# Streetscaping Beitbridge Central Business District for Public Space Quality Enhancement

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## Abstract

This study unravels processes and approaches towards external urban environment quality enhancement from a streetscaping standpoint using the case of Beitbridge Central Business District. It acknowledges that the built environment's public space ought to be enhanced from multiple dimensions. One among them is the streetscape concept. Despite the known benefits of a high-quality public space, there is a dearth of scholarly investigation of this in Zimbabwe. A mixed-method approach that involved detailed surveys aided by structured observation of the streetscape and its usage, key informant and general interviews, and desk review of secondary sources constituted the methodology of this study. Despite substantial work towards the improvement of the urban environment, this study discovered that there is still a significant mismatch between the existing image of the town and the societal expectations from the southern face of Zimbabwe. This call for the prioritisation of public space designing, by the responsible authorities, whose ultimate aim is to enhance the quality of urban environments for maximum value derivation. The study concludes that a 'street' is more intimate to humanity due to its three-dimensional nature that integrates buildings, the sidewalk, the traffic surface, furniture and other infrastructure while a 'road' is merely a two-dimensional traffic surface that is more intimate to vehicles. The 'streetscape concept' is promising to produce inclusive, smart and human responsive urban public space.

*Keywords: streetscape, public space, environmental quality, enclosure*

## INTRODUCTION

The 'streetscape concept' is promising to produce inclusive, smart and human responsive urban public space. Various commentators agree that 'public space' refers to the external component of the built environment that is accessible by the public for example streets, public parks and any land lying between

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private landholdings (UN-Habitat 2016; Carmona *et al*. 2010; Harvey 2009; Tonnelat 2010; Dilorenzo 2011). Public space is three-dimensional since it includes adjacent buildings (Gillespies 2007, Local Government Association of South Australia 2014) In addition, the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate (2005) emphasised that the term includes all the physical elements that are in that space such as street furniture, surfaces landscape and building facades.

The Local Government Association of South Australia (2014: 9) further revealed that the three key elements that influence public space are "the buildings that enclose and define the space, the space itself, and the people that inhabit the public realm and the way they use the space". Gillespies (2007: 5) concurred that ''public spaces are enlivened by the presence of people. This conceptualisation of public space shows that people cannot be separated from the public space. In support of this view, Lofland (2009) highlighted the importance and inseparability of people from successful public spaces.

It is generally agreed that the quality of public space positively contributes to the people's quality of life (Dilorenzo 2011; Gillespies 2007; Urban October Background Paper 2015; Wojnarowska 2016) and is also a major contributor to social conscience (UN-Habitat 2010: 140; Rio 2004: 38). The UN-Habitat (2016: 131-132) highlighted that the Sustainable Development Goal Specific target 11.7 is evidence of the importance of public space to humanity:

> By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

Public space plays a pivotal role in urban structure, character and attractiveness of the townscape (Wojnarowska 2016; New Master Planning Limited 2008; Project for Public Spaces 2012) and thus allows cities to compete for (Rio 2004: 38; Trip 2007: 502). A public space has the potential to reposition, reimage and market a city; and improve the city's tourism potential (Harvey 2009). It is the 'lifeblood of the city' (Carmona *et al*. 2010: 137) that gives a city its image and sense of place (Dilorenzo 2011; Gillespies 2007; Harvey 2009). Public spaces promote human health (CABE 2011; Harvey 2009), regulates the adverse effects of climate change (Maulan 2015); enhances economic performance and attracts investment (New Zealand Ministry of Environment 2005; UN-Habitat 2015; Urban October Background Paper

2015) and promote social inclusiveness (Rio 2004; Koray 1999). The Urban October Background Paper (2015: 3) calls public space the "poor man's living room". Furthermore, the public space offers to the public 'opportunities for learning, communication, refreshing and political activities' (Lofland 2009: 231).

## THE STREETSCAPE

This study is confined to the streetscape which, according to Jacobs (1961: 29), is the major component of the public space and a chief determinant of the state of public space:

> Streets and their sidewalks, the main public spaces, are its most vital organs. Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If the city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting, if they look dull, the city looks dull (Jacobs, 1961:29).

