

Analysing the Manchester Street Urban Landscape

GEOG309-16S2: RESEARCH METHODS IN GEOGRAPHY
ASSIGNMENT FOUR: THE GROUP REPORT

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Qualitative research was another key method used to obtain information for the booklet. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to collect personal memories and insights of the people and places of Manchester Street over time.

Secondary data relevant to our streetscape was also sought as it (ts]Trotsc4(an)id)d i

LITERATURE REVIEW:

A critical review of previously published literature allowed the group to identify key concepts that were relevant to our project. Historical information relevant to the streetscape, diverse research methods and assessing tourism analysis methods were the three key concepts that highlighted our project aims.

METHODS:

Following the literature review, we were able to identify the approaches that worked for similar projects and apply them to our own research. We identified four key methods that supported previous projects. These were:

- Semi-structured interviews to collect primary information;
- Collection of historical information and archive documentation;
- An interactive booklet to present the information gathered
- A survey to assess respondent's perspective on the booklet, and their views on historical and cultural conservation, preservation and documentation.

Interviewing:

The first method used was interviewing, a qualitative research approach intended to collect personal experiences and local knowledge about the history of Manchester Street North. There are three types of interviews that can be used in qualitative researching: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Gill, et. al, 2008). For this project, semi-structured interviews were used as they enabled,

" the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants, but may not have previously been thought of, as pertinent by the research team" (Gill, et. al, 2008: 291).

This allowed for more natural and personal responses from interviewees, while remaining on topic.

Our group was provided a list of people who may have had information relevant to the project. This list, provided by our community partner, was divided out so that each group member had three to five people to interview within a two week period. This initial contact set acted as an 'entry point' (Secor, 2010) to a wider network of possible interviewees as a 'snowball technique, (Secor, 2010) and expanded our connections for more data collection. 20 participants were interviewed and were either current or former residents of Christchurch, or individuals with particular interest in the area.

Interviews were then held in person with those who had responded to emails or phone calls that the group initiated. According to Keats (1993), interviews should take place in an environment where participants will feel comfortable to communicate and interact with the interviewer. With this in mind, the interviewees chose the conditions of where and when the interview would occur. Written consent was obtained prior to commencing the interview. Interview questions were adjusted depending on the participant's knowledge or experience of Manchester Street North - questions acted as prompts to encourage participants to recount personal anecdotes around their experiences

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or knowledge. The group voice-recorded the interview with phones to transcribe later, and these transcripts were used to select relevant information to use in the booklet during the next step of our project.

Limitations of the Interviewing Method:

Limitations of interviewing included time constraints, unavailable contacts, participant's perspectives, and technical problems. Due to the two week time frame, we were unable to interview people who may have been available outside of this period, regardless of the information they may have had. Another limitation was the reliability of personal accounts, miscommunication or incorrect contact details. When recording and transcribing the interview, there were sometimes technological issues with devices on which the interviews were recorded, which led to longer transcribing periods. Aveyard & Schofield (2002) noted that the process of transcribing recorded interviews can take hours and depends on the researcher's experience, the quality of the voice recording, and the number of interviews.

Secondary information sources:

In addition to the primary data collected from interviews, we also searched secondary resources for information about Manchester Street and its history. These resources were used to provide contextual background to the information gathered from the interviews, such as the information collected on McLean's Mansion.

Booklet:

We decided a booklet would be an effective way to convey our information of public memory of Manchester Street North's heritage sites to a contemporary audience. The booklet was intended to influence residents and visitors of Christchurch to be more curious about, and to have a better understanding of, Manchester Street and its historical significance. We understood that guidebooks can influence which places tourists visit and how they recall their experiences and memories (Zillinger, 2007), which is an influence we sought to replicate with our booklet.

