

Dear Sir / Madam,

I came to the public exhibition of the plans for Worthing Gateway, and spoke to one of the architects specifically regarding transport issues. I am writing to ask that you re-consider the plans for the road treatment.

As a project which aims to provide a welcoming gateway to Worthing, it is essential that we create a first impression which is both welcoming and attractive to our visitors. In a world in which more and more people shop online, those towns which will thrive economically will be those that create an attractive public realm which is a pleasant place to be.

That is why it is crucial that visitors to Worthing don't find that the first thing they see once emerging from the Worthing Gateway project is a dual carriageway full of traffic!

Proposal

It is interesting to note in the architect's illustrations that the surrounding roads are shown thronging with pedestrians but have hardly any cars. It is clear that this is highly unlikely to be accurate without a dramatic change in Worthing's transport patterns. The Worthing Gateway project is an ideal opportunity to help achieve this.

I would propose (as the architects tell me they originally did) that the roads outside Worthing Gateway should be made into an attractive "shared space" area. This will make the whole location feel a more pleasant, civilised and attractive place to be, and help create a vibrant, lively, people-centred environment, with a high quality of life.

It would also be good for the economy and promote better traffic flow:

- There is increasing evidence that pedestrian priority areas would be good for Worthing's economy – for instance adding up to 12% to the price of homes and the level of retail rents [\[1\]](#). In fact in this article, it is suggested that "to attract the smart business money, a city should restrict traffic and regulate ruthlessly". [\[2\]](#)
- Using shared space principles and reducing traffic speeds you can maintain or even improve traffic flows, while still improving safety, and encouraging more walking and cycling. In Christiansfeld in Denmark the town's central traffic intersection was re-modelled using shared space principles and tailbacks of traffic during peak periods were reduced. [\[3\]](#) A recent Department for Transport report showed 24-60% casualty reductions for 'mixed priority routes' (streets with high levels of traffic, but having residential and commercial frontages and a mix of users: shoppers, cyclists, bus users etc) through high quality streetscape, reallocation of road space and traffic calming. [\[4\]](#)

Indeed the Department for Transport's latest report on Shared Space [\[5\]](#) concluded:

"Shared Space Schemes can deliver benefits: they appear to support economic activity, improve perceptions of personal security, be popular generally with the public and traders and increase freedom of movement for many people including some vulnerable pedestrians."

The architect I spoke to told me that the original plans had included 'shared space' concepts but that in consultation with West Sussex County Council highways engineers, this had been rejected on safety and traffic flow grounds in favour of light controlled junctions and pedestrian crossings.

I contacted Ben Hamilton-Baillie (www.hamilton-baillie.co.uk), one of the country's leading experts on the application of shared space principles. His response was:

"I would be puzzled if West Sussex County Council highways engineers wanted to maintain traffic light junctions and pedestrian crossings for traffic flow and safety reasons. They should be asked to cite the research that demonstrates this case. Signals and crossings are a very expensive way (both in capital and in revenue terms) to increase the likelihood and severity of accidents, and increase congestion. Such measures will also reduce accessibility, reduce air quality, and have a negative impact on the property values of the scheme.

If you can persuade West Sussex CC to review their position, I would be pleased to offer some brief consultancy advice to them on the subject. Reviewing the position would certainly be of substantial benefit to the developers."

I suggest that Worthing Borough Council and West Sussex County Council contact him to discuss whether he feels the Worthing Gateway scheme could benefit from this approach. His contact details are:

E-mail: ben@hamilton-baillie.co.uk

Tel: 0117 911 4221
Mob: 07968 774280

Imagine perhaps a fountain forming the centre of a beautiful square but also acting as a roundabout and allowing traffic and people to move more freely and safely than previously. Doesn't that sound better than more traffic lights?

Regards,

Duncan Kay

For further information please see attached:

1. Background paper by Hamilton-Baillie / Phil Jones
2. Colin Buchanan report on benefits of shared space at Portishead
3. This video presentation by Ben Hamilton-Baillie: <http://www.rudi.net/node/22085>

[1] Department for Transport, 2009, *Shared Space Project Stage 1: Appraisal of Shared Space*
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/sharedspace/stage1/pdf/stage1.pdf>

[2] <http://www.newstatesman.com/200101080012>

[3] Ben Hamilton-Baillie, Phil Jones, 2005, *Improving traffic behaviour and safety through urban design* <http://www.rospace.com/RoadSafety/conferences/congress2006/proceedings/day3/baillie.pdf>

[4] Department for Transport, 2008, *Mixed Priority Routes: Practitioner's Guide (LTN 3/08)*
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/dpp/mpr/practitionersguide.pdf>

[5] Department for Transport, 2009, *Shared Space Project Stage 1: Appraisal of Shared Space*
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/sharedspace/stage1/pdf/stage1.pdf>