Moughtin (2003: 129) defined the term 'street' as "an enclosed, three-dimensional space between two lines of adjacent buildings". Carmona *et al* (2010: 183) described the street as 'linear'. Both sources distinguished a street from a road: the primary purpose of a road is a thoroughfare for vehicular traffic, while a street is more than a road because it runs within the built-up area between adjacent buildings. In this way, the building facades give the street an additional dimension, which makes it three-dimensional. The Project for Public Spaces (2008) indicated that when a street is characterised by minimal human presence, it is merely a conduit for vehicular traffic. In light of the undesirable state where vehicles dominate the streetscape over humans (UN-Habitat 2013; Project for Public spaces 2008), the UN-Habitat (2013: 152) calls "streetwise prosperity versus petrol-powered prosperity". This is in line with the general consensus that streets must be viewed as human social spaces (CABE 2011; Fredrickson 1999; Project for Public Spaces 2012).

The relationship between the street width and its height (walls of buildings fronting the street) is important in assessing the degree of street spatial containment or enclosure. Poerbo (2001: 305) has highlighted that:

> [e]nclosed spaces are visually pleasing and create a sense of place. They provide variety of visual interest, and are more 'comfortable' at the pedestrian scale. If the space is too large, a frequent problem, there is a loss of comfortable contact with the surroundings and a tendency towards a feeling of agoraphobia. The counterpart, less frequently encountered, is a space, which is too small, leading towards a feeling of claustrophobia.

In consistence with the foregoing, the Edinburg City Council (2003) agree that the height to width ratio of 1:3 is an effective ratio; not too wide but still has a spatial appearance. The effect of the streetscape diminishes when the street width is wider compared to its walls, for example 1:6 or more. Carmona *et al* (2010: 183) concurs that if the walls are low in relation to the street width, visual enclosure or containment is lost. On the other hand, "if the building height exceeds the width of the space, then the tops of the buildings will no longer be visible without looking up". Such heights reduce light penetration and ventilation into the space, for example a height to width ratio of 2:1. A tree canopy can also be used to spatially define street enclosure as shown in Figure 1 (Edinburg City Council 2003: 43). The enclosure concept seems to provide an opportunity for designers to intimately link public space with human needs and desires.
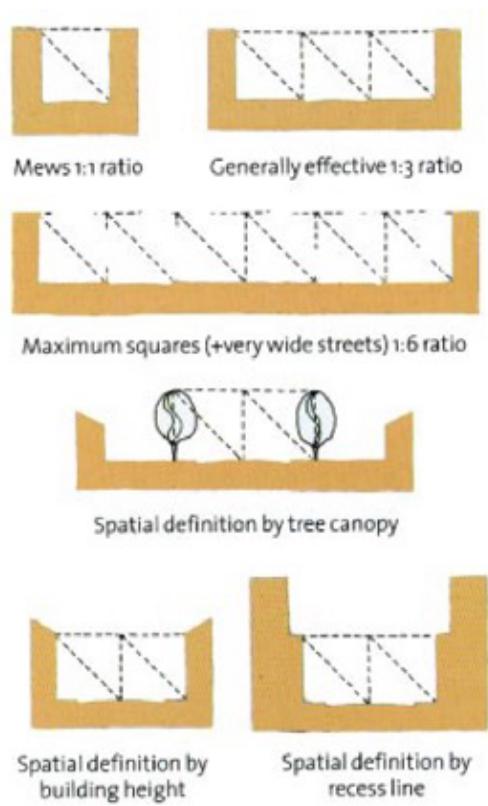


**Figure 1: Street height to width ratios. Source: Edinburg City Council (2003: 43).**

# PUBLIC SPACE QUALITY

Malek *et al*. (2010: 6) defined 'quality' as the "degree of excellence by which we satisfy the needs of the customers". Quality means fitness for use, capacity to satisfy wants or suitable for its intended purpose (Cafuta 2015; Malek *et al*. 2010), and conformance to requirements and delighting the customers (Malek *et al*. 2010). Malek *et al*. (2012) emphasised that quality is about the actual users. The approach is based on Cafuta's (2015) user-based definition of quality. Therefore, the quality of a public space is measured by its ability to meet the needs and desires of the users (Malek *et al*. 2010). Given the definition of 'quality', the understanding of human experiences and desires on the streetscape is an important ingredient towards the enhancement of the public space quality.

