



Sustainable

Isle of Coll Design Guidance



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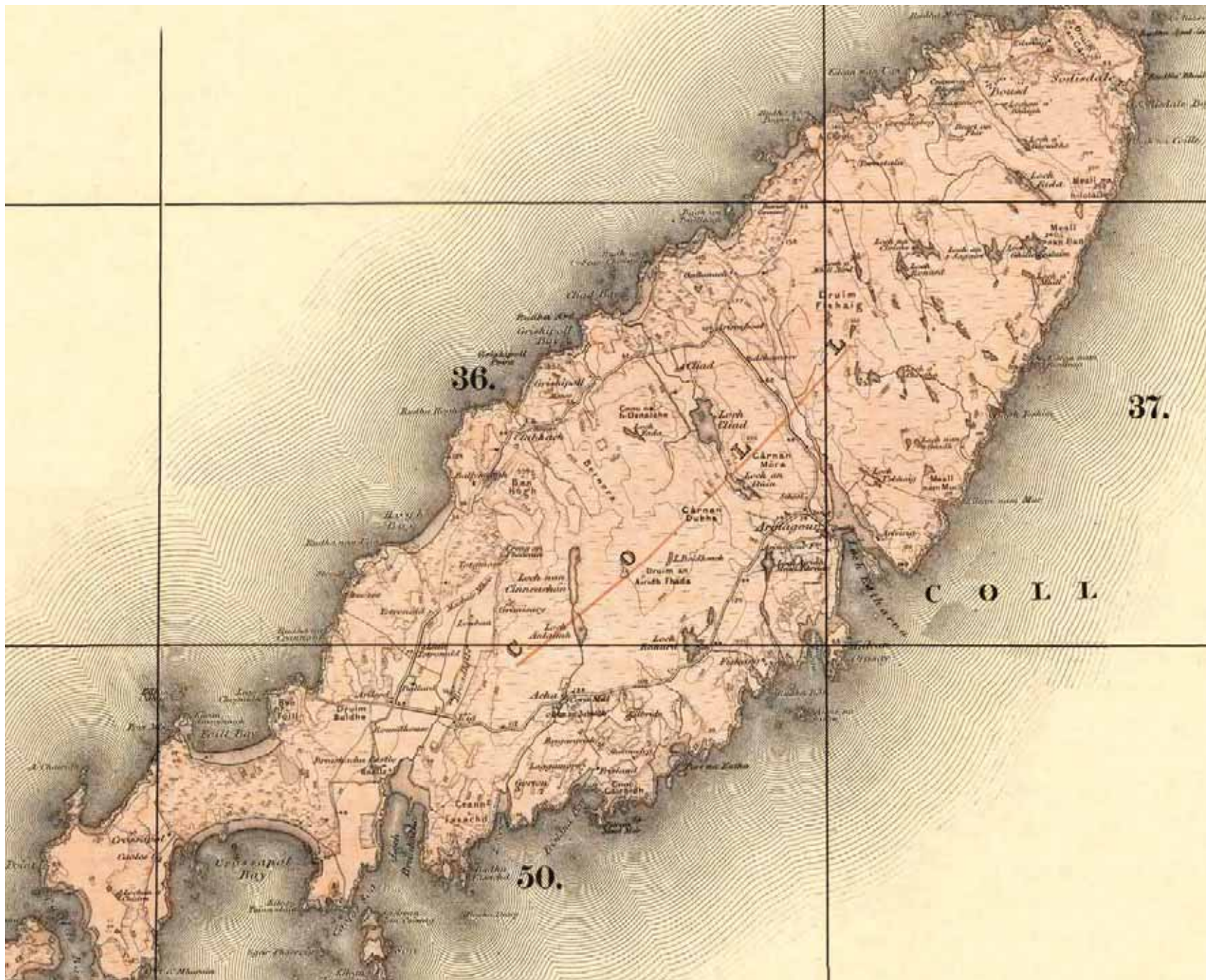
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introduction



Clusters of development in 1895 Since then, Coll's pattern of settlement has continued to evolve

Coll design guidance – consultation summary

Argyll and Bute Council (in partnership with SNH), have worked with Anderson Bell Christie to provide a practical Design Guide intended as a catalyst for good sustainable design on the island of Coll. As the Design Guidance Document developed, we consulted with Coll's Community to ensure that Guidance Content was both relevant and communicated clearly. This process is briefly summarised below:

May 2007 Initial Coll Meeting - a consultative meeting outlining our interpretation of the various character areas on the island and how the development on each varied and was place specific.

August 2007 Coll Presentation - at this we presented our draft design guidance outlining sustainable design and siting options for each area on the island. Comments were favourable and the guidance reflects them.

Coll design guidance – an explanation

This design guidance for Coll sets out to explore why some new development looks out of place whilst some fits happily into its surroundings. It suggests ways to ensure that new developments are attractive, energy efficient and flexible.

The Guidance suggests how buildings can be sited and designed so that they enhance rather than detract from or spoil their landscape setting. Whilst this guidance aims to illustrate why certain designs will not work well in particular situations, it is not intended to restrict applicant's options for developing innovative and high quality solutions for sites on Coll. Instead its aim is to encourage individual, high quality design solutions for the very special sites and places within this planning authority area. It describes the principles that underlie quality design for Coll, and describes a sustainable approach which considers the long-term impact of development.

This design guidance therefore aims to:

- **demonstrate the linkage between traditional building types and their settings**
- **ensure that new buildings are a positive addition to the Coll's landscape setting**
- **ensure that new development is appropriate for contemporary rural lifestyles**

The Guidance is not intended as an explanation of planning legislation nor does it include any guidance or reference to the building regulations.

Context and crossover with other guidance

Argyll and Bute Council have recently completed new Sustainable Design Guidance for all new housing development taking place within Argyll and Bute. This promotes good quality, sustainable and contemporary building design, and where appropriate innovative solutions, suited to the distinctive landscapes, towns and villages of Argyll and Bute.

The guidance explains the key principles of quality design and sustainable development applicable to the Argyll and Bute area as a whole. It includes a summary of the Planning Application Process.

The Sustainable Design Guides have been adopted by the Council as supplementary planning guidance and is therefore a material consideration when applications for planning consent are considered. This guidance is available on the Argyll and Bute Council website.

This Coll specific guidance supplements the more general Argyll and Bute Sustainable Design Guidance. It takes the broad Argyll-wide principles which are considered in the Argyll and Bute Design Guidance, and applies them to the landscape and built form on Coll, it will also be adopted by the Council as supplementary planning guidance.

It outlines the opportunities and constraints which in terms of the landscape character, are likely to influence the location of future housing development on Coll. This is based on the capacity of the landscape in terms of its character and scenic quality.

Document structure

This guidance is structured so that it integrates with the Isle of Coll Landscape Capacity Study and is based on an analysis of existing buildings and settlements on Isle of Coll itself.

It is structured as follows:-

Part 1 Analysis

- o A brief overview and analysis of Isle of Coll, including its range of landscape settings, existing settlement patterns and building types
- o A summary of the key design issues which arise from an analysis of landscape and settlement character

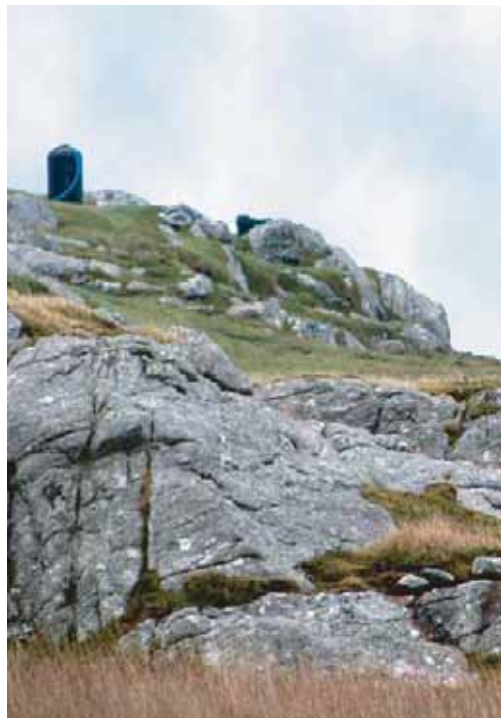
Part 2 Guidance

- o General sustainable Design Guidance applicable to Isle of Coll as a whole
- o Design Guidance for specific locations and Isle of Coll development types.

Part 3 Summary

- o The Planning Process
- o Checklist for sustainable design

analysis



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

1, Croft house: North Coll 2, Water tank located on rocky outcrop 3, waterside view : Sorisdale 4, open landscape and larger farmstead, South Coll 5, sandy beaches: travelling towards Torostan 6, hedges and dry stone walls: travelling towards Acha 7, terraced house, and garden: Arinagour 8, view to Arinagour at North

Coll's unique and special character

The Isle of Coll has a distinctive and important landscape character.

It is the location for an intricate relationship of a range of different landscape types, from the rocky coastline experienced when arriving by ferry, through moorland and hills to machair, high dunes and beautiful sandy beaches. Although it is a thriving island with a growing population, the structure of Coll's landscape is dominant and provides a dramatic backdrop for buildings and settlement.

Houses occupy the landscape in a different way, depending on which part of the island they are located.

Outside of the main village of Arinagour - which has its own distinctive structure and character - there is a range of smaller,



low density groupings which demonstrate a place-specific and ordered settlement pattern.

Often the exact location for a croft or farm has been determined by its relationship to the landscape around it. Larger farmsteadings tend to be located in more open fertile areas, and are situated to make the most of good views across farmland, whereas smaller crofts are placed between rocky knolls for shelter.

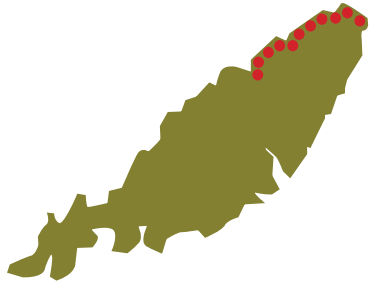
Small scale loose groupings of houses - such as the clachans at Sorisdale and Clabach - literally find the middle ground between shelter, proximity to sheltered moorings and fertile ground which could be cultivated.

There is a need to improve Isle of Coll's infrastructure, housing and facilities to ensure the future of a prosperous and economically sustainable long-term community on Isle of Coll. This new development will be introduced into what is a generally cohesive landscape and settlement pattern, and therefore will need to be considered and managed to ensure that it is a positive, integrated addition to the island's character.

A balance therefore needs to be struck between the need for innovative, contemporary and sustainable redevelopment while avoiding intrusive and inappropriate designs.

The following pages illustrate and analyse different areas of the Isle of Coll, and describe the settlement patterns associated with them.

Following the Analysis Section, we detail Design Guidance which is based on this analysis.



North (East End)

a small-scale enclosed landscape

Landscape Character

Driving through the Northern tip of Coll, the road passes close to the coast and through a rolling, rocky landscape. This is the location for rugged outcrops and raised machair, where hillocks and hollows form a series of small-scale, enclosed spaces. These often act as a frame to views of spectacular sandy beaches nearby.

This is an unusual and very attractive landscape setting, where built form comes second and landscape character dominates.

