

# *Tithe Faoin Tuath, Contae An Chláir* County Clare Rural House Design Guide

The essential guide for anybody planning,  
designing or building a house in rural County Clare

**Settlement and  
Building Tradition**

**Building Design**

**Materials and  
Landscape**



**Second Edition**

# *Tithe Faoin Tuath, Contae An Chláir*

## **Second Edition**

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# County Clare Rural House Design Guide

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*Tithe Faoin Tuath,  
Contae An Chláir*



# County Clare Rural House Design Guide

## Réamhrá / Foreword

Tacaímidne i gContae an Chláir le soláthar na tithíochta tuaithe mar aitheantas ar an traidisiún láidir leanúnach de dhaoine a bheith ina gcónaí i gceantair thuaithe den chontae. Tá éagsúlacht tírdhreachanna dearscnaitheacha le fáil sa Chontae, mar ar chuir - agus mar a gcuireann - éifeacht charnach dhearadh agus shuíomh neamh-mhothálach na tithíochta tuaithe isteach ar charachtar an tírdhreacha sin; as a n-eascraíonn fáthanna chun forbairt a dhiúltú. Déanfaidh na Treoracha deartha seo a shoiléiriú go gcaithfidh an fhorbairt tithíochta sna ceantair thuaithe a bheith d'ard-chaighdeán agus a bheith comhlántach lena timpeallacht seachas a bheith ag teacht i gceannas uirthi. Chuir éagsúlacht an tírdhreacha dúshlán faoi leith roimh ullmhú cáipéise a threorfaidh cónaitheoirí agus cónaitheoirí nua amach anseo i gContae an Chláir chun tithe a thógáil a chuireann leis an tírdhreach agus a fheabhsaíonn an tírdhreach ar cuid de iad, bíodh sé ar arda creagacha an Bhoirinn ná ar mhachairí Inbhear na Sionainne.

Is mian leis an Údarás Pleanála caighdeán ard a bhaint amach i ndearadh na dtithe tuaithe sa Chontae. Táirgíodh an treoirleabhrán údarásach mealltach le cúnamh na gcleachtóirí áitiúla agus an phobail i gcoitinnne, agus beidh sé ar fáil lena cheannach ag cách.

Tairgeann sé cur chuige d'fhorbairt na dtithe aonair faoin tuath a sholáthróidh - má chloítear leis – deis chun dearadh tithe níos iomchuí a spreagadh i gceantair thuaithe agus chois farraige de chuid Chontae an Chláir.

In Clare we support the provision of rural housing in recognition of the strong and continuing tradition of people living in rural areas of the county. The county contains a variety of outstanding landscapes where the cumulative effect of insensitive design and siting in rural housing has affected and can continue to affect the character of that landscape giving rise to reasons for refusing development. These design guidelines will make it clear that housing development in rural areas needs to be of high quality and should compliment rather than dominate its surroundings. The variety of the landscape has posed particular challenges in preparing a document that will guide residents and future residents of County Clare to construct houses that contribute to and enhance the landscape of which they form a part, whether it be the rocky plateau of the Burren or the lowland areas of the Shannon Estuary.

The Planning Authority wishes to achieve a high standard of rural house design in the county. This authoritative attractive design guide has been produced with the assistance of local practitioners and the general public and is available for purchase by all.

It offers an approach to the development of single houses in the countryside that, if adhered to, will provide the opportunity for encouraging a more appropriate house design in the rural and coastal areas of Clare.

**Patrick Keane**

*Méara an Chláir*

*Mayor of Clare*

# *Tithe Faoin Tuath, Contae An Chláir*



# County Clare Rural House Design Guide

## Introduction

### How to use the House Design Guide

The diverse and dramatic character of the ancient landscape of the county is one of its greatest natural assets.

This design guide has been prepared to show the importance of good siting and sensitive design when building in the Clare countryside. Much of the unsatisfactory rural house design throughout the county has resulted from catalogue type housing, where new dwellings are randomly located on a site with no relation to orientation, aspect, site surrounds, regional characteristics and the individual needs.

This guide looks at the variety of house types that have evolved in the rural areas of County Clare in response to the needs of the occupants, the constraints of the landscape and the availability of local materials. The landscape characteristics of Clare are illustrated and guidance is offered on how to approach the location and design of single houses in rural areas. The guide does not aim to prescribe design but to highlight, to users, the benefit of considered design in relation to issues such as siting, materials, orientation and traditional elements.

It is recognised that both traditional and modern design can develop interesting and attractive buildings that contribute to the landscape and character of an area.

The photographs used in this guide are for illustrative purposes. Each house has its own unique set of factors to take into account (siting, landscaping, proportions etc.), and each house illustrated has answered these criteria for their specific locations and may not be transferable to other locations, similar or otherwise.



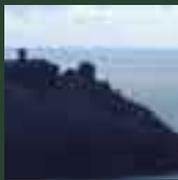
Always refer to statutory documents such as the Clare County Development Plan, Local Area Plans and guidance leaflets available from the County Council Offices.



# Landscape Character



Coastal Region



North Clare

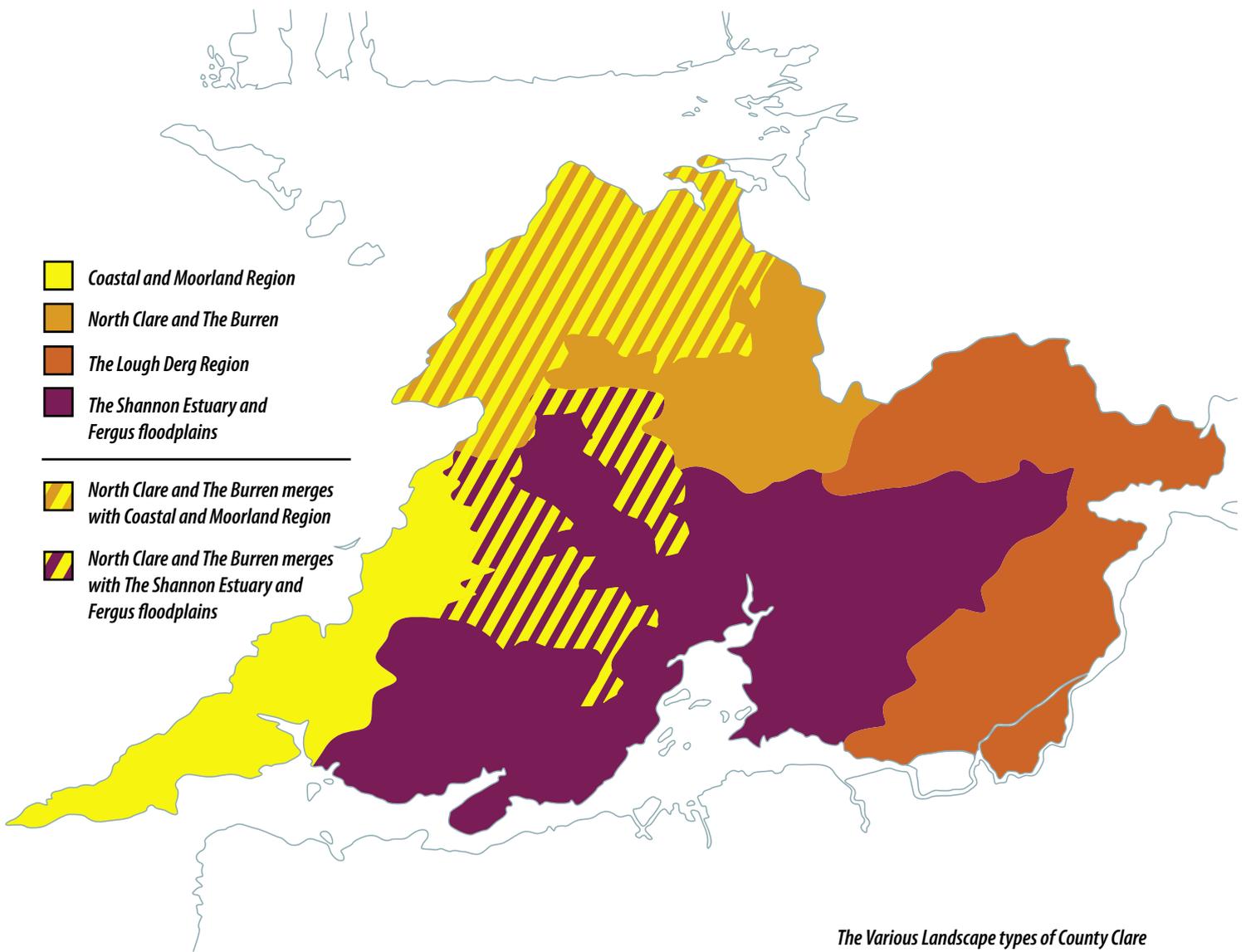


Lough Derg Region



Lowland Farmland





*The Various Landscape types of County Clare*

# Landscape Character

## Introduction

For the purpose of discussion on issues pertaining to architecture and landscaping character, the wide ranging landscapes of Clare have been simplified into four regions.

- **Coastal and Moorland Region**
- **North Clare and the Burren**
- **The Lough Derg Region**
- **The Shannon Estuary, Fergus Floodplain and Lowland Farmland**



*The Cliffs of Moher*



*Loop Head Lighthouse*



The West Coast has extreme landscape with dramatic cliff lines and the raging Atlantic, but also has its softer sheltered side such as the White Strand and the seaside resort of Kilkee.

# Landscape Character

## Coastal & Moorland Regions

### Coastal and Moorland region

North of the Shannon Estuary the lands of Clare stretch westwards across the exposed peninsula, and are subject to the extremes of the Atlantic gales. On the ocean side, wild and dramatic cliffs alternate with sweeping sandy beaches and fishing villages which have become popular holiday resorts over the years.

The vernacular architecture of these regions reflects this rugged exposed environment and also the cultural changes resulting from increased recreational use of beaches and seaside resorts such as Kilkee and Lahinch.

On the open moorland areas the typical built form consists of single storey, stone built, cottage farmhouses and farm buildings. There are some larger two storey houses in more sheltered areas away from the coast. Buildings tend to be rendered with plaster and painted with a colour wash. Similar buildings can be found on the higher ground in the centre of the county. In areas where the ground rises to the north, e.g. in the Hag's Head Peninsula west of Liscannor, the orientation of dwellings follows the contours with the front facing south, to maximise natural light and heat.



*A local house in Liscannor area*



Much of the coastal region in Clare is designated as a vulnerable landscape and reference should be made to The County Development Plan and Local Area Plans to determine the status of your proposed site.



*The Burren*



Each region in Clare will have different variations in building style and massing relative to the local environment and landscape characteristics.

# Landscape Character

## North Clare & The Burren

### North Clare & The Burren

The Burren and North Clare has an ancient vernacular architecture built upon settlement patterns. The Burren is an area of outstanding beauty making the conservation of the landscape a critical consideration in deciding upon the location and design of new buildings. The farms are widely dispersed and generally take the form of a single storey, stone-built farm dwelling with associated stone out-buildings. Late mediaeval Tower Houses are a regular dramatic and historic feature in the landscape.

