AN ALTERNATIVE AGE-FRIENDLY© HANDBOOK*

LARGE
PRINT
VERSION

* FOR THE SOCIALLY ENGAGED
URBAN PRACTITIONER

AN
ALTERNATIVE
AGE-FRIENDLY©
HANDBOOK*

FEATURING NEW & EMERGING AGE-INCLUSIVE
INITIATIVES WITH ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS
(& PROVOCATIONS) ON AGEING IN THE
CONTEMPORARY CITY

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

The demographic landscape of our cities is changing fast as our cities grow and populations age at the same time.

But how do we as designers and creative practitioners respond to this demographic challenge? How do we go about creating more 'age-inclusive' spaces? And are there ways we can cultivate a design sensibility more sensitive to the desires and needs of an ageing population?

This *Alternative Age-friendly© Handbook* provides a playful and critical exploration of what creative urban practitioners can bring to emerging debates around the creation of Age-friendly Cities. What follows overleaf are a series of suggested modes and methods of Age-friendly practice. Small-scale actions and interventions we can start taking now to create Age-friendly spaces. Creative ways of making use of existing urban spaces as we grow old. And ways of involving older people themselves in the process of re-shaping and re-imagining our cities for older age.

These are some of the thoughts and ideas explored through this handbook: opening up a much-needed debate on how we can start shaping the landscape of our built environment for our older age.

Stephen R. Hodder MBE
RIBA President 2013–2015

RIBA ⚎

HOW TO USE
THIS HANDBOOK

This *Alternative Age-friendly© Handbook* is a small pocket book for the creative urban practitioner: a practical reference for designers, architects, artists, 'urban curators' looking to support the age-inclusive (re)production of the city – together with/on behalf of/for older people.

To be used when out and about in the field, this *Handbook* provides a provisional, wayfinding introduction to the landscape of ageing in the city. It offers up thoughts, practical tools, tips and references to inspire ways of rethinking and reconfiguring older people's often neglected experience of urban space. It also draws on a range of emerging forms of age-inclusive practice to show how small-scale actions, initiatives and interventions can better support older people in making full and varied use of urban space 'even in' older age.

Structured around a series of reflective essays on age-inclusive spatial principles and approaches (from the basic terms of Age-friendly engagement – participation, collaboration and co-design – through to broader ideas around 'borrowing' time and space), the handbook is interspersed with sample guidance, 'facts', a glossary of key and contested 'Age-friendly' terms and the recurring icons and (sometimes questionable) representational features that mark out the physical and conceptual field of ageing in cities.

The handbook may be read from start to finish – or in no particular order at all.

What follows is neither guidance nor a prescriptive how-to.
This handbook is provided instead as a series of immersive essays
and prompts for action and debate: encouraging the creative urban
practitioner to read and reflect more closely on the kinds of actions,
practices and sensibilities that might help produce those diversity
of spaces, structures, networks and communities in cities
that make up an Age-friendly City.

GLOSSARY OF AGE-FRIENDLY TERMS*

accessibility *n.* **1.** capable of being easily reached and/or is available to as many people as possible. **2.** as a spatial concept, relates to inclusive design principles. **3.** a legal requirement under the Disability Discrimination Act (1995 and 2002). **4.** may, more broadly, be interpreted as a form of spatial inclusiveness (as in '*access is a gorgeous norm*'). RISKS: can overlook the way in which people's interaction with urban space is experienced 'unevenly and unequally' [see Jos Boys, *Doing Disability Differently: an Alternative Handbook on architecture, dis/ability and designing for everyday life* (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2014), p. 35]. **5.** literally, easily used, read and seen [LEGIBILITY].

age-friendly *adj.* **1.** favourable to and accommodating of older people in some form. [GENERIC] *tone:* POSITIVE. **2.** a World Health Organization (WHO) policy concept [COPYRIGHTED] designating: 'policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment that are designed to support and enable older people to "age actively" – that is, to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society.' **3.** defined through an interrelating set of eight Age-friendly© domains: *Outdoor Spaces and Buildings*; *Transportation; Housing; Social Participation; Respect and Social Inclusion; Civic Participation and Employment; Communication and Information; and Community*

Support and Health Services.
CONCEPTUAL ORIGINS:
evolves out of United Nations'
Year of Older People in 1999,
elaborated by the Euro-
pean Union, the WHO Policy
Framework on Active Ageing
(2002) and articulated in the
WHO's *Global Age-friendly
Cities: A Guide*
(Geneva: WHO, 2007).

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all-age-friendly *adj.*
1. a general term applied to
mean favourable to and
accommodating of all genera-
tions [GENERIC] **2.** often
used to broaden relevance of
an older-age-focused policy
agenda to other policy agendas
(e.g., 'child-friendly', 'dementia
friendly') [STRATEGIC], and/
or to create a (false?) sense
of the universal benefits of
Age-friendliness (as in
'*creating an Age-friendly city
means creating a city that
is friendly and good for all*').
tone: IDEALISTIC.

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checklist *n.* **1.** a list of
things to be done, points to
be considered or checked.
Often used as a reminder. *tone:*

DECISIVE. **2.** regularly adopt-
ed in Age-friendly frameworks
as a guiding template for action
(see, for instance, the CPA
Age-friendly Parks Checklist).
FUNCTION: activating. RISKS:
compliance-centred.

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handbook *n.* **1.** a small
book covering a particular
subject. (e.g., *ageing in the
contemporary city*). **2.** a small
book that can be carried
around as a ready reference
[HANDY and PORTABLE].
3. read in situ has the potential
to inspire context-specific
reflection and action [POTEN-
TIALLY ACTIVATING]. **4.** may,
though does not necessarily,
need to include instructions
or guidance (see, for instance,
Boys' *Alternative Handbook
on architecture, dis/ability and
designing for everyday life*).

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inclusive design *adj.*
1. a design approach where the
built environment (and/or any
fabricated service or product)
is designed and/or adapted
in such a way that it meets
the needs of all, regardless
of age or ability. Often used

interchangeably with terms such as 'Design for All' and 'Universal Design' (U.S.). HISTORIC ORIGINS: emerges as a response to demographic trends of population ageing and growing movement to integrate disabled people into mainstream society. *tone:* HOPEFUL. ASSUMPTIONS: 'needs' understood as common and general within any 'need' group. [GENERIC]
2. often used in conjunction with regulatory and advice-giving guidance (including checklist formats). RISKS: compliance-centred.
3. a separated out definition of design – i.e., in spite of best intentions remains marginal to (versus an integral part of) everyday design practices [Boys, *Doing Disability Differently*, p. 23].

outdoor spaces and buildings *n.* **1.** the first
of the eight domains of an Age-friendly city. **2.** literally, meaning the space beyond the front door (i.e., public domain), public-use buildings and outdoor spaces (from pavements to open spaces 'of

public value'). **3.** typically, used to refer to the physical fabric of the built environment [LITERAL/CONCRETE]. A domain commonly associated with inclusive design principles.

participation *n.*
1. literally, the action of taking part in something. **2.** in urban practice, the way in which users are empowered to shape the urban environment around them [POLITICAL]. **3.** a guiding principle in the age-friendly cities movement where older people are seen as active participants in the production and shaping of urban life. (See, for instance, the central role of older people in framing the original WHO Age-friendly Cities framework). CONCEPTUAL MODEL: citizenship-based.

'right to the city' *n. pl.*
1. literally, meaning the right to shape urban life. EFFECT: mobilising (potentially).
2. phrase originally coined by sociologist Henri Lefebvre in *Le Droit à la Ville* (published in 1968). Defined through

a politicised notion of accessibility as a 'demand...[for] a transformed and renewed access to urban life'. Concept more recently popularised by geographer David Harvey [see David Harvey, 'The Right to the City' *New Left Review* 53 (2008) pp. 23–40]. *tone:* OPTIMISTIC as in '*[t]he freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is [...] one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights*'. OPERATIONAL MODEL: collective. **3.** aligns with Age-friendly principles that foreground older people's active participation in urban life. BENEFITS: a healthy alternative to health-focused public policy discourse on ageing.

shared ground *adj.*
1. literally, refers to territory used, occupied or experienced with others. HISTORIC ORIGINS: evolves out of feminist urban practices working in the public realm (c., 1990s) *tone:* GENEROUS. **2.** implies an alternative reading of urban space that involves the principles and practice of negotiation (as in a '*shared ground negotiated through its varied use*') [NON-GENERIC]. **3.** acknowledges potential conflicts in the use (and production) of urban space. *tone:* REALISTIC. Not to be confused with the term *shared surface* (an urban design approach that seeks to minimise demarcations between vehicular traffic and pedestrians). **4.** as a spatial principle, increasingly, applied in the context of Age-friendly urban practice [see, for instance, the design studio model of *Sharing the City* (MSAp)].

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* A glossary of key, recurring (and some questionable) terms as encountered in the Age-friendly field.

THE AGE-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPE

I

BY 2030 TWO-THIRDS OF THE WORLD'S population
will be living in cities. By then, in many of these cities,
at least a quarter of those urban populations will be aged
60 years plus, if not more.[1] Here, the global graph lines
of ageing and urbanising populations are rising rapidly
together.

It would be is easy to replay these twin trends of
fast-ageing and fast-urbanising populations through
a heightened rhetoric of demographic 'timebombs' and
the language of 'apocalyptic demography'.[2] Much of the
current public debate on ageing is characterised by
precisely this kind of alarmist rhetoric – language that
has, at least, helpfully galvanised growing public, policy
and academic interest in ageing populations.

In reality, though, demographic patterns vary from
city to city. Some cities are currently experiencing fast-
ageing urban populations: larger numbers of city dwellers
are entering their late-70s, 80s than ever before. But in
other cities there is a noticeable inversion of prevailing
demographic trends. For cities like London and Man-
chester an overwhelmingly young population can be seen,

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[1] C. Phillipson, 'Developing age-friendly communities: New approaches to
growing old in urban communities' I R. Settersten, R. and J. Angel, *Handbook
of the Sociology of Aging* (New York: Springer, 2011).

[2] Kevin Harris, *Age-friendly societies in our time? A literature review*
(Wood Green Community Services/University of Birmingham: 2013), p. 1.

increasingly, dominating city-wide priorities over and above a minority older age group.

Whatever the particular demographic conditions of cities, though, now – or projected for ten, fifteen years' time – what is clear is the way in which there is still a sense in which older people remain a marginalised age group *across* urban environments. Cities are, for the most part, spaces that are imagined and structured with a younger, working age demographic in mind. Older people are not, typically, incorporated into the mainstream of thinking and planning around urban environments (with some groups of older people in areas of deprivation being particularly disadvantaged). So, while urban environments might in broad global terms project an 'alarming' graph line of ageing populations, in practice older people are still all too often, in the public imagination at least, marginal to urban life – conceptually and often quite literally less visible.

Percentage of Urban Population in Major Areas

2005
2030

Area	2005	2030
WORLD	48.7	59.9
AFRICA	38.3	50.7
ASIA	39.8	54.1
EUROPE	72.2	78.3
LATIN AMERICA / CARIBBEAN	77.4	84.3
NORTH AMERICA	80.8	87.0
OCEANIA	70.8	73.8
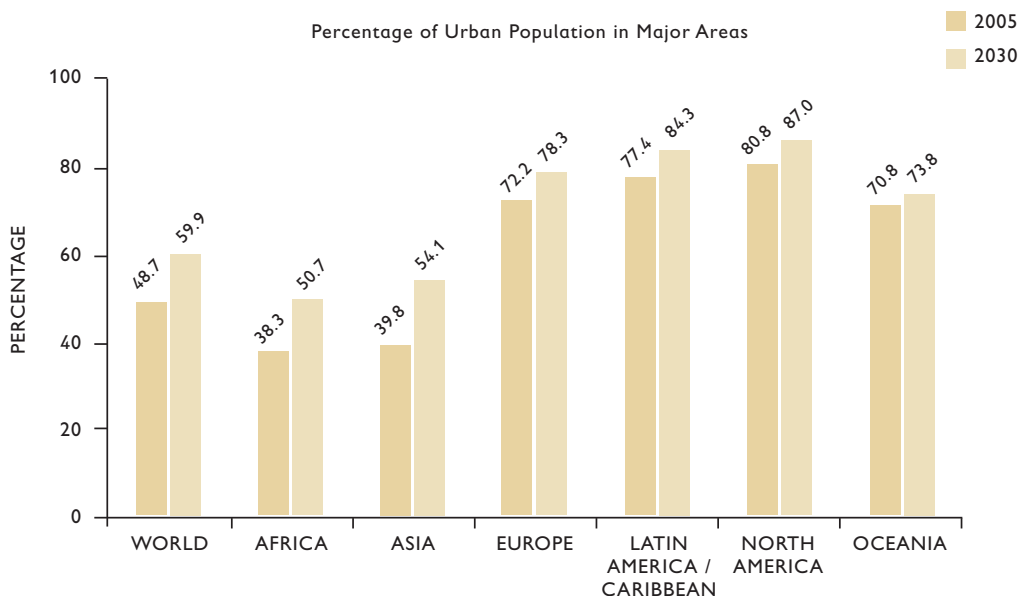
The global graph line of ageing and urbanising populations
[from the *Global Age-friendly Cities* guide (2007)]

The language of 'apocalyptic demography'
[from *A Little Bit of TLC* (2011)]

II

THE EVOLVING FIELD OF 'URBAN AGEING'

For those already working in the field of ageing, however, there has been a long-standing commitment to actively engage with the urban experiences of an older age group. Drawing attention to the way in which urban environments impact on older people's everyday lives, gerontologists, geographers and community activists have long been working on issues around ageing and urbanisation: looking at the disabling impact of physical environments on older people, for instance (and their knock-on effects in terms of health, wellbeing and quality of life) or exploring more nuanced questions around the attachments that older people form and lose to a given place over time.

There are, though, other accounts of ageing that have started to emerge within this field of 'urban ageing' in the last ten years in particular. There is a growing sense in which older people's relationship to urban environments

is starting to be questioned in different ways. How far are older people (like any other generational group) able – or not – to 'lay claim' to urban space *on their own terms*? And, is it possible to think about older people's relationship to cities and urban environments beyond 'simply' its physical impact? Beyond its effect on the ageing body? Beyond people's ability to navigate a given place? Are there ways of thinking about older people as urban citizens? As social actors actively engaged in the production and reproduction of cities? And can emerging policy concepts like the 'Age-friendly City' support these other ways of thinking about older people's possible relationships to urban space?

III

THE AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES PROJECT

In 2006, the World Health Organisation (WHO) began developing what has now become a global 'Age-friendly Cities' movement, a worldwide network of (by 2014) over 200 member cities and communities from across the world, all aspiring to create urban spaces that are, in some way, 'Age-friendly'. Founded on the principles of 'active ageing' (the idea that older people should be fully enabled to continue participating in all aspects of life – social, cultural, civic, economic), the 'Age-friendly cities' project can be seen as the first major global policy response to demographic ageing in cities and the first global project to re-imagine the social, cultural and physical

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[3] See Chris Phillipson, 'An Introduction to Age-friendly Communities' in Sophie Handler, *A Research and Evaluation Framework for Age-friendly Cities* (UK Urban Ageing Consortium: 2014), pp. 6-11.

[4] WHO, *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide* (Geneva: 2014).