Settlement Pattern

The majority of older properties are located in a strip of land to the east of the road where they do not impact on views of the coast. A series of widely spaced, single properties sit at the junction between small

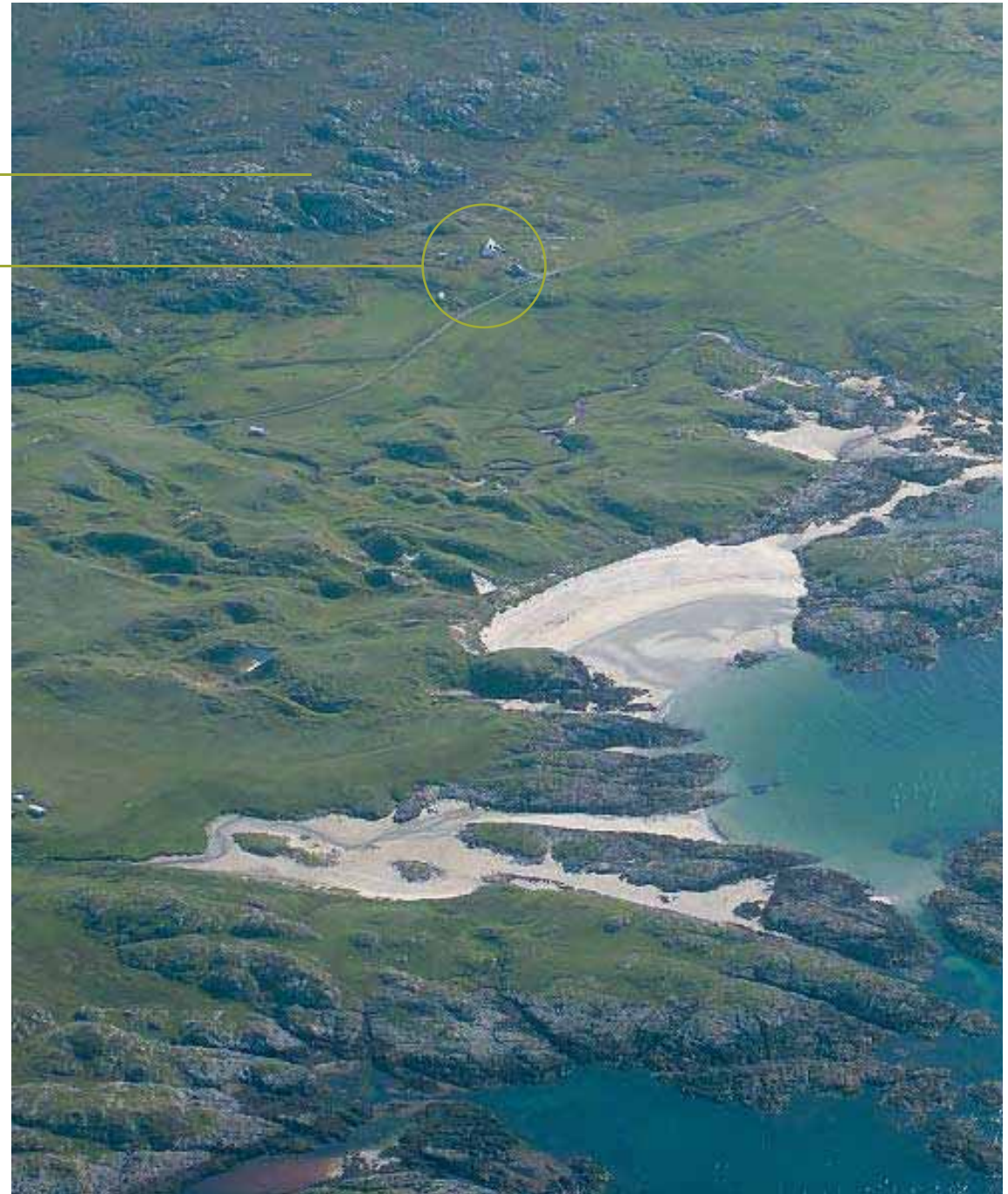
areas of more level farmland and the more rocky, rugged hillocks further east.

Traditional builders were aware of the local weather conditions and these dwellings are sensibly located to avoid the worst of the prevailing winds, using contours to make the most of available shelter. Often individual houses are sheltered by a specific rocky outcrop which can be the location for the property's water tank.

There are some newer, larger houses in this location - sometimes these are less sympathetically sited and have a disproportionate effect on their landscape setting.

Although in general the landscape becomes harsher more exposed and less suitable for cultivation than its equivalent further south, there is a larger area of more fertile, open land

low-lying outcrops houses
rocky shelter
properties located to east side of road



at Sorisdale, which is the location of a loose, low density grouping of houses and farm buildings. This development pattern is derived from its crofting origins, where cultivated land has been divided into a smaller area for each croft, each with its own house.

Massing and Scale

Older buildings are generally very small in scale - either single storey or one and a half storey in height. These small-scale buildings complement their small-scale landscape setting.

Older properties generally have massing and proportions associated with rural Scottish croft houses. They generally have:

- a narrow plan (generally one room deep) and low ceiling heights
- simple dual pitched roofs and minimal eaves, verge and gable details
- flat, symmetrical facades with a centrally located entrance, small vertically proportioned windows and a greater mass of wall to opening.

Materials and Construction

The majority of older properties in this location are constructed from local stone - as random rubble but with some dressed stone features at openings. Some properties have been limewashed, painted or rendered; some properties use timber cladding, and they utilise a range of roofing materials – including metal sheet, slate and tile.



contours used to provide shelter; buildings sited to avoid prevailing wind

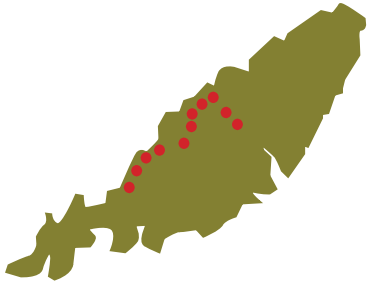


harsher exposed landscape; houses sheltered by rocky hillocks



open farmland at Sorisdale; loose grouping of houses and farm buildings





Mid Coll

larger farms sit back from road in a flatter more open landscape

Landscape Character

Here the rocky knolls which characterise the North (East End) of Coll give way to an expansive area of more level farmland located southwest of Arnabost. This is the location for a more open landscape with level areas of cultivated and grazed machair. Towards the coast are headlands and bays and extensive dunes. To the East this area is constrained by undeveloped rocky moorland.

There are long views across this distinctive open landscape, and settlement is sparse.





hinterland; houses sit between cultivated land and hillside



headlands and bays; small farms and clachans with a view to the sea

Settlement Pattern

Buildings and settlements in Mid Coll have a distinctive development pattern, massing and scale which is closely linked to their location.

- **Farmed strath;** the location for a series of substantial farmsteadings which overlook the land they serve, such as Ballyhaugh and Cliad. These are seen as “point” features and their larger scale suits the more open landscape in which they sit. Often these larger farmsteads are located away from the main adopted road.
- **Hinterland of rocky moorland;** this area is not itself developed but larger single storey and one and a half storey croft houses tend to hug the location between the change in height and cultivated land. For example, the farm at Totamore is sheltered by hillside with views over more fertile land.
- **Headlands and bays:** the location for smaller farms and clachans associated with small stretches of more fertile land sheltered by rocky knolls and with a view to the sea.

Massing and Scale

Even though some older properties are larger than others they are made up of components which share the same scale and proportions as their neighbours - such as dormers, window proportions, porches and entrances.

Where properties vary in height they still have the same proportions of walls to windows, and are made up of flat walls and simple geometric shapes.

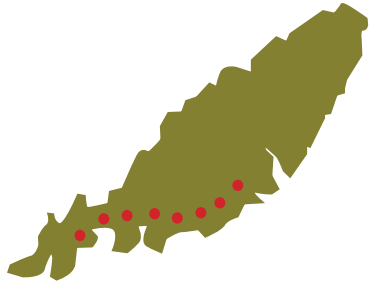
Although storey heights vary, properties have similar proportions because they have a consistent roof pitch and plan depth. They therefore complement each other even though they use different materials.

- **Farmsteadings;** symmetrical one and half storey and two storey houses tend to form a dense grouping with extensive farm outbuildings. Often their massing is broken down into a series of components of different heights but which share a common roof pitch, ceiling height and depth of gable. Although outbuildings can include more modern sheds they are generally well integrated with original farm buildings
- **Croft houses;** these share the characteristics of the smaller croft houses described on the preceding pages. These are often larger than their equivalent to the north of the island and their massing is broken up by often smaller extensions to either side.
- **Clachans;** there is a loose, low density grouping of houses and outbuildings at Clabhach, linked by a network of drystone walls.

Materials and Construction

Again, the majority of older properties in this location are constructed from local stone - as random rubble but with some dressed stone features at openings. Some properties have been limewashed, painted or rendered and the majority have slated roofs.

Garden spaces are often delineated by drystone walls - an extension of the extensive system of field enclosures for this part of the island which also includes post and wire fences and hedges.



South Coll

range of properties
farming landscape

Landscape Character

Travelling towards Arinagour from the south of the island, the road crosses an area of elevated moor consisting of heather, lochans and small scale rocky hummocks. This part of Coll is relatively flat and offers long views across countryside – often all the way to Arinagour.

To the east the coastline is indented by a series of well-defined bays. Towards the west is an area of what has historically been crofted strath where the land is much drier and better cultivated. Here there are a series of open fields, machair and rocky hills which provide a sense of containment and a backdrop to the settled valley floor.

The landscape forms a dramatic backdrop for Breachacha Castle.



elevated moorland

Settlement Pattern

Coastline; solitary properties are associated with individual bays and inlets. They are secluded and set some distance away from the road. As a result their access ways often have more visual impact than the houses themselves.

Open fields, machair and rocky hills; sparse linear development of generally single croft houses associated with access roads. Often their location is more elevated so they are very visible.

There are some larger farmsteadings which themselves range in size from single storey “cottages” sitting in a smaller plot of land, to larger extended houses with more substantial outbuildings.

Massing and Scale

Although many buildings share the same proportions and materials, and thus complement each other, this part of Coll includes a wide range of properties with a range of very different characters. Properties range from:

- **Croft houses** - simple, symmetrical two-roomed single storey croft houses and larger one and a half storey extended croft houses with outbuildings
- **One and a half story farmsteadings** associated with farmed strath with substantial stone outbuildings. A farmhouse (generally with the symmetrical proportions associated with the Scottish countryside) sits within a compact grouping of outbuildings – a dense cluster in the middle of more open landscape.

Larger farmsteadings demonstrate a variety of different groupings and the relationship between farmhouse and outbuildings is very varied – from more linear

groupings through to more traditional “courtyard” types

- **Two and a half storey individual house** - Acha House is prominent in open landscape.
- **At Breachaca** – existing castle, steading house and walled garden
- **Some newer properties** with timber cladding

The majority of properties are derived from the original narrow plan and older properties tend to be symmetrical with central entrance. Larger properties often have their massing broken up with often smaller extensions to either side.

Materials and Construction

The majority of older properties in this location are constructed from random rubble stone and some have relatively fine dressed stone features, such as arched openings.

Some properties have been limewashed, painted or rendered; some properties use timber cladding, and they utilise a range of roofing materials including metal sheet, slate and tile.



