



# Tulla

Village Design Statement

## An Tulach

Ráiteas Dearaidh an Bhaile



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The production of the document is an action  
in the County Clare Heritage Plan 2003-2007.  
The Village Design Statement was produced by  
Clare County Council with funding from the Heritage Council.

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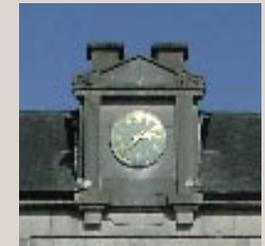
#### Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the following for their assistance in the production of this document:  
Marcus Reid, Consultant Architect who produced the document,  
the people of Tulla for their active participation in the project,  
along with Clare County Council staff, Risteard UaCroinin, Conservation Officer,  
Congella McGuire, Heritage Officer, Ruth Hurley, Architect and Pat Henchy, Executive Engineer.

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*Tulla is translated as Tulach, meaning a hill, and the name of the East Clare village is an abbreviation of Tulach na nAspal, the Hill of the Apostles*



# Preface



## Tulla Village Design Statement

The Tulla Village Design Statement aims to describe the distinctive character of the village and the surrounding countryside.

That character is identified at three levels

- the setting within the landscape*
- the shape of the settlement*
- and the nature of the buildings themselves*

The design statement has been developed in consultation with the entire village through a series of exhibitions, meetings, workshops and questionnaires to ensure that all views, local knowledge and ideas are brought together for the benefit of the village as a whole.

Input from the community of Tulla ensures that the guidelines reflect their feelings and knowledge of the village and local area and how best to future influence, maintain and enhance the character of the village,

### The objectives of the Village Design Statement are to:

- Identify and describe the built environment and those elements distinctive to the village of Tulla.
- Identify these aspects with regard to its landscape characteristics.
- Establish design principles based on the above.
- Demonstrate how the local distinct character of the village can be protected, enhanced and guided in new development rather than restricting development.
- Provide the local community with a direct opportunity to engage with Clare County Council with regard to the guidelines on future development of their village and its hinterland.
- The Design Statement is intended to be of value to residents, planners, designers and developers and to be used as guidelines in support of the East Clare Local Action Plan.

## Public Consultation Process in Village Design Statement

The public consultation process ensures that the content of the document covers a broad range of community issues and reflects the appreciation and understanding of the community of their own place.

The Design Statement is a representative document, and it is hoped stimulates and sustains community involvement in planning issues.

### Community comments

*all entrances to the village add to its characters... the poor state of many houses detract from the village*

*the centre of the village should be revitalised...renovate houses and encourage people to live here*

*improve footpaths, streets need to be resurfaced and derelict buildings need attention*

*the hill adds to Tulla's character as does the library and courthouse buildings, houses along main street, the fair green and graveyard...derelict buildings are detracting from that character*

*the front of the Courthouse to be enhanced as a pedestrian area*

*future development to be carefully monitored*



### Key issues raised during Public Consultation

- 1. Protection of Built Heritage**
  - Architectural Conservation Areas**  
*(controlled protection areas and external treatments)*
  - Record of Protected Structures**  
*(specific building protection)*
  - Buildings and materials in the village infill**
  - Areas of Archaeological and Historical interest**
- 2. Open Spaces**
  - Identification of possible areas**
  - Public spaces /streetscape**
  - Playgrounds / playing pitches / quiet gardens**
  - Markets**
  - Street furniture**
  - Lighting**
  - Paving**
  - Planting**
  - Signage**
- 3. Infrastructure**
  - Parking**
  - Public transport**
  - Traffic management**
  - Laneways**
  - Pedestrian Priority**
  - Links existing and surrounding through village**
- 4. Natural Heritage**
  - Local areas of interest**
  - Caves**
  - Amenities / fishing / swimming / Walking routes / rights of way**

# Section One



## Natural and Cultural Landscape

'Tulla, the Capital of a Barony, is a compact, pretty, Market Town, with a large Market-House, a wide open Street and some good Buildings, from it's advantageous situation, name and improvement, it may be justly call'd an handsome, rising, Village, it really affords a commanding prospect of the agreeable adjacent country for many miles, and is in the centre of a rich and respectable neighbourhood.' Historic extract, J. Lloyd 1780

Tulla is located in east Clare in an area known as the Clare Lakelands. This landscape is part of the western edge of the Irish Central Lowlands characterised by a topography moulded by glaciations into a tightly packed mass of rounded hillocks, interspersed with a multitude of diminutive lakes and bogs. The town is located in an extensive low drumlin area extending east from Clooney towards Feakle, and the southern boundary transforms gradually into the Kilkishen loughlands. The name of the village in Irish is Tulach na nAspal, the hill of the apostles, or Tulach na nEaspag, the hill of the bishops.

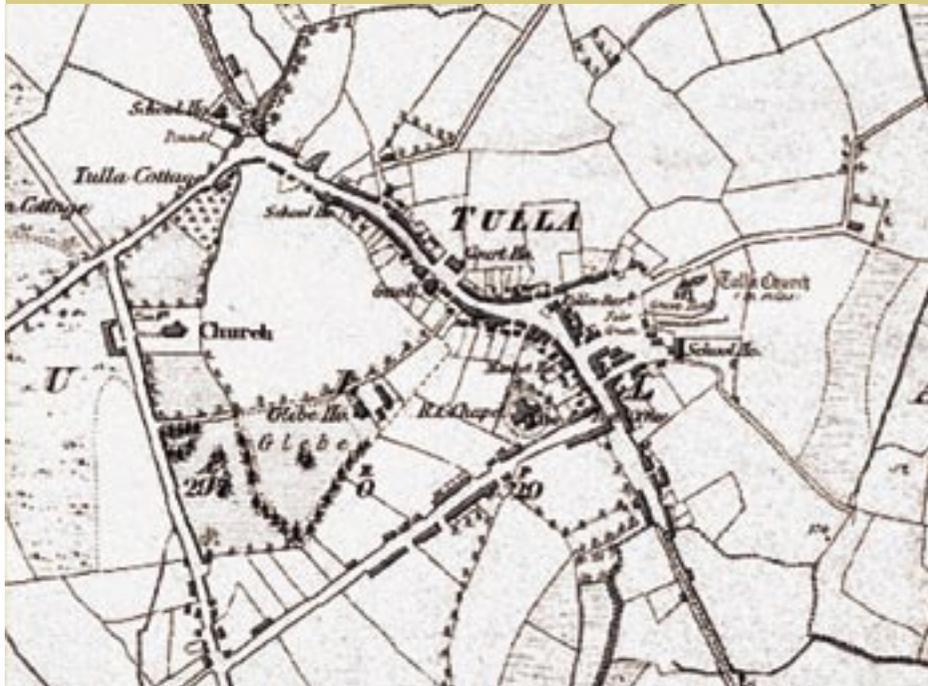
A ruined church survives on top of the hill or tullach from which the place take its name, however, these eighteenth-century remains mark the site of an earlier foundation by St. Mochulla and the location of a monastic community.

