Social Connectedness and the Built Environment

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Statement of Originality

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Synopsis

My research thesis is an inquiry into a socio-spatial process: research planned to identify some of the challenges European urban designers face when tasked with implementing a government-planned regeneration programme for an existing urban suburb because of challenges to their economic and social stability. More specifically, to identify their challenges in implementing changes that will promote social connectedness and contribute to more socially cohesive communities in town centre and neighbourhood settings.

Recent research has suggested that social capital, broadly defined as the social connectedness of a community, fosters vibrant, sustainable and healthy communities more likely to work collaboratively together to solve community issues. My research will consider the expectations interviewees have in terms of whether the interventions with which they were involved would contribute to social capital, defined in this way.

My research will be an attempt to determine whether social connectedness improved as a result of a regeneration aimed at economic and social revival of deprived neighbourhoods in Neukölln and whether it will be reinvigorated following the planned regeneration of the urban town centre of Croydon.

By using a qualitative interpretative form of inquiry, the objective of my PhD thesis is to determine how urban designers tasked with implementing such a regeneration programme can intervene without compromising the social connections that are possible within urban space. Four methods would be applied, utilising interviews, a review of government regeneration proposals and documents associated with the management of urban space supported by observational field research and photographic analysis. My research will focus on identifying a range of common themes arising from urban regeneration approaches taken by government designed to improve economic competitiveness and to address social exclusion.
My field research involves numerous visits to the town centre (and inner-city surrounding space) of Croydon and neighbourhoods of Neukölln in order to conduct my data collection, including continual partial snapshots of the social lives of inhabitants as I observe their interaction with their respective built environments. My field research, photographic review and interviews with urban design professional evolve as I attempt to plot the extent of proposed changes and consequences to the urban terrain and social cohesion over the research period.

According to the views of Putnam (2000), there are fewer opportunities for personal encounters of a less formal nature in neighbourhood and city-centres in the current period compared to the decade after WW11. There are however alternative views that argue that social connections were changing in character, and were reflective of changing developments in the way people interact; influencing social capital (Avery and Guest 1999; Forrest and Kearns 2001).

In order to develop a robust argument, the subject of urban regeneration is examined using an interpretive approach and analysed using observational and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Trying to prove or disprove that social life has declined because of the impact of changes to the built environment and the traditional facilities that serve as meeting places for people is a challenging objective however.
Chapter I Literature review

Introduction
Incorporating a thematic approach the following literature review is the first of seven chapters dealing with qualitative research into the influence of the built environment on social connectedness because of planned government regeneration in designated town centre and neighbourhood precincts. Under the thematic approach I have selected eight major themes as relevant to the research of data. Within the selected eight themes various subjects have been interrogated by my chosen literature, and reference made to outcomes from my four tiers of research enquiry. The eight themes consist of 1-The British renaissance; 2-Business Improvement Districts (BIDs); 3-Gentrification; 4-Urban design practice; 5-Neighbourhood regeneration; 6-Social connectedness - public space and public art; 7-Social capital and 8-Bottom-up and top-down approaches to urban regeneration and design.

In a number of cases particular subjects may be located in other themes; for example the subject of the ‘creative class’ (Florida, 2002) is equally applicable in theme number 3-Gentrification, neighbourhood regeneration number 5, and social connectedness and art in the public realm number 6; likewise, the subject of places where people can meet has been raised in themes 4 and 7. However for the purposes of clarity a subject raised in one theme has not been discussed in any depth in another theme as it relates to a particular city suburb. This is adequately discussed throughout the data chapters (chapters 4 and 5) and in the concluding chapters (chapters 6 and 7).

Two European city-suburbs were selected for the research; one from Berlin and one from London. I chose Croydon and Neukölln as case studies for my research because they had recently established regeneration proposals to deal with the gathering momentum of global events influencing their economic performance and social cohesive qualities. My interest in Croydon and European cities generally has grown out of my long association with European cities. Having lived in English and German city neighbourhoods their urban development formed a major part of my ongoing interest in spatial design and influence on the lives of inhabitants as urban society evolves through the malaise of political, environmental, economic and social change. The objective of this particular research is to determine the contribution of particular government regeneration proposals towards the revitalisation of urban town
centres and neighbourhood settings. I examined the visionary ideology of urban designers and the citizens they represent, especially in the context of an ecological approach to urban design, local identity and the sustainable management of urban assets challenged by mobility and alternate population issues.

Within the literature review examples of urban qualities, edge-city identity, the gathering momentum of globally inspired socio-cultural and economic instability and their challenges will be discussed in the eight themes, in the methodology chapter 2 and throughout the thesis.

1.1 Research question
Social connectedness and the built environment: my research thesis is an inquiry into a socio-spatial process: research planned to identify examples of problems European urban designers face when tasked with implementing a government-planned regeneration programme for an existing urban suburb because of challenges to economic and social stability. Specifically, to identify their concerns in implementing changes to the built environment and socio-cultural frameworks which may be in conflict with their views on regeneration proposals. Also, whether there is conflict over their ideals of what constitutes a socially cohesive society because of a lack of depth in community participation in the design and ‘day-to-day’ management of sustainable communities.

1.2 Objectives of my research
My objective for gathering four types of qualitative data was to establish a balanced framework of which existing social conditions were affected by recent changes to the economic and political stability of working-class neighbourhoods in Berlin and by government proposals designed to prevent the wholesale fragmentation of working class society. As far as Croydon is concerned: will a regeneration of the CBD where the focus is on a redevelopment retail-led agenda enhance Croydon’s competitive status in the South East London area at the expense of the city’s aesthetics, social and creative elements?

At the core of a commercial-led CBD redevelopment agenda what is the spatial meaning and function of particular aspects of architectural design when designs are identified as contemporary landscaping like Singapore (Alsop, 2007, p.14). What relationship will a building seventy storeys high have with Croydon’s surrounding streetscape-space, the control of space and the mix of people who participate in the space? Does Croydon have to import its culture
from somewhere else (interview with Long 2008) to revitalise the town centre? Its Mini-
Manhattan City skyline tag from the 60s still persists (Glancey, 1998).

Will the Berlin government’s integrated Social City programme comprising refurbishment of
social housing, revitalisation of public space; interactive socio-cultural programmes and art in
the public realm enhance social connectedness and contribute to social capital? It is generally
accepted that weaker ties between citizens are more prevalent in today’s contemporary
society than strong ties (Florida, 2002; Putnam, 2000). The subject of weak versus strong ties
as a basis of transition in urban social engagement linked to the intervention of government
programmes is introduced in theme 7 on Social Capital. The attributes and failings of types of
social capital are discussed throughout my thesis.

Under the heading ‘Towns and neighbourhoods in transition’ below (after the heading
‘Significance of my research into social connectedness’) the themes and their subject areas and
impact on revitalisation of Croydon CBD, and the social integration of inhabitants in Neukölln’s
neighbourhood settings are reviewed and discussed in association with the literature.

1.3 The methods used as discussed in chapter 2
My research inquiry method uses a four-tiered approach, with the main inquiry method
centred on interviews with urban designers faced with implementing planned urban
regeneration programmes in Croydon and Neukölln. Interviews with urban designers were
supported by written field observation and a photographic review of Croydon’s CBD - the
subject of regeneration proposals.

Prior to my formal interview process interviewees were canvassed and opinions sought as to
their understanding of the research question: Social connectedness and the built environment.
They all shared a concern with the need to provide built environments that facilitate
meaningful human social interaction as an element of social capital in 21st century
contemporary society. They were also concerned with the lack of depth in participative
consultation with some members of the community and local decision-making avenues. All
interviewees had issues with top-down and bottom-up relationships with the community,
business and various tiers of government fulfilling their own unstated agendas.
Documents concerned with the regeneration of Croydon CBD formed the fourth inquiry method. The contents of government-sponsored publications (their narrative, images and other semiotic components) were critically examined using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Manipulation, power to inform and dominate public opinion through the discourse of the written language and signs were identified in government promotional texts. The power to dominate public debate also applies to Berlin’s promotional texts, although less extreme.

My analysis of interviews, supported by analysis of government-sponsored documents and two other methods of enquiry, has provided me with an integrated-subjective insight into the challenges of the regeneration of urban environments. This is especially relevant in a multicultural society. The views, challenges and constraints of the planning implementation process form the central topic of investigation, not least of which is the question of funding constraints.

The same four-tiered method of inquiry was employed to investigate regeneration proposals in the Berlin suburb of Neukölln.

1.4 Significance of my research into social connectedness, and review of structure

At a time when regeneration proposals for the London Borough of Croydon built environment may impede or facilitate social connections between inhabitants, the impact of business and alternative management strategies on the public realm may have further repercussions on informal civil engagement in the CBD. Particularly as there are privatisation of the public realm issues under the ‘Business Improvement Districts’ (BIDs) plan for Croydon’s CBD leading to “a sanitisation of the place” (interview with Smith, 2006).

The regeneration of deprived neighbourhood districts in the Berlin suburb of Neukölln may result in a similar outcome for its socially deprived neighbourhoods although not through privatisation of public assets. Berlin is faced with the challenge of shaping social cohesion in urban society under difficult conditions caused by transformation from an industrial to a knowledge society. The quality of social connections between inhabitants in their respective town centre and neighbourhood areas via Berlin’s present urban policy is under pressure because of the core makeup of the new 21st century Berlin economy and the question of population mobility and parallel societies emanating from it.
To resolve socio-spacial and ethno-spatial polarization in Berlin (as in European cities generally: Goethe Institute 2006; URBED, 2007; URBACT, 2005) there is limited financial scope for governments to achieve designated urban regeneration outcomes, where the centrepiece is social integration. The funding of social integration programmes and the refurbishment of social housing complexes are only part of the cost of implementing Social City programmes. There are costs in the time it takes to realise back-to-work and inclusionary benefits from government programmes. The establishment of efficient and workable top-down and bottom-up protocols, as well as the cooperation of different socio-cultural groups in attempts to achieve social integration and inter-cultural dialogue within the goals of government time-frames are expectations measured in decades not years.

Layout of thesis
The layout of my thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1 Literature review, Chapter 2 Methodology (including a review of methods), Chapter 3 Characteristics of the two case study areas (Croydon and Neukölln) including maps, Chapter 4 on Croydon (CBD regeneration) the first of two data and analysis of data chapters (including observation, photographic, document and interview data) and Chapter 5 on Neukölln the second of two data and analysis of data chapters (neighbourhood regeneration); Chapter 6 Croydon and Neukölln research findings and lastly Chapter 7 - Croydon and Neukölln research conclusions.

1.5 Review and discussion of eight themes significant in urban regeneration

1-British renaissance
When the term British renaissance is used in association with urban planning it implies cities are in transition from an industrialised society to a more creative knowledge-based identity (Tallon 2010). However I will demonstrate with referral to my literature review the term British renaissance is not necessarily another meaning for urban regeneration.

Tallon sees there are three approaches that are relevant to contemporary urban regeneration in the UK in late 20th century, with the contemporary emphasis on urban renaissance, social inclusion and economic competitiveness (Tallon 2010, p.7). Urban regeneration can be seen as the outcome of the interplay between limited urban planning options, the market and government and the British renaissance approach to urban planning and design. The design of
cities however requires more than the views of city business owners and transport operatives (interview with Smith 2006).

However the term British renaissance is fraught with misconceptions and interpretations. My research is an attempt to unravel some of them. On the one hand, is the term British renaissance just another meaning for regeneration with all that it entails; from the cultural to the creative and to the competitive city? Many British cities have improved their competitiveness by adopting a more creative European entrepreneurial-styled decentralised local decision-making models rather than concentrate on the competitive city approach.

With the incursion of container modernist architecture in the 60s, (Glancey 1998) Croydon effectively turned its back on its architectural past because of incentives from the market and government to create a modernist edge city town centre in the 60s. Before the 60s Croydon had its own uniqueness underpinned with historical events traceable from 1066. Councillor Hugh Malyan (2003) clearly has visions of replacing these 60s “uninspiring tower blocks” with a later modernist version of container architecture as a way of ensuring Croydon’s competitiveness is again strategically linked to new architectural projects financed from global networks.

Tallon sees architecture as one way of ensuring that the competitive advantage of one urban centre over another is maintained. This is achieved by ensuring the functionality of redeveloped city-space is achieved so the structural form of a building represents the interests of developers as means to generate business opportunities. However within city-space remain the interests of other identities than the functions of business and retail precincts and the role of cities as centres of consumption (Glaeser, Kolo and Saiz 2001). Separation of functions in a single zone planning approach is at play and with it the cultural and artistic identity of a city is at stake.

According Madanipour (1996, p.11) separation leading to divorce between physical and social space has widened the gap between architectural and social sciences perspectives, with their very different conceptions of space.

Tallon previously argues for the inclusion of creative economies and multi-use zoning precincts as part of a renaissance approach to city design. It is the renaissance approach with the
dimensions of European cities which some Croydon council identities find appealing. The concept of a Tuscan or European city was a focal point of many discussions with my Croydon interviewees and also informed political statements on urban design for Croydon, such as Croydon Council’s desire for Croydon to become a thrusting, confident 21st Century European City (Malyan 2003).

Tim Smith (interviewed 2006; 2008) sees the Italian city as a place where there is atmosphere, lacking in Croydon, although there are glimpses. The work of Hall in Cities of Tomorrow (1989) describes the renaissance-inspired city as it develops as a cultural crucible, an innovative milieu uniting art, technology and organisation. The historical consequences of early renaissance urban planning decisions have social and economic implications for urban planners and designers in the 21st Century. The spatial layout of Tuscan renaissance design and efficient strategic alliances between other cities and communities determined their economic as well as their social success.

So what happened to “The British Renaissance” after the 2001 Partners in Towns and Cities Report (2001)? Then it was seen as an opportunity that must include renewal underpinned by the inclusion of historical or cultural assets. This report puts into perspective the meaning of renaissance as wider than regeneration.

The report from the Partners in Towns and Cities report (Croydon is a member) suggests a holistic approach to urban renaissance requires a broader perspective than many professionals or politicians have historically brought to bear. Part of my research is an attempt to see if they are capable of following through with an urban renaissance model underpinned by a spiritual mindset: a mindset with stated holistic objectives.

In 1999 the Urban Task Force report with its 105 recommendations made the case for a holistic approach that goes beyond any one project, programme or department. In doing so it scoffs at the need for town centres to be intimidating centres and I would suggest buildings 70 storeys high meet that isolative agenda.

The ideals of a British Renaissance are contained within the Partners in Towns and Cites report eight dimensions of renaissance: community engagement; pride of place; harmonious communities; networks of enterprise; integrated transport; thriving centres; quality services
and valued neighbourhoods. Croydon council in its partnership with Alsop have ignored some of the sociological aspects of this, although his (2007) Third city document, in my analysis of Croydon regeneration, talks of recognising Croydon’s more creative aspects. Alsop’s key regeneration argument of focusing on construction of a few iconic buildings because it is better to do something rather than a lot does not equate because for one single building project the cost is in hundreds of millions of dollars. Funding at this level is fraught with danger as recent globally inspired events have shown.

Swaback (2003) suggests: true involvement comes when the community and the designer turn the process of planning the city into a work of art.

Many community-based refurbishment projects with community involvement could have been undertaken for that amount of money without the wider inclusion of the competitive city concept.

Urban competitiveness on its own leaves a city vulnerable to global decision making (Tallon, 2010), where local decisions are made on an international level – funding for example. City centres or large business and finance centres like Canary Wharf without a sustainable resident population component and a ‘fly-in fly-out’ professional workforce base their competitive advantage purely on sophisticated commerce-related activities and are in direct competition with other centres – Croydon for example. Working in a global marketplace and securing urban renaissance requires more than the collective input of a sample of the four thousand town centre stakeholders and the singular visions of an architect.

2-Business improvement districts (BIDs)

Three subjects are considered in this discussion on Business Improvement Districts and their role in the revitalisation of town and city centres. I will briefly consider what BIDs offer in a functional sense to city life and conclude with a discussion on the criticisms of BIDs.

Commonly referred to as BIDs and first introduced in the UK in 2004 and much earlier in America, BIDs arose out of a desire to improve the competitiveness of cities. The creation of a quality business environment is a core thematic area for intervention regarding regeneration of Croydon’s CBD and is the first subject under scrutiny. Under the Croydon Economic Development Strategy Report (2008) the BIDs approach is a strategy designed to bring more
people into the town centre for the purpose of doing business. However the central focus is on the creation of an expanded retail shopping experience to rival other locations in the South East of England. Croydon was seen as lacking in a sense of place and during a 2006 interview with Green his comment was (sic) “It’s a Joe average sort of place: It’s not an aspirational place at all” (Green 2006). Green was commenting on the quality of its shopping precincts.

Quality business environments need particular core elements to attract and keep shoppers in the town centre and this subject looks at some of them. The first element is accessibility, being able to reach shopping precincts easily. To support this view the London Borough of Croydon appointed Space Syntax (2006) to provide a baseline spatial planning assessment of the urban layout of the town centre area and the amenities to support it. One of their baseline criteria suggests that large public places will be used for the efficient movement of people between retail, leisure and entertainment centres as well as for public transport corridors between these consumption-based facilities.

Glaeser et al (2001) have identified four elements that make a city attractive for people to live, to visit and to work in. The city has to have a rich variety of goods and services, good aesthetics and physical settings, good public services and speedy access – the ability of people to move around, public transport and walkable precincts.

This subject examines particular core elements to attract and keep shoppers in the town centre – especially after dark (Malyan 2003). The first element is accessibility and being able to reach shopping precincts easily. Croydon CBD is well served by public transport with the two major transport interchanges of East and West Croydon catering for heavy rail and bus systems. The Tramlink tram system also serves East Croydon station and other neighbourhoods.

A second element is the safety of citizens. A feel-safe environment is necessary for business to function. Shoppers need to purchase goods and services and return safely to their homes without fear of crime. Antisocial behaviour in the CBD is a problem for Croydon council because of its infusion of alcohol related venues, referred to as the (new) night time economy. Pub numbers have grown from five to forty in a ten year period according to my interview with Burton (2001). I have researched and commented on the exclusionary aspects of this topic in
my research. West Croydon was cited in the Croydon Economic Report (2008) as being particularly problematic, with the suggestion that it becomes a ‘no go’ area after dark.

Upkeep of the public realm
The second subject for discussion on BIDs is an option for Croydon council to replace some of council’s operating expenses and responsibility by delegating the management of public assets by town centre businesses in such areas as safety, appearance of a clean and tidy environment and public security.

However according to Tallon (2010, p.102) the focus of BIDs spending is on what might be regarded as superficial measures designed to enhance basic streetscape appearance and economic performance of businesses in the city centre. It does nothing to address the causes of social and economic decline and the wider problems of city centre communities and neighbourhood renewal.

Privatisation of the public realm
The third subject concerns further privatisation of the public domain and the part the wider borough’s population plays in decisions of the form the town centre should take. Croydon unashamedly is a business centre – (Alsop 2007, p68; Stapleton 2009) and Alsop leaves us with no doubt he has Canary Wharf in his sights as the commercial centre he wishes to emulate. Within his Third City document he has other visions – like “Contemporary landscaping, very high buildings – 70 storeys Singapore” (Alsop 2007, p14). The BIDs model will fit well within this proposed late modernist architecture but not as a vehicle for social inclusion.

As indicated in my research and referred to in my analysis, talk of creative visions for the town centre and the redrawn edge-city suburb of Croydon, cultural offerings will be centred around a pre-packaged form of entertainment (Florida 2002). Night clubs, pubs and theme-bars are prime examples (The Croydon Vision2020 Executive Summary, November 1998).

Whilst Tallon sees the objective of BIDs is to contribute to the wider urban renaissance perspective, particularly in city centres (Tallon, 103), upon closer inspection Tallon suggests there are criticisms regarding the expansion of private sector interests into what had been the responsibility of local government.
Joe Rowe, BID chairman (2010) believes the BID Company has an important role to play in promoting the best interests of Town Centre businesses; however what about the best interests of the other 365,000 borough inhabitants? Central government faces a number of issues; not least is the sheer intensity of urban problems such as social exclusion because of the imposition of a BIDs approach to town centre management.

According to Minton: (2006, p.2) privatisation of the public realm, through the growth of ‘private-public’ space, produces over-controlled, sterile places which lack connection to the reality and diversity of the local environment, with the result that they all tend to look the same. They also raise serious questions about democracy and accountability. But perhaps most worrying of all are the effects on cohesion, battered by the creation of atomised enclaves of private space which displace social problems into neighbouring districts (2006, p.2).

Tallon also comments of on the negative aspects of BIDs: ‘the messy vitality’ of cities is ‘diluted into carefully designed and homogenised blandness found in malls and business parks’. BIDs cannot be seen as a singular panacea for urban regeneration. A number of tensions, controversies and issues are brought about by pursuing regeneration based on retail-led schemes (Tallon 2010, p.191). This is the regeneration approach favoured by Croydon council.

3-Gentrification
There are many aspects to the gentrification debate and this one is centred on neighbourhoods designated as deprived districts by government in the Berlin working class suburb of Neukölln.

This third theme under discussion in the literature review considers prevailing Berlin urban conditions because of the recent German reunification, frequent population movements between working class districts and large outer Berlin social housing areas.

Although the gentrification theme has not been raised specifically by my interviewees in Berlin, urban environments leading to gentrified neighbourhoods has been discussed in my interviews with Berlin government representatives (interview with Franke 2006). In Berlin, urban environments influencing the gentrification of deprived working class districts include population mobility factors (URBACT 2005) and some aspects of parallel societies.
Instances of gentrification in Berlin have become more problematic in recent times because of global social and economic conditions leading to changes from an industrialised to an information-based economy seldom recorded in London or New York (Smith 2010). The following is an insight but not a conclusion into the extent of the recent influx of new residents and the exit of others with different socio-economic circumstances – one of the conditions of gentrification.

In the last few years, Berlin's gritty Neukölln district has become a hotbed of the creative class and nightlife, attracting students, artists and bourgeois bohemians. But some worry that the neighbourhood is changing too quickly and locals are being pushed out (Moises Mendoza 2008).

When reference is made to working class area neighbourhoods in Neukölln becoming attractive to live in – what are the conditions that make an area attractive to gentrification? Examination of literature and my research indicate particular local conditions are as important as city and country-wide social and economic conditions in why an area becomes sought after as a place to live and is not as expensive as other suburbs. So what are some examples of more global and local conditions driving gentrification?

The simple answer is gentrified areas are ones in which there is a degree of social improvement since most in-movers come from less deprived areas and most out-movers go to similar or more deprived areas. This could be seen as a form of gentrification. My literature research, my field research and my Berlin interviews suggest the gentrification in my case study neighbourhood’s precincts is not driven by redevelopment of neighbourhood precincts undertaken by global interests. This does not imply there is not government intervention into improving deteriorating social and economic conditions - of course there is.

Since Berlin authorities plot population movements between suburbs (unlike the UK which does not) it is easier in theory to determine the social-health and social inequalities of particular districts and allocate strategic resources accordingly (URBACT 2005). However rather than an emphasis on a housing-led regeneration approach (Tallon 2010, p.196) the Berlin government through its Social City programme allocated a range of social and physical resources to address the social and economic deprivation of many of Berlin’s working class districts.
Allocation of resources does not necessarily mean social and cultural inequalities are completely understood – it means they exist and targeted. There is an organic form of gentrification taking place in some of Berlin’s working class districts that may contribute to a more socially integrated society. However achieving a socially integrated society requires moving the understanding of the social and cultural norms of socially and economically deprived districts to other levels of community engagement and into a neighbourhood managed approach. Fortunately Berlin has a long history of migrant communities, many with a guest worker status; however there are social and cultural inequalities to resolve. This requires the cooperation and collaboration of local residents in a top-down and bottom-up strategic framework in a locally managed and government-sponsored programme of reform that includes a mix of interventions from refurbishment of social housing, enhancement of the public realm and creative programmes to develop social integration and initial social connectedness between different socio-cultural groups (Beckman, Franke, Reimann and Strauss 2007).

My discussion on the gentrification theme is not whether it is good or bad, but discussion is centred on how it relates to my research into the regeneration of the Berlin suburb of Neukölln. The gentrification theme has not been raised by my interviewees in Berlin however the conditions seen as contributing to the occurrence of gentrification in my chosen case study suburb of Neukölln exist in its neighbourhoods designated as deprived by the Berlin government.

I have directly observed some of the results of gentrification during my field observational trips to the Neukölln neighbourhood district of Schiller Promenade. I also have evidence of the changing community dynamics of the centre of Neukölln from 2006, with more vibrant one-of-a-kind local shops run by entrepreneurial migrants. I would regard such changes as evidence of gentrification which is discussed in my research findings. However it is a Berlin form of gentrification and it is unique in a sense as it is the result of an integrated approach to urban renewal involving government, the private sector and the community in all its forms. In other words urban regeneration under the Social City programme is not driven by the market as the dominant player in the construction of social housing projects.
DeBord (2007) sees this as gentrification “as it is supposed to be”. I can’t say it is good or bad – however since gentrification is often associated with soaring rents my field research did not point to this in my later visits to Berlin in 2006, 2008 and 2012. Berlin does not have an accommodation shortage like London, so large social housing redevelopment projects are not driving inner-city construction. Large new and refurbished social housing projects do exist on the outskirts of Berlin especially in the previous Berlin East areas because of poorly built slab-constructed social housing complexes in the 70s.

The gentrification of whole districts is therefore not necessarily influenced by a search for somewhere to live. There is always somewhere to live in Berlin and a good public transport system ensures connectivity with Berlin suburbs. The social problem is exaggerated when community groups are split up during movements to other districts. The Berlin government under its Social City programme, by refurbishing social housing precincts with residents still residing in them or close by, has cushioned the full effects of gentrification to some degree.

A key question is whether government policies designed to promote integration have also become an aspect of a gentrifying process which is systematically changing the social mix of working-class districts of Berlin and Neukölln specifically (de Boer 2009; Smith 2009). The Neukölln neighbourhood district of Schiller Promenade in recent times (2008) is a pocket example of an area attractive to artists and other members of the creative class who come from ethnic and old German backgrounds.

I referred previously to an organic form of gentrification involving the new creative class (Florida 2002) drawn from a new wave of artists and musicians some of whom participated in Social City public realm projects. Government strategy to socially integrate residents in Neukölln using a cultural arts strategy as part of an integrated urban regeneration strategy may end up with a controlled style of gentrification, as a new middle class (some from other countries) is attracted to a suburb because of local facilities such as schools (interview with Franke 2006) and parks and integrated public transport connections to other parts of Berlin, especially to Mitte.

4-Urban design practice
The following review investigates a thematic approach to understanding the practice and
outcomes of urban design in the current contemporary period. This thematic review is centred on Croydon’s regeneration of its town centre.

In the present urban climate there are three approaches to urban regeneration according to Tallon (2010). There are however two conditions that have to be accommodated within the practice of urban design in spite of the demands of the transitional process of cities as they navigate between the influence of globalisation and need for economic performance.


Comments on the two conditions:

In a growing metropolis urban design is both a technical and social process. The technical approach, which has been used in architectural writing, brings together the scientific information needed in the process of urban design. Information about road standards, open space requirements, trees and plants in the urban environment, lighting, infrastructure, patterns of access, modes of transport, pedestrianisation schemes, for example, is needed in the design of the urban areas.

Madanipour’s text demonstrates the existence of a bridge between the different approaches to urban design. He suggests existing literature is mostly written within architectural frames of reference. This has clearly led to a lack of understanding of the perspectives of those engaged in social dimensions of space, i.e. planners, urban geographers and urban sociologists as well as urban designers.

The social largely subjective aspects of the design of urban space can be easily turned into a functional exercise into how public space as part of urban design can only be associated with the efficient movement of citizens between transport interchanges, retail, commercial and entertainment precincts. Add security, cleanliness and lookalike retail shopping malls in single zone consumption based precincts and a sense of place has been largely replaced by the sanitised values of controlled private-public space (Minton 2006).

The influence of globalisation and the focus on economic performance and physical regeneration as a means of providing infrastructure to enhance the competitiveness of central
precincts has led to a complete lack of strategic community involvement in both the design and management of urban space in CBD precincts.

The role of architecture is as a ‘fundamental partner’ in the transition of city centres as places where people can meet and freely engage in a range of mixed commercial, cultural, creative and social activities. This has been compromised unless Croydon council urban designs engage with the social, artistic and cultural opportunities of the urban mix. From the gritty underbelly of city centre laneways and left-over spaces between buildings along with the excitement of old buildings refurbished and improved upon for new purpose, this is at the core of urban revitalisation. A place full of chain stores and night clubs is not authentic (Florida 2002, p.225-6). Not only do these places appear the same as everywhere else, as mentioned by my Croydon interviewees, but they offer the same experience you could have everywhere. The critique of this kind of single-usage functionalism is the aesthetic desires and culturally specific notions of the users are not taken into account.

Regenerated town centres need to accommodate members of the information society, the creative classes need neutral zones i.e. neither domestic, nor commercial environments (Florida 2002, p. 226; Oldenburg 1979). In such spaces, aspects of street culture and informal personal encounters can occur (Baum and Palmer 1999), where residents can interconnect with fellow citizens and develop social connectedness.

The different characteristics of technical and social aspects of urban design and how one impacts upon the other form part of my inquiry into how people’s relationship with the built environment is influenced by the owners and managers of urban space, especially if management of the public realm is controlled by private enterprise, BiDs for example.

5-Neighbourhood regeneration

A number of authors recognise the quality (Becci 2007; Copeland 2004; Steinberg 1990) of Berlin neighbourhoods is under threat because of the fluid nature of transient populations and the need to prevent Berlin becoming a “city of transit” (Franke 2003). Several ecological, cultural and social initiatives are being engaged to prevent the disintegration of those Berlin neighbourhoods referred to as “Disadvantaged Urban Areas” by the Berlin Senate for Urban Development (Junge-Reyer 2005).
The Berlin government’s focus on regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods arose out of urban conditions increasingly shaped by social and ethnic segregation because of unemployment and poverty beginning in the 1990s. The Berlin government recognised that the complex nature of the disintegration of some working class neighbourhoods was not solvable by a physical redevelopment strategy alone – nor could government afford costly redevelopment programmes. Neighbourhood regeneration of working class districts was not however a reactive response to recent globally inspired issues since local conditions in Greater Germany played a significant role in the demise of Berlin, not least amongst which was the reunification of Germany in October 3, 1990. Reunification led to the collapse of the old East German economy and the closure of many of its factories with many East Berliners leaving for the West in search of a better life (URBED 2008, p.11). It also resulted in the movement of replacement populations from the east.

Under these difficult conditions Berlin’s present urban policy is faced with the challenge of shaping social cohesion in urban society caused by transformation from an industrial to a knowledge-based society resulting in the loss of nearly a quarter of a million jobs in the industrial sector. Particularly affected were Berlin’s migrant population who reside predominately in Kreuzberg and Neukölln and adjoining districts of inner-city Berlin. These areas had very developed and stable populations – many of whom were guest workers of Turkish origin from the late 1960s-70s and fully employed until the late 1980s.

With this background neighbourhood regeneration in Berlin has arisen during a time when socio- spatial and ethno-spatial polarization threatens the genre of the Berlin neighbourhood. Berlin is famous for its neighbourhoods. They are self-contained entities with each neighbourhood providing a wide variety of services and facilities typical of a compact city. The movement of people into and out of the more socially and economically deprived neighbourhoods played havoc with government authorities trying to make sense of what services to provide, what services to dispense with and dealing with the changing socio-cultural makeup of populations (Interviews with Hübner 2001; 2004; URBACT 2005).

At the lower end of the socio-economic scale, and apart from economic reasons such as employment and lower rents, the quality of social housing was not the only major factor in why people move; it was also for social reasons (friends and colleagues) rather than family reasons. Younger urban professionals especially Biodeutsch were becoming very interested in
moving into inner-city suburbs for different reasons. The mobility of urban professionals worked for them rather than against. Their professions were often Berlin-based rather than suburb-based and they were especially interested in transport, schools, cultural and artistic venues as well as the vibrant social life typical of inner-city Berlin. Many inner-city Berlin suburbs and their respective neighbourhoods provide a wide range of facilities to meet the urban density of Berlin and typically Berlin suburbs have twice the urban density of equivalent London suburbs.

Under the uncertainty caused by socio-spatial and ethno-spatial polarization the replacement of residential buildings and the construction of new ones in the traditional and older part of Berlin was not the only answer to revitalising the neighbourhood. The challenge was to socially integrate inhabitants of deprived neighbourhoods by a social programme that also included improving the quality of existing apartments and the surrounding space. Fortunately older traditional Berlin areas do not have a housing shortage and Berlin has instigated a city-wide urban renewal programme for accommodation needing refurbishment.

The neighbourhood situation in Berlin is especially relevant to the social and cultural health of its centre (Mitte) and especially inner-city East Berlin – where most government buildings are now located.

Various authors have recognised the importance of the neighbourhood in city life and this is especially applicable to Berlin: one reason that the town centre’s capacity for social cohesion is important is the neighbourhood acts as an important setting for many of the processes which shape social identity and life-chances according to Forrest and Kearns (2001). However the health of working class neighbourhoods designated as deprived by the Berlin government can be revitalised only with the collaboration and practical assistance of business and professional entrepreneurs, youth organisations and young urban professionals, as well as local community action groups who provide creative and experimental energies that contribute to environmental care and restoration of the neighbourhood (Goethe Institute December, 2010).

6-Social connectedness - public space and public art

The theme ‘social connectedness – public space and public art’ is considered in both case study areas of Croydon’s CBD and Neukölln’s traditional high street precincts (connecting with Schiller promenade) and designated deprived districts of Schiller Promenade and Gropiusstadt.
The Berlin government’s Social City programme where their ‘Art in the Public Realm strategy’ is a vehicle for social integration is a strategic element in the creation of social connectedness between different ethnic groups in neighbourhood settings.

The intervention of a creative arts approach to revitalise Croydon’s CBD is not part of the proposed regeneration agenda, so there is no basis for me to critique non-existent opportunities arising out of a non-proposed renewal programme. I will however draw an analogy between proposals to construct town centre high-rise and interrelated green space not managed by the private sector.

Three elements of the built environment impact on social connectedness: the actual building, reflected by the type or style of architecture, its purpose or function; the type of surrounding space and whether it is in the public or private domain and thirdly the mix of people who occupy the building and the surrounding space.

Social connectedness happens in a variety of environments, for example in the workplace, across the neighbour’s fence or across to the next balcony. Work-based social connectedness offers the most diverse racially and even politically than most other social settings, with co-workers accounting for less than 10 per cent of our friends (Putnam 2000, p.87). People who connect in one sphere will also connect in another. This is why the dynamics of mixed environments produce more interrelated experiences between people given the opportunity of available free public space. How people connect in the public domain influences the quality of interpersonal connections and the most frequent of social connections according to Putnam (2000, p.93) are informal.

For social connectedness to occur the built environment and surrounding space play a crucial part. This is especially significant given the weakness in the push for high rise in Croydon’s CBD. According to the late Sir Simon Milton:

Tall buildings in the right place, such as the city, Canary Wharf and Croydon are absolutely fine and there will be other areas where new clusters could occur (Evening Standard, 8 September 2008).

The dominant pattern of new development allows millions of people to live within a few feet of each other without ever having to meet and the same is true for people who live above one
another in far denser high-rise apartments (Swaback 2003). Parks scattered on fringes of town centres are not a practical solution for apartment dwellers, because to reach them transport is required (Third city document 2007).

Social connections in buildings are more formal than connections conducted outside a building, and some built environments are highly emotionally addictive, shopping malls for example, encouraging individualistic behavioural patterns detracting from meaningful social connectedness between strangers. Shopping malls and the precincts surrounding them are considered part of public space. However the imposition of Business Improvement Districts in Croydon’s CBD accelerates the privatisation of public space. The BIDs approach to control of public assets represents a globally used term ‘private-public space’ referred to by Minton (2006, p.2) and discussed by Low (Low and Smith 2006, p.82) and by Tallon (2010).

Interconnecting shared walkable public space represents the best opportunity for informal social connectedness to occur in the public domain. People are more relaxed in uncontrolled outside urban space, if abundant facilities like pocket parks and public squares are available to reduce the tension of urban transit corridors between single-zoned precincts.

Residents of Berlin’s rented-barracks (Reif 2002; Sheridan 2005; URBED 2008) appear to take every opportunity to be outside and use the outside space for social connections. Public space is very important in Berlin and because of the compact higher density nature of urban areas good spatial design is critical as are pockets of greenspace integrated where almost every facility for urban life is close at hand. However because of the recent deprivation (prior to the establishment of Social City) of many of Berlin’s working class districts good spatial design suffered from neglect. Residents, many of whom were recent arrivals from Eastern Europe, withdrew from areas of the public realm, instead spending hours in rented apartments in social isolation. This was typical of some aspects of Gropiusstadt where significant gains were made in social connectedness from my first visit in December 2001 to further visits in 2006 and 2008.

According to Florida (2002) connectedness comes when people play a part in creating and sharing their own experiences with others. Government’s role is to facilitate opportunities for the creation of their own experiences in public space. However the perception was that a
Berlin government-controlled interventionist strategy would invite suspicion, especially from new inhabitants from societies where government-organised programmes had other agendas. The formation of a partnership between the use of art in public space without the formality of a government or private controlled agenda was adopted by the creative arts community, business community leaders and a mix of government support agencies.

The initial use of an artistic and creative process of intervention in public space is an important aspect of empowering residents in designated deprived areas to help themselves discover and share their cultural talents, often hidden by the barriers of language and cultural norms (refer to interview with Busse 2006). This is also a key element of government cultural policy (interview with Kolland 2008). Recent Berlin neighbourhood experiences points to the opportunities for social connectedness which has been enhanced by the intervention of art in the public realm rather than fragmented.

7-Social capital
Aided by my literature review my key research objective was to understand, by using a process of interpretative enquiry, the process and practice of urban planning and design as it relates to social connectedness and the development of social capital in my two urban sites – one on the neighbourhood and other on the town centre.

Putnam (1993; 2000) has been most influential in drawing the concept of social capital into widespread contemporary use in both academic and policy debates. As with social cohesion, however, overuse and imprecision have rendered it a concept prone to vague interpretation and indiscriminate application, a view proposed by Guest et al. (1999).

My discussion considers the impact and relationship of types of built environments and any improvements to social connectedness and social capital in order to address urban aspects of decay and economic opportunity in European cities in this early 21st century contemporary period.

Social capital is a feature of social life and social life is an element of urban society enabling citizens to pursue individual and shared objectives whether for commercial, personal, creative or other reasons. Social connectedness between people is both a process of connecting with others as well as a means of developing types of social capital; such features of social life as
networks, norms and trust (Tallon 2010, p145-6) enable participants to function better as a socially cohesive society.

Although according to Putnam (2000) people in a civic sense have become increasingly disconnected from one another and from their respective communities, another type of citizen has emerged leading to a weaker form of social connection between individuals. My research and interrogation of the literature (Florida 2002) suggests a weaker form of social capital has attributes suitable for contemporary life and therefore not necessarily weak in terms of building meaningful social relationships in a variety of forms.

Florida (2002, p.267-69) has contributed to my understanding and use of the concept of social capital and its practical application in neighbourhood and town centre urban environments. Richard Florida has expanded the concept of social capital to creative capital and the individuals who represent the ‘creative class’ as envisaged by Florida (2002).

Responding to the social and economic fragmentation of a number of working class districts with its challenge of parallel societies and socially exclusive enclaves, the Berlin government with federal and local support implemented a socially integrative city programme entitled Social City to address these issues. With support from my literature review (Madanipour; Tallon et al) and my research data, the social strength of the city is predominant in socially cohesive neighbourhoods. Any economic and social fragmentation of the neighbourhood can lead to the further decay of inner-city and CBD society: however Forrest and Kearns, (2001) see changes in society rather than the fragmentation of society.

The socially inclusive aspects of integrated urban renewal with refurbishment and art in the public realm has been defined by the bonding and bridging elements of social capital (interview with Franke 2006) which are under threat from the challenges to the social life of ethnic communities because of relevant global and local issues.

Interviews in Berlin corresponded with views expressed by Putnam (2000) that social capital has its poorer aspects. The so-called weaker aspects of social capital he terms ‘bridging ties’. The future of more flexible and dynamic types of social connectedness and social capital lies with more creative activities because bridging ties act as an initial basis for inter-personal and small group contacts. However the process of social connectedness under these less
structured terms needs to be facilitated by more places to meet less formally to share street-cultural activities such as carnivals and outside markets. Opportunities to meet have also to be accommodated by walkable precincts and neighbourhood transport systems, light-rail for example. It is this aspect of Croydon’s regeneration through the provision of its Tramlink light rail system which was the initial catalyst for Croydon’s endeavour to present as a confident 21st century European city (Malyan 2003).

Florida (2002) refers to the ‘creative class’ that needs neutral zones or third places i.e. neither domestic, nor commercial environments (Florida 2002, p. 226; Oldenburg 1979). In such areas aspects of street culture and informal personal encounters can occur (Baum and Palmer 1999), where residents can ‘interconnect’ with fellow citizen; discussed previously under ‘Urban Design Practices’. The application of art in the public realm in a variety of mediated and other forms of artistic communication has circumvented cultural lines where language may have been a barrier to social connectedness in more recent examples of neighbourhood decay in Berlin.

In Putnam’s view civic disengagement in any form in the community equals a loss of social capital and therefore a loss of social connectedness and inter-resident dialogue in social housing districts. Elements considered by my research and interrogation of literature are necessary for social integration to occur.

Within Croydon’s city space social connectedness is challenged not only because of proposals to build high-rise themselves but also because of the cluster effect (Milton cited in the Evening Standard, 2008) of single zone commercial and retail precincts. This results in a lack of integrated greenspace and city squares where spontaneous and informal encounters can occur and where people could create their own public space experiences. Within Croydon’s CBD social connectedness is also challenged by the exclusionary effects of bars, pubs and nightclubs, termed as the new night time alcohol focussed economy.

Putnam saw voluntary and community associations and voluntary unions as the key source of social capital; with non-privatised public space the pursuit of creative experiences becomes more achievable.
Social connectedness is enhanced when citizens have more opportunities to engage with each other especially when they share a range of spontaneous and continuous encounters and work or share creative tasks, particularly on a volunteer basis. This includes more mediated forms of human contact, which helps some remain in contact and others to be disconnected if they choose.

My research sees one of the keys to the advance of social connectedness in Croydon’s and inner-city precincts (as in Florida’s and Putnam’s analysis) as the networks resulting from systematic face-to-face association. These enable participants, often on a voluntary basis, to act together more intuitively to pursue shared objectives. On this basis the borough of Croydon has a huge voluntary sector with one garden allotment association boasting over one thousand members. Who better than they to help plan and strategically manage CBD greenscape as an inter-community, government and private sector framework for urban renewal? It is this type of community, private enterprise and government associated frameworks that helps to achieve a more vibrant and mixed-use environment to counter the more rigid, formal and competitive Business Improvement District philosophy now in use in Croydon’s CBD.

8-Bottom-up and top down approaches to urban regeneration and design

Bottom-up and top-down approaches to urban regeneration and design represent competing ideologies between the organic, intuitive and informal aspects of bottom-up regeneration approaches versus the formal, centralised and structured approaches of top-down management policies. This does not imply that one ideology is preferable to another; in both case studies they fulfil different regeneration requirements, one based on a town centre and the other on a neighbourhood district. The reasons for the renewal of neighbourhood districts in Berlin are based on the social and economic disintegration of working class districts and for Croydon regeneration is centred on improving the CBD’s economic competitiveness.

From a theoretical perspective local neighbourhood conditions are considered best suited to a bottom-up approach to regeneration and a central business district is more suited to top-down approach for its urban renewal. This will be discussed along with the merits of bottom-up and top-down approaches to urban renewal. The differences in these competing ideologies render them more suitable to one use and not another – at least theoretically.
Tallon (2010, p.84) refers to an example of a bottom-up policy approach for UK neighbourhood conditions:

Local Strategic Partnerships were created to ensure strategic (LSPs) and joined-up working at the local level to contribute to neighbourhood regeneration. They are cross-sectorial umbrella partnerships that bring together the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to provide a single overarching local co-ordination framework within which other more specific partnerships can work. They typically include local government, local health and education authorities, the police and community representatives and they are established to address instances of social and economic fragmentation.

A discussion on a top-down philosophy to urban renewal follows:

The success of city central business districts is based upon their competitive advantage and this is reflected in their ability to attract investment in business-related infrastructure and supporting services. A top-down approach through its formal and established central operating systems including globalised financial systems is a prerequisite for enhancing consumption-oriented environments. However in my thesis I will also argue for more strategic community involvement in ‘managing’ CBD public assets:

The design of these places is becoming even more precious; it is the art of “making places for people” including “all spaces between buildings, streets, squares, parks, and even private forecourts” (Urban Design Croydon 2005).

Glaeser et al (2001) see the role of cities as centres of consumption as a necessary prerequisite for their survival. He also argues that in order for consumption to operate as a sustainable city objective there must be a set of necessary conditions implemented; conditions that Croydon appears to be unable to fully meet in the current global financial market (2012).

Wishing to avoid a repeat of its 60s-70s regeneration of its CBD when it addressed the then regeneration solution in physical terms, Croydon’s 2007 Third city proposal uses a top-down urban regeneration policy where the emphasis is from the public sector. The main role for the public sector in the Third city proposal is to attract and accommodate the requirements of private investors without unduly influencing their development decisions (Tallon 2010, p.45). The top-down philosophy uses management policy makers and management operatives used to dealing with professional organisations and formal operational protocols. Centralised
government policy agendas represent an ideal fit for a top-down philosophy approach to Croydon’s CBD regeneration proposals in the current period.

It appears the best fit for resolving the social and economic fragmentation of Berlin’s working-class neighbourhoods would be a bottom-up approach to urban renewal. However the urban climate in Berlin towards the end of 20th century was more complex than for other European Union members as stated previously in the literature review. On this basis a single reliance on a bottom-up policy approach was doomed to failure because to resolve socio-spatial and ethno-spatial polarization in Berlin, where the centre issue is the social integration of migrant communities into wider German society, requires all community members to work together to achieve social and cultural harmony. Expertise, formal operating protocols and wide-ranging networks with government and business networks do not exist at the community level. Add the challenging language and cultural norms; add the dire economic landscape with migrant unemployment levels of forty per cent in some neighbourhoods (Neukölln) and there is an urban environment requiring State, Federal and EC expertise and resources. From a social cohesive perspective the inclusion of bottom-up local assets with their grass roots knowledge of local ethnic groups was a must if a socially integrated society was to be achievable by the Berlin department Social City.

The problem with using bottom-up local assets is that top-down management policy makers and management operatives are used to dealing with professional organisations and formal operational protocols which largely do not exist at the local neighbourhood level or are difficult to identity because of the challenges of socio-spatial and ethno-spatial polarization.

New forms of neighbourhood management, flexible engagement and participative methodologies with local inhabitants confronted top-down management operatives. Fortunately Social City central philosophy of using a bottom-up policy is supported by top-down initiatives that further expand the role of “civil society” organisations (sports associations, clubs, etc.). With their volunteer-based structures and commitments, they are often the settings in which the intercultural interventions are being implemented (Kirkeby 2006).
It is also a dual strategy. Government is using a top-down interventionist approach whilst reducing the potential for the community to criticize its interventionist agenda because the approach uses bottom-up initiatives provided by the migrants themselves.

There are problems of communications however. The early stages of combining the two approaches to managing neighbourhood problem-solving were spent posturing and arguing over differences between the more formalised and traditional top-down approach and the more fluid, less strategic and socially-based bottom-up perspective (interview with Franke 2006).

In the functional approach to urban design the emphasis is on formal top-down management of local resources without local involvement, whereas the bottom-up approach involves the contribution of bottom-up local assets, where the ability of local residents and identities as frontline managers in managing the upkeep of local assets may be unknown at the beginning.

The urban regeneration situation is compounded when central business districts have not evolved as part of a community-business framework in order to vastly improve the appearance of central precincts past a cosmetic approach. A business-orientated organisation operating through top-down policy agendas used to operating under competitive conditions has established procedures for immediate implementation. It is whether the outcome of a top-down managed regeneration of the CBD will result in more than window-dressing of the town centres streetscape assets however.

**Conclusion**
At a time when urban regeneration policies and strategies are in pursuit of economic, environmental and social enhancements to address the negative consequences of urban fragmentation and decline, my literature review has investigated eight major themes whose impact plays a significant role in urban renewal but not necessarily for the advancement of urban society.

Some of the authors I have selected in my literature review, especially Tallon (2003; 2010), have provided me with a critical framework of physical, social and environmental elements transforming the image of the city and neighbourhood precincts in the 21st century.
According to Tallon:

As with any process of urban change, the benefits and problems associated with regeneration are not evenly distributed. Urban regeneration is often highly selective, favouring particular spaces and social groups (2010, p.270).

At the core of urban regeneration there is a need to balance the economic competitiveness, rationalism and functionality of cities with more artistic and creative cities and neighbourhoods, thereby meeting the needs of an increasingly creative class as suggested by Florida (2002).

In the final analysis the literature review provides a constructive insight into the need for strong and strategic community participation, the need to work collaboratively in top-down, bottom-up and integrated partnerships and with the realisation that no single policy approach will achieve all the objectives set for it.
Chapter 2 Methodology

Introduction
The overarching aim of the research thesis was to determine the influence of the built environment on social connectedness resulting from planned urban regeneration in two European city suburbs. One case study focussed on the neighbourhood and the other on the town centre.

My thesis has been informed by critiques of the artificial and superficial nature of modern western urbanized society (Hoskins and Tallon 2003; Putnam 2000). In the light of these critiques my thesis examines the changing nature of urban life and the way planners organize their interventions to impact upon social interaction. Secondly my thesis considers this issue in a period when urban renaissance strategies are an integral element of European urban planning policies.

Urban renewal policies led by London Borough councils and similar organizations on the European continent were intended to revitalize cities and neighbourhoods. I used a qualitative interpretative methodology to establish whether the regeneration programme implemented in Neukölln seemed likely to be delivering the outcomes proposed in the planning documents. To consider this question, the views of those intimately involved in implementing this plan have been sought. I have also been able to provide observational and photographic evidence, of the urban planning interventions in the suburb, to examine the likely impact of urban design on informal social encounters; social connectedness and as a contribution to social capital.

For Croydon, I have considered whether the planned regeneration of the city centre is likely to achieve the objectives sought for it. I have interviewed the planners and designers intimately involved to seek their views on problems with the regeneration proposal. I have made my own detailed analysis of the likely impact. I have documented the current physical layout of the Croydon centre; an urban landscape in desperate need of revitalisation. Here, as in Neukölln, I have used field observation and photographic documentation to produce a picture of the interaction of the built environment with social connection. The purpose of using two case studies is that they deal with two fundamental aspects of urban life – the city and the neighbourhood. There is no intention while using two case studies of comparing the merits of
one over the other. While I am concentrating on Croydon’s urban centre regeneration I am aware that the Borough of Croydon has a future neighbourhood strategy in place, and this might be the most apt comparison for Neukölln’s neighbourhood intervention. In fact, there is some possibility that Croydon and Neukölln have linked neighbourhood strategies through their common participation in the European city-partner programs (Berlin Senate Department Urban Planning 2006; Goethe Institute 2006; Greater London Councils, URBACT 2005; URBED 2008).

Both urban regeneration programmes were instigated in 1999 and are addressing economic and social conditions in some Berlin neighbourhoods and the London Borough of Croydon’s town centre. Indeed the Berlin senate is responding to what it believes is the social and economic decline of many of Berlin’s working class districts. This appears to be considered to be a European-wide problem. According to Forrest and Kearns, (2001, p.2126):

There is a common belief that there is less social cohesion now than in some (usually) unspecified period in British history.

While Forrest and Kearns are sceptical, this thesis will contend that social cohesion is in fact challenged but not necessarily threatened by the kind of urban centre regeneration planned for Croydon where the importance of physical change and local landmarks cannot be overestimated in creating a sense of belonging and identity.

Forrest and Kearns also see the differences between neighbourhoods may perhaps be understood by the differences between the form and content of social networks as Neukölln implement building renewal and social programmes to address instances of neighbourhood decay in designated districts in Neukölln.

It is the perspective of Putnam (2000) that “almost all forms of civic engagement (in the USA) continue to plummet among young people”. Hoskins and Tallon (2003, p.4) describes the present urban lifestyle condition as hypermobile, transient and fragmented in the context of preoccupation with history in the contemporary design of space.

My thesis considers the issue of social capital defined by Putnam and looks at the extent to which urban interventions may have an impact.
The main inquiry method centred on interviews with urban designers faced with implementing a planned urban regeneration programme. The analysis of these interviews, supported by analysis of government-sponsored documents and two other methods of enquiry, has provided a subjective insight into the challenges of regeneration of urban environments. Their views, challenges and constraints of the planning implementation process form the central topic of investigation.

2.1 Review of candidate
As a UK and European citizen, my family, work, study and leisure activities within the London Borough of Croydon and London more generally have contributed to my understanding of some of the challenges facing urban designers and planners in the London Borough of Croydon. Five years as a student at Croydon Technical College in 1960s presented an opportunity to experience at first hand dramatic changes to the existing built environment. Regular work and part-time supervisory work experiences in Croydon’s 60s ‘new’ night time economy provided me with a basis from which to examine the present Vision2020 regeneration proposals; proposals that are based upon rebranding the town, with a night-time economy “playing an important part in this” (Third City document 2007, p.52).

Since 1962 my travel, ongoing work and research in Germany and other European countries have contributed in part to my understanding of the urban environment that exists in those areas. I have made regular visits to the UK, mainland Europe and the Middle East (Egypt, Syria, Morocco, and UAE).

During the last thirty years I have worked in and studied environmental and construction planning, urban design and sustainable building land use issues. In these disciplines I have operated as a project manager in Australia and the Pacific Rim. I now consult as an urban analyst on regional inner-city design and lifestyle issues.

2.2 Discussion on the choice of a qualitative interpretative methodology
I choose an interpretive approach, with the application of ORID and CDA as an analysis tool in determining conclusions to a research objective: Interpretation is a technical term used in connection with the elaboration model. It represents the research outcome in which a control variable is discovered to be the mediating factor through which an independent variable has its effect on a dependent variable. In this respect the dependent variable is social behaviour.
and an independent variable is the built environment (Babbie 2007, p.439; Sennett 1993, pp.13-14).

I adopted a qualitative interpretative methodology and the analytical framework of critical discourse analysis CDA and ORID in order to interpret the meaning of data made more rigorous because of three aspects. Firstly my connections with the area of research, secondly a four-tiered methods approach to data collection, and lastly it is considered usual in a participative study to demonstrate similarities in background between the researcher and interviewees. My background is in disciplines closely associated with those of my interviewees and enabled me carry out a more comprehensive interpretation of the data collected with the aid of CDA and ORID. The ORID model was first introduced in 1991 for enhancements in rural development (Barcillano 2001). My justification for using ORID was I had used it as a learning tool since 1992 in agriculture and land-use applications, and as an aid to understanding the social behaviour of people in Australian shopping centre environments during the mid-90s.

I used a qualitative interpretative methodology to uncover existing, and proposed relationships between different types of built environment undergoing regeneration and human social behaviour. The methodology was supported by four methods of inquiry comprising observation of the built environment, supporting photographs, interviews with government personnel and analysis of government-sponsored documents concerned with regeneration programmes.

It is also the function of language and photographic images in their capacity as semiotic indicators to influence a range of social processes that contribute to my research conclusions that are of relevance to my thesis. It is in these two areas of critical research where I turned to Fairclough (cited in Taylor, Wetherill and Yates 2001), Sonesson (1988; 1989) and Babbie (2007) for guidance in my application of a four-tiered inquiry method.

The application of four data collection methods helped balance the issues of authenticity and complexity associated with understanding the effects of the simultaneous introduction of other variables on social connections between people. Simultaneous introduction of additional variables such as community participation in local decision making and their participation in regeneration projects demonstrated that an integrated approach to urban renewal might achieve more sustainable outcomes.
2.3 Description of four-tiered method used to collect data, comprising observation, photographic review, interviews and reference to government sponsored documents

I used four forms of data observation (field visits and written notes: using the ORID model), photographic data, government sponsored documents and interviews to consider the impact of government interventions in both locations. The four methods were treated as an integrated system to inform selected findings of my research (chapter 6). Each of the methods of data collection be it observation, photographs, interviews or government proposals were used to determine how people relate to, and are influenced by changes to the built environment.

2.4 Observation (and note taking) of city and neighbourhood areas

I choose uncontrolled observation as my paradigm as a way of looking at a snapshot of the social lives of people in two different urban settings, the neighbourhood and the town centre. I was testing the assumption through the application of an interpretative approach to determine:

   How does the physical form of the city itself shape the social lives of the people within it (Michelson 1970)?

I set out to test that assumption with research visits to my two case study areas in European winter, spring and summer using observational, photographic, interviews and document analysis.

I adopted uncontrolled observation of the social lives of citizens in urban settings to determine the extent to which the condition and spatial layout of the present built environment influenced social behaviour.

My observations were uncontrolled only in the sense that my learning outcomes occur in the context of my own unique experiences (Bogue 1981). I was mindful that the act of observation could influence my data, and I was aware of creating overly impressionistic accounts of walks in some urban areas. Therefore I supported my observation of a partial view of urban life with photographs and government documentation describing some momentary aspects of the urban environment and proposed changes where my observations took place. As a partial account of city-life and its built environment my initial observations were not meant to be a
full audit of what took place, or after analysis of what I perceived to have taken place. My central focus was on buildings and the surrounding space.

Discussion of the number and duration of field trips – i.e. the number of hours of observation undertaken in each place, analysis of observation data, and the time of day/week/year when observations were conducted

Overview of observation protocols carried out in Borough Croydon
Observations for purposes of research were undertaken over four periods (December 2001; June 2004; May-June 2006 and April 2008). During each period four visits were made to each suburb except in 2004. Eight to ten hours were allocated to each visit. Two of the midweek visits to Croydon and to Neukölln were spent walking there, beginning from suburbs close by. I allowed three to four hours for walking to Croydon and the same time was spent in the town centre of Croydon. On a 2004 occasion when I did not conduct formal interviews it was five times for my visit to Croydon comprising Monday, Wednesday, Friday (2 periods) and Sunday.

On a Sunday I took the following route: Dulwich to London Bridge, DLR to Canary Wharf and DLR to Lewisham, bus to Crystal Palace and walk from Crystal Palace to Croydon via Norwood and Selhurst. Other occasions when I walked, it was from Bromley to Croydon via Beckenham. I also travelled by tram to Croydon from New Addington in 2001 and after walking from Shirley and from Beckenham to Croydon (several occasions in 2006 and 2008).

I did not travel on the Tramlink light-rail system in 2004 however I did use the heavy rail system travelling by train from Dulwich to East Croydon station on several occasions, including Sunday.

Each observation period consisting of 4-5 separate visits involved journeys that commenced before 0900 hours and extending to late afternoon. Visits that commenced around midday extended to mid-evening. There were two non-data collection weekend evening visits in 2006 and April 2008, and another non-data collection period of July 2008 to London and Paris. My repetitive observation of the social lives of citizens always uncovered or partially contributed to another phenomenon relating to the varieties of urban life – a Scotsman crossing Karl Marx Strasse wearing a kilt, being one example (Photo: N13). If I went out to search for a Scotsman wearing a kilt in the high street of Neukölln I would not have found one.
Neukölln Observational research was undertaken over four periods in December 2001; June 2004; May-June 2006 and April 2008.

I adopted a similar method, walking from outer suburbs (Charlottenburg on two occasions) and from nearby suburbs of Wedding and Kreuzberg. I also made three non-data collection evening visits in 2006 – two to East Berlin and one to Kreuzberg/Neukölln. I travelled to Neukölln by tram and bus and by heavy rail systems arriving at the southern bottom-end of Karl Marx Strasse in Neukölln’s high street strip.

I usually spent from 15-25 minutes at heavy rail stations and transport interchange precincts. I did not spend time around U-Bahn stations unless it was part of a major interchange. Major transport interchanges are nearly always the scene of frantic human activity the world over especially during the mornings and late afternoon periods.

How city and neighbourhood centres were approached using types of public transport and by walking
The first field visits to Croydon and Neukölln were made from outside the town centre. This was to emulate what it was like going to work or shopping, or just as a casual visitor.

The first early morning visit was always to the town centre by public transport usually by bus and/or tram, either to the Croydon mall central shopping precinct or to the high street in Neukölln (Karl Marx Strasse). This was so that my first impressions of a city centre could be recorded. Notes were made of the different centre-of-town approaches, the suburbs passed through and the type of urban terrain. The town centre of Croydon was approached from the south, north, east and west. The buildings surrounding the Croydon centre were a mix of single and double storey and semi-detached single-family residences, and three storey terraces and medium to high-rise flats.

The first trip to Croydon was by double-decker bus from the suburb of Shirley (east), a journey of about forty minutes in heavy traffic, to East Croydon station on the fringes of the CBD. The bus trip allowed me to record how people generally conducted themselves on their way to the city in my chosen city. A stroll of 15-20 minutes to the town centre area followed. A notebook and a camera were carried at all times, although I did not take pictures of people on bus journeys, although I did take photographs through some tram windows. In fact the focus of my
photographic sessions was always on buildings and surrounds: imagines of kilted-Scotsman in Karl Marx Strasse being the exception. The fact that he was, or was not from Scotland was not pursued.

In a ten minute stroll notes were made together with photographs I had taken. Before embarking on any trip to the city from a bus/tram or train terminal, I spent usually about ten minutes at the terminal taking notes on people’s partial relationship with the area, as I saw it at the time. Visits to the same area on different occasions produced different outcomes – neither good nor bad.

My fragmented objectives of people connecting with the built environment in its many forms over the course of many recorded visits to the same area helped to see just how connected or discounted people were. It was these continued visits that formed part of my interpretative methodology, and my understanding of my inquiry into a Socio-Spatial Process, and it is this I am reminded of a comment by Babbie:

> Field researchers may recognise several nuances of attitude and behaviour that might escape researchers using other methods, and field research is well suited to the study of social processes over time (Babbie 2007, pp. 282-290).

During visits to the town centre, notes were made as to the width the streets, any parks, the type of buildings, their heights and the width of the sidewalks. In this initial field observation, I made no assumptions about an underlying social reality and did not attempt a quantitative analysis (Babbie 2007, pp.42-43). I was not counting the number of people wearing leather jackets or how many children were under or over a certain age. Instead I made a note, for example, as to whether people dressed casually or formally. Were they wearing jeans in preference to smart casual? Did they wear or carry leather accessories? I would note people’s general social behaviour, such as the air of excitement in large retail precincts, especially around the Christmas period. I was interested in observing people’s immediate expressions of spontaneity towards the built environment in its many forms.

The opportunity to observe what is really a snapshot of people’s lives also provided an opening for dialogue in some instances, achieved when standing around a bus or tram stop. Conversations were not started by a question but rather by a comment about the weather, public transport or the surroundings. These initial perceived viewpoints were written down a
little later, after the conversation had finished (using the ORID model). It was a good idea to position myself outside the entrance to a large retail store or in a shopping centre (Neukölln Karl Marx Strasse and Gropiusstadt and Croydon’s Whitgift centre) and chat to anyone who sat down. For example in Neukölln’s Karl Marx Strasse I purchased a German soccer scarf, and began a number of conversations about the German team’s upcoming success in the 2006 World Cup.

This approach was very effective because people usually assumed that you were waiting for someone who was shopping at a particular store. Sitting or standing near public phone booths also provided a similar opportunity for social engagement, of course without listening-in to conversations. Conversations developed from informal social encounters aided in my interpretation of city life which was more about their body language than narrative.

I did not always use a direct route to a CBD centre; each journey was treated as a separate experience. I made notes without referring back to what I had written for a previous journey to the same place. I would begin a new transcript and refer to them all together within a week. Train and plane trips and waiting around airport terminals are good for this activity.

2.5 A review and the photographic analysis of city and neighbourhood areas

I would record the urban event as it unfolded using a tape recorder in some instances, making handwritten notes and considering photo opportunities. Voice recording was done only while walking and not when sitting, so as not to draw attention to myself. I did not try to make sense of my observations at this part of my initial analysis while taking photographs of urban environments during the time – I soon became aware of ‘photo-opportunities’ if they presented themselves. Although at the time I could not explain the exact significance of the photograph my interpretative methodological approach would help me apply different meanings to it, especially when analysed with data collected via other methods, ORID for example.

I would take occasional shots whilst sitting and walking, and make written notes in between. I referred to field notes (using the ORID model) and photographs later, usually within a two day period. I am constantly referring to photographic data, years later.
When taking pictures of the surrounds I tried to be unobtrusive. I would not stare in the direction of what I was observing when taking photographs; I endeavoured to create an awareness of what was happening and unfolding using a series of glances, being prepared to change positions to get another photo perspective. Other than for technical reasons (focus, light conditions and wrong camera angle or lacking detail and context) I used different photographic perspectives for the inclusion or exclusion of counter-illustrative images – see next section below.

The essential point here is generalities, rather than individual characteristics of the built environment and its relation to people who use it, represent my subject matter. It is the business of urban semiotics (Madanipour 1996, pp.69-73) to ascertain general facts about objects endowed with meaning, in my case, about pictures. This task includes determining how pictorial meanings differ from other signs and significations, and how the use of photographs contributes to the other four methods of gathering data, their analysis and to my research objectives (Sonesson 1989). Notwithstanding there is no inherent meaning with any sign – meaning resides in minds (Babbie 2007, p.381).

**Interpretation and analysis of photographic data**

The following three texts were used as an aid in the general interpretation of my photographs taken during a partial observation of urban life in Croydon’s CBD and neighbourhood districts in Neukölln.

1. Stephanie Taylor, Margaret Wetherill and Simon, J Yates 2001, Discourse as data: A guide for analysis
2. Earl Babbie 2007, The Practice of Social Research

**Photographic selection criteria: my positioning for photography and photo-selection**

1137 photographs were taken during my visits to Croydon and Neukölln and some outer areas; approximately 170 were selected and used for my research thesis. 10-12% of photographs were rejected for technical reasons (focus, light conditions and wrong camera angle or lacking enough detail and composition). I used several types of camera during observations including a single reflex camera. Photographs were matched with field notes taken during observations which led to the inclusion and exclusion of some of them (Babbie 2007). Reasons for this were
because of social and technical contexts. Visits to an area were repeated over the research period and so were photographs in some instances.

Underlying overcast weather conditions meant extra photographs were available for selection to deal with the challenges of poor light conditions. Sonesson (1989) helped further define my research as to the role and nature of architectural photography undertaken by me in Croydon and Neukölln and presented me its own challenges because of poor light, street and access conditions.

From a technical perspective a single lens reflex camera with a wide (16-18mm) lens being suitable for buildings and surrounds with narrow street frontages plays a part in “pictorial meanings in the society of information and also as being an important means of dissemination of the ideas of the modern architects” (Sonesson 1988; 1989).

When I noticed a part of street scene was not representative of the area as a whole based on my continual analysis, I referred to photographs and field notes taken on another occasions. The double decker red bus near West Croydon (Photo: C1) was one such opportunity, where I replaced another photograph with the iconic red bus. Other times I went searching through my extensive list of photographs that included a street-cleaner, or someone involved in a streetscape activity or as participants – the photograph of Turkish men outside a fruit-shop in Croydon was one such example. A picture that confirmed German language classes were part of efforts to socially integrate migrants in Neukölln was another. I did not know when street-cleaners were out doing their jobs. I did not know where language classes were being held in neighbourhood settings. I was just there at the appropriate time to capture fleeting images of fragmented examples of social life in urban settings. Where the contents of street-life are there one day, and not another – yet they still represent examples of streets partially endowed (Sennett 1993, p.150) with the social life of inhabitants. In other words I did not position myself outside of a building or surrounding space recording who visited the space in a certain period.

Reflections of places I visited were aided by continued analysis of my photographic data using the above three texts. During photographic sessions I avoided obvious photographic imagery of the nature of the built environment by photographing buildings without splashes of light challenging the buildings dynamics or the space around buildings.
**General interpretation of photographs as representative of urban life**

Photographs as fragmented representations of urban images in many respects qualified, often quite by accident, what were recorded as facts in the sterile environment of the government official document or suggested in an interview analysis (Sonesson 1988; 1989).

Images of buildings and their contribution to my interpretation of the impact of a range of social processes on city life are never considered on their own – they represent part of the narrative and images of my critical analysis of what goes on around me. Taylor (et al) sees pictures as semiotic representations of contemporary social life (Taylor, Wetherill and Yates 2001, pp.230-231) as important as text as another component of meaning-making and contributed to my analysis of people’s use of urban space.

Sonesson (1989) however, elevates the role of narrative to reduce the "abstractness" of visual interpretation of imagines (Sonesson 1989). Babbie see the role of photography to link photographic imagines people with other buildings and the space around them. In other words photographs and buildings at least provide a snapshot of how people use space (Babbie, 2007).

The representation of architecture in images not only defines the building itself, but the area, the time it was constructed, and not only the political climate that existed at the present time but pressures by institutions to replace it with something more contemporary in the future.

Architecture in images defines not only their relationship with people, existing buildings and the surrounding space but also their link with the creative community (Florida 2002; Swaback, 2003) who may inhabit the area. The creative nature of photography (Sonesson 1988; 1989) often created a link between oft-used narratives in government inspired visions for urban reforms were crafted in promotional brochures to further the construction of meanings where power to intimidate or empower is an objective.

### 2.6 Interviews with professionals involved in the implementation of proposed town centre regeneration programme in the London Borough of Croydon

The formal interviews which form part of the main inquiry method were conducted between me and urban planners and designers involved with the implementation of regeneration of the town centre of the London Borough of Croydon. Their real names have not been used. The interviews were semi-structured; interviewees were allowed to influence the direction of the
interview while the author maintained a broad control over the topics to be covered. I did not have a set of pre-determined questions, although I referred to a prearranged list of topics I wished to cover. Instead there was freedom to create questions, to probe those responses that appeared relevant, and generally to try to develop the best set of data in any way practical. The same interview format was used for Berlin-Neukölln and Croydon interviewees.

My interview with the environmental lawyer who represented Croydon council and their clients was through my brother, a lawyer in London. This was most fortunate because he provided important environmental perspectives to my research because of his position and willingness to share his views about regeneration.

My selection of interviewees

Croydon My research and my selection of candidates for Croydon began in mid-2001. I interviewed four face-to-face, and two additional people were spoken to in informal telephone interviews (not featured).

After my choice of Croydon because of its regeneration plans and my contact in early 2001 I made contact with the Australian office of consultants responsible for the Vision2020 regeneration of Croydon’s CBD. I have had previous contacts, because of my background with a similar Australian consulting firm who had connections with UK consulting organisations involved in town planning issues.

It was through these contacts that I learnt that Will Alsop’s firm would be taking over the proposal to regenerate the CBD; they also provided me with a background to the proposal and of the council’s role in their Vision2020. I then contacted the council, spoke with the Planning Department and arranged to meet their chief planner in December 2001. He was involved in the earlier stages of Vision2020. I did explain to the chief planner that my research would take several years and I would be returning on a regular basis; he said the project design would be undertaken by others in the future. In due course I made contact with the two architects responsible for project implementation whom I met in 2006 and 2008. Both interviewees were very interested in my research project; they sounded very keen to see Croydon change for the better, and they were enthusiastic about playing an important role in Croydon’s renewal objectives.
Neukölln My selection of candidates for Neukölln did not begin until after my meeting with Holger Hübner in Berlin mid-2001. My previous email and phone conversations with department Social City in Berlin indicated that I would be referred to other contacts as my research progressed. This related to the integrated nature of government programmes.

Holger Hübner was the catalyst for my research and my selection of the Neukölln neighbourhood’s regeneration precinct. It was not possible to know whom to interview until I had some understanding of the operation of the Social Integrative City concept. Experience of working with German organisations for nearly thirty years prior to 2001 had taught me of their attention to detailed protocols. Besides, I had received confirmation that after my arrival in Berlin I would be referred to the right contacts after I advised them of where I was in my research process. An example of this follows:

Nomination of Neukölln and several neighbourhoods undergoing intervention in the Social City programme. Meetings with: the local neighbourhood manager of one them (Schiller Programme); a contact whose organisation (DIFU) oversees Social City programmes; a local council representative who is also responsible for the funding aspect of programmes. Meetings with programme director, field and administrative personnel followed.

In both case studies some of my (Berlin and Croydon) interviewees have followed up on my requests for clarity when needed during the research period and beyond, either by phone or email.

How I set the length, frequency, and timing of interviews with professionals responsible for regeneration

Croydon My meetings in Croydon took place in December 2001, June 2006 and April 2008. I visited Croydon in 2004 on five occasions for the purpose of collecting observation and photographic data, although I did not interview anyone then. I used this visit not only to participate as a shopper or diner in the CBD activities, for example in the night-time economy, but also to see the surrounding districts of Selshurst, Thornton Heath, Bromley and others. I spent time in Brixton, Dulwich, Elephant and Castle and Canary Wharf. Areas not associated with Croydon’s Vision2020 have not been used in a critical sense in my thesis because they were not within the research criteria.
Interviews were about two hours each and they were spread evenly over the research period (2001, 2006 and 2008). This allowed for some Vision2020 projects to be implemented as suggested in government proposals and to allow me time to critically assess my on-going research findings.

Initially I made the assumption that the targeted and non-integrative approach to the CBD regeneration where the major focus was on construction of new buildings was easier to manage by Croydon council. However after critical discourse analysis I had reasons to question this assumption.

Neukölln

My meetings on the Social City programme were in December 2001; June 2004; June 2006 and April 2008. My first meetings in a neighbourhood district dedicated as a district suffering from economic and social decay by the Berlin senate were with personnel responsible for specific and targeted programmes in 2004. The suburb of Neukölln and its neighbourhood districts were discussed at meetings in 2004; 2006 and 2008.

This was helped by my interviewees’ depth of knowledge not only in their particular discipline but also in the nature of an integrated approach to the social and economic renewal of deprived neighbourhoods.

Interviews took about two hours, as did my Croydon interviews, spread evenly over the 2001-2008 research period. The time dedicated for interviews differed on one occasion in 2004 in my second interview with Holger Hübner. On this particular occasion after my meeting in his Berlin office we travelled by bus to and from Neukölln to meet the local neighbourhood manager for Schiller Promenade, a district of Neukölln. This afforded me with an extended opportunity for discussions on aspects of social and economic disintegration of working-class districts in Berlin and the Berlin government’s response.

Return visits to discuss the Social City programme allowed time for regeneration proposals to be implemented, partially or otherwise. It allowed me time to critically assess research findings and to see examples of regeneration over an extended period. The targeted and integrated approach of the neighbourhood regeneration where the focus was on building renewal, refurbishment and social intervention (as I found out in 2004-2008) was difficult to manage
because it involved so many actors, disciplines and socio-economic frameworks. My planning and project background did however provide me with a fundamental base to operate from.

The frequency of my visits to both areas, as discussed in observation of neighbourhood precincts, was not motivated by my objective assessment of the progress of particular proposals, either in town centre or neighbourhood settings. This was for a very specific reason, which forms a fundamental part of my qualitative methodology. However my many journeys on Croydon’s Tramlink system reinforced my view of the important contribution to the development of social connections between people who use light rail systems generally.

I was not quantifying what was being done and what was not completed by referring to a scope of work and nominated completed dates. I tried to look at the regeneration in the way a citizen or visitor would see it in terms of what government promotional documents had promised, what was delivered and what could be seen over a period. I was always aware of the impact of all regeneration activities no matter how small on social capital in urbanised settings.

2.7 Review of government-sponsored documents

Government-sponsored documents were provided to me by my interviewees after our first interview. It is very important to relate document analysis to the studies and perspectives covered in the literature review chapter. A review of the sites being researched with current urban issues and urban trends as covered in the literature helps to enable a closer examination of the documents as indicators of government intentions. It is necessary to engage in a discourse analysis to look for hidden meanings and agendas, to consider the challenges to government policy and examine the ways in which decisions may lead to social exclusion for some groups in the community.

Government-sponsored proposal documents need to be matched with other official government policy documents. This approach identifies how much power local councils have, and helps in an analysis of the politics in the use of the public domain. Government documents “are simultaneously an expression of social power and a force themselves” according to Smith (2006, p. vii). How language and images are used to influence social processes became more evident the further I investigated the content and context of government-sponsored documents because the same or similar words and phrases popped-up in different publications.
The next step is to identify the various proposals by name; the various strategies by programme and then construct notes comparing the different discourses used in policy and proposal documents. For example the Croydon plan states that the reduction of Wellesley Road from four to two lanes will make available significant amounts of space for the public realm whereas Third City document for Croydon states the same area will enable significant amounts of real estate to become available along the new edge of the Wellesley Road (2007, pp. 24, 25). Already this confirms the struggle for control of public space between developers and council designers (chapter 4). The latter would prefer a more culturally based intervention for the town centre. Their ideal would be to develop a new night-time economy that was also inclusive of a cultural and arts related environment. This concept has been linked to the vision for a revitalisation of the town centre by the government-sponsored document Croydon Vision2020, a vision that I widely commented on. Continuously reviewing, comparing and identifying key phrases and words and seeing them repeated in other Croydon government documents can suggest these proposals are being sponsored by developers and major retailers rather than by a democratically appointed council.

2.8 Discussion on the type of analysis used to interrogate data obtained from a systematic four-tiered method approach

Three types of analysis were adopted to interrogate data obtained from the four methods used to identify the challenges that European urban designers are facing in the implementation of a government-planned regeneration programme in an existing major-city suburb, and how it promotes Social Connectedness.

