before the coming of the railway, when Blackrock was a small seaside resort.

The existing house which dates to around 1850 occupies the site of an earlier house called Fairy Hill, which appears on the First Edition OS Map 1837.



Photo 20: Deepwell Entrance

It is not clear if the original house was demolished or subsumed within the current structure. The present appearance of Deepwell is the result of various additions.

The extensive gardens were redesigned in 1995 and comprise a formal garden in the Italianate style with a classical temple and herb garden. The design was awarded first prize by the Institute of Landscape Gardener's in 1996.

Specific Local Objective 8 of the current County Development Plan is 'To improve pedestrian/cycle way provision in the corridor between Blackrock Park and the DART Station'. This will necessitate the setting back and relocation of the stone boundary wall at Deepwell. It is important that the works required to facilitate this are carried out sensitively so as not to detract from the character and appearance of the Protected Structure.

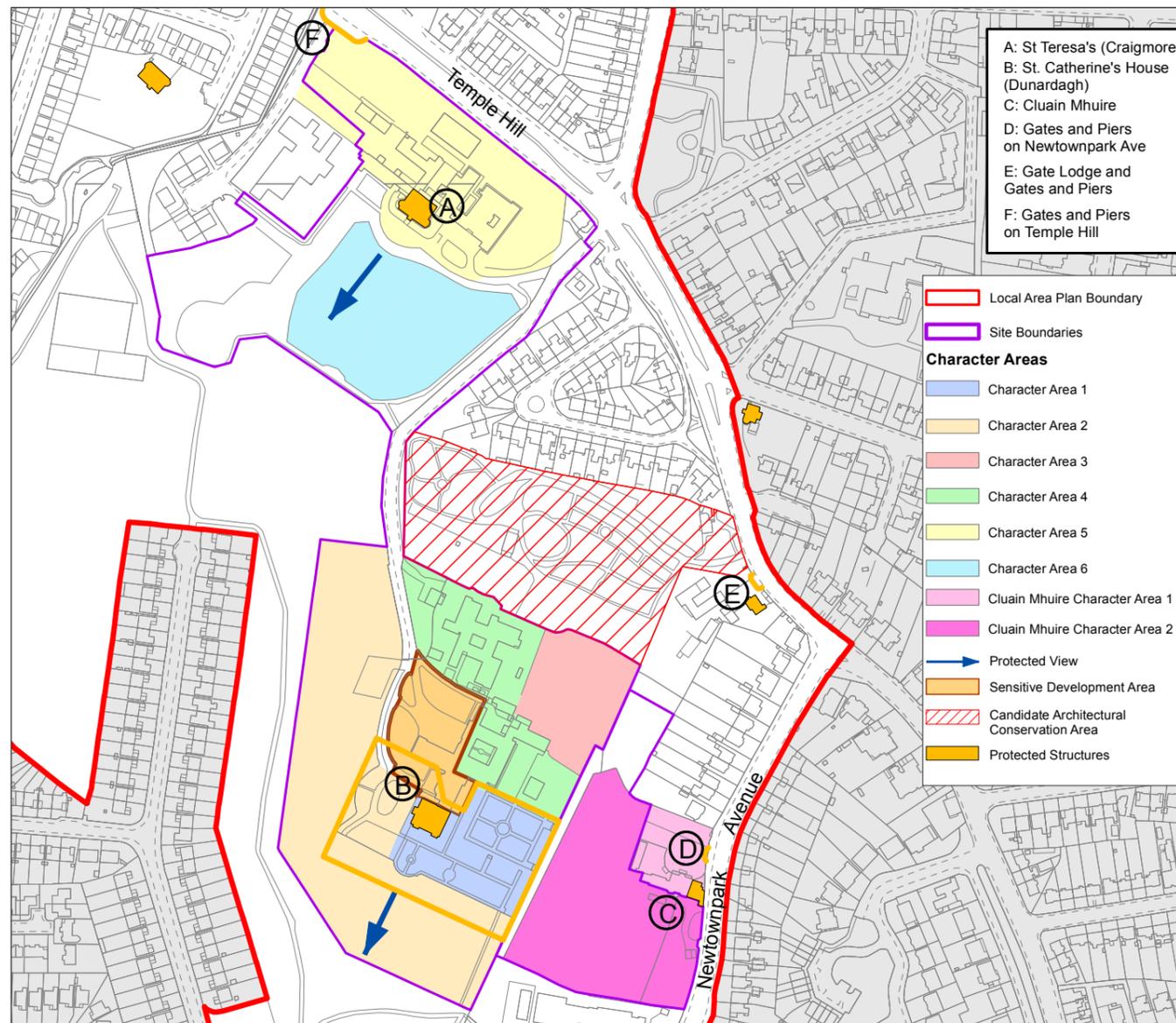
Objectives: Deepwell

DW1

It is an objective of the Council to improve the existing access from Blackrock Park to Blackrock Station. This will necessitate the setting back and rebuilding of the granite wall which forms the boundary of Deepwell. The wall will be rebuilt reusing the existing materials and replicating the traditional coursing, mortar mix and pointing style (Drawing 4 Public Realm and Map 13A & B Transport Network Strategy).

2.1.3 (iv) Idrone Terrace

This is one Blackrock's most complete formal terraces overlooking Dublin Bay. It consists of 27 no. two-bay, two-storey rendered houses with basements. The terrace is unusual for this period as it was built without stables, marking a change in the social and residential patterns facilitated by the coming of the railway which allowed a new mobile middle class to live outside the city.



Map 6: Character Areas

Section 16.3.4(ix): 'Mews Lane Development' of the current County Development Plan states that 'the principle of mews development ... will not generally be accepted where the length of all or most of the adjoining rear gardens on the side of the lane concerned is less than 25 metres'. Whilst it is acknowledged that the length of the majority of existing gardens to the rear of Idrone Terrace are less than 25 metres, it is considered that, in this particular instance and having regard to the opportunities provided by the Idrone Lane for this type of development within a 'village' context, the provision of an imaginative layout using two plots for the provision of one mews property could be possible in cases where existing larger gardens exist, as illustrated on Drawing 1.



