

## **Consultation on Heath Street/East Heath Road/West Heath Road junction Proposed Improvements**

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CC: Simi Shah

This response to the consultation on Heath Street/East Heath Road/West Heath Road junction proposed Improvements is from Camden Cycling Campaign, the local borough group of London Cycling Campaign. 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).

### **Introduction**

In the consultation Camden state that they propose measures to improve the public realm and reduce bus journey times through the junction of Heath Street, East Heath Road and West Heath Road in Hampstead.

### **Cycling**

#### **Two failures of a critical issue in the Healthy Streets check**

At a glance we have critical failures here:

- southbound on Heath Street: risk of left hook e.g. as a cyclist approaches the junction during the left turn stage in the signals;
- northbound on Heath Street: risk of left hook e.g. as a cyclist approaches the junction while the signal is on green.

We cannot accept any new junction design that includes critical failures.

#### **The role of this junction in the proposed borough-wide cycle network**

The diagram below is an extract from Camden's Draft Cycling Action Plan drawing of the proposed borough-wide cycle network. In our response to the consultation on the Draft Transport Strategy, we noted the following missing link:

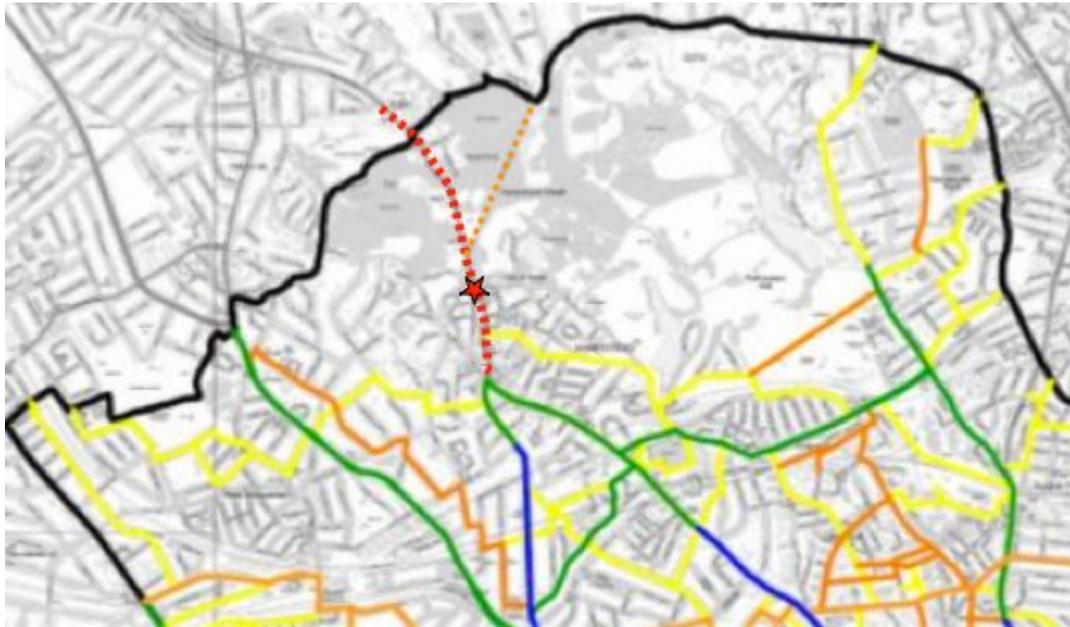
- in the middle of the north of the borough, we need a main road route, e.g. on Heath Street and North End Way.