Three analysis tools were used, namely ORID, Critical Discourse Analysis and Semiotic Photo Analysis; ORID and CDA tools have similar components of Critical Analysis and reflective learning as does Kolb’s learning cycle (1984). ORID is more suited to observational analysis as will be explained under ORID, whereas CDA is more suited for interviews and document analysis but not explicitly. Photographs were analysed in association with the observational analysis because a photographic review was made along with field notes. The semiotic part of CDA was also used to analyse photographs, as was Sonesson’s “Methods and models in pictorial semiotics” (1988) and “Semiotics of Photography” also by Göran Sonesson (1989).

ORID and the Kolb learning cycle

The first analysis tool is entitled ORID, which I have used in association with Kolb’s learning
cycle, a system I have used since the early 90s to provide strategies to help resolve environmental planning and design issues in land-use problems. Kolb’s four-stage learning cycle and the ORID model show how experience is translated through reflection into definable concepts. The objective level questions in the ORID model aim to establish the facts and in the collection of data by note taking. This gives ORID two functions; the collection and the analysis of data, as does critical discourse analysis (CDA).

**ORID: Observational model (a pathway to critical thinking) in four separate stages**

1st Stage: Observable - sensory

What can be seen, heard, smelt, tasted and the texture of surfaces

Notes were always taken with photographs of the areas I visited

A/ The built environment; types of buildings, their heights, materials, period of construction (are they modern, neo-classical?), their spatial relationship with other buildings, and the relationship of the building with the private and public realm.

B/ The people within the built environment; their reactions, for example are they rushing around, strolling, engaged in conversation with each other, did their body language suggest awareness of their surroundings, and their dress for the occasion.

C/ The treatment of public and private realm; awareness of the presence of street-rubbish, care and maintenance of buildings.

2nd Stage: Reflective

Internal reflection; feeling and intuition; memories and associations:

The reflective stage occurs at least twenty four hours after observation and no later than one week after the observation. The process of reflection involves reading through the field observation notes and adding comments about one’s feelings and associations in relation to the field trip. The reflective stage also takes the form of reflecting on particular social phenomena observed during field visits. An example of a particular phenomenon that was observed in Croydon was people either standing in small groups in an open square without anywhere to sit, either on benches or at outside eateries, people standing while eating and drinking coffee from foam cups, and people rushing around rather than strolling.

The reflective stage allows one to remember past situations and events and relate them to the field notes. The key to this stage is continuously going over government-sponsored
documents, comparing the visual dynamics of semiotic photographic analysis where interpretation may be influenced with result findings gathered from field notes, interviews and documents. The next stage is updating findings when a different viewpoint is considered or reached; repeating this approach with analysis of documents, media reports and interviews until concepts are developed.

3rd Stage: Interpretive
Level of thinking; meaning; significance; values and understandings:
Interpretation of the observations and their significance in relation to other forms of collected data is an important part of the third stage. This involves identifying key elements of the government intervention strategies and their association with notes made during the field trips.

The same applies to interviews with government stakeholders, for example when a comment is made by the interviewee that relates to something that the local council has promised as part of its intervention strategy and it either has not happened or is not happening as described in government promotions. The interpretative stage is important because it allows the cross-referencing of four types of data from the research process (observation; photographic; document analysis and interviews) as well as recent media reports. It provides an understanding of mediating factors and their respective influence on the dependent variable of people and the independent variable of built environments.

An example of the application of cross-referencing to aid in understanding data
Croydon’s Tramlink system is an example where the use of cross-referencing has contributed to my early appreciation of a street-based public transport system to existing built environments. This is because public transport provides opportunities where informal encounters can occur more easily between citizens. I compared data from the field observation and government-sponsored documents which consider the contribution of Tramlink to social capital. By referring to interview notes (2006) with Croydon urban designers I was able to confirm that Tramlink did not have town-centre connections with the major suburbs of Beckenham and Bromley. Suggestions as to why this is the case were also discussed in a paper by Peter Courtenay (2007). This reference was uncovered in 2008 when researching community attitudes to light-rail systems in Europe and the UK. The paper discusses contribution of trams to social connectedness, social cohesion and social capital.
The process of cross-referencing analysed data with a qualitative approach obtained from different methods helped me to identify hidden agendas and other interpretative viewpoints on the research data, especially when linked with my own interpretative conclusions.

**4th Stage: Decisional**

**Future resolve; what are the next steps; application and closure**

The decisional stage is where the findings from each of the four data chapters (4 and 5) are reviewed, defining what might happen in the future and what could be done with present findings of research.

This final stage helps in closing off a specific piece of research and therefore creating a systematic representation of answers that can be referred to. It indicates what further research is required and what an aspect of the data from existing research needs to be updated.

The decisional stage is where the results of collected data from the interpretive stage are examined in terms of future impacts, and suggestions are made about what could be done

Field observation means I was not looking at social life as if it were governed by invariant laws; decisions about what was observed and what to do about the circumstances of observation are not made during field observation. They act as a chronicle of events that must be continually referred to for greater meaning if necessary. I inferred from this that observation must occur over extended and different periods. This is a learning cycle designed by Kolb (1984) where re-visits to review data and data findings are encouraged.

**Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): There are three stages to CDA using an interpretative methodology as discussed in section 2.2**

**CDA Stage 1**

Involves my interpretation of what was said or implied in interviews, in documents and in signs (pictures and symbols)

**CDA Stage 2**

Involves my interpretation of what were the meanings behind what was said or implied in interviews, in documents and in signs (semiotic analysis of pictures and symbols)
CDA Stage 3

Involves my interpretation of what were the ideas or philosophies behind these meanings in interviews, in documents and in signs (semiotic analysis of pictures and symbols).

Accordingly, the analysis moves from the more obvious and readily justified accounts of the meanings of texts to a more interpretive and hence debatable analysis, which is nevertheless essential if we are to take into account the full social meanings of the texts in question.

CDA is necessarily a method of interpretation and does not give analyses which could be defended as the only conceivable way to approach a text. However the interpretations achieved here gain some extra credibility as they cross reference analyses between different types of text – field observations; photographic documents from the field; documents issued by relevant stakeholders and interviews conducted with stakeholders.

Discussion of what Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is, and how I applied CDA to understand the role of language, signs and symbols in meaning-making

Discourses are diverse representations of social life which include subject positions for the social actors who see and represent social life in different ways within different discourses. For example, the role of government and institutions in determining how people use government or private services are represented through discourses in the social practice of government, politicians and institutions. The complex combination of social practices located within discourses together constitutes a Social Order. It is this non-obvious way in which language is involved in social relations of power, to the domination and the establishment of ideologies. In other words it may appear that a particular government brochure is just a means to explain a neutral valueless preamble; however language is a resource that represents a powerful element in social reprocessing.

Through CDA I examined spoken, signed and written language, and I focused on any aspect of linguistic behaviour. From the study of particular patterns of pronunciation, through word choice, sentence structure and semantic representation, to the pragmatic analysis of how speech encounters are organised, and any combination of these in spoken, written and signed discourse.
A wide array of linguistic texts is explored in the study of discourse; these might consist of a conversation or a letter, a speech, a memo or a report, a broadcast, a newspaper article or an interview, a lesson, a consultation or a confrontational encounter, an advertisement, a flyer or a piece of gossip. In my research thesis the written text of government-sponsored documents was explored in the study of discourse. Critical Discourse analysts examine the way in which meaning is constructed throughout a text, as well as the way this is achieved at any point.

CDA involves looking at how language was used by my interviewees and the use of discourse analysis involved my search for patterns and meanings within the language used in texts, the generality of the patterns used in the texts, and the form they took in particular urban conditions (Taylor, Wetherill, and Yates 2001).

For example sub-headings used in the Third City document for Croydon (2007) use words that have a whole meaning built around them. A word such as “Alchemy” which is used in the Third City document means discovery of the elixir of life; the use of this word appears to be deliberate and is intended to create a certain impact on the reader. Now where the word “Alchemy” fits in a document about urban renewal and proposed architectural building forms is what discourse analysis attempts to uncover. While the word “Alchemy” seems out of place in a document about city-centre renewal it is clearly used here to convey the message that what is proposed is a visionary perspective that goes beyond the usual and every day.

The analysis could also adopt a whole-of-text narrative approach which refers to the story of how the need for Croydon’s urban renewal was arrived at. Or alternatively looks at the way in which economic changes in Berlin in some of the neighbourhoods have led to high levels of unemployment. I examined the way words are used to address a particular readership. For example possibilities, multiple resources – from and on different social levels is able to manage the large number of challenges suggests an integrated approach is necessary (City Council of Berlin-Neukölln, District Mayor 2009, May).

Words in a text can draw attention to certain (so-called) shared values about what is being proposed in the text such as “our shared vision”, “social partners”, or “we” (Third City document 2007) and we can consider what is implied when the whole Croydon population is talked about as “social partners” in a regeneration project centred on the CBD. The use of a particular discourse in a text can be used to condition the ways in which people should look at
the world and in this context the use of language is not, according to Taylor, Wetherill and Yates:

A neutral information-carrying vehicle, as the transmission model of communication would imply. Rather language is constitutive: it is the site where meanings are created and changed (2001, p.6).

As Low and Smith in their book entitled “The Politics of Public Space” (2006) suggest:

...charting how language moves through a culture and gradually transforms common sense and suppresses dissent is difficult (Blackmar cited in Low and Smith 2006, p.65).

There is often a distinctive purpose behind the way language is presented; there is a point to it. I have found this to be a very political process. For example when a text can be seen to justify and endorse the “suppression of public space as public property” (Blackmar cited in Low and Smith 2006, p.65) and the allocation of the public domain away from public ownership, I can consider how language represents this as an attractive option for the public at large.

**Semiotic analysis**

The idea of Semiotics is verbal and non-verbal signs can produce meaning which can lead to the creation of social relationships, systems of knowledge and thus cultural identity. The individual signs and their combinations are manipulated to perform a persuasive function in the promotion of an idea or proposal in text and pictures, which may alter the behaviour of the receivers accordingly. Semiotic analysis has provided me with the framework and means to identify signs which reflect a cultural identity or cultural purpose. This is particularly the position when images of architectural forms are used to convey that transformation of a tired 60s built environment appears utterly dependent upon the visionary attributes of a few influential stakeholders to transform the built environment for their ultimate benefit.

The words used in some government documents to convey how a particular urban regeneration proposal is implemented are not throwaway lines. My application of CDA identified words, their meanings in relationship to power to dominate what form and function regeneration of the CBD will be.

**The framework for analysis can be summarized into the following three fields of study**
1. The sign
This entails the study of the various types of signs, and the different ways they have of conveying meaning, and the way they relate to the people who use them and to people who will be drawn into the use of signs as part of their use of the urban environment. The sign (or symbol) is the first level of signification that is noted in a semiotic approach. This can be a set of words, a photograph, and a type of building or public space.

2. That to which the sign refers
The codes or systems into which signs are organised: This is the second level of analysis in semiotics. What are the deeper meanings to which a sign refers? This includes the ways that various codes have developed to meet the needs of a society or culture, or indeed any pressure group. For example this thesis will consider the way developers (chapter 4 interviews) deliver messages which have an underlying meaning which suits their interests in addition to the manifest content. Such messages may be conveyed through a public document such as a town centre regeneration proposal. Another example is the use of public art in Berlin’s Social City strategy. These art works have an overt signification as decorative objects but also reference codes and systems of understanding which suit the planners and geographers of Social City programmes.

3. The users of the sign
How a culture operates in which these codes and signs are a part. Social actors are in a position to exert influence over the field in which the sign operates. These social actors are in turn members of various cultures in which the symbolic systems analysed by semiotics operate. For example urban policy decisions are made in reference to a semiotic landscape which includes the culture of social integration, the culture of individualism and the traditional culture of a community.

Conclusion
The adoption of a qualitative methodology integrated with four methods of data collection and partnered with an interpretative critical discourse approach to analysis to show how language, signs and symbols figure in various social and cultural processes from which my conclusions were drawn. This approach led to the production of several arguments to illuminate, expand and refine my research question as introduced. Whilst rigorous exploration of the research question was not intended to prove or disprove that certain social and physical interventions
into the built environment would impact negatively or positively upon the social lives of citizens. Interrogation of the data and analysis did reveal to me how decisions by government, institutions and organisations would change the lives of citizens in neighbourhood and city centre areas either intentionally or otherwise.

The thesis as presented comments on a number of different issues related to the physical regeneration of Croydon town centre and an integrated programme of physical and social regeneration in Neukölln.

The thesis was a deliberate attempt to identify how types of built environment and proposals to change it influence social behaviour. Since I was dealing with the qualities of human social relationships, different types of built environment, different methods of construction and creative interventions, and using different actors, I was dealing with issues that were inherently interdisciplinary.
Chapter 3 General characteristics of Croydon and Neukölln

Introduction

Chapter 3 consists of a review of the general urban characteristics and maps of Croydon and Neukölln, two city suburbs of major cities parts of are presently undergoing urban renewal programmes.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a general reference point so the reader can refer to maps of each suburb; general characteristics for Croydon and Neukölln, before the data chapters in which they occur.

The London Borough of Croydon and Berlin-Neukölln have embarked upon 21st century regeneration programmes. They are seen as important ‘edge-city’ suburbs for their respective European Community capital cities.

They represent suburbs undergoing change; they have opportunities but they also have a need to get the process of urban renewal right in order to meet the complex demands of an EC sustainable cities context.

3.1 Croydon Maps CM1-3: Croydon district, CBD and Tramlink Map CTM and Neukölln NM1-2

Figure CM1: Crown Copyright 2007 all rights reserved
Mall shopping precinct (Whitgift Centre- Marks & Spencers)

West Croydon and East Croydon railway stations (including Bus/Tram interchange) are contained in the town centre: Tram stop

Croydon central library

Croydon Technical Collage

Croydon Markets

Fairfield Halls (Concert Hall)
Neukölln (Maps)

(Department Social City 2007)

(Figure: NM1)

(Figure: NM1) Map of Berlin suburbs: Neukölln located in southern area of Berlin
The Neukölln neighbourhood of Schiller promenade: The Church coffee shop is located in Herrfurth Pl: Connection to Neukölln high street shops along Wertbellin Strasse.

Neukölln Town Hall

Neuköllner Oper on Karl Marx Strasse (main high Street area). There are tram and underground rail stops in Karl Marx Strasse

Sonnenalle

Gropiusstadt lies to the south

Border with Kreuzberg
3.2 3.2 (A and B) Brief overview of general characteristics of Croydon and Neukölln

1. Croydon and Neukölln have deprived neighbourhoods: Croydon’s neighbourhood regeneration programme was planned to begin in 2008. Regeneration implies cities are in transition from an industrialised society to a more creative knowledge-based identity (Tallon 2010) ultimately contributing to the concept of the ‘creative class’ as envisaged by Florida (2002).

The unique self-contained and compact characteristics of the neighbourhood are imbedded in the mindset of Berlin residents (Becci 2007; Steinberg 1990) – under threat from social and economic fragmentation. For Croydon its primary characteristic is centred on its vast town centre retail experience perceived in its present form as unable to meet the competitive challenges of other rival centralised shopping experiences in the south of England.

2. Both have to deal with 1960s-70s buildings; construction of new buildings, and Neukölln’s refurbishment strategies began in 1999: Croydon’s regeneration is based on the town centre and Neukölln on neighbourhood regeneration in designated precincts

3. Both have to address economic, social and cultural challenges

4. Both have definitive programmes of reform associated with a joint EC approach

5. Neukölln one of the first German ‘cities’ to put into place aspects of the English garden movement – “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” social housing precincts in 1925 by the German Architect Taut. Croydon was one of the first ‘cities’ to implement a sanitary system. Both these earlier programmes were representative of a sociological reform agenda

6. Both have major shopping precincts Gropiusstadt in Neukölln (Gropius-Passagen). Croydon’s shopping Mall is one of London’s largest shopping centres, and both have existing high-rise buildings located around shopping precincts

7. Both are migrant staging points

8. Both have large concentrated social housing area in the south-eastern part of their suburb (Borough) IE. New Addington and Gropiusstadt

9. Neukölln also shares a ‘sister-city’ status with London (Boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham).
10. Both Croydon and Neukölln had migration from Turkish speaking and other nationalities because of the need for employees during their respective 60s-70s economic boom periods

11. Both Croydon and Neukölln are located on similar latitudes 51 and 52 degrees north

12. Both have integrated bus, heavy and light (tram) public transport systems and... West Croydon and East Croydon railway stations (including Bus/Tram interchange) are contained in the town centre

13. Their respective light rail systems connect to dedicated social housing precincts located in their southern neighbourhoods Gropiusstadt and New Addington

14. Both have airports located in their vicinity which featured in the defence of their cities during WW11 and are now closed for regular air-traffic – they were the first airports for their respective cities. Croydon was the home of London’s first airport, in 1915, and Croydon remains the heart of a complex and efficient southern England transport network

15. Both suburbs have the highest population for their respective cities

**Croydon’s Characteristics (A)**

Croydon is describe as having one of the largest retail and office centres outside of central London. Croydon has become one of London’s most important office hubs and a base for multinational companies and government departments. In this respect Croydon is seen as a city of opportunities and through Croydon council’s “hands-on invention” will see it transformed into a “confident 21st century European city...” (Malyan 2003).

As with a number of other European edge cities, (Hall 1998, pp.964-965, 969; McNeill, Parsons and Phelps 2002), for example Croydon and Noisy-le-Grand west of Paris situated on the periphery of a major population and business centre, its economic, socioeconomic and social status is linked with the centre and surrounding precincts of London.
The nature of the housing stock ranges greatly from large, relatively modern and often detached houses in the south, to pre-first world war, high density, terraced or converted housing in the north. The south-east is characterised by areas of large social housing estates the same as Neukölln’s Gropiusstadt district.

Around 41% of those working in Croydon town centre are based in knowledge intensive industries, compared to 28.7% across the whole Borough. West Croydon and East Croydon railway stations (including Bus/Tram interchange) are contained in the town centre. However, employment in knowledge-based industries declined by 12.6% in Croydon from 2003-2005. During the same time period, employment in the same industries rose in Great Britain, London and most of the benchmark towns. This is a concern, considering the high-value nature of knowledge intensive industries and associated high skill employment.

There is a diverse ethnic mix - 36% of the population are from ethnic groups other than “white British”.


Neukölln’s Characteristics (B)

Neukölln is a city-suburb of over 300,000 people and it is located 15 kilometres south of the centre of Berlin, with an area of 44.93 sq km in size, and as with Croydon its economic, socioeconomic and social status is linked with the centre and surrounding precincts of Berlin.

The Berlin city-suburb of Neukölln’s economic, socioeconomic and socio-cultural identity is also explicitly linked with events that occurred in the previous (GDR) German Democratic Republic East Berlin sector, and events after the reunification of East and West Germany on October 3, 1990 to re-form a united Germany were also significant. Reunification led to the collapse of the old East German economy and the closure of many of its factories with many East Berliners leaving for the West in search of a better life (URBED 2008, p.11).
Berlin Neukölln today is at the heart of momentous changes which are taking place in German culture and society brought on by world political events and the increasing movement of people, capital and ideas. Over the last 20 years Berlin has become one of the most transformed cities in the world and, understandably, it is struggling to come to terms with the speed and intensity of many of these changes. Neukölln once a large manufacturing centre with a loss of around 50% of jobs has seen a need to reinvent itself with creative and arts related industries; often referred to as the creative economy (Tallon 2010).

The direct effect upon working-class suburbs like Neukölln is strongly linked with the large movement of populations seeking employment and educational opportunities in Berlin and greater Germany. Population movements are also countered by the more entrenched nature of parallel societies, and Neukölln is increasingly shaped by social and ethnic segregation.

The suburb of Neukölln is located directly south of the city centre stretching from the boundary with Kreuzberg in the north to the city limits and Brandenburg in the south. Approximately 40% of the population of the Borough has a migrant background.

The Buildings styles in Neukölln varies from the high density typical Berlin tenements in the city end of the district and in the south they are mostly large suburban housing estates with many high-rise buildings peppered with some old village areas. One notable 60s-70s development is Gropiusstadt which is the largest social housing residential settlement in the former West Berlin.

There are known social issues in the Borough with many of the most disadvantaged districts in Berlin located within the Borough. The districts of Neukölln are: Neukölln, Britz, Buckow, Rudow and Gropiusstadt; the small neighbourhood district of Schiller Promenade is also located in the central (more traditional) part of Neukölln (figure: NM2)

Sources: Department of Urban Planning Berlin, 2009

Conclusion

The format featuring the general characteristics of each suburb with supporting photographs arranged in tables (located after the table of contents page H) will aid the reader in identifying where in the two data chapters (four and five) particular photographs are located. There are also photographs located in chapter 6 (findings) to aid in the interpretation of data.
The purpose of this chapter was not to draw comparisons between the two regeneration programmes but to help the reader identify the two features of a city environment under investigation; the city/town centre and the neighbourhood. My thesis regeneration is centred on the concept of the revitalisation of the city centre and the neighbourhood where good spatial design, social connectedness and robust social capital are desired urban qualities in both case studies.
Chapter 4 Croydon data chapter

Collection of and the analysis of data concerning urban regeneration of Croydon Town Centre: Research data drawn from observations, photographs, interviews and government-sponsored documents

Introduction

Chapter Four is the first of two data chapters associated with the collection, review and analysis of data involving urban regeneration of Croydon’s town centre. Croydon’s southern district of New Addington was also referred to by interviewees and featured in aspects of government-sponsored documents on their visions for the regeneration of the town centre of Croydon. This is particularly the case with the Tramlink light rail system that has to some extent invigorated aspects of Croydon neighbourhoods.

4.1 This is a written review from my field trips made during my PhD research to London Borough Croydon during the period (2001-2008). Data also includes photos of the built environment and associated streetscape

Introduction

My first visit in December 2001 to the London Borough of Croydon for the purpose of carrying out part one of a four-tiered method (observation, photographic evidence, interviews and the analysis of government-sponsored documents) into Social Connectedness and the Built Environment. One of the objectives of the observation and photographic process was to help identify the challenges faced by their urban designers who were responsible for the implementation of a planned regeneration programme entitled Vision2020 for Croydon’s city centre in proposed changes to the existing built environment. In this respect the observational and photographic data involved a partial review of Croydon’s present town centre spatial organisation; the type of, and condition of its built environment. A general awareness of how some people use the centre was carried out, however not insofar as seeking the views of town centre users or trying to determine the full extent of urban life in the CBD.

Four visiting periods were made to Croydon; December 2001; June 2004; May 2006 and April 2008, for the formal purposes of observation and other methods of collecting raw data for my PhD thesis. During the 2001-2008 periods many other visits were made to Croydon and
surrounding areas. These were for personal and family reasons due to my close association with the Borough of Croydon since 1947 - although these daytime and evening visits do not form part of my formal data collection objectives. This is not to say that they did not play a significant part in my impressions of Croydon during my overall analysis. A full description of the research methodology and methods used in the research is contained in chapter two.

The observation presented below represents how things are (how they look) at the moment and throughout periods during the eight years of the research - prior to the overall regeneration effect of the town centre: A process that will take place over the next twenty years or more according to government proposals contained in the Third City vision for Croydon document (2007) and the Croydon Economic Development Strategy (2008).

Field observation and an accompanying photographic review of the CBD has been analysed using the O.R.I.D system; and specifically for photographic analysis I have used semiotics of photography by Sonesson (1989) as a further reference guide where Sonesson comments:

The idea that no picture contains information in itself or, alternatively, that it contains so much contradictory information that a verbal message is needed to fix its meaning (cf. Sonesson, 1989,II.1.).

In my observation of the CBD I include comments on the status of some projects, for example promises to enhance “all spaces between buildings, streets, squares, parks, and even private forecourts” highlighted in Urban Design Croydon Brochure (2005) and to seek confirmation of whether there was evidence of an emerging café society as suggested by councillor Malyan (2000; 2003).

My interpretation of the present condition of Croydon’s town centre and its adjoining districts are based primarily upon the analysis of the views of experts involved in the implementation of the regeneration programmes. They are based upon all data collected; they are based upon part of an insightful analysis of some the ideas and conclusions in the literature review and finally they represent the views of the candidate – considering all of the above.

The observation
I decided that my first journey to Croydon from my Mother’s place in Shirley would be by red double decker bus, and because it was a cold December (2001) morning I made the decision to walk about two kilometres to my chosen bus stop.

The two kilometre walk warmed me up which helped to take my mind off of the gently falling snow – the bus stop lay just ahead of me as I was careful not to slip on the bitumen pavement. The bus stop did not have any benches or shelter so with four other passengers we all stood around in a collective silence, although I did make an attempt at a hello.

After about ten minutes the double level bus arrived at the concrete bus stop and it was about half full with people engaged in their individual reality. Some people were on their mobile phones and others were looking out of slightly-misted windows to the early morning streetscape. The bus driver re-engaged with the busy traffic from the bus stop as he propelled his bus skilfully through tight intersections and busy roundabouts. There is something that is reassureing about a large red bus as it lurches from side-to-side through well-ordered and tidy suburban areas: the neighbourhoods the bus passed through were “basically affluent and more suburban in nature” (interview with Long 2006).

The compressed spatial challenge of narrow streets and pavements contrasted sharply with numerous two storey detached and semi-attached residences that spread out into the distance on the left side of the bus. The narrowness of some sections of the main road forced drivers to wait for approaching vehicles to pass, which made the journey appear longer than it was. Some main thoroughfares between suburbs are too narrow to accommodate parked vehicles and moving traffic in both directions. The absence of dedicated cycle-ways may have also provided a number of reasons why bicycles did not appear to form a large part of the regular traffic mix.

After my arrival at the West Croydon bus and train interchange at about eight-forty-five, I dedicated the next fifteen minutes to people-watching and getting a ‘feel’ for the area. It was now about nine in the morning as I left the busy West Croydon bus-train interchange station to walk into the shopping mall area. People in various types of dress were rushing about – a scene repeated in many cities and in many countries that I have visited and represented as a feature of urban life. During my walk to the town centre the cold damp air and fragmented glimpses of a grey sky between city-buildings were offset by the bright red double decker bus
that injected colour into the built environment as it challenged the narrowness of the street space around it.

(Photos: C1) Iconic London bus and contrasting building styles sets the West Croydon urban theme

The unloved old three storey buildings with their rough (Rasmussen 2001) stone surfaces and bay windows offered a contrasting historical and material context to the featureless dirty white building with the Forbidden Planet sign on its flat street front façade on the opposite side of the street. Perhaps this was confirming the precinct’s underlying austerity (not helped by unfriendly high curbs) as commented upon by a report commissioned by Croydon Council (Croydon Economic Development Strategy report 2008).

The blandness of the white building offset by a sense of history - its potential to be realised in future plans for the regeneration of West Croydon (West Croydon Masterplan, Alan Baxter and Associates MaCreanor Lavington architects, et al. and Croydon council 2009)

(Photos: C2) West Croydon – the three storey heritage building takes centre stage
As the following photograph shows, the same area provides opportunities for a vibrant historical and contemporary architectural mix with contrasting building colours. One could imagine cafés located along the opposite side of the street with large planter boxes contributing to the aesthetics of a widened sidewalk, and the new (2001) tram system further adding to a European theme to the streetscape: atmosphere that Croydon’s urban designers and councillors (Malyan 2000) find appealing (Interviews 2006 and 2008).

(Photo: C3) Western Croydon end of the CBD with its mix of interesting building styles and colours

Apart from the above vista the present streetscape featured tired grimy glassed-in and dirty anodized light grey metal structures which typified some aspects of the West Croydon built environment representing a reflection of a modernist 1960s building style. This particular precinct still has incredible potential as a place for social connectedness as suggested in my comments above on the previous photograph.

There were no balconies here, nor roof-top gardens or step-backs to engage with the vista of surrounding streetscapes. The older side of the street featured older grey and brown pre-1950s three level buildings, their potential as a significant contribution to older building forms largely hidden in their decaying facades. The modernist minimalist flat top and boxed glassed front designs arranged in sentinel like straight lines. Where a remodelled and more expressive free form contrast, especially at the intersection of the narrowed streets would help to invigorate the present featureless form: A much maligned-place dominated by homogenous functionalist architecture and zoning activities of the 70s and 80s (Tallon 2010, p.20).
Perhaps the inclusion of postmodern organic features with building step-backs and lighter colours would modify the appearance of decay in this west Croydon area.

Third City document comments on the west Croydon area:

(sic) A new balance between North and South and the area around West Croydon station has a sad and dilapidated presence (2007).

According to Croydon Economic Development Strategy report (2008) “Similarly, it was suggested that West Croydon station stands neglected, possibly due to the fact that it only serves local communities”. These separate comments suggest that regeneration of this area is long overdue.

With my eyes refocussed at street-level on my way to the main shopping mall I navigated the narrow sidewalks and I was especially vigilant at the corners of buildings because of the likelihood of bumping into someone coming around the corner, as the following photograph would suggest.

(Photo: C4) Eastern CBD area with narrow pavements and wide-street

In the West Croydon area some of the shop front displays in the mall precinct were poorly presented, over stocked and seemed disconnected from the bland surrounding streetscape because of the busyness of their displays. As Pile suggests, such cluttered windows suggest cheap and shoddy consumer goods - “big windows loaded with merchandise express the bargain outlet of mass marketing” (Pile 2007, p. 529).

Croydon was nominated a place without inspiration in one of my interviews with urban planners; however it is also a place with opportunity, a viewed shared by (interview with Green 2006). This lower Western end of the main shopping area also produced an
unwelcoming energy which was not helped by having nowhere to sit, as I had planned to find an outside-inside coffee shop where I could observe and engage with people. There were no coloured umbrellas, planter boxes, pocket-gardens or shop-display cabinets to enhance the areas streetscape and to keep people there. Apart from a few trees there was just an uninterrupted view of the mall precinct which featured a “beware – don’t be a victim”, sign.

(Photograph: C5) Whitgift Mall area with “don’t be a victim sign”

The Whitgift Shopping Centre with the M and S store in left foreground

The poorly maintained public realm motivated me to seek the comfort of the main enclosed Whitgift shopping centre. “At night, when it is shut, this whole block becomes impregnable” (Third City document 2007, p.54), I found a coffee shop that provided some connection with the outside mall area, albeit through a closed partition window. There were however a few seats under chest high benches under the aforementioned window which provided a small internal platform to observe passing pedestrians and offered a margin of engagement with the mall area which was getting busier.

I ordered a cup of coffee from the service counter and took my place at the viewing platform and proceeded to enjoy my first coffee for the day: people were walking quickly, almost hurrying; confirming the busyness of the town centre. There were a few people walking briskly with their headphones attached and mobiles connecting them to another place and to other people. After finishing my coffee I returned to the outside mall and discovered the only coffee
shop with chairs and tables in the mall itself.

(Photo: C6) Whitgift mall area outside coffee setting

The next day I travelled along the same Croydon bus route as the day before, walking into the western suburbs away from the mall precinct. The area did not have a definitive identity and had little to distinguish it from other precincts. A number of new town centre ‘squares’ proposed in Croydon’s town centre regeneration would provide additional places where people could meet however – but this would be a long time into the future; perhaps in another twenty years. Perhaps it would be better to revitalise what already exists in the CBD?

As a visitor to this northern and western area of Croydon I noted that the dampness in the air was highlighted by moss and grass growing out of the clogged-up gutters – that may suggest the existence of micro-climatic conditions. This created an impression of disengagement from living things and other natural elements. I passed a large and badly maintained hospital on the main road. The hospital facades looked as if they were in need of urgent repair and maintenance. Grouting was missing from brickwork, and stone facings were chipped. Parts of the façade were also missing large pieces of stonework. The surrounding ironwork fences and stair supports were also in need of paintwork. The building decay was motivation for me to return to the town centre shopping centre.

I did discover years later that this area of Croydon would be part of its own separate urban regeneration project (2008) although as the following photograph shows regeneration was under way for new housing outside of the immediate town centre (2008 visit).
There are also other proactive urban renewal projects underway for example: Croydon is also a partner in the Towns and Cities Partners in Urban Renaissance Project (2001) which is concerned with the better maintenance of public spaces and other urban renewal programmes.

Workshops within these renaissance projects discuss “Job Creation, Enterprise and Property Development”. “This workshop, based on the experiences of Croydon, considered how to support the set up and success of business and entrepreneurs and also the link between physical regeneration, the availability of premises, and enterprise development” (December 2001). These renaissance projects represent the beginnings of the development of action plans prior to actual physical regeneration of the town centre.

These observations discussed in previous pages suggest the problems of the Croydon urban environment around the West Croydon station. Problems such as the lack of developed squares, narrow precincts and poor urban environment - however it should not be supposed that no efforts are being made by authorities to deal with these problems.

They are part of a recognised, strategic and collaborative approach with a focus on delivery that is scheduled to be implemented in a four tiered intervention approach – where the first-tier is of a high-level and high priority. Unfortunately it is not until the fourth tier when intervention such as implementation of the Alsop vision; commercial development with mixed residential projects gets underway. Deliverability is however a key factor where further scoping, promotion and funding are required in order to facilitate project outcomes (Croydon Economic Development Strategy report 2008).
However it seems to this researcher that despite the good intentions of the projects mentioned above the overall atmosphere of decline and lack of aesthetics in this area has not been addressed so far in the period 2001 to 2008 that this thesis covers. The problems identified in my late 2001 visit remain much as I first viewed them.

At the present time West Croydon and central Croydon generally does not currently match up to its importance or potential as a desirable place to live, as suggested by Glaeser, Kolo and Saiz (2001). The West Croydon area suffers from an extremely poor urban environment, a tired railway station, limited accessibility and inconvenient public transport interchange. The provision of new homes, businesses, community facilities and a radically transformed public realm with new squares and green spaces requires clear leadership, a shared vision a collaborative approach with a focus on delivery according to Councillor Jason Perry Cabinet Member for Planning Conservation and Climate Change, (2010).

A revitalised town centre also takes time with selected projects, implementation and completion occurring from 2015 (Croydon Economic Development Strategy report, 2008; West Croydon Masterplan, Alan Baxter and Associates MaCcreanor Lavington architects, GVA Grimly, and Croydon council 2009).

The journey continues
The window displays facing this particular part of the busy mall area were quite ordinary and unconvincing as I walked through the mishmash grey steel entrance area with people milling around with few places to sit and no attempt to turn this unique arcade precinct into a boutique outside-dining area – offering an outside-inside connection for people who want a break from the busy Whitgift centre and the outside mall precinct.
The metal-framed entrance area appeared as an afterthought in design – the single support column acting rather like a barrier, and the area was not connected by stairs to the first floor. There was no timber and metal balcony to mark the first floor either. I sat down for something to eat and although the wait-staff were very efficient there appeared to be a lack of engagement between staff and customers as they went about their work removing used dishes and coffee cups. I continued to explore the different levels and the dramatic shop-displays which were quite impressive. These represented various forms of escape; holiday scenes; the glamorous kitchens that everyone should have; clothes that could help transform people into figments of their imagination and could be worn in any major city.

On the ground floor level there was a different sort of social behaviour. People of different cultures were walking quickly and purposively. Very few people were strolling casually along and that included those with shopping trolleys overflowing with their purchased items. It may be a reflection of people on the ground floor preparing to leave the huge shopping complex. I reflected later that shopping mall customers with overflowing shopping trolleys overspend around 27% (Della Bitta, Lawson, Loudon, Rainbird, and Tidwell 1996) on their shopping bill.

Engaging with the Mall again, and across from the Whitgift Arcade another unrealised “gem” where the inclusion of an outdoor café experience – perhaps a ‘softening’ of the high curbs, planter boxes and tables with brightly coloured umbrellas will provide another pleasant place for informal social encounters and social connectedness to develop.
It was now late in the afternoon as I waited in the partly enclosed Croydon West bus terminal as the winter sun lost any warming effect on the urban grey landscape. I spoke to one man aged about forty-five who was dressed in dark-grey tones. After some slight eye contact I asked him if he had had a good day and with a lack of energy he ‘grunted’ and not rudely; in reply I then asked him if he worked in Croydon. His response in a more measured tone was, “Not if I can help it.” In a soft tone I asked him why. He responded, “It’s too busy and unfriendly.”

**New Addington**

The next day the weather was even colder than the day before as I walked to the New Addington (social) housing estate from Shirley, a district of Croydon where residents have a higher socio-economic status. New Addington is a public housing residential estate with about 10-12,000 residents; there are also some private home owners with a housing mix that includes flats, terraces, and semi-detached dwellings. (New Addington Ward Profile; Croydon Council August, 2009). It is interesting to note that The Mayor’s London Plan (2004) has identified “New Addington as a strategic area for regeneration in South London where there is substantial deprivation”.

Strolling into the housing estate I passed some neat, small and well-kept gardens and cars were parked in parking areas away from houses. Two terrace homes had a small partly iced-up water feature in their small front garden, an indication of how cold and how geographically exposed the areas was – which becomes obvious as one approaches from a distance. As I walked further into the estate featureless four storey flats appeared with roofs without
overhangs and with evidence of internal dampness on the outside wall. Later I reflected upon how it was so obvious that houses would become damp when gutters were located on external walls without overhanging eaves leading to potential gutter overflows onto the building structure rather than away from it. This particular single communal residential entrance was badly kept with bits of paper rubbish just outside the entrance. There were also weeds and associated vegetation around this particular building that was asking for neighbours to care about maintaining this particular site.

**Croydon the light rail system**

After a short walk to the New Addington Tramlink station my return visit to Croydon’s town centre was via East Croydon station using the tramway light-rail system; it was very impressive passing back gardens, parks and with its own separate rail system where the route did not involve travel over existing road intersections in some sections. There was an opportunity for more civic engagement as I heard passengers commenting upon the urban terrain as the tram took in residential suburbs as well as the streetscape of commercial and shopping areas.

**East Croydon**

It is Monday, it was very cold as I was I dropped off by car just behind East Croydon Station after a journey from Bromley. My first challenge as a pedestrian was to negotiate the narrow pavement which was not helped by a Croydon council maintenance van ‘stealing’ a part of the already congested pavement. I said hello to a council man who stood nearby, he responded warmly. As I approached the roundabout, barriers on each corner prevented me from crossing at the corner; the temporary signage directed me as I deviated from the roundabout to about twenty metres away from the intersection in order to cross. In this area there are no designated pedestrian or cycle zones with soft-edged curbs; and the tall office buildings with their smooth untextured surfaces grow almost out of the edge of the narrow pavement.

There have been some attempts at creating mini-pocket garden areas between the pavement and the building façade which helps to soften the abundance of concrete (Glancey 1993). In the East Croydon area there appear to be only commercial buildings and many are of the 60 to 70s modernist varieties bearing little resemblance to the clarity and originality of pre 1930s modernism (Rasmussen 2001).
Later more dramatic buildings from the 90s are also basic boxed, rectangular glass and clean-steel framed designs as indicated in the following Croydon central area photograph.

(Photo: C10) West Croydon glass encased modernist high-rise offices

However; there are few one of a kind shops and arcades to add interest to the feeling of sterility. The connecting street serves as conduit into the main road which is the link between East Croydon station and Croydon’s CBC, the town hall, and onto the Whitgift shopping centre complex. The European manufactured (Austria) tram system in this part of Croydon counters the bland Eastern European feel similar in some ways to the East Berlin district of Marzahn prior to its own regeneration programme. This includes the total refurbishment of its social housing panel constructed residential high-rise (Schümer-Strucksberg 1997).

In this eastern part of Croydon (outside East Croydon Transport Interchange) pedestrians dressed to deal with the cold weather were either standing around waiting for heavy and light rail connections and buses or in transit with their plastic bags amongst predominantly greyish surrounds that contributed very little to the vitality of the areas built environment.

(Photo: C11) A view towards the CBD just outside of East Croydon rail/bus and tram interchange
In this area there needs to be more city-greenspace as shown below that is a feature of some of Croydon’s outer areas that would contribute to the vibrancy of the public realm to soften the bland urban terrain; however with few places to sit and umbrellas with tables to sit around, this beautiful green-area remains lonely and detached from the CBD.

(Photo: C12) Beautiful green open area next to Croydon town hall

Retuning to reality of negotiating busy traffic interchanges, I approached the intersection of Wesley Road, with the vehicle underpass that leaves the through traffic stranded at both ends and also feeds the vehicular traffic from connecting suburban streets. The short dual carriageway is an exercise in “organised confusion” as described by one of my interviewees (2006). My successful experience as a surviving pedestrian avoiding a transport mix of trams, cars, trucks, buses, motorbikes and even a bicycle could have been a scene from any city in any developed country.

Bicycles were also not a general part of the personal transport equation however, as cycle ways are not as yet part of Croydon’s comprehensive and integrated transport system. Above the Wesley Road underpass other pedestrians were trying to achieve a moment of safety before crossing the busy intersection. The certainty of flashing lights, an assortment of signage and a secure piece of concrete platform however offered a small part of a safe environment for the unwary pedestrian or cyclist if they tried to cross.

Iconic 1960s modernist and more recent 90s structures bracket the streets around the intersection and their tall look-alike smooth facades contributed to the high velocity wind down draught. The buildings’ minimalist certainty resulted in few creative illusions (Glancey 1998, p. 70). The “spontaneous” irregular effect of traditional older buildings (Rasmussen
2001, p. 128) was missing and there is nothing to keep one guessing about where the built environment will lead to. The absence of external balconies, organic shapes, textural features or colours did nothing to soften the feel of an alien functional environment; a Manhattan-style built environment as suggested by Glancey (1998). Where up close the architecture and design is often of mediocre quality with dead frontages, poor materials and monolithic and mono-use building (Croydon Metropolitan Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options Report- 2008).

(Photo: C13) Part of Croydon’s modernist CBD skyline

(Photo: C14) Croydon’s CBD modernist CBD skyline

Even the Fairfield Hall with its urgent need for a building makeover and Croydon technical college constructed in the 1960s provide a relief from this bland architecture that stands beside Croydon technical college – a view that I enjoyed over a number of years (1962-7) whilst engaged in the particular subject of engineering drawing.
According to the Croydon Metropolitan Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options Report- (2008, p41):

If things do not change in the centre, it will probably continue to be seen as quite a good shopping centre, but a place of aging office blocks, a centre with a poor public realm, often uninspiring architecture and generally uncoordinated development.

There is very little to keep people there; instead there is a frantic effort to escape the minimal and indifferent use of space with very few arcades, historical elements or hidden courtyards to tempt and engage the visitor. There were not even rows of flower sellers and street artists to counter the sober surrounds – although these aspects are part of Croydon’s present city regeneration strategy (Third City document 2007) and Alsop’s visionary perspective.

The older part of the CBD in between the town hall and the Whitgift centre presents itself as an opportunity for a sense of history to be woven into the central commercial oriented urban landscape, but unfortunately this is not helped by the street and buildings that divide the old
and the new and an untidy streetscape with small cluttered shop fronts. Each shop competes with the other to fill their windows with as much merchandise as possible. Along the street the tram stop squeezes the public closer into the narrow pavement with the building further invading the pedestrian space.

(Photo: C16) A tram makes its way towards Croydon markets

After my scheduled meeting with Tim and Victor at Croydon council, I repeated my visit to the mall area I had undertaken many times before with its mix of pavers, tiles and slabs that were laid-out in a conflicting disarray of shapes and sizes. Upon reaching the intersection that meets with the narrow street which runs off the mall I decided to turn left and have a look at the older part of Croydon (just south and west of the CBD) where there is an opportunity for a sense of character to impose itself by valuing the importance of older architectural expressions. A reduction in the number of neon signs outside shop fronts would be one such opportunity. The older three storey building with imposing chimney stacks on one corner and diagonally opposite the circular contemporary structure could be another; an opportunity for a vibrant vehicle-free precinct.

Yet this is also wasted because people were either standing or walking around. One could imagine a central semi-enclosed tram stop with outside seating areas, outside eateries and restaurants that cater for beer-gardens or alfresco dining. There is very little to keep people outside in one spot, it was as if people were searching for something that eluded them – another corridor, another wasted opportunity. Croydon has a number of these types of exciting precincts for inclusion in its vision as one of the “Great European Cities” (Malyan 2003).
(Photo: C17) A heritage central area: this could be the site for an exciting square with popups, pocket gardens, outside-inside dining and markets

I stood and observed the markets. They were quite small. Despite this the markets provided an opportunity for some social engagement, fresh produce and an outside break from the retail shops. At the bottom end of the outside markets I turned right to enter into the street with a slight incline that adjoins the mall and the day brightened I made my way to the markets watching the stall holders and their customers engage in the interchange of their social dialogue. The inclusion of trees would have made the area more inviting however.

(Photo: C18) Croydon markets

At the lower end of the markets the shops in this bottom section of the street which was about 120 metres long were dirty, and decidedly unloved.
A connecting laneway before the mall did nothing to enhance the visual attractiveness of the public domain and with a large metal bin to impede pedestrian access.

According to Urban Design Croydon: “The design of these (above) places is becoming even more precious; it is the art of making places for people” and yet not a single person can be seen in this city centre public space; an area of the kind that the Urban Design Brochure refers to as “all spaces between buildings, streets, squares, parks, and even private forecourts” (Urban Design Croydon 2005).

Leaving behind the connecting laneway I entered the mall with its potential as a social meeting-place diminished because it functions more as a transit area between precincts with only retail shops to hold inhabitants there. Unfortunately the opportunity as a meeting place was not fulfilled in the mall’s present design primarily because it functions as an area of transit.
The clothes preference was for jeans and this had not changed since my first research visit here in December 2001. I had been here during winter, summer and spring and still there were the same narrow steel bench seats, which were more a gesture towards streetscape furniture as a form of functional expressionism than a place to sit, relax and socialise. The absence of bicycles was noticeable despite the promotion of bicycles in government sponsored brochures (Croydon Vision2020 document 1998). The ‘cold’ steel may be functional but who wants to sit on a steel seat that is cold in winter and hot in summer? The seats are also not facing towards each other therefore preventing the opportunity for informal social connections between people, if they chose. There were no tables here.

There are however bicycle-racks at the other western end of the mall as indicated in the following photograph, and a brightly coloured garbage truck navigating the corner added a sense of colour to the urban terrain.
(Photo: C23) Western end of mall CBD area near the Whitgift centre

As I continued on my field trip, dried-up chewing-gum in various shades from a sort-of-black to a slightly mid-grey colour could be seen almost everywhere as it impregnated the large off-grey concrete and mismatched pavers. Discarded cigarette ends also complemented the poorly maintained shop fronts with bits of tiles and grout missing from window facades and a cordoned-off escalator added to a sense of disrepair.

(Photo: C24) Mid-section mall CBD area near the Whitgift centre
Before I entered the Whitgift shopping centre the lack of seating promoted me to ask three policemen and one policewoman why there was no outdoor seating in the mall. Their response was that this was “because they would either be stolen or vandalised”.

There was no gradual transition from the stark reality of the outside mall to the beginning of the inner shopping precinct. There was no terrace-dining to soften the connection between the outside and the inside therefore providing an opportunity of disengagement from modernist retail areas. The quality of some of the centre’s furnishings was in stark contrast with those outside however. The centre’s loggia-style eating area provided a visual connection to Croydon’s outside modernist city skyline.

The central atria consisted of a small single row seating area squeezed into a corner of the atria floor with a minimalist glass-panelled partition to define the area as a transit zone.
The Whitgift centre forecourt

The Whitgift centre and its internal eateries

The shopping centre did however provide a margin of opportunity for some shoppers in their semi-enclosed eateries to gaze upon Croydon’s repetitive modernist high-rise city skyline that afforded its own visual dynamics.

Inside the Whitgift centre – and outside modernist and grey
The Whitgift Centre with its organic internal architecture, soft vibrant colours and hanging drapes still draws in customers as this photograph shows.

(Photo: C30) The Whitgift centre; dynamic, curvaceous, warm and interesting

It was if the mall outside and the shopping centre were from two diametrically opposing worlds. The uncleaned building facades in the background were at odds with the council street cleaner in the foreground. As the woman sat on the corner of an empty brick enclosure there appeared to be no real attempt at creating a streetscape ambience such as planter boxes, water features made from natural materials, statues or symbols that could represent Croydon’s cultural and historical heritage.

(Photo: C31) Middle-section of mall CBD area near the Whitgift centre

There were some indications that Croydon’s mall precinct had already began its regeneration process as the following photograph shows including the retention of older classical buildings
adjoining the new corner development – although this did not appear to be a widespread occurrence particularly with larger commercial high-rise buildings.

(Photo: C32) Earlier photo of the Eastern end of mall CBD area near the Whitgift centre

I left the wide mall and onto narrow pavements with their delineated demarcation from the street - a single bicycle passed me, narrowly avoiding the steeply inclined kerb. I arrived at the entrance to West Croydon station – where the proposal to regenerate the whole area would breathe new life into the precinct, perhaps? The station forecourt could be described as shabby and badly maintained with corner pillars that were chipped, and with pieces of tiles missing. Station vendors were selling newspapers, magazines, and other consumables in the station forecourt and a woman can be seen disposing of her cigarette on the forecourt floor thus adding to the sterility of the forecourt.

(Photo: C33) Entrance to West Croydon Station

Across the road The Fox and Hounds Pub offered its own multi-textured use of space. The cream building with high-pitched gable roofs, attic windows and tall chimneys in the
background challenged the modernist building with yellow shutters on the left front side of the picture. The visual dynamics of different architecture offered some of the physical ingredients for an outside meeting place. All that was needed was the creative use of the public and private realm with outside tables, chairs and outside dining on the left-hand side of the picture. This could be achieved by a partnership between Croydon council, business and local residents: a scenario not lost on members of the community (Croydon Economic Report 2008).

This small investment in a more creative use of public and private realm does not require new buildings or new investment funds from major developers. It could be replicated in a number of other public and private realm sites to act as a catalyst for social connection. It would also encourage a social interpenetration of public and private space therefore contributing to social cohesion and social capital. It would benefit small business owners because of the addition of a social context to under-used parts of public space.

(Photo: C34) The old Fox and Hounds pub opposite West Croydon Station

(Photo: C35) Another vista of the Old Fox and Hounds with its unique gabled roof
Another view of the “Old Fox and Hounds” showing its unique and sadly unrealised potential – one could image this central precinct as a site for a partly-covered Alfresco-dining experience with a historical context, welcoming passengers as they alight from the frantic West Croydon Transport Interchange. There does not have to be a new building development to achieve this – the basic ingredients for social capital are already there.

Further along the road I then turned around in this narrow and poorly maintained main street area just outside the CBD and the West Croydon transport interchange. The central and most prominent aspect of the background was a large modernist high-rise building. The foreground consisted of four level and attic terraced-style shop-top buildings.

(Photo: C36). Western Croydon looking towards the CBD – turn the street into a tramway
The white building with elegant steel balconies in the process of being tastefully refurbished provided a bright visual contrast with buildings either side of it.

(Photo: C37) Inner West Croydon with the dynamics of four different architectural styles
The stark surrounds of the opposite side of the street were softened by the pavement green grocers shop with narrow sidewalks, reflecting the dominance of the motor car over the pedestrian.

I excused myself from the central Croydon vista, and there was just enough pavement space to accommodate a group of smiling Turkish men standing underneath an awning, leaving a narrow pavement even narrower. I smiled as I approached and recognising their Turkish language having spent time in Turkey - I ask them if I could take their photograph. This was followed by an affirmative and warm response. We chatted about Australia and their life in Croydon.

(Photo: C38) Inner West Croydon greengrocers and my new Turkish acquaintances

The clutter of hidden rubbish next door brought me to a view of the dirty streetscape in the next photograph.
After further navigation of the narrow pavements for about another kilometre I crossed the main road and entered the small side street with four storey buildings without balconies, with walls that were constructed to the edge of narrow sidewalks.

The north-western side street that I had just entered was mainly residential terrace housing, with the occasional semi-detached residence. Residences go from double storey to four levels and some buildings have refurbished bay windows on the ground floor. Entry into this quiet area offered relief from the West Croydon High street precinct only about two kilometres away.
Vehicles are usually parked on the street with the vehicle parallel-parked to the street. Some residents forgo the small front garden and replace it with just enough space for a car. The residents of the terrace style housing have their own small narrow (6-8 metres wide) garden separated by a fence. The next side street revealed a compressed vista of trees, planted along a narrow sidewalk, preventing the trees from growing outwards without encountering a wall.

I continued in a northerly direction where I passed more terraced, stand-alone, and semi-detached houses, some of them with rubbish deposited between the building separations. Clearly the random distribution of rubbish in outdoor spaces is not confined to the public realm. This aspect of social behaviour suggests a neglect of public assets, a situation that is also evident in parts of Neukölln.
The disposal of rubbish even occurs next to a more recent building with the old real estate for sale sign deposited behind the front wall with old construction rubbish.

Further up the street another building had parts of its brick-fence pushed-over.

There was also some evidence of recent attempts at spasmodic building; refurbishment,
additions and modifications compete with a bag of rubbish left on the corner of the street by the brick wall.

(Photo: C46) Imposing inner West Croydon hip-roofed two storey house awaiting refurbishment?

It was at this stage that I had not seen any parks or play areas integrated with terrace or town house developments. It is this aspect of Croydon’s suburbia that could benefit from neighbourhood parks and play areas. There is however a sense of character displayed by well-maintained three storey terrace houses with their own garden areas located in wider than normal streets - pictured below.

(Photo: C47) Inner West Croydon with three storey terraces and wide-street

Around the corner was a neighbourhood shop with cluttered shop windows, featuring numerous hand-written adverts, which also conveyed a sense of informality and a local neighbourhood feel.
Just up from shop was a sad old church which stood on a busy corner block that acted as a large elongated roundabout. The church appeared isolated and lost; there is a lost sense of grandeur here. A total makeover would be required to restore this building with re-pointed block work, steam cleaning and painting, fortunately the council’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP) contains Policies aimed at preserving and enhancing Croydon’s built heritage (The Planning [Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas] Act 1990).

On the next occasion I approached Croydon’s CBD from a northerly direction and a different urban perspective began to evolve the closer I came to East Croydon. This expressive and standout building appeared out of a mix of modernist and post-modernist residential buildings. Of particular interest was its medium high-rise post-modernist blue-steel construction with the wide external balconies and elongated corners. The narrow pavement is relieved by these types of fanciful, colourful and curvilinear architectural forms and is further complemented by the wider tree-lined street in this location that comes together in small square configuration – this would make an ideal community social area with the addition of street furniture.
East Croydon: a mixture of post-modern, modernist and the more traditional

This was in direct contrast to the traditional pub on the opposite corner providing a positive creative architectural balance between old and new architectural styles.

A step back into the pub-forecourt reveals interesting building dynamics

In the same area another opportunity for an outdoor space for social connectedness was missed. The full English breakfast mentioned in the promotional sign in the following photograph below will have to be taken inside because seats are not provided outside and the bollards act as a barrier to demarcate public and private space. These types of public space are however representative of the kinds of opportunities that a regenerated city environment create for outside café precincts and cabinet-style shops. This opportunity already exists in the area with established pocket-gardens.
Fortunately there were some buildings in this area before the main thoroughfare with external balconies that open up the street to the domestic space and provide opportunities for social connections between private and public zones. Yet even here the narrow side-walk and the lamp bollards make it difficult for two people to walk together and engage in informal face to face contact, nonetheless the area did present buildings with softer multi-layered building facades aided by vivid arrangements of trees and bushes.

This Croydon East station area includes a typical 1960s residential medium density site. The present site provides an opportunity for future residential accommodation complete with external balconies similar to buildings in the previous photograph. The bland four storey modernist flats lacked balconies and did not encourage connection between residents with a slot in the lower front wall representing the common space of entry to the building.
Although the building across the street is similar, there is however a large forecourt area and with a large tree which helped to create an atmosphere of peacefulness.

The building below is a seven storey rectangular boxed example of a similar style of building with surrounding trees that help soften the building’s stark appearance.

In the distance an even higher version dominates the street, its bland and high-vertical ‘edge
to the street’ providing little architectural comfort for the surrounding space. The brown-brick building in the foreground was trying as if to reclaim what was left of the pavement and without balconies contributes very little to the streetscape, perhaps a few trees may help to soften the minimalist feel, if space allowed it.

(Photo: C57) East-Western area: concrete panelled modernist and the brick contemporary

A more recent version of a four level residential complex with little connectivity with the surrounding buildings and the attempt at balconies will achieve very little social connectedness with neighbours. One may inquire what purpose a balcony could serve without table and chairs to relax and enjoy the vista.

(Photo: C58) Inner East-West area contemporary but almost brutal four storey apartments

Not far away the two-storey semi-detached with long narrow gardens reflective of a 1920s London government decision to build lots of similar residences for the “working man” (Hall 1989). The low fence however provides garden opportunities for social connectivity between
neighbours. The creation of public domain allotments also contributes to informal face-to-face social encounters between citizens.

(Photo: C59) Croydon East: the classical single storey residential terrace

(Photo: C60) Allotments are for people to share

“The social benefits of an allotment need not be restricted to those who work the plots” - The point is emphasised by an allotment society in Croydon (above photograph) which estimates that about a third of its thousand paid-up members are not plotholders, but nearby residents who use the site as a social centre, supplier of plants or horticultural materials, or merely as a source of gardening knowledge. Indeed, the facilities provided on the site reflect the diversity of its appeal (London Assembly, Environmental committee 2006, 3.1, p.8).

4.2 Croydon Conclusion: Overall analysis of London Borough Croydon observational data

Photo: Croydon’s city centre: a dynamic aerial perspective: the not so new, the old and the old and the new together – how does it deal with the present? Preceding the four introductory photographs the observational analysis is a reminder of the challenges of regeneration towards the enhancement of social connectedness and social capital between inhabitants that lie ahead. As the following photographs reveal Croydon already has a present skyline representing a mix of contemporary and more traditional architectural forms with a variety of building styles, ages, heights and materials.
(Photo: C61) Croydon CBD: imposing city skyline

(Photo: C62) Croydon’s equally imposing historical Clocktower

(Photo: C63) An under the high-rise CBD skyline reveals a European-styled vista
The objective of the following analysis is to consider the significance of what has been observed during documented visits to the Borough of Croydon elements and highlights the overall conclusion - where the regeneration of Croydon’s city centre is badly needed as it is indeed trapped in in the 1960s-70s just waiting for revitalisation to happen – very soon.

The central issue at the moment is how the organisation of the present space matches the social identity of people who engage in the use of particular areas of public and private space - participants in the night time economy for example. The analysis is intended to reflect upon some aspects of social phenomena that were observed during field visits to this area over a period of seven years – such as the movement of inhabitants through city precincts. This is amply shown in the photograph below where there are significantly more people compared to the photograph taken in the initial observation of the mall precinct.

The above photograph as with the initial photograph of the Croydon mall streetscape does not
invite full participation in the public space, which is generally constructed as a functional area in this case as a means of transit. It does not keep people there. These areas could be considered more as a realm of beauty and relaxation with the inclusion of constructed “place-elements” proposed in the city centre regeneration Vision2020 project.

There is also not a strict segregation between the city centre precincts and districts that lie outside of the immediate districts. Presently the city with its lack of mixed-usage zones would benefit from the inclusion of creative elements as proposed in parts of the Third City proposal and associated documents, and suggested by my interviewees (2006; 2008), who suggest there, must be different reasons why people should engage in life of the town centre – other than for the purposes of shopping. It is acknowledged in this conclusion that substantial parts of urban life are not revealed, only facilities to accommodate the social lives of citizens and their relationship with city life.

Accordingly, the notion of shared public and private space is generally lacking from the city centre and from the districts that adjoin it. However in those few city centre situations where external balconies have been included in new high rise complexes, this is a solitary example of the interpenetration of public and private space - be it from a distance. Outside seating for restaurants, small eateries and as part of streetscape furniture in the city centre and areas adjoining is not a present general feature of city-life and the public domain. This suggests the present spatial arrangement of the existing streetscape and the buildings that are incorporated within it depend upon each other to soften the divide between public and private space. It is in this context that proposals to construct rectangular high-rise building with glass facades (Third City document 2007, p25) with interconnecting skywalks.

Unfortunately narrow pavements reduce the opportunity for pedestrians to engage in chosen personal encounters whilst the narrowness of the pavement forces people to intrude into the personal space of others or avoid them altogether. This has a number of disquieting social effects. It does not encourage occupation of the public space by people on foot and therefore reduces the opportunity for face-to-face personal contact and the informal observation of street life (the flaneur experience).

The pedestrian experience is not given equivalence to the motoring experience. This effect was also observable as strangers avoided eye contact with others as they navigated the narrow
pavement, sharp defining curbs and narrow streets. However on those occasions when
directions were sought from strangers people were always polite and helpful. The impact of
face to face contact between people is to reduce social tension and help to create an
impression that other citizens could be your friends rather than unknown strangers. This
impact is not helped however by a compressed streetscape that tends to funnel people along
narrow pavement corridors without a market-cross (interview with Burton 2001) to meet and
exchange social commentary.

It means that people who cannot afford cars and do not want to drive have a sense that their
right to the public space is not being recognized and exacerbates the sense of poverty and
marginalisation that not having access to a car entails. Again, this closes the public space to
people who are not likely to drive – to children, some older people especially.

The reduction in the size of public space results in the upgrading of motor traffic, which
adversely affects the provision for bicycles, due to the narrowness of pavements, the
domination of streets by cars and the absence of cycleways and bicycle-corridors to shopping
centres and cultural precincts and parks, a situation commented upon by interviewees.

The streetscape suffers from a general lack of care in the city centre and the division of
responsibilities between private citizens and local government authorities tends to ensure that
responsibility for the presentation and tidiness of the private and public realm is at odds with
reality. The failure of responsibility was evident in the way some people dispose of cigarette
butts and chewing gum on the pavement and in shopping mall areas. The effect is to imply
wholesale neglect and deprive public spaces of elegance, regardless of any aspect of the built
environment as such.

The opportunity for opening up commercial spaces to the public realm has not been taken up
in Croydon and therefore urban regeneration proposals that include these elements are long
overdue – as Croydon town centre (as suggested by interviewees and government reports)
remains trapped in the 60s-70s. There is a lack of outdoor seating of any significance even in
the basic form of a few outdoor seating arrangements as discussed earlier. This also includes
the absence of an outside eating experience; an option that is also made more challenging by
the very narrow pavements- although not insurmountable as I have seen in my many visits to
Paris and Rome.
There is also a separation between shopfronts, customers and the public or private realm. The shopping centre also fails to provide enough non-commercial areas for pedestrian traffic and adjoining seating that is not charged for as part of commercial eating provision.

The public square with a central architectural element which is a feature of many English towns where markets can flourish and where inhabitants can meet are not part of the present town centre, although there are existing potential sites for this providing a revitalisation strategy can be adopted. There are however future proposals for new squares but they will be part of a proposed commercial development.

Natural elements within the city centre and suburbs are also either badly maintained or non-existent which contributes to the sterility of the present town centre. The effect creates an atmosphere of decay and tension. There are few natural elements such as trees and plants to soften a hard and angular urban landscape especially in the mall precinct and this only adds to the lack of a sense of place.

There are promises that older buildings are gradually being maintained, however they are valued as part of a historical and cultural heritage which also includes the Clocktower and Fairfield Halls venue inspired by the councils Vision2020 plan (Tony Newman, Croydon council leader 2005).

The older, grander buildings, the town hall being an example are presently separated from existing shopping precincts. The impact of this is to create a sense that the society as a whole is unstable and insecure and that the future does not take any of its cues from its historical past; a situation not missed by interviewees.

Overall the present key effect (and intention) of all of this is to populate the city areas that masquerade as the social realm with shoppers and to retain office workers within commercial leisure premises after dark. This is a present failure to civilise the social realm by reducing socio-economic and ethnic marginalization. Instead, residents are only invited to participate in the city centre through shopping or paid leisure pursuits after dark.

One message is that if inhabitants are poor and not participants in the social life of the city they are not a member of this affluent consumer civilisation. The other message is that unless
people can engage in commodity consumption you cannot expect to be cared for with dignity. There is a denial of the reality of social disadvantage. The poorest citizens have limited rights to participate in the public realm because it conveys a message of affluence and luxury, closed to those who cannot afford to spend money on a large scale.

The following narrative is from Jonathan Glancey UK architectural writer who reports on a Borough with big ideas that has a future providing it can manage the time it takes to deal with the present.

The new (proposed) library is a clever building in many ways. Its design represents the friendly face of modern architecture. It both blends in and tussles gently with the older building; its structure is not sheathed in trite Post-Modern fancy dress, so you can see how it goes together, yet it is playful in its detailing. It is elaborate, yet the architects have resisted the temptation to apply decoration: specially commissioned artwork has been incorporated into the structure, including a large weather vane on the top of its copper barrel-vaulted roof.

The interior is planned around a tall, narrow, curving internal street (not the clichéd atrium of the shopping mall or hotel lobby) that gives on to a pavilion-like cafe, a tourist information shop, the library itself and the museum. The street can be looked down into from the five floors of the library, and from the arts centre and town hall on the opposite side. One side of the street is faced with the new building - all glass and steel - the other by the red brick and white stone of the Victorian town hall (1993).

The friendlier face of modern architecture and Croydon needs a central focus – at present there is real centre to Croydon “no sort of market cross – or central focus (market square)” (interview with Burton 2001, December). In this respect promises to enhance “all spaces between buildings, streets, squares, parks, and even private forecourts” (Urban Design Croydon 2005) have not begun to materialise. Evidence of an emerging cafe society (Malyan 2000; 2003) was also not observed in 2008.

4.3 Interview data

The formal interviews which form part of the main inquiry method were conducted between Alec McHarg and urban planners and designers who are involved with the proposed
implementation of the regeneration of the town centre of the London Borough of Croydon. The real names of interviewees have not been used.

The data obtained from interviews and the subsequent analysis was supported by analysis of government-sponsored documents, and includes comments and findings from other research sources including the literature review. Their views, challenges and constraints to the planning implementation process are the central topic of investigation.

### Table of interviewees

<table>
<thead>
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<th>ORGANISATION</th>
<th>POSITION and ROLE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alan Burton</td>
<td>Croydon Borough Council</td>
<td>Chief Planner</td>
<td>Croydon (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Green</td>
<td>Croydon Borough Council (his client)</td>
<td>Lawyer Environmental Practices</td>
<td>Dulwich (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor Long</td>
<td>Croydon Borough Council</td>
<td>Architect and Urban Designer</td>
<td>Croydon (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Smith</td>
<td>Croydon Borough Council</td>
<td>Landscape architect and Urban Designer</td>
<td>Croydon (UK)</td>
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In these semi-structured interviews the interviewees were allowed to influence the direction of the interview as it went along while I maintained a broad control over the basic topics to be covered. In this respect I did not have a specific set of pre-determined questions; although I referred to a prearranged list of topics I wished to cover, instead there is the freedom to create questions, to probe those responses that appear relevant, and generally to try to develop the best set of data in any way practical.


**Interview No: 1 – Tim Smith and Victor Long – 2006 and 2008: Architect; urban designer**

**Question (Alec)** Let’s talk about the various cultures, because you’ve got different cultures that
live in this area. Is there an interface with those cultures to enable them to contribute their ideas about the use of public space?

**Answer (Tim)** There has been a concentration on the Vision2020 in Central Croydon but I wouldn’t say to be fair, that they have been particularly targeted.

**Question (Alec)** So they don’t have membership of committees and so on?

**Answer (Tim)** They are not excluded. The problem is Vision2020, which only deals with the centre of Central Croydon. The problem is that there are very few people who actually live here at the moment, although the number is increasing. I suppose the concentration of consultation was on the business community and transport operators. It did involve conservation areas, advisory panels and community groups but they were particularly focused on a particular area of interest. There are some residential units planned but they don’t play a huge part in the city centre regeneration proposal.

**Victor’s comments on the participation of different cultures and the council’s cultural services department**

**Victor** The cultural services department has developed a cultural strategy in the cultural quarter, which has been around for quite a while now, and it’s interesting to see that not much has actually happened. Probably the only physical project that might have some effect is the Croydon Museum. What was the Croydon Lifetime Gallery which was the 1990s version of a local museum has been rebranded and converted back into Croydon Museum.

The problem was that the Lifetime Gallery was too vague a title. It was important to have something called a museum that people knew was a museum and they would go to it and know what to expect; that could be seen as a retreat into a more conservative way of looking at what culture might be. Then again it might be more realistic. I think the thing that is still missing from all the strategies that I’ve seen, and from the general attitude of the people in the Cultural Services Department, is an understanding of the quality of things that make up the unique Croydon culture; that are the things I think you could build on to develop a culture rather than trying to import things that we think a city needs or that we might import from Central London (interview with Long 2008).

**Answer (Tim)-continued** A lot of time is spent on consultations. Although it’s very easy to consult with people, it’s also very difficult to get a genuine engagement. There are groups of
people in the wider concept; you have the Croydon Society for example including the things
that they have a particular interest in. It’s very difficult to engage people. I am not sure about
the detail of how Cultural Services would engage with the community, although we do have
the beacon status thing for getting close to communities. There is also the whole
neighbourhood partnership system which is meant to be the mechanism for engaging with the
local community.

**Question (Alec)** Does that come through to your design stage? Does that feed through to your
design proposals and so forth?

**Answer (Tim)** I would probably say stop the tape now ...to be honest, it’s something that does
concern us. We do engage with the community. I’ve done some work in the Valley Park area
which was just creating footpaths to connect schools to houses; that sort of thing. I have had
dealings with the Valley Park Residents’ Association and local businesses as well. If you go into
individual projects you do get engagement with people. It’s one of those particular aspects
that we are also developing in the town centre action plan. It’s a metropolitan centre now, but
it is one of the things that we’re really trying to come to grips with.

**CDA Stage 1**

**Topics: Community engagement and consultation with individuals and self-interest groups**

As an urban designer Tim has identified one of the fundamentals of the design and planning
process which is consultation and the ease with which consultation can be achieved. In Tim’s
words “it’s easy to consult people”: Tim has raised the issue of consulting with people and
actually engaging with them. Tim has indicated here that strategic partnerships with the
community do not exist in reality; they do exist however with business and transport
operators. He agrees that on a basic level there is engagement with residents; however the
processes of engagement involve individual organisations and panels of different community
members, local businesses and other strategic partners operating as single units and not part
of an integrated system. The process of consultation with the community is presented as
adversarial and the focus of consultation is on the establishment of different groups with
different agendas in conflict with each other. The question is whether Tim as an urban
designer believes it is his role to go out and door-knock local residents.
In this respect Croydon Council has a consultation strategy which is contained in its Draft Implementation Plan (2005). In this DIP the council states that it is:

Committed to consulting with the community and all other interested parties, including residents and businesses, about the Council’s priorities and performance; to ensure that it is meeting the needs of its customers according to the principles of Best Value.

CDA Stage 2

Tim’s comment is “it is easy to consult with people”; although Tim is saying that the mechanisms for community consultation have been established, what he means here is that it is easy to give the appearance of going through a consultation process, but, as he later makes clear, this consultation is shallow. People are not really listened to and their advice is sought after all the important decisions have already been made.

Although the process of consultation does not necessarily need to focus on understanding the specific cultural needs of the community, in a multicultural society however, it is a factor in the spatial organisation of the built environment (Madanipour 1996). Croydon’s urban designers have expressed their concern with the planning proposal that does not recognise that the city also has to have its own cultural heart and does not have to have cultural icons that are franchised from somewhere else.

The commitment by the council to consult with the community is really about what the council decides are its priorities, in consultation with developers and the business community. This is reflected in how the actual consultation process is conducted, which is via a focus group approach. This involves choosing a selected audience and using questionnaires to prompt a general discussion. In this type of approach the council’s agenda has already been established by what are mainly business interests and in this context the city has to be successful economically before there is a focus on a cultural agenda.

Tim also refers to the “beacon status thing” which is a reference from the Croydon Vision 2020 document. In this document reference is made to the working effectiveness of the tri-partite approach (council, business and community). This puts into the question the validity of such a statement because consultation should be part of a process of engagement which should lead to trying to establish what all parties’ requirements are.
According to Nick Raynsford, the British Minister for London (1997-99):

The business community, the voluntary sector, people who are involved in the community, coming together in order to try and create a better life for all in Croydon. It is that sense of partnership of working together in the common interest that is perhaps the most impressive thing of what you have achieved (CroydonVision2020 document, Nick Raynsford).

The challenge of development pressures is the main thing that’s happening at the moment really (interview with Smith 2006).

In a later part of my interview with Smith (i.e. later than the part quoted above), he argued that “pressure from development interests was driving the planning process”. The implication is twofold. On the one hand this pressure takes priority which leads to an inadequate amount of consultation with the community. On the other hand, it implies that community views are not listened to if they conflict with the agenda worked out between development interests and the Council.

Third City document, Urban Design Croydon (2007) has referred to aspects of urban redevelopment including public transport facilities, new iconic buildings and new retail developments. They write that these are instrumental in making Croydon different and increasing civic pride in the social fabric of the town centre via integrated walk, cycleways and a neighbourhood tram system.

CDA Stage 3

Whilst there appears to be discussion and debate within each departmental level, there also appear to be questions about the links between different levels of decision making in different departments, such as cultural affairs and community groups. One possible reason is that ‘Cultural Services’ are delivered through Environment, Cultural and Sports Services (ECSS) and are managed by the Divisional Director of Cultural Services, who has responsibility for leisure, sports development, active lifestyles, parks and open spaces, arts, museum and libraries. This range of diverse responsibilities makes it challenging to focus on the development of strategies that are more oriented towards the creative and fine arts when trying to balance the needs for parks and open spaces at the same time. This could be the reason why “in the cultural quarter not much has actually happened” (interview with Long 2006).
Focus on an economic agenda is not necessarily integrated with an urban planner’s and designer’s individual view of culture. So the holistic tripartite approach that council refers to in the Croydon Vision2020 document (2001) may be between council, business and community. However, planning is also diffused through a number of other council departments.

This suggests there are not enough personnel specialising in the cultural and historical arena working on the town centre regeneration project. For example Croydon has only one conservation officer for its historical environment, which according to the council is appropriate for the amount of historic environment work that it has (English Heritage and The London Borough of Croydon Council July 2007). For a Borough with a population of over 370,000 people and a history that dates back to 1066, the personnel resources required to develop a historical context for Croydon appear limited. However according to the Regional Commentary on Cultural Services in the London Borough of Croydon:

The Arts Service however has been pro-active in launching audience development programmes for the diverse communities in the Borough and these development programmes have reached a wide range of community groups. However, audiences at Fairfield Hall have not developed. Following the loss of their programming budget from Croydon Council, there is pressure on the Fairfield Hall’s reserves and it appears that the classical orchestral provision may be under threat (July 2007).

As noted in Alsop’s Third City document (2007) there was a series of five workshops that were conducted over an eight week period to establish the tripartite consultation which the Council proclaims. However the community part of these consultations only included groups that were selected from higher socio-economic areas (interview with Long 2008). The challenges of achieving consultation with the community are also underlined by the Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee, which is made up of a Central London Partnership to bring together public and private sector interests in eight local authorities. They comment on issues such as the night-time economy, planning issues and community consultation. In one of the statements issued by this committee they claimed:

Councils report that it is very difficult to reach and involve people from all parts of the community, including business. There is the familiar danger that the people who respond to consultations are not representative (Doocey 2005).
And in answer to the above, it could be suggested:

It can be difficult for people (the focus group) to turn the ideas in their heads and the wishes in their hearts into images that can be seen, assessed and then carried forward from concept to reality (Third City document 2007).

The real driving force behind this approach was about establishing brand awareness, rather than about following the mandate of any consultative committee (Lawson, Tidwell, Rainbird, Loudon and Della Bitta 1996). The mandate from the Council was the most significant input into this process and that was to “re-brand the town” (Third City document 2007, p. 66). In this context, the “ideas and wishes” from the focus group help the council’s consultants to position their decisions about a set of regeneration proposals intended to be for the benefit of corporate clients such as business owners, development investors and the other 4,000 city centre residents. After this process, a new image for Croydon is to be shown to the general public and the other 330,000 or so residents of Croydon in the form of official presentations, complete with a model of the proposed town centre regeneration that presents a late modernist architectural approach.

One may ask does this proposed model of a regenerated built environment represent a narrow collection of architectural styles (Kolb 1992, p.87). Or does it represent the aspirations of a “myriad group of developers and designers, each of whom can, within the framework of the Alsop Vision, bring their individual approach to the table” (Third City document 2007, p.14).

Interview No: 2 – Alan Burton – December 2001: Chief Planner Croydon council

Concentration on town-city development

Question (Alec) In the city centre I notice there is an attempt to have a mix of population with residential being built right in the centre as well as different types of buildings.

Answer (Alan) Only just. Obviously we’ve been trying to encourage residential for a number of years and like most other British cities, the town centres are being re-populated and that may help to redress the issue. We’ve had three or four completed residential developments; the one you can see now is Barratts, a large British house builder.
There is one on the other side of this building by Barclay Homes which is more up-market. I don’t think in Central Croydon there would be any conversions of office blocks, but certainly there have been on the periphery of Croydon. We’re encouraging it; it will be a mixed use ground floor frontage rather than a single use. That’s obviously a serious weakness of our office area. The ground floor is dominated by car park, surface level car parks, with many on podiums. Yes, not throughout the whole area but as a general principle, it is mixed usage with activity on ground floor frontage, particularly on key routes.

**Question (Alec)** So there has been some frustration in trying to get divisions approved, and like in most places, in terms of spending money.

**Answer (Alan)** We’re dependent on the private sector. It’s been tweaked around certain developments that we know have been proposed or are in planning permission stage. A huge retail scheme called Park Place is proposed, including state of the art bus stations with air conditioning, etc. Park Place will be largely retail. Unfortunately it is being held up by the new Mayor of London because of the amount of parking (which is not really excessive by previous standards). The amount of retail space is excessive but they are negotiating on that. The trouble with Croydon is that we are still fighting against this image.

**Interview No: 3 - Paul Green – 2008: Town Planner and environmental lawyer**

**Question (Alec)** Good morning, I’m talking to Paul, and Paul’s going to give me a brief review of what he does and some of his views in the subject area of the regeneration of Croydon. Good morning Paul.