Photo 21: Idrone Terrace



Photo 22: Idrone Terrace (c.1910)



Photo 23: Idrone Terrace - Present day

Objectives: Idrone Terrace

IT1

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate Mews Development to the rear of Idrone Terrace in accordance with Drawing No.1. and objective H3, Section 5.2.2.

2.1.3 (v) Lios an Uisce

Originally constructed in the mid-18th Century the house presents evidence of many periods of development right up to the early-to-mid 20th century. The earliest structure is on the landward side and comprised a simple Georgian style house of five-bays and three-storeys. This residence was extended and enlarged by additions at different times in the latter half of the 18th century.

The original setting of the house has been significantly compromised, first by the construction of the Dublin-to-Kingstown Railway in 1834, then the development of Blackrock Park in the 1870's and finally by the widening of the Rock Road in the 1930s with the current arrangement bringing the traffic very close to the house and greatly reducing the privacy of the property.

In recent years a contemporary style two-storey house was constructed within the former orchard to the south west of the original house. The house was sited and designed to be deferential to the existing Protected Structure. Given the topography of the site and its open nature any further development will present challenges particularly in relation to preserving the historic views towards the sea. There is limited potential for development on the slope that forms the north-western edge of the site overlooking Blackrock Park. This has been identified as a Potential Development Area (Map 7). Given the elevated nature of this site, any further development must be considered both in the context of the Protected Structure and Blackrock Park.

Objectives: Lios an Uisce

LU1

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that no development within Lios an Uisce, within the area shown in pink on Map 7, is permitted in order to protect the character and setting of the Protected Structure - in particular when viewed from the sea and Blackrock Park.

LU2

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any proposed development within the defined Potential Development Area of Lios an Uisce (Map 7) should be appropriately sited with regard to the topography of the site, to views to and from the Protected Structure, (including views of the site from Blackrock Park) to be modest in scale and to employ natural materials which reflect the historic character of the area.

