

## ***Slane Written Statement***

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Slane</b>
<b>Position in Settlement Hierarchy</b>	<b>Village - Local centre for services and local enterprise development</b>
<b>Position in Retail Strategy</b>	<b>Level 4 Retail Centre</b>
<b>Population (2011) Census</b>	<b>1,349</b>
<b>Committed Housing Units (Not built)</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Household Allocation (Core Strategy)</b>	<b>120 No. Units</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>St. Patrick's National School</b>
<b>Community Facilities</b>	<b>Primary School, Health Centre, Garda Station, two churches, two parish halls, a small cemetery, day care centre &amp; playing pitches.</b>
<b>Natura 2000 sites</b>	<b>The River Boyne flows through Slane Village which forms part of the River Boyne &amp; River Blackwater SAC &amp; SPA Natura 2000 sites.</b>
<b>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019)</b>	<b>No SFRA Required Implement Flood Risk Management policies from CDP.</b>

### **Goal**

To encourage a sustainable level of development that is appropriate to the character, heritage, amenity and strategic role of Slane and that allows for the enhancement of the village character, services, facilities and amenities. The village should grow in a sustainable manner and new development should contribute towards the consolidation of the village, in order to promote efficient use of land and energy, to reduce pressure for greenfield development, to minimize unnecessary transport demand, encourage walking and cycling and to enhance the existing built heritage and historic village centre.

### **01 Village Context**

Slane is located within the 'Slane Electoral Area' towards the east of County Meath in close proximity to the border with County Louth. From a strategic regional context, Slane is situated approximately 11km from Navan and 12km from Drogheda being positioned midway between both towns. The village is famous for Slane Castle, its Boyne side location and its proximity to the Hill of Slane. The village centre of Slane acts as crossroads between the N2 and N51 national routes. The heart of the village extends along four roads radiating from the square at the centre of the crossroads.

Slane is located in the heart of the Boyne Valley and is designated as a County Heritage Village given its particular wealth of archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage. This is largely attributable to the village's historical development around Slane Castle Demesne which extends deep into the village, making it visually picturesque and unique.

The challenge for Slane is to capitalise on the village's rich historic past and planned urban form while protecting the unique and attractive features of the village. Development needs to be consolidated and growth directed to appropriate locations within the village envelope, allowing Protected Structures, sensitive areas and landscape features to be protected from undesirable development. The village should grow in a sustainable and considerate manner in partnership with the local community to improve the physical, economic and social amenity value of the area.

Slane's location and setting has seen it attract significant residential development in the past decade but this has not seen a commensurate amount of development in community and social infrastructure. Furthermore this has placed increased pressure on water and drainage infrastructure which are crucial to meeting the everyday needs of local residents. Other challenges to achieving the proper planning and sustainable development of Slane which must be addressed through this Development Framework include the following:

- **Significant population growth and development has taken place** in Slane in recent years, which is transforming the historic character of the village.
- The ongoing **pressure for further development in Slane**, particularly for suburban style housing estates in the village, which design-wise can be unsympathetic to the village's historic urban grain.
- The concerns of the local community regarding **the scale, extent, nature and design of recent development** in Slane and its relationship with existing residential development.
- A key challenge for Slane is **ensuring that the settlement is sufficiently serviced in terms of sewerage facilities, water supply and other key infrastructure** to be able to accommodate local development needs in an orderly and sustainable manner.
- **The road network in Slane and the local environment is suffering from traffic congestion** as a result of the meeting of two busy regional roads (N2 & N51) and the single lane layout at Slane Bridge. There remains uncertainty regarding the proposed bypassing of the village which is necessary to alleviate this unnecessary through traffic whilst seeking to significantly improve the environment of one of Ireland's most historic villages.
- **The River Boyne is an undervalued natural resource** in Slane that has the potential to attract visitors and tourists to the village in particular those visitors already in the area visiting the nearby Brú na Bóinne Interpretative Centre and Battle of the Boyne tourist attractions.
- **Slane has a rich heritage and unique character** that should be maintained and enhanced. The village itself is a planned demesne village from the 18th Century and the Hill of Slane has close links to early Christian times in Ireland.
- The **village currently functions as a local service centre** catering for the village's residents and those from the surrounding hinterland. While the village's historical attractions bring tourists and visitors to the area, there are strong opportunities to increase this through the orderly, planned and sustainable development of the village core and by appropriately locating tourist focused development.

This Development Framework seeks to respond to the challenges and development pressures facing Slane and the need to provide a positive template for the future growth, sustainable development and improvement of the village that is consistent with the policies and objectives contained in Volume I of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019.

The objectives of the Development Framework seek to create a sustainable settlement strategy that will:

- accommodate local development needs without having adverse impacts on the environment or the existing local community;

- strengthen Slane as a local service centre whilst respecting its existing and important historical character;
- protect and enhance the cultural and natural assets and heritage of the village, and;
- ensure that a full understanding of this cultural and natural heritage informs the location and design approach of new development.

## 02 Water and Wastewater Services

Water: Slane is supplied with water from the Slane Water Supply Scheme which also serves an extensive rural area including Beuparc. There are no planned upgrades to the scheme. The Slane Water Supply Scheme is adequately supplying the existing population in Slane and the Scheme has the capacity to supply the Phase I residential zoned lands, identified in this Development Framework. Meath County Council are concentrating on providing spare capacity through water conservation techniques and improving current weaknesses in the scheme.

### Wastewater:

There are currently two waste water treatment plants in Slane, the Council's own treatment plant and a privately owned treatment plant. There is limited spare capacity available in Slane to service new development. For all new developments, Meath County Council are requesting developers/ applicants to try and free up capacity in this waste water treatment plant to cater for their requirements. There are no planned upgrades to the public waste water treatment plant in Slane at present.

All development proposals shall be considered in the context of the available waste water and water supply capacity. It is accepted that the future development of Slane and the realisation of the household allocation from the Core Strategy may not occur until the wastewater services constraints outlined above have been remedied.

## 03 Land Use

Slane is identified as a village in the settlement hierarchy of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019. Recent development in the village has tended to be in the form of new residential development north of the main road through Slane (the N51) on elevated sites within the village (i.e. Ledwidge Hall, Churchlands and Castle Hill). The topographical nature of Slane being a Heritage village tucked into the valley landscape of the River Boyne has made certain elevated lands north of the N51 being sensitive to development. The Phase 1 Residential Order of Priority Lands identified for Slane have been selected primarily on the basis of applying a sequential approach from the main village crossroads in addition to topographical considerations. Slane has a limited employment base with the main areas of industrial employment being split between the Slane Industrial Estate to the southeast of the village, and the Grasslands Fertiliser site to the northeast of the village. Meath County Council considers the location of the existing Slane Industrial Estate to be inappropriate in the long term at its current location with particular regard to its visual impact on the Boyne Valley setting and its position relative to the Moorfield residential development to its immediate west. It is a long term objective of this Development Framework to facilitate the relocation of the industrial uses to more appropriate employment zoned lands within the village. All new development within Slane should be cognisant and respect the natural and built heritage of the village with high quality designs being insisted upon.

## 04 Residential Development

Slane has experienced steady population growth over the past decade rising from 823 persons in 2002 to 1,349 persons in 2011. The population has risen by 64% between 2002 and 2011, which included a 23% growth experienced between the last inter censal period of 2006 - 2011. Continued growth at these levels would be unsustainable and inappropriate to the status of Slane as a 'Village' within the settlement hierarchy of the County Development Plan. It would also be out of step with the level of infrastructure, services, amenities and

community facilities available in Slane to accommodate further growth. Particular care and attention is also required with regard to the design, form and scale of new residential development in the village reflecting on the manner in which the village has been extended in the recent past and the manner in which this integrates with the model village laid out by the Conyngham family during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The aim of this Development Framework is to ensure that there is adequate land available in appropriate locations for housing, complemented by clear policies regarding any future development proposals to construct additional houses. The availability of housing, catering for a range of household needs, is important for sustaining communities within smaller urban settlements such as Slane and enhances the quality of life for their occupants. Residential development will be accommodated within the areas zoned for residential use and also within the village centre area preferably as part of mixed use schemes.

The Core Strategy of the County Development Plan (Table 2.4 refers) provides a housing allocation of 120 units for Slane over the 2013 – 2019 period. In addition, there are a further 17 units<sup>1</sup> committed to in the form of extant planning permissions. The site with the benefit of an extant planning permission for 12 no. residential units is identified on the land use zoning objectives map. The site in question consists of the renovations of the parochial house & small mixed use commercial development adjacent to the village square.

The average density set down for Slane in the County Development Plan is 20 units per hectare. In this context, there is a requirement for approximately 6.0 hectares of residential land to be identified to satisfy this allocation. Residential lands will be delivered on a phased basis as illustrated on the land use zoning objective map. The land use zoning objectives map has identified the lands required to accommodate the allocation of 120 no. units provided for under the Core Strategy. This followed the carrying out of an examination of the lands previously identified for residential land use in the 2009 Slane Local Area Plan and still available for development. The lands which have been identified for residential land use arising from this evaluation largely arise following the application of the sequential approach from the village centre outwards (taken at the village square crossroads) in addition to topographical constraints and infill opportunities. The visual prominence of Site D and F were also a significant consideration in this evaluation. The sites that were evaluated for inclusion within Phase I of the Order of Priority phasing are presented in Appendix A.

It was considered that the other sites which were previously identified for residential development in the 2009 Local Area Plan (Sites D, E (Partial) and F) were discounted from being developed in Phase I. These lands are not intended to be released during the period of the current County Development Plan and are identified as Phase II lands.

