Bone Wells Associates
Economic & Planning Consultants

strategic planning advice

Harrow Council

Harrow COUNCIL
LONDON

Wealdstone

Vitality Study & Regeneration Brief

Draft Final Report

8th December 2005

Strategic Planning Advice Limited
Erico House
93-99 Upper Richmond Road
SW15 2TG
Tel: 0208 785 5644
Fax: 0208 785 5645
Email: mcdonald@spa-ltd.co.uk

Michael **Beaman** LIMITED
regeneration solutions

environmental & transport planning

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Brief

The consultants' brief was to "advise on what is to be done next to arrest Wealdstone's decline and better its identity and appeal to local residents". This was to include:

- Evaluating previous studies
- Updating vitality profile for town centre
- Evaluating actions taken so far.

At a meeting with the Steering Group early in September the consultants were asked to produce a radical strategy for the town centre together with a fallback approach that would be available if the radical strategy proved not to be feasible.

1.2 Studies undertaken

The evaluation of existing analyses and recommendations and of their implementation has been undertaken through a series of studies, which are reported in the Appendices to the report:

1. Shopper interview survey
2. Socio-economic profile of the catchment population & employees
3. Residents' consultations
4. SWOT analysis of the town centre
5. Evaluation of competing centres
6. Investor interviews
7. Property market analyses
8. De-cluttering note & map
9. Evaluation of experience elsewhere
10. Transport options appraisal (including accidents and car parking)
11. References.

The client decided not to commission other surveys that were offered as optional additional items in the consultants' proposal: surveys of local employers especially the business and professional services in the town centre and the major firms in the immediate surrounding area. Since the study was intended to build on the large number of previous studies that have been undertaken on the town centre, it was not intended that the consultants would carry out an interview survey of retailers in the centre. In the event we held semi-structured interviews with some half dozen retailers.

1.3 Outline of the Report

This report comprises two further sections:

- An audit of the centre, the measures that have been taken, where that has now left the centre and the roles that the centre now performs.
- An evaluation of alternative strategies for the centre and recommended actions.

The report does not repeat at length evidence that is presented in the appendices, partly because much of that evidence is familiar to the client parties and partly in order to focus in the report on a succinct account of the centre, its prospects and the recommended actions.

2. Audit: Appraisal of Action Taken and Current State of Centre

2.1 Recent Trends Against District Centres

In this section we consider the factors that have led Wealdstone town centre to its present role and condition, review what that role is and the prospects for change and improvement and suggest options for the further development of the centre.

The town centre is a problem requiring to be addressed because it no longer, in the eyes of traders and shoppers who have known the centre over a number of years, performs the district shopping centre role it used to perform. This weakness is reflected primarily in the loss of High Street multiples and the loss of (or the failure to secure) a full-scale supermarket.

This downgrading of the role of the town centre has been experienced by many small town centres and suburban district centres. It results from the trend for the High Street multiples to gravitate towards larger centres, where they can tap into a larger consumer market and where the critical mass of retailers is large enough to attract complementary facilities and to draw large numbers of shoppers.

Supermarkets, which have become the typical anchor store for district centres, have considered Wealdstone twice (Asda and J Sainsbury) and rejected it, because it did not offer a sufficiently competitive trading environment for their operations. Safeway has also left the centre.

The trends towards larger shopping centres and larger supermarkets has been supported by the much increased mobility that most people in the UK have enjoyed as a result of widespread car ownership. In particular longer shop opening hours and the spread of two car ownership has given many people access to a car during shopping hours. This means it is much easier to access larger centres and stores and, correspondingly, less attractive to shop in smaller centres.

However it cannot be assumed that these trends are linear, that they will continue as now. There are already signs that retailing may move beyond larger stores and centres:

- Competitive pressures push retailers into finding new ways of reaching customers: in the food retailing sector operators are now filling the gap left at the local level with their “Local” and “Metro” formats and with the acquisition of large chains of convenience stores.
- The vacating of shops in smaller centres is creating opportunities for independent retailers, often operating in niche markets not served (adequately) by the major groups, independent retailers who offer a different shopping experience from that of the major stores.
- Environmental concerns are beginning to give a greater value to local services that can be reached with a shorter journey and by an alternative mode of transport to the car.
- The Government in Planning Policy Guidance 6 (Town Centres) is urging planning authorities to give more attention to smaller centres, partly in recognition of the role they play in maintaining appropriate services for lower income communities.
- New markets emerge, for example ethnic minorities and poorer populations, for whom suitable retail provision is needed.

- Consumers tastes change and their spending rises, allowing them to spend on items that have been unaffordable or unavailable e.g. mobile phones and home entertainment, both of which are often provided in local centres. Health and beauty services have also expanded and are often in local centres, being trades where the cost of entry (to opening a business) is relatively low.

Some of these trends are apparent in Wealdstone and have cushioned the centre from some of the harsher effects of its declining role (see Appendix 4). They also provide hints about where the focus for a strategy for the centre should be; we return to this later.

There are however local circumstances which exacerbate the competitive vulnerability of Wealdstone town centre:

- The longstanding effect of the railway and the limited crossing points in constraining the catchment area of the centre to the south and west.
- The limited size of the catchment area of the centre, which equates roughly to the two wards of Wealdstone and Marlborough, a population of some 18,000 within 800 metres (Appendix 2). This is considerably short of the 25-30,000 normally necessary for a viable district centre. The population is expected to increase by some 2-3,000 in the next 20 years, but it will still be insufficient, especially given the proximity of competing centres and stores. (This constraint might have been overturned if a supermarket had been attracted to Wealdstone as the catchment would have included many more car users and would have been considerably larger.)
- The proximity of Harrow, a major centre.
- The centre benefits from two additional sources of custom: some 8,500 people who work in nearby major firms such as Kodak and a similar number who are employed in the town centre itself (Appendix 2). However employment in some of the major firms has been declining, for example Kodak has reduced its labour force by nearly 600 people since October 2004 and further reductions are expected. (The Council is however working to secure replacement jobs in vacated premises.)

The excellent rail and tube services to Harrow and Wealdstone are of little relevance to the centre in its local role.

2.2 The Council's Counter Measures

The Council, with partners such as WAC, has made major efforts to address the problems:

- Investment in buildings and facilities especially the Wealdstone Centre, which has been successful in building up library membership and use. The café has been less successful and the whole façade represents a significant break in the retail frontage in what was the location in the centre with the highest footfall (see Figure 1).
- The development of effectively two by-passes (one on either side of the town centre) enabling partial pedestrianisation of the High Street
- Reviews of the initial improvements and some changes e.g. two-way bus operation in the High St in lieu of one-way.
- Wealdstone Active Community: attractive events (e.g. Wealdstone in Bloom) and marketing of the centre
- Litter removal and landscape maintenance improved.

There has also been investment in new housing in the centre, for example in Headstone Drive and on the former library site.

There have however been significant, albeit unintended, negative effects from the Council's measures. Most notably the "ring" of by-pass roads has worsened the competitive position of the centre (Figure 2):

- Posing physical barriers to accessing the centre: the natural routes into the centre that used to run along Canning and Palmerston Roads and Headstone Drive have been severed and the resulting pedestrian routes are unattractive (Appendix 10). This will tend to encourage some shoppers to use a car and then, once in the car, to go elsewhere to shop.
- The centre is less visible to anyone passing on whatever form of transport e.g. workers from Kodak etc who use Ellen Webb Drive to access the station instead of Headstone Drive, and cars on George Gange Way.
- Lack of care in the redevelopment of the centre, in the wake of the road construction, has left real problems, principally gap sites
    - which blight and obstruct views into the centre,
    - which represent a loss of spending power and
    - that are not productively used,
    - which attract nefarious activities (Appendix 4).
- But it has, positively, enabled the partial pedestrianisation of the centre.

Traffic management arrangements within the centre have created some very convoluted routes for car drivers (Appendix 3).

The changed offer of the centre and the changed accessibility to the centre for all including car owners has almost certainly meant a loss of higher income, car owning households.

In addition, for a number of reasons, some beyond the Council's control, the spending power of the catchment population has probably declined (Appendix 2):

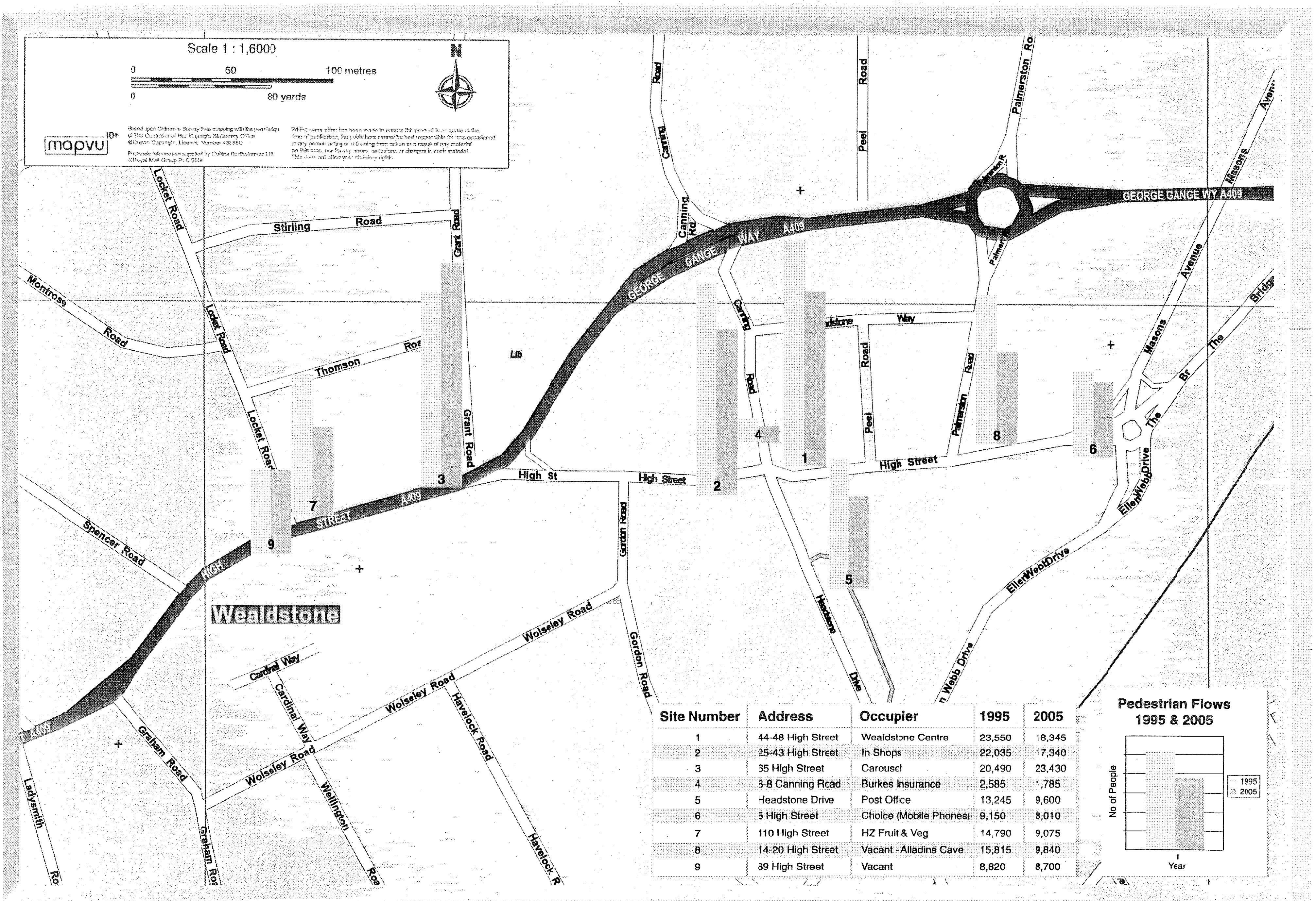
- The two wards have the highest concentrations of homeless people in the Borough.
- There was a period when a significant number of asylum seekers were housed in Wealdstone town centre.
- Partly because there has been no take-up of some development opportunities by private housebuilders, there has been more than a usual amount of social housing development in the town centre.

This is likely to have had two effects: an objective lowering of spending power available in the centre and a detraction from the image of the centre, as some of the lower income groups were very visible in the centre.

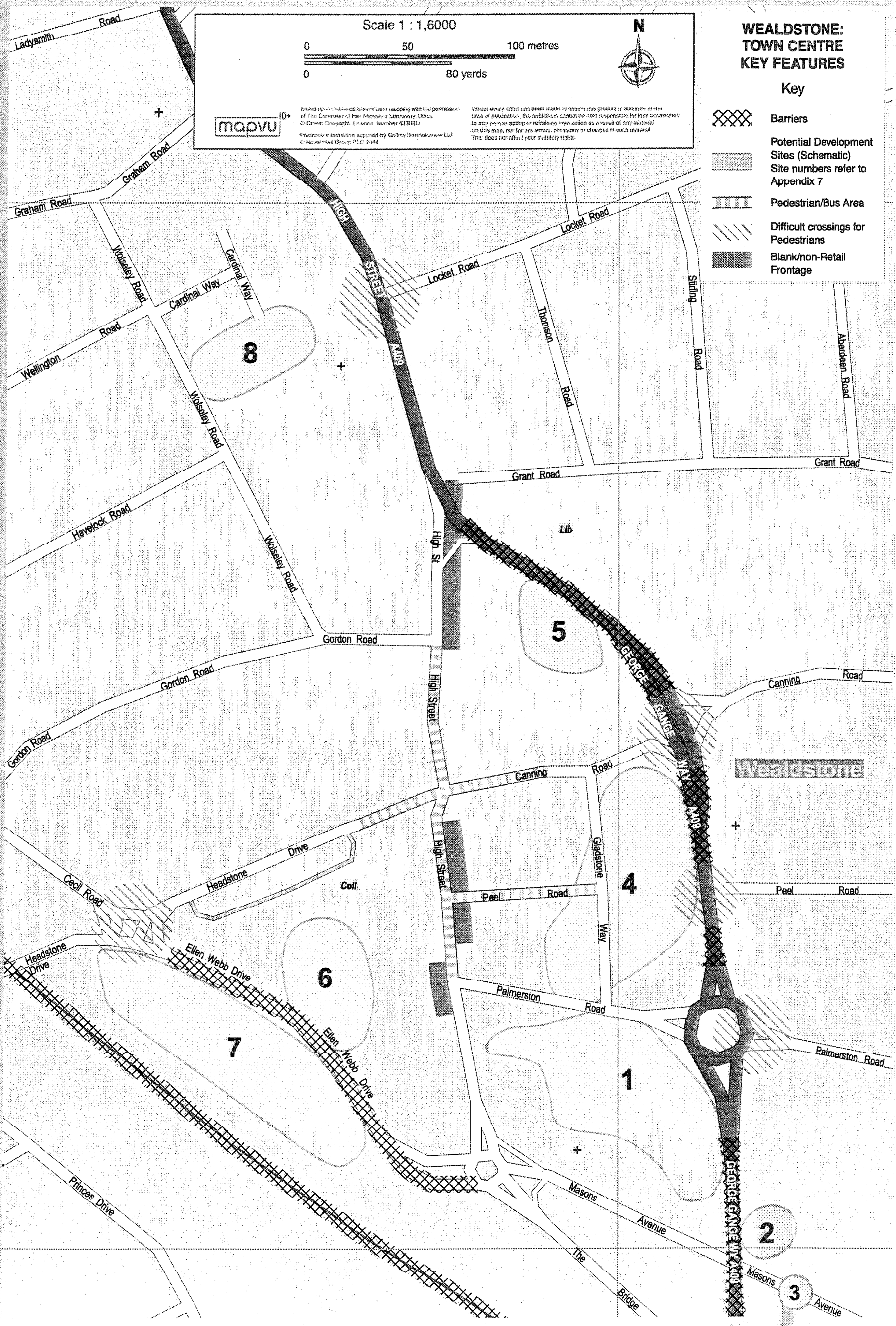
Confirmation of the weakening of spending power in the centre is provided by the shopping habits of residents, as recorded in the survey conducted in 2000.

- A quarter of residents use Wealdstone for their main weekly shop
    - 59% of those with no car
    - 19% of those with a car
- 2/3 residents use their car for their main shop, 84% of car owners.
- 12% use the centre more since the by pass was opened, 29% less.
- 18%: access is easier by bus since the by pass was opened, 9% more difficult.

In spite of the weakening of the centre, the property market appraisals in Appendix 7 indicate that various forms of redevelopment could be viable in the centre: retail development with shops over, residential development including affordable housing, smaller offices for owner occupiers and private investors. Appendix 7 also describes the development potential of eight sites that are shown schematically in Figure 2.



Site Number	Address	Occupier	1995	2005
1	44-48 High Street	Wealdstone Centre	23,550	18,345
2	25-43 High Street	In Shops	22,035	17,340
3	65 High Street	Carousel	20,490	23,430
4	6-8 Canning Road	Burkes Insurance	2,585	1,785
5	Headstone Drive	Post Office	13,245	9,600
6	5 High Street	Choice (Mobile Phones)	9,150	8,010
7	110 High Street	HZ Fruit & Veg	14,790	9,075
8	14-20 High Street	Vacant - Alladins Cave	15,815	9,840
9	89 High Street	Vacant	8,820	8,700


WEALDSTONE:
TOWN CENTRE
KEY FEATURES
Key
Barriers
Potential Development Sites (Schematic) Site numbers refer to Appendix 7
Pedestrian/Bus Area
Difficult crossings for Pedestrians
Blank/non-Retail Frontage
Scale 1 : 1,6000
0
50
100 metres
0
80 yards
N
mapvu
Ladysmith Road
Graham Road
Wolseley Road
Cardinal Way
Wellington Road
Havelock Road
Gordon Road
High Street A409
Locket Road
Thomson Road
Sliding Road
Aberdeen Road
Grant Road
High St
Lib
George Gange Way A409
Canning Road
Wealdstone
Headstone Drive
Cecil Road
Coll
Peel Road
Gladstone Way
Ellen Webb Drive
Palmerston Road
Princes Drive
Masons Avenue
The Bridge
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

2.3 Views of the Centre

Retailers' views of the prospects and needs of the centre can be summarised: they anticipate their future turnover to be stable or declining and they cite the following as key factors in their expectations:

- Lack of identity and marketing beyond the immediate area
- Too many local and not enough comparison shops
- Loss of pedestrian, bus and car movement in Headstone Drive
- The multi-storey car park attracts different views:
    - The sense of security has improved
    - It is OK for men but women still feel unsafe
    - It is too far from the professional and business services in the northern part of the centre
    - It obscures routes and views into the centre from the residential catchment area to the east of George Gange Way and from the by-pass itself.
- Too much affordable housing
- More people/customers are needed
- There is a lack of critical retailing mass e.g. clothing shops
- The loss of the surface car park on the Barratts housing site
- The loss of the custom of higher income groups
- Positively there is the opportunity for specialist second hand shops e.g. books and records which have been significant in the revival of Hastings
- There is widespread concern at the exclusion of traffic.

Similarly residents' views of the centre and the improvements needed can be summarised (Appendix 3):

- There is a need for a mainstream supermarket
- The should be a wider range of shops and more specialist shops
- Quality cafes and restaurants are needed
- There should be more short term street parking and car access
- Access by bus and for pedestrians should be improved
- Very poor traffic management system
- The Red Brick Cafè is a missed opportunity
- There should be strict enforcement of the traffic regulations, especially those relating to cars travelling in the pedestrian area.
- Litter and dirt in the streets, but this has now much improved
- Many other detailed points and suggestions for maintenance, art, planting, seating, rear servicing, railings removal, community events area.

Residents do however quote good points about the centre:

- A strong sense of community, a loyalty to the centre
- The shops especially the value shops e.g. Boots, In Shops, Woolworth.

The views of residents and retailers could be captured in two futures for the centre:

- Wealdstone should be a better shopping centre, with a wider range of shops such as it used to have.
- The centre would be more attractive and commercially successful if car traffic were allowed back into the centre,

which need to be examined in turn.

Could Wealdstone be a better centre – like it was?

The first point to make is that retailing and the town centres in which it operates are very dynamic markets: shops follow customers and their spending, so one can never say that Wealdstone will never recover a comparable, if not the same role as it enjoyed in the past.

However in the immediate future and in terms of comparison shopping the major town centres (Harrow and Watford in the present case), off centre retailing and the multiples are still gaining ground and the town centre lacks critical mass/choice, in spite of there being many comparison shops in the town centre.

On the convenience front Wealdstone has failed recently to attract a major supermarket and they are now established in competing centres around Wealdstone: Waitrose to the North, Tesco on Station Road, J Sainsbury in Kenton; these are major convenience store competitors and they are more accessible to many in the Wealdstone catchment than Wealdstone town centre itself.

However the major supermarket groups have moved on from ever larger stores: there is now the opportunity to attract the smaller format Tesco Metro or J Sainsbury Local.

Allow cars back into the centre?

Opinion on this issue is sharply divided. For those in favour of allowing cars back the key issues are:

- It is important as a source of additional turnover, which can be critical at the margin
- It increases the exposure or visibility of the centre and the shops in it, which is the essence of retailing
- Some centres have satisfactorily re-introduced cars on a controlled basis e.g. Hayes
- There is a particular case for Wealdstone town centre, which is not a long stay shopping centre but one for top-up, short stay shopping.

The opposing views can be summarised:

- There is an increased risk of accidents
- Cars produce a deterioration in the quality of the environment, especially for non-car users
- There is evidence that pedestrianisation increases turnover in shopping centres.

Given that the evidence is conflicting, there is perhaps a need to adopt a pragmatic stance: provide **some** improvement of access to, and movement within, the centre for cars, subject to suitable safeguards. We return to this issue later in the report.

2.4 Conclusion on the Role and Potential of the Centre

Our conclusion is that, in standard agents' or planning terms, Wealdstone is a local centre (or maybe more than one local centre). But it is also, in ways that are not adequately reflected in standard classifications, a great deal more:

- It has many independent shops, many run by BME business people, providing opportunities for people to run their own enterprises.
- It offers value shopping and so caters for lower income groups
- Vacancy rates are not very high and not concentrated in particular parts of centre
- Whilst there is little evidence of investment in retail property in the centre, the retailers have clearly invested in adapting their business (the products or services they offer, their pricing, the customers they serve or the way in which they handle their selling) to meet changing market conditions.
- The centre offers a numbers of specialist shops: traditional tailoring, music, "urban" music and clothing, ethnic foods
- It has become a busy centre for professional and business services especially at the northern end.

2.5 *Strategic Objective for the Centre*

In the light of this analysis we suggest the following objective for the centre for the foreseeable future:

- Ensure local communities are well served for, primarily, local convenience shops and services, entailing:
    - Value for money
    - Safety for all
    - High accessibility to/within the centre by all modes
    - Congenial experience for all users, including high environmental quality
    - Viable operating conditions for all kinds of business: retail, public services, professional and business services, and consumer services
    - A good choice of shops and services
    - Inclusion of all sections of the community in the benefits of the regenerated centre.

Our approach to a strategy for the centre and to the priority actions has been conditioned by our views that:

- It is extremely difficult to plan or determine the mix of retailing and services e.g. café, specialist retailers etc, even if the Council were to acquire key parades or sites, except perhaps for larger facilities e.g. a local supermarket. This view is based on the evidence that retailers are very quick to adapt their offer to new opportunities in the market, to an increase in spending power in the centre.
- The issue of the retail and service mix, therefore, needs to be addressed indirectly by rebuilding demand in the markets served by the centre:

Local residents	Local workers
Passing trade	Visitors

In our view the priorities are to:

- Improve the spending power that is available to the centre, that is both the volume of spending power and the ease with which its owners can get into the centre, and to
- Improve the public realm of the centre, its attraction, ease of movement and its maintenance.

If retailers see that the centre is capable of drawing in additional spending, then they, either existing traders or outsiders waiting for opportunities, will respond with a new retail and service offer.

In the next section we consider first the ways in which available spending power from the main markets served by the centre can be increased. We then look at two levels of intervention for further enhancing the attractiveness of the centre.

3. Revitalisation Strategies

3.1 Building Spending Power

Before considering access improvements we advocate a concerted programme to develop the vacant sites in and around the centre. The main sites, which may well require land acquisitions, are shown in Figure 2 and described in Appendix 7. The provisionally suggested development for each of the listed sites is:
Site 1: Mixed use – retail and market and affordable housing
Site 2: Small scale B1 offices or residential
Site 3: Residential
Site 4: Residential or possibly food retail
Site 5: Residential
Site 6: Small scale B1 or more options if PH acquired and included in scheme.
Site 7: B1 offices
Site 8: Residential

The potential and viability of each site and the proposals need to be fully evaluated. If, by way of illustration, the sites were developed as set down, there is the potential for:

- 220 additional dwellings, which, at 2.2 persons per dwelling, would add 480 to the population resident in the heart of the centre.
- 250 additional jobs, also located in the heart of the centre.

Convenience would indicate that these additional potential customers would spend a higher proportion of their retail budget in the centre than the average current shopper in Wealdstone. Furthermore as purchasers of new property (we address the tenure mix below) they are likely to have higher incomes than the average for the neighbourhood.

Because some of these sites are small and not straightforward to develop, which has probably been a factor in the reluctance of the private housebuilders to take on sites in Wealdstone recently, we recommend that the Council prepare an Area Action Plan or Supplementary Planning Document for the town centre in order to give confidence to potential investors. The plan should cover all the issues of access, parking, development, design and environmental improvement that have been recommended in this report. It might then find it appropriate to identify a partnership of a private housebuilder and a social landlord to develop a number of related sites in the centre.

We have referred in the last section to the trend that has become established for Wealdstone to be a focus for low income households (see also Appendices 2 & 3). We suggest that this trend be reversed by allowing exceptions to the affordable housing requirement within the immediate (to be defined) catchment area of the centre. Given that private investment in housing in Wealdstone has not proved viable in the recent past (according to Council officers), there is justification for such exceptions.

We accept that there is a Borough-wide shortage of affordable housing; provision should be made in other parts of the Borough where private housing investment is more remunerative (without, of course, creating the same concentrations of low income households that has been a problem in Wealdstone). Consultation Draft PPS3 Housing allows some flexibility in this direction.

The Council should also urge the Home Office not to place further groups of asylum seekers in Wealdstone until the population has reached a more balanced state.

3.2 Access to and within the Centre

The four markets for shops and services in the centre that we identified at the outset of the study are:

- Local residents
- Local employees
- Passing trade
- Visitors from further afield.

The shoppers' survey has indicated that local residents and workers arriving on foot form the majority of current shoppers in the centre (Appendix 1). In spite of the pedestrianisation of part of the High Street, a number of measures are needed to improve amenity, convenience and safety for pedestrians in the centre (Appendix 10):

- New pedestrian crossings on George Gange Way at Canning Road and Palmerston Road and on Ellen Webb Drive at the junction with Headstone Drive.
- Improved pedestrian phases on the crossing lights at the junction of High Street and Ellen Webb Drive and on Ellen Webb Drive close to Headstone Drive
- Relocating pelican crossing to coincide more closely with the desire lines of pedestrians e.g. at the High Street end of Palmerston Road
- Removal of railings at the junction of Locket Road and the High Street.
- Changing the roundabout junction of Palmerston Road and George Gange Way to a traffic light junction.

A particular issue arises in relation to workers who might use the centre from the industrial estates west of the railway bridge on Headstone Drive: the quality of retailing in Headstone Drive has deteriorated to such an extent that it is a long walk before workers reach interesting retail frontage in the High Street. An improved crossing at the junction with Ellen Webb Drive will help, and we address the question of retail draw below.

We suggest that access for the four markets be considered not only in relation to retailing in the centre, but also to other activities, current or potential. Hence parking arrangements in the centre, for example, should be planned to provide for the different needs of those:

- Who come to shop in the centre or to visit the professional and business services mainly clustered at the northern end of the centre, and those
- Who come to work in the centre and those
- Who might come for evening activities if the centre developed a livelier offer.

This requires a review of parking arrangements across the centre and in adjacent residential streets where there should be scope for sharing spaces between residents and shoppers at different times of the day. There is scope for additional parking in Headstone Drive, arranged echelon-style on the north side.

The shoppers' and residents' surveys have indicated that:

- The centre probably misses out generally on the spending of car-borne shoppers.
- Older people would benefit from improved access to the centre by car.

The advantages and disadvantages of allowing additional car access to the centre have been reviewed in the last section. In Appendix 10 we have argued that, from a transport and access point of view, it would be disadvantageous to re-introduce cars through the High Street.

On balance, taking account of the retailer and shopper perspectives, we suggest that some improvement be provided for cars to enter and move within the centre. It should be subject to careful design to ensure that:

- Through movement is discouraged, such that travelling through the centre does not become an attractive alternative to using the routes around the centre.
- Cars move and manoeuvre in a manner that is safe and not unduly disruptive of pedestrian flow.
- Car drivers can orientate themselves clearly through the centre.

Part of the access strategy could be to allow cars free-er access to the centre from 1800 to 0800 hours.

In order to allow flexibility for car access, to free space for pedestrian circulation and to maintain good access for bus arrivals, we suggest that the traffic management scheme for the centre provide for buses to run one way northbound on the High Street, returning southbound via George Gange Way, Canning Road, Gladstone Way and Palmerston Road.

Access for visitors from further afield is already good by public transport, except that signage to the town centre should be improved from the station (together with the traffic light phasing improvement suggested above).

The measures recommended so far should be common to any programme for the centre, subject to refinement in the light of the specific development proposals taken forward. There is one further component that is essential to the improving and continuing health of the centre: its day-to-day management and maintenance.

3.3 Management and Maintenance

We have described how traders in the centre have continuously adapted their offer in order to survive changing market conditions (some will have failed, principally because they failed to adapt). We are concerned that this continuous adaptation and adjustment has not been matched by the way in which the public realm has been managed.

If Wealdstone were a shopping mall such as Brent Cross or Blue Water, it would be subjected to sophisticated management and marketing to maintain its competitiveness. Some of this management would be applied to adjusting the retail mix, which is not possible in a town centre where control or ownership is spread among many parties.

Town centre management has evolved to mimic some of the practices of shopping mall management and to achieve a higher level of competitiveness for town centres. It covers a wide range of issues, which on their own are relatively minor but which cumulatively can transform the image, perception and performance of a shopping centre, for example:

- Monitoring of trading performance and footfall in different parts of the centre in order to identify opportunities to make the shopping experience more attractive.
- Security in order to make shoppers feel safe.
- Refuse collection.
- Marketing, both centre/brand promotion and special events
- Management of parking provision and pricing in order to maximise visits to the centre at different times of the week
- Litter and graffiti, which need to be removed immediately
- Contributions to the wider planning issues facing the centre such as the scale of social housing in the case of Wealdstone

- Lobbying for resources and services on behalf of the centre
- And anything that will promote the health of the centre.

We have sensed in the Council a feeling that Wealdstone "has been done" and that it is time to devote attention elsewhere in the Borough and an expectation on us that we will "sort Wealdstone once and for all". It is understandable that the Council's capital and staff resources are scarce and need to be expended equitably between the needs of different parts of the Borough. However that is not the basis for maintaining a healthy shopping centre.

Town centre management for many years was enfeebled by lack of resources and lack of support from stakeholders. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have now provided an excellent instrument for increasing the resources and commitment for a centre. It involves a challenge to the businesses in the centre and the local authority to produce a business plan that will deliver serious trading benefits, such that traders will be willing to contribute to the plan.

A possible way of priming the pump for a BID initiative would be to challenge the rateable values of one or two trading premises in the expectation that a reduction could be achieved, reflecting the poorer trading performance of the centre. (This involves no loss of revenue to the local authority as business rates (the NNDR) are collected centrally.) If the cases succeeded, then appeals could be lodged for a large number of premises, in return for an undertaking from traders that part of the savings achieved would be contributed to a shadow BID.

