

Annex 2: Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area

Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area

The Battery Road in Longford Town has a distinct character with intrinsic qualities which are based on a particular form and layout which has developed over time. This character is derived from the cumulative impact of the area's buildings, their setting, landscape and other locally important features. Battery Road has a particular *genus loci* associated with it. This area is an expression of part of cultural identity of Longford and contributes to the quality of the public realm. This area may change but its special character is of great value and worthy of protection.

Battery Road is located in the northern portion of the Town and derives its name from the military installations that once stretched from the existing barracks on Church Street to the Battery, which is now occupied by Pearse Park GAA grounds and Pearse View housing estate. The Battery Road itself is a major existing approach route into the Town from the North, and is important in forming the first visual impression for many people entering Longford.

The area is characterised by a wide, tree-lined carriageway, bounded by a wide range of structures that display a myriad of uses, sizes, scales and architectural styles. The interaction of these buildings, many of which are protected structures, with their setting, including their boundaries, planting, entrance and surface treatments have a significant impact on how the area is experienced. For this reason, the Local Authority consider that the most effective and holistic method of retaining the unique character and identity of the area is to create an ACA.

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

- is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, social or technical interest or value, or
- contributes to the appreciation of protected structures'

A wide variety of areas can be considered for designation as an ACA. For example, an ACA could be 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 an element of control over the external appearance of buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

Planning controls are more extensive in ACA's with exempted development curtailed in certain instances, for example, works, that in the opinion of the Planning Authority, would have a material effect on the character of an ACA, will require planning permission. Retaining the special character of an area is best achieved by controlling and guiding change on a wider scale than the individual structure. Hence, the objective of the ACA designation is to guide change within an area and ensure that future development is carried out in a manner sympathetic to the special character and unique identity of the area.

The aim of this section of the plan is to:

- identify the extent of the Battery Road ACA, based on the unique character of the area and how this can best be preserved.
- to set out conservation and planning policies which protect its special character and which will guide future development.
- to inform owners/occupiers and developers of the type of work that would require planning permission.

The proposed Battery Road ACA encompasses an area stretching from the existing mini roundabout at the junction with the Lisbrack Road in the north, down to and including Church Street in the south of the area, centered along the main vehicular carriageway (See ***Map ACA Battery Road***) and includes the areas set out below.

1. Battery Road
2. Junction of Battery Road and Lisbrack Terrace
3. Junction of Battery Road and Demesne Lane
4. Silchester Terrace
5. Church Street
6. Church Street Junction with Bridge Street

Schedule of Protected Structures

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. There are numerous protected structures contained in the ACA boundary which are highlighted in the ACA map.

The typology of the protected structures and proposed protected structures include:

1. Key land mark buildings including churches schools and halls
2. Large detached houses
3. Uniform terraces
4. Villa style houses

Characteristics

The characteristics which are intrinsic to the uniqueness of Battery Road include the following:

Plot size:

The plot size of the buildings on the Battery Road define its distinct spatial quality. The spatial quality of the area can be compared with sections of the Howth Road in Dublin, which can be associated with a nineteenth century suburban environment. The large plot sizes associated with many of the properties, combined with dense planting and large set-backs (in an urban context) place a strong emphasis on privacy. The area is characterized by a low density residential environment. The houses sit comfortably on their plots and, in many cases have landscaped front gardens, some of which may be contemporary with the buildings themselves. The combination of the boundary treatment and plot size creates private front zones which in turn aid definition of the character of this special area. The spatial relationship of this urban structure can be defined as between "Arcadian" and also "Boulevard planning" as defined in the Essex Design Guidelines 1997.

Architectural Character:

Battery Road is important both historically and architecturally. The buildings provide an interesting social commentary on the residential development of this section of the town. The majority of these are residential dwellings of an historically higher-end socio-economic profile.

