

First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE)

TOURISM

Arden/Queensborough Exchange



Visiting Team



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Before the Visit

- Some people had checked web sites for information and maps
- Knew there was a post office, community centre, library from the web site map.
- Some people had been there years ago and shared that it was a small community, a lake, cottages, etc.
- One person had visited Arden once before this trip to attend a Christmas event at the community centre. She knew about the “large” artist community and the cottage life.

Entering the Community

- A lovely small community that appears to have a large artist community and a beautiful lake with cottages
- Appears to be a retirement area
- The entrances had many small signs which contributed to a sense of confusion. There was a lovely construction company sign upon entering
- Noticed that there was no local businesses.
- Found the Post office, Legion, Community Centre, Library, Park and churches
- The picturesque and carefully groomed little parkette by the pond was very appealing.
- Entrance into the big park was hard to find
- Liked Bridge Street that had the Post Office, bridge and Bucket List
- The village looked a little tired, perhaps a few gallons of paint would help.
- An interesting array of artists' signage, certainly would be worthwhile checking out the local artists.
- **After immediately entering the community we scored the hamlet - (Good to Needs Improvement)**

Tourism Signage

Signage We Noticed

Signs for visiting Arden on both entering and exiting

A seniors community

Collection of commercial signs

A lovely construction company sign upon entering

At first glance signage was not as visible, however after driving around and getting more familiar there is signage but room for improvement

Directional signage was needed such as how to get to the Library, Community Centre & Post Office

Signage to entrance of the park area could be improved

Entrance Signs



We would have appreciated the green Arden sign to be out on Highway #7. Several didn't see the decorative hamlet sign. Hwy #7 would attract more potential tourists.



Many independent commercial signs.



After our 5 minute drive through we took time to record our first impressions.



Infrastructure

- **Re: Most appealing/infrastructure**
- The rolling terrain and lake were most appealing along with some artist's home/business.
- The Post Office, Legion, Community Centre, Library, presented a strong infrastructure for the hamlet.
- The central parkette on the water was very appealing
- Some sidewalks were new and some needed more work
- The street signage appears to be new but directional signage is needed.
- The wonderful old stone church needs a creative solution to a difficult situation.
- **Re: Least visually appealing/ infrastructure**
- Dead flowers in tubs entering from the south and an old unpainted building
- Too many scattered individual business signs –looked cluttered
- Like all small communities a good can of paint would help
- The park entrance was very confusing
- Attention to the picnic tables and washrooms was needed in the park

Tourism/Attractions

- Very few noticeable attractions, some public areas near water and a sandy beach
- Interesting array of artists' signage. Certainly would be worthwhile checking out the artists in the area.
- It appears that the local artists attract tourists and as such they have appeared to have brought much to the community. We believe there is an annual artisan festival that could be better marketed.
- The Climate Change Bucket List was very interesting and could again become a focal point/tourist area more than it is.
- We were informed and believe that if we had visited in the summer when the artists and cottagers were around the village may have been more active.



Festivals and Events

- Park area could be used for large festivities
- Community not known for events or festivals
- Only some events held in the community centre
- We learned about
 - senior choir,
 - Ardenaires
 - artist days
 - ranch for riding
 - kids camps
- Need to develop advertizing outside of the community.
- No information on a web site for any of the above

Environmental Sustainability

- Nice arrangement on bucket fence – concerning the environment - Suggestions could be left in the mail box
- Did not see recycling bins



Welcoming Community

As for welcoming newcomers or tourists, this could be improved

- From a business perspective there may be potential for a café, tourist information and/or a small coffee shop/store
- As tourist and potential newcomers the Post Office provide us with information
- Re: legal, immigration /housing/ translation services. There is really no real capacity for this
- Newcomers could use the community centre
- No job services ...no schools

Using Our Senses

- Fresh air
- Beautiful clean lake
- Artists' storefronts visually appealing
- Washrooms and picnic tables in the park could have been cleaner and in better repair

Information from Residents

The residents that we met at the Legion, Post Office and the Community Centre were extremely helpful and were very aware of what was happening in their community

Some of the information we learned -

- The community is eager to restore the old church but the costs is proving to to be challenging.
- Need a store ...Legion may take over a part of that role
- Town is empty when the cottage people leave
- The residents we met were very knowledgeable about what the community had to offer and the history.
- The impression was that all members of this community are working toward a better Arden
- They were happy to live there.

Friendly Residents of Arden



The Most Outstanding Features of Arden

- 'Bucket List' Fence
- Artist Community
- Lake
- Parkette and pond
- Community Centre/Library/Post Office/Legion
- Stone Church

Positive Things About Arden

- Friendly
- Clean
- Environmental awareness
- Two camps for children
- Community focused Post Office
- Legion
- Community Centre
- Physical layout/structure of town is very charming

Biggest Challenges Facing Tourism in Arden

- **Lack of signage/information to direct tourists to community, artists and businesses**
- **Lack of marketing/promotion/advertising of community, artists and businesses**
- **Socio-economic disparities**
- **There appears to be some lack of interest in the central core**
 - **Vacancies in the square**
 - **Buildings in disrepair**
- **Lack of shopping opportunities for necessities**
- **Festivals and Events do not appear to be a community focus**

This building caught our attention and were very please to hear the history and see the prints for sell at the Post Office.



Examples of Commercial & Informational signage.



Six potential opportunities available to Arden

1. Post Office

- Tourist information centre with a permanent kiosk outside

2. Streetscaping & Beautification

- Develop incentive program for beautification while maintaining architectural integrity of the community

3. Park

- A more formalized entrance
- Potential gathering place for festivals, events and family reunions
- Improve park facilities – washroom, tables, tennis courts

Six potential opportunities available to Arden

4. Partnering Opportunities

- Work with neighboring hamlets & villages for events and festivals
- Partner with Queensborough to find ways to develop incentive programs to beautify our communities

5. Marketing

- Create signage at main entrances that will encourage -
 - a) wayfinding to parks, churches, trails, legion, library, community centre
 - b) consolidate commercial signage
 - c) Target Markets – look to highway #7, Ottawa, parents, parents of camp kids

6 Website

- Promotion of community, history, events, businesses, business opportunities i.e store/cafe, B&B, corner store and artisans

Thank You
From
Your First Impressions Partner

