Retail, Consumption and the New Forms of Urban Governance

Professor Leigh Sparks,
Institute for Retail Studies,
University of Stirling

Lisbon, September 2017

Some Background

- Professor of Retail Studies and Deputy Principal
- Originally a Geographer then moved into Business/Management schools
- Member, National Review of Town Centres
- Chair, Scotland’s Towns Partnership
- Advisor, Scottish Government on Retailing/Towns

Structure

1. Retail and other change
2. Stirling’s sense of place
3. From National Review to WTLS16
4. This Matters

Crisis on the High Street

Consumer Change

- Time and Money
- Demographics
- Access and Travel
- Product and Service Demands
- Product and Process Innovation
Retail Change

- Certainty Breakdown
  - Internet
  - Discounters
  - Convenience

Convenience

- Convenience
  - Growth Sector
  - Affiliates
  - Corporates

  - Convenience Culture and Relocalisation

The Internet

- Long Run Structural Change
  - Internet shopping becomes mainstream
  - Food: National store based picking and Emerging Dark Stores
  - Non Food: National and International operations

But What is Convenience Today?

Discounters

- Recession
  - Price
  - Discounters
    - Food based
    - Non-Food Based

Hyper-fast Convenience?

Choose from a range of products and self-prepare them right over the day.
Get up to 20 items delivered within 60 minutes.

HOW DELIVERY BOT WORKS

1. Order placed
2. Item collected
3. Item ready for delivery
4. Order confirmed
5. Item delivered
6. Order received
7. Order confirmed
8. Order delivered
9. Order received
10. Order confirmed
11. Order delivered
12. Order received
13. Order confirmed
14. Order delivered
15. Order received
16. Order confirmed
17. Order delivered
18. Order received
19. Order confirmed
20. Order delivered
21. Order received
22. Order confirmed
23. Order delivered
24. Order received
25. Order confirmed
26. Order delivered
27. Order received
28. Order confirmed
29. Order delivered
30. Order received
31. Order confirmed
32. Order delivered
33. Order received
34. Order confirmed
35. Order delivered
36. Order received
37. Order confirmed
38. Order delivered
39. Order received
40. Order confirmed
41. Order delivered
42. Order received
43. Order confirmed
44. Order delivered
45. Order received
46. Order confirmed
47. Order delivered
48. Order received
49. Order confirmed
50. Order delivered
Non- Food Convenience

Retail Revolution

• The Retail Revolution has changed:
  — How we shop
  — How we think about shopping
  — How we tell others about shopping and retailing
  — How retailers sell
  — Retail operations and practices

Showrooming

A Fundamental Change

• From Adapting our Lifestyles to the Retail Offer to now the Retail Offer fitting our Lifestyles

Bubbling Up?

A Crisis of Urban Space

• Structural Change
  — Consumer behaviour
  — Business reactions
• Recessionary Overlay
  — Consumer concerns
  — The new realities in property and banking
• Spatial Change
  — We need less space
  — We need better fit space
  — We need to rethink space and place
High Streets and Town Centres

- Decline in importance
- Concentration of area (prime zone)
- Costs have risen faster
- Vacancies and dereliction – not just ex-shops and not just street level

Structure

1. Retail and other change
2. Stirling’s sense of place
3. From National Review to WTLS16
4. This Matters

Understanding Scottish Places

Stirling: Scotland’s Heart

- Castle and Broad Street
- Movement Downhill and Decentralisation
  - Thistle Centre 1970s
  - Fine Fare & MFI St. Ninians 1970s
  - Springkerse 1980s
  - Thistles Phase 2 late 1990s
  - Individual
    - Aldi, Sainsbury, Morrisons, Waitrose, Dobbies, Klondyke, Greggs, Post Office, Lidl, B&M

A (Wikipedia) Picture of Stirling

- Stirling is a city in central Scotland. The city is clustered around a large fortress and medieval old town. Stirling is the administrative centre for the Stirling council area, and is traditionally the county town of Stirlingshire. The city is located several miles to the west of the mouth of the River Forth. Historically it was strategically important as the “Gateway to the Highlands”, with its position near the Highland Boundary Fault between the Scottish Lowlands and Highlands.
- One of the principal royal strongholds of the Kingdom of Scotland, Stirling was created a Royal burgh by King David I in 1130. Once the capital of Scotland, Stirling contains the Great Hall and the Renaissance Palace within Stirling Castle. Stirling also has its medieval parish church, the Church of the Holy Rude, where King James VI was crowned King of Scots.
- Stirling is a centre for local government, higher education, retail, and industry.

