

Proposed pedestrian refuge island crossing on Main Street, Fulford

Introduction

This annex gives the background into the consideration of and proposals for additional crossings on Main Street that led to the proposed refuge island crossing near Elliot Court. It also provides information on the consultations carried out and discusses the issues raised. The annex ends with an analysis of potential options as to the way forward.

Background

There are pedestrian signals on Main Street on the northern side of the Heslington Lane junction and a pelican crossing immediately south of Prospect Terrace. These facilities are approximately 400m apart with no intermediate crossing facilities. There are a pair of bus stops just south of Elliot Court which are located approximately 220m south of Heslington Lane and 180m north of the Prospect Terrace crossings.

In 2002/03 Faber Maunsell were commissioned to undertake a feasibility study to investigate the optimal position of bus stops and the associated requirement for pedestrian crossing facilities on the section of Main Street between Fordlands Road and Elliot Court. The study identified that vehicular flows were high for most of the day and, whilst most people crossed at the pelican crossing near Prospect Terrace, it identified pedestrian desire lines elsewhere, in particular to and from shops and bus stops away from the pelican crossing. The study proposed two new pedestrian refuge island crossings:

- Between Fulford Ings and The Plough public house; and
- A crossing north of Fordlands Road which has since been installed.

Subsequently public consultation was carried out on a refuge island crossing approximately 60m south of Elliot Court. This resulted in objections and a petition against the proposed location with the following two main reasons cited:

- Concerns from residents and businesses about loss of on-street parking noting that many properties do not have off-street parking; and
- Concerns about visual intrusion in what is the least spoilt part of the conservation area.

Many of those who objected to this proposed crossing suggested that the the crossing should be located to the north of the bus stops opposite the Pavilion Hotel and former petrol filling station where its impact on the local environment and on parking would be less. This view was also shared by Fulford Parish Council.

The results were reported to the meeting of the former Planning and Transport (East Area) Sub-Committee on 11 November 2004. Members noted the results of the above and approved consultation on an alternative crossing proposal with associated waiting restrictions just north of Elliot Court.

Proposed crossing near Elliot Court

Further consultation was deferred pending the A19 Fulford Road corridor study which, in turn, was deferred pending the outcome of the public inquiries into the proposed Germany Beck development and the proposed University of York expansion. Whereas a previous study had indicated the need for highly controversial measures on Main Street, including a bus lane and the removal of large areas of parking and / or the loss of verges, the recommendations of the latest study left large parts of Main Street untouched. Whilst the corridor study did not specifically look at the proposed crossing, it came up with proposals that did not require the previously envisaged major changes to Main Street. This indicated that the proposed crossing could be accommodated without impacting on the study findings.

In addition, since 2004, the site of the former petrol filling station has been redeveloped. This development, known as Pavilion Row, consists of nine houses fronting Main Street with parking and servicing to the rear off Elliot Court.

The proposed refuge island, which is shown in plan at **Annex B1**, is located roughly mid way between the Elliot Court junction and the vehicular access for the Pavilion Hotel, and aligned so that pedestrians crossing Main Street from east to west (i.e from the hotel side) would not directly face either a window or doorway of the adjacent Pavilion Row properties. The scheme includes “at any time” waiting restrictions to ensure that parked vehicles would not obstruct the sightlines of pedestrians using the crossing point nor impede traffic flows around the island.

Consultation

As noted above, previous consultation on a proposed refuge island crossing 60m south of Elliot Court resulted in strong objections both on the grounds of loss of parking on a section of road with no alternative parking and visual intrusion in what is regarded as the least spoilt part of the conservation area.

The proposed alternative pedestrian island crossing north of Elliot Court was shown on the leaflet and plans forming part of the Fulford Road corridor improvements consultation and an accompanying questionnaire sought the views of residents and businesses in Fulford and Fishergate areas on the various improvements. Of 524 people who responded to the question on providing a new pedestrian island crossing near Elliot Court to improve access to nearby bus stops and local facilities, 323 (62%) indicated support with 60 (11%) opposed and 141 (27%) indicating neither support nor oppose.

A leaflet giving information on the proposed scheme was delivered to approximately 120 residential properties and businesses along a 300m section of Main Street and adjoining side roads as well as to key stakeholders, including the parish council, giving them an opportunity to comment. At the same time the Traffic Order for the associated waiting restrictions was advertised.

