Economic Benefits of Good Walking Environments

A report to Transport for London from the Central London Partnership

Consultant: Llewelyn-Davies, March 2003

In January 2003, Central London Partnership (CLP) commissioned consultants Llewelyn-Davies to undertake a short study to examine and demonstrate the economic benefits of walking and public realm improvements for businesses in London. The study is focused on the views of the business community but gives consideration to the range of benefits for all.

Central London Partnership

Transport for London

Llewelyn-Davies

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The Study Brief

The recent report into walking by the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee (2001) was prompted by concerns about the decline in the walking and public realm environment. The Committee concluded that the reasons for this decline were not hard to discern and stated that:

"In contrast to the changes made to every town and city to ease motor transport, walking has been made ever more unpleasant."

In response to these concerns, and following on from earlier work by Transport for London (2002), Central London Partnership (CLP) commissioned consultants Llewelyn-Davies to undertake a study to examine and demonstrate the economic benefits of walking and public realm improvements in London. The study aims to provide an improved evidence base for investment in the pedestrian environment, paying particular attention to *the views of the business community,* but also considering the range of economic benefits for all. The research, based on a series of attitudinal interviews with key landowners, developers, retailers, the tourist industry and other commercial interests – including Grosvenor, British Land, Argent, Burford, Boots The Chemist, Canary Wharf Group, BA London Eye, Heals and the Society of London Theatre - highlights how good environments for walking, and quality in the public realm, are associated with commercial benefit for many businesses in London.

The Walking Environment and City Competitiveness

Improved city competitiveness is a much sought after property of most economies. As cities increasingly engage in competition with each other at different levels, the determinants of competitive advantage are coming under intense scrutiny. The recent ESRC Cities programme[1] considers this issue of competitiveness, and has started to provide useful outputs in terms of defining what is meant by improved competitiveness. Llewelyn-Davies and The Bartlett School of Planning, UCL (2003) have recently considered the issue of transport investment and it's role in promoting city competitiveness[2]. One of the key themes in the debate is whether competitiveness is an attribute of companies (based on the thoughts of Krugman, 1996) rather than cities, regions, countries or other geographical areas (Porter, 1996 and 1998).

Begg (1999) brings together a number of these issues, and provides a framework for considering the various influences on urban economic performance. The range of potential factors in promoting city competitiveness is clearly very wide. The relevance for this report is that a high quality pedestrian environment and

1 See www.esrc.ac.uk
2 See Llewelyn-Davies and UCL, for DfT (2003) Transport and City Competitiveness

public realm is considered to play one part in providing for the ‘right business environment’.

Recent Public Realm Improvements in London

Parts of central London have seen significant improvements in the quality of public spaces in recent years. But, improvements are patchy and many places remain difficult or unpleasant for those on foot. People's tolerance of poor or overcrowded environments like Oxford Street or Bishopsgate will inevitably be reduced by the emergence of alternative locations. Improvement of the quality and "walkability" of central London and other established centres can no longer be seen as a luxury, it is vital to their continued competitiveness and economic success. Excellence in pedestrian planning and urban design is required.

Critically, our view of walking in this study is all-embracing, reflecting much of the literature in this field:

“The term ‘pedestrian activity’ can be extended to include stopping, standing, looking, waiting, sitting, talking, playing, etc. as well as denoting a means of getting from A to B.” (LPAC, 1996)

“Necessary journeys are influenced only slightly by the physical framework, but circulation, exchange and recreation activities only occur where urban design choices support public space and facilitate social interaction.” (Gehl, 1971)

Key Study Findings

The importance of high quality public spaces is strongly perceived by the business community, yet there is little direct empirical evidence on this topic. A recent report by Transport for London stated that:

“On balance, schemes which support pedestrian improvements in town and city centres generate value for retail businesses. Following a possible ‘adjustment period’ of up to 12 months following any pedestrian schemes, there is an upturn in turnover and town centre vitality.” (TfL, 2002)

This study builds on the TfL research, but importantly does not attempt to measure how much extra business is generated by improvements to the public realm. Such direct relationships are impossible to measure in a robust manner. Instead, the research takes an attitudinal and qualitative approach, exploring the issue of pedestrian and public realm improvements and economic benefit through a series of interviews with key business interests. Such viewpoints are clearly more important, in a broader sense, to ensure that the places where people shop and do business, are also places where people want to be.

A number of key issues arise from the interviews with landowners, developers and retailers and other commercial interests. These are outlined below; using actual quotes from the discussions themselves:

1. Landowners, developers and businesses clearly perceive the importance of streetscape in maintaining the value of their assets.

The appeal of the street environment is described as having a critical importance in attracting tenants, customers and retaining the image of businesses in general. For example:

"The streetscape is very important … we speak of the value that this adds to property."

"Given that people are more contented in a high quality environment, it makes sense to ensure that developments insist on a high quality environment."

Whilst streetscape quality was seen as necessary for landowners, it was not sufficient by itself to attract and retain tenants. Proximity to other businesses and services were also viewed as important. Critically, a range of factors are important to business success, and quality in the pedestrian environment is one of these.

2. The existing or potential streetscape is an inherent part of a tenants' decision to locate to an area and is an important facet of continued economic success.

It is difficult to isolate quantitiative evidence of direct economic benefit, however, evidence from our case studies provides a number of qualitative findings. For example, rents in one of Belgravia's Squares have increased following re-landscaping, to reflect the fact that the area is now more attractive for tenants. The upgrading of Motcomb Street has contributed to the ability to attract Waitrose in as a new anchor store. The importance of the streetscape can also be evidenced by the impact where the streetscape is poor. Oxford Street offices command a lower rent than the surrounding areas due to the concentration of traffic. Again, from one of the interviews:

"There is a feeling that there has been an improvement following some of the investments … (with) the re-landscaping of Orange Square, rents have been increased without any loss of tenants. Companies are willing to pay more to remain in an area that has a high quality streetscape or has received funding to enhance the quality."

3. An ongoing failure to improve the quality of the environment may lead to developers and businesses reconsidering their investment.

A number of the interviews produced evidence of businesses considering relocation, in part due to the poor quality of their local environment. For example, in one of the shopping streets in Belgravia, tenants on the side of the road where the footway is asphalted compare their situation unfavourably with the tenants on the other side, which is paved with York Stone, and are demanding repaving.

"We have considered disinvesting from areas where the streetscape is poor."

"Where the streetscape is having a detrimental effect on customers, business may refuse to locate there or consider their position … if the streetscape is bad then business will perform badly and so [companies] will relocate."

4. Unless an attractive retail and business environment is provided for consumers and developers, central London will become increasingly uncompetitive compared with other centres and out-of-town malls.

The poor quality of streets was seen as critical in the declining popularity of key areas in central London, for example Oxford Street, in favour of out of town malls. The streetscape in Oxford Street was perceived as undermining the aspiration of the district to remain London's premier retail area. This concern was reported as leading to declining capital values.

The quality of the streetscape was reported as being constantly brought up in discussions with actual or potential tenants. The value of quality in the public realm is best demonstrated by comparisons made by the interviewees in Canary Wharf and the City. An example was given of one tenant re-organising their offices as they found it very difficult to find volunteers to relocate to the City. Another interviewee contrasted their Canary Wharf offices as benefiting from an open, clean and well-maintained (district), with wide footways and not too close to cars, compared with their offices in 'grubby' Blackfriars.

"A high quality streetscape and on-going improvement to address areas adds to the value of a property and protects the value of your asset … our investment is regarded as essential in supporting the positioning of Broadgate as the 'Capital of the City'. It is a common sense approach, that if you don't improve the environment of a £26 billion asset, it may devalue over time."

"We would only locate in the very best environment we can find."

The environment is therefore very important. The Society of London Theatre (SOLT) feels that committed theatre patrons are still visiting central London "*despite the environment*." However, SOLT is concerned that visitor loyalty cannot be guaranteed if things do not improve. They are particularly concerned that the poor streetscape will counteract attempts to secure new audiences.

5. Businesses are willing to invest large sums in improvements, especially where they have control over, or confidence in, the delivery mechanisms.

The willingness of the private sector to invest in public realm improvements is a critical point, and a positive note for the future funding of high quality walking environments in London. Many businesses see this investment choice as strong business sense, critical to their future business success, and not altruistically motivated. For example, Grosvenor has an ongoing programme of improvements, including £250,000 spent on repaving and lighting improvements along Motcomb Street, and wider traffic calming and landscape enhancements. Boots The Chemist also funds 130 town centre development schemes across the UK. These concentrate on five or six key policy areas to improve the retail environment for their outlets and the towns they are located in. One of the key policy areas is the 'environment', which incorporates the public realm and streetscape.

One of our interviewees stated that:

"They always offer to contribute to public realm improvements as part of seeking planning permission. The extent of our final contribution is very dependent on the capacity of the relevant local authority to deliver streetscape improvements."

"However, there is a concern that business investment should not replace the statutory duties of and funding from local authorities."

Businesses are keen to note that they are not charitable organisations and will only contribute where it is appropriate and where there is benefit to their investment. There is a concern that they do not contribute too much, too often, especially in the case of essential streetworks, which are perceived as the responsibility of the local authority. Partnership funding, using public and private investment, offers the best way forward for many public realm improvements. The Business Improvement District (BID) model, as piloted in London through the Circle Initiative[3], is a good working example of such an arrangement.

6. High levels of maintenance and revenue funding are as important as the quality of the initial design.

A key issue arising from the business interviews is that the maintenance of the public realm does not receive adequate funding. For example:

"Sometimes the investment goes in, and the scheme looks good initially, but after a few months, things decline, and the area is not maintained."

"We contributed financially - in the region of £5,000-£10,000 - and were involved in consultation – but were disappointed with the outcome, which is not felt to reflect the plans."

The Need for Future Investment

The vast majority of our survey respondents perceived the walking environment and public realm as important to their business image and economic success. Landowners, such as Grosvenor and British Land, and retailers such as Heals are, however, at times disappointed with the standard of public realm schemes when implemented.

[3] For more information, see www.c-london.co.uk

The inescapable conclusion from the survey and case study analysis in this research study is therefore that London's streetscape, despite a number of best practice examples in pedestrian and public realm planning, is often of poor or 'tired' quality. This is particularly so in the case of streets and spaces for which local authorities are responsible, where the resources for improvements and maintenance may not be available. It is much less the case where private sector interests and money have been deployed, as in 'privately owned public spaces', such as Broadgate and Canary Wharf. Critically, business interests are very interested in the quality of their local environment and in funding public realm improvements.

The quality of the streetscape is judged not purely on the quality of the landscaping; the materials used, the design, the street furniture, etc. The level of maintenance is also fundamental. We have found no evidence that the poor quality of many public streets is the result of owners and tenants of businesses fronting those streets taking no interest in, or not caring about, the effect of this on their business. Not only is the quality of streetscape perceived and well understood, there is a willingness to contribute to improvements, capital and revenue, in some cases involving very substantial sums of money.

There is a substantial gap between the quality of public realm that businesses regard as important, and that currently provided by local authorities.

There is some scepticism on the part of land owners and occupiers about the ability of local authorities to deliver a high quality street environment. The survey indicates that this may be "holding back" private investment in, and contributions towards, public realm improvements that otherwise might be available. Some excellent, best practice pedestrian and public realm planning is being developed in London, witness:

"The experience of using the walkway to visit the area was described in the Evening Standard as extraordinary, with a 360-degree beauty and excitement (that) rivals Venice."

Strong business interest in the economic benefits of good walking environments provides a key opportunity to convert this occasional best practice in pedestrian planning into common practice in London.

"City walking is a key to urban quality, vitality and pleasure. The basis and beginning for everything. Vadare necesse est – walking is essential."

(Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzöe, 2001).

1. Introduction

1.1 Study Background

In January 2003, Central London Partnership (CLP)[4] commissioned consultants Llewelyn-Davies[5] to undertake a short study to examine and demonstrate the economic benefits of walking and public realm improvements for business in London. The study is focused on *the views of the business community* but gives consideration to the range of benefits for all. The study highlights how good environments for walking and quality in the public realm lead to commercial benefit for many businesses in London, and how the future competitiveness of London is associated with the quality of the walking environment.

Parts of central London have seen significant improvements in the quality of public spaces in recent years. For example, 30 years ago, the footways in Soho were typically blocked with parked cars, the mainline stations were drab and uninspiring, and one-way traffic schemes made crossing the road, at places like Piccadilly Circus and the Aldwych, almost impossible. Recently, we have seen improved urban spaces, best practice pedestrian planning examples such as the new pedestrian bridges over the River Thames, the provision of many improved road crossing facilities, new footways, effective parking controls, and area-wide improvements in place such as South Molton Street and Covent Garden.

But, such improvements are patchy and many places remain difficult or unpleasant for those on foot. In addition, standards of maintenance and cleanliness are no better and, at times, worse than in previous years. Another factor has changed radically in 30 years: the emergence of alternative places to shop and do business. People now have the choice to shop in purpose-built malls, like Bluewater and Brent Cross, or businesses can relocate to the outer fringes of London or to Canary Wharf.

People's tolerance of poor or overcrowded environments like Oxford Street or Bishopsgate will inevitably be reduced by the emergence of alternative locations. Improvement of the quality and "walkability" of central London and other established centres can no longer be seen as a luxury, it is vital to their continued competitiveness and economic success. Excellence in pedestrian planning and urban design is required.

The case for improving the conditions of walking has already been made strongly by CLP. One of the core objectives of the partnership is to improve movement and the environment in Central London. In support of this, CLP have produced a number of publications, including:

[4] For further information, see www.c-london.co.uk
[5] See www.ldavies.com

- An ‘Integrated Transport and Environment Strategy’ (CLP, 2001)
- ‘The Circle Initiative’ (CLP, 2001)
- ‘A Walking Strategy for Central London’ (CLP, 2002)
- ‘Encouraging Cycling in Central London’ (CLP, 2002)
- ‘An Action Plan for Central London’ (CLP, 2003)

The ‘Walking Strategy for Central London’ is particularly relevant to the issues in this study, with key objectives to:

- Make the experience of walking more convenient and easier
- Make walking more pleasant
- Make walking safer
- Create accessible public space that is socially inclusive with access for all
- Create an understanding that walking is good for business
- Increase the number of trips walked in central London, particularly for short journeys

The role of this research study is to add to the previous work that CLP has undertaken, starting from the premise that walking is critically important for London’s businesses. The study is focused particularly on establishing the economic value of walking in London, as perceived by the businesses and service providers involved in promoting greater economic success and competitiveness for London. The study aims to go beyond existing work by providing an empirical evidence base, developed using a series of in-depth interviews with businesses, which is then developed into case studies highlighting the economic value of walking and public realm improvements in London.

1.2 Structure of this Report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2: The walking environment and city competitiveness – an examination of the value of good walking environments and quality in the public realm to London’s future competitiveness.
- Section 3: Walking, definitions and trends - summarising previous work concerning walking and walkability, including seminal work from Gehl (1971 and 2000) and LPAC (1996), and concluding with an analysis of key walking trends in London.

- Section 4: Quantitative and qualitative analysis – results from telephone interviews with various stakeholders; including businesses, developers, landowners and tourist facilities.
- Section 5: Case studies – worked examples highlighting particular business experience of the economic benefits of walking and public realm improvements in London.
- Section 6 – Study conclusions.

