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The Mayo County Council gables fronting road planning conundrum

This problem has arisen a few times with confused clients and I hope this sheet explains (in my opinion) what is required:

Firstly, what is the "Mayo County Council gables fronting road planning conundrum"?:

Although it is not specifically mentioned in the Mayo County Council Rural House Design Guide, clients have misunderstood the planning request "to not have gables fronting the road":

How has this come about? The Design Guide is very clear in the concept of adopting a 'narrow plan' approach to one-off dwellings in Mayo; (see excerpt below):

The 'Narrow Plan'

In addition to the pleasing aesthetic proportions this option can provide, the narrow plan form can provide other significant advantages. With the correct orientation, and windows located appropriately i.e. large windows to the South, small windows to the North, a narrow plan form will be rewarded with beneficial passive solar heat gain. This simple measure can ensure that all major rooms can enjoy a bright, pleasant and warm atmosphere whilst significantly reducing heat & energy costs.

Optimum depth – 6 to 7 metres.

Avoid:
Deep plan – benefit of solar gain reduced.

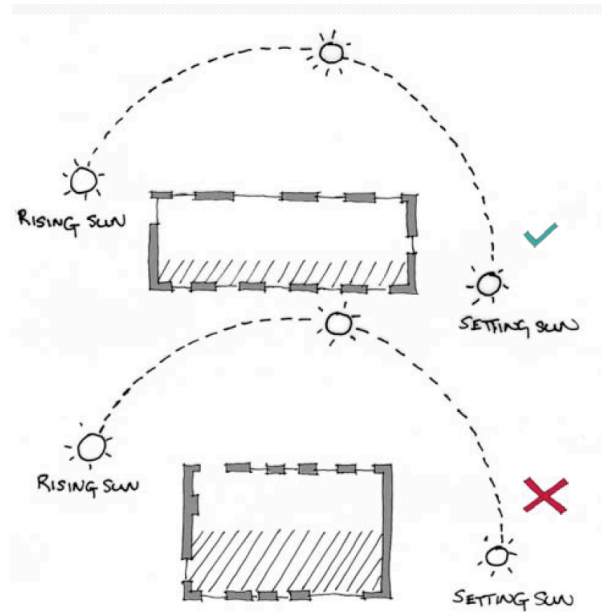
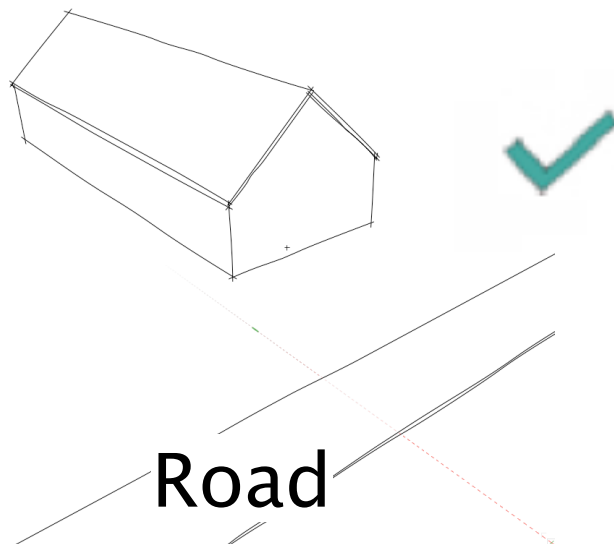


Figure 17

It therefore makes sense that if the orientation of the house is such that the house is orientated East-West and the main road is either on the East or the West then a gable will be fronting the road, which is completely acceptable.



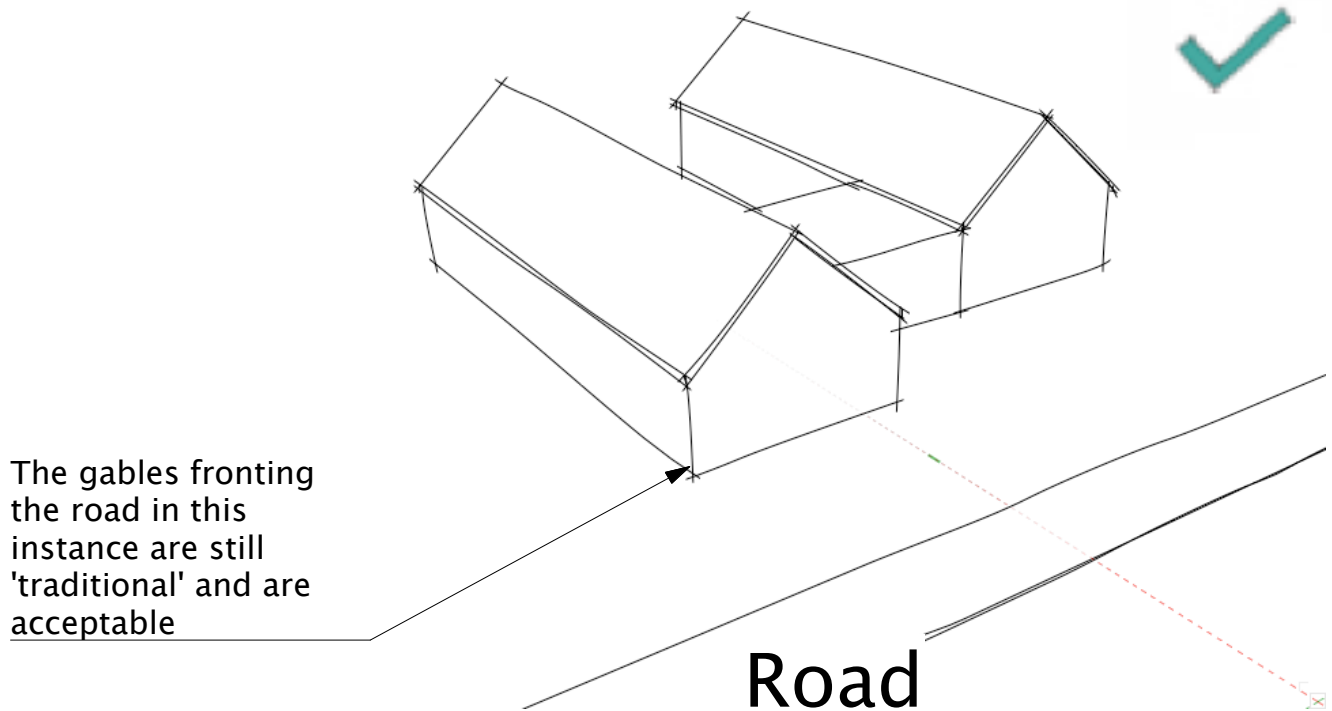
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Equally if a courtyard is formed from similar narrow plan units (as recommended in the design guide), this should also be seen as acceptable:



The problem occurs when the narrow plan is ignored and a point is reached where the connection actually becomes the main 'block' of the house. This is the point at which the 'Gables fronting the road' is unacceptable; ie when the gables are subordinate to the main body of the house.