**Answer (Paul)** Hello there Alec. Just an explanation of what I do; I work as a town planning and environmental lawyer for a firm in the City of London. I’m involved in two projects in Croydon South Centre. One relates to a major shopping centre scheme, and the other is the progression of an arena; a twelve thousand feet arena next to East Croydon station. It’s probably worth explaining just a bit about the policy concepts in which this is all taking place. The government policy document PPS 6 (Planning Policy Statement 6) which was preceded by PPG 6. The thrust of those policies is the development of total shopping facilities in the late eighties and early nineties in our centre locations such as Bluewater (Lend Lease 2004), a prime example of a total stand-alone dedicated shopping precinct.
The impact of that was that some of the major town centres were actually suffering, because the convenience of shoppers just is able to get in their car and travel to our centre shopping locations in a pleasant environment, which were easy to get around, meant that people were avoiding the town centres. As a result you were losing the whole feel and vibrancy of town centres and gradually they were going into decline. Certainly that’s one of the big issues which Croydon has been facing; its architecture and a lot of its buildings date from the sixties. There was a kind of post-war boom in Croydon but much of that architecture and building is not really suitable for modern commercial requirements. Also the office space is too dated, so you wouldn’t get major companies wanting to invest in that office space. And as for the shops themselves, what has happened in the retail market is that shops now increasingly require much bigger units than they did even ten years ago, and certainly much bigger than they did twenty or thirty years ago.

Well I think the point is that the council understands that you have got to have the quality of the shops there first of all to get the people coming back to Croydon. At the moment, the big problem in Croydon is that the shops are in the kind of middle market, there’s not much in the way of the upper market shops so the affluent sections of Croydon’s catchment tend to just not touch it with a barge pole. And that just sets the tone really for the whole town centre. Croydon is known as a bit of a Joe Average sort of place. It’s not an aspirational place at all, and that just feeds into the whole civic pride of the town. Whereas if you get a much better mix you get a real range of aspirational shops, and also the sort of middle range and lower range places as well, and then the whole image of the town will transform. Council are very keen to ensure that while that’s the fundamental to it, you need the commercial scheme there to attract people in. People aren’t going to come in there to see a nice public square when they want to do some shopping.

CDA Stage 1

Topics: Development in the City centre, residential complexes, and the town square as elements of the public realm and as a function of town centre regeneration proposals

Alan, Tim, Victor and Paul have identified a number of functional and social aspects of the town planning debate. These are based upon traditional town planning strategies which involve separate precincts for different urban functions; for example, a commercial-only zone. All zoning restraints are negotiable since “Borough ego” (Interview with Long 2006) is at play here. Croydon has to compete with other Borough centres to have the best “up-market shops”
(interview with Green 2006). Interviews with stakeholders point to a concentration of construction activity that will only occur in the town centre and adjacent to it; for example Croydon West and East master plans (Perry 2010; 2011). Alan Burton also recognises the council’s dependency “on private sectors being tweaked around certain developments” and comments on the “residential thing” as not really happening in the town centre of Croydon.

Alan Burton also draws our attention to the question of retail outlets in the city centre when he says “the amount of retail space is excessive” (December 2001). Alan’s comments below on the refurbishment of city centre office blocks and city centre residential building differ fundamentally from those made by Councillor Hugh Malyan (Croydon Vision2020 document 2006)

“I don’t think in Central Croydon there would be any conversions of office blocks” (interview with Burton December 2001) is contrary to Councillor Hugh Malyan’s written text, which notes plans for Recycling old office blocks for new uses and upgrading the Fairfield entertainment complex (Fairfield Halls Concert Hall), (Croydon Vision2020 2006).

CDA Stage 2
The differing views voiced by personnel either within the same council organisation or closely associated with it are not based upon a misinterpretation of planning policies, but come from the different views of urban designers over some aspects of what is proposed in Croydon’s town centre regeneration objectives. Government-sponsored documents analysed following this section on interviews played its part in presenting a particular aspect of the proposed regeneration of Croydon town centre. What has been promised in the documents includes a sustainable use of resources and the creation of places that are distinctive and contribute to a vibrant town centre.

For example, Croydon’s Urban Design brochure “What is Urban Design” comments on the future of Croydon’s central area: It states that “the central area of Croydon will be an area where people can relax, socialise and be part of the wider society.” The opportunity to promenade and enjoy mixed streetscape and leisure activities in the early stages of regeneration may not be there because the focus will be on expanding retail facilities rather than arts and cultural assets.
There is a centralisation of ownership of the public and private realm in the hands of developers and business organisations, or at least a strong influence from them about the use of the public domain (interview with Smith 2006). The residential element in Croydon’s city centre Renaissance development will consist of fewer apartments proposed compared to similar London Boroughs such as Lambeth: where residential apartments are one of the major elements of the built environment because of the vibrant social context that permanent residents bring to the town centre. It is important to note that Croydon’s economic performance is compared to a number of benchmark geographies that include the London Boroughs of Lewisham, Bromley, Lambeth, Southwark, along with London as a whole and Great Britain (Croydon Economic Development Strategy report 2008).

According to Cecile Balgos:

Malls are no longer just single-roofed groupings of purveyors of an assortment of goods. In many towns and cities in the United States and Canada, (and Australia) they have become the "new downtowns," where not only commercial activities take place, but social and sometimes political ones as well (Balgos 2002).

The central role of urban planners and designers is a story of compromise, firstly to act on behalf of their client and secondly to interpret a range of government policies in the context of their client’s urban planning and design objectives. In terms of working for the best interest of their client, they also need to be mindful of working in close collaboration with their client’s strategic partners such as developers and major retail businesses. Paul’s comments on the town square in this respect confirms the role of the public realm “people aren’t going to come in there to see a nice public square when they want to do some shopping”.

This comment has a similar theme to the Space Syntax report (2006) which suggests that large public places will be used for the efficient movement of people between retail, leisure and entertainment centres as well as for public transport corridors between these consumption-based facilities. Therefore council planners and designers are expected to mediate their role as a culturally creative visionary and their role as a ‘rubber-stamp’ for the commercial aspirations of developers and their architects.

**CDA Stage 3**
City planners have to work within four broad themes consisting of the business base, labour supply, the office, retail and property market and social inclusion and quality of life of its inhabitants in order to achieve the desired socio-economic position of a revitalised town centre (Croydon Economic Development Strategy report 2008). These themes lead to conflicting loyalties in managing them to achieve the role of the city as economically, socially and culturally sustainable. It has to fulfil its primary role as a centre of consumption – recognising that as firms become more mobile it has to be attractive to business firms (Glaeser, Kolo and Saiz 2001). Town centres have to also be attractive to new short, medium and long term inhabitants in terms of the quality and variety of the built environment - a situation recognised in part as far as retail facilities and efficient transport options are concerned as my interview with Green (2006) confirms.

In the short term (till 2011-2015) perhaps it is not possible to achieve a balanced social and cultural perspective as well an economic one. The reality, in a commercial and efficient transport sense, is Croydon has to compete with redeveloped London precincts such as Canary Wharf (visited in 2001; 2004; 2006 and 2008) and dedicated out-of-town retail precincts such as Bluewater (visited in 2006 and 2008) to be economically viable (Glaeser, Kolo and Saiz 2001). This reality has been mentioned by Tallon (2010 pp.173- 175): Tallon argues that the previous restructuring of (UK) cities with (60s and 70s) modernist urban landscapes combined with significant spatial fragmentation between functions has signalled that development has been an important feature of urban change in the UK in the present period.

Will Alsop (2007) is aware of the need for Croydon to seize the renewal opportunity (by endorsing his architectural vision) to regain its position as a premier shopping location:

(Sic) In the 80s and 90s Croydon lost out to Canary Wharf. Now it’s time has come again... (Alsop, Third City document 2007, p68).

Fortunately some buildings with a cultural context are being refurbished, the old Grant Brothers building being one of them, although modernist buildings of the 1960s -70s may not be retained according to (Burton interviewed in 2001).

Alcohol areas: Age divisions being reinforced

Alan Burton Chief Planner/Urban Design, December 2001
Question (Alec)
One of the things that came out the last time (during my visits in the 90s) was that there used to be about five pubs in Croydon and now there are 30 to 40. Is there is some plan to try and change this, because Croydon currently tends to cater for 18-25 year olds? That’s not necessarily good for a social mix. That’s something that’s been identified by the council and by the people for whom you work. How is that going in terms of getting more theatregoers and a more varied mix of entertainment in Croydon?

Answer (Alan) Going back about eight years there were probably not more than five public houses or bars in Central Croydon; now there are 30 or 40. They have huge night-time capacities; the new Multiplex which is nearing completion is I think up to 20,000. There are more of these Brannigan’s (pub) to add to your situation. I must confess I haven’t been here on a Friday or Saturday night. Certainly our members are very concerned. It’s a very narrow age range starting before 18, say 16, to about 25, something in that order. Effectively people in that age range occupy the whole of South London. It can be quite intimidating. It is happening throughout all British cities over the last decade. There is a far more of a night-time economy.

Question (Alec) So how would you envisage trying to resolve that?
Answer (Alan) Yes, it is quite down to the uses and probably you will find now that because it has got to a certain level that the volume of facts of nature will say put more up market restaurants and theatres to get a more balanced age range and socio-economic profile: probably ending up restricting the numbers of bars and restaurants, particularly those serving alcohol. There is a member panel set up to address this issue. There are various national conferences going on, as these problems are not unique to Croydon. Croydon is one of extremes if you like.

Questions on pubs, the new night-time culture and the consumption of alcohol were also directed to Paul Green (2006) and Tim Smith (2006) and featured in the interviews below
Question (Alec) So it’s bringing a little bit more of a mixed element to it? Because the one thing I hear people complain about is there are too many pubs.

Answer (Paul) In Croydon. Yes that’s right. It’s too alcohol-based; the evening economy there. The idea is this would bring a real buzz, so it’s completely unique to south London.
Question (Alec)
What is the situation with regard to trying to encourage a central Croydon theatre and fine-
arts patronage?

Answer (Tim) In the short term, you could probably say not much. At the moment the pubs
have been able to move in and take advantage of buildings that were originally built for lots of
other uses. There is less of a desire to locate pubs within the town centre so much, and in such
classic buildings with banks and other amenities turning virtually into pubs. The cultural offer
in terms of the warehouse and the Gateway site has potential; there have also been talks
about the Fairfield development as well and also the pumping station in Surrey Street.

CDA Stage 1
Tim and Victor both show a concern here with the opportunity for a cultural mix being lost to
the pub-scene with the Gateway site as a potential cultural precinct now under a cloud, as an
aspect of government’s compulsory purchase policies. There is also the question of zoning:
the zoning aspects of urban design are part of formal urban renewal proposals with the
question of adopting either a single zone or multi-zoning perspective. For example, a site could
be zoned for commercial usage only and this would restrict the area to those uses that were
considered as commercial-only activities. The question of zoning also applies to cultural and
social uses that have been redeveloped under the guise of leisure and entertainment venues
(Town Centre Regeneration document 2004).

CDA Stage 2
All these town planners can really do is to verbally express their concern over the pub scene
issue. Not much has been done about these concerns however according to Tim. Older
buildings such as banks which could have been refurbished for use as cultural and arts facilities
have become utilised as pubs, theme bars and night clubs. This is particularly disturbing since
they have their hands full with pressures from developers who do not want to diminish the
role of commercial precincts as business-oriented areas.

Yet their role as planners is to consider urban design and planning for future change that
includes mixed-usage, not just for more business environments. As demonstrated in interviews
with Tim and Victor (2006; 2008) there is a degree of frustration in this regard because after
all, the Cultural Services Department should be working closely with Tim and Victor to integrate social-cultural contexts into the town centre renaissance vision.

This is demonstrated regarding leisure, fitness and entertainment venues. The previous Grant Bros building now features as a family entertainment complex (Town Centre Regeneration document 2004). They are promoted as cultural precincts, but there is usually an entrance fee charged for privately owned venues.

They may fall within the visionary statements contained in Croydon regeneration documents that call for a “quirky and varied environment” “with the realisation of Croydon’s wish to become a university town” (Third City document 2007 p56).

**CDA Stage 3**

The vision for Croydon’s town centre is based on the success of architectural changes to the built environment with consumption-based activities, with flow-on benefits for the social and cultural lives for Borough residents, especially defining the role that the night-time economy has on social connectedness. How an extended night-time economy as featured in the image of the town centre benefits the medium to long term re-building of the town centre is not certain.

In the short term it is clear that Alan, Tim, Victor and Paul are very well aware of the way in which the night-time economy and alcohol consumption have become central functions of city districts in the UK (Holloway, Jayne, Knell and Valentine 2007, p. 8). They are also aware of the way in which this privileges one social group (under 25s) and tends to exclude other users of the inner urban area at night. Yet at the same time they do not appear to think it is possible for town planners and designers to do anything to reverse or mitigate this tendency (which is not helped by the Licensing Act 2003 which simplified the procedures for the sale of alcohol), although extended alcohol trading hours were also a feature of the previous licensing arrangement.

These types of business-oriented aspirations are harnessed to create an artificial sense of self, made even easier by the consumption of alcohol as well as by the use of space for these kinds of ‘contemporary’ purposes. The idea that the CBD presents itself as a picture of a “people-friendly town that is buzzing with life for most of the day and night” (Malyan 2003) is
questionable given the increase in pubs from five to forty in a few years: Which has come at the expense of the use of some of Croydon’s heritage assets such as old bank buildings as nightclubs and bars.

2-Development pressure

Question (Alec) What are the development challenges that you have to face as an urban designer who is also an architect?

Answer (Tim) The challenge of development pressures is the main thing that’s happening at the moment really. There’s a lot of development pressure in the area. Going back a little bit, you said quite rightly that it’s kind of been termed the “British edge city”. It also had this sort of connotation that half of them are bureaucrats, and the periphery of London is where it had its hey-day. Culturally, it has quite a lot to offer in terms of cultural facilities when you look at it. But I think the common perception of Croydon is that a lot of people in London regard it as a place without culture. So from an urban design perspective there’s huge potential with transportation infrastructure changes. Particularly with changes like that new London Line and changes that have already happened, such as the tram link (which may extend as well). There are also development pressures particularly with regards to East Croydon. We’re unique within South London because Croydon has a cluster of tall buildings which has led to this idea of “city-ness” within suburbia. This has allowed more opportunity for higher density, particularly for residential developments within the town centre. Really, at the moment we’re trying to get to grips with all of the issues thereabouts and managing change. Also, as urban designers we are looking at the wider cultural aspects rather than just having a monoculture of either offices or residential or retail within the area.

CDA Stage 1

Pressure from developers is presented positively in government-related documents on Croydon’s city-centre regeneration programme. It is associated with the creation of an ambitious programme of regeneration. Contrary to this view, Tim has identified a number of scenarios from his position as an urban designer that present huge design and planning challenges for the London Borough of Croydon. The major overall issue facing the Borough of Croydon is the element of change and how change influences the local cultural and social framework (identity) – hence the desire to be more than an Edge City. The element of change is not only related to development pressure in the area, but also has a large impact upon the
Borough of Croydon’s planning and design strategies. Developmental strategies which are focused on commercial and transportation infrastructure (including a transport terminal interchange) will further challenge the social and cultural identity of Croydon.

CDA Stage 2

Tim is concerned with the developmental pressures that are being applied to his council in Croydon. The central precincts of Croydon are especially vulnerable because, firstly, some of these areas are owned by corporations, and secondly, a number of these sites are in partnership with Croydon Council, which has actively supported proposals prepared by its development partner, Arrowcroft, to develop a mixed use scheme on a 12.36 acre site adjacent to East Croydon railway station, anchored by a state-of-the-art 12,500 seat arena.

A number of Croydon’s central precincts will also have residential apartments, although the exact number is considerably less than a similar London suburb of Lambeth (Powell 2004). In the context of mixed urban usage, his role as an urban designer is compromised because of his personal view that Croydon needs to re-connect with its cultural identity. In this regard Tim sees a return to Croydon’s past cultural identity as an important element in the sustainability debate, because it links Croydon to its own historical context, thus preserving it for future generations to enjoy, which is one of the principles of sustainability and the urban renaissance approach (Towns and Cities Partners in Urban Renaissance Project 2001).

At present, modern buildings in Croydon’s town centre are primarily of the 1960s -70s modernist styles. They are functionally inefficient in terms of energy usage. Although refurbishment programmes where there are wide-ranging strategic partnerships between the private and public sectors are a possibility, this seems unlikely according to Burton (interviewed in 2001).

Will Alsop the architect responsible for Croydon council’s Third City proposal does refer to the refurbishment of existing commercial buildings as the following statement confirms:

Alongside new buildings, there are existing commercial structures in Croydon which have the capacity for refurbishment; the re-skinning of some buildings has the potential to enhance the town’s image...and where the possible conversion and refurbishment of existing redundant office
buildings that are effectively dormant and non-productive at present (Third City document 2007, p.66; 68).

The residents of Croydon and visitors will become accustomed to the economic benefits that the new retail outlets provide. But some inhabitants may not see underlying social problems that extend from it, such as a de-facto inclusion zone geared for the 16-25 age group night-time culture which will become an exclusion zone for residents and visitors outside these age groups. The promise of benefits from a re-developed city centre will not be realised for some social groups, reducing the general public’s long-term gains in social inclusion for a cross-section of its citizens.

CDA Stage 3
There are two self-interest groups, as well as two equal and yet opposite ideals that emanate from the CBD’s urban design opportunities. The first self-interest group is that of Croydon council and the other that of the developer. Both have ideals that encompass urban renewal and both are concerned with a sustainable perspective such as how best to make older buildings more energy efficient and comfortable; but developers are focussed on redevelopment solutions.

The process of development has a negative association however, reflected in the word “monoculture”. Tim stresses the need to include cultural aspects in an overall design and to break down a monoculture which is just shopping, just offices or just residential. By implication he does not believe that a proper mix should exclude these three elements and a fourth element, the cultural element, where public access cultural entertainment venues are not passive nor are they expensive.

At times it may appear impossible to achieve a balance between the relentless developmental approaches of building larger and larger centralized shopping and commercial entities and the refurbishment of existing Borough assets. With the recent $500m purchase of the Whitgift Shopping Centre by Howard Holdings, the culture of shopping as a focus of regeneration in Croydon’s city centre is likely to see this continue.

Urban designers are increasingly under pressure to deviate from the ideals of the democratic use of public space as an area dedicated to the expression of culture and as a community
meeting place to the politics of space as an economic resource (Harvey cited in Low and Smith 2006).

This produces urban environments that only fit the concept of the city as a place that encourages the maximisation of consumption (Kilmartin 1985; Kolb 1992). This concept is also a response to individual pressures (Battle and McCarthy 1996) from Croydon city-centre landowners and developers.

This is good evidence that Tim would like to include cultural as a fourth aspect that should be added to a mixed use zone with the other three as well.

**Question (Alec)** Is one of your objectives that when people come to the theatre, they also could stay overnight or they could go to a restaurant or they could do the shopping, so there is not just the one activity involved? It would appear a lot of city centres fail because they’ve got a single functional aspect that is an aspect of zoning. Visitors might visit Croydon for its theatre and yet do not use the other facilities for reasons that have been already discussed, such as the new night-time culture for younger groups.

**Answer (Tim)** You get that impression of the way that central Croydon is used. It gets used by everyone for things like shopping. But with things like the Fairfield Halls, (concert hall) there will be people from south of the Borough driving up to Fairfield Halls and going to a symphony concert, and then probably exiting very rapidly from the town centre area.

**Answer (Victor)** This thing about drawing out the assets the town centre already has. Actually the way it operates is quite amazing. Our planning system should be able to draw out those and make the most of them. Instead, we still unfortunately have a planning system that tries to zone separate things.

**CDA Stage 1**
Victor’s comments (for example he used “amazing” which could also mean it is surprising), argues there is a planning system in existence where there is a separation of activities rather than a planning system that has a range of different assets located in a single area. Urban planning is representative of different approaches to development control of the town assets
and Victor’s comments are partly reflective of these types of single zoning controls that presently exist.

These plans include briefing plans and specific development proposals. For example, The Socio-Economic Infrastructure Report, relevant plans policies such as The London Plan, and The London Mayor Plan. Whatever regeneration idea is proposed has to satisfy a certain rationale for planning or indeed a combination of planning ideologies, one of which is to expand on the potential of the London Borough of Croydon as an economic-opportunity area that encourages mixed zones inclusive of social and cultural activities.

**CDA Stage 2**

The city-centre renaissance proposal by Croydon Council provides a selection of retail outlets and a pre-packaged form of entertainment for people to create their own cultural experiences (Florida 2002). Buildings designed to impose a type of neutrality (Kolb 1992) upon the space are aptly referred to as container architecture (Glancey 1998; Habermas cited in Kolb 1992, p.147), architecture without its own identity which is contrary to a mixed organic urban spatial identity. Rossi argued in L’architettura della città (1982; 1966, p. 6) “that the city was an organic work of art, the rhythms, history and context of which must be respected in any new architectural endeavour”. This ideal receives one of its most well-known expressions in the early history of renaissance Italy, which saw an interest in culture, the arts and the market place.

The proposal to include large amounts of greenspace areas integrated with city buildings to divert people’s attention from the intensity of shopping activities does however need the inclusion of native flora and fauna in order to soften a hard and angular urban landscape. The principles of zoning that are insensitive to balancing aspects of ecology are also insensitive to fine-arts and cultural life. They accompany the absence of areas where significant street markets can flourish, contributing to the sterility of the town centre. Corporate and business owners only want to invest in city greenspace and other not-for-profit neutral zones if they can be used for the concentration of consumption-based activities; whereas what is going on outside of the city centre is another matter.
CDA Stage 3

The idea of zoning rationalises a compartmentalisation of urban functions, which is actually generated by commercial pressures and does nothing to promote a restful and participatory urban environment for residents, shoppers and pedestrians. Developers and business owners want people to concentrate on shopping activities. The council’s demands for a more culturally aligned town centre may be justified, but how could it establish the nexus between development proposals and contributions from developers?

Certainly, the Third City proposal document (2007) promises “tree-lined walks and landscaped streets”. However the problem with this proposal is that these so-called existing outer-suburb tree-lined streets barely have enough footpath space for pedestrians and trees (photo: C42) and therefore trees are just a footpath ornament that further compresses the opportunity for informal face to face contacts unless they are imposed upon people. Some work has been done however on connecting inhabitants with Borough facilities, as the following comments from Smith indicate “I’ve done some work in the Valley Park area which was just creating footpaths to connect schools to houses; that sort of thing” (2006).

3-How current transport arrangements divide the city, and how the Tramlink light-rail system links communities

Question (Tim) Have you ever tried to drive around Croydon?

Answer (Alec) No I haven’t.

Answer (Tim) It’s something we’re probably not meant to talk about as urban designers these days, but driving, particularly if you don’t know the place that well, is maddening.

Question (Alec) If you miss your turn you’re really stuffed aren’t you?

Answer (Victor) For a place that’s been designed around vehicles, it’s much harder to find your way around in a car than it is on foot. It doesn’t make any sense at all. There doesn’t appear to be any logic at all to it. It’s as if there’s been an attempt to do a circle around the town centre in the 1960s, when the ring road was built. Wesley Road is the beginnings of the ring road and it goes over a fly-over up at Roman Way. But then there’s a connection that was never
completed at the top. Because of that, there’s disorientation about where you are in the town centre as it drifts off into the distance.

CDA Stage 1
Victor is aware of Croydon’s original and last attempt to build transport infrastructure which was started in the 1960s and partly completed in the early 1970s. This has resulted in an incomplete road system where road traffic is not distributed onto major inter-city roads or the town bypass system. The traffic enters into the town centre and appears to get lost in a maze of one way and dead-end streets that do not really go anywhere. In this respect Victor states:

There’s disorientation about where you are in the town centre (2006).

And Tim has a similar view:

It’s something we’re probably not meant to talk about as urban designers these days but driving, particularly if you don’t know the place that well, is maddening.

Tim has also linked spatial city networks (road/rail infrastructure barriers such as earthworks) as one cause of damage to community social cohesion by cutting neighbourhoods in half. Tim refers to rail systems that cut through neighbourhoods effectively isolating one part of a street and neighbourhood from another.

Tim’s comments:

Part of the thing about the spatial network is that there’s quite a lot of severance that’s being caused by the railways arriving in Croydon, which has sliced great big chunks out of what was more nested local fabric (2006).

Tim and Victor are concerned about how the town’s design isolates where there does not appear to be any logic at all to it, which is reflected in a sense of personal disorientation about where one is in the town centre. The sensitive subject of urban transport systems and car use is something that urban designers are “probably not meant to talk about”.

CDA Stage 2
Victor may be expressing the view that future attempts at addressing an incomplete 1960s road transport solution will be just as dismal, because the current road system is not
coordinated with other road systems nor is it integrated with other public transport systems, although there are plans to do so. Designers have to address the topic of integration of different transport options which has been planned for, and where there is evidence of one the most efficient transport system in the UK – especially the bus system (Transport for all of London; Hillier 2002).

The motor car could be viewed as an essential mode of transport for families and individuals, to undertake shopping and for visits to pubs, clubs and other leisure activities. In a reorientation of transport infrastructure for Croydon, the car’s purpose is to connect people to retail, entertainment and commercial precincts via town centre car parks.

CDA Stage 3
Underfunded public transport systems are a feature of transport planning in many countries including the UK according to Courtenay (2007). Third City document does not detail the integration of Croydon’s incomplete 1960s traffic system (such as Wesley Road). Will Alsop’s (2007) proposal to reduce Wesley Road from four lanes to two lanes, does not include a discussion about coping with through traffic trying to bypass Croydon.

Third City document uses a variety of discursive devices to create a vivid impression of consensus and corroboration between “stakeholders” in a “tripartite” relationship between the council, business and the community. This general statement really relates to social exclusion, as people without effective public transport connections will be disconnected from other communities. Fortunately the Tramlink light-rail system, according to analysis of the views of interviewees, adds value to social capital because it helps to connect residents at the neighbourhood level, therefore promoting social connectedness and social cohesion.

Discussions on the Tramlink System

Question (Alec) Where does the Tramlink System travel to?

Victor The whole project was instigated from Croydon and it extended into Bromley and other Boroughs. It was originally called Croydon Tram Link or something.

Answer (Tim) I was going to say the bigger piece of social integration that the Tramlink system has achieved is really getting people from the New Addington area into the town centre.
**Question (Alec)** I was there in 2001. New Addington has always been stuck out there somewhere and there have always been social problems because people were effectively isolated because of inadequate infrastructure. The absence of access is very difficult to evaluate in terms of resulting crime and unemployment, but as you say it’s starting to link communities together. So what are some of the ideas about an integrated tram system between competing London suburbs? For example Bromley and Sutton are effectively working against each other’s community by not having a Tramlink system that links to their town centre.

**Answer (Tim)** It skirts the two adjoining Boroughs. You’ve got Sutton town centre which is actually quite close. It’s probably within four miles. Bromley town centre as well is probably a similar distance the other side of Croydon. As the project evolved there was quite a traditional feeling that each centre would be competing with the other. There was resistance to them going directly into the town centres, a “parasitic organism” if you will. You’ve got two hubs which are plugged in to each other. It’s like Oxford Street and Covent Garden are connected by public transport. What you get in cities shouldn’t necessarily be a problem if you’ve got those hubs that are connected. Traditionally you’re joining Boroughs; look at Croydon; there are lots of concerns about where the tram goes.

**Answer (Victor)** It’s interesting; it doesn’t go from the town centre. It goes from Beckenham junction on the edge of the town centre but not part of it. So it doesn’t really go into the centre. It’s more about a Borough’s ego than it has to do with an integrated public transport system.

**Question (Alec)** That’s quite a long way isn’t it?

**Answer (Victor)** Yes, it stretches east-west across South London and obviously Croydon is in the middle of a loop so it is effectively the centre of South London.

**CDA Stage 1**

Tim recognises the value of the Tramlink network as an important piece of infrastructure for the community. He links the transport system to social integration and sees it as a contribution to social capital. He identifies the need to include the New Addington area as a
part of Croydon and this need is finally being met by an upgrade of public transport based upon trams or light rail (Peter Courtenay, The Trams.co.uk 2007). There are, however, concerns about the route taken by the Tramlink system and the suburbs that it connects to.

Victor’s narrative focuses on what the tram means to Croydon. His comment “A loop in the middle of where Croydon is, so it really works hard to make Croydon the centre of Croydon” is a definitive statement about the importance of the tramway system as an important piece of public transportation that also adds value to social cohesion and therefore social capital. Victor’s second paragraph response further confirms the important role of the tramway system to Croydon’s focus as the centre of South London. Victor has hinted that this is a role that other suburban centres would like to achieve.

**CDA Stage 2**

Tim might be expressing the view that a number of strategies in dealing with New Addington as an area of deprived need (and identified as such by the Economic Community) have been largely unsuccessful. Here we have a piece of urbanised public infrastructure that has contributed to social capital almost by accident as it helps to link people together as a travelling group without the use of cars.

The tram system has benefited the residents of New Addington as well as those of Wimbledon. Tim has “lots of concerns about where the tram goes”, and these are discussed in this analysis. The tram does not go to a large central town square to be utilised as a meeting place including pocket parks, outside dining, produce markets and abundant streetscape furniture, however there are CBD precincts where these features could be included.

The early days of the Tramlink system are a positive beginning for inter-neighbourhood transportation, but there are still concerns about the routing.

Tim and Victor comment on how the tram system does not necessarily join communities together because the transport is selective in which areas it serves. Tramlink still does not go into the heart of any other Borough centres such as Beckenham and Bromley. For example, the tram does not go through the centre of the high street of Beckenham and Bromley but skirts Beckenham’s lower fringes, as I found out on many recent trips to Beckenham and Bromley, (2001; 2006 and 2008).
Lack of consistent progress in creating effective transportation systems can be compromised by localised power centres and competing local Borough councils. It really does not matter which council sets up the relationship (as Victor mentions), it is about working together to achieve an integrated public transport system that services the overall community. Tim’s views on the apparent disinterest of some council’s working together could be summed-up by the short phrase: “parasitic organism”. In other words, there are parasites posing as urban policy makers who are not interested in an integrated public transport system. This lack of integration is demonstrated for Bromley and Beckenham town centre residents and visitors by the lack of a public transport connection to the heavy rail network. In this situation it would be easier for passengers to change platforms rather than navigate from a bus to the rail system.

It is also interesting that the two Borough centres where the tram does not enter (Beckenham Central and Bromley) are quite affluent suburbs. Does that suggest that Borough policy makers do not want trams to be associated with Bromley? This is an interesting aspect of community acceptance. For example, when Manchester's Metrolink was opened in 1992 ‘tram’ was considered to be a dirty word, and the system was referred to as Light Rail (Peter Courtenay; The Trams.co.uk 2007).

**CDA Stage 3**

The idea of extending the Tramlink public transport system to the New Addington housing estate may not have been a direct attempt by government agencies at contributing to social capital, but that is exactly what it will achieve because trams provide easier public access and opportunities for spontaneous connections between people.

In this respect New Addington is linked to Beckenham and Bromley and the area has gone from being on the outer to being in the geographic middle of a transport system. The New Addington Tramlink system was a consequence of the decision to create a modern tramway network. This reflected the failure of London’s transport infrastructure adequately to serve this locality within the wider metropolitan area of the Borough of Croydon (Peter Courtenay, The Trams.co.uk 2007).

The successful establishment of the Tramlink system and expansion (to Northern Croydon districts) can also be seen as a vital piece of public transport infrastructure that has enabled New Addington shoppers to have greater access to central Croydon’s retail precincts as well as
social connections with other neighbourhood precincts - which are some of the ideas around the regeneration of Croydon town centre.

There are conflicting ideologies over heavy and light rail systems which should see the inclusion of both systems in the strategy of an integrated public transport system in Croydon. The following is a brief review of differing ideologies that may impact on the expansion of light rail systems:

According to Peter Courtenay, trams provide a more convenient transport service than heavy rail, which is segregated from, rather than part of the urban built environment (TheTrams.co.uk 2007).

The debate should not be between the attributes of one rail system over another. Rather it should be about incorporating the best of both systems. There is a distinction however between light rail or tram systems that extend past their particular function as different forms of public transport. According to John Brotchie in his book “Cities of the 21st Century”:

The transition to an information society involves an increasing coordination of communications and transport at regional and global levels, and their closer integration with land use activities. An element of this change is a growing interest in fast inter-city rail as a part of transport links and modes – road, rail and air (Brotchie 1991, pp. 25-27).

In some respects there is a conflict of interest between the implementation of light rail and heavy rail transport systems, and in some ways they represent competing philosophies. Heavy rail-based systems are centred on the relationship between time and economics “much political, bureaucratic, and academic prestige is still wedded to the notion that speed trumps all for a successful transit system” (Lewis 2009). Light-rail systems however, have a strong social and economic context and are more about local rather than regional issues (Buchanan 2006).

4-Cultural and historical identity

Question (Alec) What about Croydon’s cultural and historical background? Are these elements being incorporated in the city centre renewal?
Answer (Tim) Looking at the long view, what interests me about Croydon is that it was a big place historically. It’s not quite a city state but you have things like the Wicker Foundation and its association with the Archbishop of Canterbury, as well as a very strong local identity that is now being subsumed into London. One of the aspects of a spatial network is that there’s quite a lot of severance that’s being caused by the railways arriving in Croydon. The railways have sliced great big chunks out of what was a more nested local fabric. So you have this thing where we’re more plugged into the wider city. There are some distortions that have happened on the local level. Not necessarily connected to the point, is that there is still a very strong sense of Croydon-ness, in cultural terms.

Answer (Victor) Which is the interesting thing; earlier there was the idea of Croydon being perceived as a place without culture, when there is actually a lot of culture here. People who are from Croydon make the point that it is not as if they were expressing any enjoyment about the place while they are here. But you do find that in a different context they will sing the praises and defend the place in a way that it is more similar to the manner that people defend their towns and cities. I think that’s something we are going to have to address. I don’t think it is ingrained in what we have been trying to do. It might be one of the reasons why Croydon is not progressing.

Answer (Tim) Like trying to steal things from other places?

Answer (Victor) You read the strategy and it’s always concerned with trying to make Croydon similar to Covent Garden or similar localities. Croydon College is an important one.

Answer (Tim) You’ve got masses of historical background in the Croydon area...

Answer (Victor) Especially the art school which still is an open art school; which meant that in the 1960s and 1970s it attracted and developed all kinds of interesting people. A lot of it developed in Croydon, and even now the space outside the college is used for skateboarding. It is recognised worldwide as being one of the best underground skate places. It is at Croydon College and yet there’s no attention to that in terms of a recognised cultural strategy. If anything it’s regarded as one of the things we should be trying to erase.
**CDA Stage 1**

The art college is an expression of cultural identity; an identity that was developed initially in the 60s. As a student at Croydon technical college I participated in the opportunity to meet students from the arts facility in the cafeteria and to share in their world view was an insight not to be missed, in my opinion as an engineering student.

As an architect and urban designer Victor comments on the inherent element of the development of the art college as attractive to people who found cultural merit in Croydon’s working class culture.

Victor’s comments on the Cultural Services department and the subject of zoning are in the context of the separation of city functions into different precincts rather than using mixed zones. Victor also comments on how out of touch the Cultural Services Department seems. Perhaps cultural activity is suffering from the concept of the single zoning of a “cultural quarter” (2006).

And Tim’s view that Croydon has considerable historical background is supported by Victor’s comments including recent historical contexts of the 60s and earlier historical associations such as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Wicker Foundation. A very strong local identity is now being subsumed into London, according to Tim.

**CDA Stage 2**

Victor comments on the art school, the skateboard ramp and the 60s and 70s attitude towards ‘art’ which is different from todays. In this respect when Victor expresses the view that Croydon Art College in the 1960s and 1970s attracted and developed all kinds of interesting people he was saying that they were quirky and avant garde artistic people who found merit in Croydon’s working class culture.

Victor also comments on how out of touch the Cultural Services Department is, especially in terms of culture suffering from the concept of zoning, with the Cultural Services Department promoting a “cultural quarter” (2006).

There is a frustration here. Victor is suggesting that Council personnel who are involved in the design process are not being listened to. Well perhaps they are being listened to, but in reality
their ideas and concepts are not being acted upon. Cultural developments from Croydon’s past may be taken into consideration, but with no plans to fully integrate them into Croydon’s Vision2020.

Tim further engages with Croydon’s historical context which he associates with “Croydon-ness” (2006). Tim expresses the view that a cultural context has to have an historical element. Tim has also linked existing city transportation networks with disruption to a sense of neighbourhood. This has been sacrificed in exchange for a global culture with look-alike centralised shopping, leisure and entertainment precincts, and where language is used in such a way that are they appear as presentations of contemporary social life.

Victor expresses the view that Croydon has been presented as place without a culture, and it is only the residents of Croydon that see it as more than just another shopping centre, competing with other centres for customers. Victor shows his concern with this situation. Victor and Tim have again demonstrated their commitment to highlighting and understanding Croydon’s specific cultural uniqueness. This uniqueness is under pressure from developers who prefer to pull things down and construct new buildings.

**CDA Stage 3**

The development of cultural precincts in Croydon’s town centre is based on Government authorities encouraging culture in Croydon if it is modeled on areas like Covent Garden. These cultural precincts are associated with the traditional high culture of Ballet, Opera, Museums and Art Galleries that may have a limited appeal to (Croydon) residents, according to Tallon (2010).

However, museums become more interesting as meeting places when functioning within a multipurpose complex that includes a library and a pavilion-like café with the arts centre and the town hall on the opposite side of the street, according to Jonathan Glancey, speaking on Croydon’s town centre proposed future development strategy (1993).

Croydon has a different kind of cultural expression which has been fostered by the Croydon Art College over decades. The College in the sixties and seventies attracted a group of artists who believed that local Croydon popular culture should be promoted and developed.
artistically. This College is still pursuing this vision of culture which authorities in Croydon should be promoting.

An example of this local culture is the skateboard ramp located underneath the College which has become world famous. They believe that the skateboard ramp, and similar local expressions of culture, should be eradicated rather than blending newer and older cultures. Instead of maintaining and developing the local definitions of culture and art developed by institutions like the Croydon Art College, the regeneration is aimed at people with money to spend rather than fostering the joy of participation in artistic creativity in whatever form.

The Italian model of a city: The idea of ‘cityness’
The cultural ideals linking Croydon with the Italian and European experience

Question (Alec) So you’re trying to bring people back to the city?

Answer (Tim) Yes. It’s really about trying to get that city feel in Croydon. There are certain parts of it which are very similar to a lot of edge cities where there are certain elements of intensity, but some aspects get ignored. What I mean is that there are always cities where people say “oh it’s an amazing Italian city” and walk around and soak up the atmosphere.

In another part of my interview with Alan

Question (Alec) Are positive things happening in Croydon?

Answer (Alan) Tramlink has had the biggest single influence. It is highly successful and is actually beginning to change the image of Croydon to something that has a very continental flavour.

Question (Alec) So that’s another feature where a continental influence is seen as a positive aspect of a city?

Answer (Alan) A lot of people say it reminds them of being abroad. Just by the introduction of poles with cables on them and a paved surface where trams run across. Strangely it gives people a positive impression. Certainly in terms of creating space, when you look at the problems that Croydon has as a pedestrian area, there is no real centre to Croydon. No ‘market cross’ or central focus. Certainly the new Park Place development will create two very
small public spaces widening out our existing street. Creating new squares will help. We’ll be looking for that in other developments as well.

**CDA Stage 1 with Alan**

Alan (chief planner) also relates a continental influence to the tramway system. It is a positive element in the design of a town or city and even “just by the introduction of poles with cables on them and a paved surface where trams run across. It strangely gives people a positive impression”. The key to the establishment of this positive feeling is not measured in large sums of money spent on entertainment areas. It was achieved by changes in the streetscape with the inclusion of more natural forms for streetscape elements that complement the built environment.

**CDA Stage 1 with Tim**

As an urban designer Tim proposes that the purpose of city is more than just a few elements. For example, Croydon is known as a city with a vibrant shopping centre. The pro-development agenda (according to government sponsored documents) is to create more commercial precincts. Tim expresses concern that this aspect of Croydon will affect its cultural ambience. Tim refers to elements of “city-ness” that are missing from Croydon. These missing elements are present in Italian and many other European cities. He portrays the role of the edge-city as a problem, and there is concern that Croydon will only be an edge-city. From an urban designer’s perspective, Tim describes the type of city Croydon should be, and he refers to it in the context of European cities, an “Italian” city with squares.

The “city-ness” quality that Tim refers to also sees the city as more than a place for consumption-based activities. As discussed previously, the question of mix is important; a mixture of cultural activities, commerce, educational precincts and so forth. The reason it has been introduced here and developed further in **CDA Stages 2 and 3** is because the Italian view of what a city should be, according to Croydon’s urban planners and designers, has fundamental consequences in the establishment of a sense of community.

**CDA Stage 2**

Tim has expressed the view that many English people who go on holiday already know what a city should be like and it is an Italian city. Some referred to a certain ambience that
encouraged people to be out and about and having casual face to face contact with other people, a feature of urban life suggested by Putnam (2000).

An Italian city in this context would ideally be a Tuscan provincial city, because they are largely self-contained urban areas within definitive city boundaries with small cottage industries integrated with shops, residences, cultural buildings i.e. places of worship, schools, art galleries and museums, and city squares. The short phrase “Italian City” has a complete meaning to many English people. If that is the case, then why and what are the ideas behind this? As an urban designer, Tim is promoting an urban designer’s view of what a city should be. A town with all the ingredients of what a typical town should be.

There is something organic about a natural paved stone surface. Perhaps the tramway cables above the street represent the old way of moving people. One can actually see how things work, how the carriage is being moved.

The ingredients that contribute to an Italian city include the nature of how work is performed - in many Italian cities local craftsmen and craftswomen can still be seen at work in the community. It is the nature of the city as a place where art, culture and commerce meet in an expression of mutual activity, and where such activities inherently help to shape the identity of neighbourhood. It is the severing of ties between craft (Fry 1994) and the community that leads to “corrosion of character”, a termed coined by Sennett to describe the personal consequences of work in the new capitalism (1998).

The consequences often result in increased population mobility, some of it perhaps unnecessary, the development of weak ties (Putnam 2000) between people, and a reduction in the number of people who have a strong association with the natural feel and use of materials in the production of an end product before it becomes just another pre-packaged retail item. The element of city life that contains a strong association with a sense of character is not lost on Alsop (2007, p.56) in a regenerated town centre:

“There is a hive of activity: a mini bohemia – delicatessens, boutiques, butchers, chocolatiers...”
The feel of a European city has not been lost on other London Boroughs such as Westminster City Council, which comments on the night-time culture:

In European cities families can be seen enjoying town centres after shops have closed and cafes and bars are more welcoming. In London, more people could be attracted to staying in town centres in the evening and into the night if there was a greater range of things to do – things that don’t involve alcohol. For example, late shopping or later opening for museums and galleries. Restaurants could stay open later and cater for families (2005).

CDA Stage 3
When Alan’s and Tim’s views on Italian cities and continental influences are analysed they reveal urban planners’ (Alan) and designers’ (Tim) sub-conscious perspective of what an ideal city centre should look like, and how the general populace should act and feel. A positive feeling is the reflection of a place that people relate to. Italian cities such as those found in Tuscany reflect the urban form that meets these criteria. These ideas are not exclusive; they are based upon some fundamentals of the geophysical design of Tuscan cities and towns, the civic traditions and the historical context. Both Hall (1998) and Putnam (2000) have commented on aspects of the Italian city.

Putnam in his book 1993 book “Making Democracy Work” writes about the civic traditions of modern Italy, groups and social organizations and the performance of Italian regional governments and sees these are positive forms of social interaction. Correspondingly, how Tim and Alan feel about Italian cityness is perhaps the sum of the collective experiences of others as well as their own.

Putnam comments on the basic fundamentals of the Italian urban experience:

Singing together (like bowling together) does not require shared ideology or shared social or ethnic provenance. Moreover, social capital is often a valuable by-product of cultural activities whose main purpose is merely aesthetic (2000, p. 411).

Professor Hall (1998) in his book “Cities in Civilisation” discusses the development of Florence during the middle ages. What can be drawn from this early development of Florence is that it was the beginning of contemporary urbanization and not dissimilar to urbanization in the 20th
century (this is discussed in the literature review). Although Rome was not discussed, its contribution would have provided Italian renaissance city-states with a similar framework in which to base their Tuscan urban form. What would be of interest to both Tim and Alan is the basis of how a city is designed and planned. The Italian Tuscan example of urban planning provides urban planners and designers with an image to work with; Heimstra and McFarling comment that:

> Whilst forming an image of city is hard to define because the interactions between the inhabitant’s characteristics and characteristics of the city are complex, and the urban atmosphere is difficult to quantify, the term urban atmosphere would be an appropriate term because it relates to the image of a city (1974).

**Enjoying the theatre of the streets (flaneur)**

The vista of Italian urban geophysical layout is available to those many who wish to embrace it. The seats and tables for the passers-by, the umbrellas that shade them and definitive precincts that surround them and connect with walkable areas provide a visual sense of place. This is what Croydon urban designers and planners understand and aspire to. It is also what the spatial form of a town centre should reflect. That is apparent in work that has been done on connecting inhabitants with Borough facilities, as the following comments from Tim Smith indicate: “I’ve done some work in the Valley Park area which was just creating footpaths to connect schools to houses; that sort of thing” (2006).

**The cultural ideals linking Croydon with the Italian and European experience**

Tim’s views are possibly related to his insight into classical building disciplines and the relationship of urban design to 14th and 15th century Italian art and philosophy (Foster, 1997). The classical and cultural ideals linking Croydon to the Italian experience are fundamental issues that represent a challenge to Croydon’s present spatial 60s and 70s organization. The fundamental issues that relate to the size of a city should reflect the opportunity to easily negotiate its geophysical characteristics, either by walking or by a street-based integrated transport system. The ideals of the classical form of a city are embedded in the thinking of urban designers, planners, anthropologists and sociologists such as Glancey (1998), Hall (1998), Putnam (2000) and Sennett (1993, pp.50-51). These ideals are present in the Italian Tuscan city.
Chapter 4 Conclusion: Interviews with government stakeholders

The findings from interviews with government stakeholders indicate they have many concerns over the way the regeneration of Croydon’s CBD is dominated by the interests of developers over the interests of the wider community.

Their specific concerns are the unique characteristics of Croydon are being “subsumed” (interview with Smith 2006) by importing urban features from somewhere else; they are concerned with the single-zone approach to development of the CBD, which is reflected in the focus of retail and commercial buildings. They are also concerned with Croydon’s present historical and cultural assets are not being refurbished or recognized for their contribution to the regeneration of the CBD.

These are not the only concerns however; the impact of the new night time economy on social inclusion; a lack of commitment to bring residential housing into the town centre and the involvement of residents in decisions about the design of their town centre represent some of their other concerns.

4.4 Analysis of Government sponsored documents

Introduction

Six government sponsored documents were referred to for review and analysis in this chapter. Five out of the six documents were subjected to critical discourse analysis (CDA) as discussed in chapter two on the thesis methodology and methods used to support the research question.

The five government-sponsored documents were chosen for CDA analysis because they specifically deal with the proposal to regenerate the town centre of Croydon as part of the Vision2020 plan. Other government-sponsored and associated reports were also used throughout the thesis to aid in understanding the effects and influence of the proposed regeneration of Croydon’s town centre on social connectedness between inhabitants.

Data from interviews, observations and photographs were also referred to aid in the interpretation of government-sponsored documents.
Critical analysis of government documents was then used in the findings in chapter 6. Chapter 6 features an overview of the findings from Chapter 4 (Croydon) and chapter 5 (Neukölln). The purpose of chapter 6 is a presentation of the findings derived from the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the results of an inquiry into a Socio-Spatial Process in two major European city suburbs.

TABLE: List of government-sponsored documents

Six government-sponsored documents were referred to for review and analysis in this chapter. Five out of the six documents were subjected to critical discourse analysis (CDA) as discussed in chapter 2 on the thesis methodology and methods used to support the research question.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>TITLE OF DOCUMENT: AND IDENTIFICATION OF SOME SPECIFIC URBAN PLANNING ISSUES</th>
<th>OVERVIEW OF THE DOCUMENT AND THE DOCUMENT'S RELEVANCE TO CROYDON CITY-CENTRE REGENERATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No 1</td>
<td>The London Plan Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan. (Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London) September 2006. (93 pages) Annex 1 London’s strategic town centre network 1 Policy 2A.5, Policies 3D.1-3 and statements on town centres in the London Plan. These set out the strategic policies that will support the development of London’s town centres over the lifetime of this plan and guide the location of retail and leisure activity. <strong>Metropolitan centres (11), of which Croydon is one, serve wide catchment areas covering several</strong></td>
<td>Features the spatial opportunities that are present in Croydon, associated with the economic redevelopment of Croydon and including some discussion of social and cultural aspects. The relevance of the London Plan and Croydon’s city-centre renaissance proposal may be considered in reference to the following quotation from John Friedmann: At the municipal scale, problems are perceived differently. The key actors here are city government, politicians and bureaucrats, as well as ‘influentials’ from the business community, such as developers. Their focus tends to reflect these interests which revolve around the urban economy, land use, and the quality of urban infrastructure. At the same time, however, local politicians also have to please the many neighbourhoods of the city and respond not only to their frequently loud demands but also be attentive to maintaining some sort of equity across</td>
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Boroughs and offer a high level and range of comparison shopping. They typically have over 100,000 square metres of retail floorspace, including multiple retailers and department stores, they also have significant employment, service and leisure functions.

The urban fabric as, for example, by providing access to public services (Friedmann, 2003, p.5). There are important key elements in the above quote. The emphasis on town-centre development will help to create an emerging class of young white collar workers, young couples, retired professionals and an emerging number of creative and entrepreneurial people who would like to reside in the city centre.

This document also refers to Further Alterations to the London Plan regarding the Compact City concept.

| No 2 | Space Syntax (2006)  
Riverside Studios London SE1 9EQ  
United Kingdom:  
Client: Croydon Town Centre  
London Borough of Croydon | Introduction: Background and Scope  
Croydon Council is engaged in the production of a Local Development Framework which includes the production of an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Central Croydon Metropolitan Centre Area. To support this process The London Borough of Croydon has appointed Space Syntax to provide a baseline planning assessment of the Urban layout structure of the area. The document discusses the use of space and people movement opportunities between city-centre precincts. |
|---|---|
| No 3 | The Croydon Vision2020  
Executive Summary (November 1998)  
EDAW Consultants in consultation with Croydon Council prior to their replacement by Will Alsop as the consultant (refer to the 3rd city document review) | Identifies Croydon Council’s visionary perspectives  
The research findings suggest that this document was later added to Third City document. The Croydon Vision2020 document consists of sixteen pages in an A4 format and which discusses council’s twenty year vision for the Borough of Croydon as well as delivery of the vision and its implied implementation schedule. |
| No 4 | Urban Design “What is Urban Design?” | This document discusses how Croydon Council plan and design the relationship between buildings, streets, squares, parks and other spaces which represent Croydon’s urban areas. Subjects include the benefits of good urban design, the future of |
| No 5 | **Town Centre Regeneration**  
*Croydon Council: Keith Briars* | Discusses particular building projects and precincts in the Croydon CBD, for example refurbishment of the former Grant Brothers Department Store. |
| No 6 | **Third City: A 21st Century Vision for Croydon**  
*Will Alsop Architect:*  
The work carried out by Alsop comes within the framework of the Croydon Metropolitan Centre Action Plan. | A promotional document that features the consultant who is responsible for putting the ideas and views of the community into visionary architectural forms; presenting those forms as completed buildings and their relationship with aspects of the surrounding space. |

**1 - The London Plan**

*(Background from the Briefing Paper: For Croydon Gateway Development, Croydon Town Centre)*: Reviewed

Croydon Town Centre is identified as an “opportunity area” in the London Plan, which is the Mayor of London’s Spatial Development Strategy. Although this document has not been analysed in detail because it does not deal with Croydon’s Vision2020 town centre proposed regeneration, a number of general conclusions have been considered in the following review.

In the Mayor of London’s Spatial Development Strategy, “opportunity areas” are defined as London’s few opportunities for accommodating large scale development to provide substantial amounts of new employment and housing, with a mixed and intensive use of land and assisted by good public transport accessibility. The question of public transport is an extremely important issue, largely because the disruptive effect of surface-rail systems dissecting residential neighbourhoods has led to the potential expansion of sub-rail systems (Third City document 2007). The London Plan states that because of the scale of the opportunities it offers and the need for integrated action, the planning framework should take an integrated approach to a number of town centre sites of strategic importance. Included are East Croydon Station, Fairfield Halls, Croydon College, Park Place and the Whitgift shopping centre extension. Important is the maintenance of council assets where there appears to have been neglect. The public concert venue of Fairfield Halls is one, even though the London Plan stresses the importance of such venues. The Regional Commentary on Cultural Services in the London Borough of Croydon (July, 2007) has also mentioned the issue of care of council assets (NHS London healthy urban development unit).
The delay in decisions around the future of Fairfield Halls has added to the problems around the state of repair of the interior and exterior of the building.

The document discusses the socio-economic spatial re-organisation of London Boroughs. The critical review process (CDA) suggests that the consolidation of urban resources includes land use. Urban consolidation is concerned with using present urban resources more effectively rather than the development of new infrastructure in other often less populated areas. Efforts to contain the sprawling suburbs have been hampered by urban planning decisions made in the early 20th century. However, since the end of the second world war urban sprawl characteristics have been contained in the London area under the Greater London Plan of 1944 (Abercrombie 1945; cited in Madanipour, 1996).

The London Plan is also the Regional Spatial Strategy for London. As such it has equivalent status to the Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) or the replacement Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) of every London Borough. In addition, policies (e.g. for Croydon) within new UDP/LDFs, need to be in general conformity with those in the London Plan. Spatial identity is associated with the purpose and use of space and the community’s perception of how the space translates into neighbourhood benefits in urban areas and the overall form of the city. For example, the allocation of space to large residential housing projects, mixed-use developments, regional business and commercial precincts, educational campuses, recreational areas and design of the public realm with town squares and open market precincts.

According to the Regional Spatial Strategy for London, new town squares will offer a safe and attractive public environment in which to engage, rest and play. This aspect of the public realm is also commented upon from a Croydon town centre regeneration perspective, particularly regarding the regeneration of West Croydon and its incorporation into the life of the town centre. “Achieving the provision of new homes, businesses, community facilities and a radically transformed public realm with new squares and green spaces however requires clear leadership, a shared vision, a collaborative approach with a focus on delivery” according to Councillor Jason Perry Cabinet Member for Planning Conservation and Climate Change (2010).

The subject of ‘new town squares’ referred to above is an interesting one because Croydon’s CBD already has a number of precincts where there are opportunities to create a number of
small to medium central meeting places. This can be achieved with the addition of streetscape furnishings, boutique displays, planter-boxes, and outdoor-indoor cafés.

2 - Croydon Town Centre Space Syntax document, May, 2006

CDA-Stage 1
Baseline analysis of urban structure, layout and public spaces
There are three elements to the Space Syntax study; which uses a qualitative and quantitative methodology; a site visit and photographic methods represent part of the qualitative methodology as evidence to determine a baseline analysis of Croydon’s present urban structure. The adaptation of a qualitative component by Space Syntax represents two of the four methods chosen by the candidate to undertake research into the urban regeneration of Croydon’s town centre.

Overview of three elements of the Space Syntax study
Qualitative analysis of the Town Centre urban layout and public spaces is based on a site visit and photographic evidence.
Quantitative analysis of the baseline urban layout and public spaces is based on spatial analysis techniques, in conjunction with the qualitative spatial planning impact assessment of the preferred option.
Option generation based on the results of the baseline analysis and wider planning and policy objectives of Croydon City Council (Space Syntax May, 2006).

The Space Syntax document is a baseline document and not a visionary document – for a visionary perspective on the proposed future regeneration of Croydon’s town centre refer to document 6.

The document confirms that Croydon City Council is engaged in the production of Local Development Frameworks which include the production of an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Central Croydon Metropolitan Area. The Space Syntax study will be used in the evaluation of the Town Centre AAP proposed urban design option, and for the selection of the preferred option.

Using various processes of analysis such as behavioural research, the Space Syntax document (2006) is an attempt to understand the life of urban dwellers as they negotiate elements of
the public realm in the context of Croydon’s present urban landscape, and how that translates to proposals to regenerate the town centre over a twenty year period.

To support this process the London Borough of Croydon appointed Space Syntax to provide a baseline spatial planning assessment of the urban layout of the town centre area and the amenities to support it. My analysis of this document suggests that the stated objectives behind the study largely fulfil a pro-development agenda, especially the proposed extra retail facilities and entertainment precincts. This is revealed through my review of the text patterns used within the language of the study.

CDA Stage 2
Suggests there are three elements to the Space Syntax study

**Qualitative analysis** suggests that the future of the town centre is closely aligned to growing the quality of the existing retail experience to facilitate the attractiveness of the town centre for new residents over the next twenty years.

**Quantitative analysis** suggests that the movement of people is to be accommodated by improvements in more efficient integrated public transport.

**Option generation** suggests that the wider planning and policy objectives of Croydon city council should be aligned with options that allow for a flexible approach to the expansion of facilities that are attractive to business firms to invest in the town centre, especially against competition with other retail centres in the greater London region.

My analysis suggests that the expansion of a consumption-based city centre and development of corridors is to facilitate the more efficient flow of people to retail, commercial and entertainment precincts. The term ‘corridors’ used in the Space Syntax document refers to the use of the public realm as transit points between town centre sites:

It identifies the barrier effect of weak connections and interruptions to access to the city centre, e.g. during a journey from the train station to the shopping mall (Space Syntax May, 2006).

The objective of the frameworks is to make urban areas safe, secure, and easy to walk and cycle in and they also refer to promoting high levels of pedestrian movement, which they state are a proven requirement for lively and successful town and urban centres.
For the movement of residents between the outer Croydon districts and Croydon’s regenerated town centre the Tramlink light-rail system represents what is perhaps the most visible and proactive sign that the regeneration of the town centre has begun.

The Tramlink light rail system has also been successful in linking the outer suburb of New Addington with Croydon’s town centre. The Syntax study is catering for an improved Croydon city-centre integrated transportation system in order to accommodate more shoppers, retail operatives, businesses and employees involved in commercial and business activities. In addition Tramlink provides other enhanced public transport options for visitors and inhabitants. Croydon has already one of the most successful integrated public transport systems in the UK (The London Plan 2006). However improvements have been highlighted in government promotional and economic research documents. These are necessary if Croydon is to regain its position as a premier centre of commercial and business activity (Croydon Economic Development Strategy report 2008; Third City document 2007).

Banister and Berechman (2000) comment in “Transport Investment and Economic Development”:

As with all decisions, there are important spatial and social impacts with some impacts not difficult to identify, as the core areas become more accessible (Croydon and central London), often at the expense of the peripheral areas (local neighbourhoods).

The mobility of populations in choosing where they live and work, and the mobility of firms, feature as major elements in the stability of two urban environments i.e. the neighbourhood and the city centre. The ability of firms to choose where they establish their business operations is fundamental to the economic success of cities, according to (Glaeser). As Glaeser et al. (2001), says service facilities are not necessarily located in city areas but follow where manufacturing plants are located.

Mobility is also linked to the attractiveness of urban layouts and its contained facilities as well as to density factors. Discussion of the influence of negative and positive mobility factors, urban density, local city and neighbourhood amenities are featured throughout the research thesis (URBACT 2005).
CDA Stage 3

The central idea of the Syntax study of the city centre is that redeveloped commercial and service facilities have the capacity if they are ‘attractive enough’ to stimulate town centre social activity. Social environments where there is an emphasis away from mixed activities of a creative and artistic nature can also lead to social and cultural exclusion for some groups.

At the same time, a proactive mixed-use development plan that increases urban density through the expansion of residential accommodation also encourages an entrepreneurial and vibrant city-centre culture (Florida 2002). This accommodates another form of social connectedness and contributes to social cohesion (Forrest and Kearns 2001).

The Space Syntax document also aligns the city centre’s future with opportunities for socialising with others, and “sees high rates of socialising as another traditional sign of success” (Space Syntax May 2006). According to the Space Syntax document:

Spatial accessibility is focussed on safe, secure and easy movement for people (Safer Places, the Planning System and Crime Prevention Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Home Office, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment; Syntax study 2004, p. 4).

I suggest the “high rates of “socialising” (Space Syntax May, 2006) are indirectly related to Croydon’s new night-time culture, and the consumption of alcohol is an element in binge drinking and anti-social behaviour. This aspect of socialising in the town centre is of concern to urban planners and designers interviewed in 2001; 2006 and 2008.

The opportunities for social interaction are also featured by Space Syntax in their promotion of town squares in the public realm.

People are more likely to use squares where they can see where they are going, and feel safe (Space Syntax 2006).

It is possible that the preference for open square and uncluttered lines creates an opportunity to utilise the public domain for street theatre (Florida 2002), cultural carnivals and outdoor public exhibitions. The study also suggests:
Land uses such as retail and catering, because they attract activity over and above the effects of spatial layout, and contribute to the natural surveillance of the space providing presence in the space (2006).

3 - The Croydon Vision2020 Document: Reviewed using Critical Discourse Analysis

The Thinking and the Vision (Executive Summary)

The following parts of the Croydon 2020 document have been analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA): The Project; the Introduction; the Vision and Delivering the Vision.

CDA Stage 1 (The Project)

The main aim of the project was to develop a vision of central Croydon that is related to its retail performance and concentration on updating its office stock including the addition of venues that cater for leisure, entertainment, cultural and civic uses. The creation of an attractive public realm linking the outer eastern and western fringes with the town centre would revitalise the town centre as part of the vision.
The Introduction page
To produce and achieve a shared vision of social, environmental and economic aspirations, all of the Centre’s communities and stakeholders would have to participate fully in shaping Central Croydon’s future.

Introduction

The Croydon 2020 Vision is the next step in Croydon’s evolution, setting out the aspirations for the Town Centre’s development over the next twenty years.

Central Croydon is a community in London and the Town that is well established but in a competitive world it has to remain economically strong and culturally vibrant. It will not be able to do this by maintaining its economic structures alone. Industries are changing, perceptions are changing and the nature of the future will have to offer an improved quality of life, work and of relaxation.

The Council has always acknowledged that it would need to address the challenges facing the Town by firstly understanding and achieving a shared vision of its social, environmental and economic aspirations, and then informing and involving all of the Centre’s communities and stakeholders. This part of the document introduces the reader to the Croydon Vision2020. It specifically defines Croydon’s aspirations for the development of the Town Centre over the next twenty years. The introduction lets the reader know Croydon’s present position regarding its regional economic status. It also reminds the reader that it is in competition with other regional centres, using language that appeals to urban professionals and investors. The

CDA Stage 1 (Introduction)
This part of the document introduces the reader to the Croydon Vision2020. Page 1 specifically defines Croydon’s aspirations for the development of the Town Centre over the next twenty years. The introduction lets the reader know Croydon’s present position regarding its regional economic status. It also reminds the reader that it is in competition with other regional centres, using language that appeals to urban professionals and investors. The
document uses language that stresses the view that for Croydon to remain competitive it has to offer improved services and lifestyle expectations in the business and social environments.

This is a shared vision document for the next step in Croydon’s evolution, setting out the aspirations for the Town Centre’s development over the next twenty years (Executive summary November 1998). The consulting firm of EDAW (London) were commissioned by Croydon council to set out a shared Vision of social, environmental and economic aspirations for Central Croydon and to prepare a Civic and Commercial Vision for Central Croydon. The introduction lets the reader know that “many exciting projects are already in the pipeline” including:

- Tramlink, an extension of the East London Line and a 200,000 sq ft family entertainment complex, and reminds the reader that: “Lifestyles are changing”.

CDA Stage 2 (Introduction)
The vision’s primary objective is the establishment of the city as a place of consumption-related activities (Glaeser, Kolo and Saiz 2001) and should act as a catalyst in the future revival of its regional economic status.

The introductory text “evolution and aspirations; proposals based on contemporary designs” implies that changes to Croydon’s town centre require an architectural solution that is unique and inspiring. Likewise, the following statement suggests haste and an emphasis on the present moment:

The immediate challenge is to create a momentum behind the vision…to get the process of redevelopment underway (1998).

These words are dynamic and indicate a sense of urgency about what needs to be done which is a view shared by Croydon Metropolitan Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options Report (2008 p.41)

Key areas of concern which affect some of the negative perceptions of Croydon may not be addressed. There is a danger of further degeneration in the public realm and a lack of investment in good urban design and architecture. Priorities such as greening the centre and improving biodiversity and sustainability would also be harder to achieve.
The Vision Statement creates an impression that redevelopment is the central key to Croydon’s future and that those who are involved in the Croydon Vision2020 are challenging Croydon’s present out-dated town centre building stock whilst engaging with Croydon’s future opportunities.

The introduction tells the reader that “many exciting projects are in the pipeline”. While it is true that there are projects that have started, including the Tramlink project, other projects have been delayed for a number of reasons such as funding constraints, compulsory purchase arrangements and zoning problems.

There is strong emphasis on the way that Croydon has to maintain its place in “a competitive world” by becoming “economically strong” and the phrase “get the process of redevelopment underway” suggests the Vision2020 is one of economic rationalism where future “lifestyle changes” will be because of growth in leisure, entertainment and retail opportunities.

CDA Stage 3 (Introduction)
The idea promoted in this document is that a thriving economy needs superior critical urban amenities and the language used in the introduction to the Vision statement is unashamedly pro-development (Glaeser, Kolo and Saiz 2001; URBACT 2005).

Third City document is also unapologetically orientated towards economic development. When a social framework is mentioned, the document deals with examples of health, environmental and safety issues (Space Syntax May, 2006). Nothing that might foster intercultural connections is specifically referred to, such as music, theatre and the fine arts. When the subject of culture is referred to it just means entertainment and leisure venues.

There are however plans to create a cultural quarter out of the Fairfield Halls precinct. This is explained in Third City document (2007). Notwithstanding the more positive deliberations contained in Third City document, such confusion as to what Vision2020 will contain and what will be built does not help build confidence in actual outcomes.
As well as global perspectives, the Croydon Vision2020 includes strategic objectives that address a number of key challenges that council says will transform Croydon over the next twenty years.

The document states that the vision that Croydon has laid out for itself is to become one of the leading city centres in the South East of England. Its focus is centred on having an external image of a fashionable, vibrant, progressive and contemporary city; an image that will be partly achieved by competing with other centres in the Southern area of England.

The Croydon Vision2020 promised the business community a smart and intelligent city built upon a strong and renewable economic base that includes a range of innovative and growth sector industries. Central Croydon will be home for a diverse mix both economic and social, with a range of leisure and entertainment opportunities. The role of education in the development of a smart and intelligent city is not mentioned in the document. Referring to renewal of the present urban form the focus of the Vision2020 on urban design includes new icon buildings (Third City document 2007), and encourages Croydon’s potential as a location for very tall buildings. Strategies for innovative refurbishments, a high quality public realm and day and night public safety are also mentioned as deliverable goals of the Vision2020.
Public transportation is also a key visionary perspective with the focus on integrated connections to central London, the South East and Europe. The Vision states that the town centre will also be designed to meet environmental goals; the town centre will be cleaner, it will be greener and air quality will be improved.

**CDA Stage 2 (The Vision2020 and Delivering the Vision2020)**

The opening paragraph on “Delivering the Vision” does not refer to the cultural legacy which might come from Croydon’s past as an innovative centre and its future in renewable energy usage. While parts of the document refer to the need for the city centre to offer an improved quality of life, of work and of relaxation, it is clear that this is underpinned by a series of interventions which the partners have identified as being necessary to deliver sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Croydon. The same opening paragraph refers to environmental aspirations, suggesting the city will greener and cleaner. Yet there are no references to the use of any renewable energy in the Vision2020 for Croydon. It would be dismissive not to refer to Croydon Council’s outstanding record on the promotion of renewable energy provisions contained in a case study prepared by Emily Rudkin of the Halcrow Group Ltd (2008):

> Council established a rule which requires all proposals for non-residential developments exceeding 1000 m2 gross floor space, and new residential developments comprising 10 or more units, to incorporate renewable energy production to offset at least 10% of predicted carbon emissions.

On the basis of what is made clear in Third City document and in interviews with town planners (chapter 4), the contributors to the design of Croydon’s city centre are in fact a small group of “town centre users and other stakeholders” (Third City 2007, pp. 10-13). In other words, they represent a combination of the business and political leadership with a few community members invited to create an impression of community consultation. Yet the Vision document talks about promoting a “holistic integrated approach” to the future development of the Central Croydon area. In fact, residents of Croydon’s outer districts are not specifically targeted for opinions about the design of Croydon’s city centre (chapter 4, p. 4). The reason given by Croydon council is that very few people live in the city centre (Third City 2007, p. 48).

**CDA Stage 3 (The Vision2020 and Delivering the Vision2020)**
The grand ideas presented in this document say very little that is reassuring about the timeframe for the implementation (Vision 2020 2004, p. 11) of projects. There are omissions in what the vision will achieve in the early stages of its phased twenty year implementation period in terms of the overall “attractiveness” Glaeser et al. (2001) of Croydon as a place to visit. As discussed above in CDA Stage 2 above, strategies that make the city cleaner and greener because of its leadership and investment in green energy are not mentioned in this document. Croydon has one of the highest carbon emissions and energy consumption levels in London, according to Borough of Croydon Environmental Agency summary (2008). Timeframes for deliverables are left to other documents to provide for an agenda for future economic and social enterprise strategies, for social inclusion and quality of life, as well as the implementation of the Alsop Vision for the Town Centre (Croydon Economic Development Strategy 2008).

Will other London city centres such as Canary Wharf (Brownhill 1997) and Lambeth (Powell 2004) remain static while Croydon seeks to reposition itself as a dominant commerce and business location? Croydon “which has long refused to considered itself a mere south London suburb” (Glancey 1993) will also have to consider competition from other south east London area suburbs such as Bromley (Interviews with Long and Smith 2006; 2008).

The rationale for limiting the number of stakeholders in the proposed town-centre design process (Third City document 2007, p.10) is to speed up the design process and decision making. Visions have to nominate practical outcomes with dedicated time frames for completion; they require the integration of public and private sector investment. However public investment usually lacks the funding necessary for completion of large construction projects (Third City document 2007; Glancey 1998) and the amount of pressure applied to council planners and designers by developers to get their own way is challenging (interviews with government stakeholders).

Comment on Croydon’s development of cultural assets, and comment on the Vision2020

Clearly the idea behind the vision is to make the town-centre attractive. The function of architecture according to (Madanipour 1996 p.32) often concentrates on the physical fabric of the city and its aesthetic and functional dimensions. This view is also supported by Glaeser et al. (2001) who are aware of the need to make cities attractive, where the quality of life is becoming critical in determining the attractiveness of particular areas. The future of cities
depends on their attractiveness for people to live, shop and work there, using economic rather than aesthetic or social criteria.

The Croydon Vision2020 document does not specifically refer to cultural development as a component of attractiveness. However it is one of the prerequisites for city life Glaeser et al. (2001). This lack of reference to Croydon's cultural heritage is at odds with the viewpoint of council’s urban designers who would like Croydon to be recognised for its “very strong local identity that is being subsumed into London” (interview with Smith 2006), and for its traditional and more contemporary cultural offerings that are unique to Croydon such as its skate-park in Croydon Technical college precinct.

As indicated previously, the delay in decisions about the future of Fairfield Halls has added to the deterioration of the interior and exterior of the building (Council Community Strategy 2006-2009). The cultural quarter regeneration project and public realm improvements are high on the Council’s agenda but according to the “Regional Commentary on Cultural Services” in Croydon, the council has been slow to move forward for financial reasons. They make these comments on the situation (2007, July):

Culture is recognised as a priority in the Community Strategy (2006 -2009) and actions have been included to improve cultural provision in the Borough. There is little mention in the Community Strategy of the potential of museums, libraries and archives to contribute to the Council’s key goals other than contributing to education initiatives. This is disappointing given the innovative and proactive work undertaken by the Library and Museums services.

This lack of early commitment unfortunately extends to other areas of the arts, as demonstrated by the recent withdrawal of funding for a theatre company in the Borough (Community Strategy 2006-2009). The lack of commitment by Croydon Council on a number of renewal issues has already been commented on in the Vision2020 document where they admit that:

... Implementation of the vision is not as sharp as it might be (Vision2020 2004, p. 11)

A review of opinions on the Vision2020 is preceded by a comment by council’s urban designers:
There is also the whole neighbourhood partnership system which is meant to be the mechanism for engaging with the local community. Does that come through to your design stage? Does that feed through to your design proposals and so forth? I would probably say stop the tape now ... to be honest, it’s something that does concern us (interview with Smith).

Rowan Moore of the Observer, comments on the where the Vision2020 fits into the Croydon renewal fabric:

The suburban Borough of Croydon has also been subject to repeated “visions” over the past two decades, namely Croydon: The Future; Vision2020 and Will Alsop’s Third City. Famous architects have zipped in and flourished brightly coloured images that turn Croydon's pervasive grey into flashes of neon, and striven to find an inner Manhattan in its array of towers (28 February, 2010).

4 - Urban Design Croydon: Reviewed using Critical Discourse Analysis

What is Urban Design? It is the art of making places for people
CDA Stage 1 Overall analysis

The five page document discusses how Croydon Council plans and designs the relationship between buildings, streets, squares, parks and other spaces which make up Croydon’s urban areas.

CDA Stage 1 (Inside Cover)

The analysis and discussion of the meaning of urban design is the central theme in the document. The Croydon experience of living, working, shopping or studying involves urban
design every day. Croydon Council promotes the art of making places for people to engage through the design of new buildings. The small A5 booklet is presented in a non-confrontational ‘caring’ format which opens out into an easy to read three page inner section, and two page outer section (excluding the front cover), which guides the reader. According to this document, the process of urban design provides the opportunity to improve the quality of people’s lives. The booklet has adopted a non-confrontational approach designed to create the impression that the council cares about its residents and this is conveyed by the following comment:

Croydon already has areas with a strong sense of place like North End, Surrey Street Market and Norwood High Street. Whilst we protect the quality of these areas we also help developers plan for quality new buildings and spaces around them.

This paragraph is aided by the inclusion of a number of photographs of the façades and window reliefs of older buildings. However streetscape perspectives of these older buildings are not included in the photographs. The use of small 5-7.5 x 3.5-9.0 cm photographs is complemented by headings such as:

The benefits of good urban design; what about Croydon? The future of Croydon’s central area; what are we doing; enriching the existing, and making connections (2006).

The urban design booklet promotes the Council’s shopfront environmental appearance improvement programme. It reassures the reader that the creation of liveable and sustainable environments is in partnership with public safety, the assessment of development criteria, business investment, and the allocation and development of the public realm. The overall emphasis is the public realm and the following short paragraph describes their definition of the public realm:

The public realm includes all spaces between buildings; streets, squares, parks, and even private forecourts. The design of these places is becoming even more precious as development in urban areas grows (Urban Design Croydon 2006).

And the document continues under the heading “What are we doing”. This section refers to the pedestrianisation of North End which has been highly successful in increasing the town’s trade. The interconnectivity of new open spaces is also discussed with the focus on linking
existing peripheral greenspace to the city centre. It makes note of the development pressures upon the council, and promotes large development projects as an essential ingredient for a vibrant town centre. There is also a focus on factors of health, safety and security.

It informs the reader that not all council efforts are focussed on the town centre with new paving, lights and trees as part of a smarter Croydon initiative. It claims that the environmental and economic success of centres outside the city centre is just as important to the Borough. There is a reference to aspects of infrastructure, such as connections with transport links, walking and cycleways:

Urban design strives to make walking, cycling and public transport a more attractive and sustainable option (Urban Design Croydon 2006).

Recognisable landmarks are to help people find their way around, with good road access, and a range of viable transport options.

It does focus on a number of small business initiatives that help to improve the appearance of shopfront façades and therefore the quality of the environment. It refers to these programmes as helping the local economies in the Borough. At the same time the overall feel of the document is about the efficient management of investments and about transport solutions that enable the effective and efficient movement of people.

**CDA Stage 2 (Analysis of Public Realm Areas)**

This document comments on proposals to construct pedestrian areas and cycleway corridors. It includes the issue of walkable connections to transport links. There is a focus on new buildings and no refurbishment strategy as such. The document relates to the city centre, but not to the refurbishment of established buildings other than the previous Grant Brothers Building. Pedestrianisation only really refers to the city-centre, and as for cycleways, these initiatives also only concern the city centre. The layout of Croydon’s town centre immediate districts (inner-city) and the narrow streets however make it almost impossible to carve cycleways out of the main roads.

This puts into perspective the emphasis of the document, which is on the importance of “the town’s trade” for the economic viability of the surrounding community. The town’s trade is
strongly associated with retail in the city centre with its centralised shopping precincts, including the remodelling of The Whitgift Centre. The focus therefore is on business that is conducted in Croydon’s City Centre and not on business carried out in the Croydon outer-Borough and its outlying districts. There is a focus however on regenerating New Addington which has a high social housing content of over 10,000 residents (Strategic Partnership Croydon; New Addington Ward Profile August 2009). This focus is significant in terms of social and economic benefits for inhabitants because of the success of Tramlink (2000) light rail system in linking the neighbourhood of New Addington with the town centre of Croydon. It is not dependent on general road conditions for its operational efficiency.

In the opposite geographical direction Croydon council has also created the impression that the council cares about its “areas with a strong sense of place like North End...” (Urban Design 2006), helping developers plan good quality buildings around them. The council also mentions that the environmental and economic success of these centres is just as important to the Borough of Croydon (Croydon Economic report 2008). There are however inconsistencies in the reality of the following statement:

> The public realm includes all spaces between buildings; streets, squares, parks, and even private forecourts. The design of these places is becoming even more precious as development in urban areas grows.