The report is supported by 3 annexes, as outlined below:

- Annex 1: Acknowledgements
- Annex 2: Telephone survey template
- Annex 3: References

2. The Walking Environment and City Competitiveness

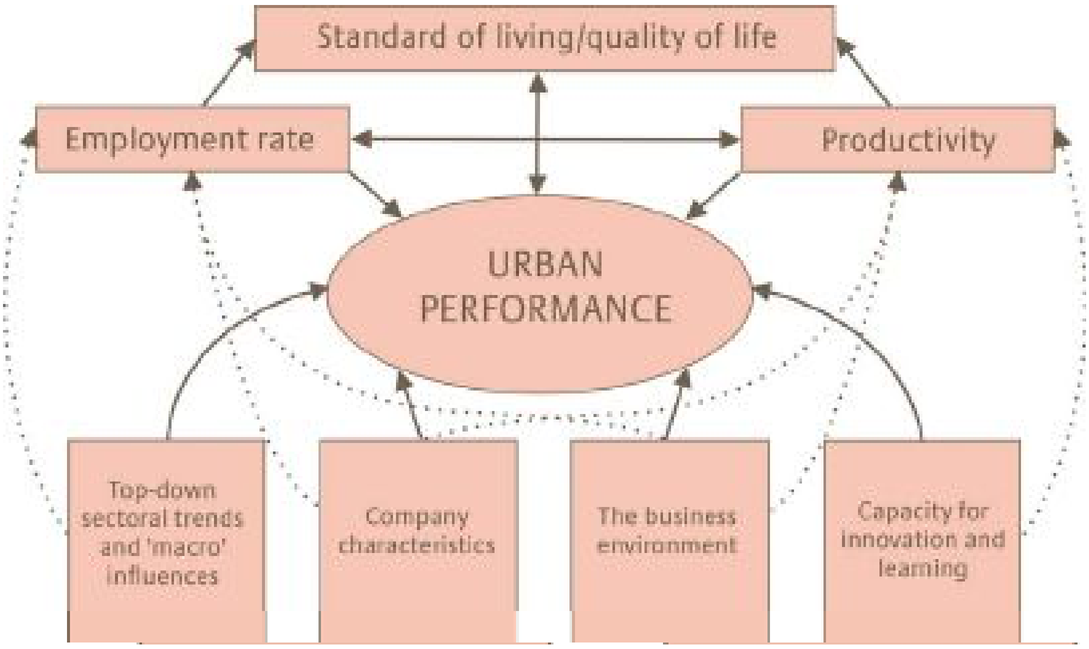
2.1 City Competitiveness

Improved city competitiveness is a much sought after property of most economies. As cities increasingly engage in competition with each other at different levels, the determinants of competitive advantage are coming under intense scrutiny. The recent ESRC Cities programme[6] considers this issue of competitiveness, and has started to provide useful outputs in terms of defining what is meant by improved competitiveness. Llewelyn-Davies and The Bartlett School of Planning, UCL (2003) have recently considered the issue of transport investment and it's role in promoting city competitiveness[7]. A further useful resource covering the London experience – of competitiveness, cohesion and governance in the 1980s and 1990s - is *Working Capital* (Buck et al, 2002).

One of the key themes in the debate is whether competitiveness is an attribute of companies (based on the thoughts of Krugman, 1996) rather than cities, regions, countries or other geographical areas (Porter, 1996 and 1998).

Begg (1999) brings together a number of these issues, and provides a framework for considering the various influences on urban economic performance – see Figure 2.1. The range of potential factors in promoting city competitiveness is clearly very wide. The relevance for this report is that a high quality pedestrian environment and public realm is considered to play one part in providing for the 'right business environment'.

Figure 2.1: *The Urban Competitiveness Maze (Begg, 1999)*



[6] For further information, see www.esrc.ac.uk
[7] See Llewelyn-Davies and UCL, for DfT (2003) Transport and City Competitiveness

2.2 London's Economic Position

According to recent research, London's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was estimated at £169 billion in 2000. This accounts for 21% of GDP for the whole of the UK. Putting this into an international context, the London economy is larger than nine of the fifteen European Union members, including Belgium and Sweden.

Table 2.1: *London's GDP in 2000, with International Comparisons*

	GDP (£bn)
London	£168.6
United Kingdom	£822.4
Belgium	£156.8
Denmark	£114.5
Ireland	£59.5
Luxembourg	£13.1
Netherlands	£246.6
Spain	£378.5
Sweden	£156.0

Source: CEBR: London's contribution to the UK economy- 2001

London is an international centre for a number of key commercial sectors, including financial services, foreign investment and tourism. Key headlines are shown below (Corporation of London, 2002):

- 75% of Fortune 500 Companies have London offices
- £315bn in foreign exchange turnover occurs each day in London
- 48% of the global foreign equity market is based in London
- £543bn a day is traded on LIFFE, more than any other futures exchange in the world
- £1,250bn is traded on metals in London
- There are 477 foreign banks in London

- 448 foreign companies are listed on the London Stock Exchange (as at January 2002)

Table 2.2 gives an indication of London's share of inward investment projects, much higher than competing cities such as Paris and Brussels.

Table 2.2: *European Share of Inward Investment Projects, 2001*

City/Region	No. of Projects 2001	Ranking 2001
London	94	1
Catalonia	86	2
Paris	61	3
Stockholm	56	4
Darmstadt/IHessen	32	5
Moscow	32	5
Bavaria	30	7
Alsace	30	7
Brussels	30	7
Madrid	29	10

Source: Ernst & Young Investment Monitor London, 2002

Business services, real estate and finance together account for almost 40% of London's GDP. Individually, business services and real estate account for 29% of London's GDP and finance for 10%. The wholesale and retail sectors account for 12% of London's GDP while manufacturing accounts for a mere 10 % - half the UK average. Transport and storage is not far behind at 9% in London.

Helped by strong growth in finance and business services, London has maintained an average overall GDP growth rate of 3.2 % over the past decade.

London continues to be one of the most popular cities in the world for overseas tourists with 11.5 million overseas tourists visiting London in 2001, see Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: *Tourist Visits to London (all figures in millions)*

Visits	2001	2002 (forecast)
Domestic	16.9	17.3
Overseas	11.5	12.2
Total	28.4	29.5

Source: United Kingdom Tourist Survey and London Tourist Board estimates, 2001

London attracted an increased 12 million foreign tourists in 2002, but a survey of London Tourist Board members – including hotels, museums and other attractions - revealed that 42% had seen business slump, comparing year-on-year quarters (LTB, 2003). Tourist numbers are enormously significant for the economic vitality of London. Tourism accounts for 4% of London's GDP and 7% of its employment. In Central London, tourism accounts for to 11% of GDP and 3% of jobs (Llewelyn-Davies et al, 1996).

Creating the best environment for business in London is critical to the economic strength of many business sectors in the capital. London offers visitors, residents and workers a wealth of cultural, business, retail and service opportunities. A mix of uses is evident in many activity hubs. Cultural and leisure activities are critically important to the London economy. For example, an LSE/MORI survey for the Society of London Theatres showed that the total economic impact of West End theatres in 1997 was £1,075 million, which includes £250 million spent on tickets and £433 million on restaurants, hotels, transport and merchandise. The West End theatres also generate 41,000 jobs (Society of London Theatre, 2003). In 1998, retail and wholesale contributed £15.2 billion to London's GDP. This was higher than the financial sector, health and education, public administration or manufacturing (ONS, 2001).

London's shopping offer is also increasingly a major attraction for tourists. 17% of visitors to London come primarily for shopping and, in 1999, visitors to London spent over £1.53bn on shopping (London Tourist Board figures, cited by the British Retail Confederation). Most tourists are likely to be on foot or public transport, hence the quality of the streetscape is important in attracting visitors to London, and to explore and spend time and money in particular areas of the city.

The fluidity and 'footloose' nature of many business sectors means that they can relocate if circumstances are not right, or are not perceived to be right, for them. The tourist sector is particularly sensitive to perceived changes in 'location attractiveness'. This report examines the importance of the walking environment for businesses, and shows how it is critical that future investment is made to the public realm, that businesses are provided with the right business environment, and hence future city competitiveness is secured.

2.3 The Walking Environment and London's Continued Economic Success

The potential beneficial impact of an improved walking environment on London's competitiveness is highlighted in a number of ways, covering issues such as the value of improved urban design, city centre vitality, and wider impacts. These are explored in more detail below.

The value of urban design

The Commission for Architecture and Built Environment (CABE) is the 'champion' for architecture and urban design in the UK. CABE arose out of a concern at government level about the quality of architecture and the built environment and a recognition that investing in quality will promote economic growth and the effectiveness of business. CABE and the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions (2002) commissioned the Bartlett School of Planning, University College London to investigate the economic, social and environmental value added by good urban design. The aim was, by means of analysis of selected commercial developments, to provide evidence of whether and how, good urban design added value. The report provides evidence to back up what was previously known intuitively about the benefits of well-designed spaces and places. From this, it is hoped that both private and public sectors will be encouraged to invest more adequately in high-quality urban design[8].

On a related theme, Gibbins and Rawlinson (2001) describing *Bristol's Legible City Initiative* highlight how Bristol seeks to establish long-term competitive advantage through design identity rooted in the aspirations for a safer, more convenient, accessible and cohesive city. The approach involves the promotion of place-specific design within the public realm.

Reporting from London, the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC, 1996) stated that in shopping centres a spacious and welcoming walking environment, with a sense of activity and fun, is one, which is economically successful. Conversely, poor footways have an economic cost.

Much of the literature picks up that there is limited evidence on a *direct correlation* between an increase in walkability and economic growth or an increase in the quality and usage of the public realm and economic growth. This reflects the complexity of the subject; and that the economic vitality of a town is subject to a number of factors, including the wider economic context, the mix of services and the level of accessibility for various modes of transport. Perhaps reflecting this complexity, LPAC (1996) found that only nine London borough UDPs mentioned economic viability or vitality as justification for improving the pedestrian environment.

[8] More information can be found from www.cabe.org.uk

A more effective method for demonstrating the economic benefits of good walking environments is to conduct qualitative analyses, which indicate the potential returns on investment. Examples are shown below, and qualitative, attitudinal analysis is at the heart of this study.

Pedestrian improvements and city centre vitality

Transport for London recently carried out a literature review on the economic impacts of pedestrian improvements (TfL, 2002). The review included a number of case studies and developed a series of indicators of economic vitality following the introduction of public realm or pedestrian improvements. In all of the case studies the city centre's position in the UK's retail rankings remained high or improved, prime retail rents remained steady or improved, and office rents and air quality also improved.

In the three cities where pedestrian flow rates were measured, pedestrian flows increased. In two centres where public attitude surveys were undertaken, the public felt that the area had become a more attractive place to shop. In Glasgow, for example, 86% of respondents who knew the city prior to the improvements felt that the city was now a more attractive place to shop. 27% of respondents said that they now stay longer in the centre, 9% spend more money and 19% visit the city centre more regularly. 80% of businesses believe that the improvement had made the area more attractive to shoppers, although the majority said that the time during the work itself had had a negative or insignificant impact. Researchers commented that this sentiment contradicted the increase in turnover by over 50% of the businesses and may be due to the 'adjustment period' effect.

In terms of the effect on city centre vitality, the report concludes that:

"On balance, schemes which support pedestrian improvements in town and city centres generate value for retail businesses. Following a possible 'adjustment period' of up to 12 months following any pedestrian schemes, there is an upturn in turnover and town centre vitality."

Moreover, comparative research on European cities and in Kensington High Street in London demonstrates that:

"Pedestrian and public transport users provide much more spending power than car users. In addition, the quality of the shopping environment is much more important than the ability to drive past or park near shops."

Additional research has found a relationship between motorised traffic and vacant retail premises. Newby et al (1992) found a statistically significant correlation between the traffic level on Leicester's city centre streets and the proportion of vacant shop premises. The higher the level of traffic, the more shop premises are likely to be vacant and so, by implication, traffic contributes to the undermining of trade.

Monheim (2001), commenting on social activity in pedestrianised areas, suggests that the trend towards the car-city discouraged walking and staying in urban streets and squares. But, in some cities in continental Europe, the public realm has been rediscovered as a stage where people can see and be seen, a stage that has to offer spontaneous as well as planned events. The success of pedestrian precincts is more than the solution to traffic problems or improvement of shop rents, it is about the fun of just staying in the core of the city.

Wider impacts of good walking environments

The benefits of better walking environments, and of increasing walking as an activity, can be most clearly seen in juxtaposition with the social and economic costs of not walking. For example, it is estimated that:

"Encouraging people to take more moderate exercise such as walking could save over £3 billion per year through a reduction in coronary heart disease. The CBI estimates that 62 million work days are lost annually in the UK from coronary heart disease and strokes at a cost to employers of £2.1 billion." (London Walking Forum, 2000).

In addition, the total cost to the UK economy in 1996 of road accidents involving pedestrians was estimated at nearly £3 billion. Congestion in London is estimated to impose costs of £2 billion a year on individuals in terms of wasted time and increased vehicle operating costs (GLA, 2000). A MORI poll carried out in 2001 for the Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) showed that Londoners are 50% more likely than other UK residents to think that congestion is a problem. And, according to a 1999 survey carried out amongst London businesses, reducing traffic levels was also seen as the second most important priority for the Mayor of London to tackle: 53% of respondents believed that reducing traffic levels was a priority.

2.4 Refining the Research Focus

As we have seen, the existing literature is mostly positive about the economic benefits (and wider social and environmental benefits) of improving the conditions for pedestrians. Much of the research, which attempts to evaluate the causal linkage between walking and economic activity, for example, investigating the impact of pedestrianisation on retail districts. However, this general understanding needs to be developed to be of relevance to London, and in particular to be of relevance for assessing the value of future investment in the pedestrian environment in London.

The consensus opinion is that walking and activity on foot is important for economic activity, and especially so in London. However, there appears still to be critical under investment in walking projects. This may reflect the methodological difficulties experienced in many studies in isolating the direct effects of pedestrian and public realm improvements on the economy and on broader city competitiveness. This research study therefore provides an initial evidence base that can be used in developing the business cases for walking expenditure. The research provides a mix of quantitative and qualitative findings, based on a telephone survey with key actors, the discussions of which are later developed into case study material.

3. Walking: Definitions and London Trends

3.1 What Do We Mean by Walking and Walkability?

Before we consider the results from the telephone interviews, it is worth noting what the term ‘walking’ can mean in terms of the variety of potential activities involved. Walking is about more than getting from A to B. Seminal work by Gehl (1971) distinguishes between walking as a method of transportation, and the active decision to stay and linger in public space as a chosen recreational activity; including sitting, consuming and enjoying. Gehl distinguishes between the former as a necessary journey, and the latter as optional activities, although a single journey could combine the two. This distinction in definition is critical in terms of the facilities required to support walking. Sitting, consuming and enjoying require quality in public realm design, and it is this ‘dwell time’ that is critical in terms of potential consumer spend and potential business success.

LPAC (1996) similarly categorise walking into different types, as outlined below:

- Access mode – where walking is used as the sole mode between two places, for example home and workplace;
- Access sub-mode – where walking is a necessary adjunct to the use of other modes, for example getting to and from the bus stop;
- Circulation/exchange mode – including window shopping, meeting people in the street, children’s play, interfaces between shops and cafés and the street, and public activities which do not fall into the traffic/travel categories;
- Recreation/leisure mode – including long distance walking and more local activity such as ‘going for a walk’, sometimes without a particular destination.

The latter two present quantification problems in terms of monitoring walking activities, yet are very important in London, for example, for developing the quality of the public realm in retail, business and tourist environments.

