

Tidy Towns 1997

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **SKIBBEREEN**
County : **CORK**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 11-06-97

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 1997 | Mark Awarded 1996 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Overall Developmental Approach | 50 | 42 | 38 |
| The Built Environment | 40 | 31 | 30 |
| Landscaping | 40 | 29 | 28 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 30 | 21 | 20 |
| Litter Control | 40 | 28 | 28 |
| Tidiness | 20 | 13 | 13 |
| Residential Areas | 30 | 21 | 21 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 40 | 29 | 29 |
| General Impression | 10 | 7 | 7 |
| TOTAL MARK | 300 | 221 | 214 |

Skibbereen, Co Cork

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Your 3-Year Development Plan is impressive, though it is not possible to learn from it exactly which projects are scheduled for which year after 1997; however, substantial inroads have already been made in the current year. The support provided by local business and official bodies to this Committee is also impressive, as is the beneficial effect of the FAS scheme. Your map proved to be of great interest for study (especially as this adjudicator has been familiar with Skibbereen for over 40 years) - but it is far too large to use in the street (on a blustery day!) especially when each site number has to be identified from separate documentation, and streets are not named on it. Would it be possible to provide a simple street plan as well next year? Extensive infrastructural work - the major sewerage scheme, the realignment of the Baltimore/Castletownsend intersection - rather serve to inhibit improvements, but a great deal has been done nonetheless. The initiative is splendid, and we will probably see a much more obvious change by next summer.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Among the important buildings which continue to be exceptionally well maintained are the Churches, the West Cork Arts Centre, Eastern Command HQ, the Garda Station, the two major Hotels and the Gael Scoil. The Town Hall is much improved. The warehouse beside the Ilen bridge makes a valiant attempt to show itself to good advantage; one would love to see the rehabilitation of all handsome warehouses. The factory buildings on the Marsh road are well presented, as is Star Commercial Systems (probably outside the area of the competition, but deserving of favourable mention). Business premises mentioned in the questionnaire were photographed, as well as some others which appealed; it is worth remembering that any with plastic or mass-produced projecting sills, PVC glazing bars on upper windows, poorly kept roofs and stacks and gables not painted to match the frontage, are eliminated at an early stage. Some less well kept premises were seen, but they were in a minority.

LANDSCAPING

Good work was noted on the Clonakilty road, in O'Donovan Rossa Park, at Riverdale and at the playground on the Dunmanway road. Colourful municipal planting brightened a number of corners (such as beside the Garda station) and delightful private planting (such as at the Shell garage and on countless business premises) was also seen. [No 5 could not be found - it may have become subsumed in building development]. The surroundings of Rossa College and the Sports Centre were equally attractive. Some hanging baskets seen in previous years were missed, probably due to ongoing site works.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

A heron was observed consuming an eel luncheon in the stream by

the car-park - an event which may be taken as an encouraging symbol of the healthy bird and aquatic life right in the town centre. The pathway along the Llen from Riverdale is a fine initiative, and obviously will be further developed. Illustrative boards might be included, identifying flora and fauna.

LITTER CONTROL

There was some disposable litter here and there in the central streets, but it was not appreciable. Congratulations.

TIDINESS

On adjudication day grass clippings had not been removed at some locations on the north side of the town. The frontage of Carberry Pre-Cast was untidy, as was an un-named adjacent premises, and the area in front of the Garden Centre was not as neat as one might expect. There are a number of other less than tidy sites, some of them mentioned by last year's adjudicator. Some of those mentioned last year have improved since then and the overall feeling is of a tidy town. Again, the completion of major schemes will help enormously.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Older street houses are almost invariably well kept, and the West Cork tradition of strong colouring has been effectively continued in more modern terraces. A cul-de-sac of two beautifully painted opposing terraces of small houses, was greatly admired. The large hill-top estates looked well on adjudication day; fairly recent road-surfacing helped. Colourful modern homes in an un-named estate by the Llen suffered from uncompleted landscaping and some weed growth. By contrast, the Riverdale estate nearby was very well kept. Substantial private homes beside and near the Baltimore road, many with fine gardens, were admired. The Orchards, under construction, looked very promising.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The approach roads from Clonakilty, Bantry, Dunmanway and Baltimore are the most impressive, though broken concrete fencing on the latter needs attention. Approaches from Baltimore via the river and from Castletownsend are not quite so well maintained. The street leading up to the hilltop estate, the continuation of Bridge street towards Riversdale, part of Mardyke road, and the car park at the Mart are all poorly surfaced. Otherwise, surfacing and paving is good. The absence of wires and poles in North street has been favourably commented on many times. Wall building at the car park on the continuation of Bridge street is excellent.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A well kept town in which a great deal of developmental and maintenance work is inhibiting a full appreciation this year, but bodes excellently for the future.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (8/8/97)

The town of Skibbereen generally looked well presented and neat on the second adjudication day. However, closer inspection revealed a

few problem areas. The Skibbereen Tyre Centre sported a very weedy forecourt area and its large out of scale plastic sign was quite faded. The South of Ireland Petroleum facility should try to screen its storage tanks more effectively. There was evidence of fly posting along approach roads. Some of the houses on the Clonakilty approach to the town needed a fresh coat of paint. There are still quite a few curved plastic canopies which should be removed and replaced with traditional fabric awnings. Don't forget to paint gable walls along the main streets of the town as these are quite prominent as the buildings step up and down. The buildings along the main streets generally looked quite cheerful and sported some colourful bunting. Pierce Hickey's in its prominent location at the junction of Main Street looked particularly cheerful. The road works in progress at the roundabout to the town centre were noted and presumably planting will be completed when this work is finished. The use of traditional vertical slating and stone boundary walls to the new housing development on Townsend Street proved interesting and appropriate. Litter control was generally quite good on the day, although some litter was apparent along Townsend Street at the junction with Main Street.