

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Oranmore**

Ref: **706**

County: **Galway**

Mark: **153**

Category: **D**

Date: **11/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	24	22
The Built Environment	40	24	23
Landscaping	40	20	18
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	13	13
Litter Control	40	15	17
Tidiness	20	7	8
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	20	20
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	153	151

Overall Developmental Approach:

There is a real spirit of enterprise shown on your entry form and support documentation. You did not enclose a map: we hope we did not miss any important sites as a result. You should mark and name all streets and housing estates mentioned on the entry form, and especially new features. It is a real pity that additional marks gained this year for new initiatives have been lost under the headings of litter Control and Tidiness, and increases in marking under other headings lower than one would like because of some discrepancies within the topic - for example, under the Built Environment.

The Built Environment:

The Castle is a superbly maintained private property; it is a landmark building, identifying the location of Oranmore from a considerable distance. OranTown is a striking new piece of urban design, with clean lines, first class materials and textures; unfortunately the lettering on the top of the facade is too obtrusive for the scale of the building. The new buildings at Scoil Mhuire, especially as seen from the side facing Galway Bay, impressed; with much-needed tree planting this should settle well into the townscape before long. A new run of shops (and offices? - you do not say) was seen to be under construction in the old village centre, and its completion will be looked forward to. The church was very well maintained and a small national school reasonably well maintained. The new shops at Bluebell were neat and inviting. The old village centre was not looking well; its clutter of shops and business premises lacks cohesion and is marred by indiscriminate signs and advertising; it is probably a mistake to expect quaintness,

but, that preconception left aside. there is no doubt that it could, with care and discretion, look very attractive indeed.

Landscaping:

Good but unexceptional landscaping was seen in a number of quarters - at roundabouts, along dual carriageways, at the all-weather sports ground, at the Quality Hotel, and in some housing areas. The children's playground was bright and busy at the time of the visit and is obviously a much valued amenity already. The Plaza outside the Library is a fine piece of design, greatly adding to the streetscape at this point yet relating a little selfconsciously to the old building which it fronts. The piece of contemporary sculpture near OranTown would make its presence more appropriately felt if it were well looked after and if its surroundings did not suffer so much from neglect.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your tree-planting programme is extensive and admirable. Trees planted only a few years ago are already making their mark. You are unspecific about the nature of the plans to attract wild life to the well area - it would be good to learn more about this and related projects; you may be doing yourselves out of additional marks through lack of information.

Litter Control:

Litter was very much in evidence at the recycling area. All litter bins seen in the town were overflowing on the date of adjudication; this may happen only occasionally, but one can only judge by what one sees. There was some disposable litter along Maree road. At the Holy Well there were broken bottles, cans and plastic containers, and considerable litter in the well itself. The adjacent sculpture was not only used as a litter repository but also as a urinal. Maintenance and collection did not seem to be in evidence, as some of the objects seen had clearly been there for some time.

Tidiness:

The area at the Holy Well and Sculpture was the most disreputable seen anywhere this year. Of far lesser significance was a neglected site between the church and sports field which was eyecatching because the adjacent properties were so well looked after, and a scruffy area between Scoil Mhuire and the sea was noticed where surely one would expect a tidy and pleasant waterfront comparable to the natural scenery. There was surprising weed growth at the entrance to the library - a few minutes attention each month would obviate this. Untidy shop signage and advertising has already been mentioned.

Residential Areas:

Substantial mature suburban housing was seen at Maree Raod; several boundary fences were were in need of painting. A pleasant estate, also of mature housing with culs-de-sac and well kept circular greens, was seen. (Several roads and estates were lacking name plates.) A very fine Victorian limestone house was admired near the OranTown centre. Apartments at Ard na Mara were neat but the frontage was bleak and would be improved by planting. The fine suburban estate at Bluebell, with young trees already growing up, was exemplary of its kind. (The prominent enclosure with the oil tanks was extraordinarily ugly.)

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach on the old Galway road was quite unsightly with much kerbside weed and broken walls. The surrounding main roads were well surfaced and well presented, with good signage. The road towards the castle was unusually poor. Lamp standards of high quality design were seen, but there were still unsightly poles and wires - the undergrounding of cables would make an enormous difference, as has been the case in several other towns.

General Impression:

It may be that imaginative ideas are running ahead of the need for proper maintenance under some crucial headings. It is not enough to be innovative, there has to be followthrough. Oranmore has enormous potential, as is clearly understood from your documentation, but some of your excellent plans do not seem to have been put to proper effect. It has been disappointing not to have been able to allocate a greater increase in marking under several headings. As mentioned by last year's adjudicator, a 5-Year, or at least a 3-Year, development plan should be undertaken, with objectives clearly identified and each project allocated a year-by-year timescale. This has proved remarkably effective elsewhere.