

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **RATHDOWNEY**
County : **LAOIS**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 18-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16
Landscaping	40	29
The Built Environment	40	28
Litter Control	40	31
Tidiness	20	12
Residential Areas	30	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	300	201

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The support given by local people through collections and by voluntary work is impressive. It is good, too, to read of co-operation from the County Council and FAS. A more legible map would be appreciated in future years - please mark all the locations where projects have been undertaken in the previous twelve months, even if they have not been completed and please name the streets.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The mill pond is an important central amenity. It is good to see it as a duck habitat. Now that the major townscape development has almost been completed at the Square, perhaps attention could be turned to this aquatic site. The island could look splendid if judiciously planted - perhaps a club, organisation or firm would take it over as a special project! Work on the river and its stone boundary walls was proceeding well downstream on adjudication day.

LANDSCAPING

The newly built stone-enclosed beds in the Square are well designed and when flowers are planted will be very attractive - this will be eagerly awaited next year. Concentrate on shrubs and perennials - annuals add significantly to floral displays for a short season but the former are more satisfying in the long term. The square will be further enhanced once the trees on the southern side are established. The planting of trees would help define the grassed space outside the MTG factory premises and on the substantial lawn of the housing estate opposite.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Church of Ireland, the most important architectural feature of the town, is very well maintained. The handsome Catholic Church has well kept grounds, as does the neighbouring school. Scoil Ghairm Oideas is also very well presented. Delaney's is an example of a fine shopfront, while Ryans is an example of one which could be made to look more attractive with painting.

LITTER CONTROL

Though there was some litter to be seen, it did not constitute a problem.

TIDINESS

The principal contribution to untidiness - much more so than litter or projecting signage and wires - was the high incidence of kerbside weed, both in older streets and on outlying roads. This gave a somewhat tousled appearance which could be put right, as in other centres, with comparatively little effort.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Many other houses are very well presented. The adjudicator especially admired a terrace with dormer windows and fine flowering creepers near the town centre. There are also nicely painted streetside terraces on the Errill road - one of the places too where kerbside weed is not prevalent. Newer housing estates were also of a good standard.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Road surfaces are generally poor but the new paving in the square is excellent. Town signs need cleaning or repainting. The approach roads from all directions are variable - well kept frontages exist side-by-side with less well kept; this is particularly noticeable on the approach from Abbeyleix, where first

class stone walls alternate with grimy concrete (such as at the VEC as mentioned by last year), there are some excellent fences but others are of poor quality.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

An attractive town, where a major central improvement has been achieved, and where opportunities exist to extend this kind of initiative.