Field observation of Croydon’s central mall area and of the area immediately to the west of the mall revealed examples of the neglect of these public realm areas and suggests that in these particular instances the improvements referred to above have not occurred. We can note that this is the case despite the fact that this aspect of city regeneration was referred to in 1998 (CroydonVision2020 document 1998). The following three photographs represent examples of “all spaces between buildings...” (Photos: 20 [existing]),

(Photo: C20) This photograph is also located in observational data
...And (Photo: C66) Courtyard area that could be used as a café or as a creative activity site

(Photo: C67) Another CBD potential courtyard site

CDA Stage 3
The central idea behind this document is to provide a “snapshot” of what is planned for the town centre of Croydon, however the ideas indicated in the document do not necessarily match the reality of inaction in the town centre and areas adjacent to it, as the above photographs show, even though “The design of these places is becoming even more precious as development in urban areas grows” (2006), targeted action to reinvigorate these areas has clearly not started.

What is planned cannot be effectively implemented in the short term unless there is a massive increase in funding and (bi-lateral) agreement on urban planning and design issues because the emphasis is on large scale new construction projects. Anything else could be a distraction from some of the visionary aspects of the Third City regeneration proposal (2007).

Commoditised public realm development
The development of the public realm has been orientated around retail precincts,
entertainment venues and commercial facilities; at least in the short term. These are rational ideas because the role of cities according to (Glaeser et al. 2001) as centres of consumption not as manufacturing centres. Such centres are also dependent upon an urban population density that will support a concentration of consumption as suggested by Glaeser, Kolo and Saiz (2001).

The orientation of the CBD to retail, entertainment and commerce is to leave out the function of the city in building social capital achieved from investment in the creative arts going beyond what is on offer from Fairfield Halls for the neighbourhoods surrounding Croydon CBD. Use of CBD as a social and cultural centre where people can meet and participate in free-events will help reduce instances of social exclusion.

Cultural events and community learning institutions such as museums, boutique concert halls and carnivals supported by central government in the CBD would contribute to social capital but which might otherwise fail to be funded by private commercial interests.

**No major increase in pedestrian or bicycle access**
At this early stage there is not an effective plan to widen roads to allow comfortable pedestrian access or cycleways: The development of infrastructure that supports the concept of walkable communities whilst facilitating the efficient flow of traffic in the town centre is still of concern to urban designers (interviews Long and Smith 2006; 2008).

**Focus on business development:**
Planned developments and new buildings are all connected to consumption-based activities to help establish a strong economic base for the Borough.

**No attention paid to history and community arts**
The plans for the Borough’s district and local centres will be included in a proposed neighbourhood regeneration programme that was scheduled for commencement in 2008. However Croydon Borough neighbourhood regeneration strategies are not part of this research thesis. Historical and cultural contexts are however referred to in Alsop’s visionary Third City document (2007). Historical and heritage contexts are also part of Croydon council’s ongoing commitment to preserving Croydon’s heritage.
Discussion of the above points

The focus of the document is on the town centre and the efficient organisation of the public realm to facilitate connections between public transport and retail areas. These transit areas have the most minimal streetscape furniture during the thesis period (December 2001 – June 2008).

Throughout the whole observation process from late 2001 until 2008 there was very little evidence of major attempts to make better use of some areas of the public realm, especially larger areas of space between buildings. In a number of instances these spaces appeared as areas in which to throw rubbish rather than as social precincts. The existence of double yellow lines and high curbs also impacted upon the spatial feeling and qualities of the area.

There is little attempt to make use of the potential of small urban precincts for “infill development” (Swaback 2003) which has become an urban phenomenon since the late 1990s. This term can refer to building additions, totally new structures, leisure space such as parks or quality pedestrian and cycleways.

There appears to be no serious attempt to use these public realm areas for efficient spatial organisation of urban precincts for relaxation and relief from stress (Heimstra and McFarling 1974).

The following photos show there is more unrealised potential for the more effective use of areas of the public realm to enhance social connectedness; their possible contribution has been discussed in the observation analysis. The analysis also suggests that investment in these established precincts will add value to social capital since it would involve refurbishment of existing areas of the built environment without major re-development. Refurbishment would contribute to the enhancement of local facilities see below.

This is a picture of Croydon CBD showing urban space and square that is not being used to create options for relaxing time out, for socialization etc. (Photos C3, 17 and 35) taken from observation data where it is discussed in detail as a potential revitalised precinct.
(Photo: C3) Inner CBD area with unlimited refurbishment potential

(Photo: C17) CBD mall area ‘square’

(Photo: C35) The Fox and Hounds Pub

Two additional ‘inner-city’ (squares) precincts – each with huge potential as creative meeting places if they were revitalised with community involvement (note: historical gabled-roofed buildings in background and buildings with external balconies adjacent).
(Photo: C68) Inner-city, with large inner courtyard for artistic, creative and social activities

(Photo: C69) Inner courtyard contemporary site: where aesthetics meets a sense of place

The established and valuable architectural mix in these locations suggests there is great potential for developing areas where more informal social encounters between inhabitants and visitors can occur, particularly if they involve the local community in refurbishment programmes.

Regeneration strategies that involve refurbishment of existing areas of the built environment can be achieved without significant re-development and cost overruns and disruption to the social fabric of the town and inner town centre areas.
5 - Town Centre Regeneration: “Tired 60s icon becomes a 21st century beacon”

The nineteen page (2001-2) document discusses as part of its Vision2020, its objective of (sic) “transforming a tired 60s icon into a thrusting, confident 21st century European city”.

CDA Stage 1 cover-page and page one (1)

The inside cover page was written by Councillor Hugh Malyan; Leader of the Croydon Council

The text includes a portrait picture of the writer and is written in a language that is assertive and supportive towards re-development of the town centre of Croydon in the 21st century. Words such as; catalyst for changing, critically acclaimed, modernising, rejuvenation, better start now, and many schemes have a long gestation period, and we are not prepared to stand still, are representations of the ideological discourse of change.
It tells us that the plan is focussed on revitalising the built environment by transforming tired 60s modernist structures to 21st century late-contemporary structures. This single page introduction promotes the idea that the Croydon council is the catalyst behind these developments and has set the visionary agenda for the proposed regeneration of Croydon.

The inside cover page with purple background and white type, attributed to the leader of Croydon council, uses words such as “synonymous”, “catalyst”, “foresight”, and “imagination” which are intended to create a sense of excitement. The “we are not prepared to stand still” statement suggests that the Council and residents are united in visionary ideals to transform Croydon. By talking about the Council’s “hands-on intervention” the narrative expands the Council’s responsibility for creating a renewed urban centre, a people-friendly town buzzing with life for most of the day and night.

Page 2: the comments on page two were written by the panel of assessors appointed under the DETR Beacon Scheme

Croydon has been awarded Beacon Council Status for the year 2001 in recognition of its commitment, enthusiasm and positive approach towards Town Centre Regeneration of its Central Area.

The Panel of Assessors appointed under the DETR Beacon Scheme recognised Croydon’s “excellence in service delivery” by commenting as follows:

**Background**
Croydon town centre faced significant challenges in the 1980s and 1990s, with the growth of out-of-town shopping in the south and the expansion of adjacent zones in the area. The council has responded well to these challenges, presenting a strong vision for the centre working closely with local partners, especially the business sector, in addressing these concerns.

**A Vision for the town centre**
Through its “Vision 2002”, published in 1996, the council is clearly putting forward a vision of what it hopes to achieve, which is the creation of a mixed-use, culturally engaging area.

**Effective and appropriate consultation**
The Vision 2002 document included reference to a large number of consultation initiatives which have helped shape the vision for the town centre. These consultations were supplemented by another research, workshops, exhibitions, questionnaires and community panels.

**Adequate regeneration**
The project involved a consultation to produce an ambitious programme of regeneration. The project was based on the absorptive approach to new developments. Evidence was provided at a local level to the council to support the development of the regeneration strategy, which was later approved by the council. The strategy involved a number of initiatives to facilitate these changes, including planning initiatives, local area design and supplementary planning guidance. There was consultation to the scheme strategy, they had assigned a master planning approach rather than a piecemeal one, particularly in relation to car parking and road layout.

**Effective partnership working**
A tri-partite approach was emphasised, between the council, business and investors, and the community. This unique regeneration program was represented in the form of a Steering Board including Council, business and investors’ representatives, ensuring a cohesive and flexible working method. The Steering Board includes representatives, both internal and external, to guide implementation of the vision.

There are a number of major development projects which are beginning to shape the face of Croydon. Many of the officers are the result of the 90’s town model and are now under development. The council has become more evident in the field of 90’s regeneration.

**Page 2: the comments on page two were written by the panel of assessors appointed under the DETR Beacon Scheme**

As throughout this magazine format information booklet, the presentation of these pages is designed to engage the reader and convey the impression that the local government authority is not a remote institution but has engaged “A tri-partite approach ... between the council, business and investors, and the community” The impression given is that the Council’s approach is both responsive and personal.
Page 2 also uses a number of short paragraphs with such headings as “A Vision for the town centre”, “Effective and appropriate consultation”, “Plans for regeneration” and “Effective partnership working” which announce the success of their efforts. Finally the bottom right-hand corner finishes off with a small photograph of Nick Raynsford, Minister for London May 1997-September 1999 with the following comment:

It is nice to see...the business community, the voluntary sector, people involved in the community, coming together in order to try and create a better life for all of you here in Croydon. It is that sense of partnership, of working together in the common interest that is perhaps the most impressive thing of what has been achieved (Nick Raynsford).

This testament sums up the implications of the page as a whole, validating what has been said above.

V i s i o n 2 0 2 0 / C e n t r a l e

Confidence in Croydon’s retail sector has soared with confirmation that St Martin’s Property Group has signed House of Fraser to take the major anchor store in Centrale, the 400,000 sq ft new purpose-built shopping centre. The new store opens later this year and is expected to create 900 jobs. 2000. The entire 11,000 sq m project includes complete integration with the recently refurbished Central. In addition to the new department store, there will be over 150 small stores and a further 110 restaurants.

Particularly notable is that planning approval has been given for a terminus tunnel from and entrance of 600 build alongside Central in a 6-story complex, which is expected to become a major gateway to the town’s retail sector. St Martin’s has additionally agreed to spend nearly £200,000 on improvements in the surrounding area, including the landscaping of the central public amenity of Centrale.

Pages 3-4 feature a number of projects that are proposed, under construction, or completed and operating. Each project is presented in a small pastel-coloured photograph and the random juxtaposition of these eleven images around a central map of Croydon helps to create an impression of organised informality in an environment that is strongly focussed on a pro-development agenda. The balance of the booklet pages dynamically visualises the planned appearance of the various projects with mixtures of strong vibrant colours. Each building structure imposes itself on an enhanced skyline, which aims according to the text to:
Make Croydon different; improve the town’s external image; lift civic pride; boost the feeling of safety and security; promote good lighting practice (Vision2020 document).

As part of Croydon’s town centre renewal, the former Grant Brothers department store is to be refurbished as a family entertainment complex. The sketch depicts a building that appears vibrant. Although there are images of people outside the building, there are no outside seating areas shown to allow engagement with the surrounding streetscape. Instead, there is a single flower-seller shown to add a sense of street life.

CDA Stage 2

The brochure promotes a Vision2020 perspective. The “buzz” will be provided by Croydon’s fast emerging café society which has managed to turn some of their negatives into success stories. What is not stated is that, the cafés in question are almost all located within shopping centres rather than on public streets during the period 2001-2008.

In the fast emerging café society, is the reader to be entranced by drawings of people against the backdrop of a Victorian façade building, reminiscent of a Paris street scene? Unlike a Paris street or similar European city vista however, there are no overhanging awnings or outdoor seating arrangements. Does this suggest that nothing should prevent or interfere with the movement of people into the entertainment complex?
The following pages introduce the reader to photographs of look-alike modernist boxed and rectangular glass-fronted buildings, without redeeming features. As examples of container architecture, (Glancey 1998) they are significant but not as architecturally challenging as Alsop’s proposed contemporary designs (Third City document 2007).

The external finishes of present buildings may be more refined but still present a sanitised version of the urban form. Within the brochure there are few illustrations of anything to relieve this monotony: no building step-backs contoured, coloured features or natural circular form reliefs. The “Cityscape” building featured on Keeley Road with its sweeping rooftop and external balconies is a welcome exception to the banality of box-like building configurations. The majority of structures are without external balconies. Some do have internal balconies, such as the IYLO, Croydon’s new landmark building, which according to the document is a:

...stunning creation that is set to become an instantly recognisable addition to the town centre’s northern skyline where every apartment within the development has access to a recessed balcony, providing private amenity space.

Recessed balconies offer some engagement with the streetscape but still present a flat featureless building form. New developments proposed in the brochure are arranged like sentinels in straight lines imposing themselves on the centralised urban landscape. Alsop is also critical of “featureless building forms”, when he refers to building with fewer faceless office blocks (2007, p.9).
CDA Stage 3

The narratives used in this document do not represent what is planned to fulfil the stated aspirations of a confident 21st century European city. This is not helped by the phrase on the inside-cover of the document which refers to Croydon’s existing town centre as:

Traffic-filled canyons, nothing to retain the interest of shoppers and office workers after dark.

When this phrase is unpacked it raises two questions; why is the city centre filled with traffic after dark? Secondly the town centre of Croydon already has a huge “middle-market” shopping centre would the idea that more “upper-market” and “leisure-led” projects keep them in the city after dark (interview with Green 2006)?

Is there a mismatch between this and the reality of envisaged planning decisions in terms of car use in the town centre? In my interview with Long (2006) his view is reflected in the following comment:
There’s disorientation about where you are in the town centre.

In the draft plan for further alterations to the London Plan (Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London - September 2006) car parking is to be subject to new standards to prevent competition between centres based on parking availability and charges. Yet clearly what is envisaged in the Croydon plans is just this – a city centre that encourages cars by creating car-parking areas and management systems that facilitate the availability of parking places. This is precisely the kind of strategy that encourages traffic-filled canyons and militates against pedestrian access as drivers seek out parking places (New Practices in Urban Design 2003; Space Syntax 2006, May).

Car dependency will continue as a major issue for journeys to the city given the small population that currently resides there, which implies that most visitors are from outside of city centre precincts. Car dependency will decline given that the new Tram-Link system provides additional access for residents who do not reside in the city centre. Strategies to grow the town centre population are compromised because “there are some residential units planned but they don’t play a huge part in the city-centre regeneration proposal” according to Smith (interviewed in 2006 and 2008).

During interviews with the chief planner (Burton 2001) and the urban designer (Smith 2006) they expressed their admiration for European cities generally and Italian cities specifically. This is a common theme in planning literature which seeks to gain inspiration from the Italian city states of the Renaissance for the design of late 20th and early 21st century urban centres (Hall 1998; Putnam 1997). Yet in reality Tuscan cities admired for their walkable precincts do not allow the car to dominate the city; the centralised and enclosed shopping centre is also not a part of the Italian urbanised experience. Visitors who leave their vehicles outside the city centre are encouraged to walk and cycle between town centre precincts.

It is interesting that a ‘park and ride’ concept is proposed for the town centre in Third City document (2007) which demonstrates a large number of definitive urban design characteristics displaying a more social role for the town centre of Croydon. It encourages people out of their cars and provides greater opportunity for informal social encounters between citizens as they travel into and out of the town centre.
CDA-Stage 3 Analysis of leisure led projects

Will the idea of leisure-led projects as economic generators for Croydon’s town centre revitalisation also translate into social and cultural mixed-use areas that Croydon designers aspire to? The details of the actual plan, as distinct from the ideals which are espoused, come as a response to pressures from developers such as Lend lease and Minerva (the developer behind the Park Place plan). The interests of major developers are fundamentally aligned to the consumption of commodified goods and services.

Whilst Croydon has to be successful economically, it can still deliver a renaissance holistic perspective as promoted by the Partner in the Towns and Cities Project Urban renaissance Project (2001): This can be achieved by establishing strategic alliances between government, non-governments agencies, community groups and the privates sector. Strategic alliances that lead to targeted action-orientated CBD regeneration projects, based on refurbishment programmes.

Language and discourse in contemporary social life

Words introduced in Stage 1, such as; catalyst for change, critically acclaimed, modernising, rejuvenation, better start now, and many schemes have a long gestation period serve as instigators in the use of language as features of contemporary life. Concluding with narratives beginning with “we”: We (Croydon council) have brought back housing to the heart of the city centre; bars and clubs are booming with vitality and we have consulted widely...are representation of an ideological discourse of change where language use plays a significant role in Croydon councils objective to be the dominant identity concerning decisions about the form the city should take in the future.

When examined critically my analysis of this document (and others) partially explains the connections between language and other elements of social life in urbanised settings. Some institutions use language and other forms of semiosis such as visual images to communicate their objectives in their control of social life in contemporary society. In what Fairclough might refer to as to the increased importance of language in social life (Fairclough 1989) has meant there are more conscious attempts to shape it and control it to meet institutional or organisational objectives (Fairclough cited in Taylor, Wetherill and Yates 2001, pp.230-231). As demonstrated in the words used in the document and introduced in stage 1 The “we are not
prepared to stand still” statement suggests that the Council and residents are united in visionary ideals to transform Croydon.

The contribution of an analysis of photographic images adds support to the use of language to influence the outcomes of urban renewal. This can be explained by the inclusion of a dramatically illuminated CBD skyline as a representation of the dominant identity of the built environment transformed because of the inclusion of lighting.

This is achieved by restructuring the relationships of power and knowledge of what is required in “transforming a tired 60s icon into a thrusting, confident 21st century European city” (Malyan 2003). So that it points to Croydon council and its development partners as the only ones having the authority, the knowledge and the understanding of what is required in the regeneration of the CBD, and how to deliver it. The outcome of regeneration proposals are therefore dominated by the interests of developers rather than the ideals of planners and designers as representatives and partners of a wider Borough community.

6 - Third City document 21st century vision for Croydon
This A5 booklet of 72 pages introduces a 21st century vision for Croydon. The booklet is an extension of a presentation given by Will Alsop for Croydon Council in January 2007 when he announced the beginning of a process of community engagement and design. Ten months later this culminated in a plan for the town centre. The A5 booklet discusses the stages of community engagement such as a series of five public workshops. It presents the processes through which the architect was able to gain access to ideas, designs and visions documented in drawings and statements from the workshops. Third City document as with the other five documents has been reviewed in association with the Croydon Economic Strategy Report (2008), and this economic report represents item 16 in the chapter 1 literature review.
THIRD CITY

"In dreams begin responsibility"

ALSOP

CROYDON COUNCIL

A 21st CENTURY VISION FOR CROYDON

A presentation at the Thornton Hall by Will Alsop in January 2003 announced the beginning of a process of consultation, engagement and design. Ten months later this has culminated in a plan for the town centre which is rooted in local determinations and aspirations. The heart of the town centre is to be a successful commuter, residential and retail community centred on a cultural centre and debating forum as a place to celebrate the town's history, its aspirations and achievements.

The work carried out by Alsop for Croydon Council covers within the wider framework of the Croydon Masterplan, a new Acton Plan. This is itself due for completion in the middle of 2005 and will provide an overall Development Plan Document for the town centre.
CDA Stage 1 Overview of the complete document: This is an inclusive Vision document and includes the following elements

Public consultation process pages 10-13; design and development protocols pages 14-19 (includes the city skyline and greenspace encircling the town; expanded further under emerald necklace on pages 32-33; tearing down the barriers (public transportation systems) pages 20-31 (includes page 54 shopping and living is concerned with the impassibility of Wellesley street, and emerald necklace pages 32-33; balance of the brochure is dedicated to what the concept of the Third City means for the residents of Croydon and plans for West Croydon page 52 proposed regeneration.

Pages 58-69, the University quarter; public perceptions and implementation

The journey for the reader begins with the phrase “A 21st Century Vision for Croydon” closely followed by (on the opposite page) an aerial view of an enhanced Croydon city centre complete with the new proposed urban development superimposed on the existing urban landscape. New building forms designed to create a vibrant architectural impression.

Throughout this magazine format information booklet, the presentation is designed to engage the reader and convey the impression that the local government authority of the London Borough Council of Croydon has formed a beneficial and strategic partnership with a design professional (Will Alsop), and that this relationship has translated into a document that
conveys the future aspirations of the town of Croydon. The booklet sets out to promote the view that the council and its consultants are not a remote bureaucratic institution but are responsive and personalized in their approach.

This impression is conveyed first of all through the magazine format which resembles a promotional booklet for a major architectural development. The document states that the focus will be on new buildings that “would be significantly smaller scale” although the picture on page 25 shows otherwise. The reader is also introduced to a close-up of town members and Will Alsop engaged in a community-consultation workshop process. The 72 pages include 28 pages of written data, although many of these pages are not full-text (the text narrative does not occupy the whole, or indeed half of the page). The balance of the remaining pages consists of photographs, drawings and images of the proposed development. The juxtaposition of these images creates an impression of a dynamic and well-thought-through urban design that will provide specific benefits for the people of Croydon. The text includes calculated informality to suggest an approachable council and a participatory design process:

Croydon was a brave new world but it’s degenerating - there’s no encouragement for activity … Determination and courage will produce a city that fully realises its potential as a successful commercial, residential and retail community respected as a business centre and sought after as a place to live and visit (Third City document 2007).

The following two pages are dedicated to city-centre drawings. An overview follows on the left hand side suggesting to the reader the difficulties of turning ideas into images. The phrase describing the workshops with the consultant as “creative and fast-moving discussions” sets the scene for solutions that may be beyond the understanding of the general public who were not part of this process. The opposite page contains a series of narratives that appears to have been designed to create a balanced impression of neighbourhood small business coexisting with larger commercial activities and with arts and cultural precincts. Language creates a picture of students from Croydon University in a cobbled street with a busy market atmosphere. Across the bottom of the two pages is a futuristic vision for a newly created urban regeneration.

Page 10 is entitled Public Consultation
Beginning with the word “Process” this section tells the story of the five workshops carried out over an eight week period. Following this are ideas from the workshops set to paper in drawings and statements, Will Alsop makes use of these dreams and aspirations of a sample of Croydon citizens to perfect his vision for Croydon. Page 16 sets the scene of the architect at work:

Chain-smoking Will Alsop in his Battersea studio (South London) with two bottles of red wine in front of him, and his drawings scattered all over the table (Third City document 2007, p. 16).

Page 14 is entitled Design Development: (there are no pictures on this page)
The sub-page heading is titled “Alchemy”
“Alchemy” used in Third City document means discovery of the elixir of life, and what is the relationship of the phrase “Contemporary landscaping very high buildings – 70 storeys high” to this word? The opposite page features a map with scribbles and light-red lines – a work in progress.

The participatory narrative is also further emphasised in this text:

With their ideas and wishes (the peoples of Croydon) voiced and committed to paper, town centre users and other stakeholders could feel assured that their views had been taken into consideration and that they had been able to play an active part in exploring how best to optimise Croydon’s present and future potential.

...and located another two page spread, the reader is introduced to Alsop’s magisterial summary of the potential of Croydon as a ‘great city’:

The dense urban grain of the great cities of the world is balanced by the presence of landscape at their periphery and water in their midst, with most cities sitting on the water’s edge, or having a great river running through their centre. Croydon is perfectly poised between the urban thrill of central London and the rural idyll of the countryside to the south and

...creating a stimulating environment of juxtaposition; green space, bustling streets, tranquillity, exuberance - in short, the noise of running water within the noise of a busy street; the encompassment of those qualities that makes the great town and city great (Third City document 2007).
On page 18-19, the photograph below shows a vast expanse of close-cut grassland, ordered with a number of goalposts scattered in their midst. There is a single person complete with two dogs in the foreground and the city skyline in the far background.

Away from the greenspace issue another page brings the reader’s attention to the railway tracks impasse:

Between them (the railway tracks) these unforgiving interventions have created a town where lives that should be lived within the cohesive whole of the town centre are instead lived in a series of parallel environments.

The text continues with a single paragraph on East Croydon Station on its own page. City parks also have their own page and again a single paragraph is allocated. Two more pages are devoted to an interpretation of a modernist structure. The building is set back three-quarters of the way up, just enough to suggest that it is not a modernist rectangular box. A single sentence piece of prose across the left-hand page completes the picture. Another page mentions the Wandle; the river that never was for many people is soon to be re-engineered and will emerge as part of the city landscape. Two pictures on the opposite side provide the reader with views of a culverted river. Croydon’s offer to the ecology will be a little stream that one day may grow into a river and take its place as an element in Croydon’s ecological renewal.

Pages 20-31 Tearing down the barriers (public transportation systems) includes page 54
The narrative continues with tearing down the barriers, discussing the need to reinvigorate and reconnect Croydon’s old buildings and surrounds as a part of a mixed Urban Regeneration.
It also considers the problems posed by four lanes of traffic, and stresses the importance of humans over the car, informing the reader that “cars must take their proper place in the hierarchy”.

The opposite page provides the reader with a pencilled, coloured map of the centre and immediate area of Croydon. Wandle Park sits almost in the middle of the grey-map, marked in light green.

On the next page are two short paragraphs which discuss Wellesley Road as it slices its way through the town:

Its spatial prominence creates a barrier that is virtually impregnable.

CDA Stage 2

Page 10 Public Consultation

It implies that the process of public consultation is about engagement with the community concerning a vision for the regeneration of the town centre. The following page shows happy smiling Croydon citizens engaged in the public consultation workshops to create an impression of strategic public involvement. The reality is that engagement with the community is restricted to participation with occupiers, investors and developers in determining what form the vision would take.

Page 14 Design Development

While the word “Alchemy” seems out of place in a document about city-centre renewal it is clearly used here to convey the message that what is proposed is a visionary perspective that goes beyond the usual and every day. The ideas behind the phrase (sic) “Contemporary landscaping very high buildings – 70 storeys high”. Are these buildings representative of the true the meaning of life?

Pages 20-31 Tearing down the barriers (public transportation systems). Page 54 refers the Shopping and living (The Whitgift Centre) – insofar there is easier access to shopping areas

I suggest the following sentence requires clarification because the freed-up space will be used for buildings rather than open public space according to Third City document:
The narrowing of the road and the disappearance of the underpass will provide more opportunities for additional land for new buildings (Third City document 2007).

The narrowing of the road and the disappearance of the underpass is intended to provide additional land for new buildings as well as easier access the Whitgift. Sennett’s view is this “leads to the intensification of buildings at the edge of roads” (1993, p.49); something that Croydon’s CB should be avoiding if walkable precincts are to be achieved, and in my response to my interview with Long and Smith (2006):

...have you ever tried to drive around Croydon...it is maddening.

Efficient road systems are not solved by reducing the number of traffic lanes that exist in a traffic system, and the inclusion of traffic lights will impede traffic-flow. Perhaps a solution for Wellesley Road as a major piece of infrastructure is to retain the dual carriageway and create a ceiling above the roadway with a large garden setting on top of it with piazzas. This would create additional areas of the public realm as well as space for new commercial and residential buildings, and this type of smaller-scale project can be undertaken with community assistance for possible garden and water features. The new above-space can leased out to eatery and café vendors – it would also be an appropriate place for popups.

While Alsop’s proposed design raises Croydon’s profile as a city with a dynamic future it also raises some other fundamental issues.

Will it also serve as an opportunity to engage with a European city design format favoured by Croydon council’s urban designers (interview with Smith and Victor 2006) and other UK urban planning agencies (Town and Cities Project 2001; URBED 2008)? How valid are Alsop’s assurances that his designs are what people want as an “appropriate highly managed public realm” (2007, p.68). Does the community want its public realm managed and controlled by the private sector (Harvey cited in Low and Smith 2006, pp. 17-19)?

See the following comment:

A space with appropriate highly managed public realm in the right setting with development is now becoming viable. Against this backdrop there needs to be clear public will, both at the Council leadership level and at the
Council officer level to endorse the Alsop Vision and to work alongside the strategic owners to bring forth this new phase of development (Third City document 2007, p. 68).

Certainly Croydon’s town centre in this respect needs a ‘wow factor’ to invigorate its potential:

The Alsop Vision has the potential to bring Croydon into forefront of the public consciousness. With the Vision in place and as the planning/development impetus is maintained, Croydon will be moving up the agenda. It will only take two or three corporate moves to provide this catalyst for change (Third City document 2007, p. 68).

Perhaps some sections of the community welcome the influence of late modernist designs and urban environments as representative of the more creative elements of corporate life (Florida, 2002) because their clean lines and dynamic architectural expressions indicate a willingness to challenge the future while turning their back on the past.

Is a twenty year planning agenda looking too far into the future for a city centre that has been left stagnating in the 60s and 70s, and may still be waiting for another ten years for significant indicators of urban renewal?

Page 52 Renewal of West Croydon as part of an inner-city urban regeneration strategy scheduled to start in 2010.

WEST CROYDON

A New Balance Between North and South

The area around West Croydon station has a sad and dilapidated presence. North of town is mostly suffering, whereas to the south are the Surrey hills and the Downs. But the arrival of the East London line in 2010 will bring even better connections to the city and new prosperity to this district in particular. Alongside the new station will come new developments, with retail, offices and dining (a nightlife economy) playing an important part in this.

“A Croydon made whole – not divided between north and outer suburban south...”
The area around West Croydon station has a sad and dilapidated presence. North of the town is mostly suburbs, whereas to the South are the Surrey hills and Downs. The arrival of the East London line in 2010 will bring better connections to the City in general, and regeneration and new prosperity to this district in particular. Alongside this new station will come new developments, with restaurants, bars and cinemas (a night time economy) playing an important part in this. What will happen to the ‘Fox and Hounds’ (Photos C34 and C35) across the road? Perhaps it could form the central part of an alcohol-free mixed cultural precinct, linking language as a part of a social reforming agent? As far as Croydon regeneration is concerned is it a commodity that ensures new social processes are associated with alcohol related activities in the proposed redevelopment of West Croydon.

The central aspect of urban spatial design will be achieved through pedestrianisation of precincts; “join up central and west Croydon for pedestrians” (Third City document 2007, p.54), therefore reversing Croydon’s image “as a bit of a Joe Average sort of place” (Interview with Green 2006). Although my interview with Green (2006) reflected his views on improving the retail image of the town centre by the inclusion of more up-market shops, the idea of connecting East and West Croydon by walkable precincts enhances the opportunity for social connectedness through the added opportunity of informal social encounters. Can’t that be achieved without the destructive element of new developments?

West Croydon also shares with East Croydon the beginning of Croydon’s Borough neighbourhoods. East Croydon marks the beginning of more suburban middle-class neighbourhoods whereas West Croydon has higher density precincts with more flats and terraces (Interview with Long 2006; 2008).

Page 54 Shopping and living (The Whitgift Centre)
This page is related to about tearing down the barriers (public transportation systems) (pages 20-31) and improving the accessibility of the Whitgift shopping centre and enlivened because of it. What it really implies is access to the retail sector will be easier once the impassibility of Wellesley road is solved.

Page 58 University Quarter; Pages 62-64 Public perceptions and early wins, and Pages 64-69 Implementation
The narratives used have very little substance; they are inconclusive because they are no time
lines established for commencement and completion of projects. This is a visionary document particularly with regard to the inclusion of Fairfield Halls as one of the sites of the Croydon University, and is therefore reflective of the documents role in creating an interest in redevelopment of the CBD. Other documents have been referred to obtain a clearer picture of the proposal to regenerate the CBD. These include the preceding five documents and documents such as The Croydon Economic Development Report et al. (2008).

CDA Stage 3

The document refers to participation but it is restricted to the interests of business and developer’s. The design for Croydon’s CBD reflects the role of developers as the main agents of spatial change. Throughout this document and others, language figures as a commodity where its purpose is in reshaping the role of cities in contemporary society. Where part of that role is represented by built environments that facilitate the activities associated with single-dimensional urban policies Tallon (2010) where the emphasis on a property-based approach, a focus on business development or limited social programmes. Successful urban regeneration requires the connection to be made between physical, economic and social dimensions, according to Tallon (2010, p.266). Not as developments featured below.

The use of the above word and the following phrase appears to be deliberate and is intended to create a certain impact on the reader and are related to a modernist vision of a city comprising of (sic) “vertical high-rise structures” (Madanipour 1996).

The planning ideas that are proposed for Croydon town centre (including East and West Croydon) are there to help Croydon meet its challenging future. The regeneration of East and West Croydon at the same time as the town centre has the potential to make Croydon a great Third City.

According to Croydon Economic Development Strategy report (June, 2008), as a key economic hub within the greater South East, Croydon has the potential to achieve significant and sustained growth, developing into a highly competitive economic location of national and international renown. After Croydon’s general economic stagnation in recent times, the timing is now right for a re-invigoration of Croydon’s economic position based on an inclusive, partnership-oriented approach to economic development. This timing is also extremely
dependent on global funding constraints. Croydon’s urban designers have also commented on this, particularly regarding ongoing development control plans and funding allocations.

Alsop has also been cited by his critics for unrealistic design and cost overruns as demonstrated by the cancellation in June 2004 of plans to build a "Fourth Grace" on Liverpool’s Pier Head waterfront. As noted above, Alsop regards his architectural heroes as Le Corbusier and Mies Van der Roe, who left an unwelcome legacy for residents in later versions of their modernist buildings. These tall, flat, boxed, straight-lined buildings still remain a feature of many city skylines after their original construction in the mid-20th century. They represent all that is wrong with architecture in the 20th century (Hall, 1989) and are in opposition to a building that displays the natural fluidity of organic features in its design.

Glancey comments on the damage that Le Corbusier did to “civilization” (1998). Le Corbusier is accused of:

(sic) Trying to destroy civilization in the 20th century with designs of towers of concrete and steel and ambitions that have witnessed the unprecedented demolition of historic buildings, streets and squares (Glancey 1998, p.68).

Richard Sennett comments:

…and of course it is Mies, archon of modernism, who is now accused of fathering a soulless environment of glass towers in which men and women are cut off from each other as from the outside: Mies, the father of visual solitude (1990, p. 111).

Alsop’s idea of an architectural vision should be seen in the light of Le Corbusier’s and van der Rohe’s past impositions on the built environment. The Alsop vision recognises the inclusion of “courtyards and piazzas” (Third City document 2007, p.24), as an opportunity to engage with a European city design format favoured by Croydon council’s urban designers. When this will occur in Croydon’s CBD regeneration is debatable.

As indicated in CDA-Stage 2 it also serves as part of Alsop’s European influenced vision for the town centre; however a focus on modernist inspired architecture will not deliver this European vision unless refurbishment and revitalisation programmes are implemented in the short term. In other words the majority of existing buildings should be retained in the town centre and
remodelled rather than key sites becoming available for redevelopment which is another term for the demolition of existing buildings.

The title of ‘Third City’ is also an important central feature of Alsop’s visionary plan. The implication is an independent city with its own history and cultural identity; an identity sought by Croydon’s urban designers. As a core element in its regeneration Croydon seeks to regain prominence as a major retail and commercial identity and not just another London Borough. The developers are promoting a sense of urgency if necessary investment decisions are to be made. Many projects however are not due to start for over ten years, meaning that it is extremely difficult to predict the market in which this plan could be realized (Third City document 2007).

Ultimately the Third City narrative encourages the residents of Croydon to demonstrate determination and courage in moving towards a corporate urban development solution because that will make Croydon city attractive to investors. The brochure presents the city’s exciting future as being linked to investment in commercial precincts and buildings associated with profitable consumerism.

The narratives used in the brochure are used to convince residents and investors that for Croydon to be known as a place to do business (Stapleton 2009) it needs an architect like Alsop to achieve it. The council in its “Future is now” document (Croydon council 2009), promotes the concept of a “no-holds barred” approach to regeneration as to what Croydon might look like if an architect like Alsop was given the existing town centre as a blank canvass for its Vision2020 to regenerate its town centre.

Alsop was chosen because he has a reputation for coming up with something out of the ordinary in architectural design. In devising his vision for Croydon, Will Alsop has dared Croydon to dream about its future as a CBD site akin to a blank canvas. The timing of this exercise is impeccable according to its Future is now document (2009):

Not just in terms of preparing our new development plan but also when key sites are available for redevelopment.
Through individual words and narratives suggested and contained in council sponsored documents infer Croydon’s CBD presents as a centre without development constraints. With key sites ready for redevelopment and with designs and functions decided upon by a few stakeholders and an architect who can help Croydon fulfil its Third City vision.

Text used to describe the development of university quarter; public perceptions and early wins, and the implementation of projects are designed to renew the faith to maintain and promote high levels of motivation in the Third City regeneration proposal.

The inclusion of language as examples of progressive indicators in contemporary social processes, and images of dramatic new building forms represent a strategic objective by council to demonstrate to investors and residents that it (only) has knowledge and the power to transform Croydon into a vibrant 21st century Third City: Where the elixir of life is achieved by constructing high-rise buildings in the CBD.

CONCLUSION
The documents I selected for critical discourse analysis were analysed featuring themes contained in the other three methods of data collection and analysis of that data. The focus of the documents chosen for critical discourse analysis was on a 21st Century Vision for Croydon.

The themes featured in documents chosen for my analysis; include community participation, expansion of retail and commercial facilities, hints of cultural inclusions, a modernist architectural solution and a suggestion of a European-inspired town centre landscape.

My analysis of the five Croydon documents indicated that they are inter-linked, using texts explicitly or implicitly ‘in dialogue with’ other texts (Taylor, Wetherill and Yates 2001). The documents followed an agenda based upon the construction of new buildings rather than the refurbishment or the revitalisation of the present built environment; promoting a modernist architectural high-rise solution for the CBD of Croydon.

There are parts of documents, and this especially applies to Third City document (2007), where there are smatterings of implications that a town centre should represent a European city approach. If this were to happen at all it certainly would not occur in the next ten or more years from 2012. The high cost of funding major redevelopment projects still requires the
demolition and clearance of existing sites if major refurbishment is not undertaken as central part of a town centre regeneration strategy.

There are however European themes that presently enhance informal encounters between citizens, where the ‘jewel in the crown’ is the Tramlink light rail system the centrepiece and partially completed element of Croydon’s proposal to regenerate the town centre, has been promoted as the stimulus for the beginning of a “thrusting, confident 21st century European city” as proposed by councillor Malyan (2003).

My research conclusion of these documents (The Town Centre Regeneration document, Third City document and the Urban Design document et al) shows that the future of Croydon’s central area (The Vision2020 1998) should be focussed on community led regeneration of existing usable spaces, including those between buildings, streets and squares, and even private forecourts.

Overall the documents are obsessed with getting commercial interests involved in reviving the city. That uses linguistic signs (words and longer expressions) as materials of ideology (Yates et al. 2001, p233), in pursuit of promoting a redevelopment agenda. While this may make sense in terms of the limited funds available to government, it does restrict options, and there are implications for the future shape of Croydon and for social capital.
Chapter 5 Berlin-Neukölln data chapter

Collection of, and the analysis of data concerning urban regeneration of Croydon Town Centre: Research data drawn from observations, photographs, interviews and government sponsored documents

5.1 Observational data, supported by photographic evidence Neukölln Conclusion: Overall analysis of Neukölln (including: Gropiusstadt and Schiller Promenade)

Observational data

Introduction

My first visit in December 2001 to the Neukölln suburb of Berlin for the purpose of carrying out part one of a four-tiered method consisting of observation, photographic evidence, interviews and the analysis of government sponsored documents. Field observation and an accompanying photographic review of the CBD has been analysed using the O.R.I.D system; and specifically for photographic analysis I have used semiotics of photography by Sonesson (1989) as a further reference guide. A full description of the research methodology and methods used in the research is contained in chapter 2.

Four visits were made to Neukölln and nearby suburbs in December 2001; June 2004; May 2006 and April 2008, for the formal purposes of observation and other methods of collecting raw data. Two of the neighbourhood districts of Neukölln; Gropiusstadt and Schiller Promenade are also featured in the observation progress – as they are in the other four methods of raw data collection.

One of the objectives of the observation and photographic process was to help identify the challenges faced by their urban designers who were responsible for the implementation of a planned regeneration programme entitled “Social City”. The title of Social City is not to be confused only as a strategy consisting of social intervention programmes. Social City is an integrated approach designed to help solve the social and economic disintegration of working class neighbourhoods of Berlin consisting of building and social programmes, for recipients of social housing precincts.

The observation presented below represents how things are (how they look) at the moment and throughout periods during the eight years of the research. A general awareness of how
some people use their neighbourhoods was carried out, however not insofar as seeking the views of town and neighbourhood users or trying to determine the full extent of life in these types of urban settings.

My interpretation of the present condition of the neighbourhood district of Neukölln is based primarily upon the analysis of the views of experts involved in the implementation of the regeneration programmes. They are based upon all data collected; they are based upon part of an insightful analysis of some the ideas and conclusions in the literature review and finally they represent the views of the candidate – considering all of the above.

**Arrival in Berlin**

I left the Berlin airport (Tegal-terminal) around 8pm with light snow falling and located the bus terminal that serves the S-Bahn (surface rail system) with a map of Berlin and I was able to find the nearest rail stop on the map. I hoped that this rail-station would have a connection that would take me to my hotel. At the bus terminal I spoke in German to a man who looked as if he would help me find the correct bus stop. He was aged in his mid to late thirties and he told me he was returning home after a late afternoon session at the airport. He directed me to the correct bus stop and we boarded the bus together; this was when the grumpy bus driver told me to ‘quickly’ put my baggage away. After several other directions my travel companion showed me the correct underground station and platform for the inner city hotel location where I would be staying during my visit. With my bus driver experience behind me, the cleanliness of the station and streetscape activity I started to feel quite safe. I could not explain this particular phenomenon at the time - and my reflections later provided conflicting views.

The next day I had my meeting with Holger Hübner of the Social City department. After our meeting and a review of the Social City concept and urban neighbourhood regeneration programmes I followed his advice and I visited the south eastern area of Berlin and including Kreuzberg and an area called Neukölln. It is in these areas where a number of neighbourhood regeneration programmes under the Social City banner were being implemented. The area is well served by public transport, such as S-Bahn/U-Bahn (underground and surface rail systems) and buses. The bus passed through Kreuzberg which is also known as “Turkish Town”). In 1984 the Internationale Bauausstellung (Building Exhibition) was held in Kreuzberg (URBED 2008).
Over the next 7-10 years I was going to learn a lot about the significance of Kreuzberg and its role in the revitalisation of working class areas of Berlin. I had known of the existence of this suburb some ten years previously when I introduced Berlin’s IBA urban regeneration project (URBED 2008) to my building and civil engineering students at technical college. A similar situation occurred in the period 2006-9 in my presentations to university students on the subject of sustainable building practices in the UK and mainland Europe.

I left the bus for the nearest U-Bahn station (underground rail system) and continued the journey on to Neukölln on the U-Bahn. It was in 2004 Holger took me to the Neukölln district of Schiller Promenade (featured in part 2) a government designated area of deprived needs in 2004 where I met the neighbourhood manager Kerstin (2004; 2006). In just a few days I had walked from district to district in Neukölln using Karl Marx Strasse as a central point area and suburbs to the north and north west of Neukölln such as Kreuzberg (similar in some respects to Croydon’s northern suburbs – where the opportunity for regeneration is planned for 2008).

The following photographs represent a snapshot of working class districts similar to Neukölln that I encountered during this visit including a picture of a typical Kreuzberg street scene below.

(Photo: N1) Borders of Nord-Neukölln: A typical high density Kreuzberg street scene
In Berlin I re-visited inner-city suburbs (Kreuzberg, Wedding, and others) that lie closest to the Berlin wall prior to its removal where a natural organic form of urban regeneration had evolved over decades. In this respect the suburb of Kreuzberg (Sheridan 2005) being an example of the positive effects of an artist-involved urban revival and vibrant multicultural contexts appeared to have re-invigorated a deprived area. In recent times however a number of different perspectives have developed particularly for Neukölln – the issue of gentrification for example, and although this has not been raised specifically by my interviewees the question of mobility factors and some of its outcomes has (interview with Franke, 2006), and in this respect gentrification is one of the outcomes of mobility (URBACT 2005). A situation that has become more problematic in recent times, the following is an insight but not a conclusion into the extent of the recent influx of new residents:

In the last few years, Berlin's gritty Neukölln district has become a hotbed of the creative class and nightlife, attracting students, artists and bourgeois bohemians. But some worry that the neighbourhood is changing too quickly and that locals are being pushed out. Now affluent foreigners from Europe and America are being blamed for rising rents (Moises Mendoza 2008).

These areas are presently undergoing building refurbishment and new residential housing
construction and some of the Neukölln side-streets were also being refurbished. There were several council employees who were replacing old with new small cobblestones, as well as placing new stones in areas where old stones were missing. I asked one of them if this was a general maintenance situation and he replied “that it was part of a general area-refit” involving sidewalks, community parks and play areas.

One of these neighbourhood areas is Schiller Promenade which is a Social City designated area of deprived need and the subject of part of my research. A photographic and commented review follows this section.

The residents in partnership with the Social City department are working to turn this working-class neighbourhood of Neukölln into an area with its own sense of place to make up for the area’s high population density and demand for social space. As a neighbourhood area with a population of 20,000 its improved local facilities in park-settings have been attractive to new residents from the creative classes as discussed by Florida (2002) and Sheridan (2005).

(Photo: N4) Park running between terraced social housing precincts in Schiller Promenade

On the next page I took photographs of cobblestones in a large pile ready for replacement as part of a Social City neighbourhood precinct refurbishment project that includes the construction of new residential apartments with external balconies and Velux windows on top floors. The inclusion of large trees with their canopies unaffected by surrounding structures aids in a sense of place.
As a repeat of December 2001, in my 2004 visit I first went to Holger’s office, and together we went by Bus to Neukölln and then walked to the neighbourhood district of Schiller Promenade and to the local neighbourhood management office to meet with Kerstin Schmiedeknecht. Kerstin who is an architect is the local neighbourhood manager for Social City. After meeting with Kerstin and discussions about her role as neighbourhood manager the three of us visited the church coffee meeting place as shown in part two of this observation on the neighbourhood of Schiller Promenade.

After this meeting I returned with Holger and then I walked back to my hotel via more inner city areas. The next day I repeated my visit (as I did in 2001) on my own to Neukölln. On this occasion I travelled by tram. Upon arrival in Neukölln I decided to go back to Schiller Promenade where I undertook another photographic and observation session which helped form part of an overall observational and photographic review of Schiller promenade – which follows in part 1.

( Photo: NS) New five storey residential apartments with velux roof-windows in Neukölln

There were a lot of new building and refurbishment activities going on in the Schiller Promenade area of Neukölln as indicated in the above photograph. As I entered another side street a vista of mixed spatial opportunities and streetscape with wide sidewalks appeared - so that the trunks of trees did not further compress the urban terrain.
I walked back to central Neukölln arriving at the other end of Karl Marx Strasse (a well-known traditional Berlin high-street shopping) with sidewalks that were not as wide as other areas of Berlin. In the main street a local shopkeeper was fixing an umbrella for a customer. He appeared to refuse any payment. I noticed the large, clear and uncluttered window display.

I continued further along Karl Marx Strasse There was a local greengrocer located further down the street.
Further on towards the Town Hall a small group of about six Turkish men were each enjoying a cup of Turkish coffee in one of the many traditional and more modern arcades located off the main street of Neukölln (Karl Marx Strasse) – the outside-inside location providing a break from the busy streetscape. The use of natural stone on the floor rather than concrete or clay pavers is still a feature of modern arcades as the photo below shows.

As the photograph below shows mini-pocket gardens are one of the features of Neukölln’s CBD arcade-precincts.
A pocket-garden in an arcade off the high street in Neukölln

And in the same arcade I am enjoying a cup of coffee and a piece of cake, my photograph taken by a fellow diner on the table opposite me.

I am enjoying coffee and cake in the same Karl Marx Strasse arcade

The same arcade provided me with a glimpse of the banality of an outside modernist vista, a vista that appeared out of character with its more traditional surrounds.
When I returned to the main street I saw a ‘Scotsman’ wearing a kilt and long socks - the wide spatial organisation that includes light-rail and soft-pavement-edges allowing easier transition between sidewalk and street for bike riders of the working-class area are evident in the following photograph.

In the clearing weather there was plenty of space on the sidewalk for a group of adults and young children to enjoy the outside vista next to the many street arcades in Neukölln.
The next morning around 7am it was cool and crisp, and my view from my bathroom on the third level was of a darkened inner courtyard of the eight storey Pension. This building linked with another building to form an inner-square shaped space for trees. There are no balconies in the inner area and it only receives direct sunlight for a short period during the day. The breakfast room also faced the inner courtyard. This room was busy with the sounds of people trying to decide what to eat from the breakfast bar. As always freshly brewed German coffee tasted good. After breakfast and just after 8am I left the pension with enough time to make my appointment with Franziska in Neukölln using the public transport system. I chose to go by the underground system on this particular day and I purchased an all-day ticket from a newsagent located in the underground station forecourt. There are three underground and surface rail stations that service Neukölln’s Karl Marx Strasse and other stations service the outer fringes of Neukölln including Gropiusstadt located on the southern side. I have used bus, street trams, surface rail and underground public transport systems to travel to and from Neukölln – I have also walked there from adjoining suburbs.

After a short walk along Karl Marx Strasse I arrived at the Neukölln town hall with its imposing stone stairs - the elevated entrance created an impression of space and the building spoke of a long history. The use of natural stone in the large elevated ground floor foyer of the Neukölln town hall added to this effect. I approached the reception area presented myself to the security operative and I was directed to the second floor and Franziska’s office. Franziska briefed me on aspects of the current intervention programmes and some of the challenges implementing stimulus programmes.
As I left the town hall I stood on the top of the steps and looked towards the town hall forecourt; where an enclosed space bordered by huge plant boxes made of natural stone (rather than concrete) provided the visitor with a feeling of space that is enhanced by the inclusion of community seating and the ‘Berlin Bear’ in the forecourt added to a sense of place. There are examples of the multicultural “Berlin Bear” throughout Berlin: in shopping precincts, neighbourhood districts, parks and plazas. The concept of using a friendly animal as a shared-community asset is also one promoted by Liverpool council in the UK and represents part of a European-wide community engagement programme (Liverpool City Council 2007).

(Photo: N15) The square outside of Neukölln town hall

The Berlin Bear is analysed as public art in chapter 4.

Cake and coffee beckoned - this is the view from the cake shop’s interior and we can note that the counter and display cabinets are actually in the street rather than being behind a closed window pane.

(Photo: N16) A cake shop with pavement cabinets in Karl Marx Strasse Neukölln
The lady in the cake-shop enquired:

Where are you from...are you on holiday? Yes I replied and added - has it changed in the last few years? And her response:

Neukölln is so interesting, it is vibrant, lots seemed to be happening so much different since the end of the Berlin wall, business is good, lots of different people live here, and we have visitors that include artists, politicians who want to spend money here to create something, and I am not sure what? I like it here, the rents are cheap and it is easy to live here, and close enough to Berlin-Mitte (2008).

This comment is different from experiences of Neukölln in 2001 that Dr Kolland refers to:

As characteristic of most of them are the problematic substance of the buildings; problems within the local economy; empty, unrentable flats and business spaces; or high fluctuation; high unemployment rates; high percentages of potential customers on public welfare; high rates of non-German residents existing on low social and economic levels (Kolland September, 2001).

After the coffee and cake I re-crossed the high street for my 11am appointment with Dr Kolland (see analysis of interview chapter 5). I continued to walk further down the high street and I decided to re-cross the street and to deviate off the high street into a side street where the sterility of the concreted public domain in this area was not helped by the graffiti. I saw a worker rendering the façade of a building and I asked him if it was part of a government funding and his answer was:

There are a number of small programmes (mini-refurbishment and modernisation) that are occurring in Neukölln in order to improve the quality of the area and residents (property owners) are encouraged to carry out their own refurbishment projects with the aid of the local neighbourhood office who provide building trades advice.
Neukölln is becoming an attractive area to live and work from because of its low-cost housing and area refurbishment programmes and its collection of small galleries; flea markets; artistic and cultural spaces.

(Photo: N17) Maintenance work on a graffiti-covered wall

(Photo: N18) Neuköllner Oper (opera) with a large internal arcade to accommodate mini-galleries and cinemas

(Photo: N19) Neuköllner Oper inner-courtyard precinct with coffee area
Schiller Promenade central parkway and timber park-seats

A man was decorating the outside of his caravan with stick-on stencils. I stopped to chat to him about his project, and he mentioned the high cost of the stencils. I asked his permission to take his photo and he was happy to do so, framed by the old church in the background, the refurbished elegant iron balconies just before the church and the tree-lined street.

A resident refurbishing his van in the street

My visit to Gropiusstadt Neukölln, a public housing (Wohngebäude) district of Neukölln

Gropiusstadt is a satellite district in the suburb of Neukölln and was built in the 1960s and 1970s – however it is an area that could benefit from the lessons learnt from Croydon’s city centre regeneration since they both have the largest retail area for their respective cities. Gropiusstadt’s most prominent feature is its 10 to 25 storey building-development.

The main high street comes to the end at Neukölln station; the station has both surface and underground train systems (S-Bahn and U-Bahn: Schnell/fast surface rail and underground Rail). I took the underground to (Lipschitzallee station) Gropiusstadt which I had visited in
2004; this mixed medium-high-rise modernist development is of immense interest because of its social housing component and its city feel. Gropiusstadt is a large residential social housing development with high-rise buildings that was evident as soon as I left the station.

The stall-holders near the station forecourt helped reduce the overall starkness of the concrete surroundings and the sterile modernist simplicity of the 1960s buildings. The trees with their spring leaves also made a more favourable impression on the otherwise bland environment and reduced the overbearing visual impact of the high-rise modernist buildings, as I moved further away from the concreted station-forecourt. A community notice board featuring local businesses also provided a local context for residents to engage with each other for work and social opportunities.

( Photo: N22) Gropiusstadt precinct community notice board

The Max Planck Institute visited Gropiusstadt (2006, 5.3 p.99), evaluated the site and asked “What lessons can your country learn from the visited project?”

These examples of European cooperation amongst EC partner members along with the Greater London Enterprise; London Boroughs Partnerships (URBACT 2005; URBED 2009) indicate the learning outcomes that can be achieved by pooling resources in order to achieve sustainable communities across Europe.

The original plans for Gropiusstadt from Walter Gropius (he died in 1969) were reworked later by other designers to house more people. Its current population is approximately 37,000 people and contains a high migrant population of over 40% (Schumacher 2008).
Stall-sellers are also a recent Gropiusstadt community initiative to encourage local businesses, as the following photograph shows.

(Photo: N23) Outside stall holders in the bland modernist residential area

Further into the Gropiusstadt precinct, the surrounding trees began to extend their presence and various shades of greenery softened 1960s and 70s minimalistic architecture. Wide four to six level residences surrounded by large well-kept gardens produced an air of unexpected relaxation and peace that was further softened by green lawns and garden-beds that went up to the perimeter of the residential buildings. This was probably due to the lower building heights; recognised by Hall (1989).

(Photo: N24) Entrance to the green corridor at Lipschitzallee – outside the U-bahn station

The three-four storey medium-high-rise residential buildings in this part of the estate had external light-reddish balconies from the ground-floor, and many had a variety of plants in them which created a garden suburb setting. Gropiusstadt’s litter and rubbish-free precincts helped re-enforce a feeling of commitment to a naturally inspired public-realm.
Away from the station other later high-rise residences appeared more ornate and interesting with soft pastel greys and large external balconies.

The second time-around and this place started to grow on me although the social challenges in Gropiusstadt are still there (Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development 2005; interview with Dr Kolland 2008). However the modernist structures appear less intimidating and this comes from the design of later high-rise structures themselves, the variations in the aesthetics of the buildings and the use of the surrounding space are in harmony with nature. The later residential buildings in Gropiusstadt are arranged to create a natural look rather than an ambience of machine sameness and this comes from height variation, the design and shape of buildings, the variations of colours the constant presence of decorative balconies that break up machine flat facades; the Max Planck Institute has also commented on this aspect of Gropiusstadt’s (improvements) to the built environment (2006): Below a slab-constructed residential complex being an older example of the sterility of early untextured concrete.
buildings. The future intention is to refurbish these types of bland social housing to make them more attractive and amenable for residents.

(Photo: N27) Drab older styled modernist residential apartments – with external balconies

Another photograph showing greenscape features integrated between apartments.

(Photo: N28) Residential apartments in walkable greenspace settings

As I further explored the Gropiusstadt social housing complex a woman passed by pushing a young child in a pushchair with another child around four holding the arm of pushchair. I said ‘hello’ as she passed and she responded warmly as two young boys around 8-10 years of age rode past on their bicycles.
Wondering if I was heading in the wrong direction, I double-checked my bearings by asking a man in his fifties riding a bike wearing smart-casual clothes. As he was coming towards me, I gestured him to stop and without hesitation he stopped and smiled, directing me in the correct direction. The Gropiusstadt estate is a cycle and pedestrian friendly village with a city-feel. The urban residential layout creates a relaxed sense of spatial sufficiency.

**The Shopping Centre in Gropiusstadt**

The large enclosed shopping centre (Kaufland) with its engaging free-form architectural circular entrance has been enhanced by Alfresco-style enclosed awnings that are complete with flexible windows and pedestrian friendly entrances.
These entrances included parking for bicycles and there was no need to negotiate around vehicular parking entrances. These spacious entrance features allowed residents to cycle or walk safely to the shopping centre from their homes through communal garden settings and dedicated cycle and walk ways rather than sharing streets with vehicular traffic.

(Photograph: N31) Outside of Gropiusstadt shopping mall with awnings and bicycle racks

(Photograph: N32) Main entrance to Gropiusstadt shopping centre with integrated greenscape

Inside the shopping centre people were dressed formally, as indicated in the photographs – in fact the Neukölln district of Gropiusstadt is one of Berlin’s poorer neighbourhoods. The reality of the shopping centre was a spectacle that had an imaginary almost stage-like quality. It was buzzing with ambient and bright lighting yet the atmosphere was not too frantic. People were either just strolling around or sitting at the many seating areas. The multi-level central atrium, complete with a large number of people-friendly inward-facing and well-finished timber ground-floor seating was occupied with a mix of people. In the centre I heard Russian, Romanian, Turkish as well as German spoken.
This public seating was inter-mixed with a range of eateries with seating that integrated with the outside streetscape and stairways to the upper-section. The selection of shops was extensive, catering for high quality food, jewellery, appliances, and fashion items. I must admit I was surprised at the high quality of the building that utilised a mix of natural materials in the construction of the complex.

(Photo: N33) Inside the Gropiusstadt shopping centre

(Photo: N34) And around the corner plenty of places to meet people in the centre

The layout of the Gropiusstadt mall Berlin’s largest suburb shopping centre (Croydon shares a similar situation – although larger and more city-like with greater retail opportunities) was
almost organically arranged with different eateries leading to the atrium. There were also a
number of separate meeting points, and in one of these was a bar area which serves wines and
beers. This feature was repeated in other areas without the bar-feature, others were ice-
cream and fruit-drink bars. The bar was not a standing only type bar; there were also a number
of comfortable seats that were located around elevated tables. This arrangement provided
opportunity for social engagement between patrons, and all the seats were occupied with
male and female patrons of varying ages. The bar counter had a number of containers with
pretzels for patrons, the almost carnival experience, even in a shopping centre, provided its
own relaxed sense of place which enhanced both contemporary and traditional meeting places.

( Photo: N35) A place for coffee, a glass of wine, perhaps a cake

( Photo: N36) Lots of different shops in the shopping centre and places to sit and engage

The next day after my visit to the Neukölln suburb of Gropiusstadt I left the pension after
breakfast to again visit districts close by to Neukölln. The day was warm and sunny and a little way from the Pension against a backdrop of busy traffic a man and a young boy were playing table tennis on a table located under a canopy of large trees in a small neighbourhood park. This was a street scene that I had also experienced in an inner Paris suburb.

(Photo: N37) A young boy and man play outside table tennis in a working class district

As I walk through a nearby working-class suburb, the open precinct with an avenue of pencil pines extends its potential as an informal meeting area with outdoor seating; small open markets and eateries and residential buildings with balconies and lots of bicycles.

(Photo: N38) Medium-rise buildings surround a tree-lined precinct with tables and chairs
(Photo: N39) A mix of architecture, bicycles and people

**Conclusion: Overall analysis of Berlin-Neukölln observational data**

The objective of the following overall analysis is to serve as a reminder as to the significance of what has been observed during documented visits to Berlin-Neukölln. The importance of understanding the meaning of observations listed below towards the spatial organisation of public space and the type of buildings is in how the organisation of space matches the social identity of people who participate in the use of that space. A balance between the needs of terrace dwellers and their private inside space and the outside space for the community needs to be maintained so noisy streetscapes are avoided.

The analysis of Neukölln neighbourhoods also aids in the reflection of particular types of social phenomena that were critically observed during four field visits to this area over a period of seven years inviting participation in the public space which is constructed as a realm of outside relaxation rather than as a parsimonious and merely functional area.

This is achieved through a number of repeated elements which can be found ubiquitously throughout most of Neukölln neighbourhoods especially those that are subject to urban regeneration because of a deprived neighbourhood status.

Even the Neukölln’s social housing area of Gropiusstadt with its large shopping mall, which is a ‘big-city’ feel mall, invites participation in the public space because of its pedestrian and cycle accessibility. There is a long way to go however and Neukölln-Gropiusstadt may be able to
share and learn from Croydon’s regenerated city-centre Vision2020 experiences as it deals with its “long way from the city” (Social City 2005) image as a place for Russian migrants of German ancestry (interview with Hübner 2001; 2004).

(Photo: N40) A dominant modernist inspired skyline view of Gropiusstadt
Since the vision of a regenerated Neukölln began in 1999 there have been building renewal programmes in nominated districts such as Schiller Promenade where refurbished balconies open up the street and the domestic space with the interface creating a zone of shared public and private space, which is a feature of shared parks located between dwellings in some instances.

(Photo: N41) It is summer in Schiller Promenade as people enjoy the neighbourhood park
The impact is to soften this divide architecturally so it does not consist of a flat wall. It is also to encourage a social interpenetration of public and private space. Members of the public can view the domestic space and occupants of private space; citizens in their private space can view and be a part of the public space. It also encourages residents to participate in the outside space, providing relief from their private domestic zone.
The effect is also to create a public space which is populated, can be observed from street-fronted balconies and doorways and is safe for children and young people especially during activities of play and recreation. It also reduces the crime and the fear of crime, someone may be watching. The subsidiary impact is to make the public space more available to the elderly, women and children.

Wide pavements allow pedestrians to compete with vehicular traffic. There is a sense of relaxation and a slowing of pace. People are allowed to walk without a sense of intruding into the personal space of other pedestrians, forced into closeness by the narrowness of pavements. The pedestrian experience is given equivalence to the motoring experience. This has a number of social effects. It encourages occupation of the public space by people on foot who can interact socially with each other and observe each other (the flaneur experience). This is significant given the high density tenement housing configurations that are typical of Neukölln and other Berlin’s working-class districts. This effect was observable in the polite and engaged contact with strangers that I had in this context as inhabitants sought to distance themselves from the spatial constraints of inside-apartment living arrangements.

The impact is to reduce social tension and help to create an impression that other citizens could be your friends rather than unknown strangers. It means that people who cannot afford cars and do not want to drive have a sense that their right to the public space is being recognized because of few single-family gardens. This helps to relieve the sense of poverty and marginalisation that not having access to a car entails in order to seek out their own piece of the public domain. Again, this opens up the public space to people who are not likely to drive for other reasons than their socio-economic marginality.

This downgrading of motor traffic is also accomplished through provision for cycle ways next to roads and bicycle parking at shopping centres and in parks. There is a generous provision of public spaces to sit down and relax which lessens the impact of high density living. These are well appointed with paving, trees, seating and even ping pong tables. The effect is to slow pace and populate the public realm with people who are not in a hurry moving functionally from one place to another, but are instead taking part in some form of leisure.
Again this helps break down the separation of the domestic and public realm - if residents are fortunate enough to have access to streetscape vistas rather than dark inner courtyards that typify yet to be renovated tenement complexes in suburbs like Kreuzberg and Neukölln.

A ‘populated’ streetscape is constantly looked after to ensure general tidiness and presentation of the public realm furniture. This however is not always the situation as public authorities struggle with the upkeep of the public realm in Neukölln as the following photographs show.

(Photo: N42) Street rubbish in a Neukölln neighbourhood

(Photo: N43) More street rubbish in a Neukölln neighbourhood and graffiti
Avoiding street rubbish in part at least is due to restraint – people do not generally drop cigarette butts or chewing gum on the pavement. The effect of a rubbish-free environment creates a sense of place and elegance in public spaces – which is usually the case. These effects go with and would not be possible without the upkeep and public funding of repairs.

There is a similar opening up of commercial spaces to the public realm, with some restaurants and eateries with outdoor seating, an option which is made possible by wide pavements. Some shop fronts (as featured in early photographs) are actually on the street without a window and door to enclose the shop – providing an inside-outside dining experience. The municipal authorities encourage street markets and provide for them in the ample public squares that spill off into side streets with tenement buildings as a backdrop - made available through street planning.

The architectural effect is to soften hard and angular containing walls and windows of some of Berlin’s working-class barrack style dwellings in hard materials with soft fabric-defined tents and open display counters. This opening up is also conveyed in the internal spaces of the shopping centre. Although the public eating and bar spaces here are clearly for commercial purposes they also open into non-commercial areas for pedestrian traffic and adjoin seating that is not charged for as part of commercial eating provision but merely provided for shoppers.
An outside local working class area market

Natural elements are well maintained and ubiquitous and provide a welcome relief where there are few family homes with their own gardens in Neukölln. Tree plantings, gravel and small lawn-settings are featured surrounding apartment buildings; on sidewalks; in the common small park settings. The effect is to create an atmosphere of luxury and peacefulness. Again, these natural elements everywhere serve to soften hard and angular building elements that include ruins and urban landscapes, all with their varied spatial qualities.

Abandoned buildings have a place in Berlin’s working-class suburbs because of their (unrealised) ‘potential for reuse, and adaptation in ways limited only by the structures themselves and the means and imagination of the occupier (Sheridan 2005; URBED 2008).

Usually the ruin serves as a reminder of some other past while the construction site might evoke the excitement of a new future – hence the selection of the Werte und Helden (“values and heroes”) project which is analysed in the analysis of Berlin-Neukölln government documents (document 4/7) as an important element in the urban neighbourhood renaissance perspective because of its sensitivity with the past built environment.

There is a preservation and enhancement of older buildings and those that are derelict are often displayed by being separated from the surrounding streetscape in a public space of some kind. The town hall is an example, faced by a large well planted park and with a colourful statue. The building itself conveys a sense of space and grandeur through its stone entrance.
way and foyer. Even a commercial building such as “Woolworths” is in fact a replica of a traditional architectural form – meaning that the modernism of much of the streetscape is relieved by these fanciful, colourful and curvilinear architectural forms. The impact of this socially is to create a sense that the society as a whole is stable and secure and that the future is guaranteed, like the past. This is a somewhat ironic message given Berlin’s not so distant past as a divided city and the real social and economic tensions that exist today.

Overall, a key effect and intention of all of this is to civilize the social realm and reduce socio-economic and ethnic marginalization by inviting all members of the public to participate in the enjoyment of a beautiful and relaxing public space. The message is “you may be poor but you are still members of an affluent civilisation that will ensure that you are cared for with dignity”. There is a public realm denial of the reality of social disadvantage in that even the poorest citizens have a right to participate in a public realm that conveys a message of affluence and luxury. That may be reflective of the utopia visions of some urban planners, rather than the reality of residents who are observers in the day-to-day critical reconstruction of their neighbourhood (Reif 2002; Sheridan 2007).

5.2 Schiller promenade (photographic and text review)

Introduction

The following represents an overview of Schiller Promenade. The government designated deprived district of Schiller Promenade is managed under the Social City local area management plan and has a population of 20,000 and is also featured in the observational review above. This brief overview includes the following:

- An introduction to the neighbourhood quarter management concept; a review of social integration programmes and introduction to the local neighbourhood manager and area manager Holger Hübner
- An introduction to physical regeneration that contributes to social capital: including refurbished of medium density residential housing and the construction of a community meeting place
- An introduction to examples of refurbished park and play areas

Schiller Promenade is a neighbourhood district of Neukölln, and is one of seventeen districts that have been identified by the Berlin government as suffering from economic and social
disintegration. In this respect it has been selected by me as a research area into social connectedness and the built environment. Other districts in this equation include Gropiusstadt, the wider Neukölln area and suburbs bordering Neukölln such as Kreuzberg which has had a considerable impact upon the regeneration of Neukölln as a model of successful urban renewal.

The overall purpose of this brief overview is to provide a partial snapshot of Schiller promenade a Neukölln neighbourhood that is undergoing physical and non-physical interventions under the Berlin government’s local Neighbourhood management Strategy. Schiller promenade is one of three neighbourhoods of Neukölln undergoing regeneration as part of the Social City programme – the table below (5.2NSP-DN) identifies other Berlin suburbs and their ‘deprived neighbourhood status’. This table also includes population makeup details.

Table 5.2NSP-DN: Table showing the three deprived neighbourhood districts in Neukölln – Schiller promenade is number 12 in the table below

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<th>German</th>
<th>Non-German</th>
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<td>Housing Units</td>
<td>Density</td>
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The following neighbourhood district of Schiller Promenade photographic review is also featured in other parts of the research thesis, for example, in an analysis of interviews. Whereas the following presentation has not, nor has there been an attempt treat photographs as self-contained, autonomous elements.

(Photo: NSP1) Schiller-Promenade Area precinct diagram

The Social-City office of the Schiller promenade Quarter management bureau is located near the centre of the parkway facing the park and the park-walkway passes through the centre of housing complexes. Twenty thousand people live in the neighbourhood of Schiller Promenade in Neukölln-Berlin. There are no single level single-owner residences, which consist of apartment buildings, with corner pubs, shops and associated businesses such as Op-shops.
Holger Huebner is the title Manager, Social-City and on his right-side is Kerstin Schmiedeknecht, an architect responsible for managing the Social City project in the Schiller Promenade neighbourhood of Neukölln, one of 17 areas consisting of 25 organisations from the public/private sectors set-up to involve community in regenerating deprived neighbourhoods in Berlin. Regeneration involves a mix of social, physical refurbishment and creative programmes.

The title of the above diagram is resident’s conference 2004 (Bewohner Konferenzen 2004) and although the area is known as Schiller-Promenade because the parkway runs through the
centre of the avenue - the actual suburb is Neukölln when it was incorporated into Greater Berlin in the 1920s.

(Photo: NSP4) Large comprehensive range of brochures for residents

Schiller-Promenade local area management neighbourhood office has a large and comprehensive range of brochures that are available to local residents. The range of brochures, include initiatives to address issues relating to inter-cultural social integration; help for older residents and looking after their dogs in order to encourage harmony with other residents. There is also an office facility available for resident’s local meetings and discussions.

(Photo: NSPS) Park entrance with a sign promoting Social-City

The park entrance begins with a sign promoting the Social-City programme - this helps to
foster a sense of community in an area that once was known as an “Anti-Social” district (direct German translation.

Around the park and areas bordering it, there is a sense of pride, which is demonstrated by building-renewal and refurbishment rather than replacement and redevelopment of older buildings. There is an emphasis on using natural and re-used materials such as crushed bricks and concrete in the play and walk areas of Schiller promenade.

(Photo: NSP6) A game of football brings young people together

The park provides a natural link for residents from both sides of the residential promenade. The park acts an interlude green-space and crushed stone (re-visible concrete is also utilised as a base material) and mixed with other materials such as crushed bricks and natural small stones. An ecological approach is used to construct play areas using natural materials, the local community, government authorities and local businesses in the planning, design and construction of precincts.

(Photo: NSP7) Lunch-time basket-ball; young and older people play ball
In the designated deprived districts of school play grounds as depicted in the above photograph there are no age restrictions for use of the play area during out of school times.

(Photo: NSP8) Refurbished older flats with enhanced facilities
There is renewed faith in the future of the area with a reversal of people moving-out of the area – where refurbished flats with added and enhanced facilities now for rent and attractive to a mix of new populations. Previously some apartments were left untenanted because the cost of building refurbishment outweighed the commercial opportunity and proactive partnerships between government and housing companies has changed all that.
The above four storey residential buildings also make more effective use of the corner of the street and create increased social connectedness between residents because of the squared precinct configuration.

(Photo: NSP9) The park ‘flying-fox’ provides a physical challenge
In the same park a local teenager tests his physical skills on a flying-fox, adding a little bit of adventure without a feeling of being enclosed. The flying-fox was constructed using a combination of donations from local business and funds from government agencies associated with Social-City.

(Photograph: NSP10) Children cycling past the café in the church square

Children on bikes - cycling past the soon to be opened café-by-the-church - a central area for social interaction! The church and the café are located in the centre of a circular route accessible by many streets creating a village square affect with the church and its trees as a focal point.

The use of cobble-stones; and in those areas where cobbles are missing or broken-away are being gradually replaced, however whole street areas are not being closed to disrupt pedestrian and vehicular access.

(Photograph: NSP11) Refurbishing older buildings rather than demolition
Refurbishing older buildings rather than destroying them helps keep residents in their neighbourhood and helps to retain the established social structure and sense of community in this mainly working-class area. Keeping residents together also challenges the negative consequences of increased population mobility as some residents are forced to seek alternative social housing and work opportunities in other working-class districts.

(Photo: NSP12) Refurbished buildings with new bathrooms
Outside of the building opposite the Schiller-promenade parkway this particular building is being refurbished with new bathrooms and other faculties. The whole building has not been gutted-out or re-cored as the Germans call it and done in stages so the residents do not have to move out. Certainly it takes longer this way however it helps to retain a sense of community and social-connectedness as suggested in photo: NSP11 above. Tradespeople are also connecting with residents discussing refurbishment of their respective apartment areas - which adds further value to a sense of community ownership!

(Photo: NSP13) The park runs between the apartments on either side
The park runs between the apartments on either side, which is an urban design feature of many Berlin suburbs. This provides apartment residents with the opportunity to experience the calming effect of green-space. The feature of parkland settings in residential areas originated in Berlin from the 1920s and was first instigated by the German architect Bruno Taut whose first major community housing project was in Neukölln.

Unfortunately until only recently have many socially-deprived suburbs have had their parks and surrounds refurbished; evidence of this is shown in this and other photos.

(Photo: NSP14) Building materials for paving the sidewalk

An important element in the Social-City program is an ecological approach - local streetscape enhancements involve the participation of all community members in streetscape project-refurbishment as well as their upkeep.

(Photo: NSP15) Enclosed children’s play area-with timber play facilities

Further evidence of an ecological perspective is in well maintained greened children’s play areas with crushed natural stone and use of timber play facilities. This community approach to
architectural landscaping reduces the ‘cold’ impact of concrete and steel, and contributes to a more harmonious feel to the area.

The surrounding backdrop of trees also helps add to a sense of place for local residents and visitors alike. The area is a definitive meeting place for all - adding value to adjoining facilities without feeling enclosed helping to offset the effect of medium density housing.

(Photo: NSP16) Residents enjoying walkable mini-park precincts

In my above photograph local residents were observed enjoying the walkable streetscape - outside the enclosed child’s playground.

Corner Shops, surrounding businesses, pubs and other meeting places are all also within walking distance from residential apartments. The major centre of Neukölln is only five minutes away and accessible by walking and by bicycle without crossing major roads and intersections.

(Photo: NSP17) The neighbourhood corner pub in parkland setting
The corner-pub as shown in the above photograph is a regular meeting place for residents if required - a feature of working class districts of Berlin.

Berlin is not really a beautiful city by other European standards particular as many precincts (excluding the previous eastern quarter) and inner-city suburbs were neglected after the post second world war (1939-45) period.

Berlin has however an urban attractiveness that has benefited from pro-active integrated social and building programmes such as Social-City.

(Photo: NSP18) Local op-shop on the opposite corner bracketed by trees

The above photograph typifies a local op-shop selling a range of 2nd hand children’s goods, clothes, and items for the young to the elderly; to meet the needs of the local community of the Schiller-promenade local area management-quarter.

In my more recent visits (2008 and 2012) the Schiller promenade district of Neukölln has become an area where specialist resellers of books, records, pre-loved clothing and other artefacts operate (Mendoza 2011).

(Photo: NSP19) Local refurbished shops, with residential balconies
Herrfurth Strasse connects with Schiller-promenade and a local pharmacist adds to the range of small shops in the area, even though 150 metres away in the Neukölln main street there are other pharmacist’s.

(Photo: NSP20) A recently opened local neighbourhood coffee shop
A small coffee shop recently opened with outside seating and the day is rather wet, windy and cool—although it is summer (June) the temperature is around 11 degrees Centigrade.

(Photo: NSP21) Small neighbourhood corner supermarket with a wrap-around residential balcony
Corner mini-markets are still a feature of Berlin’s suburbs and major retail areas although popular do not necessarily impact on the smaller community shops... and notice the wrap-around and overhanging balconies connecting the private domestic zone with the public zone.
Language helps to give shape to local reality and German language classes help towards social integration in Neukölln.

A sense of community needs a common language to help bring and bind people together. With around thirty five per cent of the population of non-German origin and with migrant women amongst the most disadvantaged, Social-City has included community German language classes in its objective to help integrate migrants into mainstream society.

The forecourt of the coffee shop takes shape blending into the streetscape as a local group of resident association members discuss progress on this particular community project. The new external balconies on the new white residential building behind are helping to establish connections with the streetscape below...and balconies on older buildings with concrete-cancer are being replaced and new ones added.
(Photo: NSP24) Under the umbrella: coffee shop in the church square

Under the Umbrella a partnership between church, bottom-up community initiatives and Social-city top-down management expertise provide is a place for residents and visitors of the Schiller-promenade quarter to meet - whatever their culture or social background. The coffee shop is not an extension of the church; it is a partnership with the church which has very kindly provided the space and its prominence in the promotion of areas for people from the neighbourhood to meet.

