



# **UNSAFE & UNPLEASANT**

**The Designed-In Dangers  
of The Elephant & Castle  
'Road Improvement'  
By Richard Reynolds**

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## **The Designed-In Dangers of The Elephant & Castle 'Road Improvement' By Richard Reynolds**

Dedicated to Johanna Hedger, killed in a collision with a truck while walking at the Elephant and Castle 5 February 2016 and Charlie Cooper killed on his motorbike in a collision with another motorbike at the Elephant & Castle 16 March 2016 and all those who are needlessly harmed by the new dangers built at the Elephant and Castle.

A project from the campaign Elephant and Castle Roundabout

[ElephantandCastleRoundabout.org](http://ElephantandCastleRoundabout.org)

[Facebook.com/ElephantandCastleRoundabout](https://www.facebook.com/ElephantandCastleRoundabout)

[Twitter.com/RoundaboutNews](https://twitter.com/RoundaboutNews)





Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Jack @jackdshaw99 · Jan 23  
@roundaboutnews @benj@tmy @ben1 enough for buses?? It's just a shambles and doesn't work! What donkeys are in charge of this??

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Roger Evans @TheEvansyPig · Jan 20  
@roundaboutnews Road space loss affects buses, essential deliveries and emergency services - why don't TfL understand this?

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
London SE1 @ben1 · Jan 22  
TfL admits it did Elephant & Castle work "without sufficient measures in place to protect bus journey times".



TfL we didn't do enough for buses during Elephant roadworks  
Transport for London's commissioner Mike Brown has conceded that the organisation didn't do enough to ensure bus journeys weren't unduly delayed.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Corbenstone @JAVOTTJTL · Jan 20  
Just me or is the elephant and castle roundabout madd confusing lol

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
William Russell @wru1934 · Jan 19  
Did any others see/hear the car drive right into the cycle track divider at Elephant & Castle yesterday? Around 8.15pm, made an epic noise.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Leo Verheven @LeoVerheven · Jan 18  
@TfL @GardinePidgeon @MayorofLondon @roundaboutnews TfL incompetent. Elephant now dangerous polluted congested idiot.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Jayne Bailey @jayne17 · Jan 19  
@SadiqKhan @TfL the whole layout of Elephant & castle needs to be looked at the time it takes to get off of walworth rd on to elephant.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Julian Rendell @jrendell · Jan 18  
Many of the 'improved' @TfL junctions defy logic & confuse (deliberately?). Amazing how it's happened in our capital, with no oversight.



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Yellow cab just spotted backing up from taking the Bend on the wrong side of the road. A year on the new layout still dangerously baffles.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Alex Goy @IMAGOV · Jan 18  
I'd love to meet the person behind the new E&C design and stamp on their little toe. More congestion, dangerous kerbs, little sense.



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Yellow cab just spotted backing up from taking the Bend on the wrong side of the road. A year on the new layout still dangerously baffles.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Julian Rendell @jrendell · Jan 14  
Was there at xmas: Just a huge, wind-swept & congested roundabout criss-crossed by bike lanes. More 1960s in execution than what it replaced.



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Ridiculous @TfL propaganda continues spending our money trying to persuade us about their Bend and polluted snobby pizza.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Elephantista @elephantista · Jan 14  
Okay the 'pizza' looks NOTHING like this



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Ridiculous @TfL propaganda continues spending our money trying to persuade us about their Bend and polluted snobby pizza.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Merthebe @Merthebe · Jan 8  
@roundaboutnews bet e&c will be one of the pollution hot spots when TfL announce new ULEZ stats

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Eloise Carpenter @EloiseCarpenter · Jan 9  
Elephant & Castle, otherwise known as hell on earth. Going nowhere fast. Sounds familiar for a work day when detritus.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Thomas Gordon @Angermorboz · Jan 8  
Incredible that even tho he died nearly 100 years ago Southwark Council got Franz Kafka to design the new roundabout at Elephant & Castle

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Gary Naylor @garynaylor69 · Jan 8  
TfL ad on 'take part about improvements to the Elephant and Castle roundabout. Have they ever tried to navigate it in the dark?'

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
It's Jonathan @ItsJonathan · Jan 1  
@roundaboutnews Just seen 6 cars with burst tyres at Elephant & Castle roundabout. Caused by new cycle lane curving that drivers cannot see

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Furious Ful @FuriousFul · 17 Dec 2016  
'I'm sure this will be as much of a success as the new E&C layout @arnage @roundaboutnews



TfL Traffic News @TfLTrafficNews  
ActiveX Optivity will switch to a new two-way traffic system from 5am tomorrow. Travel advice on our website at [tfl.gov.uk/status/updates](http://tfl.gov.uk/status/updates)

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
LWILL@London @LWILL@London · 8 Dec 2016  
Urgent action @SadiqKhan @TfL @Airpollution @Elephant @KanningtonPark Road NO2 level averages 55.5 ug/m3. Legal limit is annual mean 40ug/m3.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
@rowell the Cabbie @rowell4887 · 10 Dec 2016  
@ROADFORD if TfL have got anything to do with it, then you can guarantee it will be a right @B&K up take a look at the elephant and castle...

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
London SE1 @ben1 · 10 Dec 2016  
TfL installs Legible London signs at Elephant & Castle - but puts them the wrong way round.



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Glorie Paig Sains @GloriePaig · 14 Dec 2016  
@TfL @roundaboutnews 6.40am and traffic piling up already in New&Old Kent Rd. #imstheendroundabout #theband

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Peter Nicholas @Peter\_Nicholas · 14 Dec 2016  
@TfL Elephant & Castle junction: strong contender for worst road design anywhere, ever. Just needs some cameras to penalise the confused.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
London SE1 @ben1 · 9 Dec 2016  
A year ago Elephant & Castle roundabout was abolished. Londoners' co. @UKnews/VIEW/9594 - how do you feel about it now?

38% I've got used to it  
48% It's a disaster  
17% Underused

318 Votes - Final results

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
theycalme-re @theycalme-re · 2 Dec 2016  
I'd love to bend the pricea neck that thought the Elephant and Castle bend was a good idea

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Southwark Assembly @southwarkassembly · 30 Nov 2016  
TfL 'Have their head in the sand' about impact of Elephant & Castle changes on local backstreets, says @drivingfield

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Paul Kemp @paulkemp121 · 29 Nov 2016  
Is that the same bunch that 'improved' Elephant and Castle and Lancaster Gate and the Embankment?



Steve Compton @stevecompton  
Official picture of the bank junction committee

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
nonintheplanet @nonintheplanet · 17 Nov 2016  
@ChrisdeCastas @AB@skwind we went round ESC which had a separate lane around the roundabout but then spat you out inflicting of buses

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Frances Revel @francesrevel · 21 Nov 2016  
Monday morning traffic is proof that replanning the Elephant and Castle roundabout has solved nothing.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Elephant & Castle Roundabout · 19 Nov 2016  
TfLPH The Elephant in the room or should I say Castle? What a balls up



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
There's something worrying about the Bend of Elephant this weekend. Perhaps the new Scoot traffic phasing? #U on the case @Cyclists' @TfL

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
automeglog @automeglog · 20 Nov 2016  
@TfL \$25m improvements at Elephant & Castle showing their worth at 10am on a Sunday morning



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
legislater @legislater · 19 Nov 2016  
Designed on an abacus sanctioned by the corrupt, implemented by plums who won't take their head out from the phone. Progress...?



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Elephant and Castle Bend very clogged the evening. Avoid the area.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
TonyGBKOL @TonyGBKOL · 19 Nov 2016  
Road improvement/modernisation plans @TfL at its finest



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Elephant and Castle Bend very clogged this evening. Avoid the area.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Matthew Abouze @MatthewAbouze · 14 Nov 2016  
@roundaboutnews totally agree - it's a total cluster@k of a road 'design' - keep going! Took months to get the Lynton/Dunton lights safe!

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Mattie @mattie · 21 Oct 2016  
@roundaboutnews @ben1 I think we all know TfL's utopia artist impressions bare no resemblance to what becomes the reality.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Sara @sara · 19 Sep 2016  
@TfL can't adjust the lights in Elephant & Castle coming from London road? It's always congested

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
HOOD HAPPY @hoodhappy · 24 Oct 2016  
Look @KingofLondon everyone hates the new bend ting at elephant & castle @ roundaboutnews bare confusion!

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Mika X @MikaX · 12 Sep 2016  
Going through the insufferable Elephant & Castle roundabout in a bus makes me want to regress to my ape self and shake the seats screaming.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Rich N @richn · 22 Oct 2016  
@roundaboutnews Are you campaigning for TfL to put the roundabout back? I want to join! Just spent 20 mins turning left from borough

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
@Londonist @roundaboutnews what about a list of the worst ones...#theband in Elephant would top it

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Melissa Matricola @MelissaMatricola · 19 Oct 2016  
@standaround @TfL 21 collisions between 1 April 2015 and 31 January 2016 at Elephant and Castle. 2 Fatalities. 410 buses at peak time.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Daniel James Besson @djbesson · 22 Sep 2016  
The lights on E&C roundabout coming from Walworth Road only stay green for 7 seconds. I worked this out with great frustration.



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Max @max111 · 11 Oct 2016  
The traffic light sequence in elephant and castle suck!!

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Florence Eshaloni @FlorenceEshaloni · 11 Oct 2016  
I flagged up concerns from @BBWCC meeting re traffic lights Elephant&Castle with @TfL Director of Road Space-It's not working 4 pedestrians

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Matthew Davis @mattdavis · 5 Oct 2016  
Not joking, just got lost on Elephant and Castle roundabout again @Kyle\_JSimmons

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Clare Wren @clarewren · 17 Oct 2016  
@TfL another bus endangering cyclists, this time in both a cycle lane & over the ASL. At c.7.48pm on E&C roundabout. #space4cycling



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
@WML@ur · 7 Oct 2016  
Elephant and castle & Lewisham roundabout is just a fuckery!

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
John @johnp@ur · 11 Oct 2016  
@roundaboutnews @jonath @TfL They have the honor to celebrate the 'improvement' on road also #TfL fails

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Vicki @vicki · 8 Oct 2016  
@roundaboutnews I had a nightmare round there tonight. Totally confusing from there all the way to Blackfriars. Traffic twice as bad!

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Vicki @vicki · 8 Oct 2016  
1st time round elephant and castle tonight. What a fucking nightmare @TfL have fucked up that road. All for cycle lanes that no one is using

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Karl @karl · 8 Oct 2016  
@roundaboutnews @TfL no accountability, can't accept they're wrong & will probably come out with a sh! excuse to put it all back

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Jonathan Stewart @jonath · 8 Oct 2016  
@roundaboutnews @drivingfield @ben1 @TfL Photos don't do it Justice - #sapperRoad #TrafficSenseRoad #TrunRoadBySewah



Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
London SE1 @ben1 · 9 Oct 2016  
'Buses are slower and less reliable ... there's no point pulling the wool over people's eyes' - TfL's Steve Keane #bbc

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
London SE1 @ben1 · 9 Oct 2016  
TfL's Thomas Holmes - Elephant & Castle has highest number of bus interchanges in Europe without a dedicated bus station #bbc

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Sick of the BBC @sickofthebbc · 4 Oct 2016  
@roundaboutnews heard the new self congratulatory @TfL ad on talk sport! Putting themselves on the back over the Elephant #bbc #hredible

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
The Web of Evil @webofevil · 15 Sep 2016  
'@TfL traffic modelling' also produced the Elephant & Castle Death Bend. Who makes the models?



London SE1 @ben1  
Tower Bridge closure at same time as 'Tooley Street works' - no significant impact claims TfL. More @bbc tonight

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
nph @nph · 18 Sep 2016  
Traffic around borough/elephant & castle is always disgusting

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Dill Cuts @dillcuts · 30 Sep 2016  
@lunickycab @Steve@lepham @TfL @jonath @roundaboutnews  
I love the smell of diesel fumes in the morning.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Stef @stef · 30 Sep 2016  
@Michael Fowler10 @automeglog @sonath @roundaboutnews @TfL Are they using a Commodore 64 to do this modeling? Bloody 12 year old planners.

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Goka @goka · 29 Sep 2016  
Worst roundabout? Elephant & Castle, thanks to @TfL

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Southwark Cyclists @southwarkcyclists · Jan 31  
Oh joy! Why oh why did TfL not use our design?

Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Elephant & Castle Roundabout  
Another vehicle (van) spotted idling on the wrong side of The Bend when turning right out of Newington Causeway.

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**Edition 2**  
**March 2017**

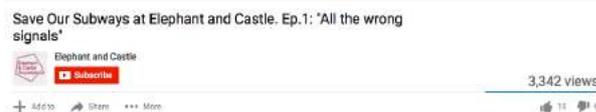
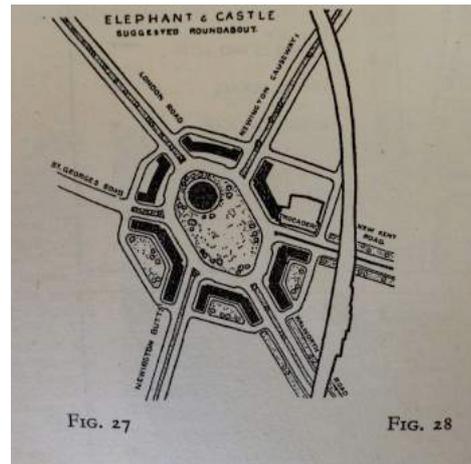
*For more information or to share suggested amendments and corrections please contact*  
[Richard@elephantandcastleroundabout.org](mailto:Richard@elephantandcastleroundabout.org) | 07980 295317

# HISTORIC CONTEXT

Unsafe and Unpleasant – that is how many users of the newly laid out northern junction at Elephant & Castle describe it now, a year since it was completed. It has claimed two lives, at least 21 other accidents and contributed to greater congestion for all users and worsened the air pollution.

Elephant & Castle has been an unsafe and unpleasant junction for a long time. In 2008 architect Mike Althorpe documented<sup>1</sup> the century of numerous plans here that have tried to reconcile the challenges of five roads, two underground lines and an over ground rail service converging on the edge of central London in a densely built place where people live, work and play. There has been big ambition but little of it was realised as intended. The Edwardian engineers who put in the Bakerloo line here wanted a subterranean ticket hall in the centre of the junction with subways radiating out from it, much like what they built at Piccadilly Circus, but permission was not granted. A surface level ticket hall was instead built at the southern end of London Road that still stands today and pedestrian subways were built in 1911 under some of the radiating roads to improve safety and congestion. The Elephant & Castle was subject of renewed attention as part of the London County Council's 1944 Greater London Plan that included ambitious intentions to segregate pedestrians from motorists to improve the safety and flow of all users. In 1959 a more modest version of the 1940s plan was built. Instead of resolving the challenges here in one grand roundabout (as pictured in 1944), it did so with two roundabouts connected by a link road, with new subways beneath. At the Northern junction (the focus of this document) new subways replaced all of the Edwardian ones. Comprehensive redevelopment of all but the Edwardian station, the Victorian Coronet theatre and reconstructed neo-classical Metropolitan Tabernacle was intended for the adjacent land of pre-war buildings, some of which was irreparably bomb damaged.

The 1950s layout remained largely intact until the late 1980s when efforts were made to address the unpleasant atmosphere in the, by now dilapidated, subways. The original drab grey mosaic was almost all covered in bright new tiles and murals. Two surface level crossings were created between the centre of the roundabout and the outside edge giving pedestrians the option of staying at ground level. New subway direction signage was



<sup>1</sup> *The Car & The Elephant*, Mike Althorpe, 2008. <http://www.thecarandtheelephant.com/>

installed which was sadly riddled with errors and sources of confusion – the subways were, for example, numbered with even numbers only and grouped together with the subways at the southern junction (demolished in 2011) as one set, which for the last five years gave the impression there were twenty subways here not just seven! Arrows pointed in opposite directions for the same place and the map (only at surface level) had staircases drawn in the wrong places – to name just a few of the errors. In December 2012 Lyla Reynolds and I documented the poor quality of this signage in a video<sup>2</sup>. It is no wonder the subways were known to be frustrating given the paucity of accurate and easy to read direction signage – you had to be a regular user to figure out their efficiency for yourself. Despite this and the two decades of neglect since their makeover the subways remained popular into this decade – particularly the two under New Kent Road and the Elephant & Castle link road. The excerpt below from TfL’s analysis shows a half-hearted effort to measure their usage, perhaps in the hope of proving them to be unpopular, which their data does not. At surface level a high collision rate for motorists and cyclists persisted, though it is important to note that pedestrians were seldom part of the statistics and their collision rate was not above average – see collision data chart in the next chapter.

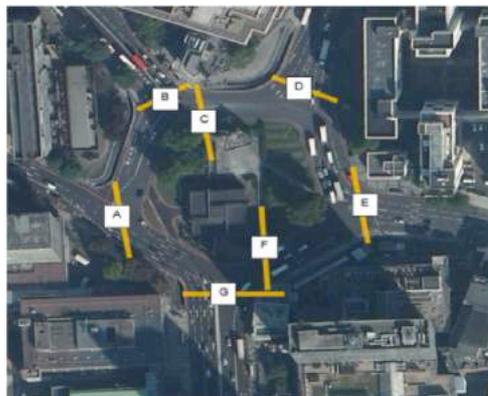
### Background

A pedestrian count at the current subway system was carried out at the end of 2012. This documented the pedestrian flows through the subway tunnels and also documented the desire lines, route choices, and behaviour of pedestrians.

This data was then used to update a pre-existing pedestrian model using our modelling software known as Legion. This count data formed the base line for future modelling and has allowed outputs to demonstrate pedestrian behaviour, route choice and journey time under the existing and proposed arrangements.

### Existing pedestrian flows

Under the current system pedestrians use at least one of the seven subways to move through the area. Below is a diagram demonstrating the current subway system and a table listing the flows as of 2012 in each subway tunnel. These figures are two-way pedestrian flows per hour during the PM peak period, however they are for the individual subways so do include an element of double-counting



(diagram of existing subway system)

Subway	Pedestrian Flows
A	423
B	374
C	414
D	474
E	1,117
F	102
G	527

<sup>2</sup> “All the wrong signals” video <https://youtu.be/muXAbVMijJc>

# DRIVERS OF CHANGE

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By the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the desire from the junction's users to see it improved was perhaps as fervent as it had been one hundred years before<sup>3</sup>. Elephant & Castle remained unsafe for some users and fairly unpleasant for all – politicians recognised the need to do something about it, both at the local authority level and more recently within City Hall. The new layout is not however the conclusion of a project seeking to make the junction safe and pleasant, but a more complicated confluence of three key drivers. These motivations shaped the brief for the traffic engineers and landscape architects, disrupting the necessary fine-tuning required to balance the needs of public transport users, pedestrians, cyclists and motorists and those who live and work adjacent to the junction.

Over the last decade different plans have been published which reflect the shifting balance of power amongst the decision makers, reveal the conflict between the three key drivers and show how the needs of many of the junction's users was largely disregarded.

## 1. “Place Making”.

Elephant & Castle sits on the edge of Zone 1 yet its land values have for decades been much lower when compared to similar locations on the ring road that encircles central London. Local authorities in the pursuit of capital and tax receipts are encouraged to reconsider the decisions that drove the comprehensive redevelopment between the mid 1950s and mid 1970s – mass affordable housing and amenities. At Elephant & Castle the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century legacy was a shopping centre,<sup>4</sup> office blocks including Hannibal House and Castle House (demolished 2011), the office block of Alexander Fleming House (converted into flats and rebranded as Metro Central Heights in the 1997), the London College of Communication and thousands of council homes (Heygate Estate, Draper Estate, Gaywood Estate, Albert Barnes House). Since the late 1990s Southwark Council have sought to redevelop much of this<sup>5</sup> with private sector investment. By 2002 Foster and Partners were appointed to master plan the district and by 2004 highly stylised illustrations of an optimistic new vision for the roundabout were marketed to residents<sup>6</sup>. The approach sought to reduce the sense of blight of the busy junction that detracted from making Elephant & Castle a place to linger, to be, to shop and to live. The radical proposal of creating a peninsula around which the ring road would bend was heavily marketed at the time across Southwark and beyond to attract developers to invest in lavish books and regular glossy magazines. Such a large portion of new pedestrian space would only be made possible in the busy junction because much of the existing road traffic was



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<sup>3</sup> Notes in Hansard show the call for subways to be built at the Elephant & Castle was raised in parliament in 1908. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1908/dec/16/construction-of-subways-at-elephant-and>

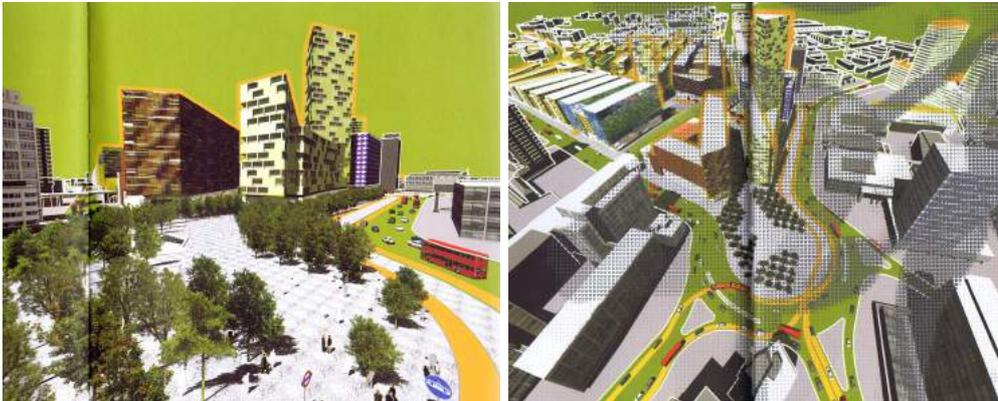
<sup>4</sup> Despite its bold pioneering ambition the shopping centre and buzzing atmosphere today it is generally seen as a flawed development in cold financial terms. Read more here: <http://postwarbuildings.com/buildings/elephant-and-castle-shopping-centre>

<sup>5</sup> *Southwark Notes* critically documents this in detail <https://southwarknotes.wordpress.com/the-elephant/>

<sup>6</sup> The plans also envisaged the area would be a pioneering environmentally friendly district and received the attention of Bill Clinton's Climate Positive Development Program in 2009. <http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/3897>

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expected to shift into a new cross river tram<sup>7</sup> being planned by Transport for London and by changes to roads in the Heygate estate enabling some traffic to bypass Elephant & Castle altogether. This design also removed the subways, and in 2004 this aspiration was written into the council's Supplementary Planning Guidance



The peninsula was a very powerful marketing tool signalling dramatic change – the two best-known symbols of the district were to go. The roundabout and the shopping centre had become simplistic symbols of the 1960s, and until recently “60s” was a pejorative label for bad architecture and urban planning, much as the remains of the Victorian landscape were widely detested in the 1960s until the conservation movement began to push their value and the benefits of renovation and adaptation.

Despite the cancellation of the Cross River Tram project by Mayor Johnson shortly after he took office in 2008, the aspiration for a peninsula at Elephant & Castle lived on within Southwark Council, and with it too the intention to remove the subways and require all pedestrians to use surface crossings. The press reported on mounting pressure for change<sup>8</sup>.

Labour took control of Southwark Council in 2010 and swiftly signed a development agreement with Lend Lease for them to develop large swathes of Elephant & Castle, most notably the Heygate Estate. Their agreement did away with most of the ambitions of the Fosters Masterplan who were replaced by Make Architects<sup>9</sup>. The plans no longer included the shopping centre site that Lend Lease had not been able to acquire, but the memory of the Fosters plan for redesigning the roundabout lived on. For example by March 2012 the 2004 SPG had been replaced with a Strategic Planning Document which stated, “*The existing subways will be removed and replaced by surface pedestrian crossings creating a more attractive and safe environment with priority for public transport users, cyclists and walkers over the car.*” Note ‘attractive’ comes before ‘safe’ in this document, followed by the unrealistic ambition to give priority to all users over the car, despite it being the inner London’s ring road. The term ‘car’ here is also used both pejoratively and manipulatively, to convey a private motorist (who we imagine could have used public transport or a bicycle) and obscure the important consideration that relegating cars to the lowest priority also relegates commercial vehicles, those on private hire, motorcyclists as well as introducing new challenges for emergency vehicles. In correspondence between Cllr John and a local resident<sup>10</sup> he justified the proposed changes, “*The legacy of the the [sic] 1960's masterplan for the area of which the subways are a key element has been a primary factor in creating negative perceptions of the area and in turn this has frustrated our efforts to attract investment into the area... The decision to proceed with plans for the northern roundabout has also been a factor in Delancey's ability to secure funds to acquire the shopping centre for redevelopment [sic]*”. I found out later directly from Stafford Lancaster, an investment director at Delancey, that this was not true. Over tea in their Mayfair offices

<sup>7</sup> *The Cross River Tram* was cancelled in 2008 by Mayor Johnson. Had it been built it would have been in operation by 2016. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross\\_River\\_Tram](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_River_Tram)

<sup>8</sup> London SE1 20 November 2008, <http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/3613>

<sup>9</sup> This story by London news website London SE1 reports on the master plan by Make Architects submitted for approval in 2012: <http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/5848>

<sup>10</sup> Cllr Peter John was corresponding with Metro Central Heights resident Nick Stratton who forwarded me the exchange.

in April 2014 he made clear their investment was in no way dependent on the specific design of the proposed new Elephant & Castle junction and that they had some reservations that the new layout could negatively impact their scheme.

