

LEGIBILITY STUDY • PUBLIC SPACE • PUBLIC LIFE

BRIGHTON & HOVE

CLIENT

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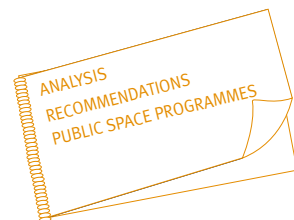
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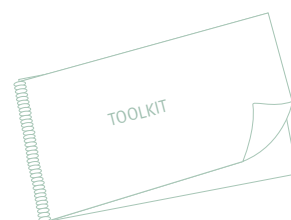
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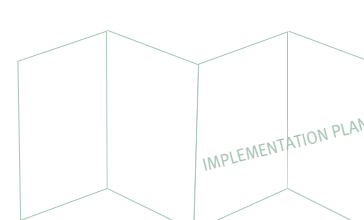
PART 01



PART 01



PART 01



GEHL Architects have been the responsible consultants for the development of Part 01.
Landscape Projects have been responsible for delivery of Part 02 and 03.

FOREWORD

“We are lucky to live in such a special city. Our diverse blend of residents, our outstanding attractions, our world famous cultural heritage and our magnificent location all combine to make Brighton & Hove such a unique place.

Sometimes however, our streets and public spaces do not do our city justice. Over the last few decades the balance of street design has automatically prioritised vehicles, even in areas primarily used by pedestrians. Streets are cluttered, there are few places to rest and enjoy being in the city, and our historic buildings are hidden away behind unnecessary road signs and crash barriers.

The City Council wants to redress this imbalance by aiming for a high quality city environment, built around a human scale, that accommodates the needs of everyone.

With this in mind, I am delighted to be able to introduce this new study, Public Space Public Life, which has been commissioned from two of the world’s leading experts in urban design, Gehl Architects and Landscape Projects. This study, and the information it contains, sets out an objective assessment of public space in our city today, and describes its future potential.

This fresh and objective view of the city presents a great opportunity to change our existing approach and realise the opportunities we have.

Our streets should be places for people to meet, spend time and enjoy all that our wonderful city has to offer. They should enable us and our visitors to move safely, quickly and easily around the city.

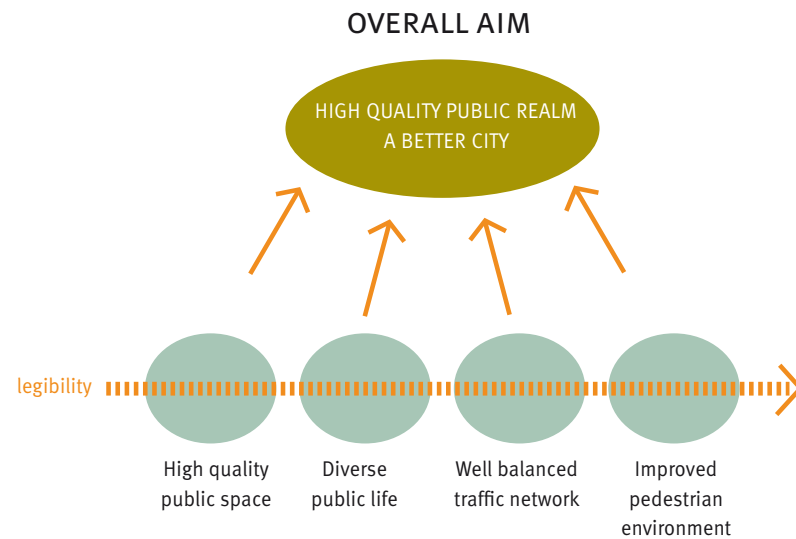
I see this document as a turning point in our city’s history. The recommendations in this report are

not a “quick fix” – they are a vision to be realised over many years. The vision will require long-term support. Copenhagen’s programme of urban space improvement was achieved over forty years of steady progress. However, as New Road has shown, each step we take can bring significant benefits.