The eight domains of an Age-friendly City
[from the *Global Age-friendly Cities* guide (2007)]

infrastructures of urban environments from the perspective of – and through the active participation – of older people themselves.[3]

Based on research conducted with older people in 33 cities from across the world, the idea of the Age-friendly City is articulated in the WHO's global guide: a practical framework to help cities develop their own Age-friendly programmes and initiatives.[4] Published in 2007 the guide is structured around eight interrelated 'domains': *Outdoor Spaces and Buildings; Transportation; Housing; Social Participation; Respect and Social Inclusion; Communication and Information; Civic Participation and Employment; Health and Community Services*. This structure provides the aspirational Age-friendly city with an integrated framework for thinking about the kinds of interrelated social, cultural as well as physical

infrastructures required to start creating Age-friendly cities – that has since formed the basis for a series of actions, strategies and initiatives across the global Age-friendly Cities network.

AGE-FRIENDLINESS AS SOCIALLY-ENGAGED URBAN ACTION

As an approach, 'Age-friendliness' has, in many ways, proved to be a useful and empowering conceptual framework for socially-engaged urban action. By drawing on the participative principles of 'active ageing' and developing an integrated view of older people's experience of cities, Age-friendliness provides a helpful structure for age-inclusive urban action. Here, older people take on an active role in the production of the city as the focus on older people is on older people as active citizens who sit at the centre of decision-making processes, and where notions of respect and social inclusion carry as much meaning and weight as those more familiar (bio-medicalised) questions of functional mobility, health and understandings of ageing as a condition of mounting dependency and need. In brief, Age-friendliness: endorses citizenship-based models of ageing; foregrounds older people's agency – and challenges conventional, bio-medical health and social care accounts of ageing. (See diagram opposite).

But while this emerging field of Age-friendly practice gains traction within a broad policy arena, filtering down through engaged local authorities and community groups, that same level of interest has not been quite so apparent among designers, architects or creative urban practitioners.

And yet the idea of Age-friendliness – in its movement beyond a singular focus on the health of the ageing body – offers a useful conceptual landscape within which

MEDICAL	CARE	CITIZENSHIP
PATIENT	CUSTOMER	CITIZEN
FOCUS ON INDIVDUAL	FOCUS ON INDIVDUAL, FAMILY AND INFORMAL NETWORKS	FOCUS ON NEIGHBOURHOOD AND CITY
CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS	CARE INTERVENTIONS	PROMOTING SOCIAL CAPITAL AND PARTICIPATION
COMMISSION FOR 'FRAIL ELDERLY'	COMMISSION FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE	AGE-PROOFING UNIVERSAL SERVICES
PREVENTION OF ENTRY TO HOSPITAL	PREVENTION TO DELAY ENTRY TO CARE SYSTEM	REDUCING SOCIAL EXCLUSION
HEALTH (AND CARE SYSTEM)	WHOLE SYSTEM	CHANGING SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND ATTITUDES

The 'citizenship-based' model of ageing
[courtesy of Paul McGarry]

architects, designers, artists (creative urban practitioners) might explore ideas and practices around ageing and the city. Moving beyond those other current policy and design concepts like 'active design' or 'healthy cities' (that carry their own focused agendas around tackling obesity and urban health inequalities), Age-friendliness openly accounts for older people's experience of urban space through ideas of participation (in urban life), through notions of spatial justice and rights to the city (borrowed from David Harvey). And it extends design thinking and practice on ageing beyond the more familiar and literally contained preoccupations of standard design 'responses' to ageing (focused on interior residential settings).[5]

In short, the conceptual landscape of the Age-friendly

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[5] See, for instance, residential focus of responses to recent RIBA call for evidence on ageing research (2014).

City holds a particular promise for the creative urban practitioner. It enables urban practitioners to move beyond the contained settings of housing, age-segregated institutions into the public space of the city – and, in the process, shift design thinking on ageing too beyond a problem-solving tradition within design practice (focused on the ageing body) into a more experimental, participative and empowering engagement with people's possible relationships to urban space.

A CAST LIST
OF AGE-FRIENDLY
URBAN FACTORS

Crediting, in alphabetical order, the urban actors actively engaged (in one form or another) in the Age-friendly production of urban space. (Referencing key projects cited throughout this guide).

PLEASE NOTE: The actors in this handbook vary in type and combination. A physiotherapist is, for instance, found working with a group of designers. A group of architects with academics, a local regeneration officer and neighbourhood residents. There are also those operating on the margins of professional practice: artists, 'urban curators', students. Here, the Age-friendly actor need not self-consciously identify with the title of either urban actor or 'Age-friendly'. What is key, though, and a recurring feature in all these forms of urban action, is the way in which these 'actors' operate collaboratively: working together in productive combinations across different disciplines, forms of practice, knowledge and know-how.

A

ACADEMIC

[*Mobilizing Knowledge* (2007) | *I'DGO* (2007) | *The Vitality Bench* (2011) | *Landscapes of Dementia Care* (2012) | *Age-friendly Old Moat* (2013) | *The Seatable City* (2013) | *Mobility, Mood and Place* (2014)]

ARCHITECT

[*I'DGO* (2007) | *The Resistant Sitting Project* (2008) | *The Ingenuity of Ageing* (2012) | *Landscapes of Dementia Care* (2012) | *Age-friendly Old Moat* (2013) | *Mobility, Mood and Place* (2014)]

ARTIST

[*The Resistant Sitting Project* (2008) | *Lounge* (2008) | *Trading Spaces* (2012) | *Civil Twilight* (2008)]

C

COMMUNITY ORGANISER

[*Journey to a Friend* (2012) | *My Generation* (2012); *Take-a-Seat* (2013) | *Age-friendly Old Moat* (2013)]

D

DANCER

[*Civil Twilight* (2008) | *My Generation* (2012)]

DESIGNER

[*Vitality Bench* (2011) | *The Ingenuity of Ageing* (2012) | *Kwiek* (2013) | *The Seatable City* (2013)]

E

ENGINEER

[*I'DGO* (2007) | *The Vitality Bench* (2011)]

M

MARKET STALL HOLDER

[*Trading Spaces* (2012)]

N

NIGHTCLUB OWNER

[*My Generation* (2012)]

P

PASSER-BY

[*The Fluid Pavement* (2006) | *Journey to a Friend* (2012) |
Landscapes of Dementia Care (2012) | *Walking-in-the-Shoes of* (2012) | *Trading Spaces*
(2012) | *Age-friendly Old Moat* (2013)]

PHYSIOTHERAPIST

[*Kwiek* (2013)]

R

REGENERATION OFFICER

[*Take-a-Seat* (2013); *Age-friendly Old Moat* (2013)]

(OLDER) RESIDENT

[*The Fluid Pavement* (2006) | *Mobilizing Knowledge* (2007) | *I'DGO* (2007) |
Civil Twilight (2008) | *The Resistant Sitting Project* (2008) | *Lounge* (2008) |
Sharing the City (2009) | *Newcastle Elders' Council Audit* (2010) | *Vitality Bench*
(2011) | *Trading Spaces* (2012) | *Walking-in-the-Shoes of* (2012) | *Journey to a Friend*
(2012) | *The Ingenuity of Ageing* (2012) | *Landscapes of Dementia Care* (2012) |
Kwiek (2013) | *The Seatable City* (2013) | *Mobility, Mood and Place* (2014)]

S

SHOPKEEPER

[*Take-a-Seat* (2013)]

STUDENT

[*Sharing the City* (2009) | *Walking-in-the-Shoes of* (2012) |
Mobility, Mood and Place (2014) | *Goodwill Journeys* (2014)]

U

'URBAN CURATOR'

[*The Fluid Pavement* (2006) | *Civil Twilight* (2008) | *The Resistant Sitting Project* (2008)]

ACTIONS
IN AN AGE-FRIENDLY
LANDSCAPE

I

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SMALL-SCALE urban actions, of different types, that have started to appear in this emerging landscape of 'Age-friendliness'. Actions and interventions that actively engage with older people's changing relationships to urban space. Actions that could be understood as 'Age-friendly' in some form – and that, as such, feature as the 'case studies' and recurring references highlighted throughout this handbook.

For the most part, these 'Age-friendly' urban actions have been driven by community groups and organisers, local authorities (often in collaboration with partner organisations such as housing providers), academics in partnership with practitioners – but only a handful of 'creative urban practitioners' (architects, designers and artists). And yet, there is a whole alternative scene of creative urban practice that has been evolving over the last ten years that has the potential to offer the Age-friendly cities project new ways of re-reading and re-producing the Age-friendly city via methods of participatory urban practice or creative techniques that explore and test out people's changing – and possible – relationships to urban space.[6]

These alternative methods complement the more 'contemporary' accounts of ageing already offered by the Age-friendly cities' project: the idea that older

people might be seen as active citizens and participants with a degree of agency in the life of the city; that thinking about the ways in which people might lay claim to urban space in older age could be understood through a rights-based discourse as much as through a health-based narrative. (Again, there is potential here to offer an alternative to the still-dominant bio-medical accounts of older age).

The methods of these creative practitioners are, in many ways, similar in spirit to existing methods of Age-friendly community-based practice: small-scale actions and interventions that operate via principles of 'small change' with priority given to relational and participatory forms of intervention.[7]

But they also offer, potentially, something else. Through their particular methods and through their creative licence this alternative scene of urban practice could offer different readings and other kinds of actions in an Age-friendly landscape: subverting briefs, introducing propositional *What-ifs*?; identifying 'Other' kinds of spaces with alternative kinds of uses; bringing a particular spatial acuity and design sensibility (skills in reframing ideas rather than solving known problems, for instance) that might well introduce new forms of practice into an Age-friendly field.[8]

This handbook is, thus, intended for these 'Other' urban practitioners who have not, as yet, necessarily engaged with the 'urban ageing agenda' and is offered here less as a prescriptive guidance (a how-to on Age-friendli-

[6] Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (Abingdon, Oxon.,: Routledge, 2011).

[7] Nabeel Hamdi, *Small Change: About the Art of Practice and the Limits of Planning in Cities* (London: Earthscan, 2004).

[8] For more on those often undervalued skills that architects bring to urban practice see, for instance, the *Cultural Value of Architecture* project: www.culturalvalueofarchitecture.org.

ness) and more as a portable reference to inspire critical reflection, action and possible intervention. It carries an underlying question that runs throughout:

"

Is there a way of starting to define, as creative urban practitioners, what an Age-friendly form of spatial practice might be? In an area where public debate has, so far, been driven largely by social policy?

"

||

THE ACTIVE VERBS OF AGE-FRIENDLY URBAN INTERVENTION

Structured through the active verbs of intervention – 'mapping', 'auditing', 'fixing' 'borrowing', 'collaborating' – this handbook has been framed deliberately in such a way as to encourage both critical reflection but also to inspire practical action. By focusing and drawing on emerging examples of small-scale actions, approaches, ways of reading the city that are sensitive to the desires and needs of older people, this handbook offers up a palette of different kinds of Age-friendly approaches that might help the creative urban practitioner support older people in making full use of urban space 'even in' older age.

For the most part the actions cited in this guide are small in scale – though they may range in form from the detailed specification for the pitch of a kerb on a pavement to neighbourhood-based approaches that carry implications for a broader, city-wide strategic approach to

Age-friendly urban development. This choice of scale is deliberate: describing forms of ground-level, at times informal grass-roots practice (temporary interventions, small-scale 're-programmings' and retrofittings of urban space', close, neighbourhood-level working) that are more easily replicated and adapted by creative urban practitioners. But they are also forms of practice that build on the principle of 'small change': the idea that a bare minimum intervention has the potential to make a difference, nonetheless, and that small-scale actions, if sustained, accumulate in impact, effect and reach *over time*.

BEYOND A BASELINE OF BODILY NEEDS

Many of the Age-friendly urban actions cited here, reflect a growing awareness within the discourse of age-inclusive urban practice of the need to think 'beyond the physical' fabric of the built environment and to address those relational and social dynamics that underpin people's everyday use and experience of urban space – particularly in areas of deprivation and social exclusion where ageing is often experienced more unevenly. This 'thinking beyond the physical' is a vital part of generating new thinking around Age-friendly urban actions – broadening out what might be understood by Age-friendly urban interventions and who those actors involved in these interventions might be. For some this has involved exploring actions and interventions that are characterised by an altogether different tone of practice. In a field that can all-too-often be dominated by a more heavy-weighted discourse (where ageing is repeatedly referred to as a mounting condition of decline, dependency and need) there is room to start suggesting a counter-narrative around forms of age-inclusive practice.[9]

Referred to elsewhere in terms of a subversion of a conventional 'hierarchy of needs', this means thinking