According to the Urban October Background Paper (2015: 2) the theme of the 2015 United Nations Habitat Day 'Public Spaces for All' was proclaimed as a result of a realisation that the public space often has been undervalued, while, in actual fact, it is the backbone of cities and is central to the creation of an inclusive city as required by Sustainable Development Goal 11 that seeks to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (ICSU/ISSC 2015: 55). Trancik (1986) concurs that the institutional neglect of the public space is a monumental problem both because of minimal investment in maintaining public space and a general lack of interest in controlling the physical form and appearance of the city. Freirre (2006) argues that most cities in developing countries have to juggle with the desperate needs for basic services required for the growing number of the urban poor. This is seemingly happening at the expense of public space quality. However, Cloete and Yusuf (2018: 36) warns that the 'quality of public spaces should rather be viewed as a basic service such as transport and sanitation'.

On the other hand, the streetscape which is the major public space in cities and has the potential to influence the quality of public space is reported to have smaller pieces of land devoted to it in Africa. It has less than 20% when compared to other continents that are above (UN-Habitat 2016) and is biased towards vehicles compared to humans (UN-Habitat 2013: 152; Project for Public spaces 2008).

The vision for the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing in Zimbabwe reads 'Sound local governance and quality-built environment by 2030'. However, a lot of literature has been written on

local governance and basic service delivery (Freire 2006; Chaeruka and Munzwa 2009; Chirisa and Dumba 2011; Muderere 2011; Chirisa and Jonga 2009), but there is a dearth in literature on the quality of the built environment, in particular public space quality improvements. Investigations specifically targeted towards the public space, image or physical appearance, the streetscape and beauty of cities are patchy if not absent in Zimbabwe. Practically, it is acknowledged that there is a mismatch between the current urban quality in Beitbridge and the expectations of the border town (Muleya 2006 and Singo 2012). The need to fill this gulf in knowledge about the neglect of urban quality; the desire to check if public space in Beitbridge Municipality conforms to the contemporary theme 'Public Space for All' the intention to influence the local and master plans which are yet to be prepared for the first time; and the need to set the scene towards the Ministry's vision 2030 on the quality of the built environment; provides the necessary basis for this research. This studytherefore strives to find strategies that may be used to improve public space quality from the streetscaping point of view given that the street constitutes the major component of the public space.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Beitbridge Municipality Central Business District. Beitbridge is a border town located at the southernmost part of Zimbabwe and it shares the border with South Africa. Figure 2 shows the location of the study area.

A mixed-method approach that involved detailed surveys aided by structured observation of the streetscape and its usage, key informant and general interviews, constituted the fieldwork of this study (Figure 2).

## PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section is broadly divided into two major parts namely the street walls; and the street surface and furniture. In alignment with the main objectives of this study, in each case, the analysis will focus on the state of the existing streetscape in Beitbridge C.B.D and discuss the potential of the streetscape concept in the enhancement of public space quality.

### STREET WALLS

The study area was divided into ten blocks as illustrated in Table 1.
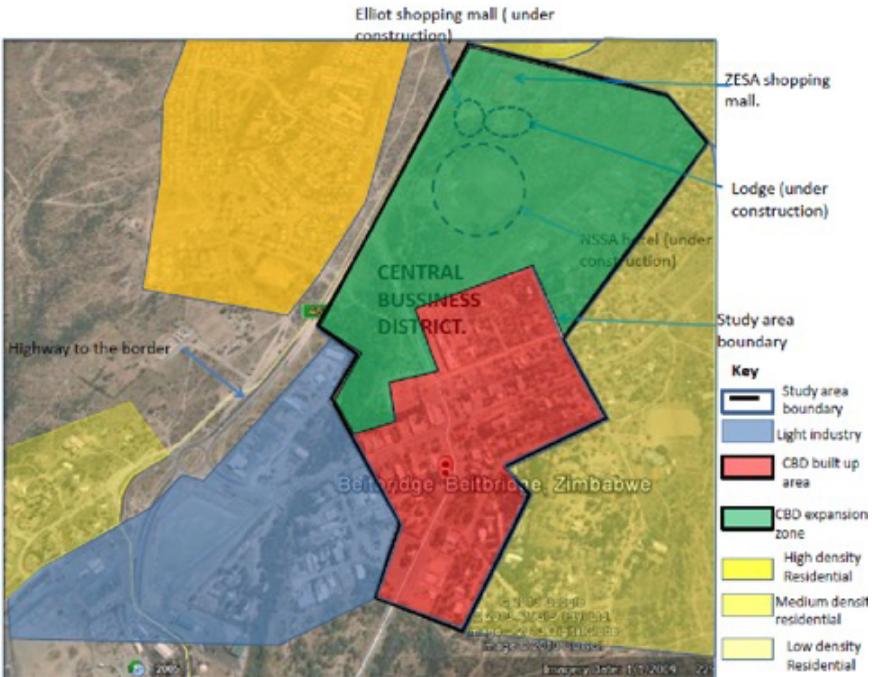
**Figure 2: The study area (Source: Google Maps, 2019) Beitbridge Municipality Central Business District.**

