

Rural Design Guide for Individual Houses in the Countryside

South Tipperary County Council



South Tipperary County Council
County Hall
Clonmel
South Tipperary County

Rural Design Guide for Individual Houses in the Countryside: South Tipperary County

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All sketches and illustrations by Jon Elliott



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1. Introduction

Purpose

It is recognised that now is the time to reinvent the country house and develop a new rural architecture for the 21st century, rather than simply remodelling or recreating the methods and manners of the past.

Purpose of the Guide

South Tipperary County Council has produced this Guide for all those who are thinking of building a house in the countryside. It has been prepared to show the importance of good siting and sensitive design for one-off houses in the rural areas of the County. The aim of the Guide is:

- To describe the site planning and design issues that need to be addressed; and
- To clearly set out what may be acceptable and what is not acceptable for one-off houses in the County.

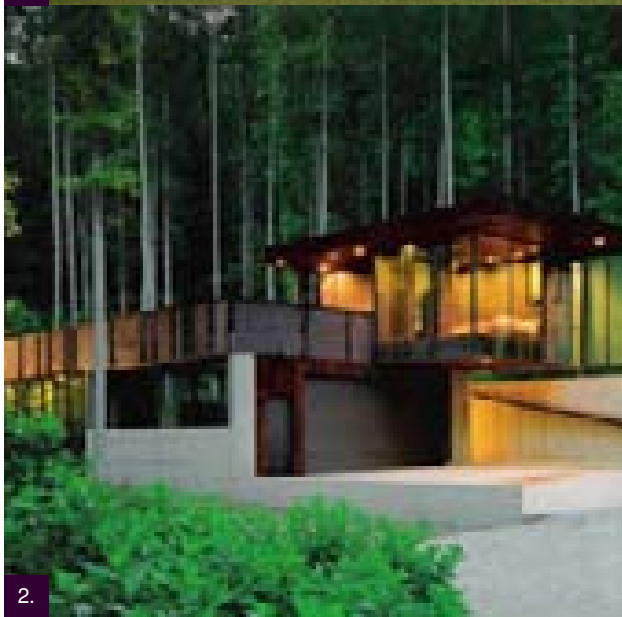
South Tipperary County Council recognises the need to improve the quality of house design in the countryside and, in particular, that new houses are better related to their surroundings. The Guide does this by identifying key site planning and design principles that need to be taken into account when considering a new house. This does not mean that all one-off houses should look the same. Instead the County Council promotes a creative interpretation of the key principles so that individual and contemporary house designs are achieved.

The County Council will expect all planning applications for one-off houses to demonstrate how these guidelines have been taken into account. Proposals which fully reflect the guidelines are likely to reduce requests for further information, while those that do not are unlikely to be successful.

The Guide has been produced following detailed consultation with the Agents operating in the South Tipperary County area and the Elected Members in the form of workshops. Subsequent observations and comments on content and emphasis were gratefully received and have been fully considered in the preparation of the Guide.

Main Objectives:

- To stimulate debate about one-off house designs;
- To foster greater consistency in planning decision-making;
- To inform and inspire applicants, builders, designers and planners; and
- To help conserve and enhance the landscape and environment in South Tipperary County.



Successful contemporary houses that respect and take full advantage of the natural characteristics of their sites

1. Introduction

P u r p o s e

How to Use the Guide

Following this Introduction -

- Section 2** Provides guidance on selecting a suitable site for potential development and on essential site planning requirements.
- Section 3** Looks at the principles of acceptable site layout.
- Section 4** Demonstrates principles of good house design.
- Section 5** Provides information on making a Planning Application.
- Section 6** Provides checklists for each step in the planning and design process.

The Appendices provide further technical information to help inform and guide the planning application.

All photo titles, with credits where applicable, are given in Appendix 3.

Step 1

Each Section of the Guide provides details on the steps that need to be taken when considering an application for a one-off house in the countryside.

The first step is to make a detailed list of your needs for the new house, or a Brief, for your designer to follow.

Consider employing a qualified designer at the start who can bring both experience and inspiration to the design process. A good designer will advise you on the choice of the right site and the correct approach to addressing the various constraints and requirements of the brief, the site, and its relationship to the landscape setting.

The end result should be a well-designed house that is a desirable place to live, that is visually pleasing, energy efficient and appropriate to the context.

STEP 1

Assess your requirements

Draft a Design Brief.
Appoint an Architect or suitably qualified designer.
Start searching for a suitable site.

STEP 2

Select the Right Site

Consult with the County Council and assess relevant policies.
Assess potential sites according to -

- Landscape character and context
- Landform and vegetation
- Views into and out of the area
- Settlement pattern
- Micro-climate and sustainable energy
- Vehicle access requirements
- Service infrastructure

STEP 3

Plan the Site

Prepare a plan of your site showing all existing features and the proposed layout.
Carefully consider the effects of -

- Topography
- Energy efficiency
- Building proportion and set-back
- Means of vehicle access and parking
- Plot boundaries
- Garden design

STEP 4

Design the House

Develop a design that is sensitive to its setting by carefully considering -

- Building scale and form
- Elevational treatment
- Materials and colours
- Roofs and chimneys
- Windows and doors

STEP 5

Make an Application

Ensure that all drawings and required information are submitted in the right format.

STEP 6

Checklists

- Site Selection
- Site Planning
- Building Form
- Planning Application

2. Selecting the site

L a n d s c a p e c o n t e x t

STEP 2

Select the Right Site

Consult with the County Council and examine relevant policies.

Assess potential sites according to -

- Landscape character and context
- Landform and vegetation
- Views into and out of the area
- Settlement pattern
- Micro-climate and sustainable energy
- Vehicle access requirements
- Service infrastructure

If a proper fit in the landscape is not achieved, then even a well-designed building can fail.

The Surrounding Landscape

Many rural houses in South Tipperary have developed over centuries, and traditional forms of building are often well integrated into their landscape setting. However, much new development has occurred without proper regard to the effect on the surrounding landscape and its wider visual impact, particularly when seen from public roads.

Before you start

The careful siting of new houses in the open countryside is essential to achieving acceptable development. Your designer will be able to interpret the landscape, identify the more likely locations and advise on alternative sites for potential development.

In starting your search for a site it is important to check with the County Development Plan and any Local Area Plans that may apply, especially in relation to:

- Policies for particular landscape areas;
- Land use zonings;
- Areas designated for heritage or amenity, such as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs);
- Areas of Archaeological Interest, archaeology policies, Record of Protected Structures and the Record of Monuments and Places.

If a site falls within or is located close to any such areas it will be necessary to take advice from the County Planning Department before proceeding.

Having identified a potential site which is likely to satisfy planning requirements, your designer should then undertake a thorough analysis of the landscape context prior to acquisition and development.

Refer to Step 6 Checklists for Landscape Analysis requirements.



3.

New dwellings that would detract from particularly scenic or vulnerable landscapes will not be permitted

The siting of a new dwelling needs to be compatible with the general principles set out in *Sustainable Rural Housing, Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (April 2005):

1. The protection of water quality in the arrangements made for on site wastewater disposal facilities;
2. The provision and safe access in relation to road and public safety; and
3. The conservation of sensitive areas such as natural habitats, the environs of protected structures and other aspects of heritage.

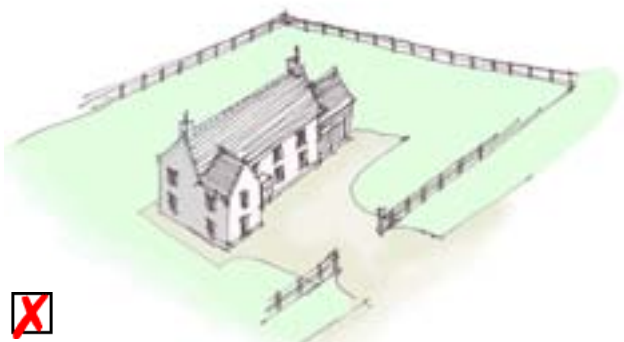
2. Selecting the site

L a n d s c a p e c o n t e x t



4.

Most traditional dwellings integrate well with their surroundings



Sites with no landscape features or that would result in the destruction of existing features should be avoided



Sites with existing landscape features that can help absorb new development should always be preferred

Assessing the site

The landscape analysis will determine the suitability of a potential site in terms of its landscape character and the capacity of the wider area to absorb new development without spoiling that character. A creative response to the particular characteristics of a site will help to secure a design solution that fits comfortably into the landscape surroundings.

The key questions to be asked when looking for a site are:

- Would the new development detract from the quality of long distance views in the area?
- Can the local topography help absorb the new development into the landscape?
- Can existing vegetation in the vicinity of the site help integrate the new development with its surroundings?
- Would the new development intrude on views from public roads or public areas?
- Would new development be in keeping with the existing settlement pattern?
- Would new development result in the destruction of existing vegetation (e.g. roadside hedgerows)?
- Can the proposed site optimise the potential for renewable energy sources?
- Can suitable access be gained to the proposed site from existing roads?
- Is the proposed site in reasonable proximity to everyday needs (e.g. shops, schools, pubs, church, etc)?
- Is the site connected to or in reasonable proximity to essential services (e.g. water, electricity, telephone)?
- Are ground conditions suitable for a sewage treatment system?
- Is the site large enough to accommodate the type of development envisaged?

If a potential site does not satisfy most of these essential criteria, then alternative locations should be sought.



5.

2. Selecting the site

L a n d s c a p e c o n t e x t

Landform

The impact of new development on the landscape can be highly variable, depending mostly on the landform and the presence of existing vegetation. The landscape types of South Tipperary range from the rolling valleys and uplands to the north, the prominent Galtee Mountains and Slievenamon to the west and east, and the low-lying flatter land and river valleys that cover much of the central area.

When selecting a site, carefully appraise the general landform of the area and **aim to avoid**:

- Sites on exposed hilltops with lack of shelter and where buildings would be conspicuous.
- Sites within intensively farmed low-lying areas with little natural screening, unless substantial new planting can be achieved to help absorb the proposed dwelling.
- Areas of boggy ground subject to frost and flooding.

Instead **look for**:

- Variations in landform that can help nestle the building into the local landscape;
- Established trees and boundary hedges to help absorb the new building.

New houses in lowland areas can be especially conspicuous. Sites with existing vegetation should be selected in preference to those that are devoid of planting. Setting a building against a backdrop of trees or behind an existing hedgerow can be one of the most successful ways for blending new development with the landscape, especially for flat or gently undulating areas.



Within hilly and undulating landscapes, sites within established mid-slope zones can often be more successfully contained by landform and existing landscape features.