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              /\
             /  \
            /    \
   ┌───────────────────────┐
   │  SELF-ACTUALISATION    │
   │ personal growth and fulfilment │
   └───────────────────────┘
  ┌─────────────────────────┐
  │     ESTEEM NEEDS         │
  │ achievement, status, responsibility, reputation │
  └─────────────────────────┘
 ┌───────────────────────────┐
 │ BELONGINGNESS AND LOVE NEEDS │
 │ family, affection, relationships, work group, etc │
 └───────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        SAFETY NEEDS           │
│ protection, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc │
└─────────────────────────────┘
┌───────────────────────────────┐
│ BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS │
│ basic life needs – air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc │
└───────────────────────────────┘
```
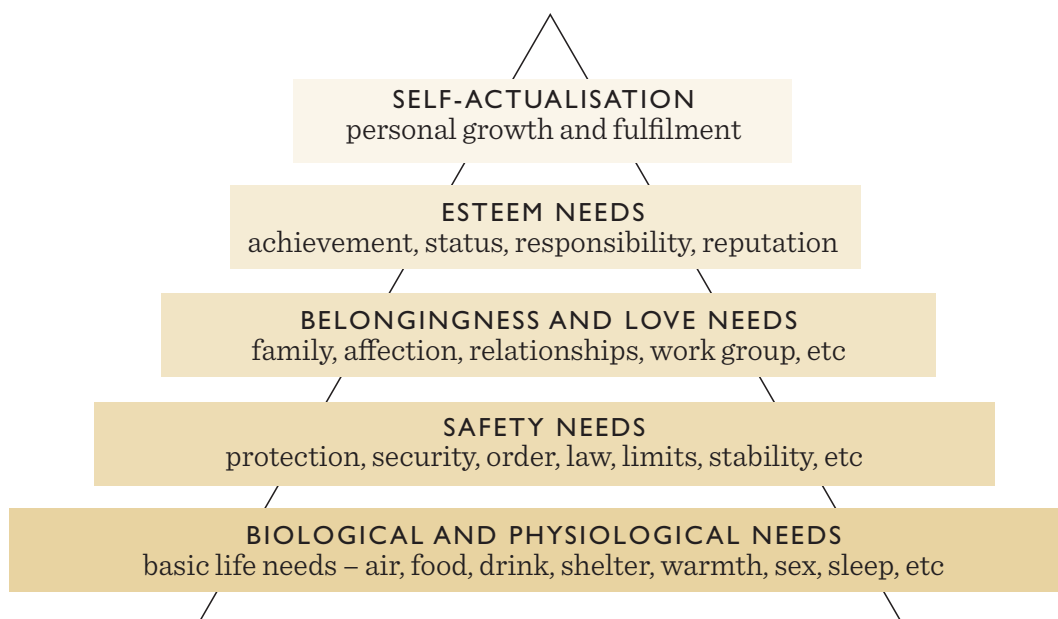
Maslow's hierarchy of needs (standard version)
[from *A Little Bit of TLC* (2011)]

about an Age-friendly form of spatial practice that operates beyond a focus on primary physical needs (baseline questions around mobility and access, for instance), and developing other forms of practice – and representation. This might include forms of practice that challenge and perhaps gently subvert the age stereotyping of certain kinds of urban spaces (spaces presumed to be used by an older generation in certain kinds of ways).[10]

In this sense, this Age-friendly handbook departs from the more familiar Age-friendly approach characterised by actionable checklists where specific guidance translates into prescribed action. Instead this handbook aims to encourage a critical and creative re-reading of the city and cultivate an Age-friendly sensibility that can suggest more open-ended urban actions and interventions. Actions and interventions that engage as much with older people's social, emotional and political relationships

| BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS |
| basic life needs – air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc |

| SAFETY NEEDS |
| protection, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc |

| BELONGINGNESS AND LOVE NEEDS |
| family, affection, relationships, work group, etc |

| ESTEEM NEEDS |
| achievement, status, responsibility, reputation |

| SELF-ACTUALISATION |
| personal growth and fulfilment |

Maslow's hierarchy of needs (inverted)
[from *A Little Bit of TLC* (2011)]

to an urban environment – as much as with the ground-level physical features of a place.

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9 Feedback from 'Ageing and the City' a *Learning from Kilburn* class held at the Tiny Experimental University at the Tricycle Theatre, London on the 26th April 2014.

10 David Sinclair and Jessica Watson, *Making our Communities Ready for Ageing: A Call to Action* (London: ILC-UK, 2014). See also Sophie *Handler, A Little Bit of TLC: Developing an Alternative Practice of Urban Care* (PhD thesis, The Bartlett, UCL, 2011).

Mapping Age-friendly Old Moat

[from the Old Moat: Age-friendly Neighbourhood Report (2013), courtesy of Stefan White]

"Maps and the act of mapping offer a different way of understanding and communicating experiences of local context in older age. Drawing out particular spatial relationships, dynamics and conditions within a defined geographic area, they provide a more integrated understanding of place that is legible, accessible and, particularly for those living within the mapped-out area, meaningful and relevant."

MAPPING, AUDITING
(& MAKING VISIBLE…)

I

THERE IS A WAY IN WHICH OLDER AGE can often bring with it a growing sense of marginalisation, of being overlooked, of becoming somehow less visible, made to feel less relevant. That sense of creeping marginalisation takes on its own particular dynamics within the urban context where older people's experiences, desires and needs are still rarely acknowledged, represented or voiced. Older people tend not to figure in the corporate account of the city (its projected self-image aligns more easily with a younger, working age demographic).[11] Whenever older people's experiences are acknowledged, these are often assumed to be of a certain kind.[12] And, almost quite literally, there is a sense too in which older people's interactions with urban settings shift gradually into 'spaces that are publicly obscured.'[13]

But there are different forms of urban practice that can provide a way of making these otherwise overlooked experiences more visible. From auditing and mapping through to narrative, storytelling techniques there are

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[11] Age Friendly Cities and healthy cities: reshaping the urban environment, *11th International Conference on Urban Health*, Manchester, United Kingdom, March 4-7th 2014).

[12] T. Bolton and R. Hay, 'Valuing inclusive places' in E. Harding (ed.), *Weathering the Downturn: What is the future for Lifetime Neighbourhoods?* (ILC-UK discussion paper, 2009), p. 23.

[13] Harris, *Age-friendly societies in our time?*, p. 2.

Participant-led mapping in Lewisham

[from the *Mobilizing Knowledge* toolkit (2007), courtesy of Professor Alison Rooke]

Scene of Hither Green Railcrash
Worked on line before continuing at Lewisham Hosp
until 4am.

Friends House   Cemetar

as
brother
his three children
le

to Baking stop for help because my
me just round corner
dress was torn.

All this
area walked
our dogs

Maidcan Line

Sandhurst Rd School
many children & teachers killed in 2nd World
School

My brother was on way home from
a pack Keeper shielded
I was looking out for my bro
saw pilot in enemy plane it
was so low – mother grabbed
in realized the danger as
no warning.

Hither Green
Railway Station

Springbank Rd

Didfall
duty here
fire near
Station we
had people
animals
shelter

Beacon Rd School
went here when Enversfota
bombed

Hither Green Lane
Previously Hither Green Hospital
mum died here with Searlet Fever
I spent 3 months
and Polio in war.

Gravesend Rd

Green Lane

Mountsfield
Park
Lewisham
People's Day
held here

bought a bike
later stolen

Broomhill Rd
Baptist
Church

foot clinic
had foot lets made here

Used to be a
school – took typ
exam

To Brom
also police sta
+ Health c
where I g

s attacked here I am
back from Hospital

Barage Baloon
here in war.

3 high rise flats

Memorial Gardens
Poppyday
Do duty for
St John

Ravenpart Rd

Irish near
here

Salvation Army

Lidl good

Brownhill Road

Shannard
Court

Songley Rd

live
here

Culverley Rd

St Laurences
Church
St John
Ambulance

Feed
pigeons
when
looking

no one

Hope Bank
worked here
10 years

To Brom

To Bromlea

risham
spital

bought a
Lambretta

mother, brother & I
have all been inpatients

opened by
and Tu-Tu
y for St John &
ingly on T.V.

Site of
Prendergast School
where I went first
year scholarship for all
not fee paying
Now Health Clinic &
childrens referral

Cotford
Theatre

horrible
pipe
modern art

Post Office
nor so good
under new management

Well Known
Black Cat
Sculpture

Car Park
Council had as

Ladywell Rec
Ravensbourne River
overflowed one people swam
& had boats

Catford
Rail stations

See films
here sometimes

Tesco &
Iceland
ett

Used to be pictures where
I did many St. John Du
now used for wors

in a d just our
Lane out of pop
ld not pass
too deep

Always traffic
ams along

Forest Hill
postry Rise Baptist
I go to flot.

forms of practice that can draw out these otherwise obscured relations and make them visible – and in the process empower older people via these techniques to enact urban change themselves.

II

COMMUNITY-LED AUDITING

Perhaps one of the more effective ways of engaging with older people's marginalised experience of urban space occurs through the actions of community-led auditing. From the *Newcastle Elders' Council* audits and those carried out as part of the *Mobilizing Knowledge* initiative in Lewisham through to the ongoing work of *Kilburn Older Voices Exchange* (KOVE), the community audit is a practiced and established form of urban practice that both recognises and makes visible older people's otherwise overlooked experience of place.

As a method, the act of auditing involves, simply, a comprehensive ground-level assessment of a local area: identifying variously via survey and walking (KOVE), modeling (at Cubbitt gallery) or participant-led mental mapping (in Lewisham) the different ways in which a local environment might be experienced (here, by an older age group)[14]. What might, for instance, be missing (a bench on Hemstal Road NW6, for instance), and why a bench is needed specifically here (on a hill, at the top of a steep incline), not somewhere else. Or what might motivate you to get out and about at all: that 'pond with lots of geese and ducks' (see the self-drawn map of Lewisham overleaf).

Audits are a highly effective tool as they catalogue those common experiences encountered in older age: the uneven pitch of a pavement, traffic lights that phase

A CAVEAT ON EMERGING
AUDITING TECHNOLOGIES

Increasingly, emerging technologies, are starting to
provide auditing functions via mobile phone technology.
Apps like the CAP Age-friendly Communities Assessment
or the Melbourne Out and About App enable those
(with access to these technologies at least) to track and
register their urban experiences in real time, registering
obstructions as-they-are-encountered or rating the
accessibility of services and public facilities instantly
on their phone.

   As personalised technologies, though, these devices
do not in themselves offer what the collective enterprise
of community-led audits, like KOVE's or the Newcastle
Elders' Council offer as combined bodies. Operating
within a broader group structure, with a collective
voice, common resources and accumulated experiences,
the community-led audit makes the process of engaging
with local planners and those with authority more
likely, ensuring that a ground-level practice of auditing
translates into actual change that can be monitored,
maintained and sustained over time.

too quickly, a lack of freely-available public toilets. Concerns, that are, in practice, all-too-easily overlooked. Sensitive to the scale of older people'e experience of urban space these audits acknowledge the disproportionate impact that these small 'micro-environmental features' have on older people, making these visible to those who do not (as yet) register the impact of these features in quite the same way.

<div align="center">AUDITING AS LOBBYING OVER TIME</div>

But the audit also functions as a lobbying tool – and mechanism for small change. The systematic collation of these obstructive and/or absent features of the urban environment draws attention to what is otherwise over-looked (not-enough rest stops) and uses this store of information based on close, ground-level knowledge to make the case for actions and interventions that directly address what are often highly specific local needs.

In this way, the audit as a methodology of collective urban action becomes an empowering mechanism for those involved to effect change and engage, authoritatively, with local authorities. (The *Mobilizing Knowledge Toolkit*, for instance, provides an explicit, step-by-step process for engaging with planning authorities and translating the audit into a mechanism to bring about change).

But the audit is also dependent on a process, and a commitment to engage in a process that continues over time. In Kilburn, the recent installation of another new bench (now gone missing) reveals a more complicated process in effecting lasting change. The lobbied-for bench that is installed (as a result of the audit), then, allegedly, mis-used (as a site of 'anti-social' congregation) has since been removed (allegedly, by a local shopkeeper conscious of the negative effect of 'anti-social behaviour' on trade).[15] Stories like these reveal the contested nature of shared

Mapping Age-friendly Social Participation
[from the *Old Moat Age-friendly Neighbourhood Report* (2013)]
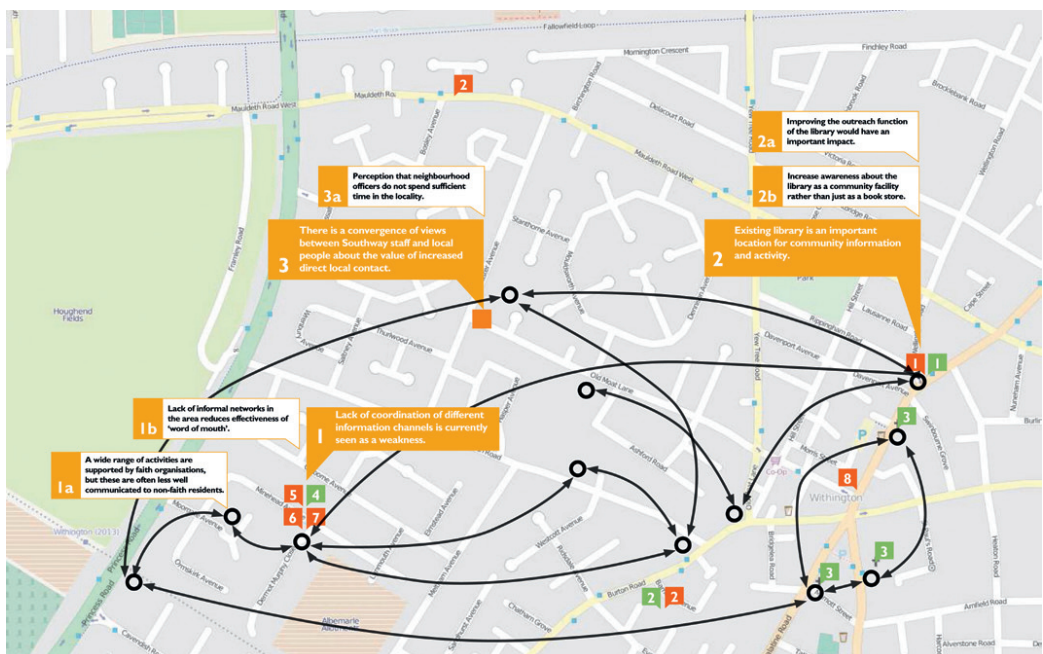
Mapping Age-friendly Communication and Information
[from the *Old Moat Age-friendly Neighbourhood Report* (2013)]

space across generational groups and interests. But they also reveal the need too for any practice of auditing to continue over time: to both register and monitor ways in which spaces, actions and interventions are perceived, experienced and used in different ways – and to evolve, in turn, methods that can negotiate these contested uses of urban space more effectively.

| | |

MAPPING AS MAKING VISIBLE

Like audits, maps, offer a particular way of understanding and communicating experiences of local context in older age. Drawing out particular spatial relationships, dynamics and conditions within a defined geographic area, maps are particularly effective mechanisms for generating a more integrated understanding of place that is legible, accessible and, particularly for those living within the mapped-out area, made meaningful and relevant.

In 2012, as part of a broader urban design research project testing out the WHO Age-friendly guidance in Old Moat (a neighbourhood in South Manchester) a local map of the area is redrawn, serially, through each of the WHO domains. Based on locally-available 'data', the project redraws the neighbourhood domain-by-domain, showing how an Age-friendly reading of a neighbourhood necessarily involves reading it, cumulatively, through each of the eight domains.[16]

Age-friendly Old Moat (a project commissioned by the housing provider Southway Housing) is perhaps the first project to have seriously engaged with the Age-friendly agenda in a spatial form. Working in a defined geographic area through a systematic process of rigorous mapping, the project has been able to, quite literally, draw out and make visible the dynamics of Age-friendliness

within a local area. Here, the interrelated domains of *Transportation* and *Social Participation, Communication and Information* and *Social Inclusion,* all play themselves out on-the-ground and in relation to each other: in the particular layout of the local streets, in the existing community facilities and public spaces of Old Moat, in the social relationships and dynamics that exist locally. It is a methodology that demonstrates that an Age-friendly urban practice cannot simply engage with a separated-out domain of *Outdoor Spaces and Buildings* alone.

As the direct product of interactions, conversations and research carried out between researchers, local residents, architects, designers, local regeneration officers – these domain-by-domain maps are representative of this extended process of local collaboration and engagement (community audits, focus groups, participation diaries, academic research). They contain a rich overlay of data that is the direct product of the project's participative research process: making visible ground-level, anecdotal knowledge and subjective perceptions of place alongside census data and quantitative findings – affording an equivalence of value to these different layers of 'hard' and 'soft' information.

There is a particular value in using maps as a representational technique. Maps have a particular way

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14 See: www.kove.org.uk; www.cubittartists.org.uk/category/education/ elders-and-community/public-wisdom and Alison Rooke and Gesche Wuerfel, *Mobilizing Knowledge – Solving the Interaction Gap between Older People, Planners, Experts and General Citizens within the Thames Gateway: Guidelines, Toolkit and Findings* (Urban Buzz and Goldsmiths CUCR, University of London: 2007).

15 Age UK Expert briefing session (Age UK, London: 30th June 2014).

16 *Old Moat: Age-friendly Neighbourhood Report* (Southway Housing: April 2013). Available to download at: www.micra.manchester.ac.uk/research/ population-ageing/research-activity

of being able to visualise and layer over data that would otherwise not be brought together and draw out the implications of the spatial relationships between this 'data'. Moreover, maps have a particular capacity to render visible experiences that are not always formally represented (e.g., the sociability of the number 179 bus that runs through Old Moat, providing an informal social resource as much as transport service for getting from A to B). But there is also something transformative in the process of mapping: as spatial juxtapositions and relationships are made visible where otherwise these might not be apparent. Seeing juxtapositions like these set out on the page, has the capacity to raise consciousness within a given area. A familiar place is seen anew – with broader strategic implications that carry beyond the local neighbourhood as local conditions, aspirations and suggested actions link in with neighbourhood services and broader strategic plans.

