



Isle of Tiree

sustainable design guidance



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* also referred to as 'Blackroofs' – however this document uses 'Blacktops' as a generic name for this distinctive Tiree house type

introduction

Tiree Design Guidance - an explanation

This design guidance for Tiree sets out to explore why some new development looks out of place whilst some fits happily into its surroundings. It suggests ways to ensure that new developments are attractive, energy efficient and flexible. This guidance suggests how buildings can be sited and designed so that they enhance rather than detract from or spoil their landscape setting.

Whilst this guidance aims to illustrate why certain designs will not work well in particular situations, it is not intended to restrict applicant's options for developing innovative and high quality solutions for sites on Tiree. Instead its aim is to encourage individual, high quality design solutions for the very special sites and places within this planning authority area. It describes the principles that underlie quality design for Tiree, and describes a sustainable approach which considers the long-term impact of development. This design guidance therefore aims to:-

- preserve, promote and protect Tiree's heritage
- demonstrate the linkage between traditional building types and their settings
- ensure that new buildings are a positive addition to the Tiree built form and landscape
- ensure that new development is appropriate for contemporary rural lifestyles

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

Context and Crossover with other Guidance

Argyll and Bute Council have recently completed new Sustainable Design Guidance for all new housing development taking place within Argyll and Bute. This promotes good quality, sustainable and contemporary building design, and where appropriate innovative solutions, suited to the distinctive landscapes, towns and villages of Argyll and Bute. The guidance explains the key principles of quality design and sustainable development applicable to the Argyll and Bute area as a whole. It includes a summary of the Planning Application Process.

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

This guidance is available on the Argyll and Bute Council website.

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

A landscape capacity assessment for housing has recently been completed for Tiree by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Argyll and Bute Council. This study describes Tiree's landscape setting and explains why some areas are more suitable for future development than others. It outlines the opportunities and constraints which in terms of the landscape character, are likely to influence the location of future housing development on Tiree. This is based on the capacity of the landscape in terms of its character and scenic quality.

The Tiree Design Guidance and Landscape Capacity Assessment therefore complement each other – the Landscape Capacity Assessment considers which locations are most suitable for development in landscape terms and the Design Guidance suggests the form that development proposals should take.

Consultation

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

January 2007; Tiree Public Consultation Event An initial consultation where we presented our analysis of Tiree's character and development history. We asked for people's views of what was important and what should be maintained in new development.

May 2007; Meeting with Tiree Development Trust At this meeting we presented our draft Design Guidance outlining sustainable design and siting. The Trust intimated they were unhappy that present planning practice favoured the development of new 'black top' houses over more contemporary homes. They asked that we ensure that our Guidance illustrate contemporary house designs that would be sensitive to Tiree without being literal interpretations of 'black tops'.

August 2007 Tiree Final public meeting - at this meeting our final guidance with the requested amplification was presented and met with Community approval of those present. It was subsequently circulated widely by the Trust and no adverse comments were received - in fact the Trust reported they were very happy with it.

Tiree's unique and special character

Tiree -as it is now.....



Tiree's landscape is unique among the Inner Hebrides. It is significant in terms of its scenic qualities - big skies, beautiful beaches and machair, but it is also an important agricultural resource for its crofting community, which has been based on Tiree for many generations. Both landscape and settlements on Tiree have been continuously shaped to a significant extent by their crofting history. Tiree's unique and important heritage is the marriage between crofting and the environment. The island's built form manifests for the most part a balanced and unified historical and cultural tradition which new development needs to respect.

Tiree is a Special Built Environment Area within Argyll and Bute. There is therefore a requirement that all new development on the island be of an appropriately high quality design and that it adopt sensitive siting and detailing.

Tiree's Development Trust (*previously Tiree Development Partnership*) has identified a need to improve Tiree's infrastructure, housing and facilities to ensure the future of a prosperous and economically sustainable long-term community on Tiree. This new development will be introduced into what is a generally cohesive landscape and settlement pattern, and therefore will need to be considered and managed to ensure that it is a positive, integrated addition to the island's character.

There is a need for innovative, contemporary and sustainable new development which is sensitive and avoids intrusive and inappropriate design.

Tiree - the possible result of poor quality development (photomontage)



Guidance Structure

This guidance is structured so that it integrates with the Tiree Landscape Capacity Study and is based on an analysis of existing buildings and settlements on Tiree itself. It is therefore structured as follows:-

Part 1 Analysis of Tiree

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

Part 2 Guidance for New Development

- o General Sustainable Design Guidance applicable to Tiree as a whole
- o Design Guidance for specific locations and types of housing development.

analysis

Tiree Character

Much of Argyll and Bute's landscape setting is very varied – often consisting of hills, forests, cliffs, and attractive shorelines.

The structure of the landscape, including the hills, woodland, coast and field pattern dominates the character and provides a setting for the buildings and settlement. This built development is often located where it reinforces particular landscape features - farms are sited along the edges of fertile valleys, fishing villages are clustered adjacent to accessible bays and towns are located against steeper slopes or between higher, more exposed headlands. Glens, lochs, coastline and woodland tend to dominate landscape character, while buildings and settlements are not as prominent.

Tiree's landscape character is untypical of the majority of Argyll and Bute. Tiree has a distinctive flat, fertile, treeless, open landscape. Although it has a few smaller hills and rocky outcrops, Tiree's most important landscape feature is the machair* which has sustained Tiree's crofting tradition. The majority of the Tiree land area is held under crofting tenure and Tiree's character today has almost entirely been shaped by man's occupation of the landscape. The character of the landscape, including the pattern and development of settlement has therefore

been shaped by the opportunities for farming and the social history of the island.

Buildings often dominate the landscape of Tiree. Because of the low profile of the topography and lack of trees, buildings themselves can be very dominant in the landscape, and it is easy to see the pattern and density of the houses.

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

They demonstrate a place-specific and ordered settlement pattern – for example, in many locations all houses are orientated to face the same way, (determined by the prevailing wind) and the majority have natural low key access-ways to individual properties - often across turf or with minimal gravel or asphalt tracks.

The following pages illustrate and analyse typical development and settlement patterns on Tiree. Subsequent sections detail Design Guidance which is based on this analysis.

(* Machair is a Gaelic word that describes an extensive low-lying fertile plain - it is one of the rarest landscape types in Europe).



Other locations in Argyll and Bute - buildings come second to their landscape setting; in Kilmartin hills and trees dominate the view



Tiree's landscape character is untypical of the majority of Argyll and Bute: Houses are the most important feature in the photograph below



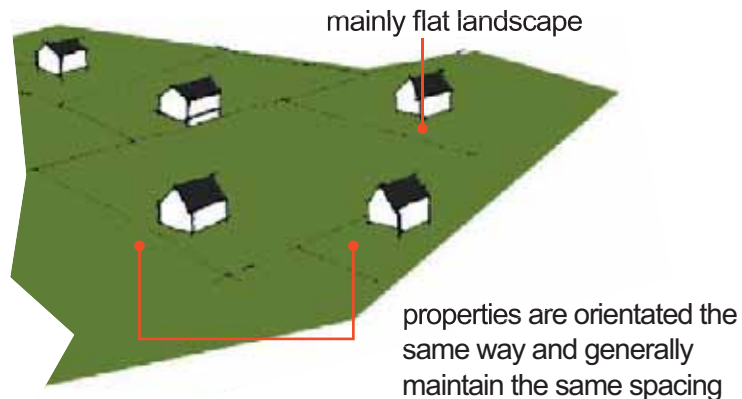
Typical Tiree settlement patterns

Low density crofting

a low density, dispersed pattern of development

In the majority of the developed areas of the island, Tiree's flat open landscape is divided into a smaller area for each croft, each with its own house.

• **The location of houses and outbuildings reflect the way the land has been divided up** and buildings are generally evenly dispersed over an area of flat landscape. The area of each croft has determined this low density and dispersed settlement pattern.



spacing between houses

Settlements beside distinctive landscape features

There are some parts of Tiree where there are obvious landscape features, such as small hills, converging routes or the coast. These are often the locations for individual or groups of houses.

• **Smaller hills and changes in gradient** - although the density is still low and determined by the crofting tradition, dwellings are often located along slight ridges of higher ground to benefit from better drainage; or alternatively (and sometimes in addition) they are located in sheltered locations behind or beside a rocky outcrop.

• **Coastal development and settlements** - depending on the exact location, development along the coastline varies from single houses to larger settlements developed by crofters or their families who moved (or were moved) from the more central part of the island to the coast for economic reasons. These denser groups of houses in some locations are to the side of Tiree's sandy bays.

• **Roads and road junctions** - small groups of houses have developed around road junctions.



Neither houses or landscape dominate the view; older houses sit behind landscape features

Typical Tìree settlement patterns

Larger settlements

'Larger' settlements on Tìree tend to be low density and are typical of hebridean crofting 'townships'. With the exception of Balemartine, there are no dwelling groupings which conform to the anticipated development pattern of most Scottish villages, where there is a more densely developed central area with houses becoming less dense towards the village edge.

- **Settlements generally tend to be uniformly dispersed**
- **Small rows of houses in the landscape tend to be orientated the same way**
- **Groups of houses are located away from the main road** and are accessed by turf or gravel tracks
- Critically, **houses sit directly in the landscape. Buildings are not generally grouped to make more formal spaces such as a village greens or conventional streets.** Short rows of dwellings are often separated by green "fingers" of machair. There is no urban infrastructure such as driveways, streets or lighting.



Landscape visible between groups of houses. No 'urban' infrastructure such as driveways, pavements, streetlights etc.



Aerial photo shows small clusters of houses making up Scaranish. Note the number of houses without formal driveways or parking

Poorly sited and laid out new development

Problems with recent development

New developments often look out of place not simply because the design of individual buildings is different, but because they are **sited** differently. Potential problems with new development include:-

- **significantly different density** - where there is predominantly low density development in established settlement patterns new developments with a higher density will generally look out of place.
- **different orientation** - houses which are orientated in a significantly different way to their neighbours stand out and can become unduly prominent.
- **'urban' layouts** – appear out of place in Tiree's landscape (streets, pavements, traffic calming, formal parking, lighting and 'conventional' access ways are alien to Tiree's prevalent character)
- **standardisation** with standard demarcated front and back gardens – standard 'suburban' fences, brick walls, pavers etc. can look out of place.

Features of a poorly sited, unacceptable new development

Newer properties are more closely grouped with a more 'urban' layout of streets and courtyards/cul de sacs



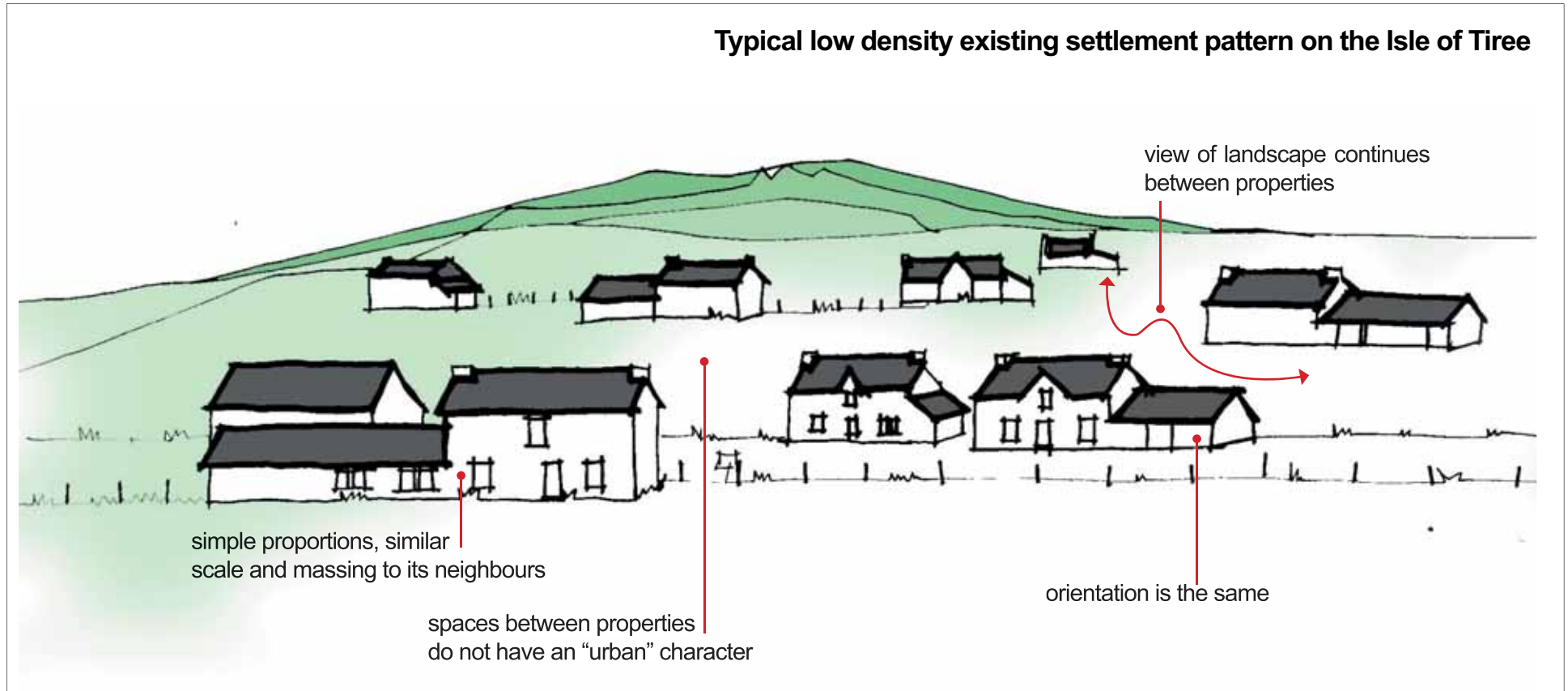
Spacing between older properties tends to be more or less the same in a specific area

Older properties tend to be oriented in the same direction to each other.

