

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BELMONT**
County : **OFFALY**
Category : **B**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 05-07-1999

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	25	29
The Built Environment	40	26	26
Landscaping	40	27	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	14	14
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	12	12
Residential Areas	30	21	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	26
General Impression	10	6	7
TOTAL MARK	300	185	190

Belmont, County Offaly

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The entry form demonstrates a very clear level of support from all bodies and agencies and this is evident in the physical presentation of the village. However, the three to five year plan which is a separate document from the entry form must still be prepared and presented and its absence reflects the reason why there is a drop in marks in this category. It should be noted that the very good standard of the entry form information is easily integrated into a development document which is supported by maps and other graphical material. The document is important from the point of view of lobbying further help and prioritising a works programme which aids in a more strategic assessment process.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The new sculpture "The Samaritan Traveller" at the crossroads develops this space at the centre of the village in a most interesting fashion given the very long entry roads with ribbon development running for quite an extended distance; this sculpture definitely demarks the centre of the village. In addition, the repainting of Cahill's sheds again reinforces the importance of this space in the centre as the village and the selected green colour is very sympathetic with the rural character. The built environment for Belmont is essentially that of a very small centre with very long entry roads with ribbon development. This is now a typical format for expansion of villages that have grown from crossroads. As such it is very important that the approach to treating the small centre is dealt with in a creative manner.

LANDSCAPING

Landscaping around the sculpture provides a very effective back drop and no doubt in future years the cedar will provide a very strong feature above the sculpture. It is a pity that the emphasis on landscaping at the cross-roads is focused on a single corner of the space as the cross-roads could do with an overall treatment which should integrate all sides and create a sense of arrival at the centre of the village. The landscape presentation is perhaps the most important aspect of this village. Continuation of proposed works will define the importance of the centre of the village and link the entry points into the village with the cross-roads. The efforts carried out in the past year must be highly commended.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Concerns for natural amenities and wildlife in rural villages need to be addressed by developing programmes for the

management of surrounding spaces to villages. In this case the management policy for the hedges must be commended; however in developing a three to five year programme it is important that your programme be spelt out so that adjudicators know how to assess the efforts within the context of the current village.

LITTER CONTROL

The standard of litter control was fairly good. However it did not seem to match the comments of last year's adjudication as litter was scattered around different spaces.

TIDINESS

The major issue that impacts on tidiness for this village is the extent of gravel at the cross-roads; this is easily managed through sweeping up the gravel which creates unsightly kerbs and can affect the safety of pedestrians.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The village is essentially extended ribbon development and as such is heavily dependent on the front gardens of the adjacent houses to the main road. In this case the gardens are very fine and create a diverse visual environment. All residents must be complimented on the presentation of their front gardens.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

This category is tied into the residential areas as there really are very few roads associated with this village. The adjudicator refers to comments presented in last years assessment sheet. However it must be noted that there is one element of annoyance which affects the tourism industry; this is road signs which point in the wrong direction. This should be corrected immediately and is the reason for the drop in marks in this category. Again it should be noted that the sign to the Brosna River cannot be read where it requests motorists to slow down to 10 mph as vegetation is obscuring this important safety warning.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The village looked very well on the day of adjudication and the efforts of last year have definitely produced a very beneficial addition to the village environment on which all must be complimented. It is hoped that a development approach may again stimulate the creative approach that the village has taken in presenting its environment.