## Block A and B

Detailed observations revealed that Block A is characterised by double-storey buildings of uniform height and continuous frontage but the continuity is disrupted by the incomplete structures and a vacant stand at the western end of the block. It was observed that the dominance of glass in the ground floor makes the block interesting, it allows for window shopping and street surveillance. The continuous canopy protects the pedestrian in the sidewalks from the sun's intense heat and from the rain. However, given the north-west to south east orientation of the block, the entire sidewalk is exposed to the direct sun in summer especially towards the evening.

Block B is dominated by a single-storey and small standalone buildings, a chunk of vacant space, and a double-storey Border Service Station (at the junction with the Hagelthorn Road). The block is characterised by discontinuous frontage and the alignment of buildings in relation to the

street (the Great North Road) is not clearly defined. The height, size and unnecessary spaces between buildings next to and including the informal market stand have made the Great North Road to totally lose a sense of coherence and enclosure.

**Table 1: The ten blocks in the study area**

| Block Name | Location | Notable Buildings or Structures |
|---|---|---|
| A | North of Great North Road | The Barclays Building, Matopo Book centre and Living Waters. |
| B | South of Great North Road | The informal market stalls and the Border Service Station. |
| C | West of Justitia Road | The Barclays, Local Authority Building and government residential houses. |
| D | East of Justitia Road | First and Last Building; ZESA office and workshop and ZIMRA flats. |
| E | East of Granite Road | Beitbridge Inn Hotel, the Shushine garage and the Colbro Truck Park. |
| F | West of Granite Road | Border Service Station and the MIPF building. |
| G | West of Hagelthorn Road | Allen and Wack, the Jayas Restaurant and DHL. |
| H | East of Hagelthorn Road | The Old Police Station, the Croc Restaurant and the Local Government Offices. |
| I | West of the highway (northern tip, CBD expansion zone). | The ZESA mall and NSSA hotel. |
| J | West of the highway | Stadium and residential areas to the west of a buffer. |

Of prominence in block B is the unpleasant- looking market stalls as given in Plate 1. The structures are made of scrap material and wooden supports,

the materials of which, do not in any way meet urban standards. Given their location at the entrance of the C.BD and in front of an appealing commercial block of buildings (Block A); the structures actually detract attention from the attractive amenity of the entire townscape.



**Plate 1: The relationship between the informal structures and Block A**

It is important to clearly state that vendors and public markets should not be considered as a streetscape nuisance; they play an important role and thus should be accommodated. The market owners and the general public are in unison when it comes to the important role played by markets as they offer convenience to customers who need to buy petty goods. The Project for Public Spaces (2008) argues that markets actually help to bring liveliness and convenience in the street. They specifically promote the kind of shopping that involves small purchases such as newspapers, air time, clothes and magazines, among other things. It is important that vending structures need to be carefully designed and located according to community needs and specific guidelines that will enhance the place's friendliness and character.

Generally, the two blocks (A and B) are facing the Great North Road, which is actual a transportation ribbon that is not physically connected to the two blocks that it is meant to serve as a street. Observation has shown that the

street does not connect to the buildings on either side; it is kerbed and the streetscape was characterised by what used to be an undefined space (currently paved as parking) that exists between the road and the buildings. Conversely, the buildings do not reinforce and define the street character. The striking height and quality contrast between the structures either side of the same street (Blocks A and B); the unnecessary vacant spaces between buildings and low height of buildings on Block B; and the lost spaces between the traffic surface and the buildings contribute to total loss of coherence of the street's spatial character. The lack of continuity and enclosure means that the relationship between buildings fronting the same street is almost non-existent.