All designers of multiple residential developments within the Plan boundary are requested to submit a Design Statement to the Planning Authority with their planning applications in accordance with the requirements of Section 11.2 Residential Development of Volume I. A Design Statement is an appraisal of the distinctive character of the area adjoining the proposed development site and must consider how the design and layout of the proposed development responds to, and preferably enriches that character.

It is noted that a site (labelled A on evaluation map) on the Drogheda Road is identified for A1 land use zoning objective and extends to 0.66 hectares in area. This site was identified previously in the 2009 Slane Local Area Plan as being subject to the preparation of a Framework Plan in conjunction with lands zoned for F1 "Open Space" to the rear of same. In this Development Framework a specific objective will require the preparation of a Design Statement to be submitted with any residential development for the said lands but to restrict

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<sup>1</sup> It is noted that the corresponding figure in Table 2.4 of Volume I of the County Development Plan is 44. However in the intervening period, planning permission for 27 of these units has since expired (SA/50493 & SA/70692 refer)

the number of residential units to 3 no. maximum to ensure that the form of development remains appropriate to this visually sensitive site. Redevelopment proposals on the site will be linked to the opening of a publically accessible open space/amenity area identified with the adjacent F1 "Open Space" land use zoning objective positioned immediately south of same.

## **05 Commercial, Economic and Retail Uses**

Slane is identified as a Level 4 retail centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. Commercial and retail units line the roads intersecting at the village centre. The retail core includes businesses such as small convenience shops, veterinary surgery, credit union, restaurants, a launderette & dry cleaners, butchers, bookmakers, pharmacists, hairdressers and a hotel and public bars. There is also an arts studio, an art & crafts shop and delicatessen within the village. There remains a high occupancy rate among the retail and commercial units in the village.

Any future commercial and retail development should be directed into the village centre thereby facilitating multi-purpose trips. This could include the change of use of some existing residential properties within the village centre in order to retain the centre as the core retailing area of the village. This would aid in the consolidation and strengthening of the existing retailing base of Slane.

Aside from small scale retailing and typical of a village of this size there are few significant employers within Slane and its immediate hinterland, with the village primarily operating as a dormitory settlement for the Greater Dublin Area.

The limited local industrial development in Slane is located at the northern edge of the village in the form of a large fertiliser plant (Grassland Fertilizers Ltd.) and at a site to the north of Slane Mill (Slane Industrial Estate). Slane Industrial Estate or Newmill Industrial Estate contains a number of industrial units and are currently occupied by fireplace (Slane Fireplaces) and piping manufacturers (Phoenix Industrial Pipeline Equipment Ltd.). Both industrial sites are visually intrusive and have a significant detrimental impact on the surrounding natural and built environment. It would be a long term objective to relocate the current industrial operations from the Slane Industrial Estate site having regard to the more recent development of Moorfield residential development between the site and the N2 National Primary Road. It is less than ideal to have traffic associated with the industrial nature of operations brought through a residential development notwithstanding the order in which they were developed. This would facilitate the site's redevelopment for uses more compatible with the adjacent Slane Mill and Village ACAs. It is noted that this was the stated intention of Meath County Council in the Slane Local Area Plan which committed to re-examining the land use zoning objectives of the Slane Industrial Estate and the consideration of the potential of uses such as tourism related commercial development, community recreational facilities and low density residential development of high architectural quality. However, having regard to the over supply of lands which have a residential land use zoning objective and the need to introduce an Order of Priority to manage the release of same allied to the need to retain employment generating uses in Slane village, it is not considered appropriate to propose a change to the land use zoning objective at this time. Furthermore, it is considered that such a decision would have to follow the outcome of traffic management options being considered for the village. Meath County Council will assist the existing industrial operations to relocate to appropriately zoned lands in Slane or elsewhere in the County to facilitate the redevelopment of the visually sensitive site within the heritage village of Slane.

It should be noted that Grasslands Fertilisers Limited is located on the Pound Road (N2 National Primary Road) and is a notified lower-tier Seveso site. The Grasslands Fertilisers Limited site is located just outside the northern development boundary of the village albeit within the transitional speed limit zone.

## 5.1 Tourism

Slane is a village of rich heritage and its location at a pivotal point on the Boyne River Valley creates strong opportunities for tourism related development. Slane is an ideal base for accessing the many historical, architectural and archaeological interests in the surrounding area. The village is located proximate to the Brú Na Bóinne World Heritage Site and to the Battle of the Boyne Heritage Centre. Despite these advantages the provision of tourism facilities within the village is relatively poor. Meath County Council previously had a tourist information centre within Slane but this has subsequently closed.

Slane is explicitly referred to in the Meath County Tourism Strategy, "Ireland's Heritage & Capital – Marketing Tourism in Meath, 2005-2010", and on the "Tourism Route Interpretation Plan for the Boyne Valley Drive" (2013) and is therefore seen as playing a critical role in the development and implementation of a sustainable tourism policy that enhances the image of Meath as Ireland's Heritage Capital. The Tourism Strategy contains a matrix of tourist product provision by key location. Slane's provision is relatively strong but given its historic character and interest to a number of potential markets has considerable gaps. Among the gaps identified by the Strategy are water based activities and angling despite the village's location straddling the River Boyne. The lack of affordable golf and bike hire facilities was also identified by the Strategy. The Strategy also identified a gap in the market for family night time entertainment and arts/cultural activities.

Slane's intricate links with the past afford the village key historical infrastructure which has the potential to strengthen the tourism base in the village area. Meath Tourism identifies the following attractions in Slane:

- The Hill of Slane
- Slane Castle & Fenor castle
- Slane Square
- The Twelve Apostles
- The Gate-Lodge
- The Gothic Gate (Main Entrance to Slane Castle)
- John Boyle O'Reilly Memorial
- The Ledwidge Plaque and Museum
- 1798 Memorial
- St. Patricks Church of Ireland
- St. Patricks Catholic Church
- The Mill
- Proximity to Battle of the Boyne Site
- Proximity to Brú Na Bóinne – Newgrange

There are a number of cafes, public bars and restaurants in the village centre. The Conyngham Arms Hotel is located in a prominent location within the village and is the only such facility in the village centre. The former Mill house within the Slane Mill complex has been converted into an upmarket 11 bedroom boutique hotel. Development objectives for Slane in the preceding County Development Plan promoted the sensitive reuse of the mill complex for visitor, tourist accommodation and leisure facilities. Currently the mill is an attractive, historic and underused resource.

A craft whiskey distillery and visitor centre at Slane Castle has been recently granted planning permission. The distillery will produce Slane Castle Whiskey, which until last year was distilled on behalf of the Mount Charles family by Cooley Distillery. It is anticipated that the new distillery will attract up to 50,000 visitors annually, with almost half of the overall investment to be spent on redeveloping 18th-century stable yards for the facility and visitor centre. The project, which recently received planning permission, will employ 25 people when it is fully open in 2015. This would be a welcome visitor attraction to the village.

## 5.2 Economic Development & Tourism Strategy

The economic development and tourism strategy for Slane is as follows:

- To promote enterprise creation opportunities and encourage job/employment creation initiatives in line with the growth of Slane and on appropriately zoned and serviced lands;
- To support Slane's position as a Level 4 Centre in the County Retail Strategy and to encourage the upgrading and expansion of the existing local shops and services and the development of new local shops and services in the village centre area to serve local need and promote tourism;
- To support and facilitate private and community initiatives for enterprise, tourism and employment where such proposals are compliant with the policies of this Development Framework;
- To promote, encourage and facilitate the development of sustainable tourism in Slane through the conservation, protection and enhancement of the built and natural heritage, in order to maximise upon the potential economic benefits arising from the tourism industry; and
- To co-operate with the appropriate agencies and local community groups in promoting tourism and securing the development of tourism based enterprises and facilities in Slane.

## 06 Community Facilities & Open Spaces

There are a number of existing community groups & facilities present. Within Slane village centre are two churches / chapel and ancillary buildings, a health centre, and an attractive public square. To the north of the village is St Patrick's National School and to the west of the village are a day care centre, Garda station, library and Wheatfield Park which is home to Slane Wanderers Football Club. Slane Wanderer's Football Club play at Wheatfield Park which is accessed through St Patrick's Terrace on the Navan Road and offers 2 playing pitches. The village's Gaelic football club grounds (Toddy Harding Park) are located 5 kilometres outside the current village boundary. A children's playground has been developed on the Collon Road. In addition there is the Slane History & Archaeology Society located within the village.

Facilities for community development allow for social interaction and engagement, and are an important part of any village. Building strong, inclusive communities is a key element in achieving sustainable development objectives, a core policy of this Development Framework. Sustainable communities require not only economic development, but also the provision of and access to community support, education and health services, amenities and leisure services and a good quality built environment. Communities also require opportunities to meet, interact and form bonds, essential prerequisites to the development of a sense of place and belonging.

Slane contains a network of local community groups that have a deep interest in the management and future growth of the village. The Framework plan entitled '*Slane at the Crossroads*' was carried out by Professor Phillip Geoghegan on future plans for the development of the historic village of Slane. The study was commissioned by the 'Slane Community Forum'.