Whatever method is employed, we urge that arrangements be put in place for the continuing management and maintenance of the centre. Neglect risks undermining the value of investments that might be made in the centre. The evidence from other regenerating centres (Appendix 9) confirms our view that action on a large number of fronts over an extended period is required for successful regeneration.

3.4 Development Strategies

As requested by the Steering Group we have looked at two development options for the centre: a more radical strategy and a more incremental approach.

A. Incremental Development

The main elements of an incremental approach would be:

- A new small supermarket (e.g. J Sainsbury Local), which could be attracted to a site such as the former Comet store near Palmerston Road; this would enhance the convenience offer of Wealdstone significantly
- Take the opportunity to inject new life into Headstone Drive, which is:
    - one of the most visible parts of the town centre, with
    - a wide open area, where
    - the retailing is very weak, and yet it could be a more impressive
    - gateway to the town centre.

  In the short term the potential for markets, festivals, exhibitions and other events should be explored.

  Consideration should be given to servicing the central area for marquees and events.

  In the light of the early experience, consideration should be given in the longer term to the development of a permanent facility for events etc.
- The link from Headstone Drive to the High Street should be strengthened by improving the quality of the intervening space and installing more features of interest to draw people into the main centre e.g. booths and stalls.

- Better use of the Wealdstone Centre, which was in the prime pitch in footfall terms:
  - Bring in a commercial operator for the Red Brick café, re-orientate it and add pavement tables. Whether this can be done in conjunction with the present operator needs to be explored; the priority should be the creation of an attractive facility for shoppers, workers and employees.
  - Review the location of the library, which has clearly benefited from its new premises and higher profile. It is however a significant blank façade in the retail frontage. Consideration could be given to taking part of the library to the mezzanine level in order to free ground floor frontage for a retail occupier. However given that the library is a recent investment by the Council, that demand for retail premises is modest and that the Centre is liked by local residents, we suggest no change for the moment. However in the future when demand for retail space in Wealdstone picks up, the opportunity cost of using the ground floor for the library may become high and it will be worth re-considering the relocation of the library.
  - Provide a crèche in order to improve the attraction of the centre to young parents.

B. Attraction of a sub-regional facility to Wealdstone
This would be a more radical approach to the development of Wealdstone town centre and results from the research we have carried out among investors (Appendix 6). The facility is designed to exploit the sub-regional accessibility of the town centre and to tap into the growing expenditure of the Asian community (and others) on social and commercial events. The core of the development would be a commercial restaurant with conference and banqueting facilities. Two possible scales of development have been considered:

- Say 500 guests: 1650 sq.m. £3.3m approx + 175 car parking spaces
- Say 1000 guests: 2800 sq.m. £5.6m approx + 300 car parking spaces.

Further details are provided in Appendix 6.

The main features of the facility would be:

- Multi-purpose, catering for weddings, where the spend can be £10k-£50k per event, conferences, training, parties
- Spin-off development: hair and beauty, costume and fashion, music and entertainment, overnight accommodation, photographers, security etc
- There could be a link to Byron Hall (refurbished), which offers a different quality of facility.

There could be potential for a Bollywood cinema to improve on the establishment in Station Road.

This option would be compatible with elements of Option A e.g. a new supermarket and improvement of the Wealdstone Centre.

Clearly a major facility such as this would require a significant site. (This is being examined and will be reported to the client separately.) And assistance from the Council or the London Development Agency may be needed to:

- Assemble a sufficient site and
- Provide initial grant support for the investment.

A potential investor/operator has been identified but no discussions have been held directly with him.

Such a development could be very beneficial to the town centre in:

- Raising the profile of the centre in NW London

- Generating significant numbers of skilled, unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in the town centre
- Promoting activity in the centre in the evenings and weekends (as well as other times) when the centre is quiet
- Attracting spin-off development to Wealdstone, which would itself change the centre's offer (as has happened on the South Bank as a result of the success of the London Eye).

3.5 Implementation

A number of measures have been recommended in order to secure the future health of Wealdstone town centre; in each case below we set out appropriate implementation mechanisms:

- A concerted programme to secure the development of the gap sites in the town centre, which requires an AAP or Supplementary Planning Document together with a partnership with suitable developers to deliver residential, commercial, retail and mixed developments.
- Junction and crossing improvements which need to be developed in design terms through the extension to the present study and then implemented using the Council's highway powers.
- The establishment of a continuing regime for the management and maintenance of the centre, for which the town centre management/Business Improvement District model is suitable as a means of engaging the traders in shared endeavour with the Council.
- A number of development projects that need to be taken to the next stage of testing (physical and financial feasibility, developer/investor/operator interest) within the context of the proposed plan for the centre.
- Preparation of a detailed design and environmental strategy for the centre.

Coordination of these activities to achieve a coherent result for the town centre is important. We suggest that an officer of the Council be identified to provide this coordination initially, with a view to handing the role to a town centre manager funded through a BID.

APPENDICES

1. Shoppers Interview Survey
   Environment and Transport Planning

2. Catchment Area Population and Jobs Profile
   Bone Wells Associates

3. Consultastions: Residents and High Street Business Services
   Bone Wells Associates

4. Wealdstone Regeneration SWOT Analysis
   Strategic Planning Advice Limited

5. Evaluation of Competing Centres
   Bone Wells Associates

6. Investor Interviews
   Strategic Planning Advice Limited

7. Wealdstone Property Markets
   Michael Beaman Limited

8. Wealdstone – Town Centre De-Cluttering
   Bone Wells Associates

9. Evaluation of Experience Elsewhere
   Strategic Planning Advice Limited

10. Transport (Incl. Accidents and Car Parking)
    Environmental and Transport Planning

11. References

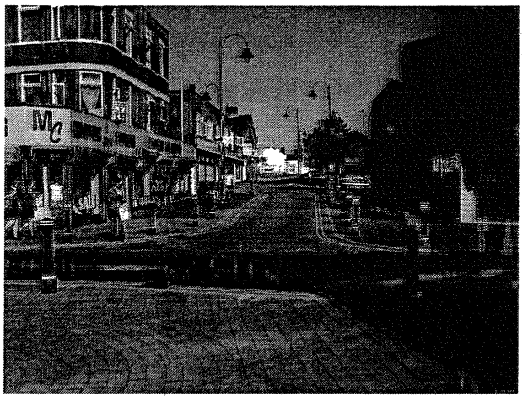
APPENDIX 1 – SHOPPERS INTERVIEW SURVEY

1. Introduction

Wealdstone has had several pedestrian schemes reviewed over the last ten years, offering a number of suggestions. Where these offered advice and suggestions on regeneration, the survey samples were generally too small to make informed recommendations.

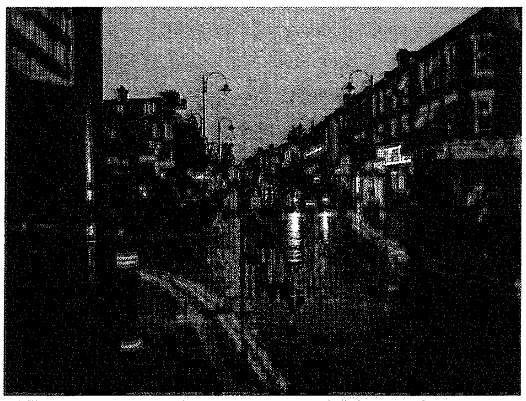
Hence ETP was commissioned by Harrow Council to carry out a new survey. The survey took place during September 2005 (Thursday 8.9.05, Friday 9.9.05, Saturday 10.9.05 and Monday 12.9.05). In total 291 pedestrians were questioned in Wealdstone High Street. The questionnaire is attached to the end of this report.

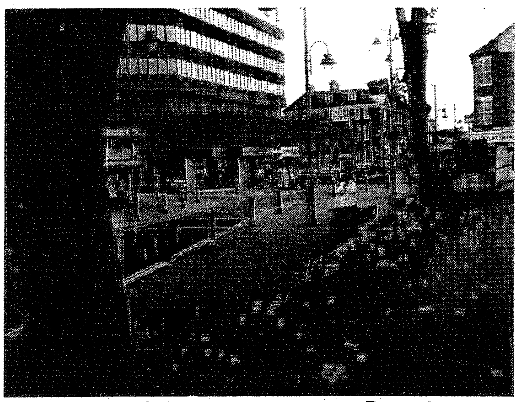
2. Impressions and different use of the town centre streets between the Weekends and Weekdays and Time of Day.



Figures 1 and 2 : Wealdstone Town Centre, Thursday (8.9.05-both am)

Figures 3 and 4: Wealdstone Town Centre, Friday 9.9. at 1900 and Saturday 10.9.05 after shops have closed





Figures 1-4 show the variation of the use by pedestrians of the town centre. Despite the obvious difference in weather conditions, the figures also show that there are few people in Wealdstone's town centre in the late afternoon and evenings because of the lack of cafes and eating places, and there is little other entertainment.

There was a marked difference in atmosphere between the weekdays and weekends. When surveying on the Saturday, we found a few drunks in the High Street by 12:00, making other people wary. By 13:30 the whole High Street became very quiet with people no longer sitting on the provided benches or the church wall (both areas had been packed with people during the week).

3. Survey Results

3.1 Racial Mix

Our sample comprised 52% white, 21% Asian, 11% black, 2% oriental and 10% mixed race compared with the official statistics showing that Harrow Borough is made up of 59% white, 30% Asian, 6% black, 1% oriental and 3% mixed race. We thought it important to note that these figures are similar as the different interests of ethnic groups should be included in our survey results.

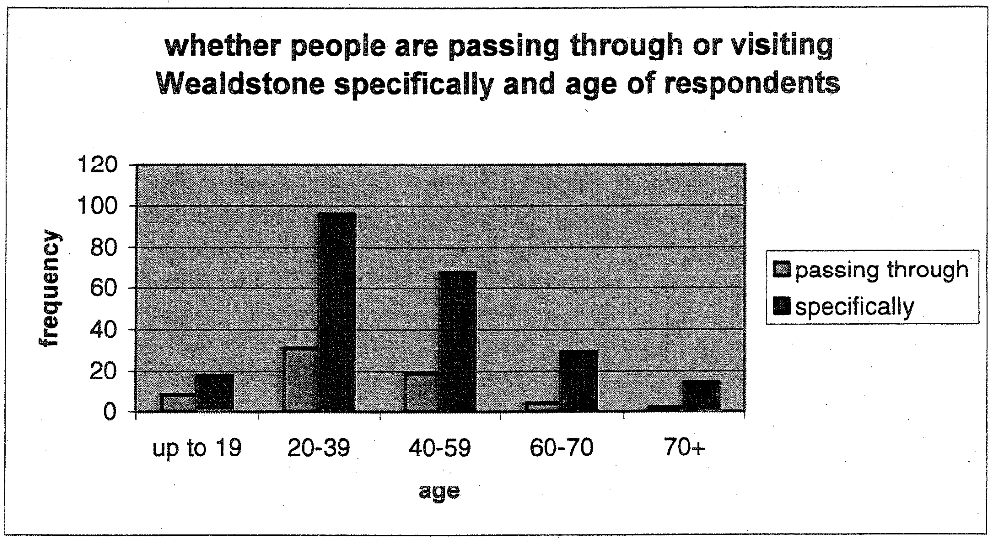
3.2 Origin of Journeys

While the exact origin/address of respondents was not asked in the questionnaire, the respondents' postcodes were recorded. Some people interviewed refused to give their postcodes, others did not know and a significant proportion indicated the first half of their postcode (for example HA3). Out of the postcodes given, about 12% were not HA postcodes (although this does not account for the number of unrecognised postcodes). Of the people **without** the HA postcodes, 63% were in Wealdstone for work, 31% were in the area for socialising and a small proportion (6%) came for shopping. There were visitors from Leicester, Havant, Ealing, South Oxhey and South Norwood.

As many people only gave the first part of their postcode, the number of full postcodes that were recognised only amounted to 78 out of the 241 people where we received an answer to this question. 68 of these postcodes were located north and east of the railway line. This suggests that the railway line does indeed act as a barrier to people visiting the area, with only 13% of those questioned living west and south of the railway line (see map in Appendix).

In order to fully understand how and why people are coming to Wealdstone, it is also important to see whether people are visiting the area specifically or just passing through. Figure 5 shows the number of people passing through, the number visiting the area specifically and the age of the respondents. The bar chart illustrates that the majority of people come to Wealdstone specifically, and that the highest number of people coming to the area both specifically and passing through are between the ages of 20 and 39.

Figure 5: Age and status of visit

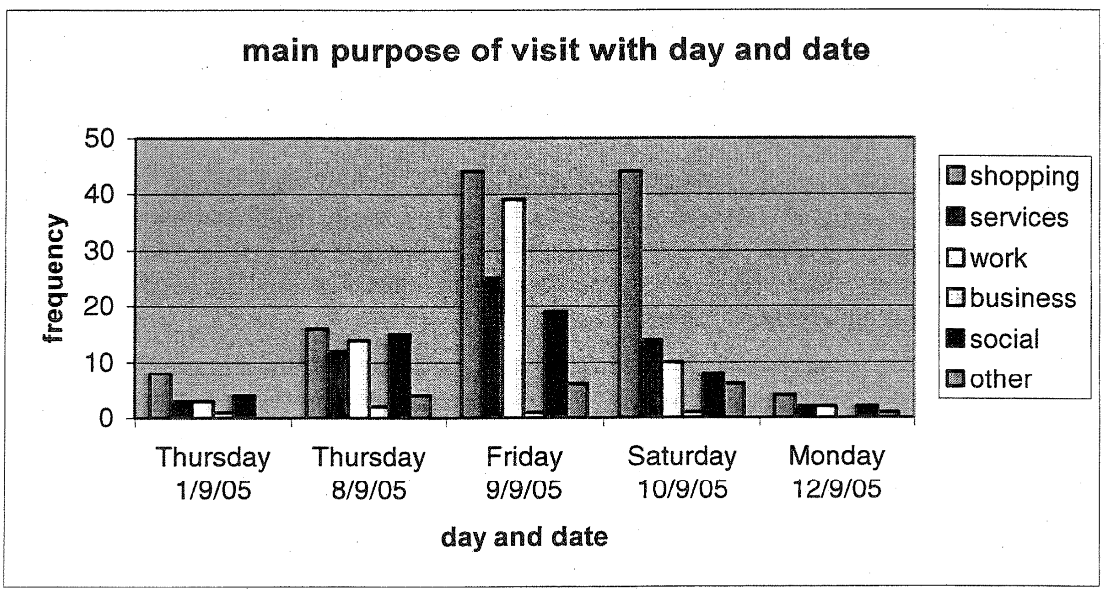


3.3 Purpose of visits to the town centre

As can be seen in Figure 6, shopping dominated on all days.This most likely resulted from the high number of female respondents (57% of people answering the questionnaire were women), and people who were not working on the days of the survey. A large percentage of people approached by the interviewers said that they were on their lunch break and did not want to stop. While shopping peaked on Friday and Saturday, social visits to Wealdstone actually declined at the weekend, with the highest number of social visits happening on Friday.

We found that the main reason for coming to the town centre was shopping, which accounted for 37% of visits. Work was the second most important reason for visiting the town centre mentioned by 22% of the respondents, while 18% of people used different services, 16% were there for socialising and meeting friends, 2% for business and 6% came for other purposes including hair and nail appointments, walking and trying to get transport to Harrow.

Figure 6: Frequency of visits and purpose

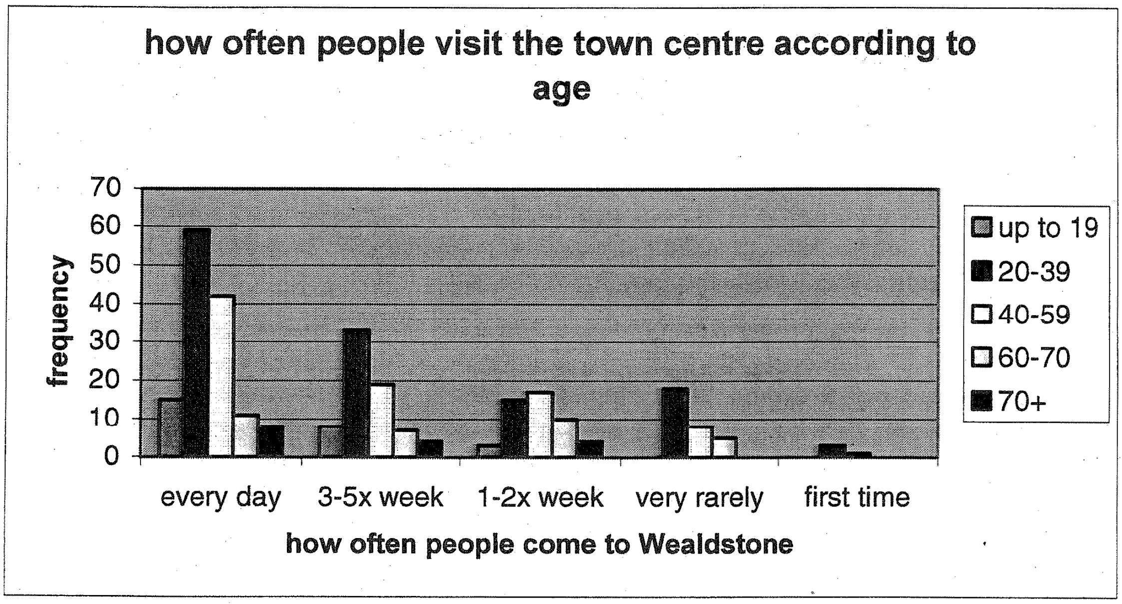


3. 4 Frequency of visits to the town centre

In general, we found that people came to Wealdstone regularly, with 47% visiting the town centre every day, 24% coming three to five times a week and 17% coming one

to two times a week. Only 1% of those interviewed said that the visit was their first time in Wealdstone. While 10% of people suggested they came to the area very rarely, this category does not actually fit with what respondents said. Some of the respondents who were listed as coming to the area very rarely, actually visited about once every two weeks. However, the lack of this option on the questionnaire meant that these answers were put in the "very rarely" category. This ultimately highlights that the majority of people use the area on a regular basis. Figure 7 combines the frequency of visits with age and shows the very high number in the 20-39 age group and a high number of young people coming every day. The high level of young people is an important aspect when considering a change of the pedestrianisation in the town centre.

Figure 7: How often people visit the town centre according to age



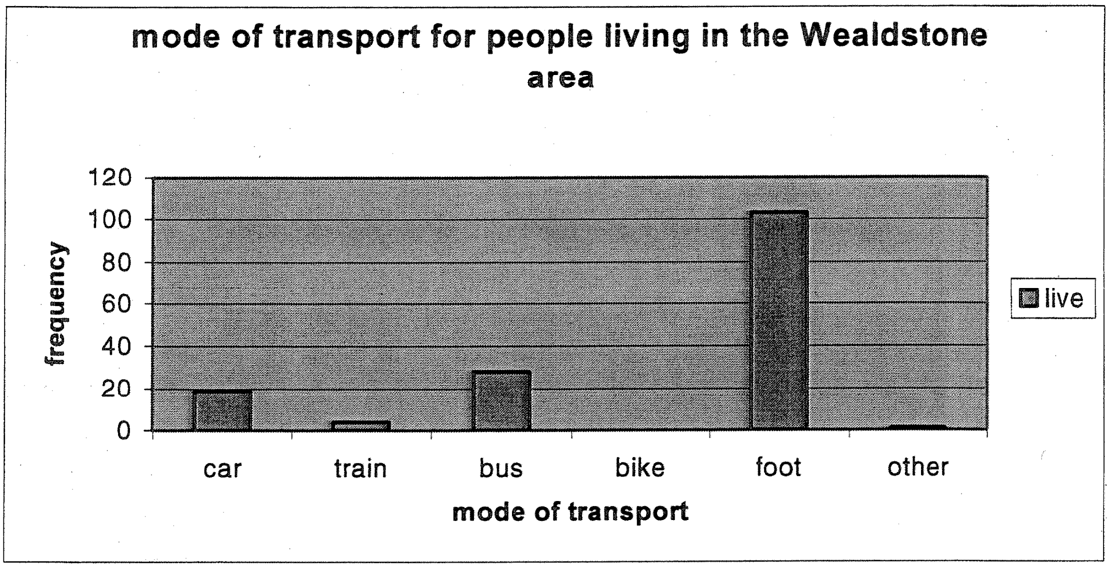
3.5 Mode of transport

People were questioned about how they reached Wealdstone High Street. Travel by foot was the most common mode of transport with 51% saying they usually walked to the town centre. 26% normally used the bus, 18% drove and five percent used tube or rail. There was little difference between the travel modes on the days of the surveys and the usual travel habits.

When studying a cross-tabulation between people's origin and the mode of transport we found that the overwhelming majority of the people living in Wealdstone walked (59%), 19% came by bus and 18% were car drivers (Figure 8).

About 80% of those interviewed lived in Wealdstone, which shows its importance as a local centre.

Figure 8: Mode of transport for people living in the Wealdstone area



Cycling does not play a major role in Wealdstone with less than 1% of the 291 people interviewed saying that they would normally ride to the centre. This should be taken into account when designating pavement area to cycling ranks. While the bike rack outside the station appeared to be used quite frequently, the one on the High Street (near Shoe Express- shop 22 to 24 High Street) was not used at all during the three days spent questioning pedestrians.

Figure 9 illustrates the role that gender plays in influencing the mode of transport. More women travelled to the town centre by bus (women 60:men 40) and on foot (also 60:40) than men did. In contrast more men than women (56:44) drove to the area on a regular basis.

Figure 9: Gender and mode of transport

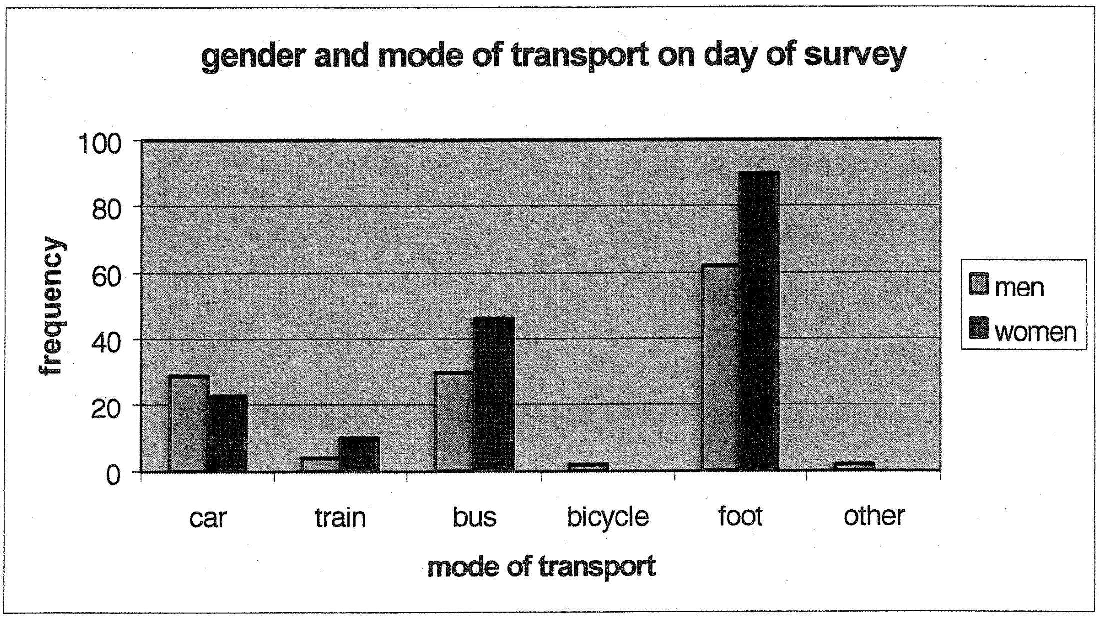
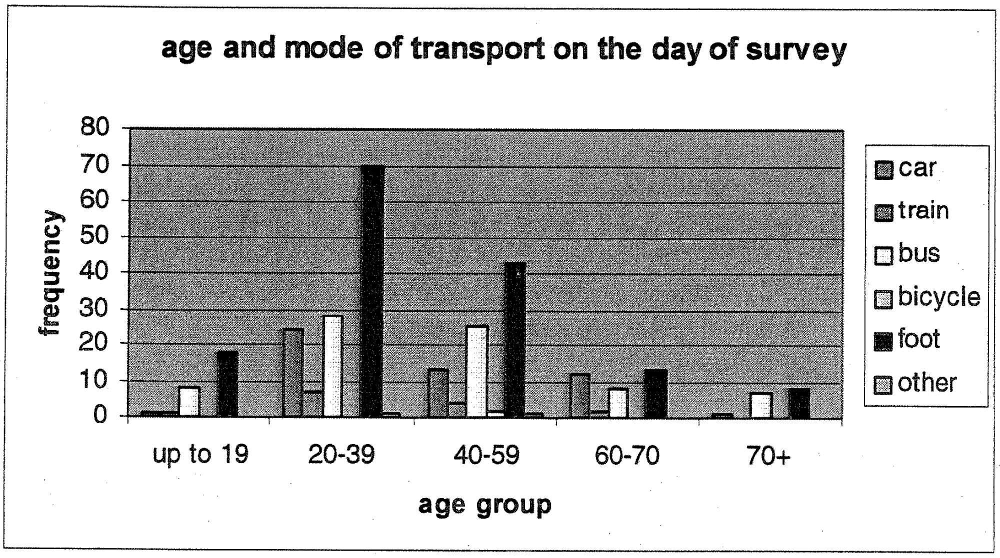


Figure 10 shows that in all age groups walking is the dominant mode, especially in the age group 20-39. Car driving is of importance in the same age group but it is still in third place after bus use in all age groups, except for the 60-70 year olds.

Figure 10: Age and mode of transport



3.6 Shopping and mode of transport

As seen above 18% came by car. We asked the car drivers what were the main reasons for their visit to the town centre?

- One third (35%) came because they wanted to go shopping
- One third (33%) because they work there
- The rest was split between services and social reasons

When comparing the people who walk to the town centre, who are the majority, we found that:

- 40% came to shop
- 23% for services
- 19% for social reasons
- 16% for work

The last important category was the people who came by bus (26%)

- 44% came to shop
- 27% for work
- The rest for services or socialising

It is clear from the analysis that the most important shoppers are the people who come by bus and walk, who are anyway the majority.

3.7 Journey problems

When people were asked whether there had been any problems with their journey to the town centre, 89% of people responded that there had been "no problems". Five percent of people said that congestion had disrupted their journey, while 2% claimed that delayed public transport had been an issue (Figure 11).

As can be seen from Figure 12, the age of the respondents was a critical factor in the problems they experienced. Most of the congestion problems were reported by people between the age of 20 and 39, those most likely to be using cars as their mode of transport. Delayed public transport also featured in the 70+ category and can perhaps be explained by their more critical approach to most things in life.

Figure 11: Percentage of problems occurring on their way to the town centre

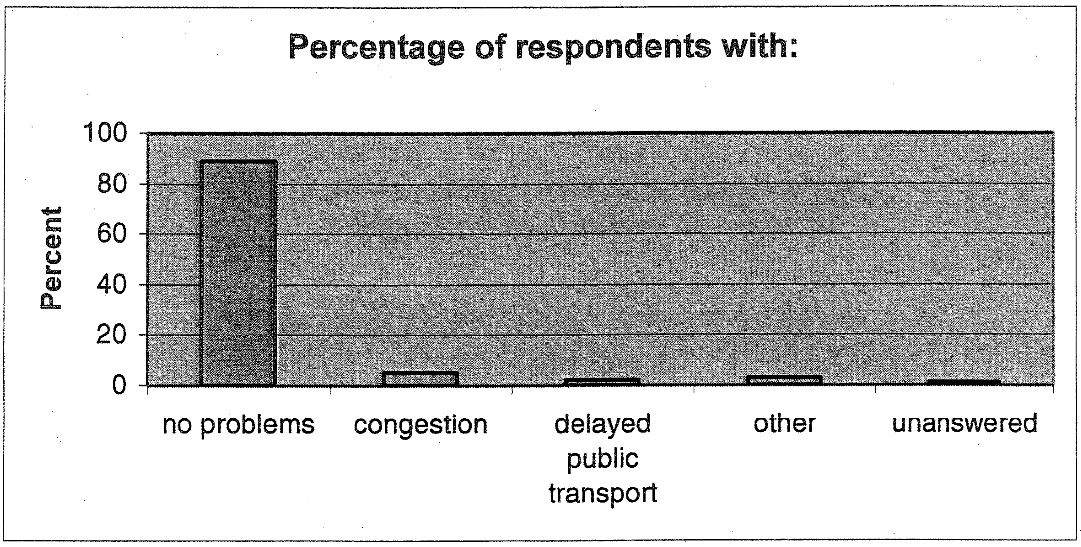
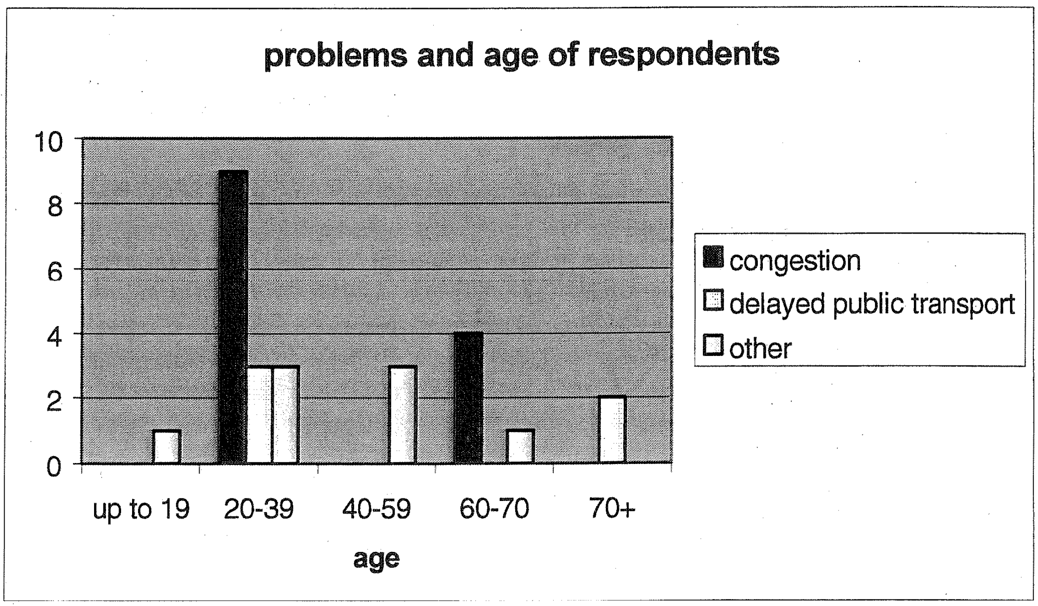


Figure 12: Problems and age of respondent



3.8 Pedestrian problems

The next question dealt with possible problems experienced on the day of the survey by people who walked to and in the town centre. From Figure 13 it is clear that feeling threatened was a relatively significant problem (23% of total frequency). People were, however, also aware of too much traffic in the area (19%).

