

# Culture led regeneration focuses on tourism essay



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## **Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to provide a framework for the basis of this study, discussing the key matters and approaches in culture-led regeneration whilst examining its functionality within a wider context. It is essential to discuss flagship developments, the public realm, urban design principles and planning policy as part of the place making process. Images of the built environment used within place promotion strategies often add value by increasing consumption within a city. The following attempts to synthesise literatures from the fields of culture, regeneration, urban design, quality of place, place image and the public realm – thus providing a coherent framework for later analysis. It is these overarching concepts which remain interlinked in creating better places where people want to live work and subsequently invest.

Part One: Regeneration

## **Culture-led Regeneration**

The term ‘ culture-led regeneration’ has become a part of the planning and development vocabulary and has been seen as being of increasing importance from the beginning of the 1990s, since which “ arts and culture have come to be seen as a key resource for urban regeneration” (Griffiths et al, 2003: 154) with both increased focus and funding opportunities.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) commissioned a report entitled ‘ The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK’ which defined regeneration as ‘ breathing new life and vitality into an ailing

community, industry and areas bringing sustainable, long-term improvements to local quality of life' (2004: 4).

Culture-led regeneration focuses on using culture and cultural activity as a catalyst and engine for regeneration activity. Within the scope of this study such cultural activity will focus on the quality and design of both buildings and the reclamations of open space including their impact and use. Often these activities are used within place rebranding strategies (Evans and Shaw 2004). Specifically this form of regeneration can be considered through many types of expression including architecture, heritage buildings, festivals, events and the performing arts (Smith, 2006). There are numerous approaches towards achieving culture-led regeneration including production and consumption based strategies' (Bianchini, 1993), as illustrated in Figure X.

Culture-led regeneration has been used extensively within Europe (Gomez, 1988; Keating and De Frantz, 2004; Miles, 2005) from the beginning of the 1990s as a strategy for regenerating cities that have suffered from social and economic decline through de-industrialisation. Whilst such strategies have been successful throughout Europe, uncertainty remains regarding their long-term benefits (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006). Various studies have been conducted into the effects and impacts of culture on regeneration as outlined in Table X within the context of this study. Culture-led regeneration initiatives have been implemented aimed towards adopting a new place image (Doucet, 2007). The shift towards a globalised economy has resulted in increased competitiveness, recognising that cities must compete on a global scale to attract inward investment. Following

deindustrialisation civic institutions have adopted culture-led regeneration initiatives as a tool which offers distinctive wider economic benefit by not only stimulating economic growth however aiming towards addressing negative market externalities and social problems (Jones and Evans, 2008). Keating and De Frantz (2004: 190) summarise ' In a crowded international market, it can mark the city as distinct, giving it a brand image. This can indirectly promote its economic competitiveness by increasing its position in the quality-life indexes of international investment ranking. It may also have a psychological effect within the city, building self-confidence and civic pride among the population and even boosting optimism among investors'. The role of art and culture is strong within economic development and place-marketing strategies as the wider cultural offer of a city formulates a key component of re-imagining and the creation of distinctive places. This often results in extensive urban development based upon consumption with individuals being attracted by the synergy formed by cultural facilities and surrounding mixed-use development (Snedcof, 1985).

## **Figure X**

Table X Impacts of Culture on Regeneration

Physical

Economic

Cultural

Enhanced identity and place image

Inward investment

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Increased cultural understanding

Aesthetic and environmental improvements through architecture, public art and public realm

Tourism and increased visitor spending

Promoting participation within the arts

Increased design quality

Increased footfall

Enhanced creativity and vision

Increased use of public open space

Increased property values

Enhanced cultural well-being

Reuse of redundant buildings/ increased occupancy of vacant land

Employer retention

Sustainable development

(Adapted from Evans and Shaw, 2004; Landry et al, 1993)

A case study on the Newcastle Gateshead found that there were social and community benefits of culture-led regeneration including increased numbers of local residents attending cultural institutions and an increased number of residents feeling that the arts had played a valuable role in their lives.

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Furthermore culture-led regeneration within the area has aided in restoring local individuals identities in addition to improving the fabric and culture within the city. Bailey et al (2004), argue that culture-led regeneration provides a framework enabling ‘ local people can [to] re-establish ownership of their own sense of place and space’. Thus, ‘ culture is a critical aspect of mediating and articulating community need’ (Evans, 2005: 959), as can be seen that one of the potential effects of culture-led regeneration is positive social impact in addition to economic stabilisation (see Figure X for examples).