There is also a holy well dedicated to St. Mochulla, the patron saint of Tulla Parish. Archaeologically Tulla and its environs are very significant. There are a number of megalithic wedge-tombs in the area and the Tulla region, as part of a North Munster grouping, is recognised for its importance and rich metals in terms of Bronze Age metalwork. Close to the ruin of Tyredagh castle are the remains of a fulacht fiadh, a mound of burnt stone and charcoal, once ancient cooking places, which tradition associates with the Fianna.

A group of limestone caves known as The Taumeens, Tomeens or To-mines are situated between the ruined Kiltannon house and Milltown Castle. These caves were formed by the action of the Kiltannon underground river eroding an open gorge and destroying the roof of its subterranean course in the process. During the nineteenth century concerts were held in some of the caves.

A discontinued lead mine is located within the Tulla region. East Clare contains lead, copper and zinc deposits.





*OS Maps First edition 1842*

## History

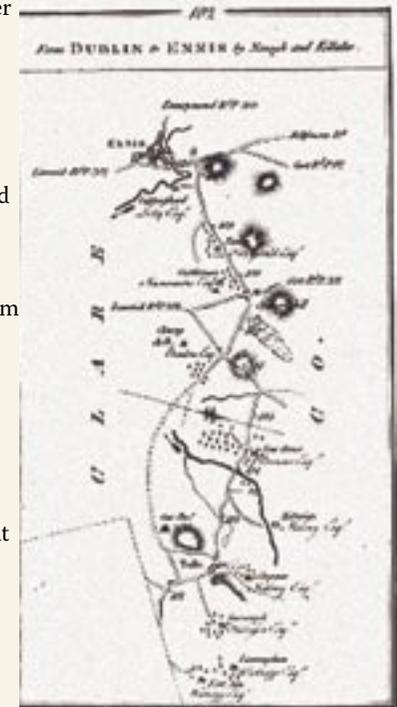
In 1837 Samuel Lewis said of the village that ‘this place seems to have some claims to antiquity, there are numerous remains of ancient castles, formerly the residences of its landed proprietors.’ A number of ruined tower-houses are still evident within the surrounding area.

Tower-houses became very popular in Gaelic-held areas in the later middle ages and are densest in the west of Ireland in the matrix of Old English and Gaelic lordships in south Galway, east Clare and east Limerick. Donagh and Rory MacNamara are recorded as the owners in 1590 of Fortane Castle and also Garruragh Castle. Garruragh Castle is significant in that it may in fact be, as indicated by Maurice Craig, an earlier structure or tower which may have been modified by the removal of one storey or more and the insertion of regular fenestration and a new doorway to convert from fortification to dwelling. The remains of the McNamara castles, Tulla, Lisofin and Lismeehan and of the O’Brien Formorla and Tyredagh are for the most part still evident today.

Tulla’s significance as a market town and service centre for the adjacent rural population was reflected in the number of important buildings such as market houses, a courthouse, a dispensary and a fair green. The physical fabric of the town developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Tulla, as described by Lewis in 1837, derived as a main trade location from ‘its situation on a public thoroughfare’, his observation supported by its inclusion in the ‘Taylor and Skinner Road Maps of Ireland 1778’ on the route from Dublin to Ennis by Nenagh and Killaloe. It is also worth noting the inclusion on the same map of the principal seats of the local gentry at Kiltanan (Malony esq.), Gregane (Malony Esq.), Garruragh (Harrison Esq.), Lismeehan (Westropp Esq.) and Fort Ann (Westropp Esq.).

Lewis also refers to these residences and there is more in his account of the area in 1837.



*Taylor and Skinner, Road Maps of Ireland 1778*

Of the town itself, Lewis comments that it 'is pleasantly situated on a hill, and is surrounded with highly interesting scenery, enlivened with numerous elegant seats and pleasing villas.' The significance of the town is reflected by the erection of a courthouse in 1838 and Lewis informs us that a chief constabulary police force was also stationed in the town at this time. The mid eighteenth-century market house on Main Street was also used as a Royal Constabulary barracks in 1919. Lewis also notes that a market was held on Thursday and on May 13th and September 29th fairs, chiefly for the sale of cattle.

Lewis also refers to the 'improved lines of road now in progress,' which were the subject of an extraordinary meeting of the Cess payers of the Barony of Tulla upper at the Courthouse in Tulla on January 13, 1847. During the famine the poor were employed on relief works on making new lines of road. One such road is still in existence near Garruragh Castle as are the remains of a famine workhouse and 'Soup School'.

In 1812 a loan of £500 was granted by the Board of First Fruits toward the cost of the erection of a church on the Kilkishen Road, Tulla. The Board of First Fruits was an important branch of the established church and between 1712 and 1833 assisted in the building of churches and glebe houses. According to Lewis the church was 'a neat edifice with a spire' and the glebe-house was 'a good residence near the church' and the glebe comprised  $2 \frac{3}{4}$  acres'. Unfortunately, the church was demolished in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the graveyard with various cutstone grave markers and mausolea still remains. A stable complex constructed adjacent to the original church building survives today, and is due to be developed as an Arts Centre by Clare County Council.