Other problems mentioned were: 13% crossing the road,

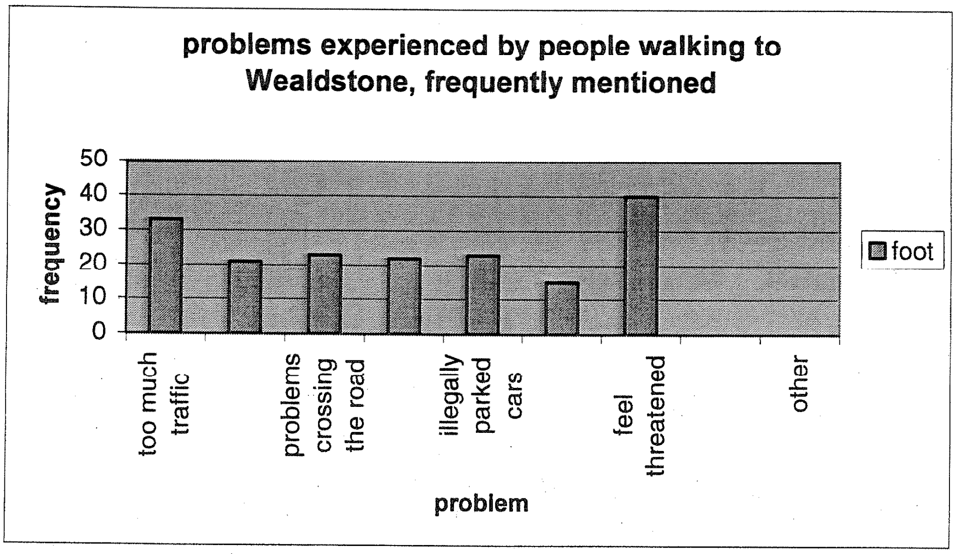
13% illegally parked cars

12% obstructed pavements

12% traffic speeds too high.

9% pavements too narrow.

Figure 13: Problems in the town centre and walking to the town centre



3.9 Driving through the High Street

One of the questions we asked was whether the respondent wanted to drive through the High Street. As evident in Figure 14, 67% of those surveyed said that they did not want to be able to drive through the High Street. However, to see how the car drivers felt about this car access issue, we cross-tabulated the people who had come to Wealdstone by car on the day of the survey with the answers to whether people wanted to drive through the High Street. Figure 15 shows the results which suggest that 65% of those who drove did not want to drive through the High Street, while 31% claimed that they would like to be able to drive in the town centre, the rest were 'don't knows'.

Although the car drivers' response seemed to be unusual, according to European research it is quite common that car drivers in particular enjoy walking in pedestrianised streets.

The views raised by the Herga and Masons Avenue Residents Association (HAMRA) members at the meeting 4.9.05 were very different. Here many were very much in favour of car access to High Street. This only demonstrates that an articulated view of a pressure group can attempt to determine the transport policies in a town, even though it is the opinion of a minority.

This HAMRA meeting also identified buses as intimidating for pedestrians. However, this opinion differed again from our findings in the questionnaire. Figure 16 shows that 72% of respondents said that they do not want buses removed from the High Street. Only 21% said that they would prefer Wealdstone if there weren't any buses in the High Street. Despite this, many people said that the bus stops were ugly and obstruct pedestrian movement. Several people interviewed claimed that people loitering outside fast food restaurants behind bus stops (this is particularly evident at the bus stop on the west side of High Street in front of Nos. 29 and 31) made it difficult for pedestrians to walk by with push-chairs.

Please note that this is exactly the bus stop we want to have removed by the one-way bus system (see Hass-Klau Option).

Figure 14: Percentage of people wanting to drive through the High Street

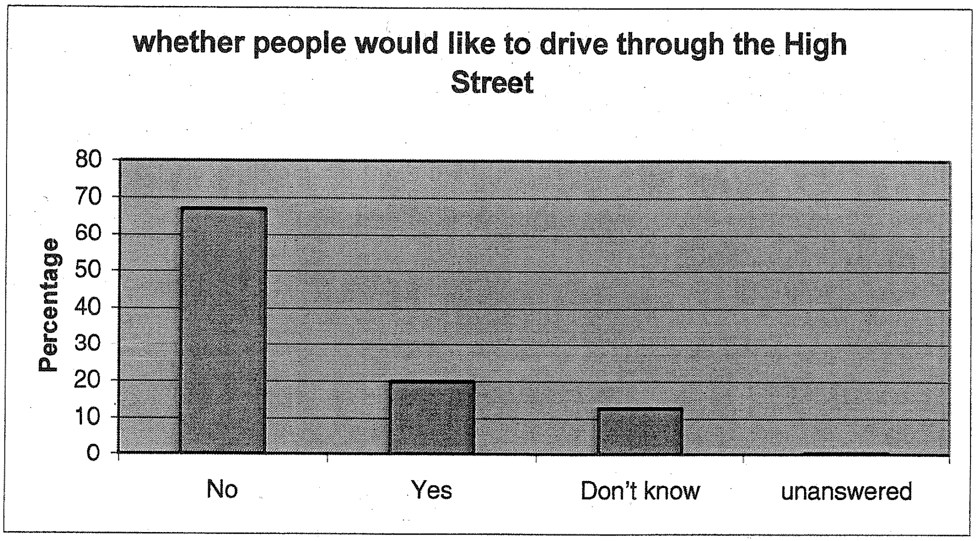


Figure 15: Percentage of car drivers who want to drive through the High Street

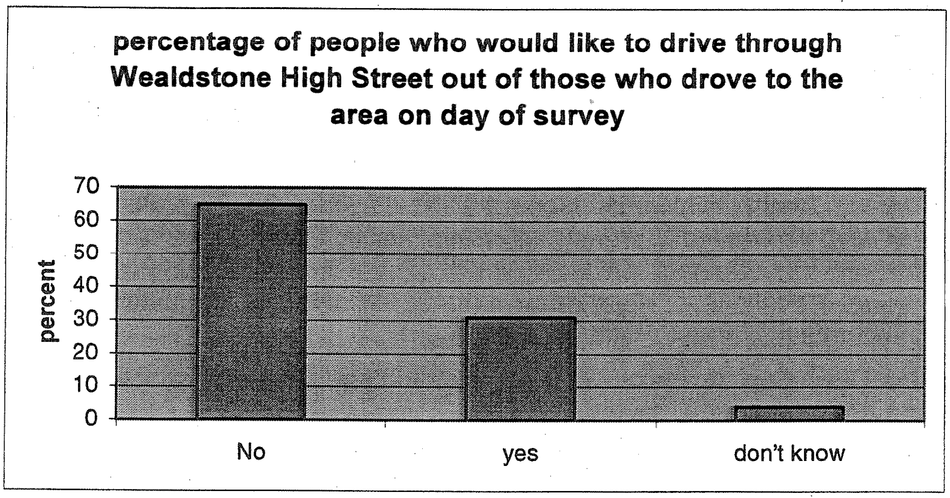
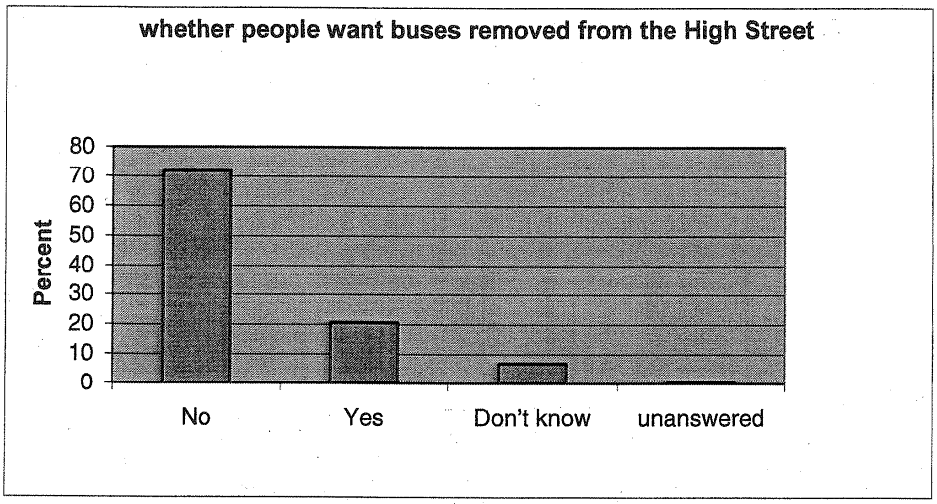


Figure 16: Percentage of people who want buses removed in the High Street



3.10 Overall rating of Wealdstone's town centre

Some of people's opinions of Wealdstone can be seen in the Figures below about the various services and the town centre itself (Question 17). Interestingly, these indicate that respondents rated the bus service and railway access as "good". Security, safety, range and quality of services, places to rest, atmosphere in the High Street and cleanliness all received "OK" ratings. While the quality of places to eat and drink also had a high number of "OK" ratings, it can be seen from Figure 17 that it achieved almost an equal number of "poor" ratings. This can perhaps be explained by respondents wanting the quality of places to eat and drink to be given an "OK" rating, but actually saying that they do not visit Wealdtone to go out to eat or drink. Entertainment and leisure facilities and the range and quality of shops (Figure 18) were both given a majority of "poor ratings".

As seen in Figures 19 and 20, both parking facilities and parking charges scored high "don't know" ratings with "don't know" receiving 46.4% and 53.6% of the ratings respectively. Many people had little idea about the parking situation in Wealdstone because the majority of people travelled to the area on foot. However, the high number of "don't know" ratings can also be attributed to people actually having little idea about what is on offer for car users. While many respondents complained about parking charges, several mentioned excellent deals, including the first hour being free and then a low fee for the next hour. Better advertising of parking deals available may reduce this "don't know" rating.

We then studied the car drivers by themselves and found that

Availability of parking spaces

- 56% were poor and very poor
- 20% OK
- 24% good and very good

Parking charges

- 43% were poor and very poor
- 30% OK
- 26% very good and good
- 7% do not know

Figure 17: Percentage rating of quality of places to eat

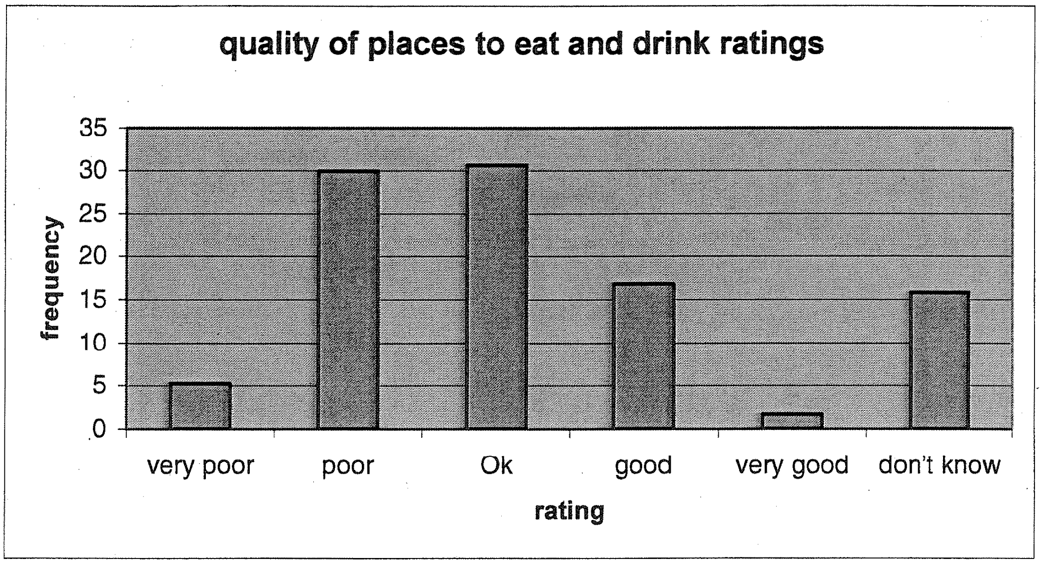


Figure 18: Percentage rating of range and quality of shops

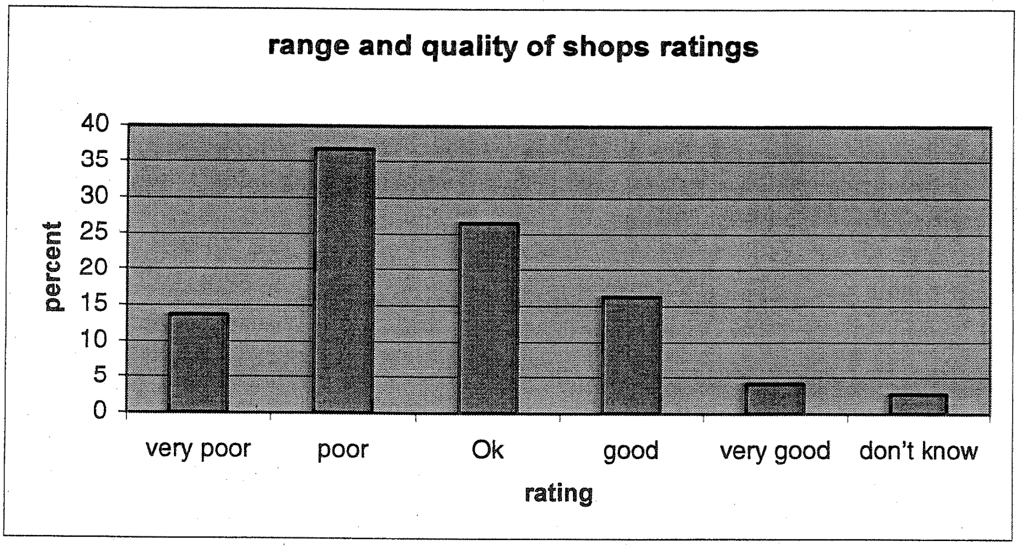


Figure 19: Rating of availability of parking

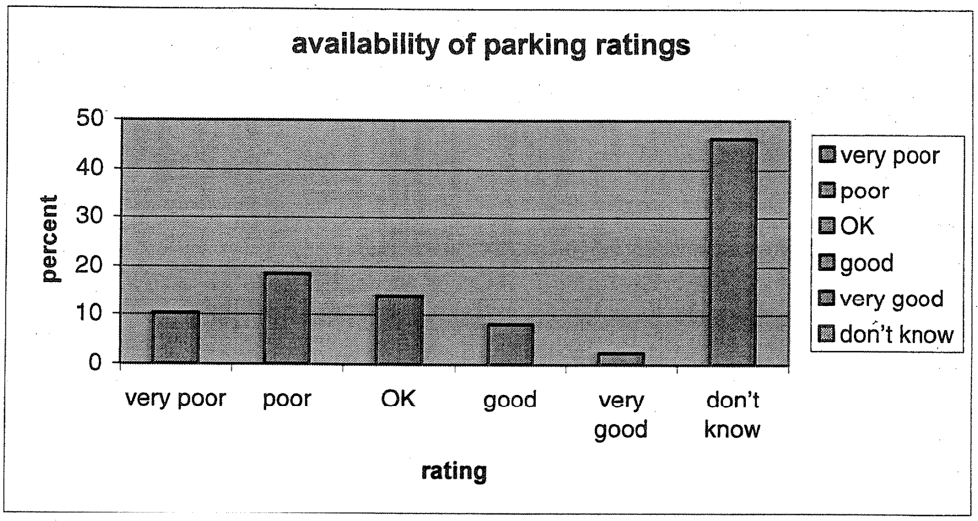
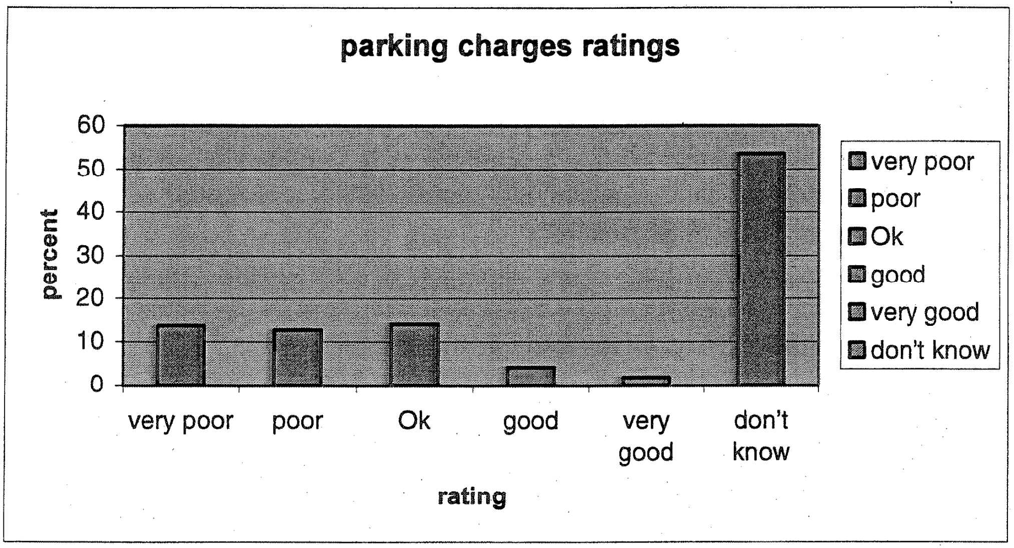


Figure 20: Rating of parking charges

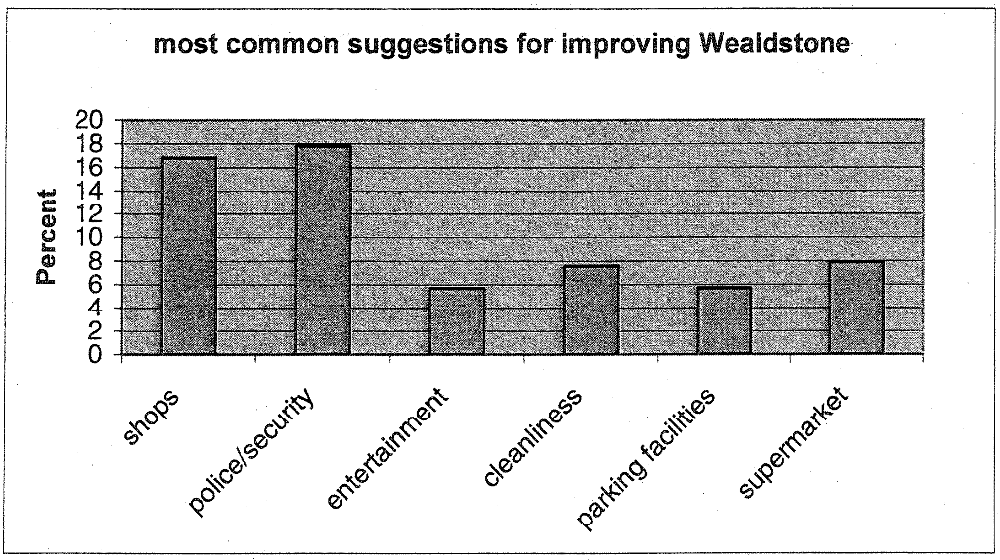


4. Suggested Improvements for the Town Centre

4.1 Overview

People were asked an open-ended question about what they wanted improved in the town centre. It should be noted that this question followed one involving the rating of Wealdstone in terms of 14 points and therefore it is likely that many of the respondents would suggest points relating to this list. However, there were wide ranges of answers and Figure 21 shows the top six suggestions listed by the questionnaire respondents.

Figure 21: Most common suggestions for improvements



4.2 Improve police provision

Improvements to policing formed the single most suggested point in the open-ended part of the questionnaire, with 17.8% of people wanting police provision enhanced. Many people seemed annoyed that the police station closed at 17:00 and that they could not get through to the police station by phone. A few respondents even said that they had phoned the police station, needing a police officer to come to their area and were told that the person answering the phone was the only person in the office and would therefore not be able to leave.

We found that the number of police and community service officers seemed acceptable. There was a constant police presence, especially during the weekdays. However, on Saturday 10.9.05 we did not see any officers.

4.3 Range and quality of the shops

Improving the range and quality of the shops was the second most suggested improvement, with 16.8% of people listing this. Many people seemed unhappy that the area did not have High Street retail chains and therefore the shops in the area did not offer much incentive for people to visit Wealdstone.

4.4 Provide a supermarket in the area

The provision of a supermarket proved to be an important suggestion, with 7.9% of local people wanting a cheaper alternative to the Iceland and Budgens (the two food chains that already exist in Wealdstone). At the moment most people go to supermarkets in Harrow Weald and Kenton. The location of a supermarket in Wealdstone could improve the area, as several people compared the "poor" atmosphere in the High Street today with the busier and "better" atmosphere of the High Street when Safeway existed.

A supermarket could boost the number of people using the area and provide an alternative for people not wanting to travel to Harrow Weald and Kenton. However, the supermarket would require a significant amount of space for parking and would most likely increase the number of cars in the area. On the other hand, it is important to keep the small food shops, because several people interviewed highlighted their importance in the area, providing choice and variety. With a new supermarket they might disappear.

4.5 Cleanliness

Cleanliness proved to be another important issue to the people of Wealdstone, with 7.6% of people claiming that cleanliness should be improved. This result is relatively surprising as cleanliness received a majority (45%) of "OK" ratings when respondents were asked how they rated the town centre. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that people were asked to rate the cleanliness of the town centre just before they were asked the open-ended question about what they wanted to improve. Thus, people were more likely to say that cleanliness should be improved because they had just considered the issue.

We found that the lack of cleanliness was indeed an issue in the town centre. While the area is regularly cleaned, there did appear to be bags of litter propped up against the large decorative flower pots and litter on the streets where fruit was sold on the pavement (Figure 20 photograph below).

Some people were saying that just two weeks before, the street cleaners had been working all the time and that the area had been tidy and then nobody had seen the street cleaners for a while. One woman suggested that they might be on holiday. However, on Monday 12.9.05, we saw street cleaners on Ellen Webb Drive cleaning the pavements.

4.6 Entertainment facilities

Entertainment and leisure facilities were another important category that 5.7% of people thought needed improvement. 50% of people interviewed rated entertainment and leisure as either "very poor" or "poor", with 21% giving entertainment a "don't know" rating. The low percentage of locals listing entertainment as needing improvement perhaps suggests that people do not see the town centre as a place for entertainment. Several people said that there was no need for leisure facilities in Wealdstone as Harrow had adequate facilities and it was unlikely that people would get entertainment in such a small town centre.

4.7 Parking facilities

The people interviewed continually brought up the issue of parking. Many respondents suggested more parking provision and lower parking charges.

Surveying Peel House we found that the car park was relatively full at 15:20 on a Thursday (1.9.05). Levels 1-3 were more or less full, level 4 had around 20 free spaces, but only two cars were parked on level 5. Saturday seemed to be similar, with most spaces used on the lower levels but not all on the top levels.

Some of the HAMRA members said that it was OK for men to use the car park but that women felt threatened and wary when in Peel House. Many of the members claimed that it was difficult to find the entry.

People also appear to dislike the Peel House car park as it acts as a barrier for those people accessing the centre on foot, east of George Gange Way.

4.8 Other suggestions

Other suggestions for improving the town centre included:

creating a proper pedestrian zone without any cars or buses (4.4%),

having more restaurants and street cafes (3.2%),

providing more activities for children (2.9%), increasing the amount of green space (2.9%),

increasing the number of areas to relax in (2.5%),

improving public transport (1.9%) and

getting rid of the gangs and drug dealers (1.9%) to name a few.

People seem to have a perception of Wealdstone as a relatively dangerous and unsafe place especially at night. While, we did not witness any problems in the area in the days and evenings of the surveys, the Saturday definitely had an atmosphere of unease with the small number of drunks. This perception whether founded or not ultimately influences how people use Wealdstone and the chance for significant regeneration in terms of numbers of pedestrians and shoppers in the High Street. Therefore, while police provision appeared adequate, locals need to be assured that the area will be patrolled and their welfare protected.

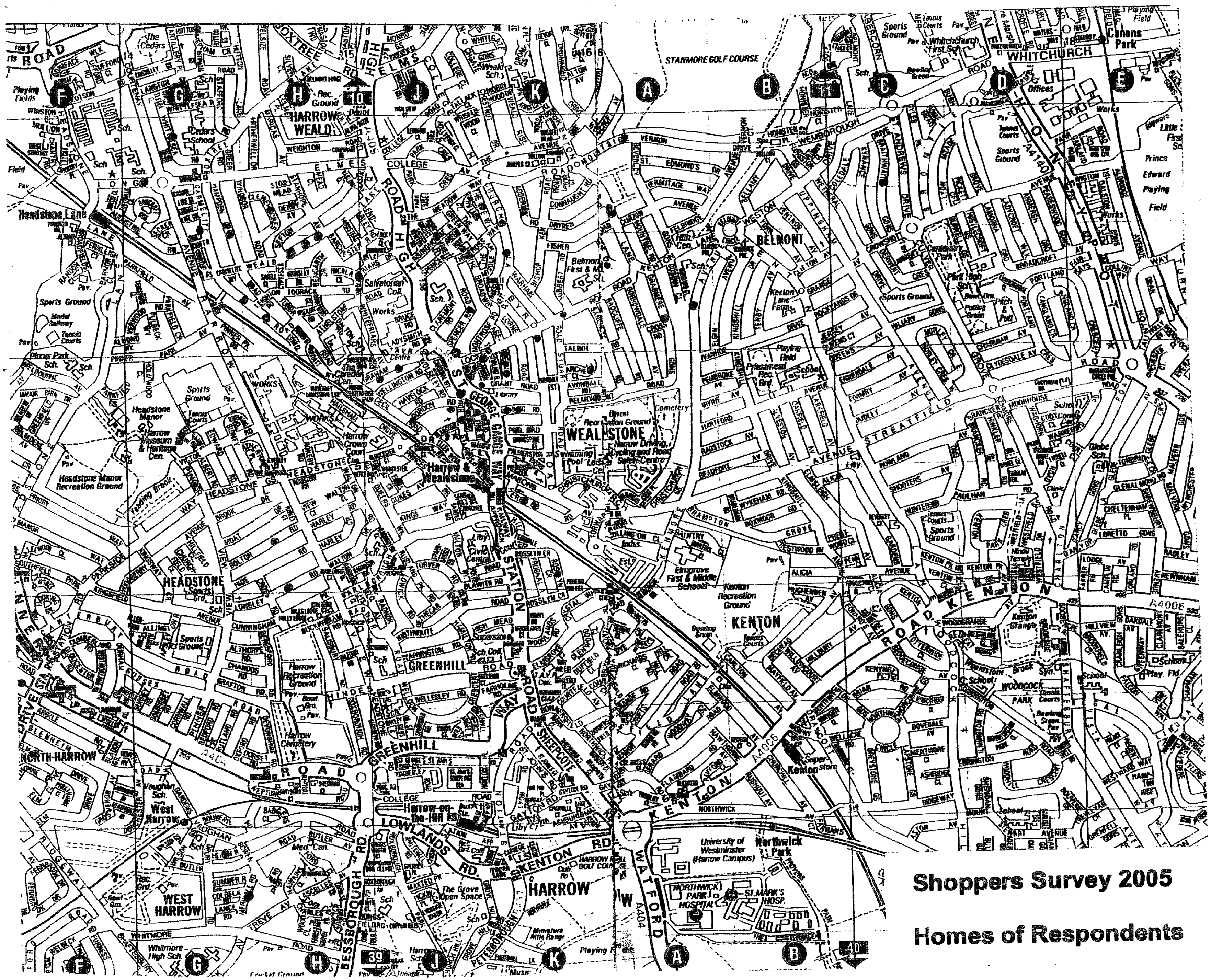
29th November 2005

Environmental & Transport Planning

10 Clermont Terrace

Brighton

BN1 6SH



Shoppers Survey 2005

Homes of Respondents

Wealdstone Centre Survey

Questions to be conducted by an interviewer

To be filled in by interviewer

Q1 Gender
Male ☐ Female ☐

Q2 Accompanying interviewee

Adults ☐

Children ☐

Q3 Ethnic Origin

White ☐ Chinese/Oriental ☐

Black ☐ Mixed Race ☐

Asian (Indian) ☐ Other ☐

Questions to be asked by interviewer

Q4 Do you live or work in Wealdstone?

Live ☐ Work ☐

Q5 What is your postcode?......................................

Q6 Did you intend to come to Wealdstone specifically or are you just passing through?

Specifically ☐ Passing through ☐

Q7 How did you travel here today?

Car passenger ☐ Bicycle ☐
car driver

Train/tube ☐ Foot ☐

Bus ☐ Other, please ☐

Q8 How was your journey here? (any problems)

No problems ☐ Congestion ☐

Delayed public transport ☐

Other (please specify):

Q9 How often do you come to Wealdstone town centre?

Every day ☐ Very rarely ☐

3-5x a week ☐ First time ☐

1-2x a week ☐

Q10 What mode of transport do you usually use to get here?

Car ☐ Bicycle ☐

Train/tube ☐ Foot ☐

Bus ☐ Other (specify) ....

Q11 As a pedestrian have you experienced any of the following problems today? (Options to be read out)

Too much traffic ☐

Traffic too fast ☐

Problems crossing the road ☐

Obstructed pavements ☐

Illegally parked cars ☐

Pavements too narrow ☐

Feel threatened, fear of crime ☐

Others (specify):

Q12 What is the main purpose of your visit?

- Shopping ☐
- Business ☐
- Services ☐
- Social/ meeting friends ☐
- Work ☐

Other (please specify):

Q13 (if shopping what kind?)

- Food shopping ☐
- Browsing ☐
- Other shopping e.g. Woolworths ☐
- Take-away ☐

Q14 (If social what kind?)

- Meeting friends ☐
- Pub ☐
- Restaurant/ cafe etc. ☐
- Church ☐

Other (please specify):

Q15 (if services what kind?)

- Bank/building society ☐
- Post Office ☐
- Healthcare ☐
- Library ☐

Other (please specify):

Q16 If business what kind? (Please specify)

Q17 How do you rate Wealdstone town centre in terms of the following?

	Very poor	Poor	OK	Good	Very good	Don't know
Bus service						
Railway access						
Availability of parking						
Parking charges (high = very poor, low = very good)						
Security						
Safety (traffic)						
Range and quality of shops available						
Range and quality of services available						
Entertainment and leisure facilities						
Places to rest (benches)						
Atmosphere in the High Street						
Quality of places to eat/drink						
Cleanliness						
Others						

Q18 Do you have any suggestions for improvements to the town centre of Wealdstone?

Q19 Do you work in the town centre? Yes: No:

Q20 Would you like it if there were no buses in the High Street (but bus stops are close to the centre)

Yes:	No:	Don`t know:

Comments:

Q21 Would you like it if you could drive through the High Street?

Yes:	No:	Don`t know:

Comments:

Q22 Age:	up to 19:	20 – 39:	40 – 59:	60 – 70:	70+:

General Comments:

Interviewer's Name: **Date:**

APPENDIX 2 - CATCHMENT AREA POPULATION AND JOBS PROFILE

1. Introduction

This Appendix deals with several inter-related topics: the catchment area population, its socio-economic profile, and local employment. Together they determine the present and potential basis of demand for the centre's shopping and other activities, e.g. an increase in the population will obviously increase potential trade. They have a direct bearing on the status of the centre, discussed in this Appendix. That is otherwise impacted of course by its competitive position vis a vis other centres (see Appendix 5).

2. Existing catchment area and population

Enough survey work has been undertaken, including the shopper and visitor survey carried out for this study,[1] [2] to confirm that Wealdstone centre's trade catchment is essentially a local one defined by the resident population with good pedestrian access to the centre's shops and services. This is well represented by the two wards of Wealdstone and Marlborough (Figure A2.1), with a combined 2001 census population of 18,170.

As a cross check on this the consultants obtained estimates from the Borough of the population resident within an 800 m radius of the High Street, a distance which serves as a good measurement for a walk-in catchment. Taken from different points of the High Street, this generates a range between 17,900 and 18,450 population,[3] a virtually similar total. Typical walking time for residents of these two wards to the town centre would be about 5-10 minutes[4].