Settlement Pattern

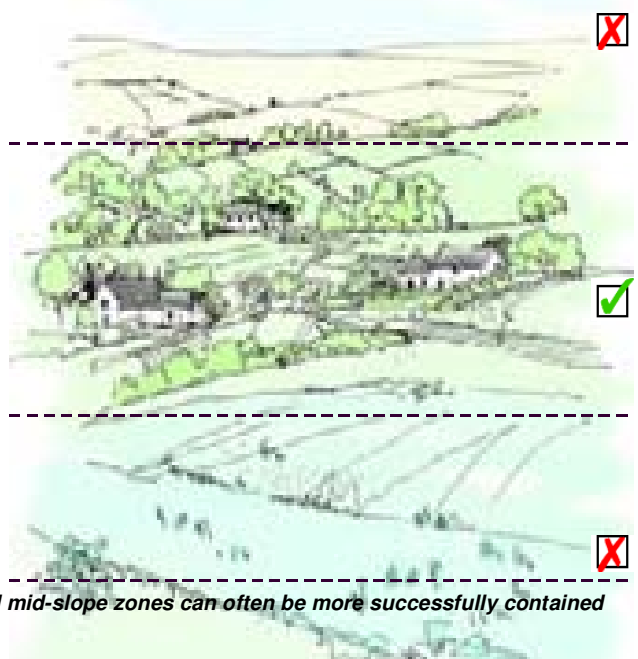
Respecting the existing settlement pattern in the vicinity of a potential site is fundamental to how well a new house will integrate with the landscape. The most intrusive form of new development is the suburban style plot that bears no resemblance to the rural character of the locality. The traditional rural settlement pattern is one of scattered development surrounded by land, with the buildings always subservient to the landscape; while the suburban pattern is of regular plots with buildings and their gardens forming the dominant image. Such development changes the character of the countryside for the worse, and when repeated leads to ribbon development and a loss of rural amenity.



X Suburban pattern



✓ Rural pattern



2. Selecting the site

Existing development pattern



Site selection should respect the local settlement pattern and avoid infilling between existing building clusters

Ribbon Development

In all cases new sites should not contribute to ribbon development along roads or within undeveloped areas between existing building clusters. Any prospective site that would exacerbate ribbon development, or lead to the coalescence of existing ribbon development, should be avoided.

'Ribbon development' is defined as 5 or more houses on either side of a given 250m of road frontage. It is undesirable because:

- It extends urban influences into the countryside;
- Results in numerous accesses onto rural roads;
- Leads to the loss of roadside features (hedgerows, sod-and-stone banks, ditches, etc.);
- Sterilises backlands and landlocks farmland;
- Creates servicing problems (e.g. water supply, drainage, footpaths, street lighting, etc.); and
- Intrudes on public views of the rural setting.



Site selection should avoid contributing to ribbon development

2. Selecting the site

Existing development pattern

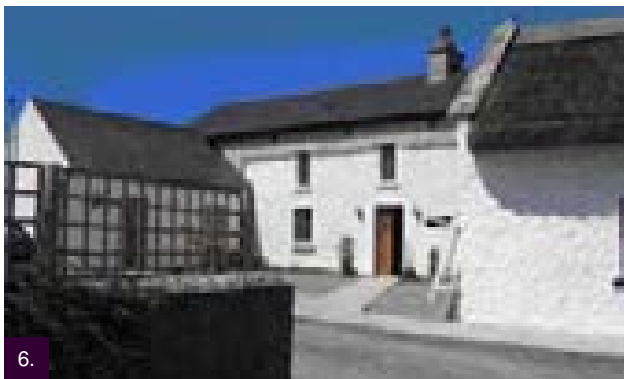
Family Farmsteads

The provision of accommodation for family members on existing farmsteads can often be achieved by locating the new building as an integral part of the overall farm composition, as opposed to a more isolated location in poor proximity to the main buildings, or where new building may result in or contribute to ribbon development.

Where a grouping around the original buildings is not practical, consideration could be given to providing new dwellings for family members in suitable locations elsewhere on the farm holding, in reasonable proximity to the farm and with vehicle access via internal lanes from the existing entrance.

Certain clusters may also be especially suitable for sensitive restoration, combining traditional built form with contemporary building materials and living spaces.

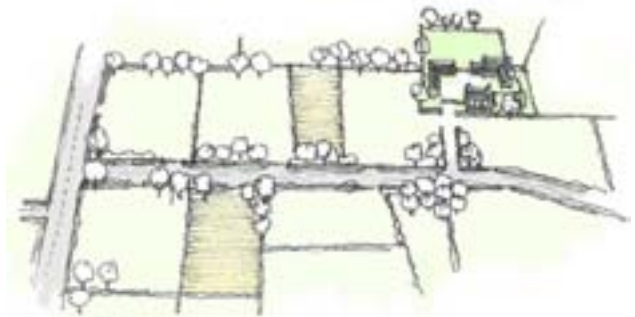
In all cases, the need to achieve sensitive location in the landscape, as well as appropriate good quality building design, will be essential requirements.



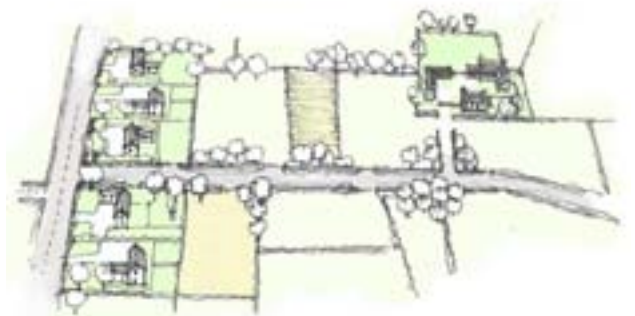
6. *Traditional grouping of farmyard buildings.*




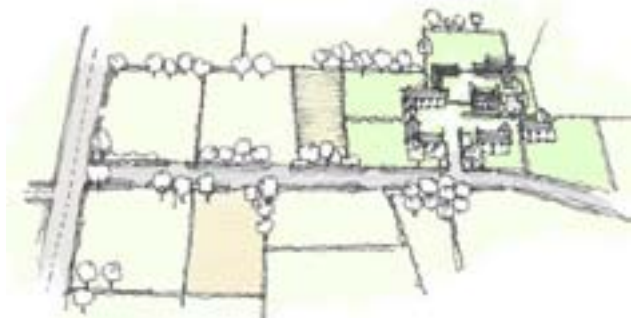
Traditional forms can be successfully adapted for new uses.




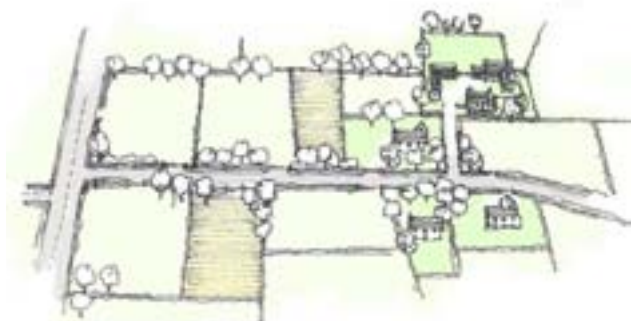
Existing farm




Unacceptable ribbon development 



Possible grouping for family members 



Possible alternative grouping for family members 

Provision for family members can take the form of a cluster of new buildings around the existing farm, or in suitable groupings elsewhere on the farmstead. Vehicle access should be via an existing internal track or lane, as opposed to frontage access onto the public road.

2. Selecting the site

Existing infrastructure

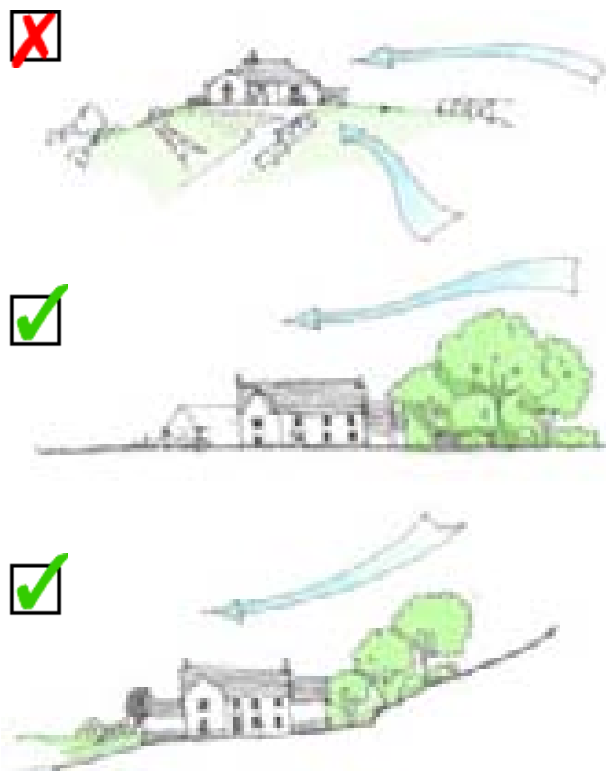
Sustainable Energy

Site selection should be strongly influenced by energy-saving objectives, including being able to maximise on passive solar heating gains through site orientation and selecting a location sheltered from the wind.

In many rural locations it should also be possible to consider specific renewable energy installations, such as solar panels, wind turbines, ground (or air) heat pump systems, and 'grey-water' recycling facilities. A potential site needs to be assessed to determine whether it can support such sustainable energy objectives.

Sustainable Energy Ireland promotes and assists the development of sustainable energy and can provide wide ranging advice on current technologies (refer www.sei.ie).

Specific measures for increasing the energy efficiency of new buildings are also included in Step 3 (Planning the Site).



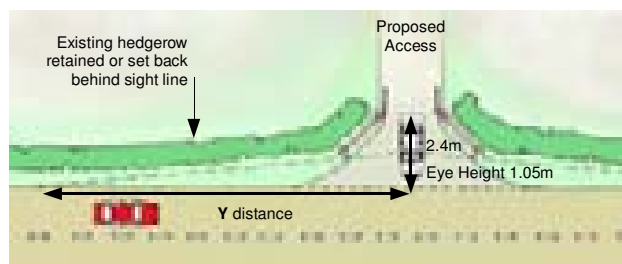
Prominent sites that are exposed to the elements are to be avoided.

Likely travel patterns are another important factor when selecting a suitable site. Energy used in driving from place to place can amount to a significant proportion of a household's total energy consumption. By locating a new dwelling closer to every day needs, such as the workplace, existing schools, shops, church, public transport routes, etc. transport energy consumption can be greatly reduced.

Accessibility and Roads

Vehicle access needs to be carefully considered in relation to category of the road, distance from the road, and existing roadside boundary features ⁽¹⁾.

Access to potential sites should be from existing entrance points on suitable existing roads ⁽²⁾, modified as appropriate to meet sightline requirements but avoiding excessive loss of existing roadside hedgerow.



Sight Line Requirements

Road hierarchy	Y distance
Roads with 100kph speed limits	215m
General Regional Roads	130m
General Local Roads greater than 4.25m wide	90m
Local Roads 4.25m wide or less	70m
Local Tertiary Roads	70m
Within 50kph speed limits	70m
Within 60kph speed limits	90m

In all cases, safety concerns are paramount and any proposals need to satisfy the requirements of the County Council's Road Section.

For further guidance on appropriate site boundary treatments refer to Step 3 (Planning the Site).

⁽¹⁾ *Sustainable Rural Housing, Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, DoEHLG (April 2005).

⁽²⁾ *Policy Statement on Development Management and Access to National Roads*, National Roads Authority (May 2006).

2. Selecting the site

Existing infrastructure

Service Infrastructure

The available services in the area should be assessed at an early stage. In particular, a constant water supply and a site that can accommodate the safe disposal of wastewater and sewage effluent are essential requirements.