The booklet was formatted to be A3 paper size with 16 folded pages, and designed to be colourful and visually stimulating, which would ideally make it interesting to read. We had to be precise when selecting what information was most relevant from the interviews, as we discovered some information was not appropriate for our audience or was not relevant to the location. Due to the nature of our research task, heritage attractions were a key element of the booklet. The booklet

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content consisted of information on significant historic stories, heritage buildings and sites, personal accounts, fun facts, mini activities, and a street map of Manchester Street North.

The booklet was then used as a research tool to measure perspectives on whether it was an effective method of communicating historic information. 40 booklets were published and distributed to selected groups, including members of the Peterborough Village Incorporated Society, University of Canterbury students and staff, family, friends, and interviewees. The booklet was printed with a link to an online survey.

The booklet was then used to analyse people's perspective of whether it was an effective way of presenting information of cultural preservation, documentation and conservation of historic places. 40 booklets were published and distributed to selected groups, including members of the Peterborough Village Incorporated Society, University of Canterbury students and staff, group member's family and friends and as well as those interviewed. The booklet was accompanied with a link to an online survey in which we could collect statistical data in order to do our analysis.

Limitations of the Booklet:

The initial booklet design was on A2 printing paper size, but had to be re-designed and re-formatted to A3 to meet UC Print's capacities - this was challenging and time-consuming, as information had to be eliminated, re-filtered, and reselected.

Surveying:

The last method used was a survey to accompany the booklet. This survey had 15 questions about the respo

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response to the design of the booklet, its efficacy, and whether they would recommend it to others. Respondents included interviewees, members of the Peterborough Village Incorporated Society, members of St Luke's church, University of Canterbury students and staff members from the Geography department. Our survey methods were both quantitative and qualitative as we needed both statistical data and exploratory research to analyse, and analysis was solely based on survey responses. Quantitative data enabled us to analyse the statistics from the linear scale and tick box questions, whereas qualitative data provided overall feedback on the booklet. Short answer questions enabled respondents to give further comment on the booklet design, content and overall efficacy.

Limitations of Survey:

Time was a major limitation to our data collection, having only received 30 of our intended 50 responses by our set deadline. We extended this deadline to bring the response rate to 40 participants.

RESULTS:

We approached our research with a few key hypotheses that referred to specific questions and responses within the survey. Our data analysis was based on a total of 40 survey responses.

1. Relevancy of Booklet Information:

Our first hypothesis was that respondents would not find the booklet information relevant if they were not frequently in the vicinity of Manchester Street North and did not have any prior association with the area. The questions in the survey that referred to this assumption were:

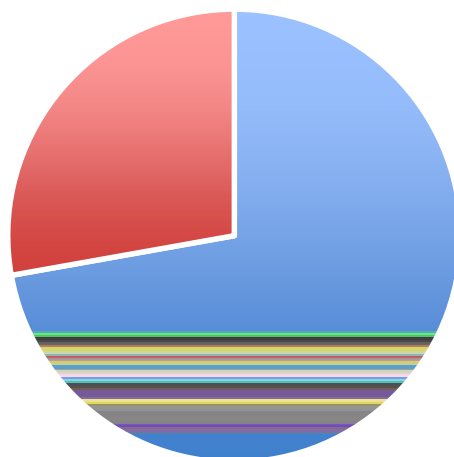
Do you have any prior association with Manchester Street?

How frequently are you in the vicinity of Manchester Street North?

Did you find the information relevant?

Analysing the answers to the above survey questions would enable us to see if the assumption had any grounding or if it was not relevant. Of the 40 survey responses received, 18 respondents answered 'no' to having prior association with Manchester Street or being frequently (daily or weekly) in the area, yet also found the information relevant (45% of responses). The following analysis is based on the 45% of respondents who did not have any prior association, nor were they frequently in the area, but found the information relevant.

Of the 45% of respondents who had no prior association, 72.2% were aware of someone who was associated with Manchester Street. The other 27.8% had not been previously aware of Manchester Street or its buildings (Fig. 1).