This confirms that the two wards are a reasonable proxy for the centre's local catchment. But it is more than a residential area: in addition to this population the local catchment includes:

- the Civic Centre
- Waverley industrial estate and most of the Kodak works
- all of Byron Park and the recreation centre
- schools and other major employment sites

However, although an 800 m radius serves as a good theoretical boundary for local shopping, it will always be affected in practice by geography, especially barriers (actual and perceived) to pedestrian access, and by accessible transport by other modes. In particular bus and rail transport is likely to be used by non-shoppers, mainly people visiting the centre for work purposes, and for shoppers living further

1 Harrow and Wealdstone Survey, September 2005, ETP, Appendix 1.
2 Wealdstone Environmental Improvements Survey, Wealdstone Active Community, July 2002.
3 2001 census analysis by LBH provides estimates of population within 800 m of the northern, central and southern nodes of the High Street as 18,455, 17,900, and 18,448 respectively.
4 Only a very small fraction of the neighbouring wards of West Kenton and Greenhill are within this range.

away but close to a bus route. Wealdstone presents a classic example of this, as can be seen in Figure A2.2.

Figure A2.1 Marlborough and Wealdstone wards/ Town Centre catchment area

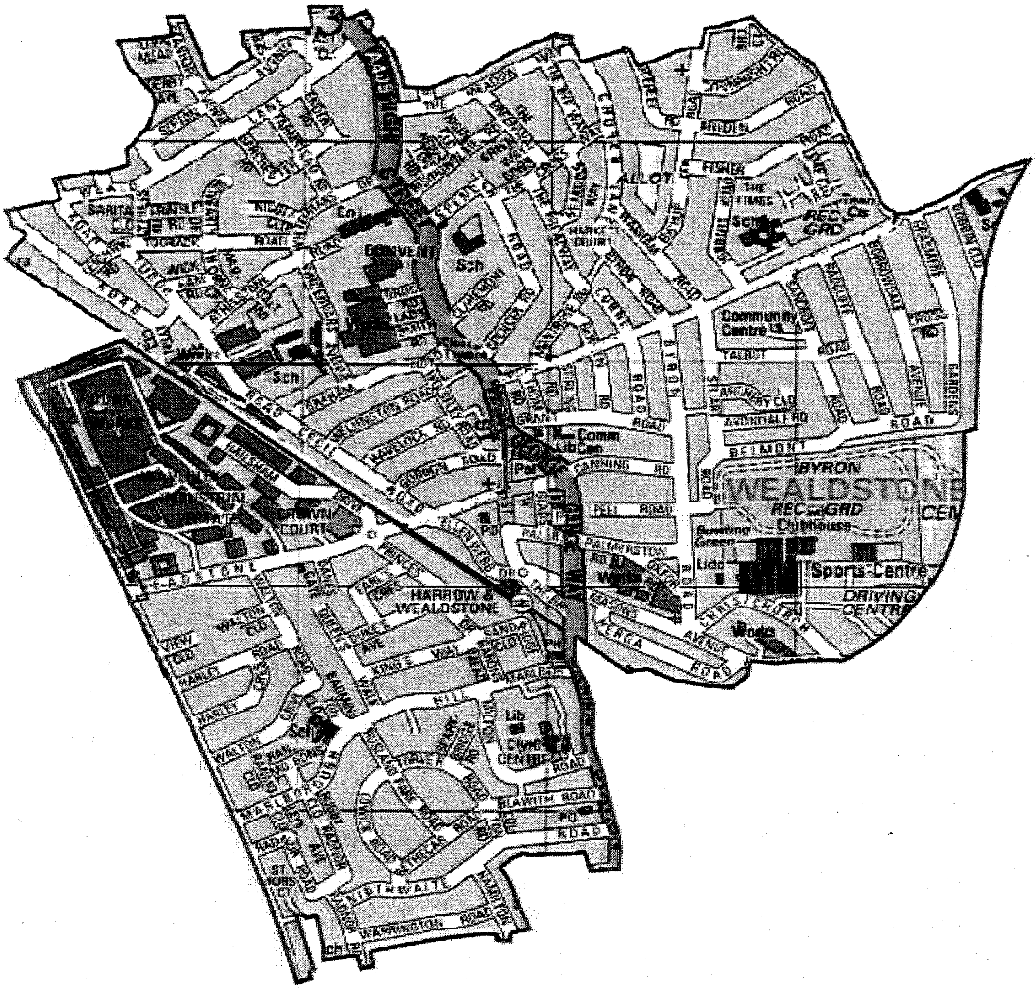
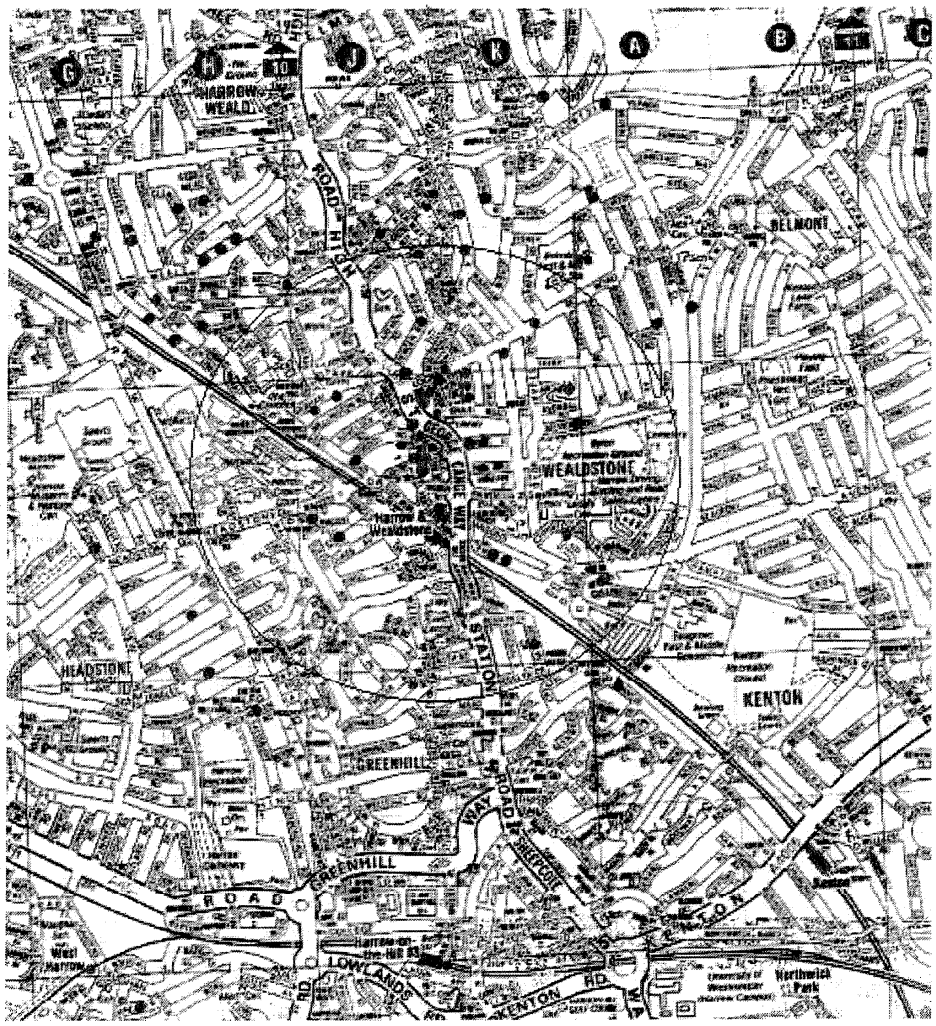


Figure A2.2 shows the residence of surveyed town centre visitors who provided postcode details of their address, and the 800 m radius from the centre of the shopping area (red dot). Although only a proportion of the total respondents interviewed, the figure shows clearly:

- the impact of the railway line as a barrier to pedestrian access
- the significant number of town centre visitors living further than an 800 m radius

Taking the first of these, the survey shows that, within the 800 m radius, three came from south west side of the railway and 33 from the north east side, a ratio of 8:92. In spatial terms, however, the residential area to the south west accounts for 35-40% of the 800 m population, so clearly this significantly depresses the catchment potential from this side. An obvious response to this is to reduce the actual and perceived barriers. A major one is the junction of Headstone Drive and Ellen Webb Drive, a strong deterrent to pedestrians identified by the Pedestrian Survey commissioned by WRAP. [5] Nothing has so far been done to improve the junction although a scheme is in the pipeline.

Figure A2.2 Origin of surveyed centre visitors and 800 m catchment



Source: See Appendix 5

Of the visitors living further than 800 m from Wealdstone centre, a significant proportion were in the centre for non-shopping purposes, mainly work. A higher percentage of these journey purposes are made by bus or car than local shopping trips. Additionally there are some major bus routes serving this population.

2.1 Catchment population and centre status

Before examining the characteristics of the population, it is useful to consider its implications for centre status.

Officially (see LBH Borough Plan[6]) Wealdstone is classified as a secondary centre Nevertheless the catchment falls short of the threshold considered viable for a district

[5] XXXXX, the Pedestrian Association, 2000 (?)
[6] Harrow Unitary Development Plan 2004, Figure 17.

centre. The latest TCPA recommendations for shopping areas [7] indicate that mixed use – walkable communities (to support a district centre) should be of the order of 20,000-30,000 people and the illustrative catchment population to support a district centre or superstore is put at 24,000 by other recent commentators.[8] Unfortunately, Wealdstone no longer possesses a large supermarket or superstore. (If the Tesco now located on a freestanding site south of the town centre had been steered to Wealdstone the centre could probably have retained an unequivocal district level status, but that did not happen). Subsequently the departure of Safeways and the decision not to proceed with a store by Sainsburys suggests that it may no longer justify this categorisation, notwithstanding its designation as such in the UDP. The additional disadvantage of proximity to a major centre, Harrow, only underlines this.

The position is not clear cut, since the government's new planning guidance on town centres, PPS6, makes clear that secondary centres are not defined only in terms of retail strength but by a range of attributes including services provision and community facilities, e.g. major library branch. With the new Wealdstone Centre serving as a significant example of the latter, Wealdstone does lean towards secondary status, further indicated by its size. The issue for Wealdstone is the function it performs; these are considered in the SWOT analysis of the centre.

3. Population Characteristics

3.1 Recent population change

From 1991 to 2001, the population of the local catchment has remained roughly constant whilst the population of the Borough as a whole has increased by 2.8% (see Table A2-1). Harrow is one of only three London boroughs to have a projected decline in population by 2016 (population projection by GLA based on 2001 Census (2003). This suggests that the population of the local catchment will remain static or perhaps even decline, all other things being equal.

Table A2-1: Population change 1991-2001 for Wealdstone local catchment and Harrow Borough

	Wealdstone and Marlborough Wards	**London Borough of Harrow**	**Greater London**
1991: Males	8,883	96,818	3,289,700
Females	9,242	104,416	3,513,400
Total	**18,125**	**201,234**	**6,803,100**
2001: Males	8,797	99,953	3,479,500
Females	9,373	106,861	3,708,500
Total	**18,170**	**206,814**	**7,260,000**
Intercensal population change	**0.3%**	**2.8%**	**6.7%**

Source: Census 1991, Census 2001

[7] Planning for Accessible and Sustainable Retail, Town & Country Planning Association Policy Statement, July 2005.
[8] Shaping Neighbourhoods, Barton, Grant & Guise, Spon Press, 2003.

3.2. Future Population – 2001-2016

The area's population is projected to grow by the GLC, from 18,500 in 2001[9] to 21,400 by 2021, an additional 2,900, amounting to an increase of over 15%. Already since 2001 the population has increased slightly through residential infill, and 277 dwellings have been given planning permission over the last year or two, sufficient to add 500 or more population. The number will still fall below the 'supermarket' threshold.

The less positive aspect of this for the health of the centre, revealed by the overwhelmingly social and affordable housing mix of new dwellings, is the low income of many of the newcomers. Only 28% of the new dwellings planned are for normal sale, and a significant number of the additional population are believed to be transient (homeless, asylum seekers etc). This is unlikely to improve the prosperity of the catchment area.

3.3. Socio-Economic Composition

While the Borough of Harrow has a lower percentage of white people than that of London as a whole (58.8% Harrow vs. 71.2% London – Census 2001), there is little difference between the proportion of white population in the local catchment and in the Borough (see Table A2-2 and Figure A2-3). A minor difference between the catchment population and that of the Borough is a higher black population (10.6% vs. 6.2%). This might be an indicator of lower income of the local catchment population but is not conclusive. The most notable difference is the greater percentage of Indians in the catchment area (and Borough) than in Greater London.

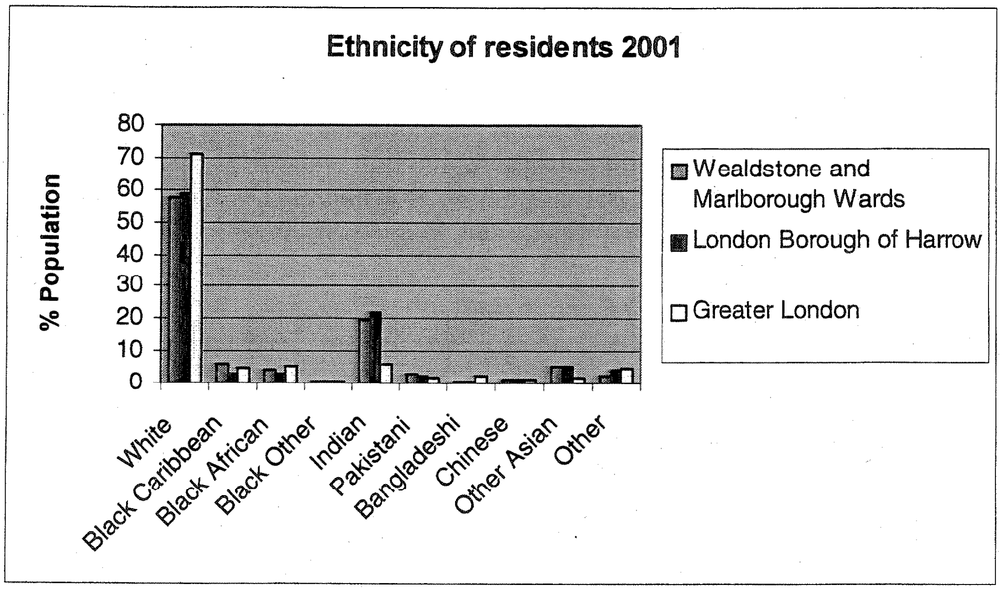
Table A2-2: Ethnicity of residents (%)

	Wealdstone and Marlborough Wards		**London Borough of Harrow**		**Greater London**	
Ethnic group:	**1991**	**2001**	**1991**	**2001**	**1991**	**2001**
White	69.8	57.4	73.8	58.8	79.8	71.2
Black Caribbean	4.7	5.9	2.2	3.0	4.4	4.8
Black African	1.1	4.0	0.8	2.7	2.4	5.3
Black Other	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.5	1.2	0.8
Indian	15.9	19.7	16.1	21.9	5.2	6.1
Pakistani	2.3	3.1	1.2	2.1	1.3	2.0
Bangladeshi	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.5	1.3	2.2
Chinese	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.2	0.8	1.1
Other Asian	2.3	5.2	2.3	5.2	1.7	1.9
Other	1.9	2.6	1.8	4.2	1.8	4.6

Source: Census 1991, Census 2001 / London Borough of Harrow.

Figure A2-3 Ethnic composition of Wealdstone and Marlborough wards, 2001

[9] Mid year estimate population.



Fewer residents in the catchment area are employed in higher professional occupations and more in lower and routine occupations as compared with the Borough as a whole (see Table A2-3). The differences are not highly significant, but clearly indicate a lower local income level. This is confirmed by analysis in "Harrow Vitality Profiles" (2003 CACI Paycheck data) [10] including Wealdstone and Marlborough in the top 5 wards in the Borough in terms of percentage of households with low income (below £10,000).

Table A2-3 Socio-economic grouping of residents 16-74 (%) in 2001

Socio-Economic Group	Wealdstone and Marlborough Wards	London Borough of Harrow
Large employers and higher managerial occupations	3.2	4.2
Higher professional occupations	7.1	8.3
Lower managerial and professional occupations	21.2	22.1
Intermediate occupations	11.4	12.0
Small employers and own account workers	6.5	7.2
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	6.0	4.7
Semi-routine occupations	9.9	8.6
Routine occupations	6.7	4.8
Never worked	4.5	3.9
Long-term unemployed	0.9	0.8

[10] London Borough of Harrow, July 2004.

Full-time students	8.7	8.9
Not classifiable	13.8	14.4

Source: Census 2001/London Borough of Harrow

3.4. Economic Activity

Table A2-4 shows the economic activity rates for the catchment area in relation to the Borough as a whole and to Greater London for 2001. There are no substantial differences in activity rates between the catchment area, the Borough and Greater London.

Table A2-4 Economic activity-residents age 16+ 2001

	Wealdstone and Marlborough	London Borough of Harrow	Greater London
Economically active	**67.5**	**68.5**	**67.7**
Full-time employees	44.4	42.3	42.6
Part-time employees	9.1	10.2	8.5
Self-employed	7.3	9.9	9.0
Unemployed	3.1	3.1	4.4
Other	3.5	3.1	3.0
Economically inactive	**32.5**	**31.5**	**32.6**
Students	5.4	6.3	6.6
Permanently Sick	3.9	3.4	4.6
Retired	9.9	11.2	9.9
Other inactive	13.4	10.6	11.5

Census 2001/Borough of Harrow

3.5. Household Composition and Tenure

The local catchment has a larger proportion of lone parent and single person households than the borough average – see Table A2-5. As noted above since 2001 many asylum seekers and homeless families have been accommodated locally, so that this characteristic is now more pronounced.

Table A2-5 Household composition (%)

	Wealdstone and Marlborough Wards		London Borough of Harrow	
	1991	**2001**	**1991**	**2001**
Lone pensioners	12.1	11.8	14.3	13.7
Single person	14.8	17.0	10.5	12.5
Lone parent	3.2	11.2	3.2	9.5
Other households	69.9	60.0	72.1	64.3

Source: Census 1991, Census 2001/London Borough of Harrow

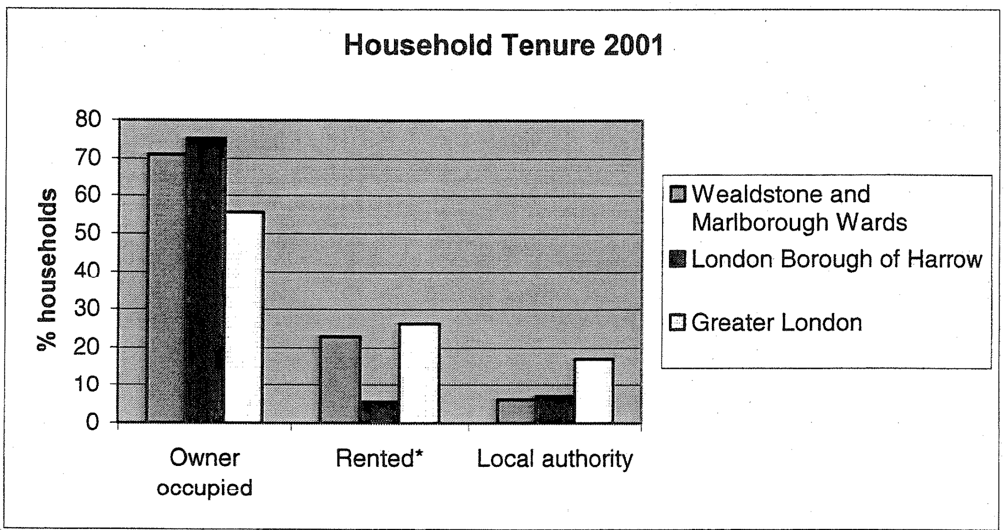
As compared to the Borough, the local catchment has a smaller proportion of owner occupied property and a greater proportion of rented property. Both the catchment area and the Borough differ substantially from Greater London in that there is much less local authority housing.

Table A2-6 Household tenure (%)

	Wealdstone and Marlborough Wards		**London Borough of Harrow**		**Greater London**	
	1991	**2001**	**1991**	**2001**	**1991**	**2001**
Owner occupied	72.9	71.0	77.9	75.2	57.2	55.6
Rented*	19.0	22.9	12.8	5.6	19.5	26.3
Local authority	8.1	6.2	9.4	7.0	23.3	17.1

Source: Census 1991, Census 2001 / London Borough of Harrow
**Includes privately rented and rented from housing association*

Figure A2-4 Household tenure in Marlborough and Wealdstone wards



Taking all this information together, it can reasonably be concluded that the local Wealdstone town centre catchment is less affluent than the average for the borough, and has an increasingly pronounced non-white composition. This means a priori that the centre will struggle to develop a more varied and distinctive retail profile.

4. Employment and Employers in the Wealdstone Area

The workplace population of the two wards is significant – 8,550 at the time of the 2001 Census (Source: LBH). This is almost as large as the economically active resident population in employment – 8,870, so although not of course self contained the area is roughly balanced in this respect.

There are two relevant but quite different aspects of local employment, and a third relating to possible new employment. These are:

- Large local employers – most relevant to boosting Wealdstone's local centre expenditure from lunch time/week day trade
- Small High Street businesses, also contributing to daytime trade potential, but of specific relevance to the occupation of High Street premises and reducing vacancy
- Potential new employers, particularly any company interested in developing a freestanding head office in the centre, taking advantage of the excellent sub-regional communications and workforce accessibility

4.1 Existing Major Employers

The original proposal for the Wealdstone study included an option of a survey of major employers, but this was cut out of the work scope. No updating has therefore been undertaken of the 1999 GLE study which examined the employment and other characteristics of major companies in the vicinity. These included Kodak (c. 2,000 employees), Katies Kitchens (c. 600 employees), Racal (300-400 employees), and Colart (200-300 employees). These 3000+ staff are all more or less located within walking distance of Wealdstone centre.

Although Kodak is understood to be rationalising its operations and reducing staff numbers, there has been other inward investment with new office-based companies locating near to the High Street.

In addition to the staff at these large firms there are probably 100 employed at the Magistrates Courts, 30-40 at Byron Park and the Leisure Centre, and about 3,000 in the Civic Centre, the largest employer in the Borough. This collectively provides a major walk in trade potential but one that has, we believe, been largely untapped because of the twin shortcomings of a very poor shopping offer – comparison, convenience and food and drink outlets – and impediments to easy access to the centre. While the latter can be improved the consultants believe that much the most significant problem is the former.

4.2. Local Businesses

Wealdstone, like other secondary centres provides accommodation in the form of new or converted retail premises to a variety of small professional businesses. The Goad survey[11] indicates that there are more than 20 with ground floor offices (including solicitors, health care, financial services and estate agents), and more with upper floor premises.[12] These outlets are concentrated at each end of the High Street, the main cluster being at the northern end.

Unlike the major companies outside the centre the small businesses have a direct stake in the health of the High Street, and being literally part of it, provide a more direct potential source of trade. The consultants had envisaged as a study option a survey of a sample of small businesses, both in the High Street and elsewhere in the Borough, to explore the potential for building up this business presence, but as with the major employers survey, this option in the proposal was not taken up. However, although the consultants have not been able to assess this market potential, a small number of telephone interviews were conducted with existing High Street businesses

[11] Experian Centre Survey, June 2003.

[12] These exclude retail services such as travel agents, launderettes, hairdressers etc, as well as banks and building societies.

to test attitudes to the centre, with particular emphasis on town centre access and parking.

These are set out in Appendix three.

APPENDIX 3 - CONSULTATIONS: RESIDENTS AND HIGH STREET BUISNESS SERVICES

1. Community Groups

1.1 WEALDSTONE ACTIVE COMMUNITY (WAC)

Interview 15 November 2005, June Skidmore, member.

WAC was established about five years ago as a volunteer group to promote the well being of Wealdstone for residents, businesses and community groups. It aims to help communication within Wealdstone, enhance safety through police liaison, and generate civic pride in the multi-cultural community. Activities include "Blooming Wealdstone" annual flower show, St Georges day celebrations and other events. WAC has written constitution and elected officers.

JS elicited views from WAC meeting the previous evening, attended by 12 people.

Is High Street better than it was 18 months ago?

Yes, a little better, e.g. litter is better, but there are more vacant shops.

Shopping behaviour

Where do WAC members do their main food shopping? ANS: Mostly Harrow (Iceland & Tesco); Watford; and Kenton.

Where do they do their main non-food shopping? ANS: Harrow:

What do they use Wealdstone for? ANS: Top up shopping, banking, library, opticians. Note that one member has to go to Harrow now since NatWest branch closed in W. Library has been very successful - members have increased & it has increased TC footfall. Most popular shops in W. are Boots and Woolworths, esp. the latter.

What would persuade people to use the centre more?

ANS: book shop, antique market, specialist shops - art shop, wet fish shop, needlework shop, Tesco Express. Red Brick cafe is a great disappointment - not open in evenings and on Saturdays. They don't do any advertising.

Night time economy.

Do members visit W in the evening? "Occasionally" e.g. Chinese restaurant. There is a snooker club there but WAC members don't use it. Not much to do.

Views on safety & security in TC? Real problems or just perception? ANS: mainly perception. Dispersal order has been very successful, but has now ceased. WAC would like it renewed. 25% reduction in crime reported.

Transport & parking issues:

i) Would members like to see cars back in the High Street? Not clear view. But one member said "It would help the traders".

ii) One way cars allowed? One way buses instead of two-way? "Would be a problem if cars were also allowed, they tailgate buses."

iii) One way buses instead of two-way? ANS Might reduce danger/intimidation of buses. "They drive too fast, like Formula 1". More traffic calming is needed.

One response that one-way buses could be good idea – could then put bus stop behind the police station.

iv) Do members use the m/s car park? Would members like to see more surface car parks? ANS: Yes but especially need better signage to show drivers where they can park, not clear. Members keen on short term car parking, would help shops, but don't want commuters.

v) Could vehicle access/navigation around centre be improved? ANS, Yes - there are absurd detours forced on residents, e.g. to go 60 m from Locket Road to Graham Road the banned turns and one ways force you to travel more than a kilometre. There are similar huge detours caused by the banned turns at Headstone Drive/Ellen Webb Drive junction. Residents are hugely inconvenienced.

vi) Improving pedestrian movement in the High Street? ANS Yes. First, removal of railings in High Street and approaches as far as possible – encourages accidents because pedestrians try and climb over them and risk injury or walk round them stepping dangerously into the street since they prevent natural desire lines. "People feel caged". Second, illegal vehicle movement causing danger to pedestrians needs to be addressed. Worst example is outside McDonalds, where there are no crossings or warnings to cars (since cars are technically banned), so people cross including many children & risk being knocked down by vehicles driven illegally in High Street turning left by McDonalds.

<u>Better comparator centres for parking & pedestrian movement</u>?

Look at Berkhampstead, used lot of hard landscaping which has slowed the traffic down.

Could the shape & design of the centre be improved? Is it too elongated, could it benefit from and east-west axis using Headstone Drive? Would it be a good idea to create a town square? ANS: especially would like Headstone Drive integrated into the centre - at present too cut off. One suggestion was to put kiosks in that dead area in front of the church - look, e.g. at St Annes Centre (Harrow) fruit stall. Ref town square - v. dependent on traffic situation - can you have a genuine square if buses charging through?

<u>General discussion point on radical changes</u>, e.g. pushing the "ethnic" angle for the centre's development. Strong antithesis against this, feeling that it would start to discriminate against existing groups, esp. long term residents - centre should serve everybody, not go out of its way to serve minorities.

1.2 PRINCES DRIVE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION: Interview 15 November 2005, June Skidmore.

PDRA has written constitution and elected officers. Established about 5-6 yrs. JS elicited views from among 20 members of the RA.

<u>Is High Street better than it was 18 months ago</u>?

Yes, a little better, though still a pigeon mess problem. There are more vacant shops.

<u>Shopping behaviour</u>

Where do members do their main food shopping? ANS: Harrow –Tesco; Waitrose in South Harrow;

Where do they do their main non-food shopping? ANS: Harrow, then Watford, and West End.

What do they use Wealdstone for? ANS: Top up shopping, library, NW Electrics shop, Herga Music, & Mon Deco Bank (not NatWest). Butchers and Boots & Woolies.

What would persuade people to use the centre more? ANS: weekly market, book shop, specialist shops – arts & craft shop, haberdashers, video rental. toy shop. Decent café - Red Brick cafe poor.

Night time economy

Do members visit W in the evening? "rarely go there apart from meetings"

Views on safety & security in TC?

Real problems or just perception? ANS: mainly perception. Dispersal order has been very successful, loitering youths and alcoholics reduced. Would like to have dispersal order back.

Transport & parking issues:

i) Would members like to see cars back in the High Street? Not many views obtained, one response was "that would help shops with passing trade"

ii) One way cars allowed? "Would be neither one thing nor the other" (one comment). Elderly people worried about illegal cars tailgating buses. Great concern with this illegal car movement.

iii) One way buses instead of two-way?

iv) Do members use the m/s car park? "Not much, no need to".

v) Would members like to see more surface car parks? YES - especially to allow short term car parking,

vi) Could vehicle access/navigation around centre be improved?

vii) Improving pedestrian movement in the High Street.

Better comparator centres for parking & pedestrian movement?

Look at Hayes & Pinner.

Could the shape & design of the centre be improved? Is it too elongated, could it benefit from and east-west axis using Headstone Drive? Would it be a good idea to create a town square?

ANS: would be nice to have a town square, where people could sit out. & improve appearance of Headstone Drive, at present ugly.

Any other proposals for improvements from members?

ANS: More events to attract people, e.g. music groups or dance groups. Open Red Brick café on Saturdays. Traders to improve their fairly dire window displays. Xmas shows at the Wealdstone Centre. "And would like to encourage an artists' colony, give the centre a more bohemian feel"

General discussion point vis a vis pushing the "ethnic" angle for the centre's development, e.g. centre catering more for ethnic minorities. Was strong reaction against this – would cause resentment among white population.

1.3 HERGA & MASONS AVENUE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (HAMCA), 4 Sept 2005

Attendance:

Dr Rachel Kenny (HAMCA)

Andrew Kingsmill "

Patricia Chisholm "

Andrew Perrara "

Adriana Perrara "

Adrian Beldington "

Roger Bone (BWA)

HAMCA is a working residents group, formed two years ago with constitution & small grant from LBH which they use for a newsletter. Residents had previously felt their complaints & views for the TC were not listened to, but now they work with Council, police etc on issues including traffic & anti-social behaviour. Chair Raechel Kenny

The consultant introduced consultants' remit, with an initial open discussion of their views, followed by specific issues.

General :Is the High St better than it was 18 months ago?

Improvements done considered to be half hearted, with scaffolding left lying around etc. Less litter but retail offer remains poor, and angst about alleged drug dealing and selling stolen goods on High Street. Concern about concentration of new accommodation on social housing plus considerable number of apparent asylum seekers/homeless persons hanging around. Recent concern about traffic impact of Byron Park development.

What would persuade them to use WTC more?

i) Tesco Metro type store – would be better prices than ********

ii) Place to get good coffee and sit down. "Not a single place to get good coffee in whole centre". Need was put very specifically – replace WC Red Brick café by a Caffe Nero opened up to the public with outdoor seating (or similar in that kind of location)

iii) A market would be an attraction, strong support for that

iv) Would love to see some specialist shops back though realistic about problems of securing this (fish shop, natural foods, another butchers, etc)

Shopping behaviour

This middle income group did main food shopping at local supermarkets (all of them), Tesco, Waitrose-Harrow Weald, Sainsburys-Kenton. Occasionally Morrisons at Hatch End, esp when visiting for other shopping. All used Wealdstone for top-up food shopping. But many of the ethnic population did use WTC for main shopping (a) because many didn't have cars, (b) because culturally used to shop for fresh food daily.

For comparison shopping, centres used were first Watford, second Harrow, third West End, sometimes Hatch End (more upmarket). Fairly easy access to all these, custom determined by quality of the offer.

Services – no HSBC in W. so have to go to Harrow. In any case banks' cashpoints exposed in WTC so people feel nervous using them. Restaurants & cafes - see above comment. Nowhere really to eat in WTC, possibly local Thai Café. So for restaurants people travel outside W – plenty of places. That and 'Taste of Asia' populated by suits at lunchtime, showing demand is there.