The proximity of Ennis town to Tulla (approximately 10 miles) can be considered as one of the contributing factors in the decline of Tulla as a market town in the twentieth century.



*OS Maps 25 inch 1919*



*17<sup>th</sup> century map of Clare*

# Section Two



*Approach Roads along Village Perimeter*

## Tulla Hinterland

### Tulla—Places of interest

THE TAUMEENS, Tomeens or To-mines, probably derive their name from TOMHAIDHM, an eruption or bursting forth of water. The Taumeens were formed by the action of the underground river eroding an open gorge, destroying the roof of its cavern.

They are situated between the ruined Kiltannon House, once the seat of the Moloneys, and the dangerous remnants of Milltown Castle, owned by Cuvea McNamara in 1580. The Kiltannon river runs underground for over a quarter of a mile. Its course can be followed through the belt of woodland growing over and on both banks of the river. The greenery is interspersed by numerous pits through which the water can be seen. Natural bridges exist between the openings. During the nineteenth century concerts were held in some of the caves. See also Lloyd's Tour of Clare 1780.

WEDGE SHAPED GALLERY GRAVES are fairly numerous in the Tulla region. Many of them were recorded in the "Survey of Megalithic Tombs in Ireland" by Ruaidhri de Valera and Sean O Nuallain. There is one in Moymore six hundred yards east of the Kiltannon river; another is inconspicuously sited on rough boulder-strewn ground south of the avenue leading to Derrymore House, at Clogher, north-east of Kilkishen. There is a ruined one about

five hundred yards south of the bungalow built on the site of Maryfort House at Lismeehan. South of the road from Newgrove to Tulla the Milltown wedge-shaped gallery grave stands on level pasture land. About one-third of a mile north-west of Newgrove bridge is the Ballyslattery or Newgrove monument. The ruins of what might be another wedged-shaped gallery grave stand close to a fence on the brow of a ridge overlooking Maryfort and Castle loughs. In fact, the three baronies of Tulla Upper, Tulla Lower and Bunratty Upper contain between them over forty such monuments. Many of them are in fairly inaccessible areas, on rough, boggy or mountainous terrain. Eugene O'Curry mentioned that in 1829 there were seven graves in Milltown townland alone.

THE CASTLES OF TULLA included Fortane which was owned in 1580 by Donagh and Rory McNamara, who also held Garruragh Castle. Tulla castle was owned by Donald Reagh McNamara; Formoria and Tiredagh castles were owned by Turlogh O'Brien; while Lisofin and Lismeehan were owned by Rory McNamara. The ruins or sites of most of these tower houses can still be located today. Fortane castle should not be confused with Fortanemore, a late seventeenth century house east of Tulla. The ruin of Fortane castle is near the site of Maryfort House which was demolished in 1967.

## Character Assessment

### The Shape of Tulla

The plan of a town is the relationship of buildings, streets and the resulting spaces to each other. It includes the relationship with the surrounding landscape and is generally an evolving form. The element which contributes most to the character of Tulla is its unusual elevated position, high above the surrounding landscape.

A full understanding of the plan form will highlight and underline the quality and character of the town. In Tulla this process includes identifying the important areas and streets, buildings of interest, the street vistas and views of the surrounding landscape. Tulla is a market town and the plan form and visual character reflect the function and status of the town. This consists of a single street comprising mostly of shop buildings with accommodation overhead. Side streets are mostly residential or institutional in nature.

The street patterns have developed historically and reflect the role of the village as a market place up until early this century. The historical town centre owes much of its character to a combination of the traditional linear building and street patterns and the distinctive hilltop setting of the village with its rise and fall along main street from the soup house, by the courthouse to the cemetery located at the highest point.

The roads leading into Tulla create particular village entrances. Tulla, like many Irish villages has suffered from indiscriminate expansion and development 'sprawl' along many of the approach roads. This form of development dilutes the visual distinction between town and country. One solution is to encourage development in designated sites within the village area, rather than spread out linear development of individual dwellings along the roadside.

The road network consists of mainly secondary and local routes. The main route from Ennis to Scariff, the R352, bypasses the village with secondary routes leading off from this route through the centre of the village and around its periphery, the R462. These routes travel into the surrounding 'townlands' in a number of directions.

Along the routes emanating from the town centre, new enclosed residential developments have appeared alongside older linear streetscapes of terraced dwellings interrupted with individual housing units.



Current Map



View from New Line  
towards Main Street



View from Fair Green of Market House,  
Main Street, Tulla. c1760.



View down Main Street and Library



## Character Assessment

### Streetscape

The most striking feature of Tulla is its spectacular location poised on top of Tulla hill. This forms a profile on the surrounding landscape with the village buildings elevated and visible from a distance. The result is a distinctive pattern of street roofscapes. There are sweeping vistas down Main Street to the hinterland below. The town has adapted to the sloping conditions by subtle incremental changes in level and elevated stepped pavements adjacent to curving street flows. Colourful door-cases greet the street with stepped entrances.

Chance meeting places are created around informal street stairways and cascading entry portals provide urban incidence and a distinctive human scale to the streets.

The buildings of Tulla are predominantly two storey gabled, two and three bay houses dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Many contain early wooden or plaster shopfronts with ornate-moulding and detailing. The village is rich in public buildings including a courthouse, two market houses, a convent. Catholic Church and the early 19th century, Church of Ireland stables. The Church of Ireland was demolished in the mid 20th century.

*Extract East Clare Draft Local Area Plan 2004*

## Buildings of significance

### Market House, Main Street, Tulla.

Detached four bay two storey building circa 1760 possibly originally a market house with round-headed openings to ground floor having cut stone voussoirs, consoled keystones and fanlights to left, in use as Royal Irish Constabulary Barracks, 1919, renovated 1990.