Various architectural time frames are represented in the ACA all of which make a positive contribution to the architectural variety along the streetscapes within the ACA, these include:

Regency
Victorian
Gothic Revival
Edwardian
Arts and Crafts
International Style

Battery Road ACA was largely developed in the 19th century. However origins can be traced back to the 15th century. The character of the ACA is not rooted in any one architectural dimension. This contributes to its unique quality and character. There are a variety of architecturally distinct building types including a regency terrace, mid 19c villa, Arts and Crafts homes, interwar and later 20 century dwellings. Structures that are important to the heritage of the town are protected. Despite the variety of forms and styles, a visual harmony exists that contributes the unique identity of the area. The various architectural styles are clearly evident on the attached map labeled 'Structures Important to the Character of the ACA'. The setting of the terraces at right angles to Battery Road forms vistas which are particularly significant feature on Battery Road and thus aid significantly to the architectural character of the ACA.

The building materials used in the ACA include stucco-facing and render, red brick, and exposed rubble granite. These finishes are found on the buildings themselves but also on boundary and surface treatments. This palette of materials contributes to the localised character of the area.

Landscaping: Mature trees bound many of the individual plots, forming extensive canopies that also line much of the public path. It is imperative that the sylvainian characteristics of this road do not become vulnerable and are retained as part of any future development. This landscaping has developed as distinct wildlife corridor which can important habitats for certain types of fauna. The sylvainian character also provides "green lungs" within the town. The variety of landscaping types also significantly contributes to the character of the area with contrasting styles varying from manicured exotic planting to large areas of lawn and gardens obscured by hedges and trees.

Walls: The majority of dwellings bounding the Battery Road are bounded by historic

boundary walls, some of which are combined with railings. These present an intrinsic introduction to the tree lined avenue and the dwellings beyond. The variety of gates and other ironwork are also important elements that contribute to the setting of the ACA.

Footpath: Battery Road contains an interesting example of nineteenth century stonemasonry which is still visible along the footpath edges. Its utilitarian nature makes it vulnerable to damage, which should be considered as part of future developments in the area.

Other important characteristics include:

1. Roof types: natural Slate
2. Iron work: including wrought iron gates and railings
3. Walls: random rubbles stone walls to Plaster walls with fine examples of pillars

Record of National Monuments

The ACA on Battery Road also contains National Monuments which are associated with St Johns Church.

Planning Implications of designation of an Architectural Conservation Area

In general terms there is a requirement under the Planning & Development Act 2000 to obtain planning permission for all development works which do not constitute exempted development. The regulations governing exempted development are set out in the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-06, as amended. These regulations set out the classes of development, which constitute exempted development together with relevant conditions and limitations. Section 4 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 also lists developments, which constitute exempted development, for the purposes of the Act. Section 4(1)(h) is of particular relevance. It states that the following shall be exempted development for the purposes of the Act: *development consisting of the carrying out of works for the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any structure, being works which affect only the interior of the structure or which do not materially affect the external appearance of the structure so as to render the appearance consistent with the character of the structure or of neighbouring structures*". Here a question arises as to what in a particular case is or is not exempted development. Any person may, under Section 5(1) of the

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

Protected Structures

Owners of structures are advised that planning permission is required for all works, which would materially affect the character of a protected structure, or any element of a structure, including its curtilage, which contributes to its special interest. Owners and occupiers 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 2000¹. 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

Owners and occupiers of non-protected structures located within the Architectural Conservation Area should note that the normal exemptions from seeking planning permission pertaining to certain types of development under the Planning and Development Regulations will no longer apply. Works which, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, would materially affect the character of the ACA will require specific grant of planning permission. This includes the following:

a. Residential properties

- Extensions and all new build that impact on the street-facing elevations of buildings, or would be visible from the public realm.
- The demolition of any structure or part thereof.
- Complete re-pointing in a style or manner other than existing.
- Removal or alteration of original architectural features on the main facades of non-protected structures including: painting of previously unpainted brick or stone surfaces.
- Rendering of any façade not previously rendered.
- Formation of parking spaces.
- Removal and/or relocation of walls.
- Roofs.
- The removal of the original roofing materials such as natural slate or clay tiles and their replacement with modern materials such as fibre cement tiles.

