

Part III. Development Plan Details

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9. Development Control: Standards and Guidance

9.1 Housing

9.1.1 Multiple housing development

Multiple housing development can be described as housing schemes of more than a single dwelling, which are dependent upon communal support services – e.g. roads, water, sewerage system etc. Multiple housing development in the open countryside will normally be discouraged.

9.1.1.1 Housing densities

In accordance with the provisions of the DoEHLG's *Residential Densities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (1999), Sligo County Council will encourage increased densities in appropriate locations, i.e. serviced areas within towns and villages where the achievement of higher densities is in character with the existing pattern of development in the vicinity and the quality of the design is consistent with the increased density sought. In this regard, all applications shall have regard to the standards set out in the Guidelines.



9.1.1.2 Provision of public and private amenity space

Public open space is one of the key elements in establishing the quality of a residential development. It provides passive as well as active amenity and has important ecological and environmental functions. As a general rule, a minimum of 10% of the site area shall be reserved as open space (excluding road margins and private amenity space). However, the assessment of open space provision shall be based on both quantitative and qualitative standards. e.g. the provision of a satisfactory amount of open space may be unacceptable where it is poorly located or unsuitably shaped.

The open space shall be conveniently located within the development, and shall be appropriately finished by the developer prior to the completion of the scheme, through appropriate landscaping, paving and boundary treatment. The Council will favour the location of open space so that as many houses as possible will face onto it. Open space to the rear of dwelling houses will not be encouraged. The layout of such areas should take advantage of existing natural features, such as trees, hedgerows, streams, rock outcrops and slopes and detailed safety arrangements, if appropriate, should be incorporated into the layout design.



The provision of a satisfactory amount of private amenity space is an essential part of the quality of a residential environment. All new houses should have an area of private open space behind the building line. As a general rule, minimum 60 sq.m. should be provided to the rear of the dwelling house. A minimum standard of 22 m between directly opposing first-floor windows should be achieved. In relation to apartment and duplex-type schemes, private amenity space should be provided in the form of landscaped areas, courtyards, terraces/patios, roof gardens and balconies. A minimum of 2.3 m shall be provided between the side walls of detached, semi-detached and end-of-terrace dwellings to ensure privacy and ease of access/building maintenance.

9.1.1.3 Home zones

Home zones will be encouraged in new residential developments, particularly as an alternative to cul-de-sac developments. A home zone is a residential street or area designed to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists have priority over the car. Within home zones, the streets are designed through the appropriate use of materials, street furniture and a variation of road widths, to force motorists to drive with more care and less speed. Ideally, the whole surface should be level and paved in setts and blocks rather than bitmac, to help distinguish the home zone from a standard road. On-street parking is normally permitted, but is often arranged at the end of blocks or terraces, or provided as shared parking areas. Roads and streets may then become places where children can play and people can interact.

9.1.1.4 Taking in charge of estates

Section 180 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 sets out the legal framework for the taking in charge of estates and this framework is the one used by the Council. In relation to holiday home developments, it is the policy of Sligo County Council not to take these in charge.

A condition is imposed on all permitted housing schemes, deferring the commencement of development work until adequate security for the satisfactory completion of the proposed development has been submitted to and accepted by the Planning Authority. This security will be released when the estate has been completed to the satisfaction of the Council.

9.1.1.5 Naming and numbering of new residential estates

All planning applications for multiple housing schemes should incorporate proposals for the naming and numbering of the estate upon its completion. The proposed name shall reflect local place names, particularly townlands or local names that have relevance to the surrounding landscape, its features, culture and/or history. The use of non-traditional names such as Tudor Lawns, The Downs etc. is not acceptable.



Estate names should be prominently located at entrances and the lettering should be clearly written and visible by both day and at night. An indication of the location of each group of numbers should be clearly visible at estate entrances and individual roads within estates.



9.1.1.6 Access for the disabled

All new buildings of public resort must conform to the design guidelines set out in *Access for the Disabled: Minimum Design Criteria* (1998), and the *Technical Guidance Document – Part M* of the Building Regulations, 2000. In particular, reasonable provision should be made to enable disabled persons to have safe and independent access to a building and those parts of a building to which it is appropriate to have access. Guidance is provided in the following documents:



- National Disability Authority's document *Building for Everyone*;
- British Standard 8300:2001 – *Building for Everyone. Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled persons – Code of Practice*, BSI, London;
- Department of the Environment, Traffic and the Regions (UK) publication *Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces* (1998).

9.1.2 Rural housing

In 2005, the Government issued *Sustainable Rural Housing: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, in order to facilitate the implementation of the rural policy framework set out by the NSS. The Guidelines acknowledge the role that people living in both small towns and villages and the wider countryside have to play in supporting a dynamic rural economy and social structure, and they also establish the main parameters for assessing residential development proposals outside existing settlements.

New development in rural areas should be absorbed and integrated successfully into the rural setting, i.e. development should harmonise or 'read' with the existing traditional pattern of development and not intrude on unspoilt landscapes. High standards of location, siting and design should be satisfied in order to achieve this objective.

The practical achievement of well integrated rural housing development requires considerable skill and experience in site assessment and detailed design. It requires an ability to examine a site in the context of its natural and built surroundings and analyse whether the site is capable of carrying the proposed development without being unduly dominant on either the surrounding landscape or pattern of development. As a general principle, it is better to design on a modest basis rather than design for maximum public visibility or 'intrusion' in terms of building form and detailing.