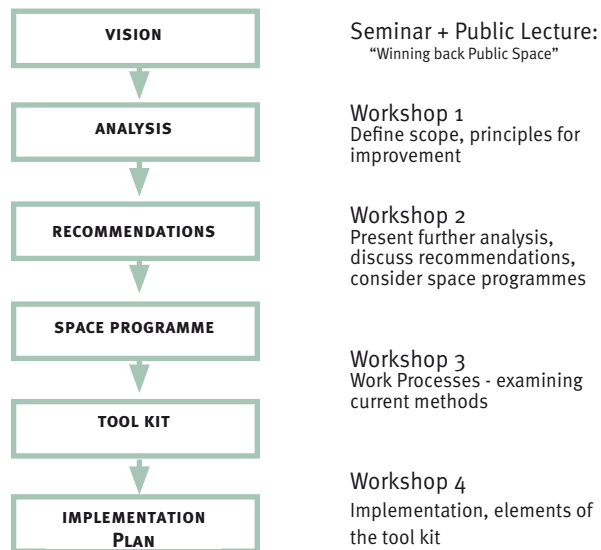
The Council will shortly publish its response to the study, setting out how we want to take forward this vision for the city’s public space and identifying some of the next steps on our journey. I hope that everyone in the city will join me in welcoming this vital report, and in making a long-term commitment to the implementation of its vision”.



Geoffrey Theobald
Chairman of Brighton & Hove
City Council Environment Committee
September 2007



PROCESS



PROCESS - HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

A better city for people

The overall aim

There is more focus than ever before on applying the human perspective to city planning. Cities all over the world are rediscovering their public spaces along with an awareness of the need for dignified, high-quality city environments.

The City Council has initiated this study to improve the legibility of Brighton & Hove. Improving people's sense of orientation and understanding of their environment starts with improving the public realm.

The overall goal is not only to improve the legibility, but also the quality of the public realm and the "liveability" of Brighton & Hove in general. The aim is to create a better city for people. The city should be easy to navigate and move around in; inviting and attractive. The city's public spaces should be places where people want to enjoy the day to day activities of everyday life.

Process

The study draws on extensive research and analyses to make recommendations for improving the city's network of streets and spaces. The study reflects local knowledge and experience as well as national and international best practice.

PUBLIC LIFE AND PUBLIC SPACE

Reasons for studying public life in cities

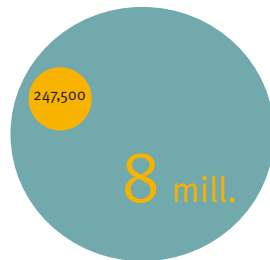
Need for people data

As most cities have excellent statistics on traffic flows and parking patterns, issues relating to traffic and parking are generally well represented in planning processes. Very few cities however, have data on how people use the city as pedestrians!

This study assesses the quality of the city as seen from a pedestrian perspective to provide insight into how the city's public spaces actually function.