Unlike the coastal and upland regions elsewhere in the county more buildings have exposed stonework. These groups of buildings are generally well set into the landscape and terrain to obtain shelter from the extreme weather. Towns such as Ennistymon, Corofin and Kilfenora reflect the urbanisation of these settlements.



*Old farmhouse and out-building*



*Lough Derg*

# Landscape Character

## Lough Derg Region

### **The Lough Derg Region**

Lough Derg contains numerous bays and inlets sheltered by wooded hills and set against the higher ground of Sliabh Bearnagh on one side and the Arra Mountains in north Tipperary on the other. Killaloe has developed as a strategic crossing point of the Shannon at the neck of Lough Derg. In the surrounding area the dwelling houses are of simple form, single and two storey farmhouses. The better climatic and soil conditions around Lough Derg support a high level of tree cover. This presents good opportunities to use planting for enhancing the siting of houses in the countryside.

The use of more diverse building materials in vernacular houses is more visible in this region reflecting better access to materials such as timber, brick, stone and slate.





In lowland areas houses are often visible for many miles. Ensure that this is considered in your chosen location, design and colour of dwelling.

## Shannon Estuary, Fergus Floodplain and Lowland Farmland

### **The Shannon Estuary, Fergus Floodplain and Lowland Farmland**

The rural buildings found in the Shannon Estuary region from Carrigaholt to Limerick reflect the more sheltered and tree-covered environment of this part of the county. The region is also home to a number of large estate houses and planned urban areas. These, in their own right, have influenced the design of single rural housing. Single storey farm houses with attic rooms are frequently found in this area. They are usually stone built with painted, rendered walls. Groups of farm buildings around large single storey or two storey farmhouses are also common within the Fergus Floodplain. The rapid urbanisation of the county is very evident in this area due to development pressures within the Ennis-Shannon-Limerick corridor and the use of urban built forms and housing estate designs in the countryside is often a discordant feature.

Soil conditions are favourable for tree cover and this provides an opportunity for the use of planting to enhance the settings of isolated houses. Tree cover however decreases to the west along the estuary towards Loop Head.





# Vernacular Elements



Siting



Shape/Form



Proportions



Boundaries



Materials



House Types



*Views over Doolin in North Clare gives an example of cluster development evolving*



# Vernacular Elements

## Introduction

The character and quality of the countryside in Clare is rich in its diversity and range of traditional dwellings and local styles. These buildings denote cultural and regional identity within the county. Subtle differences in detailing are due to issues such as weather conditions, available materials and skills, as well as the historical and cultural influences. Where reasonable to do so, these details should be reflected in the design of a dwelling.

The evolution of rural dwellings throughout the years has been influenced by the consideration of shelter, access, availability, drainage, and technological developments in materials. The quality and character of the Irish countryside has become valued both nationally and internationally. It is the developments of this diversity obtained through the physical and historical aspects that chart the evolution of the county's landscape and will continue to do so for centuries to come.

The main forms of design which contribute to successful and attractive integration of rural houses into the landscape are Siting, Shape / Form, Proportions, Boundaries and Materials.



Consider the impact of your proposed dwelling on the landscape and surrounding environment.

## Siting

Traditional dwellings often hug the contours of a site for shelter and use native planting to evade the weather. A rural building would rarely be located in an elevated and exposed location. New houses should be designed to harmonise and work with existing contours avoiding dramatic cutting and filling into hills which can leave the landscape scarred. When designing a new house against the backdrop of a large expanse of natural environment its design should recognise the relationship with the surrounding landscape, and this should be incorporated early in the design and not as a later addition.

*Examples of a traditional dwelling adapting to exposed and mature surroundings through sensitive siting, simplistic volumes and colour schemes*



Respect local traditional aspects of form and setting

# Vernacular Elements

## **Shape/form**

Older dwellings followed a simple linear plan form with a pitched roof. Availability of local materials, the weather and building practices influenced this scale. The size of the pitched roof was often influenced by size of timbers available locally, the necessity to disperse rain quickly off thatch or the consideration of possible wind damage.



## Proportions

The older established buildings in our countryside often have an attractive appearance and are pleasing to the eye. Aside from setting, this can usually be attributed to pleasing proportions as defined by the wall height/length, roof type and pitches, chimney position, porches and openings such as windows and doors. These proportions were linked to considerations such as availability of materials, optimising natural heating and daylight, shelter and the practicalities of daily living along with the influences of particular architectural styles of the time.

This is most evident in the use of classical proportions and symmetry. When a cultural pattern has been established a new house should relate to existing buildings in terms of overall composition including the relative size, volume, finishes and composition of the elements and possibly the colour scheme.

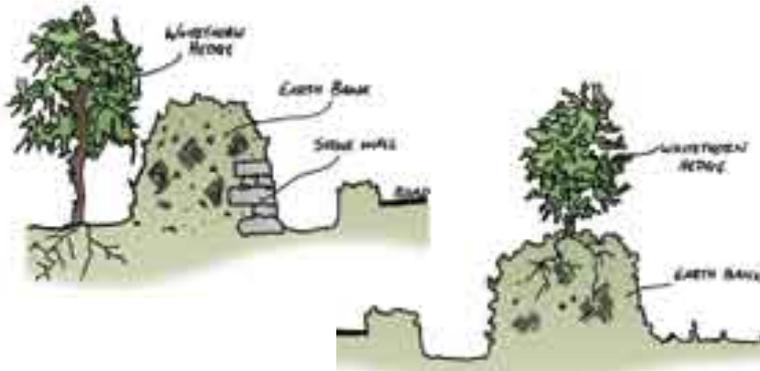


*The Volume and Proportion*



*The Features which contribute to a pleasing aesthetic in this style.*

# Vernacular Elements



*Ditches or raised banks of earth, some faced with stone, are very common in Clare. Earth is piled up, sometimes over the top of a wall and a whitethorn hedge is planted separately from the ditch or out of the face of the ditch and trained to grow vertically. The whitethorn hedge provides some stock proofing and also reduces wind-speed across the land.*

## Boundaries

The boundaries to rural houses in Clare often have drainage ditches, hedges and walls located along the perimeter. Boundary walls are traditionally constructed with limestone rubble in North Clare, shale in West Clare and sandstone in East Clare. In areas where stone was not readily available sod ditches and banks were constructed and these were often colonised by native plants or planted with indigenous hedges and trees. Such treatments gave shelter, provided drainage and blended the property into the surrounding countryside.



*This dry stone wall at Carron is an excellent example of replicating the local style. The horizontal wall with the vertical capping and uprights is common throughout County Clare*



*Although mortar has been used to consolidate this wall at Carron it is hardly visible and required no pointing. The heavy field stone capping has been popular for centuries*



*This new earthen/sod wall at Rinneen blends very well into the surrounding landscape where this method of banking is traditional*



*Boundary wall near Ruan replicates existing methods used in the area. The use of heavy capping stones allows much smaller stones to be used in the building.*



There are many different boundary wall construction types and materials in Clare. Refer to 'Stone wall Building Guidelines, Clare County Council Conservation Officer.



# Vernacular Elements

## Materials

In traditional buildings most roofs were thatched or slated with local slate – Moher/Liscannor slate in West Clare and Killaloe/Portroe or Broadford slate in East Clare. Walls were constructed of locally quarried stone and rendered internally and externally with lime burned in limekilns. The materials used would generally be from the locality and would blend with the existing landscape.



Consider the use of local materials in your house design. As well as supporting local industry it also reflects local building traditions, which can be seen in some of the more attractive villages in the county.

## Evolution of House Types in Clare

For generations people who lived in the countryside were directly related to or involved in rural activities. It is really only in the last hundred years, with improved transport and infrastructure, that homes have been built for people not involved in farming and rural occupations. Many of the original country houses are no longer in use as working farm dwellings, but have been altered and enhanced in such a way to accommodate modern needs. Below are examples of traditional country houses found in Clare. More examples of form are illustrated on page 54.



*Hipped roof cottage. Square plan and symmetry*



*Estate House. Formal architectural style. Georgian or classical proportions*



*Coastal Farmhouse including barge and plaster details*



*The Long Farmhouse. More spacious rooms with slate, thatch or iron roof*



*Two storey farmhouse. Classical lines, plastered walls and slate roof*



*Dormer Cottage. One and half storeys. Windows split at eaves line with decorative eaves detail.*

# Vernacular Elements





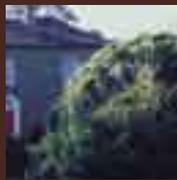
# Location and Siting



Location



Siting



Landscape



Entrance & Boundary



Environmental issues





*Pressures on the coastline leading to linear ribbon development*

i

County Clare has many areas designated for environmental protection, i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA). Likewise there are over 6,000 Archaeological sites listed as Recorded Monuments for protection. Contact The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) (065-683 7166) for further information on proposed developments within or close by these designated areas. The Record of Monuments and Places (Map and Text Booklet) is available in each of the branch libraries throughout the county as well as the council headquarters.

# Location and Siting

## Introduction

This section outlines the key considerations for finding a site in the landscape and the positioning of the building within the boundaries of the chosen site. The siting of a building in the countryside is one of the most important aspects of the planning process.

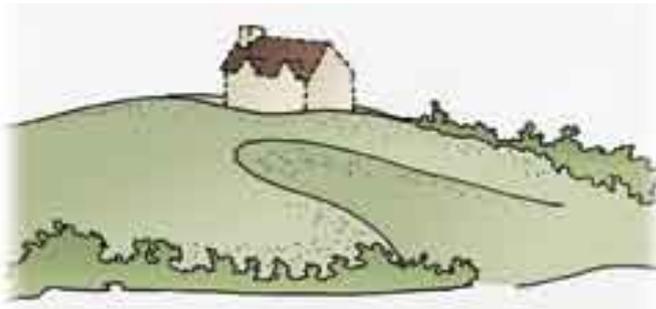
## Location

Selection of an appropriate site with regard to the relevant documents and policies of the Planning Authority will save time and expense at the planning application stage. The following are guidelines for finding a site in the open countryside of County Clare:-

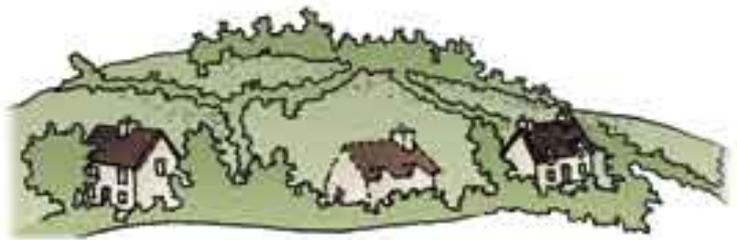
1. Refer to those areas which are designated Vulnerable Landscape Areas and Scenic Routes in The County Clare Development Plan. Avoid areas of the countryside which are less able to absorb development without significant impact upon their character, integrity and uniformity. The County Development Plan contains policies to protect such areas from inappropriate development and to preserve views and prospects from designated Scenic Routes.
2. Review access onto a public road and site distances. Will a new entrance be detrimental to traffic safety in the area and is there a safe and satisfactory view of traffic approaching along a public road to the appropriate highway's guidelines?
3. Study the character and physical attributes of the landscape and the form of generic buildings in the area before selecting a site. Consider whether your proposal will be compatible with the surrounding landscape and buildings.
4. Choose a site where natural features or the presence of trees and mature planting will minimise the visual impact of a building in the landscape. Avoid breaking the skyline or waterline when the building is viewed from a distance. Avoid adding to ribbon development.
5. Choose a sheltered site by avoiding elevated and exposed locations such as hilltops and ridge lines. This can help in reducing future maintenance and heating costs. Note the daily path of the sun to maximise on natural sunlight for warmth and light in living spaces.
6. Check available infrastructure in the area. e.g. water, sewerage, roads, schools, public transport, churches, shops, telephone, electricity...
7. Undertake a full site assessment to discover whether the ground conditions are suitable and check that there is adequate percolation for a sewage treatment system.
8. Removal of hedgerow or other vegetation to accommodate a new dwelling site entrance can be seriously detrimental to the rural character of an area.