MAPPING AS ENGAGING

In Age-friendly Old Moat, the final, overall neighbourhood plan doubles up as an action plan – a series of actions or next steps – that is both the product of a participatory process of mapping ('the map that everyone drew'[17]) and a commitment in plan form to act on the findings from that extended process of local engagement:

☐ PROMOTE INFORMAL SOCIAL NETWORKS, AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY GROUPS (ACTION # 66)

☐ ADDRESS THE STEEP INCLINE ON THE PROPOSED PRINCESS ROAD ROUTE TO THE METROLINK TO FACILITATE USE BY OLDER PEOPLE ON WESTERN PORTION OF ESTATE (ACTION # 46)

☐ ESTABLISH A RESIDENT-LED PARTNERSHIP TO PROMOTE INVOLVEMENT, OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF SPACES (ACTION # 5)

'The Map that Everyone Drew'
[from the *Old Moat: Age-friendly Action Plan Overview* (2013)]

In this sense, the plan, is not just an external cartographic view in on things (drawn up by the visiting architect), but emerges from an extended process of local engagement. It represents both existing relationships and actions-to-be-implemented as part of a broader neighbourhood-wide spatial strategy.

But crucially, these mapped-out Age-friendly actions are tied to the co-ordinates of a specific site, space or place. The spatial precision of the action plan anchors action and change to particular locations, making the prospect of action and change more likely – and accountable to the older residents of the neighbourhood.

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17 Stefan White: PAAUD Research Unit Workshop (University of Manchester: 13th May 2014)

down of movement and experience, a closing down, a form of regression, degeneration and suffering decay: all aches and pains).

She shifts uneasily about in her armchair. "You take what comes", she says. "You can't move so well, you can't hear so well, you can't talk so well."

Maybe. Though I am not so sure. Are these "symptoms" of ageing real or perceived? I wonder aloud whether these aren't simply a stereotype of ageing internalised: a stock narrative of resignation that limits the will to even move out of a place, to move beyond the front door.

"If you start feeling your age," I ask Sophie, "do you feel it first in your head or your feet?"

24

Agoraphobia

*Or the Temptations of
Once You Sit Down
You Might Never Get Up*

It's been a week since I last saw Sophie. When I call in on her I am surprised to find her still in her armchair. I wonder has she even moved? The electric heater is on and she has drawn more cushions about her "for added comfort", she says. We sit chatting, exchanging notes about growing old. Stories I've been collecting from pensioners around the borough over the last couple of days, things that Sophie's picked up on second hand: anecdotes, statistics, case studies …

25

IV

SURFACING HIDDEN STORIES

There are other ways that older people's (otherwise neglected) spatial experiences can be made more visible. Storytelling, for instance, has a particular way of providing close readings of a place: surfacing hidden narratives, accounts and experiences of place, moving beyond what is often missing in discussions around Age-friendly spaces and the all-too familiar focus on the checklist of obstructive or missing features (under the domain of *Outdoor Spaces and Buildings*).

In a series of journeys relayed on film, KOVE and a group of filmmakers, in collaboration with members of *The Gospel Oak Older People's Network*, produce *Journey to a Friend*: an alternative account of the borough told through a series of (eight) journeys across the borough as relayed, in turn, by Beverly, Rafy, Jean, Phyliss, Elsa Mae on film.[18] Each of these recorded journeys across Camden

Mapping out Hidden Stories
[from the *Fluid Pavement* (2006)]

becomes a way of both acting out and reflecting on the challenges and small pleasures of getting out and about in older age as the narrative device of the followed journey encourages a more contextualised and empathetic reading of a place.

By documenting older people's relationship to spaces-as-they-are-encountered along the way these short film journeys (just under 4 minutes-long each) force the viewer to see and contextualise a journey as it is experienced: the impact of a discrete obstruction (a stretch of uneven paving along Kilburn High Road) registers as an embodied experience relayed directly on film. (The hesitancy, the feel of walking more unsteadily is, for the viewer, felt as the deliberate hesitancy of the camerawork on film).

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[18] See: www.tonyellis.net/kove/journey.htm

But there is more to these films than, simply, a documentary-style catalogue of felt urban obstructions. As a sequence of stories, told in the first person, each journey necessarily connects up with its narrator's personal spatial biography. An immediate physical reality links up with those personal stories and histories that invariably shape people's subjective experiences of place. Viewed in this way, as a cumulative series of individual journeys, these films start to build up a broader picture of what it means to journey through the borough in older age (as a common generational experience) – encouraging a kind of sensitivity to changing urban experiences in older age that is both particular and general.

The creative licence of alternative media like film enables these less visible stories and accounts of 'urban ageing' to be told in different tones and forms. Whether mapped out on film or relayed through more conventional 'fictional' narratives, other kinds of media enable other kinds of stories to emerge that, in more formal spatial methodologies of mapping or auditing, might more easily be overlooked.

In 2006, a new large print psychogeographic novel on ageing starts circulating in Newham's local housebound library. The by-product of a longer participatory research process this novel sets out to explore 'the spatiality of ageing' in one of London's fastest-regenerating boroughs.[19] Drawing together different voices into a single narrative, this story (*The Fluid Pavement*) effectively maps out the different ways in which processes of ageing and urban change are experienced in a landscape of rapid urban renewal. The ordinary day-to-day experiences of place (recounting commonplace tactics of making do). Those small pleasures and fantasies about a place that sit

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[19] Sophie Handler, *The Fluid Pavement and Other Stories on Growing Old in Newham* (RIBA Modern Town Planning Trust: 2006).

alongside the frustrations and disappointments of what has, is being lost now.

Stories like these – a fictional book or a series of short films – are often seen as ways of engaging with a broader audience via a more accessible, easily-digested format. But there is a purpose beyond 'using' storytelling as a form of outreach. There is a particular way that stories are able to more easily draw out hidden narratives and connect them to our own experiences in a less prescriptive way. And, as accessible media are able to return to their local context – as a public-view film, or large print novel circulating via a mobile library – that both validate and make visible these otherwise hidden experiences. Like the audit or the map, stories like these, in their own ways, offer potentially transformative ways of allowing you to see and change a place anew.
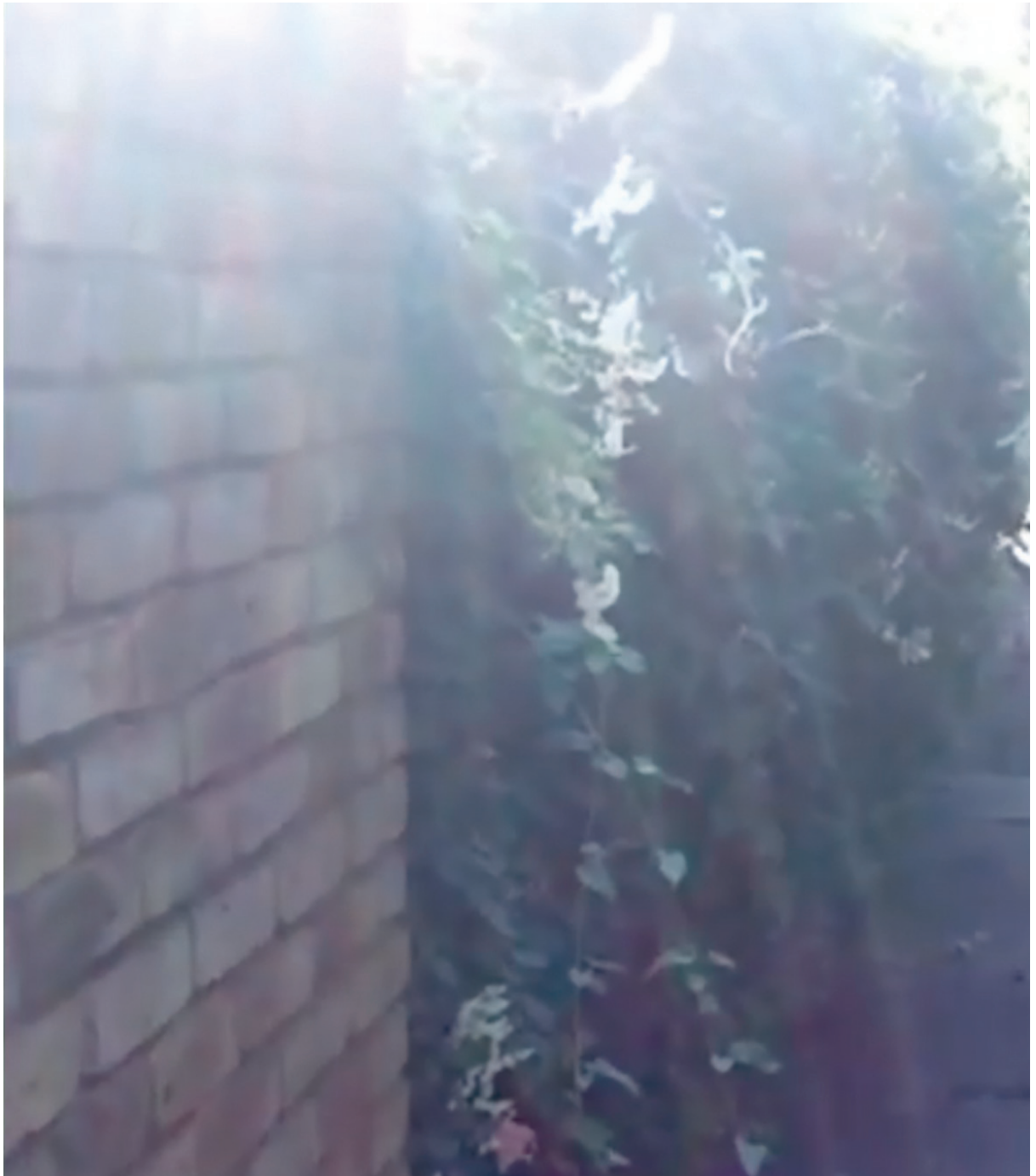
Journey to a Friend (1 of 8)

[from *Journey to a Friend* (2012), film still, courtesy of KOVE]

"The narrative device of the followed journey encourages a more contextualised and empathetic reading of a place. By documenting older people's relationship to spaces-as-they-are-encountered along the way these short film journeys force the viewer to see and contextualise a journey as it is experienced in real time...as an embodied experience relayed on film."

FACTS, TABOOS
& URBAN MYTHS

The 'key fact' is a common tool of communication and persuasion in public policy. In Age-friendly narratives, facts provide fast and effective descriptions of the different ways people's experiences of the city can often start to change in older age: diminishing mobility, for instance, a growing sense of alienation from your surroundings, a fear of stepping outdoors after a certain time of day ('about 1/2 of all people aged 75+ are too afraid to leave their homes after dark')..

There is always a risk, though, that the often alarmist 'key fact' ('a third of all people aged 65+ will fall once a year outside of their home', '41% of all people aged 65 plus feel out of touch with the pace of modern life', 'almost a quarter of older people are affected by urinary incontinence') misses out on the nuances behind factual statement. The 'fact' that diminishing walking speed, for instance, arrives at a far younger old age in more deprived areas than among more affluent older people. Or that the fear of going outdoors might relate less to physical obstructions of a place and more to an emotional sense of disconnection from a given place. The loss of a lifelong partner, for instance, that triggers a more general feeling of uncertainty, inhibiting that self-confident desire to even go outdoors (the process of bereavement and the loss of a part of yourself almost literally narrowing down movement).[20]

And yet as headline statements 'key facts' can be a highly effective medium. They address what would

otherwise be left unspoken (incontinence, for instance, as 'one of the last social taboos'[21]). They can be a way into addressing urban myths (around safety and security – and perceptions of relative risk within a risk-averse culture). Or they might serve, simply, as a pretext for further enquiry: working out exactly what might be behind a general mood of alienation and disconnect from your surroundings. A by-product, perhaps, of those feelings of insecurity generated by signs of urban disorder (e.g., broken street furniture for instance) read as signs of indifference or lack of care?[22] Key facts read this way might operate as conversational prompts for further debate. (See overleaf).

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[20] Handler, *A Research and Evaluation Framework for Age-friendly Cities*, p. 32.

[21] See: www.brunel.ac.uk/bib/tact3/project-outcomes

[22] Tine Buffel, Chris Phillipson and Thomas Scharf, 'Ageing in urban environments: Developing 'age-friendly' cities', *Critical Social Policy* (May 2012), p. 7.

A THIRD OF ALL PEOPLE AGED 65+ WILL FALL ONCE A YEAR OUTSIDE OF THEIR HOME

Going Outdoors: Falls, Ageing & Resilience (Go Far): Lifelong Health & Wellbeing programme, led by the Medical Research Council and SURFACE Inclusive Design Research Centre (University of Salford) www.salford.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/.../gofar-project.pdf

OLDER PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE DISATISS-FIED WITH THEIR LOCAL NEIGH-BOURHOOD THAN THEY ARE WITH THEIR HOME ENVIRONMENT

Sophie Handler, *A Research and Evaluation Framework for Age-friendly Cities* (UK Urban Ageing Consortium: 2014), p. 24.

HALF OF ALL PEOPLE AGED 65+ FACE PROBLEMS GETTING OUTDOORS

Sophie Handler, *A Research and Evaluation Framework for Age-friendly Cities* (UK Urban Ageing Consortium: 2014), p. 24.

ALMOST ¼ OF OLDER PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED BY URINARY INCONTINENCE

www.bbc.co.uk/news/ukwales-26788560 as cited in *Making our Communities Ready for Ageing: a Call to Action* (ILC-UK: 2014), p. 39.

12% OF ALL PEOPLE AGED 65+ FEEL CUT OFF FROM SOCIETY

TNS Loneliness Omnibus Survey for Age UK (Age UK, 2014)

THE NUMBER OF PUBLIC TOILETS HAS DROPPED BY OVER 40% OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-26788560 as cited in *Making our Communities Ready for Ageing: a Call to Action* (ILC-UK: 2014), p. 39.

ABOUT A HALF OF ALL PEOPLE AGED 75+ ARE TOO AFRAID TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES AFTER DARK

M.P., White, I., Alcock, B.W. Wheeler and M.H. Depledge, 'Coastal proximity, health and well-being:results from a longitudinal panel survey' *Health and Place,* 23 (2013), pp. 97-103 as cited in David Sinclair and Jessicca Watson, *Making our Communities Ready for Ageing: A Call to Action* (ILC-UK: 2014), p. 39.

THE AVERAGE SPEED OF THE OLDER PEDESTRIAN IS 07. TO 0.9 METRES PER SECOND

Department of Health, *Falls and fractures: effective interventions in health and social care,* (DH: 2009) as cited in *Making our Communities Ready for Ageing,* p. 37.

THE AVERAGE WALKING SPEED FOR PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS IS 1.2 METRES PER SECOND

Department of Health, *Falls and fractures: effective interventions in health and social care,* (DH: 2009) as cited in *Making our Communities Ready for Ageing,* p. 37.

41% OF ALL PEOPLE AGED 65+ FEEL OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE PACE OF MODERN LIFE

TNS Loneliness Omnibus Survey for Age UK (Age UK, 2014)

A piece of badly laid tactile paving as an example of 'poor urban design'

[reproduction of a photo from the *Mobilizing Knowledge* toolkit (2007)]

"There is a particular way in which the urban environment – often through the smallest of features – starts to register a heavier impact on us as we age … that growing sensitivity to the particular gradient of a street, for instance, or a piece of tactile paving (that feels more destabilising than it might have done a month ago, following a fall)."

FIXTURES, FITTINGS & (PUBLIC) FACILITIES…

I

THERE IS A PARTICULAR WAY in which the urban environment – often through the smallest of features – starts to register a heavier impact on us in later life. Sheila Peace (the environmental gerontologist) coined the term the 'amplification of impact of micro-environmental features' to describe something of that particular way in which we become more sensitive to the ordinary, smallest features of urban space as we age.[23] A growing sensitivity to the particular gradient of a street, for instance, or a piece of tactile paving (that feels more destabilising than it might have done a month ago, following a fall), the particular depth of a kerb that a couple of years ago we might not have registered at all through to those other less visible obstructions and absences (missing toilets, a place to sit and rest), only experienced as absences when 'issues' like incontinence or declining mobility start to intrude on everyday life.

The constraining effect of these small-scale obstructions is not always visible but their impact is, nonetheless, real. A fall on a stretch of uneven pavement can, quite literally, narrow down movement outdoors as the unsettling shock of a fall stops you from going outdoors at all. The uncertainty of not knowing if there are enough toilets on a given route can tie you to familiar, well-worn routes only – those where you already know you will find a toilet (the so-called 'bladder's leash' effect).[24]

FIXING THE 'OBSTRUCTIVE' ENVIRONMENT

Community activists, gerontologists and designers working in this area, have long been aware of this 'amplification of impact': the disproportionate effect that these easily-overlooked obstructions can often have on older people's everyday lives. As a result, there has been a great deal of work around developing design interventions and recommendations that challenge these obstructive environments as part of a broader 'inclusive design' agenda. Focused, primarily, on the provision of public facilities, modifications, fixtures and adaptations to the urban environment, age-inclusive urban action has typically involved devising interventions and recommendations that look to transform a physically obstructive environment into an actively supportive one – fixing the urban environment in some form.

This attempt to turn disabling environments into actively supportive ones has often involved focusing on those concrete 'fixtures and fittings', and public facilities, those recurring 'age-related' issues of mobility, access, incontinence, falls. These are issues that repeatedly figure as the most common and costly issues both to the individual and to the state, knowing that disabling environments carry real costs:

> **"**
>
> *'[t]he quality of pavements is a topic of great concern – particularly given the clear links to falling and the associated costs of falls to health services.'* [25]