## 07 Urban Design

Slane is set in a unique environmental landscape, against the backdrop of the Hill of Slane, mature woodlands and the Boyne Valley. The surrounding landscape of Slane is largely unspoilt and is an integral part of the identity of the village. The environs of the village

embrace a powerful sense of place in history, whilst a short distance away (6 km) this is reaffirmed by the prehistoric remains of Newgrange which have been designated as a World Heritage Site. Slane is contained within the Boyne Valley Landscape Character Area-Landscape Character Area No.5 (High Sensitivity) in the County Development Plan 2013 – 2019. Within the context of the 'Boyne Valley Landscape Character Area', Slane is described as follows:

*"Slane is a medium sized historic town, which was originally a demesne village. The overall historic built fabric of Slane remains intact. The town is centred on four large 3-storey detached houses facing a central crossroads. The local vernacular style dates from the 18th Century, with simple square cut stone buildings, with less brick detailing than is common elsewhere in the county. Residential development in the town centre is limited apart from some 1950's – 70's housing on the western approach. However there is a concentration of new development to the north of the town on higher ground. Further development of this type should be avoided due to its size, within the context of the town and its prominence in the landscape. Slane is a popular tourist attraction due to its location and heritage. Slane Castle is situated to the west of the town with Brú na Bóinne WHS to the east."*

Slane's historic core still marks the centre of social life in the village containing a number of existing business premises and residential premises. The settlement is synonymous with its distinctive historic structure and the instantly recognisable Slane crossroads. The old village is focused around the central 'Square' an octagon configuration with four streets leading on to it. The most distinctive aspects of the Slane Village streetscape radiate from the main square at the crossroads along main roads (Chapel Street, Main Street, Mill Hill and Church Street).

The overall form and structure of the village retains its 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century origins. Essentially the strong morphology of Slane village grew from the village crossroads, with later 20<sup>th</sup> century development largely forming beyond the boundaries of the traditional village area. There have been a significant number of planning applications for residential development in Slane during the past decade or so. The approved developments included schemes located to the west of the village, to the north of Slane Mill and at lands east of the village.

Design guidelines have been prepared which recognise the distinctive historic character of Slane and seek to maintain the quality of place associated with this heritage village settlement. Details of the proposed design guidelines are provided as Appendix B to the Slane Development Framework.

## **08 Heritage**

Slane is a village rich in ancient history dating back to the time of St. Patrick who according to tradition began his conversion of Ireland by lighting a fire on the Hill of Slane in defiance of Druidic law. The character of modern day Slane reflects the fact that it was laid out as an early 18<sup>th</sup> century model village linked to Slane Castle by the Conyngham's, who perceived the settlement as a desirable place to manage this 'Castle Estate' and a contribution to the aesthetic and economy of this surroundings. At the centre of the village stand four almost identical Georgian houses. The four house stand at the intersection of the two main streets in the village. The four houses and four streets form an octagon. This feature is known locally as 'The Square'. The two main streets in the village feature 18<sup>th</sup> century gray limestone buildings with slate roofs, oriel windows and stone steps and archways.

Much of Slane's charm derives from its geographical setting, its iconic formal set piece of the octagon, the use of stone in its architecture and its association with Slane Castle Demesne & Slane Mill to which it belongs both historically and socially.

To the north of the village rises the Hill of Slane. It contains a number of historic sites including the site of a Christian abbey. The Hill of Slane can be seen from the Hill of Tara which is approximately 16 kilometres away.

Slane is synonymous with its famous castle and the annual rock concert held there. Slane Castle stands on the river approximately 1 kilometre upstream from the centre of the village. The castle and surrounding demesne is also designated as an ACA.

To the west of Slane Castle is the Slane Mill ACA, standing on the north bank of the River Boyne beside Slane Bridge. The mill is a five storey cut stone building. On completion in 1766 it was the largest flour mill in Ireland. The mill house has been converted to a luxury boutique hotel. Beside the mill is the 14th century Slane Bridge. The bridge is single carriageway and used by numerous articulated lorries who use the route to avoid the adjacent toll road.

### **8.1 Architectural Conservation Areas**

Slane can be described as a remarkable demesne village. It is a settlement built around a village square that is dominated by Georgian townhouses. Slane contains three Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's) which are detailed & mapped out in Appendix 9 (Volume 2) and Map 9.2 (Volume 3) of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019. An ACA is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. They also include areas, which contribute to the appreciation of Protected Structures. The village also contains a number of protected structures (as listed in the County Development Plan) and possesses a rich sense of history and character.

The three existing Architectural Conservation Areas in the village are:

- 1) Slane Castle Demesne ACA
- 2) Slane Mill ACA
- 3) Slane Village Centre ACA

Meath County Council has prepared 'Character Appraisal' documents for the Slane Village Centre ACA and Slane Mill ACA. These documents provide analysis and design guidance for new developments and can be found at the following website link:

<http://www.meath.ie/CountyCouncil/Heritage/ArchitecturalHeritage/ArchitecturalConservationAreas/>

Work has commenced on the preparation of a 'Character Appraisal' document for the Slane Castle Demesne which should be available during the lifetime of this Development Framework.

### **8.2 Built Heritage**

Slane currently has a total of 88 no. protected structures reflecting the village's rich historical character. A proportion of the protected structures are located within the three Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's) contained within the village. Details of the protected structures in Slane can be viewed in the Record of Protected Structures (Appendix 8) of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019.

### **8.3 Archaeological Heritage**

There are a significant number of archaeological features recorded within Slane on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). This is a list of all known archaeological monuments afforded statutory protection under the National Monuments Acts and similarly under the policies and objectives contained in Chapter 9 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019.

## 8.4 Natural Heritage

In terms of natural heritage within Slane there are a number of designated sites. These are as follows:

- The River Boyne and River Blackwater candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) are positioned south of the village centre.

The EU Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European Importance. Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive requires the Planning Authority as part of the decision making process to consider Appropriate Assessment relating to the potential impact of any proposed plan or project on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site within the area. At a minimum any application for planning permission will undergo a Stage 1 screening for Appropriate Assessment.

- 3 proposed National Heritage Areas (pNHA) in and around the Slane area, which are:
  - ❖ Boyne Woods – comprising a stretch of the River Boyne and adjacent woodland 5km southwest of Slane (site code 001592);
  - ❖ Rosnaree Riverbank – small field and island home to rare rush species (site code: 001591);
  - ❖ Slane Riverbank – home to rare rush species (site code: 001591).

The Boyne Valley has a diverse range of attractive and important habitats associated with the River Boyne, including a well-wooded river corridor. In addition to this, Slane has a strong network of hedgerows and a number of trees (18 no. in total) in this Development Framework are designated for preservation under the provisions of the Meath County Development Plan.

The Boyne Valley Landscape Character Area, in which the heritage town of Slane is located, is characterised by a steep river valley with areas of rolling lowland adjacent to the River Boyne. It is potentially the most significant and highly valued landscape in the county as it contains the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site which is one of the largest and most important prehistoric megalithic sites in Europe. Brú na Bóinne is located outside the development boundary of Slane, 2km to the east of the village.

### 8.4.1 Natural Heritage Strategy

The Natural Heritage Strategy for Slane is to ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage of the village including its landscape character, open spaces, natural habitats, watercourses, mature trees and hedgerows, etc. It aims to protect and conserve biodiversity within the plan area and on adjoining lands, landscape character areas and flora and fauna and to provide for the passive and active recreational needs of users. In addition, high quality landscaping and open space areas should be provided on developed lands to provide important visual relief from the built environment and amenity places for users of the development.

The strategy aims to protect, maintain, and where possible enhance, the conservation value of the River Boyne and River Blackwater candidate SAC and SPA sites where they pass through Slane. As outlined in Volume I of the County Development Plan (Section 9.7.2.1 European Sites (Natura 2000 refers), any planning application that proposes development within or adjacent to these Natura 2000 sites will be screened and is likely to require a full Appropriate Assessment.

## 8.5 Significant Views & Vistas

Due to Slane's street pattern of four roads extending from the crossroads and its position at a considerable elevated height above the River Boyne, significant views are afforded towards the village from the valley below and from the village street outwards, forming important vistas.

The most noteworthy view towards Slane from the Boyne valley is from the southern bank of the river and the Dublin Road. This view encapsulates all the elements which form this important approach to the village. It includes Slane Bridge, the Boyne Navigation, the southern demesne entrance (Gothic Gate) designed by Francis Johnston, the ascent up Mill Hill with the stone terrace of houses built for the mill workers, the rear elevations of the houses on the Square (forming the southern entrance to the village), the plantations of Slane Castle demesne framing the ensemble to the north and the church tower to the west end of the village. The view of the rear elevation of the south-eastern house on the square is very significant as it is the first glimpse perceived of the historical fabric of the village from the southern approach. Unfortunately the traffic gantries on Mill Hill currently spoil part of the view from the valley.

#### **8.5.1 Views from Mill Hill**

Equally the views south from Mill Hill as it turns a corner below the Square are considerable. A dramatic vista through the avenue of high stone walls is created down the sweep of the hill towards the river, the canal and the valley, and then terminating with the natural landscape rising to the south. Again the traffic gantries mar the view southwards.

#### **8.5.2 The Square**

The square provides a focal point for all views through the village and as the street pattern and building lines remain more or less as they were in the nineteenth century, the current views are equivalent to those in the past. The primacy of Chapel Street affords fine views southwards, down through the set-piece of the square and its dramatic roof line, and out towards the natural landscape of the demesne and beyond, which rises to the south of the river.

The geographical location of the Square and the streets rising up from it provide ceremonial approaches from Church Street to the Square and from the Square uphill along Chapel Street. Although these approaches are not classified as views as such they provide important vistas through the village to focal points or to the distinctive entrances and exits of the village that play a vital role in enhancing its special character.

## **09 Movement & Access**

### **9.1 Roads**

Slane has good road accessibility with the N2 and N51 national routes intersecting at the village centre. Correspondingly with this road network Slane has suffered traffic related problems, owing to the volume of traffic using the N2 and N51 traffic routes which both intersect and pass through the village. The level and type of traffic passing through the village has impacted negatively on the current village environment. The volume of articulated trucks which pass through the village is considered as a by product of toll avoidance on the M1 and M3 Motorways.

