



ARMADALE TOWN CENTRE Public Realm Design Framework

West Lothian Council
August 2009

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Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

West Lothian Council are seeking to promote and facilitate urban regeneration and investment in the districts town centres and is developing with local stakeholders and community interests public realm strategies for physical improvement.

A study of Armadale Town Centre has been completed that includes an assessment of the potential for improvements in the town that will help to support the growth of the town, support centre vitality, increase the opportunity for town centre retailers and enhance place quality. The intent has been to establish through consultation, a clear vision and strategy for the public realm addressing Armadale Town Centre and Bathville Cross and from this to develop a project based strategy and design framework that supports local plan and locality planning.

The Public Realm Design Framework will establish a clear framework for public realm investment and will be promoted within the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Formerly known as *Barbauchlaw*, it was purchased in 1790 by Sir William Honeyman who



Armadale Public Art



Armadale Town Centre from the west



Armadale Historical Photo



Armadale Historical Photo

1.2 History and Background

named it Armadale after a town on his Sutherland estates.

In the nineteenth century, the hamlet became a popular industrial area because of its brick-clay, coal, ironstone and limestone deposits. After the arrival of the railway in 1855, and the extension of the Edinburgh-Bathgate line to Airdrie in 1861, Armadale became a burgh (1864). A gas-works was established – or renewed in 1919 and by 1921 the population was approximately 5,000. After a small decline to 1931 renewed growth led to nearly 8,000 people living in Armadale in 1951, enjoying the facilities of a large village, and with three coal mines and the brickworks. The quarries, brickworks and steelworks provided work for its inhabitants until their decline of the 1970s. This led to industrial estates being developed and by 1972 a hosiery factory had created local employment for women.

Armadale lost its local government status in 1975 but remained a large village and important local centre. The 2001 census estimate states the approximate population of the settlement as 9,550 and Armadale is identified as a town within the Development Plan.

Introduction

1.3 Successful Town Centres

Successful town centres are a result of a number of complex and interrelating aspects – environmental and service quality, mix and diversity, activity and vibrancy, adaptability, accessibility, etc. It is useful to look at national planning guidance where many of these key attributes have been explained and form key policy objectives.

Scottish Planning Policy 8

SPP8 identifies town centres as places which provide a diverse and sustainable mix of activities and land uses which create an identity that signals their function and wider role.

One of the key policy objectives contained in SPP8, especially relevant to this report is the need “to improve the physical quality of our town centre environments”. This means promoting good quality design, protecting and enhancing existing quality, supporting the creation of town centres which are safe, inclusive and attractive for everyone and which promote sustainable management of water and energy.

Planning Advice Note 59: Improving Town Centres (1999)

PAN 59 identifies the general qualities of successful and popular town centres. These centres:

Include a range of facilities focused in a relatively small area (a critical mass of attractions) and make best use of the already considerable investment in the built environment. These attractions include a mix of shops (particularly specialised shops providing choice and variety) as well as a wide range of financial, professional and government services together with cultural, entertainment and leisure facilities. There are therefore considerable opportunities to combine shopping trips with other activities. The existence of a thriving local resident population can be a positive force for change and the maintenance of quality.

Are highly accessible by a range of types of transport (and in addition make best use of their traditional focus as nodes for public transport), have sufficient good quality short stay car parking close to shops, have good transport linkages within the centre and have efficient arrangements for delivery of goods

Have an attractive amenity in terms of built environment and townscape, streets and public spaces are considered clean and safe and have a sense of local identity and character; all of which greatly enhances the attraction of the centre in which the shopping or leisure experience take place; and, in the future, will be those which have the vision and mechanisms in place to build on these assets, overcome problems, adapt to market and consumer needs, and secure appropriate and necessary improvements

Designing Streets: Consultation Draft

Designing Streets is intended to be a companion document to “Designing Places” and aims to apply the principles of good design contained in that policy to both new and wherever possible, existing streets. The intended outcome is streets that are better designed to accommodate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, as well as contributing to the quality of the built environment and place-making.

Designing Streets refocuses on the place-making function, giving clear guidance on how to achieve well-designed streets and spaces that serve the community in a range of ways. Designing Streets is expected to be used predominantly for the design, construction, adoption and maintenance of new streets, but it is also applicable to existing streets subject to re-design.



Introduction

1.4 The Public Realm

The term 'public realm' often means different things to different people or disciplines. Essentially, and for the purposes of this report, the public realm incorporates all areas to which the public has ready access. This includes streets, lanes, vennels, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.

- The appearance, character and quality of the public realm are composed of streetscape and landscape elements (both hard and soft) and treatments directly within the space and by the buildings and landscaping that frame and enclose the space. The latter is frequently referred to in the field of urban design as the 'public realm armature' which recognises the total extent of open space connecting building form and facades, place qualities and public realm regardless of whether this is public or privately owned.
- The public realm is shaped by the actions of a range of people and disciplines, including highway engineers, urban designers, architects, planners, developers, maintenance workforce, property owners and of course the general public in the way they use, treat and move around the public realm. As such, designing, creating, managing and maintaining the public realm is rarely a straightforward process, and achieving a high quality of public realm requires commitment from all parties working in collaboration around a shared vision and goal.

- Use of the public realm inevitably involves a wide range of differing groups of people, particularly within a town centre location. These groups, often referred to as stakeholders, includes everyone with an interest in the quality and success of the town centre. Conflicting needs and requirements between stakeholders often arise which needs to be carefully managed from the outset. This should be addressed through town centre management and creation of a public realm which is fit-for-purpose, functions effectively and which strengthens the sense of quality and enjoyment.

Small towns across Scotland have over the last decade witnessed significant challenges as a result of changing patterns of retailing and a planning system that has done little to support traditional local centres. In recent years Scottish Planning Policy and Planning Guidance has sought to address this and give greater recognition to urban design, sustainable places and address the importance of urban design and design quality in planning decisions.

Small towns are a key element of the economic, social and historical tapestry of Scotland. There are 262 with a population of between 2,000 and 20,000 inhabitants which constitute around a third of the Scottish population. These are important urban places and are likely to become more important as we seek to find ways to promote more sustainable living and address the key challenges of climate change. Small towns and local centres are also vital to local economies as key locations supporting enterprise local services, transport interchange and a range of civic functions.



Introduction

1.4 The Public Realm cont'

Experience over recent years and from similar sized towns elsewhere suggests that the traditional market town qualities are under threat. The Federation of Small Business in Scotland notes that:

Specialised stores including butchers, bakers, fishmongers and newsagents selling confectionery, tobacco and newspapers closed at the rate of 50 per week between 1997-2002

General stores have been closing at the rate of one per day and 13,000 independent newsagents closed between 1995 and 2004 and 8,600 independent grocery stores closed between 2000-2005 (25% decline)

Wholesalers which under-pin the vital retail infrastructure for local stores have closed at the rate of six per week over the last two years and over a five-year period VAT registrations for small-scale food manufacturers fell by almost 12%

Confronting these challenges requires positive action by Councils, planners, local stakeholders, retailers and all those with a commitment to their local town. Positive action, when supported by positive planning and concerted local action has been demonstrated to work.

Key lessons learnt include:

- Creating a strong sense of local ownership and active participation in the future planning of town centres
- Creating strong local representative organisations working together to provide leadership and provide champions for the town centre
- Building the quality of place and ensuring that all decisions are aligned with the vision and development objectives of the centre
- Enhancing the town centre offer and quality of the visitor experience
- Building on the distinctive qualities and strengths of the town centre.

