

The Shared space phenomenon as a tool for rediscovering mixed-use street

What is a mixed - use street?

Mixed-use street is the traditional high street, where a mix of retail, business, and public service is intermingled with residential dwellings, either above them or nearby. Mixed-use street fulfills a wide range of places functions and at the same time it is a link for different modes of transport.

Mixed-use street Link and Place activities

as PLACE:

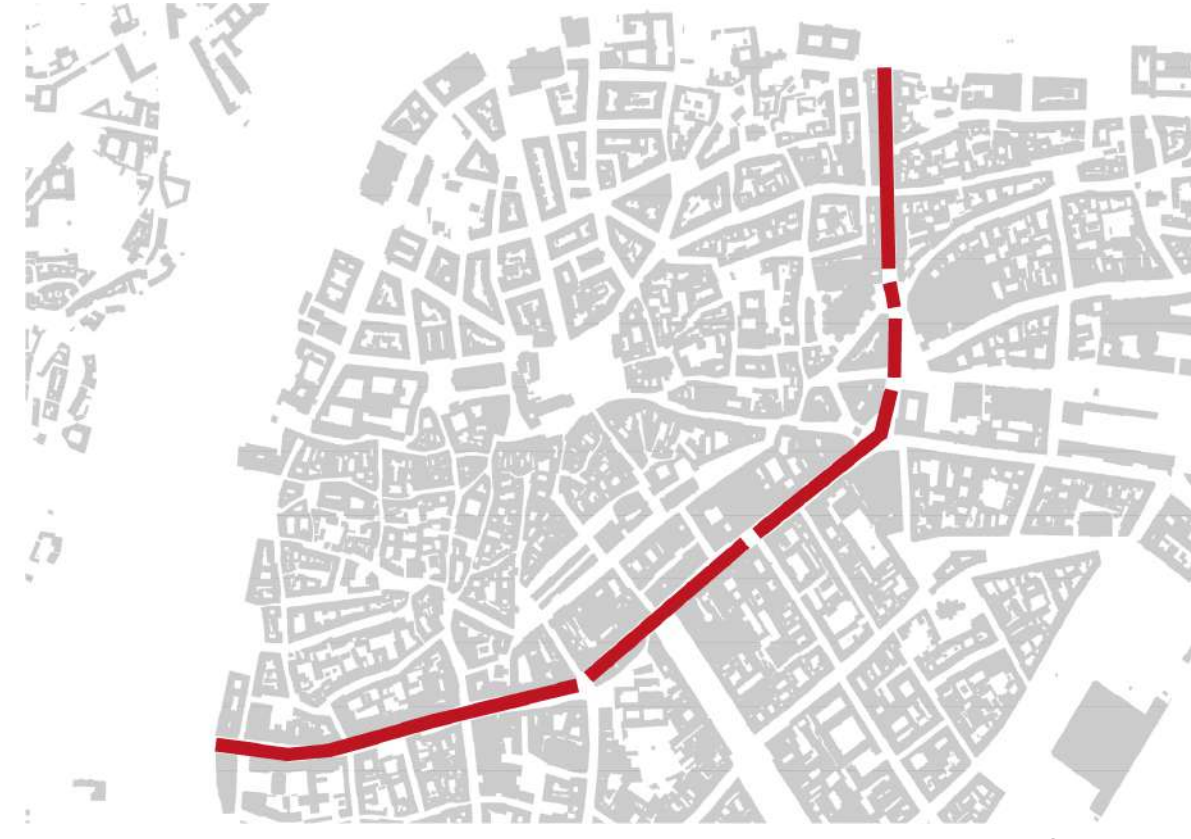
- People standing, sitting, sightseeing, shopping, trading
- Public performances, parades, demonstrations, etc.
- Parking (including cycle parking)
- Loading / servicing

as LINK:

- Through movement by:
- Private cars, vans, goods vehicles
 - Public transport
 - Cycles
 - Pedestrians

Source: UCL, London

Old Prague circuit — mixed-use street, fragmented into different traffic modes



Source: Autor

Why do we need it?

Traditionally, central or local mixed-use streets have always been at the forefront of the requirements for residence and transport, which were in a close relationship and balance; transport was mainly done using slower and more sustainable modes providing access and allowing other events to run freely. When the link or place function of such places is out of balance, people cannot freely move and use such places, so they avoid them. A disbalance arises when car traffic and transport infrastructure dominate over other users and activities in the space.

