BPLN0039_21-22_RDZZ9

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Examining Sense of Place in High Streets: A Study of Two London High Streets

RDZZ9

Date: 04/09/2022

	Word count
Main body of dissertation	10,999
Appendices	2482

Being a dissertation submitted to the faculty of The Built Environment as part of the requirements for the award of *MSc Urban Design and City Planning* at University College London:

I declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and that ideas, data, and images, as well as direct quotations, drawn from elsewhere are identified and referenced.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I am sincerely thankful and grateful for all the support and advice I received from my dissertation supervisor, Dr Juliana Martins. Your guidance and suggestions have proved to be invaluable for this research. Secondly, I would like to thank all participants of this study who dedicated their time to help me answer my research question; without your responses, this dissertation would not have succeeded. Lastly, I want to thank my loved ones and friends, including my classmates from this course for their support and company.

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ACRONYMS

TWHS – Totteridge and Whetstone High Street

MHS – Marylebone High Street

SOP – Sense of place

ABSTRACT

Within urban design and planning schools of thought, high streets have typically been studied for their commercial and transportation functions. However, there are many other significant roles that high streets play in local communities which influence a sense of place (SOP). Although recent scholarship has acknowledged the importance of examining what high streets may mean to people, few empirical studies have actually explored how SOP can be supported in high streets through physical, social, and emotional attributes. To fill this research gap, this dissertation adopted an analytical framework exploring the 'activities', 'meaning', and 'built environment' dimensions of SOP. This framework was used to explore the elements that contribute to SOP in two London high streets, Totteridge and Whetstone High Street (TWHS) and Marylebone High Street (MHS). Through the analysis of secondary data and observations, an exploratory overview was provided of the case studies. Then, interview and mental mapping findings were analysed thematically to come to a conclusion. The findings indicate that: (i) despite locational differences, SOP is supported in similar ways for both high streets, (ii) 'activities', 'meaning', and 'built environment' dimensions all contribute to SOP but 'imageability and memorability' and 'landmarks' indicators did not contribute in the ways proposed in previous literature, and (iii) when high streets are not experiential places, they are not always essential for forming a resident's SOP in an area.

1. INTRODUCTION

Discussion on SOP in High Streets

Historically, the UK's high streets evolved from towns and villages with thoroughfares containing mixed uses (Vaughan, 2015a). Today, high streets continue to be a unique characteristic of the UK's urban fabric and its planning system (Carmona, 2015). The high street is usually discussed and examined in relation to its traditional characterisation, as a centre of retail activity and a movement corridor (Hubbard, 2017). However, recent scholarship has identified the undervalued role that high streets play in forming a centre of local community, identity, and SOP (LGA, 2022). Indeed, suburban high streets have been specifically recognised as an integral place of civic life compared to city centre high streets (Vaughan, 2015b). Nonetheless, limited research exists for understanding high streets as a *place* and its value in influencing SOP. Comparisons of different types of high streets based on their contextual location, specifically whether they are inner or outer city high streets, is also lacking in current research. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the conceptual aspect of what different types of high streets mean to residents, using a framework that examines physical, social, and emotional dimensions of SOP.

Research Aim, Question and Objectives

This research aims to examine the elements that contribute to SOP in high streets from the perspective of local residents.

Based on this aim, the research question is: What is the role of local high streets in forming people's sense of place?

To answer this research question, the objectives are:
- To explore the dimensions of people's sense of place in relation to high streets
- To critically evaluate and contrast people's sense of place for an inner and outer London high street
- To identify attributes of the built of environment and characteristics of high streets that support sense of place

Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation contains six chapters. Chapter 2 reviews prominent literature around high streets and SOP, revealing how high streets could be conceptually explored in future research by using an analytical framework. Chapter 3 describes the methodological considerations, comprising the research design, case study selection, how data will be collected and analysed, and any limitations or ethical considerations of this study. Chapter 4 presents an overview of the case studies, TWHS and MHS, including an exploratory analysis of observations and secondary data. Chapter 5 discusses the analysis of interview findings based on the methodological SOP framework adapted from the literature: 'activities', 'meaning', and 'built environment'. Chapter 6 concludes this dissertation by providing a summary of the study, reflections, and future recommendations for research and policy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the academic discourses most prevalent for this topic, including urban planning, design, geography, and environmental psychology. First, high streets are explored through their different roles. Then, changes and the decline of certain high streets is discussed. Finally, the concept of SOP is reviewed, critiqued, and is argued to be an appropriate way of examining high streets in future research.

<u>High Streets and Their Functions</u>

Different types of streets in cities fulfil various purposes to cater for multiple needs of the population. People rely on streets for movement, public space, and engaging in 'functional, social and leisure activities' (Mehta, 2009: 380). A high street in the UK, or what is known as the 'main street' in the US, is a focal point for fulfilling these different roles due to its convenient location for residents and its concentration of diverse businesses. Historically, high streets have been considered the commercial activity hub of an area, providing a range of services and employment (Carmona, 2015). These services cater for the daily needs of people but are frequently complimented by leisure amenities and residential uses to create a mixed-use street (Talen and Jeong, 2019). High streets have also traditionally functioned as centres of through movement in street networks (Hubbard, 2017); high streets form a key transport point that connects to the wider urban fabric (Carmona, 2015). For a long time, high streets were seen as places of economic activity or movement; indeed, other roles were overlooked in previous literature and underestimated in practice (Burdett, 2021; LSE Cities, 2017; Scott, 2015, Mehta, 2009). However, recent literature and policy has started to recognise the significance of social and experiential functionalities of high streets (Mehta, 2009; Vaughan, 2015a; Talen and Jeong, 2019; LGA, 2022). Diversity in these functions is becoming increasingly important for the survival of high streets now, arguably even superseding retail functionality (Figure 1) (Talen and Jeong, 2019; LGA, 2022).
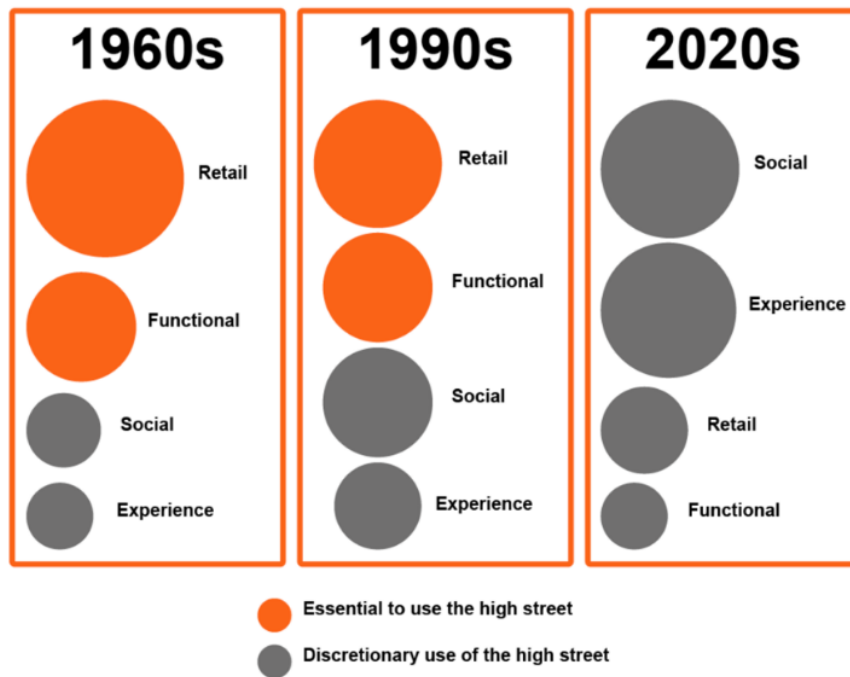
Figure 1: Changing role of high streets in the UK (LGA, 2022)

The social uses of high streets enable a sense of local identity, community, and civic life to be formed (LSE Cities, 2017; Mehta, 2014; Griffiths et al, 2008). Social infrastructures on high streets provide spaces for face-to-face interactions, public life, and conviviality to be supported (Jacobs, 1961; Latham and Layton, 2019). These interactions are particularly significant for vulnerable groups of society, e.g. the elderly, where shopping can be a regular (or only) way of socialising with others (Carmona, 2015). Connections developed by frequent users of a place are valuable as they contribute to shaping local identity (Jiven and Larkham, 2003). To foster a sense of community and 'economic resilience, place-based interdependence and mutual support', Talen and Jeong (2019: 208) stress that small-scale, independent businesses run by locals on UK high streets, and main streets in the US, are crucial. Ultimately, these social and experiential factors influence not only a sense of community, but also a SOP and quality of life for many users of high streets (GLA, 2014). While it has become evident that non-functional roles are essential to the survival of high streets, there is limited research on how high streets can be examined in a more rounded way (Palaiologou, 2015; Wrigley et al, 2015). By doing

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so, a greater understanding will come of high streets from a more inclusive perspective.

<u>Changing and Declining High Streets</u>

The UK's high streets have transformed in reaction to wider socio-economic, political, technical and behavioural changes (Hughes and Jackson, 2015). This means that some high streets have been threatened and struggled. Sparks (2021: 1) argues that the narrative, 'the death of the high street', has prevailed in literature and has resurged with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, high streets are often viewed as a 'wicked problem' for municipalities (Carmona, 2015). The significant factors which have led to changes in UK high streets can be traced back to the 1980s, through to the 2020 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns (Figure 2).
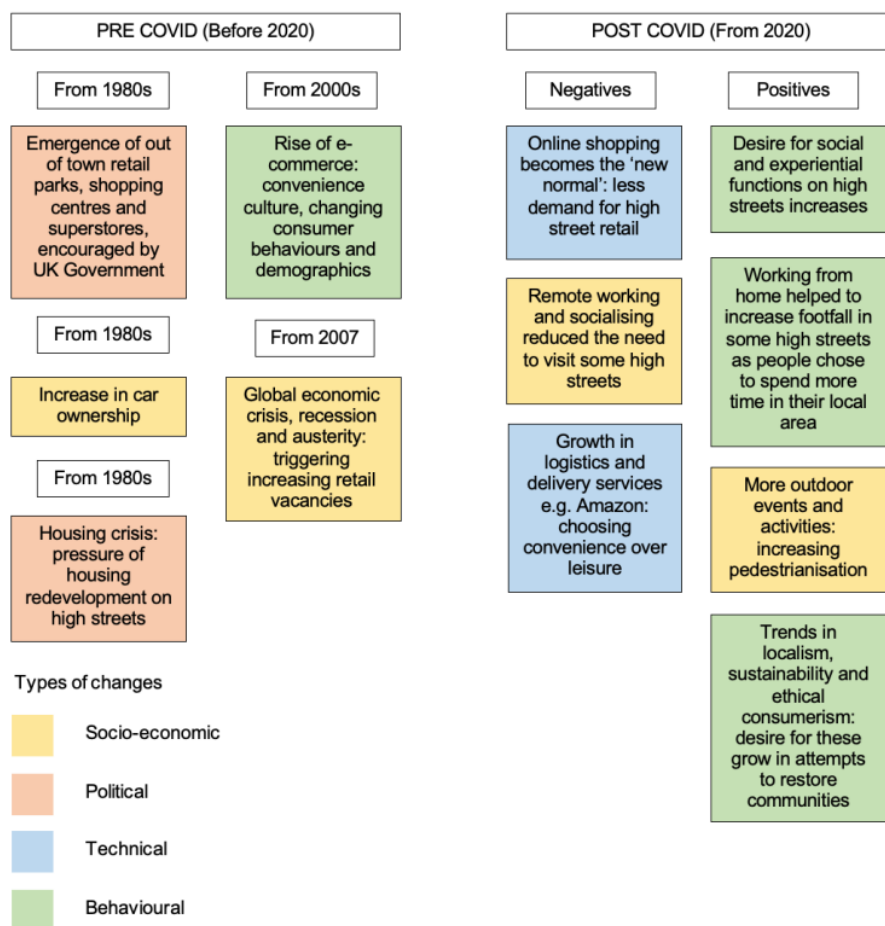
Figure 2: Changes affecting high streets before and after COVID-19 (Source: author)

One of the most common influences discussed in literature is the emergence of out-of-town retail parks (Dawson, 1998; Wrigley et al, 2015; Sparks, 2021; GLA, 2014). Out-of-town centres were facilitated by the UK government in the 1980s as deregulation under the Thatcher era meant this was a cheaper alternative to in-town shopping centres (Lowe, 2005). These shopping destinations met a variety of needs and so consumers had less incentives to visit their local high streets (Wrigley et al, 2015). In turn, high streets struggled to maintain a steady footfall. Another contributing factor was the rapid increase of car ownership in the 1980s (Figure 3); this exacerbated decreased footfalls in high streets as more people could easily drive to out-of-town centres (Sparks, 2021; Carmona, 2015). Together, these aspects fuelled the separation of retail from place. The housing crisis, particularly in London, also had substantial impacts on high streets. Coupled with the 'Right to Buy' scheme introduced in 1988, there has been an increasing pressure to redevelop retail and office spaces on high streets into residential uses to meet the demand for housing, as planning permission is no longer required in this context (Carmona, 2022). Almost 70% of high streets in London are outside a town centre boundary, meaning they often lack official policy regulation and are susceptible to redevelopment (LSE Cities, 2017).
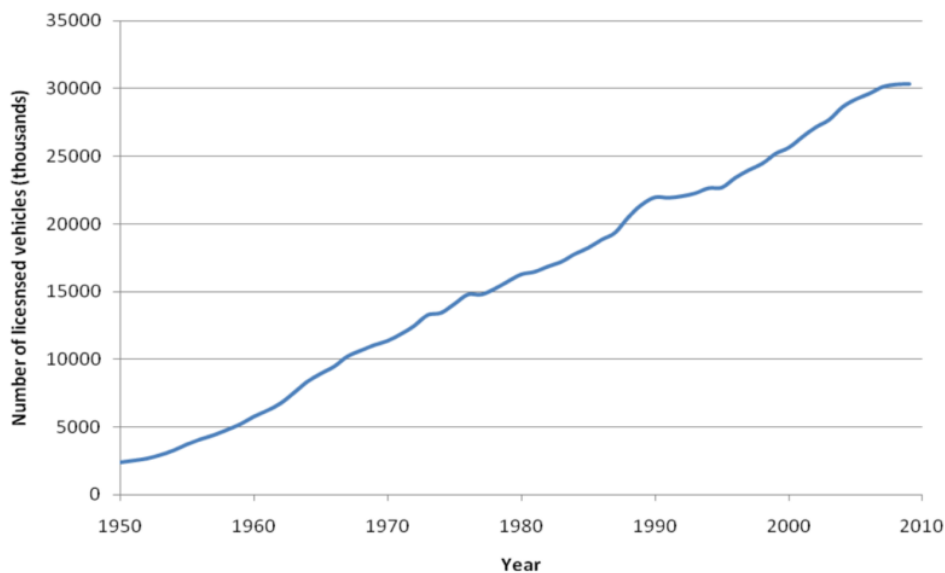
Figure 3: Privately owned vehicles in the UK (Department for Transport, 2010)

The rise of a 'retail apocalypse' accelerated by digital commerce has also been widely discussed (Florida et al, 2021: 17). Since the 2000s, there has been a significant growth in e-commerce and 'convenience culture' (Florida et al, 2021: 9). With technological advances, online shopping has become an easier, cheaper and time-efficient option for consumers (Pragmatix Advisory, 2021; Wrigley et al, 2015). The global financial crisis from 2007 and the following years of austerity also severely impacted high streets. As consumers' disposable income decreased, high streets experienced a doubling in vacancies from 2008-2013 (Wrigley et al, 2015). However, some argue that these factors provide an opportunity for high streets to adapt (Pragmatix Advisory, 2021; Florida et al, 2021). For example, high streets could work *with* online shopping, rather than against it, by providing more social and experiential functions to combat the effects of the retail crisis (Wrigley et al, 2015).

