

PLACES

OPEN SPACES

PLACES FOR RECREATION

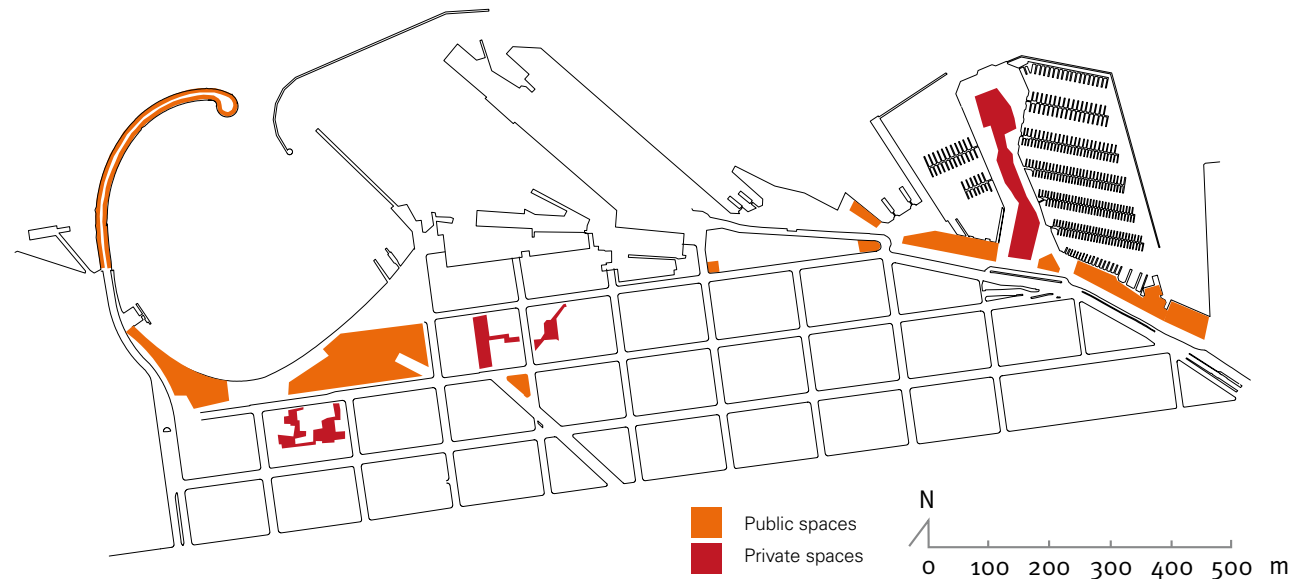
The Wharf district has some variation of public spaces from the beach and park landscapes to the est and the promenades along the coast at Pier 39 to the east. In between are a couple of small spaces like Joseph Conrad Park and the little meeting place at the corner of Jefferson Street and Taylor Street. The remaining spaces are inside the private blocks at Giradelli Square, The Cannery, The Anchorage Square and Pier 39. The most inviting spaces with human scale are private. The Wharf needs public spaces of similar quality.

The Beach and Aquatic Park areas are large and soft and with a local character whereas the spaces next to Pier 39 are more hard surfaced and used by the tourists. These spaces are large and with few options for other activity patterns than walking and sitting down, a less than ideal design given how large they are and the very limited number of alternatives.

The district lacks spaces for a variety of daily life. Few places are inviting for children or elderly. The large spaces are hard to fill with people and look deserted when they are empty and are waiting for events to happen.

Unlike the private enclosed spaces, almost all of the public spaces at the Wharf are “floating” spaces without active edges to define and activate them. The most attractive, well-used and successful waterfront open spaces around the world have well-defined and active edges. The Joseph Conrad Park is one of the few spaces in human scale with the potential to be linked to its rich edges.

Lack of active edges to define and activate spaces
Lack of inviting small spaces for everyday activities



