

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **DUNDALK**
County : **LOUTH**
Category : **F**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 07-07-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	38	38
The Built Environment	40	29	28
Landscaping	40	29	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	20	19
Litter Control	40	24	23
Tidiness	20	12	12
Residential Areas	30	21	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	30
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	210	204

Dundalk, County Louth

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for your entry form with supporting documentation on works carried out recently in the town, including the town map and excellent Heritage Trail brochure. The recent developments in Dundalk are impressive, congratulations must go to the Urban District Council, the local business people and the residents, who all play a vital part in making any town what it is. To gain further points in this section you must now prepare a 3/5 year plan outlining the future projects you wish to undertake, to build on the progress made to date.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

All the major buildings in the centre look very well. The magnificent Courthouse, St. Patricks Cathedral, the Town Hall and large Town Square give an impression of elegance and space. The main streets have a wide mixture of well presented shopfronts and pubfronts, with only a few derelict premises. The buildings in the "Dundalk Style" are attractively presented and it is a pleasure to see a shop-front such as Deareys in the heart of it all. A few premises need to pay more attention to their upper stories. The Dundalk Democrat premises again stands out and many of the pubs must be commended for their presentation. e.g. McKeowns, The Jockeys, The Windsor, The Fane, The Phoenix. Removing some of the more obtrusive plastic signs would further enhance the overall scene. It is good to see that the old P.J. Carrolls premises on Church St. has received attention since last year. The new Carroll Village development is a positive move for the northern side of the town, which still needs some urban renewal work. The County Museum/Library/Tourist Office complex was much admired, Dundalk is very lucky to have such excellent facilities. The part of the town around Roden Place is very attractive, with many fine period buildings still incorporating their original railings and balconies. Unfortunately, many of the basements of these buildings seem to be used as dumping sites for rubbish. The new Heritage Trail with its eye-catching plaques and brochure is a great initiative. The striking street name signs and cast iron finger-post signs make Dundalk an easy place for pedestrians to find their way around; modern public toilet facilities and town maps at various locations were also noted. However, it is not as easy for the motorist, as parking space does not seem to be sufficient to meet demand. The disabled parking bays in the town centre, are hopefully being used by those they are meant for.

LANDSCAPING

All the open green spaces are well kept. The mature trees at the Demesne and in front of the Courthouse are a splendid feature. Seasonal planting in front of the Courthouse and the Arts Office is attractive, but perhaps perennial plants could also be used in these locations for added year round colour. More planting around the seating areas near the fountain would be of benefit. The landscaping at the Crescent and to the back of Partnership Court/Cúchulainn Credit Union looks very well. The Parks and the Riverside Walk are a credit to those who maintain them. Landscaping along the By-Pass and in the Finnabair Industrial Estate is very effective. However, some sections appear to have been left undeveloped e.g. in front of Muirhevnamor, and would certainly benefit from a planned planting programme.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Dundalk Bay, with its vast array of birdlife, can be enjoyed from the Riverside Walk. Information plaques on the various species would be of value. Could the walk be extended to the other side of the Táin Bridge as a future project? Ice House Hill and St. Helena Park are beautifully maintained and it is good to see these amenities are well sign-posted from the town centre. The Ramparts are another important potential wildlife habitat. The refurbishment works taking place here should take this into account, by not creating too sterile an environment along the banks being cleared at present. The water quality in the river needs to be monitored, as considerable algae growth was evident in various locations.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control was again effective along the main streets. A few small deposits of litter were noted in front of The Courthouse, at Kelly's Monument and on the green at The Demesne. There may be a need for more bins in visible locations, as it was sometimes difficult to see where they were sited. Some dumping was noted in the Ramparts, two shopping trolleys filled with rubbish bags had been dumped in the river, just outside the Ramparts Mill apartments.

TIDINESS

Dundalk has a generally tidy appearance apart from some untidy "corners". The comments in last years report still apply in relation to weed growth in some housing estates. The public seating at The Square near the fountain is in very poor condition and needs to be replaced. The Edmundson Electrical premises on the corner opposite the new Carroll Village development is very untidy, with vast amounts of wind blown litter stuck in the broken perimeter

fence and considerable weed growth. Small sections of damaged or broken footpaths in Park Street also detract from the impression of tidiness.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The new stone name sign and flowerbed at the entrance to Bay Estate creates a very favourable impression to those travelling along the By-Pass. Entering the estate, the impression is sustained by the well kept gardens and colourful hanging baskets. Muirhevnamor and the new estates off Tom Bellew Avenue would benefit from a good deal of additional tree planting and weeding of roadside kerbs. The earthen banks opposite the Holy Family Church offer great potential for landscaping. Older estates like O'Hanlon Park, Oliver Plunkett Park and Park Villas are very well kept with many superb gardens. Glenwood and Greenacres have well presented homes, but some need to paint and weed along their boundary walls. Castle Road and St. Marys Road are attractive streets of very fine older town houses.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The new Xerox Technology Park on the Dublin Road is a very substantial development and its frontage will play a major part in the first impressions many visitors will form of Dundalk. It is therefore heartening to see the amount of work which has gone into the landscaping of this large site. It appears that Xerox is continuing with the excellent standards put in place by the other industrial premises, such as P.J. Carrolls and those in the Finnabair Estate. The completion of this development and associated roadworks along the By-Pass, should leave this approach in good condition. Verges on the By-Pass are well maintained. The New County Hall and grounds are impressive. The planting in front of the town dump is starting to have the desired effect. The landscaping on the Ballymascanlon Roundabout is maturing nicely. The new Recycling Centre on the old Newry Road is superb and several new developments taking place here should help upgrade this approach. Footpaths in the town centre are in good condition apart from some sections in Park Street. Tactile paving at some junctions was noted. Roads in the Quay end of the town are in less good condition and dereliction is still a problem in this area.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Dundalk is now an attractive and prosperous looking town. The many improvements carried out in recent years have made it a pleasant place to visit and a town its residents must certainly enjoy living in. As mentioned in last year's report, keeping up this rate of improvement should see Dundalk continue to advance to the higher levels of the

competition. Keep up the good work.