<u>Night time economy</u>

There isn't any. More or less confirmed by consultant's visit – see below.

<u>Transport/Parking/Accessibility</u>

Most of HAMCA's members would like to see cars re-introduced to High Street, with short term parking permitted. It would (a) encourage using the shops (b) reduce fear of crime. Obviously need to accompany this by traffic calming or measures to make car movement slow & safe.

Less enthusiasm for buses in the High Street, very intimidating for pedestrians, though clearly there has to be facility for interchange outside station. Bus stops ugly and in the way of pedestrians "you literally fall over them".

Multi-storey car park not used by HAMRA members. May be OK for men but not women – poor design cf. others like in Watford which are bright coloured. Entry difficult to find, exit with push chair difficult. No sign to say there is CCTV surveillance. Also provides major barrier to movement from Byron Park direction – the main axis west along Peel Road. Awkward to get round it on way to High Street. Meeting did not know whether car park was used by local businesses.

Parking – main grouse of HAMCA was failure of LBH to turn unused Council owned space underneath bridge by Masons Avenue for public parking. Said it had been locked and unused for years.

Vehicle access - too many bans on turning movements. Some of these menaced safety, e.g. because they were frequently ignored pedestrians had no protection through signs or traffic lights (esp. for pedestrians walking south along High Street & crossing Palmerston Road).

<u>Comparators</u>.

People sited Hayes centre as good for mixing cars and pedestrians. Allows this although does not have ugly curbs/different levels of W High Street. Done through distinctive paving etc – being all one level is statement of pedestrian priority. (Team should inspect this- Hayes is not in Harrow, but Hillingdon Borough). Hatch End copes with cars.

<u>Views on shape of centre, signage etc</u>

Some of attendees thought too elongated, others disagreed. Approval however of creating east west axis connecting Headstone Drive to Canning Road across High Street creating focal point. Main problem is that attraction to visit Headstone Drive muted – not many shops to visit. But meeting felt it was ideal area to house a market.

Signage generally considered to be abysmal. or example Leisure Centre gym reported to be best in the South East, and major other leisure facilities and a park, but you'd never know it was just down the road. Nothing to direct people leaving the station. Area is very disjointed.

Views on radical changes etc

Not discussed in detail apart from interest in Tesco small format, and private housing, and little interest in retaining multi-storey car park. Attendees were unimpressed with idea of major events venue for ethnic/Indian groups – did not see what it could bring to WTC – people coming for a one-off event fairly insulated from rest of TC activity, just potentially negative impacts of parking congestion. (What benefits does this bring to WRC?).

Safety & Security

Considerable irritation with police station which closes at 5:00 pm, and phone link there is never answered pm. False sense of security – felt better it was gone altogether if not open at night.

Impressions: The consultant walked up and down the main part of the High Street at 7:20 pm and after meeting at 10:20 pm. Lighting seemed to be good, place felt safe enough, not threatening groups around. But badly needs decent restaurants with smart bars etc to liven it up. Nowhere very inviting to go for a drink after work, other than several traditional pubs. Obviously there have been negative incidents in the past.

Wealdstone Centre

"Nobody seems to know what goes on there". "Red Brick café is a missed opportunity."

Threats & opportunities

Several attendees thought Wembley development could provide an opportunity – so big that Wealdstone might attract some overspill from it, when it all opens.

Bentley House Hotel

"Was meant to be four star". "A great let down to be filled with asylum seekers" (not sure that this is the case). "Another empty promise".

Consultants summing up of community consultation:

- Strong reservoir of goodwill indicative of significant local potential – town centre would be used more if its attractiveness was improved.
- Car owning local population (the great majority) unlikely to return to Wealdstone for major food shopping but would use the centre more if the offer was improved: Priorities are (i) Tesco Metro/Express type, (ii) a weekly market (iii) more specialist shops (iv) significantly improved Red Brick café.
- Mixed attitudes to allowing cars back in High Street but consensus on allowing/encouraging short term parking, removing railings, removing clutter, improving vehicle navigation around the area (removing banned turns causing long detours), policing illegal cars in the High Street.

- Night time economy considered non-existent.
- Strong antipathy to making Wealdstone a more “ethnic” type of centre appealing mainly to minority groups.
- Pedestrian experience considered poor when compared to other centres, e.g. Hayes.

2. HIGH STREET BUSINESSES (Pilot Survey)

2.1 Small professional businesses at north end of Wealdstone High Street. Telephone interviews October 2005

A number of professional firms clustered on the North West frontage of the High Street were contacted by phone at the end of October, broadly to record their views as to the benefits and dis-benefits of their current location, and what, if any, improvements could be made, or initiated by the Council. Five firms responded over the phone. A copy of the telephone questionnaire is attached.

The firms contacted were:

1. Connaught, Estate Agents: 1 Church Parade, High Street

   Respondent Sean Phillips, tel no 8863 4456

2. Atul Shah, Solicitors: 75 High Street
   Respondent Atul Shah, tel no 8861 5000

3. Major, Estate Agents: 77 High Street

   Respondent Mr Galbraith, tel no 8424 8686

4. Robert Goodman Associates: 97 High Street
   Respondent Mr Robert Goodman, tel 8861 0303

5. G. Savills, Undertakers: 107 High Street
   Respondent Mrs Savill, tel no 8907 3163

2.2 Summary of results

1. Length of time located in Wealdstone?

   Three firms have been located ten years or more, while the other two have been located 4 to 5 years. Three businesses own their own premises. All businesses may be said to be in ‘for the long term’

2. How many staff, and where do they live?

   The number of staff employed on site varies from 1 to 18 (including part time) – the average being approximately five. The large majority of staff arrive by car.

3. What are advantages of being located in Wealdstone as against Harrow/ Pinner?

   Good visibility, and proximity to local client base are generally seen as the key reasons for location in this part of Wealdstone. Other reasons include relatively cheap rents and ownership of premises. For legal businesses the relative proximity of the Bakerloo line, providing reliable public transport access to central London is seen as an advantage

4. What are the disadvantages of location in Wealdstone as against Harrow/ Pinner?

   Poor vehicle servicing of premises and lack of customer parking are seen as the key problems by all businesses.
   In most cases, the problem of servicing premises was not seen to be critical at the time of the original purchase or original occupation of the premises, but has become progressively worse with increasing levels of High Street traffic and consequent traffic controls

   In all cases, the current problem of parking both for staff and customers is seen as critical. In recent years businesses have suffered the loss of the old library car-park site off Grant Road, and the imposition of resident parking restrictions in the surrounding roads. These, it is understood, prevent any non-permit parking between 10 – 11am and between 2 – 3pm on a week day. The new multi storey car park on Gladstone Way is considered to be too far away, while the use of the more local Iceland car park requires, it is understood, the purchase of goods.

5. What improvements can be made?

   Two proposals to alleviate the parking problem are proposed. Firstly to publicise the times when non-permit car parking is permitted on the surrounding streets, and secondly to facilitate / improve rear parking and access. It is understood (but not verified) that the yard area to the rear of nos 89 – 99 High Street is Council adopted land which has the potential for more effective parking use.

   A further proposal suggested is to review how the parking controls in the surrounding streets are operated, including the relaxation of the afternoon control period or of the availability in that period of a limited number parking 'passes' for visiting clients.

APPENDIX 4

Wealdstone Regeneration SWOT Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
The town centre offer	Some successful specialist retailers e.g. • Music • Ethnic goods Large number of independent shops. Large discount retail offer to meet needs of low income groups. Other retail and service categories with strong representation in Wealdstone are: ▪ Elec, phones, home entertainment & video; ▪ DIY, hardware & hshd goods. ▪ Chemists toiletries & opticians ▪ Hairdressing, health & beauty ▪ Estate agents & auctioneers. Centre is large by comparison with district centres generally	There is a low number of retail multiples present in Wealdstone (in 2000, only Boots, Woolworth, Shoe Express, and Iceland) (GLE, 2000)(updated 2005) Has been in decline and is uncompetitive. Residents tend to shop outside of the area, for convenience and comparison goods. ▪ Lack of a major supermarket / foodstore ▪ Footfall in the town centre has fallen since the mid-1990's: 331k to 270k via a low of 238k in 2001. ▪ Peak footfall has shifted N from Wealdstone Centre to junction with George Gange Way. ▪ Environment and streetscape are of poor quality with a large number of vacant units in secondary areas. ▪ The centre is weak in all the durable sectors that anchor a normal town centre: clothing & footwear, books & stationery, gifts, china, glass,	Whilst perceptions of change in the retail mix of the TC are quite negative, the scale of decline is modest: ▪ The number of retail and service units in the centre has fallen from 157 to 144 1995-2003 ▪ Within this total retail shops have dropped from 68.2% to 63.9%, services have remained roughly constant and restaurants, cafes etc have increased from 14.6% to 19.4% (5 units). ▪ The proportion of convenience shops (16.4%) is high relative to the GB average (9.2%), but that reflects its status as a small town centre. ▪ Within the convenience category only CTN/convenience stores and groceries and frozen foods shops are over-represented relative to the GB average and significant in absolute numbers. Retailers have adapted flexibly to changing market needs &	Further improvements in competing centres

		leather, toys, sports and cycles, jewellery. Vacant outlets not excessive given size of centre (10.9% versus 10.2% for GB), but vacant floorspace proportion higher (reflecting larger vacant units. The visibility or exposure of the centre to potential customers is weak due to the barrier effect of the by pass roads, the intrusion of blank or worse vacant sites and the multi-story car park Fear of crime, especially in the evenings, is disproportionate to low actual crime figures. The area is considered hostile and threatening in the evenings and at night. (GLE, 1999) ▪ Later figures indicate that while overall, Harrow tends to have a lower crime rate than London averages, within Harrow, Wealdstone tends to have high rates of Auto crime and Criminal Damage. (LBH, July 2004) WRS99 Actions for Town Centre: ▪ TC management, promotion, co-ordination: Performance monitoring in place since 9/01. No consistent improvement in footfall, some reduction in vacancy rates. Marketing not underway, co-ordination poor, as Harrow/Wealdstone has been without a TC manager.	demands, changing offer, pricing etc. The area is underserved by the "evening economy", a largely untapped market for Wealdstone. Possible development of café's that could meet the lunchtime needs of local workers. (GLE, 2000)	

		(GLE, 2002) ▪ Business development / work with retailers: £300k ESF funding secured to support training and business development activities. A shopfront design was prepared for UDP. However, take-up of training and business support opportunities has been extremely low. Funding for shopfront improvements was not secured. Physical regeneration and re-development: Plans for major retail development to anchor the centre fell through, as Sainsburys withdrew their proposal as being non-commercially viable.		
Investment	Public sector investment in facilities has been significant and positive e.g. the Wealdstone Centre. Investment in housing & other development now taking place e.g. Barratts scheme on Library site and in Headstone Drive.	Rejection of Wealdstone by Sainsbury & Asda. A growing acceptance that attracting retail investment to secondary centres will be difficult, due to their weaker competitive position. (GLE, 1999, 2000, 2002) ▪ Success of these centres is dependent upon provision of a unique offer, and also the proximity to the major centre. ▪ In London, Wealdstone is the closest district centre to a major centre (1.2km) ▪ Because of this proximity, Wealdstone can be considered to be "over-shopped")	Gap sites left over from by pass development create potential for new development (see Appendix 7). Investment potential: ▪ New retail formats offer the opportunity to secure a foodstore of the right size and location for the regeneration of TC. There is potential to develop land packages to secure mixed use and housing development in the centre, including new community facilities. The suburban agenda: regeneration of suburban areas is supported in the government and professional agenda.	Attracting investment to the town centre has proven difficult, the main problems being the failure to attract a large food retailer, or to stem the perception of decline. Attracting a large retailer to the area seems unlikely, as the centre is ringed by a high number of large foodstores. The disjointed approach to town centre investment and management risks being a deterrent to investment.

		(GLE, 2000)	Wealdstone a case study in the GOL et al 1997 report Sustainable Residential Quality – identifying potential for housing development in and around TC's. Civic Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation "Sustainable Renewal of Suburban Areas" highlighting need for regeneration in suburban areas, and specific reference to this in the Government's Urban Taskforce report. Could position itself as a pilot scheme for this. The approach to TC in the London Plan envisages a continuing retail function, but emphasises the need for intensification of development, increased housing around TC's and civic and community uses. (GLE, 2002; London Plan)	
Transport Links / Access	Regular rail services to London Euston, North to Watford and Milton Keynes London Underground connection through Bakerloo Line A range of bus services serve the area WRS99 – prioritised these actions: Reviewing pedestrianisation scheme in TC ▪ Improving bus access to TC ▪ Improving station and access to it	Access to and within the area is considered poor, despite excellent transport links. ▪ Pedestrian access is impeded from all directions apart from the north, by roundabouts, barriers and large roads. Pedestrians are unable to follow "desire lines" ▪ Car access is confusing because of road layout. Despite a large supply of relatively inexpensive car parking, a perception that parking in the area is not available. (GLE, 1999)	While transport links are a major strength, they are under-utilised – opportunities exist for improvement: ▪ Wealdstone identified as a strategic transport interchange by West London Leadership and is part of the current Govt. funded TPP programme ▪ Physical developments in the town centre offer the opportunity to tackle pedestrian, bus, and parking/ access problems. (GLE, 1999)	

	▪ Improving junction adjacent to centre to provide direct access to the High Street Significant progress made on all of these by 2002: ▪ Options for review of pedestrianisation developed / consulted on ▪ Two way bus access was introduced ▪ Station underwent major refurbishment, including disabled access to platforms ▪ Interchange with bus services introduced on the bridge ▪ Major improvements made to the route for pedestrians from station to High Street. Transport investments through the council's ITP funding has totalled £800k at 2002, with a further £200k to come in that financial year. (GLE, 2002)	Car ownership levels in Harrow are higher than both London and England levels. However, levels of car ownership in Wealdstone are amongst the lowest in the district (4^{th} lowest rate of ownership among Harrow wards in 2001) (LB Harrow, 2004). Given the circuitous routes into and within the centre for cars and the poor retail and service offer, it is attractive for car-borne shoppers to go to other centres once they have opted to travel by car.		
Location / Amenity	Harrow/Wealdstone is generally regarded as a desirable area to live, with good schools and amenities, and open space. Study area contains: ▪ Harrow Civic Centre ▪ Harrow Recreation Centre ▪ Wealdstone Library & Grant Road community centre ▪ A number of churches	Wealdstone had the 2^{nd} highest rate of noise complaints in the district, in the year ending March 2003 – around 80% of these complaints were for neighbour noise. Amenity damaged by the clutter of signs and street furniture in the centre (see Appendix 8).		

		Orientation difficult within centre and approaching centre. Pedestrianisation/bypasses have pushed the issues of safety/accidents, ease of access, and visibility of the centre out to the by-passes.		
Competing Centres	See Appendix 5			
Catchment Area (Residents & Employees)	See Appendix 2			
Social Exclusion	See Appendix 2			
Management and Maintenance of the Centre	WRS99 actions: Implementation of street wardens in the area, with £400k funding from government Establishment of Wealdstone Active Community (WAC) – to provide a community led programme of activity and develop a sense of civic pride on the area.	Lack of attention to detail of day to day management of centre, especially the public realm: • Removal of trade rubbish • Litter (albeit has improved) • Cars using High Street illegally.	Community involvement: Various community groups are active, however there is no co-ordination or overall strategy. ▪ Co-ordination of existing work, and progressing groups from consultation to involvement stages could give ideas some momentum.	

	Dispersal Order seen to have been effective; pressure for its extension.			

Geographical definitions:
Town Centre: Including the station and library
Industrial areas: One to the east of the High Street to the West taking in Kodak, and a series of industrial estates, straddling the railway line.
Predominantly residential areas to the East and West of the High Street, moving north towards Harrow Weald.
The area to the South of the Railway line, taking in the Civic Centre and providing a link to the Harrow Town Centre.

APPENDIX 5 - EVALUATION OF COMPETING CENTRES

1. Local Competitors

Wealdstone town centre competes locally for retail trade (and services) with a number of other town centres and out of town superstores. The principal *comparison* centre competitors are Harrow and Watford, the former identified as a major centre by the GLA's predecessor the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC). For *food and convenience* shopping the principal competing centres are Harrow-Station Road (Tescos) Hatch End (Waitrose) and Harrow Weald (Waitrose), and Kenton (Sainsburys) - identified in the Wealdstone Town Centre Survey of approximately 100 local residents[1] and confirmed by the Consultants' discussions with local residents.[2] A comparison of Wealdstone, Harrow and Hatch End centres in terms of indicators of size and function is provided in Table 1-5 below.

Table 1-5 Indicators of size and function of Wealdstone, Harrow and Hatchend

	Wealdstone	Harrow	Hatch End
Total Floorspace	312.9	1057.0	175.4
Comparison Floorspace	130.1	585.0	57.2
Convenience Floorspace	182.8	472.0	118.2
Multiple Employment	220	1485	9
Total Employment	2967	7158	300
Public accessibility	107.5	84.6	84.2
Private accessibility	134.3	134.3	134.3
Public Ext Dep	160.6	134.2	81.0
Private Ext Dep	90.9	88.6	82.4
Composite score	**3.1**	**10.9**	**1.7**

Source: "High Accessibility and Town Centres in London" (Urbed, Halcrow Fox and Donaldsons, 1994). The Composite score is an index based on a range of factors such as accessibility, amenity, attractions etc.

The indicators given in Table 1-5 are from a study in 1994. Since 1994, Wealdstone's town centre retail profile has diminished. The closure of the Safeway store in 1995 has resulted in a significant decline in food retail, and the construction of the bypass and traffic management alterations have caused disruption to the centre. Meanwhile, retail developments in Harrow and Hatch End suggest that they have increased their competitive edge over Wealdstone.[3]

[1] Greater London Enterprises
[2] Meeting with HAMCA
[3] "Retail Analysis and Street Market Assessment: Wealdstone Regeneration study Phase 2" (GLE Strategies)

Harrow, being a much larger centre than Wealdstone scores much higher on the composite index. Wealdstone is the closest district centre to a major centre in London (1.2km from Harrow), and its close proximity suggests that Harrow is a major competitor. This is confirmed by the Wealdstone Town Centre Survey: 39% of respondents said they do their main weekly food shop in Harrow compared to 28% in Wealdstone, and 75% said they shop for clothes and special items in Harrow compared to 8% in Wealdstone. Hatch End is a much smaller centre, but recent retail developments imply that it is a competitor of Wealdstone given its close proximity.

Almost as significant as competing comparison centres are competing superstores in local or district centres or freestanding. The main competitors are Tesco, Waitrose and Sainsburys which are within a kilometre of so of the centre of the High Street. For many local residents, they may actually be nearer. The most important of these is the large Tesco located between Wealdstone and Harrow. Further competition comes from three Waitrose stores in the borough, including Harrow Weald and South Harrow, and from Morrisons at Hatch End.

APPENDIX 6 – INVESTOR INTERVIEWS

1. Introduction

The rationale for the enquiries that have been made was that just under a third of the catchment population (two local wards) is Asian, mostly of Indian origin, and that the Asian population is very strong in NW London – Southall to Hendon –such that it makes sense to test whether there might be specialist facilities that would serve this population and possibly wider groups. The aim would be too attract customers to Wealdstone from a sub-regional catchment area, exploiting the sub-regional accessibility of the centre and bringing custom to the centre that would not otherwise come.

Two further factors indicated this as the most fruitful area of search for investors willing to invest in Wealdstone:

- Our early enquiries in the Council and in the town centre revealed no investors already established in Wealdstone who might be candidates for further investment.
- We were aware from other work done in West and North London that there was a need for additional facilities for the Asian community and that there were potential investors with funds.

We used our contacts in the area to identify firms that could shed light on the nature and scale of the demand and on who might contemplate investment in Wealdstone. The topics covered in the interviews are set out at the end of this appendix (Brief).

Sixteen businesses in the fields of catering, fashion, film, retail, weddings and conferences, other corporate and family events have been interviewed. We have also examined a number of existing venues to assess the nature of the facilities and the services offered.

2. Findings

The findings can be summarised:

- There is a continuing demand for events centres that are:
  - Flexible in being able to cater for 100-1000 guests.
  - Multi-purpose, accommodating social as well as corporate events.
  - Licenced for civil ceremonies.
  - Provided with good parking e.g. 1 space per 4-5 guests.
  - Good quality, the VIP Lounge in Edgware being quoted as a benchmark.
  - Accessible for vans and lorries.
- We are aware of one investor keen to get into the lucrative weddings business.
- With assistance from FSP Architects and Planners we have made a provisional estimate of the floorspace and cost of two alternative scales of facility: 500 and 1000 guests for banqueting and 200 guests in a restaurant. The estimate is included at the end of this appendix.
- Weddings are a large part but not all of the market; their key features are:

- The large majority are mixed marriages.
- The spend per event varies from £10,000 to £50,000.
- 75% of weddings take place on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, often lasting all day.
- The scope for business development in firms supplying services for weddings is interesting: accommodation, food and drink, decorations, entertainment, florists, music, photography, security, printing, transport, fashion/clothing, website design etc.
- Weddings vary according to the wealth, origins and tastes of the parties and thus require a range of types and quality of premises.
- Venues range from commercial premises such as Bombay Dreams in Edgware and Madhus Brilliant in Southall to community centre and public facilities such as the Byron Centre.

- Engagement parties are smaller, normally being evening events.
- There is one Bollywood Cinema nearby, the Safari Cinema, adjacent to the Tesco in Station Road/High Mead, Harrow. It is an independent cinema and has been losing trade mainly because of the loss of immediately accessible parking for patrons:
    - The cinema used to share parking with Tesco but Tesco withdrew this facility and parking is now reserved for their clients.
    - The Council's car park behind Debenhams has been sold.
    - There were meters in High Mead; this is now a residents-only zone.
    - The nearby Vue multiplex also shows Bollywood films and has a car park.
    - The owner could be interested in another cinema with adequate parking.
- Asian food and fashion retailing are major business sectors and, as with retailing generally, they benefit from being clustered together, creating a critical mass that makes a destination for shoppers. The Ealing Road is a good example of such a cluster. It is unclear that there is a demand for another centre.

3. Brief

The task is to interview key business players in the NW London Asian community and do other research (web, reports....) in order to evaluate the potential for a sub-regional (appealing to a wider than local market) facility that could be located in Wealdstone town centre. The practicalities of finding and assembling a suitable site can be taken for granted.

Possible facilities include:

- A centre for family and commercial events e.g. weddings, presentations, birthdays etc
- An Asian food centre: a kind of planned Brick Lane, where you would go to find a wide choice of different types of good Asian cuisine, possibly along the lines of a food court in a managed shopping centre, where there are some common facilities e.g. tables and chairs.
- An Asian arts and performance centre, possibly with catering/restaurants attached.
- Anything else for which there is a need and which would attract large numbers of people to Wealdstone.
- Of slightly lesser interest would be a workshops centre which would attract workers but fewer members of the general public. This could be expanded if the production was for example related to clothing and fashion, such that production was linked to facilities to display and sell the clothes. Asian fashion

is big business with a strong export trade so this might be very interesting. Fashion journals might provide some interesting leads.

The questions that need to be answered in relation to each type of facility are:

- What services and facilities are involved, including rough physical size?
- What markets/needs would be served?
- What are the existing facilities serving these markets and why are they inadequate (size, location, quality, dedication to Asian events.......?)
- What numbers of people might be attracted to the facility and how frequently?
- Who might invest in and run such a facility?
- Are there any live proposals that we should be interested in?

APPENDIX 7 – PROPERTY MARKET ANALYSIS

1. Analysis of Local Property Markets and Development Options

Some of the options for improving Wealdstone as a district centre hinge on development of new buildings aimed at:

- Reinforcing the retail offer.
- Improving trading by increasing the number of people who live or work in the immediate area.
- Raising funding for projects either through recycling the proceeds from the sale of land owned by Harrow B.C, or through S106 Agreements.

In order to establish what might be possible we have analysed the local property market with the aim of identifying generic types of development that are:

- Viable in Wealdstone
- Will suit the specific sites that might be available
- Could make a contribution towards achieving tine regeneration objectives.

This section addresses the first of these three objectives, namely to identify the general forms of development that might be viable in Wealdstone. It is based on information on property values, typical building costs, and an analysis of the notional value of land used for development for retail, residential and office use. At this stage we are not seeking to attribute a value to particular sites although the information set out here directly informs the analysis of specific development options later in this Report.

There are clearly many possible types of development. In what follows we have stuck to familiar and readily deliverable types of scheme and consider:

- Retail uses, ranging from larger format food and comparison goods stores to standard small units.
- Office, ranging from headquarters buildings for large corporations to small serviced suites.
- Residential development

We have not considered the development of industrial and distribution units as a possibility. There are no suitable sites and a low ratio of employment to site area which reduces its potential to contribute to the generation of extra retail footfall.

We arrived at our conclusions on value below by using published agents reports, trade data and local agents' anecdotes, backing these up with residual development appraisals where appropriate. Summary assessments of typical land values have been included below where appropriate. These carry a health warning. The residual land value is what is left for the landowner after the costs of development, including the developer's return, is deducted from the sales. In most places, it is hypersensitive to the assumptions made about values and costs, and these can vary depending on the developer's approach and the location, shape and condition of the site. So the margin of error in residual appraisals is invariably high, but it remains the most useful tool for the task and provides a means of analysis that is good enough to indicate what is feasible in general terms.

1.1 Retail

Theoretically the options for adding to the retail offer include the introduction of comparison shopping, major food stores and extensions to the existing trading pattern. In practice the role of a district centre in providing comparison shopping is limited and Wealdstone suffers in particular from the proximity of Harrow. It is sometimes suggested that a centre might benefit from a particular type of retailer. In practice landlords are reluctant to restrict their lettings and this is difficult to achieve unless there is some degree of public control over the property. We believe that the real options is to aim for a general increase the number and size range of shops in the existing retail area and specifically to improve the food offer through the introduction of grocery multiples that are proven generators of increased footfall.

In terms of food shopping, the existing offer does not come from the leading food retail brands, Tesco, Sainsbury, Morrison, Waitrose and M&S. Of these, Morrison's are currently digesting Safeway and Wealdstone is not natural Waitrose territory and in any event they have an existing store in Harrow. In terms of size the operator best suited to the existing sites and capable of making a difference is Tesco whose Metro format commonly provides stores of around 1000 sq m. But this format has fallen out of favour with them. Apparently it suffers in comparison with their Express format because Metro units are:

- Caught by Sunday trading laws by virtue of their size.
- Do not provide additional sales commensurate with the extra trading area and marginal cost. Their smaller 'Express' format stores typically have a 270 sq m trading area.

Sainsbury's small store format is usually rather smaller than this, averaging around 200 sq m. We believe that either of these formats would be a welcome addition to trading in Wealdstone but insufficient in itself to create the footfall necessary to produce a step change.

We can't quantify the rental value of a new food store. It can vary considerably. But in terms of establishing the viability of general retail development as a means of improving the retail offer we have identified a number of transactions that provide guidance on market prices. Agents advise a range in Wealdstone from an average £12,000 rental for a typical shop unit rising to £16,000 near the station. One agent, who seemed to specialise in demand from the Asian market, advised that he was marketing FF foods on Masons Avenue at either £12,000 p.a. with the benefit of a new lease for the 65 sq m unit or around £50,000 for the existing business with the benefit of the existing lease. He believed that an investor might expect a return of around 10% on a shop with a tenant regarded as a poor risk in commercial terms with the return falling commensurately for better units. We are aware of auction transactions on units on nearby Kenton Road offering an equivalent yield (i.e. weighted to reflect factors such as the length of time to the next rent review and the availability of flats to let) averaging around 7%. Nos. 8 and 10 Station Parade were each offered at £13,500 p.a. each for units of around 110 sq m. No. I Church Parade was recently sold at auction with a rent reserved at £9,000 p.a. This was sold for £300,000 with the benefit of planning permission to create two flats on the upper floors.

In 2002 a collection of 9 shops in the parade on Kenton Road situated between numbers 150 and 186 were sold at auction. The units with single flats above typically commanded £250,000 in instances where the shop was vacant and around £300,000 where there was a tenant. The unit let to Abbey National went for £321,000 reflecting the quality of the tenant, and the Man Chui restaurant and the two flats above fetched £624,000 because of its size. The number of vacancies and timing of rent reviews make it difficult to analyse the return that investors expected from these investments, but our general impression of a range of 7% to 10% confirms agent's views. We would expect these investments to command a higher price in the current market.

TITLE : **Wealdstone – Generic Small Scale Retail Development**
Standard shops of 90 sq m with 2 flats over on 120 sq m plot

	Quantum	Rate £	Total
Retail Zone A	36 Sq m	£3,500	£126,000
Retail Zone B	36 Sq m	£1,750	£63,000
Retail Zone C	18 Sq m	£875	£15,750
Residential	160 Sq m	£2,300	£368,000
Agents Fees		1.5%	£1,890
	Net Receipt		£574,640
Building Cost	250 Sq m	£1,200	£300,000
External Works (% of build cost)		5.0%	£15,000
Fees (% of all construction)		12.0%	£37,800
Marketing & Sales (% of value)		2.0%	£2,520
Other Costs (% of build costs)		3.0%	£9,000
Developers profit (% of cost)		25%	£91,080
	Total Costs		£455,400
Land Value Realised at Sale			£119,240
Equivalent per ha			£9,936,269

The appraisal shown here is based on a new 90 sq m shop with two small flats above. The implied rent for the shop is around £14,000 p.a and the flats would be worth £150,000 each. There would need to be good access to achieve this. In practice rents on retail units differ widely depending on location and configuration. At this level retail development will usually be viable.
However new retail units similar in size would add local competition without necessarily expanding the range of goods on offer.

1.2 Residential

The main drivers of land values are the price at which completed property can be sold and local affordable housing policies. To check residential values in the area we contacted agents Baker Pearce, Ellis & Co, Rawlinson Gold, Preston Bennett, David Lichfield and Hinton & Bloxham, together with online details from Gibbs Gillespie, Colin Dean, Peter Reglar, Wilson Hawkins, Stephen Woodward, Woodrow Morris and Robertson Phillips. Further details on property on offer from developers in the wider area were obtained from Persimmon, Barratt and Clearview. The consensus was that the most active demand for flats came from younger couples and first time buyers. Buyers from minority ethnic groups often preferred houses, not least because of larger family sizes and a strong preference for freeholds. Priorities included access to tube network and amount of internal space. Wealdstone was variously seen as a 'value' location or a weaker market although sales were reportedly achieved readily enough.

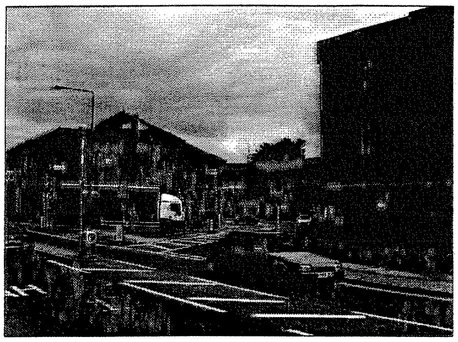
Barratt's are asking £220,000 - £240.000 for flats in their scheme of the size indicated. This equates to about £3500 per sq m. Agents viewed the upper end of this range as overpriced and suggested that a realistic asking price for reasonable quality new two bedroom flats would be around £220k. Preston Bennett in particular seemed to handle developer stock. They quoted a price from late 2004 of £220,000 for 66.5 sq m flats as typical. Existing stock in this size range in the area seems to sell at around £150,000 - £190,000 (£2,300 sq m - £2,900 sq m) depending on condition. We would expect flats above retail units to be at the very lowest end of this range. Several agents referred to an old rule of thumb that new property was worth 20% more than old. In our own experience poor space standards in modern schemes have eroded this.