New houses look inwards towards each other rather than out towards their Tiree setting

Back gardens and fencing are the most visible feature of this new development

Typical existing settlement pattern



The design guidance in the next section of this document is based on analysis of Tiree’s settlement and building character as summarised below:

- **Low density settlements** - Tiree’s character is informed by the low density of most of its development. Even in ‘townships’ and settlements there are no recognisable “urban” spaces formed by streets or cul-de-sacs.
- **Similar scale and massing** - dimensions for the same type of properties are consistent- for example, croft houses have a similar ratio between their plan depth and width. Thatched houses have a similar wall height and plan depth. Door and window openings are based on recognisably similar opening sizes, ground floor levels are low with minimal underbuildings.

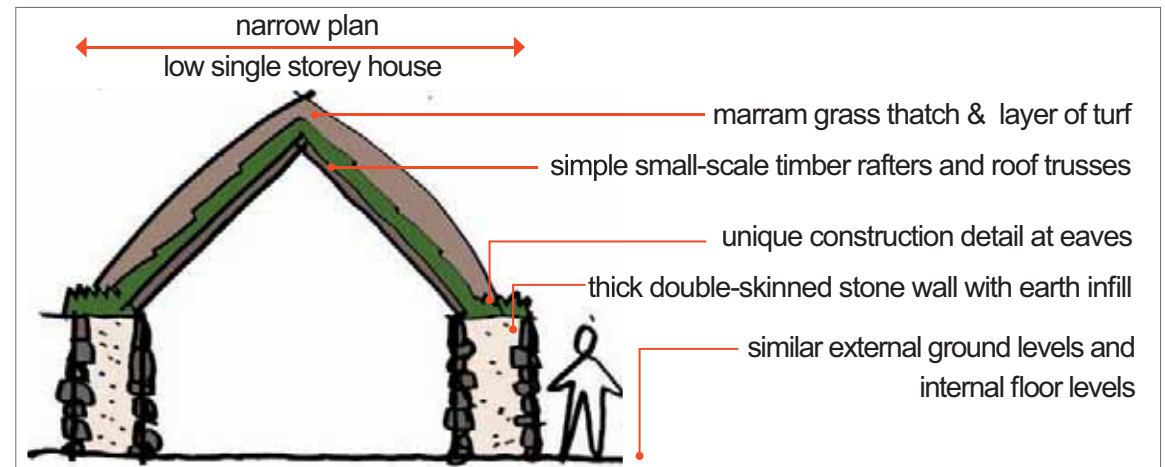
- **Properties sit directly within the agricultural landscape** - there are minimal gardens, planting and boundary treatments. Even when houses are located in a relatively more dense settlement, the machair flows between them so that there is still a very ‘rural’ impression.
- **Neighbouring buildings generally have similar orientation and siting**; properties in a particular location tend to face in the same direction as their neighbours.
- **Simple proportions** - although proportioned differently, both thatched houses and croft houses have the simple, narrow plan forms typical of rural locations. They have simple pitched roofs and flat unarticulated white or stone walls.

Typical Tiree building types

Original 'Tiree thatched house' construction

The oldest houses on Tiree are derived from the traditional hebridean "blackhouse" – a building form shaped by the limited technology and materials available at the time it was first built. There are a number of elements which determine the character of a Tiree thatched house;-

- **A direct relationship to the landscape** - many crofts have no separate garden space so thatched houses sit directly on the machair.
- **Long, low, single storey, narrow house** - thatched houses were constructed with the limited building resources available to best meet the needs of a crofter at the time that they were built. Buildings traditionally had a byre at one end, and a dwelling (often one or two rooms) at the other. This resulted in a distinctive and consistent scale, massing and proportion.
- **Low thick stone walls** - external walls are double-skinned drystone construction, with an earth infill. They can be up to one metre thick and have minimal openings. Windows and doors are narrow and continue to the eaves/wall head level which is low - generally a 'head' height of around 1.8 metres.
- **Thatched roof with a strong simple shape** - timber was scarce so rafters and roof trusses are minimal and spring from the inside edge of the thick stone walls. Roofs are hipped and thatched with a layer of turf and marram grass. Netting or ropes were flung over the roof to weigh it down during stormy weather.
- **Eaves/wallhead detail** the construction of the thatched house's hipped roof and thick stone walls results in a very distinctive detail at the eaves where the roof is set back from the wallhead resulting in a deep, 'platform' at the head of the walls. This was originally benched and turfed but now is often mortared to a fall to shed water from the building.
- **Earth floor** originally thatched houses had rammed earth floors; resulting in internal floor & external ground levels which were almost the same, emphasising the thatched house's long, low profile on the landscape.
- **Extensions to thatched houses are linear**



Minimal openings; doors and windows are deep slots.



Hipped roof with curved ridge; unique construction detail at eaves



Long, low, narrow house; there are no garden spaces with fences or driveways. There is a greater proportion of masonry to glazing.

Typical Tiree building types

'Blacktop' (or Blackroof) construction

Although traditional thatched houses withstood Tiree's often extreme weather, the low ceiling heights, small windows and central hearths did not result in a particularly comfortable lifestyle! As a result, many older thatched houses have been adapted to suit more modern ways of living. These are variously referred to as "blacktop" or "blackroof" houses.

This document uses "blacktops" as a generic name for this distinctive Tiree house type.

- **Roofs have been extended and re-covered with tarred felt** They have often been heightened to form an upper storey while still maintaining the characteristic "Tiree" rounded ridge and hipped profile.

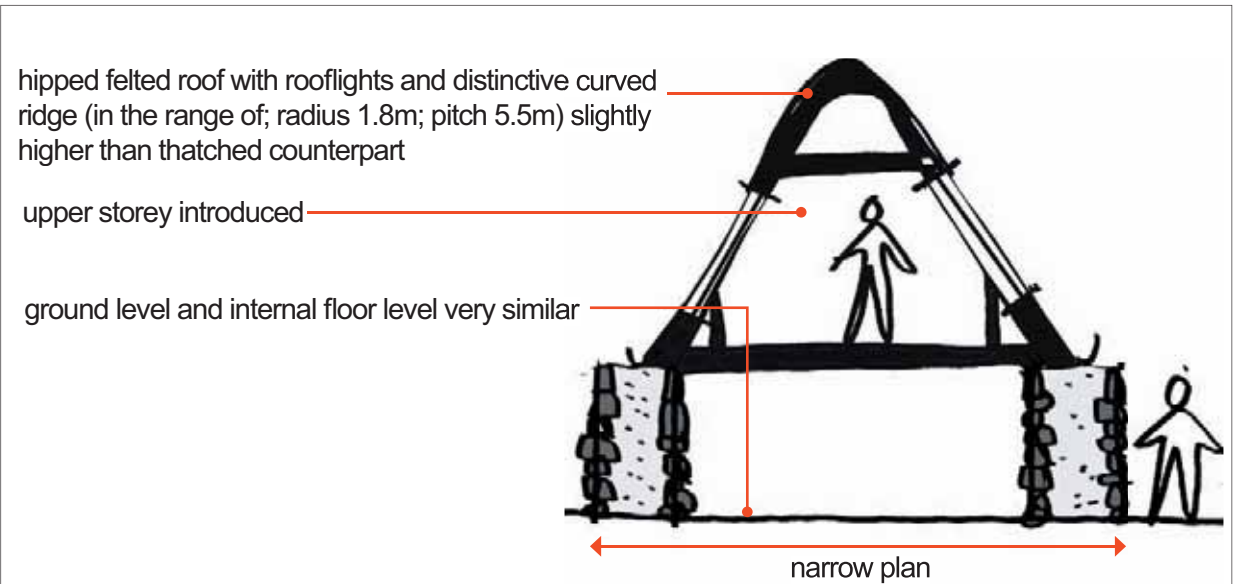
- **Chimneys added** Originally thatched houses had a central hearth. Later, chimneys have been built springing from the external walls. These appear now as distinctive, sculptural elements.

- **Newer homes; less acceptable solutions.** Some recent new homes have been built of concrete block with felt roofs, in the approximate form of 'improved/adapted' thatched houses.

Some have ignored the essential long narrow plan as well as the low roof profile of the original vernacular design, and adopted L and H- shaped plan forms.

Some have roofs which adopt a more conventional wall head (eaves) detail where the roof oversails the wall head.

As a result, some of these new "blacktops" are aesthetically more successful than others.



transition from thatch to felt



openings as slots: larger proportion of walls to window/doors



good quality refurbishment; distinctive proportions and strong simple shape retained



distinctive eaves detail retained

Typical Tiree building types

Poorly designed contemporary 'blacktop* houses'

In recent years a number of new 'blacktops' have been built in Tiree. These have proved popular with some residents and visitors. However there is concern that these can become a parody of the original thatched houses from which they developed and detract from the unique character of Tiree's building heritage.

As Tiree 'blacktops' have increased in size to accommodate modern lifestyle expectations, the associated adaptations to building proportions means that the appeal and aesthetic charm of earlier blacktop types can be lost. This hybrid effect is amplified by L and T shaped plans, and porches and inappropriate extensions resulting in a loss of the original's simple proportions and smaller scale.

Typical modern recreations incorporate the usual black felt roof but can look unconvincing because, compared to a traditional blacktop, modern timber kit and masonry construction has a much reduced wall thickness resulting in a different relationship between the eaves and the top of the wall.

New Blacktop houses can start to look quite different from their traditional counterparts. Features which start to look less convincing than the original include roofs which have slightly different proportions to the original, windows and openings which no longer form slots in the façade and a greater extent of underbuilding, resulting from the use of a suspended timber floor.

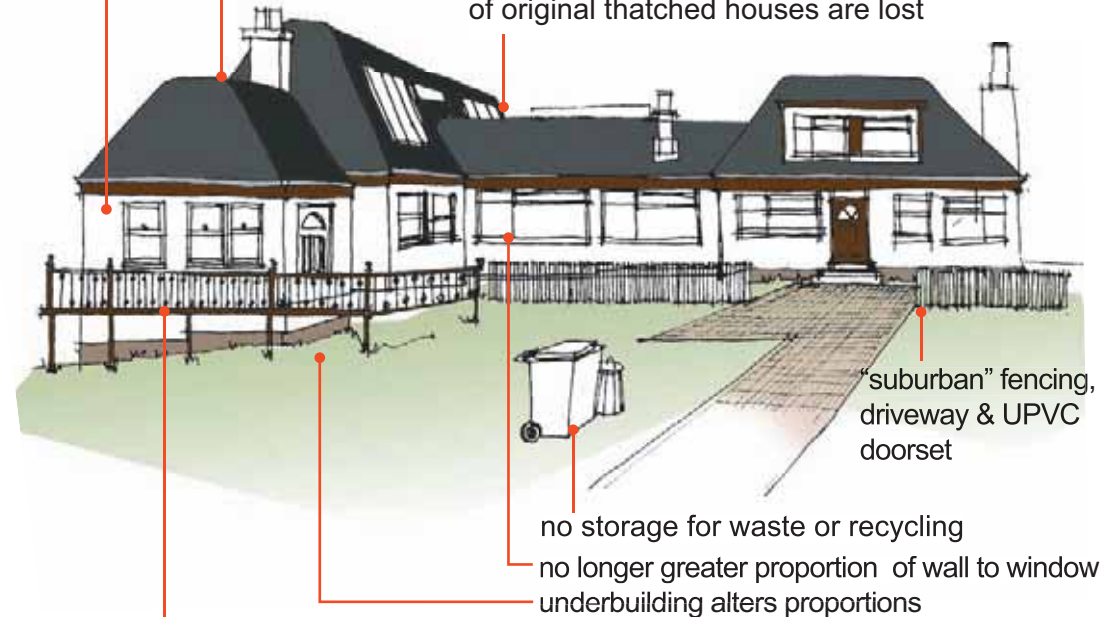
this poorly designed contemporary blacktop* house.....

