

Knightsbridge Partnership

BASELINE AUDIT – Night-Time Economy

Leighton de Burca

AttisTowns

January 2022



Knightsbridge Partnership Baseline Audit Night-Time Economy

Executive Summary

The Nightlife audit was commissioned to establish what the area currently has to offer; what the current changes and trends in the hospitality sector are; and what recommendations will help attract the right kind of visitors to the BID area. The Night-time offer has to meet the requirements of a high-end, luxury, international centre whilst still catering for all those who live, work and socialise in the BID area. When considering how the district should develop and grow, the high-end, luxury market should be the focus for the area's offer, public realm design and aesthetic.

Recommendations for Future Work

The Audits are being undertaken by the relevant specialists in the AttisTowns team, following briefings by Paul Barnes and Gary Reeves. The Audits take account of the findings of the Feasibility Study, the agreed Strategic Vision, and the commitments of the Business Plan. They also take account of relevant existing plans (e.g. the Local Plans and neighbourhood plans).

There is naturally a cross-over with other Audits, in particular security and brand, and we must ensure that these issues are addressed together, not in silos.

Recommendation One: The BID should commission setting up a Nightwatch Forum for the BID area. Night Watch is an industry led meeting for all that operate in the

night-time economy (Operating hours 18:00-06:00). The meeting would link together the night industries, police, the two councils' sections that provide services and regulate the night-time economy, Business Improvement Districts, not-for-profit community interest companies and other key stakeholders. This forum works to build better working relationships to prevent issues and improve the management of the night-time economy, enabling it to thrive and to be curated through into a safe and regulated environment.

Recommendation Two: The BID Should commission with the police and Mayors Office an International Centre Independent Advisory Group so stakeholders from the BID area can hold the Police to account for crime within the BID area and its vicinity which affect the safety and reputation of the International Centre. This specialist IAG will set the highest standards to make the area safer since much local crime is targeted at the International Centre's high net worth people and is disproportionately violent.

Recommendation Three: The BID should commission a study of the BID's digital realm. The digital realm is just as vital for a visitor experience as the public realm with use of mapping, social media and various other location-based requirements. Making sure the BID area's digital realm is up to date and accurate will help ensure the success of the area's reputation and its businesses, including those in the night-time economy.

Recommendation Four: The BID should commission a mapping of the BID area building uses. This would involve detailed mapping of BID area building uses with businesses being separated into categories in line with the nightlife audit. Businesses should be categorised according to :

Market Profile (what type of customer base the business caters for)

- Live, Work, Socialise (LWS Total)
- International Centre (IC Total)

Business Visibility (does the business have an active frontage on the high street which adds to the area appeal)

- Live, Work, Socialise Street frontage (LWS Street Frontage)
- International Centre Street frontage (IC Street Frontage)

Mapping the whole area in this way will inform decision making and support the area's development and curation into a resilient and competitive international centre.

Recommendation Five: The BID should commission a marketing campaign, e.g. 'Love Knightsbridge' campaign, which would include the night-time economy. The Knightsbridge area and its vicinity has millions of visitors each year, yet there is not a campaign which utilises all these visitors and drives them to the BID area and its members. \$1.42 trillion global luxury market remains one of the slowest industries to adopt digital. New digital-first brands have burst onto the scene and are taking market shares from established companies such as Louis Vuitton, Rolex, and Chanel. Traditional luxury brands struggle to connect with their affluent Millennials and Generation Z consumers who account for a growing share of luxury spending and future brand loyalty. This is particularly true on mobile and social media. The 'Love Knightsbridge' campaign would use the prestige of the area to link to these markets and fill social media with user created content.

Recommendation Six: Curation of the district is a vital component, for the economy over the full 24 hours. The BID

should commission a Place Making Curator to achieve the goals of the BID area. Combining the use of the buildings, tenant selection, placement, business development, shop front design, public realm and all the other areas of placemaking which combine the BID's objective with those of the Mayor's office, the two councils and the neighbourhood plans to curate an international centre for all who live, work, socialise and visit the area. Place Making Curators would work together with their counterparts in the Estate teams and support the smaller stakeholders and landowners to achieve the benchmark of the area as an international centre.