Earl Street, Dublin, 1900



Source: Pinterest

Revoluční, Prague, 2020

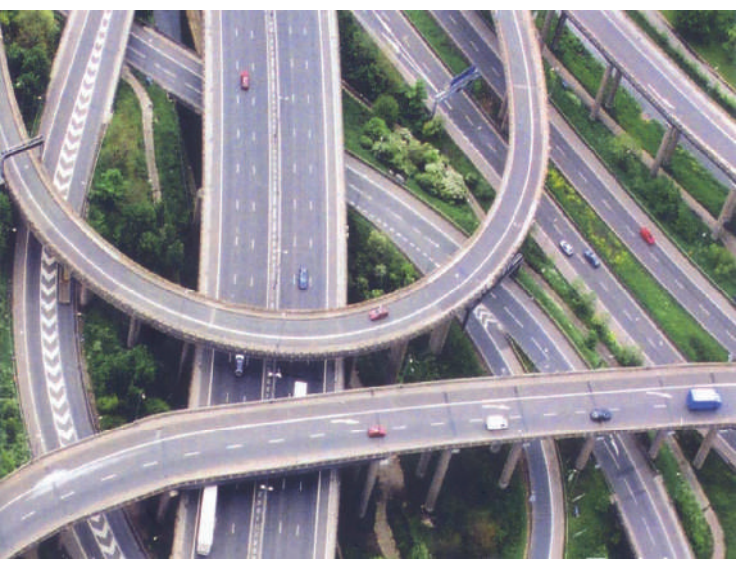


Source: IPR, Prague

Why was it lost?

Since the mechanized transport development and the subsequent development of the transport road hierarchy mixed-use streets are divided into two worlds. A vast variety of traffic calming engineering tools are used in order to combine them into one space of the street and to fulfill safety requirements. Nevertheless, the use of such engineering tools in such places anchors the dominance of highway character. But the place has absolutely opposite characteristics, so arises — chaos and ambiguity.

The difference between Highway and public Place
The Highway



- Regulated
- Impersonal
- Linear
- Single Purpose
- Consistent
- Predictable
- Systematic
- State controlled
- Signs and markings

