

Urbanism Awards 2023 nomination: Colquhoun Square, Helensburgh

'Helensburgh (population 15,430) lies on the north shore of the Firth of Clyde on Scotland's west coast. It's grid street pattern also perhaps makes it one of the finest examples of a planned town in the UK.

'Colquhoun Square represents one of the town's principal urban spaces. The square, seaside esplanade and main streets within the town's famous grid layout have undergone a major public realm and traffic management enhancement, as part of a wider £7 million Council project, which seeks to deliver wider economic regeneration benefits.

'Offering a whole new experience for both residents and visitors, Colquhoun Square has been re-imagined as the "civic heart" of the town which includes a plaza capable of supporting significant community events. The Square also incorporates a new 'Outdoor Museum' that showcases, with new artwork, aspects of the town's rich history. The redesigned Square also provides increased amenity space, seating and planting and supports an emerging "café culture" in the town.

'Having recently visited Helensburgh on a family outing, I feel this would project and space exhibit qualities that would now be worthy of further investigation by the Academy. There would appear to be an interesting back story to its design development, with a range of options being put to a vote in an informal referendum. Helensburgh is perhaps not widely known outside Scotland and would represent new ground for the Academy.

'This place was recently identified as part of an exercise at the Scottish Local Authority Urban Design Forum (LAUDF) which sought to provide an overview of some of Scotland's best urban places.'