

Analysis

Hypothesis 1

That the environmental quality improves the further away from the CBD you go.

Figure 6 shows how many penalty points each area scored for environmental quality. The Bewdley Road area had a good environmental quality; there was little noise, traffic or vandalism and easy access to the shops and schools. However because it is a terraced area there is very little open space or grassy area. Also across the road from the terraces there are several industrial premises as shown in Figure .All the residential squares scored between 6-15 points, which is good.

Barnetts lane has an excellent environmental quality. The roads are lined with trees and grassed areas, the area is clean of undue noise or traffic and there is no sign of vandalism. There was a school in my study area, which showed the close proximity between the residential areas and the school. As you can see from the photos in Figures 30-33 the houses are part of the nice environment. Only one square gets any penalty points.

Spennels as you would expect from an upmarket modern estate has an excellent environmental quality and gets absolutely no penalty points. The landscape is clean and well kept and there are plenty of grasses areas for recreational use or otherwise. The estate is self-contained with shops and a school shown in figures 16 and 17. In the corner of my study area there was a nature reserve that demonstrates the high quality environment in that area.

Birchen coppice is not up to the standards of Spennels. The open spaces and grassed areas aren't as well kept and there are signs of litter and vandalism. There are shops and a school within the estate but nevertheless most of the area still scores 10 points from a possible 65, which isn't good for a residential area. This could be explained by the fact that it is an older council estate that isn't as well looked after and is also showing signs of ageing.

This does support my hypothesis as the environmental quality does improve further away from the CBD, especially between Bewdley road and Spennels.

I believe there is a link between environmental quality and age. More modern areas have been built to provide better environmental conditions so that people want to live there because otherwise nobody would want to live in a town now that there is good transport available to the masses. Older areas were built purely to house as many people as possible to work in their factories in the knowledge that people had to live there or they couldn't get to work.

Hypothesis 2

That size and physical condition improve the further away from the CBD.

The Bewdley road area was closest to the CBD and it also had the smallest buildings. It is all small terraced housing from the Victorian period. Many of the houses have been done up as development projects so they have a good physical condition. However due to the age of the buildings they aren't perfect and score between 5-8 points in the residential areas.

The Barnetts lane area has larger semi-detached and detached houses in excellent physical condition. From the photos it is clear that the people who live here are prepared to spend a lot of money to maintain the physical condition of their properties.

Spennels also has many large semi-detached and detached houses in excellent physical condition. The physical condition of the houses is very good as all the houses are modern and built to a high standard. The photos in Figures 14 and 15 show the range of houses on the estate and their high quality. Again no points are scored.

However Birchen coppice wasn't in as good physical condition as Barnetts lane or Spennels. Again this can be explained by the fact that it is a council estate that was built a couple of decades ago and is quite old. It has an average score of 5 points for physical condition which isn't that bad.

These results show the link between distance from the CBD and size effectively and support my hypothesis. There is also a general trend in the improvement of physical condition but it isn't as clearly defined as my other conclusions.

There is also an obvious link between age and physical condition and that more modern buildings are in better physical condition.

Hypothesis 3

That the CBD contains mainly commercial buildings.

This is shown to be true in Figure 4, which clearly shows the dominant commercial sector. Figure 13 shows that 63% of the area is commercial. The other 37% is used for public buildings such as the town hall and doctors surgeries, open space for parking and there is currently a large area, almost 13%, which is vacant land being developed. This land is also being developed into more commercial properties including a large supermarket shown in Figure 40. Before the redevelopment there were large carpet factories on the land, almost in the very centre of the town, and this shows the shift in land use from industrial manufacturing to commercial. This demonstrates the successful redevelopment of brown field sites in favour of out of town green field sites. The vacant land isn't being turned into residential properties because it is too valuable as commercial land which companies will pay larger sums for. There is very little other vacant land in the centre for development so it is very sought after.

My hypothesis is proved to be true. This is because commercial properties need to be in the centre of a settlement so their range and threshold is maximized and they have the largest possible sphere of influence. The constant flow of traffic around the centre and large numbers of pedestrians provide the huge potential markets that the commercial companies need to survive.

Hypothesis 4

That the age of the buildings will decrease the further away from the CBD.

The age of the buildings is not as clearly defined in figure 5 as I would have liked. The photos show the difference in age more clearly and it is obvious from them how much the ages vary.

In the photos of Bewdley road there are plaques on which you can dates of when they were built, the house in the photo being 1986. These houses were all built in the Victorian era probably to house the workers that worked at the many carpet factories.

The next furthest from the CBD is Barnetts lane which has a range of ages. Most are built inter-war or just after the Second World War. However there are also several very modern buildings from the nineties shown in Figure 33.

Birchen coppice is a relatively old council estate built in the mid sixties. The photo in Figure 18 shows the basic semi detached houses typical of sixties estates. However it is far from the CBD. This could be explained by when it was built it may have been an out of town estate which has been amalgamated into the town as it has grown.

Spennels is a modern estate built in the late eighties. The photos show the modern designs and styles and how similar they are across the range of properties. Today the estate is still growing slowly outwards.

These results, except for Birchen coppice, support my hypothesis. Another possible explanation for the variation could be that Kidderminster spread faster southeastwards than southwestwards.

Conclusion

I believe that Kidderminster fits the nuclei model best, as there are distinctive land uses in small areas such as residential in the estates and industrial at Oldington. Kidderminster also takes ideas from the sector model in that it has residential and industrial sectors.

However no town or city can exactly fit any model exactly, as they are just there to help us understand the world, not provide a definitive explanation. Models cannot account for every different physical factor of every different settlement.

Land use in Kidderminster is changing drastically at the moment and there is huge urban redevelopment. Tesco and B&Q have both knocked down old industrial buildings and built huge superstores, as shown in Figures 38-41.

Also a large commercial estate outside the CBD has been built which will draw people away from the CBD to shop in these larger developments. This shows how towns cannot possibly fit a model.

Urban land use is a continuous process and I believe that Kidderminster is currently in a transition period from the old industrial past to the new commercial future.