

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **ROCHFORTBRIDGE**
County : **WESTMEATH**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 26-06-2001

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2001	Mark Awarded 2000
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30	34
The Built Environment	40	26	26
Landscaping	40	33	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	10	10
Litter Control	40	24	24
Tidiness	20	11	11
Residential Areas	30	20	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	29	29
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	190	194

Rochfortbridge Co. Westmeath

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

There is no Rochfortbridge plan on file. The village is going through an extraordinary level of residential expansion presumably in response to the dormitory needs of west Dublin's industrial and commercial employment. This is putting considerable pressure on village services. Rochfortbridge has endured a history of overbearing outside influence, it already forms part of the main national route to Galway. The prospect of the new motorway development will provide an opportunity to significantly change the character of the village and perhaps restructure its format from a linear to a more central structure. The interests of the community should be represented in further planning and Tidy Towns should have a role in that process.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

There is a new grey and red bricked footpath with dished access points which extends from beyond the Texaco Garage to below the pedestrian crossing. Much could be done to improve shop name fascia signs which the adjudicator felt were generally of a poor quality. The Clonlost Credit Union Building while not remarkable, is cleanly presented. Lysters Pub is brightly painted with flower baskets on display. On the opposite side, there is a conflict of interests with unsightly fast food shop signs hung with flower baskets. A combination of small but attractive terraced residential and commercial buildings and a group of disappointingly designed and presented shop fronts make up the centre of the village.

St. Joseph's School is very nicely presented with attractive garden and flower bed. The small Garda station is not a significant building but its garden is tidily presented. The old Protestant Church is a fine old building with its square bell tower. Its surrounds are overgrown but there is potential here to redevelop as a central heritage centre or for other communal use.

LANDSCAPING

At the Mullingar Road Junction there are very well maintained mature shrubberies. Opposite the Mullingar junction a grass margin with shrubs shows signs of recent disturbance probably due to underground cabling. Broken sign and pallet lying in margin opposite Farthingstown junction. On the Dalystown Road there is a major eyesore with coach operator maintenance yard.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

There is a pleasant walled amenity with seating between the Mullingar Road and Lysters Pub. Unfortunately on the inspection day somebody had used it as a refuse tip and there was considerable litter on display. This is a pity because there was good wild life activity with a selection of bird life evident in this area.

There is little evidence amenity developments but there is interesting

potential in opportunities offered by the Bord na Mona access to bog flora and fauna.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control was reasonably good but there were some areas to be watched particularly the small amenity park beside Lysters Pub which was badly littered by the contents of a bag of domestic refuse. Also traffic cones are lying with litter at the exit point of the lane from Brookfield Estate to the village There was a good supply of litter bins.

TIDINESS

The proliferation of footpath sandwich board signs should be discouraged. Lysters car park is nicely screened by hedging. The hedging at GMS continues to mature and provides effective screening. The large poster site which overlooks the residential gardens in the built up area of village centre should be removed as should the poster on the Bridge House gable. The Texaco Garage, with its broken wall and clutter has made little effort to soften the impact of its highly commercial presentation. The hanging signs on the bridge house are unattractive particularly their supports which break the skyline. There is a nice development of hedgerows along western entrance to village, again somewhat spoiled by signs.

There is a broken wall fenced with old railway sleepers to right of western entrance, along with some dereliction to right and badly maintained house to right with grass growing from gutters.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The level of new house construction is staggering. At the new red bricked housing estate to the left of the Dublin road entrance the open green area is at a preparation stage for seeding, but the grass margin between the path and road is over grown with weed. To the right the Derrygrenagh Park and its green is well presented. There is some weed growth at the base of walls which contrasts with the light colouring of the walls. The Sycamore Estate is well presented as is the Dormer type development on the opposite side of the road. The green in front is attractive but in need of maintenance. A further housing development to the left has a poorly maintained green to its front. Closer to the village the more mature housing displays well presented grass margins. To the left is a V- junction with badly maintained grass area.

The mature housing on the west side of the village is well presented with attractive grass margins and shrubberies . The Castle Park estate has some potentially attractive grassed area but on day of inspection not well maintained. Brookfield is a very nice and well presented estate in which central grass area is well maintained as are roadside grass margins and feature church walls.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The entrance to the village from the Dublin Road side is bright and has benefited from tree planting along grass margins on both sides of the road. The margins could benefit from more regular maintenance. The concrete fencing is beginning to be screened by

hedging. Considerable disruption of pathways is ongoing due to road works at the traffic calming point. The old Sheridan Truck and Plant is now an unsightly open area. The entrance to the village from the western side is quite attractive with mature housing and shrubberies from the Farthingstown junction. There are well presented margins with mature stands of chestnut trees on both sides. The picnic area on Athlone Road looks particularly well. Good access presentation on Rhode road with grassed margins and walls in good condition.

The Mullingar Road is nicely presented with grass margins and maturing hedging. There is a convenient access lane way between Brookfield and the town, good surface, but littered at the village end. The pedestrian crossing is in proper working order with dished foot paths etc. Cognise Garage colour scheme could be improved. On the Dalystown road The Church is well presented with tidy shrub plantations on either side. National school tidily presented. To the left the graveyard is excellent.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

There is no particular strength to the architectural quality of the village. The variety of width to the main street causes congestion and presentation problems. The narrow section is uncomfortable with heavy passing traffic which causes among other things pot holing and road spray onto footpaths under wet conditions. Rochfortbridge has exciting potential and you are commended for your efforts in highlighting its environmental quality.