

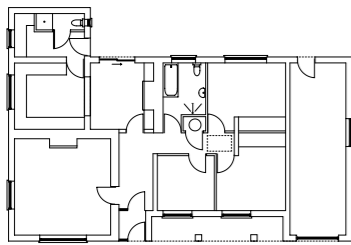
Practice
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tall-house

tall-house: Currently 1,600,000 people live outside urban settlements in the Republic of Ireland. In 2030 there will be another 1,000,000 transient rural dwellers, mostly commuters. The countryside cannot absorb further random landtake. Surrogate typologies will develop.





169 m² footprint



Glenelg.UGH (P. Lawlor, 2005)

1,000,000 transient rural dwellers

At current rates of output, up to half of a million new one-off houses are expected on Ireland’s landscape over the next 25 years. A further 250,000 acres of landscape will therefore be lost to so-called Urban Generated Housing (UGH) in ‘areas outside the limits of any incorporated or unincorporated city, town, village or any other designated residential or commercial area such as a subdivision, a business or shopping centre or community development’ by 2030. (‘countryside’ as defined by the European Environment Agency, <http://glossary.eea.europa.eu/EEAGlossary/C/countryside>). While UGH is occupied by either commuters or holiday makers, both groups of rural dwellers are transient, frequenting the landscape rather than inhabiting it.



N6.UGH (A. Hofheinz, 2006)

Further random landtake

UGH happens on existing road and power networks on the basis of development plan road-frontage requirements, which in turn is a planning extrapolation of British Standard traffic sight-line regulations. Essentially orderless, this suburbanism is described as either cluster, ribbon or one-off development of variations on a basic house type. The Department of the Environment’s National Spatial Strategy recognises UGH landuse as unsustainable.

‘[A planning paper published by the Department (of Environment) in August 2001, in the context of preparing the National Spatial Strategy,] found urban-generated housing ‘generally unsustainable’ because of the energy it consumes, the traffic it generates, and the pressure it puts on water supplies... [The paper] noted that the number of planning applications for rural housing went up between 20% and 70% in the period 1997-99, depending on the county.’ (F. McDonald / J. Nix, p. 112)



N6.UGH (A. Hofheinz, 2006)

The vast majority of planning applications made in rural areas are urban-generated one-off houses. In 2003, they accounted “for 65% of all housing in Mayo, 68% in Wexford, and some 70% in Galway. On average, 85% of all planning applications for one-off houses are granted...” (F. McDonald / J. Nix, p.113)

Although the National Spatial Strategy and the county development plans acknowledge the situation, the number of new one-off houses has not significantly decreased.

New built bungalows and detached houses in rural areas*

2004	19,350
2003	21,000
2002	20,870
2001	23,050
2000	22,500

Rural building stock 2002**

4,000,000 population	1,280,000 units
Rural: 38.8%	497,000 units
Of these, one-offs: 82.4%	409,000 units

Projected new bungalows & detached houses in rural areas, 2006 -2030

5,800,000 population**	
Average annual output:	Say 20,000
20,000 x 25 years =	500,000

*Figures: Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin, Department of Environment

**Figures: CSO Ireland



Ó Gaora House, Co. Galway (T. dePaor, 2006)



N6.UGH (A. Hofheinz, 2006)

Such houses are one/two story assemblies from off-the-shelf domestic pattern books. Development plans for each of the counties specify the minimum plot size to be a half acre or 2,000m² with a minimum site road frontage of 30 linear metres. 500,000 projected one-off houses imply 15,000km of ribbon development.

N6, the national road between Dublin and Galway is 217km long. The total length of Irish coast is 3,172km. This future development is therefore 70 times the length of the N6, approximately four times that of



the periphery of the island and the equivalent of 280 hours of continuous drive-by suburbia.

It is imagined that the planning and development regulations of 2001, Schedule 2 Part 1, are amended to allow only domestic development as extension upward or downward on non-urban lands. No horizontal expansion and no new build. The built footprint of all UGH is therefore ringfenced in 2006, and no further rural landtake permissible. The rural silhouette morphs as the existing UGH mutates and the urban contour focuses. However, the spatial and structural limits of the existing type become exhausted and with land value increase, demolition and reconstruction on the existing footprint is soon inevitable.

