

The quality of the building frontages facing the footpath is an extremely important factor for the quality of an urban area. Good ground floor facades are rich in detail and exciting to walk by, interesting to look at, to touch and to stand beside. Activities inside the buildings and those occurring on the street enrich each other. In the evening friendly light shines out through the windows of shops and other ground floor activities and contributes to both a feeling of security as well as genuine safety. Interesting ground floor facades also provide good reasons for walking around in the city in the evenings and on Sundays, engaging in the age old pastime: window shopping. Blank walls, on the contrary, underline the futility of visiting the city outside working hours.

Narrow units have the effect of making streets more interesting because many doors and different uses provide interest even on a short walk through the city. Many narrow units also provide a predominantly vertical facade which has the important visual effect of making distances feel shorter. This makes it more interesting and comfortable to walk around in the city.

As illustrated on this page the edge is often the most popular place to sit or stand and watch public life. A lively edge can be achieved through lively facades, which with columns, recesses, stairs, niches or stones give people an interesting environment to pass along or to linger by.



The Edge Effect - Stand-



The Edge Effect - Resting



The Edge Effect - Socializing

Below: Transparent ground floor frontages are even more important in the evening where they add light to the streetscape.