LU3

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any proposed development within the Potential Development Area (Map 7) shall include photomontages to demonstrate the visual impact to-and-from the Protected Structure.



Indicative Layout Plan - Not to scale.

Drawing 1: Idrone Lane Mews Development

Architecture & Culture Department



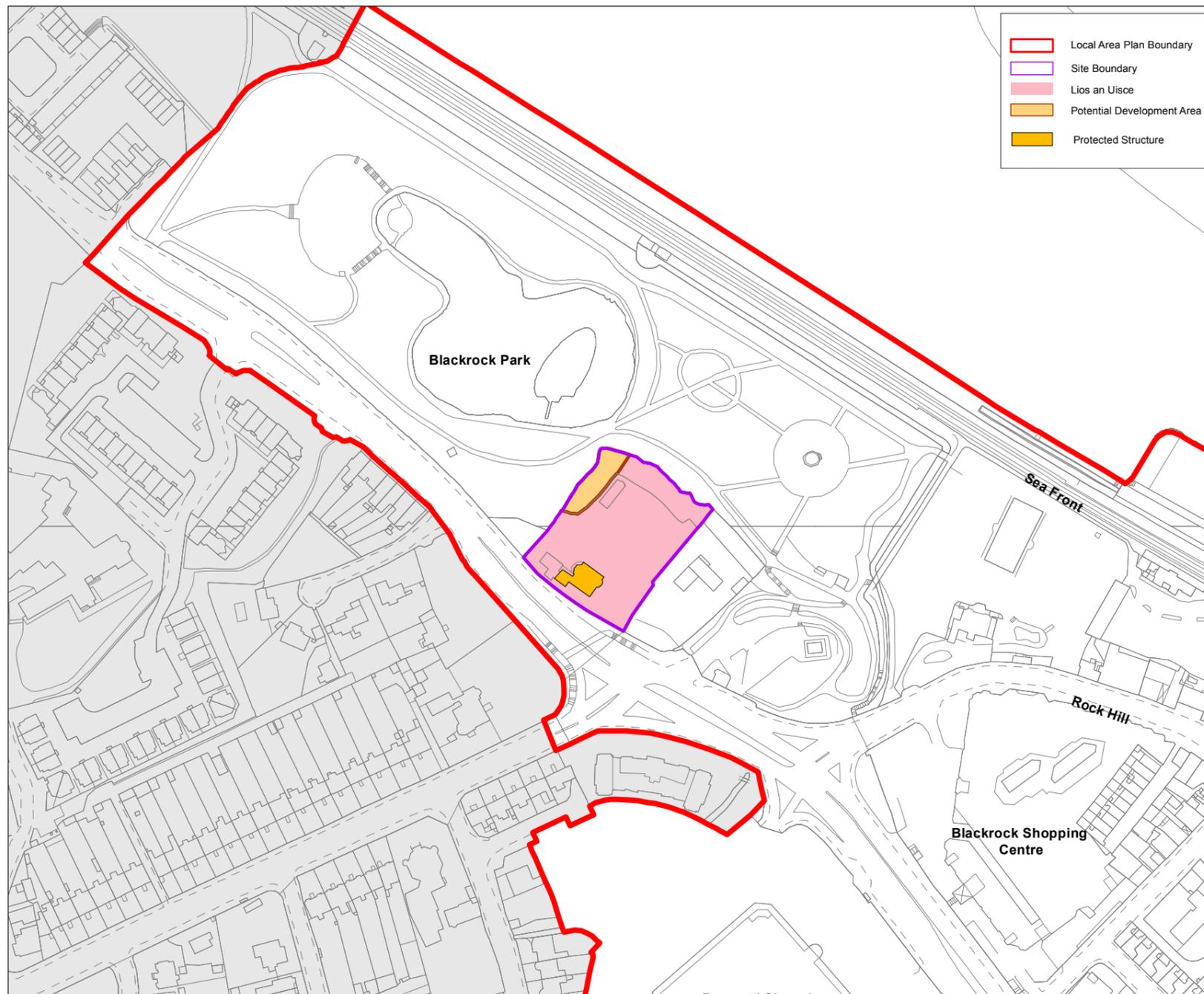
Generous planting in new rear gardens will enhance lane