“The term ‘pedestrian activity’ can be extended to include stopping, standing, looking, waiting, sitting, talking, playing, etc. as well as denoting a means of getting from A to B.” (LPAC, 1996)

Attempts to estimate what might be acceptable walking distances depend on various factors, including the type of destination or the type of trip e.g. workplace, rest places, transport nodes (LPAC, 1996).

Connections are often made between the quality of the walking environment and people’s willingness to walk (for example; CLP, 2001 and 2002; London Walking Forum, 2000; and Barton et al, 1995). Walkability is a shorthand term used to appraise the extent to which the environment is conducive to walking. The ‘*Urban Design Compendium*’ (Llewelyn-Davies, 2000) defines the factors that create a walkable environment, using the 'Five C' principles first devised for LPAC (1996), and later incorporated into Government guidance (DTLR, 2000):

- **Connected**: Do good pedestrian routes connect the places where people want go?
- **Convenient**: Are routes direct and are crossings easy to use?
- **Convivial**: Are routes attractive, well lit and safe and is there variety along the street?
- **Comfortable**: What is the quality and width of the footway and what obstructions are there?
- **Conspicuous**: How easy is it to find and follow a route? Are there surface treatments and signs to guide pedestrians?

A walkable environment thus combines efficiency, amenity, safety and the delight factor. Gehl (1971) believes that walkability affects different types of walking in different ways. His view is that:

"Necessary journeys are influenced only slightly by the physical framework, but that circulation, exchange and recreation activities only occur where urban design choices support public space and facilitate social interaction."

Gehl believes that it is possible to create a virtuous circle whereby the environment is inviting for people to congregate, which in turn attracts more people. In effect, people attract people. Two of his well-cited examples include:

- Copenhagen: between 1968-69 the area allocated to pedestrianised streets or squares in Copenhagen tripled: The number of people sitting or standing for social and recreation activities in these spaces also tripled.
- Melbourne: In 1978, as an experiment, the number of benches in Melbourne was increased by 100%: The number of people sitting in public spaces subsequently increased by 88%.

Gehl and Gemzöe (2000) in '*New City Spaces'* show recent good practice in urban design quality from around the world.

3.2 Walking Trends in London

Walking as a mode of transport appears to be particularly important for Londoners. Walking is a much more significant mode of transport in London than elsewhere in the UK, thus the standard of facilities for pedestrians is very important. For example:

- 30% of 'single mode' trips in London are made entirely on foot, the highest percentage in the UK. This under-estimates the importance of walking as a means of travel: in addition 27% of the total journey time for car travel is spent walking and 29% of the total journey time for public transport travel is spent walking too (NTS, 2001 and LPAC, 1996).

- Walking accounts for the second highest proportion of all trips made in London after driving (49%), comparable national figures for walking are 26% and driving 62%. In addition, walking accounts for 80% of all trips under 1 mile and is the main way in which public transport is accessed (NTS, 2001).

- Over the past decade there has been a marked decline in the number of wallking trips. In Greater London the number of walking trips has been reduced by 13% but in Inner London the reduction is nearer 20%. In central London the picture is different, with an 18% increase in walking occurring over the same period (NTS, 2001).

- The average Londoner is less likely to own and use a car and is more likely to walk and use public transport than other UK residents: 40% of households in Greater London do not have a car, 43% have only one. Londoners walk 23% further than other residents in the south-east and 20% further than the national average (London Walking Forum, undated).

- The London Area Transportation Survey (LATS) survey found that walking is more important for certain purposes, for example shopping, where it holds a share of 20% in London (NTS, 2001).

Walk trips (main mode) declined in Greater London by 18% between 1986 and 1998, and its share of all trips fell from 34% to 27% over the same period (National Statistics, 2000, '*Transport Statistics Bulletin: Transport Statistics for Metropolitan Areas*'. This reflects the decline in walking nationally, where the distance walked fell by a fifth in just 12 years.

The report into walking by the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee (2001) was prompted by concerns about this decline, and concluded that the reasons for it were not hard to discern. For example the committee stated:

"*In contrast to the changes made to every town and city to ease motor transport, walking has been made ever more unpleasant*."

The Mayor's vision is to make London one of the world's most walking friendly cities by 2015. In order to achieve this, Transport for London has recently produced a draft Walking Strategy for London[9]. The draft plan includes:

- An assessment of the current extent of walking in London, including recognition of its social, physical and environmental benefits and an appreciation of the difficulties faced by pedestrians.

[9] See www.tfl.gov.uk

- Identification of the key players and mechanisms to achieve objectives.
- Advice on how to integrate walking within the wider context of planning and transportation policies.
- Details of complementary measures that improve the pedestrian environment and promote walking.
- The promotion of headline initiatives, including the completion and enhancement of the six strategic walking routes.
- A monitoring, marketing and publicity plan.

Walking is perceived as an important matter for Londoners. In a 1999 MORI survey, a relatively high 24% of businesses polled felt that improving the quality of the environment should be a priority for the London Mayor.

In Figure 3.1 shows the results of a 2000 MORI survey of businesses operating within the jurisdiction of the Corporation of London.

Figure 3.1: *The Importance of Walking in the City of London*

Issue	Respondents thinking the topic is important	Respondents satisfied with the performance of the Corporation
For Business leaders		
Maintain historical buildings	9%	72%
Facilities for pedestrians	9%	56%
Street Cleaning	33%	72%
Pavement Maintenance	N/A	
For City Workers		
Maintain historical buildings	22%	66%
Facilities for pedestrians	16%	52%
Street Cleaning	38%	72%
Pavement Maintenance	12%	28%

More recent research by MORI (2003)[10] reveals that:

"Despite public optimism on core services such as health, a local authority's approval rating is based largely on how well it cleans and maintains public spaces, which are getting worse."

"Environmental services are by far the worst performing in Britain, and yet it's the thing people notice."

Given the significance of walking, it is unsurprising that a 2001 MORI poll for the Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) showed that residents of London are concerned with walkability. Half are dissatisfied with road and pavement maintenance and approximately 33% claim that they would drive less if local walking conditions were better. It is not just the infrastructure of walking that concerns residents. Safety is also a concern. While nine in ten respondents in a 2001 survey for the GLA say that they feel safe walking outside alone during the day, this falls to just half who feel safe walking alone in the evening, including 38% of women (65% of men feel safe), and 34% of those aged 65 and over.

Support for pedestrian improvements exists across the UK as a whole. In 2000, a CfIT poll showed that 88% of the public supported improvements for pedestrians - such as better-maintained pavements, more pedestrian crossings and pedestrian areas. The 2002 poll, showed a continuing dissatisfaction with the state of pavements. 50% of people declared themselves dissatisfied with the level of maintenance. However, the potential outcomes of pedestrian improvements are likely to be less significant in the UK than in London. Only 17% of people agreed with the statement that they would travel by car less if conditions for walking were better; 52% disagreed.

"*If a government was trying to buy itself popularity, it would not spend on education and health, it would spend on the local environment.*"

(Professor Tony Travers, London School of Economics, 2003[11])

[10] For more information, see www.mori.com
[11] Reported in *Regeneration & Renewal*, 7th Feb, 2003.

4. Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Analysis

4.1 Survey Method

A semi-structured telephone survey was developed to help gain a deeper understanding of the business perception of the value of investing in the walking environment. The results provide quantitative and qualitative data relating to the quality of the streetscape and how this may impact on business performance. The survey has been designed to incorporate a *variety of business angles* including landowners, developers, retailers, tourist facilities and other commercial interests, and a variety of area interests, including parts of the West End, Canary Wharf and the South Bank. A copy of the survey is found in Annex 2.

In terms of survey method, a questionnaire was emailed to a variety of interested parties and a number of individuals in positions of responsibility for businesses or buildings or developments in London. Completion of the questionnaires was achieved through a series of telephone interviews.

Care was taken to ensure that the respondents were in a position in the company where they could influence or respond to concerns and initiatives regarding the street environment. Figure 4.1 shows the businesses that participated in the survey.

Figure 4.1: *Business Interview Participants*

Business Interest	Retail	Developer/ Landowner	Other Commerce	Cultural/ Tourist
Argent		✓		
Boots The Chemist	✓			
British Land		✓		
Burford		✓		
Canary Wharf Group		✓		
Conran and Partners	✓			
Drivers Jonas			✓	
Grosvenor		✓		
Heals	✓			
KPMG			✓	

London Eye				✓
Madame Tussaud's				✓
National Gallery				✓
Society of London Theatre				✓

Further interviews were undertaken with the following organisations to help further understand area-wide issues.

- New West End Company
- South Bank Employers' Group

The study does not attempt to develop a representative view from the business sector in London as to the economic benefits of walking. Rather it seeks simply to develop the evidence base on this topic and provide a case for increased investment in walking projects and public realm improvements in London.

The survey covers a number of issues, including: defining good streetscape, the value of a good streetscape, the importance of particular elements of streetscape, investment in streetscape and potential funding mechanisms.

The questionnaire results have enabled us to construct two types of evidence about the importance of the streetscape. The first is on a quantitative and qualitative/attitudinal basis, examining overall trends amongst business, regarding their perception of the importance of the streetscape and their willingness to be actively involved in its improvement. The second type of evidence is case study based. This provides an opportunity to examine motivations and initiatives in more detail.

NB. The number of respondent answers varies by question, as not all questions were applicable to all those interviewed and some questions were not answered directly.

4.2 Survey Results

Defining good streetscape

- ***4 out of 8 (50%) of respondents rate the streetscape around their business location as "poor" or "very poor".***

Given that "walking" and other activity on foot involves the use of the street environment in a number of ways, a more generic expression for the quality of the environment in which people on foot spend their time is required. The term "streetscape" conveys this broader concept of the public environment.

If we wish to determine the value of good streetscape to business organisations, the first stage of work requires an assessment of whether the organisations recognise what good streetscape is. The survey was structured to provide respondents with visual images of good streetscape to stimulate ideas and discussion.

Encouragingly, most interviewees were already aware of the constituents of a good streetscape and how this related to their business.

Respondents representing an organisation based in a specific location were able to assess the streetscape in their surrounds. Half of respondents rated the streetscape in the immediate vicinity of their business as "poor" or "very poor". Common problems that arose were overcrowding, poor lighting, threatening environments, poor signage and traffic intrusion.

Value of a good streetscape

- ***3 out of 6 (50%) of respondents feel streetscape is important in locating in a particular area.***
- ***3 out of 4 (75%) of respondents feel streetscape is an important factor influencing whether a business remains in a particular location.***
- ***4 out of 5 (80%) of respondents consider streetscape issues when deciding to invest in their building stock.***
- ***11 out of 13 (85%) of respondents identified the streetscape as important in attracting custom.***
- ***4 out of 7 (57%) of respondents acknowledge the importance of streetscape in attracting and retaining staff.***
- ***8 out of 9 (89%) of respondents recognise that streetscape impacts on their business image.***

The value of the streetscape for businesses was divided into two distinct elements:

- Location decisions related to the business, and;
- Productivity factors relating to the business.

Location decisions

Half of respondents felt that the streetscape was of importance for locating in a particular area. This figure suggests a determination to set up and invest in areas that have economic potential but where the streetscape requires improvement. Following this, however, three-quarters of interviewees believed that streetscape was of importance to remaining in an area once a business had located there, showing that if companies are prepared to locate and invest in an area they are concerned that the streetscape is improved. The result of little or no improvement in the streetscape may lead to the relocation of business despite initial potential of an area. In simple terms, if the streetscape is bad, then business will perform badly and will be forced to relocate.

This is further reflected in decisions to invest in buildings owned or occupied by the organisations covered. 80% of those interviewed stated that the streetscape was an important factor in determining whether their organisation would invest in their building stock. The concern was that investing in buildings without investment in the streetscape would contribute to making the streetscape look worse in comparison, thus undermining the image of the area.

Commercial benefits

Commercial benefit, and thus the ultimate prosperity of business, and London as a whole, depends on three key factors:

- Attracting customers and tenants
- Attracting and retaining staff
- Improving business image

All business organisations rely on attracting customers in some shape or form whether they are passing retail trade, or tenants for an office block. The quality of the streetscape was identified by 85% of respondents as “important” in the ability to attract customers or tenants with comments such as the “appeal of the environment is of critical importance”.

Also of significance is the ability to attract and retain staff. The feeling was that it is easy to attract staff because of the “big city lights” syndrome. However, staff retention is an issue once this effect has worn off and this includes the impact of streetscape. Importantly people like to work in a pleasant environment and this relates to the external environment where their leisure time is spent and which covers their journeys to and from work.

All the factors above contribute to one overriding concern – the image of the business. 89% of those interviewed felt that streetscape was an “important” issue impacting on the image of their business. Regardless of the type of business, “their front door is the street” and so the external appearance immediately sets the scene for potential customers or clients upon arrival. Therefore, a poor streetscape can have a negative impact on business image.

Importance of individual elements of streetscape

- ***11 out of 12 (92%) of respondents were concerned about traffic intrusion.***
- ***11 out of 13 (85%) of respondents desired improved maintenance and cleansing.***
- ***9 out of 12 (75%) of respondents felt that street lighting and paving were important issues.***
- ***11 out of 12 (92%) of respondents were concerned about footways not being wide enough.***

Respondents were provided with the opportunity to differentiate between the importance of individual elements of the streetscape on their business activities. Nine elements were suggested ranging from landscaping to legibility to maintenance issues. Unsurprisingly, it became apparent that it is hard to determine which parts of the streetscape impact the most on business performance and decisions as they form an integrated package of the external environment around a business.

However, five of the issues were frequently cited as important and often in need of improvement: these being traffic intrusion, maintenance, street lighting, paving and footway width. The intrusion of road traffic had an impact on location decisions and was seen as an area most requiring mitigation. This particularly related to office bound businesses or their agents. Oxford Street was noted as an example where office rents are lower than the surrounding streets where traffic is less noisy and congested. The result for businesses is that they are forced to turn their back on the street by ‘sealing’ their frontages which is often the first step before relocation.

Maintenance was seen as an issue that reflected on the image of the business. Dirty and poorly maintained environments can generate a general feeling of lawlessness which is perceived (correctly or otherwise) as threatening. People feel that if the area is neglected, then care for their interests is also likely to be neglected. Related to this is the provision of street lighting. The result is that businesses invest their own money into maintenance schemes including the provision of street wardens and CCTV to raise the standard of the streetscape and increase the perception of a secure environment.

Footway quality was considered as important for two reasons. The first is footway width, which relates to the earlier point on traffic intrusion. Narrow footways make the pedestrian environment more threatening when there is a concentration of traffic. Furthermore, busy streets can be prone to overcrowding which is identified as a hindrance as well as an advantage to business. The quality of the paving material is also cited as an important streetscape element with styles being used to both define an area and raise its overall economic profile.

Investment in the Streetscape

- ***12 out of 14 (86%) of respondents' surrounding areas had undergone, or were undergoing, streetscape investment.***
- ***8 out of 12 (67%) of respondents identified streetscape investment as contributing, or likely to contribute, to an improved trading position.***
- ***6 out of 8 (75%) of respondents felt streetscape improvements improved trading in general in areas surrounding their business.***
- ***Where improvement had occurred, 10 out of 11 (91%) of businesses interviewed had been contributors where they had been invited to do so.***
- ***8 out of 10 (80%) of businesses would contribute to future streetscape improvements.***

The majority of organisations interviewed were able to identify areas around one or some of their businesses/buildings where there had been investment in the streetscape.

Improved Trading Position

Importantly two-thirds of businesses were quantifiably or subjectively able to state that the streetscape improvements had improved their trading position, encompassing issues such as turnover and employee retention. The feeling was that the experience of their organisation was consistent with the surrounding area and so trading had improved in general.