Surrogate typologies

The lifestyle of UGH is not threatened, the programme well established. There are four seats in a car, one front door in an elevation and there are four elevations. Four transient dweller groups (families) settle in one house. The density on the half acre plot is therefore quadrupled on the same footprint.

The new construction is tall.



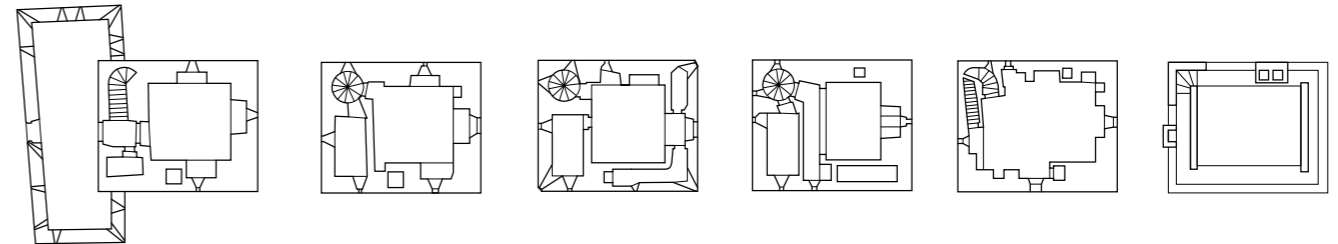
Nenagh, Co. Tipperary (P. Lawlor, 2006)



Derryhivenny, Co. Galway (D. Sweetman 1999, p. 149)



Rockfleet, Co. Mayo (D. Sweetman 1999, p. 149)



The tower-house

A statute enacted by Henry VI in 1429 declared that “it is agreed and asserted that every liege-man of our Lord the King of the said counties who chooses to build a castle or tower sufficiently embattled or fortified within the next ten years, to wit twenty feet in length, sixteen feet in width and forty feet in height or more, that the Commons of the said counties shall pay to the said person to build the said castle or tower ten pounds by way of subsidy.” (H.G. Leask, p. 76)

‘Tower-houses, as defined by Leask, are square or rectangular towers (occasionally equipped with side turrets), normally with a vault over at least one floor, usually the ground floor, and with the upper floors marked by better windows, fireplaces, etc; entry was usually through a door on the ground floor.’ (T. McNeill, p. 201)

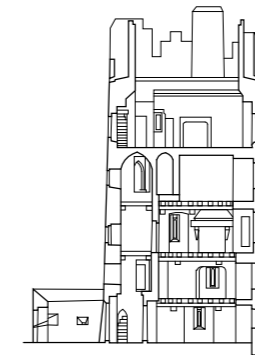
‘The towers provided different levels of accommodation: the small towers had effectively only one room on each floor, with stairs and latrine taking up the rest of the available space.’ (T. McNeill, p. 222)

‘And may these characters remain / When all is ruin once again.’ (W.B. Yeats’ inscription for Thoor Ballylee, Co. Galway)

The tower house is common in the Irish landscape.



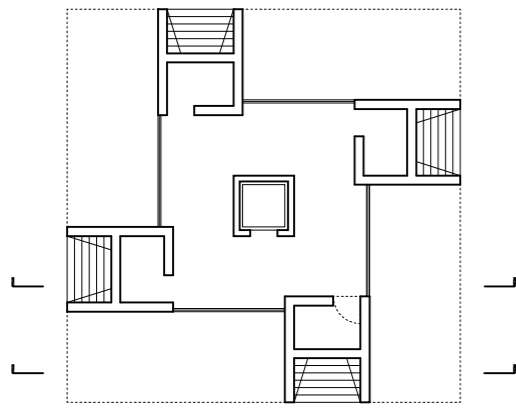
Clara, Co. Kilkenny (D. Sweetman, p. 147)