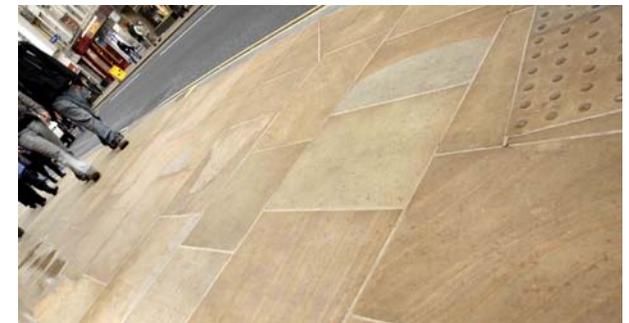


Illustration of improved street pavements



Example of close naming

Introduction

1.5 Armadale and Bathville Cross

Armadale today is a busy local centre but changes in town centre retailing, delivery of services and competition from larger regional shopping centres have created significant challenges for smaller towns such as Armadale. Small towns across the country are increasingly recognising their need to compete and create a distinctive local appeal that brings people back into local town centres and encourages activity and spend.

Critical to this process is developing with all the key stakeholders a shared vision and a clear strategy that ensures all interests are working together within a common shared understanding.

Armadale will in the next decade witness a period of significant growth with the Core Development Areas (CDA's) bringing new investment and new residents to the town. This combined with the new Airdrie–Bathgate Railway will herald new opportunity for the town centre and it is important that Armadale can present a positive new face that makes it an attract location for people to invest, shop, spend leisure time and enjoy the facilities of the town.



Armadale Shopfront



Onstreet parking in Armadale



Bathville Cross—Site for re-development



West Lothian Council Building at 'The Cross'



Place Analysis

2.1 Description

Armadale situated 2 miles (3 km) west of Bathgate. The core of the town centre lies at the junction where East Main Street meets West Main Street. Armadale is now best known for its leaning clock tower on West Main Street. The town also has a long established football team, Armadale Thistle who reside at Volunteer Park.

The population today stands at approximately 10,800 and the town has 3 primary schools and a secondary school.

Local independent traders complimented by small national supermarkets mainly represent retailers in the area.

Armadale has seen a substantial increase in house building in recent years. In particular the character of the Lower

Bathville area is being transformed with the redevelopment of the Atlas Steelworks and Ibstock Brickworks site.



Place Analysis

2.2 Development Plan Context

The Edinburgh and Lothians Structure Plan 2015 (E&LSP) identifies a number of town centres that provide a range of facilities and services, and which also benefit from being the focus of community and public transport. Within West Lothian the Almondvale Centre, Livingston, Armadale, Bathgate, Broxburn/ Uphall, Linlithgow and Whitburn are identified. Policy RET5 requires the town centre boundaries be defined through local plans or other initiatives and the vitality and vibrancy of centres should be kept under review, improvements introduced, and new developments be well integrated into the local townscape. Local Plans should also make appropriate provisions for new local shopping facilities in areas of planning growth, which includes Armadale. The local plan strategy aims to:

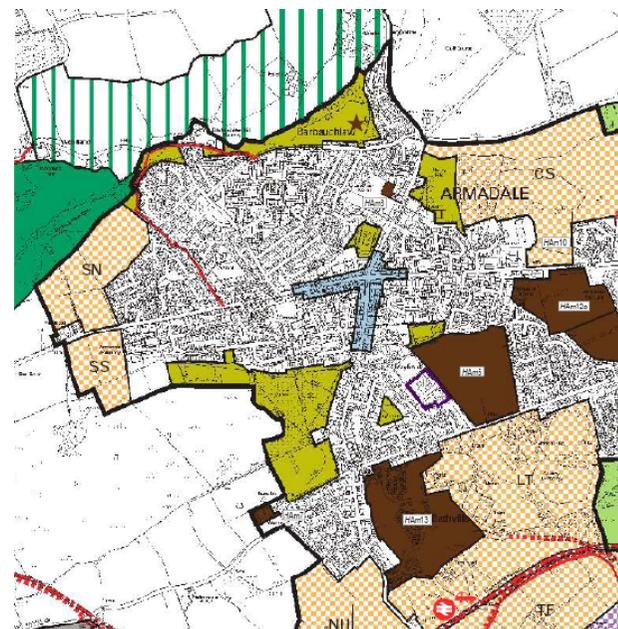
- Sustain the vitality of local centres and encourage retail and community facilities commensurate with their status
- Resist retail development outwith Livingston, Bathgate and other centres identified in the structure plan, and shown on the proposals map, where these would detrimentally affect the identified town centre
- Improve the physical environment of existing centres, through the Council integrating its own programmes of action with those of agencies, developers, traders and local communities with whom it works in partnership
- Promote new retailing provision in the key areas of major planned growth in West Lothian, identified in the Local Plan, but commensurate with supporting the existing nearby centres

The Structure Plan also identifies three Core Development Areas which will be the focus of new development in West Lothian over the structure plan period and beyond. The CDAs are **Armadale**, Livingston & the Almond Valley, and Winchburgh/ East Broxburn/ Uphall.

Policy HOU 3 of the Structure Plan identifies the scale of development required in the CDAs as follows:

Armadale	1,000 – 2000
Livingston & Almond Valley	3,000 – 5,000
Winchburgh/East Broxburn/Uphall	3,000 – 5,000

The West Lothian Local Plan has allocated the maximum numbers allowed from the Structure Plan as it allows the proper planning of large scale housing and mixed used developments in a comprehensive manner, it provides a longer-term vision and certainty for the public about how development affects and integrates with their areas and local communities and it allow for the proper engagement of the public how development affects and integrates with their areas and local communities.



West Lothian Council Local Plan Extract

Place Analysis

2.3 Planning and Development

The need for new retail provision reflects very high levels of retail leakage and the imminent growth of the town through the CDA areas. New housing development is particularly focussed around Lower Bathville and include three large core development areas:

West- accommodating the new Armadale High School and the area to the west of Glenwood Drive

East- including a site on Bathgate Road

South- linking Bathville Cross and new housing developments to the proposed station and reinstated railway line

Relevant local plan policies for Armadale include Policy TC 9 (Retail Provision) and Policy IMP 15 (Promoting High Standards of Design).

The council have also prepared Supplementary Planning Guidance for CDA developer contributions for towns and village

centre improvements. As a result, contributions are required from developers who are building new residential areas for Broxburn/Uphall. The contributions will help create additional facilities and improve the appearance of the town centre close to where the major housing growth is to take place

This document is to be promoted as SPG to provide a development management framework for new development proposals in the town centre and also provide a project plan for investment in the town centres

Locality Plan

Locality Planning is being developed across West Lothian within each multi-member ward. This process involves partner agencies from the public, private and voluntary sectors working together with communities to jointly plan local services.

Locality planning has a particular focus on addressing the key priorities within a local area and seeking to coordinate service delivery, spatial planning, and local initiatives, that:

- Support the delivery of the Council's Single Outcome Agreement
- Engage with and facilitate the involvement of communities in identifying and addressing local priorities
- Provide a focus for action on local priorities
- Encourage integrated service delivery

Armadale is well served by community facilities including the Community Education Centre, Swimming pool and Leisure Centre, Armadale Thistle FC, Library and parks, greenspace and leisure facilities.

A Locality Planning Officer has worked with local groups and local stakeholders to provide support and encourage dialogue and local participation on town centre and other local issues. Closer engagement of stakeholders with the Council and community action and participation through groups such as Retailer and Trader Groups are an important element of this work.