### Clonmore House, Ennis Road, Tulla

Detached four bay two storey, circa 1850, with elliptical-headed door opening to centre; renovated and extended to left circa 1920. Comprising single bay two storey lower recessed end bay, extensively renovated circa 1985. Detached three bay single storey gate lodge, renovated and extended to right, circa 1985, comprising single bay single storey flat roofed recessed end bay. Piers with wrought iron gates. 1840–1880.

### House, New Line, Tulla.

End of terrace three bay two storey house circa 1860 with round headed door opening to centre, renovated in 1950 with left ground floor remodelled to accommodate commercial use, renovated in 1990 with single bay two storey lower annex to left originally part of bulking to left with ground floor returned to residential use.

### Tulla House, New Line, 1800–1840

Detached three bay single storey house with dormer attic, possibly originally a presbytery on a L-shaped plan with elliptically headed door opening to centre having timber paneled pilaster doorcase, tripartite window openings to ground floor, bipartite window openings to rear elevation and single bay two storey return to rear, renovated circa 1995 with dormer attic added. Cut stone piers with moulded pyramidal capping.

### Main Street, House

End of terrace two storey house circa 1870, renovated circa 1930 with left ground floor converted to commercial use; extensively renovated circa 1985, with ground floor reconverted to residential use.

## Character Assessment

### The Courthouse

This is an extremely attractive building, fronting onto a generous open space, together creating the perceived village centre. A centre of commercial activity and a place of community gathering.

The Courthouse dates from 1838 with detached five bay two storey coursed cut stone with three bay double height recessed central block having round headed window openings, pedimented clock to parapet at centre, single bay two storey advanced central bays with square headed door openings having recessed panels over, three bay side elevations and two bay single storey lean to return to rear, partly refenestrated in 1990, in use by Clare County Council. Between 1760 and 1838 courts were held in the old market house.

This space will hugely benefit from a revised layout that will create a new stone paved plaza with in-built street furniture, new street lighting and hard landscaped elements to control vehicular movement and parking.

The courthouse faces onto an interesting square open space, however this residual space is entirely overrun with cars and littered with randomly parked vehicles. The space is in effect a surface carpark rather than a key place within the town. By reorganizing the functioning of this space it could be transformed into the heart of Tulla in the form of a civic plaza with stone paving, traffic control measures, street furniture and feature lighting would transform this car park into a worthy public place. There may be significant scope to conduct small scale design competition to seek a creative and innovative solution to the civic upgrading of the town centre as a whole. Also, the inclusion of a specially commissioned sculpture for this specific or other spaces, would contribute to the further enhancement of Tulla's civic identity.

The Courthouse square has the potential to become the main focus of Tulla Town Centre.



*View of Courthouse 1838, Main Street, Tulla.*



*View of Square to front of Courthouse, Main Street, Tulla.*



*Detail of pediment of Library Building*



*Photo of Library Building, 1843, Main Street, Tulla*



*Photo of buildings onto Main Street from the Fair Green*



*Photo of fillet and fluted engaged columns shaft with Apophyge, torus and scotia plinth. Projecting moulding in a Greek revivalist manner surrounds the monument inscription stone. It has curiously been left blank. The monuments inside the ruined church are important representations of the Ionic Order in Classical Architecture. O'Callaghan monument headstone lies in a precarious state, important stone scripts such as this are extremely rare and must be kept in better condition.*

## Character Assessment

### The Library

Detached three bay single storey coursed cut stone built market house dated 1843 with elliptical headed openings having cut stone voussoirs and gablet over central bay, renovated and extended in 1990 comprising single bay single storey flat roofed recessed end bay accommodation use as a library includes curious mythic animal carved in the pediment of the Library building. This high quality building will benefit greatly if integrated into a new Market House Plaza which can link the Fair Green back to the Courthouse Square.

The construction of the new bank building and the neighbouring resource centre have in a single stroke effectively destroyed the character and scale of the triangle, perhaps, interesting examples of modern architecture but an architecture that gives little respect to its surrounding buildings and the predominant building materials in the village.

### Tulla Community Council, Fair Green, Tulla 1884–86.

Detached five bay single storey national school, dated 1885, with single bay single storey gabled projecting lower porch to left, extensively renovated circa 1985, to accommodate use as hall.

### Tulla Town Centre St. Mochulla's, Cemetry and Fair Green

The ruins of St. Mochulla's church are situated at the highest point in Tulla. The site is of major archaeological interest adjacent to the site of Tulla Castle and Fair Green, the ruinous church structure is surrounded by many important stone mausolea and a large graveyard. The nave of the church has also become part of the burial ground with elaborate 18th century cut stone mausolea to the chancel either side of the altar. Slender ionic columns frame either side of inscription panels to the two Greek revivalist columns.

The O'Callaghan monument on the right is almost fully intact with cornice, frieze, architrave, capital shaft and attic base in situ.

Directly opposite this monument, on the left of the chancel is a symmetrical mirror of the O'Callaghan Monument, its inscription panel is blank and its cornice and architrave are lost. Ivy is taking a stranglehold on the main structure of the ruinous church and is also creeping across the ionic monuments.

*This is an important heritage site and requires careful conservation, which is presently being undertaken with grants from Clare County Council and the Heritage Council.*

## Character Assessment

### Tulla Rectory and Church of Ireland Site and burial ground

Graveyard to former Church of Ireland Church, built 1812, with various cut stone grave markers and mausolea circa 1800–1995, church demolished. Cut stone diagonal piers with cast iron gates.

The single greatest loss to Tulla's architectural heritage was the demolition of the former Church of Ireland at Kilkishen Road. However there remains a significant number of mausolea and tombs on site with the original gate posts and walls extant.

This site is recommended for protection as it is of extreme cultural significance and high architectural merit, the boundary walls remain insitu along with numerous tombs.

Obelisk monument at graveyard site circa 1820–1840. Structures such as this hold secrets to our past and have aged gracefully with the passage of time, the limestone overlaid with a patina of lichen. Original cast iron railings surround a cut stone pedimented mausoleum. These structures are currently in a neglected condition and are vulnerable to vandalism.

