



**Fingal County Council**  
Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall



# Howth Historic Core

## Architectural Conservation Area

### Statement of Character



Courtesy of National Library of Ireland

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Permission has also been granted by the National Library of Ireland to reproduce the late 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph of Howth on the cover of this document. Library Reference Number LROY1224.

Copies of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcards of Howth (Figures 2 and 5) were obtained from 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.

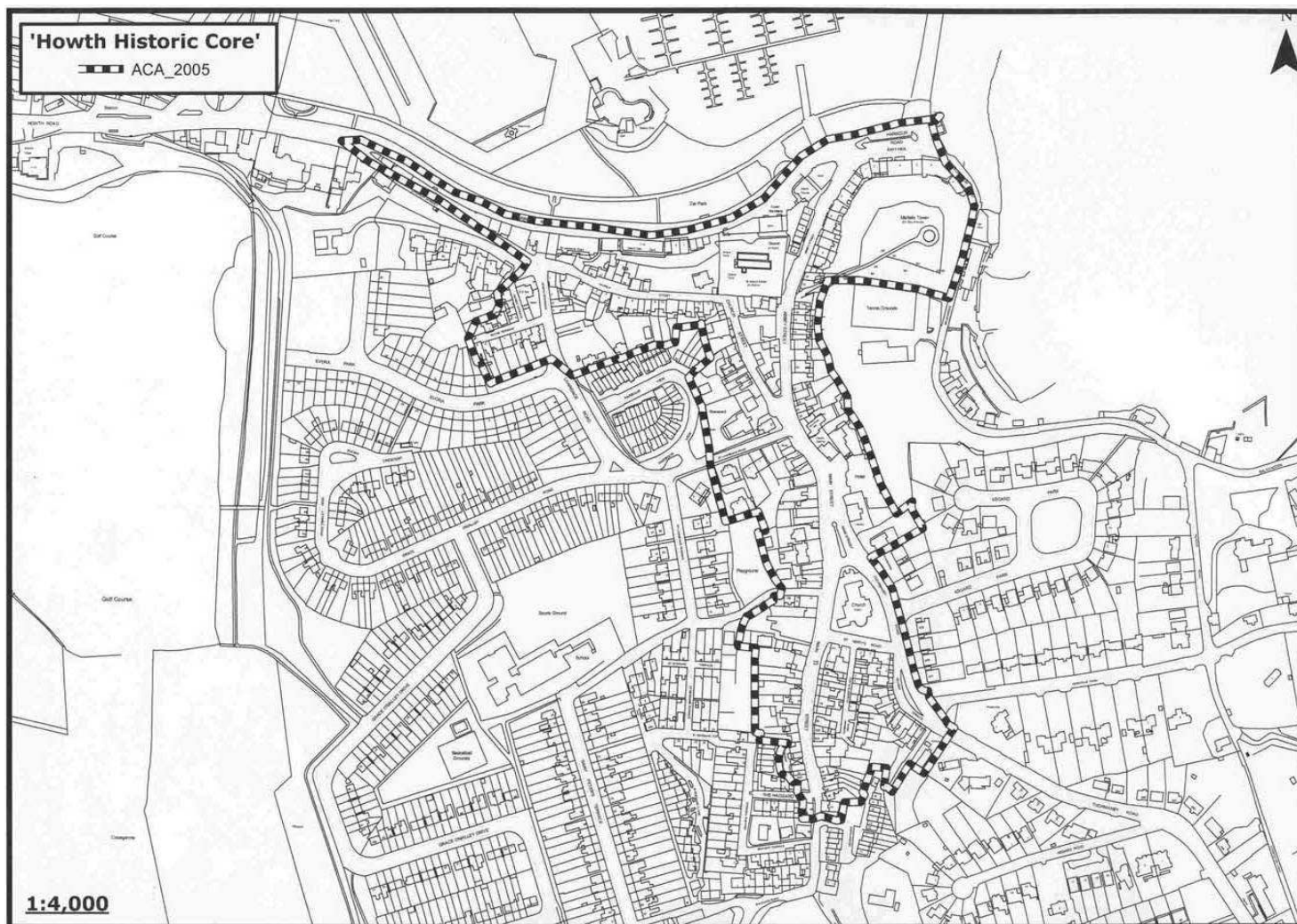
The main settlement of Howth village is located on the northern side of Howth Hill, with views to the north extending out over its 19<sup>th</sup> century harbour of Ireland's Eye, the northern coastline of County Dublin, and the Irish Sea.