In the main, ribbon development and urban sprawl in the countryside will be discouraged.



Traditionally, rural housing made use of trees, hedges, setbacks and natural contours for successful absorption



Ribbon development: frontage development along a road with no tandem development in the backlands

Urban sprawl means unplanned development expansion along the roads out of towns and villages, whether or not in ribbon form. It gives rise to the same problems associated with ribboning, but may have an even greater visual impact and transform the character of the adjacent settlement.



Urban sprawl: unplanned development expansion along the roads out of towns and villages



Infill development

However, in certain circumstances, especially where ribbon development is substantially in place and where additional housing will effectively consolidate the ribbon, ‘infill’ development may be permissible.

Similarly where urban sprawl can be ‘rounded off’ or significantly ordered through careful siting of new development, such development may be permissible.

The Council will encourage generally the restoration of derelict houses in the countryside and sympathetic consideration will be given to proposals to provide replacement dwellings. In the case of both derelict and replacement houses, design proposals should reflect the existing and previous scale, character and external finishes of the derelict/replacement house.

Where it is proposed to replace an existing dwelling house, the house to be replaced should be clearly recognisable as a dwelling house. New dwelling houses permitted under this policy should be constructed on the site of the house to be replaced – i.e. replacement in situ – except in circumstances where a setback is required in order to improve vehicular access or where alternative siting would be preferable in the interests of visual amenity, public health or orderly development.



Restoration of derelict houses will be encouraged

Whilst ribbon development and urban sprawl will be discouraged, applications for single houses will be assessed according to their capacity to be absorbed into the landscape without creating a disproportionate visual impact or giving rise to significant traffic or environmental impact. Visual impact will be assessed according to the landscape designations indicated on the Development Control Policy Map (Refer to Section 9.1.2.1). The Council will generally discourage new rural housing in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas, in coastal zones and along designated Scenic Routes.

The following subsections explain the designations contained on the Development Control Policy Map and provide more guidance on the key aspects of location, siting and design.

9.1.2.1 Development Control Policy Map

The genesis of the Development Control Policy Map was the An Foras Forbartha’s *Inventory of Outstanding Landscapes*, published in 1972. A variant of this map has been attached to successive county development plans up to the 1999-2004 Plan. This map was refined to take stock of the Yeats County landscape study commissioned by Bord Fáilte and a detailed landscape characterisation and appraisal study commissioned by the Council and completed by CAAS Environmental Consultants in 1998. The latter study was based on an analysis of the CORINE European landuse data and a county-wide landscape evaluation proofed against key planning policies. This resulted in a map indicating, inter alia, Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Normal Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas and Scenic Routes.

This approach distinguishes the ‘quintessential Sligo landscapes’, e.g. the Dartry Mountain range, the Glencar Valley, Lough Easkey and the Ox Mountains etc. Such areas are designated as Sensitive Rural Landscapes, as distinct from the remainder of Sligo landscapes, which may exhibit significant

