

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **ROBERTSTOWN**  
County : **KILDARE**  
Category : **B**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 18-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	22	21
The Built Environment	40	19	18
Landscaping	40	25	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	20	19
Litter Control	40	25	24
Tidiness	20	10	9
Residential Areas	30	19	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	23	22
General Impression	10	5	5
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>161</b>

## **Robertstown, Co. Kildare**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Thank you for your completed questionnaire. The adjudicators were impressed with the improvements made to date. The Canal Hotel was again looking well this year. It is nice to see efforts being made to improve dereliction. However, the Garda Station was disappointing. The adjudicators look forward to the submission of your detailed five year plan. This plan should be simple and realistic, covering 3 - 5 pages, together with a map outlining areas for improvement or particular problem areas. Try to get greater input from your local authority, business community, residents and schools. Visibility of the Irish language was an emphasis in this year's adjudication, as was accessibility for the elderly and disabled.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Every town in Ireland is different - each has its own unique history, topography, buildings and even use of building materials - but the most important town in Ireland is your own. Much of the overall impression of any town is dictated by its buildings. Each building is unique in its own way and collectively these buildings contribute to the unique character of the village. The best approach is for a good mix of commercial and residential enhance by sympathetic landscaping of open spaces and appropriate use of building materials. In considering the main aspects of buildings, there are two factors to be kept in mind, one is the quality of the individual structure, i.e., its presentation and materials used and secondly is the building in its overall context. Insensitive changes to individual buildings can destroy the overall character of the street. Buildings on corners, or at the end of streets assume greater civic design importance because of their location. Where such buildings are modified insensitively, or allowed to fall into disrepair, it can have serious visual implications. In Robertstown this year, the pump was newly painted, which is good to see: Meld's was also newly painted: the Barge Inn looked well on day of adjudication. It is good to see that derelict buildings have been knocked down; Mullaney's shop front also had been upgraded and the school had an excellent presentation. Two areas that need to be tackled are the Canal Stores and the Garda Station - it was very disappointing to see that the Garda Station has been vandalised. Try also to replaster the wall to the left of the Canal Hotel by the former derelict buildings as this takes from the overall appearance on the approach roads. Overall, a good performance under this section where improvements are being made.

### **LANDSCAPING**

The area to the front of the hotel adjacent to the canal was very well presented this year, as was all along by the canal; well done. It is great to see new bollards, which are being developed up from the bridge up to the slip way. The smaller ones adjacent to the bridge may be somewhat inappropriate, yet the adjudicators look

forward to seeing these completed for next year. Try to landscape the area around by the water pump. An excellent presentation was noted at the primary school - this deserves a special commendation in terms of the flowers. The appearance, maintenance and presentation of the public spaces (including amenity areas, open spaces, footpaths and streams etc.) are a vital aspect of civic design quality. Poor presentation of public areas can take away from high standards achieved by individual properties.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

Conserving nature is a new venture for many towns and can appear daunting at first. The adjudicators recognise that environmental programmes can take time to get up and running and even longer to assess their success. This section of the competition requires an involvement of all groups, including schools in the village. The emphasis is on the conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats and the environment. Woodlands, rivers, ponds, hedgerows, open spaces, graveyards and walls are important habitats. The committee needs to identify the habitats in their area and then determine the appropriate actions to conserve and enhance these habitats. Guidelines in the Tidy Towns book offer other suggestions as to the type of initiatives you might undertake. Is there a local wildlife expert, or a member of the community with experience in this area, that your committee can draw on? In preparing an environmental programme for the village, there should be a year-round emphasis on environmental protection and promotion involving all members of the community and providing access for all. The next step is to identify what habitats are in your area - are there woodlands, wetlands, grasslands, or other habitats such as urban spaces, cemeteries, walls etc. Prepare a survey and map, showing the areas of wildlife importance and areas of future importance, e.g. school grounds and gardens, derelict sites etc. Other steps involved in the preparation of the environmental programme for Robertstown would include identification of the flora and fauna in the area, preparation of a wildlife management plan as part of the area development plan and identification of tasks to be carried out including conservation projects, wildlife gardens, areas of conservation, access, tree planting, information areas etc. This must be carried out in sympathy with the local landscape and must not be overwhelming visually, or environmentally. Robertstown has an excellent potential for expanding in this category, with the canal being a central feature of the village and an extensive marsh area adjacent to the hotel. It was nice to see ducks in the canal on the day of adjudication.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

A very good presentation was noted under this category this year. However, there was some litter evident in some residential areas and outside the Credit Union. Try to maintain a vigilance in this area as you seem to be getting to grips with the litter problem.

## **TIDINESS**

Robertstown was generally tidy on day of adjudication. The

adjudicators look forward to the painting of the bollards at the junction by the canal.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

A new house was noted near the pump. An excellent effort with flowers was noted at a premises near the bridge. At St. Brigid's Terrace, weeds and some litter was evident; new cobble locking was noted but resurfacing is badly needed around this park. At Fr. Murphy Park, nice shrubbery was noted at the entrance; try to paint the seating here. New kerbing and planting was noted at the turning area - try to plant trees here also. The grassed area also needed to be cut at time of adjudication. A new residential development was noted opposite Fr. Murphy Park; this is not yet complete but the adjudicators look forward to seeing this finished next year, incorporating appropriate landscaping.

## **ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS**

The new 30 MPH signs were noted on the approach from Lowtown. The new footpath and kerbing, together with bollards, will look well when completed. Approaching from Kilmeague, the Robertstown sign needs to be replaced and grass could be neater on both sides. A new junction island was also noted with cobble locking near the Garda Station. Approaching Robertstown from Naas, this was an excellent presentation with lovely flowers. Further in, grass verges could be cut back. The pump was noted on the right hand side with a nice floral display, and new kerbing was noted on the left hand side. It is also good to see Wildlife Sanctuary signs on the right hand side.

## **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

Overall, there was a very good impression at Robertstown this year. Improvements have been made and it is encouraging to see so many developments. You have, potentially, a beautiful village, and one that just needs careful consideration. You have shown that you can improve the appearance. Try to complete one project at a time. The adjudicators look forward to further improvements next year.