An urban investigation of Dorking carried out at Juniper Hall Field Studies Centre on the 29th September 2001

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Introduction

On the 28th of September 2001 forms 8B & 8A went to Juniper Hall to carry out fieldwork on urban studies.

Our geography and history teacher Mr Mono and gap year student Mr Canavan came along to supervise us.

Our tutor Henry Norman guided us through what we would be doing and gave us hypotheses to prove.

Aims and Hypotheses

Aims:

- **To investigate the form and function of Dorking.**

Hypotheses:

- **There will be a distinct pattern of shop location:**
  - **A) Comparison goods will cluster.**
  - **B) Competitive goods will disperse.**
- **There will be a positive relationship between shop quality and street appearance.**
- **Pedestrian numbers will be greatest in the high street.**

How the project was carried out

In my group of four first I recorded the number of pedestrians on the streets, type of shop, shop quality and street quality by stopping at various points and counting the people who went by us, rating the quality of the street and shops. I also counted how many shops were vacant. I rated all of this on a scale of 1-5 inclusive. Then I did a questionnaire, asking ?? many people the following questions:

1.How often do you come to Dorking?
2.For what reason did you come to Dorking today?

3.How did you get here today?
4.How far have you travelled?
5.Where have you travelled from today?

Equipment

Here is a list of equipment that I used:

Pencil
Clipboard
Map
Info. sheets

Presentation of Data

Explanation of data

Map 1 shows the route I took on the high street, and the points I stopped at to conduct surveys for street quality, shop quality and pedestrian number counts. Graph 1 shows the *positive* relationship between street appearance and shop quality. Chart 2 shows the results of the shopping quality and street appearance survey's. Chart 1 shows the total of all the surveys. Graph 2 shows pedestrian numbers at survey points. Graph 3 shows questionnaire results. Map 2 shows the land use of Dorking.

Conclusion

REMINDER OF HYPOTETHESES:

1.•There will be a distinct pattern of shop location:
A) Comparison goods will cluster
B) Competitive goods will disperse
2.•There will be a positive relationship between shop quality and street appearance
3.•Pedestrian numbers will be greatest in the high street

1. Distinct pattern of shops

I found my hypotheses correct, competitive goods do scatter and comparative goods do cluster. This is because competitive (example: newsagents, supermarkets) goods are exactly the same, and people will buy from whoever is closest; and comparative (example: antiques) goods are different and

people will compare, then buy, and its more convenient if they are all together.

By looking at the map of the high street (Map 2) you can see that food shops (competitive) are scattered and there is a large cluster of specialist shops along West Street.

2. Shop quality and street appearance.

Again I found my hypotheses correct. The scatter graph shows a positive relationship between these two factors. As street appearance increases, so does shop quality.

3. Pedestrian numbers

Again my hypotheses proved correct, as you can see on the graph showing pedestrian numbers at survey points. All the highest pedestrian counts were found on the high street (Survey points I-N) but O is on the high street, but has quite a low count (20). This may be because it is at the very end away from all the main shops.

I also noticed that most streets with high quality scores also had high pedestrian counts such as L, with street quality of twenty, ninety-two pedestrians.

Dorking council wants to attract shoppers for their revenue and civic pride, so they

make the streets where the pedestrian counts are highest the most visually pleasing and comfortable to be in. For example they've installed benches, they keep the pavements well swept and maintained, and they've decorated the lampposts with hanging baskets and black and gold paint and they've put railings on the side of the road. This may have encouraged people to shop here instead of somewhere else (such as Guildford, their main competitor and neighbouring town).

Questionnaire results.

Most people come to Dorking more then once a week. This shows that people are coming for things like food. Most people got there that day by car or motorbike and came from three –five miles away. This shows people from outside the town come to shop at Dorking, as well as locals (quite a high percentage walked). Most people came to Dorking for general shopping. Also the fact that some people came from over 20 miles away and come less than once a month shows that they are coming for more specialised goods, antiquing was the most frequent example.

General Conclusion

Dorking councils attempt to attract shoppers to the area, for their revenue and civic pride, appears from this study to have been a success. Dorking is an attractive town well used both by the local community and nearby areas, with people even coming from over 20 miles away. The main use of the town appears to be for general shopping, although, people from further away are probably attracted by the more specialised comparative goods such as antiques.

Problems with my Urban Study

THESE WERE MY MAIN PROBLEMS:

Time was one of our main problems. I only had one weekend to do it so I couldn't compare with a weekday (the results on a weekday would have been different because adults would have been at work and children would have been at school). Also it started raining and some pedestrian counts may have been carried out in the rain, this would have affected the result quite considerately. Also when I returned to Juniper Hall result sheet was blurred, so I cannot be sure that our readings our 100% accurate. Also it was

a Saturday and the Farmers Market was commencing, this had an effect because people would have been out when normally they wouldn't.

Word Count: 1,068