# Placemaking & Place Research

This work process involves Design Research that focuses on gathering Qualitative Data, through User Research, User Interviews, and Observational Data gathering, and uses Analysis methods such as Coding Interview Transcripts and UCD tools to synthesise Insights.

Placemaking and Place Research

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# In Depth Research Project

**Placemaking and Public Space**

I conducted an in-depth research project into the role of "Placemaking", the process of shaping Public Space and its ability to impact community identity and wellbeing.

The study compared the processes, ideology, methods, goals and overall impact of several of organisation types and vehicles of Placemaking in the geographical area of London SE1.

**Methodology**
- Human Centred Design
- User Centred Design
- Whole System Design
- Design Thinking

**Tools**
- Expert Interviews
- Coding & Analysis of Transcripts
- The Public Life Data Protocol - Observational data

# Conducting Expert Interviews

**Preparing for Expert Interviews:**

I identified several organisations based on their geographical location and the availability of observable Placemaking projects for analysis.

Expert interview candidates would need to be in a senior position, so as to comment on strategy, and goals, but also have a good understanding of process and methodology.y.

Based on initial research into the available organisations, and including a range of **four types of Placemaking organisation**, I defined a short list of interview candidates to approach, and recruited them from the below type of organisations:

- Business Improvement Districts
- Social Enterprise organisations
- Identity & way-finding organisations
- Community Action Projects

| Final Organisations Chosen |
| --- |
| 4 Business Improvement District Organisations |
| We are Waterloo |
| London Bridge City |
| Better Bankside |
| Southbank BID |
| 1 Identity and Wayfinding Organisation |
| Applied Wayfinding - Legible London |
| 2 Social Enterprise Organisation |
| Mercato Metropolitano Market |
| Better Bankside - Flat Iron Square |
| 1 Community Action Organization |
| Lamlash Community Gardens |

# Conducting Expert Interviews

**Convergent and Inductive Interview Strategy:**
I decided to use a convergent and inductive Interview Strategy, as it would allow for open and unstructured interviews to be conducted without leading candidates, or creating researcher bias based on proving a pre-existing hypothesis.

This research strategy would allow me to find any common themes that emerged between organisations, and make an unbiased true comparison between similarities, consistencies, and divergences in approaches.

To provide some framework to the expert interviews, and give context, I defined **nine potential topics of discussion,** which was raised at the outset of the interview, for the candidate to discuss in any priority, or in any depth they saw fit.

## Desired Outcome:

- Compare and contrast the methods processes and objectives on a range of Placemaking projects and range of placemaking organisations.

## Methods and Tools used:

- Primary Research Expert Interviews.

## Discussion and Processing Steps

As previously mentioned, an inductive process, with no preconceived hypothesis was used to interview the experts from the chosen Placemaking organisations. The aim was to look for potential problem areas that required solutions and find consensus on the methods practitioners considered best practice. To eliminate both expert practitioner and researcher bias, caution was exercised when giving experts guiding themes to remain in scope and on topic when being interviewed. In addition, the interview was deliberately not steered to get specific answers, rather, the expert was encouraged to speak freely on all topics relevant to the research (Driscoll, 2011). The guiding themes of the interviews were as follows:

- Goals
- Outcomes
- Partnerships
- Challenges

- Methods
- Measurements
- Users
- Testing

- Mature Business Improvement Districts

# Conducting Expert Interviews

**Sample Data Collection, Placemaking Organisations Expert interview candidates.**
I chose candidates in senior positions, so they could comment on strategy and goals, as well as on process and methodology.