Recommendation Seven: The BID should commission Heritage and Cultural Trails. Knightsbridge has a long history both culturally and architecturally. A heritage trail not only highlight this but would work to attract existing visitors back and new types of visitor using the trail as a mechanism to drive footfall to other parts of the BID area which at present may not be in demand. The increase in footfall not only help existing businesses but attracts new businesses which meet Knightsbridge's benchmark to underutilised BID areas. Heritage and Culture is a strong reason to visit an area and increase dwell time. At present the BID area as a whole has not capitalised on this.

Recommendation Eight: The BID should commission a Nightlife Business Guide to support businesses through the transformational change of the BID area. The Nightlife Business Guide will showcase what's happening in the area, highlight support available both to businesses and their staff, produce profiles on key industry organisations and create in-depth pieces on the BID and its partners and how they can support members businesses.

Section One - Objectives of this Audit

The BID's vision for Knightsbridge is one of:

- "A district which combines high-end luxury with a range of amenities for local residents and employees.

Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan Vision is one to:

- "Make Knightsbridge the best residential and cultural place in London in which to live, work, study and visit".

The role of this Audit is to assess the following and make recommendations to guide.

- Audit the BID area for all businesses operating within the night-time economy (18:00-06:00).
- Split the assessment of the areas offer into the cultural categories based on their primary street level purpose.
- Breakdown the current night-time cultural offer is within the BID area
- Highlight current trends
- Highlight the standards of what the BID area as an International Centre in a 24-hour city should look and feel like for all who live, work and socialise in it.

The Audit's role is to make recommendations to be explored which aim to turn the BID area as a whole into "an iconic destination" by using the benchmarks which have been set to date within the area.

*ref 1Luxury Industry: Luxe Digital Guiding Digital Adoption for Luxury Brands | EAT LOVE SAVOR
2 | The Freedom Trail
Brompton Road BID Feasibility Study 2019
Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan page 15*

Section Two – Methodology of the Audit

For the purposes of this audit, we have split the assessment of the areas offer into the following categories based on their primary street level purpose with operating hours 18:00 - 06:00 (in line with the international industry, ATCM, Purple Flag and GLA standards).

Alcohol based Venues

- Traditional Pubs
- Food-led Bars, Café Bars & Branded Food Pubs
- Nightclubs & Late Venues

Food Venues

- Family Restaurants & Global Cuisine
- Fast Food & Take-aways

Culture and Entertainment

- Theatre, Concert & Dance
- Cinema, Bingo & Casinos
- Live Performance: Music & Comedy

Retail and Public Buildings

- Late-opening Shops & Markets
- Late-opening Museum, Art Gallery, Library, Education & Community Venues

Wellbeing

- Sports, Leisure & fitness Venues
- Health
- Beauty

Accommodation

- Hotel
- Other accommodation

The area was audited with all of the businesses being separated into the above categories with totals for each and those totals being separated into the following:

Market Profile (what type of customer base the business caters for)

- Live, Work, Socialise (LWS Total)
- International Centre (IC Total)

Business Visibility (does the business have an active frontage on the high street which adds to the area appeal)

- Live, Work, Socialise Street frontage (LWS Street Frontage)
- International Centre Street frontage (IC Street Frontage)

Section Three - Breakdown of the current night-time cultural offer within the BID area.

In line with the consumer trends for retail, hospitality and nightlife where visitors are demanding a shareable experience, places such as international centres as a whole are expected to offer the same immersive, shareable, high calibre experience to match that offered by the destination businesses within it. With the International Centre being the benchmark for the BID area it is vital that the street frontages and public realm of the BID area offer the same.

Nightlife Offer 18:00 -06:00

Traditional Pubs

The BID area has three remaining traditional pubs all operated by Green King, two of which are high calibre with regards their interior and exterior appearance and are popular with locals.

The area has lost the 'Crown and Sceptre' pub which was open all day into the evening. This is now a Pret a Manger which closes at 15:00 resulting in a reduction of the diversity of offer and a late-night venue.

Food-led Bars, Café Bars, Tea Rooms & Branded Food Pubs

The BID area has thirteen such venues in total. Only six are assessed of international centre calibre and only one of those venues has a visible street frontage. All seven live, work and socialise venues have street frontage visibility and as such balance the area away from its international centre objective. Only one out of the six International Centre calibre venues are open after 20:00.

