

MARC Research Findings

Integrating the senses inside supermarkets:
Energy, ambience and sustainable
consumption (ISIS)



The project is part of the multi-disciplinary Sustainable Consumption Institute at the University of Manchester, under the theme 'Planning a Greener Future for Retail'. It complements the recently completed Supermarket Adaptation to Future Environments (SAFE) project, which considered route maps towards the 'greening' of supermarkets, alongside their ability to both adapt to climate change, as well as positively impact upon the sustainability of their localities.

Objectives: The opening of Tesco's new 'eco-store' in Cheetham Hill (Manchester) provides an important new opportunity to assess the ecological impact of retail environments. ISIS has been developed as both an original inquiry into the (often overlooked) relationship(s) between indoor 'space shaping' and sustainability – as well as a contribution towards existing research around resource usage and energy management within commercial buildings. ISIS thus operates across three interrelated themes: eco-design (shaping in-store environments), sustainability (resource mitigation) and consumption (customer behaviour).

The Research: ISIS has been designed to deliver a detailed empirical and comparative investigation into the design, experience and understanding of in-store 'ambient environments'. Adopting a range of qualitative methods, ISIS will contribute towards a socio-technical perspective that views the social viability of design innovations – in heating, lighting, refrigeration, etc – to be as important as technical efficiency. In addition to on-site research within the Cheetham Hill store, ISIS will seek to evaluate and compare the design and operation of this 'eco store' with existing national and international Tesco sites:

- Considering how understandings of climate adaptation/mitigation strategies co-evolve alongside new types of in-store configuration (ambient environments)
- Exploring the complex links between design innovation and sustainable retail environments (eco-design / sustainable architecture)
- Assessing the relationship between sustainability themed 'interventions' and ongoing patterns of retail consumption (sustainable consumption)
- Examining how a closer understanding contemporary retail consumption, and the social practices around which it is constituted, might inform future design choices (participatory design / pluralist architecture)

Website

www.manchester.ac.uk/marc

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