

Appendix A – Design Guidelines

The streetscapes of Ballitore, Moone and Timolin all differ in character. However, there are some general characteristics, which are true for all three settlements.

The following guidelines refer to physical design issues only. Within the guidelines we have addressed:

1. Existing buildings,
2. New infill buildings,
3. New housing schemes and,
4. Public spaces.

The guidelines for new buildings relate to those in an urban setting only. New development in the countryside is generally discouraged in this report. There are three main issues, which prevail in all circumstances, whether the project consists of the restoration of an existing house, is a new build infill or a new greenfield urban development. The building in its overall context. This will include how the buildings sit within their specific location and how they contribute to the quality of urban character, e.g. buildings at corners, end of streets, closing off vistas, in prominent locations should address the civic importance of their location. Equally, opportunities to facilitate connections and links to other parts of the town; to strengthen the quality of an existing civic space or, to form part of or generate the creation of a new public space, should be considered at design stage. More often than not the most important function will be to retain an existing streetline or establish a new line. Where existing buildings fulfil these functions they should be protected.

2. The quality of the individual structure as a piece of architecture needs to be considered. Does the building sit comfortably with the prevailing architecture of the village? Are the proportions of windows and doors and the relationship between solid and void pleasing? Ultimately is there coherence between the building and the street it sits in.



Buildings at corners, at the end of streets, closing off vistas, in exposed locations, e.g. Nolan's Foodstore in Ballitore, assume greater civic design importance because of their location. Where such buildings are modified insensitively or allowed to fall into disrepair they can have serious visual impacts.

New developments of groupings of buildings should relate in scale to their surrounding context. To achieve this coherence consideration is needed in the design of the façade and use and detailing of materials. Cheap pastiche versions of historic buildings should be avoided. Simple solid and well built buildings will often be the most appropriate solutions.

3. Maintenance: The maintenance of buildings, gardens, boundary walls, outbuildings etc., be they new or old, is an extremely important aspect in the presentation and well-being of the property and the village. Property owners should carry out regular maintenance, paying particular attention to prevention of water ingress. "A stitch in time saves nine."

1.0 Guidelines for Existing Buildings

The implications of ordinary "day-to-day improvements" on the architectural character of the different villages are of a threatening significance. For example:

- the change of window Proportions,
- the replacement of timber windows by PVC types;
- the use of varnished timber instead of traditional painted;
- using a cement based render instead of traditional lime renders and mortars on masonry buildings;
- installing "pseudo traditional type shopfronts", which ignore local context and characteristics;
- removal of traditional renders to reveal poor quality rubble walls;
- removal of boundary walls and outbuildings.

All these changes can gradually destroy the essential character of a village or a farm complex in the countryside. Many happen outside the planning process.

These guidelines will be of assistance to those undertaking repair or improvement work. As mentioned above the major threat to the overall architectural character is not only from new developments, but equally, through the day-to-day activities of property owners and occupiers.

Works to historic buildings should be carried out in accordance with the DOELG Conservation Guidelines.

For buildings which are Protected Structures in the County Kildare Development Plan it may be appropriate to apply for a Conservation Grant under the DOELG Conservation Grants Scheme. Any works to such buildings will require planning permission unless exempted within the terms of a Declaration.



Nice example of traditional boundary treatment along rural roads: granite walls and planting.



Clutters of flowerpots and garden furniture should be avoided in front gardens. A careful rearrangement should be considered. If there is a wish to separate a private front garden from the public footpath a low boundary wall would be more appropriate.

1.1 The Site

Rarely a building sits on its own, it is part of a larger complex of buildings. The building should be considered in conjunction within its context. The retention of outbuildings, gardens (front and rear) courtyards, boundary walls etc. is generally important in maintaining the integrity of the character of the building. Also, as is often the case with farm complexes in the countryside, it is important to retain the mature trees, which enclose them.