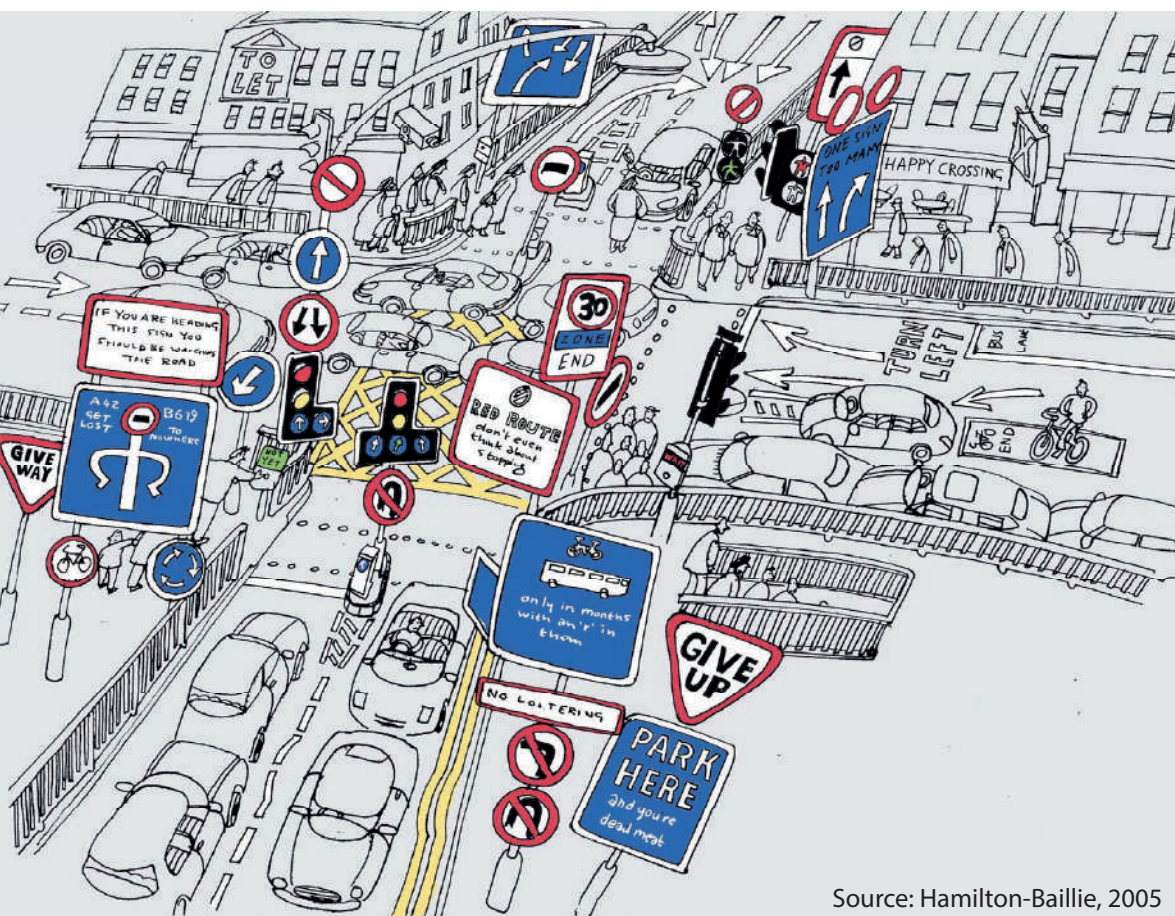
The Public Realm



- Culturally defined
- Personal
- Spatial
- Multi-purpose
- Constantly changing
- Unpredictable
- Contextual
- Cultural / social rules
- Human communications

Source: Hamilton-Baillie, 2005

A load of public space with transport infrastructure



Source: Hamilton-Baillie, 2005



Source: prazskydenik.cz

Source: chodisobe.cz

Source: ippraha.cz

Source: metro.cz

How does Shared space help a mixed-use street?

The shared space approach integrates drivers into their real surroundings by eliminating such burdensome reading space elements of transport infrastructure, and thus, forcing the drivers to adapt their speed to the current situation. The streets tell a clear and understandable story. All modes of transport give the same right of movement in all directions of public space, as required by link and place function of mixed-use streets. In reality, the individual tried-and-tested implementations in different parts of the world (e.g., the Netherlands or the United Kingdom), show positive changes due to the application of the shared space approach to main roads with higher traffic intensities. Vehicle speeds are decreasing, time on the road is being reduced due to smoother driving, the volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic is increasing while maintaining the same volume of car traffic, space is being simplified and made easier to read, the street is becoming more flexible in order to be used for various events. Safety is increased by up to 50% in some examples. All road users equally shared the entire street. Shared space thus creates a continuous public space with uninterrupted movement and residence due to the preservation of its both link and place qualities, or, so-called, mixed-use street.

Questions for further research.

Shared space is a potential approach to strengthening the quality of a place and increasing safety in mixed-use streets located in the Czech Republic. However, this is a theory that still needs to be tested. Although foreign practice shows positive results, respondents are sometimes dissatisfied with the ambiguous design of such places, and in some cases, they complain that drivers are unwilling to prioritize them. It is also not clear, what locations the Shared space is acceptable for and what are the extremes of traffic volumes? Can such spaces work together with railway public transport? How and using which tools can Shared space be verified when the result of the design process depends on a wide number of various elements and its combinations, and when street can thus take various forms? The question of the suitability of such an environment for blind, partially sighted and deaf people also remains open.

Mgr. Anton Ostach: The shared space theory and its projection in architectural and urban design

Školitel: doc. Ing. arch. Irena Fialová, 9TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM 2020, CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH DESPITE THE CRISIS, FA VUT BRNO

What is Shared space?

Shared space is traffic-calming urban design approach that integrates drivers into the street environment. The characteristic feature of the shared space theory is that the surroundings talk to its users, and it always has to tell the right story. Unlike the conventional calming measures or approaches (e.g., zone 30), which either physically or legislatively determine behavior through traffic signs and regulations, shared space uses the very context of the surrounding of public space, just as a restaurant, office or even ice rink evokes certain behavior of its visitors.

What is it used for?

The main goal is to achieve equal use of public space for all users, meaning, to achieve a considerate, respectful, conscious, and therefore safe behavior.

