

Action Plan Key Objectives

1. To promote and assist, the conservation, enhancement, and development of Lerwick's Old Town.
2. To take positive action to safeguard and enhance the sense of place, character and appearance of the Area.
3. To identify, implement and support initiatives which contribute positively to the community and environmental regeneration of the Area.
4. To promote and encourage community involvement and participation in the conservation, enhancement and development of the Area.
5. To promote and support initiatives which provide opportunities to learn about and celebrate the heritage of the Area.
6. To create a vibrant town centre to maximise the social, cultural and environmental viability of the Area for the benefit of local people and visitors alike.
7. To work in partnership with other local, national and international organisations, both statutory and voluntary to further the development of the Area.

Successful Projects to Date

Many improvements have been made in Lerwick's Old Town over recent years through the efforts of the community, Shetland Islands Council, Lerwick Town Centre Association, Lerwick Port Authority, Shetland Amenity Trust and Lerwick Community Council through the now disbanded Lerwick Town Centre Management Group.

- Victoria Pier improvements
- Esplanade parking improvements
- Market Green site (car park)
- Commercial Street reconstruction
- Lanes Improvements
- Tollbooth Renovation
- Mooring Buoy
- Cruise Liner leaflet
- Commercial Street Traffic Management Proposals
- Burns Lane (old swimming pool) car park
- Cast iron bollards
- Bins & anti-litter campaign
- Flower basket scheme
- Bunting & banners
- Paint Scheme
- Christmas Lights
- Events
- New Museum and Archive



Threats and Opportunities

As in many historic town centres however, threats and decline become evident and steps are necessary to arrest these situations. Intrinsic in arresting decline is the identification and realisation of new developments and opportunities.

Recent initiatives have supported some improvements. However, there remains a significant opportunity for a co-ordinated development strategy for the area.

The challenge is to ensure that Lerwick's Old Town and waterfront is retained as a gateway for visitors and a flagship for the Shetland community.



Priorities and Projects for 2008 - 2012:

Proposed Short term Priorities

- Interpretation - signage and maps
- Traffic management and parking
- Promote the use of public transport and investigate alternative modes of travel to access the Town Centre
- Review pedestrianisation bylaw for Commercial Street
- Enhance the Church Road crossing from Commercial Street
- Encourage anti-litter initiatives
- Tackle cigarette and chewing gum problem
- Reduce vehicle movements around the town centre
- Promote walking and cycling opportunities
- Promote future use of the Anderson High School site, to ensure a continued positive contribution to the Town Centre
- Cultural Trail – Public Art and interpretation - Lodberries to Museum along the waterfront
- Shop & business improvements / frontages and signs
- Provision of cycle racks
- Lanes Improvement Scheme
- Street and waterfront furniture
- Cleanliness
- Develop creative use of lighting – street and buildings (Dark Skies)
- Identify and highlight derelict gap sites for improvement and redevelopment
- Encourage creative ways of maximizing opening hours of businesses in the area
- Public Art
- Reduce plastic bag usage

Medium term

- Identify potential redevelopment sites
- Development of Christmas Lights
- Accessibility and shop mobility scheme
- Re-introduce a paint scheme along Commercial Street.
- Esplanade improvements
- Street markets
- Conservation – building improvements and restoration
- Removal of oil depot at North Ness
- Increased use and access to Fort Charlotte
- Improved retail environment
- Policing and security
- Encourage use of appropriate renewable energy through a potential group energy project.
- Promote the use of buses or trams for accessing the Town Centre
- Creative car parking solutions for the area – now and for the future
- Improve small boat harbour – creation of new walkway.
- Coordinate an "Events Board" with 'Visit Shetland', Shetland Arts and others
- Promotional history and leaflet

Long Term (aspirations)

- Cruise liner Quay
- Breakwater
- Protection of the Lodberries
- Yachting marina & facilities
- Sailing centre – welcome pavilion
- Seafood restaurant
- Coastal protection / development



Lerwick's History

From the early Viking visits and the later Dutch fishermen in the 16th century, the development of Lerwick began along Bressay Sound. In the mid 17th century the potential of Bressay Sound was realised by the British Government when the first foundations of what is now Fort Charlotte were built. Fort Charlotte remains a central feature of the old town today.

Lerwick's historic town centre and waterfront developed further as the merchants built Lodberries along the shore of Bressay Sound in the 17th century. Since then Lerwick has become the principal town in Shetland, expanding from a population of a few hundred in 1700 to a town of approximately 7500 in 2008.

The old town of Lerwick bounded by its immediate waterfront grew out of commerce and retains its commercial base today. Substantial growth of the town occurred in the 19th century with significant developments in the fishing industry.

