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# Introduction

The question I am investigating is 'What was Portobello Road like 5 years ago?' This is going to be about how much it's changed and developed over the last few years. I will also predict what I think Portobello Road will be like in the future.

The Investigation is part of Geography coursework. At the end of the investigation, I would have like to have a detailed account of what Portobello Road was like 5 years ago and what it is like nowadays. Also what the future has in store for Portobello Road.

The changing of Portobello Road is a geographical issue and is interesting to geographers because the land is always changing so there is lots to investigate. There are news shops, houses and being built on all parts of the road.

Portobello Road has gentrified over the years. This means that it has changed from a dirty, unpleasant area, which was mainly for immigrants to a clean, posh place which, is well known for celebrities and other rich people living there.

Portobello Road runs through Goldbourne, Colville and Pembridge (See Map A). It is located in the boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea. The Portobello Road area is very clean, tidy and presentable. It is a busy place as its very popular and well known all over the world, particularly after the film Notting Hill was made. Portobello Road changes from the north end to the south end. The North end is made up of mainly antique shops. Only a few shops are different. As you go further South, there is a whole variety of shops from shoe shops to hairdressers.

There are plenty of flats on Portobello Road and the other streets surrounding it (See Map B). The flats in that area are very well maintained and the environmental quality is excellent. Although there are no private gardens, some flats share one large garden.

I have also investigated the following:

1) What is Portobello Road like now?

Portobello Road is several markets in one. Saturday is the day which they are the busiest. There are plenty of antique markets, which open on Saturdays. The antique stores are situated on the Notting Hill end of the road and has been running since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. You can also find clothes, records and other junk. Another main trade on Portobello Road is the fruit and vegetable stalls.

The market takes up the whole street and is probably the most popular market in London.

Portobello Road has also increased the number of pubs and cafes. There is a coffee shop at every corner of the street. It is also filled with quality restaurants mainly in the Kensington Park Road area.

Because the market is so popular, there are always big crowds. Due to the big crowds there are unfortunately plenty of pick pockets around.

2) Why have changes occurred?

Portobello Road has been through many changes. These changes have taken place in order to make Portobello Road a better place. As it gentrified, it became more and more popular. This caused bigger, richer companies and businesses to move into the road as it was also attracting celebrities.

3) What changes may take place in the future?

If Portobello Road carries on making money like it is now, there is no need to change it. But there is probably room for improvement. The market end of the street has a lot litter so more bins could be placed on the street. House prices may increase further as more rich people want to move in on Portobello Road. If this does happen, there may also be a demand for more houses to be built in the area.

The small businesses will probably all close as large chain stores buy them out.

4) What do people think of the changes?

The majority of local residents either think the changes are much worse or a little better. (See Results C) Owners of small shops or businesses may not like the changes because eventually they will be out of business. Locals are also used to their local shops and may not like the idea of big companies taking over.

5) What do you think should happen to Portobello Road?

I think Portobello Road should stay as it is for now. Too many changes will upset the residents who have lived there for years. Developing it was a good idea because it wasn't a very pleasant place as there were thousands of immigrants, prostitutes in every corner and the housing was cheap and grotty because of the war.

# Methodology

I visited Portobello Road and collected some primary data.

I conducted a questionnaire and asked a few people on Portobello Road what they thought of the changes over the last few years and why they were in Portobello Road in the first place. This was done so I could find out other people's views and thoughts of the development. (See Results C)

I went to an estate agent to find out the cost of houses and flats on Portobello Road. They vary depending on the type of place and how big it is (See Results D)

I also did a Land Use Survey to see how many shops there were in each category (See Maps F, G, and H). I have compared it to a Land Use Map of a few years ago to see the difference (See Map I, J and K) and (See Graph L). There were quite a few vacant premises. I think this is because it wasn't as popular or well known at the time. There were mainly shoppers goods then. This included antique stores. Though the number of antique shops has doubled. There was quite a large variety on most of the road apart from the north end, which were mainly antique shops. This was done by walking down Portobello Road and checking each type of shop.