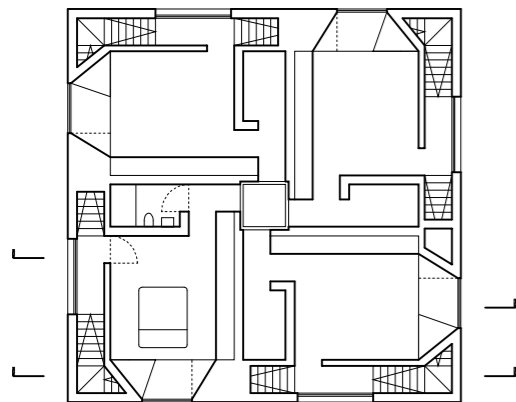
Clara, Co. Kilkenny (redrawn plans / section)

- Central Statistics Office Ireland, current statistics and projections, <http://www.cso.ie/statistics/>
- div. County Councils, current County Development Plans and Rural Housing Guidelines, available from the counties’ webpages, e.g. <http://www.wexfordcoco.ie/>
- Department of the Environment, ‘National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020’, <http://www.irishspatialstrategy.ie/> 2002
- Government of Ireland, ‘Census 2002 Principal Socio-Economic Results’, Stationary Office, Dublin 2003
- J.R. Kenyon / K. O’Conor, ‘The Medieval Castle in Ireland and Wales’, Four Courts Press, Dublin 2003
- H. G. Leask, ‘Irish Castles and Castellated Houses’, Dundalgan Press, Dundalk 1964.
- F. McDonald / J. Nix, ‘Chaos at the Crossroads’, Gandon Books, Kinsale 2005
- T. McNeill, ‘Castles in Ireland’, Routledge, London 1997
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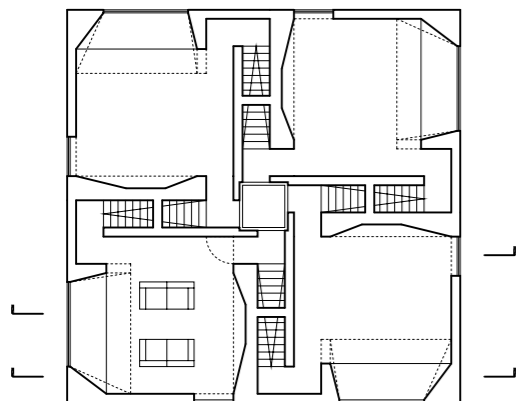
References



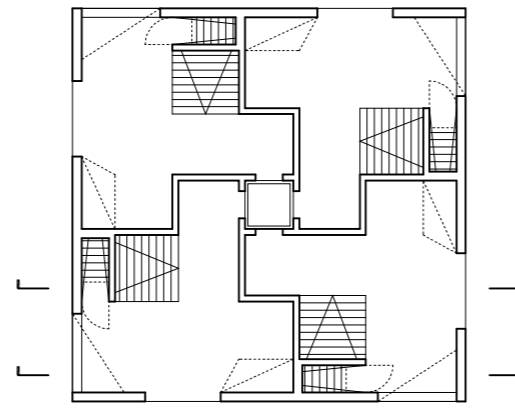
1 Ground floor—communal (crèche, day care etc.)/169m² footprint



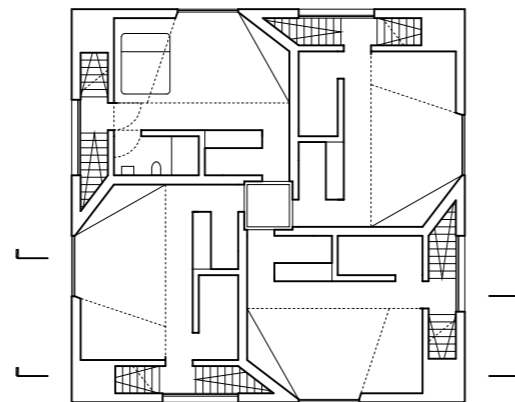
4 Third floor—bedroom 2 with ensuite and built-in storage