When selecting a site ensure that:

- The ground conditions are suitable, with adequate percolation for a sewage treatment system, in accordance with the EPA 'Waste Water Treatment Manuals'.
- It complies with the Council's current 'Ground Water Protection Scheme'.
- It is large enough to accommodate the requirements of a sewage treatment system.
- A maintenance agreement with an approved agent can be put in place to upkeep the system.
- That water supply from a public source is available - if joining a group water scheme, confirmation from the group secretary will be required.
- It is large enough to locate a well (if this is the only option) at least 10m from the septic tank or treatment system and 30–60m from the percolation area (depending on the percolation rate).
- It is connected or in reasonable proximity to existing telephone and electricity services.

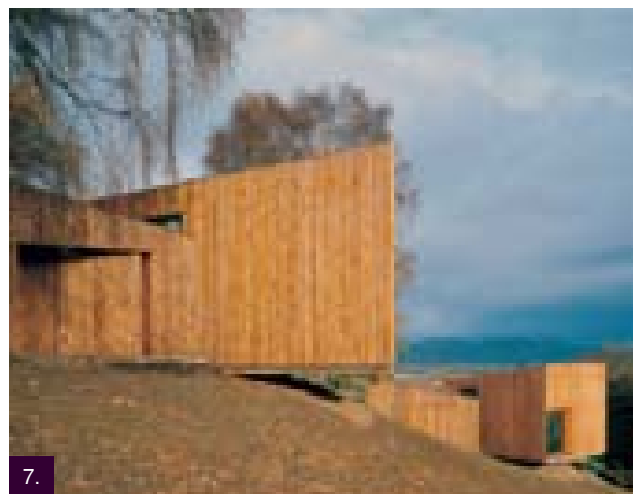
If a potential site does not satisfy the above requirements, it may be unsuitable for development.

Site Selection Summary

A well considered site for a new house in the countryside is one which:

- Will not have adverse impacts on sensitive landscape areas, protected structures or other aspects of heritage;
- Is located in an area that has the capacity to absorb another building, without adverse impact on visual amenity;
- Is capable of being visually integrated into the landscape through variations in landform and the presence of established trees and boundary hedges;
- Suits the existing settlement pattern of the locality;
- Will not contribute to ribbon development;
- Can take full advantage of renewable energy sources;
- Is in reasonable proximity to essential community services;
- Is safely accessible from the existing road network;
- Is capable of connection to existing service infrastructure and can accommodate safe disposal of wastewater and sewage effluent; and
- Meets other planning criteria and policy requirements.

For Site Selection Checklist refer Step 6.



7.

Simple forms, use of natural locally sourced materials and the relationship of the buildings to the topography creates a composition that both respects and complements the landscape.

3. Planning the site

Working with the landscape

STEP 3

Plan the Site

Prepare a plan of your site showing all existing features and the proposed layout. Carefully consider the effects of -

- Topography
- Energy efficiency
- Building proportion and set-back
- Means of vehicle access and parking
- Plot boundaries
- Garden design

Site Layout

Having found a location that satisfies the selection criteria set out in the previous section, the next step will be to examine more closely the existing features of the proposed site.

New dwellings are often placed to be seen, and conceived in a far too fussy and over-complicated manner, and with minimal new landscaping. The outcome is invariably suburban, with buildings that appear awkward within their surroundings, especially when adjacent properties vie for attention, rather than unobtrusively settling into the landscape.

Understanding the details of a proposed site is essential to achieving an acceptable design solution. The analysis should provide the basis for your designer to develop a site layout that is more sympathetic and integrated into the landscape.

Site Analysis

Show all existing features, including:

- The contours of the land;
- Vegetation cover including hedgerows and individual trees;
- Rock outcrops;
- Water courses, ditches and wetland areas;
- Location and type of boundaries;
- Existing buildings, including outbuildings;
- Other structures, such as wells, gate piers, and historical or archaeological features;
- All pipes, culverts, septic tanks, storage tanks, percolation areas, and land drainage.
- Roads, rights of way, footpaths and access tracks.



8.



9.



10.

Examples of contemporary houses sensitively designed in response to their landscape context.

3. Planning the site

Use natural slopes positively

Topography

The position of a new dwelling in undulating and hilly areas needs to be carefully considered to achieve a practical design which does not look out of place.

- Use the natural folds of the landform to help absorb the new house.
- Select naturally-occurring shelves or the gentlest part of a slope so as to minimise earth moving and to avoid excessive scarring of the landscape.
- For steeply sloping sites (e.g. in excess of 1:5) consider suitable split level (stepped) schemes that relate more closely to existing ground levels.
- Avoid the need for excessive cut and fill.
- Carefully shape the land around the building so that it blends more successfully with the surroundings while creating further shelter.
- Either remove excess fill or carefully grade it around the building to suit the natural slope of the land.



A new building should respond positively to a sloping site.



Avoid over-excavation or creating an artificial plateau.



Let the natural slope of the land dictate the building form.



Sloping sites can present the opportunity for creating an innovative solution to house design without detracting from the character of the hillside.

3. Planning the site

Energy efficiency

Sustainable Site Planning

Energy Performance

As described in Step 2, being more efficient in how we use energy in our daily lives can strongly influence the selection of a site. Considering increased energy efficiency at the site planning stage can also have immediate benefits such as:

- Saving money on electricity and heating bills;
- Creating a more comfortable and convenient home;
- Making a vital contribution to reducing climate change.

The EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings requires every home for sale or rent in Ireland to be rated as to its energy performance.

Building Form and Orientation

Traditionally buildings in the countryside were positioned to take advantage of available shelter, such as natural folds in the landform, orientating the building in relation to prevailing winds and the path of the sun, and using sheltered areas next to woodlands. Such factors are equally relevant to present day houses for energy conservation reasons.

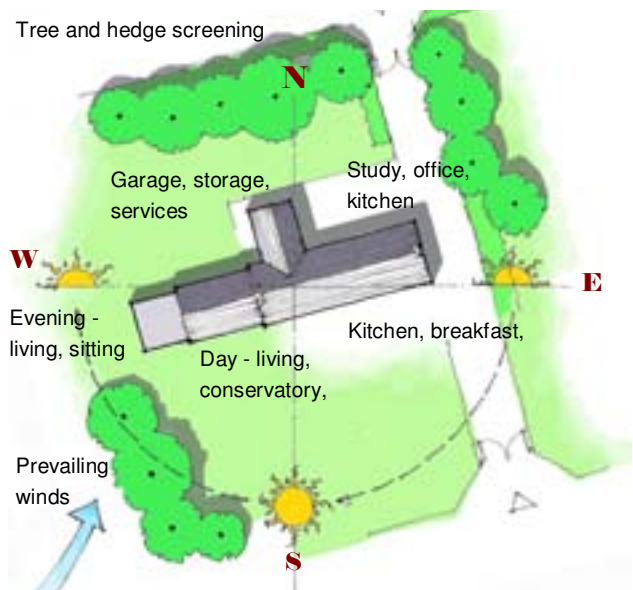
A compact building form is best for reducing heat loss. A rectangular building with one of the longer facades facing south can allow for increased solar heating, day-lighting and natural ventilation. Pitched roofs should also have one slope orientated south to allow for optimum performance of a roof-mounted or roof-integrated active solar heating system.

Creating Shelter:

- Use existing natural features of the site to help protect the building from the elements.
- Arrange the site to guide the wind over and around the building.
- Use the house, out-buildings and garden walls to create a more enclosed micro-climate.
- Introduce shelter planting of native species to help dissipate the wind.
- Retain existing boundaries such as hedgerows, stone walls or earth and stone banks.

Internal Layout

Organise the internal layout of the house to make best use of sunshine and daylight - locate the most used rooms on the south side and least used rooms to the north side. As well as reducing energy costs, sunny south-facing rooms have high amenity value. Try to minimise projections such as bay and dormer windows, which increase the surface-to-volume ratio of a building and thereby increase heat loss. They also tend to be more difficult to insulate effectively.



Orientate the uses of the house to maximise on solar gain.



Award-winning family home based on sustainable design principles, including sheltered location, use of a ground source heat recovery system, high levels of thermal insulation, maximum use of natural lighting, and maintenance-free materials.

3. Planning the site

E n e r g y e f f i c i e n c y

Renewable Energy Resources

Renewable energy resources are abundantly available throughout Ireland. They offer sustainable alternatives to the dependency on imported fossil fuels as well as reducing harmful greenhouse emissions.

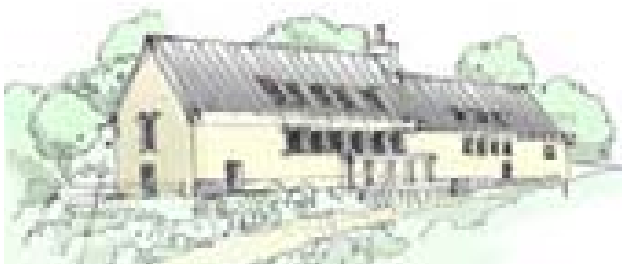
Many decisions affecting the energy performance of a house need to be taken early in the site planning and design process - refer to Appendix A for further details and to current Sustainable Energy Ireland publications (e.g. 'Your Guide to Building an Energy-efficient Home').

Solar Energy

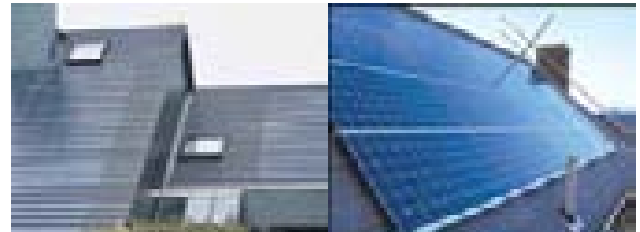
Solar is a clean, renewable energy generated from the sun. The main domestic applications are:

Solar Hot Water Heating Systems - for domestic applications comprise of a solar collector (solar panel, flat plate or evacuated tube), hot water storage cylinder and a pump. Panels should ideally face south and mounted on the main property roof, or in some cases on a shed roof or floor/wall mounted. Flat plate collectors can be installed as an integral part of the roof construction, or retrofitted to existing buildings.

Solar Photovoltaic (PV) - involves generating electricity from the sun's energy that exists in daylight. Groups of PV cells are electrically configured into modules and arrays, which can be used to charge batteries, operate motors and to power electrical tools. With a converter, PV systems can produce alternating current (AC) compatible with conventional appliances. PV is silent and has low visual impact. Panels can be installed on or as an integral part of the roof. They should not be in shadow and work best if south facing.



The total aperture of solar panels should not exceed 50% of the total roof area.



There are specific planning requirements for the installation or erection of a solar panel on, or within the curtilage of a house, or any buildings within the curtilage - refer to Step 6 Checklists for further details.

If considering the installation of solar panels, you will need to provide (as a minimum) the following information to South Tipperary County Council:

- Dimensions of the panels, their number, type, and the projection above the roof slope.
- Their colour.
- Plan showing their position on the building.
- Brief technical specifications such as power output (as usually supplied by the manufacturer).

Wind Energy

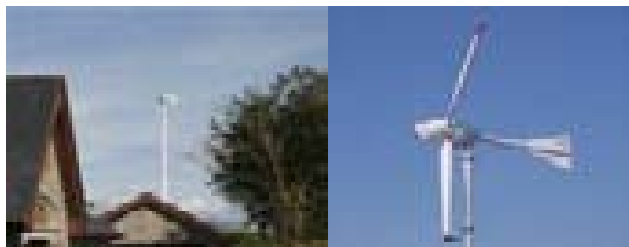
Wind turbines - harness the wind to produce electrical power. The efficiency of a domestic system will depend on factors such as location and surrounding environment. The optimum size for the average household is usually between 1.5 and 3 KWs. Because wind speed increases with height, a typical wind turbine needs to be mounted on a mast or tower. An ideal location is on a smooth-top hill with a flat, clear exposure and free from obstructions such as buildings, woodlands or other large trees that may cause excessive turbulence. Such siting could result in adverse visual impacts and needs to be carefully considered in relation to the context of the site.

