

Analysis of Traders Survey on Magdalen Street North/ St Augustine's Street

The purpose of this survey was to find out about trader's views of the current policy for Magdalen Street North/St Augustine's Street, regarding residential conversions.

1. Magdalen Street

Magdalen Street North is a retail area with ground floor retail premises and mainly residential on the upper floors. The shopping street is largely specialist shops, with some food outlets. Approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the premises in the sample were vacant. Some traders were unavailable for comments mainly due to closure for holiday/too busy.

The majority of people surveyed were well established traders, with most having been there over 5 years and many over 20 years. A few traders were newly established i.e. a few weeks/months. This table shows the large difference in terms of occupation times:-

0- 2 years	3-10 years	11-20 years	20 years and over	Total
3	9	0	9	21

Vacant Premises

The majority of adjacent premises have been vacant in the time that the interviewee had been in their premises:-

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
11	8	2	21

This is usually for a short period of time, a few months to a year is usual. Although one premises had been vacant for 8 and another for 10 years.

However, from the people who answered that they had experienced vacancies adjacent to them; most felt that it had not harmed their business:-

Yes	No	Unsure	Total
2	9	1	12

From speaking to the traders, most felt that it was the general look of the run down street which would harm the business, not whether the adjacent shops were vacant.

Opinions regarding residential conversions

Most people felt strongly that they want Magdalen Street to be maintained as a retail area, and not converted to residential. 19 out of 21 people said they would prefer to see a shop next door to them and only 2 said it wouldn't matter to them if it was a shop or a dwelling.

Opinions however were very mixed as to whether they would prefer to have a takeaway or a dwelling next door, as concerns were shown for the litter and social problems at night which takeaways bring:-

Takeaway	Dwelling	Neither	Total
7	7	7	21

Again opinions were very mixed as to whether vacant premises would harm business in the future:-

Yes	No	Total
9	12	21

Those that felt it would affect business said this would be due to less passing trade, and the general run down/messy look of the vacant shops. Comments were made such as - It doesn't give the street an affluent image and it will deter people from shopping.

However when asked that if they knew a shop would be empty for a year, would they prefer a dwelling next door, most said that they would not prefer a dwelling in its place:-

Yes	No	Doesn't matter	Total
7	13	1	21

Concerns were raised into the types of people who would occupy the houses, and that the houses may not look any better than a vacant premise if the upkeep was not good. However some who said they would prefer a dwelling thought that a house would look tidier than premises standing vacant long term.

Opinions of Anglia Square

Overall, opinions about Anglia Square were generally that redevelopment would benefit Magdalen Street, by bringing more trade to the area. However there were some clear opinions that the use should be maintained as retail and not converted to flats. Others gave negative opinions such as: 'Regenerating Anglia Square will bring some businesses down'. Some traders felt the Council should 'get rid of it'.

2. St Augustines Street

St Augustines is similar to Magdalen Street in terms of retail use, i.e. specialist shops. Many premises are vacant, and due to the nature of other businesses i.e. services such as hairdressers/opticians- some were too busy to comment. This has resulted in a smaller sample size. Upper levels of buildings are again used for flats or workrooms.

All traders except one have been on St Augustines over 5 years, the longest being 25 years, and in their time most have seen vacant premises adjacent to them. The time scales of these vacancies varied from a few months to 6 years. All interviewees said however that these vacancies had not affected their business.

Most stated that they would prefer to see a shop next door, which is in agreement with the results from Magdalen Street:-

Shop	Dwelling	Doesn't matter	Total
5	1	1	7

Opinions were also mixed, as to whether they would prefer a takeaway or a dwelling:-

Takeaway	Dwelling	Neither	Doesn't matter	Total
2	3	1	1	7

Again results were mixed as to whether having vacant premises next door would harm their business:-

Yes	No	Total
4	3	7

The reasons for yes were similar to those of Magdalen Street, such as giving the street a general run down appearance, and derelict looking buildings makes a bad impression on the street, which will lead to less business.

Results were the same for: 'if you knew a shop would be vacant for a year, would you prefer a dwelling next door?'

Yes	No	Total
4	3	7

All interviewees except one felt that the street could be regenerated if Anglia Square were to be redeveloped. The interviewee who answered no felt that his business of a small convenience store would loose out to the redevelopment.

Summary

Traders from both Magdalen Street and St Augustine's want the streets to remain as retail use.

On Magdalen Street, the majority of traders would rather see a shop stay vacant for a year than to have a dwelling in its place, and the majority also feel that an adjacent, vacant premise does not harm their business.

On St Augustine's Street a very small majority said they would prefer a dwelling next door, than a vacant premise for a year. A small majority also said having vacant premises would harm their business. This shows a difference between Magdalen Street and St Augustine Street views; however the sample size was very small for St Augustines.

Opinions of traders from both Magdalen Street and St Augustines Street were mainly positive that the streets could be regenerated if Anglia Square were to be redeveloped.