

Mulranny Village Design Statement



Mulranny Village Design Statement

AN ACTION OF THE COUNTY MAYO HERITAGE PLAN



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



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Village Design Statements constitute an innovative collaborative and participative approach to village design, where communities have a real 'voice' in how their villages are planned and managed into the future. This is the third in a series of Village Design Statements that have been prepared by Mayo County Council as part of the Heritage Plan; Design Statements have also been prepared for Belcarra and Louisburgh.

Mulranny, with its distinctive identity and setting, was identified as a key village for which a Design Statement was required, to ensure that future development is responsive to the village's unique character and has regard to its surrounding landscape and ecology.

The Village Design Statement highlights the positive features of Mulranny and the precious natural environment in which it is set. The Statement aims to guide the design of future development, so that it compliments Mulranny's unique heritage assets and includes a set of specific planning guidelines which aim to preserve and strengthen the village community. The document will be a useful guide for residents and developers in shaping proposals for future development within Mulranny.

The Design Statement recognises the important role of the local community in determining the future for their village. The community in Mulranny, through its participation in the 'Community Futures' programme, is collectively engaged in shaping the form and destiny of their own place. This Village Design Statement presents a shared vision for the future of Mulranny, and Mayo County Council would like to acknowledge the role of the community in the preparation of this document and their commitment, energy and enthusiasm for the project.

Mayo County Council acknowledges and appreciates the support of the Heritage Council in the preparation of this Village Design Statement and their ongoing support in the implementation of the County Mayo Heritage Plan.

Peter Hynes, Mayo County Manager

Cllr Austin Francis O'Malley, Cathaoirleach Mayo County Council

Mulranny has undergone profound positive change in recent times with the restoration and renewal of our built railway heritage. The social and economic benefits that have accrued remind us as to the significant role heritage assets can play in reinvigorating our village.

This Village Design Statement marks an important continuum of that process by setting out, both spatially and visually, how the village can become more vibrant and pedestrian friendly. Equally it seeks to retain a strong sense of place by preserving important details and features of our built environment and guiding future public realm and building design.

This statement represents a further milestone in progressing our vision for the future, adopted in 2010, which states that; 'Mulranny, with its beautiful location on the shores of Clew Bay, will have preserved and enhanced its natural environment, and will be a great place to live, work and visit, with an enterprising and organised community'. In this regard Mulranny Community Futures wish to acknowledge the local community, landowners and businesses for volunteering their time, energy and enthusiasm to this initiative.

Collaboration and partnership are key elements of successful community development and so we gratefully acknowledge the professional and financial support of Mayo County Council and the Heritage Council in the preparation of this Village Design Statement.

Mulranny Community Futures Group welcomes this initiative and is confident that the Village Design Statement will become a key landmark in achieving a better and brighter future for the community in Mulranny.

Mulranny Community Futures

Section 1: Introduction

- Introduction & background
- Collaborative process
- Setting the context



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

NATIONAL CONTEXT

This Village Design Statement for Mulranny is the third Village Design Statement that Mayo County Council has prepared in partnership with the Heritage Council, and notably, the first one prepared by Mayo County Council since the external evaluation of the Heritage Council's Village Design Statement Programme 1 (2000-2008), which was completed in autumn 2008. Arising from the review, the Heritage Council published a Village Design booklet in January 2009 entitled *'Enhancing Local Distinctiveness in Irish Villages – Village Design Statements in Ireland – The Way Forward'*.

WHAT IS A VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT?

A Village Design Statement is a community-led, design-focused document, which describes the visual qualities and the distinctive character of a village, and provides design guidelines, which address the qualities that local residents consider worthy of protection or improvement. The purpose of a Village Design Statement is not about whether development should take place or not, but how planned development should be carried out.

The aim of the Mulranny Village Design Statement is to ensure that future development and change will have regard to the unique attributes of Mulranny and its historical context and contribute positively to the future of the village.

In their 2008 evaluation of the National Village Design Statement Programme 1, the Heritage Council stressed that good Village Design Statements can:

- Raise community awareness about their surrounding landscape and heritage assets;
- Provide the community with a useful "tool" to ensure that future developments and changes add to local distinctiveness and character;
- Link into the planning system so that planners can use them to improve the local distinctiveness of design proposals;
- Assist local authority planners, architects, developers and others by giving them local guidance up front and;
- Generate and develop overall community confidence and capacity building.

WHAT IS THE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT FOR?

The Village Design Statement is a useful tool which can be used to identify the character of the village and to inform and advise property owners, developers and decision makers how the village of Mulranny should evolve, with emphasis on the aesthetics of the village. The Village Design Statement may be adopted by Mayo County Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, with the intention that its recommendations be taken into account when planning applications are assessed. It may also influence future planning policies in the preparation of any land use plan for the village.

WHO IS THE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT FOR?

Change to the village is brought about not only by large developments, but also by the smaller day-to-day alterations to homes and gardens, other properties, boundaries, open spaces, paths and edges, which alter the look and feel of the whole village. Therefore the Village Design Statement has been prepared to inform and assist a number of groups when considering changes/improvements to the village. Such groups include:

- Statutory bodies and public authorities
- Planners, developers, builders, architects, designers and engineers
- Local community groups
- Householders and businesses

WHY IS A VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT NEEDED FOR MULRANNY?

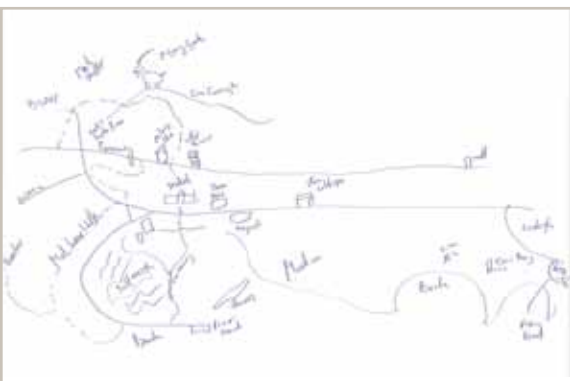
Mulranny, with its distinctive identity and setting, has been identified by Mayo County Council as an important village, which needs to be carefully managed as it continues to evolve. With the increased demand for housing, much of which is seasonal, any new development should be carefully and sensitively managed, to protect and enhance the character of the village.

A Village Design Statement is therefore needed to ensure that future development in Mulranny is responsive to the village's distinctive character and has regard to its surrounding landscape and ecology.





Participants at Village Character Workshop.



Example of map drawn for workshop exercise by workshop participant.

COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

HOW DID THE MULRANNY VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT COME ABOUT?

Mayo County Council has been collaborating with the Mulranny community on various projects over the last number of years. With the advancement of the Great Western Greenway between Mulranny and Newport and the associated increase in visitor numbers to the area, a plan was required for the village to guide future development in an appropriate manner. Other issues of concern in Mulranny include pedestrian safety in the village; lack of open space and children's play areas; and design elements of future developments in the village. Representatives of the local community requested Mayo County Council to prepare a Public Realm Plan.

It was considered that a Village Design Statement would be a more appropriate tool to guide future development in the village and to ensure that any development compliments the village's unique heritage assets.

This Village Design Statement represents a vision for the future of Mulranny, one that is shared by the residents of Mulranny, community interest groups and Mayo County Council, and is a tool to further enhance the village character in a positive way.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

In order to ensure community participation in the preparation of the Village Design Statement, public consultation was carried out. Representatives of the local community met with Mayo County Council's Mulranny Village Design Statement steering committee on a number of occasions to discuss preparation of the Village Design Statement. Mayo County Council published a notice in the local newspaper inviting members of the public and interested parties to attend a Village Character Workshop on 12th October 2010.

The workshop consisted of:

1. A presentation which outlined the nature and scope of the Village Design Statement and its relationship with the planning system.
2. Round table exercises in which participants explored and identified the distinct character of Mulranny and its features, its surrounding landscape, open spaces, landmarks, and building details and styles.
3. Round table discussion based on SWOT analysis (examining the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of the village.
4. A questionnaire survey, which was completed by the participants.

The public workshop was well attended. The majority of the participants commented that they not only enjoyed the workshop but also understood its purpose and felt that it had been useful and beneficial.

Following on from this workshop, a draft Village Design Statement was prepared. The draft document was put on public display for a period of six weeks from the 8th February until the 22nd March 2011 and submissions invited. An open day was held during this consultation period. The draft Village Design Statement was revised to incorporate submissions received.

SETTING THE CONTEXT – AN INTRODUCTION TO MULRANNY

LOCATION AND HISTORY



Historical image of Mulranny¹

Mulranny is a scenic coastal village located on the northern shore of Clew Bay, along a National Secondary Road (N59) at the junction of the Corraun/Achill Peninsula with the Mayo mainland. It is located approximately 17 km west of Newport, 14.5 km east of Achill Sound, and 32 km south of Bangor Erris. The village acts as a gateway to Achill and the Mullet Peninsula. It also functions as a small service centre for the surrounding rural hinterland.

“Maoil Raithe” or “Malla Raithe” means “Hill of the Ferns”. There is evidence of a small settlement located at Mulranny in the 1830s but the village developed with the arrival of the Westport to Achill railway line in the 1890s. Many of the existing buildings in the village date back to the early 1900s. The village is located on the Westport-Achill railway line which was in use from 1894 until 1937 when the line closed.

POPULATION

Mulranny is located within the District Electoral Division (DED) of Newport West which in 2006 had a population of 790, an increase of 12.7% from 2002. A current estimate of Mulranny’s population, within an indicative village boundary, is approx 428² people. This figure excludes its additional seasonal population. There are 325 households in Mulranny and over 80 of these are holiday homes³.

