

BLOOMSBURY RESIDENTS' ACTION GROUP

PROOF OF EVIDENCE 1

Traffic displaced from Tavistock Place

1. Tavistock Place was a key west-bound vehicle route

a) Camden Council's Statement of Case states that:

2.3. The Corridor forms part of an important east / west cycle link connecting Marylebone, Fitzrovia, Bloomsbury, Kings Cross and Angel.

b) The report fails to mention that the corridor was also an important east/west link for motor vehicles. It runs parallel to Euston Road between Gray's Inn Road and Edgware Road. At Tottenham Court Road traffic turned north for one block then west into Howland Street, continuing along New Cavendish Street to Marylebone High Street. There it turns one block south onto George Street which continues to Edgware Road.

c) It is the only east/west route between the Strand and Euston Road.

d) West-bound traffic on Theobalds Road and Holborn cannot go down Oxford Street, so either goes down Southampton Row to Aldwych and the Strand, or down Charing Cross Road to Trafalgar Square at the other end of the Strand, or down Shaftsbury Avenue to Piccadilly Circus.

e) Traffic going west down Guilford Street can only exit on to Southampton Row, on which it can either go north to Euston Road or South to the Strand, Piccadilly Circus or Trafalgar Square.

2. This key route now blocked off, causing significant traffic displacement

a) In its Statement of Case the Council states that:

2.2...Prior to the trial, the corridor served approximately 250 motor vehicles per hour (vph) eastbound and 350 vph westbound in peak hours.

b) These 350 vph have now been displaced on to surrounding streets, meaning that frequently in the day time, one can see quite literally, no cars and no cycles on the Torrington-Tavistock Place corridor, whilst at exactly the same time, the surrounding streets are struggling to cope with the traffic which has been diverted. It is common to be able to walk past the junction of Judd Street/Hunter Street/Tavistock Place and see Tavistock Place completely or virtually empty, whilst Judd Street and Hunter Street are congested with stop-start traffic, displaced from Tavistock Place, and full of traffic fumes. It should be emphasised that this congestion is unprecedented; it did not occur before November 2015. It is caused by the one-way system.

c) The pattern of congestion and non-congestion varies. Some days there is no or little congestion and other days, there are several hours of stop-start traffic. It is

difficult to say on average how many times a week there is congestion since there is no discernible pattern.

3. Photos illustrating the effect of the traffic being displaced from Tavistock Place on to surrounding streets.

3.1) The following five photos were all taken within five minutes (13.25 -13.30) on 21.1.16, showing how traffic is displaced from Tavistock Place on to surrounding streets

a)Judd St blocked with stationary traffic 21.01.16 13.25-13.30



b)Judd Street



c) Hunter Street and Handel Street blocked



d) Hunter Street congested up to Brunswick square



e) Tavistock Place empty of cars and cycles



3.2) The following three photos were all taken within 21 minutes (16.59-17-20) on 26.5.17, and illustrate the same problem:

a) Judd Street congested



b) Judd Street congested



c) Tavistock Place empty



4. Comments from participants in BRAG' Community Planning Day

The dismay and concern and sense of powerlessness of local residents who are coping with the multiple adverse effects of the trial and its displaced traffic were voiced at BRAG's Community Planning Day. Below are some examples of the perceptions and feelings of local residents.

a)

BRAG COMMUNITY PLANNING DAY

Thursday 8th September 2016, at OneKX, corner Judd Street & Cromer Street, London WC1H 8BS

COMMENTS SHEET

PLEASE LET US KNOW ANY COMMENTS, CONCERNS AND IDEAS

First name	Surname	Postal Address	Postcode	Tel no / Email
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED], CORAM ST.	WC1N [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

I live in Witley court, corner of Coram street and Woburn place and due to the change of traffic for the bike lane, traffic is now constant between 7am to 1am. Even sometimes until later. Curtains and furniture are now covered in dirt, my partners children have difficulty breathing since then started and it is horrible having windows open as the fumes + noise are overwhelming. Traffic is extreme. Also the consultation on the entrance bike rack was sent to us only a couple weeks before it was installed therefore a bit awkward anyway and its blocked access to main entrance and side FIFEXIT. The elderly and disabled residents are no longer able to stop outside the entrance. Also young kids/teenagers sit on the bikes making noise and smoking drugs until the early hours. It seems that the residents were completely ignored.

b)

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First name	Surname	Postal Address	Postcode	Tel no / Email
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Judd Street	WC1H [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

The main issue is traffic from my point of view and it was very clear from the Marchmont Street meeting on the 19th September how polarised people are over this matter. Many conflicting comments were made from different standpoints, which made for an angry meeting. Some good points were made however – one in particular that the roads are a shared space for everyone and should not be seen as a ‘them or us’ in terms of who gets to use the space. As a cyclist and car owner I see both points of view and since the introduction of ‘Boris Bikes’ the cycling group are developing a powerful voice, which the council will no doubt be forced to take into account.

