

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **GOWRAN**
County : **KILKENNY**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 16-07-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	14
Landscaping	40	29
The Built Environment	40	26
Litter Control	40	35
Tidiness	20	16
Residential Areas	30	16
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	300	213

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Your Developmental Plan, taking you up to the year 2002, is most impressive - best wishes for it. (There is no mention of the disused Corn Mill, but probably there are enough projects planned without it. It is only referred to here in passing, as the adjudicator found the site attractive). It is also good to read how well you are co-operating with national and local bodies and that you have a FAS scheme in operation. Your map has proved most helpful and the History of St. Mary's Church, purchased locally, is a credit to its authors and publishers. Please note that several apparently critical comments below are intended only as observations and do not affect marking, which will be high.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

A nominal mark is being given under this heading in its first year to those committees which have not had time to act. The suggestion of designating the marshland as a wildlife reserve is absolutely on the right lines. Your proposed tourist trail could include items of natural interest. Be sure to conserve old hedgerows and ditches and to replace timber where necessary.

LANDSCAPING

The well landscaped area between St. Mary's Church and the main street has been admired since it was first laid out. This is one place where hardwoods should be planted by the roadside where gaps have appeared in the course of time. Admirable work was in progress on adjudication day by the R.C. Church and the school. Consider more shrub-planting, as it can give year-round satisfaction.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

St. Mary's Church is the most important architectural site in Gowran, and ongoing restoration and developmental work is both essential and admirable. It is - and has always been - a great disappointment that the interior of this church, with its extraordinary and unique sculpture, is not normally open to the public; perhaps it is the intention to provide such a service under the Development Plan, thereby providing an important visitor attraction. The Castle is presumably in private ownership, and the Corn Mill clearly could not be restored unless a new use were found for it. The two Loughlan business premises are of immense significance in the townscape design, and their good maintenance should be continued. The derelict sites - including the Dome, which has become an eyesore - are an ongoing problem, and it is encouraging to read that it will be addressed in 1997-98. The Green is a visually important urban space; infill building should be encouraged to complete the sense of enclosure. An imaginative housing development here would be vastly superior to anything in the typical housing estate.

LITTER CONTROL

There was very little disposable litter on adjudication day. Congratulations.

TIDINESS

Overall, a tidy village. There was very obvious kerbside weed on the approach to the village centre from Kilkenny. Some derelict or unkempt sites were noted, but the committee is obviously aware of them. Discourage post-and-wire fencing, unplastered concrete block walls, mass-produced commercial signs, and unsightly wires.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Many old street houses are very well kept. The splendid stone cottages at the lower end of the main street were particularly admired, as were several ornamental cottages elsewhere. Houses in Parkmore Terrace are well looked after, but their severe design and layout is inappropriate to Gowran; more recent

housing at Greenview is superior, but the estate ends inconclusively - post and wire fencing is shoddy, and should be replaced by sturdy wood or (ideally) stone boundary walls. Concrete paving slabs appear to have been lying for some time and have collected weeds.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Main street surfaces are good, but this is not the case in side roads, such as at Castle Ellis. Verges and hedges on approach roads on the periphery of the village were trim (but see note about kerbside weed nearer the village, under "Tidiness"). Many very fine stone walls were noted, especially those which were recently repaired. The wall building and repair programme around St. Mary's is exceptionally impressive, and congratulations are due to all those working on the scheme. There are still some unpleasing entries and corners here and there. Extensive white fencing on the church road is of good quality and is well maintained.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A most attractive village, the people of which obviously have a very clear and imaginative idea of how it should be developed, and its unique features promoted.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (12/08/96)

Unfortunately, there was litter visible throughout the town on adjudication day - in front of the green at St. Marys, the Fair Green, along the Kilkenny and Thomastown roads. There seems to be a need for a few more litter bins in the town. The standard of shopfronts has improved dramatically since this adjudicator was in Gowran, but be wary of too many standing signs and wares in the footpaths, as this makes access difficult and clutters up footpaths. An untidy yard of trucks parked on the Dublin road blocked the view to St. Marys Church. Perhaps the owner could be persuaded to do something with this yard. The level of maintenance of landscaped areas throughout the town is very high, but the fairgreen could use some improvements. Many houses in the town appear recently painted and the colourful gardens along the main street were admired - well done!