The Greener Homes Scheme, administered by Sustainable Energy Ireland, is now available and provides assistance to homeowners who intend to purchase a new renewable energy heating system for either new or existing homes.

Scheme eligibility criteria and terms and conditions are available from www.sei.ie/greenerhomes

3. Planning the site

Energy efficiency



There are specific planning requirements for the construction, erection or placing within the curtilage of a house of a wind turbine - refer to Step 6 Checklists for further details.

If considering the installation of a wind turbine, you will need to provide (as a minimum) the following information to South Tipperary County Council:

- Dimensions of the turbine (including rotar blades).
- Height above ground or building.
- Material type and finish.
- Plan showing position on the ground.
- Brief technical specifications such as power and noise output (as usually supplied by the manufacturer).

Geothermal Energy

Geothermal heat pumps - transfer heat from the ground into a building to provide space heating and, in some cases, to pre-heat domestic hot water. The technology relies on the fact that the earth (beneath the surface) remains at a relatively constant temperature throughout the year, warmer than the air above it during the winter.

A typical system can provide 95%-100% of a household's heating requirements. The ground source heat pump comprises a ground loop (series of pipes buried in the ground either horizontally or vertically), a heat pump, and a distribution system.

There are specific planning requirements for the installation on or within the curtilage of a house of a ground heat pump system - refer to Step 6 Checklists for further details.

If considering the installation of a ground heat pump system, you will need to provide (as a minimum) the following information to South Tipperary County Council:

- Existing and proposed ground levels in the vicinity of the system.
- The total area of the heat pump.
- Plans showing position on the ground.
- Brief technical specifications such as power and noise output (as usually supplied by the manufacturer).

Biomass Energy

Biomass energy is obtained from organic materials such as wood (chips or pellets) or natural oils (e.g. from crops such as rapeseed). This can be burned like a conventional fuel but unlike fossil fuels the equivalent amount of CO² released during burning is reabsorbed by the new crops and forests replanted after harvesting, resulting in a zero-emission rating.

Biofuels are currently 50% cheaper than fossil fuels to run. Wood pellets (highly compressed dried sawdust and bark) from sustainably managed wood sources (e.g. local woodland or specifically grown tree crops) can be burned in modern, computer-controlled boiler plant to provide space and hot water heating. A wood pellet boiler is simple to install, and there is very little adjustment needed to existing plumbing if converting from a conventional system.

Water Recycling

Recent concerns over dwindling reserves of groundwater, increasing costs of domestic water supply, and costly sewage treatment plants has generated renewed interest in the recycling of domestic water. Techniques that need to be considered at the site planning stage for reducing domestic water consumption include:

Water butt - a simple, low cost method for collecting rainwater from the roof and storing it for use in the garden (e.g. instead of a mains-water hosepipe for lawns, etc).

Rainwater harvesting - provides an efficient and economic means for utilising the rainwater coming from roofs to supply toilets, washing machines and irrigation systems.

3. Planning the site

Plan for sustainability

Greywater recycling - enables slightly polluted water from the bath, shower and washbasin to be reused in the house (e.g. for toilet flushing, in the washing machine, watering the garden or for cleaning purposes). Proprietary systems comprise modular tanks, above or under ground, gravity fed by the greywater. The clarified clean water is direct pressure fed back through the house or to an outside tap for re-use.

The benefits of water recycling include:

- Rainwater harvesting (including some versions of grey-water recycling) displaces a large proportion of the water that would otherwise need to be provided by the mains supply.
- Typically a household can expect to save up to 50% of their mains water needs, significantly reducing overall water supply costs.
- In more remote areas, rainwater can provide for an off-mains supply, which can be up-graded to fully drinkable standard (potable) by using non-chemical ultra-violet sterilisation.
- Rainwater recycling can form part of an attenuation and rainwater management scheme, by reducing storm-water runoff and controlling the flow-rate off site.

If considering a rainwater recycling system, you should take into account:

- For rainwater collection, the external drainage of the roof needs to be designed to bring the water to a central point.
- Access for an underground storage tank and excavation is required.
- Internal plumbing should usually separate out the drinking (including bathing) water from the non-drinking water (WC, washing machine, outside tap).

Surface Water Drainage

All domestic buildings should be provided with a drainage system to remove surface water from the roof, or other surfaces where rainwater might accumulate (such as paved areas). Surface water discharge should be carried out to a point of disposal that will not endanger the building, environment or the health and safety of people in the vicinity. The preferred method of discharge is the Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS), which comprises -

- Filter strips and swales;
- Filter drains and permeable surfaces;
- Infiltration devices; or
- Basins and ponds.

SUDS can be designed to fit into most rural settings and a variety of design solutions are available to suit the specific site conditions.

If the site cannot drain to an infiltration system, it may be necessary to discharge to a water course. Where this is not feasible, surface water should discharge to the nearest storm-water sewer.

The discharge of storm-water from roofed and paved areas to a foul water sewer or onto the public road is not permitted.

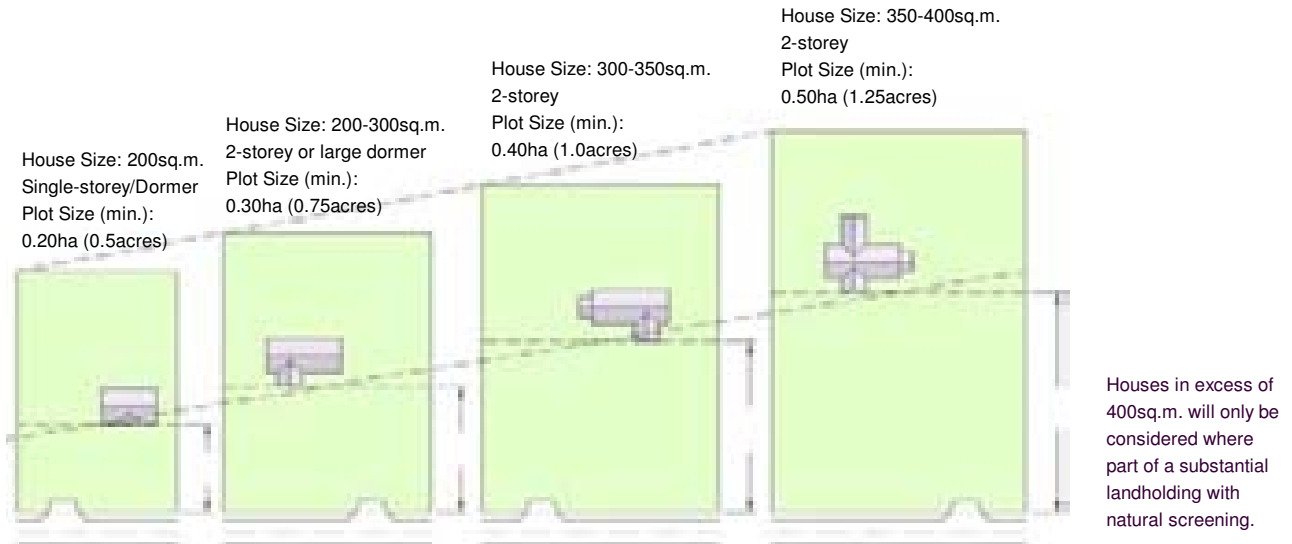
Specific information is required to support an application for discharging water to a soakaway, water-course or storm-water sewer. If in doubt, contact the Water Services Section of South Tipperary County Council.

3. Planning the site

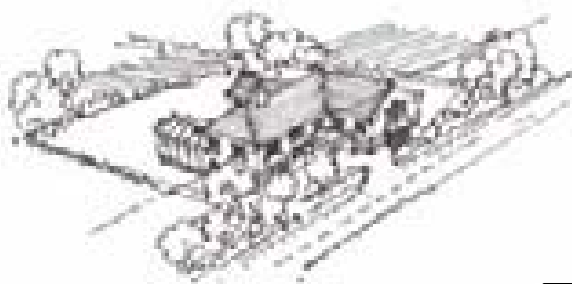
Appropriate site proportions

Proportion and Set-back

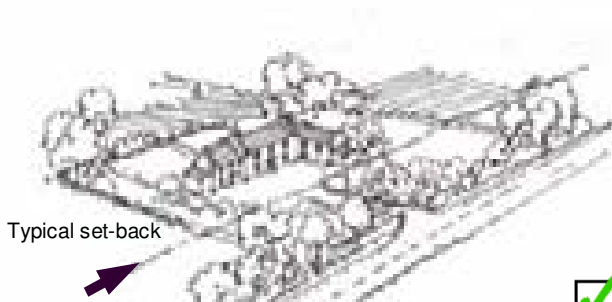
At an early stage it is essential to consider the proportion of the proposed house in relation to both the size of the available plot and the size of existing buildings in the vicinity. The new house will also need to be set-back an acceptable distance from the public road to provide adequate frontage for planting and to reduce the visual impact of development. The set-back distance will vary according to plot size, adjacent building line and the natural features of the site.



Typical house proportion in relation to plot size and set-back.



Over-scaled in relation to plot and distance from road.



Typical set-back



Adequately set-back from road and absorbed by planting.

The height of a new building further affects the suitable set-back distance - a single-storey or small dormer house may require less separation from the road than a large dormer or 2-storey house. In areas of existing housing, the set-back distance should be varied from that of its neighbours so as to avoid the repetition that may otherwise occur from a linear series of buildings.

The set-back on sites that are elevated, exposed or in sensitive locations will need to be determined according to individual visual assessment.



The size of a new dwelling should be suitably proportioned to its plot and of a similar scale as any existing houses in the area. The new building should be arranged to respect the privacy of neighbours and to avoid any over-looking.

3. Planning the site

S e n s i t i v e e x t e r n a l w o r k s

Vehicle Access and Parking

The space around the new building should be considered as an integral part of the site layout, not as an afterthought. In particular, vehicles need to be carefully provided for:

- All parking requirements should be met on site and off road.
- Vehicle access and provision for parking should not dominate the site.
- The driveway should preferably be indirect, gently crossing the natural contours of the site or curving subtly around existing site features, as opposed to taking a harsh straight line from the road.
- Surface materials should be sympathetic to the rural character of the site (such as gravel with soft edges as opposed to tarmac with pre-cast concrete kerbs).
- Frontage parking should be avoided and instead provided to the side or rear of the house.
- Where the garage is attached, it should be subservient to the scale of the building.



Avoid over-dominance of vehicle access.



Vehicle access and parking should be treated as an integral part of the site layout.



Boundaries

Destruction of existing roadside boundaries should be avoided, except to the limited extent necessary to create an entrance to the new house. Such features are highly important to the landscape - their removal may also lead to potential traffic hazard by inviting parking directly on the roadside.

