

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bray**

Ref: **160**

County: **Wicklow**

Mark: **237**

Category: **F**

Date: **09/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	44	42
The Built Environment	40	36	33
Landscaping	40	33	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	20
Litter Control	40	26	30
Tidiness	20	16	15
Residential Areas	30	23	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	31
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	237	230

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for the plan and marked map submitted with the entry form. These were very helpful at adjudication time. The plan sets out concisely the items under each of the competition category headings and these are helpfully referenced to the marked map. Bray has many attractions – having both townscape and a much developed traditional promenade area and harbour and cliff walk. The changing face of Bray resulting from massive new housing to the south of the town, new shopping areas and changes in traffic patterns represent challenges to the town which good planning will address.

The Built Environment:

There are many landmark buildings in the town. The Old Town Hall and paved surrounds (McDonalds) looks very well presented and forms a focal point for the Main Street. The Church of Ireland, Methodist and Catholic Churches all appear well. The Royal Hotel and the new Town Council offices and Mermaid together with the Dart station, aquarium and Bowling Buildings are in good appearance. The many fine terraces in the town lend great character and these appear well. The three-story terrace beside the yacht club with the elegant balconies is a marvelous architectural feature. The seafront buildings form a lovely vista and have high standards of presentation. The old Bray Head Inn is looking in need of rejuvenation. The business premises along the Main Street and Quinnsboro Road look very attractive with a small number of exceptions. Standards have risen well over the years in this regard. The new Florentine Centre under construction is causing some

disruption at present in the Main Street but this is only temporary in nature. Stonewall features at various places add good character to the town. The stone walls at the Church at Vevay and at the Bray Golf Course on the Greystones road both look well. New buildings – such as Dell add a new dimension to the town.

Landscaping:

The Quinnsboro renewal scheme is very successful. The planting of large trees of such high quality on each side of the road gives instant impact and this is very rewarding. Widening the footpath has been done very well and the overall effect presents an attractive place for pedestrians especially. Hopefully this will be extended to other streets. The continuation of the tree planting and paving works further along the Quinnsboro Road opposite the mature trees forms cohesion both on that road and also with the surrounding streets of Wyndham Park and Florence Road. The introduction of trees in confined areas is also possible and good examples of this were noticed in the streets off the Lower Dargle road – Ardee and Dargle Streets. A lovely display of gardens was noted at Maitland Street and many gardens around the Connolly Square have made great efforts with containers. The many colourful baskets and containers in the Main Street add a great summer sparkle to the town centre. The renewal of Vevay Village is working well. The roundabout at both Vevay (on exit to Greystones and that at the Shankill exit are interestingly planted using the less predictable plant content. The small roundabout at the Senior College is also attractive. Plantings at the bandstand area on the promenade looks well. Sidminton Park is an attractive oasis well concealed by hedge. Connolly Square offers interesting potential and the park along by the Lower Dargle road – while making pleasant strolling ground by the riverside has huge potential for upgrading and a higher standard of maintenance. The landscaping at the Garda station is interesting using a combination of Ivy, Gorse and Rubus with a number of mature trees and attractive sculpture

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There is plenty of opportunity for wildlife observation – at the sea shore and harbour area, by the cliff walk and along by the riverside. To make full avail of these facilities a programme mapping walks, noting – what, where and when the various wildlife may be seen would be helpful. No mention is made of this aspect in the plan and perhaps this could now become a focus of interest. Involvement with schools, local community groups (from which local knowledge may be forthcoming) and with avail of an environmental officer for the area. A plan of action could be formed.

Litter Control:

The promenade areas had reasonably small but consistent amounts of litter occurring. In the Main Street some litter was noted along the street footpaths, and at the entrance to the Council Offices.. Serious litter problems were noted at the Lower Dargle Park. The riverside walkway from the Main Street Bridge below the Royal Hotel was exceedingly littered and unpleasant. The Ravenswell road was very dirty and neglected and some litter dumping was seen on the Upper Dargle Road. All the actions stated in the plan need rigid implementation to overcome the difficulties.

Tidiness:

Attention to detail is important in this regard – mention is made again of both the riverside walk and the Ravenswell road. The appearance of the road frontage of Homelands Furniture Centre is extremely untidy. The great work of having the cables placed underground in the Main Street is marvelous. Kerbside weeds look very untidy in places – particularly at the parking bays opposite the Dart station. Shop premises needing attention also come under this heading.

Residential Areas:

There is a huge amount of residential property in Bray and surrounds. Encouragement to form residents associations in the new estates is very important. Contacts with residents associations for

the tidy towns committee are also important, as this is an important link in the network of community enterprise and spirit in the town. Mention of 55 residents associations is made in the plan. Most of the new housing estates between the Greystones (Killruddery) roundabout and the Stat Oil roundabout have been well planted at their entrances and in the open spaces with trees and grass. These will take some time to mature and give some real benefit. The large banks and verges to the roadsides of many of these estates have not been properly treated and hopefully more can be done to ensure their proper maintenance. Competitions are an excellent way of forming a united front. The free horticultural advice scheme and the grass cutting service of Bray Town Council are very positive assets.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Major changes have taken place in the surrounding roads of Bray(N11 and M50) This has left some area seemingly a little neglected – the Upper Dargle Road and the entrance from Shankill. The Greystones and the new road from the Stat Oil station are in very good condition. The one way system works very well in the town and perhaps an extension of this would help together with less parking permitted on street sides, Pedestrian zones would be very welcome for at least part of the Main Street and the narrow section of Quinnsboro road.

General Impression:

Very good headway is being made on many fronts in Bray and the planning approach as noted in the submission and with the cooperation of so many groups will all help to gain greater achievements.

Second Round Adjudication:

Bray has three key elements that combine together to give some degree of quality to the town. These are the central core shopping area, the Promenade and the River Dargle. The potential in wildlife terms of the river area does not seem to have been developed. On the day of 2nd round adjudication four bird species were noted in a few moments. The Purple Loosetrife at the road bridge beside the Shopping Centre is quite spectacular. The litter control problems noted on 1st round adjudication day were evident again on the second visit- the Main Street, the Promenade. Litter was also noted on the Lower Dargle Road and on the slope between the Church and the pavement to the Main Street. In the harbour area some graffiti on buildings was noted that requires early attention. The two large old advertising panels at the DART level crossing looked quite untidy.