Nonetheless, the pandemic in 2020 and subsequent lockdowns exacerbated existing issues. The pandemic's restrictions prompted sharper disruption to high streets, worsening previous trends of online shopping and delivery services. E-commerce arguably became the 'new normal', fuelling the closure and under-occupancy of many businesses (Nanda et al, 2021: 113). Similarly, logistics and delivery services saw an intensified growth with the 'pandemic-boom' (Carmona, 2022: 3). As people increasingly chose the safety of deliveries, many high street shops failed to survive increased business costs and reduced consumer demand (Florida et al, 2021). As people avoided busier public spaces, remote working and digital socialising grew considerably, further diminishing the need to visit high streets (Enoch et al, 2022). Indeed, due to health concerns, utilitarian shopping took priority over non-essential shopping, leisure, and socialising (LGA, 2022).

Interestingly, some positives did come from the pandemic and even helped the 'revival' of certain high streets (Phillips et al, 2021). Some high streets benefitted from remote working as residents spent more time in their local area; as restrictions were lifted, the desire for social gatherings on high streets increased, providing an opportunity for revitalisation (Nanda et al, 2021). Economic geographers Florida et al (2021) and the LGA (2022) argue there will be less demand for retail and more demand for leisure amenities now, as shopping will no longer be the primary purpose of visits to high streets. Indeed, high streets have adapted to cater for the increasing

demand in outdoor events through pedestrianised public spaces (Florida et al, 2021). Within urban design literature, it has become apparent that people want places like high streets, which are intertwined with daily life, to be pedestrianised (Carmona, 2022). This could aid high streets in becoming gathering spaces and provides the opportunity to adapt buildings to new uses (Burdett, 2021). Trends in localism have also been accelerated by COVID-19 as more people wish to support small, independent businesses (Carmona, 2022). This creates a competitive advantage for businesses, provides more opportunities for social experiences, and can help rebuild communities (Talen and Jeong, 2019; Sparks, 2021).

Many people are now keen to go out more as restrictions have been lifted; this has particularly benefitted areas where the desire for SOP and community has been emphasised (LGA, 2022). This highlights how the narrative that all high streets are declining is not necessarily true and the decline has not been uniform (Sparks, 2021). Within urban transport studies, Enoch et al (2022) argue that not all forces of change in the UK were negative for high streets and actually, some places thrived and showed resilience; they found that high streets within suburban centres revived quicker than those within city centres as they relied less on commuters and had more remote workers spending time in their locality. Indeed, Vaughan's (2015b: 3) research illustrates how outer London high streets are often 'the living heart of the suburb' with experiential diversity and sustainability in their nature, compared to inner city high streets. Arguably, the pandemic highlighted the importance of adapting high streets in the future to provide a mixture of functions that can contribute to reviving a SOP. Whilst this is consensual amongst different scholarships, there is nonetheless a lack of understanding of what elements contribute to supporting SOP in high streets.

<u>Sense of Place</u>

There are many ways in which researchers have tried to understand what places mean to people and how this meaning is formed (Shamai, 1991; Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001; Punter, 1991; Relph, 1976; Montgomery, 1998). One of these ways is through the concept of a SOP; this can broadly be defined by the meaning formed by a person towards a place which develops over time through experiences, activities, and involvement in the place (Nelson et al, 2020). Arguably, using the SOP

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concept in the discussion of high streets is an appropriate way of exploring the less-researched side of why people feel connected to their local high street. SOP has been studied across several fields including urban design, planning, geography and environmental psychology (Nelson et al, 2020). Despite this, SOP remains a complicated, 'fuzzy' concept which lacks a coherent understanding (Stedman, 2002; Nelson et al, 2020). Indeed, the theory has been divided between phenomenological and positivistic approaches (Shamai, 1991; Stedman, 2002). Initially, studies around SOP were mainly positivist as phenomenological methods were viewed as less rigorous, however, phenomenological studies have become increasingly significant as their academic importance has been realised (Altman and Low, 1992).

SOP is further split into two types of frameworks within the literature. Within urban design and planning schools of thought, a framework around 'activities', 'meaning', and 'physical setting' constitutes how SOP is measured (Figure 4). However, in the fields of environmental psychology and geography where the experiential aspect of SOP is typically explored, the concepts of 'place attachment', 'place identity', and 'place dependence' have served as part of a framework to assess SOP (Figure 5) (Carmona, 2010; Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001).
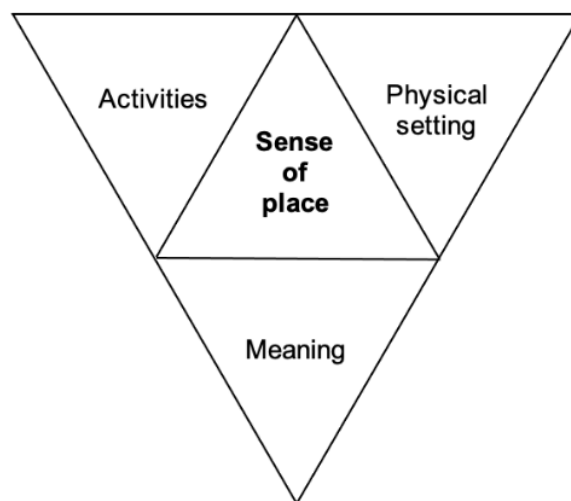
Figure 4: Activities, meaning, physical setting framework (Adapted from Punter, 1991)
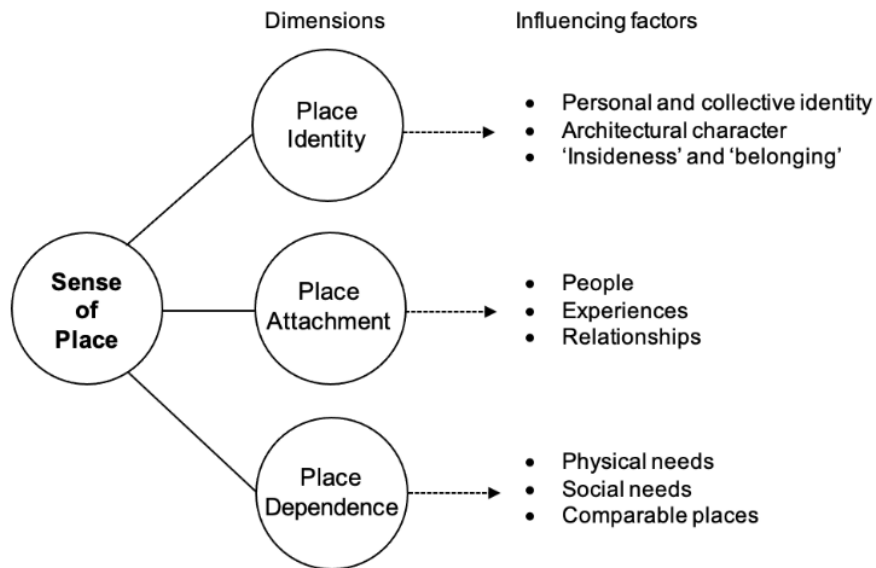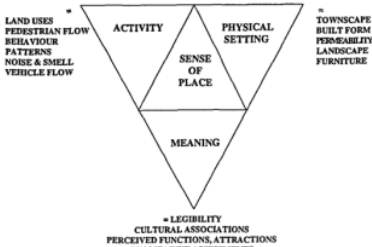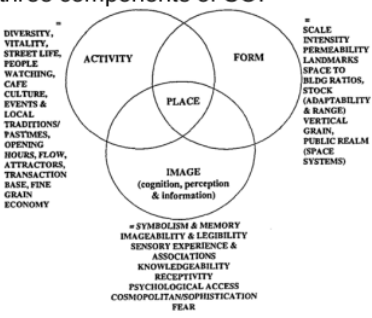
Figure 5: Place identity, attachment and dependence framework (Adapted from Aly and Aly, 2021)

Whilst both frameworks are prevalent in SOP literature, there are discrepancies within them that make defining and measuring SOP even harder. Nelson et al (2020: 239) contend this has resulted in an interchangeable 'use of multiple and inconsistent terms to ostensibly refer to the same concept of SOP'. For example, within Figure 5's framework, each dimension is also theorised separately and often measured differently to each other. Some authors even argue that place attachment, which is highly popular in the literature and has its own research area, actually comprises the other dimensions, place dependence and identity (Jorgensen and Stedman 2001; Williams and Vaske 2003). Figure 5's framework has also been criticised for disregarding the role that the built environment plays in forming a SOP (Stedman, 2003; Hummon, 1992; Eisenhauer et al, 2000; Jiven and Larkham, 2003). Montgomery (1998) recognised that few urban designers had managed to explore both physical and experiential aspects of SOP in previous studies. Therefore, he proposed the form, activity, and image framework. This framework has also differed in its theory and components throughout the literature, thus highlighting further inconsistencies (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of seminal SOP literature theories (Source: author)

Authors	Theory and diagrams	Components of SOP	Field of study
Lynch (1960)	*Environmental image:* romantic subjective view stressing the psychology of place	Imageability, memories, and legibility	Urban planning
Relph (1976)	*Identity of place:* places are constructed out of lived experiences and meanings	Ways of sensing a place through 'insideness, belonging and complete identity'	Geography
Canter (1977)	*Nature of place:* places are made of human conceptions and images ACTIVITIES — PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES — PLACES — CONCEPTIONS	Activity, physical attributes, and conceptions	Environmental psychology
Punter (1991)	*SOP:* SOP is a continuity and is integral in an area's narration LAND USES, PEDESTRIAN FLOW, BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS, NOISE & SMELL, VEHICLE FLOW — ACTIVITY — PHYSICAL SETTING — TOWNSCAPE, BUILT FORM, PERMEABILITY, LANDSCAPE, FURNITURE — SENSE OF PLACE — MEANING — = LEGIBILITY, CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS, PERCEIVED FUNCTIONS, ATTRACTIONS, QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENTS	Activity, physical setting, and meaning	Urban planning
Montgomery (1998)	*Urban SOP:* successful and high quality urban places combine the three components of SOP DIVERSITY, VITALITY, STREET LIFE, PEOPLE WATCHING, CAFE CULTURE, EVENTS & LOCAL TRADITIONS/ PASTIMES, OPENING HOURS, FLOW, ATTRACTORS, TRANSACTION BASE, FINE GRAIN ECONOMY — ACTIVITY — FORM — SCALE, INTENSITY, PERMEABILITY, LANDMARKS, SPACE TO BLDG RATIOS, STOCK (ADAPTABILITY & RANGE), VERTICAL GRAIN, PUBLIC REALM (SPACE SYSTEMS) — PLACE — IMAGE (cognition, perception & information) — = SYMBOLISM & MEMORY, IMAGEABILITY & LEGIBILITY, SENSORY EXPERIENCE & ASSOCIATIONS, KNOWLEDGEABILITY, RECEPTIVITY, PSYCHOLOGICAL ACCESS, COSMOPOLITAN/SOPHISTICATION, FEAR	Activity, form, and image	Urban design

Although Lynch (1960) and Relph (1976) were mainly concerned about experiential aspects of SOP, notably image and place itself, they nonetheless contributed to the humanistic debate around SOP. Canter (1977) took this forward by bridging the gap between physical and experiential relationships, creating the first framework 'nature of place'. Punter (1991) then placed these components within the urban planning field; he provided indicators of each component which added depth to this research. However, many indicators were vague (e.g. qualitative assessments) and arguably misplaced (e.g. having legibility in the 'meaning' component). Whilst Montgomery (1998) expanded on these indicators, many were still unclear in their meaning (e.g. intensity, café culture) and each indicator could have benefitted from a clear definition. Ultimately, there are flaws in both types of frameworks. However, many scholars concur that SOP is multidimensional and researchers must be strategic when deciding the dimensions they wish to explore (Nelson et al, 2020; Depriest-Hricko and Prytherch, 2013; Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001). As Montgomery (1998) argues, a place-making approach to public spaces, such as high streets, can help in fostering an urban SOP; if the physical, social, and emotional factors of SOP are considered carefully in future high streets, this could contribute to high quality places being formed.

Conclusion

It has become evident from literature that SOP should be examined as a people-place relationship involving personal experiences with people, as well as influences from the surrounding environment. By examining high streets from this perspective and using phenomenological methods, a contribution can be made towards not only understanding the attributes that support SOP, but also how high streets can be adapted in the future to create better quality places. As this review has illustrated, there are many challenges that high streets currently face, however, by adopting a place-making approach that considers SOP, this can perhaps help high streets to expand their functions and become more sustainable. This thesis will therefore explore SOP in two London high streets using the 'activities, meaning and physical setting' framework to determine influencing factors in this phenomenon.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the methods used to investigate SOP in high streets through its qualitative research design and multiple case study selection. Subsequently, it explains the primary and secondary data collection methods, how data was analysed, and the limitations and ethical considerations of the research.

Research Design

Previous studies examining SOP were split between phenomenological and positivist approaches. Whilst phenomenological studies often used interviews in a qualitative approach, positivist studies used surveys to quantitatively analyse data. However, some scholars found that using questionnaires to investigate SOP is reductive and not always enough to understand individual experiences (Lowenthal, 1978; Burgess et al, 1988; Shamai and Ilatov, 2005). Therefore, this study adopted a qualitative, exploratory, and interpretivist approach based on epistemology and ontology to understand the physical and experiential attributes that contribute to SOP in high streets (Patton, 1990). This dissertation has attempted to analyse individual viewpoints based on a SOP framework adapted from Punter's (1991) and Montgomery's (1998) work found in the literature review (Figures 6 & 7). As discussed in Chapter 2, there were inconsistencies in the indicators between the original frameworks. Therefore, for this dissertation, indicators have been selected and modified so they are more relevant to high streets specifically, reduce discrepancies, and guide the primary data collection. The place identity, attachment and dependence framework was not chosen because it was focused purely on the 'meaning' aspect of SOP and did not consider how activities or the built environment may contribute to SOP. However, given the popularity and importance of place attachment in the literature compared to other variables, as well as time constraints of this research, it was decided this indicator would be included in the framework under the 'meaning' dimension (Nelson et al, 2020).