Development site — Bathville Cross



Armadale Swimming Pool



SUMMARY LOCALITY PLAN Armadale and Blackridge Ward 2008 - 2011

Place Analysis

2.4 Strategic & Local Movement

Armadale is located on the A89 and straddles the Edinburgh-Glasgow 'Great Road', near the M8, and is 30 minutes by road from Edinburgh Airport. As part of the Airdrie Bathgate Rail Link Project there will be a new station at Armadale located to the south of the town. Access to the station will be from the centre of Armadale and Whitburn. Planned station facilities include:

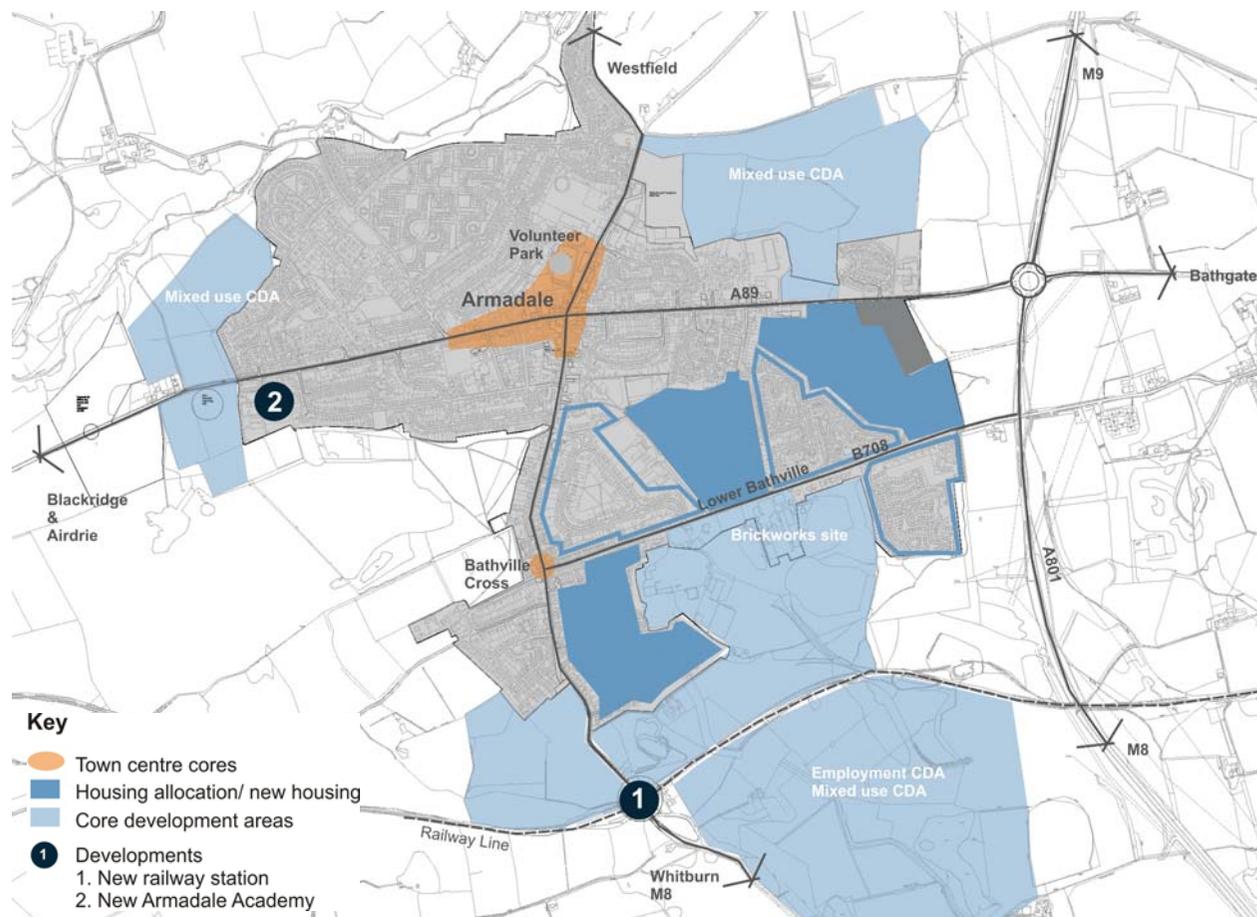
- 2 platforms, 1 footbridge, stairs and ramps
- Waiting shelters on each platform
- Self service ticket machines and passenger information 24 hour
- CCTV for both station and car park
- 188 car-parking spaces (of which 10 spaces will be for people with disabilities) with land provided for possible future extension

Car Parking

On-street parking is provided for in the village and parking is also available in other areas such as the Community Centre and off South Street. Off-street parking is well used and consultation comments have highlighted concern at parking provision and ease of use of the centre.

Bus Connections

Armadale is well served by local bus services to Livingston, Falkirk, Broxburn, Bathgate and Glasgow.

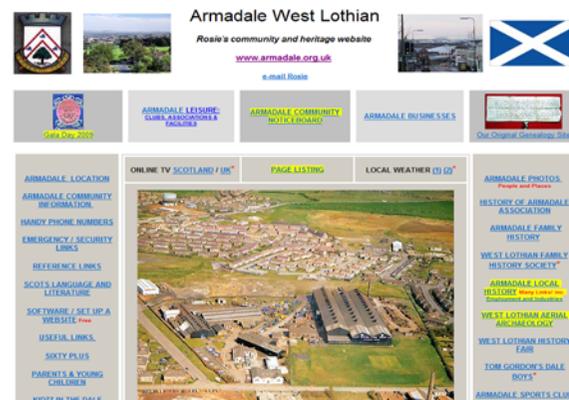


Armadale Context

Place Analysis

2.5 Community Infrastructure

- Armadale has an active community with a History of Armadale Association and active Community Council. These are supported by town centre facilities including the community centre and library.
- The town is supported by a community website, 'Rosie's Community and Heritage Website'
- Meeting of the Armadale Traders Association
- Meetings of the Community Council
- Armadale holds an annual gala.
- The Armadale Thistle Football Team plays at Volunteer Park, located in the town centre
- Its most famous 'landmark' building is the Goth (a pub). The Goth has an interesting history and was set up as a co-operative in 1901 to provide a public-house which would provide good quality goods for customers, where members would have a say in the management, but above all, where some of the profits would, in some form, be applied for the benefit of the community.



Community Website Extract



Volunteer Park, Armadale



Armadale Gala Day

Place Analysis

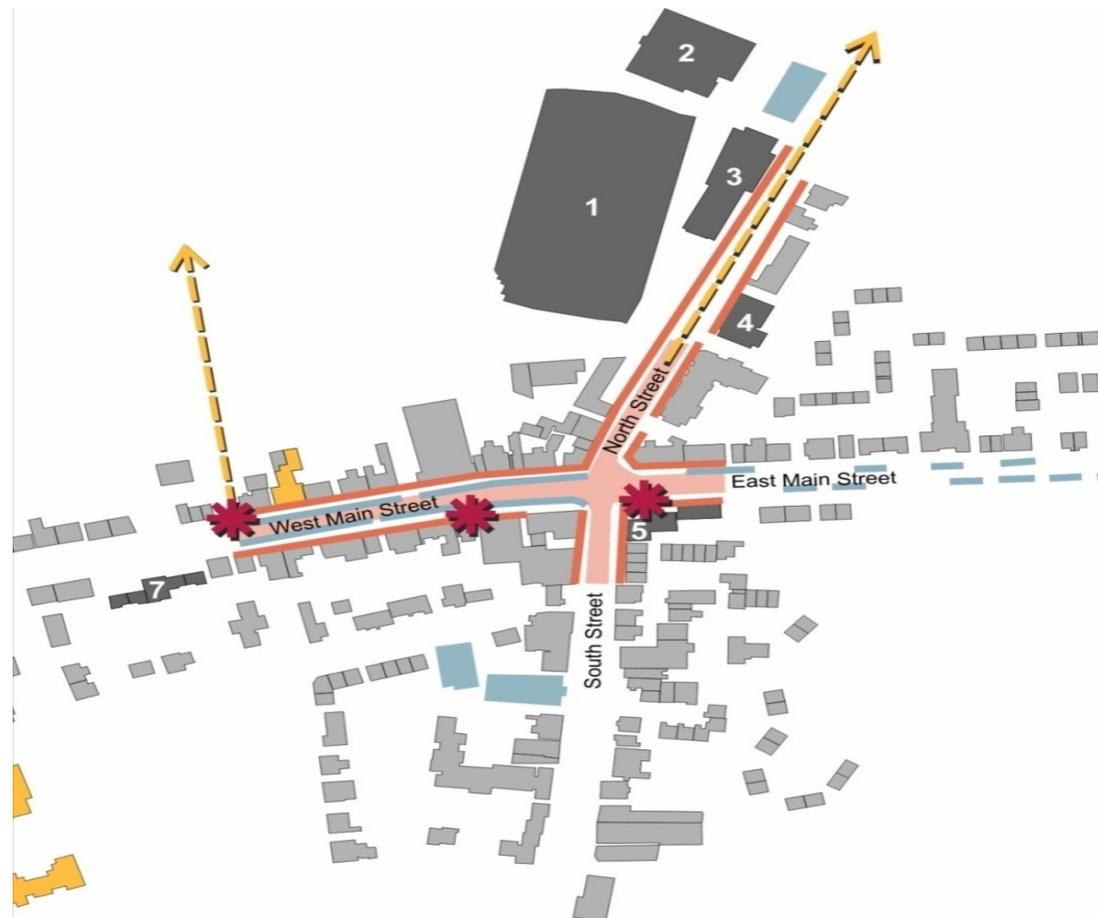
2.6 Assessment of Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths

