

Camden Cycling Campaign

7th March 2024

To: safetravel@camden.gov.uk

Clerkenwell Road Safe and Healthy Streets 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 these proposals at our monthly meeting on 19th February.

Introduction

We are thrilled to see the first stage of the much-needed cycle route along Bloomsbury Way – Theobalds Road – Clerkenwell Road – Old Street which we have been calling ‘Clerkenwell Boulevard’ since our campaign started 10 years ago.

We therefore strongly support the following proposals:

- **Stepped cycle lanes** along each side of Clerkenwell Road between Gray’s Inn Road and Farringdon Road, adding an additional 2 x 400m of protected cycle lanes to the Camden Cycling Network.
- **Dedicated signal stages** for east-west cycles at the junction of Theobalds Road/Gray’s Inn Road/Clerkenwell Road and the nearby junction at Rosebery Avenue /Clerkenwell Road.
- **Cycle gates** on both the Gray’s Inn Road and the Rosebery Avenue approach to these junctions (though see our comments below).
- **Parallel crossings** to enable access to side roads e.g. Leather Lane and Eyre Street Hill.
- We congratulate Camden for their strategic use of road closures to enable the construction of a pair of **bus stop bypasses** in this rather narrow road.

However we have many reservations and suggestions on details of the design. We describe these in the following paragraphs.

Cycle gates

When used in pairs as proposed on Gray’s Inn Road or at a T-junction as at Rosebery Avenue their design theoretically provides cyclists with full protection for all possible manoeuvres on approach to a junction, on passing through it and on exit to protected cycle lanes (including right turns in a single stage). If used correctly they are a second best to dedicated cycle signals which provide more secure separation between cyclists and motor vehicles and are well understood by cyclists.

However we have the impression that many cyclists ignore red signals at the back of the reservoir. As we are unaware of other recent audits, and to clarify this situation, John Chamberlain spent two short periods looking at cyclists’ behaviour on a weekday evening and a weekday morning at the cycle gate on Southampton Row. See Appendix A. Here is a summary from the combined results of the two periods:

- He counted 69 cyclists of whom 63 used the cycle lane and 6 used the main traffic lane.
- No cyclists stopped at the cycle signal (at the back of the reservoir) when it was red (16 out of 63).
- Of the 63, 46 arrived at the main signal (at the front of the reservoir) in red and waited. 3 ran the red signal (2 of these were turning left). 14 arrived on green with the main traffic and were therefore at risk of left hook. He saw several near misses.
- So it is functioning as a deep ASL with no intrusion of MVs or PTWs but not as intended.

These were short periods and behaviour might be different at other times. But the picture is not good.

Education of users on site? Even with full use of social media, it is unlikely that the message will get through to people cycling through these gates. We therefore suggest that intensive on the spot advice is required and that it be applied at the nearby Southampton Row junction to see whether any behaviour change can be achieved. Unless behaviour change can be effected so that the majority of riders stop at the cycle red signal, we think that Camden should consider whether they are appropriate and consider using dedicated cycle signals instead.

The cycle lanes

We have serious concerns regarding the widths of the lanes and their interruption by a loading bay.

Lane widths

LCN 1/20 Table 5-2 specifies that where peak hour flows are > 800, cycle lanes need to be 2.5 m wide. And for peak hour flows of 200-800, lanes need to be 2.2 m (with a minimum 2m for both).

See Appendix B for recent cycle counts in Clerkenwell Road: the peak flows (in February 2024) are up to ~600 per hour in the AM peak and ~700 per hour in the PM peak and are likely to be higher in warmer weather. These flows are also likely to increase when the new infrastructure is in place. We should be looking for 2.2m just for current flows and 2.5m to allow for expected increases in flows (with an absolute minimum of 2m).

We recognise that fitting everything into Clerkenwell Road is a challenge and that good use has been made of the available space to the west of Back Hill where cycle lane widths of over 2m are specified, giving room for overtaking.

We accept that at the two bus stop bypasses in the middle section, a lane width of 1.5m with island width of 2.5m is a minimum standard. And we concede that the 30m long full time loading bay is a necessary evil. However we believe that road width could be better deployed for cycling between the loading bay and Leather Lane.

Our main concern is with the approaches to and exits from the two signalised junctions at the western end. When the capacity of cycle lanes is below requirements the queues at junctions become so long that people can't get through on the first green signal. This situation was one of the worst symptoms of the inadequacy of the former 2-way cycle track on Tavistock Place as shown in [our video made in 2013](#).

