

PROSPECT SQUARE / DE COURCY SQUARE AND ENVIRONS



ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA (ACA)

Prospect Square / De Courcy Square and Environs



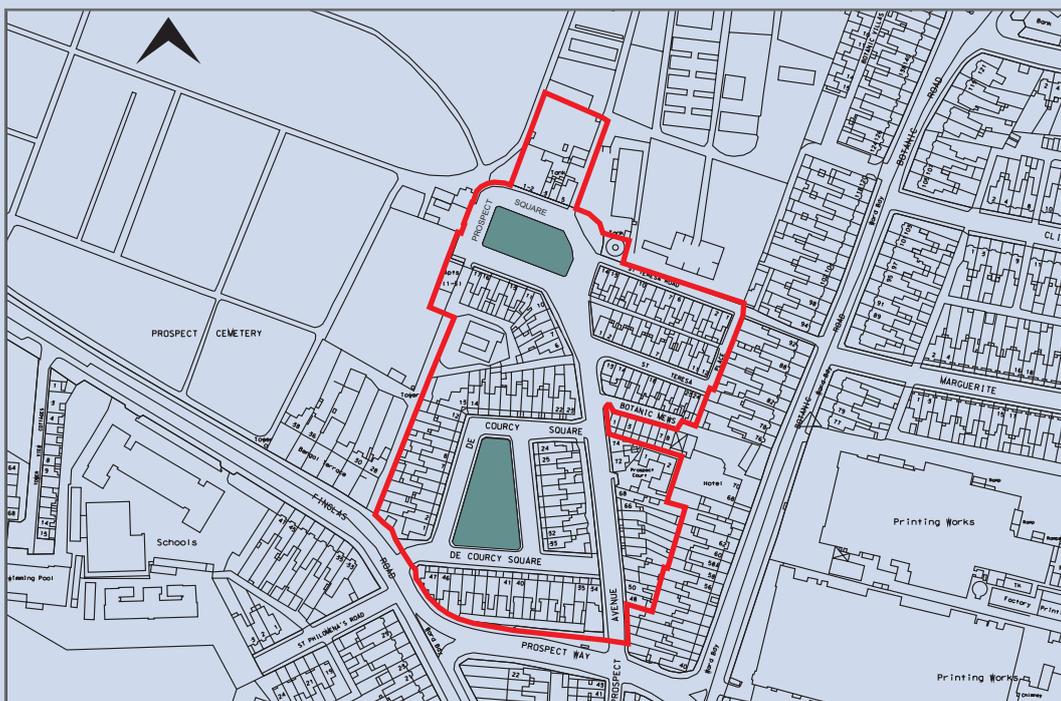
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1.0 Introduction and Location

Prospect Square/De Courcy Square is a residential enclave located east of Glasnevin Cemetery, approximately 2 kms north of the city centre. The area is made up of two 'squares', De Courcy Square and Prospect Square, and three streets, St Teresa Road, St Teresa Place and the northern section of Prospect Avenue. The majority of the buildings are late Victorian and Edwardian houses with red and yellow brick facades. The exact boundaries are delineated on the map.



PROSPECT SQUARE / DE COURCY SQUARE AND ENVIRONS



ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA (ACA)

2.0 History

The area lies in a townland called Prospect. In the eighteenth century it was pasture land situated south of the River Tolka. In 1832, as a result of a campaign for a catholic cemetery led by Daniel O'Connell, Prospect Cemetery was established here; this later became better known as Glasnevin Cemetery. O'Connell and many other patriots are buried there and the round tower that is the O'Connell Monument is a landmark feature in the general area. The original entrance to Glasnevin Cemetery was located in Prospect Square and the nearby eastern section of the graveyard was the oldest part; a gate and lodge were built here to the designs of Patrick Byrne. Prospect Avenue was constructed to link the new Glasnevin Road with the entrance to the cemetery and was originally called Cemetery Road. Before this the other approaches had toll-gates on them and were expensive for ordinary people. The new avenue was used not only by people attending funerals but also by people using the cemetery for leisure purposes, for promenading along the tree-lined avenues and admiring the monuments on Sundays. In 1846 the main entrance was changed to Finglas Road.