- The crossroads form an instantly recognisable sense of 'centre'
- The majority of facilities are located within a 5min walk from the crossroads
- The Goth forms a distinctive building and landmark
- Some older buildings are in good condition and provide a strong sense of character and a foundation for developing a quality sense of place
- There are a range of good independent shops



The Goth - Feature Local Building



Town Centre Context - Need to focus on the Cross between Main Street and North\ South Street

2.6 Assessment of Strengths & Weaknesses

Weaknesses

- The key buildings at the crossroads are of mixed quality leading to a weakened sense of character and identity
- Many of the shop fronts have introduced low quality security shutters that gives an impression of 'closed town', highlights the security issue and has an adverse impact on amenity
- There are several areas of dead / leaking space where buildings are set back from the road causing weakening the urban structure and introducing issues of litter and inactive frontage
- The majority of parking is on street with some inevitable conflicts with a busy road and meeting the short stay capacity
- Elements of street furniture, planters and public art are of limited quality giving a cluttered impression
- Further maintenance required in order to give town a face lift and make it more welcoming



Unattractive shop front display in the town centre



Building condition and façade treatments add little to place-appeal



First

60591

Get ready soon
for winter

123456

3

Vision & Objectives

3.1 Vision & Objectives

The delivery of the successful regeneration of Armadale Town Centre will require:

- **A Clear Vision**
- **Development & Design Framework**
- **Action Plan**

Building stronger town centres requires that all development (public / private and voluntary) help support the quality and distinctive attributes of our town centre. A review of Armadale indicates that the above have been lacking at key points of time in past periods of the town's development. A series of decisions over the past 30 years have resulted in an mix of development within the centre which have had the effect of weakening the distinctiveness qualities of Armadale as a traditional town centre.

Building a stronger sense of vision involves close working with the Council and stakeholders to develop a forward looking vision, which is realistic, clear and well understood and importantly is capable of winning support. The plan will inevitably include a range of measures and should be supported by a programme of projects that allow for phased implementation through a range of initiatives and developments.

Consultation has shared a common theme around the need for investment, stronger commitments to regeneration and local participation and the wish to see Armadale prosper. Key ideas and projects have focussed on addressing the key issues (amenity / parking/ heritage / retail choice / local services) around the town centre. The shared vision would address:

"a stronger more vibrant town that offers good local services and a strong sense of identity based around a quality central space and defined core which can offer a good choice of retail and local community facilities that

serve the whole community created around a safe, welcoming public realm that is appealing to residents and visitor alike".

There is the need to plan carefully for future development, taking care to learn the lessons of the past. This study represents a key opportunity to develop a clear strategy for how new developments, future investment and changes to infrastructure should be shaped and brought together in a way that develops the assets of the town and helps to improve competitiveness. Our experience tells us that, if place-making is to have a role, it must be focused to create:

- **Legibility**
- **Distinctiveness**
- **Appropriate and durable quality**

This needs to take into account and build on local assets including importantly the local community, local businesses and stakeholders. Important to building a better quality of town centre is the need to address the:

- **Role of landmark buildings, built heritage places of reference and the need to create clear spatial hierarchies**
- **Development of clear, safe and attractive connections that encourage walking and cycling and safe access for all**
- **Need to focus and prioritise the quality of the central core and address key areas such as image, parking, signage and public realm space**
- **Character, sustainability and enduring quality of all investment**
- **Opportunities for new development to contribute to townscape quality**
- **Securing meaningful local centre regeneration at Bathville Cross**



Vision & Objectives

3.2 Addressing Community Objectives & Enhancing the Centre

In order to address community groups and retailer groups should seek to work closer together in order to promote the area and organise local events and initiatives. This will help strengthen a sense of community in Armadale and also help build community capacity. Closer cooperation between local groups should be encouraged and facilitated by the Council whenever it is possible to do so

A level of consultations were also undertaken to better understand the needs of the stakeholder and community and to establish the opportunity to discuss local issues and town centre improvement priorities in view of preparing the Town Centre Design Guide. The consultation exercise involved the following:

Meeting with Council Stakeholders 22.04.2009
Meeting with Council Stakeholders 22.04.2009
Public Consultation held 09.05.09
Distribution of Questionnaires

The Consultation Report can be found in Appendix with key findings set out below:

All consultees want to see improvements in Armadale
Main improvements sought include:
Gateways & entrances to town
Signage
Improved buildings and street maintenance
Improved parking facilities
Relocation of toilets

Addressing quality of place and design to enhance the centre needs to be framed within a clearly understood set of principles. These need to be established and understood early in the process. Six key qualities are widely considered vital to the success and sustainability of development, it will be important

to keep these in the fore in planning for Armadale's future town centre:

- **Sense of Identity**
Protecting the special qualities of the Town
- **Ease of Movement**
Making circulation direct, safe and interesting
- **Safe and Pleasant Spaces**
Ensuring spaces are appealing to users
- **Sense of Welcome**
Ensuring places feel clean, safe and inviting
- **Adaptability**
Support diverse activity and allow for change
- **Good Use of Resources**
Ensure resources are well used

Based on the above, development and other initiatives within the town centre should be designed to:

Perceptions & Image
Create a welcoming and attractive first impression
Portray a positive, inviting and high quality image
Encourage diverse mix of uses and activities

Connected & Accessible
Encourage a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment
Improve legibility of the public space network through townscape improvements

Maintain & Enhance Quality

Allow for efficient and effective maintenance and management of public realm
Replace or improve unattractive or poorly maintained buildings, street furniture, etc.

Safety

Ensure that the public space network is, and is perceived to be, safe, secure and inviting
Deter crime and anti-social behaviour where possible through passive means
Allow for ease of movement through safe and convenient pedestrian crossings
Provide high level of security to business premises



Typical orientation signage around a town centre

Vision & Objectives

3.3 Key Opportunities for Armadale

Key Theme: Quality Central Space

Opportunities to create

- A better defined core
- An improved sense of welcome and arrival

How can this be achieved?

- Shop front improvements are critical particularly at the key corners
- Improved signage
- Build upon local distinctiveness in detailing and quality of the public realm
- Location for off street parking facilities linked to the core area?