| Sample Data Collection: Placemaking Organisations | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interview Date | Interview Candidate | Sample Profile: Position in Organisation | Sample Profile: Time in Position | Candidate Recruitment Method | Consent to record and share data? | Candidate Interview Method | Interview highlights: Themes raised at Interview outset: |
| Tuesday 10th July | Ben Stephenson | Chief Executive | 3 Years | Email request for a research interview | Yes, consented | Telephone interview | Goals. Outcomes. Partnerships. Challenges. Methods. Measurement. Users. Testing. Mature BIDs. |
| Friday 13th July | Craig Hurring | Director of Marketing and Communications | 4 Months | Email request for a research interview | Yes, consented | In person interview | Goals. Outcomes. Partnerships. Challenges. Methods. Measurement. Users. Testing. Mature BIDs. |
| Friday 13th July | Jack Skillen | Director of Placeshaping | 2 Years | Email request for a research interview | Yes, consented | In person interview | Goals. Outcomes. Partnerships. Challenges. Methods. Measurement. Users. Testing. Mature BIDs. |
| Monday 23rd July | Valerie Beirne | Urban Forest Project Manager | 10 years | Email request for a research interview | Yes, consented | In person interview | Goals. Outcomes. Partnerships. Challenges. Methods. Measurement. Users. Testing. Mature BIDs. |
| Wednesday 25th July | Tim Fendley | Founder, Director | 13 years | Email request for a research interview | Yes, consented | Telephone Interview | Goals. Outcomes. Partnerships. Challenges. Methods. Measurement. Users. Testing. |
| Wednesday 25th July | Vicki Exall | Head of Partnerships | 2 years | Email request for a research interview | Yes, consented | Telephone interview | Goals. Outcomes. Partnerships. Challenges. Methods. Measurement. Users. Testing. |
| Wednesday 26th July | Karen Chung | Founder, spokesperson | 3 years | Email request for a research interview | Yes, consented | Email interview | Goals. Outcomes. Partnerships. Challenges. Methods. Measurement. Users. Testing. |

# Interviews Transcripts Analysis & Coding
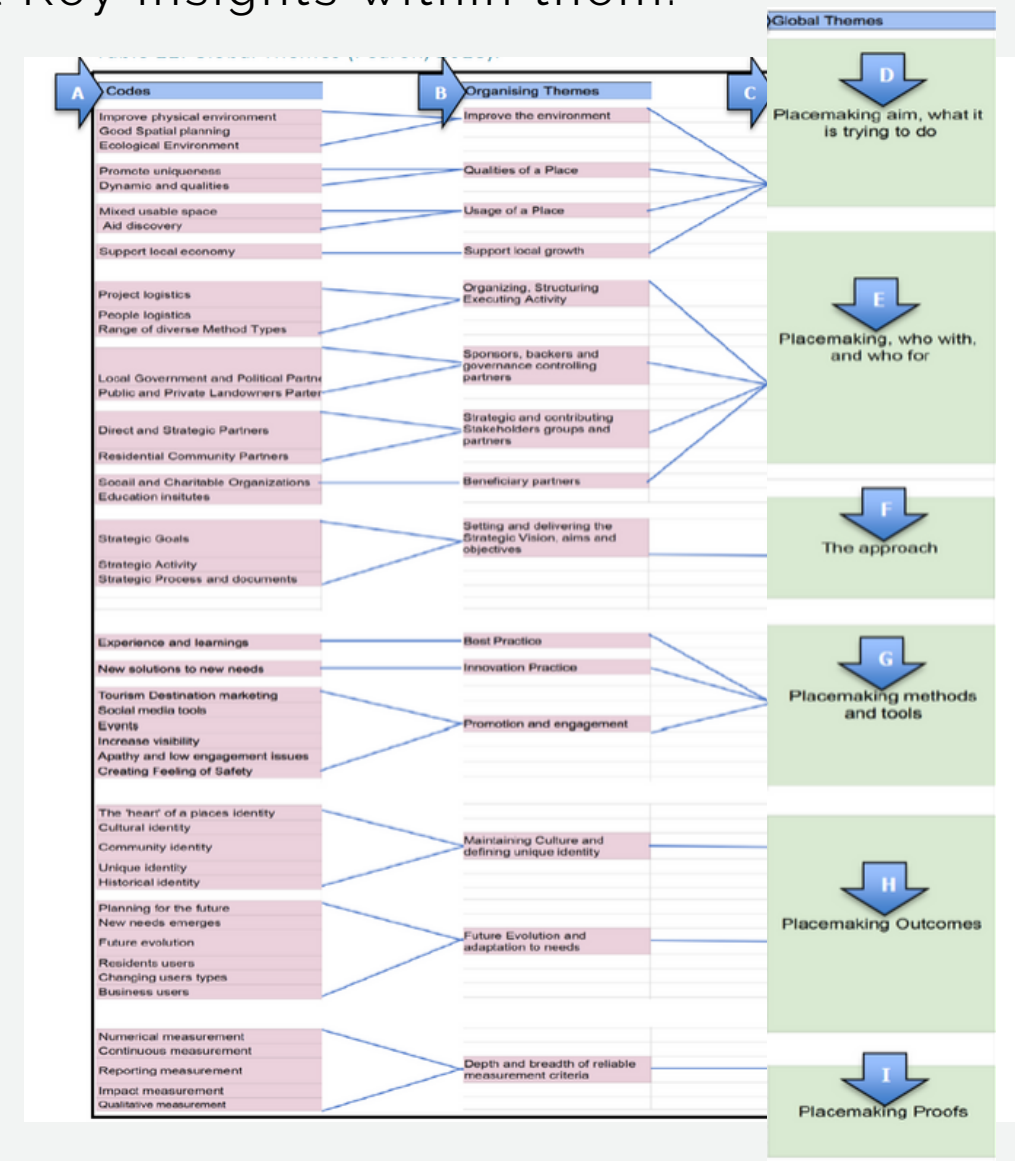
# Interview Transcripts Analysis & Coding

