

**ADVANCE NOTICE OF LISTING**

The Clerk to the Council  
Belfast City Council  
Donegall Square  
PO Box 234  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

*Dear listing  
file*

Chief Executive's Office		
Date	17/1/14	
Seen by	CX	
Referred to		
ACX	Corp Comms	Dem Serv. 17/1
GR	SPP	Bus Supp.
Dev	F&R	H&ES
P&L	P&P	Other
Ref	75177	

Tel: (028) 9054 3058

Our Ref: HB26/23/004

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: FACTORY, 3-19 RYDALMERE STREET, BELFAST, CO ANTRIM, BT12 6GF**

**LISTING OF BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST**

At present, the listing of the above-mentioned property is being considered under Article 42(1) of the Planning (NI) Order 1991.

I would welcome receipt of the views of your Council on the proposed Listing within 6 weeks of the date of this Letter. *If there is no reply to this correspondence within the stated timescale we shall assume that you agree to the listing of the above building.*


I enclose a copy of the Second Survey Report of the building(s) for your information.

Yours faithfully

**STEVEN TOSH**

**Enc** Second Survey DC Report

*Sam AWG  
20/1/14*

<b>Address</b> Factory 3-19 Rydalmere Street Belfast Co Antrim BT12 6GF	<b>HB Ref No</b> HB26/23/004	
<b>Extent of Listing</b> Factory - Building 1		
<b>Date of Construction</b> 1920 - 1939		
<b>Townland</b> Malone Lower		
<b>Current Building Use</b> Factory		
<b>Principal Former Use</b> Factory		

<b>Conservation Area</b>	No	<b>Survey 1</b>	Not_Listed	<b>OS Map No</b>	147-01
<b>Industrial Archaeology</b>	Yes	<b>NIEA Evaluation</b>	B2	<b>IG Ref</b>	J3246 7320
<b>Vernacular</b>	No	<b>Date of Listing</b>		<b>IHR No</b>	
<b>Thatched</b>	No	<b>Date of Delisting</b>			
<b>Monument</b>	No			<b>SMR No</b>	
<b>Area of Townscape Character</b>	No			<b>HGI Ref</b>	
<b>Local Landscape Policy Area</b>	No				
<b>Historic Gardens Inventory</b>	No				
<b>Vacant</b>	Yes				
<b>Derelict</b>	Partially				

**Owner Category**

### Building Information

**Exterior Description and Setting**

The block under review lies between Rydalmere St and Empire St. It formerly extended north to Lemberg St, but the N end of the premises was demolished and is now open ground outside the survey address. The site as it now stands comprises four buildings – one along Rydalmere St, and three along Empire St.

**Building 1**

A two-storey 16 bay building aligned N-S along the E side of Rydalmere St erected by the York St Flax Spinning Co in 1919-21.

Flat roof with concrete-coped brick parapet around. Replacement plastic down pipes from hoppers at

base of parapets. The latter have shallow piers with decorative terracotta panels to their outside faces. The walls between the piers are slightly recessed and also scalloped.

Walls are of red brick over a projecting chamfered purple brick base course. A mounded concrete cornice runs around the entire building at the base of the roof parapet. All openings are square-headed with concrete heads and cills, and metal window frames unless otherwise stated.

The S elevation faces into the yard. At left is a wide roller shuttered door, above which is a similarly-shuttered loading door. To right of these doorways are five window opes, one above the other and of varying height. They probably lit an internal staircase. The bottom three windows are infilled with brick but the top two retain their 3x3 top-opening metal-framed windows. The topmost window ope is on the S elevation of a single-storey roof extension with hipped natural slate roof (with finial at E end), brick chimney, and plain timber eaves boards (no gutters survive); there is also a window and/or door opening to its N elevation. The remainder of this elevation is blank except for vestiges of a modern plastic sign at top left and 'entrance' sign at bottom right.