The ACA for Howth Historic Core stretches from the junction of Harbour Road with Church Street, along the seafront area to the East Pier, up Abbey Street and Main Street, up until the junction with The Haggard. The area to the east of the Church of the Assumption is also included, up to Hillside Terrace and the old School building just south of this terrace. The ACA boundary returns back to Harbour Road along Church Street taking in Evora Terrace, Dunbo Terrace and Howth Terrace (See Figure 1)

The streets included with the ACA boundary are:

- Abbey Street
- Church Street
- Dunbo Terrace
- East Pier
- Evora Terrace
- Harbour Road
- Hillside Terrace, Thormanby Road
- Howth Terrace
- Main Street
- St. Lawrence Road (part of)
- St. Marys Place
- St. Marys Road

Fig. 1 Boundary of Howth Historic Core ACA



## Historical Development of the Area

The earliest record of Howth is a reference to it on a map compiled by Ptolemy in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century. In this map Howth is represented as a small island called Edri Deserta, which is derived from the ancient Irish name for Howth *Benn Etar*, meaning the peak of Etar, which remains with us today in the Irish translation of Howth as Binn Eadar. The most striking remnant of early settlement is the portal tomb in Howth Demesne, built over 4,000 years ago. The Iron Age promontory fort on the Baily was built about 2,000 years later. During the 9<sup>th</sup> century Howth became one of the chief Viking settlement in the Dublin area. The name Howth itself is from the Norse 'hoved', meaning head, thus reflecting its Viking heritage.

During the Medieval period, the St. Lawrence family took control of much of the lands on the peninsula and constructed Howth Castle. Ecclesiastical structures, such as St. Mary's Abbey, were also built during this period, while Howth village itself evolved as a small fishing community. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century Howth had become a popular seaside resort, and many of the impressive coastal buildings date from this time. Howth Harbour was constructed between 1807 and 1813 as the mail packet station in Dublin, on the Dublin to Holyhead route, however due to the continuous silting up of the harbour this route was transferred to Dun Laoghaire in 1834. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the area had gradually become a dormitory settlement of Dublin. Today, although it has become an affluent coastal suburb of Dublin City, it still retains its appeal



**Fig. 2 Early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcard of Howth**

as a seaside day-excursion destination, as well as remaining a working harbour providing employment to the local fishing community.

## Schedule of Protected Structures & Recorded Monuments

There are a number of Protected Structures within the boundaries of the Architectural Conservation Area that are protected under Part IV of the Planning & Development Act 2000.

- RPS No. 561 Milestone, Harbour Road
- RPS No. 567 Former Courthouse, Harbour Road
- RPS No. 568 St. Marys Abbey (in ruins), Abbey Street
- RPS No. 569 Howth College, Abbey Street
- RPS No. 570 Martello Tower, off Abbey Street
- RPS No. 571 Renaissance House, Church Street
- RPS No. 572 No. 14 Main Street
- RPS No. 573 No. 15 Main Street
- RPS No. 574 No. 20 Main Street
- RPS No. 596 Howth Garda Station, Howth Terrace
- RPS No. 597 Church of the Assumption, Main Street

A number of these structures are landmark buildings within the village and form focal points for views into and out of the area. However, others are more modest structures that represent examples of distinctive shopfronts or vernacular houses. Most of the Protected Structures are 19<sup>th</sup> century in date reflecting the period of Howth's popularity for expansion and development. There are some Medieval structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures, which due to their archaeological significance are also afforded protection on the Record of Monuments and Place.

The following archaeological sites, features, artefacts, etc., within the boundaries of the ACA, are protected by National Monument legislation as they are listed as Recorded Monuments on the Record of Monuments and Places:

- RMP Ref. DU015-029 Ecclesiastical Remains, Church Street
- RMP Ref. DU015-02901 Church, Church Street
- RMP Ref. DU015-02902 Holy Well, Church Street
- RMP Ref. DU015-02903 Altar-Tomb, Church Street
- RMP Ref. DU015-02904 Grave-Slab(s), Church Street
- RMP Ref. DU015-02905 Architectural Fragment, Church Street
- RMP Ref. DU015-02906 Graveyard, Church Street



- RMP Ref. DU015-030 Dwelling, Abbey Street
- RMP Ref. DU016-00201 Motte Site Possible, Balscadden Road
- RMP Ref. DU016-00202 Martello Tower, Balscadden Road
- RMP Ref. DU016-004 Dwelling Site, Abbey Street

### **Development Plan Zoning & Objectives**

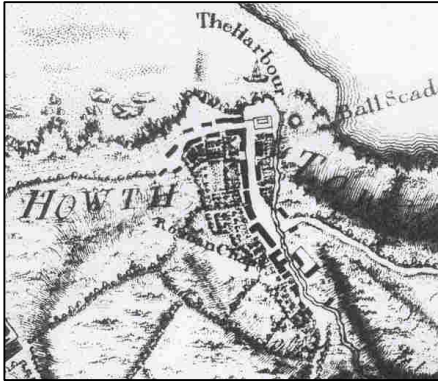
In the Fingal Development Plan 2005 – 2011 the majority of Howth Historic Core is zoned Objective SC - *To protect and enhance the special physical and social character of major suburban centres and provide and/or improve urban facilities.* The Martello Tower site and St. Marys Abbey are both zoned Objective HA which relates to high amenity areas, while Dunbo Terrace, Evora Terrace, Hillside Terrace and the most southern part of Main Street are all zoned Objective RS, which provides for residential development.