Land use diversity
Vitality
Social & experiential
functions

Activities

Built
environment

Urban form
Landmarks
Public space
Landscape
Street furniture

Sense
of
Place

Meaning

Attachment
Associations & feelings
Imageability
Memories
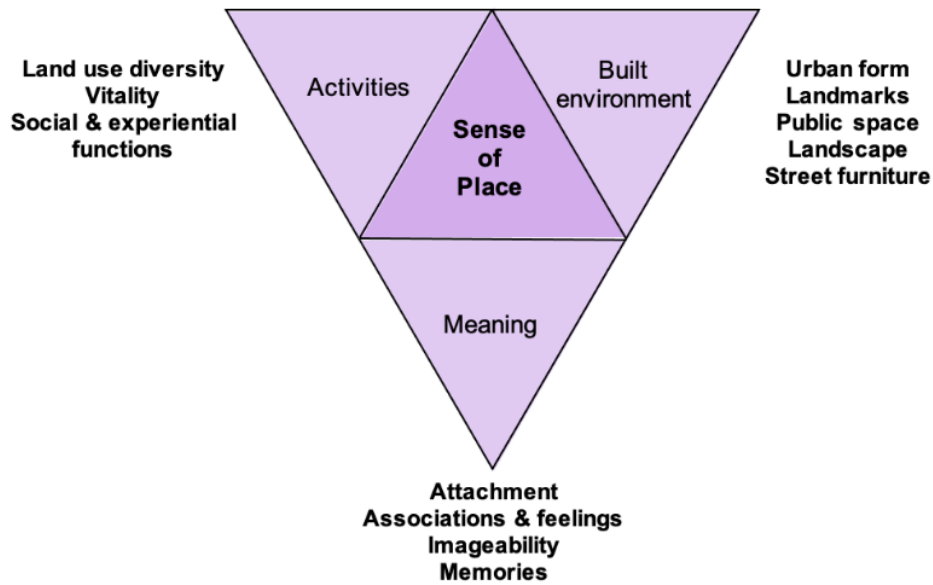
Figure 6: SOP framework used in this study (Adapted from Punter, 1991 and Montgomery, 1998)

Activities

Meaning

Built
environment

Land use diversity:
Mixture of uses on the
street catering for
different needs.

Vitality: Street life and
activities occurring.

**Social and
experiential functions**:
Leisure, recreation and
entertainment purposes
of the street (not purely
retail functions).

Attachment: Feeling
connected to the high
street, the people, and
experiences made
there.

**Associations and
feelings**: Having
positive associations
and feelings about the
street when visiting or
thinking about it.

Imageability: Being
able to picture and
recognise key parts of
the street.

Memories: Having fond
memories of the place
and the ability to
remember important
aspects of the street.

Urban form: Physical
characteristics of street
e.g. building sizes,
density, etc.

Landmarks: A feature
which is easily
identifiable and
provides orientation,
e.g. a church, a large
building, etc.

Public space: A place
allowing public use e.g.
street spaces, parks,
etc.

Landscape: Hardscape
and softscape elements
e.g. pavements, trees,
etc.

Street furniture:
Functional or aesthetic
objects in public spaces
e.g. benches, plants,
etc.

Figure 7: Framework indicators explained- how they contribute to SOP (Source: author)

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Multiple Case Study Selection

To examine SOP in high streets, a contextual analysis was deemed necessary to explore the concept in-situ (Mabry, 2012). Whilst a single case study approach is appropriate for revealing something new to existing theory, multiple case study research is often preferred as it is considered more reliable and reveals similarities or differences between places (Rowley, 2002). Therefore, a multiple case study approach was chosen, using two high streets in London. As it was discovered in the literature review that differences can arise between suburban and city-centre high streets, case studies were chosen according to this. The first case study selected was a suburban high street, TWHS, whilst the second case study was a central London h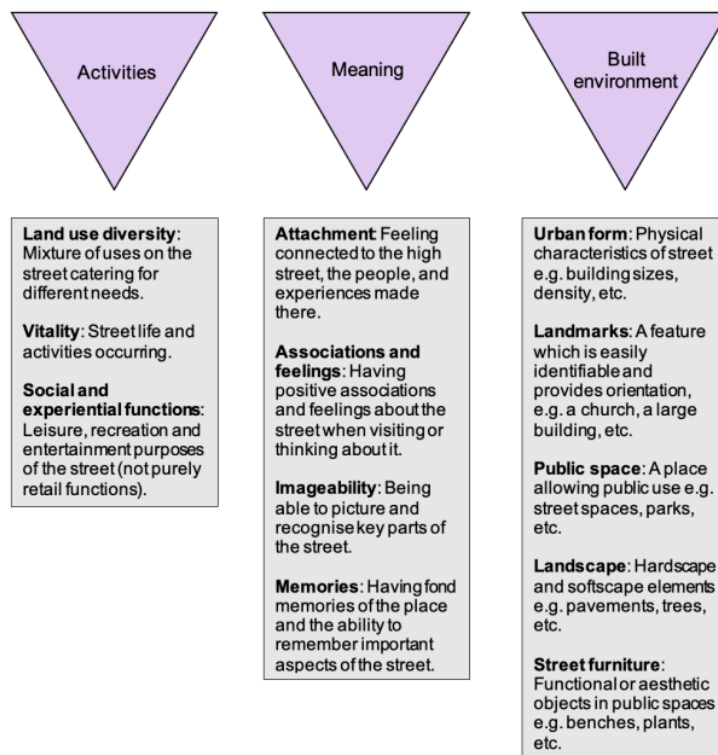igh street, MHS. As TWHS was in close proximity to the researcher, this provided an advantage in finding participants and hence was chosen for the research. MHS, however, was picked due to its location in 'the heart of London' and its recognition in the literature for its unique ownership and curation as an 'urban village' (Carmona, 2022: 24; Carmona, 2015: 43; Scott, 2015). Thus, this would provide an interesting comparison when examining SOP in their different contexts.

Data Collection Methods and Analysis

This dissertation collected both primary and secondary data to provide a well-rounded exploration of the research topic (Figure 8). Secondary data was collected from documents, reports, and maps regarding the two high streets. Then, primary data was collected through observations, interviews, and a mental mapping exercise. The data collection and analysis were qualitative to explore the topic and personal experiences of people in depth.
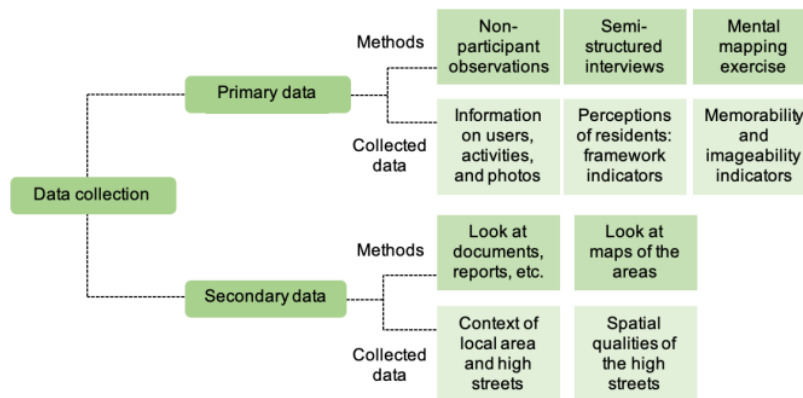

Figure 8: Data collection methods (Source: author)

Secondary Data

Policy documents, planning reports, and other types of secondary data were used to gather information on the high streets. These sources were reviewed and analysed to help understand the context of the local areas and current affairs of the high streets. Maps were also collected from these documents, as well as created from Digimap, to better understand the spatial qualities of the high streets.

Non-Participant Observations

When visiting the high streets, non-participant observations were made to collect data on the indicators from the 'activities' and 'built environment' dimensions of the framework. This was particularly useful for collecting information on the demographics of users, activities taking place, and physical qualities of the streets (Cosco, 2010). Observations were made from the 7th-24th of June, for periods of at least one hour in an attempt to observe a wide variety of people. The observer walked through the high streets and sat down at benches to write down their observations. Photographs were taken to visually capture the characteristics of the high streets that may have otherwise been overlooked (Elshater, 2018). The findings from observations were then organised into a table to be thematically analysed and combined with interview findings to understand what qualities contribute to SOP in high streets.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews were deemed to be an appropriate research method as this study aimed to 'uncover how people feel' about their high street and conversing with residents would thus 'enable them to share their experiences and understandings' easily (King et al, 2018: 11). Semi-structured interviews were carried out with residents who lived close to the high street to collect in-depth data on their personal experiences and views for each of the indicators from the framework. The interviews were structured thematically according to the three dimensions of the SOP framework by following an interview guide (Appendix 1). Doing semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions allowed the researcher to gather information flexibility and provided a conversational environment so interviewees felt comfortable (O'Leary, 2004). Fourteen interviews were completed in total, with seven interviews for each high street; interviews were mainly conducted in public spaces within the case study

areas, with the exception of two interviews taking place online over Zoom for the interviewee's convenience.

Interviewees for TWHS were obtained firstly through personal connections and then through snowball sampling. One interviewee was also found by emailing a local community group in TWHS. Conversely, only one interviewee for MHS was a personal connection; a snowball sampling technique was also used to find another participant. The majority of other interviewees were found through Facebook community groups in Marylebone and one interviewee was randomly sourced by approaching them when they were sat in a nearby green space. Interviews lasted between approximately 30-45 minutes, were recorded with the interviewee's permission, and transcribed at a later date. Once transcribed, key quotations, terms and ideas were highlighted; these were then thematically analysed according to the framework to help answer the research question.

Mental Mapping Exercise

At the end of the interviews, a mental mapping exercise was completed by each participant. Mental mapping was chosen to supplement the interviews as this could better explore the framework indicators of 'memorability', 'imageability', and 'landmarks' (Lynch, 1960). Mental mapping has proved to be a reliable method of observing people's spatial cognition of a place in fields of urban planning, environmental psychology, geography, and transport studies (Tan and Ujang, 2012; Weston and Handy, 2004). Mental mapping visualised people's perceptions and feelings towards the high streets and their surroundings (Manton et al, 2016). Whilst mental mapping studies traditionally asked participants to sketch a map themselves, recent studies found that providing a base-map with key elements around the study area helped participants to translate their perceptions onto paper (Tan and Ujang, 2012; Manton et al, 2016). Therefore, a basemap of the local area with the high street was created and given to participants (Appendix 2); participants were asked to annotate the map with the most important features of the high street for them, places they used most, and things they particularly liked or disliked, without looking at a real map or using their phone. This enabled the researcher to see what participants found most memorable about the streets, how they would picture places, and if there

were any notable landmarks. The mental maps were compared against one another to spot commonalities and differences for the analysis.

Limitations

Due to time and research constraints, data had to be collected in the month of June, meaning only a limited number of participants were interviewed; in future, further research should be done to achieve more rigorous findings. Whilst it was easy to find participants for TWHS as the researcher had personal connections there, it was initially more challenging to find interviewees for MHS as many people contacted were not available; the researcher used Facebook community groups to overcome this and managed to successfully find people. However, as these participants were part of a community group, it arguably presented a bias in terms commitment towards their local area, whereas most participants for TWHS were not part of a community group. Participants for MHS were also all women; the researcher did not get any responses from men, therefore, whilst the aim was not to choose a representative sample, this could still influence partialities in the results. For the methods, both observations and interviews are subjective, open to interpretation by the researcher, and influenced by the researcher's positionality (O'Leary, 2004). This can lead to inaccuracies in interpretations of data and can influence the way people behave or what they say when they are conscious of being studied. Furthermore, interviewees' answers could be influenced by the questions and procedure of the interview, so they may have given responses that they believe the researcher wanted, rather than what they truly think (Silverman, 2013).

Ethical Considerations

This dissertation has been considered of low ethical risk as it is not exploring or involving sensitive subjects. All interviewees were given an information sheet and consent form to sign before the interview started and were made aware that participation was voluntary (Appendix 3). All data was anonymised to ensure confidentiality of participants and has been handled according to university guidelines. Any photographs taken around the high streets also aimed to protect people's privacy.

4. CASE STUDIES BACKGROUND

This chapter provides an overview of the two case studies, TWHS and MHS. Secondary data from maps, reports, and policy documents are reviewed and analysed, as well as observations from site visits.

Totteridge & Whetstone High Street

TWHS is located in the suburban borough of Barnet in North London and within both wards of Totteridge and Woodside, and Whetstone (Figure 9). TWHS is also part of the Whetstone district town centre and is conveniently located next to the Totteridge and Whetstone tube station, however, it is not one of the four priority town centres (Figure 10) (Barnet Council, 2012).
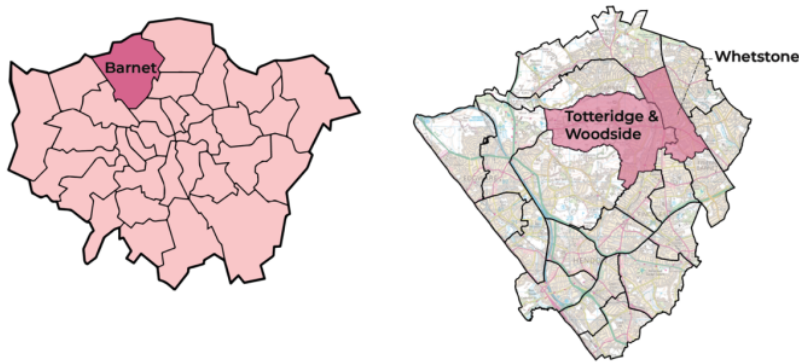

Figure 9: TWHS's borough and ward context (Adapted from LGBCE, 2022)
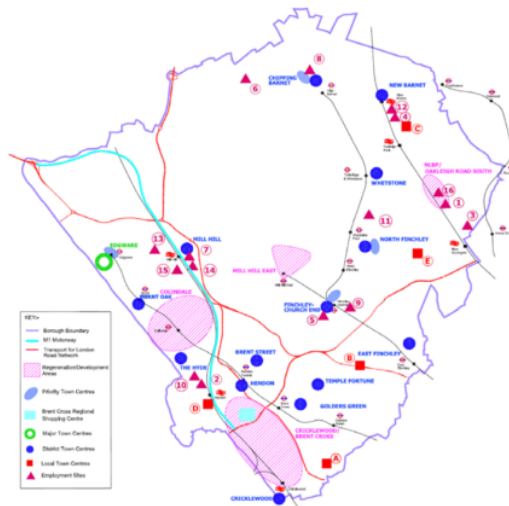
Figure 10: Barnet's town centres, employment sites, and transport stations (Barnet Council, 2012)

Figure 11 illustrates the current land uses for TWHS. From this, it becomes evident that TWHS is mixed-use but there are some discrepancies; whilst there are many restaurants and cafes, there are fewer food and drink shops (e.g. supermarkets, convenience stores, speciality cuisine shops). It is also important to note the variety within each use; for instance, although there are lots of restaurants, many of them are a similar cuisine and thus lack diversity in this sense. Arguably, it is critical to examine the presence of chain versus independent businesses on high streets (Griffiths et al, 2008). In this case, there are plenty of independent clothing stores, restaurants, and cafes, however, the supermarkets are both relatively high-end chains (Waitrose and M&S).