Arrangement of dwelling and open space parallel to lane



Shared surface to carriageway



Map 7: Lois an Uisce Potential Development Area

2.1.4 Village Character and Built Form

Blackrock village core retains a certain charm being a largely intact mid to late 19th century streetscape. Pat Walsh's, 'Images of Ireland: Dunlaoghaire Rathdown', shows how little the village has changed since the 1900's. (Walsh Pat, Images of Ireland: Dunlaoghaire Rathdown, Nonsuch Publishing Limited, 2005)

The historical and architectural quality of Blackrock village core is reflected in the concentration of Protected Structures in the area. These range from large public buildings such as the Former Town Hall and Carnegie Library, the former Post Office (recently converted to a retail outlet) and good examples of early 20th century purpose-built banks with rich architectural detailing. The majority of the

remainder of the buildings are Victorian in style, which vary from two-bay townhouses over a ground floor shopfront, to more ornate Dutch-style gable fronted buildings with brick decoration. The width of the plots are narrow, with a predominant height of two storeys, which creates a fine-grained development pattern.

While there is an objective to retain this local built heritage in accordance with Policy AR12: 'Vernacular Heritage' of the current County Development Plan, it is considered that the village core now warrants possible consideration as a candidate Architectural Conservation Area. This cACA designation could both protect the essential historic character of the village core and act as a vehicle for promoting high quality development in the future.



Photo 24: Blackrock Main Street (c.1900)



Photo 25: Blackrock Main Street Present Day

Objectives: Blackrock Village

BV1

It is an objective of the Council to protect, enhance and promote Blackrock's built heritage through the possible designation of Blackrock village core as a candidate Architectural Conservation Area as part of the forthcoming review of the County Development Plan. An indicative boundary for the proposed cACA is shown on Map 8.

BV2

It is an objective of the Council to promote the sympathetic maintenance, adaptation and re-use of the 19th century historic building stock of Blackrock village core and to encourage the retention of the original fabric such as windows, doors, roof covering, shop fronts and pub fronts.