One of few public spaces with human scale.
Joseph Conrad Park



Public space with view.
The beach, in the Aquatic Park



Huge space with no activating edges.
Public Space along The Embarcadero

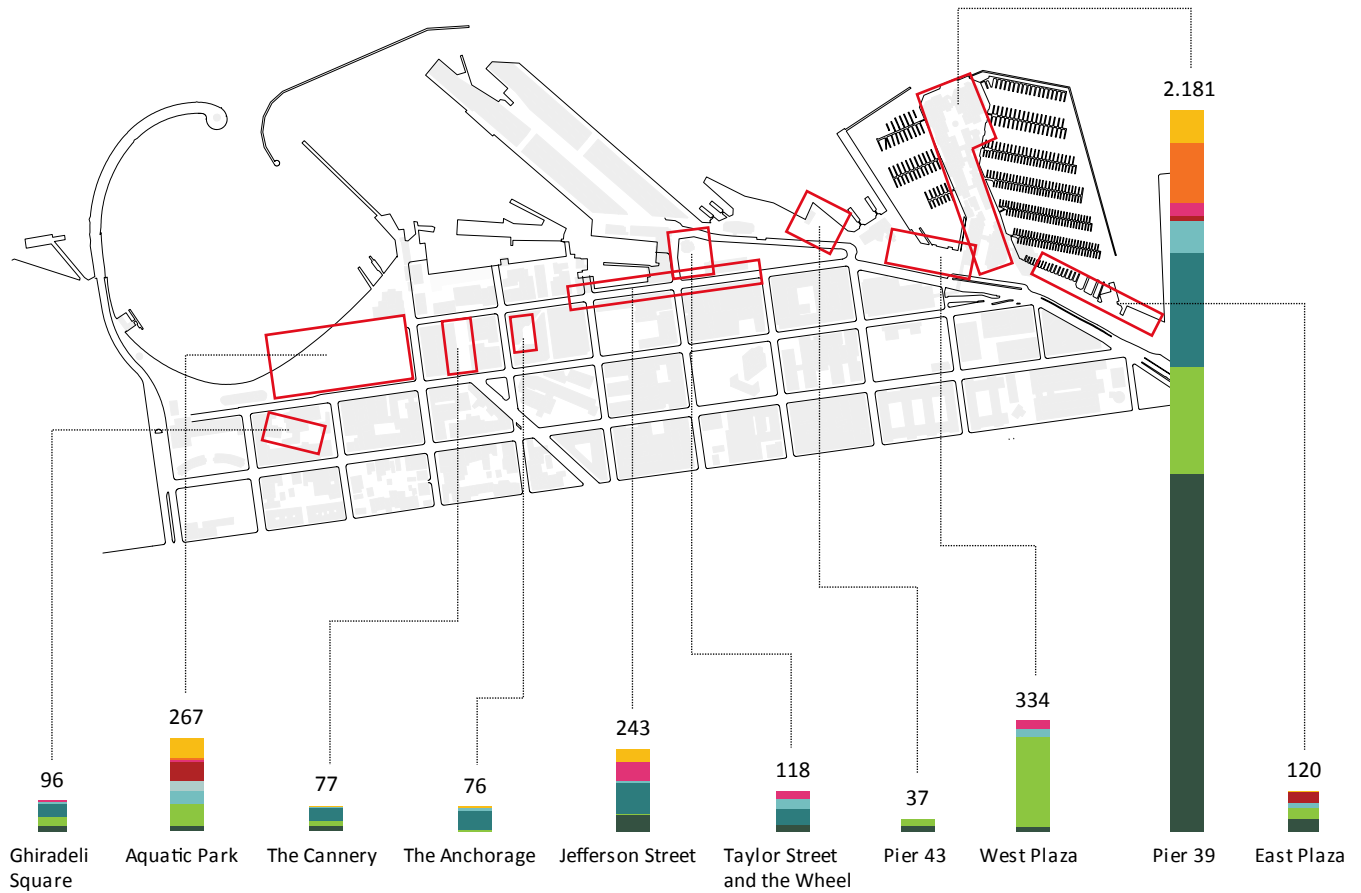
STATIONARY ACTIVITIES IN THE WHARF

WHAT DO PEOPLE DO ON A WEEKDAY?

A survey of stationary activities provide information on how many and where various activities take place. Quality of life in the city can be described by the following: $QUALITY\ OF\ PUBLIC\ LIFE = NUMBER\ OF\ PEOPLE \times TIME\ SPENT$. The optional 'staying' activities that occur in the public realm, like socialising and recreation, are the key to city quality. A high number of people engaged in stationary activities tells a story of a city with popular and inviting public spaces. The stationary activities were recorded in 10 locations representing different types of public spaces. The figures show the average sum of people active in the area between 12 noon and 4 pm taken from the survey. The diagram shows where the 'people magnets' are to be found and indicates a sort of hierarchy of public space.

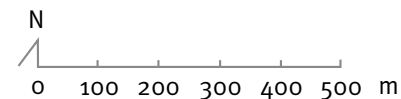
Pier 39 as a visitors destination attract 56% of all activity counted
 The area lack places for local life
 Jefferson has high pedestrian flow, but few people are staying

Today The Pier 39 is clearly the most widely used public space with a range of different activities but most people there are standing. The pier attracts mainly visitors from outside the Bay Area. The reduction in numbers of activities here and the next level of public space - the Aquatic Park - is drastic. It is surprising that not more recreation is recorded here. The analysis indicates that the study area lacks places that can attract and provide locals from San Francisco with sufficient attractive recreational options e.g. places for families, children play and physical activities. It lacks spaces for any one to stop and enjoy.



STATIONARY ACTIVITIES - AVERAGE NUMBERS BETWEEN 12 NOON AND 4PM ON A WEEKDAY

Date of survey: Wednesday, July 30, 2008
 Weather: sunny/fair, later fog, 60-65 °F
 Method: stationary activities recorded every second hour from 10 AM to 9 PM



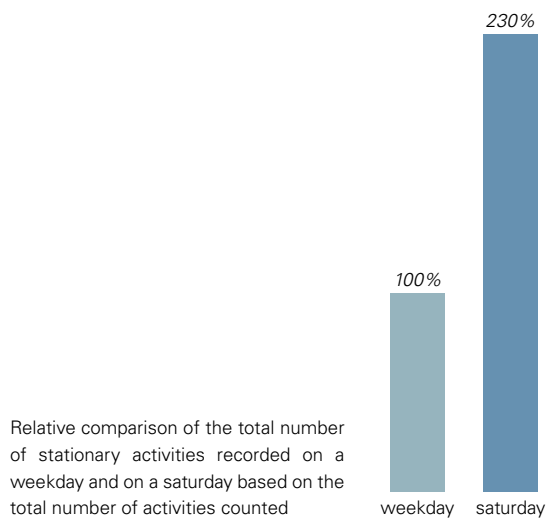
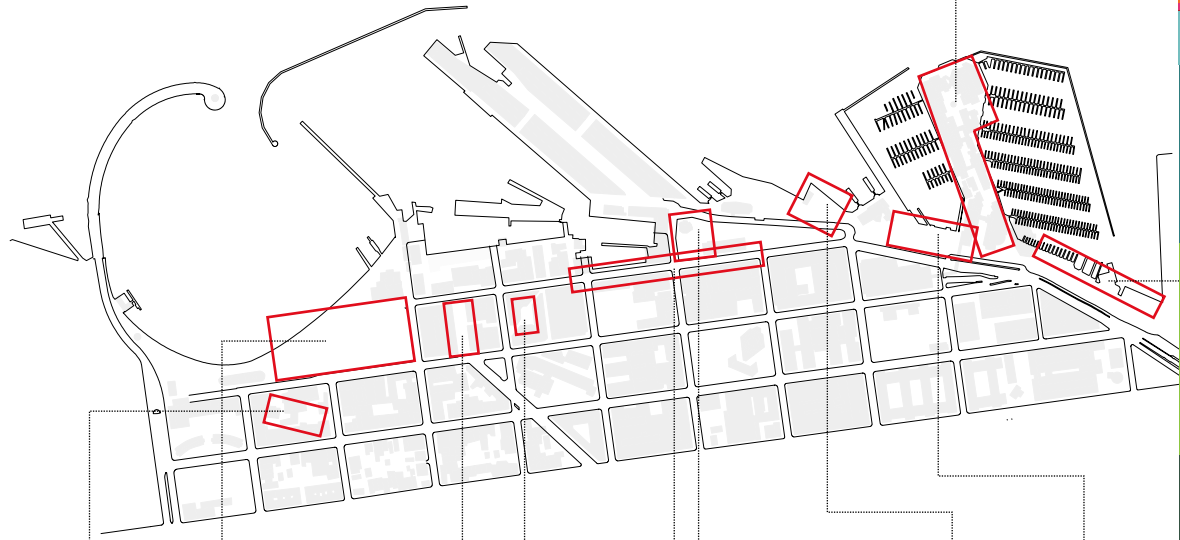
- Standing
- Sitting on benches
- Sitting caféchairs
- Sitting on secondary sittingpossibilities
- Lying down
- Children playing
- Cultural activities
- Physical activities
- Commercial active permanent

STATIONARY ACTIVITIES IN THE WHARF

WHAT DO PEOPLE DO ON A SATURDAY?

