Approaching Inverness

A Strategy and Design Guide

Contents

WSP
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2015

Executive summary

Highland Council has recognised that the quality of the approach to Inverness is an important factor in how the city is perceived and the values attributed to it by visitors, residents, business-people and potential investors.

This report and strategy was commissioned with the aim of identifying ways to enhance the quality and the 'sense of place' experienced on the key approaches to Inverness so that they reflect the status of the city and provide an attractive and welcoming environment.

The study started with a comprehensive audit of the different routes into the city, which rapidly confirmed what might be seen as obvious: the key issue is the Longman corridor – both the main route into the city for the majority of people and the least attractive route due to the disjointed 'could be anywhere' style of development along most of it.

The audit concluded that three routes into the city would benefit from 'active interventions' –a programme of improvement works - but that the majority of routes in are already quite pleasant needing only design guidance to help ensure that they remain so.

The report sets out targeted design guidance for all the main routes into the city and identifies potential improvement works for the key routes. It also identifies and provides design ideas for the places that should be considered the 'gateways' to Inverness (the points at which the arriving visitor should be made to feel that they have arrived at, and are being welcomed to, the city).

The three routes identified as requiring active interventions are the Longman corridor; Millburn Road and; Shore Street / Cromwell Road / Longman Drive – the National Cycle Route link from the Kessock Bridge to the city centre. In addition, the A862 from Clachnaharry to Telford Street roundabout is highlighted because of the opportunity for interventions to complement the emerging Muirtown Basin Development Brief.

The report also identifies that the various roundabouts on the main routes into and through the city provide the opportunity to introduce a subtle 'Highland' design theme: a series of urban and landscape design improvements with an overall 'Inverness' or 'Highland' flavour – in the same vein as the recent Councillor-led initiative on the at the junction of Inshes Rd and Sir Walter Scott Drive.

The report categorises the routes into the City according to function (through roads, main links and main streets) and provides comprehensive design guidance for each type of route. The guidance covers most aspects of development within the 'street corridor' – the zone between the buildings that form the street, with a focus on the key aspects of building lines (how development forms the shape of the street); property boundaries (the key division between public and private space) and the streetscape.

The design guidance this report is intended to be taken forward as non-statutory Supplementary Guidance which means it can be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. It can also guide proposals that affect the various approaches to the City, including any changes to the road carriageway, walking and cycling space, surrounding landscaping and signage.

Introduction

This Strategy and Design Guide aims to enhance the 'sense of place' experienced in the key entrances to Inverness, to reflect the status of the city as the capital of the Highlands - a dynamic, progressive and growing city that cares about how it is perceived by visitors, residents and business alike.

WSP UK Ltd and horner + maclennan landscape architects were commissioned in 2014 by The Highland Council to produce a strategy to assist the Council to improve the quality, character and impact of entrances to and routes through the City of Inverness.

Highland Council's vision in the strategy brief was that 'Approaching Inverness' would:

- Identify appropriate character to be created or amplified. This may be an overarching character or a series of related characters appropriate to key locations.
- Provide clear key Design Principles to ensure the characters are met.
- Define a palette of materials and design styles, cross referenced to key Design Principles and technical Design Guide, to cover: hard works, boundary types, fences and walls, surfacing, tree, hedge and shrub planting, other soft works, signage, street furniture, public art and similar.
- Identify an Approaching Inverness Demonstration Project, funded through the Development & Infrastructure Service Capital Programme, which will 'kick start' the process and stimulate awareness and understanding of the strategy.

The title 'Approaching Inverness' is intended to capture both key entrance environments (such as the Longman Roundabout) and the main road corridors that give access to the City, such as the Longman Road, Millburn Road and Glenurquhart Road.

The objective of the strategy and the long-term aim of this document and Highland Council is to enhance the 'sense of place' experienced at these locations so that they reflect the status of the city and provide an attractive welcoming environment to visitors, residents and businesses alike.

This guidance is intended to be taken forward as non-statutory Supplementary Guidance which means it can be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. It can also guide proposals that affect the various approaches to the City, including any changes to the road carriageway, walking and cycling space, surrounding landscaping and signage.

The document is set out in four main parts:

- Strategy framework, summarising how the Council can achieve its ambitions, the strategy focus and the policy context for the design guidance and suggested active interventions;
- Design guidance, to steer future development in the key corridors identified in order to maintain or, where necessary, create an environment worthy of the city of Inverness; and
- Active interventions: suggesting how some important parts of the approaches to Inverness could be improved to create this 'sense of place'.
- Details and materials: a palette of materials, design details and plant species which are typical of Inverness, to supplement the Design Guidance

Appendix 1 of this document sets out the findings of the initial scoping exercise to identify the key approaches to the city and the quality audit to categorise the current state of the approaches and identify the potential for improvement.

It was recognised that the success of the strategy would be dependent on achievement of broad consensus within the Council. A project steering group, to whom the consultant team regularly reported to and sought feedback from, was therefore set up to involve all key stakeholders from an early stage. The steering group comprised:

Nicole Wallace	*Environment Manager (D&I)*
Ann Hackett	*Principal Projects Officer (D&I)*
Emma Georgeson	*Projects Officer (D&I)*
Scott Dalgarno	*Development Plans Team (D&I)*
David McKechnie	*Integrated Transport Manager (CS)*
David Haas	*City Centre Manager*
Bob Mitchell	*Transport Scotland*

Strategy Framework

Strategy Framework and Focus

The Highland Council has recognised that the quality of the approach to Inverness is an important factor in how the city is perceived. The Council has therefore committed to reviewing the quality and condition of the approaches to the City of Inverness with the aim of improving the experience of arriving at the city which is the capital of the Highlands.

From the quality audit (see Appendix) it is clear that it is really only the close approaches the city on the A9, then the Longman Road corridor that gives a significantly negative impression to large numbers of people along with, to a lesser degree, Millburn Road and parts of Telford Street.

Most of the routes into the city through the suburbs are very pleasant.

There are two primary ways in which the quality of the approaches to Inverness can be improved:

- Design guidance or planning control - influencing or controlling the design quality of future development; and
- Direct intervention – undertaking environmental improvement projects.

Both are equally important in ensuring the long-term success of this strategy.

Where budgets permit, the Council can intervene directly and carry out environmental improvements, as can Transport Scotland on the trunk road network. However public funds can only be spent on land that is in public control.

In the private domain the Council can influence future development through Design Guidance or it can control development through the planning process. This strategy therefore considers both approaches. Design guidance is provided for all the key approaches to the city, and design proposals are made where there is both the need and the possibility for intervention mainly within the public realm.

The quality audit identified the route corridors where significant enhancements are needed to improve the quality of the arrival experience. At the same time the survey work allowed the identification of areas where there is an opportunity to intervene within the public realm.

Taking these together (quality and opportunity) the route corridors have been classified into those where active intervention should be considered and those where passive intervention - guidance - should suffice.

- Active intervention: where the audit identified significant extent of ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ quality and the opportunity for intervention within the public realm has been identified
- Passive intervention: where the route is primarily in reasonable or good condition and design guidance alone is considered sufficient to maintain and/or incrementally improve the corridor.

As part of the quality audit, the roundabouts on the main routes into and through the city were identified as a particular issue. Full-size roundabouts in urban areas create ‘voids’ in the townscape: areas where the building line is artificially set back and locally weakens the urban form. The long-term aim should be to replace urban roundabouts with light controlled junctions (as already proposed for Inshes) but in the medium-term they provide an opportunity within the public realm for coordinated design interventions to improve the landscape and townscape quality of the corridors concerned.

It was also observed that there are few clear boundary markers or ‘gateways’ indicating and celebrating the point of arrival in the city. There are clearly visible welcome signs on, for example, the A82 at Torvean and the B9006 at Culloden but the ones on the A96 and at Longman are less clear. They are also quite simple signs reflecting neither the Highland character nor the corporate image of the city.

Following the initial scoping exercise (see Appendix) it was agreed that the strategy should focus on the main road approaches to the city, along with the National Cycle Route (NCN 1) link from the Kessock Bridge, which was recognised as a poor quality cycling and arrival experience, as shown on Figure 1: Strategy Focus.

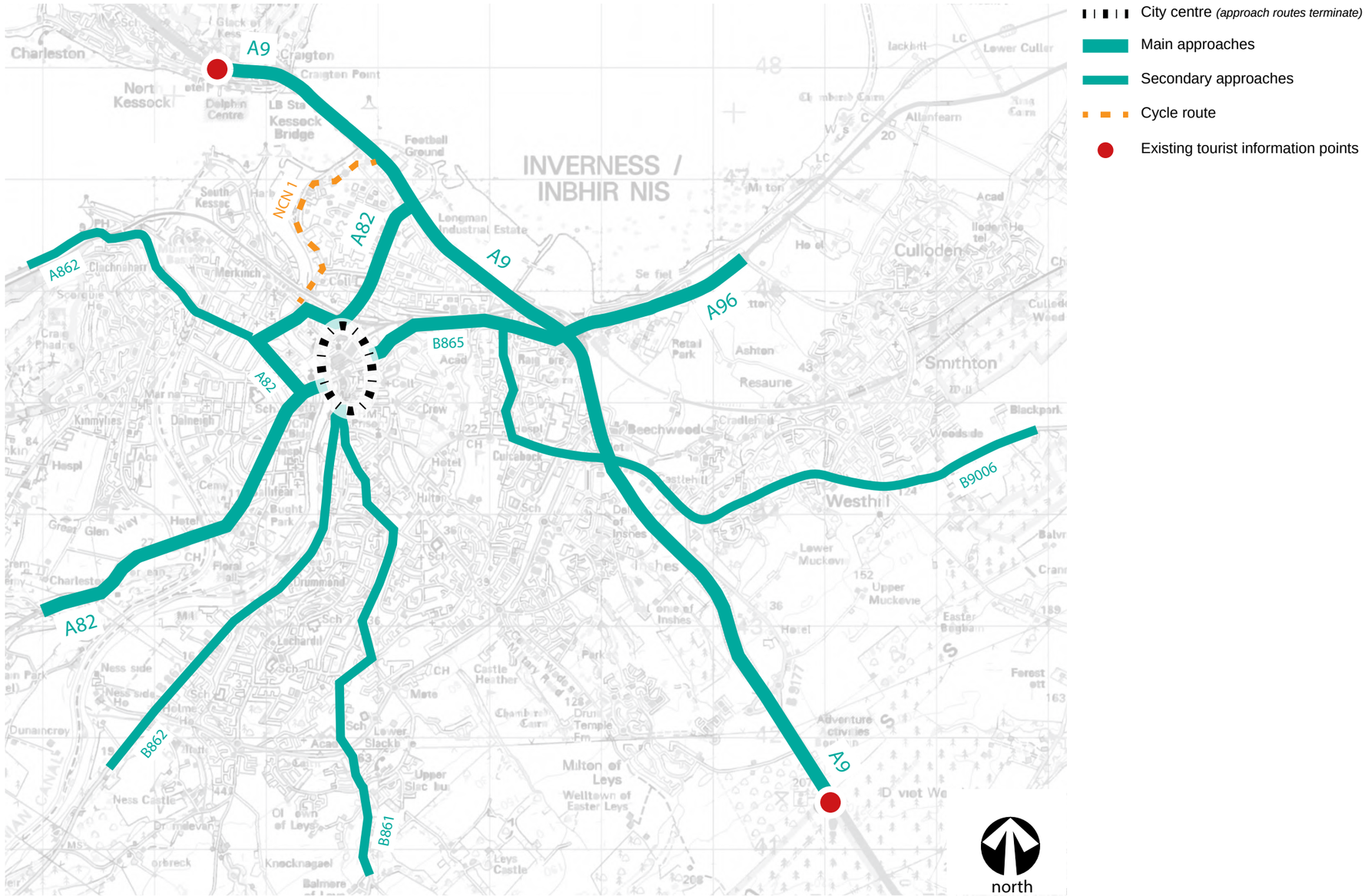


Figure 1: Strategy Focus

Policy Context

Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)

This plan was adopted in April 2012, setting out the framework for development through until 2032. The HwLDP will be supported by three area plans which are in various stages of development.

By 2030, Highland will be one of Europe's leading regions, with sustainable communities; where population growth, economic development and safeguarding the environment are balanced. The overall aspiration is to have built a fairer and healthier Highlands. Inverness is considered in the HwLDP as one part of the Inner Moray Firth; for which the key goals for 2030 are:

- Increased employment, people and facilities
- Growing City
- Safeguarded and enhanced special places
- Green network
- More efficient forms of travel
- Resolved infrastructure constraints
- Diversified economy
- Regenerated and renewed

The spatial strategy for Inverness included in the HwLDP prioritises transport improvements in the inner-city and at various locations in the wider area; as well as developing a number of expansion sites. The HwLDP will be supported by the Inner Moray Firth area Local Development Plan which is currently under examination by the Scottish Ministers. Supplementary Planning Guidance has been adopted which provides specific details on the type of development that will be supported by Highland Council in this area.

Inverness Local Plan

This plan was adopted in March 2006 (partly Continued in Force April 2012); and will shortly be replaced by the Inner Moray Firth area Local Development Plan.

Inner Moray Firth area Local Development Plan (IMFLDP)

The Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan was recently subject to Examination which concluded in March 2015 and is due to be adopted this summer. It focuses on where development should and should not occur over the next 10-20 years, and the City of Inverness is identified as a hub for the Highlands with a major role in delivering growth. It refers to significant investment in infrastructure such as the West Link road project, Inverness East transport network and an improved active travel network and places importance on the green network in the area.

Inverness City Vision

Supplementary Planning Guidance (adopted March 2013) which sets out the vision of the type of place that Inverness could be and aims to help guide decisions about what the Inverness of the future will look.

Essentially, the vision for Inverness is to match the passion of the people with the potential of the place, recognising that although people leave Inverness there should be a reason to return. A number of Future City events were held to obtain information and stories from residents which were then used to develop the vision.

There are nine key themes to help Inverness grow, and the city was divided into six zones with associated actions to deliver the vision; which include the A9 Corridor.

The Inverness City Vision recognises that the A9 Corridor presents an opportunity for the city to market itself to a wider audience and to improve the quality of design in the wider area.

City Centre Development Brief

Supplementary Planning Guidance (adopted March 2013) which identifies and promotes opportunities for the redevelopment and enhancement of the city core, to support delivery of the Inverness City Vision.

The City Centre Development Brief also identifies actions which seek to "build upon the qualities and unique characteristics that Inverness offers and set out a clear vision to promote major growth".

The City Centre extends from Friars Bridge to the north, the Infirmary bridge to the south, Midmills to the east and Tomnahurich Street to the west.

The Approaching Inverness strategy area generally finishes on arrival at the area covered by the City Centre brief.

The aspirations of the City Centre Development Brief are to:

- Improve the commercial vitality and viability of the city Centre.
- Make the City Centre the most attractive and desirable place for businesses to locate.
- Enhance the user experience for tourists and other visitors.
- Make the most of our historic buildings.
- Reconnect the City Centre with the river frontage.
- Increase connectivity and active travel to, from and within the City Centre.

There are five key themes and five key areas considered in the Development Brief which each have associated actions.

Of most relevant to this Strategy and Design Guide are the actions associated with the Old Town and Castle which are related to enhancing the attractiveness of those areas.

Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief

Highland Council is currently preparing the Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief, utilising community views which were gathered at interactive workshops in February and April 2014. The Development Brief will provide a framework for development in these areas, based on the more strategic aspirations outlined in the HwLDP and IMFLDP.

The key challenges and opportunities identified in this area are:

- Delivery of leisure, tourism and housing led regeneration around Muirtown Basin;
- The need to address complex movement patterns in the area on both land and water;
- The need to improve walking and cycling connections both to, from, and within the area.
- The protection and enhancement of the natural, built and cultural heritage of the area.

This Strategy and Design Guide picks up on the proposals in the Muirtown brief where they abut or affect the Clachnaharry Road.

A9 / A96 Improvements Study

The A9 / A96 improvements Study by Transport Scotland with The Highland Council is looking at options linking the A96 from the Smithton Junction to the A9 in the Inshes area. The intention is to provide local linkages to the proposed expansion of Inverness east of the A9 and to better connect this area of the city.

In conjunction with the West Link proposals, it is likely to lead to traffic from the A9 and the A96 heading for the A82 south of the city using Sir Walter Scott Drive rather than the Longman Road.

Local Transport Strategy

The current Local Transport Strategy was published in 2012 and is due for review in parallel with the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. The LTS is intended to guide policy and investment on transport within Highland Council and partner bodies involved in the delivery of transport infrastructure and will therefore have bearing on what is work is undertaken on the key route corridors covered by this report.

Highland Council are developing a series of Active travel audits and masterplans in partnership with HITRANS, including for Inverness. These are intended to help establish a network for walking, cycling and access to public transport and to identify prioritised action plans to serve as a framework for future investment and new development.

Creating Places

The Scottish Government's policy statement on architecture and place sets out the comprehensive value good design can deliver. It notes that successful places can unlock opportunities, build vibrant communities and contribute to a flourishing economy.

It states that good places can have personal value to us as individuals, giving a sense of belonging, a sense of identity, a sense of community, and offer us the amenities to meet our daily needs; that good places can provide value to us as a society. They attract talent and investment and are the essential infrastructure which sustains business. Good places can be the critical factor in determining whether we choose to walk or drive, whether our lifestyles are active and healthy, and the size of our carbon footprint.

As part of this policy, the Government's advice on Designing Places promotes principles of context, identity and character. This points out that successful places are:

- distinctive;
- safe and pleasant;
- easy to move around;
- welcoming;
- adaptable; and
- resource efficient.

It further notes: *successful cities tend to be vibrant and cultural cities, which have a distinct quality of place, amenities, retail and cultural offerings to attract and retain talent, investment and visitors.*

Designing Streets

Was the first policy statement in Scotland for street design and now forms part of the Creating Places policy. It is based on the premise that good street design should derive from an intelligent response to location, rather than the rigid application of standards, regardless of context. It therefore requires a design-led approach rather than a standards based methodology for street design, taking into account site-specific requirements.

Designing Streets marked the Scottish Government's commitment to move away from processes which tend to result in streets with a poor sense of place and to change the emphasis of policy requirements to raise the quality of design in urban development. Specific policy in Designing Streets includes:

- Street design must consider place before movement.
- Street design guidance can be a material consideration in determining planning applications and appeals.
- Street design should meet the six qualities of successful places, as set out in Designing Places (see above).
- Street design should be based on balanced decision-making and must adopt a multidisciplinary collaborative approach.

Active Intervention: improvement proposals backed by design guidance

The corridors found to be primarily in poor or very poor condition currently fail to give a good impression to the arriving visitor, resident or business person.

These are considered the highest priority corridors, the places where change is necessary to provide an approach to the city befitting the title 'Capital of the Highlands.'

In these areas investment and physical intervention is proposed where there is the opportunity for environmental improvement works to be undertaken.

The key routes where improvements are required are:

- A9 - Kessock Bridge to just north of Raigmore interchange, including Longman roundabout;
- A82 (east) - Longman Road to Telford Street roundabout; and
- B865 Millburn Road - Raigmore interchange low level to city centre.

To a lesser degree, townscape improvements on Young Street would enhance the arrival at the city centre from the south.

The A862 from Clachnaharry to Telford Street roundabout is also highlighted. Although generally reasonable to good quality, interventions along this route are proposed as part of the emerging Muirtown Basin Development Brief and this strategy has identified further works that could be carried out to complement or extend this to cover the whole approach.

Design guidance is also provided in order to influence and, where appropriate, control new development in the private domain.

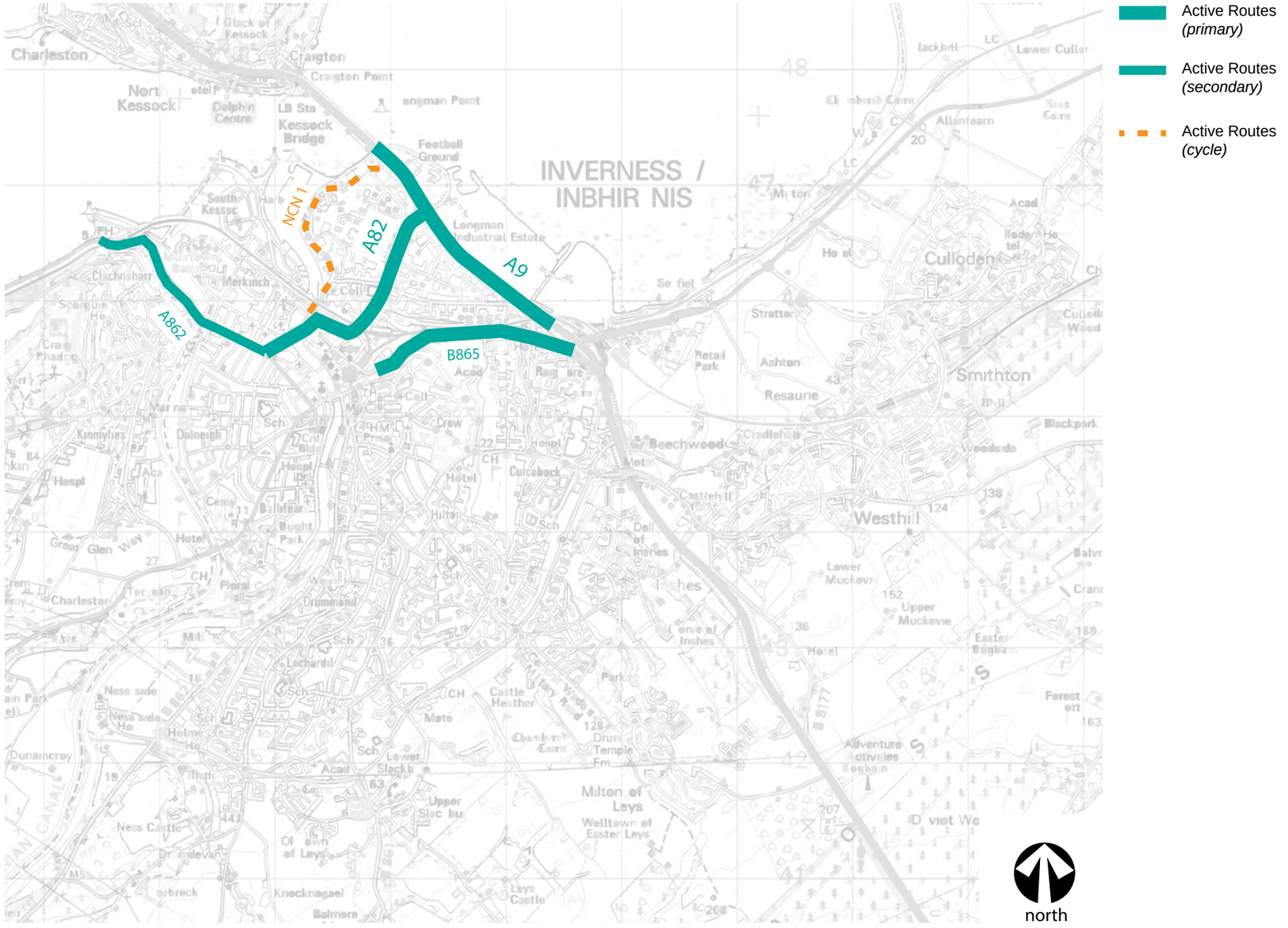


Figure 2: Active Intervention

Passive Intervention: design guidance

The corridors found to be primarily in good or reasonable condition (see Appendix: Scoping and Quality Audit) currently give a good impression to the arriving visitor or resident.

For these corridors it is considered that the design guidance provided by this strategy should suffice to maintain the overall quality of the corridor and to encourage incremental improvements of any poorer sections.

- A9 (northbound) - Daviot to just north of Raigmore interchange
- A9 (southbound) - North Kessock to Kessock Bridge
- A82 (eastbound) - Torvean to Telford Street roundabout
- A96 - Stratton to Raigmore interchange
- A862 - Clachnaharry to Muirtown Basin
- B862 - Dores Road / Island Bank Road / Haugh Road
- B9006 – Culloden / Westhill to Millburn Road
- B861 - Leys to Culduthel Road

In all cases where design guidance is proposed, the intention is that this should underpin emerging Highland Council street design guidance and that the material provided in this document can be incorporated into statutory planning guidance or used as the basis for such guidance.

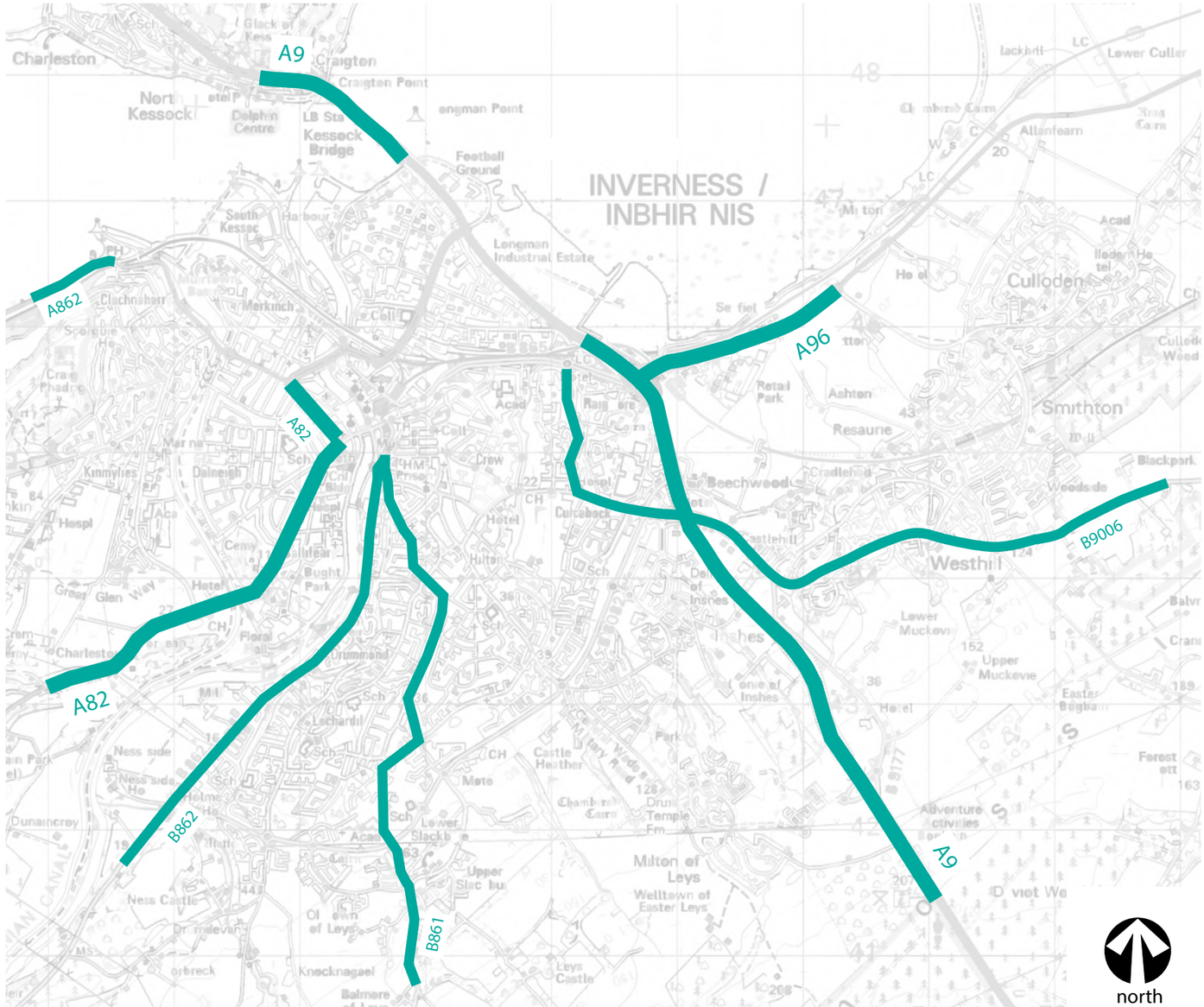


Figure 3: Passive Intervention

Gateways

The project team has identified the key places that could be considered the ‘gateways’ to Inverness. These are the points at which the arriving visitor should be made to feel that they have arrived at, and are being welcomed to, the city:

- A9 (northbound) - some improvements could be carried out at the Tourist Information Centre, and welcome signage / gateway feature introduced at the point where the view opens up around Balvonie
- A9 (southbound) - some improvements could be carried out at the rest area at North Kessock, and welcome signage / gateway feature introduced on the curve of the road at start of Kessock Bridge (bus stop area just after A82 1 mile sign)
- A96 Raigmore interchange
- A96 Stratton (tie in with East Link)
- A82 Torvean (tie in with West Link)
- A862 Clachnaharry (care will need to be taken in the design to avoid appearing to subsume Clachnaharry’s ‘village status’ into Inverness)

The idea would be to build on the current welcome signage concept and create a marker that whilst subtle, tells the visitor in more than just words that they are arriving in Inverness - the Capital of the Highlands.

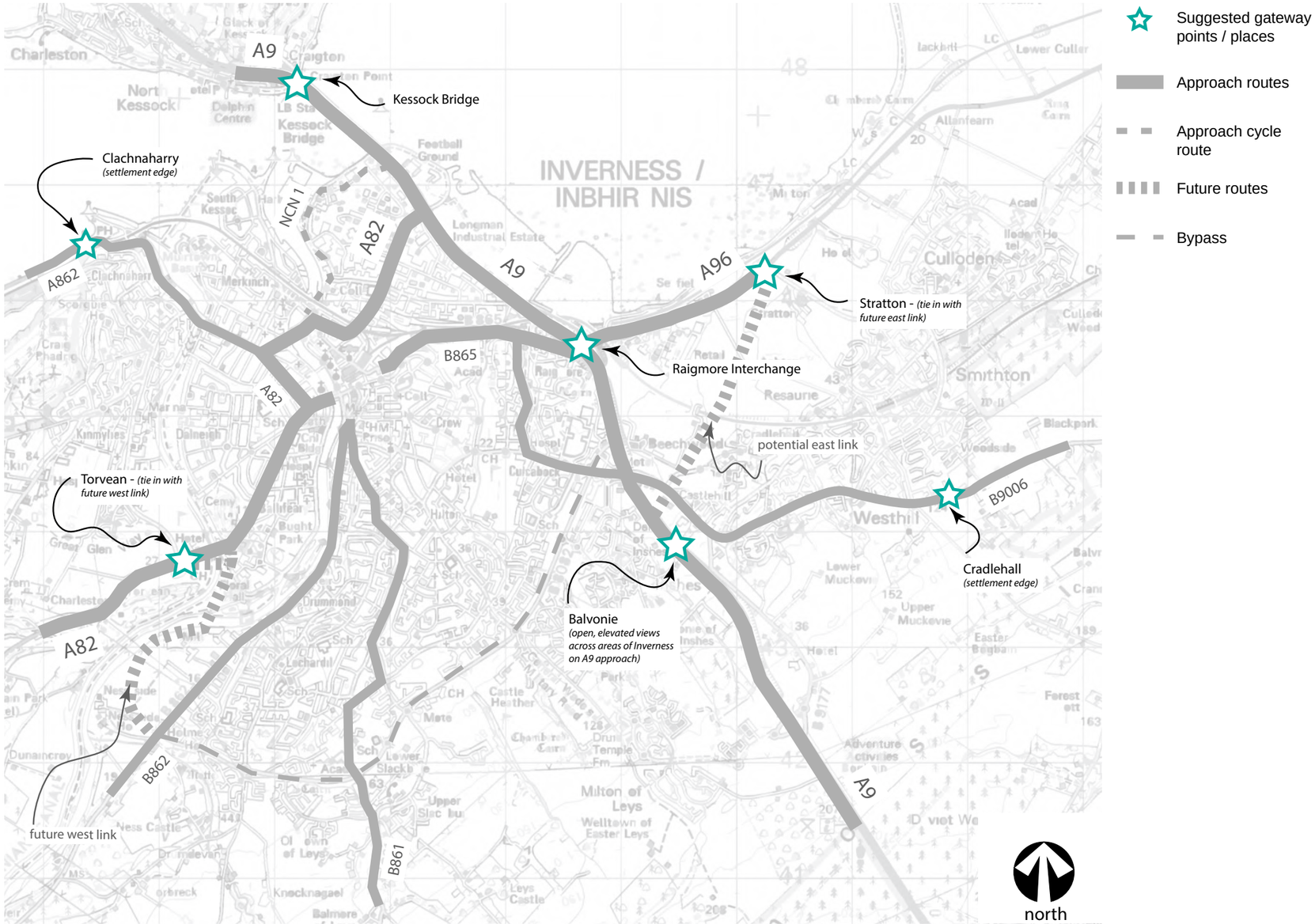


Figure 4: Gateways

Roundabouts

Full-sized roundabouts whilst facilitating traffic flow are, as advised by Designing Streets, inappropriate in an urban situation because they significantly disadvantage non-motorised users and have a deleterious effect on townscape, creating a 'hole' in the urban fabric.

It is likely that the optimum solution to balance the movement needs of all users, including pedestrians and cyclists would be to replace urban roundabouts (those on the Longman and Millburn Roads) with junctions in the same way as is currently proposed at Inshes. It is recognised that this would be a long-term approach, in particular working with Transport Scotland as the Trunk Road Authority for the A82.

In the shorter term, the various roundabouts on the main routes into and through the city provide the opportunity to introduce a subtle 'Highland' design theme: a series of urban and landscape design improvements with an overall 'Inverness' or 'Highland' flavour, but each locally distinctive.

- Longman
- Harbour Road
- Rose Street
- Shore Street
- Telford Street
- A96 Stratton (tie in with East Link)
- A96 Retail Park
- Ness-side and Torvean (tie in with West Link)

The A862 Telford Street/Carsegate Road could be included but it would be better if this were to be replaced by a light controlled junction in the short term.