The expansion of Lerwick has centred on the development of its waterfront with the original shoreline now much changed. The original old town, much of which is designated as an Outstanding Conservation Area is largely intact and serves to represent the history of Lerwick virtually since its foundation. It continues to serve as an historic, civic, social and cultural centre, a business centre and a centre for tourism and may be considered as the most important built environment in Shetland.



Building on the left needs attention, Tollbooth right and landmark entrance to Commercial St. (photos J.Molloy 2007)



Photo: Mark Sinclair - Phat Sheep Photography

Lerwick Old Town & Waterfront (Steering) Group

On 31st March 2005 a public meeting was held in Lerwick to discuss Lerwick's Old Town and Waterfront, and to determine how best to secure its future.

Forty-five people attended, representing a cross section of the community: - residents, members of the wider local community, and community groups interested in the future of the area. Organisations represented included Shetland Islands Council, Lerwick Town Centre Association, Lerwick Port Authority, Lerwick Community Council, Visit Scotland and the Shetland Civic Society.

The meeting which provided opportunities to reminisce and discuss possible ideas for the future, concluded with agreement that a community based group working in partnership with a range of organisations, could provide a valuable vehicle through which to take forward many of the ideas generated.

Twenty-two of the forty-eight attendees signed up to get involved, and a steering group "Lerwick Old Town and Waterfront Group" was formed.

This group has met periodically to agree priorities, prepare a draft constitution and has most recently worked in partnership with the Planning Service to prepare this document.

The Steering Group was constituted in July 2008, the "Lerwick Old Town Development Association" the community group formed to work in partnership with the Community, the Planning Service and other key organisations in the area to take forward this vision for the area.

Vision For The Future

This Joint Action Plan sets out a vision for the conservation, enhancement and development of Lerwick's Old Town, an area primarily but not exclusively defined by the Lerwick Lanes Outstanding Conservation Area.

It identifies opportunities for development and improvements, which if implemented, could make a significant contribution to creating a vibrant, sustainable and high quality environment in and around Lerwick's Old Town.



The Action Plan is a working document, which requires commitment and support from a range of stakeholders. Through effective partnership working, much can be achieved to safeguard the future of Lerwick's Old Town and to develop links to the waterfront and other adjacent areas through appropriate development.

Lerwick's Old Town provides employment for people from all over Shetland; it is home for many families and provides a traditional social focus and meeting place for the community. The well-preserved historic town exists alongside a thriving modern waterfront port, which in combination provides a huge economic asset to the islands.

Lerwick Old Town is an important centre for the community of Shetland and therefore it is essential that it is maintained, promoted as a centre for tourism and developed to meet the needs of the community today and into the future.

LERWICK 2009-2012

Priorities & Projects 2009 - 2012

LERWICK

Town Action Plan



Lerwick Old Town Development Association is a Joint Action Plan (Previously Lerwick Old Town & Waterfront (Steering) Group), SIC Development Plans Team & SIC Community Work



LERWICK TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN 2009

SIC



Completed Tolbooth



Old Tolbooth



Market Green Site (Car Park) - Completed

Commercial Street Traffic Management Proposals - Completed



Victoria Pier Improvements - Completed



Albert Wharf



Commercial Street Reconstruction - Completed 1999
Repair works now need to be done (2008)



