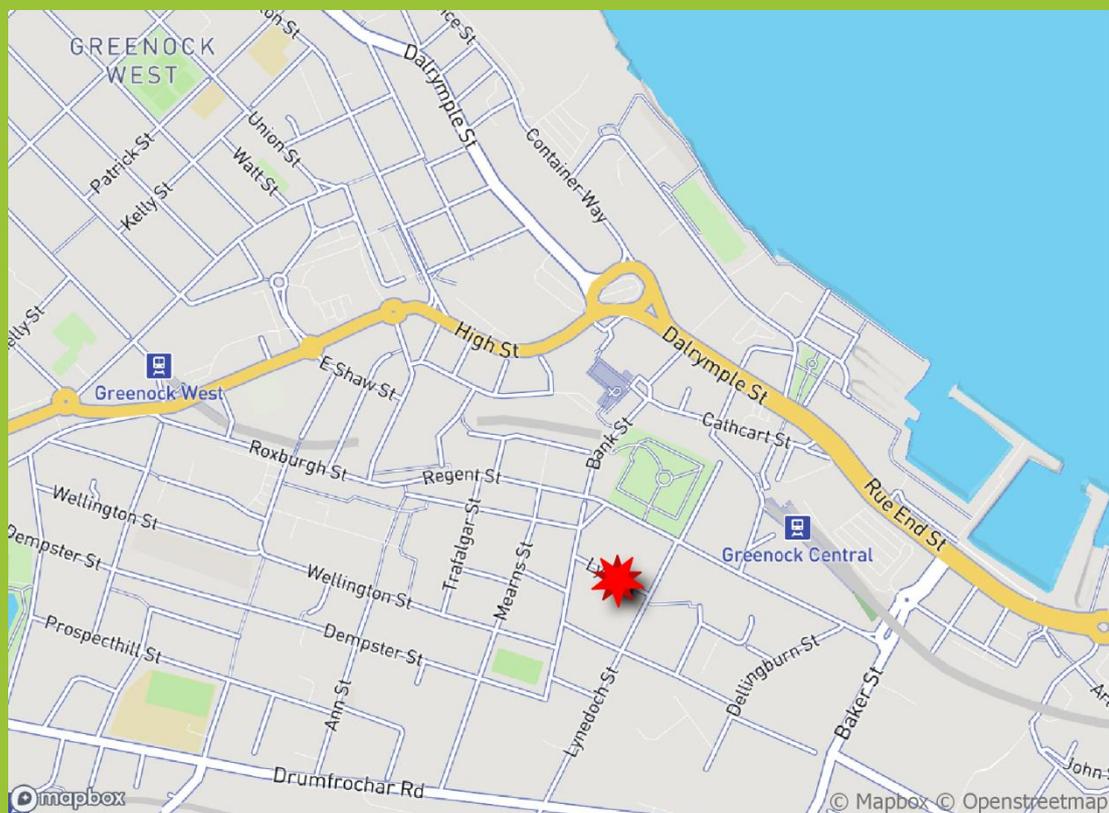


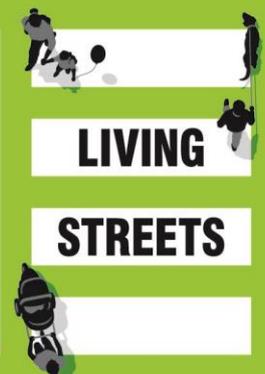
# Pedestrian conditions assessment

## Lyle Street, Greenock (Cloch Housing)

### Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities 2020-21



We are Living Streets Scotland, part of the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a nation where walking is the natural choice for everyday, local journeys.



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# Summary

## Key points for registered social landlord

Our assessment of the area around Lyle Street, Greenock, which should be checked with residents and other stakeholders, leads us to conclude that pedestrians are disadvantaged by these key issues:

- There are a number of barriers separating this area from key facilities and the town centre, making these key facilities surprisingly difficult to access (given their physical closeness).
- The local area has a real potential to feel like a coherent pedestrian-friendly neighbourhood, but current street design allows carriageway space and vehicle use and parking to dominate.

