Whose town centre is it anyway? Perspectives on the purpose of town centres in the North East

Colin Haylock
--- architect/planner and town and city centre lover!
Whose town centre is it anyway? Perspectives on the purpose of town centres

Footfall down 2% in October
Footfall down for the previous 10 consecutive months

Despite herculean efforts of players including BIDs
LAST MONTH, WE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN OUR RENEWAL BALLOT, AS THE MOST SUPPORTED BID IN THE UK WITH 88% OF NEWCASTLE BUSINESSES VOTING IN OUR FAVOUR!
A very telling observation from a former CX of the British Property Federation

Some reflections on challenges and some radical responses based on working on Newcastle City Centre
--- and East Pilgrim Street in particular
A City / Town Centre for the On-line World
A City / Town Centre for the Online World

- East Pilgrim Street as a test bed

Where it is
- Context
A City / Town Centre for the On-line World

- East Pilgrim Street as a test bed

Where it is
- Detail
The City Council’s approach
East Pilgrim Street Development Framework

More of the same
--- and why Council Owners
The Reality
--Short
– Medium ?
– Long Term ??
The Reality
--Short
– Medium ?
– Long Term ??
A City / Town Centre for the On-line World
- Understanding the area and its unique qualities
- Understanding the significance of its Listed Buildings as key assets
A City / Town Centre for the On-line World

Exploring in depth a wider range of uses

Their
--- specific needs and requirements
--- potential contribution
--- sensitivities

The potential conflicts between them

How these conflicts can be avoided / managed / mitigated through design of buildings and places
A City / Town Centre for the On-line World
Some critical questions

Why people are still using City and Town Centres?
What prompts them to gather?
What other things are people willing to travel for?
Where can they most readily reach?
What new uses and activities might help sustain the remainder of the City / Town Centre
A City /Town Centre for the On-line World
Some opening thoughts on uses

A much wider range of housing
Low cost space for
--- Tech, and “Beyond Tech” business and business incubation
--- Creative industries – including craft and making
--- Real contact social networking and support
--- A wide range of “Leisure”
Niche – “not on the high street” retailing spinning off and supporting these uses
Health and other social services
Education
Some factors to work with

Listed Buildings
Some factors to work with

Gradients of notional value / intensity
Potential Uses

A much wider range of housing

Low cost space for
--- Tech, and “Beyond Tech” business and business incubation
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Niche – “not on the high street” retailing spinning off and supporting these uses

Health and other social services

Education
Structuring the area

Maximising synergy / minimising – mitigating conflict.
The really tough stuff
How on earth do you deliver anything like this nature of change?

---- multiple owners and their aspirations
---- “winners” and “losers”
---- the potential of BIDs and Chambers of Commerce
---- joined up “public services”
---- the critical importance of Local Authority leadership