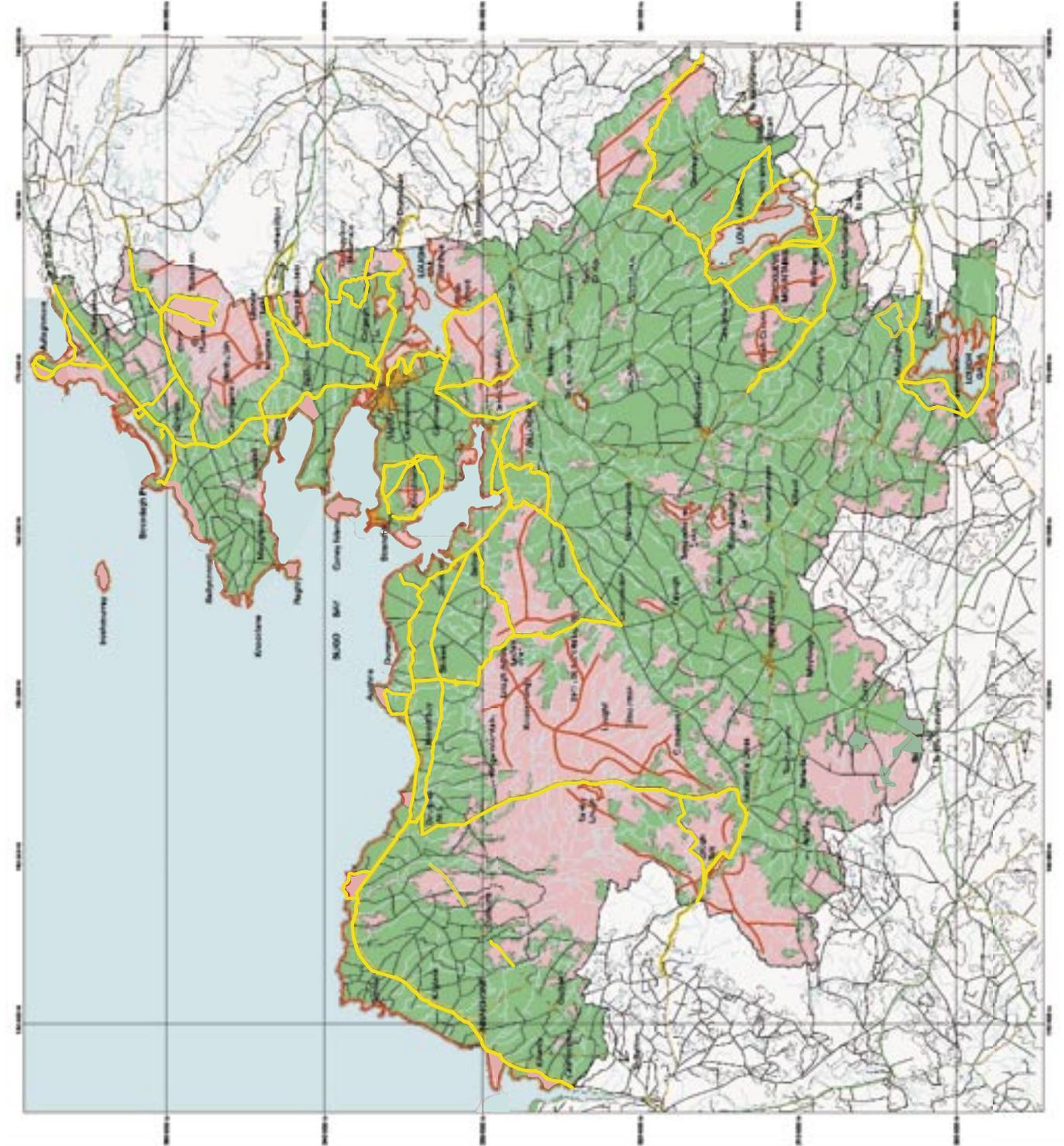
Figure 9.a

Development Control Policy Map

-  Normal Rural Landscape
-  Sensitive Rural Landscape
-  Visually Vulnerable Area
-  Scenic Routes

Note 1: The environs of archaeological and historical sites are considered Visually Vulnerable Areas.

Note 2: Scenic Routes are public roads from which the views and prospects towards Visually Vulnerable features are to be preserved.



scenic character and qualities, but not to the same immediate, memorable and special extent. Each designation is described in more detail below.

- **Normal Rural Landscapes** have the capacity to absorb a wide range of new developments, subject to normal planning and development control procedures. Most of County Sligo falls into this category, which comprises the main areas of existing farming and rural residences. Such areas tend to have enclosing topography and existing screening vegetation – or the potential to support trees, tall hedges and woody vegetation to screen new development.

In certain locations, designated Normal Rural Landscapes form the context for exceptional landscape features, such as distinctive mountains or coastal areas. In such landscapes, it is necessary to assess each development proposal on its merits, having regard to general restrictions on development (e.g. servicing, traffic safety) and any other provisions of the Development Control Policy Map that relate to the area concerned (e.g. Scenic Routes).



Drumnacool



Kilcreevin, Ballymote

Designated Normal Rural Landscapes tend to have enclosing topography and existing screening vegetation



Kesh Corann



Benwiskin

In certain locations, designated Normal Rural Landscapes form the context for exceptional landscape features

- **Sensitive Rural Landscapes** are areas with intrinsic scenic quality and a low capacity to absorb new development – e.g. uplands, headlands. They generally support insufficient vegetative cover for screening purposes and most sites are seen against the sky or water. As a result, even a small development in such an area has the potential to create an impact on the appearance and character of an extensive part of the landscape.



Tievebaun Mountain



Lough Aghree, Ox Mountains

Designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes have intrinsic scenic qualities and a low capacity to absorb development



Cope's Mountain and Glencar Lake

Designated Visually Vulnerable Areas are characterised by distinctive and conspicuous features where land meets sky or water

To preserve the integrity of designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, while endeavouring to sustain local communities, only a limited range of appropriate new developments can be accommodated. Any such proposal must demonstrate a high standard of siting, layout and design and may be required to consider ecological, archaeological, water quality and other factors.

- **Visually Vulnerable Areas** are characterised by distinctive natural features, which have an extremely low capacity to absorb new development without significant alterations of existing character over a very wide area. The eye is strongly drawn to such features, which include coastlines, lakeshores, ridgelines and hill/mountain tops, i.e. conspicuous linear features where land meets sky or water.

Due to their recognised natural beauty or interest and their susceptibility to damage, specified views of designated Visually Vulnerable Areas receive special protection (see Appendix F). Development in, or in the context/setting of these features is also strictly controlled. To be considered for planning permission, a proposal must demonstrate, inter alia, that the development will not impinge in any significant way on the integrity, distinctiveness and unique visual character of the area when viewed from the surroundings, especially from designated Scenic Routes and the environs of archaeological and historical sites.

- **Scenic Routes** indicate public roads from which the more dramatic scenic views, prospects and vistas of the County can be enjoyed. Most Routes pass through or close to designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes or adjoin designated Visually Vulnerable Areas. Scenic Routes also, in the main, form loops or circuits designed to maximise visibility of important Sligo landscapes without undue interruption. However, some routes considered to warrant designation, do not or cannot form part of a loop.

The designation of Scenic Routes provides a basis for protecting views and prospects of Visually Vulnerable features, such as mountain-ridges, lakeshores and coastlines. It is not necessary for a particular feature to be visible for the full length of a Route, as the designation is based on the overall quality and uniqueness of the views available.

Due to the strong inter-visibility between landscape elements in County Sligo, most Scenic Routes enjoy scenic views of more than one Visually Vulnerable feature.