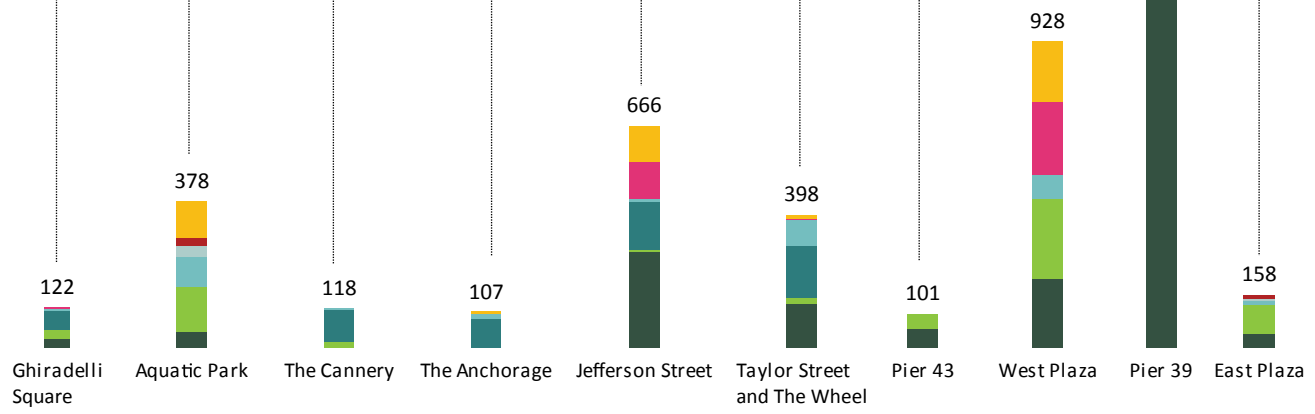
Fisherman's Wharf is a popular visitors destination - this is especially apparent during the weekend where the number of activities on a Saturday increases to 230% compared to a weekday. On a Saturday, more public spaces in the area come alive, but still most of the counted activities are concentrated to a few selected places: Pier 39, West Plaza, Jefferson Street, Taylor Street and 'The Wheel', and The Aquatic Park.

More than twice the number of activities are counted on a Saturday
 Activities are concentrated to a few selected public spaces



STATIONARY ACTIVITIES - AVERAGE NUMBERS BETWEEN 12 NOON AND 4PM ON A SATURDAY

Date of survey: Saturday, August 2, 2008
 Weather: sunny, clear, ~70 °F
 Method: stationary activities recorded every second hour from 10 AM to 9 PM



STATIONARY ACTIVITIES

COMPARING WITH WELL-KNOWN STREETS

When comparing the number of stationary activities recorded on Jefferson Street with selected international streets, it is clear that Jefferson Street has relatively few of these activities. The higher amount of cultural activities indicated on Jefferson Street is due to guided tours being included in this category.

Jefferson Street and Regent Street are comparable in activities per 100 yards but the activity profile differs; Fisherman's Wharf has a more diverse profile. The low amount of stationary activities in London relate to the narrow and congested sidewalks and lack of places to stay and sit. Strøget is a pedestrian street which puts it in another category than Jefferson Street and it's natural that it has more stationary activities. But Swanston Street in Melbourne is also a street with traffic - it has a streetcar line on it and was upgraded to a single-surface street in the late 90's - and it has even more stationary activities than Strøget. This was not the case in 1994, but today the centre of Melbourne is flourishing with activities due to a very determined and broad upgrade. The traffic situation has improved, sidewalks widened and upgraded with trees, high quality materials is used and street furniture installed. The quality of the frontages quality has been improved and the number of residents has increased with 890%.



JEFFERSON STREET



SWANSTON STREET, MELBOURNE



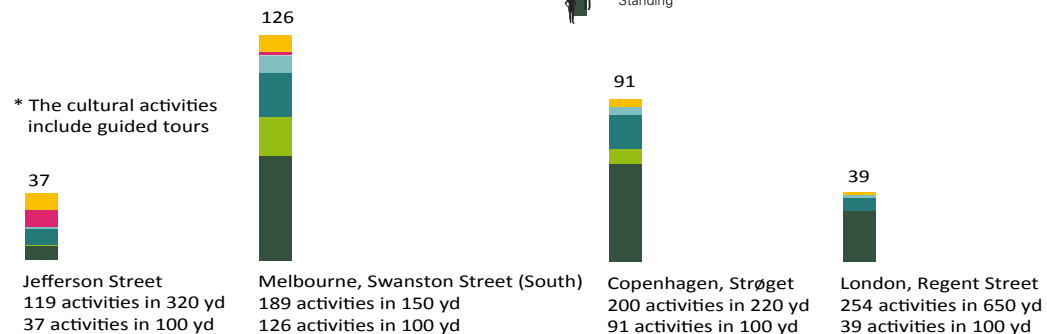
STRØGET, COPENHAGEN



REGENT STREET, LONDON

- Commercial active permanent
- Physical activities
- Cultural activities
- Children playing
- Lying down
- Sitting on secondary sitting possibilities
- Sitting caféchairs
- Sitting on benches
- Standing

AVERAGE NUMBER OF STATIONARY ACTIVITIES BETWEEN 12 NOON AND 5 PM /YARD





Bourke Street, Melbourne

SITTING IN THE WHARF

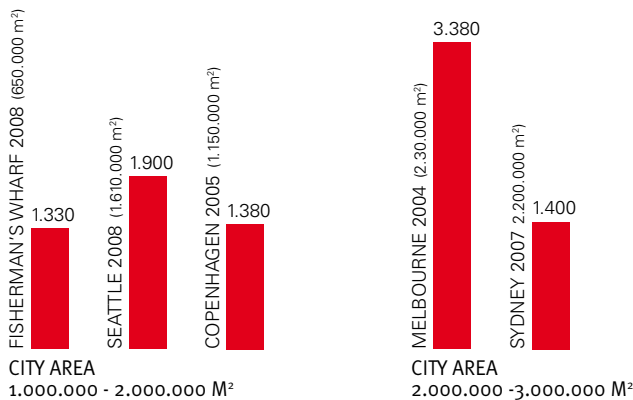
PUBLIC SEATING

Resting is an integral part of pedestrian activity patterns. Good seating opportunities give people the option to pause and rest in order to be able to walk further and enjoy public life and city activities.