As a newcomer to the area Delancey had not been part of the important club of local landowners known as the “Strategic Stakeholder Group”. This secretive gathering emerged around the 2012 led by Lend Lease, who were keen to ensure the investment made in 2010 would soon convert into property sales. They needed strong momentum of change in the wider area, action over too much deliberation. Representatives from Lend Lease, St Modwen<sup>11</sup>, UCLA, LSBU (and probably some others) would meet every few months to try and integrate their projects and ambitions and put collective pressure on Transport for London. This group included no representation from any of the two adjacent residential blocks<sup>12</sup> that accommodate 500 households nor any local councillors<sup>13</sup>. The SSG’s chair, consultant Pat Brown, who was also working as a design advisor to Mayor Johnson at the time, met with me a few times to try and placate some of my campaigning against the proposed changes to the junction. She disclosed the group’s ambitions were place making, which is her speciality<sup>14</sup>, and her aspirations were clear – the solution for the junction needed to go far beyond the needs of transport. The SSG identified that the long term and widespread desire for the council and TFL to address the unsafe and unpleasant Elephant & Castle junction was a wave of political capital that developers could use to turn the junction into a shop window for their adjacent investments. Radical change was needed for it to become a perception-changing marketing tool, helping her clients sell and rent flats and retail space.

To all but the opponent of market-led urban development (and the consequent likely demolition of council housing, gentrification and rapid community displacement), the council and developers ambitions seem reasonable. Why not try to make the improvements to the junction achieve even more than a place to pass through safely and pleasantly, why not make it a desirable place to go to as well?

But the consequence of dovetailing developer ambitions into transport needs was inevitably uncomfortable. That is because a big part of a developer’s business is marketing, it is about perceptions not reality, the image sells before the development is even built or experienced. It is a world of imagination, artistic impressions, brochures, off-plan sales and a return on investment (one that not need the investor to ever set foot in the place itself). For a local authority and developer a big sense of change goes a long way, especially when the place they seek to change is infamously unpleasant and dangerous and talk about change has been going on for years. News of change is headline grabbing and conversation worthy. Mayor Johnson also used this strategy and in 2009 made headlines<sup>15</sup> with news of his intention to have fifty places redesigned to make them more pleasant and accessible. The Guardian reported his commercial objectives, “*At a time when the government is hoping to do all sorts of things that will possibly make London less competitive*”, Johnson said, “*I think this is one of the things we can do to make London more competitive and more attractive in the long term so I justify the investment*”. The new Labour politicians in Southwark Council, like Johnson, were particularly keen to portray themselves as people of action and embraced place making at Elephant & Castle.

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<sup>11</sup> St Modwen were owners of the shopping centre until December 2013 when it was acquired by Delancey for £80m.

<sup>12</sup> Metro Central Heights [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metro\\_Central\\_Heights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metro_Central_Heights) and Perronet House <http://www.perronethouse.com>

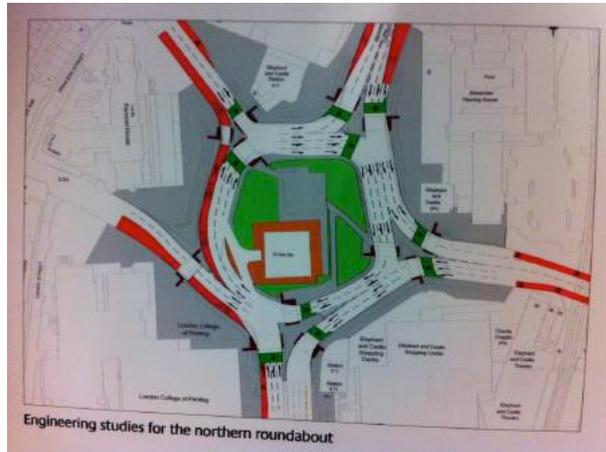
<sup>13</sup> This is a confident assertion. We know none of the three ward councilors from the adjacent Cathedrals Ward were invited.

<sup>14</sup> Pat Brown’s expertise is described at the Centre for London’s website. Her consultancy, “advises business and civic leaders on partnerships, developments and projects to create thriving places, economies and business... As the former CEO of Central London Partnership she championed the need to improve urban quality as a tool for achieving London’s continued economic success, paving the way to some of the capital’s most significant urban changes.”

<sup>15</sup> “*Boris Johnson unveils plans to revamp London's public spaces,*” The Guardian, 16 November 2009 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2009/nov/16/boris-london>

The Strategic Stakeholder Group shared the momentum of the Labour Council (who have since been derided<sup>16</sup> for way with in which they traded land value in return for swift development). The SSG ensured the 2004 vision of a peninsula got built despite nothing being the likely worsening of pressure from traffic given the cancellation of the Cross River Tram and the greater density of local (and central) London development. Lend Lease, for example, incorporated plenty of new car parking spaces into their development, despite the original Fosters plan envisaging it as car free.

As recently as 2013 Transport for London did not want to build a peninsula at the Elephant & Castle because of the congestion it would cause. In 2012 they publicised a redesign of the junction in which subways would be removed but the roundabout retained. It was unveiled to locals on 19<sup>th</sup> July at a badly promoted “Community Forum” meeting funded by Lend Lease and chaired by consultant Sarah Gaventa. The roundabout was added to the agenda late. TfL were guest speakers and they revealed an elaborate computer generated video of the new plan. But the plan was not well received and prompted discussion, both for the continued perceived dominance of the road<sup>17</sup>, its fanciful amphitheatre at the centre of the roundabout and its gratuitous use of seductive animation to sell us something that we thought we would be helping shape. The plan was not perceived as fulfilling the objective of the 2012 SPD because it did not relegate motorists to become the least important user (an impossible objective given the demands on the junction from travellers, but one that the peninsula design appeared to deliver on by being obviously less efficient for motorists than a roundabout). It was in that this meeting that the two other key drivers of the project that was eventually built became far more apparent.



<sup>16</sup> Campaigners 35%.org report on how Southwark Council will make little if any money from the deal with Lend Lease. <http://35percent.org/2016-05-11-no-profit-share-the-true-value-of-the-heygate-regeneration/>. The Observer’s Architecture Critic Rowan Moore wrote in his 2016 book ‘Slow Burn City’, “Southwark Council has been played by developers. It has had its tummy tickled, arm-twisted and arse kicked. It has got a poor deal in return for its considerable assets, multiple promises have been broken and violence done to the lives of many who lived there.”

<sup>17</sup> In hindsight it is clear the road in the 2012 proposal would have been much less dominant. At its widest it was just 5 lanes wide for motorists not 7 as has been built, and London Road has not been widened by a lane, as was built in 2015.

## 2. Shared-Space

Since the redesign of Exhibition Road in South Kensington in 2011 the design approach of ‘shared-space’<sup>18</sup> has gained considerable momentum in London. The theory is that roads and pavements are made safer and more attractive by removing as much segregation and signage as possible between all users, so that people must more cautiously navigate the space. By slowing everyone down safety is achieved and some motorists will even be deterred from the area altogether to find a faster route or alternative means of transport. This approach also ‘de-clutters’ a streetscape and enables a road to look more like a piazza, so complementing the parallel trend of ‘place-making’. A transport corridor can appear to become social gathering spaces, a symbol of dynamic civic health. Mayor Johnson embraced shared-space because it was compatible with his place-making objectives. The Guardian reported in 2009 that he wanted, *“to make public space in the capital as ‘unrestricted and unambiguous’ as possible by minimising traffic lights, removing railings and formal pedestrian crossings – and in some instances pavements too – and relying instead on pedestrians, cyclists and road users ‘negotiating’ street space”*.

The most vocal advocate of shared-space at Elephant & Castle is Jeremy Leach, a Walworth resident and chair of several local pressure groups<sup>19</sup>. He has a track record of creating shared spaces in pretty property-price enhancing streets such as Sutherland Square, a Georgian conservation area where he lives. The raised road surface, protruding tree pits and de-cluttering works well in a quiet residential backwater. Yet Mr Leach sees the solution as equally applicable to trunk roads too and welcomed the redesign of Elephant & Castle’s smaller southern junction in 2011 that partly embraced shared space. Pedestrian subways and a leafy roundabout were replaced with surface level crossings, shared space with cyclists on pavements and lots of new traffic lights. Congestion was worsened for motorists and pedestrians were forced to cross the ring road at surface level rather than use safe segregated space underneath it. One of the new crossings Mr Leach welcomed here only gives pedestrians five seconds on the Green Man and 1 minute and 27 seconds of the Red Man, and yet even that wait only gets you half way across the Ring Road! Pedestrians inevitably lose patience and make a run for it across three lanes of traffic at a time. Some are confused by a lull in traffic between the two phases of lights that let traffic north from Newington Butts and then Walworth Road, and start crossing assuming mistakenly that the Green Man is imminent. I made a video in 2014 showing pedestrians using this impractical and risky looking design<sup>20</sup>. The tangible negative consequences for pedestrians here was why concern grew about TfL building something similar at the northern junction. It was clear from the new layout of Elephant & Castle’s southern junction that the council’s aspirations to prioritise pedestrian travel over motorists (expressed in their 2012 Strategic Planning Document) was not going to be achieved, the result of forcing pedestrians to share their crossing with motorists would actually be to increase the negative impact of motorists on pedestrians.

So at the public meeting in July 2012 when Transport for London unveiled their plans for revising the northern roundabout I shared my concerns with the gathering: pedestrian safety and convenience would be undermined because of their proposed removal of all the subways. Mr Leach was quick with a strong riposte and stood to give an impassioned speech playing to the perception of the subways as a crime-ridden space, demonising them as dehumanising second-class 1960s car-centric nonsense good for one thing only – demolition, *“They must go!”* he declared with a fist in the air. (The Met Police subsequently provided data showing the subways were not crime hot spots, and the crime rate was lower in them than at surface level and his perception of crime was out of sync with the reality<sup>21</sup>). But

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<sup>18</sup> Exhibition Road in Kensington is the often-cited trendsetter here. But it is a marginal road between three museums not a major ring road or transport hub such as at Elephant & Castle

<sup>19</sup> Jeremy Leach plays leading roles in the Walworth Society, Southwark Living Streets, Elephant and Walworth Neighbourhood Forum and campaign brand “SE1 Safe Roads”.

<sup>20</sup> The subways here were never as busy as the ones at the northern junction so their loss was less consequential. The negative impact on journey times for pedestrians of using surface crossings to traverse the ring road was however very tangible. I have documented this dangerous frustration in a video showing the disproportionate amount of time given to motorists vs pedestrians.

[https://youtu.be/jm8O\\_J0pxLQ?list=PL7vkbk3HLArciqrSRWmIDj9NyyQsDWLJL](https://youtu.be/jm8O_J0pxLQ?list=PL7vkbk3HLArciqrSRWmIDj9NyyQsDWLJL)

<sup>21</sup> My perception of the subways as safer places than popular legend was confirmed in conversations with local police officers and community wardens. They did not perceive the subways to be dangerous

Mr Leach's populist rallying cry fitted with the council's long-term aspiration and was welcomed by the developers seeking more political capital to push their image-enhancing place-making agenda.

Forcing pedestrians to share space with other users had become part of TfL policy – pedestrian segregation had become deeply unfashionable. In response to a letter I wrote to Ben Plowden, Transport for London's Director of Strategy and Planning in the Surface division,<sup>22</sup> he replied on the 24 April 2014 to say, "It has been TfL policy since 2009 that where ever feasible, subways should be replaced with at-grade crossings. This is supported by the DfT's Manual for Streets, the GLA's Better Streets publication, as well as in TfL's Streetscape Guidance and forthcoming Pedestrian Design Guidance". A policy that seeks removal of this kind of pedestrian segregation "wherever feasible" is unlikely to be one that planners weigh up for its benefits or detractions for pedestrians. It was clear, subways, wherever they were, even in a place such as Elephant & Castle that had had them for over 100 years, were by 2014 well and truly vilified. Mr Plowden continued, "The view is that subways are indirect and are not supportive of those with disabilities or other accessibility needs. They also contribute to a sense of pedestrian vulnerability and can be a source of crime and anti-social behaviour leading to concerns over personal security." In reality five of the seven subways went directly under each of the five roads radiating from the roundabout, with both a gentle ramp and staircase to reach them – the two others provided a route across the roundabout. Mr Plowden provided no evidence of how subways contributed to pedestrian vulnerability or crime at Elephant & Castle. In February 2014 I videoed interviews with potentially vulnerable users of the subways<sup>23</sup>. Female students of LCC told me, "I think these subways are actually really good because they allow easier and safe way to get from section to section in such a busy roundabout, otherwise it'd be pretty dangerous. Subways just make our life easier. I think we should definitely keep the subways, they are easy access to cross the road which out having to wait." I asked about using them at night time, "everything's lit up, there are cameras here it's quite safe".



As well as removing subways removing pedestrian segregation at surface level had become policy for TfL too. Policy documents provided guidance and encouragement to remove pedestrian guardrails, and if at all possible ensure no more new ones were built<sup>24</sup>. In Mayor Johnson's 2012 manifesto he stated, "The capital has too many guardrails, restricting the movement of pedestrians and also presenting a hazard for cyclists. I have removed a substantial number of guardrails along pavements, making it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross, and stripped out other unnecessary street clutter. I will continue to work with the boroughs to push forward shared space schemes and scrap guardrails and promote this approach on new developments through the London Plan". This simplistic manifesto

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for users or a source of crime. Their concern with the subways was limited to their popularity as a sheltered place for rough sleepers and begging. The crime incident data for the subways was obtained via an Freedom of Information request I made to the police. It can be read at:

[http://www.elephantandcastleroundabout.org/data/MetPolice\\_rawfiles/Final%20Request%20ID%2047384%20-%20Elephant%20and%20Castle.xls](http://www.elephantandcastleroundabout.org/data/MetPolice_rawfiles/Final%20Request%20ID%2047384%20-%20Elephant%20and%20Castle.xls).

<sup>22</sup> Prior to TfL Mr Plowden had worked for the national charity Living Streets of which Mr Leach is chair of the Southwark chapter. Mr Plowden is a vocal proponent of shared space and place making – in 2000 he rebranded the seventy-year-old Pedestrian Society as Living Streets and during his tenure as their first paid director broadened their emphasis towards 'improving public spaces'. I shared a panel discussion with him at the Royal Institute for British Architects on 21 June 2011. The event was titled "Could subversive tactics bring our public spaces back to life?" I spoke about guerrilla gardening and Mr Plowden spoke about the aesthetic benefits of removing pedestrian guardrails and his contribution to place making. His 'subversive' actions within TfL may have contributed to death, not life.

<sup>23</sup> Watch the video 10 February 2014.

<https://youtu.be/JeBpdV8foDw?list=PL7vkbk3HLArciqrSRWmIDj9NyyQsDWLIL>

<sup>24</sup> TfL Guidance On Assessment Of Pedestrian Guardrail. <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/guidance-on-assessment-of-pedestrian-guardrail.pdf>

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pledge continued a surge in the removal of pedestrian guardrails, despite the 103-page report from which it had presumably originated presenting a far more nuanced recommendation to their use<sup>25</sup>.



On 3 October 2012 a tragedy happened at a surface level crossing near Elephant & Castle where guardrails had recently been removed. A five-year-old boy was killed at the junction of St George's Road and Garden Row several hundred metres west of the Elephant & Castle roundabout. Hichame Bouadimi had been at the crossing with his Mother's but let go of her hand and ran ahead under a flat bed lorry<sup>26</sup>. The press pointed out that TfL had recently removed pedestrian guardrails from this location. Incredibly, Mr Leach seized on this tragedy by launching a sickening campaign to press his agenda for a shared-space-orientated vision at Elephant & Castle. He pushed for more crossings of precisely the same design as where Hichame had been killed rather than those with any kind of segregation to protect pedestrians, such as subways or at the very least a guardrail to deter children from running into the road. Mr Leach also distorted Hichame's death as related to Elephant & Castle to further peddle the misperception that the northern junction was dangerous for pedestrians even though the accident occurred well beyond the boundaries of the remit for the northern junction's redesign.

On 16 November 2012 Mr Leach staged a saccharine vigil citing Hichame's death as a trigger and called it "a day of action". It was an event so fantastical and light on truth that it should perhaps be seen as performance art. Mr Leach appeared to channel his Victorian forebears at Elephant & Castle who provided escapism in theatres and helped the district earn a reputation as 'the Piccadilly Circus of the south'<sup>27</sup>. Mr Leach's dark show went for maximum emotive appeal and threw caution to the wind with facts. He set up a trestle table on the pavement outside London College of Communications next to the Elephant & Castle roundabout, far away from the location of the accident. He came with children carrying cheerful paintings of the pedestrian crossings and traffic lights that he hoped to see more of. They assumed their interests were being served, not those of a shared-space zealot<sup>28</sup>. Mr Leach bolstered his support from local groups with a document that appeared to be offering them improvements for pedestrians all across northern Southwark – he even drew me into this, I made my suggestions (such as subway retention), and then he edited them all out of the press release that focused on surface level crossings at Elephant & Castle. With the unsuspecting charity Road Peace roped in too he arranged candles in the shape of a dove and preposterously had read out the names of pedestrians

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<sup>25</sup> TfL Pedestrian Guard Railing: A Review of Criteria for Installation, 2003

<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/pedestrian-guardrailing-review-of-criteria-for-installation.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> The London Evening Standard reported on the accident here:

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/bring-back-road-safety-says-father-of-boy-killed-by-lorry-on-way-home-from-school-8201551.html>

<sup>27</sup> This rose-tinted description of the past is regularly evoked by advocates of the redesign such as Cllr Peter John and Mr Leach, despite the imminent destruction of The Coronet, the last Victorian theatre to remain, and no significant new entertainment venues in the planning except a multiplex cinema.

<sup>28</sup> I have since spoken to a teacher at Charlotte Sharman School where Hichame was a pupil. Her class contributed pictures to Mr Leach's performance. She shared with me her grave misgivings and discomfort about the project, which slowly dawned on her as something deeply inappropriate.

killed across London that year. He told the local press, “*The trouble is that his death was one of a number in the local area in the past 12 months. We’ve had four pedestrian deaths and a motorcycle death. The bigger picture is that in the past 30 months there have been 300 people killed, seriously injured or slightly injured on the roads around Elephant & Castle, which is a shocking number*”<sup>29</sup>. There had in fact been no pedestrian deaths at the Elephant & Castle junction for years, not within the project boundaries, and his figure of 300 injuries or deaths ‘around’ the area had harvested incidents with the geographic greed of an empire builder. But to all the most incisive reader he successfully portrayed the Elephant & Castle junction as a death trap for pedestrians.



The press went on to describe how Mr Leach was pressing Transport for London to introduce more pedestrian crossings on roads around the Elephant. Politicians rallied around keen to be seen to be responding to the call. The news article on Mr Leach’s vigil concluded with a quote from Cllr Peter John, “*While the detail of this is not confirmed we currently expect this to result in the closure of the subways and their replacement with signalised pedestrian crossings with an enhanced public realm*”. This quote was satisfying evidence for Mr Leach that he had squared a circle - turning an accident that had nothing to do with subways or the Elephant & Castle into further confirmation from the council that subways would be removed!

It was a month after Mr Leach’s headline-grabbing and politician-enchancing performance that Lyla and I launched SaveOurSubways.org, an effort to change people’s perceptions of the subways and to see the merits of segregated pedestrian space at the Elephant & Castle. The argument in favour of the subways seemed so clear to us, but we were aware the momentum behind shared-space for pedestrians in general and the call for surface crossings at the Elephant & Castle was enormous. Mr Leach had already attracted over 2,000 signatories when he closed the curtain on his vigil, a figure he has used to endorse less pedestrian segregation at Elephant & Castle.

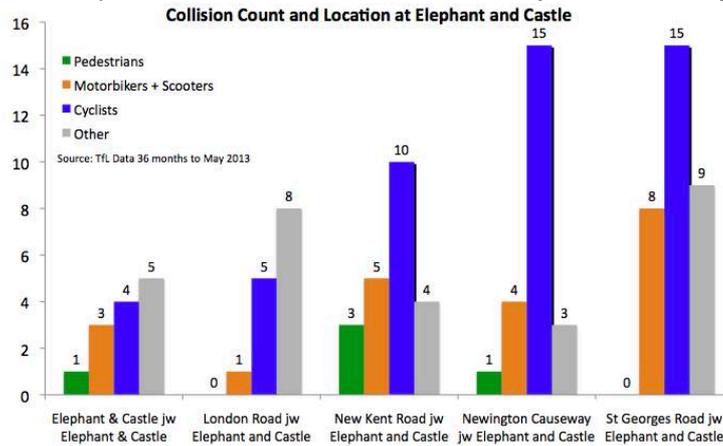
Meanwhile the parents of Hichame told the press they wanted “*speeds humps or cameras, at least a sign saying it’s a school or a lollipop patrol,*” where their son had been killed. Soon after Southwark Council found funding for a lollipop patrol there which continues to this day. No such patrols have been dispatched to Elephant & Castle’s new surface crossings, yet by 5 October 2016 children and their teachers from Robert Browning Primary School were protesting with disappointment about the new surface crossings Mr Leach had enrolled children to demand. Minutes for the Community Council meeting attended by TfL describe how, “*pupils had written an open letter to councillors complaining about pedestrian crossing times at Newington Butts. These were only 5 seconds, making it impossible for a class of 30 to cross on their way to the swimming pool. This made the crossing unsafe. The pupils said that the crossing time should be increased to 20 seconds.*” I attended this meeting and said some words of support. Mr Leach was also there but this time was silent and stony-faced at the back of the hall.

Since Hichame’s death TfL pulled back from the complete removal of guardrails at Elephant & Castle. In 2011 TfL had removed the old pedestrian guardrails along the entire length of the link road of Elephant & Castle this action was reversed in 2012. While the same guardrails were once again planned for removal in the 2015 redesign, they have so far survived, and perhaps saved some lives.

<sup>29</sup> Mr Leach’s charade was reported by SE1 <http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/6439>

### 3. Cycling Safety

In parallel with the popularity of shared space was the growing momentum for significantly improved provision for London's cyclists. Their death toll was grabbing headlines<sup>30</sup> and deterring more Londoners from taking to bikes and alleviating the congested roads and public transport. Elephant & Castle was an infamously dangerous junction for cyclists and for motorists on two wheels – 65% of collisions here involved cyclists, and 29% motorbikes and scooters (just 7% involved pedestrians).



Part of the criticism of TfL's 2012 proposal for Elephant & Castle was the lack of sufficient segregation for provision for cyclists – an urban design feature in direct contrast with the movement for shared space. Cllr Fiona Colley, Cabinet Member for Regeneration wrote to me in July 2013 defending the removal of pedestrian segregation but pressing her aspiration instead for cyclist segregation at the Elephant & Castle, *“I am also keen to see segregated cycle provision if at all possible - indeed myself and the leader were discussing this possibility with Deputy Mayor Isabel Deding this morning.”*

In November 2013 a new cycling campaign group was created. Stop Killing Cyclists demanded greater investment in cycling provision, particularly for segregated space. This turbo-charged an already dynamic lobbying community amongst cyclists, including the local group Southwark Cyclists and the London Cycling Campaign, who worked hard to advocate cycle usage and better provision in London for them. Stop Killing Cyclists used direct action. With every new cycling death a ‘die in’ would be organised at the road where the accident took place. Cyclists were rallied through social media to briefly fill a public space by pretending to be dead – over 1,000 took part in one during on 29 November 2013 outside Transport for London's HQ opposite Southwark underground station. Stop Killing Cyclists' passionate and articulate co-founder Donnachadh McCarthy was soon making a big impact in London's media as their spokesperson. Mayor Johnson and local politicians were increasingly under pressure to respond.



The failure for cyclists of road improvement at Elephant & Castle driven by place-making and shared space became grimly tangible in spring 2014. On 13 May cyclist Abdelkhalak Lahyani was killed by a lorry while turning left towards Newington Butts from Walworth Road. He was using Elephant & Castle's southern junction that in 2011 had been turned from a roundabout with subways into a light controlled T-junction with new surface crossings and new-shared space for cyclists on the pavement. The shared space provision for cyclists was not attractive because it put them in conflict with the

<sup>30</sup> In February 2015 the BBC reported Elephant & Castle as the worst black spot for cyclists with 80 accidents involving them logged between 2009 and 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-31612253>

pedestrian crossings, so most continued to share the highway in the direction Mr Lahyani was taking. Soon after the accident Stop Killing Cyclists organised a protest in the shared space to make the case for it to be replaced with segregation. My family and I took part in it. A new segregated cycle route was chalked across the pavement. It has not been built but this campaign's demands added to the pressure on councillors and the mayor to be seen to be creating cycling segregation nearby. The protest at Elephant & Castle's southern junction occurred in the closing phase of Transport for London's consultation about revised plans for the adjacent northern roundabout.

In the three years since these events a lot of new cycling infrastructure has been built across London in prominent locations. Segregated lanes now extend from Elephant & Castle to Smithfield market across Blackfriars Bridge and along northern side of the embankment. Parliament Square has some and more is under construction along the Knightsbridge side of Hyde Park. It appears the cycling lobby are achieving a great deal, although cyclists continue to die and campaigners press for more investment. Stop Killing Cyclists staged another 'die in' on 11 February 2017 in the aftermath of three London cyclist deaths the week before. This time the protest was outside the Treasury in Whitehall<sup>31</sup>. And yet in 2015 sixty-six pedestrians were killed on London's roads compared with just nine cyclists<sup>32</sup> – no one has been representing this vast pedestrian death toll across London in a way that effectively addresses it.

Encouraging recent news suggests London's leading influencers are finally looking at the bigger problem of pedestrian safety. In December 2016 Mayor Khan has appointed Will Norman as the city's first Cycling and Pedestrian Commissioner. Mr Norman, previously at Nike, replaces Mayor Johnson's Cycling Commissioner Andrew Gilligan who served between 2013 and 2016. Mr Gilligan has since returned to his main career as a journalist. In an article published in the Evening Standard on 17 February 2017 the new Cycling and Pedestrian Commissioner said, "*Pedestrians, unlike cyclists, had been 'ignored' by transport planners for too long. There hasn't been the same advocacy and campaigning around pedestrian safety in the past – it's something that has been neglected by politicians and policymaking. Given the statistics around pedestrian fatalities that is something that has to change.*"<sup>33</sup> In the same edition of the Evening Standard the paper's editorial commentary embraced this new momentum, "*Mr Norman takes seriously his responsibility for pedestrians. They rarely attract the attention that cyclists do but they – and almost all of us are pedestrians at some point in the day – are vulnerable road-users. There were 66 pedestrian fatalities last year [sic] but they attracted hardly any public attention, presumably on the basis that they are too commonplace to merit concern. Yet walkers are victims of irresponsible cyclists as well as motorists.*"<sup>34</sup>

The recent high-level acknowledgement of the neglect of pedestrians by politicians and policymakers in recent years confirms what low significance their welfare was for driving investment and design at Elephant & Castle's northern junction, despite, as we have seen already and will see more of in this document, the superficial nod by TfL to improving pedestrian safety.

