

Most rural vernacular buildings which have survived are farm-houses with associated farm out-buildings. The size of an Irish farmyard depended on the number of milking cows kept by the farmer, as shelter needed to be provided for cows during the winter. The yard layout varies from region to region (see maps). The "courtyard layout", often directly at the road, is the most common in Leinster, though the "scattered layout" was common in mountainous areas where sites were less regular.

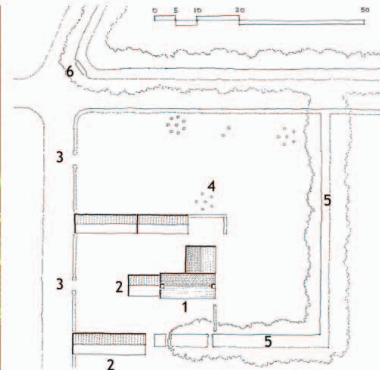
Farmyard buildings such as cow-houses, stables, barns and other stores were often thatched. Smaller outbuildings for pigs, dogs and poultry were usually located close to the dwelling as they were closely associated with the running of the household. Cart houses sometimes had stone arches making use of the Wicklow stonemason's skill. Traditional forged gates, stone piers and cobbled paving also attest to the skill of local craftsmen. Haggards adjoining farmyards sometimes have stone corn stands, walls and stands of trees, which help us to understand the workings of the farm in former less mechanised times.

Old cow-houses had to be cleaned out manually and have generally fallen out of use. Many have been replaced with larger sheds, sometimes making the original form of the farmyard layout difficult to discern. Four examples of forges associated with houses were found, generally at crossroads, which in former times must have been a very widespread type.

Some examples of cottier's houses were also found, located close to the road with no outbuildings.



Farmyard of courtyard layout. Note that the dwelling is rendered for greater protection from the weather.



Layout of a farmyard complex near Blessington

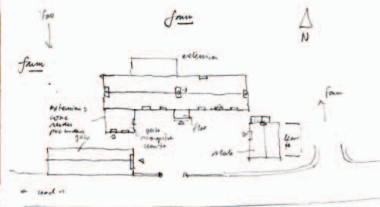
1. Farm house
2. Outbuildings
3. Gate entrances from road
4. Haggard with corn stand remains
5. Stone bank with regular spaced trees
6. Stone walls along the road with a corner seat



Exposed stone outbuildings with corrugated roofs replacing earlier thatch



Vernacular houses often open directly onto the farmyard



Limekilns were widespread before modern cement became widely available



Wrought iron gates show the skill of the local blacksmith



A row of outbuildings, part of a larger farmyard

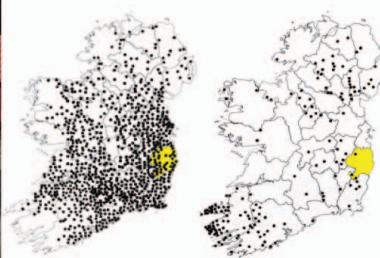


Cut stone piers with a wrought-iron gate



Large slated outbuilding adds enormous character to a sloping farmyard.

Distribution of farmyard layouts in Ireland



Courtyard type

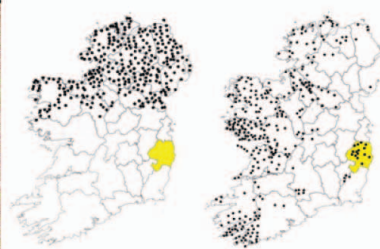
Parallel type



Corn stands formed a raised base for protecting harvested corn from damp before threshing.



Irregular paving is an important authentic feature which should be preserved



Extended type

Scattered type