As the Registered Social Landlord, it may only be possible for Cloch Housing Association to lead action in connection with a small number of the issues and ideas described in this report. The most significant of these might be around:

- improving the pedestrian-friendliness of local streets (perhaps simply leading work on this by prompting a feasibility study or something similar)
- leading on making clear the barriers faced by residents here, ensuring their voice is heard in this regard.

We report on wider issues because we consider that the better these are understood the greater the likelihood of change – whether locally and more generally.

## Background note:

Our urban environments are defined by interrelated features under the influence of many different bodies, and this report is about current conditions whatever their cause. Registered social landlords do not generally have control over the main factors which affect pedestrians in the wider areas around the properties they manage. Likewise local authorities - with limited resources and budgets, and facing numerous other constraints - do not have immediate control over many of the factors which affect pedestrians.

However, in the longer term it is helpful if problems are understood, and potential solutions are explored. Registered social landlords may be able to have a positive influence, making more immediate changes where they have the power to do so, supporting others to understand the issues their residents face, and playing their part in working toward change.

This report is based on an assessment which used mapping and information available from sources such as Google Streetview. Prior to finalising this report we presented the content to local staff from Cloch Housing Association to check its accuracy. The intention is that the information in the report is used to support a longer informed discussion with local residents, as they are the real experts on the quality of the experience for pedestrians in the areas where they live.

*Map images in this document are copyright © Mapbox, © Openstreetmap contributors.*

# Introduction

Living Streets has received funding from the Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities, administered by Cycling Scotland. As part of this work we are assessing conditions for pedestrians around properties managed by registered social landlords.

This report presents observations and suggestions for improving conditions, following an assessment of the area around the Cloch Housing Association property at Lyle Street, Greenock.

## Key factors we assess

Our assessment looked at issues such as the following:

- **Footway (i.e. pavement)<sup>1</sup> and path provision:** the presence, surface quality, continuity, width, obstruction, and design of footways and paths.
- **Accessibility:** how far footways and paths, and their interaction with the carriageways of streets, have been designed to accommodate disabled people and others less able to deal with complicated or dangerous conditions.
- **General area design and character:** whether this is an area full of human activity and street life or one dominated by the movement of or parking of vehicles and the provision of roads designed primarily to facilitate these things.
- **Local area traffic-related safety:** looking at possibility of risk of injury from vehicles, and evaluating the likely effects of this risk on behaviour, not least in terms of how easily pedestrians cross streets or junctions, but also on how pleasant or otherwise a journey might be.
- **Whether streets and paths are welcoming to pedestrians:** both in and around an area, including focusing on how they will feel after dark or later at night – considering in particular what ‘passive surveillance’<sup>2</sup> exists, and to what level streets and paths are overlooked from buildings nearby.
- **Area permeability:** looking at whether paths and footways connect to provide convenient shorter routes for pedestrians, and longer routes for those driving – or whether routes for pedestrians are defined by following streets which have been designed around vehicle use, or by the necessity to negotiate these safely.
- **Entry and exit points and routes from an area:** looking at what boundaries around the area define these points/routes, and conditions for pedestrians here.
- **Likely destinations outside the local area and routes to/from these:** considering pedestrian journeys primarily for utility journeys – including for shopping, education, and work – and conditions for pedestrians along these, distances, and potential use of public transport.

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<sup>1</sup> For clarity this report uses the word term ‘footway’ rather than the phrase ‘the pavement’ to describe the space for walking on beside a road. We do this because word ‘pavement’ is also used in technical discussion to describe the actual material a road or path is constructed from.

<sup>2</sup> We use the term ‘passive surveillance’ to describe the way in which it feels safer to be on a street where there are other people nearby who may be able to see activity, including those who might look out from the windows of a building – even if nobody is currently actively doing so.

# Location

Lyle Street is located close to the central area of Greenock. The central 'Oak Mall' shopping centre, containing the main central Greenock shopping area, is only around 300m from the street.



