

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Oughterard**

Ref: **220**

County: **Galway**

Mark: **224**

Category: **C**

Date: **08/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40	
The Built Environment	40	31	
Landscaping	40	27	
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	23	
Litter Control	40	30	
Tidiness	20	13	
Residential Areas	30	22	
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	
General Impression	10	7	
TOTAL MARK	300	224	

Overall Developmental Approach:

This has been an impressive submission, with interesting accompanying documentation. The support provided by local and national organisations is also impressive. Are you sure the town is in the correct population category? - it seems larger than the other 'B' villages. On your next map, please name every street and housing estate, as they are not always named at the actual site. Your marking is comparatively high for a new entry, but you may well find substantial increases next year when a number of signalled projects have come to fruition. Certainly Oughterard has enormous potential in the competition.

The Built Environment:

On the date of adjudication the very handsome Court House was in need of upgrading. The Roman Catholic Church in its attractive court-yard-like site was presented in a most dignified fashion. The charming Church of Ireland church was also looking well in its more secluded surroundings. The gymnasium, because situated slightly back from the buildingline, did not interfere with the integrity of the streetscape. The original brickwork of the old railway station was admired. Unfortunately many of the business premises in main street were spoiled by over-enthusiastic signage and advertising, giving a kind of honky-tonk appearance to the centre of the town in a way which one thought had been discarded some decades ago in other centres that are tourist destinations. The contrast with the smart new terrace of shops on Camp Street was remarkable.

Landscaping:

Some very attractive planting was seen, merging in places with the woodland background and in others lending a sense of care as well as colour to the urban scene. Flowerbeds at the main car park, and the shrubbery on the Clifden road, were pleasing examples. Also, tubs, hanging baskets and window-boxes greatly added to the visual enjoyment. The circular green at the residential development (not named on your map) in the cul-de-sac beyond Camp Street was an excellent example of what can be achieved with imagination and patience in new areas. The football pitch - not precisely landscaping - was well looked after.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Tree planting comes under this heading, and you have done well with new trees at the car park. Of course the indigenous trees of woodland and riverside are an immensely valuable resource and it is clear that they are appreciated. The riverside, especially at the section that contains the waterfall, was well looked after. The presence of the trout hatchery was favourably noted. The path by the boathouse was walked, and the bog road noted; public access like these to lakeside, woodland and bog are a first class way of keeping in touch with the natural environment. We would be interested to learn if there are school projects linked to wild life conservation, and if the results of these may be seen.

Litter Control:

The recycling unit at the Galway end of the town was clean. There was very little disposable litter in the town on adjudication day, except a small scattering in the main street. Congratulations.

Tidiness:

The entrance to the carpet factory was quite weedy. Debris had accumulated at the back of the Health Centre. An untidy corner near the Anglers' Bar was undoubtedly due to ongoing developmental work. Scruffy sites and entrances were seen in the continuation of Camp Street. Unsightly corrugated iron roofs were in a prominent position on the road to the ferry. These and others were all of a comparatively minor nature. The chief cause of untidiness was seen to be the many mass-produced signs on business premises, B & B signs, overhead wires and electricity poles.

Residential Areas:

New housing beside the Roman Catholic church was appropriate in scale to the surrounding buildings.

New housing of a more conventional nature, with successful tree-planting, was seen behind the Church of Ireland church. In both cases it was good to see the centre of the town being developed in this way, rather than ribbon development or estates in more remote locations - though there were examples of both the latter. The substantial suburban development beyond Camp Street (already mentioned under Landscaping) was exceptionally well maintained. Estates off the Costello road varied from the well kept to the promising.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Resurfacing in Main Street and also on the Clifden road (in progress) was impressive: good street surfaces draw a street together like a good carpet in a room. (Are new footpaths on one side of the Clifden road to be repeated on the other?) Crossing points and paving were well maintained. The main car park was well presented. Traffic management was very poor: this must be endemic in the summer months but should really be taken radically in hand. Some first class lamp

standards were admired - these could be extended to other areas with advantage. There was well kept street furniture at the pier. Some streets, but not all, had attractive name signs.

General Impression:

A town bursting with activity and a real sense of prosperity. It is clear from your documentation that you are aware of elements that need attention and that plans for improvements are under way where necessary. It will be very interesting to see how you have progressed by next year, and all good wishes are offered in your admirable endeavours.

Second Round Adjudication:

Oughterard is indeed welcome back to the competition after a number of years absence! Major roadworks were still underway on Second Adjudication Day. Discourage advertising hoardings as these can give approach roads and town centres a rather cluttered appearance. A charming whitewashed cottage on the Maam Cross road was admired with its window boxes filled with red geraniums. The Shrubbery or Village Park looked well on the day and was being well used. The charming Church on the hill on the Maam Cross approach was admired, for its magnificent setting. The Cobb House Hotel looked very fresh. There were a number of empty sites and derelict buildings along the main streets, which would benefit from development – one in particular, near the Angler's Bar was unfortunate in its rather prominent location, as was that opposite the butcher's. Some outbuildings on the Pier Road should be attended to, as they look quite rusty. Litter control could have been better on the day – quite a lot had been dumped behind the boundary wall of the Health Centre, where building work was taking place, at the Pier Road, Square junction and to the basement gratings along main streets. Untidy yard areas should be screened from public view. Wildwood B&B was admired, with its retention of its original windows. Oughterard is a very busy town with potential to succeed well in the competition, with some hard work and dedication!