The Martello Tower in Howth is within the boundaries of the Howth Special Amenity Area and is therefore subject to the policies and objectives of the management plan of the Howth Special Amenity Area Order (SAAO). However, ACA designation may impose additional constraints on what works requiring planning permission and so the section in this document outlining the implications for development in an ACA should be consulted and may supersede some policies of the Howth SAAO in relation to the built environment.

## Description of Existing Built Environment

- **Street pattern & materials**

The street pattern within Howth still reflects the historical pattern of growth within



**Fig.3 Extract from Bernard Scale's Map of the City and Suburbs of Dublin 1773**

the village. The early morphology of the town appears to have developed from a primary route from Dublin City along the northern shore of the peninsula which followed the line of modern Church Street and then turned southwards at St. Mary's uphill along the line of the present day Main Street and Thormanby Road (see Fig. 3). Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the village grew with the construction of the harbour, and towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the St. Lawrence Road area developed, including Dunbo Terrace, Evora Terrace, and Howth Terrace. Also, around this time saw the Y-shaped division of Main Street and Thormanby Road on either side of the triangular site of the Church of the Assumption, and the emergence of St. Marys Place and Road.

There is very little trace of historic street materials or furniture left in Howth, however small stretches still exist primarily along Church Street,

which was the original route into the village. There is a small section of granite kerbing outside The Red Herring, No. 53 Church Street, which also has a Victorian cast-iron wall-mounted postbox in its curved boundary wall. Limestone kerbing still exists on the southern side of this street, from outside No. 1 to No. 6 Church Street and also outside No. 16 to 23 Church Street. At the corner of No. 16 Church Street, where the road turns southwards there is a jostle stone against the edge of the building, which was



**Fig. 4 Limestone Kerbing & Jostle Stone**

used to protect the structure from damage as carriages turned the corner. There is another jostle stone outside No. 3 Main Street. There is a plain cast-iron wall-mounted postbox in the front elevation of No. 27 Abbey Street, which is the present location for the Post Office. A cast-iron milestone set into a granite surround is located on Harbour Road, in the front wall of St. Lawrence Quay Apartments.

However, the ground plan and street furniture in the rest of the village is generally modern, with concrete footpaths and tarmacadamed road surfaces. There is a section of new granite kerbing just outside McQuirke's and Howth House on Harbour Road.

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

There is limited public open space within the ACA boundaries, as the main open space in the village of Howth is the Harbour front promenade, which falls just outside of the ACA boundary. There is a small circular area of open space surrounding the Martello Tower. It is noted that there is virtually no public planting of trees, shrubs or flowers within the ACA, apart from the area at the junction of Church Street and Harbour Road, and a small area at Hillside Terrace. This is generally as a result of building lines having frontage directly onto the street and narrow footpaths, which provide limited opportunities for traditional planting. The overall impression is of a hard built landscape to the core of the village, around the Catholic Church, with limited greenery provided by private gardens, some hanging baskets, and small green spaces such as St. Mary's Abbey, and uphill slopes on Church Street before the junction with Howth Terrace. However, there are large areas of high amenity lands surrounding the village, which are located within the demesne of Howth Castle, along the East Mountain cliff walks, and on the Hill of Howth.

- **Socio-Economic Functions**

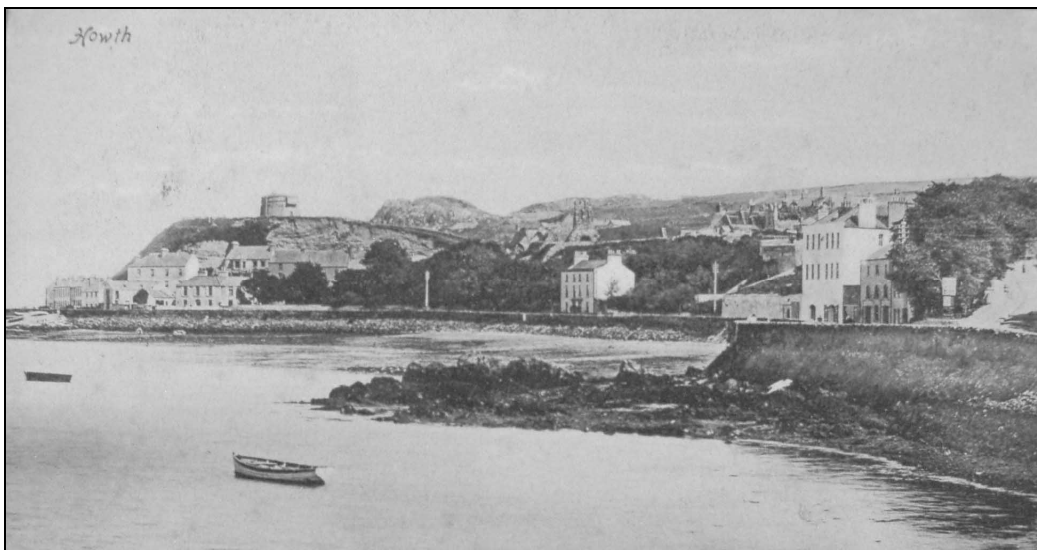
There is a mix of uses within the area such as residential, community, ecclesiastical, commercial, etc. Commercial activity is concentrated on the seafront with a smaller amount on Main Street. Businesses within the ACA are related to serving the tourist industry. There are very few service businesses to serve the residents, with no bank or supermarket in the immediate vicinity.