(Photo: NSP25) The coffee shop tiled forecourt with umbrellas

Under the umbrellas with the church walls in the background provides a spacious backdrop to the new coffee shop annex. It is an inviting outside place to sit, a place to talk with inside decor to match.
Inside-outside vista of coffee shop area and opposite new apartments

Inside the décor is warm, modern and comfortable, and the coffee and the Cake are priced to attract the local residents and their visitor. The outside vista can be viewed from the inside and people on the balconies across street can view the coffee area and the service is also good.

Neukölln street scene with traditional awnings and modernist building across the high street

The surrounding suburb of Neukölln a prominent almost inner-city Berlin district with a vibrant multi-cultural mix, and there are lots of interesting local shops to meet the needs of locals and visitors. No balconies here, but notice the staircase in the multi-storey building opposite – providing visitors to the modernist building with a view of the surrounding streetscape as they go up and down the stairs.
Neukölln is a working-class ‘inner-city’ suburb of Berlin where its borders were once close to the Eastern-Sector. Schiller-Promenade is a few hundred metres away from the main street of Neukölln; its multicultural community benefited from integrated managed programmes to reduce social segregation and exclusion of ethnic and minority groups because of social and economic collapse. Empowering community participation and extending the role of migrant women in society were other programme outcomes.

Schiller Promenade Conclusion
The photographic snapshot and written overview of Schiller Promenade shows how the greening of the public domain, play areas, social housing and the construction of a community meeting place has revitalised a previously deprived neighbourhood of Neukölln. A pedestrianised neighbourhood where people can be seen connecting with each other, children on bicycles, on flying foxes, where small coffee shops and convenience stores abide.

The photographic snapshot of Schiller Promenade does not represent the totality of urban regeneration of the Schiller Promenade district of Neukölln which in more recent times has become a sought after district for an emerging creative-class where specialist resellers of books, records, pre-loved clothing and other artefacts operate (Florida 2002; Mendoza 2011).

5.3 Interview data
The formal interviews which form part of the main inquiry method were conducted between Alec McHarg and personnel from the Berlin department Social City; Neukölln local council, German Urban Institute (DIFU) and the department of Culture Social City.
### Interview No: 1 – Holger Hübner – December 2001 and June 2004: Social City Berlin

My first interview with Holger Hübner: Overview of Berlin department of Urban Development Social City

**Question (Alec)**

Can you please give me an overview of the concepts and the objectives of Social City and comment on your early involvement in the programme?

**Answer (Herr Hübner)**

For about two and a half years now we have implemented a program called “Social City” which deals with seventeen areas of deprived needs with high levels of unemployment and population mobility; people leaving the areas because of run-down public areas; decaying residential precincts and breakdown in social networks. Many of the buildings in residential precincts were structurally sound but lacking modern facilities and something had to be done to assist residents to communicate with each other and with local government representatives about the poor condition and aesthetics of their rental accommodation.
The residents themselves also saw something had to be done about their neighbourhood because of the change from a manufacturing-based economy to an information- and scientific-based technology where people were leaving city districts in masses and going to other areas of West Berlin or the old Federal Republic (West Germany) looking for work opportunities.

Modernisation had started; residential precincts and additional underground metropolitan stations were constructed in new centres, and looking from an aerial view one can see the new town hall with a shopping mall with a choice of shops (two existing examples are Gropiusstadt in Neukölln and Marzahn in Eastern Berlin).

Just lately I have been strolling around there a lot because it was all new to me. In March of this year (2001) when I travelled by car to a new sub division I was really astonished as to how it had developed. Now instead of urban sprawl there were definitive sub-districts where residents could closely relate to four to six storey apartments located in their own greenscape, consisting of tree-lined streets and large courtyards.

**CDA Stage 1**

Social City was created in 1999 and in the first two years the Social City programme has implemented a variety of activities including festivities, public area and building refurbishment and many other measures with a total expenditure of DM71,000,000. The creation of the Social City concept arose out of a two year report (1996-1998) into social and economic changes in Berlin’s neighbourhoods; changes that identified significant social and economic decline in many working-class districts of Berlin (Strong Partners Social City, Senate Department for Urban Development 2005; reviewed in this data chapter).

Holger was astonished at the extent of the progress of re-development (December, 2001) in just two years. Holger had also observed and commented upon the inclusion of new greenscape areas of tree-lined streets and large courtyards in regenerated residential precincts. This was particularly evident in Neukölln’s government-designated deprived district of Schiller Promenade which is one of the neighbourhoods I selected for my investigation into deprived Berlin neighbourhoods.

**CDA Stage 2**
The outcomes from the Social City programmes in terms of its construction phase were the completion and partial completion of new residential complexes that included the re-organisation of the surrounding space. This was particularly significant given Berlin’s reunification on October 3, 1990 and the regeneration challenges that lay ahead (Reif 2002; URBACT 2005; URBED 2008). Also significant was the Europe-wide nature of the Social City programme where an integrative approach to urban renewal arose from earlier Greater London Council initiatives.

As was shown in the observation and photographic analysis of the four-tiered methods of data collection, the social housing districts of Gropiusstadt and Schiller Promenade (as the photographs show) include tree-lined streets and integrated gardens as part of the residential renewal process.

As a city with a previously known history of fragmented development (Sheridan 2005; URBED 2008) Berlin’s history has always been marked by upheavals and urban developments that have been more radical and impulsive than elsewhere. With that historical context the Social City programme of architectural and social invention programmes has translated into a more orderly attempt at urban regeneration of Berlin’s deprived districts in more recent times. The previous heavily criticised strategy of demolishing old buildings and replacing them with new ones has been changed to prioritise the redevelopment of existing buildings to today’s living standards. The reuse of vacant plots and upgrading of public facilities and infrastructure enhanced the character of the area and enables a mix of residential and commercial usage to occur; an objective that urban renewal tries to achieve. Most building activity so far has been concerned with renovating existing residential apartments in traditional neighbourhood districts, and has included:

- Improving the overall image of a neighbourhood district
- Greening courtyards
- Creating pocket parks
- Creating localised employment
- Expanding the district heating, water and waste management systems
- Improving the physical environment – including services, paving and retrofit programmes (e.g. balconies, external lift-systems and roofing configurations).
My general impression after my first and subsequent visits to my selected neighbourhood districts (“Kiez”) was of well-ordered and cared-for neighbourhoods.

CDA Stage 3

The bland visual appearance of Berlin’s “rental barracks” (Reif 2002; Sheridan 2005; URBED 2008) are gradually being enhanced. Modernisation has included new bathrooms, balconies, façades and the integration of greenscape featuring courtyards and tree-lined streets flowing into mixed residential, commercial and retail precincts.

Refurbishments (Altbau) and new (Neubau) social housing initiatives under the State Housing Programme (Statthau) represent a philosophy of cooperation between government and the private sector. Companies undertaking such projects include S.T.E.R.N which delivers social housing complexes for residents of deprived working-class districts in Berlin. Other building organisations such as GEHAG have been in existence since the early 20th century when they helped deliver Berlin’s first major social housing ‘Horseshoe’ development project by the German architect Bruno Taut.

Taut, who was inspired by the English Garden movement, chose Neukölln as a site for this project, which still stands today in ‘garden settings’ as a testament to earlier government social housing reforms. Residents can see physical evidence of previous enhancements to the built environment have a positive impact of reducing the mobility of populations who seek more attractive surrounds and better local facilities. A more cohesive society will develop because attractive surrounds can act as a catalyst for informal social connections between citizens (URBACT 2005).

Tenant style (rental barracks) buildings still remain a feature of Berlin today, contributing to the desire of residents to be flaneurs (Madanipour 1996) seeking the more aesthetic surrounds of parks and tree-lined avenues rather than the introversion of featureless flats. With 72.6% of the buildings renovated and modernised there has been a significant contribution to urban renewal, according to a visiting URBED group (2008.)

This was an attempt to creative definitive sub-districts which is a feature of more established areas of Berlin’s working-class districts e.g. the local neighbourhood area of Schiller
Promenade in Neukölln. This is also an attempt to reduce the effects of urban sprawl referred to above by Holger Hübner.

The ideas associated with the creation of definitive sub-districts with their own facilities are sound; however there are direct consequences for some of Neukölln’s neighbourhoods if they do not provide a range of social, educational, leisure and retail services. Slums have developed in large-scale housing projects on the outside of Berlin because of the lack of local facilities in some of these areas. Although this is not within the scope of my research, the effect on working-class districts of Neukölln is. This is in respect of the issues of the mobility of populations and parallel societies and will be discussed throughout my research findings (chapter 6) and in the conclusion (chapter 7).

Overview of social housing in Berlin’s working-class neighbourhoods

Question (Alec)
What were the conditions of the social housing complexes before the establishment of Social City – were they that bad, and what actions were taken to deal with them?

Answer (Herr Hübner)
Residents felt that something had to be done about old and badly maintained buildings and in some cases the buildings had evidence of concrete cancer. Other examples of decaying buildings include water leaks and balconies that were in a state of collapse. So there had to be a lot of repairs, balconies had to be fixed and made larger, and entrances modernised. Prior to the Social City programme however, residents did not have an effective avenue for complaints about their living areas.

The establishment of Social City has changed that situation. There is now an opportunity for residents of social housing apartments to request different types of entrances for their residential apartments to give them an individual appearance where possible. Each building would have a different façade with different colours or shapes. Some apartments needed stairs or flooring, and the creation of a separate identity for each residency. At the fundamental level neighbourhood programmes have been started to make residents’ apartments more attractive involving new balconies and refurbished common areas.
Approximately 69% of housing in Berlin is dedicated to social housing

Herr Hübner’s answer continues

In the beginning, and prior to the establishment of Social City, individual building owners and housing companies were responsible for the maintenance of rented apartments. The German Government also directed building owners to privatise certain apartments. After 1999, Social City provided advice about creating differences in the buildings because the slums became unliveable from the ecological point of view. The residents told the architects and city planners they didn’t want to see badly maintained buildings anymore and the old regime of repair and maintenance work carried out by builders was replaced by residents working with designers,
local neighbourhood representatives and local government agencies on the refurbished design of their accommodation areas.

Herr Hübner’s answers continues on social housing conditions in Berlin’s deprived neighbourhood districts

Residents did not want high-rise anymore and some residents wanted individual forms of apartment flats with larger balconies. Residents were consulted about their approaches to modernisation and restructuring. For example in August (2001) a session of Social City management was trying to decide whether to tear down older apartments or to modernise them. It was decided to refurbish them. After unification it became clear that one could modernize apartments for a third of the cost of tearing them down and replacing them with new buildings. Then one would have modern apartments that could stand for another 50-60 years at least. Consultation with residents about planning their requirements was seen as beneficial. In the beginning the residents were not sure whether they could trust the government and were concerned that their wishes would be taken too lightly. We had one case involving a very long (three hundred metre) residential block with a children’s play area behind the apartments. Unfortunately access to the play area involved a ten minute walk around to the other side of the block. In that case we (Department Social City, Berlin Senate 2001) decided to take away the central part of the apartments in order to create a central passageway to the play area, giving the residential complex a completely new character and a view of the play areas for parents from their apartments. New building facades, entrances and balconies were also added to the complex.

CDA Stage 1

According to Herr Hübner the views of residents were listened to (after earlier 20th century failures in community consultation and participation) and their specific needs were acted upon by Social City. For example the ability of parents to observe their children in newly-constructed play areas was one of the positive aspects of refurbished apartment living.

An East Berlin social housing situation that confronted the unified Berlin government in 1991 consisted of poor quality grey concrete panels for façades which were a feature of many prefabricated large residential housing estates in Marzahn East Berlin (Schümer-Strucksberg 1995). This was a typical urban situation that was addressed by the Goethe-Institute International Community Planning Workshop (translated by Davidson-Seger 2006).
Such housing social estates presented an ecological nightmare for government, community and business organisations because of the existing poor conditions of the built environment in East Berlin. Although my many visits to East Berlin and Dresden do not form a strategic part of my thesis I was able to spend time during my later visits (2006; 2008) speaking with long-term residents of East Berlin districts, some of whom spent three days (2006) showing me around improved shopping precincts, garden allotments, residential housing complexes and commercial areas. The areas where grey external building façades were still awaiting replacement (2004) presented me with a stark reminder at that time of the failure of modernist structures to inspire a sense of place, similar to Serbia and Romania.

**CDA Stage 2**

A positive outcome achieved through apartment refurbishment and retrofit-programmes, and commented upon by Herr Hübner, was the reduction in the concern of parents who were now able to see their children at play from their respective apartments. It is on this aspect of high-rise apartment living where Michelson (1970, p.96-97) comments:

> The greater number of corridors, elevators and stairways provide additional unsupervised areas where trouble might arise...when a child leaves their apartment to play many storeys below, their actions cannot be followed from the apartment.

Inadequate attention to the location and the design of high-rise apartments for residents therefore represented the greatest loss of control over the supervision of young children by their parents.

Retrofitted external balconies and external lift-systems also contributed to social capital because these targeted enhancements to the built environment empowered residents to feel a greater sense of identity with their neighbourhoods and their neighbours. Achieving a sense of neighbourhood identity however still requires socially inclusive programmes such as language, art and creative interventions in order to reinforce social connectedness between citizens.

The reality of the outcomes of refurbishment programmes in Berlin’s ‘East and West’ working class neighbourhoods was commented upon by a small group of visiting senior London local...
government officers who have met regularly over four years to share ideas and exchange knowledge on how to achieve urban renaissance. The general impression taken away by the senior local government representations from the Boroughs of Southwark and Sutton was of well-cared-for places, with little of the graffiti that was so evident five years ago (URBED 2008). Coloured render had also transformed the once grey concrete housing estates. The group saw the range of facilities provided around the main square, which included a college, medical centre and town hall, as well as the usual shopping centre. Of greatest interest were the renovated neighbourhoods, with their abundant structural planting and extensive children’s play areas. These are overlooked by blocks of flats that had been made to look individual through plenty of colour, new entrances, and in some cases elaborate balconies and roof treatments.

**CDA Stage 3**

The philosophies behind the refurbishment of the built environment are many and complex. While physical refurbishment of residential apartment courtyards contributed to the quality of the built environment, the true test of refurbishment programmes was strategic community involvement in the consultation process and in its implementation and on-going maintenance. Strategic involvement by the residents of social housing apartments in discussions concerning the layout of exterior and interior ‘fit-out’ aspects of their individual dwellings provides a sense of ownership and sense of place for social housing residents. The core challenges of bringing together residents from different cultural and community groups, local and state government agencies, and building companies under the local neighbourhood management banner are made more complex because of the integrated nature of physical and social intervention programmes.

Critical analysis indicates that partial resolution of these core challenges has been achieved by intervention of art in the public realm, the development of neighbourhood interest groups, primary education and team-based sport projects. These interventions lead to social connectedness between residents. The social encounters created from these opportunities led to sharing opinions about art and creativity, participation in sport, and home support programmes. This was prior to fundamental bridging encounters over the design of the built environment and the space that surrounds it.

These early social encounters initiated by government programmes led to improved social connectedness between residents and the development of social capital through the concept
of one aspect of social capital – that of bridging capital, which helps create connecting alliance bridges between different interest and resident groups. This may be considered a weaker form of social capital according to Putnam (2000); however weaker ties between residents at the early stages of urban regeneration also introduce more informal community networks (Florida 2002) that are more flexible.

Flexible and informal social networks are ideal for residents to discuss their own requirements in the fit-outs of their individual apartments with other residents and with trades’ people. They can share opinions of the built environment with each other rather than discuss cultural differences. The subject of religion can be highly emotive.

The application of “bridging capital” (Putnam 2000) involves residents from different cultural backgrounds working together on urban regeneration programmes under the guidance and direction of neighbourhood management groups. These types of local neighbourhood initiatives involve them with government agencies and others in order to improve the quality and aesthetics of their immediate built environment. The philosophy of neighbourhood aesthetics has also led to the expansion of the socially cohesive opportunities associated with discussions about local renewable energy production for residential complexes. The same philosophy can lead to employment opportunities for residents in the creative economy and renewable energy technology.

Resident’s participation in refurbishment programmes: courtyard design with ecological orientation; discussion on ecological factors such as recycling of materials and energy usage

Continuation of Herr Hübner’s answers

One of the first things to be done, with the participation of the inhabitants, was to change the character of the residents’ courtyard (Schümer-Strucksberg 1996). We have a block where we already see results. When it was started a playground was already established here but without trees and grass. Many, many new trees were planted and a few years later the area is a softer grassed area. There are some water features like a pond around a new housing block that is unique to these areas. The idea of a water feature that also included outside seating was for people to be able to meet in a neutral zone and communicate with each other (Oldenburg cited in Baum and Palmer 1997). There are other residential buildings that have solar collectors on the side and they have become very popular and even in areas far north
there is enough sun. In one of these big housing estates all the facades were fixed with solar collectors. The total energy requirements for the residential complex are satisfied by these solar collectors.

**Question (Alec)** How does Social City deal with the question of population mobility?

**Answer (Herr Hübner)**

To address population mobility challenges and to keep people from moving to other districts we create apartments with different features; for example by changing some small three roomed apartments into two, upgrading the water and electrical supply and by helping residents develop relationships by working together on refurbishment details.

In the last years of the GDR they did not have the money to construct elevators in six storey houses so people would not live on the fifth or fourth floor in an apartment like that. This meant that the companies would construct outdoor elevators costing about 170,000 marks. It was worthwhile because it not only provided access to the top floor but the external lift system also provided connectivity with the surroundings of the buildings and play areas, enabling parents to see their children in the adjacent playgrounds.

**The three photographs on the following pages show the benefits of a retrofit and recycle process**

(Photo: N48) Retrofitted external lift system to 6 storey apartments
How balconies enhance social connectedness and social capital

Question (Alec)
How does the inclusion of balconies contribute to social connectedness and social capital?

Answer (Herr Hübner)
Balconies have always been very typical in Berlin and residents prefer them to ground floor areas because they provide more opportunity for inter-resident communication. Social City modernised ground floor areas with this in mind. Residents who reside on the ground floor and especially those with balconies can walk around and talk to the neighbours in the next apartment when they are out on their balconies.
In the beginning children just had sand to play with, there was no climbing, basketball or any sports activities. Now there is an area to play, to collect water and the young people of the area now have an eatery. Next to it they have constructed a platform and now they have planted trees. They now identify themselves with the area. I also went into the modernised areas in East Berlin. With very few exceptions I would not find any tags or any graffiti. This is because these people play their part in the building refurbishment processes and it provides a sense of ownership. Buildings where the purpose has changed (such as where there is no more use for kindergartens) are re-shaped and the use of left-over spaces after the modernisation of buildings is also providing greater access to public transport.

**CDA Stage 1**

After CDA Stage 3 there are three photographic examples of urban garden-settings under threat from developers. These are urban space pressures, where the needs of changing and mobile populations represent a central issue that local and state planning agencies have to deal with. It is the role of an urban geographer (Interview with Franke 2006) from The German Urban Institute (DIFU) to liaise with local neighbourhood management agencies, politicians and the local community. As an integral part of local area management, liaison involved helping residents establish closer links with their neighbourhoods by expanding local amenities.

**CDA Stage 2**

Managing different community layers influences urban density requirements. Needed are a wider mix of local amenities and varied types of residential complexes for families or single residents, and for different cultural groups. Activities can be shared and explored to aid in the development of social and skills-based experiences for residents.

One way of overcoming the situation is to construct higher residential social housing. The building of residential high-rise has not had a good history in Berlin’s working-class districts however, and Neukölln’s district of Gropiusstadt is an example of a large social housing area where art in the public realm helps residents of high-rise apartments re-connect with their neighbours.

Residents of Gropiusstadt’s high-rise apartments, particularly since the latter part of the 20th century, have consisted of smaller family units and young people from eastern European countries (Poland, Russia, Romania and the Ukraine). Many of them present with a language
and cultural assimilation problem, and have become isolated in a social sense because their inter-family networks are smaller and less established than the Turkish communities in suburbs like Kreuzberg and inner districts of Neukölln.

Overall, and certainly as far as Berlin was concerned, a largely fragmented approach to urban regeneration in the immediate post WWII period resulted in a city that was compromised in its objective to be one of the world’s great cities like London and Paris. In more recent times the reality of higher urban density has been matched with enlarged courtyards, integrated green areas and enhanced local facilities for residents.

**CDA Stage 3**

As haphazard as Kreuzberg’s regeneration was, my analysis suggests that the ideas associated with the previous regeneration of Kreuzberg have been used as a catalyst for the present regeneration of Neukölln’s deprived neighbourhoods.

Kreuzberg’s isolated geographical position after the construction of the Berlin wall resulted in the development of a unique political, social and cultural underclass. This situation was even more tenuous following a failed 60s and 70s urban planning policy based on demolishing old buildings and replacing them with new ones.

During the 60s and 70s Kreuzberg became home to Turkish guest workers. A large number of houses became squats, resulting in a large alternative, left-wing community. These kinds of public displays of urban ‘civic disobedience’ were not restricted to Berlin, with similar scenarios occurring in London, and even in Sydney Australia. In recent times the continued refurbishment of Kreuzberg and other working class areas has taken on a more refined ecological perspective because of more effective re-cycling techniques and the participation of residents in the strategic maintenance of their immediate and communal living areas.

A government ecological program as part of neighbourhood regeneration of the built environment had already been in existence since 1993 and was designed initially to build over and around the factory-manufactured concrete panel structures with new types of dwellings. The sensitive use and re-use of building materials was included in refurbishment programmes; restoration of urban greenspace areas and integrated water recycling were included. The labour needed to develop the environment and the dwellings was a basis for employment.
Wealth creation was established along with the democratisation of planning and management at the local level (Knorr-Siedow 2004).

A glimpse of what is possible for Neukölln’s deprived neighbourhoods is perhaps as simple as a closer examination of past urban-renewal policies in other local and European-wide cities. There have been decades of failed and successful urban renewal strategies that often were reliant upon the uncertainty of protracted private investment.

An urban renaissance perspective is a key to holistic urban renewal in the 21st century. Needed is an urban renewal perspective that does not take its direction from an equally privileged modernist built environment, i.e. a modernist-inspired utopia that was hard to love when its foundations were encased in mass-produced aluminium, mean-spirited concrete, and with an absence of decoration.

Three photographic examples of urban settings which feature garden areas

(Photo: N51) 1st Photo: the re-use of ‘left-over spaces’ and allotment-type areas
Even in Berlin there is pressure to build in dedicated established greenspace. As this picture shows, this park was established in 1921 after the integrated Berlin urban planning act and a “keep your hands off our city greenspace” sign.

Question (Alec)
How do strategic partnerships between local business, local people and the local council benefit the local community?

Answer (Herr Hübner)
But lately (2001/2) the situation in Berlin is different. We received permission from the German federal government to remove kindergartens and schools that are not needed any
more and then to reshape the buildings for new purposes and to create something like a pyramid and terraces to make it a more interesting use of space. A few artificial climbing rocks were created from some old concrete slab buildings. In areas that have not been refurbished there is graffiti with ugly parking floors and no playgrounds for the children. So when the ‘quarter’ was established there (Kietz) including the quarter Social City management office, one of the first activities was to ask the local residents what we could do for them. As a consequence of one of these meetings there was an activity for young people to bring them together with employers to turn part of a car parking lot into a small park for local children.

CDA Stage 1
Herr Hübner discusses the outcomes of strategic alliances between local business, local people and the local council as part of an integrated management strategy to make better use of current neighbourhood facilities, and the public domain such as local schools. The major obstacle to the function and role of government and private assets is in the definition of their current uses; for example should a dedicated school playground always be a dedicated playground during non-school periods. In the Australian ‘public domain’ huge areas of educational precincts are effectively locked up during non-school periods.

CDA Stage 2
The result of strategic alliances between local business groups, local people and community organisations and government agencies (schools, police and welfare agencies) is a proactive attempt to identify and record local assets for other than their dedicated uses.

Other public assets that did not meet the existing and future needs of the community were changed. These types of actions require the strategic and integrated operation of many government, community and business oriented organisations. This was sometimes compromised by organisational constraints. For example project management teams from different disciplines have to be integrated into a single operational unit in order to carry out a reorganisation of a private realm asset. This is notwithstanding the challenges that are associated with the different dynamics of top-down and bottom-up communications.

CDA Stage 3
The central idea behind these types of urban renewal is to make use of current assets to utilise limited resources efficiently by the spatial reorganisation of the public and private realm in line
with current and future demands. Berlin has a high urban density where space for local facilities is at a premium. According to the European Union URBACT report on population mobility, shopping is listed as the most important neighbourhood asset in the study of neighbourhoods in Berlin (see URBACT; Assets of the study of neighbourhoods 2005, table 3, chapter 5).

The role of education in social inclusion for citizens with migrant backgrounds

Question (Alec)
How is Social City dealing with the issue of learning the German language for children – especially young children?

Answer (Herr Hübner)
During the beginning of the Social City programmes the situation in the designated deprived areas as far as young migrant school children was concerned was quite difficult. The children did not have play areas and did not generally communicate with children of German parents. So a process was started to bring people together to be active in their neighbourhood, because in the beginning they would remain inside their units. We started to initiate a lot of activity beginning with organising areas for children to play; later residents began cooking local dishes from their original country. By these small beginnings the children began to communicate with each other.

So here we have an example where mothers of non-German origin would start to learn German. Without German the children don’t have any chance at school and when they come to school they have not been to a kindergarten. It means they do not speak any German at the age of 6, which also makes another problem not only for the children but also for the Primary Schools. Without these Social City programmes the German population would leave the area for other areas with Primary Schools with more German children. That would lead to cultural and social segregation, leaving one area with a poorer migrant population and other areas with a mainly traditional German population. This is a situation that we are trying to avoid.

CDA Stage 1
Here is an example of a more informal approach to learning German; the subject of language is also discussed at length in interview number two (2) with Buchholst (2006). Holger has referred to the activity play and of cooking as part of a social communication programme. The
subject of play areas for children and indeed adults is also important to the social life of a neighbourhood. As my observational analysis uncovered in my subject neighbourhood district of Schiller Promenade (photo: NSP7), a mix of children and adults were in a school playground area playing games after school hours. Play areas have to be constructed, or existing facilities shared, involving the community in the refurbishment. Local people are working together with local authorities to provide local facilities.

CDA Stage 2
The teaching of language skills does not begin in the classroom. As my research has indicated, by the time some migrant children of school age begin attending school it is already too late to start learning German. As previous research has indicated, children learn more effectively from informal encounters. The playground provides one such environment. Some business car parks during the week will often become ‘play and exercise areas’ over weekends. These arrangements are often achieved as a result of the strategic involvement of neighbourhood management committees including local businesses, government agencies, schools, police, local community operatives, and local residents.

Education in the classroom is only one aspect of education - the informal activity of play between children who speak German and those who do not is a fundamental aspect of the social life of the neighbourhood where there are good and less socially inclusive consequences.

The good consequences can be attributed to the development of weak bridging ties between different cultural and social groups – these types of informal social encounters as suggested by Florida (2002) are less restrictive than encounters developed from strong ties (Putnam 2000). The less socially inclusive consequences relate to the exclusive “bonding-type” of social capital that encourages some groups to adopt an inward looking perspective, and remain detached from other neighbourhood communities. This particular topic is discussed further in my interview number four with Franke (2006).

The exercise of cooking for example, although seemingly at the fundamental level of community social connectedness, has several significant dimensions and benefits for the community because the activity of cooking local dishes from the migrant’s country of origin has a high social component. Cooking can be organised and run as a social group and as a professional team-building exercise.
Other benefits include the opportunity for local mothers to learn and speak German with each other. This translates into helping their children do their homework assignments and improving language and social skills. It also builds confidence and assertiveness in order to undertake new opportunities in the knowledge economy (Florida 2002).

**CDA Stage 3**

At this third stage of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) the idea of language as an intervention strategy may sound confronting. However, small beginnings come with basic understandings of any discipline; in this case the German language. My analysis suggests migrant mothers who learn even basic German are a strategic target for social integration at the wider community level.

Teaching migrant mothers the German language is significant because it achieves wider social and economic objectives. The role of language offsets shortcomings for children of migrants who were not exposed to the German language in pre-school play activities.

In a wider sense, mothers are then able to communicate more effectively in other disciplines and in other social, cultural, and creative contexts present in cultures other than their own. Such social connectedness may contribute to the weaker forms of social capital but may also provide for a more fluid and flexible community able to apply itself to the opportunities arising from a mediated and information-based society according to Florida (2002).

My interview with Herr Hübner provided me with an overview of the concepts and the objectives of Social City together with the early problems encountered in the implementation of the programme.

Herr Hübner confirmed an integrated approach included a mix of interventions to deal with social and economic decay but also included a mix within the type of intervention themselves. This was made clearer to me when an analysis of Herr Hübner’s interview revealed the two fundamental elements of population mobility and parallel societies were influenced by the social and economic disintegration of working class neighbourhoods in Berlin. Citizens were either on the move between neighbourhoods or between towns, or they had withdrawn to
form enclaves in districts with poor amenities and work opportunities to match their existing social and work skills.

The extent of these two central issues was revealed after initial physical and non-physical intervention using an integrated approach; however this requires further analysis and interrogation. Herr Hübner explained that physical intervention includes new balconies, bathrooms and common areas, and the building themselves were made more attractive, certainly an improvement on the previous grey-slab constructed buildings. The social component in all this is that the residents themselves were involved in decisions about the refurbishment of their living areas. Also importantly they did not have to relocate while modernisation of their apartments was underway. This gives the built environment a social inclusionary context, it is also gives a sense of place and attachment to residents of social housing precincts. In other words enhancements to the built environment help to keep people in their neighbourhood because a sense of ownership and social connectedness was forged between residents during formal and informal connections between them. Keeping residents in their neighbourhoods once building programmes are implemented is not enough to deal with employment, education and other exclusionary issues however. Districts with improved built environments and enhanced local facilities will also be attractive to citizens who are not dependent on the welfare system – forcing citizens who are dependent upon the welfare system to move to outer Berlin housing estates.

The non-physical intervention other than the participation of residents concerning decisions about their own apartments was strategic in so far as it included the role of language, home visits to migrant mothers, and art in the public realm. Even these had their physical components such as projects for play areas for children and adults. They also have to be managed locally, and that is why local neighbourhood management provides the discipline and guidance, and prepares residents for work reducing dependency on welfare.

An ecological perspective is the last component that links people of different social and cultural backgrounds. The idea is simple and low-risk because it encourages residents, community groups, government agencies and business organisations to work together for a common aim, that of a Socially Integrated City. Working together on the renewal of the public realm, building maintenance programmes, and the production of energy, waste management
and recycling all helps to build a sense of community and aids in transition to opportunities in the expanding creative economy.

**Conclusion of my interview with Herr Hübner**

My interview with Herr Hübner showed how extremely difficult it was to get the more rigid and formal aspects of top down management to work together with bottom up initiatives of the operatives at the neighbourhood level. Even ‘simple’ projects are hard to implement when political, educational, and changing employment factors are mixed together. It appears the simpler the idea which appears to cover all ‘known’ contingencies, the greater the difficulties to implement, to operate, and achieve targeted objectives.

Yet despite the difficulties of having more people involved and more disciplines to manage, the focus on small targeted programmes spreads the risk of failure and assures more project outcomes are achieved. This comes at a cost of government and non-government agencies blinded by the big picture of migrants and ‘old-Germans’ (Biodeutsch) moving between districts as their particular circumstances change, and of citizens threatened by increasing unemployment and citizen rights issues withdrawing into their separate, contained and exclusive communities. The advantages of an integrated approach, because it uses a range of strategies to deal with wide-ranging problems, can also be a bureaucratic nightmare because so many different actors are involved. There are so many complex and different cultural and social norms to satisfy in order to ensure social integration that is sustainable. This requires further analysis.

**Interview No: 2 - Dagmar Buchholz – June 2006: Social City Department Berlin**

(The interview contents from Dagmar are linked with the interviews conducted with Holger Hübner in 2001 and 2004) and the other four interviews.

**Overview**

Dagmar Buchholz is an ideal candidate for an interview because of her previous work as a Magistrate in the former East Berlin provided her with a clear understanding of dealing with social housing residents. Her previous work in East Berlin adds further depth to her work in the Social City programme in a now reunified Berlin.
**Question (Alec)** Since I was last here in 2004 I am wondering what has happened in the last year or so with Social City?

**Answer (Dagmar)** The Berlin government had to change in order to meet its present economic and social circumstances (higher levels of migration) and in 2005 the new Social City programmes entitled “New City” was reviewed because the situation in the neighbourhood quarters had worsened which required further intervention from the Berlin senate. As a result of the Berlin senate’s intervention a new resolution was passed that called for new quarter management procedures and monitoring of the neighbourhood programmes.

**CDA Stage 1**

Dagmar discusses what is especially relevant today in deprived neighbourhoods of Berlin where present urban policy is faced with the challenge of re-shaping social intervention policies that contribute more to social cohesive neighbourhoods. The re-shaping of Berlin government programmes for urban society has been achieved under difficult urban conditions caused in part by the continued and accelerated transformation from an industrial to a knowledge-based society.

The Berlin Government has to deal with a worsening urban landscape that once was dominated by factories, supporting industrial infrastructure and warehousing facilities and now is slowly being orientated towards IT, banking, service and commerce related market sectors.

Dagmar has also raised the issue of ‘difficult situations’ in deprived neighbourhoods without identifying what these situations were. My critical analysis suggests that further government intervention was required in the form of new management procedures and monitoring strategies; the issue of worsening conditions introduces a wide number of internal and external scenarios, to problems in neighbourhood settings.

**CDA Stage 2**

The term “New City” used by Dagmar is an interesting one because it introduces an expectation that Berlin’s poorer neighbourhoods (Schiller Promenade, Gropiusstadt) have to be more accountable for results from funding and programme allocations. In other words the process of neighbourhood change requires a new consciousness, where programmes and administrative protocols produce more dynamic outcomes from specific programmes. Dagmar
does not imply that the motivation behind the need for specific results arrives from the implementation of particular Social City programmes in designated deprived neighbourhoods. It is a broadly-based monitoring of all programmes.

Objectives for specific outcomes are part of what the “New City” approach from Social City demands, and this is revealed further in this interview and those with other interviewees.

This consciousness of change is being used proactively to translate into mechanisms for programmes that help to achieve social integration requires a clearer understanding of the cultural makeup of the neighbourhood. The term monitoring implies programmes have to achieve specific outcomes. For example, are job training programmes related to real career prospects and do they produce real jobs for migrants who complete the course? This topic is also discussed by Franke (interview 4, 2006) and Dr Kolland (interview 5, 2008).

CDA Stage 3

The term “New City” referred to by Dagmar indicates that politicians who control the direction of Berlin’s Social City neighbourhood management programmes need to review specific outcomes under the Social City programme. An insight into these outcomes is revealed later in the interview. Dagmar mentions a monitoring process which refers to a statement by the office of the Commissioner for Integration and Migration of the Berlin senate (Raiser 2005). This system of monitoring follows up integration processes, measures integration success; notes failures of some programmes and the success of others.

The “New City” strategy will in the future (post late 2006) implement a hardening of measures and will ensure that the new integration strategies are linked to further stringent monitoring. According to The Office of Berlin’s Commissioner for Integration, some government-sponsored initiatives in other regions have experienced severe down-sizing in recent years. The Berlin government realizes that in order to avoid the severe down-sizing of its own initiatives experienced by other regions it needs to tighten up on cultural initiatives in favour of those with a more commercially oriented result (de Boer 2009). Berlin is the largest of all the sixteen German regions and has gained increasing institutional power in recent years. The city therefore implements integration policies on a local city level while at the same time taking advantage of its influence as a state on the federal level via the second chamber of the German Parliament.
A key question is whether government policies designed to promote integration have also become an aspect of a gentrifying process which is systematically changing the social mix of working-class districts of Berlin – and Neukölln specifically (de Boer 2009; Smith 2009).

**Dagmar continues** In the last four weeks a lot has happened at the Schiller Promenade; the renovated Centrum of the protestant (Gneizareth/Nazareth) church has been blessed (consecrated). At the same time, the coffee shop has been renovated and is now being used as a central meeting point for the local neighbourhood residence (Kietz) residence.

A large children’s party was organised to celebrate the opening of the Kietz residence to highlight the success of the church project as a community meeting point. The project organisers saw this project as a meeting point for different religions to share ideas into how they can work together to develop a sense of community in the local neighbourhood. The coffee-shop meeting place in Schiller Promenade (Neukölln) is of great importance because the initial initiative was from local residents and not the Christian church.

**CDA Stage 1**
Dagmar expressed enthusiasm concerning this event i.e. the building of the coffee shop as a meeting place for all religions. Dagmar identifies the discourse of religion both as a problem of integration and one as an opportunity for different religions to get on with each other and grow a sense of local community together.

**CDA Stage 2**
Dagmar makes a point about what the local Christian church has done in providing a venue that adds value to social capital. Dagmar explains the details of the contribution made by Social City in terms of its organisation by the local neighbourhood office and this could be interpreted as what the local community has contributed in the arena of social integration without a religious context. This is because according to Dagmar: “the local initiatives came from local residents and not the church”. It was the “local residents who achieved this themselves” without any official prodding, as Dagmar presents it. There were however twenty-five organisations involved in the project which would suggest that it took a great deal of organisational know-how from the Social City organisation, which could suggest that local
initiatives are not necessarily developed by local neighbourhood residents, or at least not to the extent that Dagmar implies.

We can also question the value of this venue as a site for integration. Notwithstanding the willingness of local residents to nominate a Christian church as a meeting venue, it could be asked whether the selection of the church may compromise the neutrality of religion which an integrative intervention requires and may draw into question the real contribution of the church coffee shop meeting place to bridging social capital.

**CDA Stage 3**

The willingness of the church to invite peoples of all cultures is a central aspect of this cultural integration strategy. Yet these sorts of practical intervention strategies (mutual meeting places, language classes and neighbourhood forums) should have occurred years ago during the initial stages of guest worker migration in the 1970s as part of a new citizen induction programme. These attempts at integration now are trying to recover an urban regeneration strategy that may have been already seriously compromised. Were these lapses in attempts at integration in the past the fault of politicians, educators and local identities such as business owners, community and religious leaders?

The bottom line according to de Boer (2009) is that Neukölln’s inhabitants search for an enrichment of their city’s programme through a combination of entrepreneurship and creativity. The “Berlin Study” published by the OECD in 2000 stated that immigration is one of Berlin’s main future resources and from a positive perspective Berlin has the flair for creating a heterogeneous and colourful metropolis that thrives from the contribution that different cultures bring to it. It is a city with a huge potential for integrating people from different backgrounds (Ulrich Raiser, Office of the Commissioner for Integration and Migration of the Berlin Senate 2006).

The current strategy for integration empowers local residents to govern aspects of their own neighbourhood assets, in the process reducing the cost to government of implementing some intervention policies. They become self-governing in some aspects of neighbourhood matters. Examples may include care and maintenance of the public realm, addressing anti-social behaviour and reducing instances of graffiti. The process of empowerment helps to bring residents together in mutual collaboration for a common neighbourhood goal that concerns them all. There may be a downside in this local empowerment because it may reinforce
exclusive identities as discussed by Putnam and Florida (2000; 2002) and referred to in interview number four (4) with Franke (2006) on the subject of social capital.

Re: learning the German language

Dagmar continues

In Germany today (2006) there is a concern that far too few migrants are learning the German language either at school or in their professional life and this situation is not good for Germany because it lowers the effectiveness of social integration. There is also a political side to this, where this way of thinking is not good for Germany. We have to find ways of integrating migrants with the wider German population.

CDA Stage 1

Dagmar sees the question of language as one of the major ways of achieving social integration in Berlin’s poorer districts. Dagmar sees language as the cornerstone to personal and professional success. Establishing the importance of language begins in local children’s play areas, in the neighbourhood streets and in the first few years in school. It is political will to deliver programmes that are not only linked to specific outcomes but to change the negative way of thinking that is not beneficial to German society. Dagmar argues there is a link between economic activity and language and the stifled development of language has an influence on the success of the social integration of migrants.

CDA Stage 2

It appears that the question of language and government concerns over these issues is a recent phenomenon. It is not a recent phenomenon and the opportunity for all migrant to communicate in German has been ignored. In fact, migrants who lack the ability to communicate in German have generally been excluded from full participation in society “… with unemployment and low (often social benefit) income levels, those affected have fewer opportunities in education and to participate in other societal spheres” (Leicht 2004).

The OECD studies (2005) have repeatedly stressed that in Germany to an extent not present in any other (developed) country educational attainments are dependent on social status. In fact, immigrants and other students of low social status have worse school examination results and often leave school without any examination qualifications at all. This severely influences their opportunities for societal participation as well as in the labour market. As these problematic groups are concentrated in certain areas, due to the reasons outlined above, socio-economic
decline in these neighbourhoods was as it were programmed by economic development in Berlin (Statistisches Landesamt Berlin; Beer, Deniz and Schwedler 2002).

Whereas Leicht (2004) puts the blame on the German and Berlin governments, Pötzl (2008) has a different view, quoting from comments made by the mayor of Neukölln “about fathers who forbid their daughters from taking part in swimming lessons and class trips; and about 18-year-old women who are flown in from Turkey as imported brides, because the patriarch doesn’t like the enlightened female Turkish bank employee from Neukölln”. Pötzl does however recognize that the vast majority of Muslim immigrants live largely inconspicuous lives among their long-established German neighbours. According to Potzl:

Nevertheless, many Germans have trouble accepting the gradual changes in their society and being in close contact with a culture shaped by the rules of the Koran (2008).

CDA Stage 3

When Dagmar’s comments on the lack of German language skills as a factor in the poor professional development of some migrants are analysed, the ideas behind her views may relate to her time spent as a Magistrate in East Germany (GDR/DDR) before the unification of East and West Germany. This is because the lack of German language skills was not a major factor during the pre-unification period. This is for two reasons: firstly it was a time of full employment in East Berlin and secondly there was only a small non-German population in East Berlin of less than 2% prior to and shortly after the reunification of Berlin. In Neukölln today (2006) the non-German population is over 30% and in this respect language is only one of many issues concerning the integration of some migrants into German society.

Dagmar suggests that some migrants are not taking full responsibility for their own education; it is they who are not learning the language. However other commentators see the problem as coming from the schools themselves. Buschkowsky the mayor of Neukölln maintains “immigrant children have a harder time finishing school with a high qualification than their German fellow pupils with not enough emphasis placed on education for migrants and children of migrants” (cited in Der Spiegel 2009).

Thomas Franke (interview 4) in his opinion puts social integration objectives into perspective when he states that it will take a minimum of ten years before there will be results from
government programmes. Formal education in German language is only one aspect of interventions which have been mooted for improving language skills, especially for younger people. Kirkeby (2006) nominates the sports field as a way of establishing intercultural dialogue:

From a political point of view, sport, in terms of its structures and settings, is often referred to and preferred as an important solution to the major challenge of creating intercultural dialogue in European societies. Sport...is a recognised social phenomenon. Sports offer a common language and a platform for social democracy; however the popularity and the preferences for using sport in this context is not always enough to secure successful interventions and results, although the inter-cultural learning dimension is mainly based on non-formal and informal learning settings and processes.

**Parallel societies**

**Dagmar continues**

Members of parallel societies believe they do not have to persist in learning the German language, and to integrate. Local Turkish society and others do not see their lack of German language skills as a problem, and believe one can live within German society without it.

**CDA Stage 1**

Dagmar implies that the problem of integration is actually a problem of religious segregation; Muslims need to be integrated with non-Muslims. Here the reference is to Turkish (Muslims) forming a parallel society and earlier the reference is broader. “We have to find ways of integrating migrants with the wider German population and with other non-Muslim groups”.

While Dagmar emphasizes this religious divide and expresses the central issues about “integration” that motivate public concern, we can note that there are in fact a number of different ethnic groups that may be considered as operating parallel societies including migrants from a number of previous Russian states (interview with Hübner 2001; 2004). In the first and subsequent visits to Neukölln, Russian was the second non-German language that I detected on numerous occasions.

We can note that Dagmar uses the term “parallel society” here; a term that has been explained by Leicht (2004) and also used by the mayor of Neukölln, one of the first politicians who was credited with using it. It is also by now a popular term referred to in magazine articles and the like. Der Spiegel quotes Buschkowsky (2005) saying:
Neukölln is a good place to experience the parallel society firsthand.

Dagmar may be expressing an underlying view that comes from her working experience in this area. She worked in the former East Germany as a Magistrate. She links culture with language and both these with unemployment. She suggests an economy can only be efficient if the community speaks a common language.

CDA Stage 2
Dagmar promotes the government agenda for integration. She is in a position have an informed opinion because she has access to data from the Social City programme files on these types of issues. She implies in this comment about language that the high unemployment of migrants is their own fault; they are unwilling to learn the German language and hence unlikely to get work. However in reality there may be a number of factors of which language is only one; clearly unemployment has increased with the decline of manufacturing and language was not a barrier to employment when more manufacturing was available. Migrants account for a higher percentage of the unemployed because they make up the majority of workers in the low and unskilled manufacturing sector (Ulrich Raiser, Office of the Commissioner for Integration and Migration of the Berlin Senate 2006).

CDA Stage 3
Berlin and Germany generally have experienced a reduction in its manufacturing sector, and there has to be the realisation that education and training has not necessarily included its migrant population who continue to be employed in lower-skilled industrial work. There is a frustration in the words used by Dagmar that programmes put out by Social City take a long time to be successful in government-defined areas of deprivation such as Neukölln.

Economic productivity is impossible without cultural and social integration. Along with this lack of integration go unemployment and an increased cost in welfare provisions that has to be financed by taxation receipts. The German government cannot afford to fund ongoing areas of social need that in the end become no-go areas run as parallel societies. The German government cannot afford to have the social problems that are largely defined by culture and therefore religion but which ultimately come out of social exclusion. The absence of interventionist programmes to deal with these issues over the last twenty years has created a
current sense of urgency and frustration. Social City field and support personnel such as Dagmar have too many programmes with too low a budget to work with (Der Spiegel 2006).

Re unemployment and retraining
Dagmar continues
With the rate of unemployment over 40% in the designated areas of deprived needs the lack of German Language skills also mirrors changes in the economy because it intensifies the need to retrain the unemployed where good language skill is one of the keys to re-employment in the commercial sector. One of the fundamentals of job-retraining is to include the use of computers; this gives people in the local precincts confidence in themselves. The use of “friendly computer” systems enables them to take a self-directed approach in learning how to learn and how to look for employment opportunities in the local neighbourhood; and they are also guided towards being independent and therefore not a burden on society.

Success of programmes
Dagmar continues
It is difficult to determine if the programmes that we are responsible for are successful or not because our programmes and the associated protocols are implemented with the support of the European Union. To create jobs is one of the essentials of the programme and to determine how many jobs are created; it is not possible to say how many. It is difficult to show results and it is a very controversial and political issue. Recently however there is a strategy which we follow up, the automatic development of the infrastructure money for the children, school recreation centres. We concentrate on cooperation with schools in the quarters and funding support for integration, for computers, and health improvement programmes which can be introduced and integrated in schools and neighbourhoods.

CDA Stage 1
Actual results of employment schemes are difficult to measure. She relates this to the fact that aspects of the programmes are controlled by the EU and the cost of programmes cannot be met by Berlin Social City alone and there is need for the German government and the EU to also provide funds. She is frustrated because the programmes have not been provided with adequate funds to work. There seems to be a lot of effort by the Berlin senate for urban development (2005) for very little outcome. Outcomes are restricted by reduced programme spending and increases in job placements for residents are not forthcoming.
CDA Stage 2
Dagmar is happier giving her support to the computer assistance centres that have been set up; friendly computer systems expand the role of programmes in creating independent migrants. This aspect of government-based training is an example of the use of government programmes and technology to motivate and encourage residents to take charge of their own direction using their own time, i.e. a self-optimisation strategy. It is also a dual strategy. Government is using a top-down interventionist approach whilst reducing the potential for the community to criticize its interventionist agenda because the approach uses bottom-up initiatives provided by the migrants themselves. This approach provides tools for residents to seek work and so reduces the cost to government of finding work for residents. With about 44% of non-Germans jobless in Berlin working class areas there is a sense of urgency in developing employment strategies. When welfare payments are added to the equation the drain on the economy in financial terms is huge (Beer, Deniz and Schwedler 2001).

CDA Stage 3
The cost of programmes and the projects they are allocated for are explicitly linked, and there are protocols in place where there is a high transparency to ensure that the correct project receives the appropriate funding allocation. There is also a publication that identifies where the money has been distributed, e.g. for which projects (DIFU May, 2002 analysis report). Franke (interviewed in 2006) represents the DIFU (German Urban Institute) and comments on aspects of the relationships between his organisation (as managers) and Social City as implementers; via local area management.

Interview No: 3 - Franziska Süllke – June 2006 and April 2008: Neukölln Local Council
Social Inclusion

**Question (Alec)** Can I ask you, Franziska what is your role, and what is meant by social inclusion?

**Answer (Franziska)**
I will begin with a definition of social inclusion. Social inclusion refers to neighbourhood management; education, cooperation between different inhabitants of a particular neighbourhood quarter (Schiller Promenade is one example), cooperation between different active people in the community relationship with the city council and non-government
organisations, with the citizens in an area and integration, of course, refers to people of migrant backgrounds.

**Franziska continues**

I work in the mayor’s office (Neukölln) and my primary task is to handle European funding. So I’m responsible in the main part for the use and the application of European funding for projects which take place here in the council. In the Neukölln area there are projects which focus on the problems we have here. These include social problems; problems of employment; social integration and social development and these are our major functions. I am also involved in project management and this includes infrastructure development and the coordination of some programs that other project leaders can use. In terms of project management I also give advice on how to apply; how to implement a project; how to manage a project and what the needs are to implement a project. I coordinate with all departments of the Socially Integrated City concept and the different teams that people are involved in, and because of our different programmes we have different working groups so we need to meet every two or three months. During these meetings I inform them what is relevant; what the current programs are from the European Union structural fund, and the opportunity to apply for them. The program Social City is also funded by this European structure fund and I am also responsible for city twinning, (similar to edge-city) so we have fourteen sister cities, so this is really about international relationships.

**Question (Alec)** what is the socio-economic make-up of people who live in Neukölln?

**Answer (Franziska)**

Many people who are unemployed live there. Migrants from an economic viewpoint reside in this [sic] “weak area” that would be defined as problematic. Our hope is to attract a mix of people consisting of residents who have been retrained (by the Social City organisation) and who were previously unemployed; we would also like to attract artists, teachers and other professional people. The department Social City have adopted a programme where artists are encouraged, with the aid of government funding, to express their own artistic view of local urban problems as they see fit. I would like to introduce to you to an example of a government funded Micro-Finance programme.
It is a programme of the European Union for tracking local needs that would benefit from local finance programmes the German government decided to introduce in Germany in quarter neighbourhood management. It is a programme to support local job opportunities in this area only and it is a micro credit program where local applicants who reside in the area can apply to receive 10,000 Euros to start a self-employed business (2006) for one year. This is only a small programme which was very successful with 100,000 Euro funding available for this area which caters for ten people or separate groups. The micro-programmes also have a strongly visible aspect leading to positive social development because of the impact of small local business initiatives in neighbourhood settings.

Question (Alec) Before were there mostly unemployed people?

Answer (Franziska)

Mostly, but there is still a huge number of people who are unemployed and with a lack of education; many people from migrant backgrounds have language problems and problems at school that sometimes involves violence between students.

CDA Stage 1

Franziska has an important role and in her position she can take a broad view of events within her domain whilst at the same time she makes incursions into the realm of urban reality during her involvement with both residents and Social City personnel in defining solutions to local challenges. However Franziska is also reading the situation in relation to prejudices coming out of tensions between some migrants and the Old German population.

This is a further statement of problems associated with migrants. It seems that as the interview warms up Franziska is prepared to reveal more about what she sees as the migrant problem. Here, we find that their unemployment is to be traced to language problems which are affecting their school success. This failure at school is in turn related to problems of violence, which has also been commented upon by the mayor of Neukölln Heinz Buschkowsky (2008).

Franziska provides an example of the use of government programmes and technology to motivate and direct local residents to take charge of their own direction. This mini-financing
directive is an EU (European Union) and German government initiative and it is a programme written by Franziska.

CDA Stage 2
What is going on here is another conflation of migrants with problems and the migrant problem here is unemployment. The phrase “weak area” used by Franziska is also interesting because it is implying that these migrants have influenced the status of this area. The term weak area however refers to the area not being economically sustainable because there are not enough local employment opportunities. These were lost when the area lost a large percentage of its manufacturing and assembly industries. There is the hope that the area will improve and a mix of different types of people will come here such as artists, entrepreneurs and professional people. It is on this aspect of mix of people that de Boer (2009) comments:

    The bottom line is that Neukölln’s inhabitants need to search for an enrichment of their city’s programme through a combination of entrepreneurship and creativity.

What is made very clear here is that geographical areas of the city are being defined as problematic. In other words there is a spatial mapping of social problems and a set of spatial interventions for these particular sites. From field experience and conversations with other Old Germans, these areas were regarded as no-go zones for Old Germans to enter. What is interesting about her presentation of this issue is that this problem is referred to in a way that is almost euphemistic or at least opaque in not specifying what the problem may be. Again, it seems as though this issue is being treated as a sensitive topic and one that has be solved by government and by establishing strategic partnerships with local businesses, schools, police and community organisations.

What is interesting about the topic of social inclusion is the way Franziska initially talks about the mechanisms by which social inclusion is to be achieved for example by: “neighbourhood management, education cooperation between different inhabitants, relationships with the city council” and so on. It is only after they have been listed that Franziska explains what kind of social differentiation is implicated in the social exclusion that is to be replaced by inclusion. She defines the out-group who are to be included as people of a migrant background and these people are to be integrated into mainstream German society as a matter of priority.
What is fascinating about this is that this variable is considered as a key in the social problems of the district; for example social class, age or gender is not mentioned here in her initial outlining of the problems. The placing of this at the end of the discussion and also the way she voices it as if it was a side issue may be considered to represent the context in which it is a touchy topic to mention migrants as a problem. On the one hand the obvious intention of these government programs is to deal with the migrant problem, but it is not considered politically correct to present migrants as a problem. The other interesting feature of this representation of the problem is that it is seen as a problem if migrants are separate and different and they are to be integrated as a centrepiece of government policy. What is going on here is another conflation of migrants with another problem and as with the references to religion in Dagmar’s interview, the migrant problem here is associated with unemployment issues.

In the next section of the interview text, Franziska seems to suggest that new arrivals in the area who are intellectuals, for example students, artists or professionals may be encouraged to come to an area which is otherwise occupied by unemployed people who may be mainly migrants. This process of social change is to be encouraged as it dilutes the social problem of migrants by bringing people of a different (Old German or more middle class) background into neighbourhoods.

The Town of Neukölln has been a working-class suburb of Berlin for many years. However in recent times, the working class have been replaced by the poor, defined primarily in terms of want, social handicaps or the disorder of which they are the cause. In negative social, political and academic representations of working-class neighbourhoods, they are sometimes perceived primarily as rough or problem neighbourhoods.

**CDA Stage 3**

Franziska’s first statement links improvements in the built landscape to a desirable and intended social change and to encourage residents not to move to more desirable areas. The challenges associated with population mobility have been raised by a number of personnel from Social City, German Institute for Urban Development and Cultural Networks.

**Franziska’s comment** that we would also like to attract artists, teachers and other professional people implies that these people with these types of background have the power to help to
alleviate the social problem which migrants represent. The basis of this power comes from the relationship of artists and the local neighbourhood community. This relationship has been implemented as an interventionist strategy by utilising the intellectual power of migrants to engage with mainstream German society and other migrants to harness the district’s existing social and economic opportunities and hopefully reducing the cost to the Berlin economy of unemployment. The use of an artistic and creative process of intervention is an important aspect of empowering residents from designated areas of deprived needs to help themselves discover and share their cultural talents and it is also a key element of government cultural policy (interview with Kolland 2008). This is a policy that encourages the kind of creative diversity that is closely associated with the changing nature of working-class inner-city areas and the creative economy that develops from it (Florida 2002).

This attempt to change a traditional working-class area of Berlin, seen as a “weak or problematic area”, can be seen as de facto attempt at preparing the area for gentrification (de Boer 2009; Smith 2009) with a more mixed population and an orientation to cultural employment (de Boer 2009).

**Interview No: 4 – Thomas Franke – June 2006: (DIFU)**

**Neighbourhood management – diverse paradigms**

**Question (Alec)** Good morning Thomas may I ask you what is your role at the German Institute of Urban Affairs (DIFU)?

**Answer (Thomas)** I work for the German Institute of Urban Affairs (DIFU) as a geographer with studies in sociology as well as town planning. I try to meet sociological as well as town planning issues during my work with DIFU as part of a task force for the implementation of the Integrated Social City program which was launched in 1999 to tackle all kinds of social and economic problems in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in larger through to smaller cities.

Our task force perspective is an integrated approach that involves town planning and architectural issues as well as the questions of social integration within neighbourhoods, unemployment and the broad range of problems that are found in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. As far as I am concerned urban design and architecture play a pivotal role in neighbourhood issues.
The focus of the Social City program DIFU task force is to reorganize the national programs and organizational structures on the national, regional as well as the municipal levels, down to the local neighbourhood level, and from the reorganisation we try to establish new organisational structures. Our objectives are to integrate the disciplines of architecture, town planning and neighbourhood social structures; to bundle the resources they need in terms of money; to source the knowledge and different professions that are required and to get the top down and bottom up protocols established correctly.

As far as the organisational structures are concerned, the new form of neighbourhood management is in the context of a local village. In this context, how to combine the wider aspects of town planning principles with social integration and community building is very difficult in Germany because we have both a strong planning tradition and the community building and social workers’ tradition. They now both find themselves in same room and argue whether the one side or the other has invented the integrated approach. In any event, building a community requires an innovative neighbourhood approach and this was reflected in our paper delivered at the EURA-Conference on Neighbourhood Management, which is a key instrument in integrative urban district development (see Franke and Löhr 2001).

CDA Stage 1

Thomas Franke graphically and broadly illustrates the urban situation in Berlin. Thomas discusses the overall complexity of the challenges in the integration process from an organisational context and the tensions between the German Institute of Urban Affairs (DIFU) department and the community and social workers, a problem centred on the need to integrate a range of management structures into a single unit. Thomas indicates that success comes from good neighbourhood management working effectively with the more formalised, rigid and long established traditional planning approach.

This interesting description of his role of managing the different styles of neighbourhood affairs may suggest that there are some conflicts of neighbourhood management within Social City and the German Urban Institute as indicated by the following comment (DIFU):

The early stages of combining the two approaches to managing neighbourhood problem-solving were spent posturing and arguing over differences between the more formalised and traditional top-down
approach and the more fluid, less strategic and socially-based bottom-up perspective.

**CDA Stage 2**

The problems of Berlin's distressed urban areas are intimately linked to wider city problems such as infrastructure, unemployment and emigration, but also relate to regional and national policies, civil society and the private sector. Traditional subsidies are not seen as a solution for Berlin: they are unaffordable, artificial, inefficient and fragile. Spending must be efficient, targeted and monitored. After a decade of reunification, Berlin is just beginning to adjust to its economic problems, following high expectations. In its districts, there is a downward spiral with lower expectations and tight budget cuts. A high population outflow to neighbouring areas, together with medium-stay incomers, has led to Berlin becoming a city of transit (Franke 2003), which is a mobility factor that is difficult for government to design and provide services for.

In the functional approach to urban design the emphasis is on formal top-down management of local resources without local involvement, whereas the bottom-up approach involves the contribution of bottom-up local assets, where the ability of local residents and identities as frontline managers may be unknown at the beginning.

The problem with using bottom-up local assets is that top-down management policy makers and management operatives are used to dealing with professional organisations and formal operational protocols which largely do not exist at the local neighbourhood level or are difficult to identity because of the challenges of inter-cultural and social communication. To achieve organisational outcomes that are similar to those produced by top-down managers not only involves new forms of neighbourhood management but also willingness to engage in flexible methodologies in order to achieve “a district’s vitality and an identity originating out of their cultural diversity” (Meyer 1998, p. 28 cited in Meyer and Schuleri-Hartje, Difu 2002).

**As The German Urban Institute puts it (DUFI)**

Increasing migrants’ social involvement and integrating them in forming districts calls for low-threshold schemes, e.g. establishing centres for social dialogue, supporting independent ethnic organizations, organizing community festivals, cultivating neighbourhood cohesion and mobilizing conflict mediators (Reimann and Schuleri-Hartje 2005). Once success in low-
threshold schemes are achieved more complex schemes can be undertaken, particularly as the
certainty of migrants grows because of working closely together on developing community
assets.

**CDA Stage 3**
Years of political neglect and public ignorance from older German society in dealing with
migrants and their integration into mainstream German society has contributed to a sense of
social and cultural isolation for many residents in working-class neighbourhood districts of
Berlin. What has also been lacking is knowledge of participatory methods for migrants. What
was required was a national network of government policy makers at the top end with social
and economically disadvantaged districts at the bottom-end involved in multilateral
collaboration, with management, administrative and political structures working together
identifying and resolving neighbourhood issues (Franke and Löhr 2001).

Since the interview with Franke (2006) there has been, according to the Federal Ministry of
Transport, Building and Urban Affairs, a rationalisation of resources with a greater on-going
emphasis on strategic partnerships to sort out specific neighbourhood problems (Beckmann,
Franke, Reimann and Strauss March 2007).

The development of the neighbourhood has also benefited from ideas generated from the
European-wide Nehom organisation which is evaluation and development tool.

The Nehom research projects funded by the European Community contribute to the German
debates about the future development of policies for the cities by analysing and evaluating the
case studies and feeding the results back into practice. Main conclusions are that different
methodologies of local inclusive developments can be successful as long as accepted
intermediary actors are able to combine the local assets with the political sector and that the
economic environment of the locality has a carrying capacity which allows a step-by-step
development. Vital factors for success are the credibility of the governmental top-down
provisions and long term perspectives of the policy for change, which must be oriented
towards the problems and their generation rather than on political life-cycles like election
periods (Kährik 2006).
A problem-solving approach provides for solutions to be generated at the local neighbourhood level rather than by politicians at the beginning or end of their term in office. A local neighbourhood problem-solving approach dictates that interventions are mainly planned and implemented at micro level (a local and national level incentive) without having to refer back to a centralized policy decision (Kirkeby 2006). This local neighbourhood continuous problem-solving approach required that years of urban policy that was dominated by a centralised top-down approach and “influenced by professional and political ideologies, civic pride, financial restrictions and geographical barriers” (Shapely 2008) had to be overcome.

Social capital and participation

**Question (Alec)** Do you find it a challenge in our multicultural society to get people in the neighbourhoods to tell you what works best and especially what strategy or programme adds value to social capital?

**Answer (Thomas)** The demands of neighbourhood residents; the failure of top-down management; the question of social capital; the question of ethnic enclaves, and the large architectural picture. I think it’s a question of demands. When you talk about social capital, I think both types of social capital are important. The bonding capital is for the different, i.e. ethnic enclaves within the neighbourhood. In urban design or architecture, an example is of meeting points which are appropriate from the perspectives of those you want to address. I think a failure of top-down planning is that things that are meant in a very good way aren’t accepted by the target groups.

We have a strong and long standing tradition of public participation within planning and top-down planning protocols that ask people do they accept plans that have been (already) formulated by urban planners or not? In most cases only small changes to the plans are possible because there was little or no involvement with residents during the earlier planning stages.

The new forms of participation I would say, start much earlier within the planning process and it’s a much broader approach and it doesn’t focus solely on urban planning or architecture or town planning. So what we tried to introduce with the program are different forms of participation, and I would say there is a difference between mobilisation and activation participation; both are very important. On the one hand you need the participation, the new
participation models like neighbourhood conferences, district conferences or future
conferences with the objective of the neighbourhood or the district to get all kinds of groups
of people together and to talk about different problems and different solutions and the whole
integrative perspective. Maybe the question of urban design or architecture plays an
important role; other problems are all from the big picture, like pollution and public space,
problems with the docks, insufficient green spaces, and leisure spaces. Of course people who
live in very deprived areas with a very unhealthy environment and buildings that are not
sufficient in terms of design architecture and colour are the most disadvantaged.

CDA Stage 1
Thomas refers to the pressure placed on government to meet the demands of neighbourhoods
that he refers to as local target groups. For pressure placed upon governments one should
read demands based upon the need for local upgrades in urban physical infrastructure and
general services.

Although district culture was neglected in comparison to urban planning and to social and
economic aspects in the early years of the programme, it has now gained almost equal footing
due to its importance for communication and integration in disadvantaged urban districts. The
recent boom in cultural diversity, activities and projects is the achievement of committed
citizens. People are getting involved and taking active roles. They are helping to enhance the
image and potential of their districts (Meyer and Schuleri-Hartje 2002).

The recent arrival of an action-based problem-solving approach is confirmed by Thomas’s
comments. He points out that when residents were previously asked for ideas by urban
planners about their neighbourhood needs they were not involved in the active mobilisation of
solutions discussed during neighbourhood conferences. A more objectively oriented form of
resident participation is an approach that requires a great deal of cultural understanding
where, as Thomas suggests, you “get all kinds of groups of people together to talk about
different problems and different solutions and the whole integrative perspective”.

CDA Stage 2
The demands by residents to meet their neighbourhood needs relates to establishing systems
that facilitate inter-cultural dialogue. Although practical, theoretical frameworks and total
management systems can be incorporated into managing neighbourhoods, local
neighbourhood situations still require an understanding of local cultural norms, given the changing nature of populations in Berlin, a “city of transit” (Franke and Löhr 2001).

Thomas comments on “insufficient green and leisure spaces” and suggests that these are the types of areas where the neighbourhood members can take action to sort out, maintain and refurbish the public space. Ethnic differences are not necessarily a barrier to these practical tasks that need to be undertaken in a local district context. A cared-for environment has become a neighbourhood wellness strategy. This has been adopted as a way of helping to create a local neighbourhood identity which is unique to Berlin and residents who live in the heavily-populated inner-city (Berlin). The local area is known as a “Kiez” (a definitive neighbourhood setting). This is a vaguely defined area, usually around a square, which offers its inhabitants both the familiarity of a village and an urban lifestyle (Becci 2007; Steinberg 1990).

The combination of top-down planning procedures integrated with local bottom-up resources and initiatives has been continuously applied since the late 1990s. Without this experience, the combination of theoretical models and practical frameworks would almost be non-existent (Kolb 1984). This is active experimentation at work which is planning and then trying out what has been learnt (Kolb 1984) in the practical reality of neighbourhood settings where time and commitment to achieving stable and harmonious neighbourhoods represent the fundamentals of neighbourhood management. Otherwise even the most basic of neighbourhood issues becomes entangled in conflict rather than open dialogue between competing groups leading to resolution.

Thomas points out that “both types of social capital are important” which implies that no single social capital strategy resolves all social and economic issues. Preference for one sort of social capital over another has the potential to either help bring different cultures together or empower them to grow apart. Putnam (2000) has categorised bonding capital as “exclusive” and bridging capital as “inclusive”. Bonding capital is: “by choice or necessity inward looking and tends to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups which include churches, ethnic fraternal groups” (Putnam 2000, pp. 22-23).

Bridging capital that can be augmented by residents working together in strategic partnerships with local business, government agencies and local police not only brings residents and the
hierarchy of town planners together but also creates bridges between different resident
groups. And it is a good idea to be reminded that Berlin’s multicultural society includes over
one hundred and sixty nationalities. Linking so many nationalities with bridging capital can help to avoid the growth of parallel societies.

Bonding capital however is essential for the day-to-day economic and socio-cultural survival of residents who require supporting networks of religious or cultural links with people from their own background, especially if they are new arrivals.

CDA Stage 3
Strategies to get residents to participate fully in dialogue about their needs are still relatively new. What works or does not may be different with each social and cultural group. For example field operatives have expressed the need for direct face-to-face contacts with migrant family members rather than contact through written communications. For Islamic families, it is expected that communication in the first instance will be directed to the father. Yet it is usually women who help set up and expand inter-group migrant networks (interview with Busse 2006, Social City housemother’s programme 2005).

The idea that ethnic groups from socially deprived districts will participate in any government-sponsored programme of their own (individual) volition is debatable. However the section below discusses community participation and employment opportunities for migrant groups. A targeted approach based on problem-solving agendas that specifically focus on gauging the opinions of community leaders (Della Bitta, Lawson, Loudon, Rainbird, and Tidwell 1996) may achieve better outcomes. These leaders are the types of people who are expected to guide the community and provide direction on important issues. Groups that bond together with the help of a community leader can develop the confidence to engage with residents from other cultural or religious groups to work on community bridging projects such as art in the public realm and neighbourhood refurbishment programmes.

The strategy of community participation is centred on the government’s objective for people of all cultures to be employed; and it is hoped that a neighbourhood by neighbourhood developmental approach will produce a society that is fully integrated into the German mainstream. There is enough evidence to suggest that neighbourhoods with a low or very socio-economic status also have a very low work participation rate. Residents that live in
districts that have a low work participation rate may also find it difficult to obtain employment because of the reputation of the area where they live. This is due in part to the low level of investment in local infrastructure (Shapely 2008); giving a reputation that some residents may not necessarily deserve (Florida 2002).

Over 40% (Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development 2005) of the migrant population is unemployed as a result of the change from a manufacturing-based economy to an information technology-based economy and a lack of job and language-related skills. The economic cost of providing for the unemployed has to be tackled somehow, and using existing ethnic networks to develop neighbourhood participation and involve people with other ethnic groups is seen as the way forward.

This strategy is referred to as using “the ethnic economy” (Berlin Senate for the Integrative City, 2003-2009; Franke, Social City 2007). Established entrepreneurs from migrant backgrounds are targeted as an important community resource in the local long-term job-creation strategies to reduce dependency on welfare programmes. This approach utilizes both the attributes of bonding capital and the inclusive nature of bridging techniques. The Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing believes that the economic potential of migrant business should be exploited systematically through municipal initiatives that nurture ethnic entrepreneurs and training networks at foreign-run companies.

**Involving local residents**

**Question (Alec)** How do you get local residents to participate in decisions concerning their neighbourhood; what are the issues that are important to them?

**Answer (Thomas)** Yeah it’s an important factor. I think graffiti for example or the demolition of buildings are much bigger problems than design. What I tried to say is first of all mobilisations and activation is not the same as participation and the new forms of participation are very different from the traditional ones because participation was not integrated into the planning process. So we have two steps to do. First we need a broader approach with other aspects of how to organise these meetings, how to invite people. For example the Turkish community never reacts to flyers. They don’t accept flyers. What they accept are tapes for example, in the local TV or radio. Then sometimes they come to the meetings and say what their perspectives are on certain issues. What is much more fruitful is to mobilise the people, to meet them at
market places or to visit them at home and to ask for their description of their neighbourhood perspective, from the situation within their flat or street, how they perceive the buildings, what would they change if they could. Then you can try to mobilise them to come to those meetings and conferences to get in touch with planners, officials, politicians and so on. It’s a long way and it’s very difficult, especially where ethnic minorities are hardly reached either by flyers and the more formal ‘face-to-face’ aspects of participation. It’s much closer to daily life if the planners and even the ones who invented the program have worked in the field.

**Question (Alec)** Do you find one of the challenges is that people from ethnic minorities may not be able to tell you what they want? Is it a matter of understanding the language they use and interpreting that language to identify a particular need? Is that a challenge?

**Answer (Thomas)** Well I can’t tell you that because my problem is I’ve never worked in the field. It’s always been theoretically and not within the neighbourhoods but in between the intermediate levels of governmental involvement.

**CDA Stage 1**
Thomas has been involved with the aspect of integrative urban district development for a number of years and it was in 2001 (May) that he delivered a paper on this subject; he is very aware of the constraints associated with the theory on how to establish communications with ethnic populations. The theory is associated with inter-cultural communication (Babbie 2007), not only in the exchange of written and verbal dialogue between different nationalities but also in relation to discourses that animate interactions between cultural groups (Taylor, Wetherill and Yates 2001, p. 327).

**CDA Stage 2**
However it appears that although Thomas has not been in the field dealing with practical neighbourhood issues he appears to understand some of the issues involved in establishing connectedness between different ethnic groups.

Understanding the dynamics of how to achieve a socially cohesive neighbourhood may be improved if urban planners at all levels take an active role in field-work. Another important element in field-work participation is the separate departments needing to be combined together as an integrated unit. The German approach to project management with an
emphasis on cooperation and reporting every detail of what occurs during all stages of a project’s implementation does not differ from other organisations approaches.

CDA Stage 3
The ideal of empowering migrant groups to participate in re-designing elements of their own living space may only invite suspicion when they have little influence or control over even the most basic levels of their daily lives.

When Thomas refers to the need for planners and those who are involved in the creation of neighbourhood management systems to be involved in the practical aspects of field-work he is also aware of the need to engage local people in neighbourhood self-management systems and to empower residents (migrants) to make low-level executive decisions concerning their own situations (interview with Busse 2006). This could involve the management of inter-residents’ disputes and managing local employment opportunities. This includes the development of language, education and career skills as well as finding employment. At the opposite end of collaboration between residents there are inter-neighbourhood opportunities for improvement of inter-cultural social skills through leisure and artistic and sporting networks. Sport in particular, cuts through cultural and religious differences.

Question (Alec) My research area of interest is the working-class suburb of Neukölln; it is attractive to a mix of people from artists to teachers and business people. It is an area that has a lot of depth that needs a mixed development strategy. What are your thoughts on what works for Neukölln?

Population mobility
Answer (Thomas) My first idea when you talk about Neukölln and how to keep people there who would otherwise leave, the first thing I’m thinking of is schools. I know some friends of mine have lived in Neukölln, with some small children, working at the university. They don’t earn much money and the multicultural scene is very nice. But when the time came that the small children had to go to school they moved to a better part of the city. That’s much more important than urban design or good architecture. I must say that from the point of architecture and urban design and how to build a good environment for social integration, they have neighbourhood centres which are very, very nice in terms of urban design and
architecture, and accepted by the local people, where the local people come and meet and find different kinds of social infrastructure.

We don’t have this creative tradition here I would say if you look at creative industries where there is a lack of money. Creative industry also needs space to work as well as a creative atmosphere; artists will accept a building with lofts and warehouse style apartments which have been around for ten years. You will find them on Kreuzberg on the border of Kreuzberg and Neukölln. But I’m not sure if you can influence the unemployed and the disadvantaged in a good way. I am not sure that for them it’s so important (Thomas is referring to artistic intervention).

CDA Stage 1
Firstly, Thomas is referring to the intervention of people with an artistic background and secondly he suggests that the opportunities associated with the arts would be of little interest to unemployed or disadvantaged people. This pessimism could reflect the time it takes in order to achieve results from government sponsored programmes which should be counted in years rather than months. It may also reflect frustrations concerning where to target particular programmes.

When Thomas refers to Neukölln and “how to keep people there who would otherwise leave” he is referring to the older German population (Biodeutsch) and their children who are usually young, educated professionals who are attracted to Neukölln because of its lower accommodation costs and public transport connections with similar Berlin suburbs. The other advantages of Neukölln as a place to live according to Thomas is it is an older and well established suburb with many local services; however at this stage the artist-led regeneration of Neukölln (2006) was only just beginning to contribute to the vitality of the district.

The subject of moving to another district because of the lack of good schools is more related to the standard of education, which has to match the academic level of the students, and many of the students who attend schools in Neukölln at the beginning of their studies do not speak German (interview with Hübner 2001). This may contribute to holding other students back from their academic development who are more proficient in German and German culture.
What Thomas implies is that Germans from an older German population are more concerned about the value of good education than with the architectural style of an area; however a multicultural mix is important to an area’s social infrastructure according to my interview with Franke (2006).

On the contribution of art-related activities to local employment opportunities, Thomas comments that “we don’t have this tradition here”. Thomas is expressing the view that the suburbs of Neukölln (and similar close-by suburbs such as Kreuzberg that are also located in the southern districts of Berlin), were not traditionally creative, craft making areas. They were largely manufacturing centres of Berlin. Kreuzberg is also known as an “in” suburb, the place to be (de Boer 2009). By this comment de Boer implies that Kreuzberg has re-invented itself as a creative hub.

Thomas then claims that this arts policy cannot help the “unemployed and the disadvantaged in a good way”. In this context the people he refers to are most probably migrants, with the highest unemployment rate and rated as the most disadvantaged by the Berlin Senate for urban development (2005) and the German Urban Institute (Franke et al.2001).

CDA Stage 2
The comment by Thomas on the standard of schools suggests it is migrants who lower the standard of education in Neukölln which drives older Germans to leave the area to seek a better education for their children. Movements of Old Germans out of a working-class area such as Neukölln are not replaced by similar people; they are usually replaced by other migrants. However that is not necessarily the case when an area has become attractive for gentrification (Smith 2009); and Kreuzberg is such an example according to a number of sources (de Boer 2009; Smith 2009). The suburb of Kreuzberg is also an example of what can be achieved by an integrative approach to urban development involving government, local residents and strategic partnerships between them, local business and non-government organisations. As a previous working-class suburb Kreuzberg was also known as “Turkish town” because it was where many migrants made their home as guest workers to meet the demands of Germany’s booming post WW11 economy. Kreuzberg Berlin “working-class districts were taken over by Turkish immigrants” (Steinberg 1990, p.88) during the 1970s period.
It is anticipated that Neukölln will also benefit from its multicultural population and combine with an artist-led development of the city to produce a mix of vibrant cultures, rather than one that is dominated by any one culture or social identity. Kreuzberg is on the northern border of Neukölln while the large social housing development of Gropiusstadt with a population 37,000 (Schumacher 2008) is in the southern part of Neukölln, and further from the centre of Berlin (Mitte).

