

TRAFFIC CALMING FOR HAMPSTEAD WAY

A report to Hampstead Way residents

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1. INTRODUCTION

Following a public meeting on the subject of Traffic Calming at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute on November 7th 1991, the author was requested by Chris Hellerman to study the possibility of traffic calming measures for Hampstead Way. The aim was to establish options for traffic calming which could be introduced for the section of Hampstead Way between Headway and Corringham Road at the time of resurfacing of that section programmed by Barnet Council for April 1992. The options were to be seen in the context of a pilot traffic calming project for a section of road with known problems, to precede more widespread action in the Suburb at some future date. The author was also asked to consider the costs of possible measures.

The author presented initial ideas at a meeting of Hampstead Way residents at Fellowship House on Wednesday 11th December 1991. This report is a summary of the author's findings, and takes account of reactions and suggestions made at that meeting.

2. TRAFFIC IN HAMPSTEAD WAY

The section of Hampstead Way south of Meadway is used as a "rat run" at peak hours as a quicker alternative route to Finchley Road. In the morning peak most of this traffic appears to be coming from Falloden Way and roads feeding into Falloden Way from the north. Although several routes are used, the majority of drivers enter Hampstead Way from Meadway westbound. The northern end of Hampstead Way and Meadway eastbound each contribute about a fifth of the total traffic entering the Hampstead Way-Corringham Road section.

Southbound traffic travels either the whole remaining length of Hampstead Way to join North End Road, or turns right into Wellgarth Road, probably to avoid queues at the junction with North End Road.

Unrestricted speeds (from a small sample of measured speeds, plus four "following" runs) were mostly in excess of 30 mph. Speeds of up to about 45 mph were noted by a minority of drivers. The experience of residents is that speeds are higher at off-peak times when there is less traffic. This is partly due to the fact that speeds are sometimes moderated by the need to slow down to pass oncoming vehicles where parked vehicles restrict the width of available carriageway. The lower frequency of oncoming traffic outside peak hours reduces this speed-limiting effect.

3. SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

The problems of traffic in Hampstead Way arise from the conflict between its use as a through route and its role as a residential area and access way to Hampstead Heath.

The problems are related firstly to the speed of traffic, which is considered too high for a residential environment, and secondly to the volume of traffic. Residents mentioned additional problems of parking by visitors to the Heath in summer months.

The problems may be summarised as follows.

a) Accidents

Hampstead Way residents have documented evidence of accidents in Hampstead Way. The majority have been damage-only accidents to vehicles and property.

b) Unsafety

The road is perceived as dangerous by those who live there, and anxieties about using the road are felt all the time, whereas accidents occur occasionally. The anxieties expressed by residents, and confirmed by observation by the author, relate firstly, to difficulties of crossing the road on foot, especially at junctions, secondly difficulties for drivers entering Hampstead Way from driveways and side roads, and thirdly the unsettling effects of vehicles passing at high speed. The problem for drivers of entering the road from driveways or side roads arises from a combination of excessive speed of traffic and sight lines obscured by parked vehicles.

c) Severence

The passage of fast traffic, and at certain times considerable traffic volume, causes severance between the two sides of the road. This problem most affects the places where people want to cross, namely at junctions (especially at Headway) and between housing areas and the Heath (e.g. where footpaths on the Heath meet Hampstead Way).

d) Noise

Traffic noise is related to both the speed and volume of traffic. Noise disturbance is experienced both in the home and on the Heath and on the footways.

e) Parking

Parking on both sides restricts available carriageway such that two vehicles cannot pass. Cars and other vehicles are frequently parked (illegally) partly on the footway in an attempt by drivers to avoid damage to their vehicles. This causes inconvenience and danger to pedestrians.

4. OBJECTIVES OF TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

Objectives of traffic calming measures in Hampstead Way would be to:

- reduce the danger and perceived risks to residents and others, both as drivers and as pedestrians or cyclists;
- reduce the environmental disturbance caused by traffic, in particular noise disturbance;
- reduce parking on footways;
- to achieve these benefits without causing significant disbenefits to residents in other parts of the Suburb, or unnecessary disruption to road users;

- a further objective would be to improve the visual appearance of Hampstead Way by the installation of traffic calming measures of high quality design and engineering.

5. POSSIBLE DESIGN SOLUTIONS

All of the above objectives could be wholly or partly achieved by introducing measures to ensure that traffic speeds are no higher than 20 - 25 mph. This is the basic requirement of the traffic calming scheme, but other improvements can be made to improve the appearance and operation of the road as part of the residential environment. The design issues are set out below.

