

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **ATHENRY**
County : **GALWAY**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 23-06-98

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1998	Mark Awarded 1997
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	31
The Built Environment	40	26	25
Landscaping	40	26	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	20	20
Litter Control	40	26	26
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	21	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	21	21
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	198	193

Athenry, County Galway

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Your Community Improvements 3-Year Plan is impressive. Not a great deal that is immediately visible in the town seems to have been achieved since last year, but it is clear from the document that we may expect very radical improvements in the future. The prosperity of Athenry is matched by the increased traffic; a traffic control plan is very badly needed in the absence an existing by-pass. It is not possible to enjoy this charming town, with its many interesting and picturesque interconnecting spaces, while the motor vehicle rules over the comings and goings of the pedestrian citizen. The maps in the Plan were particularly useful on adjudication day, thank you - and also very interesting.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The modern Church is beautifully maintained. The best-kept secular public building is the superb Railway Station. Of the buildings of the distant past, the Castle is the most impressive (the concrete structure adjoining is inappropriate). One looks forward to improvements to the Dominican Abbey and St Mary's Collegiate Church, and the North Gate will be receiving its clean-up this year as shown in the Plan. It would be wonderful if some time in the future the whole town wall could be restored - if so, it would be unique in Ireland: a Millennium project? The Co-Op buildings are very well looked after - a lesson to those who assert that industrial premises can not be tidy. Most shops are well presented, though there are still too many mass-produced signs. The painting of the Madden house mentioned in the Plan did not appear to have been done by adjudication day.

LANDSCAPING

The Castle grounds and the park stretching to Bridge Street are first class, except for the weedy path through its centre. Some hard work had been done on grass-cutting in the Priory graveyard by adjudication day. Young trees were noted in several places. The two planted 'islands' at Prospect were very favourably noted, but are not remarkable enough to be considered for the national Landscape Award; the same is true of the pleasant planting at the Station bridge. Incidental planting throughout the town adds piquancy. One tub full of weeds was noted - better not to have a tub on display if it can not be planted.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The remarks of last year's adjudicator are appropriate.

LITTER CONTROL

Your litter awareness scheme may already be having an effect, though there was sporadic litter here and there on adjudication day. A black spot is just inside the gate of the Priory. Several hefty fines, well publicised, might do the trick.

TIDINESS

Projecting signs on buildings help to create untidy street perspectives. There are a number of derelict buildings, the most obtrusive being directly beside the Priory graveyard. (The removal of wirescapes and the erection of lamp standards more in keeping with the heritage nature of the town might be a project for the next 3-year plan.)

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Your competitions under this heading might be taken up to advantage in other towns. There are many charming older town houses in Athenry; PVC glazing bars should be discouraged - in fact, they should not be allowed in a Heritage-designated town. Many suburban roads and estates are not marked on the map nor do they have name plates, but among those identified, Caheroyn is an unobtrusively pleasing residential area, and Ard Aoibhinn and adjoining estates are especially well presented, with many attractive gardens. Kerbside weed was prevalent in one of the Caheroyn roads - very little time and energy would be needed by residents to attend to this.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Surfaces are reasonably good. The best kept approach road is the one from Turloughmore. The GAA street frontage is well looked after, as is the car park near the North Gate. There are still a number of unsightly open yards.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

From a distance Athenry appears to be an ancient city growing out of great trees - and indeed that is what it is. The conservation of the man-made and the natural environment go hand-in-hand, and clearly that is what this very enterprising committee has identified.