The W elevation faces directly on to Rydalmere St. It is 16 bays long and symmetrical; all but the end bays are slightly recessed. Modern metal security grilles have been inserted over all the openings and metal sheeting has also been affixed across the lower half of the GF opes. The end bays are identical and contain 1x6-paned windows to GF and 3x6-paned ones to FF. The windows are slightly inset from the face of the wall and the head of the GF one has a thin horizontal terracotta drop mould over. The walls to these particular bays are embellished on both floors with a yellow brick cill course. The remaining 14 bays have 4x6-paned windows to both floors. The heads of the window opes of these bays are set in metal channels. Above the FF heads is a dentilled course of alternating concrete bricks (set end-on) and mounded terracotta specials. There is also a terracotta drip mould over both sets of openings.

The N elevation has window openings of varying height and all of which are now either infilled with concrete blockwork, or sheeted over with metal panels; they are distributed over five columns and four rows. The right-hand end of this elevation is obscured by ivy. A single-storey roof extension rises above the roof parapet and is detailed as the extension at the S end. It has been cut through at its E end by a later insertion with flat concrete roof and dark-red brick walls and was probably a motor room for a lift to supplement the adjacent stairwell. There are several small rectangular openings around the top of this structure and a 3x3-paned window to its N side.

The E elevation could not be fully viewed from the street except for its N bay. It appears to be similar to its W elevation, right down to the terracotta detailing on its roof parapet piers. The N bay has a metal-sheeted door to GF, with 3x3-paned overlight and terracotta drip-mould over. The FF window has been infilled with brick and a small 2x4-paned window inserted. There is also a yellow brick cill course to each floor.

Roof: Natural slate.  
RWG: Concealed gutters; plastic downpipes.  
Walling: Brick.  
Windows: Multi-paned metal.

#### Back entrance

The doorway at the N end of the E elevation is accessed by a passageway from Empire St. At the street end of the passage is a pair of replacement metal gates set in a three-centred brick archway with concrete keystone, chamfered string courses at arch spring level and concrete-coped gable over. Above the arch is a plastic sign reading "Drift 'n' Wood Clothing Ltd". At the base of each archway jamb is a cast-iron wheel guard embossed "Victor C. Taylor/ Maker/ Belfast" (he operated the Atlas Foundry, Townsend St, Belfast).

#### Building 2

A two-storey, five-bay building with returns at both ends, aligned N-S along Empire St towards the N end of the premises. It was erected as offices and stores during the period 1919-21.

Hipped natural slate roof. Walls are of red brick over a projecting chamfered purple brick base course. Advanced concrete eaves below which is a dentilled course of alternating concrete and red brick. Metal and plastic rainwater goods.

All openings are square-headed with concrete heads and cills, and timber window frames unless

otherwise stated. Metal security grilles have been fitted to all street-facing openings and, additionally, metal sheeting to the bottom halves of the GF opes.

The E elevation faces directly on to the street. There are five rows of windows to each floor; 4x6-paned to GF and 4x5-paned to FF. Also a brick-infilled doorway at left (S) end of GF. The wall is embellished with a yellow brick platbands across GF just above cill level, and also at cill level on FF.

The N gable is abutted by a slightly lower and narrower single bay return. Hipped natural slate roof. Walls detailed as main section of building (including platbands). Doorway to N elevation and 4x4-paned window to E elevation. In the wall above the latter are four decorative terracotta panels. Another single-storey building was subsequently added to the W side of this return, and then another one between the latter and building 1 (no access to either).

The S gable is also abutted by a slightly lower and narrower return. To the left of this return is a FF window. The return is detailed as the main section except for its flat concrete roof (with dentilled course under). There is a 4x6-paned window to GF and a narrow 2x5-paned window to FF. The return's S elevation is abutted by Building 3; there is a 1x4-paned window to FF. W elevation of this building could not be accessed.

Roof: Natural slate.  
RWG: Metal and plastic.  
Walling: Brick.  
Windows: Multi-paned timber.

#### Building 3

A one-storey, eight-bay infill building aligned N-S along Empire St between buildings 2 and 4. It was erected sometime between 1946 and 1958 by the Ulidia Clothing Co. Pitched corrugated-asbestos roof with three circular metal ridge ventilators. Rainwater goods comprise a steel box gutter along the wall head and circular cast-metal down pipe.