Another primary source was an Environmental Quality Survey. This is assessing the buildings and area to see how clean it is. It is my own personal view. I found that the north area was very clean and well maintained whilst the south end was quite dirty and littered. I checked out places in different areas to get a varied result.

The last primary evidence was the pedestrian count. This shows how busy certain areas are compared to others. (See Results D) I stood at the end of the street and counted the number of cars, which drove from right to left.

I also collected some secondary evidence to help me. I have photos (See) to show how busy the area is and they show the fruit and vegetable market along with the flower stalls. This isn't very accurate as some days are busier than others. I have also collected pictures from the Internet and from an estate magazine of houses on Portobello Road. (See Photos N) They show the quality of houses and why they are worth how a large sum of money.

I also collected Census Data to see who lived on Portobello Road in 1991 (See Results O). It shows that not many houses were owner occupied so it was probably a time when it was still developing. The data shows what type of job the people have

and the unemployment figures. The problem with this was that the data wasn't very recent it was from 10 years back.

# Results

From the questionnaire I found:

The majority of people were male. 18 out of 45 people were between 19-29. Only 4 people were over 60, which shows there are more of the younger generation on Portobello Road.

As we went on a quiet day, there weren't as many people there shopping, as there would be on a Saturday. 28 of the people were residents. Quite a few of the non-residents were workers on Portobello Road.

28 of the 45 have lived on Portobello Road for more than 20 years so they have seen some of the changes take place.

The total of the last two answers doesn't add up to 45 as some people didn't give any answers, as they may not have lived there for long enough to know. More shops and better housing were the main two answers given by the people. Only 1 person thought the housing was worse (See results C)

The questionnaire may not be as accurate as it could be because I went on a quiet day and there weren't as many people as on a busy day. Also, 4 out of the 5 people who answered my questionnaire were workers on Portobello Road so they may not have seen all the changes over the years. The weather wasn't very good that day either so many people probably decided to stay home

Some streets surrounding Portobello Road are very busy and some are very quiet (See Results D). This is because some of those roads do not have shops and attractions like Portobello Road.

The results of the shopping environment survey were quite mixed. It wasn't excellent but it wasn't rubbish either. It was in the middle as the results show (See Results P). They were taken at the top, middle and the end of Portobello Road so you can see a picture of what it is like.

The next survey was the resident quality survey. This was assessing the houses or flats. Again the results varied. The residential areas were at the north and south end of Portobello Road. The majority of the answers were in the middle, as we couldn't decide whether it was good or not.

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# Conclusion

Portobello Road has definitely changed over the last 5 years. I think it has changed for the better. It has gentrified which means, from a dirty and foul environment to a more civilized and pleasant place to live. Some people think that Portobello Road has changed for the better whereas others disagree and believe it should not have developed so rapidly into a place where the cost of living has doubled maybe even tripled.

For now, I do not think that any new changes should be made.

The amount of convenient stores is on the rise and the entertainment level is also increasing.

The rents are probably at an all time high. Some flats can cost around £650 for just one week.

With more and more large chain store coming in, the shopping will still remain as popular with locals and celebrities.

Overall I think the changes are for the better. But the locals may disagree. Some feel the new shops are ruining Portobello Road and that the small businesses should have stayed close to them.

Some days the street may be half-empty as the weather could be bad or people have to go to work or have other places to be.

Portobello Road doesn't need too many changes in my opinion. It would help to place more bins on the south end of the street, as it's the busiest because of market stalls.

Overall, I think highly of Portobello Road. It has something for everyone. Whether it's some expensive antiques or some bread from the supermarket. Portobello Road is here to stay and the way its going it is turning into the most popular market in the UK. Thousands of tourists constantly visit so there must be something good about it. The housing quality has vastly improved since the days of war when they were cheap and grotty.

There are plans to build more flats, as there is a high demand for these. There are people willing to pay large sums of money for them.

# Bibliography

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Census data  
World Atlas