Company Contributions

Companies across the board indicated that they contributed to streetscape improvements, highlighting the importance that streetscape plays in the business model. Investing in the streetscape is recognised as a long-term decision that improves the image of an area and thus the competitiveness of their business. This is not an altruistic decision and companies are not acting as "public realm charities" – they invest for business reasons.

Surprisingly few companies interviewed were invited to contribute to streetscape improvements. A number invested under their own initiative in order to maintain the front door to their businesses. 80% of respondents further showed their concern by stating they would contribute financially to the cost of future improvements where it was appropriate to do so and if all businesses in the vicinity were involved in the process. The type of contribution to streetscape improvements varied and was sometimes in multiple. The most popular method was via a direct financial contribution separate from or incorporated within overall development costs. Respondents also favoured the consultation approach in contact with local residential associations and councillors.

Business Improvement Districts

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a financing mechanism used to provide revenue for a variety of local improvements, such as street management and cleaning, and also wider economic development, transport and marketing projects, etc. The concept of BIDs originated in the United States in the 1970s[12].

- ***6 out of 11 (55%) of respondents currently belong to a BID.***
- ***5 out of 8 (63%) of respondents not currently members of a BID would join one under the right circumstances.***

A number of organisations were interviewed who had formed or were part of pilot or voluntary Business Improvement District (BID) partnerships with other commercial organisations and with non-contributory consultation from the local community. This enabled them to contribute indirectly through a more formal body. The desire to set up partnerships of this kind in advance of formal BID legislation shows the importance of public realm issues to businesses in key locations throughout central London (and most likely in town centres across the country).

Currently just over half of the respondents were part of a pilot or voluntary BID partnership or other business organisation. Nearly two thirds of respondents (of those not currently in a BID) stated that they would join one, subject to appropriateness and other commercial inputs, subject to a case-by-case assessment. Companies are concerned that they do not end up contributing too much, too often, especially when their contributions are overlapping with those of the local authority. A major area of concern is that they do not provide funding that acts as a replacement to local authority funding for streetscape issues.

[12] For more information see www.c-london.co.uk

5. Case Study Results

5.1 The Case Studies

The following section uses a number of case studies to elaborate the issues found earlier. The case studies fall into four broad categories, as follows:

1. The approach to streetscape improvements from a *sectoral perspective*, e.g. major landowners, retail and services, developers, and tourism and entertainment.

2. The value of the streetscape where the local environment is acknowledged to be *particularly good*, e.g. Canary Wharf and Broadgate.

3. The value of the streetscape where the parts of the local environment are acknowledged to be of *average quality*, e.g. Mayfair and Belgravia, South Bank and Trafalgar Square.

4. Typical problems where the streetscape is described as *in need of improvement, e.g.* Piccadilly Circus, West End Theatre District, Oxford Street/Regent Street, Marylebone Road and Tottenham Court Road.

In the section below, we discuss each of the case studies in turn. The case studies are structured into a number of common sections, including: a brief description of the sector or area, a summary of the current streetscape, an overview of recent or planned initiatives, the perceived impact of the streetscape on business, evidence of economic value and, finally, key lessons.

5.2 Case Study 1: Major Landowners

Interviews were undertaken with Grosvenor, Burfords, British Land and Canary Wharf Group. Grosvenor owns 200 acres of SW1 in Belgravia (Knightsbridge, Victoria, Sloane Square) and 100 acres of Mayfair, which includes parts of Oxford Street, Bond Street and the Dorchester Hotel. British Land is a UK property investment company focused on actively managing, financing and developing prime commercial property. Significant assets in London include Broadgate, near Liverpool Street, and Regents Place, near Euston Station. The interview focused on Broadgate in particular.

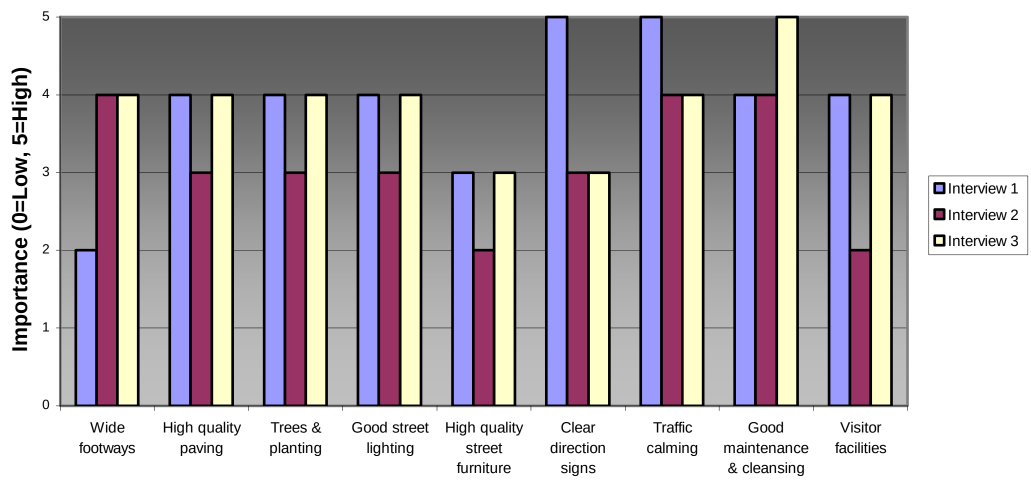
Canary Wharf Group owns and manages approximately 6 million net square feet of office and retail space. The current development comprises of 15 office buildings, a retail centre, a conference and banqueting centre, landscaped grounds and five car parks (in addition to car parking below the office buildings). There are approximately 40 occupiers of business space on the Estate and numerous retail outlets.

Importance of the streetscape to the landowners' business model

The quality of the environment was seen as important for attracting tenants by all three interviewees. The business attraction of the respondents' local areas was said to depend on the local environment, and the streetscape was viewed as an important part of this. The establishment of a public realm improvement programme has thus formed a part of a marketing programme to bring in new tenants e.g. the Jubilee Park area of Canary Wharf and the Motcomb Street improvements in Belgravia.

Whilst streetscape quality was seen as necessary for landowners, it was not sufficient to attract and retain tenants. Proximity to other businesses and services were also viewed as important. A package of features was required for landowners.

Figure 5.1: *Elements of the Streetscape Viewed as Important*



Maintenance and cleansing, and traffic management to prevent intrusive traffic, were consistently identified as critical ingredients to a high quality streetscape. Good facilities for walkers; paving, the visual stimulation of greenery and lighting, were also generally viewed as important.

Landowners were clear that perceptions of 'the streetscape' need disaggregating: Different types of tenants may have different requirements. Hotels require a good environment in general, as their business depends on being able to promote an attractive environment in which to stay. Traffic is of particular concern for office space tenants, as the noise pollution is seen as detrimental for productivity in some cases. Retail, particularly of luxury goods, also requires a high quality environment.

Evidence of the value attached to the streetscape

All three landowners make significant investment in improving the quality of the street environment. For example, British Land is investing *"upwards of £30 million*" on Broadgate improvements.

Grosvenor has an ongoing programme of improvements, including £250,000 spent on repaving and lighting improvements along Motcomb Street, and wider traffic calming and landscape enhancements.

It is difficult to isolate quantitative evidence of direct economic benefit but rents in one of Belgravia's Squares have been increased following re-landscaping, to reflect the fact that the area is now "*more attractive for tenants*". The upgrading of Motcomb Street has contributed to the ability to attract Waitrose in as a new anchor store.

The importance of the streetscape can be evidenced by the impact where the streetscape is poor. Oxford Street offices command a lower rent than the surrounding areas due to the concentration of traffic. In one of the shopping streets in Belgravia, tenants on the side of the road where the footway is asphalted compare their situation unfavourably with the tenants on the other side, which is paved with York Stone, and are demanding repaving. One of the interviewees stated that they have *"considered disinvesting"* from areas where the streetscape was felt to be very poor.

Key Lessons

- Landowners clearly perceive the importance of streetscape to maintaining the value of their assets.
- They are willing to invest large sums in improvements, especially where they have control over, or confidence in, the delivery mechanisms.
- The existing or the potential streetscape is an inherent, although not overriding part, of a tenants' decision to locate to an area and is thus an important facet of the landowners' business model.
- An on-going failure to improve the quality of environment may lead landowners to re-consider their investment.
- Landowners are willing to listen and respond to the particular needs of their tenants.

5.3 Case Study 2: Retail and Services

Interviews were undertaken with a number of retailers, restaurateurs and landowners who market their premises to retail tenants, including Heals, Conran & Partners, Boots The Chemist, KPMG and Drivers Jonas.

The importance of the streetscape to the sectoral business model

The streetscape plays an important role in the business model of retailers and the service sector due to its influence on the willingness of potential customers to visit an area. The streetscape is perceived as becoming increasingly important for luxury commodities where customers are seeking a particular retail or service experience rather than meeting a basic need. Two of the interviewees spoke of the expectations of “our sort of customers”.

“Where the streetscape is having a detrimental effect on customers, business may refuse to locate there or reconsider their position.”

One interviewee stated: “*If the streetscape is bad then business will perform badly and so [companies] will relocate.”*

Another stated that: “*We would only locate in the very best environment we can find.”*

Yet another retailer delayed locating in an area for 6 months because a landlord had not delivered promised improvements.

Which elements of the streetscape are particularly important?

A number of elements of streetscape are consistently highlighted by retailers as crucial for their business success. The first is managing traffic intrusion so that customers are not affected by externalities. Footway width and pavement quality are also highlighted as areas of concern as they immediately impact on the pedestrian’s ease of movement. Lighting is noted as an issue that impacts on the perceived safety of the shopping environment. Maintenance and cleansing is deemed to be crucial for the image of an area. It affects the opportunity to position the area as a competitive and attractive destination to customers. It may also discourage passers-by, who would otherwise be converted into customers. It is recognised that the streetscape is necessary but not the only element for attracting customers. Retailers and service providers accept their portion of responsibility and also acknowledge that agglomeration of similar types of services and accessibility are also crucial. However, they can be discouraged by the perception that local authorities are failing to fulfil their maintenance functions effectively.

Evidence of the value attached to the streetscape

In general, interviewees have contributed to initiatives in the past and are willing to do so again if they can be assured of the robustness of the delivery mechanisms.

"Boots The Chemist, for instance, funds 130 town centre development schemes across the UK. These concentrate on five or six key policy areas to improve the retail environment for their outlets and the towns they are located in. One of the key policy areas is 'environment' which incorporates the public realm and streetscape."

Retailers like Boots are constantly being invited to contribute to streetscape enhancements by statutory authorities as there is a recognition, by both the public and private sectors, of the value that the public realm holds for businesses and the ability they have to influence its quality.

"However, there is a concern that business investment should not replace the statutory duties of and funding from local authorities."

One interviewee stated that requests for contribution would have to be carefully considered. They expect to be located in a high quality environment but perceive their main contribution to the area to be their ability to act as a magnet for other businesses.

Key Lessons

- The streetscape is an important although not unique ingredient in providing a compelling retail and service offer.
- Businesses are unwilling to subsidise local authority mistakes or lack of provision.

5.4 Case Study 3: Private Developers

Interviews were undertaken with Argent Group, British Land and Burford. Argent Group is a commercial office and mixed-use developer. Argent is perhaps best known for its 17 acre Brindley Place development in central Birmingham. In conjunction with St George Plc it is currently delivering a mix-used regeneration and development around St Pancras station. British Land is a UK property investment company focused on actively managing, financing and developing prime commercial property. Significant assets in London include Broadgate, near Liverpool Street and Regents Place, near Euston Station. Planning permission has been or is likely to be obtained for a number of sites in London including Lime Street and Bishopsgate. Burford Holdings Ltd similarly deal in property investment, trading and development, with a large portfolio of offices, retail centres and industrial estates.

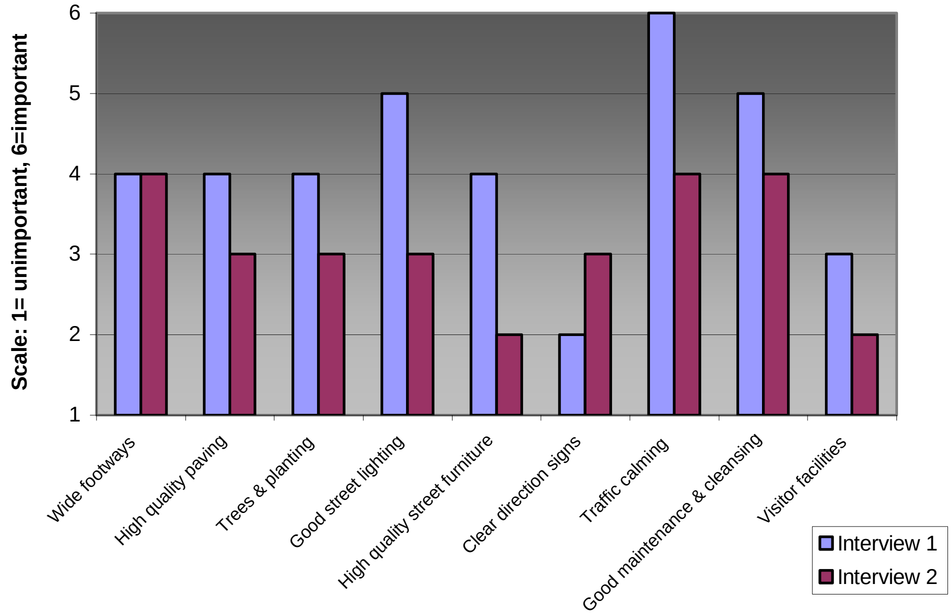
The importance of the streetscape to the developers' business model

The streetscape is seen as very important. One interviewee spoke of the "*Value that this adds to property*."

Another claimed that: "*Given that people are more contented in a high quality environment, it makes sense to ensure that developments insist on a high quality environment."*

The King's Cross redevelopment provides an interesting case study, where 'best practice in environmental quality' and 'good urban design' have been adopted as core development principles. An 'enhanced streetscape' was identified as an 'early win' for the project. The re-development process begins with an appraisal of all potential sites. Interviewees confirmed that the public realm is one of the factors considered, in addition to the mix of uses, the level of crime, the ease of access to the site and connectivity: the extent to which the site is well connected to the surrounding area.

Figure 5.2: *Elements of the Streetscape Viewed as Important*



Evidence of the value attached to the streetscape

Both Argent Group and British Land have a presumption in favour of contributing to public realm improvements as part of seeking planning permission. However the extent of the final contribution depends on the delivery capacity of the relevant local authority.

One interviewee said: "*We always offer, and get a good reception, but then find it hard to get the improvements delivered. It's hard to co-ordinate between (the local authority departments such as) planning and highways and the (community) amenity groups."*

A second interviewee compared two different London based developments, one where they are contributing £500,000, another where they are not contributing at all. A third interviewee talked in particular of the importance they place in using public art to improve the public realm.

Key lessons

- The existing or the potential streetscape is an inherent part of a developers' decision to invest in an area.
- Developers are willing to give substantial financial support, but an effective local authority delivery mechanism is essential.

5.5 Case Study 4: Tourism and Entertainment

Interviews were undertaken with a number of leading tourist providers: Madame Tussaud's, the London Eye and the National Gallery, as well as the Society of London Theatre which represents producers, theatre owners and managers of the major commercial and grant-aided theatres in central London. Both Madame Tussaud's and the London Eye are operated by the Tussauds Group. Cumulatively the attractions (not including the theatre) receive around than 10 million visits a year.

