

Rita Newton

SURFACE Inclusive Design Research Centre,
the University of Salford, UK

www.idgo.ac.uk

**Designing healthy and accessible
urban environments with older
people in mind**

Detailed Design

(SURFACE: the University of Salford)

What are the key attributes of detailed design (at both the street scale and neighbourhood scale) likely to influence aspects of older people's quality of life?

Method – in-depth interviews with 200 older people; physical audit survey of the street, and neighbourhood in which these older people live

Wide and flat tarmac footways



- Can avoid street furniture and pedestrians
- Feel safe from traffic
- Tarmac seen as smooth, even, non slippery, safer from tripping, comfortable to walk on
- Should be well maintained
- Need distinguished path for cyclists

Easy transition at level changes (1)



- Ramps with handrails to be used for level changes (issues of ease and safety)



- Steps and handrails as an alternative for those who want the exercise

Easy transition at level changes (2)



- Provision of dropped kerb important



- Tactile dropped kerb needs further investigation

Unobstructed walkways (1)



- Permanent obstructions inconvenient but necessary



- Temporary obstructions are tolerated

Unobstructed walkways (2)



- Obstructions from poorly maintained paving seen as hazardous



- Cars parked on pavement are major problem

Controlled crossing points



- Pelican crossings preferred (ease of use and safety)
- Audible signal to be provided
- Short crossing distance important

Clear, simple, easily visible and understandable signage



Frequent, warm, supportive seating, well maintained and safe



Bus stops and shelters



- Provision
- Weather protection
- Seating
- Personal safety
- Seeing the bus

Easily maintained street greenery



Easily maintained public art



- Classical public art is preferable to modern
- Water features are seen as very enjoyable
- Graffiti is not seen as art but as nuisance

Sufficient, well maintained, safe and open toilets



Street Walkability Audit Tool

- developed with older people in mind using the principles and practices of inclusive design

17 Street attributes, examples:

- street type (10 sub attributes),
- bus stops / shelter (8 sub attributes)

9 Neighbourhood attributes, examples:

- safety and perceived safety of sidewalks (9 sub attributes)
- general level of accessibility (11 sub attributes)

Physical audit of participants streets

- Narrow footways (either through design or obstacles)
- Generally smooth paving (+ve navigation) but 28% paving was poor / dangerous due to lack of maintenance
- Poor ease of movement because of siting of obstacles
- Lack of dropped kerbs at road crossing points
- Incorrectly laid / poorly laid tactile paving
- Uncontrolled road crossing points
- Limited bus stop / shelter / seat provision
- Very limited seating along routes (rather than destination)
- Easy to read and understand signage (+ve wayfinding)

Physical audit of wider neighbourhood

Wider neighbourhood is more supportive because

- Increased provision of controlled crossing points
- Footways are wider and more level so ease of navigation is improved
- Tactile paving more likely to be correctly laid

Barriers at both the street and neighbourhood scale

- Lack of seating
- Poor maintenance of paving
- Lack of easy crossing points

Rita Newton

SURFACE Inclusive Design
Research Centre,
the University of Salford, UK

www.surface.salford.ac.uk

www.idgo.ac.uk