- fails to retain a simple, narrow plan
- does not have a distinctive small scale
- there is no longer a greater mass of wall to window
- the distinctive roof shape and eaves detail associated with blacktops is lost

heavy eaves detail is at odds with roof and looks less appropriate

"squared off" ridges means character is lost

complex roof means that distinctive proportions of original thatched houses are lost



direct relationship with landscape lost because of inappropriate decking

*also referred to as blackroof

Typical Tiree building types

Original croft house construction

Through time, many Tiree crofters replaced (rather than adapted) their thatched homes with newer dwellings. These were often built beside the family's thatched house, which was then used as a store or byre. Like the thatched houses, the general design of many of the newer houses on Tiree is consistent and characterised by their simple construction which, is a typically rural Scottish style of building found in many parts of Argyll and Bute. The key factors which are typical of this building type on Tiree include:-

- **Direct relationship to landscape** - Tiree's houses often sit directly in the machair with no paths, planting, fencing or driveways.
- **A house with a narrow plan** - roof construction and timber sizes meant that, like thatched houses, croft houses were still a single room in depth. Storey heights, however, range from single storey to two and a half storeys high.
- **Stone walls** - croft houses generally have flat external walls with horizontal proportions punctuated by small, symmetrically placed, vertically proportioned windows and doorways. These proportions allow the plane of the wall to dominate visually, and although there are a few unpainted stone buildings, walls are generally limewashed, rendered or painted. Tiree has some of the liveliest painted houses in Scotland; where rubble or coursed stone is painted to emphasise edges and courses.

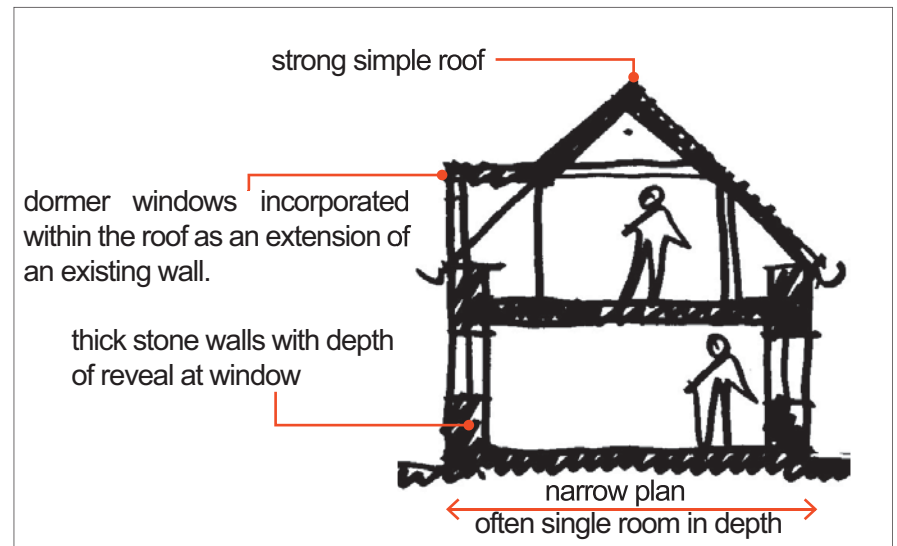
- **Strong simple roofs with simple construction details** - roofs are no longer thatched or hipped and now have a constant pitch in the range of 32-38 degrees, which is generally high enough to allow the majority of the roofspace to be used. Dormer windows are generally incorporated within the roof as an extension of an existing wall. Originally roofs were slated, or sheeted with corrugated iron, but through time properties have been re-roofed with a wide range of materials including felt, metal sheeting and fibre cement slates.

- **Eaves, verge and gable details** roofs generally have minimal overhangs and simple construction details where the roof meets walls at gables and eaves. Boxy and visually intrusive details are not typical.

- **Minimal underbuildings** - traditional houses generally have a ground floor level which is only minimally higher than the ground level outside.

- **Extensions** - often croft houses have porches placed symmetrically at the front door but generally all other extensions are located to the side, or rear of the building

There are some quite substantial croft houses on Tiree but generally these traditional rural buildings have low ceiling heights, narrow plans and relatively small windows. They integrate well with into the landscape but their interiors can be dark and claustrophobic. Rooms and layouts can be unsuitable to a twenty-first century way of life.



- low floor to ceiling heights means small scale building sits close to ground
- internal ground floor level and ground level are similar

Proportion; the houses below vary in height but have broadly the same proportions of walls to windows. They are made up of flat walls and simple geometric shapes.

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



Typical Tiree building types

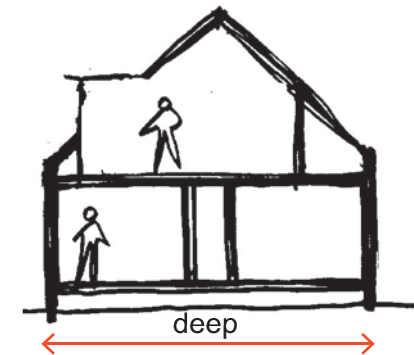
Problems with some modern dwellings

Throughout Tiree there are a number of more contemporary houses, either in clusters or as individual detached homes. Some fit in well into the Tiree landscape and others are more obtrusive. In construction and style they reflect the specific time of their construction but most generally have white rendered walls, pitched roofs of slate or grey tiles and smaller, vertically proportioned windows. Generally they do not incorporate bay windows or architectural detail.

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

- **'urban' approach to siting** higher density housing with roads, parking and more 'urban' or 'suburban' layouts.
- **house type and siting takes no account of landscape character and settlement development history**
- **inappropriate larger scale** as a result of having significantly bigger floor to ceiling heights and/or more extensive underbuilding
- **inappropriate suburban proportions and plan forms** - some building footprints are deep with narrow frontages. This is associated with a suburban way of developing a site where house types are designed to make the most of narrow building plots. These result in house forms that look alien in rural areas.
- **inappropriate extensions and additions** - a 'plan' led (rather than the traditional construction led) approach can result in complex plan forms with complicated roofs which tend to look out of place.

inappropriate more modern proportions
more complex plan form and massing



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

examples of kit houses which are not compatible with Tiree character

poor - typical one and half storey kit house is larger than its neighbour



poor - semi-detached houses have suburban proportions and siting



poor - timber kit bungalow has square plan rather than typical narrow rural plan

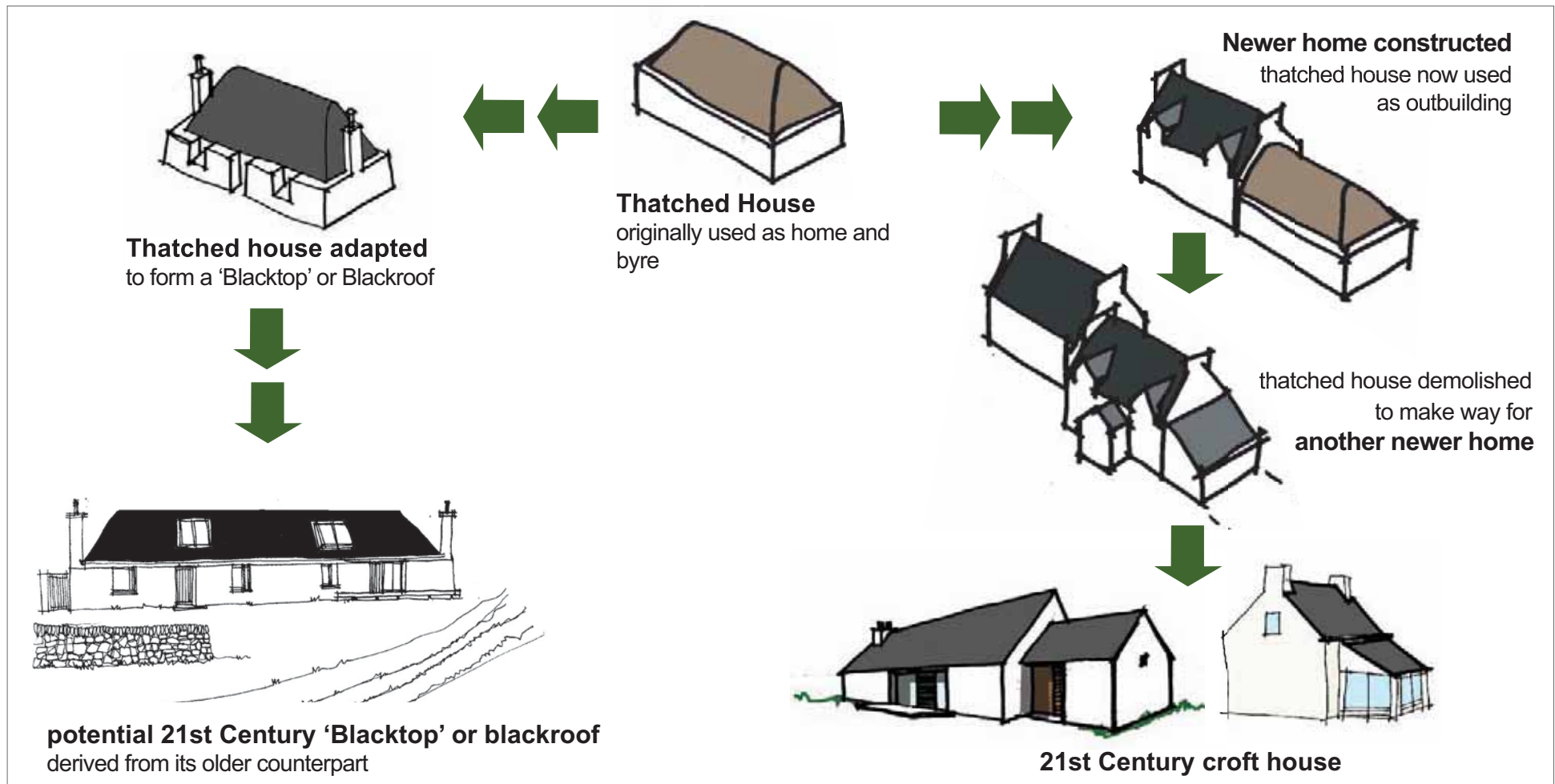
Tiree's evolving way of building

Tiree's architectural heritage illustrates how Scotland's rural houses and settlements have developed from early times, and how house building and siting is shaped by physical, economic and social conditions. In comparison with much of Scotland, on Tiree physical change has been slow and minimal.

This evolving building tradition has its own integrity and is an important physical demonstration of how Tiree's crofting community have built and occupied the land over the generations. All of Tiree's older properties have a recognisable, understandable aesthetic.

Those planning new development need to learn from and recognise this tradition. It has itself evolved, so new buildings should not be 'static', based on copying the old (pastiche) but they should seek new appropriately designed houses which take account of Tiree's most important characteristics in a modern contextual way.

Tiree's evolving way of building



siting guidance

New Development Siting Strategies

Our previous analysis has demonstrated that Tiree's landscape is unlike other areas within Argyll and Bute as there are no dominant landscape features which compete visually with buildings and settlements. On Tiree, therefore, the relationship between the landscape and the built heritage is very apparent, and new inappropriate development will be very prominent.

Inappropriate developments types can include, for example;-

- **“landmark” designs;-** one exciting or different house will be a landmark, but a number of them are likely to be visually chaotic and detrimental to the essential character of the island.
- **“could be anywhere” development;-** the design of many current standard kit homes fails to capture the special character of housing on Tiree. Using generally available designs results in new development that is not suitable for Tiree's special character.

This Guidance suggests strategies for development which are appropriate for Tiree.

Firstly the Guidance suggests **how properties should be sited**. We have used three generic landscape types to illustrate broad principles:-

- **development beside strong landscape features**
- **development within crofting landscape**
- **infill into existing settlements**
- **larger developments**

Next, the Guidance considers **strategies for designing new houses on Tiree** which sit within the context of Tiree's built history and heritage. These are based on our analysis of the two dominant house types on the island - the Tiree **thatched house** and its developed derivative **black top** and the **croft house**.

These are not intended as an exclusive way of designing new homes on the island but are viewed as a useful starting point for design in the particular and precious Tiree environment.

landmark building:
church



landmark building:
church



landmark building:
hotel



Traditionally ‘landmark’ buildings had prominent or communal use It is recommended that, wherever possible, this precedent is maintained and that all new housing generally follows the Guidance's advice for housing massing, siting and proportions.