Coastline: secluded



Croft houses: sparse linear development

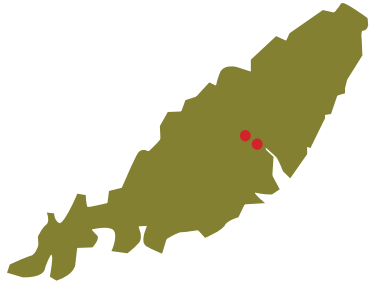


Farmsteadings: in open landscape



Landmarks: Acha House, Breachachta Castle





Arinagour

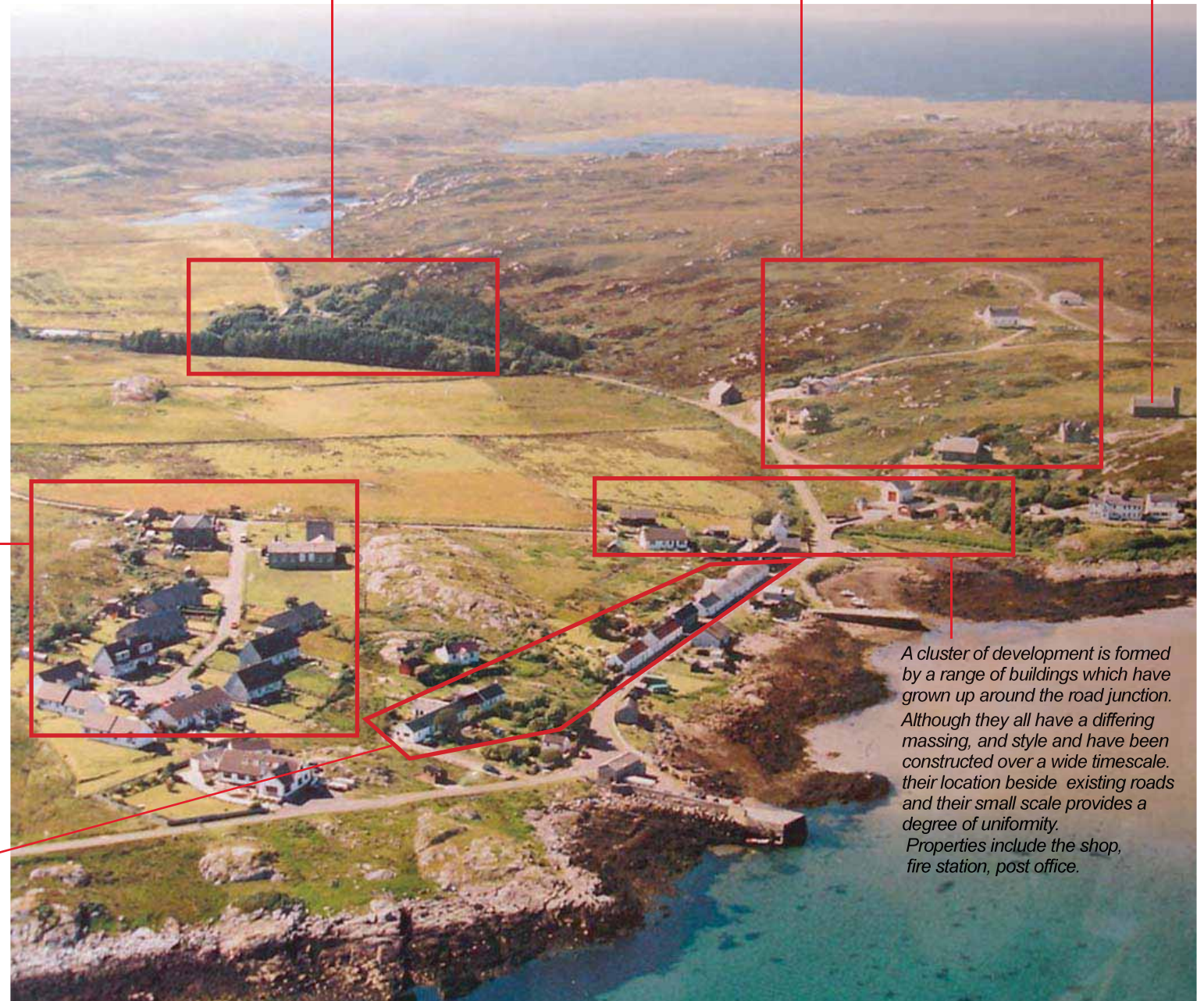
Arinagour is a relatively low density settlement made up of distinctive clusters, each with their own character (*see facing page*).

It is located in small scale, contained landscape setting on the side of a rocky inlet. It is Coll's largest settlement and the location for its school, community hall, pub, doctor, post office and shop.

The Doctors Surgery, Village Hall and a larger house form a separate grouping located at a distance from the rest of the settlement

A fragmented pattern of often isolated houses which are not always sympathetically located. Here, less successful recent development tends to intrude on the skyline

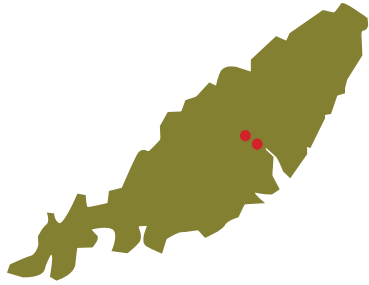
Church located at top of hill



*Varied development of more modern semi-detached & terraced houses located around a standard adoptable roads layout associated with larger much more urban settlements
Coll's primary school sits among these properties*

*Terrace of nineteenth century housing facing onto the waterside and located directly beside the road.
Although some properties have large front gardens, others sit directly at the back of a narrow pavement.*

A cluster of development is formed by a range of buildings which have grown up around the road junction. Although they all have a differing massing, and style and have been constructed over a wide timescale. their location beside existing roads and their small scale provides a degree of uniformity. Properties include the shop, fire station, post office.



Arinagour

Landscape Character

Some development is located on the side of a small hill to the north (East End) where the church forms a focus for views. Other development sits to the south and west framed by enclosed pasture and broad open strath, which itself is part of a swathe of low-lying land which continues through into the rocky moorland interior of Coll.

There are views towards Arinagour from some distance away across elevated moorland lying to the south of the village. These views towards Arinagour are important and development located around the church on its hillside setting is very visible from a considerable distance

There are views out of Arinagour into its more dramatic context of low lying hills and waterside at Loch Eatharna.

Settlement Pattern

Within Arinagour, areas of localised higher densities - such as the long waterfront terraces - form a successful development pattern, because they are perceived as only a single visual component of a

larger landscape setting.

Less successful development is, oddly, often less dense. Newer, semi-detached houses impart a suburban character which lessens the impression of a small-scale settlement in a rural location

Massing and Scale

Most properties within Arinagour are predominantly small in scale (a unifying factor) with a mix of single through to one and a half storey houses and larger properties such as the Isle of Coll Hotel

The majority of properties are derived from a narrow plan and tend to be symmetrical with a central entrance.

Materials and Construction

The majority of older properties in this location are constructed from random rubble stone. Some properties have been limewashed, painted or rendered and they utilise a range of roofing materials – including metal sheet, slate and tile.

Where properties are terraced they include a range of roofing materials including slate, tiles, metal roofing

and fibre cement slates. There are a number of single and one and a half storey properties which feature painted/coloured timber cladding. Newer rendered and roughcast buildings include the fire station and school.

In addition to the properties described above, Arinagour is the location for a range of smaller outbuildings - often single storey sheds - which utilise both timber and metal cladding.

Gardens are contained by dry stone walls, post and wire and mesh fencing



small scale properties



long terraces



hillside



varied small scale settlement



views to sea out of Arinagour



long views into Arinagour

Siting - what does guidance seek to avoid

Throughout Isle of Coll there are a number of post war or more contemporary houses. Some fit in well in the Isle of Coll landscape and others are more obtrusive.

As elsewhere in Argyll and Bute, where these newer houses do not look appropriate for their setting it tends to be for the following reasons:-

- **undue prominence** - sometimes new homes are located to take advantage of the best views, as a result they are often located much more prominently than their older neighbours which would have been sited to make the most of shelter. Because of this they can have a significant impact on their setting - for example larger properties visible from a long distance or located right beside a beach or historic property.
- **landmark designs** - one exciting or different house is a landmark, but Coll is a small island and a number of wildly different properties are likely to be visually chaotic

- **buildings are out of scale with their neighbours** - larger two storey properties can become visually dominant in among smaller “croft house” neighbours or within some of Coll’s small scale landscapes. Often this is as a result of bigger floor to ceiling heights and/or more extensive underbuilding, often associated with suspended timber floors.
- **massing is significantly different, and is not usually associated with a scottish rural location** - such as suburban semi , log cabin or larger hacienda type bungalow. Even if correctly scaled and sited, properties like this can have a disproportionate effect on their setting
- **different orientation** - houses which are orientated in a significantly different way to their neighbours can stand out and become unduly prominent.
- **using a “standard” timber kit house** many timber kit manufacturers



before: remote headland - views across water



after: remote headland - out of place larger property dominates view

produce a range of standard house types which are suitable for locations such as suburbs or the edges of a small town. These house types do not provide the best solutions for the Isle of Coll. Because their proportions and scale are different to their neighbours, they become unacceptably prominent in Coll's important landscape setting

Smaller groupings and infill

Even when individual properties have been carefully designed to suit their rural location, a new development can look out of place. This is often because:

- **new development unacceptably alters existing density** Where there is a predominantly low density small scale development pattern, new larger development with a higher density and a uniform layout will not only look out of

place itself, but will change the way its neighbours are perceived.

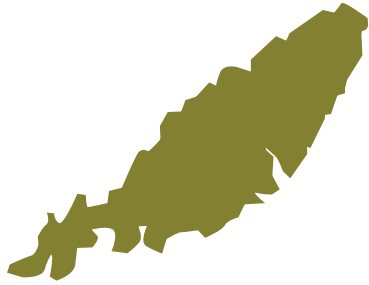
- **development is introverted** - new houses look in towards each other rather than outwards, ignoring Coll's fantastic views. Timber back garden fencing can become an unattractive "face" of development.
- **a standard, uniform "urban" layout is used** - which appears out of place in Coll's remote landscape setting (wider streets, extensive areas of pavement, traffic calming, larger parking courts, intrusive street lighting)
- **standardised suburban gardens dominate** smaller front gardens and larger enclosed back gardens - associated with timber ranch fencing, brick boundary walls, pavements