Nightclubs & Late Venues

The BID area has 7 late venues in total 6 of which are international centre calibre but only 2 are visible from the street. Most competing International Centre destinations have a much higher amount of late-night culture on offer and as such Knightsbridge is less competitive and attractive from this perspective. It is missing out on a share of the £17bn-£26bn generated by London Nightlife for the UK economy annually.

Family Restaurants & Global Cuisine

The BID area has 45 venues of this type, 38 of which are international centre calibre yet only five of these are visible from the street and all offer similar eastern style cuisine. The remainder of the restaurants are inside the department stores or hotels. The live, work, socialise offer has 7 of the 45 venues all of which are visible from the street making the international centre offer appear less apparent.

Fast Food & Take-aways

As with all high streets McDonalds is always featured. Combine this with the

other mix of retail and food offer the area has a large presence of high street international centre businesses.

Theatre, Concert & Dance

The BID area has no cultural entertainment offer with no theatres, concert venues, dance venues, cinemas or performance venues of any kind. As an international centre this means people leave this area to spend elsewhere and as such their pre- and post-entertainment spend both on hospitality and retail will go elsewhere.

Bingo & Casinos

The BID area has three gambling establishments only one is of international centre calibre. The other two are highly visible on the high street and lower the tone of the area.

Live Performance: Music & Comedy

The BID area only has one venue of this kind. This venue is only visible on foot and is only open Fri- Sat nights 21:00 -01:00. International centres of this calibre would normally have many more live performance venues to cater to the local residents and visitors. The lack of diversity and of this cultural offer is a loss to its international status. This area of entertainment usually has an earlier start time and ends by 22:30 hrs.

Late-opening Shops & Markets

The BID areas late night shops offer is strong with 25 being of international centre calibre and all 25 being visible from the street. The area could develop this further with an addition of a market strategy to cater to locals and visitors alike. Late-opening Museum, Art

Gallery, Library, Education & Community Venues.

The BID area has no museums, only one late night art gallery and two late night members only clubs. All of these are

international centre calibre but in an area of this prestige you would expect a higher number of galleries and cultural venues on offer.

Wellbeing

The BID area is well served by 15 wellbeing venues 14 of which are international centre calibre but only five are visible from the street.

Hotels and Accommodation

This is an area, like the retail offer, where the BID excels; the area has five international centre calibre hotels all of which offer an impeccable level of service and internally offer an exceptionally curated selection of experiences.

Section Four- Current Trends

Retail and Hospitality

Retail and hospitality trends have changed, and are constantly changing, led by visitors wanting more from their high streets and town centres. They are wanting an experience when they visit rather than pure utility. High streets and town centres, be it local or international, need to offer a diverse and quality mix so people have more than one reason to visit a place, stay there and spend their money, so turning it into a destination of choice.

The BID area has many landowners such as Harrods, Cadogan and Knightsbridge Estates, who have invested heavily into curating an experience within their spaces. The challenge for the BID is to extend this curation to the rest of the district for all who live, work and socialise in the area while using the benchmark of an International Centre.

Nightlife

Nightlife has been contending with this shift in user demand before retail started to move towards more experiential offers.

One of the biggest shifts in user behaviour is 18-25 year olds' relationship with alcohol. Over 38 percent of 18-25 years now socialising alcohol free. This has affected the industry's business model and what it needs to offer in the future. Visitors to the night-time economies are wanting a shareable and cultural experience be that through live music, performances, design of the venues and a more high-end and diverse beverage offer, such as prohibition style venues and cocktail bars.

Demographics

London's night-time businesses are key drivers of growth and employment, contributing £17bn-£26bn to the UK economy before the pandemic and employing 594,200 workers in the cultural and leisure segment of the night-time economy alone. London's nightlife is one of the most vibrant in the world, integral to the lifestyles of many Londoners and drawing in millions of domestic and international tourists every year.

The 'bright young things' set have evolved to another level with many of the socialites becoming well renowned DJs and event promoters. Knightsbridge's venue of choice for events in the area has been Buddha-Bar which, for example, hosted Daisy Pasternak's 18th birthday party.