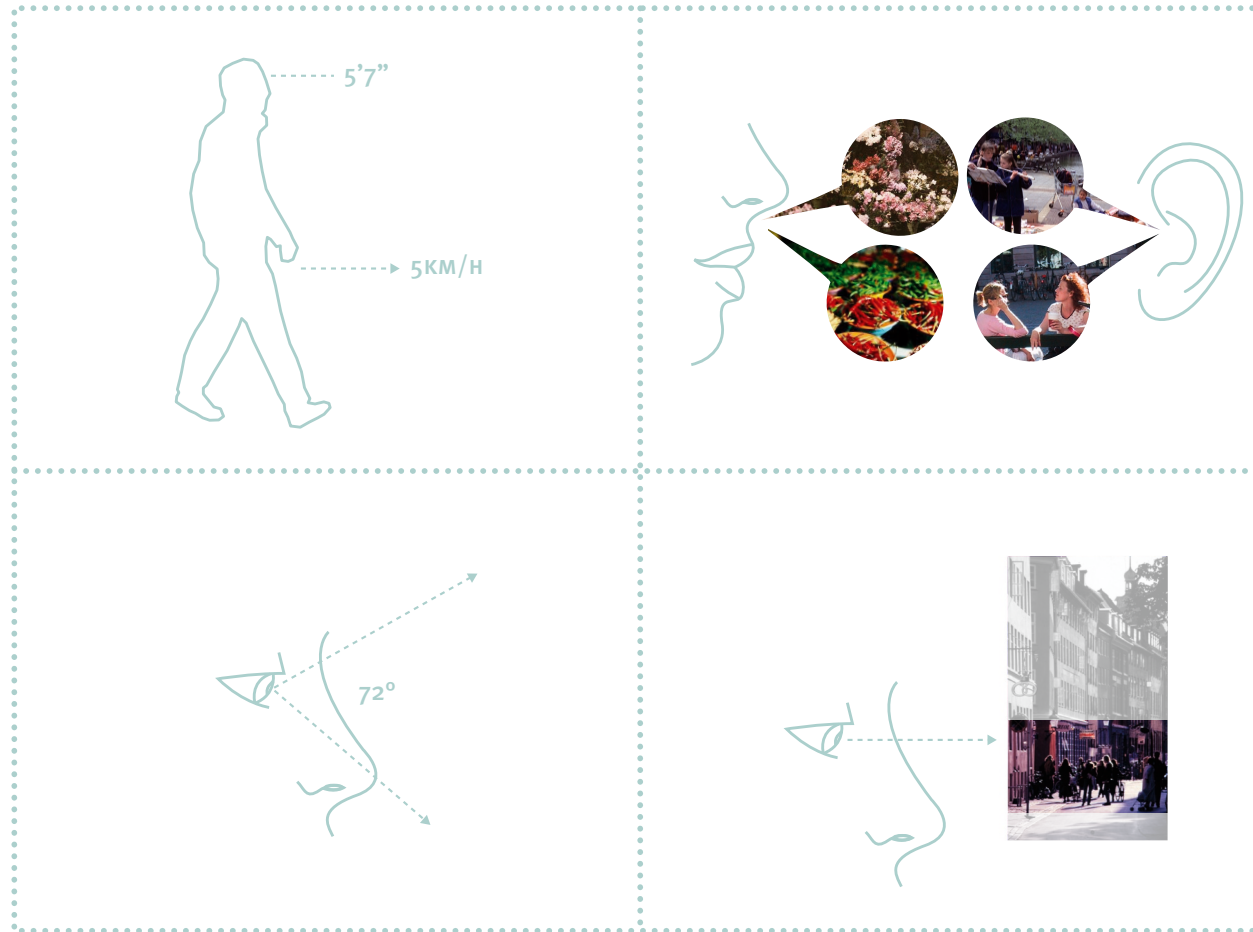
Special people conditions

Brighton & Hove has a population of approximately 250,000 and welcomes more than 8 million visitors each year. The high number of people using the city makes it even more important to understand pedestrian activity and ensure pedestrian needs are reflected in future strategies and developments impacting on the public realm.



Brighton & Hove: 8 million visitors and 247,500 inhabitants!





IDEOLOGY

The human body is the basis

Studying the city at human scale

The study aims to collect information regarding public space quality, analyse Brighton & Hove at “eye level” and make this information easily accessible to residents, politicians, city planners, developers, landowners, business associations and other groups who work to improve the quality of the city. The study will help target and measure the impact of future improvements, identify changes in the way people use areas and increase general public awareness of the quality of the public realm.

The qualitative analysis of public space in this study has been undertaken from the pedestrian perspective.

On average, people walk at a pace of 5 kilometres per hour. We experience the city through delicate senses. We focus on surroundings viewed at an angle of 72 degrees from eye level. When walking through a city it will therefore be things at ground floor – or eye level - which are most likely to hold our attention. These things are crucial to the legibility of the city as well as to our overall impression of city quality.

START WITH THE VISIONS FOR PUBLIC LIFE

Activities in cities

To understand Urban Quality, we need to understand the relationship between cities and people.