¹Source – National Photographic Archive

²Mulranny Community Action Plan 2010-2015

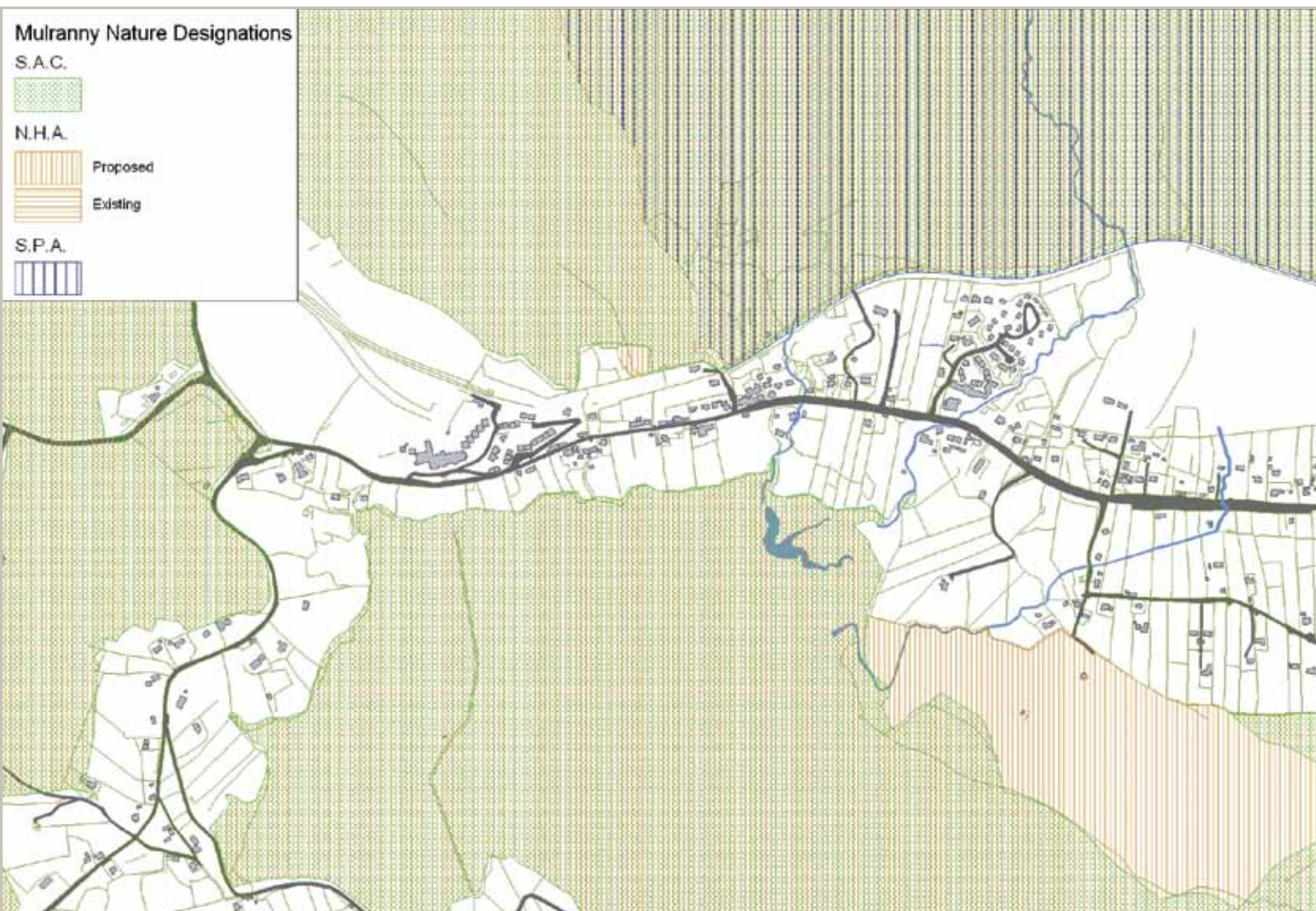
³Mulranny Community Action Plan 2010-2015



Historical map of Mulranny.

Economy/Employment

The tourism industry provides much employment in Mulranny, albeit seasonal, most notably the Mulranny Park Hotel. St. Brendan’s Village Care Centre is the largest employer employing over eighty people. Other sources of employment within the village include local shops and pubs, along with agriculture. However, most people commute to larger towns such as Castlebar and Westport for employment. Due to the large number of holiday homes in Mulranny, the village experiences an increase in economic activity during the summer, but this does not lend itself to a sustainable year round economy.



Nature Conservation Designations in Mulranny.

NATURAL HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

Mulranny is set within outstanding natural scenery, comprising of dramatic mountain ranges and rugged coastline; its character is intrinsically linked to its landscape setting. The village is a noted beauty spot, located on the slopes of Mulranny Hill on the northern shore of Clew Bay. The land on the northern side of the village rises steeply, which is an obvious contrast to that on the southern side of the village where the land falls away steeply towards the sea.

Clew Bay, is designated as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a proposed Natural Heritage Area (NHA). The Nephin Mountain Range, located to the north of the village, is designated as a candidate Special Area of Conservation and a Special Protection Area (SPA). The Corraun Plateau SAC is located to the west of the village.

It was apparent during the public consultation for the Village Design Statement that the preservation of the views across Clew Bay from the village is very important to the local residents.

The appreciation of Mulranny's natural environment by its residents was acknowledged when Mulranny Tidy Towns Committee won the Tidy Towns national "Biodiversity Notice Nature" award for the west region in 2007/2008, in recognition of their initiatives on natural heritage research, interpretation, public awareness, public participation, planning and habitat maintenance.

VILLAGE STRUCTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The village structure is predominantly linear in form, focused mainly along a National Road (N59) with some dispersed development along secondary routes. However, while the village is linear in form, there is a notable absence of a streetscape, which in part can be attributed to the village's setting and topography.

Dereliction levels are low within the village, although some buildings are in a state of disrepair. Two structures in the village are included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) — St. Patrick's Church and the Great Southern Hotel (Mulranny Park Hotel). The village also has a rich railway heritage.

WHAT THE VILLAGE OFFERS

Mulranny enjoys spectacular local amenities and has great potential for sustainable tourism, employment creation and heritage conservation. The village is somewhat of a 'walking and cycling hub' in the county, with loop walks and links to the Western Way and is located along the Great Western Greenway. There are also a number of natural and manmade recreational facilities in, or adjacent to, the village such as:

- the leisure centre (located in the hotel)
- the community and amenity centres
- sandy beaches
- the causeway and pier
- the golf course.

During the public consultation exercise the community identified a need for a public playground, more open space facilities, especially a playing pitch, and a dedicated building to serve as a tourist/interpretive centre.



Aerial photograph of Mulranny (2005).



FUTURE GROWTH

The extent to which Mulranny develops and grows needs to be sustainable and, more critically, linked to its character. Mulranny's ability to support a vibrant community and community facilities is directly linked to population growth; however the growth of the village must not take place at the expense of its character.

AIMS OF THE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

The overall aims of the Village Design Statement are outlined below. These aims and associated objectives set out how the vision for Mulranny will be realised.

Aim 1 – To protect and enhance the distinct character of Mulranny's built and natural environment.

Aim 2 – To develop Mulranny into a sustainable village with the amenities and quality of environment that the community desires.

QUOTES FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION WORKSHOP

"The empty derelict houses should be used before more building goes ahead"

"I would not walk on the road in the dark"

"There are too many holiday homes left empty in winter"

"There is a serious lack of parking in the village"

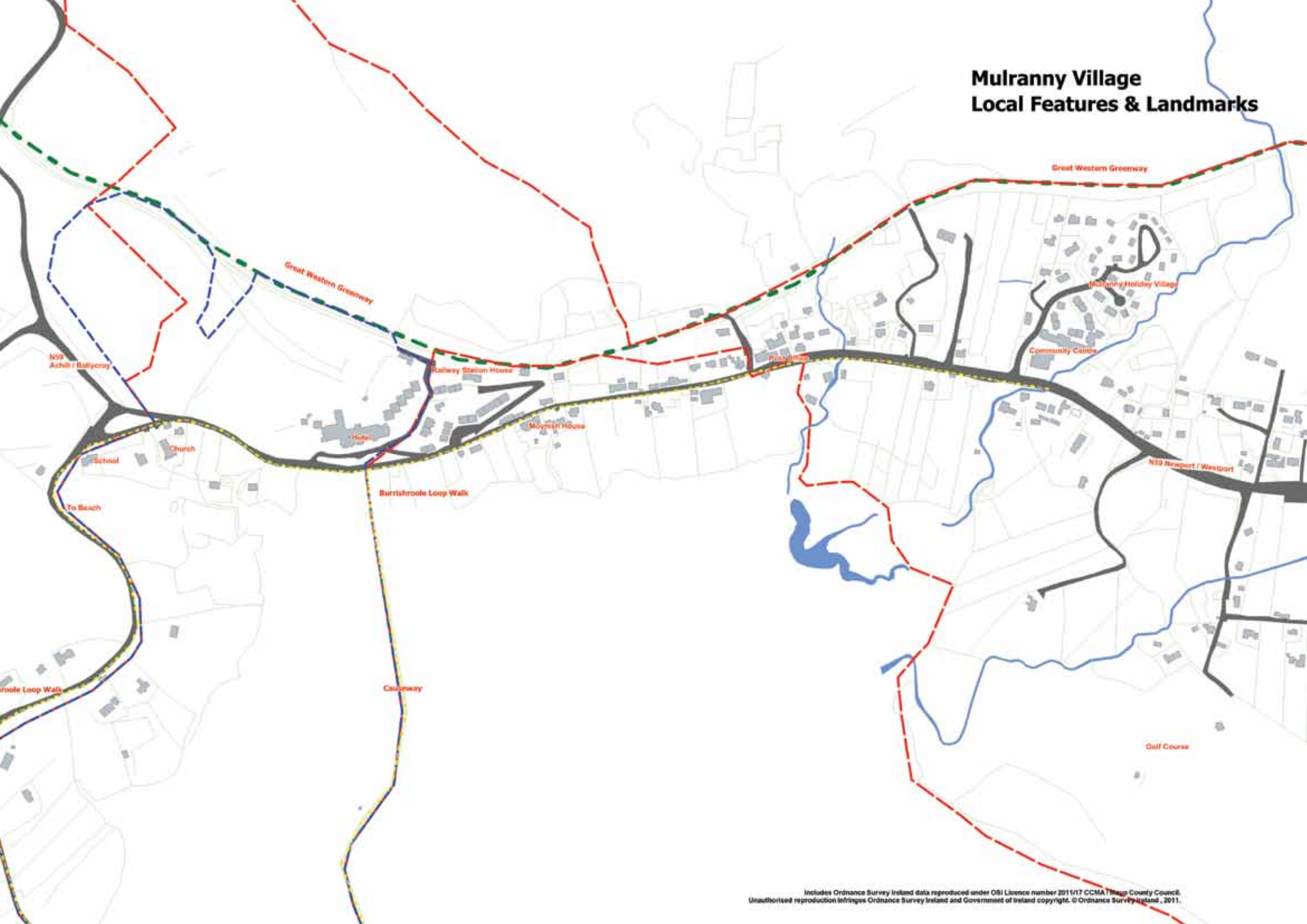
"A playground in Mulranny is very badly needed"