2. Pos

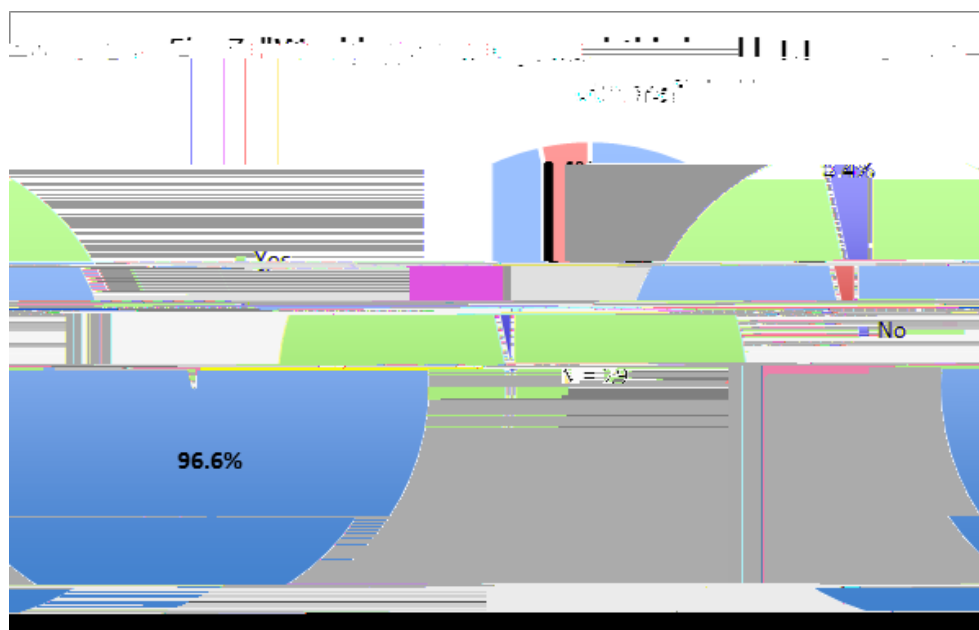
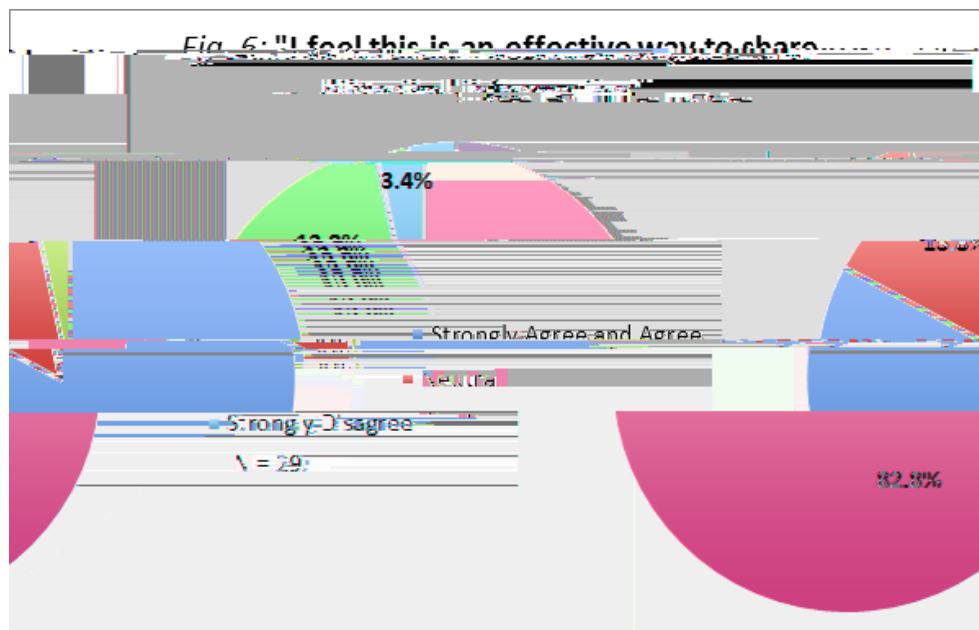
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(Fig. 4).