“ Major events are seen as a particularly effective catalyst for city regeneration processes because they are able to merge tourism strategies with urban planning and can boost the confidence and pride of the local community” (Garcia, 2004: 104)

“ The arts are a catalyst for regeneration, a magnet for tourism and business, enhance the visual quality of a city’s environment and provide a focus for community and individual development” (Miles, 2005: 896)

Figure X examples of social impacts in culture-led regeneration

## **Flagship Development Phenomenon**

Over past decades the role of the government has essentially changed from functioning as ‘ city managers’ providing frontline public services, to policies focusing on globalisation (Doucet, 2007). Accordingly transforming into more diversified economies adopting entrepreneurial practices as a result of ideological shifts within government policies promoting growth and development. In order to accumulate investment and create job

opportunities within this ever competitive economy, there has been an increased focus and awareness of consumption factors, such as quality of life, amenities, the built environment, cultural and social facts (Healy et al, 1992). Flagship developments are often used to produce euphoria, a sense of civic pride and success amongst the local population.

Flagship developments are considered a means for economic growth and further catalytic effects such as bringing derelict space back into an economic use. Flagship developments are often launched alongside rebranding or marketing strategies with the aim of changing place image towards a dynamic and creative vision, thus attracting individuals and increasing potential footfall. Flagship developments are often situated in 'high-profile' locations such as central business districts (Healy et al 1992). The Bilbao region of northern Spain is often cited as a successful example of a flagship development and is known as the 'Guggenheim Effect' having created many ripple effects across the region.

## **Critiques of Flagship Developments**

Doucet (2007) notes the foremost criticism is that of conflicting visions of the city from those of the policy makers and promoters to those of the local population. Thus the question arises as to who are flagships designed for, the residents or outsiders?

Often flagships developments follow themes and patterns duplicated from previously successful projects which lead to a 'cookie-cutter effect' (Doucet, 2007). Many flagship developments have become franchised and replicated in both appearance and form throughout the world, which subsequently

affects their impact. For example it is evident that many flagship museums are becoming franchised; diminishing originality and their unique selling positions (Harvey, 1989).

## **Impact Measurement**

The term ‘ impact’ is used in relation to the ‘ contribution’ or ‘ role’ or ‘ importance’ of culture-led regeneration. Table X below identified the different environmental and economic impact measurements and their associated tests (DCMS 2004);

Table X: Impact Measurement

### Environmental

Land values and occupancy (versus vacant premises/voids), design quality, environmental/quality of life.

### Tests

Quality of Life (ODPM’s local quality of life indicators), Design Quality Indicators (DQI – CABE/CIC), Re-use of brownfield land

### Economic

Multipliers (jobs, income/expenditure – direct, indirect, induced), cost benefit analysis, contingent valuation (i. e. willingness to pay for ‘ free’ activities such as parks, museums, libraries), inward investment and leverage, distributive effects

### Tests



Employment/unemployment rates, income/spending and wealth in an area, and distribution by social group and location, employer location, public-private leverage, footfall.

## **Place Marketing**

Image profile strategies may assist in tackling issues around deprivation and unemployment in addition to indirectly increasing its economic position reflected in the quality of life, the creation of a distinctive sense of place and psychological effects such as implementing civic pride and a shift of perceptions. Generically through UR the rebranding of a place follows through the design and construction of the built environment. Additionally the use of high profile projects in conjunction with tourism and cultural policies promotes a positive place image in order to adapt the status of the city, its local economy and attract inward business investment as suggested by Stevenson (2003). There seems to be a growing importance in the role of economic development and the adoption of place marketing and re-imaging will assist in distinguishing a place from its competing locations. Bramwell and Rawding (1996) discuss the repositioning of a place within a better market sector with the new brand communicating that alternative service range offers are available to investors, businesses and individuals.

The phrase “renaissance” defines a new approach to regeneration based on the “quality of place”, an understanding that the design and delivery of high-quality public spaces and the built environment will raise aspirations and contribute to a higher and more sustainable level of economic wellbeing. The function of the programme is to facilitate the renaissance of

underperforming places and maximise its strengths. The aim is to help places develop and prosper, both in physical and economic terms.

