

Camden Cycling Campaign

6th April 2023

To: safetravel@camden.gov.uk

CC: Karl Brierley, Anthony Christofi and Sam Margolis

Camden Square Area Safe and Healthy Streets and C50 cycle route consultation

This response to the consultation on the above proposal from Camden Council is from Camden Cycling Campaign, the local borough group of London Cycling Campaign. We represent the interests of cyclists living or working in or travelling through Camden and aim to expand the opportunities for all to cycle safely in the borough. We discussed this consultation in detail at our March meeting and also in email.

Making the trial scheme permanent

The Camden Square area has been fairly well protected from through motor traffic since filters were installed in the 1970s. The LCN route that ran through the area from Cliff Road to Agar Grove had two serious weaknesses: the need to cross the heavily trafficked Murray Street and the poor link to C6 on Royal College Street via Georgiana Street.

The trial scheme has totally eliminated both of those problems by means of the diagonal motor-traffic filter on Murray Street and the direct two-way link to Royal College Street via Randolph Street. The latter was enabled with a radical new design at the junction with St Pancras Way - the first junction in Camden to have dedicated cycle signals on all arms.

The design for northbound access from Royal College Street into Randolph Road is ingenious in providing a right turn lane for cycles at the top of a bus stop bypass island.

Overall, these improvements have done a lot to enable all sorts of people to cycle and we therefore are very strongly in favour of making them permanent. The improvements to the through cycle route now signed as C50 have brought it up to a better standard consistent with the 'C' designation.

Problems with the trial scheme

The parallel crossing over Agar Grove at Stratford Villas

The currently permitted motor vehicle right turn out of Agar Place is a hazard to people using the crossing and we are aware of one case when a motor vehicle collided with a cycle. We therefore request a right turn ban for motor vehicles.

Junction of Royal College Street and Randolph Road

Motor vehicles on Royal College Street (RCS) often use the southbound cycle lane to cut the corner to turn right. This needs to be prevented as it is a hazard for westbound cycles on Randolph Street and southbound cycles on Royal College Street.

Randolph Street cycle lanes at night time

We are aware of at least one person who won't cycle (or walk) this way at night because the cycle lanes are somewhat hidden by the parked vehicles and the bridge piers on a too-dark road. We believe that the proposed four new trees could help a little by breaking up the parking. However, we ask Camden to see whether more can be done to improve Randolph Street for after-dark cycling.

Cliff Road contraflow cycle lane - a snagging issue

Although this road has a sufficient number of two-way cycling signs (960.1), some drivers think that with-flow cyclists should be in the contraflow cycle lane. This cycle lane should be marked with logos and arrows. Also the bollard at the western end of the contraflow lane has a cycle symbol on the wrong side - [photo](#).

The proposed changes to the scheme that we support

Drawing A

C50 south of Stratford Villas

Yellow box on RCS at junction with RCS: We are very pleased with this proposal and hope that a yellow box will keep the junction clear for people trying to cycle between Randolph Street and RCS. We had thought the KEEP CLEAR was a good idea but it often doesn't work.

Stepped tracks to replace wands

Stepped tracks are very appropriate for a permanent scheme, while the wands have been useful in claiming the space for cycle lanes.

Blended junctions at Rousden Street and Agar Place

We are very pleased to see the proposal to take the cycle track through at the same level as the footway with an entry kerb between the cycle track and the road.

Priority changes to promote C50

Stratford Villas / Rochester Square (W) – Drawing C

The intention to give priority to cycles moving straight on between the cycletrack and the roadway sections of Stratford Villas is laudable since the cycle traffic is likely to outnumber the motor traffic. But we are forced to question whether any arrangement of painted Give Way markings can convey these priorities sufficiently clearly to deliver a safe junction. We conclude that one of the following two design approaches must be adopted:

Either: Keep the priorities as they are, with the bollard and kerb between the cycle track and the roadway giving a clear visual indication of the intended priorities.

Or: Reconstruct the junction using materials that leave no doubt about the intended priorities. The minimum changes required would include (a) the use of a clearly distinguishing surfacing material such as [these pavers in Cliff Villas](#) or these in [Granary Square at York Way](#) right through the raised junction in both directions and extending a few metres into the cycle track, including removal of the kerb separating the cycleway from the roadway and (b) an additional give-way marking for southwest-bound traffic on the roadway, yielding priority to oncoming cycles emerging from the cycleway. The latter would require removal of some parking to create a waiting space for yielding vehicles.

Canteloves Road / South Villas. Drawing G, drawing 6.

We are strongly in favour of the proposed change in priority here. As things are at the moment, southbound cyclists on C50 are at risk of colliding with motor vehicles emerging from Canteloves Road.

Continuous footway at junctions on roads without cycle tracks

- Stratford Villas / Rochester Square (E) – Drawing G drawing 7
- St Paul's Crescent/Agar Grove – Drawing E.

We support the proposed changes to continuous footways which emphasise the priority of pedestrians on the footway.

The proposed changes to the scheme that we support (cont'd)

Raised junctions and crossings

- Stratford Villas / Rochester Square (W) – Drawing C
- Agar Grove / Murray Street/ St Dugustine's Road – Drawing D
- Camden Terrace / North Villas – Drawing I
- Pedestrian crossing over Agar Grove near St Pauls' Crescent – Drawing E
- Murray Street/Camden Square (E) – Drawing F
- Cliff Villas (outside school) – Drawing J

We support the use of raised junctions and crossings because they are effective in slowing down all of the vehicles using the junction or approaching the crossing.