## Block C and D

Block C is made up of buildings of diverse quality. The visual quality of the Local Authority building and Barclays building is overshadowed by the neighbouring developments in the same block such as the unsightly Public Works workshop and the government houses that are in a state of disrepair. Character appraisal of the two blocks shows that the presence of 'bad neighbours' does not only dilute the pleasantness of adjacent quality buildings but also distorts the quality of buildings on the other side of the street.

## Blocks E and F

Block E is formless while Block F is somewhat continuous in form. The street is disrupted by vacant stands and incomplete structures. The Mining Industry Pension Fund (MIPF), which is one of the first buildings from the border after the service industry, exhibits modern architecture and significantly gives the town a positive image. However, the unsightly, ruinous buildings of an industrial nature and deteriorating bus wreckages in Block E compromises the quality of the streetscape and the negative effects spills over not only to Block F but to the entire street.

## Blocks G and H

Most characteristics of other blocks discussed earlier are similar to the areas in G and H. One important building stands in block H at the Hagelthorn Road- Great North Road Junction; this is the former Police Station. Observation found that the building is so carefully located in relation to the streetscape such that it actually becomes a 'distant welcoming structure' in the C.B.D for people entering through the Great North Road, the

Hagelthorn Road and the Granite road. It is so innovatively located that it actively engages the motorists and pedestrians all the way along the Great North Road by way of providing a pleasant vista or views that makes walking and driving a wonderful experience (Plate 2). However, all respondents expressed dissatisfaction over the obliterated state of all government buildings.



**Plate 2: The Old Police Station and Old Border post**

## Block I and J

While Block J is largely a buffer Block I characterised by new buildings of modern architectural quality such as the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) mall and the National Social Security Agency (NSSA) hotel. Responses from all professionals and most of the general public are in chorus with this observation, when they stated that the two buildings significantly give the town a positive image. However, analysis of the CBD layout plan (Figure 1) shows that the lack of continuity and enclosure will emerge as a relational problem in the entire Block I. The distribution, big size and layout of the existing ZESA mall stand, the Government Composite, the Civic Centre and the Magistrates court stands encourages the coming up of standalone buildings (Figure 3 and Plate 3). This state of affairs has also been worsened by the cancellation of multiple stands to pave way for the NSSA hotel and the Elliot shopping mall. Character appraisal of the existing streetscape shows that the emergence of adjacent freestanding buildings has already started as demonstrated by the existing ZESA mall and the NSSA building. Whilst the buildings present high architectural quality as individuals, the problems in their relationships is already observable and will worsen as the other stands in the northern tip are developed. Such stand alone or free-standing buildings in a sequence or in a cluster, may lead to a

fragmented, confused and disorienting urban structure-leading urban objects instead of urban fabric. Such buildings of great horizontal extent and covering significant portions of the C.B.D area will lead to loss of street spatial character resulting from lack of enclosure. CABE (2000) insists that a successful urban space (including street space) is defined and enclosed by buildings, structures and landscape. The relationship between buildings on a street and between buildings and the street, are the key to this. Buildings which follow a continuous building line around a street block and contain the private space within back yards or courtyards are often more successful than individual buildings that stand in the middle of a site. Therefore, the quality of individual buildings cannot on its own contribute to overall public space quality, but their relationships and relationship with other physical elements.



**Plate 3: Magistrate's court building standing in the middle of a site. Below: highway, buffer and pedestrians walking on the unpaved roadside.**

Most interviewed built-environment professionals believe that an excellent scenario would be a careful mixture of stand- alone building and continuous blocks to promote diversity and legibility in the built landscape. They argue that buildings in a block arrangement helps to direct movement, establish

orientation; allow the incorporation of continuous awnings and canopy that protects pedestrians from harsh weather conditions and promote visual continuity.

Layout plans (Figure 3) are accompanied by Department of Physical Planning (DPP) development standards. The research has found that the standards are similar province wide for both rural and urban settlements and are just described in general as 'conditions applicable to commercial stands'. Such conditions and standards have little implication and guidance on the management of urban form, physical city image, city beauty and the detailed street scene because they are very superficial and non-site-specific. This leads to decisions about growth patterns made from two-dimensional land use plans, without consideration of the three-dimensional spaces.