before: Arinagour, small scale rural character



after: Arinagour, out of place larger property dominates view



Coll analysis - summary

Colls evolving way of building

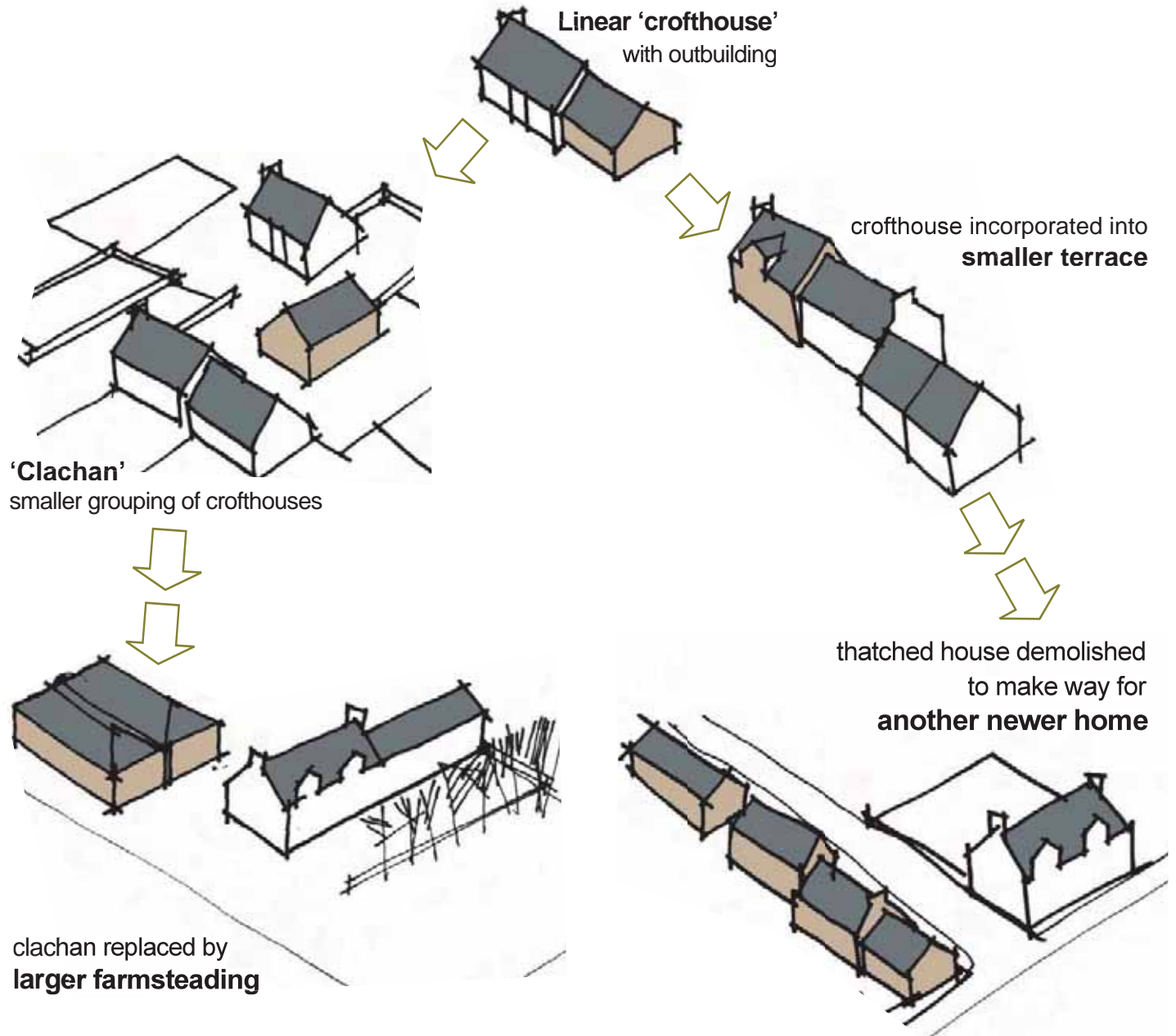
There is no single, “typical” settlement pattern or building type associated with the Isle of Coll. Every part of the island reveals different development patterns which reflect its own very local history.

They illustrate how Coll’s rural houses have developed and how different types of location have influenced the way that land is used and thus the way that building types have evolved.

Nevertheless, our analysis has revealed that Coll’s buildings and settlements often share common characteristics which developers and designers need to recognise and use as a basis for new proposals.

New buildings should not just be a reflection of traditional buildings, nor should they be copies of buildings elsewhere – rather they should be a contemporary interpretation of Coll’s evolving way of building.

Coll’s evolving way of building



siting guidance

Siting Guidance: settlement patterns and their relationship to the landscape

The previous analysis has explained how specific Coll locations are associated with particular way of siting, massing and scale of development.

New development should relate to its specific landscape setting and this Guidance now suggests strategies for designing new houses and smaller groups of dwellings specifically for the Isle of Coll

The Guidance is based upon the previous analysis of the siting, settlement and house types on the island. It suggests where each development type can be most appropriately be used so that it complements its location.

Firstly the Guidance suggests how properties should be sited and it includes four generic settlement types, together with a note of the landscape types with which they are associated, in order to demonstrate broad principles for siting, massing and scaling new development:

- **Croft houses** - a building type often located close to Coll's rocky knolls and within a more enclosed landscape.
- **Clachans** - loose groupings of smaller houses - a good model for new development which are again associated with a more enclosed landscape setting -good current examples are Sorisdale and Clabach
- **Larger houses and farmsteadings** - traditionally associated with more open landscape
- **Arinagour** - a low density development characterised by clusters each with a different character, but which share a common scale and proportions.

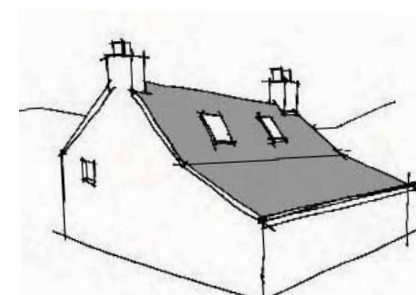
Next the Guidance considers strategies for more detailed design of specific components of new properties such as windows and openings, materials and construction details. These are not intended as an exclusive way of designing new homes on the island but can be used as a useful starting point.

Linear croft house: existing Coll examples

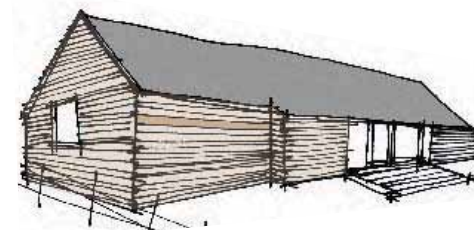
- Associated with a more enclosed landscape
- Small scale
- Simple proportions
- Dispersed, stands alone in landscape



crofthouse with various additions; metal roofing



crofthouse extended to rear



contemporary crofthouse
timber cladding

Clachan: reconstruction

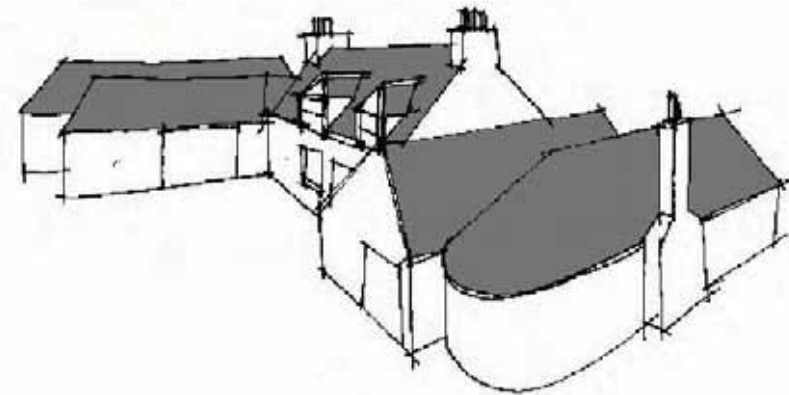
loose grouping utilising a range of roofing and walling materials



- Associated with smaller areas of open land
- Small scale
- Simple proportions
- Loose grouping
- No urban or village spaces (such as streets or squares)
- Buildings have a direct relationship with the landscape

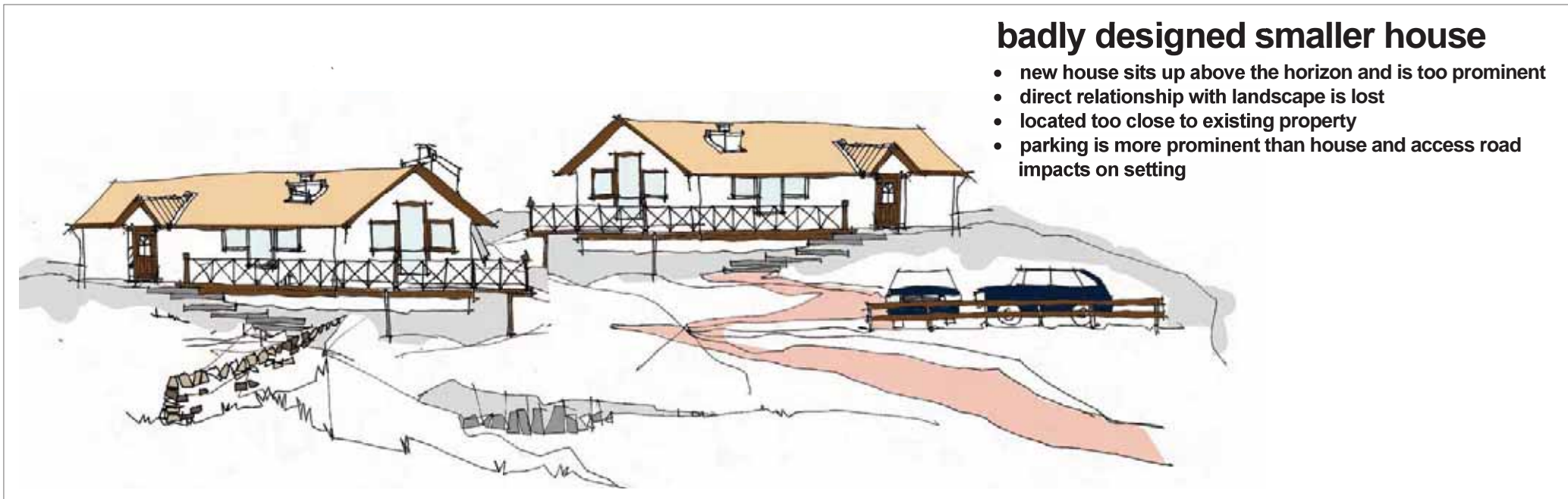
Farmsteading: existing Coll examples

generally one and half storey or two storey farmhouses with single storey outbuildings

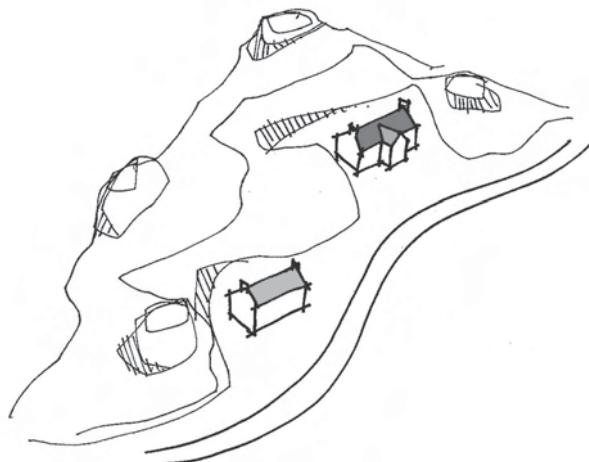


- Associated with open, fertile land
- Larger scale
- Forms complex and compact groupings

Siting, massing and scale: smaller houses



Location: well designed smaller houses are separated by larger areas of landscape



Location

This development type is associated with:

- small scale rocky and enclosed landscape to the north (East End)
- the junction between farmland and rocky moorland in mid Coll
- limited linear development to the south.