The number of seats on public benches in Fisherman's Wharf is similar to other cities. The question is, however, if an area like this with so many visitors on a daily basis couldn't offer more? Public seatings are unfortunately concentrated to a few selected areas along the waterfront and semi public spaces inside cityblocks in the eastern part of the area. Public seating doesn't seem to be part of a general street program. In comparing the high number of public seats on East Plaza with the low number of 'people sitting on benches' recorded, it is clear that better invitations than just benches are needed.

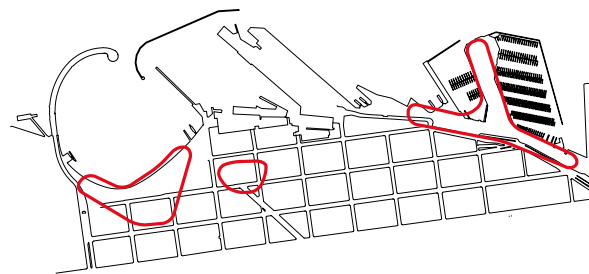
Public seating are concentrated in few specific areas
Many of the benches are in private areas

COMPARISON: NUMBER OF SEATS ON PUBLIC BENCHES IN OTHER CITY CENTRES

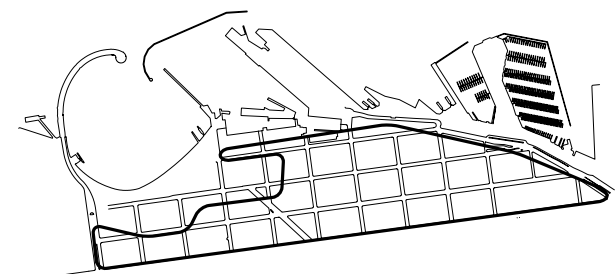


SURVEY OF PUBLIC SEATING

Number of public seating in study area



FEW SELECTED AREAS IN FISHERMAN'S WHARF OFFER PUBLIC SEATING



THE MAJORITY OF FISHERMAN'S WHARF LACK PUBLIC SEATING

SITTING IN THE WHARF

PUBLIC SEATING

There is almost no public seating along Jefferson Street - the main pedestrian route through the area and merely no public seating is found along the other streets.

Apart from the number of public benches, some other parameters are important in order to provide good possibilities for resting. Experience shows that the seating most used is of good quality, has a nice view, sufficient sun/shade and shelter, and most importantly is located in connection to important pedestrian links and destinations. Good, comfortable seating placed in the right location provides visitors with a rest and an opportunity to stay longer, which is contributing to a more lively city.

Many of the public benches in Fisherman's Wharf are seldom used, mostly because of low quality or odd locations.

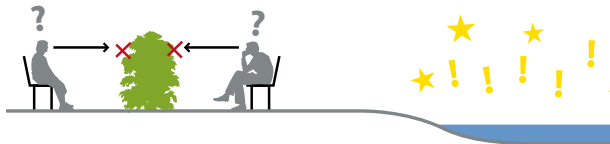


LACK OF PUBLIC SEATING

When you can't find a seat you have sit on 'what ever' you can find when you need a rest.



A public seating environment of mixed quality



STRANGE ORIENTATION OF BENCHES EXAMPLE FROM THE BAY AREA



ODD LOCATION

This is one of few benches near Jefferson Street, but it is located where almost no people walk or would like to sit.
East of Boudin Bakery, Jefferson Street



OBSTRUCTED VIEW

The potentially wonderful view is obstructed by plants and bushes.
Aquatic Park, off Beach Street



POOR ORIENTATION

Benches are turning their backs to the Bay view.
Aquatic Park, off Beach Street

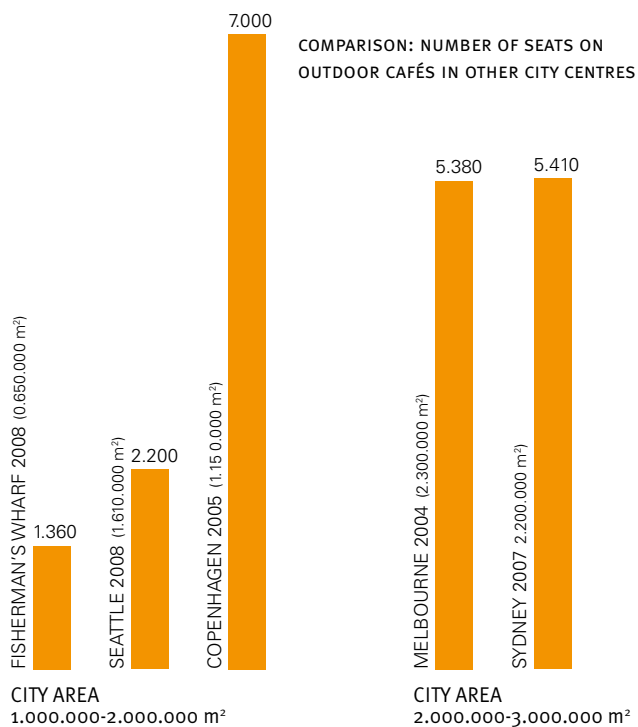
SITTING IN THE WHARF

OUTDOOR CAFÉ SEATING

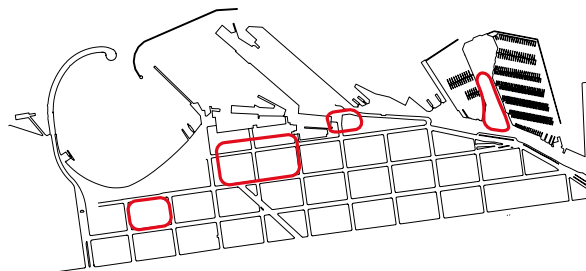
The culture of outdoor café life has developed rapidly in many countries around the world. This has significantly changed the patterns of use in the city centres.

The amount of outdoor café chairs in Fisherman's Wharf is low compared to other cities surveyed around the world. Most chairs are found in selected areas with many tourists like the southern part of Pier 39, northern end of Taylor Street, Ghirardelli Square, The Cannery and The Anchorage.