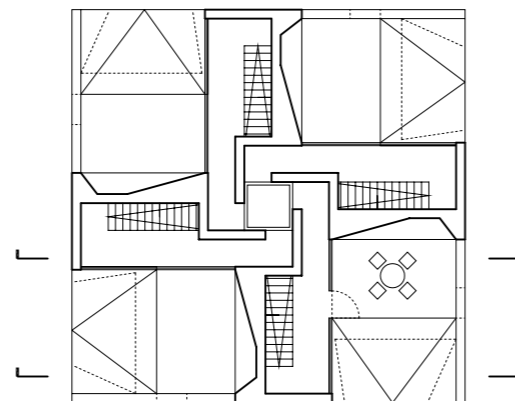
7 Sixth floor—living room with fireplace



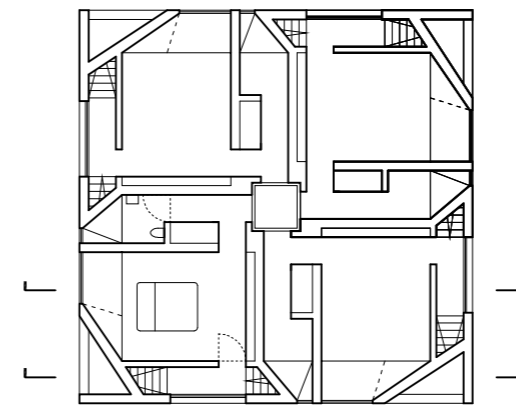
2 First floor—open porch, entrance door to dwelling unit



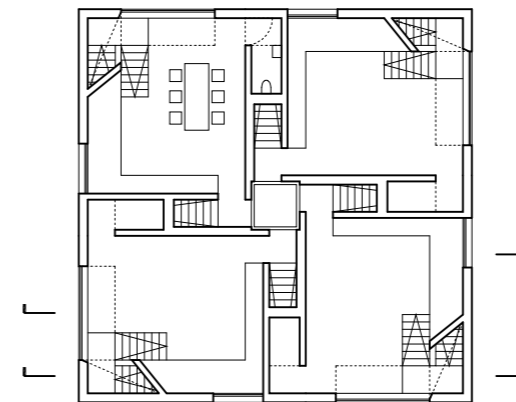
5 Fourth floor—bedroom 3 with ensuite and built-in storage



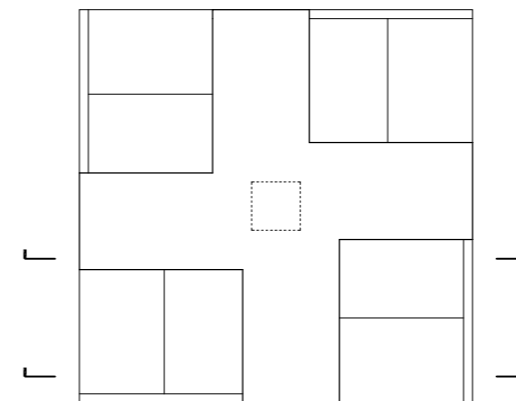
8 Seventh floor—patio with barbeque



3 Second floor—bedroom 1 with ensuite and built-in storage



6 Fifth floor—open-plan kitchen/dining area with guest WC



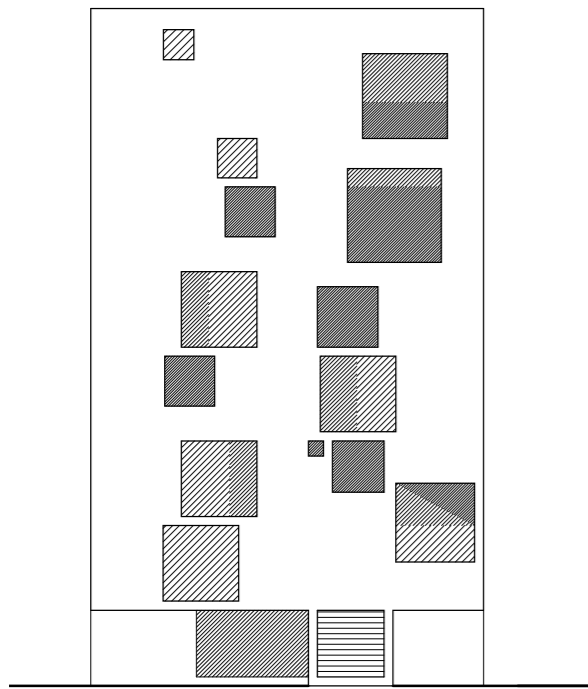
9 Roof

Tall-houses are erected on the footprint of earlier UGH, the half-acre plot held in common. They are predictably within a half-hour drive from urban settlements, off national routes in the sub-rural hinterlands or in positions of high scenic amenity. Their specific location is dictated by local market economics. They wish to be self-sufficient in terms of services and make use of passive and active energy collection, rainwater recycling and so on. They have a communal kitchen garden, composting, garden shed and a lawn within a walled, gated or non-indigenous hedge enclosure. They often have a name as address.