- **Built Fabric**

Due to the large area, and different streetscapes located within the boundaries of Howth Historic Core ACA there is a huge variety of building types, materials, form, heights, and dates. All the streets included within the boundary of the ACA contain buildings and other elements that are a positive contribution to the character of Howth, but that the characteristics of these vary. In general, the condition of the built

fabric is good, however, there are some individual properties in poor condition or boarded-up.

Harbour Road – Only the southern side of Harbour Road contains buildings, with the public open space of the harbour front promenade running along the northern side of the road. The building heights in general are 3- to 4-storeys with the exception of the Old Courthouse at the junction with Church Street, which is a single-storey structure, and Howth House, a 2-storey structure near the junction with Abbey Street. Nearly all the buildings front directly onto the street, apart from Howth House and Island View House, which have small railed section separating them from street. The western half of Harbour Road from the Old Courthouse to The Waterside Inn are 19<sup>th</sup> century structures, and are visible on an 1897 photo of the area. These structures include a pair of 4-storey semi-detached house, with projecting bay windows and railings on the third floor. This unusual feature reflects the fact that the top two storeys are residences accessed from Church Street, with addresses No. 54 & 55 Church Street. While the lower two floors are businesses accessed from Harbour Road. The structure has pitched slate roof and brick chimneys. Adjoining it is a stone building with brick dressing to the window opes and a pitched slate roof. The Waterside Inn is another pair of 4-story semi-detached buildings, which have been greatly altered over the years. East of this are different complexes of modern apartments, with shops or offices at ground floor, only broken by Howth House, a 2-storey early 19<sup>th</sup> century structure, which has been greatly altered internally to accommodate modern offices.



**Fig. 5 Late 19<sup>th</sup> century postcard of Harbour Road and Howth from West Pier**

East Pier – This is a terrace of six different buildings, built into the hill containing the Martello Tower. All of the structures are 2-storeys in height with pitched slate roofs, and appear to be 19<sup>th</sup> century in date, apart from modern replacement structure at No. 5 East Pier.

Abbey Street – The eastern side of Abbey Street is dominated by 2-, 3- and some 4-storey residences, which are mostly 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. The taller buildings are mainly located at the bottom of the hill, near the harbour area. Some of the structures have businesses operating on the lower floors. Nos. 1 to 6 have street frontages with access to front door by a flight of steps with railings. Nos. 7 to 10 and Nos. 15 to 23 are set back off the street with small front garden areas. On the western side, the lower section of the road is dominated by new build i.e. Abbey Terrace and McGuirks Golf Shop. The central part of this road contains the medieval structures of St. Mary's Abbey and Howth College, while the remaining structures up to the junction with Church Street are mainly 2-storey, 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. The majority of structures on this street, particularly the residences of the eastern side, the medieval buildings and the corner junction with Church Street, positively contribute to the character of the ACA.

Main Street – This street is dominated by the Church of the Assumption which splits the street into a Y-junction into Main Street and Thormanby Road. Commercial premises are centred around a cluster of buildings near the Church, with residential properties extending uphill towards Balglass Road. The majority of structures on this street are 19<sup>th</sup> century in date, with some modern infill. Around the commercial core the structures tend to be 2- to 3-storeys in height, while the residences are a mix of single- and two-storey vernacular structures. Along the western side of Main Street the structures tend to have street frontages, apart from Nos. 11 & 12 which are set back on elevated sites. The houses on the eastern side, uphill from the church tend to have small front garden areas. In front of the church there is a triangular area of diagonal parking, which together with the on-street parking, gives a very cluttered congested feeling to the village centre.