We have used clips from the consultation drawings to estimate the widths of elements other than the cycle lanes so as to see where more width might be gained. See Appendix C

Approach on Theobald's Road to the junction with Grays Inn Road

The approach lane width of 1.5m is unacceptable: to allow for queueing the width should be 2.5m. The current road width here is ~15m which should be more than enough for 2x 2.5m cycle lanes, 2x 3.25m motor lanes and the 1m signal island. See Appendix C1. In the short term if it is unfeasible to move the bus stop on the south side of Theobalds Road, we suggest that the footway widening should be postponed in order to widen the cycle lane on the approach to the junction.

The timed loading bay by Kings Mews is also unacceptable because when occupied, it will cause cyclists to pull out in a hurry just before the junction when the signal is on green. We are also bearing in mind that the Holborn LN promises protected cycle lanes on Theobalds Road – these could be 'future proofed' by putting in a 2.5m wide cycle lane past King's Mews as part of the current scheme (as was done at the eastern end of Clerkenwell Road in 2017 as part of the C6 developments).

The section of Clerkenwell Road between Grays Inn Road and Rosebery Avenue

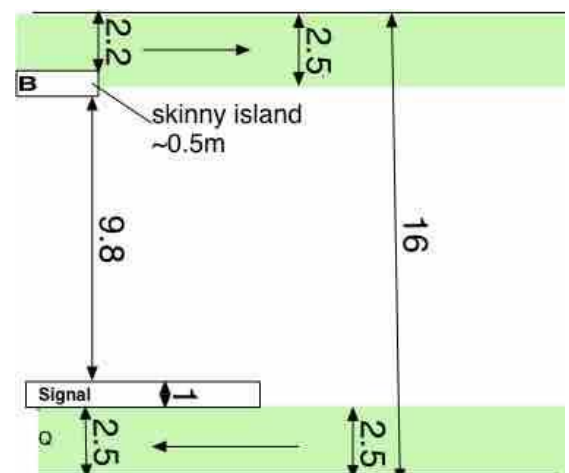
This section is crucial: the eastbound cycle lane (proposed width 2.1m) needs to have sufficient capacity for queueing at Rosebery Avenue and the westbound cycle lane (proposed width 2.05m) for queueing at Gray's Inn Road. The road width here is ~16m (Appendix C2). The three motor traffic lanes require 9.75m which leaves 6.25m for the cycle infrastructure.

We suggest that 2.5m stepped cycle lanes should be used through this section, these lanes being protected by:

- 1m wide x 8m long signal islands on the approaches to the two junctions.
- And skinny bollard islands on exit from the junctions

The sketch on the right shows how the approach to Gray's Inn Road might work.

In a similar way, the approach to Rosebery Avenue would have the signal island on the eastbound lane and the skinny bollard island on the westbound lane.

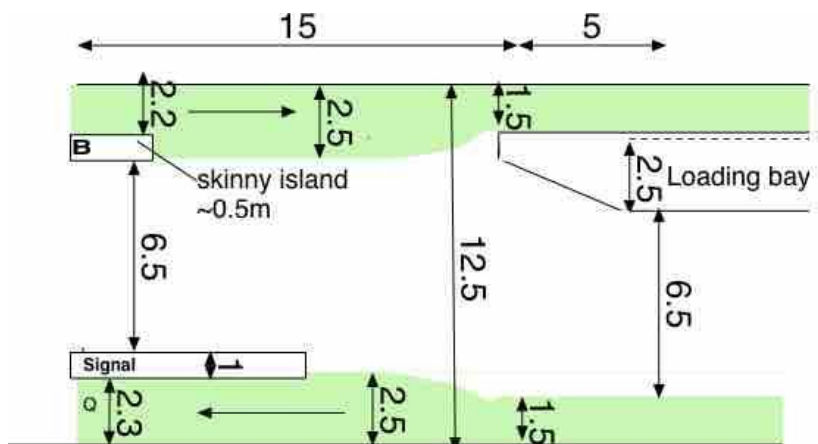


Clerkenwell Road to the east of the junction with Rosebery Avenue

The proposed cycle lane widths are 1.5m on entry to the junction and 1.65m on exit, both of which are severely inadequate.

Appendix C3 suggests that the lead up to the loading bay is about 15m long and the width of the road about 12.5m.

We suggest that the loading bay island should not start until 15m east of the junction so as to allow for about 15m of wider cycle lanes close to the junction. To allow for the gradual narrowing of the road and the cycle lanes at the loading bay we suggest that the bay area is shifted to the east by about 5m (Sheet 4 of the consultation drawing appears to leave some space between the loading bay and the parallel crossing).



The sketch suggests how our proposed layout might work.

Sadly we can see no alternative to reducing the cycle lane widths to 1.5 m as they pass the loading bay.

The section between the loading bay and the bus stop bypasses

See Sheet 4 of the consultation drawing. We estimate that if the loading bay is moved 5m to the east, the eastern end will be approximately level with the 'zebra tails' at the parallel crossing.