Part Two: Public Realm

## **A Case for Public Realm and Place Quality**

The type of investment that comprises public realm is varied and often specific to a particular location. Within a city centre context the range of interventions can cover mixed use developments with a focus on squares, waterside development combined with good urban design features which include improving connectivity and supporting green space. The approaches adopted can be led by the type of commercial use be it retail, cultural or indeed office development led.

The definition of quality of place can be broadly described as the range of factors which contribute to the attractiveness and functionality of a locality as a place to live, work, invest or visit. Investment that supports the development of high quality places is generally recognised as helping to improve economic performance. This particular view has influenced the place agenda over the past decade and this is now clearly evident in public policy. Good examples of this shift in policy include the CLG's Total Place concept and the approach being adopted by the HCA to area based development. CABE have long argued the importance of quality places in defining successful places.

## **Economic Benefits**

Various research studies undertaken over the last 10 years have sought to examine the impact of design quality on local areas and businesses. CABE

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(2002) draws together the findings of key research from the UK and abroad showing how investment in good design generates economic and social value. Collectively the studies provide evidence of the value of design in the areas of civic pride and cultural activity, business, housing, educational environments, crime prevention and social wellbeing. CABI (2004) highlighted the importance of public realm and public spaces to the competitiveness of an area.

Whitehead et al (2006) sought to follow up on the earlier qualitative findings (such as the work by CABI) to quantify measures of change in business performance brought about by urban quality improvements (for example, studies that looked at willingness to pay, impact on property values and rents, turnover, footfall or other quantifiable forms of impact). Whitehead et al (2006) examined whether improvements in the urban environment (which might be achieved through pedestrianisation or public realm improvements) affect business location decisions. The central question posed was to establish the value to office or retail businesses of locating in enhanced urban spaces, reviewing more than 700 different studies.

Table X below summarises the quantifiable evidence found by the Panel. It indicates the range and mean value for key commercial metrics such as footfall and turnover and retail and office rental premiums observed from the investment made.

Table X (Whitehead et al 2006)

Activity

Type of improvement

Number of cases

Headline values (Mean)

Retail footfall

Pedestrianisation

10

20% - 40% (32. 3%)

Retail turnover

22

10% - 25% (17. 0%)

Retail rents

420

10% - 30% (21. 7%)

Office rents

Waterfront improvement/ other water feature

10

15% - 35% (24. 2%)

Commercial property values can also benefit from the presence of quality public realm and environs. In principle, higher landscape quality will help to make sites and premises easier to sell or let and help retain occupants, with some studies suggesting that some occupants value landscape quality more highly than others to the extent that they are prepared to pay a higher than average rent for premises located in an area of high landscape quality (South Yorkshire Forest et al, 2008). Land and property values are a useful proxy measure for the relative prosperity and attractiveness of a community, neighbourhood or place. Property values reflect a basket of factors, including for example transport links, proximity to employment and local services, as well as environmental quality.

The public realm theory of change model brings together the evidence base in terms of activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts in mapping the economic benefits of public realm investment (EMDA/ECOTEC 2007). Figure X provides a schematic of the public realm theory of change model.

In the centre of the framework are the ‘ reasons’ why public realm investment brings about economic benefits summarised around six economic benefit streams:

1. Attracting business;
2. Increasing land / property values
3. Attracting visitors;
4. Increasing tourism;

5. Improving productivity; and

6. Enhancing image.

The theory is that the quality of the location is enhanced by public realm and this changes the behaviours of investors, business and visitors, leading to increased positive outcomes including increased business activity, visitor expenditure, secondary business activity, productivity and an overall enhanced image for the area. Ultimately this improves the overall investment climate for a location and employment opportunities, impacting on high level outcomes including the sustainability of communities and economic competitiveness.

Figure X: Public Realm Theory of Change Model.

## **Case Study Evidence**

In evaluating the impact of public realm there has been a heavy emphasis on using area based case studies. Such case studies have tended to focus on qualitative assessments, although increasingly they have used survey approaches to help assess the relative contribution of public realm investment. Table X summarises a number of case studies.

The case studies illustrate that public realm is reported by stakeholders as having an economic impact. Businesses across a range of studies report that public realm investment improves the performance of existing enterprises and influences new investment decisions. This is due to the way in which public realm impacts on increasing the attractiveness of an area, increasing

footfall leading to increased consumers expenditure or improves the image of an area leading to new employment generation activity.

