

Minutes of Camden Cycling Campaign Meeting. 10 November 2003.

Present: Stefano Casalotti (chair), Paul Gannon, David Arditti, Jane Boardman, Jean Dollimore (minutes). Helen Vecht, Peter Wills. Apologies: Paul Gasson, Daniel Glaser, James Brander

1. Matters arising from the October Meeting

Green Fair: Stefano reported that he has not yet applied for a grant and there is no other news.

Somerstown: Stefano said that James has some news on this, but will not be able to come until later.

SSL east: is expected to come before the (16th) December meeting of the executive (environment) committee. Paul Gannon is prepared to write and present a deputation to the committee (and contact Martyn Schofield). Jean will put this on agenda for Thursday's 'apolitical engineering' meeting with Ed Quartey and Dave Stewart and report back to Paul Gannon.

Cycle counters: Jean reported that Keith Hamilton had told her that all six new sites are now working and data is being collected. He hopes to give us data early in December. The counter in Royal College Street is being repaired.

Regents Park: Stefano said that the report has been re-written according to CCC's recommendations. The signatories now include a pedestrian group and Friends of the Earth. The report has been sent to the Royal Parks agency with copies to councillors and local residents groups.

2. Future Meetings

January 12th meeting: David confirmed that either Kevin Mayne or Roger Geffen will come to talk to us. To be advertised in the newsletter as Kevin Mayne. They will bring a projector, but want a white wall. Helen offered to bring a screen.

December 8th meeting: will be a Christmas event, moving to the Stags Head at 8pm. Jane offered to organise Indian food.

3. Plans for the Tom Young talk

We agreed that if a lot of people arrive early, we will start immediately, otherwise, we will discuss 'other business' first. Paul Gannon said that he and Tom Young will each make a short presentation and then start an open discussion.

4. Membership

We have been invited to a ring-around of lapsed members at LCC. Last time Duncan Exeley told Stefano they had enough volunteers. Stefano thinks it would be better for a Camden member to do a ring-around from home. Stefano will email Duncan to see if he needs help and is willing to give us contact details for lapsed members so that we can call from home.

Stefano suggested that it is worth doing the cyclists breakfast more than once a year. We discussed having an event in Byng Place. We will work out the details at the December meeting.

5. Car wash for bikes?

Peter Wills has tried using a car wash to clean his bike – he didn't ride it through the automatic washer– he used the high-pressure hose to good effect. However, David said the use of a high-pressure hose could be bad for the bearings.

Members Meeting

Present: the above plus, Doug Amer, Paul Braithwaite, James Brander, George Coulouris, Julian Fulbrook, Gerry Harrison, Dave Horan, Alex McKinnell, Richard Kirby LBC, Piers Player, Lilian Shapiro, Lionel Shapiro, Harriet Shelton LBC, Michael Stuart, Peter Wesley. Apologies: Mayer Hillman

6. Camley Street launch with Tom Young

Paul Gannon introduced this as a community project in which local people had often thought that a link between Agar Grove and the top end of Camley Street would be useful. Peter Wills, a CCC member who lives in the Maiden Lane area had come forward with a suggestion that we should investigate the feasibility of a cycle and pedestrian link. They obtained funds from CCCU to pay Tom Young to do a feasibility study. Copies of the detailed and well-illustrated report on this study were passed around. It is to go on a website. Paul outlined how the proposed link would fit into the planning brief for Kings Cross Development in terms of accessibility, safety and linkage to the cycle network. He suggested that we push this context as a way of achieving the link

Tom Young urged CCC members to read the report, which is mainly about how to make the link work. The existing bridge from the Maiden Lane estate to the top end of Camley Street is a misery for cyclists, pram pushers and others who can't manage steps. It reminds him of a US penal development. The proposed link is an improvement, it is more direct, simpler and is considered in the context of the Kings Cross development. The new CTRL embankment is a barrier: the existing ways through are Goodsway, Camley Street and the in addition we will have a way under the platforms of the station – will this be an improvement? Our link would be the only new major link, make Camley Street a through road, and a useful part of the cycle network, improving access from the north to Kings Cross.

The link will be designed as a dog-leg ramp with a gradient of 1:16.6 over the hammerhead area at the north end of Camley Street. There will be pedestrian access on the embankment of Agar Grove estate. At the north end, the link may emerge either on the access road to Agar Grove estate or onto Agar Grove itself. The access road is preferable as there is less traffic. It is already separated from the estate by a fence. An exit into Agar Grove would require a pavement crossover.

Tom stressed that it is important to get the design right – an architect or urban designer should be employed. The current site can be called 'SLOPE' – space left over after planning. A well-designed ramp could put this area on the map. It is highly likely to be used once Kings Cross Central is in place. He urged us to consider the implications of having such a dismal area close to the new development.

Discussion: the following points are selected from the discussion that followed:

David Arditti: what are the likely next steps? *Tom Young*: CCC should find out the likely cost, for example, get a design for planning permission and ask a quantity surveyor to cost it.

