

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BRIDGETOWN**
County : **CLARE**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 14-07-2001

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2001	Mark Awarded 2000
Overall Developmental Approach	50	25	28
The Built Environment	40	28	25
Landscaping	40	31	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	14	15
Litter Control	40	24	23
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	20	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	23	23
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	186	183

Bridgetown, Co. Clare

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

There was no document outlining a developmental approach or three-year work plan that the Committee intends to undertake. This is an important item and particularly assists in adjudication. However, it also has the benefit of informing the general public of a programme that they can be encouraged to take part in. This can be a significant task when the Committee size is so small and perhaps the Committee should approach O'Briens Bridge to see how they have developed their particular documentation as it would be very effective for a village of this scale. The village is divided into very simple components of urban design, such as the large single block containing the Church and graveyard, with adjacent school uses. In addition, the large village green area aids in separating some of the residential areas and yet provides a focus to the village. These are very important components that make an individual character for this village and one can see that the spaces are very well cared for and are seen as important contributors to the environment of Bridgetown. The mark for this category has been dropped, primarily because of the need for documentation.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Because of the layout of the village, there is a very clear division between housing areas and public facilities. There would seem to be a need to integrate these different forms of building, either through the use of colour or a consistent landscape approach. The church grounds, though very well cared for, would seem to be very underdeveloped and could be greatly improved if further planting were to be used to integrate this block of land with the surrounding countryside. The effectiveness of this approach can be seen with the mature plantings around the Clonboy Estate. It must be pointed out that the new design for the housing estate near the bridge employs a very simple design which is effective in a village environment. It would be hoped that the colour scheme that will eventually develop along this new cul-de-sac would further integrate the new housing with existing buildings in the village. The National School is well presented however increased landscaping around the school should be encouraged. When landscaping is being undertaken the Committee should think about permanent planting with a long term benefit. The care and attention to the integration of the built environment with the surrounding landscape is demonstrated by the planting display around the utility building in the centre of the village green and this demonstrates not only effective results but the creative abilities of the Committee. It must be pointed out that though the National School is very well presented, the broken windows on the water tower will encourage further vandalism to occur if they are not repaired immediately. Small walls seem to dominate

the character in the vicinity of the Church block and consideration should be given to their visual improvement, perhaps through painting.

LANDSCAPING

The village green is excellent and the provision of potted plants must be questioned because of the effective bedding plants in planters distributed through the park space. It must be stated that the method of stopping cars from parking on the grass verges has not been visually resolved and perhaps another method might be successful. The provision of a picnic table presents a very friendly message for using this park space, while the hanging baskets at the bridge are very effective in treating this river crossing. The potted plants demonstrate that great effort has been expended on this particular feature and they provide very good colour and scale. However, this effort perhaps should be placed around the church block as there is great diversity between the church block area and the village green and long term consideration of integrating these two elements of the village should be part of the Development Plan.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The presentation of the river running through the green is very effective as the feature is quite small and would be lost if enclosed by trees. However, there is a need to find a balance between highly manicured spaces and areas of ground that should be more natural or randomly treated. Consideration of this category must not only address summertime uses, but wintertime feeding for wildlife, thus this may have an impact on plant selection and might be taken into account in future works by the Committee.

LITTER CONTROL

There is very good control of litter. However, there seems to be a small population, and as such the problem would seem to be easily controlled. The provision of bins would seem to be effective, however the picnic table in the village green should, perhaps, also have such a facility. Though there are some weeds, the overall impression is that the Committee have a very strong litter programme.

TIDINESS

Tidiness refers to the overall impression of not just a litter free environment, but how the village wants to present its character. In general, the efforts have produced very good results. However there is a sincere concern that the church block could be better handled and integrated so that the whole village reads as a single unit. The untidy nature of the walls surrounding the church area is disappointing given the very high standard associated with the village green.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There is a need for landscape enclosure, particularly to the new residential areas. The effectiveness of maturing plantings

at Clonboy demonstrates the long-term integration of the built structure with the village. All of the residential areas are very well presented and the designs of the buildings are of a high quality. There is a colour scheme that successfully creates a built environment, which is appropriate to both winter and summer seasons. The village looks very well from distant views, such as the surrounding hills.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The main road has a planter installed by the Millennium Committee and though the plants are at an early stage of development, it is hoped that they will fill out in time. The concrete at the base of this planter is broken in many places and the Committee must get in touch with the County Council to see to its repair as it is a dangerous roadside element. Entry to the town from the river Shannon is very pleasant, given the arching effect created by ash trees. This easily achieved roadside character should be considered for other entry points into the village. The Committee must be complimented on retaining the many fine wild flowers and ferns that inhabit the hedges on the country road leading out of the village green. Overall the roads entering the village have a very pleasant rural character. It would be a long-term objective to extend this into the centre of the village, particularly in the vicinity of the church block between the graveyard and the National School.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The village has a very strong individual element created through a well maintained village green. The stone bridge and good presentation of trees, shrubs and potted plants, all contribute to a very gentle rural environment. There is a need to tackle the long-term presentation of the block of land containing the church and graveyard.