

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **DUNDALK**
County : **LOUTH**
Category : **F**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 28-06-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	35
The Built Environment	40	26	25
Landscaping	40	27	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	17
Litter Control	40	21	24
Tidiness	20	12	12
Residential Areas	30	18	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30	28
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	194	191

Dundalk, County Louth

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The presentation of information about Dundalk, maps, photographs and the comprehensive approach to planning and developments is commendable. The "Improve Our Town" competition is a really worthwhile approach to achieving results. Dundalk is a large town and it is understandable that with much development taking place all areas cannot be expected to be at their best all the time. This is inevitable with the larger towns especially in the present economic climate as much progress is being made in industry, buildings and roadways. The proposals to redevelop the Old Carrolls Factory site on Church Street and CIE site are interesting and will enhance the town and facilities. Planning for car parking and pedestrianisation is very important as many of the streets were never intended for heavy traffic use. The pedestrianised areas in Dundalk are very much appreciated.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The public buildings in Dundalk are generally very well presented. This is important as they form the focal point for the town. The Courthouse, County Library, and Museum, Town Hall, Seatown Castle and St. Patrick's Cathedral all play a major part in the overall architectural fabric of Dundalk. The importance of the presentation of these buildings cannot be over emphasised. These set the tone for the atmosphere of Dundalk. Clanbrassil street area has developed very well and has become an attractive street more geared for pedestrians. The huge array of shop fronts in Dundalk are a study in themselves. The combination of new and old shop fronts gives interest as long as quality is prominent in all types. The post office, Gonnell & Co, Corbetts and Austin Reids are particularly attractive with their carriage entrances very well presented. Paved areas and seating areas opposite the Courthouse provide the sort of atmosphere needed in any major town. Imaginative arrangement of levels, seating, stone and paving add to the impact of this site and help create that sense of "The Square". Derelict buildings always present problems but hopefully these are transitory and evolve to be incorporated into the developments. Litter, lighting and street signs all contribute to the success of a street or town.

LANDSCAPING

It is clear that good efforts have been made in the landscaping of Dundalk by the Dundalk Urban District Council. A good tree and shrub planting programme has been in operation. The IDA industrial lands are very well presented. Areas of the scale of these sites could take large group planting of native trees. Grass and trees make a beautiful landscape when planned well and cared for. The mature trees near the town centre add so much atmosphere and make one realise that any opportunity to plant large growing trees in town centre spaces should be availed of. Numerous bedding displays around the town add colour. So far however bedding is slow to develop in this season which prompts

the idea of combining more shrubs with bedding schemes so that there would be a body of foliage always present. Street tree planting is also very important particularly in the pedestrian zones.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

An interesting study could be commissioned to schools or third level colleges to identify the variety of wildlife habitats in the vicinity of Dundalk. This would be a very revealing study. An inventory could then be built up and publication produced as a result. Attention is also warranted to the more practical and immediate aspects such as the retention of wall vegetation, trees on building sites and changes in usage of sites. Keeping old hedges and trees on industrial sites is very important. Nice examples of such retention was noted on the Dundalk By pass at the IDA industrial area.

LITTER CONTROL

All the measures have been noted in the entry submission. It is understandable that a town of this size has a litter battle. Litter control is a seven day week job. Unfortunately litter was particularly bad around Take Away shops and at the Bank of Ireland pass machine in Park Street. Also at the Courthouse and open space opposite the Court.

TIDINESS

Overall Dundalk has a tidy appearance. As work projects become completed the standard will no doubt rise. Weed control is well under control in the town.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The housing estates around Dundalk are fairly well maintained. Tree planting and larger sized shrub borders are two issues that could be addressed in almost all areas. The use of native trees is also encouraged. Retaining existing trees and hedges on building sites should be a priority as these can then become important features of the new estates. Containers must be well filled to appear well. Containers usually look best on hard surfaces rather than placing them on grass verges. Individual gardens in estates contribute enormously to the overall appearance of the estates. Every encouragement should be given to residents to maintain their gardens well.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The new by-pass is very impressive with the extensive grass verges and some tree planting. There is still enormous scope for further tree planting schemes. Dense planting in large drifts would create an attractive scene. In general the approach roads to Dundalk are well presented. As housing estates can be enhanced by individual residences so also can approach roads be enhanced or detracted by factory sites and business premises. Sites for sale often become neglected. The Texaco and Carrolls sites on the Dublin road are attractively presented in contrast to the area adjoining the Hospital Launderette.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Dundalk has improved in appearance over the years. The pedestrian is now given a much better opportunity to enjoy the town. Housing estates are a great improvement and the by-pass takes pressure from the town centre. Litter, traffic and new developments are areas that influence the presentation of Dundalk and need attention.