Next door to the entrance to the cemetery a pub was opened in 1833 (now Kavanagh's, Nos. 1 & 2 Prospect Square) which served drink to the men who dug the graves in the cemetery, which is why it is commonly known as the 'Gravediggers'. Lore has it that they would knock on the wall of the pub with a special code to order their drinks. It was also a grocery and has remained in the same family for a long time. In Joyce's *Ulysses* the funeral of Paddy Dignam retires to this pub. Part of the pub (No. 1) and the two adjoining buildings (Nos. 3, 4 and 5) are some of the oldest elements in the ACA. Also dating to the earlier history of the ACA are seven houses on Prospect Avenue (Nos. 48, 50, 52, 54, 68, 72 and 74).

In 1876 the independent township of Drumcondra, Glasnevin and Clonliffe was founded in the area and it was administered at a local level. By this time a row of 4 houses called De Courcy Terrace (now Nos. 37-40 De Courcy Square) had been built but development was very slow and the terrace was not continued for over 20 years. This is in sharp contrast to what was happening on the south side of the city at the same time. In 1899 the area joined the city and rapid growth followed. By 1907 all the houses in the ACA had been built including St Teresa Road and St Teresa Place. This small enclave of housing was part of the rapid growth of Drumcondra and Glasnevin in the early years of the twentieth century. The houses were speculatively built and were aimed at the skilled lower classes, such as artisans and clerks, most of whom bought the houses they lived in. A diversity of housing types reflected subtle differences in social status.

Road widening changes in the 1980s bisected Prospect Avenue with Prospect Way. More recent years have seen the erection of a few infill houses, as well as a new lane and development called Botanic Mews.



Prospect Square - north side

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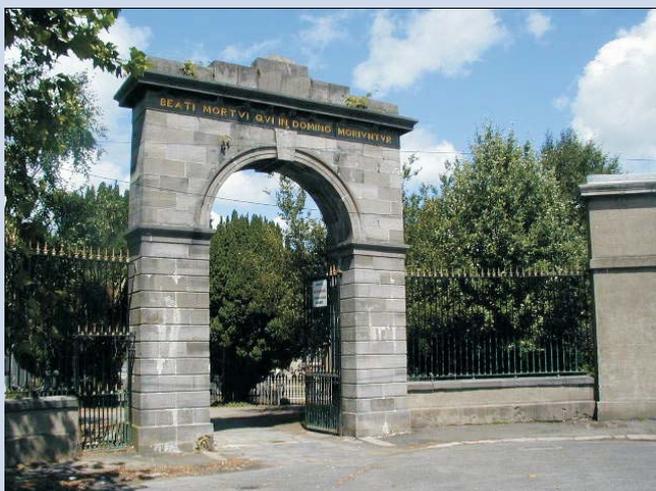
3.0 Description and Character Appraisal

The overall area can be considered as four separate but interlocking parts:

Prospect Square
De Courcy Square
Prospect Avenue
St Teresa Road and St Teresa Place.