Cushions, humps and islands

When cyclists share the road with motor vehicles, vertical and horizontal traffic calming measures always reduce their comfort; in the case of cushions and islands, their safety can also be compromised.

Replacement of cushions with sinusoidal humps on Agar Grove. Drawing E.

Speed cushions are a serious hazard for cyclists, because most road users try to avoid going over them, taking up unexpected positions; in particular, cyclists may ride too close to car doors or pull out into oncoming traffic, and they can be destabilising for people on tricycles or other non-standard cycles. Speed cushions should be eliminated from all roads where cyclists share the road with motor vehicles. We are therefore strongly in support of their replacement by sinusoidal humps In Agar Grove.

Removal of centre island on Agar Grove. Drawing E

We generally support the removal of centre islands because they can be pinch points when people have to cycle in the road. This applies to the island in question.

Speed humps on Camden Square, Stratford Villas and other roads in the area

Sinusoidal humps are acceptable when they are needed to reduce motor vehicle speeds. But most people would prefer not to have to ride over them and they cause noise and vibration. There are three speed humps on the east side of Camden Square and three more on Stratford Villas, right on the C50 as well as on most of the other roads in the area. Once a road is low traffic Camden should review the need for speed humps based on speed monitoring.

Other measures

We support all of the following proposed enhancements:

- Adding new trees to improve biodiversity and reconfiguring parking bays to improve the look of Rousden Street
- Adding six new cycle hangers across the area (though we hope that more can be funded now or later).
- Public realm improvements at green spaces and other locations in the area
- Planting new trees at a number of locations
- Adding a new Santander bike hire docking station on Agar Grove

Proposed changes about which we have reservations

We believe that the following proposals could be detrimental to the comfort and safety of people who cycle and in some cases pedestrians as well. In two of the three cases we suggest modifications that will make them acceptable.

The Murray Street/Camden Square filter – Drawing F

The current diagonal filter works very well for people of all ages who cycle; and the consultation documentation does not give a reason to change it. The proposed changes require motor vehicles to turn round at the bottom of Camden Square on the C50 route and also on Murray Street on the route to the Agar-Camley link.

Turning motor vehicles present a risk to cyclists and pedestrians (or, at the very least, an annoyance). We therefore oppose these proposed changes and ask Camden to leave the current layout as is.

Agar Grove Murray Street junction – Drawing D

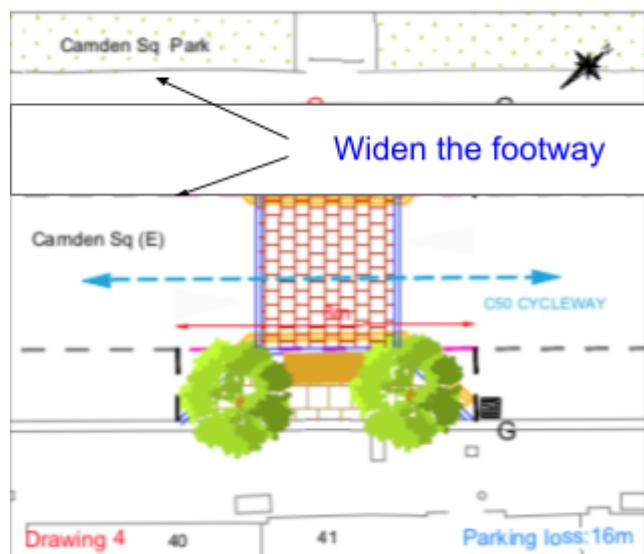
We are very pleased to see a proposal for a parallel crossing in the right place – opposite the entry to the Agar-Camley link. However, we ask Camden to reduce the amount of shared space on the Murray Street side of the junction. We suggest that the arrangement be similar to that at the Estelle Road side of the Mansfield Road crossing: that is, instead of shared space, cyclists will use a two-way protected lane adjacent to the road.

Footway buildouts – Drawing G, drawings 1-5

The proposed buildouts are on the east and west sides of Camden Square where parking spaces are provided on both sides of the road – far more than is needed. The parking on the ‘inner’ sides of the square (adjacent to the park) is seldom used, so the proposed buildouts on the inner sides would cause pinch points for cyclists.

The footways on the inner sides of the square are very narrow – far below the recommended 2m. The parking should be removed from these sides to allow for widening of these footways as shown in our drawing.

Build-outs should then be provided on the ‘outer’ sides of the square only, to allow pedestrians walking on the outer pavements to access all the park gates. These build-outs should not be a problem for bikes, as these outer sides are always densely parked, and would become more so.



Parking too close to junctions

We support Camden’s policy that there should be no parking within 10m of any junction. We urge them to apply this at all of the junctions involved. We note that the following junctions are not conformant:

- Stratford Villas / Rochester Square (SW) – Drawing C
- Stratford Villas / Rochester Square (NE) – Drawing G drawing 7
- Near the St Paul’s Crescent junction (S side) – Drawing E
- On Stratford Villas and Murray Street at their junction – Drawing F
- On all arms at North Villas junction with Camden Terrace – Drawing I

The Camden Road crossings

When TfL decided not to route the C50 cycleway on Camden Road but run it through Camden Square instead, it was recognised that essential links to locations on the other side of Camden Road would be lost. Camden officers therefore insisted on cycle crossings at Canteloves Road and Rochester Square. TfL consulted on Toucan crossings at these two locations in July 2021. See [here](#). Although Camden has marked the way to such crossings in Canteloves Road and Rochester Square, we have not heard of plans to complete the work. We ask Camden Council to put pressure on TfL to build the crossings.

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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