Key Theme: Bathville Cross - Southern Gateway

Opportunities to create:

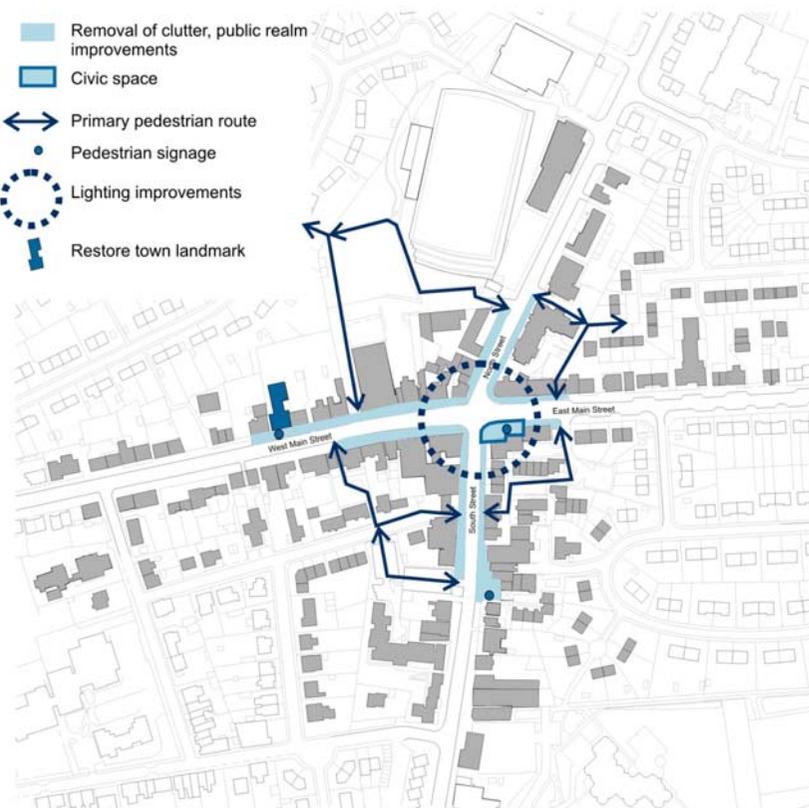
- An improved secondary or local centre
- A more distinctive town entrance

How can this be achieved?

- Improved public realm environment
- New development offers improved built form

Armadale Town Centre Design Guide

- Removal of clutter, public realm improvements
- Civic space
- ↔ Primary pedestrian route
- Pedestrian signage
- Lighting improvements
- Restore town landmark



Principle 1: Create a quality new civic space

Principle 2: Create a well defined town centre core focussed on the crossroads

Principle 3: Improve sense of welcome and arrival

Principle 4: Improve perceptions of quality

Principle 5: Improve pedestrian connections within the town centre core

- Focus public realm improvements on the crossroads

- Create a new civic space at the front of the Council Office including: relocation of public toilets, high quality surfacing, town notice board including visitor information and seating

- Building and shopfront improvements focussed on the crossroads

- High quality lighting at the crossroads gives an improved sense of arrival

- Environmental improvements for key pedestrian linkages to encourage greater pedestrian movement and perceptions of safety

- Build upon distinctive local elements including restoration of Goth clock



SCOTMID

- Sandwiches
- Newspapers & Magazines
- Fresh Food
- Wines/Spirits
- Groceries
- Bakery

value
natural
fresh local
choice

BUY 4 GET 1 FREE

HALF PRICE

BUY 2 FOR £5

BUY 3 FOR £5

BUY 4 FOR £5

RSM Coll

INDUSTRIAL PLANT

This sculpture is a combination of steel. The steel is based on the architecture of industrial period. It is a 100% recycled steel in the shape of a plant to celebrate the community.

The work was completed in 2005.

Financed by:
West Lothian District Council,
Lothian Regional Council,
Lothian and Edinburgh's Transport Limited
and the
European Regional Development Fund.

The bricks were donated by Scottish
Brick and Clay Products (Aberdeen).

The artist is John Walker.

CV57 ANX

4

Key Design Principles

4.1 Introduction

The Place Analysis identified a number of issues, which helped frame the key design principles that should steer future planning decisions and shape public realm interventions.

The principles build upon the core principles of Designing Places and the objectives set out above in earlier section and relate closely to the consultations held within Armadale.

Key design principles for the town centre regeneration of Armadale include:

- Create a well defined town centre including a quality central square
- Improve sense of welcome and arrival
- Improve perception of quality
- Improve pedestrian and cycle connections within the town centre core

4.2 Create a Well Defined Town Centre

Successful town centres present a positive image and naturally define the central core as the area with the highest intensity of use and activity. The North Street / South Street and East and West Main Street defines Armadale's town centre and improvements to this core area in terms of quality, legibility and image need addressing alongside town gateways.

The aim will be to have a well defined and distinctive place that respects the values of the community and a place where people will want to work, live and play and a place where people can meet. It should create functional public realm for all users, resolving conflicting demands through practical and sustainable design measures.

Successful town centres invest in good design and high levels of maintenance to ensure high levels of safety and cleanliness. This plays an important role in creating an attractive and welcoming town centre image.

Active frontages and opportunities for overlooking along public routes and spaces will be encouraged. All buildings should be orientated to address the public realm and enable opportunities for overlooking and natural surveillance, ideally to include an element of residential buildings. The creation of restricted spaces, particularly around building edges that are difficult to view, clean and maintain should be avoided. Where the need for provision of shutters is identified an appropriate balance between security and environmental quality should be sought.

Passive/ natural surveillance and human presence within space is usually the most effective means of ensuring that places are safe. People feel comfortable and confident using areas where there is good visibility and effective lighting and where they feel they can be seen and heard by other people.



Key Design Principles

4.2 Create a Well Defined Town Centre cont'

Create a Quality New Civic Square

Civic space in the town centre can serve as a 'civic anchor' which can help to create space for civic activity and support the vitality of the town centre. The aim should be to create a vibrant 'heart to Armadale' that will allow for activities and encourage a more active community use. This should include the creation of a new civic space at the front of the Council Office including relocation of public toilets.

Improve Sense of Welcome and Arrival

Well defined points of arrival to the town centre are essential to creating first impressions. Development interventions should seek to reinforce the quality and stature of key town centre entrances to create an attractive and inviting sense of welcome/arrival. Sense of welcome can be expressed through signage, banners, enhance lighting arrangement, street furniture and seasonal dressing (floral displays/ flags/ banners/ and signage) and the quality of streetscape maintenance and cleansing.

Improve Perception of Quality

Key to the success of a town centre, whether measured in terms of retail spend or number of visitors, is the quality of its environment. This needs to be considered for all aspects of development from individual buildings, to public spaces, landscaping, car parking and servicing. Quality is reflected not only in the design of a place, but also in the condition to which it has been maintained.

Better quality, and often more expensive, natural materials will tend to be more durable and to weather better than cheaper, man-made materials. This often has direct implications for the level of maintenance or repair required over the long term. It can also be more effective in terms of quality in the long term to repair older properties than to build new replacements.

Town centres that are able to adapt and respond positively to changing economic and cultural circumstances, needs, and market demands are those which will thrive and prosper.



Distinctive and functional civic space



Simple quality materials offering low maintenance



Illustrations of simple quality external treatment

Key Design Principles

4.3 Improve Pedestrian & Cycle Connections within the Town Centre Core

A high level of pedestrian permeability is essential for the success of Town Centres. Successful urban centres are, above all, places for people; places which are easy to understand; comfortable to move around and attractive to frequent. Roads should not be designed for cars, with pedestrian needs as secondary, but as streets with buildings facing on to them which pedestrians, cyclists, etc feel comfortable using.

