

Minutes of meeting with Camden Council / CCC

Held Wednesday 2nd April 2003 4.30 pm – 4th Floor Town Hall

Present: Dave Stewart (LBC), Ed Quartey (LBC), Alex Djan (LBC), Cllr Gerry Harrison, Paul Gasson (CCC), and Jean Dollimore (CCC).

1. Design/construction phase issues

The remark in the agenda: “CCC strongly recommends that none of these are implemented until solutions for the more serious deficiencies have been agreed.” applies only to schemes not yet started.

a. St Pancras Way

Progress update

The segregated cycle track in St.Pancras way is mostly complete – apart from **the green** surfacing. Camden has problems waiting for TTS, therefore the junction with Agar Grove has not yet been implemented. **The entry to Baynes Street is complete.** Paul encouraged the officers to ensure that we don't have problems of ‘ripple’ in the surfacing as there are in Royal College Street (**This may be due to hand laying of the green surfacing material. The possibility of the material being machine laid was discussed however it is thought that narrowest available machine is 3 metres wide**).

On the issue of Randolph Street being made 2-way officers advised CCC of the negative impact on traffic movements at the Royal College St / Camden Road junction.

TTS response on advance signal phasing (ie without segregating island)

Eddie told us that with the proposed funnel, cyclists will have a 14 sec. dedicated phase for crossing in either direction between the track in St. Pancras Way and Agar Grove. Paul urged the officers to consider the alternative of an ASL with an advance signal phase, as some cyclists may not use the funnel. However, it was agreed that the **proposed layout will be introduced as shown on the drawing** and that the use by cyclists will be monitored.

Design changes for Royal College St/Georgiana St junction

Eddie will **forward** plans of the **existing** junction **layout** to CCC by next week in time for the meeting on 14th April. CCC will study the plans and feed back suggestions.

c. Seven Stations Link east from Gordon Square

Progress update

This has already been constructed from a point 20 metres west of the Bedford Way junction to just beyond the Woburn Place junction. It is complete apart from the delay from TTS on the signaling. This entire stretch is **only 2.0 metres in width**. In response to our evident dismay (CCC having thought that the track would be close to 2.5 metres except at difficult points) **Officers explained that during the construction work difficulties were encountered with evidence of cellars to properties, and the presence of a gas main. The Council has also received an objection to the removal of the existing Taxi bay outside the Tavistock Hotel. It is for these reasons that the construction of a 2.5 metre width cycle lane along this section is not possible.**

Dave **stated** that the entire road width is too narrow in that stretch: a 2 metre track leaves a road width of 6.3 metres. **This is potentially below the minimum for 2 way traffic.**

In response to Gerry's point about too many signs in a conservation area, it was agreed to reduce the number of cycle logos in the track, but to retain the centre line.

Track width east of Woburn Place

The officers told us that the next leg as far as Judd St will also have to be **only 2.0 metres wide**.

Paul expressed CCC's point of view that SSL is intended to be a flagship scheme and attract cyclists – it should not be built below standard. **Dave stressed that the restricted width of carriageway along this section left no option but to introduce the cycle lane to 2.0 metres, which is the minimum, recommended width in the design manual. Officers and CCC agreed that reducing the width of the footway to accommodate the cycle lane is not acceptable. Officers are satisfied that all possible alternative options have been considered and the proposed 2.0 metre width remains the only solution. Dave reiterated that the option of one-way traffic westbound, with traffic diverted to Guilford Street, is no longer an option in view of the strong opposition from Ward Councillors and Coram Fields.**

Gerry suggested that SSL is always a flagship scheme but with a short narrow part – we should accept it and realize that there are other users. Paul accepts that it is not for lack of effort by the officers.

Dave assured us that the cycle track will be 2.5 metres to the east of Judd Street as the road is wider there.

Crossover plans for Judd St junction

The alignment of the junction restricts opposing traffic to pass at the same time. Therefore separate phases will be introduced.

The officers are designing for a cycle track on the south side of the road between Judd Street and Grays Inn Road. This is because local residents who are not opposing the cycle track, but are looking for benefits from it, prefer it on the south side so as to make them further away from the noise and air pollution of the cars. This involves a cross over (from north to south) at Judd Street junction.

We were shown a design for the cross over: the north side of Tavistock Place to the west of Judd Street is roughly aligned with the south side to the east of Judd Street, making the cycle crossing appear quite safe and convenient. The cycle track will rise via a ramp to pavement level on either side of Judd Street and be controlled by Toucan signals with a 14 sec dedicated phase for cyclists. The ramp should not be too steep (officers proposed a 1 in 15 gradient). There are also ASLs for use by cyclists wishing to turn north at the crossing – we wondered whether they would be used as intended but agreed to let them be tried. The pedestrian crossings are set back to make room for the cycle track **and accommodate the tactile paving layout**; CCC was concerned that this design worsens accessibility for pedestrians. The officers will send CCC a copy of the plan.