### **9.2 New Bypass**

A bypass for Slane has been a long-standing objective of Meath County Council and has the support of the majority of the local residents, who have campaigned for its construction for many years. In December 2009, Meath County Council submitted an Environmental Impact Statement and Compulsory Purchase Order for a bypass of the village to An Bord Pleanála.

The proposed bypass was routed to the east of Slane, between the village and the World Heritage Site at Brú na Bóinne. Following an Oral Hearing, held between February and April 2011, An Bord Pleanála subsequently refused permission for the construction of the bypass in March 2012.

In citing its reasons and considerations for refusal, the Board stated that having regard to the importance and sensitivity of the location, a bypass of the type proposed could only be considered where it had been demonstrated that no appropriate alternative was available. The Board indicated that it was not satisfied that alternatives to the bypass were adequately explored.

There is unanimous agreement that the potential safety risks that affect the future well-being of all road users and communities, particularly the Slane community, must be addressed. In seeking a solution, Meath County Council has always recognised that a balance must be struck between environmental, historical and archaeological considerations, and the safety and other issues caused by the present traffic through the village. The Council is committed, in conjunction with the NRA, to reviewing its proposals in light of the Board's decision. However, it will continue to protect the corridor of the bypass as submitted to An Bord Pleanála in December 2009 pending the outcome of its investigations.

### **9.3 Footpaths**

There are footpaths throughout Slane and they appear to be of a satisfactory standard and quality. There is a pavement on the western side of the N2 leading down to Slane Bridge. The bridge itself has no pavement but does have sufficient space for pedestrians to safely cross having regard to the existing single lane management of traffic on the bridge deck.

### **9.4 Car Parking**

The main roads passing through the village are wide enough to facilitate on-street car parking. A small car park containing approximately 30 – 40 spaces has been provided at the western edge of the village centre.

### **9.5 Public Transport**

The primary mode of public transport available in Slane is the regional Bus Éireann services. The number 177 and 188 buses are the main routes which have a scheduled stop in the village.

The 188 Bus Service connecting Drogheda to Trim is the most frequent public bus service in the area which also has stops in Duleek and Navan. There are 7 services each way Monday to Saturday, with 3 services each way on a Sunday.

The 177 Bus Service connecting Dublin to Monaghan (which includes a stop at Dublin Airport) has a stop also in Slane.

The most frequent direct service to Dublin is from the private bus operator '*Collins Coaches*'. During 2013 there were 9 services scheduled each way daily to Dublin City, 6 services each way on a Saturday and 4 services each way on a Sunday.

## Strategic Policies

<b>SP 1</b>	To ensure that the growth and development of Slane shall be directed to meet the needs of the local community in Slane and be in keeping with the existing character, amenity, heritage and landscape of the village.
<b>SP 2</b>	Future residential development shall integrate visually with the existing village whilst preserving and enhancing the character of Slane and shall adhere with the design guidelines of this Development Framework.
<b>SP 3</b>	To encourage the sequential development of the village core from the centre outwards, in order to ensure that the higher order facilities and the higher density development is located on the most central lands where possible, with optimum access and the highest level of services.
<b>SP 4</b>	To address traffic problems on the N2 National Primary Road through Slane.
<b>SP 5</b>	To operate an Order of Priority for the release of residential lands in compliance with the requirements of CS OBJ 6 of the County Development Plan as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The lands identified with an A2 "New Residential" land use zoning objective corresponds with the requirements of Table 2.4 Housing Allocation &amp; Zoned Land Requirements in Volume I of this County Development Plan and are available for residential development within the life of this Development Plan.</li> <li>ii) The lands identified with an A2 "New Residential" land use zoning objective but qualified as "<i>Residential Phase II (Post 2019)</i>" are not available for residential development within the life of this Development Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>SP 6</b>	To operate an Order of Priority for release of lands identified for E2 "General Enterprise & Employment" in compliance with the requirements of ED OBJ 2 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The lands identified with an E2 "General Enterprise &amp; Employment" land use zoning objective are available for development within the life of this Development Plan.</li> <li>ii) The lands identified with an E2 "General Enterprise &amp; Employment" land use zoning objective but qualified as "Phase II" will only be available for development when all of the Phase I lands have been developed or being developed (i.e. permission granted and development substantially completed) and may be available within the life of this Development Plan.</li> <li>iii) The only exception is where a significant development is proposed which could not be accommodated within the lands identified as Phase I, for reasons of scale, lack of availability of unsuitability of the relevant Phase I lands, lands within Phase II may be considered in this regard. The development of the lands identified as Phase II will be subject to the preparation and agreement of a Framework Plan with the Planning Authority prior to the submission of any planning application on said lands.</li> </ul>

## Policies

### Water and Wastewater Services

**WWS POL 1** To endeavour to maintain and provide adequate potable water and wastewater treatment infrastructure that is sufficient to meet the development needs of the town within this Plan period. However, the Council acknowledges that there are significant constraints on the capacity of the existing infrastructure and may consider restricting development in circumstances where such infrastructure is inadequate.

**WWS POL 2** To actively pursue the provision of a new/or upgraded Wastewater Treatment Plant to service the full development envelope of Slane Village.

**WWS POL 3** To actively pursue the provision of additional water supply for Slane to serve the existing population and any increases during the lifetime of the Development Framework.

### Flood Risk

**FR POL 1** To manage flood risk and development in Slane in line with policies WS 29 – WS 36 inclusive in Volume I of this County Development Plan.

**FR POL 2** Where existing development within the village is at potential risk of flooding (D1 "Tourism" land use zoning objective refer) as identified on the land use zoning objectives map, any significant extensions / change of use / reconstruction shall be subject to an appropriately detailed Flood Risk Assessment in line with the policies (WS POL 29 - 36) contained in Volume I of the County Development Plan.

**FR POL 3** The Eastern CFRAM flood mapping and management plan when complete and available will provide additional clarity to flood mapping and risk management measures than was available to inform the land use zoning objectives presented for Slane. The Eastern CFRAM flood mapping and management plan shall be consulted when available in conjunction with this Written Statement & Volume I of the County Development Plan.

### Land Use

**LU POL** To require that any future development at Slane Industrial Estate does not have a negative impact on the residential amenity of River View.

### Commercial, Economic and Retail Uses

**CER POL 1** To promote enterprise creation opportunities and encourage job/employment creation initiatives in line with the sustainable growth of Slane and on appropriately zoned and serviced land.

**CER POL 2** To consolidate the central area of the village for commercial uses.

**CER POL 3** To maintain and improve the vitality and viability of Slane's Village Centre area as the focus of all commercial and retail activity, in order to ensure both a mixture and variety of local shopping to serve the shopping needs of the local community.

**CER POL 4** To promote, encourage and facilitate the development of sustainable tourism in Slane through the conservation, protection and enhancement of the built and natural heritage, in order to maximise upon the economic benefits arising from the industry.

**CER POL 5** To co-operate with the appropriate agencies and local community groups in promoting tourism and securing the development of tourist based enterprises and facilities in Slane.

**CER POL 6** To encourage the reuse of Slane's historic buildings where they lie vacant or underused and recognise the contribution that they can make to economic development, tourism, education and the aesthetic qualities of Slane's landscape and village centre.

**CER POL 7** To promote the re-use and sensitive restoration and renovation of Slane Mill and its use and that of the adjoining lands within the Mill complex for the provision of visitor related activities, tourist accommodation and leisure facilities.

**CER POL 8** To protect the Boyne Canal and protect and maintain the existing walks along its banks and within the Development Framework boundary.

### Community Facilities and Open Spaces

**CF POL 1** To protect the sites of existing community and sporting facilities in Slane and support their further development and expansion.

**CF POL 2** To reserve community zoned land to accommodate the potential expansion of Scoil Naisúnta Naomh Padraig.

**CF POL 3** To promote the dual use of school buildings in Slane, where it does not conflict with the delivery of the education service (i.e. outside school hours and during school holidays).

**CF POL 4** To co-operate with local community groups, interested parties such as Fáilte Ireland, An Taisce, game clubs and other appropriate organisations to protect the recreational potential of the River Boyne and lands adjoining it and to carry out appropriate developments where resources permit including the laying out of walks, bridle paths, access points, new access links and picnic sites, where no negative impact to the environment or its Natura 2000 designation arise.

**CF POL 5** To investigate a new site on which to locate additional recycling facilities in Slane that will be accessible to more members of the local community.

**CF POL 6** To continue to expand and improve the library service in Slane to meet the needs of the community in line with the objectives and priorities of the Library Development Plan for County Meath and subject to the availability of finance.

**CF POL 7** To maintain and improve the children's playground at Slane Hill, Collon Road.

**CF POL 8** To continue to explore possibilities for the development of further cultural facilities in Slane and to support local agencies and communities in exploring the development potential for facilities such as the Slane Cottages development.

**CF POL 9** To provide for the development of the Trim – Navan – Slane – Drogheda cycle / greenway along the River Boyne subject to obtaining the necessary statutory planning consent, the carrying out of Appropriate Assessment, landowner co-operation and the securing of the necessary funding.

### Urban Design

**UD POL 1** To promote the development of a high quality, sympathetically designed, well landscaped and appropriately scaled environment that is in keeping with the existing character, amenity, environment, heritage and landscape of the village. Please refer to the Design Guidelines in this Development Framework & ACA Character Appraisals (where available) for more details on development within ACAs.

**UD POL 2** To encourage the sympathetic re-use or rehabilitation of any attractive and historic vacant, abandoned or derelict buildings within the Framework Plan area and encourage their sensitive conversion to residential or tourist accommodation or other appropriate use.

**UD POL 3** To consider infill and other developments within the confines of the Architectural Conservation Area for Slane Village in the context of their contribution towards the protection of architectural heritage, streetscape and the visual amenities of the central part of Slane.