Figure 11: TWHS land uses (Source: author)

The high street itself is also a main thoroughfare and a historic corridor, known as the A1000, meaning that the three-lane roads of traffic often dominate TWHS and 'effectively isolates pedestrians' (Figure 12) (Griffiths et al, 2008: 1179). Indeed, the congestion on this road and the lack of zebra crossings make TWHS difficult to navigate for pedestrians (Barnet Council, 2012).

Figure 12: TWHS's three-lane main road and wide pavements (Source: author)

However, TWHS does benefit from particularly wide pavements (Figure 12); since COVID-19 restrictions were eased, much of the pavements have been used for outdoor seating as part of eateries (Duke-Giles, 2021). Another strength of the area is the amount of nearby green space; the Dollis Valley Greenwalk, including Whetstone Stray, Brook Farm Open Space, and Wyatts Farm Open Space, all surround TWHS and are easily accessible from it (Figures 13 & 14).
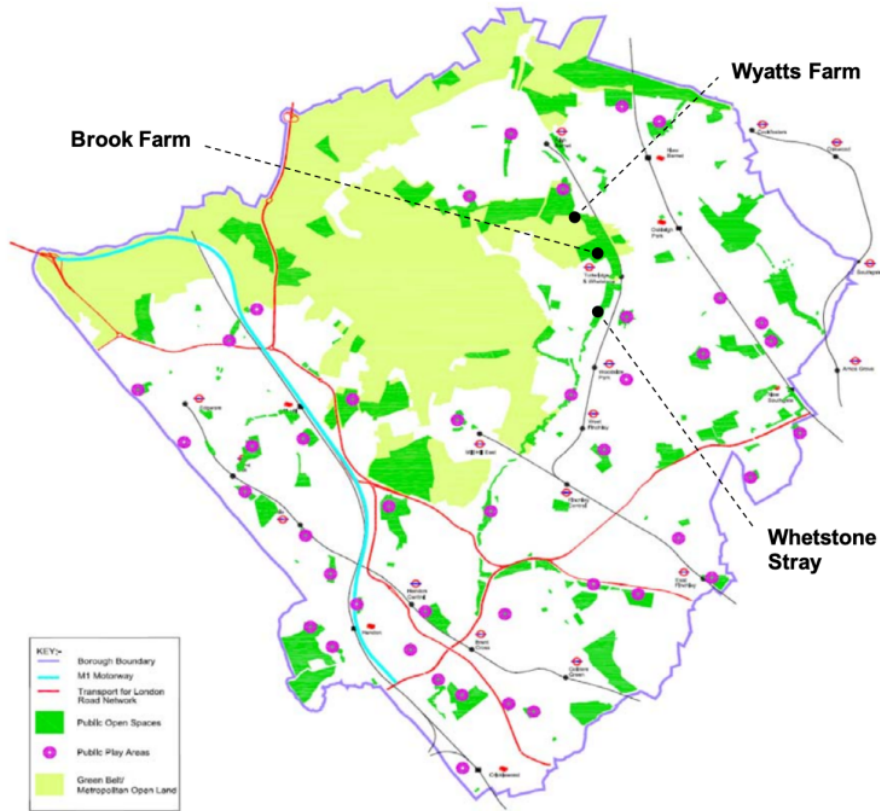
Figure 13: Barnet's green spaces near TWHS (Barnet Council, 2012)

Figure 14: Dollis Valley Greenwalk sign (Source: author)

In line with the SOP framework used in this study, the 'built environment' and 'activities' dimensions were explored through non-participant observations in TWHS (Tables 2 & 3). Through these observations, a better understanding was formed of the area.

Table 2: TWHS built environment observations

Built environment findings	Photos
Urban form: Buildings are generally low-rise and not architecturally unique.	 Low-rise buildings
Landmarks: There is a large block of offices called 'Barnet House'. This was recently denied planning permission to be converted into residential flats because of a lack of affordable housing. (GLA, 2018). Whetstone monument and a plaque explaining its history outside the Griffin pub which is a Grade II listed building and monument.	 Barnet House The Whetstone outside the Griffin pub

Public space: Green space options nearby e.g. next to the tube station and by M&S (part of Dollis Valley Greenwalk).	 Park next to tube station
Landscape: Lots of large trees lining TWHS and some planters with flowers on wide pavements.	 Trees and planters
Street furniture: Quite a few benches, including a new bench named after the Queen's Jubilee. There is also a community notice board by 'Love Whetstone' advertising local events.	 Jubilee bench Community notice board

Table 3: TWHS activities observations

Activities findings	Photos
Land use diversity: Mixture of independent restaurants, cafes, clothing stores. Also a few bars/pubs.	 Independent businesses
Vitality: Lots of al-fresco dining at restaurants/cafes. Busy in cafes and Waitrose but less busy in boutique clothing stores. Also lots of traffic from cars and buses (lots of school children waiting for buses).	 Al-fresco eateries Boutique clothing stores
Social & experiential functions: People sat on benches for different reasons e.g. waiting for a bus, after coming out a shop, talking to someone, drinking on them, reading a newspaper, on the phone to someone.	

People on benches

Marylebone High Street

MHS is located in the borough of Westminster within central London and the ward named after the high street (Figure 15). MHS is part of the Central Activity Zone (CAZ) Retail Cluster, meaning the area is deemed significant in offering town centre facilities (City of Westminster, 2021); however, it does not possess the international tourist-based uses that other areas have, e.g. Oxford Street (City of Westminster, 2016) (Figure 16). What makes MHS' businesses and architecture particularly unique and different to TWHS is how it has been owned and managed by one landlord, the Howard de Walden Estate (Temple and Thom, 2017); since the 1990s, Howard de Walden Estate took ownership of most of MHS in an attempt to reverse its decline from the 1970s, regenerate it, and place it at the centre of 'Marylebone village' (The Academy of Urbanism, 2016). Since then, MHS has been curated by Howard de Walden Estate to produce an exclusive shopping destination with many boutiques (Temple and Thom, 2017).
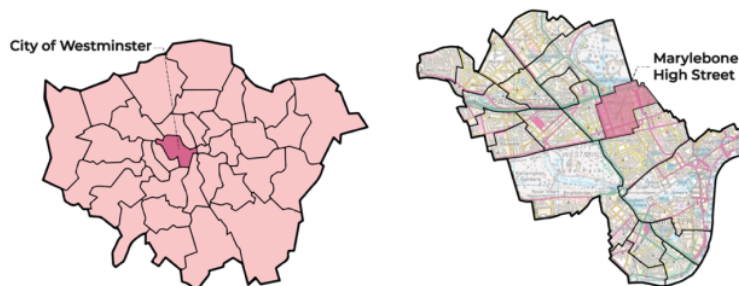
Figure 15: MHS's borough and ward context (Adapted from LGBCE, 2022)

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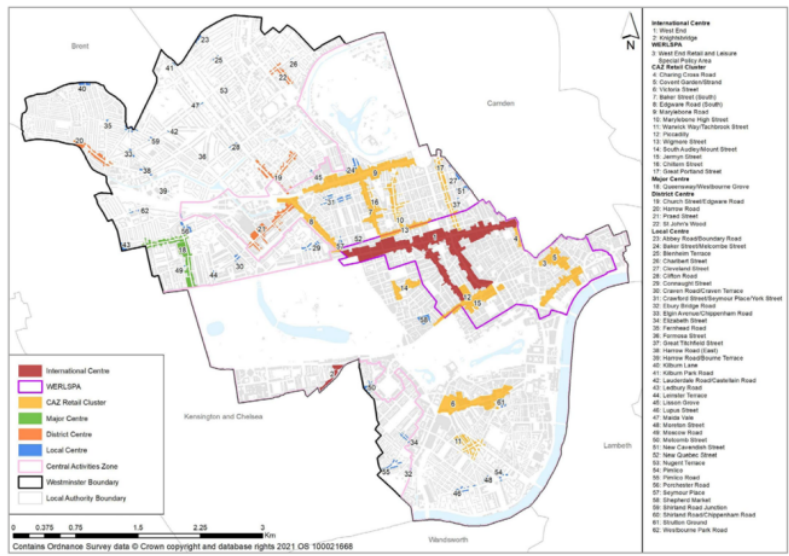
Figure 16: Town centre hierarchy (City of Westminster, 2021)
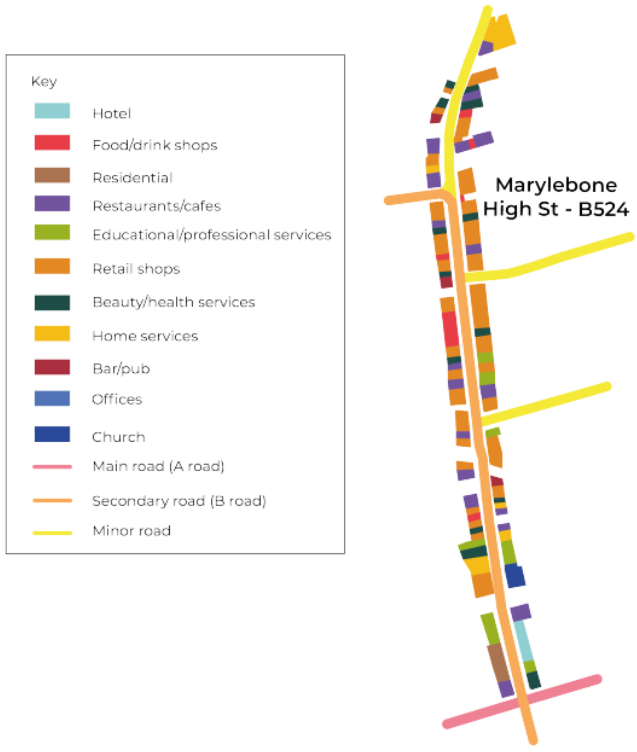
Figure 17: MHS land uses (Source: author)

For MHS, it is clear that retail shops (selling clothes, jewellery, etc.) exceedingly dominate the uses here compared to TWHS (Figure 17). However, diversity is

arguably lacking in the retail; almost all retail stores are high-end or designer boutiques targeted primarily at women. Whilst some argue this is a strength as it provides a distinctive SOP, others reason that this has 'accelerated the decline of traditional high street diversity' where everyday stores that are perhaps more useful for locals are being replaced by shops that cater to only a small demographic (The Academy of Urbanism, 2016; Temple and Thom, 2017: 56). Interestingly, there is quite a mixture between independent and chain stores in comparison to TWHS; in Marylebone, there are many boutique clothing stores, however, there are also lots of retail (e.g. Lululemon, Bimba Y Lola, etc.) and eatery (e.g. Le Pain Quotidien, Pret A Manger, etc.) chains.

The architectural character of MHS is also significantly different to TWHS. MHS primarily has mid-to-late eighteenth century architectural styles, such as Georgian, Queen Anne Revival, and Neo-Georgian (Figure 18). However, there is also some modern architecture, such as the flats above the Pret A Manger. Flats over the businesses arguably help in providing a sense of enclosure and a human-scale environment (Temple and Thom, 2017). Thus, despite being located in central London, the high street maintains the Marylebone 'village' feel (Carmona, 2015).

Figure 18: MHS's different architectural styles (Source: author)

The 'built environment' and 'activities' dimensions were also examined in MHS (Tables 4 & 5). Through the Marylebone non-participant observations, the researcher was able to familiarise themselves with the area and understand its characteristics.

Table 4: MHS built environment observations

Built environment findings	Photos
Urban form: Buildings are mid-low rise, quite unique and from different time periods. Roads are narrower, closer together and have more of a sense of enclosure.	 Mid-low rise buildings Smaller roads
Landmarks: A few distinctive churches e.g. St Marylebone Parish Church, Hinde Street Methodist Church, St James' Roman Catholic Church.	

Hinde street church

St. James' church

Public space:
Some small green spaces nearby that people use e.g. Marylebone gardens, Paddington street gardens, Garden of rest.

Paddington gardens

	Garden of rest
Landscape: Small trees line the street. Also not many planters on the street. Whilst pavements are not as wide here, there are many zebra crossing and pedestrianised streets that lead off from MHS.	Greenery Zebra crossings
Street furniture: Only one public bench on MHS; other seating is part of restaurants, cafes or shops which makes it feel semi-private and like you need to purchase something to use it.	

However, there are lots of benches in nearby parks.

Single bench on MHS

Garden of rest benches

Table 5: MHS activities observations

Activities findings	Photos
Land use diversity: Lots of boutique, expensive clothing shops and only one up-market supermarket (Waitrose). There are mixed uses but it's limited and catered primarily to a high-end market (e.g. even the charity shops have expensive items).	 Boutique stores
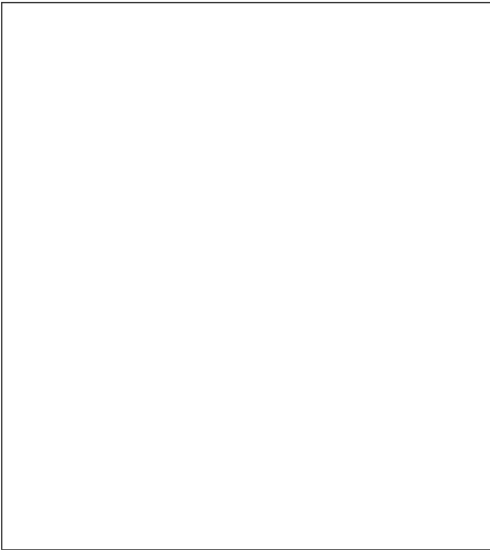
	\nCharity shop
Vitality:\nPeople in nearby parks reading, on their phones, eating, or socialising with friends. It's noticeable that there are tourists or expats here by listening to accents.\n\nLow amounts of traffic with a 20mph speed limit in the area.	\nMarylebone gardens
	\n20mph speed limit
Social & experiential functions:	

People seem to be here for leisurely activities e.g. browsing boutiques, going to cafes, etc. Lots of people dog-walking and lots of families with strollers.

Farmers' market from 10am-2pm with lots of visitors, selling upmarket goods. People also eat purchased goods in the nearby Paddington gardens.