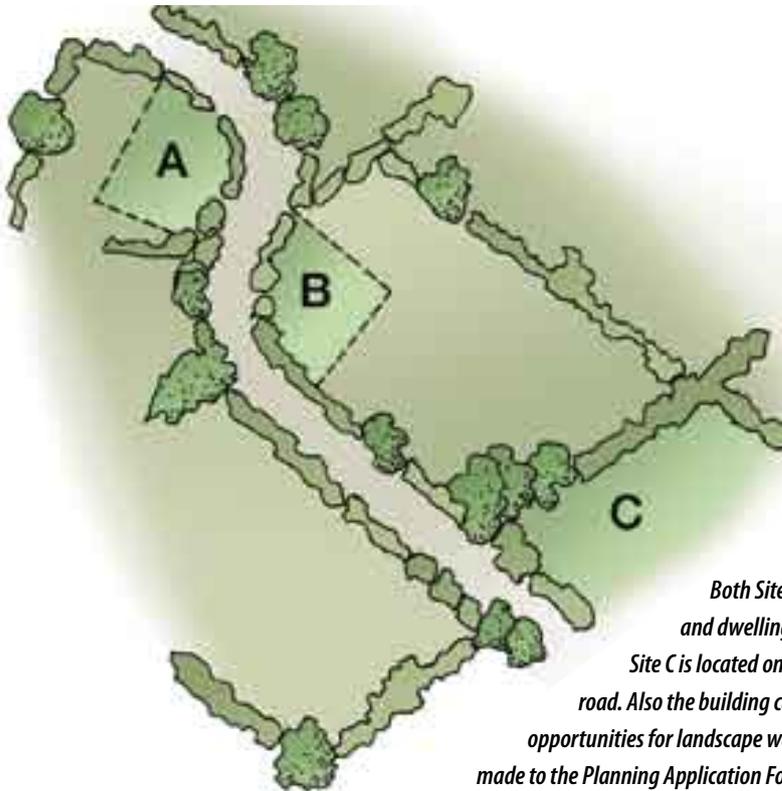
Copies of the Clare County Development Plan, Local Area Plans and other Guidance leaflets on making an application are available from the Planning Dept., Clare County Council.



*Avoid high, prominent and exposed sites or hillcrests. These locations detract from the visual amenity of the landscape and the skyline*



*A good location below the hilltop, no interference with the landscape skyline*



*Both Sites A & B are poorly located in that they present a danger to traffic and dwelling owners due to poor sight distances from the proposed entrances. Site C is located on a straighter section of the road with clear visibility of the road. Also the building can be set back from the immediate road frontage allowing opportunities for landscape works and preservation of existing hedgerows. Reference should be made to the Planning Application Form for entrance set out and set back.*



*This dwelling was constructed with consideration to the existing treescape and landscape, which leads to an attractive composition for a large house in a rural setting. The use of colour, stone finishes, window types and plaster detail, work together to form the composition.*



Note: It is illegal to clear vegetation within designated sites Special Areas of Conservation, Natural Heritage Areas, Special Protection Areas and near recorded monuments, noted in the Sites and Monuments Record 1992 and Recorded Monuments 1996, or other protected sites without prior approval from National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant bodies. A tree felling license is required from the Forest Service to fell existing trees in the countryside.

## Siting - Placing your dwelling within its site boundaries

Choose a sheltered site and check available infrastructure to avoid hidden costs. Identify the characteristics of the site such as contours, trees and hedgerows to integrate the building into the landscape.

Ensure that the site has sufficient depth to be able to locate the building back from the road edge. A dwelling fronting directly on to a road can significantly change the character of the rural setting save where the established pattern of development in an area is adjacent the public road.

- Orientate the building to maximise shelter, direct sunlight and natural warmth.
- Take note of places where you can get good views of the site so that the potential impact of developing the site can be assessed from the surrounding area.
- Position the building to avoid overlooking or loss of light to neighbouring properties.
- The driveway should not have a greater visual impact than the building itself.



*'s illustration highlights the daily path of the sun to maximise on natural sunlight for warmth and light in living spaces*

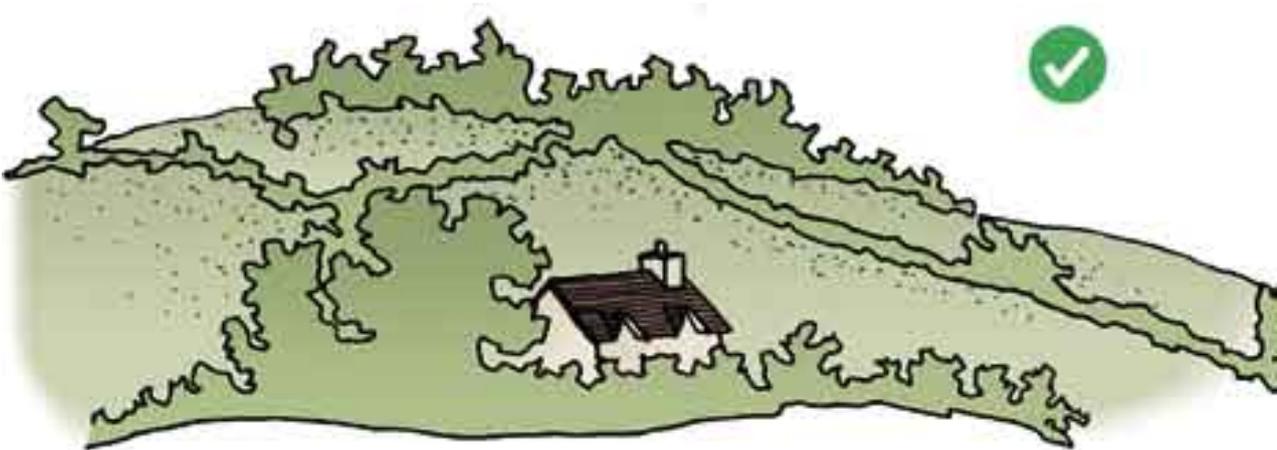
Where appropriate, creative and innovative design solutions will be encouraged which address the changing lifestyle needs, adopting and addressing the new technologies available to the building industry and respecting existing landscape of the site in order to improve the quality of the built environment.



# Location and Siting

## Landscape Works

Provision should be made where possible to retain and integrate existing trees, hedgerows, walls, rock outcrop, and other landscape features into the development. Plant native deciduous trees and shrubs indigenous to the area. (For advice on suitable native trees and shrubs, contact the Forestry Service or Heritage Officer, Clare County Council or a suitably qualified landscape designer). See Appendix 1.



*The house is located within the landscape utilising existing vegetation and indigenous trees*



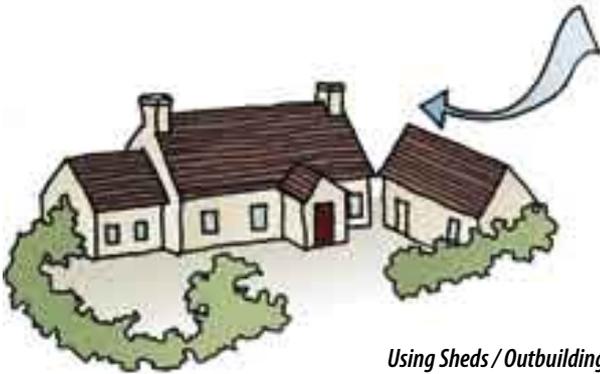
*The house sits awkwardly at the crest of the hill with species of tree in conflict with the surrounding natural vegetation*



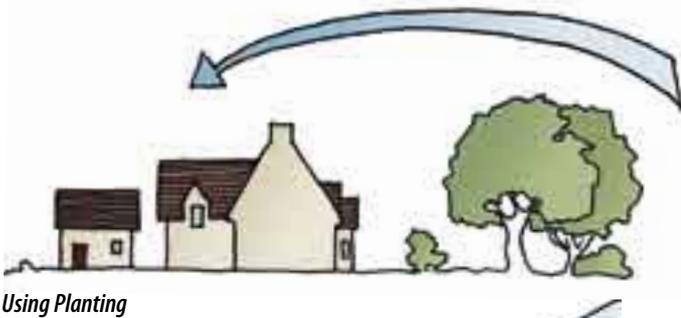
Have regard to local wildlife and nature that is dependent on the natural countryside and the protection provided by existing landscape and hedgerows. Retain existing features, slopes and contours of the natural site where possible. Moving original hedgerows can be achieved in many cases if done correctly. Hedgelaying and rejuvenation is promoted. Consideration should be given to local wildlife and the impact of any proposal to the natural environment. Guidance should be sought from the Heritage Officer on Special Areas of Conservation and wildlife protection measures required.

## Designing for Shelter

Existing boundaries should be retained where possible to include planting, hedgerows and trees. Boundaries such as indigenous hedgerow, stone wall or earth and stone banks are often more attractive and less obtrusive than new fences or walls and provide significant shelter belts for new developments. There is also the ecological benefits of maintaining the natural habitats of certain animal and bird species.



*Using Sheds / Outbuildings*



*Using Planting*



*Using existing land contours*



*Example of a farm utilising out buildings in courtyard to provide shelter in an exposed landscape.*

# Location and Siting



## Entrance and Boundary Treatment

New roadside boundaries can have the greatest visual impacts on rural development particularly where there are several different frontages adjacent to one another.

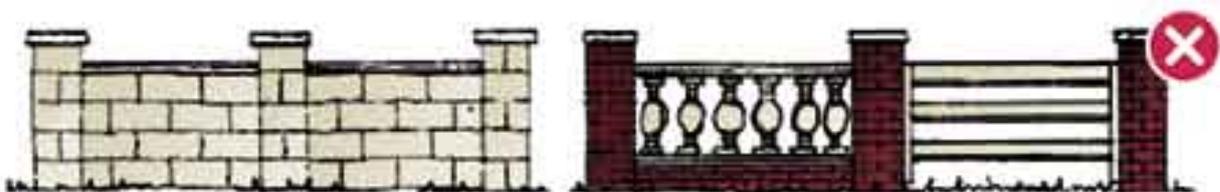
The existing hedgerow or stonewall can often be set back to the line of safe visibility without losing rural characteristics. By using a select range of materials such as stone, painted render, hedging or ditch features, compatible to the area, the character of a rural road can be retained as in the earthen banks in West Clare and deciduous tree and hedgerow species in East Clare.

