

**Report to the Chairperson and Members of the  
Transportation Strategic Policy Committee**

**Street Nameplates in Dublin City Council**



Ksawery Hession

**Senior Executive Engineer  
Road Maintenance Services  
Environment and Transportation Department**

**April 2017**

The following Minute relates to the item discussed at the Transportation Strategic Policy Committee meeting in February, 2015, on the use of street nameplates in Dublin city:

*'The Members expressed concerns about the design of the street nameplates, the font size, the level of prominence of Irish and possible inclusion of district names. The Manager was asked to come back to the Committee with proposals to differentiate Irish and English names such as the use of different colours or typefaces. The chairman suggested that an Irish font may be more appropriate for the Irish Language. It was agreed to submit a further report to a future meeting of the SPC on the issues involved.'*

## Reply

### Font

Street Nameplates are commonly viewed from an angle and therefore it is very important that the lettering is well spaced and that the correct font is used.

The form of alphabet and lettering size currently in use on street nameplates in Dublin City Council administrative area is an upper case '**Transport Medium**' font condensed to 62% giving a letter height of 63.5mm. Condensing allows street nameplate to be of a practicable size while accommodating both Irish and English text. The use of this font and letter size is based on Irish and UK Traffic Signs Manuals.

The following is an extract from the Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 7 'The Design of Traffic Signs', 2013 Department of Transport UK:

*'ALPHABETS - The alphanumeric characters used on traffic signs are from a specially designed alphabet known as the Transport alphabet. There are two versions: **Transport Medium** for white characters on a green, blue, brown, red or black background); **Transport Heavy** for black characters on a white or yellow background. ....Light-coloured surfaces, especially when illuminated, irradiate into adjacent darker ones. Thus white characters on a dark background appear thicker than their actual size, whereas black characters on a light background appear thinner'.*

Chapter 2 and 4 of the Traffic Signs Manual (Department of Transport/ An Roinn Iompair publication) refer to the use of an English Upper and Lower Case **Transport Heavy** Alphabet (TP Heavy Font). Condensing may be used to reduce the length of the Irish or English place-name by reducing the widths of the appropriate tiles in steps of 5% to a limit of 80% of their normal size. Table 4.1.2 of Chapter 4 recommends a height of text of 80mm for areas with speed limits up to 80km/hr.

### **Additional text on signs**

The nameplates currently used are rectangular in shape, 227mm high and the length is determined by the street's name in English or Irish. E.g. **LARCH GROVE** and **GARRÁN NA LEARÓIGE** whichever is the longer.

The inclusion of district names on signs would require the use of larger signs. The use of larger signs would result in difficulties in obtaining permission from property owners to attach such signs to their property. In addition larger signs would be considered by some to be visually unattractive and would be more costly to procure. Finally while the district name to be included on a particular sign would be straightforward for the majority of locations it is likely that for some roads on the boundary of districts there maybe disagreement as to the appropriate district name to be included on a particular sign.

### **Colour**

The colours currently in use on the street nameplates in Dublin City Council administrative area are as follows:

The letters of the Irish and English version of the 'street' name, and all borders are done in 'Brilliant White. The background to the name is done in 'Himmelblau' blue RAL 5015.

These choices of colours provide a very good contrast and the use of the colour blue is synonymous with Dublin including its flag.

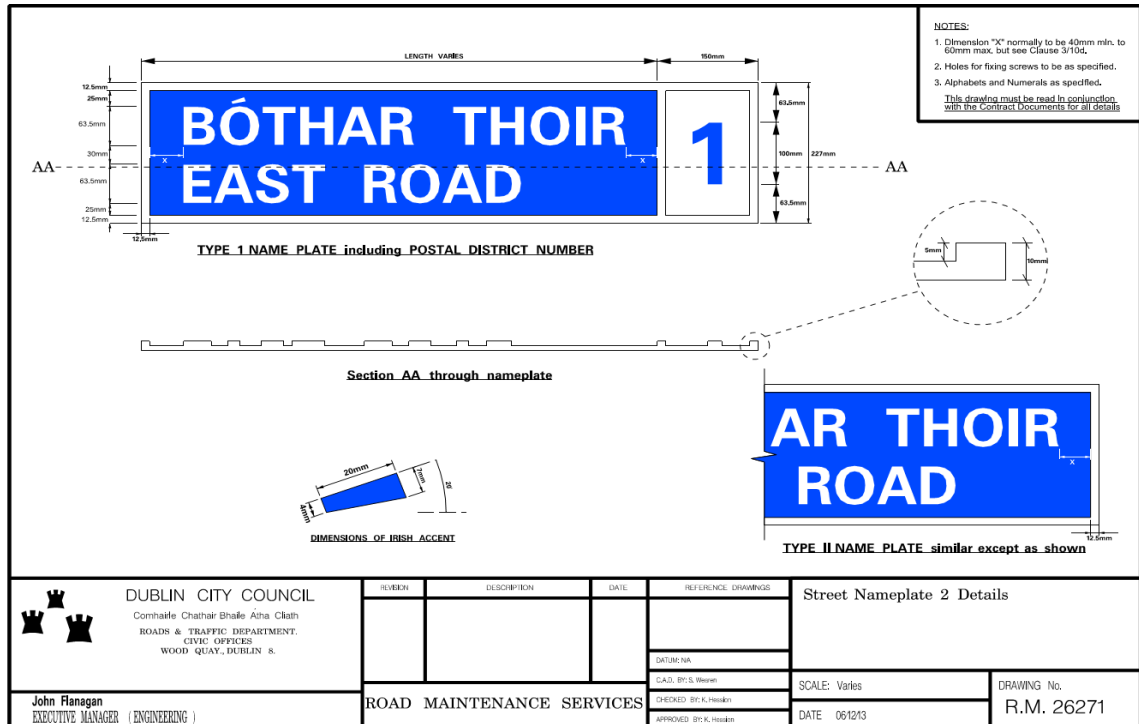
In 'Recommendations for the Design of Street Nameplates' (Department of Transport UK Circular 3/93) recommends that nameplates 'should have black lettering on a white background .. a contrast ratio of least 7:1 The use of colour combinations with low contrast, for example bronze or brown lettering on green backgrounds, will result in poor legibility, especially under.... street lighting'

### **Language**

Under the Official Languages Act (S.I. No. 391 of 2008) nameplates are signs under the Regulations and they must be in Irish or bilingual in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations. Each sign shall provide the same information in both the Irish language and the English language and therefore lettering style, colour and text should be the same for both the Irish and the English text.

## Recommendation

It is recommended as policy as per the report presented to the SPC in February 2015 to use street nameplate Type 1 in Dublin City Council Administrative Area. These are cast iron street name plates with raised white lettering on a blue background with postal district in raised blue number on a white background ( as shown below).



**Type 1**