Development should include environmental improvements for key pedestrian linkages to encourage greater pedestrian movement and perceptions of safety.

Signage should be upgraded to improve pedestrian movement and accessibility to public and community facilities including the Council offices and library etc. Signage should also be improved to direct car users to available parking.

Improve Accessibility

An accessible and inclusive Town Centre must avoid barriers which would impede the movement of people using wheelchairs, those who may be visually impaired and others who can be disabled by their environments, including those pushing prams or pushchairs. Advice contained within Planning Advice Note 78 "Inclusive Design" should be followed and community accessibility groups consulted.

Cycling Provision

Improved cycling for Armadale should include enhanced connections to canal links and also provide links to the new railway station to the south of the village. Adequate cycle parking facilities is a factor for bicycle use and should also be provided in convenient locations in the village and in particular at the railway station



Illustrations of secure cycle racks



Cycle provision requires improvement



Potential to secure cycle links to the CDA areas and Transport Interchanges



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5

Design Guidelines

5.1 Planning Application Requirements

A Design and Accessibility Statement must accompany most planning applications (not required for all planning applications e.g. signage and change of use) for development within Armadale (in line with the advice set out in PAN 68). This must clearly set out the design concept, explain how it contributes positively to the surrounding context and how it addresses the key principles set out in the previous chapter and the design criteria listed below.

The Council is seeking to support and make more transparent issues of quality in planning and design that affect Armadale. Early dialogue based on the principles set out previously will be encouraged and are intended to assist all development interests better understand requirements and the local interpretation of best practice guidance.



Attractive civic square

5.2 Respect for traditional urban structures

Buildings should be attractive and innovative, with clear front and back elevations, with public façades that positively address the public realm and incorporate frequent entrances and windows.

Buildings must wherever possible provide continuous street frontage and contribute positively to the quality of the street.

Buildings should follow the established building line along the street frontage.

Set backs from the established building line will be allowed where this contributes to the articulation of the building, and/or where this results in usable, safe and attractive public space.



Example of Improved shop frontage & signage

5.3 Enhanced Connectivity

Development proposals and Design Statements must demonstrate how they will enhance the appearance, function, safety and accessibility of all public rights of way directly adjacent to the site.

Development must not obstruct any public right of way, either physically or visually or compromise public accessibility.

The West Lothian Access Committee must be consulted early in the design process where the development proposal is likely to impact upon public realm accessibility.

Pedestrian routes/ footways should be wide enough to allow easy passing and overtaking, and should be well lit and overlooked by nearby properties to improve safety and surveillance.



Illustration of signage board for town centre

Design Guidelines

5.4 Scale and Massing

The scale and massing of development should be composed to maintain and strengthen the prevailing order, hierarchy and rhythm of the traditional streetscape.

Building heights should respect the existing eaves and ridge heights of adjacent buildings, unless the location is appropriate for the creation of a landmark building or strengthening a key public space node through a taller corner building or feature elevation



Armadale West Main Street

5.5 Elevations

A building's principal public façade should include a clear, legible main entrance and include windows/ fenestration that ensure the main public facade creates opportunities for the overlooking of public space and good surveillance of street activity.

Blank featureless elevations and facades lacking windows that are visible from the public realm should not be permitted.

Glazed openings, side and bay windows (set back from the public footpath) will be encouraged where appropriate to the surrounding streetscape context, since these offer good levels of passive surveillance.

The composition of street frontage elevations should be subdivided, through setbacks or vertical design elements, to continue the predominant rhythm of narrow fronted traditional high street plots – this should be done regardless of the type of use being accommodated and does not necessarily prevent larger internal floor spaces.

5.6 Materials and Detailing

The use of quality building materials reflecting the local vernacular will be encouraged.

Ensure consistent high quality paving materials, street tree planting, street furniture and attention to detail.

Quality of design is a material consideration in planning and the selection and approval of materials is a key element in securing design quality. Material palettes and samples should be discussed at the earliest stage with planning officers.

Design detailing of windows, entrances, and roof profiles and eaves all impact significantly on building quality and should be discussed early in the design process with planning officers.



Attractive streetscape

Design Guidelines

5.7 Public Realm Landscape

Public realm must be completed to add quality and positively contribute to safe public use and movement. Materials shall reflect/ be benchmarked against the best quality materials in the local area and be of no lesser quality.

Avoid the creation of spaces, particularly around building edges, that are difficult to view, clean and maintain.

Soft landscape should at the design stage recognise future maintenance needs and higher quality finishes (semi-mature trees and native ground cover/ or limited high density native planting) may be a better option than standard shrubs.

Private car parking must be located and be secondary to pedestrian access and movement typically to the centre or rear of a block away from the public realm frontage.

Where frontages allow public realm works to be carried out, opportunities should be investigated for the incorporation of secondary civic space that share a common palette of materials and detailing.

5.8 Energy Efficiency

Development applications shall indicate how the development addresses environmental performance (climate change/ energy efficiency/ material recycling/ waste management) and accords with planning policy and guidance.

Hard surfaces must address Sustainable Urban Drainage and provide porous surfaces and reduce surface water flow into public sewers in accord with current guidelines and best practice



Armadale Aerial Photograph

5.9 Shop Front Design

The aim of this section relating specifically to shop front alterations/ improvements is to establish a strong and attractive shop front theme for the Town Centre. Previous consultation exercise undertaken by the Council advised that continuing shop front improvements would help enhance the character of the town. It should be noted that works to shop fronts may need planning permission and the installation of advertisements may need advertisement consent.

General Design

Traditional shop front 'stall risers'– the part of the elevation filling the area between the shop window and the pavement – and cills should be treated simply in flat timber or render and coloured to match the rest of the shop front. The stallrisers should not be made into features through tiling, panelling or painting in contrasting colours.

The corporate styles of multiple stores should be adjusted to suit local circumstances.

Recessed doors should be retained if they survive.

Traditional features such as pilasters, surrounds, stall risers and cornices should be retained if they survive.

Where a shop occupies more than one building, any replacement of the shop front should take account of the individual buildings and should not be designed as a unified whole extending across both façades.

Design Guidelines

Fascias

Deep, “dropped” fascias should not be used and the opportunity should be taken to return enlarged fascias to their original depth.

Materials

Where new work is required, traditional materials should be used. Aluminium, tiles, mirrors, PVC, laminates etc. are not generally appropriate.

Colours

Pure white, purple, lilac, bright red, light colours and pastels are not usually appropriate.

Lower sections, where staining can occur, often look best when painted black or a very dark colour such as black or slate grey.

Signage

Hand painted signs are preferred, but high quality applied lettering of a non-plastic or reflective material can also be effective.

Plastic individual letters should be avoided.

Where a fascia board exists, lettering should be applied flush to the board and be no higher than four fifths of the height of the fascia board.

Lettering should be limited to the minimum information relating to the shop and its service. Lettering should not be applied to any sub-fascia or other parts of the façade.

Sponsored fascia signs are rarely appropriate unless they conform to the standards identified above.

Hanging signs can be effective but projecting box signs, whether illuminated or not, should be avoided.

Window advertisements

Covering the shop window with signs and advertisements does little for the street scene as a whole and such clutter should be avoided.

An imaginative or even simple yet effective window display is always better than a profusion of signs and bills posted behind the glass.

Illumination

Internally illuminated box signs applied to the fascia and projecting in front of the main plane of the shop front are not attractive elements in a traditional street scene and should be avoided.

Where illumination is necessary it should, where possible, be in the form of well-designed down lights illuminating a fascia board.

Security

Security measures, where necessary and approved, should be integrated into the original design of the shop front rather than stuck on.

Flat roller shutters which cover the windows when closed, external boxes to contain roller shutters when open, alarm boxes, gates and grilles are unsympathetic and add an unattractive air to the street scene.