Al-fresco dining

Farmers' market

Conclusion

From the observations and secondary data, it has become clear that there are spatial and social differences between the two high streets. Whilst TWHS is within a suburb surrounded by lots of greenery, MHS is within central London and has small pockets of surrounding green spaces. Both high streets are mixed-use but MHS is more curated towards high-end retail and leisurely activities, whereas TWHS is more functional. The built environment of the high streets are significantly different; TWHS is centred around a busy thoroughfare and has fairly mundane buildings, whilst MHS has a range of traditional architectural styles and is more pedestrian-friendly. Overall, these factors illustrate how attributes of the built environment or activities within them can contribute to SOP. This analysis will be complimented by interview findings to gain a deeper understanding of other characteristics that contribute to SOP from the perspective of local residents.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter analyses findings from data collected in interviews and the mental mapping exercise to supplement discoveries from Chapter 4. Findings have been thematically organised according to the 'activities', 'meaning', and 'built environment' SOP framework to answer the research question.

5.1.   Activities

Different types of activities take place on high streets and contribute to shaping a resident's SOP. Activities of high streets provide the opportunity for residents to create experiences and memories of the place. This analysis will explore activities through three sub-sections: land use diversity, vitality, and functionalities.

5.1.1. Land Use Diversity

Within urban design, mixed uses are often favoured in many places because of the diversity that it can offer to different groups of people (Jacobs, 1961; Katz, 1994; Montgomery, 1998). For high streets, having a diverse land use contributes to SOP by providing variety for people and thus attracting them to use the street (Carmona, 2015). In Chapter 4, it was found that MHS was dominated by retail uses, particularly boutique clothing stores. Many interviewees confirmed this, commenting on how this affects MHS's diversity: "the shops are quite exclusive... nor are the clothes really catered to people my age, it's very much for older women. And there's not much diversity around here either. It's very one type of person." Others also discussed the decrease in practical shops on MHS: "there are fewer and fewer service businesses... and there's no differentiation in price points". Indeed, the closure of functional shops affected the experience of shopping: "stuff that people need like butchers, when it closed it was just a tragedy... because people love the whole shopping experience". All interviewees thought the upmarket nature of shops and lack of practical shops contributed to MHS's homogeneity, thus confirming arguments from seminal urban designers around land use diversity.

For TWHS, a similarity was found in the shutting down of basic services, however, many restaurants or cafes have oversaturated the high street instead. One community group organiser explained how this was one of the reasons why they

wanted to improve TWHS: "this high road started to degenerate when all the useful shops closed… and its basically hairdressers and cafes now. It's a very narrow base on which to be a vibrant high street". Many residents believed that the current uses are catered towards the area's higher proportion of middle-aged and elderly residents (Figure 19).

Age	Proportion of people	Compared to the regional average
0 to 9	16.7%	▲ 27%
10 to 19	11.3%	▼ 1%
20 to 29	15.3%	▼ 14%
30 to 44	28.8%	▲ 14%
45 to 59	13.4%	▼ 21%
60 to 74	5.2%	▼ 48%
75 and over	9.4%	▲ 77%

Figure 19: Population age proportions for TWHS area (The Move Market, 2022)

One interviewee stated: "I don't think it's massively diverse but I think that's more because of the area… middle-aged white women, that's the main demographic". Although many new restaurants have opened on TWHS, residents voiced dissatisfaction over the lack of diversity in their cuisine and price range; this parallels with how Marylebone residents felt about their selection of retail stores. A TWHS resident commented: "when another restaurant opens, it'll be Greek, Turkish, or Italian. Well, what about Chinese, Caribbean, Korean? There's not enough diversity of businesses to make this a destination." Therefore, in both high streets it is important for residents to have variation *within* each type of use, as well as the uses themselves, which has arguably not been discussed enough in previous literature.

However, an interesting difference was found between MHS and TWHS. Whilst all TWHS residents were keen for more variety on their high street, some MHS interviewees argued that this was unnecessary. One Marylebone interviewee stated: "it's quite upmarket because that's what the area is… it's as diverse as it can be. It needs to be catered to the people who live in the area and that's what the people want". Another interviewee did not think MHS's uses needs changing: "I think mixed-use works in certain circumstances but for MHS you don't want that because it's a destination in itself". This is perhaps because MHS has been designed by Howard

de Walden Estate to attract certain types of uses and is not necessarily meant to be very mixed (Carmona, 2022). Indeed, a resident commented on how Howard de Walden Estate are ultimately "trying to maintain an aesthetic" on MHS which makes it "hard to do everything". These residents accepted that MHS is perhaps not intended to be incredibly diverse due to its contextuality.

5.1.2. Vitality

Urban vitality is often cited as a significant factor in influencing SOP (Montgomery, 1998; Punter, 1991; Canter, 1997; Relph, 1976). In this research, vitality is defined by the concentration of people and activities on high streets, including pedestrian flows, street life, and how well-used they are (Jacobs, 1961). It became clear through observations that MHS was well-used by people for leisure (Chapter 4). All interviewees stated that MHS is well-used, especially on weekends and when the weather is pleasant. However, some did see a difference in vitality when restrictions were first introduced for COVID-19: "when COVID was in its peak, people avoided unnecessary shopping and going outside as much". Despite this initial decrease in footfall, residents noticed that once restrictions were lifted, the liveliness of MHS soon picked up again: "after COVID, people valued going into shops more and seeing people in person". One interviewee specifically commented on the positive outcomes of COVID-19 for MHS, the addition of alfresco dining: "There's way more outdoor seating. During COVID they had seats going into the street… so now we enjoy that a lot more". In turn, this addition of outdoor seating enabled MHS to invite more people into its public space.

Similarly, for TWHS, observations revealed that it was the outdoor seating from eateries which were most used by people. One interviewee noted: "it always surprised me actually… the cafes bring loads of chairs and tables quite far into the pavement and they get quite lively". Indeed, the provision of abundant seating has been found in studies to enhance the vitality of places (Varna & Tiesdell, 2010). An interviewee thought alfresco dining helps to bring people onto TWHS and thus contribute to SOP: "outdoor seating areas make it… a more aesthetic place because it's more inviting". Although outdoor seating did increase in MHS with COVID-19, in TWHS, it appeared that this had a bigger impact for businesses: "for the smaller establishments where you can't accommodate much inside, you can do more

outside… it makes their business more viable. I think COVID actually helped, and then people got used to it". This interviewee noticed how locals have adapted to eating outdoors now, thus facilitating a long-term change in the vitality of TWHS.

Another resemblance found between the high streets was finding the right level of busyness. Residents from both areas stressed the importance of having an animated high street, without it being too busy, as there were fears of it becoming too noisy, unsafe, or different. One TWHS interviewee stated: "for your local high street, it's nice to have one that's quite lively, but I feel that you don't want one that gets too insanely busy… it's kind of good not having incentives for people to stay out super late". Another TWHS interviewee considered the issues around having mixed uses: "The problem with a night-time economy is… getting people to live over the shops, it's a nightmare". With MHS, the concern around busyness was more around losing the community feel and an encroachment of a commercialised high street: "I wouldn't want it to get any more busy… I don't want it to be the new Oxford street". One interviewee was worried that this may lead to safety concerns, stressing the need to find a "balance between being quiet enough that it feels familiar and not too touristy or a target for mugging". These findings highlight an important discussion within urban design; it is often thought that vitality is key in promoting successful neighbourhoods through mixed uses, denser populations, and a night-time economy (Montgomery, 1998; Maas, 1984; Jacobs, 1961). However, these interviews demonstrate how having each of these factors is not always necessary and that places do not have to be animated at *all* times to be effective public spaces.

5.1.3. Functionalities

High streets that offer different functions have become increasingly important for creating enjoyable places to visit (LGA, 2022; Griffiths et al, 2008). Interviews from both areas revealed a clear differentiation in what people perceive to be the main function(s) of their local high street. Generally, TWHS residents viewed necessity shopping as the primary function of this street. One interviewee thought of TWHS purely as a convenience for shopping: "it's more a necessity rather than a real choice to go there… it's just the convenience of it being there". Many residents also considered TWHS's function to be connectivity and transport. An interviewee regarded this as the second most important function: "if I'm going somewhere, that

will be where I go to get to other places… it's a middle point for a lot of people". One interviewee even thought that food shopping and transport links were the *only* functionalities of TWHS: "there would be no other real reason to come here, except for the route to be entertained somewhere else". Thus far, these findings corresponded to earlier literature around high streets serving primarily as retail and transport functions (Carmona, 2015).

However, some individuals did discuss the importance of social or experiential functions of TWHS, e.g. non-essential shopping. One interviewee noted their enjoyment for browsing independent stores: "going to the little shops, not the chains… stuff that you wouldn't normally get on the high street. It's a nice place to go and have a little wander". Another interviewee commented on how these independent stores are unique in contributing to SOP because their items would not be found online: "it's all very specific boutique stuff… so what you see is different to what you see online". On the whole, although TWHS does have social and experiential functions, they are not deemed to be the main purpose of TWHS. However. all respondents enjoyed using MHS in a recreational way which was also established in observations. There was much more of a focus on social and experiential uses: "looking in the shops, restaurant visits… it's a place where you can walk around and see what's happening". An interviewee illustrated how MHS is more leisurely than neighbouring high streets: "I'm not there to just get something and leave, I'm not in a rush. It's recreational… rather than Baker Street where I go to pick something up". In terms of experiential functions, the annual Marylebone Summer Festival turns MHS into a fully-pedestrianised area with food and retail stalls, live music, and other entertainment activities (Battison, 2022). The organiser of the first dog show in the festival discussed how important the event was, even as a temporary, experiential function: "The Summer Festival gives a real identity… it influences the aesthetic". Therefore, MHS appeared to be less functional in its nature compared to TWHS; this influences how people interact with the street and its contribution towards a SOP.

5.2.   Meaning

With time and experiences, meanings can be formed between a person and a place (Nelson et al, 2020). If a place means something to a person, then this will influence

its contribution towards a SOP. Meaning is explored in the next sections through: attachment, associations and feelings, and imageability and memories.

5.2.1. Attachment

Place attachment is defined as a connection to a place that is fostered through factors like experiences and relationships with people and is frequently cited as a significant contributor to SOP (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001; Aly and Aly, 2021). Typically, it is thought that an attachment must be positive in order for one to grow (Shamai and Ilatov, 2005). However, this was found to not always be true for TWHS. In fact, most interviewees felt they had a connection to TWHS without finding it attractive because of its familiarity: "It's not really appealing… but there's something nice in knowing what everything is, that would be all it means to me… it's just a familiar place". Interestingly, it seemed that the connection formed was often not strongly tied to an emotional attachment: "I definitely do feel a connection with it but it's more just a practical connection". These findings differ to the general consensus around positive place attachment in previous studies, especially for suburban high streets which are thought to be a centre for local community (Palaiologou, 2015).

Conversely, all Marylebone interviewees felt a strong attachment towards MHS; it was even a deciding factor in people wanting to live there and grounding them to it. An interviewee stated: "that's where our life revolves around… I wouldn't want to live in a place where there isn't a high street around the corner, like Mayfair". Another interviewee who had previously lived abroad in countries where they did not have the concept of high streets noted: "the high street is a very important part where the centre of local community is" within Marylebone. This goes against what previous studies found where suburban high streets were more often a centre of community and illustrates how high streets within a city centre can still retain a SOP through place attachment (Scott, 2015).

5.2.2. Associations & Feelings

Associations and feelings towards high streets develop through time and can change with external factors (Montgomery, 1998). Whilst these associations or feelings may not always be positive, it nevertheless contributes to SOP (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001). All Marylebone residents had positive associations and feelings towards the

high street. Many commented on how despite being in central London, MHS still has a sense of civic life: "it's got that village community vibe in central London… it's quite unique, that neighbourhood feeling". Some residents even associated MHS with their home: "it kind of is our home… my whole life has been centred around the high street". However, feelings have changed over time as all residents expressed concerns over the increasing rents for independent businesses and how this impacts SOP: "I've got more frustrated at what I've seen… the character is dying as they can't keep up with the rents. It's disappointing for the community".

For TWHS, many residents' feelings changed as they grew older: "I came to appreciate it a bit more. I didn't use it much when I was younger but then it became a bit more enjoyable". However, closing businesses with COVID-19 has negatively impacted people's associations too: "there are more places that have shut down… when you walk down now it's a bit depressing". Similar to Marylebone, an apprehension was sensed amongst residents about the effects of struggling businesses: "That's what's so frustrating about it, it just could be better… and you wait for the graffiti to arrive because that's what happens when places are shuttered". Therefore, SOP is not only influenced by *current* associations and feelings of the high street but also by what people perceive to be the *future* of the high streets.

5.2.3. Imageability & Memories

Having fond memories and images of a place is commonly discussed as an influencing factor for SOP (Lynch, 1960; Montgomery, 1998). The mental mapping exercise revealed what people found memorable and how they picture different aspects of the high streets. Table 6 shows the analysis of key maps that were produced by participants. The maps confirmed that fond memories and images of places are significant in SOP, however, it also highlighted how negative characteristics can equally be memorable and influence SOP.

Table 6: Mental maps analysis

Map: TWHS	
Key aspects	- Waitrose, Boots, and the post office identified by almost everyone - Places that had shut down which people were fond of were commonly mapped on e.g. Pizza Express, B&Q, Ask - Nearby green spaces often annotated on maps - Primarily restaurants annotated compared to other types of businesses
Map: MHS	

Key aspects	- Independent/small businesses identified by almost everyone e.g. Daunt Books
	- Nearby green spaces were commonly pointed out
	- The farmers' market was often annotated on maps
	- St Marylebone church and its gardens were pointed out by some
Similarities	- Supermarkets e.g. Waitrose were annotated by many participants in both areas
	- Negative aspects of streets pointed out on both streets e.g. unattractive buildings or businesses
Differences	- Mainly restaurants annotated for TWHS vs. mainly retail shops annotated for MHS
	- More functional shops identified for TWHS vs. more social and experiential places identified for MHS

5.3. Built Environment

Different aspects of the built environment have been widely debated as a contributing factor in SOP (Stedman, 2003). The physical setting and its attributes of a high street are thus analysed in the following sub-sections: urban form, landmarks, public space, landscape, and street furniture.

5.3.1. Urban Form

Within influential urban design literature, it has been argued that a human-scale environment helps to produce a sense of enclosure (Carmona, 2010). For both high streets, residents preferred smaller-scale buildings and streets that were closer together to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment, thus confirming previous findings. One TWHS resident stated: "it's nice because it isn't massively built-up and it's normal sized buildings the whole way down". Similarly, a Marylebone resident commented: "I like how narrow the street is, it's a really good width and very pedestrian friendly". Residents around both high streets were particularly against high-rise blocks too. A Marylebone resident noted: "If they put a really tall building on the high street it would ruin the vibe, it just doesn't fit. I think low-rise, old buildings, tables on the street thing makes the atmosphere". Likewise, a TWHS resident thought: "nothing is too big or intimidating, everything's quite small which is nice".

