

*"Caring for our environment"*

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

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 01-08-2002

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2002	Mark Awarded 2001
Overall Developmental Approach	50	41	40
The Built Environment	40	29	29
Landscaping	40	34	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	21
Litter Control	40	27	26
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	22	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32	31
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>223</b>

## Dundalk, County Louth

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH**

Many thanks for the information, maps and plans in relation to the development of Dundalk. The suggested trail around the town was welcome - though walking through the main part of the town proved the best way to appreciate the buildings and landscaping as well as avoiding the traffic. A tremendous amount of interest in the town is evident and its recent and continued expansion is creating a town of services and amenities that will make the town a pleasurable place to live work and visit. The rate of exchange between the euro and sterling is probably providing an economic boom for the town as new retail areas are coming on stream all the time.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The old and the new mix well in Dundalk. The older more historic buildings such as the Seatown Windmill, St. Josephs Church and the Georgian buildings around Roden Place are complemented by the more modern architecture of the new buildings such as those around the ring road – e.g. the Louth Council Offices and the Leisure Centre on St. Alphonsus Road. Landscaping around the newer additions will help to enhance them. The Town Hall seems vacant – is there to be another use made of this fine old building? The plethora of plastic signage in and around the Dundalk Shopping Centre area does not look particularly attractive though all are vying for business and trying to create awareness. Shops on Clanbrassil Street and other shopping street varied in presentation – there did also seem to be quite a number of vacant premises, which is a pity. This was particularly noticeable at Quaglianos. Well presented fronts included Scarlett Lady, Ma Brady, Boylans shoes (located in the fine tobacco shop), Greenmount restaurant, Dublin House, Cutting Crew, Wendles, James Dearey, McKeowns, Oscars and Tom Daveys. The fine wooden frontage on the Phoenix Bar was admired too. The Century Bar was being repainted – what a wonderful building. The library building with good disabled access really enhances the area and is in keeping with the nearby TIO and heritage centre. Francis Street which mainly consists of commercial properties located in fine Georgian buildings needs attention. Many of the premises, which are occupied by professions, need to focus on the upkeep and presentation of these buildings though it was noted that most of the brass plates were shining.

### **LANDSCAPING**

There are wonderful plans to provide amenity areas around the town. Many thanks for the plans. It is important to incorporate the community into the development of these plans as a sense of ownership and responsibility will hopefully ensure that they will act as guardians of the areas discouraging vandalism. Aisling Park and surrounding estates presently lacks a pride (and most likely finance) in many cases as there was considerable amount of litter and an erratic approach to house maintenance. Incidental planting throughout the town is very pleasant. Ornate lampstandards on Clanbrasill

Street look well – and associated planting in the area was good. The northern end of the street looks a little drab and effort needs to be made here. The new planters looked well – it is hoped presumably that the petunia will cascade down the sides of the planters over the summer. There are good plans for St. Leonards Park which certainly does need some work – again inclusion of the community as guardians may lessen the possibility of graffiti and damage.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENTIES**

Dundalk is lucky to have such an important ornithological habitat close by and plans to develop a walk out to Blackrock are commendable. Birdwatch Ireland may be able to help in the identification of species and would certainly be interested and encourage your plans. The planting of wildflowers will help to bring the countryside in to the outskirts of the town encouraging butterflies and insects.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

Litter control varied throughout the town. The centre of the town was very clean with minimal amounts of litter noted. There was however a scattering of litter on the Dublin approach road and throughout some of the council estates. Signage in relation to litter control were noted and bins spotted throughout the town were in good condition. Education and awareness as well as the imposition of fines will help to minimise litter on the streets.

## **TIDINESS**

Dundalk was tidy for a town of its size. The centre of the town was particularly tidy though graffiti was a problem in some areas. Kerbs in general were invariably free of weeds. It was also noted that there was a short queue to gain access into the landfill and recycling facilities on the Newry Road.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

There is a variety of housing in Dundalk with the core element of red brick terraced houses near the centre and on the Ardee Road. More modern housing estates were generally well kept and some such as the Riverside Crescent had made good effort in landscaping their entrance areas. Housing developments off the Long Avenue tended to be presented to a high standard. The complex of apartments opposite Dundalk Lighting demonstrated what could be done with apartment developments. Larger more affluent areas were located on most of the approach roads and most of these had made an effort in their appearance. Council estates tended to have a more erratic approach with some requiring quite considerable work. It is hoped that the proposed landscaping developments would enhance some of these areas in the future.

## **ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS**

The approach roads were generally well maintained though some of the approach and speed signs required cleaning. Rank Xerox, Carrolls and DKIT provide the lead-in from the Dublin side. Much of the heavy traffic uses the by pass which is useful though there were still a couple of large lorries on the main street. Both the Castleblayney and Carrick roads were well presented. The NI Newry Road was busy and was well kept. The graveyard and associated stone building looked well. Parking areas throughout the town were also well maintained and the one beside the tourist office with its proximity to the old stone buildings and the church was most pleasing. Good street signage was also noted and was pleasing in appearance.

## **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

Dundalk has progressed considerably over the recent years and it is now a very pleasant town to visit. There is an air of prosperity throughout the town and a pride demonstrated by the upkeep of buildings, streets and houses. The Council should be complemented on such a positive approach.

## **SECOND ADJUDICATION (01/08/2002)**

It is several years since this adjudicator was last in Dundalk and it was pleasing to note so much change, much for the better. There are still however some problems which persist - notably derelict sites and billboards. It was noted that some inroads to the visual problem of overhead cables and unsightly poles has been undertaken - the difference in such locations is phenomenal. Litter commendably again was not a significant problem but black spots did occur: e.g., in the vicinity of Dundalk Shopping Centre. The characteristic streets of redbrick houses were admired, similarly those mature town centre civic spaces such as Market Square. The completion of work to the Courthouse is looked forward. Road surfacing in many areas tended to detract from other worthwhile achievements. Rapid expansion at the edge of the town offers a great challenge. In particular the completion of the Retail Park is looked forward to - it promises to be an exciting development but hopefully will not detract from the town centre which must prosper alongside.