

# STREETS OF SHAME <sup>SOS</sup>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary of findings from 'Public Attitudes to Architecture and the Built Environment'

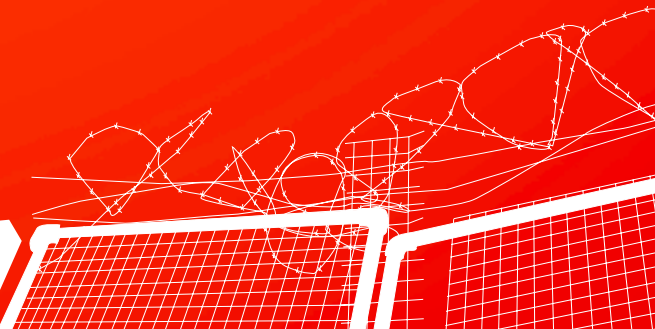
Recent research, commissioned by CABI and conducted by the MORI Social Research Institute, has helped us to better understand the public's needs and aspirations for the built environment and in particular for their local neighbourhood. It shows that the public care passionately about the quality of their local environment but are equally frustrated by its deteriorating state.

'Liveability' - or what is happening in the streets where people live - is fundamental. Not all people use NHS hospitals frequently or have children of school age and rely instead on the media to tell them how things are. But they can and do judge the fabric of urban life with their own eyes. 'Liveability' affects everyone - the elderly and the young from the wealthiest to the poorest in our communities. And despite the fact that many of the problems facing communities are not a consequence of the physical environment, investing in the physical fabric of an area certainly offers a way to find solutions.

'The Rising Prominence of Liveability'  
published by MORI September 2002,  
further details from [www.mori.com](http://www.mori.com)

Research outcomes: 3

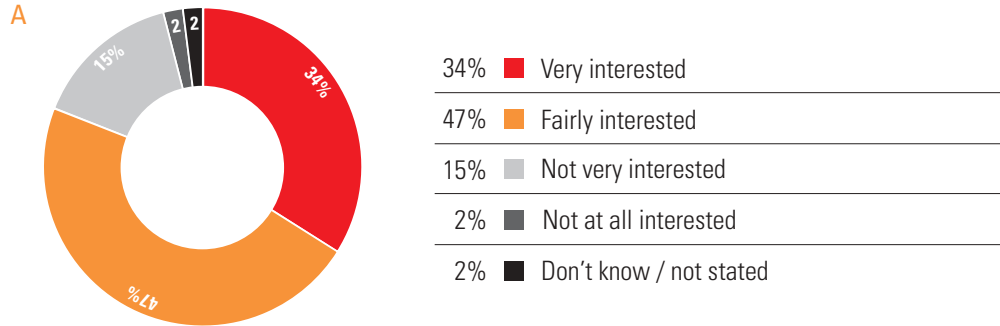
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## DOES THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT MATTER?

CABE's survey found that the vast majority (81%) of people say they are **interested in how the built environment looks and feels**; with a third (34%) saying they are very interested.

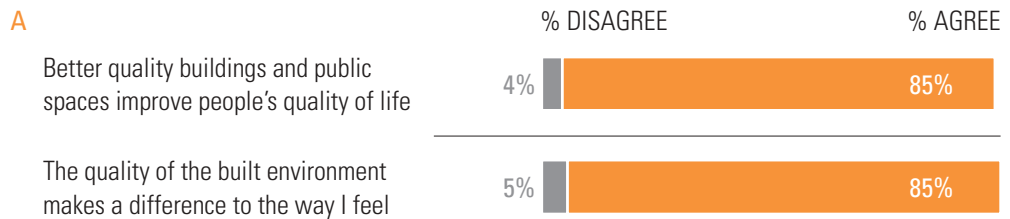
**Q** How interested would you say you are in the way buildings and public spaces look and feel to use?



Source: MORI / Base: All respondents (1,018)

It is clear that people feel there is a relationship between the built environment and well being. Over four in five (85%) agree that **the quality of the built environment makes a difference to the way they feel**, with almost a third (30%) agreeing strongly. As many agree that **better quality buildings and public open spaces improve the quality of life**.

**Q** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements ... ?



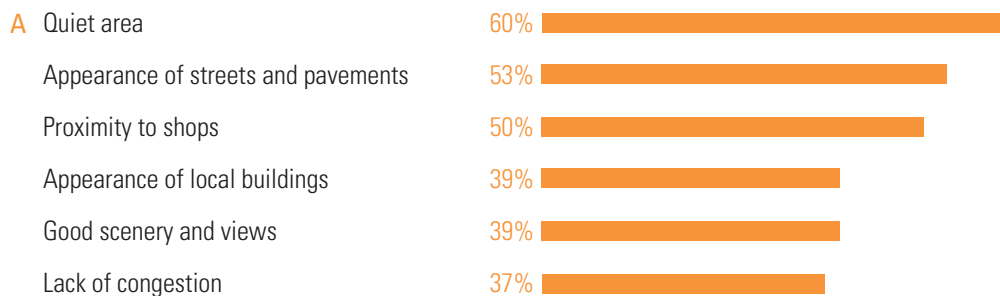
Source: MORI / Base: All respondents (1,018)

## THE LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

The **appearance of an area** is an important factor when people are deciding where to live. Half (48%) say this was very important in their decision of where to live.