New road boundaries and entrances need to be designed sympathetically, especially where several different frontages are adjacent to one another:

- Entranceways should be kept to a minimum width - with sight lines designed according to standards set out in the County Development Plan.
- New front boundaries should be restricted to a simple range of materials that are already common to the area, such as hedgerows, sod and stone banks and stone walls.
- Gateways should also be simple, constructed from timber or metal and defined by restrained piers of stone or painted render.
- For large houses constructed on substantial plots, higher standards for piers, splay walls and gates may be appropriate.
- For side boundaries, existing hedgerows are preferable, or simple timber fencing with new hedge planting.
- Suburban ranch-type fences, concrete block walls, and the regimented use of fast-growing conifers should be avoided.

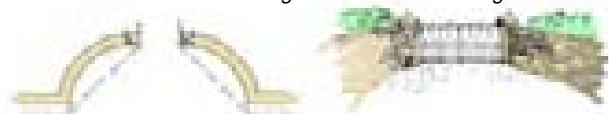
Splay with rendered walls and traditional barred gate



Convex with hedges and traditional barred gate



Concave with stone wall/hedge and traditional iron gate



Aim to achieve simple entranceway treatments.



3. Planning the site

S e n s i t i v e e x t e r n a l w o r k s

Garden Design

Step 2 of the Guide stressed the importance of respecting the landscape context and the need to link the new house with its surroundings. This can best be achieved by retaining existing vegetation on the plot, appropriate boundary treatments, and new garden design.



13.

Use existing site features to help absorb the building and/or undertake new planting of mostly native species to provide a strong landscape structure.



14.

Use garden walls and naturalistic planting to help tie the building into the landscape

Principles to be considered include:

- Retain all trees, hedgerows and other existing features (e.g. streams, rock outcrops) to provide a framework for the garden.
- Adopt a 'naturalistic' approach which is usually most appropriate in a countryside context.
- Avoid large expanses of manicured lawns and suburban style gardens with exotic species - these usually appear alien to their surroundings and do not provide habitats for wildlife.
- Plant the space between the house and the front boundary with trees in informal clumps.
- Create new hedgerows of mixed native species.
- Trees and shrubs which are locally native will be easier to establish than more exotic species, and in keeping with the character of the area.
- On exposed sites, consider more substantial shelter planting of native trees to help reduce the effects of cold winds and driving rain, whilst also increasing privacy.
- Use hard elements (paths and walls) to sensitively sub-divide the garden and to link it with the landscape setting.
- Incorporate practical needs sensitively into the overall design of the site, such as fuel and refuse storage areas, a compost/recycling area, clothes drying area, and a safe place for children to play.



15.

All applications for a new house in the countryside should be accompanied by a comprehensive landscape plan as part of any application, showing existing features to be retained and landscaping proposals (both hard and soft elements).

Refer to Appendix 1 for Recommended Planting Species.

4. Designing the house

Key principles of design

STEP 4

Design the House

Develop a design that is sensitive to its setting by carefully considering -

- Building scale and form
- Elevational treatment
- Materials and colours
- Roofs and chimneys
- Windows and doors

Traditional Building Forms

The traditional buildings of the County tended to be very simple, with little or no decorative detailing and built of a limited range of locally available natural materials. Many were only one room deep, giving a narrow rectangular plan form, which could be extended sequentially, and with consistent roof pitches. The addition of byres and ancillary buildings, with lean-to and split level roofs, onto the gable ends of houses was common, adding variety and visual interest to the simple rectangular form.



Simplicity of traditional building forms.



Contemporary Approach

New house design needs to be respectful of the past while also reflecting modern lifestyles and advanced building technologies in innovative ways.

Many new dwellings have been designed in a far too 'fussy' and over complicated manner. These are often selected from pattern books, using imitation detailing and materials that are unsympathetic to a rural area - particularly when adjacent properties vie for attention, rather than sitting comfortably in the landscape.

South Tipperary County Council promotes the contemporary design of new houses in the countryside where it satisfies the principles set out in this Guide. Good design is not just subjective - if issues such as proportion, scale, form and massing are skilfully handled, together with respect for context, the resultant building will inevitably appear appropriate or 'good'. The general approach should be one of simplicity, avoiding over-elaboration of elevational treatments and using a restricted palette of details and materials.



Simplicity of contemporary form.

In most cases the services of a qualified architect (a member of the RIAI) should be sought to deal not only with the design of the house, but also to understand the constraints and steer the development through the planning requirements.

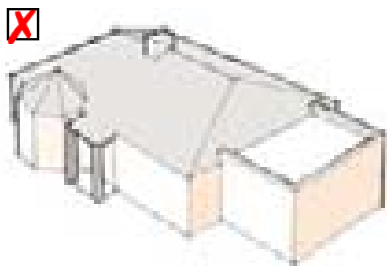
4. Designing the house

Key principles of design

Scale and Form

As described in Step 3 (*Appropriate proportions*) it is important to consider how the scale and form of a proposed new dwelling will affect the setting, its visibility in the landscape, and its relationship to nearby buildings. It is essential the new building is designed to fit the site.

The traditional linear plan form provides a versatile shape that is equally applicable to contemporary buildings. Rectangular narrow forms can adapt to most plot sizes and different landforms - running along a slope, stepping down a slope, or enclosing spaces such as courtyards - and are readily distinguished from their suburban counterparts. A dwelling with a large deep plan usually results in an over-scaled 'boxy' building with an expansive roof of shallow pitch. This is one of the reasons why bungalows often appear to be an inappropriate building design - they almost invariably are out of scale and incongruous to the countryside context.



Plan depths that exceed 7 metres create poorly proportioned boxy buildings with expansive shallow roof pitches that usually appear alien to the countryside.



Aim to achieve:

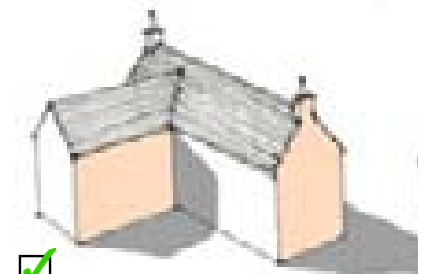
- ✓ Simplicity in design
- ✓ Rectangular, narrow plan forms
- ✓ Consistent roof slopes
- ✓ Limited variation to front elevation
- ✓ Well proportioned windows and doors
- ✓ Quality, predominantly natural materials
- ✓ Minimal ornate decoration

Try to avoid:

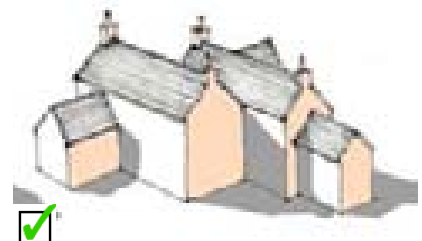
- ✗ Complexity in design
- ✗ Boxy, irregular plan forms
- ✗ Shallow pitched roofs
- ✗ Complex elevations
- ✗ Horizontally proportioned or arched windows
- ✗ Over-use of artificial materials
- ✗ Overhanging roof verges and barge boards



Simple dominant form with additions



Continuous eaves accentuate the linear form



Accommodation can be achieved by breaking-down the floor plan into smaller rectangular units, creating a more sensitive composition. Diminishing ridge heights emphasise the single dominant form and look satisfactory.

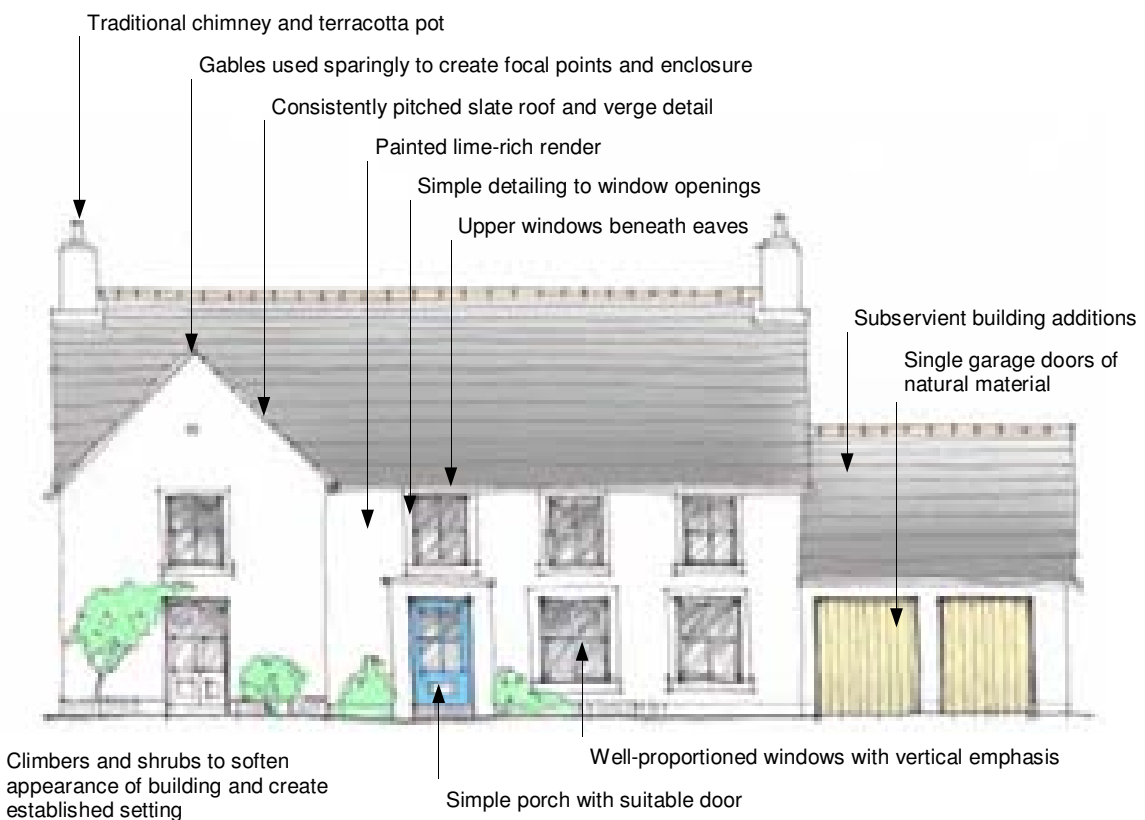
4. Designing the house

Key principles of design



Complexity

Unsympathetic



Simplicity

Sympathetic

4. Designing the house

Key principles of design

Detailed Design Considerations

Great care and attention to detail is needed to ensure that new buildings enhance rather than detract from the landscape. Generally:

- Avoid 'off-the-shelf' designs and use of inappropriate standard materials.
- Avoid using 'images' of past architectural styles, such as medieval leaded lights, mock Georgian porticos and doors, ornamental barge boards and half timbering.
- Take care not to overuse ornamental detailing such as coloured brick banding, applied quoins and unusual window shapes.

Materials

Wherever possible, building materials that are more sustainable should be used, including:

Natural raw materials - such as unfired earth/clay blocks, clay tiles, slates and wooden fibreboard, as a more sustainable alternative to concrete based products.

Insulation - sheep's wool, flax and hemp which can be used as a natural fibre insulation material.

Timber - sourced from well managed forests.

Lime-Based Mortar and Render - which gives flexibility and allows the masonry to 'breathe'. Render can be self-coloured.

Natural Paints - based on plant oils and extracts and simple minerals.

