

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Northwood** Ref: **1323**
County: **Dublin (City)** Mark: **185**
Category: **E** Date(s): **21/07/2007**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2007 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 25 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 25 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 15 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 20 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 30 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 5 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 10 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 25 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 25 |
| General Impression | 10 | 5 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 185 |

Overall Development Approach:

This area 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:

Northwood is a brand new business/residential area just south of the Ballymun M50 exit. Many buildings are unfinished so it is very much a work in progress. The completed buildings are very modern, architecturally interesting and distinct from each other. The GAMA headquarters looks particularly well. The small retail area has yet to open but looks good.

Landscaping:

Many areas have yet to be landscaped but where this has occurred deciduous shrubs have been planted. Some mature trees have been retained, adding greatly to the areas appearance. It will take time for landscaping measures to mature and it is suggested that flowering, preferably native trees and shrubs are used to add some colour. The area around Northwood Fitness could be enhanced with some vegetation. While the residential units are all apartments, many occupants have made imaginative use of balcony space to add greenery. Gulliver's retail park is clean but some additional planting of trees here would do much to

soften its image.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Despite being very built-up, there are stretches of remnant hedgerow still in existence and rabbits were seen to be grazing in these areas. It is hoped that these valuable wildlife habitats will be retained – ideally managed as a wildlife area. Elsewhere, there are some good stands of mature trees within green areas. It would be a good idea to set aside zones in these areas where the grass is cut only once or twice a year (early spring and late autumn). The application of weed killers and fertilisers should be avoided. These measures will encourage wild flowers and insects – in turn providing food and cover for birds. Installing bird and bat boxes on the mature chestnut trees would greatly enhance the wildlife value of these areas. The lake and woodland of Santry Demesne are a fantastic wildlife and amenity asset. Perhaps an information panel detailing the species to be found would give people more appreciation of this.

Litter Control:

The area was litter free on the day although for its size perhaps there should be some bins around. Some dumping of builders debris has occurred on waste ground (in the drainage ditch beside the GAMA building), but it is presumed all this will be removed on completion of the development.

Waste Minimisation:

Without details of ongoing community projects, it was difficult to ascertain the extent of progress being made under this category, 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.

Tidiness:

During this visit construction was still very much underway. Nevertheless the roads were free of mud and hoardings were of a good quality.

Residential Areas:

While the residential areas are looking really well, more could be done to label the apartment blocks with proper names – rather than merely Block A, Block B, etc., as along Northwood road. The lighting and civic sculptures add character to this emerging town and lend it a warm appearance.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The area has been fully integrated with footpaths and cycle lanes which is to be commended. Welcome signs on the approach roads would do much to enhance the new town's identity.

General Impression:

It is very pleasing to see a new town emerging that is not just a sea of apartments. Northwood has great potential to be a fine example of urban planning with integrated components of business/residential/amenity and wildlife and as such could be a really strong contender in the national Tidy Towns competition. We look forward to seeing its progress over the next few years.