The former Quaker tradition in Ballitore, of enclosing the garden by dense hedging, pruned to an even height and shape should be revived.

The boundary treatment of a site and/or the presentation of the front garden are contributing significant factors to the overall appearance of a village and therefore are of vital importance. Traditional forms like rubble stone and rendered boundary walls or hedges are most appropriate. Cast iron fencing is less common in this region and, in general, is a rather urban/suburban language. Bollards and chains should be avoided. Although flower display in pots, beds and hanging baskets can enhance the visual appearance of a site, their grouping and presentation should be considered carefully.

1.2 Internal Layout

Ideally, the original internal layout should be retained with minimum intervention to walls and partitions. This should not be a problem where residential use is being retained. The wholesale removal of internal walls and partitions can destroy the architectural integrity of an old building, as well as putting unnecessary stress on the remaining walls and floors. Current conservation philosophy is to have the minimum of structural changes to old buildings.

Where it may be necessary to alter the internal layout to meet the end-use requirements the internal character should relate to the external façade.

1.3 External

The dominant structure of the façade should be its vertical emphasis in door and window openings. This proportion should be retained. It is preferable to repair original historic windows, rather than remove and replace them. Where replacements may be necessary, softwood timber from renewable sources should be used, rather than hardwood. All new timber windows should be specially treated with an approved preservative treatment. Historic external woodwork should be painted rather than varnished. This is a traditional and more appropriate approach.

Renders should be retained, wherever possible. New render should generally be soft in texture, using lime. The use of bright colours is not a great tradition in the region. Houses are traditionally of a grey or white tone/the soft render, often left unpainted or whitewashed. Where painting, breathable paints and lime washes should be used which are compatible with the lime render. Façade decoration should be kept simple. On an interesting note: Ballitore has been referred to as "the white village" in historic descriptions.

1.4 Roofing

The traditional roofing material in the area is natural slate. Wherever possible and economically feasible natural slate should be used in the replacement and repair of roofs, and particularly in the individual buildings of architectural importance. Manufactured slate, where used, should be dark in colour and texture.

1.5 Extensions

It is often most appropriate to continue the expression and materials of the original building into the new extension. In general extensions should be located discreetly at the rear or side, if possible. Avoid flat roofed extensions, which require great design skills, not always available. Flat roofed extensions along the street frontage should be avoided in any case. Where already existing, alterations should be considered to improve their setting within the streetscape. Extensions should not dominate the existing building. Occasionally and when good design advice and skill is on board, it may be appropriate to extend using contemporary design expressions.



The appearance of this extension could be significantly improved. The flat roof is inappropriate in the roofline of the street. By adding an additional storey space could be gained and the roofline continued. It is important to retain the vertical emphasis of the façade when altering the building.



1.6 Commercial Facades

Ballitore and Timolin contain fine old shop fronts, which form a significant aspect of their cultural character. It is important that the traditional building facades including shopfronts, are retained and maintained in good condition. A policy of repair and maintenance, rather than replacement, should be adhered to.

The shopfront and façade should be considered as an integral unit. Any improvements to the shopfront should take account of the upper floors and vice versa.

It is not necessary for new shopfronts/pubfronts to be “pseudo-traditional” in character. Simple modern style shopfronts may be more appropriate, which respect the shapes, proportions and rhythms of existing buildings in the street. The main criteria would be the choice of material and scale and proportion of the various elements – windows, doors and details.

In general avoid signs above fascia level. Signage should be incorporated into the architectural design, e.g. between windows and doors, etc., at ground floor level.

The use of plaster as a design finish is also appropriate. It has a long lasting quality, and interesting architectural details can be formed.

2. New Infill Buildings

New buildings in historic areas or existing villages should generally reflect the scale, form, proportion, structure and materials of the existing buildings. These elements may differ in the villages of Ballitore, Moone and Timolin. While Ballitore has a distinctive architectural heritage, Moone and Timolin have grown gradually over the years and their informal character contrasts with the greater formality of Ballitore.