The Inshes Roundabout will be replaced by a junction should the Inshes Junction Improvements Phase 2 project proceed.

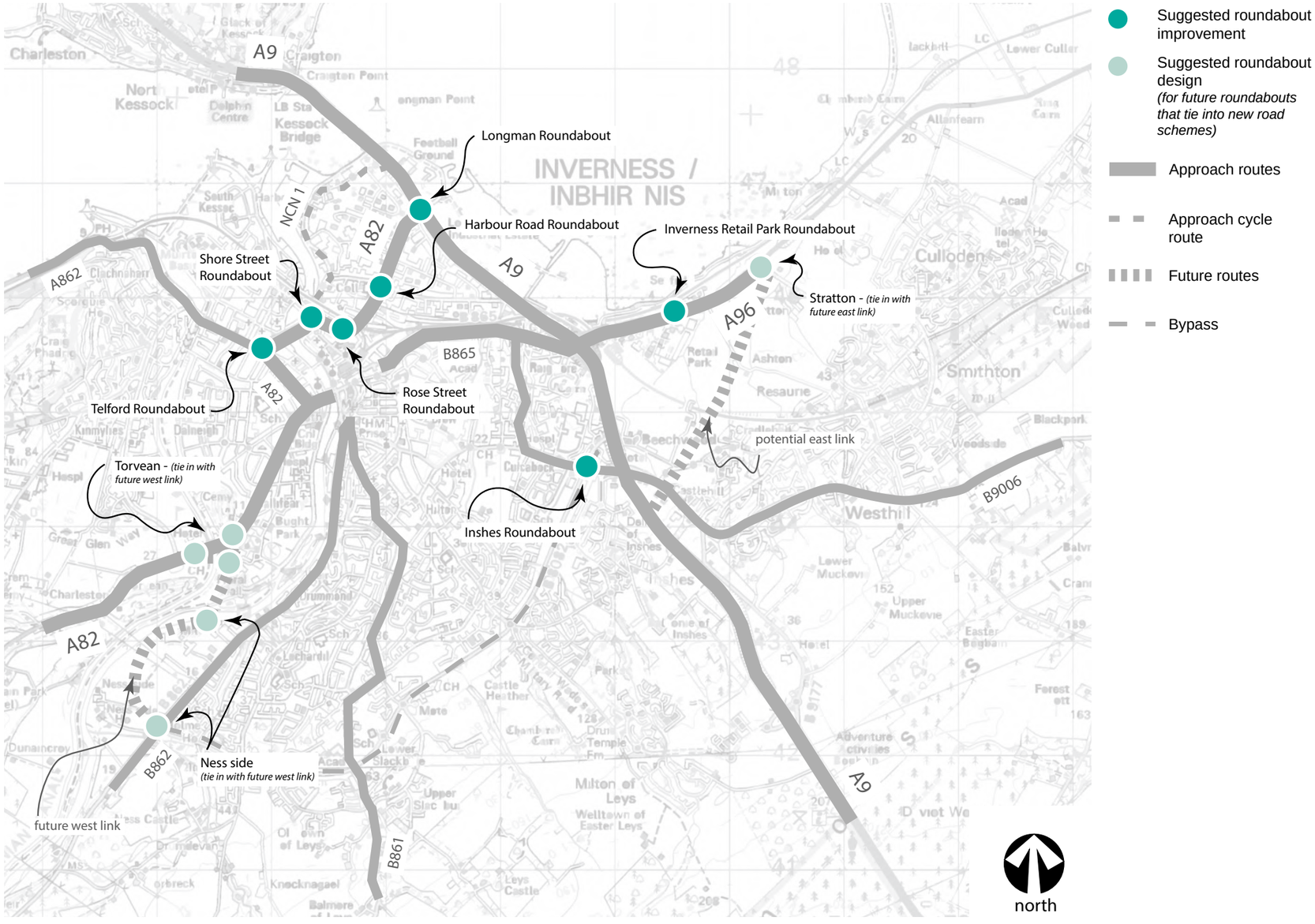


Figure 5: Roundabouts

Design Guide

Design Guide

The aim of this section is to guide the key aspects of new development on the main approaches to Inverness that affect the public realm.

This design guidance seeks to ensure future developments help to create and maintain attractive and locally distinctive streetscapes on the approaches to Inverness.

The guidance addresses key elements of the 'visual envelope' of the street corridor, the zone normally extending to the adjacent building façades that contains and defines the area perceived as the street.

The issues raised in this design guide section will be considered for incorporation into the Council's policies for design and layout, including the proposed Design and Layout Supplementary Guidance that will accompany the review of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.

These proposals are intended to guide anyone undertaking development in or immediately abutting any of the streets that have been defined as the main approaches to Inverness (as shown on Figure 2):

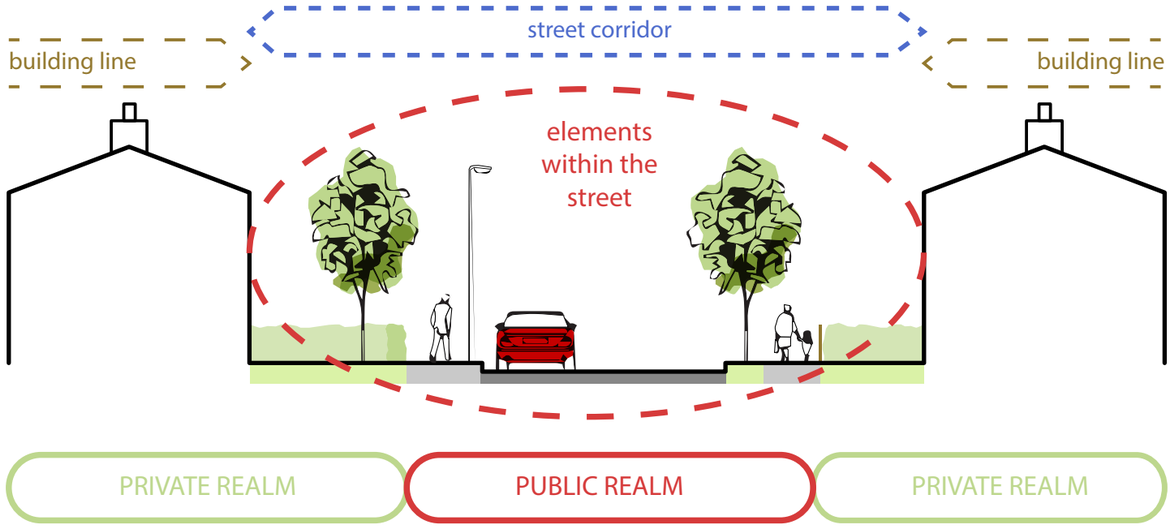
- Landowners;
- Developers;
- Householders;
- Highland Council departments; and
- Transport Scotland.

The 'visual envelope' of the street corridor is primarily made up of elements within the public realm, such as:

- Kerbs;
- Road & footway surfacing;
- Verges;
- Street trees;
- Central reservations;
- Signage and street furniture; and
- Lighting.

Certain elements in the private realm also have an important influence on the quality of the road corridor, in particular:

- Boundary walls, hedges and fences;
- Signage; and
- Building façade lines.



Streets not Roads

Great street design considers place before movement.

The underlying principle behind this guidance is that set out by the Government guidance 'Designing Streets.

"Streets have two key functions: place and movement. In the more recent past, vehicle movement has often dominated the design of streets, resulting in many streets being out of context with their location and overly influenced by prescriptive standards. The prime concern of Designing Streets, in contrast, is to reverse this trend and shift the focus firmly back to the creation of successful places through good street design.

Streets have to fulfil a complex variety of functions in order to meet people's needs as places in which to live, to work and to move around. Their design requires a thoughtful approach that balances potential conflicts between different users and objectives."

The key point however is made in Designing Streets:

"A clear distinction can be drawn in functional terms between roads and streets as follows:

Roads are thoroughfares whose main function is to facilitate the movement of motor traffic.

Streets have important public realm functions beyond those related to motor traffic. They are typically lined with buildings and public spaces and, whilst facilitation of movement is still a key function, they normally support a range of social, leisure, retail and commercial functions.

All thoroughfares within urban settings should normally be treated as streets".

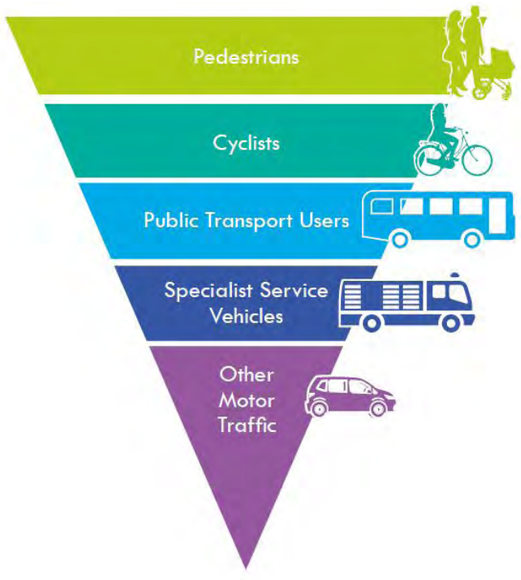
The corridors considered in this strategy are by their very nature the main vehicle approaches to and through the city: traffic movement is a major part of their function.

However, as made clear by Designing Streets and reiterated in the National Roads Development Guide[1], placemaking is critically important.

Furthermore, the needs of all street users need to be balanced. The hierarchy of user need as set out in both documents is illustrated by this graphic from the National Roads Development Guide.

The most heavily used approach to the city, Longman Road, is also the route that scored the lowest in the quality audit.

Much of this can be attributed to the weakness of the bounding townscape (disjointed building lines, varied and often weak site boundaries) but street design is also major factor: it is designed almost exclusively to facilitate vehicle movement.



The National Roads Development Guide reasonably tempers this pointing out: *"Any street whilst considering place before movement must balance all associated functions and considerations to deliver a sustainable and adaptable outcome."*

A typical 'road'

A typical 'street'

1: National Roads Development Guide produced by the Society for Chief Officers of Transport in Scotland, 2014

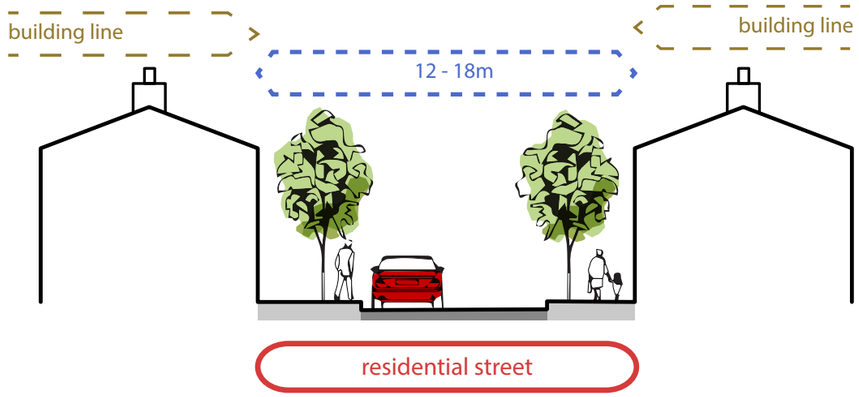
Design Principles

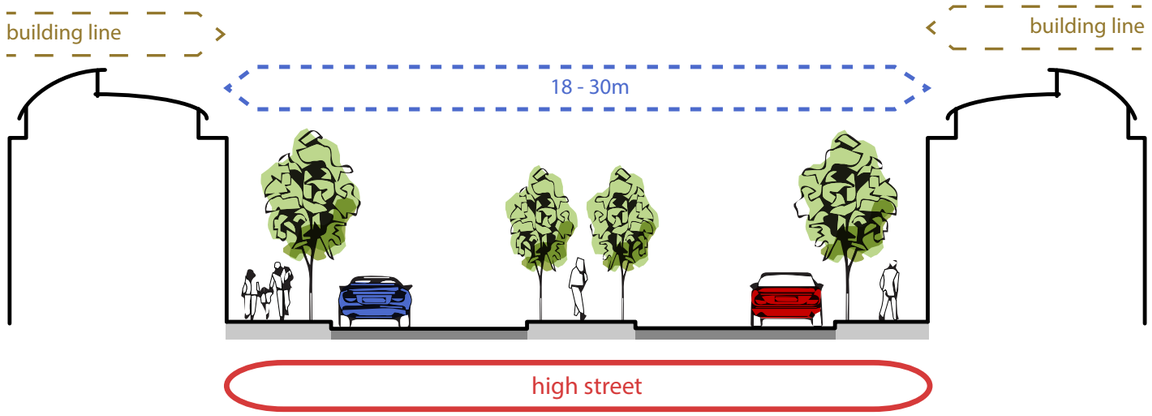
The design principles underpinning this guidance arise from two directions:

- What makes a pleasant and interesting street; and
- What is distinctive about Inverness?

What makes a pleasant and interesting street?

- Comfortably enclosed by the buildings either side;
- A quality edge to the adjoining development, clearly demarcating the separation between private and public space;
- Designed around people;
- A simple palette of materials;
- Free of clutter; and
- Well maintained.

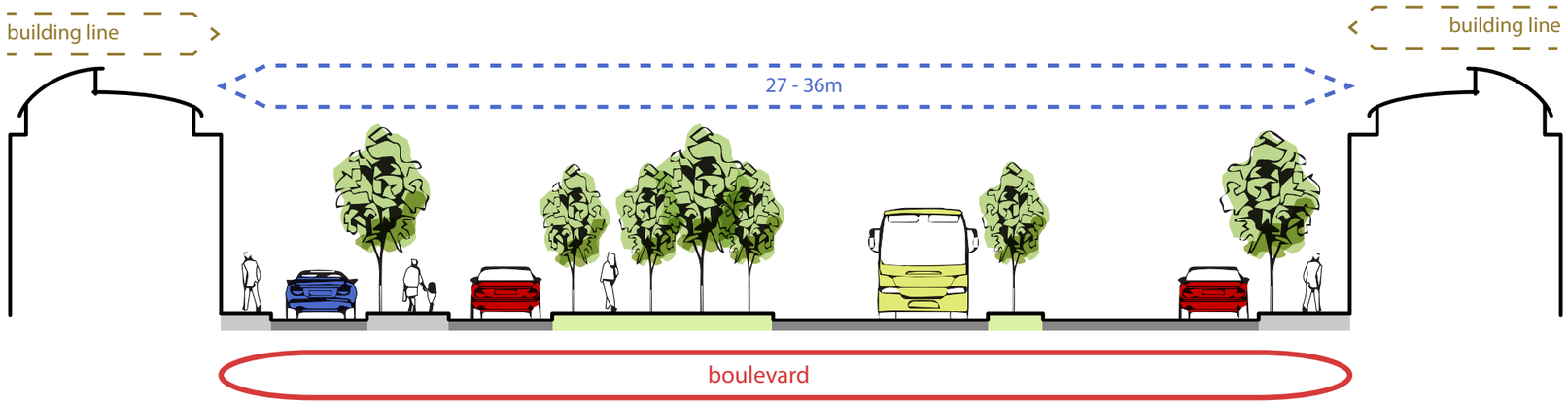




Enclosure

A key element in creating a comfortable space is the sense of enclosure that it provides – how it is contained (or not) by the buildings and trees that bound the space. This is a function of both the actual distance between the sides of the space and the proportions of the space, the ratio of width to boundary height.

Between enclosing façades, streets generally vary between about 12m wide (narrow residential streets) to about 36m (generous boulevards).

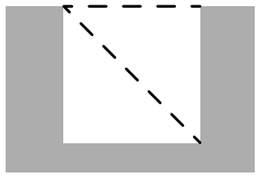


Proportions

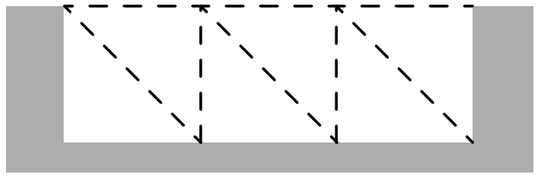
The proportion of streets generally varies between about 1:1 and 1:6. How the space created by these different proportions is perceived varies according to a number of factors, of which climate is an important one.

In hot sunny climates, shade is important and a 1:1 (or narrower) street will be seen as comfortably shaded.

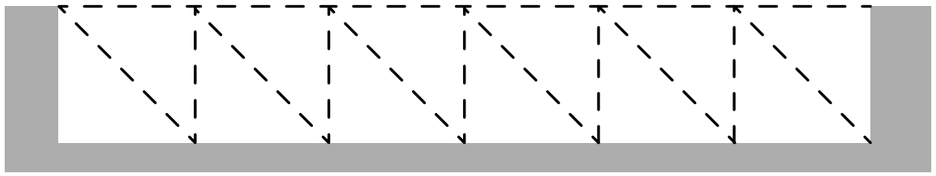
In Scotland, with lower temperatures and sun angles, 1:1 is perceived as narrow – suitable for a mews, and typically 1:3 is perceived as comfortable enclosure. Wider proportions – up to about 1:6 can be suitable for important streets and main arteries, although they tend to be perceived as somewhat open.



mews 1:1 ratio

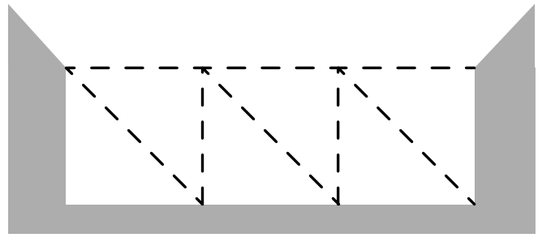


1:3 ratio effective



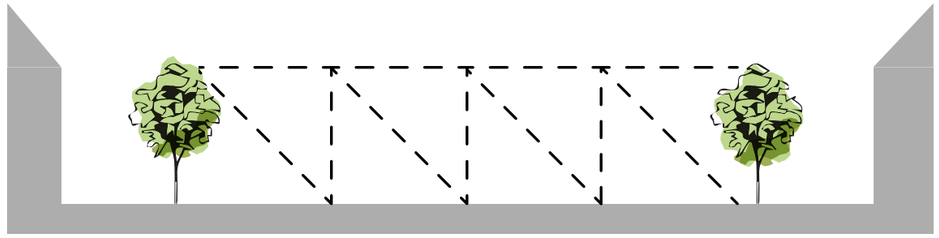
1:3 ratio effective

Ways of providing enclosure



enclosure by building line

Enclosure and proportion are best provided by defining a suitable building line.



spatial definition of street through use of tree planting

Where other factors mean that buildings have to be set back beyond the desirable building line, enclosure can be provided by appropriate tree planting.

A quality edge

The street is public space. The curtilage of developments that bound the street is usually private space. The quality of the boundary between the two is important in creating a comfortable streetscape, giving a clear visual definition between the public and private realm and helping to enclose the street whilst enabling street users to understand where they are.

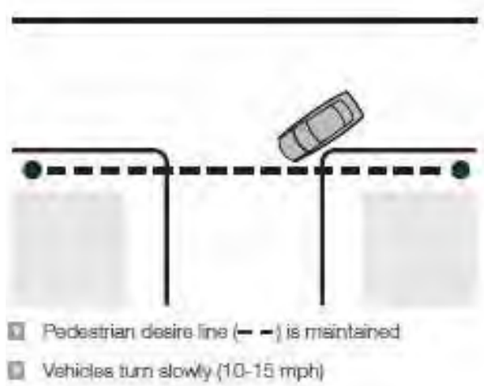
The boundary can sometimes deliberately be non-existent – such as outside the Highland Council Offices, where the broad grass strip, part of the building curtilage, can be used by the public. However, in Inverness good quality boundaries are usually provided by stone and harled walls, neatly trimmed hedges and by dwarf walls surmounted by railings.

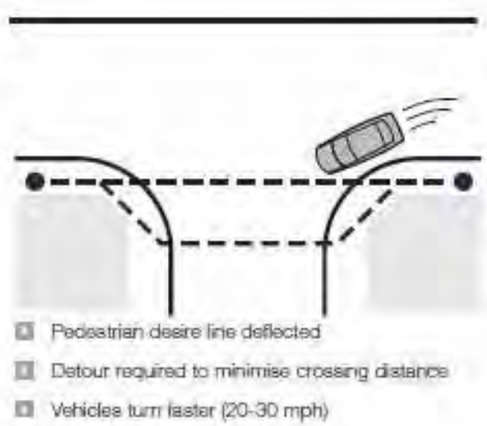
Designed around people

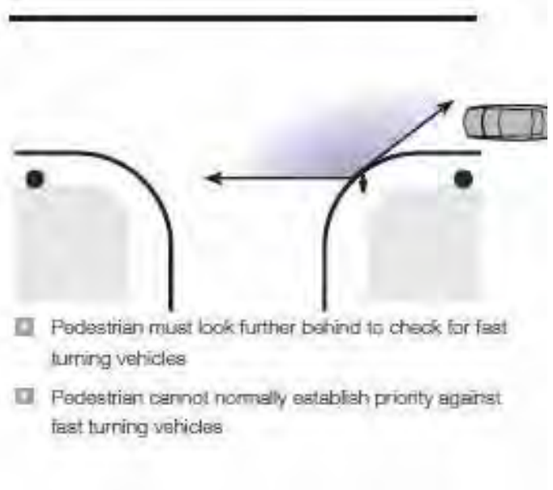
As noted in the previous section, streets are multifunctional places but the hierarchy of importance in which users are considered is critical for good street design and placemaking:

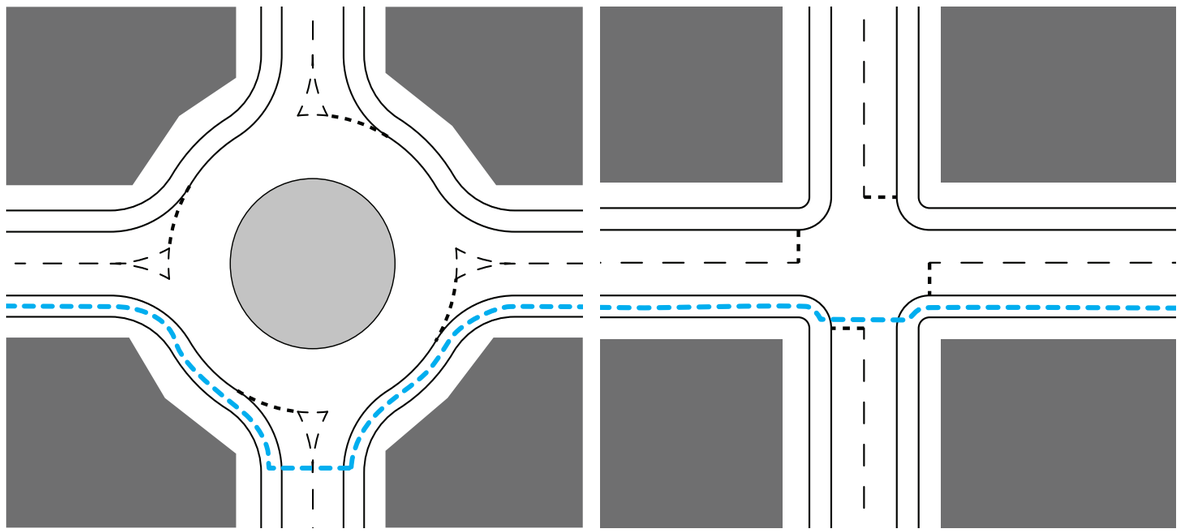
- pedestrians;
- cyclists;
- public transport;
- private vehicles.

As noted in Designing Streets, historically, the layout of towns and cities evolved around pedestrian movement. In recent decades, motor vehicles have come to dominate our streets and guidance was developed that suited car movement. To reinstate the priority of pedestrian movement has implications for the design of crossings and street interfaces. The key points taken from Designing Streets that are applicable to this guidance are to do with the details of junction geometry and, by extension, avoiding the use of roundabouts.









Roundabouts and crossroads

Roundabouts facilitate vehicle movement but at the cost of disadvantaging pedestrians and disrupting the townscape.

The dotted blue line shows how pedestrians are diverted off-route at roundabouts.

The dark grey shows potential building lines and the large set-back created by the roundabout.

A simple palette

As noted in Designing Streets, the materials used in the street should be distinctive, durable, easily maintained and of a quality appropriate to the specific context.

Part of the recognisable character of a city like Inverness comes from the traditional building and paving materials. New development should always be cognisant of this. Care should be taken when considering the introduction of new materials and, in particular, material colours should be selected to tone with and complement the existing streetscape.

Refer to Details and Materials section.

Free of clutter

This is a simple principle of good design, not unique to the streetscapes of the approaches to Inverness but even here very applicable.

In many cases, clutter in streets arises from the excessive use of signs, street markings and street furniture. New signage should never be introduced in isolation, but always considered in relation to what is there already. Existing signage can and should be rationalised, particularly before the introduction of new. Consideration should always be given to placing signs on existing features or street furniture. Good examples include wall mounting parking & waiting restriction details and fixing shared footway signage to existing lighting columns, in both cases avoiding the introduction of additional poles.

Street lighting should be as discreet as possible whilst providing the required levels of illumination. Simple modern lighting columns are generally preferred.

Street furniture should be located for maximum benefit and to reduce pedestrian obstruction.

What is Distinctive about Inverness?

- Attractive, city skyline punctuated by numerous church steeples and Inverness Castle;
- Mature, leafy streets softening vernacular styled dwellings and buildings;
- Well kept historic features with distinctive time-depth pattern noticeable from the city centre to the outer extents;
- Well maintained open green spaces and gardens;
- External views and glimpses of the impressive, wider landscape setting;
- Interesting geological history along the Great Glen leaving iconic features such as Tomnahurich Cemetery and the escarpment and sea beach behind Millburn;
- The River Ness and the Caledonian Canal; and
- Varied palette of materials including natural stone and harled walls, mature trees, iron railings, and a variety of more modern and functional materials.

Ref: Scotrail.co.uk

Specifically in terms of the elements that make up the streetscape, distinctive items include:

- Natural stone walls (rubble, brought to courses, often with a ‘hit and miss’ cope);
- Harled walls with a heavy stone or concrete unit cope;
- Neatly trimmed hedges, often beech; and
- A restricted range of hardy trees.

The guidance therefore provides a palette of suitable materials and element design that reflects the character of Inverness.

Ref: Westcoastrailways.co.uk

Design Guidance

To acknowledge the significant differences in types and balance of use on the different corridors, and to tie in with future Supplementary Guidance, this guidance distinguishes between four main types of route:

- Through roads;
- Main links;
- Main streets (residential and mixed use); and
- Main streets (industrial and mixed use).

Detailed design guidance for each route type is set out on the following pages

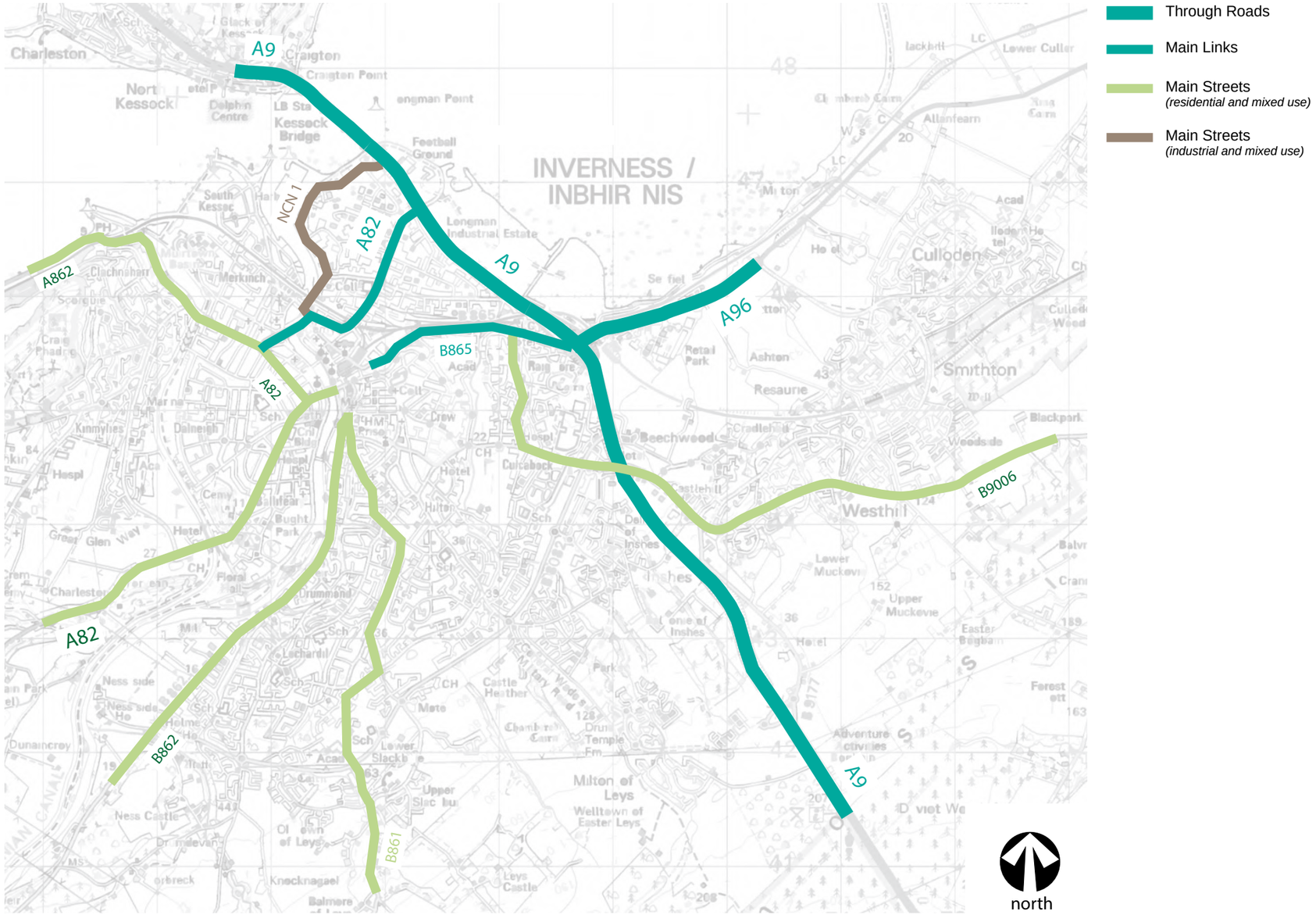


Figure 6: Route Types

Through Roads

The A9 and the A96

Function

These routes are main inter-urban rural trunk roads, under the control of Transport Scotland. Unlike the other routes considered in this study they are clearly ‘roads’ not ‘streets’ and as such the design guidance is comparatively limited.

The basic principles that apply are set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and can be summarised as:

- Integrate structures into the landscape;
- Take advantage of good views;
- Frame any spectacular views; and
- Screen unsightly neighbouring development.

Elements

- Road verges;
- Embankments & cuttings within the highway boundary;
- Structure planting on embankments and cuttings; and
- Central reservations.

Maintenance

- On the approach to the city, the standard of maintenance is critical.
- A major factor in the poor and very quality audit ratings given to the A9 approaches to the city is the abysmal standard of both establishment and maintenance of the roadside landscape - the verges and the wider embankment areas.
- Maintenance to the road verges, at least two metres from the carriageway edge, should as a minimum be equal to ‘Medium Frequency’ in accordance with the Specification for Highway Works (SHW) 3006.13 to 3006.17.
- Maintenance to the wider embankments should be, as a minimum, equal to ‘Grass Cutting: Areas of Planting’ in accordance with the SHW 3006.23 to 3006.27.

A9 Longman Roundabout

Main Links

Longman Road and Millburn Road

Function

These routes are major traffic arteries, Longman Road under the control of Transport Scotland and Millburn Road under the control of The Highland Council. Although they have a very important traffic function, they are part of the fabric of the city and the basic principle of Designing Streets applies:

"All thoroughfares within urban settings should normally be treated as streets."

The National Roads Development Guide tempers this by noting that whilst considering place before movement, associated functions and considerations must be balanced to deliver a sustainable and adaptable outcome.

These routes are, and will remain, key traffic corridors but the fundamental point is that future development affecting the design of the street - particularly issues of highway geometry, should take full account of all users of the street. Active intervention is required to give pedestrians, cyclists and public transport the priority that has traditionally been given to the car, as is being implement on Millburn Road.

It is suggested that the long-term aim should be to replace the roundabouts with light-controlled junctions.

This would recapture space from the road corridor for development or structure planting to recreate the urban fabric; allow safer use of the road by cyclists; allow safer and more direct pedestrian crossing routes and; provide the potential for transponder equipped buses to gain priority.

Elements

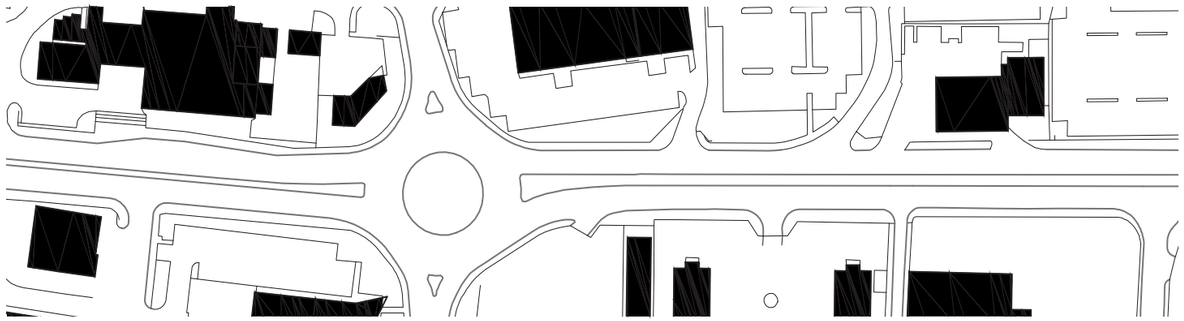
The most import elements in structuring and creating an attractive street are:

Building façade lines

Where possible new development should be positioned with the main frontage building line parallel to the street, respecting adjacent building lines where these comply with this rule, and positioned to create a breadth to height ratio across the street generally between 1:4 and 1:5.

