

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Santry** Ref: **801**
County: **Dublin (City)** Mark: **197**
Category: **G** Date(s): **21/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	25
Landscaping	50	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20
Litter Control	50	25
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	197

Overall Development Approach:

Santry was entered this year as part of the drive by SuperValu to work with communities to improve their areas through participation in the National TidyTowns Competition and assist in making their hometowns better places to work, live and visit. To generate interest this 'baseline assessment' has been conducted to assess the current state of play and identify areas that residents, businesses and local agencies could work together on in common interest. As an initial survey it is limited in scope and for reasons elaborated on beneath, the focus was generally on the sites most visible to those entering the area. TidyTowns is, of course, much broader than that, encompassing not less than a 1km radius from the centre of an urban area. Information provided by the entrant is therefore extremely important in assisting the adjudication process, and this was by necessity not available on this occasion. But an active TidyTowns group would quickly address this issue. This is particularly relevant to Santry which was active in TidyTowns up to 2004, when it was not only scoring well, but more importantly, was making steady progress.

The Built Environment:

It was difficult to do justice to Santry's aforementioned rich historical legacy during a baseline assessment, and this adjudicator looks forward to the day when, armed with exciting and detailed information from a newly formed TidyTowns group, a proper architectural audit of the area could be undertaken. As a long established area, it was no surprise to see the mature residential areas were generally presented to a very high standard - congratulations to all concerned. The OMNI retail centre dominates the Swords Road area and the adjudicator was glad to see major redevelopment taking place here adhering to the principle of creating a strong streetscape - with appropriate landscaping and natural ageing, the old and new will combine to create a better sense of place where its most needed. Many businesses were looking well on the day, but I must point out the excellently presented Swiss Cottage which looked really well on adjudication day. Its name is of course a reminder of times past, and a fine way in which an areas heritage can be kept alive in a modern

setting.

Landscaping:

There is much scope for formal landscaping throughout Santry and when the ongoing building works settle down an opportunity exists to really transform the area's appearance along the Swords Road, its most visible face to people passing through the area. Along here, the aforementioned OMNI centre is well landscaped which very much softens its image, however there is great potential to develop the stretch of road from the OMNI to AIB where only wire fences and railings are visible. The PARC building is a fine example of how this can be done. The junction at the top of the Oscar Treynor road could also be improved with creative landscaping introduced to soften the bare look of the area. It is also noted that currently Santry village is visually cut off from the fine grounds in Santry Demense to an extent that a newcomer to the area may not see the historical connection. Work at the junction should restore this connection through a landscaping scheme reducing the width of the main road. With traffic now encouraged to use the M1 into the City Centre and opportunity exist to reclaim this space somewhat from the car!

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Magenta Hall has a remnant hedgerow which is a great wildlife habitat. It should only be cut during the winter however (October - February) to avoid disturbance to nesting birds. The church grounds is a potentially rich wildlife habitat. While it is important to cut the grass in the graveyard, herbicides and pesticides should be avoided. Margins around trees should be allowed to grow and the open area to the rear should only be cut once a year. To create a tidy appearance, the margin could be regularly cut and a small information panel would inform visitors of the project.

Litter Control:

The area was generally litter free, particularly residential areas. However, there were a few blackspots noticed on the day of adjudication, The area around the Maxol station was littered and there was a foul smell of refuse coming from somewhere. Bins at the bus stops along the Swords Road were overflowing as were the bins between Magner's Pharmacy and the Spar shop. A reinvigorated TidyTowns effort could go a long way to tackling this issue.

Waste Minimisation:

Without details of ongoing community projects, it was difficult to ascertain the extent of progress being made under this category and I would look forward to seeing whether progress has in fact been made in future assessments. However taking into account the existing council facilities and SuperValu's own commitment in this area, 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, such as promoting best practice in businesses and schools, encouraging household composting through local workshops and lobbying for access to appropriate recycling facilities. How this has been achieved in other areas is contained in the Race Against Waste community booklet available from the TidyTowns Unit in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Tidiness:

Ongoing development work detracts from the area's appearance at the moment but this will settle down and ultimately improve the area. At some point, the opportunity should be taken to see whether telephone and electricity cables could be placed underground as their proliferation and presentation were also not helpful in this regard. The cross-roads at the entrance to the OMNI centre is also cluttered with neon and plastic signage and there is graffiti on many buildings and shop shutters.

Residential Areas:

As stated above residential areas are as very well kept with some magnificent gardens. New areas along the road to Ballymun also look very well and greatly improve what was a rather deserted road in years gone by.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

With the amount of commercial premises it is inevitable that some will present rather untidy and cluttered back areas to the passer by. These could be screened from sight with some thoughtful landscaping. However Church Lane, with its historic church and graveyard should really be a priority.

General Impression:

Santry has the potential to once again do very well in TidyTowns. It has problems but no more than other urban areas and a revitalised TidyTowns effort would create the momentum to tackle these issues. Consideration was given during this assessment to progress made in TidyTowns over the years. I sincerely

hope that residents and businesses working in partnership will consider re-entering the competition again next year.