In order to fit the house into its context it follows that the siting should be done in a way which incurs minimum damage to the prevailing forms. This requires analysis of existing patterns. Boundary design can vary, can be wall, can be hedging, can be high as a natural boundary, can have stone wall and plaster entrance but generally must not visually overpower the natural boundary and should retain a degree of enclosure that a road would receive from natural boundaries. In analysing the proposed boundary the designer should consider the following aspects:

- the proximity of the house to the road and its visibility from the road.
- The orientation of the house in relation to natural elements.
- The ratio of the typical house size to the site size.
- Maintaining the visual integrity of the roadscape and reflecting this in the boundary treatment.
- Landscape should reflect informal rural landscape characteristics and avoid suburban styles.



*Careful design of entrance gates makes an attractive frame for the house*



*Unsuitable boundaries for Rural Houses.*

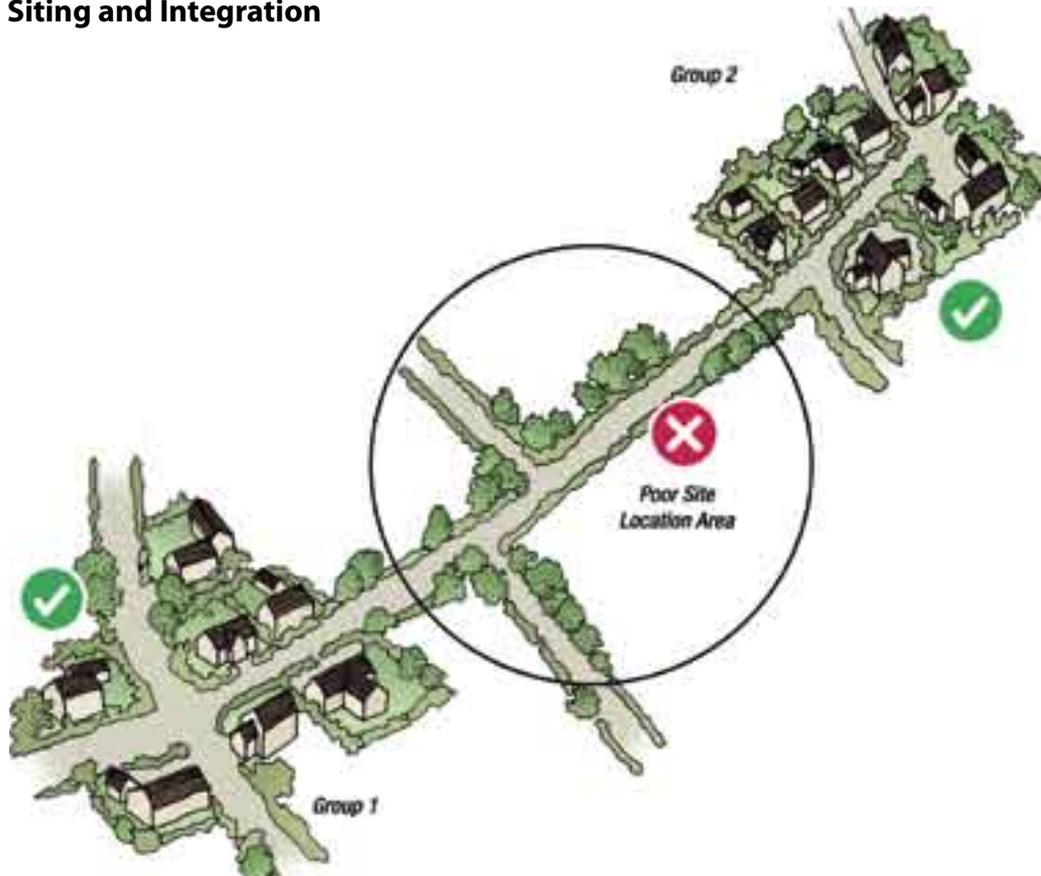


*A mix of planting rendered and local stone wall makes a more attractive composition*



*There are many forms of natural boundaries in Clare including natural hedgerows and dry stone wall construction. Refer to the Heritage Officer and Stonewall guidelines provided by the Conservation Officer.*

## Siting and Integration



*Sites should be selected to consolidate existing groups of buildings by developing along the area noted. As poor site location only encourages linear or ribbon development and blocks off back land, eventually creating a sprawl of dwellings along country roads.*

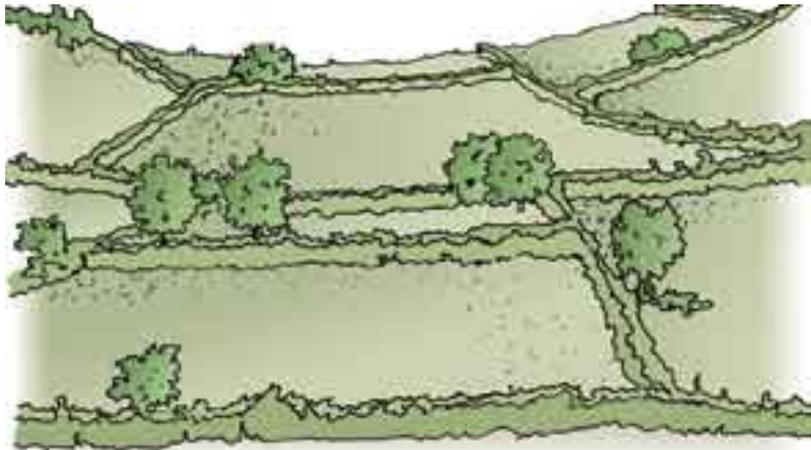


*Good designers can maximise view whilst minimising the visual impact of your house*

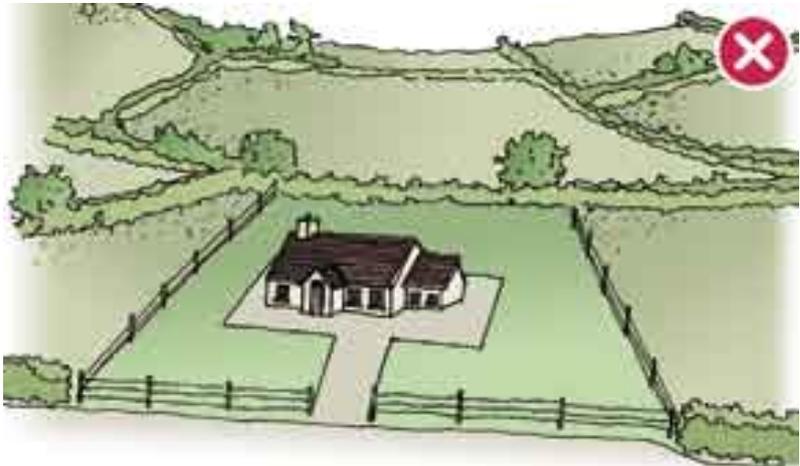
# Location and Siting

## Siting and Boundaries

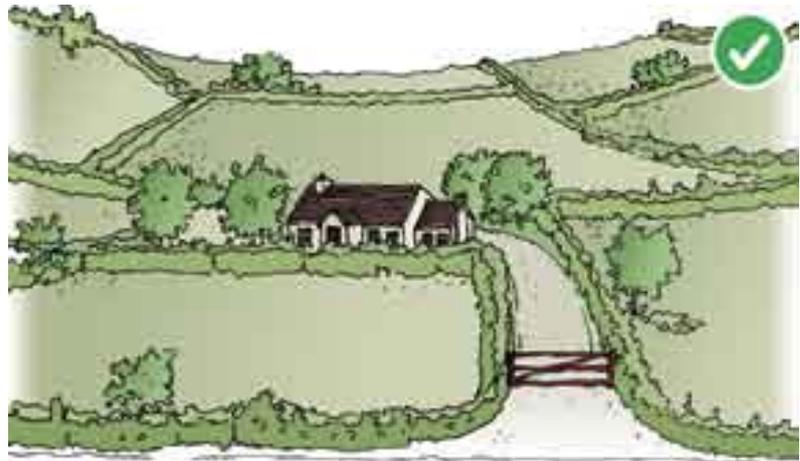
*The existing site with hedgerow and boundaries to the road.*



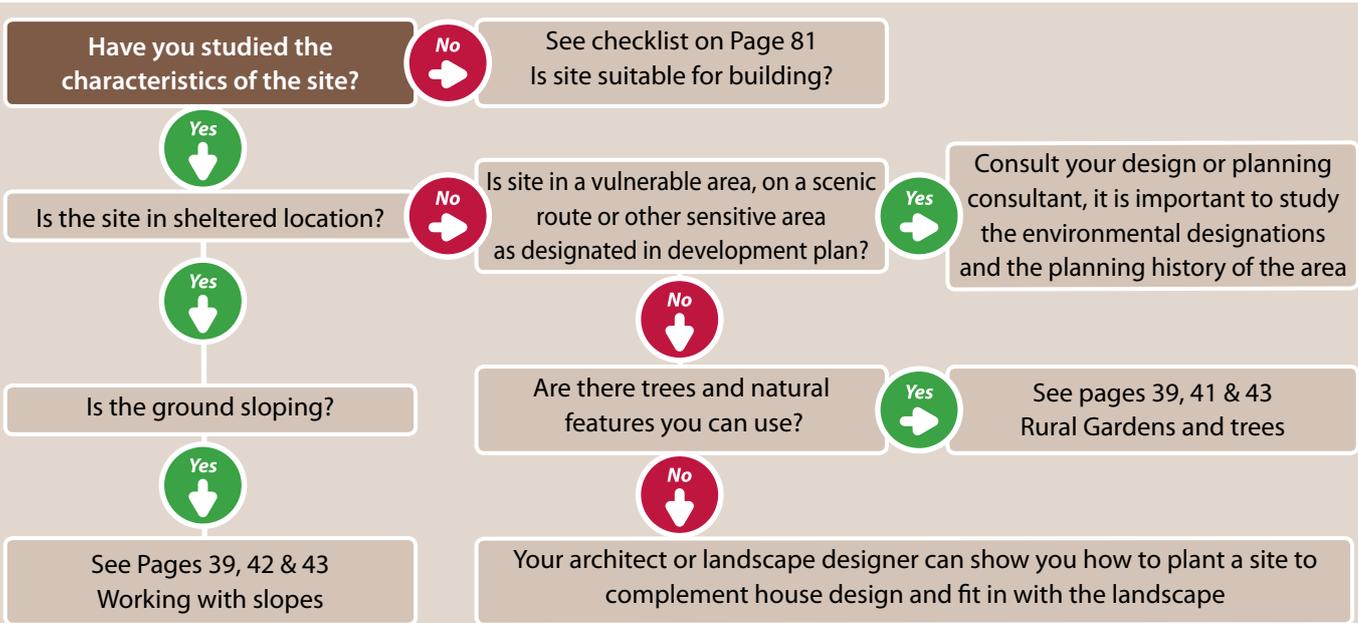
*The new house is sited centrally with no regard for existing conditions. Hedgerows are removed.*



*A satisfactory location giving both privacy and shelter to the new house whilst maintaining the landscape characteristics.*



## Review: Choosing a Site



# Location and Siting

## Review: Placing your House on Site

Study traditional older buildings to see form, orientation, shelter, response to landscape.

