

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **BANDON**
County : **CORK**
Category : **E**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 13-06-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	35	33
The Built Environment	40	27	26
Landscaping	40	27	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	17	16
Litter Control	40	29	27
Tidiness	20	12	12
Residential Areas	30	18	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	26
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	198	189

Bandon, Co Cork

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

The extensive area of older streets, and the impressive number of fine public buildings, suggest to the visitor a much larger town than its comparatively low population actually reveals. A closer look, and a study of the excellent 5 year Development Plan, discloses how the town declined in the present century, only recovering and starting to expand again in recent years. All this demonstrates the size and difficulty of the task taken on by this enterprising Committee. Some of the comments which will be made below may seem harsh, but they are offered in the spirit of a real desire to see Bandon do as well as the efforts of the Committee and the basic vibrancy and attractiveness of the town deserve. (The Ordnance Survey map provided has been interesting as a reference, but is impossible to cope with while walking the streets! - next year could you please supply a simple street-plan with salient sites and completed projects indicated?) Local support and sponsorship as shown in the answers to the questionnaire, and the ongoing good relationship with public bodies, are much admired.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The principal Churches, the Banks (the TSB was particularly noted); the blue-painted Court House, the smart Garda Station with its fine lamp standards, the Kingdom Hall and many well-appointed and brightly painted shopfronts, were very favourably noted. Some business premises are marred by mass-produced signage and lack of attention to upper storeys and roofs. To this adjudicator, alterations in the past to some faces of the unique hexagonal building at the Shambles is a major concern which might be sympathetically addressed in the Development Plan; it is a very conspicuous site. The Heritage Centre in the deconsecrated Church contains fascinating and unique displays covering a millennium of Bandon's history. The purpose of the visit was to ascertain whether a Heritage Award might be proposed, but the exhibits are not well laid out and there is a sense of dedicated voluntary work not having received the kind of financial incentives lavished on less authentic Centres elsewhere; hopefully a future candidate. The ruined arcaded building with a pedimented arch opposite the Church of Ireland and now incorporated in a commercial premises is not marked on the map; it needs attention. A number of derelict sites were seen; best wishes for your efforts at St Patricks Hill. Many of the large commercial premises on Glasslin Road are very well presented.

LANDSCAPING

The work at Allen Square has been most successful. The limetree precinct, the well planted lawns, the restored Maid of Erin 98 monument, seating, the pump and the shrubberies have recreated a most attractive area; one imaginative improvement like this has far more impact than a dozen smaller ones. Good landscaping and

stonework was also seen at Sean Hales Place. The old boulevard-like treescape at St Patricks Quay is something which might be emulated elsewhere in the course of time. The Green at Chapel Street seemed to have been partially improved; adjacent tree, flower and shrub planting brightens this precinct. Troughs of annuals with new seating were admired on the Clonakilty road. A number of small and colourful floral displays, many on commercial premises, provided points of colour throughout the town. The recently cleared Graveyard at the Heritage Centre has exposed some extraordinarily interesting tomb sculpture. The expansive grassed areas of the Sports Ground on the Macroom Road were well kept, but some other areas there were weedy.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

The river is the central natural attraction in Bandon. It is good to read that the river area is to be upgraded in two years time; certainly a walk from the Footbridge to Bandon Bridge would be a pleasant amenity. It was good to see ducks on adjudication day; the identification board for local wildlife is just the right kind of initial project.

LITTER CONTROL

Good, as last year. The provision of additional bins has probably helped. Congratulations.

TIDINESS

There was some kerbside weed on the approach from Innishannon. Rusty materials were visible in a bus park on the old Cork Road. Many poorly painted or dilapidated backs of houses are visible throughout the town and give an unkempt overall effect. However, headway seems to be gradually being made. Weed growth on stonework appears to have been successfully attended to in some locations.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The stock of very handsome old town houses, such as in South Main Street, Oliver Plunkett Street and Kilbrogan Hill, is very extensive, and it would be impossible to expect all of them to be in first rate condition. The most positive shared element is their being painted in strong colours. Dozens of smaller street houses are well presented, such as a multicoloured terrace on the old Cork road, and are very appealing. Several estates on high ground, such as Ardan na nOglach, are well kept; new hilltop housing south of the town looks promising, and there are opportunities for good landscaping on newly opened roads. There are many pleasant individual homes on the outskirts, with attractive gardens.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The approach roads from Skibbereen, Dunmanway and Innishannon, all bordered by very fine deciduous trees, create a sense of expectancy which is not altogether satisfied on arrival in some parts of the town centre. The cheek-by-jowl syndrome is very much in evidence: unkempt or near-derelict sites side by side with others - fortunately the majority - which are very well maintained.

One example is the area of Sealys Lane/Weir Street/MacSweeneys Quay. It is clear that the Committee is very much aware of this, and we will undoubtedly see gradual improvement under the Development Plan. Street surfaces are good; new paving on one side of Oliver Plunkett Street is excellent and it is good to read that it is to be repeated on the other side.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A town of real quality which is making an impressive effort to overcome environmental difficulties, and will certainly succeed if the plans of this Committee continue in the way they are going at present.