St. Lawrence Road & Tucketts Lane - Just small sections of both these streets are within the ACA boundary, where they form a junction with Main Street. St. Lawrence

Road section consists of two commercial premises and four residences. The residences are late 19<sup>th</sup> or very early 20<sup>th</sup> century structures and consist of a pair of semi-detached houses, a fine redbrick lodge-type structure (former dispensary), and a two-storey detached structure on a very elevated site.

Hillside Terrace/Thormanby Road – This is a significant cluster of different style 19<sup>th</sup> century houses on Thormanby Road, each with its own particular characteristics, ranging from simple villa-style structures to decorative Victorian bargeboard and



**Fig. 6 Tufa capping to boundary wall**

ridge tile details. The structures are all set back from the street by small front garden by a variety of boundary treatments e.g. cast-iron railings, tufa capping. At the southern end of the terrace is an unusual galvanised hall building on an elevated site on Thormanby Road. The terrace is separated from

Thormanby Road itself by a narrow crescent-shaped green space.

St. Mary's Street and St. Mary's Place – These are mainly two-storey 19<sup>th</sup> century residences, tucked behind the rear elevation of the Church of the Assumption, although there has been some modern infill at either end of St. Mary's Place. No. 5 St. Mary's Place has a very unusual front elevation with circular patterns set into its external plaster.



**Fig. 7 No. 5 St. Mary's Place**

Church Street – Church Street was originally the entry route into Howth from the city to the west before the development of the harbour area and has a sharp bend at St. Mary's Abbey where it turns southwards towards the junction with Abbey Street. It is the only street in the ACA with any historic kerbing. Church Street is a narrow street, which is predominately residential in nature but has two licensed premises and two restaurants along its length. The terraced houses along Church Street are more modest than those on Abbey Street and Hillside Terrace. Along the southern side the structures are mostly 2-storeys high with street frontages, which are provided upper storey views of the harbour over the mainly single-storey houses along the northern side of the road. Where the road turns southwards, the houses, now on the western

side, are set back a little off the street, with some separated by a small front garden area. At the junction with St. Lawrence Road, Renaissance House is set back behind a high wall. This structure was originally the Roman Catholic Chapel for Howth and has a graveyard to the rear. On the eastern section of this stretch of Church Road there is an impressive corner building with Abbey Street, with frontages onto both streets and which addresses the corner well as this is a prominent site, especially in views downhill from the Church of the Assumption. There are no other structures along this eastern section facing out onto Church Street apart from this corner building and The Big Blue Restaurant at No. 30. A stepped laneway between No. 30 Church Street and the rear of The Abbey Tavern leads down to Abbey Street to the side of Howth College.

Dunbo Terrace, Evora Terrace, Howth Terrace – These are all terraces of modest houses sited, on one-side of the road, around the impressive landmark Garda Station. Both Howth Terrace and Dunbo Terrace are terraces of 2-storey houses, while Evora Terrace is a group of single-storey cottages.

- **Views**

There are a number of locations within the ACA providing views northwards across the harbour, to the sea and Ireland’s Eye. These are located at:

- Hillside Terrace
- Howth Terrace
- Main Street (Upper)
- St. Mary’s Abbey on Church Street
- Martello Tower



**Fig. 8 View from Hillside Terrace**



**Fig. 9 View from St. Mary's Abbey**



**Fig. 10 View from Howth Terrace**

There are also significant views uphill into the village from the harbour area, with the landmark buildings of the Garda Station, Church of the Assumption, Martello Tower and St. Mary’s Abbey clearly visible.

## Summary of Special Character

Much of the charm of Howth village derives from the surviving medieval and 19<sup>th</sup> Century buildings, and its coastal setting which provides dramatic sea views of the northern coastline of County Dublin and of Ireland's Eye. The mix of grand landmark structures and modest vernacular structures mark the evolution of Howth from a small fishing community to a popular seaside resort.



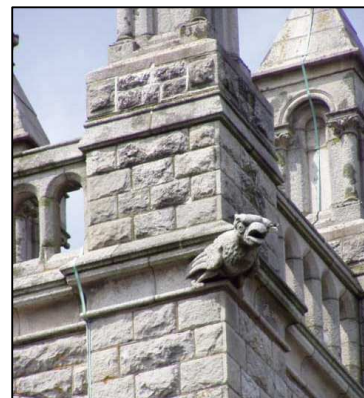
**Fig. 11 Pilaster detail of No. 15 Main St**

Most of the structures within the Historic Core ACA are terraced but they fit well into the changing contours of the village, with three- to four-storey buildings generally along the harbour front and lower sections of Abbey Street, stepping down in scale and height to single- and two-storey as the village extends uphill.



**Fig. 12 Decorative doorcase and fanlight on Abbey Street**

While the buildings themselves may appear relatively unadorned, many still retain original features such as fanlights, sash windows, railings, slate roofs, boundary treatments, etc., which all contribute to providing attractive streetscapes. The ACA also contains other structures with more elaborate details such as decorative pilasters, gargoyles, unusual external plastering, which add that little extra to the streetscape.



