

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **WHITEGATE-CLARE**
County : **CLARE**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 15-07-2001

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2001	Mark Awarded 2000
Overall Developmental Approach	50	23	29
The Built Environment	40	23	26
Landscaping	40	18	17
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	15
Litter Control	40	30	25
Tidiness	20	12	14
Residential Areas	30	20	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	19	20
General Impression	10	4	6
TOTAL MARK	300	164	174

Whitegate, Co. Clare

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you for the entry form. The information provided was rather minimal and adjudication was restricted as no three to five-year work plan was provided. If this plan document does not exist, there is a need for the entry form to be filled out in detail. It is noted that the number of members on the Committee is eight and this may be too small for the size of the town. The drop in mark for this category reflects the serious need for such a Development Plan to be drawn up, as this is a village that needs significant County Council help. There is a need for funding and outside consultancy advice on how certain aspects of this village can be retained and enhanced.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Dereliction is perhaps the most significant issue impacting on the future for this village. There is a significant problem, as there seem to be too many sites that are moving into an element of disuse. This not only affects the presentation of the buildings, but also their long-term structural worth. It was noted that there were significant numbers of plants growing in chimney pots and this can only make one wonder as to the potential damage that is happening to other portions of these derelict buildings. The Whitegate Inn has demolished a portion of its development to the side of the bar, but left the outer wall with the window in place. This looks rather unusual, though it does retain the enclosure of a village environment. Consideration should be given to finishing off the coping to the top of the wall so that this feature wall does not get destroyed from weathering. Perhaps one of the most significant visual impacts on the village is the re-use of the old Catholic Church as an industrial/commercial building. This does not project the standard image associated with such buildings in small a village and there is need to acquire assistance from the diocese to alter the very poor presentation of this site.

LANDSCAPING

This category would seem to be handled quite well. However there is perhaps a need to change the particular approach so as to address permanent features that would contribute to a village setting. The potted plants looked very well and colour selection added to the much-needed personalisation of the public space. However, efforts to landscaping seem to be limited to potted plants. The recently planted street trees at the housing on the main street look very well. However, there is perhaps the need for further street trees to define the edge of the perpendicular parking opposite the church. In general, the efforts being made towards landscaping need to re-consider the potential scale and future impact that can be achieved with larger trees.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

This category requires further explanation, as the village is very much part of the surrounding countryside, but attempts to integrate did not seem to be addressed. Though trees have been planted along the main street, there is concern that these species are not ones that are indigenous to the surrounding landscape and these will further isolate the image of the village from the surrounding setting.

LITTER CONTROL

The village was litter free on the day of adjudication.

TIDINESS

Tidiness is a category that is representative of the overall image of a town or village. With respect to Whitegate, the Local Authority has not served the village very well, as much of their work has been poorly carried out and is not finished. An example would be on the road out to Portumna where the verges are not finished and the re-surfacing needs to be addressed. Dereliction has a tremendous impact on the impression of a village and this has an impact on the tidiness aspect of the village.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There is not a significant amount of residential areas in this village. There would seem to be a contradictory message established to the extensive amount of dereliction, but there are very well maintained houses. It must be recognised that the colour selection of many of the houses is very appropriate to this scale of village.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Entry hedges are not being attended to on the roads leading into the village. There are a significant number of poor surfaces and where the surfaces have been opened up, they have not been reinstated. An example would be beside the Half Barrel public house. Entry planters on the roadside need trees replaced, but in general they look well. Though the County Council must address some of the unfinished work in the vicinity of the village centre, it must be pointed out that the Tidy Towns Committee has a responsibility to the presentation of the village. In this aspect there is concern that the dumping of a mound of sand on the public footway beside the Whitegate Inn was not only a dangerous action, but also placed the public into the roadway, rather than along the footway. It is this type of action that can significantly impact on the image or impression of a village.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Overall this village has many opportunities and the maturing of long-term permanent planting can be seen. Whitegate is encouraged to follow a long-term plan and to instigate a Development Plan that is easily achievable. Perhaps the most

significant help must come from the Local Authority at this stage so that there is confidence that they will complete their tasks and that the remaining maintenance and personalisation of the village spaces can be handed on to the residents. The drop in marks associated with this entry is not a reflection on the Committee's efforts, but more that the Committee must approach the Local Authority and seek assistance in helping pressing issues that are part of the future of Whitegate.