Stirling Retail

- Castle and Broad Street
- Movement Downhill and Decentralisation
Stirling’s Retail Issues Today

• Thistles Centre
• Decentralisation
• Secondary Streets
• Vacancy Rates
• Operational Issues

Stirling Decentralisation

• Offices – Prudential, Ogilvie
• Council Administration
• Tourism – Castle, Bannockburn, Wallace
• Sport – Annfield to Forthbank
• Light Industrial
• Schools (and Colleges and Universities)
• Cinema
• Hotels
• Residential Accommodation
• Services e.g. Post Office, Dental Practices

Stirling’s Wider “Problems”?

• Reasons to Visit?
• Folk, Work, Place?
• Stirling = ??
• Vacant Space
• Private vs Public
• Areas and Connectivity
• Lack of opportunities?

Stirling is not Uniquely Challenged

• We need to rethink and re-energise urban spaces
  – Purpose
  – Activities
  – Management
  – Approaches
  – Community

Structure

1. Retail and other change
2. Stirling's sense of place
3. From National Review to WTLS16
4. This Matters

Portas, Grimsey and Fraser

ASDA’s proposals for a new store in Stirling.
Scotland’s Towns Partnership

- Members
- Partners
- Sponsors
- Media
- Projects

The Fraser Review

- Patrick Geddes: Folk, Work, Place
  - Town Centres First
  - Town Centre Living
  - Vibrant Local Economies
  - Enterprising Communities
  - Accessible Public Services
  - Digital Towns
  - Pro-Active Planning

Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP) and TCAP One and Two Years On

- Scottish Government accepted the Fraser Review and developed the Town Centre Action Plan
- Town Centre First Principle agreed with COSLA
- Various demonstration projects against each of the 6 themes
- Scotland’s Towns Partnership – the “go-to” body
- Other projects and avenues being explored
- Alignment within government

Tools

- Town Centre Toolkit
- Place Standard
- Understanding Scottish Places (USP)
- Town Audits
- Charrettes

Mechanisms

- Business Improvement Districts
- Development Trusts
- Community Empowerment Act
WTL 2016

WTF Pillars

- Governance and citizenship
  - Blurring of boundaries
  - Engagement not separatism
  - Connectivity and community engagement
  - Open structures using new technologies
- Environment
  - Environmental resources
  - Sustainability of all assets
  - Collective actions
  - Public places, spaces and routines

World Towns Framework

Structure

1. Retail and other change
2. Stirling’s sense of place
3. From National Review to WTLS16
4. This Matters

WTF Pillars

- Unique identities of place
  - DNA of a place
  - Unique vision/distinctive challenges
  - Accommodate change but maintain uniqueness
  - Different pathways
- Local Economies
  - Local business, local economies
  - Resilience and sustainability
  - Connectivity and networks

Why do Places Matter?

- Defining Feature
- Vital Resource
- Social and Economic Benefits
- Improve Quality of Life
- True Eco-Towns
- Democratic Right to Shared Resources
Reinventing and Reimagining Places

People are the lifeblood of town centres. They spend money, support businesses and bring activity. But people have more choices than ever before. We can choose where we go shopping, meet friends, see a film, listen to music or eat out. Businesses and organisations can choose where they invest and grow.

To attract people and investment, town centres have to offer better choices in lots of ways – what they have to offer, how pleasant they are to be in, and ease of access. We are living in a time of vast social change, economically and socially. Town centres need to keep pace with changing habits and lifestyles. Doing nothing means falling behind.

Rallying Calls for New Directions

- Retailing needs to reconnect to place and places need to reconnect to people
- Plan and organise for the connections and interactions not the separations
- What matters to people

Positive Choices for People

- I’m from a place, a town, a community
- It means something to me and it defines parts of me
- It’s a community

Contact Points

Web: www.stirlingretail.com
Email: Leigh.sparks@stir.ac.uk
Telephone: +44 (0)1786 467384
Twitter: sparks_stirling