The importance of the streetscape for tourist attractions

The operators of the attractions all recognise that the key draw for most tourists is the unique heritage or excitement of the attraction itself. However providers seek to position a visit to their attraction as a uniformly enjoyable experience. A concern that the streetscape around an area is attractive follows, and by extension there is a willingness to invest to ensure that this is the case.

The London Eye confirmed: "*When it's (public space) right on our doorstep, we want to influence the shape and development of the area*". Where the public realm is poor, they may seek to withdraw their visitors; for example, the queuing area for Madame Tussaud's is now on the interior of the building.

Moreover, operators recognise a distinction between (domestic and international) tourists, who come to London with pre-established plans and who to a large extent will visit attractions irrespective of the quality of the streetscape, and London residents, employees and general passers-by. The London Eye notes that the environment in Jubilee Gardens immediately adjacent to the Eye is "*not conducive to dwell time*", whilst the National Gallery state that the level of traffic and congested footways in Trafalgar Square, prior to current improvements, prevented visitors "*straying across the road*" to visit the Gallery. There is an obvious immediate financial incentive to cater to this indigenous target group (accounting for 15% of visitors in the case of the London Eye). Strategically they are also important as numbers of international visitors and theatre-goers decline in response to security concerns. In the case of attractions such as the National Gallery, the desire to be accessible to all arises from their position as a national institution.

Providers recognise that the multiplier effect of their attraction, which could drive the development of adjacent retail and restaurant services, is dampened by the absence of a high quality streetscape. The intrusive traffic and lack of public space around Madame Tussaud's means that visitors quickly disperse. By contrast, where improvements have occurred, or are occurring, in Trafalgar Square or on Queen's Walk, economic growth follows. Refreshment carts are proving successful in Trafalgar Square now that pigeon numbers have been reduced and a new café is planned once the pedestrianisation of the North Side is complete. On the South Bank between 20-25 businesses have been established as a response to the dramatic growth in visitor numbers and the public realm improvements around the Eye.

Which elements of the streetscape are particularly important?

The impact of traffic intrusion upon (pedestrian) visitors is consistently positioned as detrimental either to the experience of the visit or, in the case of the National Gallery, as a complete deterrent. Attractions are also active supporters of high quality, public open space to support the aspiration that their attraction can be at the centre of a 'holistic' experience. The Tussauds group mooted a proposal for the creation of public open space around Madame Tussaud's and they are funding complete refurbishment of Jubilee Gardens. The National Gallery is extremely enthusiastic about the refurbishment and pedestrianisation of Trafalgar Square. Maintenance and cleansing of the area is seen as important as initial design.

Attractions value good accessibility as well as an enhanced pedestrian environment. Their objective is that access for all modes is better managed and of high quality; and that individual modes are not excluded. The National Gallery particularly underlined that they valued the use of Trafalgar Square by tour buses, notwithstanding their concern about the impact on footway congestion. The Tussauds Group manage the coach park at the Eye on behalf of the local authority and they have improved off road coach parking around Madame Tussaud's.

Evidence of the value attached to the streetscape

All providers have invested both financial and human resources to improving the streetscape or in optimising the economic benefits that arise from improvements. The Tussauds Group fund a cleansing programme around their attractions of approximately £60,000 in each location. They are also making an initial section 106 contribution of £1.5 million as part of their re-licensing application. The National Gallery has launched a £21 million programme of investment in their facilities and access to take advantage of the opportunities opened up by the improvements to the public realm in Trafalgar Square.

Key lessons

- Tourist providers believe that a high quality streetscape enhances the visitor experience and, by extrapolation, may help increase visitor spend within the main attraction and the surrounding area. They are willing to make significant investment to complement public sector initiatives.
- Investment in the public realm can enable a multiplier effect to occur in the vicinity of the attraction.
- Maintenance and cleansing is as important as initial investment in design of the public realm.

5.6 Case Study 5: Canary Wharf Management, Canary Wharf

Canary Wharf comprises approximately 6 million net square feet of office and retail space. A further 8.1 million square feet is under construction. The first tenants moved into Canary Wharf in August 1991. Now, 95% of the existing space is leased to business, which employ around 42,000 people in total.

The current development comprises fifteen office buildings, a retail centre, conference and banqueting centre, a Docklands Light Railway station, a London Underground station, landscaped grounds and five car parks (in addition to car parking below the office buildings).

A key feature of the scheme is that the 'public realm' is privately owned and managed, rather than by the local authority. Canary Wharf Management Ltd, as part of the Canary Wharf Group, manages ongoing maintenance. For this case study, a tenant and a representative of the management company were interviewed.

Table 5.1: *Summary of the Public Realm*

Issue	Commentary
Traffic	Traffic is largely directed through the western portion of the site around Westferry Circus and the underground car-parking network. The majority of Canary Wharf is based around pedestrian movement and its links to public transport nodes.
Accessibility	Canary Wharf is served by the Jubilee Line Extension and Docklands Light Railway, linking it directly to the City, West End, Stratford and South London. There are plans to extend the link to City Airport by 2005. There are 3,000 parking spaces on site as well as 8 taxi ranks and a network of cycle routes. Bus routes and waterlinks also serve the area.
Footway description	Hard landscaped footways with planting at intervals are provided throughout defining the routes through the complex.
Public space	Creating a green place is a priority for Canary Wharf. This has resulted in the planting of 378 trees (most between 35 and 50 years old) of 20 different species. A range of public art is on display.
Street furniture	Seating is designed into each public space to fit the context of that space.
Lighting	Lighting is an integral part of the landscaping strategy.
Maintenance and cleansing	All tenants pay an annual service charge to ensure a high level of maintenance.
Facilities	Public conveniences are available in the retail mall below Canary Wharf as well as in the range of bars and restaurants. The shopping mall provides a fully covered environment with internal links to the Station and main office buildings.

Recent streetscape initiatives

Canary Wharf Management Ltd stated that a high quality public realm is a core part of Canary Wharf's image. Improvements to the streetscape are an integral part of developing Canary Wharf. Quality materials are used both to maintain the image of the district but also as a long term investment in the manageability of the Estate.

Evaluation of the quality and impact of the streetscape.

The quality of all aspects of the streetscape are described as excellent, with the level of maintenance on the Estate described as particularly important. Canary Wharf received an award for 'Outstanding Contribution to Art in the Working Environment' at the Art and Work Awards, 2002.

Impact of the streetscape

The quality of the streetscape is constantly brought up in discussions with actual or potential tenants. The value is best demonstrated by comparisons made by the interviewees between Canary Wharf and the City. An example was given of one tenant re-organising their offices as they found it very difficult to find volunteers to relocate to the City. The Management Company contrasted their Canary Wharf offices benefiting from an open, clean well-maintained (district) with wide footways and not too close to cars, with their offices in 'grubby' Blackfriars.

The tenant also reported that staff enjoy working in Canary Wharf but acknowledged that the streetscape was part of a broader package which also included the shops and restaurants located on the estate and the internal office environment.

Evidence of the value attached to the streetscape

The high quality of the public realm is perceived as very important to businesses at Canary Wharf. The environment gives the area an added niche value. Monumental architecture, modern, "spacey and airy" Underground stations and quality retailing contribute to an excellent all-round offer. Such an excellent package of features is required in attracting world city type businesses.

Key lessons

- A high quality streetscape makes a major contribution to the image and business success of a district. It provides a basis for growth.
- High levels of maintenance are as important as the quality of the design.
- The high value placed on high quality public/private realm at Canary Wharf is evident in the quality with which it has been built and maintained. This appears to be due to it being privately owned and managed.
- Once the business environment has been established it is difficult to isolate causal links between business or retailer motivations and the streetscape in particular. The relationship is characterised by inter-dependency. Retail locates due to the income profile of those working on the Estate. Workers are located in Canary Wharf due in part to its reputation as a quality business

district. This is in part dependent on the quality of urban realm and in part due to the proximity to other businesses, who are in turn attracted for similar reasons. The streetscape is a key part of the myriad of reasons which allow this virtuous circle of area success to develop.

5.7 Case Study 6: British Land, Broadgate

The Broadgate Estate sits adjacent to Liverpool Street station in the City of London, providing 360,000 sqm (3.9m sqft) of office, retail and leisure accommodation spread over 13 hectares (32 acres). Together its businesses employ approximately 30,000 people.

Table 5.2: *Summary of the Public Realm*

Issue	Commentary
Traffic	The main Broadgate Centre is pedestrianised.
Accessibility	Broadgate is adjacent to and feeds into the Liverpool Street interchange. The rail network from Liverpool Street serves stations in East Anglia. Liverpool Street is on the Circle, Metropolitan, Hammersmith & City and Central Lines which cover central, west, north and east London. A bus and taxi interchange also feeds into the Station-Broadgate complex.
Footway description	Hard footways which include marble-like materials clearly define the routes into and around the amphitheatre.
Public space	The Arena amphitheatre at the centre of the Broadgate complex offers a mix of public open space, events and leisure activities, including ice skating in winter months. Large public art works define the entrances to the area.
Street furniture	Hard seating areas are provided publicly with seats also available on café terraces.
Lighting	Lighting forms an integral part of the landscaping with spotlights available for the amphitheatre.
Maintenance and cleansing	The estate is managed by Broadgate Estates
Facilities/Security	Public conveniences are available on site and in Liverpool Street Station. CCTV and private security guards cover the whole area linking it into the City Police's secure network.

Recent streetscape initiatives

British Land, the owners of Broadgate, are investing *"upwards of £30 million"* in upgrading the pedestrian environment. The public space enhancement projects include

- Major improvements to key spaces.
- New signage throughout the estate to improve orientation and movement.
- New lighting to enhance the presence of Broadgate and increase security.
- Improved entrances and routes to improve access.

There is a perception that the level of investment and the ability to deliver and maintain the quality of the environment reflects the fact that Broadgate is a privately owned estate. The correlation between money and time spent and achieving improvements is thus regarded as fairly direct. A comparison was made with other assets in areas run by local authorities. Given the number of stakeholders involved, including the Police, the local authority and other businesses, the delivery process is much more complex and perceived as practically less effective.

Evidence of the value attached to the streetscape

British Land state that: "*A high quality streetscape and a proactive improvement programme adds to the value of a property, protecting and enhancing the value of your asset*".

They regard their investment as essential to support their positioning of Broadgate as the *'Capital of the City'. "It is a common sense approach, that if you don't improve the environment of a £2.6bn asset, it may devalue over time*". British Land recognise the 'interconnectedness' of the urban environment. Users and employees of Broadgate inevitably experience publicly owned and managed areas as part of their visit. British Land have thus worked in conjunction with the Corporation of the City of London and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council to improve the streetscape in surrounding areas eg Bishopsgate.

"Quantifiable data is difficult and indeed whilst improvements may improve yield, in the short term it is hard to prove that (they) improve rents. It has never been accepted that improvements can add x% or y% to the value" Nevertheless, maintaining a high quality environment is a key business tenet.

On this basis, British Land continues to make efforts to *"bring the same skills and improvements"* to other areas in which is owns properties.

Key lessons

- A high quality streetscape makes a major contribution to the image and retail and business success of a district. It provides a basis for growth.
- High levels of maintenance are as important as the quality of the design.
- Businesses are willing to make substantial contributions to improvement projects but only if they can be assured of the efficacy of the delivery mechanism.
- Private ownership and involvement has resulted in a higher quality public realm than in adjacent local authority managed streets. (See Llewelyn-Davies, 2002, "*Going to Town: Improving Town Centre Access*")

5.8 Case Study 7: Grosvenor, Mayfair and Belgravia

Mayfair and Belgravia are synonymous with some of the most expensive and desirable properties in the UK. Large parts of the areas are owned by the Duke of Westminster's property company Grosvenor, including 200 acres of SW1 and 100 acres of Mayfair.

Mayfair is bounded by Park Lane in the west, Oxford Street in the north, Regent Street in the east and Piccadilly to the south. Within its boundaries are a number of world-renowned hotels, the prestigious shopping streets of Bond Street and Savile Row, Sotheby's auctioneers and a range of attractive squares. Belgravia covers the western half of SW1 south of Buckingham Palace and is famous for its Embassies and diplomatic quarter. There are office, retail and residential concentrations as well as the better known functions.

Table 5.3: *Summary of the Public Realm*

Issue	Commentary
Public realm	The pedestrian environment in Mayfair and Belgravia is of average quality, suffering in relative comparison to the quality of the well-maintained buildings. A variety of public and private squares add interest to the street network.
Traffic	Traffic circles Mayfair along its boundaries of Park Lane, Oxford Street, Regent Street and Piccadilly. Belgravia contains and is bounded by a number of busy road sections including Grosvenor Place, Buckingham Palace Road and Pimlico Road. The high level of traffic flow at certain points is perceived as intrusive.
Accessibility	Victoria Rail and Bus Stations are located in the vicinity of Belgravia, linking the area by rail to the south coast and Gatwick Airport, and by coach to any part of the country. Both areas are bordered by a variety of tube stations providing links to every part of central and outer London. This is complemented by the comprehensive bus network.
Footway description	Some pavement areas have become cluttered, with a criticism that street features such as signage, paving materials and posters on telecom boxes are inappropriate. A variety of paving materials are evident with a tendency to promote the use of cobbling for mews and York Stone, or similar, for retail streets.
Lighting	Light fittings in a traditional and ornate style are incorporated into the streetscape.
Maintenance and Cleansing	Beyond the standard local authority provision there is private maintenance from the New West End Company in Mayfair and landlords like Grosvenor.
Security	The presence of diplomatic organisations and up-market hotels means there is a constant security presence in terms of police and private security. Furthermore, active street frontages provide natural surveillance.

Recent initiatives

A number of streetscape improvements have been undertaken in Mayfair and Belgravia recently, including:

- Mount Street in Mayfair – original railings reinstated in front of shops.
- Private roads upgraded in Belgravia and Mayfair.
- Hanging baskets throughout Westminster.
- Motcomb Street, off Belgravia Square - re-cobbling, York Stone pavements, new lighting and signage, one-way system implemented.
- Traffic calming in Belgravia – aims to keep traffic out, guided onto the red route.
- Landscaping of north garden of Grosvenor Gardens, Chester Square, Belgrave Square, Eaton Square, Victoria Square near Buckingham Palace Road.
- Orange Square – corner of Pimlico Road re-landscaped.
- Refurbishment of Hyde Park Corner under Wellington Arch.
- In Motcomb Street, Grosvenor and Benchmark collaborated and contributed £250,000 for street improvements.

Impact of the Streetscape

The appeal of the street environment is described as having a critical importance in attracting tenants, customers and retaining the image of businesses in general. The perception is that the reputation of the area is based on an "*immaculate traditional*" and high quality public realm. There is concern that the haphazard disregard for this image will undermine the reputation of the area and bring down the standard, which has served as its 'unique selling point' in the past.

The investments identified above are motivated by business' understanding of their "long-term interest" in the area and a desire to "put something back in". They also recognise the long-term economic value of a high quality streetscape. Grosvenor is one of the original shareholders in the New West End Company, which is attempting to attain BID status for Oxford, Regent and Bond Streets. However, interviewees are keen to note that:

"*They are not charitable organisations and will only contribute where it is appropriate. There is a concern that they do not contribute too much, too often – especially in the case of essential streetworks which are the responsibility of the local authority*".

There is also a recognition that streetscape is only one of the factors that drives the competitiveness of the area.

