



Architectural Conservation Area Proposal: Shandon

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Justification for the designation of Shandon as an ACA is derived from the following:

A. Location and Existing Designations

Shandon is a residential enclave located 2.9 km from the city centre. It is made up of four streets – **Shandon Crescent, Drive, Park and Road.**



Each of these streets backs onto **Shandon Pitch and Putt course**. The course provides an unusually large green space not in public ownership in a residential area. Shandon Pitch and Putt Club dates back to the mid-1950s, is a founder member of the Pitch and Putt Union of Ireland and has

developed an 18 hole Championship course that hosts major competitions. The course is bounded by hedging, laneways and several lanes for residents to access their garages at the rear of their gardens. The area is delineated by its boundaries which add to the environmental and architectural merit of the area.



To the north, it is bounded by the railway line and the **Royal Canal** with the Sixth Lock and a wide canal basin presenting a magnificent view down towards the city to Spencer Dock where the canal joins the river Liffey.

Shandon Mill, with its beautiful stonework overlooks the canal basin and gives Shandon its name. The Western boundary runs along the top of Shandon Park and the rear of Shandon Crescent and is formed by **Mount Bernard Park** and the Luas Green Line which runs along the old Broadstone Railway cutting. The Eastern boundary is formed by the Victorian streets of Leinster and Ulster Street. The Southern boundary is formed by the Victorian Connaught Street which

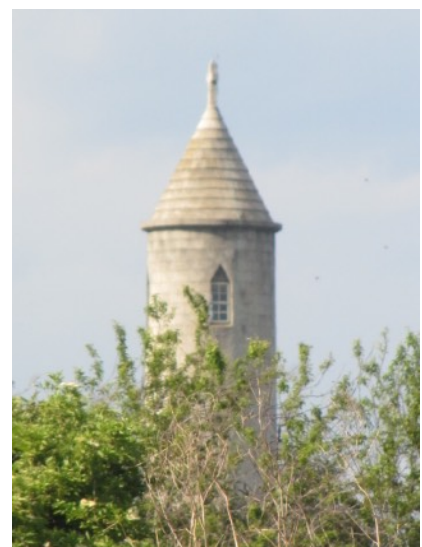




backs onto Shandon Drive. These well-preserved streets are adjoined to the historic village of Phibsborough with its Victorian neighbourhoods of Connaught Street, Great Western Square and De Courcy Square. It is worth noting that Great Western Square, De Courcy and Prospect Square and the heart of Phibsborough Village have been granted ACA status.

B. Historical Development

Shandon forms part of the **suburb of Phibsborough**. This was an undeveloped part of the city in the 18th century but with laying out of the Circular Road in the 1780s it attracted development over the next two centuries. Phibsborough gradually became drawn into the city as residential and



engineering schemes removed the rural buffer zone between the city and the countryside.

The construction of the Royal Canal, the Midland Great Western Railway and Shandon Mill all contributed to the growth of housing on either side of the Phibsborough Road. The Victorian streets were followed in the early 20th century by the development of the post-Victorian suburbs, of which Shandon is an example. **Shandon Mill** after which Shandon is named was built around 1840. It had started life as Mallets iron mill but became the North City flour mill in the 1860s.



In 1790 the Earl of Westmoreland, the lord lieutenant laid out the first stone of a lock at Phibsborough at what is now **Cross Guns Bridge**. The Royal Canal runs directly behind Shandon Park and it is here that the first of a series of spectacular locks, namely the sixth lock, was built to allow cargo barges from Shandon Mill to drop down