Industrial buildings should be placed with the yards and working spaces behind the building.

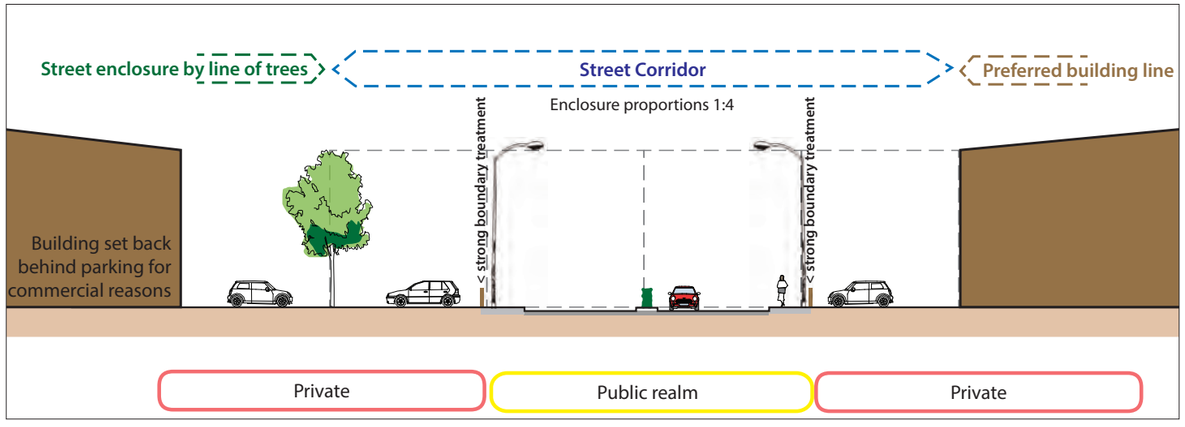
Where commercial imperatives require extensive frontage parking (e.g. large retail units) or display (e.g. car showrooms), a line of trees should be placed to create a permeable 'false frontage' across the site at the building line as described above. The trees should be medium/large to large species and spaced such that in long oblique views down the street they create the required enclosure but that in close views the commercial premises are visible behind them.



Longman Road sample figure ground diagram

Millburn Road sample figure ground diagram

The figure ground diagram of Longman Road shows how the generally random positioning of buildings fails to create any form of urban enclosure. The diagram of Millburn Road shows how the street has been substantially widened by realignment. However, the reasonably consistent building alignment and strong boundary wall to the railway land has retained a degree of urban form.



Building facade lines

Boundary walls, hedges and fences

The highway surface can form the dominant element in views of the street. A visually strong front boundary helps to contain and frame the highway, gives a clear distinction between the public and the private realm and discreetly hides any clutter there may be in a frontage yard or garden.

Preferred details:

Stone walls, with plain copes.

Harled walls with heavy plain cope.

Alternative details:

“Stone effect” blockwork wall with heavy plain cope.

Vertical board timber fence.

Well maintained hedge, alone or reinforced with a fence.

Height: 0.9m to 1.2m high preferred, higher (for security) usually acceptable, lower usually not acceptable (fails to provides sufficient visual definition to the street.

Wall thickness: minimum 250mm.

Preferred detail: random rubble stone wall, bought to courses with a heavy plain cope.
Alternative detail: stone effect block-work with a heavy plain cope.
This photo demonstrates clearly how stone weathers and improves with age whilst blockwork simply fades.

Random rubble stone wall with a traditional cope, reinforced by planting.
Building set back for commercial reasons but street containment continued by line of trees.
Quality detailing but dwarf nature of wall means that it fails to provide sufficient containment to a wide street.

Street trees and in-curtilage trees

Trees, whether in the footway, verge or within the development curtilage are required to reduce the apparent size of these major arteries where adjacent buildings are substantially set back. Existing landowners on Longman Road in particular should be encouraged to “retro-fit” trees into their existing car parks or immediately behind the site boundary and Transport Scotland should be encouraged to introduce trees wherever the verges are wide enough.

Guidance on appropriate species is given in section, Details and Materials.

Main Links (continued)

Verges

Verges should generally be avoided in new development, as these should be streets with a footway either side. Where verges are unavoidable, generally minimum 2 m, may need to widen to 3m to accommodate significant services. Minimum 2 m of verge to be level or minimally sloped (5% / 1:20 or less), maximum slope on verge 1:3 where services allow.

Existing broad verges provide the opportunity for the introduction of street trees, mass planting and hedges to contain the route corridor (see section, Active Interventions).

Central reservations

Existing central reservations provide the opportunity for the selective introduction of street trees and hedges to reduce the apparent width of the route corridor (see specific proposals).

Roundabouts

As described above, roundabouts, whist facilitating traffic flow, are inappropriate in an urban situation because they significantly disadvantage non-motorised users and have a deleterious effect on townscape, creating a 'hole' in the urban fabric. Section, Roundabouts, proposes a short to medium-term solution, creating landscape/townscape features in the 'dead space' within the roundabout. In the long term, the aim should be to replace them with junctions.

Signage and street furniture

Regulated street signage and road markings should be kept to a minimum and, wherever possible, signage should be mounted on street lights or combined with other signage or street furniture.

Junction marking should only be applied where the junction form requires clarity (e.g. angled junctions).

Non-standard marking of painting alternate kerbs black and white is a locally typical detail for sharp angled junctions and could be reproduced.

Street furniture should generally be located to the rear of the footway to ensure a clear pedestrian route. Where street furniture impinges substantially on the footway width, local widening should be provided.

Lighting

White light to THC or Transport Scotland specification as appropriate.

Columns: generally simple design and scale appropriate to street use – normally maximum 6 m high with no outreach arm, exceptionally 8 m high. Tall mast lighting should be avoided.

In areas close to the city centre, consider building-mounted lighting.

Harbour Road roundabout: pedestrian and cycle unfriendly, hard & unattractive, out of scale lighting columns, creating a void in the townscape. An object lesson in how not to treat a main link through a city.

Kerbs

Generally kerbs should match as closely as possible the predominant adjacent kerbing.

In ‘special’ locations such as squares or at significant public buildings, wider and / or higher quality kerbs may be appropriate. The use of recycled whin or granite kerbs may be appropriate in some circumstances.

High kerbing to be used for bus stops in accordance with THC requirements.

In more contemporary development, standard BS precast concrete kerbs generally appropriate as a minimum standard.

In more historic areas textured kerbing (e.g. conservation or countryside type) should be considered in preference to standard BS kerbs.

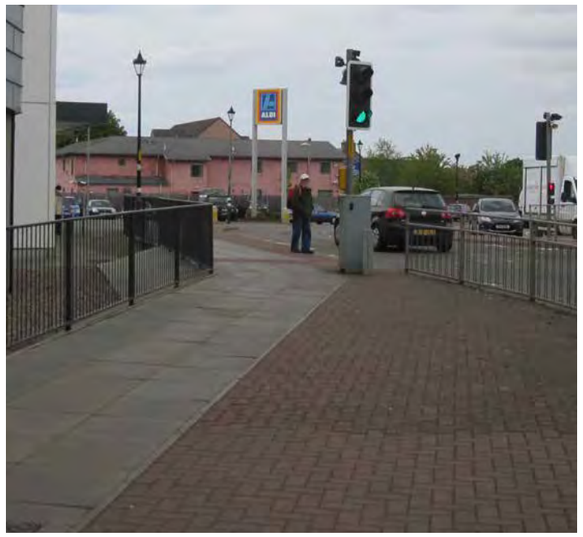
Radius kerbs should be used wherever required. Corner radii at junctions should be as small as practical, commensurate with tracking of refuse vehicle.

Maximum kerb radius at junctions to be 6 m, unless particular circumstances dictate otherwise.

‘Skinny’ kerbs: traditionally used in ‘normal streets’.

‘Fat’ kerbs: traditionally used for ‘high streets’ and important civic places. A distinction misunderstood by many designers and used in any ‘improvement scheme’.

Simple, appropriate, easily repaired paving.



Simple footway (although broken bond slabs look better) but unfortunate use of ‘low maintenance’ hardscape where grass or soft landscape would be more appropriate.

Road & footway surfacing

Generally footway paving should match as closely as possible the predominant adjacent paving.

New styles of paving may be introduced as part of a specific design but care should be taken to ensure that the colour palette tones with existing paving and building in the vicinity.

Roadway: HRA surfacing to THC specification. No chippings to 300mm closest to kerb.

Footway: Asphalt surfacing to THC specification, block or slab paving as appropriate to the location

Combined footway/ cycleway: Asphalt surfacing to THC specification with:

Preferred detail: 400mm wide block pavior strip behind road kerb or

Alternative detail: 375mm wide strip behind road kerb with white chippings.

Main Streets: residential and mixed use

Clachnaharry Rd/ Telford St - A82 Torvean to Telford Roundabout (Glenurquhart Rd, Tomnahurich St, Kenneth St) - Dores Rd/Island Bank Rd - Culduthel Rd - Culloden Rd - Old Perth Rd

Function

The function and character of these streets varies, primarily depending on distance from the city centre, from busy edge of centre shopping streets to relatively suburban streets.

All do carry significant levels of traffic, although in almost all cases this is well below 10 000 vehicles per day. The predominant use is residential and therefore the policy and guidance given in Designing Streets is fully applicable. The emphasis of design should therefore be toward placemaking rather than traffic flow.

Density of development, frontages and building set-back, parking arrangements and boundary treatments vary significantly between the more traditional and more contemporary developments.

Most of these streets benefit from direct house frontage and frontage access, while others (e.g. Dores Road) suffer from significant lengths with modern development with no direct house frontage.

The following other uses currently exist which should not necessarily be precluded:

- Smaller shops;
- Smaller business premises;
- Smaller offices; and
- B&B's and hotels.

Other features which have a more strategic function in the city are also located on some of these streets, such as:

- Supermarkets;
- Local authority offices;
- Electric transformer stations; and
- Cemetery.

Future location of these, or similar, uses on these streets requires careful consideration.

Elements

Buildings

Offsets from back of footway should vary depending on location/ character of the space within the city-centre to rural transect.

Homes, shops and business premises in the busier, more central areas should reflect the position of adjacent and opposite buildings and where appropriate should be located as close as possible to the back of footway. At these locations - outside shops and public buildings - footway width should be wider (see below)

In the denser urban area set-back of building frontages from the rear of the footway should be no greater than 3 m, to discourage the conversion of front gardens to private parking. Some properties may appropriately be located closer to the footway dependent on use and context.

In the more suburban areas, homes may be located with larger front gardens but front garden parking should be minimised and the conversion of front gardens to parking actively discouraged.

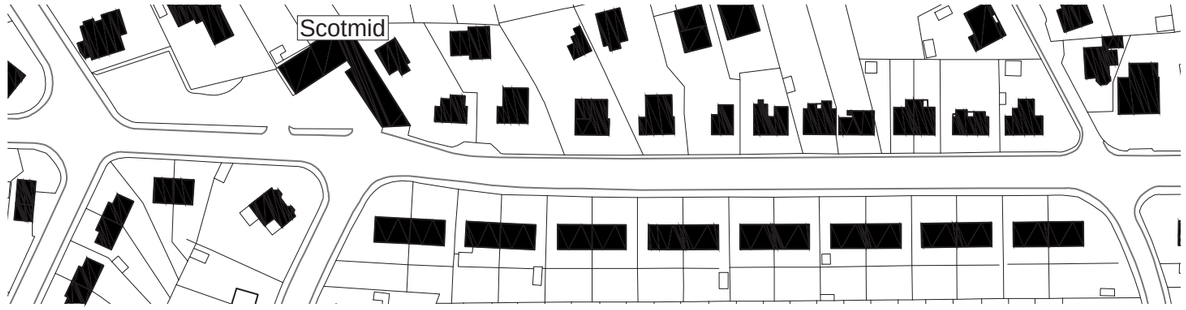
The orientation of buildings at corners and junctions should be carefully considered. There are several good examples on these streets of buildings at junctions which vary from the standard aspect.

While buildings should generally face the street, some flexibility in the angle of façade in relation to the street should be permitted.

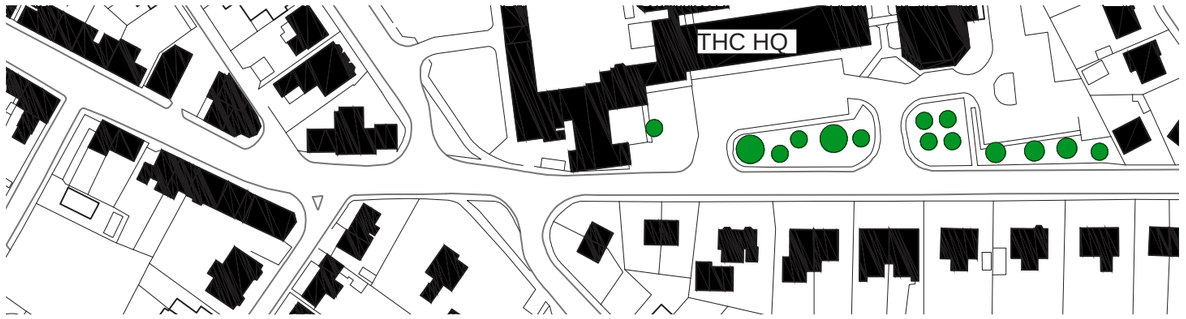
Shops (including supermarkets) should have an active frontage and preferably a street-facing entrance. Where this is not commercially possible, there should be at the least, windows showing activity within the shop facing the street.

Width to height ratio should generally not be greater than 1:4 in the more suburban sections and 1:2 in the city centre.

Open frontage and inappropriate building line detract from the character of the townscape.



Glenurquhart Road figure ground diagram
consistent 'open suburban' enclosure at 1:4.5, disrupted by uncomfortably placed Scotmid supermarket with front car parking and weak edge detailing



Glenurquhart Road / Tomnahurich Street figure ground diagram
THC offices set back but enclosure maintained by street and in-curtilage trees. Tomnahurich Street, buildings tight to back of footway, urban enclosure, about 1:2.5

Driveways

Where provided these should comply with THC's requirements regarding width, visibility and dropped kerbs.

Where appropriate visibility is achievable to the more significant street, small numbers of driveways, gateways and minor streets may be grouped to a single access point.

Driveway entrances/ gates should be located not less than 1.0m behind the back of footway with an appropriate splay or radius. This provides warning to pedestrians and cyclists of emerging cars.

Boundary walls, hedge and fences

Definitive boundary features are a strong element in the existing character of Inverness.

Post & wire, chain link, weldmesh or other visually light mesh or wire based fencing is not considered appropriate except where they are used to reinforce a hedge.

Boundary details should be of a height that creates strong visual containment to the public realm without dominating or appearing overbearing: normally between 900 mm and 1.2 m high. High boundary treatment for security reasons should only be used in exceptional circumstances and then over not more than half of the property frontage to the street.

Wall and hedge height either side of vehicle entrances should be no more than 1 m to facilitate visibility splays.

Preferred details:

- Walls of stone or harled blockwork with stone or good quality imitation stone copes located not less than 300mm behind the back of footway;
- Walls of stone or harled blockwork with stone or good quality imitation stone copes, located not less than 300mm behind the back of footway, surmounted by appropriate visually strong railings;
- Formal hedges (i.e., species designed to be kept trimmed); and
- Walls to be minimum 225 mm thick, preferably 300 mm.

Alternative details:

- Walls, max 2 m high of stone with stone copes, located not less than 300mm behind the back of footway. Min wall width 225 mm. Walls , min 500 mm, max 1.2 m high of block, harled or rendered; with concrete copes, located not less than 300mm behind the back of footway; and
- Vertical timber boarded fence, max height 1.2m.

Details to be avoided:

- Ranch-style or other timber fencing with a horizontal emphasis; and
- Concrete panel fencing systems.

Careful consideration should be given to how open and green spaces meet the street. Where they are private realm, they should be separated from the street by a wall or hedge. Extensive areas of public open space may have no boundary where there is deliberate design intent to create a different street character.

Main Streets: residential and mixed use (continued)

Street Trees

May be used to highlight and emphasise significant junctions and locations and to break up long sections of on-street parking.

Guidance on appropriate species is given in the section, Details and Materials.

Care should be taken to avoid overshadowing issues (low sun angles in Inverness, particularly in winter).

In-curtilage Trees should be encouraged to soften the boundaries between properties, the street and adjacent properties.

Verges

Verges should generally be avoided, as these should be streets with a footway either side. Where verges are unavoidable, generally minimum 2 m, may need to widen to 3m to accommodate significant services. Minimum 2 m of verge to be level or minimally sloped (5% / 1:20 or less), maximum slope on verge 1:3 where services allow.

Footways

Generally: 2 m minimum width.

At entrances to shops and significant public buildings: 4 m minimum width.

Combined footway / cycleway: 3 m minimum width (localised narrowing over no more than 5 m, to absolute minimum 1.5 m, permissible provided reasonable visibility is provided).

Signage and Street Furniture

Regulated street signage and road markings to be kept to a minimum and, wherever possible, signage should be mounted on street lights or combined with other signage or street furniture.

Junction marking should only be applied where the junction form requires clarity (e.g. angled junctions).

Non-standard marking of painting alternate kerbs black and white is a locally typical detail for sharp angled junctions and could be reproduced.

Street furniture should generally be located to the rear of the footway to ensure a clear pedestrian route. Where street furniture impinges substantially on the footway width, local widening should be provided, even at the cost of reducing carriageway width.

1:3 enclosure provided by trees rather than by building lines
Good quality traditional walls, although extensive use of high walls and fences becomes slightly 'unfriendly'.

Lighting

White light to THC specification.

Columns: generally simple design, maximum 6 m high with no outreach arm.

On smaller residential streets: maximum 5 m.

Towards the city centre, consider building-mounted lighting.

On some streets the existing lighting columns exceed these limits. Individual replacement columns should match the existing but any comprehensive replacement should adhere to this guidance.

Light spill from adjacent properties should be minimised.

1:4.5 enclosure - a main suburban street, generous set-back of housing on the right leads to a slightly open character. Loss of garden walls to allow frontage parking starting to degrade the character of the street.

Kerbs

Generally kerbs should match as closely as possible the predominant adjacent kerbing.

In 'special' locations such as squares or at significant public buildings, broader and / or higher quality kerbs may be appropriate. Broad kerbs are traditionally used to demarcate the main city centre streets. On the approaches to the city, their use should be restricted to places of public or civic importance.

The use of recycled whin or granite kerbs may be appropriate in some circumstances.

High kerbing to be used for bus stops in accordance with THC requirements.

In more contemporary development, standard BS precast concrete kerbs generally appropriate as a minimum standard.

In more historic areas textured kerbing (e.g. conservation or countryside type) should be considered in preference to standard BS kerbs.

Radius kerbs should be used wherever required. Corner radii at junctions should be as small as practical, commensurate with tracking of refuse vehicle.

Maximum kerb radius at junctions to be 3 m, unless particular circumstances dictate otherwise.

Road and Footway Surfacing

Generally footway paving should match as closely as possible the predominant adjacent paving.

New styles of paving may be introduced as part of a specific design but care should be taken to ensure that the colour palette tones with existing paving and building in the vicinity.

Roadway: HRA surfacing to THC specification. No chippings to 300mm closest to kerb.

Footway: Asphalt surfacing to THC specification, block or slab paving as appropriate to the location.

Combined footway/ cycleway: Asphalt surfacing to THC specification with:

Preferred detail: 400mm wide block pavior strip behind road kerb or

Alternative detail: 375mm wide strip behind road kerb with white chippings.

Main Streets: industrial

Shore Street - Longman Drive - Cromwell Road

Function

The primary function of Industrial Main Streets is, as the name implies, to provide access to industrial properties. They usually contain few residential properties and it is therefore hard to define them as 'streets' in terms of 'Designing Streets'. However, where they have a dual function, as in the case of Shore Street / Longman Drive / Cromwell Road, some of the principles can be applied to make them more pleasant and attractive spaces.

The aim of the street design is not necessarily to hide what is going on but to provide an attractive and, where possible active frontage with a variety of movement, noises and colours.

As well as providing access to the Harbour industrial estate, Shore Street / Longman Drive / Cromwell Road has an important role in the approach to the city: it forms the National Cycle Network (NCN route 1) link between the city centre and Kessock Bridge. There are few residential properties along the route, except at the south end of Shore Street. Good examples: Business Centre, Stadium Business Park, 24 Longman Drive and Jewson, Stadium Road.

Elements

Buildings/ Structures

Industrial buildings should be arranged with their main public entrances and facilities to the front, facing the street. Larger industrial buildings and workshop zones can be arranged behind the public frontage, reducing their impact on the street. Width to height ratio at the first building façade should not be greater than 1:6.

Industrial buildings should generally be oriented with a gable end toward the road.

Where possible existing features such as Cromwell's Tower should be made into the focal point of developments, to provide local character and distinctiveness. For example, public or office buildings could be clustered into a small square created around the tower.

Long uniform extents of building or structures should be avoided where possible. Where long façades are required for functional reasons, their extent should be broken up by planting, changes in colour, height and / or pattern.

Parking

Visitor, customer and some staff parking may be located to the front of premises. Limited cross footway parking may be permissible provided pedestrian entrances are clearly identified by landscape or other features.

Other parking facilities should be located to the side or rear of properties.

Boundary walls, hedge and fences

Industrial premises often require security fencing. Too often, this leads to the creation of an unwelcoming environment, dominated by grey galvanised palisade and chain-link fencing. This can be acceptable in a solely industrial environment but must be avoided where the route has a wider public function. Where high-security fencing is unavoidable, it can be set back a short distance into the site behind a screen hedge, or where space is severely limited, polyester powder-coated panels can avoid the uniform drab grey.

Preferred details:

- Hedges, either of deterrent plant types (e.g. berberis, hawthorn etc) or decorative hedge to screen a security fence. NB: a wide low hedge of deterrent planting can be as effective in security terms as a higher fence.
- Walls, min 600mm, max 1.5m high of stone, brick, block or rendered; with stone or concrete copes, located not less than 300mm behind the back of footway.
- NB: Wall and hedge height either side of vehicle entrances should be no more than 1.0m to facilitate visibility splays.
- Industrial security fencing and gates >1.5m high generally to be located not less than 6.0m from the back of footway. Where active building frontage is provided, a maximum of 50% of the overall length of frontage may have security type fencing located closer to the back of footway (min 1.0m).
- Barbed wire or spikes should not be used within 6.0m of the back of footway, unless incorporated within hedging or other planting.

Alternative details:

- Vertical timber boarded fence, max height 1.5m where less than 6.0m from back of footway.
- Coloured steel palisade fence.

Narrow strip of planting substantially softens frontage appearance.

Street Trees

May be used to highlight and emphasize significant junctions and locations.

In-curtilage Trees and Planting

Should be encouraged to soften the boundaries between industrial premises, the road and adjacent premises.

Verges

Generally min 2.0m, may need to widen to 3.0m to accommodate significant services. 1.0m wide min level (i.e. 5% (1:20) or flatter) verge where services allow. Max slope on verge 1:3.

Footways

Generally min 2.0m.

Combined footway/ cycleway should be in 3.0m over as much of its length as possible. Localised, short (i.e. <5m) narrowing to min 1.5m are permissible provided reasonable visibility is provided.

High quality boundary treatment in a very narrow space, required by planning conditions: Dunkeld Road, Perth.

Signage and Street Furniture

Regulated street signage and road markings to be kept to a minimum. Junction marking should only be applied where the junction form requires clarity (e.g. angled junctions).

Where deemed necessary, regulatory signage should be mounted on street lights or combined with other signage or street furniture.

Waste bins at lay-bys to be incorporated in a housing or surround.

Lighting

White light to THC specification.

Columns generally 6.0m high with no outreach arm.

Light spill from adjacent industrial buildings, yards and process areas should be minimised.

Kerbs

Standard BS kerbs to be used with generally 100mm upstand. Radius kerbs to be used as appropriate. Radii to be as small as possible, commensurate with tracking of design HGV. Where practical, max radius at junctions to be 6.0m.

Road and Footway Surfacing

Roadway: HRA surfacing to THC specification. No chippings to 300mm closest to kerb.

Footway: Asphalt surfacing to THC specification.

Combined footway/ cycleway: Asphalt surfacing to THC specification with:
Preferred detail: 400mm wide block pavior strip behind road kerb or
Alternative detail: 375mm wide strip behind road kerb with white chippings

Active Interventions

Active Interventions

The aim of this section is to provide proposals for those approach routes identified as requiring active improvement.

The routes identified as requiring or benefiting from active improvement are:

Through Roads

- A9 - Kessock Bridge to just north of Raigmore interchange, including Longman roundabout.

Main Link Roads

- A82 Longman Road; and
- B865 Millburn Road - Raigmore interchange low level to city centre.

Main streets (residential and mixed use)

- A862 Telford Street roundabout.

Main streets (industrial and mixed use)

- NCN 1 - Kessock Bridge to city centre.

A number of roundabouts have been identified as places where there is potential to improve the character and sense of identity for Inverness with a comparatively small effort, including those for consideration in the future, as new roads develop.

Key places have been identified where signage and/or features could be installed to create ‘gateways’ providing or reinforcing the sense of arrival at the edges of the city.

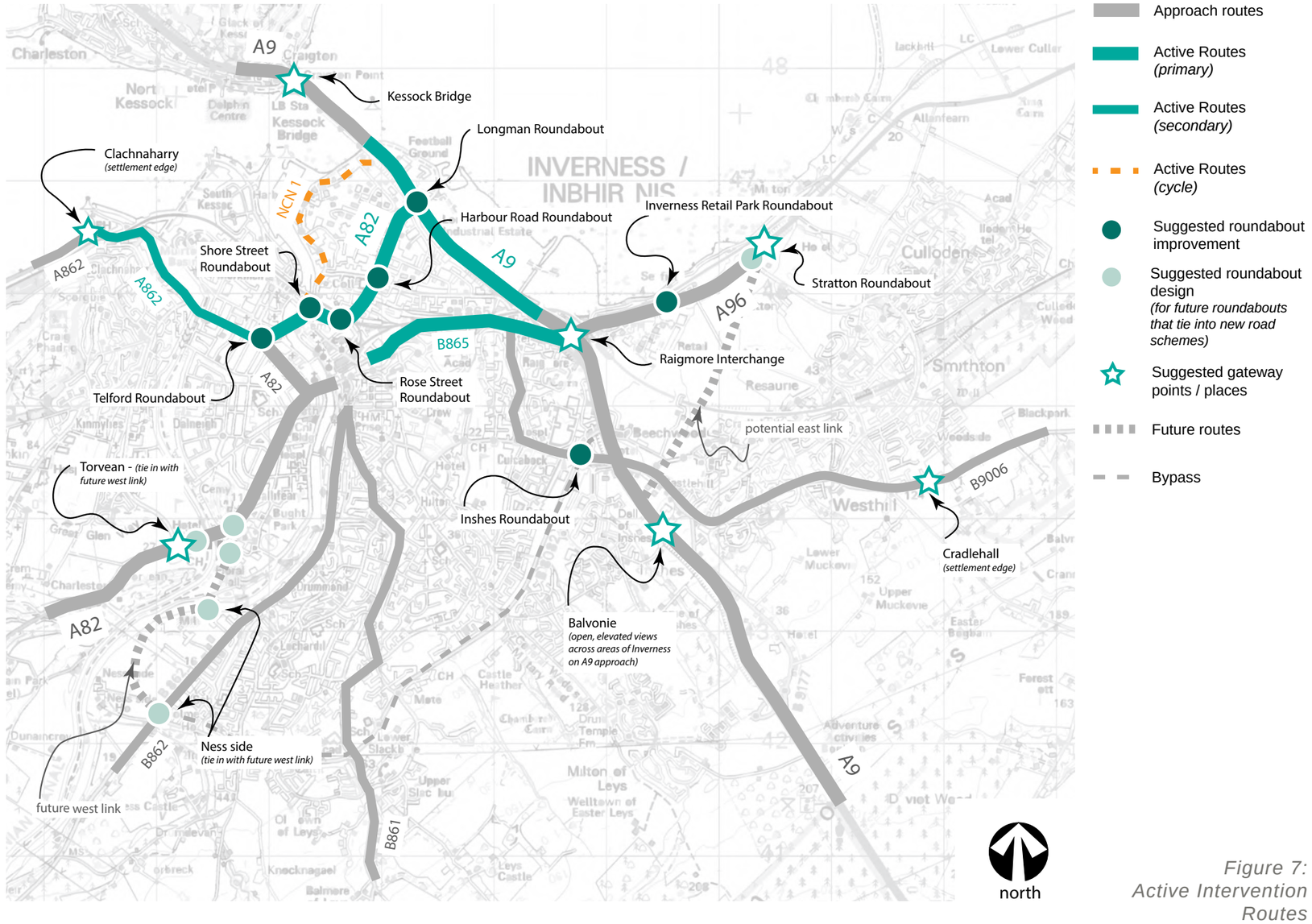


Figure 7: Active Intervention Routes

Through Roads: A9

This section covers the A9 - Kessock Bridge to just north of Raigmore interchange, including Longman roundabout.

Issues

- Main approach to the city from the north and south.
- First views of the city being into and over industrial and retail land.
- Poor soft landscape maintenance.
- No sense of arrival or local distinctiveness on reaching the Longman roundabout.
- Road corridor visibly designed for minimum maintenance cost.

Constraints

- Heavy traffic flows especially at peak hours.
- Trunk road & thus road design and maintenance standards constrained by TS requirements.

Transport Scotland and Highland Council consider that the optimum solution to congestion here would be to replace the Longman Roundabout with a grade-separated junction. However, this is currently a long-term aim with no firm time-scale.

These proposals are therefore, at least in part, an interim solution, in the knowledge that any works undertaken now would set a precedent to be followed in the design of the new junction

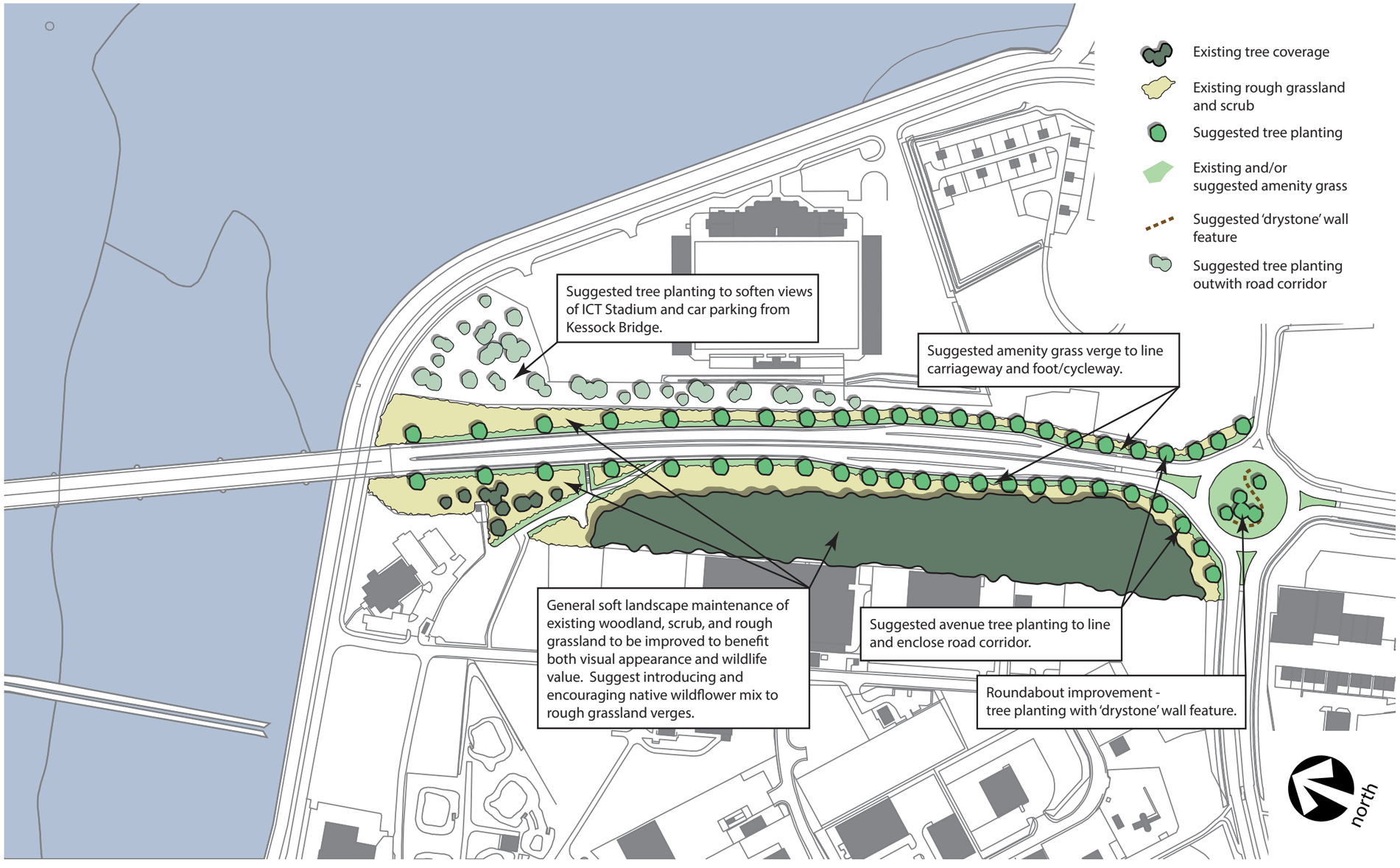
It is important that the design of any new junction should take into account that it is the destination point for many users of the A9 and the arrival point at the city which is the Capital of the Highlands.