**Location**

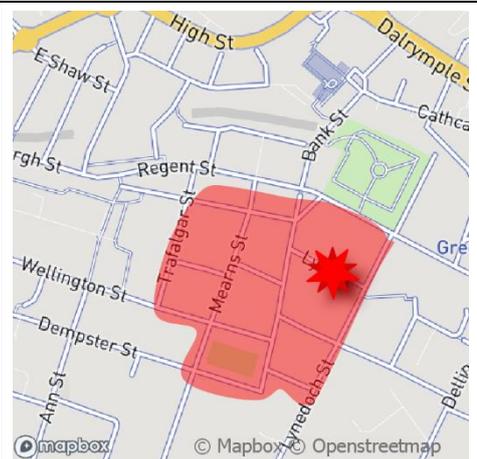
Lyle Street is at the east edge of an area of relatively dense residential property, much of which is either tenement or built of stone, or of relatively similar design. It seems likely that this feels to form a relatively coherent neighbourhood.

A southern boundary is created by an area of semi-industrial or brownfield land around an old railway cutting.

To the west are very much more open areas created by a combination of brownfield land and open areas around multistorey residential blocks.

To the east much of the building is of a more industrial nature.

To the north, a change in building use, the design of the Regent Street carriageway, and a steep hill toward the town centre, combine to create a northern boundary.



**Dense primarily-residential area**

# Observations

## Key observations

We think that these issues (and any positive points) most strongly influence the experience of pedestrians in the area. These issues may arise from many different factors. The registered social landlord, and even the local authority, may have little or no direct control over some of them.

Although the centre of Greenock is within around 300m of Lyle Street the vehicle focused nature of this area makes it surprisingly difficult for pedestrians to access key facilities.

The Oak Mall shopping centre can be easily accessed (although presumably only in daytime) from Bank Street. Improvements to Cathcart Street have made the area here more pleasant, but there is very little use of this street for retail purposes.

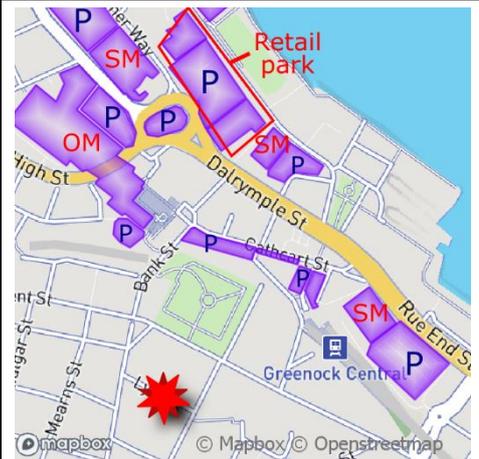
A very large 24 hour 'Tesco Extra' supermarket is north of Oak Mall, and a pedestrian route to this exists though Oak Mall. The supermarket has been built with a focus on its car park. Pedestrian access feels to be via a back entrance.

There are also pedestrian routes to this supermarket which avoid Oak Mall, but they rely on dark service lanes beneath the main A8/A78 carriageways.

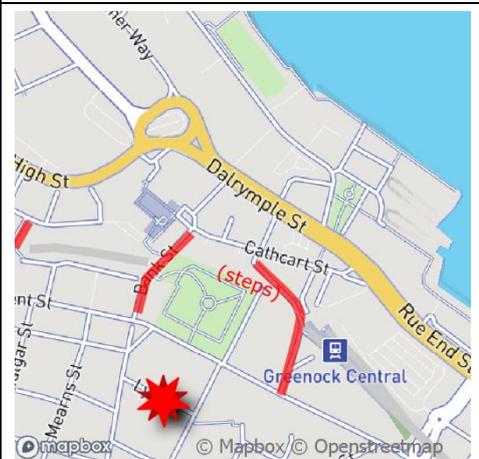
A typical UK car-park focused retail park is to the north of Dalrymple Street, as is a smaller Lidl supermarket (focused on its car park). Pedestrian routes to these do exist, but they are convoluted.

The physical geography this area means that all routes toward the centre involve either steep hills or longer flights of steps.

Along with Regent Street/Roxburgh Street (see below), the hill here helps to define a northern boundary to the residential area around Lyle Street.