Lough Easky



Ox Mountains

Scenic Routes afford unique scenic views of distinctive natural features

Appendix F of the Plan contains a list of the scenic views it is proposed to preserve over the 2005-2011 period. These include all the views listed in the *Sligo County Development Plan 1999-2004*, together with views from the additional Scenic Routes designated on the revised Development Control Policy Map in the current Plan. Some of the additional Routes were identified in the *Strandhill Local Area Plan 2003-2009*. The remainder have been proposed in the light of growing familiarity with the landscape capacity of the County, as a result of the Planning Authority's experience on the ground over the past five years.

To preserve the listed scenic views, it is necessary to control development along designated Scenic Routes, while facilitating developments that are tied to a specific location or that meet the demonstrated needs of an applicant to reside in a particular area. In all cases, the onus is on the applicant to show that there will be no obstruction or degradation of the scenic view concerned, nor significant alterations to the appearance or character of the designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes in the vicinity.

The above scenic evaluation approach and resultant Development Control Policy Map have proven robust in both facilitating development and conserving fragile landscapes and the map has been modified only in the light of development control experience. Incidentally, added protection is available under this schema for designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes insofar as the identified scenic areas correspond greatly – over 95% correlation – with sites designated under EU Directives, e.g. SPAs, cSACs and pNHAs.

9.1.2.2 Location

The surface character of an area, its topography, vegetation cover, fields and hedgerows, determine the impact of new development. Allied to surface character are the extent and pattern of existing development in a rural area and these factors will determine whether new development can be integrated successfully or not. For example, in areas of open bogland, shoreline and high, exposed terrain, it may be difficult to find unobtrusive sites. In areas of enclosed fields with mature trees, stone walls, rolling topography and existing development, imaginative use of the site's natural features can



It may be difficult to find unobtrusive sites in exposed terrain

integrate new building unobtrusively into the countryside. Areas of enclosed fields, agriculture-related development and mature tree cover can absorb new buildings without damaging the rural quality of the area more effectively than open landscapes. Sensitive design will be required in all cases, but it will be crucial if buildings are proposed in visually vulnerable, open landscapes where they are likely to be seen over long distances. The location criterion, therefore, establishes whether a proposed development will be acceptable in principle, having regard to the general characteristics of the site, its context and visibility from critical viewpoints.

9.1.2.3 Siting

The siting criterion refers to specific site assessment. The site should be sufficiently sized to accommodate a building set back from the road, and make full use of natural features. The building should be sited so as not to break the skyline or shoreline as viewed from public vantage points. Use should be made of backdrops of trees, rising land or other buildings.



Orientation of the building relative to the road and existing development is important, especially where it is proposed to terminate a ribbon of development, 'round off' existing scattered development or achieve a cluster of development. New development should relate closely to existing groups of buildings, particularly traditional farm complexes, and should not extend strip-like along public roads.

9.1.2.4 Design

The design criterion is aimed at ensuring buildings enhance rather than diminish the visual character of the area.

The scale, form, massing, proportions and detailing of a development must be assessed in relation to the character of the location, the existing pattern of development and existing site features.

Building styles that are acceptable in an urban or suburban setting are often alien to a North West of Ireland rural setting.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to apply any particular style, modern or traditional, buildings should be simple in terms of elevational treatment and materials.

Access roads and driveways should respect the site contours and cross them gently in order to integrate the building with its entrance and site.

New development should be cut into sloping land and excessive underbuilding or deadwork should be avoided.

Traditional hedgerows or stone walls should be retained in preference to ranch, palisade, paling, post-and-wire or other fencing. If a new hedge or wall must be partially or completely removed for the purpose of improving sightlines, a replacement hedge or wall should be erected behind the sightlines. In any planting scheme, indigenous trees and shrubs appropriate to the site conditions should be used.

Often the key to successful integration of new development is attention to detailed design requirements; site management and landscaping are essential to ensure that new development does not appear stark, unfinished and out of character with adjacent vernacular architecture.



Buildings should be simple in terms of elevational treatment and materials



Site landscaping is essential to ensure that new development does not look unfinished



The design criterion leaves scope for innovation and expression

9.2 Roads and transportation

9.2.1 Development along controlled roads

The NRA has directed that the development of new accesses onto the National Roads network should be strictly controlled in order to protect these roads. In accordance with this national policy and in the interest of safe traffic flow, it is the policy of the Council not to permit any new means of access along National Roads N4, N15, N16, N17 and N59, except in a limited number of cases, as specified below.

- The provision of a new house where the existing inhabited dwelling is substandard and in need of replacement. The replacement house should generally be located immediately adjoining, or on the site of the former dwelling.
- Where a house is required by a farmer or a member of the farmer's immediate family, engaged in full-time employment on the family farm, and where there is no alternative access from another public road, planning permission may be granted provided any new development is clustered around the existing farm residence.
- The creation of a new access not involving additional development, which leads to the elimination of a traffic hazard arising from an existing authorised use.
- Industrial or commercial development will be considered where it is locationally tied to a fixed resource or where it will have a major beneficial effect on the development and economy of the surrounding area.

These exceptions shall only apply subject to the condition that any such access does not conflict with any other restrictions contained in the Plan, and that the proposed access can be shown not to cause a traffic hazard.