¹ 1. 2000 Act Section 57

- The removal of existing chimney-stacks and early terracotta or clay pots or other features of the roof-scape.
- The removal of timber bargeboards and/or their replacement in a material other than the existing.
- The installation of roof-lights or dormer windows on front elevations or on slopes visible from the public realm. Where dormer windows are deemed to be permissible, these should fit in with the character of the structure, be of a modest size and should be constructed of natural materials.

b. Commercial Premises

- New commercial premises and material alterations to existing shop-fronts.
- The erection of, or alterations to, externally mounted signs and advertisements, including banners.
- The provision of awnings, canopies, flags and flagpoles.
- The provision of any security shutters or grilles and associated casings and fittings on the face of a building or in front of a window display area.

c. New Development

- New development should contribute to the visual enhancement and vibrancy of the area whilst respecting its existing physical character urban grain and plot size.
- Proposals to demolish structures of architectural merit within the ACA require planning permission. In general, they will not be permitted unless the proposed new structure is a positive benefit to the area.

Note: It should be noted that the above are not definitive. Local context may suggest alternative design solutions.

For structures/houses which are not listed as Protected Structures, the ACA designation does not prevent internal changes or re-arrangements, provided that these changes do not impact on the exterior of the structure. However, internal changes must comply with current building regulations.

Works to the public realm

Works to the public realm, which includes footpaths, street furniture, parking provision etc will have to have due regard to the special character of the ACA.

Any changes to traffic management and parking within the ACA will take into account its ACA designation and will seek to preserve or enhance the special character of the ACA in design and signage, ramps, renewed surfaces, dished pavements etc.

The Council will actively promote the retention of all surviving original kerbing and items of street furniture, which contribute to the special character of the ACA, e.g. lamp standards.

New street furniture when being provided will be of high quality reflecting the character of the ACA.

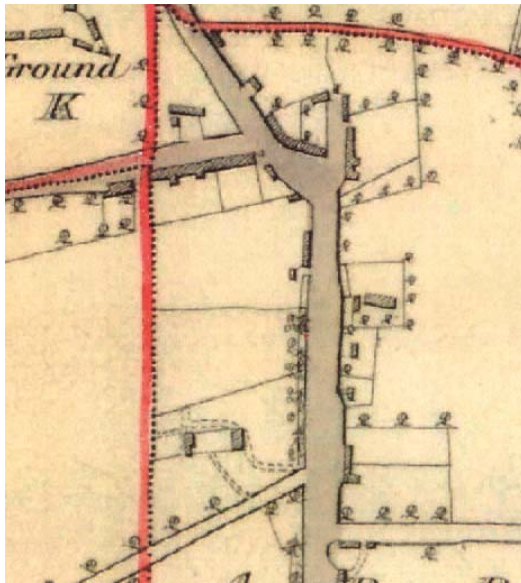
Boundary Treatment

The removal or alteration of traditional stone walls or railings, where visible from the public realm will not be permitted.

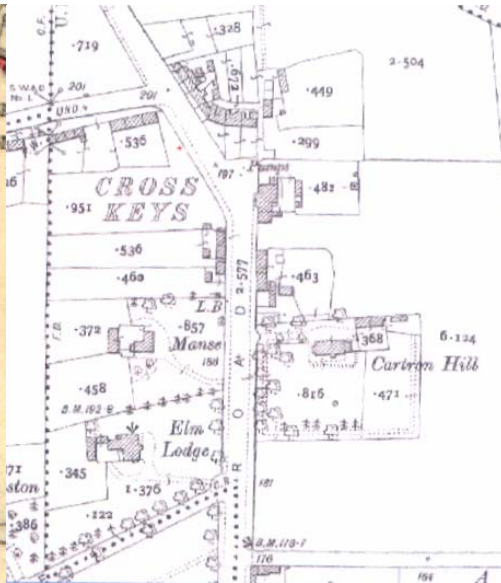
Exempted Development

Routine maintenance that would not affect the character of the Architectural Conservation Area, involving the repair or replacement of damaged elements in the exterior of the structures with the same materials and forms would generally be exempted development. However owners and occupiers are advised to seek advice from the Planning Authority.