The public realm is a secondary factor in the location decision making of inward investors in the East Midlands (EMDA/ECOTEC 2007). This was viewed as being due to the nature of inward investment decisions and the multiple factors that influence location. Moreover, it has been noted that there is little robust evidence from property market stakeholders to demonstrate the economic and regeneration impacts of investment in the public realm, but anecdotal evidence point to a positive relationship.

A more general point relates to the context for public realm investment being made. The case study evidence suggests that whilst public realm projects can be successful in their own right, they need to be part of a wider regeneration programme to contribute towards the economic revival and sustainability of an area. What the case studies generally provide is a strong signal from businesses that there is a causal relationship between public realm investment and economic performance and the mechanisms for economic impacts. What is less clear is the relative contribution of public realm to observed overall changes.

Table X: Summary of selected case studies on the economic benefits of public realm [source]

Case Studies

Context

Investment

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Qualitative Impacts

Quantitative Impacts

Birmingham Victoria Square

Public square flanked by most established civic buildings

£3. 7m as part of £6. 5m package of works

Restriction of traffic flows helped increase pedestrian flows, space for formal and informal activity, events attracts visitors.

No assessment

Bristol Queen Square

Increase in property values of 15% which in part can be attributed to the public realm.

Coventry city centre

Poor quality city centre environment

Range of public realm works incorporated

Urban design improvements in the city centre, including signage, public art and civic square improvements have been cited as leading to a 25% increase in footfall on Saturdays [footnote]

Torbay Waterfront

Waterfront investment in public realm

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The public investment was recognised by businesses as important in influencing their investment decisions and increased trade [footnote]

Based on waterfront business surveys and interviews was able to attribute on average some 20% of private sector investment to the waterfront public realm investment. Key retailers had noticed increased footfall as a benefit and some 10% of investment was attributed by the evaluators to the public realm investment.

Whitby

Town centre public realm works

Study reported an increase of 35% in visitors as a result of the public realm works. This analysis was based on a visitor survey which asked whether the public realm has influenced the decision to visit.

Part Three: Policy and Investment Rationale

## **Cultural Planning Rationale**

Most culture-led regeneration has been implemented through cultural policy (Vickery 2000) with the rationale of achieving both social and political agendas. During the 1980s the use of cultural policy shifted towards an economic and physical regeneration mechanism (Garcia, 2004; McGuigan, 2005), and was known as 'cultural economic policy' Kong (2000). Cultural policy has been used to create a sense of national identity through a cultural 'renaissance' based on primarily on achieving economic benefits (Lee, 2004). There are various policy levels which aim to support both production and consumption based strategies (Simonin 2003).

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The DCMS made it a non-statutory requirement for the local authorities in England to produce a local cultural strategy to promote ‘cultural well-being’ (DCMS 2000: 5) which resulted in a high take up. A DCMS report entitled *Culture at the Heart of Regeneration* outlined the economic and social benefits of culture and recommended policy improvements to ensure that culture is ‘firmly embedded in regeneration from the very beginning’ (DCMS, 2004: 5), not just as an after-thought.

Cultural planning is defined as the ‘...strategic use of cultural resources for the integrated development of cities, regions and countries’ (Evans, 2001: 7), and is the means for which culture to be considered in all processes relating to planning and development (Mercer, 2002). It is promoted by academics, as an alternative to traditional cultural policies (Evans, 2001; Garcia, 2004; Bianchini, 1993). This approach promotes an understanding of cities as ‘cultural entities’ (Bianchini, 1993: 212) and incorporates cultural policies with other sectors, such as planning (Lutz, 2006).

## **Public Realm Investment Rationale**

The public policy rationale for investing in public realm has become increasingly well documented in recent years. Public places that help to inspire, delight and attract people are now firmly recognised as one of the wellsprings of prosperity. Indeed, good quality public realm has become increasingly central to urban regeneration policy decisions. The case is well articulated by CABE (2003: 4) ‘A high quality public environment can have a significant impact on the economic life of urban centres and is an essential part of any successful regeneration strategy. As towns increasingly compete with one another to attract investment, the presence of good parks, squares,

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gardens and other public spaces becomes a vital business and marketing tool. Companies are attracted to locations that offer well-designed, well-managed public places and these in turn attract customers, employees and services.”