Key Siting Issues

Density

In order to retain Tiree's distinctive identity new development needs to be in sympathy with its surroundings. To achieve this; there is a need to consider both the relationship of new dwellings to their landscape setting but also their relationship to new buildings in the immediate area. In general, grazing land or grassland continues within significant gaps between buildings on Tiree – **new developments therefore need to maintain local, low density settlement patterns**

Orientation

Generally buildings on Tiree are orientated to take account of inclement weather. In a significant area of Tiree they are generally orientated east/ west or south-east/ north-west. At Scarinish and some other locations there is no such dominant pattern; instead the houses sit with the contours or with the coastline. Even so - **new houses will generally look more appropriate for their location if they face in the same direction as their neighbours.**

illus - typical existing low density development patterns



all properties are orientated the same way



spacing between properties is consistent

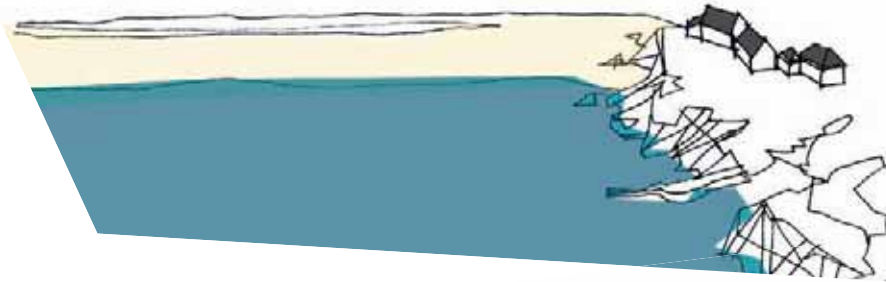


low density development pattern - these houses are located along a slight rise running at the bottom of a hill

Developments located beside strong landscape features

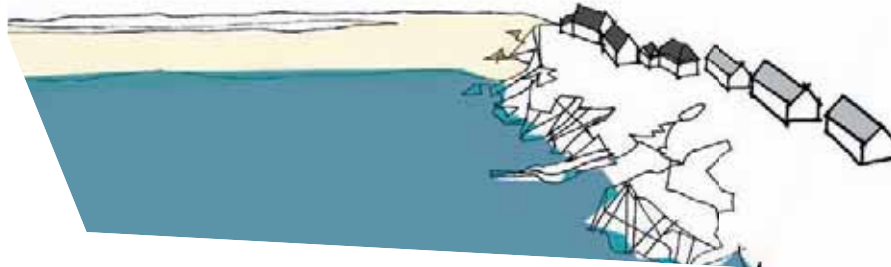
avoiding significant visual intrusion onto Tiree's shoreline

existing housing located at edge of bay



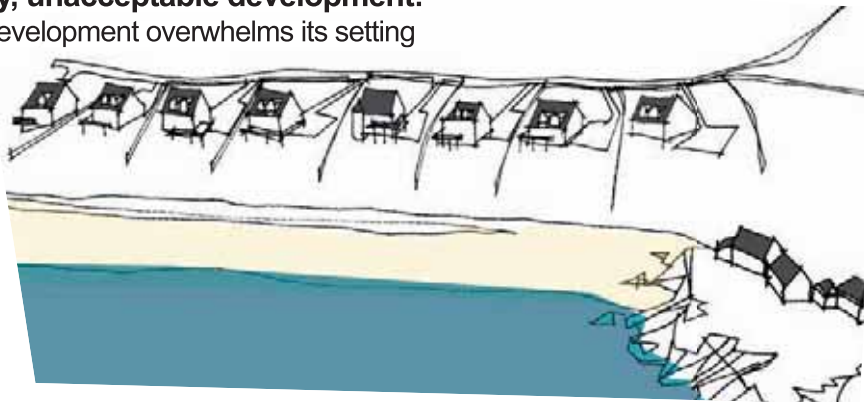
sympathetic sustainable development:

small scale, orientation, location and character of new properties is based on adjacent existing buildings



poor quality, unacceptable development:

large scale development overwhelms its setting



Some of Tiree's oldest properties are located beside strong natural landscape features. Low, single storey properties are associated with poorer quality soil on the edge of rocky moorland or on the coast and complement their landscape setting by allowing the natural features to still dominate the landscape character.

The siting of new properties in these locations can avoid impacting unduly on their setting through:-

- **'working with' the landform and other natural features**, by tucking buildings against ridges rather than siting them on top, and building at the sheltered edge of bays rather than in the exposed central arc.
- **sitting below the horizon** rather than impacting on the skyline
- **siting buildings in the same way as older, traditional properties in the area**
- **avoiding significant visual intrusion onto Tiree's shoreline**

Most older properties beside strong landscape features have a linear, narrow plan form with associated proportions and scale; they are often single storey with simple roof shapes and narrow proportions.

New houses in these locations can therefore avoid looking inappropriate for their location by:-

- **using a narrow building plan and a simple roof shape**
- **using an appropriate building scale** - generally minimising floor to floor heights, and keeping ground floor levels as close to existing ground levels as possible.
- **where two storey properties are proposed they must not dominate their setting** - they should generally have a 'traditionally derived' footprint and massing. Where a development comprises a group of houses, single and one and half storey houses should predominate with fewer two storey houses within the development.

Developments located beside strong landscape features



context

These existing houses are located at the edge of a bay and are sited so that they take advantage of the differences in level to make the most of available shelter. Groups of houses share the same orientation and utilise similar materials and construction methods. They have similar proportions and share a similar scale.



good quality development

- new houses have the same orientation as their neighbours
- there are minimal boundary treatments between each plot - allowing the Tìree landscape to continue between properties or short terraces of houses
- new properties are designed to integrate with older properties through....
 - the use of a similar scale and proportion
 - the use of similar materials and construction details



poor quality development

- new houses are orientated differently to existing properties or are located on a different building line
- visually intrusive boundary treatments, road and parking surfaces are not appropriate.



- new properties do not share the same scale and proportions as their existing neighbours. They are wrongly orientated and have insensitive garden boundaries, parking and road surfacing.

Developments located within crofting landscape

In this type of location, Tiree's character is a direct result of the current, existing density and uniformity of development. The flat landscape and the way in which existing development is more or less uniformly distributed means that houses and other buildings are very prominent. Any new development which looks significantly different from its neighbours will therefore be very conspicuous. If a new property has a landmark design and an important function it is appropriate that it should attract attention but generally, for most property types;-

- **maintain the particular density and spacing associated with a specific locale.** Always consider how existing properties group together in specific ways.

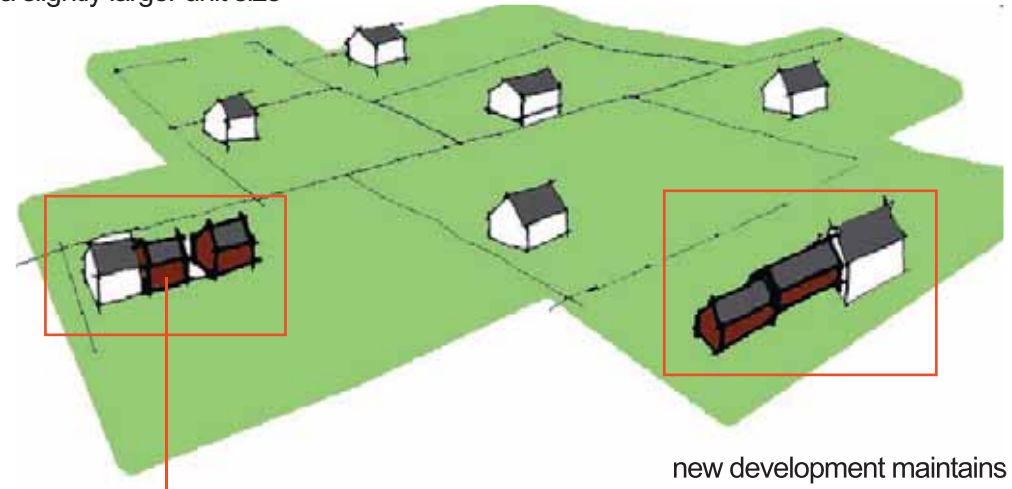
Either directly adjoin existing properties in the same way as older properties so that the development reads as a slightly larger unit size
Or maintain existing spacing between properties - in other words build where there is a gap in otherwise uniform spacing

- **orientate new buildings in the same way as older properties**
- **minimise the impact of access-ways and parking**
- **retain a direct relationship with the landscape.** Use minimal garden boundaries and avoid formal front and back gardens.

This landscape type is associated with wide range of types and sizes of properties, most of which have what is recognised as a "rural" style. They demonstrate the use of a wide range of materials (for example roofs can use tiles, slates, metal sheet roofing, thatch and felt) and sizes (single storey through to 2 storey and even 3 storey). Even so, the majority of Tiree's existing houses in this location have common design factors which means they sit happily together. These include ;-

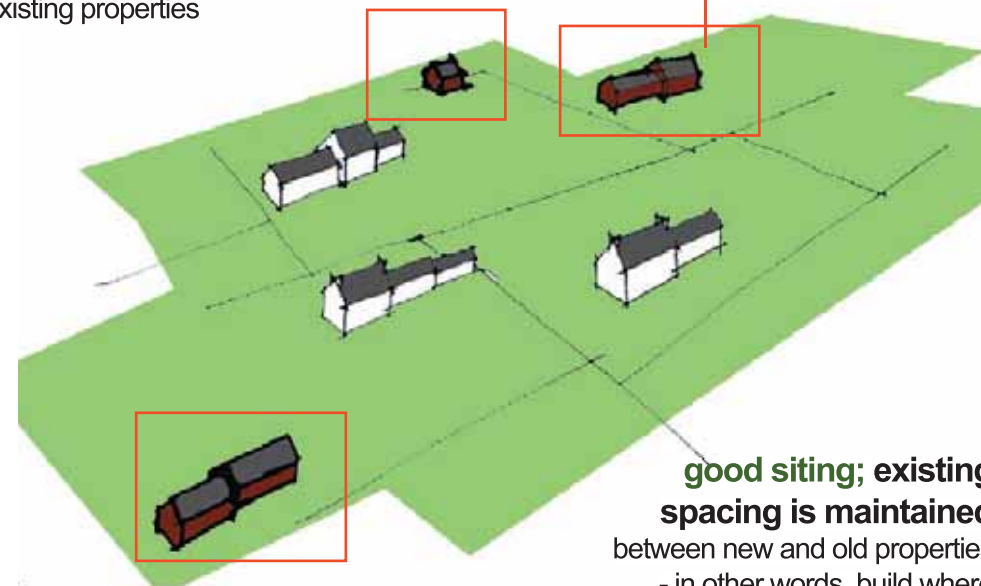
- **a linear narrow plan**
- **simple details and proportions**
- **often symmetrical with extensions to the side of the house**
- **ground floor close to ground level**

good siting; new development directly adjoins existing properties in the same way as older properties so that the development reads as a slightly larger unit size

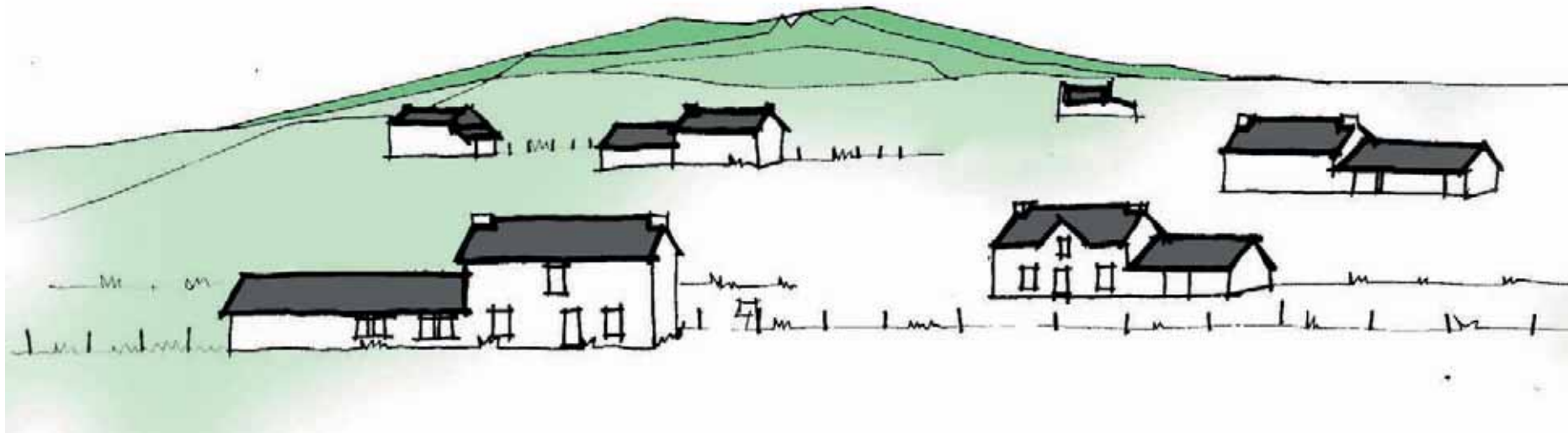


new development adjoins existing properties

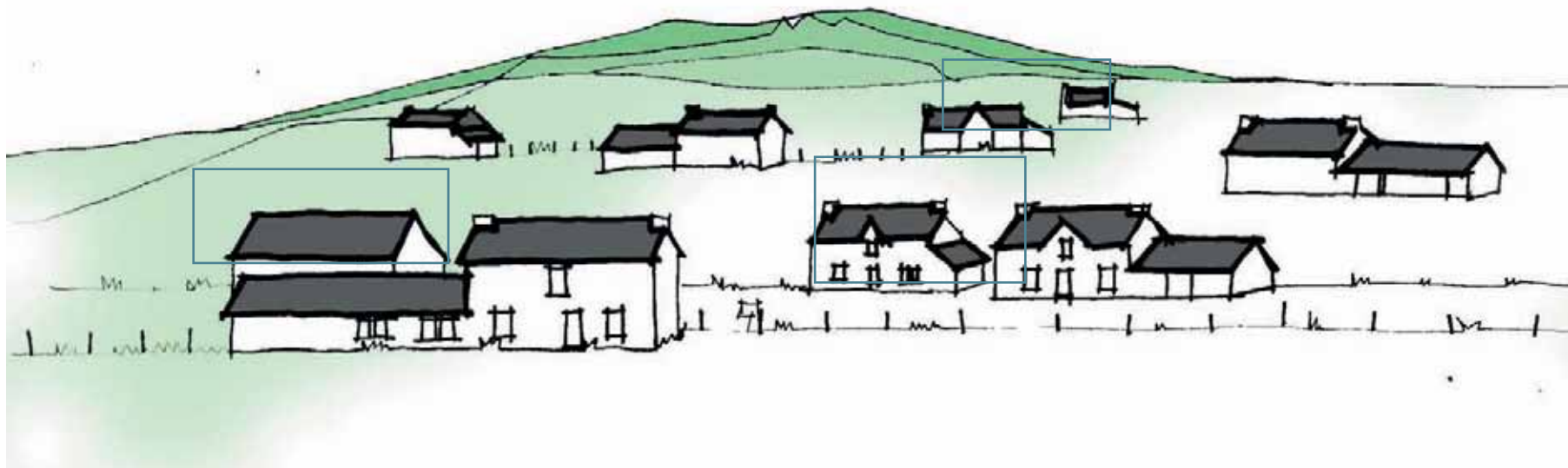
new development maintains existing spacing