"Mulranny needs a parking and viewing area"

"Some of the architecture seems totally inappropriate - it would be nice to see more traditional buildings"

"Mulranny is unspoilt and offers breathtaking views at every angle"

Mulranny Village Local Features & Landmarks



Section 2: Mulranny Now – Issues and Tasks

- Approaching Mulranny
- The village centre
- Pedestrian, bicycle and traffic movement
- The built environment
- Signage, displayed fuels, discarded materials, bins and litter
- Natural heritage and landscape
- The beach and causeway

APPROACHING MULRANNY

ISSUES

- Development along the approach roads is fragmented and scattered in nature.
- No obvious physical start to, and end of, the village.
- Wide road approach at eastern end encourages cars to speed. Village centre not visible on approach.
- Narrow road and lack of footpaths at western end make vehicular and pedestrian movement difficult.
- Spectacular sea views available obliterated by trees and buildings.

TASKS ARISING

- Provide traffic calming at the eastern end of the village.
- Promote more consolidated infill/edge of village centre development within the village speed limits in order to make the starting and finishing points of the village more obvious. This could be further facilitated through the preparation of a Local Area Plan for Mulranny.
- Improve sea views at the western end of the village through the control of plant/vegetative growth.



The wide approach at the east end of village allows approaching traffic to gain speed, but due to the bend motorists are visually unaware they are about to enter a village. This could be solved by extending the village centre eastwards.



Mulranny lacks a distinct village core.

THE VILLAGE CENTRE

ISSUES

- No obvious village centre
- Church, school and community centre all located at edge of village away from the centre.
- Buildings not terraced or closely fitted as per typical village centres.
- No clear linkage with Great Western Greenway cycle route.
- Car parking facilities inadequate and disorganised.
- Lack of footpaths and road crossings causes reliance on car use and removes visible life from village.
- Magnificent views not readily visible.
- No playground facilities.
- Lack of high quality buildings.
- Poor quality shop fronts and signage.
- Untidy displays of goods for sale.
- Litter and discarded items visible to public.

It is important to establish a defined village centre. Opportunities exist for infill development, notably on the northern side of the N59 around the existing shop and pub, and east of the thatched cottages. This would create a more consolidated group of commercial buildings and visually-obvious village centre.

Pedestrian crossings would assist in traffic calming and could link to a newly established pull-in parking and viewing facility on south side of the road across from the shop and pub. Here the spectacular views on offer could be safely enjoyed by local residents as well as visitors to the village.

A community playground would attract families into the village centre and allow children to play in safety.

Section 2: Mulranny Now - Issues and Tasks

Better connections should be made between the Great Western Greenway and the village centre, and the Great Western Greenway and the school. Property owners in the village centre and along the Greenway should be encouraged to maintain and improve their properties and enhance the appearance of this part of the village.

Such improvements would help support existing facilities in the area, and would assist in bringing more people together providing a much needed vibrancy to the village core.

TASKS ARISING

- Encourage high quality infill development on the northern side of the road in order to establish a more concentrated village centre.
- Develop a pull-in and pedestrian area for visitors on the south side of the road linked to the pub/shop on the north side of the road by a pedestrian crossing.
- Develop a playground as close as possible to this identified village centre.
- Investigate the possibility of obtaining a suitable building in the village for use as a tourist centre /interpretive centre.
- Improve connectivity between the Greenway and the village centre through signage, road surfaces and landscaping, explore the possibility of providing improved cycle links to the school.
- Encourage landowners either side of the Greenway and its links to the village, to maintain their property and keep free from rubbish and other discarded items.





The lack of footpaths in Mulranny makes the village unsafe for walkers.
The lack of pedestrians gives the impression of an unoccupied village.

PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND TRAFFIC MOVEMENT

ISSUES

- Lack of footpaths
- Lack of an obvious 'street'
- Fast movement of traffic through village
- Links to the Great Western Greenway are weak

Pedestrian safety is a key issue in Mulranny due to the lack of adequate footpaths throughout much of the village. Another issue is the lack of a 'pull-in' area to stop and enjoy the magnificent views across Clew Bay for passing tourists, as well as the lack of parking in the vicinity of the retail and business premises.

The National Secondary Road (N59) through-traffic in Mulranny can affect how the village functions and how it is appreciated. A number of measures are required so that Mulranny can prosper as a safe place to live, play and stop-off when passing through.

The relationship between the village and the road should ideally be changed to reflect that of a street where appropriate. An opportunity exists in the village for the development of a 'Promenade' on the southern side (sea-side) of the road along much of the village. A well designed and landscaped 'Promenade' in such a beautiful setting would not only place Mulranny firmly on the tourist map in the west region but would also assist in providing a safe pedestrian route through the village centre.

Increased pedestrian activity and traffic calming measures would encourage motorists to pass through the village with more care. The improvement of the footpath network in the village would make a significant contribution to the enjoyment of the public realm. Preliminary design work for a new footpath network is currently being prepared by the Road Design Section of Mayo County Council in conjunction with the National Roads Authority (NRA).

Section 2: Mulranny Now - Issues and Tasks

Attractive high quality surface paving, including sensitive treatment of any retaining walls that are required as part of the footpath construction works, are of great importance to the enhancement of the village's character. Any new footpaths should be designed and finished so as to be more appropriate to a village setting rather than a main road. Appropriate lighting and planting should be incorporated in any footpath construction. Additional pedestrian crossings would compliment these measures, while also slowing traffic down.

TASKS ARISING

- **Promenade:** Investigate the possible design and phased construction of a Promenade on the south side of the village.
- **Footpath:** Design and construct a footpath network that compliments Mulranny's distinctive character.
- **Traffic Calming:** Implement concentrated traffic calming in the village.
- **Strengthen connections** between the village and the Greenway cycle route.



THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



ISSUES

- No traditional street of terraced or closely fitting buildings.
- Piecemeal, scattered and eclectic development.
- No distinct or high quality architectural style.
- Poor quality shopfronts.
- Large petrol canopies and other fuel displays.

Architecturally, Mulranny cannot be considered to be a traditional Irish village. Piecemeal development over the last two centuries has caused an eclectic mix of building styles and no dominant building typology predominates. Flat roofed houses sit beside those with pitch roofs, building finishes and window styles and shapes all vary enormously. Two large petrol station canopies, excessive signage, poorly-designed shopfronts all add up to general lack of traditional character. The majority of the buildings in the village are used for residential purposes, many of which are used seasonally as holiday accommodation, much to the dissatisfaction of the village residents, as was articulated during the public consultation exercise.

Some of the older buildings represent a valuable heritage resource for a variety of reasons and should be reused where feasible and appropriate. Traditional and local building materials are a major element in defining the identity of an area as they are so closely related to the local geology. It is desirable that wherever possible and practical, local building and paving materials should be used in new developments. An example of this in Mulranny is the use of local red sandstone, which has been incorporated into many buildings and boundary walls in the village.

EXISTING BUILDING STYLES

Among the existing styles are the following:

- Older traditional two storey houses with robust chimneys, pitched slated roofs sloping toward the road, vertical proportioned windows and smooth plaster finish, e.g. Moynish House, generally these are located along the road.
- Newer houses with flatter pitched roofs, concrete, tiled or artificial slated roof finish, often gables facing the road, and wide horizontal windows. Often these are set back from the road.



- Flat roofed buildings, sometimes incorporate traditional features, reflecting the fact that they may once have had traditional pitched roofs.
- A Victorian, more international style, applies to the Mulranny Park Hotel (formerly the Great Southern Hotel), its disused railway station and associated buildings. These buildings incorporate imported features such as brickwork, steel, and overhanging eaves not typical of the area.
- Traditional cottages that may originally have been thatched but are now slated. Two such cottages have been thatched in recent times.
- Land Commission style cottages with hipped, slated roofs, traditional windows and smooth rendered walls.
- A medley of other structures, ranging from attractively maintained street front sheds, to flat roofed steel petrol canopies.

The variety and, in some cases, very poor architectural quality of this mix of buildings are knitted together, and one might say 'rescued' by the lush vegetation surrounding them and the dramatic natural setting of the immediate locality. Indeed, it is this vegetation, setting and the southerly aspect rather than the local architecture that help to make Mulranny the unique and beautiful place that it is.

TASKS ARISING:

- Encourage high quality architectural design in new buildings and refurbishment works in a style consistent with the higher quality buildings in the village.
- Follow the Architectural Design Guidelines published by Mayo County Council.
- Encourage refurbishment, maintenance and improvement works, notably on shopfronts, the petrol stations, window replacement and signage.
- Encourage the use of local materials in all works as well as the re-use of existing buildings in the village.
- Promote the retention and rehabilitation of existing old stone walls within the village where works (e.g. new footpaths) are proposed.
- Encourage property owners in the village, especially along the N59, to keep their properties well-maintained and well-presented.