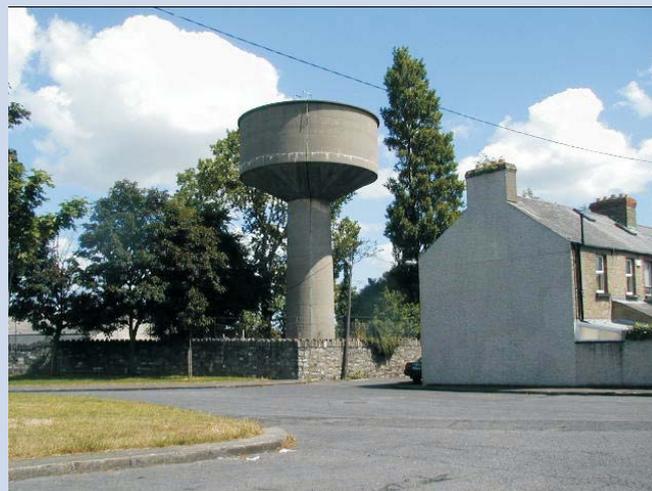
3.1 Prospect Square

Prospect Square could be said to be the heart of the ACA. It is the least formal of all the parts of the ACA and it has evolved over time from an entrance into the cemetery to its present state as a quiet and enclosed space contrasting with the heavily-trafficked surrounding streets of Finglas Road, Prospect Way and Botanic Road. The imposing stone entrance and gates to the cemetery provide the strongest visual element and the principle focus to the square. On the east side the water tower to the OPW site also has a strong visual impact. Both of these are set against the backdrop of trees of the cemetery and of the Botanic Gardens. The central open space, which was grassed over and planted in recent times, c. 1980, would have originally formed the main access route and marshalling area at the entrance to the cemetery.



Prospect Square - west side

The buildings lining the 'square' are all two-storey in height, but of disparate forms and dates. To the north the collection of older vernacular buildings have the appearance of a rural settlement while to the south is a curving terrace of polite red brick dwellings, completely urban in character.



Prospect Square - east side

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ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA (ACA)

The houses on the **south side** are all identical two-bay two-storey red brick-faced houses dating to c. 1905. They are distinguished by rock-faced granite lintels over the windows and recessed porches and have decorative brick detailing at cornice level. The windows originally were timber single-pane sash windows with ogee horns; unfortunately many of these have been replaced with aluminium/uPVC; original examples survive in Nos. 10, 11 and 14. The doors were recessed within square-headed porches, another typical Edwardian feature, and some of these porches have been covered over; the doors themselves were timber panelled doors set within a timber frame with sidelights and overlights, and many of these survive. The roofs were originally covered with natural slates, probably blue Bangor, but again have all been replaced with artificial tiles. The small red brick chimney stacks sit on the ridges with clay pots. The gardens are fronted by granite plinths topped with cast-iron railings and gates flanked by red brick piers; most of the railings and gates survive.



Prospect Square - south side

The **north side** is fronted by some of the oldest buildings in the ACA. Nos. 1 and 2, John Kavanagh's public house, accommodates the only commercial use in the ACA; this injects a reasonable level of activity into the square and attracts people who are not residents into the area. The pub is of architectural, historic, social and cultural significance and should be considered for inclusion on the RPS. The buildings adjoining the public house, Nos. 3 and 4, have very attractive brickwork to the façade, but are in poor condition and in need of extensive repair. These buildings and No. 5 next door may also warrant protected structure status. A part of this side and part of the **east side** of the square is enclosed by an attractive stone wall which is surmounted by an unattractive palisade fence.



Prospect Square - north side

The **west side** is fronted by the stone wall and gate lodge buildings of the cemetery, together with the imposing entrance gates flanked by curving plinth and railings. These elements together with the backdrop of the canopy of trees, which are visible over the wall and through the gate, and the O'Connell Monument in the distance, form the strongest element of character in the Square. The disused nature of the gate lodge detracts from the square.

PROSPECT SQUARE / DE COURCY SQUARE AND ENVIRONS



ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA (ACA)

The **east side** contributes the least to the character of the square as it consists mainly of the side elevations, side garden walls and the gables of single-storey garage buildings of the houses on St. Teresa Road and Place. However the mushroom-like form of the concrete water tower to the OPW site and the curving stone wall also has a strong visual impact with again a backdrop of trees from the Botanic Gardens.

Pavements: The pavements in Prospect Square are mainly of concrete with concrete kerbing and with some sections of granite kerbing around the cemetery entrance. There is evidence of some of the old stone setts beneath the tarmacked roadway.