Small Boat Harbour



Charlotte Street



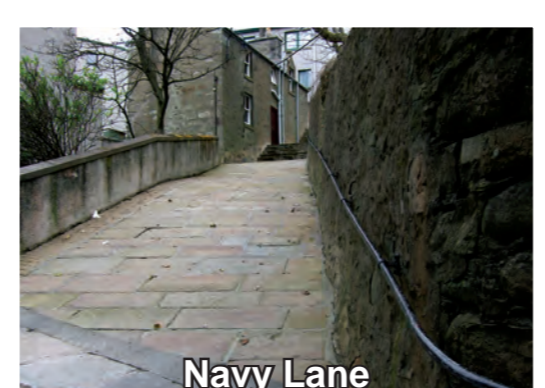
South West Gate



North Star & Excelsior



Bains Beach & Lodberries



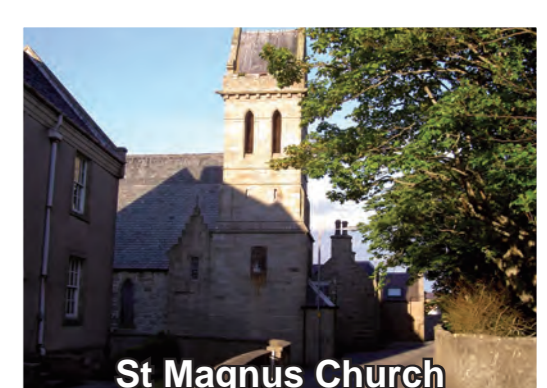
Navy Lane



Bressay Slip



Garage of south end



St Magnus Church



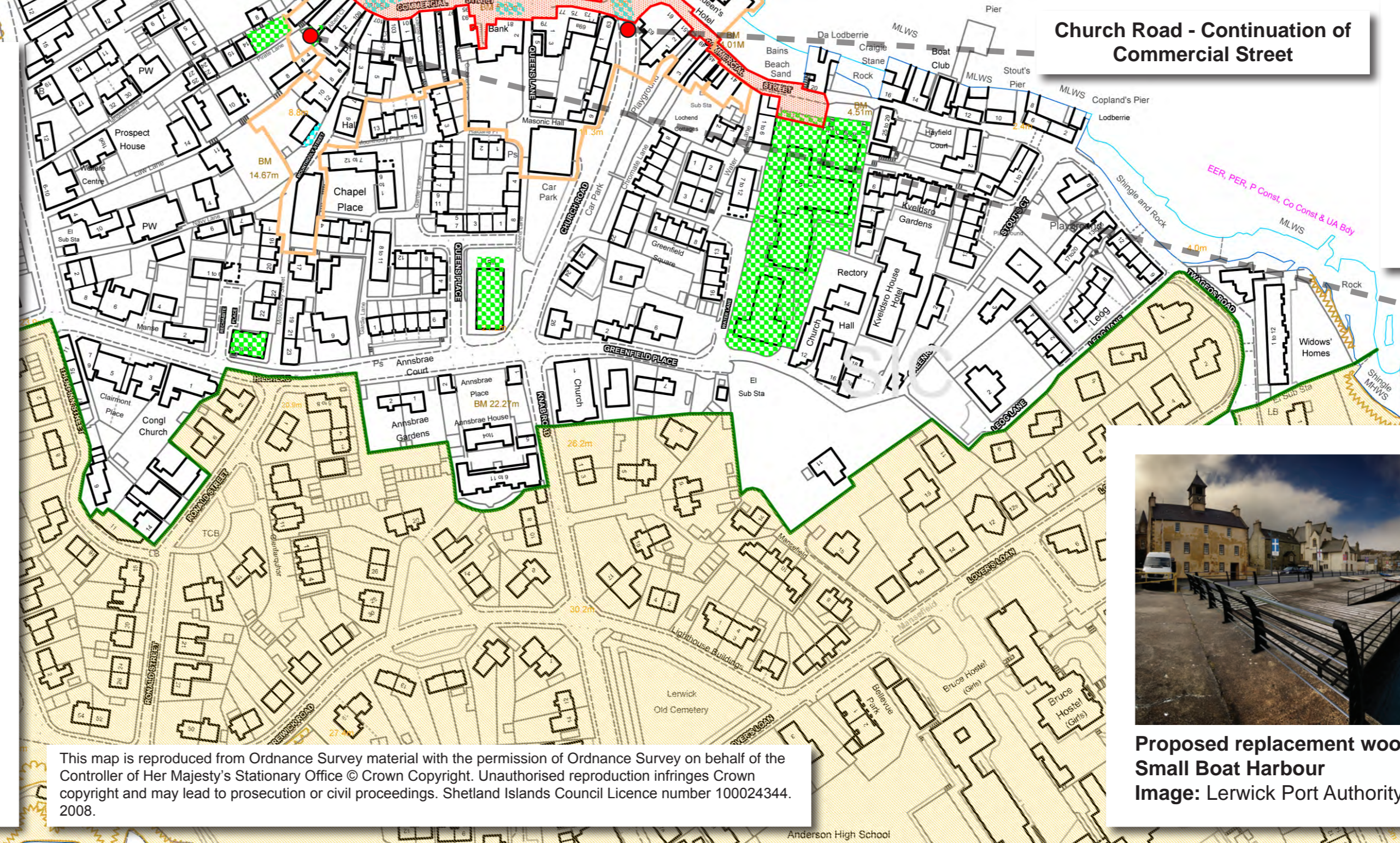
Old Swimming Pool Car Park



Harrison Square - Existing Proposal, Image: Lerwick Port Authority



Tolbooth - Completed



Church Road - Continuation of Commercial Street

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Key

- Updated Old Town Centre (Conservation Area)
- Old Town Centre Boundary
- Primary Shopping Frontage
- Commercial Street Reconstruction Project
- Victoria Pier Environmental Improvements
- Market Green Redevelopment Site
- Esplanade Short - Stay Parking Scheme
- North Commercial Street Traffic Management Project
- Burns Lane Car Park
- Fort Charlotte Boundary Walls
- Street Pedestrian Improvements / Maintenance Required
- Potential mixed use redevelopment sites



The Water Pumping Station



Lanes Environmental Improvements Scheme Bank Lane



Proposed replacement wooden boat deck - Small Boat Harbour
Image: Lerwick Port Authority