Are there neighbouring buildings?



You may be required to build in line with neighbours

You may have to consider issues of privacy and overlooking

Is it possible other houses will be built close to your site?



Check planning history on adjoining lands with Council

Landscape your site to properly integrate house into landscape. Design house to minimise effect on other houses. Consult your architect.

Have you considered Orientation?



See Page 37 on using sun's energy

Have you considered position of Septic Tank / Waste Water Treatment System?



The position of septic tank will limit position for house. You will need Environmental Protection Agency Assessment. See appendix Page 83

Is site on bend in road?



Consult Architect / Engineer about proposed entrance and sight distances. Where possible entrance should be off a side road. Refer to guidance notes on site distances required in Planning Application Form Guidance Notes.

Are there distinctive features on site?



Rock outcrops, trees and hedgerows can be used to good effect see Pages 39, 41 & 43 on using trees

Is there a good view?



Remember if you see, you can be seen. Consult your designer to maximise view whilst minimising the visual impact of your house. See Page 36, 39 & 42

Is it a sloping site?



You will need a contour survey.

# Location and Siting

Some examples of vernacular and modern houses in the Clare countryside, showing appropriate location and siting and well-considered design within the particular context of their respective sites (siting, landscaping, proportions and massing). Each house illustrated has answered the criteria for their specific locations.







# Designing Your House



Design Brief



Scale



Form and Shape



Proportion



Environmentally Sustainable Design



House Design for Rural Settings



## Design Brief

When an appropriate site has been identified, the designer will use their client's design brief or instructions to create the dwelling in scale, form, proportion and external finishes. Good design requires the skills and innovation of architectural and design professionals. The scope and solutions are limitless.

The key consideration is to remember what spaces you actually need within your building and how they can be best used. Modern buildings have a different composition from older buildings, reflecting the affluence and living practices of a contemporary society. New materials and new technologies offer different opportunities.

The materials and technologies, the living practices and space requirements must work together to reflect the landscape and area characteristics in which they are located.

## Elements of House Design for consideration

**Roof:** Profile, materials, edge details: (slate, tiles, metal sheeting, thatch, glass, zinc, etc.)

**Elevations:** How does the house look from the front, back and sides in terms of walls, windows, doors, roof height and chimneys.

**Chimneys:** Position on roofline, location within building fabric.

**Openings:** Maximise natural light and create attractive composition. Consider from inside-out as well as outside-in.

**Window and door openings:** Have regard to Building & Fire Regulations, and mobility impaired persons (part M).

**Porch:** Is the style suitable? Can the porch be internal to avoid impact on the overall house composition?

**Sunspace:** Discreet location and size in proportion to the house.

**Materials:** Generally in keeping with the local character of the area.

**Colour:** In keeping with the character of the local area.

**Privacy and safety:** Think privacy and safety!

*Both houses are of a different era, yet the setting, and plot size are relative to the dwellings and frame the buildings appropriately within the landscape context.*



Is the scale and size of the selected site suitable for the proposed design brief? i.e. is the site big enough to accommodate the house proposed?

# Designing Your House

## Scale

A building size should be relative to its surroundings. Its mass should relate proportionately to the landscape setting and site size. Large buildings generally are unlikely to be compatible within a small enclosed site. In the case of larger sites there must be careful consideration of landscape, siting and approval. Traditional estate houses set good examples of how a two-storey dwelling, set back from the road with mature landscape works, can be integrated into the countryside.

### Poor Relationship



### Sympathetic Relationship



It is possible to achieve a mixture of styles and sizes in single and clusters of houses if the designer uses selective variations of local styles and features in different permutations. The styles and massing should all be relative to the regional traditional qualities as discussed in chapter 2.



*These dwellings afford good views from inside for the occupier, and the house designs, selective materials and subtle colours create an attractive composition in these particular settings. The bottom illustration shows the importance of design considerations to the rear elevation in an exposed site location.*

# Designing Your House

## Form and Shape

A large house close to an existing small house can be overbearing and result in loss of light and privacy as well as disturbing the typology patterns in the rural landscape.

Throughout the county there are one and half storey houses which previously may have been single storey. In recent years interpretation of this type has led to the design of the 'dormer' type dwelling. The shortcoming of a poorly designed dormer is that it can have an oversized roof and an unbalanced appearance. Often the roofscape of these 'dormer types' becomes the dominant feature in the landscape. New houses, especially in the more sensitive areas, should try to emulate the simple traditional forms, while adapting to meet modern needs. In exposed areas with no natural vegetation or topographical features to screen, a single storey building may be the solution.

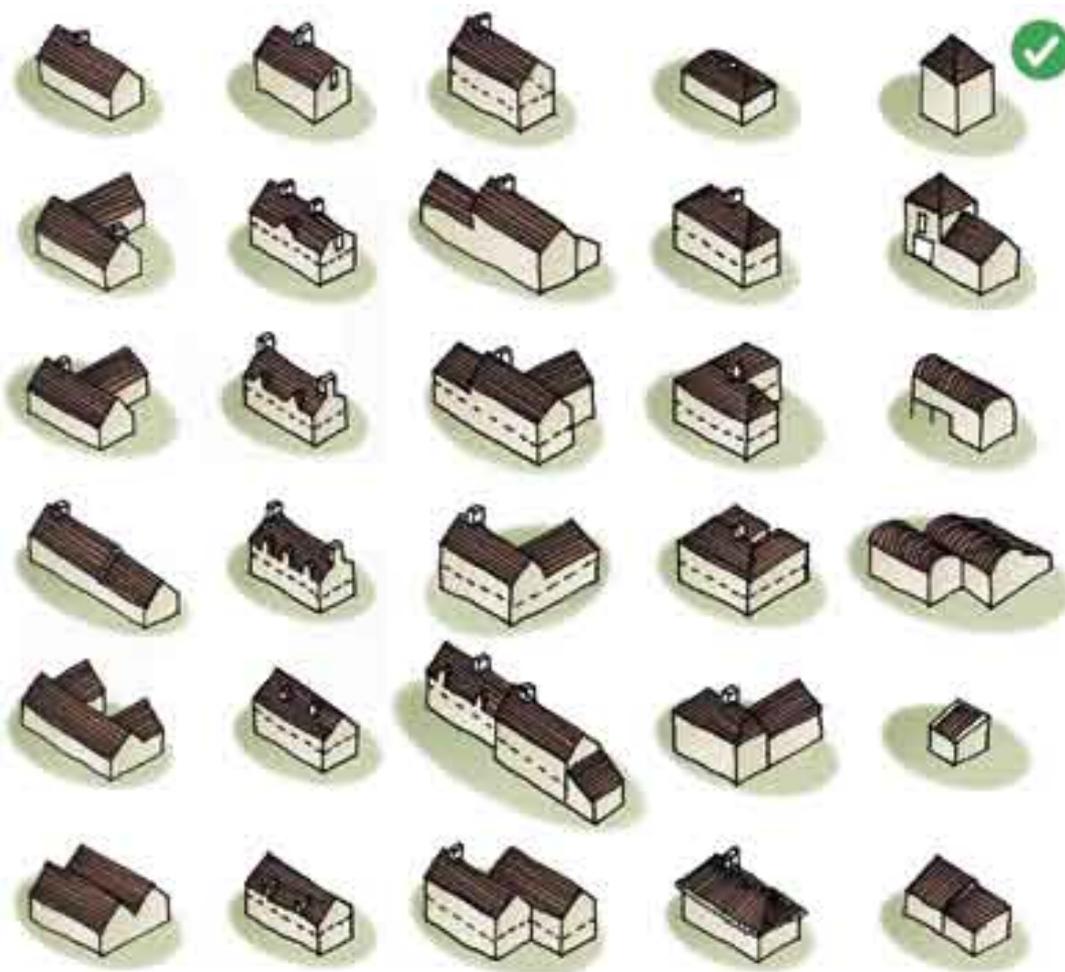


Generally avoid flat roofs or mansard configuration

## Massing & Volume

### 1. Common Building Forms in the Countryside

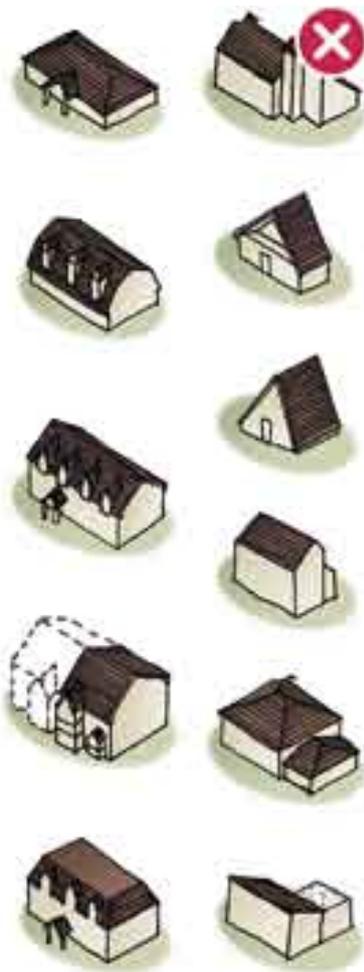
Positive characteristics to incorporate into modern design; low eaves height, simple plan form to maximise light and circulation, 35–55 degree roof pitch, modest scale maintained throughout, the use of clever massing of volumes, vertical emphasis to windows and gables, use of natural materials, timber, slate, stone, plaster, appropriate plot size. The following sketches illustrate some of the more prominent successful forms in the Clare countryside.



# Designing Your House

## 2. Pattern book forms and volumes, which generally sit poorly in rural countryside

The general faults include; highly modelled and articulated elevations, high eaves, disproportionate floor to ceiling heights, wide gables, synthetic finishes such as PVC, bulky and low level, plastic cladding, too many fussy details.



## 3. Poorly designed extensions

The following illustrate poor extensions which are larger in width on plan than cross section, extensions that project over the height of the front elevation and shallow flat roof extensions which deepen the plan of the original house affecting light, ventilation and appearance of massing.





*Above: Traditional door types found in the larger estate houses of Clare.  
Below: The modest doors found in farmhouses. Note the fanlight overhead to provide additional light into hallways.*



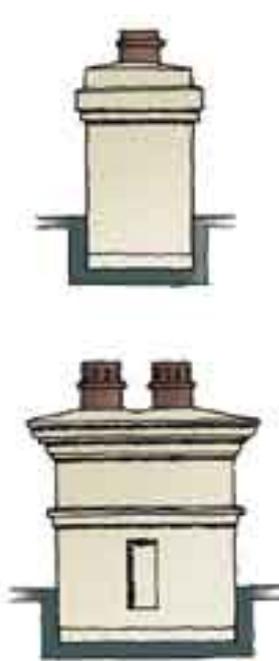
Be mindful of detail and stylistic approaches in the vicinity of the proposed site.