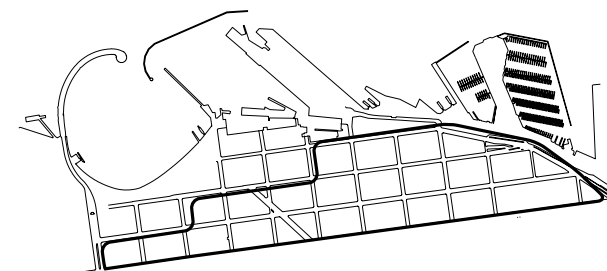
Outdoor serving are concentrated in few smaller areas



SURVEY OF CAFÉ SEATING



CAFÉ SEATING IS LIMITED TO A FEW SELECTED AREAS IN FISHERMAN'S WHARF, MANY IN PRIVATE AREAS



CAFÉ SEATING IS LIMITED IN THE MAJORITY OF FISHERMAN'S WHARF WITH ONLY 'SMALL SIZE' OUTDOOR SERVINGS

SITTING IN THE WHARF

OUTDOOR CAFÉ SEATING

A lot of the café seatings are located isolated inside city blocks at Ghiradelli Square, The Cannery and The Anchorage and do not take advantage of the proximity to the water nor to Jefferson Street as the most popular street in the area.

Looking at the number of café seats along Jefferson Street it is very limited in comparison with other waterfront streets around the world.

The outdoor servings you do find here often create problems by taking up space for pedestrians and it is difficult to get a view to the water.

Almost no outdoor café seating is recorded adjacent to the water. This pinpoints an obvious underutilization of an exceptional great potential for the Wharf.

COMPARISON: NUMBER OF SEATS ON OUTDOOR CAFÉS PER M STREET

Jefferson Street - app. 700m

324 café seats (between Hyde Street and Stockton Street)

0,5 café seat/m



Nyhavn, Copenhagen - app. 250m

906 café seats (between St. Strandstræde and Toldbodgade)

3,6 café seat/m



Akerbrygge, Oslo - app. 340m

963 café seats (between Dokkveien and west end of Stranden)

2,8 café seat/m



CAFÉ SEATING INSIDE CITYBLOCKS

When sitting at the outdoor servings in Ghiradelli Square and The Cannery - even though the fine qualities - you do not sense that you are in a special area close to the water.

The Cannery and Ghiradelli Square

Location of most outdoor servings do not exploit the potentials of the area



CAFÉ SEATING ALONG JEFFERSON STREET

Outdoor servings along Jefferson Street often creates odd situations and poor conditions for coffee drinkers, as well as pedestrians. Even here so close to the waterfront you can have difficulties to see the water and feel presence of the water.



'FACES'

WHY LOOKS MATTER

GROUNDLOOR FRONTAGES AND ACTIVITIES

The design of the groundfloor frontages is crucial for the vitality of public life. Surveys* shows that pedestrians move slower in front of active frontages, more people stop and more stationary activities take place. All and all, the number of activities in front of attractive and active frontages is seven times as many as in front of inactive and closed frontages. In addition people move slower in front of the attractive frontages generating an additional 13% increase in the total activity. The result is that inactive, closed frontages pacify the public realm while open and active frontages activate it. Apart from this, attractive frontages make walking a more pleasant activity and the city a more beautiful place to be. Inactive frontages discourage people from walking down a street, a fact that is reflected in the near-absence of pedestrians along many streets in the southern part of Fisherman's Wharf.

There are 7 times more activities in front of attractive frontages*

CLOSED



VS

OPEN



*'Close encounters with buildings' - Survey made by Jan Gehl and Centre for Public Space Research, Copenhagen

Nansensgade, Copenhagen



GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGES

QUALITY CRITERIA

IMPORTANCE OF GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGES

The design of ground floor frontages has a high impact on the attractiveness of the public realm. They are the walls of the urban environment, and contain the openings through which we see, hear, smell and engage in the city's million-faceted palette of activities. On the ground floor and at eye level we come close to the city.

Good ground floor frontages are active, rich in detail and exciting to walk by. They are interesting to look at, to touch and to stand beside. High quality ground floor frontages create a welcoming sensation and encourage people to walk and stay in the city.

TRANSPARENCY AND SMALL UNITS

Other positive qualities include a high degree of transparency enabling interaction between activities inside the buildings and those occurring on the street. Also, frontages with many small units, many openings and a variety of functions make streets more diverse, stimulating and thereby attractive. Frontages with small units also provide a predominantly vertical frontage structure which has the important visual effect of making distances feel shorter.

EVALUATION OF GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGES

In order to create an attractive, lively and people-friendly city, a substantial part of the ground floor frontage needs to be of high quality. Through previous Public Spaces and Public Life studies, a tool for evaluating ground floor frontages has been developed and is now used in many other cities.

The criteria presented on this page have been used in the evaluation of ground floor frontages in Fisherman's Wharf on the following page.



A ACTIVE

- Small units, many doors (15-20 units per 100 m)
- Diversity of functions
- No closed or passive units
- Interesting relief in frontages
- Quality materials and refined details



B PLEASANT

- Relatively small units (10-14 units per 100 m)
- Some diversity of functions
- Only a few closed or passive units
- Some relief in the frontages
- Relatively good detailing



C SOMEWHERE IN-BETWEEN

- Mixture of small and larger units (6-10 units per 100 m)
- Some diversity of functions
- Only a few closed or passive units
- Uninteresting design of frontages
- Somewhat poor detailing



D DULL

- Larger units with few doors (2-5 units per 100 m)
- Little diversity of functions
- Many closed units
- Predominantly unattractive frontages
- Few or no details



E INACTIVE

- Large units with few or no doors
- No visible variation of function
- Closed and passive frontages
- Monotonous frontages
- No details, nothing interesting to look at



F PARKING GARAGE STRUCTURE

- Large units
- No attractive or engaging functions
- Closed frontages
- Dark spaces creating a feeling of unsafety at night
- No details, nothing interesting to look at

