

TRAFFIC CALMING - A PICTORIAL OVERVIEW

SOUTH BANK POLYTECHNIC
DEPT. OF PLANNING, HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT

T.M.PHAROAH

ISBN 0 946147167 Copyright: T. M. Pharoah 1990

This set of 40 colour slides with accompanying notes shows traffic calming schemes from The Netherlands, West Germany and the UK. Although the set is designed to be self-contained, additional information on the definition and policy context of traffic calming is contained in "Traffic Calming: Policy and Evaluations in Three European Countries", by Tim Pharoah and John Russell. Page numbers of relevant information in that document are given in these notes. (See end of these notes for further details.)

Traffic Calming is a term to describe design and redesign of streets and other public spaces which emphasises safety and environmental objectives rather than provision for motor traffic. The aim is usually to bring about a change of priorities to benefit pedestrians, cyclists and non-traffic activities. Public transport improvement, urban regeneration, housing renovation and city beautification are other objectives that may be served through traffic calming policies. Speed reduction, space reallocation and environmental enhancement are the three key elements of traffic calming techniques.

This slide-set is arranged into four parts, each with 10 slides. Part 1 deals with "slow speed" areas, which include the Dutch "Woonerf" areas and other schemes based on the Woonerf principle of accepting vehicles but only at walking pace. Such schemes formed the majority of traffic calming work in north European countries in the 1970s. The rather strict Woonerf principles of "walking pace" vehicle speed and the complete absence of distinction between footway and carriageway (ie. shared surface) were modified in the 1980s, especially in West German cities. Examples of later practice are therefore included from Berlin and Cologne, even though they are not shared space or walking pace schemes in the strict sense. Very few streets have been converted to shared space in the UK and (unlike The Netherlands and West Germany), no special traffic regulations have been created for such areas. (pP .. 8,10,11,37,38,62)

Part 2 deals with the 30 kmph (20 mph) zone which during the 1980s replaced the shared space as the most popular traffic calming solution in residential areas. During the 1980s speed humps were increasingly used in the UK, often limiting speeds to around 20 mph, but this practice has not been linked to sub-30 mph speed limits. In The Netherlands, 30 kmph zones must be self-enforcing through physical design measures. The most effective Danish and West German schemes are also self-enforcing. (pp 11,16,19,36,43)

Part 3 shows traffic calming schemes for urban main roads. These mostly consist of designs which reduce carriageway space for the benefit of vulnerable road users and environmental enhancement, or for the provision of parking and servicing space. Speed limits usually remain at the usual urban limit of 50 kmph (30 mph in UK). Moderation of speed is usually achieved by the use of narrow driving lanes and interruptions to flow (eg. light-controlled crossings) rather than humps or other changes in vertical alignment. This aspect of traffic calming is likely to be the subject of major development during the 1990s. (pp 11,17,20)

Part 4 provides examples of traffic calming in roads passing through villages and other free-standing small settlements. As with urban main roads, legal speed limits often remain at 50 kmph, but physical measures are taken to reduce excessive speeds, to moderate driving behaviour, and to provide more space and priority for the activities of the street at the expense of vehicles passing through.