BV3

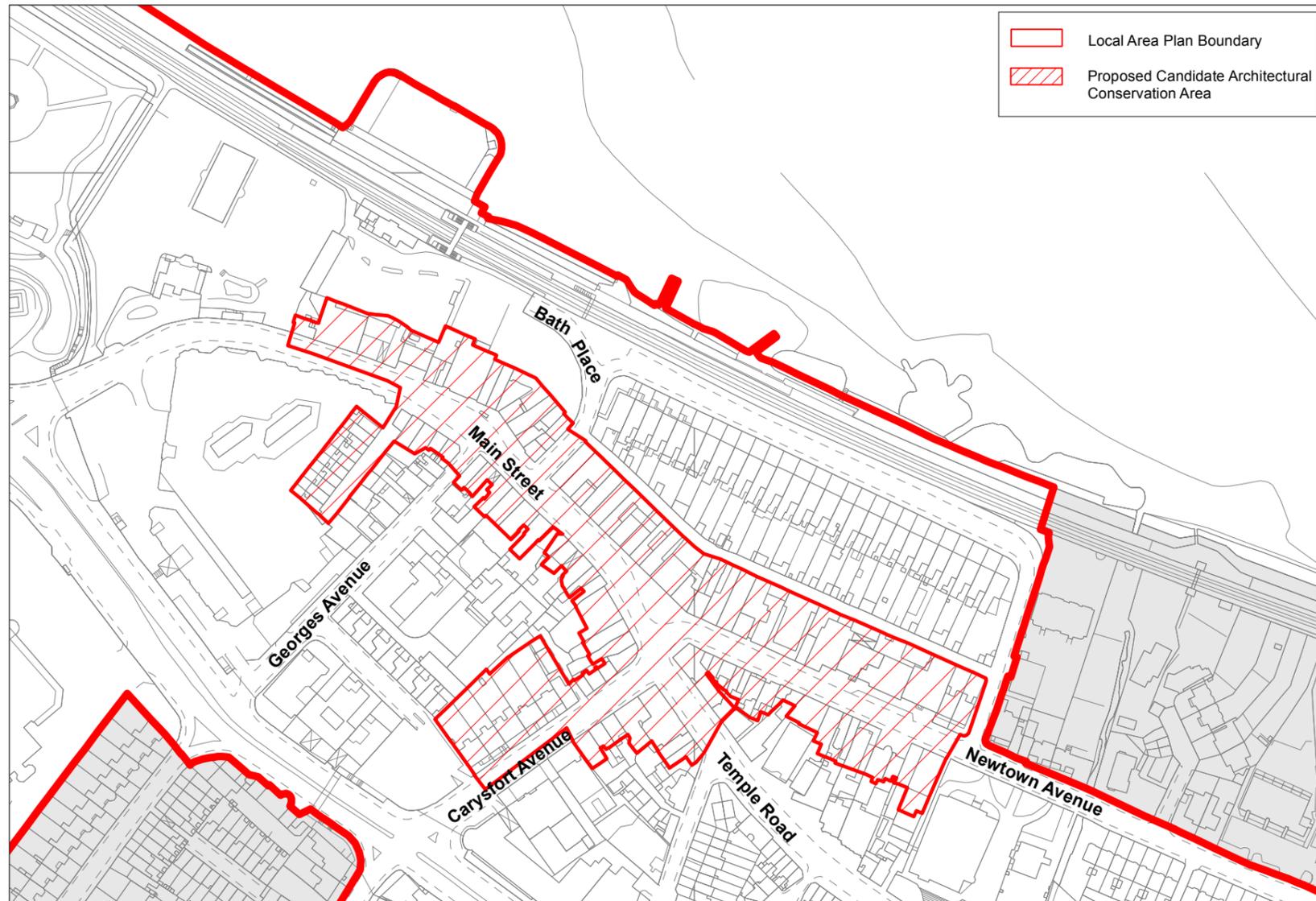
It is an objective of the Council to encourage the redevelopment of buildings which are considered, by their current appearance and scale, to be detrimental to the character of the village core. Demolition proposals will be evaluated against the merit and anticipated impact of the proposed replacement building.

BV4

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the design of new buildings shall respect the existing scale and form and shall enhance and contribute to the well defined village core streetscape through the use of high quality durable materials such as render, brick and stone.

BV5

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any development proposal that includes the amalgamation of one or more existing sites shall require sensitive planning and design treatment, to compliment the fine grain of the established streetscape.



Map 8: Proposed Candidate Architectural Conservation Area Blackrock Main Street

2.1.5 Archaeological Heritage

The County Development Plan 2010-2016 identifies only one site of Archaeological Importance within the Blackrock LAP boundary that being The Cross, located on Main Street (Record of Monuments and Places No. 023-005).

The structure is a small finely shaped granite cross. It is unusual in that it bears no Crucifixion scene but a head carved in relief and an abstract incised pattern. It is likely that the cross was originally associated with a church in the locality, or perhaps marked the boundary between churches. In later years it marked the boundary between the city and the country. The Cross is an important landmark that should be celebrated with its setting appropriately.

Objectives: Archaeological Heritage

AH1

It is an objective of the Council to create an improved setting for the Cross, an archaeological monument, as part of a wider public realm scheme and in accordance with Objective PR9 of Chapter 3, Section 3.6.2.



Photo 26: Market Cross (c.1905)



Photo 27: Market Cross Present Day

2.1.6 Signage & Heritage Maps

The heritage of an area significantly informs its identity, sense of place and character. Having regard to the historical character and natural heritage that exists in Blackrock, there is significant potential for Blackrock and its environs to become a visitor destination. The provision of signage and maps are a useful way of highlighting the important areas of heritage and natural and historical interest and are intrinsic in attracting visitors. A series of way finding signs, specifically for the purpose of guiding the visitor to the attractions of Blackrock have been erected. In addition further heritage interpretation will be encouraged.