good siting; existing spacing is maintained between new and old properties - in other words build where there is a gap in otherwise uniform spacing



before small-scale development



after small-scale development maintaining existing spacing results in minimal visual impact

Larger developments; siting guidance in open landscape

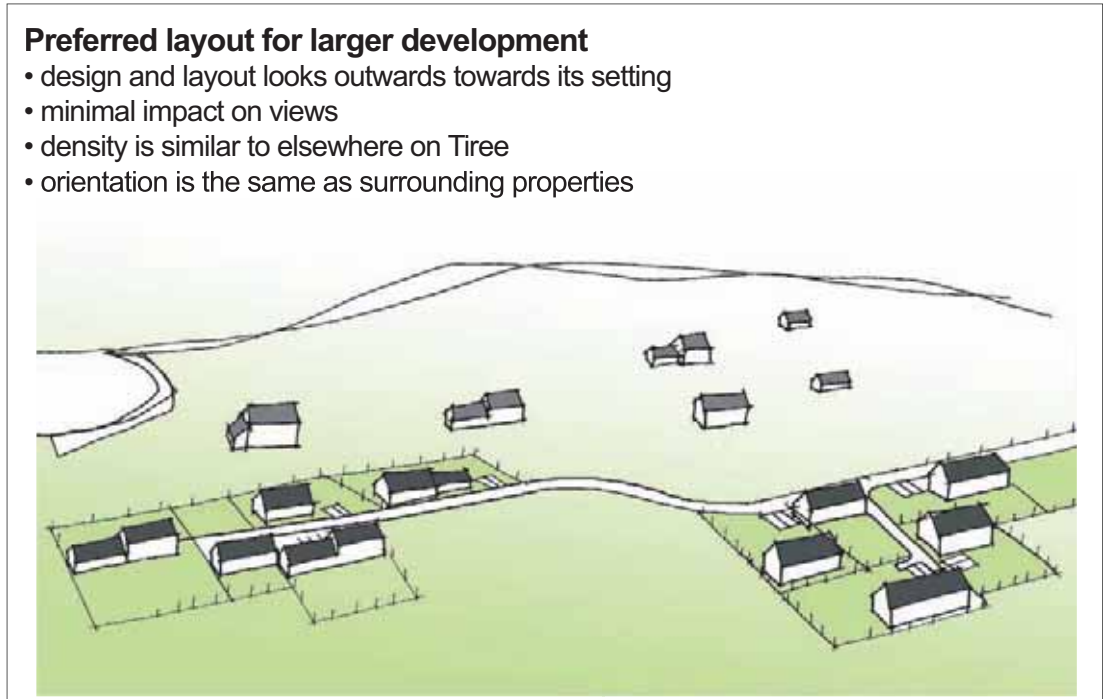
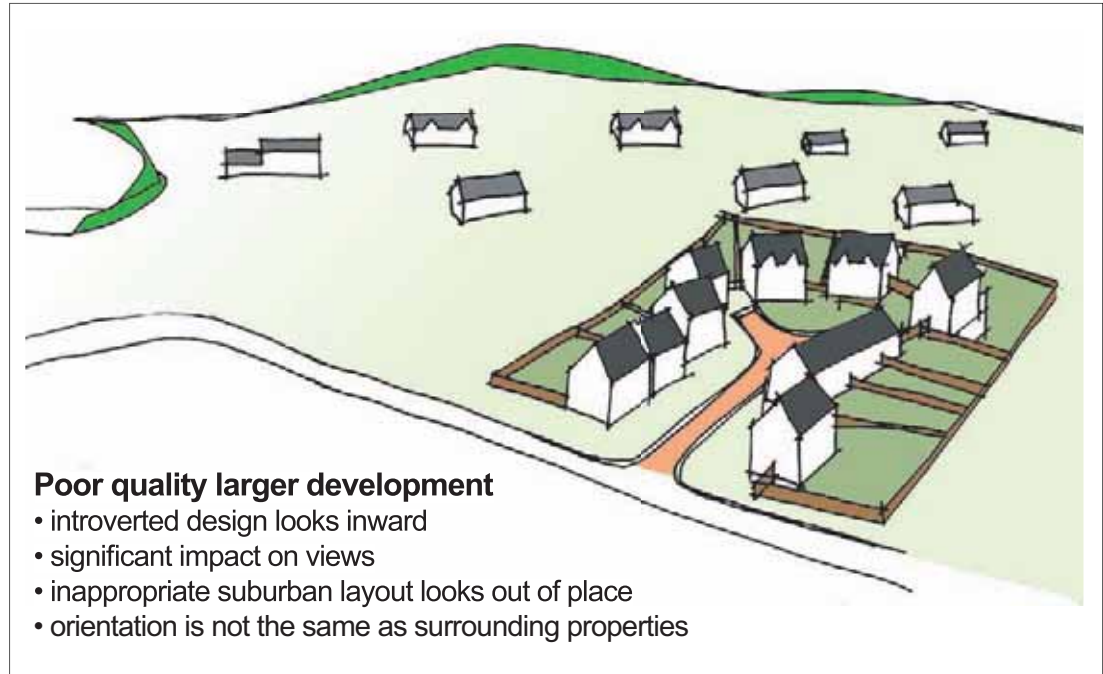
Larger developments are not generally compatible with Tiree's character. Where they are unavoidable the following design guidance will minimise their impact:-

- **Make developments as small as possible.** Larger-scale developments will dominate Tiree's "small-scale" development pattern so new developments should be limited to smaller groupings of around five units which should be integrated into the existing settlement pattern. If there is no alternative to a larger development, within the site area houses should be located in loose groupings of around five properties, separated by a significant area of landscape.

- **As far as possible, ensure that views of the landscape continue between properties.** Existing houses nearly all sit within an open landscape which extends in between properties. The design of, and absolute need for, boundary treatments should be carefully considered.

- **Avoid inappropriate "urban" solutions. Instead consider site layouts which are inspired by the island's own ad-hoc development patterns.** Avoid characteristically "urban" layouts that feature spaces such as streets, squares and cul-de-sacs - these will appear out of place as no settlements have evolved in that way on the island. Site layouts which are generated solely by the minimal requirements for standard roads and which incorporate visually intrusive traffic calming, bollards, dominant signage and road markings will also have a negative impact on their setting.

- **Avoid house types that are not typically 'Tiree'.** Suburban house types such as standard bungalows, semi-detached and terrace house types are generally not appropriate on the island. They generally incorporate deep plans with single span roofs. If there is no alternative to 'terraced' housing, it should be based on existing development elsewhere on the island, where they are rows of characteristic wide frontage or 'extended' houses.



Larger developments; siting guidance

Larger new developments should avoid uncharacteristic-looking repetition by using a range of types and sizes of properties
New buildings should relate to their neighbours sympathetically and should be orientated taking account of development patterns.

- **Avoid 'introverted' developments**

Housing arranged around a 'standard' roads layout or cul-de-sac usually results in a suburban looking development which faces inwards and does not relate to its surroundings. Views of the development from main roads and important view points will predominantly be of inappropriate back-gardens and fencing.

Clusters of houses on Tiree will need to be designed to avoid suburban front and back gardens.

- **Adopt a sympathetic, first principle approach to access and parking**

- **Minimise the impact of access-ways**

Reduce road widths and keep the use of pavements to the minimum; specify low-key street lighting; specify materials for roadways which are already used on Tiree such as tarmac or gravel - consider the use of 'grasscrete type products'; avoid block paving.

- **Minimise the impact of parking areas**

Locate parking sensitively - avoid large tarmac car parks by breaking them into the smallest possible areas. Use buildings, walling screening and landscape graded to reflect local gradients to hide cars; provide discreet covered carparking areas or incorporate garaging into proposals; provide parking spaces which are out of view, behind or to the side of a house.



On Gigha the landscape setting is maintained between properties. A cluster approach; house orientation and massing aims to minimise the impact of a 'large' development. Parking and roads are not obtrusive visually.

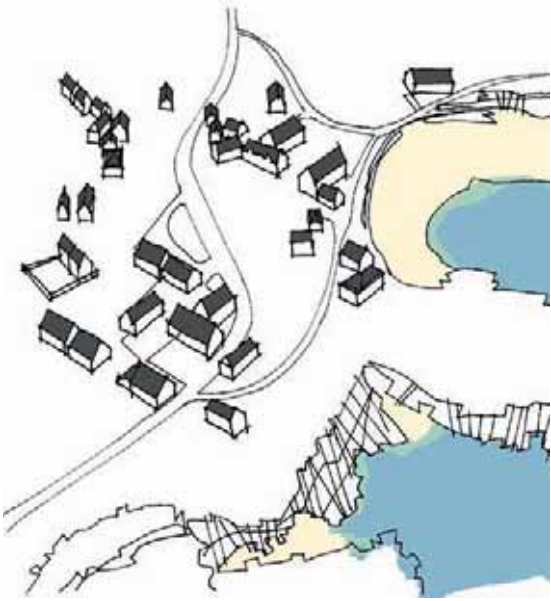


'Anywhere Development' The landscape setting is lost. Orientation is around roads layout. Massing and housing layout maximises the impact of new properties. Back gardens and fences are prominent.

Infill and extension of Tiree's low density settlements

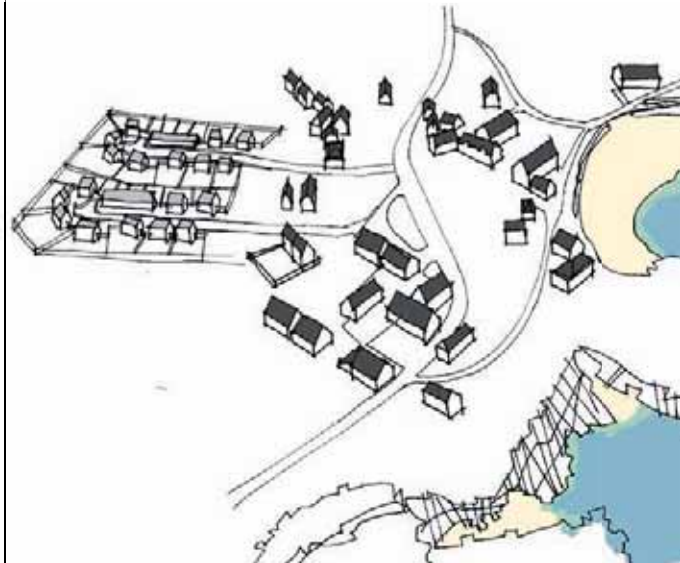
existing settlement

- landscape flows around buildings,
- there are no 'urban' spaces such as streets, squares or cul-de-sacs
- minimal road and access ways



unacceptable poor quality development

- scale is too big
- separation from rest of settlement
- inappropriate boundaries
- road treatments are visually intrusive



better quality development

- clusters means scale is broken down,
- houses are better integrated into settlement
- minimal boundary fences and access-ways



Tiree's low density settlements tend to incorporate a range of different property types and there are no standard typically "urban" spaces. Even so, there are factors which control the relationships between buildings and the landscape which need to be considered.

