Capital spaces:
London’s complex evolving public spaces

Prof. Matthew Carmona
The Bartlett School of Planning

TEN CRITIQUES

1. Neglected space

2. Invaded space
3. Exclusionary space

4. Segregated space

5. Insular space

6. Privatised space
7. Consumption space

8. Invented Space

A VERY BRIEF HISTORY

9. Scary space
Market place to garden

Purposeful ‘public’ spaces – a 19th century invention

Suburbs to ‘Modern’ space

• Most successful public spaces in London (pre-1980) were either:
  – created through largely unconscious design processes
  – designed for private purposes
  – have evolved into their present role from very different beginnings

• With the exception of its parks, those (pre-1980) public spaces designed for specific public social purposes have, by contrast, not fared so well.

A huge heritage and a critical lesson
SO IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?

To conclude

"The multiple complex spaces of a global city such as London each have different purposes, just as the rooms in a house or buildings in a city have different functions. It would be foolish to try and design all according to some idealised blueprint for the perfect public space that is equally appealing to all.

Inevitably space takes on different flavours as a result of the different groups of interests that create them or the particular range of uses they are intended to serve. What is more, these characters change over time, just as surrounding land uses and ownerships change, or as spaces are appropriated by new groups or abandoned by old".