Figure 8: Through Roads - A9

A9 Kessock Bridge 'Arrival' Zone

Existing attributes

- Wide verge / soft landscaped embankment zone either side of carriageway, under TS or THC ownership.
- Existing semi-mature woodland belt to south side of carriageway.
- Footways both sides of carriageway - cycleway on the south side of carriageway.
- Fast, straight approach to Longman roundabout.



Proposals within the highway corridor

- Tree and shrub planting to help screen broad views across the Longman Industrial Estate and to filter views of the ICT Stadium.
- Avenue tree planting to create a more formal impression of arriving at a city -on the approach to the Longman roundabout.
- Existing road corridor scrub and shrub planting managed to remove invasive weeds and improve overall appearance.
- Woodland management plan prepared and implemented to improve the ecological value, appearance and structure of existing woodland.
- Maintenance of the public spaces improved: verges between the bridge and roundabout maintained as a minimum in line with Specification for Highway Works series 3007 ‘medium frequency’ grass cutting (cut 6/annum).

Proposals outwith the highway corridor

- Tree and shrub planting adjacent the ICT Stadium and car parking areas to help screen and soften views of the stadium facade and rough, open ground.

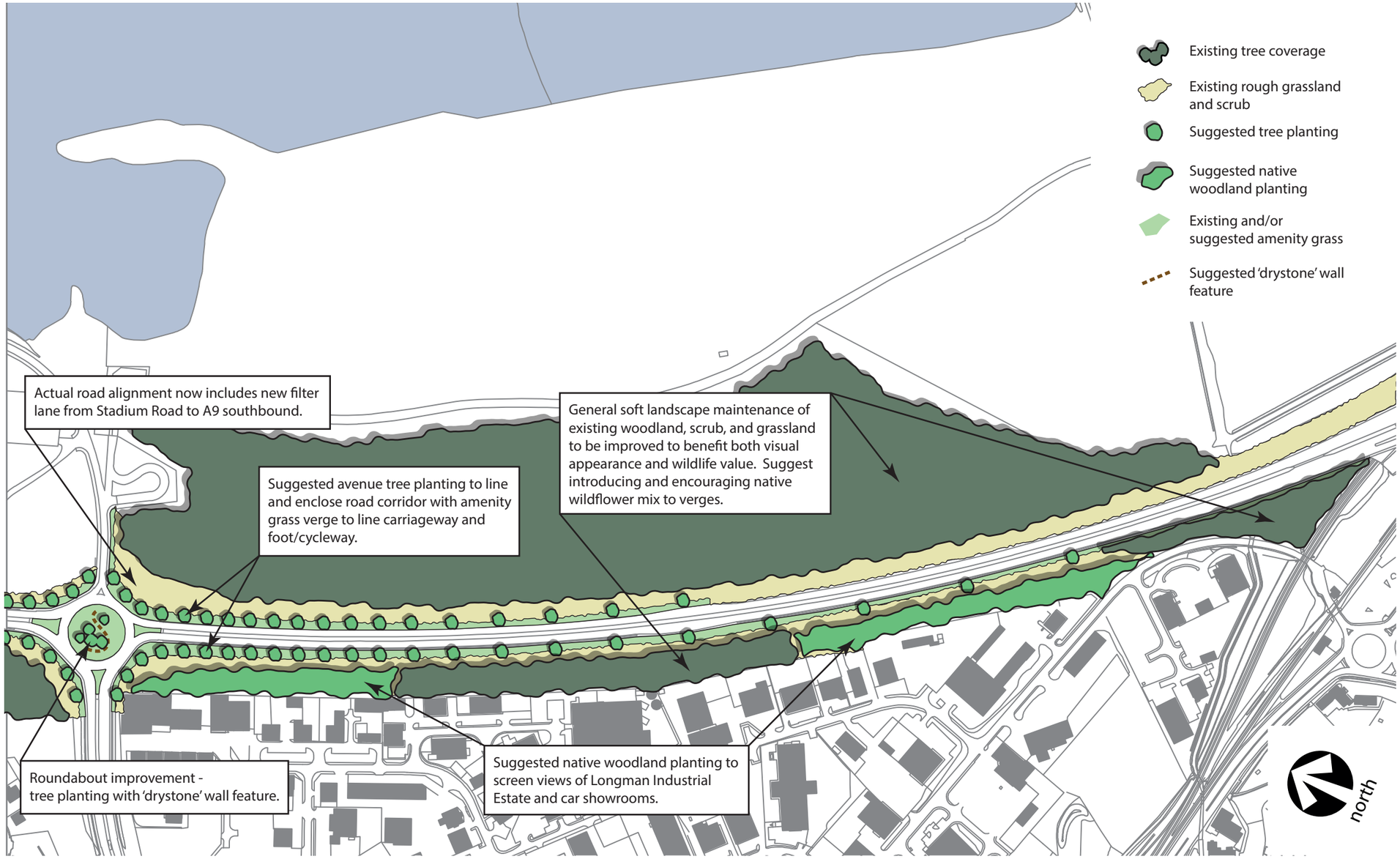
Before

After

A9 South 'Arrival' Zone

Existing attributes

- Typically, the main approach to Inverness for tourists.
- Wide verge / soft landscaped embankment zone either side of carriageway, under TS or THC ownership.
- Footway and cycleway to west side of carriageway.
- Existing semi-mature woodland belt to north side of carriageway.
- Fast, straight approach to Longman roundabout.



Proposals within the highway corridor

- Tree and shrub planting to screen views of the rear of the Longman Industrial Estate.
- Avenue tree planting to increase sense of formality on the approach to the Longman roundabout.
- Existing road corridor scrub and shrub planting managed to remove invasive weeds and improve overall appearance.
- Woodland management plan prepared and implemented to improve the ecological value, appearance and structure of existing woodland.
- Maintenance of the public spaces improved: verges within 200m of the roundabout maintained as a minimum in line with Specification for Highway Works series 3007 'medium frequency' grass cutting (cut 6/annum).


Before

Proposals outwith the highway corridor

The area of woodland on the former landfill site east of the A9 is allocated for development in the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (sites IN8 and IN13). If this development is likely to take a significant period to materialise, 'view corridors' could be cut through the woodland to open up glimpses of the Moray Firth from the road.

A requirement for view corridors giving a visual connection between the A9 and the Moray Firth should be added to the masterplanning brief for the development on these sites.


After

Main Link Roads: A82 Longman Road

This section covers the A82 Longman Road to Telford Roundabout.

Issues

- Main approach to the city.
- Passes through what is effectively a linear industrial and retail park.
- Incoherent building lines and façade treatments.
- 'Could be anywhere' building designs.
- Inconsistent and often weak edge treatment to the road corridor.
- Road corridor visibly designed for minimum maintenance cost.
- Very pedestrian and cycle unfriendly (few crossings, those that exist are indirect, roundabouts are cycle hazards and disadvantage pedestrian movement).
- Overall it looks very poor and has no local distinctiveness.

Constraints

- Heavy traffic flows especially at peak hours.
- Trunk road & thus road design and maintenance standards constrained by TS requirements.
- Significant underground services.
- Little or no spare space within the road corridor, except close to Longman Roundabout.

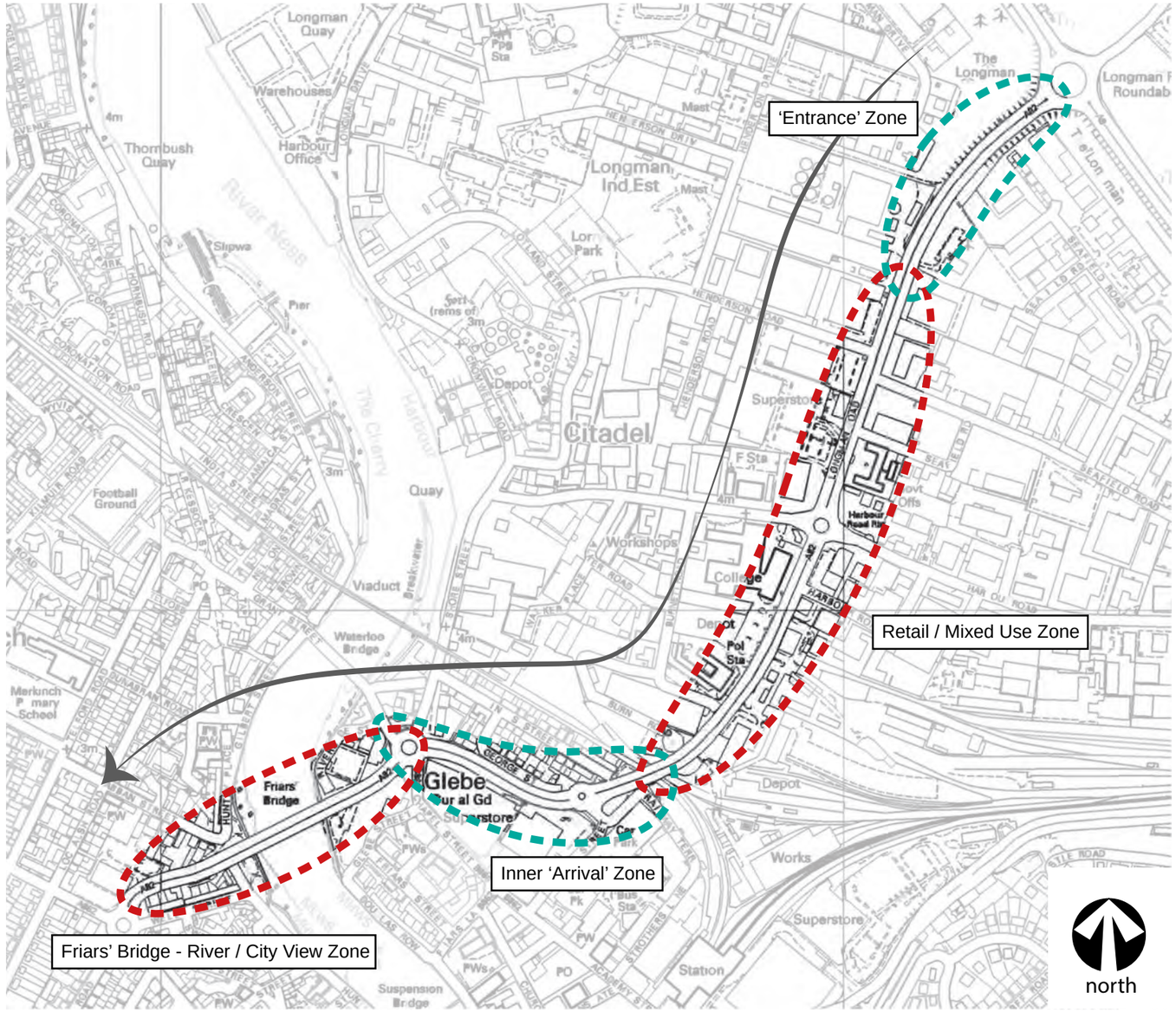
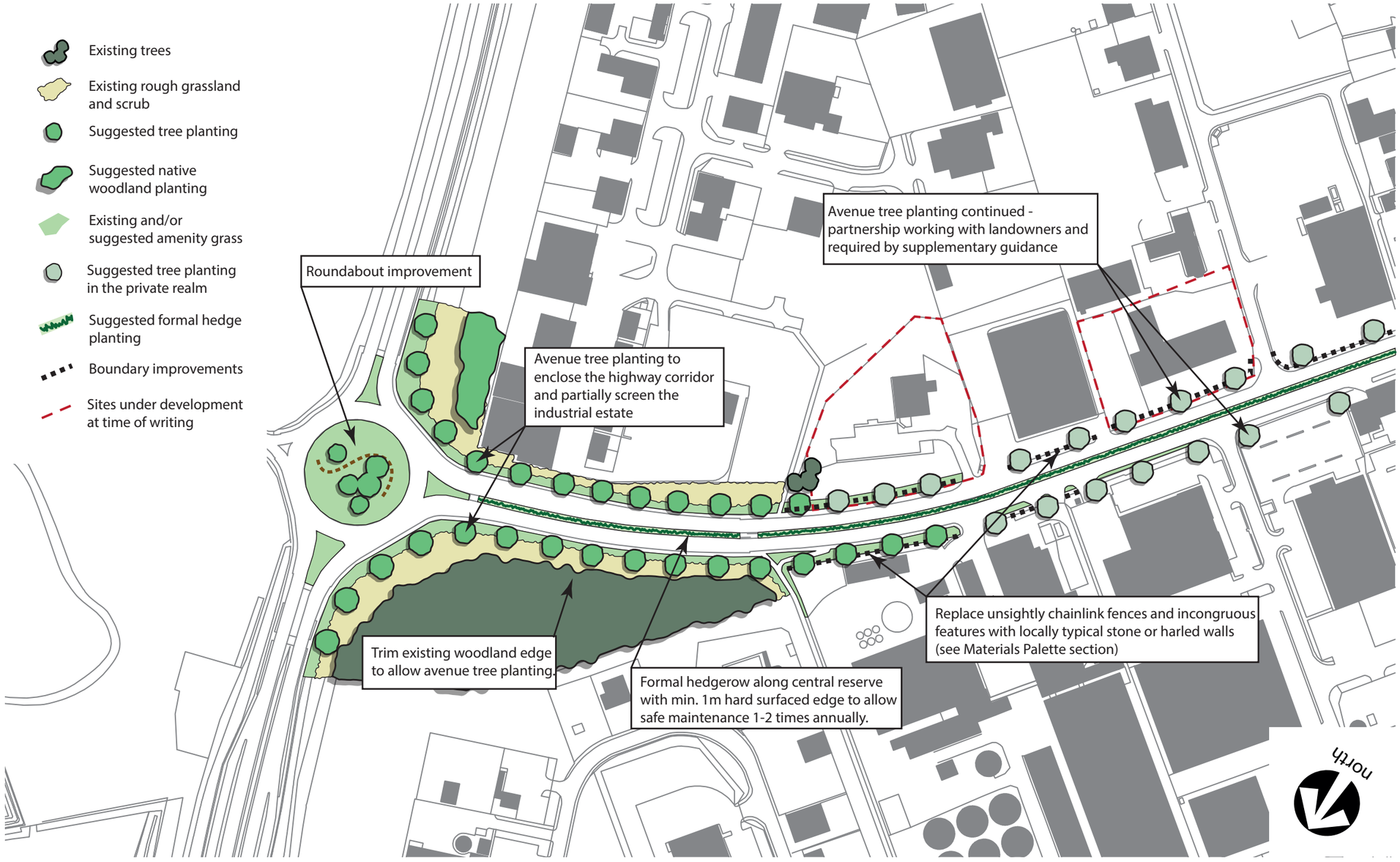


Figure 9: Main Link Roads - A82

A82 Longman Road: 'Entrance' Zone



Existing attributes

- 30mph dual-carriageway, with periodic high traffic flow - traffic light controlled at side junctions and Longman roundabout.
- Broad verges either side of the road at entrance.
- Wide area of scrubby woodland to the north.
- Wide, hard surfaced central reserve with one controlled crossing point.
- Piecemeal development with inconsistent building lines and little enclosure to the street
- Site front boundary treatments vary from plot to plot, no consistency of materials, some open, some enclosed.
- Footway to both sides of carriageway, shared cycleway over initial section from roundabout.

Proposals within the public realm

Regrade verges either side to between 1:3 and 1:4 to improve appearance and allow easier & higher quality maintenance.

- Cut back existing scrub woodland on the north side and create a tidy edge.
- Avenue tree planting either side of the road - trees spaced so that they tend to screen buildings and enclose the street in oblique views but allow views through to commercial frontages from close to.
- Hedge or band of low maintenance shrubs along the central reservation to reduce the apparent width of the carriageway, upgrade hard surfacing to edges of reservation (note that Transport Scotland have reservations about maintenance implications).
- Potentially, line of trees planted along central reservation (dependent on safety audit).
- Standard of maintenance improved to meet, as a minimum, 'medium frequency' grass cutting in accordance with Specification for Highway Works series 3007 (cut 6/annum).

Proposals within the private realm

(implementation through partnership working or required by design guidance)

- Strong, quality edge definition to site frontages (stone or harled walls - see Materials Palette section) to improve visual appearance of road corridor and sense of enclosure.
- Control building line so that new development is either located to create comfortable street enclosure or includes structural elements (eg appropriate planting - preferably continuation of avenue planting - see Materials Palette section).

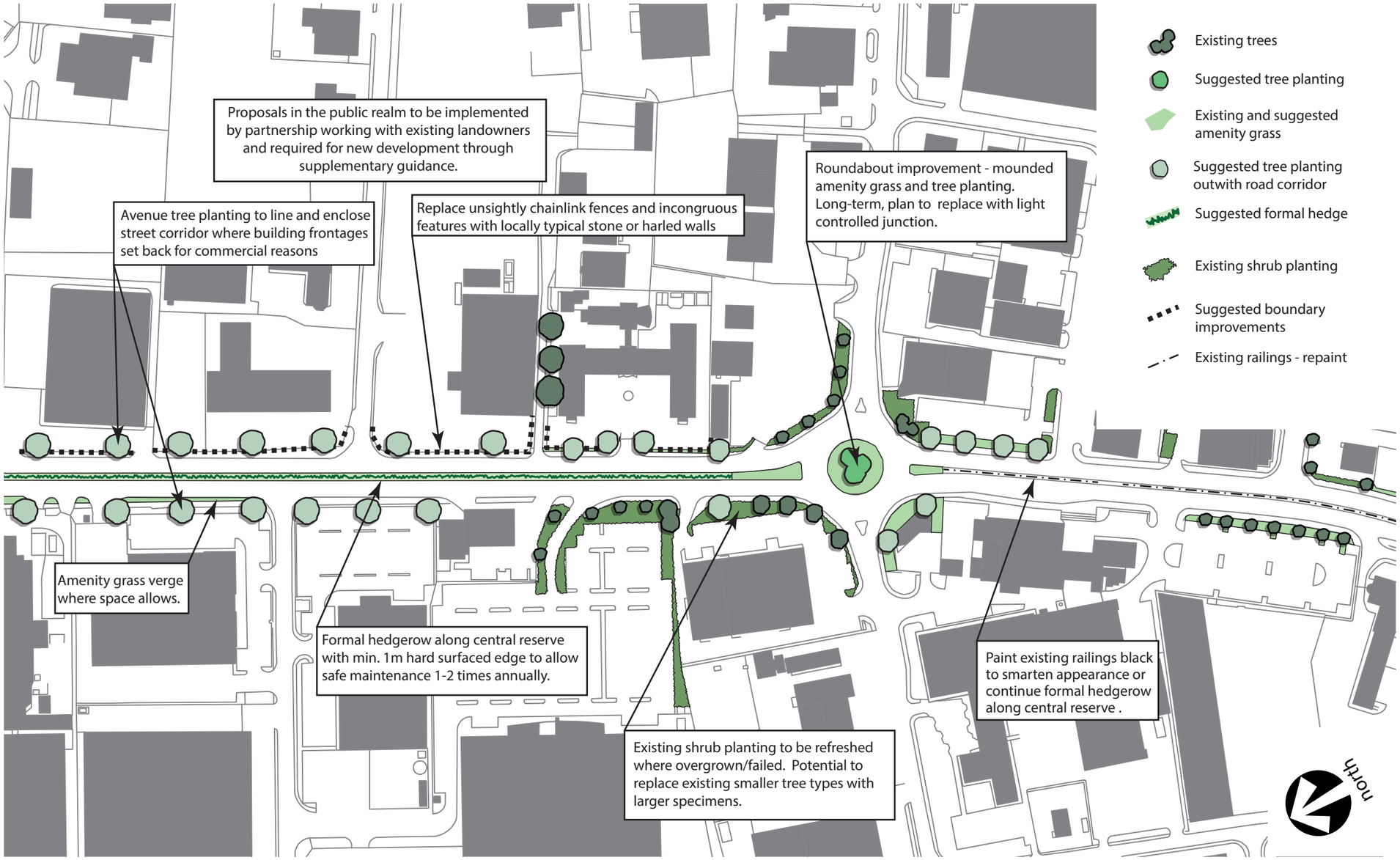
Before

After

A82 Longman Road: Retail / Mixed Use Zone

Existing attributes

- Periodically busy, 30mph dual carriageway through out-of-town style industrial / commercial development.
- Buildings set back seemingly at random and varied spacings / distances with often visually weak edge treatment. Some developers have created positive frontages, others not.
- Weak townscape means that the arrival experience is dominated by the road and traffic.
- Restricted areas of public realm - no verges either side.
- Footway to both sides of carriageway and hard central reserve - highway railings along central reserve from Inverness College, with controlled crossing point.
- Urban structure improved where buildings better respond to the form of the street (between Inverness College, and the police HQ) and where trees and walls provide some enclosure.



Proposals within the public realm

- Hedge or band of low maintenance shrubs along the central reservation to reduce the apparent width of the carriageway, upgrade hard surfacing to edges of reservation (note that Transport Scotland have reservations about maintenance implications).
- Potentially, line of trees planted along central reservation (dependent on safety audit).
- Continuation of avenue tree planting where road corridor permits.
- Improved standard of maintenance.
- In the longer term, seek to replace roundabouts with light-controlled junctions to benefit non-motorised users and allow better use of space for development.

Before

Proposals within the private realm

(implementation through partnership working or required by design guidance)

- Strong, quality edge definition to site frontages (stone or harled walls - see Materials Palette section) to improve visual appearance of road corridor and sense of enclosure.
- Control building line so that new development is either located to create comfortable street enclosure or includes structural elements (eg continuation of avenue planting - see Materials Palette section).

After

A82 Longman Road: 'Inner Arrival' Zone

Existing attributes

- Urban structure falls apart around Rose Street roundabout with multi-storey car park dominating and open views across Rose Street retail park.
- Mature trees and walls provide sense of enclosure alongside cemetery.
- Blockwork walls, although faded, help provide enclosure and a degree of local distinctiveness.
- Limited area of public realm.
- Hard central reserve.

Proposals in the public realm

- Tree planting along sections of the central reservation or possible continuation of hedgerow.
- Potentially, remove wall and railings alongside the cemetery to open up the green space for more obvious public use, with avenue tree planting to visually enclose the highway corridor.
- Tree planting in ‘left-over space’ grassed areas at Rose Street to fill in gaps in the urban fabric.
- Replace hard landscape to ‘left-over spaces’ at Shore Street with
- Clean up and repairs of red concrete block walling.
- Improvements to Rose Street and Shore Street roundabouts in line with the proposed ‘Inverness’ design theme - simple strong landform and clumps of native tree planting.
- Refresh areas of overgrown shrub planting and those that have failed.

Proposals in the private realm

(implementation through partnership working or required by design guidance)

- Tree planting along the edge of Rose Street Retail Park to help enclose the highway corridor and provide a stronger, more attractive edge to the development plot.

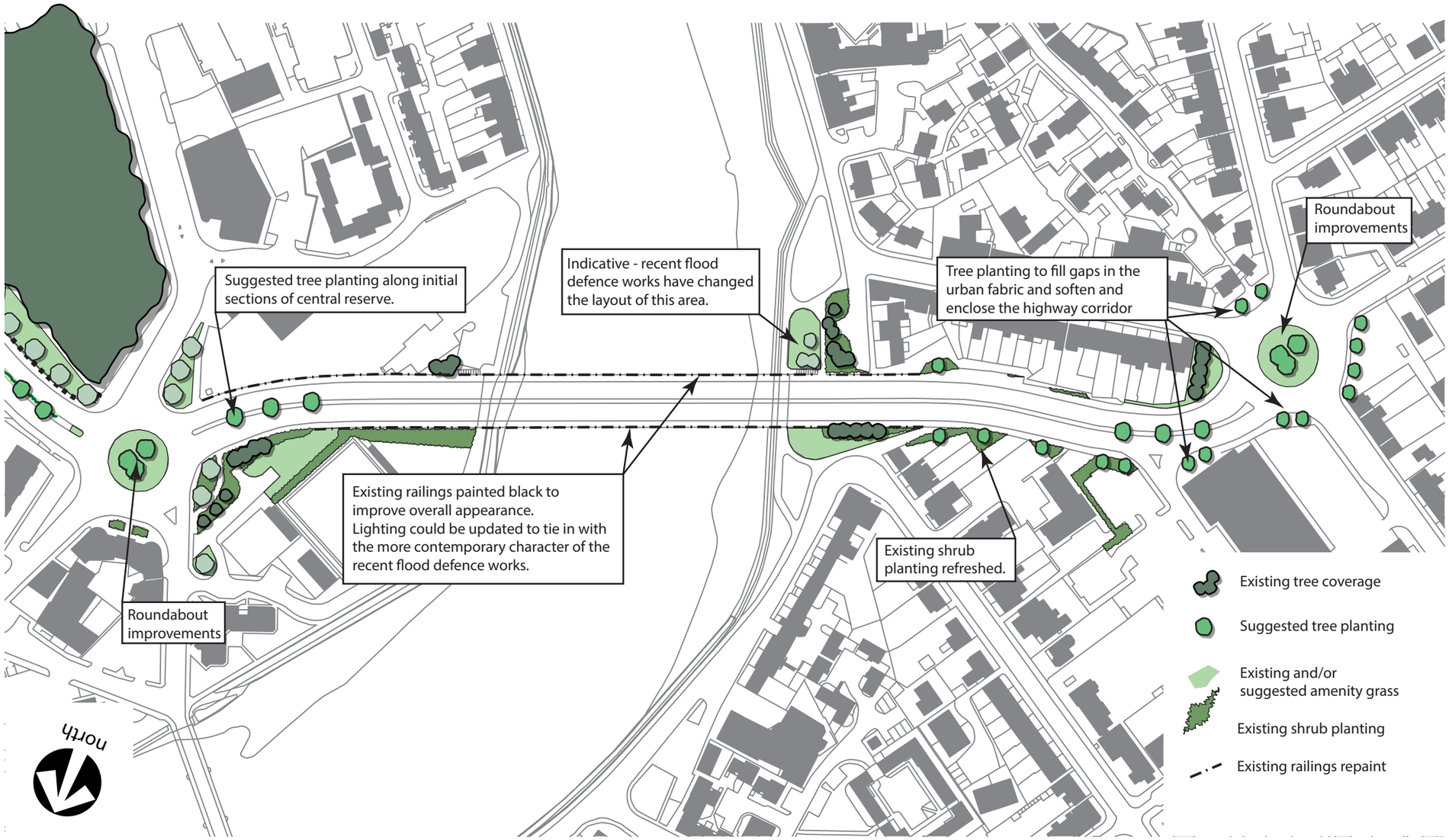
Before

After

A82: Friar's Bridge

Existing attributes

- Limited area of public realm.
- Structural limitations over Friar's Bridge.
- Views of recent flood defence improvement works.



Proposals in the public realm

- Tree planting along small section of the central reservation at each end of bridge (subject to safety audit).
- Upgrade hard surfacing to footpaths and central reservation to tie in with recent flood defence works.
- Railings over Friar's Bridge painted (black) or upgraded to tie in with recent flood defence works with a more contemporary design.
- 'Victorian style' lighting columns over Friar's Bridge replaced with a design more in keeping with the setting (contemporary to tie in with the flood defence works).
- Existing areas of shrub planting and beds refreshed with additional tree planting - overall maintenance regime improved.
- Large areas of open hard standing around Telford Street roundabout replaced with soft landscape and tree planting.
- Clean up red concrete block walling.

Proposals in the private realm

(implementation through partnership working or required by design guidance)

- Tree planting on in 'leftover spaces' at Aldi to help enclose the highway corridor.

Before

After

Main Link Roads: B865 Millburn Road

This section covers the B865 Millburn Road - Raigmore interchange low level to city centre.

Issues

- Main approach to the city from the A96 especially to reach Eastgate car parks.
- The approach feels like the ‘rear entrance’.
- Inconsistent building lines and façade treatments.
- Long length of uninspiring, hard, block work wall along the railway boundary, creating a visually unbalanced, long linear corridor dominated by the road.
- Hard, cobbled central reserve with sporadic, small scale, street trees.
- Hard cobbled areas and open grass to use up ‘dead space’.

Constraints

- Heavy traffic flows especially at peak hours.
- Significant underground services.
- Little or no spare space within the road corridor.
- Network Rail along significant stretch of northern edge.

No proposals are made for the section alongside Morrisons because the supermarket boundary treatment is generally very good and there is no space for works on the south side of the road opposite.

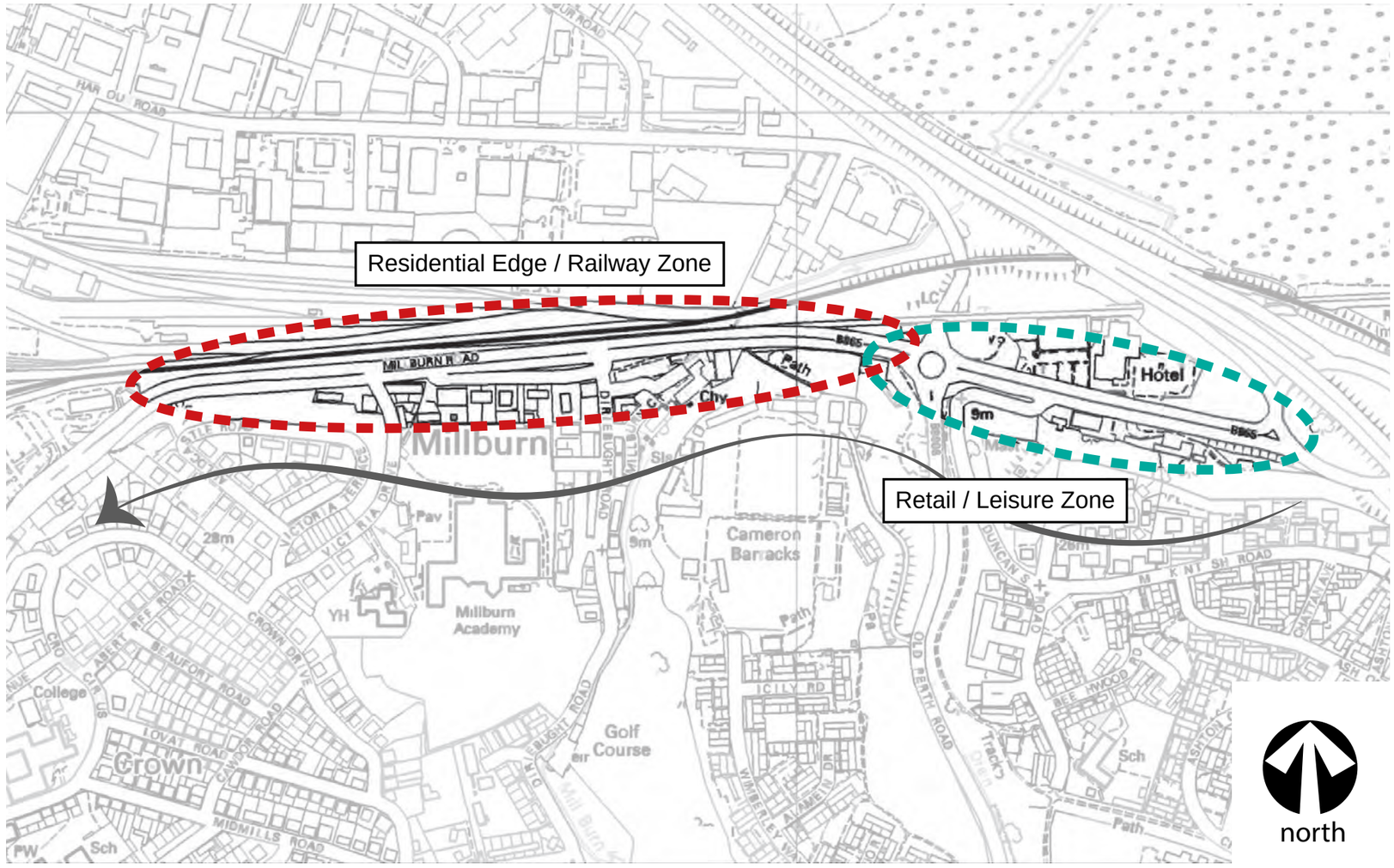
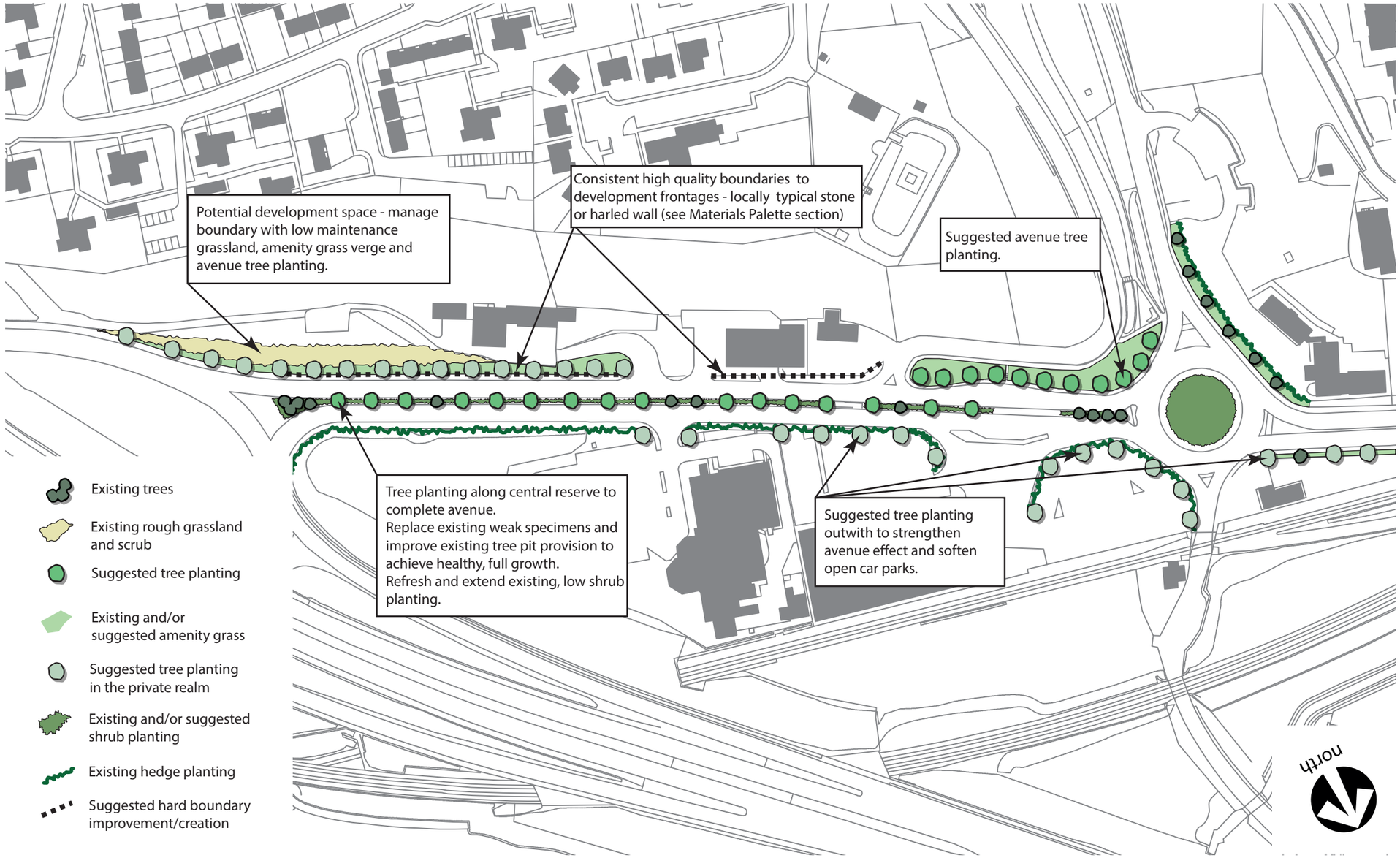


Figure 10: Main Link Roads - B865

Millburn Road: Retail / Leisure Zone

Existing attributes

- Restricted area of public realm.
- Footway either side.
- Planted central reserve - intermittent street trees and shrubs / planters although trees not generally thriving.
- Minor layout changes following cycleway development.
- Well planted and maintained roundabout.