The aesthetics of urban form is also important to consider as the architecture, colours, and details of buildings contribute to a place's character (Carmona, 2010). Interviewees from both areas favoured uniformity in high streets and colourful or historically significant buildings. A participant from TWHS found the street's appearance "had a united look about the place, but now it's a hodgepodge". Another TWHS resident felt the street could be improved to make it more attractive in the future: "it's not colourful and exciting, it's quite grey in my head… I would add some more colours and lights". Indeed, all TWHS residents found the street to possess a generic character: "there's no special architectural character, it's a fairly nondescript, suburban strip". In fact, the only architecturally significant building identified by residents was the grade II listed Griffin pub: "the Griffin is very distinct, it's got an old style compared to the rest of the buildings".

Conversely, Marylebone residents found the high street's historic architecture attractive and more uniform: "It's typical British, Georgian architecture, nice little classic buildings… it's very cohesive". Similar to TWHS, the grade II listed Marylebone pub and colourful buildings were appreciated: "the way the Marylebone pub is done is nice, and there used to be Coco Momo which had green paint, I liked that". Interestingly, several Marylebone residents commented on how they would consciously notice the urban form in a positive way: "if you stop and look, I'm amazed… I see things I haven't noticed, so it's quite unique". Whereas in TWHS, residents not did consciously notice this: "maybe subconsciously… but when I was there, I never really thought the buildings made a difference". Overall, despite the high streets looking different physically, residents had the same preferences in the built form, however, their experience of place was unalike.

5.3.2. Landmarks
Landmarks are archetypally described as an element that is easily identifiable and provides orientation in a place, e.g. a large building or a historically significant monument (Lamit, 2004). For example, many residents discussed the St Marylebone church in interviews or annotated it on their mental maps (Appendix 4). However, it was discovered that negative aspects of the high streets became landmarks for people too (Table 6 & Figure 20). A TWHS resident thought Barnet House was a

"very ugly building… a tall concrete block" and annotated it on their mental map, serving as a key point.

Figure 20: (a) Marylebone church, (b) Barnet House, (c) MHS Construction, (d) Waitrose

A Marylebone resident also pointed out how the "construction works make it hard to cross the high street" and annotated these building works on their map. Additionally, certain businesses or public spaces can be landmarks for people. In both MHS and TWHS, green spaces and certain shops (e.g. Waitrose and Daunt Books) were highlighted by participants. It is therefore noteworthy that unattractive or ordinary elements of a place can be landmarks too; people relate to things not only through positive associations but also through familiarity or negative impressions.

5.3.3. Public Space

Having sufficient public space around high streets enables residents to spend more quality time in their local area (Mehta, 2009). Indeed, green spaces are considered fundamental as a form of public space for people (Carmona, 2010). This was established for all residents around both high streets; one TWHS resident even stated "I think the main benefit is the greenery". Another commonality found was how pedestrianisation was viewed as a positive, yet unrealistic goal for obtaining more public space in the future. A TWHS local commented: "if you want to improve it as a

locality for pedestrians, you probably want to restrict the traffic, but it's also the A1000 so… I don't think pedestrianisation is going to be prioritised". Likewise, a Marylebone resident believed that pedestrianisation could result in more public space for events: "everything should be pedestrianised… for a market, or live music". Whilst traffic was generally not considered a "big problem at the moment" in MHS, "traffic does often become a problem" in TWHS which makes it "hard to cross the road sometimes". Therefore, having more pedestrianisation, public space, and organised events could help to "make this a local community" in TWHS, as well as in MHS.

5.3.4. Landscape

Hardscape and softscape landscape features are elements of high streets which can influence SOP. Similarities were revealed between both high streets around wanting greenery and wide pavements. A TWHS resident noted how there are "nice, wide pavements… you can sit quite far out" and "trees which help to keep it quite aesthetic". However, a MHS resident noticed "it would be better if the pavements were a bit wider so people could sit outside" and "you could make it a bit greener". Furthermore, the planters on TWHS "made this area just a bit nicer" as they are "by Love Whetstone… for the community", whereas on MHS, residents felt that "you don't really have space for that". Therefore, trees, wide pavements, and planters were favoured by TWHS residents, whilst MHS residents wanted more of these features in the future to enhance the physical environment.

5.3.5. Street Furniture

Street furniture can contribute to SOP in high streets as it influences the character and identity of spaces (Carmona, 2010). In particular, having sufficient public benches is important to allow people to linger, socialise or rest, especially for elderly populations (Carmona, 2010). One TWHS resident noted: "we would like to get benches all the way up because there are lots of elderly people… we get tired and need somewhere to sit". Indeed, Love Whetstone have installed several benches on the high street, personalising them "to celebrate things… so people appreciate them more" (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Love Whetstone benches

However, on MHS there is only one public bench and hence residents felt that more should be installed: "there isn't much public seating, you'd have to stop at a café". Once again, residents commented on the lack of pavement space affecting street furniture provision: "there's no room for benches… I can't think of any place to accommodate it". This confirms that benches are a particularly important street furniture to consider in how people can use a space and thus influence SOP.

Conclusion

Figure 22 illustrates the main conclusions of how each indicator contributes to SOP in both high streets. Although most findings confirm previous studies, there are some findings which only partially confirm or even contradict previous studies. Overall, there are more confirmations in MHS than TWHS and most contradictions are within the 'activities' or 'meaning' category, with the except of landmarks in the 'built environment' category. This analysis highlights important considerations of how SOP can be supported in high streets; despite having different contextual backgrounds, SOP is supported in similar ways for both high streets.

		Totteridge & Whetstone High Street		Marylebone High Street	
Activities	Land use diversity	Variation within each use, and uses themselves.	🟢	Variation within each use, and uses themselves. Uses catered to the area.	🟡
	Vitality	Right level of busyness (less night-time economy). Sufficient outdoor seating.	🟡	Right level of busyness (less commercialisation). Sufficient outdoor seating.	🟡
	Functionalities	Needs more social and experiential functions as they are more enjoyable compared to necessity shopping.	🟢	Social and experiential functions are important and could be expanded.	🟢
Meaning	Attachment	Attachment doesn't have to be positive or emotional for it to exist; more about familiarity than community.	🟡	Positive attachment grounds them to the area. MHS as centre of community is important in central London.	🟡
	Associations & feelings	Feelings became more positive as they grew older. Associations turning negative as TWHS's uses change.	🟢	Positive feelings of community. Positive associations currently under threat by future concerns of uses.	🟢
	Imageability & memorability	More functional places identified. Both positive and negative aspects remembered.	🔴	More social/experiential places identified. Both positive and negative aspects remembered.	🔴
Built environment	Urban form	Is considered cohesive, colourful, architecturally unique, human-scale, mid-low rise. Against high-rise buildings.	🟢	Needs to be more cohesive, colourful, architecturally unique. Currently is human-scale and mid-low rise. Against high-rise buildings.	🟢
	Landmarks	Negative and ordinary elements are landmarks. Shops viewed positively as landmarks too.	🔴	Distinctive church identified as landmark. But also negative/ordinary elements identified as landmarks too.	🟡
	Public space	Green spaces are important. More pedestrianisation and a less traffic-orientated high street would be beneficial.	🟢	Green spaces are important. Pedestrianisation in the future would be beneficial for more experiential uses e.g. events.	🟢
	Landscape	More greenery and wide pavements would be beneficial to allow more planting.	🟢	Trees and wide pavements are good. Planters by Love Whetstone also add to sense of community.	🟢
	Street furniture	Benches important for elderly people. Personalised benches by Love Whetstone appreciated.	🟢	Needs more public benches and space for this on pavements.	🟢

Key:
🟢 Confirms previous findings
🟡 Partially confirms previous findings
🔴 Doesn't confirm previous findings

Figure 22: SOP contributions to high streets (Source: author)

6. CONCLUSION

<u>Summary of Research</u>

This dissertation explored the role of high streets in forming a resident's SOP using two contextually contrasting case studies in London. The SOP thought argues that 'built environment', 'activities', and 'meaning' dimensions contribute to developing a SOP. This research suggests that all three dimensions contribute to supporting SOP in high streets, however, not all indicators of the dimensions necessarily do (see Figure 22). Specifically, the findings for 'imageability and memorability' and 'landmarks' indicators did not supporting existing literature. Partially different findings were also suggested for 'land use diversity', 'vitality', and 'attachment' indicators. This confirms that more clarity is needed on the 'activities' and 'meaning' aspects of SOP in research (Nelson et al, 2020). Nonetheless, this study's analysis has identified specific attributes of high streets within each indicator that support SOP (Figure 23).
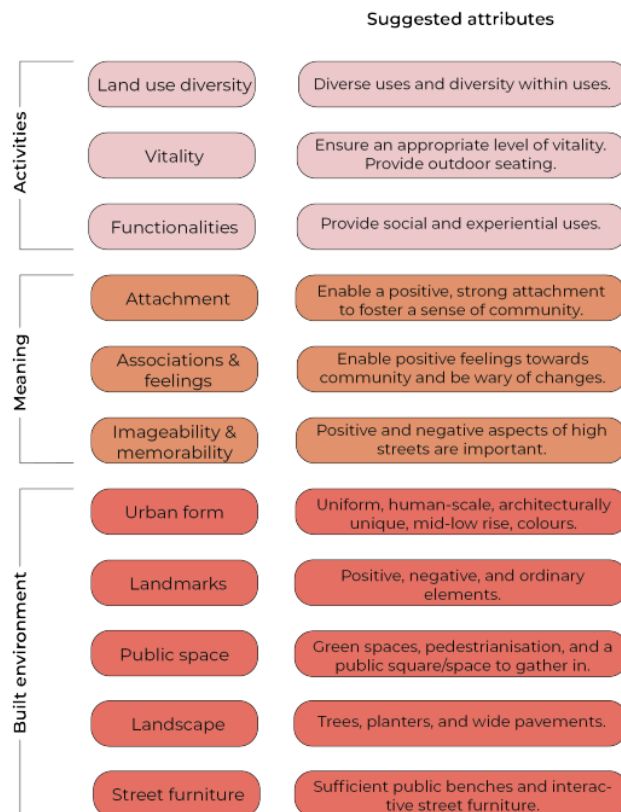

Figure 23: Suggested attributes to support SOP (Source: author)

Previous schools of thought also argued that outer city high streets offer more for users than inner city high streets (Vaughan, 2015b). Surprisingly, this was almost proven wrong in this study as MHS residents felt social and experiential functions were the most important uses, contributing to a strong SOP and community. However, most TWHS residents viewed their high street as purely functional and thus, this did not contribute to SOP. In this case, the role of the high street is not always integral for SOP in an area and high streets are not always experiential places.

Reflections on Research

For urban design and planning, this dissertation highlights the importance of studying high streets with a holistic approach. Debates around high streets are typically centred around economic activities. However, this study contributes to the debate on the conceptual role of high streets by using a framework to understand characteristics of SOP from a resident's perspective. By adapting Montgomery (1998) and Punter's (1991) framework, this thesis has been able to bridge the gap between examining physical, social, and emotional dimensions of SOP. However, it has highlighted the need to better understand these dimensions individually, especially the 'activities' and 'meaning' dimensions which lack consistency.

Recommendations

Although this research has examined the role of high streets in forming a resident's SOP for two case studies, further research could be done in more suburban and inner London high streets to consolidate findings. Participants from MHS generally had more disposable income and time compared to TWHS interviewees which inevitably influences how they use the high street and consequently SOP. In future, obtaining a more diverse cohort by comparing different groups in terms of how much time and money they have to spend on their high street could add to this discussion. Lastly, it is recommended that SOP should be considered in high streets when making future design or policy changes; such changes can be adapted to favour attributes that support SOP for residents and produce a more sustainable high street.

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APPENDICES

<u>Appendix 1: Interview Guide</u>

Introduce yourself and the purpose of the study, make sure informants sign the consent form, and ask permission for the interview to be recorded.

Warm up:

- Ask for background information: their age, gender, race, educational status, and length of residency in the area
- What do you think of the local area where you live?
- What do you think about your local high street?

Activities:

- How often do you visit the high street and for what reason(s)?
- What activities do you usually take part in on the high street? (e.g. shopping, eating, socialising with people, etc.)
- What activities do you enjoy taking part in most on the high street and why?
- What do you consider to be the most important function of the high street for you? (e.g. shopping, socialising, making experiences, etc.)
- What do you think about the types of uses that the high street offers you? Do you think there is a diverse mix of uses?
- Do you think that the high street is an important part of your local area?
- Would you say that the high street is well used and lively?
- Do you think the pandemic has affected how you use the local high street, and if so, in what ways?
- Is there anything that would prevent you from using the high street? Anything you dislike about it particularly?

Meaning:

- Would you say that it is generally a positive image you have of the high street or not really?

- Do you think your feelings towards your local high street have changed over time?
- Does this high street mean something to you? Does it mean a lot to you or not really?
- Do you feel a sense of attachment and connection to your local high street? Why is this?
- Would you say that you enjoy spending time in the high street? Why/why not?
- Do you think this high street is replaceable? (e.g. you could go to another high street nearby that fulfils the same needs)
- How connected do you feel to this local area? Do you think this high street plays a part in grounding you to this area?

Built environment:
- What do you think about the physical characteristics of your high street? (e.g. the buildings, pavements, how pedestrianised it is, etc.)
- Is there anything you would change about the design of the high street?
- What more do you think can be done to strengthen SOP in the high street, if anything?
- Do you think the built environment of the high street has a uniqueness or distinctiveness?
- Do you think the types of buildings on the high street affect your experience of the place when visiting it?
- Do you think there is sufficient public space on high street? How do you think this influences the experience of the place?
- What do you think about the street furniture (e.g. seating options) on the high street? Do you think it supports spending time in the area?

