Instead of taking tissue samples as one would from a human being, this project uses cultural probes to investigate the local social body and its unique ailments. Like eastern medicine, this project takes a holistic view of the body to look at the interconnections between problems to get a sense of the whole.

Built Environment History, Industry & Development

This theme focuses on how the natural resources such as the river and ford, as well as Brentford's geographical position, shaped the early history of Brentford and led towards its heavy industrialisation with canals, trains lines and motorways. It also explores the later decline of this industrialisation which is still felt in Brentford and the way the relics from these earlier periods are now a strong part o its identity. The words 'historic' and 'friendly' were historical remnants are not being sensitively handlec The issue of development and interventions in the

the source of fears about how the new will obliterate the old and destroy the local identity. Talking to local people there seemed to be a sense of pessimism about how much power they had to shape these decisions and a feeling that these changes were happening without their involvemen Most people welcome development but there appears to be no choice over what sort of development they will get. The demand for a local developer of Brentford that lives and works in Brentford was a frequent one. The 'Brentford Towers' emerged as the main local landmark bein drawn and painted and described by many people. The feelings about them were mixed with some describing them as a big mistake and the source of social problems, while for others the towers are

People

Community, Class & Fictions

This theme focuses on the human 'resources' of Brentford and the ways that local community is being conceptualised in Brentford. Overall along with 'historic', 'friendly' was the most frequently used word to describe Brentford. This impression of a 'homely', local community is backed up by anecdotes about people who have moved house a number of times but often just a few roads away. The issue of diversity and integration is a complex one with some very split opinions. The new developments that have already occurred appear to be having complex affects on the makeup of the local community. Issues such as gated communities and the building of small flats for investment rather than living are contentious topics.

There is a perception of a new and wealthy group of people moving in who are London commuters and who are not involved with the local community These people are also seen to be single people without children who are depriving the local community of its connections. In fact the lack of provision for young people emerged very strongly from the collected material. The issue of inequality and class tensions appeared strong from the material with people living in clearly segregated geographical areas with little social integration These tensions and lack of integration seem to be strongly related to the lack of public space

Social Space Sensory City: Roads vs. Public Space

people are affecting each other. In particular it starts from people's sensory experience of Brentford to see how they are shaping feelings and ideas of the social space around us. One of the clear issues is the town centre which during the Sensory Mapping activity was described as: "Guessing shops but feels somehow dead and boring. Rubbish is rolling around with the wind. Traffic in the background. Nothing much going on but feels like there should be." As we saw earlier, roads were fundamental to Brentford's development but have today led to a linear strip of town centre where few people walk and cars rush by causing pollution. This lack of public space where people can hang out and meet each other is clearly related to the sense of isolation and

On the other hand we have a large number of very positive adjectives for the river area in Brentford being described as 'beautiful', 'green', 'watery' and 'photogenic'. This disconnection between the High Street and the river emerges very strongly and a number of possible solutions were proposed.

A clear example of how our sensory perception are involved in politics is the issue of the old canal boats. For some people the sight, sounds and smells of these old boats evoke nervousness and disgust while for others they are beautiful, historic and the centre of their community. By being honest about our sensory perceptions, can we find a better basis for discussing these kind of contentious issues in Public Space?

OPEN DATA

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www.publicbiopsy.net

for download from the project website:

A full quality digital version of this map is available







Future Visions

Built Environment + People + Social Space = ?

There is a sense that Brentford is a place which will change dramatically in the next few years. The directions of these changes are yet to be decided. A developer is in the process of drawing up a new masterplan for Brentford which will be going to public consultation in the near future. What type of future can we envisage? One of the dangers is always the spectre of 'realism' that breaks all imagination and delivers the cheapest and most banal solutions. We asked people to 'Draw or describe what Brentford might look like in the future?' and 'You have unlimite amount of money power and freedom to change Brentford. Draw what you would do to this place?'. The majority of the drawings suggested pragmatic spatial interventions such as severing the High Stree and pedestrianising it.