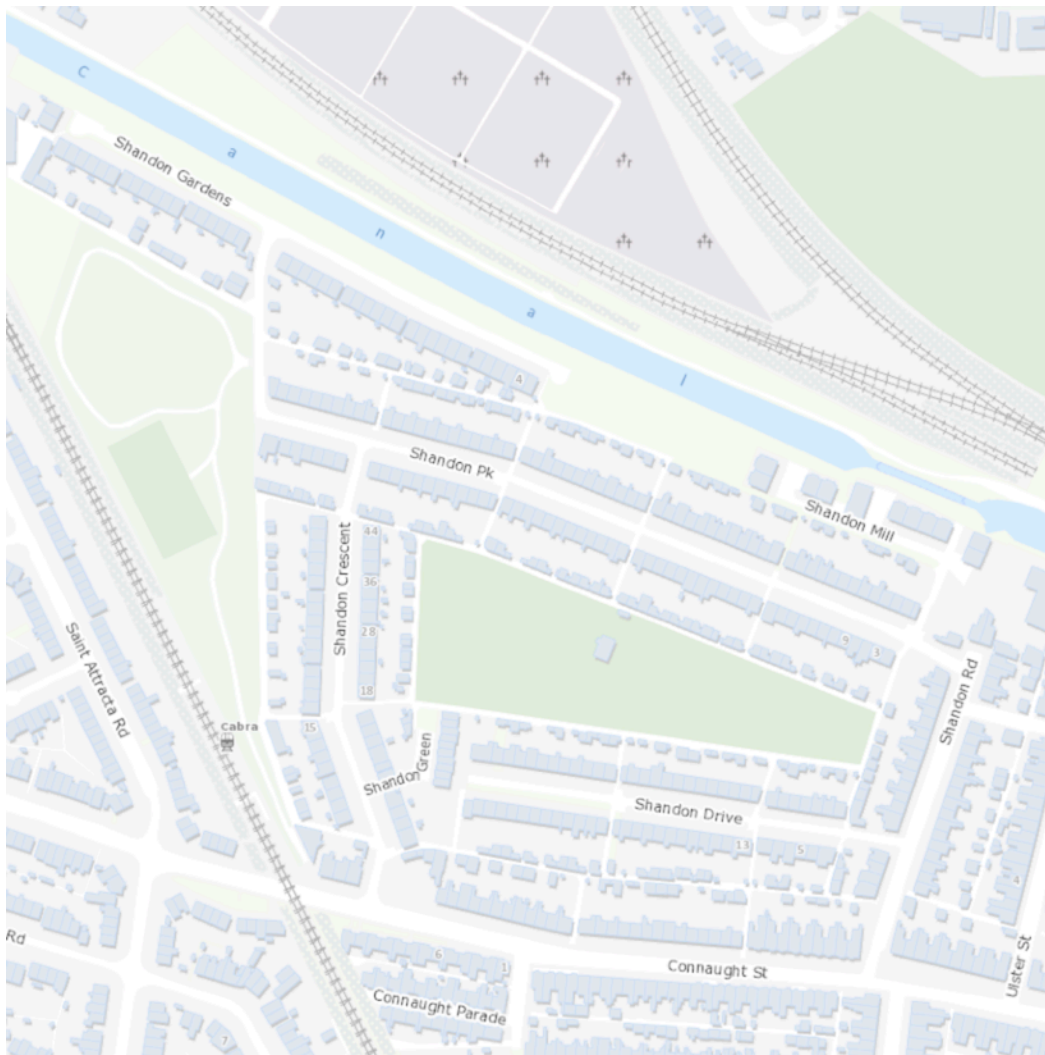
to the Liffey at sea level at what is now known as Spencer Dock. Pedestrian access to the canal and parallel linear park can be gained via the laneways between the terraces on the northern aspect of Shandon Park. On the western boundary of Shandon the modern Luas line runs behind Mount Bernard Park along the old cutting of the Midland Great Western Railway to Broadstone.



Between the Luas line and Shandon Crescent and the top of Shandon Park is the attractive **Mount Bernard** Park. It was purchased by Dublin City Council in 1983 from the Dominican nuns of Eccles Street convent school who had previously used the park for its sporting activities. The park, entered both from Shandon Park and the end of Shandon Crescent at Whelan Bridge, now boasts tennis and basketball courts and a children's playground in a mature parkland setting.

Within these well-defined boundaries the Shandon streets were built during the first three decades of the 20th century.

As Joseph Brady observed in his book "Dublin 1930-1950: The Emergence of the Modern City", "in the nineteenth century private building tended to be completed by sole traders or small companies". These built houses in small lots and used the finance realised from prior sales to fund new development. By the 1830s there was a growing trend towards larger developments built as an entity or estate. Some were large-scale developments in different locations and sometimes on both sides of the city. However, Shandon is an example of the older approach of builders who built on a small scale, a little at a time and confined their developments to a small area. The four roads of Shandon were built during the first three decades of the 20th century. The



Victorian Connaught Street which backs onto the rear of Shandon Drive was built by Joseph Byrne. His son, George F. Byrne, who was an active member of the Dublin and District Housebuilders Association, built Shandon Road, Drive, Park and Crescent.

In November 1924, 17 houses on Shandon Road were approved for George Byrne. In her book “Dublin 1910-1940: Shaping The City and Suburbs”, Ruth McManus states that “these houses were of a high specification. First quality Bridgewater red facing bricks were specified for the facing and front walls and chimneys. Best quality close grained red deal was to be used for sashes and frames and doors, while all floors,



97 Dublin Housebuilders' Association prior to their 'smoking dinner' at the Dolphin Hotel in 1932. The photograph appeared in the *Irish Builder and Engineer*. Reading from left to right, the names are: -sitting: Messrs J. O'Connell, G.M. Linzell, Alexander Strain (chairman), L.P. Kinlen (vice-chairman), G.F. Byrne, James A. Kyle, William Kyle. Standing: Messrs. R.G. Kirkham, J. Townley, P.J. Whelan, J.P. Somers, P. Cronin, R. Gough, Kearon, P.L. O'Brien, R. Cowell, P. Decy (secretary) and D. Delany.

rafters etc. were to be made of the best quality imported spruce. It seems that Byrne was also involved in building in the Mount Merrion area". McManus includes a picture of the Dublin and District Housebuilders Association prior to their smoking dinner at the Dolphin Hotel in 1932. This photograph which appeared in "The Irish Builder and Engineer" includes G.F. Byrne (third from the right sitting). George's son Louis went on to build Shandon Gardens behind Shandon Park in the 1950s.