For what place is it intended ?

The Shared space approach used to apply to any type of central main or local links and junctions in cities, towns, and villages, in places, where it is necessary to successfully integrate traffic into the street environment.

New Road, Brighton, UK



Source: PPS

Poynton, UK



Source: CHU.org

How does it work?

All elements that burden the public space and separate the driver from the events that take place around him are removed. These are traffic-engineering elements, such as legislative prohibitions, rules and protocols, signs, and markings, railings, traffic lights, curbs and speed bumps, which say to drivers:

"Go ahead, don't worry, go as fast as you want, there's no need to pay attention to your surroundings."

Shared space, basically, means the transfer of power and responsibility from the state to the individual and the community (PPS, 2008). The public space can be supplemented according to the needs of the specific location and by mutual agreement with better material design, urban furniture, public greenery, and other elements that form, so-called, 'edge friction'.

Influence of typical features on sharing

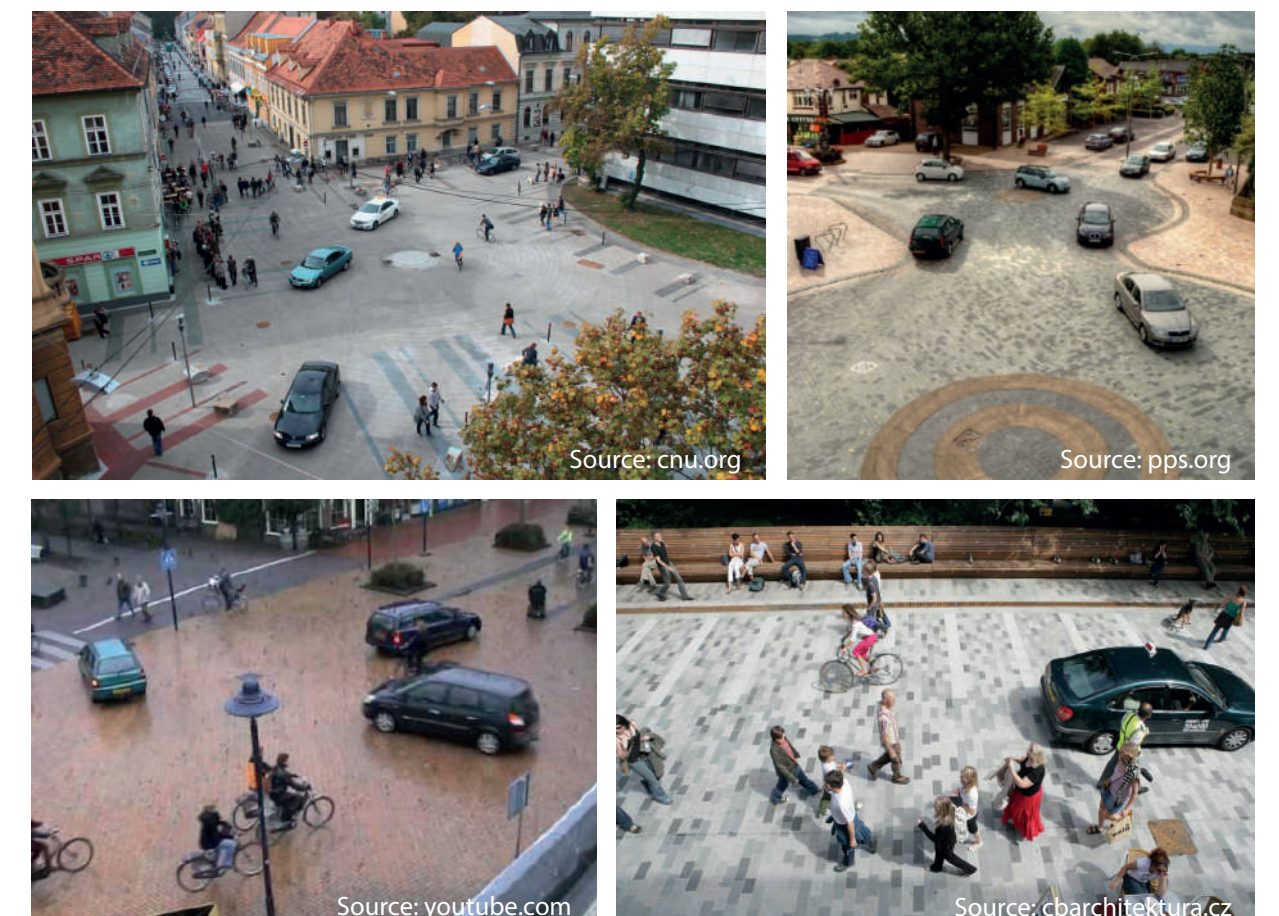
Less shared design	← →	More shared design
Kerbs		No kerbs
Pedestrian barriers		No pedestrian barriers
Vehicles restricted to parts of street, e.g. by bollards, street trees, etc.		No barriers to vehicle movement
Poor quality or unwelcoming public space characteristics		A few places where people can rest and chat
Conventional road markings		No road markings
Traffic signals		No traffic signals
Signal controlled crossings		Courtesy crossings or no crossings