The appraisal below illustrates the value of a notional one hectare residential development based upon the values above and using as a benchmark, a development of new two bed flats comprising 65 sq m gross internal area, with a single bathroom, token balcony and some semi – private external space. Build costs are approximately BCIS mean costs for low rise flats in Inner London, and the implied density is around 150 d.f. ha. The affordable housing assumption reflects what we are advised is current local policy. It is assumed that RSL's will be able to pay around £65,000 for a two bedroom flat which is a capitalisation of the target rental income for Harrow RSL's with the highest target rents. The intermediate tenure housing is priced at 60% of the market level. These are typical figures.

TITLE : **Wealdstone – Generic Residential Development**				
		11500 Sq m	On 1 ha	
	Quantum		Rate £	Total
Site Area		0.2	Ha	
Open Market Sales		7,000 Sq m	£3,500	£24,500,000
Social Rented		2100 Sq m	1000	£2,100,000
Intermediate Tenure		900 Sq m	2450	£2,205,000
Agents Fees			1.5%	£367,500
	Net Receipt			£24,132,500
Building Cost		11,500 Sq m	£1,000	£11,500,000
External Works (% of build cost)			10.0%	£1,150,000
Fees (% of all construction)			12.0%	£1,518,000
Marketing & Sales (% of value)			2.0%	£490,000
Other Costs (% of build costs)			3.0%	£345,000
Developers profit (% of cost)			20%	£3,000,600
	Total Costs			£18,003,600
Land Value Realised at Sale				£6,128,900

It is worth noting the low values attached to the affordable housing element. If there was no affordable housing requirement, land values in this illustration would increase to over £15m per ha. RSL's face difficulties in purchasing land at these levels and are thus drawn to the sites that private developers would rather avoid and which thus sell at much lower levels. This can include land with retail frontage.

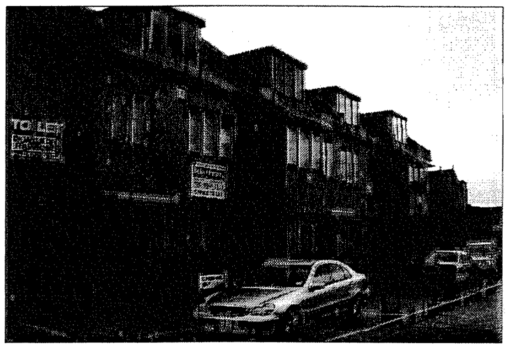
1.3 Offices



There are office developments in the vicinity of Wealdstone ranging from the relatively low density 'urban business park' form of development shown here to major blocks such as the Council's own offices and units for small firms such as those in Wolseley Road or in office blocks let as small suites. In areas like Wealdstone each tends to address a different market. Larger blocks will tend to be purpose built to meet a specific requirements. Successful development hinges critically on the number of potential occupiers in the market with a requirement that cannot be easily met by an existing building.

Office developments such as the one illustrated are usually built on a speculative basis at times when underlying demand for standard buildings is at a peak. There is usually demand for smaller units such as those on Cardinal Way off Wolseley Road because they appeal to smaller scale developers and occupier companies and others wishing to purchase freehold property. Small suites in multi storey buildings are often let on 'easy in easy out' terms to small firms who have better uses for their capital than investment in a freehold. The market for larger office blocks in North West London has suffered form the general lack of demand from end users that has depressed development since 2000. There are now signs of an upturn and increased demand is rekindling developer interest. Agents reports such as those produced by Jones Lang LaSalle and CBRE which cover the Outer London / Western M25 area show reducing availability and the former report a 57% (80,000 sq m) increase in demand in the North West London / M25 zone over the previous year, although the identified major occupier requirements were not anywhere near Harrow.

Deals that have been done in London in places such as Ealing and Hammersmith have been at around £230 sq m. We would expect levels to rise rapidly to £300 sq m as existing supply dries up. Even at a competitively lower rate, office development in Wealdstone would be viable. However the key issue is whether a good enough site could be made available, and whether there is a reasonable prospect of securing a developer and occupier. The two are linked but our general impression is that the sites within the town centre are not particularly attractive in this respect in a situation in which there is still a lot of empty space and sites with planning permission within the wider area. And the balance of development risk and construction economics suggests that any development would not comprise particularly tall buildings with commensurately high employment densities. We would not rule out the prospect of development if market conditions continue to improve but overall believe that the downside risks of failure make a strategy based on the option of securing a major new office occupier, an unattractive option.



We do believe that there is a real likelihood of demand from owner occupiers and small investors for units of the scale of Cardinal Way in the coming years. This follows the changes to the personal pensions regime and the likelihood of large amounts of SIPP funds being targeted on property. We are informed by agents Wilson Hawkins that the unit in the picture has been let at around £150 per sq m and that the freehold could be offered for around £3,150 sq m which, if actually achievable would represent a substantial and impressive capitalisation of the rental value. We also have details of a 90 sq m freehold unit on Kenton Road being offered at £330k, or £3,600 sq m. Land for this purpose would be valuable.

TITLE : **Wealdstone**	Small Self Contained Office Buildings 3000 sq m on 0.2 ha		
	Quantum	Rate £	Total
Site Area	0.2	Ha	
Value	2,550 Sq m	£3,500	£8,925,000
Buyers Costs		4%	£357,000
	Net Receipt		£8,568,000
Building Cost	3,000 Sq m	£1,200	£3,600,000
External Works (% of build cost)		10.0%	£360,000
Fees (% of all construction)		12.0%	£475,200
Marketing & Sales (% of value)		2.0%	£178,500
Other Costs (% of build costs)		3.0%	£108,000
Build Fin. (40% of Build period in Years, r	0.40	7.0%	£132,208
Void Fin. On all costs (Years, %)	0.50	7.0%	£169,887
Developers profit (% of cost)		20%	£1,004,759
	Total Costs		£6,028,553
Land Value Realised at Sale			£2,539,447
Fin. On Land Cost: (Years / %)	1.50	7%	£163,707
Land Value Now			**£2,375,740**
Equivalent Per ha			11,878,701

The illustrative appraisal here is based on the assumption that new development would command £3,500 per sq m. At the £3,150 per sq m quoted by Wilson Hawkins, the notional land value falls from £11.9m per ha to £7.7m per ha. Wilson Hawkins confirm our view that there is a ready demand for units of this type, and the development model is scalable and thus not afflicted by the need to achieve sites of a certain size or configuration.

One alternative that has been considered is trying to create an 'office village' by creating space over new retail units or converting existing space. This has attractions in policy terms when retail vacancy rates start to climb and usage of space over shops is low. We have details of a 2nd and 3rd floor suite at 104a High Street being offered at £8,500 for a 70 sq m suite (£120 sq m approx) and space at Premier House at 38-48 High Street which provides further pricing guidance seems to be typically priced at around the same level. We would expect this to equate to a capital value of around £1600 sq. m for the existing space and speculate that newly converted space over shops might be worth a bit more if there is good and attractive access.

This is rather less than we have assumed could be obtained for new flats over shops and given that space of this type might typically cost as much to build as illustrated above (£1200 sq m build cost and an overall cost & profit requirement of around £2000 sq m to be met before land value is generated), it can be seen that even assuming a premium rent for newer space, new development of this sort would not be very commercially appealing.

Whether or not it is worth converting existing space to offices will depend very much on the level of conversion costs. These can often be substantial and much of the space above shops doesn't lend itself to this purpose at all. The best opportunities can present themselves when converting the retail unit itself to office use in situations in which no retail tenant can be found.

1.4 Leisure uses

This category covers a wide range of potential uses ranging from bingo halls and cinemas to licensed premises and hotels. The number of possibilities means that it is not possible to identify a general land value for leisure uses. As a general guide, hotels in Outer London do not usually provide land values that compare with the other types of development covered here. Existing pubs can fetch over £1m or more each and new pubs and night clubs can fetch considerably more depending on the location. Multiplex's cinemas provide a small but real land value, but individual cinema's normally do not.

1.5 Air Rights

The development of air rights is usually only considered in the most valuable locations and it is not a form of development opportunity that appears to be actively sought after by developers. But the rise in house prices in recent years makes it an increasingly viable option in an increasing exploitation of air rights is not often considered. A lot of the potential in Wealdstone arises from the quantity of underused car parking spaces in Wealdstone. Viability can only be realistically considered on a site by site basis but a prima facie case is easy to make. The cost of replacing an existing car parking space with a space in an undercroft is typically around £7,000 per car after allowing for fees etc. and each car would take up around 25 sq m. So the cost of replacing 1 ha of surface car parking with an undercroft to a development of new flats would be £2,800,000. This is considerably less than the £6,128,900 that we concluded that a 1 ha site for 150 flats would be worth £6,128,900 after allowing for affordable housing. In reality things would not be straightforward. The need for an undercroft would impact on the height of the block of flats and there would be a need for some residential parking. Notwithstanding there might be some scope here. The economics of providing undercroft parking to new small office suites is similar.

1.6 The Value of Existing Space

In the analysis of retail values above we commented that existing investment property, typically comprising a standard shop with two residential flats, seemed to be fetching between £250,000 and £400,000 at auction. Larger shops units do not always come with a corresponding increase in the amount of residential space above thus their value does not increase commensurately. And new units do not command a significant rental premium over old ones in sound condition. The practical implication of this is that it will not usually be possible to replace existing frontage with new units unless the result is a very major increase in the volume of floorspace on the site.

In some cases in Wealdstone there are existing workshop units. The value of these depends very much on condition etc. but a typical freehold without any development rights might be worth £500 sq m - £700 sq m depending. Given that most workshops will cover around 75% of site area this equates to perhaps £4m - £5m per ha which suggests that it would be profitable to replace workshop premises with housing or offices.

Where development is concerned, the value of buying in property will to some extent reflect development rights. If a CPO is used the owner has rights to compensation for the extinguishment or movement of the business and these can add considerably to the costs, even if a negotiated settlement is achieved.

1.7 Conclusions

We do believe that there is scope to introduce one of the new 'convenience' retail formats offered by Tesco or Sainsbury's into the retail area and that this would provide it with a useful but not transformational fillip. But we do not believe that it will usually be possible to simply replace old retail units with new ones in the interests of improving the size mix or location of retailing within the town. Our calculation suggested that development of a new shop with flats over might produce a land value of over £100,000. There is a considerable potential margin of error in this figure but it is considerably less than the price at which existing property has been sold at auction. For similar reasons it would not appear that the expense of changing the retail layout, for instance to create an 'office village' based on the reuse of existing space, will produce a commercial value that could cover the costs involved.

We believe that good value would be obtained for small sites that lend themselves to development to provide small office units that can be sold on a freehold basis. It is less likely that developers would take an interest in the prospect of developing larger sites for offices, in the immediate future at least.

Unsurprisingly, residential development is viable. The main point of interest here is the level of subsidy that is required to create a social rented flat. If Harrow B.C. were prepared to consider a waiver of this requirement in the interest of introducing a more affluent population to Wealdstone, considerable sums might be released that could be invested in other regeneration projects within the town.

Finally, we believe that the exploitation of air rights could be considered as a way of increasing development density without sacrificing car parking.

2. Development Possibilities in Wealdstone

Within this context we have considered the development possibilities on specific sites within the town centre. These are listed below. It needs to be stressed that the values and costs that we have used are very rough estimates and only useful for the purpose of considering which opportunities are worth considering in more detail. Also, we have measured the site area of 1:2500 plans rather than measurement on site.

2.1 Site 1: 14 – 20 High Street (Former Comet and adjacent unit) and sites on SW corner of junction Palmerston Road / George Gange Way

We understand that Genesis have applied for planning consent for a retail and residential scheme incorporating the former Comet units at 14-20 High Street. This property backs onto:

a) The car park to the rear of the Wesley Owen unit at 11-13 Masons Avenue.
b) The residential terrace in Palmerston Road.
c) The sites used for workshops and parking on the West side of George Gange Way.

These sites are pictured below, following the order above. We understand that the properties in the two photographs on the right are in L.B. Harrow ownership.

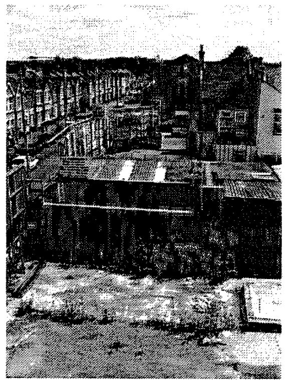
We believe that the best development solution will be obtained by consolidating these sites is desirable. In all they might total around 0.5 ha. A higher density of development on the car park and L.B. Harrow sites might be possible as part of a comprehensive scheme and it will be easier to achieve a design and layout that provides reasonable levels of residential amenity while allowing a financially advantageous mix of market and affordable housing.

2.2 *Site 2. Vacant Plot at North East intersection of Masons Avenue and George Gange*

This is a small site in Council ownership. It could be used to provide small B1 units or a small residential block but its size coupled with the inevitability of overlooking problems makes it an unappealing prospect.
It might be possible to use it in conjunction with the Site 1.

2.3 Site 3: East of George Gange Way

This site is illustrated below and is in L.B. Harrow ownership. It extends underneath the flyover, which limits the development possibilities. However there would appear to be scope on the site shown, for a residential development configured to face North and East along Masons Avenue. It could be further improved by adding the occupied but dilapidated workshop and residential properties to the east. Clearly in this case the developable area would be rather less than the site area and might be around 0.15 ha.

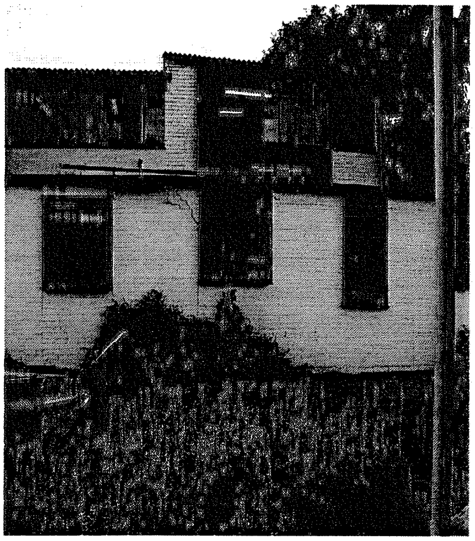


2.4 Site 4: Car Parks on either side of Gladstone Way

This site comprises the access adjacent to the Wealdstone Centre, the surface car park, the multi storey car park and additional land adjacent to Peel Road which provides a landscaped area beside the roundabout. At present the multi storey car park seems to be underused and it might be possible to replace enough of the spaces that would be lost in redevelopment through better use of other parking opportunities. The site could be usefully extended by buying the Siddashram Centre in which case the developable area is probably around 0.5 ha. It is large enough to be used for an off-pitch retail unit and some of the major food retailer's trade satisfactorily from 'backland' sites. But this would not be an intensive use of the land and residential development would probably provide better site value.

2.5 Site 5: Works and PH Garden on South of George Gange Way

This site is in private ownership although L.B. Harrow owns a small landscaped strip adjacent on George Gange Way. The workshop building is in very poor condition. There is severe cracking in the brickwork which can be seen in this photograph. The adjacent pub garden does not seem well maintained or valued. This is not a major opportunity but it does offer the possibility of a small residential development. The scheme could be enhanced by adding 16-24a Canning Road although this might add more complication than value. The developable area might be 0.15 ha and be therefore worth around £1m on the basis of our approximate calculation of the value per ha of residential land. The combined value of the existing property excluding these units should be less than that. Our rough visual estimate is that the workshops might comprise some 1000 sq m which at £500 sq m would be worth £500k and after allowing £100k for the pub garden there is still some financial headroom.



2.6 Site 6 : Land at rear of Public House at 19 & 178 High Street

This site comprises the car parking at the rear of 17b and 19 High Street and might provide around 0.1 ha of developable land. However it is not likely to be popular for residential development by virtue of its location next to the pub and small scale B1 development might be more appropriate. Clearly the land would be more valuable if the pub was included, but this might add £1m or more to the cost of the site.

2.7 Site 7: Land between Ellen Webb Drive and Railway

This comprises the railway station car park and a vacant plot lying at the end of Headstone Drive. Our rough estimate is that together they might comprise 0.3 ha of developable land configured in a way that lends itself to development for either B1 or residential use but perhaps more suited to the former by virtue of its position between the road and a main railway line.

2.8 Site 8 : Land behind the Methodist Church and Iceland 83-85 High Street

This site could comprise around 0.16 ha and using our generic value calculation would be worth around £1m. There have been both B1 and residential developments in Wolseley Road recently

Providing 50 car parking spaces for Iceland in an undercroft would cost £ 350,000 and a 120 sq m replacement church hall would cost around £100,000. Once again, allowance would have to be made for the requirement for residential spaces but the site should still have a positive residual value.

The sites are collectively market and numbered on the following plan. Individually, none of the possible developments could transform the town centre. But the development if a group of them and especially the larger sites would improve the environment, and provide valuable additional footfall. The scheme with the biggest impact might be the replacement might be Number 4, not least because it offers the prospect of a more attractive route to the High Street.

3. Conclusions

- In all we have identified sites which we estimate comprise around 1.86 ha. of new development. The development of these sites would:

- Add additional living and working population into the town centre catchment.

- Reduce dereliction and improve the outlook in many places, smartening up the town centre.

- Provide a basis for funding other projects either by:

- Recycling the proceeds from the sale of land owned by L.B. Harrow or

- Waiving contributions from residential developments towards affordable housing in return for other commitments and contributions.

APPENDIX 8 - WEALDSTONE – TOWN CENTRE DE-CLUTTERING

1. Introduction

The word 'Clutter' is defined in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as 'confused collection, crowded disorder.' This aptly describes much of the street furniture that has been installed in Wealdstone town centre in recent years

Generally there has been comparatively little attempt to integrate signs, notices and other public realm artefacts. Even within the 'pedestrianised area', associated traffic signals and signage tend to compromise attempts to unify the design character of such street furniture as lighting standards, seating or litter bins.

The attached town centre maps (with key to graphic symbols) indicate the principal sources of town centre 'clutter', other than lighting pylons, traffic signal control boxes, occasional seating, litter bins and bus shelters

2. Lighting pylons

While lighting pylons have an essential role to play, they are a source of clutter. In Wealdstone they are of two designs, the one more functional in character outside the 'pedestrianised area', and the other, more human in scale and character, within the 'pedestrianised area', as illustrated above.

In both the above situations the lighting is mounted on free standing pylons. This does not necessarily have to be the case within a street context, particularly where, as in the above illustration, the aim is to create a more pedestrian friendly environment, where much of the lighting could be less obtrusively mounted on the sides of the building frontage, as undertaken in Chichester. It is then interesting to note how much of the street signage, all too readily appended to these public posts, disappears at the same time.

While a well designed, unified public lighting regime can provide a town centre with a sense of structure and cohesiveness, it should encompass the whole town centre and not just part. Unfortunately this does not apply to Wealdstone. Ideally the street furniture approach adopted in the 'pedestrianised' area should apply throughout the shopping area, so as to signal to drivers that they are entering a distinctive pedestrian priority environment, and should modify their driving behaviour accordingly.

3. Pedestrian barriers

As illustrated above, pedestrian barriers are of the most minimal quality, and are far too extensive. One wonders how essential are the above railings at the junction of the High Street with Graham Road. The problem appears to be that previous planners and traffic engineers appear to have regarded the convenience of the pedestrian in the High Street to the north of George Gange Way as secondary to that of the motor vehicle.

The Locket Road junction is another case in point. If the junction is to be signalled, then for the convenience of the pedestrian, crossing points should be brought as close as possible to the junction, to align more closely with pedestrian desire lines - rather than for the pedestrian to be forcibly diverted by railings. If the pedestrian crossing points were to be more conveniently placed closer to the junction, (and on each of the three arms of the junction), there would be less need for such extensive railing.

Similar reconsideration needs to be given to the junction of George Gange Way with the High Street. Without necessarily changing the geometry of the junction, thought needs to be given as to why the railings have to be so extensive. If pedestrian safety is the issue, then it must be said that pedestrian use of George Gange Way is relatively minimal, since, from a pedestrian point of view, it does not go anywhere of significance.

As noted in the previous section, drivers entering the town centre from George Gange Way need to be made aware that they are entering a 'pedestrian priority zone', and not one where pedestrians are railed off as second class users of the town centre. Equally where drivers approach the town centre from the south, at the junction of the High Street with Ellen Webb Drive and Masons Avenue, they again should be made aware that the 'pedestrian priority zone' starts at that junction, and not some 75 metres further north at Palmerston Road

Where, at the end of the day, it is decided that railings should be kept in the town centre, then, similar to the lighting regime, they should be of a higher quality than that which currently exists, and should be painted and styled in sympathy with the 'furniture' pertaining to the existing 'pedestrianised zone'.

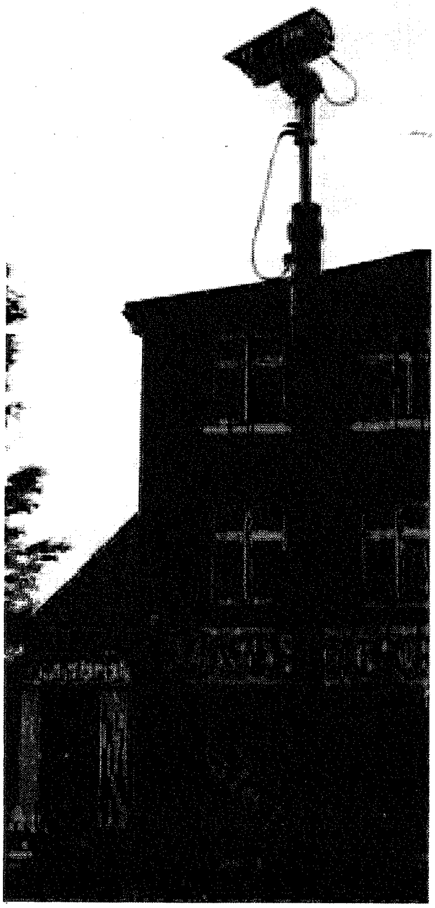
4. Posts carrying notices of waiting / loading restrictions

For the most part notices of waiting and loading restrictions are carried on their own separate posts, mostly to the front edge of the pavement. As indicated on the attached survey sheets, there are some twenty such posts in the town centre, adding significantly to the overall townscape clutter. Sometimes their message is incredibly obvious to the point of being unnecessary, as in the case where a 'no loading' sign has been placed alongside a pedestrian barrier. In any event the requirement of each individual notice should be reviewed, and where deemed to be necessary should either be integrated with other street furniture or placed in less prominent locations.

In the latter case, consideration should be given to placing such notices at the back edge of the pavement, opposite the pilaster divisions between shops. In such instances a post may not be necessary, but if it has to be a post, then its height should also be questioned. For example would reduction of height to some four or five feet above pavement level necessarily impede their visibility?

5. CCTV posts and notices

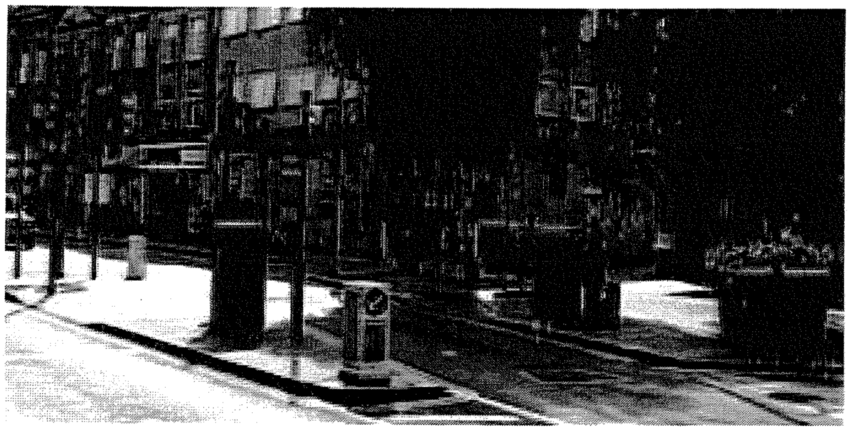
CCTV posts are ugly things. The need for their existence should be questioned. Unfortunately, it would appear far easier for a public authority to erect such large posts on the pavement, rather than attempt to solve the requirement in a less intrusive way. Alternative locations should be scrupulously examined, as for example from the top of the police station, or from the terrace of the Wealdstone Centre.



The notices indicating that there is CCTV in operation surely do not need to have their own separate posts. The notices themselves could presumably be placed almost anywhere – if not integrated with some other piece of street furniture, then perhaps on the side of a building, or even within a shop window!

6. Traffic / pedestrian signals

There are some forty posts carrying traffic and pedestrian signals erected between Locket Road in the north and Ellen Webb Drive in the south; that is very approximately one signal post for every ten metres of High Street. As will be appreciated from the attached survey sheets, the signals bunch up in four clusters to dominate the townscape at these locations. Unfortunately, the very design objective of trying to improve the environment of the town centre by constructing the two bypasses of George Gange Way and Ellen Webb Drive, together with the routeing of buses through a semi pedestrianised area, has generated a blossoming of signals and their posts.



As has been demonstrated along Oxford Street, the number of signal posts can to some extent be reduced by judicious location and integration of signals; this might be achieved in the redesign of the Locket Road junction, as discussed in the 'Pedestrian Barriers' section above. At the same time, if the movement of buses through the 'pedestrianised area' were only one way south, all the traffic signals at the Palmerston Road junction, illustrated above, could be obviated.

7. Other traffic information

The first group comprises the large, 'over – pavement' hoardings giving directional information to oncoming traffic. These, in the context of a town centre, are clumsy, brutal and out of scale. While their presence is dominating when viewed from the front, it is even more negative when viewed as a blank structure from the rear. Such directional traffic hoardings should only need to be located on the periphery of a town centre. Unfortunately they occur some half a dozen times within that of Wealdstone.

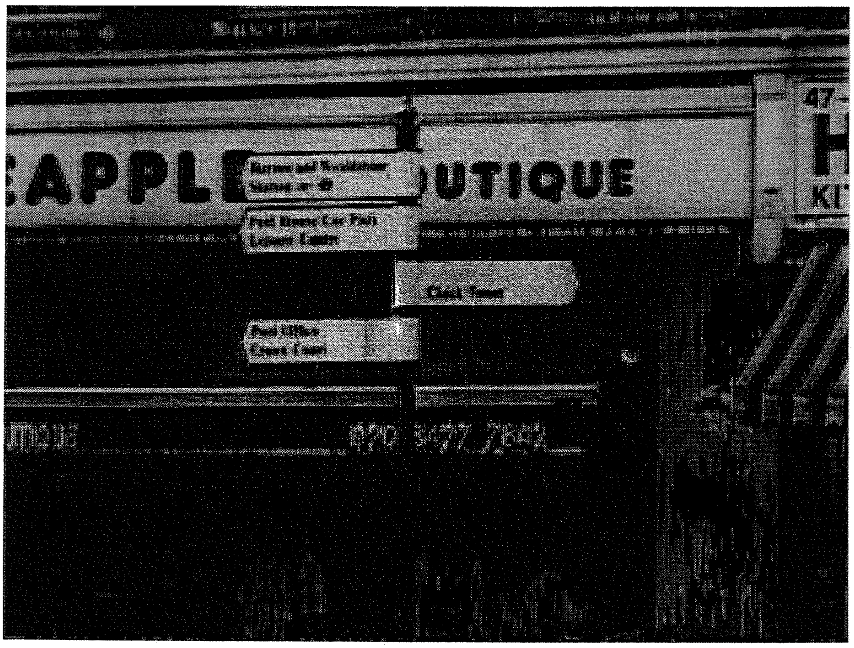
In many cases the information they carry is either superfluous, obsolete, or excessive in scale. Such cases are, 'no right turn' in Palmerston Road or 'automatic bollards' in the High Street, or 'Stop, wait for green light' in the 'pedestrianised' area. They should be reviewed as to their informational requirement and scale of presentation.

It should also be noted how hideous they can look from the rear, as in the case of the traffic hoarding illustrated over page, when viewed looking up the High Street towards Palmerston Road.

The second group results from the 'pedestrianised area' itself, which appears to need to remind bus drivers, that notwithstanding the pavior brick paving, planting tubs and bollards, it is in fact a 'pedestrian zone' that they are entering, and equally, when it can be clearly seen that the road ahead is wider without brick paviors, tubs and bollards, there needs to be a sign that advises that the 'pedestrian zone' is no more. Also one wonders, given the central 'bollarded' chicane, as to the likelihood of bus drivers being able to exceed the 20 mph speed limit. And do there really need to be so many bollards?

8. Other directional information

It seems strange that, in what is a comparatively modest town centre, its citizens should have difficulty in finding such venues as the post office, railway station, clocktower, crown court or police station. Nevertheless, this type of information is presented in two formats, one that of a traditional direction post centrally located in the 'pedestrianised' area, and the other that of a more modern looking blue and white placard at the Ellen Webb Drive / Bridge Street junction 'entrance' to the town centre. While, the latter no doubt provides some useful directional assistance for the first time, somewhat disorientated visitor having arrived by train, the former seems to be an attempt to hark back to the 'village green days of old Wealdstone'. How necessary is it?



9. Other artefacts

While it is currently pleasant to see flowers growing in numerous round tubs within the 'pedestrian area', such planting may not be so abundant or attractive in the winter months. At the same time, the large black tubs seem to be somewhat oddly located, with a rash of them placed opposite the William Hill betting office, possibly because of the space available.

Whereas the areas of the town centre outside of the 'pedestrianised area' are well provided with green litter bins, they should, together with occasional seating, be brought into line with the design and colour approach of the 'pedestrianised area', both to give an overall sense of homogeneity and promote the concept of a 'pedestrian priority zone'.

10. Conclusions

As indicated above, 'de-cluttering' is not only a matter of removing the unwanted, but also is to do with finding (alternative) ways in which functional requirements may contribute, in overall terms, to the visual enhancement and identity of the town centre. A good example of the manner in which these objectives may be relatively simply realised within a busy street environment is that of Oxford Street, where all elements of street furniture are brought together to make a positive contribution to the street scene.

APPENDIX 9 – EVALUATION OF EXPERIENCE ELSEWHWERE

1. Introduction

As part of SPA's research into possible strategies to revitalise Wealdstone's Town Centre, we identified suitable models to be used as comparators to Wealdstone. While many examples of regeneration in town centres were identified, only the most suitable comparators were used, these consisting of the models closest to Wealdstone in terms of size and demographic makeup, as well as the models with the most diverse and innovative implementation strategies. In order to examine a range of evidence, both UK and overseas experiences were collected, and from these the focus was on information regarding: the situation before any regeneration strategy, the implementation that took place, and the results that this achieved.

Despite representing a rather different model to that of Wealdstone, ideas were also taken from the London West End Strategy that could be used in the revitalisation of Wealdstone Town Centre.

2. Conclusions

In conducting this research certain limitations were apparent. The most significant of these was the lack of information available post regeneration. This made it difficult to examine the successes or failures of the schemes and consequently limited the lessons learnt from such research. In some cases, there was also insufficient information available on the situation of these town centres prior to any regeneration strategy, thus making it difficult to build up a picture of the extent to which revitalisation was needed and how the measures taken transformed the centre, if at all.

However, the research was valuable in allowing an insight into how other towns in the UK and overseas have attempted to revitalise their centres and tackle the challenges that place restrictions on the prosperity of the town. Essentially, what is most evident from the research is that there is a need for a multi-faceted approach to town centre revitalisation in order to tackle the range of problems and negative perceptions associated with a town centre in economic decline.