CDA Stage 3

The idea suggested by Thomas that when more migrants move into an area they reduce the attractiveness of the area for Old Germans (Biodeutsch), is one that Social City and other government departments struggle to change. It is an idea that is also commented on by politicians who claim that Neukölln represents a migrant suburb or parallel society. For example, the mayor of Neukölln, a committed Social Democrat, has a sense of urgency about the situation in his area and maintains that “Neukölln is a good place to experience the parallel society first hand and in ten years, we will be a migrant city,” (cited in Der Spiegel 2008).

The issue of segregated societies is also commented on by Andrea Brandt and Cordula Meyer of Der Spiegel who report on “the development of a Muslim parallel society in Germany” (2007, February 24), and also according to Faruk Süen, (cited in Der Spiegel 2007) director of the Centre for Turkish Studies, the boys and girls are increasingly defining themselves by reference to their faith (Brandt and Meyer cited in Der Spiegel 24th February 2007).

And this raises a question. Does the drift of older Germans out of suburbs like Neukölln represent the further development of segregated societies in Germany rather than an integrated one that the German government promotes? It is the opposing forces of pro-integration versus separatist societies. Education is seen as one of the solutions for integrating society, a view that is also shared by Heinz Buschkowsky, Neukölln’s mayor (2008). Brandt and Meyer regard this as naïve.

Modern liberal dogma holds education as universal cure for most of what ails society (Brandt and Meyer 2007).
Yet in fact in my analysis of this interview we can see that education is a central issue for older Germans who are changing suburbs in seeking better education for their children rather than moving because of a high migrant population.

It may be a race to reduce the influence that results from the isolating effects of a parallel society to a society marked by advocacy of social mix (Rose 2004). The upcoming Berlin neighbourhood of Neukölln could be a great example of a collection of hyper-innovative initiatives borne out of a “combination of entrepreneurship and creativity”; according to de Boer “this is a brilliant example of gentrification as it is supposed to be, it is a process led by private initiatives that changes the urban programme” (2009).

**Experimenting with economic issues**

**Question (Alec) what are you working on right now?**

**Answer (Thomas) **My professional view should be to say we are working in an experimental mode right now. Nobody knows what to do. We have good progress and good examples and the future will show what happens. My personal view is that we just have started to discuss what’s possible what’s not, what’s impossible and unless we think of let’s say full employment in our society and unless we think of growing economies first, we won’t see that maybe all these strategies will fail. So maybe we should think about alternatives for how society works.

Without this growth paradigm, you can see that society is divided into those who have first level jobs and those who are all community workers and they must get paid. You shouldn’t call public transfer a public transfer anymore; maybe you can call it community work loan. Then you will find other jobs that are needed in those communities. There are many elderly people who can’t go shopping anymore, they need assistance. So now our problems here are the erosion of social networks, the social death of integration due to the migration of those who earn the money and immigration of those who are poor. For the people you will find there, there is no local society, there are lots of people living there but they don’t know each other and they don’t want to live together because they don’t know each other. There is no community and this community maybe could be established by I don’t know how, it’s just the beginning of thinking about it by establishing a new picture on how the new society could work. It would change the picture of being employed or unemployed.
**CDA Stage 1**

Thomas discusses the reality of the situation in designated areas of deprived needs such as Neukölln and he sees the erosion of established social networks, migration issues, lack of meaningful community programmes and relationships with politicians as compromising the urban terrain because expectations do not often match the reality of what is occurring in the deprived neighbourhoods. That reality is also related to the availability of funding and to the question of where funding should be directed. Should funding be a one-off donation of support, or should it be treated just like a loan and linked to performance? After all, the monitoring of programmes and their process is high on the government agenda (Raiser 2006).

Thomas confirms that the government programmes that are designed to address issues of social integration are necessary because of neighbourhood decline as a result of social and economic changes. As a solution, members of the community would ultimately benefit from working together as a community with the assistance of government. However the depth of these problems has placed a lot of pressure on established ways of thinking about how communities would function in a new society.

Thomas’s claim that we need to change the “picture of being employed or unemployed” is puzzling. The following Stage 2 will have a look at what Thomas could mean.

**CDA Stage 2**

Thomas probably reflects upon his role as an urban geographer as an aspect of social mapping. His understanding of the social context commits him to his claim that we are “working in an experimental mode right now”. Thomas is really asking why at this stage are we (government) so cautious and implies that government agencies should be out there trying different things and working to develop new perspectives.

Thomas suggests that current government policies do have not a clear perspective on programme outcomes. For example will there be ‘always’ a pool of unemployed; will there be population groups that are difficult to integrate based upon current government policy; will some populations be continually in transit, looking for jobs that are not there and will government loans be just another type of welfare that will never be repaid?
In this context perhaps the suggestion is, there will be areas where people who live there collectively are always going to be unemployed and other creative (growth) areas where residents are usually fully employed.

**CDA Stage 3**

The sense of what Thomas is talking about as an “experimental mode” is far from clear. Yet one interpretation is that the thinks that if we continue the normal operation of the economy, the problems of Neukölln cannot be solved. The “growth economy” that could soak up the unemployment problems of Neukölln will not come to the rescue; although Florida (2002), Tallon (2010) and URBED (2008) have argued differently on the subject of creative economies.

The outcome of current trends would be that only some people would be employed in regular jobs (“first level jobs”) while others would have to remain unemployed. In this situation it will be necessary to abandon the “growth paradigm”. To deal with unemployment problems the logical thing to do would be to employ all these excess workers as “community workers”. He suggests that it is this option which is desirable.

In other words, the limited funding which is now available to deal with the problems of Neukölln should be vastly increased to the point where all the unemployed have a job doing necessary community work. He goes on to talk about how much needs to be done – for example helping old people to go shopping, as well as initiatives designed to deal with deeper social problems.

His suggestion that we should think of this funding as a “community work loan” and not a government “transfer” is unclear. One interpretation is that he thinks that people should be paid as a loan to start up a business after which they pay back the loan. However this seems unlikely because it is not clear where the income stream would come from for a private business taking old people shopping and the like – if not from government. What he may be suggesting is that it is a mistake to think of this government funding as a transfer from the employed through their taxes to the unemployed but as a loan from the employed to the community which is paid off in community services rather than in money. It is this interpretation which makes sense of his claim that the experimental mode is about changing the picture of what it means to be employed and to be unemployed. In other words, this is an
experiment in a new society and a new kind of economy. Only something as drastic as this could actually solve the problems Social City is facing.

In all this, Thomas refers obliquely to the proposals of groups such as the Green Parties, that the only way to solve current problems is to move to a zero growth economy and to fund the currently unemployed to be engaged in community work through a guaranteed adequate income mechanism. According to this perspective, it is only this solution that can relieve the stigma of welfare dependency and to ensure that social problems are handled adequately. But clearly this is not the programme of Social City, which aims to supplement welfare spending with some local initiatives funded by government – with the hope of kick starting economic development and employment in private enterprise. In a way Thomas is making a critique of this programme as it exists – it is in no way sufficient to deal with the problems that are facing Neukölln and something much more extreme is required.

**Interview No: 5 – Bettina Busse – June 2006: Social City; cultural affairs Neukölln**

**Question (Alec)** What is your role at the department Social City?

**Answer (Bettina)** In my current department I’m looking for all the projects in culture and art that have to do a lot with integration, and all the different people who live here because we have more than 160 different nationalities represented in Neukölln. I’m thinking about projects where all the different nationalities can work together and get the feeling that they really have to do something. So I’m looking for ideas which we can have together and look how to do this. I made project two years ago called “What’s a good daughter and what’s a good son?” We know what this means, but what does this mean for a Turkish person, for an Arabic, German or English person, what is the same and what are the differences so we get an understanding of each other?

*What’s a good daughter and what’s a good son: this publication is reviewed in the government promotional document section number 7.*

**Meeting the migrant community**

**Bettina continues** Most of the time I stimulate it, sometimes they come but then it’s more because they think maybe I’m a nice person so we sit together and begin to talk and say what
the problems are and we speak about it and then I’m thinking about it. But it’s not because of my position here. They come to see me because they (artists) want to run an art exhibition.

**The children’s book project**

*Bettina continues* one of my projects is setting up a library facility and I ask ten different cultures and nationalities here in Neukölln if they can tell me the important children’s books they have from their country, and then I buy all these books. Ones that stay in the library and ones that you can take with you home. And I do this with 12 different nations. So at first they each talk together in their own group about which book they want to have here, and then I put them all together and we make the new little thing in the library. And that was very important because in the beginning it was only their own nations, and then they were interested “oh and how do the others do this” and they only really take really books from their own country or maybe the person spoke Spanish, and the English book from Enid Blyton is so important for our different countries and they begin to discuss it together. But it is really difficult to find what works and why and it is often by trial and error.

**Cooking classes**

*Bettina continues* Yes sometimes this happens too. Maybe we have one area with one woman who is a really good cook and she started to cook one day in the week. This activity is for all residents of the local neighbourhood. We meet at a house with a large kitchen where residents can prepare and cook their own national or regional dishes. Each week a particular nation or region takes their turn in preparing their types of food to share with other cultures.

**Art and migrant cultures**

*Bettina continues* Very often the problem with painters is they came from their countries and they’re very good painters but they are painters maybe in conventional art from their own worlds. They prefer to work alone and not to share with others. They do real life pictures but they are in a way in that if you stay in Berlin it’s nothing new but nothing to do with how we live here. So they do more do things that relate to their own country that have more to do with their memories, their ideas, their own identity rather than the future in their new surroundings. So they came with a lot of very nice paintings but you can’t do something with this as it has nothing to do with the world here.

**CDA Stage 1**
One of the difficulties that Bettina has referred to is the different countries they orientate from; the different styles of art from a painting perspective, from their own countries and the nature of the art that is produced by them.

The process of identifying the type of activity that works, or correspondingly does not work is time-consuming but is necessary in bringing different cultures together. In this context according to Bettina the activity of cooking leads to mutual engagement and crosses all boundaries.

When Bettina and her section can identify is what selection of hobbies, art or interest stimulates social connectedness between people of different cultures then a very important step has been achieved in social integration.

**CDA Stage 2**

Bettina believes that painting is a powerful tool and may lead to cultural awareness of events and how things were in their own country of origin. The conventional nature of their paintings may be more reflective of an older, less commercialised society – then again it may not. This however is the subjective nature of painting as a form of cultural expression.

From this, other migrants that share in the multicultural experience of Berlin from other cultures and who share the expressive and very personal art of painting are exposed to other creative forms that are relative to a particular painter from a particular country, region or town, and perhaps a culture and religion.

In this context they are still connected to their past experiences. From this stability and certainty in their own cultural and social heritage they can make a base from which to explore and identify with their new life in Berlin and Neukölln. Nevertheless Bettina is concerned that these unique cultural expressions may not help them to develop an art that can cross ethnic boundaries and be relevant to their new life.

Expressions attributed to painting are generally about personal views whereas outcomes produced from the art of cooking can be shared amongst a group.
If Bettina is looking for programmes that offer engagement then the preparation and cooking of food achieves that because as well as a social exercise in social communication it is also a practical exercise, meaning that advanced language skills in German are not necessary for people to understand each other.

**CDA Stage 3**

Bettina argues that cultural expression should not translate into a mere continuation of past cultural practices and associated behavioural norms. Links with past realities are perhaps a transitional process of change, a sort of grieving process, a letting go of their past.

The fundamental element of cultural and social integration is empowering separate migrant groups to work together in a productive capacity relative to employment opportunities. These employment opportunities however need a different type of employee. In Neukölln (and similar areas of deprived need) they have experienced a shift from manufacturing to the commercial and IT sectors. Berlin-Neukölln needs a flexible workforce; they need to use the dynamics of education in the traditional school system in order to implement change in combination with the less formalised role of sport to establish inter-cultural dialogue (Kirkeby 2006).

The key to the use of art in the context that Bettina refers to is not the use of art as a means to develop future employment opportunities but purely as a means of establishing dialogue between residents of different cultures. The use of art in these circumstances is to establish social connectedness between people through the concept of weak ties (Florida 2002); a concept that allows for more flexibility in inter-personal encounters because of the different cultural backgrounds of participants. Cooking classes are clearly successful in meeting this goal. If one were to choose a single meaningful social activity, cooking is something common to all cultures. Cooking satisfies the basic requirements of hunger, health, and fitness and most of all, cooking and food link local and global ideas concerning health, nutrition and lifestyle.

**Germans and Turks mixing together after September 11**

Bettina continues Political global events such as ’9/11’ (or September 11) now play a significant part in local relations between Muslims and Christians, and the more educated someone is the less significant are cultural differences. This makes the debate about good
education and schools very important. For example less education equals more attachment to the migrant’s traditional culture rather than a western culture.

**CDA Stage 1**
With global issues such as ‘September 11’ migrants come to identify more with the aspirations of their ethnic community rather than with their aspirations as Germans. Bettina sees education as a means for connecting with all community members.

**CDA Stage 2**
As she says in another part of the interview “they go in the other direction than the Germans”. In this context they have an identity as Arab or Muslim rather than a German western one. In this context when there are more opportunities for migrants to express and to share activities other than their own the greater their acceptance of change as a vehicle for their own future away from their traditional networks.

**CDA Stage 3**
Ultimately Bettina believes that education and the traditional school system are where most change can be implemented. The ideas behind the education of migrants have to be linked to future employment training opportunities and global market conditions. In other words education has to be strategic, targeted and meaningful, and reflect the needs of local employment opportunities at the base level, at the regional and at the (German) national level.

The idea that education is ultimately a vehicle for change is important because of the number of changes that have affected some of Berlin’s traditional working-class neighbourhoods. In this context the mobility of firms and populations (Florida 2002; Glaeser, Kolko and Saiz 2001; Putnam 2000; URBACT 2005) are interlinked with alternative networks, the reallocation of resources and proactive strategic alliances between the neighbourhood and city precincts. In this respect specific levels of urban residential density are also an integral part of the spatial re-organisation of the neighbourhood and city settings.

In a much wider context Bettina is ultimately challenging the existing strong bonds of migrant traditional family and cultural networks. As was discussed two years later in my interview with Dr Kolland (2008) there is a powerful opportunity for expressions of artistic and creative values
because the flexibility of weak ties (Florida 2002) helps to establish alternative inter-cultural alliances and networks at the neighbourhood level.

**Gender and interventions in sport**

*Bettina continues* It is the women who portray the tradition of the country by their dress. You can see it in the clothes; the boys and the men are all in tee shirts and jeans. The women always are translated or transformed for the next generation of the cultural traditions of the country and women are very important to bring this to the next generation. Arabian men are not able to speak to me or look me in the eye and it is the women who make the decisions about learning. After I have met with the men, the women work it out together and get things done.

Women and girls would like to play football but they can’t because of their religion. The problem for the Turks is they have their own communities and we can really offer them very little. Perhaps it is better that they stay in their own communities. However we have to try with education and jobs. After all we asked them here as “guest workers” in the 60s, 70s and early 80s without citizen status.

**CDA Stage 1**

Bettina is wondering why Turkish/Arabic migrants come to Germany if they do not want to change and adapt to life in Berlin. However as Bettina also notes, the fact that “we can offer them very little” is underpinned by a deep historical context; one in which they were not offered citizenship status.

She sees women’s reluctance to play sport as a problem for the social inclusion strategy she is constructing. Sport is something that relates to men and women of all cultures and is part of the social life in Berlin for all genders. She sees religion as a barrier to women who want to play sport.

**CDA Stage 2**

Bettina and her Social City cultural bureau are trying through a cultural integration process to right some of the wrongs from the past. There has not been enough training in the basic educational arena or transitional training that prepares students with skills that are transferable across a range of industries prepares migrants for changes in the employment
market and includes further education through apprenticeships in the new industries such as commerce and IT. Bettina is aware of the limitations of (some) of her (Social City) socio-cultural interventions which ideally should translate into “real jobs”.

Turkish migrants are still involved in the continuing question over citizen’s rights that are often denied to them. Their previous role as guest-workers in helping to develop the German post-WW11 economy, when they were expected to return to their country of origin, achieved very little in community integration. The previous “guest-worker” title still continues to haunt German society and its relationship with ethnic minorities.

**CDA Stage 3**

Bettina acknowledges that the German state has done very little for migrants in the past. The creative ideas surrounding cultural integration are a brave attempt to empower some of the entrenched cultural enclaves to integrate with the wider Berlin community. It attempts to create an opportunity for residents to engage with their neighbours.

What is being done is to use sport to encourage inter-cultural dialogue. However, given the connection between religious beliefs and gender norms about sport, the popularity of sport is not always enough to secure successful interventions and results.

**How to engage community leaders**

**Bettina continues** My role is to establish a team of local migrants for particular projects. To make this happen I network and I look around the local neighbourhood for probably two people who are really good at communication and education. I ask them if there are others like them so I am really looking for people who can help me build a more socially cohesive society. There are certain prerequisites of course. For example they must speak German and their own language; they must be happy to reflect on their own lives, their own religion and their family situation.

My goal is around fifteen local people for my own local project; once I have the numbers for my project I then approach the local programme representative for an allocation of funding. This is not always successful of course and is dependent upon many factors which are beyond our control.
CDA Stage 1
Bettina provides an overview of her career background. She has been involved in government-funded cultural programmes for a number of years in a similar area to Neukölln. Bettina explains her role in Kreuzberg which is a more established cultural precinct because of its post-WW11 history until the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. Bettina goes on to explain that because of her good working relationship with other Social City and cultural management areas (Kolland 2008) she was able to design and deliver a number of her own innovative ideas that helped with the integration of migrants in other similarly designated deprived districts into the wider German society.

CDA Stage 2
Kreuzberg has a recent history of successful social, cultural and artistic integration and this is discussed further in chapter 6. Neukölln is a close neighbour and would like to emulate Kreuzberg’s creative history and return Neukölln to its own past history as a centre of music and theatre. An aspect discussed under government documents and featured in document number 6 following this section.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s Kreuzberg had a number of projects associated with the IBA, International Building exhibition. Many of the IBA projects involved innovative residential complexes and there were also several successful refurbishment schemes some of which opened up previously closed-off residential precincts and turned barrack-style accommodation into more comfortable and attractive residential accommodation.

Before the unification of Berlin, Kreuzberg had its mix of students, disaffected youth and Berlin’s largest Turkish migrant population with few rights of citizenship. Kreuzberg with low cost rents provided Berlin with its guest workers required to meet Germany’s high demand for labour for the post-WW11 economic boom. After the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 Kreuzberg’s developing social and cultural mix soon provided the basis for its immediate neighbour to develop its own artistic, social and cultural opportunities.

CDA Stage 3
The ideas behind Bettina’s comments are that integration programmes in areas of deprived needs such as neighbourhoods of Neukölln will be successful over time. It may take five, ten or twenty years. The Berlin suburb of Kreuzberg is one where Bettina has a history of successful
project implementation. Kreuzberg is similar to Neukölln in many respects (URBED 2008). It was and still is considered a working class suburb although Kreuzberg has become a fashionable artist precinct. This successful cultural process of change can happen to Neukölln. The challenge is that at the sharp-end delivery point to people in the community, community consultants like Bettina are required to make the programmes work. People with Bettina’s people skills are accepted by the community in which she works. However the dilemma is this: programmes cannot be designed around the positive personality of field personnel or indeed at the level of neighbourhood management. Ultimately the success of projects designed to achieve social integration is dependent upon the person who delivers programmes to migrants in the community. This is providing they receive the appropriate level of top-down support.

The philosophy of Social City is bottom-up community participation can only be achieved if the personnel are really good at this kind of community work. Fortunately this central philosophy is supported by top-down initiatives that further expand the role of “civil society” organisations (sports associations, clubs, etc.). With their volunteer-based structures and commitments, they are often the settings in which the intercultural interventions are being implemented (Kirkeby 2006).

Interview No: 6 - Dr Kolland - May 2008: Social City: Department Cultural affairs

Neukölln: Major themes discussed during my interview with Dr Kolland

Include: Art in the public realm; dealing with politicians and top-down management, and the status of Islamic girls in education and sport.

Dr Kolland is the director of the cultural department of Neukölln. She has been in this position for twenty-five years.

As the supervisor for Bettina Busse (interview No. 5) it was important to interview Dr Kolland. Dr Kolland has to deal with political figures such as the Mayor of Neukölln and some aspects of her answers to my questions reflect her opinion of politicians.

Her role as cultural director

Question (Alec) Firstly Dr Kolland may I ask you, what is your role as the Director of the cultural department of Neukölln?
**Answer (Dr Kolland)** My role is firstly to find an identified and accepted need in the community; find ways to integrate migrants in the community; enlist in a determination to integrate more children and young people in education through cultural activities; show leadership and determination to revitalise impoverished neighbourhoods and finally foster an ambition to develop additional employment opportunities through creative industries.

**Barriers to her role as Cultural Director**

**Question (Alec)** What are some of the barriers to your role as cultural director?

**Answer (Dr Kolland)** A lack of awareness in some parts of the state system about the role culture can play in tackling social exclusion. A reduction in public spending and a lack of coordination between different tiers of government adds to the difficulties of me fulfilling my role as cultural director.

**CDA Stage 1**

One tier is the top management tier consisting of the European Economic Community, German Federal, State and Local Government authorities. Another tier is composed of bottom-up operatives, such as local area management offices, field workers, neighbourhood groups, and associations with strategic (business) partners, for example building companies. Social City resources (physical and management) are managed in a strategic sense by the German Urban Institute (DIFU).

Politicians are as committed as her department is to bring about social change and revive deprived neighbourhoods. Programme delivery however, is very dependent upon funding top-down support, and in various districts of deprived need, there is a downward spiral of definable outcomes with lower expectations coming from tight budget cuts.

**CDA Stage 2**

The use of education as a practical solution to solve neighbourhood problems equals an increase in education spending. Such an increase in spending would require more teachers. There are also other local services which make demands for funding. It is also necessary to find a way to get residents to say what they want or would like in their district or town.

Meanwhile on the ground, in the streets, residences and businesses of Neukölln there are
people who may have scant regard for artists who are engaged in building upon Neukölln’s cultural heritage (Kolland 2001). In this context there are some people who would consider these artistic endeavours as meaningless compared to their own realities of putting food on the table, gaining more clients or perhaps closer ties with the neighbours who live next door, across the street or in another part of town. The approach of Social City is an integrated one and the intervention of art is one of them.

There are two different approaches to community work - cultural intervention and economic development. The practitioners sit round a table appearing to sort out their differences with a view to establishing an integrated approach to dealing with communities who reside in areas of deprived need – and the differences that are brought to the table are very challenging, innovative and often costly. The reality may result in local representatives of top-down management who hold local political positions being inclined to insist that spending on programmes must be “efficient, targeted and monitored” (Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development 2005).

Management at the strategic level may also have a traditional view of what a programme is and what it is meant to achieve. For example they may see no point in a programme that is not designed to deliver an empirically verifiable outcome. In this context the mayor of Neukölln may see cultural intervention programmes as fragile compared to the delivery of measurable outcomes – on another day he may have a another view of a situation.

In this context politicians may want to see something tangible for “their money, something they can take to a meeting that says something like we have reduced anti-social behaviour by this much; therefore for this input we have achieved so and so result” (interview with Kolland 2008).

Dr Kolland’s social invention approach suggests there is a reliance on “strong ties” (Florida 2002; Putnam 2000) that already exist in some more stable migrant communities. Empowering people to work together to create inter-cultural bonds also requires a more flexible bridging type of social capital. This produces a sort of dilemma for Dr Kolland because the concept of weak ties challenges the more stable elements of strong ties which are a feature of parallel societies and reflective of immobile populations. So, while the overt stability of a population in a neighbourhood setting may be a good place to begin the process of implementing new ideas,
such populations may also lack the willingness to accept new ideas, especially those that involve a creative arts perspective. However, new residents contribute to the dynamics of inner-cultural mix.

In this respect Dr Kolland and her dedicated team are using their personal (as well as professional) skills to achieve inter-cultural social harmony through the establishment of strong ties – at least in the earlier stages of social integration strategies - as opposed to weak ties. The use of weak ties however is a strategic toll for the acceptance of art as a way of achieving social connectedness, especially the establishment of dialogue across different cultural groups. In other words it provides an opportunity for people to express an opinion – it does not really matter what that is; it is a way of connecting people. It may be a ‘weak connection’ however. Putnam’s views on this subject below may reflect an American perspective however.

Weak ties according to Putnam are all that could come out of a demand for profitable outcomes and programs constructed around narrow self-interest (Putnam 2000). The question of the quality and function of weak ties (Florida 2002) in a deprived neighbourhood location is debatable, and is expanded upon in the following CDA-Stage 3 analysis.

**CDA Stage 3**

The central idea is the benefits of a cultural interventionist agenda are not necessarily measured in financial outcomes. For example it is difficult over a short period to measure accurately the success of a stay at school programme, or a home library book lending programme, so that students develop German culture and language skills, or a program for school leavers to provide the skills necessary to meet the needs of employers.

When there is a clash of ideas as well as ideals, there are struggles over power, struggles between the German way and the so called new way, struggles over expediency, struggles over revolution, evolution and sustainability. There is also the clash between politicians’ views and those of community consultants who experience the day-to-day aspects of implementing programmes to a community that sometimes appears disinterested at best and frustrating at worse. Yet the cultural-arts perspective may yet engage the political will to transform the previous industrial landscape of factories and technological services into a socially, artistically and culturally inspired environment.
In the early stages of document and interview analysis it was important to refer to government literature especially those that reported on the more negative aspects of deprived neighbourhoods. Such documents were often difficult to source but more easily obtained whilst in Berlin or through associates. Often stated in these documents are the problems of the local economy and built environment: empty, unrentable flats and business spaces; high employment fluctuation and high unemployment rates; the high percentage of residents on public welfare; the high rates of non-German residents existing at low social and economic levels (Kolland 2001).

A cultural-arts solution may make use of the “potential for creativity” (Schümer-Strucksberg 1997):

Because of earlier dark predictions about how to deal with the lack of places for leisure and cultural activities, local young people, private organisations, sponsors and district authority’s work out their own models for local conditions and not rely on imported ideas from somewhere else, changing how communities deal with integration.

Dr Kolland sees the purpose of the interventions being “so we can we activate the thinking of the artists” (2001). This is one of the keys to this cultural intervention as opposed to more materially focussed forms of intervention.

A cultural-arts solution may also benefit from the concept of weak ties because as suggested by Florida (2002) the advantages of weak ties allow for more flexible and dynamic relationships. The concept of weak ties challenges existing and more formal networks forged through strong ties, and they suit the opportunity for the further establishment of creative and artistic networks, and the genre of subcultures and alternative practices as discussed by Sheridan in “The Space of Subculture in the City: Getting Specific about Berlin’s Indeterminate Territories” (2005).

**Question (Alec)** Are the challenges concerning young Islamic girls the same as previously (during the last five years 2003-2008): challenges relating to attendance at school, the involvement of Islamic girls in the general community; involvement of Islamic girls in sports related activities.
**Answer (Dr Kolland)** Our success in our programmes is very much a long term thing. And one of the key outcomes is proficient levels of education, especially at an earlier age. We do not want girls remaining at home once they reach a certain age. It is a waste of a person’s potential; we would like them to share their lives with others in the community. We seem to achieve more success (if you can call it this) when there is a stable international context especially west versus east scenarios. For example when there is stability in the Middle East, or there is less documented (media driven?) Arabic/western conflict then our task is easier. You can notice this in the street. The Islamic community appears less tense and more open.

However if there is open conflict in the Middle East, for example in the recent war between Israel and Lebanon (2008), there appears to be a division in the community (of Neukölln), a division that is observable through the behaviour of residents towards each other and impossible to quantify.

**CDA Stage 1**

According to Kolland some migrants are especially influenced by the global political context. She sees a link between education and integration as a way of bringing people into the Neukölln community. In this respect when Dr Kolland refers to the success of government programmes as a long-term strategy for social integration she implies it could be another twenty five years before meaningful results will occur, and certainly not within five years.

‘There are the occasional leaps but not too many bounds’. There appeared to be a degree of frustration in how long it will be before Neukölln (and similar lower socio-economic areas) will experience social cohesion resulting from social and cultural integration initiatives.

When I reflect upon the dialogue between myself and Dr Kolland, as well as with Bettina Busse whom I interviewed in 2006, their frustrations are from two different directions, one at the management level in dealing with politicians, and the other at the community level.

Dr Kolland has explained to me that whatever approach is taken, both require large amounts of government funding. They also require effective personnel to manage field interventions. They require not only funding but also realistic time-lines for project completion. What is being said about how long they will take is often longer than a particular politician’s term in office.

**CDA Stage 2**
Dr Kolland’s cultural intervention programme is about residents in Neukölln, the status of their relationships with each other and according to some (Leicht 2004), it is about “the failure of the state to exercise care over its citizens”. In regard to this question on the status of Islamic girls and community participation, politicians do not want to hear negative things about their programmes; they do not want to read articles from Der Spiegel of this kind:

Allah’s Daughters Deprived of Rights

Nearly thirty pages of the magazine, written by a total of nine authors, detail the fates of Turkish women and girls who are victims of arranged marriages, violence and repression. Visually prominent in the article are quotes from the Koran that emphasize the subordination of women (Leicht cited in Der Spiegel 2004).

However, the reality of the status of Islamic girls in the Berlin-Neukölln public arena is difficult to determine. While popular explanations focus on the laxity of state policies that have allowed a ghetto to form, Leicht has a rather different explanation:

The tendency to withdraw into the ghetto was not a consequence of excessive national tolerance, but rather state discrimination and state-encouraged racism (2004).

CDA Stage 3

The linking of comments on an event in another country to a local phenomenon is difficult to prove in contemporary social settings. However there is no doubt of the retention of aspects of Middle Eastern culture in Berlin – aromas, dress codes and behaviours from the Middle East were much in evidence in Neukölln.

Struggles over power and definition of culture are reflected in Dr Kolland’s comments on Islamic girls and their integration into the wider traditional German society:

We do not want girls remaining at home once they reach a certain age. It is a waste of a person’s potential; we would like them to share their lives with others in the community.

The key, according to Dr Kolland, to addressing the issues associated with a segregated community is the education of younger people.
This view is also supported by an article entitled “Women the Future of Freedom”
By Ayaan Hirsi Ali (2006, Saturday, August 26):

For a while now I have been asserting that the most effective way for European Union governments to deal with their Muslim minorities is to empower the Muslim women living within their borders. The best tool for empowering these women is education.

The use of education is also about the development of a knowledge-based industry rather than one based upon the production of goods and services.

**Conclusion: Interviews with government stakeholders**

The findings from interviews with government stakeholders indicate that strategies that encourage residents to work together with each other as well as in partnership with government agencies and business organisation’s were not as effective as might have been hoped by the Berlin Senate in setting up the Social City program. This is because the involvement of all residents in local neighbourhood issues as part of a democratic process is dependent upon all social and cultural groups understanding each other’s cultural fundamentals and traditions in such a way that meaningful actions can be taken to address specific neighbourhood problems that were shown to be of concern to them.

In other words inter-cultural dialogue should lead to an action-oriented agenda. If there are not enough play-areas for example they should be provided; if residents find it difficult to communicate because of language, social and other challenges then a *concierge should be appointed by local area management for each residential complex and act as a community ‘catalyst’ to help, direct and advise residents who are in this situation. A list of residents in this situation will be sent to the neighbourhood area manager for follow-up with training. *Refer to interview No. 1 with Herr Hübner chapter 5.

This aspect of social and cultural dialogue is more evolutionary than revolutionary because of the historical background and religious identification of different socio-cultural groups. However the dire predictions of some government and social commentators that government programmes will fail to make any real headway to socially integrate different cultural groups have not been borne out.
The type of urban terrain plays a huge part in this as do education and job opportunities in the present climate of a depressed manufacturing sector. This can affect the motivation of local residents to do their part in managing some neighbourhood affairs in their respective districts. The spatial arrangement of European high street settings may be at odds with cultures where a separation between work and domestic life is not expected.

A difficulty for some politicians is the failure to get immediate returns from government-funded programmes which aim to reduce migrant unemployment levels and integrate more Islamic women into the wider German community.

Another major issue is the divisive nature of parallel societies whose very existence is of concern to government agencies and others. My assessment from the responses of interviewees indicates that parallel societies are in existence in Berlin and the question of who is to blame for lack of integration in mainstream society is never far from the surface. This is in part because of the background of the failure of previous twentieth century strategies to help integrate guest workers into the German social economy, and the failure of manufacturing in some lower skill-set sectors during the current period.

The socially inclusive qualities of mainstream German society are also debatable. Within the interviews reviewed in this section of this chapter there is evidence of successful multi-cultural integration, where different social and cultural groups are coming together to produce a society that is both creatively and economically dynamic. But further success must depend on continued options for community participation and real economic opportunities for employment, whether from a traditional or alternative perspective.

5.4 Analysis of Government sponsored documents

Introduction

Text-Data from official documents associated with Berlin-Neukölln Integrated Urban Development Programmes. The documents were subjected to critical discourse analysis (CDA) as discussed in chapter two on methodology.

The format for the review of the seven documents which is also featured in table form is as follows:
Documents numbers 1-4 are sourced from Art in the Public Realm projects, for example document number 1 is one of 18 projects displayed in the district of Gropiusstadt in 2002.

The use of documents, projects or displays in this visually stimulating form represents a dynamic, innovative and exciting way to get artists, residents and visitors in deprived districts talking. Ultimately these strategies are a part of what Florida (2002) refers to as the development of a ‘Creative Class’.

Documents numbers 5-7 portray elements of a program of social intervention which has a more controversial nature, as it undertakes to intervene to alleviate social tensions coming out of religious and cultural differences. The objective of the programmes of which these documents are a part is to stimulate inter-cultural dialogue, get people talking to each other about their lives, their problems and their challenges. The projects which have been chosen through these documents are good examples of this strategy and allow us a detailed account of how government projects form part of a social integration policy. For example, one of the projects I shall be looking at considers the relationship of adolescents to their peers, with the aim of helping young people to reflect on cultural identity and its meaning for residents in this area.

A Table Format of the seven documents under analysis (or displays or projects)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>TITLE OF DOCUMENT</th>
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<td>No 1</td>
<td>Pilot Project Gropiusstadt Year Book 2002 (2003)</td>
<td>The document consist of eighteen projects undertaken by artists in the public domain: one of these projects by Otto Karvonen from Helsinki entitled Foreigner (Aussländer) is reviewed.</td>
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<td>No 2</td>
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<td>Citizens “Getting there first” represents an idea of citizens participating in developing a part of the public realm for community use: this is a theoretical exercise designed to generate ideas and establish inter-cultural dialogue between citizens and residents from socially deprived neighbourhoods of Berlin. The close proximity of the Tempelhof airport site to Neukölln makes this project especially significant because citizens of Neukölln would be involved in presenting a wide range of community activities and special projects.</td>
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The Berlin Bear in the Park. The Berlin Bear as symbol towards the establishment of multicultural dialogue.

| No 4 | Areale Neukölln 20-21 (surrounding Neukölln) A Socially integrative City document: (Berlin Senate for Urban Development) | Werte und Helden (“values and heroes”) project number one and two: to stimulate the minds of local residents towards the purpose of buildings; their refurbishment potential and as a vehicle for cultural meaning. |
| No 5 | Nehom Report and in association with The German Urban Institute (DIFU) | Integrative Urban renewal policies in Germany overview: Identifies the importance of Nehom as a research and development tool for the provision of data and material for use in establishing policies, strategies and programmes in order to address instances of social and economic decline of neighbourhoods. The data and materials are from a number of European community sources including the UK. |
| No 6 | Rixdorf (district of Neukölln) A history of their music and theatre: A Socially integrative City document: (Senate for Urban Development: Cultural Network) | A detailed historical account with broad flowing narratives, graphics and pictures from the late 19th century until the 1930s. The importance of this document cannot be underestimated because it represent a history of Neukölln’s cultural past and fits in with the government agenda of socially mixed neighbourhoods and of the creation of a new type of ‘creative class’ as suggested by Florida (2002). |
| No 7 | What is a good daughter, good son: A Socially integrative City document: (Senate for Urban Development) | Discusses what sort of behaviour is associated with a son and daughter. This document represents an attempt at establishing some social and cultural norms with regard to issues of a day-to-day nature. It is addressed to students from Islamic, Christian and other backgrounds and concerns the expectations of relationships between children, their peers and their parents. |

Document No 1 of 7 from Pilot Project Gropiusstadt (Neukölln): Review of Otto Karvonen’s work:

Otto is from Helsinki and his work is entitled Foreigner (Aussländer)

CDA Stage 1

This first review highlights a number of the reactions from residents to the interventions of artists and their work. This particular project was selected because it represents a typical project under the cultural banner undertaken in a government-designated deprived
neighbourhood of Gropiusstadt in the suburb of Neukölln. This project is an example of art in the public realm and provides the reader with a greater sense of the projects, especially in regard to how art is employed as a tool to aid social integration.

The brief review is also supported by comments made in interviews with stakeholders from Social City and the German Urban Institute. The questions, answers and critical analysis of public art projects and their impact on deprived neighbourhoods coming from government agency interviewees are discussed in chapter 6 and included in the conclusion chapter 7.

This particular review refers to Otto’s project in Gropiusstadt (Neukölln). Basically Otto is writing on pavement areas, using chalk paint in an area surrounding the bus stop near to the underground that services the social housing area of Gropiusstadt (which formed part of my observational area 2006; 2008). Otto comments:

In this project I use different forms of media to express myself: chalk paint on the streetscape with words like foreigner, Turkish, beautiful, rich, Russian, free, innocent, guilty and when the rain washed away the paint I replaced them and after one week I left the words to the forces of nature … people would come up and comment on the words and what the words meant to them, which was the purpose of the project.

More of Otto’s comments and comments from other artists:

I recognised a certain tone of voice that indicated a primary concern about the legitimacy of such action. One middle-aged man was really concerned and was asking me if I had permission for what I was doing. When I replied that I had permission of the police he was satisfied and became very friendly. Then there was this other man who was observing my action for half an hour. When I was painting the word Aussländer (foreigner) he came up to me and told me what I was doing was very good, especially the Aussländer.

Then there was this old man who made a bit scene out of the words. He was going around reading the words aloud, like explaining the work to the others standing there. He went on somehow like this “who is normal, who is a foreigner, who is rich – that is a good question, let’s see, what would I be … strange, decent, everything …”. He was the audience one always dreams of.
And there was Monica, an artist from Brighton (UK) and her work entitled “Red Umbrellas” in Gropiusstadt (Ross 2005)

My first sighting of Gropiusstadt was of tall blocks rising like cliffs from a sea of trees. It was a hot summer’s evening in 2004. I had cycled from the centre of Berlin to see it, but the scale was unexpected. People were strolling along tree-lined walks, saying “Guten Abend” to each other, relaxing in the green spaces.

CDA Stage 2
What comes to mind from the above experiences of artists in the socially deprived district of Gropiusstadt? Do the words friendly, elegant, people strolling, bicycles and the integration of nature with the built environment come to mind? Perhaps a reminder from the observational overall analysis of Berlin-Neukölln that states that there is a public realm denial of the reality of social disadvantage in that even the poorest citizens have a right to participate in a public realm that conveys a message of affluence and luxury.

Based upon the research material it makes one wonder about what the term “deprived neighbourhood” really means; it makes one wonder what government authorities are doing about their responsibilities toward citizens who live in suburbs where there is scant recognition of what the term “deprived neighbourhood” could actually imply. It means more than employment options – a sense of belonging perhaps.

CDA Stage 3
The idea that artists can encourage residents to venture outside of their social housing apartments in Gropiusstadt by drawing in chalk on pavements may sound far-fetched but it achieved a key objective – inside people became outside people. Instead of having citizens isolated in their own apartments it brought them outside, and in contact with each other. The creative work of artists provided a catalyst for people to meet in an informal sense – no different to community gardens or residents meeting in parklike settings as they walk their dogs or play with their children. It brings inhabitants into the public domain so there does not have to be a reason if it helps to create social connectedness.
Some of the residents of Gropiusstadt are deprived of social contact with their neighbours, many of whom are migrants, non-German speaking and unemployed. They can be reached as individuals or small nuclear units but not as communities.

**Document No 2 of 7 (from 10 Occupation) Neukölln World – Citizens Getting There First**

This analysis is based on a publication from Social City, which features an account of an artistic intervention project using a combination of artistic, creative and refurbishment strategies.

The photo used to announce this project by Eva Hertzsch and Adam Page is inviting:

![Eva Hertzsch und Adam Page](image)

**CDA Stage 1**

The article features the work of two artists, one from England and one from Germany. Their work is a contribution towards the generation of ideas that are intended to stimulate intercultural dialogue in areas that have been designated as deprived by government agencies. Their project which is discussed below is community-based, community resourced and actioned by the community under the direction of the two artists.

The local action group Citizens Getting There First:

(sic) Has been formed in reaction to a rumour circulating in Neukölln that a business consortium is going to buy the Tempelhof Airport site. The business consortium intends to transform the site into an Urban
Entertainment Destination (UED). The UED will consist of an infrastructure of theme restaurants, simulation theatres, interactive rides and virtual reality arcades.

**The article states that**

Rather than waiting for the UED to be implemented by the business consortium the community action group proposes its own solution, occupy the site and, by optimising the advantages of local knowledge establish its own UED using a variety of resources from Neukölln; these resources would include local designers, builders and organisers - the residents of Neukölln represent the different cultural groups. Their unique diversification will provide big time entertainment on a grand scale at maximum convenience.

The theoretical nature of this proposed artists’ intervention into the operation of a local public realm asset by local residents should be taken as an attempt at instigating social change in the community, a fantasy in the sense that this has not yet happened and may be unlikely. *Park opened May 8th 2011: refer to after CDA Stage 3 analysis.*

**CDA Stage 2**

Page 45 of the magazine refers to “non-stop excitement” and “encounters with various cultures”. These optimistic phrases reflect a common positive evaluation of Neukölln where “a galaxy of so-called cultural events will transport you to another world”, as it is described in Der Spiegel, and indicates that encounters with the various cultures will be a positive experience.

The attempt of this intervention is to build a partnership between those who care for the future of the district and those who have an economic interest, often with the aim of stimulating local employment. Arranged in a 3D format, the photo on the second and final page draws the reader to reflect upon the article begun on the previous page. Because the photo is on the last page of the article it helps to leave a lasting graphic impression of what is on offer at the Urban Entertainment Destination. The colours used in the photo of light green for the open spaces, soft blue for the water areas, and soft reds help to add to the invitation to visit the Tempelhof Airport Urban Entertainment Destination site and share in the positive cultural experience. The reader is not exposed to culture for culture’s sake. There are practical inducements, such as a galaxy of musical personalities from the beginning of the 20th century leading up to the early 1960s, with the intention being to show that there is more depth to Neukölln than is often believed by outsiders who just see it as a deprived area.
CDA Stage 3

The theoretical ideas behind a local (Neukölln) UED citizens’ area renewal initiative is about putting into practice an artist-led urban regeneration of a public realm asset with the objective of demonstrating what could be achieved by the New Gentry – the ‘creative class’ of Neukölln. It is a form of gentrification of an area that is subject to a re-development proposal. The artists’ critique of the original development proposal is that it is not sustainable because of the focus on expensive entertainment industries for which there is no local market. The problem of this economic rationalist strategy, according to Dr Kolland, is as follows:

Where artists fulfilled their part as property scouts and path finders for investors, paving a vision for a new life: However, after the money was invested, the houses were rebuilt and splendidly restored, the rent was no longer affordable for artists and they had to move away to go on and discover the next quarter. This may be an interesting experience for artists working temporarily, but one cannot build a reliable cultural or urban politics in this way (Dr Dorothea Kolland September, 2001).

Reading further into the text the artists refer to “using cultural symbols as most important to the people living in Neukölln”. They are trying to build a partnership with residents who care for the future of the district or their own economic interest, hoping to create local employment. The ideas put forward in this document represent a confrontation between the artists and their ideas and the minds of bureaucrats.

According to Dr Kolland:

The traditionally underdeveloped sector of private engagement for culture in Germany has continued to emerge on a singular plane. Every banking institute has its one gallery, and charitable activities and sponsoring have indeed increased, all happily welcomed by the state. Private money has, of course, been invested for cultural highlights, but generally not for problematic urban zones, not for small projects and community work. In truth, the state has not maintained its responsibility to the communities (Kolland 2001).

The document indicates resistance to the acquisition of local properties by large business interests. For example on page 48 there is a reference to “Growth Machine Strategies” which enable a business consortium to accumulate ownership of local properties with minimum resistance. Perhaps these ideas are the start of a perspective that would like to see
communities’ own assets for use by the community, thereby challenging both state and corporate-business ownership.

One of the objectives of the cultural institute (Social City 2005) is to create an impression of the existence of an atmosphere of residents’ people power in the community. The impression of the existence of people’s power in the community is contained in words promoted by government agencies to empower them to believe they have control over their some aspects of neighbourhood life.

Berliners are well known for affirmative action as are other cities in the European Community in challenging urban planning decisions that affect them, for example in the 1970s when older residential apartment buildings were left unoccupied because of their poor condition. Urban communities who felt the buildings were at risk did not usually wait to be invited by local government authorities and took over buildings for the community during that 1970s and early 1980s period.

The term “Citizens Getting There First” is a current attempt by government to use narratives to foster the belief that residents have power to decide what happens to their neighbourhood. The community local action group responds to a rumour that a business group intends to buy the Tempelhof Airport site and develop it as an Urban Entertainment Destination (UED). Rather than waiting for the UED to be implemented by the business consortium, the community action group proposes its own community-led solution.

The key theme in the article is not anti-development, but conciliation and collaboration. With the planned community-based UED and its own separate consortium taking advantage of Neukölln’s multicultural society and their power to make decisions concerning urban regeneration. The artificiality of the UED proposed by business can be replaced by the introduction of cultural themes provided by the citizens of Neukölln through their own neighbourhood representatives. The plan is to draw on the real and local cultural context rather than an imported and manufactured one. The UED that is proposed would be able to benefit from a real multicultural collaborative perspective because it can draw its customers from the surrounding areas. Where better to draw customers than from the surrounding areas of Neukölln?
Post research outcome (2011)

Berlin’s biggest park will open on the former Tempelhof Airport site during two days of celebrations in May that are expected to attract 200,000 visitors. Tempelhof became world famous during the Berlin Airlift from 1948-1949 when British and American airplanes nicknamed "Rosinenbomber" (raisin bombers) landed there to deliver food and other essential supplies to the population after the Soviet Union tried to starve the city into submission through a land blockade.

The airport closed in 2008 following nearly 100 years of military and civil use when the Berlin authorities decided to develop Schönefeld as the city's sole commercial airport.

Covering 230 hectares, the new Tempelhofer Park straddles the Kreuzberg and Neukölln districts and is larger than Berlin’s famous 210-hectare Tiergarten park. The park project is costing €60 million and will be fully completed by 2017. As well as large green spaces for recreation, the park will have two barbecue areas, a bird reserve, three dog exercise areas and five toilet blocks.

The park was officially opened during a weekend of fun activities on May 8th and May 9th 2011. Attractions include a sports exhibition including soccer, cheerleading, cricket and hockey as well as trendy new sports such as floorball, speed badminton, ultimate frisbee and slacklining (McVeigh, Paul 2011).

The project outcome confirms that the refurbishment ideas mentioned in the flyer have been realized to some extent in this new use of the Tempelhof site and how strategic partnerships between the community, commercial and government agencies, where existing built environment using an ecological perspective, has resulted in a significant contribution to social connectedness and social capital.
Tournee des Tournants (Peoples journey): The Berlin Bear in the park

The artists are Uwe Jonas and Birgit Schumacher. Their art in the public realm work relates:

To the concrete phenomenon; the reality, serious and the actual of the urban public space and its changes throughout society and the transformation of society it also relates in particular to the dimensions of the public realm, and the need to have it promoted (2003).

“The art in the public realm” strategy is described by Dr Dorothea Kolland (2001) in relation to Neukölln:

The artist intervention in public domain keeps us occupied, as well as the projects we are organising. It is important to create something, important to do something positive for Neukölln. We decided in the beginning to do something on a theoretical-ground base in the public realm leading to a dialogue between artists and the public arena. It is for us to use the projects of artistic intervention for a several day symposium; to go ahead to consider the discussions in which we are involved, so that we activate the thinking of the artists.

The article features a statue of a bear which appears to be intended to promote a multicultural understanding of Berlin today. Dr Kolland in 2008 explained this statue and its meaning:
Berliners’ are happy to share; this is a true multi-cultural city and the bear is an encouragement for inter-cultural dialogue.

**CDA Stage 1**

The statue represents the identity of Berlin in the shape of a bear; a statue of a bear is used as a nationally understood symbol signifying the city of Berlin. The purpose of this rendering of the “Berlin Bear” is to stimulate cultural debate just as other European cities did. The Liverpool (1998) ‘lambanana’ statues were part of a purposive attempt at cultural/commercial regeneration of that city.

So why is the lonely bear positioned in the garden at the edge of a building in a Neukölln precinct? (Re: 2008 meeting with Dr Kolland: “the bear is not lonely; the bear is happy sharing with all cultures”). Is the bear there to be discovered as people journey through the garden? The bear decorated with a mixture of flags from different countries adds to the visual sense of balance. The Berlin Bear is the embodiment of Berlin, shared with the variety of cultures that make up Berlin today, with or without the people’s permission: If permission were sought then would it be granted and by whom? The bear was located in a less prominent position where people would discover it by chance. This placing promotes the normality of a culturally integrated community. Throughout Berlin today, the multicultural bear is a part of Berlin and bear statues can be purchased almost everywhere.

**CDA Stage 2**

The artists and their creators (Cultural Bureau Senate Department for Urban Development Berlin, 2005) have challenged the bear’s traditional Old German persona. Yet there is no malice in this. The bear’s new persona was meant to stimulate community debate by changing some of the bear’s characteristics. It could be seen as yet another piece of engineered junk, designed to promote just another artist’s view of multiculturalism. On the other hand, the bear can be seen as a practical representation of the inter-play and tension between different cultures. This interplay is played out on opposite sides of the body of the bear. It is a bear with two faces facing each other, one face with a Muslim head scarf, the other without a scarf and no words are written to comment on this interplay. Perhaps words are not required. The artist allows the statue of the bear to create its own presence and to be understood in whatever way a passer-by chooses.
The bear is in a form that is intended to relate to children as well as adults; the paintings on the bear look like those produced by children in a primary school classroom. The impact of this is to remind people of children’s need for a harmonious and happy community and to create a note of light-hearted fun. So this is a soft approach to a serious problem, the necessity to ameliorate the social disadvantage of a migrant community and to include that community effectively in the national psyche as a part of Germany (Senate Department for Urban Development Berlin 2005).

**CDA Stage 3**

This piece of art, established by artists and promoted throughout Berlin, is there to highlight the need for inter-personal connection between cultures. The traditional single cultural symbol – the Berlin Bear – can seem to be owned only by white Germans, by old Germans (Biodeutsch). Migrants are not to be welcomed. This rendering of the bear undoes that presumption and appropriates a cultural artefact to provide a dynamic solution to an urgent contemporary problem. The question for old Germans is whether the new migrants challenge the very elements that led to Berlin’s establishment as a city. Berlin’s cultural heritage developed over centuries is at risk, but what is that risk? It is the notion of stability and certainty; a sense of direction. The statue addresses those feelings by maintaining the old symbol but in a new guise. In the article, the picture of the Berlin Bear has been presented almost as a cartoon character. Perhaps this approach is more socially acceptable because it addresses the issues through a comic fantasy. Is it just another scene from a story as Berlin struggles with strategies, ideas and solutions to address the multicultural debate? Perhaps the community will listen and be aware of a simple Berlin Bear with a message to people to participate and be involved with one another, just as the bear has done by embracing different cultures into its body.

This new version of the bear may be also representative of the some of the ideals of European culture, an urban culture that is dominated by the compact form of its cities (Putnam 1993; 2000). The bear is a piece of art with a purpose. It says that the Berlin senate has ideas that are different, creative and designed by people who are mindful of the need for programmes that bring about social integration (Strong Partners Social City 2005).
There are two parts to the refurbishment process: **project one (1)** and **project two (2)**. Both concern the improvement of buildings, however for different purposes.

**Background Project number one (1)**

**CDA Stage 1**

Project number one (the bottom picture) involves the refurbishment of an old ruin dated 1806, the idea of the artist and architect Roland Eckelt. The project is entitled “values and heroes” (Werte und Helden). The main idea is to look for ruined buildings. There are a number of
buildings left over from the 19th century Franco-Prussian and other periods that were bombed during WW11 and left in a damaged condition. This is especially true of buildings that were located in the previous Eastern sector of Berlin where sometimes only the building façade was left standing. The idea is not a new one since the idea first came from the German architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841) (Bonet 2003). The text does not expand on Karl Friedrich Schinkel’s reasoning behind this; however was he confronted by ruined buildings and wanted to restore them to their previous status? Karl Schinkel was Berlin’s prominent neo-classical architect, a style of architecture that also informed surrounding streetscapes (Bonet 2003).

Steinberg in his book entitled Berlin comments:

On the celebrated buildings of Schinkel whose genius completed classical Berlin’s 19th century reputation as a new Athens on the river Spree (Steinberg 1990, p.36).

In project number 1 Roland Eckelt is referred to as the artist and controls the project from start to finish, the primary role of any artist. It is not left to builders to interpret the wishes of the artist. The project uses the presence of the building for the sole purpose of a symbolic gesture to show the local community what can be done with a ruin. The key motive behind the refurbishment through the use of art is not necessarily functional. The text states that the building will not be used for any real purpose. The reason behind the artistic refurbishment is not only to show the local community what can be done with a ruined building but also to demonstrate that the area is being revitalised and buildings and surrounds are part of that process. Whatever has to be done has to involve community because the community has been hurting from high unemployment, high population movement, from street crime and residential buildings that need revitalising. The article however does not emphasise this. So why revitalise the old ruined building? Perhaps it shows that nothing is too old to have life put back into it, and this includes people. People identify with buildings, there is a certainty about a building structure, and it means stability, and the older and more interesting the structure the more stories it can tell. Correspondingly, badly maintained buildings and streetscape that are in urgent need of repair only contribute to a community that is in decay. There may be a metaphor here in that saving something physical from the wreck of the past also suggests that a sense of community can be salvaged from ruins. From this perspective the project organisers have sought to involve the community by engaging in this unique creative arts project.
After the artist has finished with the building it will be opened to the public for a short period, perhaps for about three months. This is an extremely important neighbourhood strategy because it indirectly involves the neighbourhood in informal debate about the building. Perhaps neighbours will be discussing what will happen to the building. In any event, the community is a part of the visual strategy. When this short open-house period is over, the building can be damaged. The building will be offered to a demolition expert (Stringmeister). His role will be to core-out (Klemann 1996) the internal parts of the old ruin by selectively using explosives leaving the façade and the main building features intact. This is important because every building has an historical context and plays the vital role of a visual perspective in the neighbourhood. In this way perhaps the building has a new potential and new life. The end result however will depend upon community perception.

It is hoped that by using the old ruined building in this way the building has gone through a transition and the local community has shared in this to some degree. Project number 1 also flows onto project number 2. So why spend all this time and money refurbishing a ruin, and then coring it out? Here history plays a part. Berlin’s revitalisation is due to this, or to a similar set of building renewal strategies. Berlin’s urban designers appeared to have learnt something from their post WWII re-development experiences. After WWII, there was more wholesale destruction of their city due to demolishers pulling down the older Berlin suburbs than from the bombing of Berlin. Another element was the situation in the previous Eastern sector of Berlin. Many of Berlin’s famous old public buildings were in the eastern sector after WWII and due to the East Berlin and DDR Germany’s economies these buildings were left in a state of decay. The recently totally refurbished and redeveloped Berlin central station is a masterpiece of what can be achieved by a combination of engineering and building expertise. Fortunately the refurbishment and redevelopment approach is very popular especially in Berlin, rather than the wholesale destruction of older buildings. The text reminds us that there are expectations that in this way the old ruin will become famous and still have the potential to be used for something else. Both the Anhalter Bahnhof (old railway station) and Gedaechtniskirche (old church) are well known in Berlin for such a rebirth strategy, and have become famous landmarks in the process. Now in project number 2 they have been able to link a number of aspects of the refurbishment process to community and social capital.

In project number 2 the old modernist multilevel residential building remains defiantly awaiting its fate. Does a 1960s building still have a future? Rather than demolition, perhaps it
could be refurbished. Maybe not in total; perhaps the damaged top section will be used as an example of what can be done with a refurbishment approach. If this is to be successful, strategic alliances with local construction organisations and various levels of government may result in another life for the residential building. Does the building speak for itself and if it did what does it say to the surrounding residents? The building is still there, apart from damage to its upper structure. It is there for all to see with expectation that something exciting will happen, something different. The building will remain an asset but with an innovative perspective to its future role, with a rooftop garden perhaps, solar panels and large decorative balconies adding new life to what was just a plain modernist structure that had seen better days. Or in some people’s view it is just another building without defining features, with small balconies, and few if any lifts, that should be pulled down.

**CDA Stage 2**

The importance of projects 1 and 2 is that the neighbourhood still retains the important ground floor area and therefore the building still retains its spatial identity. Residents can still relate to the site because only the top section will be modified and importantly there is not a hole in the ground left after the building has been demolished.

Another important factor is the local community’s involvement in the project. The text strongly emphasises this aspect of community involvement. Various global factors such as a reduction in corporate investment have resulted in large population movements between urban centres. Vital refurbishment strategies are essential elements in maintaining infrastructure both from an economic and socioeconomic perspective. In other words, urban authorities have to find ways of keeping their residents in local precincts rather than moving to other suburbs that may appear to have more to offer.

The building revitalisation process is one way of achieving this because it shows that the area is visually progressive, and maintains a range of community services. This is especially relevant in suburbs that have a lower socioeconomic status. These suburbs tend to act as an entry point for newly arrived migrants who when established move to more affluent suburbs that have a higher status image and more services and supporting infrastructure. The Nehom and URBACT report documents refer to this aspect where the retention of a building as an asset requires the empowerment of residents to help make decisions concerning spatial identity and what should and could be done with the urban infrastructure. Building refurbishment strategies are
amongst other elements that contribute value to social capital because they involve cooperation between government and citizens. This can be seen from an ecological perspective (interview with Hübner 2001).

CDA Stage 3

Building lots without buildings and vacant lots after buildings have been demolished and still awaiting development in residential precincts help create a sense of despair. It adds to the unattractiveness of the area whilst creating community uncertainty (Nehom 2007; URBACT 2005). By part re-modelling a building still retains its overall identity. The re-modelling (or refurbishment) of buildings usually involves late 19th to early 20th century structures with balconies and a number of organic features. This very activity helps to create interest for the surrounding community, for example what is going to happen to the building? Is it going to be pulled down, and what is going to replace it? A strong neighbourhood management team that involves building trades people will have already been involved in the urban renewal decision-making process with a number of local management offices, panels and action groups who coordinate and communicate the various programmes that keep the community informed (S.T.E.R.N, URBED 2008, p.14). The process of building re-modelling also stimulates other community events and projects such as art in the public realm, part of an integrated intervention strategy to involve residents in their neighbourhood.

Strategic involvement is a transition from a mainly top-down planning approach with some input from bottom-up local neighbourhood initiatives to an action-based needs approach. In the latter, residents are directly involved in an on-going process of identifying very specific local neighbourhood needs and are also participating in the process of project design and implementation.

The artist recognises how hard it is to involve the community in much of the building process, especially with medium to high rise structures, because access to the building’s upper levels is difficult. The artist has chosen to think outside the square. The text describes how the artist has found a unique way to engage the community in the refurbishment project, in a way that crosses trans-cultural barriers and involve local residents in a positive expression of community unity.
He has decided that the physical location of the building impacts on three streets, on either side and in front of the building. He has decided to involve the residents of all the buildings that are located in this precinct. To achieve this the residents that live within this particular area were door-knocked and using the principles of Feng Shui they were asked to leave windows and doors open on a particular day so that the collective community energy could flow around the area adding positive community energy. This sounds innovative, but what the community really thinks about this is not really mentioned in the article although the project encourages social penetration of public and private space by local residents.

With the backdrop of Kreuzberg’s post Berlin’s wall haphazard development of abandoned buildings as a model of inept planning policies (Sheridan 2005; URBED 2008) perhaps there are lessons where future refurbishment protocols can to be considered for Neukölln in my findings (chapter 6). Where abandoned buildings offered potential for reuse, which is part of the Social City integrated approach of social and refurbishment programmes; adaptation in ways limited only by the structures themselves and the participation of the community?

**Document No 5 of 7 (from Nehom) Integrative Urban renewal policies in Germany**

Integrated Urban Development: A Prerequisite for Urban Sustainability in Europe
Commissioned by the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning: 26th March 2007

**German Institute of Urban Affairs**

Published by: Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs
Invalidenstrasse: Berlin D-10115

Klaus J. Beckman, Thomas Franke, Bettina Reimann and Wolf-Christian Strauss

Thomas Franke from the German Urban Institute (DIFU) was one of my interviewees in 2006. DIFU assists in the management and organisation of Social City Berlin operations.

Wolf-Christian Straus is also a member of DIFU, and it was he who was instrumental in organising my meeting with Thomas Franke in Berlin (2006).
CDA Stage 1

This document puts the Social City and other urban renewal strategies and concepts under the spotlight in a dispassionate way. The term clinical would also apply in the presentation of this report. The document offers the reader a critical analysis of the relationship between the various agencies responsible for the wider concept of integrative urban renewal policies in Germany, especially Berlin. At the forefront of the renewal policies are one of social cohesion and one of economic development. Nehom sees these as separate, but not separated by consequences. The built environment is at the core of economic development in several types of residential buildings. They are usually stand-alone flats; flats located above and associated with shops and commercial premises or tenement buildings and are occupied by people who rent their accommodation. There are however many home purchase schemes, some of them quite innovative, and some represent government initiatives which sponsor housing organisations. The schemes and the outcomes associated with maintenance strategies are reviewed and commented upon in the report, for example whether residents renting or owning their homes is related to socioeconomic, social and cultural circumstances.

There is also discussion on different locations and their population mix, so the overall issue is not simply renters versus owners. This is made more complex with a population that can be transitory. There are competing cultures with different aspirations. Population sub-sets such as Russian-German migrants can cause issues with integration with the local permanent residents. German language difficulties are a major reason why established residents feel under threat. They have questions concerning the repair and refurbishment of buildings and what happens to residents who are displaced because of demolition. Although new housing stock is difficult to come by, there are residential housing units in poor but reasonable condition suitable for refurbishment, as was the case in Marzahn East Berlin (Schümer-Strucksberg 1997). The focus of refurbishment and programme strategies is the neighbourhood, and management of the neighbourhood by the residents, resident action groups, Social City and strategic partners.

CDA Stage 2

The document uses a case study format and focuses on relationships, on housing strategies, how to engage and continually motivate local residents to take action in their own neighbourhoods and urban policy for local initiatives in East and West Germany. The document discusses strategic management policies such as how the top-down approach was
designed to empower bottom-up local networks. The management of issues of crime, local employment, inter-cultural constraints and lack of local amenities depended on the inter-linking of local knowledge with broader top-down management policies.

Some key expressions used in this comprehensive text sum up the approach used by the German government to achieve its urban renewal objectives. An example is the phrase “reinforcing of civic participation and the establishment of neighbourhood management”. This is a strongly interventionist approach which suggests that there are time constraints for the successful implementation of programmes from the EU (European Union) and the national German government, Berlin senate and local agencies. There are many economic and social issues that have to be resolved, and programmes dealing with these various issues will not be allowed to go over time constraints.

The document offers the reader a critical analysis of the discussions that take place between the various agencies responsible for neighbourhood management and comments on their research findings. These generally indicate that there is much work to do to avoid local agencies getting bogged down in inter-agency government paperwork procedural issues, rather than solving neighbourhood problems. However the major issue is cost because the programmes have often proved to be too costly to deliver and administer, and politicians are not happy with budget blow-outs.

CDA Stage 3

A central theme in this government document is a comprehensive review of urban integration through interventionist policies. The idea behind this document is that because the government adopts a dispassionate view of housing renewal in Berlin it misses some fundamental issues to do with understanding community problems. One criticism is that some of the ideas that come down from top management and some of the challenges to these ideas that come from the practicalities of bottom-up situations are filtered as they pass through various layers of management. This is not necessarily done on purpose but relates to the volume of information travelling up and travelling down. As a result, some realities of the lives of residents in deprived suburbs become either lost or misinterpreted because they have to pass through a number of levels of bureaucracies.

Based upon my critical analysis I believe the Urban Renewal Policies report provides a central framework to gauge such issues as population movements, the existence of parallel societies,
residential ownership and renting equity issues. The complex nature of just one of these issues is more than enough to deal with, and made even more difficult when a central framework is adopted to gauge the elements of several different issues. This has the potential of leading to a loss of strategic flexibility at the sharp end of neighbourhood management because of an all-encompassing integrative management strategy. If the ideas behind the document are for guidance then it provides an ideal framework for neighbourhood problem-solving. However if the document is to be used as a procedural manual it leads to a restriction on innovative practices in the harsh realities of life in deprived areas such as designated neighbourhood districts of Neukölln.

Document No 6 of 7 (A3-cover) From Rixdorf; now Neukölln: A history of their music and theatre

CDA Stage 1

This comprehensive book of over three hundred pages is a project by the local council (Bezirksamtes) Neukölln, and the project leader is Dr Dorothea Kolland 1990)
The front cover helps to add to the engagement of Neukölln and Rixdorf’s rich historical past. It is a comprehensive analysis of historic events over 314 pages and begins in the late 19th century. In 1873 the whole area belonged to the Emperor Rixdorf. In 1912 with his agreement the area was renamed Neukölln. During later years the streets were renamed, although even today not all streets are renamed.

The overall objective of the book appears to be to emphasize the development of Neukölln - Berlin from the latter part of the 19th century as a place of music and culture. Extensive research for the book was conducted by Social City cultural representatives. Police records and state and government archives revealed little information about the area and even the Heimat museum did not have accessible manuscripts. The book represents part of an integrated and systematic strategy to present the suburb of Neukölln as an area that would be attractive to those who seek entrepreneurship and creativity (de Boer 2009).

The contents of the book may be summed up from a Berlin expression from grandparents from 70-50 years ago:

Rixdorf gibts Musike; translated means, In Rixdorf there is music.

The area of Rixdorf and hence Neukölln (1920) had an important cultural identity that provided the residents of Neukölln with venues as social and cultural meeting places; the contents of the book assure the reader of that. Rixdorf’s history of its arts and music is delivered to the reader in both words and pictures. Events are chronicled from 1871 when Neukölln’s population was a little over 8,000 people. From these small beginnings Neukölln grew to its maximum of over 313,000 in 1932. The population today is approximately the same.

The contents of the book are a vibrant representation of Neukölln’s art and cultural heritage. The characters appear to jump out from the pages of its history during times of infinite turmoil. There always seemed to be turmoil, from the mire of late 19th century industrialisation, of large movements of populations seeking their fortunes, to the First World War, the Weimar Republic, National Socialism, the Second World War, and a divided Germany. The book highlights the diversity of this past and appears to pose the question whether it really so much different today. The artists may not fill the empty shops, the obstinacy of some people in neglected quarters (because of past government disinterest) may have stained
Neukölln’s image, but the fundamental opportunity to regain the community’s faith in its future is a reflection of its past.

CDA Stage 2
The book indicates that Social City is adding to the identity of Neukölln as a town with a history which can enhance its future in the twenty-first century. The reader is encouraged to venture into the text because of detailed narratives and pictures of over 100 years of music and theatrical history. Indeed the pictures draw the reader into past events which are described in incredible detail with dates and participants as well as their views and ideas. There are scenes of ordinary people in everyday situations – at the corner shop, in the restaurant, the local pub and local businesses. Actual protocol books are featured as are hand-written accounts and other memorabilia. It is a publication that appeals to those who have an interest in history, in sociology or in the physical area in which they reside or intend to live.

Social City cultural representatives involved in undertaking the research wanted to make Neukölln appear interesting, to present it in the best light rather than as deprived. They establish this by showing that Neukölln has a great and interesting past based on creditable historical achievements. According to the book’s publishers some of Neukölln’s history appeared lost after 1912 and certainly after the 1920 Greater Berlin Act when towns like Neukölln were incorporated into the city of Berlin. The book is a reminder that the area of Rixdorf and Neukölln has much to offer. Neukölln’s cultural and arts history with the music halls, the restaurants and the variety and depth of local businesses is a solid base to rebuild a future arts and cultural community in the Neukölln area. Although the musical personalities from the beginning of the 20th century to the early post WWII Berlin may have been lost to the area, the historical context still exists. The book adds value to the social make-up of Neukölln. So how could the contents of the book achieve this?

Looking at the contents more closely, every type of theatre from outside summer venues to indoor traditional theatres and cabaret cafés are identified. Cinemas, dance halls, restaurants, music halls and music schools of different disciplines are evident from photographs of the venues and of the people who went there. There are photographs of theatre programmes, music shops and material promoting all things music. There were songs for work, play, church, for celebration and social occasions. Music was part of life in Rixdorf and Neukölln and it appears that almost every major business had its own band, its own theatre group and singers.
The present population of Neukölln can rediscover where they live has a creative past that can inform future projects in the creative and fine-arts areas, transforming the deprived neighbourhoods of Neukölln into opportunities that cater for the “creative class” as envisaged by Florida (2002).

**CDA Stage 3**

The book represents the ideas that extend from the present Berlin Government’s integrative policy of social intervention that seeks to help residents in working-class suburbs such as Neukölln engage with each other through the vehicle of arts (Kolland 2001).

It is about the residents of Neukölln feeling like a community; using art to create ‘artistic tension’ that helps to draw out the inner creativity of the self in order to benefit the community. There is nothing to gain from an economic and socially impoverished community because the economy has changed directions. A centralised European Community with different populations and socio-cultural circumstances can still grow because of its cultural differences rather than stagnate and separate because of them.

The book acts as a catalyst for residents both new and old. Regardless of social and political developments and emerging holes in urban budgets (Kolland 2001) Neukölln can still grow socially and economically because of its historical and cultural heritage, especially when linked with new forms of communication technology. Traditional art and culture can become a new form of representative culture that engages young and old. The fundamental opportunities to regain the community’s faith in its future may yet lie with the artists and their attempts to re-build and exceed the rich narrative of Neukölln’s historical past.

The opportunities for a future built upon the past historical aspects of western art and music have to be tempered with the realism that the cultural makeup of Neukölln has changed (see interview with Busse 2006). The idea is that where there is music, song and theatre the dynamics of an artistic solution can resolve social segregation and encourage integration. Perhaps the ideals of Senator Ingeborg Junge-Reyer from the Berlin senate for urban development provide an insight into the motives of the German government:
The objectives will be challenging to implant. Hence, new ideas, and new projects will help us continue in the coming years along the effective path we have begun to take. More than ever, we need to combine the efforts of the senate and local residents, and not least those of strong local partners (Junge-Reyer 2005).

The contents of the book represent in many ways the ideals of The New Gentry – the creative classes of Neukölln that would be drawn from the new wave of artists and musicians. They will make their mark with a multitude of innovative initiatives: a combination of flea markets, shops, video bars, gallery and public space staging and popups. Economically, they will work with support from both private and government initiatives. Overall, they will represent a new gentrification of this deprived area (de Boer 2009; Smith 2009). According to Moises Mendoza writing in Der Spiegel:

In the last few years, Berlin's gritty Neukölln district has become a hotbed of the creative class and nightlife, attracting students, artists and bourgeois bohemians. But some worry that the neighbourhood is changing too quickly and that locals are being pushed out. Now affluent foreigners from Europe and America are being blamed for rising rents (March 11th, 2011).

Although the opportunities for personal encounters have diminished nowadays according to Putnam (2000), in northern Europe a combination of more traditional forms of social communication and mediated communication will enhance rather than impede social connectedness (Avery and Guest 1999).

Document No 7 of 7 Good daughter and good son (A4-158-159/165)
The book entitled Good Daughter Good Son is about communities learning to live with each other (Berlin, 2004). Published by the Culture network Neukölln (Social City, Berlin Senate) Bettina Busse (Hg) (Neukölln Cultural-Network)
Senate Department for Urban Development Wurttembergische Str 6-Berlin 10707
CDA Stage 1

This is a powerful book of 183 pages because it features some of the important issues that students and parents experience, such as the need for regular school attendance by students. This book is a documentation of interventions carried out in Neukölln which were intended to deal with understandings and misunderstandings between cultures, peer groups and genders. The focus is on sons and daughters who reside in the Neukölln district and their respect for their parents. It covers local relationships with peers, schools and inter-personal and inter-cultural communication.

The editor of this collection, Bettina Busse from the cultural network, was an interviewee in 2006 and is featured in chapter 5. The cultural network (Social City) works with local councils in delivering a range of community and neighbourhood programmes (Social City; strong partners 2005). I interviewed her at her office in Karl Marx Strasse Neukölln. I also met her briefly in 2008 when I interviewed Dr Kolland.

There are nineteen articles in this book; each heading features aspects of how misunderstandings can occur between people. The following two pages list the articles that featured in this book: They include titles such as “Critical Incidents and cultural misunderstandings; Art in Context with Inter-cultural Projects”.
CDA-Stage 1 Review of Introduction to Good Daughter Good Son

The article on page 159 featured in this analysis entitled Sons and Daughters examines the topic of respect in the eyes of Neukölln’s school children and their parents. This article was selected because it explores a number of important issues that are common in other designated areas of deprived needs as determined by the Berlin senate on urban affairs. The
purpose of this article is not to uncover what is right or wrong in terms of respectful behaviour between students and their parents but to try to ascertain what if anything has changed in recent times.

**CDA Stage 1 and 2 analyses of the graphics on page 158**

Although the article begins on page 159 I will conduct an analysis (1a) of the graphic layout on page 158, and analyse (1b) the text used in this graphic layout.

**1a:**
The graphic layout of the first page shows what is really an adolescent girl and is designed to stimulate debate around a range of issues associated with young teens growing-up, and confusing messages concerning a range of expectations that result from the process of teenage social development in the context of life in a multicultural society. The sketch of a young girl is understated, and her dress code does not appear to associate her with any specific cultural group. The sketch represents a soft entry into a very complex and difficult area of relationships between parents and their children. The sketch of the young adolescent girl is done in pencil. She is shown wearing three-quarter length slacks light grey in colour and a dark top with a halter neck and with no sleeves. She is wearing no jewellery, and perhaps very little make-up. She is standing straight with her arms folded behind her body. The stance is not really submissive, however even though the stance could indicate a degree of reservation plus determination the effect is of a person who is questioning and positive, her wide-open eyes could also be considered assertive. Her eyes are dark and her hair is dark, shortish in length with turned-up ends, sits on her shoulders and is parted in the middle. Her appearance could be considered Turkish, representing a modern adolescent girl from a Turkish family background or she could equally be from any European country. The young adolescent girl appears to be neutral, not wearing earrings or necklace.

**CDA Stage 1 and 2 (combined and continued) and the analysis of the text used in the graphic layout of the adolescent girl on page 158**

Sketch 1b: featuring seven (7) speech balloons (analysed following the picture). A speech balloon refers to what a person may be thinking about a situation without actually saying it.
The sketch on an A4 page format below has a hand-written partly obscured heading in pencil across the top of the page with the words “What do they want?” and there are also two speech balloons above the head of the adolescent girl that are not connected to her, one on the left side and one on the right side. Both these speech balloons contain words that have been partly cut-off in the original text. The adolescent girl has five separate speech balloons connected to her head and each has a question or a statement, viz.

- Left side top #4 “I will do it tomorrow and my nickname is Muecke.”
- Left-side bottom #6 “Why should I do it – why not him or her?”
- Top of her head #2 “What do you want of me?”
- Right-hand side top #5 “I don’t feel like it, I will do it later”
- Bottom right #7 “They should do it themselves”.

The sketch of the young adolescent girl and the dialogue used provide a guide for the reader to what is written on the next page. It draws the reader into the dialogue. It represents a process of exploring the notion that respect as a social protocol is as important nowadays as it ever was. The text suggests that the adolescent girl is confused about her role as a student and as a child of migrant parents. She is concerned about what is expected of her and this is highlighted in the overall theme of the graphic which is “she is coming out with excuses”.

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CDA Stage 1/2 from page 159 (combined and continued) and the analysis of the comments by the writer Jutta Aumueller

Jutta Begins with the following question
What is a good daughter and what is a good son and the nature of respect towards their parents, and what is a good son and a good daughter in the eyes of Neukölln’s students and their parents?

And her answer to the question is as follows
The fundamentals of this question are determined through a series of workshops involving parents and students. The workshops produced examples of a number of typical conflicting family issues and situations, and these were then role-played between students. Examples of the issues that were uncovered by the students during the workshops include poor school marks, arriving home late from school, missing classes at school, hanging around with people the parents do not like and not helping parents with the daily chores. There were also issues of a religious and cultural nature.

As well as role-play exercises a number of creative approaches such as collages (using photo-scenes, pictures, sketches, materials and symbols) were used as an attempt to draw out the views of students and parents on the subject of what children expected from their parents and in turn what parents expected from their children, and understanding their behaviour towards each other.

The student’s point of view was often a reflection of their religious background and their family’s country of origin. The roles and expectations of girls and boys are also a reflection of religion and their parents’ country of origin. The issues of respect, obedience and general helpfulness were common for both girls and boys, regardless of their parent’s origin and religion. The results of the role-plays and collages were reported. Reports were produced by students and their parents. Parents who experienced (German) language difficulties were helped to write their reports.