9.2.2 Sightlines and visibility standards

All developments providing for access onto public roads must show that the access proposed will not create a traffic hazard or interfere with the free flow of traffic along such roads. The availability of adequate sight distance along the road from the proposed access point is the crucial requirement for road safety. New entrances shall be laid out in accordance with the minimum standard indicated in Fig. 9.b. Such entrances must provide for a surface water disposal system to ensure that no surface water is discharged onto the public road and, where roadside drains are affected, adequate provision for piping such drains shall be made to the satisfaction of the Council.

Sight distances for National Primary and Secondary Roads

New access points onto National Primary and Secondary Roads shall be subject to the requirements set out in Table 9.A.

Table 9.A Required sight distances for access onto major roads

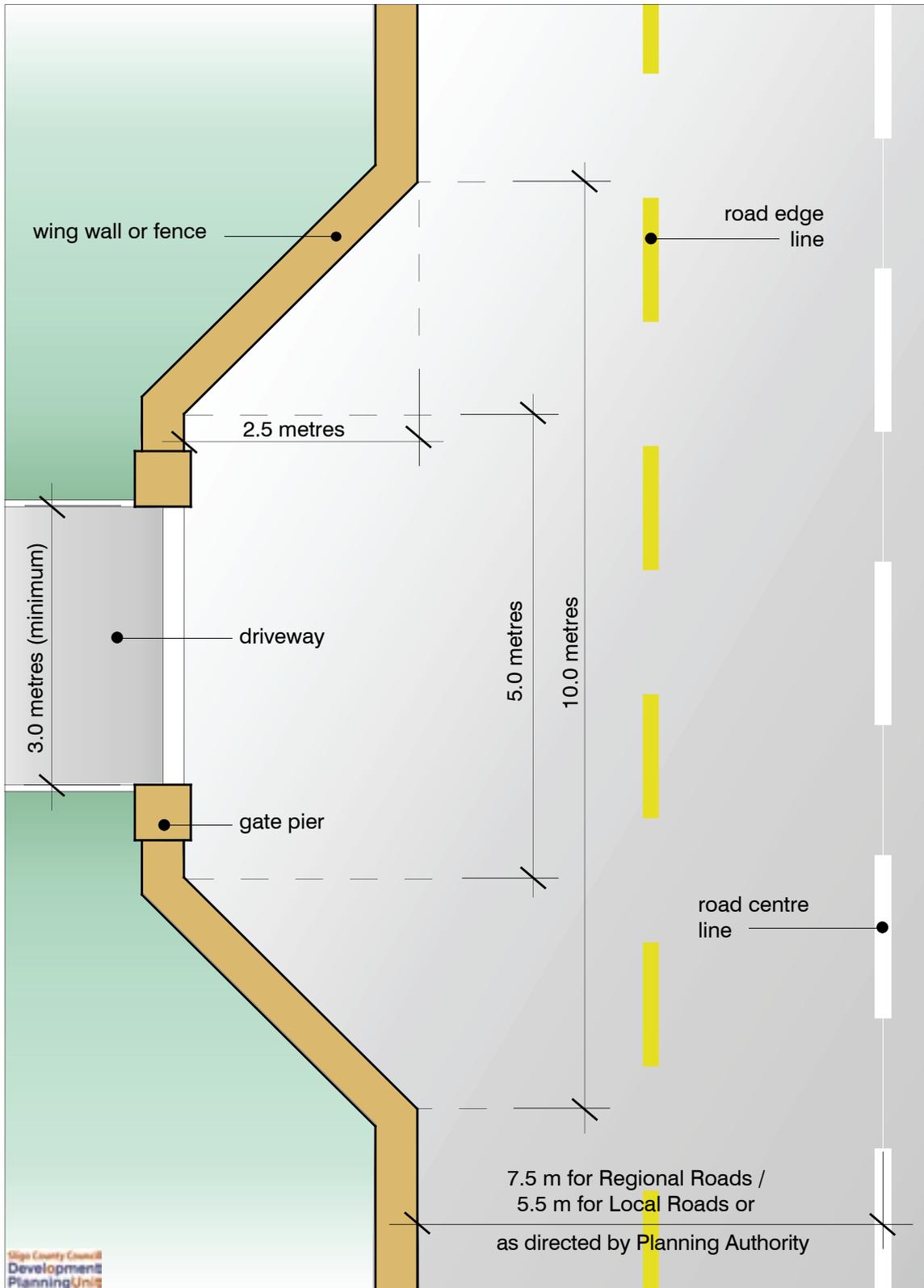
Road classification	Sight distances required for the following design speed on major roads				
	100 km/h (62 mph)	85 km/h (53 mph)	70 km/h (44 mph)	60 km/h (37 mph)	50 km/h (31 mph)
National Primary and Secondary	215 m	160 m	120 m	90 m	70 m

The sight distances are measured to the near-side edge of the carriageway in both directions from a height of 1.05 m above the ground and from a point 3.0 m back from the edge of the road.

Sight distances for Local and Regional Roads

Sight distances for local and regional roads shall be determined on a site-specific basis, subject to traffic safety considerations and with reference to sight distance requirements set out for National Roads.

Fig. 9.b Standard residential entrance from public road



9.2.3 Building lines

A setback of buildings is required in the interests of residential amenity, rural amenity and public safety, and to allow for any future road widening or realignment. The following minimum building lines are necessary for the various road categories:

- National Primary and Secondary Roads where maximum speed limit applies: 35 metres from the existing or proposed realigned boundary wall;
- Regional Roads where maximum speed limit applies: 25 metres from the existing or proposed realigned boundary wall;
- Local Roads: 15 metres from the edge of the public road;
- Urban roads (i.e within speed control zones): building lines will generally be determined by the established building line at that particular location.