Objections to the proposed scheme have been received from the York Pavilion Hotel and from the occupants of six of the nine properties in Pavilion Row. Their objections can be summarised under the following headings:

- The crossing is not needed.
- The location is a compromise.
- Its siting will add to, rather than relieve, any danger.
- It will damage the character of the village and inconvenience residents far beyond Pavilion Row.
- The restrictions on parking could seriously affect the hotel's business.
- It is not what was inferred in the corridor study consultation.
- The island would not be required in the future because of other proposed measures.

Review of the issues arising from the consultation

The crossing is not needed

- Whilst there have been no recorded pedestrian injury accidents on this section of the A19 in recent years, many residents have complained about the difficulty crossing Main Street, which is one of York's main arterial roads.
- The Elliot Court bus stops are almost mid-way between crossing facilities so those who experience difficulty crossing this busy road have to make a significant detour to cross the road safely.
- The corridor consultation identified strong support for the proposed crossing facility.

The location is a compromise

- It is acknowledged that this was not the first choice site and that more people currently cross south of the bus stops.
- However the proposed site would still be sufficiently close to the bus stops to benefit those using public transport services.
- It would also provide a suitable mid-point crossing facility for others wishing to cross Main Street safely.

Its siting will add to, rather than relieve, any danger

- The facility will make crossing the road easier and safer.
- The location has been checked to ensure that it would easily be seen by approaching motorists and that service vehicles could safely turn into and out of Elliot court and the Pavilion Hotel.
- Good inter-visibility between motorists and pedestrians has been provided.
- The scheme has been through safety checks as part of the preliminary design and has been independently checked by a Road Safety Audit team.

It will damage the character of the village and inconvenience residents far beyond Pavilion Row

- The impact on the conservation area at the proposed location would be minimal compared to the impact a crossing facility to the south would have.
- The impact on parking would also be less. The adjacent properties have off-street parking and servicing and observations indicate that this isn't as heavily parked as other parts of Main Street. In view of the nearby junction, access and bus stops where vehicles shouldn't park, the loss of potential parking spaces is minimised.

The restrictions on parking could seriously affect the hotel's business

- The hotel has off-street parking and on-street parking would still be permitted elsewhere on Main Street near to the hotel.
- The crossing would make it safer for guests parking on the west side of Main Street to cross to and from the hotel.

It is not what was inferred in the corridor study consultation

- The corridor study consultation gave an indication of the proposed measures. Whilst that consultation did not specifically mention waiting restrictions it did show the proposed island within a couple of metres of where it is now proposed.
- The proposals arising from a previous corridor study would have had a significant impact on Main street which many rightly regarded would destroy the nature and character of the conservation area and would have resulted in the widespread removal of on-street parking. The proposals in the recent Halcrow study leave major sections of Main Street untouched which should be good news to many of the residents and businesses who are aware of the background.

The island would not be required in the future because of other proposed measures

- Any proposed measures south of Fulford would not reduce traffic flows to the level that pedestrians would not require specific facilities such as refuge island crossings and signalised crossings to help them cross at key locations.
- The proposal for an additional crossing on the southern arm of the Heslington Lane junction has been dropped. In any case this would have been too far away to have been considered as an alternative crossing point for the Elliot Court bus stops.

Analysis of potential options

Option 1 is to implement the scheme as shown on the plan at **Annex B1**. This would provide a safe crossing facility in close proximity to the Elliot Court bus stops whilst minimising the impact on the conservation area and on parking, compared to a crossing south of the bus stops.

Option 2 is to implement the scheme but without the associated waiting restrictions. This would enable the proposed refuge island to proceed and a decision on the need for and extent of any waiting restrictions to be determined at a later date based on post implementation monitoring. The authority has until 20 October 2010 to implement the restrictions in full or in part without the need to advertise a new Order. However without restrictions there would be a risk of indiscriminate parking near to the traffic island which in turn could obstruct the flow of traffic and / or the safety of people using the crossing. As such this option is not recommended.

Option 3 is to carry out a further review and consultation on the alternative locations for a crossing facility. There has already been considerable investigation into potential locations for a crossing facility. Any location to the south of the bus stops would be likely to require extensive works on the sloping verges to provide appropriate disability access in what is regarded as the least spoilt part of the conservation area. In addition, observations indicate that there is likely to be far greater impact on parking than with the currently proposed site. It is also highly likely that any site south of the bus stops would again be subject to strong objections as

was the case when this was previously considered. As such this option is not recommended.

Option 4 is to do nothing. If a crossing facility is not provided near to the Elliot Court bus stops, those who experience difficulty crossing this busy road would have to continue to make a significant detour to cross the road safely which is going to discourage them from using public transport. As the lack of a suitable crossing facility does nothing to address the requests for a crossing near to the bus stops, or improve the safety of vulnerable road users, this option is not recommended.