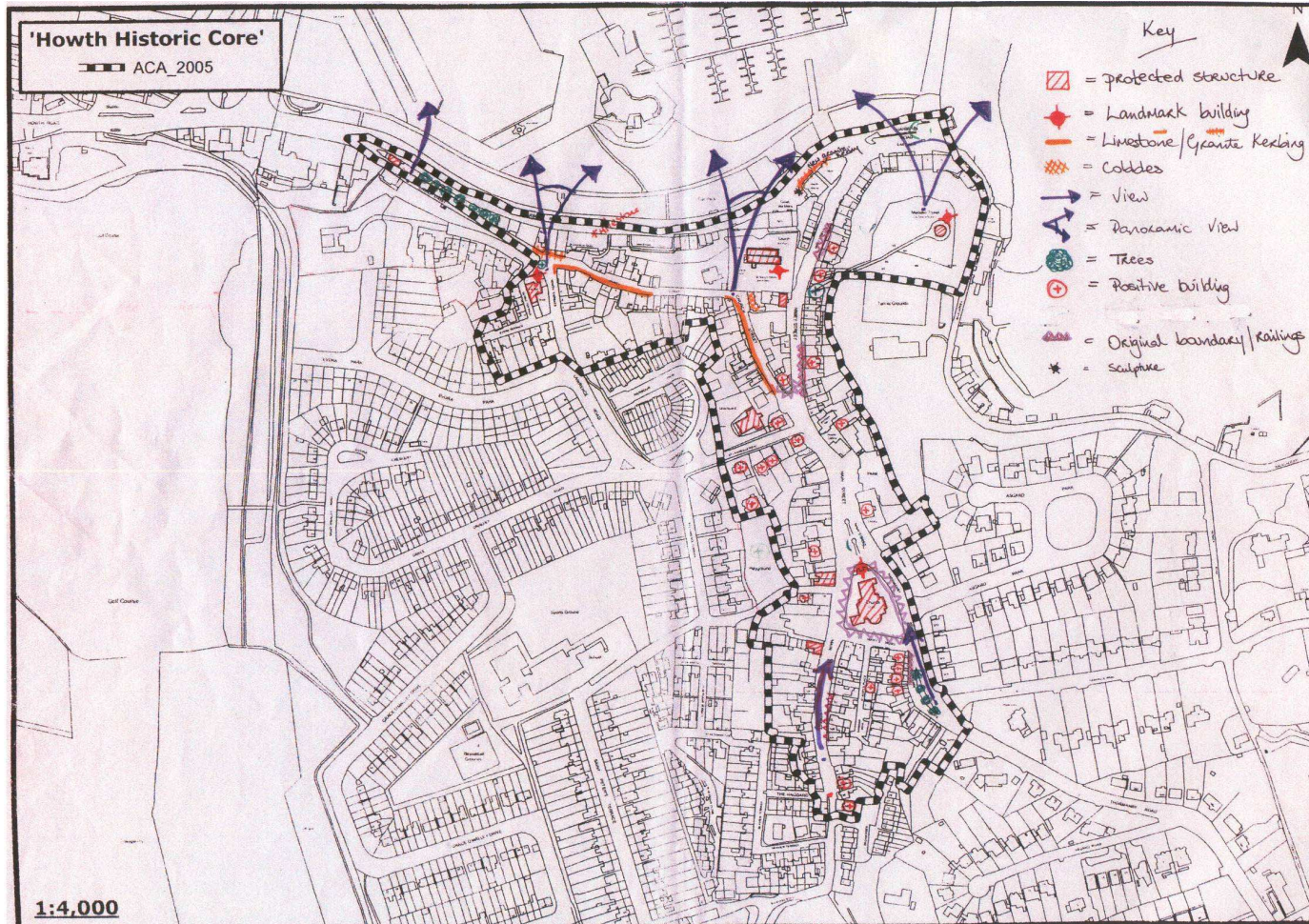
**Fig. 13 Gargoyles on Church of the Assumption**

The landmark buildings of the Church of the Assumption, St. Mary's Abbey, the Martello Tower, and the Garda Station stand out as distinctive structures above the harbour front and are focal points for views into and out of the ACA.

It is the combination of all of these elements that contribute to the special character of Howth Historic Core.



Fig. 14 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 the Howth Historic Core ACA and therefore will or will not require planning permission.

Agencies and service providers carrying out works to the public realm e.g. foot paths, street furniture, parking schemes, etc., are required to consider the special character of the area as identified in this document.

