

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Newport** Ref: **567**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **208**
Category: **B** Date(s): **19/07/2006**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2006 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 36 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 31 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 30 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 19 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 23 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 6 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 11 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 19 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 27 |
| General Impression | 10 | 6 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 208 |

Overall Development Approach:

The Newport tidy towns submission that accompanied the entry form was a very substantial document and appraised all the current developments within the town and surrounds. This document is an excellent guide to the current and future development of the town and is extremely well presented. The submission document shows that there is a great level of interest in developing the buildings, amenities and approach roads to the village. The amount of new building taking place at the moment is exceptional as there appears to be a development in each quarter of the town. This is very encouraging and if the number of derelict buildings can be dealt with at the same rate as the developments Newport will be a very changed place in a few years. The riverside setting and the 9 arched bridge gives a characteristic setting for the town. The town seems to be divided naturally into three segments – across the river on the Westport side, the middle Main Street, and the areas behind the Newport hotel. A well planned approach year by year is important with an eye on the overall development towards the future.

The Built Environment:

There is an interesting range of buildings through the town. The four story buildings along the Main Street are unique and give a defined style to this condensed area. The De Bille building appears well and the origin of the name is interesting. The Newport hotel appears well as does Dominic Kelly's premises. The Granary Mill/tourist office/ Information Technology buildings is a fine use of this building and so central. The Oratory is beautiful and a marvelous use of the station building. St Patrick's church with the lovely red sandstone structure stands high above the town and forms a great landmark. The nine arched bridge is indeed a landmark and it is great to see the plans for this and hopefully they will commence soon as at present it is a lost opportunity and a dirt gatherer. The new apartment block behind the Newport hotel will change the face of the town. The apartment block on the riverside on the Westport side quay is very substantial and appears well with the timer facing and the riverside aspect. Major works are in progress along the quay to this site as are

the works at the old station. There is a significant number of derelict and dilapidated buildings in the town. These of course are well known to the committee and hopefully extra concentration will be focused on eliminating these as they are inconsistent with the aims of the town. The school and health centres appear very well. The Eamonn Laigin memorial appears well.

Landscaping:

The riverside areas are very well maintained with the enormous stretches of grass. The areas by the children's playground and picnic tables are well landscaped and form pleasant places to be as well as giving a good entrance to the town from the Westport side. The main street tree planting is a great asset - even this small amount of tree planting gives such a benefit on the street. These trees are substantial, the grids at their bases are attractive and fitting in well with the paving. The rose beds near the bottle bank give a good touch of summer colour. The Church grounds appear very well with the lovely surround of trees and well maintained hedges and shrubberies. The approach road developments contribute well to the overall landscape of the town. The good work of tree planting is developing well. The containerised plantings through the town were much admired and these give a lovely sparkle of summer colour to the town – especially those at the Granary Mill. The entrance grounds at Newport House add a further dimension to the landscape of the town. The pampas grass by the oratory looks well.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The town walks set out by map this year are a very good development and draw attention not only to the value of walking but to the range of features that can be observed on each of the walks. The riverside areas offer enormous potential for appreciation of the natural environment. The walks on each side of the river are very attractive and give good strolling ground from which to observe the river. A walkway at the other side of the road bridge would be a fantastic amenity as on that side there is rich planting of trees and undergrowth giving a totally different habitat with wider opportunity for wild life observation. Consideration should be given to the possibility of such a development. The nine arch bridge could act as a good observation point.

Litter Control:

The activities described in the submission show that there is great emphasis on efforts to keep litter off the streets. The cleanups, shore line cleanups and the continual litter collections and litter observation are doing much to keep litter at bay. During the visit evidence was seen of litter collecting and bin emptying. There were small amounts of litter noted on the street. A disappointing level of litter was observed on the viaduct and especially on the passage way from the viaduct to the playground - this area needs special attention. The achievement of the local school of the green flag deserves good credit.

Waste Minimisation:

The litter bins were observed and are very well maintained with good structure around them and easy access. As mentioned above the green flag achievement is a good credit and will help under this heading. This aspect of the competition is about concentrating both on the need to choose materials and methods that avoid producing waste and to consider environmentally friendly ways of dealing with the waste that is generated. A campaign of awareness with both homeowners and business people needs to be started to give an understanding of the importance of waste management and recycling. Compost heaps can be made for green materials, avoidance of using materials that do not degrade easily and separation of the various materials so that they can be recycled.

Tidiness:

There is a good level of tidiness in general. However at the present time the number of building developments ongoing is having an effect on the tidiness level in the town and surrounds. This is temporary and hopefully all sites when finished will be properly reinstated and good landscaping done around them. The area on the corner en route to the school appears very unfinished – opposite Kelly car sales centre. It is important to keep a watchful eye on building developments – especially housing estates to ensure they are well finished off before the developers leave the site. The concentration on dealing with excess signage and road ways systems is good news and hopefully new initiatives will emerge to help in these respects. The road along past the handball alley is very untidy with machine parts and materials deposited by the roadside. The well grassed and maintained quayside areas are a delight and give a very tidy appearance.

Residential Areas:

There is a good range of residential housing in the town. The traditional street side residences play a very important part in the original core of the town and these appear well. The contrast of new apartments offers new style of living unknown before in this town. A watchful eye should be kept on applications for planning

permissions lest some development would get approval that would be damaging to the original integrity of the town core value. Residents committees should be encouraged within all estates and apartment blocks so that there can be a greater sense of ownership and pride in the town and surrounds. Individual homeowners can contribute very well to the overall appearance of the town by the care they give to their own properties.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The road surfaces through the centre of the town are very bumpy in places and need attention. Paving is attractive along the main street. The under grounding of cables has done much to improve the appearance of the town centre. The approach roads appear well and good work has been achieved by the methodical planning for each entrance road. The viaduct project looks very exciting and hopefully this will get underway shortly. Good work on approach roads in the form of leveling of roadside verges, grass cutting and tree planting has taken place.

General Impression:

Newport has many attractive amenities. The town is going through a big transition at the moment with the new buildings. The concentration on the town centre and the viaduct project will form the central core base for all the surrounding buildings that are taking place and thereby create a very attractive riverside town.