A very popular proposal was to increase the amount of green planting as well as alternative energy generation to create a self-sufficient Brentford The challenges of global warming and rising water levels are the main fears that people are drawing which in some of the cases are so bad, that we nee to get into our big boat or rocket and depart Earth for another planet. There was a general sense of passivity to how Brentford's future might be shaped with only a few suggesting community solutions such as local artisans and entrepreneurs and a place 'where people stay all their lives to develop and grow'. This call for human scale and community lead development is a powerful one that should not be

forgotten when the public consultation appears



WHAT IS THIS ?

This poster is an extract and taster of the full 10 meter long Brentford Biopsy banner. Both this poster and the large banner were created from data, information and conversations collected by roughly 200 local people. The participants used a whole variety of creative ways to explore and discuss Brentford. To see the full banner go to the following website where you can view and download the complete banner:

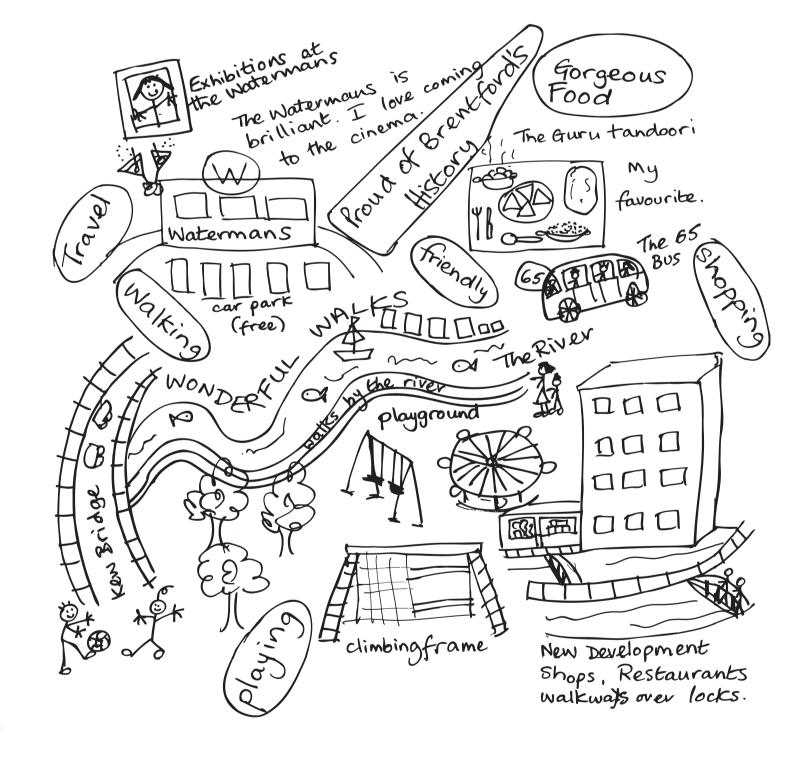
www.publicbiopsy.net

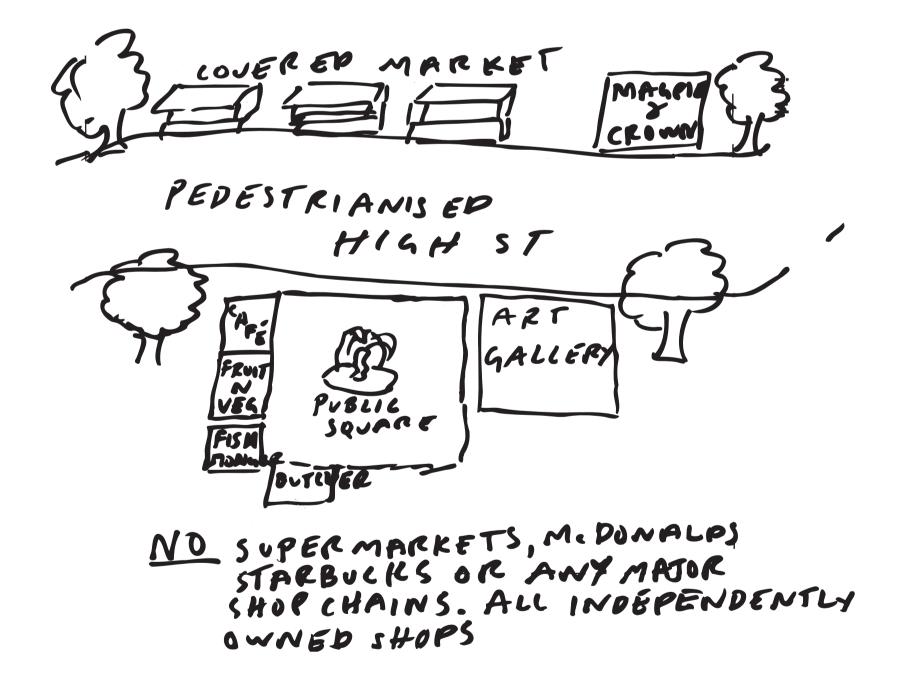


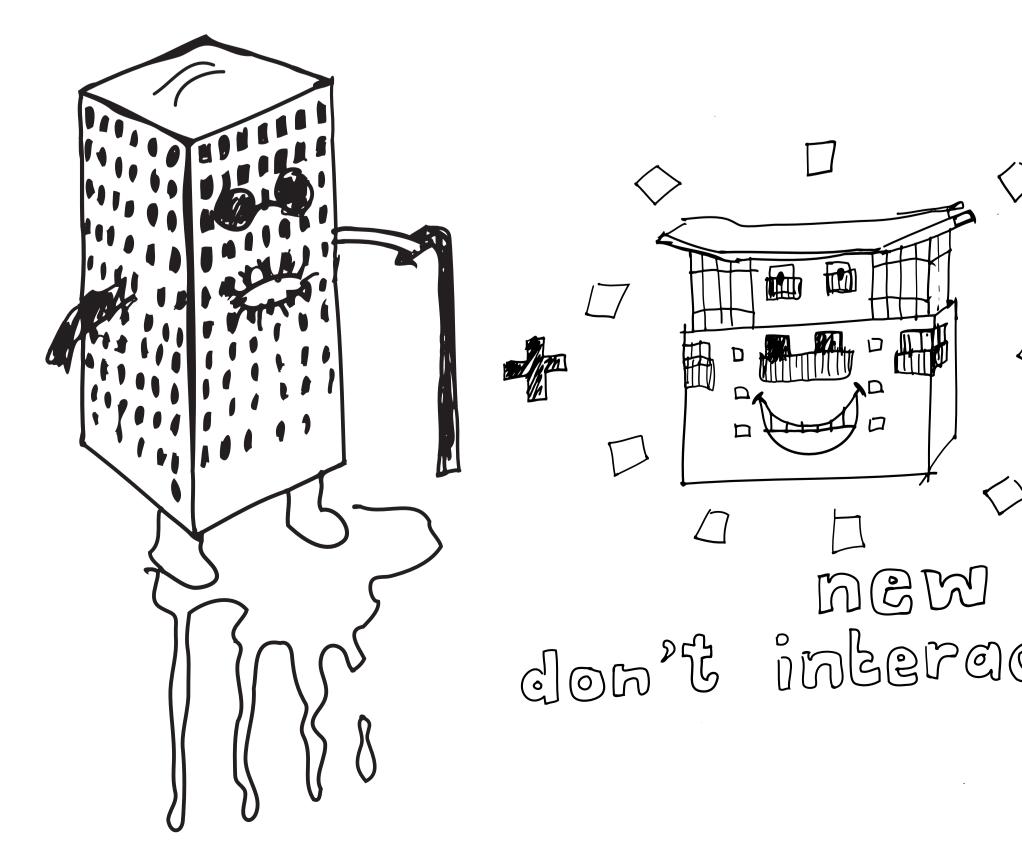
Maybe people aren't their behaviour. Let's have youth clubs.











Adjective Clouds

The clusters of blue to black words are adjectives that project participants used to describe Brentford. The size and colour The adjectives have then been collected together into clusters of similar words

historic traditional developing promising new friendly diverse communal cold divisive splintered pretentious

homely multi-racial warm-hearted

interesting varied surprising stimulating hidden neglected isolated beautiful peaceful picturesque exciting intriguing fun cultural sporty musical detached old-fashioned out-of-the-way forgotten lost green watery bucolic calm clean

convenient realistic central near linear ambiguous worth-a-visit still