



35.



Above 36, shows an existing example of an existing gable end in the plan area which fronts onto a public road. Photos 35, 37 and 38 shows alternative designs which demonstrate how a building might 'turn a corner' or 'face' more than one street or public road.

37.



38.



10 Urban Design Objectives and Guidelines

The Masterplan is shown on Figure 17 and should be consulted with when reading this section.

10.1 Building Orientation

Buildings will generally be oriented towards public roads and other public spaces and open space so as to provide a 'face' to development and to ensure natural surveillance, provide a safe and positive environment and create a more lively street front. Backing houses onto public roads and spaces is considered inappropriate, whereas framing areas of open space with a strong building line can enhance a community's ownership of that space.

10.2 Key Architectural Features/Urban Design Gateways

A number of sites and areas have been identified for key architectural features. This is to increase legibility, and by this we mean how easily it is to understand the physical structure of the environment and layout of development. Sites that have been identified for this purpose are generally located at key intersections or road junctions, in areas that are highly visible, important entrances within the masterplan and at the neighbourhood centres. These should be designed to act as urban design gateways. The architectural treatment of these buildings will be important as they will provide the 'first impressions' of development in various cells in the masterplan. Most of the buildings on the identified sites will be expected to 'turn the corner', by fronting onto two streets (See photos).

10.3 Skyline Enhancement Zones

There are a few areas within the masterplan that exhibit higher topographical contours that result in sites of high visibility. Particularly noteworthy in this regard is the hill-top in Development Cell 1 which highly visible from all the main routes within or leading to the masterplan. Additionally, there is the fairly prominent ridgeline across the northern portion of Cell 3. These areas are visually vulnerable to insensitive development patterns and in particular to roof-top designs and roof profiles. In these areas special care will be required on the part of the designer or architect to ensure that an interesting skyline can be achieved. In particular, roof-tops which display variation in terms of direction of pitch, general heights and additional features such as turrets, chimney stacks, dormers and the introduction of gables could be considered so long as they meet high standards of design.

Developments in these areas will have a better chance of assimilation into the landscape if the adjoining open space areas are subject to significant tree planting with a mix of deciduous and suitable coniferous species. This tree planting will be a requirement of development approvals and is expected, in time, to provide a 'back-drop' to development (see sketch).

It should be noted too that the developments of cells 2 and 4 will be overlooked to a degree at least by the more elevated Development Cells of areas 3 and 5, for this reason too particular attention will be required in the architectural treatment of these areas too.

10.4 The Neighbourhood Centre

The design of the neighbourhood centre should be more prominent and easily identifiable and for this reason an increase in building heights should be encouraged here. Three and



39. The siting and height of a building in addition to the colour of materials and the roof profile all have an important influence on the overall impact of a building on the landscape. These will be important considerations on hill side areas.



40. Example of tree lined avenue.
41. Example of a stormwater retention pond/
reconstructed wetlands.
42. Example of raised boardwalk through a woodland
area, the design of which would be appropriate to
Hazelwood's urban forest.



four storeys will be encouraged in a dense and tightly grained urban fabric. Residential and office uses will be encouraged over commercial and community uses.

The masterplan gives an indicative layout of the neighbourhood centre. A civic space or square will be required to front the buildings at the Hazelwood Neighbourhood Centre, with the buildings framing its edge on that side. Elsewhere tree planting will form the edge and additional landscaping will also be required. Some provisions for car parking can be provided in front of the green at a depth of one bay. Additional requirements for car parking should be provided to the rear of the buildings in the interests of visual amenity. A building of high architectural quality will be expected at this location.

10.5 Landscaping and the Design of Amenity Areas

10.5.1 Tree Lined Avenues

All the principle local roads serving the masterplan (see Figure 16) will be required to be tree-lined so as to provide clarity and legibility as to what are the main circulation routes serving each of the development cells.

