



Parks & Landscape Services Section, Municipal Services Department

**Proposed Development of Fernhill Park &
Gardens, Stepside, Co. Dublin with Works
within the Curtilage of the Protected
Structure (Fernhill House)
PC/PKS/01/17**

Appendix 9 - Conservation Report

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County

Proposed New Park

at

Fernhill

Enniskerry Road

Co Dublin

Conservation Report

Part 8



July 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
 - 2.0 Historical background
 - 3.0 Architectural Significance and Protection
 - Schedule of Structures
 - 4.0 Impact on the historic character
 - 5.0 Conservation Philosophy
 - 6.0 Works in current Part 8
- APPENDIX A References



SOUTH EAST VIEW OF MAIN HOUSE



TOWER ADJOINING ENTRANCE



1.0 Introduction

This is a conservation report on a proposed Park in Fernhill, a recently purchased property by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council located near Stepside on the Enniskerry Road.

Location

Fernhill demesne is on the R117, the Enniskerry Road on the east face of the three rock mountain. Elevated sections of the site allow a view of the sea. The lands include a substantial family residence of single, two and three stories topped by a tower structure, staff residences and agricultural buildings. The estate comprises 34 hectares of land (gardens, parkland, woodland and agricultural land).

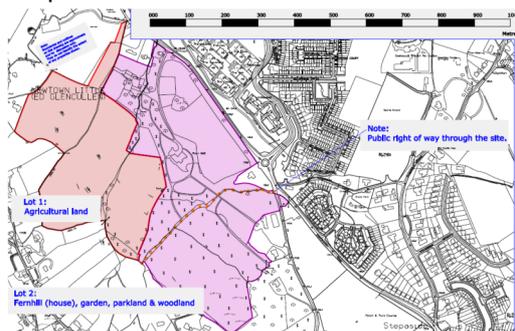
These lands can be divided into two areas:

Non-residential agricultural land with separate access off Enniskerry Road, Stepside circa 12.7 ha

Fernhill House and gardens (a 6 bed detached house of 897 m² / 9655 ft²) including staff accommodation with associated gardens, parkland and woodland. Circa 21.1 ha combined circa 34.0 ha (84 acres) the estate has been recorded for the last two hundred years as a notable garden, with native species and plants from wider travels abroad.

A public right of way exists over the southern section of the property by way of a partly enclosed path and tunnel, from Barnacullia Road to Burrow Road via Walkers Woods. A pedestrian bridge is located on this route

Map Sale of Fernhill



2.0 Historical background

The original single storey house dates to c. 1723 and was likely to have been a hunting lodge.

The early history has been researched by N. Ryan publication "Fernhill Co. Dublin".

The grounds occupied a townland known as Newtown Little.

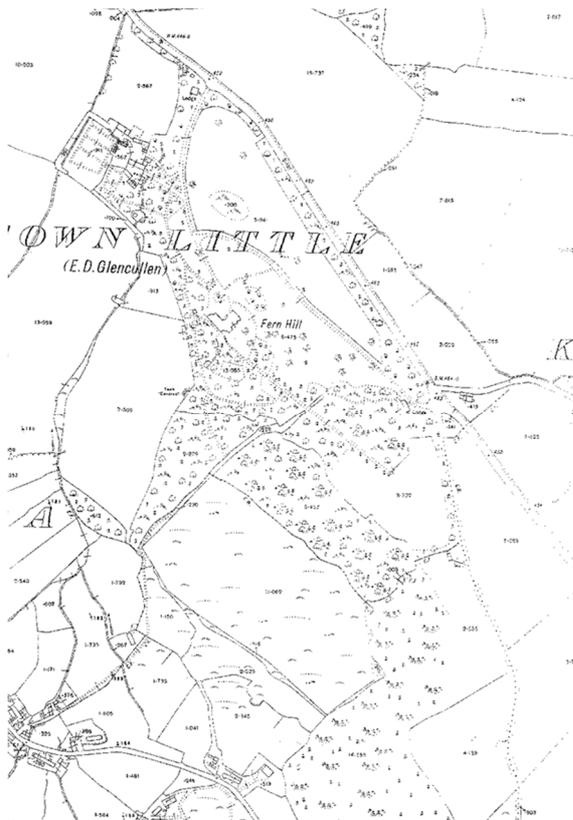
The property is understood to have extended originally to c. 110 acres. In the mid twentieth century 26 acres was cut off from the estate to form the lands for Rosemount School.