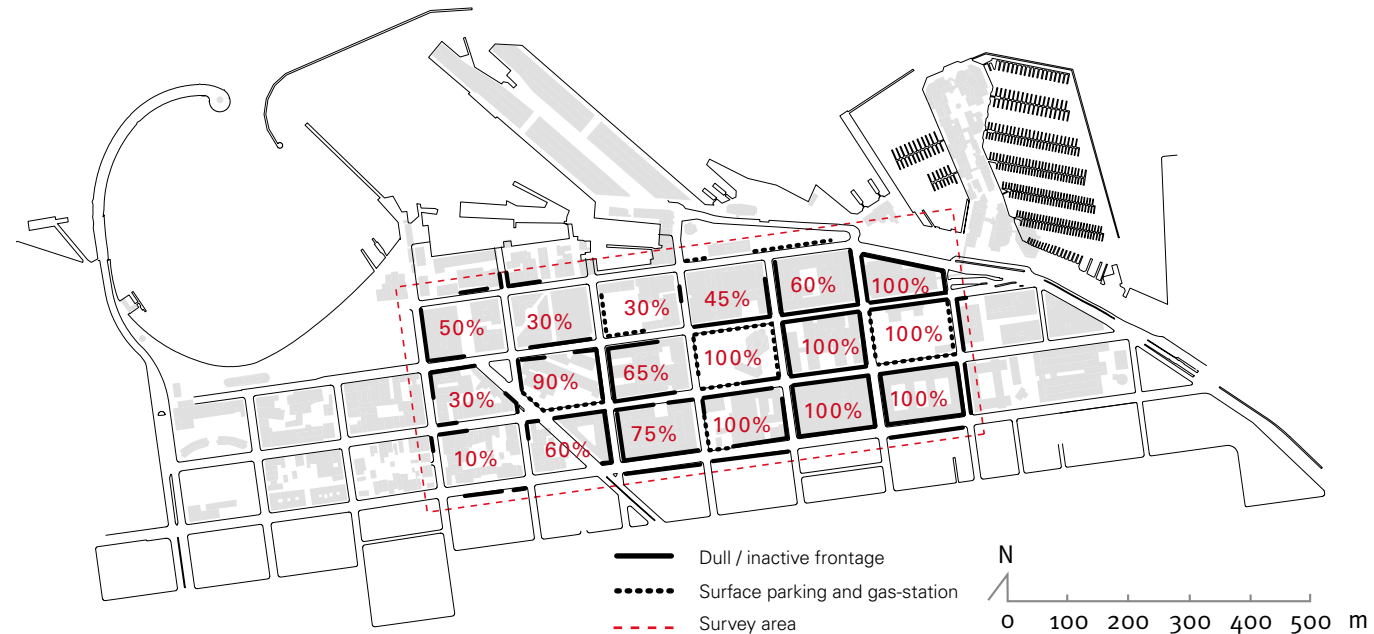
GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGES

EVALUATION OF THE GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGES

The central part of Fisherman’s Wharf is heavily dominated by dull, closed and inactive ground floor frontages, mainly because of large hotel blocks of poor architectural quality with no visual functions and no interactions with the surroundings. Large plots with surface parking and gas stations with no frontages or edges contribute further to the dullness of the area. These units will also create open dark spaces and add a feeling of unsafety at night.

The lack of interesting frontages generates an unpleasant streetscape. Thus, when walking north from downtown to the waterfront and Jefferson Street, you have to pass through an uninviting zone with poor visual quality and a pedestrian environment of low attractiveness. This part of the Fisherman’s Wharf appears as a ‘dead’ area.

Along Jefferson Street the groundfloor frontages are mostly active, although often of poor quality.



PERCENT OF DULL/INACTIVE GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGES, BY BLOCK

Dull and inactive ground floor frontages dominate the central part of the Wharf
 70% of total frontages south of Jefferson St score a D / E



ENTRANCES TO THE STREET

FEW ENTRANCES CREATE A DULL STREETScape

The number of building entrances to the street is a good indicator of how an active ground floor frontage is experienced. It also influences the activity level in the street as more people walk in and out of buildings.

At Fisherman's Wharf, there is a clear division between the hotel & parking district, which has very few entrances, and the residential district in the eastern part, together with the more commercial sequences of Jefferson Street and Pier 39 with many entrances.

Few entrances to the street in most cases results in an inactive street and creates an uninviting and unpleasant environment for pedestrians.

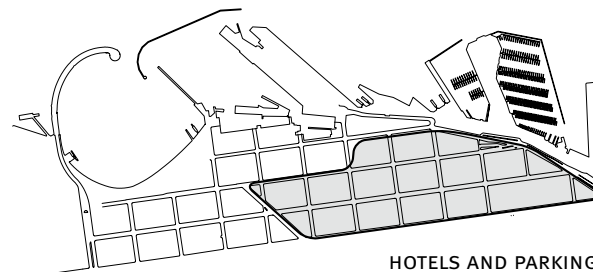
In Fisherman's Wharf, the urban grain, with long straight streets and large block units, creates a monotonous streetscape and requires a functional or visual subdivision of the blocks.

A large part of the Wharf suffers from closed frontages with no or few entrances

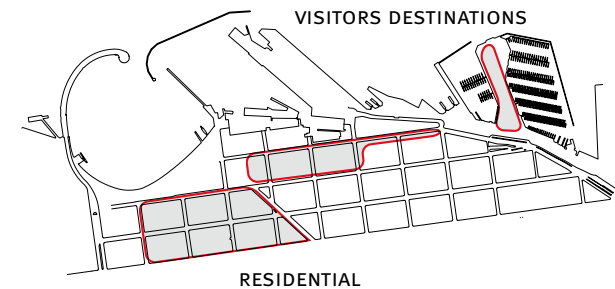
Large urban blocks create a monotonous streetscape



SURVEY OF ENTRANCES



AREA WITH VERY FEW ENTRANCES TO THE STREET



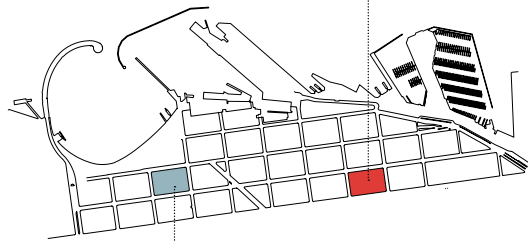
AREAS WITH MANY ENTRANCES TO THE STREET

ENTRANCES TO THE STREET

FEW OR MANY DOORS

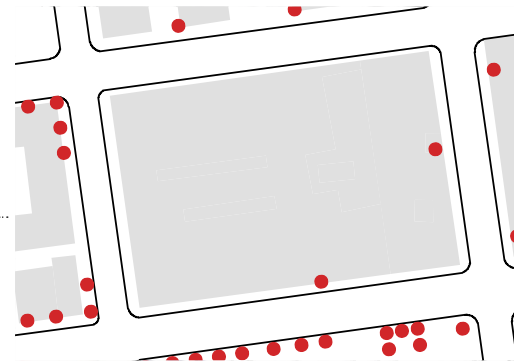
A closer look at two blocks can illustrate the polarity of the current situation. On the one hand you can find a monofunctional block - a shopping centre - with only 2 entrances! Here, the uniform frontage design emphasizes the monotonous character and results in a 'long' walk along the building.