New boundary walls shall be set back by 7.5 m from the centre line of the road for Regional Roads and 5.5 m from the centre line of the road for Local Roads or as directed by the Planning Authority.

9.2.4 Standards for roads and services in housing schemes

Access roads in residential areas and housing schemes shall be designed to physically limit vehicle speeds to 30 km/h (approx. 20 mph) and all roads shall be designed with due consideration to vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, children, the elderly and people with a mobility/sensory impairment. The provision of adequate traffic control measures such as ramps or chicanes should be included at planning stage where deemed necessary. Roads and services shall be designed and constructed with reference to standards set out in the following documents: *Traffic Management Guidelines* (Department of Transport – DoT, DoEHLG and Dublin Transportation Office – DTO 2003); *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas* (DoEHLG 1998); *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (NRA 2000); and *Specification for Road Works* (NRA 2000); and subsequent revisions of these publications.

9.2.5 Petrol filling stations

The most appropriate location for new petrol filling stations is on the outskirts of towns and within urban speed limits. A minimum street frontage of 30 m shall be required. A low wall of approximately 0.6 m height shall be constructed along the frontage with allowance for two access points, each 8-m wide. No advertising or commercial signage shall obstruct visibility over the site access points or front boundary/wing walls. The pump island shall be not less than 7 m from the footpath/road boundary.

9.2.6 Car parking standards

Adequate parking provision is essential to allow for the free flow of traffic and for the avoidance of traffic hazards caused by the parking of vehicles on the public road. Off-roadway parking spaces should be provided in accordance with the standards set out in Table 9.D at the end of this Section.

9.2.7 Transport assessments

Transport assessments shall be carried out when the following thresholds are exceeded, or as required by the Council:

- traffic to and from the development exceeds 10% of the traffic flow on the adjoining road;
- traffic to and from the development exceeds 5% of the traffic flow on the adjoining road where traffic congestion exists or the location is sensitive (e.g. due to its proximity to a busy junction);
- residential development in excess of 200 dwellings;
- residential development in excess of 50 dwellings, if the development is in close proximity to a National Road.

- retail and leisure development with a gross floor area in excess of 1,000 m²;
- office, education and hospital development with a gross floor area in excess of 2,500 m²;
- industrial development with a gross floor area in excess of 5,000 m²;
- distribution and warehousing with a gross floor area in excess of 10,000 m².

9.2.8 Road Safety Audit

Road Safety Audits must be carried out in accordance with the NRA *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* for all planning applications involving a new entrance onto a National Road or a change to the existing layout of National Roads. Relevant guidance is included in the following documents:

- HD 19/01 Road Safety Audits;
- HA 42/01 Road Safety Audit Guidelines.

Single residential developments may be exempt from this requirement at the discretion of the Council's roads engineer dealing with the application.

A Road Safety Audit may be required in relation to proposed developments on non-national roads in the following circumstances:

- where there is a need for a transport assessment, under the criteria set out in subsection 9.2.7 Transport assessments;
- for those developments requiring special consideration to road safety matters, where the development traffic could substantially affect a road with an existing sensitive use, e.g. a school or hospital;
- where otherwise deemed necessary by the Council.

9.2.9 Ducting

Ducting for services should be installed when footpaths are being put in place along local roads. In village renewal or footpath improvement, ducting should be left to accommodate the expansion of underground services at a later date. Spare ducting for future services should also be provided in housing schemes.

9.3 Agricultural developments

The Council will seek to ensure that agricultural activities, including the storage and spreading of slurry, are carried out to the highest environmental standards. Farmers will be expected to comply with the Council's document *Working with Farmers to Improve Water Quality* (January 2004) and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's document *Good Farming Practice* (2001) or such other policy documents as may from time to time be endorsed by the Council. Farmers shall ensure that there is no unsustainable build-up of nutrients in soils.

Non-exempted agricultural developments will be permitted in rural areas in accordance with location, siting and design criteria as outlined in Section 9.1.2 and will not generally be permitted in the vicinity of towns and villages where such development could create a visual intrusion into the character of the area or an environmental nuisance. In order to assess the potential impact of agricultural development, planning applications for these proposals should include the following:



- A. a completed application form for agricultural developments (available from the Planning Office of Sligo County Council);
- B. all information included in the County Council's *Guidance Notes on Agricultural Planning Applications* (available from the Planning Office).

9.4 Wind farms

The Council will require detailed information to EIA standard in applications for large scale installation proposals with significant anticipated environmental impact. In considering planning applications, the planning authority will take the following issues into consideration:

1. Issues relating to site identification:
 - wind speed
 - elevation
 - topography
 - obstacles
 - access
 - proximity of the electricity grid
2. Potential impacts:
 - visual
 - noise
 - electro-magnetic interference
 - ecology, archaeology and heritage
 - safety aspects
 - existing and adjacent land uses
 - construction
 - ancillary infrastructure requirements (e.g. grid connection)

Control conditions attaching to any grant of planning permission in respect of wind energy developments may include requirements regarding the following issues:

- siting and layout design
- blade rotation
- number of units
- design and colour
- power lines and access roads
- acoustical design and noise levels
- electro-magnetic interference suppression
- shadow flicker control
- heritage preservation
- bonding provision
- landscaping
- site restoration upon decommissioning of power generation
- regard to aircraft safety and navigation

Proposals in or close to pNHAs, cSACs, designated Visually Vulnerable Areas, archaeological sites or urban settlements shall generally be discouraged. The Planning Authority will have regard to the DoEHLG's *Wind Farm Development – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (1996), or any revised guidelines, when considering wind energy applications.