Ordnance Survey Map showing a Section of Battery Road

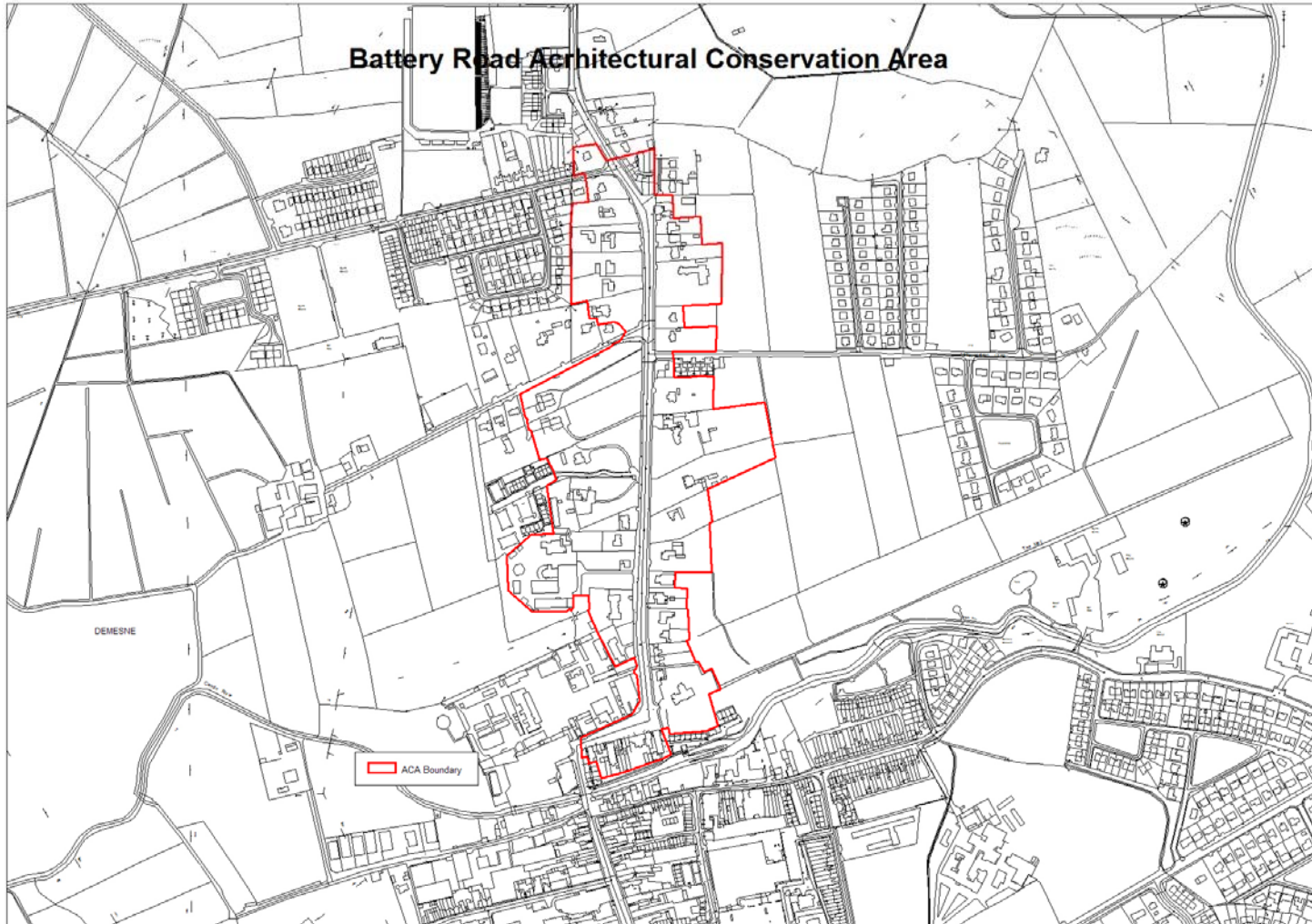


1837



1907

Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area



**STRUCTURES
CONTAINED WITHIN
THE ACA**