The parents’ point of view was interesting because of their neutrality towards the issues raised by the students. The expectations of the parents concerning the roles that girls and boys
should play were also surprising. Parents wanted their children to develop their own personalities without the pressures associated with students being obedient or manipulated.

**CDA Stage 2 (continued)**

The workshops and role plays and the varying use of creative-art helped to produce a number of definitive outcomes, challenged some pre-conceived ideas and provided clarity of other ideas and opinions. These are daily issues that are faced by children, parents, teachers and government authorities in the suburb of Neukölln.

The first page of the text begins with the question “What makes a good daughter and a good son?” In other words how are a good son and good daughter expected to behave in and out of schools in Neukölln? This question was directed at year eight students attending three Neukölln schools. It was organised by Social City’s Cultural Department, operating under the jurisdiction of the Berlin senate, who engaged some local students in debating this question through a workshop.

**Other evident factors**

Although this topic examines behaviour, the research process uncovered aspects that have a direct influence upon the social behaviour of students, the most important of these being the role of language. The importance of language has surfaced again and again in interviews with Social City representatives (chapter 5). Students from non-German speaking backgrounds who may have not attended kindergarten could begin their formal school system without a clear understanding of the German language. Language may also influence students and their parents in what is expected of them in the mainstream German school system in terms of the topic of respect as discussed in this article. There are other factors that have impacted upon the social behaviour of children in areas designated as deprived by Social City, such as the lack of child-play areas for informal social interaction.

Page 2 leaves behind the soft introduction of page 1. The reader is taken on a trip into the realities of events as perceived by students that were uncovered and discussed in the workshop prior to role play and the acting of collages. The local Neukölln students engaged in stimulating debate concerning each student’s view of an item from the workshop agenda. In the workshop a commonality is established. Each student discusses their own view of respect
and good manners, what it means to them and why. Each culture has its own view of religious and gender expectations and there are some surprising outcomes in this regard.

Page 2 starts with informing the reader as to how the students see their roles, and when reading about the students’ work, what they say and how they feel about the various issues that are of concern to them. The reader is left with the view that there are some differences in conceptions of respect between those that follow the Islamic religion and those of other backgrounds. This is especially relevant where norms for appropriate gender behaviour are concerned and distinguishes most strongly girls from Christian backgrounds and girls from Muslim families. The workshops showed that girls from an Islamic family background are expected to make a visual display of their cultural identity in a way that is not expected for boys neither from Islamic backgrounds nor for girls from a Christian or secular background. Requirements for appropriate dress are the most central aspect of this, and the text refers to this in the context of an essay written by a year eight adolescent girl whose parents are from a Turkish background. An overview of the translation of her essay reads:

Student Essay No1
In our religion you don’t have sex before marriage, you don’t have a boyfriend, and if you do have a boyfriend and have sex you are called a slut (German translation from the word Schlampe).

We don’t behave like Germans, who for instance move out from home at eighteen. We don’t do that. We have to stay at home till we are married. In our religion girls have to wear a scarf once they menstruate.

An examination of the above text would appear to indicate that there are religious differences that are acted out in the minds of some students. The phrase “We do not behave like Germans” appears to draw a line between Muslims and Germans. However this particular girl is German-born and perhaps it would be more accurate to describe the differences as those between Muslims and non-Muslims or even Muslims and Christians. Yet not all German students whose parents are of traditional German heritage are Christians whereas all children of Turkish parents are Muslims and see it as important to manifest that religious identity in daily conduct.
Student Essay No 2

Another essay from an adolescent girl with Turkish parents does not mention any religious aspects at all. There is however slight cultural differences that were uncovered in an analysis of her essay where she defines her role as:

Helping around the house; taking the rubbish out; looking after younger siblings; emptying the dish-washer, and attending to guests who visit.

The part of the text that refers to “attending to guests who visit” represents an aspect of cultural behaviour that is distinctive for Turks rather than a cultural behaviour that is tied by the student to religious values. Attending to visitors does not have to be attached to Turkish cultural norms; it is also an important social skill and one which transcends cultural boundaries.

Student Essay No 3

The following essay comment concerns a young adolescent boy whose parents are of traditional German heritage:

Son: A good son should help at home, should be honest, has to have a school certificate and should do an apprenticeship to be able to survive later on in life.

Mother I would explain to him the economic situation and the importance of having good school certificates nowadays. After all, he has to get a job to be able to support his family financially. I have been a good daughter; have been hardworking, honest and helpful. I did not always fulfil the expectations of my parents. Very early in life I took my life in my own hands because of the birth of my first child.

This student is quite definite about his role and the meaning of respect. The context of this is more global than local. His German heritage does not lead him to suggest any behaviour he is expected to carry out as an expression of his national heritage, such as doing well for one’s country. He defines the expectations placed on him in terms of what his family expects, which is to be successful in his relationship with others, to do his duties as a student and to obtain a career outcome that would make his family proud of him. These are typical of the values of the capitalist culture of the work ethic and meritocracy, and are not related to a religious or
national heritage, though of course they are dominant in the German nation while equally
dominant in other cultures.

**CDA Stage 3**

The rationale behind addressing issues about relationships with peers, relationships with
schools and inter-personal communication within an inter-cultural context has been concisely
documented by Dr Kolland (Kolland 2001, September).

The objective of this Social City programme is firstly to ameliorate social conflict and secondly
to act as an introduction to their “Vital Impulses Strong Partners house call” programmes
(Berlin Senate for Cultural Development). The intervention chosen in this case was to invite
children to reflect on their own cultural background and its meaning for parent and child
relationships. As could be expected, these are quite culturally and gender differentiated. One
can only assume that the strategy is to hope that this self-reflection will allow the children to
put their own social and cultural norms at a distance rather than regarding them as taken for
granted. The expectation is that this process will help social integration by promoting an
understanding of living with each other.

The objective of Jutta Aumueller’s document is to present this programme as part of an
integrated strategy to resolve social segregation and as a fundamental element of the Social
City house call programmes and other neighbourhood projects. The most puzzling aspect of
this is that to the reader there appears to be no rationale for this intervention. Clearly, the
Social City intervention, as presented in Aumueller’s article, rejects any such concerns. Instead
they are actually encouraging young people to present, to reflect upon and almost to celebrate
their cultural differences.

The rationale however has a number of components. Firstly the document is evidence of the
application of a particular intervention as part of systematic social integration strategy;
secondly because the document represents the work of a number of federal, state and local
government agencies it would be of interest to other interested parties, especially to
politicians. Another purpose of the document is to promote and document their interventions
to other countries both within and outside of the European community.
My interviewee Dr Kolland (2008) makes the rationale for this process quite clear when she says that it is a mistake to try to create social integration through promoting a single uniform German culture, a democratic culture. The process revealed in Jutta Aumueller’s chapter is an alternative to such an attempt to sanitise German culture to the point where it can be uniform. Clearly the objective of this Social City programme was go out and find out what people think about the idea of cultural and religious differences; what those differences might be; the level of importance placed upon them and what part they play in the causes of neighbourhood segregation. Certainly there is the need to question the attempts at the sanitisation of culture where the need to democratise cultural (Kolland, 2001) norms is seen as a prerequisite to neighbourhood harmony with the requirement that there is a single uniform German culture.

To understand the context of such an intervention, I will quote from Justus Leicht’s 2004 paper the debate over Muslim parallel societies in Germany:

Within the space of a few days, the campaign of hysteria over actual and alleged Islamist militants has swept from Holland into Germany. Liberal as well as conservative media outlets, politicians and feminists have proclaimed the failure of multicultural society and warned of the danger of Muslim parallel societies. It has suddenly been uncovered that within the population of Turkish origin in Germany, the suppression of rights of thousands of women and girls is taking place. Reality is turned upside down here. There is no mention made of how poverty and discrimination lead to social exclusion and drive sections of the population into backwardness. Quite the opposite: the conclusion drawn is that the German state has been much too tolerant of foreigners, and this must come to an end.

It was not surprising that the right-wing Bavarian minister of the interior, Günter Beckstein, demanded that foreigners living in Germany “recognize our leading culture”. But the speaker on domestic affairs for the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) Bundestag faction, Dieter Wiefelspütz, also joined in. Wiefelspütz, in effect, called on Muslims to prove their peaceful convictions, and requested that Islamic communities dissociate themselves clearly from those responsible for violence and religious mania.

The deputy Christian Democratic Union (CDU) chairman, minister of culture for Baden-Württemberg and vice president of the central committee of German Catholics, Annette Schavan, demanded that Islamic clerics agree to preach in mosques in the German language. “We can no longer permit a situation where in mosques people preach in languages that are not understood outside of the Islamic community”, Schavan said to the German press agency.
“Whoever is not understood, warned Schavan, runs the risk of inviting suspicion” (Leicht 2004).

CDA Stage 3 Conclusion

The following comments by Senator Junge-Reyer (Urban development) also explain the rationale of interventions such as “Good daughter – good son”.

Fundamental ideas about the role of respect between children and parents and members of the local Neukölln schools were used to help develop a series of programmes and projects with the object of addressing some of the misunderstandings between cultures. As well as addressing some of the cultural misunderstandings, some of the results of the workshop – role play and collage activities – provided an insight into some of the realities of the inter-cultural and religious lives of citizens in Neukölln. The major insight from this research was that it was not the parents of students at the three Neukölln schools that took part in the programme who were driving cultural and religious behavioural norms but the students themselves. In other words, the expectations of students in relation to respect differed from their parents. It appears that views of parents who attended the programme were less prescriptive than those of their children.

Some of the ideas and the values coming out of programmes such as “Good Daughter Good Son” have translated into neighbourhood projects and are listed below as “Vital Impulses” projects
Conclusion

The seven government-sponsored documents were subject to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as discussed in the methodology chapter (chapter 2). Analysis of the seven documents indicated they are inter-linked; they all have an overall thematic theme such as integrated urban development with a strong social and cultural content; visionary aspects; the implementation of a creative arts and social intervention strategy; the empowerment of neighbourhood residents working together refurbishing and managing aspects of their own districts.
Chapter 6 Croydon and Neukölln findings overview

The list of Croydon and Neukölln findings prepared from data chapters 4 and 5

Introduction
Chapter 6 features an overview of the major findings from Chapter 4 Croydon and chapter 5 Neukölln. A discussion of the findings derived from the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the results of an inquiry into a socio-spatial process in two major European city suburbs are included in the list of major findings.

This involved the identification of the challenges European urban designers are facing in the implementation of a government-planned regeneration programme into an existing major-city suburb, and how it promotes social connectedness and a contribution to social capital.

The format for discussion of the findings arising from four methods of inquiry is a series of headings, referred to as findings. A set of arguments explores whether a government-planned and partially implemented regeneration programme for an existing neighbourhood or town centre will promote social connectedness and contribute to a more socially cohesive community. The findings in this chapter and a summary of the major arguments are stated in the final chapter (chapter 7), defining the influence of government urban regeneration strategies on inhabitants.

6.0C A review of Croydon findings under investigation

Modernism and social connection
The proposal by the architect Will Alsop to populate Croydon’s urban CBD city-landscape with tall steel and glass buildings is his architectural solution for the reinvigoration of Croydon’s CBD (2007). The use of the word reinvigoration relates to the construction of larger retail precincts in order for Croydon to regain its position as a premier shopping location. These are economic solutions and do not indicate there are social challenges to solve for the present inhabitants of Croydon’s CBD and surrounding neighbourhoods. Before examining this further, the following needs to be considered. Only about 4000 people live in Croydon’s CBD. Significant growth will bring social as well as economic challenges. Proposed regeneration of the CBD must
endeavour to provide a greater mix of services for a larger and more diverse population in order to make the CBD a desirable and attractive place to live, work and visit.

One aspect of the proposed regeneration of Croydon’s town centre has been considered with great thoroughness. Alsop’s view tends towards the Italian concept of cityscape. The narratives in Third City document (2007, pp. 24:56 and p.8) such as “we need courtyards and piazzas”...“there is a need for a mini-bohemia – delicatessens, boutiques, butchers, chocolatiers ”...”cobbled streets and a busy market atmosphere” confirm Alsop’s European theme for Croydon’s CBD. This view is shared by Croydon council who seek to transform “a tired 60’s icon into a thrusting, confident 21st century European city”.

There is a conflict between these aspirations for a European feel and the continued imposition of yet more late modernist buildings in the tradition of those constructed in the 60s and 70s. Croydon’s CBD which still suffers from its “mini-Manhattan” tag (Glancey 1993) and Alsop’s Italian visions for regeneration do not work well together and should be avoided (Rowe 2007).

Alsop’s (2007) view that the design of urban space is the primary role of architects is debatable, according to Madanipour (1996), and Glancey (1998) in the sense the city is an embodiment of different functions and should show how urban space can be utilised objectively without the subordination of the aesthetics of the built environment.

The Third City proposal is what developers, businesses and what the major retail outlets want. The function of buildings therefore reflects the requirements of these interests to achieve the facilitation, flow and distribution of consumer goods, as well as leisure and entertainment services (Florida 2002).

Large pre-packaged entertainment and leisure venues should be partnered with surrounding public space catering for more informal social connections (Florida 2002; Putnam 2000; Tallon 2003; 2010). It is necessary to provide for a less formally organised and more flexible society, where social connectedness allows people to interact in ways that encourage the production of social goods and interaction that strengthens bridging bonds between members of communities (Putnam 2000).
The fundamental objectives of a city of consumption are ‘not out of place’ however, since city centres in order to be successful economically must focus on their role as centres of consumption. Equally cities grow in both economic and social aspects when they provide a rich variety of goods and services including restaurants and live theatre, good transport systems and walkable precincts (Glaeser, Kolko and Saiz 2001; Hoskins and Tallon 2003; Tallon 2010). Croydon’s Economic Report (2008) comments:

Public sector stakeholders feel that Croydon’s retail offer would be strengthened and complemented by distinctive boutique shops and specialist ethnic retail as well as taking advantage of Surrey Street Market, one of the oldest established markets in the country.

Most importantly those who are concerned with Croydon’s town centre development proposal are aware of the significance of similar regeneration projects located in other London Borough suburbs such as Canary Wharf and the London Borough of Lambeth (Third City document 2007). Croydon’s uniqueness is not currently being fully exploited (interview with Smith 2006). Aspects of Croydon’s unique heritage are expanded further in finding 6.6.

A summary of “cityness”: Croydon has its own “cityness” attributes without having to import them (interview Long and Smith 2006). Unfortunately Croydon’s regeneration is committed to new large-scale visions (Alsop 2007) of urban development instead of concentrating on more immediate and attainable solutions. Development of Croydon’s uniqueness in its extensive history originating from William’s 1066 European invasion can be inter-woven into CBD commercial precincts. After all a European city design has been promoted as the central option for Croydon’s regeneration which supports a renaissance and holistic agenda.

Croydon already has its walkable precincts, and they may be bracketed between large buildings but they exist. However they lack connectivity with other parts of the CBD and inner city precincts (Alsop 2007), where spontaneous social breaks can be taken amongst some of Croydon unique and presently underutilised locations. Locations if they were revitalised with fountains, water-stations, timber-seating and growers’ markets and the like, would attract and retain people: where a regular nod at a passing fellow citizen, a jogger, walker or cyclist can strengthen social cohesiveness in the wider Borough community.
My interviewees believe the 2020 plan fosters certain kinds of social activities while it ignores others. The broadest possible range of town centre areas where informal social encounters can occur is not fostered under the present Vision2020 regeneration proposal. This translates into a focus on social activities that have to be paid for inside buildings.

People will interact in public space if it is provided, however without public space it is difficult but not impossible to associate. However, particular public spaces can be dominated by particular groups in society, as with Croydon’s night-time economy (or more currently, Cairo’s Tahrir Square). My findings from photographs indicate Croydon’s present squares, precincts and arcades act as transit zones or corridors. They need a range of features and facilities to keep people there, to assist in the creation of mixed informal social encounters with sense of spontaneous theatre and activities to attract a vibrant ethnic mix. These independent variables have a social effect upon the dependent variable of the overall built environment.

The skate park located near the technical college is an example of outside space which has facilities where young people can interact with each other informally. Whilst there are those who are participating in skating others can be seen speaking with each other. Why not utilise an area in the same college precinct where student artists can display their work on a weekly basis? There one would have two different groups of younger people engaged in different types of activities. If one wanted to broaden the creative-mix add some engineering, architectural and building students who could present practical ideas on urban sustainability.

The CBD without a mixed urban context is not what Croydon council urban designers say they envisage in a town centre (chapter 4 interviews). Since residents who do not reside in the town centre were not consulted (Third City document 2007), it is difficult to determine what their views were.

There is a shared concern the city centre of Croydon will become a sanitised version of modernist expressionism (Foster 1997), rather than a symbol of a vibrant cultural and arts centre that includes a strong historical context. The proposed building forms reflect (Third City document 2007, p. 24, 31) dominant modernist architects such as Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius. After earlier 1920s European and Berlin (Steinberg 1990, pp. 11-12) experiences, this simplistic free-form architecture was designed to bring light and space into badly-lit and cramped factories and achieved its height of expression in the 1930s (Foster
1997, p.201). In the latter stages of the 20th century the ideals of this original movement for expressive buildings as unique standalone testaments were compromised because they evolved as monotonous and repetitive modernist rectangular steel-framed buildings which took over the skyline of many western cities (Glancey 1998).

Habermas (cited in Kolb 1992 p.147) is quoted as saying:

Modernist and postmodernists agree in the critique of this soulless container architecture, the absence of a relationship with the environment and the solitary arrogance of the unarticulated office block, of the monstrous department stores, monumental universities and congress centres...

Robert Venturi is quoted as saying:

Why must architects continue to believe that when the masses are educated they’ll want what the architects want...rather than learn from the cultures around us (Venturi cited in Kolb 1992 p. 177)?

Older commercial modernist 60s and 70s buildings in Croydon’s CBD will not be refurbished contrary to what the council hierarchy says. While Councillor Malyan speaks of “…recycling old office blocks for new uses” (2003), his town planners are sceptical. “I don’t think in Central Croydon there would be any conversions of office blocks” (Burton, chief planner 2001, December).

The focus will only be on the construction of new buildings in the town centre even though refurbishment is more economical and comes with an opportunity to create external refitted elevator systems, balconies and loggia that offer continuous engagement with an outside vista. The end result will be new buildings with smooth highly polished surfaces whose value as spectacle (Debord 1969) will be short lived because of their reliance on technology (McCloud 2006, p.28). They will be structures with little organic and classical substance and will provide limited opportunities for social connectedness because they do not help produce a set of interrelated personal experiences (Florida 2002). Florida also comments on the approach represented by the Croydon’s plan for consumerist construction:

One must be part of the scene and have a hand in creating the experience rather than merely consuming it; represented by a chain theme restaurant
or pre-packaged entertainment: You do not get to create your experience or modulate the intensity; it is thrust upon you (Florida 2002, p. 232).

According to Madanipour (1996); citizens should be involved in the design of the space as well as its operation. Ali Madanipour (1996, p.58) refers to this in his book Design of Urban Space: An Inquiry into a Socio-spatial Process:

Pressures from developers within the general frame work of behavioural research, a branch concentrated on the behaviour of organisations as the main agent of spatial change...the decision making of the managers and boards of the large business organisations had more impact on the spatial organisation of a locality than the models which attempted to explain individual choices in a free, symmetrical space.

Modernist buildings are largely conceived with the intention that form should follow function. “Fortunately the devil is in the (building) detail, not the other way around” (Glancey 1998). As Saarinen comments:

Considering the soulless and superficial form, there are three phases where an attitude of too complicated an acceptance of form has been manifest. In these three cases form is either superficially decorative (kitsch) realistically imaginative, or dryly practical (Saarinen 1985, p. 11).

Two of the three above phases may include elements from a historical or cultural context. Both of these are missing elements from a modernist building because a modernist structure is designed so there are few definitive links with the past either historically or culturally. That is representative of a philosophy that conflicts with the role of cities as a living reminder of their development over time and not as a “failed exercise in contextual modernism” (Powell 2004, p. 124). This way of urban planning has led to the destruction of examples of London’s medieval past ... “today it is a forlorn spot used for parking and the lost splendour of the fourteenth century palace is represented by just one remarkable (re-discovered) fragment: a fine fourteenth century window” (Powell 2004, p. 124).

Will this also be the future for Croydon because of architects in this project who see architecture only as an end in itself and not as a place of cohabitation (Fry 1994, p. 104)?

Two comments from the town designers exemplify the issues here.
In terms of zoning usage our role as urban designers involves looking at the wider cultural aspects rather than just having a monoculture of either offices or residential or retail within the area (interviews with Long and Smith 2006).

In the short term there will not be any theatre and fine-arts facilities (Long 2006).

New Start in March 2009 represented the business interests of Croydon’s town centre in the following comment:

As associations go, there are probably prouder things to boast about. But the sign that greets you at East Croydon railway station; ‘Welcome to Croydon: Home of Nestlé’, says more about the town than any marketing campaign is ever likely to manage. London’s most populous Borough wants to be known as a place to do business and it’s not particularly bothered whether you’re as big as the multinational name that adorns its station signs and has its UK headquarters in the town (Stapleton 2009).

Will the proposed new buildings in Croydon’s town centre also equate to too many high-rise structures? For that answer a reference to Alsop’s Third City document (2007) shows artistic examples of modernist glass-enclosed high boxes dotted around the city-skyline and a comment where the city-centre will consist of “very high buildings like Singapore seventy storeys high” (2007, p. 14). According to Glancey, architects who have created modernist buildings are ultimately engaged in the production of monuments rather than buildings for the masses, so modernism is more of an attitude rather than a style (1998, pp. 124; 128). Croydon will end up with more buildings with factory-produced glass and concrete panels, fibro-cement sheeting, anodised window-frames and without natural materials and textured surfaces (Rasmussen 2001). The proposal to replace the “uninspiring tower blocks” (Councillor Hugh Malyan 2003) is to replace the older glass and concrete with a newer version of a similar modernist concept (The Third document 2007, p. 25: picture showing the proposed buildings for Croydon city-centre). Glass connecting tubes connect people to different buildings as they are funnelled between glass and steel frame structures.

Madanipour comments on this aspect of the design of urban space: “skywalks offer safety and security from crime and harsh climate, but only through segregation of urban space” (1996, p.81).

The confides of the glassed-interior has lost its meaning where people are neither wholly inside or outside (Sennett 1993, p. 104) that invites one to enter and to engage with others yet
unable to satisfy both because the buildings function separates people from each other
(Sennett 1993, p. 104)

(Artist-image: C70) Modernist inspired proposed glass and steel-frame high-rise in the CBD

(Artist-image: C71) New LBC (modernist-inspired headquarters): Artist’s impression

Architectural solutions and social locations
There are two parts to the twenty year spatial organisation of the town centre of Croydon. Firstly it only concerns the physical aspects of the central business district, and secondly the spatial organization is primarily designed to accommodate the needs of a new type of creative resident (Florida 2002; Tallon 2010) but not necessarily one with the creative flair to which Florida refers. The spatial design of the town centre is also a validation of the new urban citizen, who they are and what they represent; for example people on the go where time is of the essence, with little or no time to enjoy what is happening around them or what Baudelaire, (1960; 1969) refers to as ‘theatre of the street’ (the flâneur).
The proposed spatial re-organization of the inner-city of Croydon is designed to further accommodate the requirements of a new type of corporate citizen; young creative entrepreneurs and those with commercial and business interests with a desire for the good things in life. This spatial organization promises to provide social contact and self-realization but may fail to deliver a sense of community and belonging because the artificial dynamics of modern culture operate between fantasy and reality (Florida 2002, p. 196); an artificial reality that is provided by retail and entertainment themes.

Part of this social reality was observable during field visits to Croydon’s town centre (December 2001-2008)? People appeared to be always in a hurry as if searching for something, with few places to sit, to relax and break their journey. Are people searching for the boundary between fantasy and reality that was promised in the counter culture of the sixties (Florida 2002), and does sitting down provide an act of momentary disengagement from the pursuit of an external reality?

In the latter stages of the 20th century and continuing into the present contemporary period the term “counter culture” (Florida 2002) implies a personal liberation that can be achieved by acting out one’s hedonistic desires within the artificial dynamics of post-modern retail, entertainment centres and theme parks. This personal therapy and self-realization may only last whilst individuals are involved in the dynamics of the town centre’s new “night-time economy” (Third City documents 2007) and sadly dissipates during their after-hours journey between the city centre and their respective outer London suburbs.

Unlike most traditional European town centres Croydon does not have a large resident population and its present population of about 4,000 are mainly landowners and city stakeholders (Third City document 2007). The small town centre population is not enough to sustain a wide socio-cultural mix. Proposed comprehensive city-building strategies encompassing recreation, retail, commercial and employment in these areas will not provide a significant cultural base either, and certainly not in the short or medium five year term of proposed development of the CBD (Croydon Economic Development Strategy report 2008).

In other words the de facto policy is to turn over the inner city to the entertainment and consumer needs of a particular middle class fragment of Croydon’s population – young people
on the go, but nowhere is there any explicit acknowledgement of the class meaning of this strategy.

The cornerstone of Croydon’s Vision2020 is to get the process of redevelopment underway. This is a policy of economic rationalism where future lifestyle changes will be initiated by a growth in leisure, entertainment and retail opportunities. All of these are related to making profits rather than creating social and cultural opportunities. Social cohesion and the creation of a cultural consensus among the inhabitants and customers of the city’s facilities can be hampered by these narrow commercially-oriented socio-spatial configurations (Holt-Jensen 2003).

One reason that the town centre’s capacity for social cohesion is important is the neighbourhood acts as an important setting for many of the processes which shape social identity and life-chances (Forrest and Kearns 2001). The further the city moves away from the traditional neighbourhood form, the more the city centre will cater for a weaker form of human interaction; that is one built on relationships within and between professional groups, rather than on relationships embracing a wider social and cultural mix with an emphasis on family and older-aged groups.

Field visits to Croydon’s CBD during the research period revealed that there were few places for people to sit in locations that include malls, arcades, building forecourts and sidewalk precincts. This also includes the lack of outdoor eating places and coffee-shops. The lack of opportunity for informal face-to-face personal connection and the development of personal narratives lead to relationships built on commercial opportunity. This is a weak form of personal connection because its foundation is based on business and not on social connection. A weaker form (Putnam 2000) of human relationships has been brought about by the temporary aspects of human social behaviour that have been developing since the mid to late 20th century. Further emphasis on a weak form of human relationships has come about from an increase in the leisure and entertainment industries and the service industry generally (Florida 2002).

New proposed locations in city centres will attract affluent professionals, recent college graduates and young entrepreneurs (Florida 2002). The widening of the socio-economic mix of citizens is an exciting prospect for the CBD. It would contribute to the less organised,
purposeful and more informal aspects of social connectedness (Putnam 2000, p.93-94), if provision for its development were to happen in the short term.

Florida writes on the attraction of a “creative class” to city centres.

Cities have become the prime location for the creative lifestyle and the new amenities that go with it and city-centre revitalization is associated with the same lifestyle factors that appeal to the creative class (Florida 2002, pp. 287-288).

This may indicate that the flexibility of weak ties is an indicator that the inclusion of at least some of the proposed visionary contexts in the shorter term may lead to more mediated forms of social connectedness.

Though some Croydon planners may have this vision in mind it seems that the actual proposals being developed have little to do with lifestyle factors that appeal to a creative class, and the middle class group that may be attracted by these developments is narrower. Even the statement that Croydon’s fast-emerging café society lifestyle has managed to turn some of Croydon’s negatives into success stories is questionable. Since 2008 there was little evidence of this café society promoted by councillor Malyan (2000; 2003).

The demand for residential accommodation in a town centre with a larger population is not being met, especially the need for social housing (Hill 2007) on a larger scale. The residential component for the city centre will be reserved for business and service interests including educational organizations. Hoskins and Tallon (2003, pp.5-7) and Tallon (2010, pp.196-199) suggests that since the 1980s, in efforts to encourage city centre living, central government and local authorities, as well as private developers, have increasingly realised the potential offered by introducing housing to certain sections of particular city centres to attract certain types of residents.

The town centre has already been discussed as a city for business interests, it also has been mentioned as a university town; both indicate an upwardly mobile and transient population (Florida 2002). The prominence of proposed one and two bedroom apartments and studio flats (Third City document 2007) confirms that the city centre of Croydon, as with some other UK cities has responded to market forces which have promoted high status residential
landscapes fuelling economic polarisation and social fragmentation (Hoskins and Tallon 2003, p.2).

This concept is embedded in competition between urban centres (Kesteloot 2004) such as between Croydon and Canary Wharf in the London docklands. Residents will be professional and business people who will bring economic benefits to the city business community, and it is these citizens and their fellow southern district citizens (interview with Long 2006) who would also benefit from cultural developments in the CBD rather than having to travel into central London for their cultural pursuits. This development perspective is commented upon by the Croydon Draft Community Plan for 2010-2015.

Florida’s proposal that city centres can benefit from cultural and creative revitalisation strategies is clearly not what is suggested in government-sponsored documents for Croydon. Whilst Florida (2002) thinks it is a sensible strategy for cities to encourage an urban environment in which a “creative class” flourishes, Croydon’s town centre regeneration proposal lacks the basic formula that Florida believes is necessary for culture and the creative class to develop as an integral part of a town centre’s social entity. In the short term there is no space provided for the development of culture within the town centre itself. Instead cultural experiences come already packaged and ready to be presented for consumption within the night time economy; representing further privatisation of the public domain by a council strategy of redevelopment in the CBD.

This equates to more privatisation of the public domain by major developers; even some parking facilities in development proposals around the East Croydon precincts are planned to fall under the jurisdiction of major developers under the business improvement district strategy (BID). Joe Rowe, BID chairman (2010):

Believes that the BID Company has an important role to play in promoting the best interests of our Town Centre businesses and look forward to working with you to that end in the coming year.

What about the ‘best interests’ of citizens other than business owners? Low’s comments on this topic are an indication that the BID approach to control of public assets represents a globally used term ‘private-public space’ referred to by Minton (2006, p.2) and discussed by (Low cited in Low and Smith 2006, p.82):
During the past 20 years, privatisation of the urban space has accelerated through the closing, redesign and policing of public parks and plazas, the development of business improvements districts (BID) that monitor and control streets and parks, and the transfer of public air right for the building of corporate plazas ostensibly open to the public.

As Minton also comments:
The privatisation of the public realm, through the growth of ‘private-public’ space, produces over-controlled, sterile places which lack connection to the reality and diversity of the local environment, with the result that they all tend to look the same. They also raise serious questions about democracy and accountability. But perhaps most worrying of all are the effects on cohesion, battered by the creation of atomised enclaves of private space which displace social problems into neighbouring districts (2006, p.2).

The missing greenspace

My findings from observations, photographs and document analysis show that integrated greenspace in Croydon’s town centre are not being fully incorporated as part of its city centre regeneration proposal. The importance of integrated greenspace cannot be overstated. Any greenspace dedicated or otherwise, is appropriate in a town or city centre. If it helps provide a balance or indeed a place of refuge it is also good for people with dogs and acts as an interlude between the built and more natural environments. Such locations are a neutral zone because they establish a restful and participatory urban environment for residents and visitors to the town centre without their need to purchase products or services in order to use the space provided.

Certainly the greenspace that encircles the town is worthwhile, has been a feature of English towns in the past and is relevant to the important identity of particular suburbs. The absence of public greenspace, namely the greening of courtyards and arcades and the creation of pocket parks and plazas in the city centre, means there are few restful areas for city centre visitors or residents.

The “emerald necklace, this green band of rich and varied public realm that encircles the town” referred to in the Third City document (2007, p. 3) is a long way from the city centre and a long way for pedestrians to walk to and from. The provision of integrated greenspace towards outer city perimeters is a costly strategic exercise that involves several planning
institutions (McCloud 2006) in complex and time consuming negotiations with the private sector, and one that the council cannot afford.

The idea that the city itself should be interwoven with green areas for relaxation is not part of the immediate rezoning plans of developers because it takes the focus away from retail and commercial activities. Even the Alsop Vision falls within the Tier 4 Complimentary Intervention (Croydon Economic Development Strategy June, 2008): With Tier 1 Interventions being shorter term, high priority and so on.

Croydon council have been proactive however in what I consider as a promotion in an aspect of greening in the Borough. In July 2009 Croydon Council launched its new community allotment project which aims to bring together the Borough’s older and more vulnerable residents to partake in healthy outdoor activity. With funding from the lottery and the Council’s community care grant a number of garden beds have been built, some of which are raised to allow easy access. “Allotments, particularly in cities, offer a retreat from urban living and escape from a fast paced world” (New Local Government Local Network 2009).

The idea of zoning rationalizes a compartmentalization of urban functions. Zoning of this kind is actually generated by commercial pressures and does nothing to promote a restful and participatory urban environment for residents, shoppers and pedestrians. Developers and business owners want people to concentrate on shopping not relaxation that is unless the relaxation includes shopping activities (Bluewater 2006). The council’s demands for greenspace may be justified but how could it resolve the nexus between development proposals and contributions from developers. The council are also one of many private and public institutions involved in the struggle and politics of public space (Blackmar cited in Low and Smith 2006, pp.54-57). The following text from Third City document (2007, pp. 24-25) indicates part of the dilemma facing council’s urban designers in the demand for integrated greenspace when the potential becomes available:

...the disappearance of the underpass, there is the advantage of significant amounts of real estate becoming available along the new edge of the Wellesley Road, intensifying the urban profile that is needed.

As a result, the new space available by removing two lanes of a major road will not be used for city-centre greenspace but for the construction of new buildings. This is in direct conflict with
the regeneration of Wellesley Road and Park Lane where a “making space for Londoners initiative” executive summary (2.1) states that it:

Offers the largest opportunity to regenerate the public realm in central Croydon; the Mayor of London has given his support for Wellesley Road/Park Lane as one of the Mayor’s 100 Spaces to transform the space into one of the finest streets in London. The project requires a forward looking, world class design which will be a visible manifestation of Croydon Council’s ambition to become London’s Third City (Pollard 2008).

Plans for this area are further complicated when item (3.3) mentions that:

The Third City Vision by Will Alsop (2007) identifies the need to improve the image of Croydon Metropolitan Centre and provide ways to smarten the public realm.

Yet clearly he does not propose to do this by using significant “amounts of real estate which become available along the new edge of the Wellesley Road” for integrated urban green space.

The lack of integrated greenspace in the city acts as an element in social exclusion. Greenspace areas are considered neutral zones or third places i.e. neither domestic nor commercial environments (Florida 2002, p. 226; Oldenburg cited in Baum and Palmer 2002). In such third places, aspects of street culture and informal personal encounters can occur. They play a role in making a community attractive (Florida 2002, p. 226). But Croydon’s town centre development is focussed on semi-public zones controlled by private enterprise “where the market is the dominant institution” (Blackmar cited in Low and Smith 2006, p.63) and for the purposes of entertainment and spectacle (Debord 1969).

Croydon already has this existing unique potential as identified in my observation and photographic data of Croydon’s town centre (photographs Nos C3, C17 and C35). Places to accommodate future outdoor cafés with brightly coloured umbrellas, mini-gardens, statues with water features and elevated timber platforms already exist in Croydon’s CBD and around West Croydon station interchange. So despite existing proclamations by government bodies that some of these places are to be re-made for public use it has not occurred.
So why await the approval of large projects before refurbishing existing areas of the private and public domain at minimal cost? They can be invigorated with assistance from the private and public sectors as well as entrepreneurs and members of local community groups.

**Night-time culture and social exclusion**

The focus on a new night-time economy is a key feature of the future economic development of Croydon’s town centre. The architect Will Alsop (Third City 2007) regards the night-time economy as playing an important part in Croydon’s town centre future prosperity. The Councillor Hugh Malyan endorses this, saying that “the bars and clubs are booming with vitality”. However contrary to this view there is significant evidence that a new night-time economy for the city centre may have negative social and economic implications for city centre users and for the overall population of Croydon.

A night-time economy linked to the consumption of alcohol leads to the social exclusion of people other than those in the 16-25 age range from the city centre. This is according to interviews (December 2001; 2006). Council planners are concerned by this:

> Certainly our members are very concerned. It’s a very narrow age range starting before 18, say 16-25, something in that order. Effectively people in that age range occupy the whole of South London. It can be quite intimidating. It is happening throughout all the UK cities over the last decade. There is a far more of a night-time economy and going back about 8 years there were probably not more than 5 public houses in Central Croydon or bars, now there are about 30 or 40. It’s too alcohol-based, the evening economy there. The idea is this would bring a real buzz so it’s completely unique to south London (Interview with Burton 2001).

The same interviewee was asked whether there were plans to encourage a central Croydon theatre and fine-arts patronage:

> In the short term you could probably say not much. At the moment the pubs have been able to move in and take advantage of lots of other uses and with some not actually wanting to locate within the town centre so much, and the classic things with banks turning virtually into pubs (Interview with Burton 2001).

The refurbishment of older more classical buildings into pubs and night clubs represented a lost opportunity for council intervention to use these neo-classical buildings as art galleries,
museums, prestige residential apartments and educational facilities rather than venues for pre-packaged entertainment. As suggested by Florida (2002):

"Pre-packaged entertainment districts do not help people to create their own experiences (2002, p. 232)."

Why is the major re-vitalisation of the Croydon town centre linked to a night-time economy and the consumption of alcohol for an age group between 16-25 years?

To an extent, this is difficult to understand since public consultation guidelines are enshrined in legislation (London Plan; public consultation 2006) and therefore major proposals like this should benefit from robust and consistent public consultation. Examples of groups to be involved in the public consultation process include: relevant voluntary sector organizations and representatives from the target London-wide stakeholder groups (such as the Black Londoners’ Forum, the LVSC, Age Concern, the London Access Forum, Greater London Action on Disability); Heads of Planning in 33 London Boroughs and the ALG relevant statutory bodies, including Government Office for London, English Heritage and CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment 2006).

It seems unlikely that such consultative groups if they were directly involved in a strategic sense in Croydon’s town centre regeneration would have endorsed the proposals to extend and amplify the exclusion of many residents from the town centre at night through a policy that emphasizes alcohol consumption and entertainment for the young. Public Consultation is promoted as a balanced process. UK and local governments try to reconcile planning policies that promote safer, cleaner and greener town centres with free market-inspired licensing policies.

There is a battle between economic rationalism and the profit motive and interests which represent classical drama, theatre and the fine arts. In terms of the potential for economic growth Croydon boasts the largest London Borough population of 330,000 and has a large youth population of 35,000 (April, 2002). This represents a huge potential for consumption-based activities and specifically for the consumption of alcohol, leading to tax revenue for government. This potential was reflected in the following Transport Users’ Committee report (King 2002, April):
Croydon is a popular place in the evenings with a large number of venues in the town centre open until 2.00am. Most are aimed at the 18-30 age groups. This has seen an increase in people in the town centre over the last few years. In 1994 the number of people in the town centre after midnight was about 4,000 and now on Fridays and Saturdays can exceed 18,000 (2002).

The city centre at night is a youth orientated economy: 45% of 16-34 year olds visit town centres at night at least once a week, compared with only 25% of 35-54 year olds, and 15% of over 55’s (Alcohol Concern Harm Reduction Group 2003). In one study, 70% of respondents to the local community crime audit survey indicated they avoid entering the city centre after dark on a weekend (Hobbs 2003).

According to Holloway, Jayne, Knell and Valentine:

Local authorities are all too aware of the tensions between the economic benefits and concerns regarding disorder that circulate around expansion of the night-time economy (2007, p. 18). Strategies to revitalise the urban night-time economy predicated on alcohol implicitly exclude faith communities such as Muslims, which contributes to social segregation (2007, p. 8).

The Community Safety Coordinator from Newcastle Borough Council (UK) made this comment on the situation there:

So that has a wider impact on the communities as well so you’ve got all the violence happening in the town centre, but then you’ve got the spillage afterwards and the costs which are huge as well, socially and financially (Community Safety Co-coordinator, Newcastle Borough Council 2007).

“Spillage” refers to the effects of anti-social behaviour on local residents as people make their way home through adjoining suburbs in the early hours after visiting the city centre.

The Central Cities Institute at the University of Westminster describes the situation in this way:

The cities as no-go areas...in a time span of 10 years, many English town centres have been transformed from being relatively deserted at night to being filled with concentrations of young drunken people out on the streets until the early hours of the morning (Roberts 2006).
In this respect West Croydon was cited in the Croydon Economic Report (2008) as being particularly problematic, with the suggestion that it becomes a ‘no go’ area after dark.

The link between an increase in anti-social behaviour and pubs, clubs, and UK licensing laws may come from the new Licensing Act of 2003 which simplified the procedures for the sale of alcohol to encourage more and later, night-time activity (Holloway, Jayne, Knell and Valentine 2007). The new licensing system (2003) enables licensees to propose their own hours and operating policies and unless successfully challenged these may be accepted even where problems are anticipated (The Licensing Act England and Wales 2003).

The Licensing Act 2003 (hereafter referred to as the Act), which came into effect on 24 November 2005, represented a major change to the sale of alcohol in England and Wales, by potentially allowing licensed premises to sell alcohol for up to 24 hours, 7 days per week.

The influence of the Act is reflected in the following report from the Applied Criminology Centre (ACC) at the University of Huddersfield which was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the impact of the legislation on changes in crime and disorder. The study examined baseline conditions and subsequent change occurring in the town centres of five case study areas, namely, Blackpool, Birmingham, Croydon, Guildford and Nottingham Armitage et al. (2008).

The report features instances of social disorder particularly occurring in early morning periods where there was a significant increase in disorder in Croydon in the latter half of the post implementation year.

The introduction of the Act brought with it a range of additional measures. These included an expansion of police powers to close areas or particular premises, specific offences relating to the sale of alcohol to children and a new mechanism for reviewing the granting of licenses that takes into account crime prevention, public safety, public nuisance and child protection.

The rationale behind the Act was that by removing fixed and artificially early closing times, the numbers of people exiting licensed premises would be dispersed over a longer time period. The expectation was that this would reduce binge drinking, violent behaviour, damage to property and disorder. At the same time, concerns were voiced that the Act would lead to
greater alcohol consumption, increased levels of violence and more pressure on accident and emergency units.

According to the Central Cities Institute, University of Westminster, the English experience demonstrates the need for a clear policy vision that comprehends the differences between creativity, cultural resources and the consumption of alcohol as a primary entertainment activity (Roberts 2006). The chair of the Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee explained the problem for Croydon:

Croydon’s night-time economy is essentially a drink industry economy...there is no non-drink environment to be found in the town (Doocey 2009).

It is just not that there is a spatial and temporal segregation of activities, which could be also backed up by a culture of non-interference on both sides, it is because there is no animated and vibrant street-life culture that is not dependent upon the consumption of alcohol. It would appear that Croydon council’s focus on a night-time economy based on pubs and clubs as proposed by Councillor Malyan (2002) and Will Alsop (2007) was always going to fail to create social inclusion, as Florida comments:

But is making one’s city into a playland for single twenty-somethings really a formula for economic success and does it produce a community that is socially viable in the long run (Florida 2002, p. 295).

In order to encourage a diverse leisure culture that is not dominated by excessive drinking, the disciplines of Planning and Licensing should work together to protect a variety of cultural activities, perhaps by developing a joint policy according to Holloway, Jayne, Knell and Valentine (2007). It is also crucial that departments involved in urban regeneration take the opportunity to influence the development of the leisure culture in association with classical culture at an early stage of urban design rather than during project implementation. Clearly the focus on a night-time economy linked to the consumption of alcohol as a way of re-vitalising the town centre because of the decline of traditional industries (Bell and Valentine 1997; Wynne and O’Connor 1998) has not worked. The dilemma facing urban planners and policy makers is threefold: firstly the need to involve all age and ethnic groups; secondly to relate modern to traditional culture and thirdly to reduce the dominance of market forces over the public right of access to the public realm (Low cited in Low and Smith 2006).
Problems arising out of the night time economy are summarised in table 3.5 below.

### Table 6C-NT: (From Tallon 2010, p.234: Table 12.3): Problems of the night-time city centre: Chapter6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spatial and temporal fragmentation of functions</td>
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<tr>
<td>High levels of crime and disorder: perceived lack of safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of residential population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of things to do; existence of pub and club culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single activity visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monofunctionality of city centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian-unfriendly environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor public transport provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive licensing laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night-time city is marginalised, controlled and regulated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The regeneration centre of Croydon remains problematic

Rowan Moore: The Observer, Sunday 28 February 2010

The suburban Borough of Croydon has also been subject to repeated "visions" over the past two decades, namely Croydon: The Future; Vision 20:20 and Will Alsop's Third City. The word "vision" has suffered drastic devaluation. Once it applied to the experiences of exalted saints and prophets, which inspired dazzling paintings and books of the Bible. Now it means something slightly stronger than "memo".

Victor Long adds: "The first question people ask when we consult them is: “Is anything going to happen this time?”

The Croydon Economic Report (2008 p.18) also expresses concerns over delays in regeneration of the CBD:

The strategy should not take retail expansion as a given. There is a need to factor in the potential risks associated with delays in raising the quality and quantity of new retail stock.

Wider community participation in regeneration strategies
The following statements sum up the question of the extent of community participation in the development of a vision for the regeneration of Croydon’s town centre.

Third City document refers to the process of public consultation as a series of five public consultation workshops involving key (CBD) stakeholders.

The findings suggest that the community consultation process did not result in the community participating in any strategic decisions where their input influenced the direction of transforming “a tired 60s icon into a thrusting, confident 21st century European city...”(2007, p.10).

It is difficult to accept that their inputs would have resulted in the types of architectural forms and promotion of a single zone approach in the design as well as the privatisation of the public realm, unless they represented only the business oriented interests of the 4000 or so CBD population.

The lack of community participation is also contained in the following responses from urban designers interviewed during my research (Long and Smith 2006).

I suppose the concentration of consultation was on the business community and transport operators...and there is also the whole neighbourhood partnership system which is meant to be the mechanism for engaging with the local community...which does not come through to the design stage for visions for regeneration of the town centre.

Whilst the lack of participation by the Borough community in a strategic sense is of concern to my interviewees, in terms of the Third City regeneration (2007) and Croydon Economic report (2008), the inclusion of the community in refurbishment programmes in the town centre precincts is not part of the present Third City regeneration proposal (2007).

My findings confirm there have been changes to the way the Borough council considers the role of the community in sharing in the long-term, shared visions for the Borough. What has changed since the end of the research period (2008) was the application of a Borough-wide engagement programme agreed by Croydon’s local strategic partnership in 2010. This programme sought to tap into the collective imagination of local people for a vision for Croydon’s future which has now extended out to thirty years (Croydon’s Local Strategic
Partnership, 2010). In my view this is yet another attempt at a failure to deliver. A view argued by Tallon (2010 p.148):

Despite repeated government commitments to community engagement, most research suggests that community involvement in partnerships over the last forty years or so has yet to deliver. Many communities still feel marginalised and unable to influence the decisions that affect their areas or the services they use in the realisation that past involvement has not delivered.

Croydon’s town centres cultural identity

The town centre of Croydon and its immediate inner-city precincts such as West Croydon are unique in so far as they have existing and underutilised historical assets that could contribute to its cultural identity. It is these assets that are under discussion in this section.

The research findings indicate that the various pressures that are applied to council planners and designers compromise their creative integrity, preventing them from producing a city that reflects the genuine needs of all its citizens and not just consumers. They are unable to create an urban atmosphere that is not a copy of a city somewhere else. Certainly urban planners and designers have to respond to the needs of business and commercial interests because a city has to remain financially viable and profitable; however it still can retain and expand its historical and more contemporary identity for inclusion in the supposed frantic intensity of city life. However the uniqueness that a city possesses is the very element that will help set it aside from other cities which have sought to copy one another. This and Croydon’s CBD position as a desirable place to live (Glaeser, Kolko, and Saiz 2001) could ensure its future. Cities that are dependent upon consumption-based activities are fully sustainable only during times of economic growth or until another city precinct produces something bigger and more spectacular with larger retail outlets and more dynamic entertainment facilities.

The adage about Croydon “respected as a business centre” (Third City document 2007) needs to be reviewed. There are no reasons that a business centre cannot include Croydon’s many fine Victorian buildings playing a central role in making a positive contribution to the vitality of the town centre. It is the sort of vitality envisaged in 1982 under the Central Croydon Conservation Area act 1982 that is under question here, and whether this look into the future assumes a 21st century association with leisure, theme bars and nightclubs. Should it have included an emphasis on more creative and artistic themes? Perhaps these historic buildings
could be venues for some local organisations to use, or share in creative, post-shopping or educational pursuits. Croydon’s Draft Community Strategy (2010-2015) has alluded to this later in this section. An emphasis on small-scale refurbishment could have commenced soon after 1998 when Croydon’s Vision 2020 was published.

Smith (interviewed 2006; 2008) sees his vision of a city with its own cultural and social heritage is being compromised by the large developers with large budgets to spend on new commercial infrastructure. He feels they are holding the city to ransom in this regard.

The outcome of the failure of planning policies to be socially and culturally inclusive is not helped by the lack of full strategic public consultation. This particularly applies to refurbishment strategies. To achieve the sort of dialogue that produces unique community-based narratives that reveal the depth and variety of cultural themes requires systematic consultation. The opportunity to create a multi-faceted cultural centre is squandered because a centralised planning system makes it difficult for councils to control night-time venues using heritage assets. Live theatre and the arts are not accommodated at present. Negative outcomes related to binge-drinking and anti-social behaviour are therefore not unexpected. Tallon (2010 pp. 232-236) argues:

...But at what cost? Refer to page 367

The aspirations of town planners and designers have lost out to market forces combined with inflated property prices (Holloway, Jayne, Knell and Valentine 2007; Roberts 2006). The development of town centre precincts, supposedly to stimulate social and cultural improvements, is more about the creation of safe zones for the movement of people to and from retail centres, entertainment venues and transport interchange points. Whilst safe zones have a social context they also have an exclusory element because of the nature of the ownership of the public realm by the private sector (Harvey cited in Low and Smith 2006). This is partly reflected in older bank buildings and other unique classical structures being turned into pubs, theme bars and nightclubs rather than refurbished for mixed community
uses. The withdrawal of funding for a theatre and indecision about the refurbishment of Fairfield Halls and surrounding space into a cultural zone to be integrated with the present educational and artistic precincts have not helped. Mixed zones with Fairfield Halls as a unique cultural centrepiece could also feature the benefits of musical and artistic multicultural offerings. Turks, Caribbeans and South Asians could be given opportunities or venues to develop their own culture with jazz culture from the 60s.

(Photo: C72) The Lord Napier Pub Thornton Heath

The Lord Napier is a great local pub with a secluded garden, and has been one of London’s best known jazz venues since the late 1960s. The culture of jazz music which represented part of my own artistic 60s involvement in the West Croydon and Thornton Heath areas could be a part of CBD street theatre as promoted in a general sense by Florida (2002). Croydon’s Draft Community Strategy (2010-2015) recognises:

Creativity and culture are also key components of the local economy, fuelling the growing number of arts and cultural enterprises that will support the Borough’s regeneration and put it on the map as a key cultural destination in London.

Creative places are popular places, places that people with ideas and aspirations want to live and work in. Promoting and supporting creativity in a way that is varied and inclusive will be central to our approach. We will encourage creative aspirations and develop a network of cultural activities that are owned by local communities and are accessible to all.

Croydon has unique and unrealised assets as part of its current identity; it is not a place where something out of the ordinary needs to pulled out of it. There is no need to concentrate on funding the development of new large entertainment centres when smaller and some larger heritage buildings exist. This is partially demonstrated by refurbishment of the old Grants Bros building in the current Third City proposal (2007). By preserving Croydon’s past Victorian
heritage, whist engaging with the future, a shared traditional and contemporary vision is possible in a town centre that reflects its social, cultural, economic and creative aspirations.

**The challenge of integration**

Data from my Croydon research and analytical research process indicates a lack of cooperation between cultural services and urban planning disciplines associated with the physical development of economic-based resources. There is a lack of motivation to engage with these issues on the part of some planners and develop an integrated working relationship between government departments, local residents, community groups and small business organisations in pursuit of a cultural and historical identity for the CBD.

A consulting town planning and environmental lawyer working for a London firm on the regeneration of Croydon’s town centre commented that “people aren’t going to come in to see a nice public square they want to do some shopping” (interview with Green 2006). He also regards Croydon as “a bit of a Joe Average sort of place and not aspirational” and selective in his views. One urban designer made this comment (interview with Long 2006):

> The cultural services department (ECS) has developed something called a cultural strategy in the cultural quarter, which has been around for quite a while now and it’s interesting to see that not much has actually happened.

The Regional Commentary on Cultural Services in the London Borough of Croydon makes the comment that:

> Culture is recognised as a priority in the Community Strategy (2006 -2009) and actions have been included to improve cultural provision in the Borough.

Yet there is little mention in the Community Strategy of the potential of museums, libraries and archives to contribute to the Council’s key goals other than as educational resources. This is disappointing given the innovative and proactive work undertaken by the Library and Museums services. Funding for the Croydon museum is minimal despite the fact that it remains one of the best of its type in London and would benefit from greater promotion; for instance through clearer marketing and appropriate staffing to ensure work with collections and other agencies can be maintained. Instead of the time consuming and costly approach to gaining access to central funding, all council groups should work together and make integrated
decisions to fund agreed objectives rather than drip-feed a number of strategies in the pretence that funding cultural programmes is a priority.

Recently, for example, the council has withdrawn funding for a theatre company in the Borough and although Fairfield Halls functions as a theatre to some degree, enhancements to the complex have been slow to move forward due to financial constraints and planning issues with developers.

As mentioned in finding on Croydon’s town centres cultural identity; there has been a failure to promote and guarantee Fairfield Halls as a functioning theatre and cultural centre. Its future as a fully integrated cultural and educational zone, with an expansion of the present site together with Croydon Technical College forming the centrepiece of the creative sector in Croydon, has not been fully debated.

Fuelling the growing number of arts and cultural enterprises will support the Borough’s regeneration and put it on the map as a key cultural destination in London. There are no reasons why Croydon cannot develop as a cultural as well as a creative city as envisaged by Florida (2002).

Whilst the findings reveal that although there was not an integrated approach to the implementation of small and large scale regeneration proposals, key improvements in other areas will be in the future underpinned by a more progressive and far reaching drive towards greater integration of services (Croydon’s Draft Community Strategy 2010).
My research suggests Tramlink is an ideal way to promote social connectedness. Every day, trams through their journeys are a demonstration in social cohesiveness. This was evident during field visits to Croydon and travel journeys on the Tramlink system (December 2001; 2006 and 2008) where observation revealed passengers commenting about the surrounding landscape and other aspects of the journey through the urban landscape. Tramlink covers the poorer sections, including New Addington, one of the UK’s largest public housing areas. The urban planners appreciate the Tramlink light rail system has created a European-style environment and recognize that the tram is making social connections and benefiting the social life of the city.

The tram represents an investment in social capital as well as a strategic investment in public transport infrastructure because each tram journey provides an opportunity for informal social encounters between passengers as well as connections to other transport options.

Tim and Victor (interviewed in 2006; 2008) comment that the trams are kept out of a number of other Borough shopping centres. This reduces Tramlink’s usefulness to suburban shoppers and helps to maintain the dominance of the car in city centres. Tramlink avoids the centres of rich suburbs such as Bromley and Beckenham as though they do not need public transport, confirming the dominance of the car. There are however plans to extend the Tramlink system to other Borough districts and London suburbs in the region.
There is no reason why trams cannot become part of the spectacle of central city life where tram stops in existing town centre squares act as a meeting place, where semi-enclosed outdoor cafés and mini outdoor markets and mini-gardens managed by local residents contribute to the social fabric of the CBD. The continuous flow of trams acts as a focal point for citizens to connect with each as they wait; preferably with comfortable timber-seating, using the terminal-point as a social backdrop.

Light rail systems are a more sustainable form of transport because trams produce fewer carbon emissions than buses. Tramlink is also a more viable form of public transport than other transport options because of its flexibility. Light rail systems are not often viewed as a viable transport system in the UK where there is an emphasis on the development of heavy high-speed rail systems. However they are often given a key role in the reinvigoration of European cities and there is strong evidence that reducing car dependency contributes to social inclusion (Wickham 2006). Wickham comments further:

Public transport is often given a key role in the reinvigoration of European cities because of the relationship between urban citizenship and urban transport. This is because urban citizenship is considered to comprise both social cohesion, i.e., the participation in the public space of the city, and social inclusion, the right of all inhabitants to physical mobility within the city and hence to access employment and social facilities (2006).

Tramlink as a street-based public transport system helps to grow the relationships between social cohesion and personal contact and the Tramlink system has certainly brought external confidence to the Croydon town city regeneration according to council Malyan (2001). My research findings suggest Tramlink was the catalyst that marked the beginning of Croydon’s regeneration. A catalyse that has to be supported by changes in all areas of regeneration.

6.0N A review of Neukölln findings under investigation

Population Mobility
The action of population mobility; people leaving because of run-down public areas, decaying residential precincts and growing poverty has severe consequences on the character of Berlin neighbourhoods in the latter stages of the 20th century. During this period many working class neighbourhood districts which are a prominent feature of Berlin were disintegrating socially and economically.
Through the massive retreat of some of its wealthy and academic bourgeoisie from the centre and northern areas of West Berlin, a large and unacceptable number of residents in the reinstated capital of Berlin were on the move. This problem was compounded by the inbound population movements of people from eastern sector countries who were now free of restrictive border conditions that existed prior to Germany’s unification in 1991.

Numbers of inbound citizens of other countries were seeking employment and education opportunities, a better life and a place to live in Berlin. Aspects of Berlin’s working class urban landscape at the end of the 20th century began to reflect some residents’ discontent with their adopted neighbourhoods and a further lack of identity for those whose stay was temporary.

Unskilled migrants for decades had contributed to the Berlin and German economy. Their job opportunities were reducing, with 207,000 jobs in the West Berlin sector in 1991, today that has fallen to about 100,000 in 2007 (Berlin Senate 2007). Unskilled migrants, who were also swept up in the political turmoil that accompanied social and economic instability, were on the move seeking lower accommodation costs and new job opportunities.

The question of what controls the process of sub-urbanisation, i.e. the move to the periphery of the city, to the suburbs, to garden and satellite cities, and to the West German Republic, was a huge social and economic nightmare for the stability of Berlin. How to provide solutions, and quickly, to address the adverse levels of mobile populations, with people disconnecting from each other and with strong community ties developed over decades often in poor urban environments now broken, was an urban situation requiring action by Berlin planning authorities.

In the short term massive and costly investment in new residential construction projects was not the answer to huge residential turnover to help citizens reconnect with each other and with their neighbourhoods. There was not enough time or funding available, so urban regeneration had to take another direction.

This was an urgent issue for the Berlin Senate for Urban Development planners. With unrentable flats, empty shops, reduced investment in maintaining social housing by building owners, and a deteriorating public domain, confidence had to be restored back into
neighbourhood life. It had to be strategic and targeted. Research by URBACT (2005) into the problems caused by the mobility of populations suggested an integrated approach to solving these problems were first considered by the Greater London Council as a partner city under the URBACT programme (2005).

In 1999 an integrated programme of urban regeneration was enacted under the Social City strategy with an emphasis on targeted refurbishment and modernising of the existing housing stock. Berlin still had sufficient social housing accommodation, as stark as it often was before government intervention (Reif 2008; Sheridan 2005; URBACT 2005; URBED 2008). With a combination of permanent residents and newcomers it was important for people to relate to each other, and with a combination of improved apartments and social programmes the movement of people slowed. However when there are reduced levels of population movement a society can stagnate, and the question arises of what is an acceptable time and rate of population mobility and how to measure it. What are the implications of unacceptable levels of residential turnover on the creation of future economic opportunities and on the social and cultural mix which come from the mobility of populations?

For illegal migrants increased mobility provides a degree of anonymity, largely because of the volume of population movement, with people often staying for only a few days in any given location. The key to resolving this high population turnover may be wide-ranging regeneration and gentrification initiatives. However, such initiatives may improve economic and social inclusion for some residents and exclusion for others. Residents may move out, once they have increased their skill levels, entered employment or have the means to move up their residential ladder, thus leaving room for new arrivals with different levels and types of need.

As the research indicates, Neukölln and similar working class districts of Berlin are vulnerable to the mobility of populations as employment in the industrial sector for unskilled people is reduced. Then the spectre of in-mobility and parallel societies may offset advantages gained from preliminary intervention programmes.

Where there is evidence of social and economic decay the implications of inconsistent residential turnover has to be matched by government, state and local investment in local service and management provisions. Each Neighbourhood Management team has an onsite office, staffed with people who can act as a bridge with the local population and work on the
different development initiatives taking place in the (small) neighbourhood districts (Kietz). This forms part of an integrated government solution to keep manageable the rate at which citizen’s move between districts. However people cannot be forced to remain or to move to other suburbs. Similarly citizens cannot be made to socially integrate with each other; they need to be empowered to do so. Refer to table 3.4 below for reasons why people move into and out of a neighbourhood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1N-PM (From URBACT 2005, p.15: Table 5-1) Mobility and social cohesion: in chapters 6 and 7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Migration = I: Out-Migration = O</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change of household composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change of financial situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better quality of housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower costs of housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>More compatible with work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family members live close-by</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends live close-by</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better housing environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better environment for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better living together of residents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better shopping opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better quality of public services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better quality of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better offers for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better socio-cultural offers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better religious offers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better leisure and sports offers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better accessibility (transport)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parallel Societies**

Parallel societies are perceived to be a challenge to social integration. They have been seen as a barrier to the gentrification of Neukölln with a new creative class. Parallel societies are of concern if it means that the people in such a society turn their backs on educational opportunities and accordingly fail to take up positions as skilled workers in technological, social and creative economies. The “potential for creativity” (Schümer-Strucksberg 1997) is a social category in great demand as the original German population declines in size and moves out of industrial employment.
The issue of parallel societies was raised throughout the research process; it has been raised in interviews with Social City representatives in December 2001; 2004; 2006 and 2008. Each interviewee has expressed a degree of concern about the issue. It has been referred to in papers on challenges facing urban policy makers. A parallel society is the term used to refer to large concentrations of residents from single ethnic groups who are distributed not across whole neighbourhoods but in small enclaves.

As my data has shown, the Social City programme has tackled the issue of parallel societies with a wide variety of integrated strategies, designed to build social capital in the suburb, to welcome and include migrants and give them a sense of real control. The programme gives residents a chance to have a say in the social and physical aspects of their suburb, to create a peaceful and relaxed urban environment, to create opportunities for members of the public to meet one another, to support creative expression, to allow issues to be raised and the like. Nevertheless, it is not clear how far this programme has been successful. Thomas Franke (2006) expressed the lack of certainty felt by planners and geographers:

My professional view should be to say we are working in an experimental mode right now. Nobody knows what to do.

“Old-Germans” (Biodeutsch), as represented by the newspaper Der Spiegel, are far from convinced that the spectre as they see it, of a “parallel society” has been averted. In other words, their view is that the Social City programme has not in fact included Muslims successfully within broader German society and that this problem goes back to the beginning of Turkish migration during the 1960s and the 1970s. They see this supposed problem of Muslim separatism as increasing day by day rather than as having been solved through the strategies of the Social City. A second issue is that all the successful public works and social initiatives of Social City can be seen as actually contributing to a gentrification of the suburb. In other words, far from rescuing a working class and marginalized suburban population, the programme has started a process in which these very people are moved out of Neukölln and replaced by a type of “creative” middle class (Florida 2002). The suburb has been improved but not to the benefit of its original residents.

There have been a number of comments on the “parallel society” (Brandt and Meyer 2007; Leicht 2004; Pötzl 2004; Rose 2004) however what is meant by this term?
As with many issues that exist in a multicultural urban society there are those who see it as the beginning of the formal separation based on religious grounds by some elements of society who choose to reside in their own dedicated neighbourhood districts. The question of choice is a muted one. As it is usually includes economic factors as the central element in why parallel societies develop. However the question of parallel societies has to include the subject of population mobility, promoting this dilemma; would members of a parallel society be permitted to move freely between different urban centres and secondly as a separatist group what would be their rights be as citizens in mainstream German society?

Why do we need to construct separate parallel societies at close quarters in neighbourhoods? How does this benefit us? It seems to only cost us and inflict strife, hostility, and conflicts right where we live (Brand and Meyer 2007).

So the question of separating groups on the basis of religion is also related to issues such as temporary and permanent movements of sections of the population within Germany itself (Morrill, 1970). The overall dilemma facing Germany may be seen as the danger that parallel societies within German cities link up with each other and with similar groups in other countries to become part of a universal globalised network (Britts and Lubeck 2001 cited in Eade and Mels) with an allegiance to fundamentalist religious Islamism. If this were to occur it could impede the establishment of a mixed social life in a multicultural society that the government hopes to establish.

Siobhán Dowling in her article “dispelling the myth of Parallel Societies” has another view. She maintains that “far from living in closed-off communities, Muslims in Berlin’s Kreuzberg district live in a culturally diverse area.” Dowling draws attention to a report on Berlin that paints a picture of the city’s Muslims contrary to many public assumptions. For example the district of Kreuzberg is a shining example of different cultures and different values coexisting successfully. According to Dowling’s Der Spiegel article, the OSI, which produced this report, is a non-profit organization founded by billionaire financier George Soros, aiming to protect and improve marginalized communities as part of its stated mission to work toward “vibrant and tolerant democracies” (Dowling 2010).

Media concern about the issue is reflected in the way Der Spiegel presented a thirty page discussion with contributions from nine authors which was titled “Allah’s Daughters Deprived of Rights” (Der Spiegel 2005; 2008). These pieces present Turkish women and girls as the victims of arranged marriages, violence and repression. Visually prominent in the article are
quotes from the Koran that emphasize the subordination of women; equality between the sexes is thus presented as an invention of the Christian West (Leicht 2004).

Authors who are concerned by alarmist presentations of the issue argue that the tendency to withdraw into an Islamic ghetto has not come about through excessive national tolerance, as media reports tend to suggest, but rather from state discrimination and state-encouraged racism (Leicht, 2004). Even now the state is far from dealing adequately with ethnic discrimination, despite the interventions which have been featured in this thesis:

...how can German be spoken by everyone when funds are being slashed for the promotion and support of foreign children in schools and kindergartens (Der Spiegel 2007)?

Der Spiegel goes on to paint an alarming picture of a parallel society:

...being able to speak German is not a requirement for daily life in this migrant neighbourhood, (however those who fail to overcome the language barrier are threatened with the loss of social benefits and limitations on their residency permits) where the street scene is often one of bearded men wearing knit caps and women in headscarves. Certainly not all businesses are Turkish or Arabic, however. German senior citizens congregate on Tuesdays for dance evenings at Zum Ambrosius, one of Berlin's traditional corner pubs, which seem exotic in this environment. But even this traditional German establishment was recently purchased by a man of Lebanese descent (2007).

The Neukölln district is home to over 300,000 people. Half of them live in the northern part that includes Sonnenallee. One-third of Neukölln's population, immigrants including about 60,000 Muslims, are concentrated almost exclusively in the northern section bordering Kreuzberg. There are 20 mosques in Neukölln alone, out of about 80 in all of Berlin. Few of these houses of worship are recognizable as such from the outside. Most are reached through gates or rear courtyards, where former workshops and factory buildings have been converted to prayer rooms with colourful patterned carpets laid out on the floor. Sweets, tea and soft drinks are sold in adjacent shops. Neukölln, like a specimen under a microscope, is proof positive of something that is slowly dawning on the rest of the country: Islam, this mysterious religion, fascinating and alarming, has gained a foothold in Germany, which is now home to more than 3 million Muslims. But the close proximity between long-established Germans and
outlandish Muslims is also a potential source of conflict, triggering resentment and fear on both sides (Der Spiegel 2007).

Synnove Bendixsen in her article “Islam as a New Urban Identity?” confirms the transition from earlier provisory backyard mosques of the 1970s to purpose-built mosques of the late 1990s and she comments on this aspect of the Islamic religion in urban environments:

Islam in their work and social lives forms part of their group orientation rather than being distinct from it and although the urban context is usually seen as a place where people turn away from religion and where religious communities fulfil few social roles, the last decade has seen a return of religion within the urban space (Bendixsen 2007).

The existence of parallel societies may become a barrier to gentrification, although I cannot see this occurring. It is uncertain however, whether a partly gentrified suburb that includes a creative class of citizen who are individually motivated and innovative and have been encouraged by government initiatives since 1997 (Schümer-Strucksberg) will enthusiastically co-exist with other populations that are bound together by an ethnic and religious identity.

The strength of family identity within Islamic cultures can also have a bearing on social integration. The challenge for government agencies is to integrate not just individuals but whole family units. As Ayaan Hirsi comments:

Remembering a family’s lineage is more important than anything else and when strangers meet they trace their separate ancestries until they find a common forefather…and therefore members of a great family that forms a clan (2007, p.4).

The assimilation of migrants into society through the job market is essential. However opportunities in the job market are linked to skills and to the emergence of new markets such as the creative economy and renewable energy technology. Currently the creative economy accounts for 20% of jobs in Berlin (URBED 2008, p.12). Being work-ready includes the ability to speak German and to have a good education in relevant skills. So when there are fewer unskilled jobs and there are educational deficits for migrants, there is an impact on the assimilation of migrants into wider society leading to the formation of an ethnic group highly dependent on government welfare. The unemployment rate of migrants nationwide is always
about 50% higher than that of the German comparison group, no matter the state of the economy or the level of unemployment (Gerd, Komosse, Saridou and Stocking 2005).

Germany’s dual system of standard education and vocational training equips youth with the necessary skills to excel upon entering the workforce. Workforce training programs are subsidized by federal and local governments in addition to private industries. This cooperation between government and industry shows a unique appreciation on Germany’s part for developing a highly-skilled workforce that is well prepared for the specific jobs emerging in growth industries (Gordon, McLain and Wong 2010, p.14).

Gordon, McLain and Wong (2010) report on the German government’s Act for Investment in the Future. The programme will invest more than $12.5 billion in fiscal year 2009-2010 in education infrastructure alone. One of the programme’s key priorities is improving student transition from school to vocational training; this is a major challenge in some migrant communities. Another is promoting programmes that help incumbent workers find careers with advancement opportunities. At the same time, the German government mitigates the cost of education through the Federal Training Assistance Act. This ensures that school students receive all necessary financing as a straight grant, while college and vocational students receive half of the money in the form of a grant and the other half as an interest-free state loan. In this way one in four students is financed by the Federal Training Assistance Act. These types of programmes help to bring migrants into the workforce.

It is clear in my research that a considerable amount of government effort has gone into addressing this issue by supporting on-the-job training, especially in recent times, which is particularly relevant to those who were not successful in formal education. There are however some underlying issues and fundamental elements that ‘prevent’ or ‘influence’ the learning of the German language. This also concerns assimilation into mainstream society which may never be resolved for some migrant groups. Government in many respects is still finding its way through the constraints of population mobility and parallel societies.

**Participation of migrants in government programmes**

The economic cost of providing for the unemployed has to be tackled somehow, and using existing ethnic networks to develop neighbourhood participation and involve people with other ethnic groups is seen as a way forward. This strategy is referred to as using “the ethnic
economy” (Franke, DIFU 2007; Berlin Senate for the Integrative City 2003-2009). Established entrepreneurs from migrant backgrounds are targeted as an important community resource in the local long-term job creation strategies to reduce dependency on welfare programmes. This approach utilizes both the attributes of bonding capital and the inclusive nature of bridging techniques. The Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing believes that the economic potential of migrant business should be exploited systematically through municipal initiatives that nurture ethnic entrepreneurs and training networks of international companies.

My analysis of interviews with Buchholst (2006) and Franke (2006), and my analysis of government-sponsored documents all revealed the extent to which top-down and bottom-up initiatives are affected by the informal nature of bottom-up protocols in conflict with the formality of top-down long term planning. There are serious attempts to identify and understand how to utilise the benefits of the two strategic approaches to project management. There has been a remodelling of both these initiatives to improve operational characteristics where there are less rigid bonding outcomes and more durable “weak-ties” (Florida 2002) between citizens.

This requires the long aspirations of top-down planning approaches to operate cohesively with bottom-up planning. Management must choose techniques to align projects and goals over a longer term; leaving development of the plan to skilled operatives, local residents who often work as volunteers, and creative entrepreneurs working in commercial and business environments. Top-down planning makes the plan, divides the project into smaller and smaller steps, adopts a step-by-step targeted approach and then there must be no operational (day-to-day) involvement in top-down management protocols such as those instigated by The German Urban Institute (DIFU).

Despite the already listed social and operational problems that Berlin-Neukölln has to face, over 40% of Neukölln’s citizens work on a voluntary basis in order to improve the living conditions in their neighbourhood. Their engagement implies that citizenship education and intercultural integration represent significant influencing factors at a very local level. There is a variety of committed partners across a wide spectrum of society in Berlin-Neukölln and other deprived districts who play a crucial role in the effort to support and practise intercultural integration through the application of physical and non-physical programmes.
Whether it is organisations who are involved in construction, refurbishment and energy production (GEHAG; S.T.E.R.N) or whether it is local businesses who allow their car parks to be turned into play and leisure precincts over weekends, each plays its part in ensuring that the impact on urban regeneration benefits their local communities. This is achieved by providing facilities that would not normally be available because of urban density restraints, construction problems and limited government funding.

When I refer to the high levels of community participation above, the issue of residents exercising the opportunity to fully participate in determining aspects of their lives in the local community should be considered. Any operational protocols, whether they are present as part of the nature of government agency practices or the more spontaneous procedural elements that exist at the citizen level, impact differently on successful social integration. There are however opponents to integration on both sides:

...before neighbours can participate in local decision-making they have to be socially integrated with each other so they understand their own cultural background before they understand each other (Kolland 2008; Simpson and Woods et al. 2004).

This issue is considered by the convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions UNESCO and UNESCO – IOM Migration Museum’s Initiative (2008).

European societies have taken a long time to recognise themselves as pluralist societies. Over several decades, they have become conscious of the fact that the notion of cultural diversity calls into question value systems, social and cultural representations, and along the same lines, the models for relating to one another or for functioning as a democracy.

In the beginning Government-sponsored strategies documents presented a dire and urgent need to address the social disintegration of whole neighbourhoods in some parts of Berlin including a number of neighbourhood districts of Neukölln. Urgent government action was required to alleviate social, cultural and economic problems that extended from unemployment to social exclusion. These were identified in the 1998 report (Berlin Senate for Urban Development 2005) into Berlin working-class suburbs.
More recent (2005-2008) government-sponsored documents have presented a more unified and successful approach by linking together more government programmes, for example the connection of micro-financing loans and art in the public realm (Chapter 6, finding on Parallel Societies). There has been a learning process since the inception of Social City in 1999. At the beginning government documentation acknowledged the difficult challenges ahead whereas in recent times (2006-9) there have been successful outcomes in social integration. Art in the public realm and Housemothers programmes are examples.

A wide range of neighbourhood projects however have not always translated to local neighbourhood members designing and implementing their own programmes, indicating the impact of top-down ‘interference’ at the roll-out or targeted stage. This is particularly evident during the implementation of first-project assignments before a degree of confidence has been established between higher and lower management operatives as to the seamless implementation of integrative programmes.

According to a German Urban Institute report, numerous projects in key areas of school and education, the economy and employment, and coexistence in the urban neighbourhood are being developed primarily by the agencies rather than the residents (DFUI 2008). There is the danger that only the higher-educated, motivated, and socially and politically aware residents will take an active part in neighbourhood management affairs. The participation of Islamic girls and women is also problematic unless some religious restrictions can be overcome or modified.

The reason this situation exists is not only because of complicated application procedures and bureaucratic obstacles but also because of the rights of Islamic women to their own identity. Many other shortcomings have become evident, some of which can be attributed to political omissions. For example the failure of language programs in schools or the defects of school buildings have hampered the development of skills necessary for successful community participation by migrants. Urban integration requires on-going top-down support and can require the assistance of government field operatives who have an intimate understanding of the needs of specific cultural and social groups.

The URBACT report comments on these problems of participation:
Numerous projects are being developed primarily by the agencies rather than the residents in the key action areas of school and education, the economy and employment, and the urban neighbourhood and coexistence (2005).

Grass roots problems can be language, educational background, economic factors, unemployment, or the influence of fundamentalists on local migrant groups who often operate as an element of a parallel society. But from the government, the problems can be the ineffective application of government programmes at the local neighbourhood level because of the number of agencies involved and their ignorance about what types of affirmative actions to take. Unfortunately this is related to complexities of delivering integrated programmes where a variety of different disciplines have to operate seamlessly as a single entity to provide solutions for a diversity of cultural groups.

To counter these grass roots problems there are needs-based action strategies designed to operate at the local level. There are new strategic programmes including local targeted needs-based strategies with decisions made at the local level without micro-management incursions from politicians. At the present time there is a variety of on-going repayable community loans and opportunities for greater expression through multi-cultural art projects as well as programmes to attract creative entrepreneurs from the business, student and urban design communities.

As discussed previously whilst there have been challenges in attracting creative entrepreneurs, funding from European, federal and state authorities and a wide variety of commercial organisations has established strategic urban renewal alliances.

There are also contributions from Neukölln local council which runs a project entitled “Young active citizens from Berlin-Neukölln designing the Intercultural City” which was forwarded as a proposal to make a contribution to the discussion about challenges and opportunities of an Intercultural City in the future, especially for the younger generation (Berlin-Neukölln City Council 2009).

There is also the Carnival of Cultures which first took place in May 1996. 50,000 visitors came to see the parade consisting of 2,200 performers accompanied by about 50 colourfully-decorated floats. This project still runs today (Goethe Institute 2010). There are of course
many other projects and government-business initiatives integrated across a number of working class neighbourhoods of Berlin. All of them and their various commercial, business, youth groups, and young urban design professionals use a targeted approach for the regeneration of Berlin neighbourhoods.

