

To: Raymond Cheng, Simi Shah

Kentish Town Road / Castle Road / Royal College Street junction improvement

This response to the consultation from Camden on the proposed improvements to the Kentish Town Road / Castle Road / Royal College Street junction is from Camden Cycling Campaign, the local borough group of London Cycling Campaign (LCC). We represent the interests of cyclists living or working in the Camden and aim to expand the opportunities for all to cycle safely in the borough. We have discussed this consultation by email and online (using Cyclescape).

Summary

We support most of the proposals, in particular we are very pleased to see the permeability improvements for cyclists, but are concerned that the proposals do not address the significant safety issue caused by motor vehicles turning into Castle Road.

Background

This is a key junction which links the excellent cycle facilities on Royal College Street to local destinations on Kentish Town Road on the one hand and the quiet route on Castlehaven and Grafton Roads on the other. Currently the junction is difficult to negotiate for cyclists; improving it would enable a high quality route, suitable for cyclists of all ages and confidence levels, from Bloomsbury to Kentish Town and Gospel Oak.

Responses to Specific Proposals

1. *Replace the fire gate with bollards at the Kentish Town Road / Rochester Road junction and provide a gap in the central island opposite Rochester Road for cyclists to cycle in and out of Rochester Road.*

This is an excellent idea and we strongly support it. As well as improving permeability and access to the area east of Kentish Town Road it will mean that cyclists no longer are tempted to use the footway.

2. *Introduce a southbound mandatory cycle lane on Kentish Town Road to guide cyclists safely to the advanced stop line in order to wait at the traffic lights in front of motor traffic. This requires narrowing the existing footway near the stop line where it is wider. Continue the mandatory cycle lane through the junction to the segregated cycle lane provided on Royal College Street.*

We support this but think the section after the crossing (northern part of Royal College Street) should be made using a stepped track to give better protection. Could space for the feeder lane be made by moving the island to the west, rather than narrowing the footway?

3. *Introduce an advance stop line and traffic signal on Castle Road. This will allow cyclists to cross the road safely and enter the advance stop line on Kentish Town Road southbound. Access for cyclists will be provided by creating a gap in the central traffic island. Pedestrian crossing will remain informal as current across Castle Road.*

We strongly support this. Currently, southbound cyclists using the quiet routes on Grafton and Castlehaven Roads cannot use this connection and either have to continue to Hawley Road or make a difficult turn out of Kelly Street. It is very important wherever possible to make routes work in both directions and this change should encourage people to use the segregated tracks on Royal College Street.

4. *Provide a new pedestrian crossing on the northern arm of Kentish Town Road. This will allow pedestrians to cross Kentish Town Road in one movement.*
We support this
5. *Widen footway on the south side at Royal College Street/Kentish Town Road junction; this will allow pedestrians to cross Royal College Street in one movement instead of the current situation where they have two crossings split by a central island. The island will then be narrowed, as it will not be used by pedestrians to wait on.*
We support this
6. *Introduce a pedestrian only stage to the traffic signals so that pedestrians can cross all roads when motor traffic is brought to a stop.*
We support this

Concerns about Road Layout

We are concerned by the conversion of the left-hand lanes on Kentish Town Road from left and ahead to left only. We think that this would increase the risk of left hooks, as less confident cyclists may not find it easy to take the right-hand lane. Currently cyclists can proceed ahead from the left lane and motorists expect this. We don't understand the reason for this change.

Left-hook risk at Castle Road

The risk to cyclists from motors turning into Castle Road has been discussed several times. It mostly (though not exclusively) comes about from motors crossing from Royal College Street (sometimes at speed) and is exacerbated by the junction layout. Cyclists proceeding from Royal College Street up Kentish Town Road feel they are going straight and do not necessarily indicate, whereas motorists cut across them.

We think that the junction needs further thought to improve this situation; our suggestions are:

1. A separate signal for cyclists exiting Royal College Street
2. Making Castle Road No Entry for motor vehicles.

We prefer the second suggestion as i) it would reduce motor traffic in Castle Road, (ii) it would improve safety for northbound cyclists on Kentish Town Road and (iii) a separate signal could add to the cycle time and disadvantage pedestrians and cyclists.

Please acknowledge receipt of this response. We would be very happy to discuss any aspect of our comments; contact details are below.

John Chamberlain, Jean Dollimore and George Coulouris
john@camdencyclists.org.uk , jean@dollimore.net , george@coulouris.net

Camden Cycling Campaign
11 Grove Terrace
London NW5 1PH
+44 20 7485 2685
+44 788 755 2391 (mobile)