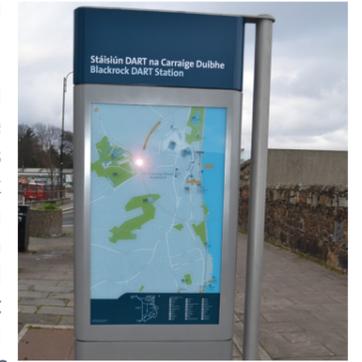


Photo 28: Wayfinding Sign, Blackrock Dart Station

Objectives: Signage & Heritage Maps

SM1

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate, provide and retain where appropriate, plaques, signage and maps communicating an interpretation of the historical and natural heritage of Blackrock and Dublin Bay.

2.2 Natural Heritage & Conservation

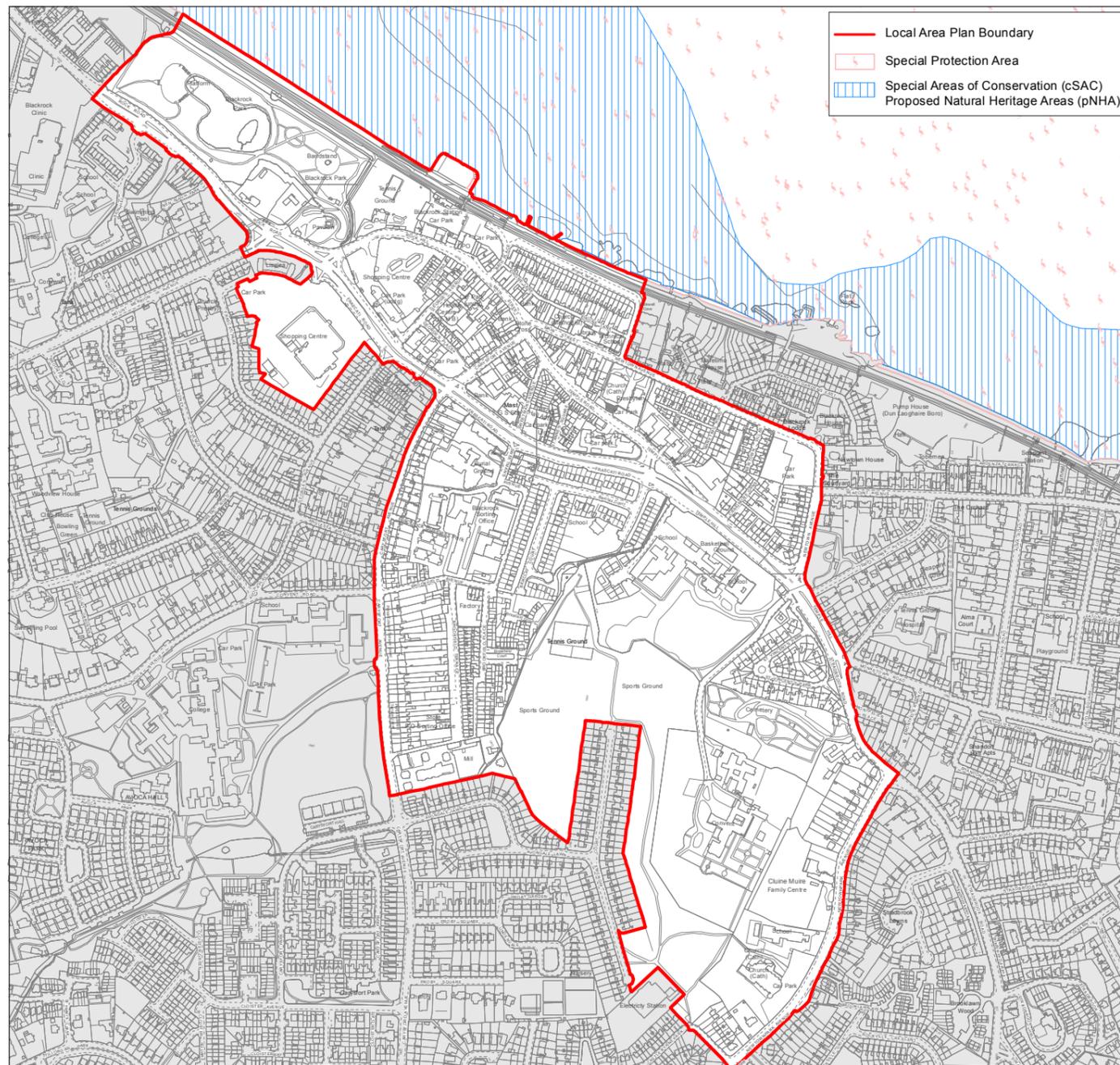
POLICY BK02

It is Council Policy to protect, conserve and enhance the natural heritage and environment within and adjacent to Blackrock whilst optimising these natural assets in the promotion of Blackrock as a heritage and visitor destination.

2.2.1 Designated Sites

The National Parks and Wildlife Service designates Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives respectively. The coastline along the Blackrock LAP falls within the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and the South Dublin Bay cSAC.

The area is designated as an SPA for its bird interest and is particularly important for over-wintering waders and wildfowl. The sand and mudflats along the coast (and habitats at Booterstown Marsh and Williamstown Creek immediately adjacent to the Local Area Plan boundary) are the main habitats of importance for these species. In addition however, grassland habitat, including amenity grassland in parks and open spaces potentially provide important foraging habitat for Brent Geese, which is one of the qualifying interests of the SPA. It is important to ensure the conservation of those grassland habitats within the Plan area that are used by this species.



Map 9: Natural Heritage (cSACs, SPAs, pNHAs)

The qualifying interest features of the SAC are the sand and a mudflat which is a habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive.

Rockabill to Dalkey island has recently been designated as a Special Area of Conservation.

Due cognisance of these environmental designations is required in the consideration of development proposals within or adjacent to the LAP boundary.



Photo 29: Wildlife on Blackrock Seafront

2.2.2 Proposed Natural Heritage Area

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are designated to conserve species and habitats of national importance as well as sites of geological interest. South Dublin Bay is also a Proposed Natural Heritage Area. This area abuts the Local Area Plan boundary. Again due cognisance of this designation is required in any consideration of proposed development along the shore line at Blackrock.