Siting

Sustainable siting of properties in these locations will avoid impacting unduly on their setting through:

- Working with the landform rather than against it: tucking buildings against rocky outcrops for shelter will reduce energy costs and impact on surroundings
- Sitting below the horizon rather than impacting on the skyline
- Maintaining the spacing between buildings in the area
- Avoiding significant visual intrusion onto Coll's shoreline

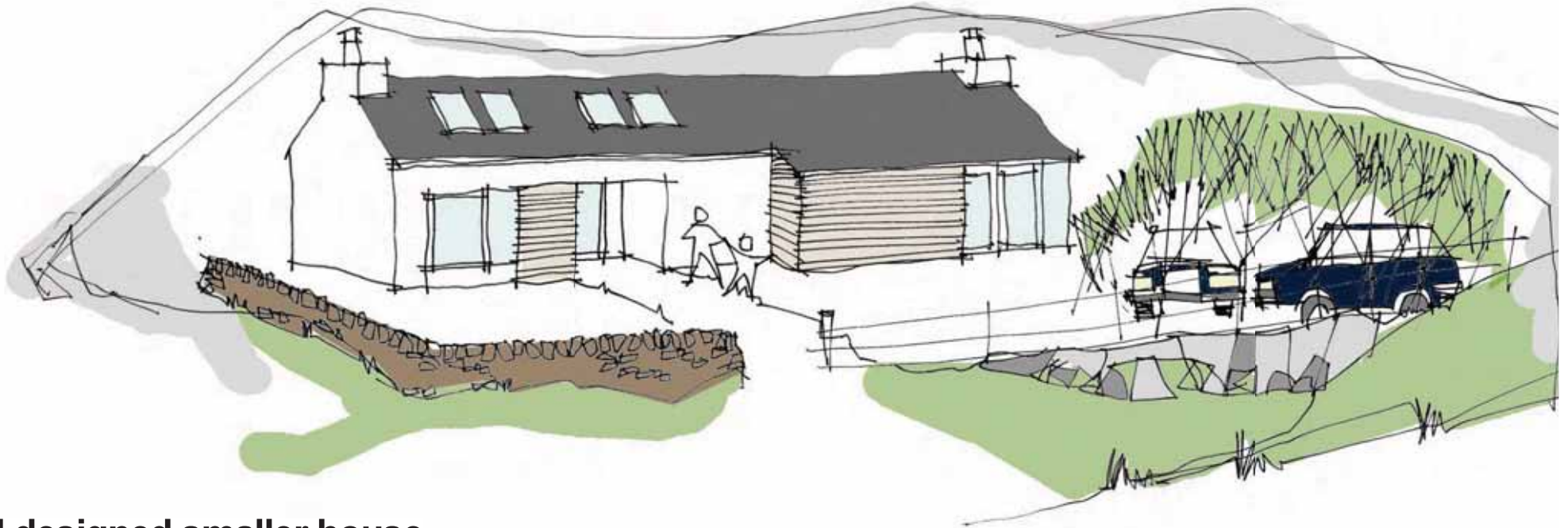
- Retain a direct relationship with the landscape use minimal garden boundaries and avoid formal front and back gardens

Massing and Scale

New houses in these locations can avoid looking inappropriate for their location through:

- The use of a narrow plan form and a simple roof shape
- Using an appropriate building scale - generally minimising floor to floor heights, and keeping as close to existing ground levels as possible
- Where larger properties are proposed they should not dominate their setting. They will complement their location better if they are a maximum of one and a half storeys and their massing is broken down into components based on a narrow plan.

Siting, massing and scale: **smaller houses**



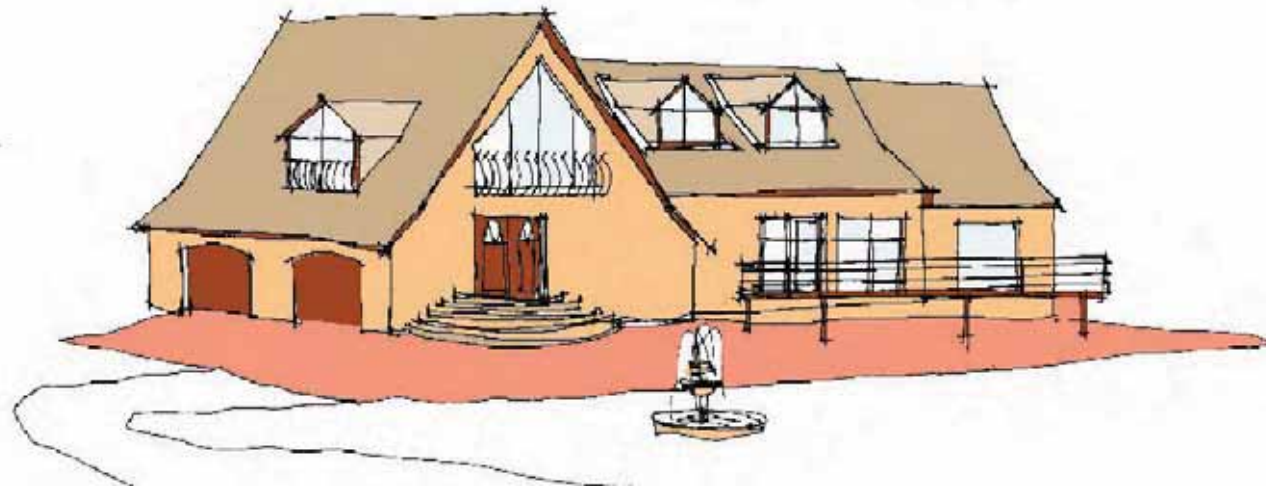
well designed smaller house

- sheltered by contours, does not impact on landscape setting
- attractive boundary treatment appropriate for location
- parking screened by planting and located away from the front of the house
- larger windows based on proportions of existing buildings
- minimal difference between external ground level and ground floor

Contemporary precedent

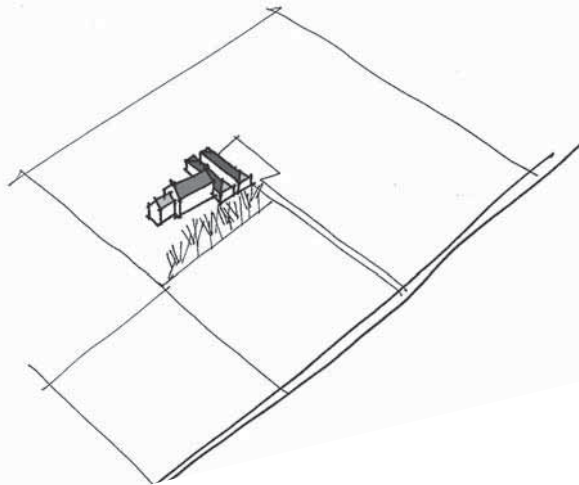


Siting, massing and scale: larger houses



badly designed larger house

- proportions are not based on rural narrow plan
- 'character' features lack local distinctiveness
- unsympathetic materials
- over-large dormer windows
- proportions are not based on rural narrow plan
- 'extensive underbuilding increases scale still further
- extensive hard landscaping and suburban garden features



Location: larger scale property sits in larger area of more open landscape

Location

This development type is associated with more open fertile landscape in mid and south Coll. It can be a good model for the design of a large homes which is in keeping with its Coll context

Siting

The flatter landscape means that these properties can be much more prominent - any new development which looks significantly different to its neighbours will be very conspicuous. To avoid this properties should:

- **maintain the spacing and density associated with a particular location.**

Either directly adjoin existing properties in the same way as their older counterparts - for example extending a farmsteading to increase the size of a compact cluster sitting in an open landscape.

Or maintain existing spacing between properties

- **orientate new buildings in the same way as**

their older counterparts - for example towards a road

- **minimise the impact of access-ways and parking**
- **retain a direct relationship with the landscape** use minimal garden boundaries and avoid formal front and back gardens

Massing and Scale

New houses in these locations can avoid looking inappropriate for their location through:

- **Maintaining a compact grouping** to give an impression of a dense cluster in the middle of more open landscape.
- **Introduce common proportions**, such as common building depth, ceiling height, roof pitch, details at eaves and verge



well designed larger house

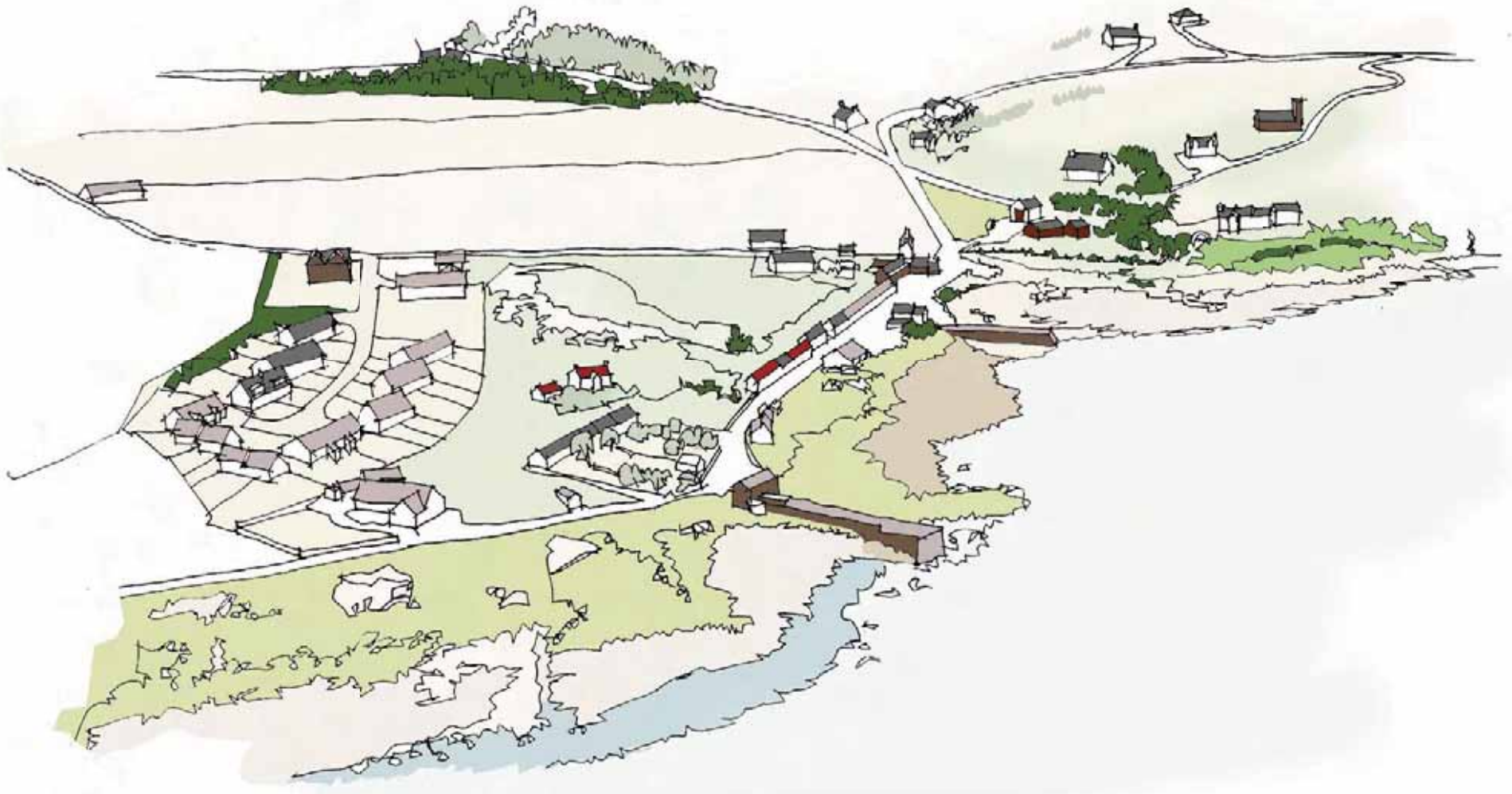
- proportions based on narrow plan
- attractive boundary treatment appropriate for location
- parking screened by planting and located away from the front of the house
- massing broken down into two storey, one and a half storey and single storey elements
- minimal difference between external ground level and ground floor

