

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **MOUNTMELICK**
County : **LAOIS**
Category : **D**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 15-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15
Landscaping	40	30
The Built Environment	40	30
Litter Control	40	19
Tidiness	20	11
Residential Areas	30	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	300	193

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

It is unlikely that any Tidy Towns Committee in a centre of this size has obtained so much co-operation from other groups and from official bodies, judging by the answers to the questionnaire. Congratulations too on extending the work outside the normal confines of the Competition (the 30MPH or town-name signs). Account has been taken of the exceptionally wide scope of activities. When supplying your map next year, please make sure that street names are marked, because there seems to be some confusion within the town and there are few street signs. Also, please be sure that your map is comprehensive - for example, there are two cul-de-sac housing estates off the Tullamore road which are not marked on this year's map; the roads were shown correctly as leading to Portlaoise but please specify which should be referred to as Portlaoise Road? Please mark all locations where developments have been completed within the past twelve-month period. Thank you for drawing attention to recent pipe-laying; inevitably it has been detrimental to appearance, but it is assumed that the streets will have been resurfaced shortly.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Cutting of weeds on the river bank was favourably noted. The river is integral to the town and it would be good to see use of it made for signposted nature walks as part of your long term projects.

LANDSCAPING

There are several excellent landscaped areas, some well outside the town which give a pleasing sense of anticipation. The most impressive is at a disused railway bridge; but those at Derryguile, on Manor Road and Rosenallis Road all have attractive planting and, in the latter case, an imitation well. A building site behind the former and unkempt verges and poor fencing opposite the others, should be a priority for tidying-up. A rather similar planted area gives a real 'lift' to Twomey Terrace and there are pleasant flowerbeds, described as 'amenity areas' at Turley's shop and other places. The centre is curiously devoid of municipal planting. The extensive grassed area at Pattison's Estate would be improved by tree planting. Graigue graveyard has been superbly grassed - a difficult task among the headstones - and gravelled; the concreted area is less effective. (An interesting and enjoyable school project might be to make an inventory of headstones - listing dates, styles, types of stone, Irish-Language, names which are still extant locally, etc., with a prize for the earliest discovered.)

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Community School and the Garda Station impressed as the best-kept buildings; a fine un-named stucco building next to the Bank of Ireland had been beautifully painted. The churches are well maintained, as is the Hospital in its attractive grounds. The Sandtex factory was particularly spruce on adjudication day but the Textile factory was in need of freshening up. There are many fine business premises but none of those suggested for entry in the national competition had the unique qualities of design and craftsmanship necessary to qualify. (As well as these two essential elements, there must be absence of mass-produced signs, absence of window stickers, first-class painting and maintenance of upper storeys, gables painted to match frontage, roofs and stacks in good repair.) The best-looking premises on adjudication day was the TSB, with its simple design and flowering baskets. Two derelict sites require attention: a house next to Scoil Phadraig and a building near Turley's shop.

LITTER CONTROL

Mountmellick was comparatively free of disposable litter, except in some of the central streets; it was particularly obtrusive in Parnell Street.

TIDINESS

Kerbside weed on Rosenallis road marred a generally weed-free town centre. Broken post-and-wire

fences in at least six locations promote an untidy aspect to their areas - this type of fencing is short-lived and weed growth is difficult to remove. Eventually, and by degrees, poles and wirescapes might be removed.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There are numerous fine street houses, the majority in good condition, although almost uniformly grey. Among the older dwellings which impressed were: a charming short terrace near Ann Grove stud and brick terraces with dormers on Lord Edward Street. The Crescent in the same street was well maintained, though the front boundary wall needed painting. A feature of Mountmellick is the large number of attractive cottage terraces on almost all the peripheral streets, including two (unmarked) cul-de-sacs of different periods, both of which are full of character. There are several fine suburban houses with good front gardens. Estates which were particularly admired were St. Joseph's, where all the houses were brightly painted and there was good planting; and an un-named circle opposite the Hospital. Pattison's Estate lacks planting at present and the retaining wall of the green was severely damaged in some places. The adjoining Twomey Terrace benefits from the planting referred to above.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Surfacing will not be commented upon until next year. The monument and railings and the replacement of lighting on poles by smart lamp-standards, have improved O'Connell Square greatly. If parking were prohibited and trees and shrubs planted, it would be a really handsome urban precinct. Off-street car parks are in short supply and on-street parking detracts from the townscape. The best approach road is the one from Portlaoise which arrives at the Anne Grove stud; the others are unremarkable.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A once-handsome town, now regaining its dignity and vibrancy.