>
> **"**
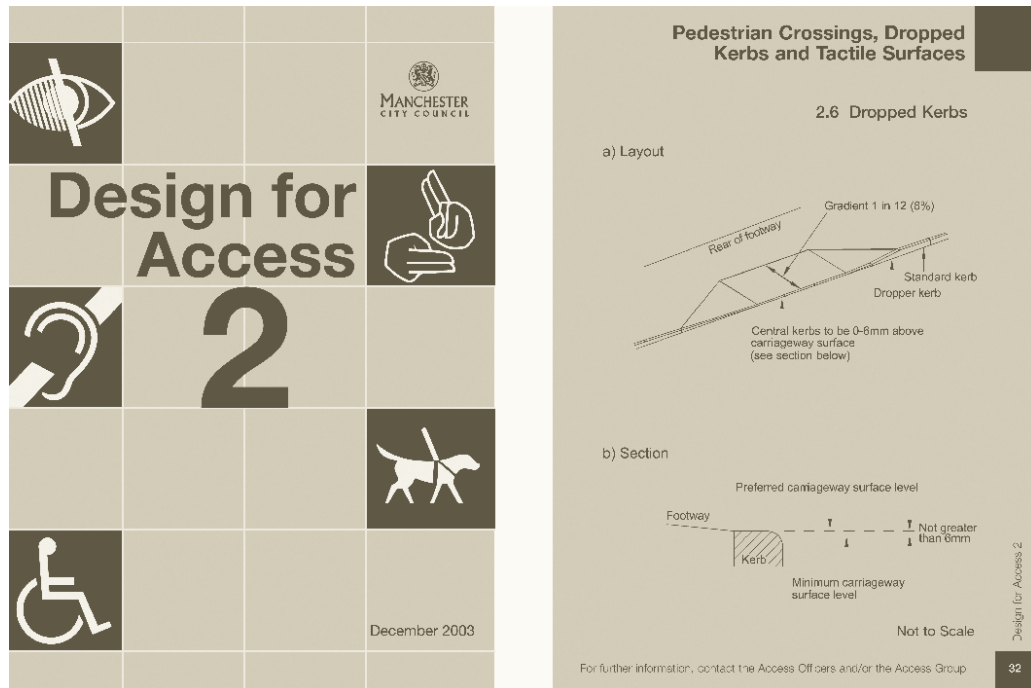
'Dropped kerbs should have a maximum 6mm upstand'
[from *Design for Access 2* (Manchester, 2003)]

Remedial work in this area has, in turn, involved a whole range of different types of projects that fix the urban environment in some form. These might include projects on the provision of public toilets: mapping their availability or trying to reconcile the gaps between Safe by Design guidance and accessibility requirements in toilet design.[26] There are projects that explore forms of public provision for resting where, as with toilets, there is

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23 Leonie Kellaher, Sheila M. Peace and Caroline Holland, 'Environment, Identity and Old Age: quality of life or a life of quality?', Chapter 4 in A. Walker ed., *Growing Older: Quality of Life in Old Age*, p. 76.

24 R. Kitchen and R. Law 'The socio-spatial construction of (in)accessible public toilets'. *Urban Studies* 38(2): (2001), 287–298.

25 Sinclair and Watson, *Making our Communities Ready for Ageing*, p. 38.

26 Jo-Anne Bichard, E. van den Heuvel, E. Jowitt, M. Gillhooly, S.G. Parker,. A. Long, N.M. Ratcliffe, K. McKee and P. Gaydecki, 'Tackling Ageing Continence through Theory, Tools & Technology', *Ageing & Society* 1 (2) (2012) pp. 83-96.

currently no statutory obligation to provide places to sit as a form of public facility. There has been work too on signage design: looking at ways signs might operate not only as a wayfinding tool (providing clear orientation and direction) but also as a time-based guide indicating walkable distances to destinations in minutes. A new generation of signage now enables the pedestrian to judge distances by time (as the pace of walking starts to slow down in older age).[27] And then there are those highly-detailed projects too that look at the fine grain of walk-able paving from level surfaces to dropped kerbs to the complications of tactile paving. The way in which a piece of tactile paving, for instance, designed for one user group as an enabling, supportive fixture (for those with failing sight) for another, older age group has been shown via bio-mechanical studies to encourage a kind of hesitancy – a cautious stepping around tactile paving – that is more likely to trigger falls.[28]

<center>| | |</center>

SETTING STANDARDS & GUIDANCE

Many of these more standard 'fixtures and fittings' – and the inclusive design principles that underpin such inter-ventions – are set down in detailed design guidance: uni-versal standards designed to support access and mitigate the effects of an otherwise obstructive physical environ-ment. In Age-friendly Manchester these principles have, historically, been followed through the *Manchester Design for Access 2*, a best practice guide providing detailed specifications for, amongst other things, dropped kerbs, tactile surfaces, footways, ramps etc..for ease of mobility.[29] But there are more recent and relevant forms of inclusive design guidance that need, in this context, to be borne in mind. There is the BSI's main standard 'BS8300', for

instance, that provides codes of standards on inclusive access. There is guidance on inclusive mobility (on how to support fully-accessible pedestrian and transport infrastructures) as well as broader work around creating accessible public spaces through principles of inclusive urban design (see, for instance, David Bonnett's Associates publication, on *Inclusive Urban Design*).[30]

But there are also more focused recommendations that have been developed specifically with older age groups in mind. The I'DGO research consortium has made a series of evidence-based recommendations that specify those material features that make the everyday negotiation of urban space that much easier (particularly for an older generation):

☐ WIDE AND FLAT TARMAC FOOTWAYS;

☐ EASY TRANSITION AT LEVEL CHANGES;

☐ CLEAR, SIMPLE, EASILY VISIBLE AND UNDERSTANDABLE SIGNAGE;

☐ FREQUENT WARM, SUPPORTIVE SEATING;

☐ WELL-MAINTAINED, SAFE AND OPEN TOILETS.[31]

These forms of guidance are a familiar feature of current Age-friendly urban practice. Many of these recommendations are already included in the WHO checklist of essential Age-friendly features and form the guiding principles for Age-friendly intervention in the

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[27] See time-guiding signage installed in Southend-on-Sea following I'DGO recommendations.

[28] 'The Design of Streets with Older People in Mind', *Tactile Paving Design Guide 003* (DSOPM003: I'DGO Consortium).

[29] *Design for Access 2* (Manchester City Council: 2003), p. 35.

[30] See: www.shop.bsigroup.com; David Bonnett Associates, *Inclusive Urban Design: A guide to creating accessible public spaces* (BSI Standards Ltd: 2013); www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-mobility

[31] See: www.idgo.ac.uk

The Vitality Bench
[powerpoint slide courtesy of Jonathan Butters Ltd.]

Outdoor Spaces of cities across the global network. But applying this guidance in practice involves more than simply responding to the basic physical requirements of its recommendations. There is a particular sensibility that needs to be applied too (that is often already implied) in much of this guidance: inviting other ways of thinking about what these inclusive design recommendations might mean – i.e., what the provision of Age-friendly toilets, seating or signage might involve beyond its literal availability and accessibility as a form of public provision.

In this way, the specification for 'seating' that is 'frequent, warm and supportive' involves thinking about a public-use seat as something more than, simply, a sittable or 'preventative' object (to support mobility and prevent falls). The inclusive design seat, in this sense, is defined as much through its desirability, convenience and comfort of use as much as through its basic function as a rest stop. Similarly, the specification for 'well-main-

tained, safe and open toilets', read in a more critical way, raises the question as to what 'well-maintained' (over time) and 'open' to use might even mean. Physically accessible but also accommodating of different uses, perhaps? A toilet here, for instance, might, beyond the basic interpretation of being open to use, also be understood as open and accessible to the particular needs of its different user groups: someone suffering from dementia being able to enter a toilet cubicle with their carer – without the sense of humiliation or embarrassment of being seen to enter the public toilet as a pair.[32]

SUPPORT BEYOND FUNCTION

Here, then, the construction of 'supportive' environments involves more than a singular focus on function and utility. Support extends into a broader set of considerations: of comfort, use and the particular relational but also temporal dynamics of using and navigating urban spaces in older age – which includes the ongoing maintenance of these facilities over time ('the well-maintained' toilet). This is a vital (but often neglected) part of a public facility's basic utility where in order to function fully as accessible amenities there is a need for these facilities, fixtures and fittings to be not only installed but maintained and cared for over the long-term.

Primarily, this is a question of basic function: the ongoing ability to access a public-access toilet designed to be fully accessible. But the idea of maintenance also operates on a symbolic level as the act of maintenance becomes a visible marker, in itself, of care. The well-maintained toilet like the well-maintained bench on the street is a symbolic as well as literal representation of the supportive urban environment (the counter-image of those signs of urban disorder and neglect that cultivate feelings of insecurity and alienation within neighbourhoods).

IV

This broader sense of what 'supportive' might mean beyond simply 'functional utility' in design terms involves cultivating a particular kind of design sensibility that only comes through the process of participation, engagement, co-production. This means actively engaging the 'end-users' in the design and/or production of any fixtures, fitting or facility for whom these artifacts are, ultimately, being designed.

In Newcastle, for instance, the production of *The Vitality Bench* involves a co-design process that allows a broader community of interest to engage with the development of a public-use bench that meets the particular needs of older people. Working with *The Institute of Ageing and Health* (Newcastle University), *Design Network South and Voice North* (a consultation network of 2000 older adults) , the *Vitality Bench* project is able, via a series of co-design workshops, to both highlight the way in which current street furniture designs fail to meet the ordinary needs of its older sitters and draw up a series of specifications for the bench that are the direct by-product of the user-led design process (a 475mm seat height with arm rests to help you get up, insulating material warm-to-the-touch). All the parts of the bench that you touch are made of plastic or wood, versus the more standard robust-but-cold stainless steel that is typically used in commercial bench stock.

As the product of a reciprocal design process the final design incorporates both the expected standard features (the 475mm seat height that corresponds to the ergonomics of appropriate sit-to-stand measures) through to a series of supplementary features – added-extras – that emerge

out of the co-design workshops, including: a place on the bench for tethering a dog to a lead, resting a warm drink, 'parking' an umbrella or walking stick.[33]

What ends up getting produced is a generic public bench (a commercial product that can be installed anywhere on a street in a park, a public square) but with added extras – a set of bespoke and adaptable features that support different uses and needs.

V

BEYOND THE BARE MINIMUM
(THE 'ADDED EXTRA')

The debate around how-to-create Age-friendly spaces can tend (as here) to revolve all-too-easily around these basic fixtures and fittings of the built environment: to level paving, benches, toilets – public provisions and facilities. But this idea of the 'added extra' raises questions as to what constitutes basic versus supplementary provision? Do (public) facilities always need to answer to a baseline of needs: a facility to support, for instance, functional mobility?

The introduction of the so-called 'pensioner playground' model across the UK, from the Dam Head Estate in Blackley, Manchester to London's Hyde Park arguably, offers a new generation of public facilities that provides something other than the standard 'supportive' facility that responds to a baseline of bodily needs.

Providing 'play equipment' specifically adapted to older people's needs, these alternative facilities offer, potentially, what in the words of the *Making our Communities Ready for Ageing* report, describes as 'desegregated apparatus for fun'– i.e. something beyond 'support': a space for leisure-based activity out in the open.[34]

The motivations in the construction and use of these 'facilities' has been mixed. Resident-led in Blackley to local-authority-initiated elsewhere, highly popular in Hyde Park, (allegedly) less well-used in Blackley. According to certain accounts, the rationale behind the construction of these facilities has been health-inducing for some ('play equipment' as a facility to keep fit) for others simply the provision of something different, something more playful (coinciding with what ILC-UK and Age UK have explicitly sought to highlight in preparing communities for ageing: the need to make places in older age more 'fun').

Whatever the motivations, though, in the construction of these facilities what is, perhaps, of interest is the way in which they take place in a different kind of place (not the all-too-familiar site of intervention on the street, kerb, or toilets) but in the 'de-segregated' space of the public park, alongside other forms of multi-generational provision... An alternative 'facility' here opens up a new dialogue around pubic provision for older age (and a more explicitly 'active third age'). Could these be the start of a new generation of public facilities for older age that go beyond the standard repertoire and associations of 'supportive' urban features?

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[32] Age-friendly Design workshop (Town Hall, Manchester: 24 October, 2012).

[33] 'The Space Between Buildings' *UK Network of Age-friendly Cities Built Environment Policy Seminar* (University of Manchester: 31st October 2014).

[34] Sinclair and Watson, *Making our Communities Ready for Ageing.*

THE AGE-FRIENDLY CHECKLIST*

☐ PUBLIC AREAS ARE CLEAN AND PLEASANT.

☐ GREEN SPACES AND OUTDOOR SEATING ARE SUFFICIENT IN NUMBER, WELL-MAINTAINED AND SAFE.

☐ PAVEMENTS ARE WELL-MAINTAINED, FREE OF OBSTRUCTIONS AND RESERVED FOR PEDESTRIANS.

☐ PAVEMENTS ARE NON-SLIP, ARE WIDE ENOUGH FOR WHEEL-CHAIRS AND HAVE DROPPED CURBS TO ROAD LEVEL.

☐ PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS ARE SUFFICIENT IN NUMBER AND SAFE FOR PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS AND TYPES OF DISABILITY, WITH NONSLIP MARKINGS, VISUAL AND AUDIO CUES AND ADEQUATE CROSSING TIMES.

☐ DRIVERS GIVE WAY TO PEDESTRIANS AT INTERSECTIONS AND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS.

☐ CYCLE PATHS ARE SEPARATE FROM PAVEMENTS AND OTHER PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS.

☐ OUTDOOR SAFETY IS PROMOTED BY GOOD STREET LIGHTING, POLICE PATROLS AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION.

☐ SERVICES ARE SITUATED TOGETHER AND ARE ACCESSIBLE.

☐ SPECIAL CUSTOMER SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS ARE PROVIDED, SUCH AS SEPARATE QUEUES OR SERVICE COUNTERS FOR OLDER PEOPLE.

☐ BUILDINGS ARE WELL-SIGNED OUTSIDE AND INSIDE, WITH SUFFICIENT SEATING AND TOILETS, ACCESSIBLE ELEVATORS, RAMPS, RAILINGS AND STAIRS, AND NON-SLIP FLOORS.

☐ PUBLIC TOILETS OUTDOORS AND INDOORS ARE SUFFICIENT IN NUMBER, CLEAN, WELL-MAINTAINED AND ACCESSIBLE.

The WHO's 'Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities' provides a series of 84 recommendations on how to make a city more Age-friendly. Read as a sequence of actions across each of the eight Age-friendly domains, these checkpoints act on all aspects of an Age-friendly city encouraging practical action and specific interventions from challenging the dynamics of ageism within cities to mitigating the effects of changing mobility 'needs' (re-adjusting the pitch of a kerb to road level to better support ease-of-mobility across a city and minimise falls in older age).

Checklists, like guidance, are a staple feature of age-inclusive policy and practice. They set basic standards while supporting and motivating practitioners into practical action – particularly for those new to a field. From the *Philadelphia CPA Age-friendly Parks Checklist*[35] to the *Neighbourhoods for Life Checklist of Characteristics of Dementia-friendly Neighbourhoods*[36] checklists and guidance encourage action and enable a more easy and speedy translation of expert knowledge into practice, ensuring basic features are set out, acted on and, once implemented, checked (at a later date).

The accessible, tick-box format, moreover, ensures that the process of 'checking' is easily made inclusive: as the checklists' 'beneficiaries' are enabled and encouraged to do the checking themselves. (See the WHO's own guidelines on using its Checklist of Essential Features: *'[i]n assessing a city's strengths and deficiencies, older people will describe how the checklist of features matches their own experience of the city's positive characteristics and barriers'*).[37]

But checklists can, as with all kinds of guidance, also be self-limiting. There is always a risk that in focusing on what is fundamental, basic, essential and/or action-able means leaving out what is less obvious or more complex – concerns and issues that are less obviously acted upon. In this way, the practice of reading and ticking boxes can be, not just self-limiting, but can also encourage a bare minimum of compliance (checking boxes versus cultivating a more involved and creative engagement with a given domain). To tick off the twelve Age-friendly actions on *Outdoor Spaces and Buildings* alone would be to limit Age-friendly action to a baseline of physical needs around access, mobility, ease and safety of movement alone.