Although we would normally support the introduction of SUDS/greening areas as proposed at this crossing, we believe that this should not be at the expense of inadequate cycle lane widths. We therefore suggest that these be dispensed with to release 2.4m road width and increase the cycle lane widths to 2.5m on both sides of the road as far as Vine Hill.

In a similar way, we believe that the westbound bus stop bypass island has been made excessively long and that it should be possible to release further road width at its eastern end.

Hatton Garden to Saffron Street

We suggest that the widths of the two cycle lanes be altered from 2.1m eastbound and 2.55m westbound to something more balanced (e.g. 2.35m and 2.3m respectively) (see Sheet 5)

Saffron Street to Farringdon Road

We observe from Sheet 6 on the consultation drawing that the motor vehicle lanes occupy 6.7m and the westbound cycle lane 2.05m; we suggest that the motor lanes be reduced to 6.5m to conform with the remainder of the road so that the westbound cycle lane can be increased to 2.25m. This is important as it is proposed to construct a stepped track here (which can't easily be altered).

We object to the proposal to retain the 'ride round' bus stop on the eastbound side; and we suggest it should be converted to a SUBB.

Side road junctions

Continuous Footways

Many of these junctions are shown with continuous footway and blue cycle lanes (e.g. Laystall Street, Vine Hill, Eyre Street Hill and Hatton Garden). We would like confirmation that the stepped cycle lane maintains its level across the junction as for example at Dalby Street on Prince of Wales Road.

Access to and from the cycle lanes on the opposite side of Clerkenwell Road

Hatton Garden: the current design (Sheet 5) does not appear to support access between the eastbound cycle lane and Hatton Garden. As a bus stop bypass is involved, we suggest the emulation of the current solution for access between the northbound cycle lane on Royal College Street and Randolph Street.

At one time we would have asked for a connection between Hatton Garden and Back Hill but the relatively recent introduction of two-way cycling on Eyre Street Hill makes this idea redundant, particularly considering the cobbles on Back Hill.

Parallel Crossings

We strongly support the proposal to add parallel crossings between Leather Lane and Eyre Street Hill and close to Laystall Street.

Loading bays

We have mentioned above our objection to the proposed timed loading bay across King's Mews. For similar reasons we object to the one proposed on Gray's Inn Road. It is our observation from elsewhere in Camden, that time restrictions at loading bays are regularly ignored by lorries, vans and cars, increasing risk to cyclists forced into the motor traffic lane.

Saffron Hill junction with Clerkenwell Road

As part of this scheme, we request that a pedestrian signal be added to the signal head at this junction. As Saffron Hill is one-way this would have no impact on Clerkenwell Road and would remove the current potential conflict where traffic has a green light but pedestrians have no signal.

We support the proposal to add a two-stage right turn for westbound cyclists at this junction to allow cyclists to access Cycle Superhighway 6 (CS6) on Herbal Hill safely.

Other proposals

We support the following:

- Improved pedestrian crossings at the Rosebery Avenue junction.
- Closure of Back Hill to all motor vehicles at the junction with Clerkenwell Road. And partial opening of the existing closure at the junction with Warner Street.
- A new public space by the closure of Leather Lane
- The addition of new cycle stands throughout the area.
- The consolidation and relocation of bus stops.

But we object to the relocation of the existing dockless bike and e-scooter bay on Clerkenwell Road by the junction with Leather Lane, to the proposed westbound bus stop bypass island because the lengthening of the island reduces the space available for adequately wide cycle lanes.

Summary

These are the main points from our response:

- This long-awaited scheme is very welcome as the first stage in the Clerkenwell Boulevard route.
- As the cycle lanes are to be implemented as permanent stepped cycle lanes it is very important that they are constructed with sufficient width:
 - Current cycle flows indicate that the cycle lane width should be at least 2.2m and expected increases indicate that the width should be 2.5m
 - It is particularly important that adequate width be provided on approach to a junction (to ensure that everyone waiting gets through at peak times).
 - The width of Clerkenwell Road between Gray's Inn Road and Roseberry Avenue is about 16m. Using stepped lanes (rather than kerb protection) should make room for ~2.5m cycle lanes through this section.
 - The width of Clerkenwell Road between Roseberry Avenue and Farringdon Road varies between ~11.8m and ~12.5m. This is sufficient to fit in a pair of ~2.5m cycle lanes and a pair of ~3.5m motor lanes but there isn't any width to spare. Therefore other uses of the road width should be strictly rationed.
 - The bus stop bypasses are essential and appear to have gained some extra road width where they pass road closures.
 - No unnecessary length should be added to the 20m loading bay or to the bus stop bypass islands, not even for cycle parking or for greening.
- The cycle lanes must not be obstructed by loading bays (not even part-time ones).
- Cycle gates: our study of user behaviour at the Southampton Row cycle gate confirms our impression that cyclists don't stop at the first signal, putting themselves at risk and defeating the purpose of using cycle gates. If intensive user education doesn't change this behaviour we ask Camden to consider using dedicated signals instead.
- Side road access: the proposed parallel crossings deal with all of these apart from Hatton Garden for which a solution is required.
- A pedestrian signal is needed at the junction with Saffron Hill.

