

Response to Consultation on: Central Somers Town proposals

To Louise Trewavas, copy to John Fitcher, Stuart Dilley, Louise MacBride, Sam Monck, Ben Knowles.

This response to the consultation on the Central Somers Town proposals, March 2015 is from Camden Cycling Campaign, the local borough group of London Cycling Campaign (LCC). We have approximately 600 members and represent the interests of cyclists living or working in the borough of Camden. We consulted our members by email on this issue as well as discussing it at a members meeting. This response reflects the views of the membership.

Context

Please note that Camden's main north-south cycle route runs through the area under consultation, following a route on Goldington Crescent, Purchase Street, Polygon Road and Ossulston Street; and benefiting from a safe crossing over Euston Road into Mabledon Place. This signed Grid route is heavily used by cycle commuters (recent counts showed 286 southbound cyclists in the 8-10 am peak).

We are looking forward to the southern extension of Royal College Street on Pancras Road with a safe crossing over Euston Road connecting to Judd Street, perhaps within 18 months. When this is in place, we expect about half of the cyclists on Royal College Street to use this new route.

However, we are hopeful that the number of people cycling will continue to increase and we also think that anyone going to the Bloomsbury area or further west will prefer to use the Somers Town route.

This signed cycle route should be improved as an integrated part of the Somers Town redevelopment.

General

We welcome the consultation's recognition of the need for general permeability for people cycling throughout the roads in this area including the existing closure in Polygon Road, and the proposed extension of this closure; as well as across the square between the southern end of Charrington Street and Ossulston Street.

We also note that the new entrance to Edith Neville school will be on Purchase Street (close to the two-way cycle track which is on the west side of the road). We are already aware of the entry to the children's centre on the closed section of Polygon Road.

Specific Comments

The main north-south route

This signed route needs to be re-aligned with a view to providing a direct and uninterrupted route for cycling. We considered two possible alignments both of which avoid the closed section of Polygon Road:

1. a route via Chalton Street and Charrington Street and through the square that leads to Ossulston Street;
2. a route via Purchase Street all the way down to Brill Place, and then Ossulston Street.

Route via Charrington Street – our preferred option

This is the more direct route and our preferred option. It requires a major intervention to provide a safe route through the square at Ossulston Street. We suggest a treatment similar to that in place at Ampton Street, where pedestrians are encouraged to keep away from cycles by separating trees and planting. See it on StreetView at: <http://goo.gl/Jrjh8b> (the distance through the Ampton Street square is only about half of that through the square here).

This route avoids the entrance to Edith Neville school but there is an issue as to how cycles will cross the footway in Polygon Road. We can see two alternative solutions:

- the cycle way would be like a small road to cross as at Ampton Street;
- cycles give way at a footway e.g. the exit from the closure of Stratford Villas at Agar Grove.

We prefer the former because it seems more easily understood by all users.

Route via Purchase Street to Brill Place

This would have the advantage of improving links to Pancras Road via Chenies Place and Brill Place. But since Purchase Street is constructed from supposedly heritage cobbles, the surface is unsuitable for cycling. The existing two-way track is directly outside the proposed entrance to Edith Neville school and does not extend all the way down to Brill Place.

The only acceptable solution would be to provide a pair of smooth-surfaced cycle lanes, one on each side of Purchase Street for its full length. Ben Knowles has told us of a proposal for a granite Bikeway in New York which is illustrated at:

<http://bikesharenyc.blogspot.co.uk/2015/04/no-more-v-v-v-v-varick-st-city.html>

But such a solution would require removal of parking as well as considerable expense.

Polygon Road

We are fully supportive of the proposal to extend the closure of Polygon Road as far as Chalton Street.

Phoenix Road- Brill Place

During the works on the Francis Crick Centre, the bollard at the junction of Brill Place with Ossulston Street has sometimes been removed. It is important that this closure is retained. We would welcome the closure of Phoenix Road at Chalton Street as a further measure to reduce motor traffic on Ossulston Street.

Please would you acknowledge receipt of this response. We would be very happy to discuss any aspect of our comments.

Jean Dollimore, jean@dollimore.net, Camden Cycling Campaign committee.