SIGNAGE, DISPLAYED FUELS, DISCARDED MATERIALS, BINS AND LITTER



ISSUES

- Excessive use of signage, advertising banners and flags etc.
- Discarding/storage of crates, shelf units, trolleys etc in public areas.
- Obtrusive display of fuels for sale.
- Bottlebanks and associated dumping.
- Poor quality shopfront signage and window advertising.

Mulranny boasts a very attractive approach that is well-maintained and nicely planted. The absence of advertising and other signage greatly contributes to the attractiveness of the approach to the village. Unfortunately this cannot be said of the village centre which features:

- Large scale petrol canopies and pricing signage.
- Random, poorly-designed and over-sized signage on shopfronts, compounded by illumination by projecting lights.
- Gas and solid fuel signage randomly placed on lampposts and walls, even where these goods are no longer displayed.
- Large printed metal or plastic signs fixed to the gables of shops and other businesses.

- Excessive use of commercial advertising of products outside shops - on bins, banners, flags etc.
- Large displays of orange gas bottles, briquettes, logs etc and associated signage.
- Poorly positioned bottle banks and associated dumping.

These items greatly detract from the streetscape and give a poor impression of the village to the passer-by. Most of this signage is not necessary and has no functional effect.

TASKS ARISING

- Removal of all random and unnecessary signage scattered throughout the village.
- Develop a coordinated design approach to non shopfront signage, such that it is consistent throughout the village, made of high quality materials and forms part of the overall character of the place.
- Strict adherence to Mayo County Council's Shopfront Design Guidelines.
- Possible relocation of fuels, bottle banks etc.
- Creation of visually pleasing enclosures to conceal fuels for sale, bottle banks etc.
- Removal of discarded crates, trolleys etc.

NATURAL HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE

ISSUES

- Protection
- Visibility and enjoyment
- Appreciation

It is undoubtedly the natural heritage that is of greatest significance to Mulranny's overall identity. From a landscape and scenic amenity point of view, new development in the village must have regard to the village's special setting and efforts should be made to retain views of Clew Bay and the mountains across the Bay.

Nature conservation should be at the forefront of people's minds with regard to any new development in the village due to the sensitivities of the habitats surrounding the village. Further opportunities exist for the Mulranny Tidy Towns committee in terms of interpretation and education with respect to the biodiversity value of these habitats.

TASKS ARISING

- Protect the views from the village of the sea and mountain.
- Protect the natural heritage and biodiversity value of the designated habitats surrounding the village and continue to raise awareness amongst the public in this regard.
- Create or enhance stopping or walking areas that allow the full appreciation of this wonderful resource.
- Establish designated viewing points for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Improve the general colour scheme of some buildings.
- General maintenance to prevent staining of and paint loss from buildings.
- General architectural restyling e.g. removal of stone cladding and tinted windows to brighten up facades and make the buildings more inviting.
- Upgrade of boundaries to traditional stone walls using local red sandstone.
- Replace petrol canopies with slimmer profiles, preferably arched with smaller signage.



View of saltmarsh from village





View of causeway.



There is a need for a co-ordinated approach to signage.

THE BEACH AND CAUSEWAY

ISSUES

- Maintenance and protection
- Access and safety
- Litter and debris

Mulranny has two beaches (one of which is a Blue Flag beach), which are valued amenities to residents and visitors. However, enjoyment of a beach must be balanced with the need to protect its role and function as a natural ecosystem. Dune conservation and education measures, as undertaken by Mulranny Tidy Towns Committee, must be continued into the future.

Access to Mulranny beach is via road or via the causeway, which has fallen into disrepair in places and would benefit from better maintenance. Better promotion of and signage for the causeway could open up the beach to tourists staying in the village.

TASKS ARISING

- Maintain the local beaches and keep free from litter and debris.
- Improve the condition of the causeway and increase awareness of it.
- Improve/consolidate signage at beaches. Develop a co-ordinated signage system in keeping with the natural setting.

Section 3: The Way Forward

Establishing a Village Centre

- Promenade
- Greenway hub
- A quality built environment
- Signage, displayed goods, litter etc
- Traffic calming and footpaths

Improving Important Focal Points

- The causeway and pedestrian routes to the sea
- The school and church area
- Landscaping and the natural environment



PROMENADE A UNIQUE FEATURE IN MAYO

PROPOSAL

To develop a wide tree lined paved 'Promenade' or walkway on the south side of the commercial centre of the village. This would be a co-ordinated pedestrian, leisure and parking area that incorporates existing structures on the south side of the village and visually links up the length of the village centre.

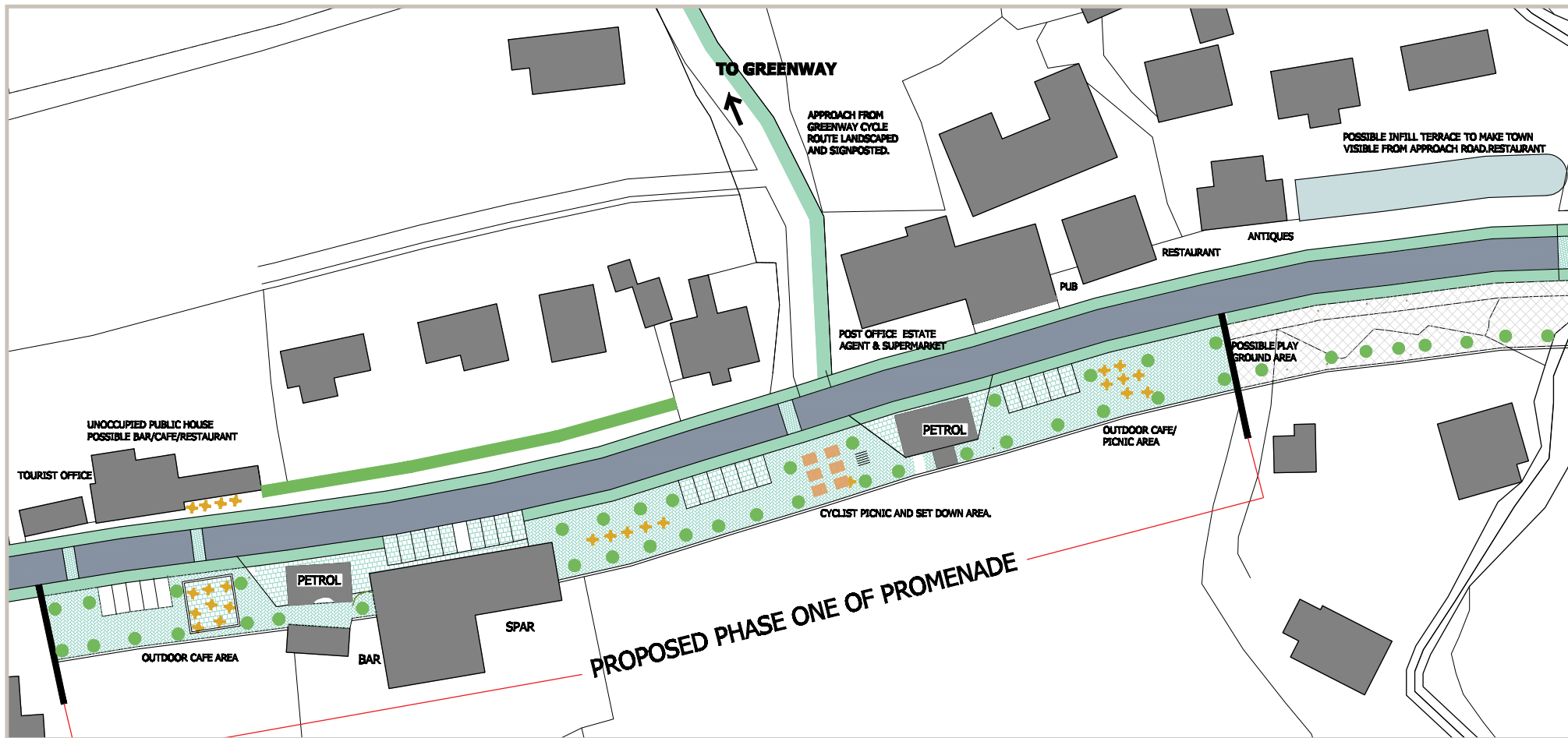
This '**promenade**' would incorporate the following:

- **Amenities:** cycle set down area, picnic area, café seating, possible children's play area, public seating, discreet lighting and litter bins, one or two lines of trees and other landscaping features.
- **Car parking:** positioned for easy access to shops and for enjoyment of views.
- **Existing activities:** existing petrol pumps, existing convenience store and bar.
- **Viewing areas:** to maximize the enjoyment of the spectacular views to the south.

The perimeter wall and paving should both be of natural local stone in keeping with the natural features of the area.



View of proposed promenade.



POSITIVE IMPACTS

The promenade would:

- tidy up the irregularly shaped often untidy south edge of the village.
- take advantage of sunlight and sea views to the south.
- provide space for amenities such as outdoor cafes, cyclist rest and picnic areas, which would generally give vitality to the village.
- provide car parking for commercial activities and enjoyment of views.
- provide a visual and pedestrian connection between all the businesses of the village, in particular those on the south side of the road.
- provide an attractive and inviting stopping point for cyclists, visible from the Greenway cycle route.
- be a unique summer time amenity, drawing visitors from the hotel, cycle route, passers by and also from afar.

PHASING

Construction of the promenade could be done in several phases:

Phase 1: The first phase of the development of this promenade would be confined to the village centre. This would be of a consistent depth such that it can incorporate the petrol stations (i.e. approximately 13 metres from the edge of the road to the perimeter wall overlooking the views). This first phase should be designed such that it will look complete in itself, in case the construction of later phases are substantially delayed.