Proposals in the public realm

- Improve existing tree pits in the central reserve (see detail in Material Palette section), replace weak tree specimens and plant additional street trees with appropriate rooting zone to complete avenue.
- Refresh existing shrub planting down central reserve and extend along tree line.
- Plant further trees along verges where space is available, to strengthen the avenue and help structure the townscape.
- Standard of maintenance of the central reserve to be improved.

Proposals in the private realm

(implementation through partnership working or required by design guidance)

- Tree planting within private land to continue avenue tree pattern.
- Provision of high quality edge definition to site frontages (stone/harled wall or hedge, as Material Palette section).

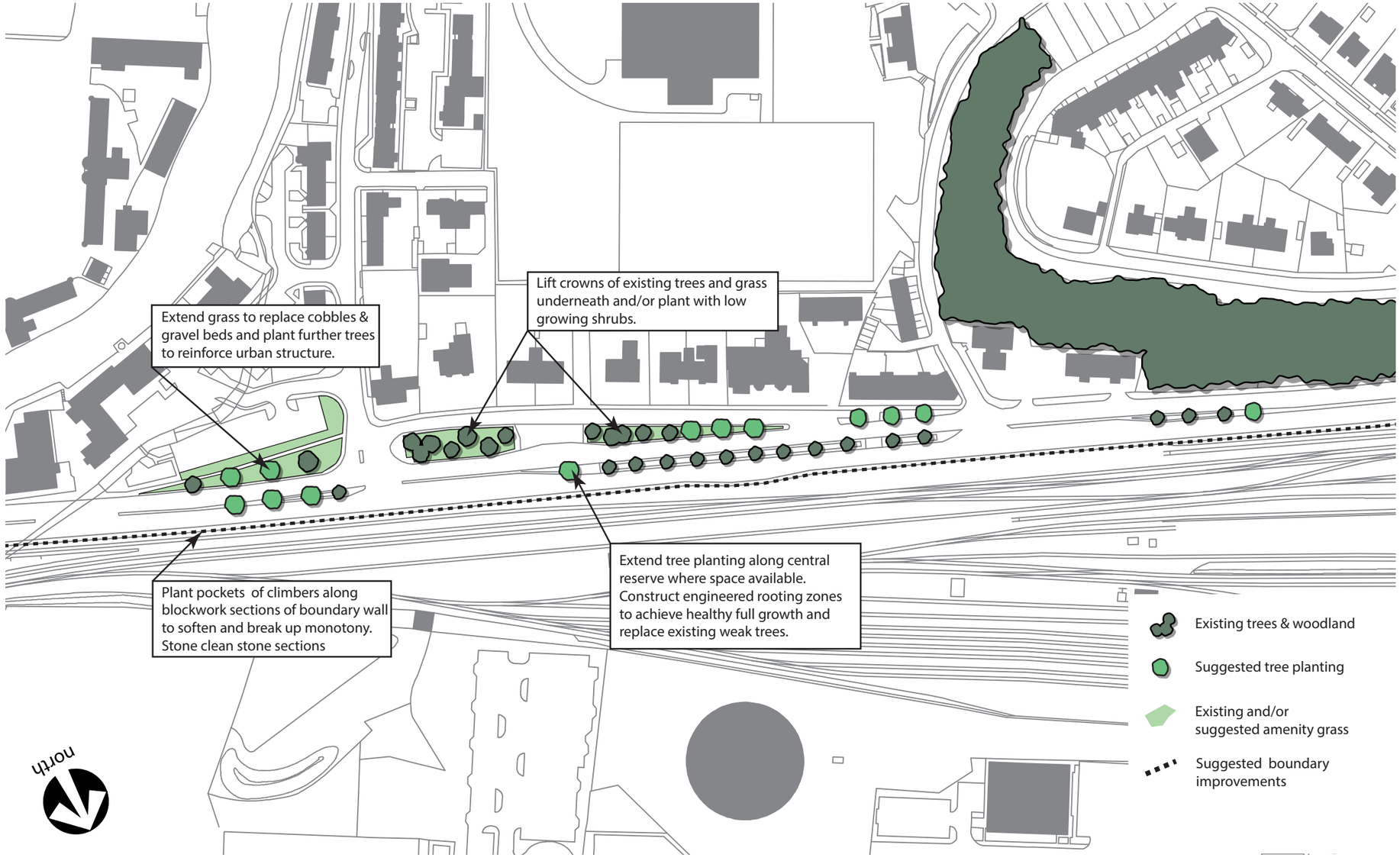
Before

After

Millburn Road: Residential Edge / Railway Zone

Existing attributes

- Restricted areas of public realm, but with pockets and islands of soft landscape space.
- Footway either side - new cycleway to south side.
- Long wall along north side of carriageway / Network Rail boundary, blockwork sections faded.
- Cobbled/gravel bed central reserve with sporadic, small scale, street tree planting.



Proposals in the public realm

- Improve existing tree pit provision along central reserve and plant additional street trees with appropriate engineered rooting zone to complete avenue.
- Plant avenue of trees along south side, where feasible, to mirror central reserve planting and enclose the highway corridor.
- Suggest grassing of areas of hard standing such as cobbles and gravel beds and plant trees where space permits.

Before

Proposals in the private realm

(implementation through partnership working)

- Plant climbers along sections of the Network Rail boundary wall to soften the appearance of the faded blockwork sections.
- Potentially, incorporate artwork and lighting to break up monotony.

After

Main Streets (residential and mixed use): A862 Clachnaharry Road & Telford Street

This section covers the A862 from Muirtown Basin to Telford Street. In the quality audit, the Clachnaharry Road section was found to be good to reasonable quality and the Telford Street section to be poor quality. Parts of the route corridor are covered by the Muirtown and South Kessock development brief and it is included here to complement and build on the emerging proposals in that brief.

Issues

- Key approach to the city from the west.
- Generally attractive between Clachnaharry and the Muirtown swing bridge, although some missed opportunities such as the canal being generally hidden from view
- Passes primarily through residential areas with a pocket of 'tired' retail development.
- Inconsistent building lines and façade treatments.
- Inconsistent edge treatments
- Urban form lost at Carsegate Road roundabout, and
- Poor and unmanaged 'amenity' landscaping in relation to retail units.

Constraints

- Heavy traffic flows especially at peak hours.
- Numerous existing junctions and traffic signals including signalled pedestrian crossings.

Opportunities

- The Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief, which overlaps with much of the route corridor

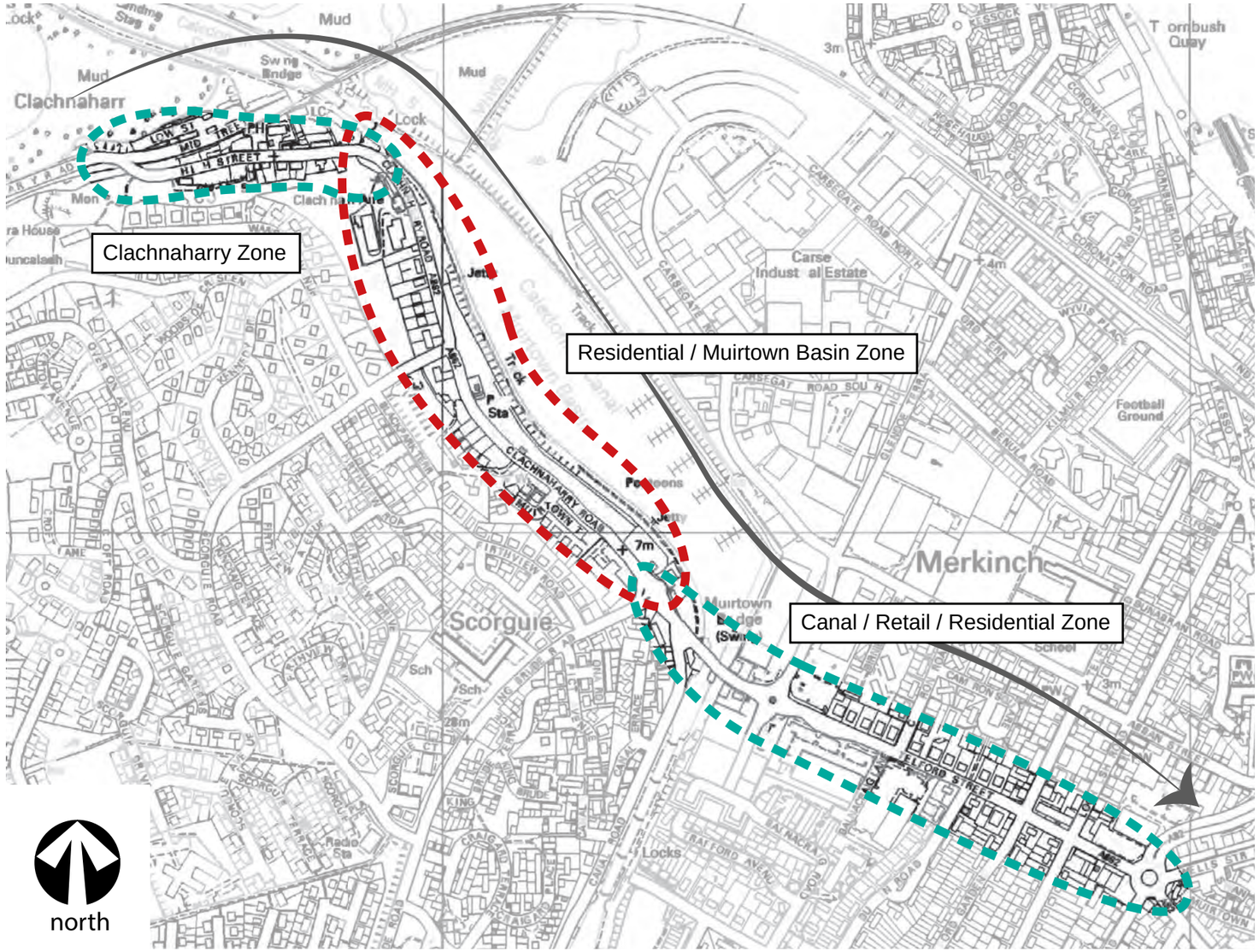


Figure 11: Main Streets (residential and mixed use) - A862

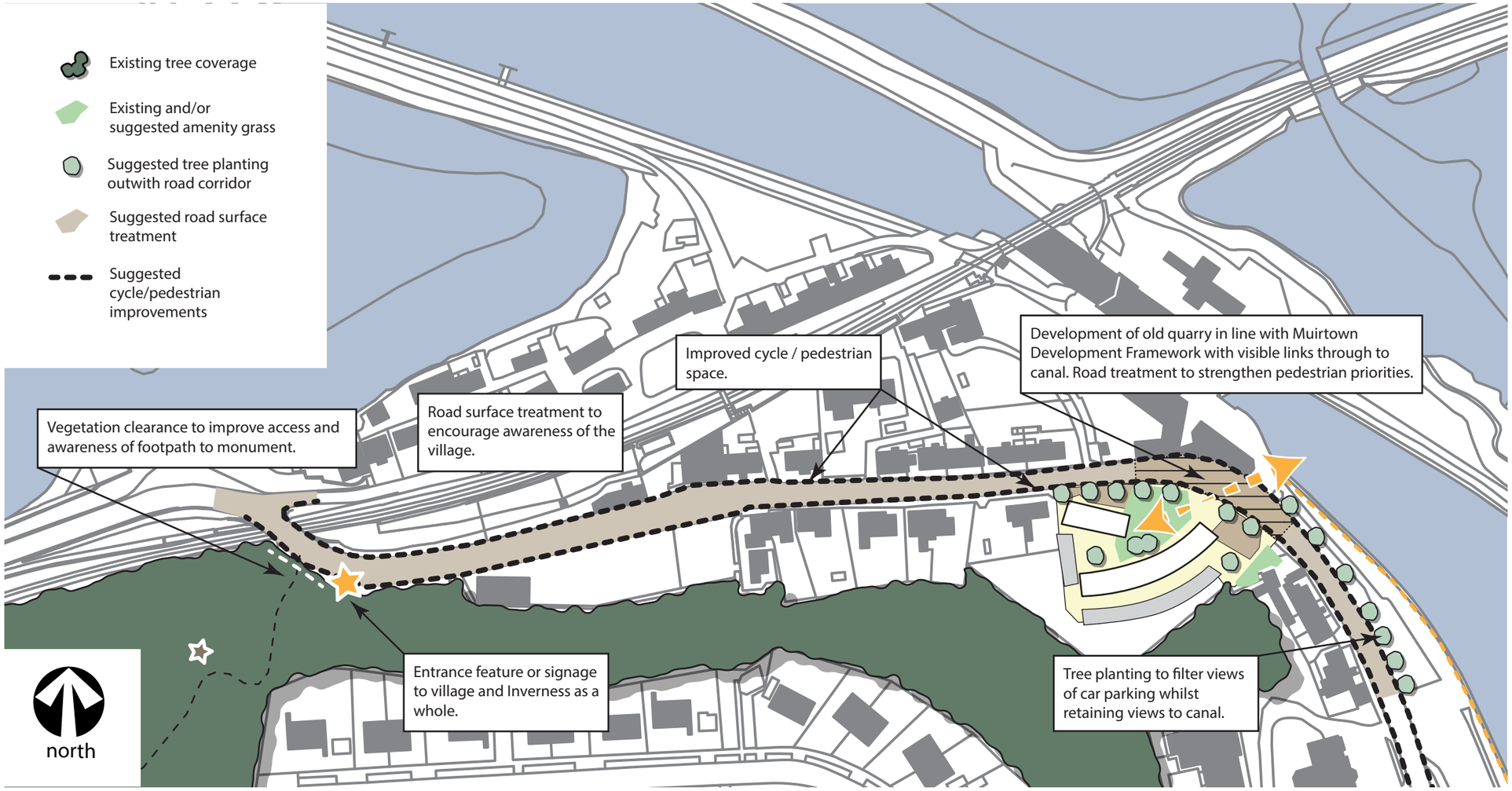
A862: Clachnaharry Zone

Existing attributes

- Attractive village character with predominantly stone cottages closely abutting the footway or narrowly set back. Parts of the village lack a footway, while in other places it is very narrow.

Muirtown Development Brief Proposals

- The Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief includes proposals to enhance the village character with entrance signage, improved cycle/pedestrian space and treating the road surface to encourage awareness of the village.
- Within the core of the village it proposes development at the old quarry site linked through to the canal and, where appropriate, opening up views of the canal.



Proposals in the public realm

- Road surface treatment to define village space and strengthen awareness there of.
- Cycle / pedestrian improvements.
- Entrance / gateway signage or feature to the village and Inverness as a whole.
- Surface treatment to the carriageway where pedestrian priority should be given to strengthen links between new development in the old quarry site and the canal, opposite.

Proposals in the private realm

(implementation through partnership working or required by design guidance)

- Support to Muirtown Development Brief proposals to improve the old quarry site and create links through to outdoor facilities along the canal side, such as the wider footpath network.
- Tree planting to line road corridor, heal gaps in the urban fabric, and help screen car parking.
- Control of frontage treatments through Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Before

After

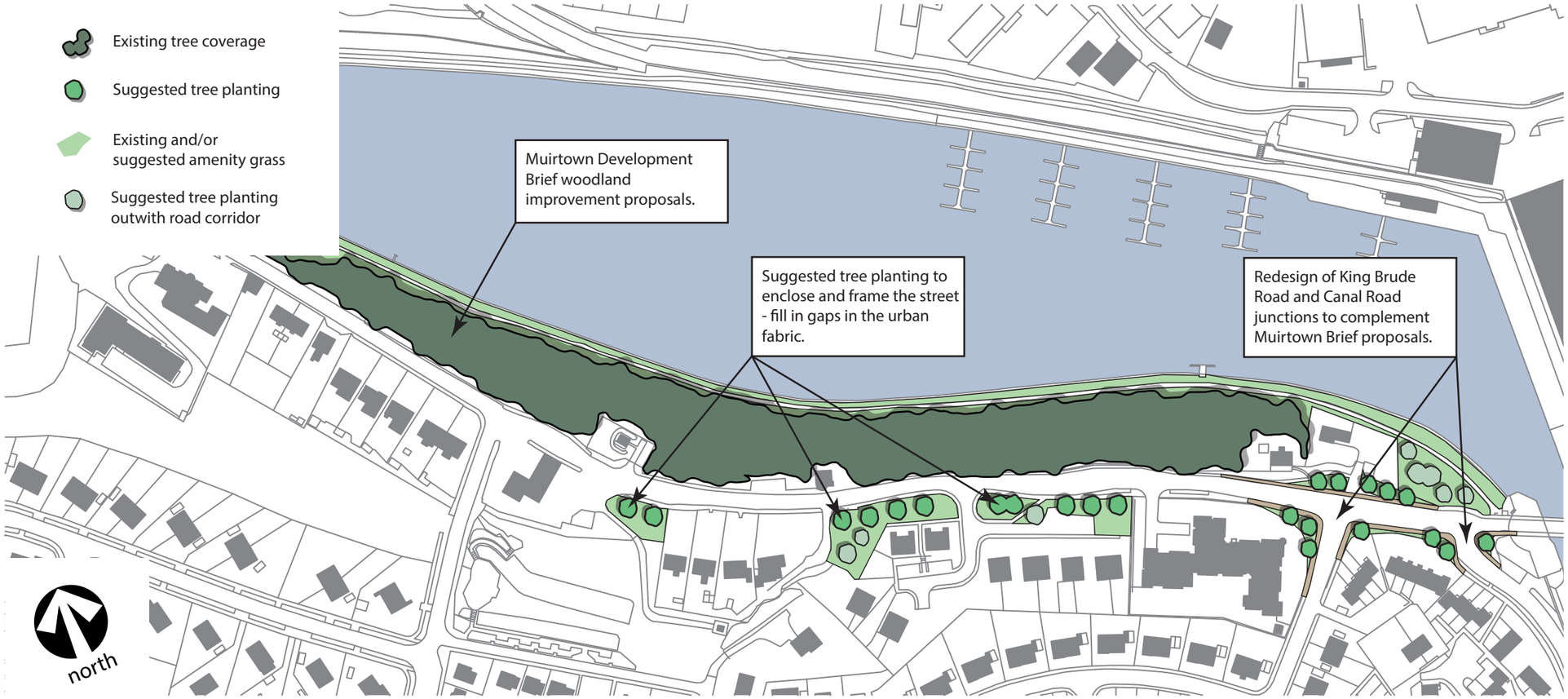
A862 Clachnaharry Road: Muirtown Basin Zone

Existing attributes

- Generally attractive section of street but inconsistent building line / enclosure to the south side.
- The design of King Brude Road and Canal Road junctions prioritises traffic movement at the expense of pedestrians and cyclists.

Muirtown Development Brief Proposals

- Muirtown Development brief proposals are for woodland improvements and potential new Sea Scout centre along the edge of Muirtown Basin, improved linkages between Telford Street & Clachnaharry Road, focal point development at the end of the basin, and an improved public realm.



Proposals in the public realm

- Tree planting in the open space below Muirtown Terrace to enclose and frame the street.
- Redesign of King Brude Road and Canal Road junctions to complement the Muirtown Brief proposals, improve the public realm, and make for easier safer pedestrian and cycle links along Clachnaharry Road.

Proposals in the private realm

(implementation through partnership working or required by design guidance)

- Support to Muirtown Development Brief proposals to improve the canal-side woodland, create visual links through to the canal basin and Sea Scout centre and basin gateway developments.
- Control of frontage treatments through Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Before

After

A862: Swing Bridge / Telford Street Zone

Existing attributes

- Attractive crossing of the swing bridge but then the street opens up to a traffic-dominated zone through the retail park, with buildings set back to allow frontage car-parking.
- Junction and street design through the retail park prioritises traffic movement at the expense of pedestrians and cyclists.

Muirtown Development Brief Proposals

- The Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief includes proposals to improve connectivity and traffic safety, enhance the public realm, and create a tourism and cultural destination with links to the waterfront.

Proposals within the highway corridor

- Redesign of Carsegate Road junction to complement the Muirtown Brief proposals and make for easier safer pedestrian and cycle links along Clachnaharry Road.
- Public realm enhancements through the retail zone.

Proposals outwith the highway corridor *(implementation through partnership working or required by design guidance)*

- Encourage retail park management to refresh the amenity landscaping and improve overall maintenance regime. In particular encourage planting of trees of appropriate scale and stature.
- Control of frontage detailing, building lines and in-curtilage tree planting for new development through Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Telford Street roundabout
Before

Telford Street roundabout
After

Main Streets (industrial): NCN 1

This section covers the National Cycle Network Route 1 (NCN1) from Kessock Bridge to Shore Street roundabout.

Issues

- Main approach to the city from the north on bicycle - designated National Cycle Network route.
- Passes through a heavily industrial area with no segregated cycle path or lane to separate the route from industrial traffic.
- Inconsistent building lines and façade treatments.
- Inconsistent and often utilitarian security plot boundary treatment.
- Road corridor almost solely designed for vehicular traffic - pedestrian and cycle unfriendly.
- Overall it looks very poor and is an unpleasant approach for the cyclist.

Constraints

- HGV access
- Restricted corridor width and limited areas of public realm

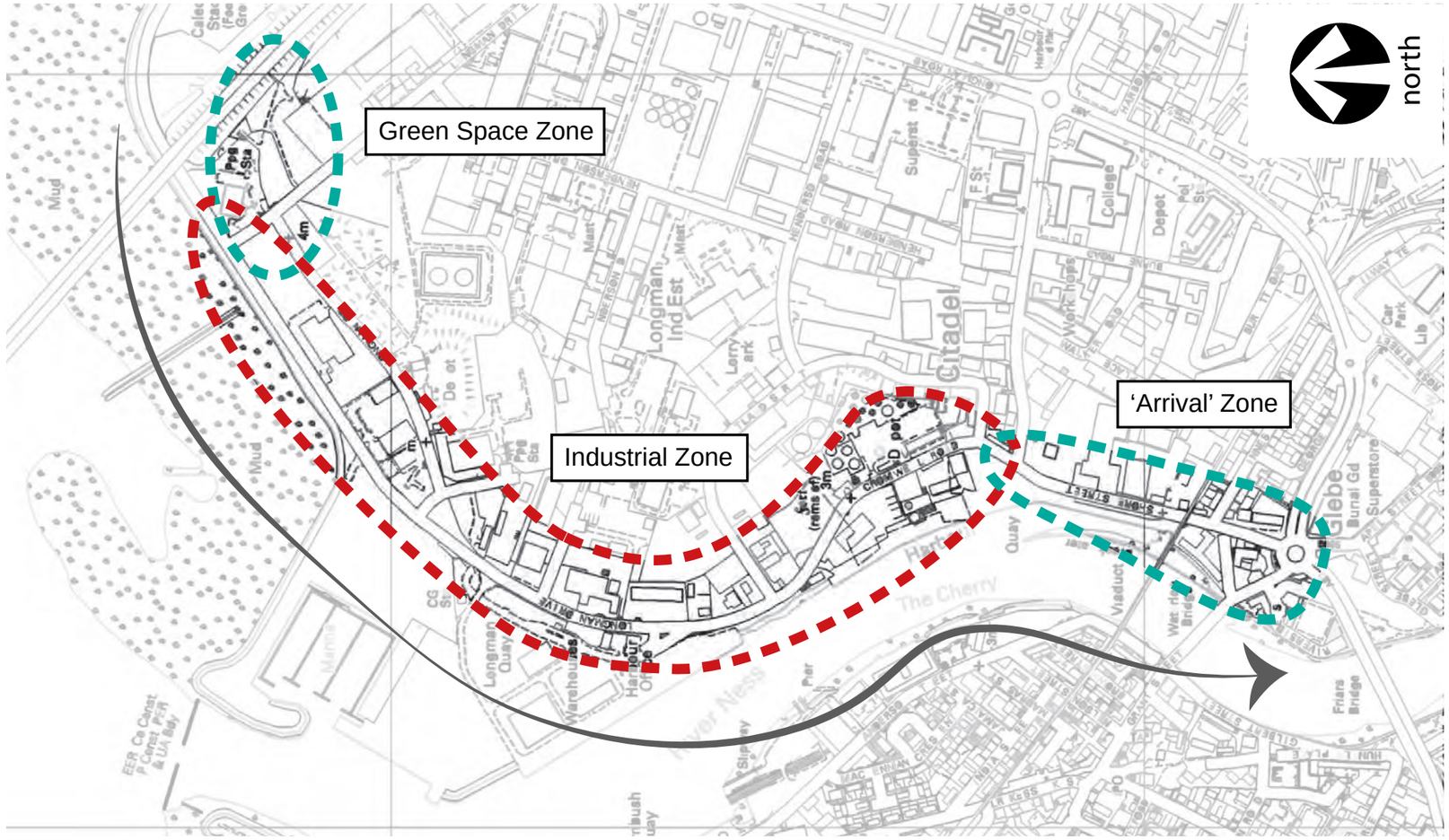
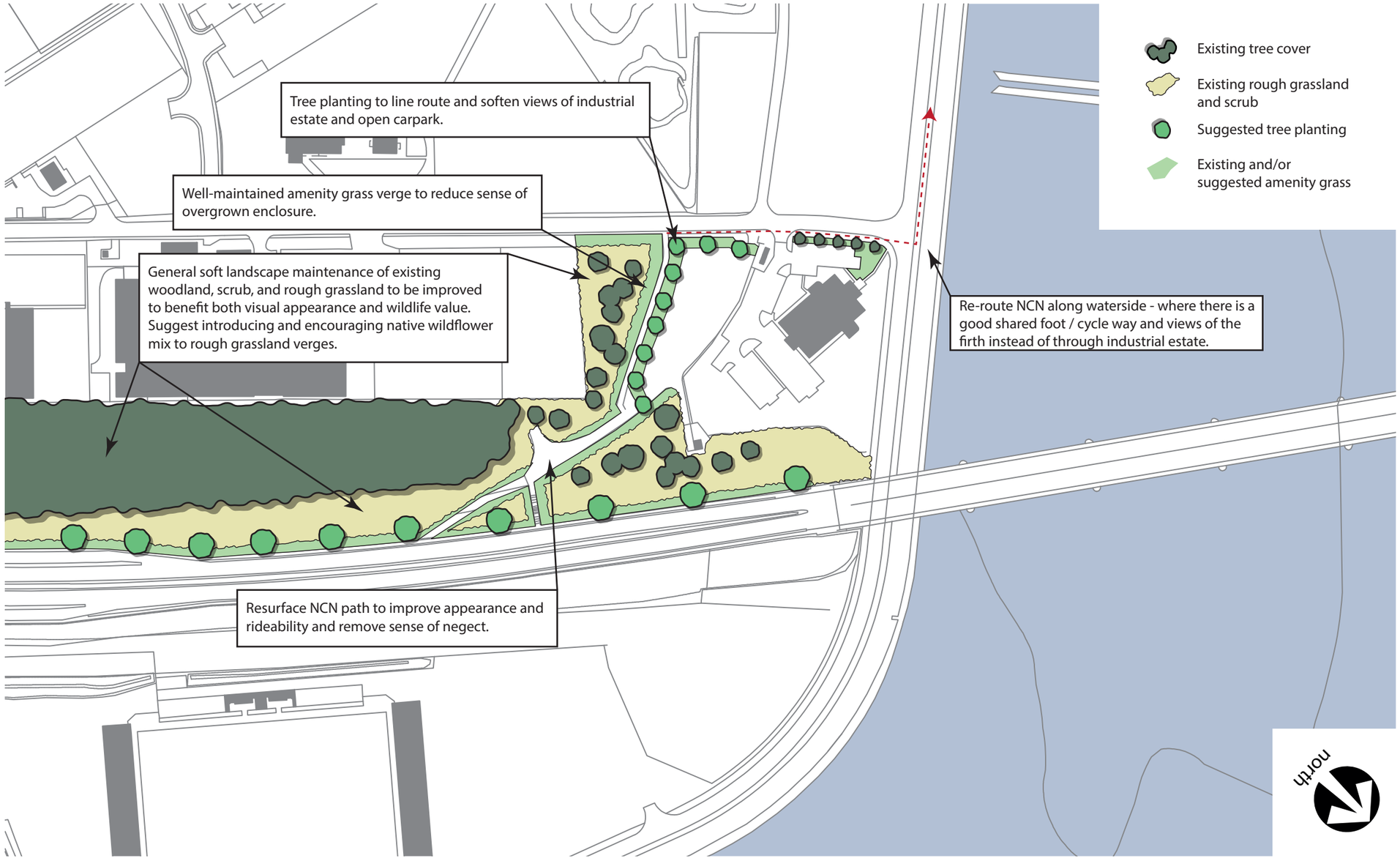


Figure 12: Main Streets (industrial) - NCN1

NCN 1: Green Space Zone

Existing attributes

- Overgrown scrub verges and mossy tarmacked path - general sense of neglect.
- Views of overflow car park.



Proposals within the NCN corridor

- Clear scrub verges back and seed with amenity grass to widen cycle route and create a less hostile, neglected space.
- Resurface route.
- Improve active maintenance of adjacent soft landscape/woodland.

Proposals outwith the NCN corridor

(implementation through partnership working)

- Plant avenue trees along boundary of car park to soften views of industrial buildings and overflow car park.
- Improve active maintenance of wider soft landscape/woodland.