This link from Heath Street to North End Way is shown by our red dotted line. Note that it is on TfL's Strategic Cycling Analysis top 5-10% busiest connections (cyclable trips)<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the SCA indicates that Heath Street is currently in the top 5-10% busiest connections (current trips) while North End Way and Spaniards Road are in the top 10-15%<sup>2</sup>. Spaniards Road which has partial provision for cycling is shown as an orange dotted line. The red star shows the approximate position of the junction under consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> SCA Figure 2.2: Categorisation of potential cycle demand with high propensity to cycle areas

<sup>2</sup> SCA Figure 2.1: Categorisation of current cycle demand



It is essential that this junction be redesigned so that it is safe and comfortable for cycling. Both approaches on Heath Street are wide enough to provide a segregated cycle lane and a separate signal stage for cycles.

### **Claimed improvements for cycling**

The consultation document says: “Advanced cycle stop lines have been added to all arms of the junction except Heath Street southbound (to allow for safe exit from Whitestone Lane). But on inspecting the drawing, we can see only two ASLs – there isn’t one on East Heath Road.

The reason given for not putting one on the Heath Street southbound arm assigns higher priority to the convenience of a few private road users on Whitestone Lane than to the safety of cyclists. It should be noted that Whitestone Lane has much better and safer motor entry/exit onto East Heath Road. Its link to Heath Street should be closed.

### **East Heath Road needs an ASL box**

An ASL will provide a safe space for people to wait if they manage to get to the front. It would be useful to have a feeder lane if one could be fitted in – as vehicles are not allowed to turn left at the junction, there would be no danger of left hook.

### **West Heath Road can have a feeder lane**

West Heath Road is being narrowed from two to one lane eastbound; there is plenty of room for a feeder lane and no risk of left hook.

### **Stated scheme motivation and expected effects**

Camden’s introduction refers to proposals to improve the public realm and reduce bus journey times. Camden mentions the following expected effects:

- bus journey times are likely to decrease by between 11 and 19 seconds for southbound traffic and up to 7 seconds for northbound traffic;
- the proposed tightening of the junction increases capacity, which assists in reducing delays to general traffic (*i.e. cycles and motor vehicles mixed*<sup>3</sup>);

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<sup>3</sup> Our note

- ASLs which will help to reduce conflict between motorists and cyclists *when pulling away from the stop line*<sup>4</sup>.
- Shorter and more direct pedestrian crossings; wider footways *but a staggered crossing over West Heath Road*<sup>4</sup>.

The time savings refer to the 268 bus, which has a frequency of only 4 per hour even at peak, and the 603 which runs at school travel times only (two journeys per day in each direction).

To summarise: the changes will have a very marginal effect on bus journey times while increasing capacity for motor traffic, which should never be allowed because it is likely to result in increased traffic volumes. This appears to be against Camden's road user hierarchy. To quote from the Draft Transport Strategy paragraph 2.18:

In order to manage this very diverse and often conflicting demand for limited carriageway, footway and kerbside space, we currently use a road user hierarchy which prioritises the most efficient, sustainable, and healthy modes of travel - walking, cycling and public transport.

### **Promised standards in the Draft Cycling Action Plan**

To quote paragraph 2.10:

On any route, or specific piece of infrastructure, we will design schemes according to the latest version of the London Cycle Design Standards. In doing so our intention is to create cycling environments that are safe, consistent, coherent and attractive for all ages.

As we have argued above, Heath Street is an essential link on the borough-wide cycle network. Therefore this junction should be implemented according to the latest version of the London Cycle Design Standards.

### **Strategic view**

This junction redesign provides an early and difficult test for the Draft Transport Strategy because its position in the road network makes it an essential part of many motor journeys across Camden. It is currently often traffic-saturated and the resultant delays must deter some journeys. The proposed design aims to increase the junction's capacity for motor traffic which must reduce the deterrent effect, resulting in more motorised journeys. That is in direct conflict with Objective 2 of the Transport Strategy: To reduce car ownership and use, and motor traffic levels in Camden.

In addition the design does nothing for cycling and by facilitating motor traffic flow will make cycling less attractive and more dangerous.

The proposal should be debated, and a resolution consistent with the Transport Strategy arrived at before the scheme goes ahead.

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

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<sup>4</sup> Our italics