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

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- **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 Howth Historic Core does not prevent internal changes or re-arrangements to those buildings within the area that are not Protected Structures (see earlier section of this document that lists 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 IMPACTING ON THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA (WORKS REQUIRING PLANNING PERMISSION)

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- **EXTERNAL WALLS**

**The removal of external plaster/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 with only a few stone-finished structures e.g. Church of the Assumption, or brick-finished houses. This type of work would generally be deemed unacceptable

**The painting of natural stone, brick or unpainted render finished structures.** Where structures were original constructed with fine stone or brick elevations, these materials were not meant to be painted and the use of modern paints can be detrimental to them, by trapping moisture in the building. Also trying to remove paint can damage the external surface of the material. Some structures within the ACA have a sand and cement render finish that was always meant to be left unpainted.

**The sandblasting of external walls,** as this damages the external surface of the natural materials -it removes the fire glaze from bricks leading to porosity and water ingress.

**The cladding of external walls with different finishes, such as stone or timber cladding..** Original external finishes are to be retained. Any proposal for the alteration of the existing finish will require planning permission.

- **ROOF**

**The removal of the original roofing material, ridge tiles, chimneys, bargeboards, eaves details, cast iron gutters and downpipes,** and their replacement with modern materials. 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 or prominent elevations of a structure.** Roof lights should be to hidden pitches where possible. The design of dormers should complement not just the character of the area but also the character of the building in which they are set. There isn't a tradition of dormer windows to the front elevation within the boundaries of the ACA, but one or two



**Fig. 15 Dormers on St. Mary's Place**

structures have small traditional paired dormers that are in keeping with the form of the building.

**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 structures within the ACA would be 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 original fenestration and external doors,** namely the enlargement of opes or the removal of original timber or metal windows, stone sills and doorsteps, fanlights or original doors and their replacement with modern artificial 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, a large number of properties have already removed 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 if they intend to change their windows in the future

- **COMMERCIAL FRONTAGES**

**The removal of existing traditional shopfronts, pubfronts or other significant commerical frontages.** There are a few fine traditional shopfronts, such as the Post Office on Abbey Street and Nos. 14 & 15 Main Street, that should be retained. The pubfronts to The Abbey Tavern on Abbey Street and The Cock Tavern on



**Figs. 16 & 17 Shopfront of No. 14Abbey Street before and after renovation**



Church Street are also notable. Planning permission is required for the alteration of commercial frontages whether the structure is within an ACA or not, however, these alterations within the ACA boundaries will also be assessed on the impact of the proposed design on surrounding structures, having regard to scale, proportions, materials and detailing. This does not preclude good modern design. New or extended commercial frontages that connect internally through adjoining buildings should maintain an active function to all the structures, where possible, so as to avoid dead street frontage. New or extended frontages should never obscure architectural details of the original building such as sills, stringcourses, windows, doorways, etc. Figures 16 to 18 show two examples of altered shopfronts that have improved the streetscape of the area.



**Fig. 18 No. 16 Main St before renovation**



**Fig. 19 No. 16 Main St after renovation**

**Installation of new signage.** While outdoor advertising is essential to commercial activity in the core of Howth village, care should be taken that it does not detract from the overall character and visual amenity of the area. Shopfront/pubfront fascia boards may cover earlier fascia boards, which are often fine examples of traditional sign writing. Where these are discovered they should be retained in situ and the new business name/logo carefully placed over it. In Howth most signage consists either of flat fascia boards or surface mounted lettering. There are few vertical projecting signs in the area. New signage on structures in the ACA should be of an appropriate design to complement or enhance the structure, and should not be overtly dominant on the streetscape. Internally illuminated and plastic fascia boxes are not suitable in the ACA. Standard corporate signage can detract from the visual amenity of the ACA but can be adapted so that it is more in keeping with the area, see Figures 20 to 22 above. Appendix C of the Fingal Development Plan 2005-2011 provides general design guidance for shopfronts within Fingal.



**Figs. 20 to 22 Examples of variations of corporate signage**

**Installation of additional external elements to the façades of commercial premises,** such as roller shutters, canopies, awnings, newspaper receptacles, vending machines,

etc. While security is an important issue, the design of security shutters should complement the structure rather than negatively impact on it. Heavy-boxed metal roller blinds are not acceptable within the ACA boundaries. Shutters can be positioned discreetly behind the fascia board or lattice grills positioned behind the shop window. In some buildings the original internal timber shutters can be used for security purposes. Security shutters should not cover the whole commercial frontage but only the vulnerable glazed areas, and should be painted or finished in colour to complement the rest of the exterior. If it is agreed by planning authority to allow external shutter to be used it should be an open mesh design in preference to a solid screen. If permission is granted for canopies/awnings in the ACA they should be made of heavy-duty cotton and not plastic. Planning permission will be required for external vending machines, ATMs, newspaper receptacles, storage bays etc. Commercial premises should attempt to limit the clutter of temporary external retail furniture, such as external heaters, bins, menu-boards, seating and ensure that their design complements or enhances the area.