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<sup>31</sup> "Cyclists stage 'die-in' protest in London for safer roads," BBC, 11 February 2017, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-38944964>

<sup>32</sup> "Why are UK road deaths on the rise again?" The Guardian, 13 October 2012. The article reported on how the pedestrian death toll across the UK has been rising in recent years, up 12% in 2011, with the biggest increase amongst children and the over-60s and in built-up areas. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/13/road-deaths-rise-uk-safety>.

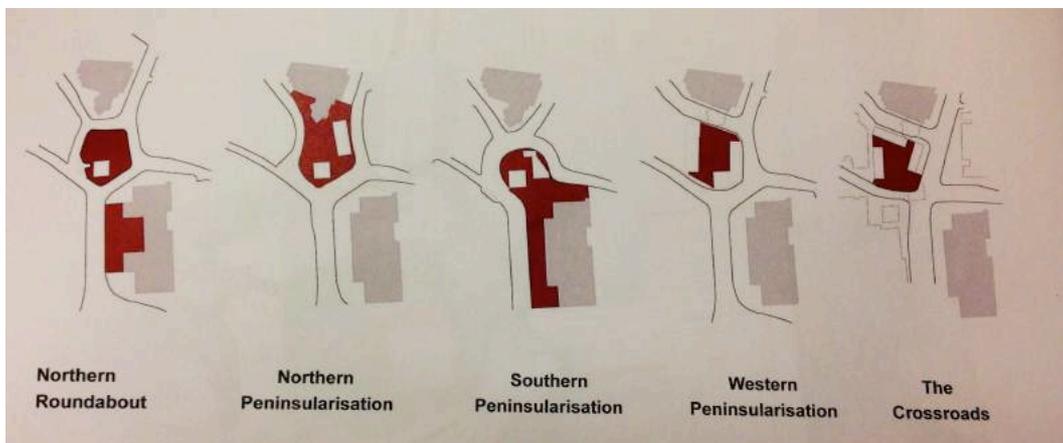
<sup>33</sup> "Bike czar insists London is safe for cyclists, despite three deaths in a week," Evening Standard, 17 February 2017. <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/bike-czar-insists-london-is-safe-for-cyclists-despite-three-deaths-in-a-week-a3469346.html>

<sup>34</sup> "Evening Standard comment: Cyclist and pedestrians both need support," Evening Standard, 17 February 2017. <http://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/evening-standard-comment-cyclist-and-pedestrians-both-need-support-a3469661.html>

# THE NEW LAYOUT

The negative response that the 2012 TfL proposal for Elephant & Castle's northern junction had elicited from shared-space advocates and the cyclist lobby empowered the developers to press for more radical change that matched their place-making agenda. It did however also create a sense of anxiety within the developer community, that TfL and the council might not sort out the junction and create a positive sense of change quickly enough to help their property sales timetable. A project risk assessment written by Lend Lease in October 2012 listed the junction as a cause of concern with a 60% risk rating that, "No improvements to the northern roundabout results in poor gateway condition to regenerated E&C." They were concerned "Reputation of poor urban area remains" – an issue of perception rather than practical usability. Lend Lease's proposed solution to this risk was, "Liaison between LL / LBS / TFL at high level. Co-operation agreement in place with St. Modwen's to bring forward redevelopment proposals. E&C Strategic Transport contribution introduced." Lend Lease would contribute funding to the junction and steer the design with their consultant Pat Brown at the helm.

In 2013 Ms Brown shared with me the commitment from Lend Lease and other members of the Strategic Stakeholder Group to ensure 'peninsularisation' happened. They faced little opposition. The first obstacle was easily removed – the TfL engineers who had insisted the roundabout needed to stay were moved off the project and a new TfL design team put in place, led by Carlo Romano. His brief, he told me, was to 'make the peninsula work'. I was fortunate enough to meet Mr Romano several times for some candid conversation and he shared with me some of his workings (see diagrams below of alternative layouts). The only option Mr Romano said came close to retaining the transport capacity of the 1959 roundabout was 'southern peninsularisation', which was helpfully also the same layout that Fosters had presented a decade earlier and had been heavily marketed at the time.



By July 2013 TfL were ready to publish new designs based on the peninsula approach. Politicians were so confident about their progress that Mayor Johnson and Cllr Peter John unveiled them at a press call in the centre of the roundabout. In attendance was Sir Peter Hendy transport commissioner from Transport for London and 'regeneration boss' Cllr Fiona Colley as the local press flatteringly described the cabinet member for regeneration<sup>35</sup>. A new more purposeful video was also made (from a pigeon's perspective hovering towards the junction from the south) to illustrate how they imagined it



<sup>35</sup> London SE1's report of the event 10 July 2013. <http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/6957>

would look<sup>36</sup>. The fanciful amphitheatre remained but the landscape was now heavily forested with the retention of existing trees and a lot new planting. The package captured positive press coverage and conveyed a strong sense of ‘action’ from the politicians after years of perceived delay. Transport for London’s shift in emphasis towards place-making at the expense of safe pleasant travel was summed up in their Road Task Force’s description about the new design at Elephant & Castle:



“previously, proposed measures have concentrated on improving road safety and reducing severance but have done little to improve the sense of place.” Mayor Johnson and his Labour Councillor supporters believed there was no trade off, and that with the new design we could in effect have ‘our cake and eat it’, (a remarkable promise that Boris Johnson continues to advocate is possible when confronted by difficult negotiations as the UK’s Foreign Secretary).



It was only those who dug a little deeper into the new plans, such as Southwark Cyclists, and myself who were not convinced by the politicians’ optimism in peninsularisation. We did not believe it would solve transport users needs fairly. When I met Mr Romano in 2014 he confided to me and a small audience, (TfL’s project manager Hugo Terry and Southwark Council’s regeneration assistant Dan Taylor), that his new design came with several unfortunate side effects, particularly for pedestrians trying to get somewhere as well as all road users. The winners of the design would be anyone seeking a place to linger next to a new wider ring road that is now eight lanes<sup>37</sup> at its widest point and of course the council and developers eager to market the Elephant & Castle as “the Piccadilly of the South”<sup>38</sup>.

In return for the new northern peninsula and an expansion of pavement next to Metro Central Heights pedestrian space would need to be lost elsewhere. Not only would some subways have to go – TfL’s Mr Romano conceded that the busiest one under New Kent Road could stay should there be the desire<sup>39</sup> – but pavements would be reduced significantly in width around the busy Bakerloo line ticket hall and

<sup>36</sup> TfL’s 2013 video - their first version of the southern peninsula junction can be viewed here:

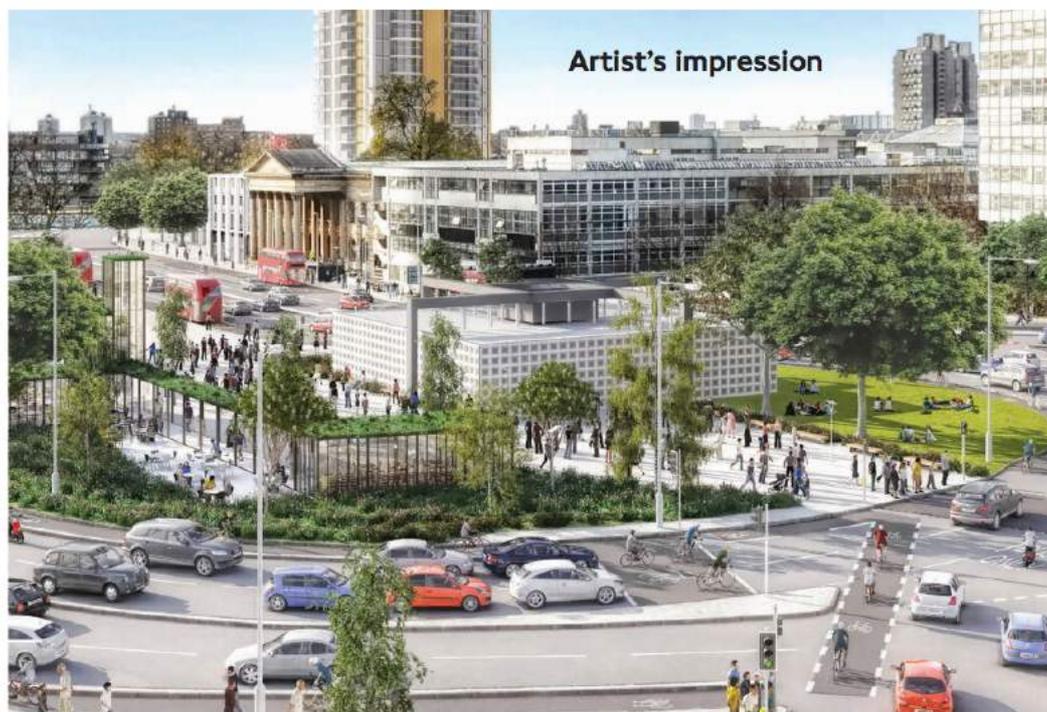
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRzZu9pEMVk>

<sup>37</sup> Seven lanes wide enough for motorists and one segregated cycle lane

<sup>38</sup> Cllr Peter John is described as evoking Piccadilly Circus of 100 years ago in an article by Dave Hill for The Guardian 13 February 2013. Like so many romantics Cllr John harks back to the golden age of endless summers before The Great War, when in fact it was a time of huge inequality in Britain and Elephant & Castle was a generally deprived area with a hangover of development from the boom years of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Victorian era. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/davehillblog/2013/feb/13/elephant-and-castle-southwark-council-regeneration-rights-and-wrongs>

<sup>39</sup> TfL’s 2014 consultation about their design never sought an answer to this possibility, it was an empty gesture to try and pacify my campaign to save the subways.

adjacent bus stops on both sides of London Road. Some pavement would also be lost outside London College of Communication. In addition the left turn for southbound traffic on Newington Causeway would be banned for all road users except cyclists<sup>40</sup>.



View looking south towards the Tabernacle

Mr Romano agreed with the data I had requested from TfL that all users would face greater congestion and he expected the consequence of that would be some drivers would discover alternative routes to bypass it. He was confident several side roads ‘*had spare capacity*’ and agreed with my observations that more westbound traffic was likely on Borough Road, Harper Road and Great Dover Street. He was keen to emphasise the new design would work, but that he was “pushing the junction to the max,” that there would be no spare capacity to accommodate any increase in road use. The only increase in capacity his design anticipated was the Northern Line underground station scheduled for construction in the 2020s – no consideration was given to changes that might be required because of the Bakerloo line extension, such as an enlarged ticket hall<sup>41</sup>. Early versions of Mr Romano’s design placed the station in the centre of the peninsula, although soon after Delancey acquired the shopping centre in late 2013 they worked the new station into their design leaving the peninsula empty. The location for the new ticket hall was instead visualised as a green-roofed café – still pencilled in for construction in the mid 2020s once the redevelopment of the Northern Line is completed. It might yet become the location for a new Bakerloo line ticket hall.

Rather than maximising space at this congested junction for the thousands of people traveling through it TfL’s proposal actually sought to destroy space needed for journeys. The proposal included neither

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<sup>40</sup> The ban is now regularly ignored by drivers who comfortably navigate the tight corner to take the left turn out of Newington Causeway towards New Kent Road.

<sup>41</sup> As recently as early 2016 L+R, the local developers of the adjacent Skipton House, shared frustrations with me that TfL would not talk to them despite their awareness that the Bakerloo line extension would require significant changes to the Edwardian ticket hall, potentially demolition. TfL contacted me in January 2017 sharing news of their consultation that went public on 9 February 2017. Their question for Elephant & Castle is where to locate a new Bakerloo ticket hall? TfL’s Gary Nolan acknowledged the project has “*almost certainly*” come too late to be incorporated into the Northern Line project or the redevelopment of Skipton House as SOM’s “*Toblerone Towers*”, which was granted planning approval in 2016 without any integration with the Bakerloo line.

reuse of the subways' vast underground space nor the creation of any new space for travellers above ground<sup>42</sup>. The 'new public space' was almost all for lingering in not travelling through. Of the three key drivers for the design place making ended up triumphing. The pressure for shared-space came in second with pedestrians having to share the road at several new surface crossings as well as having their pavements cut up by several segregated new cycle routes and shared with them in three shared-space zones. The cycling lobby did surprisingly badly from the new design given their political clout. Although superficially the new layout seemed to provide ample new segregated cycle space some of the new segregated space is not very practical and the routes through pavements are not as segregated in reality as they looked on the map.



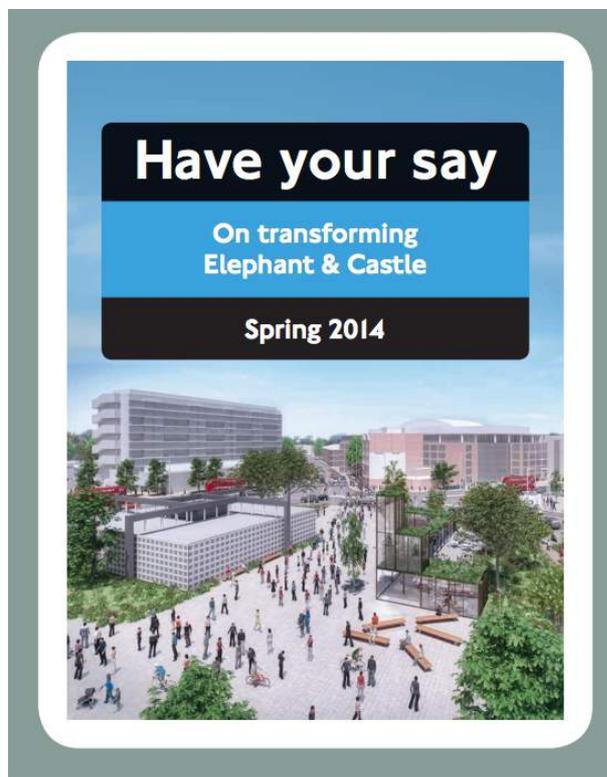
Consultation for the new design began on 12 March 2014 and ran until the end of April<sup>43</sup>. It was promoted with lavish visualisations giving a distorted impression of the design, cropping out the widest section of the new ring road, and adorning it with all sorts of greenery that, it turned out later, was not yet planned. TfL invited just one small alternative 'option' - would the northbound cycle lane cut through the pavement or run on the inside of the bus stops? It was a rather ridiculous choice but cyclists got their segregation at the expense of pedestrian safety and convenience.

<sup>42</sup> London once had aspirations for a network of high-level walkways. The Pedway plan of the 1950s and 1960s was integrated into several new buildings in London. The Elephant & Castle's Heygate Estate (1973) made extensive use of the walkway approach and even Perronet House (1970) was created with these in mind by placing the two main entrances at first floor level so it could integrate with a potential local walkway were it to be built. Although Pedway was dropped in the 1980s the idea is still alive and well in other parts of the world. Tokyo's vast and densely populated high-rise city makes extensive use of high-level pedestrian footpaths, bridges and escalators, a large network of which is at the Shibuya intersection. Unfortunately Tokyo's best known urban planning export in the UK is the surface level "Shibuya" crossing, such as that painted across Oxford Circus in 2009. High-level segregation is entirely rejected by TfL and shared-space advocates and was never countenanced for the roundabout's redesign. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City\\_of\\_London\\_Pedway\\_Scheme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_of_London_Pedway_Scheme)

<sup>43</sup> TfL currently maintain an archive of the consultation online <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/elephant-and-castle/>

The consultation was riven with place-making marketing. Far from being a project that sought to prioritise the high collision rate for two-wheeled users or to make it a more pleasant place for everyone to travel through, TfL emphasised the creation of “a major new public space”. The leaflet distributed to thousands of homes began in the language of a developer and place-maker, not a transport authority<sup>44</sup>:

*“One of London’s biggest regeneration projects is planned for Elephant & Castle. We are working with the Greater London Authority, Southwark Council and local developers to transform Elephant & Castle”... “The new high quality and attractive public space will enhance the vitality and opportunities in the area”... “The roundabout would be removed and approach roads realigned to create larger public spaces. These spaces would include trees and shrubs to create a greener space for everybody”... “We want to reduce the impact traffic has on the area and make it more attractive while also improving facilities for all road users. Our proposals include the removal of the roundabout and creation of a major new public space. This will transform the area for those who live, work and travel in Elephant & Castle. The changes will balance the needs of drivers more evenly with those of pedestrians and cyclists.”*



MAYOR OF LONDON



The literature did not go as far as Southwark Council’s 2012 SPD in relegating car users to less important than those of other travellers, it only offered to “*balance the needs.*” It was a significant concession to motorists and one I understand from talking with Mr Romano was essential to keep the traffic moving. The consultation heavily disguised the side effects of this compromise. Balance required everyone sharing a lot more space than before, and negative compromises for everyone. When the consultation referred to the collision rate it did so with reference to the new place they were making at the centre of the junction,

*“The road around the public space would be converted to two-way traffic. Currently, traffic dominates the area, and there are more collisions here than almost any other junction in the capital. Changing the way traffic moves around the area is expected to reduce collisions by a third.”*

TfL’s consultation pamphlet and online hub included a brief set of structured questions, what kind of user were you, did you represent a local group, and then a highly manipulative set of choices between their positively spun proposal<sup>45</sup>. It was a classic ‘push poll’<sup>46</sup>, a marketing exercise masquerading as research, which the casual respondent unwittingly falls for, contently agreeing with what the poll’s author intends. Scrutinise TfL’s 5 consultation questions a little more (see next page) and they become obviously ridiculous.

<sup>44</sup> “Improving Elephant & Castle”. TfL Consultation Hub  
<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/elephant-and-castle/>

<sup>45</sup> TfL’s consultation survey: [https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/elephant-and-castle/supporting\\_documents/Elephant%20and%20Castle%20Consultation%20Leaflet.pdf](https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/elephant-and-castle/supporting_documents/Elephant%20and%20Castle%20Consultation%20Leaflet.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Push\\_poll](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Push_poll)

**Do you agree with the key elements of the design?**

- Replacing subways with wide signalised crossings  
 Yes     No
- Creating dedicated and direct cycle routes through the junction  
 Yes     No
- Improving the layout of the road network to reduce collisions and using traffic signals to smooth journeys through the area  
 Yes     No
- Improving the interchange between the bus and Tube and upgrading bus stops for easier access  
 Yes     No
- Creating a usable public space that enhances the local vitality of the area and the interchange environment  
 Yes     No

- **Replacing subways with wide signalised crossings.** The width of the crossing has almost zero impact on the ease of getting across the road, it's the time required to wait, the time given to cross by the signals and the location of the crossing in relation to your desire line that is important. By using the word "wide" TfL implicitly convey the sense of narrowness in the cutting and subways.
- **Creating dedicated and direct cycle routes through the junction.** This double claim implicitly suggests all the cycle routes are segregated quicker. Several routes actually remained unsegregated and few of the new routes were quicker than the roundabout but involved elaborate twists, double backing and pauses for signalised controls.
- **Improving the layout of the road network to reduce collisions and using traffic signals to smooth journeys through the area.** This double claim suggests improved safety and alleviated congestion. Safety, as we shall see, was to be compromised by removing pedestrian segregation and replacing a roundabout with a very complicated bend for drivers. "Smoothing traffic" is a positive sounding euphemism for reduced congestion, yet was totally incompatible with the proposed inclusion of many more traffic lights in the new layout, forcing traffic to stop and start, inevitably less efficient and smooth than a roundabout.
- **Improving the interchange between the bus and Tube and upgrading bus stops for easier access.** This positive sounding statement was substantiated with no detail of the improvements for the interchange nor of the material change to the bus stops, in fact elsewhere in the document TfL's only reference to bus stops was in relation to an improvement for cyclists, "*Bus stops for buses towards Camberwell will be moved to Walworth Road, from outside the shopping centre. This is to make it safer for cyclists along this busy stretch of road, helping to improve the cycling experience*". In addition this admission of a worsening interchange between bus and Tube the northbound bus stop on London Road directly opposite the tub station also turned out to be removed altogether and moved further away so all buses on that side of the road now share the same stop near the junction with Princess Street. There has been no change to kerb heights to make mounting a bus a little easier.
- **Creating a usable public space that enhances the local vitality of the area and the interchange environment.** This daft statement strongly implied some if not all of the public space of the roundabout was not 'usable', when in fact it was well used, including the centre of the roundabout as recreation space. 'Vitality' is a developer cliché usually associated with a positive sense of urban bustle and a richness of interest, normally from the perspective of a pedestrian. Yet the new layout has created a landscape in which everyone is more exposed to the constant ring road traffic with a bleak windswept landscape offering little richness. No public art, less green landscaping, and what is there is mostly just grass.

Now that TfL had set out their plans and their push poll to help justify them the issues were clearer than ever before.

# ANTICIPATED ISSUES

The proposed design presented many likely problems for users. These surfaced from different protest groups prior to and during the consultation.

## 1. Pedestrian Danger and Inconvenience

TfL trumpeted the removal of the safe segregated pedestrian space in their consultation as an improvement for pedestrians. Using highly manipulative language emphasising fairly irrelevant benefits they explained:

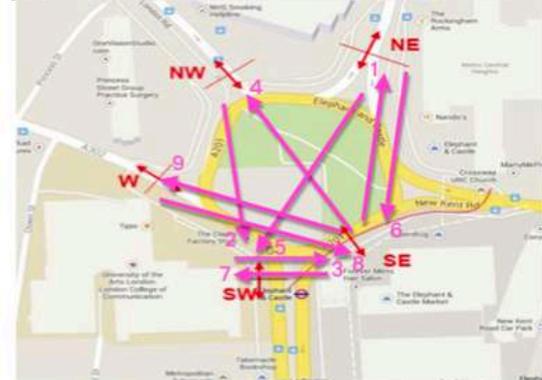
*“The seven subways that pedestrians currently use can be confusing and we know that some people feel unsafe using them. We propose replacing the subways with wide crossings to allow pedestrians to cross directly and safely between transport links and local shops and offices.”*

The subways confusion was, as we have described earlier, partly down to their incorrect, inadequate and bizarre signage<sup>47</sup>, that had been a problem since the renovation in the mid 1990s. The perception of the subways as dangerous was not matched by the reality in crime statistics<sup>48</sup>, and could have been addressed without demolition – TfL were proposed replacing a *sense* of danger for pedestrians with the very *real* danger of a collision with a vehicle and in three areas of pavement with cyclists sharing their pavement in unsegregated space. TfL’s emphasis on the width of the new surface crossings was a devious distraction from the more important measure of whether it was a better alternative – convenience. Width is of little consequence if you would have to wait a frustratingly long time for multiple phases of multi-lane traffic to pass by and require two Green Men signals to cross the Ring Road. The new pedestrian crossings were also not planned to match all desire lines.

TfL’s planners calculated that new journey times would be longer in almost every direction, but this data was not used in the consultation’s marketing, it was only available on request. The data is presented here annotated in pink to make TfL’s bad news for pedestrians a little more tangible.

### Journey Time Comparison

Journey time comparisons are made by comparing current pedestrian desire lines through the junction. These desire lines are mapped below.



(Diagram of pedestrian desire lines end and start points)

Using our Legion modelling software we are able to compare journey times under the current arrangement and what this will be under the new arrangement. The figures are based on average journey times and use industry accepted average walking speeds (1.2m/sec) as a basis.

	Movement	Current (secs)	Proposed (secs)		Difference (secs)
1	SE to NE	112.3	157.9	Increase 41%	45.6
2	NW to SW	122	156.8	Increase 29%	34.8
3	SW to SE	48.8	66.7	Increase 37%	17.9
4	SE to NW	167.2	176.2	Increase 5%	9
5	NE to SW	196.4	203.6	Increase 4%	7.2
6	NE to SE	115.2	119.1	Increase 3%	3.9
7	SE to SW	69.8	71.3	Increase 2%	1.5
8	W to SE	122.2	114.5	Decrease 6%	-7.7
9	SE to W	135.4	103.6	Decrease 23%	-31.8

<sup>47</sup> “All the wrong signals,” video produced by Save Our Subways. <https://youtu.be/muXAbVMiJc>

<sup>48</sup> This data was obtained via a Freedom of Information request I made to the police. It can be read at: [http://www.elephantandcastleroundabout.org/data/MetPolice\\_rawfiles/Final%20Request%20ID%2047384%20-%20Elephant%20and%20Castle.xls](http://www.elephantandcastleroundabout.org/data/MetPolice_rawfiles/Final%20Request%20ID%2047384%20-%20Elephant%20and%20Castle.xls).