11.5.2 Urban Woodlands (Additional Tree Planting)

A comprehensive tree planting and/or landscaping programme will be expected either within or around all areas identified for open space. The strategy of linking the proposed open space network with the existing woodland areas facilitates the development of an urban forest.

10.5.3 Creation of Ponds and/or Reconstructed Wetlands

Stormwater retention ponds or reconstructed wetlands will be required in the buffer/linear park system that runs along the northern edge of the cSAC (see section 8.3.4 (2)). These should be designed with gentle gradual slopes and the edges planted with suitable wetland plant species in the interests of safety and bio-diversity. Additional ponds may be required as part of stormwater source control management (See section 13.3) elsewhere in the masterplan and these could be suitably provided in some of the other areas identified in the open space network.

10.5.4 Woodland Walks and Amenity Trails

The masterplan establishes a framework for the development of walks and amenity trails along the perimeter of most of the development cells and in some cases, though the centre of cells. It should be possible therefore to walk from the town centre along the riverside path at Rathquarter and from there to continue along the edge of the woodlands that form the southern boundary to Cells 2 and 4. The plan provides for direct pedestrian access to the waterfront at a number of locations [The creation of these walkways will be subject to approval by Dúchas as it runs through the cSAC]. Walkways are also indicated along the eastern boundaries of Cells 4 and 6. There will also be amenity linkages through the centre of Cells 5 & 6 by means of the archaeological sites which are proposed for incorporation into the open space network.

Most of the existing alluvial woodland through the cSAC is dense and impenetrable. The principal route (solid red line on the masterplan) is already delineated but will require upgrading and some clearing of vegetation in its path. While the distance from the development areas to the waterfront is less at other locations along the woodland edge, the



From top to bottom:

- 43. Opportunities exist to create wildlife viewing points.
- 44. Trails through the woods will lead pedestrians to the water's edge.
- 45 & 46. A raised boardwalk along the shoreline and through the edge of reedbeds could be created in association with some of the proposed viewing points.

dense vegetation, old drainage courses, streams and wetlands provide obstacles to the provision of walks elsewhere. Nonetheless a second and third option is indicated on the masterplan (by means of red dashed lines).

The provision of such walkways and trail systems, will permit easy access and promote enjoyment and appreciation of the natural environment. The Sligo branch of Birdwatch Ireland visit woodlands in the vicinity and the provision of such trails are likely to be popular among such groups. Nature studies for school groups could also be considered. However, in the interests of habitat protection and minimizing human disturbance, one or two trails through the cSAC is deemed to be efficient and design measures to restrict further access to other areas within the cSAC may be required.

10.5.5 River Viewing Points

The walkway to the water described in Section 11.4.4 will lead to a proposed River Viewing Point. In addition, the linear park that runs through Development Cell 1 also will give river views. These viewing points could be enhanced by the creation of boardwalk leading out over the water's edge to a pavilion or wooden structure to shelter walkers, school groups and anglers from inclement weather. Possible locations of these are shown on the masterplan.

10.5.6 Open Space Furniture

Some resting places should be provided along the woodland edges and the woodland trails. These should ideally be of natural materials - wood or possibly stone.

Interpretative signage will also be necessary to direct individuals along the way. Additional interpretative signs could be provided to highlight the areas wildlife, ecology and flora.

Lighting should be strictly minimized throughout the cSAC to enhance the appeal for wildlife.

10.5.7 Integration of Landscape Elements

The planning authority will encourage the retention of particular elements of the landscape, including mature trees, individual trees of character, important hedgerows (see Figure 6) into the future design and layout of developments and open space plans.

10.6 Density and Design

Residential developments have become increasingly uniform throughout the country. Where once vernacular and local characteristics were evident, this has given way to uniformity and in some cases monotony. An over-rigid application of both quantitative density standards (i.e., dwellings per acre) and formulae for road designs has been partially responsible, as is the lack of professional architectural expertise. The result is that suburbs are generally a rather monotonous carpet of two storey buildings. This pattern of development is to be avoided in Hazelwood-Ballinode. The action area plan proposes a hierarchy of streets and roads and a hierarchy of open space types catering for a wide range of uses (passive and active/young and old), in addition to other elements which are intended to provide a framework that avoids over repetition and monotony in the area's future developments.