- **NEW BUILD (INCLUDING EXTENSIONS & INFILL SITES)**

**All new build that impacts on the front or prominent elevations of structures within the ACA will require planning permission**, this includes porch extensions to the front elevation of a structure. 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. The following guidance is given as to what type of new build would be acceptable:

- New buildings do not need to directly imitate earlier styles, but should be designed with respect for their context. Therefore, good quality modern design that is complimentary to the character of the ACA may also be acceptable. However, the development of any gap/infill sites within the Historic Core, especially if part of a terrace, will require a very sensitive design approach.
- New build on elevated sites in Howth Historic Core should respect the existing building lines and follow the pattern set historically of taller buildings on lower contours, and reduced heights uphill
- New buildings should take into account existing plots, where possible, in order to retain the existing grain, character and vibrancy of the ACA.

- Extensions in general should be to the rear of the property. However because of the changing topography of the village, rear extensions can often be visible from higher streetscapes, so their design should be subsidiary to the main building, of an appropriate scale, and use appropriate materials. Very careful consideration should be given to applications for extensions granted to the side or front of a structure within the ACA, as these could be particularly detrimental to the character of the area.

- **AMALGAMATION OF PROPERTIES/SITES**

**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 for the amalgamation of properties within the ACA should consider the impact of changing or extending the existing plot sizes on the streetscape. Where possible original entrances should remain in use so as to maintain an active and vibrant street front.

**The amalgamation of sites.** Any proposed development of a group of sites within this ACA, especially at an increased density, will need to respect the scale, mass, height, and design of not just the adjoining buildings but of the whole streetscape. This does not preclude modern design but it must be of good quality and positively contribute to the area.

- **DEMOLITION**

**Demolition of any building with street frontage within the ACA,** whether it is a Protected Structure or not, will require planning permission. Demolition will normally only be permitted where the structure makes no material contribution to the character or appearance of the area. There will be a presumption in favour of retaining structures that make a positive contribution to the character of the area. 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**

**Removal of original railings, bollards, boundary walls, etc.** Most structures within the Howth Historic Core ACA have street frontages but a few are set back off the street by small front gardens with a variety of boundary treatments ranging from elaborate railings set into low stone walls, walls capped with tufa stone, and Howth-stone boundary walls. Where these still exist they should be retained.

- **EXTERNAL LIGHTING.**

The proposal for the illumination at night of certain buildings and features within the ACA would need to be agreed with Fingal County Council. The method of lighting i.e. type of fitting, fixing method and type of light would need to be specified by the applicant in seeking permission and should be designed so that it does not contribute to general lighting, result in light pollution, or negatively impact on other structures in the ACA.

- **VIEWS**

**Preservation of views.** The key views out of the village such as those at Howth Terrace, Church Street, Thormanby Road, Main Street Upper and from the Martello Tower should be preserved and any works within the ACA should not adversely impact or block these views.

- **WORKS TO THE PUBLIC REALM**

**The removal of original historic street material & features,** especially the granite and limestone kerbing along Church Street. If development works require their temporary removal they are to be properly recorded, carefully removed & stored and reset following best practice. Street furniture such as the wall-mounted cast-iron post-boxes on Abbey Street and Church St should be retained in-situ.

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. Areas that could benefit with improvement are:

- Traffic Management & Parking  
Parking is a particular issue within the area, as Howth is a popular destination for daytrippers and sightseers. There is substantial on-street parking along Harbour Road and two specific parking areas within the ACA boundaries, one at East Pier and the other on Main Street. It will be a specific objective of the Howth Historic Core ACA to improve the impression of these two parking areas as currently their hard, cluttered appearance has a negative impact on the ACA. Any changes to the traffic management and parking within the ACA will take into account its designation as an ACA and will seek to retain or improve the character of the ACA in the design and provision of Pay and Display machines, signage, ramps, renewed surfaces, dished pavements etc. To improve the built environment of the ACA Fingal County Council will seek to minimise the amount of clutter of traffic signage and poles in the area, through the use of innovative integrated designs.
- Overhead Wire-Scape And Distribution Poles  
The Council should facilitate where possible and support any initiatives to underground overhead services in the historic town and village centre ACAs. The removal of redundant services from the facades of buildings will also be encouraged, as will the better design of public signage and street furniture to minimise clutter on the streetscape.
- Planting & Landscaping  
Howth has surprisingly little soft landscaping within the historic core and this should be addressed. Historic photographs would indicate that stretches of Harbour Road had clusters of trees and Main Street had a more organic feel to it due to the volume of thatched cottages along the route and surrounding open fields. Trees often make an important contribution to the appearance and character of an Architectural Conservation Area. However, there are limited areas of greenery within the core and these are mainly limited to Church Street junction with Harbour Road and the harbour front promenade.

NOTE:

Some of the works listed overleaf 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 2000-2006 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.