

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **KILKENNY**
County : **KILKENNY**
Category : **E**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 06-07-99

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1999	Mark Awarded 1998
Overall Developmental Approach	50	43	41
The Built Environment	40	36	35
Landscaping	40	36	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	18
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	22	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	35	35
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	245	241

Kilkenny Town, County Kilkenny

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The submission provided with the application form is a very impressive appraisal of achievement, and a plan for future developments. In a city of this size there are so many areas of activity that will bring improvements. The residential areas could be concentrated upon at some stage as will be outlined below. Amenity areas associated with the river are developing very well and the walks now in place are admirable. The streetscape, public building developments, and industrial areas present greater challenges now with the demands created by the boom in the economy. The amount of residents associations participating in the competitions and the varied types of competitions conducted reflect a marvellous commitment to progress.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The high standard of presentation of business premises in the streets continues. The side and "back" streets are now of a similar standard to the main streets. All historic buildings, as mentioned in previous reports, also continue to be shown off at their best. The sculpture additions are an interesting asset. With the great volume of cars present (and increasing), more extensive pedestrian only areas would be very welcome. Improvements at the cattle mart area are attractive. The new stone walls are a very valuable feature. The road to the city from the Bennettsbridge roundabout displays an excellent wall.

LANDSCAPING

There is such a diverse range of landscape developments and opportunities in Kilkenny. Some create amenity areas, others are useful to alleviate particular problems - such as softening harsh contours of buildings or obscuring unpleasant sights. Highly ornamental landscaping for street displays was noted. The work of home owners and public authorities in housing estates is to be commended. Needless to say the Kilkenny Castle grounds are a gem and make for a wonderful walk. The riverside walk and canal walk with the enormous lime trees is a wonderful asset. The peace park is a very tranquil place. The shrubbery close to the swimming pool needs attention. The park below Maudlin road gives a lovely riverside access. The grounds around Kilkenny college and the Motor tax office are pleasant, affording river frontage. The walkway created by the new hotel, if it is to be open to the public would seem ideal leading along by the riverside to St. Johns bridge. Some junipers used as ground cover are dying by the side of Kilkenny college. The motorway plantings are developing well. The roundabouts could have a greater impact than at present. This requires debate. They are seen by passing traffic only – unless they make an impact, they are unlikely to be noticed with the concentration of the motorist. Uniformly low planting schemes do not seem to make an impact. The

landscaping of housing estates is interesting. Examples of well treated estates like Ardnore, Clarnwood, Melville Heights, Sycamore and Aylsbury are in sharp contrast with Hebron Park, Bishop Birch Place and the high density housing estate at Newpark Close. Surely these latter estates need adequate landscaping as much as the former. It is as important that Public funds be secured to improve these estates as it is for the more high profile landscaping in the city. St Canices hospital grounds are very well planted and maintained and make a positive contribution to the landscape of the area. Industrial sites do not have to be drab austere places – the Hebron industrial estate leaves a lot to be desired. A couple of premises have made an effort to present an attractive landscape but the public areas are very poorly maintained. The bus station will benefit from a facelift as will the rather tired ESB landscaped bank. The residents associations are due great credit for their encouragement of better standards in their estates. Tree planting is a vital part of city landscape. Many parts of the city – particularly on the outskirts benefit from having trees retained on sites from before development. Where space permits these large types of trees need to be planted for the next two generations to enjoy. Open greens offer perfect tree planting opportunities. The green beside the church for instance at the Loughboy shopping centre has not a single tree in its enormous green.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The Newpark fen is a really interesting opportunity. The pathways provide a good basis for the wildlife project. The riverside banks by Kilkenny castle grounds and the river offer opportunities for wildlife projects. The duck introductions are a positive step. Over the next few years this aspect of appreciation of wildlife will be heightened with appropriate plans.

LITTER CONTROL

There is a very good standard of litter control. In a city of this size, constant vigilance is needed. Weekends, extra tourists, remains of takeaways and children's litter items all present problems. There was litter noted in a number of places; hopefully people will improve their sense of litter control as it is impossible to follow every individual around and pick up their litter as soon as they drop it. The schools competition your committee conducts is bound to help.

TIDINESS

There is a very high standard of tidiness. The building developments cause some untidiness but this is temporary and will be resolved in time. The well co-ordinated litter bins, lamp standards and bollards are attractive. Less on-street car parking will be a welcome development.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The involvement with so many residents committees is a marvellous idea. Every housing estate is very much dependant on individuals and the collective effort of residents can have a major influence on the appearance of a town or city. The encouragement in the form of competitions, advice and help where needed will have very positive results. Where public authorities are responsible for open space areas, consultation to ensure the work is carried out is important. With all the new housing developments a careful watch should be made to ensure sites are left in an acceptable manner before developers depart and all planting that was intended is complete. The attractive housing developments in and around Maudlin street make a nice environment. The passage through these to the main road at Statoil by the cemetery could be tidied up a little.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

There is a very high standard of roads in Kilkenny. Even those streets which in the past were considered back streets are now improved tremendously. The narrow passageways and streets give a lovely character to Kilkenny

GENERAL IMPRESSION

There is a very positive atmosphere about in Kilkenny. The use of the river bank for amenity purposes and the upgrading of buildings and facilities is very remarkable.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (12/08/99)

Kilkenny's supremacy in its category is most impressive. The rise in marks is fully justified, and was even higher prior to second adjudication-day when, unfortunately, serious littering was noted in the Hebron Park and Newpark areas. Otherwise, the city and suburbs were looking splendid; the most recent street furniture is first class, and new traffic-calming measures seem to be working as well as they can given the absence of an eastern and northern by-pass. August floral displays were abundant and delightful. Congratulations to the Local Authority, the Residents Associations, and other influential bodies. It seems extraordinary that the same Authority which is responsible for such excellence can allow a permanent blemish on the city's roofscape with the new multi-storey car park.