- Multi faceted approach needed
- Initiative / improvements take a long time to come through
- Important that a long term approach is adopted
- Important to appeal to mainstream catchment, for food shopping especially
- Need to attract modern anchor stores, like Tesco Metro, as with Gant Hill
- Important to recognise opportunities for development in a centre and establish an identity
- Formalise Action Plans as part of the core strategy to give regeneration high standards,
- Cater for all sectors of the community
- Important to engage communities
- Possibilities of including sub-regional facilities, e.g. Waitakere entertainment and sports culture
- Ideas of controlling the impact from buses, e.g. West End

3. UK Examples

3.1 Case Study 1: Gants Hill, Redbridge

The Issue/ Background

- Gants Hill is a similar size to Wealdstone, if a little smaller (226,000 sq ft cf 313,000 sq ft in 1994).
- There are currently some 125 residential properties located within the boundaries of the town centre, providing homes to 320 people.
- Gants Hill was established in the 1920s/30s to serve the adjoining new housing developed at Cranbrook, Valentines and Clayhill.
- In recent years the prosperity of Gants Hill has been in decline.
- Gants Hill closest competitor is Ilford.
- Gants Hill shares many of Wealdstone's disadvantages; no superstore, no town centre manager, no market and has lost most of its national multiple shops.
- Gants Hill also shares many of Wealdstone's characteristics, e.g. significant ethnic population and not very high income, good transport access, including tube station and public transport (bus) hub, local park with regeneration potential like Byron Park, and it had multi-storey car park (recently demolished as not contributing to town centre).
- With a relatively small customer base in the town centre catchment area, and lack of passing trade (car based) stopping off in Gants Hill, the prosperity of the centre is in decline.
- The location of Gants Hill Town Centre on a busy roundabout interchange has resulted in high volumes of traffic passing through the centre. Congestion problems can therefore be overwhelming and shoppers/ pedestrians often experience difficulties in negotiating their way round the centre. Dominance by through-traffic also seriously reduces the attractiveness of the centre to shoppers and businesses.
- Of all the district centres in Redbridge, Gants Hill has the least proportion of retail units offering comparison and convenience goods.
- There are no multiple retailers or major foodstores in the area.
- The number of vacant units in Gants Hill is significantly higher than that in other districts in the Borough.
- There are no markers (sign-posts) or common design themes to identify Gants Hill as a town centre and there are no positive features within the centre (such as a landmark building of architectural quality) to distinguish Gants Hill from other shopping centres.
- The continued designation of Gants Hill as a district centre is vulnerable. The Odeon cinema was recently demolished and whilst convenience and comparison shopping in nearby centres at Ilford, Barkingside, South Woodford and Newbury Retail Park has expanded in recent years, there has been a contraction of such shopping facilities in Gants Hill.

Implementation

- A draft Area Action Plan for Gants Hill Town Centre has been prepared and a Task Force set up.
- The purpose of this draft is to provide a framework for the restoration of the vitality of Gants Hill Town Centre and ensure that any opportunities for

redevelopment in the centre are shaped so as to be of maximum benefit, consistent with the Council's planning policies for the area.

- A number of studies have been undertaken in Gants Hill, that are important in influencing the draft Gants Hill Area Action Plan.
- One of these studies was carried out in 2002 when the Civic Trust were requested by the Council and Gants Hill Task Force to look at potential development opportunities in the area. In their report a number of key suggestions were made:
    - Redevelop the Odeon site for mixed use development of residential (for sale and to rent), office space and some retail, with below ground parking;
    - Include publicly accessible facility at ground level, e.g. new library with internet facilities, etc;
    - Include small convenience store at ground level, e.g. Tesco Metro;
    - Design a new landmark building for Gants Hill on the Odeon site;
    - New development should not be much higher than existing cinema;
    - There needs to be provision for short term parking (local shopkeepers believe it is important for customers);
    - Close Perth Road at Eastern Avenue;
    - Create new public space 'piazza' in front of Valentines Public House on Perth Road closure;
    - Provide pedestrian link from Perth Road to Frinton Mews;
    - Plant more trees throughout the area;
    - Redevelop Bramley Crescent multi-storey car park for key worker affordable housing 4-6 storeys high with 2 storeys parking below ground level;
    - Improve the appearance of the roundabout;
    - Improve lighting and cleanliness of subways;
    - Promote the best of Gants Hill e.g.1930s station.
- From this study, and the numerous others conducted, the overriding theme that was identified was that the retail function of Gants Hill town centre is declining. A common recommendation in each of these studies is that the Council should set out a detailed vision and strategic framework for the future development of the centre.
- These recommendations led to the Gants Hill Task Force being set up by the Council and it is intended that this draft Area Action Plan will set a framework for the use of land and development in Gants Hill Town Centre.

Results Achieved;

- The results that will be achieved in Gants Hill from the strategies established in the Area Action Plan are yet to be seen, as it is still in the early stages.
- It will be quite a lengthy process, which started with a study in 2001. Interim AAP was produced in 2004, but Gants Hill does not yet have an implementation timetable.
- The Area Action Plan is however enabling opportunities and actions to be identified in Gants Hill.
- The Council is initiating a Schools' Art Project in Gants Hill Town Centre. Gearies Infant School has been successful in obtaining grant funding from a number of bodies to implement this project. Once completed, it will result in a number of art-works being prepared by a professional in conjunction with the school and thereafter installed in the town centre.
- The Council has been successful in gaining grant funding from Transport for London (TfL) to undertake streetscape improvements to enhance pedestrian access and movement within Gants Hill.

- Transport for London (Tfl) has indicated that maintenance works are to be undertaken to Gants Hill roundabout in 2004/2005. These works will offer an opportunity for rationalisation of the road network at this location.
- Bus priority is to be introduced on the approaches to the roundabout, and improvements/ enhancements to the tube station and subway network are to be undertaken.
- The East London Transit Line is to pass through Gants Hill en route to Barkingside from Ilford, although the route is still to be confirmed.
- The Council has recently approved a number of development proposals in Gants Hill Town Centre.

3.2 Case Study 2: Grays, Thurrock, Essex

The Issue/ Background

- Population 11,388 (1991)
- Grays experienced detrimental effects from the opening of Lakeside Shopping Centre in West Thurrock in 1990. After 1990 a significant reduction in trade was apparent.
- In 1990 (pre Lakeside) 6.2% of total ground floor units in Grays were vacant. In 1997 (post Lakeside), this figure had risen to 16% units vacant.
- Similarly, pre Lakeside, 60.7% of ground floor units in retail were in use in Grays, in 1997, this figure had decreased to 44%.
- Grays town centre is needed to meet important local needs, especially for non-car users. The maintenance of the vitality and viability of trade here is therefore of key long-term importance. Objectives to maintain the role of Grays and other local centres, and to restrict further new out of centre development were thus implemented by Thurrock Council.

Implementation

The Approach;

1. Safeguard existing shopping provision by not normally permitting the provision of major additional floor space outside existing centres
2. Improve and safeguard shopping facilities in Grays Town Centre in order to maintain its role as a district centre
3. Retain essential neighbourhood shopping facilities

Implementation;

- *Grays Shopping Precinct Modernisation;*
  Consisting of refurbishment of the precinct shopping centre, including appropriate improvements to shops and shop fronts.

- *Additional retail floorspace for the shopping centre;*
  In order to improve the quality of the shopping facilities in Grays Shopping Centre, and to add retail stores such as Wilkinsons.

- *Grays Market Relocation;*
  From April 1996 the main market in Grays was relocated from its original site, underneath the multi-storey car park to a more prime location on the high street.

- *New Development Opportunities in the Town Centre;*
  The Borough Local Plan and Grays Development Briefs identified a number of sites in the town centre suitable for redevelopment for commercial and/ or retail and leisure purposes. A total of six hectares of land was identified as available, including the former bus depot, which was demolished and the site cleared and landscaped in preparation for development which now includes a Morrison's food retail store and Travis Perkins building materials store. Document published called "Buildings of Special Character in Grays Town Centre" identified buildings and features that's contribute to the character of

the town centre that the Council wish to protect and should be retained as part of any future redevelopment scheme.

- *Grays Town Centre Improvements;*
  Including, new paving, street furniture, landscaping and a continental piazza, as well as a closed circuit television system.

- *Art In Grays;*
  Thurrock Council began a High Street refurbishment scheme, part of which included the commissioning of a series of artworks to revitalise links with the past.

Results Achieved;

- Grays now offers a more traditional style of shopping: offering excellent facilities within the new refurbished town centre pedestrised in the mid-90s
- The Town Centre now has a wider variety of shops
- There has been a marked increase of visitors to the market, held three times a week, after its relocation to the High Street
- Thurrock's first ever Art Festival took place in July 2005, where visitors flocked to Grays High Street.

3.3 Case Study 3: Caerphilly, Wales

The Issue

- Population of Caerphilly County Borough; 170,000
- Although Caerphilly town centre has always been famous for its tasty cheese and magnificent castle, the Council are keen to highlight the many other benefits the area can offer to shoppers, tourists and investors.
- The Council had numerous objectives for Caerphilly, mainly to improve the image of the area, developing a range of amenities available in the town centre, creating employment, providing new housing and dealing with a range of environmental issues.
- The additional aim was to increase the volume of tourists passing through the town .
- Historically the shopping centres in the County Borough have been quite small, and it was recognised that they could not accommodate sufficient new retail floorspace within their boundaries to fully achieve the aim of the retail strategy. Therefore Caerphilly was selected for complementary retail warehouse development.

Implementation

The Caerphilly Town Centre Regeneration Strategy, 1990;

- The scheme comprises integrated, comprehensive partnership action taken to regenerate a town centre over a long period.
- It was the result of an early analysis of the economic and social circumstances in the area, both in the town itself and the outlying valley villages.
- The vision for the regeneration of Caerphilly was developed on three levels; firstly as a series of linked proposals for the town centre, secondly as detailed proposals for public spaces in the town; and thirdly how the centre proposals could energise a more comprehensive regeneration of the town and wider Caerphilly Basin.
- Relatively limited resources have been used to make the best of what there was by sensitive redevelopment, often involving a make-over of existing sites.
- The new shopping centre fits well with existing facilities. The bus and rail interchange works well, including the park and ride facilities which are heavily used. Particular attention has been paid to the creation of small public open spaces and high quality artwork and street furniture.
- Community consultation and involvement were built in, both to implementation and management of the process.
- In 1994, a Town Centre Management Group was formed to bring together representatives from public sector bodies, local elected representatives, the Chamber of Trade, local residents' groups, the police and retailers. The Group continues to meet on a regular basis.

2005/2006 Caerphilly County Borough Regeneration Action Plan;

- The Regeneration Action Plan sets out the specific projects being taken forward to meet the objectives of the Community Strategy and the principles of the Regeneration Programme – "The Smart Alternative".

- "The Smart Alternative" looks at how the County Borough can be regenerated over the next decade.
- The strategy contains a number of bold and innovative proposals that will help transform the fortunes of the people of the area and make it the smart alternative to the cities - an area where people can live, work, relax and learn in a vibrant and healthy environment.
- There are six regeneration principles:
    - Capitalise on proximity to Cardiff & Newport
    - Strengthening the economy of the Mid Valleys Corridor
    - Build a lifelong learning culture
    - Diversify and strengthen the economy
    - Re-establish town centres as foci of economic activity
    - Community led regeneration throughout the County Borough
- Economic and community regeneration are the central focus of the report, but they rely heavily on positive actions in education, training, transport, environmental issues and a variety of other initiatives that will transform the County Borough into a vibrant, forward-looking area.
- Fundamental to the strategy is economic diversification to meet the challenge of the loss of jobs in manufacturing, and recognition that education and skills training is the key to future prosperity. Economic regeneration is the main focus of the report, set in the context of an educational environment that is being enabled to deliver the skills demanded by modern business.

Results Achieved

- The regeneration of Caerphilly Town Centre has been so successful that Caerphilly County Borough Council has won an 'Award for Best Practice in Regeneration' from the British Urban Regeneration Association.
- Elements of the regeneration scheme have already received awards from the Civic Trust and British Council of Shopping Centres, however the award is the first time that a overall transformation that has been brought about in the town over the last ten years has received recognition.
- In addition, the fact that it is the only award winner in Wales highlights the massive change which has been undertaken in Caerphilly town, and the surrounding villages.
- To win the award Caerphilly County Borough Council had to demonstrate that the scheme had met the following criteria;
    - It had made a successful economic contribution to the area and was financially viable
    - It acted as a catalyst for further regeneration and development in the area, thus creating a self-sustaining momentum with long term benefits
    - It had contributed to community spirit and cohesion by raising levels of confidence in the long term living environment of the local area and had contributed to the capacity of local people
    - It had contributed to environmental sustainability
    - It had been completed to a point where there was a track record of success
- The scheme has made a significant contribution to the regeneration of the area and is financially viable. Tourists, shoppers, developers and housebuilders have invested in the town, and the footfall in the centre is up by 600%.
- The improvements have acted as a catalyst for further regeneration, and the model is being used for regenerating five other town centres in the County Borough.

- Two new festivals have been established and provide a focal point for community groups – the "Big Cheese" and the Christmas "Festival of Light".
- The environmental improvements have an emphasis on quality (in design and materials) and good management will ensure long-term success.
- Traffic management has been realistic, with private vehicle accessibility balanced with public transport improvement and pedestrian comfort.
- The development of visitor-orientated attractions, such as annual festivals, and the creation of new public spaces in the town centre, has not only served to attract more visitors to Caerphilly, but have also contributed to the enhancement of the local community spirit and cohesion.
- The partnership of public and private investment in the urban centre has created an attractive and vibrant core area, that welcomes visitors and has enabled local residents to feel justifiably proud of their town.
- A lesson learned here is that investments in tourism can lead to improvements in a community's sense of identity, purpose and cohesion.

3.4 Case Study 4: Cookstown, Ulster, N.Ireland

The Issue / Background

- Population; 32,577 (2001)
  30,883 (1991)
- Cookstown has built its reputation over the years as a market town, with a wide range of small independent shops. While the town centre is central to much of what occurs within Cookstown district, it does not dominate the district.
- The four main settlements of Coagh, Moneymore, Pomeroy and Stewartstown provide ideal counterbalances in the north, east, south and west of the district, as do many other smaller settlements.
- Cookstown is therefore surrounded by competing centres, thus regeneration action is vital if broadly rural communities are to remain sustainable.
- A comprehensive regeneration plan is required to build upon and develop the town's contribution to the local economy.
- Cookstown's District Council's vision is that through their regeneration strategy, Cookstown will be the capital of Mid Ulster by 2012, and the town centre will be a distinctive mixed-use place.

Implementation;

Cookstown Town Centre Regeneration Strategy:

- Recently launched by Cookstown District Council, Cookstown Town Centre Forum & all the various stakeholders.
- Strategy has six key programmes and 36 actions to further vitalise and reinvigorate the town centre over the next ten years (2002-2012);
  1. Investing in Retailing and Services
  2. Town Centre Environmental Improvements
  3. Developing Sites and Refurbishing Buildings
  4. Parking and Accessibility
  5. Visitor Destination Improvements
  6. Innovation, Marketing and Events

Physical Regeneration Programme:

- Council to continue to support local leadership and energy which produced this rich and varied community economic portfolio.
- Council to provide support towards existing and new community economic initiatives.
- Council to work closely with the Local Strategy Partnership, Department of Social Development and the International Fund for Ireland, in this community regeneration process.

Proposed activities under this programme;

- 'To enable and empower communities to undertake sustainable regeneration projects, which improve infrastructure and aesthetic appearance of their areas';
  1. Support for community based regeneration projects

2. Stimulation of Additional Regeneration
3. Provision of locally based / owned workspace provision
4. Micro economic regeneration initiatives
5. Environmental and Infrastructural Development

Town Centre Regeneration Programme:

- "To identify and implement a range of activities which support and enhance the contribution that Cookstown Town Centre makes to the local economy."

Proposed activities under this programme;

1. Establishment of the Town Centre Forum
2. Preparation of Town Centre Strategy
3. Implementation of Strategy Action Plan
4. Environmental Improvements
5. Support towards the development of vacant/ derelict property
6. Town identity and promotion (leisure, entertainment etc)
7. Traffic Flow/ Pedestrianisation / Parking – planning
8. Encouragement for Town Shopping
9. Retail/ Merchandising Support Programmes
10. A focus on Rural Retailing

Results Achieved;

The full extent of the achievements of the Cookstown Town Centre Regeneration Strategy are yet to be seen as the programmes launched in this strategy are set to run until 2012. However, some achievements are already being noted, as discovered by extensive market research carried out by MORI Ireland in September 2005 amongst consumers, businesses and focus groups within Cookstown;

- Residents feel their town is a friendly place and has a lot to offer with a balanced mix of independent and multi national retailers and of course the unique Saturday market.
- 89% of respondents felt that the standard of service found in shops was very good, with 88% also rating Cookstown as a convenient location with general attractiveness.
- Local people are appreciating the improved leisure facilities and entertainment facilities, including one of the Northern Ireland's top regional theatres, The Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, situated in the heart of town.
- The major new campaign *'Looking Good, Looking Great'* is aiming to put Cookstown firmly on the map as the capital of Mid Ulster, and Cookstown District Council in partnership with Cookstown Centre Forum are encouraging people across N.Ireland to consider Cookstown as somewhere to visit. The Campaign is going to kick off with a new TV advert, so that people can see for themselves that Cookstown is looking great.
- The campaign has developed a new brand identity for the town. This innovative new brand and marketing campaign is promoting Cookstown as a family friendly base for visitors and investors, which will help raise the profile of the town and the entire district. It is hoped it will bring future investment, jobs and spending to the district.
- It is this development of the marketing campaign and brand identity for Cookstown that has been the centrepiece of an energetic and dynamic regeneration process for Cookstown.
- The launch of 'Cookstown Shop Front Paint Scheme' has recently kicked off, which will work towards making Cookstown a more attractive shopping

destination for local people and visitors alike, but it is anticipated that small business owners will also benefit from the increased trade.

3.5 Case Study 5: The West End Strategy, London

General Ideas

- Branding Bond Street, Oxford Street and Regent Street as one location, but with their own distinct individual character. Developing identities for each neighbourhood that target needs of different customer groups, and reflecting the different purposes of the areas
  - *What different areas exist in Wealdstone Town Centre – is there scope for these to have their own distinct areas/ purposes?*

- Architecture/ landmarks that give distinct character and help give sense of space
  - *What are the landmarks in Wealdstone?*

- A sense of an entrance to the area. The three streets each having their gateways where they meet the surrounding city
  - *Establish a sense of arrival to Wealdstone Town Centre*

- Clear signage and way-finding. Making the area easier to understand and use and move through. What is where?
  - *Is Wealdstone too small to use such signage and way-finding?*

- Co-ordinating lighting and street furniture – Consistency in street furniture and materials used throughout the area, e.g. man hole covers etc.

- Clean, litter free street, crime free
  - *Highlighted as a major problem by Wealdstone residents*

- Improved greener transport

- Street art and oases of quiet and calm with seating and greenery. Oases would also be ideal locations for information points and public toilets, as well as street entertainment, stalls and permanent displays of public works of art.

- Piazzas and spaces for gathering and meeting

- Themed markets, planned street trading, entertainment, promotions, celebrations

- Red Thread: Lighting set into the pavements – a red thread. Could connect special places with main thoroughfares – attracting people to forgotten spaces and courtyards
  - *Perhaps not very necessary for Wealdstone, is the town centre big enough for this?*

Transport/ Traffic – Both Pedestrians and Vehicles

- Biggest problem with West End is congestion – so need to develop transport system

- Ideas to redesign bus network – in order to enable number of bus routes passing through the three streets to be cut from 24 today to just two, and the number of buses to be using the area to be cut by two-thirds
  - *Perhaps not viable for Wealdstone as some residents commented on the need for better access to the town centre by bus*

- Increasing pavement space. Enough pavement space to make shopping comfortable, therefore balancing the needs for people and vehicles
  - *Is Wealdstone town centre busy enough to justify increasing the pavement space?*

- Want to cut traffic congestion/ pollution/ noise reduction and changes to types of vehicles allowed on streets

- An area designed for people rather than traffic, thus creating a real opportunity to develop quality of public realm – quality public spaces, enhanced streetscape, sustainable, safe and friendly

- Could halve the amount of space taken up by bus stops and remove all 'terminating bus stands' - where bus routes end or start

Will it Work? ...Case Studies

New York:

- Visitor numbers and retail sales were falling over the last five years – 5,000 pedestrian accidents in Times Square, with 31 fatalities. What did they do? ......

  - New lighting, signage, street furniture, structures and plants
  - Traffic calming introduced in Times Square and Herald Street
  - Retail offer appearance improved

- **Results** – On corner of 42nd and 7th Avenue, number of pedestrians doubled from 24,000 in1999 to 49,000 in 2002

- Improvements to Times Square created 49,000 new jobs and accidents reduced by giving over more space to pedestrians

Barcelona:

- 1992 Olympic Games kick started radical and imaginative use of public space
- Architecture and sculpture took key role in the design of the city's public face as new parks and squares were created under the banner 'Move museums into the streets'
- Traffic reorganised to make city more comfortable for pedestrians and new network of pedestrians routes was created

- **Results** - Greater variety of retail offer in city
- Redevelopment has provided opportunities to create large floor plates allowing retailers such as Mango, Cortefiel and Pull and Bear to open flagship stores in these units

- Vacancy rates in central retail area fallen to around 2% and prime pitch of Portal del Angel there are no vacant units.

4. Overseas Examples:

4.1 Case Study 1: Henderson Town Centre, Waitakere, New Zealand

The Issue/ Background

- Population – Henderson Ward; 40,086 (2001)
- Henderson Town Centre is located on the rail corridor

Implementation

The Henderson 20 Year Strategic Plan – Developed 1995;

- Encourage mixed use development
- Improve the quality of the built environment
- Develop the green and blue networks (streams and bush)
- Improve leisure facilities – Including plan for development of new library and social services hub – public plaza and a new road entry, to stimulate adjacent private redevelopment, including new parking building for the town centre
- Improve public transport, road and walking linkages
- Encourage a range of economic activities to sustain a robust economy

Results Achieved

- Henderson main street revitalisation – has helped create a livelier, more attractive town centre, along with;
- Henderson Industrialisation Project
- West Wave Aquatic Centre - one of Australasia's finest Lifestyle Centres
- Waitakere Sports Stadium – with six basketball courts, seating for 50,000, function rooms, a gym and a venue of large trade shows and conferences
- Corban Estate Arts Centre – to cater for performing arts, artists and teaching studios, galleries, events and market areas
- Filming Production Studios – where the council have actively been attracting the film industry, and its off-shoot industries, with the aim of establishing a cluster of businesses that will increase local employment and training opportunities

APPENDIX 10 - TRANSPORT (incl. Accidents and Car Parking)

1. Transport Options for Wealdstone Town Centre

1.1 Do Nothing Option: Two-way buses, no cars

The main advantage is that nothing changes but this is also the main disadvantage. It would also cost nothing.

The present two-way bus option does not give sufficient pavement width on the western side for passing pedestrians. The buses are large and pass through the High Street very frequently which makes it not a very pleasant environment. However it does give maximum access to the town centre (Figure 1).

1.2 Car Option: Two-way buses and cars

The suggestion is that cars are allowed to enter the High Street in both directions and crossing movements will be allowed from Headstone Drive via Canning Road.

The retailers' argument is that passing car traffic would increase their turnover (Figure 2).

Disadvantages:

a) The crossing movement from Headstone Drive via Canning Road is unnecessary as cars can already cross via Gordon Road from west to east. It would also destroy the only social centre around the church that the town centre has and it would in addition be rather dangerous for pedestrians using the High Street.

b) The accident survey carried out over the last six years (1999-2005) revealed that there were no accidents in the pedestrianised part of High Street. Opening the street to two-way car traffic would certainly result in accidents occurring (see Accident Report).

c) Car drivers themselves do not want to have the High Street open for cars (When asking car drivers whether they wanted to be able to drive through the High Street, the majority of them (65%) said no, though 31% wanted to do so).

d) As buses would still be going through the High Street there would be little time advantage for cars most of the day, but certainly during the evening. There would more likely be congestion in the High Street, especially if in addition to more through traffic, illegal parking increases, which is very likely.

e) We believe that the main reason for using the High Street would be jumping traffic lights or rat running. As the overall street environment would be less attractive this would lead to fewer pedestrians than there are at present.

f) If the town centre loses about 10% of the pedestrians counted in September 2005 (some of them will go to Harrow town centre where the environment is pedestrian- friendlier), it would lose on average 140 people per hour[1]. Now clearly not every pedestrian buys something but a high percentage do (see survey results).

g) We have not yet argued what purchasing power stopping car traffic will have in comparison to other people who walk or come by bus to the town centre. We know from international research that normally car drivers spend more, but stopping traffic will surely spend less in total than the people who come regularly to do their shopping.

h) Our experience world-wide suggests that a pedestrian-friendly environment is better for retailing than a car-friendly environment. There are many aspects in which improvements could be made both in and at the access to the High Street which will enhance trade (see below).

1.3 Car Option: One-way buses and one-way cars

1.3.1 Public transport

Although public transport is absolutely crucial for the economic viability of a town centre, the two-way bus access has resulted in a reduction of the pavement width on the western side of the High Street. As the whole pavement area is often taken up with waiting passengers, the remaining pavement is now too narrow for passing pedestrians, especially mothers with pushchairs. One option is one-way bus access in the High Street for buses coming from the north and going south.

The opposite bus route coming from The Bridge should travel via Palmerston Road and Gladstone Way. The one-way street in Gladstone Way has to reverse its direction. This would also be necessary for the entrance and exit to the multi-storey car park (Figure 3).

The bus stop could be located at the corner of Canning Road / Gladstone Way. A public transport stop in Canning Road is very close (about 60m) to the shops in the High Street. The one-way bus route would give the opportunity to widen the pavement of the western side of the High Street and create more space for both pedestrians and cyclists.

1.3.2 One-way car access

This option is dearly wanted by the retailers because they assume that this would improve their retailing position. As far as we know there is no evidence that this is really the case.

Disadvantages:

a) the risk of accidents, presently there are none (see accident report).

b) higher tendency to congestion

c) increased illegal parking

[1] Average number of pedestrians counted over 3 days was 1426 per hour, the weather was warm.

d) deterioration in the street environment

The length of the street which does not allow car access is so short (about 90m) that whether people have to walk on **average** about 20-60 m more will not make any difference to turnover. The main customers of the retailers in the High Street are the people who walk or come by public transport.

1.4 Environmental and Transport Planning Option: One-way buses, no cars

The major improvements which should take place are in five areas (Figure 4):

1.4.1 Public transport (see above under 3.1)

1.4.2 Environmental improvements

By taking out one bus route in the High Street it might be possible to lant trees in addition to, or instead of, the existing planters.

1.4.3 Improvement of pedestrian phasing at pelican crossings

The pelican crossings at various junctions, such as the first crossing coming from the railway station and going to the town centre (Ellen Webb Drive), has far too long a red phase and an extremely short green phase (seven seconds). Hence many pedestrians, and particularly worrying, many children and youngsters are crossing this road when the traffic lights are still red. We suggest simplifying the traffic lights and taking out some of the turning car movements.

The long red phases are valid for nearly all pelican crossings with the exception of the crossing on Ellen Webb Drive close to Headstone Drive where the light changes in about three seconds from red to green, since it is not part of a traffic light cycle.

Some pelican crossings are not on the desire line of pedestrians, especially the one at Palmerston Road.

There seemed to be sufficient pelican crossings in the town centre but not enough on the bypass. Here we suggest a new pelican crossing at the corner of Canning Road and George Gange Way and another pelican crossing at the corner of Palmerston Road and George Gange Way

1.4.4 Space allocation in the town centre

Some more space could be given to pedestrians or cyclists at several locations, notably at the southern part of the High Street (coming from the station) in front of Nos. 6-20 High Street. Some of the space is now used by illegally parked cars. Loading and unloading bays should be more clearly marked as such

1.4.5 More on-street car parking

We would suggest more car parking spaces in Headstone Drive in the form of echelon parking on the north side combined with new tree planting and more green space in the middle of this wide street. A few more on street car parking buys would be possible along High Street (for details see Parking report).

1.4.6 New Traffic light junction

When analysing the number of accidents during the last six years we found a cluster of slight accidents at the roundabout: Palmerston Road / George Gange Way. We would therefore suggest changing the roundabout to a traffic light junction. That would have the other great advantage of allowing a pelican crossing at this junction which is very much needed to overcome the barrier effect of George Gange Way.

1.4.7 Car access

We would suggest allowing cars one-way from 18.00-8.00.

1.5 Total pedestrianisation

We assume that the length of the pedestrianisation in the High Street is only slightly increased (Figure 5) as the buses should still go one-way via Palmerston Road

Disadvantages;

a) There are three great disadvantages with total pedestrianisation. Firstly, buses southbound have to travel along George Gange Way and a bus stop would have to be at the side of this street, which has high traffic flows. Bus users would have to cross a busy road, which would need to be secured with a pelican crossing. However pedestrians would still be crossing when the traffic lights are red, especially when they see their bus coming, and hence there are increased safety risks.

b) The walking length between bus stops and shops would increase, which would make shopping in Wealdstone town centre even less attractive. That may be counteracted by more pedestrians using the town centre because it is a more pleasant environment.

c) During the evening hours there would be less social control which is still provided at present by the buses. It would be possible to let cars enter during the night but this would have implications for the street design. If the pedestrianisation option is preferred we would suggest allowing cars one-way from 18.00-8.00.

There might also be a possibility of running southbound buses via a bus lane and a traffic light in George Gange Way. The greatest advantage of this option would be that pedestrians would not have to cross George Gange Way (Figure 6)..

Advantages;

The main advantage of full pedestrianisation would be that one could create a very imaginative and attractive town centre if the Council were willing to invest.

1.6 Other possible improvements

For instance, there is a need for:

- better street cleaning
- signing the town centre when coming from the railway station
- better entrance treatment to the town centre at the northern and southern end
- retailers, who leave their discarded boxes on the pavement should behave more responsibly and take them away or enforce compliance with putting out and collection schedule
- the creation of a more attractive street environment
- an improved design of the area especially around the church
- more attractive walking connections between the car parking spaces and the High Street
- better pedestrian connections from the surrounding housing estates etc. . . .

