

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **RATHANGAN**
County : **KILDARE**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 10-07-99

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	41	38
The Built Environment	40	28	27
Landscaping	40	33	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	22
Litter Control	40	24	23
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	21	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	28	28
General Impression	10	8	7
TOTAL MARK	300	222	211

Rathangan, County Kildare

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for the completed entry form which is closely related to your development plan and provides a very effective means for communication which made the adjudication of this town very easy. The provision of the photographs was very helpful as an ongoing preview to the town and tasks carried out during the previous year. The map explained all the various parts the committee would have a reasonable input into and made sure that all parts were visited for adjudication. The three to five year development plan was very well presented and contains much of the information that allows for a very good background before adjudication can be commenced. All involved must be complemented.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Rathangan is a very beautiful town with many strong features that allow development to take place with a strong sense of connection to other parts of the town. The canal and river are very important features that have contributed to the development of the town and walking through the town one is constantly aware of the connection between these bodies of water and the amenities attached. The photograph provided illustrating the improvement made to the bridge is very good ongoing documentation and it seemed that this piece of work was very much needed. It is a pity though that the new mortar in no way matches the quality of the mortar used in the original bridge that can be seen on the photograph and is inclined to make the repairs stand out. The new surfacing at the canal is a definite improvement to the all weather aspects for access to the canal area. It is presumed that the edging to the finished areas will be carried out at a later stage as these are untidy. With respect, the presentation of the shops there is a great diversity in shop type and shop front and these contribute to a diverse environment. The corner along New Street where the Church and schools are located has a very strong theme and very good connection between the various buildings. However, it must be pointed out that the church is rather severe in its use of asphalt and that its presentation should be softened and better connected to the river.

LANDSCAPING

There is great diversity of amenity spaces in Rathangan and these vary from very well presented river walk where new planting and facilities have been prepared to the river walk opposite the church and new open spaces associated with the housing areas. Perhaps the triangular space at the centre of Main Street and Bridge Street requires better treatment as its

presentation is quite barren and falls into the background of the building elevations. These triangular spaces commonly found in towns are still very special and require great attendance to their presentation. The new beech hedge on the Edenderry Road is an effective contribution to maintaining the rural character. The Grand Canal Walk is comfortable to use and is perhaps in need of some lifebuoys to improve the safety of the area as there were a lot of children swimming there on the day of adjudication. This will be so for both swimming holes on each side of Bridge Street Bridge.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Documentation of wildlife is essential and the photographs provided were very helpful in illustrating the diversity and seasonal variety. The production of the Rathangan nature walk in the spring compiled by the Tidy Towns committee is actually a very good idea and focuses on many of the common plants which are so easily forgotten. There is hope that this leaflet will go into production.

LITTER CONTROL

Given the extensive number of litter sources in the town, there is a very effective control of this category in contributing to the image of the urban spaces. All spaces were very clean and there was no litter to be seen. What was great to see was the young people cleaning up around the swimming places they were using. Though there were areas that did contain litter, they were not so serious to see a drop in marks, but it is worth noting that the Main Street does require a bit more attendance from the shops.

TIDINESS

The whole town has a very tidy presentable image. However, there is a distinct need for great connection between the various built sections of the town as this creates a fragmented image and more thought should be given to how to develop the entry point and connection routes through the town. The old section of the town has a very strong urban character while the newer areas of housing require greater scale of planting which is more consistent in use of single species. It is the need for greater scale in the plantings that may allow for greater enclosure and connection between the various parts. One item that was in need of immediate attention is the screening of the recycling bins. These are a very good idea and are well located given that it is easy to park and stock the recycling bins. However, their presentation at the entrance to the church area should be considered.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There is a need to have the names of the estates better presented as it was difficult to establish the names of some of

the estates. There is a great diversity in the estates in their layout and building type though many of the houses are of similar size and the estates contain approximately the same number of housing. There is the added benefit that most of the estates are not very large and thus are very manageable. Spencer Court is an exceptional display of horticultural diversity and works well in a confined space with no walls between the front gardens but being contained as an enclosed environment. The visual characteristics are very different to some of the other areas of the town. St. Patricks Park was untidy by virtue of the weed kill at the kerbs and there was quite a lot of litter in certain areas thus this estate varied in presentation. Ard Mhuire is well presented and has very colourful flower beds which could do with better enclosures with large trees so as to contain it from the road.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

There are many different entry points to the town and all are very presentable. The road from Clonbullogue could do with a stronger entrance theme given the amount of development that is happening in that part of the town. The Main Street is very presentable though the junction between New Street and Bridge Street does require much stronger attention to create a visual focus at this junction. Perhaps the most dangerous area in the town that requires better traffic control is the bridge over the canal beside Tannery Park and it is questioned that vehicular entry points should be considered at this area. The Kildare Road has the appearance of a very new road and could do with much better long term plantings to establish this road with a stronger canopy while the Bracknagh Road again needs a strong theme. These are all long term decisions that can only be covered in a three to five year plan as is stated in your development plan.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

There are a lot of positive actions being taken by the committee in this town and a lot of it is very well explained within the development report which outlines a very understandable approach to the concerns and issues of the town. The additional submission of the report from Bun Scoil Bhríde was also helpful in outlining the teaching approach for getting the children more active in the wildlife concerns. Overall the visit to the town presents an environment that is very pleasant to live in but also a very dynamic one for which people get involved and shape their environment. Congratulations must be given to the committee and all people who support its efforts.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (10/08/99)

It was indeed a pleasure to visit Rathangan and witness the implementation of the development plan. The attention to wildlife and natural amenities is exemplary. The river and

canal are wonderful assets. The curving streets with so many fine Georgian buildings were admired for their generally consistent appearance; just a few inappropriate advertising signs were noted. Some litter was to be seen on the road by the post primary school, and here and there in the town centre. Most residential areas were again presented to a high standard but some of the newer ones have yet to be fully completed. The green at Ard Mhuire was especially admired. It seems that the triangle at the Clonbullogue end of Main Street would benefit from more frequent cutting. Use of stone walls as boundaries to residential properties (as on the Kildare Road) should be further encouraged. The generally impression of Rathangan is of a town which is dedicated to improvement and consequently should make steady progress year by year.