

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BANTRY**
County : **CORK**
Category : **D**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 07-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39	--
The Built Environment	40	29	--
Landscaping	40	31	--
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	--
Litter Control	40	29	--
Tidiness	20	10	--
Residential Areas	30	21	--
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	26	--
General Impression	10	7	--
TOTAL MARK	300	211	--

Bantry, Co Cork

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The introduction to your 3/5 Year Plan makes welcome reading. The document would be even more useful if objectives were listed year-by-year, as has been done in other centres; this method has proved to be effective in setting annual objectives and monitoring progress. Next year, please mark on your map all sites where improvements have been accomplished over the previous twelve months, and give names to housing estates and suburban roads. Thank you for the photographs; further pictures were taken where entire buildings were not shown (see note under The Built Environment below). Achievements, as well as plans for the future, are most impressive.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The facade of the R.C. Church is most striking, and the forecourt was well presented on adjudication day. The Church of Ireland tower makes an important architectural focus; it was a pleasure to find its fine interior sculpture and stained-glass on view. The buildings on either side of the Bantry House gateway certainly need attention; it is good to hear that the superb old warehouse (present Funeral Home) is to be developed as apartments - this will be greatly looked forward to. The yellow background to the Maxol garage needed repainting, or altering. The weatherstained concrete of the Library needs cleaning. The nearby West Cork Services Centre and Spillane's Supermarket are superbly painted. The Hospital in its pleasant gardens looked well on adjudication day. The Post Office is splendidly presented, and the Enterprise Centre is very smart. The reinstatement of the charming cottage (Pond Lodge?) is eagerly awaited. Some shopfronts which appealed to the adjudicator - in addition to those suggested on the entry form - will be considered for the various awards. It is worth noting that those of exceptional design and workmanship, where upper storeys, gables, roofs and stacks are presented to the same standard, and where there is an absence of plastic signage, PVC glazing bars, bathroom-type tiles and window stickers, will have the advantage.

LANDSCAPING

A number of nicely planted spaces throughout the town were much admired. Planting along the Harbour/Cork Road looks very well but cannot be adequately assessed until vegetation has had a chance to establish itself. The repaving, provision of new street furniture, sculpture, fountain and tree planting in Wolfe Tone Square, is a major project and in the view of this adjudicator a very successful one; it is being included under this heading rather than under Roads, Streets etc. The grounds of the West Lodge Hotel are pleasantly landscaped.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

It is good to find that real work has been done under this heading. Aquatic birds looked very happy on the pond; sympathetic

development here was admired. The walks programme produced by Bantry Tourism Association is first class - there was only time to take note of those in the vicinity of the town. The inclusion of archaeological sites is imaginative.

LITTER CONTROL

There was very little litter on the main streets at the time of adjudication, but a considerable amount was visible along the kerbs of the Glengarriff road.

TIDINESS

Untidy signs of various kinds are proliferating, especially on the Glengarriff road. Hotels, B&Bs and other tourist facilities might subscribe to a single design characteristic of Bantry, where only the premises, name and service would alter on each. Kerbside weed was noted on the Glengarriff road, and also opposite the commercial premises on the Cork road, and on the road below Gilhooly Terrace. Poisoned kerbside weed looking just as untidy as when growing was seen on the approach to the Enterprise Centre. Rusty corrugated iron roofs were visible near the Statoil garage and off Blackrock road. None of the above were seen as major blemishes, but they do combine to create a poor impression.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Older town houses are generally well painted. Small terraced houses in the vicinity of High Street, Chapel Street and Blackrock Road are attractive, though not yet in danger of becoming quaint. Suburban homes at Slip Lawn are very well kept indeed; the estate does not deserve its poor road surfacing. An unnamed new terrace on the Glengarriff road looked smart. Unnamed new(ish) hilltop houses overlooking Wolfe Tone Square are most pleasantly sited, with well trimmed grassed spaces. Keyes Terrace, with its recent paving, gravelling and planting, and the delightful Gilhooly Terrace, as well as housing under construction nearby - much of it with traditional dormers and stone boundary walls (Beacon Hill) - form part of what, with good husbandry, could be the most attractive and heterogeneous neighbourhood in town.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Paving and road surfacing is mainly good. Car parks were particularly well kept at the time of adjudication; the gravel car park at the Armada Centre is a most welcome alternative to the ubiquitous tarmac. Post and wire fencing here was in need of renewal, ideally, this should be replaced by a stone wall, or otherwise by a hedge in whatever grows well in the vicinity (hawthorn or escallonia perhaps). Very good new stone walls impressed at the Harbour/Cork Road, though part of the Bantry House estate wall requires repair. The backs of some houses, e.g. Blackrock Terrace, need attention. New kerb laying was seen in progress at the side road next to West Lodge Hotel. A wonderful rusticated stone archway on this road might be restored as a viewing point later in your 5 Year Plan. It is good to read that the Plan envisages ducting of cables and the provision of more appropriate

lamp-standards outside Wolfe Tone Square, which has already been splendidly improved. The Caravan park is reasonably well kept, but there are unkempt areas adjacent.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

An exceptionally handsome and picturesquely-situated town, regaining visual and environmental confidence quite rapidly.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (9/8/97)

This adjudicator was pleased to see the attractive town of Bantry's return to the competition after its three year absence. The remark made by the first adjudicator in respect of the confidence shown by the town in its presentation is whole-heartedly agreed with! One or two minor areas of detail in terms of presentation were noted, however. The use of curved canopies should be discouraged; these should be replaced with traditional fabric awnings. The buildings throughout the town were generally quite fresh on the day. Of particular note was G.W. Bigg's & Co. in pink with bright red trims to windows and keystones. However, on a negative note some flaky gables were noted which should be freshly painted before next year. Problem areas noted by the first adjudicator including the entrance area to Bantry House, adjacent garage and staining to the very bold dramatic modern statement that is the Library were still a problem on second adjudication day. Bantry has a fine heritage of traditional shop fronts which could be restored to their former glory with a fresh coat of paint. The attractive Methodist church on the Square was admired. Be sure not to neglect back areas, yards and out-buildings when presenting the town. The rusty tin roofed sheds opposite the catholic church create a bad impression to the visitor. Signage should also be considered, those directional signs at the town square were quite rusty on second adjudication day.