

FAO Matthew Metcalfe, Democratic Services  
Oxford City Council - Meeting of Full Council 19<sup>th</sup> December 2011  
Written submission re Agenda Item no. 22 Item 5.1  
Transforming the A40 ring-road

We must draw your attention to the most serious flaws in the above proposal and we object most strenuously to this highly polluting expensive and impractical plan.

At the moment the hedges which border the northern section of the A40 on both sides go some way to protect all the residents of Barton, Northway and Headington from noise, fumes and light pollution. The A40 is not a "visual barrier", (as reported in the *Oxford Times* front page 15<sup>th</sup> December 2011), because the trees and hedges in the central reservation actually hide the road and, also, go some way to reduce the noise and fumes and headlights.

We strongly object to a plan to create this "boulevard" by removing the hedges and the central barrier of trees. This will take away the green buffer which currently provides the only protection that these three communities have against the noise fumes and light pollution from the A40.

A major highway is just that. It cannot become a street, *unless it is closed to all through traffic*. No amount of "landscaping" can alter the fact that this is a major arterial road connecting to other towns and cities across Britain. An arterial road is by definition incompatible with a "street", however artificially engineered, unless you take away most of the cars.

To draw a comparison with Sunderland Avenue is a false one.

The houses in Sunderland Avenue are set back from the road with gardens at the front. They were built in the '50s and '60s at a time when traffic and pollution were negligible compared to now. Such ribbon development is unthinkable today. Houses are no longer built to "front" a major road. On the contrary they are usually shielded by trees and fences. You only have to look at new developments in Bicester and Abingdon to see this. To **deliberately** build houses fronting the A40 and so exposing their occupants to the pollution of a major arterial road is an impractical town planners' fantasy. It provides an appalling, unhealthy, low grade environment for those who live in them.

Recently huge sums have been successfully spent on vastly improving the Green Road roundabout so that traffic can get past it more swiftly. Traffic from London to the West heads down a steep stretch of the A40, and the steepness encourages speed. The whole point of the roundabout improvement was to help traffic get quickly to its destination. Under the proposed A40 "transformation" this improvement would be reversed. The same traffic, speeded up at the roundabout would then have to crawl west along the A40, just so that some mythical people can drink coffee at the side of a highly polluting road! The residents of Barton, Headington and Northway are far more likely to get incessant noise and even more fumes from a slow-moving, crawling "boulevard" than from a road that allows cars free passage as at present and which at least has the protection of the existing green buffers.

*Peter Shaw, 8 Stoke Place, Headington, Oxford OX3 9BX on behalf of Stoke Place Residents' Association*

Oxford City Council - Meeting of Full Council 19<sup>th</sup> December 2011  
Written submission re Agenda Item no. 22  
Policy BA7 Pedestrian and cycle links

This policy proposes to “reconnect Stoke Place bridleway with the existing footpath running north-south across the development site.”

We must point out that “re-connection” involves crossing 4 lanes of traffic just at a point where the two lanes of East-West traffic comes at its fastest downhill from the newly improved Green Road roundabout.. The undue noise from cars which would to slow suddenly at this point will be far in excess of anything heard at present from the A40 by residents of Headington Barton and Northway.

Stoke Place is a narrow rural footpath The recent Conservation Area Appraisal adopted by Oxford City Council in July 2011 says “Stoke Place is continued within this area as an attractive public bridleway running northwards from the Dunstan Road Character Area lined by trees that help green it. The path also benefits from greenery of the verge, which includes carpets of flowers of wild garlic, as well as bluebells in late spring. The rural character of the path was highlighted in 46% of the total number of responses to public consultation on the draft appraisal which **highlighted the rural quality of the bridleway as a key feature of the conservation area.**” It will be clear from this extract that any “upgrading” of this path to create a cycle track **will destroy the very features which the conservation area appraisal regards as important.**

In addition, to the south of the footpath, Stoke Place is lined by stone walls. These ancient walls form part of the Conservation area and make Stoke Place very narrow and are an intrinsic part of its character in the conservation area. It is a car’s width for about 20 metres of its length. It is physically impossible to make Stoke Place “cycle and pedestrian friendly” **because there is a narrow 20metre long section has no pavement and no room for one.**

When a vehicle, a car or a refuse collection vehicle, goes up or down Stoke Place (which is a cul de sac) **cyclists and pedestrians have to take refuge in the gateway of a house, or retrace their footsteps to the bottom of the road, or run to get out of the way.** There is no refuge in the narrow section. When Ruskin College commissions its new car park at the north end of Stoke Place and in addition uses Stoke Place again for all its service and refuse collection vehicles, there will be a total of about 50 vehicle movements a day (25 return journeys) at a conservative estimate. At busy times Stoke Place can be a dangerous road along which to walk. and cyclist have to frequently give way and dismount.. There is no room for a vehicle and a pedestrian, nor for a vehicle and a cyclist at the same time. Stoke Place cannot therefore be pedestrian and cycle friendly but is a hazardous pedestrian and cycle route.

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