The property has been owned by only two families since 1815 when it was purchased by Frederick Darley. Alderman Fredric Darley had a house on the site in 1815. His family were involved in stonecutting and building in Dublin.

The Darley family had a great interest in gardens and are said to have developed the gardens in the style of William Robinson 1838-1935.

Edmond and Justice William Darley are credited with most of the changes to the house.

The Walker Family bought the estate in 1934 and they continued in the house until recently when the estate was sold in 2007 to a Developer and subsequently bought by Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.



MAP FERNHILL

1937

*Main House
East view of gardens*



South View



Entrance



Living room



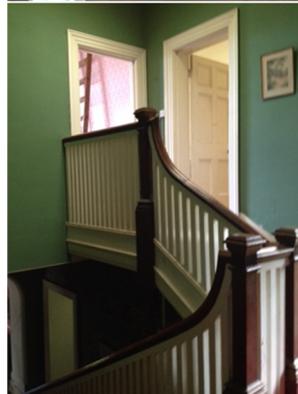
Main Entrance Hall

Lantern Light

Arts and Crafts Fireplace on opposite wall



Main Stairwell



Ceilings

Cracks and delamination in the lath and plaster ceilings are evident throughout. There are a number of areas of damp in the bedroom ceilings, some are located near chimneys and are probably due to leaks caused by defective flashings.



Wet rot Room 8

View of main entrance

All of the windows and external doors throughout the house require remedial works.



Typical Bedroom



Detail single storey roof at entrance



Plans Ground Floor

First Floor

Tower

Fernhill House:

Fernhill house offers extensive accommodation having a total of 26 various rooms and set out in Table 2 below and shown on the accompanying floor plan.

Table 2 Schedule of accommodation at Fernhill House			
Room Number	Room Title	Room Description	Comment
Room 1	Sitting Room/Billiard Room	Dual Aspect East facing window French door opens to timber trellis pergola Part sunken floor Fire place with carved ornaments	Ceiling Cracks and delamination in the lath and plaster ceiling. Recent re-plastering to external wall adjoining entrance porch. Possible dry/wet rot. All of the windows throughout the house require remedial works.
Room 2	Dining Room	Dual Aspect Two south facing bay windows Fireplace	Ceiling Cracks and delamination in the lath and plaster ceiling Anaglypta paper finish
Room 3	Second Sitting Room		
Room 4	Main Entrance Hall	Fireplace with carved overmantle Lantern Light	Ceiling Cracks and delamination in the lath and plaster ceiling

Table 2 Schedule of accommodation at Fernhill House			
Room Number	Room Title	Room Description	Comment
Room 5	Sitting Room/Dining Room	Access from kitchen area through more recent porch/lobby. Fireplace	
Room 7	Kitchen	Fittings require replacement	Wet Rot outbreak spreading through floor joists
Room 8	Store Staff Room		
Room 9	Store Staff Room		
Room 10	Store Staff Room		
Room 11	Office	Access to exterior	
Room 12	Staff Area		
Room 13	Sitting Room	Victorian cast iron fireplace	
Room 14	Bathroom	Fittings require replacement	
Room 15	Staff Area		
Room 16	Store		
Room 17	Store		
Boiler			
Stairs A		Main Stairs	
Stairs B		Secondary Stairs	Ground floor tiles show signs of rising damp
Corridor			Rising damp evident in a number of locations
FIRST FLOOR			
Room 18	Bedroom	Ceilings: There are a number of areas of damp in the bedroom ceilings. Some are located near chimneys and are probably due to leaks caused by defective flashings.	
Room 19	Bathroom		
Room 20	Bedroom		
Room 21	Bedroom		
Room 22	Bathroom		
Room 23	Bedroom		
Room 24	Bedroom	En suite WC	
Room 25	Bedroom	Opening onto modern poor quality conservatory	Floor appears unstable
Room 26	Tower Bedroom		

Observations on Fernhill House

- The building evolved from a single storey hunting lodge to a rambling family home over 120 years.
- It has a unique plan form with interconnecting blocks of one and two stories surmounted and linked by a three storey tower creating a most attractive and iconic building form.
- The house is set in its renowned gardens and the windows of the principal rooms overlook and frame exceptional views.
- It appears that a small single storey block incorporating the principal reception rooms, with a stables, was extended vertically and horizontally to create the current house.
- While the internal joinery and some of the ground floor windows to the kitchen and stores area are Victorian in form, the main rooms and entrance have an Arts & Crafts flavour with leaded lights over casement windows, very detailed carved oak overmantles and fireplaces to the main rooms
- The building is a protected structure. Permission will be required for alteration and repair and renovations will require to be carried out in accordance with conservation principles.