OM = Oak Mall shopping centre  
SM = Supermarkets  
P = Car park

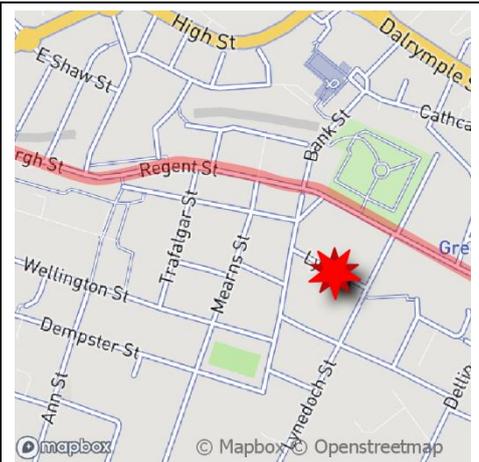


Streets highlighted red slope steeply.

Regent Street – continuing west as Roxburgh Street – is clearly a main route for traffic through the area. This street runs parallel to the railway here.

Roads north from Regent Street are narrow and descend steeply, helping to keep traffic on Regent Street.

To the east this street descends much more gently, connecting to a major roundabout-based set of junctions, which are designed to promote flow of traffic between Regent Street, the B788, and the A8 trunk road dual-carriageway.



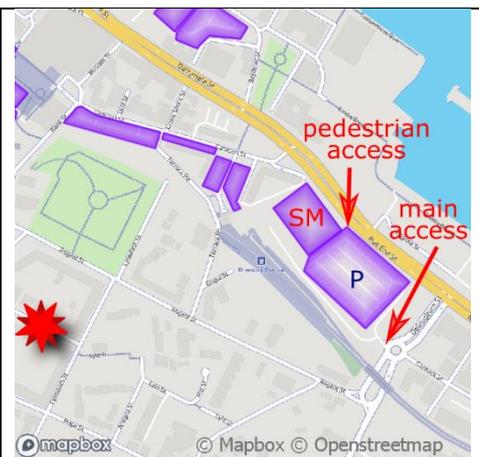
Regent St/Roxburgh Street highlighted red

## Secondary observations

As an alternative to the town centre supermarkets a large Morrisons store is only around 300m from Lyle St. However this has been built to focus on attracting car-based customers, with it facing away from Greenock, and onto the major junction between the A8 dual carriageway and the B788. The car park has its own dedicated exit from this junction.

Routes to this for pedestrians are convoluted. Some require the use of several flights of steps, others passage through car parks. Most routes are of around 700m (more than twice the direct distance).

Access for pedestrians from the main roundabout does not seem to have been considered. Consequently routes based on the use of Regent Road – with its gentler gradient – would appear to mean a trip either along the access aisles of the car park, or right around its perimeter to a pedestrian access from the A8 dual carriageway. Such a route is closer to 1km, and involves a section of Regent Street which is of a more industrial nature (distant from residential property), a stretch of footway immediately beside the dual carriageway, and an unsupported crossing of the roundabout exit leading to the car park.



Morrisons supermarket location

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)

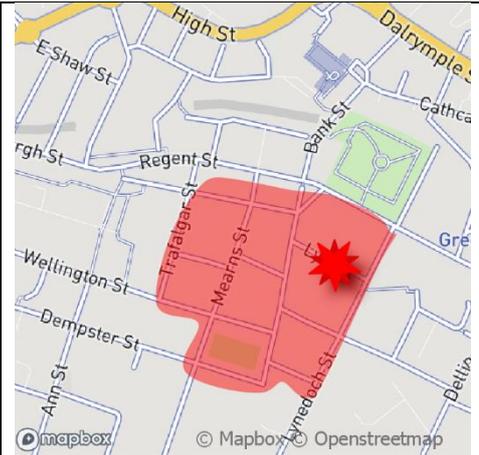
[Regent Road](#)

[Roundabout exit \(crossing point\)](#)

Although residential property dominates locally there are also some small shops and other facilities including convenience-style shops, a baker and butcher.

The street and building design is relatively coherent across the local area. Residential property predominates. In most of this local area there is a high degree of 'passive surveillance' of the streets – so that pedestrians can easily be seen from nearby residential buildings. Together these things create the sense that this is will feel to be a relatively coherent local neighbourhood.

Unfortunately this is undermined because of the domination of the streets by carriageway space – which is unattractive and which leaves only a tiny proportion of space for uses other than moving or parking vehicles.