Evidence of the value of streetscape investment

There is a feeling that there has been an improvement following some of the investments listed above. For example:

“Following the re-landscaping of Orange Square, rents have been increased without any loss of tenants. Companies are willing to pay more to remain in an area that has a high quality streetscape or has received funding to enhance the quality.”

Similarly, in Motcomb Street, Waitrose has been attracted as a key tenant with the aspiration that they will provide a magnet for other tenants. The value of the streetscape is clearly exposed in areas where the quality of the streetscape is not optimal. The example of Oxford Street is cited where office rents are considerably lower than in the surrounding quieter streets where traffic is not an issue. The noise and emissions drive businesses to seal their frontages and use air-conditioning. This is the first step before office related industries relocate because their employees want to work in an environment without noise and pollution. In one Belgravia shopping street, one side of the street has been paved with high quality York Stone whereas the other has been asphalted over. Tenants on the asphalted side are unhappy at the image it conveys compared with the neighbours opposite.

Key Lessons

- The reputation of certain areas and the businesses that are resident in them is based on the quality of the public realm.
- Certain elements of streetscape impact more noticeably on different commercial sectors, e.g. traffic intrusion on offices
- Streetscape improvements create the impression of a prosperous area, and businesses in the same vicinity that have not benefited from this perception are keen to buy into it.
- Streetscape enhancement adds value to an area, the latter is associated with higher rents or the attraction of new tenants/businesses.
- The public realm as a whole impacts on business competitiveness but it is generally hard to determine which aspects have the most impact on particular commercial sectors or particular locations.
- Company contributions are not a replacement for local authority funding in the streetscape. Both sources of funding need to work together in a complimentary manner.

5.9 Case Study 8: London Eye, South Bank

British Airways London Eye is a privately funded partnership between British Airways, the Tussauds Group and Mark Barfield Architects. It is operated and managed as the London Eye Company by the Tussauds Group, whose other attractions include Madame Tussaud's, Warwick Castle and Chessington World of Adventures. There were 4 million visitors in 2002.

Table 5.4: *Summary of the Public Realm*

Issue	Commentary
Public realm	The public realm has been greatly improved by the recent upgrades in paving and street furniture in Queen Walk alongside the Thames. However the area around the Eye is undermined by Jubilee Gardens, owned by the Arts Council which is unlandscaped and appears to lack a purpose.
Traffic	Traffic management schemes around Belvedere Road means that there is no significant conflict between pedestrians and cars
Accessibility	The Eye is well served by bus, tube, train, coach and pedestrian access.
Footway	The Queen's Walk footway along the Riverside is of high quality due to the panoramas it offers and the absence of traffic and the recent up-grading.
Signage	Signage for attractions along the river is good although Tussauds Group is working with Westminster Council to improve signage from Westminster.
Maintenance and cleansing	Statutory responsibility for cleansing the area rests with Lambeth Borough Council. The Tussauds Group already run a cleansing team of 4-5 people around the Eye and this will be supplemented as described below.
Facilities	Public lavatories are provided for visitors but are also used by those visiting the area

Recent initiatives

Tussauds manage an in-house maintenance team to maintain the cleanliness of the street environment, emptying both London Eye and Council provided waste bins and encouraging visitors to dispose of their rubbish responsibly. They have also funded upgrades to the pedestrian and vehicle access routes along Belvedere Road and manage the Belvedere Road coach park. They are currently in negotiation with Lambeth Council regarding a section 106 contribution as part of extending the operating licence of the Eye. They propose a package of measures to a value of up to £1.5 million. The re-landscaping of Jubilee Gardens is the most significant element to address what is currently seen as *"a barren open space that doesn't help any of us (adjacent businesses)"* and *"doesn't lend itself to dwell time".* Re-paving, traffic management features and funding for initiatives to address illegal street trading will also be included. It is hoped that the Jubilee Park project will also receive contributions from Shell and the Arts Council. The money for the project and future maintenance will be placed in a Trust, as the London Eye wants "*to be sure that such a significant contribution will be used to benefit the area adjacent to the Eye."* The re-licensing application also includes an annual commitment of £200,000 for cleansing of Jubilee

Gardens and relevant sections of Queen's Walk and other environmental management initiatives including security.

Impact of the streetscape

The unique panorama of London is critical in attracting the visitors to the Eye but the London Eye Company recognise the contribution of the streetscape to the attractiveness of their product. Their interest in improving the quality of the streetscape has been heightened by the expectation of life extension of their operating licence (to 25 years with a 20 year review). They *"are now looking very seriously at what to do"* and are envisaging a level of commitment which would have been inconceivable under the 2 year extension originally discussed: *"When it's right on our doorstep, we want to influence the shape and development of the area."*

Evidence of the economic value of a high quality streetscape

Footfall has grown enormously as a result of the Riverside improvement strategies. The Eye estimates that there are 7.5 million visitors p.a. to the South Bank riverside. As a result it is estimated that up to 15% of Eye customers originate from those passing by. Where existing or planned streetscape improvements succeed in supporting the success of the Eye, they also contribute to the spin off effect that the Eye has created in the area. 20-25 businesses have sprung up. These businesses are very dependent on the Eye. McDonalds estimates that when the Eye is closed for annual maintenance, takings fall by 80%. Other business neighbours state:

"The British Airways London Eye has provided the energy for regeneration. It has brought over 3 million people to the area, increasing our business by a third." (General Manager, All Bar One)

"Business trebled overnight when it opened. The effect on the area has been fantastic; the South Bank has come alive". (Manager, Bar Med)

Key lessons

- The South Bank is a leading example of physical improvement-led growth.
- Improvements in the streetscape, which complement visitor attractions, can support not only the growth of the attraction itself but contribute to a virtuous circle of growth in the broader area.
- The quality of the streetscape is dependent on a high level of maintenance as well as urban design features.

5.10 **Case Study 9: South Bank Employers' Group, South Bank**

The walking environment of the South Bank must cater to residents, employees and visitors. Attractions such as the Oxo Tower, Tate Modern and the South Bank centre make a significant contribution to London's tourist offer. The South Bank is also home to some of the UK's leading businesses including IBM UK, Ernst and Young, Sainsbury's and P&O Developments. The improvements to the Riverside Walkway since 1997 provide an opportunity to examine how the streetscape impacts upon employees. This case study is derived from an interview with the South Bank Employers' Group (SBEG) and additional desk-based research.

Table 5.5: *Summary of the Public Realm*

Issue	Commentary
Traffic	The walkway is traffic free on the riverfront, and Upper Ground is traffic calmed.
Lighting	The walkway is well lit, particularly in areas of potential anti-social behaviour, such as under bridges.
Street furniture	Benches are provided throughout the walk with litter bins and planting at distinct intervals. Other seats are provided by the range of commercial premises along the route. Signage is provided regularly with maps and vista boards also located along the route.
Paving	Surfaces have recently been re-paved, with large initial capital investment.
Open Space	The Riverside Walk provides many benches for users to sit and relax. The area outside the National Theatre hosts free concerts in the Summer. The Bernie Spain Gardens provide the biggest area of green open space but they are currently undergoing refurbishment.
Accessibility	London Waterloo, Southwark, Westminster and London Bridge are the nearest tube stations. Numerous buses serve the area and there are also river shuttles along the River Thames. Cycle lanes are provided throughout the route. The new Hungerford Bridge has improved pedestrian access across the Thames.
Maintenance	There is a daily patrol of the area, cleaning signs, pruning trees and posting monthly updates about events and activities. There are some concerns with ongoing maintenance on the South Bank (see text below).

Recent initiatives

In 1994, the South Bank Environmental Improvement Report described the South Bank as "*bleak, disaggregated and hostile, lacking shops and street level activity, and difficult for pedestrians to find their way around*."

Building on an earlier study by Llewelyn-Davies and Imagination, it proposed an urban design strategy. As a result of business concerns, the hitherto informal

South Bank Employers Group was constituted as a company limited by guarantee as the basis for bidding for funding and implementing improvements to the walking environments. The Riverside Walkway improvements were begun in 1997 and have proceeded in phases since then. The re-paving and lighting improvement projects have been some of the most recent projects.

The experience of using the walkway to visit the area was described in the Evening Standard as "*extraordinary, with a 360-degree beauty and excitement (that) rivals Venice*."

The critical element is currently the quality of ongoing maintenance. There are concerns regarding the lack of maintenance of the public realm and as a consequence developing problems in certain areas.

Evidence of the value of an improved walking environment for employees

SBEG undertook employee surveys in 1996 and 2000, just before and after the main improvements had been made. The impact of the improvements was shown to be mixed. On the one hand: "*An increased number of respondents felt that the South Bank has a unique identity which distinguishes it from the rest of London"*.

An increased percentage, rising from 17% to 31% agreed that it is an attractive and thriving place for residents, employees and visitors. Employees were also spending more in the area particularly on arts venues and restaurants. However, as indicated above: "*A majority still did not feel that the area was attractive and thriving and an increasing number did not spend any leisure time there*".

However, the survey results must be treated with care. Firstly, the pedestrian environment is still perceived to be critical. All of the top three facilities that employees believed required improvements were linked to the experience of the streetscape: 46% mentioned personal safety, 41% mentioned pedestrian routes and 35% mentioned air quality. Moreover, the low usage of the facilities was not particularly linked to the perception of the environment. Two thirds stated that it was because they did not live in the area and half because they do not have enough free time. The main draw to the area for employees thus remains the employment generating businesses. As is suggested by the business-led nature of the SBEG, the quality of the environment is important to them and, by extrapolation, to their continuing presence in the area. The ongoing nature of the improvements should also be noted. The survey was undertaken in 2000, yet the most recent batch of improvements were completed towards the end of 2002. The Bernie Spain Gardens are yet to be completed. It would thus be of value to conduct another survey in 2004 to measure any changes in opinion.

Key lessons

- The streetscape serves many user groups. The needs and opinions of employers and employees are as important when considering the quality of the streetscape as the needs of visitors, residents or customers.

- However, low usage rates of facilities by employees is not the only measure of the quality of the streetscape. This may reflect the distribution of employees places of residence as much as the perception of the area itself.

- Upgrade projects for the public realm must be accompanied by arrangements for adequate and ongoing maintenance.

5.11 Case Study 10: National Gallery, Trafalgar Square

The National Gallery houses a permanent collection of over 2,000 paintings spanning the period from about 1250 to 1900. Over 4 million visitors a year visit the Gallery. Entry to the permanent collection is free. The Gallery is situated in Trafalgar Square and is also adjacent to Leicester Square. Since 2002, Trafalgar Square has been subject to an environmental improvement strategy as part of the World Squares initiative which is funded by the GLA. This case study focuses on the results of the changes to the pedestrian environment in Trafalgar Square to explore the benefits of significant investment.

Table 5.6: *Summary of the Public Realm*[13]

Issue	Commentary
Public realm	The public realm is of a monumental scale with fountains, listed monuments and vistas of public buildings including Buckingham Palace. However, the traffic and pollution undermined the area. The presence of flocks of pigeons although welcomed by some, also discouraged people from relaxing in the Square and could be frightening, especially for children. In addition to the Square, there are lawns outside the National Gallery which are widely used by tourists and residents to relax, wait for the buses, eat lunch etc.
Traffic	Traffic running around the square is not conducive to a good pedestrian experience and was described by the GLA as "dominant"[14]. For the National Gallery this situation was aggravated by the location of the bus stops for tour buses in front of the Gallery along the north side. In a 2002 visitor survey undertaken by the GLA, 55 % of those surveyed agreed that the traffic surrounding the Square was a problem[15].
Accessibility	Trafalgar Square is well served by rail, tube and bus.
Footway	The footway was previously very heavily congested due to the volume of different uses that a narrow pavement supported: visits to the Gallery, awaiting buses, general access etc.
Signage	Signage is good although some additional directions from Leicester Square may be helpful.
Maintenance and cleansing	The Square is overseen by the GLA whilst the roads and pavements remain the responsibility of Westminster Council. Maintenance is seen as critical with nearly 40% of respondents to the GLA survey stating that the Square could not be seen as "clean and tidy". The need to address pigeon guano and feathers represents a key drain on resources.
Security	The GLA visitor survey showed that Trafalgar Square was felt to be safe. The impression of a secure ambience is more evident relative to the nearby Leicester Square particularly at night time. Night time security is of relevance to the Gallery as they extend their opening hours particularly for exhibitions.

[13] This description reflects the situation prior to the current physical improvement strategy.
[14] TfL Street Management "Trafalgar Square is Changing for the Better"
[15] GLA "Squares Annual Report 2002: Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square Garden"

Recent initiatives

The aspiration is to reaffirm the role of Trafalgar Square as the heart of London, repositioning it as a destination in which visitors and tourists can relax and enjoy London. The key aspect of the improvement strategy is the removal of traffic from the north side and the creation of a grand pedestrian staircase to link the Square with the National Gallery. Extensive repaving, landscaping, lighting improvement and street furniture will be improved. Additional facilities will include a café, lifts for disabled access and public toilets.

As an adjunct to physical improvements, greater investment is being made in cleansing and maintenance. The appearance and cleanliness of the Squares is the responsibility of a Managing Agent who oversees and manages the work of all maintenance contracts and provides advice and support to the GLA. A team of heritage wardens provide information and advice as well as ensuring the safety of visitors and preventing damage to the historic monuments on the Squares. Since the Heritage Wardens have been on duty 24 hours a day, reported crime levels have fallen by 55%.

Impact of the streetscape

The Gallery is *"very enthusiastic"* about the plans. It was recognised by the Gallery that where visitors are tourists, those who have planned to visit the Gallery will do so whatever the environmental conditions. The critical streetscape element for such visitors is signage. However, it was believed the poor state of the environment prior to the improvements discouraged spontaneous visits from those who found themselves in the Square particularly those who alight from or are awaiting tour buses. The traffic on the north side was described as a *"motorway"* which discouraged people from *"straying across"* to visit the Gallery. The congestion of the walkways encouraged visitors or passers by to move on rather than halt to consider a visit or spend time (and money) in nearby businesses. The National Gallery welcomes the traffic management initiatives but remains very supportive of high levels of accessibility: *"It's no good improving the environment if you can't get to it (Trafalgar Square)."*

Evidence of the economic value of a high quality streetscape

The East Wing Project is a *"direct response"* to the improvements of Trafalgar Square. It encompasses the creation of an East Door, which will provide public at ground level from Trafalgar Square for the first time. Adjacent to the East Door, there will be a new café and gallery shop. The Gallery is also exploring how to use the opportunities presented by pedestrianisation, to improve its accessibility and extend its activities into the public realm. It is hoped that this will increase the visibility of the Gallery, and boost an understanding of its role as guardian of the Nation's paintings. The Gallery hopes to extend its welcome to the public into the surrounding areas. Options include extending the café out onto the forecourt, or erecting steps down from the portico into the Square. The Gallery is prevented by its charitable status from making a direct contribution to the improvements to the Square themselves but the willingness to raise the £21 million required for the East Wing project illustrates the extent to which the Gallery regards a revitalised public realm as important for its future development.

Key lessons

- A poor environment might not discourage visits by those with a pre-determined destination. However, an inhospitable environment undermines the opportunity for dwell time and discourages spontaneous visits to the detriment of surrounding business and tourist attractions.
- A good streetscape is one that is designed to accommodate the relevant mix of uses. This includes appropriate provision to support accessibility.
- Streetscape improvements can catalyse further investment. They must also be accompanied by investment in management and maintenance particularly where the area serves as a showcase for London and the UK.