Key design issues include the following;-

- **new development should be integrated with the existing development pattern** - existing properties group together in loose, small-scale groupings. Housing often forms 'informal terraces of differing wide-fronted houses. New development should integrate with this development pattern in order to avoid larger infill development dominating Tiree's fragile "small-scale" settlements.
- **new buildings should be orientated in the same way as adjacent older properties**

- **grassed landscape should be maintained between groupings** – avoid intrusive and inappropriate walls and fencing.
- **existing properties are generally set back from adopted roads** – where this is the case new properties and infill development should maintain the same distance.
- **consider access** and how this can be sympathetically addressed – minimise impact of roads and parking

Infill and extension of Tiree's low density settlements

Tiree's smaller settlements often have a diverse range of building types which use a range of materials – nevertheless they sit happily together.

Key characteristics which should be included in new developments are;-

- **a range of appropriate types and sizes of properties** - derived from the characteristic and proportions of **croft houses** and traditional thatched houses (see following section)
- **properties of the same general type should have the same proportions** - they should have the same basic unit size (similar plan depth, eaves height, roof pitch etc.) based on simple, narrow proportions.
- **properties should use Tiree's characteristic darker or coloured roofs with lighter painted and rendered walls**
- **where there are long terraces, they should not be uniform**
They should generally incorporate varying types and and varying heights some single storey units.
- **retain the same scale as adjacent older buildings**



landscape extends between properties

new terraces should reflect Tiree's existing non-uniform rows of houses



Scaranish; the scale and proportion of these gables is very similar- the overall dimensions of these houses will be very alike also

Siting - general guidance for good design

Access and car parking

The visual impression of houses sitting directly on grazing land or grassland is an important part of Tíree's character, but this development pattern offers very little scope to screen car parking and access ways from view.

New development therefore needs to:-

- **avoid more “urban” solutions** such as standard streets and cul-de-sacs, traffic calming, bollards, dominant signage, road markings and lighting
- **minimise the visual impact of new access-ways/ drives** reducing the use of pavements and kerbs; minimising road widths; reducing street-lighting to the minimum; use local gravels where possible instead of tarmac drives
- **avoid large areas of paving or tarmac** particularly directly adjacent to properties
- **where possible, make parking unobtrusive** use materials such as grasscrete or local gravel tracks to minimise areas of tarmac; provide parking spaces which are behind, or to the side of a house; screen parking behind a wall or landscape graded to reflect local gradients; minimise parking numbers - consider locating visitor parking parallel to the road rather than beside the house (for example - one parking space beside the house with visitor parking at an adjacent road)
- **avoid the use of brick or block paviors** these appear alien in an island context.

Boundary treatments

Some types of fencing and walling can be visually obtrusive and detract from Tíree's key relationship between houses and landscape. Where they are located in Tíree's more dense settlements, inappropriate walls and fences can give an impression of enclosing the space between houses - again an approach which is not generally appropriate for Tíree.

New developments and new properties therefore need to look to traditional boundary treatments and avoid “suburban” gates and fences.

Flood Risk

Although flooding may not be a problem now, it is possible that climate change could have an impact on flood risk. **Areas where new development is located may be affected by flooding in the future.**



access and parking; minimal kerbs and pavements; gravel for access-ways; grasscrete for parking

1 and 4 minimal kerbs and pavements; Isle of Gigha **2** minimal access road; Isle of Tíree **3 and 6** entrance and access road; Isle of Gigha **5** grasscrete car parking; Kilmartin House

boundary treatments

7,10, 11 and 12 minimal boundary treatments; Isle of Gigha **8** turf cap to wall; Kilmartin House **9** entrance; Isle of Skye



character guidance

Contemporary Houses - based on traditional Croft Houses

New rural houses on Tiree should, as far as possible, maintain the characteristics, scale and proportions of Tiree's older buildings.

The massing and scale of new homes will have as much if not more impact on the landscape than the choice of their construction materials. New properties should not appear significantly bigger or enlarged / inflated compared to their neighbours.

The approach to the design of larger houses should be appropriate for their site - houses can be tall and narrow on more open sites, whereas houses on more developed sites should be long, low and broken into separate volumes.

Maintain the proportions of Tiree's older housing

- **use a simple long narrow plan form typical of most rural locations** – this plan type means that the proportions of a new house will be similar to its older counterparts.

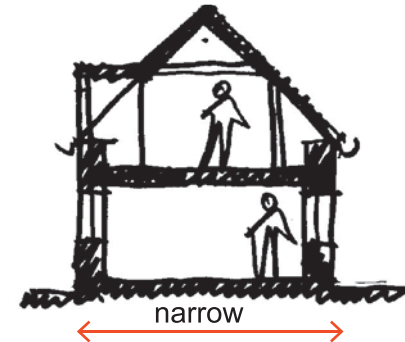
- **retain simple strong roof shapes** – Although this Guidance does not seek to be prescriptive, it is worth noting that low-key properties which integrate sensitively into their surroundings generally have steeper symmetrically pitched roofs. Where this approach is not adopted (for instance where roofs are at a lower pitch, or are asymmetrical or monopitch) a high level of design quality and control will be needed.

- **dormers** - avoid more centrally placed dormers by locating dormers at eaves/wallhead or use rooflights.

- **retain Tiree's flat, minimally articulated facades** and generally ensure there is a greater mass of wall to window.

Isle of Tiree

simple ordered linear proportions ; tall narrow houses on more open sites



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

Contemporary Scottish two storey houses in rural locations



Contemporary Houses - based on Traditional Croft Houses

Maintain the scale of Tiree's older housing

Carefully designed single, two and one and a half storey houses can all use traditional rural proportions and look appropriate for their setting:-

- **base openings on the proportions and unit size of doors and windows from older properties** Larger window openings could take the form of floor to ceiling openings traditionally found in agricultural buildings - **be careful to design for climate, exposure and orientation***
- **minimise internal ground floor levels**- concrete floors rather than suspended timber generally helps this
- **minimise floor to ceiling heights** while still giving an impression of space through **clever use of section** - many newer houses incorporate a living area with a double height space.
- **open plan spaces with larger full height windows** avoid a claustrophobic feel - but take care how you orientate big openings.

large areas of glazing



use of timber



**see Argyll and Bute Council Sustainable Design Guidance for further details*

Contemporary Houses - based on traditional Croft Houses

Contemporary examples of good new houses (many of which are timber kit) have;-

- **open plan internal spaces**
- **areas of glazing appropriately sited to make the most of views but taking account of the weather**
- **layouts designed to suit rural living (porches and entry spaces to accommodate wet clothes and boots)**
- **outbuildings and garages designed and sited with the same care as the houses**
- **simple details and proportions**
- **designs which “fit in” with their location – they use similar scale and proportions to traditional building patterns**

double height spaces



Contemporary houses based on 'blacktop'* houses

'Blacktop' houses (also referred to as Blackroof) have become a significant part of Tiree's heritage and it is important that this way of building should be encouraged to evolve in a manner appropriate to the twenty-first century. Contemporary new Tiree 'blacktops' or 'Tiree idiom' houses are suited to unique high quality bespoke designs, self-build projects and one-off houses but it is worth noting that a convincing modern re-interpretation of a traditional house is likely not be cheap, nor particularly quick to construct.

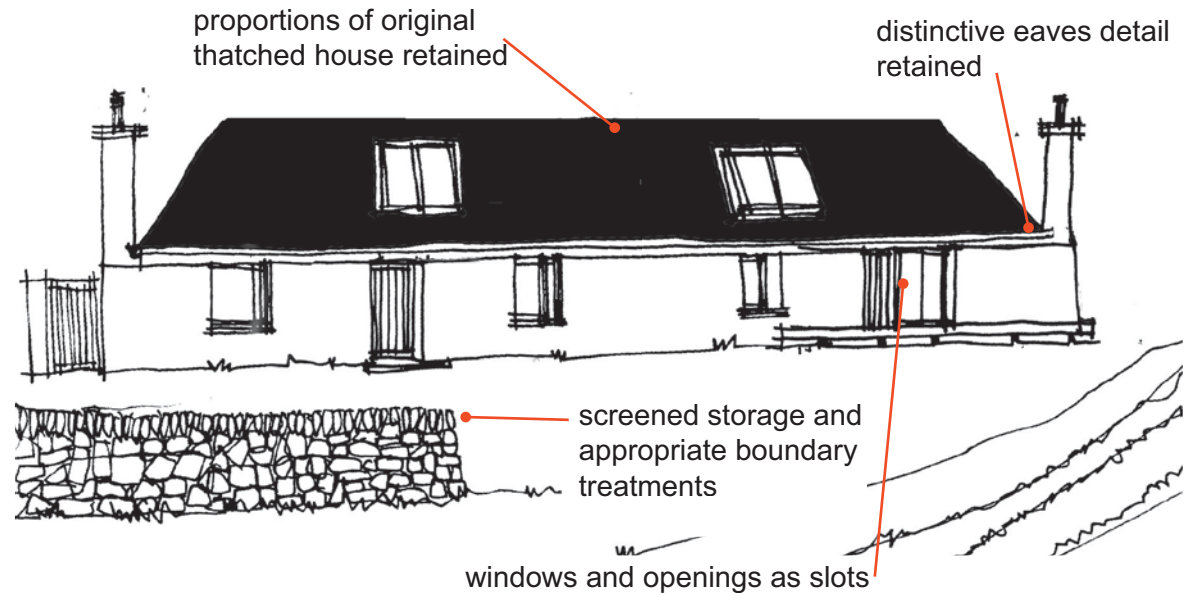
There is a need to consider how high quality design might be incorporated in more standardised, economic approaches.

For larger developments, grouping new 'blacktop' houses convincingly and reconciling them to modern road layouts is considered not likely to meet with success. This becomes even less likely working within current RSL (registered social landlord) and developer expectations for density. Rather it is viewed that if desired contemporary 'blacktops' might be incorporated if appropriate within new developments in small numbers.

(*also referred to as "blackroofs" - this document uses "blacktops" as a generic name for this distinctive Tiree house type)

this sympathetically refurbished blacktop has

- a simple, narrow plan
- a distinctive small scale
- a traditional window and wall relationships
- a distinctive roof shape and eaves detail
- a "traditional" relationship with the surrounding landscape



successful refurbished blacktop or blackroof houses

Contemporary houses based on 'blacktop' houses

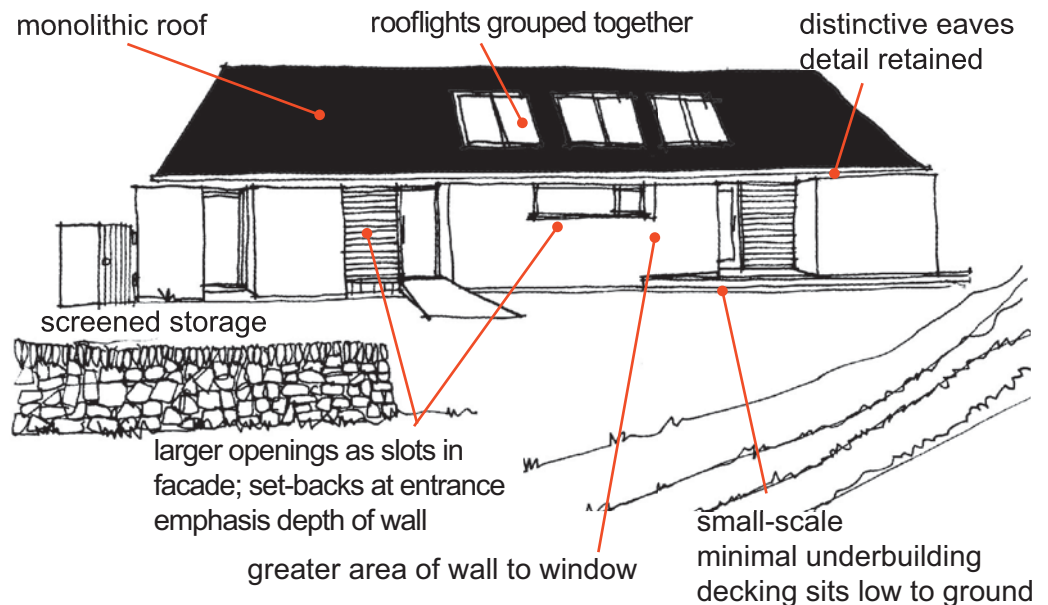
Key design guidance for new and extended/refurbished 'blacktops'*.

- **Retain a simple, narrow plan** - the retention of original proportions and aesthetics of the external walls and the roof, helps maintain the essential character of the original houses. Avoid porches and complicated plan forms such as L, H and T shapes.
- **Maintain a distinctive small scale** - avoid using a suspended timber floor and high ceiling heights. Avoid locating a house on a slope where there will be a need for underbuilding at one or other end.
- **Retain traditional window and wall relationships** Aim to retain the window and door proportions of the original thatched houses - typically these have the appearance of distinctive deep slots which often run from eaves to ground level rather than a series of holes punched through the wall.
- **Retain the distinctive roof shape** - keep the roof pitch and rounded ridge of traditional Tiree houses. Retain the traditional "mass" of the roof, carefully consider the effect of rooflights and ensure that they are located appropriately. Ensure that there is always significantly more roof in proportion to rooflights. Entirely avoid dormers and extensions of the wall into the roof.
- **Retain the distinctive eaves detail** - use the maximum wall thickness possible (for example, increase cavity or block size; increase the depth of a timber frame - this all works well with the provision of extra insulation) Set the roof back on the inside leaf of the wall and keep the gutter above the wallhead.
- **Retain the traditional relationship with the surrounding landscape** - The design of decking and boundary wall treatments has to be carefully considered.