**UD POL 4** Where new development adjoins the Slane Village Architectural Conservation Area and abuts the road, the development should provide a positive frontage to the road which extends and enhances the existing ACA streetscape.

**UD POL 5** To support and encourage development that either re-uses brownfield development land, such as sites in or adjoining the village centre, or appropriately located backland sites. Development of such sites will be subject to the relevant design standards and safeguards outlined in this Development Framework, where the protection of existing residential amenity and architectural conservation will be paramount.

**UD POL 6** To encourage the maintenance of original shop fronts and pub fronts, or the reinstatement of traditional shop fronts where poor replacements have been installed.

**UD POL 7** To strictly control all advertising signs in relation to their location, design, materials and function, particularly in Slane Village ACA.

### Heritage

**HER POL 1** To require that any new works in the village contribute positively to the architectural and historic character of the area.

**HER POL 2** To discourage development that would lead to a loss of, or cause damage to, the character, the principal components of, or the setting of the special historic interest of Slane Castle Demesne and Slane's many other important protected structures including the four houses on Slane Square and the Architectural Conservation Areas and features contained therein.

**HER POL 3** To retain historic items of street furniture where they contribute to the character of the ACA and to protect historic items of street furniture and roadside items as appropriate.

**HER POL 4** To protect and enhance the banks and corridor of the River Boyne and the natural habitats contained therein and to improve and maintain the river walk along it, where possible, in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies and voluntary groups.

**HER POL 5** To permit development on the River Boyne and River Blackwater Natura 2000 network in Slane only where an assessment carried out to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and National Parks & Wildlife Service of Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht indicates that it will have no significant adverse effect (such as disturbance, pollution or deterioration of habitat quality) on the designated area.

**HER POL 6** To maintain, and where possible enhance, the conservation value of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA Natura 2000 sites where they pass through Slane, as identified by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and any other sites in Slane that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this County Development Plan.

**HER POL 7** To prohibit any development that would be harmful or that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats and / or disturbance of species in the River Boyne and River Blackwater Natura 2000 network.

**HER POL 8** To conserve and enhance the amenity of the River Boyne including the landscape, water environment and wildlife habitats and, where consistent with this, to encourage increased public access and provision of walkways.

**HER POL 9** To ensure that development, particularly in sensitive landscapes adheres to tailored design guidelines. Sensitive landscapes include the designated views and prospects in Slane, the three Slane ACA's and close to the River Boyne & River Blackwater Natura 2000 network.

**HER POL 10** To provide adequate protection of the views and vistas that contributes to the appreciation of Slane's unique landscape character and to maintain the visual integrity of its sensitive and exceptional landscape value.

**HER POL 11** To protect areas of recognised landscape importance and protected views and prospects in Slane from the construction of large scale visually intrusive energy transmission infrastructure. In such circumstances, it is an objective to seek alternative routing or transmission methods.

**HER POL 12** To seek the retention of mature trees/significant planting (those in good condition) which contribute to the character of each ACA where appropriate.

## Movement and Access

**MA POL 1** In the event that a bypass of Slane Village is approved & completed during the lifetime of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 - 2019, it will be a policy of Meath County Council to implement traffic calming measures at strategic points in the village.

**MA POL 2** Upon such time as the Slane Bypass is completed and operational; Meath County Council will investigate the possibility of inserting cycle ways alongside or incorporated with footpaths in the village area.

**MA POL 3** To require that cycle lanes be included in all new residential developments in Slane.

## Objectives

### Commercial, Economic and Retail Uses

**CER OBJ 1** To provide tourist information signage of key attractions in the Slane area including the Hill of Slane, Slane Castle, Slane Village (the Square), the Twelve Apostles (Western Red Cedars along the Old Rectory garden wall), the Mill, the 1798 Memorial, St. Patrick's Church of Ireland, The Boyne Canal and River.

**CER OBJ 2** To liaise with Bord Fáilte, Meath Tourism and Boyne Valley Tourism Initiative of Louth & Meath Local Authorities to investigate the potential of providing a tourist office in Slane.

### Urban Design

**UD OBJ** To investigate the removal of redundant distribution poles, wires and services which hang across the streets of Slane and which deface commercial frontages and residential terraces, particularly in the Slane Village Architectural Conservation Area. Equally, initiatives to place overhead service underground will be supported and facilitated where possible.

### Heritage

**HER OBJ 1** To undertake a character appraisal for Slane Castle Architectural Conservation Area.

**HER OBJ 2** To provide a heritage information display stand providing a short history of Slane, within the village.

**HER OBJ 3** To review the recommendations of the Tree Quality Assessment carried out for Slane in November 2008 and consider implementing tree preservation orders for the trees deemed worthy of protection.

## Movement and Access

**MA OBJ 1** To investigate the effectiveness of, and if appropriate, progress the implementation of, traffic management options, including the removal of non-local heavy goods vehicles from the N2 through Slane village, in conjunction with the NRA and other relevant authorities with a view to providing an enhanced and safer environment for the village.

**MA OBJ 2** To proceed with an N2 bypass for Slane should the investigations referred to in MA OBJ 1 conclude that there is no appropriate traffic management alternative.

**MA OBJ 3** In the event that a Slane By-pass is approved, constructed and operational, it is the intention of Meath County Council to carry out a traffic study for Slane Square to reduce the visual impact of traffic management infrastructure upon Slane Village Architectural Conservation Area. The traffic study will aim at improving the flow of traffic into and out of the Square, improving the general safety of pedestrians and of removing any unnecessary traffic related visual clutter, where possible and safe to do so.

**MA OBJ 4** In the event that a Slane By-pass is approved, constructed and operational, it is the intention of Meath County Council to carry out the following improvements in Slane:

- To resurface and upgrade roads through the village and to the Hill of Slane;
- To provide where lacking, footpath facilities along the N2 route through the village particularly on the west side of this road, and;
- To implement traffic calming measures at strategic points in the village.

**MA OBJ 5** To reserve for the future provision of a new road extending from the existing road serving the Churchlands development, to the backlands area, as shown on the land use zoning objectives map for Slane.

**MA OBJ 6** To implement appropriate traffic management and environmental improvement measures throughout the town.

**MA OBJ 7** To provide a new road in tandem with development extending from the existing road serving the Churchlands development to the backland areas identified on the land use zoning objectives map noting that this site is identified as Phase II in the Order of Priority.

**MA OBJ 8** To designate and secure future walking routes through the village.

### **Drogheda Road – Specific Housing & Public Open Space Objective**

**DR OBJ** The development of a small residential scheme within the site labelled 'A' on the evaluation table along the Drogheda Road shall be linked to the opening of a publically accessible open space/amenity area to the rear identified with the adjacent F1 "Open Space" land use zoning objective. It is imperative that linkages from the new residential area are provided to the amenity lands to the rear. A maximum of 3 no. dwellings shall be considered appropriate on this site to ensure that the form of development remains appropriate to this visually sensitive site.

A Design Statement shall accompany any planning application made including details of the following:

- The Design Concept of the Scheme;
- Details of overall site design and layout of buildings;
- A comprehensive landscaping scheme providing visual and physical linkages to amenity lands located to the rear of the site;

- The delivery of residential development shall be linked to the upgrade of the amenity lands located to the rear of the site. Linkages (visual and physical) shall be provided from the residential lands to the amenity lands located to the rear;
- Provision of adequate public lighting and footpaths throughout the lands;
- High quality design, finish and layout, and;
- Infrastructural requirements including vehicular access, access for pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities, car parking and vehicle turning.

## Appendix A to Slane Written Statement: Evaluation of Residential Zoned Lands

**Table 1: Description of individually zoned available sites evaluated**

Site	Location	Hectares
A	South of N51	0.66
B	Lands at Cillghrian	1.48
C	East of Castle Hill	1.53
D	East of Churchlands	0.65
E	North of Castle Hill	3.88
F	North of Churchlands	2.09
G	West of Ledwidge Hall	0.98
H	North of Ledwidge Hall	1.77

**Table 2: Yield and Phasing of residential lands evaluated**

	Zoning	Land Area	Density	Yield	Phase
<b>Site A</b>	A2	0.66 ha	5	3	I
<b>Site B</b>	A2	1.48 ha	15	22	I
<b>Site C</b>	A2	1.53 ha	20	31	I
<b>Site E* (Lower)</b>	A2	1.43ha	20	29	I
<b>Site G</b>	A1	0.98 ha	20	20	I
<b>Site H</b>	A1	1.77 ha	20	35	I
<b>Site E</b>	A2	2.45 ha	20	49	II
<b>Site F</b>	A2	2.09 ha	20	42	II
<b>Site D</b>	A1	0.65 ha	20	13	II