The activities taking place in a city can be divided into 3 categories:

- NECESSARY ACTIVITIES
- OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES
- SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

When urban quality is poor, the number of social or optional (pleasure) activities are low. People limit the things they do in the city to necessary activities, such as going to work or shopping. Monitoring the number of optional and social activities taking place is a good way of assessing the urban quality of an area.

Connections between activities and quality

When urban quality is high, one will find necessary activities taking place alongside a multitude of optional and social activities. In Brighton & Hove the vision is to create a high quality environment which invites people to take part in optional and social activities. It is not only the number of people in the city which is important, but also the length of time they spend there.

A good city can be compared to a good party - people stay for much longer than they planned if they are enjoying themselves!



NECESSARY ACTIVITIES

The things that have to be done:

Going to school, waiting for the bus, shopping and going to work. These activities occur regardless of the quality of the physical environment because people are compelled to carry them out.

A Good City provides good conditions for the many necessary activities and will retain and strengthen these activities over time.



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES (URBAN RECREATION)

Activities people are tempted to do when climatic conditions, surroundings and the place are generally inviting and attractive. These activities are especially sensitive to quality. They only occur when quality is high.

A Good City is characterized by a multitude of optional activities. People come to town, find the places attractive and stay for a longer time. A great, attractive city can always be recognised by the fact that many people choose to spend time in its public spaces.