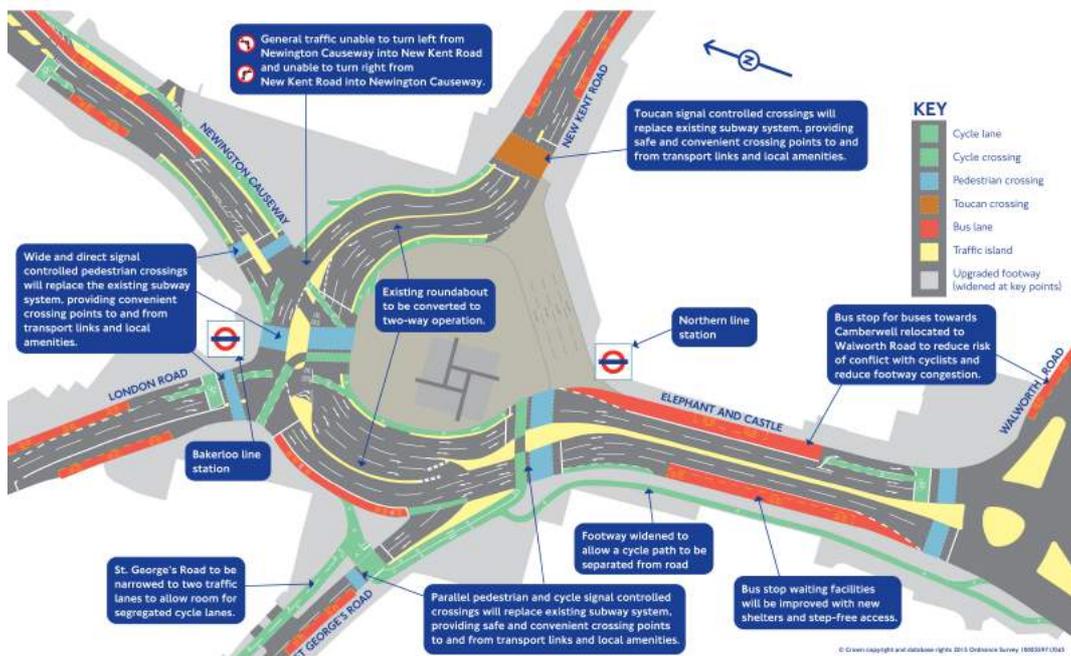


These portraits of subway users taken in winter 2014 show that despite the assertions by politicians and planners that the subways were unsuitable, they were clearly well used and frequented by vulnerable users, including the elderly, people in disability buggies and mums with pushchairs.

## 2. Congestion

TfL acknowledged in the first round of their consultation that, “To make the roads the safer, we are expecting journey times to increase for all road users. Detailed traffic modelling will continue to ensure any increase to journey time is minimised”. They said no more unless they were asked. Cllr Fiona Colley insisted to me that the downward trend for road traffic in central London seen in the decade to 2009 would continue, and so intentionally making the road more inefficient would not matter. In fact road traffic has increased, driven by light commercial vehicles delivering e-commerce. Congestion has increased 12% between 2012 and 2015 in Central London – journey times in central London have increased by 50%!<sup>49</sup>

Their modelling must have discovered some serious problems for congestion, because by the end of 2014, once they had secured support for their proposed layout, they quietly added an extra lane on the westbound Ring Road for motorists. Retired Cllr Toby Eckersley had predicted as much when he reviewed TfL’s layout in the earlier consultation where we met. He despairingly told me that, “the layout won’t work, the congestion into St George’s Road will back up to New Kent Road, it’s going to be terrible”. TfL must have eventually realised this too and doubled the capacity for motorists in this direction in their revised design late in 2014 (see map below compared the ones shown earlier). The new road space had to come from the ‘new public space’ on both sides of the Ring Road, forcing it to snake within a few feet of the listed Faraday Memorial on one side and Perronet House on the other. The wider tarmac also sealed the fate of six trees, five of them magnificent mature plane and lime.



Something must have gone terribly wrong with the traffic modelling at TfL. Not only was there a late rethink about the number of lanes needed for motorists on the Ring Road but within days of the new layout opening in late 2015 they were redrawing road markings on the western Ring Road and markings out of London Road. It appears that modelling only gets transport engineers so far, that there is still trial and a lot of potential error. The immediate congestion for all road users after the new layout was opened triggered online rage. Southwark News put the “Elephant and Farcical” story on their masthead<sup>50</sup>. They quoted @mrskatysimpson who wrote, “On a bus that has been hit by a car. Absolute

<sup>49</sup> ‘London Congestion Trends’, March 2016.

<http://londonfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/London-Congestion-Trends-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> There was a little mischief in the coverage, as a photo was used taken prior to the opening of two-way traffic when the old roundabout was reduced to just two lanes wide and a particularly congested.

shambles of a new roundabout". (Users still were not sure if it was a roundabout or not. Even TfL continued to describe it as a roundabout months after it had become a large two-way bend).

The bad media coverage about congestion has continued ever since. I have been asked to contribute to radio discussions on both LBC with Nick Ferrari and BBC London with Eddie Nestor on the subject. On 6 January 2016 Leon Daniels, TfL's managing director of Surface Transport, pleaded with listeners of Eddie's drive-time show to give the new layout a chance.

"We won't sentence you to 50 years.... give us the summer and if you don't like it we'll fix it".

Incredibly Mr Daniels also claimed he had rid the Elephant & Castle of "an urban motorway cutting through the church, university and shopping centre", when in fact he has significantly enlarged the motorway, it's wider and longer, and the portion that actually passes between the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London College of Communication has barely changed, except for the removal of some bus stops which has sped up traffic, a segregated cycle lane cutting through the pavement and the removal of a direct pedestrian subway that provided shelter from the 'motorway' above. By August 2016 TfL sought to address continued complaints by announcing they would introduce the SCOOT (Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique) system to reduce waiting times by 18% - Southwark News published the story in August (see image)<sup>51</sup>. The difference is nigh on impossible to determine and TfL have yet to publish data. Residents of Harper Road led by Ian Smith presented their complaints of the additional traffic thundering down their largely residential road to at a Community Council meeting on 5 October 2016. Jonathan Stewart shared with me written confirmation from Kings Ferry, a coach company, that their drivers now take this route instead of the redesigned junction when they are making their return journey without passengers. Some local politicians such as Labour Cllr Ian Wingfield are now clamouring to be seen to try and fix this problem, yet seem shy about admitting it was a predictable side effect from implementing a scheme he backed.

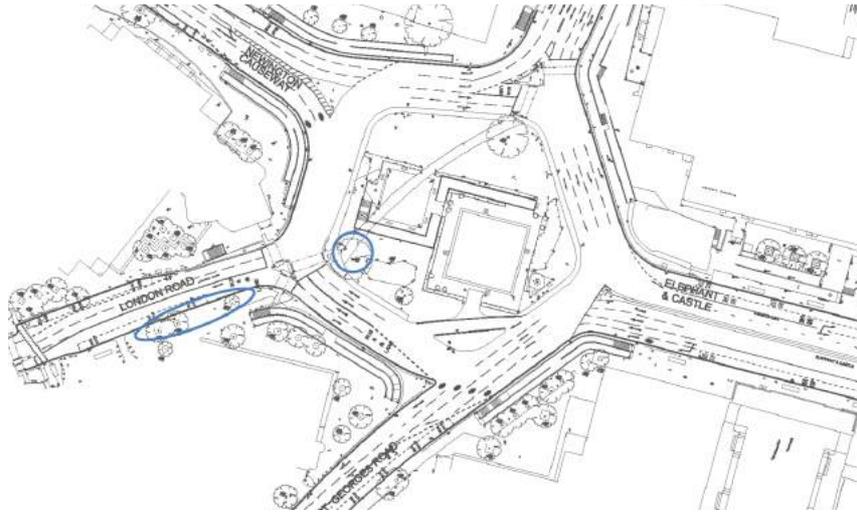


<sup>51</sup> "TfL signals much needed upgrade for lights at elephant's controversial 'Bend';" Southwark News, 11 August 2016.

<http://www.southwarknews.co.uk/news/tfl-signals-upgrade-lights-elephants-controversial-bend/>

### 3. Loss of Green Infrastructure

Elephant & Castle roundabout had been planted with a lot of trees since the 1950s, many of which had since become very large specimens; they included large plane, ash, lime and sycamore. I made a request for TfL in early 2014 for them to tell me which trees would be removed to make way for the wider Ring Road. They sent me a map of the roundabout as it was now (shown on the next page) marked up with four trees identified for the chop. But TfL's analysis turned out to be way off the mark. Only one of these trees was accurately identified. Partially due to my campaigning (I made a video<sup>52</sup>, stuck posters to the trees and rallied some people to e-mail TfL) the three on London Road were saved because TfL's road widening for an extra lane of southbound traffic ended up being mostly from pavement on the other side of the road side. But several other trees not identified by TfL in their consultation were felled.



Two magnificent mature planes were felled from the centre of the roundabout, not just one, and four trees were felled from outside London College of Communications to make room for the wider Ring Road and segregated cycle path (before and after photos shown below).



In addition to the tree felling the redesign cleared away expanses of shrubbery and grass that mitigated the presence of traffic with its effect of deadening sound, absorbing CO<sub>2</sub>, trapping particulates, emitting oxygen and providing shade and shelter.

<sup>52</sup> "Stop Mayor Boris making Elephant & Castle more polluted and congested," Save Our Subways, <https://youtu.be/NUhcHE9pO3c?list=PL7vkbk3HLArciqSRWmIDj9NyyQsDWLIL>

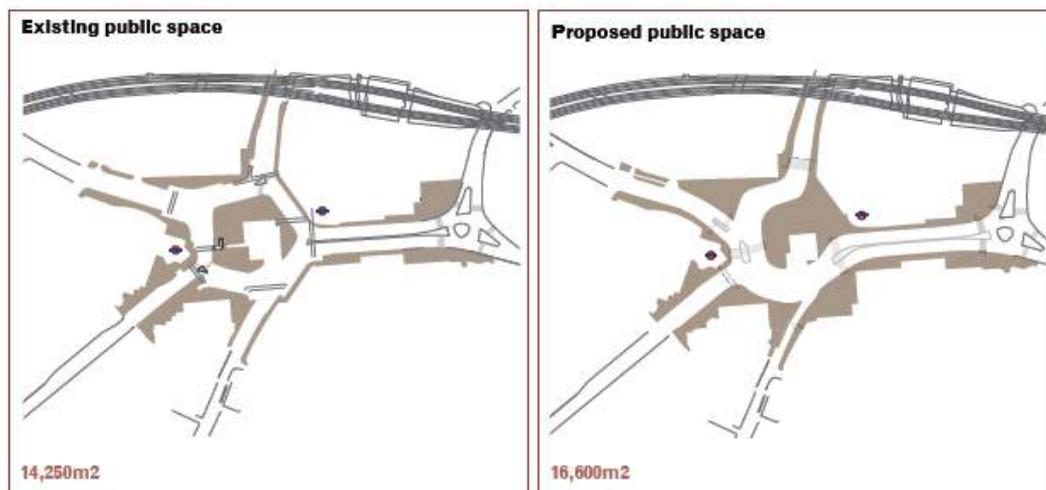


This assortment of images shows my guerrilla gardens here (2008 – 2015) of tulips and sunflowers, as well as the Marie Curie Field of Hope daffodils optimistically flowering for the last time amongst TfL’s demolition in March 2016, the roundabout in full leaf, the final summer of the trees in 2015 outside LCC seen from above, the new layout in May 2016 after the tree felling. As we shall see, the new green landscaping in 2016 has done very little to compensate for this loss.

#### 4. Loss of Public Space for Pedestrians

One of the most depressing ironies of the redesign of the Elephant & Castle roundabout was that the key driver – place-making – and the most tangible expression of that – a big public space in the form of a piazza – ended up leaving the junction with a net loss of public space. It is undeniably true that a new larger gathering space had been created in the centre of the junction that was bigger than the old gravel square at the centre of the roundabout<sup>53</sup>. But TfL and the Southwark Council peddled a myth that taking away road space would create this space. Superficially that appeared to be true because the new piazza would extend from the centre of the roundabout across the old road of the roundabout nearest the Northern Line ticket hall and the new piazza outside Metro Central Heights would cover the old more direct alignment of Newington Causeway. But what TfL went to fraudulent lengths to disguise was that that this road space would need to be found elsewhere, and then some. Both the new two-way Ring Road and some of the radiating roads would need to take away lots of pavement and lawn to be able to keep the traffic flowing<sup>54</sup>. This erosion of precious pedestrian space at surface level was compounded by the destruction of all the pedestrian space underground too with the removal of the seven subways. Think about it – an ambitious homeowner in need of more space but without room to expand outwards excavates basement extensions or builds upwards. Likewise TfL and Southwark Council had no room to expand outwards at this junction either; no buildings were to be cleared for road improvements as they had been in the 1950s at Elephant & Castle. But instead making better use of or creating new space at different levels, they deludedly set about creating a new public gathering space by actually reducing the overall surface area.

In the second round of consultation TfL's publicity documents lied about this by claiming that they were increasing public space by 2,350m<sup>2</sup>. They even mapped the lie with an "existing" and "proposed" annotation, in which grey space was space for pedestrians (hard surface and green landscaping) and white space was either road or buildings.

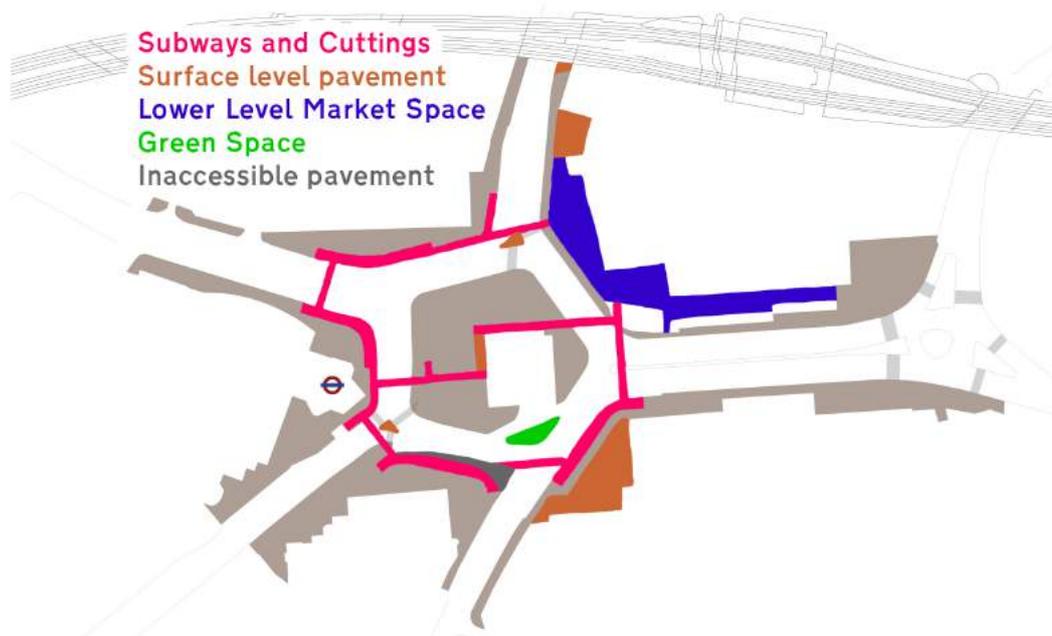


Their diagram of the "existing public space" was patently false. TfL failed to include a lot of pedestrian surface area, practical pavement space, the large network of seven subways, the vast pedestrian cuttings that led to the subways and some green space. Anyone familiar with the area as it was can quickly spot some very large omissions in TfL's diagram of the "existing public space". The large triangular gathering space that had existed outside London College of Communication since 1962

<sup>53</sup> A space that was not just a thoroughfare, but had stone benches sheltered by laurel hedges and banks of turf, some cheerful seasonal guerrilla gardens, and was of sufficient appeal even in its poorly cared for state to attract local office workers to sit and eat their lunchtime sandwiches. I once even saw a large gathering of people have a pillow fight in the centre of the old roundabout.

<sup>54</sup> Roads would be enlarged around the Elephant & Castle. London Road became wider on both sides, Newington Causeway on the western side and on the eastern side at the corner with New Kent Road next to the Elephant & Castle pub, New Kent Road on both sides, Elephant & Castle link road on the eastern side. Only St George's Road was narrowed.

was missing. TfL were claiming this was new, yet all they were doing was renewing the paving stones, replacing benches and chopping some four trees down<sup>55</sup>. TfL also drew odd and inaccurate changes to the outline of Perronet House between “existing” and “proposed” when in reality there were no changes planned to the border of the building or its adjacent flowerbeds. In late November 2014 I produced another campaign video<sup>56</sup> to highlight this falsehood, annotating TfL’s dodgy maps with a more accurate version I had drawn. It’s remarkable. You would have thought TfL would, at the very least, have included existing surface level pavement (I marked the missing bits in orange), though it is surely reasonable for them to have included the existing subways, cuttings (marked in pink) and green space too (marked in green). While I have not been able to calculate a square metre measurement for the missing space it is clear from a visual comparison between my map of the existing public space and TfL’s. Even if you concede that the small portion of inaccessible pavement at the bottom of the diagram (caged by pedestrian guard rail) marked in grey or the large lower level market space marked in blue should not be included, the loss of public space by the new design is clear.



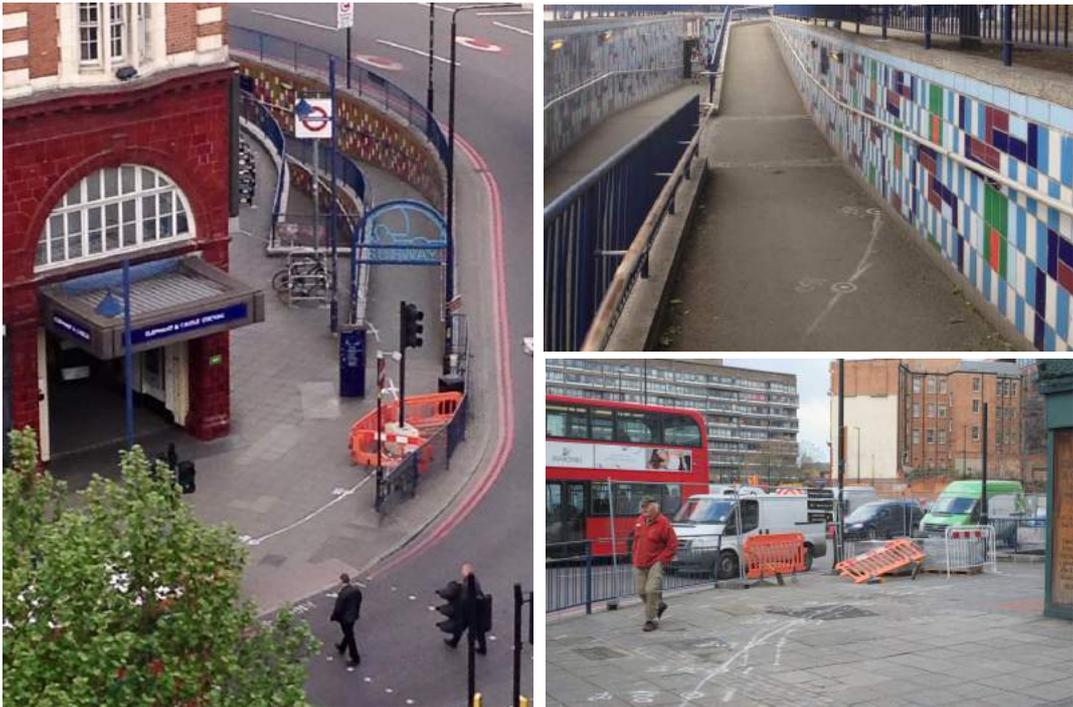
The photos above show the new design under construction. The difference between the old roundabout and wider Ring Road is clear. In the left hand image the trench in the top middle marks the new kerb compared with the old kerb marked by the fence. The right hand image was taken weeks later. At the top new kerb at the top has been built and fresh tarmac put down. In the lower half the pedestrian cuttings and pavement have been filled in and a kerb line cut just above the trees.

<sup>55</sup> The live planning application by Delancey to redevelop the LCC site will shrink this public space significantly to make room for new development.

<sup>56</sup> “TfL are Shrinking Our Public Space at Elephant & Castle”, Save Our Subways  
<https://youtu.be/7hkFM-5tfwA?list=PL7vkbk3HLArciqrSRWmIDj9NyyQsDWLIL>



These two images show the widening of London Road on both sides. In the left hand image white markings on the pavement show where the new kerb line was to be built. In the right hand image the new kerbstones are partially in place. The old kerb line is marked by the orange plastic fences. Room for an extra lane of southbound traffic was created as traffic would need to be held here longer on lights in the new design. The already shrunken public space will be reduced further by the redevelopment of Skipton House – permission has been granted for redevelopment that encroaches onto the pavement where people exit the underground, wait for buses or head to and from LSBU and St George’s Circus. Although a new public thoroughfare will be created through the current building, it matches no current desire line.

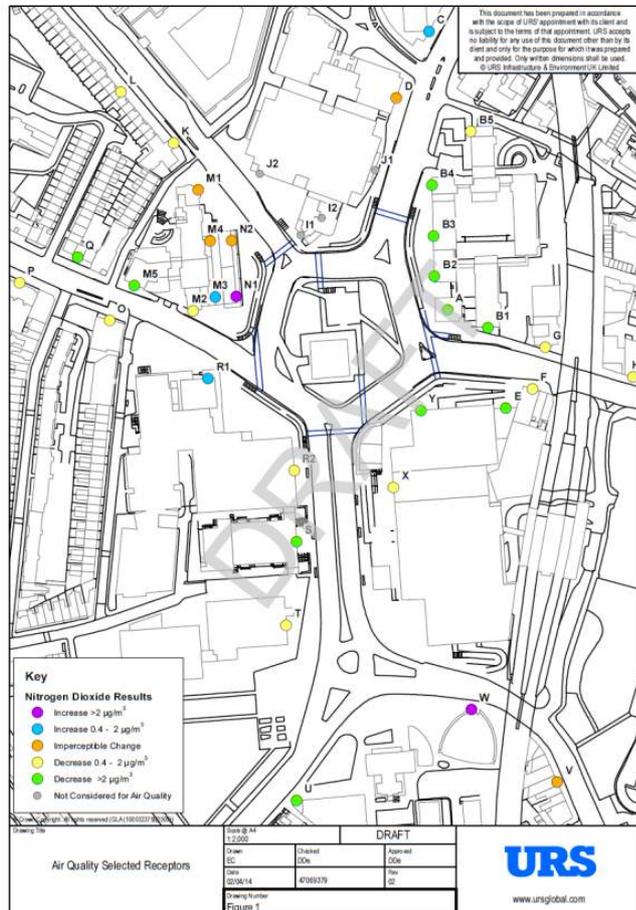


These three images show more markings for road widening: the pavement outside the Bakerloo line ticket hall, the pedestrian cuttings on the eastern side of Newington Causeway and outside Perronet House and the corner of Newington Causeway and New Kent Road adjacent to the pub.

## 5. Air Pollution

It was inevitable that the changes in the layout would lead to a deterioration in air quality. The removal of a roundabout only partially controlled by lights for a wider, traffic-light-controlled junction that increased the distance for westbound and southbound traffic motorists would increase emissions. Stop-start traffic is particularly bad. The loss of substantial green infrastructure would reduce the landscape's ability to mitigate the problem.

I asked Transport for London to provide their forecasted air pollution data and they sent me the map picture below showing changes in Nitrogen Dioxide levels. It was published in April 2014, before they amended their design to increase the width of the Ring Road, and before they knew they would be felling six trees not four. Air pollution was anticipated to worsen at the top of Walworth Road, where they were moving a bus stop to, on Newington Causeway and substantially around the lower end of London Road adjacent to Perronet House – a medium rise tower block of 89 homes. The first floor of this block, closest to the road, is reserved for council tenants with physical disabilities, including heart conditions and breathing problems which NO<sub>2</sub> worsens. The map shows Metro Central Heights residents appear to benefit from moving Newington Causeway west as do those on the southern side the junction. However the chronic congestion on the wider westbound Ring Road to the south west corner of Metro Central Heights and its tangibly accrid armoa suggests they got this wrong.



These figures from TfL should be taken with a very big pinch of salt. No only do they not reflect the finished design, but the methodology is likely to be flawed. In December 2014 Newcastle University produced a study<sup>57</sup> showing that traditional methods of modelling traffic pollution could be underestimating emissions by as much as 60%, particularly in areas where congestion occurs for a large part of the day. Anil Namdeo, Senior Lecturer in Transport and Sustainability at Newcastle University, told Phys.org, "Whereas previous models looked at 'steady state' traffic conditions, in reality, during peak hours congestion vehicles often decelerate and accelerate and move at different speeds... our new model has shown that by looking at congestion emissions rather than average speed emissions, we can gather more accurate information about emissions and air quality... By gaining a better understanding of how road networks are influencing emissions, councils can make more effective decisions about how to deal with congestion in our city centres and help reduce the 50,000 premature deaths in the UK each year that are associated with traffic emissions." Since this analysis the reliability of air pollution modelling has been further undermined by the revelation of the motor industry's emission's cover up. Cars, particularly those made by the VW Group, turn out to be much dirtier than scientists were feeding into their air pollution models.

<sup>57</sup> "Stop-start driving in city centres creates higher pollution levels," Phys.org 12 December 2014 <https://phys.org/news/2014-12-stop-start-city-centres-higher-pollution.html>

## 6. Loss of Public Art

In 1988 the subways got their first major renovation in 29 years. The original grey mosaic tiles began to be covered over. In the cuttings and some of the tunnels with brightly coloured patterns of porcelain tiles and in the subways with what the council called 'walk through murals'. £20,000 was earmarked for the project that would also double the brightness of the lighting, resurface the pavements and create new signage (that as we have seen earlier turned out to be very inadequate). The first three tunnels were painted by Denise Cook in partnership with the children of Jeffery Chaucer primary school. These featured jungle animals, underwater creatures and Georgian street scenes and portraits of historic local figures. These tunnels included the two busiest, under New Kent Road and the Elephant & Castle link road. The other tunnels were painted by David Bratby from 1991 onwards. He was briefed by the council to use brighter colours and better quality paint and his work survived in better condition than Ms Cook's paintings, that were badly peeling prior to their demolition and contributing to the subways' grotty reputation. His themes began with festivals both international and local and more historic scenes of pre war Elephant & Castle as an entertainment district and of Surrey Docks where an Elephant was being unloaded from a ship) But as his mural painting project continued subway by subway he was given more freedom and his subject matter became more eccentric. The tunnel leading to the centre of the roundabout was an almost fluorescent scene inspired by Victorian re-enactments of world events in Surrey Docks, such as the Eruption of Mount Vesuvius. His final tunnel included a surreal game of chess in which the figures have real heads (one of which was David's, another the council's Clerk of Works), Van Gogh (a Kennington resident) is seated in a modern cafe and Charlie Chaplain's Tramp is embroiled in some slapstick at a local cake shop. David Bratby is son of acclaimed painter John Bratby, who in the 1950s founded the 'kitchen sink realism' style of art and is collected by Paul McCartney.