It is worth noting the words of the American urban designer Alexander Garvin who wrote “ Urban planning should be defined as public action that will produce a sustained and widespread private market reaction” (Gallacher 2005: 11). That is to say if any new public space is not designed without some conscious thought given to increasing human activity and exchange, as well as adding to the economic value of local neighbourhoods and facilities, then it is likely to fail. The ‘ urban competitiveness maze’ outlined in the late 1990s introduced the concept that high quality public realm was an important factor in determining economic performance (Begg, 1999). The study highlighted that a high quality pedestrian environment and public realm was an essential component of creating the right environment for business.

The linkages between local environmental quality and economic performance determined that public realm could have an influence through:

- (i) stimulating the local economy through increasing private sector returns,
- (ii) have a positive impact on perceptions of the area, and
- (iii) may retain and attract workers to an area where there is easy access to employment centres (Frontier Economics Ltd, 2004).

Public realm investment is recognised as integral to the functioning of quality places. Buchanan (2008) concluded a three year evaluation project capturing

the impact of quality of place investments across the North East region (these include a range of investments in cultural facilities, streetscapes, parks and other public realm). This has focussed closely on the impact of quality places on economic performance and has highlighted the contribution of public realm to the mix of elements that help make a location successful.

Figure X overleaf illustrates the mix of attributes that make for good locations and quality of place identified in the study. Buchanan's analysis concluded that quality of place investments can make a positive contribution to regional economic performance in four areas in particular:

attracting and retaining knowledge workers;

improving productivity through enhanced density;

increasing labour force participation, and

growing the tourism and culture economy

The study identifies a broad approach to the assessment of the impact of quality of place, covering the assessment of economic change, property values and land prices, perception change and a physical quality assessment. The physical quality assessment used a number of survey tools as outlines in Figure X below.

### **Figure X:**

Figure X: Economic competitiveness and quality of place (Buchanan, 2008)

Over time public and urban realm investment has featured more strongly in order to underpin overall investment strategies. Industrialisation in the urban centres led to expansion, but de industrialisation later led to decline. The decline of many of the town and city centres was accompanied by social and physical degeneration, worsened by urban sprawl, including the emergence of out-of town shopping. The urban cores became places more likely to hinder, rather than promote, economic growth. The sheer scale of the problem, and a lack of resources, condemned to failure previous approaches of quick-fix and piecemeal interventions (in this case Sheffield).

Within cultural planning policy and economic strategy the importance of public realm is in making great places and delivering more competitive locations. They serve as an attraction for people, businesses and visitors. They become places where people want to visit, live, work and invest. They offer better lifestyles. They are more likely to attract people who have more choices in life, with higher levels of income, education and skills. They attract new, knowledge-based sectors. The process of ‘ place-making’ helps to overcome exclusion, empowering local people and raising their levels of aspiration and ambition.

The case for public sector investment in public realm is firmly grounded in a belief that it is a key contributor to the economic well-being and competitiveness of an area. There is a general body of evidence that recognises the importance of quality of place and public realm in attracting and retaining business, skilled people and visitors. From the evidence it is also clear that there are many factors that contribute to the quality of a

particular location and therefore the attractiveness of a location to residents, businesses and visitors.

Often a public realm strategy is just part of an overall investment strategy to improve the quality of a town or city centre environment – the best are often described by investors or developers where they can see that action is being taken to improve a town or city's environment across sectors – whether this be efforts to improve the town or city's retail, leisure, office, or residential offer, supported by a strong and clear masterplan and strong public sector governance. Together these factors appear to come together to improve the overall quality of a place, and a location that will encourage private sector investment. The challenge appears to be in disentangling the specific contribution of the public realm investment.

Part Four: Validity

## **Literature Validity**

Following an extensive literature review process it is vital to correspondingly consider the validity of such sources of literature. It remains essential for critical analysis and evaluation of certain aspects including the tone and style echoed within the literature in addition to the purpose for which it has been written. By undertaking effective and thorough research from a variety of quality key texts this enables the researcher to gain depth of knowledge and an understanding of the topic area. The adopted systematic approach to underpinning this literature review has enabled a variety of sources such as internet data, books, journals and reports for data collection, analysis generation and interpretation.

A widespread of government agendas, initiatives, policies and strategy report documents have been reviewed. Refereed scholarly journal articles have been considered from various respected sources, authors and academic institutions which have been written for the purposes of professionals, academics and students within the field of the built environment. Additionally, internet data and books have presented mixed views which remain valid for use within this study. Therefore, bias or alternative influences remain few, subsequently forming reliable and valuable sources of information which have been executed with a critical approach for the purposes of this study.