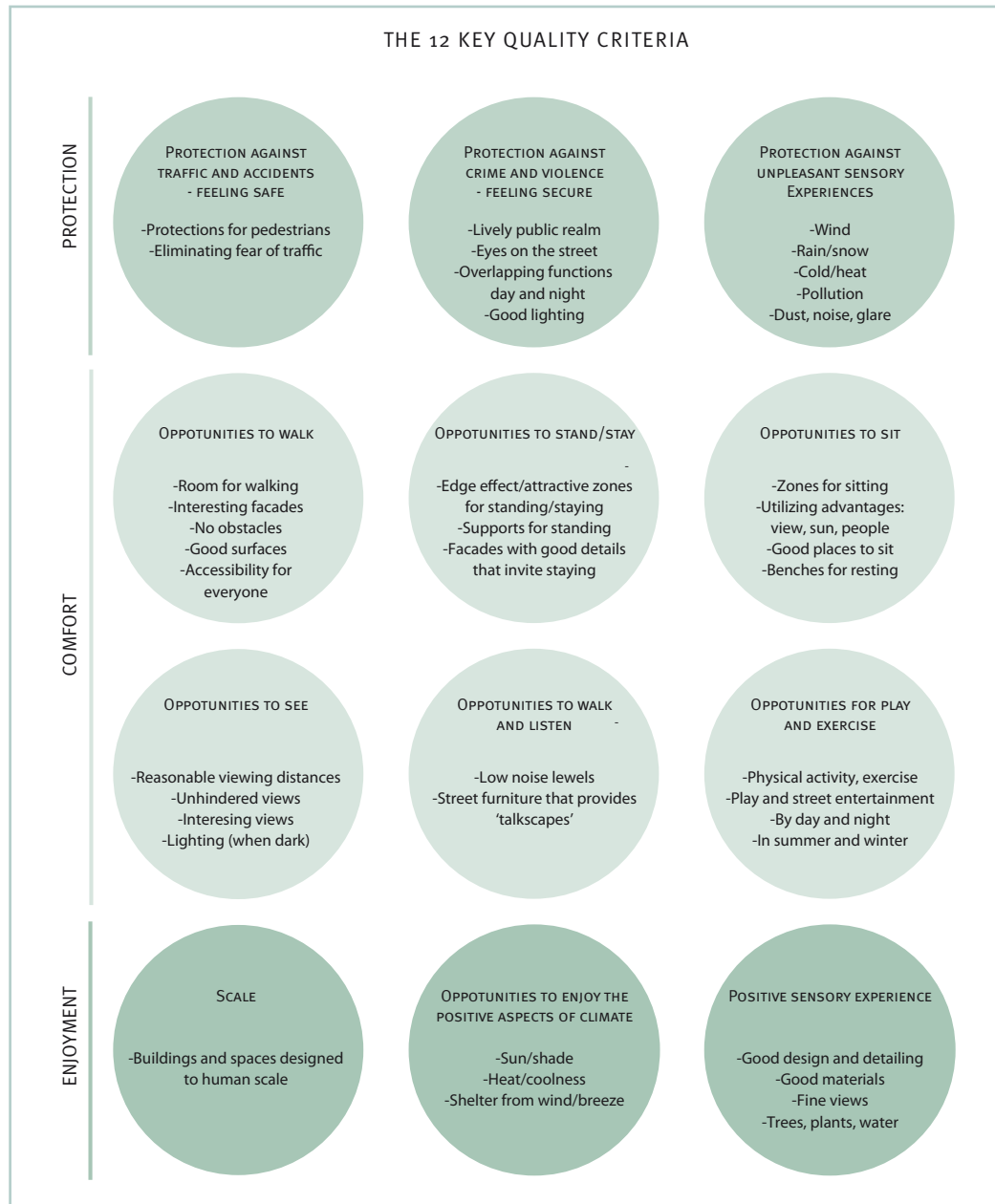


SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

These activities occur whenever people move about in the same spaces. Watching, listening, interacting with other people, passive and active participation.

A Good City offers a wide range of necessary as well as attractive optional activities, and because many people use the city, there are many people to meet, watch and speak to. The city becomes a lively and wonderful city. A people city.

OPTIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES
ARE KEY TO CITY LIFE QUALITY



as published in "New City Life", Gehl, Gemzøe, Kirknæs and Søndergaard, The Danish Architectural Press, 2006

THE 12 QUALITY CRITERIA

A good design checklist

Attractive public spaces provide room for optional and social activities. How is it possible to transform the vision of an attractive public realm into actual physical spaces?

Analyses of existing well functioning public spaces throughout the world shows that they share common characteristics. Gehl Architects have categorised and summarised these characteristics in the '12 quality criteria' on this page.

Public spaces must be inviting, attractive, and provide room for recreation, pleasure, exercise, play etc. They must be able to attract a broad variety of people, so that children, teenagers, adults, the elderly and people with special needs all feel welcome.

If public spaces are very attractive one can, in fine weather, expect necessary, optional and social activities to take place.

Good public spaces reflect the majority, if not all of the 12 quality criteria. As such the list of criteria provides a good design checklist.

This study uses the 12 quality criteria in the analysis, recommendation and space programme chapters.

RECONQUER BRIGHTON AND HOVE

Two directions in city planning

Despite the renewed interest in the human dimension, there still exist two opposite approaches to city planning. In the invaded cities, walking and public life is disappearing as vehicular traffic reigns supreme. People move in isolated climates from garages to private cars to parking structures. In the abandoned cities, walking and public life have become completely phased out. Many cities in North America suffer from this approach.

In other cities, the reconquered cities, public life is carefully supported by the introduction of good pedestrian environments. These supplement the private life spheres with well-functioning public domains which invite people to walk more and stay longer in the public realm.

Reconquering the city

Throughout the world, people respond eagerly and enthusiastically to new opportunities for participating in pleasure activities in public spaces. This indicates that the walking environments and other types of public spaces where people can meet are important assets in present day society. In a world being steadily privatised public spaces are gaining in importance.

The analyses in this study show that Brighton & Hove is currently dominated by vehicular traffic. Therefore the goal is to reclaim the public spaces in the city and create a better balance between traffic modes.



THE ABANDONED CITY
Spokane, Washington, USA



THE INVADED CITY
Westport, Ireland



THE RECONQUERED CITY ?
Brighton & Hove

The chance and potential is here, but will it be explored?
What are the dreams of the future?
How can Brighton and Hove become a high quality city that puts people first?