**A coherent neighbourhood?**

Specific issues for pedestrians on Lyle Street (and immediately neighbouring streets), include:

- surface imperfections creating trip hazards,
- their narrowness compared to the space provided for vehicle use,
- posts and other obstructions causing additional narrowing,
- sections built to have additional 'crossfall' (slope toward the carriageway) to facilitate vehicle access across them (rather than providing a steeper ramp to a more level footway).

The junction of Bank Street, Regent Street and Roxburgh Street could be key in pedestrian journeys toward the town centre. Currently there is little to support pedestrian journeys through the junction in this direction.

The crossing of Regent Street is relatively difficult here. There is a pedestrian refuge which supports crossing around 100m east – although given the nature of traffic on Regent Street this will not adequately support all pedestrians. Diversion to this is inconvenient – although (as noted below) it will support journeys toward the town centre which begin at Lyledoch Street.

On the south of Regent Street it is notable that Roxburgh Street has road markings (added around 2015) and a carriageway width consistent with relatively high speed use. Each part of the junction area has been designed with gently swept kerb lines, also consistent with higher speed use. However, vehicles using this junction area are entering and

**Links to representative images on Google Streetview:**

**Junction area, looking toward town centre across Regent Street from Bank Street**

**Most likely crossing point of Regent Street (showing pedestrians crossing)**

<p>leaving narrower residential streets where slow speeds are desirable. Better design would aim to slow vehicles before joining the residential streets. The drawings later in this report illustrate this.</p>	
<p>The more industrial area to the east is likely to provide a barrier to some journeys, particularly after dark or later at night. Pedestrians here may feel much more isolated.</p> <p>As noted above, Regent Street itself, as it passes through this more industrial area, lacks neighbouring buildings. Traffic levels here may make pedestrian journeys feel less isolated, but its design is vehicle focused and journeys are not likely to be pleasant.</p>	<p><a href="#">Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</a>  <a href="#"><u>Hope Street</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Dellingburn Street</u></a></p>
<p>Regent Street (continuing west as Roxburgh Street) has generally been designed to promote vehicle speed and flow over other considerations.</p> <p>Junctions between this and its side roads are generally fairly wide, with little or nothing to facilitate pedestrian movement across the side road ends.</p> <p>There is only one signalised crossing of the street (i.e. with traffic lights). This is around 700m west of Lynedoch Street. It seems unlikely that this features in many pedestrian journeys from Lyle St.</p> <p>It seems likely that many people will find that these issues make their journeys more difficult. This will be particularly true for those who walk (or wheel) more slowly, or who are less able to make fine judgements over vehicle movement and speed. However positively there is one pedestrian refuge island provided on Regent Street, west of Lynedoch Street, which seems important in facilitating journeys from Lynedoch Street toward the town centre. It is unlikely that this provision is sufficient to support all users to cross Regent Street.</p> <p>It is notable that west of Trafalgar Street an underpass was built to facilitate pedestrian movement, yet on the ¾km of carriageway east of this point the only support to cross is provided by two central pedestrian refuges.</p>	<p><a href="#">Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</a>  <a href="#"><u>Wide exposed crossing point of end of Roxburgh Street at Regent Street</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Pedestrian refuge based informal-crossing point of Regent Street, east of above points.</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Pedestrian underpass around 700m west of Lynedoch Street.</u></a></p>
<p>It appears that there has been some attempt to limit westbound traffic on Roxburgh/Regent Street, with small sections of one-way street where this meets the A78 trunk road. It's difficult to determine the effects of this.</p>	