I tracked down David Bratby in late 2012 and he joined our campaign to save the subways and save his murals. He hoped he might perhaps even salvage a new commission from the plans. Although we failed on both counts, his work does live on. I managed to persuade some sympathetic contractors to painstakingly remove two-inch thick chunks of concrete with portions of his mural on them prior to the subways' closure. I was delivered five heads in a wheelbarrow together with a bucket of bright subway tiles. The underground artwork also inspired a young painter, Ibie Camp, to paint a new mural in May 2016 evoking David's work and the subways' bright tiles. Her work can be enjoyed for now at the local Art Works pop up box park on Elephant Road, but this too will be cleared for redevelopment.





# PROTEST & OBJECTIONS

Pressure for a redesign of the Elephant & Castle's northern junction had been mounting for years. Earlier chapters have shown how this was driven by developers, the council and TfL seeking 'place-making' opportunities within London's streetscape, by cyclists eager to address the high collision rate there, and by shared-space advocates such as Mr Leach and Mr Plowden keen to transform London's streets into a de-cluttered nostalgic utopia of beauty and safety pre-dating the age of personalised motorised mobility, e-commerce deliveries and central London's soaring population. Their activity had at times, taken the form of protest, or at the very least lobbying colleagues and counterparts in partner organisations.

As the likely new design began to emerge in the years before construction started so did new protest activity that pushed an alternative vision for improvement, culminating in even more opposition once TfL published their proposal in March 2014.

1. **Save Our Subways.** I launched "Save Our Subways" in November 2012 together with Lyla Reynolds. Destroying safe, segregated, sheltered pedestrian space at one of London's busiest junctions seemed at odds to us with improving the place. Anecdotal conversations with neighbours gave us reason to believe we were not alone in hoping they could be kept, but we were unaware quite how fixed the decision was to destroy them all. We set about raising awareness of the need to "improve not destroy space 100% for pedestrians". Our aim was to build a database of supporters who would contribute to TfL's consultation and lobby politicians and to earn a voice that would give us access to key decision makers and the media. The website remains live at [SaveOurSubways.org](http://SaveOurSubways.org). It was of course an unmitigated failure, but we had a lot of fun for the three years prior to the subway's destruction! We had to try and help people see potential in them beyond the filth, dilapidation, broken lights, inadequate signage and the sometimes-strong smell of urine.



Our approach was mostly about entertaining. But rather than the macabre methods of Mr Leach with his dodgy vigil, we channelled more optimistic methods, but as it turned out fakery and fear trumped hope.

- a. **“Guerrilla Grime Busting Subway Spruce Ups”**. Our first event was in February 2013. I gathered a group via social media, using my Facebook page, and for the May event with the support of #wewillgather<sup>58</sup>, to create a spectacle to passers by and show our appreciation for the subways. Mostly young people and a local mum and her daughter helped Lyla and I for a few hours sponging down the grime from the tiles and murals. I also painted one grim subway cupboard door with some bright green paint. On the second occasion a BBC TV crew filmed us for inclusion in a three-part documentary about TfL and London’s roads, but sadly our contribution all ended up on the cutting room floor.



- b. **“Subway Mural Tours”**. In December 2012, October 2014 and March 2015 I invited members of the public to join myself and David Bratby, painter of mural in four of the subways. He walked an audience of forty people or so each time around the subways sharing anecdotes about their inspiration and creation. In February 2013 I recorded a video of a personal tour with Mr Bratby<sup>59</sup>.



<sup>58</sup> We Will Gather review, <https://revolutionaryarts.wordpress.com/2014/05/13/270/> It was a project from Dan Thompson, best known for instigating the “Riot Clean Up” in 2011.

<sup>59</sup> “The Subway Murals,” Save Our Subways  
<https://youtu.be/M5DXe-QE3jk?list=PL7vkbk3HLArciqSRWmIDj9NyyQsDWLIL>

- c. **The Pungent Subway.** In June 2014 I staged an installation in the subway under London Road for three days as part of the London Festival of Architecture. Skipping past the festivals' requirements for an exhibitor to have a landowner's permission, I proposed and had accepted "The Pungent Subway". In hindsight the title of the installation was perhaps a bad idea, but at the time I sought to confront the endless complaints about the subway's bad smell by showing how fun it could be to make it pungent in a pleasant way. Inspired by reading of medieval methods of odour amelioration I set about hanging the ceiling with large bouquets of fragrant herbs, rosemary, lavender, lemon balm, bay and sage (gathered from my local guerrilla gardens on TfL traffic islands) and strew some of them across the subway floor for their fragrant oils to be released by being crushed underfoot. To spruce up the appearance of the subway my friends Andy and Paul joined me late one evening in repainting the revoltingly dirty ceiling with fresh white masonry paint. I hung a polyboard sign saying "Pungent" beneath the subway entrance using the same Calvert font as the metal wording above. The installation neatly coincided by my birthday so we had a tremendous party down there for friends and passers-by, serving wine from a box on trestle table and spinning tunes on a portable record player, Petula Clark's "Don't Sleep in The Subway", The Jam's "Going Underground" etc.



- d. **Guerrilla Grotto.** With the hooks from the Pungent Subway still remaining in the ceiling of the subway under London Road Lyla and I put them to use as a funky Christmas grotto where pedestrians were encouraged to "Pick Your Own Presents". An elderly neighbour donated a box load of cheap gifts and we hung these with Christmas decorations on Christmas Eve 2014.



e. **A New Accurate Map.** Keen to demonstrate simple practical improvements to make the subways even more popular I set about creating a new accurate map to distribute at events and share online. The subways contained no maps. The few that did exist on plinths at surface level were riddled with errors: a staircase was shown to exist on the northern side of the underground ticket hall, but it was actually hidden away behind a fruit and veg shack on the other side of the station; all but one of the seven gentle ramps into the subways was omitted, instead entrances were almost all shown with stairs only; The outlines of buildings such as Metro Central Heights and The Coronet were skewwhiff and it unhelpfully made little use of colour to demarcate roads from pavement or green landscaping. The little colour used pointlessly coded which adjacent buildings were residential or not.

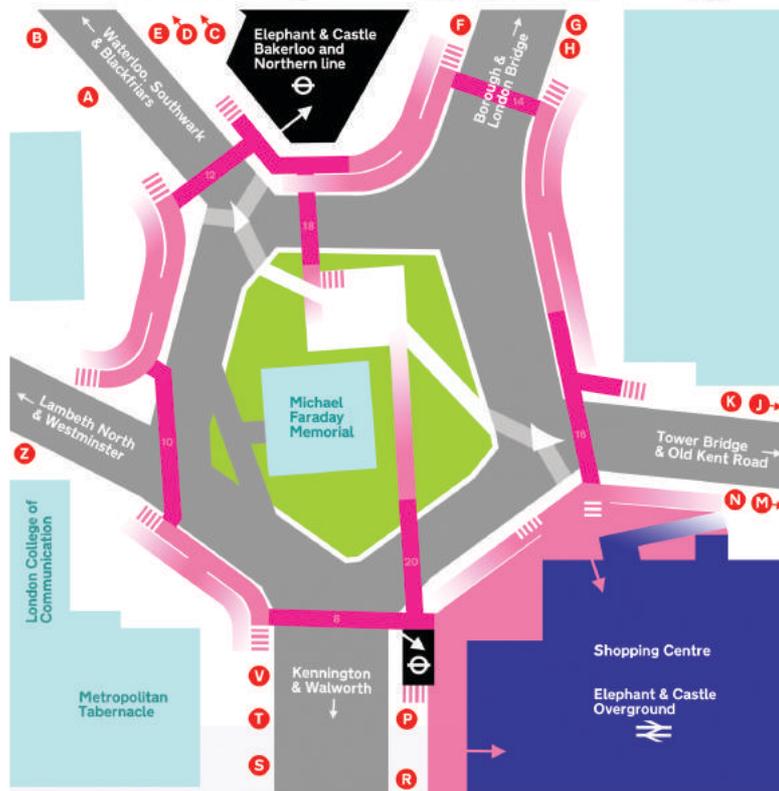


The other signage installed in the late 1980s was just a heavy-going wall of tiny text. Destinations were categorised into three sets: “Places”, “Travel” and “Walk ways” (a walk way being a strange choice of language to describe a pavement). The term walk ways is usually used to describe something at high level). Places were not kept up to date – the Inland Revenue and London Park Hotel were still signposted years after they had gone.



My new map made judicious use of colour and finally accurately laid out pedestrian space. It also tidily communicated additional useful information such as bus stop locations and the entrances to underground station ticket halls – such simple tweaks were inspired by conversations with users. I struck up conversation with countless visitors to the area who I spotted pondering the poor signage. They often assumed that the entrance to an underground station would be underground – as the Edwardian engineers had wanted to build them – instead of at surface level.

**Save Our Subways** **Elephant & Castle Pedestrian Map**



Transport for London and Southwark Council have plans to fill in the subways and make more traffic light controlled surface level crossings even though there are no plans to reduce the volume of motor traffic. We believe a better solution for everyone is to improve the subways. The signage in the subways is very poor, quite a lot of it is wrong and there has never been a clear map. So we have designed one to help people use them. Please sign our petition today. [SaveOurSubways.org](http://SaveOurSubways.org)

- f. **Videos.** Starting in 2012 Lyla and I have made nine videos about the roundabout documenting the fixes they needed, their merits the issues their removal would cause. I also managed to bring up the subject of their removal in a TV news interview I gave to John Sopel on BBC World on 3 February 2014. These can all be found on YouTube<sup>60</sup>. The channel also links to videos made by other people that are of some relevance to the campaign. During this period I also got to know Orlando Weeks, lead singer of local band The Maccabees. He wanted my family and I to appear in a film he had commissioned documenting people living at the Elephant & Castle and the creation of their latest album, 'Marks To Prove It'. Inevitably we got talking about the roundabout. We talked about artwork too. Having toyed with commissioning a special sculpture for the album cover and photographing it on one of the demolition sites at the Elephant & Castle, the band settled for an image of our existing local listed landmark, the Faraday Memorial at night. Their video for the single 'Spit it Out' was filmed in the subways<sup>61</sup>. During its closing minutes their demolition is shown and a funeral dedication fades up, "In memory of the murals painted by David Bratby". The film and video were eventually released in autumn 2015. The subsequent

<sup>60</sup> Elephant & Castle Roundabout YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjXkU5BvrVP8KEUnkS1tgMw>

<sup>61</sup> 'Spit it Out' by The Maccabees. Video: <https://youtu.be/70Zr8Ri5iCE>

feature length film 'Elephant Days' features beautiful imagery of the roundabout in summer 2014 when the hope of retaining the subways was still alive.



g. **Consultation Event Stalls.** At two events Transport for London had scheduled in April 2014 at which members of the public could speak with their 'project sponsors', Southwark Council's Head of Regeneration Jon Abbot, and the designer Mr Romano, we also attended with a stall of leaflets and eager chit chat to present the alternative perspective. London College of Communication kindly facilitated our presence and we worked together with Shelley Asquith, president of the University of the Arts Student Union. She was horrified by one TfL project sponsor giving her a reason to support the subway's closure: "*it will clear away the homeless*". Of course removing the safe public shelter of the subways was not going to solve homelessness at the Elephant & Castle, it just displaced it to less visible areas. I have since met and chatted one of these rough sleepers who was 'made homeless by TfL' as he put it. James, who I got to know during 2014, turned up in my tower block with a gathering of rough sleepers who have been found encamped blocking a fire door.

h. **Press Coverage**

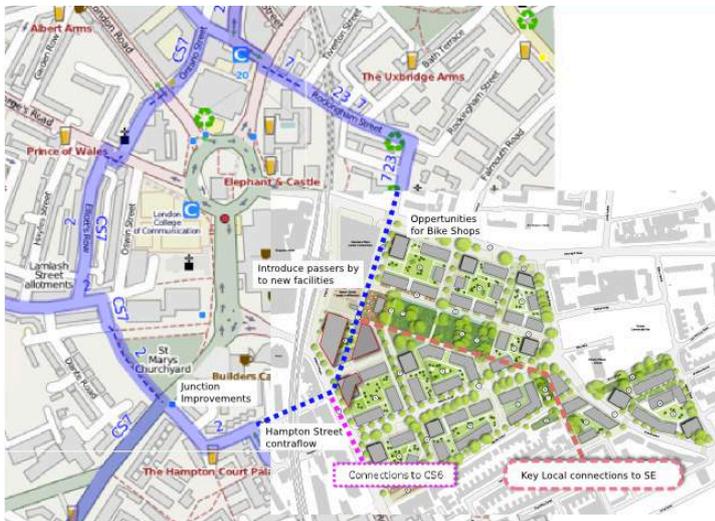
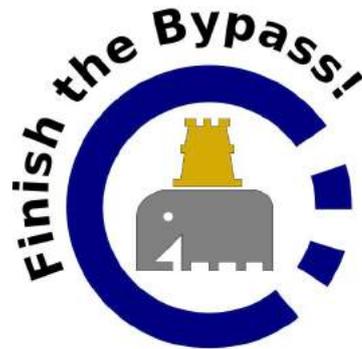


Our campaign activities sought to attract news coverage and in turn awareness of the issues as well as reaching people who took part in them or observed is. I am not one to dispatch press releases, instead I let journalists find the story and respond to their questions. The South London Press gave us some good coverage, including a front page early in the campaign and one of my polite pleas to TfL and Southwark Council rather late in the day. Press support has been much more forthcoming since the roundabout was destroyed and the devastation forecast has come to pass.

- i. **Requiem.** At sunset on 3 April 2015 over a hundred people gathered for people a performance of a specially commissioned classical composition by Danyal Dhondy, “Requiem for The Subways”. Evoking a traditional Good Friday procession (it was Good Friday), we moved between each of the subways for a burst of harmony accompanied by a melodica. The subways were shortly due to close and it was a deeply moving experience to be amongst so many people in spaces we had campaigned for three years so save that would soon be buried.



- j. **“Finish The Bypass” Campaign.** At a community meeting in summer 2012 I met local resident James Upsher who had launched the “Finish The Bypass”<sup>62</sup> campaign in 2011 to press for better cycling provision east of Elephant & Castle roundabout. He had spotted the opportunity to create this within Lend Lease’s redevelopment of the Heygate Estate. A bypass through their land would enable cyclists to stay well clear of all major roads, from New Kent Road at the top and Walworth Road at the bottom. Lend Lease did not play ball, but James continued to press for a bypass during the roundabout consultation and the idea was taken on by Southwark Cyclists in their response to TfL’s proposals.



<sup>62</sup> Elephant & Castle Cycle Bypass Campaign Facebook Group  
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/elephantbypass/>

- k. **London Cycling Campaign.** On 24 March 2014 this influential London-wide cycling group urged their supporters, “to express strong dissatisfaction with Transport for London’s proposals for Elephant & Castle”<sup>63</sup>. They said, “TfL has failed to resolve the real problem caused by a fast multilane highway cutting through an urban town centre and public transport interchange. The new design will still include up to six lanes of two-way motor traffic rushing around three sides of a new public space made from the old roundabout. There is a large amount of protected space for cycling, but critical gaps remain.” They summarised the issues in two directions:

**Northbound:**

- Cycling journeys are likely to be extremely dangerous (option A) or extremely inconvenient (option B). With the potential for serious collisions between turning motor traffic and people on bicycles (option A) and less dangerous but still highly undesirable conflicts with bus passengers and pedestrians (option B).

**Southbound:**

- The lack of protected space allowing safe passage past the link road is a serious failing, creating serious unacceptable risk of collisions with many buses and other motor vehicles.

Disappointingly LCC also passed judgement on the safe pedestrian subways by using their noses more than their eyes, lungs or some analysis about the impact on journey times, “One of the good points of the plan is that the smelly, frightening pedestrian underpasses will be closed, returning pedestrians to street level, giving better access from the tube and bus stops to the shopping centre, colleges and leisure centres.” It is deeply depressing that a lobby group for segregated cycle routes should also attack segregated space for pedestrians. There’s not even a trade off between the two safe methods of travel that would justify weighing up one form of segregation over another. LCC’s attitude just goes to show the depths of prejudice and misperceptions against subways and suggests the organisation’s disturbingly blinkered attitude to pedestrian welfare. But at least they had a go encouraging people to press TfL to build a better junction.



- l. **Southwark Cyclists.** Like LCC, Southwark Cyclists, a prominent local cycling organisation, got stuck into protesting about the changes in the final weeks of the TfL consultation. On 30 April 2014 Southwark Cyclists, published their response to TfL consultation<sup>64</sup>. Posting their response on the final day of the consultation meant their comments could do nothing to influence the response to the consultation from other people, potential respondents who might have been very interested to hear what a local cycling group felt and support their views by sharing similar concerns in their own feedback. Nevertheless, better late than never, Southwark Cyclists stated, “Implementation of TFL’s proposals would be a waste of £20 million pounds”. They identified seven key problems:

**Northbound:**

<sup>63</sup> London Cycling Campaign’s consultation response to Transport for London: <http://lcc.org.uk/articles/we-urge-supporters-to-tell-transport-for-london-that-plans-for-elephant-and-castle-fail-to-provide-safe-passage-for-cycling>

<sup>64</sup> Southwark Cyclists’ consultation response to Transport for London: <https://southwarkcyclists.org.uk/elephant-and-castle-response-to-tfl-consultation/>

- Link Rd, cyclists are forced away from the kerb to go round buses;
- Link Rd/St Georges junction there is no protection from left turning motor traffic;
- At the London Rd junction no protection from left-turning buses;
- At the Newington Causeway junction no protection from left-turning motor traffic for cyclists going to New Kent Rd (NKR).

**Southbound:**

- London Road exit requires right-turning cyclists (the majority) to move away from the kerb to a lane between motor traffic;
- There is no clear route across the junction for cyclists exiting right from London Road;
- On the Link Road cyclists have to leave the kerb to go round buses, and will have buses crossing the cycle lane.

As well as pointing out issues Southwark Cyclists worked together with LCC's Infrastructure Group to put an alternative proposal together for the layout, confident that it was "*possible to design an alternative scheme that is safe for cyclists and will allow other traffic to keep moving.*" They asserted the need for a transport focused project objective, "*TfL and London Borough of Southwark need to plan a much better public transport interchange at E&C, in a way that maximises pedestrian and cyclist safety and convenience.*" (See later chapter on Alternative Proposals).

- m. **Opposition Politicians.** All three ruling parties of Southwark Council since the 1990s had been pressing for major changes at the Elephant and Castle roundabout. The Liberal Democrat and Conservative Coalition in power until 2010 had overseen the Foster's project with its peninsula, along with subway removal made possible and compatible with the construction of London Mayor Ken Livingstone's Cross River Tram that took passenger traffic away from the junction. When Labour took control of the council in 2010 they set about turbo boosting the pace of redevelopment by handing greater influence and financial reward to the developers. This led to the



the 'place making' agenda rising in prominence as the key factor shaping the scheme, at the expense of improved transport conditions. Slowly the negative consequences on the safety and practicality for people travelling through the area began to dawn on some politicians. Not a single Labour councillor spoke out against the plans, including councillor and future MP Neil Coyle, but gradually opposition grew amongst the Liberal Democrat councillors.

Cllr Adele Morris wrote to several councillors and myself on 17 March 2014 to say, "*I am going to put my head above the parapet here and say that in the 34 years I have lived near the Elephant I have never had an issue with the subways other than (as Richard has previously pointed out) the poor signage. I know that hundreds of people use the subways daily without complaint. Whilst I am not for one moment suggesting we stick with exactly what we have now, we need to recognise that this is a very busy interchange and that if some people would prefer a traffic free crossing option then why can't they have one? Whilst the new surface crossings at the southern section are well used, I have received complaints from residents about the time it takes to get across.*"

Two Liberal Democrat Councillors contributed named feedback to TfL's consultation. Cllr David Noakes was described by TfL in the consultation debrief as, "*Does not support the removal of all subways, TfL should look to retain some of them with improved lighting and signage and should consult again.*" He also called for the cycle bypass in the east and was concerned, "*there will be longer journey times for motorised traffic which will add to pollution and the peninsular pushes busy traffic nearer to residential properties*". Mr Noakes also accurately expressed scepticism about the quality of maintenance of the new space. Cllr Tim McNally was generally supportive except for the destruction of the subways. Cllr Graham Neale, the party's spokesperson for the

environment wrote the local Liberal Democrat’s collective response to TfL’s consultation. They largely opposed the scheme and expressed disappointment at the absence of much consultation with residents during the development of the scheme in the first place. Concern for all users, whether from subway removal, longer journey times or inadequate cycle provision was expressed as being those of both party members and residents. Local Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes, who I met to discuss my concerns, and who himself met with Sir Peter Hendy of TfL to discuss them, was quoted in the consultation debrief with a wide range of concerns. TfL summarised his comments as stating, “*Simon Hughes objects to the proposals as he feels there is not significant local public support for the proposals and that the consultation is not adequate.*” His concerns were summarised as, “*there is a strong case for keeping some or all of the subways*”, concern over the “*appropriateness of the cycle link through the new public space*”, “*whether a new public space surrounded by three busy roads is the best use of space*”, “*concern about increased traffic speeds, longer journey times and more air pollution*”, “*concern about impact of prohibiting left turn from Newington Causeway into New Kent Road and vice versa for longer vehicle journeys and knock on congestion elsewhere.*” Mr Hughes continued to campaign after the consultation closed. In the aftermath of TfL publishing their report on the consultation<sup>65</sup> the South London Press quoted him under the headline “Please keep our subways” in an article to which I also contributed.

In May 2015 Simon Hughes lost his seat to local Labour councillor Neil Coyle. Mr Coyle has been a loyal acolyte of the Southwark Labour Party’s pro-developer leadership and he may well have been the unnamed Newington Councillor that TfL quoted in their consultation as having, “*Stated support for the key elements of the design and a preference for Option B.*” As the negative consequences of backing the bend



became more apparent, in the aftermath of the first death on the new road layout in December 2015, he has tried to duck responsibility as well as outlandishly portray himself as a sceptic. He even dared claim he had made critical comments of the proposals in a public Community Council meeting on 1 February 2014. But I was there, as were TfL represented by Emma Crittenden in advance of launching their consultation and a diligent minute taker from the council. Neil Coyle neither spoke out against the scheme, nor is recorded in the council’s detailed minutes of the occasion as having contributed anything on the subject at this meeting<sup>66</sup>. The minutes also note that, “*The meeting heard that there should be an option to save at least some of the subways but that these needed to be upgraded. A show hands from the audience, indicated that an equal number of attendees supported keeping the subways as preferred filling them in*” This was a moment of hope that our case for subway retention was finally converting into substantial support, but this hope was dashed later that in the year when TfL published their manipulative but unfortunately barely questioned push-poll, giving them 80% support for subway destruction – only MP Simon Hughes spoke out in public to the South London Press about the unreliability of this survey.

<sup>65</sup> Transport for London Elephant and Castle consultation debrief  
[https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/elephant-and-castle/supporting\\_documents/consultationreportwith%20appendices.pdf](https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/elephant-and-castle/supporting_documents/consultationreportwith%20appendices.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> Minutes of the Borough, Bankside and Walworth Community Council Meeting 1 February 2014.  
<http://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/g4675/Printed%20minutes%20Saturday%2001-Feb-2014%2013.00%20Borough%20Bankside%20and%20Walworth%20Community%20Council.pdf?T=1>

# GLITTER & GREEN WASH

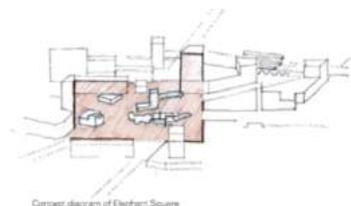
Enthusiastic respondents to TfL's consultation can be forgiven for assuming they were supporting the scheme that the prominent artistic impressions conveyed. They were not. TfL had a second, slightly less prominently advertised, round of consultation about the proposals, focused now almost entirely on the place-making purpose of the proposals. As with TfL's spring push-poll, this 'consultation' would be more accurately described as another marketing initiative, designed to ensure perceptions of the forthcoming project were positively expectant of a beautiful new place. This time the proposals were visualised with an assortment of watercolours and photography of reference points rather than TfL's usual hyper-real computer generated imagery, a replacement of a fake cartoon world with an even more illusory one, but substantiated with some very precise commitments in the commentary.



Artists impression of how the Elephant could be

TfL employed the glitter of celebratory and the camouflage of green wash to press shared with the their project of place making. In the autumn of 2014 TfL crowed to the South London Press that they would be sharing ideas from, *“our award-winning architect on the wider designs for the urban realm improvements across the area.”* The architect's appointed were the Hackney-based Witherford Watson Mann, who had just the year before won the Stirling Prize, one of Britain's most prestigious prizes for architecture. It was their conversion of another knackered old castle that had triumphed, turning the ruins of the real 12<sup>th</sup> century Astley Castle into a luxury holiday rental. Locally their metaphorical “Bankside Urban Forest” had also given them credibility with the developers and the council, reimagining the backstreets of Borough as pathways in a forest, but visibly expressed largely by the replacement of concrete pavements with stone and a few tiny new bits of greenery, such as a verdant veranda roof built over a café underneath a tree at Union Street. There was little in Witherford Watson Mann's track record that suggested qualifications for the job at Elephant and Castle in rectifying a woefully inadequate design from a transport engineer. Even Lend Lease's consultant Pat Brown confided in me that she thought they were the wrong firm for the job. I warned them they were being used, and most probably their ideas would be abused when it came to building them.