EXEMPLARY STRATEGIES TO RECONQUER OUR CITIES

UNIFIED POLICY FOR QUALITY AND VITALITY IN CITY STREETS.
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Melbourne is Australia's second largest city. Its history, street pattern and mix of high and low buildings in the city centre are reminiscent of many other large cities. However, where other cities have surrendered their streets to the automobile and developed indoor shopping malls, Melbourne decided to keep its streets as the city's most important public spaces. The city undertook extensive renovation of pavements and street furniture, and reinforced its status as a green city. Thus Melbourne has ensured that its streets invite people to walk.



RENOVATION OF PUBLIC SPACE AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT
Strasbourg, France

In only a decade (starting in 1990) Strasbourg carried out an extensive urban renewal project. The conditions for city life, cyclists and public transport have been improved dramatically, while car traffic has been markedly reduced. A linear public space policy introduced an elegant new tram line, which inspired the renovation of squares and streets along its route. Constructing the line paved the way for public space improvements both in the centre and on the outskirts of the city.



VISIONARY THINKING AND PIONEERING PUBLIC SPACE POLICY.
Barcelona, Spain

For the past two decades, Barcelona has been the most important source of inspiration for architects, landscape architects, urban planners and politicians. Barcelona has been both radical and imaginative in implementing its public space policy. Nowhere else in the world can the viewer see so many different examples of new parks and squares with so much exuberance and experimentation in their design.



RECONQUER BRIGHTON AND HOVE

The qualities of a good city

In the future Brighton & Hove should be able to include the following qualities as a part of its many attractions :

A GOOD CITY TO WALK IN AND TO STAY IN

- Room to walk with ease and comfort
- Built environment that accentuates positive aspects of climate
- Pleasant facades at street level to stroll alongside
- Good conditions for people with special needs
- Clear structure in the pedestrian system
- Well designed footpath with few interruptions
- Few and short waiting times at intersections
- Widespread seating possibilities

A GOOD CITY FOR SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES

- Space for cultural activities and communication
- Space for spontaneous activities
- Democratic public spaces for all

A GOOD CITY FOR TALKING, AND EXPERIENCING

- Low level of noise and few disturbances (in certain city areas)
- Intimate public spaces
- Fine views and good details

A LIVELY, DIVERSE AND SAFE CITY TO MOVE AROUND IN

- A wide variety of uses throughout the day/week/year
- 'Many eyes on the street' conveying a sense of safety and security
- Safe places and streets both day and night.

THE COPENHAGEN DEVELOPMENT

Copenhagen as a case study

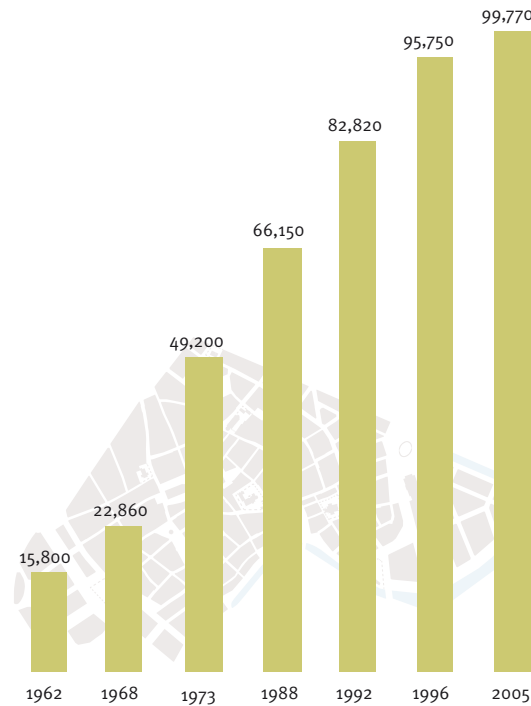
This section describes the developments in Copenhagen city centre, where for 40 years a ‘step by step’ policy has sought to turn a car-oriented city into a people-oriented one. The catalyst for this development was strong public demand at a time when fuel prices and taxes on private cars were rising.

