

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Whitehall** Ref: **1319**
County: **Dublin (City)** Mark: **200**
Category: **F** 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	30
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	5
TOTAL MARK	400	200

Overall Development Approach:

Whitehall 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:

Whitehall is a mature residential Dublin suburb. Its most prominent feature is its church. It is unusual in that it is built of red brick with copper domes and also the Spanish style bell tower. The mosaic of the holy family at the entrance must surely be a unique feature. The grounds Margaret Aylward Community College are in a poor state of neglect and could do with being tidied up. The neighbourhood in general is very charming. The Grand Bingo Hall used to be a cinema with the classic cinema facade. The sign however is plastic and detracts from the buildings appearance. Some shops along this stretch are also unfortunately abandoned with graffitied shutters.

Landscaping:

The church has recently opened its car park and has been planted throughout with maple and dogwood. This is generally welcomed, although it should be noted that maple is of little value to wildlife and when planted in monocultures can be a dull, green colour in summer. The park to the rear of the church is mostly green grass

and the same planted maple/lime trees. This could be greatly improved by planting with a variety of native species - cherry, rowan, oak, birch etc...Much more pleasing on the eye and of great value to wildlife.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The park to the rear of the church has great potential to be a wildlife habitat. Unfortunately the current landscaping is not wildlife friendly. A greater variety of native trees, and more of them, along with setting some areas aside to allow the grass to grow long would greatly boost biodiversity in this area. Small information panels would inform locals.

Litter Control:

There was a minor amount of litter on the foot path in front of the Bingo hall. The residential areas were litter free.

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:

Many of the shop fronts are plastic and the Bingo Hall in particular would greatly enhance the look of the area if it were to have improved signage. The pavement all along the front of these shops is cracked and crumbling.

Residential Areas:

The residential areas are beautifully kept, some with spectacular gardens. The street signs are of the old, bi-lingual variety and should be cherished.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

There is little in Whitehall to identify itself and some welcome signs on the approach roads would do much to address this. These roads are all urban in nature and it is difficult to determine when you are leaving one area and entering another.

General Impression:

Whitehall is a charming old Dublin suburb. Unfortunately its appearance is diminished by poor shop fronts and poor landscaping in the open spaces. Participation in TidyTowns would assist in developing community and business interest in tackling these issues.