**Interviews Transcripts Coding & Analysis:**
I extracted the **Subtopics** in the raw data acquired from the seven interview transcripts by grouping related similar or duplicate topics and iterating the process until all subtopic groups were stable. Next, I identified a name for each group of subtopics.

TThese named groups now formed the **Major Themes** extracted from the interview data. To further refine the data, and gain both overarching (Major) themes as well as deeper more focused insights, I then applied a descriptive name or phrase to the **Key Insights** extracted from the various subtopics. Some Major Themes contain several Key Insights within them.

### Table 1

| Expert Interviews | Major Topics | Sub Topics |
|---|---|---|
| 1.Southbank BID | | History |
| 2. We Are Waterloo BID | **Background** | Learning systems |
| 3. London Bridge City BID | | Trust gained over time |
| 4. Better Bankside BID | | Timeframe |
| 5. Applied Wayfinding | | A mature BID |
| 6. Mercato Metropolitano | | Background |
| 7. Castle Place | | BID Pilot scheme |
| | | Urban contexts |
| | | Meet community need |
| | | Create alternative option |
| | **Goals** | |
| | | Public realm |
| | | Environment |
| | | Safe and pleasant |
| | | Management and maintenance |
| | | World class physical environment |
| | | Residential developments |
| | | Proposition |
| | | Retail in new developments |
| | | Trend for co-working spaces |
| | | Ground level |
| | | Pedestrianizing |
| | | Increasing the quality of space |
| | | Diversity of space |
| | | Effectiveness of the space |
| | | Look like |

### Table 2

| Expert Interviews | Major Topics | Sub Topics | Codes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.Southbank BID | | History | |
| 2. We Are Waterloo BID | **Background** | Learning systems | Experience and learnings |
| 3. London Bridge City BID | | Trust gained over time | |
| 4. Better Bankside BID | | Timeframe | |
| 5. Applied Wayfinding | | A mature BID | |
| 6. Mercato Metropolitano | | Background | |
| 7. Castle Place | | BID Pilot scheme | |
| | | Urban contexts | |
| | | Meet community need | New solutions to new needs |
| | | Create alternative option | |
| | **Goals** | | |
| | | Public realm | Improve physical environment |
| | | Environment | |
| | | Safe and pleasant | |
| | | Management and maintenance | |
| | | World class physical environment | |
| | | Residential developments | |
| | | Proposition | |
| | | Retail in new developments | |
| | | Trend for co-working spaces | |
| | | Ground level | |
| | | Pedestrianizing | Good Spatial planning |
| | | Increasing the quality of space | |
| | | Diversity of space | |
| | | Effectiveness of the space | |
| | | Look like | |
| | | Not sterile | |
| | | Retains uniqueness | Promote uniqueness |
| | | Marketing | |