**Peace and quiet** is voted the most important factor in making an area a pleasant place to live, followed by **the appearance of streets and pavements** (53%) and **proximity to shops** (50%).

**Q** Thinking about the area where you live in your opinion which of these, if any, are important in making your area a pleasant place to live?



Source: MORI / Base: All respondents (1,018)

COWCROSS STREET, LONDON  
Poor street maintenance creates an image of neglect



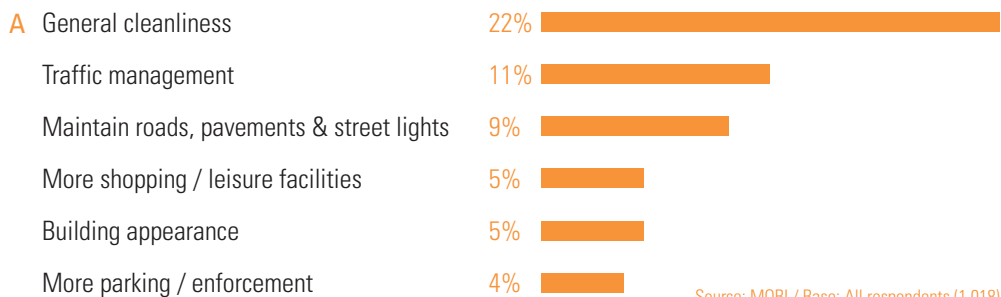
## SATISFACTION WITH THE LOCAL AREA

The good news is that the majority (70%) of people are satisfied with the appearance of their local area. **But one in five (20%) are dissatisfied; one in twenty (6%) are very dissatisfied.**

It is striking that **one in three people note a decline in their area over the last three years**. Indeed, over half those polled said they would be **willing to pay an extra £20 per year in Council Tax to improve their local area** - more among those most likely to be Council Tax payers (i.e. the 25-64 year olds).

The things that people would like to see improved in their area are varied, but the most common **relate to streets**. These changes are not difficult to achieve either.

Q Thinking about the overall appearance of your local area, what would you like to change to improve it?



Source: MORI / Base: All respondents (1,018)

## A MESSAGE FOR GOVERNMENT

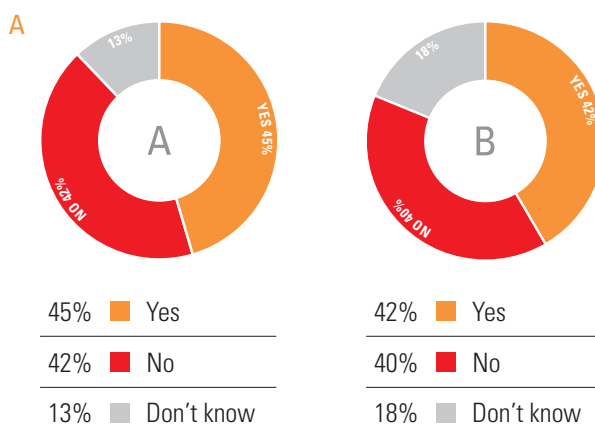
Given the perceived impact the built environment has upon quality of life issues, it is perhaps not surprising that people think the Government should get involved in promoting improvements to it. And most people agree that public money should be spent on promoting good buildings and public spaces.

There are other clear messages for government. Almost half (45%) of those who say they voted in the last council elections also say they would be more inclined to support a different party if there was a significant deterioration in the quality of the local environment alone. Two in five (42%) non-voters said this issue would make them more inclined to vote next time.

Whilst we would not expect a change in people's local environments to really motivate such drastic change at the polls, this does highlight the extent to which people value their local area and the potential for improvements to have some impact on the way local and central government in particular are perceived.

Q If the environment in your area significantly improved or declined in the next three to four years, do you think this alone would make you more inclined to:

- A) support a different party at the next local election?  
B) vote in the next local council election?



Source: MORI / Base: A) All who voted in the last local council election (643) / B) All who did not vote in the last council elections (355)



HATTER STREET, BURY ST EDMONDS  
Wider pavements reduce traffic speed



ST JAMES' BOULEVARD, NEWCASTLE  
A safer place for walking

# ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) commissioned MORI's Social Research Institute to carry out a survey to look at public attitudes to the built environment.

The survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews during March and April 2002. MORI surveyed a representative sample of 1,018 respondents aged 16+ across 100 sampling points in England. During the analysis stage, the data was weighted by age, sex, working status and ethnicity.

Copies of this summary are also available on CABE's website and [www.streetsofshame.org.uk](http://www.streetsofshame.org.uk)

## cabe

CABE, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, is the nation's champion for better places, places which work better, feel better, are better. We believe that decent homes, work places, shops, schools and hospitals are everyone's basic right, a right worth fighting for. CABE uses its skills and resources to campaign for a better quality of life for people and communities across England. We do this through a rich mix of campaigning, researching, instigating and assisting with technical expertise and opinion.

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