



*This is [REDACTED] I took her photo for a photography project documenting the homeless of Dublin. Just a reminder that, regardless of the bigger picture urban vs rural, skyscraper vs sprawl arguments that will be debated to set out the National Planning Framework, as of right now people are living on the streets of Ireland and an immediate reaction is needed.*

Ireland faces crucial decisions as to the future of its housing development in the next 20 odd years. I would say that lately we have been failing our brief to develop in a sensible and sustainable way, but this plan offers a golden opportunity to get things right. Traditionally we have been a rural populace, unfortunately there's only so many jobs one can pursue in the countryside, thus we are attracted to cities. Cities are only going to grow larger and more populated, so how can we reconcile this with the traditional Irish image of countryside living?

However, when one thinks on it, what is traditional Irish countryside living? To me it represents a sense of community, of knowing your neighbours, and being at home in your immediate surroundings. So can the old Irish rural community be transported into the cityscape where jobs have brought the populace?

Cities are often cast as impersonal and cold places, but they needn't be. Our current cities are too low rise, while this adds charm, it's probably too inefficient for the modern world. The logical conclusion is to build up. Personally I'd advocate building medium rise apartments (Skyscrapers would be an intimidating leap too far from our current status) to reinvigorate and repopulate inner cities. We cannot keep spreading out onto greenfield sites and ruining our beautiful landscape. The conundrum is that the city is expensive, so we must also provide affordable housing. Then while being cheap, design choices must be made to foster a sense of community within and between these apartments.

Something I would like to see is more pedestrianised areas within the inner city. This is something we are already moving towards but I think it should be pursued further, this primacy of the car has fostered our suburban lifestyle and, while it isn't going away, its role should be reduced in combination with a rise in cheap public transport.