3.2 De Courcy Square

De Courcy Square is laid out in a formal manner being surrounded on three sides by identical two-storey red brick houses and on the fourth (south) side by older single-storey red brick houses. All houses are fronted by small railed front gardens. The central open area, which is part-cultivated with vegetables and part wild, with two trees in the south-east corner, is enclosed on all sides with a 1m high railing on a concrete plinth. Access to this central area is limited to two pedestrian gates which are fitted with locks.

The most significant characteristics of the square are the sense of enclosure provided by the buildings and the unified architectural treatment of the houses. Although modest in size and significance individually, as an ensemble they form an attractive set-piece. The small railed gardens to the front of the houses, despite the poor condition of some of them, add greatly to the character of the space. While the central open area also contributes significantly to the square its unkempt condition and lack of general access limits its amenity potential. The square is generally free from traffic presenting a quiet and enclosed atmosphere but this is disturbed at the south-western corner at the opening onto Finglas Road.



De Courcy Square

The square is enclosed to the north east and west by two-storey houses which date to c. 1905. They are distinguished by red brick facades with rock-faced granite lintels over the windows, a typical feature of the early twentieth century and by a concrete keystone over the front porch. Some of those on the west side have been inappropriately painted and/or rendered. The windows originally were timber single-pane sash windows with ogee horns; unfortunately many of these have been replaced with aluminium/uPVC; original ones survive in Nos. 8 and 28.



De Courcy Square

PROSPECT SQUARE / DE COURCY SQUARE AND ENVIRONS



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The doors were recessed within segmental-headed porches, another typical Edwardian feature, and some of these porches have been covered over; the doors themselves were timber panelled doors set within a timber frame with sidelights and overlights; original doors and porches survive in Nos. 6 and 15. The roofs were originally covered with natural slates, probably blue Bangor, but again many have been replaced with artificial tiles. The small red brick chimney stacks sit on the ridges. The gardens are fronted by concrete plinths topped with cast-iron railings and gates; most of the railings survive with only a couple of front sites changed and a substantial number of gates also survive.



De Courcy Square

The houses on the south side of the square are single-storey to the front but two-storey to the rear. Their facades have decorative details in yellow brick which was also picked up in the chimney stacks. They originally had timber two-over-two sash windows with ogee horns, as survive in Nos. 34, 35, 41 and 47, and very decorative doorcases and timber panelled doors as in Nos. 35, 36, 43 and 46; many had granite plinths to the railings.



De Courcy Square- south side

Pavement: The pavement in de Courcy Square is of concrete with concrete kerbing although some granite sections survive and there is evidence of some of the old setts beneath the tarmacked roadway. The boundary treatment of the railed space consists of a concrete plinth topped by simple cast-iron railings and there are two access gates flanked by attractive piers. The pavement around it has granite kerbing.

Historic Street Furniture: Two attractive early lamp standards.



Historic street furniture

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ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA (ACA)

3.3 Prospect Avenue

Prospect Avenue was the historic approach to the cemetery and today it is the primary entrance into the ACA. It is the most varied street in the area, being lined on the east side by several terraces of different styles and dates. On the west side is an early limestone wall fronting a laneway to the rear of the houses of De Courcy Square.



Prospect Avenue



Prospect Avenue

The street opens on the south with a series of garages belonging to the houses onto Botanic Road, then a modern infill house and then four two-bay two-storey rendered houses c. 1850. These are followed by a row of six houses identical to the later ones on De Courcy Square, being two-bay two-storey red brick-faced houses dating to c. 1905; original windows and front door survive in No. 62. These are followed by another two-bay rendered house c. 1850 and the opening to Prospect court, a small modern development of single-storey houses. There are then two distinctive three-bay single-storey rendered cottages also c. 1850.