Later Phases: The promenade could extend both east and west and could eventually link up with the walkway down to the causeway. The later phases should all be of equal depth but could be of a lesser depth than the first phase, which has to accommodate two petrol stations. Finishes, fixtures etc. should be identical to those employed in the original first phase.



Sketch A: Start of proposed promenade opposite thatched cottages.



Examples of promenade seating.



Sketch B: View of proposed promenade west of Spar opposite Campbells Pub.

DESIGN DETAILS

Paving: Natural stone finishes and/or a high quality concrete/ local stone mix such as 'Pieri Chromo-Fibre' varying to define parking areas, petrol station areas and defined seating/ cafe areas.

Boundary/Perimeter Wall: 1100 cm high natural stone wall built in a style typical of dry stone walls of the locality.

Planting: One or two parallel lines of trees, planted approximately 7 – 11 m apart. Species: variety that will grow in coastal/seaside areas. Trees to be pruned back annually to ensure 'framing' and full enjoyment of views to sea. Also flowering shrubs typical of locality.

Depth: A consistent depth, approximately 8 – 13 m continuously, this includes the footpath.

Fittings: Cycle stands, picnic tables and chairs, viewing benches, litter bins, decorative lighting, possible play area.

Signage: A carefully designed and co-ordinated discreet signage system should be developed for the entire village.



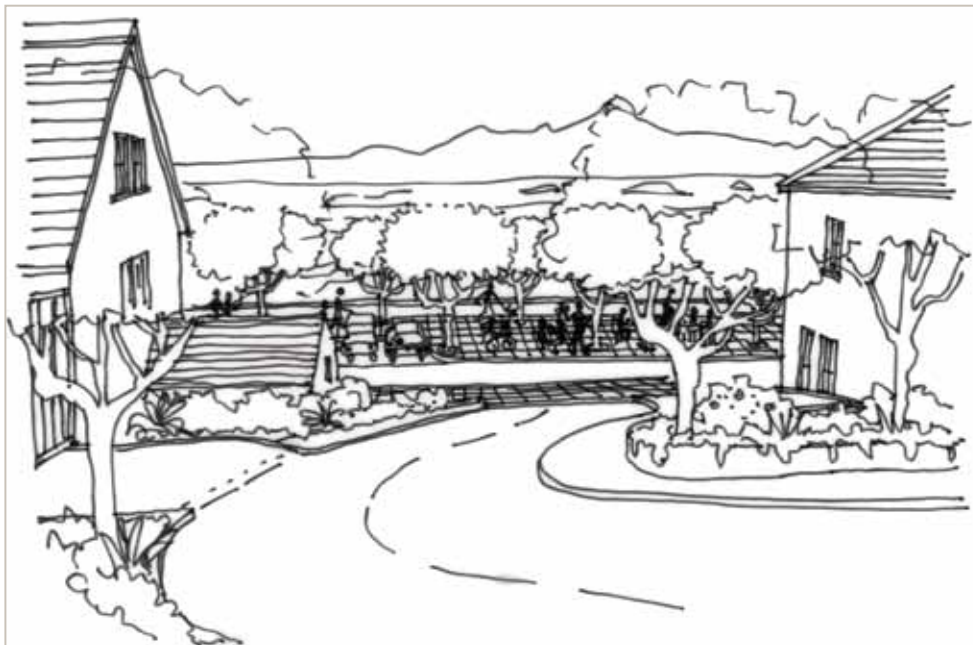
Examples of promenade furniture, planting and paving.

A GREENWAY HUB ESTABLISHING MULRANNY AS A MAJOR STOPPING POINT

PROPOSAL

To strengthen the links between Mulranny and the Great Western Greenway cycle and pedestrian route such that Mulranny becomes the central stopping point on the route.

Mulranny village centre does not yet exploit its potential as a stopping off point for cyclists/walkers along the Greenway. As a place of exceptional beauty there is an huge opportunity to make strong visual and physical connections with the Greenway. However work is required to make Mulranny appear visually enticing to passing cyclists.



Sketch C: Proposed cycle stands, café area, and sea views, seen from an attractively landscaped cycle link road will draw the cyclist into the village.

POSITIVE IMPACTS:

- Increased commercial activity for cafes, shops, restaurants.
- Increased vitality in the village centre,
- Full integration of the Greenway with Mulranny Village.

WORKS REQUIRED:

- Provide improved hard landscaping and planting to create more visually attractive approaches from the Greenway into the village.
- Design signage system for promotion of the village along the cycle route in Mulranny.
- Establish clearly visible bike stands, picnic area and ideally cafes etc along and opposite the proposed promenade area at the base of the slipway connection from the cycle route.
- Establish road crossings and signage to link school, church etc. directly to the Greenway via existing side roads.
- Remove the substantial amounts of litter and discarded materials visible from the Greenway route; provide screen planting to conceal boats, other goods etc stored on private property.
- Remove the unattractive displays of fuels etc. for sale along the N59, storage of waste materials and inappropriate signage clearly visible from the Greenway slipway.
- Address issue of gradient of slipway from Greenway into village.



Examples of street furniture and signage complimentary to Mulranny's setting.

A QUALITY BUILT ENVIRONMENT CONSOLIDATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

PROPOSAL

To establish a way forward such that Mulranny's existing and future built environment becomes one of pride to local residents; attractive and inviting to passers by; and enhances the spectacular setting in which the village sits.

The most admired towns in Ireland are ones with a high quality building stock, normally of a consistent design style. This quality is highly dependant on good and sympathetic architectural design, upkeep and maintenance, high quality signage and shopfronts, limiting advertising signage and the use of building materials and finishes that fit in with the original traditional architectural styles of the area.

As stated above, Mulranny village is formed by a cluster of buildings of very different styles, positioned separately and following no particular building pattern. While it is the spectacular setting and natural environment that knits this village together, there is great potential for the improvement and enhancement of the built environment.



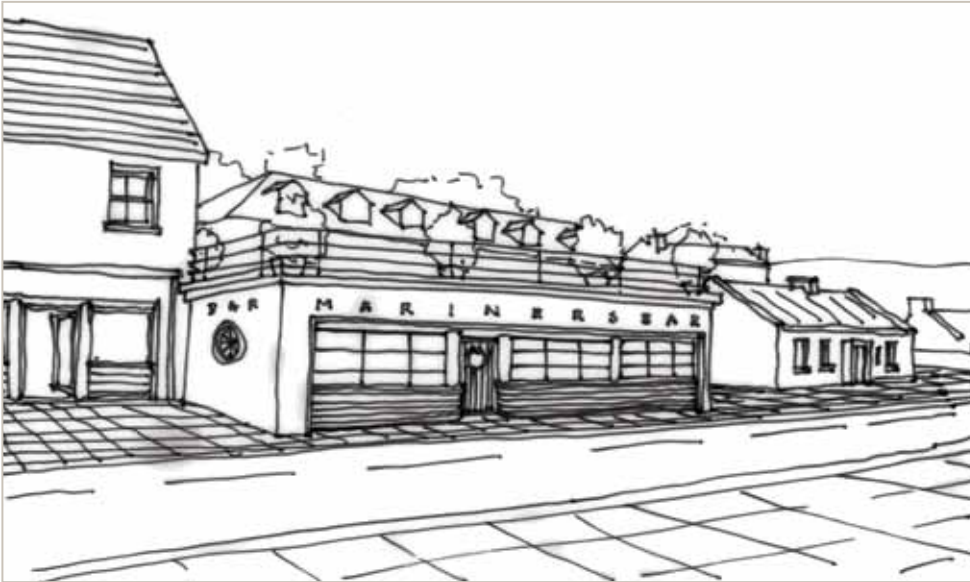
Sketch D: Potential adaptation of Costcutters Supermarket and public house to achieve a more traditional appearance (note paving).

THE EXISTING BUILDING STOCK - RECOMMENDED WORKS

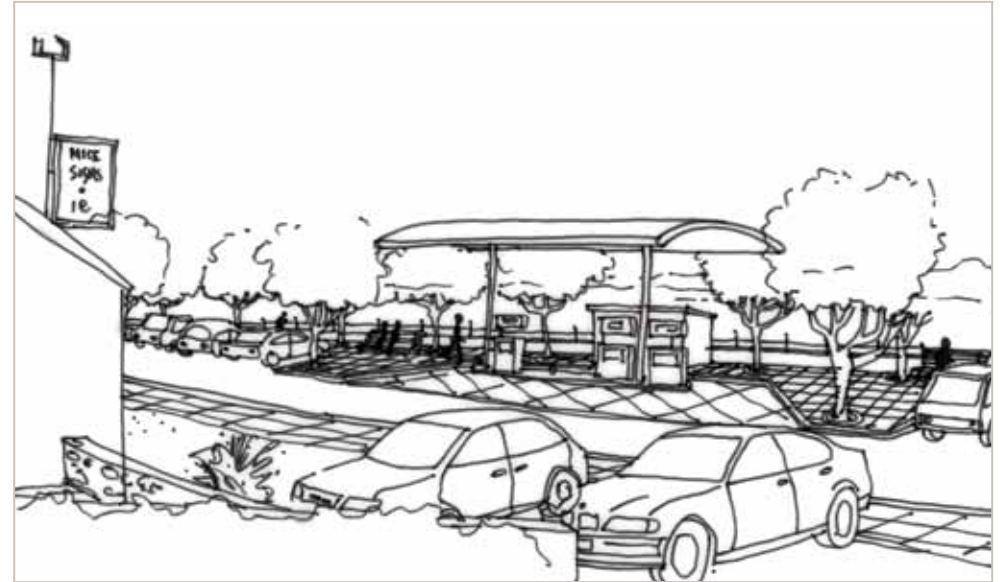
When buildings are being refurbished or upgraded:

- Replace wide horizontal windows with windows with a more vertical emphasis.
- Replace flat roofs with traditional slated pitched roofs.
- Remove flat stone or brick wall cladding, tinted glass windows etc to brighten up facades and make the buildings more inviting.
- Use smooth painted plaster, timber windows, local red stone etc. finishes in keeping with traditional buildings of locality.
- Upgrade boundaries to traditional stone walls using local red sandstone.
- Replace existing petrol canopies with canopies with slimmer more elegant profiles with smaller signage.
- Replace shopfronts with traditionally proportioned shop fronts with individual lettering and smaller signage.