Condition of Fernhill House – Prior to DLR Acquisition:

- It is clear from a preliminary inspection that the building has not been maintained for many years.
- The roofs are leaking in a number of locations and there is considerable damage to the ceilings throughout.
- Rising damp was apparent in a number of locations and wet rot is also evident. (See Room Number 8)
- There is likely to wet/dry rot in a number of other locations in the building.
- The building will require extensive renovation, new services, mechanical and electrical, including rewiring, fire and intruder alarms, new heating system, new kitchen and bathrooms, insulation, general building works and decoration.

VIEWS Courtyard/ Stable Yard and Kitchen Garden



Fernhill Gardens

The elevated setting of the property affords spectacular view over the City of Dublin.

The gardens and arboretum were, it is understood, established in the 1860's or thereabouts by Mr Justice Darley and his son Edmond.

Towards the turn of the 19th century, Judge William Darley extended the gardens with the inclusion of a number of water features, rockeries and establishing a collection of many unusual and fine Rhododendron varieties, including the "Fernhill Silver", a hybrid, believed to have been given to the Darley's by the Glasnevin Botanical Gardens.

From 1934, during the stewardship of the Walker family, work continued, with the expansion of the varieties of Rhododendron, improvements to the walks, additional topographical features and upgrading of the information in respect of the plants and trees within the garden. This facilitated the opening of the gardens to the paying public.

The Walker family were greatly influenced by the ideas and ethos of the Irish practical gardener William Robinson (1838 – 1935), whose ideas about wild gardening spurred the movement that evolved into the English cottage Garden, which organises exotic plants into a naturalistic setting. There are numerous specimens of magnificent trees and shrubs lining the pathways through the garden. The garden remained open to the public until the Walkers disposed of the property.



VIEW OF COACH HOUSE FROM KITCHEN GARDEN



Court Yard Stable Yard View

BUILDINGS WITHIN THE GROUNDS OF THE PARK

Gate Lodge

This period building is situated at the main entrance. The building is a simple dashed and part timber faced single story building with a single "A" pitched tiled roof.

Accommodation

Sitting Room/Kitchen. Two Bedrooms. Bathroom.

This was originally a two roomed building which has been extended over the years, including a modern bathroom.



Courtyard Area: Coach house

Two Storey single range building pitched clay tile and timber roof stone construction with brick details to the opes and brick quoin detail.



Constructed with accommodation as follows

Ground floor

Carriage/garage with a pit and stables (one stall remains) to the remainder.

First Floor –

Hayloft Tack Area –

Building type

Typical late Victorian/Edwardian



Garden Cottage:

This is a two storey single pitch building located adjacent to the Courtyard was converted from a small barn into a residential unit, currently occupied on a life tenancy basis by a member of the Walker family.



The Barn

This is a typical agricultural building with a corrugated metal roof (left hand side of gate). .

This remains outside the current Part 8



Staff Bungalow

This is a modern system built single storey house situated in the old farm yard of no merit.



There are two further single storey buildings in the Courtyard.

The Garage- Outhouse

The garage is a single story building with metal double doors built onto the Courtyard Wall. It requires remedial works and to be re-roofed.



The Shed

This is a small single store building used as a WC and store. The existing metal awning is unusual, reminiscent of a central European design. It requires to be restored and refurbished.



Buildings within the Garden

The Potting Shed

This is a low single storey building of brick construction with timber windows and a timber roof finished in clay tiles. It requires remedial works.



The Peach House

This building is in poor condition. It has had a number of unsuccessful interventions, including plastic panels as sections of roof. The timber rafters are in poor condition. The entire structure requires refurbishment.

