

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **LETTERKENNY**
County : **DONEGAL**
Category : **F**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 18-06-99

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	43	42
The Built Environment	40	34	33
Landscaping	40	35	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	19
Litter Control	40	34	34
Tidiness	20	13	14
Residential Areas	30	23	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	24
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	235	229

Letterkenny, County Donegal

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

There is no doubt that the development of Letterkenny has been exceptionally comprehensive and rapid: the fact is obvious on any visit, and the amount of supporting documentation - greater in volume than any provided by other entrants - is a further indication. (Please do not feel that you have to enclose copies of correspondence with other bodies, etc) Congratulations on your Townscape Environs Work Programme, and the remarkably detailed and informative Reports on a number of strands of Nature Study, Heritage and Conservation. You will notice that increases in marking are very slow in categories where you have almost reached the top: this is normal with towns (few) that have reached your level. Progress under Wildlife and Natural Amenities has been specially welcomed this year.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The most interesting architectural newcomer is the Theatre which will be assessed when completed. Most of the year work seems to have been in the renovation and maintenance of existing buildings, and in the continuation of construction work on new office and apartment projects. A number of business premises were photographed with a view to possible shopfront awards - all the Banks looked particularly smart this year. There are several buildings which do not always get a mention but which do not go unnoticed - such as the modern Church on Gortlee Road, the Library and Arts Centre, and the Unifi and Sigro factories.

LANDSCAPING

While planting at roundabouts, the Market Square and several other public and private sites continues to be of a high order, it is the Town Park which must take precedence here this year. Design, layout, the choice of trees and shrubs, the children's play area, and the style of park furniture, all deserve the greatest commendation. Adjudication was prior to the placing of the extensive floral decorations listed on your entry form, but this will receive comment at the time of second adjudication. The effort put into it is well known.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

This seemed to be a comparatively low priority until recently. The content of the Wildlife Survey is absorbing, and also your remark that there was greater interest than anticipated - this seems to be the case all over the country.

It is excellent that you should draw further public attention to the topic by producing the attractive brochure on walks. The Ballboe and Ballymacool projects are also impressive in their different ways - again, it is encouraging to learn of the public response.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control was certainly as effective as last year. It is a task which we would all wish to do without, and vigilance is always necessary in a busy centre such as Letterkenny.

TIDINESS

Due regard has been given to the fact that with so much development in progress there are bound to be unsightly areas, but there are other spots here and there which need attention - the 'backs' from Kelly's Bar to Donohoe's Studios, for example; broken or sagging fencing, some kerbside weed, and considerable visual clutter on the link and approach roads at the foot of the town. No doubt this will improve as construction projects are completed and the plans for urban improvement can be truly implemented. Projecting plastic and mass-produced signage on main street premises are still quite evident.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

While the new apartment buildings are beginning to assert themselves, the more traditional housing also seems to be improving. The neighbourhood of Glencar Park, with its neat shopping precinct, is a good example. Residential areas around Dr McGinley Road, at Oaklands, Ashlawn, Tara Court and others, to take a fairly random look, are well kept. New housing at Larkin Court is neat and attractive - it is good to note that the naming of new estates is not all bland: how about some authors and artists, as has been done with acclaim in Derry? Friel, McGill, Allingham, MacManus, MacMeanmain, etc etc.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The new link road should certainly do much to alleviate the traffic delays - its opening will be eagerly anticipated. Surfaces are generally good, though part of the Kilmacrenan road and the roads south of Oltown Bridge are very poor. New paving was favourably noted at College Road, as were the truly excellent stone walls built at Gortlee Road.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A town brimming with energy where an unprecedented number of developments are in progress.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (12/08/99)

It is hard to keep pace with the level of new development in Letterkenny. There is a great sense of prosperity about. Litter was not a significant problem but papers were to be seen all the same at kerbsides, not only in the town centre but in peripheral areas outside commercial premises. It was pleasing to see a general improvement of Lower Main Street but details such as a bill board on the gable of Ind Fianna Fail HQ detracted somewhat. The entire town centre with so many tall buildings has a wonderful urban atmosphere. Pearse Road is gradually improving but the the diverse type and quality of developments jar in many cases - the trees are becoming reasonably effective in creating a common denominator however. The standard of planting and grass cutting on the approach roads and within the town confines was of an exceptionally high standard. The town park is a wonderful asset.