75.9% of respondents "strongly agree" or "agree" to the statement "Historical and cultural preservation and documentation is important or relevant to me" with only 3.4% of respondents choosing "strongly disagree". 20.7% answered "neutral". (Fig 5)

" Cultural heritage conservation helps a community not only protect economically valuable physical assets, but also preserve its practices, history, and environment, and a sense of continuity and identity."

The positive relationship between how long respondents have been in Christchurch and their view on conservation of historic places (etc.) in post-disaster cities aligns with this statement.

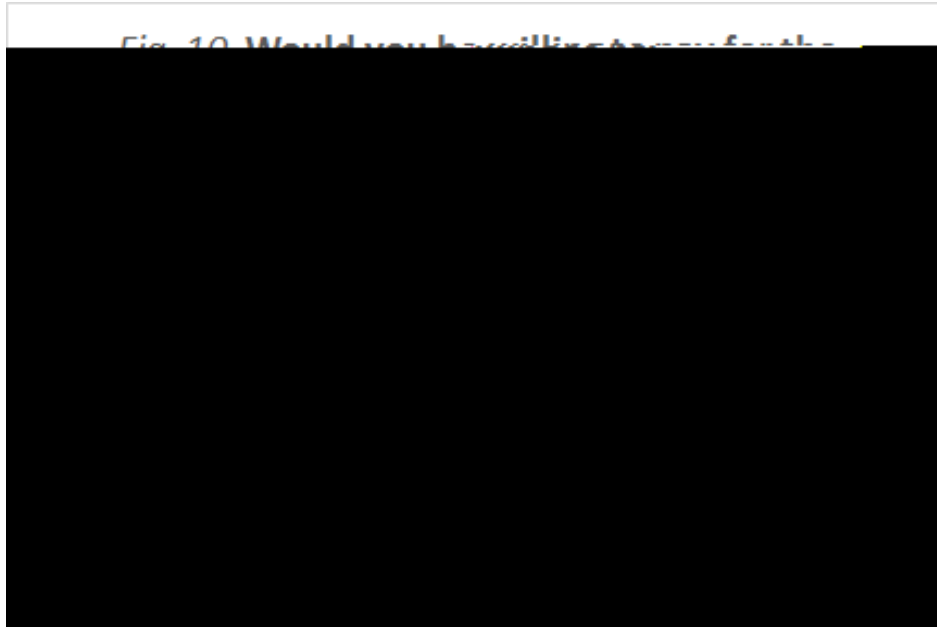
It is worth noting that 82.8% of this subset also strongly agreed or agreed with "I feel this is an effective way to share historical information", and 96.6% chose 'Yes', when asked if they would recommend this booklet to others. (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7)



3. Willingness to Pay for the Booklet:

We hypothesised that respondents who found the information relevant and interesting and are interested in historical and cultural preservation might be willing to pay for the booklet. The 28 respondents who 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to the statement "Historical and cultural preservation and documentation is important or rele

These respondents also believed that the information in the booklet was 'somewhat relevant' or 'very relevant'. From the 28 respondents, 92.9% found the information in the booklet 'somewhat relevant' or 'very relevant', and from that, 69.2% demonstrated willingness to pay for the booklet. (Fig. 10)



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As a group, we would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge those who have helped us with our research project. We wish to acknowledge Di Lucas, our community partner, for being passionate and supportive throughout our research project. Thank you for providing us with key contacts that got the project underway initially! Thank you to Rita Dionísio for mentoring us throughout the duration of this semester, your feedback has always benefited the research project greatly. To the interviewees, many thanks for telling us your personal accounts of the Manchester Street streetscape, and allowing us to publish your contribution. Those who were given a copy of the Stories of the Street booklet, thank you for your valuable feedback in the surveys. Without your input, our data analysis would not have been possible. Special thanks to Eric Pawson for also mitigating any issues in which we came across during the research project.

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APPENDICES:



