

## Section 6 Site Selection

### 6.1 Read the landscape

Look at the landscape in which you wish to build, attempt to classify it as discussed previously in Section 5. Think about appropriate siting within your chosen landscape and the kinds of development most suitable for the area, become familiar with local building traditions and orientations, for example gable ends facing the prevailing winds or the use of single storey to minimise exposure and impact.

Do not choose a prominent corner site, an elevated/exposed site or an elevated location within the site, any house developed in such locations will result in a **High Impact Development** which will detract from the area, set a poor precedent for other developments and be less energy efficient. Choose a site in which you can develop a **Low Impact** home, which can be absorbed into and linked with the landscape.

Avoid locations that will result in breaking the horizon or waterline. Be aware of how your house will be viewed from all surrounds; in particular avoid shoulders or crests of exposed slopes. Prior to development or even purchase of your site it is possible to erect a lath to the full height of your proposed house in order to assess its impact.

Take account of local settlement patterns and circumstances. Look for good examples of existing dwellings within the landscape including any traditional buildings that integrate well or are of pleasing design; these should inspire your future design choice.

***A successfully integrated house does not dominate within the landscape; the landscape remains the dominant feature.***

**It is an objective of the Council to actively discourage any development that is unsuitably sited and results in an obtrusive or strident feature within the landscape.**

County Donegal Development Plan 2006-2012 (as varied)



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## 6.2 Research the Area

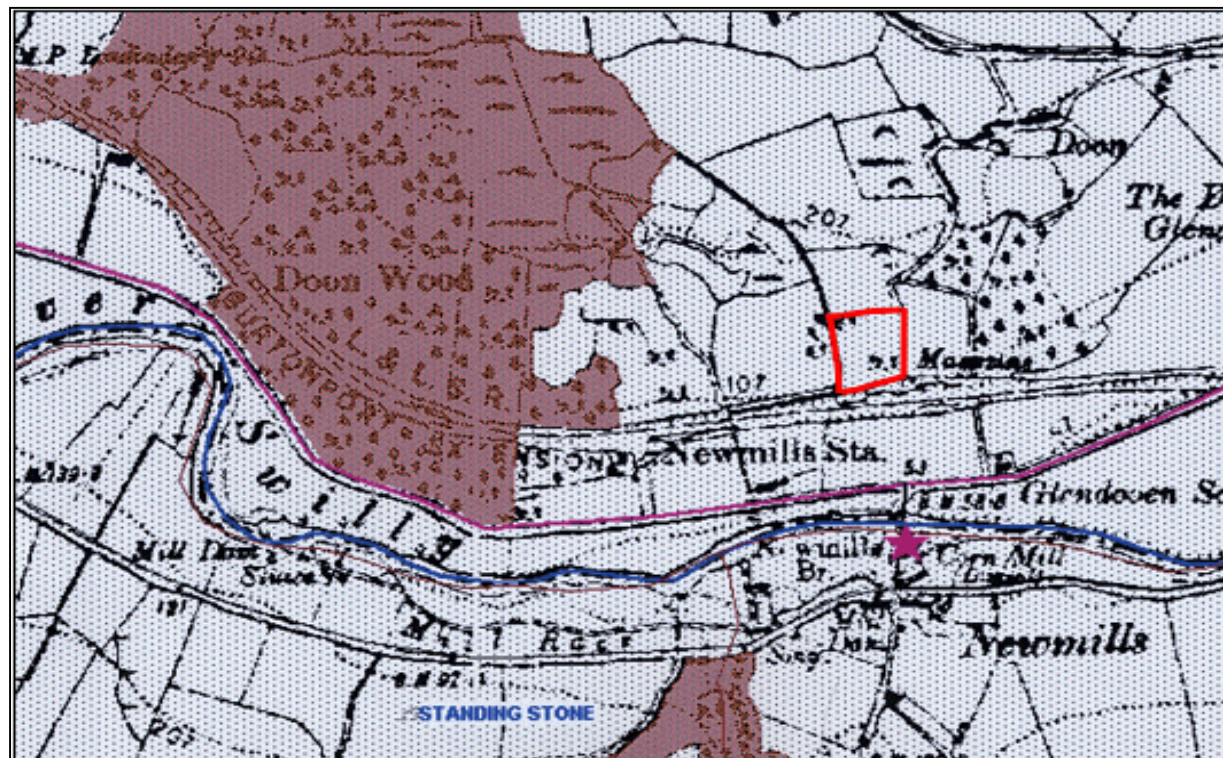
Make sure all the necessary services such as electricity, phone, water etc are available.

Check to see if any specific planning policies apply to your site such as National Roads Policies, future Road Routes, County Development & Local Area Plan Zonings, Amenity Areas, SPA, SAC or NHA designations or areas of Geological Interest.

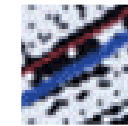
Check to see if there are any archaeological or conservational implications associated with the site, if structures exist on site are they protected under the Record of Protected Structures?

Seek advise on the flooding status of the area (see policy ESP2 of the County Development Plan).

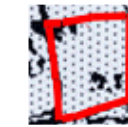
Should your site be affected by any of these considerations seek advice before proceeding further with the application, it may save you time and expense.



**River**



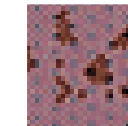
**Site**



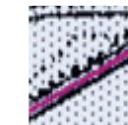
**Protected Structure**



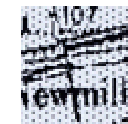
**NHA**



**Regional Road**



**Railway Line**



**Protected Monument**



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### 6.3 Be Practical

Choose a site that is close to all those services you use frequently such as schools, shops, workplaces etc. Closeness to services will mean less travel time and shorter daily journeys that will in turn reduce fuel costs, both personal and environmental, and free up your personal time!

Ensure your site is of an adequate size to accommodate all the necessary services such as water, power and access. Think about the future demands you may have on your site and ensure it is flexible enough to accommodate them, for example; extensions, garage space, children's play areas or recreational spaces.

Choose a site that is suitable for the treatment of wastewater using a septic tank or other approved system if there is no mains sewage drainage in the area.

Ensure that any road entrance to the site can comply with traffic safety regulations for road openings as recommended by the Roads Engineer for your area.



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### 6.4 Use What's Naturally There!

Choose a site which will allow you to take full advantage of naturally occurring tucks, hollows or sheltered areas, these will guide winds over, around or away from your house which will reduce your fuel consumption and **lower the impact** of your dwelling.

Ensure your house can be orientated in such a way as to take full advantage of the daily path of the sun, this will give you free warmth and heat energy and create a bright living environment, reducing electricity usage.

Choose a site containing mature/semi mature planting rather than an open, exposed site. Aim to build against a natural backdrop of trees as this will soften the appearance of your house in the landscape and provide shelter. Ideally your site should have at least two mature/semi mature boundaries, you can then retain any planting or tree growth on boundaries or within the site and plant out the remaining boundaries.

Avoid any site that is too much work! Sites which require extensive groundworks either in the form of excavation or filling will alter the appearance and character of the landscape, will have cost and time implications, result in permanent scarring of the landscape and often result in poor living environments for the occupiers. If possible within the site choose a location that would entail the least amount of change, work with naturally occurring gradients and not against them.

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