In general, infill development in Ballitore should reflect the simple Quaker architecture and continue or re-establish the streetscape of Ballitore with its terraced houses.

In Timolin and Moone the building form is less compact. There are few terraced houses, old vernacular style buildings and modern type bungalows are found next to each other. This variety of recent architecture opens possibilities for modern contributions. New buildings should reflect the building traditions of the area and should be an expression of their time. There is no need for slavishly copying older buildings, new buildings can be contemporary in expression and conform to the general characteristics outlined above. In all cases, it is recommended that appropriate professional advice and expertise shall be consulted.

3. New Housing Schemes

The demand for housing within the area will increase as referred to in the report. More developers will seek planning permission to develop housing within the area. In the recommendations of this report suitable locations for future housing schemes have been identified. In general, there should be no new housing outside the identified areas for the lifetime of this plan.

It is important that the new developments are not isolated nodes bearing little relation to the existing urban structure. Rather, development should extend from the urban centre and adopt existing languages of streets, squares, courtyards, lanes etc. Therefore all new schemes should adhere to the principles of permeability, legibility, appropriateness and additional quality. Large unconnected cul-de-sac developments should be avoided. Existing links should not be cut off by new development, but new pedestrian and cycle links should be provided as an integral part of the layout and should connect with existing pathways and rights of way. Any development which exceeds four houses, should have a coherent layout, e.g. form a streetscape, a square etc. Every scheme should provide for car parking, bicycle parking, waste facilities etc. and open spaces within the site. In larger schemes the option of grouped car parking should be considered. The open space should be designed in an appropriate fashion respecting its rural context and as an integral part of the layout. Pastiche historicist street furniture, etc. should be avoided.

The external design of the houses should be simple and of a good quality. The use of indigenous building materials should be encouraged. The traditional proportions and dimensions of houses should be maintained. Every scheme should provide a range and variety of house designs. Large developments with identical house types should be avoided.

New development should contribute to the provision of local facilities and services by paying a development fee or including specific social, cultural, and amenity facilities into their scheme. For example the provision of sports facilities, which was identified during the public consultation process as a community need, might be part or whole funded or implemented as part of one or numbers of such developments.

All proposals should address aspects of sustainable development such as waste management, building construction and materials, low energy and energy efficient design, etc.

4. Public Spaces

The appearance, maintenance and presentation of public spaces – footpaths, streets, amenity areas, etc., are a vital aspect of civic design quality. The public areas are often overlooked and detract from high standards achieved by individual properties. It is important that any improvements or additions are carried out in a sensitive manner. Unsightly poles and wires, obtrusive traffic and parking, and damaged footpaths all create major difficulties, and make a town less friendly for residents and visitors alike.

All existing stone kerbs should be retained and, where necessary any new replacement kerbing should match. In general all paving should be neutral in tone. Concrete paving slabs or setts or in situ-concrete pavements are most appropriate for general pavements in a rural village. Tarmac or gravel type finishes are also acceptable along informal rural roads.

Road markings should be kept to a minimum. Use soft yellows and narrow lines, where possible. Car spaces could be marked out with colour contrasting paving units rather than harsh white lines.

The introduction of street planting and seating should be very carefully considered in terms of place making. Orientation of seating, shelter, shading by planting, nearness to traffic, suntrap potential, possibility for observing street life, etc., are all issues to be considered. Selection of plant species / street planting should take account of tree heights, spread, leaf size, colour through seasons, etc. and be made in consideration of their impact on the area and the desired effect to be created. Indigenous species should be used and, in general single species should be planted to create an overall uniform effect. Any street furniture should be designed and constructed in consideration of the location and be of a simple and uniform design to retain sense of place.

Public lighting should consider the quality of lighting appropriate to the character of the village. Light fittings should be kept simple and unobtrusive. In some instances, e.g. a new public space, innovative lighting schemes can extend the use of the space and enhance the overall character.