9.5 Telecommunications

In 1996, the DoEHLG published *Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, dealing with telecommunications installations which form part of the requirements for licensed, public mobile telephony and which are considered to be development in accordance with the Planning and Developments Acts. The Planning Authority will have regard to these Guidelines, or any subsequent revisions, when assessing proposals for telecommunications infrastructure.

Telecommunication masts, access roads and associated power lines will be assessed with regard to siting and design criteria, safety and the mitigation of intrusive impacts. The following standards shall apply:

- A. masts will not generally be permitted in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes/Visually vulnerable Areas, pNHAs, cSACs or adjacent to Scenic Routes;
- B. masts shall be designed and located so as to cause minimum impact on the landscape and, where possible, should be located within forest plantations.
- C. operators should seek to co-locate their services by sharing a single mast or, if necessary, locating additional masts in cluster form.
- D. in the event of the discontinuance of any mast installations, the mast and associated equipment shall be removed from the site and the land restored to its original condition.

9.6 Extractive industry

Published in April 2004, the DoEHLG's *Quarries and Ancillary Activities : Guidelines for Planning Authorities* offer planning guidance on the extractive industry ancillary activities. The Guidelines are also a practical guide to the implementation of Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, concerning the control of quarries. The Planning Authority will have regard to these Guidelines when assessing all quarry-related proposals.

Quarry owners and operators will be aware of the public concern to which certain extractive industries can give rise and should therefore take the earliest opportunity to discuss their proposals with the Planning Authority by means of a pre-application consultation. This will facilitate an assessment as to whether the proposed development is in accordance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan for the area, along with other relevant government guidelines and policies.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may be required for the proposed development, depending on its nature and extent. The relevant thresholds for the requirement of submission of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (Part 1, Class 19 and Part 2, Class 2), i.e. development exceeding 5 hectares in area.

Note: An EIS may be required for development proposals below this statutory threshold at the absolute discretion of the Council. The statutory information to be contained in an EIS is set out in Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 and prospective developers are also advised to have regard to the *Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements* (EPA, March 2002).

Whether or not an EIS is required as part of an application, the Planning Authority will require comprehensive details of all existing and proposed activities on site, as well as those associated with, or possibly affected by, the proposed development. In this regard, the following should be submitted, in addition to all standard requirements for a planning application:

1. maps showing total site area, area to be excavated, any ancillary proposed developments, nearest dwelling houses or other structures/features within approximately 1 km of the site;
2. description of aggregate(s) to be extracted, method of extraction, ancillary processes, equipment to be used, storage of materials, settling ponds etc.;
3. total and annual tonnage of excavated aggregates, expected lifetime of works, maximum extent and depth of excavation, phasing programme;
4. description/drawings of development works (buildings, fixed and mobile plant, roads, fuel tanks, water supply, drainage);
5. likely environmental effects, proposed mitigation measures and restoration/aftercare proposals.

For existing quarries, details in relation to the history of activities on site and compliance with Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 should be submitted.

9.7 Advertising

Advertising is an accepted part of business and provides information to the general public. However, advertising signs, individually, or more particularly in groups, may cause injury to amenities and detract from the appearance of an area or a building, especially when they are out of scale and character with their surroundings. They can also be a major distraction to road users and may result in the creation of a traffic hazard.

Advertising signs will not generally be permitted along roads in rural areas, outside the boundaries of towns and villages save those relating to heritage or tourist attractions. The Planning Authority will operate a licensing system for all new signage and advertising structures on public roads.

9.8 Light pollution

Artificial lighting has done much to safeguard and enhance our night-time environment but, if not properly controlled, obtrusive light can create serious physiological and ecological problems. Light pollution is caused by excessive artificial light being directed into the night sky and can be injurious to visual amenity, distract passing motorists, disturb people's sleep and adversely affect local ecology. It is a form of pollution which can be substantially reduced without detriment to the lighting task in both urban and rural areas.

Details of any lighting schemes required for a new development should be submitted as part of the planning application. The scheme should demonstrate that it is the minimum needed for security/working purposes and that it minimises potential pollution from glare and spillage.

9.9 Water supply, drainage and wastewater disposal

All surface water and foul water drainage systems will be designed and constructed in accordance with the *Building Regulations* (1997) Technical Documents Part H – Drainage and Wastewater Disposal, and in accordance with the *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas* (DoEHLG, 1998).

9.9.1 Water supply

All water mains and ancillary fittings will be constructed, laid and tested in accordance with the requirements of *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas*, Section 4 - Water Supply (DoEHLG, 1998).



Aghoo reservoir, Drumnacool

9.9.2 On-site wastewater treatment systems

Wastewater treatment systems should be located, constructed and maintained to the highest standards to ensure minimal impacts on water quality and particularly groundwater quality. Accordingly, all applications for planning permission involving the use of an on-site treatment system must contain sufficient information to demonstrate that the proposed development will be environmentally sustainable.