Prospect Avenue



Prospect Avenue

PROSPECT SQUARE / DE COURCY SQUARE AND ENVIRONS



ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA (ACA)

3.4 St Teresa Road

St Teresa Road consists of a terrace of identical two-bay two-storey yellow brick-faced houses on the west side, c. 1905. They are distinguished by red brick dressings to the openings. Like De Courcy Square and Prospect Square the windows originally were timber single-pane sash windows with ogee horns; unfortunately many of these have been replaced with aluminium and uPVC; No. 6 still has its original windows. The doors were timber panelled doors set within a timber frame with an overlight, and opened directly onto the street; no original doors survive. The roofs were originally covered with natural slates, probably blue Bangor, but again many have been replaced with artificial tiles. The yellow brick chimney stacks sit on the ridges and have red brick tops and clay pots. Opposite the houses, on the east side of the road is the attractive limestone wall of the OPW Depot which meanders into Prospect Square.



St. Teresa Road



3.5 St Teresa Place

St Teresa Place consists of two parallel terraces of two-bay two-storey yellow brick-faced houses c. 1905. The terrace to the south has segmental-headed openings and orange brick dressings to the heads which continue in bands across the facades; No. 14 is slightly different and No. 13 was rebuilt c. 2000. The windows were all originally casement windows, as survive in Nos. 16, 17, 19, 20 and 23. The front doors were timber panelled with a two-paned overlight, as survive in Nos. 19 and 21. The terrace to the north in contrast has square-headed openings with red brick dressings. The windows were timber two-over-two sash windows with ogee horns. The front doors were timber panelled with a single paned overlight. Most of the original features have been replaced with aluminium and uPVC.



St. Teresa Place

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ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA (ACA)

Like St Teresa Road the houses opened directly onto the street without front gardens. The roofs were originally covered with natural slates, probably blue Bangor, but all have been replaced with artificial tiles. The yellow brick chimney stacks sit on the ridges and have red brick tops and clay pots. To the rear is a laneway lined by concrete block walls, of consistent height, with painted boarded doors.



St. Teresa - south side

St. Teresa - north side

3.6 Summary Character Statement

This ACA is a residential enclave which is an oasis of calm and tranquility with the organic form of Prospect Square at its heart set against the backdrop of the trees of Glasnevin Cemetery and the Botanic Gardens. The older vernacular houses of Prospect Square and Avenue are cheek by jowl with the polite red brick terraced houses of later times, either formally laid out as in De Courcy Square, or in simple rows as later interventions into Prospect Square and Prospect Avenue. The more modest yellow brick terraces found on St Teresa Road and St Teresa Place add to the variety and interest.

PROSPECT SQUARE / DE COURCY SQUARE AND ENVIRONS

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA (ACA)



4.0 Character and special Interest (under Planning and Development Act 2000)

Architectural:

the area due to its form and layout has a special sense of place and separateness. It is an oasis of quiet and tranquillity within the city. *Architectural:* Its setting is also special with the canopy of trees from Glasnevin Cemetery and the Botanic Gardens as a backdrop.

Architectural:

it hosts a collection of modest Victorian and Edwardian houses with standard plan forms and a variety of simple but attractive designs to the exterior elevations. These are set into an earlier footprint of vernacular rendered houses and cottages lining a nineteenth-century route.

Architectural:

the buildings provide an interesting visual mix with a number of different set-pieces; as in De Courcy Square an Edwardian urban park development, or as in St Teresa Place, a typical artisan arrangement of parallel terraces.

Historical:

The area is special because of the historical association with Glasnevin Cemetery, having the original entrance to the cemetery with surviving gate and gate lodge, a historic pub associated with the cemetery and the main access route Prospect Avenue having its origins in the opening of the cemetery.

Historical:

The ACA is a good example of the typical pattern of the development and growth of a suburb in the north of the city, being first part of the Drumcondra township and then incorporated into the city itself.

5.0 Building features which contribute to the character

Roofs- pitched form with no parapets, largely single-span, covered with Bangor blue slates, red and yellow brick chimney stacks, their details and clay pots.