### Table 3

| Codes | Organising Themes | Global Themes |
|---|---|---|
| Improve physical environment / Good Spatial planning / Ecological Environment | Improve the environment | **Placemaking aim, what it is trying to do** |
| Promote uniqueness / Dynamic and qualities | Qualities of a Place | |
| Mixed usable space / Aid discovery | Usage of a Place | |
| Support local economy | Support local growth | |
| Project logistics / People logistics / Range of diverse Method Types | Organizing, Structuring Executing Activity | **Placemaking, who with, and who for** |
| Local Government and Political Partners / Public and Private Landowners Partners | Sponsors, backers and governance controlling partners | |
| Direct and Strategic Partners / Residential Community Partners | Strategic and contributing Stakeholders groups and partners | |
| Social and Charitable Organizations / Education institutes | Beneficiary partners | |
| Strategic Goals / Strategic Activity / Strategic Process and documents | Setting and delivering the Strategic Vision, aims and objectives | **The approach** |
| Experience and learnings | Best Practice | |
| New solutions to new needs | Innovation Practice | **Placemaking methods and tools** |
| Tourism Destination marketing / Social media tools / Events / Increase visibility / Apathy and low engagement issues / Creating Feeling of Safety | Promotion and engagement | |
| The 'heart' of a places identity / Cultural Identity / Community identity / Unique Identity / Historical identity | Maintaining Culture and defining unique identity | |
| Planning for the future / New needs emerges / Future evolution / Residents users / Changing users types / Business users | Future Evolution and adaptation to needs | **Placemaking Outcomes** |
| Numerical measurement / Continuous measurement / Reporting measurement / Impact measurement / Qualitative measurement | Depth and breadth of reliable measurement criteria | **Placemaking Proofs** |

# Research Product

**Organising and Global Themes, Synthesised Codes**

All expert interview transcripts raw data has now been converted into valuable insights to guide the research further.

I have extracted the **Subtopics,** grouped these under **Major Themes** of the Research, further broken those themes down into Key insights otherwise know as **Research Codes** which can further direct research and be a used for further analysis. Research Codes can them be grouped under their high-level Thematics, defining a set of **Organising Themes** (the why or meaning criteria of findings).

Finally, to obtain the highest level view of the data, I grouped and named the Organising Themes into their high level **Global Themes.**
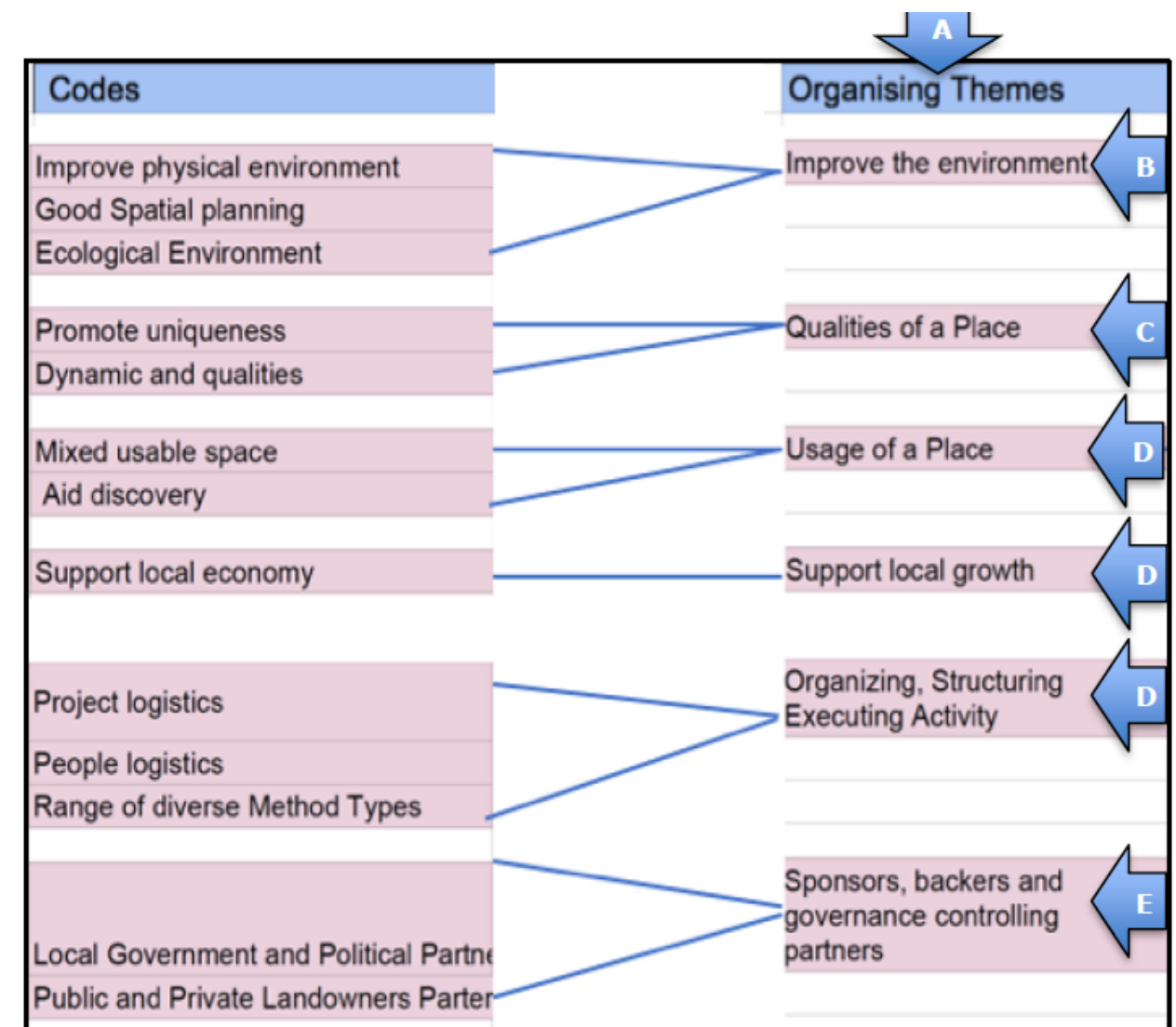
# Observational Data Analysis