Before

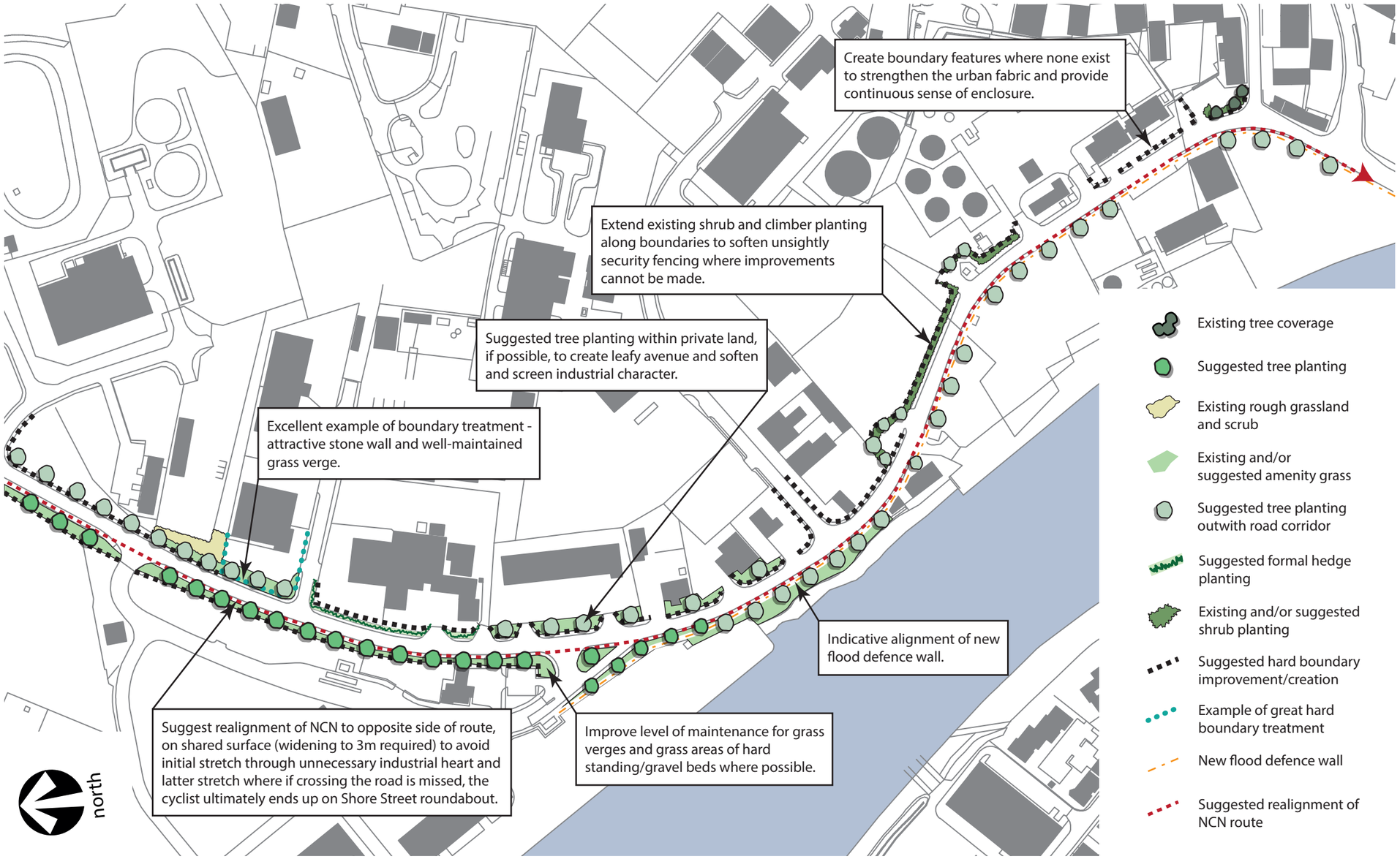
Existing good quality shared surface along the firth, with great views, but not used by the NCN. Simply needs re-signed

After

NCN 1: Industrial Zone

Existing attributes

- Dominated by industrial uses and functional requirements.
- Long, gloomy route with industrial traffic hazards.
- Recent flood defence works extend along latter half of route to west side.
- Dominance of unsightly security and utilitarian boundary treatments.



Cyclists already use the footway as a safer alternative to the road. In places this could be simply formalised.

Proposals in the public realm

- Provide safe, segregated cycle route.
- Improve and exploit pocket spaces, e.g. Cromwell's Monument.
- Plant street trees and amenity shrubs where possible to soften and structure the streetscape.

Proposals in the private realm

(implementation through partnership working or required by design guidance)

- Require new development to set back frontage security fencing behind a narrow strip of trees and amenity shrubs/hedging. Encourage existing users to do likewise where possible.
- Encourage and facilitate the use of climbing plants to help screen unsightly boundary treatments and where possible, encourage the improvement of hard boundary treatments.
- Refresh and improve the level of maintenance for areas of existing shrub planting/scrub.
- Promote, where feasible, the planting of trees in appropriate, root safe, pits, to line the route and help screen and soften industrial elements.
- Encourage the creation of boundary treatments where frontages spill out into the road corridor and the urban fabric is frayed.

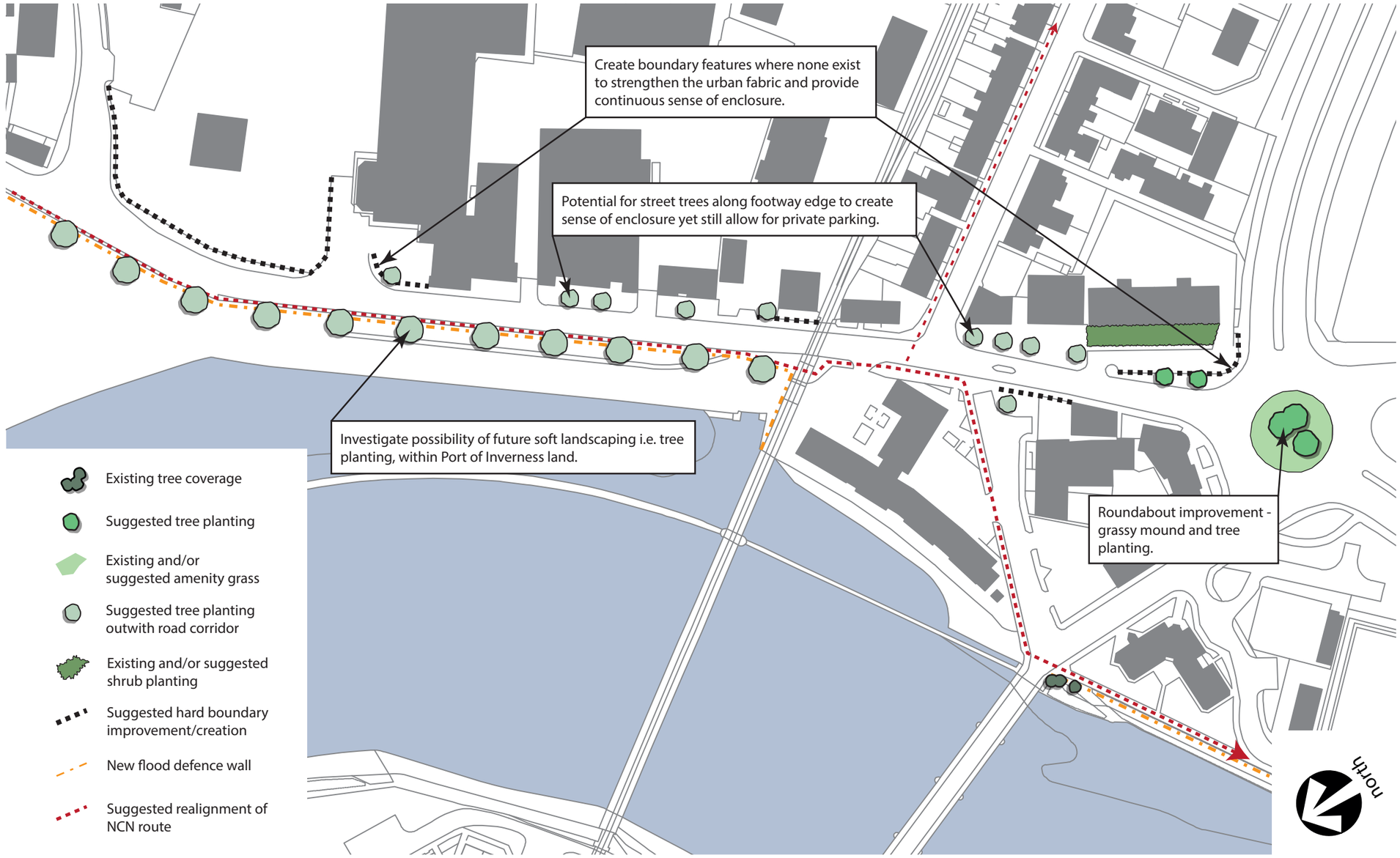
Before

After

NCN 1: 'Arrival' Zone

Existing attributes

- Parked cars over pavements and areas of hard-standing outside businesses.
- Empty area of Port of Inverness land behind new flood defence wall - future use unknown.
- Not very obvious change in direction of cycle route along minor road to Grant Street, with no clear crossing facility to leave Shore Street safely - ultimately bound for hazardous Shore Street roundabout.



Proposals within the public realm

- Provide safe, segregated cycle route and take route clearly over Shore Street roundabout, or along Innes Street to underpass.
- Plant street trees and amenity shrubs where possible to soften and line road.
- Improve soft landscaping on Shore Street roundabout to mark positive entrance feature.

Proposals in the private realm

(implementation through partnership working or required by design guidance)

- Plant trees and amenity shrubs where possible to soften industrial units and features.
- Improve existing areas of tree and shrub planting.
- Investigate potential design of Port of Inverness land behind new flood defence wall to incorporate soft landscape features.

Before

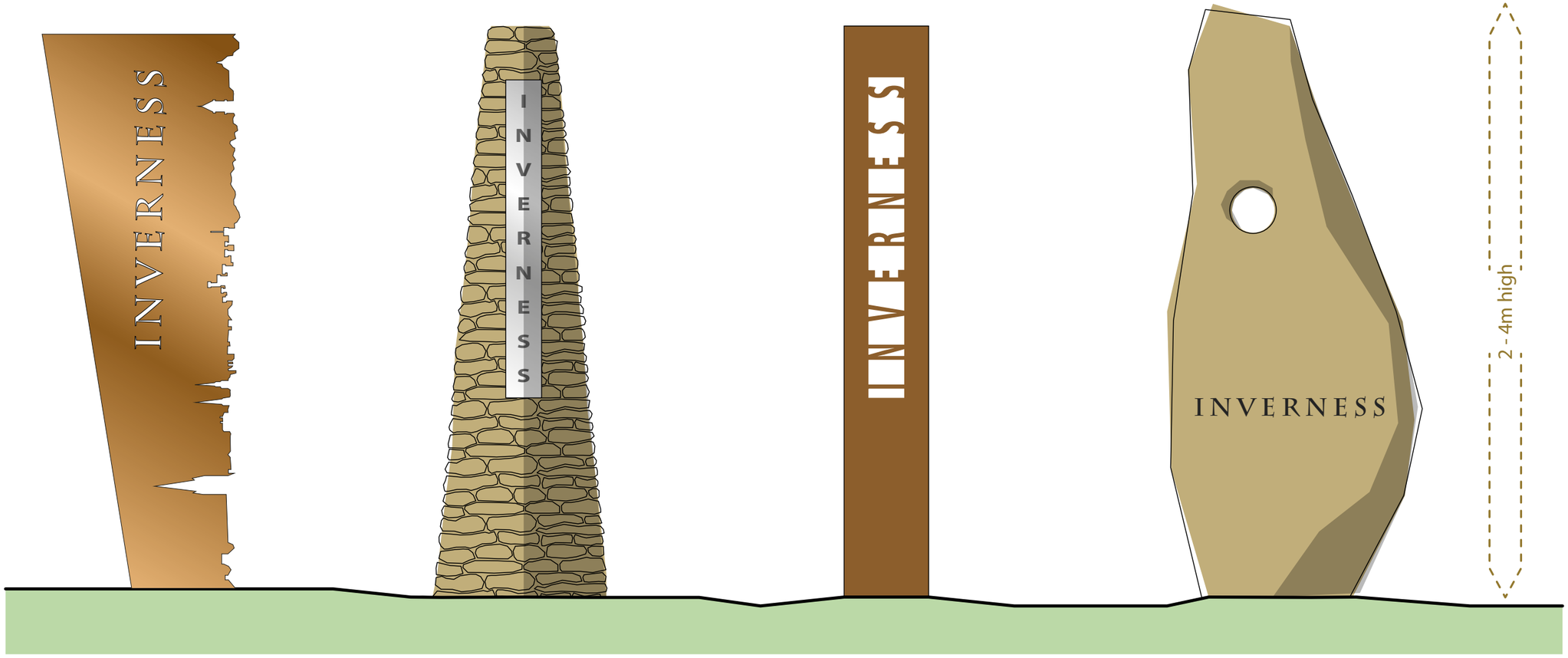
After

Widening the footway by about 1 m would create a safe shared surface

Gateways

There are a total of seven suggested gateway feature locations, five of them located on main approach routes and two on secondary approaches, as illustrated on Figure 7, Active Intervention Routes. The design, scale, and prominence of a gateway would relate to the hierarchy of route on which it was located i.e. a more prominent gateway feature would be designed for the A9 than would be for the B9006.

Identifying and designing a suitable gateway feature for Inverness would require great and integral input from the local community. The following provides just some typical gateway features that may be appropriate for the identified locations, to signal arrival into the City of Inverness and portray an attractive and proud image for visitors and local residents alike.

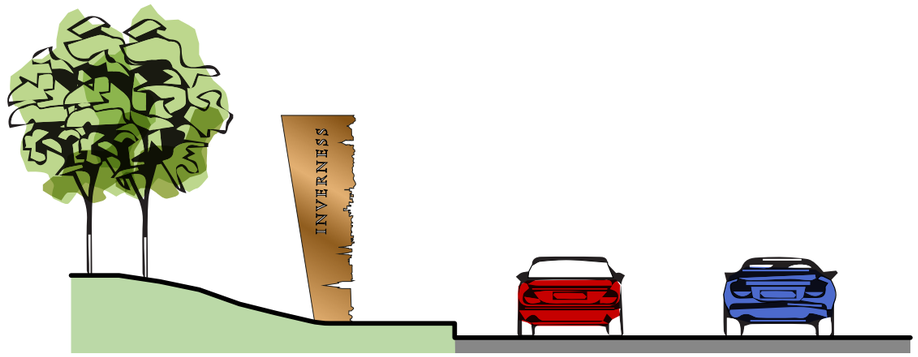


Laser cut corten steel

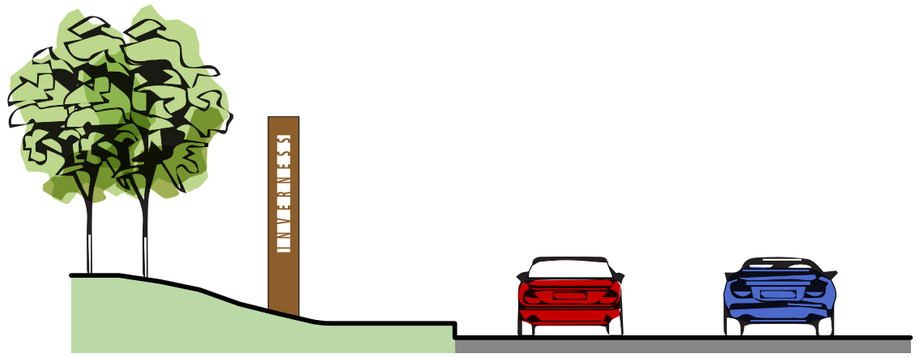
'Dry stone' stone obelisk

Carved timber post

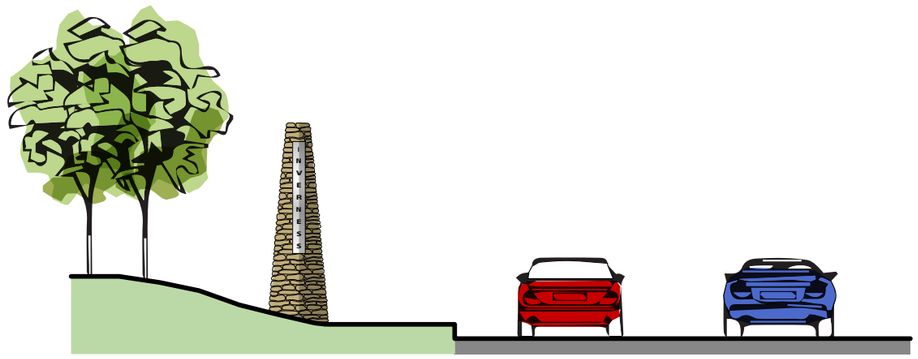
Engraved 'standing stone'



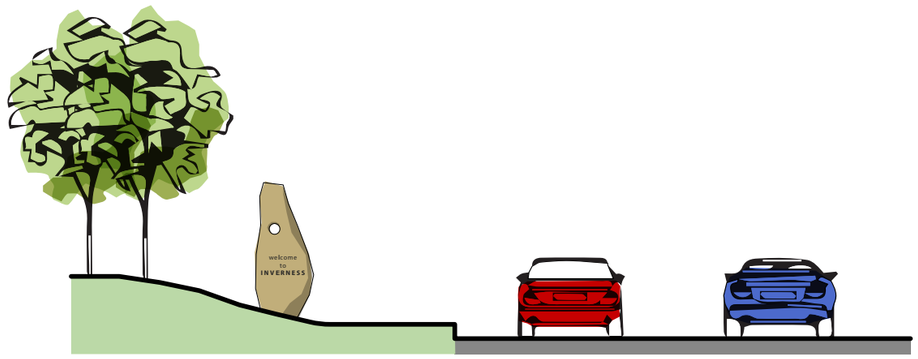
Laser cut corten steel



Carved timber post



‘Dry stone’ stone obelisk



Engraved ‘standing stone’

Small standing granite stones, the Gateway to Aberdeen

Walkway gateway feature, corten steel

Stone obelisk

Inverness campus, entrance feature

Standing stone

Roundabouts

As noted previous, the long-term aim is to balance the movement needs of all users and the optimum solution is likely to be that urban roundabouts are replaced with junctions. Equally long-term, Transport Scotland seek eventually to replace the Longman Roundabout with a grade separated junction.

In the medium term, low-cost design interventions could help fill the ‘hole’ in the townscape caused by the urban roundabouts and help create a ‘Highland’ design theme to reinforce the identity of the city.

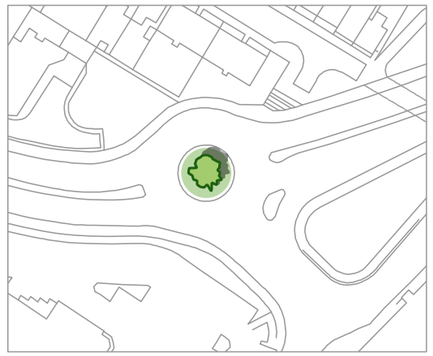
Application of this design theme to the new roundabouts that form part of the West Link proposals, to the existing roundabouts on the A96 east of the Raigmore Interchange, to any new roundabouts formed as part of the A96 linkage project and to the Ness Side roundabout on the B862 would form distinctive arrival points to the city, reinforcing any ‘gateway’ proposals.

Precedent images and ideas

- 1 - Scots Pine on grassy knoll with ‘drystone’ wall feature - typical Highland image.
- 2 - Edinburgh Airport junction on the A8 - native tree and shrub planting with stone wall feature and well-maintained amenity grass verge/frontage.
- 3 - Domestic scale street trees on well-maintained grassy roundabout with seasonal interest from bulb planting.

Longman
Simple mounded grass ‘knoll’ with stand of Scots pine and sinuous ‘dry stone’ wall feature.

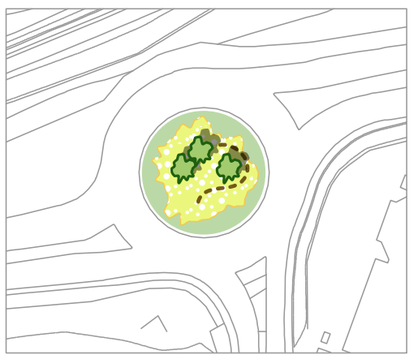
Harbour Road
Grass verge with wildflower centre, single hornbeam, and sinuous ‘dry stone’ wall feature.



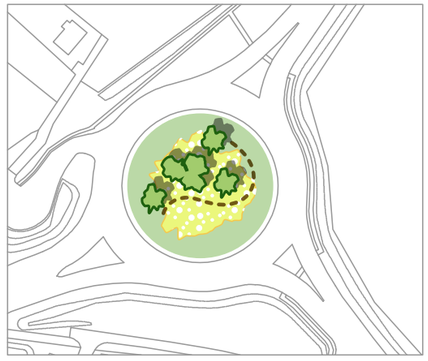
Rose Street
Simple grass centre with single silver birch.

Shore Street
Grass verge with central shrub planting, and small stand of cherry trees.

Telford Street
Simple mounded grass ‘knoll’ with wildflower centre, and small stand of hornbeam.

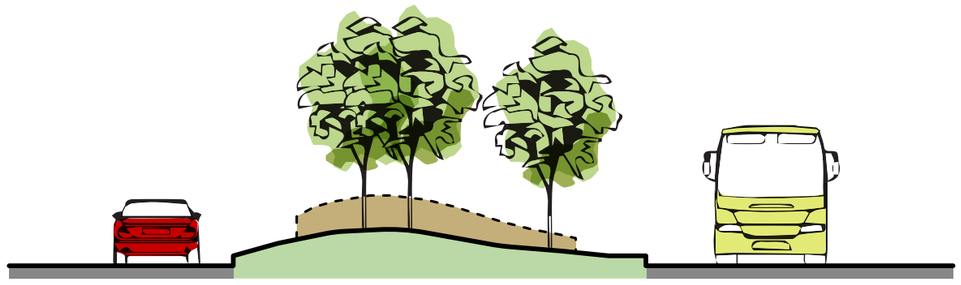


A96 Retail Park
Simple mounded grass ‘knoll’ with wildflower centre, stand of silver birch, and sinuous ‘dry stone’ wall feature.



A96 Stratton
Simple mounded grass ‘knoll’ with wildflower centre, stand of silver birch, and sinuous ‘dry stone’ wall feature.

Ness-side
Simple mounded grass ‘knoll’ with wildflower centre, single alder, and sinuous ‘dry stone’ wall feature.



Typical roundabout cross-section
Simple mounded grass ‘knoll’ with small stand of trees and sinuous ‘dry stone’ wall feature.

Details & Materials

HARDWORKS ELEMENTS

Preferred Boundary Treatments

Definitive boundary features are a strong characterising element of the Inverness streetscape. Two types of wall are particularly characteristic: random rubble brought to courses and harled blockwork. Both are typically capped with either heavy dressed stone copes or 'hit and miss' copes of squared rubble. Their use should be encouraged to maintain the local distinctiveness and townscape character of Inverness.

Stone walls

- Height - 0.9m to 1.2m (preferred)
- Higher (for security) usually acceptable, preferably over no more than 60% of the frontage length
- Lower usually not acceptable as fails to provides sufficient visual definition to the street unless doubled up with a trimmed hedge or capped by substantial railings
- Thickness: minimum 250mm
- Extent: minimum 60% of frontage length, preferably all except for pedestrian gate
- Preferably natural sandstone (locally sourced)

Cope

- Plain, heavy dressed natural stone
- 'Hit & miss' squared natural stone rubble

Harled blockwork walls

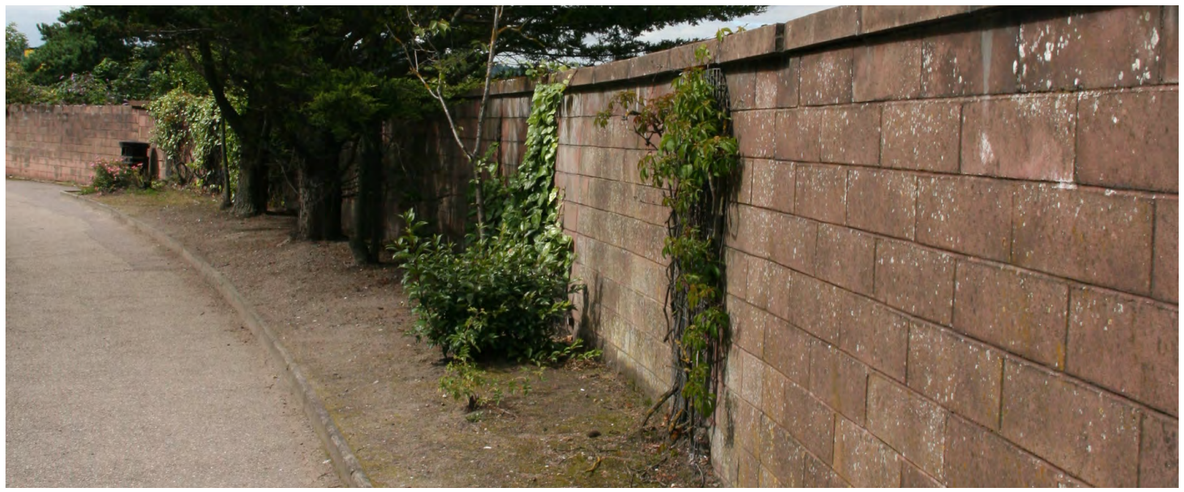
- Height - 0.9m to 1.2m (preferred)
- Higher (for security) usually acceptable, preferably over no more than 60% of the frontage length
- Lower usually not acceptable as fails to provides sufficient visual definition to the street unless doubled up with a trimmed hedge or capped by substantial railings
- Thickness: minimum 250mm
- Extent: minimum 60% of frontage length, preferably all except for pedestrian gate
- Colours: white, off-white, cream

Cope

- as previous

Alternative Boundary Treatments

Definitive boundary features are a strong characterising element of the Inverness streetscape. Two types of wall are particularly characteristic: random rubble brought to courses and harled blockwork. Both are typically capped with either heavy dressed stone copes or 'hit and miss' copes of squared rubble. Their use should be encouraged to maintain the local distinctiveness and townscape character of Inverness.



Stone 'effect' blockwork walls

- Height - 0.9m to 1.2m (preferred)
- Higher (for security) usually acceptable, preferably over no more than 60% of the frontage length
- Lower usually not acceptable as fails to provides sufficient visual definition to the street unless doubled up with a trimmed hedge or capped by substantial railings
- Thickness: minimum 250mm
- Extent: minimum 60% of frontage length, preferably all except for pedestrian gate
- Artificial or reconstituted stone blocks, in keeping with character of existing stone walls
- Colours: buff, sand, salmon, light grey - colour from exposed aggregate age better than pigmented concrete

Cope

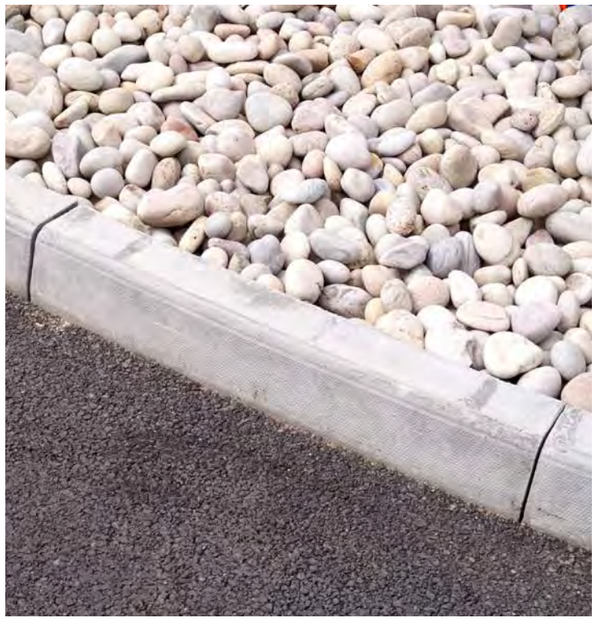
- Plain, heavy dressed artificial / reconstituted stone blocks

Vertical fencing / railings

- Height - 0.9m to 1.2m (preferred)
- Higher (for security) usually acceptable, preferably over no more than 60% of the frontage length
- Within a streetscape where the plot frontage treatment of stone and harled walls predominates, alternative boundary treatments can be visually successful
- Extent: minimum 60% of frontage length, preferably all except for pedestrian gate
- When viewed obliquely (looking along the street) the boundary appears solid and robust
- Colours: timber / black or stainless steel railings

Preferred Kerbs and Surfacing Treatments

A sense of spatial hierarchy can be easily achieved with the appropriate use of kerb and surface treatments. Generally, the closer one gets to the city centre or places of public interest, the higher the quality and aesthetic appeal of materials and design should become. Inverness has an existing palette of hard surfacing materials, which should be used appropriately where approach routes do not already suggest a level of city importance.



Traditional kerbing

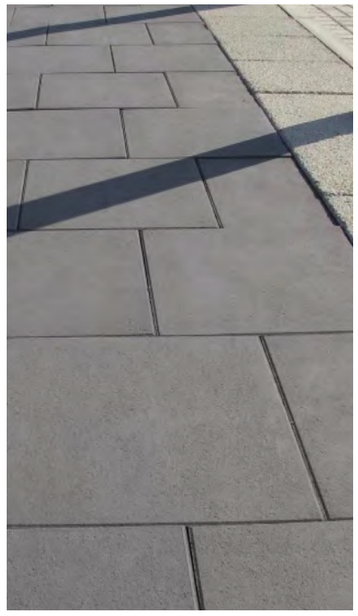
- Dressed granite, sandstone, or whinstone
- 125mm or 150mm for ordinary use
- 250mm or 300mm for important places: high streets and civic spaces
- Corner radii should be as small as practical: typically 3m for minor roads and 6m for major, unless particular circumstances dictate otherwise

Contemporary kerbing

- Standard concrete road kerbs for ordinary streets
- High quality exposed aggregate kerbs for more prestige or historic locations
- 125mm or 150mm for ordinary use
- 250mm or 300mm for important places: high streets and civic spaces
- Corner radii should be as small as practical: typically 3m for minor roads and 6m for major, unless particular circumstances dictate otherwise

Natural stone paving surfacing

- Natural stone slabs (sandstone, Caithness flagstone) for high streets or more prestige or civic locations
- Natural stone blocks or setts (sandstone) for secondary streets, or as edging to slab paving, or as paving details and features



Contemporary paving surfacing

- Exposed aggregate concrete paving slabs for secondary streets
- Exposed aggregate concrete blocks or setts for tertiary streets, as edging to slab paving, as paving details and features, or for car parks

Standard road and paving surfacing

- Asphalt or DBM for footpaths / cycleways (usually with chippings) for tertiary streets and less public areas, and car parks
- HRA for roads (usually wiith chippings)
- Standard concrete paving slabs and blocks for tertiary streets and less public areas. and car parks

Softworks elements

Boundary hedges

Definitive boundary hedges are a strong characterising element of the Inverness streetscape. A well maintained hedge, alone or reinforced with a fence can provide this. Suitable species are those that take regular clipping.

Suitable hedge species

- Beech (Fagus sylvatica)
- Copper Beech (Fagus sylvatica f. purpurea)
- Yew (Taxus baccata)
- Western Red Cedar (Thuja plicata)
- Holly (Ilex aquifolium)
- Privet (Ligustrum ovalifolium)
- Hornbeam (Carpinus betulus)

Also suitable are:

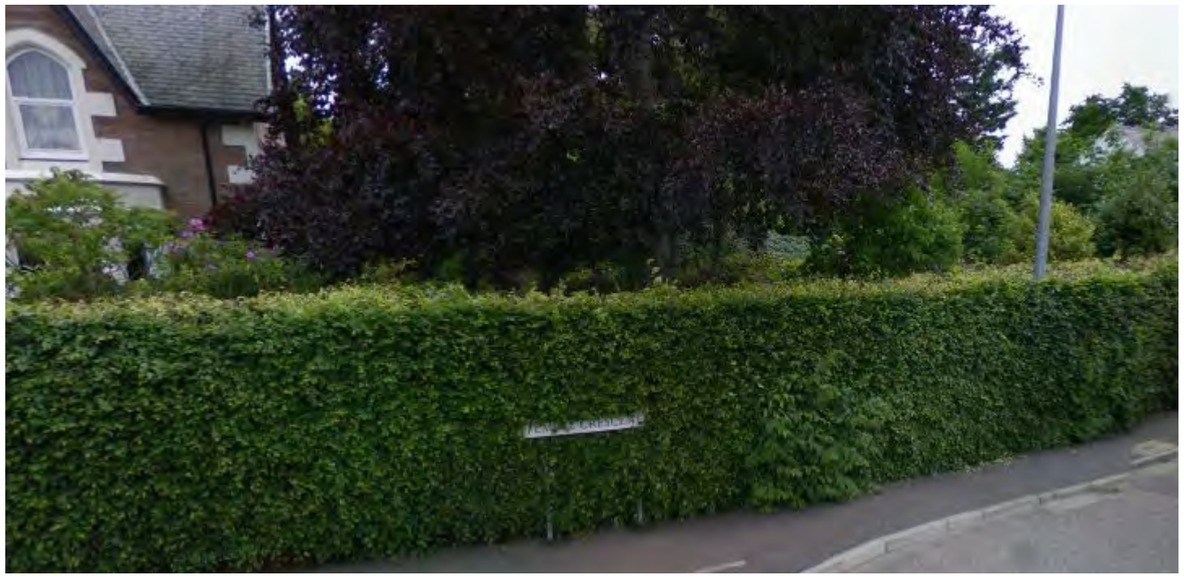
- Lonicera nitida
- Portuguese Laurel (Prunus laurocerasus)
- Berberis (Berberis x stenophylla, B. darwinii, B. thunbergii)
- Pyracantha (many varieties)
- Lawson's cypress (Chamaecyparis lawsoniana)

And, in more rural / urban edge locations

- Viburnum opulus
- Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna)

The best know quick solution – Leyland Cypress is deliberately not on this list: not only does it grow too rapidly for many people to control properly, once it is too big, it can't be cut back to size – it doesn't re-sprout from old wood, so bare areas are left.

Frontage hedges are best kept between 1 and 1½ metres high. Higher than this is not only oppressive for passing pedestrians but more difficult to maintain.



Beech hedge, Culduthel Road

Thuja hedge, Glenurquhart Road

Street trees and in-curtilage trees

Inverness has a good selection of mature street and in-curtilage trees, making many areas attractive, green and leafy.