Alarm boxes should be fixed in inconspicuous positions on the façade.

Solid shutters cause a dead and uninteresting appearance and should be avoided. An open mesh grille behind the glass is the preferred means of security. Where considered acceptable, external shutters should be of an open grille type.

Canopies

Where canopies are required, only retractable blinds of a traditional canvas type without advertisements should be used. Curved “Dutch” canopies are not generally appropriate.

Access

The general principles are that steps should be avoided where possible, with ramps provided to shop floor level. Ramps, entrance areas and shop floors should have a non-slip surface. Tactile paving can be used to denote a change in level or steps, with handrails protecting level changes. When alterations are being made to a shop front, the opportunity is available to improve access for all, with special consideration for those with disabilities and parents with prams.

Design Guidelines

5.10 Town Welcome Gateways

Gateways are the main entrance points to a town and are usually related to road or rail. Gateways can support regeneration and physical renewal and positively impact on perception and image of the town. Gateways for Armadale should focus on the following:

Concentrate investment and environmental improvement on a limited number of key gateways and only on primary routes

Main gateways need to create a sense of arrival and high quality profile and image for the town

Where a junction of corridors meet, this should be a focal point for investment

The main gateways to Armadale offer good opportunities to create a sense of arrival and a high quality profile for the towns. The key gateways are:

Approach to Armadale from the east and west

Approach to Armadale at Bathville Cross and the new Airdrie-Bathgate line

Town signage where these exist should be replaced with gateways. Gateways features incorporating signs are appropriate for and could appropriately involve floral displays and signs to express the sense of welcome.



Examples of town centre banners



Banners support events and marketing



13 Rough Court

P

Jan's Hair Salon

TAKE AWAY

SG55 NVX

6

Public Realm

6.1 Introduction

Quality of public realm is an important element in defining quality of place. This section of the report provides guidance on how to improve the quality of the public realm through the establishment of a limited range of high quality materials, furniture and lighting. During the design process, it is important to consider the appropriateness of the elements for the specific area, the role it is intended to fulfil and the future maintenance requirement. This section is divided into:

1. General guidance for application of elements
2. Surfacing details
3. Planting guidelines
4. Street furniture guidelines
5. Signage and lighting
6. Future proofing and long term maintenance



6.2 Guidance for the Application of Elements

The following general guidelines are proposed for the location of street furniture and other Design Elements in order to achieve easy, uncluttered pedestrian movement, set appropriate quality standards and comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Signage

Improved signage and a distinctive new town centre sign or information board would assist in orienting visitors and allow the community, local traders and business to promote local events and interests.

Locally Distinctive Street Furniture

The central core of Armadale will focus on the 'Square at the Cross' and the feature that is the 'The Goth'. Street furniture should be carefully selected and sited to minimise clutter but also to strengthen character and distinctiveness. Further dialogue with the local community on street furniture and the links to the story of Armadale should form part of the design process and include further dialogue on the future of the existing public art elements.

6.3 Surfacing Guidelines

Consideration of a combination of large and small scale paving units should be used to provide contrast and interest. Surfacing materials should be durable and appropriate and tie in with the existing material palette.

High Quality

Use a combination of high quality natural stone and concrete products in large areas of high footfall, where cost prohibits the use of all natural stone e.g. principal shopping streets.

- Use of larger scale paving units, a minimum of 400x400mm for the majority of the pedestrianised civic space. The colour of the units should be selected to compliment the building materials. Natural stone offers best long term value and quality appearance but a concrete product with a high natural aggregate content would also be appropriate.
- Opportunity for using some natural stone for setting areas/ contrast strips and detail areas. These are appropriate within high quality seating areas or to provide a link between other areas of natural stone in civic spaces.
- Retain all existing traditional whin and granite kerbs where possible. New kerbs should typically be a proprietary concrete product containing natural stone aggregate.

Typical location: new civic space

6.3 Surfacing Guidelines Cont.

Moderate Quality

Use of predominantly high quality concrete products in areas adjacent to new development where cost or functional use prohibits the use of natural stone.

- Use of flexible bound surface for the majority of the footways.
- Use of small paving units to add interest and detail to at edges and seating areas.

Typical location: town centre core



Functional and attractive street paving

6.4 Planting Guidelines

Planting is a useful element for the creation of attractive and sheltered places, and for spatial definition. Existing street trees in good condition should be retained, and poorer quality specimens should be considered for removal. Additional planting should be provided to compliment the existing tree stock.

Different planting is appropriate for different areas within the town centre. The following provides general guidance:

Planting within the town centre core

- Good quality street trees should be used with a clear stem to add character but retain views
- Limited shrub planting should be used as this may screen views. Limited use of ground cover planting should be used and is more appropriate

Planting adjacent to footpaths

- Trees with a clear stem should be used to retain views
- Use of large shrubs not appropriate, as these block views and restrict natural surveillance. Ground cover planting to retain views is more appropriate

Planting specification

New planting should be urban and ornamental in form. Typical guidelines include:

Street trees

New street trees should be columnar in form with a maximum mature canopy width of 5m and a minimum clear stem of 2.2m. These should be planted within defined town centre core avenues or in single species groups for impact. Use only root balled or container grown specimens and plant at a minimum of 18-20cm girth size.

Some typical species are: *Acer platanooides* 'Crimson Sentry', *Acer campestre* 'Streetwise'

Public Realm

6.5 Furniture Guidelines

A consistent suite of street furniture should be utilised within the town centre core to improve visual appearance and sense of quality, and should be selected to combine comfort and quality with robustness and functionality. Care should be taken in locating of the street furniture to prevent creating clutter and impeding accessibility within the streetscape.

Application of street furniture

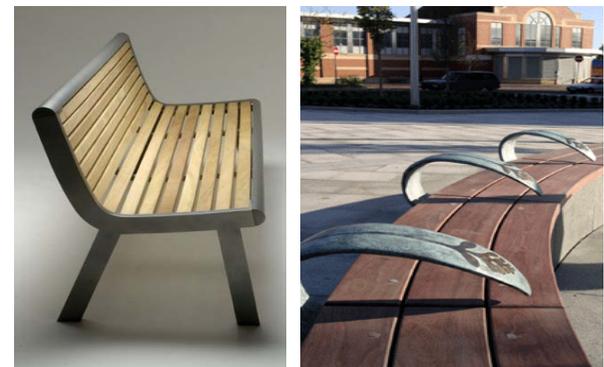
Town centre core

Street furniture elements should be selected for both quality of appearance and robustness and may include stainless or galvanised steel, stone and timber.

Furniture Specification

Typical guidelines for furniture provision within the town centre core include:

- Benches with arm-rests and backs for comfort. A combined stainless steel/ hardwood is appropriate for comfort and durability
- Selection of litter bins should be undertaken in consultation with West Lothian Council's Operational Services. Bins without lids are not appropriate within the town centre environment.



Functional and attractive street furniture

Public Realm

6.5 Pedestrian & Cyclists Linkages

Pedestrian Provision

Development proposals should include environmental improvements, which better define key pedestrian linkages and accesses including:

Improved Access linking new development outwith Town Centre

Local environmental improvements that improve amenity on routes that connect the Town Centre to new developments outwith the centre (e.g. new supermarkets)

Cycle Provision

Criteria for designing cycle networks include access, safety, continuity, directness and comfort. They should be fit for purpose, well light and DDA compliant. The provision of well designed cycle parking facilities will encourage their use by cyclists. There are many types of cycle parking fixtures available, though not all meet the following requirements:

Security: The frame and if possible both wheels should be able to lock to the parking fixture. For short term use, the parking area should be in clear view of passers by with natural surveillance. Cycle racks that only support a cycle by the front wheel are not satisfactory.