Rainwater goods- cast-iron rainwater goods including hexagonal hoppers and ogee gutters.

Facades and exposed side elevations -

red brick laid in Flemish bond/English Garden Wall bond, lime mortar flush pointing, stone plinths, rendered plinths, decorative iron vents, decorative cornices.

Decorative details to facades-

rock-faced granite lintels to windows and door, cement keystone to doors, red brick string courses, red brick dressings to windows and doors.

Windows-

largely square-headed openings except in St Teresa Road, segmental-headed openings, brick reveals, granite cills, timber single-pane sash windows, two-over-two on the north side of St Teresa Place and casement on the south side of St Teresa Place, painted finish.

Porches-

recessed doors on three sides of De Courcy Square and on south side of Prospect Square, some on Prospect Avenue, otherwise no porches. Terracotta tiled floors.

Door Frames-

Timber door frames with sidelights and overlights in De Courcy Square and Prospect Square, plainer door frames elsewhere, timber overlights, two-pane in St Teresa Place, and single-pane elsewhere.

PROSPECT SQUARE / DE COURCY SQUARE AND ENVIRONS



ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA (ACA)

6.0 Policies

The purpose of an Architectural Conservation Area is to identify areas of special character and architectural interest and to manage change in such a way as to preserve that special character.

The aim is to provide a framework that will permit a degree of flexibility in terms of design consistent with the maintenance and improvement of the essential character of the ACA. To fulfill this aim all new development in the area of the ACA should be implemented and carried out in accordance with the following policies/objectives.

Policy 6.1 Preserving the Character

- a) It is the overall policy of Dublin City Council to protect and conserve the character and setting of the ACA. As set out in this document.

Policy 6.2 Record of Protected Structures

- a) Kavanagh's pub in Prospect Square will be considered for inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures.

Policy 6.3 Reinstatement

It is the policy of Dublin City Council to encourage the reinstatement of features where the original and historic features have been lost or replaced. To this end reinstatement works shall not require planning permission. To ensure that new features are appropriately detailed such works will normally require agreement with the Conservation Section of the Planning Department through a Section 5 Declaration. Such works will include:

- a) The replacement of later inappropriate windows with timber sash windows where appropriate, and timber casement windows where appropriate, to match the original samples which survive in each terrace all to have a painted finish.
- b) The replacement of later inappropriate doors with painted timber panelled doors to match the original samples which survive in each terrace.
- c) The replacement of later inappropriate roof coverings with Bangor blue slates.
- d) The replacement of later inappropriate front boundary treatments with new boundaries which match the original samples which survive in each terrace.
- e) The removal of inappropriate coverings to facades, such as paint over original brickwork.

PROSPECT SQUARE / DE COURCY SQUARE AND ENVIRONS



ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA (ACA)

Policy 6.4 **Skyline clutter alarm boxes, electrical wiring, TV aerials, satellite dishes, solar panels.**

- a) New electrical and other wiring should be fixed to facades so as to minimize the impact on the façade. Redundant and unused wiring should be carefully removed.
- b) Satellite dishes and solar panels will not normally be permitted on the front elevations, front slopes, front chimney stacks or above the ridge line of buildings.
- c) All external fixtures to buildings, e.g. alarm boxes, should be located so as to minimize their visual impact.

Policy 6.5 **New Build**

- a) New development should combine positively with the historic fabric and be of a high design standard, using only materials and forms which compliment the character of the ACA.

Policy 6.6 **The Public Domain**

Dublin City Council shall endeavour to ensure that works to the public domain, such as works of environmental improvement, or of utilities improvements, are of the highest standards and do not detract from, nor add clutter to, the character of the area.

Policy 6.7 **Domestic Extensions**

Domestic rear extensions, which are within the limits set out in the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, would not affect materially the character of the Architectural Conservation Area and consequently would be considered to be exempt development.

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