# Placemaking and Public Space

**O**bservational Data Gathering:

As part of the research project I conducted into the role of "Placemaking" in shaping Public Space, and its impact on community identity and wellbeing, I compared installations by the following organisation types:

- Business Improvement Districts
- Social Enterprise organisations
- Identity & way-finding organisations
- Community Action Projects

**Methodology**
- Human Centred Design
- User Centred Design
- Whole System Design
- Design Thinking

**Tools**
- Expert Interviews
- Coding & Analysis of Transcripts
- The Public Life Data Protocol - Observational data



MEASURING THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

**PROTECTION**

FEELING SAFE
- Protection against traffic and accidents
- Protection for pedestrians
- Eliminating fear of traffic
- Low speed

FEELING SECURE
- Protection against crime and violence
- Lively public realm
- Eyes on the street
- Overlapping functions day and night
- Good lighting

MICROCLIMATE
- Sun/shade
- Heat/coolness
- Shelter from wind/breeze
- Minimize pollution
- Minimise dust, noise, glare

**COMFORT**

CONNECTED
- Part of a pedestrian network
- Links to destinations
- Accessible with bicycle
- Links to public transportation

SEEING
- Easy orientation
- Reasonable viewing distance
- Unhindered views
- Orientation at night

WALKABLE
- Room for walking
- No obstacles
- Good surfaces
- Accessibility for everyone

TALK & LISTEN
- Low noise levels
- Dimensions that stimulates meeting others
- Street furniture that provides 'talkscapes'

SIT & STAY
- Edge effect/attractive zones for standing/staying
- Zones for sitting and resting
- Good places to sit with view, sun, people

ACTIVITY & FUNCTIONS
- Physical activity, exercise, play
- Variety of functions that stimulates activity
- By day and night
- In summer and winter

**ENJOYMENT**

HUMAN SCALE
- Buildings and spaces designed to human scale
- Dimensions and detailing that stimulate our senses
- Spatial enclosures

IDENTITY
- History
- Sense of place
- Local identity
- Amenity values

SENSES
- Good design and detailing
- Good materials
- Fine views
- Trees, plants, water

# Placemaking and Public Space

In the observational data gathering on Placemaking installations, I used the **Gehl Institute - Public Life Diversity** and the **Public Life Data Protocolas Toolkits** as frameworks to define the criteria of observations. Using five categories of "Human Centred" criteria such as Active Social, Passive Social, Protection criteria, Comfort and Enjoyment to assess and grade the Placemaking Instillations.

