



B.B.R.A.G.

THE BROMLEY BOROUGH ROADS ACTION GROUP

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Committee Members: P.Appleby, R.W.Lawson, M.J.Stilwell

Nigel Wilkinson
Atkins Transport Planning
Woodcote Grove
Ashley Road
Epsom, Surrey
KT18 5BW

5 September, 2004

Reference Bromley Town Centre Scheme (Elmfield Rd & High St South)

Dear Mr Wilkinson,

We have the following comments on this scheme:

1. We are generally in favour in improving the environment of the Bromley South area and making it more pedestrian friendly. Clearly the current arrangement was devised when traffic on the road was much heavier, whereas now it is relatively light. We are therefore in favour of removing the central raised "bed" on the High St which I understand is proposed (although not mentioned on the plan provided).
2. On that basis we also suggest that the existing parking bays that are still retained in the new plans on the High Street be removed and the "loading bays" also (if the latter was possible as it appears from the plan that the shops on the eastern side of the High St may have rear access).
3. Similarly we would suggest that the High St and Elmfield Road be substantially reduced in width along their whole lengths so they are only one lane wide. At present, and even in future allowing for the bus lanes, there are two lane carriageways which deter pedestrians from crossing and increase the "separation" of the two sides of the High Street. We therefore suggest that the bus lanes be removed.

In essence we think that the bus lanes are unnecessary on those roads, although you may say that there is some congestion at the lower end of the High St caused by queues backing up from the junction with Masons Hill. However we believe this is caused by poor junction layout and poor timing of the traffic lights at that junction (exacerbated by TfL introducing an unnecessary longer pedestrian phase recently).

4. We would therefore suggest more emphasis on pedestrianisation of the High Street by the use of suitable visual clues and street furniture be considered.

5. However we are totally opposed to the use of speed tables (or “kerb level crossing areas” as they are misleadingly called on the map), particularly at the junction of the High St and Elmfield Road, and on Elmfield Road opposite “The Mall”.

The use of speed tables contradicts the adopted policy of Bromley Council of “a preference for non-vertical traffic calming devices”. Speed tables are particularly to be avoided on bus routes as they cause major discomfort to bus passengers and drivers and slow buses almost to a stop. In general speed humps, cushions and tables have many disadvantages and you can find more details of our objections to these devices on our web site.

6. We are also opposed to the use of speed tables at entries to side streets as indicated on the plan at the junctions of Ringers Road and Ravensbourne Road with the High St. Note that these treatments have no real advantage and yet are very expensive to construct. Removing all tables or “kerb level” treatments from the plan would not only be in line with official council policy, but it would save a major proportion of the budget that could be better spent on other improvements.

7. We are also opposed to the removal of the pedestrian crossing outside The Mall on Elmfield Road as that is a point where many pedestrians wish to cross. Making it a kerb level crossing whilst removing the pedestrian crossing is positively dangerous as it suggests to pedestrians that they have priority when they do not.

8. I think the junction of the High Street and Elmfield Road should be reconsidered as it is certainly confusing to pedestrians at present. Clearly there has been an attempt to integrate the upper, pedestrianised part of the High Street with the lower part of the High Street, but it doesn't really work. The shape of the junction and its treatment is unusual so it is not clear to pedestrians when and where to cross. But the new proposals don't seem any better and may be even more confusing. Ideally the entrance/exit to Ethelbert Road from the High Street should be closed off but whether that is practical or not I do not know (Ethelbert Road would need to be made a two way road in that case).

9. In summary, we suggest that the proposed scheme should be substantially reconsidered. At present it is clearly quite an expensive scheme, and yet provides relatively few benefits.

Incidentally I would also like to point out that it is exceedingly discourteous not to respond to questions. I sent you an email asking for the cost of this scheme, which you appear to deliberately ignore after talking to council staff (at least that's what you implied when I spoke to you on the telephone). Even when I asked you to respond within 24 hours by phone, you did not do so. If you didn't know the answer you could have said so, or consulted Bromley Council staff. As it was you simply ignored the communications. This is not how to undertake a public consultation exercise if you want to get useful answers.

Yours sincerely

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Secretary & Treasurer
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