All proposals for on-site treatment systems shall be designed and constructed in accordance with

the EPA's Wastewater Treatment Manuals – *Treatment Systems for Single Houses* and *Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels* – and with the Council's technical guidance document *On-site Sewage Treatment Systems* (available from the Planning Office) and any further guidance documents issues by the Council.

Treatment systems for small communities, business, leisure centres and hotels shall not be permitted without an adequate, legally-binding contract for the management and maintenance of the system, for the life of the system.

Reed beds/wetlands are not considered satisfactory until national design and installation criteria are agreed.

9.9.3 Surface water drainage

All applications for planning permission shall incorporate proposals for the disposal of surface water. Storm water will not generally be allowed into the foul sewerage network and should be disposed of, subject to suitable treatment where necessary, to available watercourses or through separate surface water drains to independent outfalls. The Council will also promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) where there are no positive or natural drainage systems into which to discharge storm water.

When creating a new vehicular access onto public roads, existing roadside drainage shall be maintained by the incorporation of a suitably sized drainage pipe. In these circumstances, each application shall be accompanied by design calculations or appropriate evidence to support the size of pipe selected. In any event, surface water shall not be allowed to discharge onto the adjoining public road from the proposed development.

9.10 Development charges and bonds

9.10.1 Development Contribution Scheme

Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 enables local authorities, when granting planning permission, to include conditions requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the Planning Authority and provided by or on behalf of a local authority.

The first Development Contributions Scheme for the County, outside the Sligo & Environs area, was made on the 1st November 2003 and is applicable for a period of five years from that date. The level of contributions under this Scheme was increased with effect from 1st June 2005.

The Development Contribution Scheme makes a reasonable level of funding available for improving the County's infrastructure in an open and transparent fashion and will facilitate the Council in providing new infrastructure, which it would otherwise be unable to do.

The classes of public infrastructure and facilities for which contributions are payable in County Sligo under the current scheme (adopted in 2003, rates revised in 2005) are set out in Table 9.B. The 2005 contribution rates are set out in the Table 9.C.

Table 9.B Classes of infrastructure for which contributions are payable

Class of infrastructure	% of contribution
town / village improvements, car parking, roads	8
water facilities	42
wastewater facilities	42
libraries, museum and community / cultural development	8

Table 9.C Levels of development contributions

Class of development	Amount of contribution
residential development up to 150 sq.m	€4,900 per unit
residential development greater than 150 sq.m	€4,900 per unit + €15 per sq.m over 150 sq.m
commercial / industrial development up to 150 sq.m	€7,000
commercial / industrial development greater than 150 sq.m	€7,000 per unit + €15 per sq.m over 150 sq.m
nursing homes, guest houses, hotels	€1,300 per bedroom
storage, warehouses, cash & carry up to 150 sq.m	€7,000
storage, warehouses, cash & carry greater than 150 sq.m	€7,000 per unit + €15 per sq.m over 500 sq.m
change of use from residential to commercial	€45 per sq m in respect of first 150 sq.m + €15 per sq.m in excess of this
shortfall in car parking provided	€2,100 per space

Contributions in respect of water and wastewater facilities are payable only if the proposed development is to be connected to the public water mains or wastewater facilities, or where it is proposed to provide such facilities within the following five years.

The contribution rates will be adjusted with effect from the 1st of April each year, based on changes to the Wholesale Price Index for Building and Construction published by the Central Statistics Office.

9.10.2 Security bonds

In order to ensure the satisfactory completion of new developments, the Planning Authority will impose conditions on planning permissions, requiring the submission of a bond or other agreed security before commencement of development.

Table 9.D Car parking standards

Class of development	Unit	Minimum parking spaces per unit
house	dwelling	2.0
apartment	dwelling	1.25
retail unit outside speed limit	100 sq.m gross floor area	10
retail unit inside speed limit	100 sq.m gross floor area	6
office	30 sq.m gross floor area	1.0
church	seat	0.25
school	classroom	1.0
hospital	bed	0.25
theatre / cinema	seat	0.25
nightclub / dance hall outside speed limit	9 sq.m gross floor area	3.0
nightclub / dance hall inside speed limit	9 sq.m gross floor area	1.5
hotel (excluding bars and function rooms)	bedroom	1.0
hotel staff accommodation	3 employees	1.0
bar lounge outside speed limit	2.5 sq.m public space	1.0
bar lounge inside speed limit	4.0 sq.m public space	1.0
restaurant	10 sq.m dining space	2.0
manufacturing industry	100 sq.m gross floor area	2.0
warehousing	100 sq.m gross floor area	1.0
community hall	5 sq.m gross floor area	1.0
bank	100 sq.m gross floor area	5.0
vehicle service garage	service bay (cars) service bay (lorries) 4 sq.m gross floor area	3.0 3.0 1.0
funeral home	5 sq.m	1.0
service industry	100 sq.m gross floor area	3.0
leisure/ sports facility	100 sq.m gross floor area	3.0
nursing home	3 bedrooms	1.0
museum / gallery	100 sq.m gross floor area	5.0
golf / pitch and putt	hole	2.0
golf driving range	bay	1.0
bowling alley	lane	3.0
guesthouse / b & b	bedroom	1.0
surgery	consulting room	3.0
cash-and-carry outlet	90 sq.m gross floor area	2.0