Nevertheless the starchitects began the proposal with some high-concept thinking, spotting that the alignment of the 1960s architecture happened to frame the junction as a large rectangle. That much of this architecture was due to be demolished and the conventional configuration was to be lost was not permitted to detract from the classical appeal of this, nor was the far more dominant feature of the landscape – the large ring road snaking



in a large bend through the space, or the incongruous Faraday Memorial sitting off centre. The firm gave the roundabout a new name: Elephant Square. A focal point for the square was to be a large poll topped by a bronze Elephant with a Castle on its back next to a café space prominently branded with roof top letting, Elephant Square.

The architects were so caught up in the place-making brief from their clients that they even portrayed the current efficiency and speed of travel for pedestrians as a negative! *“People move through quickly, make their connections below ground, or hurry through well-worn local shortcuts to bus stops and beyond.”* People must be stopped it seems, encouraged to use the junction to “easily meet friends and socialize”, as if the already large provision of adjacent meeting places in bars, restaurants, shops and food markets as well as the many new ones planned were not enough. Despite emphasizing the destruction of the subways the architects go on to say pedestrians deserve to have “shelter from the road”. The kind of shelter they have in mind is an expensive coffee shop – they refer to The Grind on Old Street Roundabout in their native East London, a bizarre choice of reference given that at this roundabout there are much more sheltered public spaces and retailers in the thriving Old Street subways!

## 8. A Landscape that recognises local people, plants and stories

### Planting full of stories and memories

The market gardens of Walworth grew apples and fruits local to the Elephant, as one of the local gardeners said ‘If you could find those apples and plant them again... that would be great’. We’re interested in introducing species like this that are connected to local history and part of its memory.

We’d like the new plants to represent something of the cultural mix at the Elephant too. Species like false acacia, which was introduced into Britain from Southern America. Like how the Latin community have made Elephant their home, so a species like this might put down roots. The new plants can be exotic, different, productive - species with divergent social histories, and connected physically to the local community.

‘wouldn’t it be remarkable to pick a plum off the tree at the Elephant... you might want to wash it first mind you’ (local means)



false acacia



Urban Apple Growing



prunus serotina



japanese cherry



white wisteria

Most of Witherford Watson Mann’s proposals were about trees and shrubs – they even proposed branding the centre of their new Elephant Square as ‘Faraday Garden’. I was encouraged that substantial new planting might compensate the loss of mature trees for road widening – *“Elephant Square could have up to one hundred new trees and shrubs and over 1000 square metres of new soft planting including new green roofs on pavilion structures”* the published consultations stated, specifying that 60 new trees would be added. Imaginative inspiration was also sought from residents, as I facilitated a couple of Witherford Watson Mann’s team attend a community garden party at the Plant Station on Walworth Road, where they sought inspiration from residents for the new planting. *“We’re interested in finding species which are particular and peculiar to the Elephant, in combinations that you wouldn’t find anywhere else but the Elephant.”* TfL’s consultation presented a delightfully optimistic vision that would ensure the space was not as bleak as many feared. Sub-titled, *“Planting full of stories and memories,”* it seemed intended to evoke the local diverse local culture and rich, leafier heritage.

Incredibly, the architects also drew direct inspiration from my nearby guerrilla gardening activity, and lifted my photography from the web of our guerrilla lavender harvest on Westminster Bridge Rd for inclusion in their report. *“Alongside trees with interesting leaf form and colour, we’d like to plant trees and plants that provide a crop. Lavender is already being locally harvested nearby, and in a small park up New Kent Road, people have told us how they love to eat the plums that grow close to the road.”*

Sadly the architects also proposed the ultimate green-wash cliché as a way of improving the five-storey blank wall of Bakerloo Ticket Hall – another high-tech high-cost green façade. There are plenty of plants that would naturally, safely and cheaply clamber up a wall like this given a bit of open ground at the bottom but instead a thirsty and labour intensive solution was proposed, one that has so far cost £250,000<sup>67</sup> to install and required a substantial amount of replanting less than a year later because it died. The image here shows the green wall in autumn 2016 prior to the replanting. Thankfully a second green wall proposed for a northern wall on Perronet House was thwarted by resident opposition.



Witherford Watson Mann even proposed a water feature. *“We’d like to find space to reintroduce water. Reusing one of the old subway entrances. Running water working with the intense new planting would help to soften the acoustics and make the space have a human scale.”* It’s unclear what the meant by ‘reintroduce’, unless they were harking back to the lost river of the Neckinger, which passes nearby in the area of Brook Drive.

Given the project objective was for this to be a place to linger Witherford Watson Mann proposed going to town with a vast amounts of seating areas. A total of 220m of new benches was proposed. I have not measured whether these were installed, but it is probably quite likely, as benches now clutter and obstruct many of the pavements, forcing pedestrians out of their desire line and sometimes into danger. 340m<sup>2</sup> of new retail space, including 12 pitches outside Metro Central Heights, was also proposed.

The hard surfaces were to proposed as being laid with York stone together with tailor-made extra large granite kerb stones, materials used in the most prestigious parts of London and intended to signify Elephant and Castle’s new found status. York stone is particularly high maintenance, discolours easily and weathers rapidly into a uneven surface. Its use, such as on Regent Street, is usually accompanied by an attentive and intensive maintenance regime, which is not the track record, nor intention of the authorities here – as stated to me by Southwark Council’s regeneration team.

Very little of what Witherford Watson Mann proposed ever came to be built and I have heard that Stephen Witherford became increasingly exasperated with his clients resistance to his vision or his feedback to the unfolding disappointment that emerged during the construction phase. There is little glitter or green wash now to disguise the full horror of TfL’s new layout.



**No Forest:** Instead of the 60 new trees promised, just nine were planted in the ground, and 12 in temporary tubs. New species included one birch tree (good for mitigating against diesel pollution, we could do with more of them), but it had soon fallen out of its stake and was keeling over badly. Two American sweet gum were also planted, but one was felled less than a year later after a car mounted the pavement and knocked it down. The only other trees to be planted in the ground are the six ornamental cherries – a net total one year on of eight small new trees, just 13% of the promise. Southwark News reported on my complaint about these missing trees on 26 May 2016<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> As told to my friend Wilm Weppelmann by contractors installing the green façade in May 2016.

<sup>68</sup> “‘TfL, where are our missing trees?’ Elephant and Castle’s guerrilla gardener demands,” Southwark News, 26 May 2016 <https://www.southwarknews.co.uk/news/tfl-trees-guerrilla-gardener-demands/>

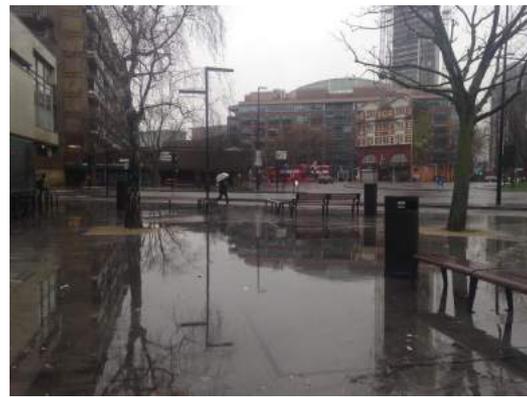
**No Orchard :** The twenty fruit trees were never planted. Apples, quinces and plums were proposed. Instead, just six non-fruiting ornamental cherry trees were planted outside Metro Central Heights.

**No Historical References.** The published plans had stated, “*We would like to plant hops along the base and on the roof of a new structure, and new Oak trees, referencing the beer and barrels of the historic pub. G. Baldwin & Co was established 1844 on the Walworth Road. They are a supplier of medicinal herbs and natural products and a cultural landmark of the area, we’re working to find how plants like this could be incorporated into the scheme.*” None of this has been planted.

**No Reuse of Subways:** Whether as a water feature or the proposal’s quiet suggestion of reusing the subways under London Road as a café, the subways were closed. Despite assurances to me from the TfL project team that they would be sealed up with potential exhumation in the future, I spotted, and later had confirmed, that they were in fact pumped full of liquid concrete.



**No Intended New Water Feature:** The plans to reuse the cutting into a subway as a water feature was not built despite no reported public opposition to the proposal. There has however been a far more prominent new water feature regularly occurring on the new peninsula as a result of a blocked drain. A vast new lake has emerged whenever there is heavy rain as the drain cannot cope with the vast and environmentally un-friendly run-off from the large new hard surface area, (pictured left, 23 June 2016). More than a year since The Bend opened it appears contractors have finally fixed this problem, leaving a large of the new lawn as a muddy mess in their aftermath. A new water feature has however begun to emerge during winter 2016 on the piazzetta outside London College of Communications (pictured right).



**No Elephant Square:** Not only are two of the important features that define the current ‘square’ due to be demolished (Hannibal House and London College of Communication’s tower), but Transport for London never implemented the use of the new name. Where as old road signs showing maps of the junction were topped with a label saying “Elephant and Castle Roundabout” the new signs showing the bend had no such branding. TfL have continued, from time to time, to call the junction Elephant and Castle Roundabout, despite the roundabout having gone. Even as recently as March 2017, at the inquest into the second death at the junction since it was redesigned, TfL’s representatives continued to call it the roundabout.

**No Elephant on top of a pole:** The Elephant intended for this role was identified as the one outside the Elephant and Castle shopping centre that faces the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Witherford Watson Mann’s ambitions were sadly thwarted. Its owners’ Delancey had no intention of parting with it. Nor did it turn out to be bronze anyway. The original bronze Elephant that had looked down on the junction from the roof top of the Victorian Elephant and Castle pub that had been restored and relocated inside the shopping centre in the mid 1960s had been quietly substituted for a fibreglass fake. TfL have not been prepared to fund the creation of a bronze replacement for WWM’s Elephant on a stake.

**No Lavender or Fragrance:** Despite having stated “Sensory, fragrant planting would help change the atmosphere” not a single plant with substantial fragrance, whether from blooms or leaves has been planted by Transport for London’s contractors. Even though they made the case for the practicality of lavender none was planted, “The Guerrilla Gardeners planted lavender on a nearby traffic island, and have harvested the crop. The plant is very hardy, and can survive against the busy road, whilst its scent as you sit next to it would be a real surprise.” The proposals also described how rosemary and thyme would be used in the orchard area. But instead the two new large raised beds here have instead been planted with a rather bleak combination of cranesbill, hellebores and grasses. Within a few months some surprising additional greenery had emerged, stinking nettles and bind weed, surely not what anyone intended?! This failure is something relatively easy to fix informally. Even during the construction phase the temptation to turn the freshly turned soil adjacent to a temporary pavement into a floral and fragrant delight was too good to ignore. In April 2015 two friends and I sowed a seed mix of sweet alyssum and Californian poppy in this space that thrived and delighted the eyes and noses of passers by for several weeks that summer. More recently, depressed by the bleak permanent new landscape I led some guerrilla gardening in December 2016 to add a large clump of rosemary to one small area of the new landscape. Now a fragrant evergreen hedge is thriving beside the ring road amongst which a dense clump of tulips and allium will soon emerge.



**No Retail:** Of the new retail space promised, including 12 pitches outside Metro Central Heights, only one solitary burger van appeared in 2016, and even that seemed to come and go after just a week or so in the autumn of 2016. A café space in the new piazza was proposed but not intended to be built until the mid part of the next decade because the piazza will soon need to be dug up to provide space for TfL to expand the northern line ticket hall. However in February 2017 I received an e-mail from TfL saying that his colleagues and Southwark Council were shortly be activating this area, though I remain sceptical a retailer would want to be pitched at the heart of London’s most polluted junction.



# DISMAY, DANGER & DEATH

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## Elephant and Castle: Two-way traffic redesign causes chaos

7 December 2015 | London

Share



@MARIADAGANDRA

"It's a very busy junction and it always will be," a TfL spokesman said.

The removal of the Elephant and Castle roundabout has been causing chaos for commuters, with motorists complaining of queues of more than an hour.



In the early hours of Sunday 6 December the roundabout closed and ring road traffic was directed onto what we have since branded “The Bend”. In memory of the loss and in anticipation of the tragedies to come I tied bunches of white chrysanthemums and a laminated tribute to lamp posts around the junction.

The dangers so many had forecast were immediately tangible. At this stage the cycle lanes were not even open but problems were obvious. By Tuesday 8 December the South London Press made the awful new design their front page story, “Roundabout Hell – Traffic Chaos”. Even BBC reported on how bad the new layout was.<sup>69</sup>

Everyone seemed confused and collisions between motorists became even more common place. Within less than a week TfL were out removing and repainting road markings trying to fix it, adjusting lane width, arrows and the position of give way lines – tipex for project that needed a far more substantial edit. TfL even substantially lengthened the westbound bus lane that begins shortly after New Kent Road to try and alleviate the new congestion of buses trying to get into London Road and over a new pedestrian crossing. Transport for London dispatched safety officers to stand watch all day, making notes and talking to stationary motorists and pedestrians. Their



<sup>69</sup> “Elephant and Castle: Two-way traffic redesign causes chaos,” BBC, 7 December 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-35026096>

assignment was intended just for days but was extended into weeks. A lorry took out a traffic light at a pedestrian crossing within days.

On 6 January 2016 I had a chance encounter with Mayor Johnson. I spotted him pushing his bicycle along Bermondsey Street and got a one to one with him for a few minutes as he walked. After my preamble about the increased dangers and tangible frustration expressed online and with incessant honking he responded by saying 'give it a chance', and described how he'd cycled through recently and it wasn't really open or ready to judge. Warning him that the roads were very much almost complete and that I had been told some cycle lanes were not yet open due to anxieties from TfL's contractor Ringway Jacobs and TfL as well as local cyclists, I encouraged less optimism and more analysis. After some guffawing from him about having to do something, that at least it was worth a go, he pushed on with the rhetorical, "so we've ballsed up at the Elephant have we" – "yes Boris, you have," I replied, "then we'll just have to fix it won't we" he said. I encouraged him to enthuse this more pragmatic approach amongst his TfL management and friends like Peter John at Southwark Council who had been bullishly optimistic in the press.



On 30 January I photographed the collision between two buses on London Road (right), which smashed the windscreen. Debris from pranged cars now regularly littered the road and was typically documented on Twitter by shocked and frustrated travellers.

On 5 February The Bend claimed its first life<sup>70</sup>. 86 year old Johanna Hedger was killed by a lorry while crossing the New Kent Road portion of The Bend. Only weeks earlier this crossing had been served by a safe segregated subway but pedestrians were now forced to cross the dual carriageway ring road with

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<sup>70</sup> "Elderly Woman Struck and Killed by Lorry at Elephant and Castle has been named," Southwark News 25 February 2016, <https://www.southwarknews.co.uk/news/elderly-woman-struck-and-killed-by-lorry-at-elfphant-and-castle-has-been-named/>

a surface level crossing, made even more dangerous by its location on a sharp corner with just a few fleeting seconds of green man between long red phases. The air ambulance team could not save her.

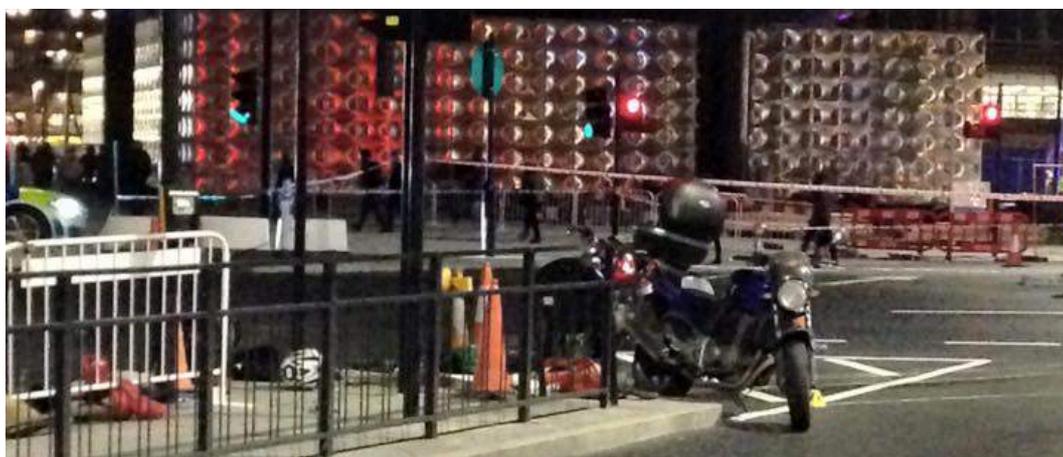
In response to the tragedy local campaigner Mr Leach tweeted from his @SE1SafeRoads account a heartless comment to remind everyone of his dislike of segregated pedestrian subways, *“Oh dear. First fatality on the new configuration at Elephant & Castle. I personally prefer the surface level...”*



Local MP Neil Coyle who had backed The Bend reflected in the press on his constituents concerns, *“I’ve had multiple complaints about the safety of this site from pedestrians and cyclists,”* said Mr Coyle.

TfL reinstated their safety wardens to monitor the situation around the junction. Patrick Kelly, the public liaison officer for Ringway Jacobs TfL’s lead construction contractor who was an expoliceman, shared his concerns about the layout with me and other residents at a Perronet House and Princess Street Residents Association Meeting. He encouraged us to point out issues to him and TfL sooner rather than later because he believed there was a better chance of getting things fixed while his colleagues were on site finishing the landscaping. He had shared his concerns with TfL but was not satisfied with their response and hoped the volume of concern would lead to some changes.

It was not long before another death at The Bend. Charlie Cooper was on his motorcycle heading north on the ring road. Mr Cooper was in the right hand lane of The Bend but needed to cross the inside lane to turn left into Newington Causeway. As he did so he failed to see another motorcyclist and crashed into him at about 27mph. The two men and their bikes slid along the road for 20 metres crashing into the new pedestrian island at the southern end of Newington Causeway. He died at the scene.



The aerial shot of the crash scene (next page) shows the array of confusing new permanent road markings. Since then two of the bike lanes have been painted blue and the pedestrian crossings have been painted beige but many drivers continue to make precisely the manoeuvre that Charlie took that led to his death. Southwark News, reporting on the inquest of Charlie Cooper, wrote, *“The ‘confusing road’ layout of the new Elephant and Castle junction may have contributed to the death of a young*

motorcyclist, a court has heard.”<sup>71</sup> The surviving cyclist Mr Inwood was reported as telling the court, “Despite having commuted via the junction “nearly every day” during the redevelopment works. I’m never sure what lane you can use. Some lanes you can use. Some you can’t on a motorcycle.”



In court TfL’s Thomas Holmes was highly defensive about the layout as it exists today, a stance that is presented despite recently hearing a barrage of complaints from users at a Community Council meeting on the 5 October 2016 (described earlier) and conveying to those of us who attended that he would look into our concerns and explore potential improvements. He told the court on 8 March 2017 that, “I think the junction is as good as we can get it. There is very little more we can do with this layout in this configuration to affect users’ behaviour. I believe any further changes could be detrimental.” Lessons are not being learnt. Mr Holmes is not collecting evidence. I was already aware from conversations with TfL in 2016 that they would not be counting any collision data as relevant for many months of the new layout, they were intending to discount it as unrepresentative. Further worrying news was shared by Mr Holmes in court when he said he could not answer whether accidents had increased or decreased since the redesign because the most recent



<sup>71</sup> “Inquest: Young Motorcyclist Died After Collision On ‘Confusing’ Elephant And Castle Roundabout,” Southwark News, 16 March 2017 <https://www.southwarknews.co.uk/news/inquest-young-motorcyclist-died-collision-confusing-elephant-castle-roundabout/>

collision data was from June 2016. Yet even without the most recent nine-month period he should have had a six month sample to draw some observations from even if, like his boss Leon Daniels, he chose to dismiss the incidents as teething problems for users unfamiliar with the layout.

Collisions have continued, though thankfully with no fatalities. Given TfL's assertion that familiarity should lead to a safer journey here it is worrying to observe several collisions involving bus drivers who are probably the most regular users of the roads here. I photographed a collision between several buses on 5 May (pictured previous page), and between a 136 and pregnant driver of a Range Rover Evoque on 6 July.



A worrying occurrence is the frequent disregard by motorists for where they should drive. Some are errors, some are wilful violations. The most terrifying to observe are motorists turning right too soon when driving south from Newington Causeway, setting them on a crash course towards pedestrians and eventually oncoming traffic. Instead of crossing the three east bound lanes (two for vehicles and bike lane) and turning right after the traffic island they take the turn immediately, on the right hand side of the road. I have even seen three cars in a row taking this wrong turn! Although eastbound traffic is held on a red light at the point they are on green to turn pedestrians do not have such a fortunate grace period to avoid disaster. This is their green man phase and they will not be expecting traffic from the wrong side of the road. Some traffic that make this move realise quickly, pause, back up and progress correctly, but most continue until on the wrong side for tens of metres until they take the next opening in the central reservation.

Motorists regularly take the banned left turn out of Newington Causeway and make a U-turn back onto the northbound ring road at the turning that should only take them towards St George's Road. Eastbound traffic from London Road regularly uses the middle lane to turn left, despite the arrows marking it for right turning vehicles because there is insufficient road space for two large vehicles to smoothly and safely make this turn. Horn honking is frequent, collisions between motorists occasional, and a collision between a motorists and pedestrian seems inevitable either as a vehicle swerves out of the road to avoid a collision or does not manage to safely drive over the crossing on the green man

phase. On 16 February 2016 one TfL safety officer told me he had seen, “15 drivers cross a green man in 30 minutes” at this location between the Bakerloo line ticket hall and a traffic island.

It is not just the road that has become more unpleasant and dangerous. The new piazza has become a particularly popular place for skateboarders to spend time. They were not a user group who appeared anywhere in TfL’s consultation process, but have been delighted by the expanse of smooth surfaces and the relocated vintage stone memorial benches which have become apparatus to slam their boards against. Crowds of them regularly occupy what was intended as a pedestrian thoroughfare and seating area. The South London Press wrote about the problem on the 15 April 2016. While police have concluded the issue is not sufficiently serious for their attention I have heard from TfL that they intend to deter the skaters by retro-fitting new tops to the now damaged stone benches which will obstruct skaters from using them as ramps. It’s such a simple problem a better landscape architect would have anticipated and prevented using indentations in the stone or “pigs nose” metal attachments. Meanwhile the skaters have been busy, even building a tailored made portable ramp to slot onto the stone bench.



At the start of May 2016, when the new north bound segregated cycle lane opened on the west side of the Elephant and Castle link road, TfL stationed several officers in high visibility jackets for a week and gave them megaphones to shout at pedestrians and cyclists in case they strayed out of their confined adjacent spaces. It’s segregation, but it doesn’t work well, because pedestrians have to cross the cycle path to reach bus stops and crossings. The inadequate provision for south bound cyclists at this point, or the encouragement for them to use the existing westerly CS7 cycle bypass also means cyclists quite frequently use this one way cycle lane as a two way route.



Further designed in dangers are documented in the next chapter.

# DISGUSTING DEGRADATION

It did not take long for what was intended to be an attractive new place for people to want to spend time in rather than just pass through to become degraded, disgusting and damaged.

The neglected new planting and damage to the old stone benches by skate boarders has already been documented. The many new vast brown metal rubbish bins were replaced within weeks because they began to rust. Their replacements are now doing the same – like the new brown lampposts that failed to work properly for many months the bins are a Spanish product that is unsuited to our environment. Despite their populous number, some bins now regularly overflow, both because they are not emptied frequently enough and several are positioned far from where people actually spend time. They have been placed next to the new benches, rather than next to bus stops and tube exits.



I have campaigned since 2007 and so far failed for a new public toilet at this junction. TfL proudly boast of it as Europe's largest bus interchange yet does not provide a single public convenience for the thousands of users. Although there are three pubs on the eastern side of the junction many people and the landlords, are not comfortable using a pub toilet. That the subways had been used as public toilets but were destined for demolition would not make the problem go away. I have regularly seen people finding corners to relieve themselves in since the new layout opened; I have even caught a bus driver (pictured) peeing against the door to my tower block. Inspired by the Piers Gogh's landmark public toilet in Westbourne Grove built at the encouragement of a local residents' association, I made enquiries about doing something similar here, but there was zero will from either the council or TfL to fund this much needed facility. The moderate shelter afforded by the vertical beams of the listed Faraday Memorial has become the most suitable location in the new landscape for people caught short. Last summer I had to grab my 3-year-old daughter out of this disgusting puddle that she had innocently assumed was harmless rainwater to jump in.



# IMAGE MANAGEMENT

TfL heavily marketed their plans before and since the construction of The Bend. Regular press ads in the Evening Standard – a paper consistently supportive of every grand TfL project – presented vulnerable users as welcoming the changes on the grounds of safety. It was implied they were pedestrians. Yet, as we have seen, pedestrians were the least vulnerable user group at the junction and were the ones loosing segregated space and enduring some significantly increased journey times through slower crossings, indirect routes and relocated bus stops. The marketing was not conveying an objective nor a true benefit. A focus group had probably guided the agency that a positive sense of change would be most powerfully communicated to everyone by showing the most vulnerable user, whether it was true of the scheme or not. A friend tracked down Ido, the wheel chair user portrayed in the ads, to his Facebook profile. It turned out he was an actor that was living in Israel.



It is clear given the investment in image management by TfL since The Bend opened that the expenditure is about projecting a positive reputation of the organisation and location, not engaging people in discussion or consultation. On 9 November 2016 local news service SE1 reported that TfL had spent £87,000 on press and radio ads lauding Elephant & Castle remodelled junction over the summer after the project was completed<sup>72</sup>. The emphasis of this marketing was very much about the new place and not about the safety, as if that was now obviously untenable. The data was revealed in response to a Freedom of Information Act request from the SE1 website, “TfL confirmed that between July and October it spent £49,388 on press space and £37,465 on radio airtime to promote the Elephant & Castle junction”. I have not heard the radio ads, but the press ads showed three young women labelled as local residents Toriann, Deanne and Asia, standing in a computer-enhanced version of the new piazza under the headline “Elephant & Castle’s public space has been transformed”. The new paving, lawns and green facade on the Bakerloo line ticket hall can be seen in the distance. The ring road is almost entirely cropped or obscured from view. I could not resist but create a spoof showing a more familiar scene less cheerful on the piazza and the degraded new public space. It was no surprise that the most frequently seen type of person spent lingering on the piazza are not young female friendship groups or sisters, but older men drinking either lounging around drinking or skating.