<p>Very locally residential property dominates, but outside this area the mixed nature of land use means that many pedestrian journeys may involve sections of street or path where pedestrians feel more isolated. Such issues can be created by park land, brownfield land, and more industrial areas.</p>	<p><a href="#">Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</a>  <u><a href="#">Wellington Street to west of local area</a></u>  <u><a href="#">Dempster Street to west of local area</a></u>  <u><a href="#">Roxburgh Street to west of local area</a></u></p>
<p>Streets in the local residential area have a speed limit of 30mph. They are designed to be permeable for vehicle use, but (positively) the designs of many junctions within the area may slow vehicles. The traditional building design here means that corners are tighter - without the modern tendency to provide gentle swept kerb lines.</p>	<p><a href="#">Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</a>  <u><a href="#">Tighter corners on street junction</a></u>  <u><a href="#">Tighter corners at Lyle Street</a></u></p>
<p>Footways (pavements) in the local area are present on both sides of most streets. These seem to be of moderate quality – so many people may be able to use them without significant issues. However these are narrow enough so that temporary obstructions like bins may cause significant issues.</p>	<p><a href="#">Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</a>  <u><a href="#">Narrow obstructed footway (Lyle St)</a></u>  <u><a href="#">Narrow obstructed footway (Lyle St)</a></u></p>
<p>There are individual sections of local footway which are in poor enough condition so that they may be impassable using a wheelchair or other mobility aid.</p> <p>Many kerbs in this area are low, and dropped kerbs are relatively common in the local area. The dropped kerbs are poorly designed in some places.</p> <p>The hills in the area, combined with the wide design of junctions (outside the more local area) are likely to cause some people with disabilities significant issues. The geography of the area can't be changed, but it should be noted that the addition of vehicle-focused junction designs in such a location may multiply issues for some.</p>	<p><a href="#">Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</a>  <u><a href="#">Low kerb providing easy access to carriageway (Bank St)</a></u>  <u><a href="#">Roxburgh St / Bank St dropped kerb</a></u>  <u><a href="#">Roxburgh St / Bank St parking dropped kerb</a></u></p>
<p>Many people would choose to use the steep 'Bank Street' as a route toward the town centre.</p> <p>Those who find this to be too steep might use Terrace Road – which has a more gentle gradient. This also provides a route to Greenock Central station. However there are issues with this route including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sections of this route might be made more awkward by parked vehicles,</li> <li>• parts of the footway are made very narrow by lamp posts,</li> <li>• key sections of footway lack dropped kerbs.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</a>  <u><a href="#">Route to east footway of Terrace Road across wide entrance</a></u>  <u><a href="#">Alternate route to east footway of Terrace Road means crossing poor surface</a></u>  <u><a href="#">Uncontrolled parking dominating east footway</a></u>  <u><a href="#">Obstructed narrow footway</a></u>  <u><a href="#">Full height kerbs at bottom of Terrace Road</a></u></p>

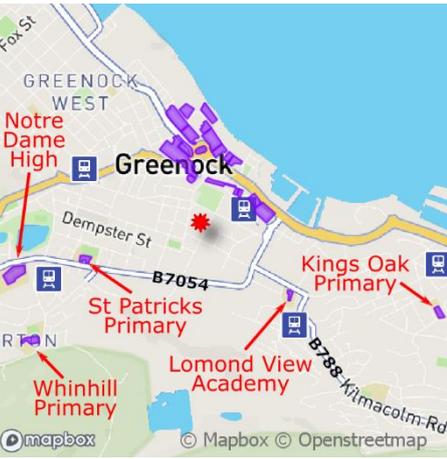
An additional problem on Terrace Road is apparent where steps from Lynedoch Street meet it. Here parked vehicles are allowed to block the base of the steps. These steps provide another important route for pedestrians toward the town centre. There is no good reason to allow parked vehicles to block their use. Not only does this have practical consequence but it also signals that pedestrian needs are seen to be secondary to the provision of parking here.

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)  
[Blocked access to base of steps](#)

Routes to non-denominational primary schools nearby are of about 1.7 km or 1.9 km – but conditions on these routes may be as big an issue as the distances.

Most available options for pedestrian routes to these schools include sections which might feel to be dominated by vehicles, or unwelcoming due to a sense of isolation. The determining factor in how welcoming (or otherwise) streets are after dark is probably their use by other pedestrians.

It is significant that pedestrian routes to most of the local schools involve interaction with the B7054 or B788. These are roads focused almost entirely on vehicle movement, probably making them more unpleasant environments for pedestrians, particularly after dark or later at night.



**Local schools**

The local secondary school, Lomond View Academy, is much closer (around 800m) by the most direct route. However routes to this must negotiate vehicle dominated roads and the industrial area to the east of Lyle Street. It seems likely that many pedestrian routes to the Academy become unwelcoming after dark, unless children walk in larger groups.