2.2.3 Views and Vistas

The coastline and sea views are an attractive natural asset in Blackrock which should be exploited to their full advantage. The Plan recognises the objective in the current County Development Plan 'To Preserve Views' out to sea from Idrone Terrace. In addition, the views of Dublin Bay from Blackrock Park are considered to play an important role in the overall attraction of the Park. The Plan will seek to facilitate their preservation and enhancement where appropriate.



Photo 30: Dublin Bay & Howth viewed from Idrone Terrace

2.2.4 Trees, Woodlands & Hedgerows

The Plan recognises the overarching County Development Plan objective 'To Protect and Preserve Trees and Woodlands'. There are a number of specific locations within the Plan area where this objective applies (Map 2). Note that these locations are indicative only and identify sites with significant trees for protection/preservation (subject to condition and feasibility) and are not necessarily indicative of an individual tree(s) or its exact location(s). The Plan will seek the preservation of these trees and woodlands in the consideration of any future development. In addition, the recently adopted Tree Strategy for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown 2011 – 2015 sets out a strategy for managing, protecting and improving the tree resource in the County. Any development proposals within the Plan area will be required to accord with the requirements and principles of the Tree Strategy.



Photo 31: Trees in Blackrock Park

2.2.5 Biodiversity & New Development

Biodiversity evolves from the term biological diversity, which relates to the variety of life on earth. It includes the full range of plants and animals and their relationship with one another. Biodiversity within the Plan area includes both formally designated sites (SPA, cSAC, pNHA) and non-designated areas such as public parks and local woodland areas. These non-designated areas act as corridors and links for wildlife.

'The Green City Guidelines: Advice for the Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity in Medium-to-High-density Urban Developments' (2008, UCD Urban Institute Ireland) stress the need to effectively incorporate biodiversity into new development. The integration of biodiversity within new development provides an opportunity to create attractive residential environments and should be considered at the outset of the design process.