3.0 Architectural Significance and Protection

Cultural/Artistic Significance

4.0 Impact on the historic character

All works will be contained within the site. No item of architectural or cultural significance will be removed from the buildings or the estate.

5.0 Conservation Philosophy Proposed Restoration Conservation Principles

All restoration works will be carried out in accordance with the best conservation principles in accordance with the Guidelines of the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government, and in accordance with the principles of the Venice and Burra Charters. The existing building and all interventions shall be recorded. The historic and artistic work of the past will be respected without excluding the style of any given period.

Interventions

It is the object in carrying out the works that the works will be limited to the minimum intervention necessary for the survival of the property and its suitability for current occupancy standards. All features of importance are to be retained and protected.

It is intended to carryout, in all cases where possible, repairs rather than replacement of original fabric and new repairs should be in accordance with existing details and discernable without distracting from the structure.

Unsatisfactory repairs and alterations which disfigure or compromise the visual amenity of the structure will be replaced.

Decay

Where decay occurs before repairs are undertaken, an analysis should be undertaken of the cause of the deterioration and the repair should address the remediation of the fault.

Detailed inspections to be carried out prior to the works being undertaken. Only appropriate works to be undertaken, new materials only to be used where original materials are unobtainable.

Construction- Existing use

Only contractors with proven experience in working on historic buildings shall be engaged on the works.

Method statements will be required as directed by the conservation architect.

Supervision

Supervision of the works shall be under the direction of a suitably qualified person with conservation experience.

6.0 Conservation Works in current Part 8 (Structures)

Title	Description	Part 8	Outline of Proposed works
Fernhill House	Main House Period building	Not included	Works to be undertaken to preserve the structure and integrity of the structure Further Part 8 to be obtained for final use
Gate Lodge	Staff Residence Period building	Not included	In reasonable condition
Court Yard/ Stable Yard			
Coach House	Period building Garage and stable	Included	Works to be undertaken to preserve the structure and integrity of the structure Further Part 8 to be obtained for final use Change of use to restaurant
Staff Bungalow	Demolish 20 th century building	Included	Structure of no conservation merit
New Tower Building	New Staff building Change/ Toilets Lecture Room Public Toilets Public Seating Viewing Tower	Included	New Nzeb high quality modern building
Existing Outhouse	Existing Shed	Included	Works to be undertaken to preserve the structure and integrity of the structure New use as Shop/ Community building
Garage	Existing garage	Included	Works to be undertaken to preserve the structure and integrity of the structure New use as Plant and store building
The remainder of the buildings on the estate do not form part of this planning permission			

APPENDIX A

References

Various articles relating to Fernhill

<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/cgi-bin/viewsite.cgi?siteid=2431>

<http://archive.irishartsreview.com/irisartsreviyear/pdf/1990/20492645.pdf.bannered.pdf>

Here is the link to the full record for the book by Malins and Bowe:

https://library.ucd.ie/iii/encore/record/C__Rb1233375

Here is the link to the full record for the book by George and Bowe:

https://library.ucd.ie/iii/encore/record/C__Rb1107358

Here is the link to the full record for the book by Terence Reeves-Smith

https://library.ucd.ie/iii/encore/record/C__Rb1659646

Here is the link to the full record for the book by Rob Goodbody:

https://library.ucd.ie/iii/encore/record/C__Rb1187102

IRISH ARTS REVIEW 1990

Extract from article by Anne Kelly

"Grants towards restoration work are paid in arrears, and projects are assessed on the basis of their intrinsic merit, the Council meeting about half the total project costs. One allocation of particular interest was that of £7,000 made to Fernhill Gardens in Sandyford, Co. Dublin, towards the cost of replanting areas of the gardens which suffered major storm damage on two occasions over the last few years. The gardens, consisting of about fifty acres, date from 1850 but many of its trees date from much earlier. The Darley family built the house and began developing the gardens, work being continued by three generations of Walkers. The Darley's' main contribution to the ornamental garden was a broadwalk - a flat terraced walk *"extremely wide, so that a group of three ladies in their wide skirts could walk side by side, conversing while they took the afternoon air."* This feature, along with the box-hedged kitchen garden and the typically Irish laurel lawn are reminders of a more formal era, in what is now a Robinsonian garden. William Robinson (1838-1935) began a crusade against the architectural garden in favour of more natural forms of garden" -



GARDEN VIEWS