5.12 Case Study 11: Burford and Piccadilly Circus Partnership, Piccadilly Circus

Piccadilly Circus forms a strategic hub in the heart of London's West End. Approached by six roads, which link it to Oxford Street, Soho, Trafalgar Square, Green Park and Leicester Square, it is not only a destination but a crucial through-route in the pedestrian hierarchy for central-west London. The familiar figure of Eros dominates the centre of the traffic-filled circus, which is surrounded by a number of commercial uses, of which the Trocadero is the largest and best known, containing a range of bars, restaurants, cinemas and other leisure activities. The range of activities within Piccadilly Circus and neighbouring areas combined with the good public transport links enhances the area's evening capacity and the opportunities and problems associated with that.

Table 5.7: *Summary of the Public Realm*

Issue	Commentary
Traffic	Traffic is a constant and inevitable intrusion for this main hub of central-west London. Buses provide much of the traffic and have designated lanes, as do cyclists.
Accessibility	Piccadilly Circus is served by Piccadilly tube station, with access to the Piccadilly and Bakerloo Lines, linking it to western, northern and southern parts of London. The bus network feeds through the area as well.
Footway description	Paving slabs cover most of the routes. Pavement widths vary and are sometimes inadequate to cover the volume of pedestrians especially in relation to the traffic congestion and speed.
Public space	The public space consists of the central hard civic space, with the well-recognised statue, but the majority of the area is taken up with road routes, bus lanes and a series of isolated islands for pedestrians. On-street clutter and hawkers proliferate.
Street furniture	The presence of some types of street furniture is, at times, perceived as a problem, with benches attracting tramps.
Lighting	Standard street lighting is placed throughout the area.
Maintenance and cleansing	The local authority and the Piccadilly Circus Partnership voluntary BID provide maintenance and cleansing. Wardens funded by the PCP monitor the area.
Facilities/Security	Public facilities are provided outside and within the Trocadero as well as in the Tube Station. It is deemed to be especially important in this area, as a lack of facilities motivates people to seek facilities elsewhere, with the result that they do not return. CCTV covers the whole area and is monitored from within the Trocadero building.

Overall the quality of the streetscape in Piccadilly Circus is described by interviewees as 'poor'. The pavements are overcrowded with poor quality lighting and a lack of direction signs to surrounding attractions. The result is a dirty and 'scruffy' environment that is uncomfortable, and at times threatening, for the pedestrian. Despite the attractions of Piccadilly Circus and its importance as a through-route and node of central London, residents and employees avoid the area, if they can, so the largest day-time footfall is through tourism. The area is one of the core centres for London's evening economy. However, behaviour associated with 24-hour activity and a lack of associated maintenance contributes to the perception of a poor and threatening environment.

Recent streetscape initiatives

In addition to statutory management by Westminster City Council, Piccadilly Circus is managed by a voluntary BID organisation, under the Circle Initiative[16], called the Piccadilly Circus Partnership (PCP). The PCP is a partnership of landowners and businesses based in the vicinity. These include Burford who own the Trocadero, British Land, Land Securities and McDonalds. Residents and councillors also sit on the PCP board.

The PCP area covers Coventry Street and has recently been extended to include Piccadilly Circus itself and the whole of Leicester Square. Using private sector and SRB funding a team of wardens and street cleaners has been established so as to provide enhanced maintenance and cleaning of the streets. PCP is a financial contributor to the West End CCTV Control Room which is housed in the Trocadero. PCP has extended the coverage of the West End CCTV Control Network by funding an additional camera. The lead organisations contribute significantly to the £500,000 annual budget, for instance, Burford provide £200,000 pa.

Impact of the streetscape

Although the streetscape is identified as “paramount” for attracting customers, tenants and staff to the area, businesses still locate in this area despite its visible external problems. One reason was identified as the economic potential of the area. Interviewees identified the potential high returns on investment if the current poorly maintained, but central area, could be turned round. Businesses are also aware that 50 million people pass through the area per annum regardless of the streetscape quality*.*

However, there is a desire to enhance this number, improve the reputation of the area and turn passers-by into retained customers. Improvement for Piccadilly Circus is being held back because investment in buildings will only serve to make the streetscape look worse. Therefore:

“*A circle of decline exists whereby until the streetscape is improved, the buildings are not improved either, and this adversely impacts on the image of the area*.”

The vision for the area outlined by interviewees tends to focus on small scale improvements supported by co-ordinated and improved maintenance. There is no desire to create a Covent Garden like space with lively public spectacle, as this is perceived as implying onerous new security and maintenance requirements.

[16] The Circle Initiative is the first programme of its kind to pilot ‘Business Improvement Districts' (BIDs) within the UK. Funded through the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) from the London Development Agency (LDA), it is led by Central London Partnership (CLP), with the City of Westminster as the accountable body. There are five partnerships - Better Bankside, Circle Waterloo, Holborn Business Partnership, Paddington Circle and Piccadilly Circus Partnership - that are being funded over a five year period from 2001. For more information, see www.c-london.co.uk

Evidence of the value of streetscape investment

The scale of the PCP investment illustrates the importance streetscape plays for business. "*There is a perception that business is improving with the investment going in, but that this is a long process, which will not have immediate results*."

Further evidence of the business commitment to streetscape is highlighted by the fact that the PCP is a pilot mechanism, with a voluntary set-up, devised in advance of any formal BID legislation. Landlords like Burford feel that the current legislation situation skewing payment for streetscape improvements towards tenants is "ridiculous" and they feel that they should be actively involved in the process as it is their assets that are most affected.

Key lessons

- Businesses acknowledge the value of the streetscape and are prepared to invest money and set-up partnerships to improve the public realm when it will obviously improve their business position.
- Poor streetscape counteracts the other natural business advantages of a centrally located and accessible area.
- Substantive improvement to the streetscape does not necessarily require large-scale investment in a re-designed public realm. Improved maintenance regimes can make a real difference.
- Given the importance of local authorities in the maintenance of streetscapes, a co-ordinated approach with a pro-active local authority is essential.

5.13 Case Study 12: The West End Theatre District

There are 37 commercial theatres in London's West End, offering around 40,000 seats. There are also 15 cinemas many with multiple screens, more than 1,000 premises licensed to sell alcohol with meals and 278 venues licensed for late-night music and dancing. The case study drew on information provided by the Society of London Theatre (SOLT), the trade association which represents the producers, theatre owners and managers of the major commercial and grant-aided theatres in central London.

Table 5.8: *Summary of the Public Realm*

Issue	Commentary
Public realm	There is a conflict between the needs and expectations of the West End's theatre audiences and others using the West End for other leisure purposes. Streets are overcrowded and populated with drunken patrons. There is evidence of drug dealing and some drug taking
Traffic	Traffic management has, over the years, been deployed to improve conditions for pedestrians through much of the West End. Where traffic congestion remains it is incompatible with a pleasant and safe walking environment.
Accessibility	The West End is reasonably served by tube and bus. However, leaving the area after shows is perceived to be difficult. Patrons may particularly feel uncomfortable waiting for night buses because of safety fears.
Lighting	Lighting is not consistently sufficient. Some individual theatres light their immediate vicinity but the area-wide improvement tends to be limited as ad-hoc investment may exacerbate the perception of the dinginess of the areas outside the illumination.
Maintenance and cleansing	Poor levels of maintenance adjacent to the side exits and backs of buildings
Security	Despite the relatively low level of reported crime, there may be a disproportionate fear of crime as a response to the experience of the streets at night time.

Recent initiatives

The perception is that the area has declined rapidly in the last four years. Some of the theatres have begun unilateral action. For example, the Really Useful Theatre Company will shortly begin a regular routine outside their theatres including:

- Steam cleaning pavements
- Jet blasting the street level of the theatre buildings
- Washing the illuminated bollards
- Fly poster and sticker removal
- Traffic patrols
- Flood lighting

- CCTV
- Hanging baskets

SOLT is also engaged in discussions with local authorities about how the area can be improved. It presents difficulties that the West End extends across three council jurisdictions. There is also a complex network of interests, e.g. CLP and Soho business partnership. This has tended to hinder progress in the past. There is an on-going dialogue with Westminster Council and discussions have recently begun with Camden Council and with the Mayor's Office. It is hoped that the current series of meetings will lead to some kind of position confirming a common purpose and future concerted action.

Impact of the streetscape

The environment is very important. SOLT feels that committed theatre patrons are still visiting *"despite the environment".* However, SOLT is concerned that visitor loyalty *"cannot be guaranteed"* if things do not improve. SOLT is particularly concerned that the streetscape will counteract attempts to secure new audiences. This is particularly important given the likely decline in international visitors in the light of the current global situation.

Evidence of the economic value of a high quality streetscape

The value of a vibrant theatre district to London is clear. An LSE/MORI survey for the Society of London Theatres showed that the total economic impact of West End theatre in 1997 was £1,075 million, which includes £250 million spent on tickets and £433 million on restaurants, hotels, transport and merchandise. It also generated 41,000 jobs. The theatre is also important in attracting foreign capital. 37% of overseas visitors cite theatres and galleries as "important" or "very important" in deciding to visit the UK and 30% of business visitors to London say that arts and culture are an important part of their visit.

No quantitative data is available concerning the impact of the streetscape in supporting this contribution to London's wealth, however, a visitor survey is currently in process. This will ask patrons what, if anything, they find unpleasant about the West End. The importance of the environment arises from *"a sense of inevitability of the argument."*

Anecdotally, some coach companies have said that: "*The number of coach trips to the West End is in decline. Some coach parties are tending to go to the theatre in the regions, e.g. Oxford, instead*."

Key lessons

- The quality of the streetscape is relevant to the vitality of the night time economy as well as day time economic activity.

- The quality of the streetscape is dependent on maintenance and behaviour management as well as urban design features.

- Individual businesses are willing to contribute to improving the streetscape, but in the absence of support and funding by local authorities, there may be negative feedback concerning future investment in the area as a whole.

5.14 Case Study 13: New West End Company, Oxford Street

The three streets of Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street are very well known in London, and throughout the UK, as retail destinations. In July 2000, the New West End Company (NWEC) was established as a voluntary Business Improvement District to ensure that the area consisting of Bond Street, Oxford Street and Regent Street remains a world class international shopping and visitor attraction. NWEC is a partnership of property owners and retailers in the West End. The existing Oxford Street and Regent Street business associations are represented. For this case study, a representative of NWEC was interviewed and this data supplemented by desk research.

Table 5.9: *Summary of the Public Realm*

Issue	Commentary
Traffic	Oxford Street is the subject of a ban on all traffic except buses, taxis and cyclists, and access for lorries during certain hours. However, the volume of these classes of traffic still results in frequent delays and congestion. The amount of traffic and associated pollution is seen as creating a 'joyless' and at times unsafe experience, which discourages people from staying in the public areas. Pavements on Oxford St and Regent St are frequently congested, especially so at peak times such as the weeks before Christmas.
Accessibility	The district is served by four Underground stations: Piccadilly Circus, Oxford Street, Marble Arch and Tottenham Court Road. There are numerous buses.
Footways and crossings	Footways have been paved in recent years in the western half of Oxford Street and in Regent Street. The quality in the eastern half of Oxford Street is noticeably poorer, and this reflects the generally more 'down market' shops in this area. Some significant improvements have been made to pedestrian crossing facilities, for example 'straight ahead' crossings instead of staggered crossings.
Public space	Cluttered streetscape, including market stalls, which are of an unattractive design, over stocked, replicating each other and blocking views and access. Limited physical means for staging events, promotions to improve attractiveness. Some long, daunting vistas down the main streets which may be off-putting for visitors.
Street furniture	Limited signage makes it difficult for pedestrians to know where they are and identify how to get to where they want to go.
Maintenance and cleansing	The level of street management is regarded as poor, and has led NWEC to fund a street warden initiative and a "Cleaner Streets Campaign".

Recent streetscape initiatives

In January 2003, NWEC announced that it had appointed architects HOK to help develop a masterplan for revitalising the West End district and ensuring it is the number one shopping and visitor attraction in the world.

The Masterplan will identify opportunities for improving all aspects of the district, including:

- Setting of buildings and the management of spaces, including street furniture and lighting.
- Public access to and enjoyment of the streets, both visually and environmentally.
- Traffic management: the maintenance of high volume public transport services and the examination of the potential for a sustainable local transport initiative.
- Pedestrian and cyclist access.
- Way-finding throughout the whole district.

NWEC is working with Westminster City Council, the Greater London Authority, the Mayor's Office, the Metropolitan Police, street associations, transport providers and London business groups to deliver the masterplan.

Evaluation of the impact of the streetscape

The poor quality of streets was seen as critical in the declining popularity of the Oxford Street area in favour of out of town malls. The streetscape was thus undermining the aspiration of the district to remain London's premier retail district. This concern was reported as leading to declining capital values.

Evidence of the value attached to the streetscape

£500,000 has been allocated to the masterplanning exercise. The funding for the proposed improvements will be in addition to this budget.

Key lessons

- Without the ability to provide an attractive shopping environment to consumers, Central London will become increasingly uncompetitive compared with out of town malls and other retail centres.

5.15 Case Study 14: Madame Tussaud's, Marylebone Road

Madame Tussaud's was established in the UK in 1835 and moved to its current location in 1884. It is now owned by the Tussauds Group whose other attractions include the London Eye, Warwick Castle and Chessington World of Adventures. It is visited by over 2 million visitors a year.

Table 5.10: *Summary of the Public Realm*

Issue	Commentary
Public realm	There is no dedicated public space around Madame Tussaud's
Traffic	Traffic flow around the attraction is heavy which when combined with the congested footways means that the area is not conducive to dwell time.
Accessibility	Madame Tussaud's is well served by tube and bus.
Footway	The footway is congested due to the volume of people using the street as a thoroughfare and the bus terminal at Baker Street as well as providing a key access route to Madame Tussaud's.
Signage	Signage to the attraction is quite good.
Maintenance and cleansing	Cleansing seen as critical, hence the investment described below. Maintenance is also important. Paving and signage were particularly identified as requiring on-going surveillance.

Recent initiatives

Tussauds Group have made improvements within and outside the main attraction to mitigate the low quality of the streetscape. An in-house maintenance team is responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the street environment, emptying both Madame Tussaud's and Council provided waste bins and encouraging visitors to dispose of their rubbish responsibly. They have improved the coach parking provision to limit the impact on the street of visiting parties. They have also opened up space inside the building to provide an off-street waiting area for visitors. Tussaud's accept the responsibility to help provide facilities to enable pedestrians to orientate themselves to the attraction. They would *"expect to fund (signs) and have done so in the past".*

Impact of the streetscape

The streetscape is perceived as having limited effect on the core business of Madame Tussaudss as visitors tend to come despite the environment. *"The measure is: does the streetscape put people off (visiting)? At the moment, I don't think it does".* However, the *"general ambience"* and the *"lack of public spaces"* means that the potential of the area around Madame Tussaud's to be a *"destination"* in its own right is limited. The streetscape is not conducive for increasing dwell time which might support spontaneous decisions by visitors to use other businesses in the area, or Madame Tussaud's own supplementary activities, such as their outside coffee bar.

Evidence of the economic value of a high quality streetscape

The correlation between a high quality streetscape and business success is illustrated by the level of investment made by Tussauds Group. In addition to the coach park and waiting area provision, the street cleaning team costs at least £60,000 p.a. Tussauds Group has also proactively sought in the past to develop the area around Alsop Place into designated public space. This idea will not now come to fruition due to traffic management changes.

Key lessons

- The quality of the streetscape is dependent on maintenance and behaviour management as well as urban design features.
- A poor environment might not discourage visits by those with a pre-determined destination. However, an inhospitable environment undermines the opportunity for increased dwell time and discourages spontaneous visits to the detriment of surrounding business and tourist attractions.