Basic habitat assessment to identify biodiversity features should be carried out and used to inform the design and layout of new development.

New planting schemes should include predominantly native species. The introduction of non-native species, in the absence of natural predators or control mechanisms, can become invasive and result in the loss of naturally occurring biodiversity.

Objectives: Natural Heritage & Conservation

NHC1

It is an objective of the Council to ensure the protection and preservation of the ecological integrity of the designated SPA, cSAC and pNHA within and abutting the Blackrock LAP boundary in the consideration and implementation of development proposals within the Plan area. Any relevant development proposals shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in accordance with the requirements of the European Communities (Birds & Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI.477 of 2011).

NHC2

It is an objective of the Council to ensure the conservation of important foraging areas for Brent Geese, which are located within the boundary of the Blackrock Local Area Plan but are outside of the formally designated areas. An assessment of the use of grassland habitats by Brent Geese within the Plan area may be required where development proposals or land use changes are being considered.

NHC3

It is an objective of the Council to have regard to the EU guidance document 'The Implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive in Estuaries and Coastal Zones' (EU 2011) when assessing development in or near coastal areas which is likely to have significant effects on the integrity of any designated sites, coastal and marine fauna, flora and amenities.

NHC4

It is an objective of the Council to protect and enhance the views out to sea at Idrone Terrace and Blackrock Park.

NHC5

It is an objective of the Council to protect and preserve the trees, woodlands and hedgerows within the Local Area Boundary. Any development proposals within the Blackrock LAP boundary shall have due regard to this overarching County Development Plan policy and to the Tree Strategy for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown 2011 – 2015.

NHC6

It is an objective of the Council to conserve, enhance and manage the natural heritage within the Plan boundary, including its biodiversity, landscape and geological heritage and to promote an understanding of and sustainable access to it.

NHC7

It is an objective of the Council to support the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in the maintenance and, as appropriate, the achievement of favourable conservation status of Natura 2000 sites and their associated habitats and species to which the European Communities (Birds & Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI.477 of 2011).

NHC8

It is an objective of the Council to protect and enhance biodiversity within the Plan boundary in accordance with the Green City Guidelines. Habitats including watercourses, hedgerows and woodlands act as corridors and links for wildlife and are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

NHC9

It is an objective of the Council to protect the natural character and ecological value of rivers and streams within the Local Area Plan boundary. In that regard the Council shall ensure, that in the event of lighting being proposed along a watercourse corridor, that an Ecological Impact Assessment (and where necessary an Appropriate Assessment) including bat and otter surveys, shall be conducted. All watercourses shall be maintained in their open natural state in order to prevent habitat loss, preserve biological diversity and aid in pollution detection.

NH10

It is an objective of the Council to encourage and facilitate the implementation of measures to control and manage alien / invasive species (e.g. Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, etc.) and noxious weeds (e.g. ragwort, thistle, dock, etc.) within the Plan boundary.

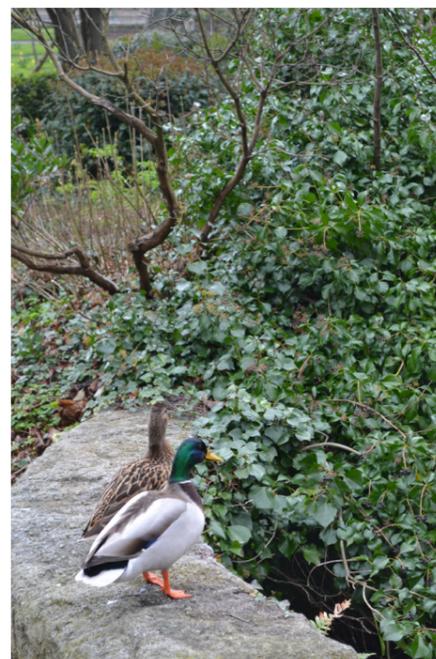


Photo 32: Wildlife in Blackrock Park