Wall of E elevation could well be part of the original 1912 boundary wall around the premises. It is of red brick over a projecting chamfered purple brick base course and with eight recessed panels, all of which have dentilled heads (detailed as Building 2's eaves). Both end panels are blank, four have rectangular window opes (with concrete cills but now sheeted over), and two have square opes (no cills, but sheeted over as well). The windows may be later inserts. W elevation could not be accessed.

Roof: Corrugated asbestos cement fibre.  
RWG: Metal.  
Walling: Brick.  
Windows: Unknown.

#### Building 4

A two-storey, seven-bay building aligned N-S along Empire St, towards S end of premises. The four-bay section at S is wider than the three-bay section at N. This building was erected sometime between 1920 and 1925. The S section was the boiler room, and the N section the engine room. Pitched natural slate roofs with skylights to W slope of bays 1-4 (as numbered from S end) Also raised verges (coped with concrete and with corbelled concrete shoulders), and raised firewall between the two sections. Slatted timber ridge ventilators to both. Metal and plastic rainwater goods. Walls of red brick over projecting chamfered purple brick base course. Advanced concrete eaves below which is a dentilled course of alternating concrete and red brick. GF of N elevation is abutted by Building 3. Exposed section has two segmental-headed recessed panels with concrete keystones.

E elevation faces directly on to street. All GF opes are completely covered with metal sheeting and the FF opes are filled with metal security grilles. The openings to this elevation are all windows. Those to bays 1-4 (as numbered from S end) have projecting concrete cills and flat concrete heads. Those to bays 5-7 have flush concrete cills and segmental brick heads. Save for bay 1 (which has a 2x3-paned replacement window), all the FF windows are 4x5-paned timber frames with segmental brick heads and

flush concrete cills. The GF and FF windows to each bay are set in recessed panels detailed as the N gable.

The S gable, being wider, has three recessed panels (detailed as N gable) and a circular window ope in the gable apex.

The W elevation faces into the yard. Bays 1-4 (from S end) have no GF openings except for one roller-shuttered door. There were originally four FF windows (one to each bay), each 4x6-paned timber frames, but one has been enlarged to accommodate a roller shuttered loading door. As with the E elevation, the opes are set in segmental-headed recessed panels. The W elevation of bays 5-7 was not visible. A walkway clad in corrugated asbestos sheeting connects this section with Building 1 at FF level.

Roof: Natural slate.  
RWG: Metal and plastic.  
Walling: Brick.  
Windows: Multi-paned timber.

#### Yard wall

A wall wraps around an open yard at S end of premises. The W wall, along Rydalmere St, has been rebuilt in modern brickwork and contains a set of folding steel gates which form the main site entrance. The W half of the S wall has been rebuilt in shuttered concrete but the E half is original brickwork, complete with shallow brick pilasters to its inside face. Between these two sections of wall is an opening for a previous gateway, long infilled with concrete blockwork. The E wall, along Empire St, is also an original wall and has three recessed panels with dentilated heads which are identical to those on E wall of Building 3).

#### Setting

The factory is set within what is now a largely residential area with terraced two-storey houses facing it along Rydalmere and Empire Streets. There is also a modern industrial warehouse to the W of the N end of Building 1. On the other side of the yard wall at the S end of the complex are several small single-storey buildings, including a now-defunct shop.

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#### Interior Overview

No internal access

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#### Architects

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#### Historical Information

This plot was first developed in 1919 by the York Street Flax Spinning Company, one of the largest yarn spinning companies in Ireland at that time. The Valuation revision book notes a "factory in progress" during 1919 and 1920. The 1920 OS map shows a building captioned as a "flax spinning mill" along the E side of Rydalmere St (designated as Building 1 in this report). There is also a second building towards the N end of the Empire St side of the area under review (bld 2). The 1921-22 Directory notes the presence of the York Street Flax Spinning Company on Rydalmere St, so they were presumably taken up occupancy by then.

However, the 1922 Valuation notes that the factory was "not fully utilised". This was possibly because the engine house and boiler house had still to be built towards the S end of Empire St (building 4). The valuation suggests that it had been completed by 1925 as the premises are cited simply as "factory". This building is also shown, along with the three others, on the 1931 OS map.