The most problematic block has a total of two entrances. That is equivalent to 8 entrances per mile of frontage



On the other hand, you can find a block in the residential area with a mix of functions, frontage design and unit sizes with 48 entrances!

Frontages with small units also provide a predominantly vertical frontage structure, which has the important visual effect of making distances feel shorter.



2 entrances per block
0.5 entrance per 100 meters



48 entrances per block.
11.5 entrances per 100 meters.



Single function shopping centre block.



Residential and mix use block.

'OUTSIDE - IN' SPACES

THE OUTSIDE EDGE LACKS ATTRACTIONS

The phenomenon with public and semi public/private spaces like Pier 39, Ghiradelli Square, The Cannery and Anchorage that turn their back to the public realm and focus the attractions inwards, creates a situation where life and dynamism are removed from the streets. These places all have interiors with plenty of public seating and café seating and a fine grain with numerous entrances facing the open space, but the outside edges are lacking most of these fine qualities.

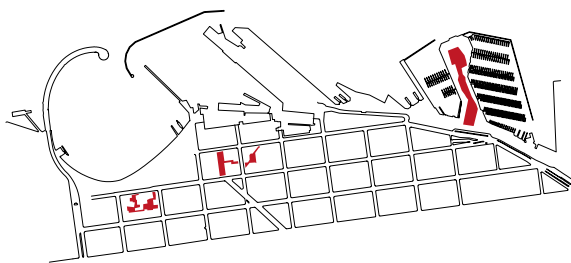


GHIRADELLI SQUARE - DEAD AND CLOSED OUTSIDE

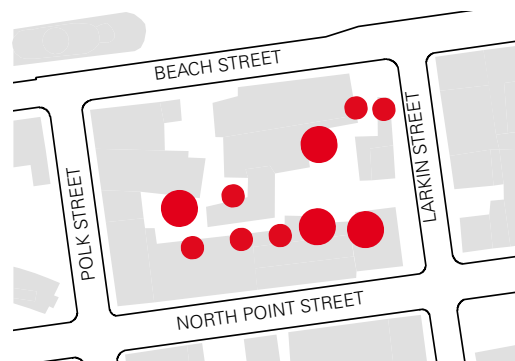


GHIRADELLI SQUARE - LIVELY AND ENJOYABLE INSIDE

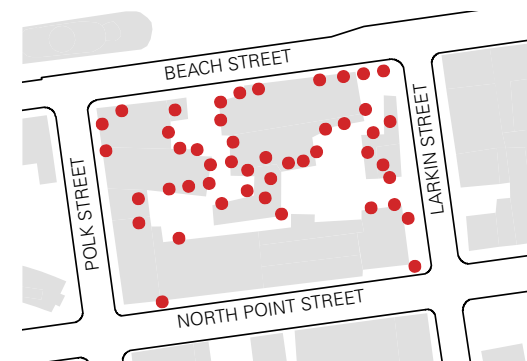
Popular destinations turn their 'outside' in and detract life from the public realm



'OUTSIDE - IN' AREAS IN FISHERMAN'S WHARF



NO PUBLIC SEATING IN THE SURROUNDING STREETS



MOST ENTRANCES ARE FACING THE INSIDE OF THE BLOCK

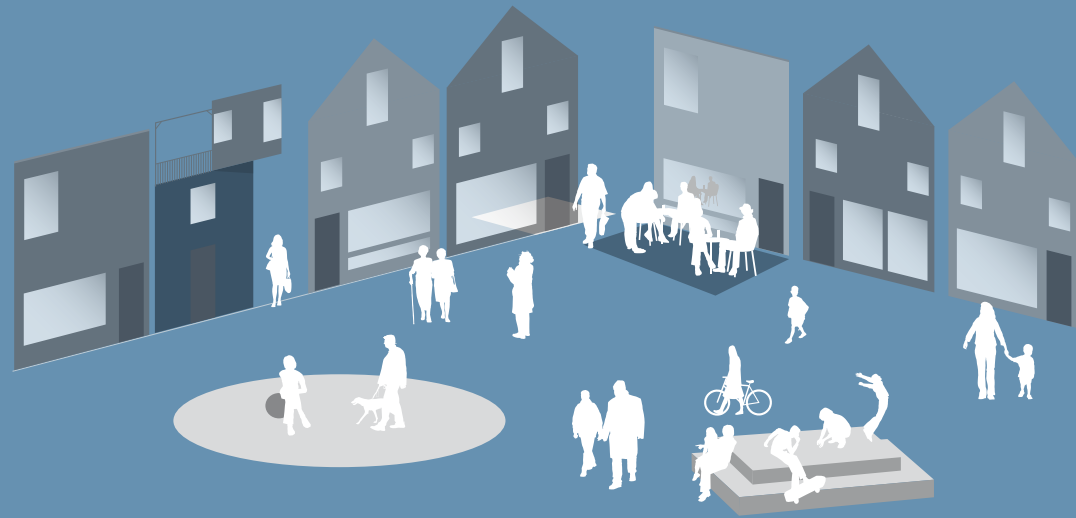
LOOKING AT THE WHARF

OVER-COMMERCIALIZED STREETSCAPE

In the previous surveys and analysis, the poor quality and lack of interaction of many frontages in Fisherman's Wharf has been addressed. Also, the lack of entrances especially in the central parts, has been studied. But another part that disrupts the quality of the public realm is the very commercialized streetscape. A sign culture with big and loud advertisements and commercial stalls that take over the sidewalks results in the impression of the scattered streetscape. Audiovisual commercialism pollutes the sounds of the street and makes conversations more difficult.