Sketch E: Alternative design for public house to achieve a more maritime character.
Possible café on roof area to take advantage of views.



Sketch F: Potential upgrade of petrol canopy and incorporation into proposed promenade.

The following simple improvements would make an immediate positive impact:

- Removal of unsuitable, plastic, excessive and oversized signage and illumination features from shopfronts.
- Painting and improvement of the general colour scheme of some buildings.
- General maintenance to prevent staining of and paint loss from buildings.





Sketch G: Proposed start of village centre clearly visible to approaching cars.



NEW DEVELOPMENT – RECOMMENDED WORKS

- Positioning of new commercial development within short walking distance of existing shops and services.
- Positioning new building development such that it is terraced onto or tightly fit between existing buildings to create a consolidated street frontage.
- High quality architectural design, aesthetically pleasing and harmonious with its setting.
- Careful design facilitating full enjoyment and enhancement of the south facing scenic setting.
- Practical, but aesthetically pleasing solutions for the provision of car parking, petrol, fuels and other miscellaneous services.

THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED AS FOLLOWS:

a) Infill development:

This is defined as development terraced between or beside existing buildings. It extends or consolidates an existing line of buildings. Infill development would greatly help to consolidate and define Mulranny village centre by 'joining up' the currently scattered collection of stand alone buildings.

- A two storey terraced development stretching east of the thatched cottages would make the village identifiable and visible at a distance by cars approaching from Newport. At present, drivers cannot see the village on approach and so are not inclined to naturally slow down until it is too late.
- Two storey buildings constructed along the north side of the N59 in the village centre between existing buildings would form a street terrace of buildings.
- If infill development is not feasible or does not take place careful landscaping and treatment of boundary walls can create a sense of continuity of the village centre.

b) High Quality Architectural Design

Good architectural design is worth investing in. It not only leads to an aesthetically-pleasing building on the outside, but also efficient use of space, and the maximum possible enjoyment of the building by its users. This will in turn lead to improved commercial viability and a better resale price.

Due to the mix of building styles currently found in Mulranny, there is greater potential for contemporary architectural design if it is of high quality and finish.

However, new buildings should be architecturally consistent with their neighbours, in terms of scale, proportioning and finish. New buildings should aim to visually enhance their setting, and never detract from it. They should create visual continuity with the other surrounding buildings in the village centre.



Example of restrained contemporary design compatible with traditional styles.



Example of traditional shopfront design that enhances the street setting.

A CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TO SIGNAGE, STORAGE AND LITTER

PROPOSAL

To review all existing externally visible advertising and directional signage, goods for sale, discarded and stored materials, and litter issues etc. to minimise its visual impact.

POSITIVE IMPACTS:

- Reduction of visual clutter in the village centre.
- Greater enjoyment of Mulranny's spectacular natural setting.
- Improved built environment.

While signage is essential to inform the public of the existence of businesses and to give directions etc, there is absolutely no reason why signage cannot be done well and have an enhancing effect on a place. A co-ordinated approach to signage in the village would not only make for a more attractive village, but will facilitate a great reduction in the amount of signage necessary.

Bright, excessively-sized signage and advertising can have a 'cheapening' effect on a place; carefully designed signage can make a place look interesting and unique. Signage is just as effective, if not more so, if it is carefully designed to become an integral part of the building on which it sits. Good signage implies that quality products are for sale and that the owner of the premises gives a good service.

RECOMMENDED WORKS:

- Development of a Signage Design Guideline and Plan specific to Mulranny for directional and information signage. Signs should be of high quality materials and form part of the overall character of the place.
- Removal of all random signage scattered throughout the village.
- Removal of all excess signage from and in front of shopfronts.
- Strict adherence to Mayo County Council's Shopfront Design Guidelines.
- Creation of discreet enclosures for fuels for sale and bottle banks with minimal signage.
- Possible relocation of fuels for sale and bottle banks.
- Minimisation of promotional advertising in shopfront windows.



Example of innovative solution to screening, where signage is used to screen and secure bins.

TRAFFIC CALMING AND FOOTPATHS

PROPOSAL

To provide footpaths, road crossings and other discreet traffic calming measures and to create a pedestrian safe and friendly village centre where visitors and locals alike will choose to stop and walk through the village rather than drive.

As a defined village structure is not clearly apparent from either approach to the village, Mulranny suffers from the problem of motorists speeding through it. This combined with the narrowness of the roads and the lack of footpaths makes Mulranny an unsafe and uncomfortable village to stop at or walk or cycle in.

Traffic calming need not consist of large amounts of oversized 'SLOW' signs. Traffic can be naturally calmed by various measures, from simply being able to see the village in advance, by narrowing the road, and by pedestrian crossings. The latter two elements require careful design, positioning and consideration. Road crossings should be located to ensure maximum access to shops and enjoyment of the proposed promenade.



Sketch B: Proposed pedestrian crossing to promenade will slow traffic and define village centre.

POSITIVE IMPACTS:

- The village centre will become more visually 'alive'.
- Improved road safety all round.
- A greater sense of community.



Sketch H: Footpath connecting Health Centre and supermarket with Spar and Campbells.

RECOMMENDED WORKS:

- Carefully positioned road crossings to announce the existence of the village centre and slow traffic.
- Carefully designed footpaths and road crossings to facilitate pedestrian movement between shops/services.
- Infill and edge of village centre development to visually reinforce the existence of the village centre and create built edges visible at a distance from the approach roads.
- Keep village centre road widths to minimum permissible.
- Carefully located and designed car parking to prevent onstreet parking and traffic issues.

THE CAUSEWAY AND PEDESTRIAN ROUTES TO THE PIER AND THE SEA

PROPOSAL

To strengthen connections to and promote enjoyment of the sea, beaches and causeway around Mulranny. The old Victorian causeway and pedestrian route to the sea were originally built as part of the Great Western Railway Hotel and are now a public amenity, providing a link to the beach and pier.

POSITIVE IMPACTS:

- Improved pedestrian connections from village centre to the causeway and pier.
- Improved visibility of entrance to the causeway.
- Improved visibility in the wooded areas.
- General repairs and improvements to steps, railings, lighting etc.

Whether the proposed 'promenade' is ever extended as far as this or not, a footpath connection from the village to the Causeway walk is desirable. This could be done by means of a timber and steel cantilevered walkway located inside the stone wall on the forest side of the road. This walkway would be an attractive feature in its own right. Such cantilevered walkway structures are visible along the sea in Rosbeg in Westport and along the River Liffey in Dublin city centre.

Meanwhile, the existing and original entrance from the road to the causeway walk is not very visible and easily passed unseen. Once entered the steps down to the causeway are somewhat hazardous due to erosion of earth each side of the steps, the lack of natural and artificial light, and the general wear and tear.

As well as the causeway steps, other locally named rights of way exist from the village to the shore, i.e. "Beady's Boreen" and "Carol's Boreen".



In-ground fitted up lighters and tree flood lighting would be discreet and provide interesting lighting effects.

Steps near Lake Como in Italy.

RECOMMENDED WORKS:

- At entrance to causeway replace dark stone bollards and plant boxes with stainless steel to make entrance more visible, bollards could be illuminated.
- Substantially cut back trees at entrance and down steps to open up and allow in more natural light.
- Provide lighting from the entrance area down the steps to the path. Maybe use uplighters to illuminate the trees.
- Develop a clear signage and mapping system to facilitate use and awareness.
- Provide edge protective handrails to steps. A long term plan should be made to upgrade these steps and their surroundings, while at the same time protecting and respecting the natural environment
- Restore the pumphouse and provide heritage trail signage.

The causeway walk at sea level is somewhat hazardous at times due to the effects of erosion by the sea. The pier also requires attention regarding accessibility. Any works to these areas will require appropriate ecological assessment and specialist consideration to ensure the protection of the natural environment and the retention of the original Victorian character and to ensure that the investment will provide long term solutions.

THE SCHOOL AND CHURCH AREA

PROPOSAL

Rearrangement of the existing road, parking and open space in this area to allow greater and safer ease of movement, and the creation of a visually enhancing social amenity.



View of school and church area.



POSITIVE IMPACTS:

- Increase parking provision.
- Improved traffic flow to and from this area.
- Pedestrian crossings.
- Improved social amenities.

Although located at the far west end of the village, away from the commercial centre of Mulranny, the area in which the school and church are located is an important and busy hub in the village. Traffic, pedestrian safety and car parking issues arise on a daily basis, at the start and end of the school day, at mass time and when funerals and weddings are taking place. Visually, there is great potential for enhancement of this area also.

RECOMMENDED WORKS:

(subject to the agreement/approval of Mayo County Council Road Design Section)

- Rearrangement and marking out of car park, to improve car parking capacity.
- Reduction of slip road width, if possible, to allow the provision of a footpath and to slow traffic movement.
- Provision of road crossing from car park to school and church.
- Enhancement of the amenity area i.e. seating already provided.
- Provision and careful design of high quality hard landscaping finishes, street furniture and planting.
- Establish road crossings and signage to link school, church etc. directly to the cycle route via existing side roads.

LANDSCAPING AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

PROPOSAL

Development of an approach to landscaping and planting to conserve and enhance the existing natural setting, and give Mulranny a unique character of its own.

Mulranny is unique in the west of Ireland in that it combines a south sloping aspect with a sheltered setting.

As a result, Mulranny is rich in vegetation which in itself further provides shelter from the elements. Such growing conditions are rare along the exposed Atlantic coasts of Ireland and as a result Mulranny has a unique botanical character. Planting can be used to great advantage.

