

Marchmont to King's Buildings cycle route

Comments from Spokes

November 2014

Introductory comment

Spokes welcomes increased consideration and road space being given to cyclists and pedestrians. We are broadly supportive of the measures in these proposals, but would like them taken further, based on the following general principles:

- + Every step should be taken to avoid cars parking in or encroaching into cycle space. Thus there should be maximum use of double-yellow lines, mandatory lanes and physical segregation. A survey of our membership found that cars parking in cycle lanes (legally and illegally) was by far the main complaint about the KB to Princes Street onroad route (QBiC).
- + Use of uphill cycle lanes where both ways really do not fit
- + Onroad cycle lanes to be designed as in Leith Walk, at extra width (1.75m) and with a substantial marked door-opening gap
- + Reducing the kerb radius at junctions – which should be done throughout.
- + Clearways at bus stops
- + A 20mph speed limit for the entire route is important, particularly as the proposed pseudo-one-way gyratory system may otherwise encourage greater speeds.
- + Join the gaps - the scheme should join to QBiC, i.e. the full length of West Mains Road.

Specific comments and suggestions for improvements

Melville Drive / Marchmont Road Junction

- Northbound cycle lane is needed to the end of Marchmont Road. Queueing left-turning traffic often blocks entry to the lane on Melville Drive.

Marchmont Road

- Existing Marchmont Rd cycle lanes are in the "door-zone". Renewed lanes should be further out - as in QBC. If there is really not enough road space, consider uphill side only.

Kilgraston Road

- No parking should be permitted at any time.
- No loading should be permitted on the west (uphill) side between Grange Loan and the lay-by to the north of Hope Terrace.
- The bike lane should be mandatory.

A more radical approach should also be considered, closing Kilgraston Road to all traffic except buses (of which there are relatively few), bikes and pedestrians, and for access to the small number of local properties.

- A 5m 2-way bus/bike carriageway, with passing places at bus stops, and a 20mph speed limit, would provide a much calmer and safer environment than at present, including for cyclists travelling in both directions.
- Pedestrian conditions are currently very poor. The above proposal would allow pavement widening by more than 2m.
- This would also reduce motor traffic in Marchmont Road and Blackford Avenue, thus helping improve other sections of this bike corridor.
- Since this is a radical proposal, it could be trialled with paint and planters (a la Jan Gehl) and replaced by the above original option if unsuccessful.

Dick Place / Blackford Road / Kilgraston Road Junction

This crossroads is a useful east-west road for cyclists, but is also used as a short-cut by motorists. Cycle-plugs allowing only cyclists to leave Kilgraston Road would help. This would also prevent new short-cuts being taken by those southbound on Kilgraston Road who currently turn right in to Grange Loan.

Kilgraston Road / Grange Loan Junction

This junction is indeed in need of a major modification.

- We are concerned that southbound traffic from Kilgraston Road to Grange Loan may go faster at the corner. The sweeping corner should be tightened to reduce speeds. Hatching should be used in Grange Loan to reduce the risk of conflict with oncoming cycles (and other vehicles).
- Cyclists should be allowed to travel east from west or south. There is enough room for two-way cycle access in the SE corner of the junction.
- Care needs to be taken not to introduce a pinch point northbound on Kilgraston Road.
- Do not build out the south-west pavement; use a smaller kerb radius at the corner to reduce speeds and protect northbound (straight-on, uphill) cyclists.

Grange Loan / Blackford Avenue Junction

- We welcome the improved layout, which should reduce conflict as the junction is further round the corner.
- A cycle lane at the NE corner may encourage cyclists to use a poor choice of line. Keeping out from the kerb is safest if turning right here.

Oswald Road / Kilgraston Road Junction

- There may be an increased flow continuing west on Oswald Road.
- There is a new danger for cyclists turning North from motorists going straight on. To improve this, increase the south-side buildout and reduce the north-side one to move the junction further around the corner. Reduce junction kerb radius to reduce speeds.
- Alternative remedy: cycle-plug cyclists-only westbound.
- Note that the drainage at the north-west of this corner can be very bad leading to flooding of the foot-way, and the line of the proposed cycle lane.

Blackford Avenue / Oswald Road Junction

- A reduced kerb radius would reduce speeds, and protect northbound (straight-on) cyclists.

Blackford Avenue

- No loading at any time should be permitted between South Oswald Road and Oswald Road (apart from the bus stop!) No vehicle access is required. The cycle lane here should be mandatory.
- Single Yellow line section between Grange Terrace and St Albans Road should be replaced by Double Yellow lines.
- Bus Stop south of St Albans Road - should this have a clearway?
- Pedestrian Crossing at the Post Office - is this phased with the junction? Will these signals impede cyclists who have just been given precedence at the main junction?

Blackford Station Five Way Light Controlled Junction

- The southbound cycle lane on the railway bridge is welcome. It should continue further south (beyond the kerb corner) to discourage vehicles cutting in and blocking the lane when queueing. The kerb line could be changed to allow more space for a bike lane (the pavement shape means this will have very little impact on pedestrians). A few metres off the northbound bike lane might also be “required”. The red chip treatment should flow in to the bus stop even if the lines do not.
- The marked lanes look to be a general improvement.
- Cycle priority at traffic lights is welcomed with interest.
- Right turning vehicles from Blackford Ave to West Savile Terrace can block the junction; vehicles behind may then change lanes unexpectedly (in to the new dotted lane). Should these right turns be banned?

Blackford Avenue South-East

- We are opposed to an uphill cycle lane unless parking is removed from one side of the road. Not doing so will require narrowing the traffic lanes. Westbound cyclists currently filter through the traffic at busy times; narrower lanes will make this very difficult. At busier times it is unlikely that cyclists will reach the downhill lane in order to take advantage of cycle priority at the lights.
- The demand for parking is largely for commuters. Parking should be completely removed from the uphill side - there is then clearly enough room for a cycle lane in both directions, including a decent buffer to keep out of the door zone. Extending the Controlled Parking Zone to include West Mains Road would help reduce the demand.
- The westbound downhill cycle lane on Blackford Ave raises concerns. A motorist turning left will arrive at the left turn lane just as the bike lane starts. It may look like a slip lane and so it may feel natural to simply drift leftwards. The lane must start earlier. To accommodate this, remove parking spaces between the north side bus stop and the junction.

West Mains Road / Langton Road

- Changing the sequence of lights so that pedestrians and cycles go before vehicles exiting Langton Road will reduce conflicts. Currently pedestrians tend to step in to West Mains Road as soon as the lights go red.

West Mains Road / Langton Road / Max Born Crescent

- Continuous cycle lanes are needed in both directions throughout. There is enough road space for this if parking is restricted, the existing cycle path is removed and build-outs reduced.

West Mains Road / Max Born Crescent

- The new island in West Mains Road creates a pinch-point. Continuous cycle lanes are needed through this junction. The south side build-out to the east of Max Born Crescent can be reduced to allow the island to be placed further south.
- The first car parked to the east will create another pinch-point. Parking restrictions should continue eastwards at least as far as the centre hatching.

West Mains Road / James Dewar Road (East of scheme as proposed)

- The build-outs at KB entrance 2 are to improve sight lines around commuter parking. If this parking is removed there is room for a refuge island and on-road cycle lanes joining this scheme to the QBC.
- The University has recently marked David Brewster Road as one way (westbound). Cyclists wishing to access James Dewar Road must do so via this entrance.