



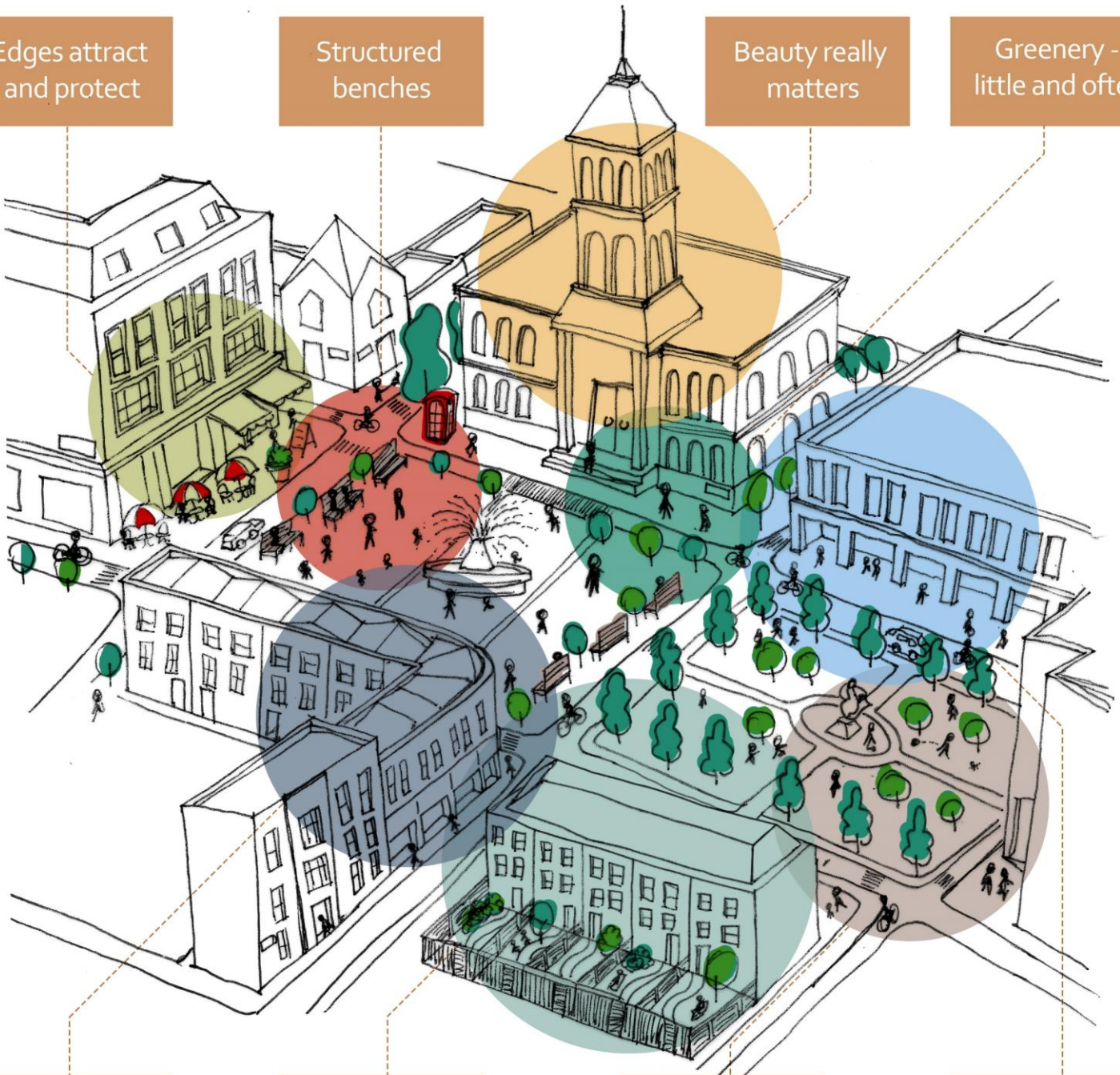
HOW TO DESIGN POPULAR PLACES

Edges attract and protect

Structured benches

Beauty really matters

Greenery - little and often



Mix it up

Gentle density is your friend

Human-scale enclosure

Walkability works



Gentle density is your friend



Open spaces should be 50-100 metres wide

The best and most beautiful streets and squares are typically in areas of 'gentle density', half way between the extremes of tower blocks and extended suburbia. Buildings that are 3-7 storeys high, built up space that is 45-65% of the total area, and blocks between 50-150 metres long are normally best.



Greenery - little and often



- Plant trees 8-15m apart
- 5-15% of land should be public gardens

People like being in green places. Urban greenery is associated with higher physical & mental wellbeing, as long as it is used. You can maximise this by planting street trees, interweaving green spaces into streets and squares. However, greenery on its own is not enough. Squares can be popular places without a blade of grass in sight.



Structured benches and statues



6-10% of squares should be seating

Where seating matters. Horizontal infrastructure, with a bit of structure, helps humans play the right roles: benches that face a fountain; an arcade that faces a square, with a statue or a podium in it. You should not 'bench wash' an ugly and windy chasm or art wash on a traffic island. Most people will avoid them.



Beauty really matters



Protected buildings improve perception of place by 19%

The most popular places with 70-90% of the population have a strong sense of place and 'could not be anywhere.' They have 'active facades' that 'live' and have variety in pattern. These developments also tend to be more long-lasting and resilient. Their organised complexity attracts, interests and reassures.



Mix it up!



60% of people prefer to live in a mixed use neighbourhood

Places with a textured mix of different land uses, and active façades, are nearly always more successful. They attract more people and generate more diverse and engaging environments. They can work for longer portions of the day by mixing people at work, lunch, home and play.



Edges attract and protect



80% of people prefer to sit facing a court

The edges of streets and squares attract us. This is partly lived experience (it is where we are used to pavements going, even when a street is pedestrianised). But it is also sensory. There is more to look at (shop fronts, cafés) and (in a square) edges allow us to step back and either watch the world go past, or sample the space.



Human scale enclosure



Height to width ratio from 1:0.85 to 1:1.5

Most people like to spend time in places that are enclosed and human scale, without feeling too closed off. There is a necessary moment for views that open up as you round a corner, for grand vistas, for open parks, but many of the most popular streets surrounding and linking such views are surprisingly human-scale.



Walkability works



Residential roads should be 20mph

..but does not quite mean maximising space to walk. Compact, walkable & 'bikeable' environments are good for you. People walk in them more and are healthier and happier. This in turn drives higher values. More walking is encouraged by engaging façades, regularly spaced trees, presence of resting places, and wide pavements.