**Figure 3: Size, layout and distribution of stands in the CBD northern tip.**

This study also noted that building plan approval process has a bearing on streetscape character. Section 43(20) (a) of the Model Building by-laws gives local authorities the powers to reject building plans or require that they are

modified, 'if in the opinion of the local authority, the proposed building is not likely to be in general harmony with the class and character of buildings in the neighbourhood…'.However, a decision as to whether a building is in 'harmony' or not is a subjective judgement of an individual assessor (town planner, engineer and health officer), given that there are no detailed and updated guidelines specific to Beitbridge that clearly state the expected 'character of buildings' in different parts of the C.B.D. as informed by local conditions. The DPP standards are too general and outdated; and can thus not be efficiently used to perform this function.

Observation has shown that all the streets under study do not provide a sense of enclosure because they are very wide in relation to the street height. Both the Hagelthorn road and the Granite road are about 35-40m wide street space while the street height is about 8m (double storey with parapet) giving a street height- width ratio of 1:5. Single-storey buildings have a height -width ratio of 1: 8. The two ratios do not provide enough enclosure (Poerb 2001; and the Edinburg City Council 2011). The low spatial character resulting from minimal enclosure makes these 'roads' to lack street character (Plate 7). The newly planted street trees in linear form are likely to bring a sense of enclosure. This relationship between street height and width shows that the street space is under-utilised by the buildings fronting the street. In other words, such wide streets are normally associated with multi-storey buildings, not only to improve the visual enclosure but also to intensify the functions associated with the spacious streets.

## THE STREETSCAPE SURFACE AND FURNITURE

A detailed analysis of the streets was done focusing the following sections: pedestrian sidewalks, traffic surface; and street furniture.

## PEDESTRIAN SIDEWALKS AND TRAFFIC SURFACE

It was observed that generally the system of sidewalks or pedestrian walkways is not fully developed. The streetscape is dominated by vehicles and the vehicular traffic surface are clearly defined although parking is not fully demarcated. Vehicular circulation has been improved through road repairs, redoing of carriageway markings and introduction of traffic lights. Pedestrians compete with vehicles on the use of the traffic lanes. The highway (Block I and J) is a good example showing bias towards the design for vehicles over pedestrians. There is no sidewalk along the highway such that pedestrians to

and from the border either compete with vehicles on the vehicular surface or walk on buffer where there are no prepared surfaces for walking. The trees planted on the buffer are not related to the sidewalk as to provide shade to pedestrians. Appropriate placement of trees of the right size, canopy and shape can help solve the problem while they also give shade to the sidewalk to supplement the role played by the canopy at different times of the day and different seasons. In fact, the buffer can be used for many human supporting services such as sitting, rest, walkways among other things. The study found that people walk long distances under the scorching sun and over a rugged roadside to and from the border. The highway is actually a road meant for vehicles and does not possess the streetscape character that links with humans.

In most cases, building fronts are dominated by verandas that are characterised by abrupt changes in levels and multiple steps that make navigability by the wheelchair impossible. They are a danger to the visually impaired, and demand a lot of physical effort to go through. That is a terrible experience for the weak, old and sick. Pavements are in place but discontinuous, starting from the MIPF building and stretches for only about 50m on one side of the Granite road. The pavement and verandas, are narrow (about 2m), and do not allow for street seating and socialisation.

## Street Furniture

The streets are almost devoid of public benches or seats for people to rest, relax and socialise. People have been observed to sit on steps or rocks that were not consciously placed for the purpose of seating as shown in Plate 4. The only public seats in the outdoor space are at the Old Border Post, where they are underutilised now because of a change of use from border post to government offices. The concrete seats as shown in Plate 4 now stand as wasted prosperity, but given their durability, they can be moved to strategic sites where they are needed. One woman interviewed stated that the town centre is not women-friendly because it does not give them opportunities to sit and suckle their children or to change children's nappies.

Mehta (2006) argues that segments of the town 'with one on or more public seats are livelier that those without public seats. However, not all blocks with public seating are

**Plate 4: No benches in active places (top) and underutilised benches (bottom) at the former**

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was done to assess the potential of streetscaping the Beitbridge Central Business District in the enhancement of public space quality. It was found that buildings of architectural quality do exist, both historic and modern. However, the co-existence of such visually appealing buildings with buildings of low aesthetic value, the unsightly light industry in and adjacent the CBD and the undeveloped sites leads to an overall poor public space quality. Lack of continuity and enclosure; the monotonous dominance of single and double-storey buildings and minimal numbers of buildings that

are more than three-storey impacts negatively on the expected urban morphology of the CBD. The net result is lack of diversity in urban form and the absence of a unique skyline; a skyline that is supposed to give Beitbridge Municipality its distinctiveness and identity.