Contemporary precedent



Arinagour; existing development

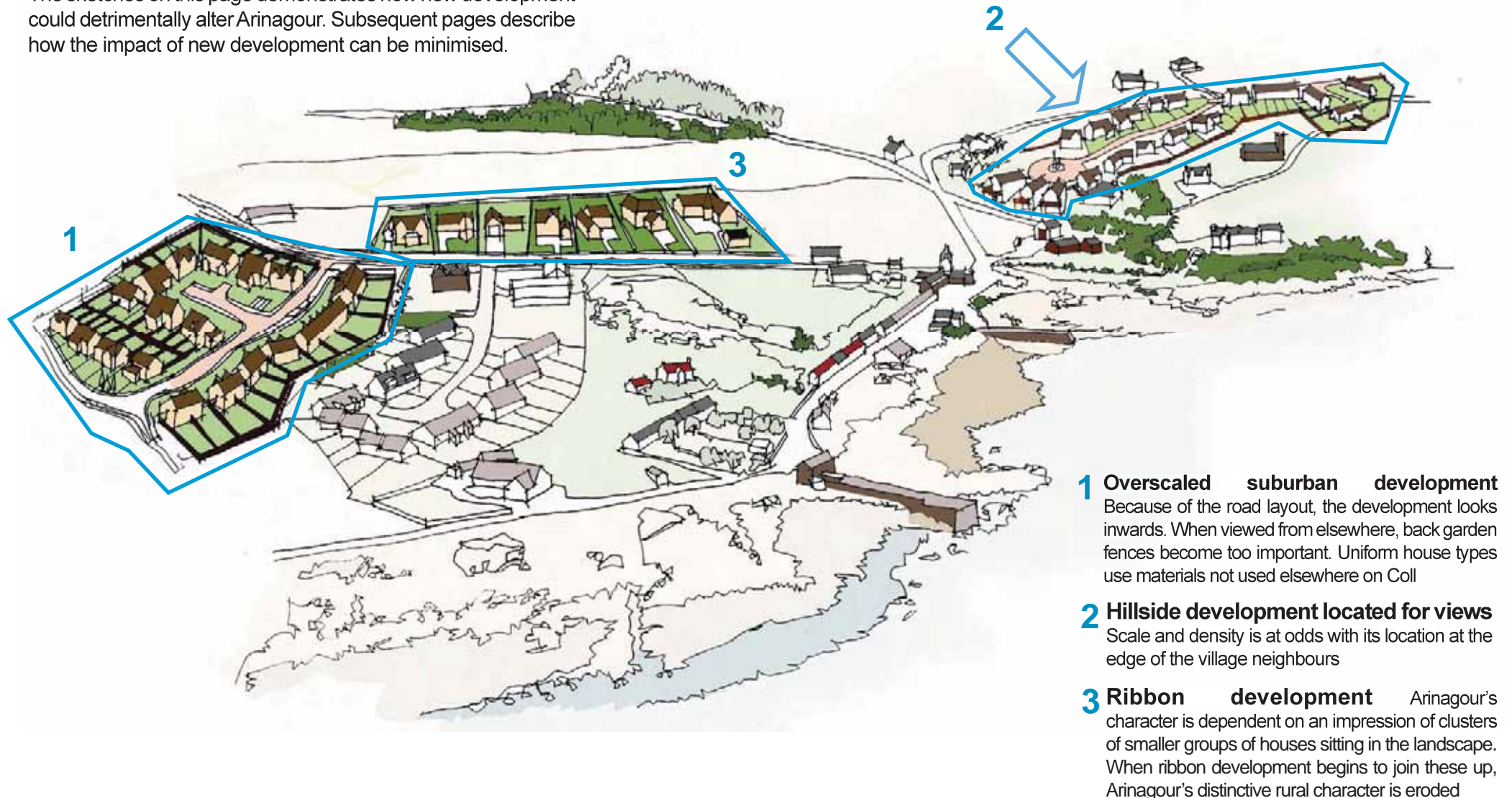
Better development is rural in character, rather than suburban, and is designed specifically for its location rather than utilising a 'standard' Scotland-wide solution. It is small in scale so that it does not overwhelm its neighbours and properties use the same narrow plan and simple details as their older, successful counterparts.



Arinagour; how it could go wrong

It is anticipated that Arinagour will be the location for limited development of smaller groupings of housing located on development sites already identified in the Argyll and Bute Local Plan.

The sketches on this page demonstrate how new development could detrimentally alter Arinagour. Subsequent pages describe how the impact of new development can be minimised.



- 1 Overscaled suburban development**
Because of the road layout, the development looks inwards. When viewed from elsewhere, back garden fences become too important. Uniform house types use materials not used elsewhere on Coll
- 2 Hillside development located for views**
Scale and density is at odds with its location at the edge of the village neighbours
- 3 Ribbon development** Arinagour's character is dependent on an impression of clusters of smaller groups of houses sitting in the landscape. When ribbon development begins to join these up, Arinagour's distinctive rural character is eroded

Siting massing and scale: Arinagour small scale development - design principles

Siting small groups of houses

Some locations for new development will be very prominent and can be viewed from a long distance. It is likely that some new development will be very prominent when driving towards Arinagour across elevated moorland from the South of Coll.

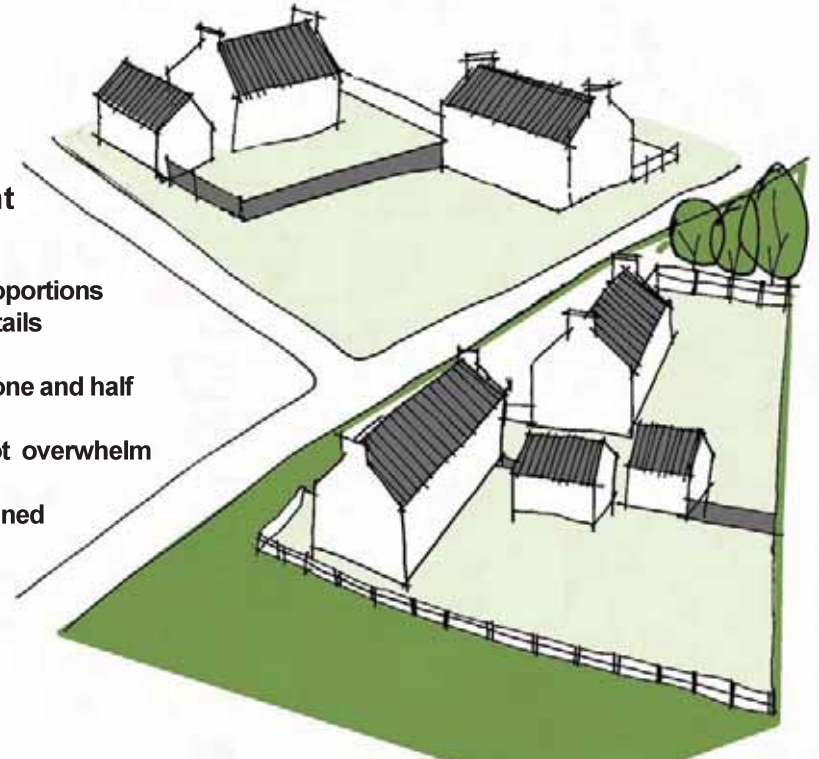
It is essential that properties in these locations use appropriate massing, scale and materials to minimise their impact. Larger new properties in this location have demonstrated that white render is very conspicuous and an alternative materials such as rubble walling and timber should be used instead

Carefully siting small groups of houses will avoid detrimental impact on their setting. In general, successful edge of settlement development:

- **Minimises the number of units per cluster** - around five is generally successful
- **Avoids repetition of limited number of house types** which all have same relationship to the road
- **Works with the landform rather than against it**
- **Sits below the horizon rather than impacting on the skyline**
- **Avoids significant visual intrusion onto its village setting**
- **Avoids layouts which focus on standard road designs** instead houses are located first with due regard for shelter and solar gain, and roads layouts come second.
- **Buildings need to be grouped around attractive small scale informal places** which are not dominated by bins or parked cars
- **Integrate designs for boundaries and gardens** – they need to be designed with as much care as the properties themselves

appropriate development edge of settlement

- all properties have common proportions and simple eaves and verge details
- orientation varies
- massing varies between one, one and half and two storeys
- small, loose cluster does not overwhelm landscape setting
- boundary and landscape designed as an integrated part of the overall development



Contemporary precedent



Siting massing and scale: Arinagour small scale development - design principles

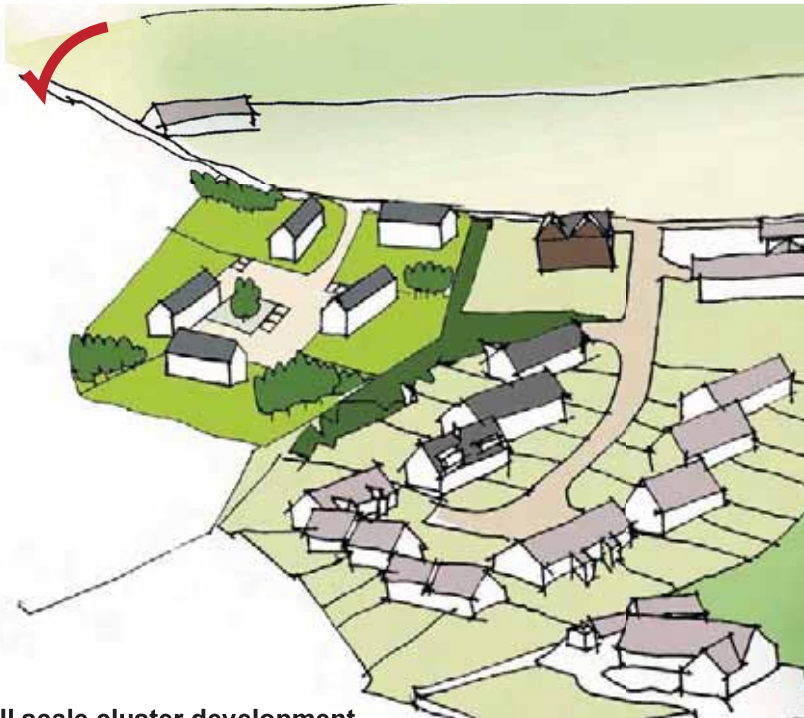
Massing and Scale - small groups of houses

New houses can avoid looking inappropriate for their Arinagour location through:

- **Appropriate massing and proportions** based on a narrow form, simple proportions and robust details.
- **Varying height and orientation** – alternate orientation, vary scale and massing by including one storey and one and a half storey properties.