<sup>72</sup> “TfL spent £87k on press and radio ads lauding Elephant & Castle,” London SE1, 9 November 2016, <http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/8993>



**Elephant & Castle's public space has been transformed**  
 Toriana, Deanne and Asia, local residents

As part of the Road Modernisation Plan, the northern roundabout at Elephant & Castle has been redesigned. The area now has segregated cycle lanes to help improve safety, as well as public spaces with new seating and greenery. This is one of the ways we reinvest all our income to run and improve your services. To find out more search TFL Roads

MAYOR OF LONDON Southwark TRANSPORT FOR LONDON



**Elephant and Castle's public space has been made even worse**  
 So say many of its users in comments on social media

An already congested and unpleasant junction on London's inner ring road has been made more congested, polluted and dangerous by a misguided scheme from Transport for London, Southwark Council and Lehd Lease to force-fit a 'space to linger' into it. @roundaboutnews | Facebook.com/ElephantandCastleRoundabout

**UNSAFE & UNPLEASANT**

The Designed-In Dangers of The Elephant & Castle 'Road Improvement'  
 By Richard Reynolds

# SUGGESTED CHANGES

## a. Alternative Proposals (2014)

During the consultation of 2014 before work began on building the new junction opposition groups proposed several alternative designs for the junction. These were bold alternatives that ignored the preoccupation with a peninsula and considered the wider context. I devised one after conversations with many supporters I had met during the campaigning with sought to retain segregation between all users where there was clearly demand, and enabled this by seeing the junction in the context of the wider area rather than trying to force everything into the constrained space of the project area. The roundabout was retained but modified to slow traffic speeds and improve lane discipline. Cyclists were given some improved provision on the roundabout, but primarily encouraged to avoid the junction through the provision of better bypasses. The busiest of the subways were retained and improved with the others converted for new uses. This Alternative Proposal was publicised online as a pdf and online video<sup>73</sup>. The proposal did not seek to create a new public space at the junction yet sought to be compatible with the developers place-making enthusiasm by pointing out the five big public spaces nearby being created or renovated away from the ring road.

**Elephant & Castle Roundabout**

## Alternative Proposal 1

Cleaner  
Safer  
Nicer

Transport for London are proposing a new layout for the junction at Elephant and Castle that they forecast will make it a more congested place for everyone who passes through there by however they travel. They also predict it to become more polluted near the flats of hundreds of people who live there because of more traffic spending longer travelling around their extended ring road. The London Cycling Campaign has slammed their proposal for failing to improve conditions for cyclists. This proposal presents an alternative using Transport for London data on collisions, pedestrian flow. It has been developed from many hours of discussion with users, developers and transport engineers.

Our 3 Key Design Principles:	Errors by Transport for London:
1. Consider the wider context of routes, places and plans that could be or will be put to better use.	1. Ignore existing cycle routes and the potential for more in adjacent streets
2. Integrate the plans with the redevelopment of the Northern Line Station and Shopping Centre.	2. Fail to take the opportunity for a better design that is only possible since the new owners of the shopping centre set out their intention for demolition.
3. Maximise space available for all users to pass through safely and comfortably on their journeys.	3. Force a costly outdoor leisure space to be squeezed into the inner ring road.
	4. Apply city dogma of filling in subways.

This Alternative Proposal redesigns almost every element of the junction and has an impact on adjacent streets as well by creating new safe routes and improving existing ones. Ring road traffic is kept moving at the roundabout but it and St Georges Road are narrowed to help safely and cleanly slow traffic without making it stop. Two new pedestrian crossings are created where they are most desired now. New segregated cycle lanes are created at Newington Causeway The cycle bypass is completed which CS7 and other routes have started. Four of the seven subways are renewed and three integrate directly into a new below-street underground station and new shopping centre. The three quietest subways are closed to pedestrians and used for other amenities.

View an animated version of this Alternative Proposal with a commentary online

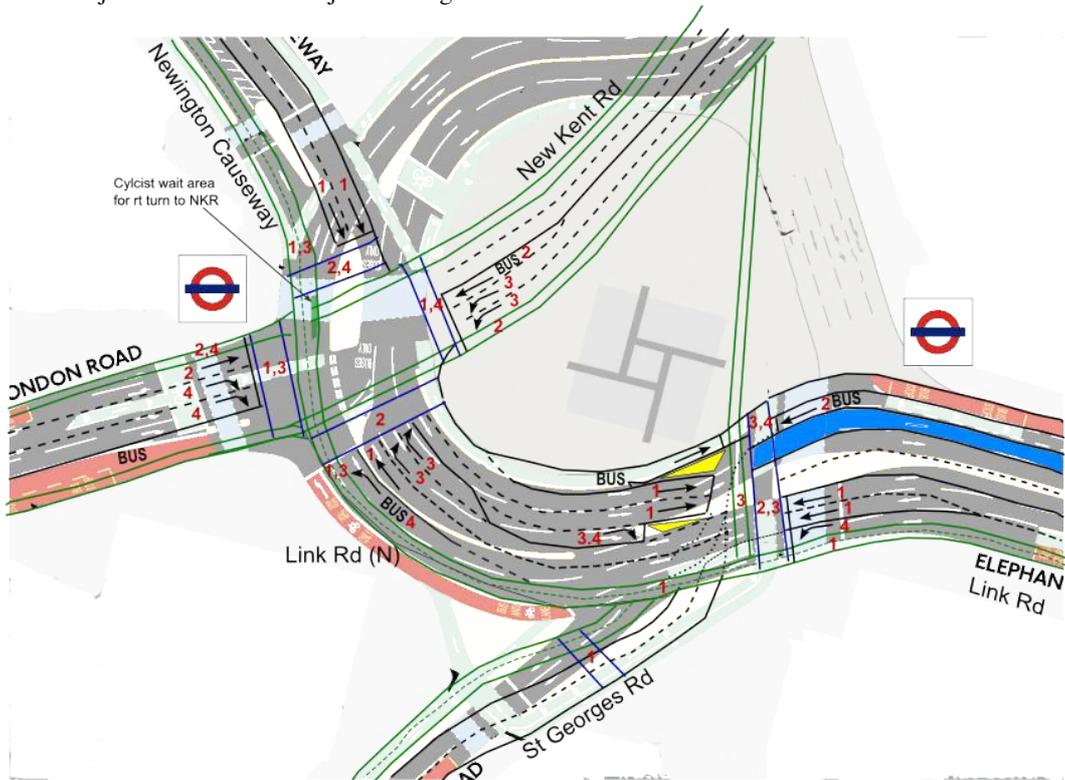
Please share your support | [ElephantandCastleRoundabout.org](http://ElephantandCastleRoundabout.org) | [@roundaboutnews](https://twitter.com/roundaboutnews)

Southwark Cyclists together with the London Cycling Campaign also produced an alternative proposal that focused on improvements for transport rather than creating a new public space<sup>74</sup>. Instead of retaining the roundabout or the bend they realigned the roads more radically to create a cross roads between New Kent Road, London Road, Newington Causeway and the Elephant and Castle Link Road, with St George's Road as a T-junction south of this. They also boldly proposed rearranging the link road. *"In order to separate cyclists from buses we propose that the cyclists have the west side of the*

<sup>73</sup> I created a video explaining the rationale for my alternative design which can be watched online at: <https://youtu.be/FYVIKcxtDfY>

<sup>74</sup> The full proposal from Southwark Cyclists can be downloaded from: <https://southwarkcyclists.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Elephant-Castle-proposals-v5.doc>

Link Rd, the buses the east side, and the general motor traffic goes in the middle. This solves the problem that occurs at the moment and is still present in the TfL plan, where cyclists have to intermingle with the buses at the bus stops on the Link Rd.” The proposal also sought to address the failings of the 2011 redesign of the Elephant and Castle’s southern junction, but considering the northern junction and southern junction together.



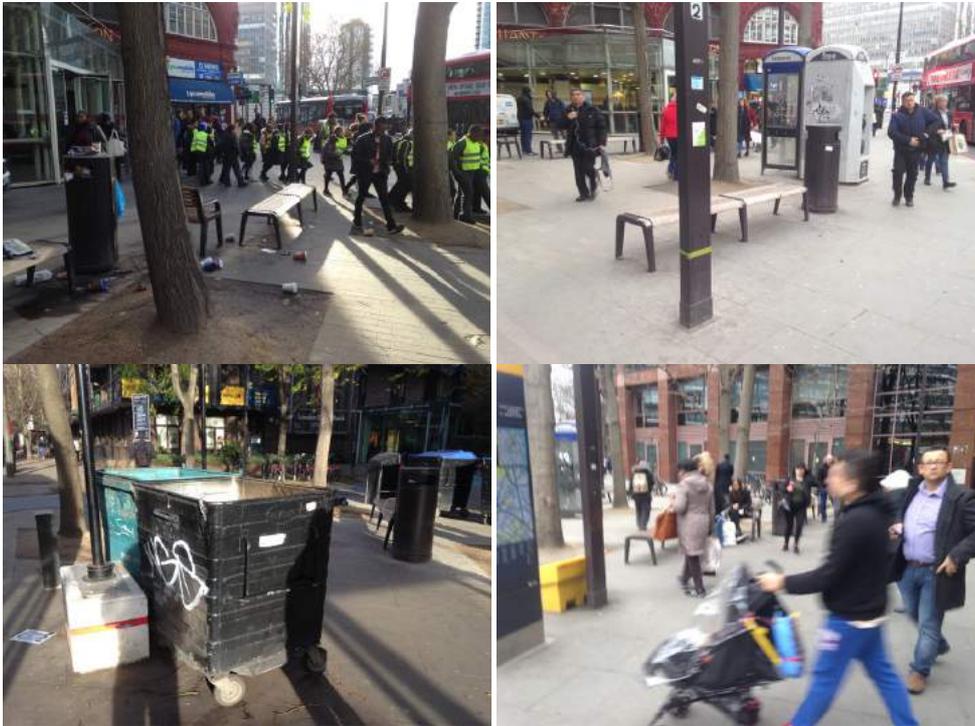
In April 2014 also received a grand neo-classical proposal from Peter Cooke which conceived a new horse-shoe shaped building opposite the Metropolitan Tabernacle, enabling better connections between the station and the bus stops and creating new public space away from the demands of the northern junction. The website where Mr Cooke hosted these proposals is now offline.

**b. Modifications (2017)**

Since The Bend opened in 2015 the need for changes has been obvious. After a year of observations and discussions I have put together a list of 28 with the help of local resident Eileen Goodway and two members of Southwark Cyclists, Francis Bernstein and Andy Caldwell. Problem areas are noted, the issue about which we are concerned and a suggested change. This list of identified issues is not expected to be definitive, nor the modifications necessarily the best solution, but it is intended as a starting point for either action or at the very least discussion. Some are however undoubtedly simple and unlikely to be contentious and it is hoped that TfL will embrace them swiftly.

1.

**Location:** Pavement at Southern end of London Road outside Skipton House and Bakerloo Ticket Hall.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** This is a busy pedestrian thoroughfare adjacent to the Bakerloo line ticket hall, the large office block at Skipton House, numerous southbound bus stops on London Road and entrance to London Southbank University. The redesign reduced the width of this pavement to make room for an additional southbound lane on London Road. Three new benches and two chairs (away from the bus stops) were added.

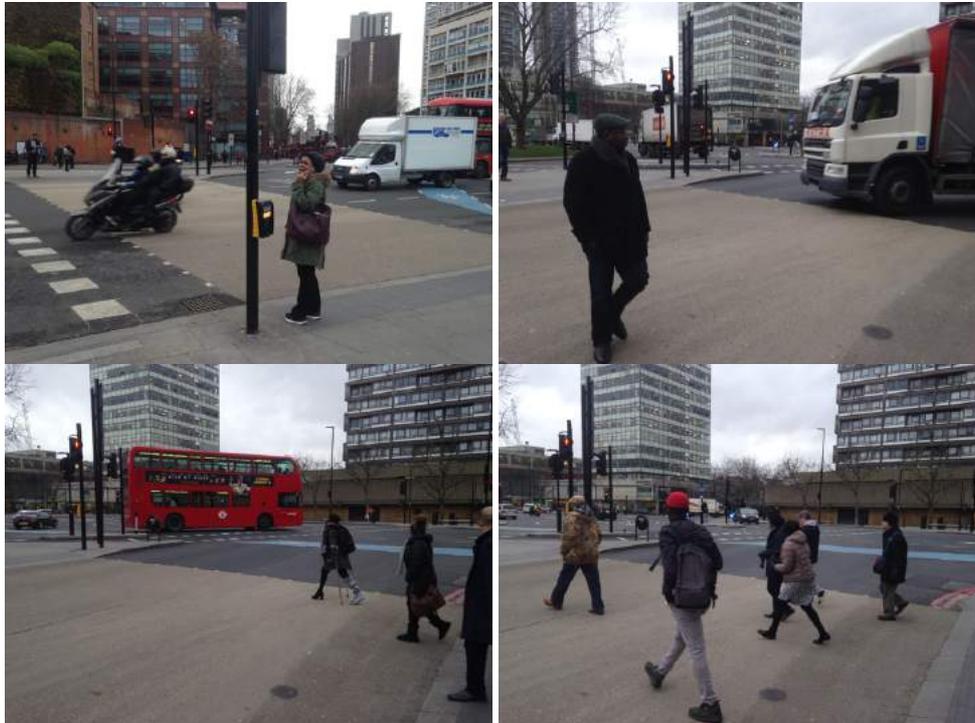
**Actual Behaviour:** An obstacle course of obstructions in the pavement blocking the desire lines: the benches and chairs, rubbish bins, signposts, bulk refuse bins, telephone boxes, a cash machine, a grit box, legible London sign and tree pits. The benches are not regularly used.

**Urgency/Danger:** Pedestrian collisions and trip hazards especially for visually impaired and disabled. High pedestrian congestion.

**Potential Solution:** Review pedestrian desire lines and then move obstacles (particularly benches and bins away) from them.

2.

**Location:** Pedestrian crossing of the Ring Road between the Northern end of the piazza and the Bakerloo ticket hall.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Pedestrians are required to cross the Ring Road using signalised crossings in two phases of Green Men without countdowns. Pedestrians must wait for a maximum of 1 minute and 41 seconds for four different traffic flows to pass, two from the East, and two from the West. Traffic from London Road turning left onto the Ring Road is meant to pass single file from the one left turn lane at the Southern end of London Road.

**Actual Behaviour:** Many pedestrians are unwilling to wait for the Green Man. They become impatient from the long wait. Many pedestrians cross on the Red Man. The pause in traffic about midway during the Red Man phases often misleads some into assuming the Green Man is about to come on, so they begin crossing only to flee back or forwards in panic as traffic proceeds. To make matters worse left-turning eastbound traffic from London Rd regularly drives through the Green Man phase, so patient pedestrians are not rewarded with a safe crossing. This is caused by the traffic congestion from London Rd struggling to turn left because of inadequate space. Although only one lane is assigned for left turning traffic from London Road two lanes of traffic usually try to take the tight corner. If one vehicle is large there is not room for two to pass side by side, so they are squeezed to a halt to avoid collision and delayed passing the pedestrian crossing. The danger is audible from the regular honking of buses.

**Urgency/Danger:** High pedestrian demand for crossing six lanes of traffic is an accident waiting to happen. The crossing has inappropriately brief and infrequent signal phasing. Pedestrian frustration and confusion is high because the countdowns at the end of the Green Man were switched off within days of the new layout opening in December 2015 and subsequently removed because they were observed to confuse people into trying to cross the Ring Road in one phase.

**Potential Solution:** Introduce a Green Man phase for pedestrians between each phase of traffic. Introduce a “count down” on the Red Man to relieve impatience and avoid confusion in the pause in traffic flow. Introduce “intelligent pedestrian crossing” technology to prioritise pedestrian movements. Look at new phasing or road layout to avoid left turning congestion and collision. A subway used to enable pedestrian to cross this route more quickly even though it was less direct.

3.

**Location:** North bound cycle lane at Southern end of Newington Causeway.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Cyclists to use this lane when heading North on Newington Causeway.

**Actual Behaviour:** Many motorists drive into the advisory cycle lane because it cuts the corner, and is a natural racing line for drivers (buses, lorries, motor bikes and cars).

**Urgency/Danger:** “Left hook” risk and sideswipe collision from motorist into cyclist. Visibility is not good because of the sharp corner preceding it and the lamppost.

**Potential Solution:** Cycle lane should be marked more clearly or made mandatory, with blue paint for example, as the cycle route is along the Ring Road where it is not segregated. Consider a narrow build out to protect the cycle lane.

4.

**Location:** Right turn for motorists from Newington Causeway onto the Ring Road.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Drivers leaving Newington Causeway are only permitted to turn right. To do so they must drive across the two eastbound lanes of the ring road, through the gap in the raised stone median and then turn right along either of the two lanes of the Ring Road that soon expands to three lanes wide.

**Actual Behaviour:** While almost all traffic does as intended, a shockingly frequent occurrence, spotted at least weekly without looking out for it, are vehicles turning right too soon after they leave Newington Causeway, and so end up driving on the wrong side of the road over a pedestrian crossing. Three cars one behind the other were spotted doing this on 10 February 2017 (shown in left hand photograph, two Silver Toyota Prius and dark blue Ford Galaxy). Some motorists reverse backwards to correct their manoeuvre others drive onwards on the wrong side and get back onto the correct left hand side of the Ring Road by passing through the gap after the pedestrian traffic island, (the police caught a Budget rental van doing this manoeuvre on 17 February 2017, shown in right hand photograph).

**Urgency/Danger:** A head on collision between motorists is waiting to happen, or a collision between motorists and pedestrians using the signalised crossing, since it's a Green Man phase for them on the northern half of this pedestrian crossing when traffic turns right from Newington Causeway.

**Potential Solution:** Clear markings are needed on the eastbound Ring Road just west of the turning out of Newington Causeway to signal it is no entry to motorists. This could be a no entry symbol, or two arrows pointing East. Perhaps there is also a need for additional signage on posts.

5.

**Location:** Pedestrian crossing at Southern end of Newington Causeway



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Pedestrians are expected to use the staggered zigzag crossing within the guardrails and wait for two phases of Green Men to cross Newington Causeway.

**Actual Behaviour:** Many follow the desire line, avoiding the slow pedestrian crossing altogether which can require a wait of up to 1 minute and 17 seconds. Pedestrians use the painted hatched box as a refuge on the roadside of the pedestrian guardrail if they decide not to try and make the crossing in one go.

**Urgency/Danger:** Collision between pedestrian and motorist. Traffic speeds around this blind corner from London Road towards Newington Causeway, and drivers are not expecting pedestrians in this area.

**Potential Solution:** Remove at least one of the three obstacles, e.g. remove the zig-zag crossing, reduce Green Men to a single phase, or review the location of the crossing. Reinstating the pedestrian subway here and guard rails along the pavement to deter any surface crossing is recommended due to the high vehicle volume and high speed seen over this crossing.

6.

**Location:** Northbound segregated cycle lane on Newington Causeway



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Cyclists take the segregated lane and motorists keep to the road

**Actual Behaviour:** Many cyclists not using the segregated lane because it directs them towards the rear end of buses waiting at the bus stop soon after the segregation ends. Motorists regularly collide with the kerb of the island that segregates cyclists from motorists.

**Urgency/Danger:** Collision between motorists and kerb appears regular given the damage to the new granite kerb and bollard. Motorists and cyclists are at risk of collision as cyclists pull out of the segregated lane sharply around the buses pulling into the kerb in front of them towards the bus stop.

**Potential Solution:** Remove the segregated island altogether to deter cyclists from staying left, or install an illuminated sign on the island to help motorists see it.

7.

**Location:** Shared space cycle 'short cut' on pavement linking the Southern end of Newington Causeway to the eastbound Ring Road towards New Kent Road.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Southbound cyclists on Newington Causeway who want to turn left at the Ring Road towards New Kent Road are directed to take the dropped kerb onto the pavement from Newington Causeway and cut across perpendicular to the pedestrians walking to and from their pedestrian crossing. Cyclists take a dropped kerb off the pavement into the eastbound segregated cycle lane, giving way to cyclists from the West.

**Actual Behaviour:** Very few cyclists use this 'short cut' because it risks conflict with pedestrians. It is barely any further to continue in the cycle path all the way to the end of Newington Causeway and take a sharp left on the lights into the segregated lane.

**Urgency/Danger:** Cyclist and pedestrian collision. Sharp corner to return to the cycle lane creates conflict with other cyclists at speed.

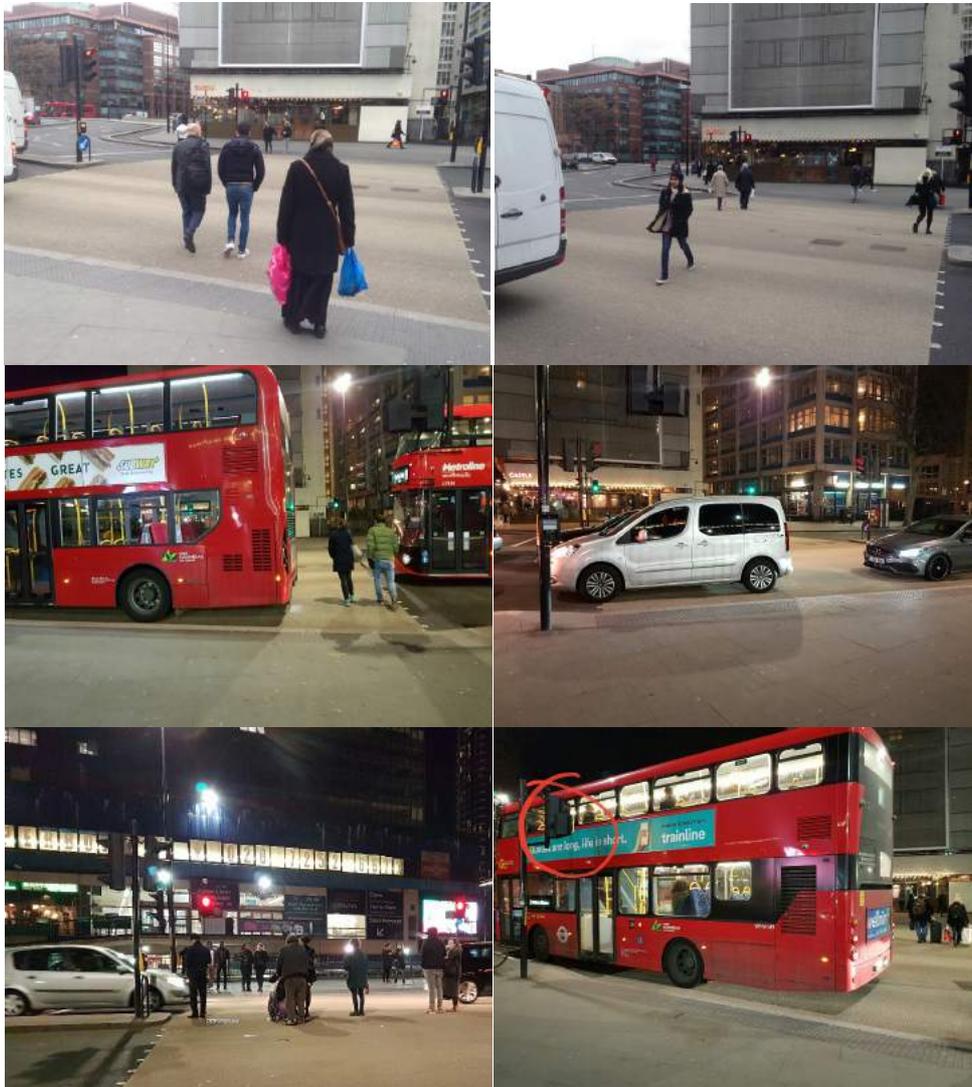
**Potential Solution:** Remove this shared space 'short cut'. Smooth the on-carriage South Eastern corner of Newington Causeway to enable this turn to be made more easily (as already being used by most cyclists).

(In February 2017 TfL added two bollards to the shared space with signs intended to alert cyclists and pedestrians to its designation. Their inclusion suggests TfL acknowledge there is a collision risk here. But the signs on each bollard are incorrect, placed back to front, designating the shared space as not for cyclists and the pedestrian space as shared. Even if they had been installed correctly the recommendation is to remove this shared space altogether. As of 17/2/17 the signs are sheathed with a bag).



8.

**Location:** Toucan Crossing at the end of New Kent Rd by the Elephant & Castle pub.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Pedestrians and cyclists can cross the Ring Road in one phase.

**Actual Behaviour:** Large number of pedestrians not willing to wait at the for the Green Man at the crossing as they become impatient from the extended and very long waiting times of up to 1 minute and 35 seconds. The Green Man appears for just 4 seconds followed by a countdown of 13 seconds. They cross on the Red Man, some make it in one go, others end up stuck in the tiny central island that has no clear demarcation of a wait area or tactile area. The congestion on the westbound Ring Road means vehicles regularly overhang and block the crossing, restricting access and blocking the signals. The poor visibility around the corner for motorists heading towards New Kent Road means they occasionally don't stop on the red light and cross over during the Green Man phase.

**Urgency/Danger:** Severe pedestrian collision with motorist waiting to happen. There's already been one death here since it opened.

**Potential Solution:** Change phasing of lights so pedestrians need not wait so long. Have a count down on the Red Man as well as the Green Man to remove frustration. Clearly mark road to prevent motorists blocking the crossing. Reinstate the direct pedestrian subway.