# Designing Your House

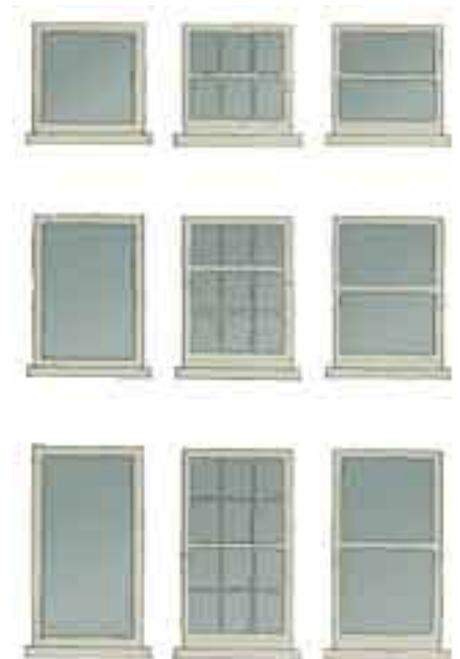
## Proportion

The proportions of a building are governed by height, width, and roof shape along with the positioning of projections and openings such as doors, windows, porches, sun rooms, chimneys and other features.

There is a huge range of window, door and chimney styles throughout Clare and these differ from region to region. The consistent element is the relative proportion of the features and the detail finish. For example, in the Doonbeg area the chimneys are simple plastered variety whereas in the Killaloe region there may be the introduction of a brick course for pattern. Windows in West Clare often have decorative plaster surrounds. Windows and fascias in East Clare have more of an emphasis on carpentry detail. It is the skill of the designer and planner which should be employed to analyse and apply appropriate designs for a selected site region.



*Some decorative chimney types found throughout Clare.*



*There are many ranges and types of windows which can be used. Reference should be made to Building Regulation documents in relation to opening sizes required in new dwellings.*

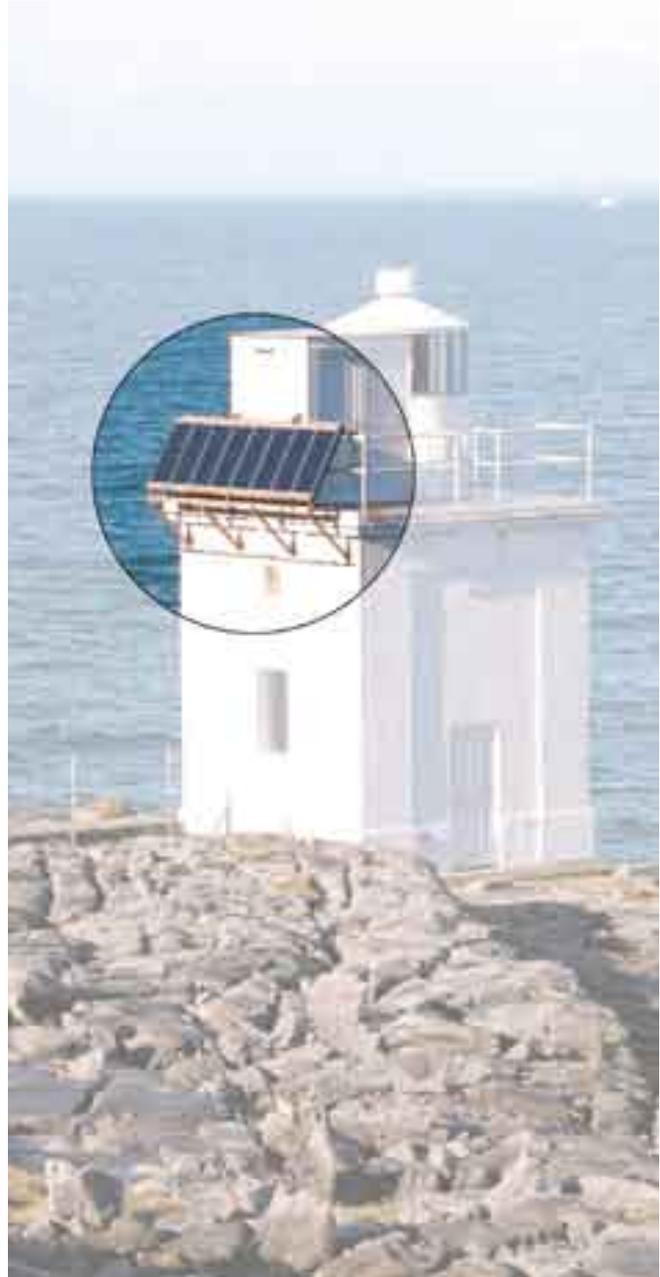
## Construction Techniques and Energy Efficiency

House Design links the home to many aspects of life: food, procreation, health, work, transport, education, creativity, energy, waste, pollution, global warming and so on. This makes the home a platform for sustainable design and the consideration of the biodiversity aspects of design within the home.

In terms of design and layout, careful sizing and orientation of windows and walls can provide high levels of insulation and save on energy and heating costs. The use of solar panels to create heat and hot water is already in widespread use in parts of Ireland. Wind, small-scale hydro, and biomass systems can also be used where appropriate. There are now limited grants for such technologies available from the Irish Energy Centre.

Saving energy saves money, a benefit that will increase as electricity and heating fuel charges rise. Also, of course, since most energy in use now produces pollution, switching to renewable sources doubly benefits the environment

*There are many aspects of environmental design which can be incorporated such as the use of high performance insulation, solar panels (as highlighted in this illustration), water conservation and use of natural earth products*



Sustainable Development: Development which meets the needs of the present community without compromising the ability of future communities to meet their needs.  
1987 World Commission

# Designing Your House

## Environmentally Sustainable Design

Buildings should be designed with flexibility and adaptability in mind. Sustainability of design should be considered to optimise energy performance and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in line with the standards required to comply with the implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. The standards developed to comply with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive will enable the calculation and certification of the energy efficiency of new houses and this information will then be required as part of the planning application. Building regulations contain guidelines on how energy conservation requirements should be met. Architects and designers will be able to advise on the new requirements applicable.

### Checklist: Energy & Environmental Sustainability

#### CONSIDERATIONS

#### CHECK

<b>Local Facilities:</b> Schools, shops, bus networks etc, water, sewage	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Prominence:</b> Avoid hilltop location. Address local landscape typology.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Energy:</b> Minimise need for artificial light, avoid mechanical ventilation, conserve water.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sun/Orientation:</b> Use orientation wisely. Map out sun path on site.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Shelter:</b> Use existing landscape characteristics where possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Access:</b> Have regard to existing boundaries and integrate where possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Power:</b> Assess proximity of nearest power source. Consider use of wind/solar power.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Water:</b> Have regard to adjacent watercourses.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Telecom:</b> Assess proximity of nearest telecom source.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Drainage:</b> Assess suitability of site. Avoid dumping waste.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ancillary design:</b> Consider spaces for fuel storage, TV aerials, clothes drying, recycling area, refuse storage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Eco-system:</b> Consider the house as an Eco system.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Recycle:</b> Reduce and reuse household waste where possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Use Earth products:</b> Slate, timber, lime, water based paints	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Construction Sustainability:** In the interest of sustainability, care should be taken to reduce the energy and pollution required to provide a dwelling. Consider the production, transport and disposal of materials. Demolition materials may be re-used on-site, natural materials used for doors, windows, roof and walls. Use natural vegetation for boundaries, screening and entrance where possible. Consider repairing / extending existing buildings before new option.

## Inappropriate House Design for Rural Settings

Bungalow types were greatly influenced by foreign suburban house catalogues which became available in the 1960s & 70s. Identified by a large mixture of materials, disproportionate windows, low pitched roofs, linear uneconomical plan and rigid siting, many bear little or no reference to the older house types of Clare.



Familiarise yourself with the house types and materials prevalent in your locality

# Designing Your House

In comparison to the simplistic, clean lines and attractive vertical proportions of the single storey farmhouse, the bungalow is often comprised of confused, untidy and disproportionate features bearing no relationship to its surroundings. Catalogue houses are effectively designed in isolation from setting and location; however some of the design issues resulting from existing catalogue houses can be addressed by appropriately designed extensions and alterations. It is strongly recommended that special attention should be paid to issues noted in chapters 3,4 & 5 of this document.



*An example of a typical bungalow with wide windows, low pitched roof and confusion through the mixing of materials, finishes and features conflicting with the natural Clare countryside.*

## Modern House Design

The dwelling design will continue to be driven by environmental, social, economic and taste factors. Sustainable design and new technologies form new challenges for the designer. As can be seen from the traditional building illustrated, the evolution of the dwelling is charted through its historical and cultural evolution. In the last decade, there has been an increased awareness of the beauty of the county and the desires of people to experience the external qualities of their surroundings whilst enjoying the benefits of a modern lifestyle in the home.

The success of the building will be its ability to merge with the surrounding landscape whilst illustrating sustainable design, innovative use of context, site layout, building mass and form, materials, energy management, space heating, landscaping, passive design, plan design and finish. To achieve the maximum advantages in addressing these factors when designing a modern house, it is recommended that the services of a professional trained designer be engaged.



# Designing Your House



Modern design can provide interesting and more sustainable interpretations of modern living whilst retaining a sympathetic relationship to the rural setting.

## Review: Appropriate House Design

Have you appointed an architect / designer?



You will need to furnish a detailed brief of your requirements.  
**Accommodation:** *Number of rooms; Orientation of rooms; Relationship between spaces; Size of house etc.*



We would suggest that you consult a qualified architect to see what services can be provided. The RIAI produced a guide 'Working with your Architect' which you may find beneficial. See page 83 for contact.

Do you have strong design preferences?



Consult your architect / designer.  
Do these preferences reflect buildings in the locality?



Consult your architect / designer who will develop a brief with you—taking into consideration your requirements, a site survey and its locality—and will propose some suitable design options to develop with you.

Does your site have natural screening?



We suggest that you look to retain the natural screening in order to fit into the local surroundings more naturally.



Depending on location and type of adjacent buildings you may be restricted in what you can build on a site



# Designing your House

Some examples of award winning contemporary houses in the Irish countryside, illustrating well-considered design solutions (use of light, space, new building technologies) , for modern living requirements along with appropriate use of modern and vernacular materials within the particular context of their respective sites (siting, landscaping, proportions and massing). Each house illustrated has answered the criteria for their specific locations.

*Practice Credits on page 87*







# Alterations, Conversions and Extensions



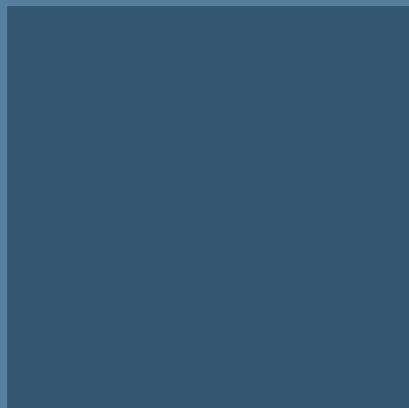
**Alterations to Existing Buildings**



**Roof Space**



**Sunrooms and Conservatories**





# Alterations, Conversions and Extensions

## Alterations to existing dwellings

An existing building can be renovated and extended to provide a comfortable modern home with instant character.

Extensions should generally be located discreetly at the rear or side of the existing building and should not dominate it. Extensions to vernacular buildings are generally added to the long axis of the building and the symmetrical character can be retained by the careful placement of windows, doors and chimneys reflecting existing patterns.