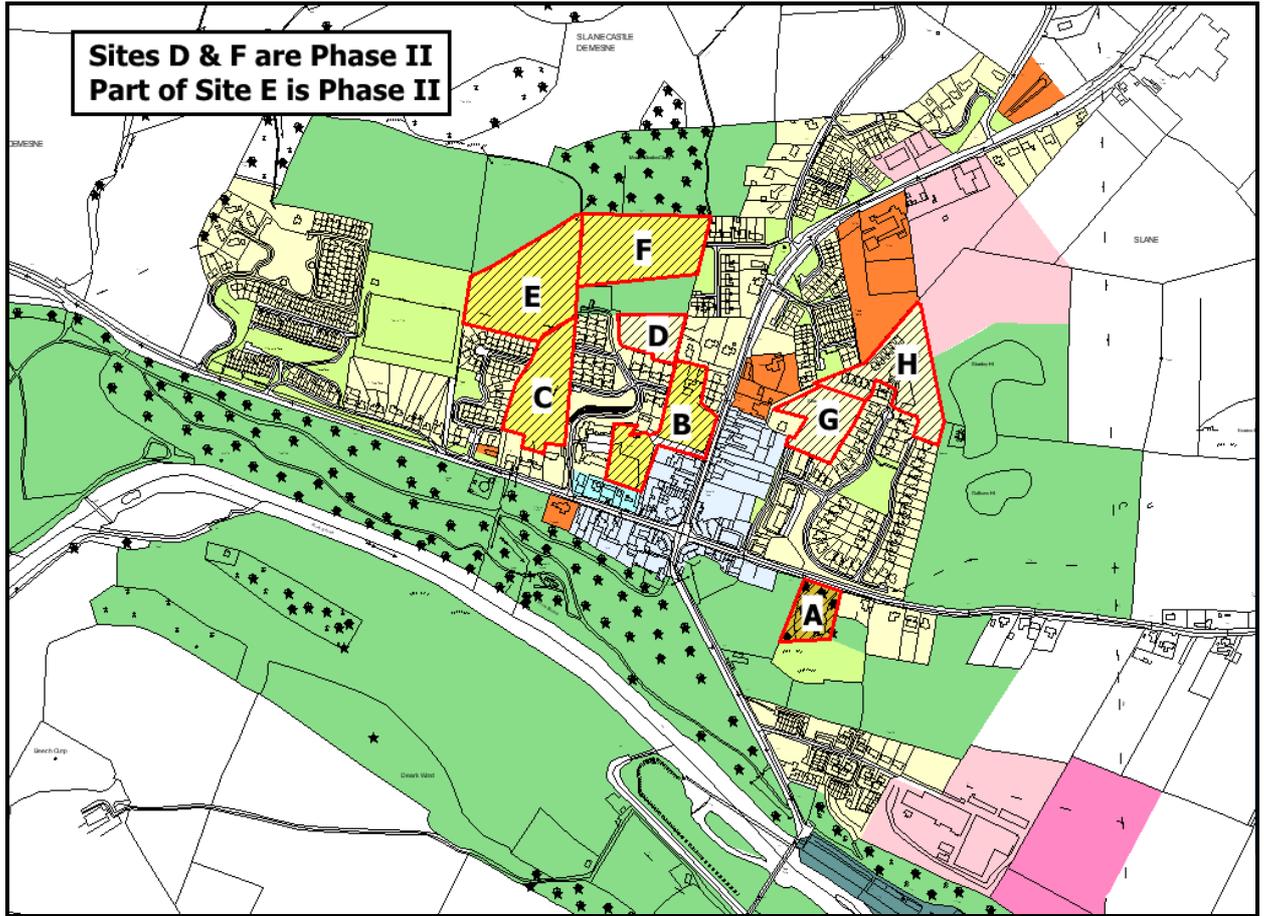
### Phase I Order of Priority Sites

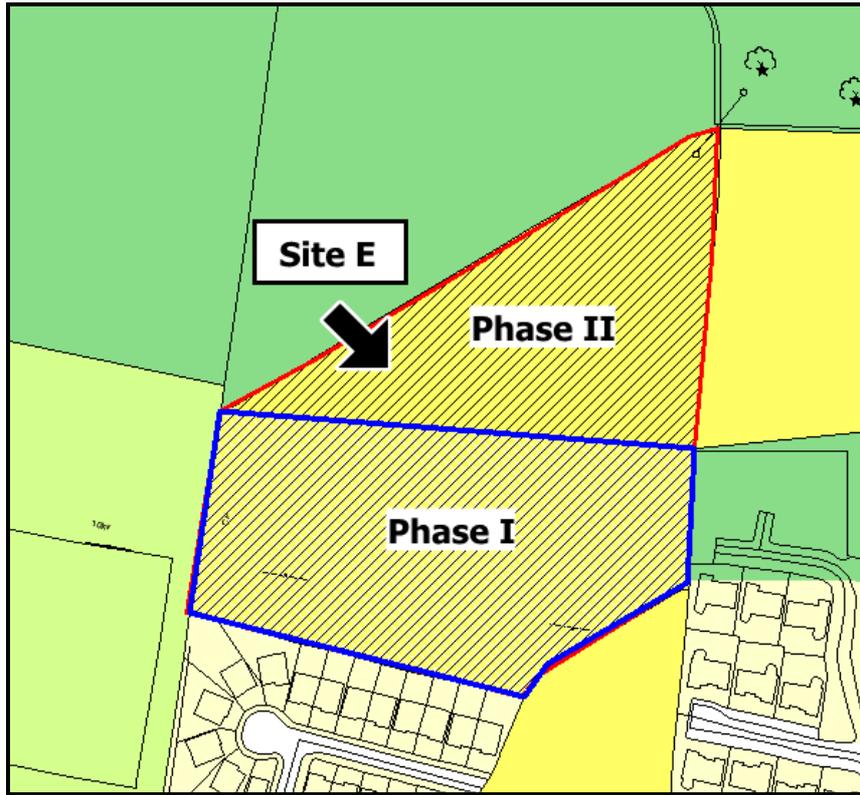
Sites A, B, C, E\*, G & H are included as Phase I lands.

\*1.47ha of Site E lands are included in Phase I  
The remainder of Site E is included in Phase II.

### Phase II (post 2019) Order of Priority Sites

Sites D, E\* and F (based primarily on sequential distance from the central village square in addition to unfavourable land topography associated with these sites).





**Site E: Order of Priority Phasing**

## Appendix B to Slane Written Statement: Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines recognise the distinctive historic character of Slane and seeks to maintain the quality of place associated with this heritage village settlement.

### Context & Setting

Slane is set in a unique environmental landscape, against the backdrop of the Hill of Slane, mature woodlands and the Boyne Valley. The surrounding landscape of Slane is largely unspoilt and is an integral part of the identity of the village. The environs of the village embrace a powerful sense of place in history, whilst a short distance away (6 km) this is reaffirmed by the prehistoric remains of Newgrange which have been designated as a World Heritage Site. Slane is contained within the Boyne Valley Landscape Character Area-Landscape Character Area No.5 (High Sensitivity) in the County Development Plan 2013 – 2019. Within the context of the 'Boyne Valley Landscape Character Area', Slane is described as follows;

*"Slane is a medium sized historic town, which was originally a demesne village. The overall historic built fabric of Slane remains intact. The town is centred on four large 3-storey detached houses facing a central crossroads. The local vernacular style dates from the 18th Century, with simple square cut stone buildings, with less brick detailing than is common elsewhere in the county. Residential development in the town centre is limited apart from some 1950's – 70's housing on the western approach. However there is a concentration of new development to the north of the town on higher ground. Further development of this type should be avoided due to its size, within the context of the town and its prominence in the landscape. Slane is a popular tourist attraction due to its location and heritage. Slane Castle is situated to the west of the town with Brú na Bóinne WHS to the east."*

Slane's historic core still marks the centre of social life in the village containing a number of existing business premises and residential premises. The settlement is synonymous with its distinctive historic structure and the instantly recognisable Slane crossroads. The old village is focused around the central 'Square' an octagon configuration with four streets leading on to it. The most distinctive aspects of the Slane Village streetscape radiate from the main square at the crossroads along main roads (Chapel Street, Main Street, Mill Hill and Church Street).

The overall form and structure of the village retains its 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century origins. Essentially the strong morphology of Slane village grew from the village crossroads, with later 20<sup>th</sup> century development largely forming beyond the boundaries of the traditional village area. There have been a significant number of planning applications for residential development in Slane during the past decade or so. The approved developments included schemes located to the west of the village, to the north of Slane Mill and at lands east of the village.

### Aim of Design Guidelines

These design guidelines aim to both preserve and enhance the character features identified in this Development Framework, and seek to influence and inform high quality design of new development. They endeavour to provide landowners, developers and their architects with a template for design best practice, when developing within the settlement boundary of Slane.

The design guidelines place particular emphasis on residential development as this is the most predominant use of land within Slane, and is likely to remain so during the duration of this Development Framework. This section seeks to promote an understanding of the key design principles which respect Slane's heritage and landscape attributes. There are three Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) in Slane. Specific design guidance for future development in the ACA's is provided in the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019, the character appraisals completed for Slane Village ACA and Slane Mill ACA, and best practice

design guidelines. Design guidelines for the village area excluding the Architectural Conservation Area are provided.

### **Architectural Conservation Areas**

There are three Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's) in Slane that consist of:

1. Slane Castle Demesne ACA
2. Slane Village ACA
3. Slane Mill ACA

Meath County Council has carried out Character Appraisal documents for Slane Village ACA and Slane Mill ACA. The character appraisals outline details of the ACA's identifying the key elements. A character appraisal for Slane Castle Demesne has not been completed to date but is expected to be completed during the lifetime of this Development Framework.

Meath County Council would strongly advise that developers be cognisant of the design guidance provided for in these ACA Character Appraisal documents when new development is proposed in such areas of Slane. Early consultation with Meath County Council's Conservation Officer would also be advised.

### **Design Guidelines within Slane Village ACA**

Designation as an ACA puts an obligation on prospective developers to produce a very high standard of design, which should contribute to the visual enhancement of the area while respecting its physical character. There are two separate Order of Priority Phase I Residential Zoned sites contained in Slane Village Architectural Conservation Area, located west of Chapel Street (0.87ha and 0.61ha). The following guidance regarding new development in Slane Village ACA should be adhered to:

#### **New Development in Slane Village ACA**

### **Planning Applications in Slane Village ACA**

All planning applications for development within the Slane Village ACA should be accompanied by a Historical or Architectural Heritage Report, together with details of mitigation measures proposed to protect the said buildings/ structures.