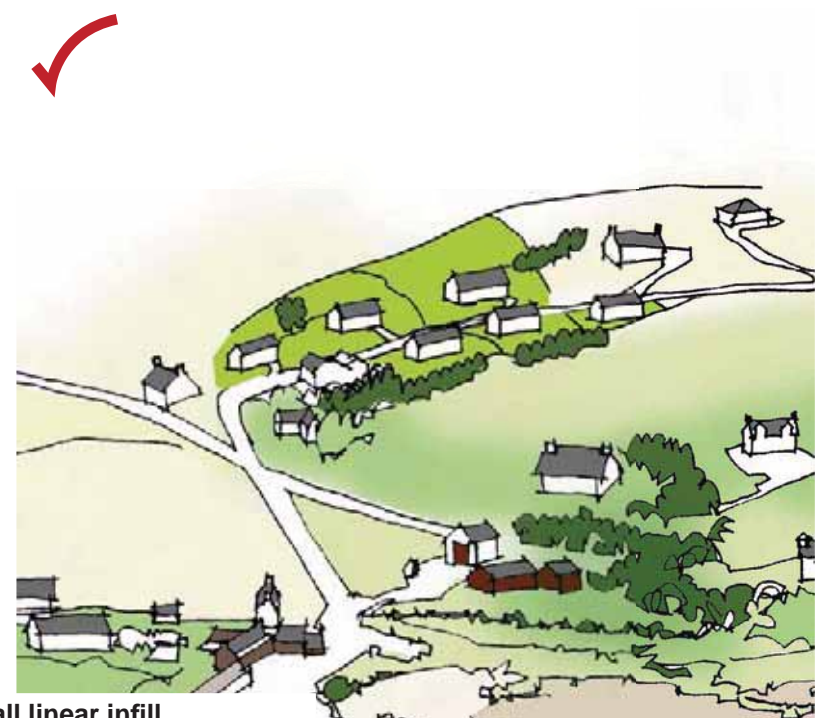
- If two storey houses are included, they should be offset by a greater number of one and one and half storey properties. The Guidance does not seek to limit the size of larger properties but these should be appropriately broken down in scale

- **Use the same simple eaves, verge and window details throughout**



Small scale cluster development

- House types, materials, density and scale are similar to their neighbours
- Varying orientation and garden locations breaks up impact (no standard front and back gardens)
- Sympathetic low key boundary treatments and planting designed to integrate building and its landscape setting neighbours



Small linear infill

- Small scale development takes second place to its Arinagour setting
- New development is located in a similar way to surrounding properties, with the same plot sizes and relationship to road
- New planting could frame views of new properties from a distance

Siting massing and scale: infill

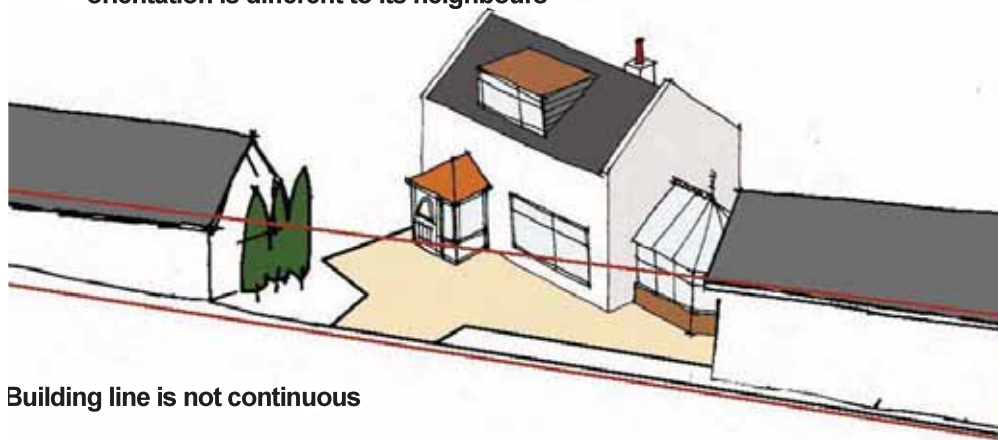
New development must not overwhelm its setting within Arinagour

Existing properties group together in loose, small-scale clusters and new development should integrate with this development pattern in order to avoid larger infill development dominating Isle of Coll's fragile "small-scale" settlement.

- **New development within Arinagour should be designed with a variety of massing and scale** to reinforce Arinagours eclectic character
- **Avoid properties with a suburban character** such as semi detached houses with a deep plan

X inappropriate infill

- parking located in front of house
- underbuilding increases scale of property
- massing is different to its neighbours
- roof line is different
- orientation is different to its neighbours



Contemporary examples of infill



Access and Parking

Because the Isle of Coll is rural and remote its residents rely on the use of their car, so every new development needs to include safe accessways with appropriate passing places, junctions and sightlines together with well designed, unobtrusive parking.

New development therefore needs to:

- **Avoid “urban” solutions which use “standard” roads layouts that have not been designed specifically for their Coll location.** In this type of development parking is often sited directly in front of properties where it is at its most obtrusive. Avoid materials associated with an urban or suburban location – such as brick/block pavements
- **Minimise impact of parking areas** – locate parking areas where they are out of site – screened by built form, landscape or topography. Avoid parking spaces located directly in front of houses
- **Minimise the visual impact of new access ways and drives** Typical strategies include reducing the width of roadways, minimising the use of pavements and kerbs. Integrate designs for roads and parking with those for properties. For example use local gravel where possible, instead of tarmac driveways - and screen parking with landscaping or boundary treatments
- **Reduce lighting (including streetlighting) to the minimum** Lighting solutions intended for towns and cities can be a source of light pollution in a remote rural area. New development needs to balance safety and security against local distinctiveness and countryside character. Consider locating lights at low level and choose fitting which minimise light “spillage”



access and parking; minimal kerbs and pavements

1 and 4 minimal kerbs and pavements; Isle of Gigha **2** minimal access road; Isle of Tiree **3 and 6** entrance and access road; Isle of Gigha **5** grasscrete car parking; Kilmartin House **6** access road; Isle of Coll **7, 8 and 9** car parking; Isle of Coll



Planting and boundaries

Well designed fencing and walling can integrate new development into Coll's landscape setting.

Some types of fencing and walling can be obtrusive and detract from Coll's distinctive rural character. When located in among groups of properties, inappropriate walls and fences can give an impression of suburban development.

New developments should look to traditional boundary treatments and avoid “suburban” walls and fences

- **Entrances to single houses** - avoid formal solutions such as gateposts, pilasters and off-the -peg wrought iron gates. Instead provide low-key gates and signage with a rural character. Where bins are to be stored at entrances, screen them from view.
- **Smaller groupings should avoid “introverted” layouts** which offer boundary fences as the most prominent view.
- **Vary the location and orientation of properties so that garden spaces are not uniform**
- **Provide rural rather than suburban boundary treatments** – such as dry stone walls, post and wire fences, hedges, farm gates.

X



Unacceptable examples ; boundary treatments



character guidance

Sustainable Design

The Isle of Coll can be very windy and exposed. Climate change means that the weather will probably get windier, wetter and wilder and new buildings need to take this into account. However this Guidance, in line with contemporary living expectations, also suggests that new homes can accommodate more open-plan layouts and larger areas of glazing for views and light. These are areas where heat can potentially be lost. Using energy-efficient, sustainable building materials and methods will ensure that houses can accommodate these aspirations while remaining warm, comfortable, efficient to heat and easy to maintain.

Material choices need to be considered carefully to accommodate Coll's weather and climate. Detailed consideration of sustainable materials and renewable technologies is outwith the scope of this particular Guidance Document which deals only with Coll – specific issues.

Refer to Argyll and Bute Council's Sustainable Design Guidance (available on Argyll and Bute Council's website).

- **choose materials which are durable, tried and tested**
- **use materials and construction methods which are locally available**
- **consider carefully before using technology and components which need specialist maintenance**
- **minimise construction time** – conditions on Coll, as on many islands, means that it makes sense to consider the use of prefabricated components or building systems e.g. prefabricated Structural Insulated Timber Panel Systems etc.



sustainable materials; timber and stone



sedum roof



solar panels



consideration is given to areas of glazing to maximise light, views and energy efficiency

Inappropriate materials and construction methods

Some modern materials and details detract from Coll's distinctive character because-

- they introduce other elements which are visually **intrusive** for example bulky eaves and verge details. These become unduly prominent. Visually a building is now much more complicated - it no longer has Coll's simple proportions but has an extra visual element
- they are associated with “suburban” development such as brick coursing with render; overly complicated metalwork features; feature front doors
- they alter proportions for example extensive brick base course at underbuilding, picture windows and bay windows

Materials and details which can be detrimental to local character include;-

- Facing brick
- Dry dash marble chip render
- Obtrusive proprietary plastic roof accessories such as heavy verges and eaves details
- uPVC doors and windows
- False window astragals
- Heavy interlocking concrete roof tiles (unless they have a simple “thinned” profile which mimics slate and which minimises the eaves and verge detail)

Avoid artificial decorative features that are not related either to local traditional finishes or the building's function. Typically these include;-

- Brick window surrounds
- Artificial stone features such as quoins & door surrounds
- Complex, preformed, metal decorative features
- Complex /heavy eaves and verge details
- “Feature” Doors
- Bay/bow windows
- ‘Tyrolean’ render



simple and robust character

Contemporary designs should have a simple and robust character

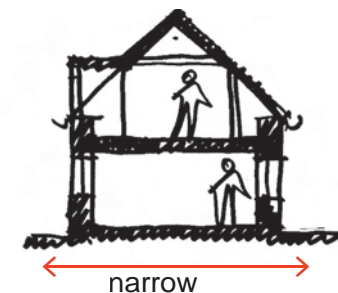
The majority of Coll's older buildings are based upon a **narrow plan** – the result of the construction methods and materials available at the time they were constructed. Their more modern equivalents can have very different massing and proportions, resulting from a deeper plan form.

Designs based on a simple, narrow plan typical of most rural locations means that the proportions of newer properties will integrate sympathetically with their neighbours. Outbuildings should be designed with the same care as main properties.

Retain simple strong roof shapes and avoid large overscaled dormers which dominate the roof of which they form a part. Although this guidance does not seek to be prescriptive, its worth noting that low-key properties which integrate sensitively into their surroundings generally have steeper symmetrically pitched roofs. Where this approach is not adopted, a greater degree of skill and a higher design quality will be needed (for instance where roofs are at a lower pitch or are asymmetrical or monopitch).

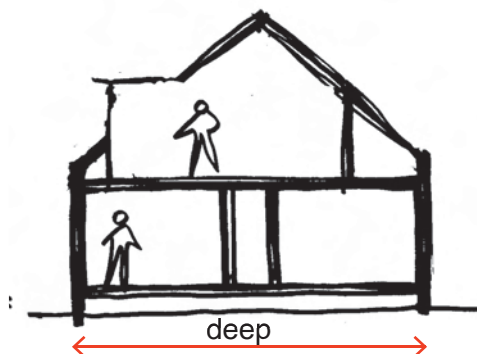
Coll's successful older buildings have a robust character based upon simple construction details and minimal articulation. New proposals should avoid inappropriate, overly complex details and design features which tend to dominate – for example heavy verge and eaves, larger dormer windows.