Generally, the CBD is oriented towards vehicular traffic because it is characterised by a well-delineated carriageway, but the sidewalks are not well established. Where sidewalks exist, they are narrow, discontinuous and in most cases stepped or in a state of disrepair. In this regard, the street sidewalk is handicapped to perform its contemporary functions of facilitating walking, encouraging social, commercial, stationary and lingering activities. Public seats are almost non-existent.

It appears there is no profession or statutes that clearly guide the relationship between buildings and the quality of outdoor spaces. Even the DPP planning guides and standards do not give enough detail on the expected character of buildings in the Beitbridge CBD. One would expect detailed standards or a strategy specific to Beitbridge CBD which is informed by the unique topography, climate, and local socioeconomic factors. The objectivity of the plan approval process in terms of the required character of buildings in the CBD has also been questioned by this study because the said 'character' is not formally documented. This gap partly explains how two-dimensional thinking on layout planning has led to disintegrated urban objects instead of the desirable coherent urban fabric.

The study notes that generally the quality of the public space is not satisfactory and there is still a considerable mismatch between existing image and the regional, if not international importance of the town. This study recognises that the town is at a youthful stage and the country is faced with an economic meltdown, but this is the rightful time to develop the ideas and vision for its future state. As the face of the country, the town must strive to become a city with an image that is internationally recognised. It is appreciable that work is in progress, and the town is at its infancy stage, but the future of the outdoor space needs to be clearly defined first because in most cases quality does not come as an accident. According to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (UN News 2015), 'successful public spaces do not just happen; …'

Drawing from the conclusions and in order to improve public space quality through streetscaping, this study makes the following recommendations:

All the roads in an urban set-up or built environments must be understood, planned, designed and managed as streets. Even national highways have to be streetscaped throughout their length as they traverse built up areas, because of the concentration of people who also need their space along and across the highways. The highway buffer creates discontinuity in the built fabric; leads to underutilisation of land and total lack of enclosure; takes away the possible street character of highways and thus the necessity and size of buffers in urban areas needs to be revisited.

The three-dimensional aspect of streets -emphasising the role buildings, trees or whatever features that front the road surface-is an important design concept. The concept calls for the understanding of the effect that two-dimensional layout planning has on the resulting three-dimensional design. The size of individual plots; their distribution and relationship with the street; and the street width, height and layout shall be appreciated at the design stage in order to create a coherent 'urban fabric' and avoid 'urban objects'. The relationship between the street height and width is not merely a matter of visual enclosure and continuity but can be used to guide the intensification on the use of streets and corresponding properties. In this way precious CBD land is not wasted. Furthermore, the urban elements (buildings, roads and other infrastructure) can be neatly weaved and integrated into a coherent whole. The image and appearance of cities and subsequently urban form can therefore be controllable.

The quality of streets must not confined only be to the vehicular traffic surface but other components that makes it usable by human beings for example continuous and inclusive sidewalks, street walls, furniture and surfaces. Therefore, the detailing of the street walls and surface shall cover all physical elements that support human basic outdoor activities such as walking, seating, stationery lingering activities. The quality must be based on the ability to satisfy inclusive human needs and desires. The streetscape concept demands that the character of the buildings and any other physical elements is defined, documented and legalized; understood and shared with designers; maintained and enhanced. A CBD Local plan or public space strategy is therefore necessary to give room for objectivity in design decisions.

The final recommendation to local authorities and designers is that they need to take advantage of streetscaping in creating a good human multisensory experience through the provision of shade, ease movement, seats, underfoot design, state of the sidewalk, building façade design and

human comfort in general. Therefore, the streetscape concept can potentially be advanced to humanise public space and subsequently improve the quality of the built environment and make it inclusive. In short, this paper redefined and expands the streetscaping concept to incorporate the human element. Given the bias towards humans over vehicles, the approach may be termed 'humanistic streetscaping'. Humanistic streetscaping can therefore be used to enhance public space quality.

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