



Surgery 3 – Tenants as Partners

Sustainable options for co-design from the perspectives of large/chain and independent family businesses

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The Third Place

- Ray Oldenberg, "The Great Good Place" (1989):
"Beer gardens, main streets, pubs, cafes, coffee-houses, post offices....."
 - Third places are the heart of a community's social vitality and the foundation of a functioning democracy.
 - They promote social equality by levelling the status of guests, provide a setting for grassroots politics, create habits of public association, and offer psychological support to individuals and communities."
- Third Places are:
- Defined by their patrons
 - Created through enlightened self-interest by retailers (tenants), landlords and council
 - Their function is conversation
 - They are accessible to all

The Third Place as a commercial opportunity

- “Great Good Place” published 1989
- Starbucks opens first store outside Seattle 1989
- Barnes & Noble and Borders develop book superstores 1991
- First Starbucks inside a bookstore, 1993
- Bookstore cafes in the UK mid-90s
- Borders UK superstores 1998

Borders UK 1998-2009

- Established US retail concept
- Book/music/movie/mags superstores
- Coffee shops
- Events programmes
- Long opening hours
- Comfy chairs
- Something for everyone
- Inadvertently made Vital Kingston happen

Third place benefits for Borders

- Increase dwell-time
- Increase customer numbers
- Increased regularity of visits
- High likelihood of whole family visits
- Lift transaction numbers
- Lift average transaction value
- Underpin store income

However...

Third place attributes require:

- Space – sales per square foot
 - Staff time – sales per payroll hour
 - Management excellence and focus
 - Investment in marketing, events etc – inevitably, some of this money will be wasted
- ...and customers are promiscuous

UK book market

2000:	2010:
Specialist retail: 55%	Specialist retail: 38%
General retail: 22%	General retail: 17%
Supermarkets: 5%	Supermarkets 20%
Mail order/clubs: 15%	Mail order/clubs: 5%
Internet: 3%	Internet: 20%

Source: PD estimates/Nielsen

Decline of high street bookselling

- 1990s - early 2000s: making hay while the sun shone
- By 2010:
 - Undermined by supermarkets and discounting
 - Undermined by internet – the long tail
 - Undermined by internet – social networking
- RIP Borders; Books etc; Ottakars; Dillons; Hammicks; Hatchards (chain); Blackwell's (non-academic); Thins; Sherratt & Hughes; many independents

The Third Place as a commercial opportunity

- Coffee shops have worked
- 11,000 in the UK
- 4,000 branded (Starbucks, Nero, Costa etc)
- Great Good Places?
- Acceptable alternatives to MacDonald's
- Heirs to the US diner and the UK greasy spoon?
- Growth of semi-formal dining – from Berni Inns and Pizzaland to Wagamama, Jamie's, etc.

Vital Kingston goals

GOAL 1

A short term goal of trying to influence what becomes of the former Borders (UK) book store and trying to broker a positive solution for the community.



Vital Kingston goals

GOAL 2: Longer term: Engaging with stakeholders and supporting places for informal social interaction outside in the community both for pleasure and for work.

- a) Try to incentivise landlords to **give preference to a mixed use of space** so that the town centre has a balance of amenities.
- b) Fundraise for **support grants** to extend the range and opening times of community amenities.
- c) Provide a structure for local business, especially small business, to **feed into and draw from the placemaking process**, thereby increasing their sustainability.

GOAL 3: Organising a calendar of our own 'pop-up' events that help to build community spirit.

Tenants as partners

- Enlightened self-interest?
- Planning gain?
- Integrated cafes, performance spaces, places to hang out
- High-end – Duke of York Square
- John Lewis
- Tenants as instigators?
- Tenants as community participants?

Tenants as partners

- Retail tenants and landlords share the same interest – money
- Usually through trying to screw each other...
- Retail design (macro and micro) is all about sales
- What retailers want
 - High customer numbers – footfall
 - High dwell time
 - Disposable income
- All of these requirements can be met (and quality enhanced) through attention to broader community benefits

- However, some things rarely happen.....

Well, gentlemen, what can we do to engage with the community and create a meaningful exchange of ideas in Kingston-on-Thames?



A retail head office, somewhere in England

My recommendations:

1. Start with the Area Action Plan (David Whipp)

- Drive has to come from the local community, and the councillors who represent that community
- Always seek planning gain – eg the better integration of different spaces for shared use.
- Charter Quay: apartments, restaurants, shops, enhanced riverside, the Rose theatre
- Make participation a given for key traders in Kingston

My recommendations:

2. Recognise that the “third place” has changed:

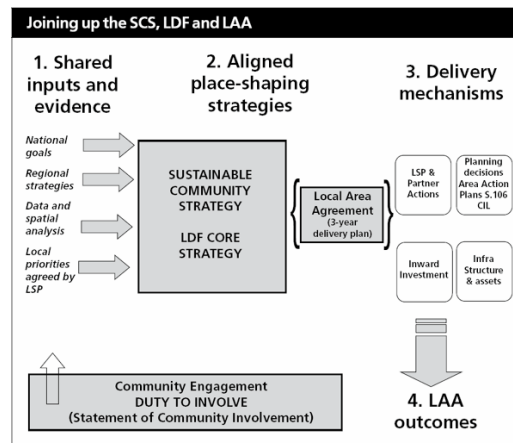
- Open spaces – market square, park, riverside
- Bookshop
- Library
- Gallery/Museum
- Chameleon bar

Not to mention:

- Online communities – blogging, social networking sites etc?
- Is “the third place” an out-dated concept?

My recommendations:

- Encourage involvement of the broader community through plain English and overt enthusiasm:



My recommendations:

- Create events that resonate for the whole community

Kingston River Celebration 14th -22nd July



Kingston University London

KINGSTON READERS' FESTIVAL



My recommendations:

- These activities are isolated from the commercial core of Kingston
- They are known to participants, and those who care to investigate
- Services to the existing community, or means of attracting visitors (even from Richmond) and increasing commercial activity?
- Get the crowds into the town! (And get them back again)

In summary

- Don't hold your breath waiting for another new bookstore
- Tenants and landlords will – at best – deliver enlightened self-interest
- Use the resources, places and people we have – council, schools, art and sports institutions, residents
- Recognise the difference between the town centre and the housing “villages”
- Create an environment in which more people feel able to participate