

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Artane** Ref: **1187**
County: **Dublin (City)** Mark: **195**
Category: **G** Date(s): **27/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	25
Landscaping	50	20
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20
Litter Control	50	25
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	25
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	20
General Impression	10	5
TOTAL MARK	400	195

Overall Development Approach:

Artane was entered as part of the drive by SuperValu to work with communities to approve the environmental standards of their areas through participation in the National TidyTowns Competition. Areas were entered on the basis that they fall within the catchment area of the nearest SuperValu store and this 'baseline assessment' is intended to provide a basis on which progress could be made over the coming years through partnership with residents, businesses and local agencies. As such it should not be interpreted as a critique of the area but rather an opportunity for everybody to work together to make their hometown a better place to work, live and visit. As part of SuperValu's strategic approach to sustainable development in the area, a nominal mark has been given to reflect this. Further marks will be awarded in future years where more tangible TidyTowns structures are developed and local environmental plans prepared and implemented.

The Built Environment:

Artane is a mostly residential Dublin suburb. Like many suburbs it is difficult for the visitor to immediately locate a distinctive heart or 'town centre' to the area, where one might perhaps expect to find some commercial or civic buildings. This is of course largely a product of the history of the area's development but much could still be done to create a focus which would indicate one is entering a distinct and unique area of Dublin. This would be a very worthwhile project that could be developed in partnership with Dublin City Council over the coming years. At things stand, it was difficult for the adjudicator to accurately know where the area began and ended, so forgive me if some mistakes were made. In TidyTowns this is normally resolved by the TidyTowns group submitting a map with their entry form and if the community gets behind this new TidyTowns effort, this could be considered for next year. Therefore for this assesment, the centre was taken to be the Artane House pub and the commercial area around Artane Castle. I am aware that the centre could also be taken to be the roundabout and the row of shops and houses along the Malahide Road, although I believe the Artane Castle complex does offer the best location being off the busy road. And as a complex it is

quite attractive being very well presented and maintained. Indeed, generally speaking all the commercial buildings, including businesses along the Malahide Road, are well presented, although an initiative could be introduced to encourage the replacement of plastic shop fronts as moving away from these styles helps to give a town greater character. McDonald's has shown how this can be done through its stylish McCafé branding. I should point out that throughout the assessment I was very aware of the proximity to the scene of the heartbreaking Stardust tragedy and I sincerely hope that the site can be developed in a sensitive manner that could not just win the support of everybody affected but become a symbol of remembrance and healing!

Landscaping:

Like many urban areas the opportunity exists to introduce refreshed landscaping throughout the area and perhaps enhance the ubiquitous maple and lime trees planted on every street and in every open green space. They are alien species, providing no food for birds, and when planted in monocultures are a dull, dark green in summer. There is a very welcome exception to this at the front of Tesco where there are some mature birch and willow. A survey of open spaces would quickly provide the basis for a new landscaping scheme that could be promoted by a TidyTowns group.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

As mentioned above, there is great potential for some fine landscaping and of course this would also have benefits for wildlife. The introduction of a variety of native trees would make an immediate difference. Not cutting the grass during the summer in selected areas would also allow the creation of grassy meadows and new habitats that would encourage wildflowers and insects, and in turn provide food and cover for birds.

Litter Control:

Despite the size of the area and the amount of through traffic, particularly at the Malahide Road, there was only minor amounts of litter to be seen. Well done to all concerned!

Waste Minimisation:

Without details of ongoing community projects, it was difficult to assess the extent of progress being made under this category and I would look forward to seeing whether progress has in fact been made on future assessments. However taking into account the existing council facilities and SuperValu's own commitment in this area, I believe a nominal mark is appropriate for this year. There are however plenty of ways in which local communities can assist in tackling this growing problem and many useful tips are contained in the Race Against Waste community booklet available from the TidyTowns Unit in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Tidiness:

The area is generally uncluttered although traffic is constantly heavy, as Artane is not only on a major route to Dublin City Centre but also, in more recent times, has become a route to Beaumont Hospital. While there was evidence of graffiti, it was not as obvious as in many other urban areas.

Residential Areas:

I am delighted to report that residential areas are litter free, tidy, well sign posted and have a colourful array of well kept gardens. Well done to all concerned! Arlea church is beautifully landscaped although the adjacent Resource Centre could do with some renovation.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Roads were generally in a good condition and appeared well maintained. While parts of Artane are identified through the names of pubs and other businesses, a welcome sign to the area would enhance this identity. McGovern's pub on the main approach road has a very nice front.

General Impression:

The impression of Artane is that it is a very nice place to live with well kept residential areas displaying a strong sense of community pride which could see the area do very well in TidyTowns. Like many suburban areas, the main priority is to create a more visible sense of location through developing a town centre, probably around the Artane Castle Complex, and better defining its boundaries with good signage. I very much hope that this report will help in some way in encouraging Artane to develop its latent potential.