Warm down:
- Do you have any questions or comments?
- Is there anyone else you would recommend me to speak to in relation to this research?
- Thank participant for their time

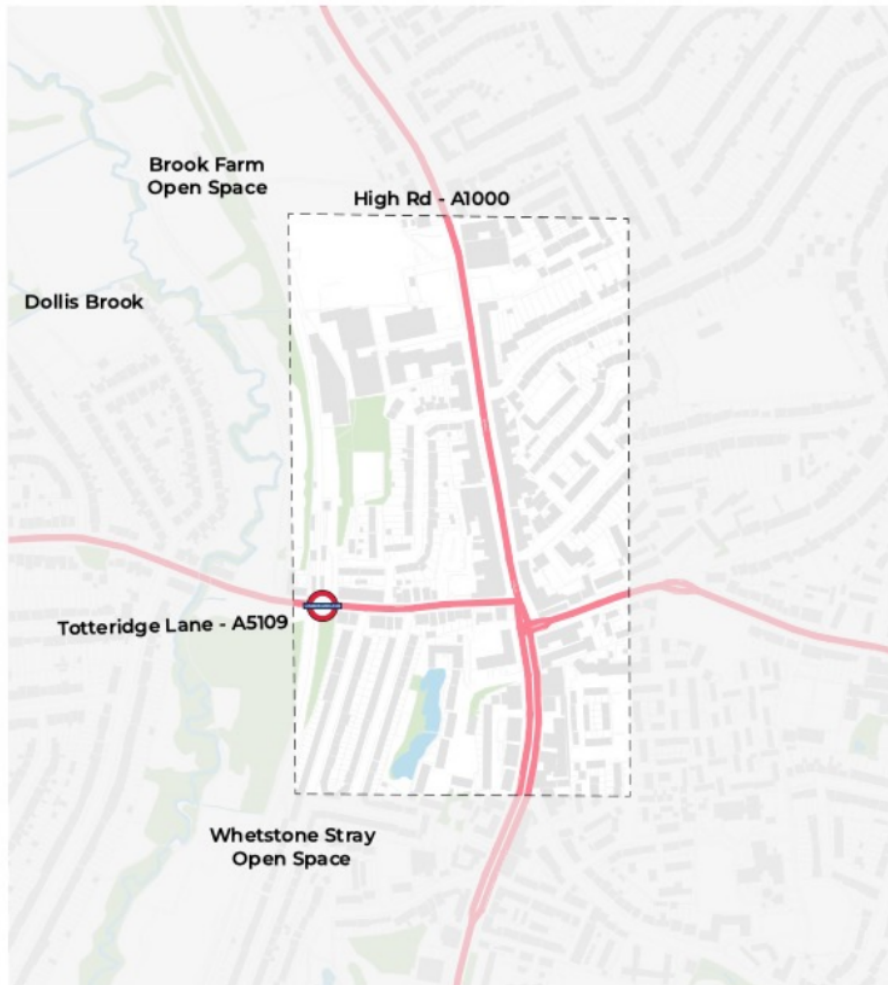Appendix 2: Basemaps Given to Participants for the Mental Mapping Exercise

Marylebone High Street basemap created by the researcher using Digimap and Adobe Illustrator.

Mental Mapping Exercise

Totteridge and Whetstone High Street created by the researcher.

Information and consent form

Project Title: The role of local high streets in forming people's sense of place

Researcher: Sana Miraj

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research project being undertaken by a Masters student from the Bartlett School of Planning, University College London (UCL).

Before you decide whether or not to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what participation will involve. Please read the following information carefully, feel free to discuss it with others if you wish, or ask the research team for clarification or further information. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Why is this research being conducted?

The aim of this project is to understand the role that a local high street may play in forming a resident's sense of place.

Why am I being invited to take part?

You are being invited to take part because you are a resident of the local area where the high street is situated and you have used the high street whilst living in this area.

Do I have to participate?

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you do choose to participate and then change your mind, you may withdraw from the research at any time with no consequences and without having to give a reason.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

If you do choose to participate, you will be invited to an interview to explore the issues highlighted above. The interview will be conducted at a mutually agreed location. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes-1 hour and will be audio recorded (and transcribed at a later date). You will have the opportunity to see the interview transcript and agree any amendments with the researcher after the interview is concluded. Travel and subsistence expenses are not offered for participation.

What are the advantages of taking part?

There are no immediate benefits for participating in this project and no financial incentive or reward is offered, however, it is hoped that this project will inform qualitative research around sense of place and high streets in London.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

We anticipate no significant disadvantages associated with taking part in this project. If you experience any unexpected adverse consequences as a result of taking part in the project you are encouraged to contact the researcher as soon as possible using the contact details on page 2 of this information and consent sheet.

If I choose to take part, what will happen to the data?

The interview data will be anonymised at the point of transcription and identified by a general identifier (e.g. 'Planning officer A' or 'Planning consultant B' or a suitable pseudonym). A record of participant identities and any notes will be kept separately and securely from the anonymised data. All data and information affiliated with this project will be securely stored on an encrypted computer drive and physical documents will be stored securely on University property.

The data will be only used for the purposes of this research and relevant outputs and will not be shared with any third party. The anonymised data may be utilised in the written dissertation produced at the end of this project, and this dissertation may then be made publicly available via the University Library's Open Access Portal, however, no identifiable or commercial sensitive information will be accessible in this way.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

It is anticipated that the data collected in this project will be included in the dissertation produced at the end of this project, submitted for the award of a Masters degree at University College London (UCL). You will not be personally identified in any of the outputs from this work, and attributions and quotations will be anonymised. If you would like to receive an electronic copy of any outputs stemming from this project please ask the contact below who will be happy to provide this.

Contact Details

If you would like more information or have any questions or concerns about the project or your participation please use the contact details below:

Primary contact   Sana Miraj

Role   MSc student

Email   zcfasmi@ucl.ac.uk

Supervisor	Dr Juliana Martins	
Role	MSc dissertation supervisor	
Email	j.martins@ucl.ac.uk	
Telephone		

Concerns and / or Complaints

If you have concerns about any aspect of this research project please contact the MSc student contact the student in the first instance, then escalate to the supervisor.

Informed Consent Sheet
The role of local high streets in forming people's sense of place

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form by ticking the boxes to acknowledge the following statements and signing your name at the bottom of the page.

Please give the signed form to the researcher conducting your interview at the interview. They will also be able to explain this consent form further with you, if required.

1.	I have read and understood the information sheet.	☐
2.	I agree to participate in the above research by attending an interview as described on the Information Sheet.	☐
3.	I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary.	☐
4.	I understand that I may withdraw at any time without giving a reason and with no consequences.	☐
5.	I agree for the interview to be audio recorded.	☐
6.	I understand that I may see a copy of the interview transcript after it has been transcribed and agree any amendments with the researcher.	☐
7.	I understand that the intention is that interviews are anonymised and that if any of my words are used in a research output that they will not be directly attributed to me unless otherwise agreed by all parties.	☐
8.	I understand the data from this project will be considered for repository in the UCL Open Access repository as described on the Information Sheet but that this will be anonymised data only.	☐
9.	I understand that I can contact the student who interviewed me at any time using the email address they contacted me on to arrange the interview, or	☐

the dissertation supervisor using the contact details provided on page 2 of the information sheet.	

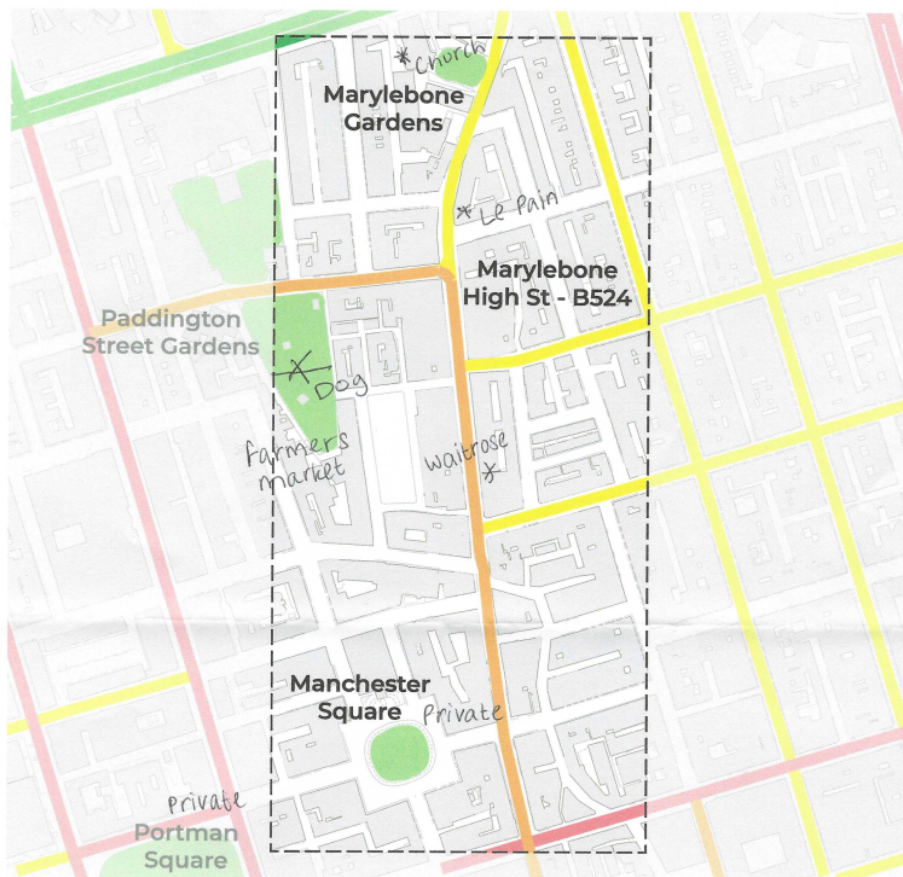**Participant name:**   **Signature:**   **Date:**

Researcher name: **Signature:**   **Date:**

Mental Mapping Exercise

Key
- - - - Site boundary
- Green spaces
- Buildings
- Primary road
- Main road (A road)
- Secondary road (B road)
- Minor road
- Streets

Mental Mapping Exercise

Handwritten annotations on map:
- Occassional visit.
- weekend rout.
- visit alot for coffee newspaper
- → walk to soho

Map labels:
- Marylebone Gardens
- Marylebone High St - B524
- Paddington Street Gardens
- Manchester Square
- Portman Square

Key
- - - - Site boundary
- Green spaces
- Buildings
- Primary road
- Main road (A road)
- Secondary road (B road)
- Minor road
- Streets

Appendix 5: Non-Participant Observations (In Full)

Table 7: TWHS built environment observations

Date/Time	Weather	Built Environment	Photos
06/07/2022, 1pm-3:45pm	24°C, warm but cloudy	**Public space**: Green space options nearby e.g. next to the tube station and by M&S (part of Dollis Valley Greenwalk). **Street furniture**: Quite a few benches, including a new bench named after the Queen's Jubilee. There is also a community notice board by 'Love Whetstone' advertising local events.	 Park next to tube station Jubilee bench Community notice board
07/07/2022, 3pm-4:30pm	24°C, warm and sunny	**Urban form**: Buildings are generally low-rise and not particularly or architecturally unique. **Landmarks**: There is a large tower block of offices known as 'Barnet House'. This was recently denied planning permission to be converted into residential flats because of a lack of	

Date/Time	Weather	Activities	Photos
		affordable housing and inadequate consideration of its urban design, land use, transport, etc. (GLA, 2018).	Low-rise buildings Barnet House
10/07/2022, 4pm-5pm	28°C, very hot and sunny	**Landscape:** Lots of trees lining the high street and some planters with flowers. **Landmarks:** There is the Whetstone monument and a plaque explaining its history outside the Griffin pub which is a Grade II listed building and monument.	Trees and planters The Whetstone outside the Griffin pub

Table 8: TWHS activities observations

Date/Time	Weather	Activities	Photos

05/07/2022, 1pm-3:45pm	24°C, warm but cloudy	**Vitality:** Lots of al-fresco dining at restaurants and cafes. **Social and experiential functions:** Some people sat on benches reading or talking to a person they are with.	 Al-fresco dining People reading on benches
07/07/2022, 3pm-4:30pm	24°C, warm and sunny	**Vitality:** Quite busy in cafes and Waitrose but less so in other shops e.g. boutique clothing stores. Also lots of traffic from cars and buses (with lots of school children waiting for the bus). **Social and experiential functions:** Lots of people sat on benches for different reasons e.g. waiting for a bus, after coming out a shop, drinking on them, reading a newspaper, on the phone to someone.	 Boutique clothing stores People on benches

| 10/07/2022, 4pm-5pm | 28°C, very hot and sunny | **Vitality:** Not very busy today despite being a weekend- not as many people eating outside.

Land use diversity: Mixture of shops e.g. grocery chains, smaller convenience shops, restaurants, cafes, but only a few clothing stores and bars/pubs. |
Empty restaurants

Board outside station showing different businesses |

Table 9: MHS built environment observations

Date/Time	Weather	Built Environment	Photos
13/07/2022, 3:45-5pm	29°C, very warm and sunny	**Public space:** Some small green spaces nearby that people use e.g. Marylebone gardens, Paddington street gardens, Garden of rest. **Urban form:** Buildings are mid-low rise, quite unique and are from different time periods but mainly Georgian style architecture.	

			 Paddington gardens Garden of rest Mid-low rise Georgian buildings
15/07/2022, 2pm-3pm	26°C, warm and sunny	**Street furniture**: Only one public bench on the street; other seating is part of restaurants/cafes or outside shops which makes it feel semi-private and feels like you need to purchase something to use it. **Landmarks**: A few distinctive churches e.g. St Marylebone Parish Church, Hinde Street Methodist Church, St	

		James' Roman Catholic Church.	Single bench on street Hinde street church St James' church
19/07/2022, 1pm-3pm	38°C, extremely hot and sunny (heatwave)	**Landscape:** There are trees lining the street but they are quite small. Also not many planters on the street. Whilst pavements are not as wide here, there are many zebra crossing and pedestrianised streets that lead off from the high street.	

Greenery

Zebra crossings

| 24/07/2022 10am-3pm | 26°C, sunny and warm | **Street furniture**: Although public seating is lacking on the actual high street, there are quite a lot of benches in the nearby parks.

Urban form: Roads are narrower, closer together and have more of a sense of enclosure. | |

Garden of rest benches

Smaller roads

Table 10: MHS activities observations

Date/Time	Weather	Activities	Photos
13/07/2022, 3:45-5pm	29°C, very warm and sunny	**Vitality:** Lots of people sat in nearby parks reading, on their phones, eating, or socialising with friends. It's noticeable that there are tourists or expats here by listening to accents. **Social and experiential functions:** Quite a few people eating outside of cafes and restaurants.	

| | | |
Marylebone gardens

People eating outside |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15/07/2022, 2pm-3pm | 26°C, warm and sunny | **Land use diversity:** Lots of boutique, expensive clothing shops and only one up-market supermarket (Waitrose).

Social and experiential functions: Lots of people seem to be here for leisurely activities e.g. browsing boutiques, going to cafes, etc. A lot of people dog-walking and lots of families with strollers. | |

			 Boutique stores People walking on the high street
19/07/2022, 1pm-3pm	38°C, extremely hot and sunny (heatwave)	**Vitality:** Not as busy because of the heat, but still some people sat inside where it's cooler. Also low amounts of traffic with a 20mph speed limit in the area.	 20mph speed limit
24/07/2022 10am-3pm	26°C, sunny and warm	**Land use diversity:** A few charity shops, pubs, and bars. There are mixed uses but it's limited and catered	

| | | primarily to a high-end market (e.g. even the charity shops have expensive items).