Developments have included stopping through traffic, reducing the number of car parking spaces in the city centre and increasing the amount of space set aside for pedestrian activities. Since 1962, when the first pedestrian scheme was introduced, space allocated to car free streets and squares has risen from 15,000 m² to 100,000 m².

These physical changes have been the background for a dramatic increase in the number of people using and enjoying the city.

In Copenhagen the benefits of these changes have been monitored over three decades.

THE GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT OF PEDESTRIAN AREAS IN THE HEART OF COPENHAGEN FROM 1962-2005.



The graph shows the development of pedestrian areas in the parts of the inner city where studies have been conducted from 1962-2005. The numbers indicate m²



First pedestrian promenade in 1962: 15,800 m².



By 1973, the network of pedestrian streets connected the most important locations in the city centre: 49,200 m².



The network of car-free streets and squares in 2005: 99,770 m².

WHAT BRIGHTON CAN LEARN FROM COPENHAGEN

FIRST PEDESTRIANISED STREET

In 1963 Strøget was the first street in Copenhagen to be converted to a pedestrianised street.

> 1960 Strøget was invaded by cars. City life was forced onto narrow pavements with minimal pedestrian activities.

>> Today Strøget is a mixed recreational, and one of the most popular streets in Copenhagen.



FIRST SHARED SURFACE

Strædet marked the introduction of a new type of city street in Copenhagen.

> Only 8-11 metres wide this street used to carry quite heavy traffic, including several bus lines.

>> In 1989, it was experimentally reclassified as a shared street (a street where pedestrians and bicycles have priority, but where cars may enter at low speed).



FROM CAR PARK TO RECREATIONAL SQUARE

In 1954 these two squares were one big parking space.

> The conversion to recreational squares was a two stage process. In 1962 the first square was transformed.

>> In 1992 the other square followed. Today the squares are completely free of cars



No masterplan

The interesting part of the Copenhagen story is that the development in the inner city was not based on one overall master plan. The development of the public spaces was a slow process that took place over several decades - but with a clear vision and enthusiastic city architects at the helm.

Incremental change

The first lesson to be learned is that this sort of development takes time. It is therefore crucial to develop a set of tools and a well functioning process on how the ideas are taken from the vision, over the implementation to maintenance.

- Workshop 1
Define scope, principles for improvement

VISIONS FORMULATED DURING WORKSHOPS WITH THE CITY OF BRIGHTON & HOVE.
THESE VISIONS ARE THE OVERALL GOALS OF THIS STUDY.

- Process of creating **a better city** and improving urban living
- Develop **a new culture** of political understanding incorporating **quality of public space** / urban realm + public life
- Embrace **diversity** - of the city's people as well as its destinations
- Create an inclusive **place for all**, residents and visitors alike

- Analysis introduction

analysis

city scale & local scale



ANALYSIS INTRODUCTION

Similar problems on all scales

A city dominated by traffic

The analysis is focused on the way people, both residents and visitors, spend their time in and move around Brighton & Hove. The findings show that Brighton & Hove experiences similar problems at local, district and city scale caused by vehicular traffic overpowering streets and neighbourhoods. Similarly, a lack of consistency and quality of streets and spaces is a persistent problem at both city and local scale.

How to read the analysis

The analysis begins on the wider city scale and investigates the relationship between the core city centre and its surroundings. The City scale analysis has three focal themes - Landscape, Districts and Movement.

The second part of the analysis begins to focus on the inner city and is therefore called Local scale. The focal themes in this part of the analysis are Movement and Spaces.

The last pages of the analysis summarise Brighton & Hove's current problems. This section is followed by recommendations aimed at transforming Brighton & Hove.