# Observational Analysis

**Measuring Human Experience in "Wayfinding" Placemaking Installations:**

I used a Human Centred Criteria based on the "Public Life Diversity" and the "Public Life Data Protocols" Toolkits to conduct the observational Analysis and a double entry notebook format to record my observations and initial thoughts.
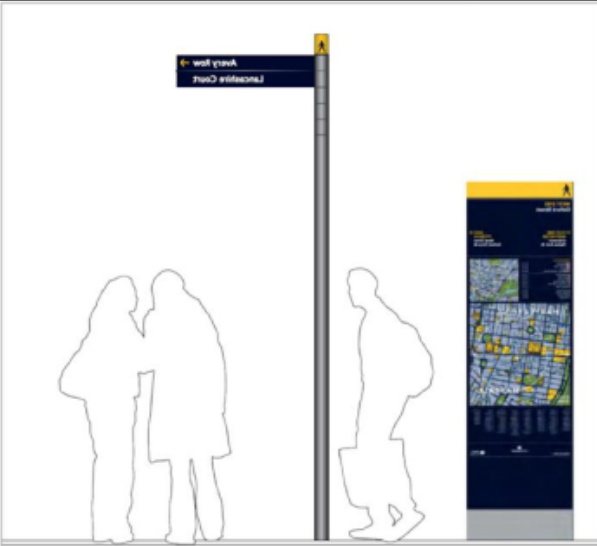


| Observations | Thoughts |
|---|---|
| For this observational analysis site visit, I went to Lower Marsh Street and market, which are managed by 'We Are Waterloo' Business Improvement District. Lower Marsh Street is a historic location in the Waterloo area.

I observed a wide road, with a number of cafes bars and other retail provisions, such as clothing stores, music shops, and Community group premises.

There was little through traffic from cars and the addition of seating and benches in a paved open area.

Lower Marsh Market had a number of food stalls operating along the length of the street. These stalls used branded market tents which had the Business Improvement Districts logo on them. | When measured through the toolkits, I found that Lower Marsh Street and market seem to meet many of the criteria for Active social, Comfort criteria, and Enjoyment criteria.
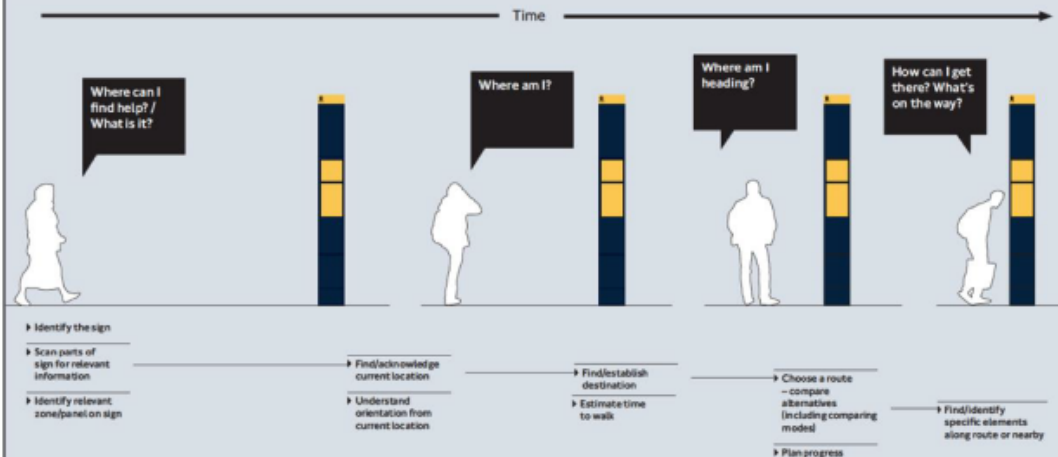
Wide streets create a pedestrian-friendly road, cafes, bars and other retail provide Social activity and Entertainment, in particular, the activity of the market food stalls which at lunchtime drew crowds of visitors.

The addition of open paved areas with seating creates a place for people to stop, sit and not just pass through delivering Comfort and Human Scale Enjoyment criteria. |

# Observational Analysis

**Measuring Human Experience in "Community Action Projects" Placemaking Installations:**

# Observational Analysis

**Measuring Human Experience in "Social Enterprise" Placemaking Installations:**

# Observational Analysis

**Measuring Human Experience in "Southbank Business Improvement Districts" Placemaking Installations:**

# Research Product

## Observational Insights to Measure Human Experience

I analysed all the data gathered from the observational studies conducted at the eight Placemaking sites. Data was captured relating to the five Human Experience criteria that I derived from the Gehl Institute - **Public Life Diversity** and the **Public Life Data Protocols Toolkits**.

