

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **ARDCLOUGH**
County : **KILDARE**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 13-07-1999

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	26	26
The Built Environment	40	18	18
Landscaping	40	19	18
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	15
Litter Control	40	24	23
Tidiness	20	13	11
Residential Areas	30	19	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	16	16
General Impression	10	4	4
TOTAL MARK	300	154	150

Ardclough, County Kildare

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you very much for your completed entry form and it is recognised that there is a Committee of approximately twelve people which is a comfortable size for the population catchment of the village. Recent actions have been quite effective in consolidating the public spaces and presenting the village. There are some quite effective approaches being taken to enhancing the overall setting and Ardclough should be praised for these efforts. A three to five year Action Plan is required as a mandatory item within this category. At present only the entry form has been submitted. Given the recent date of entry into the Competition it would be unfair to deduct marks for the non-submission. However it must be seen that this document is an important aspect and without its submission this category cannot be adjudicated more fully. Hopefully next year such a document will be submitted with the entry form.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Ardclough is a very small village and in the early stages of developing a central area. Most of the buildings associated with the village are quite new and relate to a road junction beside the canal. The village must decide whether this category is a significant category in the Competition and if so, certain aspects will require very strong attention. One of these aspects is the manner of building walls and the village has been very successful in unifying the built areas through the development of walls over the recent years. These works must be complimented as they have been effective in seeking a unity through the village. The School suffers from having very prominent prefabs at the main junction and meeting space. Obscuring views of these buildings should be considered as would extending the stone wall around the School area. The Church is a very vibrant addition to the village and illustrates how effective landscape setting can provide a very strong theme for the village.

LANDSCAPING

This is a very important aspect for the village and with proper management will greatly establish a method of unifying the different parts and reinforcing the central area near the junction. The Church provides one form of landscape treatment which is very effective and beautifully maintained. The amenity spaces associated with the residential areas need a consistent form of landscape treatment so as to unify them. At present they are quite different in character. However the planting of new trees along the side of the main road is an effective measure as to how such spaces can be connected. New developments in landscape treatment

should focus on structural tree planting such as beside Lyshandra so as to begin the process of enclosing and unifying spaces. Though there are very good displays of flowers in various locations, the efforts at this stage should focus on primary long term benefits.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

This category within the Competition is becoming quite important as it can provide direction for future selection of trees and treatment or management of various spaces within the village. The Development Plan must cater for this aspect and it should be explained in the broadest manner possible. With respect to the School the cypressus hedge is quite out of context given the extended learning role that the schools now cater for in respect to wild life. The Committee must be complimented for seeking a board to present the wild life habitats along the canal.

LITTER CONTROL

There are very few sources in Ardclough for generating litter and as such standards are expected to be quite high. On the day of adjudication the village was very presentable.

TIDINESS

There is a defined character that separates the new developments from the rural areas in Ardclough and this is one of a manicured landscape. There is perhaps too great a contrast between some of the open spaces and the surrounding rural countryside and greater integration should be examined. However at present the current management plans do produce a very tidy village.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The two major estates in the village are approximately the same size. Lyshandra Manor has tackled the need for large trees in future years. However its layout of amenity spaces contrasts with Wheatfield which has a much better size amenity space and stronger colours at the entry and though developed at an earlier stage, contains some very pleasant gardens which contribute to the amenity space. There is perhaps a greater need for trees at the edge of this open space and perhaps the protection or visual enclosure through the use of a hedgerow.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The trees alongside the main road beside Lyshandra will have a very good effect in future years and were well worth planting. The village needs entry signs demarking the village name. The exit signs to the village at the canal bridge have

been broken through bending the tops. These must be replaced as they are quite detractive and present a different type of flavour to activities. However in general all roads in Ardclough are of a very good standard. On a last note the triangular space at the road junction which has raised grass should seek some further landscape treatment as the space is primarily for display rather than use. The trees should be of a larger standard size and tree pits should be of adequate quality so as to aid in accelerated growth in early years. The quality of the grass seems to indicate some deficiencies in the soil and this must be examined if trees are to mature in this space.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Ardclough is in the early stages of developing an environment. The positive attitude being demonstrated by the village will have significant long term effects as many of the actions will be contributing to the integration of the environment with the surrounding landscape. At present the Development Plan needs to be prepared and this may highlight a hierarchy of specific tasks over the next set of years that should consolidate some of the more urgent requirements.