(a) Road design modifications

Hampstead Way is presently designed as a traffic road, with signs and markings reinforcing the through traffic function rather than the residential function. Those aspects of the present design which encourage traffic and traffic speed could be removed when traffic speed reduction measures are in place. These include:

- carriageway centre-line marking (immediate removal),
- other markings such as "SLOW" painted on the road,
- warning signs for bends,
- street lights could be reduced in scale in future

The removal of these features will enhance the appearance of the road.

(b) Extent of traffic calming scheme

Meadway is a suitable northerly point for the start/end of the scheme for two reasons. Firstly, traffic volumes are highest south of this junction (600-700 vph at peak compared to 100-220 vph north of Meadway. Secondly, the priority arrangements at the junction with Meadway mean that traffic speed is low at this point.

The southern end of the scheme should ideally be either Wellgarth Road or North End Road, where junction arrangements ensure slow speeds.

Corringham Road is not a suitable start/end point unless a modification can be made to ensure that northbound traffic does not approach the "calmed" section too fast. Such a modification would have to rely on signs and an enforced turn, and not a vertical shift in the carriageway.

If the section Meadway - Corringham Road is treated in order to use the opportunity provided by the proposed re-surfacing work, this should be seen as the first phase of a scheme that would at a future date extend southwards at least as far as Wellgarth Road.

(c) Speed reduction measures

The most effective speed reduction is achieved with vertical shifts in the carriageway. The most common type is the round top hump, although flat topped humps and variations are possible under the Road Hump Regulations (Department of Transport, 1990).

Other speed reduction measures are possible, including chicanes and width constrictions, but these are generally less effective.

d) Humps in Hampstead Way

A series of 9 humps between Headway and Corringham Road would be effective in reducing average speed to below 20 mph. This would achieve a spacing of about 50 metres between each hump, which would be effective in preventing drivers speeding up in between humps.

The following locations are likely to be suitable for humps:

Outside No	22 (20 metres from Meadway)
	18/105 (Brow of hill)
	12/97 (Marked by mature trees each side)
	8/89
*	81 (Footpath to Heath)
	73 or 75
	69
*	67 (Wild Hatch path)
*	63 (Junction with Corringham Road)

* locations where a flat-topped kerb to kerb hump would help pedestrians crossing to and from the Heath.

e) Visual enhancement

Additional features could be incorporated to improve the appearance of the road and to reinforce the visual message to drivers that a slow speed is appropriate. It is suggested that these additional features take the form of carriageway narrowing at the hump locations on one side of the road by the creation of planted areas with shrubs and/or a tree. These narrowings would create "sheltered" parking, and residents could be encouraged to park on the narrowed side only. Creation of such planted areas in former carriageway space would be subject to there being no problem of interference with gas, water and other services underground.

(f) Costs

The costs below are rough estimates of construction costs assuming savings from the work being carried out in conjunction with the resurfacing work. No allowance is made for design, supervision or administrative costs.

COSTS OF SPEED REDUCTION MEASURES, MEADWAY~CORRINGHAM ROAD

9 standard humps @ £700	£6,300
Speed reduction feature, Corrihgham Rd	£3,000
Signs	£ 500
SUB TOTAL (Min cost) (£9,800)	
Extra cost of 3 kerb to kerb flat topped humps	£2,400
Planted narrowings 6 @ £700	£4,200
TOTAL INC ENVIRONMENTAL & ADDITIONQL FEQTURES	£14,000

If residents were to meet the cost of construction, divided between 30 households, this would mean per household a contribution of about £350 for the minimum

scheme, and £475 for the scheme with environmental enhancement.

6. WIDER EFFECTS OF TRAFFIC CALMING IN HAMPSTEAD WAY

A scheme to reduce traffic speed in Hampstead Way will tend to make it less attractive as a through route. This could result in some traffic diverting to other routes. The extent of any such diversion and the alternative routes that would be affected cannot be predicted with any certainty. Possible alternative routes would be Finchley Road/Hoop Lane and Wildwood Road. However, the former is congested at peak times, and the latter is rather more circuitous than Hampstead Way. Through traffic may therefore continue to use Hampstead Way despite the slightly longer journey time resulting from a traffic calming scheme. A reduction in the average speed between Meadway and Corringham Road from 30 to 20 mph would add 24 seconds to drivers' journey times.

The aim of the traffic calming scheme in Hampstead Way should not be to reduce or divert traffic, but to reduce the speed of traffic.

7. CONCLUSION

It is recommended that a traffic calming scheme along the lines suggested could be implemented on Hampstead Way between Meadway and Corringham Road to coincide with the resurfacing of this part of the road subject to the following points:

1. Design of a satisfactory modification of the Corringham Road junction to meet DTp regulations concerning the approach to a series of humps;
2. The scheme should be seen as a first phase of traffic calming eventually to be extended at least as far as Wellgarth Road, and if necessary to other roads that act as alternative routes;
3. Residents in roads that may experience some traffic diverted from Hampstead should be consulted, in particular Wildwood Road.