



CONVERSATION: " Shared space is old hat, why is it now so contentious? "
5.45pm to 7.30pm on Thursday 23 April, 2009, in the Boardroom at the
Royal Commonwealth Society,
25 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5AP Tel: 020 7930 6733

Shared Space - a briefing paper by Tim Long

Shared Space (SS) is latest traffic calming idea from Europe, but schemes have existed in the UK for 20 years. 4 parts of this discussion:

- Explain the aim of SS,
- Examine a traffic calming scheme to highlight how it provides some SS benefits,
- Review what makes SS schemes work, and
- How these findings help to identify a kerb delineator for SS.

Aim of Shared Space

SS tilts traffic priority towards pedestrians to improve walking by reducing kerb height's so it is easier to cross the road, especially for physically impaired (e.g. wheelchairs, prams, heavy shopping / luggage, young and elderly). More people crossing the road slows and calms traffic, encouraging greater pedestrian priority.

Traffic calming can provide some Shared Space benefits

Many traffic calming measures provide some SS benefits. Bernard Street at Russell Square tube station:

- Raised delivery bays provide more space for walking, as often empty.
- Raised crossing over side roads are step / kerb-free.
- Narrow this one-way street so easier to cross wherever you want, so reducing pressure on crossing points.

These traffic calming measures (step or kerb-free delivery bays, crossings, and narrower roads), provide some of SS benefits.

Review of Shared Space schemes in London

4 SS schemes are reviewed, in Covent Garden area about 20 years, and in Liverpool Road in Islington, about 10 years old. See table below.

The logic for how SS works is that the greater volume of pedestrians calms the smaller flow of motor vehicles, which encourages pedestrian priority. But, SS can work on busier streets if corresponding increase in traffic calming measures.

Shared Space Design

Raised junction with low kerbs provides an all round solution for the greatest number of as kerb is the most widely recognised separation between footway and carriageway. Low kerbs are also supported by:

- Paving contrast, pave footways in paving and carriageways in tarmac, so they look and feel correct.
- Colour contrast at kerb from yellow or white lines.
- Raised junction has ramps that calm traffic, provide audible warning, deter cyclists, and allow shallow ramps to indicate crossings.
- Building line provides tapping rail.
- Traffic and pedestrians indicate where to go.



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Street name	Carriageway	Traffic flow	Pedestrian flow	Footway	Kerb separation	Parking and loading	Active frontages	Traffic calming features
Neal St and Short's Gdns	1-way. Paved in concrete blocks. Neal St is about 100m long.	Low as end of traffic cell, & deliveries til 10am.	V high ped flows.	Paved in tarmac.	No kerb, but bollards and paving in different colours and textures.	No resident or visitor parking & double yellow lines. Regular recesses in bollards for loading bays.	V active as small shop units with very narrow frontages.	Acute bend to enter and exit Neal St, and slight chicanes along its length.
Lamb's Conduit St	1-way. Paved in tarmac. About 80m long.	Open to all traffic at all times, but slightly higher traffic flows. Cycle contraflow.	Med ped flows.	Concrete paving blocks.	No kerb, but bollards and paving in different colours and textures.	No resident or visitor parking, double yellow lines. Regular recesses in bollards for loading bays.	Active frontages as small shop units with narrow frontages.	Ramps to enter and exit street and give way junction in the middle and end of st. Traffic lights cause traffic to pulse into st.
Liverpool Rd between Chapel Market and Tolpuddle Rd	2-way. Paved in tarmac. About 80m long.	Medium traffic flows, including buses.	Med ped flows.	Concrete paving slabs	Low kerb design, with some street furniture. Paving in different colours and textures.	No resident or visitor parking, double yellow lines, & deliveries from the back of properties.	Active frontages between Angel Centre, Sainsbury's supermarket and Chapel Market.	Side road is open some of the time, and a zebra. But traffic lights allow pulses of traffic to enter and exit st.
Seven Dials	Junction of 7 rds. 1-way. Dials paved in concrete blocks. 7 side rds in granite setts.	Very high traffic flows.	V high ped flows.		No kerb, but bollards and different paving in different colours and textures.	No resident, visitor or delivery parking as it all occurs in side sts.	V active frontages all round, & peds funnelled into junction of 7 sts.	Complex, unique & very tightly traffic calmed junction, with 2 zebras on main entry & exit rds.

Conclusions

SS aims to improve walking by increasing pedestrian priority.

SS existed in the UK for a couple of decades.

SS uses well established traffic calming measures.

SS schemes have the following common features:

- No or low kerbs up to 100m long,
- Contrasting footway and carriageway paving materials,
- Narrow, one-way streets, with no parking, making them easier for people to cross informally (ie where and when pedestrians like).
- High flows of pedestrians (typically from active frontages),
- Low flows of motor vehicles,
- Often contain compact, give way or unusual junction to calm motor traffic,
- On busier, two-way roads can work if sufficient traffic calming measures (especially zebras as they provide pedestrian priority).

Low kerb design provides all round solution for the greatest number of people.

Questions:

- 1) What other design principles help to make SS work in the UK?
- 2) What good and bad SS schemes can we learn from?
- 3) What research is needed?