Consultation with Department of the Environment and Clare County Council Conservation Office, in relation to conservation works to such burial sites is required prior to any works being undertaken by the local community.

### Stable Complex, Kilkishen Road, Tulla 1800/1840

Detached eight bay single storey coursed cut stone built stable complex circa 1820, on a U-shaped plan with six bay recessed central block having elliptical headed carriageways with cut stone voussoirs and single bay projecting end bays having central bays to side elevations, now ruinous and in use as County Council Depot.

The designation of the Stables as Community Arts Centre is pivotal to securing the future survival of this protected structure whilst also consolidating cultural uses within the town of Tulla. The scheme is currently being developed in conjunction with Clare County Council.



*Photo of Stable buildings and gate, previously of the Church of Ireland*



*Church of Ireland graveyard*

# Section Three



## General Recommendations—Tulla Town Centre

### Tulla Town Centre

Local Authorities have embraced new approaches to planning, coupling relevant conservation concerns with the inevitability of new and greater development pressures. The purpose of documents such as this and the increased consultation with local organisations and community bodies is to find methods of implementing clear conservation guidelines while simultaneously welcoming new and sustainable development. This can be achieved through clear and detailed guidelines by local authorities regarding the nature and extent of development they would recommend in towns and villages such as Tulla.

The public consultation process is critical and is recorded in this Village Design statement. It seeks to clarify the impressions and opinions on the current condition of Tulla and help promote planning and development guidelines approved by the community of Tulla.

Tulla is transforming as a result of modern pressures, from a historic market town serving a rural agricultural community to a commuter town serving its neighbouring town of Ennis and also the city of Limerick. This change of function as a commuter town will place development pressures on Tulla, with an emphasis on residential development. Tulla has the benefit of being a nucleus of a community with numerous core facilities, shops, church, schools and hall. It has a well defined visual identity and the objective in future development to respect this character.



## General Recommendations—Tulla Town Centre

### Design Guidelines New Urban Proposals

The rural town and village plays a significant economic and service role for the surrounding rural communities. It is clearly a more sustainable form of development than dispersed one-off housing, making a more economic use of both land and services and increasing social and community interaction through proximity. The town or village sustains the rural community's educational, business and leisure needs and offers extra residential choice.

The key to developing rural vibrancy is, firstly to acknowledge the advantages of living in towns and villages and, secondly, to offer people the choice of attractive well-designed residential environments. As towns and villages also suffer from the growing rural population decline, designers and developers must respond with models for quality environments. Working alongside local councils there is potential to revitalise town spaces where town communities take priority.

Most rural towns and villages have vacant backlands and brownfield sites which are there to be exploited with developments which are well designed and responsive to their contexts in terms of scale, materials and architectural forms. Developments that will provide residential and other accommodation and simultaneously improve and enhance the architectural character of the area.

#### Actions

Use the existing ring-road, Kilkishen and Newline to form the framework for a long-term urban development, public and private facilities to be located along these routes. This could be enhanced by tree planting or a series of urban furniture interventions.

#### Encourage

development proposals to open up landlocked sites to the rear of the main street—the backlands.

#### Create

a defined park amenity at town centre or at backlands site, connected with the main road networks by pedestrian pathways.

#### Develop

a plateau that would develop from the cemetery and enhance the public realm with an active market and civic square.

#### Introduce

guidelines on the improvement of the market buildings, the courthouse and the church grounds.

#### Consider

street edges and proposed building developments along the village street designed to reinforce the building lines the street as public space.

#### Achieve

higher densities where possible and appropriate.



*Views along Main Street, Tulla*

*A zoning and planning policy that reflects the real needs of everyday life in all its facets. In Tulla there is a clear need to generate residential activity along the village centre to create a flexible mix of shops, workshops, office and residential activities.*

## General Recommendations—Tulla Town Centre

### Design Guidelines—Conservation Area Designation

*‘a town without old buildings is like a man without a memory’*

In the best historic townscapes the entire built environment dates from the same time period and has very few extraneous or unsuitable elements which might detract from the overall scene. While it can be very difficult often to identify the reasons why particular townscapes are attractive, their quality can be severely affected by the demolition of a single building or the addition of a new one out of character with the existing street. Tulla village is as an Architectural Conservation Area in the East Clare Draft Development Plan 2005. Much of the built fabric of the village centre dates from the early to mid 18th century as indicated on the Grand Jury Map of 1787 and the 1st Edition O.S. of 1841.

It is important that the 18th and 19th century character of the village is preserved and enhanced in order to consolidate its design and make it an attractive place to work, do business, live in or visit.

In the recent past the integrity of the village has been compromised by the building of some inappropriate structures, inconsistent shopfronts and the use of non-indigenous, artificial materials for roofing, doors and windows. It is important that this trend be reversed and a serious effort made to restore the traditional character of the village centre. This can be achieved through the use of natural materials for the repair and refurbishment of existing structures and in reflecting established building lines, eaves, ridge heights and roof pitches in new buildings, particularly in in-fill sites.

In Tulla the morphological frame of the street and open spaces is reasonably intact and reflects the time-period and purpose for which the town was established. The quality of the ‘townscape’ often lies in the eyes of the beholder, and becomes entirely subjective. The atmosphere or ambience can, like the townscape, be difficult to define. It is something developed over time and cannot be artificially created. The importance of historic events or the continuation of cultural events, strengthen the ‘unbuilt’ character of the town.