### **Imitation of Existing Styles in Slane Village ACA**

The concept of the direct imitation of earlier styles is not always appropriate but if this model is to be followed then the elevational treatment of new development should be well-proportioned and built with respect to its context. Buildings should follow the eaves height, roof pitches and building lines which predominate in the respective streets and should employ windows of matching proportions and alignment. Materials should be of good visual quality and durability. Features which are not found amongst the historic buildings of the village should be avoided. These include projecting eaves, fascia and soffit boards, dormer windows and roof windows, standard issue concrete cills or copings, top-hung, top-hung casement windows, pressed aluminium gutters or uPVC features of any kind. Roofs should be covered with natural slate, terra-cotta decorative elements, lead or other roofing which enhances the character of the ACA.

### **Contemporary Architectural Styles in Slane Village ACA**

High Quality contemporary architectural design that is complimentary to the character of the ACA is acceptable but the development of any infill sites within the ACA, particularly of part of a street terrace, will require a very sensitive design approach and should positively contribute to the character of the area. A design impact statement providing justification for the proposal in terms of design, concept, scale, materials and proportions should accompany such an application.

### **Plot and Building Lines**

New buildings should take into account existing building lines and plots in order to retain the existing grain and character of the ACA.

### **Extensions in Slane Village ACA**

Extensions should be kept to the rear of properties and be of an appropriate scale, built with suitable material and finishes. Due to the geographical location of Slane Village rear extensions may often be visible from higher streetscapes and their design must follow the same principles for new development as laid out above. Extensions to the side or front of street front structures within the ACA will not be encouraged by the council as these could be detrimental to the character of Slane Village.

### **Development within the Grounds of Larger Residences**

In the case of buildings with large gardens or grounds, special consideration must be given to the impact of any new development on the buildings, and on their respective existing boundaries. Within Slane Village ACA this is most relevant in the attendant grounds of the larger residences such as the four landmark houses on the square, and Mount Charles Lodge and Cill Ghrian on Chapel Street. The gardens of the latter two properties (which are protected structures) were strategically placed to the front of the houses rather than to the rear due to their geographical location on the slope and in order to take advantage of their southern aspect. The key features in the attendant ground of the two residences are their attached outbuildings, courtyards, landscaped gardens and respective follies. Both properties have large mature trees which form part of the boundary to the village streets with limestone rubble walls, in particular on Chapel Street and Church Street. All these elements are an integral part of the streetscape and the special historical character of the village of Slane and must therefore be preserved. Appropriate extensions and restoration work to the outbuildings of these residences may be considered by the council. In the interest of protecting and conserving these key sites within the ACA and considering the impact future development would have on the ACA, it is recommended that these two protected structures remain as they were originally intended, as private residences within their own grounds.

The same principles apply to the landmark houses on the square and in particular to the north-eastern and south-eastern houses where the gardens are still intact. In the case of the south-eastern house, the rear of the site is clearly and highly visible from the public realm, namely from the ascent to the village from Mill Hill, which provides an important entrance to the village and forms part of one of the most significant views of Slane Village from the Valley below. For these reasons it is important that both houses should remain, as they were originally intended, as private residences within their own grounds.

### **Amalgamation of Structures, Properties and Sites within Slane Village ACA**

The amalgamation of structures requires planning permission regardless of whether they are located within an ACA or not. Proposals for the amalgamation of properties within the ACA should take into consideration the impact of changing or extending the existing plot sizes on the streetscape. Original entrances should remain in use. The amalgamation of sites within the ACA, especially with an increased density should respect the scale, mass, height and design of not just the adjoining buildings but the entire streetscape. This will require sensitive planning and design treatment in order to complement the fine grain of the established streetscape. A Design Impact Statement providing justification for the proposal should accompany such applications.

### **Demolition Works within Slane Village ACA**

Proposals to demolish structures of architectural merit within the ACA, whether a protected structure or not require planning permission. Demolition will normally only be permitted where the structure makes no material contribution to the character or appearance of the area. There will be a presumption in favour of retaining structures that make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Where permission is sought for the demolition on the grounds of structural defects or failure, a report containing annotated photographs and

drawings will be required. The report should be produced by a suitably qualified and experienced professional regarding the existing condition. As part of the justification for any demolition within an ACA on structural grounds, details will be required of repairs and remedial works usually carried out in similar circumstances and details of why they are not deemed suitable in this case.

#### **Boundary Treatments within Slane Village ACA**

Removal of original railings, gates, gate piers and boundary walls, whether visible from the public realm or not, requires planning permission. Most buildings within the Slane Village ACA have street frontages but landmark buildings on the square and various residential properties and ecclesiastical buildings on Chapel Street and Church Street are bounded by limestone walls or elaborate cast-iron railings, which add to the special character of the village. Where these still exist they should be retained. In the instance where a section of boundary wall has been removed in order to provide a new entrance to a property or a site, the broken edges of the original wall piece should be finished appropriately and never left in a ruinous state.

#### **External Lighting Slane Village ACA**

Proposals for the illumination during night-time hours of certain buildings and landmark features within Slane Village ACA must be agreed beforehand with Meath County Council. The method of lighting, i.e. type of fitting, fixed method and type of light would need to be specified by the applicant seeking permission and should be designed so that it does not result in light pollution or negatively impact on other structures in the ACA.

#### **Preservation of Views- Slane Village ACA**

The significant views outlined in this document are namely those looking down through the square towards the Boyne Valley to the south from Chapel Street, and down Church Street towards the Church of Ireland and the edge of the demesne from Main Street and the square. Equally important are the views towards Slane from the west end, i.e. the road from Navan along the demesne wall, and from the lower reaches of the Boyne and the Dublin Road to the south. It is vital to the special character of the village that these views are preserved and any works within the ACA should not adversely impact or block these views.

#### **Existing Shopfronts in Slane Village ACA**

Existing shopfronts contained in Slane Village ACA shall be adequately maintained and alterations and repairs should be in character with the existing character and materials used.

#### **Internal Alterations- Works not requiring Planning Permission**

The ACA designation does not prevent internal changes or re-arrangements to the structures which are not listed as 'protected structures' within the ACA, provided that these changes do not impact on the exterior of the structure. All internal changes must comply with building regulations.

#### **Works to the Public Realm**

Generally, works to the public realm will be carried out by Meath County Council or major utility and service providers, may be exempt from planning permission. However, prior to commencement of the works, consultation with the Conservation Officer of Meath County Council will be required, to ensure these works enhance and improve the special character of the ACA and do not negatively impact on it. The following areas will require special consideration:

**Work to public footpaths**, including the preservation of historical street surfaces such as cobbles or original kerbing. New pavements should not be of poured concrete or tarmacadam with reconstituted stone kerbing, but should reflect the natural materials of the village. When cobble-lock style paving is used it should be of an appropriate scale, colour and detail to complement the character of the village.

**Retention and preservation of all surviving items of street furniture**, which contribute to the special character of the ACA, such as the original lamp standard, cast iron water pumps and post boxes. New street furniture when provided will be of high quality reflecting the character of the ACA.

**The installation and location of utility boxes**, such as large ESB metre boxes, should be given careful consideration with regard to their position within the ACA and the impact of colour and massing on adjoining boundary treatment and surrounding buildings. Painted finishes of muted colour rather than galvanised finish should be considered.

### General Design Guidelines for Slane Village

#### **Understanding the Importance of Good Design in Slane**

Quality design can significantly enhance the sense of place associated with an area. Design is not concerned exclusively with buildings, but also the wider use of spaces which provide the backdrop for people to live, work and socially interact. Quality design should seek to create a sense of civic pride and promote safe, inclusive and accessible living and working environments, which recognise the significance of the past whilst embracing the importance of the future. This is a key challenge in Slane, where the intricate connections to the past are emphasised by the designation of three Architectural Conservation Areas. It is a challenge for future development in Slane to have its own unique identity while respecting and providing linkages (both physical and visual) to Slane's unique cultural and historical identity. A significant proportion of Slane Village is not contained within Slane Village ACA or Slane Mill ACA. However the wider village area and the wider landscape setting has an important role in safeguarding the setting of Slane Village ACA and has a role to play in maintaining the cultural heritage of Slane.

#### **Making Connections – Design Guidance**

In order to deem development successful within Slane, much depends on the creation of high quality access points and connections which afford permeability to the village and wider surrounding area. Within Slane key linkages should endeavour to create safe connections for pedestrians and cyclists alike. Ease of movement from residential development to and between the village centre, local schools, churches and community facilities should remain an integral principal of good design. Understanding the existing movement network is an important element in designing a successful and sustainable development. This involves considering the following:

- How routes from the new site will knit in with the existing infrastructure;
- The provision made for all forms of movement, with positive presumption in favour of walking, cycling and public transport, where this is available;
- How the new development can benefit the area as a whole, for instance by the introduction of a new footpath or the extension of an existing one to the village centre;
- How movement will be provided for at all stages in the development.

#### **Shopfront Design and Advertising**

All new shopfronts in the wider village area of Slane should be of a high quality and should not detract from the appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area. The following guidelines shall be applied to the assessment of any applications for new or altered shopfronts:

- The reinstatement of traditional shop fronts where poor replacements have been installed shall be encouraged.
- Design of new shopfronts should be sympathetic with the building and streetscape and in particular the character of Slane Village ACA.
- External roller shutters are not acceptable.
- The fascia panel, design and lettering of advertising should be an integral part of the shopfront design- these should be simple and legible.

- The use of plastic internally illuminated box signage and excessively large projecting signage shall be discouraged.

### **Improving the Streetscape**

Visual Improvement to the appearance of buildings shall be encouraged as they will illustrate a sense of civic pride within the village. The provision of seasonal flower displays and the use of appropriate external lighting can bring buildings to life and contribute to an increasingly vibrant streetscape.

