

Tidy Towns 1997

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **VIRGINIA**
County : **CAVAN**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 12-06-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39	38
The Built Environment	40	28	25
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	21
Litter Control	40	27	27
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	19	16
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	21	22
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	205	199

Virginia, County Cavan

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Many thanks for your extensive submission and comprehensive responses to the questionnaire. You have clearly identified both the valuable architectural and natural heritage that Virginia has to offer. Virginia Development Association is obviously a very active and busy group of people! The five year plan commissioned will help to identify the areas which need attention and give a more structured approach to your evidently enthusiastic and successful plans for the town. You obviously have very good support from the local business community and a good working relationship with FAS and Cavan County Council. Try to establish closer links with North-West Tourism as this is important for a town like Virginia with all it so obviously has to offer the visitor. Plans to develop the bog on the Baileboro Road is a useful suggestion in terms of wildlife. The adjudicator appreciates the problems you have with traffic management within the town. You are in a strong position in the national competition and your future plans should ensure that Virginia does better still in the years to come.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The support you get from the local business communities is evident in the presentation of the commercial buildings within the town. Even an obviously empty bright pink shop entering the town from the Kells Road was freshly painted. Healy's was admired as a beautifully restored shop front and the hanging baskets on Mathews and Brady's were admired although those to Harry's Bar had yet to come into their full glory. Issues which still need addressing are those of inappropriate shop front furniture such as curved canopies, projecting globe lighting to pubs and too many stickers in shop windows, which give a cluttered appearance. The old stone sawmill by the bridge is a most attractive asset to the town. The old Catholic church on main street with its plans for development as a theatre will be a great asset to the town. The Garda Station looked especially fresh in a pink with wine trim to the plinths etc. The garden centre looked very colourful. The health centre looked fine but could be freshened up before next year. The modern church with its dominant slate roof was admired, particularly for its magnificently pristine landscaped grounds. The school was very fresh with its planted beds to the lay-by on the roadside, but the landscaping to the school grounds themselves looked a bit bleak and should be softened somewhat perhaps by planting trees. The barrier to the roadside should be painted and was bent over. The Courthouse at the top of the town is an attractive building in green with its high arched windows either side of the fan lit door. However, it looked in need of freshening up.

LANDSCAPING

The many new trees planted along approach roads will be a valuable asset to future generations of the town. The yew trees

marching up either side of the stone boundary wall to the Church of Ireland looked quite magnificent, as did the church itself. However, the grounds to the front were badly in need of some attention especially since the church is in such a prominent location at the axis to the top of Main Street. The subtle planting to the nameplate signs on the approach roads was admired. The new trees by the stone cottages on the Cavan Road are coming along nicely.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Virginia is indeed fortunate in terms of its natural assets such as the river, nearby lake, plenty of mature trees, extensive grounds and gardens. Wild flowers were visible on the approach roads and the noisy sound of rooks was to be heard, particularly in the vicinity of the Church of Ireland. The river is a strong natural feature in the town and could perhaps be incorporated more fully into the town's activities. Perhaps develop a riverside walk from the handball alley (which needed painting although cheerful yellow bog irises were evident) along to the stone mill to the other side of the town. You should contact local experts and national bodies such as ENFO and Conservation Volunteers of Ireland. They will give you information to help you to establish an environmental programme, identify local habitats, compile a species lists of the flora and fauna in the locality and compose a wildlife management plan.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control within the town was generally quite good. Very little litter was evident along Main Street. However, some was evident by the bridge leading down to the riverside and within the grounds of the Church of Ireland in its dominant position at the top of the main street.

TIDINESS

The overall impression given by the town of Virginia on adjudication day was one of great neatness and order due to its presentation in all categories. However, one or two issues still need to be addressed; these include the broken down timber fence on the Longford Road beyond the Park Hotel, one or two tin sheds such as that beside the stone cottages on the Longford Road and the extremely prominent tin roofed out-buildings facing the visitor on approaching the town on the Dundalk Road all of which should be freshly painted. Pavements within the town along the Main Street were in need of attention as they are in quite bad order.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The standard of presentation in this category was quite high. Obviously local residents within the town and along approach roads take great pride in the appearance of their properties. Stone cottages throughout the town were admired and those on the Kells road approaching the town could be as attractive as the rest if developed further. The stone cottages with the rustic timber porches on the Longford Road are particularly attractive and

unique. Housing estates such as Lakeview on the Kells Road were nicely finished with a stone boundary wall. The houses along the Longford Road were well maintained. Some boundary walls along the Kells Road appeared to be quite grubby. A gable wall of one house along the Dundalk Road badly needed freshening up as did one set of steps at the raised houses on this road, which were shown up quite prominently by those to the other side which were extremely fresh. There is a boundary wall by the bridge which should be freshly white-washed. Individual gardens that were admired were: the pretty cottage with window boxes full of pansies and tubs each side of its door and the beautiful gardens with their abundance of purple rhododendrons on both the Longford and Cavan Roads which gave a welcome splash of colour. One in particular was greatly admired for its use of indigenous bog irises. A bungalow with a bright yellow door on the Longford Road was particularly admired for its garden which extended to the roadside. A broken boundary wall at a stone cottage on the Kells Road is badly in need of repair.

ROAD, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Some work is needed in this category as in general the approach roads were quite wild and overgrown. The Kells Road was quite overgrown and the kerbing to the pavement was broken. The trees along the Longford Road were admired, in particular the magnificent yew trees either side of the Church of Ireland. Wild daisies at the stone boundary wall of the Park Hotel were quite charming. The speed limit sign on this road was brand new; however, the town nameplate sign was quite grubby and scratched and the concealed entrance sign was virtually obscured by long grass due to overgrowth along this road. The junction sign also badly needed painting. Along the Cavan Road an empty site by the speed limit sign had a pile of concrete blocks which looked quite untidy. There was also a grubby advertising placard for one of the hotels within the town. The nameplate sign also badly needed washing. The junction sign approaching the Kells Road was stained with rust. The nameplate sign on the Dundalk Road needed painting and the directional signs looked quite grubby.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The gracious plantation town of Virginia set in the wooded northern shore of Lough Ramor exudes a relaxed charm. Its wide curving Main Street sweeps round from the tall Church of Ireland at the head of the town to an old stone mill and bridge over the river at the far side. It is a magnificently laid out town plan with its central church and elegant yew trees at the top of the axis to the main street and visible to travellers approaching the town from all directions. There is a heritage of stone cottages, a few unspoilt traditional and indeed restored shop fronts and many natural assets. The Virginia Development Association has taken a simple approach to the presentation of the town, nothing is forced and this results in a simple elegant charm.