Convenience: Facilities should be sited as near as possible to user destinations e.g. near entrances of shops, the library, in car parks at closest point to the centre, and other locations such as schools or places of employment. This is particularly important for short term use.

6.6 Artworks Guidelines

Town centre public art should be retained or considered for relocation to a single location in the village to be determined, such as a Public Art Square. No new pieces should be added to the town centre environment until a review of the quality and positioning of existing features is undertaken. Public art should contribute positively to a shared community sense of place and are often most successful when they contribute to place distinctiveness by linking to a place's story.

Banners and Signage

Consider opportunities for a bespoke signage family consisting of visitor information signs, interpretation and way-finding. These could be used at key arrival points and civic spaces. Signage must be considerably positioned within the streetscape to balance effective visibility of signs with the need to maintain good levels of visual connection (few obstructions) along pathways. They should be located:

- A sensible distance from tree foliage,
- At a sensible height which takes account of wheelchair users eye level,
- In well-lit areas, not overshadowed by nearby buildings,
- To allow for a reasonable range of viewing distances
- To avoid forming clusters of various types of street furniture
- In some cases, combining a pedestrian sign with a streetlight



Example of new signage for town centre

6.7 Lighting

Lighting can contribute to enhancing the appearance of an area after dark and making residents and street users feel secure. Development should include a high quality lighting scheme at the crossroads to improve the sense of arrival to the town centre. The lighting should be appropriate to the context and planned as an integral part of the new civic space, and in conjunction with the location and anticipated growth of planting. Consideration should be given to attaching lighting units to buildings where possible within the town centre to reduce clutter at street level.



Attractive Lighting at the Goth



12

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1924

ERECTED
IN MEMORY
OF
MALCOLM
WALLACE
PRESIDENT
1924-1928

THE
GOTH

48

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Action Plan

7

7.0 Action Plan

The Public Realm Design Guide has been developed to provide a clear way forward in the development and implementation of a series of projects to improve Armadale town centre. The Action Plan seeks to balance aspiration and pragmatism and offer a 'shopping-list' of potential projects capable of contributing to place quality.

The Action Plan sets out the low, medium and high priority projects that will work towards achieving the vision and objects of the Town Centre Design Guide. Project outcomes are linked to the objectives as set out in earlier sections. Overall the Action Plan has been developed to reflect local ambitions set in the preceding sections of this report and from feedback from community consultations. The list addresses a breadth of projects each of which could make a contribution but it is not intended that the list is definitive (nor that all projects require completion) rather it offers a framework to provide a mechanism for further design development and prioritisation.



The Cross— Armadale Town Centre

Action Plan

Ref No.	Potential Project	Project Description	Partners	Provisional Budget	Priority	Project Outcome
ARM 01	Relocating toilet facilities	Relocation of toilets to (See also ARM 02)	WLC / Private Location to be agreed with Environmental Services/Property Services	£10,000	High	Enhance quality of environment
ARM 02	Creating quality civic space	Create a quality central space and defined town centre core focused on the crossroads providing new surfacing, seating, town notice board with visitor information	WLC Design approach to be reviewed through consultation	£120,000	High	Enhance quality of environment and build upon village distinctiveness
ARM 03	Shop front scheme	Improve shop fronts by offering a grant support for the cost of Shopfront Upgrading	WLC / Retailers	£20,000 Long term programme	High	Enhance quality of environment
ARM 04	Town centre gateways	Provide new signage and/or banners at entrances to the village (i.e. from East and West and from Bathville Cross)	WLC Detailed locations to be agreed and approved WLC Roads/Transportation	£40,000	High	Improved sense of welcome to the village and build upon village distinctiveness
ARM 05	Goth Tower refurbishment	Restore the Goth including repainting and clock repair	WLC Detailed scope to be agreed with WLC Conservation Officer	£5,000	Medium – High	Enhance quality of environment and build upon village distinctiveness

Action Plan

Ref No.	Potential Project	Project Description	Partners	Provisional Budget	Priority	Project Outcome
AR M 06	Refurbishment and location of public art	Refurbish current public art features and relocate to a new location in the village (To be determined, e.g. Public Art Square)	WLC / Community. Further consultation with local arts and community groups recommended	£7,500	Medium	Build upon village distinctiveness perhaps by clustering all public art elements
AR M 07	Improving Connections	Environmental improvements for key pedestrian linkages	WLC Scope to be agreed through further consultations	£30,000	Medium	Potential S75 contribution from edge-of-centre retail development
AR M 08	Streetscape Enhancements	Remove and replace redundant pieces of furniture (i.e. benches and planters, etc.)	WLC Implement to ensure common street furniture elements	£25,000	Low – Medium	Enhance quality of environment
AR M 09	Building enhancement and conservation	Encourage and facilitate investment in building facades and building conservation	WLC / Private Protect heritage value of important local buildings	Variable	Medium	Raise quality of built environment
AR M 10	New street pavements	Provide new street paving on the main walkways in West and East Main Street	WLC Address local surfaces as required	Variable To be agreed	Low – Medium	Enhance quality of environment
AR M 11	Lighting Scheme	Provide high quality lighting at the crossroads	WLC Integrate with new civic space and street furniture proposals	£20,000	Low – Medium	Enhance quality of environment, improve sense of arrival to the village centre, improve perceptions of safety

Action Plan

Ref No.	Potential Project	Project Description	Partners	Provisional Budget	Priority	Project Outcome
AR M 12	Public and community facilities – Signage	Upgrading of signs to key community and public facilities e.g. Council offices, library, etc.	WLC Better quality signs to express contemporary service levels	£10,000	Medium	Raise sense of quality within central core
AR M 13	Provide either a central finger post sign to facilities or a town centre map	Provide within civic space a orientation signage and / or interpretation panel potentially including key businesses	WLC Signage to express a sense of welcome	£10,000	Medium – High	Raise sense of quality within central core
AR M 14	Environmental enhancement at Bathville Cross to public realm	Provide higher quality setting in the area of Bathville Cross	WLC / Private Enhance local retail centre and support regeneration	£60,000	Medium Linked to development of corner site	Raise sense of quality at gateway and local centre
AR M 15	Undertake Public Realm cleansing to improve image	Cleaning of public realm spaces. Removal of litter, graffiti, chewing gum, etc.	WLC	£5,000 - £10,000	Medium – High	Raise quality of environment and improve image
AR M 16	Improve signage to available parking	Direct parking to existing car park just off south street and adjacent to swimming pool and community centre	WLC	£5,000 - £10,000	Medium	Support for car access and retail
AR M 17	Support local community and retail groups	Provide town centre management advice and help to facilitate local events, webpages and other local initiatives	WLC	£5,000	Medium – High	Help community interests promote Armadale

Action Plan

Ref No.	Potential Project	Project Description	Partners	Provisional Budget	Priority	Project Outcome
ARM 18	Encourage new supermarket operators to develop and support community programmes	See above	Private Sector Potential developer contribution	TBA	Medium – High	Potential S75 contribution from edge-of-centre retail development
ARM 19	Develop through Community Council / Retailer Groups local initiatives with local sponsorship, development funding and / or S75 monies	Other town examples include: Bags for life Free trade promotions Local fair day Town website Retail sponsorship Rail opening event	Various	TBA	Medium	Connects various community interests and promotes Armadale
ARM 20	Develop within the civic space location for Christmas tree / carol services / Christmas light event	See Civic Space ARM 02	WLC	Included above	Medium – High	Create a focus for any local seasonal event
ARM 21	Extend provision for hanging baskets and floral displays within the immediate area of the cross and within East and West Main Street	Create more of an impact and colour within the central core based on floral displays	WLC / Private Sector / Community	£10,000 Annual Maintenance cost	Medium	Add interest and distinctive visual quality