### **Respecting the Existing Building Heights and Massing in Slane**

The predominant building height in Slane Village is two-storey with little variation in building height. Slane's street pattern of four roads extending from the crossroads and its position at a considerable height above the River Boyne ensures that significant views are afforded towards the village from the valley below and from the village street outwards, forming important vistas. Amendments to the established building height in Slane have the potential to impact negatively upon the significant established views/ vista in the village undermining its intricate character. Any planning application for a building with a height in excess of two-stories must be accompanied by the following:

- Written Design Statement
- Visual Impact Assessment setting out the justification for the height increase outlining potential impacts on these prominent views/ vistas:
  - Views south from Mill Hill
  - Views south from Chapel Street
  - Church Street Vista
  - Chapel Street Vista
  - View west from Slane Mill
- Visual 3-D material such as photomontages

### **Design Guidelines for the Development of Residential Lands Located north of Church Lands Housing Estate**

Outside the Village ACA there is a Phase 2 Residential zoned site of approximately 2.09 hectares in area, located north of Church Lands Housing estate. This Development Framework anticipates that this site will not be developed for residential development during the lifetime of the County Development Plan (2013- 2019). The following design guidelines are however provided for the long term development of this site.

- As part of the planning application, a character appraisal of the development site shall be prepared outlining how the natural features of the site, views into and out of site, access to site and topography of the site have influenced the final development proposal.
- The maximum residential density of development on the site is 20 units per hectare.
- Vehicular access to the site, if possible, should be via the existing vehicular access to Cran Daire Brea Estate.
- Development shall provide a minimum of 15% public open space provision.
- Developer should consider formally linking open space provision for the proposed development with the open space provision of Cran Daire Brea Estate in order to maximise open space provision in this area of Slane village.
- The proposed residential development should not impact negatively on views southwards towards the village core from the 'Hill of Slane.' The roofscapes should be

consistent with the existing roofscapes of Slane. Roof materials should be consistent throughout the development and the use of traditional materials such as slate is recommended. Roof colour should be blue/black/grey, consistent with the Slane area.

- The development will provide a mix of unit types, and varying bedroom provision (one/ two/ three/ three +). The mix of bedroom provision will be discussed and agreed with Meath County Council prior to the submission of the planning application. Apartment units are not deemed an appropriate form of development in Slane.

### **Residential Design Guidelines - Key Considerations Appreciating Local Distinctiveness**

Features which are synonymous with a particular locality and which encourage people to call that particular place home illustrate local distinctiveness and help to foster a sense of belonging and civic pride. Every community has a distinct and special character that makes it recognisable and unique, with Slane being no different. All new development within Slane should therefore aim to improve upon and enhance the distinctiveness of the settlement. However, while developments should respond to local character and identity, they should not intentionally replicate surrounding development forms and detail. New development should have a distinct identity in itself and make a positive contribution to the wider identity of the local area.

New developments which create or enhance a strong sense of place tend to evolve through a rigorous design process which includes learning from and incorporating local knowledge, experience and culture. However, while the design of new development should draw inspiration from Slane's indigenous character, the objective should be to move forward and not to mimic, but rather reflect and complement, the design of the past.

### **Residential Design Guidelines**

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government adopted 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' in May 2009. This document sets out guidelines for residential developments in small towns and villages. The Guidelines are accompanied by the 'Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide' which illustrates how the guidelines can be implemented effectively and consistently across the different scales of urban development around the country. The Manual and its contents inform the Residential Design Guidelines presented in the following table. While strategic considerations such as location, connections and sustainability will determine much of the success of a new dwelling or residential scheme, the finished quality of the built form can have a significant effect on a development's character, sense of place and legibility. Quality in the detail of the architecture and landscape design will help a new development to make a positive contribution to its surroundings and Slane's local identity.

All new residential developments in the Slane area are required to create high quality, legible, functional and well designed residential environments. New residential development is required to address the issues raised in Table 1 overleaf - Residential Design Guidelines.

**Table 1: Residential Design Guidelines**

**Residential dwellings** should present a high-quality living environment for their future occupants, in terms of the standard of individual dwelling units, and the overall layout and appearance of the development.

**Roads:** New roads in residential areas should design in safety and play for children by incorporating traffic calming measures into the design and layout. Long straight stretches of road should be avoided at all times as this encourages speeding. Adequate road drainage must be considered as part of any residential development.

**Public Open Space:** This should be integrated into the overall layout of residential development and should take advantage of the existing landscape and allow for more passive use of open spaces. The recreational needs of new residents should also be taken into consideration and playgrounds for children and sheltered and landscaped areas for more relaxed recreational pursuits, incorporated into the layout wherever possible.

Open spaces in new development should be suitably proportioned. Narrow tracts, will not be acceptable. Smaller areas of useable open space and play grounds should be carefully sited within residential areas to be accessible and overlooked by dwellings so that the amenity is owned by the residents and is safe to use. Natural surveillance might be from windows of nearby houses or from people using the space or even drivers of passing vehicles. The feeling of safety generated by high levels of natural surveillance in public areas will encourage further use and participation in public life – which will itself reinforce high levels of surveillance. Public open space provision shall accord with the County Development Plan standards.

**Dual Aspect:** Dwellings should be pre-dominantly dual-aspect (with windows/openings on two or more elevations). Where single aspect dwellings are unavoidable, single aspect units should have a predominantly south facing aspect and north-facing elevations will not be permitted. Dual aspect homes provide residents with a greater level of amenity within their home. By ensuring that at least part of the unit receives direct sunshine for part of the day, this format reduces the need to make use of artificial illumination improving the standard of living inside the dwelling and uses less energy.

**Roof Profiles:** Over complicated or large roofscapes should be avoided. Simple roof forms perform better and are more aesthetically pleasing. Traditional local styles of roof profiles should be considered with pitched roofs between 35 and 45 degrees.

**Roof Finishes:** Roof materials should be consistent throughout a single scheme. The use of traditional materials such as slate is recommended. Roof colour should be blue/black/grey, consistent with the Slane area.

**Height:** All dwellings in close proximity to one-another or within the same scheme should be of similar height and no one dwelling should tower above the other.

**Sunlight:** Development should be designed to allow the living or working space full exposure to sunlight, avoiding overshadowing.

**Shelter:** Dwellings should be located in the landscape to exploit the natural shelter of hills, ridges, topography and vegetation.

**Boundaries:** Local types of stone and/or hedgerows and tree stands in boundaries should be incorporated into the layout of the development. Existing trees and hedges should be used to 'fit' a house next to another. Local plant varieties should be used to provide appropriate shelterbeds to help:

- shelter buildings from cold winds and driving rain,
- improve and soften the appearance of an area,
- encourage wildlife,
- add variety and interest to a development.

**Contours / Topography:** In order to ensure a layout that is sympathetic to landform, buildings should be parallel with the contours so that houses fit into the landform naturally. Excessive building up or digging into the landscape is not acceptable.

**Privacy & Amenity:** Good space standards, sound insulation and access to private open space are all important aspects that need to be provided in new dwellings in order to ensure adequate privacy and amenity standards. The existing landscape should be used to secure privacy. Additional planting may be necessary to create private space where natural features do not exist. Rather than establish a minimum window-to-window standard, the DoEHLG Urban Design Manual recommends that the aim should be to assess the impact on the privacy of the layout and home design based on:

- The sites location and residents expected levels of privacy;
- The size of the windows – both those overlooking and overlooked;
- Changes in level between overlooking windows, and;
- Ability to screen/partially obscure views through design or judicious use of planting.

**Proportion:** A balance of proportion between the windows and doors throughout and between dwellings should be maintained.

**Entrances:** Entrances should promote safety by being obvious and should be designed in a manner that utilises the assets of the area, such as natural planting and any indigenous stone. Traditional features are favoured rather than more modern high iron gates. Where there is an existing boundary feature, every effort should be made to retain it.

**Bin Storage:** Each residential unit must have adequate storage for three wheeled bins. Residential units with no rear access should provide adequate storage for the bins to the front of the development, in contained units.

**Recycling:** Recycling is important and a central facility should be located on site along with refuse bins. Space for composters should also be provided in the case of new residential development.

**Public Lighting:** Careful consideration to the location of the public and private lighting within a new residential development should be considered. Public lighting should provide a sense of security and increase safety for pedestrians, cyclists and car users.

**Car Parking:** Car parking should be planned in the layout of any development with facilities for both residents and visitors. Where car parking for dwellings is provided in on street form as opposed to being provided in front gardens; a landscaped strip of private garden space with a minimum depth of 1.5metres should be provided to the front of each house.

**Gardens:** Large areas of lawn should be avoided and tree and shrub planting considered instead. The garden should be considered as a productive element of rural living e.g. for growing vegetables. Linking a dwelling with its surrounding landscape is an important aspect in the layout of a new development in Slane. An effective rural garden layout and design will ensure that the dwellings and natural features compliment each other. Suburban layouts should be avoided e.g. hard kerbing.

**Outbuildings & Garages:** Outbuildings such as garages, gas and oil tanks and storage sheds should be designed to compliment houses and should be part of an overall scheme rather than an afterthought. They should be used to create a sense of enclosure and to help

define spaces. The position of these structures should be considered at the outset of the design process.

**Porches:** Porches should be kept simple with fussy and over ornamental pseudo classical porches avoided. Porch design should be consistent with the design of the house. Porches should project from the building by at least as much as they span. Open porches are preferable to enclosed ones.

**Extensions:** Proposed extensions to buildings and boundary features such as front, rear and sidewalls, should use matching materials in a style to complement the original building and adjacent boundaries. The total energy used in development should be minimised as far as possible to encourage sustainable development practices in line with government initiatives and current legislation. This should encourage the use of locally sourced, 'environmentally friendly' and energy efficient materials for construction as well as minimise running costs.