

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BALLINASLOE**
County : **GALWAY**
Category : **E**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 19-06-98

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 1998 | Mark Awarded 1997 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Overall Developmental Approach | 50 | 32 | 32 |
| The Built Environment | 40 | 26 | 25 |
| Landscaping | 40 | 26 | 25 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 30 | 21 | 21 |
| Litter Control | 40 | 24 | 25 |
| Tidiness | 20 | 13 | 13 |
| Residential Areas | 30 | 22 | 21 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 40 | 27 | 25 |
| General Impression | 10 | 6 | 7 |
| TOTAL MARK | 300 | 197 | 194 |

Ballinasloe, County Galway

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Plans for the future are impressive, especially the Litter Abatement Plan of two years ago. Next year, please mark on your map all sites where improvements have taken place (or have been ongoing) over the past twelve months; please show all housing estates, and please be sure that all streets and estates are named. It is unlikely that we will miss any, but one wishes to be certain.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The principal buildings are well maintained - especially the Railway Station, which is one of the best in the country, the superb Hospitals, B Company Army HQ, Caoineas, the Du Barry factory, Garbally College, the schools but especially Scoil Greallain, and the churches. Some important buildings in the town centre such as the Town Hall and the Court House could be improved by, e.g., painting woodwork and glazing bars, and the extensive concrete portions of the Fire Station and Social Services centre need freshening up. Many business premises, as mentioned last year, are individually well kept, but in perspective projecting signs give an untidy effect to the streetscape. Some of your nominations for awards included buildings with unsightly stacks, unpainted gables, mass-produced signage, and one roof gutter with weeds - the whole building must be properly maintained, not only the street-level fascia.

LANDSCAPING

The continuing tree-planting programme has been very favourably noted. The unique fair green in the town centre is well kept; the public will create paths where they want to walk, so it is better to go along with this and make such paths 'official' - such as the unkempt track up to the Church of Ireland church. Incidental planting is pleasing throughout the town. The landscaping at Sli na hAbhann is first class (not shown on map).

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Your response to the questionnaire under this heading is entirely in keeping with the spirit of the competition. With such fine riverine, sylvan and pastoral surroundings, not to speak of habitats within the town, you might suggest a schools project for an inventory of local flora and fauna, for publication.

LITTER CONTROL

This did not seem to be as effective as in 1997. Possibly the impact of the launch of the Action Plan has abated. There was appreciable kerbside litter especially at the central intersection, in

Society Street, in Dunlo Street and on the road past Portiuncula Hospital. Litter in the car park near the Court House and in the entry beside the Methodist Church appeared to have been there for some time.

TIDINESS

The effect of projecting mass-produced signage has already been adverted to. Wirescapes are a matter which could be reduced over a period of time as more appropriate street lighting is introduced. There was considerable kerbside weed on Church Hill at the time of adjudication.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

In Ballinasloe the areas immediately outside the centre seem to be the best kept. Even the very large housing estates at Hymany Park are better cared for than similar in most other towns. Estates such as Ard Muire and Garbally Drive, with excellent grassed spaces, and the more compact estates of private homes off the Athlone road, are very pleasant indeed, many houses with excellent front gardens. The small development near the principal bridge is most attractive, and a somewhat similar development between the Fair Green and Dunlo Street in course of construction promises very well. Ashfield Drive, and an un-named cul-de-sac of half-a-dozen 19th century houses of great character were particularly admired.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The principal approach roads are very good indeed and give a pleasing introduction to the town. Because of considerable development, the Ahascragh road will not return to this high standard for some time. Stone walls on the outskirts are very fine, none more so than those recently built on the Portumna road. Most surfaces are good, and there is good paving in the town centre. Kerbs need repair in McKevin Avenue. Most car parks are well kept.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A handsome town, where traffic seems to be more effectively regulated than in many towns of similar size - though less on-street parking is desirable. The UDC, Chamber of Commerce and Tidy Towns Committee, working together, obviously have the betterment of all aspects clearly in view.