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Architects

## Fact Sheet:

### 10 Questions to evaluate your architect's rural design

So you've commissioned your architect and he/she's gone off and come back with his/her first sketch design. Below are a few pointers concerning how you should evaluate his/her design:

#### 1. Does it answer the brief?

The design needs to have all the accommodation you require in a format that would work the way you live. It's important to remember that the *'Plan is the generator'*; each room needs to be the right size and in the right place for you and your site.

#### 2. Does it have a big idea?

Every project needs a good idea that everything else hangs from. Without a *'big idea'* the house is just a collection of rooms. Treated correctly the 'big idea' can influence all design decisions you make throughout the house both inside and out.

#### 3. Is it an appropriate scale?

Contemporary will work in rural settings (Mayo in fact encourages this) but the design will still need to be sensitively scaled.

#### 4. Is it appropriately detailed?

When using traditional windows they should follow *'Golden-section'* proportions of being taller rather than wider. Larger glazing to the south is however encouraged in tune with Passivhaus principles. Also, larger glazed 'separations' between forms also works well.

#### 5. Does it respond to the site?

The design needs to take account of the sun's path throughout the day, wind directions and topography.

#### 6. Does it have a strong form?

Rural Irish architecture is very straightforward; the forms are simple and strong.

#### 7. Are you using the right materials?

Indigenous materials could be simple white painted plaster, natural local stone, metal roofs, blue/black/grey slate, timber possibly in wooded areas.

#### 8. Does it take account of my budget?

The proposed design should take account of your budget. As a rough cost allow €100 per square foot; therefore a 2000 square foot house would cost €200k.

#### 9. Has the architect captured the 'essence' of what I was looking for?

It's important that your architect designs something you would like to live in.

#### 10. Am I prepared to reevaluate my preconceptions in what I'm looking for?

The architect's job is to challenge and push the boundaries; are you prepared to take on board his/her ideas to achieve a better design?

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