Suitable tree species

Large trees: suitable for boulevards, edges of large car parks, edges of open spaces

- Beech (Fagus sylvatica)

(sensitive roots, for open spaces and large gardens; street use only where serious care taken to provide engineered rooting zone)

- Norway maple, larger cultivars

  Acer platanoides ‘Summershade’

- Sycamore cultivars

  Acer pseudoplatanus ‘Erectum

  Acer pseudoplatanus ‘Rotterdam’

- Lime, selected species & cultivars

  Tilia cordata ‘Greenspire’

  Tilia tomentosa ‘Brabant’

  Tilia x euchlora

Fagus sylvatica

Acer platanoides

Acer pseudoplatanus

Tilia cordata

Tilia tomentosa

Tilia x euchlora

Medium-sized trees: suitable for suburban streets and the interior of car parks

- Norway maple, mid-sized cultivars.
  Acer platanoides ‘Cleveland’
  Acer platanoides ‘Columnare’
  Acer platanoides ‘Drummondii’
  Acer platanoides ‘Emerald Queen’
  Acer platanoides ‘Olmstedt’
  Acer platanoides ‘Schwedleri’
- Field maple, selected cultivars.
  (marginally hardy for Inverness, only for more sheltered situations)
  Acer campestre ‘Elsrijk’
  Acer campestre ‘Streetwise
- Italian alder (Alnus cordata)
- Turkish hazel (Corylus colurna)
- Flowering crab apple, selected cultivars and species.
  Malus trilobata
  Malus tschonoskii
- Bird cherry, selected cultivars
  Prunus padus ‘Albertii’
- Hornbeam
  Carpinus betulus ‘Frans Fontaine’
- Rowan, selected varieties.
  Sorbus aucuparia ‘Fastigiata’
  Sorbus aucuparia ‘Sheerwater Seedling’
- Swedish whitebeam (Sorbus intermedia)

Acer platanoides ‘Cleveland’

Acer platanoides ‘Columnare’’

Acer campestre ‘Streetwise’

Alnus cordata

Corylus colurna

Malus tschonoskii

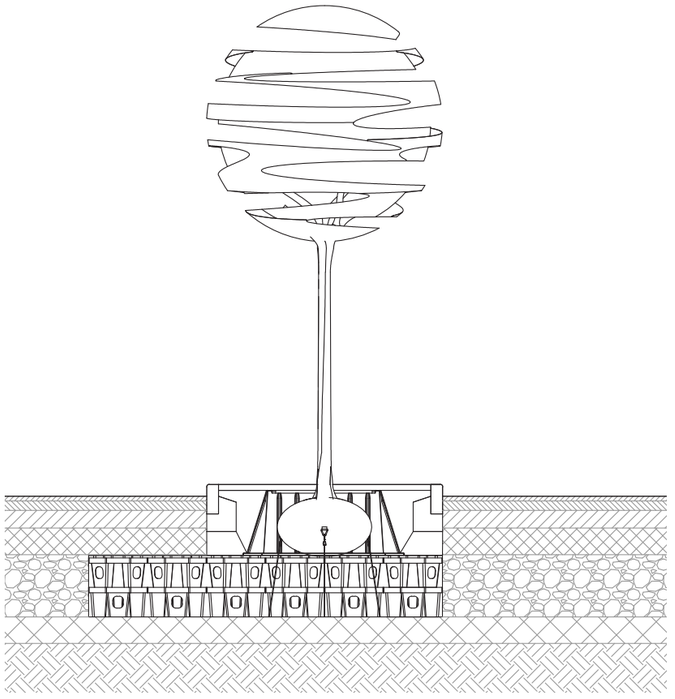
Prunus padus

Carpinus Frans Fontaine

Successful trees

Successful street trees are:

- species that will grow well in the Inverness climate;
- of scale and stature when mature to suit the scale of the street; and
- provided with the conditions they require to successfully establish and mature.



Trees need an adequate rooting zone, with soil that is reasonably open and fertile, aerated and adequately drained.

This is normal in parks and gardens but difficult to provide in the street.

In the street, problems arise because of tree roots lifting kerbs and paving, and trees often fail to flourish because the soil is too compacted (roots can't penetrate) or insufficiently aerated or drained (roots need both air and water available in the soil, but not to excess).

Proprietary systems exist which are designed to allow adequate root zones to coexist with fully engineered road construction and underground services, and to divert roots away from the surface where they can cause problems to the footway.

Sorbus 'Sheerwater Seedling'

Sorbus intermedia

Detail of root zone cells and root deflectors (by Green Blue Urban) providing an adequate root zone in a central reservation, with the tree soil and root zone completely below the road construction.

Preferred detail on the left hand side - rooting zone extends under the carriageway. The detail on the right hand side - rooting zone only under the central reservation may be adequate if the rooting zone forms a long trench.

Appendix: Scoping & Quality Audit

Scoping

Scoping to agree the extent and focus of the strategy, audit to objectively consider the existing situation and help set priorities

The study commenced by identifying all the routes that could be reasonably considered as 'Approaches to Inverness' and taking a broad-brush look at their relative quality and importance (Figure 1: Initial Study Area).

This initial scoping exercise looked widely at how different groups of people might approach the city and how they might experience the approach, including iconic but lightly used approaches such as the Caledonian Canal and more widely used 'not car' routes such as the National Cycle Route and the railway corridors.

In early discussions and in parallel with initial consideration of the quality of the approach experience afforded by the different routes, the project steering group decided that resources should be prioritised: that effort should be concentrated on the areas where improvement works were likely to have the greatest potential impact.

This took into account the quality of the route, the numbers of users and the potential for improvements to contribute to the image of the city or other Council objectives.

- **Take a strategic approach: concentrate on the routes that are most used and/or the most in need of improvement.**

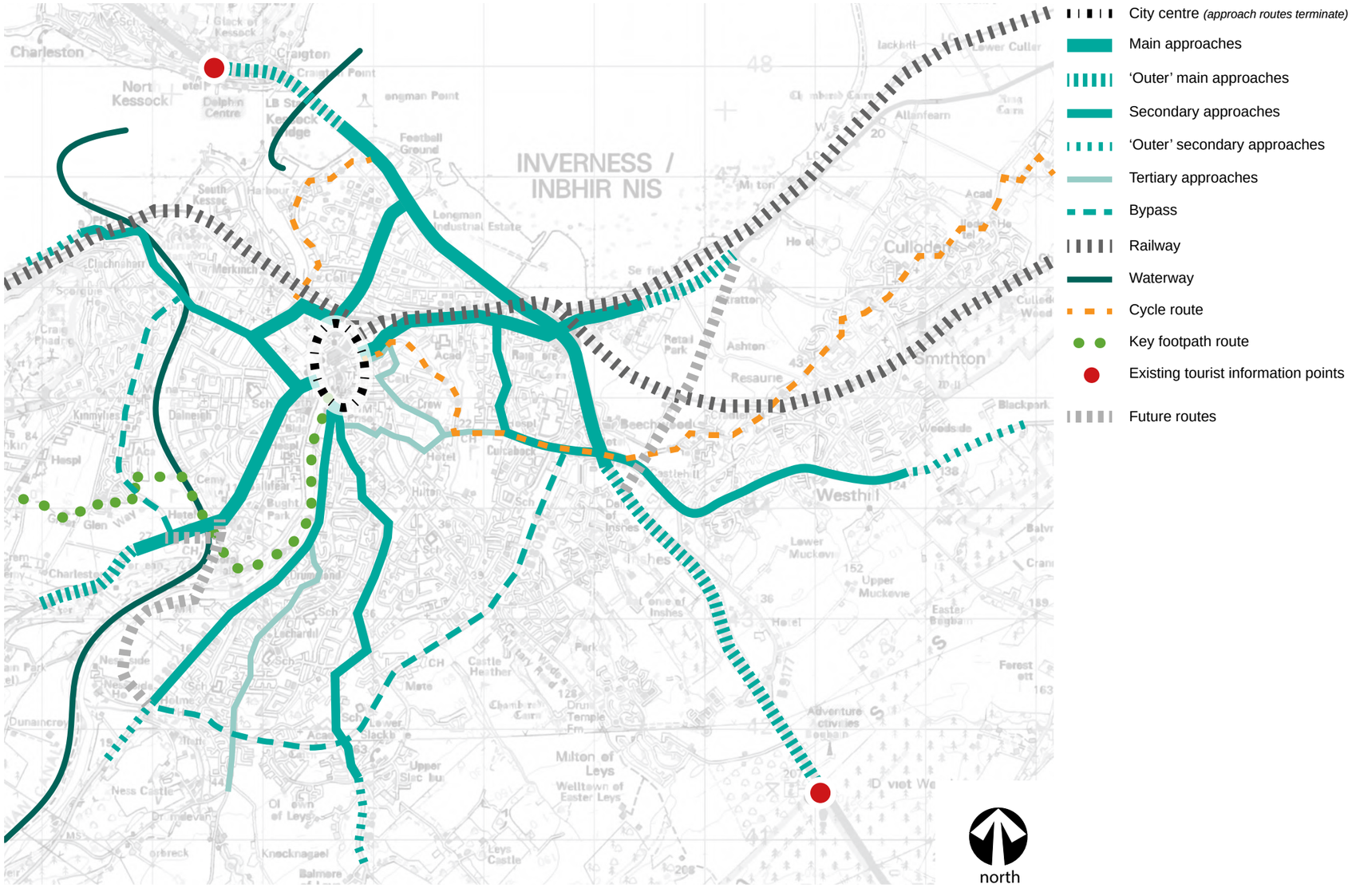


Figure 1: Initial Study Area

On this basis, it was agreed that the strategy should focus on the main road approaches to the city, along with the National Cycle Route (NCN 1) link from the Kessock Bridge, which was recognised as a poor quality cycling and arrival experience (Figure 2: Strategy Focus).

Important approaches to the city that have consequently been left out of this strategy include:

- The cycle approach to the city from the east, which is the subject of a current improvement programme (the Millburn Road cycle route);
- The cycle routes in from the south (Loch Lomond-side) which are generally recognised as pleasant; and
- The arrival experience into Inverness by public transport (bus and rail), which is being considered separately as part of the City Centre Development Brief.

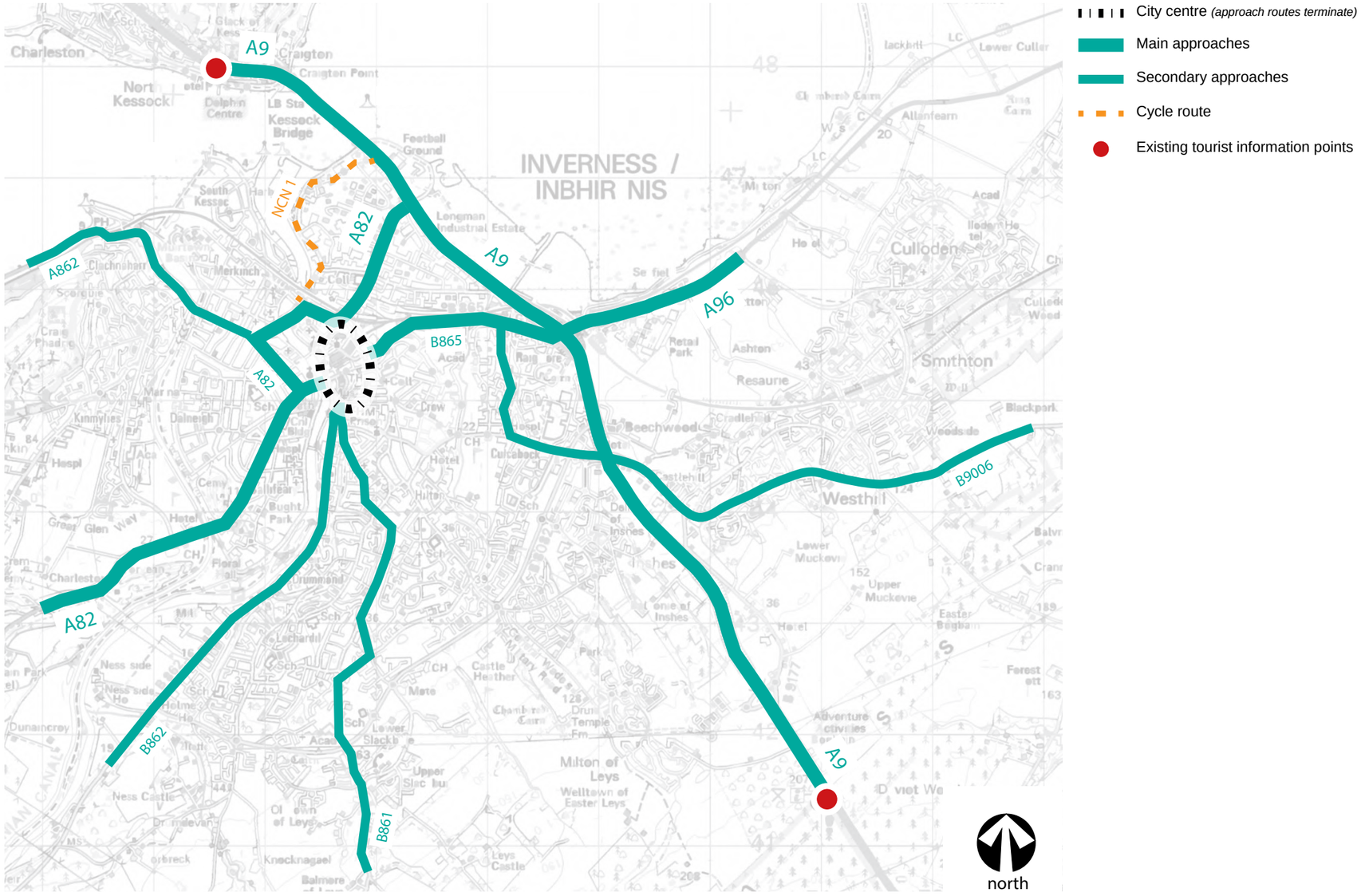


Figure 2: Strategy Focus

Quality Audit

The audit considered all the routes agreed as the strategy focus, looking at the quality of experience and the impression gained along the route for the resident, visitor or business person arriving in Inverness. In effect, the audit was asking the question 'do I feel like I am arriving in the Capital of the Highlands'.

The quality of a road corridor is made up of the interaction and quality of a number of elements, some part of the public realm and many part of the adjoining private realm, including:

In Urban Areas

- The degree of enclosure and the urban form provided by the buildings that line the road
- The architectural quality of the buildings that line the road
- The road boundary – fences, walls and hedges
- The quality of any open spaces adjoining the road
- Any roadside trees and trees in private gardens and frontages
- Road verges (if any)
- Lighting
- Street furniture and road signage
- Kerbs and footway – materials and condition
- The road surface – materials and condition
- Visible standard of maintenance (and signs of dereliction)

In Rural Areas

- The quality of the immediate adjoining landscape
- Visible standard of maintenance (and signs of dereliction)
- The road boundary – fences, walls and hedges
- Road verges
- Roadside trees
- Kerbs and footway
- Lighting
- Street furniture and road signage

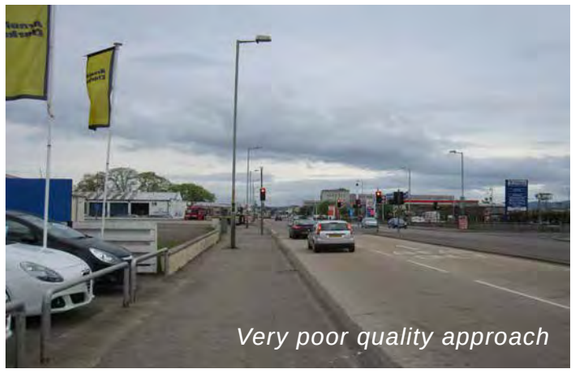
Considering the road corridor as a whole, the quality of the townscape and urban form in built up areas; the quality of the landscape in the countryside and urban open spaces and the quality of maintenance, the approaches were categorised in a 'traffic light' fashion to help identify key issues. Figure 3: Quality Audit shows the outcome of the initial audit and the table below gives the criteria used.

Descriptor	Meaning	Criteria: some or all of these apply	
		Urban / built areas	**Countryside and green spaces** *(open countryside, rural or urban woodland areas, urban green spaces)*
Good	A pleasant experience and/or a good impression. Recognisably approaching an important Highland city. ***Little or no need for improvement.***	Strong urban form. Continuous or distinctive built frontages and/or garden and frontage boundary treatment. Dominated by recognisably traditional Highland or modern Scottish building or frontage styles (may have some other building or frontage styles but these do not stand out obtrusively). Well maintained. Little or no dereliction or graffiti.	Well maintained, little or no sign of dereliction. In urban areas or urban fringe, verges neatly cut and good quality, in rural areas verges may be appropriately wild. Attractive views or a comfortable sense of enclosure
Reasonable	Generally gives a good impression. ***Improvement at locations would be helpful to the image of the city.***	Generally strong urban form. Generally continuous or distinctive built frontages and/or garden and frontage boundary treatment but may be some gaps. Building styles varied and may not be distinctively Highland. Reasonably well maintained but may have short sections of poor quality. Little obvious dereliction or graffiti.	Reasonably well maintained but may have short sections of poor quality. Few signs of dereliction. In urban areas or urban fringe, verges generally tidy and reasonably quality, in rural areas verges may be slightly unkempt. May have attractive views or a comfortable sense of enclosure, may have nondescript or uninteresting views
Poor	Generally gives a mediocre impression. ***Some improvements necessary to provide a good impression.***	May have a weak or disjointed urban form. Built frontages may be discontinuous or not distinctive. Building styles generally not distinctively Highland. Adequately or poorly maintained. Some areas of obvious dereliction or graffiti. Some areas of unattractive industrial or commercial use.	Overall adequately maintained but with sections of poor quality. May have some signs of dereliction. In urban areas or urban fringe, verges maintained but not well, in rural areas verges may be somewhat unkempt. Few attractive views or comfortable sense of enclosure, mainly nondescript or uninteresting views.
Very Poor	An unpleasant experience and/or a poor impression gained. Nothing tells the visitor that they are arriving somewhere special. ***Substantial improvement required to give a positive impression of the city.***	Weak or disjointed urban form. Built frontages generally discontinuous and not distinctive. Building styles generally not attractive. Obvious sections poorly maintained. Some areas of obvious dereliction or graffiti. Substantial areas of unattractive industrial or commercial use.	Overall poorly maintained and / or signs of dereliction. In urban areas or urban fringe, verges poorly maintained. In rural areas verges unkempt. Poor quality of immediate roadside environment detracts from enjoyment of wider views.

Table 1: Quality Audit Criteria


Good quality approach


Reasonable quality approach


Very poor quality approach

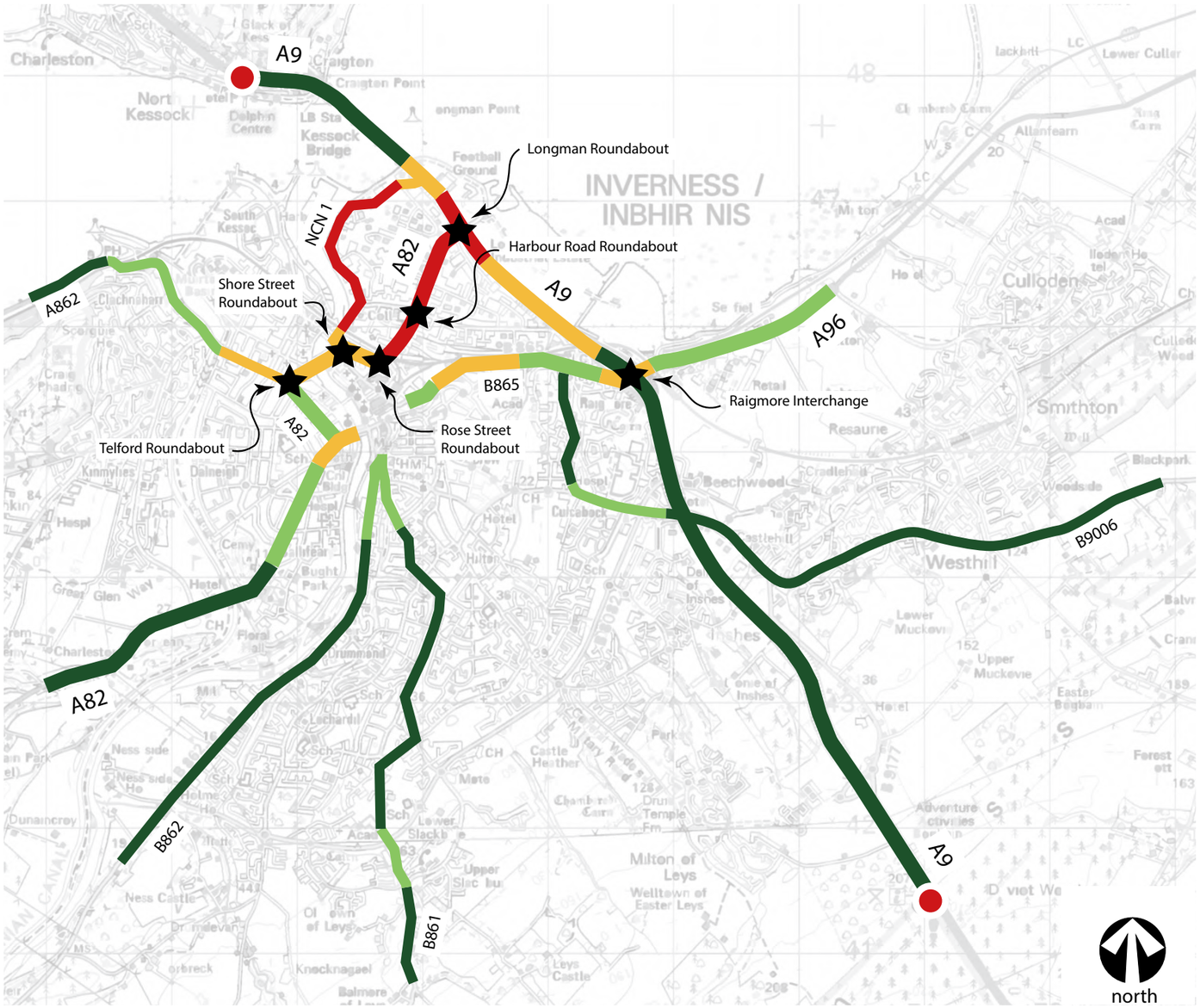


Figure 3: Quality Audit

Quality Audit: A9 Daviot to Longman Roundabout

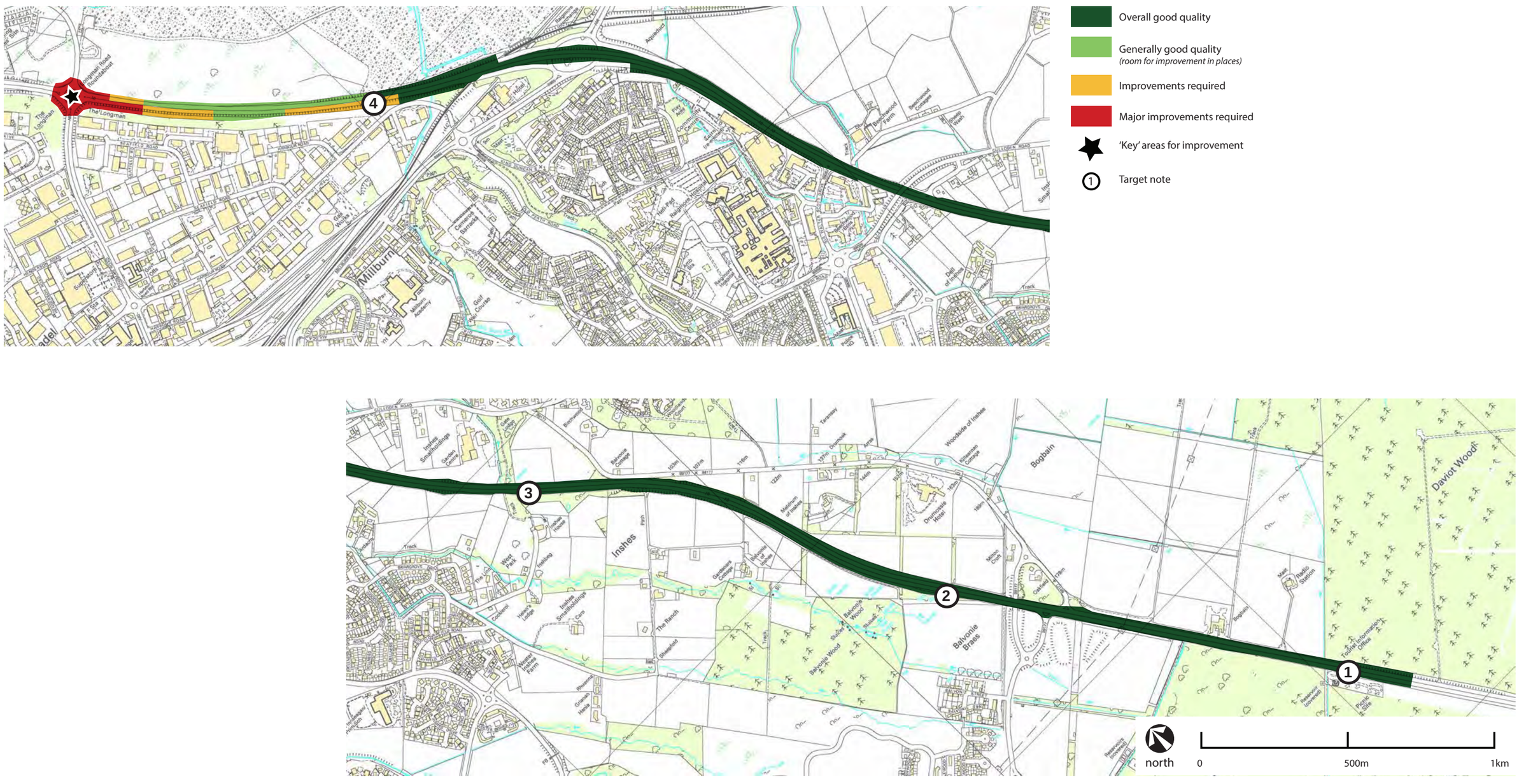


Figure 4: A9 approach from the south, Daviot to Longman roundabout

Tourist Information Centre viewpoint now screened by mature forestry, no views.

Glimpses of the Moray Firth, the Black Isle and distant hills come into view as the road starts its descent to Inverness.

A well-maintained typical dual carriageway with central reserve, grass verge, boundary tree and shrub cover (including Daviot Wood), and stretches of embankment/cutting.

The city comes into view, framed by roadside vegetation and the road embankment, then with increasing proximity and as boundary vegetation recedes, the city unfolds.

Raigmore Hospital and the iconic and elegant Kessock Bridge form prominent features of the view with a backdrop including Ben Wyvis and Ord Hill.

A real sense of arrival, almost like coming in to land in an aircraft.

Framed views of the Moray Firth and the Black Isle, as road sweeps down and towards Inverness.

This section gives a real sense of approach.

Sense of arrival unfortunately let down in the ‘final approach: the city’s ‘welcome’ image formed by views of the rear of car showrooms, garages, and light industrial units, and with highway elements including lighting columns and crash barriers dominating the foreground.

SUMMARY

A pleasant approach to the city, with a real sense of arrival as you ‘swoop’ down the hill seeing the city unfold, but let down as you actually arrive by views of the back end of the trading estate, uninspiring planting, poor quality maintenance and overgrown highway verges.

Potential close views of the Moray Firth blocked by planting on the old landfill. Longman roundabout and the surrounding verges and scrub / open ground presents a main ‘entrance’ to the city lacking in any identity or pride and merely represents an engineered and functional highway junction.

Overall, the impression is of neither being really cared for nor really cared about.

Quality Audit: A9 North Kessock to Longman Roundabout

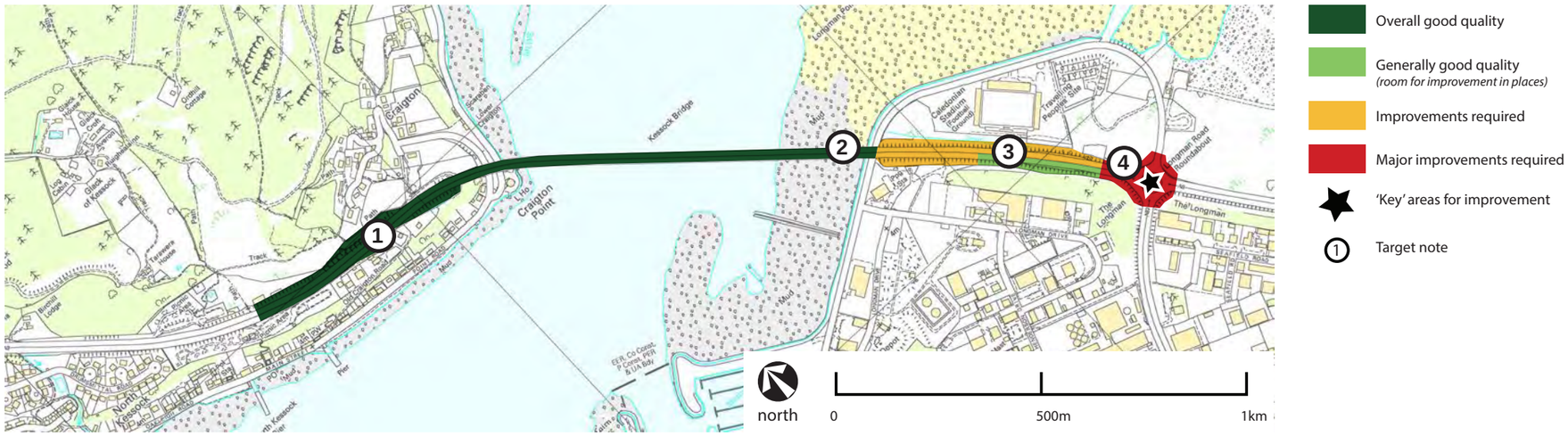


Figure 5: A9 approach from the north, North Kessock to Longman roundabout

Views along the A9 southbound are initially constrained and framed by boundary vegetation cover.

A mix of native deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs provide seasonal variation.

The lighting columns hint at the approach to an urban area.

Over the Kessock Bridge, views open up to reveal the Moray / Beauly Firth, and the urban sprawl of Inverness.

As the road descends towards the Longman roundabout, the city becomes more visible and individual elements are more legible.

Clear views to the right of the Longman iIndustrial Estate, in particular Moray Firth Maltings, Inverness Courier building and the sewage treatment works.

The ICT stadium, prominent on the left tends to attract the eye.

A lack of structure or roadside planting leaves views of these features generally open and ‘hard’.

Views into the ICT stadium on the left, partially screened by poorly maintained roadside planting

To the right, well-established tree planting encloses the road corridor and screens the Longman.

Highway elements, signage and road markings strengthen the urban context, but the route is nondescript and uninspiring for the immediate approach to a city.

Unmaintained grass verges portray a sense of neglect.

An effort has been made to create a feature of the Longman roundabout but this is low-key and lost behind dominant highway elements.

The roundabout itself does little to mark the entrance point to the city.

Glimpses of the Longman industrial estate are visible - “that’s where we’re heading...?”

SUMMARY

An exciting approach to the city, as you cross the Kessock Bridge with broad views of the Moray Firth and the city of Inverness spread out before you, but let down as you actually arrive with views of industrial workings, waste ground, uninspiring buildings, neglected planting, poor quality maintenance and bare highway verges.

Longman roundabout and its immediate approaches present a main ‘entrance’ to the city lacking in any identity or pride: merely a functional highway junction.

As in the approach from the south, the impression of neither being cared for nor cared about.

Quality Audit: A82 Longman roundabout to Telford roundabout

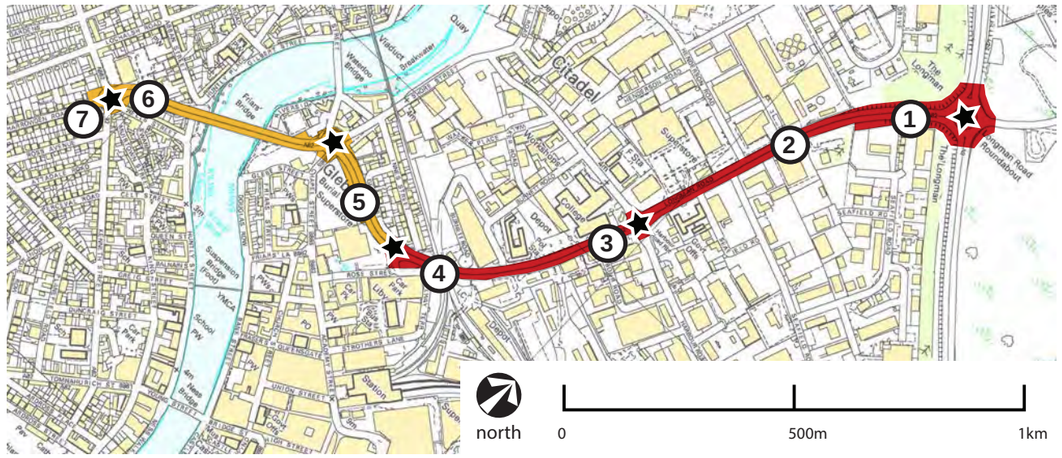


Figure 6: A82 approach from the north, Longman roundabout to Telford Street roundabout

- Overall good quality
- Generally good quality *(room for improvement in places)*
- Improvements required
- Major improvements required
- 'Key' areas for improvement
- ① Target note

On a slight embankment, the first views of the city are across a tidy grass verge to the back of Highland Industrial Supplies on your left.

To the right, tree and shrub planting frames the road corridor.

However it is short lived and the industrial and commercial character of the Longman is soon dominating the approach.

Moray Firth Maltings is prominent to the right.

An unassuming 'welcome' sign lost in a busy view.

An absence of urban structure, varying and often weak property boundaries and a confusion of vertical elements (highway signage, commercial signage including flags, lighting columns etc) creates a complex, disjointed and purely functional approach.

Little vegetation and little structure and a wide road. The highway dominates the scene.

Overall, an unpleasant arrival experience: an "edge of town" industrial / large retail / commercial estate which could be anywhere.

Inverness College to the right with a depressing hard facade. Unfriendly pedestrian barrier rail along the central reserve.

A clear effort has been made to provide a unifying boundary to the road corridor with red "artificial stone" walling, although now looking rather tired & somewhat timid in scale, so visually 'lost' against the scale and variety of adjacent development.

Some tree and shrub planting to help define the road corridor but generally "domestic" rather than "urban" scale.

As the road rises over the railway line, views towards Craig Dunain and Craig Phadrig begin to suggest a more rural character. The hard carriageway and central reserve continues to dominate the route. Elevated views of industry and demolition are glimpsed to the right.

The city centre begins to become visible to the left, as the road rises, and attractive church steeples pierce the skyline.