# Potential improvements

This section lists some ideas for change. These are intended to prompt discussion, and are not necessarily recommendations. We've separated the ideas into three rough categories. The first ideas are about changes which might more easily be led by the registered social landlord. The registered social landlord may be able to have a strong influence in connection with the second group of ideas. The third group of ideas are generally for the longer term, or of a nature which means that a much wider group of agencies would need to be involved.

## **Led by the registered social landlord:**

The registered social landlord might consider trying to take a lead on the following issues, although the cooperation of other bodies might be required:

### **Temporary residential junction redesign (potential feasibility study)**

The local area (generally between Lynedoch Street and Trafalgar Street) has streets which might easily be made more friendly for pedestrians. There should already be very limited through traffic here, with most vehicles being driven to or from local destinations.

There is real potential for this to have the feel of a more unified neighbourhood. There are even existing shops in this area. Buildings here are mostly built close to the street, and many have windows looking out onto the street. This might make the area feel relatively safe and more pleasant to walk around, even after dark or later at night.

At the moment almost all of the available space is given over to carriageway, with minimum footway (pavement) widths, even at key carriageway crossing points.

The images provided in the final section of this report show how differently junctions can be designed in a residential area. Ideally streets should be re-designed properly, with high quality materials. However it should also be possible to use more temporary measures to change how junctions feel to pedestrians. Carriageways can be narrowed with bolt-down kerbs or similar interventions. In some places it can help to paint narrower junction mouths, even while the actual kerb line remains unchanged. Central white lines can be removed so that streets don't feel to be designed for high speeds. Small trees or other plants can be added using planters rather than installing green areas in the street surface.

Given the narrowness of the footways (pavements) it seems likely that temporary obstructions such as rubbish bags currently cause issues. Along with work to improve junctions (by reclaiming parts of the carriageway) it may at the same time be possible to provide protected spaces in what is currently carriageway, to support uses such as mid-block crossing movements, bicycle parking, and temporary storage of rubbish.

Work on such changes might be led by a registered social landlord, even if this is limited to a feasibility study.

## **Influenced by the registered social landlord**

These more complex changes might require a much deeper involvement from other bodies, but we guess that the registered social landlord ought to be able to provide strong encouragement or strong influence:

### **Bank St / Regent St junction improvements**

There are strong arguments for more substantial alterations to the junction at Bank Street and Regent Street given its importance in pedestrian journeys toward the town centre.

Options include the provision of either a zebra crossing, or a full set of traffic signals (traffic lights) at the junction. There are also good arguments for redesigning Regent Street in order to make it more pedestrian friendly overall – perhaps either avoiding the need for traffic signals, or making conditions more suitable for a high quality zebra crossing.

Cloch Housing may be able to represent their residents in this area, working with them, and supporting them, in order to highlight this issue.

### **Improving Terrace Road steps access**

It ought to be simple to prevent the parking of vehicles in such a way as to block the base of the steps linking from Lynedoch Street to Terrace Road. Changes here ought to be simple to implement. Cloch Housing may be able to represent their residents in asking for such an improvement.

Cloch Housing may also be able to help to determine whether conditions on Terrace Road, including on these steps, are important to residents in their journeys as pedestrians.

## **Longer term or more complex change**

The potential improvements listed here are of a nature meaning that change is likely to take much longer, and that the registered social landlord is likely to have much less influence:

### **Improving Terrace Road**

Terrace Road, as noted, has the potential to be an important route to the town centre for residents living near Lyle Street. This also provides access to the nearby station. The issues noted above make it much less welcoming for pedestrian use – almost certainly discouraging pedestrian trips toward the town centre, or even use of the train.

Changes here would need to be more substantial, and easy solutions are unobvious, although some aesthetic improvements may be relatively simple.

Not all possible improvements are obvious. It might be, for example, that changes to the wall bounding the lane at the foot of Terrace Road would improve the look of the area. This might involve simple maintenance, or a more substantial re-design. Likewise, improvements to the landscaping around some of the buildings at the top of the hill might give the area a more cared-for appearance.