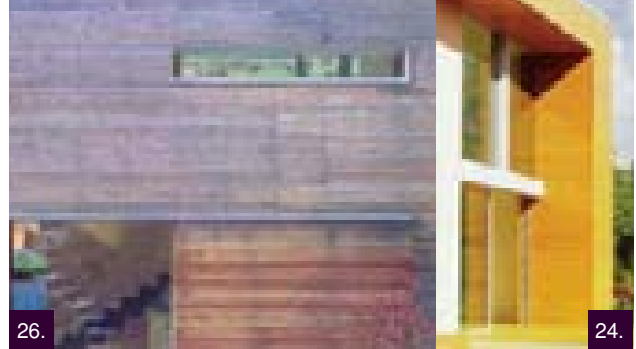
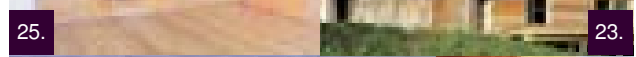
Glazing - double glazed 'E glass' has an invisible metallic coating that reflects the heat back into the room.

Contemporary materials such as copper and zinc can be successfully combined with timber, glass, slate, rendered and painted blockwork to create attractive houses.

Although many traditional houses were constructed from stone, they almost always had a painted plaster finish (except for grand classical houses or the more important civic buildings). In new houses, stone should be used in a restrained manner to provide contrast and, in suitable locations, to help integrate the building with the landscape. In contemporary houses, the skilful use of stone can provide an attractive interplay of 'solid' and 'light' materials.

Natural stone garden and boundary walls can be especially effective in linking the new house with the landscape. In all cases where stone is used it should be sourced from the locality.

A random mix of materials such as brick, stone and concrete should be avoided. Artificial materials, including pvc doors, windows, eaves and weatherboarding, fibre-cement slates and concrete roof tiles should generally be avoided.



Contemporary building forms and materials

4. Designing the house

Key principles of design

Colours

The colour of a new building should aim to blend with the local landscape. Bold, vivid colours should be avoided, especially on walls and roofs. Generally the use of 'earthy' colours that complement the natural hues of the countryside will be most appropriate for large surfaces (walls). Roof should appear darker than the walls. Whites, off-whites, light greys and ochres were often the dominant colours for walls of traditional buildings, and can effectively off-set more brightly painted elements such as doors. Windows and their surrounds should preferably also be muted in colour.

Roofs and Chimneys

Roofs can be the most dominant element of a building when seen in the landscape, especially from elevated view points.

- Roofs on new houses should aim to be simple and consistently pitched.
- Roofs that oversail the external walls should be avoided, unless an integral part of a contemporary design.
- Natural roofing materials should be used, such as flat dark tiles and natural slate (which are slightly textured and weather readily), sized to suit the scale of the roof and laid in diminishing courses from the eaves.

- Rainwater goods should be as discrete as practicable.
- Chimneys are an expected feature of houses in the countryside and can add interest to most types of building - their proportions and details should be appropriate to the size and style of house.

Windows and Doors

The elevational appearance of a building is determined more than anything else by the positioning, size and design of door and window openings.

- The total area of window and door openings needs to be in proportion to the scale and style of the house.
- Gable end and north facing walls will usually benefit from a lower ratio of opening to wall.
- Windows should usually line-up over each other - although a carefully considered contemporary design can result in a visually balanced elevation with less regular pattern of openings.
- The size of opening should reflect the function of the room - very small bathroom, cloakroom or landing windows can contribute to the composition of a façade by contrasting with more expansive openings to principal living areas.
- Irregularly-sized windows and elaborate bay windows should be avoided.



27.

Contemporary use of materials and colours

4. Designing the house

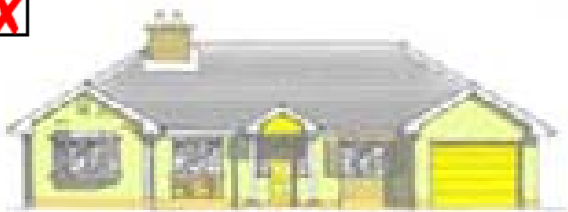
D i f f e r e n t h o u s e t y p e s

Single-storey houses

Bungalows

The single-storey bungalow, now all-pervasive in rural areas, was for the most part influenced by foreign suburban house catalogues of the 1960s and early-1970s.

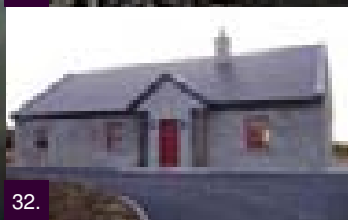
Typified by a large mixture of often contrasting materials, disproportionate windows, expansive low pitched roofs, elaborate ornamentation, brightly painted facades, suburban-style landscaping and rigid siting, the building type invariably appears inappropriate in a countryside setting.



Modern bungalow type to be avoided.



Simple interpretation of traditional building form.



Contemporary Alternatives

The traditional single-storey house can be reinterpreted in many different ways in response to your brief, the landscape context and the size and configuration of your plot. By following the general principles set out in the Guide, it is possible to achieve an innovative design solution for a variety of single-storey house sizes which meets your living needs and respects the local character of the countryside.



4. Designing the house

D i f f e r e n t h o u s e t y p e s

Dormer houses

The dormer house evolved from the bungalow during the 1960s onwards in response to gaining more accommodation in the roof. Many were derived from pattern-book designs, resulting in an uninhibited range of mostly suburban forms and styles. Frequently comprising irregularly shaped roofs, asymmetrical elevations, use of artificial materials and elaborate detailing. When combined with poor siting within expanses of lawn, the dormer house usually appears alien to its rural surroundings.



Dormer house type to be avoided.



Simple interpretation of dormer building form.

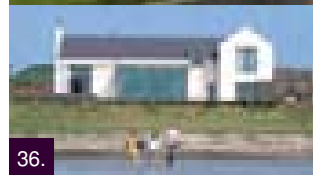
Contemporary Alternatives

The dormer house can provide a suitable building type in the countryside but the design needs to be carefully considered so as to avoid over-complicated roof planes and eaves lines. In many cases, depending on your design requirements and the context of the site, a 2-storey building may be preferable.

Where dormers are required, they can often be best located on the rear (private) roof slopes as opposed to the public front of the dwelling. Traditional eaves dormers are the preferred form, simply detailed to suit the style of the house. Rooflights should be considered to avoid a proliferation of dormers and in preference to mid-roof dormers.



34.



36.



35.



38.



37.

4. Designing the house

D i f f e r e n t h o u s e t y p e s

2-storey houses

Numerous two-storey houses in a wide variety of styles have been recently constructed throughout the County to meet the growing demand for living in the countryside. Many of these may make reference to traditional forms, but frequently they appear over-scaled or unnecessarily elaborate in their detailing. Simplicity is avoided in the quest for making individual statements, while innovative design in a contemporary form is rarely achieved.

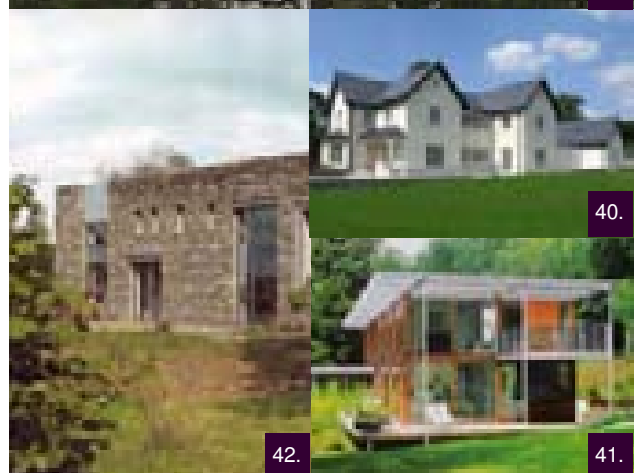


Simple 2-storey building form based on a narrow plan form.

Contemporary Alternatives

The main design emphasis for 2-storey houses should be to reduce the mass of the floor plan (especially for large houses) so as to avoid irregular boxy building shapes that may not sit comfortably on their sites.

The narrow rectangular plan house does not result in overly high or shallow pitched roofs, and allows subservient additions and extensions to the main structure. On hilly and undulating sites, the narrow plan form reduces the need for an excavated platform and enables the building to more fully respond to the natural contours of the site.



4. Designing the house

Building additions

Building Extensions and Garages

The addition of outbuildings or extensions can be one of the most controversial parts in the design of a house. The key objective is ensuring that the main house is clearly seen as the dominant element. The scale and detail of additions, garages in particular, should match the balance of the house and be subservient to it. With larger houses, detached garages may be more suitable, located discreetly to the rear or side of the main building.

Extensions and garages should generally be built with similar materials to the existing house. Flat roof extensions should be avoided where they would conflict with the style of the main building. Over-scaled garage doors and the use of artificial materials should generally be avoided.

Conservatories/Sun Rooms

Conservatories or sun rooms can form attractive additions to the house if well-located, as well as a means for achieving solar gain. Considerations of scale, proportion and spatial layout of the house are all important to ensure that a conservatory is an appropriate addition. They should not be added to front elevations, or appear too suburban or elaborate in style. Additions to gable ends or rear elevations are usually most appropriate.

Artificial materials (e.g. UPVc) should be avoided. Generally painted timber is preferred, finished in muted tones such as grey-green. Whites and bright colours can be over-conspicuous, detracting from the appearance of the house.



Inappropriate building extensions



Flat roof



Front elevation



Over-elaborate



Gable end



Simple, to rear



Appropriate extension, subservient to main house and of same materials

4. Designing the house

B u i l d i n g c o n v e r s i o n s

There are numerous empty buildings throughout South Tipperary, often located on good sized plots with road access and within mature landscape settings. The sympathetic restoration of buildings which are structurally sound, reasonably intact, safely accessible and capable of being connected to water and other services should be viewed as an important alternative to building new houses in the countryside.

The approach to conversion should be simple and uncluttered, with no attempt to over-domesticate or suburbanise the building or its setting. The original idiosyncrasies of the building should be conserved and enhanced. Factors to be considered include:

- The original building height and eaves lines must be fully respected.
- The internal room layout should be arranged so that the original structure, openings and features can be retained, or adapted with as few external changes as possible.
- The existing roof structure should be retained wherever possible, and left uncluttered.
- The addition of dormers can be too domestic in character and, subject to proportion and scale, should usually be avoided - flush fitting roof lights are more suitable for buildings with low eaves, provided that they are narrow and not too large or numerous.
- Roofing materials should be slate, laid to the original pattern.
- All existing materials should be salvaged and re-used - only good quality natural materials should be added, and wherever possible of local origin.
- The size, coursing, joint width and pointing on new stonework should match the original.
- Window and door openings should preferably be unaltered - new openings where necessary should be vertically proportioned.
- New window and door joinery should be purpose-made.
- Garages and workshops should preferably be provided by sensitively converting associated sheds and outbuildings.
- Any essential new additions should be of materials that match or complement the main building to be converted, and carefully sited so as not to detract from its setting.

The adaptation and reuse of existing buildings is an important principle of sustainable development. The conversion of traditional rural buildings into contemporary living spaces can not only bring buildings back to life but may also provide opportunities to sensitively conserve the built heritage and maintain the character and distinctiveness of the area.



5. Making an application

P r o c e s s

STEP 5

Make an Application

Ensure that all drawings and required information is submitted in the right format.

Considering an Application

South Tipperary County Council are committed to securing high quality design throughout the County and engaging effectively with applicants. The Council has a duty to communicate to applicants the particular issues that need to be considered before making an application, and to explain to them what is required. Pre-planning meetings are therefore encouraged.