Dave Horan : although the link would be an improvement to the area, we should look into the effects on security in the estates, of lighting on the Camley Street Natural Park and on the trees on the embankment. *Tom Young*: for security, the ramp should not have an accessible underpart and it should be well lit. Any street works better when it is connected. Concerning the trees, the Arups engineer consulted stated that possibly the trees endangered the embankment. *Peter Wills*: the people in the Nature Park are in favour of the link.

Gerry Harrison: congratulated CCC on this effort and he said he supports us. He stressed that he wants the existing bridge to be made safer – closing it would create an additional no-go area, but it is hard to explain that to Elm Village residents. The police can't agree: Kentish Town police want it open and Albany Street want to close it. Four council officers use it to walk from Maiden lane to the Town Hall. Gerry supports our new link as it will create more pedestrian traffic. His reservation about a cycle link is that it may reduce the use of the Royal College Street extension.

Doug Amer: the street policy team looked into the link 18 months ago and is not prepared to push it in the current context. However, the Kings Cross team say it will make sense in the context of that scheme and land ownership would not then be a problem. We should send a copy of the report to Dave Reidy and Bob West.

Richard Kirby: in the context of Kings Cross development, council members and officers are looking to improve Camley Street. But work on Kings Cross Central will not start until 2007 and we might wait until 2015 for the link.

Lionel Shapiro: Connectivity to Camden Square is an up-market development.

David Arditti: agreed with Doug Amer that the efficacy of the link is related to the Kings Cross development. The existing cycle link is a by-pass of the area for people from north London. The new link into Kings Cross will change things in 20 years. It is a challenge to keep the Nature Park – a green space.

Tom Young: in the context of change, can the Elm Village residents expect no change in 20 years? The Camley Street link will enable people to access the goodies.

Stefano Casalotti: why can't we do something small sooner with some effect now? *Richard Kirby*: The development must first do things related to employment, housing and then roads. They can't do everything up front. The link would be hard to justify early on. *Doug Amer*: Acceptability to Elm Village is crucial. If the link is built too soon it may be underused. It would be a political disaster to build one that fails.

George Coulouris: The link could be used now to access St Pancras and Kings Cross stations from middle class areas. The bridge over the railway in Cambridge is a similar project, connecting an isolated area to Cambridge station.

Tom Young: there is a regeneration element. For example, now the people working in the workshops at the top of Camley Street can't easily get to the Irish Centre on foot. Have the planners taken the Green Development Plan into account?

Richard Kirby: we have not seen it yet, but this plan must be provided. *Tom Young*: Camley Street is part of it.

Richard Kirby: yes, but other parts of the plan must be delivered immediately.

Lionel Shapiro: concerning timing: if a pedestrian link is built first, people would use it, e.g. to go to jobs in Kings Cross. Cyclists can get into Camley Street via the garden centre. *Tom Young*: when the Arctic Street link (between Regis Road and Spring Place) was opened it was well used. It is a good idea for pedestrians to lead the way. *Doug Amer*: For pedestrians, it would have to be a staircase, but would be difficult politically.

Paul Braithwaite: concerning the design, the sharp bend in a two-way cycle ramp will be difficult for cyclists. *Tom Young*: there is not much room on the site (must be 1.8 metres from railway). Would prefer a curve, but couldn't fit it in. Concerning the gradient, many useful places in cities are steep. Connectivity is useful even if it is not ideal for all users.

Helen Vecht: queried the track width figures in the report. *Tom Young*: the width is 1.8 for pedestrians + 2 for cyclists = 3.8 metres. He had avoided cutting the retaining wall of the embankment, but could consider doing so.

Paul Braithwaite: concerning the new cycle track in Pancras Way: it is impossible for northbound cyclists to turn right into Agar Grove. *George Coulouris*: The traffic lights are not yet in place: they will provide a cyclists' phase.

Paul Gannon: If we must wait for 12 years, we should consider improving the other link. We should discourage the bunker mentality.

Stefano Casalotti: what is the cost of getting the plan costed? *Tom Young*: a cost consultant could give an estimate on the basis of the report. *Julian Fulbrook (cllr)*: ask Argent St. George. *Doug Amer*: ask the Kings Cross team. *Richard Kirby*: we don't have the resources. *Stefano Casalotti*: it would be useful to have the figures. *Gerry Harrison*: The type of structure would affect the costs. *Tom Young*: ask for the costs of a straight, steep gradient ramp, built in concrete. *Lillian Shapiro*: the costs are academic if the ramp is unlikely to be built. *Paul Gannon*: if money was available, attitudes might be different. Suggest a free-standing steel structure, independent of the embankment.

Tom Young: no one knows when this might be feasible. CCC should regard it as a long-term plan and keep it in focus.

Stefano Casalotti: how can we keep it in focus? *Richard Kirby*: send the report to Argent St. George for costing.

Tom Young concluded by saying that CCC must keep the plan in focus by developing and hardening the project over time.