

Blackford Safe Routes

Newbattle Terrace resurfacing, carriageway improvements – response

Overview

Newbattle Terrace is a residential street, very narrow in places, that connects Kilgraston Rd (Grange) to Morningside Rd in an East-West direction. St Peter's Primary School, S. Morningside Primary School, the Royal Blind School, a cinema, and hospital / care-home facilities exist nearby. It currently suffers from high volumes of through-motor-traffic ("rat-running"); speeding traffic; narrow non-Equalities-Act-compliant footways; kerb crossings that are not dropped; extremely high "enclosing" stone walls on both sides, street trees on the carriageway, and; blind junctions. School pupils from surrounding schools must cross Newbattle Tce in both directions at the same times: both the pupils at St Peter's Primary / S. Morningside Primary and those at James Gillespie's Primary (JGPS), travelling in opposite directions. The popular [JGPS bike-bus](#), attracting up to 160 participants, passes through the quiet-route grounds of the Astley Ainsley hospital and crosses Newbattle Tce at the North gate.

Plans

City of Edinburgh council propose to resurface Newbattle Terrace and provide some carriageway and public realm improvements, including the following:

- A signalised pedestrian crossing is added opposite Falcon Gardens
- Pedestrian priority continuous-footway is added to the Falcon Gardens side street crossing and some driveways
- Raised-tables (speed ramps) and footway build-outs are added to the crossings at Morningside Rd and Pitsligo Rd
- A short section of footway is widened where existing trees are in the carriageway (and where it does not affect parking!)
- New street trees are added

Council drawings:

[TDD-637052-2-11 \(I 2020-08-10\)-ConsultationDownload](#)

[TDD-637052-2-12 \(I 2020-08-10\)-ConsultationDownload](#)

[TDD-637052-2-13 \(I 2020-08-10\)-ConsultationDownload](#)

[TDD-637052-2-14 \(I 2020-08-10\)-ConsultationDownload](#)

Blackford Safe Routes recommendations

Key recommendation:

Remove through-motor-traffic from Newbattle Tce by means of a modal-filter between Canaan Lane and Whitehouse Loan. Blackford Safe Routes have already put forward plans to include a modal filter on Newbattle Tce, as part of our [“Liveable Neighbourhoods”](#) (low traffic neighbourhoods, LTNs) plans. We are currently working in conjunction with Edinburgh City Council and Sustrans to design and detail these plans. Temporary planters could be used, in the first instance, as part of the Spaces for People initiatives.

It is strongly recommended that the designers of the Newbattle Tce improvements contact Gert Rijdsdijk (key contact at CEC active travel team) to discuss future LTN plans.

Reducing motor traffic would remove the need for the signalised pedestrian crossing and allow continuous footway to be constructed across Morningside Rd (which carries high pedestrian volumes) and Pitsligo Rd.

Suitable alternative parallel through-routes for motor traffic already exist via Strathearn Rd / Church Hill to the North and Cluny Gardens to the South.

General:

The resurfacing/carriageway improvement plans continue to provide for, and maintain the status-quo, of heavy volumes of motor traffic on Newbattle Terrace. The proposed infrastructure could still be described as “motor dominated”. This is contrary to the council’s own goals of reducing traffic and promoting active travel. This is a case of “doing the wrong thing, better”

Signalised crossing:

Children, their parents/carers, teachers, as well as others, need to be able to cross Newbattle Tce safely – both at Falcon Gardens and at the [Astley Ainsley gate \(school bike-bus route\)](#). The source of the danger is too much motor traffic, mostly through-traffic, that is not immediately local, and is rat-running and often speeding.

Signalised pedestrian crossings are “motoring infrastructure” that are expensive to install and expensive to maintain. The council already struggles to maintain the existing motoring infrastructure which continues to proliferate, adds to street clutter, is awkward for walking, wheeling and cycling, and is frequently damaged by careless drivers.

We think it is inappropriate to install a signalised crossing at this location, rather than deal with the **source of the problem** which would be to **reduce motor traffic**.

That way, formalised crossings are not necessary – pedestrians can cross where and when they like, at their convenience, not at the motorist’s. In a low-traffic neighbourhood, Zebra crossings could suffice, where there is a need for a formal crossing.

Continuous footway:

Continuous footway is generally only suitable where there are *very* low traffic volumes crossing it and when cross-traffic is only travelling in one direction i.e. one-way, or the side-street is a short cul-de-sac. See the excellent Robert Weetman blogs:

- [Robert Weetman quality checklist for continuous footway](#)
- [Continuous footway design details](#)

Not enough has been done to reduce traffic along Falcon Gardens. The part-time “no motor vehicles” signs are widely ignored at school drop-off and pick-up times (and enforcement results in conflict between parents).

Falcon Gardens should have a short section of one-way at the junction with Newbattle Tce (with a cycling bypass) to reduce traffic movements to a minimum, shorten the crossing distance, and so that pedestrians are not having to look in “all directions at once” when crossing.

If through-motor-traffic were eliminated on Newbattle Tce, continuous footway could also be provided across Newbattle Tce at Morningside Rd – a crossing that carries very high pedestrian volumes. Continuous footway at this location would also improve the pedestrian environment on Morningside Rd, which in turn would lead to a higher footfall to the shops.

Footways:

The footway width on the [South side of Newbattle Tce, opposite Pitsligo Rd](#), is unacceptable. It is too narrow (less than 1 metre), substandard, non-Equalities-Act-compliant and is further obstructed by a lighting column. It would be impossible to get a wheelchair along here, let alone for someone to pass a wheelchair without stepping into the carriageway. There are a high proportion of elderly living in the area.

During footway resurfacing, the footway should be made completely level where it crosses driveways and any perpendicular kerb stones removed. For vehicle access, only an abrupt ramp should be provided near the kerb.

Lighting columns obstruct the footway at [42](#), [54](#) and [64](#) Newbattle Tce. They create pinch-points between stone walls and the columns themselves which would cause accessibility problems for a wheelchair and are certainly non-Equalities-Act-compliant. The lighting columns should be relocated.

A lighting column, parking ticket machine and Police Box form [significant footway obstructions](#) at the Police Box. The parking ticket machine and lighting column should be relocated.

The footway on the North side and West end of Newbattle Tce is very narrow and should be widened.

Build-outs:

The carriageway width (8.0m) at the junction with Morningside Rd is too wide and will enable high vehicle speeds (or parking on/near the junction) and create longer than necessary crossing distances for pedestrians. The build-outs here should be further extended and the carriageway reduced to say 6.0m. The tactile surfaces are located too far from the pedestrian crossing desireline (the existing ones are right on the corner), forcing pedestrians to take a longer crossing path and reducing their visibility and sightlines.

Dominion Cinema:

The owner (or employees) of the Dominion Cinema frequently park their (large) vehicles (up to two) on the footway outside the theatre (this can be observed on [Google streetview](#)). This should be prevented by physical measures i.e. bollards or cycle racks.

Street trees:

We approve of the new street trees to be added to the carriageway.

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