

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **KILKENNY**
County : **KILKENNY**
Category : **F**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 16-07-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	17
Landscaping	40	34
The Built Environment	40	34
Litter Control	40	28
Tidiness	20	15
Residential Areas	30	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	300	229

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The level of sponsorship and other assistance is immensely impressive, as is the co-operative effort with official bodies and groups. It is difficult to discern from the information given on the entry form, however, which projects are those undertaken over the past year, which are ongoing, and which are projected; and in some cases it has even been difficult to discern these distinctions from inspection of the sites. (For example, "Kenny's Well - work in progress"; such work was not seen, and in fact this very interesting site was particularly scruffy, with a great deal of litter on the bank above the well). When completing the form next year, please differentiate between work achieved and work proposed. Your map this year was fanciful rather than informative; some sites mentioned on the entry form were not marked (Kenny's Well was one of them), several important streets were not named (among them Rose Inn Street and Kieran Street), several important buildings were not marked and no housing estates were marked. Several hundred other committees manage to provide clear and useful maps; when supplying yours next year, please mark all the essential locations, and also all the sites which you would like to have specially considered. Thank you for including your Plan for 1996.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

This is a new heading and it is good to see the Newpark Marsh emphasised. The aquatic life there seemed to be flourishing on adjudication day. Further steps to encourage wild life in watercourses, riversides and wooded areas will be welcomed in future years.

LANDSCAPING

Husbandry of mature trees, the planting and encouragement of young trees, the planting and maintenance of shrubs, and floral displays in both public and private property, are remarkably comprehensive in Kilkenny, and the city and suburbs were looking exceptionally attractive on adjudication day as a result. The planting in the market yard and along Batman's Quay was photographed and will be entered in the national competition. (Unfortunately there was much litter here - see below). Flowers on most roundabouts were splendid, and also in a large number of open spaces, streets and even lanes, giving a real 'lift' to their surroundings. Mowing of lawns was exemplary, in far-flung estates as well as in more populous areas such as the Castle grounds. Landscaping at points mentioned on the entry-form was favourably noted - except at Kenny's Well, which was a disappointment. Environmental work in St. Mary's churchyard will be looked forward to, as it is badly needed and will be a worthwhile project in this central location. A good start seemed to have been made on planting at the riverbank beside the Kilkenny Hotel.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

It is pointless simply to enumerate the works of architectural importance exemplifying over ten centuries of building tradition, as this has been done many times before - except perhaps to add that first-class annual maintenance is obviously of prime value here, and those concerned are again to be congratulated. Among recent restorations, the upgrading of the two Georgian street houses in Parliament Street is a work of major significance. Completion of the work on the west side of the Castle will be eagerly awaited. Regarding business premises, there are so many fine old and new frontages that it is again pointless to list every example. Many are first rate but their attractiveness is not always fully realised - as McGrath's superb hardware shop which just needs a little redecoration. Regarding shopfronts suggested for the national competition, some were photographed and will be entered, and the adjudicator added some further examples; the following criteria apply; as well as unique design and craftsmanship of the frontage, the building must be clean overall, the upper storeys including eaves, roof and stacks must be in prime order, and there must be no mass-produced signage, obtrusive window stickers or unsightly wires.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control was less successful than last year. It may be that the first adjudicator was present on two unusually 'off' days, and so the second adjudicator will be asked to take particular note of this heading. The central streets (except Patrick Street) were reasonably litter free on first adjudication days, taking into consideration the very large numbers of visitors, and most of the residential areas were fairly litter-free. There were some extraordinary discrepancies however: over eighty pieces of disposable litter were counted between John Street Bridge and the Court House via the river bank - this was especially noticeable from the other side of the river. A similar, though not so acute, problem was counted between John's Bridge and Greene's Bridge on the east bank; the worst point was near the Ball Alley where there were beer cans and plastic bags filled with refuse. A quantity of litter was noticed in the handsome stone trough at the foot of the Parade. There was also littering in a street to the south of the Barracks. It would be good to see the city entered for the All-Ireland Best Kept Award, but litter and residential areas are among the priorities in that competition.

TIDINESS

In spite of the above, there is no doubt that Kilkenny is a tidy city, and the majority are clearly working very hard to maintain this enviable condition. Kerbside weed was almost entirely absent except for about a quarter mile on the Castlecomer road and on Hebron road; there are fewer inappropriate signs; boundary walls and fences are for the most part neat. Gradually, the proper authorities might remove the unsightly wirescapes and provide lighting standards more in keeping with the dignified townscape; this expensive operation has made an immeasurable improvement to other town centres.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Older street residences, including innumerable small terraces, are full of character and charm in many different locations. (One example: the curve of well-coloured one-storey houses immediately south of the Butler House). Infill housing here and there is admirable. Among the many housing estates of very varying social grouping, layout and age, briefly visited, and admired for their sense of cohesion - many with fine gardens - were Glendine Height, Newpark Lawn, Ashurst, Talbot's Inch, Clarinwood, Bishop's Meadows, Saville Park, Springmount, James Green, Lacken Drive, Shandon Park, Ard Nore and Duke's Meadows. The older estates between the Bennettsbridge and Waterford Roads are full of charm - and not a speck of litter. there was a mild litter problem in estates off the Tullaroan Road, but not in nearby estates off the Kilmanagh Road. Many estates do not have name plates. The attractively planned estate in a series of courts, Newpark Close, and also that at Hebron Park had litter problems which it is hoped is only temporary.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Main approach roads, with their grass verges, were exceptionally well looked after on first adjudication days. The east side of the Carlow Road roundabout needs improvement however. Roadworks in progress have already improved an unsightly stretch by the Show Grounds. There is still a very scruffy corner site opposite the Newpark marsh, as well as unkempt kerbsides with much litter nearby, just beyond the 1844 boundary south of the Barracks - these might equally well be noted disadvantageously under "Tidiness". Dereliction or near dereliction in Kieran Street was unfavourably noted. Any visit to Kilkenny inevitably points up the despoliation of Green's Bridge, formerly one of the most handsome in Ireland: could this not be changed? Is not a picturesque footbridge from bank to bank the answer, prohibiting pedestrians from crossing the old bridge? A pity to see a concrete block wall on the Bennettsbridge road where the stone walls are magnificent. Street furniture, road surfaces and paving are of a distinctly superior quality; the limestone paving and seating in High Street is nothing short of superb. Signposting of places of interest is excellent.

GENERAL IMPRESSION A superb city in a superbly maintained environment, where certain discrepancies, some of them mentioned above, require attention lest standards disimprove.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (11/08/96)

As always, it was a pleasure to visit Kilkenny City on second adjudication. Despite the fact that the City was thronged with visitors, there was scarcely any litter visible and the main areas of the City were virtually litter free. Bins had been emptied after the weekend and this is commendable. However, there were a few areas of litter along the Castlecomer and Dublin roads, mainly originating from take-aways. The planters throughout the town and the planting of many small greens were very well maintained and set a standard for other large towns to follow. The grass areas along the Dublin road which were mown unevenly in stretches should be mown all the way to the first name sign. As usual, the standard of buildings was high, and hopefully your plans for the remaining problem areas will be realised. Most of the housing estates were well presented and we look forward to your plans for the Newpark Marsh in the coming year.