(*also referred to as "blackroofs" - this document uses "blacktops" as a generic name for this distinctive Tiree house type)

this sympathetically designed new blacktop (or blackroof) has

- a simple, narrow plan
- a distinctive small scale
- a traditional window and wall relationships
- a distinctive roof shape and eaves detail
- a "traditional" relationship with the surrounding landscape



successful new houses

guidance

materials
and

construction

Small Scale - High Impact

There are no large scale landscape features on Tiree that compete with its crofting landscape where buildings and houses are very prominent. In this context the siting, mass and choice of materials and details of new development is critical – arguably more than in many other locations. In particular it is important to choose materials and details which complement the approach already noted in the Guidance ie, **the need for simple, well proportioned rural buildings** with strong simple roofs and walls.

Some modern materials and details detract from this key approach because-

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

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

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

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

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



poorly designed roofs are bulky and visually intrusive

better designs for roofs minimal eaves and verge details; roof coverings are smoother and less "clumpy"

poor choice of materials; heavy roof tiles; visually intrusive construction detail at eaves and verge; cast stone quoins; poor fenestration

Choosing sustainable materials

Although Tiree is one of the sunniest places in Britain it is very windy and exposed. Climate change means that the weather will probably get windier, wetter and wilder and new buildings need to take this into account. However this Guidance, in line with contemporary living expectations, also suggests that new homes can accommodate more open-plan layouts and larger areas of glazing for views and light. These last are areas where heat can potentially be lost.

Using energy-efficient, sustainable building materials and methods will ensure that houses can accommodate these aspirations while remaining warm, comfortable, efficient to heat and easy to maintain.

Material choices need to be considered carefully to accommodate Tiree's weather and climate.

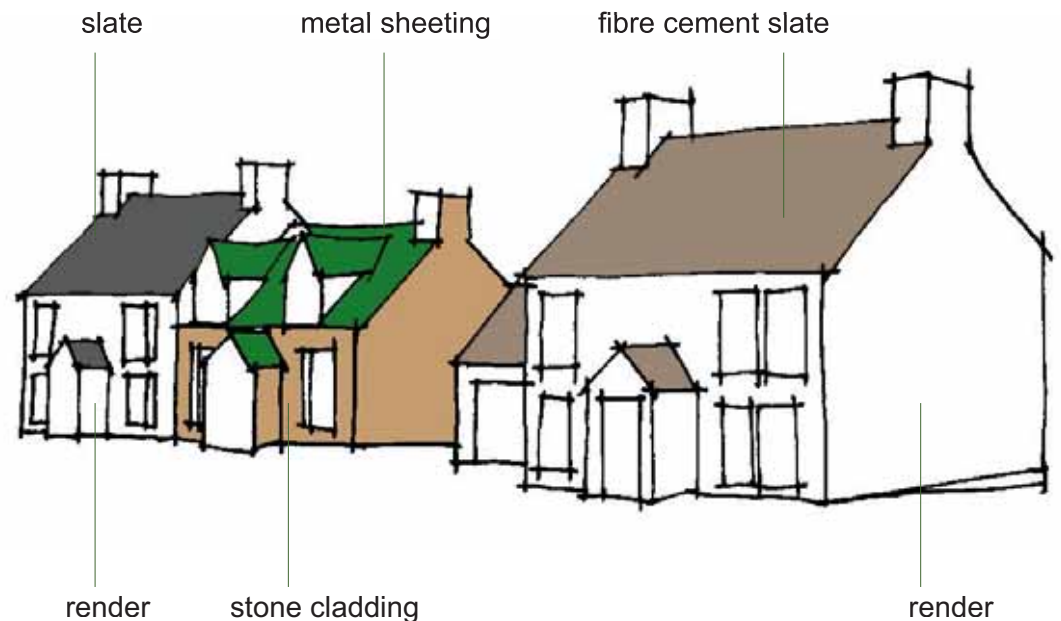
Detailed consideration of sustainable materials and renewable technologies is outwith the scope of this particular Guidance Document which deals only with Tiree – specific issues.

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

- **choose materials which are durable, tried and tested**
- **use materials and construction methods which are locally available** (bear in mind that these need to evolve along with Tiree's buildings)
- **consider carefully before using technology and components which need specialist maintenance**
- **minimise construction time** – conditions on Tiree, as on many islands, mean that it makes sense to consider the use of prefabricated components or building systems e.g. pre-fabricated Structural Insulated Timber Panel Systems etc

Isle of Tiree - this group of new houses uses a range of different building materials

Houses are integrated visually through the use of similar proportions and scale; the same unit sizes of windows, porches and openings and the same minimal eaves and verge details



Preferred Materials

Roofs

Choose materials which are in keeping with those used on Tiree to date and which reinforce the architectural aesthetic of the roof as a single strong visual element:-

- Fibre cement slate
- Slate
- Good quality metal sheeting (eg. zinc, lead, simple steel corrugated panels)
- Plain concrete tiles with simple profile which mimic slate - use advisedly
- Roofing felt, detailed and specified in accordance with best practice
- Thatch
- Turf



Walls

Choose materials that work with the aesthetic of the walls of the buildings of Tiree:-

- **Polymer render** (Polymers in factory-made renders give consistency and control of what is a powder material. They are less susceptible to cracking and crazing when compared to traditional sand and cement.)
- **Traditional wet dash render**
- **Natural stone**
- **Drystone walling**
- **Timber cladding** (horizontal or vertical timber boarding)
- **Corrugated metal cladding** (to match/ complement traditional corrugated iron cladding)
- **Lime based render**
- **Lime washed or masonry painted stone** – appropriate mineral based masonry paints are recommended



Parking, access and boundaries

Three examples of contemporary parking access and boundary treatment.



Design for Life

Flexibility; designing for future change

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

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

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

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

Design For Life - “barrier free design “

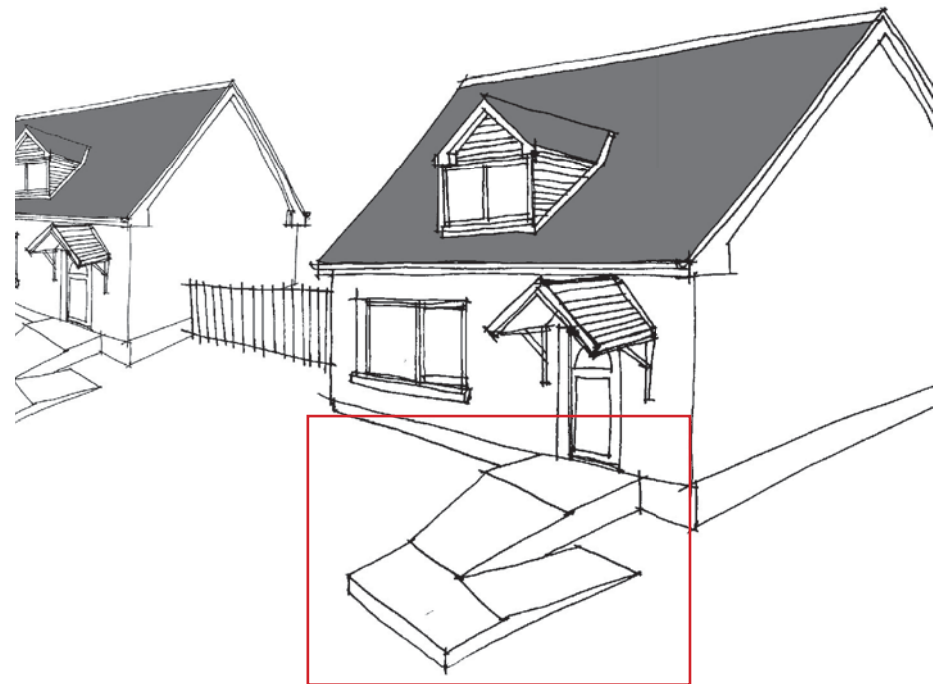
In a remote location like Tiree where there is no purpose-built sheltered housing and there is a limited housing stock, it is essential to make sure that new housing can accommodate the needs of different residents.

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

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

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

Poor quality level access thresholds - suspended timber floors and extensive underbuilding can result in ugly and extensive ramps at entrance doors



Design for Life

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

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

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

Thresholds without a step at entrance doors are now required by the Building Regulations. Although this can be achieved with a suspended timber floor and a ramp, the effect is unattractive and the ramp can be costly and take up a very large area. A better detail is to make the internal ground floor level and external ground level more or less equal at the front door. This is now a common construction detail, which works best in a sheltered location. Providing an element of shelter is a challenge as many porches and canopies can look out of place in a rural situation. The following solutions are suggested:-

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



level access threshold and doorway protected by setback or canopy



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

Good quality level access thresholds

Standard 'kit' house unsuited to a Tiree location

Many timber kit manufacturers produce a range of standard house types which are suitable for locations such as the suburbs or the edges of a small town. These house types do not provide the best design solutions for the Isle of Tiree - because their proportions and scale are different to their neighbours they become unacceptably prominent in Tiree's important and unique landscape setting.

elements of a standard kit house which are **not suitable** for an Isle of Tiree location

"heavy" details draw attention to eaves and verge as visual elements which are separate to the roof itself

dormer window located midway between eaves and ridge, again with "heavy" details



roof has a lower pitch with heavy concrete roofing tiles

openings within the facade do not use the same proportions as their Tiree counterpart



square plan results in a house with proportions which are different to its Tiree neighbours

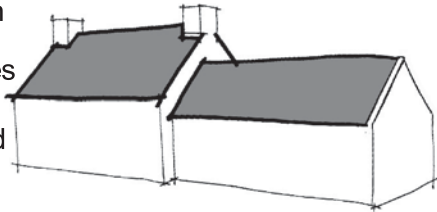
extensive underbuilding and associated ramp

"suburban" garage with "up and over" garage door

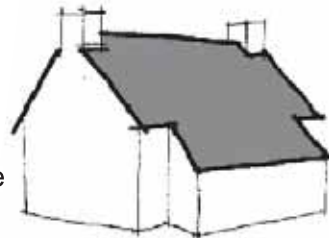
Examples of timber kit houses designed for the Isle of Tiree

existing Tiree houses - simple strong shapes

- larger building broken down into separate components -minimises visual impact
- linear proportions and narrow plan
- chimneys at gables
- skew at gable



- linear proportions and narrow plan
- single storey extension to two storey or one and a half storey house
- continuation of main roof slope
- chimneys at gables



- linear proportions and narrow plan
- dormer windows in roof are an extension of the plane of the external wall
- chimneys at gable
- skew at gable



- linear proportions and narrow plan
- chimneys at gables
- skew at gable



new timber kit equivalent

- larger building broken down into separate components
- linear proportions and narrow plan retained
- chimneys at gables
- minimal verge at gable instead of skew; minimal eaves
- full height openings and greater mass of wall to window
- recessed entrance protects timber cladding at entrance door
- minimal underbuilding (concrete ground floor) and minimal ramp



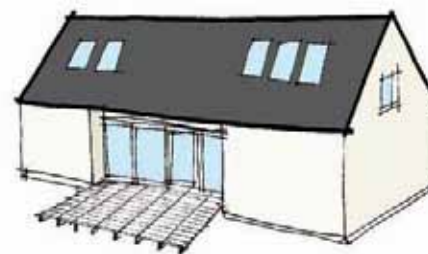
- linear proportions and narrow plan retained
- chimneys at gables
- minimal verge at gable instead of skew
- minimal eaves detail with small overhang and minimal bargeboard
- full height openings and greater mass of wall to window
- single storey sunspace or more extensive to living room



- linear proportions and narrow plan retained
- chimneys at gables
- minimal verge at gable instead of skew
- symmetrical facade
- larger windows retain the same proportions as existing Tiree houses
- dormer windows are extension of plane of external wall



- linear proportions and narrow plan retained
- roof lights used rather than centrally located dormers) in order to maintain plane of roof
- minimal verge at gable instead of skew
- full height openings and greater mass of wall to window
- minimal underbuilding (concrete ground floor) and low-key ramp