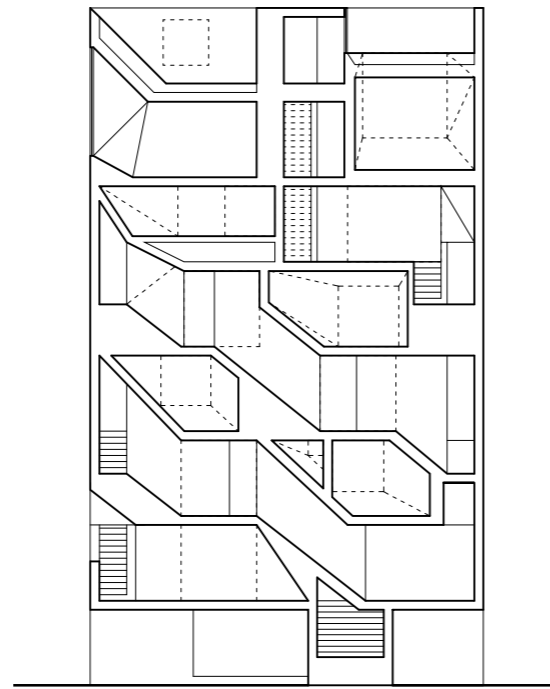
Occupants share with their neighbours a carpool and a crèche or day-care (depending on the age profile). Sometimes the tall-houses are used as guest houses where previous planning uses allow.

Each of the four dwellings in one tall-house has own-door access from a driveway/carport, with covered porch, open plan kitchen/dining, a living room with fireplace, a patio with outdoor cooking facilities, three bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms, built-in storage and a lift. These domestic spaces rotate so that each dweller group enjoys each orientation and view variously. Each occupant is sufficiently unaware of his neighbours. A mural stairs leads down into the countryside.

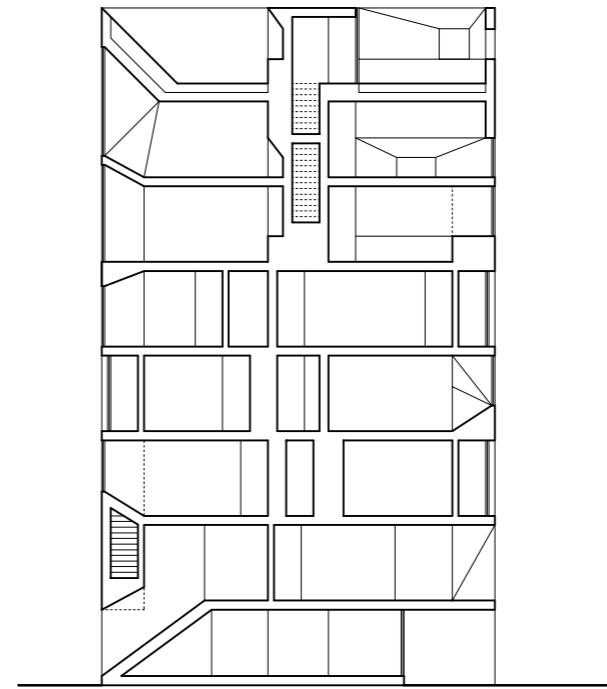
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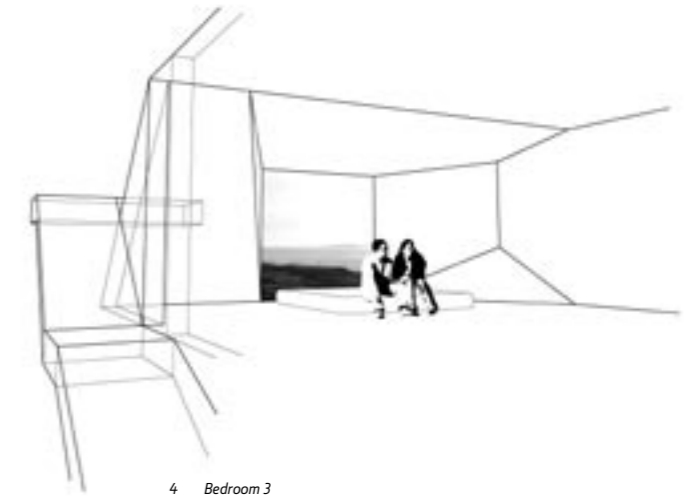
1 Elevation