44 percent of the area's residents are classed as affluent making this one of the richest areas yet the cultural, entertainment and nightlife offer does not have a diverse offer to meet the needs of this high-calibre market.

Section Five – Highlight the standards of what an International Centre BID should be.

When considering how the district should develop and grow, the high-end, luxury

market should be the focus for the area's offer, public realm and aesthetic. As mentioned in the recommendations, Place Making Curators would be the vehicle for this.

The large estates teams in the BID area have already done so much to set the high standard of the future with the restoration and illumination of the facades. The impeccable detail of work between Knightsbridge Estate site with its intersection with Cadogan Estates (Harvey Nichols and Sloane Street) with the seamless public realm. One of the greatest examples of interior and exterior curation and level of design and aesthetic detail is the Burberry store. Harrods' Technical Department is the best example of catering to the new trend of experiential retail.

As highlighted in Section Three the area's cultural offer is significantly short of optimum. It does not live up to the ambitions of the BID neighbourhood Forum. One would expect in an area such as this more lifestyle shops, great independent cultural venues, high-end European restaurants, live performance venues (located appropriately), art galleries which regularly open late all alongside the luxury retail.

The Knightsbridge International Centre night-time standards should be at minimum.

- Every shopfront of the area meets the shop front design guidelines for the type of building and whether the business be high-end or independent high street the attention to design detail be of the highest standard and aesthetic.
- Pavement design is consistent throughout the area and matches the design outside the Burberry store.
- Cleanliness is vital in a luxury area. Every visible surface should be

cleaned regularly, and any damage or defects fixed immediately.

- Transport access. High net worth individuals are most likely to drive within and to the area. This will be the case throughout the 24-hour economy. Traffic flow will need to be managed to ensure this is swift and effectively managed such as locations where town cars and taxis can stop as at present this is not the case. Those areas will need impeccable design to ensure vehicles can pull up and the occupants can get out safely and cleanly, ensuring no puddles or trip hazards are present.
- Safety, real or perceived, is vital for a luxury area. Security and prevention of crime or threats should be handled swiftly and all visible signs of anti-social behaviour should be dealt with as a priority. This should also dovetail into evolving the public realm security and resilience remit and manage the impact of a major incident or terrorist attack.
- International Luxury Centres are all about excelling expectations of people who have the highest standards. All visible staff within the district should have the highest level of customer service training with any operational issues remedied out of view.

The area must have an overt 24/7 offer promoting that the district is working but with the area always looking clean and seemingly operating effortlessly so the luxury guests to the area feel welcome, relaxed and that the place is their destination of choice.

In Conclusion

In conclusion, the area is fortunate to have experienced estate teams who are creating amazing experiences with the highest level of detail.

The challenge facing the BID is to standardise and embed these standards of design and attention to detail to make the whole area a global iconic experience for all who live, work and socialise there, both day and night.

Leighton de Burca
Partner
AttisTowns

Appendix KnightBridge Key Stats

Residents

- 190,000 Knightsbridge residents, making it one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in Europe.
- 44% of residents are categorised “affluent” - Part of Britain's wealthiest borough.

Visitors

- 15 Million retail visitors annually.
- 19 Million people enter/ exit Knightsbridge station every year
- With more than 40,000 visitors every day, Knightsbridge is at the centre of London’s Multi Billion Pound Tourist industry, driving massive year round footfall.
- Harrods attracts 15 Million visitors annually (pre pandemic)
- Victoria and Albert Museum 4.3 Million visitors
- Natural History Museum 5 Million
- Royal Albert Hall 1.75 Million
- Serpentine Galleries 1 Million
- 34 Million people enter / exit South Kensington Station each year
- Hyde Park has 12.8 Million Visitors

Travel connections

Knightsbridge to

- Paddington 19 Minutes
- Kings Cross St Pancras 13 Minutes
- Green Park 3 Minutes
- Holborn 9 Minutes
- Liverpool Street 21 Minutes
- London Bridge 16 Minutes
- Victoria 11 Minutes
- City Airport 35 Minutes
- Gatwick 45 Minutes
- Heathrow 41 Minutes