Parts of Fisherman's Wharf
are not a pleasant visual
experience





URBAN LANDSCAPE

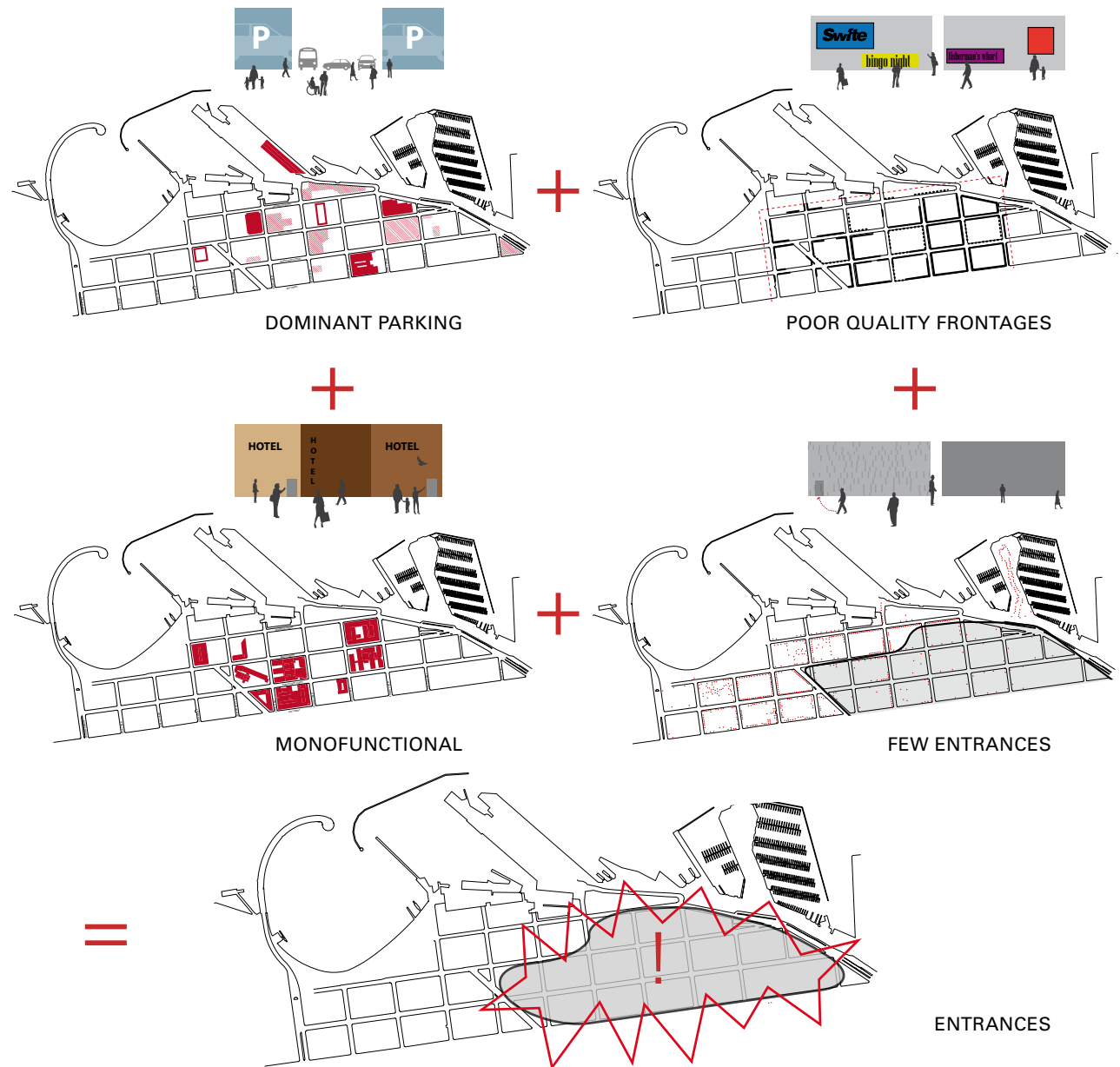
AN INACTIVE ZONE

CENTRAL PART - AN ALMOST DESERTED AREA

Adding the previous surveys and analysis together, a picture emerges of the central part of Fisherman's Wharf as a deserted area. The lack of diversity of functions, the domination of parking and garages, the reduced number of entrances, and abundance of dull frontages creates a 'dead zone' between San Francisco and it's waterfront.

The zone appears lifeless and unattractive and does not contribute to the idea of a world class destination.

There are a few highlights in this environment, but it fundamentally expresses the feeling, that this place is for driving - not walking. The odd side of this situation is that there is a high concentration of people in these urban blocks who have to walk the waterfront, which is their main destination and reason for being there.



A 'dead zone' between San Francisco and the waterfront

LACK OF INVITING LOCATIONS AND NETWORK

LOW LEGIBILITY AND NOT INVITING TO ALL GROUPS OF PEOPLE

The network of streets, open spaces and boardwalks are rather poorly connected. There are few places that are inviting for families although families, are a large proportion of the visitors. There are few invitations for old people or children to enjoy activities except for standing or sitting down, and even then, the opportunities to sit are not very attractive.

The core east-west pedestrian route through the Wharf, Jefferson Street, is a confusing place and it does not offer the best invitations to explore the Wharf. Many of the exciting places to explore are situated right next to Jefferson Street along the water or inside blocks but remain hidden from most visitors.

Besides the key tourist destinations, there are several key spaces in the pedestrian network that are 'points of disorientation' rather than places to invite the visitor to continue her exploration of this complex and interesting location. Many places have low legibility, where people look at maps and wonder where they are, or how to get to their desired destinations.

The Wharf is highly complex but lacks a feeling of unity or sense of place to pull it all together.



Few spaces with invitations to other activities than standing or sitting down

Poor connections between the different public spaces and low legibility in the Wharf as a whole

TURNING ITS BACK TO THE WATER

POOR CONTACT WITH THE GREATEST ASSET

Many of the places where visitors congregate and move through provide or offer is no access or view of the water. Many of the restaurants turn their backs to the Bay. This is specially true around Jefferson Street.

Water and views to the Bay seem to be a scarce commodity, although the Bay is full of opportunities. In summarising the surveys and studies, it is evident that the invitation to go and explore the water and related activities along the waterfront is limited, but the potential is huge.

A lot of the views from the city to the Wharf are blocked by buildings, including buildings on piers, so the waterfront is invisible.



Many views to the Bay are blocked by buildings or other obstacles

Restaurants along Jefferson Street, the main pedestrian route, turn their back to the Bay



Larkin Street provides a fine view to the waterfront.



Columbus Avenue provides no view to the waterfront.



Jones Street provide no view to the waterfront.



Taylor Street provide no view to the waterfront.