POSITIVE IMPACTS:

- **Infill:** Between scattered buildings to create visual consolidation of the built environment.
- **Character and Colour:** to enhance Mulranny's unique character, reflecting its sheltered south facing micro-climate.
- **Shelter:** For the proposed promenade and its activities.
- **Screening:** For privacy and to conceal less visually-pleasing areas.
- **Attraction:** Improved visual amenity generally.



Example of carefully pruned trees giving shelter while not obliterating views.

RECOMMENDED WORKS:

- Advice should be sought as to the exact choice of plants such that they are indigenous to and will survive the local coastal and soil conditions, appear natural in their setting and support local wildlife.
- Development of a planting strategy unique to Mulranny; advice should be sought from qualified Landscape Architects and Horticulturalists.
- Identification of areas in Mulranny that would benefit from screening, shelter, enhancement etc.
- Liaison with Mayo County Council Horticulturalist/Heritage Office.



Good streetscape design requires a certain harmony in the interrelationship between buildings. New buildings should therefore try to respect or have regard to the existing building fabric, which contributes so much to the existing character of the village. This requires a sensitive approach which has regard to local context, relating to a number of streetscape elements, such as plot width, building height, building line, roof type/pitch, fenestration pattern, materials, detailing, etc.



An exciting well-designed contemporary form with vertical proportioning set in a suitable setting could give Mulranny a contemporary character different from other villages in Mayo.

A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH

Few buildings in Mulranny display traditional Irish village characteristics, but examples would be the health centre and Moynish House. The majority of buildings have either been built or substantially altered within the past sixty years. This allows Mulranny to perhaps take a much more contemporary approach to its architectural design, which would and could maximise on enjoyment of the spectacular views and available sunlight due to its southerly aspect.

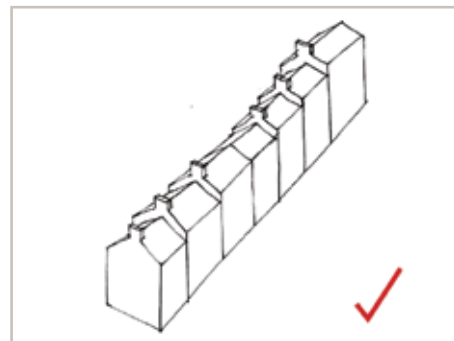
It should be noted that only high quality contemporary architectural design that respects the scale, proportioning and finishes etc. that exist already will achieve unity of character with the existing built fabric of the village. The elements of the older more traditional buildings e.g. the height, building setback, roof type, proportions, materials, etc., offer a cue from which the modern designer can select, so as to produce a modern building of innovative design that has regard to the existing character and context. This is sometimes referred to as 'context design'.

It is important that development consolidates and reinforces the traditional structure of the village, rather than creating a dual settlement, physically disconnected from the village in character and form. The following guidelines should be considered.

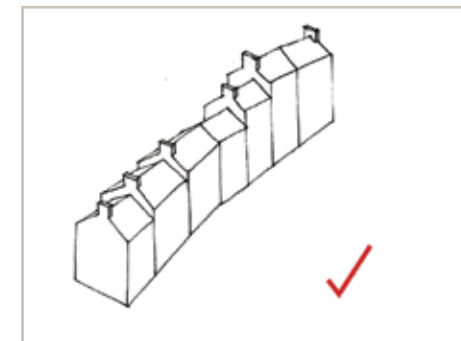


BUILDING LINES/BUILDING SET-BACKS

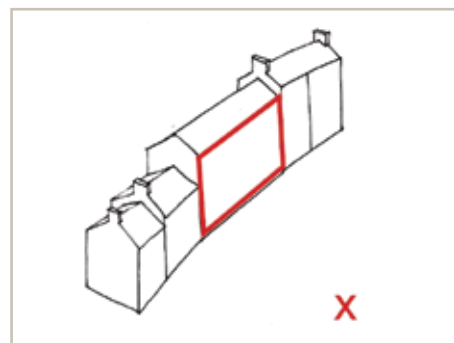
Building line or building set-back refers to the position of the façade of a building relative to the street. Traditional streets usually display fairly consistent building lines which can be straight, curved, deflected or meandering. Unfortunately in Mulranny there is little consistency in the building pattern; building facades step in and out along the road, although there are enough short straight building lines to now establish a building line for future development. This would allow footpaths to be placed and a streetscape to be formed. Where the road curves or deflects, any new terrace built should curve or deflect with it, as this adds character and interest to a street.



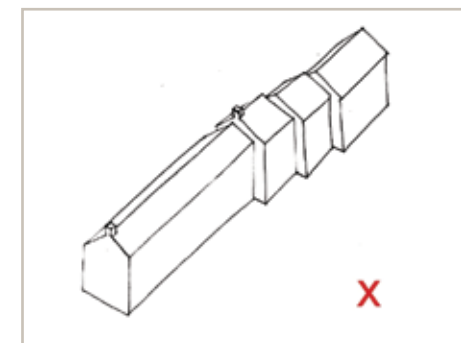
Traditional straight building line.



Traditional deflected building line.



Plot amalgamation and associated redevelopment can result in a disruption of scale of vertical emphasis in streetscape. The cumulative impact of this over generations can significantly erode the inherent character of the traditional streetscape.



Stepping of building lines in new infill development should be avoided.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

In the traditional Irish village, the door and window openings are vertically orientated and aligned. It is important that this pattern is maintained, and therefore the pressure for larger openings should be resisted. Given the southerly aspects of the majority of facades in Mulranny, there is much solar heat and light gain to be enjoyed, along with the spectacular views. In this case with careful architectural design, larger windows can be introduced with in built vertical emphasis and traditional fenestration pattern.

In general, windows and door frames should be set back or recessed from the face of the building. This was traditionally important to protect the natural wood frames from the elements, but it also gives depth and character to the building. Traditional windows were constructed of hardwood and were of the traditional sash type (with one, two or four panes over a corresponding number below). In general, original timber windows and doors should be refurbished, or if necessary replaced in wood, in preference to their replacement with modern materials and uPVC materials.



Inappropriate uPVC windows with outward openings have replaced traditional hardwood sliding sash windows. Where possible original windows and doors should be conserved or re-instated.

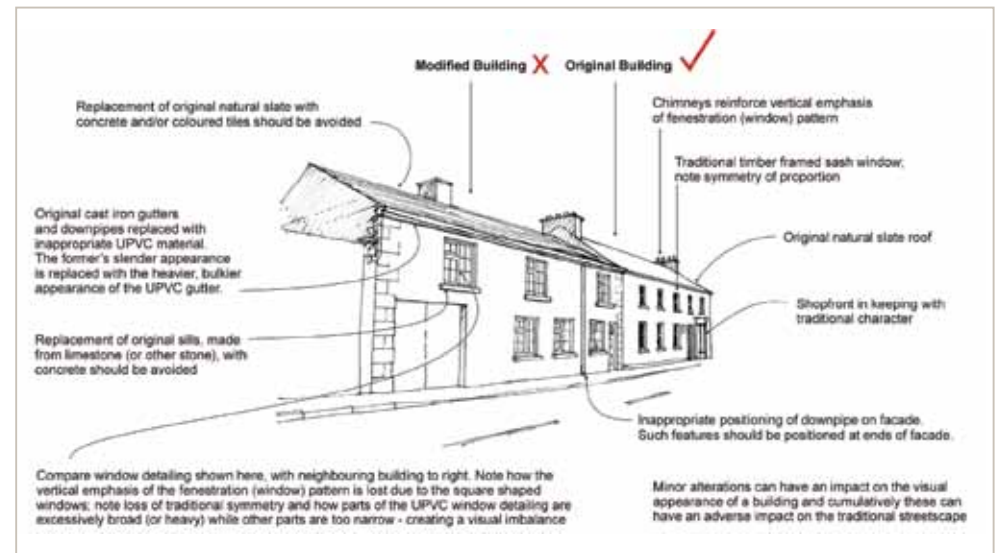


Overly horizontal emphasis for traditional streetscape – Such relatively minor alterations to individual buildings on a street may seem trivial, but their cumulative impact can be quite significant.

BUILDING HEIGHT AND SCALE

The traditional building heights of one and two storeys apply here in Mulranny. The older buildings in the village have a relatively shallow roof span and c.35 degree pitch again typical of other villages. Newer buildings unfortunately vary in character creating an eclectic appearance and visually incohesive mix of flat, shallow pitch and very large dormer roofs.

The demand for greater floor area in recent times has lead to the deeper floor plan. Unfortunately this has had a corresponding effect in relation to the scale of the roof making it significantly larger. This larger single roof should be avoided. There are several ways of achieving traditional scale of roof over a larger building.



STREET ROOFLINE

Given the varying building heights in the village and the varying building lines (building setback from street edge), there is a corresponding difference in roof lines. This fact however, should not preclude a more consistent approach being taken in respect to new infill development opportunities, particularly along the village centre. It should be noted however, that it is common in the Irish village for building heights and the ridges of roofs, to step up and down continuously within a limited range. This adds visual interest and rhythm, and avoids the monotonous rigidity of overly standardized roof lines.

For new pitched roofs, the angle of the pitch should be generally consistent with its neighbours and should not be excessively steep (or shallow). Similarly the depth of the span of the roof should not be too great as this leads to excessively large roofs out of proportion with those surrounding. Dormers and flat roofs along the streetscape should be avoided as they are not in keeping with the character of Mulranny.

SHOP FRONTS AND SIGNAGE

There is only one traditional shopfront remaining in Mulranny. Every effort should be made to retain and conserve this shopfront at Moynish House. It adds greatly to the character of the street. The special features of its design and proportion include the pilasters, nameboard, console, cornice and traditional sign writing style. These features, it should be noted, are not over-elaborate, the fascia is flat on the façade, and there is no additional signage outside the nameboard. Modern designs which echo its scale and fenestration of the traditional street proportion and avoid excessively large nameboards would be suitable on other infill sites or where shopfronts are being replaced. For further design guidance refer to Mayo County Council's Shopfront Design Guide.