**Challenges of an integrated approach to regeneration**

Before I begin to consider the general success of an integrated approach to intervention in Neukölln’s deprived neighbourhoods I would draw attention to the basic requirement for social integration which is gainful employment, to provide for oneself and one’s family. This is absolutely crucial to successful integration, although other factors (political participation, development of common values, similar basic orientation, and social contacts) also play a major role in enabling people of different origins to live together (Gerd et al. 2005). Yet in many ways the provision of this essential ingredient lies outside the sphere of operations of these neighbourhood interventions. One has to be reminded that the Berlin government (with EC support) has a strategy for the urban regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods involving a wide variety of social and physical programmes; in other words it is not one type of programme versus another. Programmes are delivered as part of a total Social City integrated solution to addressing instances of social and economic disintegration across working-class districts of Berlin.

My findings indicate that the success of social connectedness between different cultural and social groups is more evolutionary than revolutionary, and the suburb of Kreuzberg is a good example of this. Even though this was achieved where there were few positive contributions to social capital by government agencies in the period 1960-83, however decades of political, social and economic turmoil, and in some cases spontaneous reaction to poor urban conditions, did provide the groundwork for a unique mix of social housing projects which began during the mid-80s under the International Bauausstellung.

In 1984 the Internationale Bauausstellung (Building Exhibition) was held in Kreuzberg following on from the “Strategies for Kreuzberg” in 1983. As a result of this competition emerged the ‘Twelve Principles of Careful Urban Renewal’ and the most important message was integrated community engagement (URBED 2008). It not only served as a showcase of architecture but, more importantly had the task of managing careful urban renewal that would foster inter-cultural dialogue.
It is difficult to measure whether evidence of the success of an integrated approach was due to the contribution of different disciplines and agencies to urban regeneration programmes leading to the social and economic revitalisation and redevelopment of deprived suburbs. It is also difficult to comment on whether the contribution of non-government actors towards regeneration was underpinned by a spontaneous or pragmatic reaction to events. However, evidence of the implementation of programmes has been observed; it has been photographed; it has been reported upon in government sponsored documents and it has been discussed in interviews with representatives from Social City, DIFU, Neukölln local council and the Cultural Institute of Neukölln (2001; 2004; 2006 and 2008).

The district of Schiller promenade (Neukölln) for example has been strongly referred to in government documentation as an area that typified the social and economic deprivation of a number of Berlin working-class suburbs and although the nature of success is extremely difficult to access, what was evident during visits to Neukölln was that government (Social City) programmes were being implemented as claimed in government documentation.

The positive outcomes that were achieved in the district of Schiller promenade have been reviewed from December 2001 until mid-2009, and the area has been visited in 2001; 2004; 2006 and 2008. The outcomes of a practical nature that were observed and photographed on neighbourhood field trips were: aspects of the suburb such as parks and the sidewalks, the maintenance of the streets, the ongoing refurbishment of residents’ buildings and the public realm and the construction of new social housing precincts. Incidentally I also visited other Berlin suburbs, the centre of Berlin, East Berlin (Marzahn-Hellersdorf) and Dresden in East Germany all with similar urban renewal programmes.

Face-to-face encounters in both the private and public realms are indicative of the important role that integration plays in neighbourhood social development, and many residents were observed strolling through parks, shopping at local shops and taking note of building refurbishment activities in their neighbourhood. The integrative nature of the government intervention into neighbourhood problems also provided an opportunity to observe different types of programmes being delivered: Including German language classes, after school activities; sport or homework assistance, site meetings for inter-cultural connections at the Church hall and facilities at the local area neighbourhood office (Kietz).
The final piece of the evidence necessary to assess the integration strategy was provided through meetings with various government personnel. The participants in these interviews were those who were responsible for the design, delivery and implementation of programmes. I spoke to staff from the German Institute for Urban Development. They share the overall responsibility for managing the urban development strategy and I spoke to staff from the head office of Social City responsible for programme design and monitoring of programmes in the neighbourhood districts.

The local council and the local bureau’s role is funding allocation and dealing with neighbourhood problems. Neighbourhood managers whose role is managing the day-to-day local delivery of district programmes and liaison with local neighbourhood stakeholders were also interviewed. The artistic and cultural director responsible for art-in-the-public-realm and managing artistic intervention and projects associated with it was consulted. Field consultants responsible for direct contacts with migrants were interviewed (interviews with Buchholst 2006; Busse 2006). All these personnel have their variety of functions and work together in an integrated approach to try to achieve specific and targeted solutions to the complex nature of social, economic and cultural environments that exist in Neukölln.

Overall my findings indicate that for integration programmes to result in successful outcomes there must be personnel who have had previous practical experience in delivering programmes in the field. Particularly after 2005, continuous interdepartmental action has demonstrated that it is a basic requirement for all administrative levels to operate cohesively with field operatives responsible for implementation of neighbourhood programmes. Especially important is partnerships with operatives who have worked on programmes in other neighbourhood districts such as those first implemented in Kreuzberg (interview with Busse 2006), and developed over many years.

If there were a single key element in the adaptation of an integrated approach it is the continuous interdepartmental action of members working together in one neighbourhood, rather than separate actions being based upon separate targeted initiatives across different neighbourhoods.

Biatrice Sokoloff writing in her paper “Public Spaces and the Reconstruction of the City:
Learning from Barcelona and Berlin” expresses a view which is in support of the strategies undertaken by various Berlin and regional governments designed to add value to neighbourhood identity:

The integration of building refurbishment programmes and self-help strategies empowered residents to remain in their neighbourhoods, minimised the transitory nature of population movements between Berlin suburbs and helped retain a sense of neighbourhood identity. In this respect inhabitants undergoing refurbishment to their residential complexes were virtual participants in the make-over of their apartments, which contributed to the attractiveness of the neighbourhood as a place to live rather than a place to leave from.

**Empowering local residents**

A variety of accessible neighbourhood facilities is a feature of Berlin suburbs and it is important for Berlin’s working class areas not to lose this aspect of Berlin’s urban identity (URBACT 2005; URBED 2008).

The quality (Becci 2007; Copeland 2004; Steinberg 1990) of Berlin neighbourhoods is under threat because of the fluid nature of transient populations and the need to prevent Berlin becoming a “city of transit” (Franke 2003). Several ecological, cultural and social initiatives are being engaged to prevent the disintegration of those Berlin neighbourhoods referred to as “Disadvantaged Urban Areas” by the Berlin Senate for Urban Development (Junge-Reyer 2005).

Other than by drawing neighbourhood assets together through the process of older building refurbishment and new building programmes (Altbau and Neubau) the focus by government is on helping empower residents to manage aspects of their community and to secure its own identity. This is a way of reducing government expenditure in funding controls to manage local facilities. There is a community building aspect to building refurbishment and self-management initiatives in Berlin working class districts. With the collaboration and practical assistance of business and professional entrepreneurs, youth organisations and young urban professionals, local community action groups provide creative and experimental energies that contribute to environmental care and restoration of the neighbourhood (Goethe Institute December, 2010).
Through the neighbourhood community managing aspects of its own social housing programmes, the local school and areas of the public realm, state and local governments are effectively reducing their neighbourhood operating costs in addressing elements of the physical precinct and social conditions. There is actually an extension of detailed control of everyday life now exercised by local citizen committees under the direction of a local government neighbourhood agency (URBED 2008).

I will argue that this devolution of power is also about the expense of government for the state apparatus. By devolving power to local committees the state gets rid of or reduces the financial cost of dealing with these local problems. This approach (although without mention of the term devolution of power) is beneficial in strengthening social capital and engaging participatory management in neighbourhood settings has been discussed in the DIFU report (2007 pp.63-65).

However in my research findings (as demonstrated by my observational document and interviews) the claim that these initiatives genuinely foster social capital is supported. This is especially the case when government agencies charged with the challenging aspects of urban regeneration are at an “experimental stage now” (interview with Franke 2006), and are under immense pressure to resolve the social and economic deprivation of whole Berlin working-class districts. Hence one reason why a number of regeneration strategies such as art intervention in the public realm and some ecological programmes have been integrated with physical aspects of urban renewal in order to achieve social and economic change.

The role that language plays in empowering residents to manage some of their neighbourhood civil functions where social and economic problems are known to exist is significant. Previously it was not the function of residents to manage properties not owned by them. The increased importance and use of language has enabled the discourse of ownership and running of state assets to be questioned with the result local problems are managed by local residents in partnership with government agencies. Whilst social connectedness and social capital has been enhanced at the same time: there are other government programmes where language figures in the discourse of contemporary social life.

**Contribution of public art programmes**
One of the central features of the non-physical elements of the government’s social integration strategy is the instigation of an artist-led revival of neighbourhoods with a deprived area status. The research findings indicate that the use of art and artists to go out and engage with local residents is a trans-cultural project that has contributors from Islamic, Christian and other religions. These projects which have expanded considerably since 2001 are held in squares, corners of parks and streets, in churches, old flower shops, in side streets and alley ways (2009). They include dance festivals, live theatre, the use of modern media interwoven with the classical arts and the dynamics of laser light technology.

The artist-led cultural initiative is intended to use art in the public domain in order to stimulate debate between residents concerning the conditions in which they live and work and their interaction with each other. This art-led intervention is in line with Germany’s first Schröder Government in 1998, creating the post of Federal Commissioner for Culture and the Media for the first time in Germany’s political history.

Kreuzberg and Neukölln are adjoining suburbs and the success of artistic development in the former has inspired this strategy to be part of an integrated urban regeneration solution in the latter suburb. For Neukölln to expect the same sort of spontaneous outcome achieved from what was failed government urban renewal policies would have to be seen in the light of history. The success of Kreuzberg in my view was also against a 60s-70s built environment consisting of dark narrow courtyards, with few amenities, inept planning policies, disused, indeterminate urban areas and populated by guest-workers, artists, squatters and other dissociated citizens (Sheridan 2005; URBED 2008).

Despite the negative view of these suburbs that has stemmed from their role as entry points to Berlin for masses of workers coming to seek their fortune (Wiensowski 2002, p. 12), during the period 1878-1900 Kreuzberg and Neukölln expanded their artistic potential (Steinberg 1990, p.98). Indeed Neukölln-Nord was known as the place for musical and theatre presentations in the 19th and 20th centuries (Kolland 1990). The publication from Social City entitled “Where Kreuzberg and Neukölln meet” (Bach and Huege 2004) also provides a historical review of both Berlin suburbs.

The department Social City has a continuing role (Where Kreuzberg and Neukölln Meet 2005) in its promotion of the social and cultural development of Kreuzberg by using language that
represents how particular ways of interacting have resulted in a socially inclusive society. That has been illustrated through text; graphics and photographs demonstrate how the depth of artistic and creative elements represents important components of the urban makeup of these two adjoining suburbs. Contributing to the restructuring of a working-class neighbourhood that was dependent on manufacturing to one engaged in a mix of entrepreneurial and creative initiatives.

Over time Kreuzberg has effectively developed a lifestyle that appeals to the creative class (Florida 2002). Its proximity to Neukölln where there will be “a collection of hyper-innovative initiatives” (de Boer 2009) means that Neukölln itself may well become another city location for the ‘creative class’ to flourish.

Accordingly, the Kreuzberg area and the northern district of Neukölln have re-invented themselves from industrial centres to creative and artistic locations. This dates back to the seventies when young children and teenagers were engaged in government theatre-workshops (Bach and Huege 2005, p. 83). This was nearly thirty years before Social City was started in 1999. The once-maligned Kreuzberg, a suburb where a large number of Turkish workers live, and before that, as Sheridan (2005) describes it, was an indeterminate territory, home for Berlin’s subculture. Kreuzberg is now a very successful multicultural district where art, theatre and fashion inter-mingle. According to de Boer (2009) “this is a brilliant example of gentrification as it is supposed to be”. This is a development that may not be lost on government agencies responsible for the revitalisation of deprived neighbourhoods in Berlin.

One could argue that “there has been a type of sinister effect on the community” because of the failure of industrial businesses. With the community being dependent for its economic and social welfare on these businesses, their collapse has meant that it is also the responsibility of government and industry to improve the town’s fortunes after this calamity (Brown, Child, Parker, and Smith 1981, p. 66).

The marginalisation of migrants on the labour market, their partial segregation as a result of economic mechanisms on the housing market, and the indecision of politics that has been underway since the 1980s, and, at the same time, the self-tetanisation with which migrants responded, has led to migrants becoming a new ethnic underclass in Berlin (Stocking, Walter et al. 2005, June 30).
Art in the public realm programmes are also supported by government “micro-financing programmes” (interview with Süllke 2006). These programmes provide for 10,000 euros per individual or small group to start a self-employing business. Some retail outlets were also able to benefit from this programme when shops were left empty. They could re-open with their own merchandise because of funding assistance from Social City. The overall budget for this small programme is 100,000 euros, which caters for ten separate groups of individuals.

This type of intervention has helped to develop neighbourly contact and control over the streetscape by ordinary people. It can actually contribute to the kinds of self-realization that Maslow and Putnam find desirable (Maslow cited in Della Bitta, Lawson, Loudon, Rainbird, and Tidwell 1996) particularly for migrant women who have often been left isolated at home. Some art programs have directly targeted this group such as the “Housemother’s programme” (Social City 2005), a programme where home visits to migrant mothers help to ensure their isolation from the mainstream community is minimised.

Art in the public realm also creates an opportunity for artists of various genders and cultures to be the forerunners as well as part of the new creative class of Neukölln. They can engage with artists from other countries to put into practice their own artistic traditions and to contribute to other cultures. These locally created opportunities act as a conduit for their experiences to be incorporated into urban projects in other German cities and other European countries (Kolland 2008). This Social City project permits the artist to be free from government interference and realize their own personal direction.

The new ‘creative class’ is not a new phenomenon for Berlin even though it was not until recently that the focus of government changed from the social and economic aspects of neighbourhood programmes to incorporating an awareness of district culture into urban planning (Meyer and Schuleri-Hartje 2002). It was in 1997, some six years after reunification, that a creativity strategy was developed for deprived neighbourhoods in East Berlin. This was precursor to more recent programmes to attract and develop the creative class. Some Berlin neighbourhoods that were considered deprived had already implemented successful creativity programmes (Schümer-Strucksberg 1997) in response to the difficult political and socio-economic changes of Berlin.
Benefits of an ecological approach

Since the early 1980s ‘ecologically compatible urban renewal’ has also been a focal issue of urban development of social housing in Berlin, featuring the refurbishment and construction of social housing apartments and social and art-related interventions. In 1987 the national Ministry of Building and the Berlin Department of Building joined forces with the tenants and alternative building associations of the generally cautious district renewal movement which previously had actively implemented alternative projects in renovation buildings. The involvement of tenants in building renewal compliments the ecological mantra of recycling, material re-use, natural elements and human participation.

Typically such projects have been enacted with the involvement of residents in all of the government designated seventeen districts of deprived need using a neighbourhood approach under the Social City integrated city urban regeneration plan (Junge-Reyer 2005). This includes the districts of Gropiusstadt, and Schiller Promenade (Neukölln) which formed part of my research thesis in Berlin. Photographs and an observational commentary have featured examples of these programmes concerned with state owned apartments (Photos: N5, N46, N48-51 et al.) in working class suburbs of Berlin such as Neukölln.

This following extract is from a report from the national Ministry of Building and the Berlin Department of Building (Reichmann 2001) with some of my research inclusions and clarifications, and supports the views expressed by Holger Hübner in interviews conducted in 2001 and 2004.

The overall co-ordination and research support on ecological projects was administered by the urban renewal company **S.T.E.R.N.** which has the responsibility for the whole area (Block 103 and Block 104). The single ecological model was planned and implemented by **STATTBAU**. **STATTBAU** acted on behalf of local people and was founded in 1983 as an alternative administrative body for reconstruction and now forms part of Berlin’s Social integrative city strategy enacted in 1999 (URBED 2008).

As a point of interest the IBA Altbau programme refers to the repair and alteration of existing blocks under Hardt-Waltherr Hämer, and IBA Neubau refers to new buildings under the late Josef Paul Kleihues. An example of buildings from the Neubau (new building) programme is shown below which are quite impressive for a social housing project (Hudson, 2009).
In Kreuzberg, the Altbau programme largely retained the former residents. Among those affected by rehabilitation, 95% remained in the neighbourhood, 61% in their original flats. The largely applied self-help formula at the time lowered the costs, had a clear socially emancipating impact and produced a strong identification of people with their neighbourhood.

The project incorporated not only ecological aspects but also typical demands for self-determination and low rents. However, as the success and economic viability of innovative ecological measures depends to a large extent on the users themselves, and on their environmental awareness and behaviour, the project has been designed to take into account
the wishes of the inhabitants and with their cooperation at the planning and implementation levels.

The benefits of an Ecological approach to improvements to the built environment, as partly indicated by the following review

All in all projects were implemented in 13 buildings with 110 apartments and 20 shops, not a small number of buildings (Reichmann 2001). Ecological measures were planned and implemented according to the following themes:

Energy use, waste management and ecological approaches to material usage

1. Rational energy use

In the energy sector planning concentrated on four aims:

1. Energy savings by thermal insulation
2. Reduction of emissions from the generation of heat and electricity
3. Low heating costs
4. Pilot project of combined energy generation from solar energy, combined heat and power, energy from the urban energy supplier BEWAG (a company in operation for over 100 years).

The main power plant of a typical residential apartment building is the gas-fired high efficiency boiler that is linked to two generators for power and heat production, with 55 kW each per day per building achieved from solar energy sources. The Berlin power utility BEWAG feeds additional power into the main plant at peak hours as required.

The photo-voltaic technology contains 180 m² of solar cells and generates an annual power of 14,000 kWh with the balance of approximately 6,000 KWh made up from other sources. Improvements in photo-voltaic and other solar-energy and renewal sources is expected to result in less reliance on energy produced from finite resources.

2. Water saving measures

The water saving concept is mainly directed at the identification of as many saving potentials as possible. The water charges are calculated for individual apartments instead of for the whole building complex. A meter registers the consumption of cold water after water saving equipment was installed in the buildings sanitation areas. In one building complex, grey water
from four apartments is collected, biologically treated, irradiated with ultraviolet light and purified via a vertical biological filter and the treated grey water from each household is used for flushing toilets.

3. Waste collection system
After the buildings of Block 103 were taken over by a co-operative, the residents decided to set up a waste collection system which is a practical example of empowering residents to manage aspects of their own neighbourhood operations. The system includes separate collection for plastics, a bio-waste compost system, separate collection for special waste, and a collection site for all other waste (e.g. aluminium, old clothes etc.). The implementation of the collection system and the first phase of use were accompanied by a research project from the Technical University of Berlin, an approach that demonstrates an integrated perspective to local neighbourhood management.

4. Green areas
In a typical medium multistorey residential building complex (in working-class districts like Neukölln) half of the enclosed courtyard area of 840 m²; 4,800 m² on the walls, and 1,232 m² of the roof have been covered with plants and 574 m² of the roof area has also been set aside to function as green terraces with lawns and plants.

5. Environmentally friendly construction materials
The outer walls were insulated with environmentally friendly materials and protected with mineralised rendering and silicate-based paint. Ceilings adjacent to the attic are insulated with mineral wool or expanded clay pebbles. Where possible, the old wooden floorboards have been preserved and borax preparations are used to protect the timbers.

Results and Impacts
1. Rational Energy
   - The evaluation study calculated that final energy use decreased by 44% and that electricity consumption was reduced by 7.5%.
   - The combined heat and power plant covered 56% of the annual electricity consumption.
   - The solar technology covered 14 to 16% of the annual electricity consumption.
2. Water saving measures

- In sanitation areas the average reduction of water consumption is 20%.
- Due to the rainwater collection system nearly 50% less is discharged into the sewage system.

3. Waste collection system

- The study on the waste collection system revealed that nearly 50% of the annual cost can be saved.
- 78% of the inhabitants agreed to a systematic upgrading of the waste collection system.

4. Green areas

- In the 13 buildings included in the ecological renewal, the sealing of green areas was reduced to 41%. The sealing of the whole area of Block 103 has been reduced to 63% compared to an 85% average in the Kreuzberg district, an area that borders on Neukölln.

Germany takes a comprehensive approach to financing energy efficiency projects that are also supported by a number of ecological tax reforms. An example of this commitment occurred in 1999 when the government introduced the 100,000 Solar Roofs Program, to increase photovoltaic electricity generation by subsidizing the installation of new solar panels. The government invested $738 million and also expects to generate $1.88 billion in private investment (Gordon, McLain and Wong 2010, p.12).

Neighbourhood spatial design

Good spatial design is where almost every facility for urban life is close at hand, where the means and the choice to take one there are ensured by the transport system, where a high quality social life is within walking and cycle distance and where the natural ecology is inter-woven with the built environment.

I have featured a short list I consider to be good indicator of a good spatial design. This list represents my own views, and is supported in some instances with items from urban-spatial design references and other sources.
• The size and population density of the suburb or town should be large enough to enable a quality of lifestyle that matches the retail and community services the area provides. The residential district of Gropiusstadt does have its own shopping centre that is serviced by ground-level multiple pedestrian corridors and access points, both within the housing complex and the shopping centre itself (Madanipour 1996). These include a wide selection of dedicated cycle and pedestrian ways and a combination of vehicle and sidewalk streets. Gropiusstadt however lacks theatre, creative and fine-arts venues, which exist in older Neukölln-Nord.

• A central area or a number of focal points such as a town square that are incorporated within the town. These areas should be non-commercial areas where people can meet to enjoy the streetscape without the need to purchase items for the privilege of doing so. There should be some informality associated with the space allocated for the use of the community and it can be surrounded by shops and outside markets. The size of the squares should reflect the neighbourhood district where they are situated; they should contain community seating; they should contain a central feature (statue, fountain) and the square should be embellished with trees and shrubs fully maintained by the local community.

• A uniformity of building height, neither too high nor too low (Hall 1989). The majority of residential buildings are not less than four levels with a maximum of eight levels. The social housing district of Gropiusstadt (south-Neukölln) has a number of residential high-rises up to twenty-two levels that are incorporated into lower level residential complexes. The height of these high-rise apartments has been one of the causes of social exclusion in Gropiusstadt where some residents have been isolated from others.

• The existence of a wide mix of activities and intensive use of land assisted by good public transport access. This transport enables residents to easily move between places of work, local facilities and home (Morrill 1970, p.135; Space Syntax 2006).

• The suburb or town should be tightly geographically defined (contained within a range of hills, a system of valleys or within a lake or river system) and it should have definitive boundaries that use buildings.

• Any regeneration of a district should include an integrated social, cultural and physical approach to the enhancement of a particular suburb. For example in Neukölln there are a number of small projects that are part of an ongoing mixed strategy, not just
funded as part of a once-only programme. They include a number of small yet significant urban regeneration projects that range from physical development (building refurbishment and modifications) to the nonphysical such as artist projects using art in the public realm to initiate debate within the community.

- Development of a local identity that uses historical, inter-cultural, artistic and educational resources. Sport may also be an important factor in the development of a local identity (Kirkeby 2006).

- The area should have a mix of different employment opportunities. The absence of such a mix was one of the causes of the social disintegration of Neukölln which up until recently depended entirely on manufacturing and assembly industries for employment. Beginning in 2001 there were continuing opportunities for an arts related revival. The area should also be open to new types of industries and professions and attract people who continually search for an enrichment of their city’s environment through a combination of innovation and creativity, and by their actions help to establish the type of “creative class” that Florida refers to (2002).

- The design of an area should enable a village atmosphere and ready pedestrian access should enable easy contact between neighbours without crossing major street intersections. Residents should not have to depend on the car as a primary means of transportation to local shops and services. An integrated public transport system should form part of the area’s infrastructure and heavy rail systems should be elevated or tunnelled under road and water systems depending on the topography. Transport earthworks should not cut through neighbourhoods. Unrestrained urban sprawl should be avoided because of its exclusionary impact in hampering the lives of those without ready access to a car and its impact in separating residents into their own personal transport, creating other residents as strangers.

- The design of the urban life landscape should facilitate the relationship between parents and children. Ideally children should be free to play unsupervised while parents are able to observe them from houses or apartments (Heimstra and McFarling 1974).

Residents were observed in face-to-face meetings in street settings at the corner shop, in parks and in school playgrounds playing basketball (chapter 5). Residents were also seen speaking to tradespeople concerning the refurbishment of their various apartments in Schiller Promenade.
(Photo: N54) Schiller Promenade residents in the public realm

**Built environments that enhance social capital and connectedness**

The concept of the village, present in Neukölln and Kreuzberg and in similar working-class suburbs, further strengthens social capital when residents participate in the bridging opportunities created by a regenerated and revitalised built environment; an environment where there has been direct community participation brought about by strategic government policies and the participation of local residents, business organisations and local agencies. Social capital is further strengthened when residents are involved in the ongoing maintenance and operation of their living areas, which remains a function of the Social City programme under the administrative control of local neighbourhood management.

As a consequence of the refurbishment of balconies (interview with Hübner 2001; 2004: observational and photographic analysis) and the modernisation of ground-floor balconies has led to residents visiting each other for a chat. Renewal of recreational and community meeting areas and the improvement of greenspace precincts with new tree-planting and grassed areas have also achieved similar outcomes of informal social connectedness between residents in Gropiusstadt and Schiller Promenade-Neukölln. This is simply because people prefer to meet each other in areas where the public realm is cared for in a mutually cooperative way between residents and local government agencies.

The distinctive unity of the neighbourhood, which in many instances has been hard-fought and hard-won, has been further enhanced by the direct involvement of residents in the upkeep of communal garden areas and the removal of graffiti. It is this strategic involvement on
maintenance issues along with decisions about the design of residents’ living areas and operations in the ecological efficiency of their neighbourhood facilities that have contributed to the establishment of improved social connections between citizens. These early beginnings in social connectedness because of discussions about the built environment that has contributed to social capital, and those inter-neighbourhoods networks that foster socially cohesive communities at the more flexible, innovative and responsive end of social capital networks (Florida 2002).

Whilst the existence of overhanging balconies, large inner neighbourhood parks between rows of terraced-styled houses, outdoor cafes on wide sidewalks and playground space overlooked by housing contribute to social capital it is also about construction protocols and maintenance of public assets by residents who reside in social housing precincts. Not only have the particular characteristics of the built environment enhanced social capital but the way that the construction of new complexes and refurbishment has been conducted has contributed to the informal bridging and more formal bonding ties among established neighbourhood residents.

Long-standing ties between residents can be irrevocably broken when residents of social housing apartments are forced to relocate because of modernisation to their apartments or because of the nearby construction of new residences. My research findings identify two sets of criteria that expand these types of social capital; one is where the emphasis is on the renovation of existing estates (URBED 2008, p.17), rather than in the construction of new accommodation. The second is on the promotion of sustainable communities within an ecological context; details that have been featured in findings; benefits of an ecological approach and energy use, waste management and re-cycling strategies.

A strong sense of community is maintained when residents are involved in building refurbishment programmes as a collective identity, by remaining in their apartment complexes or in their neighbourhood whilst modernisations are undertaken. Social bonding at the bridging stage is further enhanced when the same residents are involved in maintaining a revitalised first-class public realm and in energy, waste management and ecological approaches to material usage.

No longer was a built environment that consisted of permanent and structurally sound buildings enough. Residents did not stay in neighbourhoods made even more untenable by an economy in decay, where local facilities such as neighbourhood shops were closing and social
connectedness was further compromised by the sight of grey-coloured concrete façades and stark inner courtyards of tenement apartments. It required both temporary and permanent integrated solutions. Some thirteen years later small to medium localised and targeted projects have resulted in a revitalised built environment that has collectively contributed to a more robust type of social capital in Neukölln.

A targeted project in Neukölln’s northern district for example resulted in a depressing street corner being reinvigorated by local architects with their winning ‘City Kitchen’ project as part of a 2009 cultural festival. The young architects transformed it into a meeting place for local people and passers-by, offering them a space where they could sit down and eat together, exchange recipes and talk to one another (Goethe Institute 2010). This is similar to some respects to the Migrant-Mothers cooking classes as discussed with one of my interviewees (Busse 2006). With a built-environment perspective, and with the contribution of Berlin’s new prize for architecture, the Urban Intervention Award is conferred for creative urban sites with an exemplary character (Goethe Institute 2010).

(Photo: N55)

Yet despite the reality that residents may not participate as fully as might be expected in terms of the expressed aims of Social City the challenges of delivering a regenerated built environment has also been met by the delivery of many social inclusion programmes as mentioned above and in finding on empowering local residents.

The question is; can the discipline of maintaining continuous improvements to the built environment set by the Berlin senate to achieve the concept of a socially integrated city be enough to withstand the effects of population mobility and parallel societies?
Unrealistic policy-outcome expectations of politicians

This issue was raised in interviews with stakeholders in the management and the implementation of Social City and cultural programmes. The concern expressed is justified by the viewpoints of media articles on the inclusion of migrants into mainstream German society. The expectation by some politicians is that these programmes for social integration will be successful in a very short time frame (interviews with Franke 2006; Kolland 2008). This is contrary to the experience and expectations of those responsible for programme implementation. For example, Dr Kolland who was running the art in the public realm programme commented that “success in our programmes is very much a long term thing” (2008).

In the media, politicians are nothing short of alarmist in their concern about the problems of integrating migrants into German society, and what they have to say about this implies that solutions are needed right now and cannot wait for programmes to have a gradual cultural impact over decades. “Politicians are aware of increases in fundamentalist attitudes in Germany” claims one newspaper report (Brandt and Meyer 2007). The supposed rise in Islamic fundamentalism is blamed on the government’s policy of social integration. The federal politician Schavan was quoted in Der Spiegel as saying “my central message is: we have an economic and cultural crisis in Germany...and the debate on government reforms and values belong together” (2004).

At a local level, Heinz Buschkowsky, Neukölln’s mayor and a committed Social Democrat, also expressed a sense of urgency about the situation in his area when he told a group of foreign journalists:

Neukölln is a good place to experience the parallel society firsthand and in ten years we will be a migrant city.

And one year later the same mayor made this comment:

Crime rates in Neukölln are high, youth gangs fight each other or steal, and in the area around Hermannplatz, you can get anything you want, Kalashnikovs...angel dust, and you don’t have to speak a word of German you have the entire infrastructure in Turkish or Arabic at hand (cited in Der Spiegel 2008).
The above sentiments from German politicians indicate a sense of urgency which was referred to in the interview below with Thomas Franke (2006) from the German Urban Institute:
When the program started here politicians wanted to see first results after a couple of years. We always learned from urban renewal programs earlier, that the minimum of 10 years is necessary to talk about possible results. You can’t take a photograph from it or statistical data.

A number of politicians appear to have an unrealistic view of the time it takes to complete the objectives of programmes that attempt to create social and cultural change. They falsely compare such issues to practical interventions such as refurbishment of residential apartments or expenditure on the production of solar energy. They fail to understand the strategic thinking behind cultural and creative programmes such as art in the public realm.

The completion of creative and art-related programmes becomes subject to the constraints associated with a politician’s term in office. Programmes where there is an unquantifiable aspect in determining outcomes are looked on with suspicion and the outcome is a failure to ensure the continuous flow of government funding necessary for social interventions to work within a realistic time frame.

Currently the Senate, with the Commissioner for Integration and Migration as a lead agency, is working on the development and implementation of a monitoring system to follow up integration processes and measure success and failure (Raiser 2006). Politicians would like to be able to quantify and prove successful results from programmes. They would like to see the delivery of education tied to educational outcomes which in turn could enhance employment opportunities. The aim is to remove migrants from dependence on state welfare support so they realise their potential as citizens of Berlin (Interview with Kolland 2008).

**Conclusion: Croydon and Neukölln**

In response to my research objective (ref. p2), by allowing the integration of findings from the four tiers of data and analysis, this study has enabled a better understanding of the process and practice of urban planning and design as it relates to social connectedness and the development of social capital in Croydon and Neukölln.

Interrogation of my findings revealed that the challenges faced by urban professionals tasked with successfully implementing government-sponsored regeneration programmes in their
respective town centre and neighbourhood districts are dependent upon so many complex variables that are difficult to manage.

They are complex not only because of the functional process of implementing and managing regeneration proposals but also because of a number of actors who employ their own strategic and non-strategic agendas in order to achieve their own objectives.

The investigation of each topic revealed a number of almost insurmountable discourses occurring in the field of regeneration and outside it.

Whether it is the lack of community involvement or resistance to it by central government or professionals; whether it is arguments over single-zone or multi-use environments, or more contentious issue of parallel societies, expectations are often bound up in unrealistic expectations.

Although Croydon promotes an integrated approach towards the proposed regeneration of its town centre, its direction the regeneration should take is primarily with the business community and government agencies.

In Neukölln and similar working class districts empowering people through improvements to their built environment and the application of inclusive social programmes to help them to communicate as individuals and small neighbourhood groups could be largely undone by the influence of population and parallel societies on a much larger scale.

**Connections between the two case studies**

Throughout the research the focus has been on two separate case studies – one based upon city centre regeneration the other on neighbourhood. There has not been an attempt to elevate the merits of one over the other, although the findings discussed in this chapter have highlighted social, cultural and economic outcomes of interventions each with their own interpretations. Connections between the two case studies are discussed over the next few paragraphs.

The first connection highlighted in literature review and throughout the thesis is Croydon and Neukölln have similar challenges to the overall stability of their urban environments and to the
people who inhabit them. However it is the approach employed to deal with these challenges that appear quite different when first viewed after the outcome of the initial analysis of research data. Later with more informed analysis of my research modified my initial conclusions rationalise problems facing Croydon and Neukölln as being different when they are both based around threats to economic performance to their respective cities.

Government agencies responsible for the regeneration of Croydon and Neukölln are aware of the importance of economic and social stability and have taken different paths to resolve these challenges with different outcomes. Croydon have embarked upon retail-led regeneration of its city centre by developing high profile central retail and commercial development relying upon the trickle-down economic effects to bolster their economy. Thus there is a reliance on regeneration where there is an emphasis on a top-down market-led entrepreneurial approach to urban regeneration.

The Berlin governments approach is more integrated in so far as there is greater emphasis on a collaborative relationship between top-down management expertise and local bottom-up local initiatives to solve instances of neighbourhood social and economic decline. There is also an emphasis on a combination of urban development, housing, social, and economic policy instruments involving a network of public, private, and business protagonists. This emphasis is on a small-project approach differs from the large-scale developmental approach envisioned in Croydon’s regeneration policy.

Overall the differences between the two case study areas can be summed up as follows: In Neukölln there is an effective plan to produce an urban design which facilitates social connection and can be seen to be working. In Croydon the current urban scene is inimical to social connection and the plans are to produce an environment even more inimical to social connection.
Chapter 7 - Croydon and Neukölln research conclusions

Introduction
In this final chapter I shall expand upon some of the central arguments from the findings in the previous chapter. Then I will discuss recommendations arising from my research as particular regeneration strategies either enhance or hinder social connectedness and social capital in Croydon and Neukölln.

I consider that social and refurbishment and new building interventions in Neukölln have generally been successful in establishing social capital, at least as far as I can tell with the data I have. However there are ongoing challenges to social connectedness and networks to improve social capital as will be demonstrated in this final chapter. During the period of data collection I found that the Croydon CBD was experiencing various problems in the way the existing built environment impacts on social capital. The focus on building new commercial high-rise and expanded retail facilities suggest that the proposed regeneration changes to Croydon CBD, although only partially implemented, are not going to help a great deal and the lack of refurbishment of present buildings would not help to alleviate this impact.

I am also critical of the focus on the councils BID strategy for the regeneration of the CBD that effectively excludes the non-business sector. The failure to involve a wider cross-section of stakeholders in planning, design and refurbishment of extensive smaller programmes in the CBD does not make for an expansion of social capital, and the plans themselves are flawed. They are for the creation of somewhat limited forms of social engagement for the residents and visitors to Croydon CBD, especially in the short term.

7.0C London Borough of Croydon
The central issue under discussion in the final chapter is privatisation of the public domain by private interests and how privatisation strategies will impact upon precincts and buildings to be constructed; how they are constructed and how they will be operated in the future. The following is a list of elements of regeneration in the CBD: Privatisation of the public domain, Croydon night time economy and the café society; renaissance and economic competitiveness, development and refurbishment of entertainment precincts and the re-branding Croydon; car parking in the CBD, inner-city residential, modernism and high-rise, refurbishment as a
regeneration strategy; the contribution of culture and history to the economic development of the CBD.

The major area of concern for urban designers responsible for transforming Croydon into a confident 21st century European city is that places that were once valued for their authenticity and uniqueness (Florida 2002, p.228) will not be considered as part of the council agenda to redevelop the CBD as a business and commercial centre. This council agenda is the one preferred by business and commercial institutions motivated to control public space by private interests and sanctioned by government approval under the Business Improvement District strategy (BID), (Low cited in Low and Smith 2006 pp.81-83; Minton 2006, p.2).

A review of the elements of regeneration follows

Privatisation of the public domain

I suggest the decision to involve only CBD stakeholders in proposals for the regeneration of the CBD was to “get the process” of development underway under the BID strategy so there was evidence of some “iconic” (Alsop, 2007) enhancements to the CBD. Clearly this has not happened and has led to yet another perceived vision failure, of which there have been many (Alsop 2007; Lacovara 2010). Or is this because, according to Madanipour (1996, p.193); “massive redevelopment projects seem no longer financially viable”.

7.2C Renaissance and economic competitiveness

The aspirations for compact, mixed use and sustainable cities are incorporated within Lord Rogers’ Urban Task Force Report (1999b) and the Urban White Paper (DETR, 2000b, cited in Hoskins and Tallon 2003, p.3), both of which aspire to achieve an urban renaissance in British cities where city centre living is given a key role.

The alternative view is whether a town centre renaissance-style plan for Croydon is the right regeneration solution for the vitalisation of its CBD or for UK cities generally. In practice however, such places are difficult to create according to Hoskins and Tallon (2003 p.3).

While policy documents can point to the kind of urban neighbourhoods they wish to emulate, citing Bologna, Barcelona, Madrid, and Amsterdam as examples, translation within a British context is no easy task. Tallon (2010) also recognises that many English towns have improved their economic competitiveness by the adoption of a renaissance approach.
Development of entertainment precincts and the re-branding of Croydon’s CBD

As central feature of Croydon the upgrading of the Fairfield Hall entertainment complex had not commenced in 2008. Fairfield Hall, located away from the CBD, had not changed since I observed its construction during the 60s and plans to incorporate it into the wider CBD have not started, nor has the East Croydon transport interchange upgrade to incorporate walk and ride bridges with seated viewing platforms.

As part of the BID strategy developers want their own new entertainment venue constructed as part of the East Croydon redevelopment proposals. Developers want to present their clients with new architectural designs under their control that are an embodiment of their client’s branding, representing efforts to rebrand Croydon’s CBD (Alsop, Third City document, 2007). Robert Booth reporting in The Guardian quoting from Peter Saville, the creative director at Manchester City Council who produced a brand vision of Manchester as "The original modern city", comments:

When you hear they are rebranding Croydon you can’t help but smile in a cynical way. I am very sceptical about the notion of rebranding place (2007, 13th November).

Croydon night time economy and the café society

Certainly accompanying these new developments, new policies towards town centres, which aim to ‘reclaim the public realm’, are also being imported from the US – policies which overlap significantly with the current emphasis on the dealing with the agenda of anti-social behaviour. I suggest that addressing the problems pertaining to the development of a night time economy discussed by Low (2006, pp.81-3); Minton (2006, p.2) and Tallon (2010, p.234) are partially resolvable under the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), which recently received parliamentary approval, paving the way for private control of town and city centres through the payment of a levy by local businesses. However this will be at the expense of the inclusion of social groups.

The benefits of the development of the evening and night-time city centre have been mainly economic according to Andrew Tallon in his book entitled “Urban Regeneration in the UK” (2010, p. 234-236). The economic benefits from the sale of alcohol should help co-fund other refurbished inner-city venues for the expression of the artistic and creative aspect of popular
culture, thereby encouraging a mixed audience in the CBD. This could foster a creative city (Florida 2002) in conjunction with the cultural city, discussed by Tallon (2010, p. 241).

There is little mention in these documents of free public access spaces (malls, open air theatres, pedestrian promenades) and government-funded cultural spaces. The withdrawal of funding for some cultural assets is also referred to in government-related documents. Interviewees also show a concern for the absence of cultural assets in the CBD and are also worried that there are no plans to expand these assets, certainly in the immediate future.

The lack of delivery of regeneration projects is especially significant in comments made by councillor Malyan (2003) that alongside Croydon’s fast emerging café society lifestyle they have managed to turn some of Croydon’s negatives into success stories. There was confirmation that Croydon’s café society was embedded in the life of the CBD prior to 2001 contained in an Official Press Release on The Opening of Tramlink by Tramtrack Croydon Ltd on the 8th May 2000. This was 18 months prior to my first visit to Croydon’s CBD for the purposes of research and one year after my personal visit in 1999. Councillor Hugh Malyan (May, 2000) is quoted as saying “...in the central area, the trams have added to the colourful continental feel of the place with its busy pavement cafes and buzzing atmosphere”.

In the research period December 2001 until June 2008 there was no evidence of this fast emerging pavement café society in the CBD described above.

The poorer (and older) residents of the Northern suburbs (Croydon economic report 2008) are also unlikely to find much that they can use in the proposed high cost night-time entertainment venues and they have not been consulted about the use of the CBD and the proposals for a renaissance-style regeneration. They are likely to find high cost shopping venues in malls a mixed blessing. This highlights the fact that measures to improve economic competitiveness and tackle problems of social disadvantage and exclusion represent a struggle between theory and practice and a “one size fits all approach” (Tallon 2010, pp.5-6) in urban design.

**Car parking in the CBD**

The documents mention removing the problems created by cars and train lines breaking up pedestrian access, but really do not show that they are proposing major solutions. What is not
proposed is a European-style exclusion of cars from the CBD with parking stations ringing the city, or the moving of large roads and rail traffic underground with pedestrian surfaces and pocket-gardens established above rail and road infrastructure.

They propose in fact major shopping malls serviced by large parking areas. There are certainly some improvements proposed and partially implemented especially the light rail service which began operation in 2001; improvements that have reduced car dependency.

**Inner-city residential**

There is no emphasis on developing a real residential base in the inner city. This could have been achieved by refurbishing and retrofitting “uninspiring tower blocks” (Malyan 2003) for residential use with outside elevator systems and loggias prior to 2010. The subject of residential accommodation is mentioned in documents but actual proposals are negligible in terms of numbers of residents intended. The figures of about an additional 12,000 new residents in a twenty year period are far too small. The evidence gathered from the four research methods of inquiry indicates that the programme to re-cycle and retrofit office blocks for new uses, for example for residential dwellings, had not begun during the research period (2001-2008).

**Modernism and high-rise**

Modernist architectural solutions are preferred because they are visually dynamic and create a symbol of economic power (Madanipour 1996). A single-zone area is attractive to business and commercial interests because it reduces investment risk through a concentration of limited consumption-based businesses in the CBD. I argue that the distinction between the social and built space has heightened the separation between mixed human activities and a space where only singular activities occur leading to the virtual abandonment of the CBD after 5pm according to Tallon (2010, p.234), therefore making limited and inappropriate use of the town’s assets (interview with long 2006).

The proposed buildings for the CBD are almost all modernist and high rise. The human scale is missed. There are no balconies proposed to break up flat facades and engage people with the street, and connections between high rise buildings are to be facilitated via skywalk systems rather than via the street. Skywalks do not offer the same opportunities as balconies for
human interaction between the private zone of the built environment that includes external balconies and the more public streetscape precincts and the surrounding ecology.

Mediating these contesting views one would have to consider the function of skywalks is as corridors between buildings; glass connecting tubes may provide sanctuary from inclement weather but will isolate people from the street-level streetscape.

The effect is to keep people in buildings, preventing social inclusion because of physical isolation from streetscape events, festivals and carnivals which have been increasingly staged in (UK) city centres since the late 90s according to Tallon (2010, p.224). The inclusion of facilities for staging streetscape activities in the public domain is a necessary prerequisite for the appropriate revitalisation of place.

It may appeal to some of Croydon’s regeneration decision makers to focus on a particular architectural solution and the council seems to depend “on private sectors being tweaked around certain developments” (interview with Burton 2001). Council’s dependency on private sector development cannot produce a positive transformation strategy and clearly does not include holistic renaissance perspectives as promoted in the Partners’ Town Report, produced by an organisation in which Croydon is a partner member (2001).

**Refurbishment as part of a CBD regeneration strategy**

City centres require the inclusion of mixed-zones (discussed further below), a variety of building styles, and aesthetic qualities as necessary contributions to the socially inclusive aspects of some built environments. Ongoing refurbishment and retrofit strategies for existing redundant office buildings, and the transition of corridors as social meeting places provide assurances of stability for inhabitants and visitors. Tallon (2010, p.224) argue that the conversion of redundant office buildings into flats can create new mixed use ‘urban villages’.

There is however a counterargument to a refurbishment and retrofit agenda which argues “the state of existing buildings can be a real deterrent to investment”. Private investment is crucial if major refurbishment or renewal is to be carried out. The focus is then on public sector investment and community involvement that continues funding past the initial pump-priming investment stage (Towns and Cities Partners in Urban Renaissance project 2001, pp. 92-93).
I recognise the implementation of a refurbishment strategy is not within the primary interest of developers because it does not fit within a contemporary rebranding and the control of public space as discussed earlier. Refurbishment is a sign of immediate and less costly activity and investment in the future viability of town centres’ existing urban landscape and acts as an investment in social (bridging) capital. Buildings are not being pulled down; they are being enhanced and cared for, retaining historical assets and working with community participation.

I suggest the council’s approach is deliberate because involvement of the community in the regeneration process conflicts with their ideals the form regeneration will take.

The contribution of history to the 21st century economic re-development of the CBD

As a prosperous historic town in the 19th century and a really pleasant place, said Jon Rouse (Croydon council chief executive 2007) quoting historical sources, taking part of its future urban renewal from these historical frameworks assures citizens that Croydon is a place of variety and substance. My interviewees (Long; Smith 2006) and Tallon et al. (2003) recognise the contribution of historical buildings, parks and open spaces to the character, diversity, the economy and sense of identity of urban areas.

A glance below and beyond Croydon’s immediate high-rise skyline will reveal a rich tapestry of architectural styles, heights that do not challenge the too vertical to the street edge designs and constructed from a variety of materials, enough to remind us that Croydon is not lacking in its own history. A sense of history that provides stability should not be abandoned for promises that emphasise the excitement and stylishness of the city as a place to live (Hoskins and Tallon 2003, p.5).

First raised in the methodology chapter 2 there is a counterargument questioning the preoccupation with history as a reaction to the hypermobile, transient and fragmented lifestyles of today’s society (Hoskins and Tallon, 2003) because the refurbishment of a city’s older buildings into contemporary usage maybe a poor reflection of their previous history.

Croydon’s Victorian buildings are now transformed into high-end bars, nightclubs and fashionable eateries. One of my interviewees (Smith 2006) refers to this as “a sanitisation of the place.”
The contribution of aesthetics towards vibrant city life

The challenge to refurbish the gritty underbelly of city centre laneways and spaces between buildings into attractive spaces where people can engage is ultimately a statement in urban recycling and community participation rather than redevelopment. It is also about exploring the present opportunities that extend from the condition of Croydon’s present CBD and managing the existing aesthetics through the contribution of popup markets, carnivals and other people constructed experiences. Rather than experiences constructed by private enterprise as packaged entertainment for public consumption (Florida 2002).

Government documents concerned with regeneration talk much about participation but it is not realised. Actual participation has been restricted to a few business interests and residents of the CBD itself.

The notion of a community strategic partnership between the council and Borough residents required a change in attitude by the council towards the involvement of the community in future visions for the town centre. Perhaps the following is evidence that issues identified in my research, where participatory consultation with the wider Borough community has not occurred and should have-given the wider consequences of social exclusion. In a statement by Mike Fisher, chair of the local strategic partnership (2010, p.4):

Distilled from the collective imagination of more than 20,000 local people, we now have a clear view of Croydon’s future. “We are Croydon this is our vision”– was adopted by the Partnership earlier this year; it sets out clear aspirations for Croydon in thirty years’ time when we expect to be a city renowned for our enterprise and skills, contributing not just to the London economy but to that of the UK and beyond.

Is this recognition, supported by my research that inhabitants of Croydon were not strategically consulted in the design of the town centre, did not have a say in the dynamics of socio-spatial processes, the function of buildings, their form and the use of the surrounding space? I argue, as does Tallon (2010, p.7) that partnership arrangements have emerged as a central feature of urban regeneration strategies in the UK.

The input of help from volunteer groups is also not lost in Croydon’s Economic Development Strategy Report (2008, p.21:3.30). There is a very strong voluntary sector in Croydon, with the highest levels of volunteering in London.
Documents refer to using public space for relaxation and social contact but there is not much sign that this has been done during my period of research. The pictorial representations of public space tend to show areas being used for pedestrian transit to shopping centres, rather than being occupied by open air cafes and markets, or by extensive seating and green space. Croydon’s present CBD already has existing areas whose potential has either been underutilised or not fully exploited.

**Greenspace in the CBD**

There is little mention of integrating green space in the city. Green space is mentioned and pictured, but it consists of large unpopulated sports fields outside the CBD, rather than integrated small parks and vegetation within the CBD itself. This is strange since Croydon and other London Boroughs have a long historical involvement in the horticultural and social benefits of allotments (London Assembly, Environmental committee 2006, 3.1, p.8).

As discussed earlier the volunteer sector has been under-utilised. I suggest that amongst its 1,000 or so allotment holder’s strategic alliances could be established with other community stakeholders such as volunteers to help with design and greening the CBD, rather than waiting for a minimal iconic developer-led revitalisation of the town centre.

Some recent and relevant community projects do exist. In July 2009 Croydon Council launched its new community allotment project which aims to bring together the Borough’s older and more vulnerable residents to partake in healthy outdoor activity (Victoria Ellis and Nick Hope of the Local Community Network Alliance 2009).

Given the innovative ideas already proposed by UK (Partners in towns and cities urban renaissance project 2001: Planning for Town centres report December, 2009, et al.) how has Croydon ended up with a vision that looks like a repeat of the 60s? This vision of Croydon’s town centre so disliked by Glancey (1998 et al.) is being repeated.

**The contribution of the CBD environment to social capital and connectedness**

I did not see physical evidence that opportunities for improving social capital and therefore social connections between people in the CBD had materialised during the late 2001-2008 research period.
Around the CBD there were no coloured umbrellas, planter boxes, pocket-gardens or pavement shop-display cabinets to enhance the surrounding streetscape and to keep people there. Apart from a few trees there are few places for people to sit and enjoy the vista and these few are compromised by a lack of variety. This was recognised in Croydon’s Draft Community Strategy Report of (2010-2015):

Although Croydon has clean streets and well maintained parks the street scene in many parts looks tired and in need of renewal. Hamilton-Baillie (2008, p130) makes a similar claim to that argued in this thesis. As streets become less attractive people are going to spend less time in them for social activities.

Opportunities for increased social encounters for all citizens need the existence of real opportunities in public realm settings, particular for those creative citizens who are driving the growth of (UK) cities (Tallon, 2010). Vacuous promises of a few iconic standalone developments are insufficient on their own. Integrated activities, greening of the CBD and the refurbishment of a large percentage of existing buildings, mediating their function as well as their form, are necessary to retain a sense of place. Unfulfilled promises of urban renewal lead to community frustration because of inactivity due to ill-defined local proposals and proposals driven by overseas policy frameworks or funding constraints from changing global financial circumstances. How a sense of frustration affects the individual, the community and business interests is not possible for me to comment upon because of the limitations of my research. Suffice it to say there are always social consequences resulting due to a lack of commitment to promised delivery on urban renewal strategies.

**The benefits of Tramlink to social capital and connectedness**

I have referred at length to the benefits of Tramlink in improving social connectedness in my finding. Benefits are not directly limited to social connectedness for passengers but also include local employment in the maintenance and further development of light rail systems (Buchanan 2006). This reduces reliance on large developers expanding retail opportunities in the CBD as a means of local employment.

Tramlink’s contribution to social capital is also enhanced with a reduction in car use in Croydon’s CBD by 19%, use by a wide patronage mix of passengers from students to older
retired people and the use of trams as an interchange to other London suburbs. These aspects connect even more people together. The Tramlink light-rail system has also been very successful in connecting outlying Borough districts, such as the social housing area of New Addington, to Croydon’s town centre (Buchanan 2006; Malyan 2000).

With the socially cohesive benefits of Tramlink well documented (Buchanan, 2006; Courtenay 2007; Hillier 2002) and its European flavour appreciated by council urban planners and designers (2001-2008), the contribution of Tramlink to Croydon’s objective to be a confident 21st European city is widely accepted.

7.0N Berlin-Neukölln: Interrogation of programmes designed to achieve social integration in deprived neighbourhoods in Neukölln

The key argument referred to below was formulated from chapter 6 and considers how social capital and social integration has been enhanced by the government’s strategy of urban regeneration. The programme is based on an integrated approach and enhanced by an emphasis on ecological principles of refurbishment, energy provision, recycling and waste management. The programme increases the social connectedness of citizens in government-designated neighbourhood settings.

Population mobility

This part of the final chapter under discussion interrogates the argument that social connectedness and social capital have been enhanced in Neukölln because of interventions contained in Berlin’s Social City programme. This is an integrated strategy designed to address the problems of deprived Berlin districts brought about by the movement of inhabitants into and out of a neighbourhood because of the deterioration of economic and social conditions. Population movements have both favourable and unfavourable consequences (URBACT 2005).

My research findings suggest that too few population movements can lead to the proliferation of parallel societies and ethnically related enclaves, which was more problematic because of a lack of citizen status and deteriorating employment conditions for migrants. Whilst some interviewees were concerned with the influence of parallel societies on mainstream society because of population mobility factors, others took a different view.
They (Bendixsen 2007; Dowling 2010) thought successful outcomes were achieved as a result of earlier public realm programmes, applied as an initial neighbourhood social connectedness strategy. Residents are encouraged to meet each other in the public domain and share in inter-cultural and social dialogue. The basic idea is that discussion of art can facilitate social contact and allow discussion of religious differences in a context that does not increase mutual hostility. The aim of the strategy is to provide a neutral point of reference through which people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds can engage in a common pursuit of creative and art-related activities.

The intervention of art in the public realm and other architecturally creative interventions such as carnivals and precinct improvement are applied continuously, reinforcing community engagement especially as the dynamics of the neighbourhood change. With new commercial enterprises and residents establishing themselves in newly refurbished and reinvigorated neighbourhood precincts, it is essential that the use of art and creative activities be continuously and rigorously applied; it may be a youth festival, food, music, dance and costume carnival, or a forum on the re-use of ‘left-over’ urban spaces (Goethe Institute 2010).

Follow-up programmes from these early and continuously applied informal social encounters established social connectedness between residents and formed the basis for a weak yet robust form of bridging social capital to develop. This could only evolve further when other elements of the Social City integrated approach were implemented as part of an overall strategy.

Informal social encounters leading to social connectedness between residents of different cultural backgrounds could also fail to materialise without the German language as a fundamental necessity to support informal encounters between residents from different cultural backgrounds. There are often religious constraints that excluded some female residents from participating in some activities conducted in the public realm.

Religious as well as social factors modified women’s opportunity for social connectedness. Home-based activities such as inter-cultural cooking classes contributed to social capital and were a significant precursor to their own educational and social development, and thus the development of their children.
Here again government documents and interviews with Social City professionals confirming the role of education in social integration programmes were supported by my observation of women from Islamic cultures engaging in shop-front German language classes in Neukölln. Speaking the German language provides people with the opportunity to navigate across different cultural norms and to share intercultural experiences. Here intervention acted as a socially inclusive activity. The positive nature of such interconnections are however not a guarantee that such interventions will lead to ongoing social connectedness between residents of different cultural groups. In other words, just because there are strategies in place to empower residents to socially integrate does not mean they will do so continuously and without reservation.

In strategies designed to address the question of population mobility, the willingness to try a number of different creative interventions to address the social disintegration of the neighbourhood was a central reason why social connectedness has generally improved in the designated deprived neighbourhood of Neukölln. Population mobility is also an issue when the facilities of a neighbourhood do not match the needs of a particular social or cultural group. My argument is this is especially related to education, and specifically the ability of children to communicate in German from the day they begin school. In-school and out-of-school activities help prepare children to accept change, just as play-areas help children to develop and expand their social skills across different social and cultural groups.

**Gentrification and mobility**

Government strategy to socially integrate residents in Neukölln using a cultural arts strategy as part of an integrated urban regeneration strategy may end up with a process of gentrification, as a new middle class is attracted to a suburb because of local facilities and connections to other parts of Berlin, especially to Mitte. The topic of gentrification was not specifically mentioned by representatives of Social City or German Urban Institute who were interviewed in 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2008. It is not a major problem in Berlin where there are more stringent government controls (de Boer 2009; Smith 2009).

While concerns about gentrification are understandable, my research suggests that the combined strategy of physical and non-physical interventions has worked to integrate and improve the lives of the existing migrant and working class community of Neukölln, during the period of my research (2001-2008).
The success of the artist-led programme is also due to the committed sense of community around the arts fraternity that the strategy generates. The findings of this research indicate a vitality coming out of the place because of the variety of pop-up art exhibitions and urban-usage projects in the public domain (Goethe Institute 2010). In Neukölln there are many shops run by migrants, and apart from selling goods from their home countries, many of those shops function as an informal socio-cultural contact point for the local ethnic communities. Such retail contact points add value to social capital through the continuation of positive social connectedness in Neukölln, and assist in developing inter-cultural dialogue.

**Review of improvements to social capital and connectedness**
In my interviews with Holger Hübner (2001: 2004) and Kerstin Schmiedeknecht (2004: 2006) they talk about physical interventions and participation in them as a means to deal with these issues. I argue through my photographs and field notes that the physical interventions and their participatory construction have already made a considerable difference to the social capital enabled in Neukölln. This is evident in the integration of green space, wide walkways free from traffic, balconies and low rise, integrated small shopping centres with walkable neighbourhood facilities for the community.

The supervision of children’s play areas from the residences is viable due to the design of play areas relative to their apartments. Wide pavements on roads, soft-curb edges, outdoor eating spaces, provision for bicycle parking at shopping centres, reconstructed social housing apartments including stairwells, painting and balconies, green space and outdoor seating are all influenced by the participation of residents. I have noted that participation in this social space is actually realised by residents who can be observed making use of these facilities; to walk, to play in the park, to meet with family and friends at the church or neighbourhood centre or on the shopping streets. In an URBACT ratings study of neighbourhoods (2005, p.15:5.2) those having in-migrated to a new suburb valued the proximity to services, particularly shopping opportunities, the centrality and accessibility of the area, and the proximity to relatives and friends as necessary elements in neighbourhood characteristics.

**Artist-led influence on established ethnic neighbourhoods**
A social integration strategy that is still delicately poised raises this question as suggested in part by Sheridan (2005). Is there a danger that migrants will be forced out of their established
neighbourhood precincts because of the incursion of the art community into established Islamic neighbourhoods?

The present reality as suggested by Kolland (interviewed in 2008) is that it could be another twenty-five years before meaningful results for migrants will come from current government strategies. There are still the problems of the local economy and built environment: empty, unrentable flats and business spaces; high employment fluctuation and high unemployment rates; the high percentage of residents on public welfare; the high rates of non-German residents existing at low social and economic levels.

Yet the suburb of Neukölln, which has a reputation in Germany as being a rough inner-city district with a large number of immigrants and widespread social problems, has become increasingly fashionable in recent years, partly due to its urban edge and low rents according to Moises Mendoza (2011).

This is reflected in stark reality if one is an unskilled and under-educated migrant who resides in refurbished central neighbourhood districts of Neukölln like Schiller Promenade. These have become popular and perhaps more exclusive as a neighbourhood. In the last few years skyrocketing rents have driven out many long-time Neukölln residents, and some poorer residents have been forced to move to housing projects on the edges of Berlin that are in danger of becoming slums. The construction of new apartments and resettlement of social housing recipients from suburbs like Neukölln was commented upon by Hübner (interviewed in December, 2001, 2004).

**Parallel societies**

My research suggests that parallel societies have developed over decades. This is the dilemma in which my interviewees as social planners find themselves. Parallel societies are produced by people who live on the fringes of society and have developed over time as a group that has been marginalised, intentionally or otherwise. Another and perhaps more appropriate term for parallel society is alternative society. For that definition I sought support for my argument by examining Kreuzberg as a model where different types of parallel societies developed between the end of WW11 and unification of East and West Berlin in 1990.
The argument here is that Kreuzberg’s urban condition in this period 1945-1990 saw the development of various sub-cultures (Sheridan 2005) which ran parallel to mainstream Berlin society. These alternative sub-cultures were political, artistic, creative and social but not necessarily religious. That came with the arrival of guest workers mainly from Turkey. So after decades of mixed cultural identities, against an oppressive urban backdrop consisting of ruined buildings Kreuzberg had already evolved as an example of a successful transition from urban social and economic decay into a vibrant culturally diverse area; an area which Siobhán Dowling “cites to dispel the myth of Parallel Societies and Muslims as living in closed-off communities” (2010).

My argument is that the intervention of art in the public realm as a part of a government-sponsored social integration strategy enhances social connectedness and contributes to the building of social capital and therefore socially cohesive societies.

The creative inclusive context of art helps the newcomer or those who may have been excluded to fit into an existing urban society and make sense of it, in the way that strangers relate to each other (Madanipour 1996, p.80). It is the opportunity for as well as the frequency of such encounters (as commented upon by Florida 2002 et al.) that is the central issue of sociological enquiry.

**The contribution of informal space**

The contemporary art scene in areas like Neukölln often takes place informally in open urban spaces, in courtyards, in closed-down factories and in empty houses; the very same urban space that is also occupied by members of the parallel society and the community in general. Such informal and spontaneous encounters between artists and other community members lead to the breakdown of the rigidity of strong ties (Putnam 2000, pp.22-24) and the development of more flexible weaker ties (Florida 2002; Madanipour 1996). This comes from sharing many social, cultural, ecological and economic experiences.

Informal encounters and the temporary nature of artistic life and the art scene means the community is constantly changing. A socially cohesive society comes out of the social connectedness connected to the coming and going of the arts and creative community. This community is attracted not only by the opportunity to exhibit but because of the quality of the built environment and the services it supports such as schools, pocket-parks and informal
leisure facilities. These in turn contribute to social connectedness leading to more durable ties between citizens.

In Neukölln and areas like it there is still plenty of affordable accommodation, if one is prepared to share, despite skyrocketing rents in some instances. Open-air arcades, low-cost shared-apartments and empty warehouses all contribute to a more flexible parallel society and the stability of a more mobile, interdependently creative and open society. The wholesale destruction of a sense of historical and contemporary significance was mostly avoided, and refurbishment and ecologically-oriented community participation programmes helped with the continued engagement of citizens along neighbourhood lines rather than within cultural and ethnic ghettos.

Navigating through art and physical intervention; a final review of an integrated strategy
The explicit implementation of art and other creative elements are not enough to sustain a neighbourhood under threat from economic and social disintegration. It brings citizens together but does not necessarily keep them there. To achieve that requires working, planning, solving problems and maintaining solutions together.

There cannot be time-lapse gaps between the intervention of art and physical interventions. It is not enough that one follows the other, they are intertwined, and each type of intervention with its various disciplines complements another. The medium-term success of the Socially Integrative City through the Social Programme suggested in my conclusion could quickly fragment (Hoskins and Tallon 2003) if any interruption to the delivery of programmes occurs.

Interventions can work but not if there is persistent unemployment for the migrants with the downturn in manufacturing of basic non-specialised products. There are on-going problems as one of my interviewee’s points out (Franke 2006). Upgrading into the digital and creative economy (Florida 2002) is all very well as an ideal but the reality is that the bottom end of the labour market is left out of this option as manufacturing falls apart for unskilled workers. There is less work for people with low level skills in German, maths etc. Even if their children do better at school, which is not that likely without massive remedial school funding, the adults are still unemployed.

Then other jobs will have to be found that are needed in those communities. There are many
elderly people who cannot go shopping without assistance. Neukölln’s problems here are the erosion of social networks and there is no rescue from the creative growth economies that could help solve the unemployment problems of Neukölln and suburbs like it. Long term unemployed could act as community providers, as suggested by Franke (interviewed in 2006).

Government needs to recognize that the problems of mobile populations and parallel societies are not problems stemming from cultural difference and an ineluctable otherness on the part of Islamic immigrants. Instead to promote a more realistic understanding there needs to be an understanding of the synergy between economic exclusion coming from the downturn in manufacturing and cultural nationalism as a response by migrants.

The URBACT survey (2005) of people moving from one working-class suburb to another in Berlin shows that poor economic indicators such as high unemployment in the suburb to which they are moving can be partially offset by good neighbourhood facilities such as shops (92% important), better housing (58% important), transport (nearly 90% important) and not surprisingly family at (62% important) and friends at (nearly 80% important). But what is surprising is the attraction of good schools which are seen as (just over 20% important) by people re-locating to new suburbs. People moving suburbs see better housing environments in other areas (72% important) as a reason to leave their existing areas (Table 6.N-PM chapter 5).

My view, based upon the above conclusions and arguments from my research are that Neukölln’s development will be a repeat of Kreuzberg’s social development which has evolved over decades. Turkish and other migrants who began their life as guest workers chose to stay in Kreuzberg during times of urban decay. They still remained later despite the instigation of many unconventional and perhaps chaotic projects that were often self-initiated during changing economic periods. Although government approvals came later, a sense of community had already developed prior to government acceptance of community initiatives. It is this unique and socially complex and historical background that has underpinned the direction of Neukölln’s neighbourhood regeneration programmes.

A sense of community has evolved in Neukölln because of outcomes learnt from Kreuzberg’s historical development and recent socio-economic indicators referred to in the previous paragraph. Indicators that also stress the value of better housing (72% important) for migrants who will leave an area for areas like Neukölln.
A review of social and town planning interventions in the two case study areas and suggestions for direction

Suggestions for Croydon

1. Facilitate the adoption of small programmes versus large urban regeneration programmes. Global funding constraints often increased the uncertainty of protracted large private investment.

2. Implement a rolling 5 year plan. Long term plans based on large iconic projects are subject to current changes in the global economy, so from 2001-2010 very little has happened.

3. Funding earmarked for regeneration (renaissance) proposals should be quarantined against the issues suggested in item 1 and 2.

4. The strategic involvement of all Borough residents is necessary in a true participatory model through to the design and implementation process. Projects include ecology and greening. Croydon already has a successful track record in sustainable energy and waste management, and these should be integrated as part of Alsop’s vision as an immediate targeted project.

5. The involvement of a variety of residents with diverse backgrounds in targeted urban refurbishment programmes is recommended, especially regarding greening of the CBD and refurbishment projects. Refurbishment of the built environment should be open to contribution from local and national urban planning and design entities. Suggestions to facilitate the vibrancy of “all spaces between buildings, streets, squares, parks, and even private forecourts” have been in the public arena since the government white paper in 2000 (UK Partners in towns and cities urban renaissance project 2001) and identified in Urban Design Croydon (2005).

6. Croydon already has one of the most comprehensive integrated transport networks in the UK and this should be linked to the pedestrian experience to facilitate improved public transport such as extended light-rail or street-tram systems. Public transport systems can interconnect with the public realm and lead to more vibrant public areas, and especially areas of the public realm such as refurbished alleyways, courtyards, laneways and private forecourts (item; the challenge of integration) where there is already private and public access.
7. Add more routes to Tramlink (there are some proposals in place), establish a new tram route to travel past the Whitgift centre, passing the lower end of Croydon markets, along North End to West Croydon Station and into outer districts. This provides uninterrupted streetscape connectivity. Construct tram stops (3) in the Whitgift Mall precinct which should include partially undercover eateries and mini-markets and extensive streetscape furnishings as a neutral zone from retail activities.

8. Expand and share city and neighbourhood urban design parameters with planners and designers who operate at the middle management level in other EC countries.

9. Refurbish all commercial, retail and historical CDB buildings.

10. Implement a European renaissance perspective as discussed in the conclusions and promoted by UK government agencies, incorporating a compact-city design and outside CBD vehicle parking arrangements.

Suggestions for Neukölln

1. Increase the levels of community participation in ecological and greening projects, especially those that involve residents in renewable energy projects and the creative economy.

2. Address the question of citizenship for migrants from non-German and German origins.

3. Encourage the work-participation rate of migrants in the IT and banking environments. Assist migrants to develop transferable skills from their involvement in community renewable energy projects.

4. Establish strategies to adjust the views of those politicians who are often out of step with consultants and their field work challenges with migrant communities. They are problems of economics rather than of culture.

5. Quarantine funding from global financial constraints with less reliance on the private sector.

6. Continue with the internationalisation of art in the public realm projects (see Kolland) and integrate more creative-art projects with mediated forms and the information-based economy, especially with other EC partners (including the *UK).

   *There are some present programmes.

7. Further address the issue of learning the German language that is most obvious in parallel societies. This can be achieved by applying the opportunities gained from volunteers directed to work in refurbishment and renewable energy projects, through
to work-based training regimes for school students in the built and land-use environments.

8. Within the parameters of the neighbourhood management model, involve community members in the strategic design of social, cultural and built environment contexts. Neighbourhood management currently has integrated partnerships with many community, government, private and business groups.

9. Incorporate the above with the challenges of applying top-down and bottom-up initiatives in field situations. Work with local community members in strategies to implement initiatives in partnership with commercial operatives who also nurture ethnic entrepreneurs as role models for their communities. This can be achieved by providing a guaranteed income for the structurally unemployed as suggested by one of my interviewees Franke (2006). Then other jobs will be identified as needed in those communities; for example many elderly people need practical assistance. Problems here are the erosion of social networks.

Conclusion: What of Croydon?

Croydon’s genuine heritage remains a secret to many who perceive it as a 60s and 70s town without a history before the 20th century. Croydon does have a rich and varied history but it has to be interwoven with its future visions and its present urban landscape which has underlying potential for enhancement as attractive and interesting meeting places. The present town centre urgently needs aesthetic enhancements as a precursor to being a confident European city (Malyan 2003); however the CBD is not a blank canvass to be entrusted to views of business and commercial interests under the business district improvement district strategy (BID). It is urban public space which needs to be understood before attempting to transform it and placing it under the control of the private sector.

Croydon is often perceived as a new town suburb of London, not as somewhere to visit but en route to somewhere else. It struggles to achieve a Third City identity with its back offices of large companies and government departments which it plans to repeat under the present BID strategy (2011).

Community perceptions as to a lack of any significant enhancements to Croydon’s CBD are not helped by the lack of clarity in assisting inhabitants to understand the interdisciplinary nature of urban planning, architecture and landscape design and in processes required to implement
it. Nor has the community been invited to participate in strategically targeted short term objectives that to this day have not been fulfilled.

It requires more than individual words, images and narratives contained within language to address the challenges to managing the ambiguity and uncertainty about the nature and scope of urban design, (Madanipour 1996). Unfortunately over ten years have passed since the government’s November 2000 Urban White Paper, Our Towns and Cities: The Future; which states that “the regeneration progress is patchy” (2001, p16).

**Conclusion: What of Neukölln?**
My conclusion suggests the present urban atmosphere in the government designated deprived neighbourhoods of Neukölln did not arise from a kind of artists’ or squatters’ rebellion as it did in Kreuzberg. It was overly optimistic to expect the art in the public realm intervention programmes as part of an integrated urban regeneration strategy to develop in a similar way to Kreuzberg’s “spontaneous” artists post war and pre-unification rebellion. Kreuzberg’s development over decades evolved between the environments of two competing post WW11 ideologies of capitalism and communism.

Neukölln like Kreuzberg has always had its gritty side. However unlike Neukölln, Kreuzberg post-war fragmented urban landscape hid an urban subculture that influenced the development of a unique and turbulent cultural life (Mendoza 2011: Sheridan 2005). Seen from afar, it may have been unique but it was no utopia.

Before the unification of 1991 Kreuzberg had roads that realistically went nowhere, and if they did the very connection they had to Berlin Mitte before the Second World War ended abruptly after the construction of the Berlin wall. Kreuzberg’s bomb-damaged buildings became home for the poor or poorly connected. It also gave artists and designers amongst the disconnected the opportunity, be it somewhat dramatic, to evolve in an urban environment where there were no rapid changes to the urban landscape. This is because urban planning perspectives did not occur till later (Sheridan 2005). Kreuzberg with its low rents and connections to industrial suburbs such as Neukölln and Wedding became one of the Berlin working class suburbs of choice for many guest workers, especially those from Turkey. Unlike todays conditions it was also a time of economic growth.
The application of art as a strategy to aid social integration is only one element in a total strategy for interventions to build social capital and strategies for the inclusion of ethnic minorities. The function of art is as a catalyst to draw residents out of their apartments and into the shared space of the public realm to connect with one another in their individual interpretation of the meaning of art. Whatever the images of art portrayed, it functioned as a catalyst in a journey towards social connectedness and social cohesion, which required a revitalised built environment formulated on ecological principles to give it longevity. In partnership with the refurbishment of its social housing areas and the construction of new four storey apartments, a strategy to improve the social life and economic situation in some of Neukölln’s more deprived neighbourhoods commenced in 1999.

The refurbishment of older apartments was its contribution towards development of social capital, but only if refurbishment was underpinned by a community partnership and included an ecological factor. The factors necessary for this regeneration were the participation of residents, commercial and creative enterprises and government agencies in the refurbishment of residential and shared-garden areas, as well as ongoing maintenance and energy programmes.

Informal bridging ties developed initially between neighbours because they did not have to vacate their apartments or districts during re-modernising, and therefore shared the progress and experience of refurbishment with one another. This collaborative approach between residents of social housing precincts and government instigated strategies helped in the development of socially cohesive neighbourhoods. Residents of refurbished apartments were involved in re-modelling plans under the Social City programme for their apartments, utilising the advantages of larger balconies and greening of the public domain for social connectedness between neighbours, and in informal connections with streetscape activities and neighbourhood facilities.

Art and innovative concepts associated with architecture and construction benefited from the inclusion of social and arts-related integration programmes. Such programmes assisted school leavers from migrant families to add to their more functional skills.

Integrated programmes empowered members of parallel society and others to participate more fully in a multicultural society. Community engagement helped citizens to form a more
robust collective identity with their neighbourhood and with one another because of physical improvements to the built environment, and helped balance out population mobility between neighbourhoods.

An integrated approach may be low-risk because of its ecological component and strong operational connections to the wider community, but it is difficult to manage all top-down and bottom-up actors simultaneously. Some politicians have expressed scepticism at the continued application of the Socially Integrated City concept which is delicately poised between success and failure to unite different cultural groups in a sea of continuing economic turmoil.

Reflections on my research: Choice, limitations, contributions of, and directions for further research

The final few paragraphs are a review of my choice of the two case studies, my limitations and difficulties in conducting research, a review of research questions and directions for future research. At no time was I motivated to change my choice of Croydon and Neukölln – quite simply because I had spent a lot of time deciding upon where my research could take place. My final choice was made easier because of my extended involvement in European and Islamic life; my birthplace of Beckenham, Kent and the case study areas similar regeneration start dates involving two aspects of urban life – the town centre and neighbourhood districts.

Having decided upon my research question in 1998, with no desire to change it because it was an extension of my Masters research, the tyranny of distance was my first considered major limitation. However human communication was the primary obstacle to gathering and analysing research of any genre. After many years of successful communication with UK and German organisations I was aware of how my research process could proceed because of the professionalism of my UK and German interviewees in determining any outcomes of research.

My research was potentially limited because of the wide multi-disciplinary nature of the urban environment encompassing architectural, social, cultural and economic issues – with an integrative approach necessary for effective implementation of programmes.

I realised that although initially coming from an engineering, building, environmental land-use and project background my research was centred on a sociologist’s interpretation of the use of space in urbanised society and there were limits to the interpretation of the use of space. In my initial submission my desire to link Croydon’s future neighbourhood 2008 regeneration with its current CBD regeneration proposals I was unnecessarily critical about neighbourhoods where enhancement programmes were not due to commence until 2008. Beside my initial submission expanded my research parameters beyond my designated research objectives.

The purpose of using two case studies was each dealt with neighbourhood and town centre settings. Because they were in different locations there was an opportunity to learn from both.
Thus there was no need to expand and complicate my Croydon research to other areas such as Canary Wharf therefore diluting my data analysis.

Initially the combination of art in the public realm as a complement to the refurbishment of residential apartments in Neukölln as part of regeneration programme presented me with different interpretations of social integration strategies. It was through repeated visits that the benefits of small programmes over larger ones were observed. With each centre the need to use all available top-down and bottom-up local resources appeared to me to be obvious. Not so obvious were difficulties in achieving the full cooperation of top-down and bottom-up operatives.

My research into social connectedness and the built environment has contributed to an understanding of the role of social connectedness in bringing people of different socio-cultural background together as a pre-cursor to the formalisation of more robust community networks. Resident networks contribute to social capital even in the blandest of built environments, for example modernist social housing high-rise precincts initial social connections between inhabitants can be established through creative intervention programmes.

There has to a vehicle, an event the more spontaneous the better to make up for built environments where there are few opportunities for informal personal encounters to occur, or environments where there is a fee for entry.

Having just completed another 2012 European research trip (UK-London, Germany-Berlin and Köln; France- Paris and Lyon, and wide areas of Italy) I will be producing subsequent papers. One will highlight the treatment of public and private space by smokers in regional and large urban centres. The second paper will discuss the impact of cultural differences to the socio-economic performance of towns and cities. My further research (extending from 2012 London, Berlin and Lyon visits and interviews) further considers the question of parallel societies and population mobility on socially cohesive and integrated societies. London’s Canary Wharf could also form the basis of further research on social connectedness and the built environment – in urban environments built by business for business purposes.
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