

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **CLIFDEN**  
County : **GALWAY**  
Category : **B**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 21-06-98

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1998	Mark Awarded 1997
Overall Developmental Approach	50	31	29
The Built Environment	40	28	26
Landscaping	40	22	21
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	18
Litter Control	40	22	22
Tidiness	20	7	7
Residential Areas	30	18	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	21	20
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>168</b>

## **Clifden, County Galway**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

The 1996 Clifden Regeneration Strategy remains the essential point of reference. The initiative of the Chamber of Commerce does not appear to have been matched yet by action from the Local Authority and other official bodies. Social and economic constraints, as shown in the Strategy, are an appreciable hindrance to progress, but, if the Tidy Towns effort may be seen as any kind of yardstick, progress is relatively slow. - Thank you for your answers to the questionnaire, and your useful map and leaflets. Next year, please mark on your map all sites where improvements have been made over the previous twelve months - for example, where trees have been planted; it is unlikely that we will miss any, but one has to be certain. Please state in your answers to the questionnaire if a project has been completed - e.g. 'upgrading of sewerage scheme to protect wild life' - or if it is still contemplated.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The completion of the sensitive rehabilitation and extension of the Railway Station is an event of major importance. The as yet unfinished Engine Shed looks extremely promising. The new hotel in the complex fails to make the connection with the station or the town in terms of scale, style and texture; though otherwise a not unpleasant building, an immense opportunity in townscape has been lost. Completion of the adjacent holiday homes and shops will be looked forward to. In the town, several unpainted gables, chimney-stacks and dormers spoil otherwise well-presented shops and business premises. Some shopfronts nominated for awards can not be considered because the whole building is not adequately maintained or because of mass-produced signage or PVC glazing bars replacing sash window frames. Joyce's (Solicitors) fine painted gable makes a wonderful introduction to the main street; others might follow suit.

### **LANDSCAPING**

The garden at the Bank of Ireland car park is pleasant, and one wishes that there were more of this kind of development. There are many open spaces, and 'corners' such as at Bridge and Market street which are weedy and would be transformed by evergreens or other shrubs. Incidental planting, window-boxes and hanging baskets are good where seen.

### **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

The neighbourhood of Clifden is renowned for its flora and fauna. The presence of seals and dolphins draws interested visitors. The wonderful mountain, bogland and marine walks, the availability of archaeological and fishing trips, and other related attractions, are

very well advertised to the public through the excellent 'Historic Guide and Map'. This is most encouraging.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

There was appreciable kerbside litter in the main streets on adjudication day. It was depressing to see cans deposited in a flower tub: while it is disgraceful that an individual should do this, speedy removal is nonetheless essential. Do not be discouraged - your anti-litter programme will take time to come into effect.

## **TIDINESS**

Derelict sites in prominent places, very unsightly 'backs' especially as seen from the Ballyconneely road, the unkempt spaces between well-kept industrial and commercial premises on the Galway road, wirescape, kerbside weed in the Fair Green area, and the proliferation of uncoordinated and confusing signage (directional, informational, advertising) combine to impose the overall condition of untidiness which greatly diminishes Clifden's superb natural and manmade environment. This adjudicator acknowledges a different view as expressed by last year's adjudicator, where diplomacy seems to have prevailed.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

Very handsome street houses, some charming terraces of domestic scale - such as on the south side of the river, in Church Street and Market Street, retain the flavour of the old town, marred by only occasional vacancy. Homes at the Quay are particularly well presented, especially Quay House; the renovation of an old warehouse looks very promising. Outlying residential areas are generally well looked after.

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

The approach from Galway does not give an impressive introduction, but the indications are that this will improve as new developments are completed and sites sited up. Surfaces are good in most areas - particularly good in the Fair Green neighbourhood - though the Ballyconneely road is potholed. Paving of footpaths in the central streets must have been relaid since publication of the Strategy, which is most encouraging. Car parks are well maintained, but there is far too much on-street parking. The street name signs are as attractive as they are useful.

## **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

Like last year's adjudicator, I enjoyed my visit to Clifden. I was very impressed by the published plans for the betterment of the town, and feel that because of this important initiative by the Chamber of Commerce the tide may already have turned. There are dominating financial and social issues, but issues immediately

relevant in the context of Tidy Towns are undoubtedly being addressed. Critical comments above have been made in a spirit of a desire to help with these important initiatives.