I collated this data gathered into a table, according the 14 detailed Human Experience criteria, this provided each Placemaking location with a score out of 14.

Once collated the output was a comparative table of all sites from the observational study, rank with a score out of 14 for Human Experience.

| Observational Analysis Criteria | Category Tally by Site Visit | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Applied Wayfinding | We Are Waterloo | London Bridge City | Better Bankside | Southbank BID | Mercato Metropolitano | Flat Iron Square | Castle Place |
| **Social Activity - Active Crieria** | | | | | | | | |
| Dog walking, Taking pictures, Playing, Active recreation, Talking, Strolling, Eating | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| **Social Activity - Passive Crieria** | | | | | | | | |
| Watching culture, Parallel activity, Coworking, Commercial activity | ☐ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| **Protection Criteria** | | | | | | | | |
| Feeling safe | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| Feeling secure | ☐ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☐ | |
| Microclimates | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☐ |
| **Comfort Criteria** | | | | | | | | |
| Connected | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| Walkable | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | |
| Sit and stay | ☐ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | |
| Seeing | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☐ | ☑ | ☑ |
| Talk and listen | ☐ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| Activity and functions | ☐ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| **Enjoyment Criteria** | | | | | | | | |
| Human scale | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| Identity | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| Senses | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ | ☑ |
| **Scores:** | | | | | | | | |
| | 8/14 | 13/14 | 13/14 | 14/14 | 14/14 | 13/14 | 14/14 | 12/14 |

Claire Fearon | 2019

# Strategic Frameworks

# Criteria & Checklist

**Research criteria and quality checklist for a prototype framework**

Based on the research carried out, I defined a set of criteria and a Quality Checklist benchmark for the prototype framework.

## Collation of Placemaking Best Practice

| (How) Processes (When) Stages (What) Sequences | (What) (Where) Placemaking Aim, Objective | (Who) Partners, Backers, User collaboration, Governance | (How 1) Strategy, Goals, Approach, | (How 2) Tools, Methods, Placemaking types, Design Thinking, Human Centered Design, | (Why) Impact, Outcomes, Experiences, Mixed uses | (What) Proof, Evidence, (How) Usability, Measurement | (Future) Sustainability, Evolution, Growth, Open source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sequences | Placemaking objective | Partners | Strategy | Best practice | Outcomes | Proof | Sustainability |
| Stages | Physical environment | Sponsors | Vision | Tools | Impact | Evidence | Evolution |
| Participation ladder | Spatial planning | Backers | Goals | Methods | Experiences | Numerical Measurement | Growth |
| Strategic Objective | Economic improvement | User Collaboration | Approach | Learnings knowledge share | Mixed uses | Contiguous change Measurement | |
| Strategic Requirements | Ecological improvement | Governance | | Innovation | Local Identity | Reporting Measurement | |
| Governance system | Social enterprises | Local Government Partners | | Evolving needs | Community Identity | Qualitative Measurement | |
| | Quality of a space | Landowners Partenrs | | Promotion and events | Historical Identity | | |
| | Mixed Usages of a place | Strategic Partners | | Visibility | Future plans and use | | |
| | Active social uses | Beneficiary Partners | | User Safety | Business needs met | | |
| | Passive social uses | logistics Partners | | User confidence | User needs met | | |
| | | Implementation Partners | | Social media | | | |
| | | Residential Community Partners | | Placemaking Types | | | |
| | Workbench Matrix Tool | Participation Ladder Tool | | Design Thinking Tools | | | Open Source guide |
| Workbench Process Method | Public Life Framework Tool | Stakeholder Involvement Tool | | Human Centred Design Toolkit | Social enterprise tools | Usability Testing | Quality Profile Checklist Tool |