It is possible to introduce a new extension which harmonises with the existing building without having to impact negatively on the original structure. Specialised design requires consultation with architect / designer and the Planning Authority.



*A good extension is usually subservient to the main building. Extensions can reflect traditional aspects of the existing building, but contemporary extension can also serve to compliment the existing building.*



*The flat roofed extensions to the front and rear of this building detract from the original proportion. The window styles are in conflict with the original window size openings.*



**External Lighting** in the countryside should be carefully considered. Excessive lighting in the form of floodlighting can be visually obtrusive, can disturb wildlife and can create a road hazard.

## Roof Space

It may be possible to use some of this area by the addition of small roof lights or a small window in the gable end, as appropriate. Dormer windows may be acceptable providing they are small, suitably located and in proportion and in style with the existing windows. Building Regulations should be consulted and future storage requirements in lieu of attic space need to be considered.



*Careful selection of window types and sizes can create pleasant roofspace for the home owner, without jeopardising the composition of the building.*



Conversion of roof space can be an economical solution to space pressures in your home.

# Alterations, Conversions and Extensions

## Issues to be addressed when considering a conversion or alteration

Reasons to consider alterations include;

- a) The spatial needs for reasonable comfort are insufficient for occupier's needs,
- b) The dwelling will cease to be used as a dwelling and fall into disrepair, or
- c) The original dwelling was poorly designed and can be rectified by the incorporation of an extension.

### Checklist:

CHECK

**Is the building a Protected Structure?** – if so, check restrictions on internal and external changes with the Planning Authority. No alterations can be made internally or externally without the consent of the Planning Authority

**What is the best position for any extension or alteration** so it will not detract from the original building style, mass and orientation?

**Is there enough room** on the site to accommodate an extension comfortably?

**Can space needs** be met by reorganising the existing plan?

**Can the building structure** support the required modifications?

**Can the existing services cope** with the additional accommodation?

ie. is the septic tank system appropriately sized to serve the new extension?



**IMPORTANT:** Is the building in an ACA (Architectural Conservation Area). If so no external alteration can be made without the consent of the Planning Authority (see ACA brochure)

## Demolition of an existing building

Where an existing building has deteriorated to such a level that it is incapable of renovation or conversion, the Council may agree, subject to compliance with the Development Plan Policy, to its replacement with a new dwelling.

Demolition of vernacular structures is not normally permitted and persons wishing to demolish or alter an older dwelling and outbuildings are advised to contact Clare County Council's Conservation Officer for advice.

Vernacular buildings are often attractive features of our landscape, and if they are of significant cultural, historic or architectural value are worthy of protection.

Buildings of particular interest are those roofed with Moher/Liscannor slate or Broadford/Killaloe slate, the traditional roofing materials in Clare for many centuries. Windows, window surrounds, door details and other craftsmanship features are also important to preserve.



**Restoration:** In the restoration of older buildings care must be taken to use appropriate materials. Many old buildings are not compatible with the use of modern materials such as cement, uPVC, cement fibre slates etc., often resulting in problems associated with damp, condensation, fungal growth, brick spalling, structural cracking etc. Contact the Conservation Officer for advice and useful contacts for craftsmen, suppliers, conservation engineers, materials etc.

# Alterations, Conversions and Extensions

## Sunrooms and Conservatories

Over the years the use of sunrooms and conservatories as extensions to the home has increased. When selecting a conservatory it is important that the style respects and is suited to the style of the original building. Do not be tempted to add an over-elaborate conservatory to a simple dwelling and always seek advice on style from a trained professional. Consider using natural materials such as timber. Be conscious of the effect of the conservatory upon the character of the existing house. Try and locate the conservatory away from the front elevation of the house, avoiding north facing aspects where possible. Sunrooms can provide a space that can be used all year round as the solid roof provides shelter from the sun and retains the heat in winter. The physical impact of a sunroom needs to be considered as the solid roof creates a prominent addition to an existing dwelling similar to that of an extension.



*Two examples of sunrooms where different shapes compliment the original dwelling mass.*

## Review: Alterations, Conversions and Extensions

Have you looked at the list of Protected Structures in the County Clare Development Plan?  
Is the building protected ?



You should consult architect, conservation engineer and conservation officer at an early stage to establish development limits.



Is building old and of local significance?



It will be important to maintain scale and general form and avoid taking from significant views of building.



Is building style worthy of retention?



Consult your architect / designer who will advise on scale and form of original and new building.



You may wish to use this opportunity to improve an unattractive building or incorporate outhouses into an existing house.

There are occasions when a contrasting modern design extension can be more effective than trying to match the existing style.



Grants may be available for Protected Structures. Certain essential house repairs for old age pensioners and disabled are also available. Check with the Council and the Health Board.



When considering the restoration of an existing vernacular building please refer to The Clare County Crafts Directory and guidance information which is available from the Conservation Officer, Clare County Council.



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# Checklists

# Useful Information

# Appendices



# Checklist

## CHECKLIST FOR POTENTIAL HOME BUILDERS

- Assess your needs.
- Search for a suitable site location.
- Consult relevant policies in the Clare County Development Plan, the Ennis and Environs Plan and Local Area Plans.
- Appoint an architect or suitably qualified designer.  
The RIAI (Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland) have a list of registered architects.
- Draft a design brief – consider your housing requirements and future needs.
- Assess the site.  
This should include the following:
  - commission a plan of the site at an appropriate scale showing:
    - the contours of the land;
    - existing vegetation cover including individual trees;
    - the location and material composition of boundaries;
    - existing buildings, structures and historical or archaeological features;
    - all pipes, culverts, septic tanks, wells, storage tanks and percolation areas;
    - existing roads, rights of way, footpaths and access tracks;
    - water courses, wetlands and water features;
    - land drainage.
  - services
  - current use of the site and adjacent land uses.

### REMEMBER:

- :: Develop a design brief that fulfils your requirements and enhances the landscape.
- :: Anticipate any problems you might face.
- :: Make a pre-planning inquiry if you are unsure about your proposal being acceptable.
- :: Submit your planning application.

Application forms and information pamphlets are available from The Planning Department, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co Clare. Tel. 065 6821616.  
E.mail: [Plannoff@clarecoco.ie](mailto:Plannoff@clarecoco.ie)

## Checklist

### CHECKLIST OF SITE CHARACTERISTICS

- Road frontage and sight distances  
(Are you on bend in the road?, do you have permission to reduce hedgerow height?)
- Slope of ground  
(You will need a site contour survey)
- Trees & Hedgerow  
(Assess for screening and shelter)
- Orientation: Sun-path on site
- Vegetation as indicator of drainage
- Rock outcrop
- Neighbouring Buildings
- Farms and Farmyards – vicinity thereto
- Are there services?  
(Mains water, sewerage, electricity, telephone, public transport etc.).
- Have you local knowledge of site?  
(it may have been filled, or it may be subject to seasonal flooding, e.g. a turlough!)
- Streams, rivers or drains close to the site.
- Size of site.
- Views to and from the site. Remember, if you see, you can be seen.
- Recorded archaeological monuments (check with your local library —Record of Monuments and Places)

# Checklist

## Checklist for Building a New House

- Do you have a site already?
  - Does the site have outline planning permission (OPP).  
(You must comply with all OPP conditions in your design).
- Have you appointed an architect? (see Design Brief and Elements of House Design page 50)
- Are you purchasing a site subject to outline planning permission or full planning permission.
- Do you have a choice of site. (see page 36 & 37).
- If you have a choice of site, consult your architect. (see Inappropriate and Appropriate House Design, page 60–67).
- Are you building on a family farm. (see page 36 & 37).
- Have you considered restoring or extending an existing building  
(see chapter on Alterations, Conversions and Extensions, page 69).



If you are looking for an appropriate site in a specific area, your architect may be able to assist in the selection process in advance of purchase.

## Useful Information

### Maintenance and Alterations

- ⚡ Keep your house in good repair in order to avoid major repairs at a later date.
- ⚡ When undertaking minor repairs or improvement to the existing house consider the changes carefully with reference to the guidelines, particularly taking care to preserve special features. If your house is listed as a protected structure, you will need permission to do any alterations or changes (internally or externally).
- ⚡ Use permitted improvements to make the house more suited to present day living.
- ⚡ Maintain and protect where necessary boundary hedges, gates, gardens, mature trees and other landscape features.
- ⚡ Tenants should check the conditions of tenancy and bring defects to the attention of landlords. Tenants are entitled to demand certain repairs and improvements.
- ⚡ Communicate with your neighbours on the upkeep of the area. Help those individuals who may be unable to manage some aspects of maintenance such as the elderly or disabled.
- ⚡ Some buildings are listed and will be in the Record of Protected Structures or ACAs. The Conservation Officer can provide guidance with respect to particular problems.

### Useful References:

- 2005 – 2011, Clare County Development Plan
- 2005, North and East Clare Local Area Plans
- 2003, South East and West Clare Local Area Plans
- 2003, Ennis and Environs Plan
- 2003, Corofin Local Area Plan
- 2002, Kilrush Development Plan
- 2005, Rural House Design Guidelines, Department of the Environment
- Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2004
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001
- Stone Wall Building Guidelines, Conservation Officer, Planning Department, Clare County Council.
- Planning Application Guidance leaflets available from Planning Office
- Government Policy on Architecture 2002 – 2005
- List of Protected Structures, Conservation Officer, Planning Department, Clare County Council.
- Environmental Protection Agency Manual 2000 on Waste Water Treatment Systems
- Architectural Conservation Areas, County Clare (Brochure, Planning Department)

### Other Web Addresses:

- Clare County Council:  
[www.clare.ie](http://www.clare.ie)
- Environment Protection Agency:  
[www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)
- Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government:  
[www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)
- Environmental Information Office:  
[www.enfo.ie](http://www.enfo.ie)
- Architects:  
[www.riai.ie](http://www.riai.ie)

### Contacts/Professionals

- County Council Officers
- Architects
- Planners
- Engineers
- Landscape Architects
- Historians
- Horticulturists
- Interior Designers
- Conservation specialists
- Heritage specialists
- Archaeologists