Isle of Coll simple proportions



- narrow plan - often single room in depth
- thick stone walls with depth of reveal at window
- low floor to ceiling heights
- internal ground floor level and ground level similar

inappropriate more modern proportions
more complex plan form and massing



- plan depth is wider
- depth of reveal at window is lost
- higher floor to ceiling heights
- greater extent of underbuilding

Isle of Coll simple and robust character



appropriate scale

Contemporary designs should maintain the scale of Coll's rural housing

- New properties should not appear significantly bigger or enlarged than their neighbours
- Minimise scale by avoiding extensive underbuilding, use concrete floors rather than suspended timber
- Break down massing of larger properties
- Minimise floor to ceiling heights while giving sense of space through double height spaces and open plan areas
 - clever use of section



Minimally articulated facades and larger windows

- **Greater mass of wall to window**
- **Windows based on proportions and unit size of neighbours** - base openings on the proportions and unit sizes of doors and windows from older properties
- **Larger window openings** - areas of glazing appropriately sited to make the most of views to take account of the weather - these could take the form of floor to ceiling openings traditionally found in agricultural buildings - carefully designed for climate, exposure and orientation



Isle of Coll materials

Roofs

Choose materials that are similar to those already used on Coll and which reinforce the idea of the roof as a single strong visual element:-

- Fibre cement slate
- Slate
- Good quality metal sheeting (eg. zinc, lead, simple steel corrugated panels)
- Plain concrete tiles with simple profile which mimic slate - use advisedly



Corrugated Panels and Fibre Cement Slate sit side by side



Slate

Isle of Coll Materials

Walls

Choose materials that are similar to those already used on Coll:-

- **Polymer render**

(Polymers in factory-made renders give consistency and control of what is a powder material. They are less susceptible to cracking and crazing when compared to traditional sand and cement.)

- **Traditional wet dash render**

- **Natural stone**

- **Drystone walling**

- **Timber cladding**

(horizontal or vertical timber boarding)

- **Corrugated metal cladding**

(to match/ complement traditional corrugated iron cladding)

- **Lime based render**

- **Lime washed/masonry painted stone**

appropriate mineral based masonry paints are recommended



Stone



Render and limewashed/painted stone



Timber cladding

Design for Life

Flexibility; designing for future change

Over the years many houses have themselves been altered and extended to meet changing needs. It is very likely that new developments will not be used in exactly the same way in thirty or forty years time, as they are today.

New buildings should be sited and designed to allow for changes to suit future uses.

On Coll, new homes can be an important component of providing facilities for the island's sustainable economic future.

New houses need to be designed to provide for the needs of those who choose to work at home – this might simply be the provision of wiring and sockets for a home office, or the design of outbuildings which are flexible enough to be used as workshops or offices. For example, they could include loft spaces which can be easily converted into future living areas, or even bedrooms with extra power and telephone points so that they can be easily converted into home offices.

Design For Life - “barrier free design”

In a remote location like Coll where there is no purpose-built sheltered housing and there is a limited housing stock, it is essential to make sure that new housing can accommodate the needs of different residents.

New homes should accommodate changes in family circumstances as far as possible, and make it as easy as possible for a person to live independently as they get older.

For example, (in addition to the downstairs WC suitable for use by a disabled or elderly person required by the building regulations), the following can be “designed-in” at an early stage to increase the flexibility of new housing:-

- Stairs which are suitable for a future stairlift to be easily fitted
- A downstairs space which could be easily converted to a future shower (for example a cupboard)
- Bathroom walls suitable for fixing grab rails
- Corridors which are wider than normal so that all areas of the building are, as far as practically possible, negotiable by a wheelchair user.

Level access to entrances

A key feature of “barrier free” design is the need for level access to new buildings. To achieve this, the following points need very careful consideration:-

Parking spaces need to be large enough for a wheelchair user to get in and out of a car.

Access paths need to have a gradient shallow enough to allow a wheelchair user or ambulant disabled person to access a property. This point needs to be considered very carefully at the beginning of the design process because a site is unlikely to be completely level. Materials used for access paths need to be carefully considered - for example, gravel is difficult for a wheelchair user. This may be in conflict with a desire for low key accesses to Coll homes but with thoughtful design this can be accommodated.

Thresholds without a step at entrance doors

are now required by the Building Regulations. Although this can be achieved with a suspended timber floor and a ramp, the effect is unattractive and the ramp can be costly and take up a very large area. A better detail is to make the internal ground floor level and external ground level more or less equal at the front door. This is now a common construction detail, which works best in a sheltered location. Providing an element of shelter is a challenge as many porches and canopies can look out of place in a rural situation. The following solutions are suggested:-

- **Locate entrances in the most sheltered position**
- **Provide suitable run off/land drainage for the area around an entrance door – proprietary slot drains are available for this**
- **Provide a suitable porch**
- **Inset entrances to provide a canopy rather than applying a “stick-on version” onto the facade**



level access threshold and doorway protected by setback

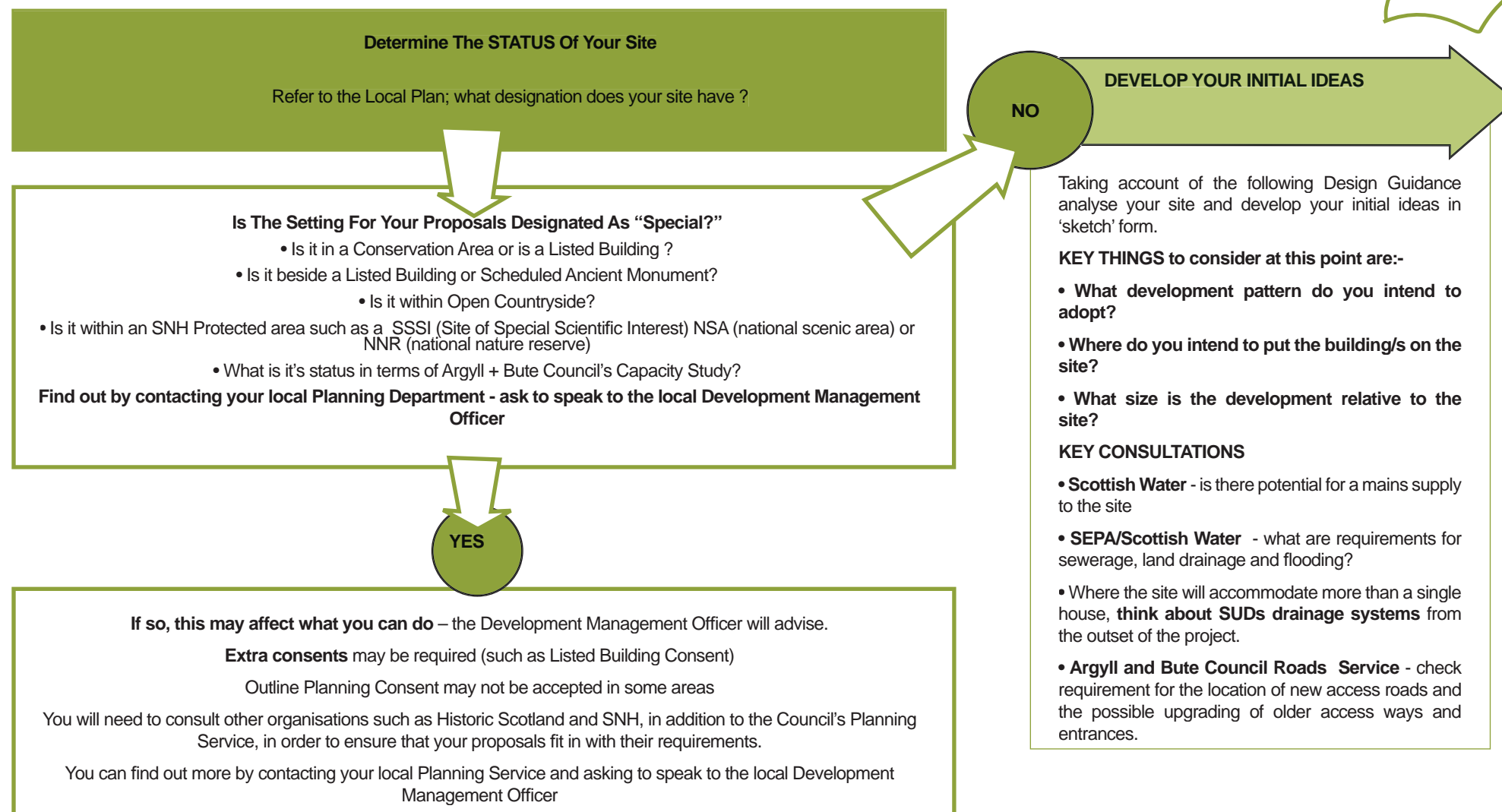


ramps are minimised through the use of lower ground levels (concrete floors)

summary

The Planning Process

This chart is an extract from the overall Argyll and Bute Sustainable Design Guidance for all new housing development taking place within Argyll and Bute. It is intended to guide Applicants regarding the Planning Application process. It is hoped that it will promote good communication between Applicants and Planning Officers and ensure consideration of the design quality for all proposed development.



DESIGN STATEMENTS

You are encouraged to compile a Design Statement* which explains how proposals are designed to fit in with their context and how proposals are seen from key viewpoints. This does not need to be a lengthy document and should not duplicate the content of the Planning Application. Illustrations should relate clearly to the text and can include photographs, sketches, diagrams,

photomontages, concept diagrams, computer-based images and artists' impressions. You can start to collect information for your Design Statement from the earliest stages of the process outlined on this chart

** there is guidance on Design Statements in Scottish Executive Planning Advice Note 68; Design Statements.*

INITIAL 'PRE-APPLICATION' CONSULTATION

"an exploratory dialogue"

Arrange to discuss your initial ideas and the site with the relevant Development Control Officer. It is important to get the most out of this meeting so it useful to send the Development Officer some information, by post in advance. The following information will be very helpful:-

• A map or drawing clearly identifying the site location and boundaries

Clearly identify all the information that you have at this stage, such as roads, paths, field boundaries, rivers or streams, adjacent buildings and any other features. Provide the OS Grid reference.

• Site photographs and sketches to illustrate the context i.e. the surrounding buildings and landscape.

It is important to be clear about what you want to develop on the site. Provide material to illustrate your initial ideas for the site eg. sketches or photographs of relevant similar developments elsewhere.

All of the material above should be used to describe the site and allow you to illustrate what you consider is important about how it should be developed. It will help the Planning Officer to form a view about the site and hopefully allow you to discuss and agree a broad approach to the development.

If you are considering applying for Outline Applications, note that they are generally discouraged in the following areas:-

- Conservation Areas
- setting of Listed Buildings
- NSA's
- Enabling Development
- Developments of 3 or more houses in the open countryside

DEVELOP YOUR PROPOSALS

If it is successful, the Pre-application Consultation should allow you to take forward your proposals to a full Planning Application (or in some cases Outline Consent) – if not you should be in a good position to see where your ideas might be re-thought or revised and developed.

In the latter case you should arrange a further meeting to discuss the revised proposals.

PLANNING APPLICATION

Once you have agreed the broad approach to the development you should develop the proposals and make a Full Planning Application, or an Outline Application.

The guidance for Planning Applications states the minimum drawing (illustrative) information which should be provided as part of an Application but in order that your proposals are clearly understood you are advised to provide additional information to illustrate the key issues about the development that you have considered.

Suggested Additional Illustrative Material of Proposals;- In providing additional illustrative information it is important to home in on the design KEY ISSUES and provide additional information about the development that the 'prescribed' drawings do not show. Where appropriate this might be photos or drawings that:-

- Provide photographs which illustrate the context i.e. the surrounding buildings and/or surrounding landscape and how proposals relate to their location
- Site sections showing how the development addresses the site's contours
- Provide details of the site boundaries and how it will be seen from main road and important views
- Illustrations of the massing of the building on the site – simple 3d sketches are usually very useful in this regard.