

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **ATHY**
County : **KILDARE**
Category : **E**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 11-07-1999

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	31	34
The Built Environment	40	30	27
Landscaping	40	27	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	21
Litter Control	40	22	19
Tidiness	20	12	11
Residential Areas	30	20	17
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	21	20
General Impression	10	7	6
TOTAL MARK	300	191	180

Athy, County Kildare

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you very much for the completed entry form which is very informative on local issues however, for the size of town, there is a great need to provide the three to five year action plan which is now a mandatory document in the competition. The provision of the photographs of the shopfronts entered for the competition were very helpful and should always be submitted as very often, it is difficult to photograph shop fronts on the day of adjudication (depending on the parking layout at the time). The drop in marks reflects the need for this Action plan to be presented as complete adjudication for this category cannot be carried out until such a document is provided.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Athy has an exceptional series of spaces around which the built environment is displayed. This creates great diversity and in some cases quite mixed presentation. Perhaps the most important aspect that must be tackled is the presentation of the Tegral factory which has a significant impact on the town. Given that the company contributes so much to the architectural industry they should be asked if they can present a better image in this portion of the town. It is not merely the scale of the industrial buildings but the lack of any long term landscape provision along the main entry road into the town. Rice Square is a very poorly presented space and in marked contrast to the Courthouse square. This is unfortunate as it is a contemporary space and really should also have as high a standard as has been expended on the court house area. At present the space lacks both charm and a cohesive presentation format. Perhaps some of the simple ideas used at Courthouse Square could be reused in this space. The Maxol Station on Carlow Road requires attention as does car parking which has a tremendous impact on most of the pedestrian areas of the town. The GAA grounds must be complimented for having their hanging baskets, while in general the overall built environment to the town is really quite high and these previous comments are directed more at critical areas that should be addressed in a development plan.

LANDSCAPING

Given the size of the town there is quite a diverse range of landscape areas both from roadside walks to large parks. The riverside park that has been recently finished is a wonderful amenity for any town to have and the care and attention given to this space must be complimented. The park near the railway station is a great asset and very well used during the day of adjudication. It is unfortunate that no

name could be found and a name at the entrance could be helpful. In general many of the landscape areas that serve the town belong to the many residential estates adjoining the main roads and most of these are very tended and have a great influence on the presentation of the overall image to the town. There are pleasant border plantings along Shrewleen Lane and these along with the adjacent urban renewal improvements very much improve the setting for this area of the town.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

This is an important category and must be reviewed in the 3 to 5 year plan given its ability to influence particular decisions on landscape treatment. There was minimal mention as to how it has influenced the thinking in the town though the location of sign post information for Lords Island is a positive action. This category is often a difficult issue to develop in the early stages and requires a certain level of creativity.

LITTER CONTROL

There is a very effective programme for litter control in Athy as was evident on the Main Street which was very clean after a busy day. The efforts spent in this category have produced very positive results and makes the visit to the town a very pleasant experience and contributes to the overall image of the town. Consulting with Athy U.D.C. regarding an anti litter plan would be very helpful as you seem to have a good working relationship with them. This would benefit the whole community and of course the Tidy Towns committee.

TIDINESS

The town is very tidy in all areas and the GAA grounds were most presentable and had a different flavour to many of the other GAA grounds presented in other villages and towns. Perhaps the pride in the old areas of the town should be carried through to some of the other developments and greater emphasis should be placed on trying to resolve the integration of some of the more prominent new developments so that there is a greater balance between old and new. In particular Rice Square is quite detractive in the centre of the town and though the entry road and surroundings to the Tegral plant were very tidy, the overall image could be improved.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There is quite a significant number of residential areas in the town and all are very tidy and well presented. Parc Bhríde and Avondale Drive present a very pleasant garden environment which greatly improve the areas. Entry

plantings to Holmcroft Estate were very strong in presentation and the baskets were quite effective however, ivies could be made as a permanent planting on some of the boundary walls. Forest Park has a very high standard and the lack of walls between the road space and the private gardens has been very effective in creating a park image. It is noted that the maintenance to the nature strip has been lowered through the use of gravel which looks very well and though not generally as pleasant as grass, maintains a very useful surface for additional car parking and consistency along a road edge.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The comments from last year's adjudication should be followed up on. Entry areas into the town could benefit from greater attention to defining the sense of entry, however, once within the town many of the roads present a very good environment and there are quite comfortable spaces for both traffic and pedestrians. It is understood that the redesign of the main street may relieve some of the congestion that is so well known in Athy and though the works are perhaps beyond the scope of the Tidy Towns committee, a development plan could be instrumental in ensuring that local issues are addressed. In general most roads presented a very tidy image. Ardrigh was very pleasant as was Graylands which had a very good frontage onto the Carlow road. The very good gardens associated with Oak Lawn make the road environment very pleasant, however it is a pity that the large cupressus tree has been stripped at the Carlow Road junction and its replacement should be considered.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Athy is a very pleasant town to visit and has very good facilities and much of the efforts provided by the committee have brought about very strong individual character to the town. It is obvious there is great pride with many of the areas but this should extend to the presentation of some of the newly built commercial facilities.