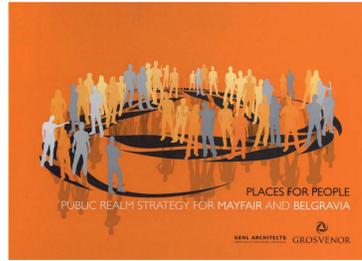


A Public Realm Strategy for Mayfair and Belgravia



This strategy was prepared by Gehl Architects for Grosvenor and launched in March 2007.

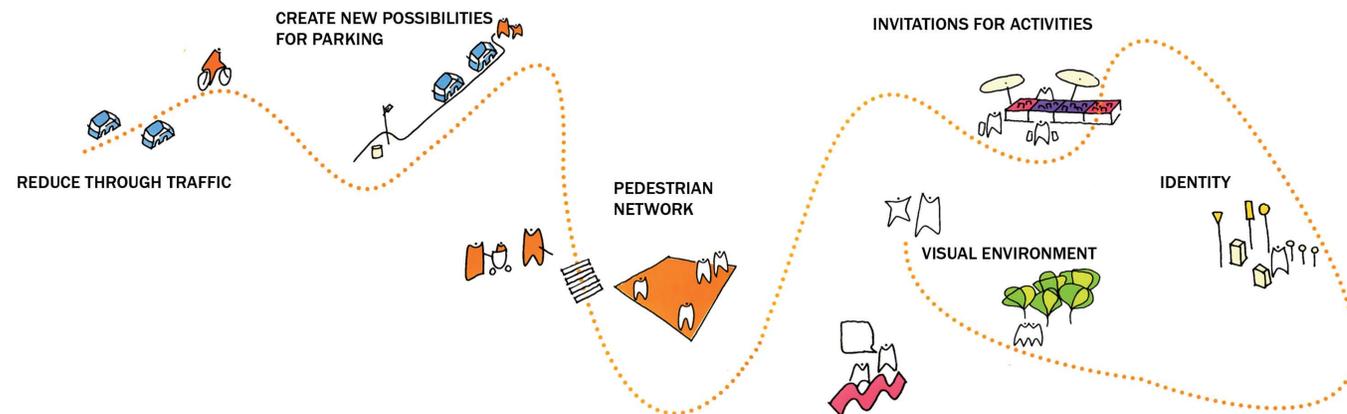
Places for People undertook a broad review of the quality of the public realm in Mayfair and Belgravia. Although the two Estates have many exceptional assets and qualities, they both display some of the adverse characteristics common to many cities today.

Key Issues identified included:

- The outstanding architectural quality of the buildings is seldom complemented by high quality public realm.
- Poor visual environment – the quality of the street elements such as signage and furniture is poor, and the streets are often too cluttered.
- Visually and spatially the streets and squares are dominated by traffic and parked vehicles, and not celebrated as quality public spaces.
- The domination by traffic has created strong barriers to pedestrian movement.
- Carriageways, especially in Belgravia, can be very wide. This encourages increased traffic speeds, affecting pedestrian movement and comfort.
- Pedestrians and cyclists have not been accorded sufficient priority.
- Public spaces are not fully utilised and most recreation takes place in the adjacent Royal Parks.

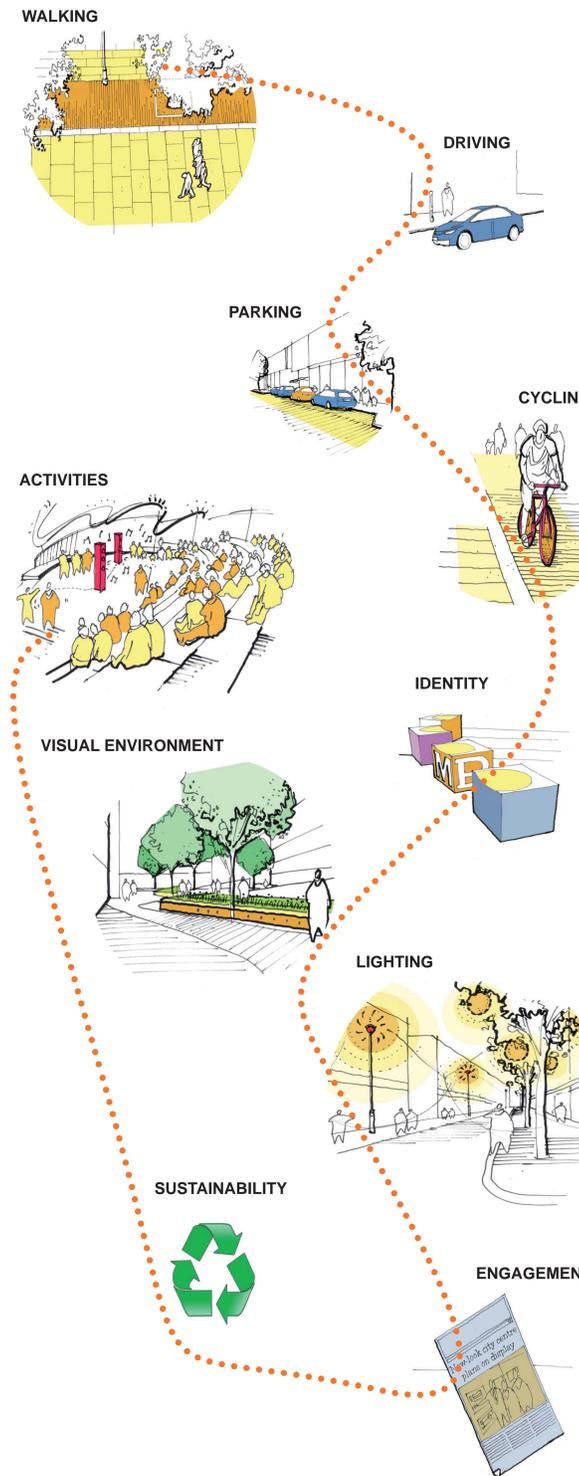
Places for People identified six 'main strategies' for addressing these issues:

- Reducing through traffic by reintroducing two-way streets, better traffic management, and reducing roadspace.
- Considering new possibilities for parking including 'pocket parking' and the use of underground facilities.
- Improving the pedestrian network by ensuring access for all, widening pavements, providing dedicated crossings, continuing pedestrian surfacing across minor roads, introducing shared vehicular and pedestrian spaces, and enhancing the public realm.
- Inviting activities and events whilst avoiding conflict with residents.
- Enhancing the identity of each estate through the arts, planting and local amenities.
- Enhancing the visual environment of each estate by reducing clutter, improving maintenance, and using high quality materials for surfaces, lighting and street furniture.



Moving forward: The Detailed Design Approach

These Gehl Strategies need to be translated into detailed scheme designs for improving the public realm and street environment. Each of the joint Grosvenor-Westminster schemes will therefore follow 10 Detailed Design themes or objectives¹, in summary:



Walking

- Introduce 'shared spaces'² in appropriate strategic locations.
- Widen footways, minimise street clutter and provide designated pedestrian crossings.
- Extend pedestrian surfacing across lanes and alleyways where feasible.

Driving

- Promote the reintroduction of two way streets in appropriate locations.
- Introduce better traffic and speed management through material selection and the location of street elements such as parking, trees and furniture.
- Reduce carriageway widths where appropriate and where it enhances its context.

Parking

- Reduce the dominance of parking within each estate.
- Avoid long rows of parking and improve its visual incorporation into the streetscape.
- Encourage the better use of existing basement and multi-storey parking facilities.

Cycling

- Create a high quality, coherent and legible environment that accommodates cyclists.
- Create attractive and logical cycling opportunities though not necessarily through separate cycle lanes.
- Introduce cycle parking at appropriate regular intervals and at points of known demand.

Activities

- Introduce opportunities for various activities & events whilst being sensitive to residential areas and businesses.
- Promote opportunities for different types of activities, whether active or passive.

Identity

- Establish a distinctive, coordinated and simple palette of high quality surfacing and street furniture.
- Ensure a high quality estate wide treatment, enhanced in strategic locations.
- Use Westminster City's distinctive black livery for street furniture items as the norm.

Visual Environment

- Ensure that materials and street furniture items are co-ordinated, high quality and in character with their context.
- Ensure that materials and street furniture items do not dominate streets and spaces.
- Enhance street trees and planting where appropriate, and promote the arts and use of water features.

Lighting

- Introduce a coordinated and stimulating approach to lighting across each estate in appropriate locations, enhance character, local amenity and create a distinctive and memorable experience.
- Ensure lighting schemes are energy efficient and sustainable.
- Minimise intrusive light and light pollution.

Sustainability

- Promote whole life costing in the design of public realm schemes.
- Ensure the choice of materials selected and implemented reflects anticipated high levels of use and represent long term sustainable solutions.
- Support the use of more sustainable transport modes and patterns.

Engagement

- Promote engagement with communities and stakeholders.

Footnotes:

1. These Themes will be featured in a forthcoming Public Realm Handbook for Mayfair and Belgravia soon to be published by Grosvenor.
2. Shared space is defined by CABE (Civilise Street Briefing, CABE SPACE, 2008) as being 'space in which different street users have equal entitlement and priority to the space', it 'strives to combine rather than separate the functions of street' and 'seeks to improve the living environment of people without needing to restrict or banish motorised traffic.'