

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **RAPHOE**
County : **DONEGAL**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 19-06-1999

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	32	30
The Built Environment	40	26	25
Landscaping	40	26	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	10	10
Litter Control	40	24	23
Tidiness	20	10	10
Residential Areas	30	15	15
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	23
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	175	168

Raphoe, County Donegal

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Your planning is impressive. Clearly it will take time for all the projects envisaged to come to fruition - that is the advantage of a 5-Year Plan where work can be phased or paced with particular ends in view. It is many years since this adjudicator visited Raphoe: two things are immediately obvious after a long absence - the palpable sense of history as evinced through the core townscape and the older buildings, and the poor development of more recent times as demonstrated mainly in peripheral housing. The Tidy Towns CE Project, with the help of the numerous groups and organisations listed in your documentation, is providing the impetus for a co-operative effort which will develop and improve and encourage where these elements are needed. As to the marking, increases (or decreases) in categories other than 'Developmental Approach' are given in respect of work advanced or completed (rather than proposed) over the, previous twelve months. When submitting your map, please mark such sites.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The principal buildings of architectural interest - and there is an unusually high number - are well maintained. Work at the Castle gatehouse was very favourably noted, as well as work which should perhaps be properly categorised under 'Back Areas' below. The handsome Scots Church appeared to be disused (is this the case?) The Health Centre promises well. Business premises are generally well presented. When suggesting shopfronts for awards, the whole building including roof, stacks, gables and upper storeys must be in perfect order; in older buildings no PVC glazing bars should have been introduced; and there should be no plastic or mass-produced signage. Best wishes for the restoration of the Volt House - a splendid project.

LANDSCAPING

Floral displays in public and private properties were most attractive on adjudication day. Successful tree-planting was noted at Back Lane - but some young trees at St Eunan's Terrace and Beechwood were badly in need of support. As mentioned by last year's adjudicator, there are a number of sites which would benefit tremendously from further tree planting.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The suggested route was walked. An illustrated board identifying plant, bird and animal species would be a help, as well as signposting. School groups might be encouraged to identify and list such species, perhaps culminating in an exhibition of drawings, to stimulate interest.

LITTER CONTROL

Disposable litter was seen here and there, but in general the co-operative drive by concerned groups is proving effective.

TIDINESS

Weed control, and the absence of flyposting and graffiti, contribute to what should be a very tidy town, were it not for a number of derelict, vacant or simply scruffy sites. An open yard in McBride Street is an example.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Many beautifully kept older houses and cottages in streets such as Meetinghouse Street and McBride Street provide Raphoe with much of its character. A yellow house opposite the Castle is a fine example. Individual homes on the outskirts, many with pleasant gardens, are very well kept. Beechwood estate was looking very trim on adjudication day - the stone wall is excellent. Some of the boundary walls and fences at Meadowhill need attention and the pleasant green was in need of cutting. Boundary walls and fences also need attention at St Eunan's Terrace; the open space at the lowest level needs cleaning and definition. It is excellent to read of the plans put forward by the residents of these estates - the results will be looked forward to.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Surfaces of main streets are of a high standard, but several side streets are very badly maintained indeed, among them Railway Road and St Eunan's Terrace; the Local Authority has definitely let down the community here where in the matter -of street furniture, lighting and paving it has served the community well. Back Road - surely a more prepossessing name can be found for it! - is much improved, with excellent stone walls. Stone walls elsewhere were also much admired and give an important -'lift' to their neighbourhoods.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A town of real dignity and presence, where neglect of various kinds is now being energetically addressed. (Raphoe, as a name, is virtually unknown outside the county, and undeservedly so. The absence of a major hotel with a constant flow of overnight visitors - many far less interesting and attractive towns are better equipped - would help in this regard).