Social and experiential functions: Farmers market from 10am-2pm with lots of visitors, selling lots of upmarket goods. People also eat purchased goods in the nearby Paddington gardens. |
Charity shop

Pub

Farmers market |

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM
FIELD / LOCATION WORK

UCL

DEPARTMENT/SECTION: BARTLETT SCHOOL OF PLANNING
LOCATION(S): LONDON, ENGLAND
PERSONS COVERED BY THE RISK ASSESSMENT: Sana Miraj

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF FIELDWORK (including geographic location): I will be carrying out observations, interviews and surveys on two high streets in London (Marylebone High Street and Totteridge and Whetstone High Street).

COVID-19 RELATED GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT STATEMENT:
Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. The virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Droplets fall on people in the vicinity and can be directly inhaled or picked up on the hands and transferred when someone touches their face. This risk assessment documents key risks associated fieldwork during a pandemic, but it is not exhaustive and will not be able to cover all known risks, globally. This assessment outlines principles adopted by UCL at an institutional level and it is necessarily general. Please use the open text box 'Other' to indicate any contingent risk factors and control measures you might encounter during the course of your dissertation research and writing.

Please refer to the Dissertation in Planning Guidance Document (available on Moodle) to help you complete this form.

Hazard 1: Risk of Covid -19 infection during research related travel and research related interactions with others (when face-to-face is possible and/or unavoidable)
Risk Level - Medium /Moderate

Existing Advisable Control Measures: Do not travel if you are unwell, particularly if you have COVID-19 symptoms. Self-isolate in line with NHS (or country-specific) guidance.
Avoid travelling and face-to-face interactions; if you need to travel and meet with others:
- If possible, avoid using public transport and cycle or walk instead.
- If you need to use public transport travel in off-peak times and follow transport provider's and governmental guidelines.
- Maintain (2 metre) social distancing where possible and where 2 metre social distancing is not achievable, wear face covering.
- Wear face covering at all times in enclosed or indoor spaces.
- Use hand sanitiser prior to and after journey.
- Avoid consuming food or drinks, if possible, during journey.
- Avoid, if possible, interchanges when travelling - choose direct route.

- Face away from other persons. If you have to face a person ensure
that the duration is as short as possible.
- Do not share any items i.e. stationary, tablets, laptops etc. If items need to be shared use
disinfectant wipes to disinfect items prior to and after sharing.
- If meeting in a group for research purposes ensure you are following current country specific
guidance on face-to-face meetings (i.e rule of 6 etc.)
- If and when possible meet outside and when not possible meet in venues with good ventilation
(e.g. open a window)
- If you feel unwell during or after a meeting with others, inform others you have interacted with,
self-isolate and get tested for Covid-19
- Avoid high noise areas as this mean the need to shout which increases risk of aerosol
transmission
of the virus.
- Follow one way circulation systems, if in place. Make sure to check before you visit a building.
- Always read and follow the visitors policy for the organisation you will be visiting.
- Flush toilets with toilet lid closed.
-'Other' Control Measures you will take (specify):

**NOTE: The hazards and existing control measures above pertain to Covid-19 infection risks
only. More generalised health and safety risk may exist due to remote field work activities
and these are outlined in your Dissertation in Planning Guidance document. Please consider
these as possible 'risk' factors in completing the remainder of this standard form. For more
information also see: Guidance Framework for Fieldwork in Taught and MRes Programmes,
2021-22**

Consider, in turn, each hazard (white on black). If **NO** hazard exists select **NO** and move to next
hazard section.
If a hazard does exist select **YES** and assess the risks that could arise from that hazard in the risk
assessment box.
**Where risks are identified that are not adequately controlled they must be brought to the
attention of your Departmental Management who should put temporary control measures in
place or stop the work. Detail such risks in the final section.**

ENVIRONMENT	The environment always represents a safety hazard. Use space below to identify and assess any risks associated with this hazard
e.g. location, climate, terrain, neighbourhood, in outside organizations, pollution, animals.	Adverse weather conditions (low risk) e.g. a storm, flooding, severe rain or winds. Location (low risk) e.g. getting lost and going into unsafe areas.

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

	work abroad incorporates Foreign Office advice
	only accredited centres are used for rural field work
	participants will wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the specified environment
	refuge is available
	work in outside organisations is subject to their having satisfactory H&S procedures in place
✓	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

Adverse weather: Stay indoors when advised to for adverse weather events.
Location: Look at maps of the area before going there, plan your route before carefully and have a backup route in case the first is impassable, ensure a means of raising alarm if I do get lost e.g. have a phone with GPS and maps.

EMERGENCIES	Where emergencies may arise use space below to identify and assess any risks
e.g. fire, accidents	Examples of risk: loss of property, loss of life

Fire breakout in building you are in (low risk): loss of property and/or life.

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

	participants have registered with LOCATE at http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/
✓	contact numbers for emergency services are known to all participants
	participants have means of contacting emergency services
	a plan for rescue has been formulated, all parties understand the procedure
	the plan for rescue /emergency has a reciprocal element
	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented: will have a phone and emergency contact

FIELDWORK   1   May 2010

EQUIPMENT	Is equipment used?	NO	If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
e.g. clothing, outboard motors.	Examples of risk: inappropriate, failure, insufficient training to use or repair, injury. Is the risk high / medium / low ?		

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

☐	the departmental written Arrangement for equipment is followed
☐	participants have been provided with any necessary equipment appropriate for the work
☐	all equipment has been inspected, before issue, by a competent person
☐	all users have been advised of correct use
☐	special equipment is only issued to persons trained in its use by a competent person
☐	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

LONE WORKING	Is lone working a possibility?	**YES**	If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
e.g. alone or in isolation lone interviews.	Difficulties in getting help when needed (low risk) Travelling alone to places on foot/by public transport with risks of personal attacks (low risk)		

CONTROL MEASURES	**Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk**
☐	the departmental written Arrangement for lone/out of hours working for field work is followed
☐	lone or isolated working is not allowed
☐	location, route and expected time of return of lone workers is logged daily before work commences
☐	all workers have the means of raising an alarm in the event of an emergency, e.g. phone, flare, whistle
☐	all workers are fully familiar with emergency procedures
✓	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

Difficulties in getting help: Carry a phone with you at all times and do not carry valuables unnecessarily.

Travelling alone: Interviews, surveys and observations will be carried out in public spaces where other people will be around to reduce risks. I will also avoid travelling alone at night and will stay on busy, well-lit roads.

FIELDWORK   2   May 2010

ILL HEALTH	**The possibility of ill health always represents a safety hazard. Use space below to identify and assess any risks associated with this Hazard.**

e.g. accident, illness, personal attack, special personal considerations or vulnerabilities.	Fatigue leading to lack of concentration, accidents and risk of injury (low risk) Lack of physical fitness leading to risk of personal injury/illness (low risk)
CONTROL MEASURES	**Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk**

	all participants have had the necessary inoculations/ carry appropriate prophylactics
✓	participants have been advised of the physical demands of the research and are deemed to be physically suited
	participants have been adequate advice on harmful plants, animals and substances they may encounter
	participants who require medication should carry sufficient medication for their needs
✓	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

Fatigue: Do not try to do too much in one day and ensure sufficient rest is taken.
Lack of physical fitness: Do not be afraid to tell someone if you feel unwell or cannot carry on with a task; if you feel unwell then stop.

TRANSPORT	**Will transport be required**	**NO**		**Move to next hazard**
		YES	✓	**Use space below to identify and assess any risks**
e.g. hired vehicles	Travelling alone on public transport with risks of personal attacks (low risk)			

CONTROL MEASURES	**Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk**

✓	only public transport will be used
	the vehicle will be hired from a reputable supplier
	transport must be properly maintained in compliance with relevant national regulations
	drivers comply with UCL Policy on Drivers http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/college_drivers.php
	drivers have been trained and hold the appropriate licence
	there will be more than one driver to prevent driver/operator fatigue, and there will be adequate rest periods
	sufficient spare parts carried to meet foreseeable emergencies
✓	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

Travelling alone: I will avoid travelling alone at night and will stay on busy, well-lit roads.

DEALING WITH THE	**Will people be**	**YES**	**If 'No' move to next hazard**

PUBLIC	dealing with public		If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
e.g. interviews, observing			
	Causing offence, leading to abuse/attack (low risk) Misunderstanding of nature of work in interview, leading to risk of attack/abuse (low risk)		
CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk		

✓	all participants are trained in interviewing techniques
	advice and support from local groups has been sought
✓	participants do not wear clothes that might cause offence or attract unwanted attention
✓	interviews are conducted at neutral locations or where neither party could be at risk
✓	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

Causing offence: Let participants know how much of their time you will need, seek training in good interview techniques and dress approporiately. Do not stand in places where you will be causing an obstruction and always carry your UCL ID card.

Misunderstanding of nature of work: Be aware of any sensitive issues involved with discussions or interviews and try not to bring this up. Ensure people know who you are and what you are doing.

FIELDWORK   **3**   May 2010

WORKING ON OR NEAR WATER	Will people work on or near water?	NO	If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
e.g. rivers, marshland, sea.	Examples of risk: drowning, malaria, hepatitis A, parasites. Is the risk high / medium / low?		
CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk		

	lone working on or near water will not be allowed
	coastguard information is understood; all work takes place outside those times when tides could prove a threat
	all participants are competent swimmers

	participants always wear adequate protective equipment, e.g. buoyancy aids, wellingtons
	boat is operated by a competent person
	all boats are equipped with an alternative means of propulsion e.g. oars
	participants have received any appropriate inoculations
	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

MANUAL HANDLING (MH)	**Do MH activities take place?**	**NO**	**If 'No' move to next hazard** **If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks**
e.g. lifting, carrying, moving large or heavy equipment, physical unsuitability for the task.	Examples of risk: strain, cuts, broken bones. Is the risk high / medium / low?		

CONTROL MEASURES	**Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk**
	the departmental written Arrangement for MH is followed
	the supervisor has attended a MH risk assessment course
	all tasks are within reasonable limits, persons physically unsuited to the MH task are prohibited from such activities
	all persons performing MH tasks are adequately trained
	equipment components will be assembled on site
	any MH task outside the competence of staff will be done by contractors
	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

FIELDWORK   4   May 2010

SUBSTANCES	**Will participants work with** **substances**	**NO**	**If 'No' move to next hazard** **If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any** **risks**
e.g. plants, chemical, biohazard, waste	Examples of risk: ill health - poisoning, infection, illness, burns, cuts. Is the risk high / medium / low?		
CONTROL MEASURES	**Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk**		

	the departmental written Arrangements for dealing with hazardous substances and waste are followed
	all participants are given information, training and protective equipment for hazardous substances they may encounter
	participants who have allergies have advised the leader of this and carry sufficient medication for their needs
	waste is disposed of in a responsible manner
	suitable containers are provided for hazardous waste
	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

OTHER HAZARDS	**Have you identified any other hazards?**	**YES**	**If 'No' move to next section** **If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any** **risks**
i.e. any other hazards must be noted and assessed here.	Hazard: Medical conditions resulting from extended display screen use Risk:	RISK OF POSTURAL PROBLEMS, VISUAL PROBLEMS, FATIGUE AND STRESS	

CONTROL MEASURES	**Give details of control measures in place to control the identified risks**
Ensure postural and visual problems are dealt with and take enough breaks from the screen to rest. Ensure the work space has sufficient ventilation.	

Have you identified any risks that are not **adequately controlled?**	**NO**	✓	**Move to Declaration**
	YES		**Use space below to identify the risk and what** **action was taken**

DECLARATION	The work will be reassessed whenever there is a significant change and at least annually. Those participating in the work have read the assessment.
Select the appropriate statement:	
	I the undersigned have assessed the activity and associated risks and declare that there is no significant residual

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risk

☑ I the undersigned have assessed the activity and associated risks and declare that the risk will be controlled by
the method(s) listed above

NAME OF SUPERVISOR   Dr Juliana Martins

FIELDWORK   5   May 2010

Appendix 7: Ethical Clearance Questionnaire

Ethical Clearance Pro Forma

It is important for you to include all relevant information about your research in this form, so that your supervisor can give you the best advice on how to proceed with your research.

You are advised to read though the relevant sections of UCL's Research Integrity guidance to learn more about your ethical obligations.

Please ensure to save a copy of your completed questionnaire BEFORE hitting 'submit' (you will not be able to access it later).

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Submission Details

Page 2

1 * Please select your programme of study.

> Urban Design and City Planning

2 * Please indicate the type of research work you are doing.

- ☑ Dissertation in Planning (MSc)
- ☐ Dissertation in City Planning (MPlan)
- ☐ Major Research Project

3 * Please provide the current working title of your research.

> Examining Sense of Place in High Streets

4 * Please select your supervisor from the drop-down list.

> Martins, Juliana

Research Details

5 * Please indicate here which data collection methods you expect to use. Tick all that apply.

- ☑ Interviews
- ☐ Focus Groups
- ☑ Questionnaires (including oral questions)
- ☐ Action research
- ☑ Observation / participant observation
- ☐ Documentary analysis (including use of personal records)
- ☐ Audio-visual recordings (including photographs)
- ☐ Collection/use of sensor or locational data
- ☐ Controlled trial
- ☐ Intervention study (including changing environments)
- ☐ Systematic review
- ☑ Secondary data analysis
- ☐ Advisory/consultation groups

6 * Please indicate where your research will take place.

> UK only

7 * Does your project involve the recruitment of participants?

'Participants' means human participants and their data (including sensor/locational data and observational notes/images.)

◉ Yes ○ No

Appropriate Safeguard, Data Storage and Security

8 * Will your research involve the collection and/or use of personal data?

Personal data is data which relates to a living individual who can be identified from that data or from the data and other information that is either currently held, or will be held by the data controller (you, as the researcher).

This includes:

- Any expression of opinion about the individual and any intentions of the data controller or any other person toward the individual.
- Sensor, location or visual data which may reveal information that enables the identification of a face, address etc. (some postcodes cover only one property).
- Combinations of data which may reveal identifiable data, such as names, email/postal addresses, date of birth, ethnicity, descriptions of health diagnosis or conditions, computer IP address (of relating to a device with a single user).

○ Yes ◉ No

9 * Is your research using or collecting:

- special category data as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation*, and/or
- data which might be considered sensitive in some countries, cultures or contexts?

*Examples of special category data are data:

- which reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership;
- concerning health (the physical or mental health of a person, including the provision of health care services);
- concerning sex life or sexual orientation;
- genetic or biometric data processed to uniquely identify a natural person.

○ Yes ◉ No

10 * Do you confirm that all personal data will be stored and processed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018)?

○ Yes
○ No
◉ I will not be working with any personal data

11 * I confirm that:

☑ The information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge.
☑ I will continue to reflect on, and update these ethical considerations in consultation with my supervisor.

You **MUST** download a copy of your responses to submit with your proposal, and for your own reference.

To do this, use the print screen function of your web browser, and print to PDF in order to save.

Close this window

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BPLN0039_21-22_RDZZ9

FINAL GRADE

/100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

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