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Photos 47-53: Examples of street furniture, parkland benches, litter bins and bollards that would be appropriate for the master-plan.

Photo 47 shows a more refined design style of seating that would be suitable at the neighbourhood centres while examples shown in photos 48, 49 and 50 display more rusticated designs made of natural materials that would be better suited to the woodland and parkland open space areas.



Good design is paramount to a good quality residential environment. To achieve higher density schemes, planning applications will need to be prepared by designers who are suitably qualified or proven in the field.

Higher densities will be encouraged through the following mechanisms:

1. **Varying housing types and sizes**, i.e., a greater mix of smaller one and two family units to reflect demographic changes.
2. A **reduction in private open space** (bearing in mind the increase in recreational and leisure activities away from the home), such as a reduction of front garden sizes, possibly in favour of more private space to the rear of the property in some instances. A reduction of rear garden sizes should be considered for corner sites, as these sites are generally more significant, architecturally – providing an opportunity to address two streets. A reduction of rear garden size may also be appropriate for some one and two bedroom units, which will have a smaller household size.
3. Densities can be increased by providing **car parking on-street** rather than on-site, thereby reducing front garden sizes.
4. **Shared car parking** provisions, either of small groups of 4-5 cars or where car parking is provided behind a building block or within a courtyard.
5. Incorporating **three storey buildings at intervals** within a block or street or at the end of a block. These three storey elements can accentuate junctions, provide an architectural focus in the centre of a block or can act as 'book-ends' at the end of blocks. Increases in building heights at intervals can vary the roof line and building profile on the street, creating a more interesting architectural environment. Note the location of 'Key Architectural Features,' as highlighted on the Masterplan. Increased building heights to three storeys will also be encouraged at the neighbourhood centre.
6. Increased use of **different house types** and layouts – including courtyards, terraces, duplexes and apartments - in preference to blanket layouts of detached and semi-detached houses. It should be noted that some of the most attractive and sought after areas in which to live are older housing areas of Georgian and Victorian styles, in which terraces, frequently three storey in height are the norm. Such styles and development patterns need to be revisited.
7. Increases can be achieved through **high quality and imaginative designs** (this is likely to require professional expertise). In order to overcome potential problems such as overshadowing, overlooking, public and private open space, a greater importance will be placed on the design of the development and the mix of housing types that are provided.

Attention is also drawn to the study '*Planning Issues Relating to Residential Density in Urban and Suburban Locations*' – Study prepared on behalf of the Minister of the Environment and Local Government, 1999, where examples of development forms are given.

Photos 54-58 (from top to bottom);

54 and 57: Examples of how modest increases in building heights can add interest to housing layout while facilitating increases in residential density.

55: Increases in building heights will be encouraged at the neighbourhood centre, while the constant variation in building height creates rhythm in the design.

56 & 58: Two different examples of a courtyard type development layout—such terraced developments also help increase residential density.



59. Example of a quality design that incorporates a mix of family unit and household sizes integrated into the one development.

60: This development (right) has been laid out in a clear and legible manner (in the form of a crescent). It is easily understood. Note how the near corner building is orientated to address both sides of the street. The building therefore provides a degree of natural surveillance to the front and to the side.

The stone wall is constructed on local, natural materials which relates to the original site context.



62. (Below) The footprint or layout of a building should respect existing site characteristics or features and should adapt themselves to the site context. Non-standardised layouts also result in more interesting roof-profiles which is important in areas of high visibility and in particular on hill top areas and hillsides.



61. (Above) Shared car parking areas such as this reduce the demand for large front garden sizes to accommodate car parking within the curtilage of the dwelling. As a result larger areas can be given over to public open space and increased residential densities can be achieved.