*Courthouse Interior*



*Courthouse*



*Old Market House opposite Fair*



*Library Building*

#### ***Buildings that are considered significant in terms of history and heritage***

*Many of these buildings face problems of structural decline and functional obsolescence and it is essential to find new uses that do not destroy their character. The restoration and appropriate use of Tulla's buildings of significance can be implemented with limited resources and a little imagination. An identification of facilities currently lacking in the village could present these buildings with future uses. Those uses are varied, from a local history museum to arts centre, or possibly private developer led accommodation or commercial offices.*

*In considering new uses for such buildings two important points should be remembered. Firstly the buildings cannot be separated from their context, the spaces and character of their location. The character of these buildings must be enhanced by any new works to their exterior and the environment in which they sit. Secondly, the interior treatments should be true to the original design and materials of the original building.*

## General Recommendations—Tulla Town Centre

Of greater significance than the individual buildings within the village is the streetscape, the terrace buildings that follow the distinctive contours of the village location. Any change of use or structural works to an individual building unit within the streetscape must recognise the cultural and character significance of the greater grouping of street buildings. The individual building, is in reality only an element in the overall village unit; inappropriately develop or alter one townhouse and you potentially destroy the entire character of a terrace and the greater village character. A control policy on the facades, scale and material character must be implemented to preserve the existing building stock and give direction on appropriate infill development.

### Elements of building design which will serve to restore the character of the village:

**Chimneys**—large, bulky chimney-stacks, placed on the centre of ridges, are an important, established architectural feature. These should be retained on existing buildings and replicated on new-build where possible.

**Roofs** should be covered in natural quarry slate with clay or concrete ridge tiles. Verges should be finished with concrete over-barges or rendered to the underside of the slate, without under-barges.

**Rain water goods** should be fixed to an advanced eaves course or plaster band without fascia or soffit.

**Walls** should be finished in smooth plaster. Stone houses should be finished in a lime-render without cement.

**Windows** should have a vertical emphasis and those on a street or public lane elevation should be wooden sliding-sash, or inward-opening casement type. Wide windows reveals should be avoided unless ornately moulded.

**Doors** should be wooden, sheeted or panelled.

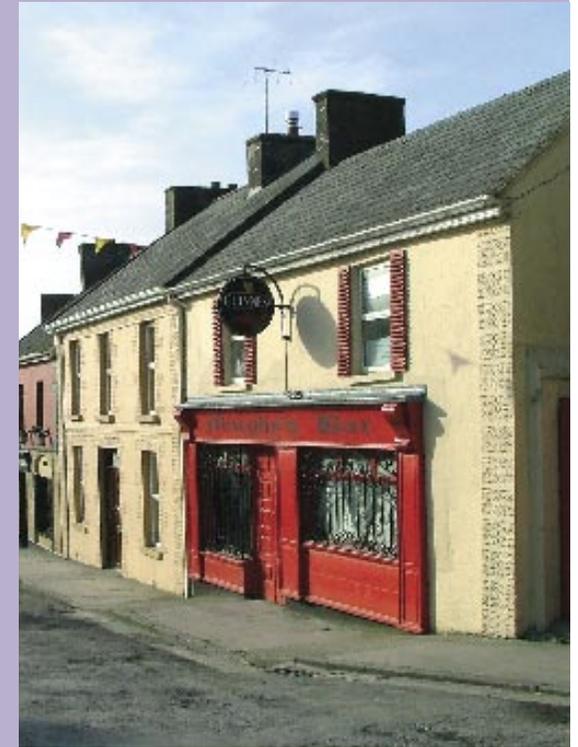
**Window** cills should be of a traditional depth (bullnosed)

**Shopfronts** should be of render or wooden manufacture and reflect traditional design.

**New buildings** should reflect the traditional established building widths and gables should be of a pitch between 35° and 40°.

**Signage** both directional and commercial should be discreet and in sympathy with the character of the village.

*It is also important that the character of this 18th/19th century village be considered when the local authority are designing footpaths, paving plans, public spaces, street furniture etc. Infrastructural services should be designed in a way which will minimise negative visual impact on the village centre and Architectural Conservation Area.*





*Existing Housing Developments, Tulla, Co. Clare*



*Predominantly low density, suburban in design built along perimeter of town*



*Building Lines in general. It is important to maintain existing building lines. Major visual elements should be highlighted. In Tulla the particular topographical situation creates an undulating roofline as the main street ascends, flattens, ascends to the hilltop only to begin its descent all the time curving gently along its path.*

## General Recommendations—Tulla Town Centre

### Design Guidelines—New Development

In Tulla, within a predominantly rural area of the county, policy in general would be to direct new residential development into the village rather than dispersed development into the countryside.

Under Density guidelines Appendix (V) I of the Development Plan 2005 it is a policy to give consideration to allowing higher than prevailing densities on serviced land in existing towns and villages, provided that such development would not detract from the existing attractive architectural character of a place, where this is a relevant consideration.

For example higher densities are seen as appropriate in developments which would reinforce existing street patterns or create more compact, more clearly defined towns and villages. Higher densities and building scale will improve the legibility and urban nature of the local centre and create variety in urban form and allow for imaginative design solutions.

Increased densities at appropriate locations will achieve more economic use of existing infrastructure and serviced land, a reduced need for development of 'greenfield' sites, urban sprawl and ribbon development, more cohesive town and village growth pattern, greater numbers accessing existing services and facilities or allowing provision of sustainable local services and a reduced need for infrastructural investment.

**Plan Form** It is important to acknowledge the streetscape and its role in defining character of the village. Emphasis of the streetscape, the recognition that within the village context and the combined frontage of a number of buildings is often of far greater value than the individual buildings themselves and must be highlighted to avoid intensive infill developments. Entrances, areas of architectural or archaeological importance, residential areas, areas requiring renewal and development, areas of possible future development and buildings which close the vista are all important. The views from a town onto the surrounding countryside are a significant aspect of the village to both local and visitor alike.

The Bank building is an example of development lacking regard for its context, poor material usage and inappropriate form and scale.

## General Recommendations—Tulla Town Centre

### Form of new development

Tulla is unique with regard to its topographical conditions. Therefore the usual guidelines regarding road widths, densities and plot ratio should be flexible to ensure that new developments respect the existing character, ie. they should have a legible relationship to their surroundings. They should compliment and enhance adjacent buildings, routes and spaces. Hierarchy of distinctive spaces and buildings, the provision of orientation spaces. The village has evolved a network of distinctive routes and spaces of both cultural and economic significance which need to be retained, enhanced and expanded.