## Appendix 1: Boundary Planting

The Following are species of trees and shrubs native to Ireland

SPECIES	SOIL PREFERENCES	HEIGHT (m)	GROWTH RATE	BIODIVERSITY	ATTRACTIVE FEATURES
Alder, Common	Damp. Medium to Heavy texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5–15	Fast	Birds/Bats, Red Squirrels	Nuts / Cones
Ash	Average Moisture. Medium Texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	15+	Medium	Birds/Bats, Red Squirrels	
Birch, Downy	Damp. Medium to Heavy texture. Acid to Medium acidity	15–15+	Medium	Birds/Bats, Red Squirrels	Flowers / Catkins, Autumn Colour
Birch, Silver	Dry. Light to Medium texture. Acid to Medium acidity	15–15+	Fast to Medium	Birds/Bats, Red Squirrels	Flowers / Catkins, Autumn Colour
Blackthorn/Sloe	Average moisture. Light to Heavy texture. Acid to Alkaline acidity	5–15	Medium	Birds/Bats	Flowers / Catkins, Berries
Buckthorn, Alder	Damp. Medium texture. Acid acidity	5	Medium	Birds/Bats	Flowers / Catkins, Berries, Autumn Colour
Buckthorn, Purging	Damp to Average moisture. Medium texture. Alkaline acidity	5	Medium	Birds/Bats	Berries
Cherry, Bird	Damp to Average moisture. Light to Medium texture. Acid to Medium acidity	5–15	Medium	Birds/Bats Autumn Colour	Flowers / Catkins, Berries
Cherry, Wild	Average to Dry moisture. Light to Heavy texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5–15	Fast to Medium	Birds/Bats Autumn Colour	Flowers / Catkins, Berries
Crab Apple	Average moisture. Medium to Heavy texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5–15	Slow	Birds/Bats Autumn Colour	Flowers / Catkins, Berries
Elder	Damp to Dry moisture. Light to Heavy texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5	Fast	Birds/Bats, Red Squirrels	Flowers / Catkins, Berries
Elm, Wych	Damp to Average moisture. Medium to Heavy texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	15+	Slow	Red Squirrels	Autumn Colour
Guelder Rose	Damp to Average moisture. Medium to Heavy texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5	Medium	Birds/Bats Autumn Colour	Flowers / Catkins, Berries
Hawthorn	Average to Dry moisture. Light to Heavy texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5–15	Fast to Medium	Birds/Bats, Red Squirrels	Flowers / Catkins, Berries



*The list does not include many well established garden plants that are widely distributed throughout Ireland that may be appropriate for planting within the site rather than on its boundaries. Advice should be sought from local landscape contractors and horticulturists.*

## Appendix 1: Boundary Planting

SPECIES	SOIL PREFERENCES	HEIGHT (m)	GROWTH RATE	BIODIVERSITY	ATTRACTIVE FEATURES
Hazel	Average to Dry moisture. Medium to Heavy texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5–15	Fast to Medium	Birds/Bats, Red Squirrels	Flowers / Catkins, Nuts / Cones
Holly	Average to Dry moisture. Medium texture. Acid to Medium acidity	5–15	Medium to Slow	Birds/Bats	Flowers / Catkins, Berries, Evergreen
Juniper	Average to Dry moisture. Light texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5	Slow		Berries, Evergreen
Oak, Pedunculate	Damp to Average moisture. Medium to Heavy texture. Medium acidity	15+	Medium	Birds/Bats	Nuts / Cones, Autumn Colour
Oak Sessile	Average moisture. Light to Medium texture. Acid to Medium acidity	15+	Medium	Birds/Bats	Nuts / Cones, Autumn Colour
Pine, Scots	Dry moisture. Light texture. Acid to Medium acidity	15+	Medium	Birds/Bats, Red Squirrels	Nuts / Cones, Evergreen
Rowan	Average to Dry moisture. Light to Medium texture. Acid to Medium acidity	5–15	Fast	Birds/Bats, Autumn Colour	Flowers / Catkins, Berries
Spindle	Damp to Average moisture. Medium to Heavy texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5	Medium		Berries, Autumn Colour
Whitebeam	Damp to Dry moisture. Light to Heavy texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5–15	Medium	Birds/Bats	Flowers / Catkins, Berries
Willows	Damp to Average moisture. Medium to Heavy texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5–15	Fast	Birds/Bats	Flowers / Catkins, Autumn Colour
Yew	Average to Dry moisture. Light to Medium texture. Medium to Alkaline acidity	5–15	Slow	Birds/Bats	Berries, Evergreen

**NATIVE SHRUBS** Blackthorn, Broom, Purging Buckthorn, Alder Buckthorn, Dog Rose, Elder, Gorse, Guelder Rose, Hawthorn, Juniper, Spindle, Privet

**INTRODUCED TREES** Beech, Douglas Fir, Field Maple, Hornbeams, Horse Chestnut, Larch, Limes, Lodgepole Pine, Norway Spruce, Poplars, Sitka Spruce, Sweet Chestnut, Sycamore...

**IN ADDITION,** consider some of the following shrubs for your garden, attracting an abundance of bees, butterflies and birds; Aucuba, Berberis (barberry), Buddleia (butterfly bush), Ceanothus, Chaenomeles (Japanese quince), Cistus, Cotoneaster, Escallonia, Fuchsia, Hebe, Hypericum, Mahonia, Olearia, Philadelphus (mock orange), Potentilla, Pyracantha (firethorn), Ribes sanguineum (flowering currant), Rosa canina/rugosa (dog/ramanas rose), Skimmia, Spiraea, Syringa (lilac), Viburnum and Weigela.

## Appendix 2:

### The Building Regulations and Dwelling Houses

The Building Control Act 1990 establishes a statutory duty to design and construct in accordance with the Building Regulations. Every building to which the Building Regulations apply should be designed and constructed in accordance with the provisions of such Regulations and the responsibility for compliance rests with the designers, the constructors and the building owners.

The Building Regulations set out the technical requirements for the design and construction of building works. The Building Regulations are divided into 12 parts, and for private dwelling houses, the most common areas to be addressed are as follows

Part	Description	Requirements	Part	Description	Requirements
<b>A</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This requires buildings to be designed and constructed so as to ensure that they can withstand the combined loads without impairing the stability of any part of the structure</li> </ul>	<b>G</b>	<b>Hygiene</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of adequate washing and toilet facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	<b>Fire Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mains powered fire detection and alarm system.</li> <li>Bedroom windows sizes for escape or rescue.</li> <li>Design and positioning of staircases.</li> <li>Adequate fire separation within and between dwellings.</li> <li>Access for fire brigades.</li> </ul>	<b>H</b>	<b>Drainage &amp; Waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of adequate wastewater drainage and septic tanks.</li> <li>Water disposal.</li> </ul>
<b>C</b>	<b>Site Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site preparation, drainage.</li> <li>Dangerous substances (e.g. Radon).</li> <li>Resistance to weather and moisture.</li> </ul>	<b>J</b>	<b>Heat Producing Appliances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appliances designed to burn solid fuel, oil or gas.</li> <li>Protection of the building and oil storage tanks.</li> </ul>
<b>D</b>	<b>Materials &amp; Workmanship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fitness of materials and adequacy of workmanship.</li> <li>Height of letterboxes.</li> <li>Requirement of safety glazing.</li> </ul>	<b>K</b>	<b>Stairways, Ladders, Ramps and Guards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe and adequate design of stairs.</li> <li>Guarding/protection from falls.</li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	<b>Sound</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resistance of noise pollution between dwellings.</li> </ul>	<b>L</b>	<b>Conservation of Fuel and Energy.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limiting heat loss &amp; maximising heat gains.</li> <li>U-Values and thickness of insulation.</li> <li>Zoned Heating.</li> </ul>
<b>F</b>	<b>Ventilation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ventilation of habitable rooms.</li> <li>Mechanical ventilation of bathrooms/WC.</li> <li>Prevention of condensation in roofs.</li> </ul>	<b>M</b>	<b>Access For People with Disabilities.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach to access into and circulation within dwellings.</li> <li>Access to electrical switches, doorbells, etc.</li> <li>Provision of sanitary accommodation.</li> </ul>

The above-tabled information is a guideline and not a detailed review of the Building Regulations. Persons should seek professional advice for their own specific situations and should consult the current Technical Guidance documents and the current Regulations.

In accordance with the Building Control Regulations 1997 a Commencement Notice must be submitted to the Building Control Section of Clare County Council, Central Fire Station, Ennis, 14 to 28 days before the commencement of works.

All queries on Building Control issues and Building Regulations can be directed to the Building Control Section of Clare County Council at (065) 6846302.

## Index

### Illustrations Submitted by Practices

#### House at Chapel Pass, p66, pic A.

O Donnell & Tuomey, Camden Row, Dublin 8.  
Ros Kavanagh Photography, 29–31 South William Street, Dublin 2.

#### Weekend House, p66, pic B & p67, pic M.

John Dorman Architects, Merrion Building,  
Merrion Street Lr. Dublin 2.  
Ros Kavanagh Photography, details above.

#### House at Roslea, p66, pic C.

#### House at Cong, p66, pic D.

Aughey O Flaherty Architects.  
Swanville Place, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

#### Inbetween House, p66, pic E.

Dominic Stevens, Cloone, Co. Leitrim.  
Ros Kavanagh Photography, details above.

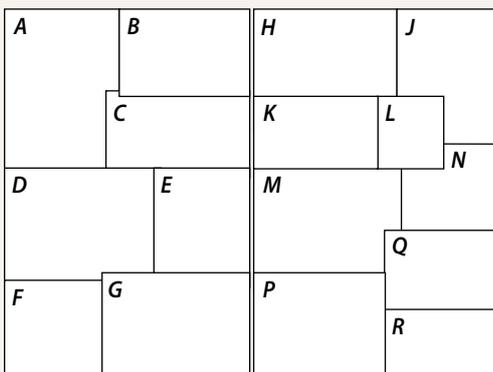
#### Ceann Tra, Clew bay Mayo, p66, pic F & G.

Simon J Kelly & Ptnrs, Patrick McCabe.  
Corrib Castle, Waterside, Galway.

#### Seafield, Coney Island, p67, pic H, J & L.

#### Robinson House, Bangor, p67, pic R.

Robinson Patterson Partnership Ltd,  
Clarence Gallery, Linenhall St, Belfast BT 2 8BG.  
Photographer: Chris Hill



Designing your House image spread pp 66 & 67

#### Dirk Cove House, Clonakilty, p67, pic K.

Niall McLaughlin Architect,  
31–51 Highgate Road, London. NW5 1RS UK.

#### House at Killeenanan, Co Galway, p67, pic N.

Richard Murphy Architect,  
The Breakfast Mission, 15 Old Fishmarket Close, Edinburgh, EH1 1RW.

#### Stone House Extension, Wicklow, p67, pic P, & p71.

Henchion-Reuter Architects, Martin Henchion  
8 Parkview Place, Ringsend Dublin 4.

#### Castlequarter, Cratloe, p48, p62, p67, pic Q.

Healy & Partners Architects,  
Barrow House, Michael Street, Limerick.

### Other Illustrations Submitted

#### Page 52 Siobán Mulcahy Architect,

Affick, Tulla, Co Clare.

#### Page 62 (lower right) Kostas Wootis,

Finangh, Quin, Co Clare.  
Photographer: Jeremy Phillips, 72 Millford Road,  
York, England. YO23 1 NQ

#### Page 49 ('scale' image) & Page 54 (second down)

Fergus Quinlan, Doonin, Burrin, Co. Clare.

#### Page 75 (right) Tom Byrne,

Byrne O'Donnell Scully, Carmody Street, Ennis.

### Other Information Submitted

#### Appendix 1, Boundary Planting information, p54 & 85

Steven Meyen (forestry adviser Teagasc), Crann publications

# Glossary

<b>ACA</b>	Architectural Conservation Area
<b>EPA</b>	Environmental Protection Agency
<b>NHA</b>	Natural Heritage Areas
<b>NPWS</b>	National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
<b>OPP</b>	Outline Planning Permission
<b>PVC</b>	Polyvinyl Chloride
<b>RIAI</b>	The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland
<b>SAC</b>	Special Areas of Conservation
<b>SMR</b>	Sites and Monuments Record
<b>SPA</b>	Special Protection Areas