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35 See: www.pcacares.org/Files/age-friendly_checklist_June_2011. pdf (June 2011)

36 See: www.idgo.ac.uk/about_idgo/docs/NfL-FL.pdf (2004)

37 *WHO Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities* (Geneva: WHO, 2007) p. 1.

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Extract from the *WHO Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities* (Geneva: WHO, 2007), p. 1. (for the domain of *Outdoor Spaces and Buildings*).

A temporary intervention devised by Ageing Facilities with the St. Paul's Church elders' dance group

[from *Civil Twilight* (London, 2008), photo courtesy of Verity-Jane Keefe]

"Acts of urban appropriation hold a particular symbolic value within the broader project to create 'age-inclusive' environments as they test the age-stereotyping, often age-segregated nature of certain kinds of times and spaces. Temporarily at least, forms of practice like these allow older people to lay claim to urban spaces and times of the day not ordinarily associated with an older age group."

BORROWED (TIME)
& SPACE

I

DESIGN RESPONSES TO AGEING can often involve identifying practical 'solutions' to particular problems: designs to prevent falls, interventions that encourage physical mobility. But there are alternative forms of creative practice that, although not always acknowledged in discussions around Age-friendly practice, operate outside this more dominant tradition of problem-solving design.[38] Here, a creative urban practice might focus less on the design of a specific solution (a concrete artifact, for instance, to a particular 'issue') and focus instead on ordinary experiences, uses and ways of 'reproducing' a given place.

These alternative forms of urban practice have the potential to move Age-friendly actions beyond the more familiar territory of solutions-based design responses that focus on the physical fabric of the built environment. This might involve a range of different possible approaches: from interventions that involve a flexible programming of urban space through to actions that imagine and devise other ways of using different kinds of spaces, in different ways (acknowledging and questioning the social, relational and political dynamics in the use of urban space). In its most creative form these spatial practices can start to question, challenge and transform conventional

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[38] Awan, Schneider and Till, *Spatial Agency*.

The Band on the Wall Nightclub
[video still from *My Generation* (Manchester, 2012)]

perceptions, stereotypes and narratives of urban space
and the place of older people within broader dynamics
of urban change.

II

BORROWING (TIME &) SPACE

Many of these more flexible approaches to thinking
about, using and intervening in urban space could be
understood in broad terms as actions that 'borrow'
(time and) space in different ways. A 'temporary urban
intervention', for instance, that momentarily disrupts
the routine use of a particular kind of place at a particular
time of day, or actions that 'appropriate' spaces not
ordinarily associated with an older age group (a nightclub
in Manchester, for instance).

For the past four years, the city's iconic *Band on the Wall*

The 'My Generation' club night event
[video still from *My Generation* (Manchester, 2012)]

club has been 'borrowed' every couple of months and turned into a clubnight venue for those 50 and over: challenging perceptions that certain kinds of spaces might be age-specific and, in a way too, playfully subverting the generational dynamics of Manchester's urban night-time economy and the narrative self-image of the city as youthful by association. Last year, in a similar vein, a Parkour dance club in south London set up a 'free running' session catering specifically to an older age group encouraging that same kind of playful appropriation of the streets (negotiating obstacles through jumping, running and climbing over walls, benches and bollards). Actions more ordinarily associated with a younger age group – and an antidote, perhaps, to the more risk-averse culture ordinarily associated with people's experience of urban environments in older age.[39]

   Projects and initiatives like these operate in different ways. They may carry official authorisation via local authority involvement (as staged events) or they may

operate as informal ground-level actions (see, for instance, the semi-illicit appropriation of a park after dark led by an elders' dancing group in East London).[40] Either way, these acts of urban appropriation hold a particular symbolic value within the broader project to create 'age-inclusive' environments as they test the age-stereotyping, often age-segregated nature of certain kinds of times and spaces, suggesting forms of practice that, temporarily at least, lay claim to those kinds of urban spaces and times of the day not ordinarily associated with an older age group.

Here, the inclusive design principles of enabling access is potentially recast. From the notion of access as simply supporting functional access within a 'resistant material environment' to a broader notion of universal design where access is understood no longer as a concession but a 'gorgeous norm' – and spatial inclusiveness looks to generate an equivalence of experience for all.[41]

III

BORROWED & ORDINARILY FLEXIBLE SPACES

There is, arguably, a growing trend towards thinking in this kind of way: through the idea of a kind of flexible borrowing (appropriation) or lending out of spaces that would, ordinarily, carry other 'uses'. Often these spaces are quite ordinary in themselves – churches, leisure centres, vacant shops – with the interventions and borrowings of these spaces motivated less by the desire to challenge symbolic narratives around the use (and age-stereotyping) of certain kinds of spaces and motivated more by the pragmatics of service provision.

Here, a vacant shop on the high street (in Cheetham Hill) might be reconfigured as a temporary, pop-up space

The 'Healthy Eating Zone' in a 'borrowed' restaurant?
[from *The Ingenuity of Ageing* (2012)*,* image courtesy of Yanki Lee]

for local skills exchange; or a local restaurant might be re-imagined as a dedicated healthy-eating zone for older adults.[42] In Age-friendly New York, the school bus is turned into a demand-responsive transport system for older adults once the schoolchildren have been dropped off at school.[43] Shared across the generations the borrowed bus makes practical use of the gaps in the bus schedule to offer a new form of public service provision.

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[38] Awan, Schneider and Till, *Spatial Agency.*

[39] For more on the 'Risk v. Challenge' debate on older people's experience of urban space see Phil's Stafford's *Adventures in Elderburbia* blog: agingindiana.wordpress.com

[40] See: www.ageing-facilities.net

[41] Masashi Kajita cited in Jos Boys, *Doing Disability Differently: an Alternative handbook on architecture, dis/ability and designing for everyday life* (Abingdon, Oxon.,: Routledge: 2014), p. 38.

In the current economic climate of austerity and budgetary constraints where public provisions, formerly taken for granted, are being scaled back, these kinds of borrowed times and spaces take on added significance. They provide alternative sites for much-needed services and facilities, making use of, most often, commercial spaces that might have vacant periods through the course of the day.[44] In local planning this idea of borrowing space is being actively encouraged via the policy mechanism of 'meanwhile spaces': where high street shops and organisations are enabled to make use of the 'dead time' of their trading/working hours via an open-door policy that welcomes in local groups wanting a space to meet or hold activities.[45]

But there is a longer history of community-led initiatives too that look to the existing commercial infrastructure of the high street to provide public services on private premises. In Richmond, the concept of the 'publicly-available' (or borrowed?) toilet has been in operation for over a decade via its *Community Toilet Scheme*.[46] Here, working in conjunction with the council, local businesses from pubs and restaurants to local shops, pledge to make

[42] Yanki Lee, *The Ingenuity of Ageing: for designing social innovation,* (London: Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Royal College of Art, 2012), pp. 52-3.

[43] *59 Initiatives; Age-friendly* NYC (New York Academy of Medicine & Age-friendly NYC: Fall 2013).

[44] Sinclair and Watson, *Making our Communities Ready for Ageing.*

[45] RIBA Building Future Cities Catapult workshop (RIBA, London: 14th April 2014).

[46] Communities & Local Government, *The Provision of Public Toilets Twelfth Report of Session 2007–08* (House of Commons: The Stationery Office Limited: London, 2008).

[47] 'The Space Between Buildings' *UK Network of Age-friendly Cities Built Environment Policy Seminar* (University of Manchester: 31st October 2014).

their toilets free and accessible to use by the general public (non-customers included). In Age-friendly Manchester, meanwhile, the newly-launched *Take-a-Seat* initiative in Old Moat (borrowed from a similar scheme in New York) works on a similar principle. Predicated on the simple idea of 'borrowing' a chair to sit on, shops in the local neighbourhood commit to providing passers-by with a place to sit in their premises in the absence of enough public benches along the street. (A shop signs up to the local Age-friendly Charter, and puts a sticker in the shop window that signals you are welcome to come in and take a seat if you're in need of a rest – with no obligation to buy anything).[47]

IV

SHARING THE GROUND
(SOCIAL ENCOUNTER & EXCHANGE)

This pragmatic idea of 'borrowing' the ostensibly private space of a local shop as a public-use space for rest, is significant as a spatial principle. It extends the idea of Age-friendly action beyond the public realm and responsibilities of the street – and the local highways department – into the private but familiar space of the local butcher's, baker's, the local café ...

It also encourages a way of thinking about urban space not simply in terms of its physical fabric and the concrete intervention (the installation of a standard 'ideal-type' bench) but as a public resource and social network (particularly, when taking-a-seat means not just having a place to sit and rest, but a possible site for social interaction). In theory at least, initiatives like *Take-a-Seat* promise not just a seat but, potentially, a more convivial social infrastructure along the local high street: a place to stop and chat as much as take a rest.

Engaging with, identifying and building on these ordinary, everyday interactions and uses of borrowed space could, arguably, be part of the broader Age-friendly project: drawing out the existing social and relational dynamics of existing spaces. The social warmth of Betty's shop on Kilburn High Road, for instance, (as identified by Elsa Mae in *Journey to a Friend*), or the Morrisson's supermarket in Chorlton that (uncovered through the Manchester Ageing Study) turns out to be an informal sociable space as much as a space to shop – and that, in Germany at least, has been recognised formally via the Kaiser Age-friendly supermarket business model now providing dedicated social zones for its older customers. Noticing the social possibilities of existing spaces is, in itself, a form of age-inclusive practice: being able to see the nuanced ways in which the balcony and the activities that take place within them function as a mediating space between indoors and out (between public and private) or the way in which the number 179 bus in Age-friendly Old Moat functions as a sociable space not just as a functional route for getting from A to B.[48]

As ordinary kinds of spaces, places like these are not always visible in discussions around Age-friendly spaces. The value of these spaces often lies hidden behind their more obvious function. The potential of the bus or the balcony, for instance, to 'function' as a site of what Nicholas Falk describes as the 'accidental encounter.'[49] Or the street market (in Lewisham) valued as much as

[48] Handler, *A Research and Evaluation Framework for Age-friendly Cities*, pp. 30-32.

[49] Nicholas Falk, 'Lifelong neighbourhoods: how older people can add value', *Viewpoint no. 49* (Housing Lin: September 2013), p. 10.

[50] Rooke and Wuerfel, *Mobilizing Knowledge*.

[51] Age-friendly Brighton feedback on URBACT initiative in Udine Italy, *UK Network of Age-friendly Cities Meeting* (Keele University: 12th June 2014).

a space of 'vitality' and informal social encounter as much as a site of commercial trade and exchange (that suggests, in turn, a different reading of what 'inclusive design' might mean – as a form of *social* inclusion).[50]

But it is precisely these kinds of spaces that open up questions as to how all-too-familiar spaces carry a value beyond their ostensible function. And the specific spatial qualities and temporal dynamics of these kinds of ordinary spaces that openly invite participation, use and activities of different sort. Why a marketplace might cultivate a sense of conviviality and social interaction in a way that supermarkets typically might not? How the number 179 bus operates as a site of accidental encounter? And if there are ways of cultivating these kinds of sociable spaces and sites of accidental encounters to encourage a kind of natural conviviality – without forcing an artificial/ manufactured kind of sociability? What would the bare minimum intervention involve? An intervention as simple as removing the boundary fences on an allotment site (as in Age-friendly Udine) to encourage social interaction among its older residents? Removing a set of physical (and social) boundaries and seeing what happens next?[51]

V

RETROFITTING, MODIFYING, ADAPTING …

Projects and initiatives like these that foreground and focus on these more ordinary uses of existing spaces are more easily overlooked perhaps because they do not offer the promise of the new solution: the installation of a new intervention, fixture or fitting. They rely, instead, on the existing: identifying the value of what is already there and building on these through tactics and techniques

Griesheim: the 'Seatable City'
[image courtesy of Professor Bernhard Meyer]

that, variously amplify, modify, retrofit or subtly alter what already exists – in small ways.

There is a tactical economy in these forms of Age-friendly action that is important to register. Many of these ostensibly Age-friendly actions operate on the principle of the bare minimum intervention – making use of what already exists. The fully 'seatable city for seniors' in Griesheim, Germany, for instance, proceeds (on the initiative of Professor Bernhard Meyer) not through the wholesale installation of a brand new set of benches across the city but operates, instead, on the simple principle of making, where possible, small-scale adjust-ments to the existing urban fabric: discrete modifications to existing features of the street (bicycle stands, for instance, adapted to double up as 'rapid rest stop' seats).[52] Closer to home, the *Resistant Sitting Project* in Newham, East London, identifies an already fully-networked infra-structure of (informal) rest stops: low-enough boundary walls, sittable bollards, an empty stretch of supermarket shelving – all those ordinary, overlooked spaces that older residents already use as informal seats when out-and-

'Len's Low Wall'
[from *The Resistant Sitting Project* (London, 2008)]

about.[53] Here, the existing features of the streetscape can already be seen to provide forms of infrastructure that public authorities struggle to provide: borrowed seats, here, given a 'formal' value through an alternative map of unlikely 'street furniture' across the borough.

In Eindhoven, that principle of making use of what already exists has, more recently, been adopted by the design group Denovo – albeit in more playful form. Adapting the existing features of a street (lampposts, benches, fences), Denovo, together with a physiotherapist and residents of a local sheltered housing complex, transform the local streets into an alternative 'public gym' for its residents. Through the simple addition of minimal supplements to existing street furniture a generic streetscape now has the potential to function as a public work-out area even as these new fixtures merge camouflaged back into the existing fabric of the streetscape.[54]