At the top of the hill it is important that the current car parking arrangements, which allow parked vehicles to dominate the space, are improved.

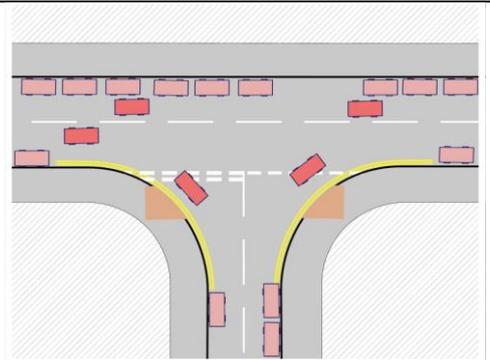
# Further information

## Illustrative sketches of junctions

Below are greatly simplified sketches illustrating that different junction designs make a difference to pedestrian journeys. Improvements can take time and be costly but these images should help to explain our assessment.

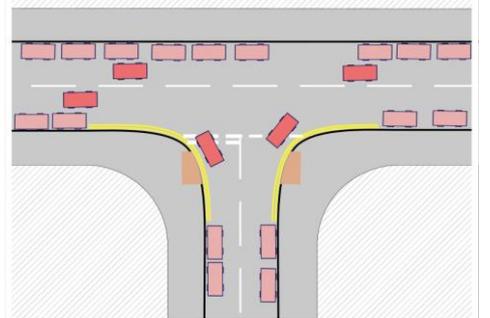
Some junctions have wide gently swept corners, as shown here. This allows vehicles to join/leave the main carriageway at greater speed. Designs like this are used in order to try to support smooth flow on the main carriageway – although a multitude of other issues can often prevent this.

The junction of Regent St and Roxburgh St ([Streetview link](#)) is an example. Within around 50m of this point Roxburgh St is narrowed by parked vehicles to a single vehicle lane.



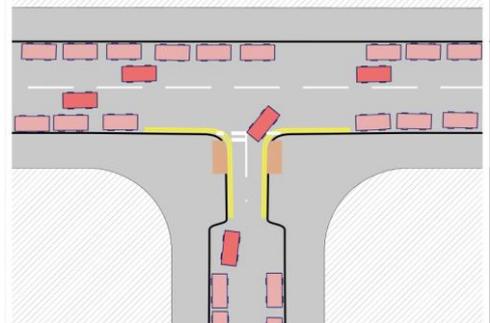
Many junctions within the local area are on older streets defined by tenement buildings or similar. This creates much tighter corners. Side roads designed like this can be very significantly easier for pedestrians to cross. The carriageway is narrower, and vehicles must be driven more slowly.

The junction of Lyle St and Lynedoch St ([Streetview link](#)) is an example.



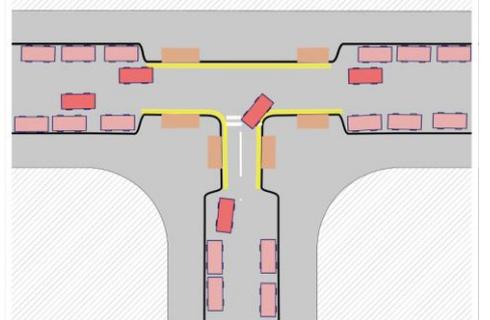
Once it is accepted that a residential area should only support slow speeds, and that side-road crossings should prioritise pedestrians, many can be narrowed much further.

This restricts vehicle movement, meaning that those driving some vehicles may need to negotiate passage with one another. For smaller roads (as shown) this might apply to car users, but larger vehicles can be affected on larger roads.



To further prioritise pedestrians, junctions like those in the area around Lyle Street can have the width of the carriageway on both roads at a junction narrowed. This makes crossing much easier in all directions.

Junctions designed in this way can significantly slow vehicles turning into a side road, control parking at the junction, narrow the carriageway to be crossed, and increase visibility for and of all users.



## Potential funding

Funding for improvements to the urban environment might be available from a number of sources, including:

- Places for Everyone:  
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2019/scotland/places-for-everyone/>
- Awards for All:  
<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/under10k>
- The Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities:  
<https://www.cycling.scot/what-we-do/cycling-friendly/social-housing-fund>