Company records describe the buildings as follows:

Building 1. This measured 204ft x 50ft in external plan and stood 38ft high. It was of brick, with a bitumised reinforced concrete roof, and contained two fireproof staircases. The walls were apparently thick enough to allow additional storeys to be added should the need arise.

Building 2 was also of brick and measured 65ft x 27ft x 42ft, with a 12ft x 27ft x 29ft annex (at N). There was a packing and dispatch room on the GF, and offices on the FF. It was connected at FF level to

**Building 1.**

Building 4 comprised a boiler room measuring 59ft x 38ft x 41ft and an engine room measuring 40ft x 25ft x 35ft; both were of brick and single spaces internally. The latter contained a steam turbine and several electricity dynamos. The boiler, which was automatically stoked, also generated steam for the factory's central heating system. OS maps show a chimney just beyond the S end of the boiler room.

There were no further significant developments in the 1930s as the 1937 OS map is identical to the 1931 edition.

Sometime in the late 1930s, the York Street Spinning Co vacated the premises which were then requisitioned as stores by the Admiralty. However, the generating plant was also kept on standby should the municipal electricity supply have been seriously disrupted.

The factory was still under Admiralty control at the end of the Second World War. By now, an annex had been added to the S end of Building 2 (which now measured 86ft x 27ft x 37ft).

In June 1946, the premises were purchased by the Ulidia Clothing Company Ltd for the sum of £22,500. It was probably this company which was responsible for the infill building (bld 3) between Buildings 2 and 4 along Empire St which is shown on the 1958-59 OS map. This firm was still in operation in 1965.

The most recent occupant of the site appears to have been the Drift 'n' Wood Clothing Co, but the buildings now lie empty.

**References – Primary sources:**

1. PRONI VAL/12/E/193J/42/2. Valuation Office 1:1056 map (1906-31).
2. PRONI VAL/12/B/43/C/39. Valuation revision book, p.875 (1913-25).
3. PRONI OS/10/1/60/12/2. OS 1:2500 map, Co Antrim sheet 60-12 (1920).
4. Belfast & Province of Ulster Street Directory, p.643 (1921-22).
5. PRONI VAL/12/B/43/C/44. Valuation revision book, p.983 (1924-30).
6. PRONI OS/10/1/60/12/3. OS 1:2500 map, Co Antrim sheet 60-12 (1931).
7. Belfast & Province of Ulster Street Directory, p.612 (1935).
8. PRONI OS/10/1/60/12/4. OS 1:2500 map, Co Antrim sheet 60-12 (1937).
9. PRONI D2964/J/15. Papers relating to York Street Flax Spinning Co premises on Rydalmere St (1945-46).
10. Belfast & Province of Ulster Street Directory, pp 212 and 487 (1945).
11. PRONI OS/111/147/1/1. OS 1:2500 map, IG sheet 147-01 (1958-59).
12. Belfast & Province of Ulster Street Directory, p.675 (1965).

**Criteria for Listing**

<b>Architectural Interest</b>	<b>Historical Interest</b>
B. Proportion A. Style C. Ornamentation J. Setting	X. Local Interest

**Evaluation**

Large red brick factory complex mainly constructed in the early 1920's by the York Street Flax Spinning Company and developed during the next 25 years. Building 1 in particular is an imposing multi bay factory with large window openings in a mix of Victorian materials and modernist solid to void walling ratio. Some of the buildings exhibit interesting detailing, such as the use of clay and concrete brick dentillation on window heads and along the eaves, and terracotta drip moulds. This large industrial complex was used by the Admiralty during WW2 as stores and its electricity generating capacity was on standby to supply the wider area if needed. The complex has a late Victorian setting of terraced housing and is of local interest as a place of work for many of the local community.

**Replacements and Alterations**

Inappropriate

**If inappropriate, Why?**

Roller shutters in some openings detract from original character

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**General Comments**

Listing Criteria R - Age; and S - Authenticity also apply.

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**Monitoring Notes – since Date of Survey**

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**Date of Survey** 26/11/2013

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