There is a modesty of practice in these kinds of small-scale actions based on the principles of modification, overlay, retrofitting and the idea of 'borrowing' and making use of what already exists. Arguably, these more

modest forms of practice, remain open to modification, appropriation and re-use themselves. In terms of design and urban practice, this is an important dynamic to bear in mind: that the urban action or intervention may not provide a fixed, permanent and lasting solution but opens up a process instead through which a range of 'solutions are continuously proposed, tested and evaluated.' And where the (Age-friendly) intervention itself ('deliberately tentative') is, as Yanki Lee suggests, 'always ready for modification.'[55]

VI

AN EXPANDED FIELD OF AGE-FRIENDLY PRACTICE

This idea of borrowing time and space inevitably starts to open up the typology of what has, in Age-friendly practice, conventionally been contained within the domain of *Outdoor Spaces and Buildings*. Thinking beyond public facilities, benches and the navigable street it is possible to start thinking about other kinds of spaces, conditions and programmings of space too: supermarkets and high street shops – so-called 'third spaces' that blur the boundary between public and private. Or generating forms of practice that involve other forms of practice and intervention: the modification, appropriation of

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[52] Frank Leyhausen, 'Greisheim becomes a 'seatable city'' *The Journal* (AARP International: 2014), pp. 72-3.

[53] See: www.ageing-facilities.net

[54] See: www.kwiekbeweegroute.nl www.denovo.nl

[55] Lee, *The Ingenuity of Ageing*, p. 51.

[56] Karen Franck and Quentin Stevens, *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban life* (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2007).

Instructions for 'The Kwiek Shoulder Turn' inlaid on paving
[video still courtesy of Denovo Design]

a private boundary wall, a lamppost, a park (after dark), an empty shop – those in-between, threshold spaces and liminal time zones ('loose spaces') that support diversity and possibility in urban life.[56]

In times and spaces like these the activities that take place within them do not necessarily match up with the programmed intentions for that space. And yet there is, in these ambiguous, borrowed spaces, always that possibility for other kinds of (temporary) activities and uses to take place within them, challenging or subverting intended, regulated or generationally-specific uses of space, laying claim to other kinds of spaces in different ways.

This broader landscape of Age-friendly urban action is important to consider within the context of the growing privatisation of public spaces in the UK and the tendency to design for age in age-segregated ways. As public spaces become increasingly over-regulated and public provision itself risks being privatised these forms of action that test

out and enable other ways of laying claim to urban space in older age represent important forms of urban action. They acknowledge, implicitly, those broader notions of 'rights to the city': the way in which the city is not generated for any 'one client' (or, indeed, any one generational group) but is, rather, a shared ground negotiated through its varied, often contested use.[57]

For an emerging scene of Age-friendly urban action these principles of shared ground and spatial 'rights' are perhaps important guides to help steer Age-friendly urban action – particularly in the context of urban change and development where older people can so often be left marginalised and overlooked. And here, there is perhaps room for more explicitly political forms of Age-friendly urban action: actions that explicitly engage with these dynamics of urban change – and the role of older people within those processes of change.

Operating often through agile forms of creative urban practice, there is a potential for Age-friendly urban actions to operate as a form of what Jane Rendell describes as a 'critical spatial practice'[58]: actions functioning as a kind of critical commentary (revealing otherwise less visible urban dynamics) but also as a means to campaign for alternative forms of (here age-inclusive) urban change.

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[57] Age UK Expert briefing session (Age UK, London: 30th June 2014).

[58] Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (London: IB Tauris, 2006).

THE *TRADING SPACES* PROJECT
(A CALL TO ACTION)

In 2009, as part of the Serpentine Gallery's broader Skills Exchange residency programme, artist Barby Asante and Cristina Garrido Sanchez, 'borrow' a stall in East Street Market off the Walworth Road in south London for a week. Working together with a group of local women from Southwark's InSpire Reminiscence group, the temporary stall trades in gathered stories of the marketplace: collecting conversations and reminiscences around the market and community from passers-by.

Taking place within the wider context of local area gentrification there is a deliberate agenda in this *Trading Spaces* project where stories exchanged about the market as-it-was becomes a pretext for challenging the broader dynamics of local gentrification. The growing trend to gentrify London's street markets is symptomatic of a new generationally-specific 'planning paradigm' looking to attract a particular (more upwardly mobile) younger generational group.' *

What starts out as the ordinary collation of old stories and reminiscence on a borrowed street market stall ends up, in the form of a manifesto and campaign: a call to action challenging the dynamics of local gentrification.

* *Art and Care: a Future* (Serpentine Galleries: London, 2012), pp. 86-9.

SAVE LONDON MARKETS

1 USE IT
2 CAMPAIGN
3 NETWORK
4 REVIVE, DON'T GENTRIFY
5 BOYCOTT

A RECIPE FOR ACTION

1. Shop there! Discover its history, meet the traders & understand what is happening with it.

2. Start or get involved with a campaign to increase community involvement in the future of your market. People coming together equals a powerful voice.

3. Good campaigns involve traders, local organisations, shoppers, the community, landlords / management companies and the local Council. Markets are complex places; get to know everyone. Connect, debate and and swap strategies with community groups, market campaign groups, traders and users of markets in and beyond – London.

4. The issue of gentrification is about private versus community control! Encouraging the future should come out of a community dialogue and reflect the diversity, desires and needs of the community. Everyone should be involved in the process. Don't forget the environment and its sustainability.

5. Stop shopping in supermarkets.

This recipe was developed in the Serpentile Intensity by Barby Asante & Cristina Garrido Sanchez in which market traders, campaigners, historians and activists came together to swap recipes for local food and ideas for how to save London Markets.

Trading Spaces Campaign poster

[from *Trading Spaces (*London, 2012), design by Abake, image courtesy of the Serpentine Gallery and artist Barby Asante and Cristina Garrido Sanchez]

"In contexts of rapid urban change and development older people are often left marginalised and overlooked. There is a need to make space for more explicitly political forms of Age-friendly urban action: actions that openly engage with the often alienating dynamics of urban change – and that open up possibilities for the potential roles that older people can play within those processes of change."

WHAT IF ?*

One of the particular qualities of creative forms of urban practice is the propositional *What if?* The ability to question and challenge spatial norms, subvert, rather than conform to a given brief. This kind of propositional *What if?* is, arguably, key to any kind of creative work 'on ageing' where so much of current practice is focused on problem-solving around a baseline of imagined needs (though this is not always acknowledged).

Designers, arts-based practitioners and students work within a privileged realm where creative licence allows for more room for maneuver enabling a looser playing around with ideas, generating speculative proposals, challenging norms through interventions and generating alternative, future urban scenarios that can operate as both real-world propositions (briefs for acted-out interventions) but that can also serve, simply, as prompts for debate (re-reading and suggesting other ways older people might lay claim to urban space).

The following *What-ifs?* operate in this spirit of proposition and creative speculation – a series of questions to motivate thinking about older people's possible relationships to and use of urban space (beyond the conventions of 'standard' design responses), re-imagining the future of ageing now (and beyond).

* All the following *What ifs?* are based on actual propositions and speculations articulated in (student) design studios, think-tanks, semi-fictional stories, artists' residencies and/or as actual propositions tested out 'on-the-ground'.

1

WHAT IF A NIGHTCLUB BECAME (FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY) A NIGHTTIME VENUE RESERVED FOR OLDER PEOPLE ONLY?

My Generation clubnight: Band on the Wall in partnership with the Age-friendly Manchester and Cultural Strategy Team, Manchester City Council.

C O N T E X T : community-organised event (realised scenario)
S I T E : nightclub (Northern Quarter, Manchester)
S U B J E C T : challenging stereotypes of age-appropriate spaces of association

2

WHAT IF AN AGEING MARKET HALL WERE RE-IMAGINED AS AN 'AGEING ENTERPRISE CENTRE'? A REPAIR, RE-USE AND UP-CYCLING CENTRE THAT COULD PROVIDE OLDER PEOPLE WITH SIMULTANEOUS EXPERIENCES FOR WORK, PLAY AND LEARNING IN THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY? TURNING TYPOLOGIES OF CONSUMPTION INTO PRODUCTIVE CENTRES OF REMAKING AND REPAIR?

Sigrid Muller, 'The End of Working Life', *Studio Seventeen, Architecture and Ageing,* (The University of Sheffield School of Architecture: 2013), p. 60.

C O N T E X T : student project (spatial proposition)
S I T E : the empty market hall (Shipley, Sheffield)
S U B J E C T : ageing structures, objects and subjects turned into productive processes

3

WHAT IF PRIVATE GARDENS WERE RE-APPROPRIATED AS URBAN ALLOTMENTS? AND THE FOOD PRODUCED ON THOSE SITES, THROUGH A PROCESS OF BARTERING AND EXCHANGE BECAME THE BASIS FOR ECONOMIC REGENERATION – WITH OLDER PEOPLE AS THE MAIN DRIVERS FOR AN EMERGING ECONOMY?

Toby Ingle, as featured in *Little Ideas: The Relational City,* Volume 2, (Manchester School Of Architecture with Manchester City Council: June 2009).

C O N T E X T : student project (spatial proposition)
S I T E : the re-appropriated private garden (Newton Heath, Manchester)
S U B J E C T : older people as drivers of (local) economic regeneration

4

WHAT IF A PARKOUR
STREET RUNNING GROUP
PROVIDED TRAINING
SPECIFICALLY FOR AN
OLDER AGE GROUP?
TURNING THE STREET INTO
A PERFORMATIVE SITE FOR
AN OLDER GENERATION?

Parkour Dance, Bermondsey.

CONTEXT: 'Parkour Dance'
dance class
SITE: railings, benches, walls and
other features of the street
(Bermondsey, South London)
SUBJECT: re-inventing obstacles
as sites for risk-taking and physical
challenge (even in older age)

5

WHAT IF THE ACTIVE THIRD
AGE RECLAIMED THE HIGH
STREET AS A CATALYST
OF NEW PUBLIC AMENITY?
AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE
COMBINED WITH INTER-
GENERATIONAL EXCHANGE
TO COMPLEMENT EXISTING
RETAIL?

*An Urban Future: Scenarios for
2030, Silver Linings: The Active
Third Age and the City,* (RIBA:
2013), p. 20.

CONTEXT: thinkpiece
SITE: the (ailing) high street
SUBJECT: re-animation of fading
urban landscapes via public struc-
tures of intergenerational exchange

6

WHAT IF AN 'ELDERS'-ONLY
DANCE CLASS' WENT
DANCING OUTDOORS
IN A LOCAL PARK AFTER
DARK? AND STARTED,
SIMULTANEOUSLY, RE-EN-
ACTING A LOST TRADITION
(OF DANCING IN THE PARK
ON A SATURDAY AFTER-
NOON) WHILE ENGAGING
IN AN ILLICIT ACT OF
UNSANCTIONED CONGRE-
GATION AFTER THE PARK
GATES HAVE CLOSED?

Spatial Proposition #9, from
Sophie Handler, *The Fluid Pavement
and Other Stories on Growing Old
in Newham* (RIBA: 2006), pp. 120-1.

CONTEXT: participative urban
intervention (as realised 'spatial
proposition')
SITE: Barking Road Recreation
Ground (East Ham, East London)
SUBJECT: challenging risk-aversion
via the semi-illicit re-appropriation
of urban space (out-of-hours)

7

WHAT IF THE COMMUNAL LOUNGE IN A SHELTERED HOUSING COMPLEX WERE TURNED, TEMPORARILY, INTO A POKER-PLAYING CLUB? BRINGING THE LEISURE-ZONES OF THE HIGH STREET FROM THE OUTDOORS IN?

Camilla Brueton, *Lounge,* (2007), commissioned by SPACE studios.

C O N T E X T : artists' residency (scenario in situ for over a week)
S I T E : communal lounge in a sheltered housing complex (Hackney, East London)
S U B J E C T : bringing the leisure zones of the high street, temporarily, indoors

8

WHAT IF A 'REGENERATING PARK' WERE RE-PLANTED WITH MATURE SPECIES TREES THAT LITERALLY MATCHED THE SCALE AND MEMORY OF HOW A PLACE USED TO BE?

Spatial Proposition #8, Sophie Handler, *The Fluid Pavement and other Stories on Growing Old in Newham* (RIBA: 2006), pp. 118-119.

C O N T E X T : 'co-produced' spatial proposition
S I T E : a park (Canning Town, East London)
S U B J E C T : cultivating age-equivalent

spaces in spaces of rapid urban regeneration and change (cultivating a sense of the familiar)

9

WHAT IF A LOCAL ELDERS' TRAVEL GROUP EXTENDED ITS REGULAR ROUTINE OF TOURIST TRIPS OVERSEAS AND STARTED VISITING NEW SITES OF LOCAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THEIR OWN CITY?

Yanki Lee, *The Ingenuity of Ageing: for designing social innovation,* (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Royal College of Art, London UK: 2012), page 53.

C O N T E X T : participatory co-design project (a propositional scenario)
S I T E : Tsinghua, Beijing
S U B J E C T : engaging with local urban change and development through an alternative model of 'regeneration tourism'

10

WHAT IF THE CITY BECAME A UNIVERSITY? USING EXISTING STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND SKILLS SHARING BETWEEN GENERATIONS?

An Urban Future: Scenarios for 2030, Silver Linings: The Active Third Age and the City, (RIBA: 2013), p. 28.

CONTEXT: thinkpiece
SITE: the breadth of a city
SUBJECT: making use of existing urban resources to support lifelong learning (and cross-generational skills exchange)

11

WHAT IF A WEARABLE BADGE WERE ABLE TO INTERACT WITH TRAFFIC LIGHTS TO ALLOW FOR LONGER, MORE COMFORT-ABLE CROSSING TIMES? BUT DOUBLED UP AS AN INTER-ACTIVE SOCIAL TOOL TO ENCOURAGE INFORMAL GOODWILL TOO?

Alessandra Furetta, Sheng-Hui Hsu, *Blackberry Report Royal College of Art 2014*, (Helen Hamlyn College of Design, Royal College of Art, London UK: 2014).

CONTEXT: student competition (in partnership with commercial sponsors)
SITE: Camden, London
SUBJECT: generating multi-use personalised devices that support social interaction as well as mobility.

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'Designers trained in the arts are capable of capturing fleeting moments and structures that others find ephemeral, imaginative, and unstable for serious research. They are also trained in reframing ideas rather than solving known problems.' [59]

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[59] Koskinen, et al *Design Research Through Practice: From the Lab, Field, and Showroom,* (Waltham, MA: Elsevier/Morgan Kaufmann: 2012), section 1.3 cited in Lee, *The Ingenuity of Ageing*, p. 43.

COLLABORATION, PARTICIPATION, 'CO-DESIGN'...

THROUGH ALL THESE PROJECTS it is the recurring themes of collaboration, participation, co-design that surface over and again: involving, engaging with, being led by older people as social actors/agents in urban space. Often marginalised in processes of urban development and change there is arguably an 'underlying ageism' that characterises much of urban planning processes where older people are easily represented as passive victims of urban change.[60]

The Age-friendly Cities concept helpfully re-positions older people as central to the process of engaging in the production of an Age-friendly City across all its eight domains. But forms of participation, engagement and co-production are different. And just as there is a need in Age-friendly practice to open up and encourage different deliberative models in processes of civic partici-pation,[61] so too in design and creative spatial practice there ought to be ways of ensuring that there are a range of methods, approaches and techniques that involve and empower older people to engage with, respond to and/or initiate design processes and spatial practices and initiatives.