Likewise applicants will be expected to demonstrate from the outset that careful consideration has been given to the location, siting and design of new housing in the countryside.

In most cases the assistance of skilled architects and designers should be sought for preparing the application, especially for sensitive locations. This will not only help achieve good quality design, but should help reduce the need to submit additional details in response to 'requests for further information'.

Applicants, and their agents, should familiarise themselves with the relevant policies of the County Development Plan, as well as the principles and advice contained in this Guide and other relevant Council documents.

Submitting an Application

Applicants should note that guidance notes for completing a Planning Application are obtainable from the County Council. Failure to fully meet the requirements may result in an application being rejected as invalid or in a request for further information. It is in your interest to make sure that all required information and documentation is submitted to avoid unnecessary delay in processing the Application.

With applications for one-off houses in the countryside, the omissions that commonly occur include:

- Lack of sufficient site survey information. Indicate existing and proposed site levels, and finished floor levels for all new houses. Many sites in the County are sloping and the development must be designed accordingly.
- Indicate in as much detail as possible proposed building materials for all building elements - including their colour and texture.
- Remember to consider the scale and orientation of any adjoining buildings. Contiguous elevations and cross sections may be especially important in assessing the interrelationship of new house types.
- Consider the spaces between buildings, their landscaping, planting and materials at the earliest stage in the design. A qualified Landscape Architect will have special expertise in these matters and should be involved in scheme design wherever possible, especially for sensitive or conspicuous sites. Include sufficient details on existing and proposed vegetation, hard landscaping materials and boundary treatments, planting species, and phasing of the landscape construction.
- Lack of sufficient details showing how the house will be serviced and the means for achieving safe access.
- Lack of sufficient details on renewable energy sources.

An 'agent' can act on your behalf in terms of planning advice, as well as preparing the drawings necessary for the application to be considered by the County Council. Alternatively, it is possible to have someone prepare the plans/drawings for you to submit with the application.

In every instance, to enable a prompt assessment of your project, it is essential that whoever prepares the application is familiar with this Guide as well as other specific requirements of the County Council such as siting, traffic safety, public health, design standards, etc. as contained in the current County Development Plan.

6. Checklists

Site Selection

STEP 6

Checklists

- Site Selection
- Site Planning
- Building Form
- Planning Application

Have you...

- Assessed the suitability of a site in terms of its landscape character and the sensitivity and capacity of the area to absorb development?
- Consulted with South Tipperary County Council if a site falls within or is located close to sensitive landscape areas or other environmental designation?
- Prepared a written brief of your requirements for the house?
- Considered the early appointment of a skilled designer to steer you through the planning process?
- Appraised the form of existing buildings before selecting a site to ensure that new development will be compatible with the existing character of the area?
- Considered a site where natural features such as trees and hedgerows can help assimilate new development with the surroundings?
- Avoided hilly sites where development may break the skyline when viewed from a distance, or would result in excessive cutting or filling of the local topography?
- Avoided elevated and exposed locations such as hilltops and ridgelines, which would increase energy consumption and fuel costs?
- Avoided sites that are subject to flooding, boggy, or in a frost pocket?
- Ensured that a site will not contribute to ribbon development or other inappropriate development form?
- Considered the micro-climate and the benefits of sustainable energy?
- Considered the proximity of a site to existing facilities, such as schools, shops, church, pub?
- Ensured that the site is accessible from the public road and can achieve adequate sight lines at the entrance without excessive loss of the existing roadside boundary?
- Considered the availability of existing service infrastructure, including water supply, telephone and electricity?
- Undertaken a Site Suitability Assessment (Percolation tests) to determine whether ground conditions are suitable for effluent disposal?

Further Details/Information

The County has many designated areas for environmental protection, e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), as well as designations for heritage protection such as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and Protected Structures. There are also numerous archaeological sites listed as Recorded Monuments for protection.

Lists of suitably experienced Architects are available from the RIAI.

Undertake a detailed assessment of the context - refer next page.

Refer to the requirements of:
'Sustainable Rural Housing - Guidelines for Planning Authorities', DoEHLG April 2005

and
The National Roads Authority (NRA)
'Policy Statement on Development Management and Access to National Roads', May 2006.

Consult with the County Roads Section if in doubt on vehicular access and road safety issues.

Any Planning Application for a new single dwelling (where not served by public sewer mains) must be accompanied by a Site Suitability Assessment Report, in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency Wastewater Treatment Manuals. The site assessments are carried out by private operators who are screened by the Council's Environment Department - an up-to-date list of approved assessors is available from South Tipperary County Council Planning Department.

6. Checklists

S i t e S e l e c t i o n

Landscape Context Assessment

In most cases, particularly in sensitive or vulnerable landscapes, South Tipperary County Council may require evidence that the following analyses have been undertaken as part of the planning and design process:

<p>Landscape Context</p> <p>On a suitable scale map of your site assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The local topography (hills, valleys, ridges, contours).• Surrounding villages, farmsteads and other one-off houses.• Long distance views of the site from roads, lanes, public footpaths and other properties. <p>Landform</p> <p>Prepare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A contour plan showing the general shape of the landform.• A slope analysis diagram showing aspect, angle of slope and indicative areas suitable for development.• Cross sections demonstrating an understanding of visibility to and from the site (noting the effects of existing vegetation, roads and other vantage points). <p>Vegetation</p> <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Different types of cover around the site, e.g. woodlands, hedgerows and sod banks.• Opportunities for extending existing vegetation patterns into or around the site.• Locally occurring tree and shrub species.	<p>Landscape Character</p> <p>Assess the visual and subjective qualities of the site and its environs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of views to and from the site.• Definition of surrounding landscape character, e.g. moorland, pasture, arable, hedgerow pattern, etc.• Presence of rivers, streams and other water features.• Definition of field size and pattern, e.g. small scale, large, regular, fragmented, etc. <p>Climate</p> <p>Identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• South facing slopes and orientation to benefit from solar gain.• Potential frost and mist hollows.• Existing tree belts providing shelter.• Prevailing winds and potential areas of shelter provided by topography. <p><i>A thorough photographic record is essential for use during the site assessment process. Panoramic views are very useful for assessing the impact of potential development on the landscape setting.</i></p>
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6. Checklists

Site Planning

Have you...	Further Details/Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Prepared a detailed analysis of your site showing all existing features?<input type="checkbox"/> Considered the detailed effects of topography in terms of building form and avoiding excessive cut and fill?<input type="checkbox"/> Identified south facing slopes and orientation to benefit from solar gain, and noted potential frost and mist hollows, prevailing winds and potential areas of shelter afforded by topography?<input type="checkbox"/> Have you examined the requirements for incorporating renewable energy sources?<input type="checkbox"/> Considered the proportion of the house in relation to the size of the plot and scale of any existing buildings in the locality?<input type="checkbox"/> Ensured that the building can be positioned to avoid overlooking or loss of light/privacy to neighbouring properties?<input type="checkbox"/> Ensured that the site has sufficient depth to be able to locate the building back from the road edge?<input type="checkbox"/> Carefully considered the means of vehicle access to the site?<input type="checkbox"/> Ensured that sufficient front boundary vegetation can be retained while accommodating vehicle access requirements?<input type="checkbox"/> Established means for protecting existing trees, hedgerows and banks, and noted opportunities for extending existing vegetation patterns into, or around, the site to help absorb or screen the new development into its setting?<input type="checkbox"/> Considered appropriate boundary treatments?<input type="checkbox"/> Prepared a landscaping plan showing all existing features to be retained and new planting and hard surfaces?	<p>Obtain a detailed survey of the site and its immediate surroundings showing contours; vegetation; boundaries; existing structures; historical or archaeological features; all pipes, septic tanks, wells, percolation areas, etc.; roads, rights of way and access tracks; water courses and wetlands; soil types and land drainage characteristics.</p> <p>The Planning and Development Regulations 2007 make specific provision for renewable energy installations.</p>

6. Checklists

B u i l d i n g F o r m

Have you aimed to achieve...

- A contemporary design that reflects modern lifestyles while being respectful of the past?
- A simple design solution?
- A wide frontage and narrow depth plan form, with additive elements where required/suitable?
- An external appearance that reflects the internal plan arrangement?
- A main elevation that is generally flat-fronted, except for porches, with subtle breaks in the building line used to add interest and to create and define external spaces?
- A limited range of building materials and, wherever possible, locally available?
- The use of real materials - stone, timber, slate - in preference to artificial ones?
- Limited colours, and muted in hues?
- Consistently pitched roofs, dark tiled and with neat eaves detailing?
- Carefully located and detailed windows, doors and chimneys?
- Extensions or additions that are subservient to the main building and of similar scale/style?

Have you tried to avoid...

- An over-scaling of traditional form and altering roof pitch to suit?
- A complex design solution?
- A cumbersome, boxy and near-square floor plan?
- Unusual and elaborate forms, complicated roof shapes, exaggerated and random changes in ridge line?
- Imitation styles, such as haciendas, chalets, log cabins and pattern book designs?
- 'Façade' architecture and randomly applied external finishes?
- Predominant use of artificial materials?
- Arbitrary changes in materials?
- Bright garish colours, especially in structural elements such as roofs and walls?
- Over-sailing roofs and boxed verges?
- Irregularly placed or over-large roof lights?
- Protruding bay windows and elaborate porches?
- Ill-proportioned openings and dormers?
- Over-scaled or contrasting additions (garages, conservatories, sun rooms)?

6. Checklists

P l a n n i n g A p p l i c a t i o n

Have you...

- Fully complied with the guidance notes for completing a Planning Application, obtainable from South Tipperary County Council?
- Copy of the site notice and plan showing its position on site?
- Submitted a landscape context assessment?
- Submitted sufficient site survey details?
- Submitted a site analysis plan?
- Copies of the Site Layout Plan at not less than 1:500 scale?
- Copies of drawings of floor plans at not less than 1:200 scale?
- Copies of drawings of all elevations at not less than 1:200 scale?
- Submitted sufficient information to demonstrate the scale and orientation of the building in relation to any neighbours (including contiguous elevations as appropriate)?
- Submitted sufficient details of proposed building materials?
- Submitted required information for renewable energy applications?
- Submitted results of a Site Suitability Assessment Report, including trial hole layout plan?
- A schedule listing all plans, maps and drawings?
- The appropriate fee?

Appendix 1

Recommended Planting Types

Rural gardens should aim to be natural in appearance and in harmony with the landscape character of the site location. Suburban garden styles should be avoided. In the majority of cases, planting should be of native species - these not only respect and reinforce the character of the landscape but also support wildlife and help to meet bio-diversity targets.

The main planting types to be considered when planning a new garden comprise:

- Woodlands/Shelter Belts
- Hedgerows
- Specimen Trees
- Shrubs

Woodland Planting

Woodland planting can be used to create naturalistic screening of particular views or to help the new house integrate more effectively with the surroundings.

