

1204-25/04/JSC
25 March 2014

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Dear Ian,

Dawecroft Limited
Proposed Change of Use at Mickey Flynn's Snooker Club - Mill Road, Cambridge
Pre-application Enquiry

I write further to our meeting on Monday, 24 February 2014 during which we discussed the options for servicing the premises at Mickey Flynn's Snooker Club in conjunction with a potential change of use to retail uses and your subsequent letter dated, 7 March in which you set out the informal opinions of your safety audit colleagues in respect of our proposals, as illustrated in drawing number 1204-25/PL01 and 1204-25/PL02.

In the second paragraph of your letter you provide the comments of your safety audit colleagues in respect of the 'half-width' lay-by option and in the third paragraph you summarise their concerns in respect of the shared footway/lay-by option. I will respond to each of the opinions in turn.

Your colleagues suggest that they are **"concerned about the potential for pinching accidents where cyclists are caught between the stationary vehicle and an overtaking vehicle"** and go on to state that the available width between the sides of the vehicle and the far side kerb if, too large, will encourage cars to pass a cyclist at speed and if too narrow, **"may encourage drivers to squeeze a cyclist against the side of the delivery vehicle."** The suggestion that drivers may be encouraged to cause an accident is surprising. In the five year period since 2005 up until 2010 there were a total of 29 accidents involving cyclists, the majority of which occurred as a consequence of turning traffic joining or leaving Mill Road. Three accidents involved a cyclist undertaking movements required due to the presence of a vehicle servicing retail or other units along Mill Road or moving off from the kerb side (1 accident). Two accidents involved a cyclist overtaking a vehicle when a vehicle was passing in the opposite direction and found that there was insufficient space. This condition would be addressed by both Option 1 and Option 2.

The scenario being described by your colleagues includes the *status quo*, where vehicles already service retail and other units from the street and in many cases result in only half the width of the carriageway being available for the movements of traffic and cyclists. By providing additional space, it is suggested that this too is detrimental to safety, which seems surprising. The concerns related to speed seem unfounded to me. You accepted in our meeting that Mill Road is a low vehicle speed environment, due I suspect in part to the presence of on-street servicing activity. The road is also subject to a speed limit of 20mph.

Paragraph 7.2.3 of Manual for Streets discusses the merits of using narrow streets as a traffic calming feature, generally over short distances and suggests that a carriageway width of 2.75m may be used as a minimum. The guidance continues that widths between 2.75m and 3.25m should be avoided as they could result in drivers

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trying to squeeze past cyclists. The proposed 'half-width' lay-by provides for greater than 4.5m of available carriageway adjacent to a delivering vehicle when a vehicle is in-situ during servicing acts and is considered to be suitable and appropriate in this instance and indeed is fully in accordance with the Manual for Streets advice. I do not therefore agree with the conclusions of your safety auditors.

Turning to consider the concerns that have been expressed in respect of the second option illustrated in our drawing (number 1204-25/PL02) I cannot accept the suggestion that the scenario described is a situation that will in reality occur. Logistics operators provide servicing solutions for retail units and shops across the length and breadth of the country and no doubt in very tight locations where interaction with pedestrian traffic is likely. The type of solution proposed in this option is very similar to that employed in the city centre at locations near Boots the Chemist on Sidney Street and at Café Rouge on Bridge Street where pedestrian volumes are much higher than in Mill Road. Many logistics drivers work on a self-employed basis and any such instances as suggested by the road safety auditors would inevitably result in the individual being dismissed.

Further, the majority of logistics operators or keepers of premises complete detailed risk assessments of servicing a specific site and this will identify all local constraints and factors affecting safety and movement. Notwithstanding that I do not accept that a driver's attention would be distracted to such an extent as described, it is proposed that controls be introduced to limit servicing to certain times of the day, to reduce any potential risks.

Taking the points raised in context further, the proposed servicing bay would be located downstream of an existing set of traffic signals which due to side road traffic demand result in regular breaks in the flow of traffic. Such circumstances would provide clear and obvious opportunities to emerge from the bay, affording the necessary time to diligently observe the movements of pedestrians, their routing and speed of progress along the footway. If a movement was partially completed, trailing traffic would simply wait whilst the vehicle manoeuvres into the carriageway and continues its journey.

Manual for Streets 2 'Wider Application of the Principles' acknowledges that on-street servicing bays are often required and goes on to state that ***"some authorities are placing loading areas on strengthened areas of the footway, which ... allows pedestrians to use the space when there are no vehicles present."*** There is no suggestion from the research that underpins MfS2 that this is in anyway an unsafe practice.

For these reasons, I do not agree with the views being offered by the County Council safety auditors in respect of the proposals in our drawing (number 1204-25/PL02).

In light of the obvious support for this type of approach in Manual for Streets and the wider application of this type of servicing solution elsewhere in Cambridge I would welcome the chance to meet on site to discuss this further, perhaps in the presence of your safety audit colleagues.

Yours sincerely

Julian Clarke
Director

cc. Mr C Brown – Januarys
Mr S McNamara – Dawecroft