Source: DfT, London

The principle of Shared space approach



Source: Hamilton-Baillie, 2005



Source: chru.org

Source: pps.org

Source: youtube.com

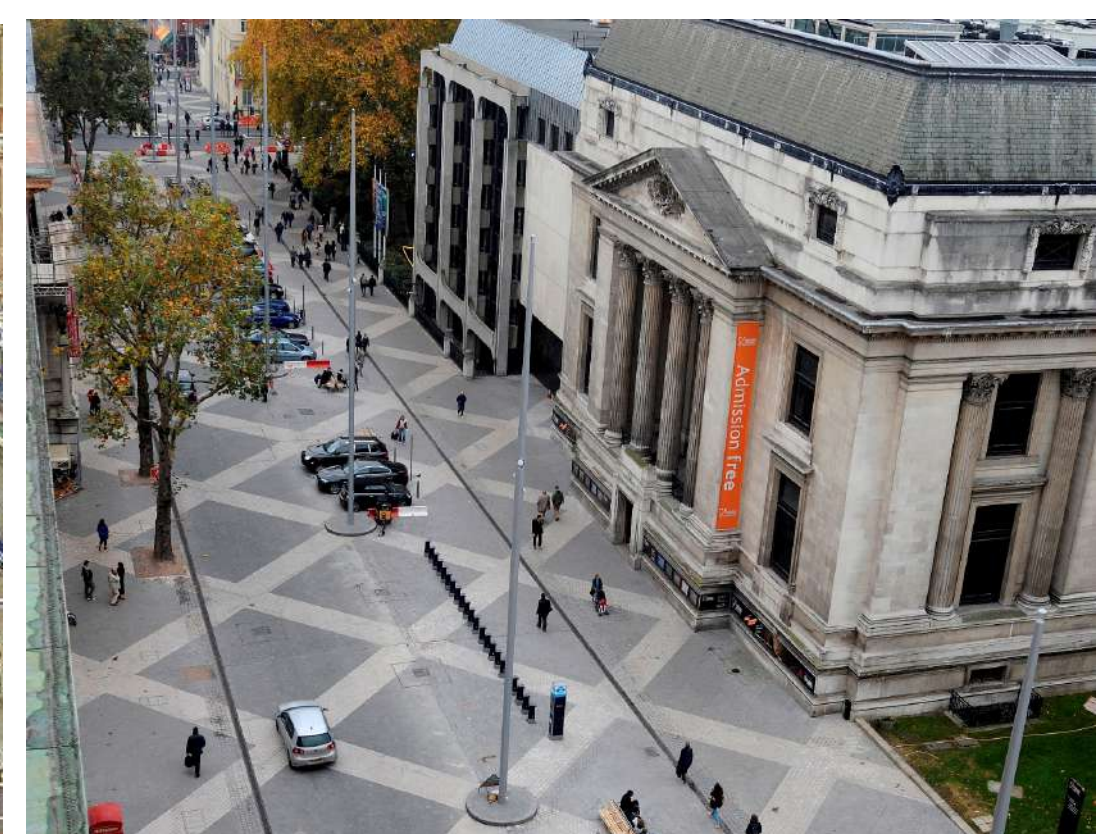
Source: charchitect.cz

Transformation of Kensington High Street, London, UK



Source: transformingcities.co.uk

Transformation of Exhibition Road, London, UK



Source: allianz.com



Source: wordpress.com

Source: en.wikipedia.org

Source: allianz.com

Source: allianz.com