Typically woodland (or Shelter Belt) planting should contain a large percentage of small trees (feathered or whips) interspersed with larger trees (clear stem) to provide a more immediate effect - e.g. :

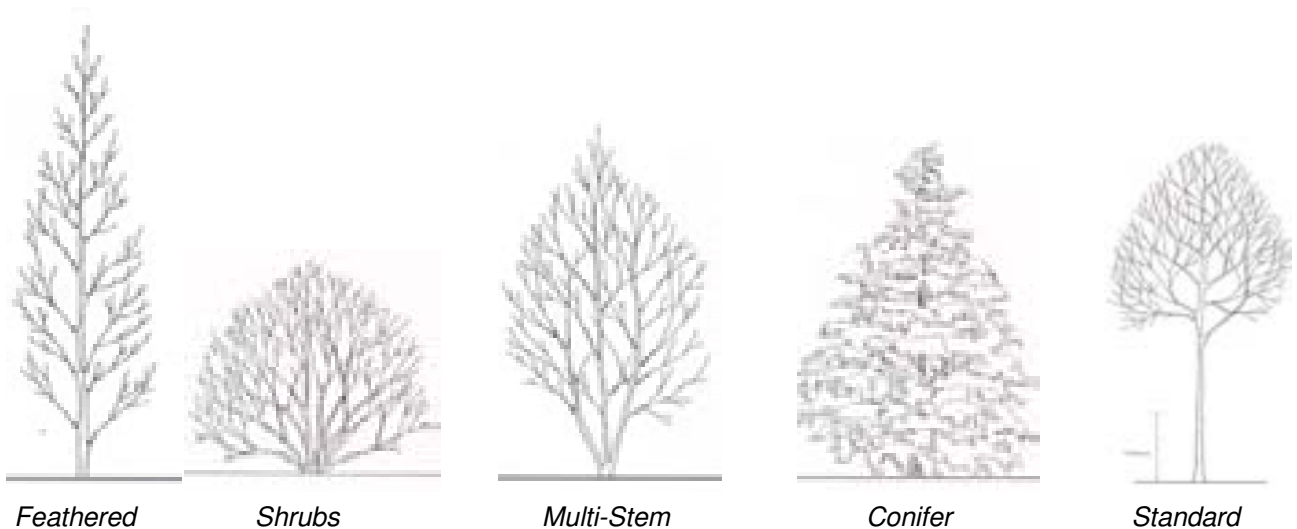
80% feathered/whips (60-90cm height) planted at 1.2m centres

20% Standard Trees (6-8cm girth, 10-12cm girth, 14-16cm girth, and 16-18cm girth)

Typical recommended species/mix :

Common Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	20%
European Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	20%
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	15%
English Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	5%
Durmast Oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>	5%
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	15%
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	10%
Larch	<i>Larix decidua</i>	5%
Scot's Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	5%

Typically plants are available from the nursery in the following forms:



Appendix 1

Hedgerows

New hedgerows should consist of a combination of native tree species with under-storey planting of multi-stemmed shrubs. Shrubs should be planted in a double-staggered row, around 0.9m apart (2-3 plants/sq.m.), with trees (species as per Woodland) randomly interspersed. Shrubs should comprise bare-root whips (min. 60-90cm height).

Typical recommended species/mix:

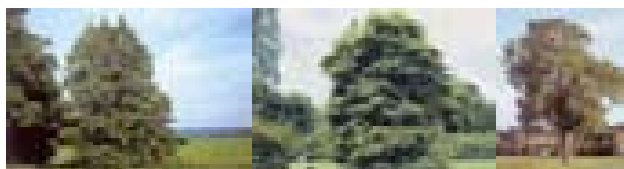
Whitethorn	<i>Crataegus laevigata</i>	10%
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	60%
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	5%
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	10%
Guelder Rose	<i>Viburnum Opulus</i>	5%
Spindle	<i>Euonymus europeaus</i>	5%
Dog Rose	<i>Rosa rugosa</i>	5%

Specimen Trees

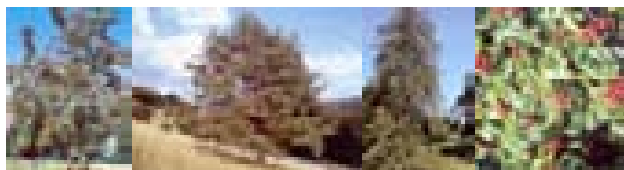
Trees planted singly or in small groups (3-5) should be of a large size, Advanced Heavy Standard Trees (16 – 18cm girth), to make an immediate impression .

Typical recommended species include:

Common Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
European Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
English Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Durmast Oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Larch	<i>Larix decidua</i>



Alder European Beech Ash



Rowan Scots Pine Larch Hawthorn

Common Native Trees

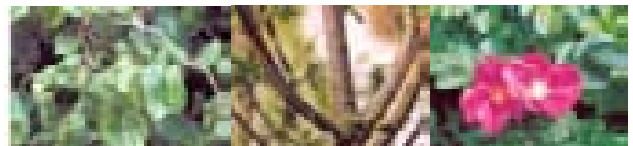
Shrubs

Shrub species can be planted in bold groups to the edges of Woodland/Shelter Belts to provide added interest and a lower layer of vegetation. They should be planted as bare-root whips (min. 60-90cm girth) or in 2-5 litre containers, at around 2 plants/sq.m.

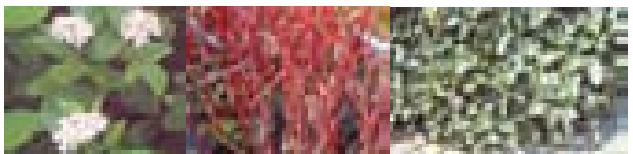
Typical recommended species include:

Whitethorn	<i>Crataegus laevigata</i>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Guelder Rose	<i>Viburnum Opulus</i>
Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus frangula</i>
Spindle	<i>Euonymus europeaus</i>
Dog Rose	<i>Rosa rugosa</i>

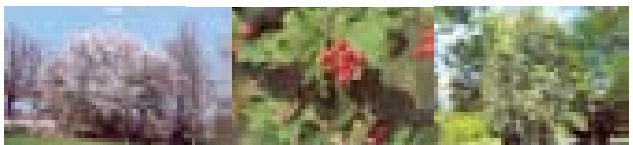
All trees and bare rooted shrubs should be planted from early November up to the end of March.



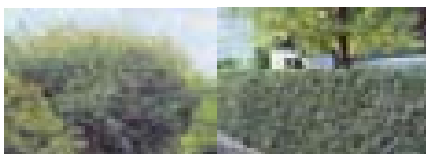
Hazel Spindle Dog Rose



Cornus C. 'Sibirica' Ivy



Blackthorn Guelder Rose Holly



Blackthorn Beech (hedge)

Common Native Shrubs

Appendix 2

Building Regulations

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 constructor and the building owners.

The Building Regulations 1997 set out the technical requirements for the design and construction of building works. The Regulations are divided into 12 parts, and for private dwelling houses, the most common areas to be addressed as follows:

This information is a guideline only, and not a detailed review of the Building Regulations. Applicants should seek professional advice for their own specific situations and should consult the current technical guidance documents and current regulations.

In accordance with the Building Control Regulations 1997, a Commencement Notice must be submitted to the Building Control Section of South Tipperary County Council, 14-28 days before the commencement of works.

All queries on Building Control issues and Building Regulations can be directed to the Building Control Section of South Tipperary County Council.

Part	Description	Requirements
A	Structure	The 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 building.
B	Fire Safety	Mains powered Fire Detection and alarm system, window sizes for escape or rescue. Adequate Fire Resistance.
C	Site preparation and Resistance to Moisture	Site preparation, drainage, dangerous substances (e.g. Radon), resistance to weather and ground moisture.
D	Materials and Workmanship	Fitness of Materials and Adequacy of Workmanship
E	Sound	Resistance of noise pollution from one dwelling to another.
F	Ventilation	Ventilation of rooms of specific floor area and condensation in roofs.
G	Hygiene	Installation of adequate washing and toilet facilities.
H	Drainage and Waste Water Disposal	Installation of adequate wastewater drainage and septic tanks.
J	Heat Producing Appliances	Appliances designed to burn solid fuel, oil or gas. Adequate design and installation of Air Supplies, Exhaust Gases, protection of the Building and Oil Storage Tanks
K	Stairways, Ladders, Ramps and Guards	Safe and Adequate Design of stairs and protection from Falls.
L	Conservation of Fuel and Energy	Limiting heat loss, maximize heat gains and controlling output.
M	Access for people with disabilities	Approach to, access into and circulation within a dwelling, access to electrical switches etc. Also the provision of Sanitary accommodation.

Appendix 3

Photo Titles and Credits

The photos that appear in this Guide have been obtained from a variety of sources. Every effort has been made to correctly credit the authors of the photos where known and the designers of the houses where applicable. Any omissions or inaccuracies can be brought to the attention of South Tipperary County Council Planning Department.

1. Carton Le Vert House - Antoin MacGabhan Architect (IAI Award 2003 'Best Building in the Landscape').
2. Mountain Guesthouse, Georgia, US - Mack Scogin Merrill ELAM
3. Glen of Aherlow - author
4. South Tipperary house - author
5. South Tipperary house - author
6. Farmyard, North Tipperary - photo courtesy of AJ Murphy
7. Poustinia, Kilsheelan - Bates Maher Architects (RIBA European Award Winner 2006)
8. The S House
9. Summer Residence, Northern Zealand, Denmark - Henning Larsen
10. House at Kilcornan, Ennistymon - Michael Kelly Architect (IAI Award 2005)
11. The In Between House
12. Cedar House, Cringleford - Crispin Lambert Architecture (South Norfolk Design Award 2007)
13. Garden at Fedany
14. Garden at Ballinterry
15. Garden in South Tipperary
16. Esher House - Wilkinson King Architects (Best Residential Design, Daily Telegraph Home Building and Renovation Award 2005)
17. House at Grange, Co. Limerick - author
18. Bungalow - author
19. House at Murroe, Co. Limerick - author
20. Seafield, Coney Island - Robinson Patterson Partnership (IAI Award 2004)
21. Long View, Henley on Thames - Avanti Architects
22. Seafield, Coney Island - Robinson Patterson Partnership (IAI Award 2004)
23. Poustinia, Kilsheelan - Bates + Maher Architects (RIBA European Award Winner 2006)
24. Westlake House, Peterborough - Spacelab UK Architects
25. Westlake House, Peterborough - Spacelab UK Architects
26. Cavegn House, Vorarlberg, Austria - Ivan Cavegn Architect
27. Long View, Henley on Thames - Avanti Architects
28. North Tipperary House - AJ Murphy Architect
29. Weekend House - John Dorman Architects (IAI Award 2001)
30. The In Between House
31. House at Borrisokane, North Tipperary - author
32. Bungalow at Fedamore, Co. Limerick - author
33. House at Clonakilty - Niall McLaughlin Architects (Winner Grand Designs 2007)
34. Dormer House, South Tipperary - author
35. Carton Le Vert House - Antoin MacGabhan Architect (IAI Award 2003 'Best Building in the Landscape').
36. Seafield, Coney Island - Robinson Patterson Partnership (IAI Award 2004)
37. House at Dromkeen - author
38. House at Patrickswell, Co. Limerick - author
39. Ardvey House, Isle of Harris - Graphite Studio Architects
40. House at Adare, Co. Limerick - Healy & Partners Architects
41. Jacob's Ladder, Oxfordshire - Niall McLaughlin Architect
42. House in Limerick County - Murray O'Laoire Architects
43. House in South Tipperary - author
44. Conservatory - author
45. Conservatory - author
46. Derelict House in South Tipperary - author
47. Derelict House in South Tipperary - author
48. Derelict House in South Tipperary - author