As Bernard Neary documents in his book 'Dublin 7', the construction of houses in Shandon Park started during the 1930s. Shandon Crescent was built during the war and the houses were advertised in the Golden Jubilee booklet issues by Bohemians to celebrate fifty years of the Club in 1940.

The green area now leased to Shandon Pitch and Putt Club at the centre of all four roads was gifted to the residents by George Byrne in the 1950s and it remains in the

collective ownership of the houses of Shandon. It is this green space which gives the whole area a cohesive shape and a sense of place and identity.

C. Architectural Interest

The four Shandon streets are all straight roads and adjoining one another to form a rectangle. This is only broken at the end of Shandon Drive which has been converted into a cul-des-sac. This gives the pleasing sense of an architectural and environmental enclave.



Shandon Road, Park and Drive have terraced red brick housing in groups of 6 to 12 houses per terrace. They were built in good quality red brick with large one over one sash windows. Some householders have followed the fashion for installing aluminium or PVC windows so prevalent in the later decades of the 20th century but increasingly



less of these remain. More and more householders have restored or reinstated replicas of the original wooden sash windows. The yellow decorative brickwork over the doors and across the upper storey give the terraces a rhythmic architectural pattern and a visual harmony. The doors are recessed with timber panelled doors set within timber frames with sidelights and over-lights. The majority of doors still retain their original decorative stained glass door panels reflecting the Art Deco taste of the period. Many door still have their original brass door fixtures. The majority of houses still have slate roofs and all have red ridge tiles and red brick chimneys. Some cast iron guttering and down pipes remain. Yellow brickwork below the gutters contributes to the visual continuity of the terraces.



The terraces are fronted by railed gardens with terracotta tiled paths between the front door and pavement. A significant number of the original cast iron





railings with all their elaborate decoration remain intact. Where they have not, many have been restored in sympathy with their original design so that the overall impact on the streetscape is still one of a pleasing visual harmony. In the very few cases where tiles have been replaced or altered it has been done to facilitate disability access.



These three streets and terraces exhibit overall a remarkable degree of preservation of their original characteristics. The roads have very little street furniture and have retained the original standard street lighting. Shandon Road, the oldest of the four, still has the original cobble stones in the gullies which fortunately the Council has not concealed with tarmacadam. There is still a large amount of the original granite kerbstones in evidence on all the roads.



Shandon Crescent, the last road to be built, foreshadows the future with its leaning towards Art Deco and with its move away from the redbrick facades of the Victorian and early 20th century suburbs. When these houses were advertised for sale by George F. Byrne they were offered as “attractive Modern Brick houses” and situated on “Dublin’s most Central Building Estate”. The terrace of between 4 and 6 houses also present a pleasing visual and architectural harmony. One of their original selling points was the bay windows to the first floor found at both ends of each terrace. The terraces all uniformly retain their white stucco cladding with attractive red brickwork around the recessed doors, and above the upstairs windows where no bay is present. Red bricks are found below all the lower sills, again giving an attractive visual continuity to the terraces. A line of red





brick detail is found on each chimney. Each garden gate is flanked by red brick pillars with attractive capstones. Unfortunately most of the original window frames and doors are gone but increasingly modern replacements are being installed and are in sympathy with the 1930s modernism envisioned by the builder George F. Byrne. The terraces are fronted by gardens with all their original walls and gates intact. Garages with their Art Deco design over the door remain.



Overall, there are six “infill” houses and one double fronted house at the end of a terrace. While they have broken uniformity they have not broken the line of the terraces and all have used redbrick and so do not greatly impact on the visual symmetry of the roads.

D. Environmental Interest

While the roads of Shandon are narrow and were not built for cars there is a great feeling of space and tranquillity in a green environment. This can be attributed to the following:

- (I) The presence of wide pavements on both sides of the Shandon Road and well-kept verges on both sides of Shandon Drive, Park and Crescent.
- (II) A large number of trees on all four roads
- (III) Terraces divided by laneways with vistas into green spaces



- (IV) Front gardens on all terraces, with a great deal of cultivation in evidence
- (V) Proximity to the Pitch and Putt course, Mount Bernard Park, the Royal Canal and the linear park between it and the rear of Shandon Park
- (VI) Original lamp standards creating a low light effect. Given its central city location Shandon has a remarkably low level of light pollution. No through traffic and the amount of green space in Shandon must contribute to lower environmental pollution from traffic in the greater Phibsborough area.