Excessively steep pitch roof – In a typical terrace, the angle of the roof pitch is generally consistent, even though building heights may vary. New infill developments (or refurbishments that include new habitable roof space) should ensure that the pitch or angle of the roof is consistent with neighbouring properties.



Recently built shopfronts in Mayo that respect the scale and proportioning of the traditional buildings.

MATERIALS AND DETAILS

The retention or reinstatement of the traditional elements of a building, such as chimneys, cast-iron gutters, natural slate roofs, etc. should be encouraged. The modern trend of removing chimneys in the refurbishment of buildings can have a significant cumulative impact over time, as the street begins to lose some of its vertical emphasis.

Red Sandstone is a traditional building material in Mulranny. A few newer buildings outside the village centre are finished with a stone face, and depending on design this is acceptable and can be used as a way of achieving the vertical proportioning, typical of a traditional village. Most buildings have a cement plastered finish, though traditionally would have had a lime based mortar. It is important to retain the renders on buildings that had originally been finished in this manner, as it protects the building from rainwater and damp. When removed, it can expose a rough rubble wall with a mix of materials that was never intended to be exposed.

LINKAGES AND PERMEABILITY

Permeability is the relative ease with which people can move about and get to their destination. Linkages and connections between places and new development areas will be important. The imposition of cul-de-sacs without adequate consideration to these linkages is likely to result in an unsatisfactory development form.

NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

In general, the fronts of houses should be orientated to face a public street and adjoining open spaces, while the backs of houses should interlock with each other. This ensures that all open spaces are overlooked by adjoining dwellings, providing natural surveillance and a sense of security. The provision of rear gardens along principal access roads should be avoided.



Use of Red Sandstone typical of the area.

LANDMARK BUILDINGS AND CORNER SITES

At key locations, such as at junctions, nodal points, focal sites and street corners, future developments and buildings should be individually designed so as to accentuate the special site features, i.e. two façades may be required on a corner building to address each adjoining street. Such buildings could be accentuated through stepping up building heights or through other forms of design articulation (i.e. fenestration etc.)

LANDSCAPING

The landscape structure of Mulranny is a very notable feature of the village. In particular, the existing trees and shrubs provide a very positive contribution to the character of the village. Future development areas should give due consideration to landscaping and tree planting so as to ensure the newer and older areas are, in time, unified. Native tree species, which tolerate the coastal conditions, will be particularly encouraged due to their greater ecological value (they support and sustain a greater variety of insects, birdlife and mammals). All future developments should be accompanied by a landscape plan that outlines the approach to be taken. Landscaping should address not just the common, public area or open space, but should also give consideration to the private domain. Landscaping and tree planting can be used to successfully address the transition in building types and set-backs that emerge from the village centre to the village edge.

Section 5: Delivering the Village Design Statement

DELIVERING THE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY BUY-IN

Mulranny has a good community spirit, with active community groups, and it is collectively engaged in looking to its future. It was apparent during the public consultation process that many residents felt that the process of preparing this document had been a worthwhile one, in that it brought like-minded people together in the pursuit of common goals for the village.

The success of the Mulranny Village Design Statement must be judged on its ability to bring about change. To bring about this change, a partnership approach is required between all the relevant stakeholders involved.

A key challenge in delivering the varied tasks identified in the Village Design Statement will be sourcing funding, which given the trying economic times we find ourselves in, may prove difficult. External factors such as allocated Local Authority funding, and the availability of funding from other sources, including the private sector will be influential if the identified tasks are to be achieved.



Village Design Workshop – Mulranny – 12th Oct 2010

22 members of the public attended the workshop.

Exercises

Exercise 1: Participants were asked to draw a map of Mulranny identifying what for them are the village's main features.

The maps that were drawn by the participants were quite consistent in what they portrayed. The main buildings within the village such as the shops, hotel, guesthouses, church, school and railway station as well as obvious features such as the beach and causeway were consistently shown.

Exercise 2: Participants were asked to mark on a map the important landmarks of Mulranny. Examples of large landmarks could be the church or the hotel, the smaller or more local landmarks could be a tree, a decorative sign or even something unique in someone's garden.

The bigger landmarks identified tended to be larger buildings in the village, the Greenway and other features and structures such as the beach and pier. Smaller landmarks listed were numerous and included the Fair Green, Carrolls Cottage, Brothan Road.

Exercise 3: Participants were asked to identify and map the different zones or areas that they perceive within Mulranny. These areas could include, for example, busy and quiet areas; green or built up areas, safe or dangerous areas, etc.

In relation to identifiable zones, the most persistent issue noted was that of the danger caused by the lack of footpath(s) in the village centre. Reference was also made to the scenic amenity value of the area between the village and the sea, as well as the conservation/habitat values of much of the lands either side of the village.

Exercise 4: S.W.O.T Analysis

Strengths – Scenic coastal location, leisure amenities such as surfing, walking, golf, beaches, hotel, shops, pubs, amenity centre, pier, machair.

Weaknesses – Lack of footpaths, parking and road safety issues, lack of public space and a playground, dereliction/vacant property, lack of sewerage scheme, lack of public lighting.

Opportunities – Greenway, beaches, walking routes, causeway, conservation areas, leisure centre, empty buildings, pier (potential for marina), 18 golf course, interpretative centre, outdoor activities, café, restaurants, enterprise units, development of tourism/water activities, conservation of natural amenities, water wind as energy resource.

Threats – Coastal erosion, invasive species such as Gunnera and Japanese knotweed, litter, over-development, traffic congestion.

Exercise 5: Questionnaire

Participants were requested to complete the following questionnaire. 21 questionnaires were completed.

Q.1 Have you enjoyed the workshop and found it beneficial?

The majority of attendees found the workshop beneficial and enjoyable, though a few commented on what they saw as a poor turnout, and a few stated that they would have liked to have had more time to complete exercises.

Q.2 What for you is the distinguishing characteristic of Mulranny and why?

Natural environment and location; sea views; machair and beach habitat; hotel; causeway.

Q.3 Is there a particular type of development needed in the village and why?

Footpaths, enterprise, tourism and leisure facilities, football pitches, public open space, car parking, playground, marina, food outlets.

Q.4 What is your favourite building/structure within Mulranny and why?

Hotel, thatched cottages, causeway, old station house and water tower, Moynish B&B.

Q.5 What is your favourite section of street within Mulranny and why?

Area around church, sections with footpath because they are safe, section between Daly’s pub/shop and Moynish House due to views, approach into village from Newport due to planters and cottages.

Q.6 What is your favourite vista (distant view) within your village, that you feel should be protected and why?

Coastline, Croagh Patrick and mountains in general. View to and from the village and view of and from the Causeway.

Q.7 Do you use any public recreation/amenity facilities in the town and do you feel these are well provided for?

Hotel leisure centre, beach and pier other rural walks, causeway, Greenway, amenity and community centres, golf course.

Q.8 Are there parking problems within Mulranny, and if so where?

Church, school and shops were identified as particular problem areas.

Q.9 Have you any ideas on how to improve your local physical environment?

Provision of footpaths, a playground, village lacks a focal point – a public space area should be created, additional parking, revamp old derelict houses, additional public lighting, traffic calming in village, use of local stone on boundary walls, trim hedgerows in village to enhance views.

Q.10(a) Generally, how safe from the risk of crime do you feel in your village?

Q.10(b) and are there any particular parts of the village that make you feel unsafe, and why?

- (a) The vast majority of respondents stated that they felt safe both before and after 7pm.
- (b) Main area of village identified as unsafe mainly due to the lack of a footpath, and to a lesser extent due to the lack of lighting. Cushlecka and Beach road highlighted due to lack of lighting also.

Q.11 How do you feel about the new development, particularly housing development that has taken place in Mulranny in the past 10–15 years?

Most respondents were largely critical of recent development, identifying the poor inappropriate design of the new housing estates and the lack of traditional architecture employed. The issue of unoccupied holiday homes was raised as well as the lack of amenities that should have developed alongside the housing.

Q.12 Do you like the way Mulranny is growing and developing? Feel free to expand on your answer

While most were positive on this, some respondents felt more enterprise/employment generating development is needed as well as tourism related development, rather than just holiday homes. Some also felt that enough development had taken place in the village.

Q.13 Which parts of Mulranny do you feel should be developed in the future and are there are areas of Mulranny that you feel should be kept free from development?

Many felt there was potential for additional development in the centre of the village as well as the potential for a harbour/marina facility.

Areas to be kept free – land on the seaside of the village and beach front and beach area in general, some respondents felt it was fine as it is now.

Q.14 Have you an opinion about the future size of Mulranny?

- Keep it at its current size
- Let it get a little larger
- Let it get a lot larger
- Its already too large
- No opinion/Not sure

The vast majority of respondents wished to see the village get only a little larger, with a few stating that they wished it stayed at its current size.

Planning Policy – Regional

Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022

Planning Policy – County

Mayo County Development Plan 2008-2014

<http://www.mayococo.ie/en/Planning/>

Relevant Extracts from Mayo County Development Plan 2008-2014

Objective CSS-2.4 of the County Mayo Development Plan 2008-2014 states that it is an objective of the Council to encourage the sympathetic refurbishment, redevelopment and reuse of derelict, redundant and ruined buildings, and the appropriate development of infill or back-land sites within the built-up areas of towns, having regard to Village Design Statements/Development Frameworks, where prepared.

Objective CSS-2.1 of the County Mayo Development Plan 2008-2014 states that Village Design Statements will be incorporated into the County Development Plan through the statutory variation procedure.

Useful Contacts

Mayo County Council – www.mayococo.ie

The Heritage Council – www.heritagecouncil.ie

Mulranny Tidy Towns Committee – www.mulranny.ie

For Further Information Contact:

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www.mayococo.ie/heritage



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council

An Chomhairle Oldhreachta
The Heritage Council