Table 1: Various Transport Options for Wealdstone Town Centre (the High Street)

	Do nothing option	Car option two-way	Car option one-way	Hass-Klau option	Pedestria-nisation
Public transport access	+	+	+	+	VN
Road safety in the town centre	+	N	N	+	++
Road safety just outside town centre	0	+	+	+	N
Environmental improvement	0	VN	N	+	++
Economic viability	N	N	N	+	+
Improved design	0	VN	VN	+	++
Improved walking conditions to town centre	N	+	+	+	+
Walking condition in town centre	0	N	N	+	++
More car parking	0	+	+	+	+
Improved cycling	0	N	N	+	+
Cost *	+	N	N	N	VN

+ = positive, ++ = very positive, counts for 1.5 points N = negative, VN = very negative counts for 1.5 points, 0 = no effect or the same

* + = no cost, N = additional cost, VN = high costs

Number of plus + :		**Number of N:**
Do nothing option	3	2
Car option two-way	4	8
Car option one-way	4	7.5
Hass-Klau option	10	1
Pedestrianisation	10	4

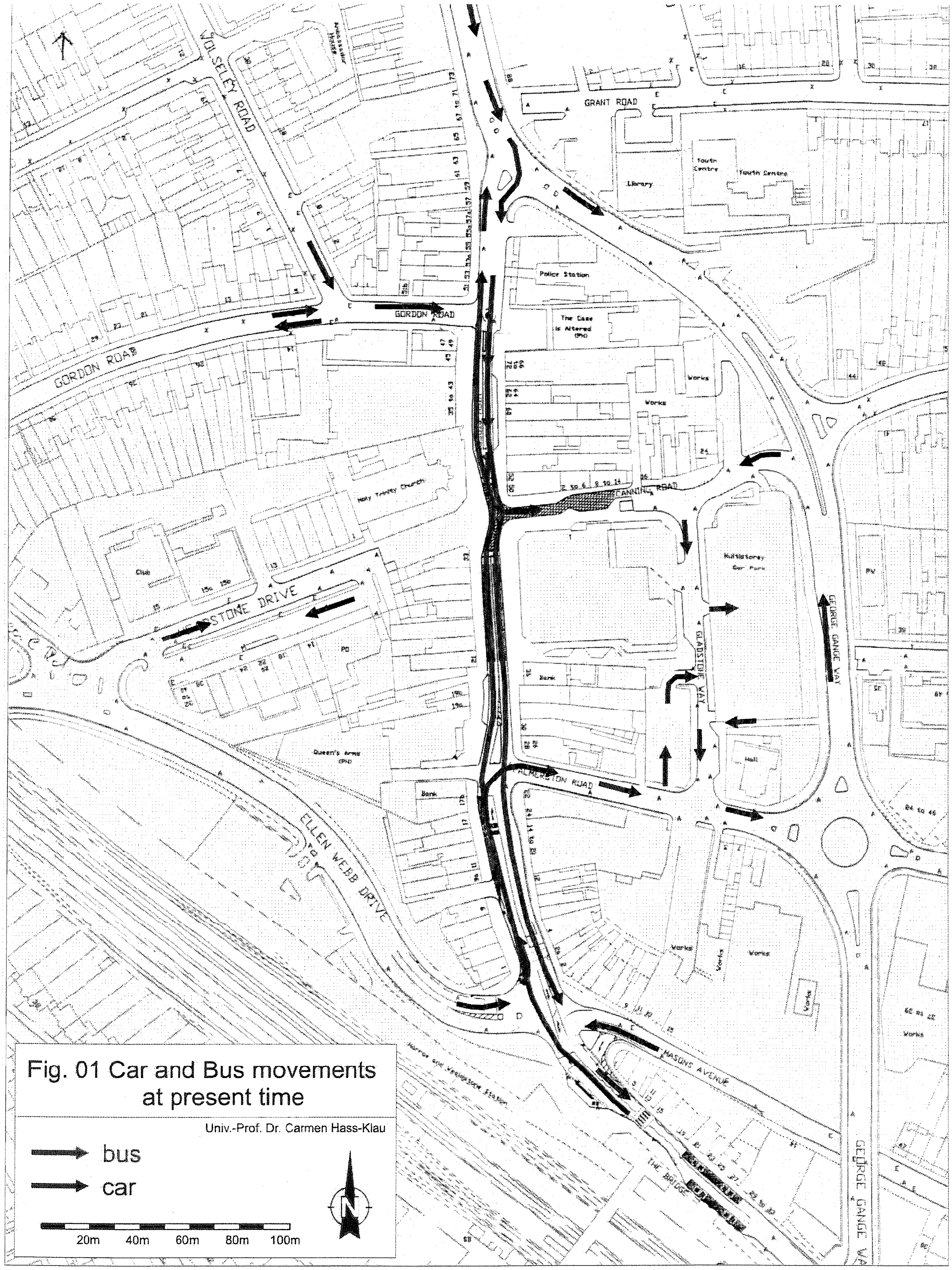


Fig. 01 Car and Bus movements at present time

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Carmen Hass-Klau

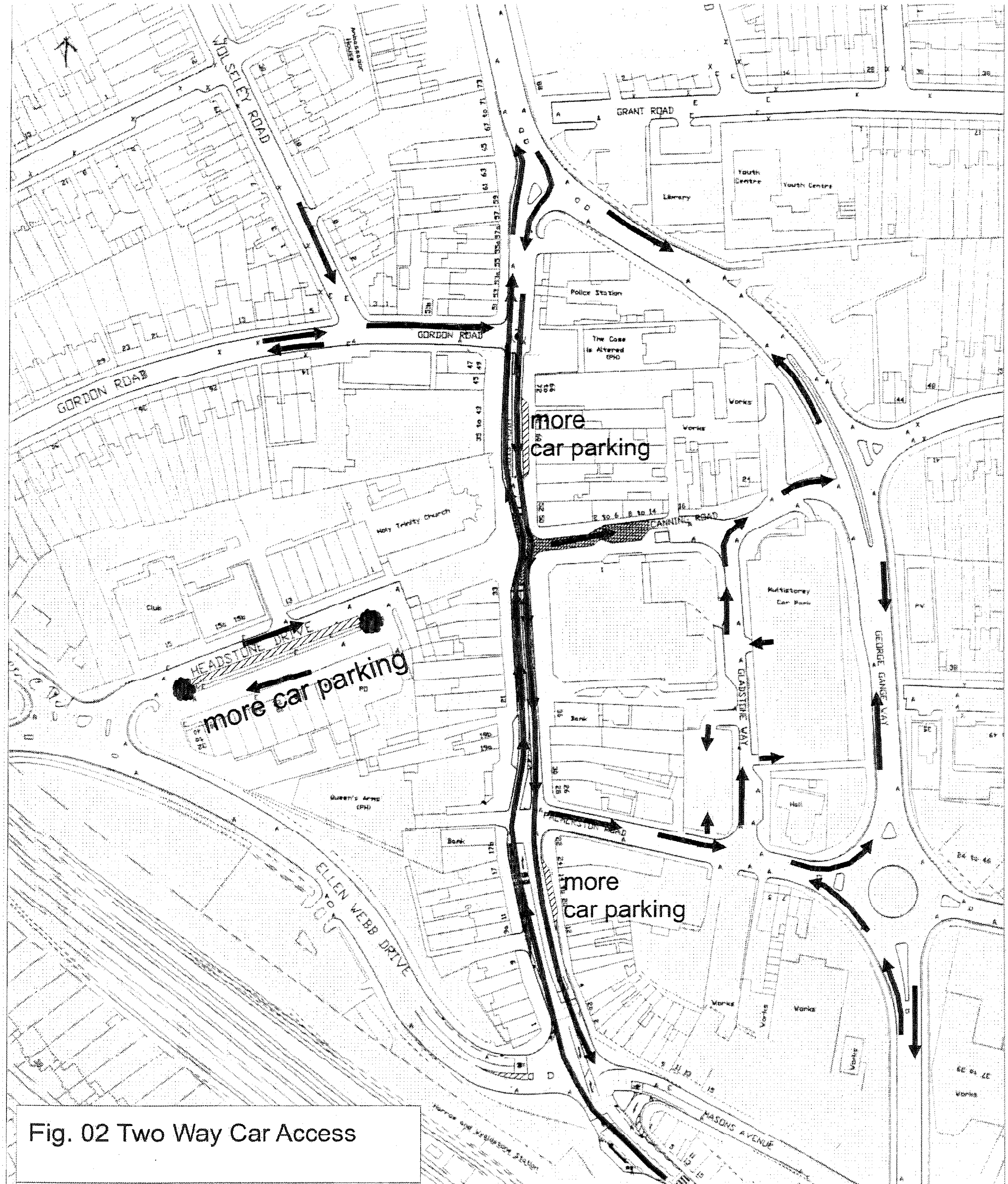


Fig. 02 Two Way Car Access

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Carmen Hass-Klau

bus

car

20m 40m 60m 80m 100m

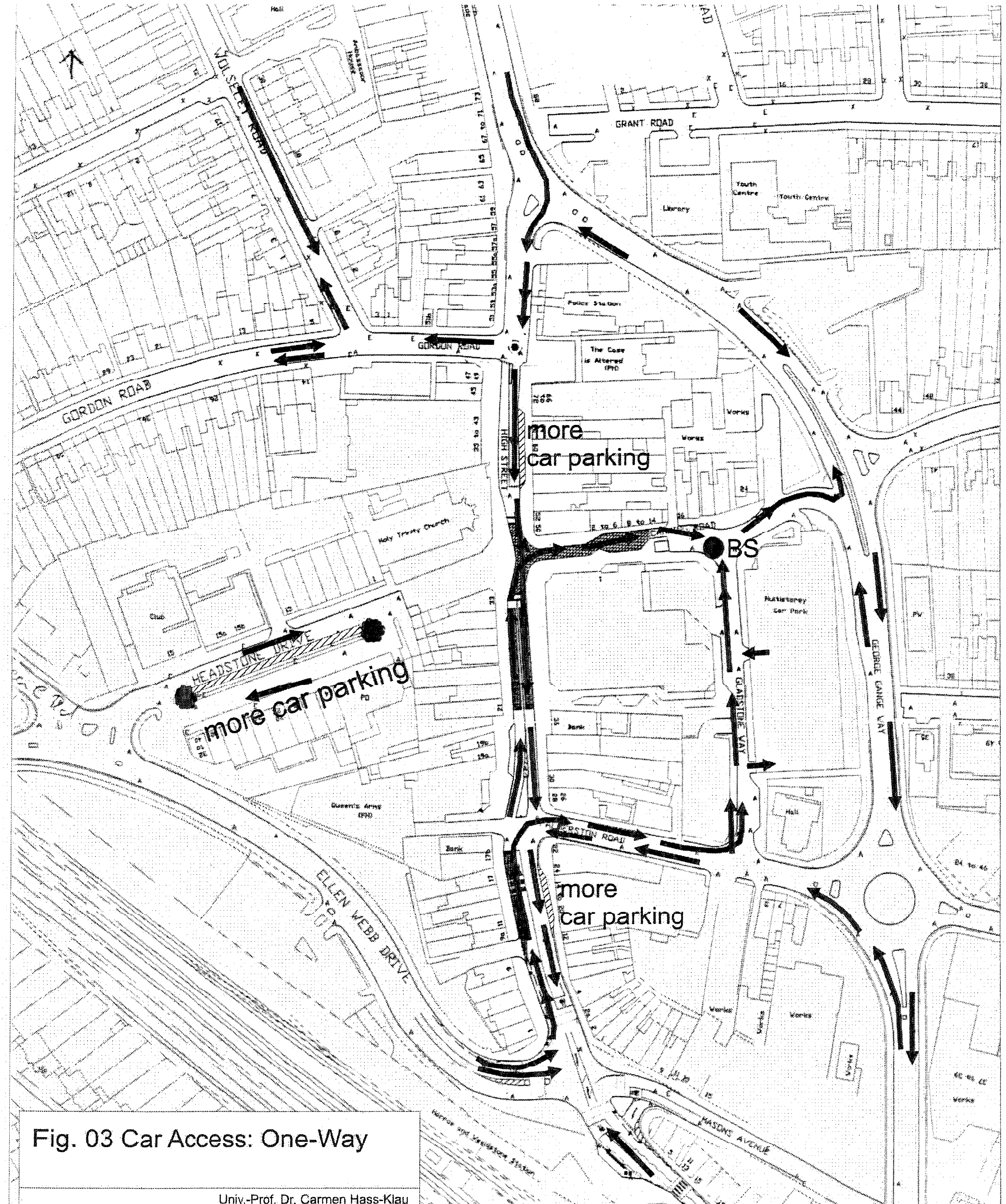


Fig. 03 Car Access: One-Way

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Carmen Hass-Klau

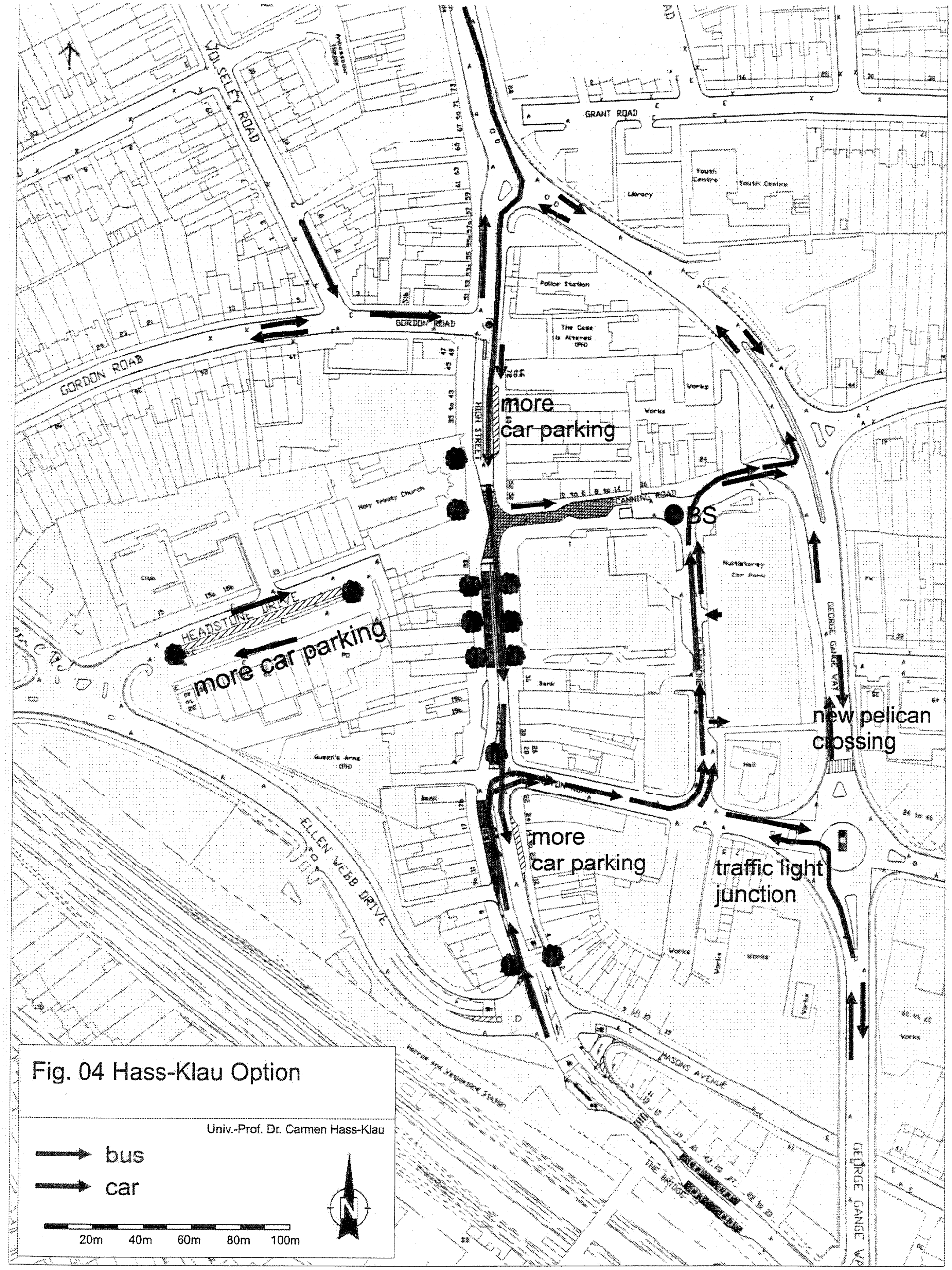


Fig. 04 Hass-Klau Option

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Carmen Hass-Klau

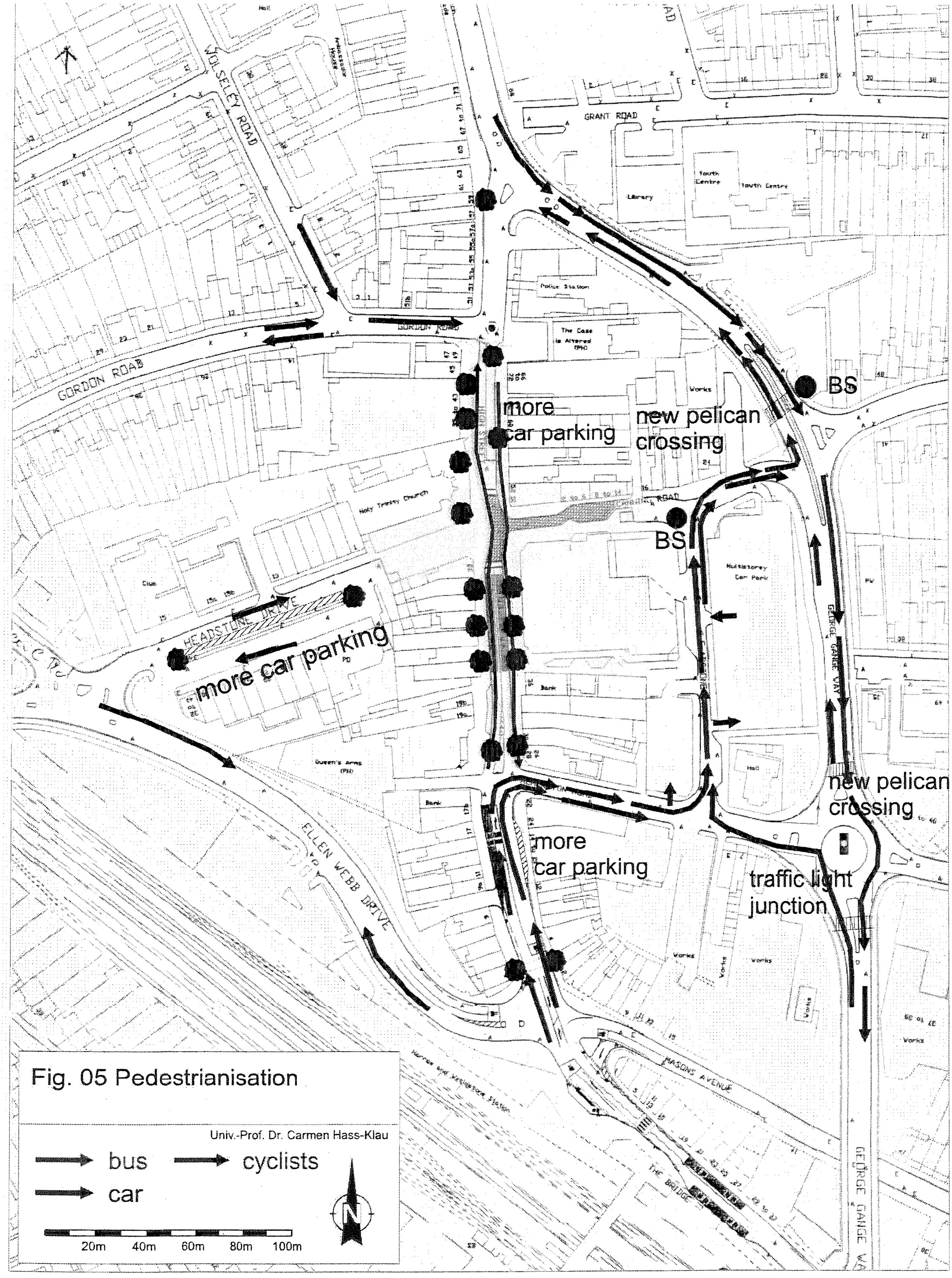


Fig. 05 Pedestrianisation

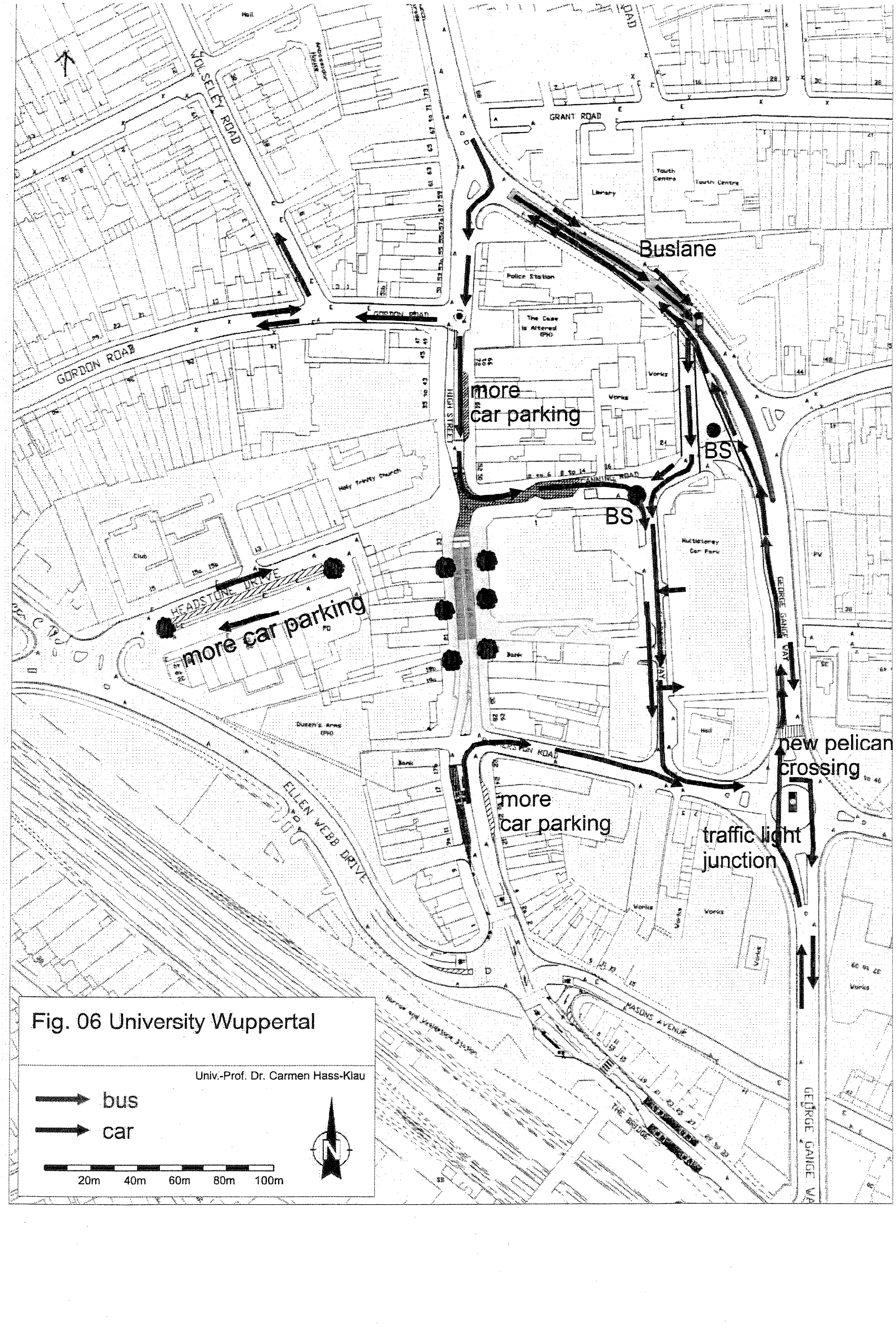


Fig. 06 University Wuppertal

1.7 Conclusion

Having discussed several options we conclude that the Hass-Klau option would be the best one as it allows good bus access. We know that there is a relatively high percentage of people coming by bus and of them 44% are shoppers.

Our experience with pedestrianisation suggests that taking cars out tends to have a positive effect on shops. Our experience is that in subcentres there could be problems with pedestrianisation without public transport access because the positive effect which does take place in larger centres does not normally take place in sub-centres and there are problems in the evening when the shops are closed.

Opening the High Street to car access will do nothing for trade but will further reduce the attractiveness of this street. Most of all it will certainly lead to accidents.

2. Parking spaces in Wealdstone Town Centre

2.1 Background

In total there are 280 parking spaces in the multi-storey car park, which was mostly full during the time of our visits (about 4 times). There are about 80 car parking spaces next to Ellen Webb Drive, there is an on-street car park at the corner of Palmerston Road and Gladstone Way with 27 spaces, and there are 31 parking spaces in Headstone Drive which are pay and display bays. This gives a total of 418 spaces during the week which seems quite sufficient for such a small centre (considering that Basel city centre only has 850 public car parking spaces).

In addition, there is the car park at Sandridge Close which is occupied during the week by commuters but is fairly empty on Saturdays and has become popular. There are 23 parking spaces. In total there should be 441 car parking spaces available on a Saturday

2.2 Pay and display spaces

We analysed the survey results of Headstone Drive at four different times (one in November 04 and the other in April 05), and we found that neither on Thursday, (11.11.04) nor on Saturday were all places taken. There were three free parking bays at 10.00 and 8 free spaces at 12.00. During the rest of the day, 10 and more spaces were free on Thursday. On Saturday there were three free spaces at 10.00, 10 free spaces at 12.00, 12 spaces at 14.00 and even more free spaces during the rest of the day. The survey took place every two hours starting from 8.00 until 1800.

There was another surface car park at the westerly end of Canning Road and Grant Road which closed in early January 2005 for redevelopment.

The survey in April (9.4.05) shows that the busiest times were on Saturday 14.00, 16.00 and 18.00. There were three parking spaces left at 14.00, five at 16.00 and 11 at 18.00. During the rest of the time about half or more of the parking bays were free.

On Tuesday (12.4.05) at 14.00 there was still one parking space left at 10.00 and at 16.00 there were 15 spaces free and at 1200: 16 spaces.

2.3 Cost of car parking

The price for the pay and display spaces is 20 pence for 20 min (£5 for more than three hours), which is not high. The hourly charge at the multi-storey car park is 40 pence per hour and the first hour is free (open from 7.30-20.30 Monday to Saturday). The car park at Sandridge Close costs £2.50 per visit from 8.00-18.30.

2.4 Other options for car parking spaces

There are no other off street car parking facilities in the High Street or neighbouring streets. However there are three loading bays which are in force between 7.00-10.00 and 16.00-18.30. One of the loading bays is outside the pedestrianised area and could be used between 10.30 - 16.00 as pay and display spaces (same conditions as in Headstone Drive). It would provide about four car parking spaces but there may be problems with loading and unloading.

It might also be possible to reduce the double yellow line at Headstone Drive and more space would be available for echelon parking (this should be checked by a traffic engineer).

There is also the option of a small number of car parking spaces in front of No 4-16 High Street which would provide four or five spaces (same condition as in Headstone Drive).

2.5 Conclusion

Evidence suggests that there seems to be enough car parking spaces in Wealdstone town centre despite the complaints by the retailers. There are only very few options for providing more car parking on the High Street itself.

There are a number of vacant sites which could in part be converted to parking but we believe that new housing or office developments would be more advantageous for the town centre than more car parking spaces.

3. Accidents in the Town Centre of Wealdstone

3.1 Background

In Britain, accidents are classified into fatal, serious and slight injuries.

We analysed two sets of data from:

1999-2002

2002-2005

The two-way running of buses in the Town Centre was introduced in August 2002; before this period there was one-way bus operation. Both sets of results relate to periods after the High Street was partially pedestrianised. The data extends to and includes Ellen Well Drive and George Gange Way.

3.2 Increase in the number of accidents

When studying the accident data over the period 1999 – 2002 we found that there were 29 accidents. The data from 2002- 2005 show 40 accidents, which was a significant increase in the total number of accidents in comparison to the three years before. The accident area could be divided geographically into south and north. The northern part starts at Headstone Drive and Canning Road and ends roughly at High Street/ Spencer Road. The southern part reaches as far as The Bridge. The statistics show clearly that in the period 2002-2005 far more accidents happened in the southern part than in the period 1999-2002. The accidents in the northern part of the High Street remained more or less stable although there was also a small increase as well in 2002-2005. Most noticeable is the doubling of the accidents at and close to the roundabout George Gange Way and Palmerston Road from four slight accidents in 1999-2002 to eight slight accidents in 2002-2005. In addition, there were six accidents at the junction High Street/ Masons Avenue in 2002-2005 whereas there was only one in 1999-2002 (this has to be checked by a traffic engineer).

3.3 Serious accidents

1999 – 2002:

There were four serious accidents during the period 1999-2002. All of them were outside the pedestrianised area. Two of the serious accidents were at the junction High Street / Locket Road, one involving a bus and the other a motor cyclist. There was an accident at the top end of the High Street at the junction with George Gange Way involving a pedestrian.

The fourth serious accident was a car/ pedestrian collision at the junction High Street/ Canning Road. This is not untypical for a street which still has the characteristics of being a pedestrianised area, but allows car traffic. The reason was that the pedestrian walked across the narrow street without seeing the car.

2002 – 2005

Although there was a significant increase during the period 2002-2005 in the total number of accidents only four were serious. All of the serious accidents were outside the pedestrianised area.

One serious accident was at the junction High Street/ Masons Avenue involving a bus; the other one was at the junction Masons Avenue/ The Bridge involving a young girl of 14. One was again at the junction of High Street/Locket Road; the other was a cycle accident at the junction High Street/ George Gange Way (description of the exact location of the accident is not clear from the Stats 19).

Three of the eight serious accidents were at the junction of High Street/Locket Road during the last six years (from 1999-2005).

3.4 Slight accidents

1999 – 2002:

From 1999 (June) – 2002(May), there were 25 slight accidents. During this period buses were running one-way through the High Street. All of the accidents were outside the pedestrianised area.

The most dangerous junctions were:

- High Street /Locket Road (five accidents, one involving a cyclist and two involving pedestrians)
- High Street/George Gange Way (four accidents, one involving a cyclist)
- High Street /Palmerston Road (three accidents, one involving a pedestrian).

Four out of seven slight accidents were typical roundabout accidents with two wheelers involved in each case (cyclists and motor cyclists). In one accident a pedestrian was involved and in the other two cars. Four of the slight accidents occurred at the roundabout Palmerston Road/George Gange Way.

From 2002 (June) -2005 (May), there were 36 slight accidents. During this time period, buses were running two-way through the High Street. All accidents were outside the pedestrianised area.

The most dangerous junctions were:

- High Street /Locket Road (six accidents, two involving pedestrians and one a motor cyclist)
- High Street/Masons Avenue (six accidents, two involving pedestrians, one with a bus and a pedestrian)

  High Street George Gange Way (three accidents, one involving a cyclist and one a pedestrian).

Seven slight accidents were on roundabouts, all involving cars (which is good news in terms of injuries) most probably because cyclists were using the High Street by then. In one accident a pedestrian was involved. The roundabout at Palmerston Road/George Gange Way alone had six accidents.

3.5 Bus accidents

There were seven slight accidents involving buses from 2002-2005 (two-way bus operation), whereas three years before there were six minor accidents. From 2002-05, there were two accidents in which a pedestrian and a cyclist were involved. That was not the case when there was the one-way bus operation. However the pedestrian accident was in August, just at the time when the two-way bus operation was introduced.

3.6 Conclusion

The accident statistics, which were analysed over a period of six years, show very clearly the benefit of the pedestrianised section of the High Street, which has no accidents whatsoever, particularly if one compares the accidents in the part of the High Street which is not pedestrianised but is also dominated by shops. Here, we found 15 accidents of which two of them were serious in 1999-2002 and 17 accidents of which again 2 were serious in 2002-2005.

In assessing whether two-way flow buses have more accidents than a one-way operation we would conclude that there might be a slight tendency to more accidents with two-way flow buses but the statistical evidence is weak.

There are several junctions that need more consideration in terms of improving road safety, especially the one at High Street and Locket Road. We would suggest changing the roundabout at Palmerston Road/George Gange Way into a signalled junction (this has to be checked by a traffic engineer). This would also provide much better crossing facilities for pedestrians coming from the eastern part of Wealdstone.

APPENDIX 11 – REFERENCES

1. Wealdstone Regeneration Study: Stage 1 Report, GLE, July 1999

2. Retail Analysis & Street Market Assessment, GLE, May 2000

3. Wealdstone Town Centre Survey: Survey of 100 residents, GLE, 1999/2000

4. Review of Pedestrianisation Scheme, Alan Baxter & Associates, November 1999

5. Wealdstone and Harrow Town Centres Walking Audits, and related LBH and WRAP documents, The Pedestrians Association, October 2001

6. Wealdstone Regeneration Review, GLE, 2002

7. Walking Audit Matters, London Borough of Harrow, Department of Environmental Services, April 2002

8. WAC Wealdstone Environmental Improvements Survey, WAC, July 2002

9. Harrow Vitality Profiles, A Portrait of Harrow and its People in Statistics, London Borough of Harrow, 2004