The following sample of participatory/collaborative processes describes a spectrum of possible (overlapping) terms of Age-friendly engagement, empowerment and spatial agency – from ways of mapping and gathering knowledge about a given space to designs, interventions and urban actions acted out in those spaces – by/with/

from for older people. They are set down here in the knowledge that, as Yanki Lee notes, any 'fixation on the role of the designer as the decision-maker and the suppression of reflexivity on the designer-user relationship creates a power disparity which leads to social exclusion.'[62]

A semi-structured form of interactive, qualitative research where a group of (here, older people) might be asked to talk about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about a given place. Used in the original research project that helped shape the Age-friendly Cities policy framework (see the 1997 V*ancouver Protocol*), focus groups can provide a useful form of engagement in the preliminary phase of urban mapping and research.[63]

These groups can be particularly helpful in: informing the development of community audits (see below); in identifying key issues to be explored further in urban research and as a way of gathering information from different agencies and groups within a local area. Focus groups can also provide a forum for discussing, sharing and contextualising any findings in research-based urban practice from physical and spatial data (see, for instance, the *Age-friendly Old Moat Research and Evaluation Toolkit*).[64] In this sense, ongoing engagement via focus

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[60] Chris Phillipson, *Developing Age-Friendly Cities: Policy Challenges & Options*, Viewpoint 37 (Housing Lin: October 2012), p. 6.

[61] Handler, *A Research and Evaluation Framework for Age-friendly Cities*, p. 146.

[62] Lee, *The Ingenuity of Ageing*, p. 58.

[63] World Health Organization, *Vancouver protocol* www.who.int/ageing/publications/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20AFC_Vancouver_protocol.pdf

groups has the added potential to, in some way, hold both urban research and the activities of the urban researcher/practitioner to account.

THE COMMUNITY AUDIT

A community-based process used to profile a local area or issue. Can help provide a more comprehensive baseline picture of a neighbourhood (mapping out both its needs as well as its experiences/'assets') or can often focus in on a particular area of concern. Requires the involvement of the local community at each stage of the auditing process, though may be initiated by an external organisation (as in the *Age-friendly Old Moat* project). As a community-led initiative will often function not only as a baseline survey of an area and/or an issue but as an activist form of grass roots practice (see, for instance the *Newcastle Elders' Council Audit*) where the process of auditing acts as a spatialised voicing of local concerns. The form and 'output' of community audits can vary and may involve film media (see, for instance KOVE's *Journey to a Friend*), standard surveys, workshops, focus groups, a toolkit (see, for instance the *Mobilizing Knowledge* toolkit) or resident interview.

'WALKING ALONGSIDE'

An ethnographic method that has become increasingly popular in the social sciences (in the form of the walking interview) and adopted in various guises in creative forms of urban practice. Involves, essentially, walking and talking (here, with an older) participant, urban user, inhabitant. Led by the resident walker, the idea of 'walking alongside' is, necessarily, less directive and more open-ended as a mapping process, enabling serendipitous and unanticipated encounters, the surfacing of otherwise

hidden stories – 'accounts of place that interweave personal biography and individual experiences with collective (social) memories and spatial histories'– and involves the space itself (and the process of walking) as the 'site of elicitation' (a prompt/prop for conversation).[65]

Could be used, for instance, in gaining a better understanding of how older people's social networks and community relations are spatialised (see, for instance: Andrew Clark's *Landscapes of Dementia Care* funded by MICRA with Richard Ward and Mathew Hargreaves from the Manchester School of Architecture).[66]

Could also (as an embodied practice) be used to cultivate empathetic relationships with people's experience of a place (see the Manchester School of Art (MSA) design lab 'Walking in the Shoes of' project run in conjunction with Manchester City Council's Age-friendly Manchester team). Invariably, walking methodologies require a falling into the ordinary rhythms of the leading walker's everyday life. In this way, as an embodied practice could be seen as a form of urban practice in itself.

CO-DESIGN METHODS

A designer-led process that aims to encourage and empower 'users' to develop design responses to specific problems. As a practice, involves a deliberate blurring of roles between user and designer. While often resulting in the co-production of a particular artifact, privileges the process (versus product) of design. Can enable a broad community of interest to engage with the development of a specification and design (for a particular artifact, for instance) cultivating a sense of ownership over the designed object (see, for instance, the development of *The Vitality Bench* by Jonathan Butters Ltd. involving a broad network of 2000 older adults).[67] May, however, be more loosely understood to involve a process of pairing

designers with 'users' as a form of exploratory design practice (see, for instance, the 15 students from the Masters of Architecture programme in the Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture working 'co-creatively' with twelve older people from the City of Manchester as part of the *Mobility, Mood and Place* project').[68]

PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES

More open-ended than co-design processes, participatory practices describe a broad set of approaches that actively involve the user/inhabitant/resident (however defined) within a creative process of spatial production. May lead, variously, to: new spatial conditions; new forms of spatial practices, and new ways that eventual users/inhabitants/residents might shape those conditions and practices (over time). Forms of participatory practice can vary from temporary interventions to longer-term community-based projects. They carry, however, a common commitment to an ethics of participatory practice: i.e., an acute awareness that there are different ways in which a user/inhabitant/resident/participant might be involved within any participatory process and that there is a need to be both aware and responsive to this: engaging directly with issues of creative authorship, control, and, more fundamentally, with the social and political not just aesthetic aspects in the production of urban space.

Within the field of ageing, this kind of participatory practice has the potential to challenge both the role of the creative practitioner as an authoritative problem solver in practice and 'the notion that ageing is a policy problem to be solved with design solutions handed down to an elderly group.'[69]

A more formalised set of processes and structures of engagement. May vary in form from top-down, statutory consultation processes (although these risk, in their formulaic structures of engagement, legitimising top-down versions of planning, development and urban change) through to innovative methods that embed design groups and fora within broader local authority programmes. See, for instance, the *Age-friendly Manchester Design Group* and *Forum*, a local authority-initiated platform enabling older residents interested in issues around design in an Age-friendly city to exchange ideas together with local designers, practitioners, housing providers, council officers through both a focused steering group and a broader city-wide forum. On a symbolic level engagement structures like these can provide a platform and voice for an otherwise marginalised age group. But they also offer, on a pragmatic level, structures and collaborations with local designers and practitioners that may offer and lead to new design actions and initiatives. Has the potential, as a 'design group' to shift older people's interactions with civic structures beyond what can often be self-limiting structures of access forums and the separate category of 'accessibility.'[70] See also, the work of the *Mobilizing Knowledge* project where the explicit ambition to solve the interaction gap between planners and local older residents involves a process of empowering older people to actively engage with otherwise opaque planning processes.[71]

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[64] Old Moat: Age-friendly Research and Evaluation Toolkit (Southway Housing: 2013), page 20.

[65] See *Realities Toolkit* #13 available at: http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/1323/1/13-toolkit-walking-interviews.pdf. Andrew Clark and Nick Emmel, 'Using walk-

ing interviews' (August 2010) http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/1323/1/13-toolkit-walking-interviews.pdf

66 '*Landscapes of Dementia Care* focused on how carers for people with dementia understood and experienced their neighbourhood, and how carers and people with dementia are supported through locally situated networks of formal, informal and occasional care' Ward, R. Clark, A. and Hargreaves, M. (2012) 'What does neighbourhood mean for people with dementia?', *Journal of Dementia Care*, 20 (2) 36-39.

67 'The Space between Buildings', *Built Environment Seminar Report* (UK Urban Ageing Consortium: October 2013).

68 See: www.eca.ed.ac.uk/architecture-landscape-architecture/news-events/architecture-students-co-design-with-older-people

69 Lee, *The Ingenuity of Ageing*, p. 2.

70 See Boys, *Doing disability differently*, p. 25.

71 Rooke and Wuerfel, *Mobilizing Knowledge*.

NOTES*

* A space for noting down (possible) sites, spaces, times and places
for Age-friendly urban actions.

The following references refer to the urban icons on the back cover of this guide: a spread of familiar (and not-so-familiar) icons of ageing in the city. From the self consciously Age-friendly to the more questionably outmoded and ageist.

'If urban graphics have the potential to inscribe age-stereotyped scripts in the mind, could they also incite alternative kinds of Age-friendly action and behaviour?'

1

The public transportation priority seat 'for people who are disabled, pregnant and less able to stand' introduced as a prompt for a culture of courtesy and to support otherwise disabled mobility. Cultural origins: Japanese public transportation system (1970s) where they are commonly referred to as 'silver seats'. Inaugurated on Respect for the Aged Day 15th September, 1973.

2

Traffic sign for older people crossing the road. Introduced in the United Kingdom in 1981 (based on a children's competition). Portrays a silhouette of a man with a flexed posture using a cane and leading a kyphotic woman, originally with the words 'elderly people' underneath. (Regulations introduced in 2003 scrapped the caption 'elderly people' on the grounds of ageism). Used interchangeably for crossings marking out frail, disabled, or blind people.

3

A playful inversion of the traffic sign marking elderly crossing, as devised by artist Steve Messam. Commissioned by Cumbria Tourism in 2009, the sign depicts a straight-backed couple carrying walking poles on top of a summit. Part of a series of commissioned 'Signs of Adventure', this alternative traffic sign suggests an alternative image of ageing. (Originally placed on the summit of Coniston Old Man mountain).

4

Age-CAP is a cross-platform smart phone application providing a crowd-sourced database of 'Age-friendly' locations. Designed using universal design criteria, app users can rate a location or service on-the-spot based on a ratings criteria developed out of the World Health Organization's Age-friendly Cities guidelines (WHO, 2007). Available for free on the iTunes and Google Play stores.

5

Representational pictogram of the approximately 1/3 of all people aged 65+ who fall at least once a year away from the home.

[See *Going Outdoors: Falls, Ageing & Resilience* (Go Far): a multi-disciplinary research project funded by the cross-council Lifelong Health & Wellbeing programme, led by the Medical Research Council and SURFACE Inclusive Design Research Centre (School of the Built Environment, University of Salford)].

6

A sign of those 'very active' older people who are more likely to fall outdoors than people with frailties.

[See *Going Outdoors: Falls, Ageing & Resilience* (Go Far)].

7

The Bruges forget-me-not knot: a dementia friendly symbol intended as a clear and recognis-able symbol to those with an early stage diagnosis of dementia. The knot-in-the-handkerchief marks out those safe havens across the city where those with dementia can seek assistance. Found, principally, in shop storefronts. (Serves also as a reminder to staff of their own dementia-awareness training).

8

The 'Slalom': a suggested in-and-out healthy walking route through a line of bollards along a street. Activating pictogram embedded in paving. Promotes balance and co-ordination.

[From project 'Kwiek' in the Woen-selse Heide neighbourhood of Eindhov-en. KWIEK is a series of urban routes set out by Denovo Design to encourage

older people to exercise outdoors. Co-created in the immediate vicinity of a nearby nursing home, each KWIEK route has been designed to encourage physical activity in the face of declining mobility. Those exercising on the marked-out routes are supervised by physical therapists, ensuring a safe and comfortable workout with the exercises themselves performed along existing objects on the street (on benches, lamp-posts and fences). By adding minimal supplements to these objects, Janne van Kollenburg, Manuel Wijffels and Lotte van Wulfften Palthe from Denovo Design have transformed the public space around a nursing home into active work out areas. For more information visit: www.kwiekbeweegroute.nl]

9

The 'Shoulder Turn': rotating shoulders in a steady standing pose. Activating pictogram embedded in paving. Promotes flexibility and movement in upper joints.

[KWIEK , Denovo Design]

10

The 'Stretch': stretching against an existing street sign. Activating pictogram embedded in paving. Stretch before conducting street-based exercise.

[KWIEK , Denovo Design]

11

The 'Knee lift': lifting one leg after the other with knees bent (to a 90 degree angle), with hands poised for stability on a streetside fence.

Activating pictogram embedded in paving. Promotes joint flexibility.

[KWIEK , Denovo Design]

1 2

The 'Leg stretch': raising and stretching out of the legs (one after the other) while seated on a bench on the street. Activating pictogram embedded in paving. Promotes flexibility and circulation.

[KWIEK , Denovo Design]

1 3

The 'Walk along a line': place one foot in front of the other along a pre-painted line on the street (as if balancing on a tightrope). Activating pictogram embedded in paving. Promotes balance and core stability.

[KWIEK , Denovo Design]

1 4

The 'Goodwill Journeys' badge: allowing the wearer to interact with traffic lights to allow for longer, more comfortable crossing times. Doubles up as interactive social tool to encourage informal acts of goodwill.

[Helen Hamlyn College, Royal College of Art Blackberry® competition]

1 5

The symbol for a 'dementia-friend' (or, anyone who commits to learning more about what it is like to live with dementia and then turns that understanding into action.) Available as a badge to be worn in public. Serves as a reminder of the volunteer's

own dementia-awareness training as well as a public signal of solidarity and empathy. Scheme launched by the Alzheimer's Society in 2013 as part of the Prime Minister's *Challenge on Dementia.*

AGE FRIENDLY
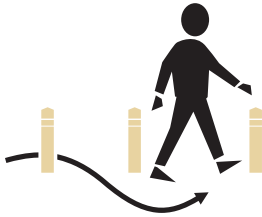MANCHESTER

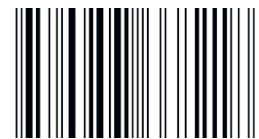E·S·R·C
ECONOMIC
& SOCIAL
RESEARCH
COUNCIL

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester
Institute for Collaborative
Research on Ageing

ageUK
Love later life

RIBA

msa projects
manchester school of architecture

UK Urban Ageing Consortium

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