From Rose Street to Shore Street roundabout, the designed boundary theme continues: red block walling and wall with railings contain the road corridor & give it a local character, albeit now rather tired and faded.

Mature trees either side reinforce containment.

A pocket of green space, adjacent Chapel Street Cemetery, is cut off by wall and railings, creating an underused ‘dead space’.

Ornate “Victorian” lighting columns look somewhat out of place.

On the approach to Telford Street roundabout from Friars Bridge, highway features and traffic volume increases and dominates the space.

The roundabout makes a large hole in the urban fabric and, finished in flat concrete block provides little interest. Extensive concrete surfacing around the roundabout reinforces the hard, open character of the space.

Adjacent garden trees and a line of mature cherry trees on the Wells Street corner provide a degree of containment and softening.

Telford Street roundabout is an unattractive open space dominated by traffic, hard surfacing, signage and lighting.

Motorway style lighting column in the centre of the roundabout inappropriate in a city context.

New Aldi store and adjacent flats have reinstated an appropriate building line, helping to repair the hole in the urban fabric created by the roundabout.

SUMMARY

A varied but very ‘hard’ and disjointed approach to and through the city.

Disjointed townscape, utilitarian detailing and visual dominance of hard elements combine to create a very bleak approach from the A9 to Harbour Road. From Harbour Road to Rose Street the route is loosely unified by red artificial stone walling and consistent paving details but very weak townscape detracts substantially. From Rose street to Shore Street, better containment by trees and buildings. Kenneth Street a congested but overall pleasant urban / suburban traditional street.

For the main approach to the city, the route does not inspire any sense of identity or Highland character. The key arrival section from the A9 to the River Ness feels like the rear entrance to any old town.

Quality Audit: A82 Torvean to Kenneth Street, plus Young St

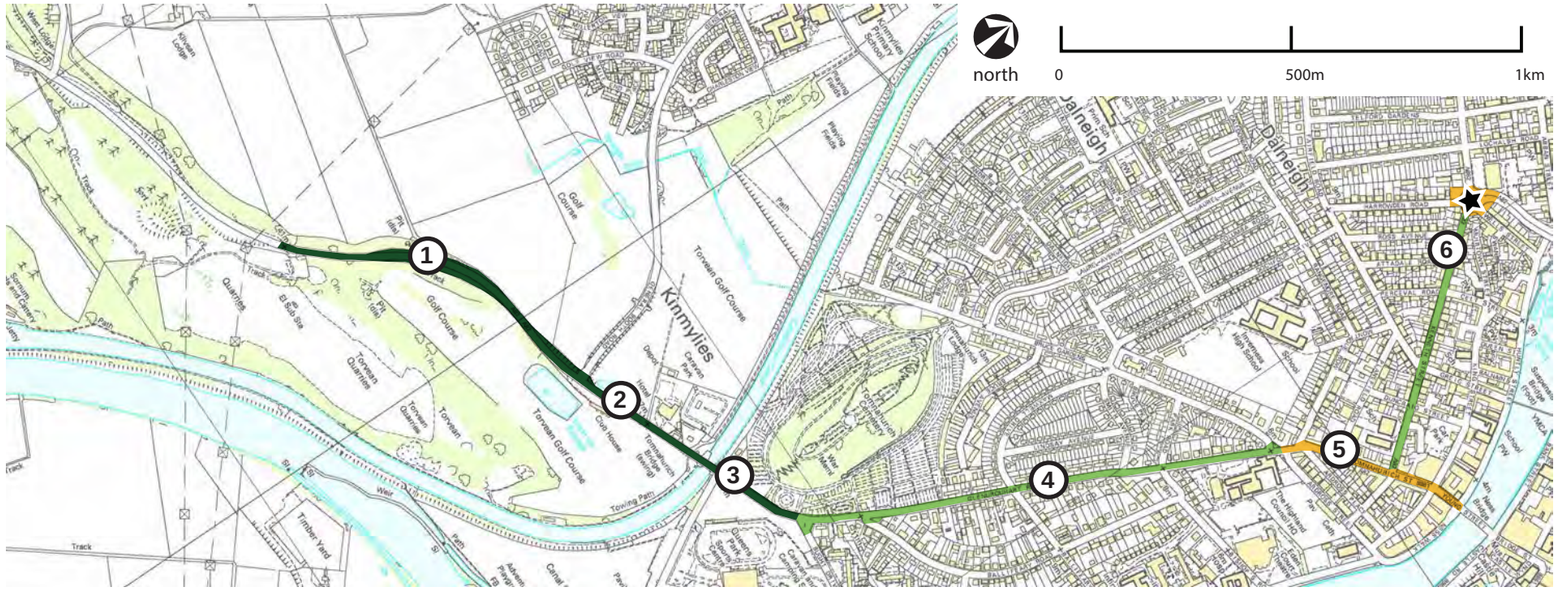


Figure 7: A82 approach from the south, Torvean to Telford Street roundabout, including Young Street

The Torvean area (between notes 1 and 3) will be substantially altered by the Inverness West Link road project.

With thoughtful and appropriate design, this gives the opportunity to create a positive 'entrance point' or gateway to the city from the south.

The A82 is bordered by mature, leafy woodland either side as it swings gently round to Inverness.

A footway runs along the left hand side and signage and speed restrictions indicate the approach to an urban area, together with a well placed 'Welcome to Inverness' sign.

The pillow like mound of mature woodland blanketing Tomnahurich Cemetery is an iconic feature and visible on the approach.

The Kessock Bridge is often visible in the distance to the left, backclothed by Ord Hill.

Attractive stone walling along the perimeter of the golf course to the right although weak chain-link fencing to the left.

The renovated Premier Inn building with golf course in the foreground forms an attractive and well maintained feature to the left, softened by mature trees.

Canal boats (taller ones) can often be glimpsed up ahead, through the line of aspen trees, including the popular Jacobite cruise ship.

Once over the Caledonian Canal, the road descends past the cemetery and the leisure centre. Mature trees help screen the slightly 'municipal' looking leisure centre to the right and frame the route ahead.

A row of small cottages to the left are a quaint introduction to the town.

The route continues past the cemetery - railings and ornamental tree and shrub planting provide an attractive boundary and containment to the left.

The road becomes very urban and enclosed as it bends round into Tomnahurich Street. Houses abut the footway and on-street parking both sides adds to the busy urban character.

A medley of paving materials (tarmac, concrete flags, block paving) creates a mismatched and confusing pedestrian environment.

As the road continues, the centre of the city becomes more visible, in particular the 'By The Bridge' building, the Inverness Town Steeple, and the Town House. Active shop fronts and larger scale buildings indicate the centre, although let down by the blank face of Tesco .

Predominantly two-storey houses, set back behind generous front gardens give a pleasant suburban character although noticeably divided between social housing to the left and private dwellings to the right.

Painted central reserve with island crossing points.

Boundary treatments vary. The majority are reasonably strong (walling and hedging) giving edge containment to the street but distinct sections where gardens have been opened up for parking detract from the character of the street.

Weak edge detailing, inappropriate building line and visually open front car park at Scotmid a particular eyesore.

The view is focused along a corridor of vernacular housing with garden vegetation. Boundary treatments to properties are mixed, but generally comprise a low wall topped with railings/timber fence/overhanging hedge.

The route opens out across Telford Street roundabout. Concrete block paving with creeping moss/weed growth presents an uninspiring central space, together with highway signage and a large lighting column. Areas of open, hard standing surround the roundabout. A small pocket of grassland with domestic scale trees lies to the left of Wells Street and provides some softening and seasonal interest. New flats adjacent Aldi are smart, but increase the degree of 'hard' edging around the roundabout.

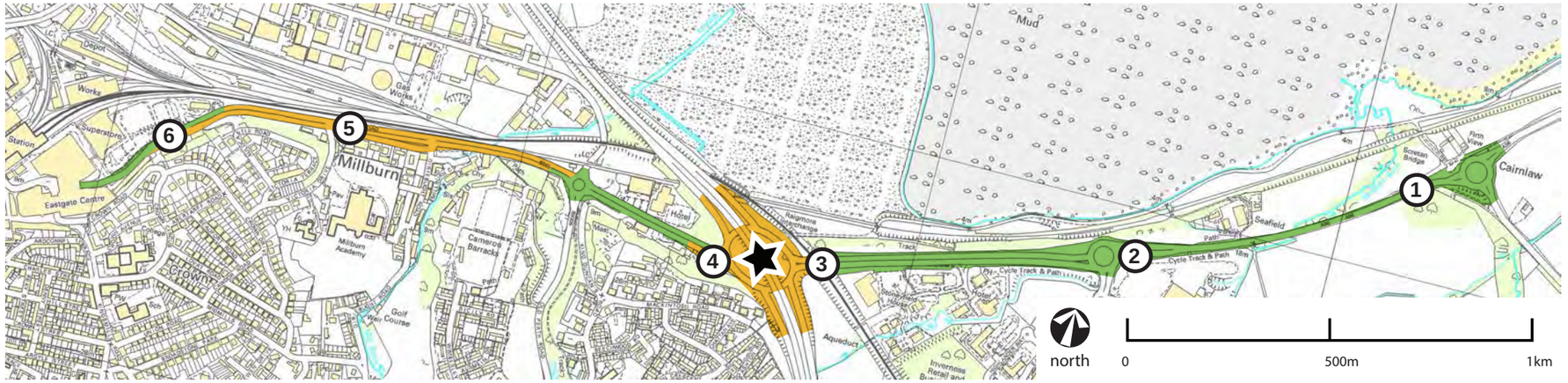
SUMMARY

A leafy approach to the city with a generally attractive townscape and a comfortable degree of enclosure. Gentle transition from rural to suburban to urban character. Overall, a sense of Highland identity and charm.

Traditional details and building form predominant although some out of character developments (such as Scotmid) and 'unfriendly' façades (Tesco) detract. Clear recent erosion of the townscape a concern - where gardens converted to car parking and positive boundary features are lost completely.

Open frontage of the Highland Council offices successfully integrated by a strong line of street trees recreating the original building line.

Quality Audit: A96 stratton to eastgate centre



Overall good quality

Generally good quality
(room for improvement in places)

Improvements required

Major improvements required

'Key' areas for improvement

① Target note

Figure 8: A96 approach from the east, Stratton to Eastgate Centre

The approach to Inverness begins at the Culloden roundabout, as street lights and footways begin to make an appearance.

Surrounding farmland and vegetation hints at still being some distance from the city limits (although this is due to change with planned expansion of the city).

The two roundabouts east of the A9 lack any real interest or identity, although they do provide a pretty display of wildflowers during the summer months.

This is typically quite a busy area where the carriageway and traffic movement dominates.

Roadside vegetation softens the backdrop, but also screens views of the Beauly Firth to the right.

The entrance to the retail park is clearly visible.

The extent of structure planting and open space suggests the route is still some way off the city centre.

As the route approaches the Raigmore interchange, the road descends and crosses the railway line. Although there is a high degree of surrounding tree cover, this section is fairly ‘engineered’ in character. The ‘welcome’ display of bedding plants is slightly twee and offset from the line of view/travel so not clearly visible.

The interchange and flyover is quite a gloomy place.

Although there appears to be blue lighting underneath, it is only evident at night time.

Extensive tree and shrub cover helps hide the concrete bridge structure and integrate and road embankments.

Immediately on leaving the roundabout, Millburn Road is well enclosed either side by trees and the wooded hillside although not helped by the retail and fast-food development along the foot of the hill.

These, together with the out-of-town style retail units beyond the well-landscaped Thistle Hotel give an incoherent street frontage and no sense of place.

Millburn Road runs parallel with the railway, separated by a concrete slatted fence and then red concrete block walling with intermittent natural stone panels.

The central reserve consists of cobbles set in concrete with occasional small scale street trees.

The dual carriageway, central reserve and solid boundary wall creates a hard corridor, dominated by the car for most of its length.

Generally reasonably enclosed to the left, with development facing or reasonably close to the street, with pockets of tree and shrub planting and the wooded hillside providing containment and softening.

On reaching the edge of the city centre, the road widens to seven lanes to provide access to Morrisons and the Eastgate Centre.

Morrisons bounded with an attractive stone wall and extensive planting, unfortunately the walling is small-scale and the trees domestic varieties so they don’t have the stature to match the scale of the road.

Buildings along the left hand side of the road feel unwelcoming, with no proper footway and incoherent building lines, with cars parked in gaps and on the pavement.

Greeted by car parks and backs of buildings, this area gives the impression of entering the city from the rear.

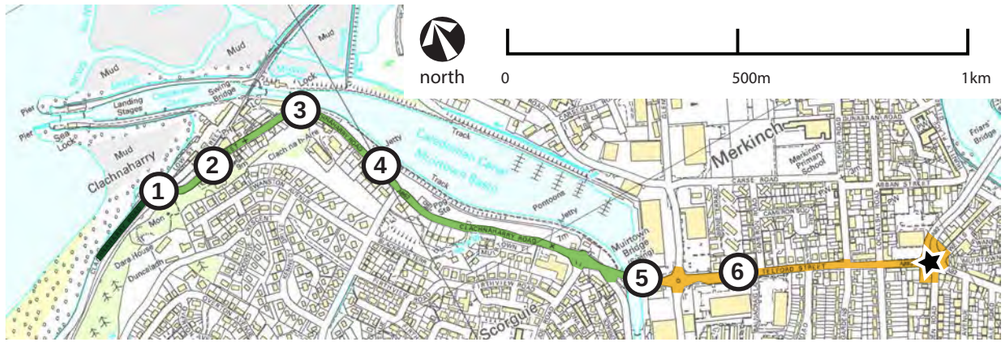
SUMMARY

Unassuming but reasonably pleasant rural character of the A9, from the Raigmore interchange on, this route feels like another ‘back-door’ approach to the city.

Gloomy through the interchange, then rather characterless with little or no sense of place along most of Millburn Road. The concrete structure of Raigmore interchange and the red blockwork wall parallel with the railway line are two rather dull and functional elements in places which have potential to create something more iconic and representative of the Highlands and Inverness.

The route as a whole breaks into quite distinctive sections, with no unifying theme, design style or set of features. Raigmore interchange a sharp change between rural and peri-urban - a perfect opportunity to create a “gateway” to the city.

Quality Audit: A862 Clachnaharry to Telford Street roundabout



Overall good quality

Generally good quality
(room for improvement in places)

Improvements required

Major improvements required

'Key' areas for improvement

① Target note

Figure 9: A862 approach from the west, Clachnaharry to Telford Street roundabout

The approach to Clachnaharry is leafy with views over the Beauly Firth to Kessock Bridge.

The new bridge over the railway line (light controlled) is quite utilitarian but creates a distinctive arrival point.

An unsightly bill board makes a prominent 'gateway' feature to the town.

Street lighting and footways suggest the beginnings of the urban area.

Narrow street with some vernacular buildings and a new block flats tight to the street edge help create a 'village' character.

On-street parking makes it even narrower, especially when the Clachnaharry Pub is busy, together with painted cycle lanes either side of the road.

Mature woodland backclothing at some height to the left provides a greater sense of enclosure within the street. A range of boundary treatments creates a slightly disjointed but overall attractive frontage to the road.

Views out and over the Caledonian Canal and Muirtown Basin, to boats tied up in harbour, provide momentary interest and 'breathing space', before woodland, and housing development rising up to Scorguie, enclose the route again.

The footway is now restricted to the right hand side of the road only. An attractive stone wall to other side of road helps screen the car park.

Distant views of Kessock Bridge to the far left and Drumossie Muir to the front can be glimpsed in clear weather.

A 'hard' approach on to Telford Street – there is a dominance of car parking, signage, concrete block paving across the roundabout, and heavily clipped evergreen shrub planting.

The old B&Q and surrounding land is very unsightly and presents a very negative image - travelling people utilising the empty car park. Other retail units are empty and with the gloomy, grey flats visible behind the Coop, this section of the route is not hugely attractive.

On reaching the junction to the A82, views over Muirtown Basin with marine activity, open up to the left.

Prominent signage is visible from the retail park in the distance, but the foreground is dominated by highway elements relating to the junction and various crossing points.

Attractive stone wall boundaries either side of road.

Culloden and Drumossie Muir are visible in the far distance.

Telford Street is lined by a mix of building uses, styles, and scales with various boundary treatments lining the footway. Road junctions and traffic signals have widened the streetscape, leaving the fabric a little unravelled.

Soft landscaping in gardens and around car parks helps soften the route.

SUMMARY

An approach of two halves. Clachnaharry hints at some traditional, village character, before more modern development mixed with tired and, in places, empty commercial / retail units and associated car parking and amenity landscaping unravels the charm and sense of place. The increased flow of traffic along this route, with associated highway elements and junctions, appears to have taken precedent above any vision to create or maintain a sense of place.

Although there is a relatively high degree of characterful townscape and soft landscaping along this route, the section along Telford Street feels tired and unkempt, with overgrown or sparse planting beds and areas of mossy block paving, for example the mini roundabout and Telford Street roundabout.

Quality Audit: B861 Leys Castle to Castle Street

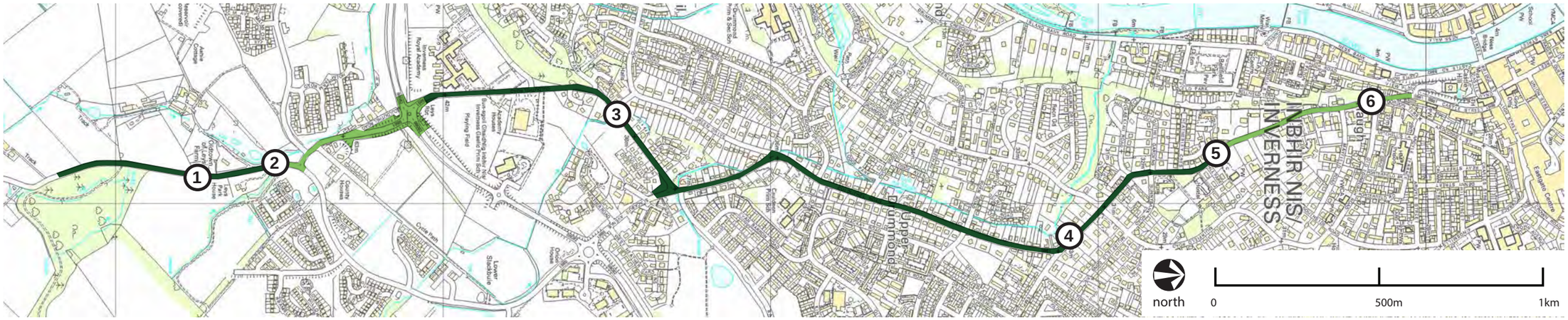


Figure 10: B861 approach from the south, Leys Castle to Castle Street

Overall good quality

Generally good quality
(room for improvement in places)

Improvements required

Major improvements required

'Key' areas for improvement

① Target note

As the B861 descends past Leys Castle, Inverness becomes visible in the distance, framed and, at times, obscured by roadside vegetation.

With increasing proximity to the city, views open up towards the Black Isle and distant hills. Street and speed signage appears, together with street lighting and footways. Kerbs replace the informal edge of the rural single track road.

The residential outskirts of Inverness are relatively new and generally lack the softening of mature woodland and tree planting. Open expanses of amenity grassland and pockets of farmland facilitate open views across to the other side of the Great Glen and to the Black Isle, although they also leave new housing development exposed and prominent.

The road continues through residential development bounded by a mix of wall types and heights and softened by extensive garden vegetation and mature tree cover. A pleasant suburban mix of hard and soft elements.

Sections of the route run through areas of mature tree cover overhanging the road and creating a mature, leafy corridor. Boundary treatments and gateways appear old with a sense of history behind them.

Well maintained hedgerows and boundary walls create the impression of a fairly affluent area that takes pride in their surroundings.

With increasing proximity to the city centre, traffic becomes more concentrated and on-street parking starts to line the route. There is still a high degree of mature tree cover.

The Rocpool Reserve restaurant signals that the centre of the city must be relatively close and that the route is leaving the residential suburbs. On street car parking dominates the left hand side of the road.

On entering the centre of the city, the castle (court) begins to form a prominent focal point to the view, above well maintained grounds (albeit pockets of seasonal bedding plants / bulbs and shrubs within mown amenity grass). In clear conditions, Kessock Bridge is visible momentarily in the distance.

Tree cover reduces either side of the road and a variety of hard landscape detailing begins to converge in a somewhat piecemeal fashion.

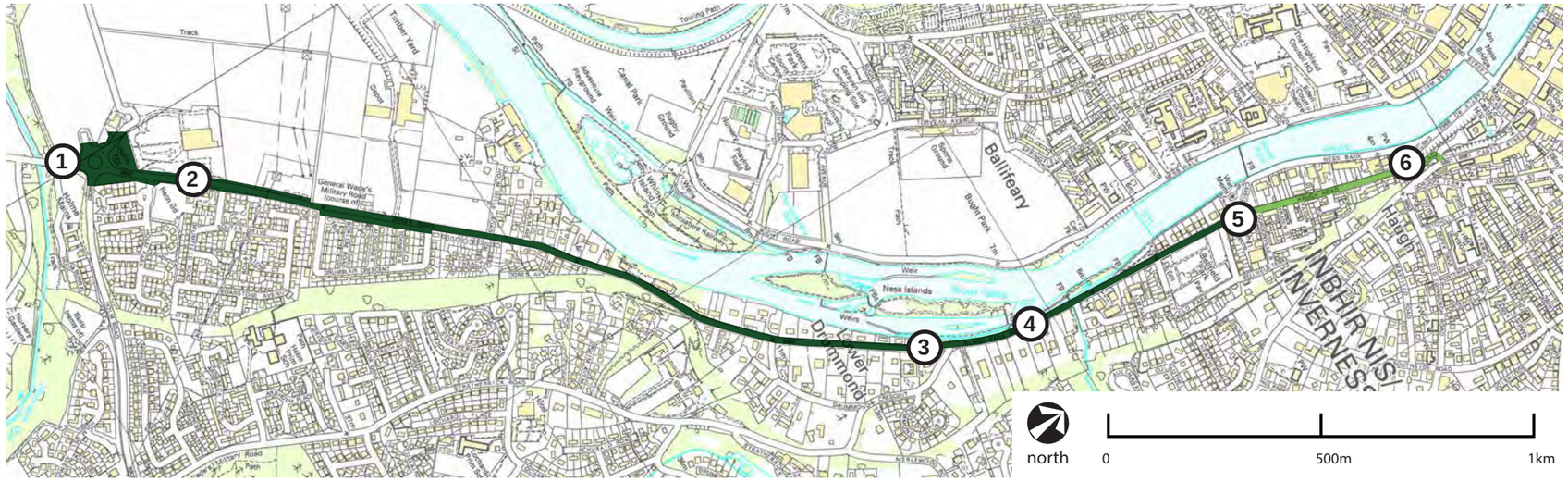
SUMMARY

This is a very pleasant approach to the city, but one used primarily by locals. It is leafy, well maintained and has a good mix of both attractive and distinctive hard materials (such as stone walling and rendered walling) and soft materials (such as mature trees and garden shrubs). There is a true ‘street’ feel to the approach as the road sweeps through the older, more traditional areas of Inverness.

With increasing proximity to the centre, traffic and pedestrian activity increases and materials, building styles, sense of space, and quality of space becomes more diverse and stimulating. However, this also brings with it a degree of visual confusion where elements of the view are not necessarily coherent.

Overall, the route provides a gentle and enjoyable approach to the city centre.

Quality Audit: B862 Dores Road to Castle Street



- Overall good quality
- Generally good quality *(room for improvement in places)*
- Improvements required
- Major improvements required
- 'Key' areas for improvement
- ① Target note

Figure 11: B862 approach from the south, Dores Road to Castle Street

The B862 opens quite suddenly across the large roundabout at Ness Side, after enjoying a rolling and winding route through mature trees and farmland.

A wooden Nessie provides an attractive centre piece to the roundabout and marks the edge of Inverness, however it is quite subtle and easy missed.

Mature trees continue either side of the road in the distance.

After the roundabout, the route becomes more urban with features such as bus shelters, parked cars, street lighting, housing estates / roads.

It remains very leafy and green including rural features such as farm gates and dry stone walls to the left.

The majority of the route is very leafy with mature trees overhanging the road and creating a soft corridor and funnelling movement along. Natural stone walls are characteristic of this route and provide attractive and characteristic boundary treatments.

Footways typically only line one side of the road, maintaining a slightly rural quality.

Although there remains a soft backdrop of mature trees behind buildings to the right, Haugh Road suddenly becomes dominated by a range of hard materials and differing boundary treatments.

Space feels like more of a premium as the urban grain becomes more tightly-knit.

Although a large number of traditional building styles and materials still existing along this section, more modern styles and materials are filling in the gaps.

Passing the Ness Islands and with increasing proximity to the city centre, open green spaces and visible pedestrian routes begin to open up to the left.

Natural stone walls and mature trees are still very characteristic along this route.

Climbing up to Castle Street is quite pleasant and demonstrates how old and new design can work together well.

Mature trees within the castle grounds, above a natural stone retaining wall, provide an attractive junction in the road.

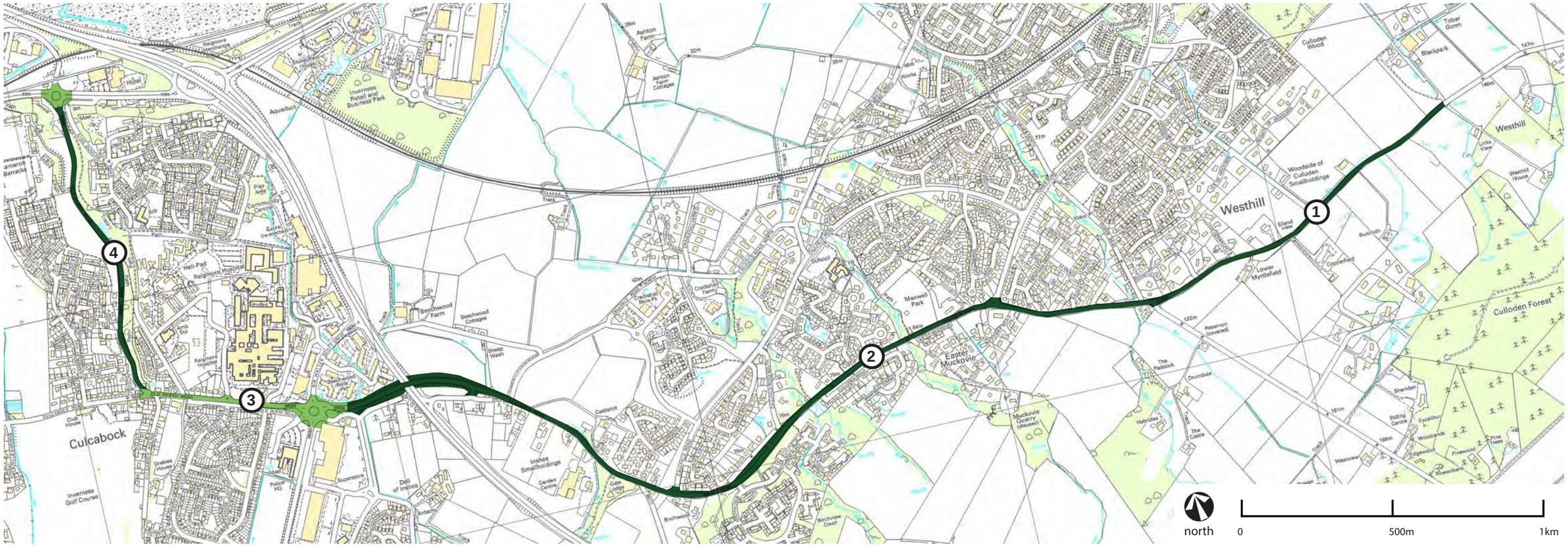
SUMMARY

This too is a very pleasant approach to the city, again one used primarily by locals. It is very leafy, well maintained and has a good mix of both attractive and distinctive hard materials (such as stone walling and rendered walling) and soft materials (such as mature trees and garden shrubs).

With increasing proximity to the centre, traffic and pedestrian activity increases and materials, building styles, sense of space, and quality of space becomes more diverse and stimulating. However, this also brings with it a degree of visual confusion where elements of the view are not necessarily coherent.

Overall, the route provides an attractive and traditional approach to the city centre.

Quality Audit: B9006 Westhill to Millburn roundabout



Overall good quality

Generally good quality
(room for improvement in places)

Improvements required

Major improvements required

'Key' areas for improvement

① Target note

Figure 12: B9006 approach from the east, Westhill to Millburn roundabout

When approaching Inverness from the east of Culloden on the B9006, the extent of housing development becomes visible to the right and suggests that Inverness is not far.

Mown verges, street lighting, b&b signage, and private housing boundary treatments hint at the edge of an urban area.

A simple well-placed ‘welcome’ sign in a mown verge, unfortunately doubled-up with the Fairtrade branding.

As the route continues through Culloden, footways, boundary treatments, street furniture, street lighting, and bus stops, suggest the suburbs of an urban centre.

This section of the route is attractive and leafy with a mix of traditional and new building materials. Street furniture tends to be typically ‘highway’ in nature. The style and type of bus shelters used appear to be rather random and thus detract from any consistency the route may have.

The road continues past Raigmore Hospital with housing to the left. Trees are fairly small scale and do little for the roadscape. Open amenity grass expanses and verges separate the road from the adjacent housing.

As the volume of traffic has increased since the beginning of the approach, so has the dominance of the highway and highway features.

The short stretch of Old Perth Road is attractive, woody, and has a comfortable sense of enclosure with pockets of open space.

A natural stone retaining wall runs along the length of the right hand side and separates the woodland edge from the road and footway.

Only the chain-link fence along the left hand side lets this section of route down.

SUMMARY

This is an attractive and meandering approach to the city centre. Mature trees and traditional boundary treatments are common along great stretches of the route. There are sections where new development and improved highway features do not possess quite the same charm and aesthetic appeal as the more ‘mature’ sections.

The proposals set out by the Council for the Inshes Junction Improvements will replace the Inshes roundabout with a junction but, at five and six lanes wide, one that is more reminiscent of a trunk road than an urban street.

Overall, the route is a pleasant approach to the city, again one primarily used by locals.

Quality Audit: NCN1 Kessock Bridge to Shore Street roundabout

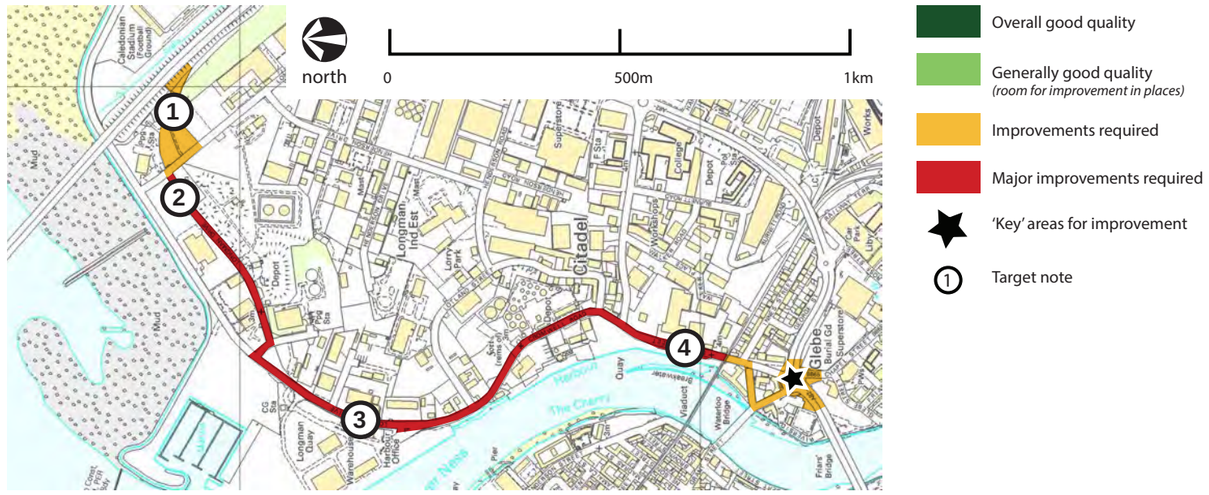


Figure 13: National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 1 approach from the north, Kessock Bridge to Shore Street roundabout

Leaving the A9 / Kessock Bridge, the NCN swings round and down to the Longman Industrial Estate, along a cycle track, through dense, overgrown scrub planting. This section of route feels slightly 'uneasy' and neglected.

The cycle route continues past the rear of the Inverness Courier building and the open car park. This stretch of route still feels neglected with one side of the cycle track being scrubland and the other being an open, gravel overflow car park with little soft landscape.

The remains of an old fort (built by Oliver Cromwell) along Cromwell Road, provides an intriguing find, incongruously juxtaposed against various industrial features and buildings.

The NCN is still routed through the heart of the industrial estate with no segregation from HGVs or other industrial traffic.

The NCN continues through the industrial estate dominated by security fencing, an array of other boundary treatments, a range of different industrial units (size, shape, materials, activities), all of which is less than welcoming for a cyclist.

On the approach to the city centre, traffic becomes more concentrated and residential buildings begin to appear. The railway bridge hints at a boundary between the town and the industrial lands. Temporary Heras fencing and car parking adjacent and under the railway bridge, with areas of neglected overgrowth, create an uneasy sense of space lacking in pride.

SUMMARY

This cycle route into the city is very unpleasant and does not present a good impression for cycle tourists approaching from the north. Besides the aesthetics, there are safety issues for cyclists having to navigate through industrial traffic. The alternative to this route requires use of the footway along the A9 and then along the A82 Longman Road together with pedestrian crossings. This is not ideal either.

Overall, considering it is a designated National Cycle Network route, it does not really cater for the cyclist.