9.

**Location:** Westbound cycle lane on the Ring Road from New Kent Road.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Cyclists from New Kent Road heading West towards Elephant and Castle are meant to filter from shared road space into this segregated cycle lane.

**Actual Behaviour:** Many cyclists avoid/miss this cycle lane. Those heading North stay with the traffic so they are better placed to turn up London Road, and avoid needing to use the complicated and slow cycle crossing from the central piazza to London Road. Filtering into this cycle lane is also difficult because vehicles in congestion regularly obstruct it.

**Urgency/Danger:** The segregated cycle route does not match the desire line for most cyclists. Its design appears to be a trap for leaves and unwelcomingly slippery.

**Potential Solution:** Further analysis needed.

10.

**Location:** Cycle crossing between the Northern end of the piazza and the central traffic island.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Cyclists heading to London Road from the New Kent Road are expected to leave the segregated cycle lane on the nearside of the Ring Road, cycle onto the piazza up a dropped kerb into shared space, cut through the flow of pedestrians, wait on a give way line ready for the Green Cycle light to guide them across the Ring Road to a small gap in the traffic island. Here they are to wait for a second Green Cycle light to signal them across the diagonal painted cycle lane up a dropped kerb onto the pavement outside Perronet House, cutting behind another pedestrian crossing before returning to the road where buses are usually queuing.

**Actual Behaviour:** The intended path and behaviour for cyclists (from New Kent Road to London Road) over this junction is so complicated, indirect and slow, few cyclists take it. Instead many stay in the Ring Road and flow with the traffic, using the bus lane and give way line. Instead of waiting for up to three Green Cycle lights, they only need to wait for one to let pedestrians cross.

**Urgency/Danger:** The intended behaviour risks collisions between pedestrians and cyclists as well as collisions between cyclists and motorists as cyclists try to squeeze into the segregated cycle lane that starts at the Western end of New Kent Road and feeds this turn.

**Potential Solution:** Review the crossing. Remove the two sets of cycle lane crossing. Convert the diagonal cycle crossing over the Ring Road from the traffic island towards the pavement at London Road into a pedestrian crossing (see next page).

11.

**Location:** Shared space pavement on South Western end of London Road, outside Perronet House.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** North bound cyclists from the Ring Road are directed on a Green Cycle light to cross its eastbound portion towards the pavement on the South Western corner of London Road. A white dashed lane marks their path. Cyclists enter the pavement over a dropped kerb, where they are then required to share space with pedestrians behind a busy pedestrian crossing before returning to the road at a dropped kerb directly into a bus lane used by 12 different bus routes on London Road.

**Actual Behaviour:** Few cyclists take the intended route, and instead take the more direct option by leaving the dashed white cycle lane to enter London Road. They give way to pedestrians using the pedestrian crossing and then proceed up the bus lane by overtaking buses safely. Some cyclists do take to the pavement but can struggle to get past pedestrians and struggle to re-enter the road because a parked bus often blocks their dropped kerb.

**Urgency/Danger:** The current indirect layout encourages cyclists to collide with pedestrians on the pavement and buses when they re-enter the road.

**Potential Solution:** Change the current markings for from a one-way cycle route into a two-way Toucan crossing so that pedestrians who are trying to cross to the peninsula from the Western side of London Road can take this desire line and cut out one of the three phases of Green Men that they are currently are expected to wait for if they use the pedestrians crossings for London Road and the Ring Road – this diagonal is one side of a triangle for pedestrians. Many pedestrians have already clocked that this is a safe crossing because it shares the Green Man phase with the indirect route across London Road, but it is not clearly signalled.

12.

**Location:** Pavement in front of Perronet House facing the Ring Road between London Road and St George's Road



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Pedestrians should be able to pass around this corner easily and past the trees, comfortably avoiding the overhanging building that comes perilously low to tall people's heads and away from the kerb.

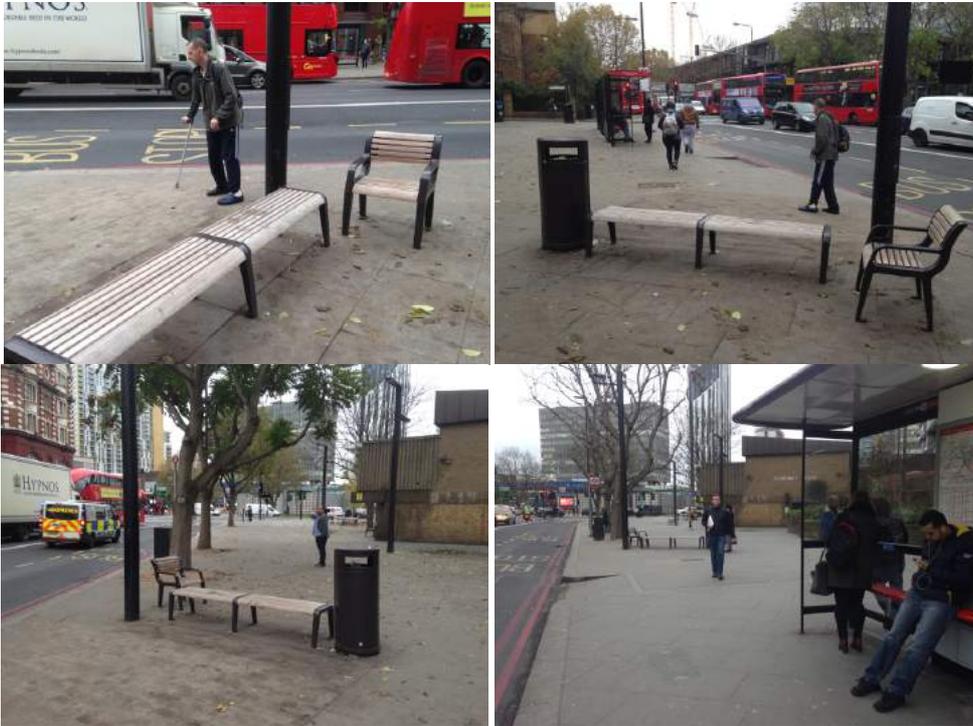
**Actual Behaviour:** Pedestrians cannot take the desire line in two locations here because of the obstruction of three benches, a chair and a tree and for the tall, overhead dangers. Pedestrians take the long way around to cut under the overhang in one location or across a tree pit in another.

**Urgency/Danger:** Pedestrian's hitting head the overhanging building or tripping on the tree pit.

**Potential Solution:** Move the benches to underneath the overhang with their backs against the building, thereby deterring pedestrians from walking in dangerous places and also providing shelter for anyone who wants to sit on the bench. The tree and tree pit is little obstacle if the bench near it is removed.

13.

**Location:** Pavement outside Perronet House on West side of London Road



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** This busy pedestrian area is both a thoroughfare for people heading to and from London Road from Elephant and Castle and near 12 bus routes. Pedestrians should be able to move directly along the pavement and reach their buses. The benches are intended for lingering away from the bus stops.

**Actual Behaviour:** A cluster of a bench, chair, bin and lamppost obstructs the desire line for pedestrians often forcing them to move closer to the traffic, which can become congested. Pedestrians often end up walking in the road. Few benches are used, as they are not near close enough to the bus stop.

**Urgency/Danger:** Adverse consequences of pedestrians funnelled near/into main road.

**Potential Solution:** Remove the benches and bin and relocate them away from the desire line, in line not against the flow of pedestrian traffic. The bin would be most useful adjacent to the bus stop where most people linger and have need to dispose of rubbish.

14.

**Location:** Pedestrian crossing and CS7 crossing of London Road near Princess Street and Ontario Street.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** London Road traffic to stop on the lights to let cyclists and pedestrians cross in one phase.

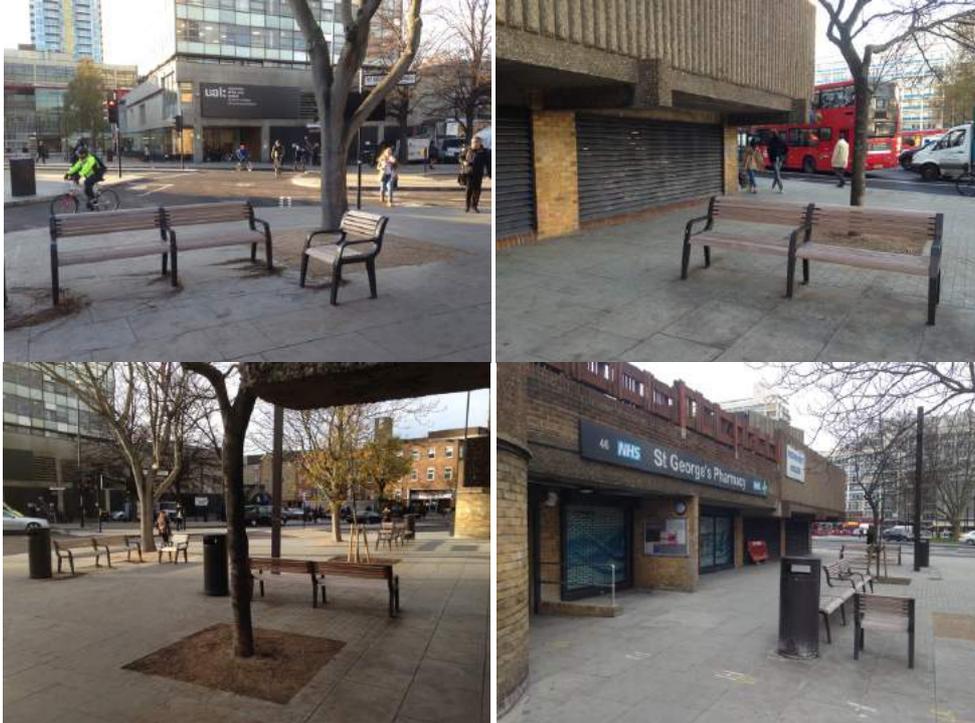
**Actual Behaviour:** Southbound congestion on London Road means traffic often blocks/overhangs the crossings. Cyclists have to squeeze through vehicles, end up cycling on the pavement and sharing the pedestrian crossing.

**Urgency/Danger:** Collision waiting to happen between cyclists, pedestrians and motorists

**Potential Solution:** Yellow box markings or some other sign to motorists to not park on the crossings. Use CCTV for enforcement and penalties. Soften the kerb on the Western side of London Road to enable buses to filter into the bus lane to ease congestion. Consider moving CS7 away from Princess St and Ontario Street North to Garden Row to provide more space on London Road for vehicles to remain stationary in the congested flow – request supplementary document on issues about the gyratory between Elephant and Castle and St George’s Circus and details on the proposed move of this portion of CS7.

15.

**Location:** Pavement outside St George's Pharmacy at Perronet House on Eastern side of St George's Road covered in an array of benches, bins and tree pits.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Pedestrians are expected to walk around this corner between St George's Road and the pavement facing the Ring Road. The benches are there to encourage people to linger next to the busy road.

**Actual Behaviour:** The array of benches and wide tree pits create numerous obstacles for pedestrians and are seldom sat on so pedestrian have to navigate around them.

**Urgency/Danger:** Benches block pedestrian desire lines. Trip hazards. Danger of overhang for tall pedestrians. Visually impaired have poor guidance on desire lines.

**Potential Solution:** Move benches so they do not obstruct the pedestrian desire lines, perhaps under the overhang of Perronet House to deter people from walking there and provide shelter for the few who use the benches.

16.

**Location:** Staggered pedestrian crossing at the Southern end of St George's Road



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Pedestrians are expected to take an indirect zigzag crossing over the segregated cycle lane and one-way dual carriageway of St George's Road.

**Actual Behaviour:** Most pedestrians take the desire line and cross in a straight line, avoiding one or both of the intended pedestrian crossings. Some avoid the crossing entirely and take the most direct desire line across the traffic island.

**Urgency/Danger:** Collision between pedestrian and motorist or pedestrian and cyclist. The wider area has become informal shared space causing confusion for all. Some people with children in buggies still take the desire line but have no dropped kerb, delaying their return to the safe pavement.

**Potential Solution:** Change the layout so the pedestrian crossing is directly across the road and cycle lane and not staggered in a zigzag. Move the portion in the segregated cycle lane further South.

17.

**Location:** Pavement piazza outside London College of Communications facing the Southern end of St George's Road



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Pedestrians to move directly along this pavement following the desire line and lingering on one of four benches facing the Ring Road.

**Actual Behaviour:** A cluster of four benches and a rubbish bin obstruct the pedestrian desire line creating a narrow pinch point along the kerb close to traffic. Forced by the obstruction some pedestrians take an indirect route around the inside, or into the cycle lane, or wait for other pedestrians to pass before carrying on. Few ever sit on these benches, as there are plenty of alternative options nearby within the pavement away from the busy road.

**Urgency/Danger:** Pedestrian and cyclist collision.

**Potential Solution:** Remove the cluster of four benches and relocate them to further within the LCC piazza away from pedestrian desire lines.

18.

**Location:** Southbound portion of segregated cycle lane outside London College of Communications.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** This route is a link for cyclists riding between St George's Road and either the South of Elephant and Castle or the East towards New Kent Road (across the piazza).

**Actual Behaviour:** Few appear to use this route because of its complexity and the two sets of traffic lights. Those heading South tend to use the northbound segregated cycle lane or only partially use the provision and cut across the Eastern portion of the pedestrian crossing to head South. Those heading East turn left at the bottom of St George's Road and follow the bus lane and segregated cycle lane around the Ring Road.

**Risk:** Cyclist with cyclist collision, and cyclist with pedestrian collision.

**Potential Solution:** Further analysis needed.

19.

**Location:** Northbound segregated cycle lane of the Elephant and Castle Ring Road outside London College of Communications.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Cyclists follow the cycle lane that twists around the piazza.

**Actual Behaviour:** Cyclists regularly take 'short cuts' off the cycle lane across the pavement (as shown in the photograph) in what is a congested area for pedestrians adjacent to a pedestrian crossing.

**Urgency/Danger:** Cyclist and pedestrian collision.

**Potential Solution:** Change the alignment of the northbound cycle lane and pavement so that the cycle lane takes the direct route. This would be even easier to create if the segregated cycle lane did not lead onto a light controlled cycle crossing across the Ring Road.

20.

**Location:** Pedestrian crossing of the Ring Road between Northern Line and LCC



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Pedestrians cross in two phases of Green Men (unless you run and can make it in one phase).

**Actual Behaviour:** Large number of pedestrians not willing to wait at the signalised crossing as they become impatient from the extended and very long waiting time, of up to 1 minute and 40 seconds. Pedestrians are frustrated by the delay and so cross on the Red Man. There used to be a direct subway crossing here.

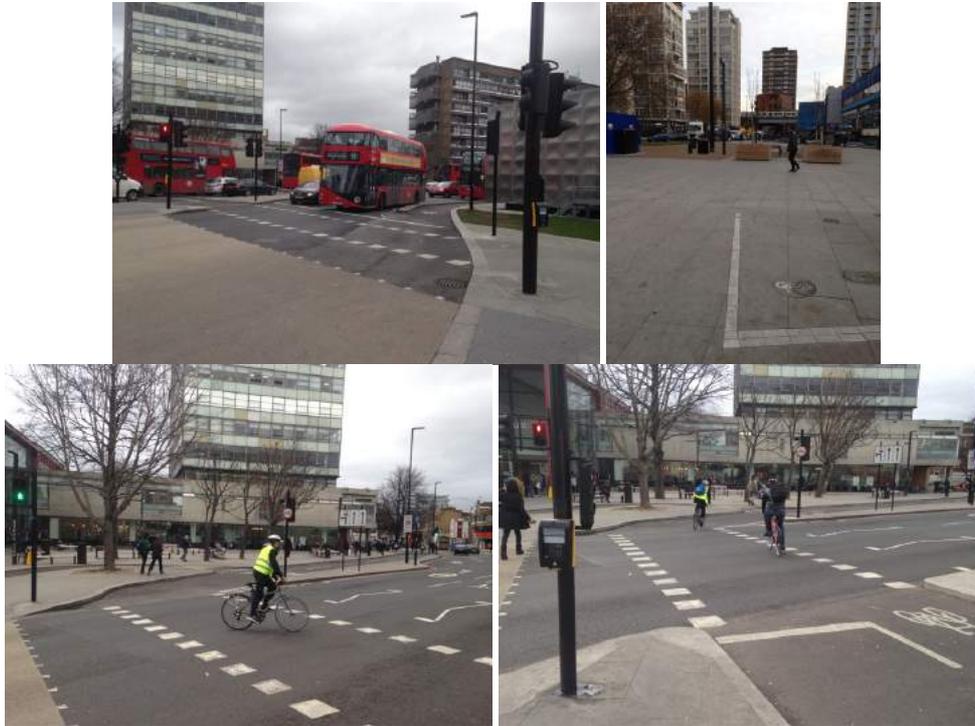
The lull between phases of southbound Ring Road traffic confuses many pedestrians, so they begin crossing expecting a Green Man. But more traffic then crosses. This is very dangerous when crossing from the piazza because the visibility of the road and cycle lane is poor for pedestrians because of the obstruction of the Faraday Memorial that the road curves around. Traffic takes this corner at high speed and takes the racing line across the lanes.

**Urgency/Danger:** Collision between pedestrians and motorists and pedestrians and cyclists, particularly southbound on the Ring Road.

**Potential Solution:** Give a greater proportion of time for pedestrians to cross. Introduce a count down on the Red Man to alleviate frustration and clarify that the pause in traffic does not mean a Green Man is imminent. Find a way in the phasing to enable pedestrians to cross with one Green Man, not two. Reinstate the subway (it is still there, unlike the others it has not been filled with concrete).

21.

**Location:** Cycle crossing between the Northern Line tube and LCC.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Cyclists are encouraged to cross the piazza and head either North or South. If they want to go North from the piazza they must cross the Ring Road in two phases alongside the pedestrian crossing to join up with the segregated cycle lane that leads North towards St George's Road.

**Actual Behaviour:** Cyclists attempt to make the crossing in one phase (rather than three) and wait in the middle on the island, or they avoid the route altogether because it is complicated and slow. Many cyclists follow the main road and flow with the traffic.

**Urgency/Danger:** Collision between cyclists and motorists as many cyclists are not willing to wait extended periods of multiple phase of signals.

**Potential Solution:** Further analysis needed.

22.

**Location:** The central 'shared space' for pedestrians and cyclists extending from the shopping centre Northwards around which the Ring Road bends.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** This is a short cut for cyclists to cut across between New Kent Road and Walworth or St George's Road as well as a major pedestrian thoroughfare in many directions. The benches are there for people to linger.

**Actual Behaviour:** Cyclists use all sorts of different routes to detour around the benches and end up straying far into the pedestrian piazza in a fairly unpredictable manner for all to navigate safely. The benches are fairly undesirable in such a noisy and polluted location.

**Urgency/Danger:** Collision between pedestrians and cyclists. Benches obstruct cyclists – forcing them to take circuitous routes so they end up in places pedestrians are even less likely to be expecting them.

**Potential Solution:** Create a segregated or better-marked cycle lane across the piazza so it is clear to pedestrians that they are crossing a potential conflict with cyclists and clear to cyclists that they need to stay in lane. Make this cycle lane westbound only for those coming from New Kent Road heading South to Walworth, not eastbound. Cyclists heading East must follow the Ring Road in that direction, much of which has new and effective cycling segregation.

(In February 2017 TfL added two bollards to the shared space with signs intended to alert cyclists and pedestrians to its designation. Their inclusion suggests TfL acknowledge there is a collision risk here. But the signs on each bollard are incorrect, placed back to front, designating the shared space as not for cyclists and the pedestrian space as shared. Even if they had been installed correctly the recommendation is to remove this shared space altogether. As of 17 February these bollards have been covered in a sheath to hide their incorrect signage.)



23.

**Location:** Lawn on the piazza.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** The lawn is a recreational or ornamental space.

**Actual Behaviour:** The pedestrian desire line for people heading towards New Kent Road from the top of the piazza cuts directly across this lawn. The lawn is rapidly deteriorating because of its use as a thoroughfare making it both undesirable for recreation and far from ornamental.

**Urgency/Danger:** Slip hazard for pedestrians.

**Potential Solution:** Replace a portion of the lawn with hard surfacing along the desire line. Ensure future plans retain the desire line and do not block it with a café or Bakerloo ticket hall. Create new soft landscaping – particularly trees that use less pedestrian space and maximise environmental benefits – away from desire lines.

Note as of 17 February 2017 this area is due to be laid with new turf due to disruption caused by on-going work to repair a broken drain (pictured). A request for this investment to be shifted to hard landscaping was rejected by an officer at TfL that day on the grounds of further investment in ‘activating the space’, rather than making it safe or efficient to walk across. *“My colleagues are working with LB Southwark to activate the space – for example it could become event space with a range of uses. These plans include the possibility to provide additional areas of hardscaping etc. and the interim space was designed to be flexible to accommodate a range of interim uses.”*



24.

**Location:** The four large planters and bench at the centre of the piazza.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** Ornamental planting and a place to linger looking at the Ring Road. Pedestrians pass around them to and from the New Kent Road and the busy pedestrian crossing at the Northern end of the piazza.

**Actual Behaviour:** Pedestrians cannot take the desire line because of this barrier. Few ever use the bench positioned to face five lanes of busy Ring Road traffic. Many pedestrians take the Western side of these planters in what can be a congested area, made more unpleasant by its popularity with skateboarders.

**Urgency/Danger:** Pedestrian congestion and collision with skateboarders and wayward cyclists

**Potential Solution:** Move the planters and the bench out of the way of the pedestrian desire lines.

25.

**Location:** The South West corner of the Faraday Memorial on the piazza.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** New ornamental grass, not for access.

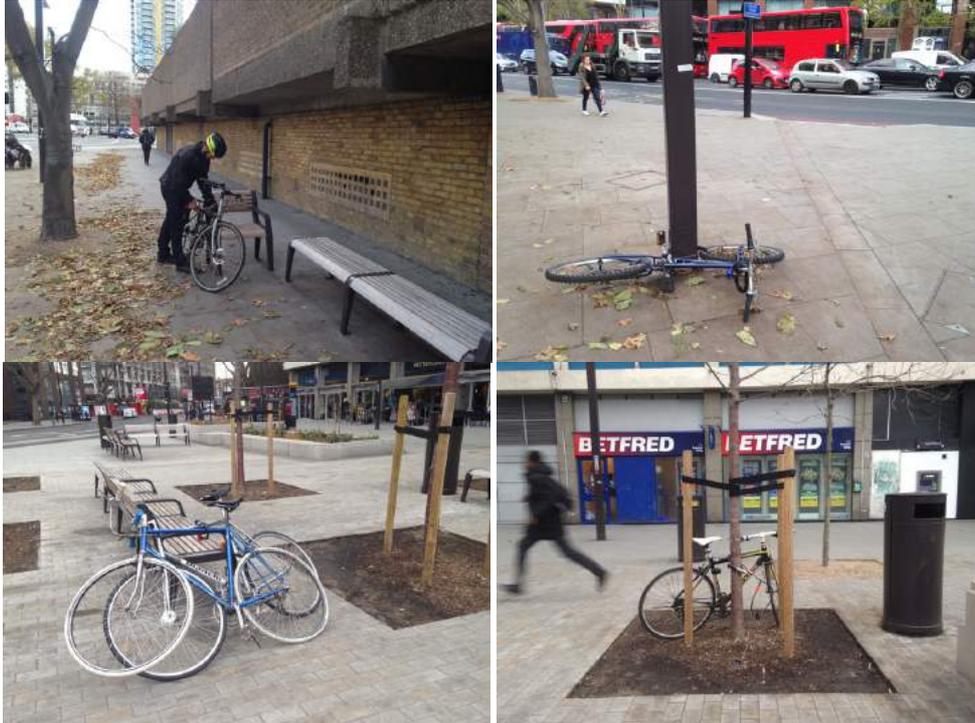
**Actual Behaviour:** Some pedestrians use this as a short cut around the Western side of the Faraday Memorial.

**Urgency/Danger:** Pedestrians slip over on the grass or walk into the cycle lane.

**Potential Solution:** Replace a portion of grass, about two metres wide along the kerb to match the pedestrian desire line. Ideally also move the lamppost out of the way. Pedestrians should not be deterred from using this corner. The rather unattractive high maintenance grass could be reinstated as a shrubbery or perhaps have a tree planted in it.

26.

**Location:** In many areas around the junction where cycle racks are needed, - space for 50 was promised but not delivered. It is particularly necessary on the pavement outside Perronet House facing East and the pavement on the Eastern side of Newington Causeway.



**Assumed Intended Behaviour:** The junction has been marketed by TfL and Southwark Council as being made more attractive for cyclists but the only racks are concentrated on the Southern side of the Ring Road. The trees and benches shown here are not intended for bikes to be locked to them. Bike racks that used to exist near Perronet House at London Road were removed during the redesign for no apparent reason.

**Actual Behaviour:** Cyclists use lampposts and benches against which to lock their bicycles because of insufficient cycle storage/parking.

**Urgency/Danger:** Trip hazard for pedestrians, potential damage to trees and street furniture.

**Potential Solution:** Install many more bike racks, particularly on the Northern side of the Ring Road, such as under the over hang of Perronet House and on the pavement outside Metro Central Heights.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To Lyla for her support, patience, tolerance and encouragement as the anxiety and fear of the proposed changes to the roundabout griped our household and became a reality. Thanks for helping channel this into projects that have been fun, fulfilling and sometimes even delivered the positive outcome intended.

To Eileen for giving me the strength of commitment to get this document finished.

To the local Liberal Democrats who finally got on board with the fight against TfL's proposals. Our fears came to pass. Keep the faith and keep on the fight. Things can only get better.

To everyone who helped create the campaigns and events including but not limited to Lyla, David, Danyal, Andy and Paul.

To the Elephant and Castle pub for embracing our rebrand of the roundabout for what it is.