2 Section through porché



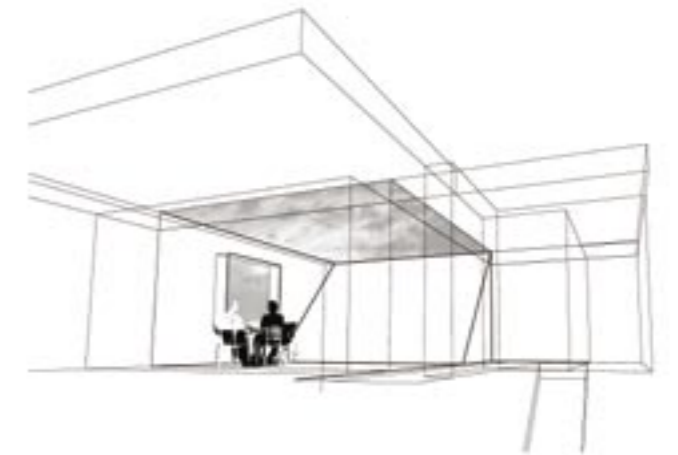
3 Section through domestic spaces



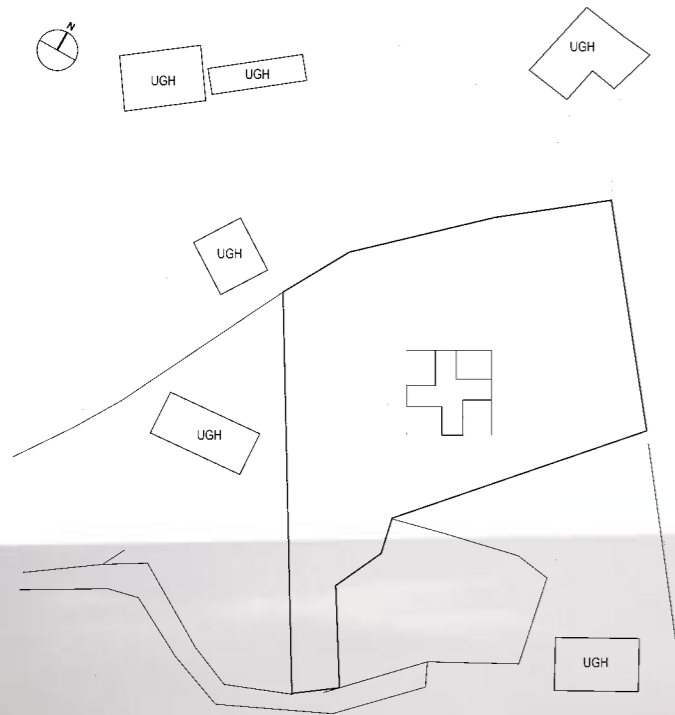
4 Bedroom 3



5 Living room



6 Patio



tall-house on site of Ó Gaora house

UGH location criteria (typical county development plan 2005 – 2011)

Site curtilage	minimum 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres)
Road frontage	minimum 30 metres
Building lines	County Roads and Regional Roads 20 metres
Entrance	Entrance gates shall be recessed 4.5 metres behind the line of roadside hedgerow with side boundaries splayed at an angle of 45 degrees to the public road carriageway. Opportunities for shared use of access or combining access points should be availed of.