**Fabric and Materials** The general range of new materials which would be considered within the conservation area must be expressly specified and approved. The predominant building materials which make up the fabric of the town should be clearly identified. In general, restraint in the use and range of materials achieves the greater success in new developments.

**Scale** In general buildings found in Irish towns and villages are small in scale and generally have vertical proportions and emphasis. This comes from the small size of building materials, the narrow frontages with a vertical emphasis of the windows and spaces between windows. These traditional proportions should be acknowledged and respected when considering new development in proximity to the town but particularly within the town centre and along the main streets.

**Landscape** Existing open spaces and natural amenity features should be protected and enhanced. Landscape elements such as trees can be preserved where of significant importance and incorporated into future community and housing developments. Open spaces identified for possible future development have a potential to generate new pedestrian routes stemming from the existing road/path networks and perhaps the introduction of new village square or urban centre.

**Street Furniture and Signage** The local authority should implement a policy to improve the design and appearance of street furniture. Solutions can include the removal of overhead wire and poles and an efficient and coherent arrangement of road signs. These works could be carried out during necessary road improvements throughout the village. The Local Authority could generate a plan to implement key improvements in a designated area to begin with that could stipulate further implementation village wide.



## General Recommendations—Tulla Town Centre

### DESIGN GUIDELINES—PROVISION AND TREATMENT OF OPEN SPACES

#### Network of public space

*“The street can be regarded as more or less the oldest element of urban planning. The street has been the ‘living room’ of the people. The public space must once more become the setting, with an improved spatial organisation for all the activities it has been used for since time immemorial’ Stefan Wewerka, 1964*

Part of the successful developments and growth of Tulla will rely heavily on cohesive use of its existing open spaces for both building development and the creation and expansion of open public spaces.

Public spaces in most urban settlements amount to more than 50% of total land area which include streets, public squares, parks and less well defined common areas. These interweaving public spaces provide a web of connections offering people a wide range of choices when deciding to make local journeys. New urban developments should strive for a clear hierarchy between the major through routes and more subtle structures of local streets and alleys

Urban spaces must not be considered as isolated units but as a series of interconnected outdoor rooms with a range of different functions and activities. Outdoor eating, street entertainment, play areas, public gardens, civic squares, markets, but most importantly places for people to move through and inhabit.

It is within these territories that communities interact and come together. Streets and spaces which are active and inhabited units in achieving vitality and a sense of security.



*The triangle at the library and Fair Green offers great potential for a new urban space.*



*Backland sites and existing laneways can be exploited and increase pedestrian movement from the main street into future new developments*

## General Recommendations—Tulla Town Centre

### New Pedestrian Routeways

Priority movement and positive discrimination in favour of safe, secure, convenient and direct routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Increase overall permeability to maximise pedestrian and cycle movement on site, to reduce car dependency and establish a legible, safe and effective movement hierarchy that includes '...high quality networks for walking and cycling. Defined circulation network of routes, spaces and streets to provide and a clear distinction between public and private areas.

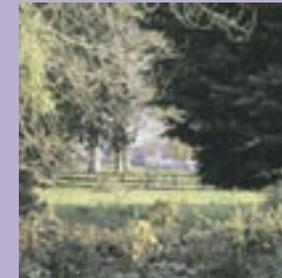
**The Public Realm** A public realm strategy is required which specifies a clear network and hierarchy of open space. Safe, well maintained, attractive and uncluttered public spaces provide vital 'glue' between buildings and play a crucial role in strengthening communities.

Public Spaces and the network of paths and routes that interconnect them must be planned before development and included in Local Area Plans.

**Provision of New Public Open Space** Every town and village plan should include a strategy for open spaces and to attempt to connect all in a continuous system of pedestrian route. Achieving such a strategy requires a commitment to impliment a design plan and may involve land acquisition, developments agreements and agreements with property owners.

East Clare Draft Local Area Plan 2004 identifies areas as suitable open space and recreational zones.

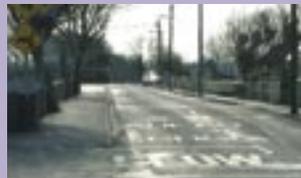
Currently the open ground at the Church of Ireland graveyard could accommodate a public park which would work well in conjunction with the current proposal to develop the stables buildings into an Arts Centre.



*The planning strategy is to facilitate the growth of the town into its immediate environs and to encourage walkable communities that live close enough to the centre of the town to allow for journeys to services, shops and schools to be undertaken safely and conveniently on foot or bicycle without the need for the use of a motor car.'*



*Traffic conditions along Tulla Main Street*



*Approach Roads into Tulla*

## General Recommendations—Tulla Town Centre

### DESIGN GUIDELINES—NEW TRAFFIC FLOW AND PARKING MODELS

In Tulla, as in many villages and towns, traffic and parking pose significant problems. Parked cars should not dominate the streetscape as this undermines the relationship between the dwelling and the street, in particular in an area of heritage significance.

In Tulla, car parking should be restricted and heavy vehicle should be rerouted from Main Street except for designated delivery times. Such traffic can be accommodated on alternative roads surrounding the village. Future commercial developments of sites onto Main street could be conditioned to accommodate off-street parking facilities. All communal parking area should be well-lit, open to natural surveillance and have designated pedestrian routes.

Traffic Proposals could also consider the reduction of through traffic and for the increased allocation of pedestrian surface along certain parts of main street. Speed can be controlled and enforced by the physical arrangement of buildings and other urban form elements, physical in-built traffic calming and physiological measures, changing driver perceptions of the area and the 'feel of the street'. Residential circulation space designed for very low self-enforcing vehicle speeds (10mph or less) to improve road safety, encourage non-car based modes of travel and to allow the street to be used as a public social space. A policy of speed reduction within the town core allows for a road width reduction and pedestrian prioritisation.

The Design of urban form 'gateways', lighting, change of surface material and signage can be introduced to reinforce change of character in the street in relation to movement and privacy including the incorporation of formal play areas and the design of informal opportunities for children's play.