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Appendix A

Southampton Row Southbound Cycle Gate

Lane Used	Cycle Signal			Main Signal			Comment
	Aspect	Stopped	Did not Stop	Aspect	Stopped	Did not Stop	
21/2/24 1730-1750							
Main Lane	NA	NA	5	Red	4	1	
				Green			No cyclists
Cycle Lane	Green	0	29	Red	28	1	Design Behaviour
	Red	0	8	Green		8	Left Hook Danger
	Red	0	1	Red	1		
Total			43		33	10	
27/2/24 0810-0820							
Main Lane	NA	NA	1	Red	1		
				Green			No cyclists
Cycle Lane	Green	0	18	Red	17	1	Design Behaviour
	Red	0	6	Green		6	Left Hook Danger
	Red	0	1	Red		1	
Total			26		18	8	

Comments:

1. The cycle lane is easy to reach.
2. The Cycle Lane signal is green most of the time (red when MVs get a green).
3. No cyclists stopped at the cycle signal when it was red.
4. Some cyclists leaving the main signal on green did not make it through the junction ahead of PTWs.

Analysis

Cyclists arriving on a green cycle light mostly stopped at the main signal (45/47) and are protected from left hooks (but see 4 above).

All cyclists ignored the cycle signal so those arriving on red (16/69) were in danger of left hook, and were typically positioned at the kerb so badly placed to go straight.

Appendix B

Cycle counts from recent sensor data on Clerkenwell Road (averages over 28 days leading up to 23rd February) supplied by Anthony Christofi:

- About 5000 cycles per day on average with the largest numbers on Tuesdays:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
~5000	~5400	~5000	~4800	~4600

- On the busiest weekday ~600 in AM peak (7 am - 8 am) and 700 in PM peak (5pm - 6pm).

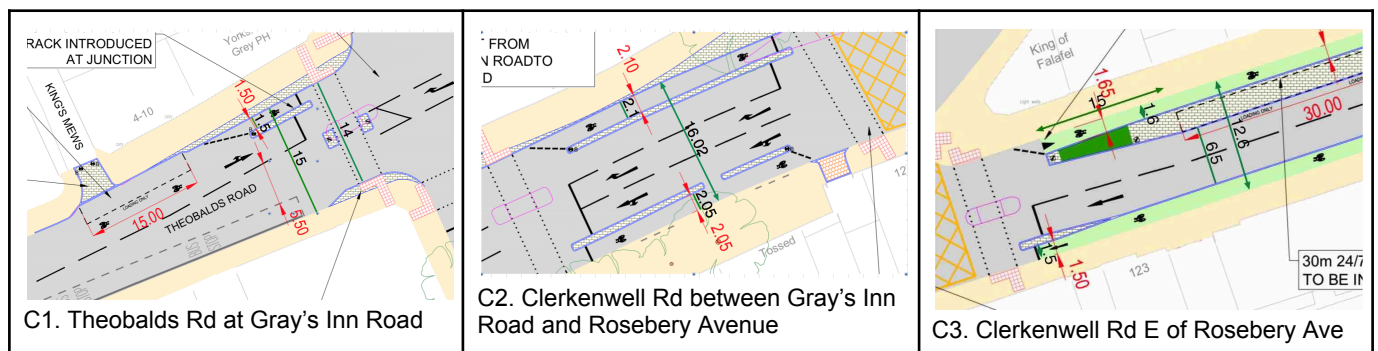
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM	~450	~600	~450	~400	~300
PM	~650	~700	~650	~550	~425

Our observation of the counts on the other cycle counters available to us indicates that it is likely that the counts on Clerkenwell Road would be higher in warmer weather.

Our response to this and other consultations has been impeded by the lack of direct access to the sensor data via Camden Open Data for this and other recently installed counters. We make all the counts we can access available using software written by George Coulouris and accessed via our website [here](#).

Appendix C

The map clips below are taken from Sheets 2 and 3 of the consultation drawing. We have added green lines to obtain further approximate measurements.



C1 suggests that Theobalds Road on the approach to Gray's Inn Road is about 15m wide

C2 suggests that the road width here is about 16m.

C3 suggests that the road width here is about 12.6m, while the lead up to the loading bay is about 14m long.