The ‘Tavistock Experiment’ has made what was a vital East/West artery for all forms of traffic and given it over to cyclists which, for the most part, is only used at peak times twice a day. In the process it has impacted on other streets and neighbourhoods. The council’s proposed response to this is to restrict traffic coming into Judd St, thus pushing the traffic into other areas already heavily trafficked. People live, work and play there too so is this really the solution; cutting down on pollution in our streets but moving it into their streets? And there are other plans for traffic restriction talked about. Is there any joined up thinking in all of this?

We live in a dynamic city and traffic is a serious problem ... but it’s not going to go away as Uber cars, tourist coaches, online deliveries etc increase into ever restricted road space if all these schemes go ahead. Yes, we’d all like to live in a pollution free environment but until they find an alternative to the internal combustion engine, that’s not going to happen any time soon. In the end we all have to share the problem.

Specifically the Tavistock scheme should be amended to allow a cycle lane in each direction and to maintain two way motor traffic. It was another good suggestion at the Marchmont meeting and one that would – though tightly spaced – allow access for everyone.

If you need more space, please use the other side.

If you wish to fill in this comments sheet in your own time, you can email it back to us at Debbie@brag.org.uk or post to us at 91 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE

c)

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First name	Surname	Postal Address	Postcode	Tel no / Email
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] Sandwich Street	WC1H [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

I am horrified at the lack of consultation with local residents on the proposed changes to road and cycle routes in the area of Tavistock Place and Judd Street. Consultation so far has been token and suggests that planners have either forgotten, or have deliberately ignored, the needs of local residents. Residents obviously support improvements to the environmental quality of their immediate surroundings and welcome any changes that will reduce noise and other forms of pollution, such as vehicle fumes. The problem is that the current proposals trap the many local residents, who find it difficult to walk or cycle, in their homes. Access for taxis and other service vehicles will be difficult and taxi fares for even short distances to and from the area will become prohibitively expensive. These proposals need to be reviewed with the needs of residents taken seriously into account.

Residents often feel that the needs of others, for example, short term residents, such as students and tourists and those merely passing through the area are given priority over those who live here. The balance needs to be tilted back towards those who live here.

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d)

To go west is now ridiculous it involves driving up to Euston Road and then down Gower Street and across which has increased travel time, traffic, cost and is unnecessary. Why not reverse Montague Place to allow cars coming from the south to have a way of heading to the west end.

Summary

- 1) Additional traffic, fumes, noise and inconvenience and disturbance due to the bike lane and no other route west.
- 2) Bike rack outside coram street extra traffic, narrowed the road, noise/teenager/anti social behaviour + loss of access for loading/unloading + disabled people.
- 3) Traffic in whole area multiplied due to changes.

e)

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		Argyle Square		

We feel that the interests of transients are put above residents in our part of WC1, particularly in respect of transport. We also feel that a lot of decisions regarding transport are not very well thought out, resulting in more dangerous junctions for everyone, and needless delay to cars. Much of what has been changed is particularly dangerous to children and older people.

In addition we feel that sometimes cycles are excessively prioritised over motor vehicles, and as a result it is quite difficult to get tradesmen to visit our house. With five children we also need a fairly large car, as sometimes there is no viable alternative. Until large electric cars are more widespread, it should be possible for residents within the congestion zone to keep their existing car. Furthermore, the jams caused by some poor traffic decisions (eg Judd St) increase pollution for pedestrians, and I am sure that walking is the preferred form of transport for most people living here.

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5 Comment from local older resident

- a) I strongly oppose, on behalf of myself and fellow local residents, the proposed closures and curtailment of access along Judd Street, our last viable route.
- b) I have serious cardiac, asthma and other conditions and have had emergency admissions to hospital necessitating emergency ambulance to my home in Thanet Street.
- c) Most shopping is delivered by van to my home. I like other elderly and infirm residents rely on this service. Already we are finding difficulty in having contractors attend for plumbing and other trade repairs because of the already reduced access.
- d) Most of the cyclist's use of Tavistock Place and Judd Street occurs as 'pass-through' at peak hours.
- e) As it is, continuing closure of local roads, forcing vehicles into long detours and to fewer routes is INCREASING traffic delays and resulting pollution and increased costs to the economy.

M. G. Versteeg, Thanet Street