In addition, routing the SSL on the southern side of Regent Square and Sidmouth St looks a considerable improvement for cyclists (as there is 1 rather than 4 side roads crossing it)..

CCC requested that green surfacing follow through across the junction i.e. across Judd Street. Officers agreed to implement this.

The Judd St junction plan is about to go out to consultation. There will probably be no local objections to it, but the Councillors (Barbara Hughes and Nick Smith) are anti-cyclist. CCC **suggested** inviting them to **their** April 14th meeting to ask them to explain their grounds for objecting, or if they can't come, **CCC would** attend their surgery.

Eddie to email copy of draft drawing to CCC

2. Critical safety issues for existing cycle facilities

a. Seven Stations Link

Gordon Square: Plans for east and west side junctions east and west.

We were shown the plan for the Byng place junction. The give-way **carriageway markings** for traffic turning into Gordon Square **has been** implemented as agreed. The officers will consider doing the same for the junction on the other (east) side of Gordon Square. **Introduction of signals may be the long term solution.**

Gower Street. Vehicles making left turn into Torrington Place cut across cyclists stopped on track and/or demolish segregating bollard.

Cyclists waiting to go west across Gower Street from Torrington Place need to be protected with a bollard (from traffic turning into Torrington Place from Gower Street). The original bollard was taken out when heavy construction work was going on in the area. Lorries turning the corner may knock down any bollard. The officers propose the use of a **'reflective guard post'** – this can flap down and is surfaced with plastic reflectors. (They have used the same on the new route up Pancras Road to Goods Way). They will move the cycle track stop lines back from the junction so that stationary cyclists are protected by the segregated kerb.

Tottenham Court Road. Conflict between cyclists & motorists turning out of Torrington Place, and major hazards for cyclists turning from Tottenham Court Road into Torrington Place.

The cycle track runs along the north side of Torrington Place to the junction with Tottenham Court Road where there is an ASL. They will move the segregating island at the junction southwards in order to widen the track to allow full two way cycle flow; this will allow cyclists to exit into Tottenham Court Road either via the ASL or the cycle track, thus offering them more permutations for getting across Tottenham Court Road and into Howland Street.

The lead in for cyclists coming up Tottenham Court Road from the south of the junction and turning right into the track in Torrington Place is wrongly aligned. It will be altered.

Charlotte Street. Vehicles turn left into Charlotte St across path of cyclists

The officers agreed to take the green surface across the junction. Unfortunately service vehicles in Howland Street are demolishing the island ends and bollards

Tottenham Court Road / Torrington Place – left turn filter

Officers agreed to implement realignment

Ampton Street/Grays Inn Road. Response from TTS on restoring cycle signal phasing, which appears to have been reduced or totally removed from original scheme.

Paul has had complaints from Islington and Hackney cyclists. The lights used to provide an advance stage for cyclists – who took it out and why was no one at Camden Council apparently given the opportunity to defend cyclists' interests? Dave will ask TTS to put it back.

b. Royal College Street

Plender Street & Pratt Street junctions: Cyclists on the track continue to experience difficulties with motorists pulling out across their path, with biggest problem being motorists not expecting southbound cyclists; motorists also sometimes turn into these side roads across the path of cyclists. Can any further design tweaks be made to improve these junctions...

It was felt that motorists coming from the side streets (Plender and Pratt) are improving – they generally do observe the ‘stop’ signs. There is a potential danger from vehicles turning across the track into the side streets. The officers may consider ramps for the cars and in the long term the use of signals at the junctions.

3. Eton Avenue Market

Alex told us that Camden have been given a plan for the market. Unfortunately the external project manager (John Wolfenden) and private architects have not allowed for the fact that the market is being built over an existing cycle track. They are more interested in the aesthetics – considering the space as a public piazza when the market is not present. However there are safety issues for cyclists going through and they must make a separate place for them.

Alex said that there are now to be a maximum of 40 market stalls and that they could be sited on one side of the street with the marked cycle track on the other side. In March he asked the designers to provide a cycle lane away from the pedestrian activities in the market. Alex is willing to draw up a plan if the designers don't cooperate. He will look into statistics for current cycle use of this track.

However all officers present seemed to think that they were unlikely to get a satisfactory solution for cyclists as this scheme is being run by an external project manager on behalf of the Planning Dept, and it would seem that the original brief did not mention the need to maintain access through the site for cyclists.