| Placemaking Quality Profile Checklist | Plus | Minus |
|---|---|---|
| **Quality criteria** | | |
| **Economic** | | |
| Economic improvement | ✔ | |
| Physical environment | ✔ | |
| Landowner Partnerships | ✔ | |
| Strategic Partnerships | ✔ | |
| Beneficiary partnerships | ✔ | |
| User safety | ✔ | |
| User confidence | ✔ | |
| Business needs met | ✔ | |
| Placemaking Types | ✔ | |
| Innovation | ✔ | |
| Visibility | ✔ | |
| Promotion | ✔ | |
| **Social** | | |
| Physical environment | ✔ | |
| Experiences | ✔ | |
| Mixed uses | ✔ | |
| Active social uses | ✔ | |
| Passive social uses | ✔ | |
| Social enterprises | ✔ | |
| Local identity | ✔ | |
| Community identity | ✔ | |
| Residential community Partnerships | ✔ | |
| User's needs are met | ✔ | |
| Continuous Change Measurement | ✔ | |
| Qualitative Measurement | ✔ | |
| **Ecologic** | | |
| Ecological improvement | ✔ | |
| Physical environment | ✔ | |
| Spatial planning | ✔ | |
| **Culture** | | |
| Local identity | ✔ | |
| Community identity | ✔ | |
| Historical identity | ✔ | |
| Quality of space | ✔ | |
| Experiences | ✔ | |
| Social media | ✔ | |
| Events | ✔ | |

# Prototype Framework

**Definition of prototype framework and criteria for Placemaking concept ideation**

I used the criteria and checklist I established, to define a prototype recommended framework for future Placemaking projects, based on a recommended collaborative community and industry consultation approach.

| Step-by-Step Guide | Project Stages | Project Partners | Inputs | Processes | Toolkits | Testing Criteria | Output Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gather the project partners and complete the inputs and processes using the tools. Conduct the testing then measure and review results. | **Stage 1:** Strategic Objective | • Project Team<br>• PM Governance<br>• User Representative<br>• Strategic Partners | • Strategic Requirements | • Clarifying Strategic Goal and Strategic Partners | • Strategic Process Tool **Participation Ladder** (Breman, (2008)<br>• **Stakeholder Involvement** (Cilliers, 2010) | • **Strategic Alignment** | Project:<br>PM Gov:<br>User:<br>Review: |
| Gather the project partners and complete the inputs and processes using the tools. Conduct the testing then measure and review results. | **Stage 2:** Project Definition | • Project Team<br>• User Representative<br>• Experience Experts<br>• Strategic Partners | • Users Needs<br>• Project Goals<br>• PM Sponsor Goals<br>• PM Best Practice | • Define Project Goal | • Definiton process tool **Workbench Matrix** (Habiforum, (2008)<br>• Best Practice Checklist **Quality profile checklist** (Habiforum, (2008) | • **Type of Experience selection** | Project:<br>PM Gov:<br>User:<br>Review: |
| Gather the project partners and complete the inputs and processes using the tools. Conduct the testing then measure and review results. | **Stage 3:** Project Conception | • Project Team<br>• User Representative<br>• Experience Experts<br>• Strategic Partners | • Case studies<br>• Learnings<br>• User Goals<br>• Experience Design expertise | • Knowledge Share<br>• Project Coordination<br>• Expertise Identified | • **Public Life Framework Tool** (Gehl Agency 2013)<br>• **Design Thinking Toolkit** (Design Council, 2005)<br>• **HCD Toolkit** (IDEO, 2015) | • **Project Concept for fit** | Project:<br>PM Gov:<br>User:<br>Review: |
| Gather the project partners and complete the inputs and processes using the tools. Conduct the testing then measure and review results. | **Stage 4:** Project Delivery | • Project Team<br>• User Representative<br>• Operational Partners<br>• PM Governance | • KPI's<br>• Functional criteria<br>• Economic criteria | • Porotype<br>• Implement | • PM Experience Type Toolkit<br>• Pilots<br>• **Social Enterprise Toolkit** (Dees, 1998) | • **Test KPI's**<br>• **Test Quality of Experience** | Project:<br>PM Gov:<br>User:<br>Review: |
| Gather the project partners and complete the inputs and processes using the tools. Conduct the testing then measure and review results. | **Stage 5:** Post Implementation | • Project Team<br>• User Representative<br>• PM Governance Strategic Partners | • Final Project Implementation | • Measure projects current success<br>• Measure projects Future success | • **Open Source Guide** (Barrie, 2010)<br>• **Quality profile checklist** (Habiforum 2005<br>• Usability testing | • **Test Usability**<br>• **Implementation Sustainability** | Project:<br>PM Gov:<br>User:<br>Review: |

# Thank You.

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Placemaking and Place Research

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