5.16 **Case Study 15: Heals, Tottenham Court Road**

The Tottenham Court Road area is primarily a retail and office district. It is known as a destination for high quality home furnishing and decoration. The Heals flagship store is located in a listed building. Other occupiers along the road include Habitat, The Pier, Purves and Purves and Cargo Homestore. It is also known for its provision of electrical goods stores. Restaurants and cafes proliferate in the side streets.

The case study centres on the public realm surrounding Heals and Habitat. The business perception of impact of the quality of the streetscape on economic vitality was obtained through an interview with the manager of Heals and the London Borough of Camden.

Table 5.11: *Summary of the Public Realm*

Issue	Commentary
Traffic	Tottenham Court Road is used intensively by pedestrians and road traffic. It is a one way street where traffic calming measures have been installed including pedestrian crossings and road narrowings.
Accessibility	It is served by three Underground stations: Goodge Street, Warren Street and Tottenham Court Road. There is a constant flow of buses through the road and cycle lanes are provided for the majority of its length.
Footway description	The footway is between 3 and 10 metres wide, averaging around 6m, surfaced in newly laid 'pimple' paving slabs for much of its route. There are a number of street traders selling fruit, flowers and consumer goods (e.g. bags, batteries, umbrellas). The footway outside Heals/Habitat was widened in 2002 as part of the remodelling of the junction with Torrington Place.
Public space	Whitfield Gardens: a public square near to Goodge Street Station. The design is rudimentary at best, the materials and furnishing used of poor quality, and it has been poorly constructed. Standing water occurs on the floor surface after rainfall.
Street furniture	Street furniture is limited and generally is found in the wider 'open' spaces such as Whitfield Gardens – some of this is provided by Café Nero for its customers. Most of the street furniture is road signage and telephone boxes. There are some direction arrows but these do not provide specific routes or highlight any of the local attractions.
Lighting	Standard street lighting lines the road.
Maintenance and cleansing	Standard local authority provision.
Facilities	Customer lavatories are available within some of the stores

Recent streetscape initiatives

The Whitfield Gardens public square was re-furbished in 2002. The refurbishment was subject to an open competition. An implementation budget of £250,000 was developed with the London Borough of Camden inputting £150,000. Heals, Purves & Purves and the American Church adjacent to the Gardens made donations. The aims of the refurbishment were to tackle issues such as poor design, noise, and the impact of numerous pigeons. Heals contributed financially

- in the region of £5,000-£10,000 - and was involved in consultation. They have been disappointed with the outcome, which is not felt to reflect the plans.

Evaluation of the quality and impact of the streetscape.

Interviews described the quality of the streetscape as poor. Key problems were identified as:

- The poor quality of the paving.
- High volume of traffic, which is particularly intrusive when walking on the narrow pavements (this perception may reduce following the introduction of the congestion charge).
- Dilapidation caused by lack of cleanliness, flyposting, poor state of repair of street furniture, presence of street vendors, prevalence of rough sleepers and beggars.

Impact of the streetscape

The streetscape was defined as of critical importance given that retailers succeed by being able to entice customers into an exciting environment.

"The streetscape is identified as particularly relevant for Heals' retail offer. Their target customer group expect a high quality shopping experience appropriate to the quality and price of Heals' product range. There is great concern that the quality of the urban environment in Tottenham Court Road fails to meet these expectations and may actively discourage potential customers."

It was recognised that it was difficult to quantify numbers of customers who have not visited the store because of their dislike for the streetscape. However, there are certainly particular instances of customers who stated that they would go to another store because Tottenham Court Road was "*such a dreadful place.*"

Evidence of the value attached to the streetscape

Heals' ties to Tottenham Court Road are historical rather than a reflection of satisfaction with the current streetscape. At the time of Heals' construction, great care was taken to ensure a high quality interface between the shop and the street.

"The priority that Heals places on a high quality environment is illustrated by their approach to expansion, where they expect a slick environment. We won't go into a site that has anything less than the very best (urban environment) we can find."

In Tottenham Court Road, their commitment is evidenced by their contribution to the Whitfield Gardens refurbishment. As a result of the limited success of this initiative, they remain "*Very interested (in improving the quality of the streetscape) but entirely cynical*." They would need to be assured of effective delivery capacity before making further contributions. The existence of a BID, with joint public and private funding, may be an effective delivery mechanism for future public realm improvements.

Key lessons

- The quality of the environment is important for retailers. Its importance increases for retailers positioned towards the luxury goods end of the retail offer.
- Greater commitment to quality is needed on the part of the public authority, especially when financial contributions are sought from businesses.
- Ineffective delivery mechanisms for streetscape improvements must be resolved as part of a strategy to improve the walking environment in London.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Good Walking Environments and Continued City Competitiveness

The interviews with businesses in London have highlighted the critical importance of the walking environment to continued economic success, across a wide range of interests, including major landowners, retailers, developers, and tourism and entertainment organisations. Excellence in the surrounding public realm is perceived to be associated with direct commercial benefit.

London's continued competitiveness, position as a World City, and continued attractiveness as a location for key commercial sectors, such as financial services, foreign investment and tourism, is in part dependent on a high quality public realm.

The inescapable conclusion from the survey and case study analysis is, however, that London's streetscape is often of poor or "tired" quality. This is particularly so in the case of streets and spaces for which local authorities are responsible. Resources are not always available for capital and revenue projects. This is less the case where private sector interests and money have been deployed, as in "privately owned public spaces" such as Broadgate and Canary Wharf.

The quality of the streetscape is judged not purely on the quality of the landscaping; the materials used, the design, the street furniture, etc. The level of maintenance is also fundamental. We have found no evidence that the poor quality of many public streets is the result of owners and tenants of businesses fronting those streets taking no interest in, or not caring about, the effect of this on their business. Not only is the quality of streetscape perceived and well understood, but there is a general willingness to contribute to improvements, in some cases involving very substantial sums of money.

It appears, therefore, that there is a substantial gap between the quality of public realm that businesses regard as important, and that currently able to be provided by the highway authorities. The vast majority of our survey respondents perceived the walking environment and public realm as important to their business image and economic success. Landowners such as Grosvenor and British Land, and retailers such as Heals are, however, at times disappointed with the standard of schemes when implemented.

There is some scepticism on the part of land owners and occupiers about the ability of highway authorities to deliver high quality street environments. The survey indicates that this may be "holding back" private investment in and contributions towards public realm improvements, that otherwise might be available.

The key lessons from the attitudinal interviews are:

- Landowners, developers and businesses clearly perceive the importance of streetscape in maintaining and enhancing the value of their assets.
- The existing or potential streetscape is an inherent part of a tenants' decision to locate in an area and is an important facet of continued economic success.
- An ongoing failure to improve the quality of the environment may lead to developers and businesses reconsidering their investment.
- Unless an attractive retail and business environment is provided for consumers and developers, central London will become increasingly uncompetitive compared with other centres and out of town malls.
- Businesses are willing to invest large sums in improvements, especially where they have control over, or confidence in, the delivery mechanisms.
- High levels of maintenance and revenue funding are as important as the quality of the initial design.

6.2 Moving Forward: Partnership Funding

The BIDs programme, s.106 agreements, Borough Spending Plans and other private initiatives. offer scope to tackle the problem of under investment in the walking and public realm environment in London. At the same time, such initiatives may be insufficient to bring about the general and widespread improvements that are required to achieve London's aspiration to be a world leader.

The investment in high quality design and construction that is apparent in privately owned spaces (such as office precincts, retail malls, and some mainline railway stations) needs to be replicated in the streets and spaces that are the responsibility of local authorities. Publications such as *New City Spaces* (Gehl and Gemzöe, 2001), the *Urban Design Compendium* (Llewelyn-Davies, 2000) and *Going to Town: Improving Town Centre Access* (Llewelyn-Davies, 2002) offer best practice design examples, and benchmarking with cities such as Barcelona, Copenhagen, Strasbourg and Freiburg provides the way forward for streetscape improvements in London.

Critically, the level of maintenance also needs to be improved and this presents a dilemma for the role of BIDs. Whilst local authorities have not been able to achieve the standards to which businesses aspire, it is questionable as to whether BIDs should assume the statutory functions. Even the less contentious initiatives, such as particular area improvements, also pose questions of accountability. Isolated improvements conducted by business in the absence of effective local authority leadership may have a negative impact on surrounding areas either making them appear more dingy or merely displacing anti-social activity elsewhere. Business interests in London strongly perceive the importance of the walking environment in London, witness Grosvenor and British Land:

"*The appeal of the street environment is described as having a critical importance in attracting tenants, customers and retaining the image of businesses in general."*

A high quality streetscape and on-going improvement to address areas adds to the value of a property and protects the value of your asset."

A partnership approach, with public and private involvement, will be the best way forward, with a consortium of interests brought together, tackling local problems and implementing best practice area-wide improvements. London's future pedestrian and public realm renaissance can, and should be, of exemplary practice quality, to act as a catalyst and inspiration for towns and cities throughout the UK and further afield. As this study has shown, business interests perceive such future improvements to be critical to the continuing competitiveness of London and position as a World City.

Annexes

Annex 1: Acknowledgements

This research study has been carried out for Central London Partnership by consultants Llewelyn-Davies.

Project Team

Tim Pharoah, Robin Hickman, Eleanor Purser and Will Teasdale.

Client Review

Bob Coe, Central London Partnership.

Photo Credits

Photos by Ben Castell, Eleanor Purser, Will Teasdale and Canary Wharf Management Ltd.

Survey Respondents

CLP and Llewelyn-Davies wish to express their gratitude to all respondents for their interest in the project and time given freely.

Central London Partnership

Central London partnership is comprised of a range of public and private sector organisations which are either directly responsible for providing services within the central London area or are committed to its future success and viability. CLP membership includes the eight central London local authorities: London Boroughs of Camden, Islington, Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth, the Cities of London and Westminster and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. CLP aims to make central London a better place to live, work, invest or visit.

Llewelyn-Davies

Llewelyn-Davies is a multi-disciplinary practice specialising in transport and land-use planning, urban design, economic development and regeneration, architecture, health services planning and graphic design. The firm is one of the UK's foremost planning practices which over the last 30 years has developed an unparalleled record of urban policy formulation and master planning of strategic areas and brownfield sites; of working at plan implementation with private sector developers; and of high quality report production.

The firm is at the cutting edge of emerging urban planning and transport policy work, for example: 'Going to Town, Improving Town Centre Access' (a companion guide to PPG6), the'PPG13 Best Practice Guide', 'Planning for Sustainable Access Best Practice' and 'Transport Assessments' (companion guides to PPG13), ‘Methods for Determining Parking Standards’; the ‘Urban Design Compendium’ and ‘Delivering Mixed Use in Town Centres’. The Sustainable Residential Quality work, which we have recently completed, has fed into and is acknowledged in the Government White Paper: “Planning for the Communities of the Future”. In addition, ‘Better Places to Live: By Design’ was published as a companion guide to PPG3.

Our studies have been recognised as exemplifying good practice principles by Government in the White Paper ‘Planning for the Communities of the Future’, in ‘PPG3 Housing’ and in the ‘Draft RPG9 for the South East’. The Practice was represented on the Urban Task Force.

Economic studies are an important component of much of our work and the practice has extensive experience in economic demand studies, analyses of regional economies and investment potential, and the impact of policy on local and regional economies. For example, see: ‘Four World Cities’ and ‘a Socio-Economic Assessment of London’.

Our national urban planning and regeneration experience includes master planning, development frameworks and urban design guidance on major projects such as Merseytram, Granton, Clydebank, Cardiff Bay, Ravenscraig, Port Greenwich, Barking Reach, Brixham Harbour, Lower Lea Valley, Orgreave Colliery, The Royal Arsenal Woolwich and many more. The firm is at the forefront of Urban Villages planning and has been planners and urban designers on three Urban Village projects in the last two years: Gateshead (St James), Wolverhampton (St Johns) and Plymouth Devonport.

Annex 2: Telephone Survey

The survey below illustrates the generic questionnaire used for all interviews. Certain questions e.g. question one were omitted and others tailored e.g. question five, dependent on the business activity of the interviewee

Name	
Name of Business	
Position in organisation	

Q1 Overall how would you rate the quality of the streetscape in which you are located?

1. ☐ Excellent
2. ☐ Good
3. ☐ Fair
4. ☐ Poor
5. ☐ Very Bad

Comments...
....
....
....

Q2 In general, how important is the quality of the streetscape in the area surrounding your properties for the following aspects of your business model? (1 = unimportant, 5 = important)

Aspect	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Attracting tenants/customers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attracting or retaining staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Image of the business in general	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other………………………………	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q3 How influential is the quality of the streetscape in the following? (1 = unimportant, 5 = important)

Aspect	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Decision to locate?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Decision to remain in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Decision to invest in the buildings?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q4 How important are particular elements of the streetscape for your business and why? (1 = unimportant, 5 = important)

Aspect	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Wider footways	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Better quality paving	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Trees and planting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Street lighting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Street furniture (benches, litter bins)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clear direction signs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Less intrusive road traffic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Improved maintenance & cleansing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Facilities for visitors (toilets, shelter)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q5 How do you rank the quality of the streetscape compared with other aspects of the area when making business decisions about location?

Streetscape is:	Less important	About the same importance	More important	Don't know
Proximity to the same type of shops/ businesses	☐	☐	☐	☐
Proximity to other shops/businesses in general	☐	☐	☐	☐
Proximity to services eg banks, restaurants	☐	☐	☐	☐
Convenience from places of work	☐	☐	☐	☐
Proximity to public transport hubs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Presence of lively public spaces (open air cafes, street performances etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visual attractiveness provided by other buildings (shop windows, architectural features)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Proximity to tourist attractions (museums, galleries etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reputation of the area	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q6 Has there been any recent investment in street quality near one of your businesses?

1. ☐ Yes ➔ Go to Q7a
2. ☐ No ➔ Go to Q9

Describe:

………
………
………

Q7a Did such investments improve the trading position?

3. ☐ Yes ➔ Describe and indicate whether this is quantifiable or subjective
4. ☐ No
5. ☐ Don't know

....
....
....

Q7b Did such investments improve trading in the area generally?

6. ☐ Yes ➔ Describe and indicate whether this is quantifiable or subjective
7. ☐ No
8. ☐ Don't know

....
....
....
....

Q8a Did your business contribute or initiate to these street improvements?

9. ☐ Yes ➔ Go to question 7a
10. ☐ No ➔ Go to question 7b

Q8b What type of contribution was it?

11. ☐ Direct financial contribution
12. ☐ Financial contribution through a BID or equivalent
13. ☐ Consultation
14. ☐ In kind contribution. Describe ....
15. ☐ Funded as part of redevelopment.
16. ☐ Other. Describe ....

Q9 Were you invited to contribute?

17. ☐ Yes
18. ☐ No

Q10 Would your business consider contributing financially to the cost of future improvements?

19. ☐ Yes ➔ go to question 11
20. ☐ No ➔ go to question 12

Q11 What level of financial contribution do you might be reasonable?

....

Q12a Are you currently a member of a Business Improvement District or local business association?

21. ☐ Yes ➔ Describe and go to Q11
22. ☐ No ➔ Please go to 10b

Q12b Would you join if one was available?

23. ☐ Yes
24. ☐ No
25. ☐ Don't know

Q12c Do you have a company policy on participation in BIDs?

....

Q13 Do you have any other comments?

Annex 3: Useful References

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