**Pedestrian and Cycle Routes** These routes not only facilitate circulation but have a significant impact on the open-space network with the town. In general the width and positioning of walking and cycling routes should respond to their particular location and function. Pathways, road edges and steps should be upgraded by the Local Authority within an overall plan for the village.

Tulla is recognised in the settlement hierarchy of the County Development Plan 2005 as a large town that has the infrastructure to allow for expansion. Any future expansion will have to be coupled with a significant improvement of public transport, in particular the route to Ennis.

The Local Community has suggested greater utilisation of the school buses. An adequate enclosed bus stop should be commissioned for the village.

## General Recommendations—Tulla Hinterland

### Rural Development and Sustainability

Individual houses, farm clusters and villages play a large part in defining rural landscape. They are a significant component of the rural landscape and public opinion overwhelmingly supports rural vitality and policies for an inhabited countryside.

However, recent rural development has resulted in new housing forms that are conspicuous and aesthetically controversial elements to the contemporary rural scene. New houses, public and private, are of many styles, with the majority flaunting a clear break with older building patterns, for a large part of the population, increased affluence and use of the car have widened locational choices for residence; many urban workers and retired people, including returning emigrants, have chosen to settle in rural areas. Without corrective policies, house styles are likely to increase in variety and discordance with the landscape.

There has been a growing tendency to suburbanise the countryside, with house types typically lining and facing directly onto main roads on highly visible sites. One-off houses at random intervals along the roadside, usually accompanied by the removal of indigenous planting, walls and hedgerows.

The forms of development places a major strain on infrastructure and services, and will, if left uncontrolled, have a seriously detrimental effect on the rural landscape, impacting negatively on future social, environmental and economic considerations.

Sustainability, in terms of housing has been defined as housing which creates vibrant communities, and is efficient in the use of land, energy, water and other neutral and non-renewable resources. It is now almost common policy amongst the County Councils to commit policy redressing population decline in rural areas, by promoting the regeneration of the smaller towns and villages, and through the development of sustainable rural housing for those who live and work in rural communities, insofar as this is compatible with conservation of the rural environment, and a wider public interest.

Opposition to the ongoing suburbanisation of the countryside and the proliferation of sporadic urban generated housing outside the town and village, must come from a local community level as well as governmental level.

Local rural communities must anticipate the adoption by local County Councils of policy structures and controls to restrict inessential housing in rural areas. Local communities must anticipate change and develop viable methods and arguments for continued rural developments on a sustainable level.

*Future development must respect both tradition and national considerations.*

# Section Four



*Possible urban intervention for Courthouse Square*



## Summary of Proposed Strategies

### Treatment of Existing Open Space

Provide a hierarchical framework for a variety of formal / informal public spaces defined by buildings / tree belts and landscaping and linked to principal circulation grid and local centre.

Enhancing positive identity in townscape by use of street frontages, corner / entrance treatments and landmark buildings / landscaping.

### Tulla Courthouse and 'Market Square'

This space will hugely benefit from a revised layout that will create a new stone paved plaza with inbuilt street furniture, new street lighting and hard landscaped elements to control vehicular movement and parking.

The court house faces onto an interesting plaza shaped space, however this residual space is entirely overrun with cars and littered with randomly parked vehicles. The space is in effect a surface carpark more befitting the rear of a supermarket than to such a key place in the town. By reorganizing the functioning of this space it can be transformed into the heart of Tulla with a civic plaza with new stone paving, traffic control studs and bollards, new street furniture and new lamp standards and feature lighting will transform a car park into a public place. There is significant scope to conduct small scale design competition to seek a worthy solution to the civic upgrading of the town centre as a whole. Also, the inclusion of a newly commissioned sculpture for this specific space will contribute to the further enhancement of Tulla's civic identity.

There are opportunities to carry out a comprehensive painting scheme in conjunction with a policy of restricting or removing inappropriate signage and street furniture. Any redevelopment provides the opportunity to insert new modern buildings retaining the character of the streetscape.

The Courthouse plaza could become the main focus of Tulla Town Centre.

## Summary of Proposed Strategies

### Fair Green

Provide a controlled carparking area and public area at perimeter of the graveyard. This area can be easily accessed from the 'triangle' which can also be landscaped to provide more generous pedestrian areas.

### Traffic Management

Traffic issues have not been covered in this document because at present Clare County Council are undertaking a Traffic Management plan.



*Possible Urban intervention at the Fair Green and Triangle at Library*





## Summary of Local Community Workshop Proposals

### Infrastructure to be upgraded to provide

Increased pedestrian accessibility through improvement and renewal of existing pathways and street edge, the provision of appropriate signposting of existing and proposed pedestrian routes through the villages and information on the numerous heritage walks.

Improved public transport through the provision of a frequent bus service to Ennis, to include a village sheltered bus-stop.

A viable traffic management plan to be introduced creating a one-way traffic system, a restriction on heavy vehicles through the village centre, re-routing heavy vehicles away from the village centre. Works to include the re-surfacing of all road surfaces, the adequate drainage of pathways and significant works to key areas along the village street.

Introduce a coherent car-parking policy, restricting parking at junction, restricting on-street parking to one side only, the creation of off-street parking areas.

### Built Heritage to be protected and enhanced (community proposals)

The curve of the street top to be preserved and reinforced.

Conservation of Church walls in Graveyard.

Proposals for the workhouse site.

The School renovation seen as model building.

Encourage use of local materials in proposed developments.

### **Open spaces to be developed through**

- A proposal to hard-landscape approach to 'Fair Green'
- A proposal to develop the grounds of the Workhouse
- A proposal to develop the Protestant Church Grounds and Stable building
- Country markets to front of Courthouse
- A street furniture proposal
- Community playing pitches within half mile of centre
- Removal of ESB overhead cabling along street scape
- Implement amenity charges on current and future development
- Upgrade and improve all signposting, street-lighting and road and pathway surfaces

### **Natural Heritage**

- Shannon Development, Community Employment Schemes
- Promote and enhance cycling and walkways
- Promote Kiltannon Caves, Tomeens
- Community networks
- Fishing



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