LANDSCAPE - DISTRICTS

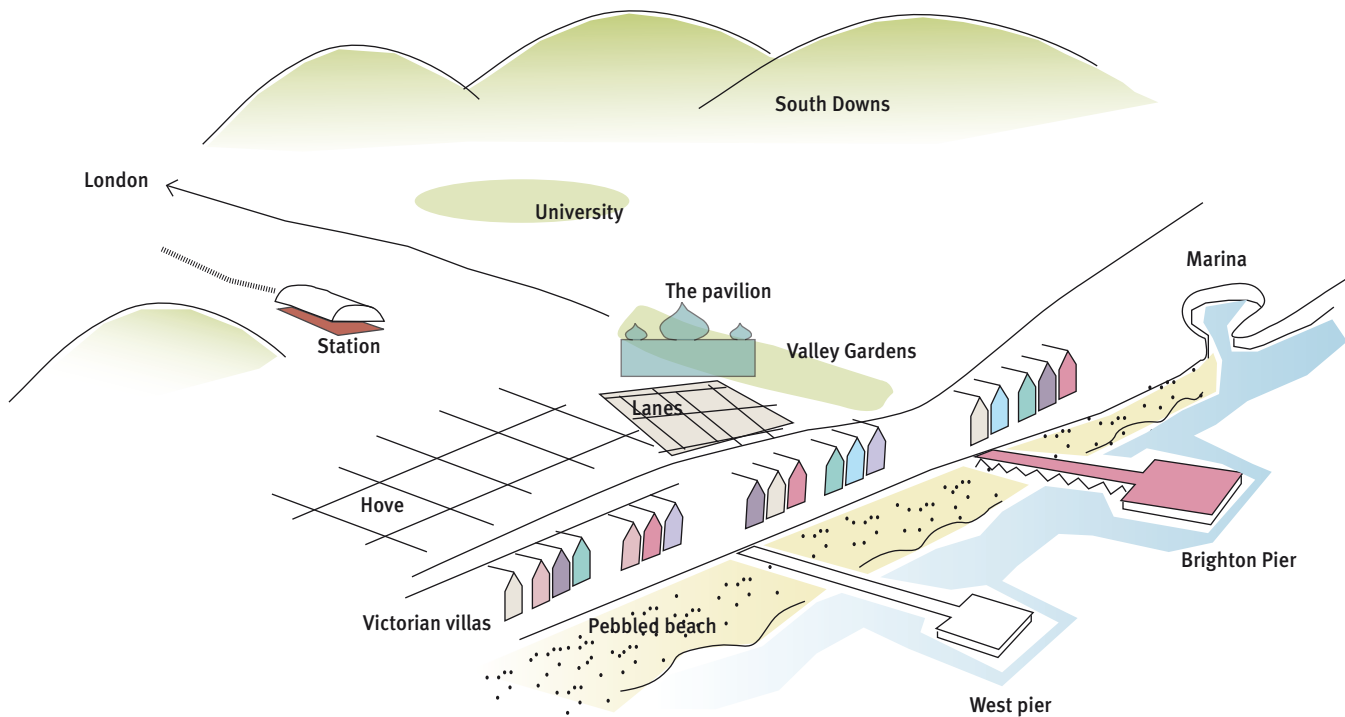


MOVEMENT



SPACES





ANALYSIS INTRODUCTION

The basic mental map

The natural elements, the built environment, the streets, squares and open spaces all help to define and make cities legible. The organisation of these elements contribute to a “mental map” of the area that each person relies on to find their way around the city.

Whilst local inhabitants generally already have a good knowledge of their city, their mental map can be enhanced by improving the city’s urban form and creating greater variety and character. Visitors approach cities with definite expectations of attractions. These ideas will be formed from social experience and/or information services and will produce images of urban areas.

The basic visitor mental map of Brighton & Hove is strongly related to the seafront, the Pavilion Estate and the narrow streets in the inner city. The core of Brighton city centre is strongly represented on people’s mental map but for many visitors, Hove centre is less clear.

The need for a clearer mental map

The aim is to strengthen the mental map by creating distinct destinations and clarifying routes. Both Brighton and Hove should be represented on the mental map in the future. New attractive destinations should be introduced, leaving a picture of a vivid public realm in the minds of both locals and visitors.

- Development in relation to topography
- Open space