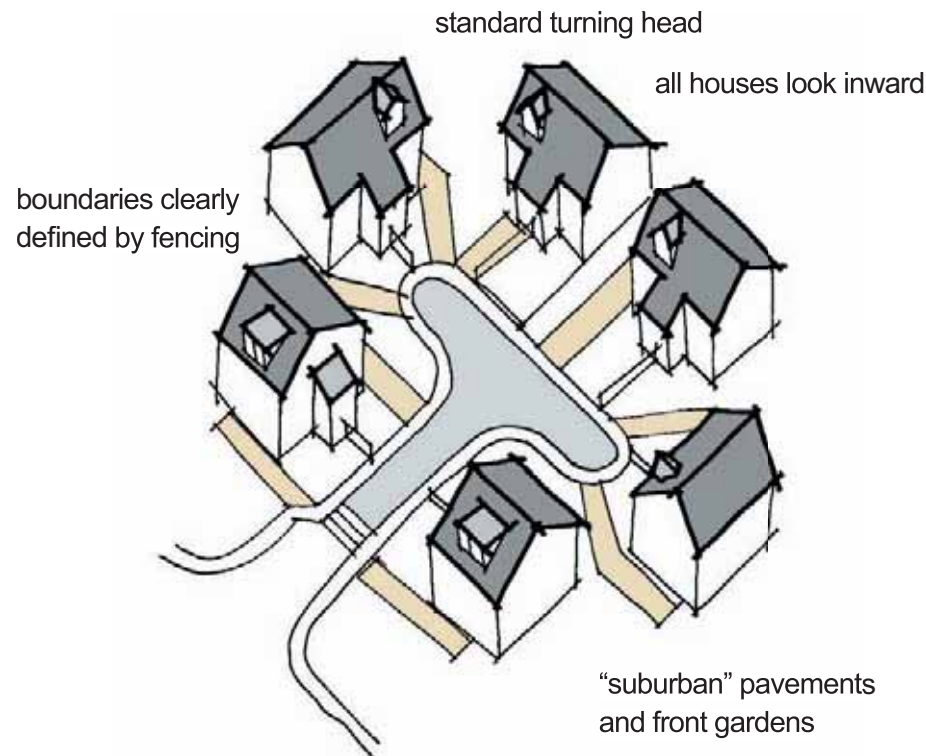
Standard site layouts for 'kit' houses which are unsuited to a Tiree location

It is very likely that there will be a need to group small numbers of timber kit houses together in order to minimise infrastructure costs (eg. the provision of affordable housing). These groups of houses will have a significant impact on their Tiree setting, so it is important that their design is well thought through.

Throughout Scotland, site layouts for new housing are derived from a standard road design and minimal sizes for turning heads. This approach results in house groupings which are not suitable for development on Tiree.

Often this type of site layout is combined with uniform development where the same house types are repeated - an approach which can be very suitable for an urban or suburban location but is less suited to Tiree.

site layouts for groups of kit houses which are **not suitable** for an Isle of Tiree location



Examples of site layouts for timber kit houses designed for the Isle of Tiree

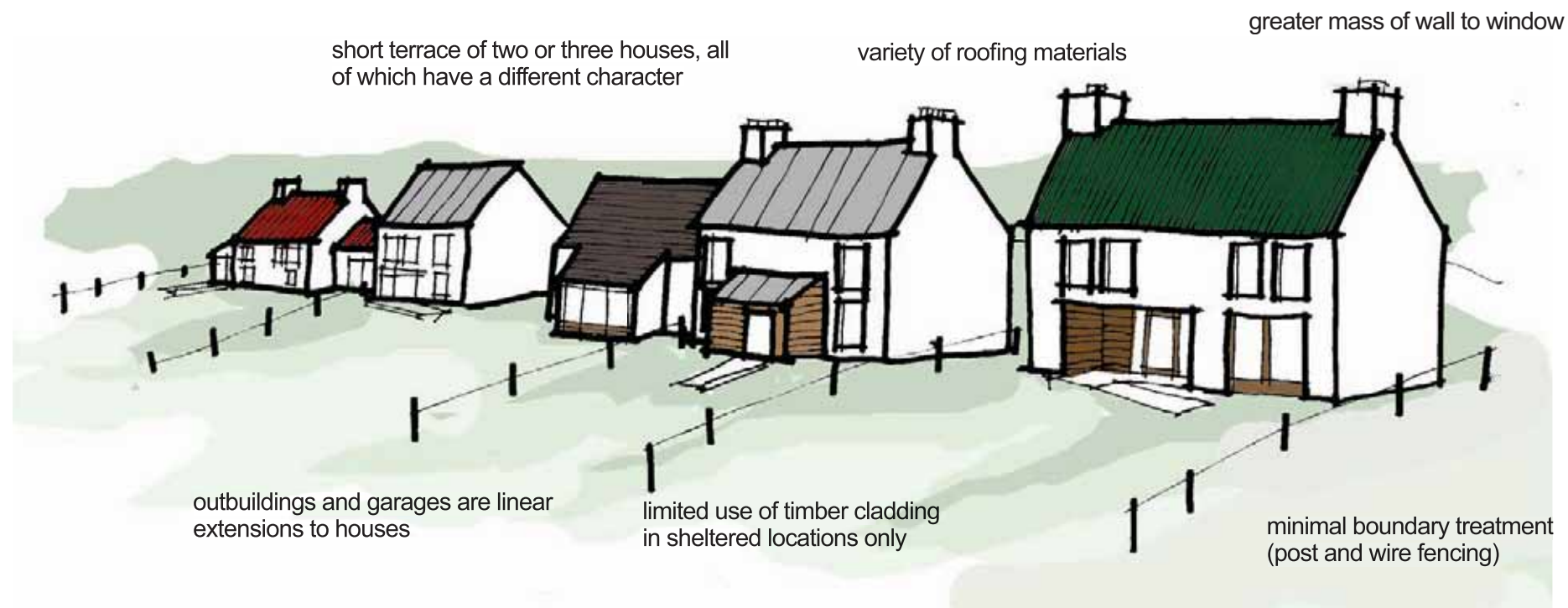
Site layouts for new housing on Tiree should be derived from the successful existing groups of houses on the island.

The examples shown on this page are derived from the short “terraces” of houses which are located at the north west of the island. However, every new development should take into consideration the successful building groupings which are immediately adjacent to the development site.

A site layout for timber kit houses designed for the Isle of Tiree

A range of house types (single, one and a half and two storey) which use proportions and materials derived from successful existing Tiree houses

Houses are integrated visually through the use of similar proportions and scale; the same unit sizes of windows, porches and openings and the same minimal eaves and verge details



summary

summary

Tiree's unique character is a product of its particular topography and its buildings. The latter are the evidence of its crofting and economic history. This specific built landscape has to a certain extent been protected till recently by the relatively slow pace of the agricultural and tourist economy on the island. There are now, however, twenty first century pressures for development on the island and given Tiree's sensitivity, new development needs to evolve from Tiree's building tradition and become part of it. If Tiree is to remain special it should not succumb to the 'could be anywhere' and 'anything goes' development that has blighted other prospering rural and island locations.

This guidance seeks to illustrate the particular design challenges on Tiree; to define what is particular about the place and direct those who would develop on the island to find innovative but sensitive solutions to the island's new housing needs. To develop on Tiree carries challenges and responsibilities to be in keeping and match its wonderful quality and character.

It is understood that generating appropriate house designs and settlement or layouts for groups of new housing will take time and thought and that standard solutions simply cannot be applied. However the environment on Tiree is precious and once precedent good designs are achieved these will consolidate the value of Tiree's built heritage, as well as in themselves be valuable assets for the islanders in the future. Most importantly of all if this guidance is successful it will result in homes that will be truly desirable and sustainable for generations to come, and buildings which will ensure that it remains a special place into the future.

The Planning Process

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

Determine The STATUS Of Your Site

Refer to the Local Plan; what designation does your site have ?
see the Argyll and Bute Council website for details (<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/localplans/index.htm>)

Is The Setting For Your Proposals Designated As “Special?”

- Is it in a Conservation Area or is a Listed Building ?
- Is it beside a Listed Building or Scheduled Ancient Monument?
 - Is it within Open Countryside?
- Is it within an SNH Protected area such as a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) NSA (national scenic area) or NNR (national nature reserve)

Find out by contacting your local Planning Department - ask to speak to the local Development Management Officer

YES

If so, this may affect what you can do – the Development Management Officer will advise.

Extra consents may be required (such as Listed Building Consent)

Outline Planning Consent may not be accepted in some areas

You will need to consult other organisations such as Historic Scotland and SNH, in addition to the Council's Planning Service, in order to ensure that your proposals fit in with their requirements.

You can find out more by contacting your local Planning Service and asking to speak to the local Development Management Officer

Develop your initial ideas

NO

Taking account of the following Design Guidance analyse your site and develop your initial ideas in 'sketch' form.

KEY THINGS to consider at this point are:-

- What development pattern do you intend to adopt?
- Where do you intend to put the building/s on the site?
- What size is the development relative to the site?

KEY CONSULTATIONS

- **Scottish Water** - is there potential for a mains supply to the site
- **SEPA/Scottish Water** - what are requirements for sewerage, land drainage and flooding?
- Where the site will accommodate more than a single house, **think about SUDs drainage systems** from the outset of the project.
- **Argyll and Bute Council Roads Service** - check requirement for the location of new access roads and the possible upgrading of older access ways and entrances.

design statements

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

diagrams, computer-based images and artists' impressions. You can start to collect information for your Design Statement from the earliest stages of the process outlined on this chart
**there is guidance on Design Statements in Scottish Executive Planning Advice Note 68; Design Statements.*

initial 'pre-application' meeting

"an exploratory dialogue"

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

- **A map or drawing clearly identifying the site location and boundaries**

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

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

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

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

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

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

develop your proposals

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

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

PLANNING APPLICATION

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

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

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

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

Action checklists

The following checklists are intended as a summary of the main considerations of the Design Guidance for Tiree. They outline the general principles that designers and developers should consider when proposing new housing in order to ensure better and more sensitive development on the island.

As with the overall Argyll and Bute Sustainable Guidance there will be occasions when the 'generalisms' summarised are not specifically appropriate, and other design solutions are required. It is anticipated that for these situations a skilled Architect or Designer will be appointed to explore and demonstrate their design solutions.

It is the aim of the Supplementary Planning Guidance that in all new development on the island Applicants and Planning Officers work together within the general ethos of promoting sensitive design to protect Tiree's unique character.

Action checklists;siting

general guidance for siting all new developments (from one-off houses to larger developments)

- maintain existing local low density development patterns
- orientate new homes taking account of the prominent settlement plan and neighbouring buildings
- ensure that grassy landscape continues between clusters of homes and properties
- avoid design solutions associated with more urban/suburban locations
- minimise the impact of new access ways and parking, avoiding large areas of hardstanding and the use of brick/block paving
- avoid inappropriate boundary treatments, suburban gates and intrusive fencing .

guidance specifically relating to larger developments

- minimise the impact of larger developments by locating properties in appropriate groupings- a maximum of five properties
- use site layouts which are inspired by the island's own development patterns and which maintain local density
- avoid "introverted" developments with suburban front and back gardens
- adopt a sympathetic approach to access and parking
- avoid "urban" solutions such as cul-de-sacs, uniform terraces and paved streets
- avoid suburban house types
- work with the landform: locate houses where there are clear changes in gradient or where there is already an established pattern of houses sited against hillsides or knolls

guidance specifically relating to strong landscape features

- locate buildings on their site in the same way as older properties in the area
- avoid visual intrusion onto the shoreline or skyline if possible
- two storey properties should not dominate their setting
- house **types** in these areas should use a narrow plan form, simple roof shape and small scale

guidance specifically relating to more open landscape

- maintain the specific density and settlement pattern of adjacent older buildings
- orientate new buildings in the same way as older properties
- house **types** should use a narrow plan form and simple roof shape

guidance specifically relating to infill into Tiree's low density settlements

- new development should be integrated with the existing development pattern and should maintain the same density as older surrounding properties
- ensure that grassy landscape continues between clusters/properties and avoid more urban alternatives
- maintain a similar distance from existing roads as existing properties, and minimise impact of new access ways and parking
- specific house **types** should have similar scale and proportions to their direct neighbours

Action checklists; character

guidance specifically relating to new houses

- base designs on the simple, generally narrow, plan form typical of most rural locations
- retain simple, strong roof shapes
- retain Tiree's flat, minimally articulated facades
- base openings on the proportions of doors and windows from older properties
- base proportions of larger windows and patio doors on larger openings in agricultural buildings
- minimise underbuilding
- minimise floor to ceiling heights

guidance specifically relating to new or refurbished 'Tiree Houses' and 'Blacktops/Blackroofs'

- use a simple narrow plan
- maintain a distinctive small scale
- emphasise traditional window and wall relationships
- retain the distinctive roof shape
- retain, as far as possible, the distinctive eaves detail
- retain direct relationship with the surrounding landscape

guidance specifically relating to materials and details

- wherever possible use sustainable materials and construction methods (see Argyll and Bute Council Sustainable Design Guidance)
- use materials which are in keeping with those used on Tiree to date
- avoid "heavy" and overly complex construction details at eaves, verges, porches
- new homes should be adaptable so that they, as far as possible, can accommodate occupants as they get older
- avoid visually intrusive entrance ramps